



This is a repository copy of *G20 summitry beyond global governance*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/210374/>

Version: Published Version

---

**Book Section:**

Dobson, H. [orcid.org/0000-0003-3124-8546](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3124-8546) (2024) *G20 summitry beyond global governance*. In: *Unpacking the G20: Insights from the Summit*. Political Science and Public Policy . Edward Elgar Publishing , pp. 126-151. ISBN 9781786433541

<https://doi.org/10.4337/9781786433558.00012>

---

© Hugo Dobson 2024. This is an open access work distributed under the Creative Commons AttributionNonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). Users can redistribute the work for non-commercial purposes, as long as it is passed along unchanged and in whole, as detailed in the License. Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd must be clearly credited as the rights holder for publication of the original work. Any translation or adaptation of the original content requires the written authorization of Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.

**Reuse**

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND) licence. This licence only allows you to download this work and share it with others as long as you credit the authors, but you can't change the article in any way or use it commercially. More information and the full terms of the licence here: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

**Takedown**

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing [eprints@whiterose.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@whiterose.ac.uk) including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



[eprints@whiterose.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@whiterose.ac.uk)  
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

## 7. G20 summitry beyond global governance

---

### 7.1 OVERVIEW

On 11 July 2012, what could only be described as a spat erupted between two cities over who was to secure the opportunity to host Australia's G20 summit in 2014. With Melbourne withdrawing from the competition citing concerns around the possibly negative impact of protest and policing, it had become a two-horse race between Brisbane and Sydney. The decision of Australian prime minister, Julia Gillard, to award Brisbane the opportunity was greeted with jubilation and sour grapes by Brisbane and Sydney, respectively. For Brisbane, this was a chance to step out of the shadow of Sydney and stake a claim to be an upcoming world city. Its lord mayor, Graham Quirk, boasted ebulliently that '[w]e're coming to get them on a whole range of events in this city over the next few years', so its rival should 'get used to it [losing]'.<sup>1</sup> As a result of hosting the G20, Brisbane was expected to receive a boon in terms of its reputation, as well as an estimated AUS\$50 million in economic stimulus.<sup>2</sup> For Sydney, Gillard's decision was regarded as misguided at best and politically motivated at worst. On the one hand, Brad Hazzard, Planning and Infrastructure Minister of New South Wales, colourfully argued that:

Sydney is the only true world city of Australia. We have the Opera House that can cater for thousands of people, we have the Museum of Contemporary Art; we'd made arrangements and offered them some excellent provisions of services through the Botanic Gardens but, instead, they're going to cop the Convention Centre on the Brisbane River. What the leaders of Russia and Britain will think when they're told they're going to go to Brisbane over Sydney one only can guess. The city of Brisbane is a great city. The people of Queensland are great people, but when it comes down to which city is the gateway from the world to Australia there's no question – Sydney. The G20 leaders really should have been treated to Sydney, not Brisbane.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, Hazzard went as far as to try and occupy the moral high ground, accusing Prime Minister Gillard of engaging in pork-barrel politics: 'She's chosen Brisbane simply to use the leaders of the world as political

pawns in her game to try and win back the votes across Queensland. It's insulting to the 20 leaders.'<sup>4</sup>

This vignette neatly illustrates that for each member the G20 is not just a mechanism of global governance created to address shared challenges. Engaging with, and particularly hosting, a G20 summit has various domestic aspects. As demonstrated above, this can range from a perceived reputational and economic boost to the host city, via possible political manoeuvring behind the scenes, to fears that protests and policing might both get out of hand and thereby negate the benefits. In the case of Brisbane and all other summit host cities, the importance of the choice of venue, facilities, marketing activities and security are amplified and transform a global event into a very local one.

This chapter explores the seventeen summits that have taken place between 2008 and 2022 with attention placed first and foremost on the host country, city, leader and people, and explores how the G20 has impacted upon them. However, the discussion is extended to include other participants where relevant because ultimately all leaders – whether host or invitee – will participate in these multilateral and bilateral meetings with one eye on issues of global governance and another looking beyond these challenges and firmly fixed on the reception back home.

## 7.2 BUILDING LEGACIES AND BURNISHING REPUTATIONS

Hosting a G20 summit affords the host country and city an opportunity to build their national and civic brands as well as the individual leader's short-term reputation and longer-term legacy. As mentioned at the outset of this book, four months after the G8 met in Japan, the first G20 leaders' summit was held in Washington DC in November 2008 to address the worsening GFC and economic recession. This coincided with the end of his two-term presidency, so President George W. Bush had nothing to lose in terms of re-election. However, he was certainly open to criticisms of being a lame-duck president and also that the successful presidential candidate – either Obama or McCain – should have been present at an event scheduled for ten days after the election. However, who this would be was unclear when the summit was announced towards the end of October 2008. Ultimately, Obama kept a respectful distance (some might argue strategic, in case the summit failed) from this first, hastily convened G20 summit. The Bush administration worked to 'seek the input' of the president-elect and kept Obama's team briefed as part of the transition process. However, as presidential historian Robert Dallek argued, '[i]n some ways, he's [Bush] trying to rescue his reputation, and the last thing Obama or even McCain are going to care about is saving George Bush's reputation'.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the Washington summit represented an opportunity to create

a legacy that might mitigate some of Bush's previous high-profile failures and controversies.

The consensus is that Bush was by and large successful in doing this. He could have convened a smaller group of participants that simply reinforced the outmoded and discredited forms of global governance. As Bush explained in his final press conference of the summit:

The first decision I had to make was who was coming to the meeting. And obviously I decided that we ought to have the G20 nations, as opposed to the G8 or the G13. But once you make the decision to have the G20, then the fundamental question is, with that many nations, from six different continents, who all represent different stages of economic development – would it be possible to reach agreements, and not only agreements, would it be possible to reach agreements that were substantive? And I'm pleased to report the answer to that question was, absolutely. (G20 Information Centre 2008b)

Despite unsupported rumours that Bush did not know what the G20 was (Postel-Vinay 2014, viii), in the words of Andrew Cooper (2010, 745), 'even as a "lame duck" President, George W. Bush acted as an effective convenor of the G20'.

The legacy of this first summit was that developed countries were firmly brought to the top table of discussion on global economic cooperation, the advanced countries lost not only their elite position but also the moral high ground as blame for the GFC was clearly attributed in the resulting declaration (G20 Information Centre 2008a), and although rewriting the Bretton Woods system of rules regulating financial markets was an ambitious goal, the summit provided immediate and mid-term actions to be taken, agreed common principles and provided the format for future summits as an 'improvised crisis committee' and longer-term premier forum for global economic cooperation. In some ways, Bush secured some kind of legacy by default and by being the convenor of the first G20 summit. In other words, 'whatever happens, the G20 is already a winner. The fact that it has become central to global policymaking may prove a more important legacy of this crisis than any specific agreement it reaches.'<sup>6</sup> However, the fact that Obama committed to the G20 process at a later stage and contributed to the success of the 2009 London summit retrospectively allowed Bush to salvage a more substantial legacy as host of the first summit.

However, several politicians have vied for the title of progenitor of the G20 and the associated reputational benefits. On the one hand, a number of leaders could make this claim while still in office, including the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the UK prime minister, Gordon Brown, and the Australian prime minister, Kevin Rudd. On the other hand, retired

politicians, in particular the former Canadian prime minister, Paul Martin, had long campaigned for a Leaders' 20 (Martin 2005).

Many observers regard the London summit as the most successful in marshalling the G20 members behind a common response to the GFC based on anti-protectionism and generating a rescue package of US\$1 trillion to stabilize the global economy and bolster the work of the IMF – all this despite also having the distinction of being the only one-day summit. As a result, the evaluation of Brown's leadership role was highly positive and his name was touted as a potential head of the IMF or a more formalized G20 (Payne 2018). Brown received universal praise from his fellow leaders for his role in organizing this summit. Obama described it as 'historic' and a 'turning point'; he went further by highlighting Brown's 'integrity'. Some observers regarded it as 'the peak of Gordon Brown's term as prime minister'.<sup>7</sup> However, and as explored in 6.3 below, Brown was unable to translate this reputational boost into an electoral advantage.

Although some have identified Obama as the biggest beneficiary of the London summit, his reputation as an innovator in global governance was secured later in the year when he 'orchestrated the major moves on the consolidated design of the G20 prior to the Pittsburgh summit' (Cooper 2010, 745–746). One of the main outcomes of the summit was that the G20 was appointed as the 'premier forum for international economic cooperation'.

For rising powers, the G20 format conferred status and recognition of their position in global economic governance, while offering the opportunity to make an intellectual contribution that any outreach process like Heiligendamm could never satisfy. In the case of China, when it assumed the G20 presidency towards the end of 2015, Xi was eager to shape the G20 itself, its work and direction, to ensure a Chinese contribution to global governance. However, it is important to remember the context of China's engagement with the G20 (Kirton 2016). Traditionally, China was wary of the G20's informal and unofficial role as the 'premier forum for international economic cooperation', preferring to prioritize the UN as the legitimate and legal centre of global governance. Similarly, the Russian presidency sought to shape the organization, functioning and ultimately the legitimacy of the G20 by establishing the C20 at its 2013 summit in St Petersburg: 'The heavy hand of discipline over the G20 process by the government of President Putin went hand in hand with impressive signs of inclusion with Civil Society (C), Business (B), Youth (Y), and Labour (L) 20 components' (Cooper and Pouliot 2015, 347).

As regards Mexico, another rising power, it sought to carve out the role of a bridge between developing and developed members of the G20. This is a role

that hosts often seek to claim as their own but Mexico was in a particularly strong position to do so:

Mexico became the first emerging economy of the G5 to host and preside over a G20 summit, while its second institutional contribution was to repeat, and thus consolidate, the new tradition of rotating the presidency and venue of the summit between an advanced G8 member country and a rising power not a member of the G8. (Villanueva Ulfgard and Alejo Jaime 2014, 1534)

An innovation of the Mexican presidency in terms of G20 governance was holding the first informal meeting of foreign ministers. However, it struggled to play the role of host and burnish its reputation in some ways. Although its G20 presidency was confirmed at the 2010 Toronto summit and preparations began soon thereafter, the Los Cabos summit took place only seven months after the Cannes summit and as a result in many ways similar challenges and outcomes were still evident. In terms of outcomes, Los Cabos consolidated the drift that had emerged in G20 governance and its failure to transition from a crisis committee to a global steering committee, especially in the face of the European sovereign debt crisis that continued to hijack summit agendas. In addition, the Los Cabos summit was immediately followed by the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro. However, despite a clear opportunity, little synergy emerged between the two. Goodliffe and Sberro (2012, 1) dismissed the summit in damning language:

The failure of the Los Cabos summit to satisfactorily address the European sovereign debt crisis and ominous world economic outlook, let alone agree on concrete measures to improve the oversight and functioning of the global economy, appears to confirm the diminishing effectiveness and relevance of the G20 as an organ of international governance since its inception in December 2008. While few accomplishments were achieved in the area of global governance during the Mexican presidency, acute collective action problems, made worse by the present economic crisis, paralysed the G20 in the lead-up to and during the Los Cabos summit. These collective action problems and the ensuing failure of global governance are attributable to the absence of leadership evident at both the global and European levels, which in turn testifies to the excessive dispersion of state economic and political power within the international system.

Moreover:

... since those opening conclaves of 2008–9, G20 summits have often degenerated into ritualised exercises in sterile debate, empty grandstanding and vacuous promise-making, bringing the organisation's effectiveness and even relevance increasingly into question ... Los Cabos ... perpetuated this trend towards stalemate and inaction. (Goodliffe and Sberro 2012, 2)

Further,

... there is a legitimate fear that the choice of two trendy seaside resorts for its last two summits [Cannes and Los Cabos] signals the G20's regression from a new mechanism of global economic governance to another glittering but ultimately ineffective forum for world leaders. (Goodliffe and Sberro 2012, 7–8)

In addition to the distinction of having conceived of the G20 or shaping its development, G20 leaders have sought to burnish their country's reputation and their own legacy through specific initiatives or agenda-setting. In securing the co-presidency of the G20 with Canada in 2010 and hosting the fifth summit in November 2010, South Korea became the first Asian country to host a G20 summit – a fact that was not lost on President Lee Myung-bak and the Korean people. The impact that South Korea could have as host upon the G20's agenda, as well as the impact that the G20 could have on South Korean society, were two interconnected strands that ran through South Korea's presidency and beyond.<sup>8</sup> The concrete outcome of the summit was the adoption of the Seoul Consensus, which sought to present an alternative to the Washington Consensus. In so doing, Korea would draw on its own experience of rapid economic development and provide lessons that, according to one Korean journalist, 'rich countries will never be able to give to poor countries'. The Seoul Consensus was hailed as the first step in the presentation of Korean- or Asian-style development models as new global standards to be tested in Latin America and Africa. If successful, the Seoul Consensus could consign the 'development models used so far' to the rubbish bin.<sup>9</sup> Six years later, China was provided with a similar opportunity to shape the development agenda in its own direction at the 2016 Hangzhou summit: '... it [was] a big chance to show China's view on global development to the world'.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, Lee instrumentalized the G20 to impact on South Korean society so as to feed a sense of national pride as well as burnishing his own personal legacy. As South Korean presidents are constitutionally prohibited from serving more than one term, the pressure to create a legacy in a relatively short time period is considerable. In the 2007 presidential election, Lee campaigned on the '747' plan of an annual increase in GDP of 7 per cent, a doubling of per capita annual income to US\$40,000 within a decade, and the elevation of South Korea from the eleventh to the seventh largest economy in the world. With the GFC that hit the following year threatening to scupper his plan, Lee campaigned aggressively to secure the role of first Asian president of the G20 and with it the perceived associated benefits for both his legacy and enhancing the nation's sense of identity as a leading power. This was clear when he stated that '[t]he success of the G20 summit is the people's success and the country's success. If, at times like this when our national fortunes are on the rise, we

unite and move forward, we will certainly become a first-class nation leading the world.’ Lee’s Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan agreed and portrayed the summit as a ‘chance to upgrade our country’s status in the international community’. The domestic media reaction chimed with the Lee administration. The greatest legacies of the summit were seen to be Korea’s demonstration of leadership and its proven ability to ‘play a central role in global diplomacy’.<sup>11</sup> At the same time,

Korea proved itself to be a skillful economic and diplomatic player on the global stage ... Korea is no underdog. It is no longer a small power that can be swayed by bigger or more aggressive neighbors. It is a medium strategic power with the ability to participate in the global agenda, and it should think like one.<sup>12</sup>

The approach of the Australian presidency at the 2014 Brisbane summit was to pursue a tight agenda with the focus placed on economic growth and agreed targets of 2 per cent growth in five years. Its signature policy was the Brisbane Action Plan (BAP), as well as an agreement to reduce the gender participation gap in formal labour markets in G20 economies by 25 per cent by 2025 and provided momentum for the W20 initiative at Antalya the following year.

Although Türkiye has ‘pursued a low-profile inactive G20 policy in the years since its accession’ (Parlar Dal 2019, 592), assuming the G20 presidency for 2014 provided an opportunity, as it had for South Korea in 2010, Mexico in 2012 and Australia the previous year, to stake its claims as a leader in global governance, rather than an oft-cited middle power or rising power. As has been demonstrated elsewhere, ‘for middle or emerging powers like Türkiye with weak institutional attachments to global governance, G20 hosting carries inevitable value’ (Çolakoğlu and Hecan 2016, 144). This value extends to the individual leader. Having attended the first G20 Washington summit as prime minister of Türkiye, volunteered in 2011 to host the G20 in 2015, and then assumed the role of president in 2014, Recep Taayyip Erdoğan is a G20 veteran and is the only leader to attend the first G20 summit and remain in power at the time of writing. As a result, the 2015 Antalya summit was a tightly organized event that paid attention to legacy and new issues, delivering concrete policy and organizational outcomes that could bolster the G20 and in turn Erdoğan’s position. The signature theme of the summit was the three Is of inclusiveness, investment and implementation. Interestingly, the style of Erdoğan and the Turkish authorities in preparation for the summit was described as ‘nurturing’, ‘consensus-building’, and focused on discussions, articulation and compromise (Vines 2015b). This claim is supported by the number of preparatory meetings held in advance of Antalya, more than any other G20 presidency (Çolakoğlu and Hecan 2016, 150).

Two challenges threatened to derail Erdoğan's approach to hosting: one external and one internal. On the one hand, the summit was overshadowed by the Paris terror attacks that took place two days beforehand. As discussed in Chapter 5, alongside Syria and the migration crisis, it was these more overtly political issues, rather than economic ones, that provided the focus of discussion, both formally and informally. On the other hand, Erdoğan was in a slightly precarious domestic position with his party having just, in the same month as the summit, regained the majority it lost earlier in the year. Thus, Erdoğan was presented with an opportunity to burnish his and Türkiye's reputations on the global stage by making a concrete contribution to global governance, but he needed to have one eye on the domestic situation and another on unexpected external shocks. Nevertheless, through a strategy of balancing between addressing existing issues and adding meaningful new initiatives to the G20's agenda, Antalya resulted in progress on a number of issues, for example promoting the quality of infrastructure on the one hand, and the promotion of new issues and structures, such as the W20 as an official engagement group, which has continued at every subsequent summit, on the other hand (Çolakoğlu and Hecan 2016).

For the Argentinian president, Mauricio Macri, hosting the G20 summit in 2018 conferred a considerable degree of prestige and recognition, considering that Argentina's membership of and contribution to the G20 had from the outset come under question and scrutiny. As a result, hosting a smooth and successful summit was a priority. Prime Minister Abe Shinzō's signature contribution to the G20's agenda of the following year was the establishment of the 'Osaka Track', which he hoped would be long remembered as the starting point of global data governance. As mentioned in the previous chapter, although a number of participants including India, Indonesia and South Africa did not sign up for the initiative, believing it to be a plurilateral initiative in conflict with WTO multilateral principles, it was presented as Japan's intellectual and leadership contribution to the setting of international rules around the digital economy.

One privilege that the host of a summit is afforded is to invite non-G20 leaders to attend the summit. This allows hosts an opportunity to give the summit a regional flavour and input into the issues under discussion, as well as bolstering the host's position as a potential regional leader. Russia invited Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev to the 2013 St Petersburg summit. Australia invited the leaders of Mauritania, Myanmar, New Zealand and Singapore to the 2014 Brisbane summit. At Antalya in 2015, Türkiye demonstrated its regional ambitions by selecting Azerbaijan as a summit guest. The following year saw China invite a number of important regional participants in the BRI to the Hangzhou summit, including the chairs of the AU and ASEAN (Chad and Laos respectively), alongside Egypt and Kazakhstan.

In 2018, in Buenos Aires, Latin America's second G20 summit, Macri sought to realize this by inviting a number of 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. The following year in Osaka, the Japanese government sought to do so by inviting the leaders of a number of South East Asian countries, namely Thailand (as chair of ASEAN), Singapore and Vietnam, in addition to the Japanese president of the Asian Development Bank. This role of representative of Asia has been Japan's traditional role in the G7, where it is the only Asian representative, but something it has struggled to establish in the larger G20 (Dobson 2004; Dobson 2012a). In addition, it was worth noting that the invited guests represented a region concerned about China's rise and its increasingly assertive position, and which Japan has sought to embrace within its own diplomatic initiatives such as the Arc of Freedom and Prosperity (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan 2006).

Finally, there is a rarely experienced opportunity to burnish reputations. This has happened on the two occasions when double-header summits have taken place: in 2010 when Canada hosted the G8 and G20 back-to-back, and in 2011 when France held the G8 in the spring and the G20 in the autumn. Both presidencies were provided with an opportunity to foster synergy between the two global governance mechanisms. However, little was achieved to this end as both summits struggled to find a focus and purpose in light of a series of global 'wicked' problems ranging from the Arab Spring to the European sovereign debt crisis.

### 7.3 LEVERAGING THE SUMMIT

The opportunities and impact of G20 summits can extend beyond coordinating common global action or basking in the reflected glory and reputational benefits associated with hosting these events. Summits also provide venues for leaders to make progress on domestic issues, often seeking to boost electoral prospects, while engaging bilaterally with key partners to address important foreign policy challenges.

As regards instrumentalizing the G20 to progress explicitly domestic issues, as host of the 2010 Seoul summit, South Korea pursued its national interest in a number of ways, ranging from utilizing the summit as a deadline to conclude the Korea–US Free Trade Agreement, which had stagnated at the ratification stage for more than three years due to opposition in both countries' legislatures, to speculatively securing greater leverage with North Korea and, in the event of unification, attracting assistance from multilateral institutions to ease the associated economic burdens, although in the end ultimately no mention was made of North Korea in the final summit documentation.

In the case of Japan, Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko arrived at the 2011 Cannes summit at the height of the sovereign debt crisis keen to stress that Europe needs to get its house in order and highlight Japan's best practice in addressing its own accumulated debt through concrete measures such as proposing to raise the consumption tax incrementally from 5 to 10 per cent by 2015. Ahead of Cannes, it was suggested that this pledge would be included in the final summit documentation.<sup>13</sup> This was then presented at home as an international commitment to stymie any domestic criticisms surrounding this controversial issue (Dobson 2013a). At the 2014 Brisbane summit, Prime Minister Abe pursued a similar approach by seeking and securing fellow summiters' endorsement of Abenomics before returning home, dissolving the Lower House of the Japanese Diet and calling a snap election, in which he lost a handful of seats but maintained his party and ruling coalition's dominant position (Dobson 2017). It has even been suggested that Abe instrumentalized the 2013 St Petersburg summit to pursue an issue wholly unrelated to global summitry: securing the 2020 Summer Olympics for Tokyo:

... for Japan and Abe greatest potential success at the G20 has had nothing to do with the G20 at all. It has been the opportunity for Japan to lobby participating governments to vote for Tokyo as the location of the 2020 Summer Olympics. Whether the lobbying was successful will be judged when the votes are counted in Buenos Aires and the winner between Tokyo, Madrid, and Istanbul, is announced early Sunday morning Tokyo time.<sup>14</sup>

Luckhurst has coined the term 'endorsement function' to describe this strategy by which leaders use G20 agreements to justify introducing domestically controversial policies. He cites additional examples of Brown tethering the UK's domestic fiscal stimulus to the G20's collective strategy, and Chinese policymakers instrumentalizing G20 agreements to promote domestic reform in particular sections of the economy (2019b, 103).

As regards leveraging the G20 to benefit a leader's electoral chances, the potential of such linkage is self-evident and examples abound. However, concrete evidence of causation is thin. For example, the reputational impact of a successful summit on the political survival of Brown was clear, although some feared that he was overplaying his hand by ratcheting up expectations around the establishment of a second Bretton Woods system. Immediately before the London summit, political pundit Andrew Grice ruminated on '[w]hy has Gordon Brown apparently gambled his reputation, and based his political survival plan, on a meeting of 20 world leaders in London on 2 April, the outcome of which is beyond his control?'<sup>15</sup> After the summit reached a historic agreement on dealing with the GFC, one British cabinet member said '[t]he scale of this deal will help with Gordon's underlying credibility. It will remind people what he is there for. It will be a slow burn, but the markets have jumped,

and the polls will probably follow.<sup>16</sup> Yet, despite hosting what was perceived to be the most successful G20 summit, Brown was unable to exploit any reputational ‘summit tailwind’ and translate it into electoral success, as New Labour’s time in power came to an end just over a year later at the 2010 general election. The initially positive evaluation of Brown’s role was tempered by a more negative, domestic association with the London summit that resulted from the violent protests outside the summit venue, heavy-handed policing and ultimately the death of Ian Tomlinson, a newspaper vendor not involved with the protests, which is discussed below.<sup>17</sup> Combined with a general mood for change in the country, and a number of gaffes on the part of Brown, including claiming in Parliament that by recapitalizing British banks ‘we not only saved the world’, rapidly corrected to ‘saved the banks’ (Daily Hansard 2008), this summit demonstrates the limited impact a positive performance has on reversing electoral fortunes.

President Nicolas Sarkozy of France lost a closely fought campaign, almost six months after the 2009 Cannes summit, in his bid to be re-elected as president for a second and final term, to the Socialist François Hollande. The election campaign was largely seen as a vote on Sarkozy’s track record since 2007 and his personal failings. Seven years later, he failed in his appeal to avoid trial for illegal financing surrounding this campaign. As regards the German federal elections that followed the 2017 Hamburg summit, Angela Merkel was stymied in any attempt to translate a successful summit into electoral success. Although she secured a fourth term as chancellor and her party was returned as the largest party, it lost 65 seats and entered into negotiations with other parties to establish a grand coalition. This election also saw the rise of the far-right *Alternativ für Deutschland* as the third largest party.

Mexico held a general election eleven days after the 2012 Los Cabos summit. Mexican presidents only serve one six-year term, but President Felipe Calderón’s party’s nominee, Josefina Eugenia Vázquez Mota, fared badly in the presidential election, as did his party in elections for the Chamber of Deputies and Senate. Seemingly the summit had no positive impact. In Argentina, once again, a summit performance could not balance out negative public opinion, as Macri lost to the left-wing opposition in the August 2019 primary elections for the presidency, ahead of the October 2019 vote, as a result of his austerity policies, having hosted the G20 summit nine months previously.

Having inherited Australia’s G20 presidency when he became prime minister, Tony Abbott lasted less than a year before he lost the Liberal Party leadership election and prime ministership to Malcolm Turnbull in September 2015. Some argued that the Brisbane G20 served as an unnecessary burden and distraction from domestic issues for Abbott and his treasurer Joe Hockey, both of whom might have survived the leadership challenge without it (Kirchner 2016, 499–500). After Turnbull took over as prime minister, it is interesting

to note the ‘lesson learned’ in that ‘Hockey’s successor as treasurer, Scott Morrison, said he would not attend meetings of the G20, IMF or World Bank, deputizing to a junior minister’ (Kirchner 2016, 500).

The only positive example of electoral success following a summit can be seen in the case of Japan. Abe faced elections for the Upper House of the Japanese Diet the month after the 2019 Osaka summit, which proceeded exactly as expected. Although Abe’s Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition partner lost the super-majority required for any constitutional revision – a long-held personal ambition – he led his party to its sixth successive victory in national elections and maintained control of the Upper House. It is unlikely that the G20 summit had much impact upon voters one way or the other, especially when considered alongside the weak and fragmented state of the opposition in Japan.

Some leaders have not had elections to worry about. Putin hosted a G20 summit having been elected in March 2012 for a six-year period with 63.6 per cent of the vote. However, perhaps the clearest example of the limited impact of summits is when a leader is faced with a choice between an immediate election and attending a summit. Faced with such a dilemma at St Petersburg in 2013, the Australian prime minister, Kevin Rudd, skipped the summit. It would be methodologically challenging to establish the concrete impact of a summit on opinion polls and voting intentions; however, based on the anecdotal and temporal evidence mentioned above, summits are quickly forgotten and their impact is probably limited. The *New Statesman*’s Andrew Grice acknowledged the limited impact of a summit and the overriding importance of domestic issues when he wrote ahead of the 2009 London summit that:

Close allies insist that Brown will focus on the domestic agenda once the G20 show is over, and that he knows the Budget on 22 April will be much more important to his chances of staging another political fightback. ‘He has not staked all his chips on a one-day summit’, one said. ‘He will move on quickly. He has still got a lot of chips left.’<sup>18</sup>

Moving beyond leveraging the summit for domestic or perceived electoral gain, global summitry presents all governments with an opportunity or challenges in managing bilateral relations with key partners. For example, at the second G20 summit in London in 2009, Argentina even used the London G20 summit to raise the issue of the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands.<sup>19</sup> As regards the Sino-Japanese relationship, President Xi Jinping’s visit to Osaka represented the first visit of a Chinese leader to Japan in nine years and an incremental step in an improving bilateral relationship. Xi and Abe pledged to arrange Xi’s first state visit to Japan the following year. However, the same was not true of the relationship with South Korea, for which no bilateral was organized. The

choice of Osaka Castle for an evening performance and leaders' dinner also proved to be controversial as it was the historic base of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the regional lord responsible for Japan's invasions of Korea in the sixteenth century. Equally, Abe's twenty-sixth meeting with Putin demonstrated incremental progress but also the distance left to travel in resolving the territorial dispute between the two countries and signing a peace treaty.

For the UK prime minister, Theresa May, a series of G20 summits provided the opportunity to promote post-Brexit Britain's role, reassure the international community and strike up some trade deals. This was clearly the case at the 2016 Hangzhou summit, the first to be held after the referendum on EU membership. Abe took the summit as an opportunity to deliver an uncharacteristically frank and direct warning in the form of 'Japan's Message to the United Kingdom and the European Union', which outlined Japan's priorities in the withdrawal negotiations, its desired outcomes and warnings as regards potential consequences (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Japan 2016). The 2018 Buenos Aires summit afforded May a similar opportunity and was also the first time an incumbent UK prime minister had visited Buenos Aires. Both Macri and May managed to keep their bilateral meeting on track by focusing on summit themes and avoiding any reference to the Falkland Islands that might undermine the status quo (*Global Policy* 2018a). Osaka represented May's last G20 summit – she had already announced her intention to resign – and an opportunity to speak frankly with Putin, expressing her displeasure over Russian involvement in the Salisbury nerve agent incident. The darker side of managing bilateral relations can also be seen in allegations that Russian authorities had spied on delegations attending the St Petersburg summit, which were denied and met with counter-allegations.<sup>20</sup>

Most significantly, G20 summits provide an opportunity to manage the 'most important bilateral relationship in the world, bar none' with the US (Dobson 2012b). Sometimes this can be of equal importance to, or even more important than, the core business of the G20. In the case of managing the US–China relationship, G20 summits have regularly provided opportunities for a reset in relations, as seen most recently at the 2022 Bali summit in what was probably its most significant outcome, or a ceasefire in an ongoing trade war, as seen at the 2018 Buenos Aires summit. In the case of the US–Japanese relationship, the 2019 Osaka summit afforded another opportunity for Abe to meet with Donald Trump as part of a series of official visits, regular meetings and phone calls. In fact, organizing bilateral meetings around multilateral gatherings was established as a norm of Japanese diplomacy early in 2017. The overriding concern was to show a united front after typically colourful Trumpian comments surrounding imbalances in the US–Japan Security Treaty made immediately before the summit: 'If Japan is attacked, we will fight World War III. We will go in and protect them with our lives and with our

treasure. We will fight at all costs, right? But if we are attacked, Japan doesn't have to help us at all. They can watch on a Sony television.<sup>21</sup> In their bilateral meeting on the first day of the summit, Trump clarified that he was calling for the amendment of the treaty, not its abrogation.

This leveraging of the summit can work in the opposite direction. Syria was the issue that forced its way onto the agenda at the 2013 St Petersburg summit in light of failed US attempts in the UNSC to sanction air strikes in the face of China and Russia's veto. The unscripted, ad hoc discussions over dinner demonstrate how multilateral summits can be used to not only handle the hegemon, but allow the US to manage its bilateral relations with key partners on crucial issues. Similarly, Trump used the opportunity of a visit to East Asia for the 2019 Osaka summit to announce an impromptu visit to the Demilitarized Zone at Panmunjom, the first by an incumbent US president, and his third meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

#### 7.4 ECONOMIC BOON OR WHITE ELEPHANT?

In similar fashion to sporting mega-events like the Olympics, the rights and responsibilities of hosting a summit are often perceived by, and sold to, host cities with reference to the potential benefits that will result. In contrast, cities can also be wary of hosting these diplomatic mega-events for fear of the possible negative impact, especially in terms of protest and policing.

Probably the most common perception is that hosting a summit provides a city with a marketing opportunity to promote itself internationally and change negative perceptions into positive ones. For example, Obama had originally planned to host the third G20 summit in New York to coincide with the opening of the UNGA. However, faced with a number of logistical challenges, the US authorities abandoned this plan and instead chose Pittsburgh. The publicly declared intention was partly to showcase the city of Pittsburgh and its recovery from the collapse of its steel manufacturing base to become regarded as one of the most liveable cities in the US.<sup>22</sup> Pittsburgh was certainly not a global city in the same category as Washington, London or New York, so considerable lobbying took place to secure the summit. In Obama's words, this would allow Pittsburgh to showcase its transition 'from the city of steel to a centre for high-tech innovation – including green technology, education and training, and research and development'.<sup>23</sup> One example of this was that the G20 leaders met in the environmentally sustainable David L. Lawrence Convention Center.

Mayor of Seoul Oh Se-hoon highlighted the summit as an opportunity to make the city better known to the outside world and attract incoming tourism and investment into the city, 'to build a "truly global city" not only a city foreigners want to visit, but also a place where they want to invest and live'. To

this end, ahead of the 2010 Seoul G20 summit, the metropolitan government increased its marketing budget dramatically. Hotels went through substantial renovations and considered the best way to present Korean cuisine in a user-friendly way to an international audience. During the summit, a range of sightseeing tours that showcased the city's achievements were organized for journalists. The G20 reached such a level of ubiquity that '[e]ven non-English-speaking taxi drivers can recognize the sound of "G20"'.<sup>24</sup> In his New Year's address to the Korean people, South Korean President Lee connected the international to the domestic by reflecting on the highlights of the year and Korea's future direction, citing first and foremost the G20 summit: 'The Republic of Korea was able to stand tall in the international arena by hosting the G20 Seoul summit. Korea has now emerged as a nation that helps to establish the international order, rather than always having to follow others.' He then dubbed the young people of Korea the 'G20 Generation' (*G-iship Sedae*), who should be nurtured as 'protagonists for building a leading global nation'. An opinion poll conducted in Autumn 2010 was similarly positive: a majority of 41.8 per cent of respondents felt that hosting G20 was an opportunity for Korea to promote its image abroad and that it would increase the nation's standing in international society; 35.3 per cent felt that Korea would benefit in economic terms from hosting the event (Cherry and Dobson 2012). Although no causal link can be established, the following year Pyeongchang was selected to host the 2018 Winter Olympics.

The vignette that opened this chapter demonstrates the importance of hosting the G20 summit to the city of Brisbane as well as what missing out meant to Sydney. Brisbane Marketing described the G20 as a 'once-in-a-generation event', 'the most important gathering of world leaders ever held in Australia' and sought to 'both leverage the G20 itself and create a parallel program of activity that would take advantage of Brisbane's notoriety as a G20 host. Doing so left a valuable and lasting legacy for Brisbane'. 'People around the world read about, heard and saw Brisbane as one of the world's friendliest cities, a serious player in the Asia Pacific, and as a city capable of hosting major events without any problems' (Brisbane Marketing, no date). Although an opinion poll found that 54 per cent of Australians regarded it as a chance to promote the country, 55 per cent believed it to be little more than a 'talk-fest' and only 26 per cent believed it delivered concrete outcomes for Australia and the world. Another poll saw 39 per cent of respondents regard it as a waste of money (Grattan 2015, 178).

Hangzhou was selected as host of China's G20 for a number of reasons (for a wide-ranging exploration of China's G20 presidency, see Chin and Dobson 2016), but local issues were salient. First, by serving as Communist Party Secretary for Zhejiang from 2003 to 2007 and residing during that time in the provincial capital of Hangzhou, Xi Jinping's personal connection with

Zhejiang province was clearly on display. Second, the desire to showcase Zhejiang's achievements and entrepreneurial spirit as the home of 'red capitalists' can be discerned. Zhejiang boasts a range of high-profile success stories including China's leading private automotive company, Geely, and is the birthplace of Jack Ma and the e-commerce firm Alibaba. As a result, '[t]he city of Hangzhou, and Zhejiang province are presented collectively as the "new face" of China' (Chin and Dobson 2016). An example of this campaign landing with the right audience can be seen in the production by BBC World News of a video featuring the iconic sights of Hangzhou from West Lake to Alibaba and screened from August to October either side of the G20 summit.<sup>25</sup>

The second reason connects to the first in that Xi's time as Party Secretary was regarded as one when Zhejiang Province's private sector boomed, with provincial GDP growing by 14 per cent in this period. China had recent experience of hosting global summits with the 2014 APEC forum held in Beijing and Xi was eager to ensure a successful summit with a local audience in mind. Hangzhou, with a population of approximately 9 million, was reduced to a ghost town as local residents were actively encouraged to leave the city during the two-day summit.<sup>26</sup> A state-of-the-art conference centre was constructed, with journalists being smoothly ferried from airport to hotel to media centre and back again. In addition, Hangzhou benefited from billions of pounds in improving the infrastructure and sprucing up the city to be ready for the gaze of the world's media.<sup>27</sup> In many ways, this was redolent of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics, especially considering that internationally famous Chinese film director Zhang Yimou, who also staged the opening and closing ceremonies for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, led a team that organized a performance for the leaders on the evening of the summit's first day with the famous West Lake as a backdrop.

Having missed out to South Korea on the status of hosting the first Asian G20 in 2010, and having been looked over in favour of China as host in 2016, the Japanese government managed to secure the presidency in 2019. The choice of Osaka as host city was mostly a foregone conclusion. It had demonstrated its ability to host both global mega-events in 1970 when it was the first Asian city to host a world's fair as well as global summits in 1995 when it was selected to host the annual summit of the APEC forum. However, it had lost out to Tokyo and Okinawa respectively in its efforts to secure the 1993 G7 summit and 2000 G8 summit. Thus, it seemed to be Osaka's moment and the obvious choice for Japan's first G20 summit. Security was tight with 32,000 police officers drafted in from across Japan, schools closed and little in the way of protest to derail the summit.

As regards measuring the concrete benefits of hosting a G20 summit, this is a challenging task, as the nature of the benefits and risks are so diffuse, especially when it comes to something as intangible as reputation. In addition,

the appropriate timescales for auditing any benefits are unclear. Nevertheless, attempts have been made based on media reports that suggest the Pittsburgh summit resulted in benefits totalling approximately US\$135 million, while the Toronto summit resulted in benefits totalling approximately US\$95.4 million (Guebert and Tanna 2010). In terms of benefits for the South Korean people, the 2010 Seoul summit was presented as delivering a distinct economic benefit. According to the Samsung Economic Research Institute, the short-term gains associated with hosting a successful G20 summit were seen to be as high as US\$20.6 billion. As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, Brisbane was estimated to receive AU\$50 million in investment. Brisbane Business Events claimed to have generated AU\$30 million in business leads in the three months following the summit. On the eve of the summit, Brisbane-based economist Gene Tunny toned down expectations with a forecast that the 1988 World Expo held in Brisbane resulted in more economic benefits than the G20 was likely to accrue: ‘There is no comparison. Expo 88 ran longer than the G20, with more than 16 million people coming from around Queensland, interstate and overseas.’<sup>28</sup> Ahead of the 2017 Hamburg summit, short-term monetary gain was highlighted based on the numbers of delegates and journalists and the average business visitor spend of US\$268 for an overnight visit. However, these gains are offset by the negative economic impact of closures in anticipation of protests and violence.<sup>29</sup> In the case of Hamburg these fears were realized, as outlined below.

Calculating the costs of hosting a summit involve similar risks to estimating the benefits. The added challenge is that they can easily accumulate, especially as they are predominantly related to infrastructure and security. Cannes was thought to have cost 80 million euros. Hosting both G8 and G20 summits back-to-back is estimated to have cost the Canadian taxpayer CA\$1.1 billion, with claims for compensation for damage from the protests still being processed two years after the summits, and totalling more than CA\$11 million for the Toronto G20.<sup>30</sup> Toronto was dubbed the ‘most expensive, the most violent and the one with the least benefits’ (Kirton 2012, cited in Villanueva Ulfgard and Alejo Jaime 2014, 1535). The Brisbane G20 was estimated by some to have cost AU\$500 million, although the *Brisbane Times* put it at AU\$400 million (US\$268 million). Antalya was estimated to have cost US\$500 million. Hangzhou was rumoured to have cost US\$24 billion to organize. Hamburg was thought to have cost 72.2 million euros. Buenos Aires was estimated to have cost US\$112 million (Muhanna 2018). The Indonesian government allocated just over 500 billion rupiah (US\$32 million) at the start of its presidency, a similar amount to that allocated for preparing for the 2023 ASEAN summit.

The opportunity to showcase a city can also backfire disastrously. The Mexican government chose the Los Cabos International Convention Centre as

the venue for the 2012 summit. However, it was destroyed by Hurricane Odile in 2014 and the following year was reported as lying ‘forgotten and neglected, yet another testament to wasteful projects’:

The once proud building that hosted world leaders now sports shattered windows, gaping doorways, collapsed ceilings, peeling walls, broken flagpoles – and not a flag in sight. A green wall with 2,000 square meters of indigenous plants, once dubbed the largest of its kind in the world and considered the center’s most attractive feature, is now overrun with rotting vegetation.<sup>31</sup>

The Centre was relaunched in April 2018 and hosted the fifth annual Destination Wedding Planners Congress, one of the key events in the calendar of the wedding industry.

Looking beyond the economic impact, research has also been conducted on the possible increase in demand for mental health support at a local level as a result of hosting a G20 summit and how this can be mitigated: ‘... with detailed planning and extra resources, the G20 [Brisbane] summit passed without any major mental health incidents or major increase for mental health presentations’ (Emmerson et al. 2017).

## 7.5 POLICING PROTEST

Like many other mechanisms of global governance, G20 summits have attracted a range of demonstrators, both peaceful and violent. Often it will be the protests and inconvenience of related policing measures that are most remembered by local residents. The obvious challenge for a summit host is facilitating the rights to protest and freedom of speech while ensuring a peaceful summit and protecting both locals and visitors. The seventeen G20 summits provide examples of both tragic failure and qualified success (on G20 engagement with civil society generally, see Dobson 2011b; Cooper 2013b).

As regards the failures, the 2009 London and 2010 Toronto summits stand out as the obvious examples. The venue for the second meeting of the G20 leaders was the ExCeL centre in East London’s Docklands, although the focus for protest was the City of London and the Bank of England. In the run-up to the summit a range of peaceful civil society activities were held. Most visibly, on the weekend before the actual summit, 35,000 people participated in the ‘Put People First’ march in Hyde Park, central London, stressing ‘jobs, justice and climate’. This served as an umbrella for over 120 groups and organizations including Christian Aid, Oxfam, the Trades Union Congress and the Campaign

for Nuclear Disarmament. Writing before the summit, *The Economist* captured the mood:

Anti-capitalists are billing it as ‘Financial Fools’ Day’ [coinciding with April Fools’ Day] and climate-change worriers are gearing up to protest against ‘fossil fools’. For London’s police, charged with protecting world leaders at the G20 summit and quelling the crowds who are massing to rail at them, April 1st is going to be a long day. Police are expecting an ‘unprecedented’ coalition of protesters to gather in the city’s financial district the day before the summit, to demonstrate against everything from Iraq to subprime mortgages. Groups last seen in the 1990s are thought to be unfurling their banners again, to take advantage of a force that is already stretched.<sup>32</sup>

In total 10,000 police officers were deployed in an operation that cost over US\$10 million and the anti-globalization protests of the kind seen at Seattle in 1999 never materialized. Instead, reportage on the day noted the festive and peaceful nature of the protests. However, in the days that followed, two examples of police brutality emerged. The first and more salient case was the death of Ian Tomlinson, who was hit with a baton and then pushed to the ground. He later died. Tomlinson was not protesting but returning home from his job as a newspaper seller. It was an American fund manager who filmed the incriminating footage of the police assault that led to Ian Tomlinson’s heart attack. An inquest found the policeman responsible guilty of unlawful killing, but a subsequent trial found him innocent of the criminal charge of manslaughter. He was ultimately discharged from the Metropolitan Police. A day after Ian Tomlinson died, a female protestor was struck by police. This case also surfaced as a result of protestors filming the incident.<sup>33</sup>

The handling of protests around the 2009 London summit had a long-term impact on police tactics, especially the containment tactic known as ‘kettling’. The House of Commons’ Home Affairs Committee published a report two months after the summit that focused on containment tactics, police–media relations, the identification of police officers and their training (Home Affairs Committee 2009). A month later, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) Denis O’Connor published a report entitled *Adapting to Protest*, which reinforced many of the Home Affairs Committee’s findings. The report recommended an immediate review of public order training and examination of tactics to ensure they are subject to medical assessment, the provision of guidance on the confinement and release of peaceful protestors, and the clear identification of police officers (HMIC 2009).

As regards the Toronto summit the following year, the Canadian authorities were faced with the challenge of hosting the G20 in the urban centre of Toronto immediately following the meeting of the G8 in the more rural retreat of Huntsville. However, one factor both summits shared was that they became the target of civil society protest. Again, peaceful marches and a people’s

summit were planned but CSOs were frustrated by being housed in a separate media centre and only allowed into the official media centre when invited by accredited journalists. However, the lasting impression of the Toronto summit was the violent protest that shocked many Canadians and resulted in the largest police operation and number of arrests (1,100) in Canadian history (Monaghan and Walby 2012, 654). In the words of Kitchen and Kim (2014, 201):

The dominant images that emerged from the G20 Meeting in Toronto in June 2010 were not the traditional family photos of world leaders coming together to advance their global initiatives, but rather those of street protests and violence in the context of a massive security operation and allegations of police brutality, unlawful detention, and other breaches of civil liberties.

In a highly critical post-mortem of the policing of this summit, Kitchen and Kim (2014, 212) have argued that:

The provision of security at the G20 in Toronto in June 2010, and at mega-events more generally, is an important illustration of the way in which the lines of provision of domestic security through policing, and of national security through the military, are increasingly becoming blurred, and how privatization facilitates the urbanization and militarization of security ... [In addition,] an important part of this shift is in the way that cities are the 'home front' of new testing grounds for military weaponry and tactics of war.

Furthermore, some have suggested some kind of retribution on the part of the Canadian prime minister, Stephen Harper, against the urban Toronto area, which had not supported him and where he could afford to lose support he never had: 'Even before the G20 arrived, it was widely proposed that Prime Minister Stephen Harper, whose governing conservative party won not a single parliamentary seat in the Toronto metropolitan area was cynically setting the city up.' (Cowen and Smith 2010, 44, cited in Kitchen and Kim 2014, 213)

As was the case in London, it was argued that the impact of the protests could be seen in later policing decisions:

Some activists in both Toronto and Pittsburgh argued that the G20 mobilization affected the way police managed the subsequent Occupy protests and others noted that the controversy surrounding the policing at the G20 contributed to the city's decision not to renew the Chief of Police, and subsequent discussions around the expansion of Taser use and the policing of racialized communities. (Wood et al. 2017, 605)

In contrast, measuring the impact of media exposure on the protest movements is challenging. According to Wood et al. (2017), some protestors felt that the heavy-handed police reaction they encountered resulted in increased support and recruitment for their cause, as well as engendering new campaigns, whereas others felt it created a climate of fear and caution.

At the other extreme, the 2014 Brisbane summit has been touted as an example of successful policing. Australia had more time than previous hosts to prepare for this summit as Julia Gillard was asked at the 2011 Cannes summit to host and Brisbane won out over Sydney in the summer of 2012. In total, more than 6,000 police were recruited from Queensland, Australia and New Zealand as part of Operation Southern Cross, which proved to be the largest ever peacetime police operation in Australian history. In light of Queensland's history of managing protest and the reportage in local media, fears of things getting out of hand and resulting in violence appeared to escalate (Legrand and Bronitt 2015, 3–4). However, the first day of the summit was declared a public holiday – a tactic also employed at the Buenos Aires G20 – and although the city was locked down and heavily restricted, protestors were out in number and only a handful of arrests made. Ultimately, Baker et al. argue that the policing of the Brisbane summit learned the lessons of previous failures and ‘based on extensive dialogue and minimization of coercive public order strategies’, resulted in a peaceful, even successful, summit (2017, 425; Molnar et al. 2019). In addition, protests and policing were observed by independent legal observers. This had been the case at London and Toronto but Brisbane did not experience similar levels of violence.<sup>34</sup>

Several summits present a more mixed experience, including the 2009 Pittsburgh, 2010 Cannes, 2017 Hamburg and 2018 Buenos Aires summits. The city of Pittsburgh braced itself for protests with the G20 London summit of earlier that year still fresh in the collective memory and the associated fear that protests would detract attention away from the desired narrative of Pittsburgh's transformation. Ahead of the summit, the Pittsburgh G20 Resistance Project ([www.resistg20.org](http://www.resistg20.org)) called for disruption of the meeting through a mass march, targeted businesses such as Starbucks and McDonalds and urged a ‘peoples’ uprising’. In response, requests from hundreds of protestors to camp in the city's botanical gardens, in whose Phipps Conservatory the G20 leaders dined on the first night of the summit, were rejected by the local courts ahead of the summit. The city's police force was reinforced by bussing in police forces from New York, Virginia and Kentucky and placing national guard troops and the coastguard on alert. There were even unfounded rumours circulating that prisoners were to be released in order to accommodate the anticipated number of arrests.<sup>35</sup> During the actual summit, all was calm within the area cordoned off around the convention centre. The high-profile CSOs grabbed the headlines with Oxfam's ‘Big Head’ leaders and Greenpeace activists hanging a banner highlighting climate change from Pittsburgh's West End Bridge (Wood et al. 2017). However, not far from the restricted area, riot police were reported to have used sirens, tear gas and rubber bullets to deal with thousands of protesters, resulting in skirmishes and roadblocks on the first day and evening of the summit. Reaction from one protester drew a link

with policing techniques at previous summits: ‘This kind of force has been used as an option of first resort by cops [at summits] in Italy, London and now Pittsburgh ... We have managed to create a pretty big disturbance without destroying any property.’<sup>36</sup>

The second day of the summit saw a self-proclaimed and police-authorized ‘peoples’ march’ to protest against the ‘war on terror’ and the G20’s response to climate change and poverty. This event was attended by 10,000 people and was peacefully concluded, in contrast to the previous day’s events.<sup>37</sup> In total, eighty-three people were arrested during the summit and US\$50,000 of damage was caused.<sup>38</sup> In summary, one editorial dubbed the protests as ‘lacklustre’ and opined that:

At the time of writing, the protests in Pittsburgh ... don’t seem to be reaching the peak we saw at the ‘Battle of Seattle’ in 1999. Even the lowest estimates put that crowd at more than 40,000, all there to decry the evils of globalisation. Ten years on, after the worst financial collapse in living memory, the G20 seems a far less controversial affair.<sup>39</sup>

As regards the impact protest itself, the Pittsburgh summit demonstrated the changing nature of protest, especially in response to social media, and Twitter in particular. Protestors were able to share information about themselves and the police, which had previously been the preserve of the latter, and thereby rebalance the traditional information asymmetry. Moreover, this was the first event hosted in the US to see protestors arrested for tweeting about police activities (Earl et al. 2013). Moreover, the exposure is thought to have rejuvenated some protest groups:

The AWC [Anti-War Committee], formed to protest the Iraq War, had been experiencing difficulty mobilizing people around peace issues in recent years, but the G20 gave the AWC a much-needed boost of confidence and some new members following the protests. Pittsburgh Indymedia was also having difficulty surviving before the G20, but experienced great success in covering the protests and was temporarily revitalized as a result. An anarchist collective called the Pittsburgh Organizing Group (POG) had been planning to disband just before the White House decided to hold the G20 in Pittsburgh, but upon hearing the news decided to remain together to aid the mobilization. They did so and gained new members, prolonging the life of the group for about a year after the G20 demonstrations. (Wood et al. 2017, 600)

As regards the Cannes summit, Cooper and Pouliot (2015, 347) argue that alongside the Los Cabos summit, this summit ‘suggested a move away from exclusionary tactics toward cooptation’. To this end, President Sarkozy engaged with civil society representatives before the summit to discuss substantive issues and strategies around development, as well as extending ‘privileged access’ to some of the higher profile civil society groups. Sarkozy

went as far as commissioning ‘Bill Gates ... to write a report on innovative financing for development. In many ways, therefore, Gates’ close involvement at Cannes was an exceptional one-off performance’ (Cooper and Cornut 2019, 313). On the streets, 12,000 police officers largely closed down Cannes and limited any protests and demonstrations to Nice, which also hosted the people’s summit.

Hamburg’s experience in 2017 was similarly mixed. As a city known for its history of radical politics, some have suggested that Merkel hoped to harness some of this spirit of her city of birth to demonstrate Germany’s ability to host a successful summit while maintaining an open and liberal society. Inevitably, the 100,000 protestors who gathered from across Europe targeted individual leaders like Trump and Putin and regarded the G20 as part of the problem in promoting globalization and fostering inequality. Although the mood around Hamburg ahead of the summit was tense, a range of demonstrations were organized in the run-up to and during the summit that were both peaceful and innovative, typified by a ‘Zombie March’ of 1,000 actors silently marching through the streets of Hamburg. However, on the eve of the summit, protest soon escalated into violence and rioting, exemplified by the ‘Welcome to Hell’ demonstrations that degenerated into protestors and riot police exchanging bottles and bricks for water cannons and pepper spray. It is estimated that damage totalling 12 million euros was caused and 400 arrests were made.<sup>40</sup>

In the run-up to the following year’s Buenos Aires summit, security was one of the chief concerns as a result of bomb attacks in Buenos Aires immediately before the summit and the final of the Copa Libertadores. This was being contested for the first time in its history by the two local rivals, River Plate and Boca Juniors but with the second leg of the final descending into violence and farce, concerns were raised about how Argentinian security forces would deal with the upcoming G20 summit (*Global Policy* 2018b). In the end, Buenos Aires and its public transport system were locked down, its residents were given a national holiday in an attempt to empty the city during the summit, and although thousands protested on the streets, these demonstrations passed off peacefully.

There have also been a number of summits where civil society engagement and demonstrations have by and large failed to materialize. Despite the importance of the first G20 in Washington, which brought the relevant leaders around the same table, civil society activity was limited at best with numbers in the ‘hundreds’ and the mood festive and peaceful.<sup>41</sup>

This is not to say that civil society was wholly absent from the event. Ahead of the summit, G20 leaders were the target of civil society campaigns. According to *The Observer*, ‘more than 600 civil society groups from over 100 countries have signed a petition calling for a wider range of countries to be involved, under the auspices of the UN’. The same report quoted Nick

Dearden, Director of the Jubilee debt campaign saying, '[o]ur worry at the moment is that this will simply be a resuscitation of the existing system'.<sup>42</sup> In addition, some civil society groups expressed concern about the issue of representation at the summit and the marginalization of the South. Finally, as possibly the first official interaction between the G20 and civil society, the G20-created taskforces were tasked with engaging 'in multi-stakeholder "downreach" with civil society experts, but only on a functional, epistemic community model, rather than a fully democratic one' (Hajnal and Guebert 2009, 14).

There was also little in the way of protest at the 2012 Los Cabos and 2013 St Petersburg summits. According to Villanueva Ulfgard and Alejo Jaime, although limited and hardly innovative, the Mexican presidency actively sought to engage with civil society, provided opportunities at the Los Cabos summit for CSOs to engage with the G20 and thereby recognized 'the importance of having spaces and dialogues available to civil society as part of the agenda of the G20 presidency' (2014, 1531). The Russian presidency built on this momentum the following year by establishing the first C20 summit, as a specific stakeholder group by which the G20 can engage with civil society. The depth of Russia's commitment to the C20 surprised some (Naylor 2023). As regards protest and demonstration, although Scott McDougall of the Caxton Legal Centre is partly correct in claiming that '[i]f you look at Russia last year in St Petersburg in the G20 summit there, there were no protesters to be seen or heard on the streets', there was a small counter summit held in St Petersburg immediately before the summit to argue the case for an alternative to the Washington Consensus. In addition, small-scale protests attempting to highlight human rights issues and homophobic government policies took place on the first day of summit. Internationally, 3 September 2013 was a day of protest in nineteen cities against rising homophobia and related government policies in Russia ahead of the summit. Within Russia, LGBT protests included a demonstration intended as a 'thank you' for demonstrations across the world in solidarity with Russia's LGBT community as well as an attempt to gain the international attention afforded by the summit.

Protesting during a global pandemic proved difficult but not impossible. The Riyadh G20 process shifted online in early 2020, as did protest against both the summit and the Saudi record on human rights. The Indonesian government temporarily reintroduced some Covid-19 restrictions and limited the movement of people during the Bali G20. In addition, the police urged the public to refrain from demonstrating.

## 7.6 SUMMARY

As mentioned above, mega-events like the G20 are as much local events as they are global ones. This chapter began with a vignette from the 2014 Brisbane G20 and will end with another that illustrates how the selection of a city as summit host can throw local and historical issues into relief. The summit venue was the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre in South Brisbane and Aboriginal people used nearby Musgrave Park to stage protests during the summit despite disputes surrounding the function of the park and Aboriginal rights to its use. Obama's visit to Brisbane provided a different perspective on segregation as seventy years earlier, Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in the Southwest Pacific Area, General Douglas MacArthur, stationed his General Headquarters in Brisbane during World War 2. South Brisbane was where African American soldiers were garrisoned in line with the US armed forces' policy of segregation during World War 2.<sup>43</sup>

This chapter has only skimmed the surface of the multiple ways and the extent to which these local issues surface as a result of the G20 coming to town. The domestic impact, whether it be political, economic, reputational or cultural, of global mega-events, whether they be diplomatic, like the G20, or sporting, like the Olympics, requires further research based on a rigorous methodology. However, it is possible to glean some initial hypotheses that future research can demonstrate or debunk. First of all, there appears to be a perception among G20 countries that participation in and hosting a summit of this elite grouping confers status, and their leaders have sought to enhance and benefit from this status both in terms of national and individual reputations. Second, leveraging the G20 has been a common practice among leaders with one eye on specific issues related to national interest at home or abroad. Third, despite the perceived status associated with membership of this elite club, the chances of translating this status, or the hosting of a successful summit, into electoral success appear slim at best. More perilously, an unsuccessful summit performance can compound an already negative reputation. Fourth, the seductive belief in the economic benefits of hosting a summit persist despite being them being difficult to measure. Finally, striking the balance between facilitating protesters' rights and ensuring a peaceful and secure summit is a fine one, but the lessons of G20 summits have informed a wider body of knowledge and practice on policing mega-events.

## NOTES

1. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 July 2012.
2. *The Brisbane Times*, 11 July 2012.
3. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 July 2012.

4. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 July 2012.
5. *The New York Times*, 22 October 2008.
6. *The Financial Times*, 23 September 2009.
7. *The Guardian*, 16 June 2013.
8. For a detailed analysis of the Seoul summit, see Cherry and Dobson 2012.
9. *Chosun Ilbo*, 16 November 2010.
10. *China Daily*, 6 August 2016.
11. *Chosun Ilbo*, 13 November 2010.
12. *The Korea Times*, 13 November 2010.
13. *The Japan Times*, 28 October 2011.
14. *Forbes*, 6 September 2013.
15. *New Statesman*, 26 March 2009.
16. *The Guardian*, 3 April 2009.
17. *The Guardian*, 16 June 2013.
18. *New Statesman*, 26 March 2009.
19. *The Sunday Times*, 29 March 2009.
20. *The Guardian*, 29 October 2013.
21. *The Washington Post*, 26 June 2019.
22. *Reuters*, 10 July 2009.
23. *The Economist*, 19 September 2009.
24. *Korea Herald*, 5 November 2010; *Xinhua*, 9 November 2010.
25. *China Daily*, 9 August 2016.
26. *BBC News*, 2 September 2016.
27. *The Guardian*, 31 August 2016.
28. *ABC News*, 14 November 2014.
29. *China Daily*, 7 July 2017.
30. *National Post*, 31 October 2012.
31. *Mexico News Daily*, 4 November 2015.
32. *The Economist*, 26 March 2009.
33. *The Economist*, 16 April 2009.
34. *ABC News*, 14 November 2014.
35. *Daily Telegraph*, 22 September 2009; *The Guardian*, 24 September 2009.
36. *The Financial Times*, 25 September 2009.
37. *The Herald*, 26 September 2009.
38. *Associated Press*, 25 September 2009.
39. *The Sunday Times*, 27 September 2009.
40. *Deutsche Welle*, 29 May 2018.
41. *BBC News*, 16 November 2008.
42. *The Observer*, 2 November 2008.
43. *Brisbane Times*, 13 November 2014.