

FIRST PAST THE POST ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN MALAYSIA:

A COMPARATIVE AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Bachelor in Legal Studies (B.Hons)

Faculty of Law

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DECEMBER 2011

The students/authors confirm that the work submitted is their own and that appropriate credit had been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praises are due to Allah, whom we seek for help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evils within ourselves and from the burden of our evil deeds.

Alhamdulillah, we are grateful to our supervisor, Puan Maryam Abdullah for her encouragement and wisdom in guiding us to the completion of this project paper. Her assistance has been most vital in deepening our understanding regarding the issue.

We would like to express our gratitude to our interviewees; Associate Professor Dr. Mohd. Fuad Bin Mat Jali and Yang Berhormat Khalid Bin Haji Abd Samad. Not only have they provided us with precious and essential responses to the interview, their enthusiasm to allocate their time to share their knowledge with us have been a priceless experience. We would like to thank them again for the assistance in granting an interview despite with the limited time given.

We would also like to extend our special appreciation to our parents, family and friends who have contributed direct and indirectly in the completion of our Honours Project Paper by providing monetary and moral support.

This research project has been carried out by a team consisting of Fatin Nadzirah binti Johari, Fazlan Fardiansyah bin Abdul Kadir, Nur Adnen binti Yahya and Rabiatal Adawiyah binti Yusoff.

Through this research, it is hoped that we have contributed something which would mark the beginning of improvisation of the current Act which plays an important part in determining the election result which in turn would enable the electoral system to be more democratic and fair.

Thank you.

ABSTRACT

This research study will discuss the first past the post electoral system in Malaysia. It touches on the history of the electoral system and seeks to trace on how the system was adopted in Malaysia. Aside from that, it also includes view on electoral system from the Islamic perspective. The effects of the electoral system towards the constitution of Parliament are also examined.

Particular focus is on the recent 12th General Election held in Malaysia during 2008 where the Opposition, for the first time in almost fifty years, succeeded in denying two-third majority of seats of the ruling coalition, Barisan Nasional. The Opposition, which then established a coalition known as Pakatan Rakyat, gained almost half of the total percentage of national votes in parliamentary elections. However, they managed to obtain only 37 percent of the seats in Dewan Rakyat, the lower House in Parliament. Reasons for such disproportionate result and how they affected the balance of power between Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat in the legislative assembly are elaborated in the study.

In addition, electoral systems of different nature are also analysed. Singapore practices similar electoral system with Malaysia with the exception of several reforms. In contrast, South Africa practices Proportional Representation electoral system which differs with the Malaysian system in terms of the methods to elect leaders in the legislative assembly.

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