

POLITICAL COMPETITIVENESS AND VOTERS BEHAVIOR: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON SOCIOECONOMIC ISSUES

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the causal relationship of political competitiveness and voters' behavior in Malaysia. Questionnaires were developed and distributed to 14 f panel groups which involved 740 respondents in the age of 21-60 years old. The data collected from a survey was analyzed using SPSS 22 with descriptive statistical analysis to analyze the theory. From the result it can be found that both the political competitiveness and the voters' behavior are influenced by the parties and candidate capabilities to handle electoral issues. This study paved the way on empowering political parties and candidates as well as to enhance the political competitiveness quality in Malaysia.

Keywords: *Political competitiveness, voters' behavior and electoral issues*

1. Introduction

Political competitiveness is a new area of study in political science. Related areas are focusing more on economic competitiveness and social economic development. This study describes how electoral issues namely socioeconomic issues influenced the voters' behavior and determine the political competitiveness prior to the 13th General Elections in Malaysia.

2. Political Competitiveness

Political competitiveness can be refers to a phenomenon whereby two or more parties are competing among each other to win an election. This study focuses on how two major parties namely The Barisan Nasional (BN) and The Pakatan Rakyat (PR). The Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition as of August 2009, Barisan Nasional's member parties including United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), Malaysian People's Movement Party (Gerakan/PGRM), People's Progressive Party (PPP), Parti Pesaka Bumiputera