DAULIYAH
Journal of Islamic and International Affairs

Volume 10, No 2, p. 148-165 2025

DOI: 10.21111/dauliyah.v10i2.14813

Analysis of the Contribution of Newly Industrialized Countries to Economic Resilience in the Asia-Pacific Region

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Article History:
Received: July 15, 2025
Revised: July 23, 2025
Accepted: July 30, 2025
Published: July 31, 2025

Keywords: *Newly Industrialized Countries, Economic Resilience, Asia-Pacific.*

Abstract

The Asia-Pacific region has demonstrated relatively strong economic resilience amidst uncertain global dynamics. This study examines the strategic contributions of Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs), including South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong, in enhancing the region's economic resilience. The central hypothesis in this study states that the greater the role of NICs in regional integration and technological innovation, the higher the level of resilience of the Asia-Pacific region's economy to external shocks. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a desk study approach and secondary data analysis, utilizing international reports, academic publications, and macroeconomic data from official institutions. The novelty of this research lies in emphasizing the link between the innovation capacity of NICs and regional fiscal resilience, which has not previously been explored in the regional political economy literature. The results show that NICs not only act as drivers of economic growth but also as stabilizers through production diversification, supply chain strengthening, and the creation of innovation hubs. The findings underscore the importance of international collaboration among countries in the Asia-Pacific region to accelerate resilient and sustainable economic transformation.

INTRODUCTION

In the global economy's dynamics, the Asia-Pacific region holds a strategic position as one of the world's key economic growth centers. The area is not only rich in natural resources, but it is also the main stage for countries that show rapid industrialization and modernization. Among these countries, the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) play a very significant role in shaping the region's economic resilience(Aprianti, 2015). Countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong have successfully undergone impressive economic structural transformations, moving from an agriculture-based economy to a high-tech industrial and service sector in a relatively short period. The success of these NICs has not only had a positive impact on their domestic economic growth but has also made a crucial contribution to enhancing the economic resilience of the Asia-Pacific region as a whole(Paldam, 2003).

In its historical development, the emergence of the Newly Industrialized Countries in the Asia-Pacific region is inextricably linked to a combination of various internal and external factors that interact with one another. The internal factor is that each country has successfully implemented effective development strategies, including export-based industrialization policies, investment in education and human resource development, and the creation of a conducive investment climate. External factors include global dynamics such as increased demand for manufactured products, developments in information technology, and global market integration, which provide opportunities for these countries to accelerate their industrialization. Support from international organizations and the openness of the post-Cold War global market have also increased the room for NICs to expand their economic influence(Broadbent, 1992).

In the regional context, the presence of NICs not only strengthens the economic structure of the Asia-Pacific region but also accelerates regional economic integration through the development of global supply chains. Countries such as South Korea and Taiwan, for example, play a crucial role in the semiconductor and electronics industries, which are vital components of the global technology ecosystem. Meanwhile, Singapore and Hong Kong are developing into international financial and logistics centers, facilitating the flow of trade, capital, and information in the region. Thus, the role of NICs as key nodes in regional trade and financial networks makes them strategic actors in strengthening Asia-Pacific economic resilience(Burton, 1989).

Furthermore, the ability of NICs to manage risks and adapt to global changes is a reflection of their economic resilience, in the face of challenges such as commodity price fluctuations, the global financial crisis, climate change, and geopolitical tensions caused by conflict. Asia Pacific is one of the regions that feels the impact of these conflicts amidst world uncertainty. The Asia Pacific

region is slowly rising due to the emergence of new industrialized countries that can have a positive effect on economic stability in the area.

New industrial countries are declared capable of generating economic resilience, which refers to a country or region's ability to face, absorb, and recover from various internal or external economic shocks. In facing complex challenges, newly industrialized countries have high competitiveness and can compete with developed countries. They have sustainable technological innovation, adaptive economic policies that provide a solid foundation for economic resilience, and a significant impact on the Asia-Pacific region(Prakash, 2022). NICs demonstrate a relatively fast and effective response capacity. The flexibility of fiscal and monetary policies, the existence of adequate foreign exchange reserves, and market confidence in political and legal stability in these countries are essential assets in the economic recovery process. This success also provides important lessons for other countries in the region in strengthening their domestic economic resilience.

On the other hand, the development of the Newly Industrialized Countries in the Asia-Pacific also has consequences for the region's overall economic governance. Closer economic linkages are driving the importance of strengthening regional cooperation in addressing transnational issues such as energy security, financial stability, climate change, and protection against global supply chain disruptions. Therefore, the active involvement of NICs in regional forums such as APEC, ASEAN+3, and G20 shows their commitment not only as beneficiaries of globalization but also as essential contributors to maintaining regional stability and resilience(Febreani, 2022).

Research related to Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) is still little discussed in International Relations Studies. This paper examines the topic of the Role of newly industrialized countries in economic resilience in the Asia Pacific region. To date, there has been no similar research discussing this topic, particularly about newly industrialized countries. This research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring issues related to the Asia Pacific and the New Industrial Countries. With the increasing complexity of global interdependence today, the Role of Newly Industrialized Countries in supporting the economic resilience of the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly relevant to study in depth. This study is not only critical in an academic context but also provides policy implications for decision-makers in designing resilient and adaptive development strategies in the face of growing global uncertainty.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding International Political Economy and Economic Opportunities of Newly Industrialized Countries in the Asia Pacific Region

International Political Economy (IPE) is a multidisciplinary approach to international relations that studies the interplay between power and production in the global system. International Political Economy combines economic and political analysis to understand how global structures influence domestic policies, and conversely, how states position themselves within the global capitalist system (Heywood, 2014). It rejects the dichotomy between the market and the state, and emphasizes the roles of institutions, history, and non-state actors in shaping the global economy.

In the context of NICs and the economic resilience of the Asia-Pacific region, the International Political Economy approach helps explain how these countries leveraged their position in the global capitalist system to enhance national competitiveness(Rosyidin Mohamad, 2020). The Newly Industrialized Countries did not grow naturally, but through deliberate and planned development strategies, such as export-based industrialization policies, protection of strategic sectors in the early stages, and massive investments in education and infrastructure. All of these reflect a selective and pragmatic form of state intervention in managing the economy.

International Political Economy theory sees the success of NICs as a result of their ability to control global capital flows and strengthen their position in global value chains. South Korea, for example, is not only a production base for electronics but also a major player in semiconductor technology. Taiwan is emerging as a global manufacturing hub, thanks to companies like TSMC, while Singapore and Hong Kong are positioning themselves as financial and logistics centers that connect Asia with international markets. In this context, economic resilience is not just about resilience to crisis, but also about the ability to access, master, and develop technology, as well as lead global innovation.

International Political Economy also underscores the importance of the asymmetrical structure of the global economy(Kegley, 2008). Although NICs have achieved a higher position in the world economic hierarchy, they still face pressures from advanced industrial countries and complex geopolitical dynamics (Rosyidin Mohamad, 2020). In the face of these pressures, flexible and autonomous economic policies are crucial to achieving economic resilience. This can be seen from the strategy of diversifying export markets, strengthening the domestic sector, and building a strong national financial system that is selectively connected to global markets.

Furthermore, International Political Economy proposes that economic resilience is also influenced by power relations between developed and developing countries. In this case, the role of NICs becomes essential as a counterweight in a world economic system that tends to be dominated by Western

nations. Their contributions to strengthening regional institutions and promoting a regional financial architecture, such as the Chiang Mai Initiative, demonstrate efforts to create a system that is more autonomous and not entirely dependent on Western institutions, including the IMF and the World Bank.

The International Political Economy approach provides an understanding that the economic resilience of the Asia-Pacific region is not only determined by markets and free competition mechanisms, but also by the political-economic strategies carried out by countries such as NICs. Economic resilience is the result of the interaction between domestic policies, a country's position in the global system, and power relations formed within an integrated world economy. Literature related to new industrial countries remains minimal, as evidenced by articles and other studies. Therefore, the author researches new industrial countries, with a particular focus on the role of economic resilience in the Asia Pacific Region.

METHODOLOGY

To address this research, the author employs a qualitative research (Nugrahani, 2010) method with a library research approach, utilizing secondary data sources such as books, scientific journals, media reports, and news articles. The sources were selected based on the criteria of thematic relevance, publisher credibility (e.g., reputable journals, reports from international institutions), and data currency (mainly post-2015). The focus of this research is to identify the role of Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) in strengthening the economic resilience of the Asia-Pacific region.

In the analysis process, the authors employed a thematic analysis approach to categorize the findings based on key topics, including regional economic integration, technological innovation, and macroeconomic stability. The theoretical framework employed refers to International Political Economy (IPE) theories, specifically liberal, structuralist, and dependency theory approaches. Any data collected is analyzed triangulatively by comparing various sources to ensure the validity of the information, and then synthesized in the context of the literature to draw relevant conclusions consistent with the research objectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

NICs as Drivers of Regional Economic Interdependence in the Asia Pacific Region

The Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) in the Asia-Pacific region, including South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong, play a crucial role in fostering regional economic interdependence. Through export-based industrialization, high-tech mastery, and open trade policies, NICs have successfully integrated their domestic economies with global and regional

markets(Juliandini, 2020). The active involvement of NICs in regional organizations such as ASEAN, APEC, and RCEP strengthens the trade and investment architecture in the region.

This interdependence gives rise to interdependent cross-border production networks. For example, Taiwan and South Korea, as semiconductor manufacturing centers, provide critical components to electronics industries across Asia, the Americas, and Europe. Meanwhile, Singapore has become a crucial hub in logistics, finance, and international trade. These interdependent relationships not only increase economic efficiency but also strengthen regional stability, as each country has an incentive to maintain the continuity of mutually beneficial economic relations(Hobday, 1994). Within the framework of liberalism, this interdependence fosters peace, political stability, and sustainable economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region.

Additionally, the macroeconomic stability of NICs is a crucial pillar in maintaining regional economic balance. Prudent fiscal management, strong financial systems, and investment-conducive regulations make NICs a prime destination for international capital flows. This has a reinforcing effect on the region's economic resilience, while reducing vulnerability to external pressures that often hit developing countries.

In a long-term perspective, the contribution of NICs to the economic resilience of the Asia-Pacific region is not only financial, but also has implications for regional political, social, and security stability. By creating inclusive and sustainable economic growth, the potential for economic conflict can be minimized, while regional cooperation can be expanded in various strategic sectors.

NICs in the Asia Pacific are the primary drivers of regional economic integration through their active participation in various regional cooperation forums, including ASEAN+3, APEC, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Their involvement in free trade agreements and investment liberalization has led to increased flows of goods, services, and capital between countries in the region. For example, Singapore played a crucial role in the development of AFTA and RCEP, facilitating greater market access and enhancing regional economic connectivity.

The contribution of new industrial countries proves that the existence of industrial countries is not just a theory. However, new industrial countries have become a significant economic force in the Asia Pacific region, helping it continue to progress and develop. The emergence of new industrial countries serves as a stimulus for other countries in the region to follow suit and become industrialized themselves.

1. South Korea

South Korea is a notable example of a Newly Industrialized Country (NIC) in the Asia Pacific region. Its economic transformation, which began in

the 1960s(Henley & Nordholt, 2015), has made the country a significant economic power in East Asia, as well as a model of development that many other developing countries look up to. In the early 1960s, South Korea was still a poor and agrarian country, recovering from the devastation of the Korean War. However, by implementing an aggressive export-based industrialization strategy, supported by temporary protectionist policies, heavy investment in education and infrastructure, and close cooperation between the government and large business conglomerates (chaebol), South Korea was able to record rapid economic growth. The country was later classified as a NIC due to its sustained high economic growth, rapid industrialization, particularly in the technology, automotive, and heavy manufacturing sectors, changes in its economic structure from an agrarian-based to an industrial and service-based one, and significant increases in per capita income and public welfare(Burton, 1989).

From the perspective of liberalism theory in international relations, South Korea's progress and its role as an NIC reflect how economic interdependence can be a driving force for regional stability and peace. In the Asia Pacific context, the increasingly integrated economies of countries in the region create significant incentives for them to cooperate and avoid conflict, thereby sustaining mutual economic growth. As a newly industrialized country that has reached economic maturity, South Korea now plays a strategic role in the regional economy and geopolitics. The country has become a major actor in global supply chains, particularly for electronic products such as semiconductors and smartphones, as well as vehicles and steel(Park et al., 2022). Major South Korean companies, such as Samsung, LG, and Hyundai, have a significant influence on global and regional trade, thereby strengthening South Korea's economic position in the international arena.

Additionally, South Korea is also recognized as a hub of technology and innovation. The country consistently ranks at the top of the global innovation index and has a high level of research and development (R&D) spending. The resulting innovations not only sustain the domestic economy but also contribute significantly to the development of the digital economy and economic integration in the Asia Pacific region. South Korea's commitment to regional cooperation is evident in its participation in various economic and political forums, including ASEAN Plus Three, APEC, and RCEP. Through these forums, South Korea continues to promote economic integration, sustainable development, and regional stability in politics and the economy.

Not only through economic and technological channels, South Korea also utilizes its cultural or soft power to expand its influence. The Korean Wave, or Hallyu phenomenon, has brought the Korean entertainment industry, food, cosmetics, and culture to various countries, especially in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. This has not only increased the export of cultural products but also built a positive image and closer ties with the international community. As a newly industrialized

country, South Korea has become a strategic bridge between developed and developing nations. Its successful, adaptive, and innovative development experiences and models provide inspiration and important lessons for countries seeking to break away from dependence on primary commodities and move towards sustainable industrialization.

2. Singapore

Singapore is one of the most prominent Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) in the Asia Pacific region(Chu, 2019). Despite its small size and limited natural resources, Singapore has transformed itself into a global center of commerce, finance, and technology in a relatively short period. This transformation began after the country gained independence in 1965, when it faced major challenges, including high unemployment and dependence on foreign trade. However, through Lee Kuan Yew's strategic leadership vision, Singapore developed an export-based manufacturing industry, created a stable investment climate, attracted foreign direct investment from multinational companies, and built an efficient education and governance system. As a result, Singapore has evolved into a high-income, open, high-tech, service-based economy, a hallmark of a NIC that has reached industrial maturity.

Singapore's role in the region's economy is immense, especially as a global financial and logistics hub that connects Asian and Western markets. The Singapore stock exchange (SGX), its robust banking system, and world-class ports and airports make the country a key node in international trade. On the technology front, Singapore is leading the way in digitalization through its "Smart Nation" policy, as well as the development of strategic sectors such as fintech, AI, and biotechnology.

In terms of regional cooperation, Singapore actively promotes economic integration through its participation in ASEAN, APEC, and RCEP, as well as various bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements, reinforcing its role as a distribution and investment hub in Asia(Yani & Nizmi, 2018). Political stability, a robust legal system, and low levels of corruption make Singapore an ideal location for global companies to operate. Although geographically small, Singapore wields significant diplomatic influence, as reflected in its active role as a mediator on international issues and its hosting of strategic meetings, such as the Trump-Kim meeting in 2018.

In the context of international political economy, Singapore's role as an NIC reflects the shift in global economic power from Western dominance to the Asian axis. Singapore is not only an economic actor, but also a significant political and diplomatic power in the region. Together with other NIC countries, Singapore is helping to encourage the formation of a new regional economic order that is more open and interdependent. Through trade, investment, regional cooperation, and industrial integration networks, the country has made significant contributions to strengthening economic connectivity between countries and

deepening interdependence in the Asia-Pacific region. As such, Singapore is not only a symbol of successful economic transformation but also a key catalyst in shaping a more integrated, stable, and economically prosperous region.

3. Taiwan

Taiwan is one of the most influential Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) in the Asia Pacific region(Chu, 2019). Despite its politically complex status in international relations, Taiwan demonstrates significant economic and industrial strength as a high-tech manufacturing center and a major player in the global supply chain, particularly in the semiconductor industry. Since the 1950s, Taiwan has undergone an economic transformation through an export-based industrialization strategy, in which the government actively encouraged the development of the light manufacturing sector and gradually transitioned towards heavy industry and high technology. This transformation has created Taiwan's distinctive features as an NIC, characterized by high and stable economic growth, a shift in economic structure from agrarian to industrial and service sectors, advances in technological infrastructure, and an export strength based on innovation.

One of the primary pillars of Taiwan's economic strength is its dominance in the semiconductor industry(Institute For Security & Development Policy, 2025). Taiwan is home to TSMC (Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company), the world's largest chipmaker that supplies the technology needs of global companies such as Apple, AMD, and Qualcomm, making the country strategically important in the global supply chain for electronics, automotive, and artificial intelligence products. In addition, Taiwan has a robust innovation ecosystem, not only in semiconductors but also in the development of optoelectronics, precision machinery, and Industry 4.0-based technologies, such as AI, the Internet of Things (IoT), and clean energy. Taiwan's economic dependence on exports also drives its active involvement in regional and global trade networks. Taiwan has close trade ties with countries in East Asia, ASEAN, the United States, and Europe, making it an important driver of economic growth in the Asia Pacific region.

On the other hand, Taiwan's strategic geographic location on the East Asian maritime route and its vital role in global technology make it a central player in complex geopolitical dynamics, particularly in the context of tensions between China and the United States. Although not diplomatically recognized by many countries due to the “One China” policy(Chang, 2019), Taiwan is still able to establish international cooperation through informal channels, especially in the fields of economy, education, and culture. Through the New Southbound Policy, Taiwan strengthens relations with Southeast Asian countries, South Asia, and Australia, to expand the range of partnerships in trade, tourism, and education. Overall, Taiwan, as a newly industrialized country, has not only succeeded in building a competitive and innovative economy but also plays a strategic role in

maintaining regional economic stability and growth. Its contributions to global technology, economic resilience, and international trade networks make it a model of NIC success that remains relevant amidst geopolitical challenges and dynamic global change.

4. Hongkong

Hong Kong is a classic example of a Newly Industrialized Country (NIC) with significant influence in the Asia Pacific region. Despite its small territory and limited natural resources, Hong Kong has successfully transformed itself into a global hub for trade, finance, and logistics, vital to the regional economic architecture(Skulska et al., 2011).

Since the end of World War II, Hong Kong has grown from a British trading colony to one of Asia's most dynamic economies, driven by several strategic factors such as its favorable geographical location as a gateway to mainland China, the adoption of a laissez-faire economic policy that encourages a significant role for the private sector, and the flow of foreign direct investment and industrial relocation from developed countries. In addition, improvements in education quality, workforce skills, and port and transportation infrastructure strengthened the region's economic foundation. Over time, Hong Kong developed into a service-based economy with key strengths in finance, banking, logistics, and international trade. Its global role is further strengthened by its position as one of the world's leading financial centers, alongside New York and London, through the presence of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (HKEX) and thousands of multinational companies that make it a hub for investment management in Asian markets.

After returning to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 under the principle of "One Country, Two Systems," Hong Kong has maintained a distinct legal and economic system from mainland China, making it an important bridge between the global capitalist economic system and China's socialist economy. In logistics, its international ports and airports are among the most active and efficient in the world, making Hong Kong a key distribution node in the Asia Pacific(Chu, 2019).

Although not fully sovereign, Hong Kong can engage in economic cooperation through international organizations, such as the WTO and APEC, allowing it to remain active in promoting cross-border trade and investment as a NIC, Hong Kong is characterized by rapid economic growth and rapid industrialization from the 1960s to the 1980s, a shift in economic structure from manufacturing to high-tech services, high per capita income, and efficient business governance that makes it highly competitive globally.

Today, Hong Kong serves as a key investment platform for regional strategic projects, such as the Belt and Road Initiative. He remains a vital financial and legal bridge between China and the rest of the world. Amidst

geopolitical challenges and domestic policy changes, Hong Kong has consistently played a crucial role in supporting regional economic integration, maintaining trade connectivity, and enhancing the economic stability of the Asia Pacific region(Jacobson, 2019). With its long history as a trading colony, a free trade-based economic strategy, and a strategic geographical position, Hong Kong asserts itself as a unique, flexible, and influential economic actor in the current and future regional economic order.

In terms of the Global Innovation Index, countries such as South Korea and Singapore recorded the highest scores among other NICs. South Korea consistently takes the top spot in terms of investment in R&D, strength of research institutions, and collaboration between the private and academic sectors. Singapore, despite its small size, demonstrates remarkable efficiency in transforming innovations into high-value-added products and services. Meanwhile, Taiwan excels in advanced manufacturing capacity, particularly in the semiconductor and electronic components industries. Countries like Malaysia and Thailand are still in the middle, with increasing technological capacity but not yet entirely relying on innovation as the main engine of economic growth.

In terms of dependence on international trade, Singapore has a very high trade-to-Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio. This indicates that the economy is highly open and integrated into global value chains. South Korea and Taiwan also exhibit a high dependence on exports, particularly in the high-tech sector. On the other hand, Malaysia and Thailand exhibit similar trends, but primary commodities and intermediate goods still dominate their export structures. This makes them more vulnerable to fluctuations in global prices and external demand.

In the context of foreign direct investment flows, NICs such as Singapore and Malaysia attract global investors due to their political stability, investment-friendly regulations(Srifauzi & Fajrina, 2023), and developed economic infrastructure Singapore, in particular, is becoming a regional financial and logistics hub, making it a magnet for FDI in services, technology, and high-value-added manufacturing sectors. South Korea, despite its vast potential, relies more on large domestic companies such as Samsung and Hyundai as the main drivers of economic development, resulting in less inward FDI than Singapore. Taiwan, on the other hand, faces geopolitical constraints that occasionally impact investor perceptions, although its technology sector remains an attractive prospect.

Contribution of Newly Industrialized Countries Post-COVID-19

The contribution of NIC countries is crucial to economic resilience in the Asia-Pacific region. One case study concerns post-COVID-19 economic resilience(Hatuel-Radoshitzky & Heistein, 2020). The author attempts to analyze the effectiveness of the contributions of newly industrialized countries to their respective countries and their impact on the Asia-Pacific region. The following table presents data on post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery indicators:

Table 1: Post-pandemic recovery indicators across Newly Industrialized Countries in the Asia Pacific Region

Countries	Country 2021 GDP Growth (%)	Total stimulus (USD Billion)	Focus on economic recovery	Data Sources
South Korea	4.1	220	Digitization, green energy, social.	Ministry of Economy and Finance Korea (2022)
Taiwan	6.5	17	Semiconductor, pharmaceutical, communication	Taiwan NDC (2022), MOF Taiwan
Singapore	7.6	>75	Digitalization, vaccines, logistics	Ministry of Finance Singapore (2021), IMF
Hong Kong	6.3	38	Financial stability, MSME, services	HK FSTB (2022), HKSAR Budget Report

Source: Data processed by the author

From the table above, it can be seen that Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) such as South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong have played a central role in strengthening the economic resilience of the Asian region following global crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic. These four countries

have demonstrated an extraordinary capacity to respond to economic and social disruptions through adaptive policies, robust public health systems, and advanced technological capabilities. Despite their differing economic structures, they have all successfully maintained macroeconomic stability and contributed to the region's recovery, particularly through trade, investment, and the provision of strategic goods such as semiconductors, medical equipment, and financial services.

South Korea, with its strengths in high-tech manufacturing and digitalization, recorded economic growth of 4.1% in 2021 after a mild contraction in 2020. The government allocated over USD 220 billion in the Korean New Deal, which includes investments in digital transformation, green energy, and social protection. This measure strengthened the resilience of the domestic economy while maintaining the continuity of global supply chains, particularly in the automotive and technology industries(Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2023)

Taiwan, renowned as a global semiconductor manufacturing hub, managed to maintain economic stability with 6.5% growth in 2021. Its swift crisis management approach and strengthening of its domestic industry enabled Taiwan to maintain production capacity throughout the pandemic, becoming a major global supplier of chips and electronic components. According to the Taiwan National Development Council, selective fiscal policy support and investment in biopharmaceuticals and communications technology were key drivers of the recovery.

Singapore has also emerged as a model for pandemic management and economic recovery. With a rapid vaccination strategy, policy transparency, and digitized public services, the country achieved a 7.6% growth rate in 2021. The Singaporean government allocated over SGD 100 billion to support its workforce, MSMEs, and digital infrastructure. Singapore's position as a logistics and financial hub in Southeast Asia facilitates regional trade flows, including the cross-border distribution of vaccines and medical equipment(Republic Of Singapore, 2022)

Hong Kong, despite experiencing political pressure and a decline in tourism, still recorded a moderate recovery of 6.3% in 2021. The government disbursed over HKD 300 billion in economic relief funds focused on the services sector, small industries, and labor market stability. As an international financial

center, Hong Kong maintains global capital flows. He maintains East Asian financial stability through policy reforms and capital market connectivity with mainland China (Office, 2022)

These countries' contributions not only accelerate domestic recovery but also support regional economies by serving as pillars of global supply chains, key investors in neighboring countries, and key trading partners in ASEAN and the RCEP. Their digitalization initiatives, stable high-tech exports, and flexible economic policies make these NICs anchors of Asia's post-crisis growth and recovery.

Within the framework of international political economy, newly industrialized countries (NICs) in the Asia-Pacific region, such as South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong, represent successful examples of structural economic transformation that are inextricably linked to global power dynamics, the international trade architecture, and complex geopolitical policies. Their economic development is determined not only by domestic factors, such as technological innovation, bureaucratic reform, and industrial efficiency, but also by their position within the global capitalist system, which is controlled by major powers like the United States, China, and international institutions like the WTO, IMF, and World Bank. South Korea and Taiwan, for example, have successfully risen to the status of developed countries by relying on strategic alliances with the United States, both in security and technology, which have provided them with market access and technology transfer since the end of the Cold War. However, this closeness also places them in geopolitical dilemmas, particularly when relations between China and the US become tense, such as over the South China Sea issue or the trade war.

Singapore and Hong Kong, on the other hand, demonstrate a more pragmatic approach to political economy. Singapore serves as a neutral logistical and financial hub amidst great power rivalry, balancing Western and Chinese interests through economic diplomacy and active participation in regional forums such as ASEAN and the RCEP. Hong Kong, despite its special status within the "one country, two systems" system with China, maintains a liberal and open economy. However, in recent years, it has faced pressure from Beijing's political intervention, which has altered global investor perceptions. In this regard, political influence on economic policy is significant, with state power becoming

a crucial instrument in determining economic direction, as theorized by the statist school of international political economy.

Furthermore, these four NICs also benefit from a global order based on economic liberalism, which allows access to free trade, cross-border capital flows, and support from multilateral institutions. However, international crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions in the Indo-Pacific demonstrate that dependence on the global system also harbors structural vulnerabilities, particularly when supply disruptions or conflicts between major powers occur. In this regard, NICs such as South Korea and Taiwan are developing economic and technological diversification strategies to reduce their dependence on a single major partner. Singapore, meanwhile, continues to strengthen regional cooperation through ASEAN mechanisms and the integration of Asia's digital economy to maintain regional stability.

Critically, it can be argued that Asia-Pacific NICs occupy an ambivalent position in the international political economy: they are beneficiaries of globalization, yet highly vulnerable to global shocks and significant power conflicts. Therefore, their foreign and economic policies are oriented not only toward growth but also toward managing geopolitical risks and strengthening strategic autonomy. This position makes them not only regional economic actors but also crucial players in the shifting global power configuration toward multipolarity.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) play a crucial role in shaping the dynamics and direction of the Asia-Pacific region's economic adaptability. In the face of global challenges such as technological disruption, geopolitical crises, and climate change, the region's ability to remain relevant and competitive relies heavily on the active contributions of countries in economic transition, such as South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. While not formally categorized as developed economies, these four countries have demonstrated structural resilience, innovative capacity, and the ability to respond quickly and effectively to global economic changes. Through their export strength, dominance in technology supply chains, and adaptive economic policy approaches, NICs can drive inclusive growth and strengthen regional economic resilience.

The economic transformation experienced by these countries is not just an increase in per capita income or industrial capacity, but also reflects their ability to build responsive institutions, education systems that support future

skills, and high-tech development that responds to the demands of the industrial revolution 4.0. Thus, the adaptability of Asia-Pacific economies cannot be separated from the role of NICs as new growth engines that bridge development needs with innovation. They serve not only as manufacturing and export centers, but also as key nodes in interdependent regional economic networks. Their role in promoting regional economic integration through active participation in multilateral forums such as APEC, RCEP, and ASEAN Plus Three also emphasizes the importance of NICs' role in strengthening an open, collaborative, and rules-based regional economic order.

However, it is essential to recognize that the positive contribution of NICs to regional economic resilience is not without challenges. High dependence on exports, growing geopolitical pressures, particularly between major powers such as the United States and China, as well as domestic structural issues, including social inequality, aging labor markets, and limited natural resources, are obstacles that must be anticipated going forward. However, the long experience in undertaking economic reforms and resilience in the face of crises equips NICs actors with the capacity to adapt and steer the region on a more sustainable development path.

Through this analysis, it is clear that the existence of NICs not only enriches the economic configuration of the Asia-Pacific but also serves as a transformational force capable of steering the region towards a more resilient and innovative future. Therefore, it is crucial for countries in the region, including those in the early stages of industrialization, to establish strategic cooperation with NICs, learn from their policy models, and develop more adaptable economic systems. Amidst growing global uncertainties, collaboration among countries in the Asia-Pacific, supported by active contributions from newly industrialized countries, is crucial to strengthening the foundations of a regional economy that is resilient to external shocks and inclusive for all.

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