Inclusiveness Matters:

The Development of Ethno-Politics in Malaysia

Abstract

Malaysian voters made a historical decision in May 2018, ushering in what observers termed a “Malay political tsunami” by displacing the UMNO government’s decades long rule. This paper argues, however, the spirit of inclusiveness played a crucial role in the first transition of power in Malaysia. Moreover, the inclusive representation of major ethnic groups in the multi-racial state by the winning Alliance Hope coalition was a key factor leading to the transition.

This paper examines the political development in Malaysia, from the beginning of inclusive politics in the early stage of its independence, to the declining of inclusiveness from the 1970s to 1990s, to the collapse of the inclusive politics since 2008 when the DAP (the Chinese opposition party) produced a major victory over the MCA (the Chinese party in the ruling UMNO government) in the May 2008 elections. Finally, this paper also explores the challenges of the new ruling Alliance Hope in Malaysia.

Keywords

Ethno politics, inclusiveness, UMNO, MCA, MIC, Alliance Hope

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