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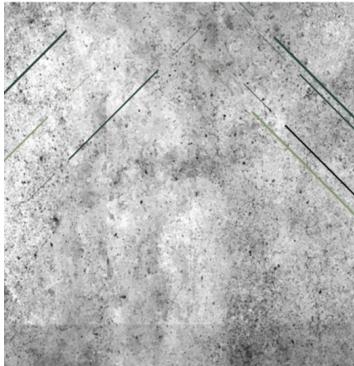
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ASEAN Vision Beyond 2025 - Challenges and Strategies for an Inclusive Socio-Cultural Community

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ASEAN Vision Beyond 2025 - Challenges and Strategies for an Inclusive Socio-Cultural Community

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Abstract

The ASEAN Vision beyond 2025 aims to establish an inclusive socio-cultural community (ASCC), yet faces significant hurdles in its implementation. While ASEAN's commitment to socio-cultural integration is commendable, developing a cohesive regional identity remains a critical challenge due to historical grievances, extensive cultural diversity, and persistent socioeconomic inequalities among member states. Previous research has largely identified these issues separately without deeply analyzing their interconnections or the direct impact of economic and security dimensions on the socio-cultural community. This study addresses this research gap by specifically examining how economic disparities and security challenges, including external alliances such as AUKUS and the Quad, affect ASEAN's sociocultural cohesion and shared identity. This research aims to answer the following questions: (1) How do economic disparities among ASEAN member states influence the integration of the socio-cultural community? (2) In what ways do evolving security dynamics impact socio-cultural cohesion within ASEAN? The findings reveal that ASEAN's sociocultural integration suffers significantly due to the lack of coherent policy synchronization between economic, political-security, and socio-cultural agendas, exacerbated by inadequate monitoring and enforcement mechanisms. Furthermore, the rise of external security alliances undermines ASEAN's centrality, causing internal fragmentation and weakening regional solidarity. To effectively achieve its vision beyond 2025, ASEAN must implement robust cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, strengthen policy enforcement, promote inclusive participation, and reinforce its capacity to manage external security influences. Only through these targeted strategies can ASEAN build a truly unified and resilient socio-cultural community.

Keywords: ASEAN; Socio-Cultural Community; Regional Identity; Security Alliances

Introduction

The ASEAN Vision Beyond 2025 aspires to create a community characterized by dynamic economic growth, enduring political stability, and vibrant social harmony. However, the socio-cultural dimension, particularly represented by the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), faces significant challenges in its realization. One primary obstacle is the inadequate coordination between economic, political, and socio-cultural agendas, which are often addressed separately despite their interconnectedness (Caballero-Anthony & Emmers, 2022). ASEAN's consensus-based decision-making process, while beneficial for political stability, often leads to inefficiencies in aligning diverse national interests with unified regional goals (Huck, 2020). Additionally, economic growth has not necessarily translated into equitable social development, exacerbating disparities that threaten regional cohesion (Baviera, 2017). Scholars emphasize that ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) policies frequently lack sufficient integration with socio-cultural frameworks, thereby

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widening the gap between economic and social progress (Menon & Shrestha, 2013). Despite strategic initiatives such as the ASCC Blueprint 2025, the absence of robust policy synchronization remains a persistent challenge (Lee, 2021). Effective governance mechanisms and improved cross-sectoral collaboration are crucial to fully realize ASEAN's vision of an inclusive community (Mohd Nor, Mamat, & Mahamood, 2020).

Ethno-cultural diversity within ASEAN presents another profound challenge, as divergent identities and historical grievances among member states complicate efforts to foster cohesive regional identities (Das, 2024). This diversity affects political stability and economic-led regional integration by creating barriers to policy harmonization and trust-building among nations. Additionally, the lack of robust mechanisms for managing intra-regional conflicts exacerbates these issues, undermining cooperative initiatives and a unified socio-cultural framework (Das, 2024).

Constructing a shared ASEAN identity is further complicated by entrenched nation-state mentalities, necessitating dynamic institutional development and social capital accumulation. Issues such as rights and cultural recognition of indigenous peoples remain inadequately addressed, with development-driven projects frequently infringing upon their rights (Kepka, 2024). Exploring cultural commonalities between member states, for instance between the Philippines and Vietnam, is recognized as crucial for fostering mutual understanding and collective ASEAN identity.

While strategic initiatives like the ASEAN Enabling Master Plan 2025 exist, ongoing issues such as lack of political commitment, socioeconomic disparities, and ineffective monitoring mechanisms highlight the need for more transparent implementation and evaluation strategies (Suriyankietkaew & Nimsai, 2021). Although these shortcomings are well-identified in existing literature, there is insufficient analysis of specific policy tools or monitoring frameworks capable of enhancing political commitment and addressing socioeconomic disparities (Djalante, Nurhidayah, & Van Minh, 2020). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified these challenges, underscoring the urgency for comprehensive, region-wide recovery frameworks that prioritize vulnerable populations and adapt successful international models, such as those from the Asia-Pacific Development Center for Disability, specifically tailored to ASEAN's unique socio-political dynamics (Pertiwi, Sos, & Sulistyani, 2020).

Moreover, existing literature highlights ASEAN's need to bolster capacities for addressing non-traditional security threats, such as pandemics and natural disasters, through permanent mechanisms and strategic planning aimed at regional resilience (Kliem, 2020). However, detailed proposals on institutional mechanisms or best practices from other regions remain scarce (Yaacob et al., 2022). Scholars advocate fostering a genuine sense of community and solidarity through inclusive policies and proactive citizen participation to achieve a people-oriented ASEAN community (Martel, 2017), yet specific examples or case studies of successful inclusive policies within ASEAN or comparative regions are notably lacking.

Although ASEAN has made progress in economic integration, scholars indicate that aspirations towards a supranational organization are significantly constrained by preservation of state sovereignty, necessitating careful balancing of national interests with regional cooperation (Sujadmiko et al., 2023). Detailed case studies addressing similar challenges in other regional organizations remain underexplored (Singh, 2008).

Thus, a critical research gap emerges clearly: existing research has primarily identified isolated issues without comprehensively examining how economic disparities and security challenges directly impact socio-cultural integration and identity formation within ASEAN. This study seeks explicitly to fill this gap by analyzing the interplay between economic inequalities, evolving security dynamics, and their collective impact on ASEAN's socio-cultural cohesion.

Therefore, the central research questions guiding this study are: (1) How do economic disparities among ASEAN member states specifically influence the integration of the socio-cultural community? and (2) In what ways do evolving security dynamics, including external alliances such as AUKUS and the Quad, directly affect socio-cultural cohesion and identity formation within ASEAN?

Addressing these specific questions will enable a clearer and deeper understanding of the challenges confronting the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community beyond 2025, and help propose strategic, integrative solutions necessary for achieving genuine regional integration.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research methodology using secondary resources to explore ASEAN's vision beyond 2025, particularly focusing on the challenges and strategies for an inclusive socio-cultural community. The qualitative approach is ideal for gaining a deep understanding of complex socio-political phenomena and allows for the analysis of historical and contemporary perspectives (Creswell and Creswell 2018). By utilizing secondary resources such as official ASEAN reports, academic journals, policy briefs, and other scholarly publications, this study draws on existing data to understand the key factors shaping ASEAN's sociocultural community and its future direction. Secondary data analysis provides the necessary flexibility to interpret diverse viewpoints and critically evaluate policy implications (Silverman 2020).

The choice of 2025 as a reference year in this study is significant primarily because it aligns with the conclusion of ASEAN Vision 2025 and the associated strategic roadmaps, including the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint 2025. This period represents an important evaluative juncture, offering an opportunity to assess the effectiveness and limitations of existing frameworks, policies, and implementation strategies. Moreover, selecting 2025 allows this study to propose timely recommendations and strategic adjustments needed for the next phase of ASEAN's socio-cultural integration and long-term regional planning beyond the currently established vision.

The use of qualitative methods also supports thematic analysis, which is critical for identifying recurring challenges and potential strategies within ASEAN's socio-cultural framework (Flick, 2018). Through the analysis of previously published materials, this research aims to generate insights into how ASEAN can achieve more inclusive sociocultural integration beyond the evaluated period of 2025.

Secondary sources are advantageous for this type of study, as they provide a broad spectrum of information, helping to triangulate findings and ensuring the reliability and validity of the conclusions (Bryman, 2016). This methodological approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the sociocultural dynamics within the ASEAN community, relying on well-established data to draw meaningful interpretations of regional integration efforts.

Results

Looking Through The ASEAN Vision 2025

ASEAN Vision 2025 constitutes a comprehensive strategic framework designed to enhance regional integration and cooperation among ASEAN member states, building upon the achievements of the ASEAN Community established in 2015. This vision emphasizes a rules-based, people-oriented, and people-centered ASEAN, embodied in the motto "One Vision, One Identity, One Community" (Kuzminov & Bevza, 2023). Central to this framework is the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which facilitates the free movement of goods, services, investments, and skilled workers, thereby fostering economic integration and growth within the region (Quimba et al., 2020). The AEC operates within a broader context, alongside the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) and the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), each guided by specific blueprints under the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 framework (Quimba et al., 2020). Supporting this view, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 emphasizes infrastructure, institutional, and people-to-people connectivity, aiming to enhance regional competitiveness, inclusiveness, and cohesiveness through strategic priorities such as sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation, seamless logistics, excellent supervision, and people flow ("The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 with the Belt and Road Initiative," 2022).

Strengths of ASEAN Vision 2025 include its flexible integration approach characterized by the "soft character" that contrasts rigid frameworks observed in European and North American regions, allowing adaptability to the diverse needs of its member states (Kuzminov & Bevza, 2023; Balakrishnan, 2017). ASEAN's pragmatic and process-oriented regionalism, known as the "ASEAN Way," facilitates cooperation and regional integration while respecting state sovereignty (Balakrishnan, 2017). The socio-cultural pillar (ASCC) aims to foster a people-centered ASEAN by promoting social responsibility, solidarity, and a shared regional identity (Yuniarti, 2018; Baviera & Maramis, 2017).

However, ASEAN Vision 2025 also exhibits notable weaknesses. Despite the articulated vision, there remain significant shortcomings in policy synchronization and effective implementation mechanisms across its three pillars (Lee, 2021). The consensus-based decision-making, while beneficial for political harmony, often impedes timely and efficient action, creating barriers to fully realizing regional integration goals (Huck, 2020). Furthermore, economic integration under AEC, although beneficial, has inadequately addressed socioeconomic disparities, contributing to uneven regional development that undermines socio-cultural cohesion (Menon & Shrestha, 2013). Additionally, the vision does not sufficiently address historical tensions and ethno-cultural diversity, factors critical to achieving a unified ASEAN identity (Das, 2024).

Several factors potentially hinder progress toward ASEAN Vision 2025. First, limited political commitment and inadequate monitoring and enforcement mechanisms threaten the translation of policies into meaningful outcomes (Suriyankietkaew & Nimsai, 2021). Second, the complexity of managing intra-regional conflicts without robust conflict-resolution mechanisms undermines effective cooperation and unity (Das, 2024). Third, the growing influence of external geopolitical dynamics, including security alliances such as AUKUS and the Quad, poses risks of internal fragmentation and threatens ASEAN centrality in regional security matters (Li & Tianyi, 2022). Lastly, the ongoing digital economic disparities and challenges related to protectionist measures may further exacerbate inequalities and impede comprehensive regional integration (Sefrina, 2024; Chen, Quah, & Tan, 2023).

In summary, ASEAN Vision 2025 presents an ambitious and integrative framework aimed at fostering regional cooperation, identity, and cohesion. Nevertheless, significant weaknesses in policy coordination, implementation, conflict management, and handling external geopolitical pressures must be strategically addressed for ASEAN to fully realize its vision beyond 2025.

Challenge on Traditional Security: Military Alliances of The West and Economic Bound of China

The rise of security alliances, such as AUKUS (Australia, UK, and US) and the Quad (US, Japan, India, Australia), poses a substantial threat to ASEAN's position as the leading authority in regional security. China, through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), further deepens its influence within the region, increasing ASEAN nations' economic dependence on it. These geopolitical shifts highlight ASEAN's limitations in managing complex security matters and maintaining regional cohesion, which directly impacts the realization of ASEAN Vision 2025, particularly within the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC).

The establishment of alliances like AUKUS and the Quad beyond ASEAN's framework signifies diminished confidence in ASEAN's capability to effectively address regional security challenges (Umar & Santoso, 2023). ASEAN's exclusion from pivotal security dialogues risks marginalizing its role as the central diplomatic and conflict-resolution platform in the region (Ha, 2022). For example, the AUKUS agreement, which enhances Australia's naval capabilities with nuclear-powered submarines, raises concerns about a potential arms race, thus threatening ASEAN's long-standing goal of creating a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in Southeast Asia (Kazmi, 2023; Gautam, 2023). The diverse reactions of ASEAN member states to these alliances further underscore internal divisions, weakening the capacity for unified action on regional security matters and impacting regional solidarity and shared identity, core objectives of the ASCC (McDougall, 2023; Li, 2022; Wicaksana & Karim, 2023).

China's increasing economic influence through infrastructure investments under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) significantly affects ASEAN's internal dynamics. In 2022 alone, China allocated USD 14.8 billion—40% of its total Asia-Pacific engagement—to ASEAN countries, financing critical projects such as high-speed railways and investments in Indonesia's nickel industry (Chiang & de Micheaux, 2022; Chen, 2020). While this economic cooperation supports regional connectivity, it simultaneously raises concerns regarding over-dependency and potential debt traps, threatening the autonomy and socio-cultural cohesion among ASEAN states (Gong, 2020; Anwar, 2024). China's assertiveness in territorial disputes, notably in the South China Sea and towards Taiwan, further complicates the socio-cultural integration efforts within ASEAN by exacerbating nationalistic sentiments and internal tensions, undermining regional unity (Gerstl, 2022; Jamil, 2024).

This evolving security environment has created notable internal divisions among ASEAN nations. Countries like the Philippines exhibit closer alignment with the United States, demonstrated through joint military exercises, responding directly to Chinese military activities near Taiwan (Arugay, 2022). Conversely, Indochina countries such as Vietnam and Cambodia strengthen their economic and military ties with China, reflecting divergent national interests and geographical considerations (Hamilton, 2024; Koga, 2022; Emmerson, 2020; Hiebert, 2020). Such divisions pose significant challenges to ASEAN's socio-cultural objectives by weakening regional solidarity, fostering mistrust, and reducing collective identity.

ASEAN's adherence to non-interference and consensus-based decision-making principles frequently results in ineffective responses to regional conflicts and territorial disputes, notably evident in handling the South China Sea disputes (Koesselianto, Supriyadi, & Taufik, 2024; Rustandi, 2016; Sinaga, 2024; Wibisono, 2017). The absence of decisive and unified responses further erodes the community's credibility and cohesion, ultimately hindering the socio-cultural integration envisioned in the ASEAN Vision 2025.

Countries like Indonesia face significant challenges in balancing strategic interests with both ASEAN frameworks and external security alliances, reflecting broader difficulties in ASEAN's diplomatic approach within the complex Indo-Pacific geopolitical landscape (Amin, Paramitha, & Al Farauqi, 2024; Malik & Wahyudi, 2024). The necessity to maintain economic relations with China while addressing security concerns results in conflicting national policies, undermining ASEAN's collective stance on security and negatively impacting socio-cultural solidarity (Aziz & Basir, 2022).

In conclusion, ASEAN's response to traditional security challenges, characterized by a predominantly reactive and fragmented approach, directly impacts its socio-cultural community. To support ASEAN Vision 2025, particularly the goals of the ASCC, ASEAN must enhance security co-operation mechanisms like the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), develop stronger frameworks for preventive diplomacy, and promote unified regional collaboration. Without assertive, unified actions, ASEAN risks external exploitation and internal fragmentation, significantly hindering the socio-cultural integration necessary for achieving the objectives of ASEAN Vision 2025 (Malik & Mehmood, 2024; Labrecque, 2024).

Challenge Non-Traditional Security: Climate Crisis

Climate change presents a significant and fundamental danger to numerous ASEAN member states, especially those that possess wide coasts and areas situated at low altitudes. The region faces significant challenges to livelihoods and food security due to rising sea levels, frequent extreme weather events, and shifts in farming patterns (Caballero-Anthony et al., 2023). The adequacy and urgency of ASEAN's endeavours to tackle the consequences of climate change and advance sustainable resource management have been subject to criticism. Although ASEAN has implemented various declarations regarding climate change, tangible steps and enforceable commitments are lacking (Desker, 2008). The organization's adherence to the principle of non-interference has frequently impeded more assertive regional strategies for environmental protection and mitigation of climate change (Lassa et al., 2016).

ASEAN nations are among the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change, yet there seems to be a lack of awareness and urgency from its members. The geographic exposure with

many coastal areas at the equator makes them highly susceptible to climate impacts (Cook, 2024). Rising sea levels and global temperatures are two of the most urgent issues to be addressed by ASEAN members (Islam & Kieu, 2021). Climate-related issues have also expanded to other sectors beyond temperature rise, affecting agriculture, fishing, and rural economies.

The climate crisis has caused farmers to lose profits. Crops are difficult to grow due to uncertainty in weather patterns, disrupting the cycle of agricultural production, threatening food security, and impacting the economies of agriculture-based ASEAN states (Lassa et al., 2016). Rising sea temperatures force fishermen to travel further into the ocean, requiring more time and resources to catch the same quantity of fish as in previous decades (Brennan, 2021). These cases illustrate how the climate crisis hinders economic development, increases inequality, and disproportionately impacts rural communities that rely on natural resources for survival (Freedman, 2017).

The loss of economic opportunities in rural areas has also led to an increase in rural-to-urban migration. People migrate to cities in search of employment, straining urban infrastructure and worsening pre-existing economic challenges, such as urban poverty (Yaacob et al., 2022). This mass migration has disrupted the social and cultural dynamics of both rural and urban areas, leading to increased tensions and conflicts. Another example of climate-induced migration is the increase in climate-related disasters, such as Typhoon Yagi, a Category 5-equivalent super typhoon that hit Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand in September 2024, causing mass displacement and significant economic losses.

Given these vulnerabilities, ASEAN must prioritize climate mitigation strategies. However, despite commitments under the Paris Agreement, ASEAN countries' nationally determined contributions (NDCs) remain among the most modest globally (Cook, 2024). The commitment to net-zero emissions remains weak and lack of enforcement mechanisms. ASEAN should shift its energy policy from a short-term focus on affordability and energy security, which often encourages reliance on fossil fuels. However, transitioning towards renewable energy remains a challenging endeavor. ASEAN should strive for greater coherence in its climate and energy policies, ensuring that they reinforce each other and effectively combat climate change. Furthermore, ASEAN should enhance its NDC goals and Paris Agreement commitments, leveraging them to increase legitimacy and global standing as a serious actor in international climate policy (Caballero-Anthony et al., 2023).

Discussion

Looking for a Sense of Belonging: Challenges in ASEAN Identity

The ASEAN Vision aims fundamentally at fostering a regional identity to ensure cohesion and solidarity among member states. The ASEAN identity is built upon five major pillars: nationalism, religion, cultural norms, modernist developmental approaches, and regionalism (Hardy, 2017). However, creating a unified identity that resonates across diverse national contexts remains challenging. ASEAN member states exhibit significant variations in political systems, cultures, languages, ethnicities, and religions, complicating efforts to build a collective ASEAN identity that integrates these diverse backgrounds while maintaining individual national identities (Jönsson, 2010; Haacke, 2013).

The results of this research highlight that historical grievances and ongoing intra-regional disputes continue to inhibit the development of mutual trust, a crucial component of building collective regional identity and effective socio-cultural integration (Benny, 2016; Das, 2024). Moreover, ASEAN's approach to integration has been criticized for its elite-centric and state-driven nature, limiting broad public engagement and awareness (Acharya, 2021; Huong, Maffettone, & Marchetti, 2011). The limited public participation in ASEAN's initiatives restricts grassroots-level identity formation, leading to weak "we-feelings" and fragmented social integration (Lee, Hamid, & Hardy, 2022).

Additionally, the principle of non-interference, central to ASEAN's diplomatic approach, although beneficial in maintaining inter-state harmony, restricts open dialogue on shared socio-cultural values, hindering collective identity development and effective response to socio-cultural challenges (Seah, 2018). Thus, enhancing ASEAN's socio-cultural cohesion requires a strategic emphasis on inclusive citizen participation, broader public awareness campaigns, and focused cultural exchange initiatives to strengthen collective identity and solidarity among ASEAN citizens.

Strengthening Inclusive Socio-Cultural Community

In addressing the challenges identified, strengthening an inclusive socio-cultural community emerges as pivotal for the successful realization of ASEAN Vision 2025. An inclusive socio-cultural community values and incorporates all individuals, irrespective of their backgrounds, ensuring equitable participation and acceptance (Sundram, 2025; Nesadurai, 2009). This inclusivity involves targeted empowerment initiatives aimed at marginalized groups, including women, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged communities, enabling their meaningful participation in socio-cultural activities (de Vries & Meijknecht, 2010; Colombo & Lindström, 2021).

The research findings underline the significance of addressing socioeconomic disparities and managing external security influences to foster a stable socio-cultural environment. This environment is essential for encouraging inclusive participation and mutual understanding among ASEAN populations. Establishing inclusive socio-cultural spaces, such as regional cultural festivals and educational exchanges, can significantly enhance mutual understanding and dismantle cultural stereotypes, thereby fostering empathy and unity among ASEAN citizens (Bowman, 2012; Wright & Bloemraad, 2012).

Effective policies supporting socio-cultural inclusivity are essential, requiring the involvement of governments, civil societies, and community leaders. These policies should prioritize inclusive education, equitable healthcare access, and targeted social protection programs to protect vulnerable populations, thereby addressing underlying socio-economic disparities identified as barriers in the research (Abbasi-Shavazi & Sadeghi, 2015; Mitchell & Desai, 2005).

Ultimately, realizing an inclusive socio-cultural community demands active stakeholder engagement and a shift in collective mindsets towards valuing diversity and promoting equity (Noor & Leong, 2013). Establishing such an environment is crucial for sustainable peace, socio-cultural integration, and shared prosperity, directly addressing the research questions by mitigating economic disparities and external security influences identified as threats to ASEAN's socio-cultural cohesion (Syed & Kramar, 2009).

Conclusion

ASEAN's efforts to realize its socio-cultural objectives beyond 2025 necessitate a critical reassessment of existing strategies and a robust restructuring of its integration approaches. The findings of this research indicate significant gaps between ASEAN's ambitious objectives and their practical realization, largely attributable to inadequate policy coordination, insufficient implementation mechanisms, and persistent internal divisions exacerbated by external geopolitical influences. Without addressing these critical weaknesses, ASEAN risks diminished regional relevance amid shifting global power dynamics and increasing internal vulnerabilities.

To effectively achieve the objectives of ASEAN Vision 2025, ASEAN must prioritize enhancing its policy implementation and monitoring frameworks, explicitly integrating gender perspectives, economic empowerment, and environmental protection into actionable and enforceable commitments. Moving beyond rhetorical commitments, ASEAN requires precise mechanisms, clear accountability structures, and robust performance evaluations to translate policy statements into tangible benefits for its populations.

Developing a shared ASEAN identity remains an essential yet unresolved challenge. ASEAN should actively invest in educational initiatives and cultural exchanges, emphasizing inclusive and broad-based citizen participation. Such initiatives must foster a bottom-up regional identity that

resonates with diverse populations, particularly among youth and civil society. Failure to strengthen this shared identity risks continued fragmentation and limited socio-cultural integration.

Furthermore, ASEAN must address socio-economic disparities within and among member states through targeted policies that ensure equitable development and social inclusion. Direct interventions in poverty alleviation, access to quality education, healthcare, and infrastructure are crucial for mitigating disparities and fostering collective regional resilience and solidarity.

Security challenges, particularly those arising from external alliances and geopolitical rivalries, significantly impact ASEAN's cohesion and socio-cultural integration. ASEAN must reconsider its traditional non-interference principle, adopting a more assertive stance in managing regional security matters. Enhanced institutional capacities and proactive diplomacy are critical in maintaining ASEAN centrality amidst competing external influences.

In conclusion, ASEAN's socio-cultural vision beyond 2025 can only be effectively realized through comprehensive, strategic reforms that address identified shortcomings in integration mechanisms, socio-economic equity, identity building, and security cooperation. ASEAN's future trajectory hinges on its willingness and capacity to critically confront existing deficiencies, innovate its integration approaches, and foster genuine solidarity among its diverse member states. Without decisive and immediate actions, ASEAN risks stagnation and reduced effectiveness, ultimately undermining the prosperity and stability envisioned for the Southeast Asian region.

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