



# Reconstructing the International Peace Architecture in the Asian Century

**DOI:**  
[10.1080/13600826.2021.1948393](https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2021.1948393)

**Document Version**  
Final published version

[Link to publication record in Manchester Research Explorer](#)

**Citation for published version (APA):**  
Uesugi, Y., & Richmond, O. P. (2021). Reconstructing the International Peace Architecture in the Asian Century. *Global Society*, 35(4), 419-434. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2021.1948393>

**Published in:**  
Global Society

**Citing this paper**  
Please note that where the full-text provided on Manchester Research Explorer is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Proof version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version.

**General rights**  
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Explorer are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

**Takedown policy**  
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please refer to the University of Manchester's Takedown Procedures [<http://man.ac.uk/04Y6Bo>] or contact [uml.scholarlycommunications@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:uml.scholarlycommunications@manchester.ac.uk) providing relevant details, so we can investigate your claim.





# Reconstructing the International Peace Architecture in the Asian Century

Yuji Uesugi & Oliver P. Richmond

To cite this article: Yuji Uesugi & Oliver P. Richmond (2021) Reconstructing the International Peace Architecture in the Asian Century, *Global Society*, 35:4, 419-434, DOI: [10.1080/13600826.2021.1948393](https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2021.1948393)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2021.1948393>



Published online: 06 Oct 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 272





View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



# Reconstructing the International Peace Architecture in the Asian Century

Yuji Uesugi <sup>a</sup> and Oliver P. Richmond <sup>b</sup>



<sup>a</sup>Faculty of International Research and Education, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan; <sup>b</sup>Department of Politics, The University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

## ABSTRACT

This introductory paper for the special issue on *Reconstructing the International Peace Architecture (IPA) in the Asian Century* outlines the background to, the objective and the scope of, and the key contributions of the special issue. A fundamental problem that each contributor has underlined is the inability of the existing IPA to effectively cope with emerging counter-peace challenges in the face of the rise of Asian powers and the global geopolitical rivalry. This special issue seeks to address the following questions: (1) how would the rise of Asian powers affect global power's framing of peace, and its international and local hybridity within the IPA; (2) how might the interests of the Global North, Emerging Powers, and the Global South be addressed simultaneously or be integrated with the IPA; and (3) how global institutions such as the United Nations might incorporate non-Western values, customs, norms and standards into their doctrines and practices of peacebuilding? This paper offers some speculations about peacebuilding, statebuilding and development assistance in the new international relations in which China plays a major role.

## Introduction

This special issue is one of the substantive outcomes of an international workshop held on 12–13 September 2019 at the Global Asia Research Centre, Waseda University, in which over 50 peacebuilding academics, practitioners and graduate students gathered to discuss the theme of “Reconstructing the Architecture of International Peacebuilding in the Wake of Global Demographic Change”. This workshop was organised with a view to recognising that the rise of Asian powers has brought new challenges and opportunities in international peacebuilding, as elaborated further in this special issue. The workshop, representing an open debate between Asian and Western scholars, was premised on the assumption that emerging Asian powers may exert their influence on existing theories and practices, as their efforts toward peacebuilding, statebuilding and development assistance are distinctive from the conventional Western approaches. For example, all of them are or used to be developing countries and thus appreciate the position of being an

**CONTACT** Yuji Uesugi  [uesugi@waseda.jp](mailto:uesugi@waseda.jp)  Faculty of International Research and Education, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

aid recipient country, giving priority to economic development and stability over individualistic rights and emancipation.

While geopolitics and nationalism are still prevalent, and China's foreign policy is often seen as the great "other" in a new "Cold War" from a Western perspective, it has also become clearer that international order cannot be stabilised or advanced without substantial Asian contributions to multilateral activities, related to peacebuilding processes. More significantly, as such, their contributions will inevitably lead to change and reform (as they already have done vis-à-vis issues such as development and human security). So the current apparent stasis in what has been a Western-led practice of order maintenance and improvement through peacekeeping, mediation, peacebuilding, development and statebuilding is actually much more complex. At strategic, institutional, regional, state and local levels Asian approaches to peace, both academic and doctrinal, are developing, both paralleling and displacing previous practices.

At a critical juncture in human history, facing unprecedented population growth, climate change, "technological singularity" (Kurzweil 2006), and the twenty-first century's version of the "Thucydides Trap" (Allison 2017), the rise of Asian powers could work in both ways: promoting subaltern claims and addressing social and global injustice or strengthening elite domination and prolonging the "Westphalian Peace", which is the bedrock of the existing international order. The basic principle of the Westphalian Peace is the premise that sovereign states would maintain international order by respecting each other's sovereignty and balancing their respective power. It was widely understood that the Westphalian Peace emerged in the aftermath of the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia that ended the 30-year war in Europe. This view that the Treaty of Westphalia gave birth to the formation of modern international relations and its system of sovereign states is something of a myth, however (Akashi 2009). It was created and proliferated by British and American scholars of international politics in the nineteenth century in response to the expansion of the British Empire (Shinoda 2014), partly driven by Eurocentrism.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a number of American scholars of international politics generated a discourse of the US-led "liberal hegemonic order" or "democratic empire" to theoretically legitimise a series of social engineering attempts by the US, serving as a "Liberal Leviathan" (Ikenberry 2011). Under the normative auspices of Liberal Peace, conventional peacebuilding actors such as the United Nations (UN), Bretton Woods Institutions, and Western donors have tried to advance human rights, democracy, development, and human security in the "Rest" of the world. Such ambitious endeavours did not bear fruit on many occasions, however.

Upon the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab 2017), the global divide has been accelerated with rapidly growing digital technology, which can augment global civil society or undermine democracy, a fundamental principle of the existing international liberal order (Bartlett 2018), through supporting authoritarian modes of government. Advanced communication and information technologies such as the Internet, Social Network Services (SNS) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have expanded the horizons of subaltern claims for expression and participation as well as increasing the ability to monitor its citizens and place them under constant surveillance in the quest for stability.

We have witnessed one such application being used to deal effectively with the COVID-19 in East Asia, which is briefly discussed in Howe's paper in this special issue.

During the Cold War, the East Asian countries of the Capitalist block such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan accomplished an Asian economic "miracle", and towards the end of the Cold War, dictatorships in South Korea and Taiwan were replaced by democratic regimes. Thus, now they can be categorised as *Liberal Democracy* (an open-access order). Countries in Southeast Asia such as Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines have modelled themselves after East Asian front-runners following the theory of modernisation, and after the fall of dictators in the Philippines and Indonesia, they have set Liberal Democracy as their goal for development (Brunei is a notable exception).

On the other hand, the Asian members of the Communist/Socialist block such as China, Vietnam, North Korea, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar adopted the one-party system, and selected a distinctive development path from the Capitalist block. With the end of the Cold War, however, and except for North Korea, they have been integrated into the global capitalist economy. While Cambodia and Myanmar have introduced multiparty democracy (albeit both are facing a serious democratic roll-back, controlled by an authoritarian regime and a military junta, respectively), the rest of them still maintain the one-party system. Economic success by China, Singapore and Vietnam has illuminated a possible alternative pathway to Liberal Democracy for pursuing economic prosperity, which can be classified as *Developmental Nondemocracy* (a limited access order).

The two models – Liberal Democracy and Developmental Nondemocracy – differ in their polity, but both of them are operating under the rule of global capitalism (North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009). In the post-Cold War era, South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives seem to have pursued the Liberal Democracy model, despite their turbulent trajectories. They, together with emerging democracies in Southeast Asia, can be categorised as *Developmental Democracies*. With the successful rise of Developmental Nondemocracies such as China and Singapore, developing countries in Asia encompassing these Developmental Democracies as well as the authoritarian regimes, therefore, have three options for their development strategy: (1) aiming for Liberal Democracy; (2) aiming for Developmental Nondemocracy or (3) remain underdeveloped.

Of course, we can expect Developmental Nondemocracies to change their direction and transform their polity to democracy as Singapore seems to have started such a transformation by softening its authoritarian control. China might emulate Singapore – soft authoritarian capitalism with a high-tech and globalised financial and technological centre – and it has experimented with this in Shenzhen. While Singapore's success provides an attractive alternative pathway for China, the Singapore model rests on openness and mobility, which the Chinese government has been cautious about after the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989. Chinese citizens are placed under strict governmental control and their access to the Internet is restricted by their authority. Furthermore, the Singapore model would not provide a simple solution to China as a whole, as a high level of inequality still exists in China, and the Chinese government faces the urgent and critical challenge of meeting subaltern claims for social justice in order to prevent the unleashing of citizens' desire for liberty.

## The objective of this special issue

Against such a backdrop, the above-mentioned international workshop reviewed the trajectory of international peacebuilding and explored what options are available for tackling counter-peace challenges. It examined the contribution of Asia to the concept and praxis of peace in the context of the development of the Westphalian-based “International Peace Architecture” (IPA) that subsumes ideas, norms, legal frameworks and institutions established for the purposes of maintaining international peace (Richmond 2012). The central concern of the international order and the fundamental purpose of forming and maintaining such an order has been to achieve international peace, within the conceptual parameters, conditioned by the power relations and social claims of the particular era. Richmond (2018, [Forthcoming](#)) recently claimed from a historical perspective that the IPA has been evolving for centuries, shifting from the balance of power model to the liberal peace. It became necessary to reduce war, violence, global stratification and disparity to realise a more stable, sustainable, and equitable international community and to achieve a legitimate, subaltern-oriented everyday peace. To some degree, this is illustrated in the documentation surrounding the emergence of a “Sustaining Peace” debate in the UN circles (UN 2018).

An overall objective of this special issue is to advance the recent academic discussion in the literature on international peacebuilding about a “local turn” and a “hybrid turn” as well as to expand the peace lexicon by adding insights from non-Western perspectives, especially those from Asia (Uesugi 2020; Uesugi et al. 2021). The present-day theories and practices of peacebuilding in academia, diplomacy (foreign policy and aid) as well as statebuilding and development are all defined by the legacy of nineteenth century Western ontology, epistemology and methodology which are based on certain sediments of different human civilisations and history, while neglecting, overlooking or forgetting others. Each contributor to this special issue offers twenty-first century versions and/or Asian variations of peace scholarship, including perspectives and attitudes that are more suited and timely to construct a conceptual bridge between the overarching international order and each sovereign initiatives for peace formation (Richmond 2018).

Four out of five papers included in this special issue were presented at the above-mentioned international workshop at Waseda University, while the remaining one was contributed afterwards to fill in thematic gaps that existed in the original collection. This special issue is a collective effort of peacebuilding scholars in response to a keynote lecture by Oliver Richmond delivered at the international workshop, in which he highlighted the main arguments of his forthcoming book entitled *The Grand Design: The Evolution of the International Peace Architecture*.

In the keynote lecture, Richmond presented his understanding of the IPA and its historical evolution. He claims that the IPA is an umbrella concept, not just pointing to tangible mechanisms and institutions responsible for maintaining international peace such as the UN, but also it encompasses normative underpinnings established for such a purpose. In addition to the keynote lecture, the contributors of this special issue revisited three supplementary contributions by Richmond (2012, 2014, 2018) with a view to reconstructing the IPA to address defects and to meet with unforeseen changes in international relations. Based on these insights, this special issue attempts to assess the impact of the decaying dominance of the conventional actors responsible

for maintaining international peace and the growing influence of emerging powers in Asia in the twenty-first century. Building on the premises of “peace formation” (Richmond 2016, 2018, 2019) and “hybrid peacebuilding” (Uesugi 2020; Uesugi et al. 2021), it seeks to rescue peacebuilding from neoliberal epistemological frameworks. Peace formation facilitates a view that peace is formed from the ground up, from the grassroots level, being carried out by local/subaltern agency and networks, and scaling up towards the state and international order. Hybrid peacebuilding, on the other hand, complements the theory of peace formation by underlining the significance of interplays and crisscrossing approaches of vertical (ranging from international to interpersonal levels), horizontal (crosscutting various internal or intercommunal cleavages) and diagonal (between insiders and outsiders) bridge-building (Uesugi 2020). For locally formed peace processes to reach and shape political orders at the national, regional and international levels, it is argued, a coalition of mid-space bridge-builders who can travel across the above-mentioned three critical cleavages must be mobilised.

From the point of view of international peacebuilding, statebuilding and development assistance, such micro understandings of interactions and interconnectedness between local and international actors on the ground can only help us to acknowledge the complexities of exchanges among a wide range of agencies and networks, including between local and international organisations. As local peacebuilding dynamics occur within subnational, national, regional and global systems, and the rise of Asian powers would formulate considerable pressure at all levels in the IPA, it is imperative, therefore, to understand ways in which these different systems and subsystems resonate with each other, if we are to restructure the global institutions for peace. It is equally important to assess the prospect of emerging Asian powers to contribute to the necessary reconstruction of the IPA, whether they are capable and willing to present new additions or alternatives to liberal peacebuilding established within the Western value system.

### **The scope of this special issue**

In this special issue, a metaphor of a “toolbox” is used to characterise the multiple functions of the IPA. Unlike the metaphor of the “invisible hand of God”, which gives an impression that the IPA is a monotheistical almighty remedy for all the challenges of the past origins as well as the ones we now face, the toolbox metaphor can help us visualise polytheistic manifold tools required to meet diverse problems but concurring in different spaces as illustrated in the six-stage evolution of the IPA: (1) balance of power; (2) democratisation and self-determination; (3) alternative international political economies; (4) liberal peacebuilding; (5) neoliberal statebuilding; and (6) sustaining peace. These six stages coexist within the IPA, each responding to different problems. As Richmond ([Forthcoming](#)) argues, the current IPA needs an alternative or reform so that it can deal with the counter-peace challenges of today, especially deepening and widening cleavages within and across societies. This special issue is an attempt to explore the potential of Asian powers to reshape the newest and sixth stage of the IPA without disrupting the overall architecture. All papers in this special issue, discuss a range of questions revolving around the concept of the IPA, although each focuses on distinctive aspects as summarised in the latter section of this introductory paper.



Societies both within and across the national boundaries are facing two contradictory trends. On the one hand, the globalised neoliberal economy has forced many to be integrated into the globalised capitalistic chain, which helped many developing countries in Asia, such as China and India to lift themselves up from poverty to emerging economies, while at the same time the gap seems to have widened or become more visible between those who have and have not. It seems that under authoritarian capitalism, economic liberalism has undermined political liberalism by replacing the latter with an approach that values stability for growth over the emancipation of subalterns. In this special issue, authoritarian capitalism and the revival of geopolitics as the underlying currents of international relations are identified as the two major features of the emerging order that pose a threat to what Richmond (2018) calls the “Peace with Global Justice” (PGJ) pathway of the IPA.

China is considered amongst others to be the most prominent leading power in Asia that has the potential to shape the new reality in the international relations in Asia and beyond. The legitimacy and efficacy of the post-World War II international order which has been led by the US, seems to have weakened and as a result the UN is at risk of crumbling. A number of failed attempts at liberal peacebuilding and neoliberal statebuilding in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya have damaged the legitimacy of the US as a prominent “liberal hegemon” (Ikenberry 2006).

To recapitulate, the basic premises of this special issue are threefold: (1) the existing IPA is unfit to meet the emerging challenges of the twenty-first century; (2) the emerging Asian powers prefer the reform of the dominant structures and the operating system of the IPA; and (3) unprecedented globalisation in the last decade has accelerated further global stratifications which require a response from the IPA.

## Key problems

There is both the systemic encounter in the multipolar world to mediate, as well as subaltern claims across acutely different groups around the world to respond to. Clearly, the UN system, the donor-system, regional and state-level politics—though making important contributions—are not in a position to mediate this level of complexity through their own respective rationales: liberal peace, the states-system, ideology, or geopolitics. The state-level logic of authoritarian capitalism, illiberal states and peace or reform outcomes, compounds the problems faced by attempts to end contemporary wars such as in Yemen or Syria.

Furthermore, the UN Security Council failed to transform itself to catch up with geopolitical shifts and economic growth in Asia, despite the efforts by Japan, Germany, India, Brazil and other countries to become its permanent members. Although China advocates democratisation of international relations and argues that the opinions of developing countries should be reflected more in the operation of the UN, China has not welcomed any reform of the UN Security Council that could undermine its prestigious diplomatic position in the international arena. Such behaviour contradicts China’s own slogan about the democratisation of international relations.

Through persisting on self-determination for the poor and weak, China and India, as aspiring moral leaders of developing countries, complement the existing international



order that has suppressed subaltern aspirations. They may offer additional (not alternative) models of statebuilding and development: how to take advantage of a globalised economy without being unilaterally exploited by global capitalism. Because the West also represents global capitalism, it has been difficult to promote self-determination and autonomy of individual developing states. Promoting economic rights and ideals of cultural variation via democracy and justice (eradicating global inequality created by the neoliberal globalised economy), China and India might force reform of the existing system, as discussed in the paper by Uesugi and Richmond in this special issue. For the most part, however, their engagement with the liberal rights framework has aimed to compress it into merely subsistence and development, as opposed the broader rights and dignity framework the liberal international community has proposed (The Economist 2020).

At the 75th anniversary of the UN, almost one year after the above-mentioned international workshop was held in Waseda University, we heard arguments about how the situation is not improving: the superpower rivalry between the US and China operates through geopolitics to undermine the already fragile IPA. In addition, the pandemic of COVID-19 has revealed the needs and urgency for reform of the IPA so that it can counter challenges from both traditional and non-traditional security threats such as pandemics and climate changes, as illuminated in Howe's paper and Simangan's paper, respectively, in this special issue.

It was reported that Xi Jinping stated in the UN annual meeting in September 2020 that

No country has the right to dominate global affairs, control the destiny of others, or keep advantages on development all to itself. Even less should one be allowed to do whatever it likes and be the hegemon, bully or boss of the world. Unilateralism is a dead end. (Al Jazeera 2020)

While his remark is obviously legitimate and multilateralism is a better substitute for unilateralism, a critical question related to the reform of the IPA is how far this can develop given clashing US and Chinese hegemony, and whether it would increase the likelihood of realising subaltern emancipation and PGJ.

In the face of the US's retreat from its role as a chief guarantor of the existing IPA under former President Trump, China expressed its interest in assuming some of the responsibility for maintaining international peace, even implying that China is ready to take more responsibility. Under such circumstances, the IPA helped avoid the "Thucydides Trap" (Allison 2017) by preventing the rivalry between the US and China from escalating. As discussed in the paper by Uesugi and Richmond in this special issue, both the "Eastphalian" principles (such as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence of 1956) and the liberal philosophy of democracy and PGJ indicate that no one, including the US and China, should dominate global affairs, control the destiny of others, or keep the advantages of development all to itself. Of course, the best scenario is that the US and China will cooperate to strengthen the IPA by introducing a new stage to stabilise previous layers and help realise PGJ. The contributors of this special issue believe that either appropriate additions or alternatives to the IPA have to be found, and embark on theoretical and/or empirical explorations in each paper.

## Key questions

Peacebuilding encompasses multi-directional and multi-level efforts in the global, international, regional, national, subnational, communal and interpersonal spheres. So far “peace formation” remains one of several logics, and it has not displayed an overriding influence on the system of international order. It lacks direct influence on the IPA, even if it has contributed to its evolution and the overarching norms of the international community. How can the rise of Asia support peace formation in each conflict-affected society to offer feedback to the IPA and support a shift towards PGJ? This is the key question that the authors of this special issue collectively seek to answer.

Based on the premises that the existing IPA needs to reflect the changing environment, a key set of questions to be asked in this special issue includes: (1) how would the rise of Asian powers affect the global power relations, framing of peace, and international and local hybridity between Western and non-Western approaches within the IPA; (2) how might the interests of the Global North, Emerging Powers, and the Global South be addressed simultaneously or be integrated with the IPA; and (3) how global institutions such as the UN might further incorporate non-Western values, customs, norms and standards into their doctrines and practices of peacebuilding so that they can overcome the limits of Western epistemology?

With the rise of China entangled within the globalised economy, Asia as a region has established itself as a major hub in the multipolar world, especially in terms of economic trade, human mobility and political influence. Considering the scale of its economic power, it is plausible that the centre of gravity will return to Asia in the next decades of the twenty-first century. However, the IPA has yet to adjust to emerging conditions, and so long as the current geostrategic trend continues, it will not transform itself in line with the UN’s most recent thinking about “Sustaining Peace” at least in the foreseeable future (Cavalcante 2019). This is problematic given that new types of conflict have been emerging for which new tools are required from the IPA.

## Key contributions

A major theoretical contribution of this special issue can be found in two important interdisciplinary contributions by Joanne Wallis and Dahlia Simangan, the former brings in a microlens and employs a psychological analysis, whereas the latter aims at drawing lessons from the discourse of the Anthropocene. Building upon the literature on peacebuilding, especially reflecting the limits of liberal peacebuilding and possible contributions of post-liberal approaches such as hybrid peacebuilding (Uesugi 2020) and adaptive peacebuilding (de Coning 2018), both of them explore new horizons of the IPA by incorporating unconventional frameworks.

The micro-analysis presented by Wallis suggests that the worldviews of each international peacebuilder, including those who work at the front line in the field, affect the policy choices made by peacebuilding institutions such as the UN. Not only diplomats, aid workers and academics involved in bilateral intervention, but also international civil servants who are supposed to be independent from their political affiliation and religious belief, are prisoners of their epistemological frameworks that they were raised with, although prior education and inter socialisation can induce adjustment to their cognitive

frameworks. The organs of the UN system, such as the Security Council and the General Assembly, for example, are dominated by the hybrid doctrine of both liberal peace and the Westphalian norms which place priority on the sovereignty and national security of each member state over subaltern claims for emancipation, prioritising realist approaches to international relations in which power politics dictate the behaviour of major powers. While during the Cold War, the Soviet Union and China offered different normative perspectives based on Marxist/Socialist worldviews, in the post-Cold War era, Western epistemological frameworks established by the Western elite who share conceptions of peace, war, order, and rights, have been reproduced continuously in both academic and professional training to consolidate their domination in every branch of the organisation.

Under such circumstances, non-Western worldviews played a marginalised role in international peacebuilding. A corollary of this analysis is that with the rise of Asia, more non-Western actors who are not raised nor trained (and thus not prejudiced) by Western epistemology are going to be involved in peacebuilding business of the UN as well as creating additional institutions within or outside of the UN system. This may alter the fundamental doctrine of the IPA. The paper by Uesugi and Richmond in this special issue examines the potential for such development in the IPA. In addition, Howe's paper extends this line of thought into the context of regional organisations in East Asia. Wong's paper outlines the characteristics of Chinese approaches to peacebuilding to provide grounds for further speculations about the doctrinal shift in the IPA. Finally, but perhaps most radically, and presciently, the paper by Simangan calls for the establishment of reflexive peacebuilding institutions to implement such a doctrinal shift on the ground.

Another important contribution of this special issue stems from the empirical analysis of the following questions: Do Chinese approaches pose a considerable threat to liberal peacebuilding as claimed in the Western political discourse? How has China's rise in international peacebuilding impacted the critical and post-colonial peace discourse of every day and hybrid peacebuilding (Richmond 2009; Uesugi 2020; Uesugi et al. 2021)? The existing discussion on hybrid peacebuilding has reminded us of the importance of local knowledge and legitimacy in building sustainable peace. A dominant coalition of local elites (North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009) and external interveners have to find a mutually beneficial relationship in order to create a stronger link between the IPA and world society. The paramount challenge facing us is how to appreciate such dynamics and to utilise both internal and external transnational resources to enhance the power of locality (i.e. subaltern claims for peace and justice) to advance peace formation in post-conflict environments in the midst of a revival of geopolitics and nationalism, as well as the rise of non-Western peacebuilding actors? Being one of the most successful cases of post-Cold War development, China together with other Asian powers may offer a little noticed perspective based on their prior and current experiences of successful development, taking advantage of the existing neoliberal Westphalian international order in the process, and now moving into multilateral spaces left vacant by current or recent Western disinterest. Hence, the goal of this special issue is to consider conceptually as well as empirically issues surrounding the reform of the IPA. This goal is pursued in the following five ways.

## The structure of this special issue

The first paper by Yuji Uesugi and Oliver Richmond entitled “The Western International Peace Architecture and the Emergence of the Eastphalian Peace” examines the prospect of the rise of an Eastphalian Peace and its implications for the existing IPA. The Eastphalian Peace is an expression that aims to provide a conceptual umbrella term for the premises of peace and order that emerged as a result of the rise of Asian powers such as China and India (Kim 2018). The paper assumes that the existing international order was originally built on the Westphalian principles of sovereign equality and non-intervention of domestic affairs of other states, but as divergent forces operated in international relations, different norms, values, legal frameworks and institutions have been added to form independent stages in the IPA. On this premise, the paper discusses the likelihood of the emergence of the Eastphalian Peace by exploring implications of the rise of China and India for the existing IPA and examining obstacles to the Eastphalian Peace. Emerging powers in Asia are all beneficiaries of the neoliberal global economy supported by the Pax Americana and its architecture. The relative decline of US power has given China and India the option to reject, support or supplement the US in maintaining international order. At the same time, geopolitics dictates the relationship amongst the three key players, the US, China and India. Despite the common interests in preserving their vested interests in neoliberal economic growth, sovereignty and non-intervention, the rivalries between the US and China, and between China and India have prevented them from promoting the establishment of an alternative Eastphalian Peace but they may well be interested in developing a new layer, or reforming the IPA. Judging from what China and India have said and done, however, it is unlikely that the Eastphalian Peace would force a drastic change in the existing IPA which is based on the Westphalian framework. Nevertheless, their foreign policy overlaps with their core interests, revealing their hegemonic nature and the contradictions inherent in their foreign policy. This points to a need to support the multilateralism present in the current IPA and supports the logic of its further evolution, rather than building a new Eastphalian framework (though an Eastphalian layer may be necessary).

The second paper by Joanne Wallis entitled “It’s the Little Things: Analysing the Role of International Interveners in the Social (Re)construction of the International Peace Architecture”, steps back from empirical analysis and turns to a methodological discussion and exploration. It introduces foreign policy analysis and offers a micro-level analysis, including psychological ones, of individual peacebuilders who intervene as part of international efforts from outside into conflict-affected societies. It assumes that under the existing IPA, conventional peacebuilding actors such as the UN have failed to fully recognise the fact that ideas and practices relating to peace are constituted and instantiated within intersubjective social contexts as peace is socially constructed. The paper argues that post-Cold War international peacebuilding remains largely guided by Western values, norms and practices, particularly the concept of the liberal peace. This has seen both the discourse and practice of peacebuilding at the international level dominated by ontological individualism. However, in non-Western conflict-affected societies, a reflexive and contextual approach is often needed which provides space for recognising a more relational ontology. This paper considers how the IPA could be socially (re)constructed to better incorporate non-Western values, norms and practices into its

principles and practices. Inspired by the recent “micro-turn” in international relations theory and its rediscovery of everyday lives, it focuses on three levels of analysis: macro, meso and micro. While macro and meso-level studies of the IPA have overlooked the significance of individuals, they are the conduits through which macro and meso-level forces are filtered. While institutions reflect, restrain and enable individuals’ behaviour, it is the behaviour of individuals that reproduces or transforms them.

The third paper by Dahlia Simangan entitled “Reflexive Peacebuilding: Lessons from the Anthropocene Discourse” continues the epistemological and methodological discussion about how to build and sustain peace in post-conflict societies in the era of the Anthropocene in which human activity has caused tremendous changes in the earth’s systems. Base on the assumption that responding to ecological threats and addressing the elements of violent conflict share similar complex issues of implementation, this paper re-conceptualises existing theoretical frameworks for peacebuilding, drawing on some lessons and insights from the Anthropocene discourse. In so doing, it identifies the “pathological path dependency” of the international peacebuilding agenda and the need for reflexive peacebuilding institutions across agency, time, and space of peace formation. It argues that peacebuilding organisations such as the UN need to recognise pitfalls in their epistemology and methodology identified by critical peace researchers as well as their path dependency to be more responsive to the evolving peace requirements of post-conflict societies, especially in the context of global environmental changes. A corollary of reflexive peacebuilding is the adoption of the adaptive peacebuilding approach, which is “informed by concepts of complexity, resilience, and local ownership” (de Coning 2018, 305). Reflective peacebuilding, which shares with some of the traits in mainstream Buddhism and Hinduism worldviews—implying “everything is relational and impermanent”—may offer a remedy for appropriate reform of the IPA in the twenty-first century.

The fourth paper by Brendan Howe entitled “Challenges to International Organisation in East Asia” discusses both the theoretical foundations and empirical evolutions related to international organisations, and explains why the peace and security-generating function of the international organisation has proven so difficult to manifest in East Asia. Although India is not included in the primary focus of this paper, Howe’s analysis adds a regional dynamic and insight to a global discourse on the IPA presented by the first paper by Uesugi and Richmond. Howe argues that neither liberal peace nor classical realist perspectives can offer theoretical foundations for peace in East Asia. As an alternative, he offers post-liberal theoretical perspectives and expects the spillover effects of an informal alliance around non-traditional security issues between the Asian middle powers such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Indonesia to counter regional challenges of East Asia. While the scope of his recommendation is limited to the East Asian context, if it is combined with the conclusion of the first paper by Uesugi and Richmond, a new prospect for regional peace and security in East Asia and its implications for the IPA can be anticipated even with existing ideological divides, deep historical mistrust, territorial conflicts, and jealous defence of sovereign state prerogatives.

The fifth paper by Wong Kwok Chung entitled “The Rise of China’s Developmental Peace: Can an Economic Approach to Peacebuilding Create Sustainable Peace?” presents an empirical study of China’s evolving approaches to international peacebuilding in

Sudan, Libya, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka. The rise of China has new implications for the existing notions and practices of peacebuilding. As Wong explains in his paper, China has established a style of so-called “developmental peace” which can be characterised as a model that prioritises economic development over liberal democracy, and state-led top-down approaches over bottom-up approaches led by civil society actors. This is a bifurcation or departure from the liberal peacebuilding model, which has offered theoretical and normative underpinnings of international peacebuilding led by conventional actors such as the UN and Western donors. China’s developmental peace employs a different logic from liberal peacebuilding by prioritising economic development and a right to live in dignity that can be achieved through exercising economic rights and rights to develop over upholding liberal norms and institutions that values individual liberty in political and civic rights. As Wong points out, this model is still in the process of formulation and at the moment, China does not have an official peacebuilding policy. China holds a view that as every peacebuilding context is different, each peacebuilding strategy should be unique and tailor-made and thus avoid standardisation. Because China’s involvement in international peacebuilding has a relatively short history, its impact on the existing theory and practice of international peacebuilding has not been adequately recognised and assessed. This paper seeks to fill this analytical gap.

## Speculations

This special issue does not seek to trigger a paradigm shift that prescribes alternative approaches to the current IPA as all the papers are firmly rooted in the accumulated and prevalent Western-centric knowledge, wisdom, and traditions of the past centuries. As the papers included in this special issue offer rigorous analysis, adopting both orthodox and critical rules of academic research, the remainder of this introductory paper takes the risk of engaging in an unconventional venture: offering some speculations. This risk-taking is worthwhile as traditional understandings of human society on which the IPA has rested need a fundamental rethink, and a breakthrough is imperative if our epistemology is to cope with unprecedented systemic, demographic and ecological changes.

In Asia, various international organisations and regional frameworks that include China as their integral member are proliferating. These often overlapping and complementing institutions do not operate under a single rule, as Howe illustrates in his paper in this special issue. Rather, each maintains its distinctive nature and serves as a hub for a wider networked platform, upon which harmonious relationships among states are negotiated and maintained. Khanna (2019) points out that the Asian system has never been a bloc, and its stability has been maintained across many subregions not through the static hierarchy (unipolar order) but through the fluidity of relationships. He goes on to argue that there will be no Chinese unipolarity in the sense of vertical hierarchy – neither globally nor even in Asia as a worldview of multipolarity, or horizontal hierarchy of mandala has been historically prevalent in Asia (Khanna 2019).

This Asian notion of hierarchy or mandala can be understood as “harmony-in-hierarchy”: “The system is harmonious as long as everyone in his role behaves as the role requires” (Shih 1990, 40). The Asian conception of order and hierarchy is characterised



by the sense of responsibility that guides how everyone performs in their own position in international society. Regional powers are responsible for providing public goods for the rest while the rest show respect to the powers. One could argue with some obvious exceptions (such as the occasional clashes between Chinese and Japanese over the definition of their roles and relationships) that this system has provided win-win outcomes to both ruled and ruling in Asia before the West challenged or eroded the system (albeit it was the direct clash between Chinese and Japanese in the twentieth century that collapsed it eventually). A revival of traditional relationships of “harmony-in-hierarchy” has the potential to bring back the balance in the regional order, and coexistence can become a reality with the rise of Asian powers. However, such a framework may also disguise the maintenance of regional and global hierarchies, with multiple challenges to their legitimacies, meaning that such a system (which has much in common with the liberal peace praxis of the last decades) may prove more ambiguous in terms of peacemaking than such arguments may suggest on the surface.

As the paper by Uesugi and Richmond in this special issue highlights, Asian powers adopt contradictory principles with regard to maintaining international order. For example, identifying China’s Confucian/Westphalian paradox, Buzan and Goh (2020) ask how these seemingly contradictory positions fit together, and argue “Until this question is clearly resolved, China’s Confucian foreign policy rhetoric will continue to look confusing, and even duplicitous, to outsiders”. So far, we have witnessed two inconsistent forms of behaviour in Chinese foreign policy especially after the recent shift from Deng Xiaoping’s *taoguangyanghui* (bide time and hide capabilities) policy of 1978 to Xi Jinping’s post-2013 *fenfayouwei* (strive for success) strategy, as pointed out in Wong’s paper in this special issue.

Westphalian principles have provided the main philosophical and operational foundations for the IPA, and emerging actors in Asia such as China, India and the member states of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have been faithful advocates of Westphalian principles. For China, it seems that two paramount principles of the Westphalian order – sovereign equality and non-intervention – can coexist in the worldview of horizontal-hierarchy and harmony-in-hierarchy. The existing IPA may be strengthened in the direction of conservative tradition through the active participation of these emerging powers in Asia, and liberal peacebuilding may have become a short-lived venture. At the moment, emerging powers in Asia do not seem to be interested in changing the structural environment and resolving internal contradictions in the global system of capitalism, as indicated in the paper by Uesugi and Richmond in this special issue. At the same time, sovereign responses to long-standing problems in human society (achieving global justice, equity, sustainability, and overcoming hierarchy and dominance) have proven themselves relatively inadequate (liberal view) or extremely limited (hybrid view).

In the post-World War II order, international organisations such as the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) have been considered as mechanisms for managing disagreements and confrontations among states, and thus maintaining international order. As it developed, the fundamental role of the IPA became to maintain a harmonious states-system, and promote independent coexistence through the principle of embracing diversity and mutual respect. This was undermined by and for the West because attempts to determine the



rights conflict-affected citizens could claim were conducted with little consultation with them. This allowed the West to ignore the Non-Aligned groupings during the Cold War, leading to the collapse of the subsequent New International Economic Order, and later similar traits undermined the liberal peacebuilding framework. China, India, and other vying states, appear to be making the same mistake as they appear to connect order with their own geopolitical, and geo-economic interests rather than PGJ, though they do tend to take the IPA into account.

International organisations are required to reorganise themselves according to the premise of constant adaptation to a changing environment (de Coning 2018), as Simangan illustrates in her paper in this special issue. The limits of the Bretton Woods Institutions in this respect were exposed when they showed reluctance to keep pace due to the influence of the US Congress, which operates solely for the interests of the US rather than the international community. Against this backdrop, China established the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB) and the BRICS Bank (now called the New Development Bank). Whether these various international organisations will be able to respond sensitively to necessary changes will be an issue for the future, as Howe points out in his paper in this special issue.

Nevertheless, we might expect an alliance to be forged between China's State-Owned Enterprise and global civil society organisations under the banner of New Development Assistance (Jing, Mendez, and Zheng 2020). This has created possible areas of collaboration between China (AIIB) and traditional donors (World Bank, IMF, Asian Development Bank). For example, under their collaboration, Public-Private Partnership, Civil Society Involvement, Integration of Aid and Trade/Investment, might be facilitated by necessary reforms for both sides if they are willing to agree on the emergence of a more hybrid international order, strengthening the IPA, as well as accepting the science that has led to the contemporary equation of peace with global justice. Though this is probably utopian or idealist of course, it is also a guide to future progress in the expansion of rights, sustainable peace, and progress in developing international order and the IPA. Nevertheless, the problem remains that a focus on security and economic practices of trade and investment over the broader areas and functioning of the IPA, covering peacebuilding, statebuilding and development assistance, and expanding rights, democracy, justice, and civil society, tends to undermine the legitimacy of the overall architecture by foregrounding great power geopolitics as this special issue illustrates. This marginalises the subaltern claims that the ever-evolving IPA is supposed to represent and be legitimated by, a negative drift which the Asian challenge to the existing IPA also appears to replicate.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on Contributors


*Yuji Uesugi* is a Professor in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Faculty of International Research and Education, Waseda University in Japan. He is a deputy director of the Okinawa Peace Assistance Centre and Hiroshima Peacebuilders Centre. His recent publications include

*Operationalisation of Hybrid Peacebuilding in Asia: From Theory to Practice* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), *Hybrid Peacebuilding in Asia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), *UN Governance: Peace and Human Security in Cambodia and Timor-Leste* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). He was the Japanese government delegate to the Independent Commission on Policing in the Mindanao peace process in 2013, and also served as a conflict prevention expert in a JICA's peacebuilding project for the National Directorate for Prevention of Community Conflict, Secretary of State for Security in Timor-Leste.

**Oliver Richmond** is a Research Professor in IR and Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manchester, UK. He is also an International Professor at Dublin City University, a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Tubingen in Germany, and Visiting Professor at the University of Coimbra, Portugal. He received a Distinguished Scholar award from the ISA Peace Studies Section in 2019. His publications include *The Grand Design: The Evolution of the International Peace Architecture* (Oxford University Press, Forthcoming 2021), *Peace Formation and Political Order in Conflict Affected Societies* (Oxford University Press, 2016), and *Failed Statebuilding* (Yale University Press, 2014). He is co-editor of the Palgrave book series, Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies, and co-editor of the Journal, Peacebuilding.

## ORCID

Yuji Uesugi  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4488-5384>

Oliver P. Richmond  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8938-2209>

## References

- Akashi, Kinji. 2009. *Westphalia Joyaku: Sono Jitsuzo to Shinwa [The Peace of Westphalia: Its Myth and Truth]*. Tokyo: Keio Gijyuku University Press.
- Aljazeera. 2020. "China: Trump 'Spreading Political Virus' at United Nations", September 22. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/9/22/china-trump-spreading-political-virus-at-united-nations>.
- Allison, Graham. 2017. *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?* New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Bartlett, Jamie. 2018. *The People vs Tech: How the Internet Is Killing Democracy (and How We Save It)*. Kindle Edition. New York: Dutton.
- Buzan, Barry, and Evelyn Goh. 2020. *Rethinking Sino-Japanese Alienation: History Problems and Historical Opportunities*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cavalcante, Fernando. 2019. *Peacebuilding in the United Nations: Coming Into Life*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- de Coning, Cedric. 2018. "Adaptive Peacebuilding." *International Affairs* 94 (2): 301–317.
- The Economist. 2020. "The Persecution of the Uyghurs is a Crime Against Humanity", October 17.
- Ikenberry, John G. 2006. *Liberal Order and Imperial Ambition: Essays on American Power and World Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Ikenberry, John G. 2011. *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jing, Yijia, Alvaro Mendez, and Yu Zheng. 2020. "New Development Assistance in the Making: An Introduction." In *New Development Assistance: Emerging Economies and the New Landscape of Development Assistance*, edited by Yijia Jing, Alvaro Mendez, and Yu Zheng, 1–18. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Khanna, Parag. 2019. *The Future Is Asian: Commerce, Conflict, and Culture in the 21st Century*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Kim, Sung Won. 2018. "Eastphalia Revisited: The Potential Contribution of Eastphalia to Post-Westphalian Possibilities." *Pacific Focus* 33 (3): 434–454.

- Kurzweil, Ray. 2006. *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*. London: Penguin Books.
- North, Douglass C., John Joseph Wallis, and R. Weingast. 2009. *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recoded Human History*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Richmond, Oliver P. 2009. "Becoming Liberal, Unbecoming Liberalism: Liberal-Local Hybridity via the Everyday as a Response to the Paradoxes of Liberal Peacebuilding." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 3 (3): 324–344.
- Richmond, Oliver P. 2012. "Beyond Local Ownership in the Architecture of International Peacebuilding." *Ethnopolitics* 11 (4): 354–375.
- Richmond, Oliver P. 2014. "Emerging Actors in International Peacebuilding and Statebuilding: Status Quo or Critical States?" *Global Governance* 20: 563–584.
- Richmond, Oliver P. 2016. *Peace Formation and Political Order in Conflict Affected Societies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Richmond, Oliver P. 2018. "Rescuing Peacebuilding? Anthropology and Peace Formation." *Global Society* 32 (2): 221–239.
- Richmond, Oliver P. 2019. "Peace and the Formation of Political Order." *International Peacekeeping* 26 (1): 85–110.
- Richmond, Oliver P. (Forthcoming). *The Grand Design: The Evolution of the International Peace Architecture*. Oxford University Press.
- Schwab, Klaus. 2017. *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*. New York: Currency.
- Shih, Chih-Yu. 1990. *The Spirit of Chinese Foreign Policy: A Psychocultural View*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Shinoda, Hideaki. 2014. "Kokusai Shakai no Rikkenteki Seikaku no Saikentou: 'Wesutofaria Shinwa' Hihan no Imi [Re-Examination of the Constitutional Nature of International Society: The Implications of the Critique of the "Myth of the Westphalian System"]." *Kokusaiho Gaiko Zasshi [The Journal of International Law and Diplomacy]* 133 (3): 374–396.
- Uesugi, Yuji ed. 2020. *Hybrid Peacebuilding in Asia*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Uesugi, Yuji, Anna Deekeling, Sophie S Umeyama, and Lawrence McDonald-Colbert eds. 2021. *Operationalisation of Hybrid Peacebuilding in Asia: From Theory to Practice*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- United Nations (UN). 2018, January 18. *Report of the Secretary-General: Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*. A/72/707-S/2-18/43.