

Institution: University of Sheffield
Unit of Assessment: 27 - Area Studies
Title of case study: Promoting understanding of Japan's role in global summitry
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Through a series of briefings, interviews and workshops Hugo Dobson's research on the Group of 8 and Group of 20 summits and the role played by Japan has had both policy impacts and media/public understanding impacts. On the one hand, his research has impacted on European and UK policymakers' knowledge base and policy debates, in addition to the approaches they have taken in negotiations with the Japanese government. On the other hand, his research has influenced the reportage of global media outlets and their decisions as to what is newsworthy, ultimately contributing to national debates, particularly in the UK and Japan.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>As the only scholar in Europe to combine the study of global summitry and Japan, Dobson's research from 2000 onwards has developed through three stages that reflect actual changes in global summitry.</p> <p>The first stage began in 2000 when Japan played host to the twenty-sixth G8 summit. This inspired Dobson's initial exploration of Japan's role in the G8 based on archival work and interviews with a range of key participants in the summit process, including leading Japanese politicians. The result was the publication of <i>Japan and the G7/G8, 1975 to 2002</i> (R1) in addition to numerous book chapters and working papers. This body of work represented the first systematic treatment of Japan's role in the G8 and highlighted the range of actors involved, their objectives and strategies, in addition to the overall importance of these previously overlooked summit meetings to Japan in forging its identity and shaping its behaviour.</p> <p>During the second stage, from 2003 to 2008, the G8 underwent a process of outreach and dialogue with potential new members that culminated in the creation of the G20 in 2008 as the 'premier forum for international economic cooperation'. Dobson's research responded by tracing these developments resulting in another well-received contribution to Routledge's <i>Global Institutions Series</i> entitled <i>The Group of 7/8</i> and published in 2007, in addition to numerous book chapters and working papers. This body of work not only accounted for the changes in both the global order and global summitry but also outlined possible future scenarios, presaging the creation of the G20, whilst arguing that the G8 would continue and explaining Japan's qualified and contradictory reaction to these developments.</p> <p>The third stage is on-going since 2008 and has seen Dobson's research continue to explore the development of the G8 and G20 resulting in a number of online publications and peer-reviewed articles in leading Area Studies and International Relations journals (R2). This body of work has contributed to understanding by: 1) exploring the evolving relationship between different mechanisms of global governance and accounting for the continuation of the G8; 2) identifying and evaluating the (in)effectiveness of various strategies adopted by Japan in managing this highly fluid situation (R4; R5), including its use of global summitry to turn controversial domestic issues, such as increasing the consumption tax and the current government's economic strategy dubbed 'Abenomics', into summit commitments in order to get leverage at home; 3) assessing the way in which Japan has managed key bilateral relations in a multilateral context (R3); and 4) highlighting the contribution of non-traditional actors including civil society and leaders' spouses to global summitry (R6).</p>

During this final stage Dobson attended summits as an accredited journalist in order to observe and research various participants and developments in global summitry. Concurrently, he co-organised and participated in a series of briefings, interviews and workshops to disseminate his research and impact upon the understandings and decisions of policymakers and the global media. This then resulted in the coproduction of knowledge and creation of a virtuous circle of research, dissemination and impact.

3. References to the research

- R1. Hugo Dobson (2004) *Japan and the G7/8, 1975-2002*, London: Routledge. Listed in REF2. The research was funded through the Hosei International Fund Foreign Scholars Fellowship and published by an internationally renowned publisher recognised as being at the forefront of Professor Dobson's field of study.
- R2. Hugo Dobson and Judith Cherry (2012) 'Seoul-Searching: The 2010 G20 Seoul Summit', *Global Governance*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 363-381. doi: [10.5555/1075-2846-18.3.363](https://doi.org/10.5555/1075-2846-18.3.363). An internationally peer-reviewed journal with a ranking on the Australian Research Council Index of 'A' and an impact factor of 0.44.
- R3. Hugo Dobson (2012) 'Managing the Medusa: Japan-US relations in GX Summitry', *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 175-198. doi: [10.1080/09512748.2012.658850](https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2012.658850). An internationally peer-reviewed journal with a ranking on the Australian Research Council Index of 'A' and a five-year impact factor of 1.071.
- R4. Hugo Dobson (2012) 'Japan and the Changing Global Order: the Case of a Gaggle of Gs', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 229-257. doi: [10.1093/irap/lcr023](https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcr023). An internationally peer-reviewed journal with a ranking on the Australian Research Council Index of 'A' and an impact factor of 1.147.
- R5. Hugo Dobson (2012) 'Japan's Diplomatic Double Whammy: Hosting TICAD-IV and the G8 Hokkaido-Toyako Summit', *Japanese Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 237-253. doi: [10.1080/10371397.2012.708395](https://doi.org/10.1080/10371397.2012.708395). An internationally peer-reviewed journal with a ranking on the Australian Research Council Index of 'A'.
- R6. Hugo Dobson (2012) 'Where are the Women in Global Governance?: Leaders, Wives and Hegemonic Masculinity in the G8 and G20 summits', *Global Society*, Vol. 26, No. 4, pp. 429-449. doi: [10.1080/13600826.2012.710594](https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2012.710594). An internationally peer-reviewed journal with a ranking on the Australian Research Council Index of 'B'.

4. Details of the impact

Policy Impacts

In October 2009 the European Commission identified Dobson as the best-positioned scholar to brief its officials at an informal seminar held in Brussels on how to leverage cooperation with Japan in the G8 and G20 to better achieve common goals. This briefing helped its officials "*better understand Japan's immediate concerns and interests in various multilateral fora and how we might be able to tap into these in our pursuit of the EU's global aims*" (S1). Dobson's contributions "*remained important underpinnings as we built on this early work on upgrading the EU-Japan relationship at the subsequent 2010 and 2011 EU-Japan Summits*" (S1). The result of this process was the Foreign Affairs Council's decision in November 2012 to begin negotiations with Japan towards both a Framework Agreement and a Free Trade Agreement.

In addition, Dobson has co-organised numerous policy-focused workshops and briefings in collaboration with the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) believing that *“it is invaluable and essential for diplomats in the FCO to not only have at their fingertips our country’s best research on matters of policy importance, but also to have a sufficiently close relationship with those experts that we may draw on their judgements at often very short notice”* (S2). These events have included officials with a direct role in the preparation of the G8 summit, such as the UK sous-sherpa (aide) to Prime Minister Gordon Brown. A workshop in February/March 2008 entitled ‘The 2008 G8 Summit: Lessons for the UK and Japan’, took place at a time when, according to the aide, the UK government was championing outreach and expansion among its G8 partners. Dobson’s research findings on Japan’s promotion of, and resistance to, these initiatives were fed into policymakers’ understanding of what would become a major issue just months after the workshop. These events have also included officials with a direct role in UK-Japan relations, such as the current UK Ambassador to Japan. During May and June 2013, Dobson initiated, co-organised and participated in a series of weekly policy briefings for the FCO on key issues, including global summitry, that were timed around the 2013 Loch Erne Summit and *“informed policy officials as to the latest research on these topics, [and] also brought together colleagues from across different parts of government to discuss issues of common relevance who otherwise might not have met”* (S2). Dobson also edited the briefings as a volume of policy papers for distribution to UK missions overseas to ensure that *“the impact of the seminars will be made broader and more longer lasting”* (S2).

Media and Public Understanding Impacts

This impact was created through collaboration with global think tanks including the G8/G20 Research Groups, the Global Summitry Project and the Centre for International Governance Innovation. Dobson has joined researchers from these think tanks and secured official media accreditation to attend G8 and G20 summits since 2008. He was thus able to conduct a number of official press briefings and one-to-one in-depth interviews with leading UK, Japanese and global media outlets including *The Times* (readership: 500,000) and *Asahi Shinbun* (readership: 11 million), in addition to *Nihon Keizai Shinbun* (readership: 3 million), *Wall Street Journal* (readership: 2 million), *Kyodo News* (Japan’s major news agency and source of news for Japanese newspapers, radio and television), *BBC World Service* (audience: 188 million), *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* (the national radio and television broadcaster), *Canada Television Network* (the largest private broadcaster), *China Radio International* (China’s equivalent of the *BBC World Service*) and *Xinhua* (China’s major news agency and source of news for newspapers, radio and television).

Thus, Dobson’s research on the historical context of Japan’s role in the G8, the reasons behind the Japanese government’s conflicted response to the creation of the G20 and the role of non-traditional actors has impacted on media understanding of these issues. According to a Japanese journalist: *“[i]t is often the case at these major diplomatic events that a correspondent inevitably relies heavily upon his or her own government for the necessary information and insight into how the various negotiations and diplomatic contacts are progressing. All the more reason then why I have found Professor Dobson’s help to be invaluable”* (S3). Impacting on media understanding has in turn impacted on the resulting reportage, as illustrated by two UK journalists: *“I often find myself struggling to catch up very quickly on complex subjects. Professor Dobson’s clear explanations were exactly what I needed, and The Times’ coverage of the summit was enhanced as a result”* (S4). *“He [Dobson] provides me with the necessary information to put recent events into context and this helps me judge whether something is particularly newsworthy or relevant”*. Moreover, this reportage ultimately impacts on public understanding by *“feed[ing] into the national debate going on in Japan on particular issues”* (S5).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- S1. Corroboration of impact on EU policymakers: Political Desk Officer for Japan, Unit for Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand, External Relations Directorate-General, European Commission.
- S2. Corroboration of impact on UK policymakers: Head of the Asia-Pacific Research Group, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- S3. Corroboration of impact on media reportage: Foreign Correspondent of *Asahi Shinbun*.
- S4. Corroboration of impact on media reportage: Asia Editor of *The Times* and 'What the Papers Say' foreign correspondent of the year in 2005.
- S5. Corroboration of impact on media reportage: Correspondent of *Kyodo News*.