

REGIME CHANGE AND REGIME MAINTENANCE
IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

DISCUSSION PAPER No 24

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AND DEVELOPMENT:
THE 1999 SABAH STATE ELECTION**

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Published by
The Department of Political and Social Change
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
The Australian National University
1999

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National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:

Chin, Ung-Ho, 1967- .
'Kataks', Kadazan-Dusun nationalism and development:
The 1999 Sabah state election.

Bibliography.
ISBN 07315 2678 3.

Elections – Malaysia – Sabah. 2. Sabah – Politics and
Government. I. Australian National University. Dept. of
Political and Social Change. II. Title. (Series : Regime
Change and regime maintenance in Asia and the Pacific.
Discussion paper series ; no. 24).

324.95953.

Printed in Canberra by Panther Publishing Press.

**'KATAKS', KADAZAN-DUSUN NATIONALISM AND
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INTRODUCTION

The 1999 Sabah election was held amidst great expectations among political observers and the public. It was the first election to be held since Malaysia plunged into a recession caused by the Asian currency crisis two years earlier. The ringgit was no longer convertible and Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad had sacked his deputy, Anwar Ibrahim, over differences in economic policy and Anwar's attempts to unseat the long serving prime minister. Anwar staged rallies throughout Peninsular Malaysia and was subsequently arrested and charged with corruption and sodomy. Anwar's expulsion from the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) had raised questions about Mahathir's hold on Malaysia's dominant party and about his grip on power. There were comparisons, although inappropriate, between the Mahathir regime and the Soeharto regime in Indonesia. There were widespread street demonstrations in Kuala Lumpur calling for the resignation of Mahathir over the Anwar affair. The Mahathir regime was arguably facing its most serious political crisis since coming into office in 1981. After several months a new deputy prime minister, Abdullah Badawi, was appointed.

Badawi visited Sabah four times in the first two months of his appointment, signalling that he was going to be the key federal man in charge of the upcoming Sabah election. His predecessor had played a key role in the 1994 Sabah election and Abdullah was expected to pick up where Anwar had left off. With general elections anticipated within a year of the Sabah election, the Sabah polls were seen by some in the peninsula as a litmus test for the general election and a general test of Mahathir's personal popularity and of the regime's ability to hang on to power.

In Sabah, expectations were remarkably high as many saw the election as a crucial test of the ability of the ruling Sabah Barisan National (BN or National Front) to win outright. In the last polls, the opposition Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS or Sabah Unity Party) had won the election but widespread defections to Sabah BN led to its downfall. The subsequent formation of the Sabah BN government, with support from the defectors, had led many to question its political legitimacy. The election was thus an opportunity for Sabah BN to get a proper mandate from the people.

Sabah Politics

Politics in Sabah is characterized by four features. First, there has been fierce competition for political power between the three politically significant groups: the Muslim *bumiputera*, or indigenous peoples, the non-Muslim *bumiputera* (mainly Kadazan-Dusun), and the Chinese community. Sabah's two million population is roughly divided into 40 per cent Muslim indigenous, 40 per cent non-Muslim indigenous, and 20 per cent Chinese and other non-indigenous.

Secondly, there has been constant shifting of political loyalties. Sabah governments tend to fall within a decade of coming into power. Tun Mustapha Harun and his party, the United Sabah National Organisation (USNO), ruled Sabah from 1967 to 1975 before he was thrown out by the electorate in favour of Parti Bersatu Rakyat Jelata Sabah (Berjaya or Sabah Peoples' United Front). Berjaya under Harris Salleh governed Sabah until 1985 when it was dislodged by PBS. The PBS government under Joseph Pairin Kitingan lasted until 1994 when defections caused its downfall. Since then, Sabah has been ruled by the Sabah BN coalition led by Sabah UMNO. Both Mustapha and Harris are Muslims while Pairin is a Roman Catholic. Thus, for the most part, a Muslim has headed the Sabah government.¹

Thirdly, vote-buying, using cash, and other forms of inducements are key ingredients for political mobilization and securing electoral support. Large amounts of money are spent on elections by all parties and candidates to secure votes. Many voters expect to be compensated in some form for their votes. Giving 'coffee money' or 'transport money' is widely seen as an acceptable form of securing political support on polling day. Once a party gets into power, it is further expected to reward its supporters through the distribution of state resources, such as timber licenses, mining rights or government contracts. Patronage plays a key part in cementing political

support and defections. This leads to a high degree of corruption as those in power seek to enrich themselves and their parties in order to survive politically.

Fourthly, prior to Sabah's entry into the federation of Malaysia in 1963, Sabah (and neighbouring Sarawak) demanded constitutional guarantees and autonomies in certain areas. These special rights, applying only to Sabah and Sarawak, were spelt out in the 1962 Inter-Government Committee (IGC) Report (Government of Malaya 1963). The main features of the safeguards (generally referred to as the 'Twenty Points') were:

- (a) Islam's status as a national religion was not applicable to Sarawak and Sabah;
- (b) immigration control was vested in the state governments of Sabah and Sarawak;
- (c) Borneonization of the civil service, and English as the official language of both states, were recognized;
- (d) no amendments or modification of any specific safeguards granted under the Twenty Points can be made by the federal government without the agreement of the Sabah and Sarawak state governments, and
- (e) there would be no right to secede from the Federation.

Since then, one of the key political debates in Sabah (and Sarawak) has been over how thoroughly the federal government has kept to the promises made in the IGC Report. The federal government's position has been that these constitutional guarantees were transitional in nature and would be scrapped in the future in the interests of national integration.² Many Sabahans, however, argue that the future of these rights was not up to the federal government but rather up to the peoples of Sabah and Sarawak. Critics argue that the federal government has not adhered to the Twenty Points and has circumvented many of them, especially in areas of religion and Borneonization of the civil service. Islam was made the official religion of Sabah (and Sarawak) despite the guarantee. Many senior officers in government departments in Sabah were from Peninsular Malaysia despite

the explicit promise to give first preference to local civil servants under the Borneonization pledge.

Many Sabahans are also critical of political interference from Kuala Lumpur. A popular slogan has been 'Sabah for the Sabahans', and Kuala Lumpur has been seen as the 'new colonizer'. There is also widespread resentment over the massive transfer of wealth from Sabah's petroleum and other natural resources to the national coffers. A recent study suggests that Sabah has generated more wealth for the federal government than it receives from Kuala Lumpur in terms of development grants and financial aid (Wee 1995).

The anti-federal fervour has been compounded by the large number of illegal Filipino (and a smaller number of Indonesian) migrants living, more or less permanently, in Sabah. Many non-Muslim Sabahans resent these foreigners and blame the federal government for the situation. Border controls and security come under the purview of the federal government and many Sabahans suspect that the federal government has taken a relaxed attitude towards these migrants. The suspicions are grounded in the fact that almost all these illegal migrants are Muslims and a substantial number of them vote (illegally) in elections using identity cards issued illegally by the federal-controlled Department of Registration. Many of these Muslim migrants are known to strongly support the ruling BN dominated by UMNO. UMNO is unashamedly for the Malay race and Islam (see Crouch 1996). Many suspect that the federal government has tried to use these Muslim migrants to increase the Muslim population in Sabah and so alter the state's population in favour of Muslims, increasing its political power correspondingly.

Kadazan-Dusun Nationalism and PBS's formation

The fierce political competition between the Muslim and the Kadazan-Dusun community in the past decade can be largely explained by the rise of Kadazan-Dusun nationalism, which found an outlet to express itself politically through the PBS.

The Kadazan-Dusun community constitute about 40 per cent of Sabah's population, and, as such, always saw themselves as the anchor of Sabah politics. The first chief minister after independence in 1963 was Donald Stephens, a Kadazan nationalist. He was the first *Huguan Siou* (paramount chief) of the Kadazan-Dusun and founded the United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Organisation (UPKO), a party that explicitly seeks

to represent the community. However, by 1967 Stephens was pushed out of office by a Muslim, Tun Mustapha Harun, with support from Kuala Lumpur. It took a decade before Stephens (and the Kadazan-Dusun) was back in power through a new party, Berjaya. Berjaya won convincingly in the 1976 election when it took 28 to USNO's 20 seats.

Fuad's rule, however, was to last less than three months. On 6 June 1976, Fuad and three senior leaders of Berjaya: Peter Mojuntin, Salleh Sulong and Chong Thaim Vun, were tragically killed in a plane crash. Harris Salleh, a Muslim, was sworn in as Fuad's successor. The Kadazan-Dusun's dream of coming back into power died in the plane crash.

After that the Kadazan-Dusun community searched for a leader who could take Stephens's place. It took more than a decade before a new *Huguan Siou* emerged with the same legitimacy as Stephens: Joseph Pairin Kitingan.

Pairin's rise can be traced back to the Berjaya government led by Harris. Harris appointed a Kadazan-Dusun, James Ongkili, as deputy chief minister while Pairin was made a junior minister. Ongkili, an academic historian who taught at Universiti Malaya before entering politics, was deemed ineffective, and was widely seen by his community as too accommodating to the Muslims. The Kadazan-Dusun were increasing anxious about four issues: Islamization, discrimination in the civil service, the '*pribumi*' label and the influx of Muslim Filipinos.

Although high-handed tactics of Islamization ceased with the defeat of Mustapha in 1976, subtle attempts at conversion to Islam were still carried out among the predominantly Roman Catholic Kadazan-Dusun and other indigenous communities. Harris's victory in the 1981 state elections had made Islamic activists in Berjaya more assertive. The election result indicated that Berjaya had captured the Muslim vote (21 of 44 successful Berjaya candidates in the 1981 state election were Muslims). This meant that the Muslims in Berjaya controlled about half of Berjaya's elected representatives and they began to agitate for more pro-Islamic policies. Pressure was put on non-Muslim indigenous to convert, and big conversion ceremonies began to appear in non-Muslim areas, the same sort of ceremonies that were held during Mustapha's reign.

The Kadazan-Dusun also felt uneasy about their political status. Although they were officially classified as '*bumiputera*' and thus eligible for special state benefits such as scholarships, bank loans and recruitment into the civil service, in reality they were discriminated against in favour of Muslim *bumiputera*. The Kadazan-Dusun felt that they were 'second-class'

bumiputera.³ There was anger that all the senior positions in the Sabah civil service were held by Peninsular Malays and that there was an active unofficial policy of discrimination against them in the higher echelons of the civil service. It was known that it was easier for a Kadazan-Dusun civil servant to be promoted if he was to convert to Islam (Kitingan 1986; Kahin 1992; Loh 1992; Yee 1992).

The Kadazan-Dusun sense of being 'second-class' *bumiputera* was compounded by Harris's decision to lump the Kadazan with other indigenous groupings in the 1980 census. Prior to 1980, the Kadazan were categorized as a separate entity, but in the 1980 census they were classified simply as '*pribumi*', a collective term for all indigenous groupings in Sabah. The Berjaya administration had also changed the character of the Kadazan Harvest Festival (*Tadau Tagazo Kaamatan*) by relegating it into a *Pesta Rakyat*, open to all races. These moves were seen by the Kadazan-Dusun as blatant attempts to diminish their strong ethnic and cultural identity.

The unhappiness was compounded by the influx of Muslim Filipinos. The Kadazan-Dusun (and the Chinese) were worried that the Muslim Filipinos could alter the delicate political balance between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Sabah. Although the non-Muslims were in the majority in the state, the large influx of Muslim Filipinos (numbering about half a million) reduced the gap between the Muslims and non-Muslims significantly and quickly. Berjaya's excuse for not doing anything about the influx of Muslim Filipinos was that border and security issues were under the purview of the federal government. Moreover, according to Harris, it would be physically impossible to send all the Filipinos home.

All these four issues were raised repeatedly in the state cabinet by Pairin. He demanded forcible repatriation of the Muslim Filipinos, promotion of the Kadazan-Dusun culture and language, a halt to forced conversion to Islam, and that the Sabah government give financial assistance to Church activities, in the same way that state funds were given for *dakwah* (missionary) activities of the Sabah State Muslim Organisation (MUIS). Pairin's reputation for raising these issues earned him the respect of many Kadazan-Dusun, especially the influential educated Kadazan-Dusun middle class.

Pairin began to revive the Kadazan Cultural Association (KCA), a powerful grassroots organization, and in 1982 he was made *Huguan Siou*, the first Kadazan to hold the title since the death of Stephens. In other words, the Kadazan community had a new champion after 1976.

Pairin's strong non-Muslim views boiled over in the 1983 Berjaya party congress. Before that, in July 1982, Harris had sacked Pairin from the state cabinet. At the party congress, Pairin again raised the grievances of the Kadazan-Dusun and non-Muslim communities, prompting Harris to expel him from the party in the middle of the congress. Harris then pulled out an undated letter of resignation Pairin had signed when he was elected in 1981, forcing a by-election in the Tambunan constituency. The by-election was held in December 1984 and the result was never in doubt. Standing as an independent, Pairin's emotional call to Kadazan-Dusun nationalism meant that the Berjaya candidate, Roger Ongkili, a nephew of Pairin, never stood any chance. Ongkili was beaten by a margin of four to one.

The humiliation for Harris was too much for him to bear and he publicly punished the people of Tambunan by withdrawing Tambunan's status as a district. Tambunan was placed under the control of the Keningau District Office and all government facilities in Tambunan were withdrawn (*Daily Express* 1 January 1985). This action merely reinforced Kadazan-Dusuns' feeling that they were being persecuted by Harris and the Muslims.

With the Kadazan-Dusun strongly supportive of Pairin, Harris, hoping to prevent further erosion of support, decided to call an election in April 1985. Harris wanted to move quickly as Pairin had already registered a new Kadazan-Dusun-based political party, Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS).

On 5 March 1985 Kuala Lumpur approved PBS's application and Pairin unveiled PBS's symbol, two hands clasped together over a map of Sabah. It was meant to symbolize friendship and cooperation among the peoples of Sabah. However, the symbol was politically potent for another reason: it was almost an exact copy of the symbol used earlier by the congregation of Sabah's Catholic parishes, with only the cross missing. The meaning was clear to the Catholic/Christian community: although PBS was multi-racial, PBS would fight for the rights of the non-Muslim community after years of suppression by successive Muslim-led governments. The tone of the campaign was thus Muslims vs non-Muslims.

Although PBS was barely a month-old, it swept to power, winning 25 of the 48 seats in the state legislature. In fact, PBS took 26 seats when the only successful Pasok candidate, Ignatius Malanjun in Moyong, joined PBS. USNO took 16 seats and Berjaya was left with just 6 (Puthuchearry 1985; Kalimuthu 1986). PBS won because it had the near total support of the Kadazan and Chinese votes. The Kadazan-Dusun were back in power again.

Sabah Elections

Within the Malaysian political system, parliamentary and state elections are usually held at the same time. The only exceptions are the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak.⁴ Due to their unique histories and different levels of political development, state and parliamentary elections are usually held on different dates. This has allowed a degree of separation of issues for parliamentary and state elections. Nation-wide issues play a much more important role in national parliamentary elections while state issues tend to dominate state elections. Even in national elections, however, due to the parochial nature of politics in both states, nation-wide issues tend to be subservient to state issues. Thus, issues dominating the headlines in Peninsular Malaysia, such as the sacking of Anwar Ibrahim and his subsequent trial, do not have much impact on politics and electoral behaviour in Sabah and Sarawak. In fact, the Anwar episode was generally seen as a non-issue by all the major combatants in the 1999 election in Sabah. In 1995, the Chinese voters on the peninsula strongly backed the Mahathir regime. In contrast, the Chinese voters in Sabah were lukewarm towards the ruling BN coalition and their vote was split between the PBS and BN (see Chin 1996b, 1996c).

The federal government/UMNO takes elections in Sabah seriously for the simple fact that they worry that strong anti-federal sentiments may lead to attempts to secede from the federation. Unlike states on the peninsula, Sabah and Sarawak are separated physically from Kuala Lumpur by the South China Sea. The different histories and demography of Sabah and Sarawak also make them likely candidates to pull out of the federation if there were any attempts to break up the federation. Many senior UMNO leaders still harbour fears that Sabah and Sarawak may turn into 'another Singapore' if they are not kept under a watchful eye (Chin 1997).⁵

ELECTORAL SETTINGS

The 1994 Poll and its Aftermath

The previous state election was held in February 1994. The results were close: PBS won 25 seats to Sabah BN's 23 (Sabah UMNO 18; SAPP 3; LDP 1; AKAR 1). Of the 436,448 votes cast, PBS took 215,952 votes (49.5 per cent) and BN 201,374 (46.1 per cent); the rest went to the smaller parties and independents (*New Straits Times* 21 February 1994; Chin 1994). The results

indicated that voting was along ethnic/religious lines: PBS took all the 15 Kadazan-Dusun majority constituencies while Sabah UMNO won all its 18 seats in Muslim-majority constituencies. With the Chinese vote partially split, the seven Chinese-majority constituencies were divided between PBS (which won 4) and BN (3).

Although PBS won the election narrowly, the Pairin-led administration collapsed within three weeks when Sabah UMNO successfully enticed key PBS legislators to defect. The going rate for the early defectors was said to be three million ringgit.⁶ The final blow to Pairin came when his younger brother, Jeffrey Kitingan, announced that he was leaving PBS to form a new party, Parti Demokratik Sabah Bersatu (PDSB), which would ultimately seek to join the BN.⁷ Another key PBS strongman, the party's secretary general, Joseph Kurup, also left and formed Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS). Kurup joined the BN coalition immediately. Yet another key PBS figure and former deputy chief minister, Bernard Dompok, formed Parti Demokratik Sabah (PDS) and it too became a component of the BN.

Initially Pairin tried to call for another state election, but the governor refused his request to dissolve the state assembly (which had yet to sit). The governor claimed that the Sabah BN should be given a chance to form the state government if it had the numbers. The governor could hardly be neutral towards Pairin, given that his son had just been elected as a Sabah UMNO assemblyman.

A new state government was thus formed with Sabah UMNO at the core, and Sakaran Dandai was sworn in as the new chief minister on 17 March 1994. Mahathir announced that the federal government would honor its election pledge that the Sabah chief ministership would be rotated every two years between Muslim *bumiputera*, non-Muslim *bumiputera* and Chinese leaders. The triumvirate system was supposed to stop one leader, or one ethnic group, from adopting the 'grab-all' mentality practised in Sabah. More importantly, it was to ensure that the BN would be able to secure support from the three main political groupings in Sabah (*Daily Express* [Kota Kinabalu] 21 March 1994). Sakaran served for a few months until he was made Sabah governor in December 1994 (a post he still occupies). He was replaced by another Sabah UMNO nominee, Mohd Salleh Tun Said Keruak, the son of the previous governor.

In March 1996, after Sabah UMNO had held the chief ministership for two years, it was the turn of the Chinese to take over under the rotation system. This created a mini-crisis when Sabah UMNO decided that it was

unwilling to give up the office. After all, Sabah UMNO had the single largest number of legislators in the state assembly. They were not keen to see a Chinese taking over the most powerful office in the state. Mahathir had to force Sabah UMNO to give up the post. One of the key reasons why the BN did well in the 1994 state election was the promise of a rotation system for the chief minister. If this promise had not been kept, there was a real likelihood that the voters would turn against BN, and especially Sabah UMNO, in the next election. Mahathir's then deputy, Anwar Ibrahim, had to go to Kota Kinabalu personally to persuade Sabah UMNO to drop its objections.⁸ The Sabah UMNO representatives finally agreed to drop their objections when Mahathir promised them that Sabah UMNO could still exert major influence in the state government through the number of state cabinet posts given to Sabah UMNO. Sabah UMNO was promised the largest share of the state cabinet, with four full ministers, including a deputy chief ministership.

Mahathir also acceded to Sabah UMNO's request that the bulk of the chief minister's discretionary powers be transferred to cabinet where it had the numbers. Prior to that, the position of Sabah chief minister was all powerful – the chief minister could, for example, decide on land matters single-handedly without going to the state cabinet. This gave the chief minister tremendous political patronage; it was common practice for the chief minister to grant mining, land and timber concessions as a political reward, to cement political ties, or simply to raise money for elections.⁹ In June 1996, four bills – the *Forestry Enactment Amendment*, the *Mining Ordinance*, the *Sabah Land Ordinance Amendment*, and the *Delegation of Powers Ordinance* – effectively stripped the chief minister of his absolute discretion when it came to land matters and the granting of mining and timber concessions. Obviously Sabah UMNO wanted to make sure it could still influence 'who gets what' once it was out of the chief minister's office. This was the price the Chinese and the non-Muslim *bumiputera* community had to pay if they wanted the rotation system to continue (interview with a PBS figure).

SAPP's Yong Teck Lee was finally sworn in as chief minister on 28 May 1996, and two weeks later, on 18 June, the four amendments limiting the powers of the chief minister were passed in the state legislative assembly. Yong served a full two years before he handed power over to Bernard Dompok, a non-Muslim *bumiputera*, on 29 May 1998.

The 1995 Sabah Parliamentary Elections

In April 1995, Mahathir called for a general election. This was the first election to be held since the fall of the PBS administration in March 1994. Although in general parliamentary elections are less important than state elections in Sabah, the PBS made a great effort in the election to prove that its political support was intact despite the defections. The voters were told that the parliamentary election was an opportunity to 'punish' the political 'katakas' (frogs) who had jumped from the PBS into the BN. This was especially so in the Kadazan-Dusun seats where the voters were told to discard those Kadazan-Dusun representatives who had 'sold out' their race by defecting to the BN.

The BN was sufficiently worried about PBS that it issued a special BN supplementary manifesto specifically targeted at Sabah voters. The Outline Perspective Plan for Sabah (OPPS) promised that Sabah would be on par economically with Peninsular Malaysia by 2010. Needless to say, this was only achievable under a BN administration. During the campaign period, projects amounting to more than M\$2 billion were pledged by the BN leaders (*Borneo Mail* 18, 19 April 1995). The explicit choice facing the voters was best summed up by the Sabah UMNO chief minister: 'The election provides the people with a choice between BN's politics of development or PBS politics of sentiment' (*New Straits Times* 25 April 1995).

The results were: BN 12 constituencies (Sabah UMNO 8, SAPP 3, LDP 1) and PBS 8. The voting pattern barely differed from the 1994 election. The BN took 52.7 per cent of the vote, about 5 per cent more than in 1994. PBS took about 10 per cent less at 42.3 per cent of the popular vote, a drop of about 7 per cent compared to 1994. Voting was again clearly along ethnic/religious lines. Sabah UMNO dominated in the Muslim-majority constituencies where it took 62.5 per cent of the popular vote, compared with PBS's 36.6 per cent. In 1994, in the Muslim areas, BN received 55.9 per cent while the PBS got 41.0 per cent. Sabah UMNO had strengthened its hold over the Muslim territories while PBS lost some ground.

In the 1994 election, the Chinese community was almost equally split between PBS (50.0 per cent) and BN (47.0 per cent). This pattern was repeated in 1995. BN received 43.6 per cent of the vote while PBS was close behind at 37.2 per cent. DAP took a significant 16.7 per cent of the vote. Assuming that DAP voters would have voted for PBS if the party had formed an alliance with PBS against BN, one could argue that more than half of the voters in the Chinese constituencies were against BN; hence the

Chinese vote had split. Had there been an alliance between PBS and DAP, they could easily have won at least 2 constituencies (Gaya and Sandakan). This was the political price paid for the inability of PBS and DAP to form an alliance. Put another way, the victories of SAPP and LDP were the result of the split in Chinese votes, and DAP gained at the expense of both BN and PBS. This suggested that while about half of the Sabah Chinese voters supported the opposition, about a fifth of the Chinese voters were hard-core supporters of the DAP.¹⁰

In the Kadazan-Dusun areas, PBS took nearly 60 per cent of the popular vote against BN's 40.7 per cent. The Kadazan-Dusun voters' support for PBS remained intact and all BN Kadazan-Dusun-based parties were defeated. One of PBS's key defectors, Jeffrey Kitingan, was decisively defeated by PBS's Maximus Ongkili, Jeffery's nephew. Another key defector, Bernard Dompok, was also decisively defeated by a PBS candidate. Almost all the BN votes in the Kadazan-Dusun constituencies came from the Muslims. This is best illustrated in the Panampang constituency, where the composition of the voters was: 40.3 per cent Muslim *bumiputera*, 36.5 per cent Non-Muslim *bumiputera*, 21.0 per cent Chinese and 2.2 per cent Others. The PBS candidate, Paul Nointien, obtained 51.9 per cent of the vote and his opponent, Bernard Dompok, received 45.9 per cent. Assuming that the Muslim vote was firmly behind the BN candidate, Dompok managed to secure only about 5-8 per cent of the non-Muslim (read Kadazan-Dusun) vote. Overall, however, the BN machinery made a significant gain in the non-Muslim areas. Compared to the 1994 results (BN 28.9 per cent, PBS 64.7 per cent), BN has managed to swing about 12 per cent of the non-Muslim *bumiputera* vote in its favor.

The defeat of all Kadazan-Dusun BN candidates completely wiped out the Kadazan-Dusun representatives in the federal government - Jeffrey Kitingan was a deputy federal housing and local government minister while Dompok was a minister in the Prime Minister's Department. After the election, in an apparent snub to the Kadazan-Dusun community for voting against the BN, Mahathir appointed the LDP president, Chong Kah Kiat (an ethnic Chinese), to a federal cabinet post usually reserved for a non-Muslim Kadazan-Dusun.

Gerrymandering and Phantom Voters

Since the first state election thirty-two years ago, Sabah has delineated its electoral boundaries three times. From the original 32 state seats in the 1967 polls, the number was increased to 48 before the third state election in 1976. When Labuan became a federal territory in 1983 the electoral boundaries were again delineated. The latest delineation was gazetted in 1994. These redrawn boundaries were being used in the 1999 election. Though the number of state constituencies remained at 48, two non-Muslim *bumiputera* seats were taken off the electoral map and the ethnic composition of the voters was completely transformed in certain seats. 'Corners' of more than twenty seats were carved out and added to other constituencies and some seats renamed during the redelineation exercise.

Tenom was renamed Melalap, Buang Sayang became Pantai Manis and Sipitang, Sindumin. Sook and Langkon gave way to Senallang and Kalabakan in the Muslim-majority east coast of Sabah. Part of Langkon was merged with the nearby Tandek and Matunggong constituencies. In the case of Sook, it was merged with the existing Pensiangan constituency on one side and with the former Tenom seat on another to give birth to Melalap. Both Senallang and Kalabakan were cut from existing seats in two other areas where Muslim *bumiputera* voters made up the majority. Other changes to the constituencies were less obvious but nevertheless altered the ethnic voting possibility. Inanam, for example, which had been a predominantly non-Muslim *bumiputera* constituency, became a Chinese-majority area after its electoral border with Likas was changed. Likas, which had comprised a mix of Muslim *bumiputera* and non-Muslim voters, became a Muslim *bumiputera* majority area.

The original 32 state constituencies were drawn up so that there was an equal number of Muslim and non-Muslim seats. This resulted in the Chinese becoming the balancing power. The electoral boundaries were changed before 1976, and the number of state seats was increased to the present 48, creating 22 Muslim-majority constituencies, 18 non-Muslim and 8 Chinese. After Labuan became a federal territory in 1983, the electoral boundaries were again shifted to give 18 Muslim, 20 non-Muslim, 8 Chinese and 2 mixed seats.

There is little doubt that the most recent delineation exercise favored the ruling BN coalition, in particular Sabah UMNO. 26 of the 48 seats were now Muslim-dominated. Since 26 seats constitute more than half the seats in the state Legislative Assembly, the delineation ensured that the Kadazan-

Dusun would never be in a position to challenge Muslim dominance in the polls. There are now only 12 Kadazan-Dusun seats compared to 18 in 1994. The number of Chinese-dominated seats was also reduced, from 8 to 5 while the number of mixed seats was increased to 5.

Another issue of concern was 'phantom voters'. According to PBS, about 5,000 phantom voters were prepared for the 1999 polls (*Borneo Post* 28 January 1999). Pairin claimed illegal immigrants had registered as voters using the names or identity card numbers of dead locals. He claimed that transfer of voters *en bloc* without their knowledge or consent had also taken place. In reply, the Election Commission claimed to have struck 3,000 names off the voting list, most as a result of PBS's complaints. Two days before polling, PBS filed a police report claiming that 49,270 immigrants had been unlawfully issued with blue Malaysian identity cards to enable them to vote (*Borneo Post* 11 March 1999). No action was taken by the Election Commission.

There was strong anecdotal evidence to support the PBS's claim. In the four-year period leading to the polls, the number of voters had increased by about 125,000. The government-controlled compulsory Employees Provident Fund (EPF) had admitted the existence of 14,000 illegal immigrants with EPF accounts.¹¹ After the elections, the police confirmed that they had arrested four Filipinos who tried to vote in Penampang and two Bugis in Bingkor (*Daily Express* 23 March 1999). In other incidents, another nine suspected Filipinos were prevented from voting in the southern coastal area of Kuala Penyu (*The Star* 15 March 1999).

'Katak': The Political Frog

By the time the election was called in late February 1999, the political landscape had changed considerably due to the movements of the political '*kataks*' (i.e. politicians who hop from one party to another, like a frog). In Sabah politics, moving from one party to another is common-place, so common that an assemblyman, Abdul Malek Chua, had written a book entitled '*YB For Sale*',¹² which criticized party defections. Chua was writing from experience: he had been in Berjaya, USNO and Sabah UMNO before joining PBS. Defections are common, despite the existence of an anti-hop provision (Section 18 (2) (d)) of the Sabah state Constitution; the Kota Kinabalu High Court had ruled it to be *ultra vires* Section 10 of the federal constitution in 1993.

The three main Kadazan-Dusun parties in the Sabah BN (PDS, PBRs and AKAR) were all formed by PBS defectors. Eleven state assemblymen of the Parti Demokratik Sabah (PDS), headed by Chief Minister Bernard Dompok, were all elected on a PBS ticket in 1994. The situation is similar in PBRs. The entire SAPP elected leadership comprises PBS defectors. Jumping from one BN component party to another was a common occurrence after 1994. For example, in October 1997 state assemblyman Adib Said Besar Sigoh suddenly left Sabah UMNO and joined the Kadazan-Dusun-based PBRs. In November 1988, the top LDP Youth and Women leaders defected to SAPP (*Daily Express* 11 November 1998). A month earlier, more than a thousand LDP members in Tawau defected *en masse* to SAPP (*Daily Express* 5 October 1998).

The more prominent Kataks prior to the elections are listed below:

- **Jeffrey Kitingan**, younger brother of Pairin, left PBS in 1994 to help form the PBRs but subsequently joined AKAR (he has since returned to the PBS fold after losing a power struggle in AKAR).
- **Mark Koding**, the founder of AKAR, quit the party to rejoin the opposition PBS; a year earlier, Koding and Jeffrey Kitingan had lost the reins of AKAR to **Pandikar Amin Mulia** (*Daily Express* 23 March 1988) (Pandikar himself was a former vice-president of PBS).
- **Clarence Bongkos Malakun**, a PBS strongman stood as an independent against PBS in 1994, but returned to PBS after a period of suspension.
- The children of the late Tun Mustapha Harun. **Amir Kahar**, **Badaruddin** and **Dayang Maimunah** followed the footsteps of their father by joining Sabah UMNO in the early days of its expansion to Sabah in 1991 but their differing political affiliations were visible in the 1994 state election: Amir Kahar stood and won in Banggi on a PBS ticket, while Dayang Maimunah remained the Kudat Sabah UMNO division Wanita chief. Amir Kahar returned to Sabah UMNO soon after the 1994 election. Dayang Maimunah left Sabah UMNO in 1988 and stood as a candidate of Parti Barisan Rakyat Sabah Bersekutu (Bersekutu) in the 1999 election.

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- **Harris Salleh**, the former president of Berjaya and Sabah chief minister (1976-1985), left Sabah UMNO and revived a 'mosquito' party, Bersekutu, for the 1999 election.
 - The Sabah MCA leader, **Chau Tet On**, the assemblyman for Api-Api, was the sole MCA representative in the state Legislative Assembly. Chau had won the seat on a PBS ticket in the 1994 state election before defecting to the MCA.
 - **Kong Hong Ming** had stood on a Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) ticket in the Kudat constituency in the 1994 Sabah election, and to the surprise of many won the seat. He was made a state minister, but trouble began when he challenged party president Chong Kah Kiat for the LDP presidency in 1995. After losing the fight, he left LDP and was dropped from the state cabinet. He joined Gerakan and was made Sabah Gerakan chief. Within months, he was expelled from Gerakan for not supporting the amendments to legislation aimed at transferring some of the chief minister's powers to the cabinet. Shortly afterwards he joined PBS, a party of which he was a member in the 1980s.

Living up to its reputation as a *katak's* paradise, on the eve of nomination day, Sabah saw several dramatic defections when individuals found that they were not named as candidates. The most sensational of these was Tanjung Aru Sabah UMNO division chief Yahya Lampong. He defected to Bersekutu when told he was not Sabah UMNO's choice, was named as a Bersekutu candidate, then changed his mind twenty-four hours later and moved back into Sabah UMNO; his explanation: 'temporary insanity'.

Other prominent defectors on the eve of nomination were: Ansari Abdullah, a deputy UMNO division chief, and Abdillah Haji Hamid, a former federal deputy minister, who both shifted from Sabah UMNO to Bersekutu. Five other Sabah UMNO members defected on nomination day, standing as either candidates for the opposition or as independents. All were later expelled from Sabah UMNO.

More than 900 Bersekutu members in Sandakan and Tawau had left *en masse* to join the Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) forty-eight hours before nomination day.

Ang Lian Hai moved into PBS when he was selected as the PBS candidate in the Chinese-majority Tanjung Papat seat. Ang, however, was better known as a DAP man, having contested on that party's ticket three times before, including once for a parliamentary seat. The former Sabah DAP secretary joined PBS only on the eve of the dissolution of the state Legislative Assembly on 22 February.

There were further defections on the eve of polling. The most prominent of these was Lawrence Gimbang, the deputy speaker of the Sabah Legislative Assembly during the nine-year PBS rule, who pledged his support to Sabah BN. It would appear that Gimbang decided to jump when he was passed over for the Bingkor seat. Pairin's younger brother Jeffrey was nominated as the PBS candidate despite strong lobbying by Gimbang. He obviously timed his defection to create maximum damage to Jeffrey's chances. Jeffrey nevertheless won.

STATE OF THE PARTIES

The Barisan Nasional

The state election was originally scheduled for the second half of 1998. The Sabah BN had already conducted three election 'dry runs' in June, October and November 1997 and the electoral machinery was put on alert from January 1998. The dry runs indicated that Sabah BN would win at least 26 seats, mostly in the Muslim areas. The election was, however, postponed until early 1999 for two principal reasons.

First, the Kadazan-Dusun BN parties were weak on the ground. Feedback from the election dry runs suggested that the Kadazan-Dusun voters still preferred PBS and that the Kadazan-Dusun BN components (PDS, PBRs and AKAR) were fighting against each other on the ground instead of working together. Mahathir tried to solve this problem by proposing that all the Kadazan-Dusun BN parties merge into a single entity (*Daily Express* 8 April 1997, 21 November 1996). However, this was flatly rejected by leaders from PDS, AKAR and PBRs. The party leaders knew that any merger would mean that two of them would no longer be party leader and would therefore be out of the race for the non-Muslim *bumiputera* chief minister slot under the rotation system.

Secondly, seat allocation became a major obstacle due to the large number of BN component parties. With forty-eight seats to be shared by nine parties, coming to some sort of agreement was near impossible. This was especially true of Kadazan-Dusun constituencies where PDS, PBRs and

AKAR were all claiming to be the true representatives of the Kadazan-Dusun community in government.

At an early stage, Sabah UMNO asked for 25 seats (or all the Muslim constituencies). Among the Kadazan-Dusun parties, PDS asked for 14 seats, PBRS 5 and AKAR 4. Among the Chinese-based parties, SAPP wanted at least 8, LDP 4, and Sabah MCA 2 (*Daily Express* 18 June 1998). Sabah Gerakan and Sabah MIC, knowing their minuscule strength on the ground, did not ask for any seats but instead asked for a nominated state assemblyman slot, senatorial posts and more seats on the local councils.¹³

On the eve of the election, the Sabah BN was able to settle the candidacy of only 45 of the 48 constituencies (*Daily Express* 23 February 1999). The other three seats were the subject of dispute among the parties until the final decision was made by Mahathir and Abdullah Badawi. The final seat distribution was: Sabah UMNO 24, PDS 12, SAPP 5, LDP, AKAR and PBRS 2 each, and Sabah MCA 1.

Sabah UMNO

Sabah UMNO had a turbulent time prior to the polls.¹⁴ There was serious infighting amongst the various factions. In December 1996, Abdul Ghapur Salleh, one of its most senior members, resigned suddenly as deputy chief minister, state finance minister and Sabah UMNO deputy chairman. But he withdrew his resignation from the three posts the following month after Mahathir refused to accept it. When Dompok took over as chief minister in May 1988, Ghapur declined reappointment to the state cabinet. The posts of deputy chief minister and finance minister were taken over by Osu Sukam, who quit the Land and Co-operative Development portfolio at the federal level. It appeared that Ghapur had lost out in his power struggle with Osu's faction. The fight between Ghapur and Osu was the most public among the many factional fights as the party headed towards the election. Many Sabah UMNO heavyweights were trying to position themselves as leader of Sabah UMNO because they knew that it was Sabah UMNO's turn to be the chief minister after Dompok; the non-Muslim *bumiputera* term of office was to end in May 2000.

When Anwar Ibrahim was sacked as deputy prime minister in September 1998, there were fears that this would cause a split in Sabah UMNO as many of its leaders were known to be close to Anwar. Anwar had played two crucial roles in Sabah politics. The first was the dissolution of

USNO in favor of Sabah UMNO. He worked out the various arrangement whereby former USNO leaders would take up leadership positions in Sabah UMNO. The second crucial role came in the 1994 Sabah election. Mahathir delegated much of his authority as BN chairman to Anwar for the election. It was Anwar who controlled the funds that were used in that election and he had a major input in the selection of candidates. He also played a crucial role in enticing several PBS assemblymen to defect shortly after PBS had won the elections, causing the downfall of the newly re-elected PBS government.

The fears were largely unfounded as many of pro-Anwar Sabah UMNO members simply transferred their loyalty to Mahathir. Like all politicians, they knew their political future lay with Mahathir. Almost all pro-Anwar candidates were renominated so that they did not bolt from the party to run as independents or oppositionists.

There was also a rift between the Murut and Bajau Muslims and the Malay Muslims in Sabah UMNO. The Malay Muslims were irked when some Bajau and Murut Muslims in Sabah UMNO began to describe themselves as 'Malays' in front of federal UMNO leaders. The Sabah Malays feel that they share a special bond with the peninsular Malays and since UMNO stood for Malay nationalism and Islam, being a pure Malay was a positive factor in internal UMNO politics.

LDP

The Liberal Democratic Party was in turmoil for most of the second half of 1998. LDP president Senator Chong Kah Kiat caused an uproar when he placed his brother-in-law, Lee Chuen Wan, and sister, Naomi Chong (Lee's wife), in charge of the LDP Sembulan Division. This irked Joseph Tham, a close aide of Chong, who candidly accused Chong of nepotism. Tham and twenty-eight others resigned on 7 July. Further trouble occurred when Chong's confidential secretary, Roger Lee, was forced to resign when the party's supreme council moved to sack him as LDP Youth chief and dissolve his Api-Api division along with eight branches (*The Star* 18 July 1998). Many senior party members were unhappy when Chong decided to give up his ministership in the federal government to fight for the Kudat state constituency. This move deprived others of the chance to move forward. Many thought that Chong should be content with his senatorial post and let others contest the Kudat seat.

Earlier, in 1995, the LDP suffered a major fracture when Chong was challenged for the presidency of the party by Kong Hong Ming. Kong was the only successful LDP candidate in the 1994 state polls and he felt that he should be party leader instead of Chong who was not elected. The bitter struggle ended when Kong lost the internal party vote. Kong subsequently left the party with many of his supporters and rejoined PBS.

The Kadazan-Dusun Parties

The major problem facing the BN Kadazan-Dusun parties, PDS, PBRs and AKAR, was a lack of political legitimacy. The entire elected leadership of these three parties was elected as PBS candidates in 1994. The three party leaders knew that their claim to represent the Kadazan-Dusun community sounded hollow. This was especially so after all PDS and PBRs candidates were defeated by PBS candidates in the 1995 parliamentary polls. One suggestion, as mentioned above, was the amalgamation of all three, or at least PDS and PBRs, into a single BN Kadazan-Dusun party. This was rejected out of hand by the party leaders, who did not want their chance of becoming the non-Muslim *bumiputera* chief minister diminished. PBRs and AKAR leaders, moreover, knew that PDS was in a stronger position than they in any merger. In terms of numbers, PDS had eleven assemblymen while PBRs had only two and AKAR three.

The Parti Demokratik Sabah (PDS) was caught in a war of words with PBS for most of the year preceding the elections (See *Borneo Post* and *Daily Express* various issues 1-15 July 1997). PDS President Bernard Dompok had always maintained that the formation of PDS had the personal blessing of PBS President Joseph Pairin and he further claimed that Pairin had personally chosen the party name PDS. According to Dompok, Pairin helped establish PDS just after the collapse of the PBS government in 1994 because he wanted to ensure that the Kadazan-Dusun community was represented in a future BN-led state government. Pairin denied this and claimed that Dompok was merely trying to use the PBS to legitimize the formation of PDS.

AKAR had the greatest internal problems among the BN Kadazan-Dusun parties leading up to the polls. In 1996, there was an acrimonious battle between Jeffrey Kitingan and Pandikar Amin Haji Mulia over the leadership of the party after Mark Koding, the party founder and leader, announced that he was quitting. Koding backed Jeffrey as his successor but

Amin cried foul, claiming that Jeffrey was nothing more than an opportunist '*katak*'; Jeffrey had joined AKAR after an unsuccessful attempt at forming his own party. Pandikar eventually won the struggle and Jeffrey left with his supporters, first declaring himself as a 'BN independent', then rejoining the opposition PBS in 1997.

In the 1999 election, AKAR's leader Pandikar Amin did not contest, giving way to a Sabah UMNO candidate in return for a senatorship¹⁵ and a post in the federal cabinet.

The other Sabah BN parties – SAPP and PBRs – enjoyed relative calm before the election. SAPP was firmly under the leadership of Yong Teck Lee, while friction in PBRs was at a minimum given that it had only two state assemblymen and the party leader was made a deputy chief minister.

The Opposition

PBS

The opposition was less divided than the Sabah BN. PBS was united under Pairin; the only doubt was whether PBS was going to fight the election alone or in coalition with other opposition parties. Parti Bersekutu under Harris made some overtures to PBS but Pairin firmly rejected any pact with Harris or any other opposition party, although there was a discreet understanding that Bersekutu and PBS would avoid attacking each other and concentrate on the Sabah BN.

One source of tension in the PBS was the issue of *kataks* returning into the PBS fold. There was widespread resentment against former PBS members who returned to the party after joining Sabah BN. Pairin's brother, Jeffrey Kitingan, bore the brunt of the resentment inside PBS against the returnees. Many in the party did not want him back as he was the most high-profile PBS assemblyman to defect after the 1994 polls. This was made very clear when Jeffrey failed in his bid to win the vice president's post at the twelfth PBS congress (*Daily Express* 26 September 97).¹⁶

Karamunting state assemblyman Lau Pui Keong left the PBS and declared himself to be an independent in 1997. Lau, a former Berjaya state assemblyman and Sabah's longest serving Chinese assemblyman, could not get along with Pairin after he accused the latter of promoting Kadazan-Dusun rights at the expense of the Chinese community. Lau stepped down

from his position as PBS vice president and, knowing that he would probably be defeated as an independent, did not stand for re-election in 1999. Another senior Chinese PBS figure, deputy president Wong Ping Chung, was also known to be unhappy with the PBS leadership prior to the polls. Wong was the Kudat assemblyman but was defeated by BN-LDP's Kong Hong Ming in the 1994 election. Kong later defected to PBS and was made the party's candidate in Kudat for the 1999 election. Wong wanted to contest the Kudat seat but was willing to settle for the Inanam seat if given the chance. He got neither and blamed Pairin for it.

Parti Bersekutu

Parti Bersekutu burst onto the public stage amidst much fanfare. Its flamboyant leader, Harris Salleh, attracted attention early when he promised that, if elected, he would distribute MR300 to every adult Sabahan from the Amanah Rakyat Negeri Sabah (ARNS) (Sabah People's Trust). This was a practice started in the early 1970s by Mustapha Harun. Just before every election, Mustapha would hand out 'dividends' from the Yayasan Sabah (Sabah Foundation) to every adult Sabahan registered on the electoral roll. It was nothing more than a cash bribe and was very successful in enticing the voters to vote for USNO. It was obvious that Harris wanted to re-use a tried-and-tested method to entice the voters.

Parti Bersekutu also managed to attract media attention when former leaders of Parti Bersekutu claimed that Harris's take-over of the party was 'illegal'. This went on for several weeks until Harris managed to get confirmation of his position as acting president of the party from the registrar of societies (*Borneo Post* 10 October 1998). On 15 January 1999, six weeks before the election, Harris met secretly with Mahathir in Kuala Lumpur. It is almost certain that Mahathir asked Harris to withdraw from the election while Harris was thought to have asked for Bersekutu to be made a component party of the BN (*Daily Express* 21 January 1999). No deal was struck.

Harris was clearly confident about Bersekutu's chances, having finalized the list of candidates as early as mid-February 1999, earlier than any other political party (*Borneo Post* 25 February 1999).

Sabah DAP

The main Chinese opposition, the Sabah Democratic Action Party (DAP), remained silent for most of the year preceding the election. The Sabah DAP was at a low ebb because the man known as 'Mr Sabah DAP', Fung Ket Wing, was no longer in the party. DAP expelled Fung in 1988 when he tried to overthrow DAP leader Lim Kit Siang. Several other Sabah DAP leaders had also abandoned the party. Ang Lian Hai, former Sabah DAP secretary and three-time DAP candidate, left to become a PBS candidate. Samson Chin, a former Sabah DAP MP, also became a PBS candidate.

Despite this, Lim Kit Siang, the national DAP leader, openly backed the PBS. The reasons were fairly obvious: DAP wanted the BN defeated and knew that PBS stood a real chance of winning the election. Furthermore, in the 1990 parliamentary election, the DAP had had an unofficial pact with the PBS when it withdrew from the Chinese seats and backed the PBS candidates instead.

Minor Parties

The minor opposition parties that took part in the elections were Pasok, Setia and PAS. The Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Pasok Nunukragang Bersatu (Pasok) was one of the oldest political parties in Sabah. Its members comprised mainly Kadazan-Dusun and Murut and the party claimed to have 12,000 members (though this was almost certainly a highly inflated number). Pasok, which won the Moyog seat in the 1985 state election,¹⁷ did not participate in the 1994 state election. In early February 1999, it announced that it would field fourteen candidates. A few days before nomination day, however, it said it was pulling out of the election and was supporting Sabah BN instead. In a surprising twist of events, Pasok sprang a surprise in Moyog when it fielded its president, Cleftus Sipain Mojingol, against the BN chief minister, Bernard Dompok (*Daily Express* 3 March 1999).

Another minor party, Parti Demokratik Setia-Sehati Kuasa Rakyat Bersatu Sabah (Setia), decided to field twenty-one candidates in the 1999 election. In the 1994 elections, Setia contested and lost in all fourteen constituencies.

PAS's entry into Sabah politics was mainly to 'fly its flag' and lay the groundwork for future elections. It needed to field some candidates to show that it was serious about entering Sabah politics for the long term and had

support among the local Muslim population. In reality, the party had little support in Sabah; its ideological goal of creating an Islamic state had little appeal even among the radical Sabah Muslims. PAS's earlier forays into Sabah elections had all been disastrous, with many of its candidates losing their electoral deposits.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the party had hoped to capitalize on the Anwar Ibrahim issue and fielded six candidates. All six lost.

THE CAMPAIGN

Prior to the dissolution of the state assembly, Sabah BN held 43 of 48 seats. Sabah UMNO had the most seats (21) followed by PDS 11, SAPP 5, AKAR 3, PBRs 2, MCA 1, PBS 4 and independents 1. Sabah UMNO had two nominated assemblymen with another vacancy following the death of Pitting Ali from Sabah UMNO. Three nominated assemblymen were from the PBS.¹⁹

The Sabah State Legislative Assembly was formally dissolved on 22 February, twenty-four days short of completing its five-year term. Nomination day was 2 March and polling for Sabah's ninth election took place on 12-13 March 1999. No doubt the ten-day campaign period, a day shorter than in the 1994 election campaign, was designed to benefit the ruling BN at the expense of the opposition. Although formal campaigning was restricted to the ten day period, in reality all the parties had been campaigning since early January 1998. So, in effect, this election saw the longest period – fourteen months – of campaigning.

BN, PBS and Bersekutu had candidates in all the 48 constituencies. Parti Setia nominated 21 candidates, PAS 6 and Pasok 1 while 27 contestants stood as independents, making a total of 199 candidates.

'Building the Future Together' and the bait

The BN campaign, as in previous elections, was based on a mixture of threats and promises. The manifesto, entitled *Building the Future Together*, pledged to steer Sabah's economy to greater heights through generous financial support from the federal government. Its promises could only be filled if the BN was allowed to complete its 1995-2010 long-term development agenda, that is, if it could get elected. The BN promised to continue the rotation system because the BN believed in 'sharing power'. It

made it clear that if the BN lost the election there was 'no way' PBS or Bersekutu would be admitted into the BN to form a coalition government. This was repeated many times by Mahathir personally; he vowed that an opposition government would not get any additional financial support from the federal government:

'We are not being unfair... we are more fair than them [the opposition] but we cannot be generous to them. We can be generous to a BN government in Sabah and that I can promise' (*Daily Express* 11 March 1999).

In sum, the BN promised economic development and continuity if elected, and threatened political instability and economic stagnation if rejected.

Among major government projects and grants (bribes thinly disguised as 'development'), dished out during the campaign were:

- RM24 million for minor projects in all 48 constituencies. Each constituency was to receive RM500,000 in addition to the RM4 million grant from the federal government for minor rural projects. According to Second Finance Minister Mustapa Mohamed, only BN assemblymen could use the money. For constituencies not represented by BN assemblymen, the grants would be handled by BN representatives (*New Straits Times* 17 December 1998).
- RM112.9 million to rid Sabah of abject poverty (*Borneo Post* 29 January 1999).
- Four new fire and rescue stations in Sabah by end of 2000 (*Borneo Post* 6 March 1999).
- Construction of a 60km road linking Merotai to Kalabakan in southeast Sabah, costing about RM80 million (*ibid.*).
- A RM50 million Royal Malaysia Navy (RMN) forward base in Semporna and a RM700 million Second Regional Marine Command in Sepanggar Bay in Kota Kinabalu (*Daily Express* 7 March 1999).
- Six hospitals in Sabah, costing RM590 million, under the Seventh Malaysian Plan. In addition, a new RM208 million Specialist

Hospital would be built for Lahad Datu (*Daily Express* 5 March 1999).

- A new Mara Junior Science College (MRSM) in Kinarut and a new Mara Skills Training Institute (IKM) in Menggatal, to cost RM46 million and RM44 million respectively (*Daily Express* 27 February 1999).
- A RM800 million allocation to Universiti Sabah Malaysia (USM). According to Mahathir, this proved the federal government's 'love' for the people of Sabah, because even the long-established Universiti Utara Malaysia in his own constituency of Kubang Pasu had secured only RM400 million (*Daily Express* 6 March 1999).
- A RM200,000 allocation from the federal government to the Kota Kinabalu Municipal Council (KKMC) to upgrade facilities and settle problems at the central market (*Daily Express* 8 March 1999).
- RM4 million for twenty Chinese schools in Kota Kinabalu (*Borneo Post* 12 March 1999).
- A RM2 million chair in Kadazan-Dusun studies at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

For the selected examples given above, BN promised more than RM2.6 billion in projects and grants if elected. Given that there were 726,690 potential voters, this worked out at about RM3,500 in 'development' for every Sabah voter.

Sabah BN used Islam blatantly to sway the Muslim vote. In a speech before a gathering of the state's Islamic officials and missionaries, Sabah Deputy Chief Minister Osu Sukam stated that it was *fardhu kifayah* (social obligation) for Muslims to vote in a BN government because BN was led by Muslims and Islam could only flourish under Muslim (read UMNO-led) rule (Osu was no doubt referring to PBS being led by Pairin, a Roman Catholic) (*Daily Express* 6 March 1999). This message was repeated in all the Muslim areas.

To blunt PBS's strong Kadazan-Dusun credentials, the BN Kadazan-Dusun parties tried to gain political mileage from several highly publicized communal events. These included the state government-funded RM2 million chair in Kadazan-Dusun studies at UMS, the introduction of Kadazan as a

Pupil-Own-Language (POL) in primary schools throughout the state, and the setting up of a Kadazan-Dusun Chamber of Commerce to promote Kadazan-Dusun equity in government contracts. The BN Kadazan-Dusun parties claimed that if PBS won power the Kadazan-Dusun community would be 'finished', as there would be no Kadazan-Dusun representatives in government. Dompok upped the stakes when he announced that he would quit politics if defeated.

The BN Kadazan-Dusun parties spent a considerable amount of time attacking Pairin's status as *Huguan Siou*, or paramount leader of the Kadazan-Dusuns. They claimed that Pairin was politicizing a title that was merely a cultural symbol. The *Huguan Siou* title was Pairin's strongest claim to be the legitimate leader of the Kadazan-Dusun community, and many Kadazan-Dusun voters had voted for PBS solely because of Pairin's status as their paramount leader. This attack on Pairin was counter-productive, merely reinforcing Pairin's image as the legitimate paramount leader of the community.

To counter the PBS's claim that all BN Kadazan-Dusun candidates were 'traitors' and *kataks*, Dayak leaders were brought in from neighboring Sarawak. Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) leader Leo Moggie's brief was to show the futility of staying in opposition. PBDS and PBS had much in common; both represented the main indigenous groups in their respective states. PBDS fights for indigenous Dayak rights in Sarawak; in opposition against the Sarawak BN from 1987 until 1994, the PBDS was unable to bring any government development into rural Dayak constituencies, PBDS opted to rejoin the Sarawak BN (Chin 1996a). Leo Moggie's message was simple: the rights of the Kadazan-Dusun are best looked after within the BN and this was the lesson learnt by PBDS. BN Kadazan-Dusun leaders were not 'traitors' by joining BN but were in BN to bring development to their people (*Daily Express* 6, 7 March 1999).

In the Chinese areas, SAPP, LDP and Sabah MCA constantly reminded the Chinese community that political stability and their economic prosperity was tied to a BN victory. The Chinese voters were told that the only way an ethnic Chinese, as a member of a minority, could become chief minister was under the BN's rotation system. Comparison was made with the plight of the Indonesian Chinese to stress the importance of political stability and Chinese representation in government.²⁰ Mahathir personally praised the role of the Sabah Chinese business community and promised that there would be more business opportunities if BN were elected.²¹

More than RM6 million was distributed to Chinese schools throughout Sabah. The Sabah Chinese community, like their counterparts in Peninsular Malaysia, are supportive of Chinese education and have generously supported the independent Chinese schools since independence. In the 1994 election, the BN was able to win over a substantial number of Chinese voters when the then deputy prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, gave RM30 million to Chinese schools in Sabah a few days before polling day. The Sabah BN was obviously hoping for a repeat performance.

The importance of the Sabah campaign for the federal government was underlined not only by the funds committed but also by the number of federal ministers involved. The key federal person in charge of the campaign was Abdullah Badawi, the newly appointed deputy prime minister. Abdullah made four visits to Sabah (within the space of two months) prior to the election and he stayed in Sabah throughout the campaign. Another key federal player was the *menteri-besar* of Pahang, Khalil Yaakob, who took six weeks special leave to serve as operations director for the entire BN campaign. Khalil was a man with seemingly unlimited financial resources.²² In many Sabah UMNO constituencies, it was UMNO personnel from the peninsula who took charge of logistics. Thousands of peninsula UMNO campaigners were used under the 'adoption' concept. Under this, UMNO branches from the peninsula 'adopted' individual Sabah UMNO branches and divisions and helped with campaign funds, materials, logistic support and personnel. There were credible reports of widespread vote buying by the Sabah BN.²³ Voters in several key marginal seats were given RM\$50 on polling day. Although the PBS also gave voters food and materials as inducements, their level of spending was nowhere near what the Sabah BN spent in the election. A conservative estimate put Sabah BN spending at close to RM300 million for the entire election.²⁴

Mahathir himself made four visits to Sabah, including a whirlwind tour of half a dozen marginal seats one day before polling. All the federal ministers, *menteri-besar*, and chief ministers from the other states were roped in for the campaign. Over one hundred 'field information officers' from the national Information Department were sent to Sabah to drum up support. In the rural interior, the ability to use government helicopters gave the BN a distinct advantage.²⁵

It goes without saying that the BN campaign enjoyed the benefits of the BN's being the incumbent. The BN had unparalleled access to the state-owned radio and television stations. The two private television stations, TV3

and Channel 7, were owned by individuals close to UMNO, and their reporting reflected this.

'United to Save Sabah' and Kadazan-Dusun Nationalism

PBS's manifesto, *United to Save Sabah*, gave a broad outline of the party's political, economic, socio-cultural and institutional objectives. The manifesto elaborated at length the party's achievements when it was in power from 1985 to 1994 and detailed the many broken promises of the BN government. The main thrust of the manifesto was to:

- restore the 'rights' of Sabah as enshrined in the Twenty-Points;
- abolish the rotation of the chief minister's post;
- formulate a new anti-hop law;
- restore the constitutional and legal powers of the chief minister.

As in its previous manifestos, PBS promised to find a solution to the illegal Filipino immigrant and fake identity card problems.

One interesting omission from the PBS manifesto was any reference to Labuan. PBS had harped on the Labuan issue at every election since 1984. In this election PBS decided not to raise the Labuan issue in order to protect Bersekutu. Bersekutu was led by Harris Salleh, the former chief minister who had signed Labuan away to the federal government. Raising the Labuan issue would hurt Harris, now a foe of the BN. Bersekutu was expected to draw Muslim votes away from the BN and no doubt this would benefit PBS.

At the grassroots level, the main emphasis in PBS's campaign was on ensuring that state rights under the Twenty-Points were respected; scrapping the rotation system; a new 'anti-hop' law, and 'positive revenge' on PBS *kataks*. PBS claimed, with some justification, that rotating the chief ministership every two years was disruptive, wasteful and inefficient. 'Positive revenge' was the term coined by Pairin when he asked voters to reject all BN candidates who had won on a PBS ticket but crossed over to the BN (*Daily Express* 24 February 1999). The list was long (twenty-one); practically all the BN candidates in the non-Muslim constituencies had won their seats on a PBS ticket in 1994. The main targets for the PBS leadership were the main BN Kadazan-Dusun leaders such as Dompok of PDS and Kurup of PBRs. Pairin spent a considerable amount of time campaigning

against these two personally. Pairin understood the importance of defeating the two party leaders so that they could not claim to represent the Kadazan-Dusun.

In the Kadazan-Dusun areas, PBS made a successful call for Kadazan-Dusun unity and nationalism, arguing that the BN Kadazan-Dusun parties could not protect and promote the interests of the community as the government was dominated by Sabah UMNO, a party that promoted only Muslims and the Malay race. BN Kadazan-Dusun leaders were singled out for 'selling out' their race and religion.

PBS also campaigned heavily on the fact that it was truly multi-religious, with strong Christian representation and some Muslim support, unlike Sabah BN which was clearly dominated by Muslims. In previous elections, PBS had obtained votes from the Christian community who were worried about increasing Islamization.

Bersekutu's Promises

Bersekutu made a list of seemingly impossible promises during the election campaign. In addition to the RM300 cash grant to every Sabahan adult, the other notable promises included:

- a female Chinese state minister (there has never been a Chinese woman minister in the Sabah cabinet and this promise was obviously aimed at the Chinese female voting population) (*Daily Express* 5 March 1999);
- land for squatters;
- a private university, called, 'Universiti Yayasan Sabah' in Kundasang (*Daily Express* 25 February 1999);
- forcing the federal government to hand over billions 'owed' to Sabah since 1964 according to a formula in the federal constitution (*Borneo Post* 8 March 1999).

Harris tried his best to project Bersekutu as the party for Sabah Muslims, as opposed to Sabah UMNO which he tried, unsuccessfully, to portray as a '*semenanjung*' (peninsular) Muslim party. In one famous

remark, he claimed that he could easily win the Likas seat simply because the Muslims there would vote for him! (*Sabah Times* 8 March 1999)

Many of the party's promises were not taken seriously by the electorate when it became obvious that the sums promised far exceeded anything an opposition state government could deliver. They were simply too far-fetched. It was clear early on that Bersekutu was not a credible threat. Harris Salleh was still largely unforgiven for handing Labuan Island over to the federal government. His insistence that he too was for Sabah rights sounded hollow given his record in office. Mahathir's television interview in which he said that Harris had given Labuan to the federal government on a 'silver platter' damaged the party irrevocably (*Daily Express* 12 March 1999).

Another event from Harris's past which caused grave political damage was an oil agreement signed by Harris in 1976, as chief minister, in which Sabah gave up rights to petroleum found in the state to the national oil corporation, Petroliaam Nasional Berhad (Petronas). Under the agreement, Sabah received a paltry 5 per cent of the state's oil royalties while 95 per cent went to the federal government's coffers. Many Sabahans regard this as another example of Harris 'selling out' Sabah. The BN took great pleasure in revealing that another signatory to the oil agreement was Pairin Kitingan, and that it was hypocritical of Harris and Pairin to claim that they were fighting for state rights. Pairin's plausible defense was that as an assistant minister in 1976, he signed the agreement merely as a witness under direct orders from Harris (*Daily Express* 9 February 1999). The only issue on which PBS and Bersekutu were in agreement was the 'rotation' system: like PBS, Bersekutu promised to scrap the system once in power.

THE RESULTS

Voting, as expected, was along ethnic/religious lines. The BN took 31 seats with Sabah UMNO winning all the allocated seats (24), SAPP (3 of 5 allocated seats) and LDP (2 of 2). The BN Kadazan-Dusun parties were decimated. PDS was able to win only 2 of 12 contested seats while all the candidates from PBRs and AKAR were defeated at the hands of PBS candidates.

The PBS took the other 17 seats. All other parties were crushed at the polls. With the exception of a few Bersekutu candidates, all the other candidates lost their electoral deposits, indicating their dismal support.²⁶

Although the BN had a working majority of six seats, this was still short of the all important two-thirds majority needed to amend the Sabah Constitution. This was quickly solved when BN exercised its right to appoint six nominated state assemblymen; this brought the BN majority to 12 seats and gave it a two-thirds majority in the state assembly.

Overall, the BN got 46.4 per cent of the vote, followed closely by PBS with 41.2 per cent. Bersekutu came a distant third with a mere 10.5 per cent (see Table 2). Essentially, Sabah UMNO took the Muslim vote, and PBS the non-Muslim *bumiputera* vote, while the Chinese vote was complex. Ironically, for a party that claimed to target the Muslims, Bersekutu performed better in Chinese-majority constituencies than Muslim-majority constituencies (this of course does not mean that Bersekutu won Chinese votes). The voter turnout was 72.5 per cent of the 726,690 eligible voters.

The Muslim Vote

Sabah UMNO clearly led the Muslim vote. With the exception of Labuk and Kunak, it won all the 26 Muslim-majority constituencies.²⁷ In terms of percentage, Sabah UMNO was able to get 52.6 per cent of the vote in the Muslim constituencies while PBS was able to get a respectable 31.7 per cent. Most of PBS's vote in the Muslim seats came from Kadazan-Dusun voters, though it received some Muslim votes. Bersekutu's appeal to the Muslim community came to nothing and they were able to get only 13.1 per cent of the vote. Harris himself lost in a Muslim seat (Likas) to an ethnic Chinese BN candidate.

PAS, as expected, performed poorly and received a total of less than 1,500 votes in all the six constituencies it contested. Clearly the Sabah Muslims did not like PAS's fiery brand of radical Islam. PAS's raising of the Anwar Ibrahim issue did not make any impact on the Muslim electorate, suggesting that the Anwar issue was seen as a 'peninsular' issue with no ramifications for local Sabah politics. This was confirmed when Abdul Rahman Yaakub of PBS was heavily defeated by a BN candidate in the Klias constituency. Rahman Yaakub was a close ally of Anwar and Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Anwar's wife, had helped him to campaign.

The Non-Muslim bumiputera Vote

PBS dominated the non-Muslim *bumiputera*, predominantly Kadazan-Dusun, vote the way Sabah UMNO dominated the Muslim vote. This was best symbolized by the disastrous defeat of all BN Kadazan-Dusun parties. The incumbent chief minister and PDS leader, Bernard Dompok,²⁸ was defeated along with the leader of PBRS and deputy chief minister, Joseph Kurup. Only 2 of 12 PDS candidates survived the polls. The two candidates each from PBRS and AKAR lost to PBS candidates as well, leaving both parties with no elected representatives at all. It was clear that the '*katak*' label spelt their political death.

The two PDS victories, in Ranau and Kuala Penyu, were essentially based on Muslim votes. Kuala Penyu is a Muslim-majority seat while in Ranau Muslims constitute 37.5 per cent of the voters. It is almost certain that the Muslims in both constituencies cast a block vote for the BN candidate, thus allowing the PDS candidates to win.

The PBS domination of the non-Muslim vote can be seen in the voting statistics (see Table 2). PBS gathered 58 per cent of the votes in the 12 non-Muslim *bumiputera* constituencies while BN managed to get only 38.4 per cent. Bersekutu performed poorly in the non-Muslim areas, getting an insignificant 3.2 per cent of the vote.

The Chinese Vote

The Chinese vote was perhaps the most interesting in the election. In 1994 the Chinese vote was split between PBS and BN. This time around, it would appear that there was no straightforward pattern. PBS took 3 of the Chinese-majority seats (Api-Api, Sri Tanjung and Inanam) while the BN was successful in the other two (Tanjung Papat and Karamunting).

Assuming that the majority of Muslim voters in Chinese-majority constituencies voted for the BN, with the rest going to Bersekutu and PBS, the following pattern of Chinese voting emerges.

In the Api-Api constituency, PBS managed to get 2 Chinese votes for every BN Chinese vote. PBS got about eight thousand Chinese votes to BN's four thousand.

In the Sri Tanjung constituency (10,513 Muslim voters; 583 non-Muslim *bumiputera*; 15,747 Chinese; 136 Others), the result was: PBS 8,759 votes; SAPP-BN 5,007 and Bersekutu 3,814. The Chinese vote was heavily

in favour of PBS. PBS got about 85 per cent of the Chinese vote while Bersekutu and BN shared the other 20 percent. The Muslim vote in Sri Tanjung was split between BN and Bersekutu.

In the Inanam constituency (2,716 Muslim voters; 7,628 non-Muslim *bumiputera*; 10,971 Chinese; 118 Others), the Chinese vote was split between PBS and Bersekutu in a ratio of about 2:1. The results were: PBS 9,648; Bersekutu 4,940 and PDS-BN 1,081.

In Tanjung Papat, the Chinese vote was split three ways between PBS, BN and Bersekutu. The constituency had 14,457 voters (4,317 Muslim, 265 non-Muslim *bumiputera*, 9,797 Chinese, 78 Others). The results were: SAPP-BN 4482 votes, PBS 2786, Bersekutu 2311. Assuming that 80 per cent of the SAPP-BN's vote came from the Muslims, it is clear that the Chinese vote was split three ways: almost equally between PBS and Bersekutu and some to SAPP-BN. This allowed the BN candidate to win.

The result in Karamunting (5,087 Muslim voters; 261 non-Muslim *bumiputera*; 9,206 Chinese; 54 Others) was: LDP-BN 4,719 votes; PBS 2,922; Bersekutu 2,124. It is clear that the Chinese vote was split between PBS and Bersekutu, allowing the BN candidate to win on a combination of the Muslim vote and some Chinese support.

It could be argued that Bersekutu's presence in all five Chinese constituencies served as the vote-splitter among Muslim voters. For example, if there had not been Bersekutu candidates in Tanjung Papat and Karamunting, there is a real likelihood that PBS would have won these two seats. Bersekutu performed poorly among Chinese voters, in part because many Chinese voters still remember Harris's role in the 1986 riots in Kota Kinabalu. The rioting in the capital city disrupted Chinese businesses and many Chinese blamed Harris.²⁹ The confessions of several former top officials of Berjaya (who were now with Bersekutu) that they were behind the bombing campaign and rioting caused many Chinese to vote against Harris and Bersekutu.

From the above, it can be concluded that close to 70 per cent of the Chinese vote went to PBS while most of the remainder went to BN and a smaller proportion went to Bersekutu. The convoluted pattern could only be explained by the presence of local factors.

In the Api-Api constituency, many Chinese voters voted for the PBS because the BN candidate was from Sabah MCA. Many Chinese voters were simply turned off by the MCA whom they regard as a lackey of UMNO and incapable of standing up for Chinese rights. Instead, they chose PBS, a local party. National MCA leaders who campaigned in Api-Api were widely seen

as outsiders meddling in internal Sabah affairs and were considered arrogant by the locals.³⁰ The Sabah MCA candidate, Chau Tet On, suffered from the *katak* label – Chau had won the seat earlier on a PBS ticket. Chau also suffered political damage when rumors circulated that some residents in the area would be forced to move to make way for a major tourist development; those residents voted against Chau.

From the Api-Api vote it would appear that the Sabah Chinese do not accept Peninsular Chinese parties. Sabah Gerakan made a wise move in deciding not to contest the election. It is almost certain that its candidate would have met the same fate as the Sabah MCA candidate.

In Sri Tanjung, the Muslim vote did not go totally to BN because the BN-SAPP candidate, Michael Lim Yun Sang, was unable to get the support of the local Sabah UMNO officials. Some Muslim Sabah UMNO supporters decided to vote for Bersekutu instead (personal communication from a BN official).

In the Inanam constituency, the Bersekutu candidate performed strongly among the Chinese voters because she was personally popular. Her anti-corruption platform attracted a following. The BN candidate performed poorly in part because she was not a Chinese. The Chinese voters simply refused to endorse a non-Muslim *bumiputera* for a Chinese seat.

In the Tanjung Papat constituency, PBS probably lost some crucial Chinese votes because the party endorsed an outsider, former DAP stalwart Ang Lian Hai, leading to some local PBS members abstaining or voting against PBS.

In Karamunting, a similar situation occurred. PBS dumped popular incumbent Lau Pui Keong, who had left PBS after disagreements with Pairin. Lau had been Karamunting's assemblyman since 1976, having won re-election seven times, a record. Many Chinese voters in the constituency consequently voted against PBS.

Overall, PBS won the vote in the five Chinese-majority seats, with 48.2 per cent of the votes, followed by Sabah BN with 36.4 per cent, while Bersekutu was a distant third with only 15.0 per cent.

The Mixed Constituencies

In the mixed constituencies, BN performed marginally better than PBS. The Sabah BN took 3 seats (LDP 1, SAPP 1, Sabah UMNO 1) while the other 2 went to PBS. This is reflected in the voting percentages; the Sabah BN took

45.8 per cent of the votes in the five constituencies, followed closely by PBS with 43.1 percent, and Bersekutu again a distant third with a mere 9.1 per cent. Voting here was clearly along racial/religious lines. The Muslims supported BN while the majority of the Chinese and Kadazan-Dusun supported PBS. A small minority of voters supported Bersekutu.

It is extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, to measure the impact of the phantom voters. Precise figures are impossible to obtain. Unconfirmed reports suggest that while more than 80 per cent of the phantom voters voted for the Sabah BN, a small minority voted against it. Those who voted against the Sabah BN were angry that promises made to them in the 1994 state and the 1995 national parliamentary elections were not fulfilled.³¹ Again, there is no way to verify this.

Despite claims that the BN won an 'overwhelming majority',³² this was simply not the case. In percentage terms, more than half the Sabah voters rejected Sabah BN. The BN win had more to do with the gerrymandering of Muslim seats and the 'first-pass-the-post' electoral system than anything else. Sabah BN won an 'overwhelming majority' only among the Sabah Muslims. The Kadazan-Dusun community clearly rejected the Sabah BN, and Sabah UMNO in particular. More than half of the Chinese voters also rejected the Sabah BN in favor of the PBS.

There are remarkable similarities between the 1999 vote and the 1995 parliamentary polls (see Table 1). As in 1995, all the PBS defectors who stood in Kadazan-Dusun areas were defeated. In Muslim areas in 1995, BN received 62.5 per cent of the vote while PBS got 36.6 per cent, in a straight fight between Sabah UMNO and PBS. If we postulate that it was also a straight contest between Sabah UMNO and PBS in the Muslim seats in the 1999 Sabah polls and that Bersekutu's voters would have voted for Sabah UMNO in the absence of Bersekutu, then Sabah UMNO would have received 65.7 per cent of the vote to PBS's 31.7 per cent.

This pattern is repeated in the Kadazan-Dusun areas. In 1995, BN obtained 40.7 per cent to PBS's 59.1 per cent. In 1999, BN obtained 38.7 per cent to PBS's 57.6 per cent. In the Chinese belt, the situation was similar. In 1995, BN took 52.7 per cent to PBS's 42.3 per cent. In 1999, the corresponding figures were 36.4 per cent and 48.2 per cent. Assuming that Bersekutu's 15 per cent vote would have gone to BN if there had been a straight fight between PBS and BN, then the BN vote for 1999 would have been 51.7 per cent.

Whither Kadazan-Dusun Nationalism?

With only two Kadazan-Dusun representatives in the Sabah BN, it was obvious that the next Sabah chief minister was going to be a Muslim. Strictly speaking, it was still the turn of the Kadazan-Dusun community under the rotation system. Dompok had served only 13 months of a 24-month rotational post when he was defeated.

Given that the Kadazan-Dusun had decisively rejected the Sabah BN, Mahathir appointed Osu Sukam, Sabah UMNO chief, as the new chief minister. Mahathir, however, did promise to carry on with the rotation system, indicating that a Kadazan-Dusun would take over as chief minister after the Muslims and the Chinese. However, several Sabah UMNO leaders have already called for a rethink on the rotation system while others are openly calling for the system to be discarded (*Daily Express* 28 March 1999). Given the fact of 26 Muslim-majority constituencies – more than half of the 48 state constituencies – some elements in Sabah UMNO believe that Sabah UMNO can effectively rule Sabah alone, or at the very least, hold the chief ministership in any coalition.

The Chinese will of course fight any moves to scrap the rotation system, but given that the Sabah Chinese community did not wholeheartedly support the Sabah BN, there is little the five elected Chinese BN legislators can do if Sabah UMNO decides to scrap it.

The big question hanging over Sabah politics is what to do with the Kadazan-Dusun? It is obvious that Mahathir and Sabah BN cannot ignore the political wishes of a community that constitutes about 40 per cent of Sabah's population; moreover, the Kadazan-Dusun are the largest ethnic grouping in Sabah.

One possibility is the 'PBDS prodigal son' scenario (Chin 1996a). The Iban/Dayaks in Sarawak are very similar to the Kadazan-Dusuns. They feel that, as the largest ethnic grouping in Sarawak, they should hold power, or at the very least be a major power broker in Sarawak politics. In the 1960s there were two Iban chief ministers, but since the Melanau Muslims came into power in 1970 the Iban/Dayaks have been completely politically marginalized. In 1983, the Iban/Dayaks tried to regain their pre-eminent position by establishing a new communal party, Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS or Dayak People's Party). Although PBDS was accepted into the Sarawak BN and the federal BN, this did not alter the power structure in Sarawak. Power was still held by a cabal of Melanau Muslims in Pesaka

Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) and Foochow Chinese in the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP).

Frustration led PBDS to pull out of the Sarawak BN in the 1987 Sarawak election and link up with some PBB dissidents. Although PBDS was able to win fifteen Dayak-majority seats – almost all the Dayak seats – it was still unable to gain power because it could not attract the non-Dayak votes. Four year later, PBDS tried to repeat its performance in the 1991 Sarawak election (Chin 1996d). This time PBDS managed to get only seven Dayak seats, undermining its claim to be the political representative of the Iban/Dayak people. Unable to hang on to its core Dayak support, PBDS sued for peace and was finally re-admitted into the Sarawak BN in 1994. The re-admission, however, came at a heavy price. PBDS, now a member of the ruling Sarawak BN, was expected to support all government policies, including those detrimental to the Dayak community it seeks to represent. PBDS effectively spent seven years in opposition for nothing; it did not gain any political muscle and by going back into the Sarawak BN fold, it effectively lost all its bargaining chips. The Dayaks are still completely marginalized in Sarawak politics.

Federal leaders are hoping that the experience of the Iban/Dayaks in PBDS will be repeated in Sabah. The expectation is that the longer PBS stays in opposition, the weaker it will become (like PBDS), and in the next state election the Sabah BN will be able to win over a significant number of Kadazan-Dusun constituencies, which will render PBS politically impotent. PBS will then have to seek readmission into BN, or dump Pairin as leader and enter into some sort of alliance or coalition with Sabah BN.

The problem with the 'PBDS prodigal son' scenario is that the comparison between the Iban/Dayaks and Kadazan-Dusun may not be apt. For one thing, the Iban/Dayaks do not have a *Huguan Siou* who can act as a unifying point. The Sarawak Iban/Dayak community lacks a leader like Joseph Pairin Kitingin in Sabah. There are about half a dozen Iban/Dayak leaders who can all legitimately claim to represent the Iban/Dayak politically. Moreover, the divisions in Dayak groupings are deep and perhaps irreconcilable. The Iban, the largest Dayak group, for example, is in serious political competition with the second largest Dayak group, the Bidayuh. Even within Iban society, there is deep animosity and rivalry among the 'modern' Ibans (those living close to the major urban areas of Kuching, Sibuan and Miri) and the 'ulu' Ibans (those who live deep in the interior).

The clear danger facing PBS in the immediate future is the possibility that some of its seventeen assemblymen will be enticed to cross over to

Sabah BN. Although Mahathir has unequivocally said that Sabah BN will not accept any defectors from PBS because it has a 'majority already', a senior member of Sabah UMNO left the possibility open by stating that PBS defectors can join the BN if they serve a period as 'independent' (*Borneo Post* 18 March 1999). Five days after the election was held, in a pre-emptive move, all the newly elected PBS assemblymen with the exception of party leader Pairin were flown to Perth, Australia, supposedly for a 'study tour' (*Daily Express* 20 March 1999). It was clear that the PBS leadership was worried about defections.

The PBS fears were not unfounded. Barely three months after the elections in June 1999, Penampang MP Paul Nointein, PBS deputy president Abdul Malek Chua, the assemblyman for Kuamut, and Ulin Pamiang, the assemblyman for Pensiangan, joined Sabah BN. Nointein joined PDS while the other two opted for Sabah UMNO (*Daily Express* 23 June 1999). Despite their denials, there were widespread rumors that each was paid more than RM2 million (about US\$500,000) to defect, with similar offers to other PBS assemblymen as well (*Daily Express* 22, 23 June 1999).³³ Their defection to Sabah UMNO has increased Sabah UMNO's elected members in the 48-seat state Legislative Assembly from 24 to 26, while the PBS representation has been reduced from 17 to 15. The Sabah UMNO chief minister proclaimed that the 'doors were open' to individual PBS elected representatives to join BN but were 'closed' to PBS to join as a component party of Sabah BN. About a week earlier, another PBS deputy president, Datuk Wong Ping Chung, also quit the party (*Daily Express* 10 June 1999).

It would appear that the Sabah BN's strategy to weaken PBS was two-fold. First, it would entice PBS elected representatives to defect; secondly, it would specially target PBS Muslim and Chinese elected representatives to cross over. The idea was to reduce PBS to a Kadazan-Dusun party with no elected representatives from other races. This would make it easier for Sabah BN to portray PBS as an ethnic party with Kadazan-Dusun chauvinist tendencies (personal communication from senior PBS figure, June 1999).

In August, PDS was renamed United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Organisation (UPKO) (*Daily Express* 22 August 1999). UPKO was a party established by Donald Stephens, the first *Huguan Siou*, back in 1964 to explicitly represent the interests of the Kadazan-Dusun. It received strong support from the community but was suddenly dissolved by Stephens in 1967 when he joined Tun Mustapha Harun's USNO in the name of indigenous unity. He also embraced Islam and became Mohammad Fuad Stephens (Granville-Edge and Devadason 1999; Roff 1974). PDS's decision

to change its name reflected the party's desperation in trying to woo over the Kadazan-Dusuns by capitalizing on old sentiments for UPKO, leading many in Sabah to mock the renamed party as *Untuk Pemimpin Kalah Organisation* (For Defeated Leaders Organization). Using the UPKO name also suggests that the party will be even more explicit in espousing Kadazan-Dusun nationalism.

Repressive-Responsive Regime?

In a recent publication, Crouch argues that the Malaysian political system, based on the BN coalition under UMNO, was both repressive and responsive to the Malaysian polity. The system, according to Crouch, was 'neither unambiguously democratic nor authoritarian' (Crouch 1996:240) and while Malay demands were met, more often than not important concessions were given to the non-Malays, principally the Chinese. Thus, while the Malays were given huge subsidies and handouts under the New Economic Policy (NEP),³⁴ some sections of the non-Malay communities also benefited from the NEP. In the political arena, although UMNO could easily rule on its own, nevertheless it has sought to govern through a coalition and give some cabinet positions to its coalition partners representing the non-Malay communities. Repressive behaviour such as the detention of opposition figures (mostly Chinese) without trial has been displayed by the executive when Malay/Muslim political supremacy has been threatened or questioned by non-Malays. This 'repressive-responsive' regime, according to Crouch, accounts for the relatively peaceful and stable political record enjoyed by Malaysia since independence.

I would suggest that Crouch's analysis is only partly applicable to Sabah. While one could argue that Mahathir's chief-minister-rotation scheme was an attempt to 'respond' to the wishes of the Sabah people, and that harassment of the democratically-elected PBS government was an example of its 'repressive' mode, Mahathir's actions in Sabah could be explained in far simpler terms. It is asserted here that the regime's actions in Sabah were based simply on trying to impose the peninsular political dichotomy of Malay/non-Malay *bumiputera* /non-*bumiputera* Muslim/non-Muslim, over the existing triangular situation (Muslim *bumiputera*, non-Muslim *bumiputera*, Chinese) in Sabah politics. As noted above, past governments in Sabah have tended to have the political support of two of the three groups. By gerrymandering the electoral map to ensure an outright

Muslim majority, the BN/UMNO government has ensured that politics (and voting) from 1999 onwards will be strictly a competition between the Muslims and the non-Muslims in the state. In the 1999 election, PBS won the support of the Kadazan-Dusun and the majority of the Chinese voters but due the dominance of the Muslim constituencies it lost the entire election. It is argued here that the 1999 election result indicates that the Mahathir regime has succeeded, in part, in imposing the peninsular dichotomy.

One could also argue that Mahathir's offer of a rotation system was a meaningless gesture given the reality of Muslim dominance behind the scenes. When Sabah UMNO reluctantly gave up the chief minister's post under the rotation system, the price was the transfer of key discretionary powers of the chief minister to cabinet. With Sabah UMNO always holding a majority in cabinet (the '5:3:3' formula has been used for the distribution of Sabah cabinet posts, i.e., 5 Sabah UMNO; 3 non-Muslim *bumiputera*; 3 Chinese), any chief minister will have to get the approval or consent of Sabah UMNO for all major policies. Hence Mahathir's strong public support for the rotation system was, at most, a public relations exercise rather than any real 'response' to the people's wish for 'power sharing'.

The motive for imposing the rigid peninsular dichotomy was fairly obvious. By imposing the Muslim/non-Muslim dichotomy, and by extension Muslim political supremacy and hegemony, the regime was hoping to bring some sort of uniformity to the entire political system. As we have seen, the Mahathir regime (and its predecessors) encountered major problems dealing with Sabah over the issue of state rights (specifically the Twenty Points). By bringing UMNO into Sabah and imposing the same political framework as states on the peninsula, the Mahathir regime was obviously hoping that state rights issues would be less politically potent in the future. Sabah, it is hoped, would eventually be just another state in the federation.

Thus the regime's approach to Sabah politics has more to do with the state of federal-state relations than with the 'responsive-repressive' strategy. The threat of Sabah (and potentially Sarawak) seceding from the federation has pushed the regime to impose its brand of politics on Sabah despite the apparent differences in demography, history and political culture.

As we have seen, this strategy appeared to have worked among the Sabah Muslims but not among the non-Muslims. The non-Muslims, especially the Kadazan-Dusun, have clearly demonstrated that they reject the peninsular brand of politics and may have hardened their anti-federal sentiments. The non-Muslims have every reason to reject the peninsula BN style of politics. In peninsular Malaysia, politics is clearly divided along

religious and ethnic lines, while in Sabah the lines are not so transparent. In the past, Muslims have supported non-Muslim parties; for example, the Muslims supported PBS in the 1986 elections. Non-Muslims have also supported Muslim-led parties; for example, the support given to Berjaya in 1976 and 1981 by the Kadazan-Dusun and the Chinese.

In the peninsula, UMNO's constant push for greater Islamic symbols and stricter adherence to Islam in all government-related activities has alienated many non-Muslims, especially the Christian community who live under a siege mentality. In contrast, religious tolerance has always been high in Sabah, and the Roman Catholic church has always played a prominent role in the lives of the Kadazan-Dusun and the Chinese. Moreover, unlike the peninsula, the Muslims in Sabah are a minority in the state. Past leaders, like Mustapha and Harris, who tried to push Islamization too flagrantly, were punished severely at the polls. This may no longer be possible given that more than half of the constituencies in Sabah are now Muslim-majority seats.

Ethnic relations between the Malays and the non-Malays are poor in the peninsula while in Sabah, relations, while not perfect, are certainly better than those found on the peninsula. The plural population (Sabah has more than 26 ethnic groups) with no single ethnic group constituting an outright majority, has ensured a higher degree of racial interaction and cooperation.

What is happening in Sabah could be taken as a precursor to what may happen in Sarawak, a state with similar demographics to Sabah. UMNO clearly wants to expand into Sarawak, the only state in the federation where it is not present, and fulfill its desire for a truly nation-wide political organization. One might speculate that the federal government has used Sabah as a laboratory to test strategies of bringing the politics of the two Bornean states into line with those of the peninsula states. The Sabah experience has shown, however, that this will not be easy and may even heighten regional sentiments among Sarawak's plural population..

CONCLUSION

In Malaysian electoral politics, the incumbent BN has always enjoyed an in-built advantage. This has ranged from the use of government facilities and personnel for campaigning, and extensive use of state-owned media to promote the ruling coalition, through 'on the spot' government grants and promises of development funds, to gross gerrymandering and seemingly unlimited financial resources for campaigning.

Despite this, the Sabah BN performed poorly in Sabah in 1999. Its thirty-one seats were gained mostly through gerrymandering, which gave the ruling coalition twenty-six Muslim-majority constituencies; the bloc vote given to Sabah UMNO by the Muslim community; and promises worth billions of ringgit in development expenditure which helped to secure votes from the non-Muslim communities, especially the Chinese. The BN received about 46 per cent of the votes. This meant that more than half of the Sabah voters rejected the ruling coalition and its brand of peninsula-based ethno/religious politics. More seriously, Sabah BN was unable to win a two-thirds majority, the yardstick often used to measure the success of the ruling coalition in Malaysia. Only through a legacy of colonization (the six appointed assembly members) was the Sabah BN able to get its two-thirds majority.

Politically the most damaging outcome was the failure of Sabah BN to win political support from the largest indigenous group in Sabah, the Kadazan-Dusun. The community rallied behind PBS despite threats that it would have to bear a heavy political price. PBS's ability to win in almost all the Kadazan-Dusun areas clearly indicated that it had the full support of the community it seeks to represent.

On a broader level, the state election confirmed the dominance of parochial state issues in Sabah politics. The inability of PAS to use the Anwar issue to garner votes, and the failure of major contestants to raise any nation-wide issues suggest that the people of Sabah have not fully integrated into the federation, even after thirty-six years, and that voting patterns in Sabah cannot be used as an indicator for polls in the rest of the federation.

The fierce loyalty shown by the indigenous Kadazan-Dusun towards the PBS suggests that political integration among the *bumiputera* groupings has been a massive failure. Although the Kadazan-Dusun are *bumiputera* by legal definition, it is obvious that they do not identify with the main *bumiputera* group, the ethnic Malay. Islam was clearly the divisive factor here. So long as UMNO merges the image of Islam with that of the Malay race, and, by extension, implies that a *bumiputera* should be a Muslim, the non-Muslim indigenous peoples will continue to feel disenfranchised.

The federal factor was also important. The anti-BN votes of the Kadazan-Dusun and the majority of the Chinese community suggest that a large segment of Sabah people do not see Kuala Lumpur in friendly terms.

In the near future, it is almost certain that the Sabah BN machinery will be used to isolate the Kadazan-Dusun community, economically and politically, both as a punishment and as a lesson to others. Small

development funds for Kadazan-Dusun areas will be given out only through BN agents in constituencies controlled by the PBS. Major projects will be shelved until the next election to show the Kadazan-Dusun the virtues of voting for the Sabah BN. Pressure will also be exerted on the three main BN Kadazan-Dusun parties to merge into a single entity, given that individually all three are extremely weak. The hope is that a single Kadazan-Dusun party will challenge PBS more effectively.

Notes

- * I would like to thank the many individuals from Sabah, especially those from PBS and BN, who provided much information. I am grateful to Ron May and Harold Crouch for useful suggestions on the first draft. I would also like to thank the UPNG Research Committee for partially funding a field trip to Sabah in 1998. At the time of the election, one US dollar was fixed at Malaysian ringgit (MR) 3.80.
- ¹ The early political history of Sabah is covered in Milne and Ratnam (1974); Roff (1974), and Lee (1974).
- ² For a fuller discussion on the conflict between the federal government and the state governments of Sabah and Sarawak over the Twenty Points, see Chin (1997).
- ³ This term 'second class *bumiputera*' was emphasized to me by a Christian Kadazan-Dusun state assemblyman. 'First-class *bumiputera*' refers to Muslim *bumiputera*.
- ⁴ The only exception in the peninsula was in 1978, when Kelantan, a northern state, held a state election. The election was called under special circumstances, beyond the scope of this paper.
- ⁵ Singapore was thrown out of the Malaysian federation in 1965 by Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia's first prime minister. This led to a serious split in UMNO as many senior UMNO officials felt that Tunku should not have taken the 'easy route'. Rather, they wanted Singapore to remain in the federation, under duress if necessary.
- ⁶ This figure was given by Pairin. Of course those who defected later were paid a lot less.
- ⁷ PDSB was unable to get registered as a political party.
- ⁸ Anwar met with all Sabah UMNO legislators at the Kota Kinabalu airport. See *Daily Express* [Kota Kinabalu] 4 May 1996.
- ⁹ Interviews with senior PBS figures. See also *Daily Express* 10-20 June 1996 on the controversy generated by the bills.
- ¹⁰ Interestingly enough, the Sabah Chinese vote went against the nation-wide trend, in which the urban Chinese voted for the BN ruling coalition.
- ¹¹ In interviews, both opposition and government politicians freely admit that many illegal Filipino and Indonesian Muslims were issued with blue identity cards. A blue identity card signifies Malaysian citizenship, which allows one

-
- to vote. These cards can only be issued by the federal government's department of registration.
- 12 YB stands for *Yang Berhormat* (The Honourable), a popular term for elected representatives.
- 13 In Malaysia, all the senators in the upper house are appointed. At the local government level, all district and town councillors are also appointed directly by the government, giving the ruling party a powerful patronage tool.
- 14 The background to UMNO's entry into Sabah is discussed in Chin (1999).
- 15 In Malaysia, members of the Upper House, Dewan Negara (Senate) are appointed by the government, giving the BN a powerful source of patronage .
- 16 *Daily Express* 26 September 1997. See the many letters written by PBS party members against the return of Jeffrey Kitingan, in *Daily Express* 12 October 1997.
- 17 The winning Pasok candidate joined PBS immediately after the election.
- 18 In order to get the election deposit back, the candidate must get at least one-eighth of the total votes cast in the constituency.
- 19 Inherited from the colonial authorities, the Sabah Constitution allows for the nomination of six assemblymen, bringing the total membership of the Sabah Assembly to fifty-six. The nomination is done by the chief minister.
- 20 In the Elopura constituency in Sandakan where the incumbent Tham Nyip Shen (BN-SAPP) was being challenged by Chong Ket Wah (PBS), the SAPP *ceramah* (political talk) on 8 and 9 March 1999 featured a video on racial riots and armed conflicts in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Kosovo. Tham won.
- 21 See Mahathir's speech as reported in *Overseas Chinese Daily News* 6 March 1999.
- 22 Personal communication from a Sabah politician. Khalil Yaakob did such a good job in Sabah that he was promoted to the post of UMNO secretary-general shortly after the Sabah elections. His brief was to get UMNO ready for the general elections.
- 23 See statements issued by SUARAM, a NGO which sent an election monitoring team to Sabah.
- 24 Personal communication from a senior Sabah politician.
- 25 See statement from Aliran, a NGO, dated 16 March 1999.
- 26 Bersekutu's leader Harris resigned from the party shortly after the polls, which led to a flood of resignations. Bersekutu is basically a 'mosquito' party now, reverting back to its original status before Harris took over.

27 There are different ways of classifying ethnic seats. In this paper, I have taken the simple rule: if any community (Muslim, non-Muslim (predominantly Kadazan-Dusun) or Chinese) constitutes more than 50 per cent of the voters in any constituency, then that constituency is an ethnic seat. A 'mixed constituency' is one where no one group made up more than 50 per cent of the voters.

28 Despite his public pledge to 'retire' from politics should he be defeated, Dompok has not done so at the time of writing (September 1999).

29 Bombings and rioting occurred after PBS won the 1986 state election. USNO and Berjaya had hoped that the bombings and rioting would lead to a security breakdown and direct federal rule from Kuala Lumpur. The senior USNO and Berjaya members, including the former USNO secretary-general, publicly admitted their involvement in the 1985 bombing campaign, fourteen years later. See *Daily Express* 14 January 1999.

30 During *ceramah* (campaign speeches) in Kota Kinabalu, many local Chinese were especially amused when MCA campaigners from Peninsular Malaysian told them that MCA's record in 'protecting' Chinese interests was second to none. A member of the audience then asked the MCA representative, if this was so, how come there are no Chinese chief ministers or *menteri-besar* in the peninsula. The MCA representative was lost for words (personal communication from a Sabah journalist).

31 This information was given to the author by a senior PBS politician. According to the politician, a former Registration Department officer went to PBS and told the party the location of the phantom voters. This officer, who had just been released from prison for his part in issuing illegal Malaysian IC (Identity Cards) to illegal migrants, went to the opposition after the BN refused his request for financial aid. A senior BN politician verified this story.

32 See the newsreports in the *New Sunday Times* and *The Sunday Star* 15 March 1999. The *Daily Express* in Kota Kinabalu headlined 'Barisan Wins Big'.

33 It will be recalled that Chua wrote a book *YB for Sale* just prior to the election, criticising elected representatives for hopping from one party to another. Obviously Chua is not one who practices what he preaches.

34 The NEP was an affirmative action program giving *bumiputera* (Malay) preferential access in all social and economic spheres. For example, Malays have special access to university scholarships, loans for business, and special '*bumiputera* only' trading licenses.

FIGURE 1. Map of Sabah's 48 Constituencies

(source: *Bernama*)



TABLE 1. The 1995 Parliamentary Election Results in Sabah

(Source: Chin 1996b)

Constituencies	BN	PBS	DAP	Ind	PAS
<i>Muslim bumiputera</i>					
Marudu	10766	10880			
Belud	17368	10327			
Papar	12131	9015		257	
Beaufort	14719	10076		221	
Sipitang	9732	5208		162	
Beluran	5869	5679			
Libaran	12777	5453		215	
Kinabating	6431	4533			
Silam	15815	6737			
Semporna	17006	4788			
Tawau	20168	11037		372	825
<i>Total</i>	<i>142782</i>	<i>83733</i>		<i>1227</i>	<i>825</i>
%	<i>62.47</i>	<i>36.63</i>		<i>0.54</i>	<i>0.36</i>

Constituencies	BN	PBS	DAP	Ind	PAS
Non-Muslim bumiputera					
Bandau	5,851	10716		162	
Tuaran	10108	12114			
Penanpan	12982	14652			
Keningau	8736	17510			
Tenom	7025	9949		105	
<i>Total</i>	<i>44,702</i>	<i>64941</i>		<i>267</i>	
%	<i>40.67</i>	<i>59.08</i>		<i>0.24</i>	
Chinese					
Gaya	12336	12127	1541	431	
Tanjung Aru	8788	10306	4142		
Kinabalu	6462	7973		1953	
Sandakan	12892	4103	9818		
<i>Total</i>	<i>40478</i>	<i>34509</i>	<i>15501</i>	<i>2384</i>	
%	<i>43.58</i>	<i>37.16</i>	<i>16.69</i>	<i>2.57</i>	
<i>Grand Total</i>	<i>227962</i>	<i>183183</i>	<i>16902</i>	<i>3878</i>	<i>825</i>
%	<i>52.68</i>	<i>42.33</i>	<i>3.90</i>	<i>0.90</i>	<i>0.19</i>

Key: BN: Barisan Nasional DAP: Democratic Action Party
 PBS: Parti Bersatu Sabah PAS: Parti Islam Malaysia Ind: Independent

TABLE 2. The 1999 Sabah Election Results

(Source: *Malaysian Election Commission web site*)

Constituencies	BN	PBS	Berse- kutu	Setia	PAS	Ind.	Pasok
Muslim bumiputera							
Banggi	2854	1840	454			38	
Tempasuk	4911	4176	368	38	239	61	
Usukan	7127	3503	894				
Sulaman	6571	3127	886	100			
Likas	9110	4148	3576	318	200	100	
Petagas	9234	5447	960	122			
Kawang	7017	4804	282	117		49	
Pantai Manis (<i>formerly Buang Sayang</i>)	7357	4823	458	143			
Bongawan	6087	3795	163	54		343	
Kuala Penyu	4956	4072	468			69	
Klias	7209	3431	640				
Lumadan	4678	2316	847	312			
Sindumin (<i>Sipitang</i>)	4794	3112	934				
Sugut	2405	2151	216			123	
Labuk	3349	4478	217	77		473	

Constituencies	BN	PBS	Berse- kutu	Setia	PAS	Ind.	Pasok
Sungai Sibuga	7927	3893	2166	282			
Sekong	3230	1860	1246	581	121		
Sukau	3988	816	1519		126	101	
Kuamut	2777	3286	1371				
Kunak	4619	2126	1987	503			
Lahad Datu	7781	6547	2933	579			
Sulabayan	3302	785	2340			786	
Senallang (<i>new seat</i>)	4855	1637	3297				
Balung	4787	2934	2729				
Merotai	5265	4218	2653		373	113	
Kalabakan (<i>new seat</i>)	5127	1877	1593	157	293	17	
<i>Total</i>	<i>141317</i>	<i>85202</i>	<i>35197</i>	<i>3383</i>	<i>1352</i>	<i>2273</i>	
<i>%</i>	<i>52.59</i>	<i>31.71</i>	<i>13.10</i>	<i>1.26</i>	<i>0.50</i>	<i>0.84</i>	

Constituencies	BN	PBS	Berse- kutu	Setia	PAS	Ind.	Pasok
Non-Muslim bumiputera							
Matunggung	3602	5326	292	60			
Tandek	4412	5671	463				
Kadamaian	2725	6583	151				
Tamparuli	3939	6125	475				
Kiulu	1622	5007	142				
Moyong	6482	10870	285			79	18
Kundasang	4102	4201	481	72			
Ranau	6074	4847	224	53			
Tambunan	2116	6791	169	141			
Pensiangan (<i>Nabawan</i>)	2655	3934	616				
Kemabong	4741	3905	274				
Melalap (<i>Tenon</i>)	4626	6886	337			131	
<i>Total</i>	<i>47096</i>	<i>70146</i>	<i>3909</i>	<i>326</i>		<i>210</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>%</i>	<i>38.70</i>	<i>57.64</i>	<i>3.22</i>	<i>0.27</i>		<i>0.17</i>	<i>0.015</i>

Constituencies	BN	PBS	Berse- kutu	Setia	PAS	Ind.	Pasok
Chinese							
Api-Api	5963	9146	1040				
Tanjung Papat	4482	2786	2311				
Sri Tanjong	5007	8759	3814			155	
Karamunting	4719	2922	2124			59	
Inanam	4940	9648	1081				
<i>Total</i>	<i>25111</i>	<i>33261</i>	<i>10370</i>			<i>214</i>	
<i>%</i>	<i>36.42</i>	<i>48.24</i>	<i>15.04</i>			<i>0.31</i>	
Mixed Constituencies							
Kudat	6935	5447	481	105			
Bengkoka.	4042	2121	211	97		558	
Sembulan	5161	5464	2109			70	
Bingkor	4871	8339	395			22	
Elopura	5577	3647	2070	276		75	

Constituencies	BN	PBS	Berse- kutu	Setia	PAS	Ind.	Pasok
<i>Total</i>	26586	25018	5266	478		725	
<i>%</i>	45.78	43.08	9.07	0.82		1.25	
<i>Grand Total</i>	240110	213627	54742	4187	1352	3422	18
<i>%</i>	46.40	41.28	10.58	0.81	0.26	0.66	0.003

Key: BN: Barisan Nasional
 PBS: Parti Bersatu Sabah
 PAS: Parti Islam Malaysia
 Ind: Independent
 Pasok: Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Pasok Nunukragang Bersatu
 Bersekutu: Parti Bersekutu
 Setia: Parti Demokratik Setia-sehati Kuasa Rakyat Bersatu Sabah

TABLE 3. Candidates and Ethnic Profiles of Constituencies, 1999

(Source: *Bernama* – National News Agency, Kuala Lumpur)

BANGGI

1. Datuk Amirkahar Tun Mustapha (BN-Sabah UMNO)
2. Salbin Muksin (PBS)
3. Ghazali Harris (Bersekutu)
4. Maria Tam (Independent)

Incumbent: Datuk Amirkahar Tun Mustapha (BN-Sabah UMNO) – votes received, 1994: 2,335: majority 347(won seat as PBS)

Voters 1999: 7,650 (Muslim *bumiputera* 64%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 35.88%, Chinese 0.12%, others 0%) [1994 - 6,555 (56.96%, 42.79%, 0.24%, 0.01%)]

KUDAT

1. Senator Datuk Chong Kah Kiat (BN-LDP)
2. Jimmy Wong Sze Fhin (Bersekutu)
3. Kong Hong Ming (PBS)
4. Ahmad @ Tawang Jalil (Setia)

Incumbent: Datuk Kong Hong Ming (PBS) - votes received, 1994: 5,476: majority 279 (won seat on BN-LDP)

Voters 1999: 17,977 (Muslim *bumiputera* 42.07%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 24.08%, Chinese 33.49%, others 0.36%) [1994 - 15,298 (42.77%, 23.05%, 34.03%, 0.15%)]

BENGGOKA

1. Paul Tom Imbayan (Independent)
2. Dayang Maimunah Tun Mustapha (Bersekutu)
3. Tsen Kwet Chong (Setia)

4. Richard Mazagi (PBS)

5. Datuk Masrani Parman (BN-Sabah UMNO)

Incumbent: Masrani Parman (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 3,511: majority 357

Voters 1999: 10,384 Muslim *bumiputera* 50.91%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 48.17%, Chinese 0.92%, others 0% [1994 - 9,033 (52.15%, 46.62%, 1.19%, 0.04%)]

MATUNGGUNG

1. Atong Mangabis (PBS)

2. Berman Angkap (Bersekutu)

3. Datuk Marcus Majihi (BN-Akar)

4. Junan Olok (Setia)

Incumbent: Datuk Marcus Majihi (BN-Akar) - votes received, 1994: 3,826: majority 1,843 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 11,627 (Muslim *Bumiputera* 13.4%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 83.75%, Chinese 2.75%, others 0.1%) [1994 - 8,350 (17.93%, 79.46%, 2.59%, 0.02%)]

TANDEK

1. Joe Santi (Bersekutu) Abd

2. Datuk Saibul Supu (BN-PDS)

3. Dr Maximus Johnity Ongkili (PBS)

Incumbent: Saibul Supu (BN-PDS) – votes received, 1994: 2,926; majority 668 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 13,864 (Muslim *bumiputera* 23.67%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 71.31%, Chinese 4.96%, others 0.06%) [1994 – 6,938 (32.91%, 65.47%, 1.55%, 0.07%)]

TEMPASUK

1. Salam Hj Gibang (PBS)
2. Musbah Jamli (BN-Sabah UMNO)
3. Mohd Aminuddin Aling (PAS)
4. Masud Nanang (Setia)
5. Dausin Pangalin (Independent)
6. Ibrahim Linggam (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Datuk Pandikar Amin Mulia (BN-Akar) – votes received, 1994: 4,142; majority 947

Voters 1999: 12,239 (Muslim *bumiputera* 60.5%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 38.47%, Chinese 0.45%, others 0.58%) [1994 – 10,858 (59.1%, 39.93%, 0.45%, 0.52%)]

KADAMAIAAN

1. Lidu @ Serirama Johari (Bersekutu)
2. Timbon @ Herbert Lagadan (PBS)
3. Datuk Baggai Basirun (BN-PDS)

Incumbent: Datuk Baggai Basirun (BN-PDS) - votes received, 1994: 5,127; majority 3,032 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 11,536 (Muslim *bumiputera* 8.43%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 90.77%, Chinese 0.72%, others 0.08%) [1994 - 8,945 (18.5%, 80.8%, 0.7%, 0)]

USUKAN

1. Mudry Nasir (Bersekutu)
2. Saidil @ Saidi Simoy (PBS)
3. Datuk Mohd Salleh Tun Said Keruak (BN-Sabah UMNO)

Incumbent: Datuk Mohd Salleh Tun Said Keruak (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 6,274; majority 2,683

Voters 1999: 14,526 (Muslim *bumiputera* 89.24%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 2.78%, Chinese 6.77%, others 1.21%) [1994 - 12,452 (77%, 16.23%, 6.24%, 0.53)]

TAMPARULI

1. Mojilip Bumburing (BN-PDS)
2. Datuk Monggoh Orow (Bersekutu)
3. Edward Linggu Bukut (PBS)

Incumbent: Datuk Wilfred Bumburing (BN-PDS) - votes received, 1994: 6,347; majority 5,087 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 13,487 (Muslim *bumiputera* 20.54%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 59.46%, Chinese 19.66%, others 0.34%) [1994 - 9,658 (21.34%, 66.80%, 11.75%, 0.2%)]

SULAMAN

1. Datuk Haji Mohd Noor (BN-Sabah UMNO)
2. Rakam Sijim (PBS)
3. Hamdin @ Din Abd Kadir (Setia)
4. Mohamed Daud Abdullah (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Datuk Haji Mohd Noor (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 5,016; majority 876

Voters 1999: 13,968 (Muslim *bumiputera* 82.97%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 13.49%, Chinese 3.09%, others 0.45%) [1994 - 11,771 (65.05%, 21.69%, 12.97%, 0.29%)]

KIULU

1. Lovis Rampas (PBS)
2. Datuk Gisin Lombut (BN-PDS)
3. Seibing Gunting (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Gisin Lombut (BN-PDS) - votes received, 1994: 4,354; majority 2,528 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 13,968 (Muslim *bumiputera* 6.32%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 90.03%, Chinese 3.62%, others 0.03%) [1994 - 8,156 (30.59%, 64.77%, 4.63%, 0.1%)]

INANAM

1. Judy Hiew Miu Nyuk (Bersekutu)
2. Datuk Christine Vanhouten Tibok (BN-PDS)
3. Johnny Goh (PBS)

Incumbent: Datuk Stephen Kutai (BN-PDS) - votes received, 1994: 7,907; majority 4,079 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 21,433 (Muslim *bumiputera* 11.88%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 34.59%, Chinese 53.24%, others 0.28%) [1994 - 15,566 (30.37%, 40.04%, 29.42%, 0.17%)]

LIKAS

1. Saujin Kadir (Independent)
2. Datuk Yong Teck Lee (BN-SAPP)
3. Gamparon Lajah (Setia)
4. Yahya Kassim (PAS)
5. Datuk Harris Mohd Salleh (Bersekutu)
6. Chong Eng Leong (PBS)

Incumbent: Datuk Yong Teck Lee (BN-SAPP) - 8,035; majority 2,180

Voters 1999: 25,976 (Muslim *bumiputera* 55.44%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 12.15%, Chinese 32.01%, others 0.40%) [1994 - 19,756 (38.87%, 4.52%, 55.68%, 0.93%)]

API API

1. Chin Chen Fui (Bersekutu)

2. Datuk Chau Tet On (BN-MCA)

3. Dr Yee Moh Chai (PBS)

Incumbent: Datuk Chau Tet On (BN-MCA) - votes received, 1994: 9,132;
majority 4,294 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 23,107 (Muslim *bumiputera* 7.38%, non-Muslim *bumiputera*
5.69%, Chinese 86.21%, others 0.72%) [1994 - 20,016 (6.23%, 5.64%,
87.09%, 1.04%)]

SEMBULAN

1. Yong Oui Fah (PBS)

2. Datuk Chau Chin Tang (BN-SAPP)

3. Dr Tan Kok Sui (Bersekutu)

4. Datu Bara Datu Alawaddin (Independent)

Incumbent: Datuk Chau Chin Tang (BN-SAPP) - votes received, 1994: 4,777;
majority 298 (won on PBS seat)

Voters 1999: 18,616 (Muslim *bumiputera* 39.49%, non Muslim *bumiputera*
10.27%, Chinese 49.46%, others 0.78%) [1994 - 13,504 (38.71%, 8.31%,
51.95%, 1.03%)]

MOYOG

1. Datuk Clarence Bongkos Malakun (PBS)

2. Datuk Conrad Mojuntin (Independent)

3. Tan Sri Bernard Dompok (BN-PDS)

4. Legacy @ Ignatius Matayun (Independent)

5. Cleftus Sipain Mojingol (Pasok)

6. Benedict Sakunil Mansul (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Tan Sri Bernard Dompok (BN-PDS) - votes received, 1994: 6,615;
majority 3,255 (won on PBS seat)

Voters 1999: 22,616 (Muslim *bumiputera* 5.89%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 60.98%, Chinese 32.58%, others 0.55%) [1994 - 14,242 (19.96%, 65.38%, 13.65%, 1.01%)]

PETAGAS

1. Datuk Yahya Hussin (BN-Sabah UMNO)
2. Mohd Dini Mohd Khan (Bersekutu)
3. Musa Abdul Rahman (Setia)
4. Hj Uda Sulai (PBS)

Incumbent: Datuk Yahya Hussin (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 7,513; majority 1,190

Voters 1999: 23,152 (Muslim *bumiputera* 69.76%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 15.53%, Chinese 11.1%, others 3.61%) [1994 - 20,350 (54.03%, 19.68%, 25.6%, 0.69%)]

KAWANG

1. Datuk Pengiran Othman Rauf (Setia)
2. Datuk Osu Sukam (BN-Sabah UMNO)
3. Datuk Ariaah Tengku Ahmad (PBS)
4. Mohd Kanit Omar (Bersekutu)
5. Patrick Singh (Independent)

Incumbent: Datuk Osu Sukam (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 4,699; majority 64

Voters 1999: 15,458 (Muslim *bumiputera* 54.84%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 34.11%, Chinese 10.14%, other 0.91%) [1994 - 11,787 (51.7%, 37.5%, 10.72%, 0.08%)]

PANTAI MANIS

1. Mohd Ishak Laimudin (Bersekutu)
2. Datuk Abdul Rahim Ismail (BN-Sabah UMNO)

3. Juani @ Johnny Mositun (PBS)

4. Dr Zainuddin Mohamed (Setia)

Incumbent: Datuk Abdul Rahim Ismail (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 6,359; majority 1,643

Voters 1999: 16,132 (Muslim *bumiputera* 53.23%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 28.37%, Chinese 17.28%, other 1.12%) [1994 - 13,802 (56.43%, 26.9%, 16.41%, 0.26%)]

BONGAWAN

1. Abdul Karim Abdul Ghani (Setia)

2. Ajmain Abdul Gani (Independent)

3. Datuk Karim Bujang (BN-Sabah UMNO)

4. Datuk Dzulkifli Abd Hamid (Bersekutu)

5. Awang Tengah Awang Amin (PBS)

Incumbent: Datuk Karim Bujang (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 5,498; majority 1,902

Voters 1999: 13,659 (Muslim *bumiputera* 64.68%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 27.06%, Chinese 8.2%, others 0.06%) [1994 - 11,868 (65.41%, 25.78%, 8.66%, 0.15%)]

KUALA PENYU

1. Hj Asmat Hj Misrin (Independent)

2. Md Tajudin Md Walli (Independent)

3. Marcellinus Augustine Piong (PBS)

4. Awang Hashim Awang Gador (Bersekutu)

5. Datuk Wences Anggang (BN-PDS)

Incumbent: Datuk Wences Anggang (BN-PDS) - votes received, 1994: 4,430; majority 400 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 12,066 (Muslim *bumiputera* 56.6%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 36.09%, Chinese 6.98%, others 0.32%)[1994 - 10,486 (56%, 35.59%, 8.2%, 0.21%)]

KLIAS

1. Datuk Lajim Ukin (BN-Sabah UMNO)
2. Abdul Rahman Md Yakub (PBS)
3. Ustaz Saidin Musi (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Datuk Lajim Ukin (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 4,881; majority 405 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 15,073 (Muslim *bumiputera* 63.46%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 18.46, Chinese 17.99%, others 0.09%) [1994 - 12,033 (59.05%, 22.77%, 17.81%, 0.37%)]

LUMADAN

1. Abdul Sulaiman Omar (Bersekutu)
2. Surinam Sandikong (BN-Sabah UMNO)
3. Yusof Judin (PBS)
4. Jahari @ Johari Mohd Dun (Setia)

Incumbent: Datuk Dayang Mahani Tun Rafee (BN-Sabah UMNO) -votes received, 1994: 4,517; majority 1,768

Voters 1999: 10,648 (Muslim *bumiputera* 89.44%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 4.72%, Chinese 5.44%, others 0.4%) [1994 - 9,065 (86.37%, 7.83%, 5.78%, 0.02%)]

SINDUMIN

1. Pengiran Sarpudin Ahmad (Bersekutu)
2. Datuk Sapawi Ahmad (BN-Sabah UMNO)
3. Jamilah @ Halimah Sulaiman (PBS)

Incumbent: Datuk Sapawi Ahmad (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 4,580; majority 1,446

Voters 1999: 12,070 Muslim *bumiputera* 61.68%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 30.65%, Chinese 7.35%, others 0.32% [1994 - 9,702 (65.25%, 27.24%, 7.07%, 0.44%)]

KUNDASANG

1. Datuk Ewon Ebin (BN-PDS)
2. Ramdi Indang (Bersekutu)
3. Karim Adam (PBS)
4. Benjimin Yasin (Setia)

Incumbent: Datuk Ewin Ebin (BN-PDS) - votes received, 1994: 4,956; majority 2,528 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 11,539 (Muslim *bumiputera* 41.31%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 58.25%, Chinese 0.41%, others 0.03%) [1994 - 11,061 (30.99%, 68.36%, 0.62%, 0.03%)]

RANAU

1. Datuk Sirigan Gubat (BN-PDS)
2. Henrynus Amin (PBS)
3. Muslien Baringkok (Bersekutu)
4. Sutian @ Phoulus Kendilong (Setia)

Incumbent: Datuk Sirigan Gubat (BN-PDS) - votes received, 1994: 4,615; majority 1,122 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 14,542 (Muslim *bumiputera* 37.5%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 55.46%, Chinese 6.75%, others 0.31%) [1994 - 10,329 (35.96%, 55.95%, 6.76%, 0.33%)]

TAMBUNAN

1. Joseph Jouti Ajun (Bersekutu)

2. Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan (PBS)

3. Juili Matimbun (Setia)

4. Petrus Guriunting (BN-PDS)

Incumbent: Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan (PBS) - votes received, 1994: 6,265; majority 5,696

Voters 1999: 11,086 (Muslim *bumiputera* 5.12%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 92.46%, Chinese 2.24%, others 0.18%) [1994 - 8,153 (4.12%, 92.59%, 3.01%, 0.28%)]

BINGKOR

1. Datuk Joseph Kurup (BN-PBRS)

2. Kuilan Anggau @Justina (Bersekutu)

3. Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan (PBS)

4. Peter Kodou (Independent)

Incumbent: Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan (PBS) - votes received, 1994: 6,408; majority 4,159 (won on a PBS seat, jumped to PBRS, Akar, back to PBS)

Voters 1999: 19,009 (Muslim *bumiputera* 39.18%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 47.8%, Chinese 13.01%, others 0.01%) [1994 - 12,061 (18.48%, 74.54%, 6.69%, 0.29%)]

PENSIANGAN

1. Ulin Pamiang (PBS)

2. Ellron Angin (BN-PBRS)

3. SUSURU @ SIMON ANTIBAK (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Datuk Adib Sigoh (BN-PBRS) - votes received, 1994: 2,370; majority 623 (won seat on PBS jumped to Sabah UMNO and joined PBRS)

Voters 1999: 10,240 (Muslim *bumiputera* 12.98%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 85.98%, Chinese 1.04%, others 0%) [1994: 3,209 (3.4%, 95.35%, 1.19%, 0.06%)]

MELALAP

1. Datuk Kadoh Agundong (BN-Akar)
2. George Rejos (Independent)
3. Jait Mahat (Independent)
4. Edward Sibin (Bersekutu)
5. Radin Malleh (PBS)

Incumbent: Datuk Kadoh Agundong (BN-Akar) - votes received, 1994: 3,498; majority 1,898 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 16,607 (Muslim *bumiputera* 22.69%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 50.94%, Chinese 25.99%, others 0.38%) [1994 - 8,841 (24.86%, 45.29%, 29.62%, 0.23%)]

KEMABONG

1. Datuk Rubin Balang (BN-Sabah UMNO)
2. David Jani (Bersekutu)
3. Esar Andamas (PBS)

Incumbent: Datuk Rubin Balang (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 3,521; majority 1,150 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 11,140 (Muslim *bumiputera* 14.16%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 75.26%, Chinese 10.52%, others 0.06%) [1994 - 7,366 (21.18%, 67.19%, 11.58%, 0.05%)]

SUGUT

1. Datuk Surady Kayong (BN-Sabah UMNO)
2. Jamarudin Madirin (Bersekutu)
3. Tuminggi @ Abd Mutalib Daud (Independent)
4. Amran Masrah (Independent)
5. Jublee KK Zen (PBS)

Incumbent: Surady Kayong (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 2,403; majority 79

Voters 1999: 7,182 (Muslim *bumiputera* 52.38%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 45.38%, Chinese 1.33%, others 0.91%) [1994 - 7,386 (63.12%, 34.74%, 1.35%, 0.79%)]

LABUK

1. Liaw Teck King (Independent)
2. Datuk Tan Yong Gee (BN-PDS)
3. Yusof Apok @ Joseph Apok (Setia)
4. Datuk Michael Asang (PBS)
5. Kamar Karim (Independent)
6. Abdul Aziz Mohd Nasroh (Bersekutu)
7. Nordin Khani (Independent)

Incumbent: Tan Yong Gee (BN-PDS) - votes received, 1994: 3,256; majority 1,076 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 11,556 (Muslim *bumiputera* 64.69, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 31.34%, Chinese 2.82%, others 1.15%) [1994 - 8,847 (52.12%, 44.76%, 2.86%, 0.26%)]

SUNGAI SIBUGA

1. Datuk Musa Aman (BN-Sabah UMNO)
2. Ramli Noordin (PBS)
3. Musa Jala (Bersekutu)
4. Isnain Amat (Setia)

Incumbent: Datuk Musa Aman (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 8,211; majority 3,708

Voters 1999: 22,754 (Muslim *bumiputera* 67.75%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 4.25, Chinese 27.89%, others 0.11%) [1994 - 19,960 (68.75%, 5.21%, 25.5%, 0.54%)]

SEKONG

1. Datuk Nahalan Damsal (BN-Sabah UMNO)
2. Abdul Wahid Hamid (PBS)
3. Zulkifli Pitting (Setia)
4. Hamzah Abdullah (PAS)
5. Ridi Alawangsa (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Datuk Nahalan Damsal (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 4,667; majority 1,548

Voters 1999: 12,161 (Muslim *bumiputera* 75.76, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 2.01%, Chinese 21.72%, others 0.51%) [1994 - 13,764 (75.85%, 5.16%, 18.82%, 0.17%)]

ELOPURA

1. Chong Ket Wah (PBS)
2. Mohd Amran Saidin (Setia)
3. Datuk Tham Nyip Shen (BN-SAPP)
4. Ramli Hj Wen (Independent)
5. Dr Chu Ying Kai @ Lawrence (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Datuk Tham Nyip Shen (BN-SAPP) - votes received, 1994: 4,854;majority 870

Voters 1999: 17,144 (Muslim *bumiputera* 46.43, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 2.21%, Chinese 50.77%, others 0.59%) [1994 - 14,311 (31.02%, 7.85%, 60.49%, 0.64%)]

TANJUNG PAPAT

1. Datuk Raymond Tan (BN-SAPP)

2. John Khoo Cheo Ping (Bersekutu)

3. Ang Lian Hai (PBS)

Incumbent: Datuk Raymond Tan (BN-SAPP) - votes received, 1994: 3,614; majority 87

Voters 1999: 14,457 (Muslim *bumiputera* 28.94%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 1.97%, Chinese 66.39%, others 2.7%)[1994 - 12,605 (25.24%, 4%, 69.76%, 1%)]

KARAMUNTING

1. Wong Lien Tat (BN-LDP)

2. Dr Chung Kwong Wing (Bersekutu)

3. Lee Tze Ting (Independent)

4. Thien Fui Yun (PBS)

Incumbent: Datuk Lau Pui Keong (Ind); votes received, 1994: 4,219; majority 113

Voters 1999: 14,608 (Muslim *bumiputera* 39.19%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 0.38%, Chinese 60.09%, others 0.34%) [1994 - 12,218 (28.95%, 3.84%, 67.03%, 0.18%)]

SUKAU

1. Halban Janan (Independent)

2. Pusing Baligang (Bersekutu)

3. Mahlan Adari (PBS)

4. Datuk Aklee Abas (BN-Sabah UMNO)

5. Ustaz Ridwan Baharun (PAS)

Incumbent: Datuk Aklee Abas (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 3,504; majority 917

Voters 1999: 11,245 (Muslim *bumiputera* 96.63%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 1.23%, Chinese 2.01%, others 0.13%) [1994 - 10,187 (94.07%, 3.41%, 2.01%, 0.51%)]

KUAMUT

1. Datuk Hj Abd Malek Chua (PBS)
2. Datuk Joseph Siting Saang (BN-PDS)
3. Ali Latif Taha (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Datuk Joseph Siting Saang (BN-PDS) - votes received, 1994: 2,184; majority 735 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 10,362 (Muslim *bumiputera* 57.65%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 41.44%, Chinese 0.88%, others 0.03%) [1994 - 5,452 (52.55%, 46.56%, 0.83%, 0.06%)]

KUNAK

1. Mohd Amin Jaafar (Bersekutu)
2. Rayman Udin (Setia)
3. Abdullah Minun Sahirun (PBS)
4. Jasa Rauddah Ismail (BN-Sabah UMNO)

Incumbent: Unding Lana (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 5,241; majority 3,179

Voters 1999: 14,661 (Muslim *bumiputera* 94.28, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 1.11%, Chinese 3.98%, others 0.63%) [1994 - 14,858 (92.08%, 3.73%, 3.89%, 0.30%)]

LAHAD DATU

1. Sulaiman Pangeran Atok (PBS)
2. Abdul Banning Abd Mohamad (Setia)
3. Samsu Baharun Abdul Rahman (BN-Sabah UMNO)
4. Abdillah Abdul Hamid (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Datuk Amat Yusof Jamlee (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 7,820; majority 1,144

Voters 1999: 28,110 (Muslim *bumiputera* 69.56%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 9.11%, Chinese 20.03%, others 1.31%) [1994 - 23,055 (69.39%, 10.29%, 20.01%, 0.31%)]

SULABAYAN

1. Muhammad Yassin Hj Ibrahim (Independent)
2. Abdul Salam Hj Maslah (Independent)
3. Mohd Lan Allani (BN-Sabah UMNO)
4. Ispal Hj Abok (PBS)
5. Datuk Askalani Abdul Rahim (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Datuk Nasir Tun Sakaran (BN-Sabah UMNO) (won in a by-election when Tun Sakaran Dandai was appointed TYT)

Voters 1999: 10,673 (Muslim *bumiputera* 99.82%, non-Muslim 0.01%, Chinese 0.04%, others 0.13%) [1994 - 17,626 (95.58%, 1.05%, 3.35%, 0.02%)]

SENALLANG

1. Datuk Nasir Sakaran (BN-Sabah UMNO)
2. Abdullah Sani Hj Ab Salleh (Bersekutu)
3. Sabardin Ombra (PBS)

Voters 1999: 14,556 (Muslim *bumiputera* 94.32%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 0.23%, Chinese 5.3%, others 0.15%)

BALUNG

1. Kassim Ibong (Bersekutu)
2. Wong Fook Voon (PBS)
3. Datuk Mannan Jakasa (BN-Sabah UMNO)

Incumbent: Datuk Mannan Jakasa (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 7,370; majority 2,058

Voters 1999: 16,230 (Muslim *bumiputera* 75.82%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 1.76%, Chinese 18.31%, others 4.11%) [1994 - 19,079 (69.68%, 5.39%, 24.25%, 0.68%)]

MEROTAI

1. Dr Patawari Patawe (BN-Sabah UMNO)
2. Bacho Pendrongi (Independent)
3. Majin Ajin (PBS)
4. Abdurahman Ahmad @ Maidin (PAS)
5. Mohd Ishak Awadan (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Datuk Abdul Ghapur Salleh (BN-Sabah UMNO) - votes received, 1994: 9,515; majority 6,153

Voters 1999: 19,515 (Muslim *bumiputera* 77.88%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 3.26%, Chinese 18.42%, others 0.44%) [1994 - 18,662 (81.02%, 5.78%, 11.74%, 1.46%)]

KALABAKAN

1. Mohd Said Senang (Setia)
2. Hamud Salleh (PBS)
3. Badal @ Samsuddin Kamsa (Independent)
4. Raden Kakung (Bersekutu)
5. Abdul Wahid Yemang (PAS)
6. Datuk Abdul Ghapur Salleh (BN-Sabah UMNO)

Voters 1999: 14,094 (Muslim *bumiputera* 75.55%, non-Muslim *bumiputera* 13.48%, Chinese 9.07%, others 1.9%)

SRI TANJONG

1. Datuk Michael Lim Yun Sang (BN-SAPP)
2. Mohd Abidin Patangari (Independent)
3. Samson Chin Chee Tsu (PBS)

4. Shanty Chong Chui Lin (Bersekutu)

Incumbent: Datuk Micheal Lim Yun Sang (BN-SAPP) - votes received, 1994:
8,637; majority 926 (won seat on PBS)

Voters 1999: 26,981 (Muslim *bumiputera* 37.17%, non-Muslim *bumiputera*
1.65%, Chinese 60.5%, others 0.68%) [1994 - 24,720 (41.72%, 1.95%,
56.09%, 0.24%)]

Table 4. Brief Party Profiles

(Source: various newspaper reports)

Sabah United Malay Nasional Organisation (Sabah UMNO)

UMNO was officially established in Sabah in February 1991. UMNO president and Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, decided to spread UMNO's wings to Sabah in October 1990, the day PBS pulled out of Barisan Nasional in the heat of that year's general elections. Paving the way for UMNO's entry was the late Tun Mustapha Datu Harun's United Sabah National Organisation (USNO), which dissolved itself to allow its members to join Sabah UMNO. At the same time, Harris Salleh's Parti Berjaya was also dissolved so that its members could join Sabah UMNO, making it a party largely of ex-USNO and Berjaya members. Mustapha, a Suluk-Bajau chieftain, was Sabah UMNO's first member and chairman, and won for the party its first elected Sabah seat of Usukan in Kota Belud in a 1991 by-election. When he quit UMNO during the February 1994 state elections, he was replaced by his deputy, Tun Sakaran Dandai, a Bajau leader from Semporna. Sabah UMNO is currently led by Osu Sukam, a Malay from Papar, who is also Sabah chief minister. Based on the number of registered members, Sabah UMNO is the second largest party, with over 300,000 members.

Parti Demokratik Sabah (PDS)

Former Sabah chief minister Bernard Dompok was the key man in the birth of the party, which took place just before the collapse of the PBS government following the 1994 Sabah state elections. The idea was for ex-PBS leaders (Dompok was a former PBS deputy president) to have another vehicle to represent the Kadazan-Dusuns within the newly formed Sabah Barisan Nasional state government. Registration of the party was approved by Kuala Lumpur within a week, a record time for the registration of a political party. The day the party was approved, it was accepted into the Sabah BN. PDS has centered itself

in Penampang, which had never had a chief minister until Dompok's appointment. The party was decimated in the 1999 polls by PBS, and party leader Dompok lost his seat. At the party's fifth party congress in August 1999, it changed its name to United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Organisation (UPKO)

Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBR)

Like PDS, PBR was formed by a PBS dissident, Clarence Bongkos Malakun, just days before the collapse of the PBS government. Malakun, the *pro tem* president, handed over the party leadership to Joseph Kurup at the party's launch in Penampang. A leadership tussle almost immediately ensued between Jeffrey Kitingan and Kurup. Kitingan disappeared from the party after the launch, saying he wanted to start his own Party Demokratik Rakyat Sabah (PDRS), but shelved that plan and joined an existing BN component, Parti AKAR. PBR has been active in the interior regions of Keningau, working among the Kadazan-Dusuns and Muruts. The party was comprehensively defeated by PBS in the 1999 polls.

Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat Bersatu (AKAR)

AKAR was formed in 1989 after a bitter dispute between PBS president Joseph Pairin Kitingan and his deputy Mark Koding over the use of the terms Kadazan and Dusun. Koding's United Sabah Dusun Association did not want the name Dusun to be incorporated into the Kadazan Cultural Association led by Pairin. Koding, with several other PBS leaders (Pandikar Amin Mulia, an Iranun, and Kalakau Untol, a Dusun) decided to form AKAR. It was registered on 15 September 1989, with Kalakau as its president and Pandikar as secretary-general. Koding entered the party in November that year as president. AKAR joined BN soon after. In the May 1990 state elections, all 36 AKAR candidates, including Koding, Pandikar and Kalakau, lost their seats to their former party, PBS. Again, in the October 1990 parliamentary election, AKAR failed to win a single seat. However, it managed to win one of the seven seats allocated by BN

in the 1994 state elections, with Pandikar securing Tempasuk in Kota Belud; he was made a state minister. The party changed its name to AKAR Bersatu after Jeffrey Kitingan entered the party at the end of 1994. A power struggle between Jeffrey Kitingan and Koding on one side and Pandikar on the other, erupted in 1995; Pandikar's group eventually took charge and changed the party's name back to Parti AKAR. Koding and Jeffrey Kitingan quit the party and have since returned to the PBS. AKAR was totally wiped out in the 1999 state election by PBS.

Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP)

SAPP was formed by C: dissidents in PBS just before the 1994 state elections. It was led by Yong Teck Lee, a former PBS deputy president, who revolted against Pairin in January 1994 when Pairin decided to drop Yong and several of his men as candidates for the upcoming 1994 state polls. Yong and several Chinese leaders, including Elopura assemblyman Tham Nyip Shen, flew to Kuala Lumpur, had the party registered on 21 January, and joined BN immediately. SAPP declared that it wanted a state-federal reconciliation so as to bring Sabah into the mainstream of development. The party joined Barisan Nasional before the 1994 state elections and Yong Teck Lee was appointed Sabah chief minister for two years in May 1995, under the Sabah BN rotation system. The party has pockets of support in urban areas of Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan and Tawau. It is the largest of the Chinese-based Sabah BN parties, and managed to win three of the five BN allocated seats in the 1999 state elections.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)

LDP was born of a fresh effort to form a coalition of ethnic-based parties to oppose Parti Bersatu Sabah in 1989. Two veteran former Berjaya leaders, Hiew Ming Kong and Chong Kah Kiat, set out to form a Chinese-based multiracial party during the period in which Parti AKAR was also formed. Hiew, from Tawau, became party president and the Kudat-based Chong secretary-general. The party targeted Chinese professionals, with the hope of becoming the

dominant Chinese party in Sabah. It contested Chinese-dominated seats in the July 1990 state elections but failed to make any headway within Sabah's ethnic Chinese community, who maintained their support for PBS. LDP's failure in the elections saw Hiew step down and Chong take over as president. The party stayed out of the 1990 general elections. Its fortunes dramatically changed with the pullout of the PBS from the BN during the October 1990 general elections. LDP (and AKAR) were immediately accepted into the BN fold.

The LDP performed remarkably well in the 1999 polls, winning all the two seats allocated to it.

Sabah Malaysian Chinese Association (Sabah MCA) NESE

The Malaysian Chinese Association, the dominant Chinese BN party on the peninsula, expanded into Sabah in 1991 following the entry of UMNO. Sabah MCA claimed a membership of 20,000 members in eighteen divisions with more than 200 branches throughout the state. In 1998 Chau Tet On became the first Sabahan to head Sabah MCA. Chau was first elected under the PBS banner in 1994. The MCA's sole candidate in the 1999 state elections, he lost his seat to PBS. Sabah MCA is extremely weak as many Sabah Chinese see the party as nothing more than a lackey of UMNO, and as an outsider trying to meddle in Sabah politics.

Sabah Gerakan

Sabah Gerakan, an offshoot of the peninsula-based Gerakan, was formed in December 1995 as a result of a leadership tussle within the Liberal Democratic Party. In November 1995 the then Kudat state assemblyman, Kong Hong Ming, unsuccessfully challenged the LDP president, Chong Kah Kiat, for the party leadership. Having lost, Kong left with his supporters and a month later became Gerakan's first Sabah state chairman. Kong was, however, sacked from Sabah Gerakan in 1996 after he failed to support a government bill to curb the powers of the chief minister. His place was taken by Dr Chong Eng Leong, who also

quit, in May 1998. Sabah Gerakan came under the supervision of Gerakan national treasurer Soong Siew Hong. Sabah Gerakan is also very weak, suffering from the same perception problems as Sabah MCA. It has virtually no support among the Sabah Chinese community. Sabah Gerakan did not ask for any seats in the 1999 polls. Kong has since rejoined PBS, a party he joined in the 1980s. He was defeated in the 1999 polls under the PBS banner.

Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC)

MIC, following the footsteps of UMNO and MCA, spread to Sabah in February 1994 to provide representation for the 25,000-odd Indian community, thinly spread all over the state. The party claims a membership of about 3,000 with twenty branches. Its Kota Kinabalu branch chairman, V. Jothi, became Sabah MIC chairman. The party did not ask for any seats in the 1999 polls. It has little support among the Sabah Indian community.

Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS)

PBS was formed just weeks before the April 1985 state election. Since its inception, it has been led by its founder, Joseph Pairin Kitingan, a Kadazan Roman Catholic married to an ethnic Chinese. Pairin, a former minister in the Sabah government led by Harris Salleh, was sacked from Berjaya in 1984 after he raised the grievances of the Kadazan-Dusun and non-Muslim communities over issues of Islamization and Kadazan-Dusun rights. Forced to vacate his seat of Tambunan, Pairin easily won re-election as an independent. Widely regarded as a champion of the non-Muslims and the Kadazan-Dusuns, Pairin led PBS to victory in the 1985 elections. Pairin's legitimacy among the Kadazan-Dusuns is due in large part to his position as *Huguan Siou* of the Kadazan-Dusun community. PBS ruled Sabah from 1985 until 1994 when mass defections caused the collapse of the newly re-elected PBS government. Although Pairin is PBS's major strength, he is also its main weakness – there is no clear successor to Pairin and there are doubts that PBS can survive without its founder.

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