CHAPTER 8

The Politics of Ethnicity: Authoritarianism, Development, and Social Change in Malaysia

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INTRODUCTION

The results of the general elections, held on March 8, 2018, suggested a fundamental and permanent change in Malaysia’s political system, in contrast to the beginning of the end of an authoritarian form of governance in recent years. This change was not only influenced by the electoral outcome but also by the broader economic and social trends occurring in the country.

In recent years, Malaysia has seen significant economic growth and development, with the government implementing various policies to promote economic growth and social welfare. However, these developments have also been accompanied by increased social unrest and political tension, particularly in the context of ethnic politics.

The results of the 2018 general elections were seen as a significant turning point, with the opposition coalition, led by Anwar Ibrahim, winning a majority of seats in the parliament.

The significance of this election cannot be overstated, as it marked a shift in the political landscape of Malaysia, with implications for the country’s future direction and the role of ethnic politics in shaping governance and development.