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Could the East Asian Way of Peacekeeping Be a Recipe for Global Peace?

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Abstract

This paper offers new evidence in support of an argument that suggests that East Asian way of keeping peace is developmentalist, anti-interventionist and anti-hegemonic and thus even more different from the existing Western prescriptions for peace than realized before. This argument is based on some new data on organized violence, conflict termination and discourses of protection and security and a comparison of current East Asia with other regions, and with its performance three decades before 1980.

The article also investigates whether the East Asian recipes for peace and prosperity could offer global prescriptions. Again, based on data on global fatalities of organized violence, the conclusion is clear. The world could learn from East Asia: the recipes the long peace of East Asia is based on, as defined in this article, can be found useful also to the entire world.

Keywords

East Asia, developmentalism, interventionism, hegemonism, organised violence, peacekeeping, conflict termination, escalation

1. Introduction

East Asian (= countries of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations + China, Japan, Korea and Mongolia) relative peace since the end of 1970s has been subject of a lot of scrutiny.

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Kivimäki¹ first showed that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN, has been exceptionally peaceful by using recipes of peace very different from the liberal democratic orthodoxy.² Later Tønnesson revealed that such strange peace has spread to the entire East Asia, including Northeast Asia.³ Finally, three books have tried to conclude the unique East Asian recipe for peace.⁴

Each of these studies conclude, as the East Asian recipe, something that differs from the Western orthodoxy of peace-making. The fact that East Asian conflict termination is not based on formal peace negotiation is one such feature that differentiates East Asian Peace from Western orthodoxy.⁵ Each of these books also reveal partly similar conclusions on the reasons for East Asia's peacefulness. Somehow the East Asian obsession to develop economically is part of the explanation of all the main explanations of the long peace of East Asia. Yet, there are still some differences in the interpretation of the observable facts, while the existing studies have not yet tried to generalise the East Asian lessons globally.

The article argues that East Asian peace is fundamentally anti-interventionist, developmentalist and anti-hegemonic and thus even more different from the existing Western prescriptions for peace than realised before. This argument is based on some new data on organized violence, conflict termination and discourses of protection and security. East Asian conflict prevention has been successful in all types of organized violence, also in the reduction of state-based autocratic violence, not just in the prevention of conflict violence. East Asia, since 1980, has

¹ Timo Kivimäki, 'The Long Peace of ASEAN,' *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 38, no. 1, January 1, 2001, pp. 5–25, <https://doi.org/10.2307/425780>.

² Bruce Russett, *Grasping Democratic Peace*. (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

³ Stein Tønnesson, 'What Is It That Best Explains the East Asian Peace since 1979? A Call for a Research Agenda,' *Asian Perspective*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2009, pp. 111–36.

⁴ Elin Bjarnegård and Joakim Kreutz, *Debating the East Asian Peace: What It Is, How It Came About, Will It Last?* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2017); Timo Kivimäki, *The Long Peace of East Asia*. (Farnham/London & Cambridge MA: Ashgate/Routledge, 2014); Stein Tønnesson, *Explaining the East Asian Peace: A Research Story* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2017).

⁵ Isak Svensson, 'East Asian Peacemaking: Exploring the Patterns of Conflict Management and Conflict Settlement in East Asia,' *Asian Perspective*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2011, pp. 163–85.

been successful in this respect compared to other regions, and compared to its performance three decades before 1980.

The long peace of East Asia is based on a fundamentally anti-interventionist foundation: East Asian states do not intervene militarily in each other's conflicts. This has reduced the escalation of organized violence. While the previous research has largely disregarded the fact that East Asian reduction in fatalities of organized violence is a product of lack of conflict escalation rather than a product of prevention of conflict onset or successful conflict termination, this paper will use this fact as the foundation of the interpretation of the East Asian recipe for success.

At the same time, East Asian peace is also anti-hegemonic as conflict termination no longer supports the imposition by external powers of 'correct solutions' on intra-state conflicting parties in other countries. The anti-hegemonism of the long peace of East Asia can be seen in the fact that victories (external impositions of solutions) have declined drastically with the decline of fatalities of organized violence. Conflicting parties or external peace-brokers have no longer been able to impose their favourite solutions by means of military power, something that neoliberal peace enforcement doctrine suggests as a recipe for global peace.

As the other side of anti-hegemonism, it seems that East Asian peace emerges out of informal dialogue that aims at regional consensus but does not impose solutions on other states. Thus, consensus in informal multi-track dialogue translates into peace by means of sovereign national decisions and self-restraint that dialogue has persuaded, rather than by means of formal supra-national institutionalization.

Finally, the paper will investigate whether the East Asian recipes for peace and prosperity could offer global prescriptions. Again, the conclusion is clear. The world could learn from East Asia: some of the recipes the long peace of East Asia is based on, can be found useful also to the entire world.

Existing Literature: Why Is East Asia Peaceful?

East Asia, defined as ASEAN countries, Koreas, Mongolia, Japan and China, represent 31% of world's population. During the first post-World War decades from 1946 to 1979, it produced 75-82% of world's conflict fatalities depending on which battle deaths data version one chooses.

I will call this period the East Asian belligerent era. During the decades since 1980, it has only produced 3-7% of world's fatalities of conflict.⁶ I will therefore call this time East Asian peaceful era or the long peace of East Asia. The average annual number of fatalities of conflict in East Asia during the peaceful era compared to the belligerent era, is just 5%. Thus, 95% of fatalities of conflict have disappeared! Tønnesson, Bjarnegård, Kreutz and others have specified this by pointing to the fact that peace has emerged in steps, first in Japan, then in Korea, then in ASEAN and finally also in China and Indochina. After the 1980s interstate conflicts and wars (conflicts with more than 1000 annual fatalities) have disappeared almost altogether.⁷

But the long peace of East Asia is not just an exceptional transformation of a belligerent region into a peaceful one. East Asia today (after 1979) is also an exception if we compare it to other regions. If we look at all organized violence,⁸ we can see that the world average number of fatalities per population in all the years between 1989 and 2019 has been more than 23 times higher than in East Asia.⁹ In fact, if we compare East Asia to Americas, to the rest of Asia,

⁶ These calculations are based on low, high and best estimates of the PRIO battle deaths data 2.0 and 3.0 Lotta Harbom and Peter Wallensteen, 'Armed Conflicts, 1946–2008,' *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 46, no. 4, July 1, 2009, pp. 577–87, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25654437>. The use of Uppsala and PRIO data for the overlapping years (1989-2008) produce very different results specifically in East Asia (yet the conclusion on the long peace of East Asia is almost identical regardless of the choice between these data sources). Consequently, this article does not combine the two data sources in the study of the period before and after 1979. Calculated from UCDP data Therese Pettersson and Magnus Öberg, 'Organized Violence, 1989-2019,' *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 57, no. 4, 2020, pp. 589–603, we can see that the share of East Asian fatalities of all organized violence in 1989-2019 is 3.0%.

⁷ Bjarnegård and Kreutz, *Debating the East Asian Peace: What It Is, How It Came About, Will It Last?*; Tønnesson, 'What Is It That Best Explains the East Asian Peace since 1979? A Call for a Research Agenda'; Mikael Weissmann, *The East Asian Peace. Conflict Prevention and Informal Peacebuilding*. (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

⁸ Organized violence here includes, in addition to conflicts, also fatal, organized violence against civilians, i.e. one-sided violence, and violence that the state does not get involved in, i.e. non-state violence.

⁹ This conclusion and most of the calculations on the relationship between conditions and conflict are based on a dataset Timo Kivimäki, *Data on the Fragility-Grievances-Conflict*

Europe, Africa or any other region, there is not another region that produces as small a number of fatalities of organized violence per population. This is what requires an explanation so that we could test how generalizable the East Asian experience can be.

This article will investigate whether the causal mechanism of the long peace of East Asia is merely based on the positive interdependence of East Asian nations¹⁰ and the obsession to develop economically,¹¹ or whether there are other mechanisms that are prominent, perhaps more important in the explanation of the disappearance of fatalities of organised violence in the region. The former position according to which peace is promoted by means of economic development is often called the so-called ASEAN Way¹² or the Chinese idea of Peaceful Development.¹³

The relationship between development and peace in the ASEAN Way is conceived in two distinct ways. While Hsueh shows, perhaps most convincingly, that development as such contributes to the ASEAN peace,¹⁴ Acharya, Tønnesson and Kivimäki emphasise ideational

Triangle. (Bath: University of Bath Research Data Archive, 2021),
<https://doi.org/10.15125/BATH-00951>.

¹⁰ Benjamin E. Goldsmith, 'A Liberal Peace in Asia?,' *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 44, no. 5, 2007, pp. 5–27; Benjamin E. Goldsmith, 'Peace by Trade,' in *Debating the East Asian Peace: What It Is, How It Came About, Will It Last?*, ed. Elin Bjarnegård and Joakim Kreutz (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2017), pp. 13–35.

¹¹ Stein Tønnesson, 'Peace by Development,' in *Debating the East Asian Peace: What It Is, How It Came About, Will It Last?*, ed. Elin Bjarnegård and Joakim Kreutz (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2017), pp. 55–77; Tønnesson, 'What Is It That Best Explains the East Asian Peace since 1979? A Call for a Research Agenda'; Kivimäki, 'The Long Peace of ASEAN.'

¹² Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order*. (London: Routledge, 2001); Chienwu (Alex) Hsueh, 'ASEAN and Southeast Asian Peace: Nation Building, Economic Performance, and ASEAN's Security Management,' *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* vol. 16, no. 1, 2016, pp. 46–53, <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcv012>.

¹³ Jia Qingguo, 'Peaceful Development: China's Policy of Reassurance,' *Australian Journal of International Affairs* vol. 59, no. 4, 2005, pp. 493–507,
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10357710500367299>.

¹⁴ Hsueh, 'ASEAN and Southeast Asian Peace,' pp. 46–53.

factors, such as commitment and valuation of economic development rather than economic development itself.¹⁵ The two interpretations of developmentalism do not rule each other out, but rather could be complementary: even if the reason for ASEAN peace was the subjective ideational commitment to economic development, rather than objective economic development, such commitment could be short lived if it did not result in tangible gains in economic growth, as has happened in ASEAN.

While in the case of ASEAN developmentalism literature has not raised geopolitical concerns, Chinese development-orientation, while regionally pacifying Chinese policies,¹⁶ have always been viewed as a challenge, and thus a threat, to the stability of US-led world order.¹⁷ This way Chinese developmentalism has been viewed as a double-edged sword, yet, evidence of Chinese conflict behavior can be shown to testify the immediate pacifying effect of developmentalism: according to PRIO and Uppsala statistics of conflict, China has not engaged at war since 1988, and since the developmentalist turn until 1988, China's conflicts were related to ones that had started already before the developmental turn.

If East Asian states construct the role of the state as an instrument of economic human security of citizens, this makes conflicts less attractive. This is something were the explanation of the long peace of East Asia draws from the global theories of capitalist peace.¹⁸ What offers regional flavour to the theory is the idea of capitalist peace focusing attention to things that unite, away from divisive issues. Trade and development are common interests that East Asian states can focus on, and by focusing on things that unite rather than things that divide East Asia has managed to avoid over-emphasizing divisions and conflict.¹⁹ This is also the case in the

¹⁵ Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order*; Kivimäki, 'The Long Peace of ASEAN,' pp. 11–14; Tønnesson, *Explaining the East Asian Peace: A Research Story*.

¹⁶ David C. Kang, *China Rising: Peace Power and Order in East Asia*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Qingguo, 'Peaceful Development.'

¹⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski and John J. Mearsheimer, 'Clash of the Titans,' *Foreign Policy* (Washington, United States: Foreign Policy, February 2005).

¹⁸ Goldsmith, 'A Liberal Peace in Asia?'

¹⁹ J. Sudjati Djiwandono, "Intra ASEAN Territorial Disputes: The Sabah Claim," *Indonesian Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1994, pp. 49. While Djiwandono described this approach as traditional to ASEAN in the 1990s, the consistency of this approach can be demonstrated

smaller interstate and transnational institutions of cooperation, for example in the growth areas²⁰ or institutions set up for the resolution of a particular dispute.²¹ This approach is clearly different from the problem-solving approach prominent in much of Western literature:²² the focus is not on problems, and the aim is to avoid over-emphasising disagreements. The focus on things that unite rather than on problems is what has confused much of existing literature on the East Asian way of conflict management. Jürgen Rüländ, for example, claims ASEAN is for fair weather cooperation only as it does not develop instruments for problem solving.²³ However, perhaps the East Asian way is to 'change the weather' and to promote 'fair weather', instead of having to prepare for the rain. By focusing on things that unite, East Asia may be developing resilience that will then sustain peace when disagreements are being settled.

The East Asian focus on economic human security has also meant that the idea of responsibility to protect has not become a vehicle for the legitimization of military interventions. Instead, the East Asian developmentalist attitude pushes the focus away from confrontational regime changes and military interventions. When there are humanitarian issues that are related to poor

by the fact that the China-ASEAN meeting of June 2021 was still described in the media as follows: 'During the ASEAN-China meeting, both sides largely downplayed their differences, including over the South China Sea disputes. Instead, they emphasized areas of common concern and cooperation' Richard Javad Heydarian, 'Biden's China Policy Gets ASEAN Cold Shoulder,' *Asia Times*, June 16, 2021, <https://asiatimes.com/2021/06/bidens-china-policy-gets-asean-cold-shoulder/>.

²⁰ Bilson Kurus, 'The BIMB-EAGA: Developments, Obstacles and Future Direction,' *Borneo Review*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1997, pp. 1–2.

²¹ Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, '1st Meeting of the Malaysia-Philippines Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation, Speech by Foreign Minister of Malaysia,' *Foreign Affairs Malaysia*, vol. 26, no. 4, 1993, pp. 54–55.

²² Herbert C. Kelman, 'The Problem-Solving Workshop in Conflict Resolution,' in R. L. Merritt (Ed.), *Communication in International Politics*. University of Illinois Press. (Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 1972); William Ury, *The Power of a Positive No: How to Say No and Still Get to Yes* (New York: Hodder Mobius, 2008).

²³ Jürgen Rüländ, 'ASEAN and the Asian Crisis: Theoretical Implications and Practical Consequences for Southeast Asian Regionalism,' *The Pacific Review*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2000, p. 444.

political administration, East Asian countries are mostly inclined to help other governments create more efficient governance.²⁴

In addition to the explanation based on economic development and developmentalism, the long peace of East Asia (and ASEAN) has been explained by various other conditions and approaches. Urdal²⁵ points to demographic developments, while Svensson claims that the crucial differentiation between East Asian zones of peace and the zones of violence in East Asia and in the world is the prominence of violent religious disagreements.²⁶

Furthermore, scholars make references to a special type of informal institutionalization, personal contacts between various political and military elites, and flexible, consensus-seeking, non-confrontational approaches.²⁷ Earlier, during the first decades of ASEAN, personal ties and confidential, non-confrontational interaction by friends in the national elites of the region were often in key roles when problems were solved. For example, in the Malaysian-Indonesian dispute over the islands of Ligitan and Sipatan, efforts were led still in the 1980s by the very same people that almost two decades earlier had been conspiring to establish ASEAN as a regional forum of elite cooperation.²⁸ While such negotiations took place in almost complete secrecy, the only things that wider public learned emphasised common identity, common values and things that united. This was exemplified, for example, by a public statement made by the Secretary General of Indonesia's Home Affairs Ministry, Major General Nugroho, who said

²⁴ Tiejun Zhang, 'Sino-European Relations: From the Height to the Width,' in *In Bart Gaens, Juha Jokela and Eija Linnell, Eds., The Role of the European Union in Asia., The International Political Economy of New Regionalisms Series* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 121–38.

²⁵ Henrik Urdal, 'Peace by Demographic Change,' in *Debating the East Asian Peace: What It Is, How It Came About, Will It Last?*, ed. Elin Bjarnegård and Joakim Kreutz (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2017), pp. 115–41.

²⁶ Isak Svensson, 'Peace by Avoidance of Religious Civil Wars,' in *Debating the East Asian Peace: What It Is, How It Came About, Will It Last?*, ed. Elin Bjarnegård and Joakim Kreutz (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2017), pp. 98–114.

²⁷ Weissmann, *The East Asian Peace. Conflict Prevention and Informal Peacebuilding*.

²⁸ Renate Haller-Trost, *The Territorial Dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia over Pulau Ligitan and Sipadan.*, International Boundary Research Unit, Boundary & Territory Briefing, vol. 2, no. 2 (Durham, UK: University of Durham, 1995), p. 4.

that differences of opinion between Malaysia and Indonesia in territorial issues were understandable in light of the 'maps inherited from their colonial masters.'²⁹ On the question of colonialism, of course, Malaysia and Indonesia stood on the same side against great powers, and thus, this framing of the dispute united rather than divided public opinion. The descriptions of dispute resolution by the former spokesperson of the president of Indonesia, Dewi Fortuna Anwar, give examples of many similar personalistic, confidential, non-confrontational approaches to disputes.³⁰

More recently, after democratization of East Asian states has limited the importance of informal personal ties between elites of regional states, research has also shown that legal norms are getting increasingly important for East Asian, and especial ASEAN diplomacy. Instead of cooperation of likeminded generals, interaction takes place between legal experts of the region.³¹ In such a context, the common collective identity, and common roles of interaction of the professional community of legal experts has replaced the elitist common identity and elitist norms of the old ASEAN senior officials.

The main contender to the developmentalist understanding of the long peace is, however, the idea that the drastic decline of fatalities of organised violence is a result of the withdrawal of external powers³² or the regional resistance to the military interference by foreign powers in the domestic affairs of regional states.³³ This claim has been the subject of much controversy, though. There is no doubt that since the establishment of ASEAN, and since the transformation

²⁹ Haller-Trost, 5.

³⁰ Dewi Fortuna Anwar, *Indonesia in ASEAN Foreign Policy and Regionalism* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994).

³¹ Yann-Huei Song and Stein Tønnesson, 'The Impact of the Law of the Sea Convention on Conflict and Conflict Management in the South China Sea,' *Ocean Development & International Law*, vol. 44, 2013, pp. 235–69; Shirley V. Scott, 'Peace by International Law,' in *Debating the East Asian Peace: What It Is, How It Came About, Will It Last?*, ed. Elin Bjarnegård and Joakim Kreutz (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2017), pp. 36–54.

³² Joakim Kreutz, 'Peace by External Withdrawal,' in *Debating the East Asian Peace: What It Is, How It Came About, Will It Last?*, ed. Elin Bjarnegård and Joakim Kreutz (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2017), pp. 78–97.

³³ Timo Kivimäki, 'How Does the Norm on Non-Interference Affect Peace in East Asia?' *Asian Survey*, vol. 55, no. 6, 2015, pp. 1146-1169.

of China into the policy of Deng Xiaoping, East Asia has avoided military interference against sovereign governments of the region. There are plenty of documentary sources on the norm, most explicit and authoritative of them the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, which has been used as a normative foundation also in the ASEAN + Three (Japan, South Korea and China) cooperation. Furthermore, conflict statistics clearly show the practice of military non-interference since 1979 in practice. However, what is debated about in the existing literature is whether military non-interference is in any way connected with stability and peace, and if it is, how? There is a strong belief among regional politicians that military non-interference contributes to peace. According to Singapore's former Foreign Minister S. Jayakumar, for example, 'ASEAN countries' consistent adherence to this principle of non-interference is the key reason why no military conflict has broken out between any two ASEAN countries since the founding of ASEAN ... Let us maintain it in the twenty-first century.'³⁴

Yet, there is also a strong belief that the role of US deterrence, and thus external interference, has contributed to East Asian stability.³⁵ Non-interference has sometimes been seen as an obstacle for the regional pooling of sovereignty that could then be used for the creation of regional stability and peace: If each state refuse to compromise its sovereignty, the region cannot create its regional power to regulate peace.³⁶ The limits East Asian non-interference sets to US leadership in the region is further seen as an obstacle rather than a recipe for peace.³⁷ Finally, non-interference has also been seen as having a problematic effect on intra-state violence by atrocity criminals: authoritarian or terrorist violence can continue within state borders if the regime is unwilling to resist it and if sovereignty is respected too punctually by

³⁴ S. Jayakumar, "Opening Statement", ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, Subang Jaya, Malaysia' (ASEAN, May 24, 1997), https://asean.org/?static_post=opening-statement-by-professor-s-jayakumar-minister-for-foreign-affairs-and-minister-for-law-of-the-republic-of-singapore-at-the-33rd-asean-ministerial-meeting-24-july-2000-bangkok.

³⁵ Michael Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*. (London: Routledge, 1989).

³⁶ Kao Kim Hourn, *ASEAN's Non-Interference Policy: Principles under Pressure*. (Selangor, Malaysia: ASEAN Academic Press, 2000).

³⁷ Leifer, *ASEAN and the Security of South-East Asia*.

other states.³⁸ At the same time, evidence of temporaneous correlation between the strength of non-interference principle and peace and various indicators of political human security have been referred to as evidence of the opposite.³⁹

Empirical Investigation Strategy: How Do We Know Which Are the Main Causes of The Long Peace of East Asia?

It would not be possible in one article to prove causality (or the constitution of social realities of peace) and the causal mechanism from a recipe and East Asian conditions to the long peace of East Asia. The studies reviewed above show correlative relationships and plausible causal mechanisms and reveal by means of methods of historical analysis how in some situations conditions and methods lead to peaceful outcomes. The identification of alternative causal mechanisms that in East Asia produce peace is therefore, in this study, based on the above review of existing literature. As can be seen in the existing literature, the main controversy on the mechanisms that prevent conflict are between developmentalism and non-intervention. At the same time, the main controversy on the mechanisms that terminate already existing organised violence is between a strategy of offering perfect, winning solutions to end conflicts and a strategy of allowing local solutions, face saving and endless informal dialogue to end violence.

While there are studies that reveal the positive effect of various recipes for peace in East Asia, what remains unknown is the question of which of these mechanisms are the most important ones that the world could learn from. While there may be many causal mechanisms, only some can be the most dominant. This study will identify the main controversies of the existing literature, revealing the main claims related to the recipes of long peace of East Asia. Whether some of these claims manage to identify the most important recipes or not, will be tested against simple descriptive statistics and comparison between peaceful and belligerent periods in East Asia, and between peaceful East Asia and more belligerent regions in the world. Data on developments in organised violence, on the one hand, and on conflict termination, on the other,

³⁸ Alex J. Bellamy and Catherine Drummond, 'The Responsibility to Protect in Southeast Asia: Between Non-Interference and Sovereignty as Responsibility,' *The Pacific Review*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2011, pp. 179–200, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2011.560958>.

³⁹ Timo Kivimäki, 'East Asian Relative Peace - Does It Exist? What Is It?,' *Pacific Review*, vol. 23, no. 4, 2010, pp. 503–26.

will be used for the test of the main mechanisms of East Asian peace. Different causal mechanisms from conditions and strategies of conflict prevention to the long peace, affect different phases of conflict development, and produce different peace outcomes, and thus, this comparison can reveal which of them is the most dominant explanation of peace in East Asia, and which of them should be tested for their global effect.

Thus, by simply looking at whether East Asian conflict prevention manages to prevent conflict onset or conflict escalation, one can already test which of the alternative causal mechanisms deal with the recipes that explain the main reason for East Asian success. Similarly, if East Asia manages to produce peace through peace agreements, victories, or with some other routes, reveals which of the peace-producing mechanisms in the East Asian strategy are the most important. Thus, the method of this study is simply to test existing claims of the dominant mechanism of the long peace of East Asia by revealing what East Asia is successful of in the production of peace. This can be done simply by comparing the track record of successful East Asia with the one of other regions and with the poor track record of the old, belligerent East Asia. This way it will be possible to reveal which recipes mainly contribute to the long peace in East Asia. These main recipes can then be tested globally by looking at the variation in the use of the East Asian recipes and the variation in time and place of conflict and fatalities of organised violence.

The dominance of development and developmentalism in the explanation of the long peace of East Asia would require that conflict statistics will show that the kind of conflict that prevents development is what is missing in East Asia, while other types of conflicts could still exist. Similarly, if non-interventionism was an important contribution to East Asian peace, then one would assume that conflicts would not be terminated by decisive victories that were assisted by the overwhelming power of external powers that enforce specific terms of peace on violent perpetrators. All this investigation assumes a comparative research design that utilises the fact that East Asia now is more peaceful than it was before and that other regions in the world. This difference in organised violence is associated with the differences in the approaches between the peaceful period/region and the belligerent period/region.

While there is substantial literature documenting and explaining the long peace of East Asia, scholarship has not been courageous enough to suggest that the East Asian recipes could be generalized globally. On the contrary, European and American experience has been eligible to become a global norm and model, but not the East Asian experience. Since East Asia has less

fatalities of organized violence than Europe and Americas, this paper dares to test whether the East Asian experience could inform global security strategies. The simple method in this investigation is to look at the contribution of what is specific to East Asian peace on a global level. Since non-intervention turns out to be crucial for East Asian peace, conflict statistics will be investigated to see what external interventions contribute to the fatalities of organised violence.

Developmentalism or Non-Interventionism, or Both?

The correlational association between developmental orientation of East Asian states after the 1970s and the decline in conflict fatalities is well shown.⁴⁰ However, the East Asian experience of conflict does not suggest that we should emphasise developmentalism as the main explanation of the long peace of East Asia despite the fact that this has been the main conclusion by many scholars.⁴¹ A closer look at the conflict problem in East Asia reveals that East Asia has not really improved its ability to avoid conflict onset very much. Rather it has managed to avoid the escalation of conflicts. If we use PRIO-Uppsala data⁴² on conflict and war episodes and we sophisticate the geographic specification of conflicts by adding the East Asian subregion into the graph, and if we also add a temporal distinction between years 1946-1979 and 1980-2019,⁴³ we can cross-tabulate small conflicts (with 25-999 annual battle deaths) and wars (with 1000- battle deaths) and pre-1980 years and post-1979 years of East Asian violence in the following manner:

⁴⁰ Chih-Mao Tang, 'Southeast Asian Peace: A Mixed Democratic and Capitalist Trajectory,' in *East Asian Peace Program's First Annual Conference, 'Democracy and Peace in East Asia,' Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University* (Uppsala, 2011); Tønnesson, 'Peace by Development'; Kivimäki, *The Long Peace of East Asia.*, chap. 5.

⁴¹ See for example Tønnesson, 'What Is It That Best Explains the East Asian Peace since 1979? A Call for a Research Agenda'; Bjarnegård and Kreutz, *Debating the East Asian Peace: What It Is, How It Came About, Will It Last?;* Weissmann, *The East Asian Peace. Conflict Prevention and Informal Peacebuilding.*

⁴² Pettersson and Öberg, 'Organized Violence, 1989-2019.'

⁴³ It would be more accurate to compare average annual numbers of fatalities, but since the two periods are almost equally long, and since we are mainly looking at relative developments, there is no reason to complicate the discussion by introducing annual figures.

Table 1: Change from Pre-1980 Wars to Post-1979 Conflicts

	Belligerent Era	Peaceful Era
Small Conflicts	204	265
Wars	134	21

Here we can see that the number of conflicts has not been reduced much by the long peace of East Asia. Looking at all conflicts the number has only been reduced by 15% (from 338 to 286), while the number of small conflicts has increased! To rescue the thesis that East Asian peace is a product of developmentalism only, one should show that only bigger conflicts affect economic growth. But then the experience of inter-Korean trade seems to suggest that tension already reduces trade, investment and economic growth. One does not need a major war for that. Thus, it seems unlikely that developmentalism is the main explanation to the long peace of East Asia. The main explanation to the transition from belligerent era to the long peace of East Asia must be related to something that East Asian states do once there already is some disagreement and violence.

If we look at how East Asia differs from other regions, after the beginning of the long peace of East Asia, we will see the same pattern as in the difference between belligerent and peaceful era's in East Asia. East Asia has as many wars as Europe and only slightly less than in Americas, but many more small conflicts (because it also has a larger population). While elsewhere the number of small conflicts is 3-4 times that of wars, in East Asia it is 13 times. Clearly, East Asia is special in its ability to keep its small conflicts small.

Table 2: The Long Peace of East Asia, Compared to Other Regions

	Europe	Middle-East	Rest of Asia	Africa	Americas	East Asia
Small Conflicts	82	179	243	410	96	265
Wars	21	68	81	160	34	21

To reveal the main formula of the long peace of East Asia, we will then need to find an explanation to the disappearance of conflict escalation in East Asia. If we look at the documents that preceded the great change in East Asia at the end of the 1970s, we can see one doctrinal change that could be related to the drastic drop in conflict fatalities and conflict escalation in East Asia. Of the six fundamental principles of the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation three first emphasise the respect of military non-interference, sovereignty and territorial integrity.⁴⁴ This document became the foundation of a broader East Asian cooperation in the ASEAN+3 and ASEAN Regional Forum cooperation.

A similar message can be found in the Chinese conversion into the ideology of the long peace of East Asia: Deng Xiaoping rejected the practice of cultural revolution of intruding into the internal affairs of other countries by exporting communist insurgency, as he also rejected American practices of military interventionism.⁴⁵ Deng also emphasised the importance of facilitating economic development as the main function of the state.⁴⁶ Clearly, the anti-interventionism and developmentalism that ASEAN adopted in its establishment was also opted for in the new Chinese way at the end of the 1970s. For the question of conflict escalation, the Chinese and ASEAN anti-interventionism constituted an end to the internationally imposed expansion of destructive power in intra-state disputes: if others do not offer, and they are not allowed to join the dispute militarily, the conflict remains smaller. Restraint with regards to interfering into disputes outside country's borders seems like a plausible explanation for the fact that conflicts do not spread and become more deadly. There is no comparable change of doctrine or practice among non-East Asian great powers: great power interventions in the context of Cold War and in the post-Cold War context of humanitarian interventions were at least equally frequent outside East Asia before than after the beginning of the long peace of

⁴⁴ ASEAN Secretariat, 'Treaty of Amity and Cooperation,' 1976, <https://asean.org/treaty-amity-cooperation-southeast-asia-indonesia-24-february-1976/>.

⁴⁵ Xiaoping Deng, 'Realize the Four Modernizations and Never Seek Hegemony,' May 7, 1978, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/dengxiaoping/103389.htm>.

⁴⁶ Xiaoping Deng, 'We Shall Concentrate On Economic Development. September 18, 1982.,' *Talk With Kim Il Sung, General Secretary Of The Central Committee Of The Korean Workers' Party. Available at* <Http://English.Peopledaily.Com.Cn/Dengxp/Vol3/Text/C1030.Html>., 1982.

East Asia. If anything, humanitarian interventionism has increased during the past 25 years.⁴⁷ Thus, it seems clear that East Asian peace is not a product of voluntary withdrawal of great powers from the region as Kreutz suggests,⁴⁸ but rather something that East Asian security practice has brought about.

Undoubtedly, the ASEAN and Chinese anti-interventionism is not only a strategy of conflict prevention. It also constitutes convenient excuse for remaining silent regarding atrocities of various varieties. East Asia remains a region where the levels of autocratic violence have been very high, while the transparent control of such violence remains on a lower level than in many other regions. Yet, the introduction of military non-interference in domestic conflicts has been associated with a decline of authoritarian violence and increase of domestic democratic control over the exercise of violence by the political executives.⁴⁹ Here, though, it is likely that developmentalism, and the integration into the global economy and online culture, have contributed more to the decline of autocratic violence than non-intervention.

Evidence on the extent of different kinds of organized violence suggests that non-interference is the main reason for peace in East Asia. Since 1946, intra-state wars that have been intervened by outsiders have contributed to two thirds of conflict fatalities in East Asia.⁵⁰ This finding can be complemented by a calculation according to which conflicts with external intervention tend to be 3-9 times more intensive than conflicts without such external escalation (measured as fatalities per year). Furthermore, a huge majority of fatalities (up to 98 %) of conflict in those conflicts that outsiders, mainly great powers, have intervened, have occurred only after the entry of great powers.⁵¹ Thus, it seems logical that the East Asian rejection of and self-restraint with regards to external involvement in the intrastate disputes and conflicts must be a big part of the explanation of sudden drop of conflict fatalities in the region.

⁴⁷ Timo Kivimäki, *The Failure to Protect. The Path to and Consequences of Humanitarian Interventionism* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019).

⁴⁸ Kreutz, 'Peace by External Withdrawal.'

⁴⁹ Kivimäki, 'East Asian Relative Peace - Does It Exist?'

⁵⁰ Kivimäki, *The Long Peace of East Asia.*, pp. 117–20.

⁵¹ Kivimäki, pp. 117–20.

This does not, however, necessarily mean that all external interference is detrimental for peace. US deterrence, for example, has often been seen as a pillar of peace in East Asia.⁵² Military involvement is always an indicator of failure of deterrence, and thus, it could be possible that great power interference in domestic disputes and conflicts is detrimental only when deterrence fails, and punishments must be implemented.

However, if we look at how allies of great powers fare in East Asia in comparison to neutral countries and enemies of alliances, we can see that deterrence cannot be part of the recipe that explains the long peace of East Asia. US allies have tended to be more democratic in East Asia than US enemies, and so while alliances have not necessarily explained the reduction of organised violence in general, they may explain some of the decline in autocratic violence. Yet, it is clear that the general unwillingness in East Asia to accept foreign bases, foreign drone-based surveillance and counterterrorism, etc, means that military deterrence by foreigners has declined in the period of relative peace and decline of autocratic violence in East Asia. The new commitment to non-interference, and the reluctance to accept external forces in internal disputes is temporarily associated with the decline of fatalities of violence. Yet, even stronger evidence can be found if we compare periods of high to periods of low levels of deterrence, and countries whose security has been dependent on US deterrence to countries with no such dependence.

If we look at the impact of the rise of US deterrence after the meeting of the U.S. ambassadors in Bangkok in 1950 and the formal new American commitment to the region, one cannot see consistent patterns. About half of the nations experienced more, and half less conflict annually, on average. The East Asian average (as well as the Japanese, Mongolian averages) remained the same during the Cold War and before it after the WWII. If we look at battle deaths, only Malaysia and China were better off during the Cold War US leadership than before it. Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, The Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and Korea lost on average more people in Cold War conflicts than before the rise of US leadership. Because of the huge population of China, the East Asian average number of casualties was still greater before, than after, the rise of US global leadership. What is striking is that it was mainly the allies of the US

⁵² Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1974).

whose conflict fatalities increased most once the US took leadership of East Asian affairs in 1950.⁵³

After the ending of Cold War, the US had less interest in deterring undesired developments in East Asia. Yet, except for Cambodia and the Philippines, all East Asian countries had fewer conflicts and battle deaths after the end of the Cold War than before it. The beginning of the War on Terror in 2001 increased the US interest in the region and created some systematic effect on the level of US deterrence. Yet, in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines, the number of conflicts and the number of casualties increased slightly, while no effect could be detected elsewhere. The countries whose conflict intensified were the ones where the US used its deterrence most, as conflicts with radical Islamist movements were exactly the focus of US security strategy.

Thus, it seems that the key to security in East Asia is in Asian, rather than American hands, and that, instead of just East Asian developmentalism, especially East Asian anti-interventionism explains the fact that after 1979 East Asian conflicts no longer escalated into wars. While globalist developmentalism in East Asia may have contributed more to the opening up of East Asian countries, and the increasing transparency and control of the possible elite misbehaviour, military non-intervention has been the main reason for the tendency of conflicts not escalating into wars in East Asia. Thus, developmentalism and anti-interventionism, together, have pacified East Asia.

External Enforcement of Perfect Solutions or Anti-Hegemonic Face-Saving and Endless Informal Multi-Track Dialogue?

Peace-making does not only indicate the ability to end conflicts, but it also gives a hint of the culture that leads to and escalates conflicts. Victory, for example, can be an incentive to further conflicts, and imposition of one state's own solutions on other states, while the need to protect might be a justification for the defeating of perpetrators of violence or atrocity criminals. If again, conflicts end in formal processes, rather than in informal interaction and self-restraint of conflicting parties, this may constitute a culture where conflicting parties do

⁵³ Timo Kivimäki, 'The Jeju Process and the Relative Peace in East Asia,' *Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2010, pp. 355–70, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10163271.2010.500024>.

not see benefits in informal dialogue, and as a result, there may have a different path to peace or escalation of conflicts than countries with more informal path.

Comparing East Asia after 1979 with other regions and with itself before 1980, reveals three patterns of the long peace of East Asia. First, East Asian conflicts do not seem to end in military victories, especially not in revolutionary victories.⁵⁴ Partly this may be related to the rejection of foreign influence that could tilt the balance of power to the advance of one of the conflicting parties, to allow a victory. This may also reveal something about East Asian framing of conflicts: conflicts are not about perpetrators that need to be defeated, but rather they are about disagreements, misunderstandings and policies that emphasise divisive issues too much and disregard uniting common interests. As has been revealed by Qin, East Asian new approach to international politics is relational rather than agent-centric: conflicts are not about rogue states, dictators and terrorists, they are about bad relationships.⁵⁵ This relational approach is sometimes criticised for its “quietism” about atrocities.

Secondly, conflicts in East Asia are not terminated with peace negotiations.⁵⁶ There are only two conflicts, one in East Timor, and the other in Aceh, that were ended in peace negotiations. Elsewhere negotiations either did not result in the ending of hostilities, or hostilities were ended already before formal negotiation.

Thirdly, rather than formal processes, in the peaceful East Asia, conflicts tend to end in informal dialogue and mutual decisions based on self-restraint. The two last elements of East Asia peace-making clearly suggest that instead of explicitly negotiating about differences, avoidance of conflict escalation in East Asia is based on informal, quiet dialogue, emphasis on things that unite, and self-restraint.

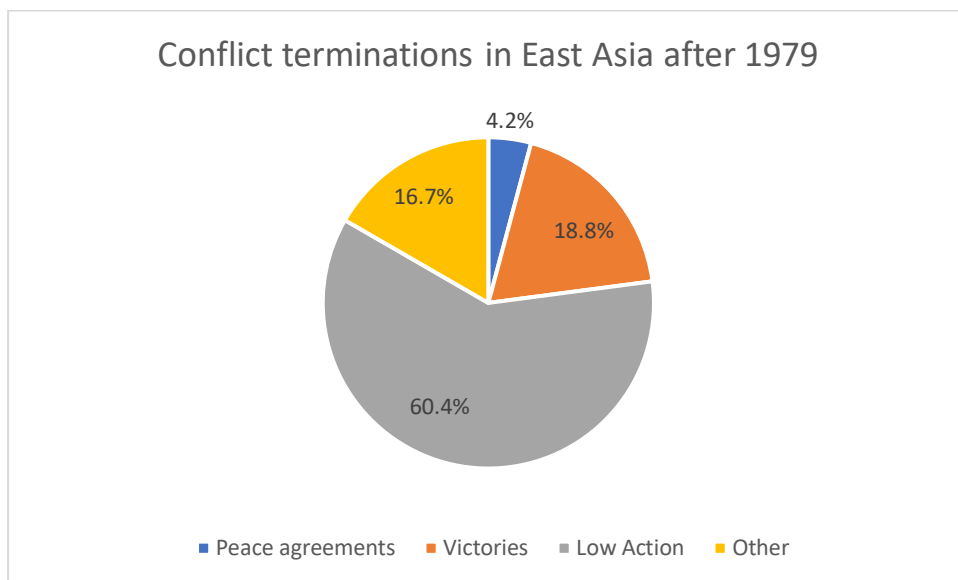
⁵⁴ Svensson, ‘East Asian Peacemaking: Exploring the Patterns of Conflict Management and Conflict Settlement in East Asia.’

⁵⁵ Yaqing Qin, ‘A Relational Theory of World Politics,’ *International Studies Review*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2016, pp. 33–47; Yaqing Qin, ‘Development of International Relations Theory in China: Progress through Debates,’ *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2011, pp. 231–57, <https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcr003>.

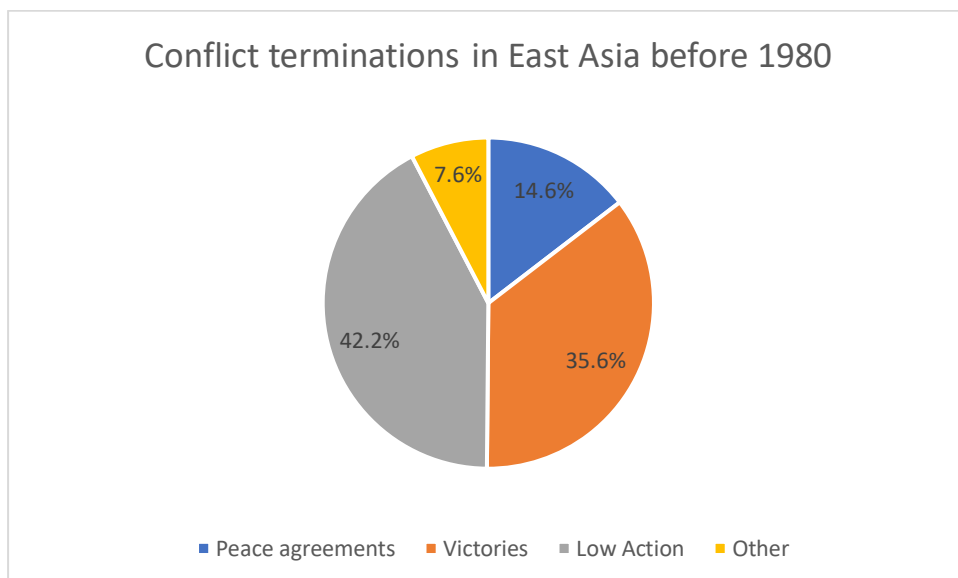
⁵⁶ Svensson, ‘East Asian Peacemaking: Exploring the Patterns of Conflict Management and Conflict Settlement in East Asia.’

Graphs 1, 2 and 3 show this in comparison with the old East Asia and with the rest of the world. In Graph 4 I compare East Asia with the region with the greatest number of conflicts, Africa.

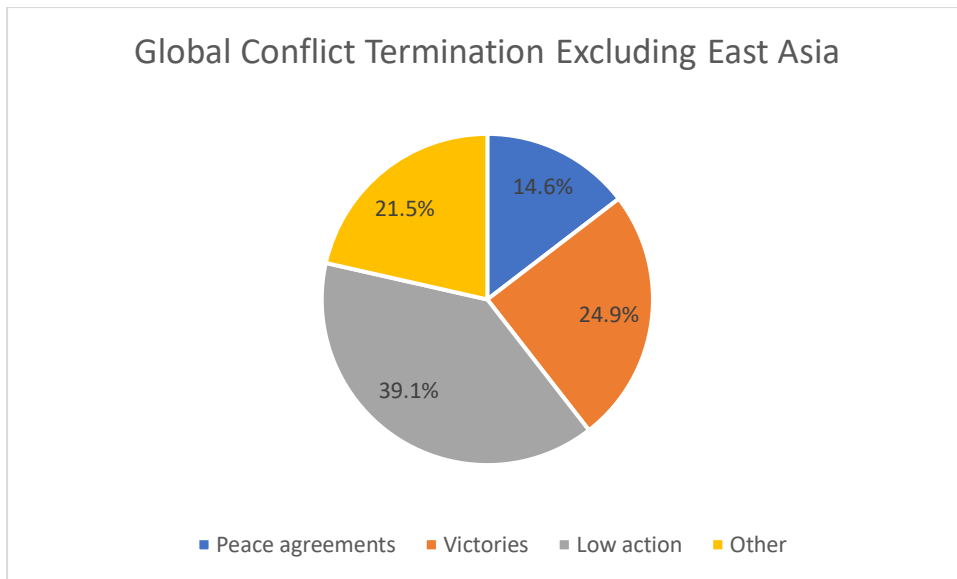
Graph 1:



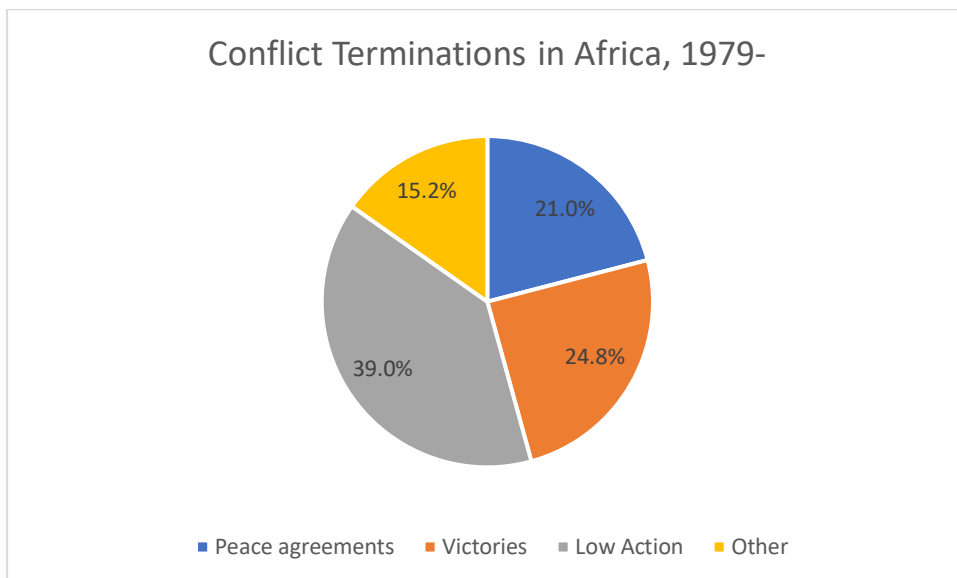
Graph 2:



Graph 3:



Graph 4:



The percentage of victories dropped from 35.6% to 18.8% when moving from the belligerent to peaceful era. East Asia is also less focused on military victory than the rest of the world. Conflicts are no longer about the imposition of solutions, but rather, each country can design its own solutions, albeit often after long informal dialogue with regional states. This way, the East Asian way is anti-hegemonic: it does not aim at dictating solutions to intra-state problems of other states. While efficient in conflict termination, this approach could, again, be criticised for tolerance towards wrong policies in other countries. In some cases, say in Pol Pot's Kampuchea, the problem that needs to be fixed should not be out of research just because it exists in another country: one would need to end genocide even if it took place behind state borders.

Furthermore, conflicts do not tend to end in rebel victories in East Asia as often as they used to, or as often as elsewhere in the world. The latter unique characteristic of East Asian peace-making is related to the new prudence and restraint against the support of anti-government conflicting parties in another country. While this used to be rather common in East Asia still in the 1960s and 1970s, it is possible to see from the Uppsala/PRIO conflict statistics that this has not happened a single time in East Asia after 1979.⁵⁷

While the Western security paradigm is often focused on sorting out who is right and who is wrong, who is the good guy and who is the bad guy, many East Asian cultures are more hesitant to seek solutions that constitute defeat and loss of face for anyone. While imposition of solutions to others is only in the Chinese diplomatic discourse called anti-hegemonism,⁵⁸ this approach seems to be prevalent for the entire region: East Asian conflicts do not seek to impose solutions by means of military force. Instead, East Asian countries and cultures are more interested in finding stable solutions that save everyone's face and help everybody to feel victorious.⁵⁹ East Asian conflict prevention is based on multilateral cooperation rather than alliances to oppose someone.⁶⁰ Such a policy could, in some situations, be criticised for its failure to deal with atrocity criminals, who do not want to accept cooperative solutions: atrocity criminals may sometimes need to be resisted.

While the Western way to human security and interpretation of the Responsibility to Protect consensus has sometimes been criticised for being more focused on the punishment of the perpetrators than to protection of victims,⁶¹ East Asia emphasises self-restraint, and tries to

⁵⁷ Studied from the data from Pettersson and Öberg, 'Organized Violence, 1989-2019.'

⁵⁸ Deng, 'Realize the Four Modernizations and Never Seek Hegemony.'

⁵⁹ Anwar, *Indonesia in ASEAN Foreign Policy and Regionalism*, 42; Djwandono, "Intra ASEAN Territorial Disputes: The Sabah Claim."

⁶⁰ Sun Xuefeng, 'Why Does China Reassure South-East Asia?,' *Pacific Focus*, vol. 24, no. 3, 2009, pp. 298–316, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1976-5118.2009.01027.x>.

⁶¹ Mahmood Mamdani, 'Responsibility to Protect or Right to Punish?,' *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2010, pp. 53–67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502970903541721>.

cooperate for human security. As a result, the Western media often criticises East Asian and ASEAN unwillingness even to name the perpetrators.⁶²

A more confrontational way can be found in the Wars in Korea and Vietnam during the belligerent era. There security was not offered by peace but by victory of capitalism over communism. According to instructions by the office of the US Secretary of Defense, officers should tell the soldiers that 'if the Communists were successful, you would become the slave, body and soul, of as cruel a band of individuals as ever ranged the earth.'⁶³ Thus, security based on compromise with the enemy was not an option. Peace had to be achieved through victory. This must be one of the reasons why East Asia used to be belligerent, while currently it is peaceful. Yet, this must also be why it has been difficult to tackle intrastate violence in East Asian autocracies, such as Myanmar.

Perhaps even more astonishing than the decline of victories, is the decline of formal peace negotiation in East Asian conflict termination. After 1979, only two of the 48 conflict terminations ended with the help of formal peace negotiation. This constitutes a decline from 14.6% of East Asian conflict terminations to 4.2%. Even the two peace negotiations were not as formal as believed. In the East Timor process, where Professor Peter Wallensteen's team was asked to facilitate a hybrid formal/informal effort, while in the Aceh Peace Talks, President Martti Ahtisaari mediated with a group of unofficial academics and businessmen facilitating the process of pre-negotiation and creation of contacts of negotiation.⁶⁴ These negotiations never claimed exclusivity and they were based on the idea of 'nothing is accepted until everything is accepted.' This meant that the negotiation process as such was almost entirely informal until the signing of the final agreement.

Instead of formal peace negotiation, conflicts tend to end after informal contacts and independent decisions by each conflicting parties to end hostilities (informal dialogue and self-restraint). While informal, personalistic dialogue has been typical for East Asia, this was not typical for the termination of conflicts that great powers participated in. Most colonial

⁶² Heydarian, 'Biden's China Policy Gets ASEAN Cold Shoulder.'

⁶³ Office of Secretary of Defense, 'The Issues at Stake in Korea,' *Armed Forces Talk*, vol. 340, (Washington D.C.: August 18, 1950).

⁶⁴ Damien Kingsbury, *Peace in Aceh: A Personal Account of the Aceh Peace Process* (Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2006).

wars as well as the Vietnam and Korean Wars were terminated in very formal settings. The share of informal conflict termination which can only be observed as cessation of hostilities (in absence of ceasefires, peace agreements or negotiations) has increased by 18.2 % points of all conflict terminations from the belligerent to the peaceful era. The large share of informal conflict terminations is an anomaly also in comparison with other regions. The share of informal conflict terminations has increased in most regions of the world, but East Asian share is still much higher than anywhere else.

In most cases of conflict termination, one cannot link any official activity to the process. Rather interaction between conflicting parties and stakeholders take place between academics, media personnel and officials in their private capacity. Instead of allowing these meetings any official capacity or decision-making power, most often the format of East Asian informal peace-making is that after unofficial dialogue, conflicting parties make their individual decisions that echo the consensus arrived at in informal, person-to-person dialogue based on individual ties and friendship.

For academic organizations the facilitation of meetings that officials can use for testing their ideas safely without committing their government or losing their face, is a matter of prestige. Academics with influence and official contacts are often considered more successful in the East Asian academia. At the same time, several East Asian countries consider it legitimate for politicians and officials to get their promotions on the basis of meritocratic virtues. Participation in academic events is therefore attractive to them. Furthermore, yielding to the concepts and ideas arrived at in regional expert meetings is to the meritocratic credit of the entire government. As a result, East Asian unofficial peace dialogue proceeds through the unofficial path to the 'fizzling out' of conflicts. The fact that such a way of conflict termination also reflects most East Asian political cultures better than the 'best practices' of conflict terminations of those conflicts in which too much authorship was with outside powers, makes the East Asian conflict terminations more sustainable: conflicting parties made their decisions on peace themselves and thus, there is no need to challenge a peace they feel ownership of. Solutions that such approach reaches are then often more genuinely locally owned and, thus, more durable than solutions that one party imposes on others after a victorious battle.

Lessons to the World

The focus on prosperity as part of the peace strategy can be seen useful also globally. Firstly, a focus that looks at human security and the responsibility to protect people merely or primarily as a political issue, or an issue of prevention of atrocity crimes, is problematic because of the fact that prosperity seems to protect people better than punishment of atrocity criminals. For example, human security is much more severely threatened by poverty than violence. Less than 100,000 people are killed by all types of organized violence in the world annually,⁶⁵ while a greater number of children die every week from poverty-related problems.⁶⁶ Clearly, there is more work on poverty-related human security problems than problems related to violence by dictators and terrorists. Thus, there are global lessons from East Asian developmentalism and focus on prosperity. Yet, political and economic concerns interact. While East Asia could teach the world of the primacy for human security of economic concerns (and discourage the West from some of its economic sanctions), it should also learn from the West the fact that democratic political developments may often be instrumental for positive economic developments.

Development focus is also globally useful in the prevention of fatalities of organized violence. The UN saves more than 30,000 lives more in its peacekeeping operations (counted together) during years when the development discourse is more prominent than average, compared to years when it is less prominent than average.⁶⁷ Here, development discourse's utility for UN success in saving lives excludes the focus on lives saved directly by actual development effort, as the focus here is only on the reduction of fatalities of direct violence. When focused on

⁶⁵ Calculated from the UCDP data, Pettersson and Öberg, 'Organized Violence, 1989-2019.'

⁶⁶ calculated from Unicef, 'The State of the World's Children 2019 Statistical Tables,' UNICEF DATA, 2019, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/dataset/sowc-2019-statistical-tables/>.

⁶⁷ This is calculated by assuming that fatalities of organized violence would continue as they were before UN intervention and then by comparing the effect of UN intervention in years when UNSC debate emphasizes developmental issues to those years it does not. The data is from Timo Kivimäki, *A Dataset on the Discourse, Approach and Outcomes of UN Peacekeeping, 1993-2019*. (Bath: University of Bath Research Data Archive, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.15125/BATH-00783..>

development the UN operations save a vast number of lives also by reducing the number of fatalities of poverty, disease, hunger, child mortality, mortality at birth, etc..

The world could also learn from the East Asian anti-interventionism. If we focus on the post-Cold War period, we can see that what East Asia has experienced can be perceived globally. The only difference is that there has not been a global hesitance towards external intervention as there has been in East Asia.⁶⁸ External intervention by great powers is associated with 5.4 times greater number of fatalities per population, and 5.5 times higher if the intervention is conducted by the US.⁶⁹

If we then look at the change in the number of fatalities per population from one year to the next, we can see that that on average intervention predicts an increase of fatalities by 45 times. In this investigation US intervention seems to be less detrimental for the development of fatalities of organized violence. Yet also US intervention predicts an 18 times greater increase in conflict fatalities compared to a situation where US has not intervened. While in some cases such interventions can be defended as enforcement of humanitarian norms, the fact that they tend to increase the number of fatalities should be considered as an argument for the East Asian hesitance and self-restraint.

The world could also learn from the East Asian anti-hegemonism. In Western-dominated scholarship East Asian hesitance to focus mainly on things that divide is often seen as unwillingness to face realities. This may also sometimes be the case: while problems should not be the only focus in conflict prevention, they too, need to be addressed. Yet, the occasional overemphasis on problems, atrocities and violence, rather than on things that compromises could be built on, may be the reason why peace in Western political discourse is a product of victory rather than compromise. Due to the idea of tight association between peace and our terms of peace in the Western security discourse, conflict termination is often seen as imposition of solutions (often from outside the group of conflicting parties). Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, for example, the task of peacemakers is to introduce a

⁶⁸ In the analysis of the effects of intervention in intrastate violence in this paper is based on data on fatalities of organized violence from the UCDP Georeferenced Events data Pettersson and Öberg, 'Organized Violence, 1989-2019.'

⁶⁹ Lagging intervention and lagging fatalities and then correlating the two shows that both the number of fatalities predicts intervention, but also that intervention predicts increased numbers of fatalities per population.

solution to the political problem and if necessary, to use military power to 'sell' the solution.⁷⁰ While this may be wisdom sometimes, in some cases such an approach may provoke resistance because to enable the imposition of a solution, the enemy must be defeated, and often also embarrassed.

Again, the East Asian anti-hegemonist recipe of avoiding the imposition of solutions and the aversion of humiliating military defeats and victories can be a global lesson, too. If we look at the strategy of UN peacekeeping and compare it with the strategies of unilateral great power interventions, we can see that the UN approach is closer to the one in East Asia: UN conflict intervention intends to do exactly what Tony Blair suggested one should not settle for. It aims at freezing the conflict in order to facilitate dialogue between conflicting parties. At the same time, most unilateral interventions have defined the 'atrocious criminals' in advance and then simply aimed at defeating them.

If we then look at the development of fatalities of organized violence during and after intervention and compare it to the situation before the intervention, we can see that unilateral operations almost always fail to reduce these fatalities while UN operations that do not aim at victorious conflict termination, tend to reduce fatalities.⁷¹ Thus, the East Asian and the UN approach may be something the world could learn from.

Furthermore, if we look at the East Asian approach of focusing on self-restraint more than changing the behaviour of others by means of military victory or otherwise, we have some global evidence of the virtues of the East Asian approach. In a study focused on US presidential discourse and conflict fatalities it was possible to conclude that fatalities increased when the US president framed protection as something where one needs to prevent actions of a perpetrator of atrocity crimes, whereas the opposite effect followed when the situation was framed in a way that did not identify someone else whose action needed to be changed for the sake of protection. Whenever the focus was on exercising power to influence others, US tended to fail to protect more often than when the focus was on doing something

⁷⁰ Tony Blair, *A Journey* (New York, NY / Newark, NJ: Random House / Audible, 2010), chap. 8.

⁷¹ Timo Kivimäki, *Protecting the Global Civilian from Violence: UN Discourses and Practices in Fragile States*. (London: Routledge, 2021).

oneself or when the approach focused on mutual self-restraint.⁷² Again, the East Asian formula of conflict termination has some useful lessons for the rest of the world.

Conclusions and discussions

East Asia has been very successful at avoiding conflict escalation. In addition to the East Asian developmentalist obsession, this relative success has been built on anti-interventionist recipes. By not intervening in conflicts of other nations, East Asian countries have avoided fueling disputes, while conflicting parties have not been able to depend on external help in their war effort. The common rule against interference has also stabilized inter-state relationships, while at the same time it has reduced the legitimacy of authoritarian violence in the name of national security. At the same time, it has not been able to aggressively address its problems with authoritarian unfairness and violence.

East Asian recipe has also been based on anti-hegemonism, as states have not been eager to impose solutions to each other's conflicts. Military power has not been used to impose solutions and win favorable terms of peace, while at the same time, formal, supra-national peace processes have not been at the heart of conflict termination. Rather, states have been allowed to find their own solutions to their disagreements, while states have not been eager to force their solutions even on their intra-state opponents. Conflicts have ended with informal dialogue and mutual decisions that emphasizes self-restraint: peace has been locally owned, and mutually accepted, which explains why peace has been durable and sustainable. While anti-hegemonism has contributed to the reduction of fatalities of organized violence in East Asia, it has left the region powerless to impose solutions in situations where a country is clearly in violation of humanitarian norms, such as in the post-democratic Myanmar.

The world is moving towards escalation of tension and proxy wars. The approach of the West, but also Russia, may have been too often to blame the opponent and frame the conflict as something that can only be ended if the other conflicting party can be defeated or reformed. This is clearly not the East Asia way of conflict de-escalation. Unsurprisingly, no progress has been made to avoid escalating tension and global war. There is a need for dialogue that also focuses on issues of common interests. Building on common interests that unite great powers

⁷² Kivimäki, *The Failure to Protect. The Path to and Consequences of Humanitarian Interventionism*, chap. 8.

could enable cooperation and joint action. Thus, to avoid great power war we need to learn from the cooperative, East Asian approach to world politics.