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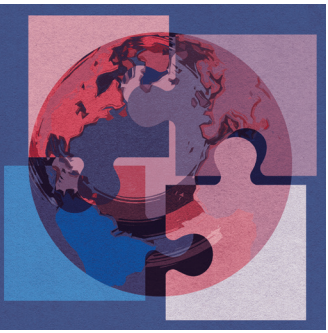

GLOBAL TRANSITIONS SERIES

Non-Western approaches to peacemaking and peacebuilding: State-of-the-art and an agenda for research

Mateja Peter and Haley Rice

The Global Transitions Series looks at fragmentations in the global order and how these impact peace and transition settlements. It explores why and how different third-party actors – state, intergovernmental, and non-governmental – intervene in conflicts, and how they see themselves contributing to reduction of conflict and risks of conflict relapse. The series critically assesses the growth and diversification of global and regional responses to contemporary conflicts. It also asks how local actors are navigating this multiplicity of mediators and peacebuilders and how this is shaping conflict outcomes and post-conflict governance.

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Key findings and recommendations for further research:

Scholarship has begun to address how the increasing presence of non-Western powers as mediators and peacebuilders is impacting specific peace projects and the global order as a whole, but some key questions remain underexplored.

- We found a fragmented literature: overview and comparative studies addressing alternative peacemaking and peacebuilding approaches, and case studies on how individual non-Western powers approach specific conflicts. Comparative studies tend to start with the concepts employed by global institutions, thus excluding some of the practices that could be classified peacebuilding if a liberal lens was removed. Case studies provide more nuance but often do not distinguish between general foreign policy activities versus activities aimed specifically at reducing the risk of conflict relapse.
    - Further research is needed on how non-Western powers are thinking about approaches to conflict, and which foreign policy activities they see as reducing the risk of conflict relapse. Such research would uncover how the vocabulary in the field is changing, and what different actors understand as peace measures, and why.
- Motivations of non-Western actors in peacemaking and peacebuilding are complex but often painted with a broadly negative stroke. Comparative studies indicate a variety of overlapping motives but remain quite general in their findings; they observe little variation within individual actors or between different actors beyond ascribing deeper ideological motives to illiberal non-Western actors.
    - Further research is needed on developing a disaggregated approach which accounts for variation both between non-Western powers, and within the peacemaking strategies of individual states depending on the proximity of intervention.
- Non-Western approaches to conflict management differ in form and substance from Western ones, but the two should not be seen as dichotomous. All non-Western countries operate both within and outside the liberal peace perspective, with the grouping existing on a spectrum.

- When it comes to form, we are seeing a shift from multilateral to unilateral interventions, and a shift from global to local and regional players. Most non-military measures pursued by non-Western powers are conducted bilaterally. There is now a multiplicity of mediators and peacebuilding actors in the field, with some research indicating that this may lead to fracturing of peace processes.

    - Further research is needed in understanding the dynamics between multiple actors, particularly questioning to what extent non-Western efforts displace Western peacemaking and peacebuilding, or rather combine in some form.

    - Further research is needed on the role of local agency in peacemaking processes. There is limited research on local elites effectively engaging in forum-shopping, but more insight is needed to understand under what conditions this happens and how it impacts political settlements.

- When it comes to substance, potential differences between Western and non-Western approaches are identified around norms of non-intervention, norms of accountability and participatory governance, and the balancing between development and democracy. Non-Western actors prefer top-down approaches, working mostly with governments. Those able to provide aid do so with limited conditionality regarding internal arrangements. This seemingly advances an alternative approach, which prioritises development over political participation.

    - Further research is needed into how explicit these ideas are in non-Western thinking, and how exactly they differ between various non-Western actors. Non-Western approaches are often nearly equated with those of China, yet peacemaking is often quite localised and involves regional actors. Understanding how different non-Western practices feed into each other is equally important as understanding how non-Western approaches relate to established liberal models.

Introduction

Non-Western powers have become important actors in third-party interventions in conflict and post-conflict areas. The terminology of "non-Western", "emergent", or "rising actors" itself is problematic and confusing. Here we conceptualise these powers in relation to the equally problematic term "Western actors", a loose shorthand for European and North American liberal democracies which over the last three decades have shaped the policy agenda of peacemaking and peacebuilding both within and outside the global institutions. But structural changes and the emergence of a multipolar world order mean that this "peacebuilding consensus" (Richmond, 2004) is now cracking. Non-Western states increasingly engage substantively in multilateral peace operations, having moved away from their traditional role as troop contributing countries in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping (Abdenur, 2019; Peter, 2014; Paczyńska, 2021). These states also conduct peace support operations in the framework of regional organisations (Fisher & Wilén, 2022) and form ad hoc coalitions of neighbours to counter transborder threats (Karlsrud & Reykers, 2020). While these activities are undertaken in the framework of the UN Charter, new configurations of actors are leading to a proliferation of new approaches to conflict management. In addition to the more militarised presence aimed at stabilising host states and regions, non-Western powers have also expanded their roles in broader peacemaking and peacebuilding activities, assuming politically consequential roles for developments in areas of intervention (Call & de Coning, 2017; Carothers & Samet-Marram, 2015; Richmond & Tellidis, 2014). Today neighbouring states, regional organisations, and non-Western global powers are increasingly present in conflict areas as mediators and peacebuilders.

These changes raise important questions about how approaches to peace and the nature of the global order are changing in the present, and how they might look in the future. Are we simply witnessing a quantitative change in actors involved in peacemaking and peacebuilding, or is this growing marketplace of options also bringing about qualitative transformations in peace settlements? What motivates non-Western interveners in their peacemaking activities? What ideas are these actors introducing in their approaches to peace, and how is this shaping conflict outcomes and post-conflict governance? What influence do these developments have on the global international institutions and liberal norms that have underpinned the post-Cold War order?

In this paper, we provide an overview of how existing scholarship has addressed non-Western approaches to peacemaking and peacebuilding and outline some possible future directions for research on the topic. In the first section, we address some methodological considerations related to this body of scholarship. The second section tackles discussions surrounding the motivations of non-Western powers for their involvement in peacemaking and peacebuilding. In the third section, we address what the scholarship can tell us about the form and substance of non-Western approaches to peace. At a fundamental level, we are asking whether the existing literature suggests that non-Western powers are espousing a different theory of change in their approach to peacemaking and peacebuilding. We conclude by identifying gaps in existing scholarship and mapping out areas that require further research.

Methodological challenges of researching non-Western peacemaking and peacebuilding

"Peacemaking" and "peacebuilding" are terms commonly used in academic and policy circles, whose meanings have evolved considerably in the past decade. The usual starting point in our conceptualisation, which raises its own biases, comes from UN definitions, starting with "An Agenda for Peace" (United Nations, 1992). In UN documents, peacemaking and peacebuilding are typically discussed together, along with peace enforcement and peacekeeping. If peacekeeping and peace enforcement entail primarily military measures –respectively, with or without the consent of the host government – peacemaking and peacebuilding capture their non-military counterparts. UN terminology presents a clear distinction between military and non-military policy frameworks. Peacemaking and peacebuilding broadly describe the non-military activities seeking to address how countries fashion political settlements and ensure longer-term stability. Despite this starting point, the terms are used inconsistently across different literatures and much confusion remains over what precisely peacemaking and peacebuilding encompass, and how they are or should be practiced (Marley, 2020). In their 2007 survey of 24 governmental and intergovernmental bodies active in peacebuilding, Barnett et al. established that different bodies have understood and therefore institutionalised their peacebuilding activities very differently (Barnett et al., 2007). Their study captured only global institutions and liberal democracies, and therefore it is logical to conclude that the addition of non-Western understandings and practices almost certainly increases this pre-existing conceptual ambiguity. Conceivably, it also blurs the stark policy divisions drawn between different activities and measures in UN documents. Resolving some of this ambiguity is important in order to ensure our inquiry sets parameters open enough to capture pertinent research covering non-Western approaches. Additionally, it allows us to remain conscious of biases in how these concepts have been used in existing studies. This seems particularly apt as the bulk of these studies are still conducted by Western researchers, who are socialised into Western understandings of peacemaking and peacebuilding.

To accomplish this we need *a working definition of peacemaking and peacebuilding that meets the following criteria:* (1) the definition needs to be sufficiently *minimalistic and neutral* to capture peacemaking and peacebuilding activities of both Western and non-Western actors, even when not termed using that language; and (2) the definition cannot be all-encompassing – that is, it needs to be sufficiently *substantive and specific* to delineate peacemaking and peacebuilding from other foreign policy activities that actors might rhetorically bundle up with peace measures, as the latter are seen as morally desirable. Peacemaking and peacebuilding are usually thought of as *going hand-in-hand*, with peacemaking understood as activities aimed at bringing hostile parties to an agreement, and peacebuilding describing activities aimed at ensuring that political settlements, including but not limited to peace agreements, remain sustainable. Traditionally, peacemaking and peacebuilding would be thought of as sequential (e.g., United Nations, 1992), but there is now a growing recognition in both policy and literature that peacebuilding is not limited to post-conflict measures. Instead, it can occur both before and during conflict, paralleling attempts to come to a negotiated settlement.
One exception in this regard is the African Union understanding of peacebuilding, which even in the more recent guidelines focuses predominantly on post-conflict activities (African Union, 2018; Lotze, 2020).

What encompasses *peacemaking* conceptually is less controversial. A good working definition meeting our criteria can be taken from the UN Capstone doctrine, which describes peacemaking as "measures to address conflicts in progress and usually involves diplomatic action to bring hostile parties to a negotiated agreement". (United Nations, 2008: 17) These measures include mediation and good offices, and can be undertaken by a variety of actors: non-governmental envoys, governments, groups of states, regional organisations, or the United Nations. Peacemaking can be either formal or informal. While theoretically less controversial, it is not uncontroversial in practice, as fragmentation of conflict and the existence of complex conflict systems means that it is no longer straightforward to determine who the relevant "hostile parties" are, nor how to bring them to "negotiated agreement". This often means that peacemaking does not conclude with one negotiated agreement, but turns into a "formalised political unsettlement", where the disagreements at the heart of the conflict become embedded in political and legal institutions (Bell & Pospisil, 2017), and potentially require continued diplomatic involvement of outside actors. Moreover, while the UN conceptualisation draws sharp lines between peacemaking and any military measures, in practice, these lines might be more blurred.

Peacebuilding, on the other hand, is a more contentious concept, even on paper. Most Western states and institutions, as well as global organisations – which typically are more influenced by liberal norms – provide expansive definitions of peacebuilding, already defining its substance. The UN Capstone doctrine states that peacebuilding "involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict", therefore providing a neutral starting point. It continues by stating that these "measures address core issues that effect [sic] the functioning of society and the State, and seek to enhance the capacity of the State to effectively and legitimately carry out its core functions" (United Nations, 2008: 18). It thus indicates that peacebuilding is not only state-centric, but also primarily concerned with state-society relations, with the effectiveness and legitimacy of the state at its core. Similarly, a 2012 OECD study discusses a "convergence of the concepts of peacebuilding, statebuilding and conflict prevention", (OECD, 2012; see also OECD, 2001) treating them as near-synonymous (Cf. Paris & Sisk, 2009). These more expansive/Western definitions of peacebuilding already imply what the measures to reduce the risk of lapse or relapse into conflict should be, and thus apply a liberal lens in what they recognise as peacebuilding or not (Paris & Sisk, 2009; Richmond, 2005). Any research agenda on global peacebuilding and non-Western approaches necessitates a decentred stance and definitions that do not situate the liberal content at the centre of analysis (Cf. Jütersonke et al., 2021: 946-7). Only by doing this are we able to recognise as peacebuilding certain types of thinking and practices that can fall outside of the liberal understanding of peacebuilding.

At the same time, while the understanding of peacebuilding should be neutral as to what measures can produce the desired outcomes, it needs to be substantive enough to ensure that the objective of these measures is the desired outcome: peace. Not all foreign policy activities, whether military, economic, or diplomatic can be understood and classified as peacebuilding, as that would make the concept an empty one. The same applies to peacemaking. In other words, peacebuilding activities need to have an underlying logic of how the risk of lapse or relapse into conflict will be reduced– that is, they need a theory of change.

A *theory of change* is the understanding of how a specific activity will result in achieving desired changes in a particular context (Church & Rogers, 2006). While our approach to a theory of change needs to remain agnostic in its substance, the presence of some implicit or explicit understandings of how what is being done contributes to peace is needed. This is a difficult methodological puzzle, since, as we discuss below, motivations of actors are often multicausal and intertwined, with the logic underpinning donor activities also frequently unclear. Even when articulated in official documents, strategies and policies habitually include poorly defined objectives with a lack of a clearly stated or testable theory of change. This is not unique to non-Western actors, with researchers and evaluators often prompted to deduce the logic that underlies peacemaking and peacebuilding programmes based on practice (OECD, 2012: 33).

If recognising peacemaking and peacebuilding is already a methodologically difficult task, determining *which actors constitute non-Western powers, how comparable these actors are, and whether they can even be thought of as a group*, complicates things further. In most studies, these actors are states, although there exists a rich – almost parallel – literature on how African regional organisations (Aning, 2008; Gelot, 2012) and, to a smaller extent, ASEAN in Asia (Narine, 2004; Sánchez-Cacicedo, 2010) construct collective narratives and practices of peacemaking and peacebuilding, contesting global/UN approaches with regional ones. There are also many individual case studies discussing approaches to peace within states such as China (Jiang, 2017; Burton, 2019; Adhikari, 2020) or Brazil (Kenkel, 2010; Kenkel, 2013; Santos & Cravo, 2014). In our discussion of findings on non-Western approaches we draw on studies of these countries, but our assessment of the state-of-the-field is primarily focused on how we can enhance our broader comparative understandings and any emergent non-Western models. It therefore uses case studies to contribute to the literature, and tries to group several actors and discuss their motivations, influence, and approaches to peace in a comparative perspective.

Any such collection of states is artificially constructed, and the heterogeneity between states is included, with discussion of how these relate to Western/liberal approaches. Methodologically, we need to remain cognisant that while we use the terms Western and non-Western approaches, these are intended as a short-hand, not commitment to a dichotomy. We return more substantively to this debate in the third section, where we address the form and substance of non-Western approaches to peace.

Peacemaking (PM): non-military measures to bring hostile parties to a negotiated agreement.

Peacebuilding (PB): non-military measures aimed at ensuring that political settlements, including but not limited to negotiated agreements, remain sustainable.

Important: PM and PB need a theory of change, that is, they need an implicit or explicit understanding of how reduced risk of conflict relapse is meant to be achieved.

Comparative scholarship uses different labels to discuss a broadly similar group of actors involved in peace efforts, but depending on the label used, individual studies include or exclude particular actors. This has an impact on comparability of scholarship and their conclusions. Selected studies have focused on *the BRICS* (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and their approaches to peacebuilding, (Allouche & Lind, 2014; Richmond & Tellidis, 2013) while others have expanded this category, referring to a slightly larger group of actors under modified labels. In their study of *emerging powers* and peacebuilding, Richmond and Tellidis, for example, include Turkey, Indonesia, Mexico, and the Gulf States, arguing that what unites these countries and BRICS is their nonadherence to the principles of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (Richmond & Tellidis, 2014: 563). In other analyses, the term *rising powers* varyingly includes Turkey, (Parlar Dal, 2018) or Indonesia and Turkey, (Call & de Coning, 2017) or Egypt, Indonesia, and Turkey, (de Carvalho & de Coning, 2013) with a rationale that all of these countries can be understood to be "on the outside looking in" (Hurrell, 2006) on a global system dominated largely by the U.S. and its Western allies. Other authors speak of *illiberal* or *authoritarian powers*, (Lewis et al., 2018; Risse & Babayan, 2015; Smith et al., 2020) focusing on actors undermining democracy promotion. Alternatively, Jütersonke and co-authors include Japan, referring to their grouping as *alternative peacebuilders* and peacebuilders not part of "the mainstream Anglophone discourse" (Jütersonke et al., 2021: 946-7).

Each of the above groupings brings its own set of differing dynamics and therefore scholarly findings, so when approaching this, we remained deliberately vague in our understanding of non-Western powers, adopting a similar approach as Acharya when discussing *new actors* (Acharya, 2018). However, in our analysis of the literature, we prioritised scholarship focusing on actors that offer alternative peacemaking and peacebuilding approaches, that potentially present a credible counterweight to Western ones. While we are cognisant that in many conflicts, "relatively weak countries are sometimes able to exert significant influence on transitions near them, rivalling or even outweighing that of major Western powers" (Carothers & Samet-Marram, 2015: 2), we focused our literature on credible and more widely-applicable alternative models. This necessarily meant putting emphasis on the approaches of China and Russia globally, as well as regional powers and organisations in regional settings, whilst somewhat de-emphasising actors such as Brazil or Indonesia in Africa or the Middle East. Similarly, there is a degree of prioritisation of literature addressing alternative models that might be more difficult to reconcile with Western/liberal ones, actors such as Japan therefore receive less weight when we provide more general statements on what we describe as non-Western approaches. A degree of oversimplification was needed to capture a possible collective.

What motivates non-Western powers to engage in peacemaking and peacebuilding?

Peacemaking and peacebuilding dovetail and overlap with more "ordinary" foreign policy in pursuit of strategic interests and propagation of values. This is not necessarily a negative development as studies suggest that actors with moderate self-interest tend to have a better leverage over hostile parties, making them more credible mediators and more effective interveners (Beardsley, 2009; Howard, 2008). The literature also very rarely separates the peace motivations of actors involved in a particular region or state from their broader strategic objectives. This is not unique for non-Western actors, and the more critical literature generally provides a broader spectrum of underlying motives for any intervention purportedly supporting peace (Pugh, 2004). Studies on non-Western actors follow this trend, but seem to amplify critiques of motivations, as authors, who are often based in the West, research actors about whose motivations forms of peacebuilding they may be more sceptical. Here we provide a brief overview of what existing research says about motivations for non-Western powers' involvement in peacemaking and peacebuilding. We do so, however, with a stipulation that some studies seem to be quick to draw conclusions concerning motivations of non-Western actors, and that non-Western actors might have a different substantive understanding of peacebuilding than the authors themselves (see the next section). While a lot of the literature reads primarily ideological motivations into actions of non-Western powers, "framing the marketplace as a contest between democracy promotion and autocracy promotion would be erroneous. The motivations of governments seeking to shape political change in other countries are highly diverse and hard to neatly categorize" (Carothers & Samet-Marram, 2015: 1).

All the motivations discussed below could be considered "strategic interests", so we broadly separated them into material-based interests and "soft power", or values-based interests. Alternatively, Parlar Dal outlines "self-interests-based preferences, status-seeking attitudes, cost-oriented normative approach, and region-focused priorities" (Parlar Dal, 2018: 2209). These are not neat categories, and one motive may bleed into or reinforce another.

De Coning & Call note the "mutually reinforced" nature of strategic interests by values and principles, with a common denominator that intervening states seek influence, whether on a regional or global scale (de Coning & Call, 2017: 251; see also Abdenur & De Souza Neto, 2014).

Material-based interests

Security/Stability interests: Seeking another state or region's stability to maximise one's own security is a classic motive for peacebuilding. This is particularly evident when immediate geographic proximity is a factor, as intervention and peacebuilding efforts may be tied to more immediate national security concerns. Parlar Dal argues that "[i]f the conflict's negative externalities are high, which means that the conflict has an overriding and significant negative impact on other regional countries, the incentive for conflict management will be higher" (Parlar Dal, 2018: 2211). Adhikari finds this in the approaches of China and India, which commit more comprehensively to peacebuilding in areas where cross-border ties also impact the security concerns of these states (Adhikari, 2020). This has also been suggested as the case for Turkey's involvement in Syria. Aspects of the Syrian conflict that directly impact on Turkey's national security concerns include the massive influx of cross-border refugees, and Kurdish fighters in Syria that Turkey considers as a branch of the PKK, and has defined as a terrorist group (Yaşar, 2021). Stability and internal security motivations for engaging in peacemaking and peacebuilding have also been widely researched in Western approaches, with the literature on the EU noting the existence of an internal-external security nexus, where internal security concerns override other motivations and dictate the substance of EU's peacebuilding strategy in the immediate neighbourhood (Ioannides & Collantes-Celador, 2011; Raineri & Strazzari, 2019). In this, Western and non-Western actors' motivations are not entirely dissimilar.

Economic/Commercial interests: Broader stability may also be sought for strategic economic reasons, where again there are certain similarities with Western motivations. For example, Chinese involvement in the Horn of Africa has been suggested to be linked to longer-term interests – including for access to natural resources and markets, to guarantee crucial shipping lanes, and to protect their own nationals in the region in the event of emergency – rather than any inherent desire to play the role of a regional security guarantor (Shinn, 2018; Call & de Coning, 2017; Carson et al., 2020). Where extensive commercial relations pre-date conflict, the urge to protect such commercial interests can draw in actors that otherwise might be less likely to try the role of peacemaker, such as China in Sudan and South Sudan (Patey, 2014; Moro, 2012; Anthony & Hengkun, 2014).

Improving trade relations, accessing new markets and maximising commercial opportunities for a state's private sector or state-owned enterprises appears to be, at minimum, a happy side-effect of peacebuilding interventions for some intervening countries (Call & de Coning, 2017). However, it is suggested that in the case of authoritarian states coming to the aid of other authoritarian states in their peacemaking efforts, such commercial alliances may be more directly transactional. Security assistance to address instability could, for example, be implicitly linked to the awarding of contracts (e.g. for arms dealing or reconstruction) to firms from the intervening country (The Economist, 2021). Russia's activities in the Central African Republic have raised concerns regarding transactional security assistance of the "resources-for-protection" (Edwards, 2021) variety: aside from official state-sponsored Russian security support, gold and diamond mining licenses were legally awarded to Russian firms around the same time that Russian mercenaries allegedly tied to the Kremlin arrived in-country (Bax, 2021). These same mercenaries have also been reportedly ferrying out illegal "blood diamonds" from the provinces where they are training local soldiers (Searcey, 2019). While economic and commercial motivations are addressed in literature covering both Western and non-Western approaches to peace, some scholarship does find the quid pro quo nature of these exchanges more obvious in approaches of non-Western states.

Political favours or strategic alignment: Outside of a desire to secure another state's stability or gain commercial advantage, other interests may be tied to political favours or strategic alignment, whether at the regional or global level. In such cases, literature suggests that non-Western powers use peacebuilding assistance to reinforce economic or military ties for geopolitical reasons, applying their own type of conditionality. A global example includes the case of China releasing aid to Nepal in return for the non-recognition of Taiwan (Ghimire, 2018). A regional example includes the dynamics of Gulf states' involvement in the Horn of Africa, both as a region to cultivate as a hedge against an expansionist Iran, and as the grounds for playing out regional rivalries between Gulf states and their partners, as when Turkey and Qatar on one side compete for regional alliances against the UAE, and Saudi Arabia and Egypt on the other. In this case, Gulf states have offered foreign aid and investment to countries in the Horn of Africa contingent on them 'picking sides' in a Gulf state political split (Carson et al., 2020: 24-25).

Foreign interventions as diversion: Scholarship has noted that conflict management interventions – particularly the timing of certain high-profile events (such as peace conferences or elections) – can serve as actions to distract from domestic troubles and scandals in intervening states. Again, this is not without parallel in Western examples: the timing of the first post-war elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina was largely seen as a way to detract from domestic scandals and secure Bill Clinton's re-election (Zaum, 2008). However, studies of non-Western approaches to conflict management suggest that this motive is even more prevalent with illiberal powers, with some non-Western actors using foreign intervention as a diversionary tactic, garnering support at times of internal trouble and distracting from general failures or specific domestic debacles. For example, Turkey's interventions in locations such as Somalia and Libya have been described as "adventurism abroad" intended to "fire up his [Erdogan's] nationalistic base" and show Turkey's global importance (Carson et al., 2020). Russia likewise has been accused of "diversionary use of force" abroad, (Beliakova, 2019) or using foreign policy manoeuvres to distract a domestic audience (Filippov, 2009), as in its peacemaking approach to Kosovo (Baranovsky, 2015; Rotaru & Troncotă, 2017), and more recently as the annexation of Crimea (Vlasenko, 2015; Gerstel, 2017). The literature on this topic suggests a variation between how Western powers, and especially illiberal, non-Western powers use their peacemaking and peacebuilding approaches.

Values-based interests

Soft power/Reputational benefit: Intervention can have complicated and mixed motives: material and ideological interests may have significant overlap, as values and principles guide and reinforce strategic interests. For example, some Gulf state peacemaking efforts in the Horn of Africa pre-date more recent security and economic engagements associated with the competition for regional alliances (Mahmood, 2020), and particular states (e.g. Qatar) appear at least equally interested in burnishing their soft power or reputation as a peacemaker (Mesfin, 2016). Globally, powers with greater reach such as China and Russia may seek similar reputational enhancement, as when Russia positions itself as a "crucial player" or "indispensable negotiator" in the Syrian conflict, which elevates both its regional and global stature, and very publicly confounds U.S. calls for the Assad regime to go (Singh et al., 2019; Yacoubian, 2021a). Some states appear to seek to burnish their image as a global peacemaker in order to reap particular reputational dividends, as Brazil and India have done in the quest to secure a seat on the UN Security Council (Richmond & Tellidis, 2013). In this, non-Western powers do not seem too dissimilar to Western ones.

Ideological balancing: Geopolitical aims may likewise be informed by values-laden considerations. This could be regional ideological balancing, or more generally, balancing against the wider liberal order. Regionally, again using the example of Gulf state competition in the Horn of Africa, strategic competition for regional influence is informed by ideological considerations: "competing attitudes towards political Islam" (particularly towards the Muslim Brotherhood and similar groups) have led these competing groups of Gulf states and their partners to lend support to opposing factions in conflicts in Somalia and Sudan (Carson et al., 2020).

Such regional balancing can be contrasted with potential balancing against the liberal order more widely. At the global level, if a defining feature of national interest is "to create an international environment conducive to the survival and prospering of the nation's domestic institutions" (John Lewis Gaddis, 1982 in Brands, 2018: 65), then a shift away from the principles underpinning liberal peacebuilding – inclusivity, domestic accountability, rule of law – makes the world a safer place for illiberal regimes and autocracies. In this sense, certain non-Western peacebuilding interventions may serve to push back against U.S. hegemony, Western peacebuilding practices, or liberal values more generally. (See Brands (2018) on ideological competition generally, and Yacoubian (2021a, 2021b) for more on Russian motives in Syria in particular.) With regard to authoritarians making the world safe for autocracy, it has been found that "material and discursive" support from stronger authoritarian states can shore up governments of weaker authoritarian states, "thereby bolstering their capacity to govern and legitimizing their ruling status and controversial policies" (Cheung, 2019: 4). Indeed, a quantitative assessment on domestic use of Authoritarian Conflict Management (ACM) strategies found that states which fully embraced these authoritarian tactics were more likely to receive external authoritarian support when it comes to conflict management (Keen, 2021).

Overall, the comparative literature is clear that non-Western powers engage in conflict management for a variety of overlapping motives, but it often remains quite general in its findings, rarely observing much difference between Western and non-Western approaches, beyond ascribing deeper ideological motives to illiberal non-Western actors. This is something that Carothers & Samet-Marram (2015) have found in their own research as well. However, individual case studies paint a more nuanced and complex picture connecting domestic and cross-border issues with value-laden motivations. More work, however, would need to be done to delineate foreign policy interventions (especially military interventions) pursued primarily or purely in the interest of strategic gain but draped in the language of 'peace' or 'peacekeeping' (potentially to increase international acceptance of the action) from foreign policy interventions actually undertaken with a view to reduce conflict or the risk of conflict relapse.

What does non-Western peacemaking and peacebuilding look like?

What does non-Western peacemaking and peacebuilding look like in form and substance? Where and how does it present a departure from Western approaches to peace? Can we discern a distinct theory of change in non-Western approaches, and are there enough commonalities among these actors for these to present a credible alternative to Western ones? How uniformly are these approaches practiced in different areas of the world? Are we speaking of one broad approach or are there multiple competing visions within non-Western approaches?

We now have a growing body of case studies on individual non-Western powers' approaches to peace in different conflicts, with research particularly focusing on high-profile conflicts, such as Ukraine or Syria. But there is still a scarcity of literature directly engaging with any peacemaking or peacebuilding models that non-Western powers might be proposing. This is likely a result of a set of interrelated reasons. Unlike Western powers, which often pronounce their peacemaking and peacebuilding strategies in policy documents, non-Western states tend to lack specific doctrines or policy frameworks in this field. This complicates research as it means that any models these actors are formulating need to be deduced from their practice. Understanding an underlying logic from their practice is also a complex task, as non-Western powers are starting from radically different positions and often seemingly have little in common with each other. The literature has therefore only made limited advances in providing substantive conclusions that go beyond finding the lowest common denominator. Alternatively, when discussing non-Western approaches as a counterweight to Western ones, the literature sometimes near-equates these approaches with those specifically of China, as the biggest actor in the field. While more work needs to be done in understanding and conceptualising any underlying theory of change model, existing research does however point to a couple of productive starting points for how we might think about non-Western approaches and their theory of change.

To begin with, existing research broadly suggests that despite many commonalities among non-Western powers, there are also important differences in how these actors engage with peacemaking and peacebuilding. Some of these are obvious and are connected to their relative power within the global order – the role of China as a peacebuilder with a global reach, for example, will be different from the role of South Africa or Turkey, as more regional interveners (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010; Ozerdem, 2019; Kok, 2014).

Some non-Western actors position themselves primarily as peacemakers (e.g. Russia, Ethiopia, Kenya), while others (e.g. China, Japan, or Qatar) seem to have a longer-term peacebuilding approach connected to their aid activities (Abboud, 2021; Phillip Apuuli, 2015; Adhikari, 2021; Inada, 2005; Ishikawa, 2014; Khatib, 2013). This distinction seems to be connected to their own level of economic development. Some of the more peacebuilding-focused actors capitalise on their foreign aid to position themselves as a peacemaker/mediator (e.g., Qatar), whereas others do not seem to have an ambition to translate their aid directly into a peacemaking role (e.g. Japan). As the Chinese decision to appoint the first political envoy to the Horn of Africa earlier this year indicates, their approach to how their peacemaking and peacebuilding strategies might be connected is also evolving (Schipani, 2022).

Perhaps a more consequential, broader finding – and one that allows us to see differentiation among non-Western actors in a more nuanced way – is that *Western and non-Western approaches should not be seen as dichotomous*. Indeed, more recent literature has criticised earlier research for presenting non-Western peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts as pure obstacles to Western approaches or characterising them as "the dirty rest" (Börzel, 2015). In their study of BRICS as peacebuilders, Richmond and Tellidis (2013: 2) conclude that all five states and most other emerging donors agree with some aspects of the liberal peace architecture, namely, "a stable bureaucratic state with control of the means of violence and varying degrees of capitalism". But they also point out that different states in that grouping are more closely aligned with broader liberal assumptions than others. Japan, India, South Africa, Brazil, but also Turkey, Indonesia, or the African Union, are often mentioned as being closer to the Western approaches. Conversely, China, Russia, and the Gulf States are more commonly described as further away (cf. Allouche & Lind, 2014; de Carvalho & de Coning, 2013). Their individual positions on this are not static, with Turkey's and Brazil's autocratic turns and changes in their peace approaches serving as prime examples. The primary takeaway of the literature seems to be that regardless of their individual and collective approaches, all non-Western countries operate both within and outside the liberal peace perspective, and that this grouping exists on a spectrum. The mere dichotomy of Western and non-Western is therefore problematic and can only serve as a shorthand.

Form: what shape does non-Western peacemaking and peacebuilding take?

Conformity and differentiation with the liberal model seem to relate to how non-Western powers cooperate with global institutions, and whether they engage in *multilateral and/or bilateral peacemaking and peacebuilding* (Sabrow, 2020). Some of the variation in their cooperation with the UN system might also be due to the relative size of each power, as middle powers are more reluctant to act unilaterally (Destradi, 2018). But the patterns are not entirely uniform. With global institutions having internalised liberal peacebuilding assumptions into their programming, one would expect that non-Western powers more closely aligned with Western approaches, especially the ones with democratic systems themselves, would engage more deeply in multilateral activities. Studies do indeed confirm that to a degree, democratic non-Western powers often contest liberal peace approaches from within (Lucey et al., 2014; de Coning et al, 2014). Similarly, African regional organisations and powers often work closely with the UN, developing distinct collective conflict management rules for the continent, but also aligning these with global/liberal norms (Nash, 2021). The Gulf States, on the other hand, seem to prefer unilateral peacemaking and peacebuilding (Barakat, 2012; Ennis, 2018; Glombitza & Ulrichsen, 2021). But there are powers, such as Brazil, which actively engage in global institutions and are democratic, but conduct their peacebuilding activities almost exclusively on a bilateral basis with host states (Kenkel, 2013).

When it comes to the two non-Western great powers, China and Russia, both are commonly described as providing alternatives to liberal approaches, despite the dissimilarities between their strategies of engaging with global institutions on peace. China actively participates in multilateral peace approaches, evidenced by its position as the largest UN peacekeeping troop contributor of all permanent members of the Security Council (He, 2019), while at the same time also conducting much of its peacemaking and peacebuilding unilaterally (Adhikari, 2020; Wang, 2018). Its military and non-military activities are conducted through different fora. Russia, by contrast, is much more sceptical of global approaches and prefers to act independently or through regional organisations it controls on both military and non-military matters, engaging in what has been referred to as 'instrumental multilateralism' (Kropatcheva, 2016). At the same time, both China and Russia ensure partnerships of regional organisations they are involved in with the UN (Jütersonke et al, 2021: 955-6).

There are few conclusive findings on non-Western engagement with the global peacebuilding architecture, with one possible trend (deduced from individual case studies) that non-Western powers have all developed unilateral approaches to peace, which seem to run parallel to their multilateral engagement and take a different shape than their work through global institutions.

When practiced outside global institutions, what does non-Western peacemaking and peacebuilding look like? One important finding across the literature is that non-Western powers seem to share a wider understanding of peacebuilding, conceptualising this as including activities that in the West would be seen as somewhat separate from peacemaking and peacebuilding. Most prominently, research indicates that many non-Western powers prioritise development as an integral part of peacebuilding framework (something that the OECD explicitly excludes), with studies on China in particular highlighting that the Chinese model is one of "developmental peace" (Abb, 2018; Wang, 2018). The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, for example, would therefore form part of peacebuilding. This idea of humanitarian and developmental assistance, infrastructure investments and loans, and technical aid all forming part of peacebuilding seems to be shared by other non-Western powers as well (Jütersonke et al, 2021: 952-3), especially those that have the capacity to provide aid. But there are also differences among non-Western powers.

While most non-Western powers have focused on economic cooperation, linking their security policies to development and development-related cooperation (Parlar Dal, 2018: 2219), Russia has gone in another direction. Research suggests that Russia sees military engagement (military aid, security provisions and training, and direct law enforcement and policing) as part of its conflict management strategy abroad. In form, the Russian approach resembles more that of Western powers than, for example, China, which consistently advocates that military presence to support peace efforts needs to be consent-based and UN-authorised, not bilateral (He, 2019; Nikitina, 2015; Van der Lijn & Avezov, 2015). What is less clear is to what extent Russia undertakes these activities with an intention to manage conflicts and reduce the risk of conflict relapse, and to what extent this is just part of its broader foreign policy aimed at expanding its influence.

The key finding of the literature on the form of peacebuilding practiced by non-Western states seems to be that applying a liberal understanding of what peacebuilding should look like would exclude many activities of non-Western actors, which seem to be crucial to understanding the non-Western model and its underlying theory of change. That said, there is one important actor in this grouping – Russia – whose conflict management approaches, at least in form, resemble Western security sector assistance.

Substance: what norms do non-Western powers espouse?

If the form of non-Western peacemaking and peacebuilding is difficult to define, the substance and normative commitments are equally elusive. There are three areas where research points at potential variances between Western and non-Western peacebuilding approaches: (1) norms of non-intervention; (2) norms of accountability and participatory governance; and (3) and prioritisation of development over democracy. These are interlinked and collectively impact a potential theory of change model espoused by non-Western actors.

One of the biggest commonalities among non-Western powers, and a large reason why they are often considered as a grouping, has been their difficult relation to the relaxation of the norms of non-intervention in internal affairs, advanced by liberal approaches to peace. The stances of individual non-Western powers range from discomfort to rejection, and individual states have evolved their own positions over the years (Fung, 2019; Foot, 2020). What unites these actors are their concerns about the potential for abuse of such interventions by outside, or Western, powers.

These discussions have evolved most openly around the debates on Responsibility to Protect (R2P), and whether force can be used when a government is manifestly failing to protect its own population (Thakur, 2013; Stuenkel, 2014; Newman, 2013; Aning & Edu-Afful, 2016). Brazil – a power that reluctantly engaged with the norm, without rejecting the right to intervene – even proposed the idea of 'Responsibility while Protecting', as a clarification of the obligations of the intervener (Kenkel & Stefan, 2016). Most non-Western actors, including China, therefore strongly prefer the protection of civilians approach within UN peacekeeping, which is consent-based, to the more expansive use of force under the R2P label (Fung, 2019).

A commonality among non-Western powers on the norm of non-intervention is clear at a discursive level, but in practice appears to be less uniform. Looking at the two great powers, Chinese practice seems to mirror its rhetoric, and the country links any of its military and security presence to host state consent (Hirono & Lanteigne, 2011; He, 2019). Among others, India seems to be pursuing a similar approach (Adhikari, 2018). Russian practice, on the other hand, suggests less uniformity, and also departs from its rhetoric. Russia has been categorically rejecting non-consensual use of force to resolve the internal matters of states within the UN Security Council and criticising Western states for linking peacemaking to military solutions. At the same time, however, the country has been practicing this same military assistance–peacemaking nexus approach in the post-Soviet space. This has sometimes entailed providing security provisions to like-minded host governments with their consent (e.g., recent developments in Kazakhstan) (Cooley, 2022) but also militarily supporting groups opposing non-sympathetic governments without the host government consent (e.g., Ukraine, Moldova over Transnistria, Georgia over South Ossetia) (Paczyńska, 2021; Nikitina 2015; van der Lijn & Avezov 2015). When acting without the host state's consent, such aid has often been unofficial or conducted through private military actors, as most prominently seen in the presence of "the little green men" in Ukraine (Popescu, 2015; Ucko & Marks, 2020). Further afield, Russian military support seems to be primarily in support of host governments (e.g., Syria, the Central African Republic). Importantly, through military assistance both near and far abroad, Russia has managed to become an important peacemaker in these conflicts. This link between military support and the potential peacemaking role has been indicated also in empirical studies on the Gulf States (Barakat, 2012; Ennis, 2018; Glombitza & Ulrichsen, 2021). This shows the potential blurring of peacemaking and peace enforcement in the approaches of some non-Western states, and the difficulty of neatly separating activities in support of peace from other foreign policy objectives.

A nuanced reading of the literature indicates that there are commonalities in non-Western scepticism of liberal actors undermining the norm of non-intervention in internal affairs, but that in practice these non-Western powers do not themselves have a unified approach to the non-intervention norm. While the literature in this area is conceptually underdeveloped, individual case studies show that some non-Western powers practice a different approach to non-intervention in their immediate neighbourhoods versus in farther-flung locations. This is not entirely unique to non-Western powers, and an analogous development has been described in EU's approaches as "a proximity paradox in peacebuilding".

In areas where actors have the most motivation for devoting sufficient peacebuilding resources and implementing their theory of change model, their commitment to the normative underpinnings of this model tends to be the most compromised, due to domestic considerations (Osland & Peter, 2019). Importantly, various non-Western powers differ from each other in the level of inconsistency between discourse and practice they exhibit when it comes to non-intervention (the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine being the prime example). As we are not dealing with one unified non-Western understanding of the norm of non-intervention, the question of compatibility with Western approaches becomes more open ended.

Another important divergence indicated in the literature between Western and non-Western approaches to peacemaking and peacebuilding relates to the two groupings' approaches to state-society relations: that is, (1) questions of inclusivity and participatory governance models in host states, and (2) whether there is an expectation that the government needs to be not just effective, but also legitimate and accountable. Scholarship is quite clear that non-Western powers tend to prefer top-down approaches, working mostly with governments (Call & de Coning, 2017). This finding is linked to the above understanding of the norms of sovereignty and non-intervention. In describing the Chinese approach, Jütersonke and colleagues argue that "Beijing eschews the implicit distinction between legitimate and "less legitimate" sovereigns that often prevails in liberal circles" (Jütersonke, 2021: 951). There are two immediate consequences to this stance.

First, China has developed a request-based approach to its aid, allowing host governments to determine priorities, and not linking these to any conditionality beyond economic viability of projects. For example, it strongly supports an "African solutions for African problems" stance (Van Hoeymissen, 2011). This is in stark contrast to the conditionality of the liberal model, which attaches stipulations of broader accountability, transparency, and participatory governance – a model that has also been broadly critiqued in the literature (Campbell, 2018). Other non-Western donors appear to take a similar approach. This does not mean that conditionality does not exist: as previously discussed in the motivations section, quid pro quo (such as non-recognition of Taiwan or alliance building) does exist in these relationships, but the conditionality does not seem to be linked to the domestic models of host states.

Second, because non-Western actors – again, most research has been done on China – do not condition their aid to domestic arrangements, they tend to engage in limited support for nonstate actors, reinterpreting the role of civil society as the supporter and collaborator of a strong state (Jütersonke, 2021: 952), and most certainly not a watch-dog to hold the state accountable (Cooley, 2015). This privileging of centralized state authorities at the expense of other actors in peacemaking and peacebuilding is a theme that seems common to at least illiberal non-Western actors, with one important caveat: Russia – which as discussed above, less consistently applies the norm of non-intervention in its own immediate neighbourhood – seems to advocate for inclusive peacemaking and participatory governance, even to the extent of self-determination, in areas where host states are less supportive of its presence (Paczyńska, 2021; Nikitina, 2015).

Another divergence between Western and non-Western approaches, which flows directly from these different stances on non-intervention and conditionality, relates to how the two groupings balance between democracy and political rights, on one side, and development and economic rights, on the other. Once again, the Chinese approach of weighting development and economic rights over democracy and political rights seems to be the most distinct from the liberal one. It is also potentially the most consequential in terms of providing a different theory of change. But scholarship does suggest that other non-Western states that act as donors have been striking a similar balance to China when it comes to prioritising development over democracy (Call & de Coning, 2017; Richmond & Tellidis, 2013). This prioritisation of economic development over political competition seems to indicate a different theory of change underpinning at least the Chinese approach, but likely also that of other non-Western donors. Studies on Japan, for example, confirm the same sequencing in the Japanese approach (Uesugi et al, 2021).

Both Western and non-Western approaches emphasise stability, including "a stable bureaucratic state with control of the means of violence and varying degrees of capitalism" (Richmond & Tellidis, 2013) as a path to peace. However, while neither rejects that participatory governance and development are important for sustainability of peace, the Western/liberal model seems to assume that greater political access and participation will be conducive to prosperity and development, while a non-Western model inverts the sequence. As Call and de Coning argue, non-Western powers reason instead that "the level of political competition that a society can manage peacefully is closely linked to the complexity of its social institutions, and thus its level of development" (Call & de Coning, 2017: 254). It is not entirely clear from existing studies how implicit or explicit this understanding is (most research is not interested in analysing the theory of change model itself), but prioritisation of development does seem to be present in the approaches of many non-Western states. The literature therefore at least implies that non-Western powers might be working with longer timelines in their approaches to peace than Western liberal peacebuilders.

Conclusions

Our overview of the existing literature shows that scholarship has begun to seriously address how the increasing presence of neighbouring states, regional organisations, and other non-Western powers as mediators and peacebuilders may be impacting both specific peace projects and the global order as a whole. Some key questions, however, remain underexplored and poorly connected.

Our first general finding is that the existing academic literature addressing our core topic is fragmented. The primary reason for this is that studies do not employ the same vocabulary, and therefore often do not feed into each other. We encountered the same problem in our own preliminary research, and it was with difficulty that we sought to ensure we were not inadvertently excluding a whole body of relevant literature. We are dealing with two sets of, at times, parallel literatures: overview and comparative studies addressing alternative peacemaking and peacebuilding approaches, and studies on how individual non-Western powers approach specific conflicts. Comparative studies interested in bigger questions of the global order generally start with a vocabulary employed by global institutions, and therefore often exclude some of the practices that could be classified as peacemaking and peacebuilding if a liberal lens was removed. Regional and country case-studies, on the other hand, provide much more depth to non-Western powers' practices, but are less aligned to the understanding that the intent of the activities captured is to reduce the risk of conflict relapse. Often, such literature does not distinguish between general foreign policy and activities promoting peace. The challenge remains, then, of how to connect overview studies interested in bigger questions (but whose findings mostly remain at a general level), with in-depth case studies that are interested in foreign and security policies (but not necessarily approaches to conflict management and post-conflict transitions). One productive step in how existing research could be enhanced is through mapping how non-Western powers think about approaches to conflicts, focusing on which foreign policy activities they see as reducing the risk of conflict relapse. By examining the rationale underlying their approaches, can we better understand how the vocabulary in the field might be changing, and what different actors understand as peace measures and why.

Our second general finding is that motivations of non-Western actors are complex but often painted with a broadly negative stroke. A lot of the literature reads primarily ideological motivations into actions of non-Western powers, pitting liberal and non-liberal actors' engagement in conflict and post-conflict spaces as a competition between democratic and authoritarian models. While this may be true in some instances, the overall picture that emerges is more nuanced. While the literature remains quite general in its findings, the majority of comparative literature now maintains that non-Western powers engage in conflict management for a variety of overlapping motives. Studies examining practices of individual non-Western states in concrete conflict and post-conflict situations paint a complex picture connecting domestic and cross-border material interests with value-laden motivations. Bringing this nuance to comparative studies examining the future of the global order is a fruitful next step in our research agenda. What seems to be missing in comparative research is a disaggregated approach accounting for variation both between non-Western powers, and within peacemaking and peacebuilding strategies of individual states depending on the proximity of the intervention (that is, more local to global). Such research has for example been done in EU studies, exploring EU conflict responses through concentric circles (e.g. Mac Ginty et al, 2021).

Our third general finding is that non-Western approaches to conflict management differ in form and substance from Western ones. However, while the literature often portrays non-Western approaches as opposing liberal peacebuilding models, Western and non-Western approaches cannot be seen as dichotomous. All non-Western countries operate both within and outside the liberal peace perspective, with the grouping existing on a spectrum.

When it comes to form, we are seeing a shift from multilateral to unilateral interventions, and a shift from global to local/regional players. Case studies indicate a variety in how non-Western powers cooperate with global institutions. However, what is clear from these studies is that most non-military measures pursued by non-Western powers are conducted bilaterally. There is now a multiplicity of mediators and peacebuilding actors in the field, and some research is indicating that this may lead to general confusion and fracturing of a peace process. Parallel processes may be run in tandem, in competition, or in complete ignorance of each other.

Further work is needed to understand the dynamics between multiple actors: to what extent non-Western peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts displace Western efforts, or rather combine in some form (whether layering to create new effects, or somehow cancelling each other out by pulling in opposite directions). Furthermore, the role of local agency in this is underexplored. Individual case studies suggest that local elites can effectively engage in forum-shopping among different international actors and options available to them, leveraging actors and processes against each other in the pursuit of self-preservation and regime stability. But further work is needed on when, where and under what conditions this happens, and whether or not this is leading to political settlements aimed at reducing the risk of conflict.

When it comes to substance, potential differences between Western and non-Western approaches are identified around norms of non-intervention, norms of accountability and participatory governance, and the balance between development and democracy. Most research has concentrated on the fact that non-Western powers share a discomfort with intervention in the internal affairs of host states. They prefer top-down approaches, working primarily with governments. Those able to provide aid and investment do so with limited conditionality as to internal arrangements. This seemingly advances an alternative approach to reducing the risk of relapse into conflict, compared to that embedded in the liberal model. While the Western/liberal model assumes that greater political access and participation will be conducive to prosperity and development, and thus attaches accountability and transparency conditions to aid, non-Western actors operate with an underlying assumption that greater development is needed before political competition can be introduced. However, the existing literature is not nuanced enough to provide a clear understanding of how implicit or explicit these ideas are in non-Western thinking, nor how exactly they differ between various non-Western actors. Conclusions drawn about non-Western approaches and how they relate to established Western models are often nearly equated with the actions of China specifically, as the biggest player in the field. Yet in many conflict arenas, peacemaking is increasingly regionalised, with neither China nor Western powers taking the lead. One important research question is how the approaches of global and regional actors interact. Understanding how different non-Western approaches and practices feed into each other seems to be equally important as understanding how non-Western approaches relate to established liberal models. A logical next step in our research agenda would therefore be to examine specific conflict and post-conflict spaces mapping the interaction of different actors on the ground.

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