



## The Political Stability of Federation of Malaysia

Panlayamon Sinnang

*Lecturer in Bachelor of Political Science, Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand*

**Key words:** Political stability, Malaysia, participation, population, establishment, constitution

**Abstract:** The research in political stability of Malaysia aims to study; political stability of Malaysia; factors effect to political stability in Malaysia. The research is qualitative research by using the methodology of documentary research both domestic and international aspects as well as in-depth interview. The key informants were scholars who graduated from People and community university of Malaysia. Qualitative data analysis had been made by using content analysis in-depth interviews and observations. The interpretation has been made by using inductive interpretation, logical analysis and descriptive interpretation. The research result found that: based on the political stability of Malaysia, the country has a government with single party to administrate country for long time. This cause the establishment of various policies had continuity or the country has very high political stability from the analysis as follows; Malaysia had never used violence in political change; most of Malaysian people have high political participation with their voluntary and political awareness; Malaysia has respected in political rules and conditions in the provisions of the constitution; political institutions have high stability none of political intervention of the military and government officials; diversity and strength of various interest groups who had made voluntary agglomeration. In case of Malaysia called racial group; righteousness, efficiency and effectiveness of a democratic political system; social structure is the democratic attribute which made the political participation of Malaysian people is at high level. Factors effect to the political stability of Malaysia are: the political structure of Malaysia is an important factor that facilitated the management of diversities in term of racial and cultural differences to be smooth and successful; Economic factors; social factors included leadership, politic party, quality of population and Bumiputra.

### Corresponding Author:

Panlayamon Sinnang

*Lecturer in Bachelor of Political Science,  
Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Bangkok,  
Thailand*

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## INTRODUCTION

“Political stability” means the country has a certain level of security with the integrity of the territory, not being interfered by external powers and has full sovereignty without any superior power. The most important is the government is strong and it stay long enough to effectively manage the country. Since, the country had entered to ASEAN community, the meaning of “political stability” has been changed. Throughout

48 years of ASEAN, political stability in ASEAN had been arisen from Authoritarian. For example, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, the former Malaysian prime minister who had an important role in the country for a long time. He made various policies with continuity and had ability to maintain economic development. The majority of the people can be freed from poverty. Some countries can upgrade to be developed countries. As a result, ASEAN in the form of “associations” has a diplomatic relationship based on the characteristics of strong leaders. The

diplomacy is in form of leaders to leaders which is not interfere with other internal affairs and the consensus principle. All member states must have mutual agreement. The international forces shall drive all members of ASEAN to push themselves into the political stability for 48 years.

The change of Southeast Asian nations from “Association” to be a “Community” which does not create only the changes of nation but also create change in interaction with the outside world. This is important to drive changed among member states. Therefore, the member countries of the ASEAN community have interpreted the new meaning of “Political Stability” in accordance with the context of each country as well as world politics and economy.

Malaysia is a country in ASEAN that has both political role and development at high level. One of the important factor is Political stability. The country had none of political change since the country independence for 47 years. The country has large political party which had only 5 former prime ministers. Malaysia has planned many strategies to meet the goals set. Therefore, it is interesting to study the political stability of Malaysia which will affect to the development of other countries in the future.

#### **Research objective:**

- To study the political stability of Malaysia
- To study factors affect to the political stability of Malaysia

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The research is qualitative research by using the methodology of documentary research both domestic and international aspects such as the act and laws related to political and governance system, public participation, administrative organization, political stability of Malaysia as well as using in-depth Interview methodology. The key informants were scholars who graduated from people and community university of Malaysia including the people and community leaders of Malaysia.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Political stability of Malaysia:** Malaysia has a government with single party to manage the country for long time. Therefore, the establishment of various policies has continuity. Although, the political strength of the government party is weakened but it still considered the country has highest political stability in the region. The country also uses political policies to bring the economy, benefits and trade opportunities to the country. This is

different from Thailand where has many political parties or coalition government, lacks of unity with policies that are constantly changed for all time, resulted to the change of government leaders which is caused of discontinuity in many political policies.

Malaysia has very high political stability. If applied its political concepts and theories about stability for analysis, it can be described as follows (Amornkun and Pholamnuy, 2015).

Political stability will not occur or cause serious issues immediately, if there was violence in political change. Both caused by the state power, groups established by state power, masses and groups in society who driven for political change. In particular, there will be conflict among both sides. Malaysia has never had a violent political repression. For example, Malaysian people protest in many cities to dismiss Prime Minister Najib Razak from the position caused from corruption scandal in 2015 but it was done peacefully.

The majority of people had political participation with voluntary and caused by political consciousness. It can be seen from the voting rate in the Malaysian Election Commission (EC) has identified the voting rate was 82.32% or 12,299,514 voters from the number of registered voters was 14,940,624 voters (“EC revises voter turnout figures to 82.32%”, 2018) data from the Secretariat of the House of Representatives Demonstrates. It means that Malaysian people had concrete political participation. Political rules or conditions in the provisions of the constitution.

Political institutions both from weakness and insecurity of democratic political institutions as well as the violent conflicts between institutional mechanisms in former political and democratic political institutions. It caused lack of political stability. Malaysia did not have two mentioned issues due to the United Malays National Organization-UMNO is the government party who has built political voices base for 61 years after independence from England. Moreover in the Malaysian constitution there is none of section mentioned to the dissolution of the party or political disqualification of politicians. Thus, it made the political party of Malaysia called as the strong institution and it is an important factor that made Malaysia have highly political stability.

The political intervention of the military and government. Malaysia is a country that never had any coup. The investigation system and mechanism to solve political issue is in accordance with the procedures mentioned in constitution.

Diversity and weakness of various interest groups which gathered by voluntary agglomeration. Malaysia has racial diversity as an important issue. Due to the country has consisted with citizens from various races. At present, 50% are Malay ancestors, 24 percent are Chinese. Indigenous peoples have about 11, 7% of Indian ancestry

and about 8% is other ancestry. Even though, Malaysia consisted with many racial citizens but the Constitution, Article 153, stipulated that "special status" is given to Malay people and indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak or called Bumiputra. Bumiputra is the ethnic group that relied on government support. Although, the same section in Malaysia constitution stipulated that the government must protect the rights of various ethnic groups to be equal. But some argue that the voices of Bumiputra is higher than other ethnic groups.

Lack of righteousness and the inefficiency and effectiveness of the democratic political system. Dr. Mahathir Muhammad, aged 92 years old who had served as prime minister during the year 1981-2003. He was the political teacher for Mr. Najib Rasak, aged 64 years old, who was the Prime Minister, since, 2009. The decision for returning to the election of Dr. Mahathir due to the scandal in the government investment project called 1MDB or 1Malaysia Development Berhad which had Mr. Najib as the chairman. In case of the transfer of government investment fund valued \$700 million to his account. This has been debated, since, 2015. People, politicians and stakeholders in Malaysia politics has proceed issues in under procedures mentioned in Malaysia Constitution. Various allegations in Malaysia needed to wait for elections and without any coup. The elected government is justified with efficiency and effectiveness of a democratic political system. It is acceptable both domestic and international level rather than the coup, resulted to the country has continued political stability.

The structure of society that is class-like till the political culture is inform of state power rather than democracy or political participation.

After independence from England in 1957, Malaysia had to face issues caused from different ethnic groups among Malay, Chinese and Indian group. The issue occurred during British rule and had been severed on 1969. The riots of ethnic groups which caused the losses to the Malaysian society in wide area, Malaysia is aware of the issue until led to policy changes by emphasizing on equality, distribution of income and economic coupled with to decrease social gap with the new economic policy in 1970. There are also other factors which allows Malaysia to successfully manage the various social and cultural differences in the country such as the survival of the country, political and governing structure, Roles and management of local authorities and creating mutual political consciousness of Malaysian citizenship.

In summary, Malaysia is one of countries with political stability for decades with only one political alliance party that ruled the country, since, 1957 with many factors contributed the stability of Malaysian politics and allows the country has ability to further develop in other aspects.

### **Factors effected to the political stability of Malaysia**

**Political structure of Malaysia:** The political structure is an important factor that facilitates the management of racial and cultural differences with smoothness and success. Malaysia is governed by a federal system (federation) which empowers the local government for self governing except the military power, Foreign Affairs and Fiscal Economy. This made the management within each area has flexibility, suitability in term of social and cultural conditions for not waiting for an order from the central government which may be delayed and inconsistent with local government. In term of local social and cultural policies, local governments can self operated. Due to the local elections especially minister shall receive votes from local people which needed him to build up popularity. Therefore, the local politicians shall develop policies that are acceptable for being elected in the next term. Meanwhile, the national political structure was ruled by the Barisan Nasional party, ruled Malaysia, since, 1973. The party comprises with Malay, Chinese and Indian political parties with the mutual goal of peaceful and racial sharing. The mentioned political party has monopolized the country's administration and also built up a continuous social and cultural policy approaches (Kuhonta, 2008).

**Economic factors:** Malaysia has a government with single political party to administer the country for a long time. The establishment of various policy assignments has continuity. Later, the political strength of the government party is weakened but it still considered a country with high political stability in the region. The country also used its political policies to bring economy for create benefits and trade opportunities. In addition, the Malaysian government has prepared the development with supportive factors and protection the industry in advance by the announcement of various industrial product standards to support the ASEAN Free Trade Area as well.

### **Social factors**

**Leadership and political parties:** Political stability in Malaysia is at high level caused from strong as dictator or Authoritarian. Since, Dr. Mahathir Muhammad had played an important role in the country for a long time that made various policies with continuity and ability to maintain the level of economic development. The majority of people freed from poverty line. Malaysia is able to move forward into developed countries. In addition, the AMNO Party (UMNO: United Malays National Organization) is the largest political party in Malaysia which is the dominated political party since the country has been independence. The UMNO Party has policy which focus on nationalism but not violent and support Malay citizens to have the right for participating in national and political administration. The opposition party still lacks of potential to challenge the power and

stability of the government. Issues undermine the stability and security of the government or UMNO party included the disharmony among UMNO members resulted from disagreements between politicians in UMNO party. Even though it does not a outstanding conflict is still an important part of Continuing policy implementation that may effect to the political stability of Malaysia at high level.

**Population quality:** The population has well educated from the foundation liked western education. Malaysian people have a similar education to the Western countries. They have the ability to use English well. In addition, about quarter of Malaysian population has Chinese descent and they have the ability to use Chinese well. Therefore, it is easy for them to do trade with China.

**Bumiputra:** Bumiputra is a policy that give special privileges to the Malay and original indigenous people as provided in the constitution of the federal republic of Malaysia. The policy aims to provide social and economic security of the population in the group called Bumiputra consisted with Malay and former indigenous peoples led by the National Front. The economy of the Bumiputra group is still lower than other populations. For the National Front, Bumiputra group has significant to occupy positions in the country's administration. The Bhumibutra group is a large population and affect to majority voices in election. The Bhumiputra group is important vote base of the National Front. The results of the two-elections (year 2008 and 2013), the National Front which is the government of Malaysia for more than 50 years, has received less support votes until they cannot occupy major seats in the council. It was reflected to continue popularity of the party. The main reasons from dissatisfaction with the implementation of Bhumiputra party such as cronyism and did not comply with the democratic governance. The majority of Malaysians have focus on politics which freed from ethnic group or nationalism.

It is likely that the majority of population want to support the opposition party which uses the middle line policy regardless of racial difference. Although, the Malaysian government has tried to resolve the social and economic disparity among three races with variety of policies which established to adjust the new social structure and stimulate sustainable and equal economic

growth. Therefore, the Bhumiputra policy is one of the policies that challenge for problem solving and unity of Malaysia.

The political stability of Malaysia is caused by two important factors: decisive leader who had high leadership in according to the Hegemony political concept and monopolistic politics. The state power was in line with concept of dominance (leadership) by Antonio G. Chee (Entwistle, 1979). The concept shows the relationship between the stability of political power and social control in democratic capitalist society. The government has duty to create dominance and ideas for the ruling class for accepting their political values. The political power may conduct through "ideology" or an important attitude/view that helped government to rule their citizens peacefully. For example, Malaysia under the leadership from UMNO Party which is different from Thai society that has problems with patronage systems deeply embedded in society. It cannot indistinguishable in all sectors.

## CONCLUSION

This is supported by the study of Theerawekin (2011), stated that the patronage system is embedded in conservative society, values comprised with one patron and a number of followers. The patron will be a person with high position in society or administrative power, wealthy and well respected. The patron can give a penalty or benefit to followers at certain context.

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