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IMF and Building Regional  
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August 2013

Online at <http://mpa.ub.uni-muenchen.de/49514/>

MPRA Paper No. 49514, posted 15. September 2013 17:25 UTC

Deep Financial Crises,  
Reforming the IMF and Building Regional Autonomy: Towards  
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*Revised, August 2013*

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\* I would like to thank Tanweer Akram, Ilene Grabel, Izumi Otomo and Derek Sarchet. All remaining errors are mine.

## Abstract

This paper analyzes the problems of creating and expanding national macroeconomic policy space and economic governance. It develops a critical constructivist evolutionary theory of international financial institutions and arrangements within a framework of dynamic complex adaptive economic systems(DCAES). More specifically, the paper analyzes the following aspects:

- The IMF's response to recent and emerging global economic and challenges, and the evolving nature of its role.
- The most appropriate role of regional arrangements in financial stabilization, based on experiences with such arrangements in this and prior episodes of crisis.

The role of IMF under the present globalization arrangements and repeated financial crises is studied by following such a critical constructivist evolutionary theory of international financial institutions within a rigorous DCAES framework. It is shown that IMF must and can change in a direction which allows for greater national policy autonomy. It is also shown that the IMF needs complementary regional institutions of cooperation in order to create a stabilizing hybrid global financial architecture that will be more democratic and pro-development in terms of its governance structure and behavior. Thus regional financial architectures will need to be integral parts of any new global financial architecture (GFA).The tentative steps taken towards regional cooperation in Asia since Asian financial crisis are discussed to illustrate the opportunities and challenges posed by the need to evolve towards a *hybrid* GFA. The opportunities and challenges arising from the current global crisis are also analyzed in this context.

**Keywords:** dynamic complex adaptive economic systems, financial crises, global financial architecture, regional financial architectures, a *hybrid* GFA, regional cooperation, the IMF.

**JEL Classifications:** F3, F6

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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AESAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AFC	Asian Financial Crisis
ASA	ASEAN Swap Agreement
BCBS	Basel Committee on Banking Supervision
BIS	Bank for International Settlements
BITs	Bilateral Investment Treaties
BOP	Balance of Payments
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India and China
CAR	Capital Adequacy Ratio
CCP	Central Counterparty
CDS	Credit Default Swap
CET	Constructive Evolutionary Theory
CFTC	Commodity Futures Trading Commission
CPSS	Committee on Payment and Settlement Systems
CRPRID	Center for Poverty Reduction & Income Distribution
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DCAES	<b>Dynamic Complex Adaptive Economic Systems</b>
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
FCL	Flexible Credit Line
FTAs	Free Trade Agreements
FX	Foreign Exchange
FYDP	Five Year Development Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country
HDR	Human Development Reports
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IGO	Inter Governmental Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
IOSCO	International Organization for Securities Commissions
IPS	Integrated Package Services
LDC	Least Developed Country
LIC	Low-Income Country
MAG	Basel Committee Macroeconomic Assessment Group
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals

MDGR	Millennium Development Goals Report
MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOF	Ministry of Finance
BOJ	Bank of Japan
MPND	Ministry of Planning and National Development
MPO	Management and Planning Office
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NAPEP	National Poverty Eradication Programme
NEEDS	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
NGO	Non Governmental Organizations
NPC	National Planning Commission
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OTC	Over the Counter
PC	Planning Commission
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
SBA	Stand-by Arrangement
SDR	Special Drawing Rights
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SFT	Securities Financing Transactions
SIV	Structured Investment Vehicle
SPV	Special Purpose Vehicle
Stats SA	South Africa Statistics Office
TB	Tuberculosis
TWGs	Technical Working Groups
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
VIE	Variable Interest Entity

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Despite the initial bafflement as the world economy was hit by the biggest financial crisis since the Great Depression, by now there is broad agreement on the underlying causes of the crisis: banks and financial institutions indulged in excessive leverage and excessive risk taking while regulators did not provide an adequate regulatory framework. In the US, the proximate causes also included the Fed policy under Alan Greenspan of supporting an artificial housing boom after the bursting of the stock market bubble through low interest rates and lax regulations in the housing and financial sectors in particular. Through various channels, the crisis was transmitted to other sectors of the economy and to nations across the world, leading to significant human development impacts on the poor and vulnerable. As the “Stiglitz Commission report” (the Report of the Commission of Experts of the President of the United Nations General Assembly on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System), among other sources, emphasizes, the deeper causes relate to historic reversal of post-depression checks and balances of national and global economic governance.

As the Report of the Commission of Experts of the President of the United Nations General Assembly on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System put it:

“...the standard policy nostrums—that countries should have sound macroeconomic policies strong governance, transparency, and good institutions – may be less than helpful. Countries that held themselves out as models of best practices have been shown to have had deeply flawed macroeconomic policies and institutions and to have suffered from major shortfalls in transparency.”

Against this backdrop, there have been many calls for changes in the global financial and economic governance architecture that would lead to a more stable and less risky international financial system. For example, internationally, there is momentum around BASEL III, a package of proposals to strengthen global capital and liquidity regulations. The United States government and various EU countries had introduced legislation aimed at reforming financial institutions under their jurisdiction.

While these processes are underway, the crisis itself continues to evolve leading most recently to an anemic recovery. Paradoxically, some emerging economies face concerns about excessive financial inflows and overheating of their economies. On the other hand, several countries now face (or anticipate) debt sustainability issues of different degrees of severity. The prolonged crises in Southern Europe lingers on.

Among the IFIs, the IMF has played a prominent role through several measures including the establishment of flexible credit lines, changes in conditions attached to emergency funding and, more recently, in its interventions to support the Euro-zone economies. At the same time, several regional arrangements, such as currency swap lines, have also been put into place. Whether global or regional mechanisms are more useful in preventing financial contagion and to what extent these complement each other, remain open questions.

Changes in the world financial and economic order have consequences for developing countries directly, through banking regulations and global/regional policies, and also indirectly through the impact on developed countries themselves, which can affect lending, foreign investments as well as international aid. In this context, it is possible to find the motivations for undertaking a study that will examine the principal changes that have taken place (or are likely to do so) as a result of the financial and economic crisis. These changes can also include alterations in financial and economic governance mechanisms and policies given the general economic context in which countries, in particular developing countries, are operating.

This paper documents the nature and scope of these principal changes, and analyzes their consequences for developing countries in particular. It also explores the important policy space issue by exploring analytically the conditions for their most effective responses. Without being exhaustive, the developments covered include:

- The IMF's response to recent and emerging global economic and challenges, and the evolving nature of its role.
- The most appropriate role of regional arrangements in financial stabilization, based on experiences with such arrangements in this and prior episodes of crisis.

The methodological approach adopted here is a type of *constructivist* and *evolutionary* analysis of our complex international economic system and political economy. The technical work on aspects of this dynamic complex adaptive economic systems or DCAES in short, has



been done in Khan(2004, 2011; Lin et.al. 2008) among other sources. The institutions I discuss and the alternatives I propose here are all path dependent, but in a non-deterministic manner . Social practices based on collectively held ideas by both elite and non-elite groups can matter in crucial ways. However, given the structural aspects of global financial and economic system and the conflicting ideas and norms, there are serious contradictions at all levels of the system. Recognition of such contradictions and conflicts at both ideational and material levels dialectically forms the “critical” part of my constructivist adaptive complex systems approach(Khan 2004,2006,2011).<sup>1</sup>

In analyzing the above in the context of the Developing Countries (DCs) in particular, the following features of DCs are highlighted among others:

- a. DCs have fewer resources for coping with financial crises, particularly one which is global in its scope;
- b. Most DCs lack automatic stabilizers due to the embryonic nature of their fiscal and social protection systems;
- c. They have limited ability of borrow in international financial markets and this limits their ability to pursue countercyclical policies;
- d. These threats are often exacerbated by global financial market integration and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and bilateral investment treaties(BITs). Many WTO commitments also affect the DCs adversely. IMF pro-cyclical Structural Adjustment Policies can also constrict the policy space.

The social and political construction of global and regional financial arrangements also depends critically on a supporting structure of complementary institutional network (CIN), norms, ideas and practices. Global financial architecture (GFA) and Regional financial architecture (RFA) both depend on their respective CIN within a global system of nation states and international organizations. Given the real interdependence within the system, all actors have some stake in sustained growth and stability with equity. At the same time part of the complexity of the global

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<sup>1</sup> At the same time corporate actors are legitimate under some conditions. In this my analysis is similar to Wendt’s (1987, 1999) constructivist approach which does not contradict a deep and sophisticated version of Scientific Realism. Indeed, both Wendt and I build upon a scientific realist ontology avoiding narrow determinism. See also Khan (2003a,b; 2008c), Best(2010) and Abdelal (2007).

financial system arises from various contradictions and asymmetries in the system itself. Thus the central argument of this paper is that sustainable policies at the national level require a supporting network of GFA and RFAs that go some distance towards resolving the key issues arising from such contradictions and asymmetries. Appropriate national policies in their turn can contribute to the sustainability of the GFA and RFA. It can be shown that following an evolutionary theory of international financial institutions, two broad types of possible Global Financial Architectures can be identified.<sup>2</sup> In this paper, following Khan (2002c) the first is called an *overarching type*, exemplified by the classical gold standard and the defunct Bretton Woods system. The second is called a *hybrid form* that allows for the existence and coevolution of some Regional Financial Architectures as well. The changing roles of the IMF and national economic policies can be examined within these two possible financial architectures under globalization. The ongoing politics of re/construction of IMF along a more functional and equitable line is and will remain complex and require a separate treatment that is beyond the scope of this paper and therefore is not attempted here. However, the tentative steps taken towards regional cooperation in Asia since Asian Financial Crisis (AFC) are discussed to illustrate the opportunities and challenges posed by the need to evolve towards a *hybrid* GFA. The opportunities and challenges arising from the current global crisis are analyzed in this context.

In light of the above observations, in this paper I will discuss the problems of creating and expanding national macroeconomic policy space and economic governance for the developing countries in particular within a framework of overall global and regional financial architectures. The context of the current global financial and economic crisis gives such an exercise an undeniable urgency. However, the theoretical approach towards a type of constructivist analysis which respects the structural complexities of a global real-financial economy with serious asymmetries, problems of managing risk and uncertainty and uneven development may have broader applicability beyond the current crisis. Whether state capacities exist for formulation and implementation of national economic policies may depend in large measure on the kind of

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<sup>2</sup> For specific models and arguments see those developed in Khan (2001, 2002c, 2004 and 2005,2006) and Khan *et al.* (2008). Khan (2001; 2005) formalizes various types of path dependence. In Khan (2002c) a specific argument called “the extended panda’s thumb” is advanced to urge the utilization of the existing IMF with some modifications in a new, hybrid GFA. The arguments developed here also are consistent with Griffith-Jones(1998). See also Griffith-Jones *et al.*(2003,2006,2010 and 2013), Eichengreen(2013a,b;1999), and Eichengreen and Dincer(2013).

global and regional financial architecture in existence at any point in time---with or without financial crises.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In section 2, the key question of how to move towards a Workable Development-oriented Global Financial Architecture with an Enabling Role for Regional Financial Arrangements and the implications for the developing world are discussed. Important as the theoretical issues raised in this section are, without a new and workable Global Financial Architecture that is practically possible, the prevention or even management of financial crises will be very likely be impossible for the developing countries in particular. Therefore, the remainder of the paper until the concluding part concentrates on the problems of a new GFA and presents the case for a hybrid GFA with possible reforms at the IMF and building of regional institutions. The final section concludes.

## **2. Towards a Workable Development-oriented Global Financial Architecture with an Enabling Role for Regional Financial Arrangements**

### **1.1 A Constructive Evolutionary Theory (CET) of GFA: two evolutionary types of GFA---AFC as a Critical Case for a CET of GFA**

It should be mentioned at the outset here that the Constructive Evolutionary Theory (CET) of GFA developed here is an example of evolution within a dynamic complex adaptive economic system that operates globally. The dynamic instabilities in such a system can arise in both the real and the financial parts of the system and in interactions between them. In my earlier work in the bounded rationality context using neuro-fuzzy models I was able to show the crucial role of social learning in order avoid to at least the possibility of deepening the crises if not entirely averting them. However, given the endogenous role of uncertainty and lack of coordination in a

complex capitalist economy, crises can not be completely averted. The pragmatic question is how to ensure that they are not deep crises.

Malthus, Sismondi and Marx in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Keynes and Kalecki in the 20<sup>th</sup> century analyzed some aspects of the possibilities of crisis without formalizing the complexity as such. Both Keynes and Kalecki presented models of aspects of endogenous crises from the real side. But these did not formalize complexity as such. Keynes had crucial insights about the fragile nature of a monetary economy and the role of uncertainty as opposed to insurable risk in making private and socially uncoordinated investment decisions crisis-prone, leading to periodic deficiencies in effective aggregate demand. Minsky pioneered modeling financial fragility and many of his followers have done the best work in advancing the modeling of financial fragility in a complex monetary economy.

In order to motivate the discussion that follows empirically, we can revisit some aspects of AFC before discussing the current reform moves within the IMF. In distinguishing among the countries that managed to survive the AFC and those that did not, John Williamson, one of the proponents of the “Washington consensus,” pointed out that whether or not these countries had liberalized their capital accounts could be construed as crucial. Those that had not, survived.<sup>3</sup>

All Asian crisis countries had accepted the IMF’s Article VIII obligations, as evident from the historical documents. But as some<sup>4</sup> have pointed out, liberalizing trade and liberalizing financial sector have different policy implications. In line with the discussion in the previous section, theoretically, one should carefully distinguish the welfare impacts of financial market liberalization in an uneven world from such impact in a smooth world of equals with information symmetry. Indeed, next to unevenness, the most critical element is the role and the presence of *asymmetric information*. In a financial market, gathering, selecting, using and providing information are central to its proper functioning, yet it is precisely here that market failures from asymmetric information can arise.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John Williamson (1998), *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> See for example, Bhagwati(1998).

<sup>5</sup> Stiglitz has been one of the pioneers of such “information theoretic” approach. For further analysis, see Stiglitz (1994).

But the constructive evolutionary theory with appropriate attention to structure goes further than simply cataloguing moral hazard and adverse selection problems. On the *explanans* side are also *the asymmetries in the size, structure and capabilities of the economies and polities*. These asymmetries constrain some polities, particularly the economically disadvantaged ones from developing as quickly as possible in an equitable manner. The UNCTAD reports on the poorest underdeveloped countries point this out empirically.<sup>6</sup> The theoretical significance of these features of the real world is that no uniform set of rules can work for all the economies and polities in the world. *A fortiori*, it follows that for GFA and RFAs to serve these poor countries as well as the rich countries equally well, special provisions should be in place.

It may appear that the least developed countries are only a special case. But that is not the whole truth. The NIEs, the European social democracies, Japan etc. each in its own way is also different. This poses the real theoretical challenge: how can we even attempt to theorize in the face of such diversity? The way out is through a consideration of the basic needs of the system and asking if these can be satisfied better under arrangements that are different from the old IMF and the “Washington Consensus.”

Further work by Barry Eichengreen and others<sup>7</sup> show that it is possible to move beyond the post Bretton Woods and pre-(global)crisis situation. In contrast with the conservative Meltzer report after the AFC, all of these authors emphasize the need to strengthen the IMF in certain dimensions. However, not all of them recognize the crucial need also for the RFAs and the role they can play in creating an enabling environment for the state to implement beneficial economic policies. A completely constructive evolutionary theory of GFA recognizes the need for RFAs from both an *evolutionary* and a *structural* perspective. Given the lack of political resolve, a

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<sup>6</sup> See UNCTAD(2002,2003 2007).

<sup>7</sup> See in addition to Eichengreen (1999) cited earlier, Azis, Iwan J (1999) *Do We Know the Real Causes of the Asian Crisis? Global Financial Turmoil and Reform: A United Nations Perspective*, The United Nations University Press, Tokyo.

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Tobin, James., and Gustav Ranis (1998). *The IMF's Misplaced Priorities: Flawed Funds*, The New Republic, available online at the following address: <http://www.thenewrepublic.com/archive/0398/030998/tobin030998.html>

Yoshitomi, Masaru and Kenichi Ohno (1999), "Capital Account Crisis and Credit Contraction: Towards a Better Management of Systemic Currency Crisis", Paper presented at ADB Annual Meeting, 29 April 1999, Manila.

point made forcefully by Eichengreen among others, there is little chance of creating *institutional structures* in the manner of the 1944 Bretton Woods agreement. The recent path of the world economy does not lead to this immediately. At the same time, the recent path does not lead to only neoliberalism. It is possible to both reform the IMF, as Eichengreen suggests, and to create new RFAs to complement such reforms. Thus this theory leads to the question of identifying a spectrum of GFAs. Most important among these are those that combine the GFAs like a reformed IMF with appropriate RFAs.

Formally, the heuristic argument presented above can be established via a careful consideration of *path dependence* during evolution of the GFA. In order to do this in a conceptually rigorous manner, the concept of *path dependence* itself has to be refined and formalized in a specific way. I have developed this idea elsewhere, and will only sketch the conceptual path to be followed briefly.<sup>8</sup> Briefly, there can be completely deterministic(CD), completely stochastic(CS), and partially deterministic (PD) characterizations of path dependence. Eschewing the formal apparatus of graph theory and neural network dynamics which can be used to describe these rigorously, we can simply say that in deterministic path dependence there is only one choice of path. Everything is as it should be, since there are no bifurcations at any point in history. In fact, we can make a stronger statement. At *no* point in history is there even a *possibility* of even a bifurcation. Most people will see this as an extreme, and in case of human institutional design, perhaps as an unrealistic case.

The purely stochastic case is all *random mutation*. Again, there is no way that conscious choice can play a role here either. Blind chance determines the outcome. The last type of path dependence, i.e., the PD variety leaves some room for evolution to be a result of at least some kind of bounded rational human activities. In this case, a complex set of human activities including learning and improving policy making capabilities can influence which network of paths are followed over time. While the number of available paths at any point in history may be large, they are never infinite. Therefore, combinatorial mathematics will in most cases show the existence of the most likely evolutionary outcome. However, the caveat that large, seemingly random fluctuations (e.g., a war) can throw these calculations off is always a (rare) possibility.

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<sup>8</sup> See Khan (2001 and 2002c)

Fortunately, barring such events as wars, revolutions, complete meltdowns of financial systems etc. there are not at present an unmanageably large number of outcomes that are possible for the GFA. In fact, if we are willing to assume a continuum with nothing but an overarching *global* architecture for international finance with regional impurities added as another type we have just two types of possible evolutionary outcomes for the institutional history of GFAs from a theoretical point of view.

The first type, which can be created at special evolutionary moments, can be called *Overarching GFAs*. Gold standard under the UK hegemony and Bretton Woods under the threats of a postwar depression are two examples. Recent history does not support the hope that such events are about to happen again. Therefore, a second type of evolutionary path resulting in a hybrid form should be recognized. This is the hybrid coexistence of a GFA together with one or many RFAs. We can call this type a *hybrid GFA* for shorthand reference. Once again, Asia after the AFC is a good place to begin the analysis.

In the Asian case, as many have observed, the financial sector liberalization followed the pre-AFC neo-liberal GFA by default. There were some short-term gains of the policy, but ultimately it resulted in severe instability. More generally, as Kaminsky & Reinhart<sup>9</sup> show, based on the episodes of 76 currency crises, of which 26 are also characterized by banking crises, financial sector liberalization can result in a boom-bust cycle by providing easy access to short-term financing. Proponents of liberalization suggested some sort of micro sequencing in order to prevent such adverse consequences. With some variations, the most commonly suggested sequence was: improve the quality of regulation, make sure they are enforced, and then improve the supervisory mechanisms. Once the markets are liberalized, the level of bank's minimum capital requirements could then be brought closer to what the *Basel Accord* required.

As one author,<sup>10</sup> who, of course, does not use the same terminology as developed here, nevertheless points out, there is a contradiction in this type of GFA arrangement.

But when the Asian crisis countries liberalized the financial sector in 1980s, the aforementioned preconditions (assumptions) were not in place. Yet, they were rushed to liberalize by the IFI. Ironically, when at the early stage the policy showed favorable impacts, e.g., higher economic growth; greater access to financial services, the IFI applauded it. But when

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<sup>9</sup> See Kaminsky and Reinhart (1999).

<sup>10</sup> Azis (2002c).

the crisis hit, the very same countries previously praised were swiftly placed into the category of those with misplaced development strategies. All of a sudden, nothing was right with these countries. When confronted with such an embarrassing contradiction, the international institutions are quick to claim that they actually *saw* the faults, and *already reminded* the governments about the existing flaws (e.g., weak banking system, unsustainable exchange rate system, and widespread corruption).<sup>11</sup>

IMF recommendation during this period led to the increase in interest rates. Because of the common prescription under the GFA this occurred in all Asian crisis countries. Such high rates created more moral hazard and adverse selection problems, thus showing that the incentive system has indeed been altered, and led to the undertaking of bad risk by the banking sector<sup>12</sup>. As Azis correctly points out:

Under these circumstances, the amount of investment credits going to risky sector rose (adverse selection), the incidence of bail out in the absence of free-exit scheme also increased (moral hazard), and the subsequent banks' franchise values (expected returns) declined. All these are precisely what the "pre-conditions prior to liberalization" are expected to avoid. Thus, the implicit logic is inherently self-conflicting, i.e., expecting bank's prudent behavior while allowing 'franchise value' to fall. The suggested preconditions, although seemingly logical, simply do not match with the prevailing institutional conditions.<sup>13</sup>

Azis points out further:

The IMF persistently argued for liberalizing the sector and meeting the pre-conditions simultaneously. A study by the Fund on the sequencing of capital account liberalization using the case of Chile, Korea, Indonesia and Thailand, for example, stresses the importance of proper sequencing if benefits from the liberalization are to be achieved and the risks to be minimized. The study also argues that financial sector liberalization, especially capital account liberalization, should be a part of a coordinated and comprehensive approach, in which the sequencing of regulatory and institutional reforms is critical. The design of macroeconomic and exchange rate policies should also play a vital role (Johnston, Darbar, and Echeverria, 1997). While intuitively making sense, such conclusions are too broad, far from being practical. No one would argue against the importance of making liberalization policy (or any policy for that matter) consistent with the prevailing macroeconomic policy. But how do you do it, remains unanswered. The information contained in such a study is of limited value to policy makers. Yet, while many countries still had problems to meet the stated preconditions, they were pushed to accelerate the liberalization policy by recommending one or two new measures to safeguard. More often than not, these measures are based on the practice of developed countries that have different institutional conditions.(emphasis mine)<sup>14</sup>

Here the author correctly pinpoints the failure to recognize unevenness as a key feature of the failure of the IMF to prescribe the correct medicine. In fact, IMF did much worse--- it prescribed

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<sup>11</sup> Azis(2002c) p.3

<sup>12</sup> See Hellman, Murdock and Stiglitz ( 2000)

<sup>13</sup> Azis(2002c) p.3

<sup>14</sup> Azis (2002c) pp.3-4



the wrong medicine, a set of measures that worsened the impact of the AFC. This situation illustrates the danger of being in the grip of a (pseudo-) universalistic theory that simply cannot be applied in the real world of unevenness without serious distortions that may cause great harm. An alternative is to work with our type two hybrid combinations of GFA and RFAs. Again, Asia can be used as an illustration.

Prior to AFC, the borrowing in short-term market and the increased flow of foreign capital both occurred almost simultaneously in these countries. As the real exchange rate appreciated, competitiveness suffered, and vulnerability to sudden reversals of capital flows increased. It must be emphasized that these were systemic features that went largely unnoticed by the IMF or the private sector. As is well known, in a nonlinear system the vulnerability to sudden shocks is a logical possibility. In case of Asia, this became an empirical reality of nightmare proportions.

With most debtors being in the corporate sector during the AFC, the capacity to invest became severely constrained. The debt-deflation scenario became the reality because the price effects of depreciated exchange rates did not occur until much later, if at all. Hence, the initial currency crisis became first a more general financial crisis and then a full-blown economic crisis. In Indonesia it also became a social and political crisis

The Asian crisis showed that, the composition of capital flows matters. The fact that there were sudden reversals of capital flows during 1997 and 1998 led many to believe that most capital flows in the region were of portfolio investment type. Reversals of such capital can strain the region's financial system sufficiently to cause or exacerbate its collapse<sup>15</sup>. However, while it is true that portfolio investment was on the rise, data indicate that foreign direct investment (FDI) remained the largest in all Asian crisis countries. In all Asian crisis countries foreign debts increased persistently until the onset of the crisis. These were debts of the private sector from foreign private lenders. Regional monitoring with the help of a theory such as the one proposed here could have caught the problem and a regionally, ultimately globally, coordinated solution could be attempted. But this was never a possibility under the then existing circumstances. We now know that financial and balance-of-payments crises became interlinked precisely because of the existence of foreign-currency-denominated liabilities (foreign debt) in the domestic financial

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<sup>15</sup> See for example, Rodrik and Velasco ( 1999)

system.<sup>16</sup> This hindsight can be used to develop RFAs in Asia, Latin America and a few other regions.

In Asia, a “Washington Consensus” policy mix of monetary tightening and fiscal restraints was imposed as part of the IMF conditionalities. The experience during the Mexican crisis in 1995 had convinced the Fund that such a policy mix was appropriate for Asia as well, despite the fact that the pre-crisis conditions in Asia were quite otherwise.<sup>17</sup> Another element emerged in Asia that was indeed new, the IMF suggested a rather radical and fundamental change in the countries’ institutional structure.<sup>18</sup> In the event, neither set turned out to have been well-conceived.

As already observed, the Fund’s insistence on severely tightening the monetary policy by raising the interest rates turned out to be incorrect and counterproductive. Its arguments for remaking many institutions in Asia did not make evolutionary sense although all would agree that ending corruption, curtailing special business privileges, and imposing the practice of good governance, including good corporate governance were good overall goals.<sup>19</sup> But quite apart from the well known fact that this falls outside the Fund’s mandate, such adjustments at the time could result in further instability. In the words of Morris Goldstein, an ex-IMF staff member: “...both the scope and the depth of the Fund’s conditions were excessive...They clearly strayed outside their area of expertise...[I]f a nation is so plagued with problems that it needs to make 140 changes before it can borrow, then maybe the fund should not lend.”<sup>20</sup> Although not a conscious advocate of the evolutionary theory advanced here, Goldstein’s long experience and solid sense of institutional matters led him to the right conclusions in this matter.

Before leaving the question of the analytical distinction between the two types of GFAs it is instructive to ask whether the theory of the second best is relevant in making this distinction. Although the language of evolutionary theory is different, this can be done in a way that throws further light on why the hybrid form is important. In a first best world without frictions, information problems and market imperfections an overarching GFA is indeed optimal. However

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<sup>16</sup> See Krueger (2000)

<sup>17</sup> James Tobin and Gustav Ranis (1998) were among those who believed that the IMF programs in Asia were based on the Fund’s experiences with Mexico in 1994.

<sup>18</sup> Azis (2002c) suggests: ‘The experience with policy adjustments of this kind in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (from communism to market economy) had inspired the Fund to do the same thing in Asia.’ (p.7)

<sup>19</sup> See Khan(1999a, b; and 2001) on Asian corporate governance reform, and the sketch of an evolutionary theory.

<sup>20</sup> New York Times, October 21, 2000.

once we depart from any of these we are in the second best world. Interestingly, given these imperfections, at least along some dimensions, a hybrid architecture with RFAs can (locally) improve upon the surveillance problems that an overarching GFA will face. As long as local information gathering and monitoring can be improved under a (local) RFA, there is an advantage to having an RFA. In the world of second best this can be called “the principle of localism”.<sup>21</sup>

## **4.2 Towards a Workable Hybrid GFA: RFAs, the IMF and National Policy Management under Fractured Globalization**

But how is the transition towards a hybrid GFA to be effected? What conceptual modifications are necessary in the way to which we have become accustomed to thinking under the present institutional order? The present and following sections are all intended to answer these questions. The present section will consider steps taken by the IMF during the global crisis and some general issues and the possible formation of RFAs stemming from the AFC and the current crisis, while sections five and six will address more rigorously how the IMF needs to be modified and what such a modified IMF together with several RFAs could do. I do this strategically by discussing the counterfactual of what a hypothetical RFA in Asia could have done to handle the situation before, during and after the AFC. This turns out to have broader applicability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global crisis management. But in order to build the argument for a hybrid GFA fully, first the recent tentative but potentially important reformist steps of the IMF deserve consideration.

### **4.2.1 The IMF’s Response to the Global Economic Crisis and its Evolving Role**

#### **The IMF’s loss of stature after the Asian financial crisis**

After the Asian financial crisis, the Fund lost much of its credibility with developing countries. As a result, the Fund’s program portfolio diminished significantly for much of the last decade. Prior to the most recent crisis, demand for the Fund’s resources was at an historic low. Major borrowers had repaid their outstanding debt to at the time of the most recent crisis, leading the Fund to contract its staff by around 15% [Gabel 2010, 3; Kapur and Webb 2006; Thomas

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<sup>21</sup> I am grateful to Barbara Stallings for very helpful discussion on this point.

2009]. The Fund's loan portfolio shrunk from \$105 billion to less than \$10 billion in the space of five years (2003-2007) [Weisbrot, Cordero and Sandoval 2009].

Many have pointed to the Fund's continued insistence on using *ex ante* and *ex post* conditionality as a major reason as to why countries shied away from going to the institution for help. The historical use of conditionality within IMF programs meant that developing countries had to acquiesce to dominant Western thinking on correct fiscal and monetary policy formulae. Embarrassment at having to ask the IMF for assistance during crises also played an important role in dissuading developing countries from ceding control over their fiscal and monetary policy over to the Fund. Over the past decade or so, developing countries were able to resist relying upon the IMF through:

- The over-accumulation of reserves
- International private capital flows
- Bilateral swap arrangements
- Regional banks and financial arrangements
- South-South financial assistance.

#### **4.2.2 Regaining Relevance**

In December of 2008, the IMF was thrust into the global financial crisis through its stand-by arrangement with Iceland. The Fund package with Iceland totaled \$2.1 billion, with over \$800 million made available immediately for the country [Anderson 2008]. IMF policy prescription was used to explicitly stem the fall of the Icelandic krona to ward off the potential of massive defaults in foreign denominated currency. Monetary and fiscal policy space was left largely open by the Fund. The IMF also provided assistance in the restructuring of the entire Icelandic banking and financial structure.

Since providing assistance to Iceland, the Fund has been very active in providing financial assistance to member states all over the globe. Notably, the global nature of crisis has meant the Fund is being seen in areas of the world (most especially Europe) for the first time in quite a while. With that said, the majority IMF's response to the crisis was built around a sharp increase in the amount of concessional lending to low- and middle-income countries.

Lending to low-income countries during the crisis period was 4 fold larger than historical levels [IMF 2009]. In late 2009, concessional resources for low-income countries to meet

projected demand were increased to nearly \$17 billion through 2014 [IMF 2009]. Relief on interest payments by LICs to the IMF through 2011 has been approved. Additionally, LICs now can access double normal limits on annualized draw-outs from the Fund. The IMF approved a \$250 billion allocation of SDRs that will be distributed to all of the member countries at the Fund according to their quota levels. As such, more than \$18 billion will be available to LICs to augment their foreign exchange reserves to alleviate financing and BOP constraints [IMF 2009].

In the wake of the global financial crisis, the Fund has become relevant again. It is also trying to regain credibility in global financial governance---an effort that actually started with the AFC (Khan 2002c, 2004, 2006; Best 2010). It has served as a “first responder” to financial crises in countries throughout the globe [Grabel 2010, 3]. The restoration of the Fund to its ‘proper place’ in the international financial system was seen in its speedy response to the Icelandic crisis and from the boost it received from G-20 nations. Indeed, the G-20 meeting in April 2009 reaffirmed the Fund’s mandate and provided new and large amounts of funding commitments (\$1.1 trillion for the crisis; \$750 billion through the IMF) to support the institution’s efforts [Grabel 2010, 3]. Even China and Brazil, notable critics of the Fund’s governance policies, committed new resources and lending to the institution. These new commitments will facilitate greater interaction and sharing of resources between the IMF and regional development banks.

The G-20 has backed the partial devolution of funding commitments from the IMF to regional development banks to allow resources to be available in a more timely fashion to countries in need. This kind of development speaks to a small, but growing, consensus that the IMF might be better served in the future to serve as a central figure in a network of intergovernmental finance with regional development banks and institutions [Vols and Caliri 2010].

In 2009, the IMF also began issuing its own bonds to boost its available resources. \$90 billion of the \$500 billion in new resources for future IMF lending will come from BRIC countries and South Korea [Grabel 2010, 4]. The development is important in two ways:

1. Lenders from emerging and developing markets can use their new lending capacity to exert greater influence over policies of the Fund.
2. Buoyed by new commitments from the BRIC reaffirms the central role the Fund will continue to play as a lender of last resort.

### **4.2.3 Current Arrangements**

As of January, 2011, the Fund had 19 Stand-by Arrangements with different member countries. These arrangements involved the potential draw-out of over 70 SDR billion, of which nearly 35 SDR billion had already been delivered. These arrangements included member states from Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, Central America, Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia. The Fund also had four extended arrangements with member states, with nearly 20 SDR billion in resources were being utilized through these facilities. Three countries (Colombia, Mexico and Poland) had already begun taking advantage of the IMF's new Flexible Credit Line facility. These three arrangements had already seen nearly 48 SDR billion in BOP assistance being given out by the Fund. The above arrangements, totaling over 125 SDR billion, were all relatively recent; all of these facilities were initiated in the last three years [IMF Financial Activities Update 2011].

In addition, the Fund as of February 2011 had 28 Extended Credit Facility Arrangements on its books. The value of these arrangements was around 2.5 SDR billion, a billion of which had already been drawn upon. Over the past decade, the Fund had committed over 6 SDR billion in debt relief through its Heavily-Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) programs. These programs had involved arrangements with over 60 countries [IMF Financial Activities Update 2011].

### **Changes in the IMF's conditionality regimes**

In the wake of the global crisis, the IMF has introduced a number of new financial programs aimed at allowing countries to have more agency in delineating their loan/policy structures. The IMF has stated that these facilities "will be more flexible and tailored to the increasing diversity" of member countries [IMF 2009]. New instruments include:

- Extended Credit Facility – medium-term support and flexibility program
- Standby Credit Facility – addresses short-term and precautionary needs
- Rapid Credit Facility – emergency support with limited conditionality
- Flexible Credit Line – support for BOP pressures for countries with strong macroeconomic track records; no ex post conditionality [IMF 2010d]
- Precautionary Credit Line – lower standards of qualification than for the FCL; less ex ante qualifications, but stronger ex post conditionality

Each facility and credit line has its own conditions, term structures, borrowing capacity and availability. The IMF has strongly pushed to make its credit facilities more low-cost for member economies. Conditionality is being streamlined to “focus on core objectives” [IMF 2009], and applies primarily to structural reforms. Conditionality is not supposed to affect countries’ fiscal policies that directly target poverty alleviation, growth and pro-poor spending. Programs now are supposed to accommodate larger fiscal deficits, looser monetary policy and increased inflation targets. Additionally, countries will not need to seek waivers for access to funds if reforms are not completed by a specific date.

In addition to paying lip service towards granting more policy autonomy to countries with IMF facilities, the Fund has softened its stance on capital controls and other macro-prudential measures [see, Ostry, *et. al* 2010]. The Fund, and its sister organization the World Bank, have indicated that the targeted and temporary use of capital controls can be an effective way for countries to defend themselves against exogenous financial shocks and preserve monetary policy space [Beattie 2010; Ostry, *et. al* 2010]. This is a far cry from the Fund’s reaction to the controls put into place by Malaysia during the Asian financial crisis. As part of the Iceland’s 2008 Stand By Agreement (SBA), the IMF explicitly advocated the use of such controls [Anderson 2008]. Nonetheless, one of the Fund’s most recent papers on economic liberalization [Shah and Patnaik, 2011] indicts the use of controls in India for their ineffectiveness in shielding the economy from exogenous shocks and their bias against small- and medium-sized private firms.

In reality, a close study of conditionality ‘reforms’ confirms that they are more *ad hoc* and piecemeal than might otherwise appear. Many of the recent studies of SBAs and other facilities negotiated during the crisis have shown that the IMF has continued to promote pro-cyclical macroeconomic policy targets or structural adjustments [UNICEF, 2010; Van Waeyenberge, Bargawi and McKinley, 2010; Muchhala, 2009; Solidar, 2009; Weisbrot et al., 2009]. Questions have already arisen as to what fiscal programs count as targeting ‘poverty alleviation, growth and pro-poor spending’. Does the subsidizing of basic energy inputs for the poor (kerosene, heating oil, etc.) count under these spending exceptions? The evidence emanating from the IMF is mixed at best. Public outcries in Pakistan and the Kyrgyz Republic over the ending of energy input subsidies are important examples of how IMF policy prescription can directly lead to public unrest. In the midst of the crisis, the Hungarian government’s public

spat with the IMF over program conditionality was especially notable, illustrating the unease within governments to work under the Fund's rules [Bryant 2010].

#### **4.2.4 Governance Reforms at the IMF**

The IMF has recently seen a change in the share of voting quotas. In November and December of 2010, IMF member countries agreed to an unprecedented doubling of quotas to SDR 476.8 billion [IMF 2010a]. This doubling of quotas was complemented with changes in the quota shares amongst the members. As a result, more than 6 percent of quota shares will be shifted to “emerging market and developing countries” and away from over-represented European countries. The shifting of shares will not impact the voting power of the Fund's poorest members. Starting from 2012, the Fund's 10 largest contributors and quota shareholders will more accurately reflect the countries' contributions to world GDP. The total shift in voting share to developing countries, when combined with the 2008 quota reform, will be 5.3% [IMF 2010c].

Changes to the IMF governance structure will also come via the Executive Board. The size of the Board will remain at 24 members. However, advanced European countries will reduce their contribution to the Board by two. Developing countries will up their contribution by the same amount. Further, from 2012, the Executive Board will consist only of elected Executive Directors, “following entry into force of the proposed amendment of the Fund's Articles of Agreement, end the category of appointed Executive Directors (currently the members with the five largest quotas appoint an Executive Director)” [IMF 2010c].

#### **4.2.5 Supervisory Role in the World Economy**

Key leaders at the Fund have acknowledged that the institution has not done a good enough job at understanding the effects of financial flows on the financial system, and in particular, the effects of flow velocity on contagion and crisis. While not a self-indictment per se, the Fund has been very vocal about the ways in which it can better serve the international financial system. Generally, the Fund has communicated that it must clarify the Fund's mandate and improve the role of the Fund in promoting global stability. On three issues in particular



(cross-border research on capital flows, systemic changes in financial regulatory structure, taxes on flows), the Fund has focused a large amount of attention.

Fund Directors have noted that volatile capital flows played an important role in the transmission of shocks towards the depth of the current crisis. As it is the Fund's mandate to oversee international monetary stability, the institution acknowledges that it must strengthen its ability to "advance in bilateral and multilateral surveillance and policy advice for member countries, based on extensive analytical work and taking into account country specific circumstances and relevant experiences" and "develop a coherent Fund view and inform policy guidance on capital flows" [IMF 2011]. The Fund has initiated work on *Cross-Cutting Themes from Recent Country Experiences with Capital Flows* as a starting point from which it can further elaborate its views on how to deal with cross border flows. In particular, the Fund has highlighted the need for its research and surveillance to focus on the potential spillovers of capital flows and the implications for the international monetary system as a whole.

The Fund has been very vocal on the need for global policy cooperation in the international monetary and financial system [IMF 2010b]. Directors at the Fund see it necessary that, for the global recovery to accelerate, cooperation on financial regulatory architecture must be prioritized. The Fund is currently working hard with member states to guard against protectionist and mercantilist policy measures. In doing so, the Fund plans on delivering spillover reports for the world's major economies that assess the impact of domestic policies of systemic countries beyond their own borders [IMF 2010b]. Part of this larger surveillance effort involves an enhanced understanding of macroeconomic and financial risks and their associated linkages. Similarly, the Fund has also produced research and policy proposals on the resolution of cross-border banking institutions [Hagan and Vinals, 2010].

IMF directors have stressed the need for member states to develop a global financial safety net to protect against the threat of future shocks. Much of this discussion has centered around the ways in which such a safety net could be initiated. The Fund has been at the fore in assessing the potential regulatory and tax policies that could be used to develop such a safety net [IMF/G-20, 2010 (There is no link for this cite...it is a leaked paper, but I have access to it on my computer, so I can send it to you via e-mail)].

After losing much of its relevance after the Asian financial crisis, the IMF has suddenly become the most important financial and monetary institution in the world economy (save

perhaps the Bank of International Settlements). Its loan portfolio has swelled to historic levels. New commitments from member states and direct borrowing by the Fund have meant that available resources are also at an all time high. Dozens of countries from every continent on the globe have credit arrangements with the Fund currently. The Fund's geographic reach has put it in a unique position to monitor financial and economic developments. Critical research and surveillance by the Fund can help us better understand the linkages between financial flows and policies within and among member states. Greater voice has even been given towards the use of the Fund's SDR as future reserve currency.

Such importance and responsibility requires that the Fund seriously consider the weight of its continued use of conditionality on member states. No doubt, the Fund is carefully considering the viability of its lending model along with the potential easing of terms and conditionality in its programs. Recent quota and governance reforms indicate that the Fund is at least beginning the process of granting more agency to developing countries on the appropriateness of fiscal consolidation and tight monetary policy.

As the crisis comes to an end, it will be important if reforms to the Fund's governance and program/facility structure will be long-lasting or *ad hoc*. Indeed, countries have been granted more autonomy over their decision making in the wake of the crisis. Only time can tell whether or not such change is really serious.

#### **4.2.6 Some Key Propositions**

If the argument—motivated and illustrated by both the AFC and its aftermath and the recent global crisis and its aftermath, particularly the still ambiguous but nevertheless serious reform-talk at IMF itself--- presented so far is valid, then several propositions can be accepted. First, there may be more than one evolutionary possibility; so there may not be a unique, global optimum set of institutions. Second, the goal of achieving stability and sustainable growth in a world of scarce resources leads to exercising prudence as a principle, particularly when costs are distributed unevenly over space and time. Third, a combination off global institutions with regional and national level institutions may provide more public good than focusing simply at the global level. The case for RFAs has so far rested implicitly on the third proposition. I now wish to elaborate more on this point and link it to the formulation of national economic policies and

institution building at the national level as well. It is best to focus again on a concrete case such as the post-crisis Asia to give substance to the formal argument.

After the AFC, and again after the recent global crisis, the IMF, the World Bank, BIS and the national policy making bodies were in intense consultation. The current discussion regarding reforms in some ways mimic the individual East Asian economies responses after the AFC in that they took numerous measures such as improving bank supervision, allowing greater exchange rate flexibility etc. to inoculate themselves against future capital account shocks. However, individual countries now just as the Asian economies after the AFC are still vulnerable to large negative capital account shocks. The national strategy of having a very large stock of foreign reserves to deal with large capital flight may work but it is an extremely expensive strategy. As the recent global crisis shows, no one can foretell how frequent such crises may be, and how expensive; but if the past is any guide, even infrequent crises can be quite expensive to manage in this manner. This is not to say that such measures should not be taken. On the contrary, these measures are and should be a part of the transitional national management strategy. However, more is clearly needed. It seems that following this logic, an increasing number of developing country policy makers are realizing that although they may not have the capacity to change the international financial architecture immediately, creating a regional financial architecture may be an attainable goal. There can be a whole range of regional financial cooperation policies leading to more permanent institution building. These could begin with a peer review process such as the G7 or preferably, the G20 process. Using this as the reference point, a move to mutual liquidity provision and some form of enforcement mechanism could be adopted. These could be enhanced through exchange rate coordination and enhanced surveillance process. Ultimately, such a process could evolve into an RFA that could have its own institutional and organizational structure.

In the Asian case, such an evolutionary process had already started after the AFC. The most important steps taken then were: the Manila Framework Group Meeting, the ASEAN Surveillance Process, the ASEAN+3 Surveillance Process, and the Chiangmai Initiative-related Surveillance Process.

It has to be said that the performance of Manila Framework Group as a mechanism for regional financial cooperation and regional financial surveillance has not yet reached its potential. The reasons are related to institutional incapacity which has prevented the parties from specifying

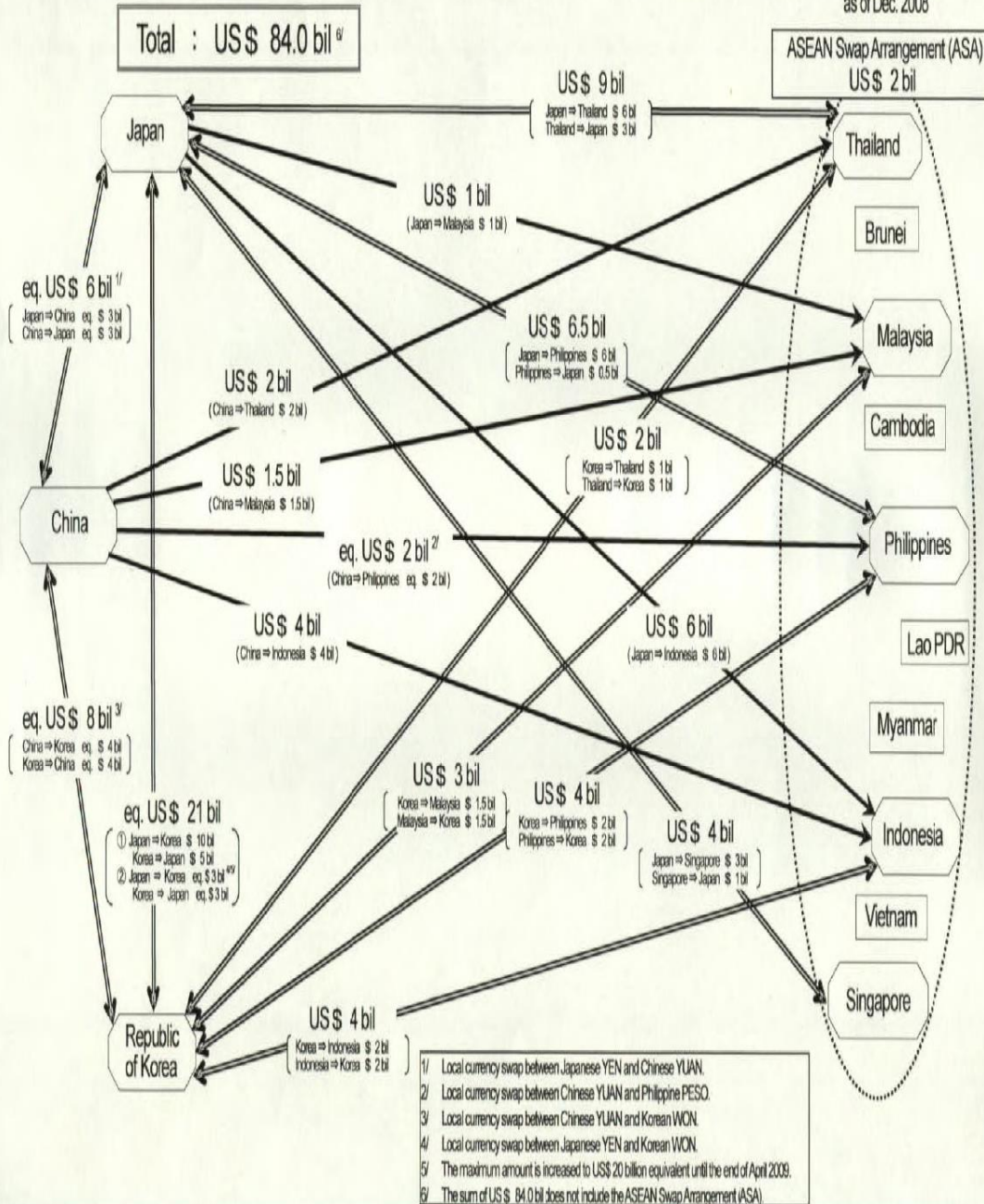
clearly the objectives of information exchange and surveillance. Consequently, no priorities, targets, and rules have been set for the process of information exchange and surveillance. Most importantly, there is no actual peer review process; the surveillance process seems to be simply general discussion of the global and regional economic outlook. Finally, there seems to be no attempt to formulate any country-specific or region-wide recommendations for policy actions--- a point to which I will return at the end.

The other processes also have much room for improvements and the actual prospects for improvement, as shown by the Chiangmai Initiative-related Surveillance Process. In addition to an expanded ASEAN Swap Arrangement (ASA) that includes all ASEAN members and a network of bilateral swap agreements among ASEAN countries plus China, Japan and South Korea, the initiative has opened the door for further discussion about concrete policy coordination and institution building. In so far as the swap arrangements are concerned, currently 10 percent of the swap arrangements can be disbursed without the IMF involvement. Figure 1 below shows the network of ASA during 2008.

**Figure 1: Network of Bilateral Swap Agreements under CMI  
Source BOJ**

# Network of Bilateral Swap Arrangements (BSAs) under the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI)

as of Dec. 2008



Even with this modest beginning, there is now a need for the swap-providing countries to formulate their own assessments about the swap-requesting country. Costs of such information gathering can be economized through regional cooperation. Such a move will also make it possible to pre-qualify members for assistance if and when the need for such assistance arises. This will also help fight contagion and prevent capital flight when actions are taken promptly before a crisis point is reached because of avoidable delays. Acting in accordance with the principles of prudent management stated earlier, there could be a regular policy dialogue at the deputy minister level. Finally, at the organizational level, the evolutionary approach could lead to the establishment of an independent surveillance unit to serve as the core of an RFA, and to lead the policy dialogue. The proposed policy dialogue process should pay particular attention to the root problems in East Asia's weak financial systems (e.g. prudential supervision, risk management, and corporate governance), and actively promote the development and integration of long-term capital markets. At this point, it is not essential to pinpoint any further the precise organizational blueprint for such an RFA; but the point that the process underway can result in an appropriate institutional structure with proper organizational design is important to grasp. A critical constructive evolutionary economic theory suggests that an open architecture will be better able to absorb future shocks, learn from them, and modify itself. <sup>22</sup>

In light of the foregoing analysis of AFC and subsequent attempts at an incipient Asian RFA, at a concrete policy making level, one could make the case for Asian countries lobbying for the formalisation and regularisation of ASEAN Chair's and ASEAN Secretary-General's participation in the G20 Summits. There is also a regional logic for holding policy dialogue meetings of an "expanded" ASEAN+3 (regular 13 members plus India, Australia and New Zealand) in general but particularly before the G20 Summits for coordinating policies and developing common positions to support the ASEAN representatives at the G20 Summits. Furthermore, supporting and joining the informal Global Governance Group (3G) convened by Singapore under the auspices of the United Nations to coordinate Asian position with developing countries in other regions of the world. Another regional institution building possibility is that once the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO) is established in Singapore (by May 2010). AMRO can coordinate the policy dialogue meetings of the

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<sup>22</sup> Although the terminology used is different, Kuroda and Kawai (2002) describe the case for strengthening regional financial cooperation in East Asia in terms that lend support to the "open architecture" view with a regional component advanced here from an evolutionary perspective.

“expanded” ASEAN+3 overall. Specific moves could include designing coordination in order to support participation of the ASEAN Chair and the ASEAN Secretary-General in the G20 Summits.

There are two key aspects of such an interrelated architecture that will crucially affect the workability of a possible RFA in Asia or in any other region. First, the willingness of a reformed IMF to permit the RFAs to have a certain degree of regional autonomy. For this the complementarily and burden sharing aspects of the GFA with RFAs need to be recognized. This is a special case of complementary institutional network (CIN). Second, and another instance of CIN, is the viability and cooperation at the national level. A slogan accompanying globalization is that the nation state can no longer act on its own. This may be true in certain areas of macroeconomic policy, but on a wide range of issues from tax policies to environmental policies the national governments can within limits formulate and implement policies. In the area of finance, even under WTO rules, there are possibilities of not only policy maneuvering but also of institutional reform and new institution building. In addition to addressing such matters as prudential supervision, risk management, and corporate governance the need for building other institutions for risk sharing, human development and policy dialogues within the nation loom large as tasks during the transitional management at the national level.

One final observation regarding the creation of an RFA within Asia is necessary before moving to a discussion of the future of the IMF in the next section. To put it in the most concrete and perhaps provocative way, could the Chiang Mai initiative foreshadow an East Asian Monetary System?

The AFC led to a collapse of the dollar pegging most of the economies in East Asia had before the crisis. The East Asian economies prefer a certain amount of exchange rate stability due to their trade multilateral dependence. They also see some advantages to be gained from coordination against speculative attacks, and preventing competitive devaluations in the region. However, fixing rates with respect to one another like the EMS earlier also carries dangers. Furthermore, the US dollar is still the most important vehicle currency in the region. Therefore, whether something like a yen bloc or even an Asian Currency Unit (ACU) can be created in the near future is doubtful.

At the same time, the experience of the AFC points towards closer coordination and a concerted effort to reduce volatility in the currency and financial markets. Since there are



asymmetries among the countries in the region, the more advanced countries need to take the lead and ensure that in times of asymmetric shocks, the less advanced countries will have resources to call upon. Thus any kind of steps towards an RFA will have to involve adequate reserves and the ability to provide liquidity and other resources to countries that need these in times of crisis.

### 3. The Changing Role of the IMF within a Hybrid GFA:

In this section I want to address what is perhaps the most important institutional and policy question that arises from the proposal for a hybrid GFA. What will be the role of IMF, and how will this new role differ from its present or neoliberal role? As mentioned already, the handling of the AFC by the IMF had raised important issues of global governance. The Fund had been criticized by the left, the right, and also the center. The global financial crisis has elicited mixed but on the whole potentially constructive responses from the IMF. I have already alluded to some of the ways in which the IMF will need to change its ways if the hybrid form of GFA I am suggesting here is to become a viable option for institution building. Elsewhere<sup>23</sup>, I have pointed out the need for adhering to some basic principles as the IMF transforms itself consistent with a critical social constructivist approach. Chief among these principles are the principle of symmetry and the principle of burden sharing. These are described briefly below:

1. *The principle of symmetry*, i.e., the surplus and deficit countries should be treated equally.

However, it was not realized in the past; nor is it likely to be realized in the near future.

However, there are various ways to pursue this as a goal even under the current set up of the IMF. If serious efforts are made to follow this principle by a reformed IMF, that will be an important step towards a new and better GFA.

2. *The principle of burden-sharing*, i.e., during episodes of crisis management the IMF will share the management burden with the RFAs and through them also with the affected countries and their neighbors.

It should be kept in mind that in keeping with the critical constructivist argument developed so far both the principles recognize the practical impossibility of the IMF being transformed into a global central bank in the near future. What the IMF cannot do now and will not be able to do in the foreseeable future is to follow Bagehot's dictum to lend freely against good collateral at a high interest rate in time of crisis. Unless SDRs become the commonly accepted and easily expandable means of settlement, this role will remain foreclosed. It is unlikely that the principal

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<sup>23</sup> See Khan (2002c).

shareholders of the IMF will allow such a change to occur.<sup>24</sup> Also, compared to a national central bank dealing with a problematic domestic financial institution the IMF has a limited ability to force corrective action. Yet, there will clearly be a role for IMF lending, and the consequent moral hazard will need to be recognized. But just as the moral hazard from having fire fighters ready to fight fires does not compel thoughtful communities to abolish fire stations, the global community also cannot abolish the IMF, or reduce its resources simply because there is a moral hazard problem associated with such institutions. The second principle above, the principle of burden sharing with the RFAs, national governments and the private sectors should go some distance towards both increasing the overall resources available, and mitigating the moral hazard.

While the Fund cannot now, or even in the near future be expected to act as a global central banker, pressures for increasing the net supply and poor country allocations of SDR will have beneficial effects. Even if the increases are not significant in the short run, the tendency will keep alive the eventual goal of forming a global central bank, as Keynes had envisioned. More practically, putting pressures on the IMF to emit new SDRs in order to finance the stabilization of primary ( and perhaps other) commodity prices will lead to benefits for both the developing and the developed countries in the intermediate run. The stabilization of these prices will help many developing countries avert BOP disasters. Furthermore, to the extent that the unusual price increases, such as the oil price increase in the 70s, create general inflationary pressures such pressures can also be averted. A smooth international transactions pattern will thus be consistent with domestic price stabilization as well.

In addition, the Fund can make a concerted effort to manage the private creditors. Most important from the point of view of managing crises will be the incorporation of new provisions on loan contracts so that orderly work out procedures become feasible. The Fund can also lend into arrears as a means to provide debtor-in-possession financing. Such a provision, along with more direct measures vis-à-vis the creditors, can help to bring the creditors to the bargaining table during a crisis.

Such measures to manage the creditors should also be complemented by increased surveillance of financial markets. Strengthening supervision is one aspect. Arriving at independent assessments of financial risk is another, related aspect of moving in this direction. However, it is

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<sup>24</sup> However, this should not be ruled out completely. Pressures for increased supply of SDRs will be beneficial in specific ways as argued below.

important to realize that even after adopting this stance, the risk of crises will still remain. Not all crises can be foreseen, much less prevented. The best that can be done is to draw the countries, the private sector and the RFAs together in an effort to strengthen the financial structures, including information gathering and processing capabilities. A cooperative structure where the Fund recognizes the need for hybridity will also help to reduce the reaction time.

Reducing the reaction time can help only if the policies undertaken cannot do much harm even if they are not successful in achieving their positive aim. The IMF has been correctly criticized for suggesting a “one-size-fits-all” policy package. Here again, a changed institutional structure with a more flexible IMF will mean a case-by-case approach where the RFAs will play a significant role. National economic policies such as requiring borrowers to unwind positions in increasingly risky situations, curbing excessive foreign borrowing, limiting portfolio investment, cautionary policies towards derivatives and off- balance sheet items may need to be examined as serious policy options. Tobin tax, or individual country taxes of the Chilean variety should also be given serious consideration. The *mantra* of free capital movements together with the refrain that there is no alternative needs to be revised appropriately to incorporate the available tools that the Fund can help countries use to mitigate the risks arising from such capital movements.

It is not clear that the Fund can do much in instituting a more stable exchange rate regime. The pegged rate system, advocated among others, surprisingly by the Wall Street Journal, will create one-way bets for speculators. Free floating, on the other hand, can lead to disasters when exchange rates collapse suddenly instead of finding a new stable equilibrium. Such perverse dynamics was observed during the AFC, particularly in the Indonesian case. The inability of Greece to use exchange rate policy during its own crisis shows how the EU and particularly the ECB may not be a model to emulate for creating future RFAs. Neither currency boards nor perfect flexibility can prevent vulnerable currencies from collapsing. Rather a managed float before any signs of crisis appear together with a prudent management of the financial and real sectors would seem to be both pragmatic and feasible at this point. Strengthening the capacities of central banks will have better pay off here than urging the IMF to twist the arms of the countries through conditionalities.

In Asia, in addition to the high interest rate standard recipe, the IMF seized the crisis as an opportunity to dismantle what remained of the particular mix of institutions that had historically evolved to create the so-called “Asian Model of Development”. Widespread and massive bank

closures, enterprise restructuring, opening up sectors to foreign ownership, tearing down labor institutions in the name of flexibility, and attack on living standards seemed to be a part of an overarching agenda. This type of radical restructuring under duress is not the way to apply the principles that are being advocated here.

In spite of widespread criticism from many quarters, the IMF still remains committed to capital account liberalization as *an ultimate* goal. The AFC and similar crises have merely given it pause to consider proper sequencing before liberalization. The critical constructive evolutionary theory developed here, point to a more nuanced, less global approach. Some economies may be ready for capital account liberalization; others are not. The IMF needs to distinguish among them carefully, and not adopt capital account liberalization as a principle enshrined in its revised articles of agreement.

It goes without saying that proper sequencing, better monitoring and management of debt, greater transparency in both the government and private sector operations, more effective regulation of domestic financial institutions are all desirable policy goals. Also desirable are domestic tax policies that do not encourage excessive reliance on short-term capital inflows. However, in a world of unevenness some countries may also require temporary capital controls through various means. The IMF, instead of taking a dogmatic approach that says “no” to any form of capital control should set up facilities for examining the impacts of different alternatives. In doing so, it should also pay attention to the principle of symmetry so that the borrowing countries do not always and everywhere have to take the initiative. At the same time both capital inflows and outflows need to be controlled to some extent

A reformed IMF together with the RFAs could take the leadership in providing the overall framework within which individual countries could pursue policies most advantageous from a systemic point of view. For example, as alluded to already, the hybrid GFA could have a framework agreed to by the member countries of the IMF so that when a crisis hits lenders would be subject to credit standstills and orderly workouts. This would clearly force the creditors to shoulder some of the responsibility for the crisis. Such an arrangement, in all likelihood, will also reduce the need for large IMF loans. Another part of the new IMF responsibilities could be the collection of a global Tobin tax. Although no panacea, such a tax would almost certainly reduce returns to very short-term capital movements. A further consequence of a Tobin tax could be a somewhat more stable exchange rate system. Adoption of a securities transactions tax is also

not a far-fetched idea. Even Lawrence Summers wrote academic articles before he joined the government advocating modest taxes on these transactions.<sup>25</sup> As any international monetary economist knows, the “impossible trinity” of international capital mobility, fixed exchange rate system and an independent monetary policy can not all be pursued together although Mundell’s carefully specified context for “the assignment problem” and his solutions may be applicable in specific instances. Slowing down short term capital movement need not prevent long term capital from flowing across borders. However, fixed exchange rates must be given up if countries are still to pursue independent monetary policies. Thus, a return to the old IMF is neither necessary nor desirable. The transformation of the IMF as a handmaiden of the neoliberal agenda in the 1980s shows that something like a constructivist process was already at work in the post Bretton Woods system IMF. Given sufficient political wisdom and will that process can be reversed towards creating a transformed IMF that can serve the cause of financial stability for global prosperity much better than it has done during the last decades of the twentieth century. This new IMF will adopt a more flexible approach towards national policies. It will recognize that in periods that seem to be leading towards a crisis there may need to be policy shifts such as a shift towards some types of capital controls. The present articles of the IMF actually allow some forms of capital controls when countries are in distress. Instead of dismantling, these provisions have to be made realistic and applicable whenever the financial system seems vulnerable. Thus flexibility and context-dependent policy making will be the key features of a hybrid system. To begin with, debt rescheduling, moderation in fiscal-monetary policy mix with an expansionary bias for most economies and gradual restructuring of corporate sectors with strengthening of standards and corporate governance are steps that IMF can encourage the economies to take without interfering directly with the policy making in specific countries.

Other measures that the IMF can allow or even encourage national governments to pursue could include requiring lending institutions to hold different levels of provisions for countries with different estimated levels of riskiness measured by such factors as the state of the banking system and the level of reserves relative to short-term debt. As many have observed, risk assessment by the credit rating agencies also leaves much to be desired and could be improved if IMF provided some guidance and input. Another, more practical measure would be to impose

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<sup>25</sup> See Summers and Summers (1989).

different levels of taxation on earnings from overseas investments with different maturities. Although as stated in the previous sentence, it will not be so sensitive to individual country risk; it will nevertheless curb some of the tendencies towards short-termism. It should be mentioned that the Basel Committee regulations in effect during the AFC may have been a culprit in this respect. These regulations gave a lower weight to short-term foreign lending (20 per cent) for capital adequacy purposes than for loans with a maturity period of over one year (100 per cent). A new IMF could make such rules less biased by coordinating its guidelines with BIS, and being guided by a better theory than the one underlying the Washington consensus. Here some of the Basel III guidelines, if they check the currently systemic dysfunctional pro-cyclical tendencies can be helpful.

#### 4. Summary and Conclusions

The history of financial crises shows that they cannot be prevented once and for all in a globalized monetary economy with unpredictable ebbs and flows in capital movement. This history also shows that financial markets have short memories and limited long-term learning capacity. Thus there needs to be--- within the limits of human fallibility--- a well-designed set of institutions capable of dealing with the tendencies towards financial instability and crisis.

Given the unevenness in the structure of the global economy, the developmental consequences of financial crises are particularly important to analyze when designing institutions to contain and manage such crises. In this paper, particular attention has been given to the fact that the negative consequences for output growth, employment, income distribution and poverty reduction are relatively more severe for the DCs and LDCs. At least partly this occurs because of the following characteristics among others:

- a. DCs and LDCs have fewer resources for coping with financial crises, particularly one which is global in its scope;
- b. Most DCs and all LDCs lack automatic stabilizers due to the embryonic nature of their fiscal and social protection systems;
- c. They have limited ability of borrow in international financial markets and this limits their ability to pursue countercyclical policies;
- d. These threats are often exacerbated by global financial market integration and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and bilateral investment treaties (BITs). Many WTO commitments also affect the DCs adversely. IMF pro-cyclical Structural Adjustment Policies can also constrict the policy space.

The analysis here leads to the conclusion that these States will need to become more reliant on each other to implement the reforms and support regional development initiatives. Failure to do so will then mean that these States will have to become more reliant on international technical expertise and resources which may or may not be forthcoming. This may be the time for multilateral agencies to devote significant resources towards building capacities in DCs and LDCs with the help of experts with combined technical and area specializations.



In this light, the fact that the States have a full decade to delineate and implement a proper course is not as long a time horizon as it first appears to be. Even if the banking sector is adequately reformed, the proper use of financial markets will also require an enabling global financial architecture and an overall reduction of systemic risk.

As an earlier paper (Khan2009) showed, analyzing the challenge of meeting the MDGs which justifiably, has high priority in both the UN and the affected countries presents us with the fact that some important gaps still remain.<sup>26</sup> In one way or another, these all involve problems of capacity building and cooperation among national, sub-national and international actors both at the governmental and civil society levels. Related to this, the interests of those who live in rural areas, more remote regions and are disadvantaged for that reason would need greater representation. The combined disadvantages of gender, location and ethnic identification raise particularly salient issues for widespread deliberation. Concrete step-by-step plans of action with identifiable outcomes need to be communicated clearly, and followed through properly. All these are made much more difficult if not impossible to achieve specially for LDCs during times of crisis and global contraction.

In times of crisis, there are well-meaning suggestions of radical institutional restructuring that fade away when the immediate crisis is over. Only a few farsighted or worrying types may still voice lingering concerns. Following this literature, but more importantly, the recent global crisis and the history of the AFC motivate my proposals for moving away from an *overarching type* of GFA--- to use the terminology developed here.

Given the features of the real economic world, an evolutionary approach admits of multiple evolutionary equilibria, and a need for realistic institutional design that recognizes path dependence and the role of alternative theories and interpretations without the disabling and in most cases incorrect slogan that there is no alternative. Although social and political construction of new institutions and arrangements are difficult, except for rare circumstances, there are usually more than just one possibility. Real struggles among competing ideas, norms and politics at different levels are necessary aspects of the process of choosing among these possibilities. Such a critical constructivist approach applied to the recent international financial and economic history leads to the identification of two broad categories of global financial architectures. The

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<sup>26</sup> This applies particularly to those countries targeted to receive Integrated Package Services (IPS).

*hybrid* variety advocated here on the basis of both realism and systemic efficacy and equity will nevertheless involve much institution building that is always fraught with the danger of politics-gone-awry.

The dismantling of Chilean capital controls in 1998 is a case in point. In this particular instance, a balance of payments crisis prompted the loosening of capital controls instituted earlier (Agosin 1998). It can be argued that the situation of policy and institutional reversal occurred because the interest groups favoring liberalization following a particular world view were strengthened. Such interests in Chile included at that time holders of foreign exchange, exporters, foreign creditors and investors, and the IMF and other international financial institutions. Thus the political problems of coalition building and ensuring the least cost cooperative outcome need attention. The limited achievements and remaining problems that can be seen from the Asian example discussed here should provide concrete motivation to think further about such problems of designing institutions in the real world currently.

Even under a far-from-complete RFA in Asia, the current global financial crisis has made the benefits of having an RFA structure obvious to the Asian central bankers and other players. All the surplus countries carry too much hard currency reserves which is costly. In particular the developmental opportunity costs from foregoing developmental projects are deemed to be quite high, as critics from China in particular stress. It is to be kept in mind that these foregone projects are not just in the reserve country, but in many DCs and LDCs outside of the borders of the Asian surplus economies. Thus the developmental opportunity costs of the current excess reserve-holding system are quite high indeed.

One way to assess the utility of an RFA for Asia is to raise a counterfactual question. From the policy perspective, it is interesting and important to know if the existence of an Asian RFA would have helped in any way during the AFC. The counterfactual question then asks: suppose there existed an RFA for Asia during the AFC, how would it have responded to the crisis that would have been different?

In contrast with the behavior of the IMF, within the proposed hybrid GFA, a regional financial architecture, had it been present could have done at least the following on the basis of applying an evolutionary theory of financial instabilities under globalization:

1. Through constant regional monitoring it would have sensed the danger ahead of time. Even a regional monitoring unit alone would have been able to do better than the IMF team in Asia.
2. Through constant formal and informal contact with the officials in member governments and the private sector, it would have sized up the possible extent of the problem earlier and better than did the IMF.
3. Through prompt and early action it would have provided liquidity to the system, and punished bad management in coordinated measures with the national governments.
4. It would have been able to start regional discussions about bankruptcy and work out procedures by keeping in close touch with the history and legal issues facing particular countries.
5. It would have been in a position to use both moral suasion and toughness to keep both regional creditors and debtors in line.

The fundamental requirement for this, however, was an actually existing RFA with enough liquidity and technical expertise. The Asian Development Bank provided quite a bit of liquidity to Korea in particular, but did not even have a monitoring unit when the crisis broke out. Furthermore, the autonomy and integrity of any future RFA, in Asia and elsewhere are issues that need discussion. The relationship between the RFAs and the IMF also needs to be further specified. These are matters that are of necessity evolutionary by nature. In this paper, I have tried to specify some principles that may help in selecting the more beneficial evolutionary path.

Once there is a full-fledged regional financial architecture for Asia, for instance, it could be a regional lender of last resort. It could also perform effective surveillance functions. In addition, it could promote financial and corporate restructuring that is necessary, but almost impossible for the IMF to do. Finally, in the event of a future global or regional crisis, a more timely response could come from such an RFA already in place. In addition to East Asia such useful RFAs could be constructed in South Asia, the MENA region, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. In EU, ironically, a deconstruction towards a more flexible RFA through a reform of ECB and a

construction of a more benign federalist revenue-sharing fiscal structure may be what is needed.<sup>27</sup>

The critical constructivist argument developed so far points to the possibility of using our knowledge, interpretative flexibility within reasonable limits and political skills and ingenuity to utilize existing institutions together with some new ones to achieve desirable goals of global financial governance. In case of GFA, this argument strengthens the case for developing the hybrid variety. Using both the existing global institutions such as the IMF, albeit in a modified form, and building upon existing regional initiatives may offer a better chance of creating a beneficial makeshift hybrid GFA than the textbook type pie-in-the-sky schemes correctly dismissed by Eichengreen. However, Eichengreen does not consider the role of RFAs in his otherwise excellent analysis. One way to read the present paper is to see it as filling this gap by using an evolutionary constructivist argument for a hybrid GFA. A set of realistic reforms of the IMF together with the formation of RFAs will offer the best chance for the global economy to achieve stability and prosperity with equity.

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<sup>27</sup> See Underhill, Geoffrey. 2011 (forthcoming). "Paved with Good Intentions: Global Financial Integration and the Eurozone's Response," *European Political Science*, 3.

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