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**CASE-BASED LEARNING IN POLITICAL SCIENCE: USING SOUTHEAST ASIA’S
INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY AS A TEACHING TOOL**

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Introduction

In recent years, the teaching of political science has increasingly shifted toward interactive and practice-oriented methodologies. Traditional lecture-based approaches often fail to capture the complexity of contemporary political processes, particularly in regions undergoing dynamic institutional transformations. One innovative method that bridges theory with practice is case-based learning (CBL), which allows students to analyze real-world political developments through structured, comparative study.

Southeast Asia provides a rich empirical foundation for such pedagogy. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam demonstrate diverse pathways of political and institutional stability shaped by their unique historical trajectories, governance models, and participation in regional frameworks like ASEAN. Examining these cases through the lens of political science education not only enhances student engagement but also cultivates critical thinking, problem-solving, and comparative analysis skills.

Research Objective

The article aims to explore how institutional mechanisms of stability in Southeast Asia can be integrated into political science teaching through case-based learning. The objectives are:

To conceptualize political and institutional stability as key analytical categories in political science education.

To identify the relevance of Southeast Asian case studies for developing comparative and critical thinking skills in students.

To propose innovative teaching strategies that incorporate case-based learning into university curricula.

Material and Methods

The study employs a comparative qualitative approach drawing on academic literature, policy reports, and institutional documents on governance in Southeast Asia. The case-based learning methodology is analyzed as both a pedagogical tool and a framework for engaging with empirical material. Specific teaching methods include:

Case study analysis of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

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Role-play simulations replicating ASEAN decision-making processes.

Problem-based tasks on anti-corruption strategies, political party systems, and public security policies.

Discussion-based learning to evaluate the transferability of Southeast Asian experiences to other contexts.

Research Results

Enhanced Engagement

One of the key findings is that case-based learning significantly increases student engagement. When learners are presented with real-world political scenarios—such as Indonesia’s transition to democracy, Malaysia’s balance between ethnic politics and stability, or Vietnam’s party-led governance—they are more motivated to analyze the material. This practical dimension captures their attention in ways that abstract theoretical lectures often cannot. By situating political concepts in real contexts, students not only learn the theory but also understand its application in practice.

Moreover, engagement is especially heightened when students are exposed to regions that are less commonly studied in their academic environment. Southeast Asia, being relatively unfamiliar compared to Western political contexts, sparks curiosity and encourages exploration. The novelty of these cases challenges students to question assumptions, thereby making the learning experience more dynamic and interactive. This element of discovery transforms the classroom into a space for active inquiry rather than passive absorption of knowledge.

Critical Comparative Thinking

The diversity of institutional mechanisms in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam provides fertile ground for developing comparative thinking skills. Each country represents a distinct political trajectory—Indonesia with its democratic reforms, Malaysia with its semi-democratic structures balancing pluralism and elite dominance, and Vietnam with its one-party system and developmental state. When studied together, these cases push students to evaluate how different institutional frameworks manage stability and adapt to change.

Through guided discussion and analysis, students learn to identify patterns and differences across political systems, fostering deeper understanding of governance beyond simplistic dichotomies of democracy versus authoritarianism. This approach helps cultivate critical thinking, as learners must consider multiple variables—historical legacies, social structures, regional pressures—in shaping institutional outcomes. In doing so, students not only grasp the uniqueness of Southeast Asia but also refine their skills in comparative politics more broadly.

Practical Skill Development

Another major outcome of case-based learning is the cultivation of practical skills relevant to both academic research and professional practice. Role-playing exercises that simulate political negotiations, policy-making scenarios, or party competition allow students to practice decision-making under constraints. These activities go beyond memorization, enabling students to experience the challenges of political processes firsthand.

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Scenario analysis, in particular, equips learners with problem-solving tools applicable to real-world political settings. By evaluating corruption-control strategies in Indonesia, electoral reforms in Malaysia, or security policies in Vietnam, students gain insights into policy evaluation and design. Such experiences not only enhance their analytical abilities but also prepare them for careers in government, diplomacy, or international organizations where these skills are indispensable.

Regional Relevance

Finally, ASEAN’s institutional framework adds a crucial regional dimension to political science education. As a model of cooperation and conflict management, ASEAN demonstrates how states with diverse political regimes can maintain stability through consensus-building and gradual integration. When students engage in simulations of ASEAN summits or regional negotiations, they gain practical exposure to the complexities of multilateral diplomacy.

This regional perspective underscores the importance of institutions in shaping stability beyond the national level. By studying ASEAN, learners see how domestic political mechanisms intersect with regional strategies, producing a layered understanding of governance. Incorporating this into case-based learning not only strengthens students’ comprehension of Southeast Asian politics but also prepares them to analyze regionalism in other parts of the world.

Conclusion

The integration of Southeast Asia’s institutional stability cases into political science curricula through case-based learning enriches the educational process by bridging theoretical concepts with practical application. This approach not only strengthens academic knowledge but also fosters the development of transferable skills essential for future political scientists. By incorporating interactive teaching tools—such as case studies, role-plays, and problem-solving exercises—universities can cultivate globally aware, critically minded students capable of engaging with complex political realities.