

Political Attitudes and Voting Behaviour

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Abstract—In democratic political system, voting is one of the forms of political participation. The objective of this study is to identify political attitudes and perceptions that may motivate citizens to vote in general elections. This paper compares political attitudes of three categories of voters, namely “non-voters” or those who never voted, “occasional voters”, and “frequent voters.” The survey in this study used purposive population sampling, involving 622 respondents in Penang, Malaysia. The chi-squared test indicates differences among the three groups of voters in the study in certain aspects of political attitudes such as satisfaction with democratic procedure in this country and the fairness of the general elections. Similar pattern is also evidenced for questions regarding their perceptions towards political institutions, i.e. the state government is responsive to people’s demands, the federal government is responsive to people’s demands, people have a say in what the state government is doing, and people have a say in what the federal government is doing.

Keywords—political attitudes, political motivation, political perceptions, voting behaviour.

I. INTRODUCTION

PAST research in political science and studies of electoral behaviour have contributed to our understanding of trends in voting behaviour. The application of survey research to the study of electoral behaviour was pioneered by social scientists in the 1940s when Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues surveyed 600 prospective voters in a single community over the course of the 1940 American presidential campaign [1]. A second study was later conducted in New York in 1948 [2]. Both studies defined questions and research methods that have had profound effects on subsequent research and work in the studies of electoral behaviour.

Other studies of electoral behaviour include application of social-psychological [3], rational [4], social calculus [5] and descriptive social norms [6] perspectives.

In rational choice models of participation, the explanations focus on the cost and benefits of participation to the individuals. Basically, the individual will decide to vote when the expected benefits from voting exceed the costs of voting. The expanded rational choice model of participation incorporates “civic duty” as an additional benefit from voting beyond the effect of the vote on the election outcome [7]. The

civic duty component in the voting calculus is psychological benefit from following the norm of voting such as in the model of turnout by altruistic voters who incorporate the utility of general others and the interests of others in their group into their calculations and [8], [9].

Most studies of voting behaviour reviewed focus on the roles of personal characteristics, attitudes, interests, and social factors in influencing individuals’ voting behaviour. The objective of this study is to identify political attitudes and perceptions that may have association with voting behaviour in Malaysia. Previous study of political participation indicates that the majority of respondents voted in every general election even though a small minority (10%) of them admitted to be involved actively in politics [10].

II. METHODOLOGY

This study used survey method to measure the variables. The sample consisted of 622 respondents interviewed in Penang, Malaysia. The questionnaire used five-point Likert scale for each item. For the purpose of results presentation and discussion in this paper, the answers in the Likert scale were reconstructed into three categories: (1) Disagree and Strongly Disagree, (2) Somewhat Agree, and (3) Agree and Strongly Agree.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the purpose of this study, all respondents interviewed aged above twenty-one years. Four questions were asked regarding political attitudes of the respondents. The results show that 69.6% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed to being tolerant towards people with different political ideologies, 51.1% thought they were able to influence government’s decision, 50.9% were satisfied with democratic procedure in this country, and 49.4% agreed and strongly agreed to the fairness of general elections.

Four questions were also asked to the respondents regarding their political perceptions. The data indicate that 43.8% of the respondents thought the state government is responsive to people’s demands, 45.7% thought that the federal government is responsive to people’s demands, 51.5% agreed and strongly agreed that they have a say in what the state government is doing, and 46.3% agreed and strongly agreed that they have a say in what the federal government is doing.

The analysis was also done to compare the self reported “non-voters” or respondents who never voted, “occasional

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voters” or those who did not consistently come out for general elections, and “frequent voters” who reported they voted in all general elections or regularly came out for elections. It is important to note that the data show 14.8% of the 622 respondents reported they never voted, 12.9% were occasional voters, and 72.3% were frequent voters. The chi-squared test indicates differences among the three groups in six aspects of political attitudes and perceptions. Each of the cross-tabulations displayed in the bar charts (Fig. 1-6) have a statistically significant chi-square of $p < 0.001$.

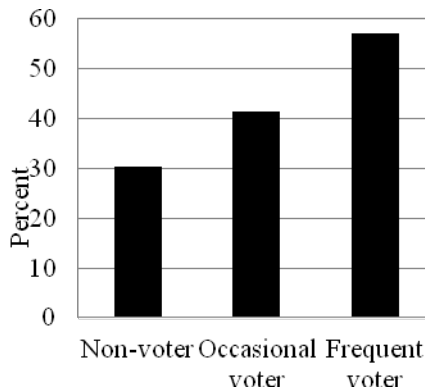


Fig. 1: Agree/Strongly Agree: I am satisfied with democratic procedure

Fig. 1 shows more than half (57%) of frequent voters were satisfied with democratic procedure in the country as compared to 41.3% of occasional voters and 30.4% of non-voters.

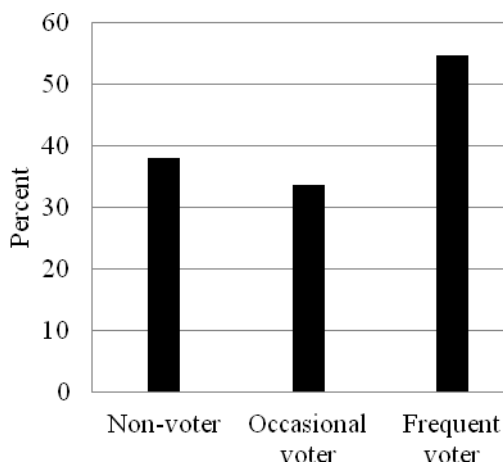


Fig. 2: Agree/Strongly Agree: I believe in the fairness of general elections

Fig. 2 shows 54.7% of frequent voters, 33.8% of occasional

voters, and 38% of non-voters who believed in the fairness of general elections.

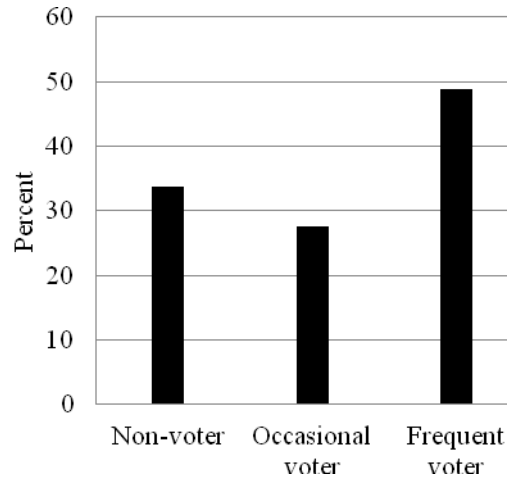


Fig. 3: Agree/Strongly Agree: The state government is responsive to people’s demands

Fig. 3 indicates nearly half (48.9%) of the frequent voters agreed and strongly agreed that the state government is responsive to people’s demands. Only 27.5% occasional voters and 33.7% non-voters agreed and strongly agreed with the same statement.

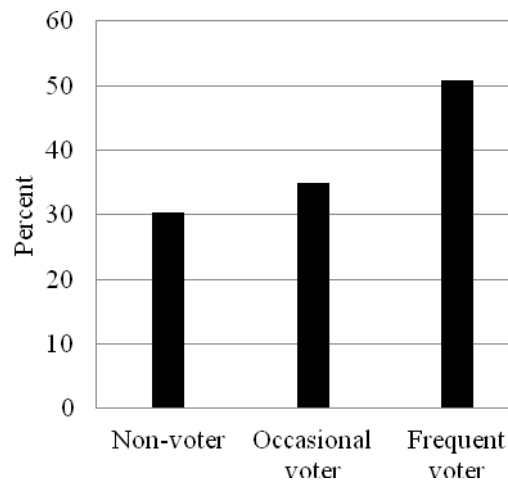


Fig. 4: Agree/Strongly Agree: The Federal government is responsive to people’s demands

Fig. 4 indicates more than half (50.9%) of the frequent voters agreed and strongly agreed that the federal government is responsive to people’s demands. Only 35% of occasional voters and 30.4% of non-voters agreed and strongly agreed with the same statement.

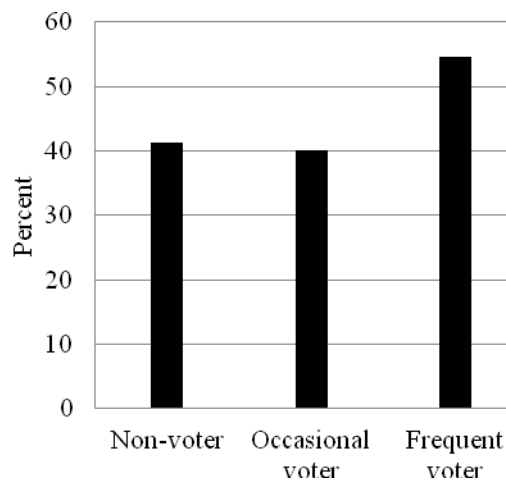


Fig. 5: Agree/Strongly Agree: People have a say in what the state government is doing

Fig. 5 shows 55.8% of frequent voters, 40% of occasional voters, and 41.3% of non-voters thought that people have a say in what the state government is doing.

Fig. 6 shows 50.6% frequent voters, 35% of occasional voters, and 35.9% of non-voters thought that people have a say in what the federal government is doing.

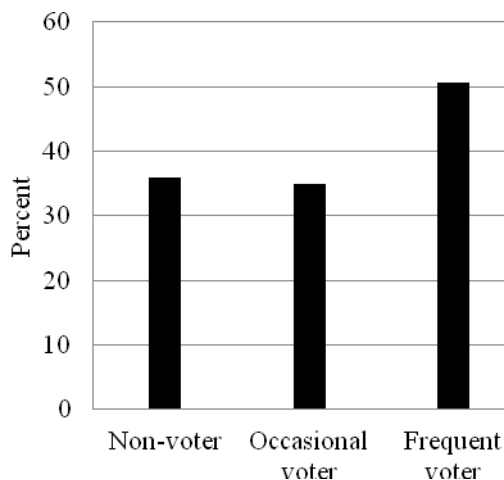


Fig. 6: Agree/Strongly Agree: People have a say in what the federal government is doing

The data in fig. 1-6 indicate frequent voters were most likely to be satisfied with democratic procedure in the country and believed in the fairness of general elections. They were also most likely to think that the state and federal governments are responsive to people's demands as well as people have a say in what the state and federal governments are doing. On the other hand, the non-voters were least likely to be satisfied with the democratic procedure in the country and to think that the federal government is responsive to people's demands. The occasional voters were least likely to believe in the fairness of general elections and to think that both the state

and federal governments are responsive to people's demands.

In general, these results seem to be consistent with other studies which suggest that personal attitudes and perceptions influence voting behaviour and have effect on likelihood to vote among general population.

IV. CONCLUSION

The findings in this study suggest that certain political attitudes and perceptions towards political institutions may contribute to a combination of factors that motivate the respondents in this study to vote during general elections. Finally, further investigation is needed to establish associations between political attitudes, perceptions and issues related to voting behaviour in Malaysia.

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The court's supportive role in Arbitration under the law of United Arab Emirates

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Abstract— Arbitral tribunal increasingly obtains more power and independence. This is due to the increasing confidence in this dispute resolution mechanism. Despite that independence, the need for the court's support is inevitable. State courts play various roles pre-arbitration, during arbitration proceedings and post arbitration. This paper discusses the role of UAE court in arbitration.

Keywords—Arbitration, arbitral award, court's supportive role, enforcement, Interim Measures.

I. INTRODUCTION

UAE courts play several roles to support alternative dispute resolutions (ADR), such as arbitration, mediation and adjudication. It is always believed that effective ADR mechanisms are the right means to reduce the courts' workload.

In UAE, there are federal and local laws. In cases of contradiction, federal law prevails. In Dubai, the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) hosts DIFC courts that have jurisdiction over disputes involving companies registered in the DIFC. Recently, these courts' jurisdiction was widened to allow agreed jurisdiction, i.e. an agreement on their jurisdiction where the original jurisdiction is for state courts. DIFC has its own laws which are heavily influenced by common law. Arbitration bodies in UAE provide their own rules. Examples of these are Dubai International Arbitration Centre (DIAC) and London Court of International Arbitration in Dubai (DIFC-LCIA). This paper will rely heavily on such rules.

This paper will discuss the court's supportive role in arbitration. This will include pre-hearings, during hearings and post award. The recognition and enforcement of arbitration awards raised a number of questions in the past few years. The doctrine of public order has been relied on by Dubai courts to nullify an arbitration award. The tribunal's power to issue interim measures orders in UAE is still very limited. Interim measures must be ordered by competent courts. This may cause considerable delay in arbitration. The paper will look at the UNCITRAL arbitration model law to see how interim measures can be awarded.

II. INDEPENDENCE OF ARBITRATION

Under most legal systems, arbitration is independent from national courts. For example, the arbitral tribunal can decide on its own jurisdiction, parties may elect the law governing their dispute, the arbitration clause or agreement is autonomous which survives the termination of the original contract, judicial control of errors of law is abandoned in most legal systems subject to certain restrictions such as public order and the principle of fair hearing.[1]

III. THE COURT'S SUPPORTIVE ROLE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ARBITRATION

There are three possible areas of court intervention: enforcing the arbitration agreement, establishing the arbitral tribunal and challenges to jurisdiction

3.1 Enforcing the Arbitration Agreement

A party may take the case to court despite the existence of arbitration clause or submission agreement. Here, the defendant will have two choices either to go on with litigation or to object to the court jurisdiction. If he decides to select the latter choice, he becomes when he must raise his objection.

Obviously, the model law suggests that objection to the court jurisdiction by a party cannot be raised after submitting his first statement on the substance. Unfortunately, the position under UAE is not as clear as under the model law. The defendant must object before the first hearing. The first hearing under the UAE law means the first session. This means that the defendant will still have the right to object to the jurisdiction of the court even after submitting his first statement on the substance since he can object in the first hearing.

3.2 Establishing the Arbitral Tribunal

The court will have the power to intervene upon the request of the parties if they fail to appoint the respondent's arbitrators or to appoint the sole 'chairperson' arbitrator. Parties may also challenge the impartiality of the arbitrators. Here, parties are strongly advised to select their own arbitrators and to put in place procedures to select a substitute arbitrator where a nominated arbitrator is not acting due to withdrawal, dismissal, etc. This advice is based on the fact that the court's decision in selecting the arbitrator(s) cannot be challenged. A selected arbitrator may not be the best

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