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8. Conclusions

8.1 OVERVIEW

This final chapter brings together the previous thematic chapters in the form of a series of individual profiles that answer the original question posed at the outset of this book regarding how nineteen countries and one intergovernmental organization have engaged with the G20 over seventeen summits between 2008 and 2022. To avoid the tedium of slavishly going through each country and summarizing its position within the G20, this chapter will arrange like-minded countries into subgroups. This will also provide an opportunity to tease out a range of common positions, identities and behaviours within these subgroups, in addition to the points at which, and reasons why, they might diverge.

There are many ways of cutting the G20 cake into subgroups. It could be on the basis of geography. Europe's presence is clearly dominant as a result of its over-representation within the G20, as discussed in Chapter 2. The emergence of an Asian identity with the G20 has been touted and critiqued in equal measure (Dobson 2011a; Dobson 2012c). In the case of Latin America, Luckhurst (2015) explored the identity – endogenous and exogenous – of Argentina, Brazil and Mexico within the G20 from 2008 through to the mid 2010s. He argued that during this period Brazil and Mexico had become G20 insiders to a greater degree than Argentina as a result of their respective policy positions and levels of compliance with G20 commitments. This was even though the ultimate indicator of being an insider – hosting a summit – was variable with Brazil yet to assume the G20 presidency (it will in 2024), whereas Mexico had (in 2012) and Argentina would (in 2018). It appeared that Brazil and Mexico's identities were based less on geography and more on the subgroups of similarly positioned countries to which they belong, namely G5/O5, BRICS, MIKTA. As a postscript, by the 2020s, Mexico's average levels of compliance between 2008 and 2021 had declined and were more similar to Argentina's than Brazil's.

Historic landmark events have resulted in the restructuring of subgroups. For example, Russia's aggression against Ukraine has led to the splintering of the G20 into three groups:

One group consists of Russia and China with a shared goal of replacing the international order led by the West. Another group consists of the US and democratic market-oriented countries in Europe and Asia, which have an interest in preserving the liberal rules-based international order. And the last group consists of a number of non-aligned countries – Argentina, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Türkiye – that avoid siding with either the authoritarian camp led by Russia and China or the democratic camp led by the US and Europe (Kang 2022).

In terms of identity, emerging economies have received a considerable amount of attention, for good reason. Cooper and Stolte (2019, 703) argue that they 'have pursued a dualistic strategy that allows them to be simultaneously institutional "insiders" and "outsiders"'. However, the pursuit of this strategy varies among the emerging powers. In the case of the middle powers, Cooper and Mo have argued that '[t]he G20 demonstrates that middle powers can make a difference and share the burden of leadership with great powers' (2013, 11). Nevertheless, within this common contribution to global governance, secondary powers 'have been required to weave multiple roles' (Alexandroff 2015, 261). Even within the G7, which has like-mindedness written into its DNA in the absence of concrete membership criteria (Morin et al. 2019), Chapter 3 demonstrated occasions when divisions emerged over the G20's response to the GFC.

It goes without saying that individual countries can hold multiple and conflicting identities concomitantly, which only adds to the complication. This chapter notes this complex picture but also needs to start somewhere in providing country-specific profiles while highlighting the similarities and divisions within groups. So, this chapter is organized on the basis of the established subgroups within the G20; namely, the G7, BRICS countries, the middle powers of MIKTA, as well as Argentina and Saudi Arabia, which did not belong to any specific grouping between 2008 and 2022, the period under examination in this book.

The chapter will profile each country's role in the G20 by outlining the nature of their representation and leadership style, their concrete contributions over time, the levels of compliance with commitments, and the underlying motivating factors. On the one hand, these factors can be rooted in domestic policies and can even be historical in nature; for example, the nature of capitalism in member countries (Kalinowski 2019). On the other hand, they can be found in foreign policy and diplomatic considerations. For example, Alexandroff has argued in relation to secondary powers that 'most of these

states have struggled with the constraints imposed by bilateral or multilateral security alliances with the US' (2015, 261). Dobson (2012b) has explored Japan's behaviour in G7 and G20 summits through this lens of managing its bilateral relationship with the US hegemon. Each section will end with an evaluation of the commonality and divergence within the subgroup.

8.2 THE G7

The G7 presidency rotates in an order that developed organically over time and provides as good a structure as any to explore each member. So, to begin with France, its own presidency currently lasts five years and can be renewed once. Between 2008 and 2022, three presidents have represented France at G20 summits: Nicolas Sarkozy, François Hollande and Emmanuel Macron (see Appendix 2). Regardless of president, French foreign policy has traditionally and regularly projected a self-perception as the stalwart of liberty, fraternity and equality in its domestic and international politics. Within the G7, this was clearly on display when it hosted the 1989 summit of the Arch, scheduled deliberately with Bastille Day and the bicentennial celebrations of the French Revolution. Within the G20, whether represented by Sarkozy or Macron, France has consistently presented itself as the defender of multilateralism. This can be seen as a consistent characteristic of France's engagement with the G20 regardless of the incumbent administration. For example, as seen in Chapter 2, although French officials expressed concerns around the representation, legitimacy and efficiency of the original G20, Sarkozy played an active and key role in advocating an upgrade of the G20 to the leaders' level in 2008 and his boosterism is captured in his claim that: 'The G20 foreshadows the planetary governance of the 21st century.'¹ As seen in Chapter 3, Sarkozy's objectives in response to the GFC were a radical overhaul of what was regarded as a failed system and 'the moralisation of financial capitalism' and 'the refoundation of a better regulated capitalism'. Ten years later, Macron demonstrated similar bolstering of the G20's position when he declared France's position on the agenda set ahead of the Buenos Aires summit and in response to the disruption to the rules-based liberal international order caused by the Trump administration.² In 2018, the US was seen as a blocker and spoiler but previously it had been a partner and enabler, as seen when Sarkozy played a leadership role alongside Obama in creating the MAP as the mechanism by which G20 countries would work with the IMF to monitor national growth policies.

France's multilateralism in the G20 can be described as robust, not only in its words but in its actions. Sarkozy's demands for radical measures in response to the GFC were backed up by threats at more than one summit to walk out if he did not get what he wanted. More constructively, in terms of the G20's development, France has supported the expansion of the G20's

agenda to address the pressing issues of the day, as seen in Chapter 3 in the case of food security. It has also sought to address concerns around the G20's legitimacy by nurturing engagement with civil society, as was evident when it hosted the 2011 Cannes summit, and to enhance the G20's effectiveness by arguing in favour of establishing a secretariat to support its work. France's levels of compliance with G20 commitments also pay testament to its faith in multilateralism. A comparison of levels of compliance between 2008 and 2021 places France towards the higher end of the scale overall but behind the joint most-compliant G20 members, the UK and the EU, who are not far ahead of Germany, Canada and Australia, before we get to France (G20 Information Centre 2023). However, they also hint at a willingness to prioritize national interests, as was seen when Sarkozy encouraged French car makers in receipt of government funds to firewall domestic jobs. Domestically, when France hosted the G20 summit in 2011, it coincided with its hosting of the G7 earlier in the year and much was made of the connection between the two, although mostly in terms of the optics (Naylor and Dobson forthcoming). However, at the same time, the choice of 'trendy seaside resorts' rendered the G20 in the eyes of some observers as 'another glittering but ultimately ineffective forum for world leaders' (Goodliffe and Sberro 2014, 7–8).

The US presidency is based on a four-year term that can be extended once. So, within the G20, US representation has transitioned through four presidencies: George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump and Joe Biden. The Bush and Biden presidencies provide the bookends to the period under examination in this book, while Obama and Trump provide the substantial engagement with the G20. These two forms of engagement often contrasted starkly, as will come as no surprise. Nevertheless, for the US, informal global summitry has always been about shared and cooperative leadership going back to the original G20 of finance ministers and central bank governors created in 1999 and whose membership was shaped by US treasury secretary, Larry Summers. Almost a decade later, Bush played a central role in the upgrading of the G20 at the 2008 Washington summit to create a more inclusive mechanism of developed and developing countries than the G7 and to address a shared challenge in the form of the GFC that originated in the US. In other words: 'The US has produced institutional, material, and policy leadership but never sought a privileged place nor led alone in these informal institutions governing today's intensely globalized world' (Kirton 2020, 103).

Ünay (2014, 142) captures the response of the Bush administration in the specific context of the establishment of the G20 and in line with traditional US

foreign policy as a (declining) hegemon seeking to share the responsibilities of global governance, but on its own terms:

By creating an umbrella organization at the leaders' level and enhancing the restrictive club of G7 by including rising powers led by China, India and Brazil in the heart of the governance framework, the US administration successfully created a sense of 'complex interdependence' and shared responsibility for the future of the world economy, while deliberately paving the way for debates of multipolarity in the global system. On the other hand, as the institutional design and control of the whole G20 process was carefully completed under an Anglo-American compact, the image of participative multilateralism was conceived politically useful for the White House.

The Obama administration continued this approach of sharing responsibility for the future of the world economy. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, Obama declared his support early in his presidency for the updating, refreshing and renewing of international institutions. Once the GFC had abated and any initial misgivings about the G20 were overcome, Obama provided further leadership as host of the 2009 Pittsburgh summit at which the G20 was declared 'the premier forum for international economic cooperation'. However, these reforms would not amount to the overhaul on a planetary scale advocated by Sarkozy. With similar forms of capitalism, Obama found more of a bedfellow in the UK prime minister, Gordon Brown, and supported his leadership within the G20 and his specific approach to the GFC based on fiscal stimulus. The instrumentalization of the G20 to promote a shared response to the more pressing collective action problem of climate change was seen ahead of the 2014 Brisbane summit when Obama, in collaboration with Xi Jinping, forced discussion of the challenge onto the agenda despite the different priorities of host Tony Abbott.³

Trump's infamous speech to the UNGA in September 2018 captured the nature of US involvement in the G20 during his administration, at least on the surface: 'America is governed by Americans. We reject the ideology of globalism, and we embrace the doctrine of patriotism. Around the world, responsible nations must defend against threats to sovereignty not just from global governance, but also from other, new forms of coercion and domination' (White House 2018).

So, the US position fundamentally changed with the Trump administration from the tradition of 'a leader seeking consensus' to one that 'put it at odds with other G7 and G20 members', particularly over the issues of climate change, symbolized by US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, as well as free trade, captured by withdrawal from the TPP (Nelson 2020: 8). As

discussed in Chapter 4, the leaders' declaration that came out of the 2017 Hamburg summit epitomized these divisions:

We take note of the decision of the USA to withdraw from the Paris Agreement ...
The leaders of the other G20 members state that the Paris Agreement is irreversible. (G20 Information Centre 2017a)

An uptick in the consideration and adoption of unilateralism was evident during this time as a way to navigate this turbulent period and departure from traditional US foreign policy until normal service was resumed with the attendance of Biden at the 2021 Rome summit. The G20's handling of climate change at the 2017 Hamburg summit exemplified this approach. Nevertheless, Trump did put reform of the informal mechanisms of global governance up for discussion with proposals for the return of Russia to the G8, as well as the addition of Australia, India, South Korea and Russia to the G7 to form a G11 (Nelson 2020).

The US levels of compliance with G20 commitments capture this complicated relationship with the G20 over time from 2008 to 2021. The US finds itself separated from fellow G7 and Quad members of the UK, the EU, Canada, Germany, France and Australia with the highest levels of compliance, and behind its key Asian allies of Japan and South Korea, but just ahead of its great power rival China (G20 Information Centre 2023). Domestically, the US has hosted two G20 summits (Washington in 2008 and Pittsburgh in 2009), representative of its influence in the genesis of the G20 at the leaders' level.

In the case of the UK, engagement with the G20 coincided with a period of global leadership under Brown at the height of the GFC until 2010, relative stability under David Cameron from 2010 to 2016, followed by a revolving door of prime ministers thereafter in the shape of Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak, who struggled to manage, and even triggered, ongoing domestic crises and scandals. Although Brown was domestically in a fragile position for most of his prime ministership, he appeared on the global stage of the G20 as leader with a plan, which was focused on fiscal stimulus. The 2009 London summit was the high point of Brown's global statesmanship and his 'integrity' and 'leadership' were singled out by Obama.⁴ Under Brown, but also his successor Cameron, attempts were made to leverage the perceived legitimacy of the G20 to justify domestic aspects of their response to the GFC. This is not a strategy exclusive to the UK, as mentioned below in the case of Japan, but it has been argued that:

British politicians ... have used [the G20] as a platform from which to reiterate the position that there is no alternative to prudence. In combination, the G20's technocratic approach to the diagnosis and treatment of the crisis and the gradual shift in emphasis to fiscal sustainability provided international endorsement of a domestic

growth strategy that was based on the twin pillars of financialisation and fiscal austerity. (Rogers 2015: 318)

The opportunities presented by a G20 summit to pursue national interest were also evident at the 2012 Los Cabos summit when Cameron was accompanied by a trade delegation of UK companies to Mexico, seeking alternative markets and partners outside the Eurozone. In similar fashion, May sought to reassure concerned partners at G20 summits from Hangzhou onwards around the impact of the 2016 Brexit referendum and process of withdrawal from the EU, as seen in Chapter 6.

Nevertheless, the UK has contributed to debates around the future shape of global summitry. Brown can legitimately be regarded as one of the architects of the G20. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 2 and *passim*, Cameron was tasked ahead of the 2011 Cannes summit with drafting ‘Governance for growth: building consensus for the future’, which called for a better coordinated, more accountable and ultimately more effective forum. Although the report was silent on the issue of membership, the UK government acknowledged that ‘[w]e have moved irreversibly from a G8 world to a G20-plus world’. As regards the expansion of its agenda, a number of other objectives emerged for the UK government within the G20 that demonstrated its willingness to expand the remit of the G20’s activities. For example, Cameron was supportive of responding to the Syrian conflict within the G20 although he was limited by what he could agree to in the absence of a parliamentary mandate for intervention, as seen in Chapter 5.

In terms of bilateral relations, the UK has used the G20 to manage a difficult relationship with Russia. At the 2014 Brisbane summit, Cameron announced that Russia was ‘ripping up the rulebook’ through its actions in Ukraine.⁵ From that point on, the UK led on coordinating the G20’s response to Russia’s incursions into and ultimate invasion of Ukraine, as well as domestic issues, most notably the Salisbury Novichok poisonings in 2018. Within this context, May appeared in a most awkward photo-shoot with Putin, both stony-faced and barely shaking hands, at the 2019 Osaka summit.

Levels of compliance with G20 commitments between the 2008 Washington summit and the 2021 Rome summit demonstrate that on average the UK holds the position of most compliant country with the same score as the EU (G20 Information Centre 2023). On the domestic level, the London summit is probably better known for heavy-handed policing, the death of Ian Tomlinson, or even the visit of Michelle Obama, than for addressing the GFC.

As regards Germany, its representation is one of the most consistent, with Angela Merkel attending every summit between Washington in 2008 and her farewell at Rome in 2021. Merkel’s dominant position stands out among G7 partners with only Canada coming close, and within the G20 is only bettered

by the president of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In addition, Germany can in many ways be seen as an innovator in G20 governance. Finance Minister Hans Eichel hosted the first G20 meeting at the finance ministers' level in Berlin in 1999. Eight years later, when it hosted a G20 summit at the leaders' level, the German government worked to

shift the focus of the G20 beyond international financial and growth toward broader socioeconomic challenges. Furthermore, the German government had proposed new topics that had not yet been discussed within the G20 process, but were covered at other fora, such as global health, which was covered by the G7. The initial German G20 agenda can thus be seen as a continuation of the German G7 presidency in 2015, which focused heavily on such issues as climate change mitigation, global health, and sustainability. (Berger et al. 2017, 113)

It also established the S20 as an official engagement group of scientific researchers as part of its presidency in 2017, and the first-ever ministerial meeting of health ministers that has continued at subsequent summits. However, this was not an uncritical position and German officials were concerned about issues of representation, legitimacy and efficiency surrounding the first G20 at the leaders' level (Kirton 2013, 64–65).

As regards expansion of the G20's remit, as mentioned above, Germany proposed new topics for discussion. It led under its presidency on the adoption of the G20 Action Plan on Marine Litter, gave global health greater prominence, embedded Africa in discussions around the global tax agenda, placed food and agriculture on the agenda and supported a stand-alone statement on terrorism.

As regards specific issues, Germany worked closely with France in taking a common approach to the GFC based on strict regulation and opposed to the US and UK emphasis on stimulation, as outlined in Chapter 3. It also supported, with France, an FTT to pay for the damage caused by the crisis. Alongside the UK, it supported the Mexican presidency in placing BEPS on the G20's agenda. Germany has also adopted a pragmatic approach, as seen at the Hamburg summit when it sought as host to manage Trump as the disrupter-in-chief. Its approach was the adoption of a minilateral approach of G19+1 on climate change, as outlined in Chapter 4, that acknowledged the US position but reinforced the collective and 'irreversible' position of the other G20 leaders in relation to the Paris Agreement.

Levels of compliance with G20 commitments between 2008 and 2021 demonstrate Germany's role within the G7. It sits at the top end of the scale, marginally behind the most compliant members of the UK and EU, and marginally ahead of Canada (G20 Information Centre 2023). An aspect of G20 summit-hosting that Germany shares with its democratic G7 partners is the association with protest and policing. The 2017 Hamburg summit saw some

of the most violent protests in summit history with ‘Welcome to Hell’ prominently graffitied across the city.

Turning to Japan, it has been represented by seven prime ministers, who between them capture both the ‘revolving door’ of Japanese politics experienced between 2006 and 2012, the stability of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō’s record-breaking tenure as prime minister, followed by a possible return to the traditional transience of Japanese prime ministers. At the 2009 Pittsburgh summit, the Brazilian president, Inácio Lula da Silva, captured the challenges faced by Japan within these informal gatherings of leaders in typically colourful language: ‘in Japan ... you say “good morning” to one prime minister and “good afternoon” to a different one’ (Soble and Dickie, 2010).

The norms of bilateralism, Asianism and internationalism have been instrumental in shaping Japan’s postwar foreign policy. These norms also shaped its approach to and behaviour within the G7 where Japan sought to manage the ‘most important relationship in the world, bar none’ with the US, give Asia a voice as its sole representative, and demonstrate its credentials as a recognized great power of the day and responsible member of the international community (Dobson 2004). This approach was in evidence in its initial response to the early G20 summits. However, the increased levels of Asian representation in the G20 made it more challenging for Japan to play the role of regional representative. An expanded G20 also diluted the more exclusive great power status accorded through membership of the G7. As a result, although Japan’s initial engagement with the G20 was proactive, as seen in its financial contributions to the G20’s response to the GFC outlined in Chapter 3, its advocacy for the G20 as the ‘premier forum for international economic cooperation’ was muted and it sought to ensure the continuation of the G7 (Dobson 2012a). Japan’s representation within the G20 during this time was complicated by the ‘revolving door’ of short-lived Japanese prime ministers. However, under the long-serving Abe and with its G20 presidency in 2019, Japan became more comfortable with the co-existence of both summit processes and no longer saw them as a zero-sum game. To this end, it began to innovate in G20 governance, as seen in Chapter 4, when it convened the first-ever climate G20 Ministerial Meeting on Energy Transitions and Global Environment for Sustainable Growth in Karuizawa, and the first-ever combined G20 Trade and Digital Economy Ministerial Meeting in Tsukuba.

Another role that Japan adopted within the G7 that transferred over to the G20 is that of a bridge or honest broker who is able to find a compromise between divergent partners. This was clear at the 2019 Osaka G20 when divisions between G20 members on trade, security and climate change were not far from the surface. Abe was keen to stress ‘unity’ and ‘shared views’ at every opportunity.⁶ At his final press conference, Abe captured his approach for the world’s media: ‘In this world where emphasis tends to be overly placed on

confrontations, we look for common grounds and points of agreement. Under an approach unique to Japan, at this Osaka summit, the G20 unites and sends a strong message regarding global issues' (Kantei 2019b).

Faced with US–China trade tensions that threatened to (and eventually did, according to some) derail the 2019 G20 Osaka summit, the Japanese hosts tried incrementally to seek a compromise between its two most important bilateral partners. In the words of one Japanese government official involved in pre-summit ministerial talks at Tsukuba, '[r]ather than papering over the differences, we decided to make them clear. The G20 is a process of peer pressure. The essence of what we agreed in Tsukuba will be incorporated in Osaka.'⁷⁷ The compromise in language on trade reached at Tsukuba that was repeated in the Osaka leaders' declaration did not explicitly mention anti-protectionism but instead declared that '[w]e strive to realise a free, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, predictable and stable trade and investment environment to keep our markets open' (G20 Information Centre 2019b).

Levels of compliance with G20 commitments demonstrate that Japan has responded solidly to the norm of internationalism and provided more than lip service with an average level of compliance from 2008 to 2021, similar to but slightly better than South Korea and the US. However, its levels of compliance do not match the big hitters of Australia, Canada, the EU, France, Germany and the UK (G20 Information Centre 2023). Japan has also sought to provide concrete outcomes, especially in its role as G20 president. At the 2019 Osaka G20, the launch of the eponymous Osaka Track, outlined in Chapter 5, as a framework to promote international governance of the cross-border flow of data, as well as the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision to reduce marine plastic waste, were Japan's signature contributions. In the case of the former, the Japanese government worked with the US, the EU, Australia and Singapore on a plurilateral approach to which India, Indonesia and South Africa did not sign up, instead claiming that it did not conform to multilateral principles of consensus-based decision-making in global trade negotiations. This instance demonstrated that the traditional role of honest broker was more challenging for Japan in a diverse forum like the G20, rather than in a more like-minded group such as the G7.

As regards domestic considerations, when Japan hosted the G20 in Osaka in 2019, it was embraced very much as G7 summits had been as an opportunity to showcase the city and wider region as well. Osaka had bid unsuccessfully to host a G7 summit but was successful in securing the status associated with hosting a diplomatic mega-event. In concrete domestic policy terms, and similar to the UK situation mentioned above, the G20 was used to legitimize a controversial domestic policy, in this case the increase in consumption tax (Dobson 2013a).

Known for its high turnover rate of technocratic leaders, Italy has been represented by eight prime ministers over seventeen summits, from Silvio Berlusconi at the early summits during the GFC and Eurozone crisis through to its first female leader, Giorgia Meloni, at Bali in 2022. Italy presents an interesting case. Despite being an original member of the G7 from 1975 as well as the G20 at the finance ministers' and leaders' levels, and holding the G20 presidency in 2021, it is probably one of the least researched members of the G20, certainly compared to its G7 partners and the BRICS countries. This may have something to do with its high turnover of leaders, although a country like Australia with similar levels of turnover in its leadership has received more attention. Within the G7, Italy has historically been grouped with Canada and Japan as the non-core members, as was most starkly seen at the 1979 Guadeloupe summit of core G7 countries, France, the UK, the US and West Germany, focused on political and security issues. Almost thirty years later, along with Canada and Japan, Italy did not demonstrate complete buy-in as a core member to the upgrading of the G20 to the leaders' level in response to the GFC. However, this also does not wholly explain the lack of attention accorded to Italy, as its Canadian and Japanese counterparts have been the subject of research.

Nevertheless, we can trace aspects of G20 leadership. For example, during the Italian G20 presidency of 2021, global summitry began to edge towards business as usual after the virtual meetings of 2020. As seen in Chapter 3, the Italian government placed recovery from the pandemic at the heart of its agenda with an emphasis on food security, nutrition and sustainable food systems in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The concrete outcome took the form of the Matera Declaration, which called on the international community to address the impact of Covid-19 on livelihoods, strengthen food chains and ensure adequate nutrition for all in line with SDG-2 on zero hunger by 2030. The Italian presidency also sought to leverage the G20's flexibility by convening a special summit on the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan after the US completed its withdrawal in August 2021. The Italian presidency also managed to keep the G20 together as they headed directly from Rome to Glasgow for COP26. Leadership often becomes more visible when a G20 country hosts the summit. Nevertheless, isolated examples prior to this can be seen. As discussed in Chapter 3, Italy played a key role alongside Australia, Canada, the UK, the US and the Gates Foundation in funding the AgResults initiative announced at the Los Cabos summit.

Levels of compliance with G20 commitments between 2008 and 2021 suggest middling levels of performance. Italy is ranked well behind its G7 partners, and is more at home among BRICS countries such as Brazil and India, but ahead of the poorest performers, in ascending order, of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Indonesia (G20 Information Centre 2023). Domestically,

as mentioned above, the Rome G20 summit took place as the world continued to emerge from lockdown and reaccustom itself to face-to-face meetings. As a result, its domestic impact was probably less felt by the Italian people than would have been the case in different times.

Canada has been represented at G20 summits by only two leaders, a consistency in representation that is only bettered by Germany by virtue of Merkel's dominant position in German politics. Canada stands alongside Italy and Japan as countries that cherished the status associated with their G7 membership, even if at times regarded as non-core members, and feared its dilution with the rise of the G20. Thus, the G20's elevation to 'the premier forum for international economic cooperation' was greeted with wariness but ultimately 'a sense of the inevitable' (Kirton 2013, 237). This may partly explain how the Canadian government failed to generate synergy between the G8 and G20 when it hosted back-to-back summits in 2010. Canada also stood in contrast to partners such as France when engaging with civil society. The Toronto summit was organized in a way that excluded and frustrated CSOs, as highlighted in Chapters 1 and 6.

On occasions, Canada has found itself on one side of deeply divisive issues that cut across the subgrouping distinctions that provide the structure of this chapter. As explored in Chapter 3, Canada found itself alongside a collection of G7, BRICS and MIKTA partners opposed to the idea of an FTT as host of the Toronto summit. In the case of security and the Syrian conflict, as seen in Chapter 5, Canada was on the side of the debate that supported collective action against the government of President Bashar al-Assad in response to its use of chemical weapons against its own people in violation of the norms of international society. Again, this issue cut across subgrouping divides within the G20.

Nevertheless, Canada has played a leadership role in the G20. In the form of Paul Martin, it was a key innovator in its creation and development (Cooper 2013a, 972). As regards providing leadership within the G20, Canada's main task was keeping it focused on the most pressing task, the continued recovery from the GFC (Christie 2010). At the height of the GFC, as outlined in Chapter 3, Prime Minister Stephen Harper sought to find a middle path between the extreme positions of the US and Europe at the 2008 Washington summit, showcased Canada's relatively successful navigation through the crisis and advocated selective regulation. As seen in Chapter 4 on sustainable development, alongside its co-chair, South Korea, Canada was instrumental in placing the issue on the G20 agenda and funding the AgResults initiative announced at the 2012 Los Cabos summit.

Levels of compliance with G20 commitments between 2008 and 2021 reinforce Canada's role as a true believer in multilateralism. It sits at the higher end of the spectrum and nested among fellow G7 members and middle powers.

So, just behind the most compliant member of the UK and EU, but just ahead of Germany and Australia (G20 Information Centre 2023). Domestically, the G20 is probably better remembered, as explored in Chapter 6, for the violence and policing, the damage and costs associated with hosting the 2010 Toronto summit.

Prior to the announcement of the AU's permanent membership of the G20 in September 2023, the EU was the only G20 member to be an intergovernmental organization, not a country, and its representation is decided by the organs of the organization. Thus, the EU has been represented at the G20 by presidents of both the European Commission and the European Council, as it has at G7 summits. Although it is not part of the country-based rotation of G20 presidencies, it is effectively a full member in most aspects. Its main challenge has been to speak with a single voice on behalf of its members. Rommerskirchen (2013) has explored the EU's ability to do this in the specific case of macroeconomic policy, arguing that in its initial engagement with the G20, 'the EU has failed to create a consistent system of external representation that might enable it to play a more prominent role on the global stage, considering its overall economic might and the competences that supranational bodies have acquired in the European policy process' (2013, 348).

For example, as highlighted in Chapter 3, the EU could not establish a single position on the FTT with the Commission strongly in favour but the UK, in particular, opposed.

In contrast, Moschella and Quaglia have argued that at least in the case of the G20's most salient economic agenda items, 'a single voice can be developed and publicly articulated even if the preferences of the large member states are heterogeneous, provided that the issues under negotiations are not politically salient' (2016, 907). For example, as seen in Chapter 3, the EU has supported a strong G20 statement in support of anti-protectionism and advocated strict regulation of executive pay and bonuses. Since the first G20 summit, the EU has traditionally caucused before the leaders' summit to establish a common position that is then communicated to the world's media ahead of the summit. A summit tradition of sorts has developed by which the presidents of the European Commission and Council give the first press conference before the leaders' summit begins. As a result of this high level of public and media engagement, the EU's position within the G20 is relatively easy to trace and in some ways is also more stable over time. Inevitably collective action is a repeated theme that is salient in the EU's communications, whether it be the traditional G20 issues such as economic growth, free trade, financial regulation and tax transparency, or newer issues for which the G20 was not created, as discussed below. More specifically, Kalinowski (2019) highlights how the EU's position on responses to the GFC and its preference for austerity, as opposed to the US emphasis on stimulus packages (described by Czech prime

minister, and president of the European Council, Mirek Topolánek as ‘a road to hell’), are rooted in the historical origins of the EU’s model of capitalism.

In terms of the G20’s development, as highlighted in Chapter 2, President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso is one of many who can lay claim to be an architect of the G20. As regards the G20’s agenda, the EU has been willing to support its expansion to include security issues such as sustainable development, as seen in Chapter 4, climate change, as seen in Chapter 5, and terrorism, as seen in Chapter 6. In the case of terrorism, this has been in response to specific crises such as the Syrian conflict. Ahead of the 2013 St Petersburg G20, EU presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso were supportive of the convening of an international conference on the conflict, stating that the international community could not remain idle and should address it through the UN. In the context of the refugee crisis, at the 2015 Antalya summit, the EU’s official position was that ‘[t]he G20 must rise to the challenge and lead a coordinated and innovative response to the crisis that recognises its global nature and economic consequences and promotes greater international solidarity in protecting refugees’ (EU 2015b). A few years later at the Hamburg and Buenos Aires summits, the EU pursued a robust response within the G20 to the issues of migrant smuggling and human trafficking (EU 2017; EU 2018). This included supporting a proposal that would institute targeted UN sanctions against migrant smugglers.

As regards levels of compliance, the EU holds the position of most compliant member, alongside the UK, across commitments made at G20 summits from Washington to Rome (G20 Information Centre 2023). As regards hosting a G20 summit, although the EU is an original and effectively full member of the G20, it is not part of the country-based rotation of G20 presidencies as mentioned above. However, as the G7 demonstrated in 2014 when Russia’s membership was suspended and Brussels stepped in to provide an alternative summit chair and venue, the EU would be capable of taking on this role if necessary.

So, within the G7, cohesion and diversity are in evidence. In the absence of official membership criteria, the G7 is bound together through shared values. Within the more diverse G20, the G7 thus stands in contrast to many, but not all, members of the wider group, thereby strengthening these commonalities. The G7’s response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as discussed in Chapter 6, has provided a lightning conductor to reinforce these bonds within the forums of both the G7 and the G20. Compliance with summit commitments is another commonality within the G7, with generally good to high levels of compliance, especially when contrasted with the wider membership of the G20, as will be discussed below. Divergence can be seen in particular in the early summits and the response to the GFC. As mentioned above, Kalinowski (2019) highlights how the US, Asian and EU positions on responses to the

GFC, based around the choice between austerity and stimulus, cut across the G7 subgroup and can be explained by the historical origins of the different variants of capitalism. Schirm has also demonstrated how responses to economic issues undercut and transgressed traditional distinctions within the G7. For example, US demands that the G20 continue large-scale economic stimulus packages were aimed as much as at fellow G7 members, Germany and Japan, as at China. Both Germany and Brazil were critical of the loose fiscal position of the US because of domestic factors and traditional attitudes and economic practices (2013, 698–699). Schirm has also explored currency manipulation and the impact of undervaluation on trade competitiveness, demonstrating how the US was critical of China’s policies but in turn found itself criticized by Germany and Brazil (2013, 701–702). These two countries were allied in their criticisms of the US as well as China as a result of domestic factors, as had been the case in their concerns over US stimulus packages. Again, it appears that the coherence of traditional and newly formed subgroups can easily be undermined by domestic politics.

8.3 BRICS

At the cusp of a new millennium, Jim O’Neill famously coined the acronym BRIC to identify the rising economic powers that were expected to challenge the central position of the G7 in global economic governance. The acronym became reality in 2009 when Brazil, Russia, India and China met at their first summit in Yekaterinburg. South Africa was invited as a guest to the second BRIC summit in Brasília in 2010 before BRIC became BRICS the following year in Sanya, China. From 2014, with the Fortaleza summit, the rotation of BRICS summits began in line with the acronym. The third cycle of summits was completed in 2023 with the Durban summit at which Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were invited to join the bloc. As is the case with the G7, this order provides a logical structure to explore each member of this subgroup.

In terms of representation at the G20, Brazil has experienced a journey that began with Lula da Silva in 2008 and ended with him returning to the presidency at the beginning of 2023. In the intervening period, Brazil was represented at the G20 by three other leaders – Dilma Rousseff, Michel Temer and Jair Bolsonaro, although ministerial alternates have been delegated on occasion. Regardless of leader, Brazil regards its G20 membership as overdue recognition, although it has been much more vocal than others in its criticisms of the old order. This can be seen in Lula da Silva’s placing blame for the GFC firmly on white men with blue eyes, as seen in Chapter 3. In addition, he declared that ‘[w]e are talking about the G20 because the G8 doesn’t have any more reason to exist’.⁸ So, Brazil has been a vocal supporter of the G20

from its outset. It chaired the forum at the finance minister's level in 2008 as the GFC erupted and, as seen in Chapter 2, argued for its upgrade to the leaders' level in order to create a more 'agile' group. It supported the elevation of the G20 to the 'premier forum of global economic cooperation' at the 2009 Pittsburgh summit. As regards G20 reform, 'Brazil was comfortable with the gradual shift in the G20's focus from that of "crisis breaker" to "steering committee" for global economic and financial governance' (Doctor 2015, 295). At various times, Brazil has argued for a greater institutionalization of the G20. According to de Freitas Barbosa and Mendes (2010, 67),

the ultimate interest of Brazil in the G20 is to institutionalize its role as a decision maker in all arenas of the international economy, alongside other BRIC countries. Once that is consolidated, Brazil will most likely try to combine a strategy that strengthens its political position as leader of the developing world with a pragmatic approach that defends the economic interests of its increasingly internationalized business community.

So, alongside the status and prestige that comes with G20 membership, claiming the role of leader of the developing world is also a common reaction that has emerged among BRICS countries. In other words, as Doctor (2015) has argued, Brazil has begun to supplement its previous foreign policy priority of national economic development with a quest for status and prestige as a leader of the developing world within the G20 and other institutions of global governance. In this light, and like other BRICS countries, Brazil has used its position to argue for IFI reform and a breakthrough on stalled trade negotiations in the WTO.

However, Brazil's support for the G20 is not unconditional. It has been concerned that the G20 should not undermine the position of the UN as the legitimate and legal centre of global governance. This is a position Brazil shares with other countries seeking a permanent seat on the UNSC. So, similar to fellow BRICS countries, Brazil has enjoyed the status and opportunities presented by its inclusion in the G20 but has balanced this by continuing to emphasize the central position of the formal and legal centres of global governance within the UN system (Doctor 2015, 297).

As regards levels of compliance across the commitments made at G20 summits from Washington to Rome, BRICS compliance is noticeably lower than G7 compliance on average for reasons that will be discussed below. Within BRICS, Brazil is the second most compliant country, behind China but comparable with India and ahead of Russia and South Africa (G20 Information Centre 2023). As regards the domestic reception, Brazil has yet to host a summit but will assume the G20 presidency on 1 December 2023.

As regards Russia, it has been represented by two leaders over seventeen summits, with Dmitry Medvedev attending the first six summits between 2008

and 2011 and Vladimir Putin attended ten summits between 2012 and 2021. This gives Russia a high degree of consistency in its representation at the G20. However, Putin has been willing not to attend in person, as was the case at the 2021 Rome summit where he attended online, and at the 2022 Bali summit, where Russia was represented by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who left the summit a day earlier than scheduled. Putin has also been willing to leave the summit early, as seen in Brisbane when he complained that ‘[i]t’s nine hours by plane to Vladivostok, then nine hours to Moscow. I have to get home on Monday to get to work and I need four to five hours sleep.’⁹ Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine raises the question of when/if Putin will attend another G20 leaders’ summit.

The lack of engagement seen in Putin’s participation is mirrored in the levels of compliance with the commitments made at the sixteen summits that took place between 2008 and 2021. Russia ranks towards the lower end of any scale. Within BRICS, Russia is the second least compliant country, on a par with South Africa. Within the G20, it is the fifth least compliant country. Even hosting the G20 did not appear to result in an uptick in Russia’s levels of compliance (G20 Information Centre 2023). As regards the domestic reception, Russia assumed the G20 presidency in 2013 and hosted the leaders’ summit in St Petersburg. As seen in Chapter 7, the accompanying international popular and media attention focused on human rights’ issues within Russia, particularly LGBT+ rights, accusations that the Russian government spied on other countries’ delegations, and the low levels of protest ahead of and during what proved to be a closely stage-managed event.

Nevertheless, looking back over seventeen summits, Russia’s contribution to G20 governance can be discerned. In response to the GFC, as seen in Chapter 3, Russia under Medvedev was for the most part supportive of many of the measures adopted by the G20, including reform of the IMF at Washington and Brown’s position on stimulus at London. On specific issues, the 2013 St Petersburg summit saw the adoption of the G20/OECD BEPS Action Plan. As regards the place of development on the G20’s agenda, as seen in Chapter 4, Russia contributed through the expansion of the G20’s remit on the issue through the St Petersburg Development Outlook, and a review of the G20’s treatment of the issue up to that point and a reprioritization of the G20’s efforts. Sustainable energy policy is another issue that Russia has been ready to engage with in the G20, as seen in Chapter 5, and as evidenced by the establishment of the Energy Sustainability Working Group (ESWG), co-chaired by India and Australia, at St Petersburg. As outlined in Chapter 6, Russia was willing to use the G20 as a forum for the informal discussion of conflict in Syria through multilateral and bilateral meetings, while continuing to prioritize the position of the UNSC. Finally, despite the tight control of protest at the St Petersburg summit and within Russia generally, it has ironically contributed to

the G20's evolving legitimacy through the establishment of the C20 as an official engagement group at the 2013 St Petersburg summit (Cooper and Pouliot 2015; Naylor 2023).

India has been represented by only two prime ministers since the 2008 Washington summit: Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi. India's position towards the G20 in general is that 'existing institutional structures of global governance do not reflect current international realities' (Sachdeva 2022, 85) and thus it has welcomed the opportunity presented by the upgrading of the G20 to have its voice heard on a range of issues. Terrorism represents a particularly salient example, as seen in Chapter 6. Similarly, it was Modi's words that concluded paragraph 4 of the Leaders' declaration: 'Today's era must not be of war' (G20 Information Centre 2022a; Niblett 2022). India hosted the 2002 meeting of the G20 at the finance ministers' level and was meant to host the leaders in 2022 to coincide with the 75th anniversary of its independence. However, the decision was made in 2020 to move it to 2023.

However, the tension for India and other countries that aspire to a permanent seat on the UNSC, whether they be members of the G7 or BRICS, has lain in the difference between an informal grouping like the G20, struggling with legitimacy and effectiveness, and a formal, legitimate centre of global governance in the form of the UN. In this light, India has been more wary of the G20 than some of its other BRICS partners. Cooper and Stolte outline the hedging strategy by which it initially 'carefully balanced joining the informal G20 by robustly asserting its commitment to the formal UN' (2019, 707). So, India was also ready to accept the status associated with G20 membership but gave a lukewarm response to and engagement with the preparations for the first Washington summit (Cooper and Farooq 2016, 92). Since then, it has displayed some resistance to the expansion of the G20's role and agenda and has stressed the position of the UN over the G20 on several issues, including sustainable development (Chapter 4), climate change (Chapter 5) and security (Chapter 6).

Nevertheless, in the lead-up to its assumption of the G20 presidency on 1 December 2022, India began to take a more visible and proactive role in raising its leadership profile under the wide-ranging slogan of *One Earth, One Family, One Future*. India has also regarded itself as a voice for the voiceless within the G20, as was seen at the first Washington summit and particularly on the issues of sustainable development and food security.

Over seventeen G20 summits, India has taken a robust position on specific issues. For example, as seen in Chapter 6, at the 2019 Osaka summit, India refused to sign up to Prime Minister Abe's DFFT initiative. As seen in Chapter 3, Herman and Cooper (2013, 403) single out India among several other countries as 'the worst offenders' for introducing discriminatory trade measures despite G20 commitments. So, as regards levels of compliance

across the commitments made at sixteen summits from Washington to Rome, India has a below-average level of compliance that is comparable with Brazil, both behind China as the most compliant BRICS country, but ahead of Russia and South Africa (G20 Information Centre 2023). As regards the domestic reception, India hosted its first G20 in September 2023. However, in the run up to the summit, it was clear that the G20 coming to India was regarded at the popular level as recognition for India's growing status in the world.

As regards China's participation in the G20, it has been represented by two leaders: Hu Jintao at the first seven summits from Washington to Los Cabos in 2012, and Xi Jinping from St Petersburg in 2013 onwards. Clearly this represents a high degree of consistency across seventeen G20 summits. Yet, the trajectory of China and Xi's engagement with the G20 was impacted severely by Covid-19. As a result of the pandemic, Xi did not physically leave China for over two years until his state visit to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in September 2022, followed by his attendance at the Bali summit in November. For a process that relies heavily on informal, in-person and interpersonal interactions, this was a substantial and potentially damaging disengagement and one that Xi sought to address by proactively and visibly making his presence felt at the G20 in Bali (Agrawal 2022).

Kirton neatly sifts the literature into competing schools of thought on China's role in the G20, including 'passive self-interested status seeker', 'emerging country caucus leader', 'BRICS leader', 'failed Asian leader', 'balancer and bridge builder', 'cooperative reformer', 'flexible inter-vulnerable equal', 'G2 duopolist', 'major power in a constraining club', 'proactive reinforcer, reformer and replacer', 'successful system reformer', and 'global governance co-leader' (2016, 1–8). Of course, these roles are not mutually exclusive and China has displayed one or more of them at any given time over fifteen years of G20 summitry.

As demonstrated in the previous chapters of this book, a steady pattern of development in China's role is discernible. Its approach to the early summits at the height of the GFC was one characterized by initial caution and suspicion towards the G20, wary of expanding its agenda and reinforced by a preference for the UN. However, at the same time, it welcomed and luxuriated in the de facto recognition and status as a great power that membership of the G20 accorded, as well as the specific attention given to China as the first among equals within the new additions to an expanded summit table. This ultimately resulted in a more instrumentalist approach to G20 leadership (Kirton 2016), which also reassured the world that China sought to operate within the status quo rather than promote a revisionist agenda (Cooper and Farooq 2016, 86–90). Certainly, China sought to address obvious injustices and anomalies, such as World Bank and IMF reform, but within given structures and processes, making it 'a reform-minded status quo power' (Ren 2015).

This cautious approach changed with China's G20 presidency and the 2016 Hangzhou summit, by which it 'recast its engagement as leadership' (McKinney 2018, 710). The epiphanic role of summit host is not unique to China and can be seen in established and rising powers alike. This development should also be seen as part of a continuum that includes hosting other international mega-events such as the 2008 Olympics and 2014 APEC summit in Beijing.¹⁰ In the words of Gregory Chin in relation to China and the World Bank, this is 'remaking, not breaking' (2010b, 91). Ultimately, the relationship between China and the G20 is mutually beneficial and reinforcing (Bo 2021, 117–119). The G20 benefits from its recognition of China and its position in the global economy in that it can justify its claim to be the premier forum for international global cooperation – the legitimacy that is absent in more exclusive groups like the G7. China benefits from membership of the G20 in several ways that might appear contradictory but reflect China's recent history and current position in the world. It provides both status and recognition as a contemporary great power, as well as providing a central conduit to pursue its various national economic interests, give fellow developing countries a voice in a central mechanism of global governance, and provide global public goods as befits its position.

China has also adopted a strategy of working in coalition with other G20 countries. Kirton and Wang (2023) provide the example of the China–UK coalition on green finance, which resulted in wider acceptance among the G20 of the Green Finance Study Group's recommendations, as outlined in the G20 leaders' communiqué that resulted from the 2016 Hangzhou summit. In contrast, Kirton and Wang also highlight the contrasting unsuccessful attempt by China to build a coalition with the US and EU on the Enhanced Structural Reform Agenda.

China's evolving relationship with the G20 is also captured by its levels of compliance with commitments made at summits between 2008 and 2021, which place it at the head of the BRICS countries and in the middle of the wider G20 (G20 Information Centre 2023). As regards the domestic reception, as discussed in Chapter 7, China hosted the G20 leaders' summit in Hangzhou in September 2016, in what proved to be a closely stage-managed event. Hangzhou was carefully chosen as the summit venue to showcase local, regional and national achievements to the outside world, residents were actively encouraged to leave the city during the summit, and journalists were ferried to and from the airport, hotel and media centre. It was also rumoured to be one of the most expensive summits in G20 history as Hangzhou benefited from a considerable amount of investment in infrastructure.

South Africa has been represented by three presidents at the seventeen G20 summits between 2008 and 2022. Kgalema Motlanthe attended the first two summits at Washington and London, before Jacob Zuma then assumed the

presidency for a decade between 2009 and 2018. Cyril Ramaphosa became president and has represented South Africa from the 2018 Buenos Aires summit onwards, although he delegated the 2021 Rome summit to Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, in order to campaign in domestic elections. As outlined in Chapter 4, South Africa's participation at the G20 is guided by its four strategic foreign policy pillars, focused on domestic objectives and national interest; the promotion of issues of interest to Africa and its development; shaping the architecture of global governance; and the advancement of the Global South's agenda through South–South cooperation and North–South dialogue. It has probably been most successful in the second and fourth objectives by seeking to mainstream sustainable development within the G20's agenda and bring the attention of the wider group to African issues. To this end, South Africa was closely involved in developing the 2010 Seoul Development Consensus, and welcomed the establishment of the G20 Global Infrastructure Hub at the 2014 Brisbane summit as well as the G20 Africa Partnership at the 2017 Hamburg summit. At the same time, although the chairs of the AU and NEPAD have attended the G20 as guests and the former was finally recognized as a permanent member in September 2023, South Africa is the only African country to be represented. As a result, it has assumed the mantle of regional leadership. As mentioned in Chapter 2, South Africa sought to amplify the region's voice in the G20 by using several regional mechanisms (Cooper 2011a, 207).

As regards shaping the architecture of global governance, South Africa hosted a meeting of the G20 at the finance ministers' level in 2007 and was supportive of the upgrading to the leader's level in 2008 to create 'a new space for dialogue and a springboard for new ideas in the international sphere' (Postel-Vinay 2014, 2). However, like several other G7 and BRICS countries, South Africa has maintained the position of the UN as the central mechanism of global governance especially when it comes to issues outside the G20's traditional remit.

South Africa is often perceived to have a marginal role within the G20 (Obi 2015). This is most starkly reflected in its levels of compliance with commitments made at the sixteen summits that took place between 2008 and 2021, and which are similar to those of Russia. Within BRICS, South Africa is the least compliant country; within the G20, it is the fourth least compliant country. South Africa has yet to assume the G20 presidency and host a leader's summit. This is all set to change in 2025, although whether it will respond to the responsibilities of hosting the G20 with higher levels of compliance remains to be seen.

In summary, it is clear that several commonalities emerge that make BRICS more than an acronym. First and foremost, the status and recognition associated with joining an elite club represents one of the key aspects of their mem-

bership within the G20 and has enabled them to move beyond their position as outreach partners in a semi-permanent state of liminality. This narrative has been framed as one of justice as the voices of emerging powers are brought into global governance alongside the G7. Building on this, BRICS countries have also used their position within the G20 as a driver to increase the attention given to the concerns of the Global South in global governance. However, there is a tension between these two positions of insider and outsider that has resulted in some BRICS countries adopting cautious approaches or ‘hedging strategies’ (Ünay 2014). Cooper points out, in the case of China and India, how both identities can coexist, creating a dualistic mindset that results in an ambivalence towards global governance, which China has been able to manage but India has struggled to reconcile. On the one hand, China has kept ‘options open and not over-committ[ed] in terms of either status seeking or solidarity’ within the G20 as it moves to a leadership role at its own pace and on its own terms (2021, 1952). However, India has been unable to resolve the apparent contradictions of this mindset, resulting in a hesitant and cautious approach to G20 leadership. This may change with India’s G20 presidency acting as a catalyst during 2023 (and by extension in the cases of Brazil and South Africa in 2024 and 2025 respectively). The responsibility associated with hosting the G20 may also address one of the negative commonalities shared by BRICS countries in the form of noticeably lower levels of compliance with G20 commitments.

Since the first BRIC summit in 2008 held in Russia, a sense of cohesion and mutual support among BRICS countries has emerged within the G20 and in opposition to the G7. This has been fostered by pre-summit meetings of BRICS countries to share information and compare positions on the key agenda items, which have become the norm over time. In the slightly mangled words of Russian presidential aide, Yuri Ushakov, ‘BRICS is a good floor for the joint protection of interests of member countries with dynamic economies on the world scene’.¹¹ More concretely, at the 2013 St Petersburg summit, Putin specifically praised Zuma for having done a ‘remarkable thing’ by highlighting the unintended consequences of attacking Syria, and acting ‘as a champion of small nations opposing US-led Western plans to attack Syria militarily’.¹² With future expansion of the bloc and Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, this level of coherence may or may not survive. It was China, India and South Africa who abstained in the UNGA votes calling on Russian to end its aggression and refusing to recognize Russia’s annexation of parts of Ukraine. However, Brazil, India and South Africa also fit into the non-aligned camp, identified by Kang (2022), who wish to avoid taking sides.

8.4 MIKTA

From 2010, non-G7 countries began to assume the G20 presidency, as seen first with South Korea and the Seoul summit of November of that year, followed by Mexico in 2012, Australia in 2014 and Türkiye in 2015. Although it would not host a G20 summit until 2022, Indonesia also fitted into this category of traditional middle powers, leading to the emergence of a new acronym of MIKTA. The idea of this subgroup was first discussed at the first G20 foreign ministers' meeting held under the Mexican presidency in February 2012, with the first meeting of MIKTA foreign ministers realized on the sidelines of the UNGA the following year. According to its own webpages, MIKTA was intended to be 'a cross-regional and flexible consultative platform among five democracies that benefit from open economies with significant global and regional influences'. Since then the chair of MIKTA has rotated on an annual basis and regular meetings of foreign ministers and senior officials have taken place throughout the year. However, leaders of the MIKTA countries have resisted the impulse to meet and formalize the subgroup, although they did meet on the sidelines of the 2022 Bali summit. The acronym provides a logical order by which to explore the role and leadership of each member of this subgroup within the G20.

Mexican presidents serve non-extendable six-year terms. So, three presidents have represented Mexico at seventeen G20 summits between 2008 and 2022: Felipe Calderón at the early summits at the height of the GFC through to the Los Cabos summit of 2012; Enrique Peña Nieto represented Mexico through to the 2018 Buenos Aires summit; and Andrés Manuel López Obrador won a landslide election in July 2019 a few days after the Osaka summit, but chose not to attend the Rome and Bali G20 summits, instead sending Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard as head of Mexico's delegation at these three summits.

Despite López Obrador's apparent shunning of the G20, Mexico had previously taken its role in the G20 seriously. It was the first G5 country to host a G20 summit and ahead of the 2012 Los Cabos summit it was eager to ensure a successful summit, especially in light of the disruption caused by the sovereign debt crisis at the previous year's Cannes summit. To this end, a 'broad agenda with specific deliverables' was promoted as part of its preparations, which were described as thorough, transparent and inclusive, involving regular meetings of G20 ministers, engagement groups and non-G20 countries. The Mexican government petitioned the EU to try to coordinate efforts to resolve the sovereign debt crisis ahead of Los Cabos to avoid the summit becoming a casualty of the ongoing crisis.¹³ In terms of G20 governance, as outlined in Chapter 2, it contributed by establishing the first informal meeting of the

G20 foreign ministers in February 2012, ahead of the leaders' summit. It innovated by formally establishing the T20 official engagement group of think tankers and academics, and proactively brought the voices of civil society into discussions at an early stage, ahead of Los Cabos, in a constructive way that was widely praised. In terms of agenda, and as seen in Chapters 4 and 5, the Mexican presidency also played a leadership role by placing climate change and development issues on the agenda of the Los Cabos summit. This was in line with Mexico's hosting of the G20 finance ministers in 2003 when the focus was placed on poverty reduction, development assistance and the MDGs (Cooper and Thakur 2013, 45). Thereafter, Mexico continued to contribute to the G20, and in innovative ways, as seen in the part played by the Mexican Agency of International Cooperation for Development in the German presidency's development and adoption of the VPLM to foster knowledge-sharing around the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as discussed in Chapter 4 (Villanueva Ulfgard and Vega 2019, 635–636). However, in many ways, Los Cabos represents the high point of Mexican leadership within the G20.

In terms of compliance with G20 commitments across the sixteen summits between 2008 and 2021, Mexico finds itself in the middle of MIKTA in terms of compliance and sixth lowest, just ahead of Russia, within the wider G20 (G20 Information Centre 2023). As regards domestic reception, Mexico's general election, held eleven days after the 2012 Los Cabos summit, demonstrated that there are no votes in summits.

The Indonesian presidency is based on a five-year term that can be renewed once. As a result, its representation at the seventeen G20 summits between 2008 and 2022 has been remarkably consistent with Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono attending the first eight summits up to and including the 2013 St Petersburg summit, and Joko Widodo attending from the 2014 Brisbane summit onwards and hosting the 2022 Bali summit. As explored in Chapter 2, Indonesia was selected to be part of the original G20 because of its regional status in South East Asia, instead of Malaysia and Thailand. Alongside Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, it also contributed to the Muslim world's levels of representation. Its membership has been described as 'a surprising moment' and 'not only an honour but also a responsibility towards the international community' (Salim 2011, 98). So, since 2008, Indonesia has advocated on behalf of developing countries more broadly, as seen in Chapter 3 at the time of the GFC, and has adopted a regional leadership role on behalf of ASEAN within the G20. However, this role is not one way and immutable. Alexandroff (2015, 261) has highlighted ASEAN's 'tug' on Indonesian policy, while referring to Wihardja's (2014) discussion of a more balanced 'post-ASEAN foreign policy' under Yudhoyono, whereby ASEAN, the G20 and other forums occupy an equal status.

In terms of leadership, within the G20, Indonesia has been vocal on a number of issues. Yudhoyono was supportive of including climate change on an expanded agenda. Armstrong (2019) has highlighted Indonesia's willingness to take a robust position in defending multilateral principles of trade at the 2019 Osaka G20, as discussed in Chapter 6 with reference to Japan's Prime Minister Abe's signature policy of the 'Osaka Track'. During its G20 presidency, expectations were low that the Indonesian hosts would be able to navigate the turbulence caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine, as well as the energy and cost-of-living crises. However, summit observers were pleasantly surprised with the outcomes and the fact that a leaders' declaration was agreed by emphasizing the G20's economic remit. As part of this effort, Widodo's role was praised:

[He] laid the groundwork for this constructive outcome with his pre-summit global shuttle diplomacy, which included trips to Washington DC, Moscow and Beijing. His plausibility as a neutral convenor at a time of sharp international tensions was buttressed by the fact that while Indonesia has condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine at the UN, it has not imposed sanctions on Russia in response. (Niblett 2022)

However, as regards compliance with G20 commitments, across the sixteen summits between 2008 and 2021, Indonesia has the lowest level among MIKTA countries and the third lowest within the wider G20, only slightly better than Türkiye and Saudi Arabia (G20 Information Centre 2023). It remains to be seen if this will change after Indonesia's G20 presidency. In terms of the G20's domestic reception, the Indonesian government has accorded the Bali summit and the 2023 ASEAN summit similar amounts of funds. To ensure a smooth summit, the authorities temporarily reintroduced some Covid-19 restrictions, limited the movement of people, and urged the public to refrain from demonstrating.

Similar to the Mexican presidency, South Korean presidents serve a single non-extendable five-year term. So, four presidents in total have represented South Korea across seventeen G20 summits between 2008 and 2022: Lee Myung-bak at the first five summits between Washington in 2008 and Los Cabos in 2012; Park Geun-hye from St Petersburg in 2013 to Hangzhou in 2016 and her impeachment later the same year; Moon Jae-in from Hamburg in 2017 to Rome in 2021; and Yoon Suk-yeol from the 2022 Bali summit onwards.

South Korea grasped the opportunity of its G20 presidency to record several firsts: the first non-G7 country to hold the presidency and the first G20 summit to be hosted in Asia. As seen in Chapter 7, the South Korean presidency and 2010 Seoul summit were woven into a narrative of South Korea's arrival on the international stage, an objective that would later be articulated as becom-

ing a ‘global pivotal state’. To this end, South Korea took the opportunity to showcase its own model of development and recovery from World War 2 and the Cold War. President Lee described the Seoul summit as instrumental in his country moving from being a follower to a leader that stands tall in the international community, and the young people of Korea as the ‘G20 Generation’ who will be at the forefront of their country’s global presence.

Despite the various firsts and rhetoric, South Korea assumed the G20 presidency at a challenging time as the urgency of the GFC was beginning to dissipate. In this context, the South Korean presidency approached its G20 in a pragmatic way. In Lee’s words,

it is unrealistic to expect that countries will have uniform positions on every key issue because each of them has a different economic situation and policy background. What really counts is to demonstrate a spirit of concession and compromise through concerted efforts. As a matter of fact, the strength of the G20 lies in the fact that even though the process of reaching a consensus is difficult, the impact and ripple effect of any agreement will be enormous.¹⁴

South Korea’s identity as a middle power meant it was predisposed to play the role of arbiter in finding a compromise. Hence, it sought to strike a cooperative balance between developed and developing countries, place an emphasis on outreach activities to non-G20 countries and take an inclusive approach to an agenda that placed development firmly on the agenda through the Seoul Development Consensus, as seen in Chapter 4. The South Korean presidency also took an innovative approach to G20 governance by establishing a summit of business leaders that would become the official engagement group of the B20, as seen in Chapter 2. Thus, South Korea was able to demonstrate G20 leadership while engaging in national branding activities, prompting one summit observer to describe its style as ‘entrepreneurial leadership’ (Cooper 2013a, 977).

Like all G20 countries, South Korea has taken the opportunity afforded by the G20 summit to pursue bilateral discussions with its key partners. In the case of the Seoul summit, discussions between Lee and Obama were focused on the Korea–US free trade agreement and the stalled six-party talks on North Korea’s denuclearization.¹⁵ In the case of the Hamburg summit, Moon met with his Chinese and Japanese counterparts to improve the state of their bilateral relations and regional security issues.

In terms of compliance with G20 commitments across the sixteen summits between 2008 and 2021, South Korea is the second most compliant MIKTA country, behind Australia, but with a similar level of compliance to the G7 countries of Japan and the US (G20 Information Centre 2023). As regards domestic reception, the South Korean government launched an awareness-raising campaign four months ahead of the Seoul summit and

appointed goodwill ambassadors to support its work: Olympic figure skating champion Kim Yu-na, Manchester United striker Park Ji-sung and actress Han Hyo-joo.¹⁶ As seen in Chapter 7, the Seoul summit was generally regarded positively by the Korean people as part of a coordinated effort to demonstrate their country's growing importance on the international stage.

In terms of representation at G20 summits between 2008 and 2022, Türkiye stands alongside Germany in having a single leader, for the most part, attending all the G20 summits between 2008 and 2022. Either as prime minister or president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan represented Türkiye at sixteen summits, only missing out on the 2014 Brisbane summit, which was attended by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. Ünay (2014, 138) neatly summarizes Türkiye's position within and towards the G20:

As an emerging power located in the midst of strategically important regions of the Balkans, Caucasia, the Middle East and North Africa, Türkiye greatly has valued the G20 since its inception as a crucial platform of global economic governance. Given Türkiye's growing diplomatic activism and expanding economic relations with regions such as Latin America, East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa over the course of the last decade, the rotating presidency of the G20 in 2015 was seen as a great opportunity to improve the country's global profile even further. The political leadership also perceived this presidency as an opportunity to reflect Türkiye's main emphasis in diplomatic relations on development issues by trying to form linkages between the members of the G20 and the least developed countries in different geographies.

This pursuit of a global profile is slightly complicated by Türkiye's history, as demonstrated by Parlar Dal (2019) who points to the tension behind its past position as a great power but its current status of a middle power. Nevertheless, Türkiye has demonstrated G20 leadership. In terms of the agenda, it has supported a 'comprehensive agenda' that recognizes the interconnected nature of global challenges and extends from addressing the GFC, to macroeconomic cooperation, to embracing development, climate change and energy transitions, and security, in particular terrorism. In the case of the latter issue, this was partly a result of the issue of being thrust onto the agenda at Antalya through the Paris shooting on the eve of the summit, but also reflects Türkiye's regional concerns in the Middle East, particularly over Syria. The ability to keep the G20 on track and together in the face of unexpected events was evident under the Turkish presidency, which worked towards a well-prepared agenda focused on promoting growth based on inclusiveness, implementation and investment but had to respond to the demands of sudden and unanticipated events. As regards membership, Türkiye has acted as a regional leader, as reflected in its guests invited to Antalya, as well as the role it has assumed as a bridge builder between developed and developing countries within the G20 (Parlar Dal and Kurşun 2018). As regards G20 governance, it welcomed the

upgrading of the G20 to the leaders' level in 2008 and has contributed to the development of G20 governance over time, for example by establishing the W20 as an official engagement group during its G20 presidency.

As regards domestic reception, as mentioned in Chapter 7, ahead of the 2015 Antalya summit, Erdoğan was in a slightly precarious domestic position so the G20 summit presented him with an opportunity to burnish Türkiye's reputation on the global stage and by association his own. However, this engagement with the G20 has not translated into compliance with G20 commitments. Across the sixteen summits between 2008 and 2021, Türkiye has the lowest level among MIKTA countries and the second lowest within the wider G20, only slightly better than Saudi Arabia (G20 Information Centre 2023).

Finally, as regards Australia, a turbulent period in its political history has inevitably been reflected in its representation within the seventeen summits between 2008 and 2022. Kevin Rudd was prime minister at the height of the GFC through to his resignation in 2010. Thereafter, Julia Gillard became leader of the Labor Party and Australia's first female prime minister until Rudd returned in 2013 for a short while, before losing a federal election to a Liberal–National coalition headed by Tony Abbott. Abbott was replaced as Liberal Party leader by Malcolm Turnbull, who in turn was replaced by Scott Morrison. In 2022, the Labor Party led by Anthony Albanese returned to power after a federal election victory. Within this turbulence, deputy prime ministers and foreign ministers have attended the G20 in place of prime ministers at some G20 summits. Despite a revolving door of prime ministers, Australia has demonstrated sustained engagement with and contribution to the G20. Melissa Conley Taylor describes the G20 as 'a high priority' for Australia as part of a 6+2+N foreign policy (the six key bilateral relationships – the US, China, Japan, India, Indonesia and South Korea) – the two key multilateral organizations – the G20 and East Asia summit – and the immediate neighbourhood of the Pacific (Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies Renmin University of China 2016, 101).

Rudd can lay claim to being one of the architects of the G20, having lobbied Bush to upgrade the G20 to the leaders' level in 2008. In his speech to the UNGA in September 2008, Rudd advocated an overhaul of the global financial regulatory system that increased the roles of the FSF and IMF. The role of the G20 within this was to provide the political authority to promote urgent and comprehensive implementation. He was also eager to increase the voice of rising powers through an iterative G20 process: 'I believe China and India do deserve a greater place at the international table. One of the ways in which that can be secured is through the continuation of the G20 into the future.'¹⁷ Unsurprisingly, Rudd supported the G20's self-appointment as the 'premier forum for international economic cooperation' at Pittsburgh in 2009. In terms of shaping the G20's agenda, Australia used its G20 presidency to dedicate

time and space to the discussion of energy issues for the first time, promoted the targets of increasing growth by 2 per cent in five years and reducing the gender participation gap in G20 labour markets by 25 per cent by 2025. In terms of delivering concrete outcomes, the Australian presidency can point to the creation of the G20 Infrastructure Hub.

At the same time, the pursuit of status and recognition for the growing importance of Australia as a middle-ranking trading power have been evident alongside the promotion of an enhanced role for the G20.¹⁸ The significance attached to its presidency of the G20 was evident when Abbott described the 2014 Brisbane summit as ‘the most influential and significant gathering that’s ever been held in our country’ (G20 Information Centre 2014e). To this end, ‘koala diplomacy’ was on display at the Brisbane summit, with Abbott posing for photo opportunities with the world’s leaders and a koala (Harris Rimmer 2014).¹⁹ However, a degree of status anxiety is also discernible. For example, Australia opposed Spain’s membership of the G20 on the rationale that it would open a Pandora’s Box of membership claims from countries and run the risk of diluting the status associated with membership of the G20 (Naylor 2019b, 81, 92).

Australia’s internationalist credentials have thus come under scrutiny. For example, Rudd chose to skip the 2013 St Petersburg summit in order to fight a federal election campaign at home. Under its G20 presidency the following year, Australia’s government pursued a ‘mean and lean’ agenda (Downie and Crump 2017, 684), with a tight economic focus that it found difficult to maintain in the face of pressure from the US and China, as outlined in Chapter 5. In particular, the issue of climate change and Australia’s continued reliance on fossil fuels have been the foci of criticism internationally and within the G20. Abbott was seen to have tried unsuccessfully to resist the issue at the Brisbane summit, and other leaders have been active in using the G20 to defend the country’s climate policies. Morrison withdrew support from the GCF in 2018, resisted any unambiguous and explicit commitments to phase out coal at the 2021 Rome summit and ahead of COP26 in Glasgow, and defended Australia’s record on emissions reduction.²⁰

Nevertheless, Australia has the highest level of compliance with G20 commitments among MIKTA countries across the sixteen summits between 2008 and 2021. Within the wider G20, its levels of compliance surpass those of the G7 countries of France, Japan and the US and are not far behind Canada and Germany (G20 Information Centre 2023). As explored in Chapter 7, hosting the G20 contributed to the reputation of the city of Brisbane. Over 2,000 tourism and hospitality workers, taxi drivers and volunteers completed a training programme with the objective of communicating the city’s image as a friendly city. According to Tourism Australia Managing Director John O’Sullivan: ‘Brisbane is not just hosting a meeting of some of the world’s most

important leaders, it has created a total G20 city experience for all summit attendees that is simultaneously showcasing some of the exceptional food, facilities and culture we have on offer here in Australia' (ASE 2014).

In summary, within MIKTA, convergence and diversity are both in evidence across seventeen G20 summits. The common aspects of MIKTA countries' behaviour within the G20 revolve around status and recognition, much as is the case within BRICS, if not more. National branding is clearly evident among MIKTA countries, especially when hosting a G20. All MIKTA countries have gone to great lengths, more so than G7 and BRICS countries, to ensure successful summits, while at the same time using the opportunity presented by a summit to showcase their respective histories, cultures and achievements.

In terms of summit performance, Ünay has argued that one shared characteristic among MIKTA countries is that 'middle powers acting as insiders in the G20 showed a high degree of commitment to the activities of the forum. More often than not, they were able to increase their policy effectiveness by focusing on specific and targeted activities within the G20 and forming coalitions through various working groups' (2014, 150). So, in this context, the role of a bridge builder has emerged as a shared role among MIKTA countries. At the same time, another commonality is that they have attempted to assume the role of representative of their immediate regions or the Global South, which can provide a tension with the objective of seeking status within the G20 and commitment to the forum. In other words, the dualistic mindset that Cooper refers to within BRICS on the part of China and India, as outlined above, is equally applicable to MIKTA countries, as demonstrated by Indonesia and its dual roles in the G20 and ASEAN.

However, divergence is also evident. For example, Türkiye has been in favour of broadening the G20's agenda to include security for example, whereas Australia sought to keep it focused on economic issues. In terms of compliance across the sixteen summits between 2008 and 2021, the diversity across MIKTA countries comes most starkly into relief. On the one hand, Australia is more at home among the G7, whereas Indonesia and Türkiye exhibit some of the lowest levels of compliance among G20 members (G20 Information Centre 2023). In this regard, MIKTA appears to be little more than an acronym.

8.5 ARGENTINA AND SAUDI ARABIA

In August 2023 at the BRICS summit held in Durban, Argentina and Saudi Arabia were invited to join the bloc alongside Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. This invitation will take effect from 2024 and is still being considered at the time of writing. However, for the purposes of this

book and its focus on the period between 2008 and 2022, Argentina and Saudi Arabia are treated as not belonging to any subgroup.

Argentina's presidency is based on a four-year term that can be renewed once. In this context, Argentina was represented by Cristina Fernández de Kirchner from the 2008 Washington summit to the 2013 St Petersburg summit. She was unable to attend the 2014 Brisbane summit due to illness, nor the 2015 Antalya summit, in light of an impending election that signalled the end of her second term. So, Argentina was represented by Economic Minister Axel Kicillof and Foreign Minister Héctor Timerman at these two summits. Thereafter, Mauricio Macri served a single presidential term and represented Argentina at the G20 summits between the 2016 Hangzhou summit and 2019 Osaka summit that bookended Argentina's G20 presidency in 2018. Macri lost the following year's election and was replaced by Alberto Fernández, who attended the G20 summits from Riyadh in 2020 (albeit virtually) to New Delhi in September 2023, but will not seek re-election in the poll scheduled for October 2023.

Akin to the experience of BRICS and MIKTA countries, G20 membership conferred a considerable degree of status and recognition on Argentina. This was all the more significant as its membership had been questioned, but in the end it won out over regional competitors like Chile. Assuming the G20 presidency was an opportunity to add to this status and recognition, Argentina's presidency was built around the slogan of *Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development* and as might be expected of a first-time host whose membership of the G20 has been questioned, Macri stressed the central role of the G20, calling it 'the world's preeminent forum' not only for economic but political cooperation. Argentina's priorities supported the expansion of the G20's agenda by including infrastructure for development and a sustainable food future. In terms of G20 governance, a climate sustainability working group was established under the Argentinian presidency.

In line with BRICS and MIKTA countries, Argentina has also sought to play a regional leadership role. This was seen at the Buenos Aires summit by inviting several guests, including the Chilean president, Sebastian Pinera, and representatives of the Caribbean Community, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Development Bank of Latin America. At the same time, like G7, BRICS and MIKTA countries, Argentina has sought to instrumentalize the multilateral forum of the G20 to pursue issues of national interest, particularly in the case of the Falkland Islands.

As regards compliance with G20 commitments, Argentina has been identified as one of the G20 members that introduced the highest number of discriminatory trade measures (Herman and Cooper 2013, 403). Across the sixteen summits between 2008 and 2021, Argentina has been at the lower end of the scale with an average level of compliance similar to Mexico, Russia and South

Africa (G20 Information Centre 2023). In terms of domestic reception, as seen in Chapter 7, Macri's experience provides another example of how there are no votes in summits.

Established as an absolute monarchy, Saudi Arabia occupies a unique position among G20 members. It has been represented at the seventeen summits between 2008 and 2022 by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and his son Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. On occasions, finance and foreign ministers have attended in their place: Saud bin Faisal Al-Saud at Seoul, Ibrahim Abdulaziz Al-Assaf at Cannes, Los Cabos, St Petersburg and Hamburg, and Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud at Rome (see Appendix 2).

In the context of its political system, questions have been raised around the rationale for Saudi Arabia's inclusion in the forum. Concerns have been reinforced by international issues, such as the war in Yemen, and domestic affairs, particularly its human rights policies. In the run-up to the Riyadh summit, a number of protests against and boycotts of the Saudi G20 were staged across the world. For example, the European Parliament called upon the EU and its member states to downgrade their representation to 'avoid legitimising impunity for human rights violations and ongoing illegal and arbitrary detentions in Saudi Arabia'.²¹ In this light, the G20 was seen by some as complicit in showcasing the kingdom to the outside world and even serving to rehabilitate Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman after the Khashoggi affair.²²

As seen in Chapters 4 and 5, at the outset of its G20 presidency, Saudi Arabia continued to place the emphasis in the agenda on 'safeguarding the planet', food security, particularly water scarcity, as well as digital financial inclusion, with specific regard to women and young people. However, despite its assumption of the presidency on 1 December 2019 as the first Arab nation to do so and its slogan of *Realizing Opportunities of the 21st Century for All*, the Covid-19 pandemic and its economic impact inevitably overshadowed Saudi Arabia's G20 in terms of organization and the agenda. In terms of organization, the leaders' summit itself, ministerial and sherpa meetings, as well as engagement groups, were all moved online. An extraordinary summit was held on 26 March 2020 in response to the pandemic at which G20 leaders pledged to 'spare no effort, both individually and collectively, to protect lives; safeguard people's jobs and incomes; restore confidence, preserve financial stability, revive growth and recover stronger; minimize disruptions to trade and global supply chains; provide help to all countries in need of assistance; coordinate on public health and financial measures' (G20 Information Centre 2020a). The leaders' summit was similarly held online from 21 to 22 November of the same year.²³ In terms of the agenda, King Salman bin Abdulaziz called for greater accessibility to vaccines at his address on the opening day of the virtual summit. However, Saudi Arabia also sought to make

progress on economic issues with which it was more comfortable, such as the future of the WTO (G20 Information Centre 2020b). King Salman called for coordinated efforts to boost trade and revive global economic growth. In terms of function, the Saudi hosts were eager to stress the G20's continuing role as a crisis committee despite its evolution since the GFC. As King Salman said in his opening speech: 'The G20 leaders met for the first time 12 years ago in response to the financial crisis. The outcomes achieved are ample proof that the G20 is the most prominent forum for international cooperation and for tackling global crises.'²⁴ In fact, Crown Prince Mohammed proposed that the G20 meet on a biannual basis – a virtual mid-year meeting and an end-of-year in-person meeting – a hybrid version of the frequency with which it had met at the height of the GFC.²⁵

Outside the pandemic, the Saudi presidency secured an endorsement from fellow G20 members of the circular carbon economy, its pet project to reduce the carbon footprint. However, this endorsement was dropped the following year at the Rome summit. As regards compliance with G20 commitments, across the sixteen summits between 2008 and 2021, Saudi Arabia has on average the lowest level of compliance (G20 Information Centre 2023).

8.6 BEYOND THE G20

Over a period of seventeen summits and fifteen years, the G20 has gone from crisis committee and 'premier forum for international economic cooperation' to a potentially endangered species or irrelevance for some summit watchers (Shaw 2018; Sobel 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have only amplified this pessimistic evaluation. Nevertheless, any predictions of the G20's demise would be premature and misplaced, as they were in the case of the G7/8 at the height of the GFC. Once these forums are established, they tend to linger, adding to the messy nature of contemporary multilateralism. Looking at its future from a country-specific perspective, the G20 will continue to engage with stakeholders and evolve in terms of its membership, as seen in the decision at the 2023 Delhi summit to include the AU. This provides both a rationale and basis for future research on its members' perspectives, positions and behaviours. From 2022 to 2025, the G20 presidency is in the hands of a series of BRICS and MIKTA countries for the first time: Indonesia, India, Brazil and South Africa. This book has demonstrated how the responsibility associated with hosting a summit can impact on a country's perspective on and approach to the G20, as seen most notably in the case of China, but also across a number of G7, BRICS and MIKTA countries. From 2026, a new cycle of G20 summitry will begin and all members will host the G20 for a second (or third) time. This provides a new factor to consider in

country-specific studies as members begin to build up a longitudinal profile of summit-hosting.

NOTES

1. *Financial Times*, 8 November 2010.
2. *BBC News*, 29 November 2018.
3. *The Age*, 17 November 2014.
4. *BBC News*, 1 April 2009; *Financial Times*, 1 April 2009.
5. *The Telegraph*, 13 November 2014.
6. *The Japan News*, 30 June 2019.
7. *Financial Times*, 21 June 2019.
8. *BBC News*, 16 November 2008.
9. *The Age*, 17 November 2014.
10. *China Daily*, 6 September 2016.
11. *TASS*, 17 June 2012.
12. *Pretoria News*, 13 September 2013.
13. *Cape Times*, 15 June 2012.
14. *Xinhua*, 8 November 2010.
15. *Korea Times*, 10 November 2010.
16. *Korea Herald*, 8 November 2010.
17. *AAP*, 13 November 2008.
18. *Australian Financial Review*, 16 March 2009.
19. *The Guardian*, 14 November 2014.
20. *The Guardian*, 31 October 2021.
21. *The Independent*, 21 November 2020.
22. *The Guardian*, 20 November 2020.
23. See Naylor 2020 on the pitfalls of virtual versus in-person summitry.
24. *The National*, 21 November 2020.
25. *The Arab Weekly*, 23 November 2020.