Study on Peace-Building in Southeast Asia from the Perspective of Normative Localization —— Based on the Comparison Between Myanmar and Cambodia

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Abstract

This paper attempts to take Myanmar and Cambodia as examples to explore the consequences of constructive interaction between the international community and Southeast Asian countries after the cold war. After the end of the Cold War, Southeast Asia encountered two regional conflicts and crises of global concern. We finds that for Myanmar and Cambodia, the ability of political elites is the key to leading regional and global peace. The ability of political elites not only determines the process of external norms, but also affects the changes of regional norms. As far as Cambodia is concerned, through cooperation with the United Nations and ASEAN, it has rapidly rebuilt its political authority and effectively internalized the international community's peacebuilding norms. Therefore, Cambodia can improve its national capacity and stability after the emergence of political authority. As far as Myanmar is concerned, after the end of the cold war, the political authority still exists in Myanmar, thus maintaining a certain degree of national stability. With the outbreak of the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar in 2015, Myanmar's original national construction gradually began to collapse. On the one hand, Myanmar cannot internalize the international community's peacebuilding norms. On the other hand, due to the decline of political authority, various internal forces began to struggle with each other, which ultimately led to the failure of the country. For the dissemination of international norms, whether in Cambodia or Myanmar, the localization of external norms requires the cooperation of the political authorities to effectively prevent conflicts.

Keywords: Myanmar, Cambodia, peace-building, Southeast Asia, Normative localization

Introduction

War and peace have been long discussed in international relations. In different periods, scholars regard peace as an appropriate state of existence. However, peace is always short-lived and often accompanied by war. Whether these conflicts are caused by identity, religion, or national interests, they are easy to attract the attention of the international community in the era of globalization. After the end of the cold war, international peace-building operations have been carried out in many states just emerging from civil war. The international community hopes that this way can bring peace to these states. However, most of these states are still experiencing political instability and intensified internal conflicts. As a result, the international community has begun to reflect on peace-building.

From the perspective of the international community, as a strong norm of the international community, the nature of peace-building is mainly two; The first is the role of change, which promotes the change of the political system of the target country and forms a democratic government that can be consulted by all parties; Second, the role of legalization, hoping to change the contradictions within the country and bring peace.

Although these strong international social norms have the idea of "good governance", they are not necessarily suitable for all states. In Southeast Asia, after the end of the cold war, Cambodia accepted the peace-building of the United Nations, but Cambodia's domestic contradictions have not been significantly reduced. In Myanmar, the ethnic conflict of Rohingya broke out in 2015, and so far there is still no way to properly handle it. From the above situations of Cambodia and Myanmar, we can not help asking why there is such a big gap between the normative practice and the expectations of peace-building in Southeast Asian states.

It seems that for Southeast Asian states, "good governance" is of course an ideal that they continue to pursue, but more importantly, it is "suitable" for the norms of Southeast Asian states. Therefore, this paper will focus on the adaptation of Southeast Asian states to the strong norms of the international community. The problems in this paper can be roughly divided into two aspects to examine; One is to standardize the study of localization and whether it has been approved by Southeast Asian states. All these are closely related to peace-building in Southeast Asia, so we need to discuss peace-building in Southeast Asia.

Literature review

In terms of the localization of norms, different from the general research on norms, the localization of norms pays more attention to the capabilities and roles of local actors. In this respect, the academic circles of international relations talk less about it, and scholars regard the localization of norms as "normative agency". As Colin Wight said, international relations has not yet systematically grasped this concept, and it is difficult for us to understand what is “Activism”. What does it mean? Who would do that? (Douglas Porpora, 2015) as a representative of the British School, Barry Buzan defined this as the state of action or the use of power (Buzan, 1994). Wendt, the representative of constructivism, regards the state as an

enlarged individual, and normative activism is thus defined as building each other into a collective with interests and fears through practice (Wendt, 1999). Bhaskar believes that the implementation of norms can change and can promote the change of certain things (Roy, 2020). Antje Wiener discusses the perspective of normative competition. She believes that the enforcement of norms is caused by normative competition (Wiener, 2015). Kazushige Kobayashi and others investigated the localization of norms from the perspective of national behavior. They distinguished the internalization of the dominant norms and the surface behavior adjustment (such as "rhetorical behavior" and "tactical imitation") in the process of national socialization. The latter usually does not lead to a deep change in the preferences and identities of actors. At the same time, the diffusion of dominant norms does not necessarily strengthen the existing hierarchical power relations, because secondary actors may also seek more equal power relations by internalizing dominant norms (Kobayashi & Herbert, 2021).

Amitav Acharya is the first scholar to systematically study the implementation of norms, which has greatly inspiration for this paper. Achaya believes that in the process of the localization of norms, foreign concepts must be consistent with the existing cognition of the local people, so it needs to be supported by an auxiliary norm. Auxiliary norms and local actors determine whether the norms can be accepted. Therefore, there are four situations, namely, local actors accept and auxiliary norms accept; Accepted by local actors, but not by auxiliary norms; Local actors do not accept, and auxiliary norms accept; The four situations are not accepted by local actors and auxiliary norms. At the same time, Acharya further explained the process of normative circulation. He pointed out that normative circulation proves that the creation and dissemination of norms is a two-way process, in which the global norms provided by transnational moral actors will undergo debate and localization, After localization, the norms will be fed back to other created norms (Acharya, 1995).

However, Acharya neglected several properties of the specification. First, the specification itself is not homogeneous. In the international community, norms are different from strong norms and weak norms. They have different effects on the localization of norms. Secondly, Acharya also neglected that in the localization of norms, both auxiliary norms and local actors are related to the consent of political authorities. In short, if an international norm tries to be localized in a certain country, it needs the consent of the highest political authority of the country, because whether it is a subsidiary norm or a local actor, it needs the endorsement of the internal authority of the country to be effective. On the whole, the research on the localization of norms still seldom considers the adaptability of the local country, nor does it examine the role of political authority in the process of the localization of norms.

In the aspect of Chinese scholars, there are still few discussions. Du Juan believes that the emergence of the localization of norms is whether a country recognizes the nature of international norms. In other words, if a country identifies with the collective identity represented by the advocates of international norms, it will have more power to internalize international norms; On the contrary, if a country does not recognize the collective identity of the international norm advocates, it will violate the international norms (Du Juan, 2008) Zhang Lei inspected the localization of health governance norms in Southeast Asia from the perspective of national capabilities. He believes that the localization of norms is the positive

construction of foreign norms by local actors through discourse, framework, grafting, and cultural selection (Acharya, 2009).

The reason why Southeast Asian states can effectively improve health governance norms is that the localization of norms is a process of regulating and empowering national initiative, and conversely, the exertion of national initiative is a process of promoting or restricting the localization of norms. Specifically, the localization of norms combines the core characteristics and regional characteristics of international norms, while the national initiative is divided into standard practice and creative practice. International norms have standardized guidance, regulation, and constraint on the practice process of giving play to a national initiative. The regional characteristics are the basis for homogenizing the creative practice process of giving play to the national initiative, and in turn, the creative practice process reinterprets and transforms the international norms in a heterogeneous way (Zhang, 2020).

From the perspective of ASEAN preventive diplomacy, Wu Lin emphasized the issues of the standardization process, standardization internalization, and standardization localization. He believes that the generation of the localization of norms does not necessarily lead to the internalization of norms, and the adoption of some norms is only "cosmetic". Through the introduction of a rationalized formal structure derived from the hegemonic global discourse, the legitimacy of local traditional practices is recognized by the outside (Finnemore, 1996). Therefore, he believes that there is a problem of "incomplete internalization" in the process of internalizing the new specification. From this point, he further discussed the institutionalized and non-institutionalized processes in the normative process (Wu, 2019). Wu Lin's article has a great inspiration to the author, but he pointed out that there is a problem of "incomplete internalization" in the localization process, which I think is normal. From another point of view, no country can completely internalize or localize foreign norms. Most states do not have the same degree of localization or internalization of foreign norms. Norms are like morality. Everyone has a different understanding of them, so there will be deviations in adaptation.

On the whole, neither foreign nor Chinese scholars have answered the question of the role of political authority in the practice of normative localization. In the process of the dissemination and localization of norms, the nature of norms is not invariable. The strength or weakness of norms is based on the nature of norms. It can be judged from three perspectives. The first is whether the code has "authority". If it has sufficient "authority", it indicates that the code is easily accepted by members of the international community; On the contrary, it is difficult to be a kind of disseminated norm. (Liu, 2009; Li, Zhu & Zheng, 2022) Secondly, whether the norms can punish the violators is the common supervision of the international community. Moreover, whether the norms can promote the survival of members of the international community, that is the ability to provide public goods. In short, a strong norm must have authority, and there are consequences logic (punishment mechanism) and adaptive logic (providing public goods) of the norm.

In terms of peace-building in Southeast Asia, this paper focuses on mediating civil wars and reorganizing states in Southeast Asia. Therefore, other peace-building theories and strategies are not included in this paper. Joakim Ö Jendal and Sivhuoch Ou analyzed the peace-building in Cambodia and believed that although peace-building promoted the deepening of

progressive peace, However, there are still deep-rooted tensions hindering the progress and development of the country (Öjendal & Ou, 2013) Sungyong Lee and wookbeom Park analyzed the Democratic situation in Cambodia from the perspective of local transformation of peace-building. First, they pointed out that the change of local political structure in post-war peace-building may be faster and more radical than the peace-building envisaged by academic researchers. Secondly, local actors (including political elites and citizens) promote social change. This dynamic process may be created in various ways. Cambodian social actors put forward different democratization procedures, and this stage determines different situations of interaction (Lee & Park, 2020)

Dahlia Simangan compared peace-building in Cambodia, Kosovo, and East Timor. He pointed out that in Cambodia, local political elites use the legitimacy and justice of political institutions to pursue their political interests (Simangan, 2017). In Kosovo, the dominant local actors use the judiciary as a tool to retaliate against minorities. In East Timor, the local leadership abandoned the pursuit of justice and reconciled with the Indonesian government. In all cases, justice is either deprived or the expectations of local people are ignored for short-term interests (Dahlia, 2017).

Therefore, some scholars emphasize the localization and adaptation of norms and challenge mainstream peace-building that only emphasizes external norms. Both emphasize the important role of wisdom, courage, and compassionate non-violent principles in building a stable peace process (Curle, 1994) However, the difference between the two is how to find the balance point between foreign norms and localization of norms, To achieve lasting peace (Lopes & Theisohn, 2003; Shinoda, 2008; Boonpunth, & Saheem, 2022)

Before the analysis of this paper, it is necessary to clarify the definition of some concepts. First, about political authority. According to Max Weber, the formation, governance, and domination of any organization are based on a certain authority. Proper authority can eliminate chaos and bring order; An organization without authority will not be able to achieve its organizational goals. He proposed three formal forms of political domination and authority, namely, traditional authority, charismatic authority, and rational-legal authority.

This paper will take Acharya's normative circulation theory as the analysis basis and extend it. The traditional peace-building programs emphasize the dominance of external norms but often neglect the role of reflection on locality. This paper defines the three types of comprehensive authority and defines political authority as the identification of the legitimacy of political power. It is usually backed by political power, and based on the appeal of justice or personality, it produces a highly stable and reliable political influence and a power relationship of domination and obedience. It is the most effective expression of political power (Weber, 1997) Secondly, on the norms of peace-building. Peace usually refers to a state in which there is no war or other hostile acts. Peace can be divided into long-term stable positive peace and short-term fragile negative peace.

Research objectives

As an external norm, the goal of peace-building in this paper is not only to end the war and achieve short-term negative peace but also to eliminate potential war crises and achieve long-term positive peace. The localization of norms refers to the active construction of foreign

concepts by local actors (including controversy, framework, transplantation, and cultural selection), which results in the agreement between foreign concepts and domestic concepts and practices (Du, 2008). This paper argues that the degree of localization of norms can be examined from the two dimensions of normative adaptability and normative cognitive ability.

This paper attempts to take Myanmar and Cambodia as cases for analysis. The reason why Myanmar and Cambodia are compared is that Myanmar has maintained a strong national political authority since independence, so it has less localization of peace-building norms; Cambodia, on the other hand, has experienced national division. Its domestic political authority was initially shaped by the United Nations, which has largely localized the norms of peace-building. By comparing the interaction between the political authority and the localization of norms in the two states, we can find out the causal mechanism between the political authority and the localization of norms.

1. As a strong international norm, what is the practice of peace-building on land in Southeast Asia?

2. What role does the political elite play in the process of localization of foreign norms?

3. How do the adaptability and cognitive ability of political elites affect the localization of foreign norms?

The conceptual framework

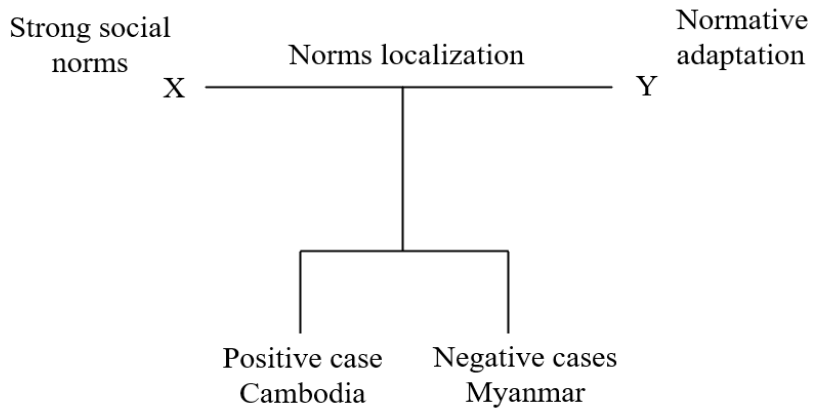


Figure 1 The analysis logic of comparing Myanmar and Cambodia
(self-drawn by the author)

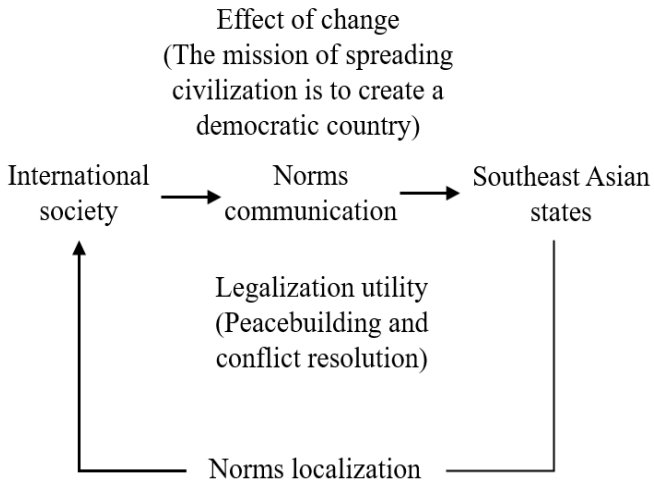


Figure 2 strong normative circulation model
(self-drawn by the author)

Research Hypothesis

Therefore, starting from the development of Southeast Asia after the cold war, this paper assumes that since peace-building is the collective expectation of the international community for a long time, peace-building has all the elements of strong norms. However, in the process of the strong localization of norms in Southeast Asian states, the adaptability and cognition of local actors to the localization of norms are different, so there will be several phenomena, as shown in Table 1:

1. When the local actors have strong adaptability to foreign norms and strong cognitive ability to foreign norms, there will be "greater localization of norms", which shows that the local actors understand the significance of the norms and have the ability to adapt to the norms
2. When the local actors have strong adaptability to foreign norms and weak cognitive ability to foreign norms, there will be "a small degree of localization of norms", indicating that the local actors may not understand the meaning of norms, but can adapt to the localization of foreign norms.
3. When local actors have weak adaptability to foreign norms and strong cognitive ability to foreign norms, there will be "national failure". "National failure" means that although the country understands the meaning of the norms, it cannot adapt to and bear the gap between the localization of the norms and the actual situation of the country.
4. When the adaptability of local actors to foreign norms and their cognitive ability to foreign norms are weak, it means that the local actors of the country will resist the localization of strong norms.

Table 1 Hypothesis of standardized localization actors (self-drawn by the author)

	Strong Adaptability to External Norms	Weak Adaptability to External Norms
Strong Cognitive Ability to External Norms	Norms Localization to a Large Extent	National Failure
Weak Cognitive Ability to External Norms	To a Lesser Extent, Norms, and Localization	Resist Strong International Social Norms

Methodology

Based on recognizing the importance and value of historical research, this paper compares existing research articles and books to analyze the current situation and evolution trend of political systems in the process of internalization of peacebuilding in Myanmar and Cambodia. Through the analysis of history, we can find the cause and effect clues in the relationship of various events, deduce the causes of the current situation of the system, and speculate on the future changes of the system.

The research method used in this paper is Qualitative Research, which is to study An object whose meaning is beyond its boundary and is typical of the objective world The method of actual description and theoretical analysis of the event. This means that a single case is always It can provide an extremely detailed display for a wider subject of academic interest. This takes Interaction, evolution, and specific scenarios derived from them, and theoretical inference based on them includes A centralized comparison based on case studies and case studies.

Based on the above analysis logic, this paper will compare the localization process of peacebuilding between Myanmar and Cambodia, and try to find out the trends and laws.

Results

In 1991, the Cambodian civil war ended and in 1992, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAAC) began its post-war reconstruction efforts to introduce the foreign norm of peace-building into Cambodia (Peou, 2000; Heininger, 1994). These liberals made a lot of attempts to localize foreign norms. Firstly, these liberal international organizations worked to integrate and transform the loose political forces within Cambodia to create a transparent and impartial domestic political authority to implement the domestication of foreign norms, which involved a wide range of policy areas, including policy formulation, implementation, and regulation, as well as dispute resolution and the development and transformation of administrative institutions.

To engage a wide range of local people in the process of localizing norms and to regulate domestic political authority, some international organizations such as the World Bank have developed a series of institutional frameworks to institutionalize external norms in local contexts, and these localized norms have been institutionalized into legal rules and regulations that take full account of the interests of local stakeholders (Sekiguchi & Hatstkano, 2013), and thus have survived over time. In addition to hard forms of external norm dissemination such as laws, these national organizations also undertake soft forms of norm dissemination such as organizing training and education.

For example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank regularly organize training courses for young people, women, and children and local leaders to promote international norms such as human rights, democracy, free elections, and civic participation (Ledgerwood & Un, 2003). As a result, local organizations such as the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights and the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association provide long-term analysis and monitoring of the policies and actions of the Cambodian government (Sperling, 2009) and ensure that local authorities in Cambodia effectively promote the localization of international norms in the long term. To promote the deepening of the localization of international norms, international organizations have established a series of local organizations at the community level, such as farmers' associations and women's information networks, which help local people to defend their interests and even support them in their opposition to the local government (political authority) when the government's actions are contrary to the localized international norms and cannot be resolved through legal means. The local organizations may even support the community in their campaign against the local government (political authority) when the government's actions are contrary to international norms and cannot be resolved through legal means (Boege et al., 2009).

The ability to establish effective institutions reflects the local capacity to adapt to external norms, while the development of civil society reflects the ability of the local population to recognize external norms. The process of localization of foreign norms in Cambodia can therefore be divided into three stages.

Stage I (1991 to around 2005): strong adaptive capacity, weak cognitive capacity, a lesser degree of normative indigenization

The Cambodian government has achieved a great deal in its first 15 years in terms of its ability to adapt to external norms, that is, in terms of home-grown institution-building. The democratic government, established with the help of external norms, has worked on three main themes: accountability, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights enacting a series of laws and establishing a large number of administrative structures to resolve conflicts and safeguard the interests of the people. Cambodia is one of the most dependent states in the world on external assistance, and the domestic authority established with the help of international organizations to obtain external assistance largely adhered to the agenda of external donors when formulating government policies and national laws in the 1990s and until 2001 Cambodia still calls it the best law in Cambodia (Chanboreth, & Hach, 2008; Hughes, 2009).

In terms of the ability to perceive external norms, i.e. the political participation of the Cambodian people, Cambodian civil society did not initially establish itself as a social organization independent of the government to guarantee democracy and freedom, but still showed a clear change, reflecting the Cambodian masses' greater ability to perceive external norms. The development of Cambodian people's awareness of external norms is concentrated on the understanding of democracy. In the 1990s, the war-torn Cambodian people understood democracy only in terms of security and the absence of violence and did not expect the government to solve the problems of the people's living standards (National Democratic Institute, 1996).

However, a 2003 study showed that nearly 70 percent of Cambodians believe that democracy should include freedom of expression, the guarantee of human rights, and free elections (The Asia Foundation, 2003). Furthermore, in terms of freedom of expression, Cambodians in the 1990s were reluctant to make political comments in public, fearing reprisals from political figures. Only a decade later, however, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of NGOs in Cambodia, almost half of which are engaged in localizing external norms, such as securing human rights for Cambodians, free elections, and relief for the needy. A large number of local Cambodians are involved. This shows that the Cambodian population has significantly increased its capacity to recognize external norms, but overall, awareness is still weak.

Stage 2 (2005 - 2015): strong adaptive capacity, strong cognitive ability, greater normative localization

After the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) strengthened its political authority through a military coup in 1997, Cambodia's growing domestic political authority, while not overturning established institutions, became selectively resistant to new institutional demands from external donors. The new institutional demands of external donors began to be selectively resisted. Cambodia's increased resistance to external norms is closely linked to China, which increased its economic aid to Cambodia around 2005, making it Cambodia's largest economic donor (Var, 2016). China's economic aid to Cambodia does not come with any strings attached or restrictions on the use of aid, as is the case in the West. As a result, Cambodia is more willing to accept Chinese aid, and the West is not building Cambodia's institutions as much as it used to (Touch, 2014).

In terms of awareness of external norms, the political participation of the Cambodian people has increased significantly and is of a high standard. The Cambodian people are acutely aware of the importance of democracy in external norms and expect democratic governance. People want elections to change the bad parts of government behavior. Since 2010, Cambodian people have organized a lot of peaceful demonstrations to protest against corruption in the government, and these protests have been the result of advocacy by local NGOs promoting external norms in Cambodia. In addition, the group of people involved in the localization of foreign norms is also growing, with an increasing number of Buddhist monks as well as farmers in rural areas (Fuller, 2013).

Another manifestation of the increased civic awareness of the population is the increasing demands on the government; whereas in 1991 the Cambodian people demanded

only that the government maintain peace and stability, around 2010 they demanded that the government ensure freedom and democracy for the people while also reducing corruption. The pace of institution building in Cambodia has not kept pace with the civic awakening of the people. In 2003, Cambodian people's satisfaction with the government was 76 percent; by 2014, this figure had fallen to 49 percent (The Asia Foundation, 2014).

Stage 3 (c. 2015 - present): weakened adaptive capacity, increased cognitive capacity, a trend towards state failure (negative mixed peace)

At the level of the adaptive capacity of external norms, the Cambodian government began to establish a series of new institutions to resist external norms, and the adaptive capacity of external norms was significantly reduced. In July 2015, the Cambodian National Assembly passed a new law that mandates the registration of domestic NGOs, allowing the government to stop the activities of any NGO and strengthen the regulation and restrictions on opposition political parties. However, there are no clear rules on how to limit government misconduct (Huang, Gu, & Lin, 2017).

In contrast, political participation in Cambodia has developed rapidly at the level of the perceived capacity of external norms. Many citizens first express themselves through legal channels, and when this does not work, they resort to collective appeals through NGOs (TIAdmin, 2012). The number of protests by victims of inappropriate government policies has grown, the groups involved have expanded from predominantly urban to rural areas, and the methods of struggle have evolved from unity with domestic groups to internal and external links with international organizations. A typical example is a general strike organized by Cambodian trade unions in 2014, where Cambodian workers united and contacted international organizations to put public pressure on the government, a strike that lasted four months, during which the Cambodian government could do nothing (Verkoren & Ngin, 2017).

The rapid development of external norms among the Cambodian population is mainly related to two factors: the development of social networking platforms, which have given the population wider access to information beyond the official media; and the fact that many NGOs and opposition figures have their online pages to expose government misconduct (Strangio, 2016). In addition, a new generation of youth born after the Cambodian civil war has begun to actively participate in social activism, demanding not only social stability but also a reduction in social unemployment and government corruption. This generation of young people has been educated from an early age on Western norms of liberal democracy and other foreign norms, and half of them are voting adults with a deep willingness for political change (Khemara, 2014).

As a result, peace in Cambodia presents a negative hybrid peace in which international norms are juxtaposed with local agents and foreign factors are mixed with local factors, neither liberal nor emancipatory (Simangan, 2018). Cambodia's peace-building has been generally successful, but in recent years it has become less robust and declining due to the complexity of various internal conflicts. In 1989, the name of the country was changed from Burma to Myanmar, and the Law and Order Restoration Council (LORC) was put in charge of the ethnic regions, with a ceasefire in place in the ethnic regions, officially starting the process of peace-building. Burma's peace-building process began in earnest.

Stage 1 (1989-2010): weak adaptive capacity, weak cognitive ability, and resistance to normative localization

In terms of adaptive capacity, the military ceasefire was not followed up by a process of political change or any institution building. Although the Su Maung government established three nationalisms and his successor Than Shwe began to establish the rule of law and enacted several laws, the extent of this was very limited. The ceasefire in some areas was followed by an increasing number of troops, and the increased local military presence led to the government violating people's lives and property, seizing their fields, and forcing them to work. Instead of creating new institutions, the Burmese military government has gone on a rampage to trample on basic institutional safeguards. The Burmese defense junta set up a series of companies for economic gain and was unwilling to make any political system changes (Kramer, 2018). In the 1990 general election, the military government lost to the domestic opposition NLD, but it resisted condemnation by external norms and refused to surrender state power.

This changed in 2003 when the government proposed a seven-step plan to return power to the people. In July 2005, under pressure from external norms (both ASEAN and international), Myanmar's Foreign Minister U Win Aung announced at an ASEAN meeting that Myanmar would promulgate a new constitution to effectively promote democratization. In 2010, Myanmar enacted five laws on general elections. In terms of cognitive capacity, civic political participation in Myanmar remains at a low level, and while the basic security of life in the country has been ensured since the end of the war in 1989, and civil society organizations have gained some scope for development (Kramer, 2011), actual development has been limited. Due to the low level of localization of external norms in Myanmar and the absence of local social organizations to resist government misconduct, international sanctions against Myanmar for breaches of international norms (Pouligny, 2005).

Such as democracy and human rights have tended to be external and direct, rather than a combination of domestic and international organizations opposing the government, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations Development Programme in response to the military government's refusal to hand over power after the 1990 elections. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations Development Programme, for example, directly punished Burma for refusing to provide loans and economic aid after the military government refused to hand over power after the 1990 elections, with no response from domestic social organizations. Isolated by Western international norms, Myanmar turned to ASEAN, which accepted Myanmar as a member in 1997 and incorporated Myanmar into the ASEAN regional normative framework, while providing substantial economic assistance and investment projects (Askandar, 2005).

In 2007, the military government raised the prices of essential goods such as gas and oil, making it difficult for the poor to make ends meet, so people took to the streets and marched in protest against the government's actions, which the military government brutally suppressed - the Saffron Revolution. But until the 2010 elections, there was still little sense of civil society in Burma. The largest opposition party, the NLD, which had received significant popular support, gave up its right to contest the election, and the junta's USDP won the election easily with resources provided by the military government. There was little protest from the Burmese

people in the process, and many even supported the USDP because of the medical resources and micro-credits it relied on government resources to provide. The root cause of this is that the basic needs of the Burmese people are not well met, so naturally, they cannot talk about democracy and freedom top of this (Owen, 2010).

Stage 2 (2011-2020): strong adaptive capacity, weak cognitive capacity, a lesser degree of normative localization

In terms of adaptability, the Myanmar government has initiated a degree of institution-building since 2011, and during the administration of Thein Sein, the first democratically elected government from 2011-2016, a lot of institutional changes were made in compliance with the requirement to localize external norms. In terms of the political system, he amended the electoral law to allow opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who had a history of imprisonment, to run for political office. He also made changes to the media system, abolishing a series of political censorship of the media and granting freedom of expression to the people (BBC NEWS, 2012). On ethnic issues, Thein Sein's government has initiated peace talks with local ethnic armed groups and has institutionalized the National Ceasefire Agreement, which promises local autonomy to ethnic groups. In 2016, the NLD succeeded in taking over state power from the USDP, reflecting the first results of Myanmar's democratization reforms (Debiel, Held, & Schneckener, 2016).

In terms of cognitive capacity, citizen political participation in Myanmar remains low. Before Aung San Suu Kyi's rule, only 34 percent of households had access to electricity, and even though Aung San Suu Kyi's '12-point economic policy' had achieved excellent results in developing the economy (Thant, 2021), the basic livelihoods of Myanmar's population were still not fully secured during this period, and it is not possible to expect her to have a deep understanding of civil society. civil society. The Burmese population does not have a high level of acceptance of international norms such as human rights and freedoms. According to the UN, by 2019, the number of Rohingya refugees implicated in the war had reached 900,000 (The UN Refugee Agency, 2019). In the face of the atrocities committed by the Burmese army against the Rohingya, the NLD government, which was in power at the time, along with the general Burmese public, collectively lost their voices and remained silent. The NLD government has repeatedly compromised with the military in dealing with the human rights of ethnic minorities in Burma, and the Burmese public has no objection to this.

Stage 3 (2021-present): weak adaptive capacity, strong cognitive capacity, state failure

In terms of adaptive capacity, the Burmese government has not completed “democratic consolidation” and is showing an institutional decline in terms of institution building. In Huntington's definition of “democratic consolidation”, the peaceful transfer of power after the 2015 elections may be symbolic of a democratic system, but the real test of the quality of a democratic system (i.e. whether it is consolidated) will be the peaceful transfer of power after the 2020 elections. In 2021, the defense forces overthrew the National League for Democracy ("NLD") government and formed a new government headed by Min Aung Hlaing. The NDF declared the 2020 general election fraudulent and overturned the previous electoral system (i.e. simple majority) in favor of a new electoral system (i.e. proportional representation), and amended a lot of previous laws and regulations. At the same time, a new government was

formed by the NLD, leaving two parallel and opposing governments in Myanmar (Jitpiromsri, Haque, & Chambers, 2021).

ASEAN norms, as an external norm, also punished the Myanmar chaos after it occurred. The spillover effects of the chaos in Myanmar have affected regional stability in Southeast Asia and violated ASEAN's institutional normative framework. As a result, ASEAN did not invite Myanmar's leader Min Aung Hlaing to the ASEAN Summit in 2021. In contrast to ASEAN's soft punishments, the West has imposed several rounds of tough economic sanctions on Myanmar and put pressure on the military government through the UN (The European Parliament, 2021). While Western sanctions have failed to address the situation in Myanmar and international norms have failed, ASEAN, with its dynamic and flexible regional normative framework, has put forward a 'five-point consensus' that has led the military government to take concrete action to ensure that the situation in Myanmar does not deteriorate further (Sochan, 2022).

In terms of cognitive capacity, the level of civic political participation in Myanmar has increased significantly and is at a high level, with an unprecedented rise in enthusiasm following the junta coup in 2020. In contrast to the parallelism of the two governments, the response of the Burmese people has been polarised, with peaceful and violent means intertwined. Those who support the military have taken to the streets in solidarity, while those who support the NLD have expressed their discontent with the military government through soft means such as strikes, market strikes, and school strikes (UN News, 2022).

The lack of civic awareness has often led to extreme violence and terrorist attacks (The United Nations). Unlike previous civic engagement activities, civil society activism in Myanmar from 2020 to the present has been fragmented and loosely based on the lack of political party leaders, and due to the popularity of the internet in Myanmar, online opinion leaders have become the real offline leaders of civic activism in Myanmar. As a result of the political instability and the impact of the new crown epidemic, Myanmar's economy has been decimated and a large number of people have been laid off and unemployed (International Labour Organization, 2021). These unemployed people have also become involved in political activism and expressed their interests.

Discussions

We discuss the localization of peace-building from two aspects. From the perspective of ASEAN regional norms, the peace-building process in Cambodia generally conforms to international norms, and ASEAN has not received any pressure from Western states to interfere, so ASEAN norms have been the icing on the cake in promoting regional peace and stability and providing economic assistance in the process of localizing foreign norms in Cambodia; however, the peacebuilding process in Myanmar has often been criticized by international norms due to a series of hard-line and uncooperative behavior by the military government.

However, the peace-building process in Myanmar has often come under fire from international norms due to a series of uncooperative actions by the military government. It is the flexibility of ASEAN regional norms to mediate that has made possible a lesser degree of normative domestication in Myanmar in the period 2011-2020.

From the perspective of international norms, during the peace-building process in Cambodia, there was little resistance to the dissemination and localization of international norms, and it was easy to localize norms and establish a new order on the ruins of war. The contradiction between the people's significantly increased cognitive capacity and their weak ability to adapt to foreign norms, and between the enthusiasm of citizens for political participation and the backwardness of institutional development, has exacerbated the unrest in Burma and made state failure inevitable (Ginty, 2011).

From the above two aspects, we can find that as two "unstable" countries after the cold war, Myanmar and Cambodia have some common characteristics in internalizing the norms of peacebuilding. When ASEAN norms are consistent with the norms of peacebuilding, political elites are more able to accept the transformation from strong external norms. Positive circulation promotes the stable development of the country, and Cambodia has become a successful case.

When the ASEAN norms and the peace-building norms are mutually exclusive, the political elites are more inclined to abide by the ASEAN norms. However, this led to the disconnection between the cognition of the political elite and the society, and the rapid decline in the adaptation to foreign norms, which led to the gradual failure of the country, and Myanmar became a failure case. We believe that the cognitive ability of the political elite and the ability to adapt to external norms have an impact on the country's internal.

Conclusion and suggestions

By comparing the process of localization of the norms of peacebuilding in Myanmar and Cambodia, we find that the cognitive ability of political elites and their ability to adapt to foreign norms (receptivity) largely determine whether the norms can bring about national stability.

In addition, based on the previous theory of norm localization, this paper further finds that if foreign norms want to play a role in an "unstable" country, they should not only consider interest groups, political parties, or the public but also pay attention to the political elite. Our reason is that the political elites have enough political authority and decision-making ability (power), so to some extent, they are the representatives of the country, which is the key to determining whether the external norms can continue to be deeply localized or limited. In addition, external norms often involve important issues, such as national stability, general political groups, interest groups, etc., which have no way to directly affect the decision-making process. From a point of view, our research can effectively explain the reasons for the failure and success of Myanmar and Cambodia.

On the whole, the peace-building process in Cambodia, which began in 1991, was a success, while the peace-building process in Myanmar, which began in 1989, was a failure. The reasons for this can be considered in several ways: firstly, from the perspective of domestic authority, Cambodia did not have a strong political authority in the post-war period, which was established by the UN with the support of international norms, and the post-war recovery required significant assistance from international organizations, which were naturally unwilling and unable to resist external norms (including international and ASEAN norms).

We believe that although the norms of the international community are very important to Southeast Asia, this does not mean that Southeast Asian states must fully conform to the expectations of the international community. Southeast Asian states must maintain their characteristics.

New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

This research is to create new knowledge. By comparing the results of the internalization of the international norm of peacebuilding in Myanmar and Cambodia, we come to a different view from the mainstream. In the process of localization, strong foreign norms must cooperate with local political elites to effectively change the behavior of the country. As an intermediary, political elites' cognitive ability and adaptability largely determine the path and way of standardization internalization. Our hypothesis can provide Southeast Asian states with a new perspective to rethink the significance of peacebuilding. At the same time, peace-building in the process of localization will not necessarily increase the stability of Southeast Asian states, but will greatly weaken the country's ability to maintain order. This result highlights the role of ASEAN norms in safeguarding the autonomy of Southeast Asian states.

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