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# ADAPTABILITY OF ASEAN STATES POLITICAL SECURITY NORMS IN THE POST COLD WAR UNDER A THEORY OF SOCIAL EVOLUTION ANALYSIS

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**Abstract**

This paper attempts to explain the changes in the adaptation of ASEAN states to security norms since the cold war. After the end of the cold war, the ASEAN states did not immediately adopt the ASEAN Framework for security cooperation, but still followed a certain degree of survival instinct. With the strengthening of ASEAN normative power, the situation of security cooperation between Southeast Asia and other major states in the region has begun to be dominated by ASEAN. This change has not only led to changes in the security habits of ASEAN states but also prompted ASEAN states to gradually adapt to the security norms based on the ASEAN Framework. The changes in the adaptability of ASEAN states to security norms illustrate the fact that ASEAN norms are spread from another perspective, and also show the reasons why ASEAN can advance towards a security community.

**Keywords:** Social Evolution, ASEAN Norms, Security Norms, Southeast Asia, ASEAN Way

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## Introduction

Regulation has always been an important issue in international politics. The main idealism of early times was how to build an international community that could avoid war. As an integration cooperation organization in Southeast Asia, ASEAN dominates the political, economic, cultural, and other orders of Southeast Asia. As a security norm, the ASEAN norms are characterized by a decision-making process characterized by high consultation, wide consensus, and an autonomous, informal, and non-confrontation-based regional cooperation process, which is mostly used on issues such as non-use of force, peaceful dispute settlement, regional autonomy, and collective self-help (Acharya, 2004: 239-257). However, many scholars still question the effectiveness of the ASEAN norms, and this paper holds that ASEAN norms whether a specification is effective by complying with thrust (a kind of compliance pull), and although the actor may choose to violate the rule or norm, it can survive if it retains a sense of status (or a sense of standing). Compliance with thrust causes the offender to develop a legitimate strategy (Justificatory Strategy) for their behavior. Even if someone has violated it, it entices actors to follow rules or norms in the future (Price, 2021: 161-165). According to the definition of Price, we can regard ASEAN Way as the ASEAN norms.

However, at present, the academic community has less considered the adaptability of Southeast Asian states to ASEAN norms. Since the end of the Cold War, ASEAN has covered most Southeast Asian states, but why does it still have synchronized synchronization in security cognition? The close connection between ASEAN from the end of the Cold War to the present day shows that in the process of adaptation to ASEAN norms in Southeast Asian states in the post-cold war period, there should be a change from an adaptation to a great adaptation. Proposing a kind of analytical framework, this paper will explain the changing process of norms adaptation in ASEAN states, which is reflected in the change in security concepts. However, the ASEAN norms are manifested by the informal system, and the academic community has not concluded whether the security concept of ASEAN states is influenced by the ASEAN norms.

This paper will examine the concept of legal adaptability with the definition of Philippe Bourbeau's concept of resilience. Philippe Bourbeau defines normative fitness as resilience, which can be divided into three aspects: the first is maintenance, which consumes resources and energy to maintain the status quo; the second is marginality, which means that the actor responds within the boundaries of current policies, norms, or social structure; the last is a renewal, which changes existing policy assumptions, sets new governance goals and reshapes social structure (Bourbeau, 2013: 3-17). We define normative adaptability as whether a specification can strike a balance between flexibility and stability, and presents a certain nature of "maintaining the status quo", "positive response" and "reshaping the social structure".

## Literature Review

Because of the adaptability of ASEAN security norms this paper can be roughly divided into two categories: "research on ASEAN norms" and "research on adaptability". In the first category of research, Amitav Acharya discussed the constructivism of the politics, economy, and security of Southeast Asia, and proposed the concept of a "security community". He believes that the construction of identity and norms makes ASEAN one of the most successful regional organizations in developing states (Acharya, 2005: 95-98). Other scholars have analyzed ASEAN as a security community from different perspectives (Collins, 1999: 95-114; Acharya, 2005: 85-118). In terms of political economy, many scholars believe that ASEAN is mainly an institution of economic integration, and economic cooperation will lead to political cooperation. They discussed the political and economic and historical changes in Southeast Asia with ASEAN as the center (Askandar, Bercowtch & Oishi, 2002: 25; Stubbs, 2008: 451-455; Rüland, 2011: 91-93; Ishikawa, 2021: 24-30). The above scholars have analyzed the

connection between ASEAN and ASEAN norms from different perspectives, but they lack the investigation of safety norms in different periods of Southeast Asia and the analysis of the transmission power of ASEAN norms.

To sum up, in addition to focusing more on the EU, most scholars still cannot explain how the adaptability of norms changes. Scholars only believe that the adaptive changes come from the passive acceptance of external shocks, such as the refugee issues and the European debt crisis. In addition, scholars do not explain how individuals (or states) adapt to collective (or community) norms, and how this adaptive transition process occurs. On the whole, neither foreign scholars nor Chinese scholars can well explain why the adaptation of ASEAN norms, and how a country changes its security concept in the process of adapting to the norms. At present, scholars have no way to explain the correlation between national autonomy and normative adaptability. Based on this, this paper will analyze the adaptability changes of ASEAN states in the post-Cold War period to make up for the lack of academic research on normative adaptability.

### **Research Objectives**

Specification adaptability refers to whether a specification can strike a balance between flexibility and stability, showing a certain nature of "maintaining the status quo", "positive response" and "reshaping the social structure". How a state adapts to a norm is largely reflected in whether the national security concept is affected by this norm and then changes. However, in the process of adapting to the norms, the country has a certain autonomy. This autonomy is also closely related to the external environment, so this paper will take Tang's (唐世平) theory of Social Evolution as the analytical framework to discuss the causal relationship between the change in the external environment and the autonomy of the country's adaptation to norms.

- 1) How did the security adaptability of ASEAN states change after the cold war?
- 2) Why ASEAN states' security behaviors are getting closer?
- 3) Why do ASEAN states gradually take the whole ASEAN (altruism) as a consideration to adapt to security norms?

### **Research Methodology**

This paper uses the process tracking method to try to find the causal mechanism within the case of the adaptation of Southeast Asia states in ASEAN norms. The process tracks have four tests at the operational level, nominally, case selection, tracking mechanism, situation conditions, and evidence testing the four tests point to the same purpose: on the one hand, explain the changes in specific cases on a case-by-case basis, and on the other hand, leave enough room for generalization and application of the refined causal hypothesis.

- 1) Are ASEAN states' security behaviors consistent with Social Evolution theory?
- 2) How did ASEAN states' perceptions and choices of security norms change after the cold war?
- 3) When ASEAN states choose the security norm community of collective identity (altruism), how do they consider it?

### **Concept Framework**

The changes in the adaptability to security norms will be reflected in the interaction between security concepts and international structure and ASEAN, so the adaptability of ASEAN states has four situations; altruism or altruism in the international structure, and egoism or altruism in the ASEAN framework.

	<b>Self-egoism under the ASEAN framework</b>	<b>Altruism under the ASEAN framework</b>
Self-interest in the international community (Individual survival instinct)	China focuses on its security concept, and ASEAN norms are only partially observed. (The Loose Security Alliance)	The country focuses on its security concept, and the influence of ASEAN norms has increased. (The Loose Security Community)
Altruism in the international community (Collective survival instinct)	States focus on each other's security concepts, and ASEAN norms have been observed. (Close Security Alliance)	States mainly focus on mutual security concepts, and ASEAN norms have become a system. (Close Security Community)

**Figure 1** Concept Framework

### **Research Hypothesis**

Tang proposed a theory of Social Evolution in his book "The Social Evolution of International Politics from 8,000 BC to the Future". He believed that the impetus of the international structural transition was consistent with the survival mechanism of biology, and so he redefined the "variation" - "selection" - "genetic" mechanism of biology.

In terms of "variation" mechanisms, he regarded the idea of specific institutional arrangements as genes and institutions as a genetic phenotype. Since the germination of ideas involves consciousness, the mutation in Social Evolution in the concept dimension (that is, the new concept) is not random, but the concept produced by the individual (state) based on solving specific problems and striving for specific goals.

In terms of the "choice" mechanism, Tang believes that when the state chooses new or old ideas, who can be chosen is based mainly on the judgment of the person in power. Existing ideas, especially those that have been dogmatic, often have the power to support them and have a huge impact on the new ideas (genetic) adaptability.

In terms of "genetic" mechanisms, he believes that there is no obstacle that the genes (such as ideas) and phenotypes (such as institutions, and culture) of acquired traits can be passed directly on to the next generation. At the same time, genetic mechanisms are divided into two types. One is longitudinal inheritance, which occurs within individuals and continuously forms groups with consolidated genes with the help of historical memory and education. The other is lateral inheritance, which occurs among individuals and is formed by constantly receiving external unsafe signals (Tang, 2017: 90-100).

- 1) From the end of the Cold War to the signing of the ASEAN Charter in 2003 is a period of "mutation". There are two conceptual groups within ASEAN member states: "states that follow the individual survival instinct" and "states that obey the ASEAN framework". These conceptual groups gradually transform their ideas into foreign policy, forming two traits, namely, "loose security alliance" and "close security alliance". These two traits also represent different situations that ASEAN states are adaptable to security norms and are more adapted to a certain nature of security norms. "Free security alliance" is more adaptable to "the flexibility of ASEAN norms"; "close security alliance" is more adapted to "ASEAN norms and stability".
- 2) Signing of the ASEAN Charter in 2007 to the construction document of the ASEAN Political and Security Community in 2015, belongs to the role period of the "choice" mechanism. The change in international structure promotes the gradual expansion of the advantages of choosing "states that obey the ASEAN framework", and the expansion of the advantages drive the spread of ASEAN norms. It also symbolizes the victory of the "close security alliance" adapted to the "norms and stability of ASEAN" in the competition for survival, and moving towards the "loose security community".

3) From the introduction of the construction document of the ASEAN Political and Security Community in 2015 to the promulgation of the Will of the ASEAN Community after 2025 in 2020, it belongs to the function period of the "genetic" mechanism. The behavior of "states that follow the ASEAN framework" gradually became a habit and circulated among ASEAN members in the form of historical memory.

## Results

After the end of the Cold War, the external environment changed dramatically, and global economic and technological cooperation flourished. At the beginning of the end of the Cold War, the large European market and the North American Free Trade Area have initially taken shape. The mutation of the external environment has made the concept of Southeast Asian states "change" and a new concept appear. In addition to the original concept of compliance with the survival instinct, the concept of compliance with the ASEAN framework has also emerged. Once states comply with the framework of ASEAN, ASEAN has normative powers, and becomes the advocate and convergence of norms (norm brewery) (Katsumata, 2006: 181-185).

A typical text of the "variation" in this concept is the Singapore Declaration (Singapore Declaration Of 1992 Singapore) signed by ASEAN states in January 1992. In terms of the political and security cooperation framework, the Singapore Declaration embodies the expansion of horizontal and vertical ASEAN security norms. On the longitudinal extension of the ASEAN norms, The Singapore Declaration encourages Southeast Asian states and ASEAN states to join the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in Southeast Asia; On the lateral extension of the ASEAN specification, The Singapore Declaration stressed the need to play not only the role of the ASEAN Ministerial Conference in strengthening internal exchanges among ASEAN states, Moreover, we should take ASEAN as a platform, To include states from outside the region into the ASEAN security cooperation framework, Strengthening the stability of ASEAN security norms, Even if complete security cooperation among ASEAN states, However, ASEAN can use this platform to achieve security cooperation with some states outside the region, If there is a sovereignty dispute between the Philippines and Vietnam in the Nansha Islands, The degree of cooperation between the two states is extremely limited, The Philippines also expects to cooperate with major powers outside the region. As a result, some altruism in the international structure and self-interest among the states within ASEAN has emerged (Capie, 2012: 75-78; Kawasaki, 2006: 219-222).

ASEAN has also been committed to expanding the effectiveness of the ASEAN institutional framework and striving to shape a regional security environment with the ASEAN Regional Forum. For example, the chairman of the second ASEAN Regional Forum in 1995 called on ASEAN to be the core driving force of Asia-Pacific cooperation. In addition, the concept of survival instinct and refusal to join the institutional framework remains strong. Take Myanmar as an example. Although Myanmar joined ASEAN in 1997, and ASEAN has tried to make constructive contact with it, Myanmar has always been resistant to ASEAN norms and systems and has refused to cooperate with ASEAN states, which has seriously damaged ASEAN international status. In the first decade of joining ASEAN, Myanmar preferred to cooperate with other states outside the region (such as India) rather than with ASEAN states under the ASEAN framework (Acharya, 1997: 319-322; Nischalke, 2002: 95-100; Majumdar, 2015: 79-82).

After Myanmar accedes to ASEAN, the diplomatic exchanges and cooperation talks between India and Myanmar continue to heat up. In 2000, Myanmar Vice President Chiang Chiang visited India; in 2001, Indian Foreign Minister Singh; in 2003, Indian Vice President Ali Shekavat, and in 2004, Myanmar President Dan of State met to hold consultations on strengthening political security and economic cooperation. During this period, India and

Myanmar have carried out joint military exercises and intelligence exchange work in the traditional security field, as well as specific cooperation in the non-traditional security field. At this time, among ASEAN states, the two concepts of following the survival instinct and following the ASEAN framework are being balanced (Jürgen, 2009: 427-430; Sukma, 2012: 140-142).

Changes in the external environment make the "variant" concept of adhering to the ASEAN framework continue to grow. The Asian financial crisis in 1997 swept across Southeast Asian states, which seriously threatened the political security and social security of Southeast Asia and other states, thus endangering the economic and security cooperation of all states. The financial crisis has strengthened the determination of all states to cooperate within the ASEAN framework and maintain the norms and stability of ASEAN. In December 1997, the ASEAN Summit adopted the ASEAN Vision 2020 through consensus, pointing out that ASEAN should be built into a friendly, closely connected, open and stable community by 2020. The Bali second agreement declaration proposed to build an ASEAN community in 2020, ASEAN community by ASEAN security community, ASEAN economic community, and ASEAN social and cultural community in three parts, the three final pursuits respectively to give up the use of force to resolve disputes with each other, realize the ASEAN regional economic integration and the Southeast Asia region into a friendly community. The concept document of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Conference (ADMM) in 2006 reiterated that ASEAN should be used as a core driving force for regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. In January 2007, ASEAN states advanced the establishment of the ASEAN community at the 12<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in 2015. In the survival instinct and the "mutation", the latter has gradually gained the upper hand (Acharya, 2005: 95-100; Easton & Stubbs, 2006: 135-140).

Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the external environment has changed again, the process of economic globalization has accelerated, and China, India, and other economies have risen rapidly. External environment changes "choice" obeys the ASEAN framework this concept can continue to exist, with the horizontal transmission and longitudinal transmission of ASEAN norms, and ASEAN specification internationalization and international norms of ASEAN interaction, observing the concept are better than following the concept of survival instinct, which is a stable specification of close security alliance than a flexible specification of the loose security alliance. ASEAN states are deeply aware of the importance of accelerating the process of regional integration and strengthening cooperation within the ASEAN framework, giving ASEAN a stable framework of norms and rules and a more efficient and simplified decision-making process (Acharya & Stubbs, 2006: 126-130; Lee, 2010: 497-502; Jones, 2014: 367-369).

In November 2007, at the 13<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, ASEAN leaders signed the ASEAN Charter, which officially came into force the following year. The ASEAN Charter affirms the construction of the ASEAN community in terms of norms and institutions. When the ASEAN Community is built, it will give Southeast Asian states a collective identity and act on this basis to meet external challenges together (Acharya & Stubbs, 2006: 125-134). The introduction of the ASEAN Charter marks that the external environment makes ASEAN states choose to abide by the concept of the ASEAN framework. ASEAN states have established close security alliances with stability and norms and evolved towards a loose security community. The changes in ASEAN security norms are embodied in ASEAN elaboration on building a political and security community. In February 2009, ASEAN states signed the Roadmap for Building the ASEAN Community for 2009-2015, which provides detailed plans for the construction of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community. Among them, the part of the ASEAN Political and Security Community is called the "ASEAN Political-Security Community Building blueprint" (ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint). The blueprint emphasizes that the ASEAN Community should be normative and stable. Especially, it is the stability of external norms,

that is, emphasizing that in the exchanges between ASEAN lies in states outside the region, we should maintain the "central position of ASEAN in ASEAN", carry out cooperation between ASEAN states and foreign states under the framework of ASEAN inclusive system, and make every effort to promote the building of an ASEAN community by 2015 (Li & Zheng, 2021: 82-84; Sukma, 2012: 150-152).

In November 2015, ASEAN states issued the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Building the ASEAN Community and the ASEAN Community 2025: Moving Forward Together at the ASEAN Summit 27<sup>th</sup>, announcing the successful establishment of the ASEAN Community by the end of the year and planning the development route of the ASEAN Community to 2025. This marks the completion of the evolution of ASEAN from a close security alliance with stable norms in the ASEAN Charter in 2007 to the characteristics of a significantly loose security community in 2015. In the specific diplomatic practice, ASEAN states have evolved from cooperating with states outside the region without cooperating with ASEAN states to giving priority to cooperation with ASEAN states, with the help of "ASEAN central status" rather than bypassing ASEAN cooperation with states outside the region (Beeson, 2009: 333-343; Hsueh, 2016: 27-66; Ishikawa, 2021: 24-41).

In November 2020, At the 37<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, ASEAN states issued the ASEAN Community Post-2025 Vision Hanoi Declaration, the declaration is made against the ASEAN Declaration, Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, the ASEAN Charter, the ASEAN Indo-Pacific Outlook and the reiterating of a series of ASEAN norms, emphasis stressed the importance of ASEAN in safeguarding regional peace and security and promoting regional cooperation and development. From March 31, 2022, to April 1, the ASEAN community vision after 2025 working group held the first meeting in the ASEAN secretariat, 2022 vision implementation, and specific implementation plan, emphasizing ASEAN should focus on regional traditional security and non-traditional security, regional cooperation under the system framework, ASEAN community to take concerted action to meet various challenges. It is foreseeable that although ASEAN will still encounter various setbacks and challenges in the future, these challenges cannot prevent ASEAN cooperative security from evolving from a loose security community to a close security community (Loh, 2018: 385-402; Yukawa, 2018: 305).

## Conclusion & Discussion

By analyzing the adaptation of Southeast Asian states to ASEAN norms after the Cold War, this paper finds that the adaptation of Southeast Asian states to ASEAN norms is consistent with the path of Social Evolution. First, at the end of the Cold War, ASEAN states only followed the concept of survival instinct, both in the international structure and the ASEAN framework, they adopted self-selfish cooperation. At this time, ASEAN was a loose security alliance that adopted flexible norms. The release of the Singapore Declaration in 1992 marked the birth of the new variant concept of -- compliance with the ASEAN framework. The 1994 ASEAN Regional Forum showed a balanced situation between old ideas and new variant ideas. Subsequently, after the 1997 financial crisis, the ASEAN Vision 2020, the Second Bali Accord Declaration in 2003, and the ASEAN Summit in January 2007, the community-building time was advanced to 2015, and the concept of compliance with the ASEAN framework has gradually enhanced, and the adaptability of ASEAN states to ASEAN norms has also strengthened with the signing of a series of documents. We believe that as Southeast Asian states become more and more adaptable, ASEAN will institutionalize ASEAN norms and bind them to ASEAN central position in the future. ASEAN will form a real political-security community.

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