

The 1999 General Elections in Malaysia: Towards a Stable Democracy?

ABDUL RASHID MOTEN

ABSTRAK

Di Malaysia, pilihanraya umum pada tahun 1999 telah membawa perubahan yang bermakna dari segi taburan penyokong dalam pengundian parti. Ia memberikan takrifan baru tentang pertalian di antara kumpulan sosial dengan sokongan terhadap parti. Ia juga turut menyaksikan peranan yang menonjol yang dimainkan oleh badan-badan bukan kerajaan, serta kekuatan-kekuatan sivil dan politik lain dalam masyarakat. Parti-parti yang bertanding turut membincangkan isu-isu yang serius pada pelbagai peringkat dan akhirnya parti-parti tersebut akur kepada keputusan dan menerimanya dengan tenang. Keputusan pilihanraya menunjukkan terdapat kecenderungan menggalakkan ke arah pembentukan sistem dwi-parti campuran yang memungkinkan pengukuhan sistem demokrasi di Malaysia.

Kata kunci: demokrasi, pembangunan, pilihanraya, Malaysia, parti politik

ABSTRACT

The 1999 general elections in Malaysia have brought about a significant change in the distribution of partisanship in the electorate. It redefined the relationships between social groups and party support. It witnessed an assertive role played by various non-governmental organizations and other civil and political forces in the society. The contesting parties debated serious issues at different levels and have accepted the results with grace. The results showed an encouraging movement towards a two-coalition 'turnover' system that allows for deepening democracy in Malaysia.

Key words: Democracy, development, elections, Malaysia, political parties

Elections are the essence of democracies. They provide mechanism for changing the governing officials, help legitimate a regime or maintain its legitimacy, and also provide an opportunity to a larger part of the population to influence public policies by choosing among contenders for political office. Although scholars generally accept this 'process' view of democracy, many would insist on knowing more about the conditions existing in particular countries before awarding them the accolade 'democratic' simply on this basis. They argue that

