Abstract  This chapter traces the Sinic East’s patterns of joining multilateral treaties by six policy domains country by country. The strong finding is that in Sinic East multilateral treaty participation has registered an upward leap. Japan’s multilateral treaty participation came very early after the defeat in 1945. Japan’s development was orchestrated by joining in the United Nations in 1956 and the multilateral treaties such as the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank of Economic Recovery and Development, and the OECD in the early and mid-1960s, leading The Economist magazine to publish a “Consider Japan” editorial in 1962. In early and mid-1970s Japan’s elevation to the developed North club position was established with its becoming a founder member of Group of Seven. Policy domain-wise, Japan’s good footing in the International Labor Organization and General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade cannot be underestimated. While the four Asian tigers (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong) dramatically and nimbly solidified their economic position in the 1970s through 1990s, China evolved through waves of upward leaps: first, by opening to Japan and the United States through the 1970s, second through lifting economic sanctions by Japan followed by the rest of the West in the early 1990s after the massacre of the Tiananmen square protesters, and finally with the joining and acquiring privileged status in the World Trade Organization in the early 2000s. All of these advances have been dramatic. After Vietnam’s very long years of war-footings, internal and external, it has benefited from the long East Asian peace (Tønnesson 2019), from the peace agreement between the United States and Vietnam in 1973, the peace agreement between China and Vietnam in 1984 to the reform policy starting in 1986 and the joining in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1991 through the US-led economic sanctions against China in 2017 onward. Its development has also been noteworthy. Multilateral treaties have been very transformative in themselves. Sinic East has been very adaptive to the changing internal preferences and global preferences, orchestrating has worked well. Even North Korea has been moving dexterously: Even after many years of absence in multilateral treaties, North Korea was early in joining multilateral treaties dealing with intellectual property and the environment and once joining the United Nations in 1992 it has joined more multilateral treaties per year than the United States since 1945.
8.1 Multilateral Treaty Participation Are in Sync with Economic Development

We have examined how sovereign states’ participation in multilateral treaties has triggered upward leap broadly in terms of economic, social, and political development. Our focus is on Sinic East countries, Japan, South Korea, China, North Korea and Vietnam. To show how multilateral treaty participation has much to do with economic development in the East Asian region, we first start with the flying geese developmental paradigm (Akamatsu 1962; Korhonen 1994; Ozawa 1994, 2005). Akamatsu’s idea started with his observation on Japan’s woolen goods industry in 1930s. Japan excelled itself in producing silk in the pre-modern eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Hayami 1992, 2015). Once cotton-weaving technology was introduced, cotton cloth became Japan’s most cash-earning product. Then Japan shifted to woolen products while relocating some of cotton production to its neighboring places such as China in the 1920s and 1930s. His idea is to focus on a labor-intensive product such as cotton at an early developmental stage. But once labor productivity goes down in terms of comparative advantage or changes in other circumstances, there was a need to shift to more profitable products such as woolen goods or automobiles in the 1930s. Toyota, a large automobile producer in the twenty-first century, was one of the most profit-making firms in the production of cotton cloths in the 1930s. Already in the 1930s Toyota had begun producing automobiles with the cotton-weaving machine metamorphosed into automobile driving engine. An empirical testing ground was now opened once the turmoils and whirlwinds of the interwar period was over in 1945. Under the Pax Americana structure, East Asia offered an ideal testing ground for the empirical testing and further reformulation of his idea.

8.2 Japan

After 1945 Japan was the only country of the five Sinic East which was not war-torn (Inoguchi 2020). The rest were all torn by war, both civil and international, after 1945. Furthermore, World War II forced Japan to start afresh, at least on the surface. The accumulated technological advances before 1945 were not underestimated (Hayami 2015; Gordon 2018; Nakamura 1983, 1994). The redeployment of cotton-weaving machinery to automobile production by the 1930s is one of the best examples. Therefore, Japan’s recovery from ashes of war was fast thanks to the seven-year-long American occupation, which got rid of potentially destabilizing forces, extreme right and extreme left (Dower 2012), and deflating government expenditures on security and defense by the asymmetric alliance with Japan, whereby, the US defends Japan whereas Japan keeps the no-war constitution, which was not to be amended (Smith 2019). Japan started to export simple, crude, and cheap products, then more value-added manufactured goods such as TV, automobiles, and machines. Joining multilateral treaties came step by step. Initially the treaties and agreements
with the United States were literally everything. No other Asian countries had much to do with Japan since many Asian countries were either not yet independent or barely independent but soon drawn into civil and international wars; moreover, many Asian peoples were negatively affected by Japanese wars in Asia. The triggering mechanism of multilateral treaties came step by step on key occasions: first, regaining national independence in 1952; second, being admitted to enter the United Nations in 1956; third, paying back of all loans to the World Bank and obtaining developed country status (joining the OECD and hosting the Tokyo Olympic Games) in 1964; fourth, overcoming the oil crisis and joining the Group of Seven in 1974; fifth, joining the Plaza accord with Group of Seven on allowing the selling and purchasing of major currencies, to assist the US to keep the leading position; sixth, enduring the Asian monetary crisis of 1997–1998 offering financial and technological transfer assistance; seventh, overcoming the great depression of 2008 and helping to alleviate negative impacts of globalization by enlivening global, regional and bilateral arrangements with developing and developed countries. In sum, Japan was the lead goose regionally in a happy environment under the Pax Americana.

It should be noted that the global “lead goose” was the United States. Other geese followed Japan, and some of them replaced Japan’s lead-goose position by excelling themselves, focusing on advanced service manufacturing. They are the Four Tigers (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong). Having received Japan’s trade and investment massively in China’s manufacturing and infrastructure after the joint uplifting economic sanctions against China’s suppression of protests in 1989, China resumed its two-digit economic growth, which lasted three decades thereafter. Following up the lead-goose formation pattern, they were able to spend less on research and investment than the United States and so were the Four Tigers in Asia. Most striking in the graph for Japan in Multilateral Treaties Participation (Fig. 8.1) were:

1. Participation in all the six domains, especially those in peace and disarmament, labor and health, trade, commerce, and communications increased in parallel more or less;
2. In the post-Cold War period the domain in trade registered a very active and astronomical increase in participation.
3. The post-Cold War trio domains—intellectual property, human rights, and the environment—expanded steadily.

Summing up, Japan has been helped immensely by its steadfast participation in and compliance with multilateral treaties despite all the shortcomings. As the “oasis” of stability now so noted in the turbulent world of digitized globalization, Japan is linked to proactive policies. In sum, Japan was able to spearhead manufacturing products in the latter half of the twentieth century. But into the new millennium, 30 years’ stagnation has prevailed: demographic decline, stagnant innovation and patent acquisition, and organizationally stalled society under the surface of peace and stability, Japan as the leading goose in East Asia has been replaced by China challenging the US, the Four Tigers leading advanced service-sector projects (The Economist 2019).
8.3 China

The most striking feature of China’s graph of Multilateral Treaties Participation (Fig. 8.2) is that its position in 1978 and beyond resembles that of Japan in 1956.

Fig. 8.2  The participation in UN multilateral treaties of China
and beyond. What is meant by that? As Japan opened itself to the outside world in 1956, China did so in 1978. Before 1956 when Japan entered into the United Nations Organization, it was alone and apart from the rest of the world except for the United States. No less important is the per-capita income level of Japan in the first decade after the war. It was recovering and developing fast from the lowest level. In 1950, in terms of per-capita national income, Japan was ranked almost at the bottom of Asia when the Philippines was one of the richest in the region. In 1978 China was one of the poorest in Asia. Deng Xiaoping stood high with the slogan of “hiding oneself and biding time.” In three decades the picture seems similar between Japan 1986 and China 2008. In 1986 Japan was at the height of “Japan as Number One” (Vogel 1983) whereas in 2008 China was at the height of its hidden ambition laid bare by publishing “China 2025,” in which China made it clear that its economic strengths would overtake the US by 2025 (Gabriele 2020). In 2019 Japan was sometimes reputed to be the oasis in the turbulent world. Yet it faces a society that is increasingly aging, decreasing patent-acquisition, and resignation-cum-satisfaction in a stalled society. In 2019 China still registered a 6% annual growth rate. Yet the hyper-regulations of what Branko Milanovic calls “political capitalism” (2019) practiced in China generate bureaucrats with tight lips, one of the consequences of which being the tardy response to the outburst of coronavirus epidemic in Wuhan. The one-and-half-month delay in publicly recognizing its outburst (and thus triggering a prompt response), resulted in some close to 60,000 persons killed by the epidemic as of the end of April 2020, the figure surpassing those American soldiers killed in the Vietnam War. The efficient and effective characteristic of “political capitalism” is exemplified by the construction of a few hospitals, in each of which 1000 beds were installed, in half a month at Wuhan. Tracing China’s rise and fall and analyzing three decisive issues from an international perspective, Wei (2019) lists energy, territory, environmental problem, and human rights and anti-corruption. All four domains are decisive. But Wei (2019) gives Part IV: Human Rights and Anti-Corruption the subtitle “Key Elements for China’s rise as a great Nation.”

8.4 South Korea

In 1945 South Korea was sprouting a lot of political and social movements liberated from Japanese colonial rule. All sorts of actors were involved. Out of the chaotic uncertainty emerged two declarations of independence: the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. The latter was headed by Synmang Rhee, a right-wing nationalist ideologue and emigre from Hawaii whereas the former was headed by Kim Il Sung, a communist active in the pre-independence Manchukuo brought in with the Soviet Army from the Soviet Far East in 1945. The fierce competition between them resulted in North Korea’s all-out military attack on South Korea to militarily unify the country in 1950. Although the armistice was signed in 1953, the land was left ruined and both governments continued to place themselves on war
footings for many years till now. Focusing on South Korea, one is struck by the similarity of industrial growth between South Korea and Japan. Both recovered swiftly from war devastation. Then multilateral treaty participation in the labor domain and in the human rights domain prepared good industrialization in the mid-1950s through in the mid-1970s (Fig. 8.3). Both started with elementary manufactured products for export like “cotton shirts, plastic flowers and black wigs” (The Economist 2019). Then they moved on to “memory chips, laptops and equity derivatives.” It was in the latter half of the 1970s that South Korea vigorously activated infrastructure (subway and airway) and heavy industrial sectors (steel, chemicals) thanks in part to the basic treaty between South Korea and Japan in 1965 and South Korea’s multilateral treaty participation thereafter, including the treaty on the Asian Development Bank. It is most interesting to note that multilateral treaty participation in the peace domain and in the trade domain ran in parallel since the mid-1970s. These parallel movements coincided with the self-confidence in economic strength vis-à-vis North Korea. South Korea has maintained steady participation in the labor and human rights domains since the mid-1970s despite authoritarian politics. The Asian monetary crisis in 1997–1998 transformed South Korea dramatically in two fronts: South Korea was under the guidance of the International Monetary Fund, which transformed the economy in line with the “neo-liberal” policy and its electorates leaned to the progressive direction, which was evidenced in the renewed increase of those multilateral treaties in the labor and human rights domains and the strident increase on the multilateral treaty participation in the environment and intellectual property domains. The global recession, originating in the US in 2008 onward, and Japan’s big earthquake-cum-tsunami-cum nuclear power meltdown in 2011 created the vacuum of global markets into which the developing South spearheaded by BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and the MIKTA (Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey, and Australia)
expanded its share in the global market. The rise of the US–China tariff-tech war in 2017 has had a negative impact on the South Korean economy, especially in the further improvement of social security and poverty-stricken strata. Yet the rise of South Korea has been quite admirable all the more because of its great vulnerability to the outside environmental forces like the sandwiched between great powers the US and China and facing the hostile North Korea. Its per capita GDP is on a par with that of Japan (The Economist 2019).

### 8.5 North Korea

Self-reliance ideology and a centralized system long dominated North Korea without multilateral treaty participation (1953–1975); *Jangmadam* market informal capitalism since the 1970s rose while the strict centralized system was somewhat relaxed and weakened (Baek 2016). Multilateral treaty participation in the labor and human rights domains increased as the centralized system weakened (Fig. 8.4). Then in the 1980s onward, both peace and trade domain participation increased; the latter half of the 1990s saw frequent intermittent famines; science education was emphasized, and science and technology were directly linked to economic development. (One of the most striking findings of multilateral treaty participation is the leading profile of those participation in the intellectual property and the environment domains throughout all the periods especially in the post-Cold War period.) Whereas the priority on

### Democratic People's Republic of Korea

![Fig. 8.4 The participation in UN multilateral treaties of North Korea](image-url)
people’s livelihood was emphasized, national security or more narrowly regime security remained vital, according to Sungun ideology (the military is paramount among all sectoral priorities); hence priority goes to study science and technology especially in nuclear and rocketry technology for deterrence. Kim Il Sung first wanted to get nuclear power stations with agreement with Bill Clinton in 1994. But the agreement collapsed in 2009. Then Kim Jong Il searched for Sungun policy (the military first). Kim Jong Il died from a heart attack in 2011. Kim Jong Un then more narrowly focused on nuclear weapons, which led him to test nuclear missiles and nuclear bombs in the 2010s. That led to the US–North Korean denuclearization talks in 2017 through 2019 between Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un. The Summit talks had stalled by 2019. To sum up, North Korea was basically reluctant to join the multilateral treaties system because doing so was in total opposition to its principle, juche (independence, autonomy, self-reliance) especially in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Yet recognizing South Korea’s rise, especially in the manufacturing sector and in the military build-up under the dictatorship and its Nordpolitik, North Korea has been very proactive in mobilizing support from the developed South, especially those weapons-purchasing Middle East and African countries. North Korea has been quite active in trying to build nuclear power stations by the Six Party talks headed by the US along with South Korea, China, Russia, and Japan. North Korea joined and after the Six Party’s failure withdrew from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Subsequently focusing on ICBM with nuclear bombs loaded, North Korea has been trying to wipe out the US from the Korean Peninsula, so far to no avail. The fact that North Korea’s participation in multilateral treaties per number of years in the UN is much larger than the corresponding figure of the US.

8.6 Vietnam

The prevalence of war in Vietnamese life before and after 1945 until the border with China was calmed down in 1984 with the peace settlement of the Chinese-Vietnamese war of 1979. During the long war-cum-peace period during 1945 and 1984 a small number of multilateral treaties were joined by Vietnam in the domains of trade, commerce, and communications, labor and health, intellectual property, and human rights (Fig. 8.5). The collapse of the Soviet Union and the US post-war embargoes negatively affected the Vietnamese economy. Trade liberalization was implemented by devaluing its exchange rate to increase exports and reform embarkation started. In 1986 the Doi Moi reform was officially announced and implemented. The US embargo stopped in 1994, but the Asian monetary crisis of 1997–1998 caused the Vietnamese economy to slow down. But by 1999 annual economic growth rate came back to around 7%, making Vietnam’s one of the world’s fastest-growing economies. With the accelerated Doi Moi reform policy, multilateral treaties in all domains increased in number, especially those in the trade domain and the labor domain. Since the mid-1980s those multilateral treaties in such domains as human rights, the environment, intellectual property, and peace domains have registered a
steady increase. To sum up, Vietnam has been one of the most active states in the developing South. In terms of the member of multilateral treaties joined by Vietnam per the number of years in the United Nations, Vietnam overtakes that of the US even more than North Korea. With the adoption of “political capitalism” with Vietnamese characteristics, Doi Moi, Vietnam has been quite constructively active in the regional organization as well.

8.7 Throughout Sinic East

One notices from Figs. 8.1, 8.2, 8.3 and 8.5 (Japan, South Korea, China, and Vietnam) that participation in a bundle of multilateral treaties in six policy domains triggered developmental leaps upward. The timing of such participation depends on circumstances in which each Sinic East country was placed. By circumstances are meant a number of things: developmental stages (early starter, late comer), developmental principles (nationalist, protectionist, internationalist, universalist), regime characteristics (dictatorship, authoritarianism, democracy), popular life satisfaction (satisfied, dissatisfied), and global (and regional) systemic breakdowns (the first and second oil crisis, Asian monetary crisis, global recession, economic sanctions, and the Covid-19 pandemic assault world over).
8.8 Regional Dynamics of Sinic East

Before examining each Sinic East country’s graphs of multilateral treaties participation, a brief summary of regional dynamism is given here. From a long-term perspective, Sinic Asia or East Asia has been most significantly characterized by three trends: (1) East Asia was one of the two key battlefields of World War II along with Europe; (2) The localized Cold War was waged in East Asia, the Korean War and the Vietnam War; (3) The global end of the Cold War precipitated East Asian communist regimes not to be prevailed by its capitalist brothers and sisters, thus creating “the East Asian peace” (Tønnesson 2019) and the era of the “capitalism, alone” (Milanovic 2019). In this section we summarize how the first trend was succeeded by the second trend. From Sect. 8.10 we will summarize what came as the second and third trends country by country with multilateral treaties functioning transformatively as vehicles and agents. The peace settlement of World War II was precipitated by Germany’s surrender, Europe was left in ashes and faced division into western and eastern Europe by the US and the USSR respectively. However, the peace settlement of World War II in East Asia was partial peace with the US-led Western bloc, that is, Japan’s surrender with the US-led allied powers. What happened after the East Asia’s partial peace settlement was the struggle between communist forces and capitalist forces in all East Asian societies, especially Korea, Vietnam, China, and Taiwan, with Japan being an exception. What triggered these struggles in East Asia? It was the accelerated destruction of East Asian societies by the Japanese imperial armed forces. The European war was waged with the breakdown of the fragile Versailles peace (Macmillan 2007). The East Asian war started in one sense by the subjectively preemptive preparatory consolidation of war footings, which was foresightedly envisaged by Lieutenant Kanji Ishihara against the emerging hegemon, the US. For that purpose, Japan enhanced its aggressions in one region after another in Asia. The US imposed the economic embargoes in the spirit of war prohibition specified by the Kellogg-Brian Treaty (1928) further consolidated with “teeth” added to guard against Japanese aggression in East Asia (Hathaway and Shapiro 2007). What happened toward the end of the war in East Asia? It is the Japanese destruction of East Asian societies to fight against the US by brutally and relentlessly mobilizing resources in occupied territories, human and material, and Japanese and other Asian. Anticipating the Japanese defeat and surrender to the Allied powers, Joseph Stalin rushed his soldiers and weapons from the West to the East with the German surrender in May 1945. Stalin and Franklin D. Roosevelt raced to the East for Japan and surrounding East Asia in order to become the occupying power (Hasegawa 2006; Okonogi 2019).

In China in 1945, Chiang Kaishek, President of the Republic of China, announced clemency to the Japanese imperial forces to surrender their weapons to the Chinese government forces, saying China would not seek revenge against Japan but would offer clemency to all the Japanese soldiers and peoples. Chiang’s clemency was Christian, meaning love your former enemy. Mao Zedong, representing Communist forces in China, announced clemency to the surrendered Japanese imperial armed
forces on the grounds that the war was led by the Japanese military and that Japanese people were the no less victims of the military cliques than the Chinese people. All the Japanese military forces in China, then amounting to 2 million soldiers, surrendered their weapons either to the Chinese Communist forces and to the Kuomintang government forces. Communist and government forces competed to get massive caches of Japanese weapons wherever they were. In 1945–1949 the civil war was waged between them. It was in former Manchuria where communist forces overwhelmed the government forces: the first massive head-on confrontation between them in Shenyang, Liaoning province in Manchuria which ended with the overwhelming victory of the Communists. Civil wars in 1945–1949 experienced new factors. First, the Soviet Union activated its operations throughout Sinic East: China, Korea, and Japan. In China, the Soviet military guidance and assistance to the Chinese communists were not underestimated. Second, the United States policy toward China changed dramatically: from Roosevelt to Truman; from its pro-Chiang Kaishek policy to elevate China as the center of US far eastern policy to its policy cool and critical to the Kuomintang China (Van de Ven 2017). Then Communists drove the Kuomintang’s forces to southern waters and Taiwan.

In Vietnam earlier in autumn 1941, and before Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, French Indochina and shortly thereafter British Malaya and Singapore were occupied by the Japanese imperial armed forces, which wanted to negate and nullify the colonial French and colonial British power in Southeast Asia. In 1945, as soon as Japanese surrendered, Ho Chi Minh, leading Vietnamese Communists and representing the Vietnamese people, declared national independence, with the Constitution vividly reminding people of the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. Ho Chi Minh’s most famous words were “Nothing is more precious than national independence.” However, the colonial war came back with the French fighting Vietnamese in 1945–1953. In 1953, a fragile peace settlement called the Geneva agreement was signed between them. In the south the Republic of Vietnam was born whereas in the north the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was born. The guerrilla war resumed in the south in the mid-1950s and then the US intervened massively in mid-1960s and the war ended in 1973 with the fragile peace agreement was signed. In 1975 both Vietnams were militarily united with the Communists emerging as victors in this long-fought struggle.

In Korea the race between the US and the USSR was the struggle of speed of not only moving soldiers and sailors closer to Japan and its vicinities. Soviet soldiers needed recuperation after the German surrender, but were sent out shortly after May 1945 from the West to the Far East. Americas soldiers and sailors skipped from one island to another in the Pacific Ocean, defeating the remaining Japanese imperial forces one by one. The competition between two US militaries, Chester Nimitz (navy) and Douglas MacArthur (army), took the two parallel forms:

1. Nimitz chose the strategy of massive aerial strikes on Japanese cities, factories, ports, railways, and
2. MacArthur chose the strategy of unprecedented bombing of civilians, targeting Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic bombs to accelerate the Japanese surrender
and thereby reduce the anticipated massive amount of American soldiers and sailors needed to land at Japan and face heavy Japanese resistance.

Those atomic bombs were dropped on 6 and 9 August, 1945. Soviet soldiers had reached Kurile islands and northern Korea. In northern and southern Korea the latent struggle between Communists and non-Communists commenced, anticipating the Japanese imminent defeat and surrender. It involved not only competition between Communists and non-Communists but also between home nationalists and nationalists abroad (like Moscow, Beijing and the Soviet Far East and Manchukuo, Hawaii, and Shanghai). The initiative of consolidating power was taken by Communists in the Soviet Far East and Manchukuo and in northern Korea (that is, Kim Il Sung), whereas the initiative of consolidating power in southern Korea was taken by nationalist in Hawaii (Synman Rhee). To Joseph Stalin the US atomic bombs were dropped too early whereas to Truman they were surprisingly fast in persuading Japanese emperor to nod his surrender—but not soon enough to free the US of complications in Korea, including the latent seed of triggering the Korean war in 1950.

8.9 Japan

Japan’s participation in multilateral treaties is most active among Sinic East states. It makes sense because it has been one of the few OECD club countries in the non-West with many multilateral commitments. In the Cold War period those treaties in the peace domain and the trade domain were steadily on the rise whereas those multilateral treaties in the labor and health domain have risen steadily during the Cold War period and more so beyond. Multilateral treaties in the environment, intellectual property and human rights have risen during the late Cold War period, and most importantly during the post-Cold War period.

Those multilateral treaties in the trade domain registered an upward slope when epoch-making events took place. In the mid-1950s Japan entered the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade, and the Bank of International Reconstruction and Development. In the mid-1960s Japan’s participation in the trade domain registered in conjunction with the Tokyo Olympic Games, the joining of OECD, and International Monetary Organization and other international financial institutions. In the mid-1970s they joined of Group of Seven Powers in post-first oil crises in the 1970s and 1980s (Putnam and Bayne 1988). These two constituted the foundation of the Japan as Number 1 (Vogel 1983), which lasted by around mid-1990s. Beyond 1995 those multilateral treaties registered by leaps and bounds in the broad harmony of the advent and acceleration of globalization. Important to note here was the Asian monetary crisis (1997–1998). Thereafter those multilateral treaties jumped upward in a striking fashion. The pattern was repeated in 2008 and beyond, after another economic upheaval. While in the 1950s and 1960s multilateral treaties in the trade domain were meant to accelerate economic development by enhancing infrastructure and alleviating conflicting arrangements on foreign
trade, investment and technology transfer with foreign states, those in the mid-1990s and beyond the late 2000s were meant more to alleviate the negative impacts of regional and global crises. Japan’s participation in multilateral treaties domain by domain for each period, Cold War and post-Cold War are illustrated from Figs. 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10 and 8.11.

Fig. 8.6  Japan’s participation in human rights multilateral treaties

Fig. 8.7  Japan’s participation in trade, commerce, and communication multilateral treaties
Fig. 8.8 Japan’s participation in intellectual property rights multilateral treaties

Fig. 8.9 Japan’s participation in environment multilateral treaties
8.10 South Korea

The Korean war (1950–1953) ended with the armistice agreement in 1953 between the US-ROK-UN forces and the DPRK-PRC forces. But it was not a peace treaty. Therefore, occurrence of non-major confrontations was not excluded thereafter. That
is why number of multilateral treaties in the peace domain jumped twice: in the mid-1970s when South Korea adopted Nordpolitik establishing the diplomatic normalization with the Soviet Union and thus meant to push its diplomatic offensive vis-à-vis North Korea; and in 1992 when the simultaneous entry of the two Koreas into the United Nations was achieved. To adapt its diplomacy to a new situation South Korea joined a number of multilateral treaties for the subsequent few years thereafter each time. Then a few years elapsed without any multilateral treaties in the peace domain because of its concentration in attention to economic development and arms enhancement. Those multilateral treaties in the trade domain increased dramatically in the 1970s through the mid-1980s and then in the late 1990s onward. The diplomatic normalization with Japan in 1965 and subsequent bilateral treaties with Japan were meant de facto war-reparation-cum-economic assistance without the name of war reparation in the areas of infrastructure building, industrial construction such as automobiles, technology transfer such as manufacturing of the advanced kind of steel products and financial assistance. Before multilateral treaties placed important roles to South Korea, those bilateral agreements were instrumental to push South Korea to the position of “four flying geese” (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore) between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s. “Four flying geese” was meant to denote a flock of geese flying as a group. It is headed by a leader of navigation in economic development like Japan as the first flying goose. The next sub-leaders are the four flying geese. Because of its brand, multilateral treaties the four flying tigers joined by leaps and bounds during the mid-1970s and mid-1990s. Some excesses experienced during this period caused the Asian monetary crisis of 1997–1998. One consequence of this crisis was that South Korea was subordinated to the guidance of the International Monetary Fund, which forced too many mini-scale industrial firms to be merged by what would become very few mammoth chebols. Riding high on the digitized globalization in neo-liberal persuasion South Korea and other flying tigers changed the order of seats, from followers to leaders, especially in special service manufacturing products like smartphones (The Economist 2019) where Japan was slower to develop service-targeted worldwide export products. This is admirable even though South Korea has been able to take advantage of its developing South status for so many years. Despite its GDP being ranked No. 11 in the world, it has not yet discarded its developing status in the World Trade Organization, the International Energy Agency and other international institutions despite its promise to do so.

Because South Korea was late in joining, its membership of multilateral treaties in all domains was one half of Japan’s during the entire Cold War and Post-Cold War period. But South Korea’s accumulated number is twice as many as North Korea. Even North Korea’s number is, when the accumulated number is divided by the number of years in the United Nations, on a par with that of the United States! The United States has been following the Washingtonian principle of disentanglement all the way since 1945 despite its role as leader of the liberal world order. Donald Trump is not an exception. It is normal, American style of multilateral treaty participation! In the intellectual property, the environment and human rights domains, South Korea has registered a similar pattern with Japan in that during the post-Cold War period they have joined such treaties eagerly although because of the developing South
status they do not necessarily shoulder much of its burdens, as in the Paris climate change accord. South Korea’s participation in multilateral treaties domain by domain for each period, post-armistice and post-Asian monetary crisis period (1997–1998) are illustrated from Figs. 8.12, 8.13, 8.14, 8.15, 8.16 and 8.17.

**Fig. 8.12** South Korea’s participation in peace and disarmament multilateral treaties

**Fig. 8.13** South Korea’s participation in human rights multilateral treaties
Fig. 8.14  South Korea’s participation in trade, commerce, and communication multilateral treaties

Fig. 8.15  South Korea’s participation in intellectual property multilateral treaties
Fig. 8.16  South Korea’s participation in environment multilateral treaties

Fig. 8.17  South Korea’s participation in labor and health multilateral treaties
8.11 China

Civil war divided China, with its Kuomintang Government led by Chiang Kaishek, until 1945. After Japan surrendered to the Allied powers led by the United States, Communists and Kuomintang forces resumed the civil war after they captured as many weapons as possible from the surrendered Japanese armed forces throughout China and East Asia. The resumed civil war ended with Communist victory. The Kuomintang government captured Taiwan in 1949, a former Japanese colony, proclaiming the same Republic of China and retaining United Nations membership and remaining a Security Council permanent member until 1972. The People’s Republic of China replaced the Republic of China on Taiwan in 1972, when the United States normalized diplomatic relationship with Beijing at the sacrifice of Taiwan. Yet those multilateral treaties earlier signed and ratified by the Republic of China were acknowledged by the People’s Republic of China in 1972 through 1979. The Republic of China on Taiwan subsequently behaved in international organizations such as the World Health Organization as an “as if” observer. The practice was permitted until recently. More recently, since the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party President Chen Shui Bian assumed the office in 2006, China has been rejecting Taiwan’s observer’s participation. Before 1972 those domains in which multilateral treaties China joined were mostly those domains in labor and health, and human rights. China since 1949 adopted a policy of self-reliance of economic development and national security, so it had not much to do in multilateral treaties except those succeeded from the Republic of China, Nanjing. With the diplomatic normalization first with Japan (in 1972) and then with the United States (1973), and with the peace and friendship treaties with Japan (1978) and with the United States (1979), the People’s Republic of China entered into the multilateral treaty arena (Soeya 1998; Vogel 2019; Hattori 2011; Smith 2015). Most noteworthy is the jump start of those multilateral treaties in the trade domain in the mid-1970s and beyond. The diplomatic normalization with Japan was accompanied with a massive dose of economic assistance (not called war reparation). In late 1970s Deng Xiaoping came to power, initiating reform and the opening to the world policy line in 1978—what Branko Milanovic (2019) called “political capitalism” in full fashion. The 1989 suppression of Tianmen protestors led the West and Japan to impose strong economic sanctions. In 1991 Japan lifted economic sanctions and the West followed shortly thereafter. That led China to join key multilateral treaties in the trade domain thereafter until Donald Trump started to impose economic sanctions vis-à-vis China from 2017 onward. The entry into the World Trade Organization was admitted by Barak Obama in 2000 (Steinberg, January 2020). Since China was categorized as a developing South country in the WTO, rules and regulations were leniently applied. Hence China registered two-digit developmental achievement—three decades of annual economic growth rate. When the world economy stagnated in 2008 and, thereafter what Branko Milanovic calls the “rebalancing between the West and the East” became very visible and tangible, with the West or the developed North stagnating and declining whereas the East or the developing South surging forward with annual economic growth rates
registering 6–8% growth rates spearheaded in India and China. All these led to the United States carry out economic sanctions for the reasons of violation of intellectual property rights, technology transfer, and massive use of state-owned-enterprise ability to amass investment capital through state possession of land, global construction of value chains *sans frontier*. Those multilateral treaties in the trade domain have kept growing despite Trump. But China has discovered the global infrastructure-enhancing project called the One Belt, One Road project, consolidating roads and ports throughout the rest of the world using its surplus capital and labor for linking China and the neighbors near and afar. Multilateral treaties in the peace domain have been registering near astronomical military expenditure almost reaching US counterpart in 40 years period if including personnel costs. During the post-Cold War period the four domains have increased those multilateral treaties in such domains as labor and health, human rights, the environment and intellectual property. The priority of labor and health has been evinced by the total change of style of words used for describing what is on the demand side of people (beautiful good life) and on the supply side of government and enterprises (insufficient provision of products and services declared in the Central Committee policy line in 2016). Although many multilateral treaties in the domains of intellectual property, human rights and the environment have clauses of duties, regulations and burdens, China has been bereft of paying so much due to the developing South country status provision (Wei 2019). China’s participation in multilateral treaties domain by domain for each period, pre-normalization period (1950s–1960s), normalization period (1970s) and post-Cold War period are illustrated from Figs. 8.18, 8.19, 8.20, 8.21, 8.22 and 8.23.

![China’s participation in peace and disarmament multilateral treaties](image-url)

**Fig. 8.18** China’s participation in peace and disarmament multilateral treaties
Fig. 8.19  China’s participation in human rights multilateral treaties

Fig. 8.20  China’s participation in trade, commerce, and communication multilateral treaties
Fig. 8.21  China’s participation in intellectual property multilateral treaties

Fig. 8.22  China’s participation in environment multilateral treaties
North Korea was long regarded as a country totally secluding itself from the rest of the world. Having declared independence in 1948 it entered into war for the 1950–1953 against South Korea and the US-led United Nations forces. The war battered each other’s land almost completely and killed not only Koreans from both sides but also Chinese Volunteer armed forces and American armed forces and their allies such as the Turks. Thus, even after the armistice agreement was signed, North Korea did not join any multilateral treaties until in the early 1970s when it joined a multilateral treaty in the labor and health domain. Its important ties during its isolationist period (1948–1968) were with the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union plus the pro-DPRK Federation of Koreans in Japan and its predecessors. Most noteworthy of North Korean participation in multilateral treaties is that its joining multilateral treaties in the intellectual property domain was the first big action in the early 1980s along with its joining multilateral treaties in the peace domain. While those treaties in the peace domain were more erratic, those in the intellectual property domain have leaped since 1980. Joining those multilateral treaties in the environment domain has been on a steep, continuous rise whereas joining those multilateral treaties in the trade domain has been in the staccato-like fashion, each time moving up by one octave or two higher. Those multilateral treaties in the peace and trade domains have been influenced by more political considerations rather than those in intellectual property and environment domains. North Korea’s participation in multilateral treaties domain by domain for each period, post-armistice period (1953–), post-Nordpolitik period and post-Cold War period are illustrated from Figs. 8.24, 8.25, 8.26, 8.27, 8.28 and 8.29.
Fig. 8.24 North Korea’s participation in peace and disarmament multilateral treaties

Fig. 8.25 North Korea’s participation in human rights multilateral treaties
Fig. 8.26  North Korea’s participation in trade, commerce, and communication multilateral treaties

Fig. 8.27  North Korea’s participation in intellectual property multilateral treaties
Vietnam was long placed on a war footing—before, during, and after wars of many kinds, even before 1954 when the Geneva peace accords between the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and France were signed. But the national election stipulated in the Geneva accords was not carried out. South Vietnam’s prime minister Ngo Dinh Diem said that the Republic of Vietnam had not signed the Geneva accords.
and therefore South Vietnam was not bound by it. The guerrilla war started in South Vietnam thereafter. It was in mid-1960s when the United States decided to militarily intervene in South Vietnam in support of the Republic of Vietnam. In 1973 the United States decided to withdraw its forces. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the United States signed the peace accords. In 1975 Saigon fell to the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The Republic of Vietnam collapsed. Thus, peace looked arrived. Yet, even before the peace in Vietnam against the US, China and the Soviet Union were extremely at odds over what China called Soviet revisionism. They fought a brief but bloody war in 1969 on the Amur River flowing on their border. Nearly a decade thereafter, China was led by Deng Xiaoping with the banner of the reform and the opening to the world. He visited the United States and Japan in 1978. Shortly after his trips abroad, China intervened militarily into the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in February 1979. Vietnam had been occupying Cambodia where anti-Vietnamese forces were emerging strong. China withdrew from Vietnam whereas Vietnam withdrew from Cambodia. An accord was signed in 1984 between Vietnam and China, so that peace arrived in Vietnam at long last. After 1975 and especially from 1984 onward Vietnam joined many multilateral treaties. Those policy domains of Vietnam joining multilateral treaties were the trade domain and the labor and health domain. These two domains have been overwhelming in number vis-à-vis other domains like the peace domain, the human rights domain and the intellectual property domain. This is very different in North Korea, where the intellectual property domain and the environment domain overshadow the other domains. Vietnam’s participation in multilateral treaties domain by domain for each period, pre-Doi Moi period (1986) and post-Cold War are illustrated from Figs. 8.30, 8.31, 8.32, 8.33, 8.34 and 8.35.

Fig. 8.30  Vietnam’s participation in peace and disarmament multilateral treaties
Fig. 8.31 Vietnam’s participation in human rights multilateral treaties

Fig. 8.32 Vietnam’s participation in trade, commerce, and communication multilateral treaties
Vietnam’s participation in intellectual property multilateral treaties

Vietnam’s participation in environment multilateral treaties
Fig. 8.35  Vietnam’s participation in labor and health multilateral treaties

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