

Crime in Asia: Toward a Better Future

John Braithwaite

Received: 5 June 2013 / Accepted: 30 September 2013 / Published online: 25 October 2013
© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

Abstract There are two fundamental ways to reduce crime: fix crime prevention weaknesses or build on crime prevention strengths. Three crime prevention strengths that have delivered most Asian societies comparatively low and falling levels of violence are considered: (1) war reduction as a path to reduction of common criminal violence; (2) comparatively low levels of inequality; (3) comparatively low ratios of stigmatizing to reintegrative social control that respects human dignity. Transformative justice that addresses the root causes of wars, reduces inequalities of wealth and power, and empowers communities to do their own restorative justice are paths considered for building a nonviolent Asian future.

Keyword Asia · Crime · Homicide

Unreliable National Data and the Reliability of Regional Aggregates

The Americas and Africa are the high violence continents of the globe, Western Europe and Asia the lower violence regions, with a good many low violence exceptions such as Canada in North America and quite a few high violence exceptions in Asia that I will discuss. We see this broad pattern if we look at homicide rates country by country, the most reliable crime for comparative purposes of measuring levels of violent crime, though still fraught with reliability problems. As in Western Europe and North America, the homicide data on the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime website suggests that the homicide rate in Asia has fallen by 40 % since 1995. That rosy story of improvement cannot be told about Africa and South America. It also cannot be told about the Arab world and the Middle East, where recent massive spikes in military crimes in Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, and beyond have made that region even more bloody than the first decade of the twenty-first century. Terrorist bombings are also again increasing sharply in Iraq at the time of writing.

This paper is based on a Plenary Presentation, Asian Criminological Society, Seoul, August 2012. There is a small fraction of overlap with a plenary I presented at the Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology in Auckland in the same year (Braithwaite 2012). I am grateful to participants at Seoul and to Susanne Karstedt for critical comments on the paper and for access to Karstedt's most up-to-date Violent Societies Index data.

J. Braithwaite (✉)
Australian National University, Canberra 0200, ACT, Australia
e-mail: john.braithwaite@anu.edu.au

Three of the four lowest homicide rates in the UNODC (2012) homicide report are for Asian nations. The Asian nation with the highest reported homicide rate—Myanmar—is only the 73rd highest worldwide. While there are considerable doubts about the quality of the homicide data from many countries, Fig. 1 shows that Asia and Europe, as best as we can tell overall, have much lower homicide rates than Africa and the Americas. Africa and the Americas combined have a homicide rate about five times as high as both Asia and Europe.

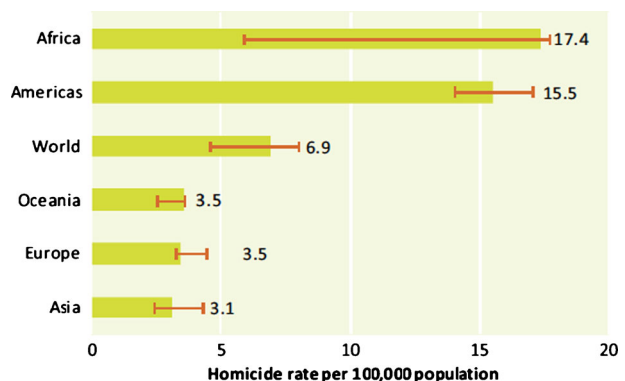
Asia is also becoming the peaceful continent in terms of armed violence. It was not always so. In the mid-twentieth century, Asia was the most dangerous place on earth in terms of risks of violent death. World War II, the Chinese civil war after World War II, the Korean War, and the Indo-China wars that engulfed Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and beyond all count among the 20 most horrific conflagrations of recorded human history.

The slaughter of communists and then Tamil separatists in Sri Lanka from the 1970s and half a million Communists in Indonesia in the mid-1960s were among a number of other conflagrations. As democracy arrived in Indonesia in the late 1990s, there was another spike in violence at many hot spots, criminal violence, gangs, terrorism, and armed violence. In fact, up to 2002, Indonesia had the worst terrorism problem in the world, with bombs ignited in 38 churches across Indonesia during Christmas Eve services in 2000 (Braithwaite et al. 2010, chapter 1). After 2002, Indonesia was passed by Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, which continue to be the highest terrorism states.

The case study of Indonesia reveals a common Asian pattern. There are high rates of violence as states struggle through the transition to democracy and greater prosperity, but settling to low levels of violence by global comparative standards once democracy is consolidated. Indonesia was also like China and Japan in being willing to invade other countries and to promote insurgency in other countries during its more authoritarian periods earlier in the second half of the twentieth century. The fourth great Asian power, India, has continuously been a democracy with independent courts, and has not been prone to invade other states throughout its post-independence history.

For most of the period since World War II, Japan has been the number two economy in the world. Has any number two economic power for a long period like half a century ever in human history done less to connect up its economic power to deployment of the power of violence? One benefit Japan has reaped, according to my analysis, is a sharply declining crime rate for the half-century after World War II. For the past half-century, the current number two power in the world, China, has also shunned militaristic adventurism. The example of the great Asian powers has seen Asia transformed from one of the most violent

Fig. 1 Homicide rates by region (2010 or latest available)
UNODC (2011, p. 21)



regions of the world in terms of warfare to one of the least violent. Asia is a big place, however, more than half the world's population, and there are many exceptions from Sri Lanka to Mindanao to Kashmir to Myanmar. The biggest recent exception has been Afghanistan with the way its wars have increased violence in all the countries that surround it and cost the lives of two million of its own citizens in recent decades.

In broad brush, my contention is that many of the arguments in Steven Pinker's (2011) sweeping book on violence, *The Better Angels of our Nature*, apply with more force to Asia than to most of the world. My argument will diverge from his in some ways, however. My hypotheses about the structural drivers of patterns of violence in Asia are:

1. War causes criminal violence; Asia has experienced a large decline in wars and war deaths.
2. Inequality and poverty are structural conditions that promote violence; Asia is a comparatively egalitarian region of the globe, even if inequality has increased in much of Asia, as it has throughout the capitalist world.
3. Stigmatization and humiliation promote violence more than empathic and reintegrative forms of social control; Asia enjoys a higher ratio of empathic and reintegrative forms of social control to stigmatizing and humiliating forms of social control compared to many other parts of the world.

Widening the Lens; Qualifying the Hypotheses

Susanne Karstedt (2012) has recently made an important contribution in developing a Violent Societies Index. It combines four measures into one: (1) interpersonal violence measured by the homicide rate; (2) state violence measured by the Political Terror Scale that incorporates state-sanctioned killings, disappearances, torture, political imprisonment; (3) terrorist attacks; and (4) battle deaths in state-based internal armed conflicts. She also constructed a second index that excluded homicide. For many countries, homicide data are neither sufficiently available nor reliable across the period from 1980 to 2009. Furthermore, illegal and lethal violence by police and other security forces are often excluded from homicide counts. The second index however includes such violence, and represents the deaths from riots and police and security force action that are otherwise neglected. Given the unreliability of international statistics on violence, this is a good move in measurement theory terms. When quite different measures of different kinds of violence are positively intercorrelated and are combined into a composite index, prospects improve that the shared variance captured by the composite index will capture true variance from all the measures, as opposed to their considerable error variance. Using Karstedt's approach, the Asian advantage is not so strong. On the Violent Societies Index that includes homicide, Sri Lanka is the most violent Asian society between 1980 and 2009, and it ranks 5th in the first decade and 4th in the second and third ones, of the 73 nations scored on the index. Other Asian societies that rank highly among the 20 most violent societies are Thailand (10th in 1980–1989, and 11th in 2000–2009), and the Central Asian societies of Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan between 1990 and 2009. If homicide is excluded, more Asian societies move up to higher ranks. Afghanistan, India, and Sri Lanka rank among the 10 most violent out of 132 countries from 1990 to 2009, India being 3rd and 4th, where it moved from 13th between 1980 and 1989. Throughout the whole period, Myanmar ranks among the 20 most violent societies on the second index, as does the Philippines. Pakistan joins this group in 1990, and

Indonesia between 1980 and 1989, and again in the 2000s (which incorporates the period discussed earlier) (Karstedt and Koch 2012).

Thankfully, Asia's most violent society from 1980 to 2009 on Karstedt's index, Sri Lanka, has experienced a violence turn-around, though without addressing the root causes of its violence. War and terrorism deaths have fallen to zero since the bloody defeat of the Tamil Tigers in 2009. Disappearances still occur, but at a greatly lower level than during its three decades-long war. Political imprisonment is still a major problem, but during the current decade many times more political prisoners have been released than arrested in Sri Lanka. Torture remains endemic for those who are detained. Sri Lankan homicide rates are still high by Asian standards, but well down from a peak of over 10 per 100,000 in 2006 according to the UNODC data (See also: <http://www.indexmundi.com/facts/sri-lanka/homicide-rate>).

These Asian countries that score highly on the Violent Societies Index have all attracted international attention for seriously violent state abuses of human rights since 1980 that frequently escape homicide counts (in addition to significant numbers of armed conflict deaths). Even so, consider Afghanistan and Pakistan, that have seen the largest increases in state-sponsored and state-tolerated violence against civilians during this century (not only within their borders, but from Pakistan into Afghanistan and India, and from Afghanistan into the United States, India, and Central Asia). These are the states where the increases in terrorist and state violence are more sustained into the present than in Sri Lanka and Iraq. Pakistan saw much worse mass state atrocity, including state-sanctioned mass rape by its military, in less than 2 years before, during, and after its 1971 civil war over Bangladesh. This took a much higher toll in lives than the Pakistan state has been responsible for this century. Afghanistan saw many times more lives lost to state atrocity during the era of its Soviet-backed regime (1979–1989) than have been lost to all forms of violence in or from Afghanistan in the twenty-first century, as terrible as that worsening twenty-first century toll has been.

Considering the Hypotheses in Turn

War Causes Criminal Violence and Asia has Experienced a Large Decline in Wars and War Deaths

This hypothesis has enjoyed support in criminology for a long time. Archer and Gartner's (1984) classic study showed that following participation in wars, whether the war was at home or overseas, nations' homicide rates increase. Ghobarah et al. (2003) show systematically across WHO members that homicides and suicides increase *after* nations experience civil wars, and that homicide increases cascade after the war to countries contiguous to the country that has experienced a civil war. A large majority of those killed in wars worldwide between 1945 and 1979 were East Asians, but since 1979, East Asia has been remarkably peaceful (Tønnesson 2009). The Human Security Report (2012, chapter 5) shows that the East Asian decline continued from 1990 to 2009. Central and South Asia was also declining until 2005, but increased sharply for the next 4 years as a result of escalating battle deaths in Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. In the longer run, Asia overall has experienced a massive decline from exceptionally high war deaths from the rape of Nanjing through World War II and from an Asia that accounted for a large majority of the world's war deaths between 1945 and 1979.

One argument is that both criminal violence and the violence of modern wars cascade from hot spot to hot spot. I have outlined this argument in more detail in an article for the

Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology that I draw upon in this paper (Braithwaite 2012). Asia has moved from a comparatively high to a comparatively low level of cascading of violence from hot spot to hot spot, except in the arc from Central Asia to Kashmir and across India's Maoist insurgencies (Braithwaite and D'Costa 2013). Because violence cascades, it is imperative that we prevent it before it cascades too much, something that has happened in East and South-East Asia at least, with East Asia's soft power of recent decades. One reason for a focus on preventing violence from cascading too much is that there are tipping points in cascades of violence (Kennedy 2009).

It also follows that it is mostly a mistake to fight violence with violence; only rarely is this the best or only recourse remaining to us. We must focus on fighting it through prevention. Violent means of pursuing simple policies such as regime change in Iraq or Afghanistan must be tested critically against this question: 'What might violence in pursuit of that regime change cascade to?'

Criminologists have been insufficiently interested in cascades of violence. They have been more concerned with violence displacement. This is the idea that, if we extinguish violence at one place, those who have a propensity to violence will simply move to indulge it at another place. The empirical literature mostly tends not to reveal displacement effects for violence and crime generally (Weisburd et al. 2011). If anything, when we extinguish crime at one hot spot of violence, crime also tends to decline somewhat in surrounding areas. This should have been a clue to criminologists to follow cascades of violence as a more important research question than displacement of violence. The particular kind of cascade dynamic explored in this article is violence that spreads horizontally in space from hot spot to hot spot, sometimes linking one hot spot to another like ink spots that expand and connect up. Elsewhere, the Peacebuilding Compared research project explores more vertical cascades from the center to the periphery of the world system (Braithwaite and D'Costa 2012).

We have learnt from Iraq that violent death rates often go up after a war ends, with only El Salvador having a higher total violent death rate than Iraq between 2004 and 2009 (Geneva Declaration 2011, chapter 2). It has also been discovered in a number of African and Latin American conflicts that killing (Duffield 2001, p. 188), even more so rape and domestic violence, can increase after a peace agreement is signed, and likewise for some Latin American civil wars where a doubling of already extreme homicide rates at the end of the war delivered a higher death rate than during many of the peak years of civil war (Richani 2007; Muggah and Krause 2011, p. 180). There can be various local reasons for this. A common one is that a peace agreement between warring armies gives them security from each other's guns that allows them to concentrate with impunity on pillage of civilian populations whose domination they divvy up in the peace deal.

El Salvador illustrates what I see as a clue to why Latin American post-conflict societies have so much more homicide than anywhere in Asia. Richani's (2007) analysis of El Salvador, with comparisons to Guatemala, illustrates the type of case where criminal gangs move in to monopolize social control at hot spots. The civil war in El Salvador caused a flood of refugees into the United States after 1980. They were mostly unskilled peasants with little or no English who experienced widespread unemployment in the US. This resulted in their recruitment into gangs and the drug trade, particularly in Los Angeles. Gang wars arose from the takeover of formerly Mexican gangs by Salvadorians with fighting skills sharpened by civil war. In the years after the 1992 peace agreement in El Salvador, the US forcibly repatriated 130,000 immigrants, 43,000 of them with criminal records, back to El Salvador. Returning gang members took over certain hot spots, making a number of coastal sites in El Salvador transit points in narcotrafficking, something that never had happened before 1990. El Salvador's prisons became particularly inflamed hot spots

where assassinations of gang members involved in the drug trade were rife. After the 1992 peace agreement, El Salvador's homicide rate skyrocketed, killing more people per year than had the civil war. The homicide rate peaked at 138 per 100,000 in 1994 and 139 in 1995. Gang conflict was responsible for most of the homicide, which was concentrated at hot spots.

One of the worst ways of reading the takeaway message of this paper would be that, because wars must be resolved hot spot by hot spot, where each one has its own logic, that all we need to do to fight twenty-first century wars is to deploy the technocratic tools of criminology. A bit of violent crime mapping here, a bit of problem-oriented or pulling-levers policing there, a touch of restorative justice conferencing to secure reconciliation somewhere else, is not what I have in mind, though these tools probably should have more place than they do in UN peacekeeping. On my analysis, peacebuilding remains fundamentally about finding political solutions to problems through empathic political conversations among protagonists. It is just that the most critical political conversations may not be among national leaders, but among regional clan leaders, religious or ethnic leaders, or rural warlords who have chased out the state, who *are* the state for all practical purposes in the region they control.

A key role of UN peacekeepers becomes one of creating safe spaces where these leaders can meet with locally knowledgeable peacebuilders to advance such political conversations without fear of being killed. UN diplomats do not need to know enough about the variegated local conflicts to drive their preferred solutions to them village by village. They do at least need to know where the hot spots are. They need to know enough of the dynamics and leaderships of their local hot spot contestation to know who must be promised security to come together to lead political dialogue toward a local peace agreement, local reconciliation, and reintegration of combatants.

For the policing part of the peace operation, it follows that the normal approach of dropping in thousands of international police in to a place like El Salvador or Timor-Leste to drive UN vehicles around the capital is not very helpful. Rural policing is normally the priority. It is not just that you cannot build rural community policing capacity in a village society with UN police sitting in patrol cars in the capital, it is also that you can no more build a police organization to reach out to rural spaces by flying in a thousand police than you can build a civil aviation system by flying in a thousand pilots to build aircraft and control towers.¹ Operational UN police have never built a police organization in their home state. Doing that requires people with skills in project management, in founding police academies, building payroll systems, and the like. Most of all it requires political sophistication in how to support local leaders in remote corners of village societies who have the language and cultural skills of their district to teach community policing. It must be community policing skills of a kind that are relevant to community problem solving at the kinds of hot spots they have.

It is early days in my research that seeks to refine the idea of cascades of violence on cases like the Great Lakes region of Africa and across Central and South Asia. In Afghanistan, cascading from other regional players such as Pakistan show three dynamics to be in play. Residues of previous wars left many groups angry at other groups who had occupied their lands. Refugee camps were places where the Taliban and Al Qaeda were able to recruit angry young men by giving them an education in Madrassas and a path to employment. A gun culture, a drug culture, and a shakedown and murder culture cascaded across South and Central Asia from Pakistan and Afghanistan. Finally, the Taliban were only able to begin on

¹ I am grateful to Vivienne O'Connor from the US Institute of Peace for this analogy.

their path to power in Kandahar in the mid-1990s by offering to establish Islamic order in Hobbesian spaces exploited by many armed gangs. The Taliban were able to show farmers that they could make it possible to get their produce to markets without being shaken down by many different armed groups along the road. The Taliban shut down their roadblocks. At one level, they made rural spaces safe for women who were being raped by armed men. Of course, the Taliban then used that domination of an anomic space as an ‘armed rule of law movement’ to impose a new form of tyranny, and not only upon women. David Kilkullen (2011) has taken us on a journey across time and space to show from the writings of the ancient Greek Herodotus (1954) how military commanders with a small local base could expand that base during periods of Hobbesian (Hobbes 1651) anarchy by providing quality justice and security services to ever-widening circles of frightened citizens.

Bangladesh is another case where we have seen an Islamist group cascade into domination of a rural space where there was a rule of law vacuum. Bina D’Costa and I are undertaking a study of armed violence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh that sees it as falling at the end of a long cascade of violence that consumed all of South Asia (Braithwaite and D’Costa 2012). Imperial domination cascaded down to a politics of separation of India from the Mughal and British Empires, which cascaded further down to a politics of separation of Pakistan from India that cost two million lives, cascading to a war of separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan, which cascaded through layers of internal conflict within Bangladesh. Modern wars cascade to the creation of Hobbesian rural spaces where women are routinely violated, revenge is indulged, rule of law is in abeyance, and insurgents morph into gangs of organized criminals.

These anomic spaces are in the market for a supplier of order. That supply might come from one organized crime group dominating, from an armed rule of law movement like the Taliban, UN peacekeepers, a state that supplies community policing and a rule of law, or a state military that allows enough pacification to justify its presence and enough anarchy to itself profit from organized crime. Braithwaite and D’Costa (2012) found the Chittagong Hill Tracts to fit the last description. There are other cases like this in Asia, such as West Papua in Indonesia. The descent of the Chittagong Hill Tracts into this condition is viewed in our research through a lens that points back through the layers of the above cascades.

Inequality and Poverty are Structural Conditions That Promote Violence; Asia is a Comparatively Egalitarian Region of the Globe

I will much more briefly mention my other two explanatory hypotheses for Asia settling into becoming a comparatively low violence area of the world. Asia has lower levels of inequality compared to high violence regions of the world in South and North America and Africa. This is also true in the most developed economies of these three continents—Brazil, the United States, South Africa—which have very high inequality. Of course, there is shocking inequality in Asia, but it is much less than in these other continents. Even countries that have pro-poor left of center governments such as South Africa and Brazil have among the highest gini coefficients in the world and among the highest homicide rates in the world. There are no Asian countries that are in the same league as either of them in terms of inequality or homicide, except perhaps Afghanistan if we could ever test this with adequate Afghan economic and homicide data.

That said, income inequality is widening across the capitalist world, and Asia is no exception, especially its major economic powerhouses, China and India. Most Asian nations have done a good job of reducing poverty in recent decades and improving their performance across the Millennium Development Goals and the Human Development Index. But their rich have tended to grow richer at a much faster rate, widening inequality. In the latest

World Bank data,² Nepal has the highest gini coefficient for income inequality in Asia, but on other continents there are 46 countries that are worse. Of greatest concern is that China is now the second most unequal society in Asia, ranking 57th in the world in terms of inequality. While China's gini coefficient is still well below the world average, this is a great concern and warning signal coming from Asia's greatest economic powerhouse. The concern becomes sharper if we focus on inequality between the top and the bottom as opposed to gini overall. On the ratio of the income of the wealthiest 10 % of its population to the poorest 10 %, China is now the 24th most unequal country in the world.

Though it is no longer a fashionable argument amongst criminologists, I still believe that the data are broadly consistent with the arguments in my book, *Inequality, Crime and Public Policy* (Braithwaite 1979). Today, what was demonstrated in that book remains true: nations with high levels of inequality have high homicide rates. I also still believe that inequality of wealth and power worsens both crimes of the powerless and crimes of the powerful. Excessively powerful, unaccountable people perpetrate crimes of domination because they dominate; powerless people perpetrate poor peoples' crimes because they are dominated. With wider inequality, we therefore often have greater crimes of exploitation and higher crimes of the exploited.

If Asia wishes to remain a low crime part of the world, it will do well to resist Western trends for the gap between the rich and the poor to grow ever wider. In terms of poverty reduction, Asia is consolidating this part of its accomplishments; in terms of inequality, it is eroding it.

Stigmatization and Humiliation Promote Violence More Than Empathic and Reintegrative Forms of Social Control; Asia Enjoys a Higher Ratio of the Latter to the Former Than Many Other Parts of the World

Like my last structural hypothesis, this is a highly contested and controversial one among Asian criminologists. The theoretical claim here is that societies are effective in reducing crime when crime is shameful in the eyes of most citizens (Braithwaite 1989). If family violence is not shameful in a society, that society will have a lot of family violence. If corruption is not shameful, it will have a lot of corruption. If drunk driving is not shameful, it will have a lot of deaths at the hands of drunk drivers. When societies succeed in persuading their citizens that family violence, corruption, and drunk driving are shameful, as some have, these crime problems can be dramatically reduced.

The paradox of this theory is that the worst way of attempting to do so is by stigmatizing criminals, humiliating them through shaming. Shaming is effective when it is reintegrative, counterproductive when it is stigmatizing. While Eastern criminal justice is rife with stigmatization, I still think there is more space for reintegrative social control in Asia than in the West. We see this in the extremely low imprisonment rates in large Asian countries such as India, and particularly low rates of juvenile incarceration. India has an adult imprisonment rate of 30 per 100,000 (compared to 730 in the United States and more than 500 in Russia, Georgia, Cuba, and Rwanda) and Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Japan all have imprisonment rates in the 40s and 50s. China is the great concern with an imprisonment rate similar to most Western societies at 121, but more so because it accounts

² A good place to view these data is Wikipedia because it helpfully compares the World Bank gini rankings for income inequality with those from other sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_income_equality

for a majority of the world's executions, even though Chinese executions have declined sharply in recent years.

Japan and China are large Asian societies that I have, controversially, argued in the past have been more reintegrative, particularly with juveniles, because of some enduring influences of Confucian reintegration in the social control traditions of these societies. This is also true, I suspect, of some smaller Asian societies such as Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. Beyond Confucianism, Asia, Africa, and Oceania are blessed with a great variety of restorative traditional philosophies such as the increasingly pan-African cultural tradition of Ubuntu and traditions of justice on the mat in Timor-Leste. Because these kinds of traditions have been more widely extinguished in Europe and the Americas, Asia can choose to build restorative justice on more promising traditional foundations. Being ashamed to be ashamed, being able to acknowledge shame (Ahmed et al. 2001) is not as big a challenge in Asia as it is in the West.

Reintegrative shaming means shaming of a criminal act within a continuum of respect for the person, treating the criminal as a good person who has done a bad deed. It means terminating rituals of condemnation with rituals of reintegration. Restorative justice, I believe, is the way to institutionalize this in contemporary conditions. Neither the West nor the East has gone very far in doing so. When Asia does embrace restorative justice, my hypothesis is that it will further consolidate a long run virtuous circle of violence reduction during the current century. It will consolidate both the shameful of violence and the advance of empathic civility which are at the heart of Pinker's (2011) analysis of the long-run decline of violence globally: "A culture of honor, in which men were respected for lashing out at insults, became a culture of dignity, in which men were respected for controlling their impulses" (Pinker 2011, p. 274).

Conclusion

I have advanced three structural explanations for why Asia has lesser problems of violence than the Americas and Africa. Europe is a more complicated comparison that is not the topic of this paper. Suffice it to say that the European homeland has also experienced a large decline in battle deaths since 1945, even as it continues to project its young people to theaters like Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Iraq. Germany is a case akin to Japan, though its commitment to soft power somewhat less. Russian power softened, then moved back to hard power under President Putin. Russia's movement from a highly stigmatic, carceral justice system has been limited. But for Europe as a whole, there has been a long running rise of civility and reintegrative social control since the eras of Medieval and early modern excess, and a long running democratization of shame (Elias 1978, 1982; Braithwaite 1993). We now know a lot about how it became shameful for European men to wear swords and other weapons in public. As in Asia, the trajectory from the hierarchical structures of the Middle Ages to the welfare state of the 1970s was in many ways a journey toward greater equality, a trajectory partially reversed during the past four decades. A great deal can be learnt about the case of Europe from Steven Pinker (2011).

The hypotheses I have developed slightly more fully here are that Asia enjoys a comparatively higher ratio of reintegrative to stigmatizing forms of social control than the rest of the world (and certainly compared to the Americas); inequality is comparatively lower than the rest of the world; and wars are cascading violence at much lower levels in recent decades compared to the extreme level of violence cascades that were engulfing Asia during the half-century from the Rape of Nanjing.

These three structural explanations might also lay a foundation for how Asia can build a better future. A better future would involve consciously building more reintegrative institutions through embracing restorative justice; struggling against the takeover of Asia by inegalitarian contemporary Western norms of income distribution; and continuing to cultivate soft power and getting better at dousing hot spots of armed violence so they do not cascade violence across the continent in ways they did during previous centuries when warlords roamed more freely from hot spot to hot spot. This means patient attention to addressing the root causes of both war and violence. An Asian culture of sharing and support of weaker economies to conquer poverty is needed. Building the kind of democracies that render extremes of power more accountable through checks and balances and separations of powers is one vision for a better future. This can be an Asian future with even less violence.

References

- Ahmed, E., Harris, N., Braithwaite, J., & Braithwaite, V. (2001). *Shame management through reintegration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, D., & Gartner, R. (1984). *Violence and crime in cross-national perspective*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Braithwaite, J. (1979). *Inequality, crime and public policy*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Braithwaite, J. (1989). *Crime, shame and reintegration*. Sydney: Cambridge University Press.
- Braithwaite, J. (1993). Shame and modernity. *British Journal of Criminology*, 33, 1–18.
- Braithwaite, J. (2012). Cascades of violence and a global criminology of place. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 45, 299–315.
- Braithwaite, J., Cookson, M., Braithwaite, V., & Dunn, L. (2010). *Anomie and violence: Non-truth and reconciliation in Indonesian peacebuilding*. Canberra: ANU E Press.
- Braithwaite, J., & D'Costa, B. (2012). *Cascades of violence in Bangladesh. Peace building compared working paper*. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Braithwaite, J., & D'Costa, B. (2013). *Recognising Indian cascades of violence: Kashmir. Peace building compared working paper*. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Duffield, M. (2001). *Global governance and the new wars*. London: Zed Books.
- Elias, N. (1978). *The civilizing process: The history of manners, trans. Edmund Jephcott*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Elias, N. (1982). *State, formation and civilization: The civilizing process, trans. Edmund Jephcott*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Geneva Declaration. (2011). *Global burden of armed violence 2011*. Geneva: Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.
- Ghobarah, A. H., Huth, P., & Russett, B. (2003). Civil wars kill and maim people—long after the shooting stops. *American Political Science Review*, 97(2), 189–202.
- Herodotus. (1954). *The histories. translated by A. de Selincourt*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Hobbes, T. (1651). *Leviathan*. Project Gutenberg: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3207>
- Human Security Report Project. (2012). *Human security report 2012: Sexual violence, education, and war. Beyond the mainstream narrative*. Vancouver: Human Security Press.
- Karstedt, S. (2012). Contextualizing mass atrocity crimes: the dynamics of extremely violent societies. *European Journal of Criminology*, 9, 499–513.
- Karstedt, S. and Koch, M. (2012). Violent societies index. Violent societies working paper No 1, University of Leeds and University of Bielefeld.
- Kennedy, D. M. (2009). *Deterrence and crime prevention: Reconsidering the prospect of sanction*. New York: Routledge.
- Kilkullen, D. J. (2011). Deiokes and the Taliban: Local governance, bottom-up state formation and the rule of law in counter-insurgency. In W. Mason (Ed.), *The rule of law in Afghanistan: Missing in inaction*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Muggah, R., & Krause, K. (2011). Closing the gap between peace operations and post-conflict insecurity: Towards a violence-reduction agenda. In J. C. Cockayne & A. Lupel (Eds.), *Peace operations and organized crime: Enemies or allies?* London: Routledge.
- Pinker, S. (2011). *The better angels of our nature*. New York: Viking.

- Richani, N. (2007). *Systems of violence and their political economy in post-conflict situations*. Latin American Studies Program, Political Science Department, Kean University.
- Tønnesson, S. (2009). *Peace for Asia*, AsiaPortal <http://infocus.asiaportal.info/2009/10/19/blogsin-focus-2009octoberpeace-asia/>. Downloaded 10 August, 2012.
- UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2011). *Global study on homicide*. Vienna: UNODC.
- UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2012). Homicide statistics. Geneva: UNODC, <http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=UNODC&f=tableCode%3A1>
- Weisburd, D.L., Cody, T., Teichman, D., Gill, C. and Vitter, Z. (2011). *Displacement of crime and diffusion of crime control benefits in large-scale geographic areas*. Protocol. Campbell Database Systematic Reviews. Retrieved from www.campbellcollaboration.org/library.php