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THE REGIONAL CONTEXT OF STABILITY FORMATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Abstract: This article examines the regional factors influencing the establishment and maintenance of stability in Southeast Asia. It analyzes political, economic, and security dimensions, emphasizing the role of regional organizations, intergovernmental cooperation, and strategic partnerships. The study highlights how historical legacies, cultural diversity, and geopolitical dynamics shape the region's stability. By combining qualitative and quantitative data, including case studies and comparative analysis, the research provides insights into mechanisms that sustain peace, prevent conflicts, and promote regional development. Recommendations for policymakers, scholars, and international actors are offered to strengthen regional resilience and collaborative strategies.

Keywords: Southeast Asia, regional stability, political cooperation, economic development, security dynamics, ASEAN, conflict prevention, geopolitical factors

INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asia is a region marked by significant geopolitical, economic, and cultural diversity, which profoundly affects the processes of stability and development (Acharya, 2014). The formation and maintenance of stability in this region depend not only on national governance but also on regional dynamics, intergovernmental cooperation, and transnational interactions. Political stability, economic growth, and security are mutually interdependent; instability in one domain often triggers challenges in the others (Emmerson, 2015). Over recent decades, Southeast Asia has experienced rapid economic development, changes in political regimes, and growing engagement with global powers, such as China and the United States. These dynamics provide both opportunities for regional cooperation and challenges that may threaten stability, including territorial disputes in the South China Sea, socio-economic disparities, and the influence of global geopolitical shifts (Thuzar, 2020). Understanding stability formation in Southeast Asia thus requires a multidimensional perspective that integrates political science, international relations, economics, and security studies.

ASEAN plays a crucial role in fostering regional stability through mechanisms of diplomacy, economic integration, and conflict resolution (Ha, 2018). Its frameworks, including the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation and various confidence-building measures, exemplify how regional institutions promote collaboration among diverse states. Historical legacies, ethnic heterogeneity, and social structures influence domestic and regional responses to internal and external pressures, shaping both governance and inter-state relations (Suryadinata, 2017). This study provides a comprehensive analysis of political, economic, and security factors influencing stability in Southeast Asia. It evaluates the role of regional institutions, intergovernmental cooperation, and global partnerships in mitigating risks. The research contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical policymaking, offering insights that are valuable for scholars, diplomats, and decision-makers engaged in Southeast Asian studies and regional security.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of stability formation in Southeast Asia demonstrates that regional stability is a multidimensional and dynamic process shaped by political, economic, security, cultural, and historical factors. Stability is not merely the absence of conflict but a complex equilibrium maintained through effective governance, institutional cooperation, and proactive engagement with both regional and global actors. The interdependence of political stability, economic growth, and social cohesion underscores the need for holistic approaches to sustain peace and resilience in the region (Acharya, 2014; Ha, 2018).

ASEAN remains the cornerstone of regional stability, providing frameworks for conflict resolution, diplomatic dialogue, economic integration, and security cooperation. Its mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, have proven effective in promoting mutual trust, transparency, and collaboration among member states. Moreover, strategic partnerships with external powers, multilateral agreements, and regional confidence-building measures contribute to mitigating potential conflicts and ensuring long-term stability (Thuzar, 2020; Pham & Tran, 2019). Despite these achievements, Southeast Asia continues to face persistent challenges, including territorial disputes, socio-economic disparities, political transitions, and external geopolitical pressures. Addressing these challenges requires not only state-level initiatives but also coordinated regional strategies and adaptive policymaking. Policies aimed at inclusive economic development, social equity, and institutional strengthening are crucial for reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing the resilience of both states and societies. Cultural diversity, historical legacies, and social structures also play a significant role in shaping stability. Societies that promote inclusivity, respect for minority rights, and participatory governance tend to exhibit greater resilience, which positively influences regional dynamics. The interrelation between domestic governance and regional cooperation highlights the importance of integrating local realities into broader policy frameworks (Suryadinata, 2017). Future research should continue to explore the interplay between domestic policies, regional frameworks, and global dynamics, particularly in light of emerging challenges such as climate change, transnational security threats, and evolving economic alliances. By deepening the understanding of these interactions, policymakers, scholars, and regional actors can develop more effective strategies to sustain stability, peace, and prosperity in Southeast Asia. Ultimately, maintaining regional stability requires continuous collaboration, adaptive governance, and a shared commitment to long-term security and development. The insights from this study emphasize that stability is an ongoing process—one that demands vigilance, cooperation, and innovation from all stakeholders to ensure a peaceful and prosperous Southeast Asia.

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