10th semester thesis - European Studies

Post-liberal statebuilding paradigm and Normative Power Europe: case of the EU and Cambodia

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Abstract

The European Union (EU) is a global actor that has ties, relationships, and cooperation agreements with various states around the world, especially active on the front of developmental aid towards fragile states. This project will take a closer look at the relationship between the EU and Cambodia. The EU and Cambodia has a cooperative partnership spanning from the late 90s to the present, while some individual EU member states have an even longer relationship with Cambodia. A particular focus will be placed on the events that led to the partial suspension of the Everything but Arms (EBA) agreement between the EU and Cambodia, which was due to the lack of progress on the subject of human rights, labor rights, and environmental protection, as well as the dissolving of the government's opposing party and jailing of political opponents in Cambodia.

Starting with the methodology chapter, which accounts for epistemological and ontological considerations of this project, this will explain the choices on the research design and other considerations, followed by a chapter on theory. It is worth mentioning that a working definition of fragile states will be accounted for as well, drawing from a variety of terms in the contested understanding of fragile states. Theory will utilize Ian Manners' normative power Europe (NPE) approach, in combination with the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm suggested by David Chandler. Following the account of what NPE and post-liberal statebuilding is and does, is a synthesis proposing a synergy between the two approaches. The two approaches and their theoretical thoughts and tools will be applied to the investigation of the EU - Cambodia relationship. A particular focus will be on the explanation of why the significant norm diffusions over an extended period of partnership did not have a strong effect that encouraged change. Finally, the conclusion will not only sum up the findings and discuss the potentially improved explanatory power of the two approaches by combining them. It will also discuss both potential future research and general considerations when approaching research regarding statebuilding and NPE in the future, with a particular focus on reconsiderations and different viewpoints when it comes to international relations and the study of them. In terms of future research, this paper's advice for a direction is within the changes of developmental aid within the EU's new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027.

Introduction

The European Union – it has no seat in the United Nations, nor direct presence in any of the other major inter-governmental organizations. It does not have a standing army or the capacity to project hard power in a way that could tip the global balance of power. It covers just 2.8 percent of land surface, yet consists of 27 member states (Howorth, 2010, p. 458). It does not have 'sovereignty' in any conventional traditional Westphalian sense, both internally or externally, and it cannot be remotely considered a 'world power' in a traditional understanding of world power. However, in academia the EU is often described as a global actor that is able to influence the course and action of international relations, and even arguably the course of history of the 21st century (Howorth, 2010, p. 458).

The EU is being referred to as one of the two superpowers (Hettne et al., 2008), as an empire (Zielonka, 2008) or *just* a global actor (to name a few: Rhinard & Sjostedt 2019; Langenhove 2010; Bretherton & Vogler, 2002). The scholarly body discussing the EU's 'actorness' in the global world is vast, and even if debates are more often than not centered around 'to what extent' the EU is acting, it seems that there is more or less consensus of the EU being a global actor. So, like a global actor, the EU would be expected to have a its foreign policy clearly stated. This is not the case, and using the words of Pierre Vimont, a former senior French and EU diplomat, who served as the Executive Secretary-General of the European External Action Service: "The EU does not have a real 'European foreign policy'" (Szalai, 2019). It is primarily due to every individual member state also acting as its own actor in the international arena, and a lack of wish from member states to give full responsibility to the EU's High Representative (Szalai, 2019).

Yet, even without a defined foreign policy, the EU is seen as an exporter of rule of law and good governance in the international arena. One way to explain what role the EU has in the international arena, is presented by Ian Manners, in his 2002 work "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?". In that work, Manners discusses what the EU is in terms of normative power, and how the EU diffuses those norms in the international arena (Manners, 2002).

Others, on the other hand, tried approaching the EU in terms of global presence and action applying the statebuilding theory; be it statebuilding through good governance (Hout 2013), discussing EU statebuilding strategies in the Western Balkans (Bieber, 2011), or comparing the EU's statebuilding policies between Sri Lanka and Serbia (Glasius & Kostovicova, 2008).

However, regardless of which way within academia one is looking, it seems that statebuilding has evaded the normative power Europe approach, and vice versa. While often, even in the articles and works mentioned above, one sees mentions of good governance, rule of law, or democracy, it is never in an in-depth sense such as Manners offers in the understanding of the EU as a normative power. On the other hand, while Manners' concepts did offer a new agenda for the study of the EU in the international relations, spawning multiple articles that deal with the EU as a normative power (Juncos 2011; Pace 2007; Rosamond 2014), Manners never truly cemented the paradigms, or concepts through which, for example, power or sovereignty should be understood when working with the normative power Europe approach. Therefore, this project will work on trying to find the synergy between international statebuilding and normative power Europe, to offer a new lens through which to look at the EU's external actions and cooperation with third parties. To be more specific, the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm, suggested by David Chandler (2010) will be utilized with the normative power Europe approach, as the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm argues that to effectively explain relations of supra/international institutions and organizations with states, reconsiderations of the traditional liberal notions need to be undertaken. Which leads us to our question:

How can the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm and the normative power Europe approach work together? A case of the EU's influence on Cambodia, and partial withdrawal of EBA.

Here, we have chosen the EU and Cambodia as a prime case upon which a synergy between the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm and the normative power Europe approach will be applied. First, Cambodia and the EU has a longstanding partnership in a variety of fields. Second, over the past years, the relationship between the EU and Cambodia has deteriorated due to human rights, labor rights, and environmental protection violations in Cambodia. This project will first outline methodology, accounting for different research choices and considerations. Following that, it will outline and explain normative power Europe as presented by Manners as well as criticisms raised by other scholars. Afterwards, the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm by Chandler will be presented, outlining what it is and how it differs from the traditional statebuilding paradigm, also followed by criticisms raised against this paradigm. Finally, the relationship between the EU and Cambodia will be briefly shown, followed by outlining the issues and turns in the relationship towards the worse, where the synthesis of both the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm and

normative power Europe will be applied. Finally, findings will be concluded upon, followed by a discussion and potential future research and suggestions.

Methodology

Epistemology, Ontology and Qualitative data collection

Before we account for the epistemological and ontological stance of this project, it is important to briefly mention what those two terms are concerned with. Ontology is concerned with what we study – the object of investigation (Porta and Keating 2008, 21), meanwhile epistemology is concerned with how we know things (Porta and Keating 2008, 21). Epistemology calls for what is considered as acceptable knowledge (Bryman 2012, 27).

When it comes to this project, the epistemological stance is more interpretivist (or post-positivist) rather than empiricist (or positivist). To begin with, NPE deals with norms and norm diffusion in the international society, and in this project focuses on discursive meaning and building of norms, rather than a hard empirical framework for analysis, which falls under interpretivism, while the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm challenges and inverts traditional assumptions and terms that dominates the international relations field, such as sovereignty, which falls under interpretivism as well, as the interpretivist aim is to unpack core assumptions that underlie the positivist image of the world, attempting to counter this perceived empiricist orthodoxy (Lamont 2015, p. 39). Furthermore, creating a synthesis of both these approaches (NPE and post-liberal statebuilding), researchers intervene in observed social realities through their role in knowledge production (Lamont 2015, p. 39). Not to say that the call for greater application of NPE and the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm does not aspire to be policy relevant, or that it does not have predictive validity. However, shifting meanings over time and the construction and reconstruction of the understanding of good governance qualifies as interpretivism rather than purely positivism (Lamont 2015, p. 38). For example, Manners (2000) argues that while looking at the EU in the international system, it would be positivist methodologies (Manners 2000, p. 21) as it is looking at the EU's relation with different states. However, looking at the EU's role in the international society, it would require the interpretivist approach, as it involves subjective viewpoints and how the EU conceives itself in its relations to other states and how those states view the EU (Manners 2000, p. 21). This project deals with the application of both NPE and post-liberal statebuilding, but part of it is how Cambodia perceives the EU and how the EU conceives itself in its relations to Cambodia, furthering the argument that the epistemological stance of this project is interpretivist rather than positivist.

As for ontology, the perspective of constructionism is applied here. Unlike objectivism, there are no implications that social phenomena confront external facts that are beyond reach or influence (Bryman 2012, p. 32). Indeed, working with post-liberal statebuilding, the whole notion of how sovereignty is understood is revisited and reconstructed which is applied here. Even though we are working with institutions (where often objectivism is the ontological position), constructionism does not mean denying the pre-existence of objects of interest (cases such as Strauss et al. 1973; Becker 1982 show it is possible). However, when it comes to norms and their diffusion, considerations within paradigms to term and meaning shifts. Those particular realities are in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction (Bryman 2012, p. 34). Even norms themselves are negotiated, change over time, get amended to reflect the wishes of an institution or continually changing realities within and outside, even if we as researchers acknowledge pre-existing realities.

Now, the research strategy is qualitative. First, unlike quantitative research, this project does not employ measurements and quantification of massive data sets or a great number of cases. Secondly, as it is interpretivism and constructionism when it comes to the epistemological and ontological positions, those are often associated with qualitative research (Bryman 2012, p. 36). It is worth noting that it is a deductive approach (starting with theory) rather than an inductive approach (starting with a hypothesis with a goal to generate theory). However, qualitative research, that is often associated with theory generation, can also be successfully employed when it comes to theory testing (Bryman 2012, p. 37). Not to conflate with the case study research design, qualitative methods here are meant to describe the diverse set of tools and resources that are being drawn upon to collect and analyze data.

As for data collection, a combination of archival, internet-based, and document-based data collection has been conducted for this project (Lamont 2015, p. 79). Furthermore, the data gathered is a combination of both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources refer to original documents, authored by individuals who had direct access to the information they are describing, or directly experienced something related to a particular event (Lamont 2015, p. 81). While secondary source documents refer to, and/or analyze primacy source documents (Lamont 2015, p. 81). In this case, mainly primary source documents are the EU Parliament resolutions, statements by the EU commission and other branches, as well as statements and plans by the Cambodian government. Furthermore, references from lengthy research reports such as UN assessments are also primary sources.

Media reports, on the other hand, are secondary sources. Secondary sources provide the researcher with a particular topic of interest, basic background information, and other potential developments. However, we do understand that media outlets cannot be constituted for national or international sentiment, but rather a certain perspective depending on the nature and content of media articles (Lamont 2015, p. 82)

Other limitations that we are aware of in this project regarding document-based research is the potential lack of access to all documentation at any given time, especially when dealing with institutions, organizations, and states. Even with full access to documentation, one might wonder how a decision-making process worked that led to particular outcomes, be it policy, statement etc. (Lamont 2015, p. 82). Another potential limitation is the veracity of any document-based research. A researcher must be aware of potential biases or perspectives on a given issue when utilizing documents for research. To remedy this, the researcher must be well acquainted with the veracity of sources to both inform readers and be aware of the potential impact on the findings (Lamont 2015, p. 82).

Case study design and other considerations

Case study research is a commonly used method in International Relations. However, as Lamont argues, there is a general absence of conceptual clarity when it comes to what makes up a good case study (2015, p. 127), and that it is viewed within the discipline of IR as either methodologically underdeveloped or suspect (Gerring 2004; Maoz 2002). Furthermore, case study research, comparative method, and qualitative research are sometimes used almost inter-changeably (Lamont 2015, p. 127). Even though the terms 'case study' and 'qualitative method' were used almost synonymously (Levy 2002), qualitative methods encompass a broader range of methods or techniques that allow the researcher to examine contextually rich data on their selected research topic, as written out in the qualitative research part of this project.

It is worth noting, that case studies are better at answering questions to generate a fruitful and detailed understanding about how certain processes work but are not as well equipped to make any grand theoretical claims (George and Bennett, 2005). This does not mean that a case study only provides some deeper insight into a particular case. Well-constructed case studies provide valuable insights into social processes that inform how international relations can be understood and

explained broadly, with new insights generated and added to the IR are often the result of case studies (Lamont 2015, p. 129).

Before diving into defining the case study in this project, it will be outlined that defining case studies is not a small task when it comes to methodology. Moses and Knutsen define case studies as "histories with a point" (2012) and limited to detailed historical studies of specific events in recent history. Lipson defines them as detailed investigations of individual events, actors, and relationships (2005), George and Bennet provide the definition of a case study as a "detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events" (2005), Gerring gives the definition: "an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a large class of units" (2004, p. 342). These examples are written to show the variety of ways that case studies are being classified and defined by different scholars and academics. Even the question of how much we can generalize from a case study, is largely dependent on how you define and/or design your case study. An example of that would be if the case study is indeed defined and carried out as simply in-depth analysis of a specific actor or a historical event, it truly holds little value when it comes to hypothesis testing or theory development (Lamont 2015, p. 130). Those who privilege causal effect over causal mechanisms see that the bigger the set of cases that is being tested the better generalizability. This criticism comes from those who design social science inquiry with attempts to generate knowledge to answer the bigger questions in the field (King et al., 1994, p. 211).

However, in scholarship, one should not assume that causal effects are more valuable. In fact, case studies do help generate new hypotheses, which large quantitative studies struggle with (Lamont 2015, p .8). For example, while doing interviews, or any type or archival research, one can find new primary data that was not expected to be uncovered. This could propose alternative causal explanations within a field that are not present in current literature. Furthermore, it allows the researcher to see certain narratives that are not visible in quantitative research (Lamont 2015, p. 129).

When it comes to research design, Manners argues that it is best to employ 'longitudinal interpretation' design when dealing with NPE to get a fuller understanding of the nature of power in world politics (Manners 2011, p. 244). However, he does note that demands of time and funding publications do tend to be in rather short time horizons and observational rather than interpretive analysis (Manners 2011, p. 244). In the case of this paper, however, focus is more on synergy and explanatory power through the combination of NPE and the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm,

leading to it being a case study design, in particular a case study that seeks to combine theory and approach to offer a greater explanatory power than when using those approaches individually.

Furthermore, this project design fits best within the theory building case study design. "*Using a theory building approach to case studies we select cases to help develop and refine the proposition and develop a theory that fits the case study*" (De Vaus 2013, p. 223). Even though the traditional use of the theory-building approach seeks to generate theory, in this case it is seeking to find a synergy between two theories to boost explanatory power. So, while it is not generating a new theory per-se, it is seeking to develop and refine propositions of what theory and approaches could be used, calling it to reconsider the individual theory approaches.

Another crucial point to consider when using the case study design is it whether it is a retrospective or prospective design (De Vaus 2013, p. 227). In this instance, it is a retrospective design, as the data collection was done at one point in time, rather than over an extended period of time. Data also comes from a longer period of time, including different timeframes and previous events/actions (De Vaus 2013, p. 228). We do acknowledge the possible pitfall of this approach as a great deal of data could be forgotten or missing. However, this is remedied by using documents and records, and internet-based research that allows for access to archived primary and secondary sources.

Time Frame

When it comes to the time frame of the analysis, an overview of the EU-Cambodia relationship over the last two decades will be provided. However, the focus will be on the latest years that lead to the partial suspension of the Everything but Arms deal between the EU and Cambodia.

Terminology of fragile state in this project

The terms 'fragile state' or 'states' should always be used with caution. It can be perceived as being far from neutral terminology, carrying not only emotional implications, but financial and political implications as well (Grimm et al., 2014).

Such expressions as 'weak state', 'failing state', 'failed states', and 'collapsed state' have become pervasive, both in scholarly works and in practitioners' discourses. 'Principles of good international engagement in fragile states' have been drawn up to many international and

regional organizations, among them the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union' (World Bank 2011; OECD 2007; Commission 2007). In the context of the US, the National Security Guidelines of September 2002 declared failed states to be a greater threat than states with ambitions of conquest, and while following suit in 2003, the EU announced that failed states constituted a major threat to European security as well (Toje, 2005). This also resulted in a policy shift with the acknowledgment that modern wars are a problem more likely to occur within states rather than due to relations between states (Grim et al., 2014 p. 198).

This policy development also influenced a shift in academic work (primarily peace and conflict studies), with terminology used to describe the same phenomenon: 'fragile state', 'collapsed state', 'failed state' etc. (Odhiambo, 1991). This intersection between policy and research priorities was the crucial element behind the rise of the 'fragile state' agenda (Grimm et al., 2014 p. 199). The adoption of the fragile states discourse allowed states to emphasize support for poor countries, allowing to assist countries selected on the basis of their policy- performance and institutional capacities (Grimm et al., 2014 p. 199).

A more critical perspective, for example Ziaja and Mata (2010), showed that, while most indices share common ground in their classification of countries such as Iraq or Afghanistan as fragile states, these same indices diverge heavily from classifications in other cases such as Cuba, North Kora, Israel, and China (Ziaja and Mata, 2010). More researchers have analyzed and shown cases of the 'fragile' or 'failing state' concept being problematic in many ways, calling for potential abandonment of the concept in general (Call 2008; Nay 2013; Nuruzzaman 2011).

The use of those concepts, however, is still widely popular, be it 'fragile' or 'failed' states (including other derivatives). Even post-liberal statebuilding utilized 'fragile states' terminology. However, it is worth noting that an increasing awareness among scholars and policy makers of the shortcomings and limitations of the concept, more diplomatically formulated versions of the same label emerged. Such being 'situations of fragility' (OECD 2007), 'countries and regions in crisis, post-crisis and fragile situations'.

In this project, 'fragile state' is understood as a 'policy' narrative, as its meaning reflect the strategic vision of the EU towards cooperation with Cambodia. It is also interchangeably used with the EU's own terminology of 'vulnerable developing states' (Commission 2020). Cambodia is one of the countries under the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) and has an
Everything but Arms (EBA) agreement with the EU. This is 'a special arrangement for the least

developed countries, providing them with duty-free, quota-free access for all products except arms and ammunition' (Commission 2020). So, in this case, by the EU's own definition, Cambodia is among the 'least developed countries' in the world. Even if looking at another source, Cambodia was classified under 'High warning' when it comes to state fragility and stability index in 2020 by the Fund For Peace think tank (FFP) (Messner et al., 2020).

So, while there is a great deal of definitions of fragile states or vulnerable and developing states, this project follows the EU's own classification of Cambodia as one of the least developed countries in the world (due to the EBA arrangement), and throughout this project, 'fragile state' will be used interchangeably with 'vulnerable developing state' or 'least developed country'.

Theory

Normative Power Europe (NPE)

The following section of the theory chapter will deal with the theory of Normative Power Europe (NPE) as developed by Ian Manners (2002). The section will account for the key features of the theory, the most significant and relevant criticisms of the theory, and the analytical opportunities that the theory provides.

The Normative Power Europe approach and argument takes it root in a general discussion and debate about the international role of the European Union (Manners, 2002, p. 235). On one side of the debate was the idea of the EU as a civilian power, while the other side was arguing that the EU presented a military power in the international arena (Manners, 2002, p. 236). The civilian power Europe notion was characterised by a "centrality of economic power to achieve national goals; the primacy of diplomatic co-operation to solve international problems; and the willingness to use legally-binding supranational institutions to achieve international progress" (Manners, 2002, p. 236). This notion of civilian power was developed in the early 1970s, and was later criticized by Hedley Bull in 1982, who instead argued that the EU should become more self-sufficient through seven steps: "the provision of nuclear deterrent forces; the improvement of conventional forces; a greater role played by west Germany; more involvement on the part of France; a change of policy in Britain; careful co-existence with the Soviet Union; and careful co-existence with the United States" (Manners, 2002, p. 237).

In the early 1970s, the notion of civilian power was much more prominent compared to military power. The aim of the EU was to be a civilian power of solidarity and peace, ensuring sustainable development in Europe. The idea of the EU acting as a military power was a major taboo ever since the defeat of the European Defence Community at the hand of the French national assembly in 1954. But with the agreement of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) in 1991, the intent of the EU to move towards a more militarily focused union was made clear, and the taboo was shattered (Manners, 2002, p. 237). The expectations following the TEU was to move beyond a civilian power and fundamentally shift to military aspects of its power. The following years proved to be disappointing on that front, as the EU failed to meet those expectations, and the military dimension of the EU now lies within the European security and defence policy (ESDP), but the intentions were clear, and the debate between civilian and military power flourished during those years (Manners, 2002, p. 237).

In 2002, Ian Manners enters the scene of the debate, arguing that Duchêne's civilian power and Bull's military power share more common assumptions than is first thought. Even though they were on opposite sides of the debate, both Bull and Duchêne were interested in maintaining the status quo in international relations. Furthermore, Manners argued that both Duchêne and Bull "valued direct physical power in the form of actual empirical capabilities whether long on economic power or a need for military power" (Manners, 2002, p. 238). Lastly, both Duchêne and Bull saw European interests as paramount even though they disagreed on how to best serve them.

Most importantly to Manners' argument, is that these assumptions that Bull and Duchêne share were shaped by the stalemate situation that the Cold War brought with it. The end of the Cold War brought with it the collapse of states in Eastern Europe "whose ideology was perceived as unsustainable by its leadership and citizens – by the collapse of norms rather than the power of force" (Manners, 2002, p. 238). This is where the notion of NPE sprouts, as Manners writes: "Thus a better understanding of the EU's role in world politics might be gained by reflecting on what those revolutions tell us about the power of ideas and norms rather than the power of empirical force – in other words the role of normative power" (Manners, 2002, p. 238).

The idea of normative power in the international arena is not new, as both Carr (1962), Duchêne (1973), and Galtung (1973) have given some degree of attention the concept. Carr makes the distinction between economic power, military power, and power over opinion in his book *The Twenty Year's Crisis 1919-1939* from 1962 (Carr, 1962). Duchêne talked about the European Community as an 'idea force' that spread the beliefs of the founding fathers to different political temperaments (Duchêne, 1973). And Galtung argues that ideological power is powerful because of the power-sender's ability to shape the will of the recipient through the media of culture (Galtung, 1973). Generally, the idea of normative power to Manners is to refocus attention away from the traditional discussion of civilian power and military power towards the normative dimension (Manners, 2002, p. 238). Moreover, the debate between civilian and military power is concentrated on the state-like features that the EU possesses, and normative power is a move beyond that and towards more cognitive processes and symbolic components (Manners, 2002, p. 238). It is important to mention here, that the normative power Europe approach is not meant to replace nor nullify the efforts of the civilian and military power approaches, rather 'augment' those approaches "with a focus on normative power of an ideational nature…" (Manners, 2002, p. 239).

As mentioned above, the notion of normative power is not new, which also means that the use of normative power in international relations is not new either. Global empires and powers through history have been utilizing normative power and promoting norms, but essential parts of Manner's normative power Europe are the three key features, of the EU's normative difference that sets them apart from those historical powers and their use of normative power (Manners, 2002, p. 240). First, the historical context of the EU is key, as the EU was created in a post-war environment which nullified the nationalism in European states that had led to wars. Therefore, the EU was created at a time where the pooling together of resources and sovereignty for the sake of the greater good of Europe was the mainstream ideology (Manners, 2002, p. 240).

Secondly, "the EU has evolved into a hybrid of supranational and international forms of governance which transcends Westphalian norms" (Manners, 2002, p. 240). In other words, the normative power of the EU is different from traditional states as the hybridity of the EU is a different political form. Lastly, a central part of NPE is the EU's international identity in the world, and in this regard, the constitutional nature of the EU is important. Manners explains: "the constitution of the EU as a political entity has largely occurred as an elite-driven, treaty based, legal order. For this reason, its constitutional norms represent crucial constitutive factors determining its international identity" (Manners, 2002, p. 241). Social justice, democracy, rule of law, and human rights are some of the key norms that are constitutionalized in the Treaty on European Union (TEU), but these norms were already declared in 1973 in the Copenhagen declaration, so the ingrained norms through declarations and treaties of the EU is something that also sets it apart from states in terms of normative power (Manners, 2002, p. 241).

These three features (historical context, hybrid polity, legal constitution) are not only the normative difference of the EU, but it is also what accelerated and affirmed the EU's commitment to placing these norms at the center of both relations with member states as well as foreign relations.

The very last normative difference Manners mentions is the idea that normative power does not implicitly assume that the use of force is necessary. Manners argues that normative power Europe is different to pre-existing political forms, which is why he dives deeper into what he calls "the EU's normative basis" (Manners, 2002, p. 242). The normative basis in rooted in the history of the EU's treaties, declarations, policies, and so on. Manners identifies five core norms within the political and constitutional body of the EU: *peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law,* and *human rights.* Furthermore, Manners identifies another four 'minor' norms: *social solidarity, anti-*

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discrimination, sustainable development, and *good governance* (Manners, 2002, p. 242). These norms are very important to keep in mind when we go into the analysis of our case in this project, as these are what NPE argues are the norms that create the basis of the normative power of the EU.

It is worth noting that some of the 'minor' norms identified by Manners could be argued to have risen in importance and relevance since the time of is writing, which is something that Manners himself acknowledges (Manners, 2011). After looking at how the EU is normatively unique, and what the normative basis is through its constitutional nature, it is now worth looking at how Manners argues that the EU norms are diffused, as this is the most crucial step to being a normative power. This will also account for how NPE is designed to be used in analysis and what tools the theory provides for this purpose.

NPE analytical tools

NPE argues that EU norms are diffused through six factors: *Contagion, Informational diffusion, Procedural diffusion, Transference, Overt diffusion,* and *Cultural filter* (Manners, 2002, p. 244).

Contagion refers to the unintentional diffusion of ideas from the EU to other political actors. An example of this is the attempted replications of the institutional model that the EU is representing in Mercosur (Manners, 2002, p. 244). This was not an intentional outcome of the EU to see a similar institutional initiative in South America, but nonetheless a result of a diffusion of EU norms and ideas.

Informational diffusion refers to the result of more active and intentional communication from the EU. This can be done through a range of communicative strategies from the EU, as well as new policy initiatives from the Commission (Manners, 2002, p. 244).

Procedural diffusion refers to "the institutionalization of a relationship between the EU and a third party, such as an inter-regional co-operation agreement, membership of an international organization or enlargement of the EU itself" (Manners, 2002, p. 244). The main difference between the procedural and informational diffusion is that the procedural diffusion has institutional aspects at the center, whereas the informational diffusion does not necessarily have to do with institutionalization in any way. As mentioned, enlargement rounds could be an example of procedural diffusion as the relationship between the EU and a candidate state is being institutionalized.

Transference refers to diffusion of norms taking place through the exchange of goods, trade, aid, or technical assistance from the EU to third party states (Manners, 2002, p. 245). This is a more traditional diffusion of norms in the sense that the diffusion of norms, as a result of trade and aid, is not a very surprising outcome. An example of transference that Manners mentions is the European development fund to the Cotonou states (Manners, 2002, p. 245).

Overt diffusion refers to the diffusion of norms through the physical appearance of the EU in third party states or international institutions. The EU have delegations all around the world, and these are representing an example of overt diffusion. EU representatives in other international institutions also represents an overt diffusion of EU norms (Manners, 2002, p. 245). In that sense, overt diffusion is arguably the most direct form of diffusion of norms.

Lastly, *cultural filter* refers to "the interplay between the construction of knowledge and the creation of social and political identity by the subjects of norm diffusion" (Manners, 2002, p. 245). This is, in other words, the reaction to the collusion of international norms with subject states' knowledge and identity. "Examples of the cultural filter at work include the diffusion of democratic norms in China, human rights diffusion in Turkey, or environmental norms in Britain" (Manners, 2002, p. 245).

These are the six factors that Manners identifies that can encapsule the way that EU norms are diffused. To show how these factors work, Manners uses the case of the abolition of the death penalty around Europe as an example. This paper is going to use these factors on the case of Cambodia, but it is still worth acknowledging and accounting briefly for Manners' case of the abolition of the death penalty.

The abolition of the death penalty

The right to life for everyone has been a part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) since 1948 and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) since 1950. But it was not until 1983, with the addition of article no. 6 to the ECHR, which we will come back to several times in this section, that European states started to attempt to enshrine this right in international law (Manners, 2002, p. 245). Following this initiative, the UN's second optional protocol (OPT2) was added to the international covenant on civil and political rights (CCPR). Both article no. 6 and OPT2 were initiatives aimed at abolishing the death penalty (Manners, 2002, p. 245).

Manners identifies three factors that led the EU to pursue the international abolition of the death penalty. Firstly, the Council of Europe (CoE) played a big role in ensuring that the abolition of the death penalty became a norm of western Europe from the mid-1980s onwards. Yet only 6 of the 12 EC states at the time had abolished the death penalty and only 8 of the 12 had ratified article no. 6 before 1990, which indicated that the abolition of the death penalty was more of a symbolic norm at the time without substantial changes in laws in half of the EC (Manners, 2002, p. 246).

Secondly, the end of the Cold War presented the opportunity to rethink what it meant to be a democratic, liberal European state. This rethinking included both western and eastern European states and reinforced the principles of the ECHR by making them a prerequisite to joining the new European 'club' (Manners, 2002, p. 246). "In June 1996, the CoE made immediate moratoria and ratification of protocol no. 6 explicit requisites for membership, as well as calling for those Member States who retained the death penalty but did not use it to abolish it in law" (Manners, 2002; CoE, 1996).

Lastly, the period from 1992-1997 was characterized by a crisis of confidence in the EU, and the Union's member states and institutions were now looking for a way to reignite the Union after this confidence crisis after the Maastricht Treaty. A way to do this was by reinforcing the commitment towards human rights through the ECHR, but this was first blocked by a ruling from the European Court of Justice that meant that the EC could not adopt rules and conclude international agreements on human rights (Manners, 2002, p. 246). But, in 1997, article no. 6 was updated with new founding principles along side "corresponding references for applicant states and sanctions for failing to respect these principles… (Manners, 2002, p. 246). This was a clear sign of the intent that the Amsterdam Treaty signaled to make a move towards making these principles a central part of the future of the EU, especially the abolition of the death penalty, which was specifically written in the final act of the declaration (Manners, 2002. P. 246).

Suddenly, the EU went from having their initiatives blocked to being in a very strong position in their pursuit of abolishing the death penalty. The year 1997 was a momentum year for the EU on that front, as the Union also called upon the European states to ratify OPT2, as well as starting a general cooperation with the UN to achieve the goal. Now the EU had a treaty basis for the first, which meant that doors opened for more independent initiatives that were not dependent on the ECHR any longer (Manners, 2002, p. 247). As a result of the independence that the EU had acquired in 1997 on the human rights and death penalty front, 1998 saw three major developments

in this regard. First, the EU developed guidelines for EU policy towards third countries with focus on human rights and the abolition of the death penalty. These guidelines allowed the EU to intervene in a number of different ways in third countries in order to monitor and report the progress made on the human rights and death penalty front (Manners, 2002, p. 247). Second, a development sprung out of these guidelines which saw an increase in the initiatives taken by the EU presidency. In 1998 the Austrian presidency wrote to George W. Bush in regard to a specific case of Stan Faulder v. Texas, which was one of the early indications of a pattern emerging of the EU intervening in specific cases directly (Manners, 2002, p. 248). Last, the Council began to present annual reports on human rights which would assess the situation annually regarding human rights in the EU and internationally (Manners, 2002, p. 248). Those were the three big developments in what was called 'the human rights' year' 1998. Following that year, the EU kept developing their policy towards making the abolitionist norm international in a more overt way, and especially the interventions in specific cases by the presidency developed with Germany making two declarations, Portugal seven, France six, Sweden eight, and Belgium six interventions (Manners, 2002, p. 248; Commission, 2001).

As a summary to the development of the EU's initiatives regarding human rights and death penalty, Manners argues that "though it might be difficult to assess the full impact of the EU's normative power on this subject, it is possible to make two broad observations on its exercise of power" (Manners, 2002, p. 248). The first observation is that the EU was trying to raise the abolitionist approach to the international level be engaging with the super-executioners, the US and China. Referencing back to the tools of analysis laid out above, the EU was using informational and overt diffusion. The informational diffusion could be seen in the initiatives and dialogue coming from the presidency and the parliament, while the overt diffusion could be seen in the physical delegation offices in Washington for example, not to change the minds of the governments directly per se, but to contribute towards raising the issue to the international level (Manners, 2002, p. 248). The second observation has to do with the EU's efforts to create a basis bilaterally and multilaterally for raising the issue. Bilaterally, the EU raised the issue of abolishing the death penalty with more than 20 countries during the Finnish and Portuguese presidencies. Multilaterally, the EU made its presence known in the UN with a speech held by the Finnish foreign minister at the 54th UN general assembly (Manners, 2002, p. 248).

Without going too deep into the details, Manners does mention three situations where the EU's normative power initiatives on the abolition of the death penalty played a crucial role in

actual changes in law. The first situation is with Poland and Cyprus, where both countries were applicant states to the EU at the time and they ratified article no. 6 in 2000. The second situation is with Albania ad Ukraine, who at the time were not applicant states to the EU, but still ratified article no. 6 in 2000. The third situation is with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, who at the time were not members of CoE neither the EU. These two countries abolished the death penalty in 1998 and 1999 respectively (Manners, 2002, p. 249).

The case of the abolition of the death penalty is Manners' main case used to show the normative power of the EU. Even though the case has been boiled down to a certain degree in this project, it has still been done justice, and the main arguments and conclusions of it are clear. It is now worth turning the attention towards the main criticisms pointed towards the NPE approach, which is what the following section will provide.

Criticisms of the NPE approach

This following section will outline some of the most central criticisms to the NPE approach. Primarily, the article written by Thomas Diez (2005) titled *Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'* lays the foundation for much of the general criticism that has faced the NPE approach and draws upon several other scholars and presents their criticisms as well. Therefore, Thomas Diez's article will primarily be referred to in this section.

The main argument that Thomas Diez presents is that "the EU's normative power is by no means a unique phenomenon. Indeed, it can be said that the one case against which the idea of the EU as a normative power is most often developed, the US, has exemplified the concept of a normative power during significant parts of its history" (Diez, 2005, p. 614). Furthermore, Diez identifies three aspects of Manners' normative power idea that need further elaboration. Firstly, the notion of normative power as not only an actor (like in the sense of a superpower or great power) but also a relationship is not clear enough according to Diez (2005, p. 615). Manners is talking about normative power without clearly laying out the inspirations that this normative power has taken from the Weberian notion of A making B do something it otherwise would not, and the Lukesian notion of a hegemonic power shaping the behavior of others (Diez, 2005, p. 616). Secondly, the discussions on normative power Europe examines whether the EU acts as a normative power, instead of examining the impact of EU policy. This means that it is examining whether the EU is a specific type of actor, when it should be examining if it even has normative power in a relational sense (Diez, 2005, p. 616). Thirdly, Diez argues that normative power could easily go

alongside military power and economic power, and that normative power must be irreducible to economic or military power if it were to be a separate category (Diez, 2005, p. 616) In other words, Diez is arguing that normative power as a separate category of power is possible, but slightly unnecessary as it could easily go side by side with military power and economic power. Diez also draws upon Robert Kagan when mentioning that the EU' use of civilian power rather than military is not as much a choice as it is a necessity due to the lack of military capabilities of the EU compared to the US for example (Diez, 2005, p. 616).

Another argument that Diez presents, drawing from Richard Youngs, is "that normative power is not an objective category. Instead, it is a practice of discursive representation" (Diez, 2005, p. 626). Where Manners is writing about NPE as if it is granted that the EU is a normative power, Diez argues that EU as a normative power is a discursive construction rather than an objective fact, which means that there are ways in which it is being constructed, which gives a new dimension to the notion of the EU as a normative power. In general, Deiz calls for a greater reflexivity when it comes to the EU as a normative power and the construction of EU as a 'self' and the rest of the world as a 'other' (Diez, 2005).

These were some of the most prominent criticisms of the NPE approach as laid out by Thomas Diez drawing from several other scholars. We acknowledge that the approach of NPE as defined by Manners in 2002 has been subject to many additions, revisits, and criticisms, and opened an entire universe of discussion on the EU and of normative power as a concept. This section has accounted for some of the main criticisms, although an entire project could be written on the development of the academic discussion on the EU as a normative power.

With that, the next sections will look at the paradigm and approach of post liberal statebuilding.

Post liberal statebuilding

In the scholarly work of International Relations, statebuilding has been prominent since the inception of the discipline even though it might have had different names throughout the years (Andersen 2012, p. 205). During the interwar period, the focus of the international arena in Europe was on economic and financial construction and the League of Nations. The focus was on preventing instability within states during efforts to rebuild them, and to deal with threats of other states in the international system (Andersen 2012, p. 205). During the Cold War, statebuilding was most prominently displayed in IR literature on intervention (*see* Kissinger 1964; Lillich 1973; Bull 1988). Following the end of the Cold War and resurgence of the globalization approach, statebuilding became the new conflict resolution approach (Andersen 2012, p. 205). Most notably, after 9/11, statebuilding took center stage as a means of preventing terrorist groups from operating and thriving.

Today international statebuilding, with the goal of developing and exporting frameworks of good governance, has become a key policy field for international institutions and leading states (Chandler 2010). Over time, statebuilding changed to being more than just a post-event action – western military interventions for humanitarian or security reasons (Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq) or post-conflict peacebuilding (Bosnia and East Timor) – but instead being increasingly seen as a crucial package of policy measures designed to prevent states from sliding into political and economic collapse (Chandler, 2010). The conceptual framework of international statebuilding has become one of the most important areas of policy discussion in the international arena regardless of the issue of concern: be it war and conflict, development and poverty reduction, human rights and democracy, threat of terrorism, response to global economic problems, environmental preservation and more (Chandler 2010, p. 4). In terms of the conceptualization of international statebuilding, it can be approached from different angles: focus can be largely on international administrations; concerns of post-conflict peacebuilding; increasing state capacity to address the risks of state failure or issues of underdevelopment.

In the following section, international statebuilding will be conceptualized and clarified as a paradigm of post-liberal statebuilding as developed by David Chandler, in his 2010 work *International Statebuilding: The Rise of Post-Liberal Governance.*

Sovereignty

When it comes to the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm of international statebuilding, one of the most important conceptual shifts compared to classical statebuilding is the notion of sovereignty and the meaning of the term (Chandler 2010, p. 43). In classical statebuilding, sovereignty as a concept defined the autonomy of the state. It indicated states' rule over a territory, and its autonomy to be an actor in the international sphere (Chandler 2010, p. 43). It is also a central concept in the classical political theory of liberalism and international relations. The post-liberal statebuilding paradigm problematizes the centrality of autonomy by redefining sovereignty through inverting the meaning of autonomy from classical liberal frameworks (Chandler 2010, p. 43). In this case, sovereignty is redefined from simply being an attribute of autonomy, marking control over a territory, to the recognition of the limits and dangers of autonomy or control (Chandler 2010, p. 45). Problematization of autonomy in international statebuilding is not seen as a positive attribute anymore. The assertion of importance of autonomy can be potentially destabilizing and conflictual. In other words, it is because of the idea that states are autonomous that they become failed or failing, because they control themselves. That can lead to a lack of an international framework of regulatory norms and an interplay of institutional frameworks that are seen to be necessary for an effective and functional state (Chandler 2010, p. 45).

When it comes to redefining sovereignty in this paradigm, it is done through the sovereign state forms being held up, but sovereignty itself being unbundled: emphasizing the administrative and technical responsibilities of the state while abandoning its political content of self-government and autonomy (Chandler 2010, p. 46). First, sovereignty is to be seen as capacity in post-liberal statebuilding. This allows one to see sovereignty as continuum of sovereignty of a hierarchy of sovereignty, with some states being more sovereign than others (Chandler 2010, p.48). When seeing sovereignty based on capacity, rather than political and legal rights of equality in the international arena, intervention can be framed as supporting 'sovereignty', even if it undermines the rights of self-government (Chandler 2010, p. 50). This way of seeing sovereignty as 'capacity' in the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm, differs from what the classical liberal paradigm sovereignty understands in terms of autonomy (Chandler 2010, p. 51). It seeks to legitimize policy in the post liberal terms of technical and administrative outcomes rather than representational legitimacy, thus problematizing autonomy, as the only barrier to technical and administrative efficiency is the vested interests of political elites having vested interest in power over technical

efficiency (Chandler 2010, p. 51). When talking about sovereignty in terms of capacity in the post-liberal framework, it is at the level of administrative decision-making, and not as an expression of a self-determining collective political subject. This way, 'good governance' becomes a reflection of that capacity of a state to be able to govern itself.

Another part of that shift regarding the concept and term of sovereignty is what is best described as sovereignty being a responsibility, rather than the rights of sovereignty (Chandler 2010, p. 53). Seeing sovereignty as responsibility allows for a new consensual, or 'partnership', approach to statebuilding (Chandler 2010, p. 53). Quite often the case that non-western states are in poor positions to resist international mechanisms of regulation with bundles of international aid, trade privileges, debt forgiveness, or integration to international organizations – in exchange for external support for governance reforms and institutional capacity-building (Chandler 2010, p. 53). Moreover, the greater the inequalities of state capacity between non-western states and international institutions the grander the language of partnership. An example of this is the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) project that extended the 'country ownership' approach of World Bank Povert Reduction Strategies. It required states to engage in far reaching governance reforms and open every area of domestic policy making to international scrutiny and involvement (Chandler 2010, p. 54). The 'responsibilities' in this case are with the domestic sate, but the partners decide the policies (UNMP 2005, p. 53). So, the host country schedules the meeting, but the 'guests' come with policy frameworks (Chandler 2010, p. 55). These external policy prescriptions are often closely tying international aid to monitoring and new institutional frameworks of regulation. Furthermore, seeing sovereignty as a responsibility also enables different partnerships between non-western states and international institutions to be seen as a 'part of the state' rather than interventionalist practices.

When it comes to autonomy, unlike in the classical liberal paradigm where autonomy is understood as a sphere of freedom and non-intervention, the post-liberal paradigm of statebuilding sees it as a sphere necessitating intervention. That is a part of the problematization of autonomy within the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm. In this framing, autonomy is the presupposition of interventionist practices, rather than a policy goal or end product (Chandler 2010, p. 191). The starting assumption of post-liberal statebuilding is that the autonomy of post-colonial states is potentially problematic for both their citizens and international society as a whole. The policy discourse of international security has shifted from discussions of interventions being a 'reaction' to the problems of fragile states, especially in relation to conflict, war crimes, human

rights abuses – to a perspective that argues that preventive intervention needs to take place to ensure that states and societies do not make the wrong autonomous choices that can result in conflict and disintegration (Chandler 2010, p. 192). In post-liberal statebuilding, it is understood that unconstrained autonomy – decision making in institutional frameworks which are not internationalized carry the risks of violence and human rights abuse and thereby necessitates external intervention. This is the starting assumption – that external intervention is necessary as a precondition for social harmony – rather than external intervention is an exception or a reaction.

In conclusion, the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm redefines sovereignty, shifting and detaching it from autonomy. Sovereignty becomes both a measure of capacity (in terms of good governance, which will be expanded in upcoming section) and responsibility (that enables interventionist practices of policy prescription to non-western states). In this framing, sovereignty is a product of shared goals by both domestic and international actors. When it comes to autonomy, the sovereign autonomy is removed from the political agenda both domestically and internationally in post-liberal statebuilding. Furthermore, inversed from classical liberal approach and problematized, often being seen as the barrier for sovereignty capacity or sovereignty responsibility building practices.

Governance over government in post-liberal statebuilding

Another point in understanding international statebuilding is that, within the paradigm of post-liberal governance, it is important to make a distinction between what is meant with government and governance. Generally, in the field of international relations, quite a bit has been written about the shift from government to governance: this shift has been understood as deeply implicated in the process of globalization. As the world is increasingly becoming interconnected, independent, and globalized, the power and control of government is said to have diminished (Chandler, 2010, p. 71). With that in mind, it is seen that the shift from government to governance is parallel/similar to that of a shift from nation state control and power to sharing of power with other actors at a transnational and subnational level (Rosenau, 1995). This shift is to be seen as the state being just one player in the development of rules and regulations on the global level. However, it is worth noting that the global level lacks a sovereign or a formally institutionalized government, thus understood to be a sphere of governance rather than government (Finkelstein, 1995).

When it comes to the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm, the distinction between government and governance is not that the paradigm of governance lacks a hierarchy or a government, but that similar practices are facilitated (Chandler 2010, p. 71).

In this sense, governance is more than just a technical absence of government, making of policy, or regulatory guidelines. Governance, in this instance, implies and involves an entirely different relationship between the government and the governed (Chandler 2010, p. 71). Governments can also practice governance and is not just being restricted to non-governmental institutions. Even though government does imply command, control, and direction, states that practice good governance do not command, plan, and control, but rather they are relationship managers in this post-liberal statebuilding paradigm (Chandler 2010, p. 72). In other words, government helps steer the state like a ship into a particular direction. Drawing from Massimo De Angelis (2003), governance can be understood as a continual process of relationship management rather than the pursuit of discrete policy goals that are not linear in terms of instrumental goal orientation towards the achievement of external goals (de Angelis 2003, p. 3). In this sense, governance is not about the capacity of government to decide autonomously on goals and purposes of power, but rather on the capacity of self-direction in response to external variables (Chandler 2010, p. 72). It is in this paradigm that the shift is seen as governance not being the lack of sovereign or government, but rather that ways of governing should be different: where responses are being made to external factors, rather than attempts to change them or set an independent course. Governance, as a governmental rationality in post-liberal statebuilding, reduces the state to the status of any other social actor which needs to respond to external stimuli, be it wage fluctuations, climate change, or interest rates (Chandler 2010, p. 72). So, when looking through the post- liberal statebuilding paradigm, the extent to which the state is able to respond to these stimuli can be indicative of whether its governance is good or not good.

Furthermore, it is not just that governance is different from government in the style or rationale of governing in post-liberal statebuilding. It is to be understood that governance is legitimized on different terms than the classical liberal paradigm of representative government or sovereignty (Chandler 2010, p. 73). Legitimacy of governance does not depend on the relationship between the government and the citizens, unlike in the case of legitimacy of government. Governance is a technical or administrative understanding of the role of government, so governance is 'blind' to the origins of governments, political or representative legitimacy of policy-goals (Chandler 2010, p. 73). In this sense, policy goals and implementation are up to consideration of

legitimacy on the basis of their approach and understanding of the problem regardless of the active agent of governance. This leads to the examination of the quality of different policies and 'steering' or 'guiding' of a state, rather than the legitimacy of representatives (Chandler 2010, p. 73). Within the international statebuilding paradigm, the citizen is not just the subject of the law or policy, but object of policy making.

The post-liberal paradigm tends to be more concerned with processes of engagement, rather than policy goals, focusing on enabling states to pursue goals safely and within a framework of international constraints. In this understanding of the post-liberal paradigm, external policymaking is concerned with technical and administrative frameworks, in order to facilitate the construction of functionality, resilience, adaptation, and capacity (Chandler 2010, p. 193). Furthermore, there is a growing rejection of idea that development, democracy, and security are goals in themselves rather than seeing them as the outcome of good management. This has been leading to rather distinct policy areas such as development, rights promotions, and security becoming merged into what is understood today as international statebuilding (Chandler 2010, p. 194).

The post-liberal paradigm and the problematization of autonomy with focus on preventive intervention, reconsidering sovereignty, and privileging governance over government will be used to understand the working of the EU's export of good governance and rule of law. The following section outlines the understanding and variety of fragile (potentially weak) states as seen in international statebuilding.

Post-liberal paradigm and threat of fragile states and intervention

When it comes to security and intervention, post-liberal statebuilding diverges from both liberal paradigms of international relations and non-liberal paradigms of international relations which share the same starting point: that of the autonomous political subject (Chandler 2010, p. 123). By removing the rationalist assumptions of originatory autonomy, post-liberal statebuilding breaks the connection between freedom and security, making both terms lose their meaning (Chandler 2010, p. 123). Without this centrality of autonomy, freedom is seen as the ability to make rational choices and security is seen as maintaining the status quo. The post-liberal paradigm returns to the traditional problematic of international relations – equilibrium. However, it does this without the rational agency or rational subject that are subjects of geo-political contention (Chandler 2010, p. 123). In this sense, equilibrium refers to the 'global' security or collective

security threats and are understood to derive independently of conscious or rational human agency. Be it global warming or economic downturn, poverty, crime, conflict, terrorism, scarcity of resources, these threats are understood to be hedging the capacity of autonomous states: as seen as global problems thus necessitate global solutions (Chandler 2010, p. 124).

In this framing, the weak link in managing these threats in the development collective mechanisms are the states least able to implement the governmental framework of adaptation and resilience – states with a lack of good governance (Chandler 2010, p. 124). Due to this, the post-liberal paradigm considers weak or fragile states as the greatest security threat. Not in the same sense as the threat of 'rogue states', but rather that they can become the vehicles for those threats (Chandler 2010, p. 124).

Ghani and Lockhart best describe this by saying that a number of contemporary global crises have their roots in forty to sixty fragile countries, and it is due to those countries experiencing prolonged conflicts or misrule, violence, and terror which with an ever-expanding platform threatens the entire globe (Ghani and Lockhart 2008, p. 23).

Weak or fragile states are understood to undermine the security of international community as a whole. However, dealing with the weak or fragile/failing states in the post-liberal paradigm of international statebuilding does not rely on a liberal discourse of intervention (Chandler 2010, p. 125). Due to the post-liberal paradigm removing the rationalist assumption of the positive nature of these states' autonomy. Even though the post-liberal paradigm does see that fragile or weak states require international statebuilding intervention to secure themselves and to prevent them from being a security threat to the international community, this task of international actors is not the one of liberal 'intervention'. Rather, that intervention is to be understood in terms of post-liberal 'prevention'. It is to ensure that states are included in international institution frameworks capable of making improvements to the dangers of their sovereign autonomy (Chandler 2010, p. 126).

In this sense, in this project, 'intervention' will be used as well. Rather than being understood in liberal terms of intervention, it is to be understood in terms of post-liberal statebuilding of prevention or challenge through the integration of fragile states to international institution frameworks and external policy suggestions that seek to change and improve. Even international institutions or stakeholders giving policy prescriptions is understood as 'intervention', or policy intervention, in the post-liberal paradigm of international statebuilding.

Criticism of post-liberal statebuilding

To begin with, the whole paradigm of post-liberal statebuilding provided by Chandler is a critique itself in the sense that international state-building has become post-liberal in that its classical frameworks and politics have been inverted and transformed (Tellidis 2012, p. 432). Post-liberal statebuilding is highlighting the shift from government to governance, where governance discourses see statehood as separated from sovereignty (Tellidis 2012, p. 432).

The criticism of post-liberal statebuilding is of the removal of local agency in the problematization of autonomy. Chandler seems to deny all agencies apart from the hegemonic actors. In those terms, state-building becomes an exercise between international supra- or interstate actors with local state actors (Tellidis 2012, p. 433). Post-liberal statebuilding provided by Chandler seems to not take into account that communities that need peace are often the ones marginalized by both domestic actors and international actors, unless when development is posed as freedom. Then the external state-building must address the lack of empowerment of individuals and communities to make the "right autonomous decisions" (Tellidis 2012, p. 433). Furthermore, Chandler separates statebuilding from nation-building, trying to show that statebuilding can be promoted without engaging in nation building. Then statebuilding becomes a technical, administrative, and scientific process (Lemay-Hebert 2009, p. 27). With this separation, post-liberal statebuilding becomes depoliticized through the focus on state capacity building and on concerns of stability and regulation. The criticism here is that statebuilding is often seen as a very political process, thus depoliticizing the framework can be argued to make it a very narrow technical and functionalist framework (Lemay-Hebert 2009, p. 27).

Another big criticism is the inverting and transforming of the ontology of autonomy and sovereignty, as doing so makes the presupposed liberal contract of states obligation for the security and development of its citizens become confusing (Tellidis 2012, p. 434). It is due to that inversion that a presupposition rises that a new kind of contract between local state actors and their subjects will emerge (Tellidis 2012, p. 434).

It is worth noting, that this paper does not set out to remedy any criticisms and questions raised against Chandler's post-liberal paradigm. However, these criticisms and questions raised are taken into account before moving into the synthesis, bridging both NPE and post-liberal statebuilding.

Synthesis

To begin with, as part of this synthesis, we argue that both theories (NPE and Post-liberal statebuilding) are versions of international statebuilding. First, post-liberal statebuilding is within the statebuilding school of thought. It does challenge the traditional assumptions of sovereignty and autonomy, inverting and transforming them to be seen as capacity and responsibility (in case of sovereignty), problematizes autonomy, outlines good governance as key to statebuilding, and detaches the political from the institutional capacity building. NPE, be it Manners (2000; 2002; 2011), Pace (2007), Whitings (2011), implicitly do consider sovereignty and autonomy when discussing the EU's projections of normative power, and those implications seem to be steering away from any (neo)liberal understandings. However, there seems to be no explicit definitions of how a researcher should approach sovereignty and autonomy in NPE. For example, Manners, when presenting his case with the abolition of the death penalty writes "…number of features of the EU increasingly exercising normative power as it seeks to redefine international norms in its own image. These features include willingness to impinge on state sovereignty" (2002). So, even though it seems to employ an understanding of sovereignty in line with the traditional liberal paradigm, the actions of the EU do call for reconsideration of what sovereignty entails. In the case presented by Manners, it would make more sense to see sovereignty in the sense capacity and responsibility. Therefore, this paper suggests taking the basis of the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm's terminology of sovereignty, as capacity and responsibility for good governance and using the post liberal statebuilding terminology when talking about sovereignty within NPE.

Even though post-liberal statebuilding is interested in what particular supra/international institutions or organizations do or say when it comes to international statebuilding, it too, like NPE, cares for 'what it is', and not just 'what it does'. When it comes to international statebuilding, the goal of developing and exporting frameworks of good governance is a key policy field for various institutions and leading states. Good governance is also one of the major norms within NPE, which Manners (2011) argues has over the last years seen a rise in significance and focus from the EU. The understanding of state centrality is also common between the two approaches – the focus is removed from it. Furthermore, post-liberal statebuilding and NPE do seem to see governance in a similar fashion. While NPE does not detach the political aspect or government from governance, unlike post-liberal statebuilding, both of the approaches see policy goals and implementation as

core indicators of good governance and focuses on the quality of different policies rather than simply legitimacy of representatives within the government, making citizens of the state objects of policy making, and not just subjects of said law or policy.

In the case of NPE and the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm, the focus is largely on processes of engagement, rather than just policy goals. In NPE, this is expressed by repeated highlighting of both actions of normative power and impact of normative power (Manners 2011). As post-liberal statebuilding is concerned with enabling states to pursue goals safely within the framework of international constrains, so does the EU seek to engage external actors in a meaningful way and build their capacities through the encouragement of process of engagement and dialogue (Manners 2011, p. 236).

So far, it is shown that NPE and post-liberal statebuilding view sovereignty, good governance, and engagement in a similar fashion -with focus on processes, actions, and impact rather than simple goals of a policy. In the upcoming analysis, the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm and definitions of sovereignty, problematization of autonomy and focus on engagement, action, and impact will be supplementing NPE, as it offers the possibility for a deeper dive into the terminology that NPE does seem to lack to the same extent.

When talking about differences between NPE and the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm, the first thing that is apparent is NPE's focus on norms. Manners outlines six factors of norm diffusion, offering analytical tools, while post-liberal statebuilding by Chandler does not offer such analytical tools, but rather utilizes the international statebuilding approach to newly redefine terms. In the following analysis, NPE's analytical tools will be utilized, as this project is concerned with both the EU and good governance norm diffusion regarding the relationship with Cambodia. Furthermore, post-liberal statebuilding separates statebuilding from nation building, removing the focus from the political international statebuilding, while NPE does not. This difference does not invalidate either approach, because NPE's political view is not synonymous with nation building. So, there is no apparent disagreement between the two approaches, as the primary reason why the political is problematized in post-liberal statebuilding is due to the problematization of legitimacy. NPE, like post-liberal statebuilding, sees legitimacy in the form of good governance, processes, and impact (albeit from two different perspectives, one from the EU's, another from the external actors).

In conclusion to the theory section, the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm, in terms on terminology of sovereignty, problematization of autonomy, focus on capacity building, and responsibility of good governance, will be utilized together with NPE and its analytical tools to

answer why the normative approach to the EU's relationship with Cambodia suffered difficulties in areas of human rights, poverty, and civil society building, while it flourished in developmental aid and economic areas. The focus is to showcase the synergy of both theories has a greater explanatory impact than pursuing answers with them individually.

Analysis

European Union – Cambodia relations: A historical overview

The relations between Cambodia and member states of the European Union date back to before the EU came into existence. An example would date back all the way to 1863 where King Norodom and Napoleon III agreed upon a protectorate deal (Hör, 2017, p. 137). In that case, Cambodia approached France looking for protection from the neighboring countries of Thailand and Vietnam. Even though the end of the protectorate came in 1953, France played a key facilitating role in the Paris Peace Accord in 1991 and still remains one of the largest diaspora communities of Cambodians (Hör, 2017, p. 137). Another case is Germany; The German Democratic Republic maintained diplomatic, educational, and economic relations with Cambodia over the decades. Today, Germany is an active supporter of the development and democratization process in Cambodia with the help of a variety of institutions (Hör, 2017, p. 138).

When it comes to the European Union and Cambodia relations, those relations are often compared to the relation the EU has with countries like Thailand, Vietnam, China, and Japan. The EU - Cambodia relations are rather young and less based on traditional and longstanding historical ties. This is due to several factors. Geographical distances, the process of EU's evolution, and the Cold War just to mention a few (Hör, 2017, p. 138). However, over more than 20 years, since the signing of the EC-Cambodia Co-operation Agreement in 1997, the cooperation between the EU and Cambodia has been deepening and extending with particular focus on development cooperation and trade (Hör, 2017, p. 138).

When it comes to foreign policy, cooperation between the European Union and outside organizations and third countries, in this case Cambodia too, is guided by Article 21 of the Treaty on the European Union (Eur-Lex, 2009) It describes the values of cooperation, democracy, the rule of law and universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity and principles of equality and solidarity, respect for the principles of the UN Charter and international laws. So, when the European Union engages in development cooperation, action is connected to the intention of spreading European values in aid receiving countries. This is further illustrated with the guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia (Council of the EU, 2012), adopted on 15th of June 2012. These guidelines state that the condition for developmental support is: the preservation of peace and strengthening of international security in accordance with the UN Charter, the promotion of a rule-based international system,

respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, and the promotion of cooperative and sustainable policies to meet global challenges, be it energy, security, environmental protection, poverty, economic imbalances, or health issues (Hör 2017, p. 139). There are several institutions tied to the implementation of developmental policy. First, the European External Action Service (EEAS) – which represents the European Union and its values worldwide. EEAS operates as a diplomatic service fortifying the management of networks and partnerships in various fields between the EU and Cambodia (Hör 2017, p. 140). EEAS, however, is not the only institution involved in this cooperation: the EEAS works closely with European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Foreign Affairs Council (EEAS, 2016a). When it comes to external assistance program funding, the EU budget and the European Development Fund provide the economic backing, while the European Investment Bank (EIB) supports European development cooperation policies by offering loans and grants.

Outside of the EC-Cambodia Framework Cooperation agreement, which came into force in 1999, another big milestone in the EU - Cambodia relationship is the EC-ASEAN Cooperation, which Cambodia acceded in July 2000, which allows parties involved to participate in EC-ASEAN activities and the Everything But Arms Initiative (EBA) from 2001. EBA allows Cambodia to benefit with duty-free and quota-free access to the EU markets. Other major contracts, with focus on deepening the relationship between the EU and Cambodia, include the EC-Cambodia Community Strategy Paper 2007-2013, the European Development Cooperation Strategy for Cambodia 2014-2018, and the Multiannual Indicative Programme 2014-2020.

Trade between EU and Cambodia

The European union is promoting liberalization and open markets all over the world and is committed to creating conditions for fair and prosperous trade. This applies to the case of Cambodia as well.

European Union, Trade with Cambodia

Total goods: EU Trade flows and balance, annual data 2010 - 2020
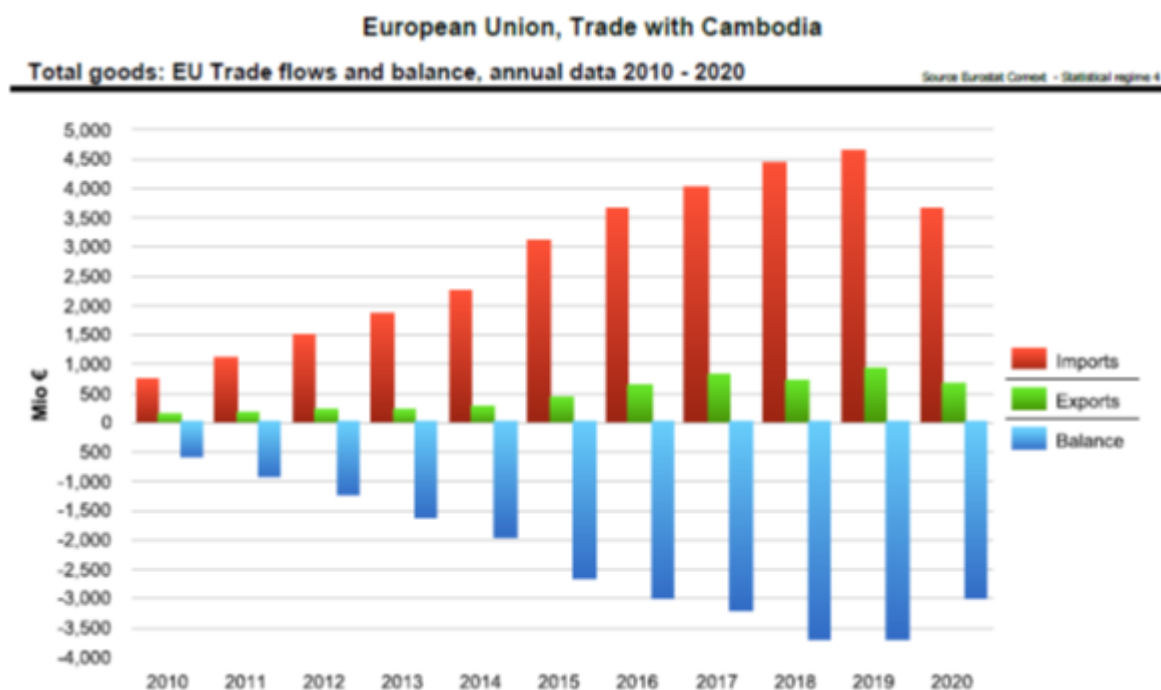
(Source Eurostat Comext – Statistical regime 4)

This table illustrates how the trade between the European Union and Cambodia has significantly increased during the period 2010-2019, with a slight decrease during 2020, which can be attributed towards a global disruption of economy due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Economic motivators play a central role in EU – Cambodia relations. When it comes to total trade volume, it has been growing from EUR 883 million in 2010, to EUR 5.570 billion in 2019, and taking a slight dip to EUR 4.313 billion in 2020. This increase of Cambodia's exports to the EU over the years primarily derives from the trade scheme that applies for Cambodia as it one of the 48 least developed states, failing under EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP) making Cambodia eligible for the Everything but Arms (EBA) scheme. Due to the EBA, Cambodia can export goods duty-free and quota-free to the EU, with the exception of weapons, ammunition, and arms (European Commission 2013). This also allows Cambodia, in compliance with EBA, to

benefit from regional accumulation. This means, for example, that Cambodia can finish textile products from other ASEAN countries. These products will then be considered a Cambodian origin product, as Cambodia has easy access to the European Market (Hör, 2017, p. 148). Furthermore, the EU is the largest donor of trade-related assistance in Cambodia. This support has contributed to a simplification of procedures relating to import and export, while also helping to implement an ambitious program of customs automation. The European Commission's "Export Help Desk" is a free online service that provides information on how to access the EU market listing import requirements, tariffs, customs documentation, rules of origin and more (EU Delegation to Cambodia, 2016a). It is crucial to mention that as of the 12th of August 2020, the EU has temporarily partially suspended the EBA deal with Cambodia. The withdrawal of preferential access to the EU market makes up about 20% of Cambodia's exports to the EU. This partial suspension is due to serious and systematic concerns related to human rights ascertained in the country (Ferrie and Malinowska, 2020). This will be further explored in the following sections.

Outside of that, another way the EU has been pursuing liberalization of the Cambodian market, in particular with focus on supporting European businesses in market entry and elimination of trading barriers, was the EuroCham Cambodia (Hör 2017, p. 149). Inaugurated on the 2nd of June 2011 with the support of three founding European Business Organisations: the French *Chambre de Commerce Franco-Cambodgienne (CCFC),* the *British Business Association in Cambodia* (BBAC), and the German *Arbeitskreis Deutsche Wirtschaft* (ADW), EuroCham focuses on promoting the interests of European businesses operating in Cambodia, helping European companies enter the Cambodian market and creating an extensive support network among corporate and individual members alike (Hör, 2017, p. 150). Furthermore, EuroCham activities include partnerships with the Cambodian government in areas of taxation and dispute resolution, creation of sector-specific Committees, and provision of a range of services to European businesses (EuroCham Cambodia, 2021).

This section has briefly illustrated the overall trade situation between the EU and Cambodia, and that, both of terms of export and import, the trade has been growing between the two parties, with increasingly more mechanisms appearing to ease the access for both the European businesses to the Cambodian market and vice versa.

European Union and Aid

When it comes to the development of Cambodia since the Paris Peace Accords in October 1991, the EU has always had a central role. Between 1991 and 1999, an estimated amount of EUR 262 million were provided by the EC as assistance to the Kingdom of Cambodia. Furthermore, EU member states have funded bilateral cooperation programs accounting for another EUR 590 million. In 1993, after the first democratic elections in Cambodia, the EC Rehabilitation Programme for Cambodia (PERC) was established with a budget of EUR 88 million (Hör, 2017, p. 145). Aid has been provided by both the EC and member states since the early days of cooperation between the EU and Cambodia.

When it comes to funding for the EU development cooperation, it is regulated within the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). MFF determines the ceiling of the EU's annual budget for the time frame it covers, which is based on a proposal by the European Commission. It aims at supporting national policies such as the "Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency in Cambodia" and the "National Strategic Development Plan" (Kingdom of Cambodia 2013). Furthermore, it follows the overall EU policies, primarily being set out in the "Agenda for Change" (European Commission 2011), in which the main objectives are aimed towards fighting poverty more effectively around the globe. The European Union and its partners are Cambodia's largest donors of grant development aid. Overall development assistance to Cambodia by the European partners for the period of 2014-2018 is estimated around EUR 892 million in grants, with an additional EUR 478 million in loans.

During different periods, the development grants and aid were focusing on a variety of issues depending on the period. The first EC-Cambodia Country Strategy Paper 2000-2003, and the National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2002-2004, focused on poverty reduction. The main areas of intervention addressed urgent issues such as humanitarian aid and mine clearance, long term rural support, basic education, health, support to the reform of public administration, actions in support of human rights, and the consolidation of democracy (Hor, 2017, p. 146). The NIP of 2005-2006 focused on pro-poor economic development, support of the social sector, and governance as a cross-cutting issue (EC Strategy paper 2007-2013). The 2007-2013 EU-Cambodia strategy paper continued with similar developmental goals, with the EU providing a great deal of aid in terms of grants and investments, and in the period of 2014-2020 the EU development cooperation funds more than doubled from EUR 170 million in the period of 2007-2013 to EUR 410 million for the

2014-2020 period. Investment areas include agriculture and natural recourse management, education and skills, as well as Governance and Administration (MFF 2014-2020).

These numbers and aid agreements are highlighted here to illustrate that outside of economic partnership regarding import and export, the EU has also been contributing a vast amount of development aid. This level of development cooperation is also seen as a controversial issue among scholars, as some argue that it reflects a certain aid dependency of Cambodia towards the EU (Moyo, 2009; Hayter, 1971; Easterly, 2006; Ear, 2013). However, in the case of Cambodia, it is worth noting that there are alternative donors like China, the US, Japan, and Korea. This potentially ensures the country's freedom to make its own choices. Moreover, the EU engagement must follow the Cambodian National Development Plans relating to policies that were developed by the Cambodia government. This is to prevent the EU from simply forcing measures onto the Cambodian administration. Prime Minister Hun Sen has repeatedly opposed any indications of foreign intrusion into internal affairs (Xinhuanet, 2017).

However, it is worth noting that the upcoming time frame of the MFF 2021-2027 changes how the external action funding functions. A new financial instrument known as 'The Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument' (NDICI – also known as 'Global Europe') has been proposed by the European Commission. This instrument combines funding for programs in different fields of EU external action into one single instrument (Hoogeland and Stracquadanio, 2021). The goal of this instrument is to both set the main policy priorities of the EU and provide the budgetary framework for the programs in the field of development, international cooperation, and neighborhood policies. This way, there will be a policy-driven and inclusive approach to the decisions made on where the funds of the EU's external actions will be allocated (Hoogeland and Stracquadanio, 2021). The previous regulation (Regulation Eu 236/2014) that set the rules for the funding coming out of the EU external action and Development Fund expired at the end of 2020. In December 2020, the European Parliament and the Council reached a political agreement on the NDICI proposal, and in January 2021, the European Parliament and the Council started working on translating the proposal for the NDICI into a final legal text for an EU-regulation with work still ongoing as of the time of writing. NDICI combines more than ten different external means of financing into one, with EUR 79,5 billion split into four main components: Geographical, Thematic, Rapid Response, and Flexibility Cushion for responses to emerging crisis situations (Hoogeland and Stracquadanio, 2021). The first component, with the highest amount of allocated funds, will focus on reinforcing cooperation with

partner countries from different regions in the world on a broad spectrum of issues: promoting rules of law, human rights, democracy, good governance, peace, security, sustainable development, managing inequality, climate change, migration, and employment. The thematic component refers to Sustainable Development Goals: promotion of human rights, civil society, stability and peace, health, education, or sustainable and inclusive growth. The rapid response component refers to managing crises, prevention of conflicts and (re)building peace efforts, while the final component refers to the organization of aid in case of armed conflicts or natural disasters, or to just top up existing programs under the first and second component (Hoogeland and Stracquadanio, 2021).

Another important note is that NDICI is going to be fully integrated into the MFF-budget rather than being kept separate from the Commission's budget. For example, the European Development Fund (set to be closed in favor of NDICI) funding was handled by Members States directly. This will lead to the Parliament having more power in terms of holding the Commission more directly accountable for how the funds of the EU's external action are handled (Hoogeland and Stracquadanio, 2021).

The EU and promotion of values in Cambodia

The previous section accounted for the trade partnership between the EU and Cambodia as well as the developmental aid history. Now, it is worth turning to the EU's promotion of values in Cambodia. As mentioned in the previous section, the EU's development aid engagement must follow Cambodian National Development Plans to ensure that the EU simply does not force measures on the Cambodian government. Therefore, talking about the goals of the European Union regarding development cooperation in Cambodia, it is aimed at supporting the Royal Government of Cambodia by realizing their self-imposed strategies. This is in the backdrop of the overarching priorities, such as poverty alleviation, and meeting the basic needs and expressions of pursuing fostering democracy, rule of law, gender equality, rural development, food security, climate change prevention, human rights, peace, stability, and creation of common markets. These objectives are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and are firmly set in the Lisbon Treaty itself, with a focus on the support for human rights and democracy in all external actions (TEU Article 21; TEU Article 3(5)). However, it is worth noting that all these issues were part of the first country strategy paper between the EU and Cambodia all the way back in 2000.

The guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security policy in East Asia adopted in June 2012, cite the development and consolidation of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as a condition for developmental support and aid (Council of The European Union, 2012). This is in line with the challenges reflected in official documents of the Kingdom of Cambodia such as The National Strategic Development Plan for 2014-2018. It outlines the government's demands for "a credible and stable legal and judicial system that promoted human rights and dignity, strengthened the rule-of-law principle of a liberal democracy and ensured social justice" (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2014). Even the Cambodian Constitution is based on values such as rule of law, human rights, democracy, and power separation that has been historically embedded in the Kingdom's legal and political system (Hör, 2017, p. 144). As an example, article 13 of the Constitution of Cambodia recognizes and respects "human rights as stipulated in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of human rights, the covenants and conventions related to human rights, women's and children's rights" (Constitution of Cambodia 1993). However, concern for human rights and democracy has been key interests for the EU ever since the inception of the union. Since 1998, the EU has deployed four full Election Observation Missions (EOMs) to Cambodia: for the National Assembly Election of 1998, 2003, and 2008, as well as for the first ever Commune Council Elections in 2002. This trend continued, as the EU felt that inadequate progress had been made in addressing the concerns and recommendations made in 2008 leading to a two-person Expert Mission (EEM) to be deployed in Cambodia at the 2013 National Assembly Elections (EEAS 2015). This also led to an EU funded project with a focus on reforming the National Election Committee (NEC). While the NEC's mandate is to organize the national and local elections in Cambodia, the European Union provided EUR 10 million of financial support to the election reforms in various forms: equipment, technical assistance, and policy advice. However, this funding was suspended by EU right before Cambodia's 2018 general election (Thul, 2018). Which brings us to the events that transpired in 2015 that lead to the EU's suspension of funding towards the Cambodian election with eventual partial suspension of the EBA.

Cambodian human rights violations

Even though it were the events transpiring from 2015 and onwards regarding human rights violations and unwarranted arrests of political opposition to the ruling government of

Cambodia that lead to an eventual partial suspension of EBA and stopping of funds to improve and reform elections in Cambodia, the history of the issues is deeper.

An example of this is the Cambodian sugar industry. In 2006, the Cambodian sugar industry was close to non-existent (Davies, 2017). According to trade data from the UN, in 2007, Cambodia exported USD 61,000 worth of sugar to the EU. By 2011, it was USD 12.9 million worth of sugar export to the EU (UNCTAD, 2013). However, this rise of the Cambodian sugar industry did not come without its own issues. Reports were coming in from NGOs and human rights organizations that as many as 12,000 people were affected by human rights abuse and environmental damage, forced to leave their homes, and children as young as 12 forced to work with harvesting canes. The UN special rapporteurs since 2012 have "pointed to the need for a thorough investigation" (Davies, 2017). A European Parliament resolution also noted that over 400,000 people were displaced and dispossessed of their land, homes, and livelihoods by the authorities and businesses over the last decade (2012/2844(RSP)). Even though the EU has been exposed to lobbying for years by NGOs to take action and address the human rights situation in Cambodia, no concrete action has been taken. By 2014, the Commission announced that it has reached a compromise with the Cambodian government to address the issue, with the EU paying for consultants to draft terms of reference under which a team of independent auditors and government employees could assess claims of dispossession and rights violations in the industry (Davies 2017). However, the victory was rather bittersweet in the eyes of NGOs and human rights activists, as it still meant that Cambodian authorities have the final say over the wording. Also, it is worth noting that not a single audit has been carried out since that announcement.

This lack of response from the EU has been confusing for human rights activists, as the EU is seen as a good value promoter. Gaelle Dusepulchre, the permanent representative of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) to the EU considers that the lack of response from the Commission is due to fear that any serious investigation would harm the free-trade agreements currently under negotiation with Cambodia's neighbors such as Vietnam, where human rights conditions are considerably worse in some instances (Davies, 2017).

Another case that led towards the partial EBA suspension and withdrawal of EU funding for elections in Cambodia, dates back to 2015. That year, a Cambodian court issued an arrest warrant for the leader of the opposition, Sam Rainsy (DW, 2015). Furthermore, more charges for arrests were issued towards the opposition party CNRP (Cambodia National Rescue Party), with a wave of arrests of human rights, worker rights, and environmentalist activists. This led the

European Parliament to urge the Cambodian authorities "to revoke the arrest warrant and drop all charges issued against opposition leader Sam Rainsy and Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) members of the National Assembly and Senate, including Senator Hong Sok Hour and CNRP activists and organizers, to allow them to work freely without fear of arrest or persecution, and to end political use of the courts to prosecute people on politically motivated and trumped-up charge", with the EP calling on the Cambodian government and the opposition to engage in a serious and meaningful dialogue (2015/2969(RSP)). However, it is worth noting that the European Parliament itself has no means to directly sanction. Therefore, in 2016, the European Parliament said in a resolution that aid worth around 461 million dollars should be dependent on improvement in human rights and called on authorities to drop all charges against opposition leader Sam Rainsy, calling it judicial harassment of adversaries (2016/2753 (RSP)). Part of that resolution was also a call to release human rights activists in custody, and call to allow both politicians, activists, and human rights defenders to be able to work without the fear of prosecution (2016/2753 (RSP)). The reply of Cambodia's Prime Minister was "Don't scare me and threaten me" (Thul, 2016). Making a point that these cuts in aid would primarily affect foreign-paid non-governmental organization workers.

Furthermore, China, who is a big partner and donor to Cambodia, does not make threats or attach conditionalities to aid and investment. It is worth noting that different institutions, like the European Parliament, can be more critical and express harsher criticism, calling for decisive action, while other EU players such as the delegation and ambassador are more reserved and diplomatic. A potential explanation is that the operating institution in Cambodia is dependent on good relations with Cambodian authorities in order to conduct their activities.

This call to drop charges "or else" by the European Parliament did not work out and the situation in Cambodia continued to deteriorate.

The situation in regard to the jailing of the opposition reached a critical point with the Cambodian Supreme Court dissolved the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), in November 16, 2017 (Eachambadi, 2017). This allowed Prime Minister Hun Sen to extend his 30-year reign as the leader of the nation, and the court imposed a five-year ban on 118 party members, effectively locking them out of any political activity for the foreseeable future. Human Rights Watch called the ruling "the death of democracy in Cambodia" (Eachambadi, 2017). This ruling was also the reason why the EU withdrew aid for the following 2018 election in Cambodia, as the opposition was non-existent after this ruling.

Human rights organizations, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty, continued to call and advocate for the release of political and activist prisoners during the following years (Amnesty, 2018; HRW 2018).

Furthermore, UN monitoring bodies have unanimously expressed concerns about this situation, noting that the redistribution of CNPR seats to other parties at the communal level deprives Cambodians of their rights to political participation. That report also concludes that the regression of political rights in Cambodia, including the amendments to the Constitution to introduce a lese-majeste law, constitute 'grave' developments, aimed at repressing dissenting voices and curtailing fundamental freedoms (UN 2018).

Due to a lack of change 'for the better', in February of 2019, the procedure of the EBA withdrawal was started. The Commission, on November 12, 2019, submitted to Cambodia a report demonstrating serious and systematic violations of key principles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) linked to political participation, freedom of expression, and freedom of association in Cambodia. However, there has been no significant progress since then. Following that, on the 12th of February 2020, the Commission decided to partially withdraw Cambodia's preferential access to the EU market (Commission 2020). It came fully in effect on August 12, 2020, with the commissioner for Trade Phil Hogan saying "*We have provided Cambodia with trade opportunities that let the country develop an export-oriented industry and gave jobs to thousands of Cambodians. We stand by their side also now in the difficult circumstances caused by the pandemic. Nonetheless, our continued support does not diminish the urgent need for Cambodia to respect human rights and labor rights. I stand ready to continue our engagement and to restore fully free access to the EU market for the products from Cambodia provided we see substantial improvement in that respect*" (Commission, 2020).

Post-liberal discourse of governance in case of the EU and Cambodia

After a brief review of the EU-Cambodia relationship in terms of trade, developmental aid, and the EU acting as a values promoter, the approaches will be applied to analyze the situation with a focus on both human rights conditions in Cambodia, as well as the election situation that worsened over the last years that led to the partial suspension of EBA.

To begin with, when talking of the EU actions in Cambodia, it reproduces post-liberal discourse, which builds on the EU's external governance agenda. However, it is worth noting that

through the discourse of post-liberal governance, the EU seeks to avoid the direct political responsibilities associated with its normative power. In turn, autonomy and self-government is problematized. This can be seen in the official summary of the Delegation of the European Union to Cambodia website, under the Relations with the EU.

Here, we see a focus on "partnership" where it is noted that the EU is committed to ensuring more effective aid and strengthening of Cambodia's leadership of its own development process (2016). This is in line with the post-liberal paradigm of seeking to engage in the process of building up governance in terms of capacity and responsibility. The EU does not seek to establish representative legitimacy of policymaking, but rather focuses on partnership in terms on technical and administrative capacity. This is an iteration of the EU supporting a wide range of human rights activities, such as advocacy, protection, democratic development, civil society strengthening, and support for vulnerable groups, as noted in the Delegation of the European Union to Cambodia (2016). Again, this is a part of the discourse of post-liberal statebuilding where the EU both denies its power and focuses on giving support in building up and upholding human rights and democracy (the focus is on the country's government), but at same time exercising it.

An example of such exercise of governance is seen in the case of the Election Observation Missions conducted by the EU to Cambodia. These missions were concluded with the EU providing recommendations on how to improve democratic elections, and to highlight potential concerns. This case illustrates the post-liberal discourse of governance very well, as it is external policy prescription without the formal responsibility for governing and policymaking in the country regarding election processes. This is very different from the traditional liberal understanding of sovereignty and autonomy too – as in sovereignty based international relations one either respects sovereign autonomy or coercively intervenes to undermine that sovereignty. However, in the case of the EU and the discourse of governance from the post-liberal statebuilding perspective, it is supportive of sovereignty, though on the basis that sovereignty is understood as a capacity to manage autonomy. This understanding also enables interventionist approaches and conditionality when talking about capacity-building in Cambodia. Also, the example of the Election Observation Missions serves as proof of that conditionality, as the EU has funded projects with the focus on reforming the Cambodian National Election Committee with policy advice, equipment, and technical assistance, eventually suspending the funding, as none of those recommendations were implemented across nearly two decades of cooperation and the situation worsened (Thul, 2018).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the post-liberal paradigm requires intervention,

but as a means to strengthen the sovereignty rather than undermine it. This is another point proving that the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm is compatible with NPE, as any norm diffusion or normative power projection is not considered or seen as undermining sovereign rights, but rather resulting in improvement of sovereignty as capacity and responsibility through normative processes and impact.

It is also worth noting that applying the post-liberal paradigm's understanding of sovereignty when it comes to the EU's normative approach towards its relationship with Cambodia, remedies the issue of any conditionality that is applied (be it aid and improvements in election policy, improvement of human rights, or risk of a loss in partial EBA access) breaching sovereignty in the traditional liberal sense of sovereignty. Suddenly, the sovereign and self-rule is not being intervened in a traditional sense, but rather in a sense of post-liberal discourse of Cambodia not exhibiting the capacity and responsibility for sovereignty and upholding agreements and goals set out in its own constitution. As this section primarily focused on a brief application of sovereignty in post-liberal discourse in the EU and the Cambodia relations, the following section of the analysis will utilize NPE and look at the processes with applied understanding of sovereignty of post-liberal paradigm.

NPE's standpoint

The following section of the analysis will focus on the NPE's standpoint and approach to the case of Cambodia and the EU that has been presented above. The analytical tools provided by the NPE approach through Ian Manners will be used. When using NPE on this case, it is important to account for as many instances of norm diffusion as possible, dating back as far as possible in the case, as the NPE is interested in the process of norm diffusion over several years.

At the beginning of the analysis, it was mentioned that the relations between Cambodia and Europe date back to many years before the existence of the EU. But the first significant instance of norm diffusion that this paper identifies is the 1997 EC-Cambodia Co-operation Agreement entering into force in 1999, which states that it recognizes "the excellent relations and ties of friendship and cooperation between the Community and Cambodia" (EC, 1999). This sentence is highlighted here because it indicates that there has most certainly been exposure between the EU and Cambodia before this agreement, which means that some norm diffusions have most likely taken place leading up to this agreement, yet this paper will use this agreement as the first reference point of empirical data facilitating cooperation and thereby norm

diffusion from the EU towards Cambodia.

When diving into the specifics of this agreements, from the standpoint of NPE, it is worth first looking for facilitations of the core norms that lay the foundation of the EU's normative basis. Firstly, article 1 of the agreement states: "Respect for the democratic principles and fundamental human rights established by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights inspires the internal and international policies of the Community and of Cambodia and constitutes an essential element of this agreement" (EC, 1999). In this first article, which is titled 'basis', it makes clear that two of the core norms of the UE normative basis, namely democracy and human rights, are both essential to this agreement. It is expected that democracy as a norm is mentioned early in an agreement to state that the terms on which an agreement is made are on a democratic foundation. It is the only time that democracy is mentioned, whereas human rights is mentioned four times, twice in the introduction and twice in article 1. The emphasis on norms can vary depending on who the parties of an agreement are. In this case, Cambodia represents a state with particular issues on the human rights front, which automatically will show in the EU's efforts to facilitate the human rights norm in agreements with Cambodia, which will also be shown in later examples.

Article 2 is outlining the objectives of the agreement, where section d states that it is an aim of the deal "to contribute to Cambodia's efforts to improve the quality of life and standards of living of the poorest sections of its population, together with measures for the country's reconstruction" (EC, 1999). This section of the "objectives" article emphasizes the EU's focus on the 'good governance' norm. Moreover, article 3 states that "the Community recognizes Cambodia's need for development assistance and is prepared to step up its cooperation in order to contribute to that country's own efforts to achieve sustainable economic development and social progress of its people through concrete projects and programs (…)" (EC, 1999). This article clearly states the importance of sustainable development, which is also a part of the EU's normative basis. Furthermore, the article the focus on social progress is a nod to the social solidarity norm, which means that just by looking at a few articles so far, most of the normative basis of the EU has been identified in the agreement, which is also an indication of how pivotal this agreement was as a first big step towards a hope of normative changes in Cambodia's behavior following the agreement. The agreement has articles on trade cooperation, environmental cooperation, economic cooperation, agriculture, energy, regional cooperation, science and technology, chemical drug precursors and money laundering, physical infrastructure, and information, communication, and culture (EC, 1999). All these article titles show that the entire normative basis of the EU as a normative power is represented in the agreement. As

mentioned, this is argued to be because of the agreement being the first official and encompassing document facilitating future cooperation between the EU and Cambodia, as article 15 titled 'future developments' also illustrates with: "Within the framework of this Agreement, either Party may put forward suggestions for expanding the scope of the cooperation, taking into account the experience gained in its application" (EC, 1999).

So, the norms have been identified in the agreement, and it can therefore quite clearly be seen as an active form of diffusion of norms. Which brings us to the factors of norm diffusion that Manners defines.

As the agreement is an active and intentional diffusion of norms, the factor that has to do with unintentional diffusion of norms can therefore be excluded form the conversation here, which is *contagion*. Instead, the kind of diffusion that was started by this agreement we argue are *procedural, transference,* and *overt* diffusion.

Procedural diffusion includes the very creation of cooperation agreements and generally includes an institutionalization of a relationship between the EU and a third party (Manners, 2002). Article 14 is titled 'institutional aspects' and states that a Joint Committee will be established as a part of the agreement, which puts it directly under the category of procedural diffusion, as this is an institutionalization of the relationship between the EU and Cambodia with EU norms sprinkled all over the agreement as well.

Transference diffusion takes place through trade agreements and exchange of goods, aid, or technical assistance from the EU to a third party (Manners, 2002). Some articles of relevance here article 4, article 7, article 9, article 10, and article 13. Article 4 is addressing the agreements facilitation of trade between the EU and Cambodia, which is a central part of the transference factor of norm diffusion. Article 7 is the article on agriculture, and it states that the EC and Cambodia will examine "the possibility of assisting the Government of Cambodia in its efforts to diversify agricultural exports" (EC, 1999). Here is a section that emphasizes the use of EU assistance to Cambodia. Furthermore, article 9 on regional cooperation states that an activity on this front could include "technical assistance (services of outside consultants, training, of technical staff in certain practical aspects of integration)" (EC, 1999). Article 10 on science and technology goes in the same vein as article 7 and 9 by stating that cooperation in this area may involve "the exchange of scientists to promote the preparation of research projects and high-level training" (EC, 1999).

Lastly, article 13 on information, communication and culture states that new initiatives may be made in the area of "preparatory studies and technical assistance for the

conservation of the cultural heritage, notably for the purposes of tourism" (EC, 1999). As can be seen in these articles, there is a major emphasis on the technical assistance in several areas as well as trade. This makes this agreement fit under the category of transference diffusion of norms, which brings us to the last diffusion factor that is also found in this agreement, which is *overt* diffusion.

Overt diffusion refers to the physical presence of the EU in a third-party state (Manners, 2002). Here, we can refer back to the articles already brought up mentioning the exchange of personnel, technical assistance, and/or training of personnel in Cambodia. Back in 1999 when this agreement came into force, it was limited how much technical assistance and training could be done online as it is today. Therefore, the physical presence of EU officials and representatives played a big role in how this agreement was rolled out in practice. In addition, article 14 that mentions the Joint Committee being formed also states that "the Joint Committee shall be composed of representatives of sufficient seniority of both Parties. It shall normally meet every other year, alternately in Phnom Penh and in Brussels, on a date fixed by mutual agreement.

Extraordinary may also be convened by agreement between the Parties" (EC, 1999). Not only will representatives and officials of the EU be present in Cambodia at all times to train and assist Cambodian personnel in different areas, the EU will even show up in the capital of Cambodia every other year to have a Joint Committee meeting. Lastly, the presence of an EU delegation in Cambodia presents another form of overt diffusion, as the EU has a dedicated ambassador in the country. As mentioned in the theory section, the EU has delegations all over the world, and having one in Cambodia is an example of overt diffusion of norms. Thereby, it can be argued that overt diffusion is also present in this agreement.

EC-Cambodia Co-operation Agreement entering into force in 1999 was the kickoff of EU norm diffusion towards Cambodia, and the procedural, transference, and overt diffusion have all been identified in the articles of the agreement. Now, we jump to the year 2001 when Cambodia joined the Everything but Arms Initiative, as this marks the next significant moment of EU-Cambodia relations. It also presents a framework established for EU-Cambodia relations that could give indications as to whether some focus points have change, or if some norms have been addressed or shifted in focus since the EC-Cambodia Co-operation Agreement.

As it has been mentioned in the above section on the trade development between the EU and Cambodia, the EBA is a pivotal moment for Cambodia as it sparked the beginning of a massive spike in trade with the EU. As Cambodia is categorized by the EU as one of the 49 poorest/least developed countries in the world, this makes the country eligible for accession to the scheme. Given

that the EBA is a scheme created specifically for the purpose of trade, the norms that follow the scheme, primarily human rights, fall under the transference diffusion. In order to become a part of the EBA, the country in question must be in "compliance with the principles of 15 UN/ILO conventions on core human rights" (European Parliament, 2019).

In other words, at the time of Cambodia entering the EBA scheme in 2001, the EU felt it necessary to re-address the human rights situation, even though the EC-Cambodia Co-operation Agreement clearly states that the future development of cooperation has a great focus on the human rights issue. Ever since the EBA, more and more agreements and strategy papers have been created to further facilitate the EU's wish for change in regard to human rights in Cambodia, as well as elections. Moreover, as mentioned in the above section on the EU promotion of values in Cambodia, there have been four different EOMs in relation to elections, an expert mission in 2013, and additional funding towards election reforms. Yet, there still seem to be issues. Taking the point of departure in 1991, and arguing that 1997 was the major kickoff, that would make up 23 years of the EC/EU diffusing norms in Cambodia and yet the EU ended up partially suspending the EBA due to human rights violations related to the situation accounted for in the above section on Cambodian human rights violations.

This is where the NPE approach can be seen to lack explanatory power when addressing why the diffusion of norms in a third-party state across 23 years have not brought about any changes in the state's behavior on the most central norms established through countless strategy papers, constitutions, agreements, and schemes. The NPE approach as developed by Ian Manners does not set out to explain why norm diffusion has changed, and as has been discussed in the theory section, this is due to the vagueness of the structural functionality of the approach, which Manners fully embraces is lacking. This is where the post liberal statebuilding comes in. This section has identified the EU as a normative power in relation to Cambodia through the facilitation of its entire normative basis in the EC-Cambodia Co-operation Agreement from 1997 as well as the EBA scheme from 2001. It has argued that the EU's main forms of diffusion has been *procedural, transference,* and *overt* diffusion. Lastly, this section has set the stage for the merging of NPE and PLS to explain the lack of progress in the respect for human rights in Cambodia.

Turning to post-liberal statebuilding to remedy the lack of explanatory power of NPE when addressing why the diffusion of norms in Cambodia, over 23 years did not bring any change in Cambodia's behavior regarding human and labor rights.

The first evident thing is the post-liberal discourse of understanding autonomy. Due to sovereignty being understood as capacity and responsibility building of good governance, autonomy in this paradigm is problematized. The vested interest of political elites in keeping power is one of the barriers for any successful norm diffusion. The arrests of political opposition and dissolution of the challenging political party are all in post-liberal statebuilding prescribed towards autonomy – problematic for both citizens of Cambodia and the international society. In this case, the autonomous choices taken by the Cambodian government have resulted in conflicts (both internally and externally) and divide among the Cambodian people. Furthermore, post-liberal statebuilding argues that external intervention is necessary as a precondition to unconstrained autonomy for the sake of social harmony. The EU over 23 years of cooperation and partnership with Cambodia through various ways of norm diffusions pursued institutionalization and building up capacity of good governance in Cambodia, which is argued was for this particular reason – to constrain autonomy through institutionalization and internationalization of Cambodia. However, even over this lengthy period of cooperation, the vested interests of political elites in Cambodia became a serious roadblock to any good governance in terms of capacity building of good governance. This is also in line with NPE suggesting that the potential impact of norm diffusions requires a great deal of time to be noticed and to stay.

It can be said that the EU has pursued the subordination of politics to bureaucratic and administrative procedures of good governance – for example funds, policy advice, equipment, and expertise towards improving elections. These are all ways to constrain autonomy for the good of the country. However, there has always been a question in regard to conditionality. That while there are 'carrots', there exists 'sticks' too, because the UN fundamental human rights are not upheld. Can the EU not simply stop the funds until the issues are resolved? Well, in post-liberal statebuilding, this is not understood as some end goal of policy implementation, but rather relationship management. Again, it turns the conversation towards autonomy – partnership between the EU and Cambodia is voluntary and autonomous from both sides. This leads to years of norm diffusion being the focus of managing the relationship rather than pushing for change through conditionality. It is worth noting here, that the Cambodian prime minister has on several occasions expressed a wish for no intervention from external actors, so the EU, in regard to cooperation with Cambodia, are being very careful not to impose any restrictions right away, but rather try to participate in a dialogue, reminding the commitments that the Cambodian government made in regard to upholding human rights, labor rights, and environmental rights. That is a primary

explanation of it taking 23 years for the EU to partially suspend EBA. It is that 'roadblock' of autonomy that keeps undermining any norm diffusion within Cambodia, with the EU trying to constantly engage in a dialogue with hopes of change through incentives such as aid.

Another crucial point is that even though the EU's approach towards norm diffusion can be explained fruitfully with help of post-liberal statebuilding and understanding of sovereignty, and that unconstrained autonomy by political elites wanting to keep power is a major roadblock towards truly impactful norm diffusion, the EU is not the only donor to Cambodia. China is a major donor and contributor to Cambodian infrastructure, challenging the EU on donation sizes (Richarson 2010). This also allows the Cambodian government to not be solely dependent on the EU. Between Cambodia and China, there are articulated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (Richardson, 2010), which include mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality, and mutual benefit. This leaves the Cambodian government with two relationships – one with the EU, which is within the framework of post-liberal statebuilding, and China, which is within the framework of the traditional liberal paradigm.

The Cambodian government stressed the fact that "China's aid has no strings attached and has an intention to help develop Cambodia with the respect for the country's sovereignty" (Sok Touch, 2019). In this sense, sovereignty is understood in the traditional liberal sense of statebuilding, as being a part of autonomy. Given that Cambodia is an autonomous actor, it has a choice to align itself with someone who they gradually see as interventionist through policy prescriptions (in particular with sovereignty as capacity and responsibility building), or someone who sees sovereignty in traditional liberal terms and has an agreement, regardless of the internal situation, to not intervene. With the European Parliament calling for the release of the political opposition, or the whole aid package will come under scrutinous review, has been perceived as external intervention into an internal situation.

So, while the post-liberal paradigm allows us to understand that autonomy in good governance capacity and responsibility building is problematic and creates a roadblock for impactful normative power exercise in Cambodia, it also highlights the difference in 'partnership' approaches between two different entities – one being the EU, the other being China. This wish to have unconstrained autonomy for political elites in Cambodia makes it more appealing to cooperate with a country that "respects non-interference in each other's internal affairs", as opposed to a partner that is ready to impose conditionality over not meeting particular goals of human or labor

rights. This is two different paradigms clashing in the international arena with a fragile state caught in between.

Conclusion

In the beginning of this paper, we posed the question:
How can post-liberal statebuilding paradigm and normative power Europe approach work together?
A case of the EU's influence on Cambodia, and partial withdrawal of EBA?

To answer that question, the paper introduced the two approaches, which led to a 'synergy' section, outlining the compatibility of the two. Then a brief overview of the EU and Cambodia relations was provided to establish a long running cooperation on which the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm and normative power Europe were applied in the analysis.

With the help of the post-liberal paradigm, the understanding of the EU's actions in Cambodia were explained by inverting traditional liberal thinking of sovereignty and proposing to view these external actions through the understanding of sovereignty as capacity and responsibility. This was also illustrated with various partnership agreements between the EU and Cambodia. Furthermore, the EU's actions in Cambodia are in line with the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm, as focus is on capacity building to enable the government to exercise good governance through various policy suggestions (such as election observation missions), and aid with a focus on technical assistance and expertise building. As the understanding of how the EU views its partnership with Cambodia through the post-liberal paradigm, normative power Europe offered the tools to provide a deeper understanding of which form of norm diffusion are at play in that relationship, their processes, and impact that has been achieved with over two decades of cooperation.

Procedural, transference, and overt norm diffusion forms were identified as key in the EU and Cambodia relationship. Procedural diffusion being the very creation of cooperation agreements, with formally institutionalized relationship between the EU and Cambodia. Transference diffusion taking place through economic cooperation, aid, and various technical assistance, while overt diffusion was identified through the physical presence of the EU in Cambodia, such as the Delegation of European Union to Cambodia. It outlines the origins of these norm diffusions, and where those norm diffusion processes can be seen in various articles and agreements between the Cambodia and the EU. These norm diffusions in building up the Cambodian government capacity for good governance did indeed have an impact that is seen primarily in economic terms. The economic growth in Cambodia, growth of various sectors for good exports can clearly be seen. Help in regard to technical assistance, setting up ways to easily access markets for Cambodian

businesses, and policies that support the cooperation, were indeed very impactful. However, despite this positive impact over recent years, areas of interest for the EU, which revolves around human rights, labor rights, and environmental protection, eroded. Even with these norm diffusions at work, the situation kept deteriorating, and in this case, normative power Europe was given a helping hand from the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm to explain this downturn.

As analysis continued, post-liberal statebuilding added the explanatory power to explain *why* developmental cooperation is so uneven. It is the problematization of autonomy that is seen as a roadblock for effective governance and strong sovereignty. While a country sees certain matters as internal, with keeping the autonomy for decision making for themselves, especially when talking of elites that seek power and staying in control, it will always be an issue for any fruitful international statebuilding actions, such as norm diffusions. Even though the EU has conditionality in its toolbox, it is crucial to keep in mind that the EU is not the only actor in the region, and post-liberal statebuilding efforts through building of sovereignty are put against more traditional liberal understandings of autonomy, with sovereignty being an aspect of it, which in turn makes the EU seem very unresponsive to human rights violations. It is not that there is a lack of response, but a strong response could damage the cooperation and the relationship to such a degree that it would be irreparable.

That is also why, when it comes to sanctions, the EBA withdrawal is only partial, rather than full. This still allows the EU to be an actor in Cambodia, continuing to diffuse norms in various ways in the hopes of building up the sovereignty capacity and responsibility, and constraining autonomy with even more deals and aid programs. This will be addressed further in the discussion section.

This paper can argues that the post-liberal paradigm and normative power Europe are compatible, offering an exchange of enhancing explanatory power (especially in cases where NPE struggles to explain the improvements or encounters deterioration of situation through extended exposure of norm diffusions), while the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm offers a view and in depth explanations of core principles, such as sovereignty, autonomy, rule of law etc., breaking away from traditional liberal assumptions of those terms, which is more in line with the EU and what the EU seeks to achieve as a global actor.

In terms of the academic contribution this paper represents, we argue that there should be more attempts to use synthesis of different approaches of statebuilding (in particular utilizing the post-liberal statebuilding paradigm) and NPE. This serves as an example and encouragement to

partake in these journeys of theoretical approach synthesis in European studies and international relations, rather than working alongside each other, which was illustrated in the introduction in regard to the body of academic works.

Discussion and Future Research

Several interesting things should be discussed and taken into consideration, especially when considering potential future research and general academic debates and tendencies.

First, it is worth discussing China and its donations towards Cambodia. The world that is analyzed today through various approaches and theoretical lenses cannot focus on one-on-one relationships and seek to explain different rationales based either on internal workings or some roadblocks that come from the cases being investigated. More increasingly, especially when working with fragile states and policy, other aid donors are an important factor to account for when dealing with international relations between parties. Like in the case of this project, where Chinese aid, that has no conditionality and based in traditional sovereignty partnership, is an impactful variable to discuss human rights and labor rights achievements (or lack of them) in Cambodia. The interconnected world we live in today calls for a reconsideration of how research is being approached when in comes to international relations. This is not to say that the traditional way of doing research and project writing has no merits, it absolutely does, however, it raises questions as to whether it is as fruitful as it could be. This is also not a call to overcomplicate theories and approaches by introducing a myriad of variables, but rather finding ways so synergize approaches that can be applied.

Another point is that there seems to be a lack of recognition of the paradigm clash especially in statebuilding literature. A single state can function differently within the international arena in comparison to the EU. So, even though the EU's approach to third parties can be describe in post-liberal statebuilding terms, other aid donors have their external actions more characteristic of traditional liberal paradigms. This should be addressed more generally when considering aid donor influence especially on fragile states. It calls for a better understanding of competing paradigms and tactics of actions of those present, that can lead to competition. This type of research would allow us to see strengths and weaknesses of different paradigms towards external actions and aid towards fragile states. There has been a call for quite a few theoretical reconsiderations over the years, as, now more than ever, it seems to be a relevant discussion to talk about improving and reflecting

within core theoretical assumptions to help explain the constantly changing international environment.

As for those interested in the EU and Cambodia relations, it is worth keeping track of the situation for any developments. A point of interest would be the new MFF implementation and its functionality. As noted previously, MFF for 2021-2027 sees many individual aid mechanisms come together under one umbrella – The Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). As noted, due to the way NDICI will function, it will give the Parliament more power in terms of holding the Commission more directly accountable for how the funds of the EU's external actions are handled. While, in 2016, the Parliament held a resolution to review the funding in light of human rights violations and political opponent arrests, it was taken lightly by the Cambodian prime minister. Even though it is not in practice yet, it seems that the words of the Parliament will carry more weight than ever before. Will this make the Parliament more involved? Could the Parliament become some safeguard of human rights in the international arena when it comes to the EU partners with more involvement in fund distribution? These things are yet to be seen, but we recommend keeping an eye on these developments and possibly comparing these changes in future research.

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