

THE POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT AND THE 1996 SARAWAK STATE ELECTIONS

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Pilihanraya negeri Sarawak tahun 1996 merupakan suatu peristiwa politik yang agak tenteram berbanding dengan pilihanraya-pilihanraya negeri yang lepas pada tahun 1987 dan 1991 yang sengit dan penuh ketegangan. Parti Barisan Nasional merasa cukup yakin dengan kedudukan mereka sebagai parti pemerintah negeri akibat penguasaan semua kerusi dalam Dewan Undangan Negeri (DUN) Sarawak sebelum pembubaran DUN pada bulan Ogos 1996. Lagipun, kelemahan parti pembangkang serta ketiadaan unsur-unsur ketidakpuasan hati daripada mana-mana puak politik di dalam parti-parti Barisan Nasional Sarawak menyumbang kepada keteguhan kedudukan Barisan Nasional Sarawak sebelum pilihanraya 1996.

BN mendekati pilihanraya 1996 dengan penuh keyakinan dan menggunakan strategi "Politik Pembangunan" (PP) mereka sebagai asas kepada strategi kempen pilihanraya. Manifestasi kempen PP ini jelas ternampak dalam pengagihan projek-projek pembangunan dan pemberian sumber-sumber awam serta wang untuk menjamin kemenangan bagi pihak BN dalam pilihanraya tersebut. Pengagihan sumber-sumber awam, projek serta wang dalam pilihanraya ini sebenarnya merupakan suatu tindakan memberi rasuah untuk mengumpul undi.

Penggunaan strategi PP pada masa pilihanraya membawa kesan penting. Ia memperdalamkan sindrom bantuan subsidi (subsidy syndrome) di kalangan rakyat biasa serta merumitkan lagi "budaya membeli undi" dengan pemberian wang, sumber awam serta projek-projek pembangunan. Pemenang pilihanraya Sarawak 1996 adalah parti BN. Akan tetapi, yang kalah dalam pilihanraya tersebut bukan hanya parti politik pembangkang sahaja tetapi proses demokrasi serta kepentingan rakyat biasa.

INTRODUCTION

A Tame and Lacklustre Election

Unlike the turbulent 1987 and 1991 elections of recent memory, the 1996 Sarawak State Elections was a tame, lacklustre and almost predictable affair. The ruling Sarawak Barisan Nasional¹ (BN) coalition was safely ensconced in

power with a hold on all the seats in the *Dewan Undangan Negeri* (DUN) or State Legislative Assembly prior to its dissolution in August 1996. Neither was there any perceived threat from any opposition quarter nor from any disgruntled faction within the ruling BN. The dominance of the BN and by implication, Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud, over the assembly and the state was evident.

In part, the overwhelming political control exercised by the BN was due to the return of the erstwhile opposition Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) to the BN coalition in 1994.² This meant that the contentious demands of the Dayak communities for more equitable political representation and access to development resources which had characterised politics in Sarawak during the 1980s and the early 1990s was effectively silenced. On the other hand, the political control of the BN was also attributed to their track record over the 1991-1996 period of governance in which they delivered much development to the people of Sarawak, ostensibly through a "Politics of Development (POD)" strategy.

The "Politics of Development"

In a seminar on development attended by BN state assemblymen on 14 July 1992, Abdul Taib Mahmud articulated his vision of the POD strategy as an accompanying component of Dr. Mahathir's grand vision which sought to achieve full industrialisation in Malaysia by the year 2020. According to Mahmud, the POD is a response to "the Politics of False Promises"³ which had been the predominant socio-cultural style of Sarawak politics during the 1980s, especially evident in the 1987 elections, when opposition politicians thought that they "could win [the] people's confidence and support by being smart, by being tricky and by resorting to all sorts of tricks"⁴ including lies to achieve political power. The POD strategy of the BN government⁵ was thus projected as an effort to remedy the earlier alleged unethical and questionable political practices of politicians and government under former Chief Minister Rahman Ya'kub's administration.⁶ Mahmud defined the POD as follows:

"It is not politics that tries to win people's support by making the Government act like Father Christmas, giving projects here and giving projects there. That kind of practice will not transform the people. If you give people a lot of things just like we give a lot of things to our children without looking after them and without telling them what is right and what is wrong, and moreover without discipline, the end result is that we get real spoilt brats. No

matter how rich they are, they are still spoilt, and we find that the parents may not be able to look after them or to rely on them. Therefore, *the POD is a total commitment to development by using the power of politics to make sure that we achieve our development objectives. In other words, we put development objectives as paramount in our political actions. If at one time or another, our political interest is in conflict with the development objectives, the former should by all means give way to the development objectives in as far as politics allows us to do so. In other words, our politics must be subservient to the demands of development, and that means, we who are the leaders, whether at the top or grassroots level must be aware of our vital role as the representatives of the people.*"⁷ (emphasis added.)

It is clear that Mahmud considers development as the "be all and end all" of politics, in which politics must make way for development if ever there is a clash of interests. In making this point, Mahmud hoped to distinguish his BN administration from that of Rahman Ya'kub's which was noted for its reliance on development patronage and the distribution of electoral largesse.

In Sarawak, the distribution of largesse to party and business loyalists within the state by the ruling BN party has routinely taken place as part and parcel of the state's economic development programme through timber concessions, the favouring of various loyalists with licensing for financial and other commercial services, the award of government contracts for infrastructure and other development projects, and the re-zoning of land for urban and commercial development.⁸ Termed as "development patronage", such "elite alliances are mutually rewarding [and] conflicts of interests are not considered important issues in this overall context".⁹ While extensive under Rahman Ya'kub's administration, such practices are not exclusive to his administration. Another practice, also commonly associated with, though again not exclusive to Rahman Ya'kub's administration, is the distribution of development projects, financial and other handouts, pledges and promises of future projects made mainly, but not solely, by the ruling party during electoral periods in exchange for voter support.¹⁰ Such handouts are termed "electoral patronage". Mahmud's BN administration's POD strategy ostensibly aimed at developing a new political culture in Sarawak which emphasises development achievements instead of the distribution of development patronage and electoral largesse, especially during electoral periods. Ironically, Mahmud's BN administration failed to live up to its own vision of the POD during the 1996 state elections.

Aim of this Paper

Undeniably, there has been development in Sarawak under the Mahmud administration, especially during 1991-1996. However, the evidence as presented in this paper will suggest that the POD strategy, apart from being an articulated policy is equally political rhetoric fudging over the BN's resort to development patronage and electoral largesse to remain in government. Such rhetoric is more pronounced during electoral campaign periods. During the 1996 state elections, BN politicians of Mahmud's administration used electoral patronage, specifically in the form of *projek kilat* (instant development and infrastructure projects) and financial and other handouts to achieve their partisan party goals. Such behaviour hardly distinguished them from the behaviour of politicians of Rahman Ya'kub's administration. Instead, it merely reinforced the continuity of an existing political culture. It is thus this author's argued opinion that the BN coalition's behaviour and resort to electoral patronage as evidenced in the 1996 state elections points precisely to what its POD strategy criticises. Furthermore, instead of "politics being subservient to development", "development" in the hands of the BN is also used as a tool of political manipulation and control. The POD strategy was applied quite successfully by the BN as its central election message during the 1996 elections. Many rural villages and longhouses supported the BN, partly out of conviction, but also partly because of their fear of the negative consequences of acting otherwise.

THE RUN-UP TO THE ELECTIONS AND THE PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN

A Lack of Public Interest

The electorate of Sarawak were rather disinterested in the run-up to the elections. Many perceived it as irrelevant to their situation and deemed it a non-event in view of the overwhelming dominance of the BN. Interestingly, while many acknowledged the impressive track record of the BN in delivering development, many also felt the need for an opposition presence in the DUN. They lamented the lack of any potential alternative voice in the forthcoming electoral contest capable of bringing about a more responsive and transparent form of government via increasing the presence of an opposition within the DUN. Public desire for a more transparent and accountable administration was also partly fuelled by the perception that a small group of business and political elite closely linked to the BN and the Chief Minister were reaping inequitable benefits of development patronage;¹¹ a perception not unlike that which dogged

the previous administration of ex-Chief Minister Abdul Rahman Ya'kub. Thus, while many acceded to the fact of an impending BN victory, they nonetheless also harboured mixed feelings about it.¹²

The BN's Pre-Election "Politics of Development" Propaganda Campaign

The BN did not take any chances with the public's perception of a foregone conclusion to the 1996 election and spared no effort to remind the people of the BN's development achievements and the existing inter-communal harmony within the state. Huge billboards were put up at public expense in all major towns announcing the developmental successes, real and mythical, of the government and by implication, the governing party. Songs and advertisements were also placed over local radio and national TV which focused on Sarawak's unity and development achievements. Similarly, the Sarawak Information Department organised a "road show" exhibition which toured all the major towns before the election. The exhibition entitled, "*Berbudi Berjasa Budaya Kita*" extolled the development achievements of the BN government under the leadership of Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud. The *Sarawak Tribune* even ran a triumphalist editorial on 30 July 1996 which predicted the BN would not only form the new government come nomination day but would also sweep all 62 seats in the election.¹³ It reflected, no doubt, the BN's hopes of gaining an historic clean sweep of all the seats of the state assembly. The BN's control over the main local Malay and English news dailies¹⁴ also meant that the opposition was relatively unheard and unseen in the run up to the elections.¹⁵ With the possible exception of the opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP),¹⁶ no other party was perceived as being able to provide some form of check and balance to the BN.

Whither the Opposition?

The lack of any party to provide a substantive opposition platform in the election was rather paradoxical. Ever since pre-Malaysia days, and especially in the 1960s and early 1970s, there had been waves of opposition parties and personalities who had received credible levels of active support from the Sarawakian electorate. For many, voting for the opposition was an indication of their support for the two political parties then in opposition along with their respective political ideologies, namely the socialist ideology of the Sarawak United Peoples' Party (SUPP) and the nationalistic fervour of the Sarawak National Party (SNAP).

For example, in the 1960s, SUPP was a considerable socialist opposition force. So successful was SUPP in opposition that they supplanted the Sarawak

Chinese Association (SCA), a coalition member of the ruling government of the day, as the dominant Chinese party. In the 1969 election, the SUPP won 12 seats to the SCA's three. In short, SUPP garnered more seats than did the Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (PESAKA) which won eight seats, and rivalled Parti BUMIPUTERA's 12 seats. Since SNAP - also in opposition in 1969 - had won 11 seats, this gave the combined opposition a total of 23 seats. After the elections, however, SUPP joined the then Sarawak Alliance government and is currently one of the two main pillars of the BN. In February 1966 when the then federal government imposed a state of emergency (and direct federal rule) in Sarawak, the nationalistic SNAP-led coalition government headed by Stephen Kalong Ningkan was ousted from power. However, SNAP did not fade into decline in opposition but rather grew in strength winning 11 seats in 1969 and 18 in 1974 matching even the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu's (PBB) haul. In 1976 however, facing internal financial constraints and under the pretext of bringing more development to their constituencies from within the government, SNAP rejoined the BN. Their electoral fortunes in terms of seats in the DUN have declined ever since.

Another party, which has the chameleon-like distinction of having been both in and out of government over the last 10 years, is the PBDS. Formed in 1983 after a split in SNAP as a result of a power struggle between the President, James Wong, and the then Deputy President, Leo Moggie, PBDS campaigned in the 1983 elections as a member of the BN and won six seats. After it left the BN and moved into opposition in 1987, PBDS won 15 seats in the state elections of the same year. However, when they fared poorly in 1991 by winning only seven seats, the PBDS leadership immediately applied for re-admission into the BN coalition. Their justification was not unlike that of SNAP, i.e. that they would be able to "struggle" better for the Dayak cause by being able to have more access to development funds and projects for their constituencies from within government, failing which the Dayaks would be left behind in the race for development. Ironically, the neglect of the Dayaks by the then BN government was the same apparent reason advanced by the same PBDS leadership when quitting the BN in the first place in 1987. Thus, despite their strong electoral performances while in opposition, many Sarawak political parties have been incorporated into the then Alliance and current BN governments. To an extent, this is due to the implementation of the "Politics of Development".

THE "POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT" IN PRACTICE AND THE EMASCULATION OF THE OPPOSITION

As an integral strategy of Malaysia's drive for industrialisation by 2020, the POD strategy aims to use "the power of politics to... achieve [the state government's] development objectives"¹⁷ for the people. As a consequence of the implementation of the POD strategy, many Sarawakians, and especially those living in rural areas, now regard and look towards the BN as the only political party capable of delivering development. While this translates into increased support for the BN, it has however also led to an increased dependence upon the BN for development to the extent that a "subsidy syndrome"¹⁸ has apparently emerged, and especially in the rural areas. Neither has the BN done much to discourage this subsidy mentality nor the perception of it being the only party capable of delivering development. Rather, the BN has used development projects and the provision of public services as pivotal tools to extract political support for themselves. For example, all constituencies represented by BN (but not opposition) parliamentarians are favoured when federal and state government development projects are planned. Apart from planned development projects, BN parliamentarians are allocated an annual sum of RM300,000 for minor rural development projects like providing "footpaths, electric generators, building and piping material".¹⁹ BN state assemblymen are allocated RM200,00 for the same purpose for use within their state constituencies. Not only is the practice discriminatory of non-BN elected assemblymen and parliamentarians considering it is public funds that are being distributed, but such dole-outs have only reinforced the subsidy mentality prevailing among the people.

Consequently, the rural electorate has become aware that voting for the opposition can only work to their own disadvantage. For example, numerous rural villages and longhouses which supported PBDS (then in opposition) in the 1987 and 1991 elections were subsequently excluded from the BN's development plans while those longhouses, or parts thereof, which supported the BN received and enjoyed development projects and public services. Community leaders who were known to have opposed the BN were removed from local office after the 1987 election. Such punitive measures contributed to the break-up of some longhouses or the divisive conflicts and factionalism in the longhouses.²⁰ Furthermore, the new voting and vote-counting systems drawn up by the Malaysian Electoral Commission in 1991 allows the BN to pinpoint quite accurately the voting patterns of particular villages/longhouses, even down to the level of each *bilik-household*. This allows the BN government "to identify those areas that had voted for the opposition and subsequently to isolate those particular areas from receiving any government aid".²¹ Thus, many

rural folk fear the negative consequences of supporting opposition parties even if they are critical of the actions of the ruling party. The electorate of Sarawak (not unlike their West Malaysian counterparts) also realise that the opposition does not have access to public funds and cannot meet their development aspirations. Since much of Sarawak is still relatively rural and inaccessible, and the rural people desirous of development, it is increasingly rare that a constituency returns an opposition candidate as its representative in the DUN.²² Beyond these developmental considerations, opposition parties in Sarawak face immense difficulties during election campaigns which by all accounts are extremely expensive and exhausting affairs covering vast areas, with the main mode of transport being the river

By emphasising its POD strategy in the run-up to the 1996 election therefore, the BN was able to remind the electorate of the dire developmental consequences of not returning it to power for another five-year term; consequences which remained vivid in the mind of (rural) voters given their bitter past experiences after the 1987 and 1991 elections. In this way, the BN was able to define the focus of the 1996 election campaign solely on its track record of "delivering development". The opposition, not having similar access to public funds nor the media, was handicapped even before the election campaign began.

Electoral Jockeying within the BN before the Elections

Hence, it was not the potential threat from the opposition which captured centre-stage as the elections approached. It was instead the contests within, and among the BN parties themselves, for the right to contest the limited number of seats. Indeed, the fervour of the behind-the-scenes electoral jockeying among the many incumbent and 'would be' assemblymen within the various component parties of the BN intensified and became public as the elections approached.

The SUPP made headlines in Sarawak in February 1996 when they announced that they had finalised their list of candidates for the 1996 election. However, in late July/early August 1996, Thomas Hii, the SUPP Meradong incumbent was reportedly still battling Law Hieng Deng, (the SUPP Deputy Chairman and federal Minister for Science and Technology), and others who sought to replace Hii with another nominee. Eventually Thomas Hii and the SUPP Bintangor Branch Office were evicted from their premises by a prominent Sarawakian billionaire who owned the building and who did not support his candidacy. On 6 August, SUPP leaders announced they would most likely submit their finalised list of candidates by mid-August, making their earlier February boast

sound rather hollow. This also meant that SUPP was the last party to submit its list of candidates to BN Chairman Abdul Taib Mahmud. Interestingly, the *Sarawak Tribune* (6 August 1997) attributed the delay to "recent political developments" within SUPP - a neuphemism at best, reflecting the intense jockeying for electoral nominations which took place in SUPP.

Neither was SUPP the only party within the BN to undergo such political "horse-trading". In Marudi, seven senior members of SNAP jockeyed for the right to contest that seat allocated to the party by the BN. A similar contest was seen among many other SNAP party members in Tasik Biru.²³

Intra-party tensions and jostling within PBDS also spilled over into the local press when both PBDS Vice Presidents Sng Chee Hua and James Masing publicly clashed over financial matters and by extension, for control of the party. Accused of using his financial clout to "control the party", Sng denied all such allegations and emphasised his "making sizeable contributions at the request of the party leadership". James Masing, in turn, denied not being able to work with Sng but added that "PBDS did not need to depend on one man for financial support".²⁴ PBDS experienced further internal squabbling. Despite effectively having been put into "political pasture" when he was appointed High Commissioner to New Zealand earlier in the year, PBDS Deputy President Daniel Tajem appeared miffed that neither he nor his preferred nominee was to be nominated for the Bukit Begunan seat. He issued a press statement threatening to return to contest his Bukit Begunan seat if "a suitable candidate was not nominated to replace him".²⁵ In reply, PBDS Election Committee Chairman James Masing denounced all newspaper reports related to Daniel Tajem's possible return to contest the election as "malicious".²⁶ The only party which did not wash any 'dirty linen' in public was the PBB, a reflection perhaps, of Abdul Taib Mahmud's iron grip over his party.

Apart from jockeying among candidates, the parties within the BN also were busy squabbling over the right to contest the six new seats of Jepak, Kota Semariang, Nangka, Senadin, Kedup and Ba'kelalan created under the 1995 electoral re-delineation exercise. Long before the elections, it was widely speculated that PBB was to receive three seats with a seat each being allocated to the other three junior members of the BN coalition. Instead, the end result saw the PBB, as *primus inter pares* within the BN, allocated four of the new seats with the remaining two apportioned to SUPP and SNAP. PBDS did not receive any of the new seats. Instead, it was allocated the risky seat of Belaga,²⁷ previously held by PBB. The apportionment of seats was unsurprising and it reflected the relative strengths and status of the respective parties within the BN coalition before the elections.

Such pre-electoral jockeying was not new. In his study of development practice and political goals in Sarawak in the 1970s, M. Leigh had noted that "politics in Sarawak is concerned essentially with the control of land, timber and minerals. A consequence of the quest to gain power is the accretion of wealth from these natural assets"²⁸. It is thus debatable whether those seeking nomination within the various component parties of the BN really had the peoples' interests at heart. Rather, the perception is that many sought nomination because of their individual desire for political position and the accompanying spoils of membership within the BN coalition government.²⁹ This proportional increase in "electoral jockeying" among politicians in Sarawak is the corollary to the growing influence of "politics in business and business in politics" in Malaysia as a whole since the 1980s, a phenomenon where the mutual benefits of political patronage accrue to ruling party politicians and their favoured business associates.³⁰ A senior member of a BN component party even remarked that the question of assemblymen representing the people's interests in the DUN was really a "non-issue".³¹ Such a view constitutes a reasonably honest evaluation of the extent to which democracy and the peoples' interests in Sarawak have been subverted by the vested political-business interests of the BN.

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND RESULTS

"Father Christmas" Approach or a "Politics of Development" Strategy?

Given their overwhelming majority in the DUN, their near-monopoly control of the media, their access to substantial financial resources, their access to government organisational and transportation resources, and the relatively weak situation of the opposition, the BN approached the 1996 state elections brimming with confidence. Their greatest challenge apparently, was to ensure a relatively high electoral turnout so as to avoid losing any seat on account of sheer voter apathy.

The State Assembly was dissolved on August 15. Nomination day was set for August 27 with polling scheduled to take place on September 7-8. Not unexpectedly, the BN was returned unopposed in 19 constituencies on Nomination Day but faced contests for the remaining 43 seats. The DAP chose to challenge the BN in six urban-based seats. A motley group of one of those 60 independent candidates were also involved in the elections.

Despite its being a caretaker government once the Assembly was dissolved, the BN utilised a huge amount of public resources during the election campaign period. A brief review of new development and infrastructure project handouts as reported by the media between 24 August - 8 September illustrates this. The financial worth of all such projects and other official financial handouts show that the BN distributed RM6,374,000³² in official direct financial grants. Numerous infrastructure projects which total costs reportedly amounted to RM51,827,000³³, were declared "open" by BN leaders. Pledges of financial grants and infrastructure projects of which the reported values amounted to RM418,324,700.³⁴ were also made by BN leaders during this time. Cumulatively, the amount of official public funds spent and/or committed by the BN under the guise of "delivering development" as reported by the media was RM476,525,700 or an average expense of RM7.68 million per constituency. This amount does not include the many development projects and other handouts which went unreported by the media during the period audited. Also excluded are all development projects and other handouts (reported or otherwise) in the period beginning from dissolution of the DUN to Nomination Day, i.e. just before the electoral campaign officially began. Such bittersweet³⁵ handouts however are anything but electoral bribes in name and were clearly instrumental in extracting political support for the BN. A partial listing of all development projects and related statements as articulated by various BN candidates and politicians in the 1996 Sarawak State Elections appears as Appendix A.³⁶

The intricate nature of this POD strategy of the BN was most evident when then caretaker Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud pledged a new township worth RM10 million to the people of Bau on 28 August in his desire to secure their support for Peter Nansian, an unknown political neophyte who joined SNAP/BN a few days before nomination day. Nansian was, until his nomination, the General Manager of the Bintulu Development Authority, a statutory body of the Sarawak State Government. Mahmud withdrew his pledge a week later³⁷ citing non-support for BN policies from the Bau populace as the main reason for his reversal. Similarly, when Sibü voters rejected the BN and voted three DAP candidates into the DUN, Mahmud announced after the election that while the BN would honour all its election pledges, "... he was uncertain what would happen to Sibü..."³⁸ a reference, no doubt, of intentions to neglect or at worse to punish Sibü voters for not supporting the BN.

Apart from directly pouring in huge amounts of official development projects and other handouts, the BN also mobilised government organisations to assist their campaign for re-election, and to project the POD successes of the BN government between 1991-1996. Many federal, state and local government

agencies like the Sarawak Information Department, the Jabatan Kerja Raya³⁹ (Public Works Department), District Offices, Radio Television Malaysia (RTM), Department of Community Development (KEMAS), Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (Village Development and Security Committees), were mobilised to organise numerous opening ceremonies and election *ceramahs* to project the development achievements of the BN government. The Information Department issued numerous daily press releases throughout the campaign period to the mass media extolling BN leaders and their commitment to development. RTM screened documentaries portraying the same while the local *Rangkaian Nasional* radio station repeatedly broadcasted songs which hailed development achievements, unity and communal harmony in Sarawak. Further radio interviews, live broadcasts of opening ceremonies of development projects, news and commentaries all praised Sarawak's leadership and their success in bringing about development. This manipulation of the electorate via the radio to ensure a Barisan victory was simply overwhelming.⁴⁰

Official government transport vehicles like cars, four wheel drives, helicopters, and speedboats were also utilised freely to ferry BN politicians and their retinue the length and breadth of Sarawak. Even federal government ministers like PBB Vice-Presidents Sulaiman Daud (Minister of Agriculture), Abang Abu Bakar (Minister, Prime Minister's Department), PBDS President Leo Moggie (Minister of Telecommunications and Posts), and others who were not contesting the election, attended various hastily organised government functions in their official capacities and used the opportunities to campaign for the BN. The BN did little to distinguish between party resources and government resources and there was little appreciation of their role as a caretaker government during the campaign period. Anwar Ibrahim, the Deputy Prime Minister, was at least more judicious than his cabinet colleagues. He minimised his use of public resources during his one day campaign sweep for the BN. Apart from flying in and out of Sarawak on the official ministerial executive jet and driving around in an official state car, Anwar Ibrahim flew around in one of Ting Pek Khiing's SAEAGA Air helicopters⁴¹ which enabled him to attend three official government functions in three different locations, all of which were broadcasted live by RTM's *Rangkaian Nasional*. He also made it very clear that his whirlwind trip was to underscore the federal BN's commitment and support for the Sarawak BN and by implication, its POD strategy.

The Election Results

The BN won 38 seats on Election Day but lost in five constituencies which included the defeat of senior Deputy Chief Minister and SUPP President Dr.

Wong Soon Kai. Three of the seats were lost to the DAP and two others to independents. Voter turnout was lower than in the two previous state elections as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Popular Support for Political Parties, Sarawak State Elections 1987-1996

Year	1987 State Elections		1991 State Elections		1996 State Elections	
Political Party	Votes	% of Vote	Votes	% of Vote	Votes	% of Vote
BN	249,289	54.6	301,027	62	242,839	65.7
PBDS	79,548	17.4	106,892	22	-	-
Independents	6,840	1.5	6,209	1.3	88,601	24.0
DAP	51,341	11.2	43,793	9.0	32,421	8.7
Permas	64,152	14.1	16,159	3.3	-	-
Bersatu	84	-	-	-	-	-
Parti Negara	-	-	5,651	1.2	-	-
Spoilt Votes	5,305	1.2	5,970	1.2	5,844	1.6
Total Vote Cast	456,559	100	485,701	100	369,705	100
Voter Turnout	73%	-	69%	-	64%	-

Source: Malaysian Elections Commission, *The Star*, *Sarawak Tribune*, *Borneo Post*.

Only 64 percent of the total electorate eligible to cast their votes for 43 seats did so on election day, a decline of 5 percentage points from that for 1991 (69 percent voter turnout) and 9 percentage points from that for 1987 (73 percent voter turnout). Voter apathy was a major reason for the low turnout since many already considered a BN landslide win a foregone conclusion and did not make the effort to vote.⁴² When scrutinised over a longer period, declining voter turnouts arguably does seem to suggest a decline of interest in the electoral process as indicated in Table 2.⁴³

Table 2: Declining Voter Turnout in Sarawak, 1969-1996

Year	1969	1974	1979	1983	1987	1991	1996
Voter Turnout (%)	80.0	75.1	72.8	72.6	73.6	72.8	63.8
Decline/Increase (Percentage points) (Base year=1969)	-	- 4.9	- 7.2	- 7.4	- 7.0	- 7.2	- 16.2

Source: Malaysian Elections Commission.

Independent candidates made huge gains in terms of total voter support as indicated in Table 3. Collectively, the 60 independents secured 88,601 votes compared to a mere 6209 votes in 1991. Interestingly, many of these independents contested in and drew their support from constituencies which included those contested by the then opposition PBDS in 1987 and 1991. This time around, PBDS only garnered a total of 23,620 votes from six constituencies compared to the 79,548 (21 seats contested) and 106,892 votes (34 seats contested) it polled in 1987 and 1991 respectively. Thus, it is arguable that voters who would have voted for PBDS, had PBDS remained in opposition, maintained their commitment towards supporting the opposition in 1996 by voting for independents instead of the BN. More significantly, all political parties, whether the BN or the opposition DAP, saw a drop in their total voter support, trend made starker by the gains of the independents.⁴⁴

Table 3: Breakdown of Votes in 1991 and 1996 Sarawak State Elections

Political Party	PBB	PBDS	Independents	SUPP	DAP	SNAP
1991	145,534	104,936	6,209	126,105	46,549	29,462
1996	93,795	23,620	89,273	109,743	32,421	15,639
(+/- Votes)	-51,739	-81,316	+83,064	-16,362	-14,128	-13,823

Source: Sarawak Tribune, The Star

"Father Christmas"- Style Money Politics in the Election

As noted earlier, the BN's use of development patronage in awarding major contracts, licenses and land re-zoning, etc. to their political-business allies allows it to draw upon large amounts of financial resources from various timber tycoons and other business interests for their electoral war chests.⁴⁵ Such practices are common knowledge in Sarawak and have been used even before the formation of Malaysia by the British colonial administration to build up the wealth of particular personalities so as to facilitate their victory at the electoral box.⁴⁶ The use of money by the BN as well as by various opposition candidates to enhance their chances of electoral success continued in the 1996 elections. During and after the elections, numerous allegations and a court case illuminated how various politicians, their agents and supporters did use money to influence voters.

On September 30, independent candidate for Balingian, Yusuf Abdul Rahman filed an election petition in the Sibu High Court alleging "massive vote-buying

activities" by Abdul Ajis Abdul Majeed, the PBB/BN candidate.⁴⁷ The DAP alleged that certain elements in the Pelawan constituency were involved in vote-buying when someone found a purse containing five photocopied identity cards, voting centre information slips with voter registration numbers and five crisp new RM50 bills. The SUPP/BN candidate for Pelawan, Vincent Goh, immediately denied the allegations.⁴⁸ Awang Abdillah Awang Nasar, independent candidate for Jepak, alleged that "money politics had unfairly influenced voters in the constituency". Reportedly, Awang was approached many times by BN members "to solve things out". Although he denied taking any money himself, Awang claimed that many of his supporters deserted his campaign after they were bought over.⁴⁹ Donald Lawan, independent candidate for Bukit Begunan, made public allegations of money politics in the local news media during and after the elections. He alleged a non-Dayak from outside Bukit Begunan was influencing voters with personal benefits, ostensibly to return the BN to power in Bukit Begunan. After his defeat, Lawan went on public record to thank Sng Chee Hua, the multi-millionaire PBDS Vice-President, for playing a major role in helping the PBDS/BN candidate, Mong Dagang win the Bukit Begunan seat. Lawan subsequently filed an election petition seeking to nullify the Bukit Begunan election on grounds of vote buying. His petition was granted by the Election Court when it found that some persons had resorted to "extensively prevalent bribery" to influence the election on the BN candidate's behalf.⁵⁰ The opposition leader of the Malaysian Parliament, Lim Kit Siang alleged that up to "60 times the legal limit of RM30,000"⁵¹ was distributed in Bukit Begunan during the election. If he is to be believed, then the total amount of bribes distributed during the whole 1996 election campaign in exchange for votes could possibly be much larger considering that Lim was only referring to one constituency in the electoral contest. Rural voters also vividly recalled for this researcher how they received money at various times and at various functions during the election period, and often from both sides of the campaign.⁵² Pressmen who covered the campaign also recall how they were approached by rural voters who wanted to know whether they had brought money for distribution in their camera and press bags.⁵³

Money politics and gambling also affected the campaign of some BN politicians. The electorate had some very substantive reasons for not supporting Dr. Wong Soon Kai, the Deputy Chief Minister, SUPP President and candidate for Bukit Assek.⁵⁴ However, it later became obvious that Dr. Wong's defeat was also due to the existence of an illegal albeit "organised gambling syndicate" purportedly backed by one or more wealthy local billionaires. The syndicate offered great odds: 50:1000 for Dr. Wong to win,⁵⁵ meaning that if Dr. Wong lost, punters stood to gain RM1000 for every RM50 bet staked. Economically

rational punters thus took out huge bets and promptly voted against Dr. Wong and urged others to do the same to ensure a financial windfall. Thus, a straight-forward election contest was transformed into a multi-million ringgit horse-race! Apparently, two other SUPP/BN candidates for Meradong and Pelawan in the Sibu area were also similarly felled by the activities of the same gambling syndicate. The SUPP later alleged that they had fallen victim to vote-buying by various tycoons who had bankrolled certain candidates in an anti-SUPP campaign during the elections.⁵⁶

One cannot but conclude that the open use and distribution of money by some of the BN and independent candidates, and the involvement of shady gambling syndicates in order to influence voting-results is little more than a consequence of the long-standing custom of electoral patronage linked to earlier electoral contests, especially the closely contested 1987 elections. In that election, the then caretaker Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud admitted in an interview with Radio Australia that he had spent an estimated RM300,000 – RM500,000 per constituency⁵⁷ in an intense contest to secure electoral victory over his uncle, Abdul Rahman Ya'kub. Dr. George Chan, the current Deputy Chief Minister, correctly described this 'custom' as something which has "infected the state and which is now quite obvious".⁵⁸ This 'custom' however, is currently something more readily talked about rather than acted upon. After all, "which current politician in a closely fought election is going to be the first person to be bold enough to renounce money politics when there is so much at stake and when there are so many favours to repay?"⁵⁹

More importantly, such electoral practices reflect the numerous, deep and long-standing linkages between business and political actors. Sarawak politics has long been characterised by its instrumental "patron-client" relationships in which political patrons who enjoy "some coercive power and (or) official position of authority"⁶⁰ use their positions to endow business associates (clients) with development and infrastructure contracts, logging concessions, commercial licenses, land development titles, and so on. In return, business clients provide political patrons with financial and other resources which are then utilised in election campaigns to further the patron's involvement in politics. Otherwise, how else does one explain the easy access to the substantial and unofficial electoral war chests which the Sarawakian politicians enjoyed, evidence of which is seen in the huge amount of financial handouts made during elections as noted above? All the cash that is unofficially distributed as electoral largesse stems from private sources, the so-called "goodwill" financial donations from businessmen. Consequently, these businessmen receive government infrastructure contracts, development projects, commercial licenses and logging concessions as a reward for their financial contributions.

A brief discussion of these inter-linkages between the timber industry and political actors will illuminate this phenomenon of money politics in Sarawak. The timber industry in Sarawak is presently dominated by four major business concerns. "The Rimbunan Hijau group belongs to the family of Senator Tiong Hiew King. The WTK group is owned by Wong Tuong Kwang, The Samling group owned by Hiew Teck Seng and the KTS group owned by the family of Lau Hui Kang".⁶¹ At various times in the political history of Sarawak, many politicians have been closely linked or related to the families who run these timber concerns. Apart from Tiong himself who served as a senator in the Federal Parliament, "Rimbunan Hijau business associates have included a former speaker of the federal senate and James Wong, Sarawak's [erstwhile] Minister for Tourism and the Environment."⁶² Among the business associates of Wong Tuong Kuang (WTK) was a former state assemblyman from Marudi. WTK also has a son who is a senator, Wong Kie Yik. Similarly, among Hiew Teck Seng's alleged business associates was an assemblyman from Matu Daro also a prominent businessman. Lastly, Lau Hui Kang of the KTS group is also Chairman of the Sarawak Timber Association (STA). As Chairman of the STA, he is consulted on a regular basis by politicians in government. Establishing business associates would not be a problem for him. He is said to be close to the Chief Minister Taib".⁶³ Such relationships reflect the numerous, deep and long-standing linkages between business and political actors in Sarawak. They are also difficult to disassemble owing to the numerous powerful interests involved in perpetuating them.

CONCLUSION

In the end, the 1996 Sarawak State Elections, while tame, lacklustre and predictable compared to earlier elections, did throw up a few surprises. The loss of five seats, the low turnout and the large number of votes garnered by independents upset the BN's celebrations and their hopes of making a clean sweep of the elections. This was all the more glaring given the BN's mobilisation of huge amounts of public and private resources in its campaign for re-election under the guise of the POD strategy of delivering development to the people. That it was unfair and unethical to use public resources as electoral patronage in support of its own partisan political campaign did not seem to concern the BN. The "Father Christmas" attitude and behaviour of the BN coalition did, however, indicate a misunderstanding, deliberate or otherwise, on the part of the federal and state BN leadership, of the real role of a caretaker government in contrast to that of a government in office. It also pointed to the BN's lack of understanding of the concept of transparency and accountability of a government with regard to using public resources.

The use of the POD strategy as an essential component of its election campaign by the BN also points towards the entrenchment of a new and insidious political culture. While the POD, in its first dimension, is something welcome when applied appropriately and developed in tandem with a vibrant civil society, the POD strategy as currently promoted by the BN only serves to deepen electoral and development patronage. Such patronage only serves to corrupt the democratic process promoting instead a paternalistic system of government at best. In consequence, substantive democratic participation by the people in government and their influence over the desired pace and pattern of development has, over the years, been reduced in Sarawak. Increasingly, the democratic participatory space in development is being replaced by a debilitating and patronising "subsidy syndrome". This new political culture along with declining voter interest in electoral contests is worrying as it may well precipitate further non-participation in future elections as well as deepen general social apathy.

The BN's POD strategy also deliberately distorts the understanding of the substantive and complementary role an opposition should play with regard to the ruling party in a democracy. This role, when developed, could possibly contribute towards deepening democracy and enhancing economic development by allowing for the expression of different views and minority public opinions, the articulation of alternative development programmes, the scrutiny of proposed development projects, and the provision of a check and balance mechanism on possible ruling party excesses. No such constructive role for the opposition was perceived in the elections. Rather, the BN actively campaigned against the need of an opposition in the DUN, and smothered the opposition's electoral efforts via the POD. The smothering of the opposition by the BN in its quest to control all seats, if not at least a two-thirds majority in the DUN, illustrates how the POD strategy is quite asymmetrical to the BN's other oft expressed desire to achieve the objectives of Vision 2020 which includes ushering in a "mature democracy".

More corrupting, however, is the deepening culture of money politics, of resorting to direct financial handouts to influence voters and electoral outcomes. While many police reports and allegations about money politics were made in the elections, no candidate has yet been taken to task either by the police or the Election Commission. The failure of the responsible authorities to weed out the debilitating influence of money politics in electoral contests, despite the findings of the Election Court on the Bukit Begunan case, is worrying. One can only surmise that if left unchecked, the curse of money politics, together with power addiction and personal greed, will only grow and increasingly feed on the national interest.

Via its POD strategy, the BN had hoped to promote a new political culture in Sarawak, in which politics would be made subservient to the development needs of the people. While development has undoubtedly taken place in Sarawak, the POD strategy has also been used as a political tool to obscure the continued reliance of the BN on electoral patronage and money politics in its quest to retain political power in Sarawak. The main consequence of this practice is that the POD strategy serves the partisan political interests of BN politicians instead of serving the cause of development for all, irrespective of political persuasion. Indeed, current evidence suggests that the on-going practise of electoral patronage and money politics under the BN's POD strategy, has caused democracy and the peoples' long-term interests to become the main victims of Sarawak's electoral process.

NOTES

- ¹ The Barisan Nasional coalition holds power at the federal level and in 10 of the 11 states of Peninsular Malaysia as well as in Sabah and Sarawak. While the Barisan Nasional governs at both the federal level and in Sarawak, the mechanics of government are substantially different at the federal and the state levels. Due to the special rights accorded Sarawak (and Sabah) in 1963 when Malaysia was formed, the Sarawak Barisan Nasional rules with considerably more autonomy than its counterparts in the peninsular states. See Francis Loh, "Sabah: One of Thirteen or One of Three", *Aliran Monthly*, 10(8), 1990 pp25-28. for a more detailed discussion of these rights. For the purpose of this paper, I use the acronym BN to refer to the Sarawak Barisan Nasional unless explicitly stated otherwise.
- ² For an account of the PBDS' role in and out of government with regard to the 1987 & 1991 elections, see Richard Mason, "Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak and the Sarawak State Elections of 1987 and 1991", *Kajian Malaysia*, XIII(1), June 1995, pp. 26-58.
- ³ Mahmud, Abdul Taib, "The Politics of Development: Roles of and the Challenges for the Elected Representatives", in *Jurnal Azam*, VIII(2), November 1992, p.2
- ⁴ Mahmud, "Politics of Development", p. 2
- ⁵ The BN has, for years, presented itself as the only party capable of fulfilling the development aspirations of the people. It is however, only recently, that this image has been systematically articulated as the "Politics of Development" by Abdul Taib Mahmud.
- ⁶ Abdul Taib Mahmud is the nephew of Rahman Ya'kub and was chosen to succeed his uncle when Rahman Ya'kub became Governor of Sarawak in 1981. Abdul Taib Mahmud was for a long time the most senior PBB member next to Rahman Ya'kub.

Mahmud's forceful criticism of Rahman Ya'kub's administration was effectively the culmination of a power struggle between the first and second echelon leadership of the PBB which was eventually to "redefine which group had access to wealth". Quoted in Jayum Jawan, *Iban Politics and Economic Development. Their Patterns and Change*, Bangi, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Press, 1994, pp. 141-142.

- ⁷ Mahmud, "Politics of Development" p.4
- ⁸ See Michael Leigh (1991), "Money Politics and Dayak Nationalism: The 1987 Sarawak State Election", in Muhammad Ikmal Said & Johan Savaranamuttu (eds.), *Images of Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, Persatuan Sains Sosial Malaysia; and F. Majid Cooke, "The Politics of "Sustainability" in Sarawak", in *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 27(2), 1997, pp. 217-241.
- ⁹ Majid Cooke, "Politics of Sustainability", p.227
- ¹⁰ The distribution of electoral largesse has also been documented by other researchers like R.S. Milne and K.J.Ratnam (1974), *New States in a New Nation*, London, Frank Cass; Leigh, "Money Politics"; and Majid Cooke, "Politics of Sustainability"
- ¹¹ Personal interviews with members of the public, April 1996. That such perceptions existed is not in doubt. The veracity of such views however was but another matter.
- ¹² Personal interviews with members of the public, April 1996.
- ¹³ The earlier re-delineation exercise of 1995 saw the creation of six new state constituencies in Sarawak for the 1996 election. These new seats were Jepak, Kota Semariang, Nangka, Senadin, Kedup and Ba'kelalan. A total of 62 seats were thus up for grabs in the 1996 election compared to 48 seats and 56 seats in the 1987 and 1991 elections respectively.
- ¹⁴ The Sarawak Tribune and its sister Malay-language daily *Utusan Sarawak* are currently owned and controlled by various members of the Melanau faction of the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) who are closely aligned to the Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud.
- ¹⁵ The exceptions were the local Chinese press and the *Borneo Post* which provided a much more balanced reports of both government and opposition views in the run-up to and during the elections.
- ¹⁶ But even the Sarawak DAP, in the run-up to the elections, was in the beginning throes of disarray because of disputes between its English and Chinese educated factions. These disputes burst onto the scene during the elections. Despite a majority decision of the DAP State Committee and the national party leadership to field only one candidate (Ng Kim Ho) in the Padungan constituency in the Kuching parliamentary

area, disgruntled elements within the DAP Stampin Branch put up two of their own candidates, Chua Chiou Kuia and Ting Kee Kai who contested the Batu Lintang and Pending seats respectively, as independents. Both these seats are also in the Kuching parliamentary area and adjoin the Padungan seat. Both independents used the Tiger head symbol (thus public reference to them as the Tiger candidates) and both campaigned that a vote for them meant a vote for the DAP. It is alleged that the presence of the Tiger candidates severely interfered with Ng Kim Ho's campaign in Padungan which subsequently contributed to his defeat (Personal interview, DAP Kuching Parliamentary Committee Member, December 1996).

¹⁷ Mahmud, "Politics of Development", p.4

¹⁸ Dimbab Ngidang, "The Politics of Development in Longhouse Communities in Sarawak, East Malaysia", *Development in Practice*, 5(4), 1995, p.306

¹⁹ Jawan, "Iban Politics", p.148

²⁰ For a more detailed account, see Mason, "Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak", p.41 and Ngidang, "Longhouse Committees", p.310

²¹ Mason, "Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak", p.47-48

²² This does not mean, however, that opposition parties or independents do not win elections. On the contrary, they do and sometimes against formidable odds. But such victories only occur if and when the electorate perceives a political party as capable of winning a sizeable number of seats; or when charismatic and popular individuals contest as independents; or as a protest against BN candidates who do not perform to expectations; or when the electorate perceives the distribution of benefits from development projects and programmes to be going against their interests.

²³ *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 August 1996

²⁴ *Sarawak Tribune*, 7 August 1996

²⁵ *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 August 1996

²⁶ *Sarawak Tribune*, 12 August 1996

²⁷ Belaga was a risky seat on account of two key factors. Firstly, there existed deep dissatisfaction of the local electorate towards the building of the Bakun dam and over the relocation/compensation plans of whole longhouses affected by the dam. Secondly, the electorate was also criticise of the out-going PBB assemblyman whom they did not regard as having adequately represented their interests to the state government.

- ²⁸ Michael Leigh, "Is There Development in Sarawak? Political Goals and Practice", in James C. Jackson & Martin Rudner, (eds.), *Issues in Malaysian Development*, Singapore, Heinemann Asia, 1979, p.371
- ²⁹ Personal interviews with members of the public, August 1996.
- ³⁰ See Edmund Gomez, Terence and Jomo K.S., *Malaysia's Political Economy. Politics, Patronage and Profits*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- ³¹ Personal interview, PBDS Executive Committee Member, April 1996.
- ³² This figure is possibly higher given the probability that some official direct financial grants went unreported in the media.
- ³³ This figure should be higher. The media reported the financial cost of only some of the infrastructure projects officially declared open or launched during the campaign period by the BN. Project costs for other projects officially declared open like the Todong-Batu Kawa Road project, the Miri hospital, the new Dalat township, new Dalat hospital, the Sibu Town Square project, and the Stenggang Oil Palm Estate went unreported.
- ³⁴ This figure should be higher too. Reported in the media but unaccounted for in financial terms were two big projects announced by James Wong, State Minister for the Environment, who pledged a low cost housing project of 700 houses and a new airport to the people of his Limbang constituency (*Sarawak Tribune*, 28 August 1996).
- ³⁵ "Bitter" because such handouts come with a veiled threat by the BN of the severance of public services and future development projects if voters do not show their gratitude towards the BN by voting for them. "Sweet" because oftentimes, many rural constituencies seldom receive the fawning attention of the ruling party nor that of their would be elected representatives until election time when numerous development projects and financial windfalls are showered upon them from on high.
- ³⁶ This list is at best a partial one. It does not include the projects reported in the media between the dissolution of the DUN on 15 August and nomination day on 27 August. Projects which were announced between 15-23 August when unofficial campaigning took place, prior to nomination day are also not included. Note also that only official projects are listed. This list does not include other "non-official financial handouts" (i.e. bribes) distributed by some BN candidates and independents during the election.
- ³⁷ *Sarawak Tribune*, 3 September 1996; *Borneo Post*, 3 September 1996
- ³⁸ *Sarawak Tribune*, 9 September 1996

- ³⁹ A few years ago, the JKR, a federal government agency, charged with providing public works projects, began identifying JKR projects as 'Jasa Kepada Rakyat' projects. Translated this means, 'good deeds for the people' projects. This is a good example of how the Federal and State BN governments attempt to give the impression that the publicly funded projects are benefits provided by the ruling political party.
- ⁴⁰ This particular mode of campaigning was very effective since most rural Sarawakians primarily rely on their radios for news and entertainment.
- ⁴¹ The close links the ruling BN has with large business concerns and the politics-business patronage relationship is a mutually beneficial one.
- ⁴² Personal interviews with members of the public; September 1996.
- ⁴³ There are some discrepancies in the figures quoted in this table compared to those in Table 1. Table 1 drew from various sources and there were different figures in different publications which had to be checked and reconciled to the best of this researcher's ability.
- ⁴⁴ It is beyond the scope of this paper to speculate about the real reasons for this trend except to note that it warrants further investigation.
- ⁴⁵ See R.S. Milne, "Patrons, Clients and Ethnicity: The Case of Sarawak and Sabah in Malaysia", in *Asian Survey*, XIII (10), October 1973, 891-908. See also Leigh "Money Politics" ; Jawan "Iban Politics" and Majid Cooke, "Politics of Sustainability".
- ⁴⁶ For a more detail account of colonial patronage and early-Malaysia political patronage, see T'ien Ju-K'ang, *The Chinese of Sarawak: A Study of Social Structure*, Monograph on Social Anthropology, Nr.12, London, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1950. See also R.S. Milne "Patrons, Clients and Ethnicity" and Ratnam and Milne *New States*
- ⁴⁷ *Borneo Post*, 1 October 1996
- ⁴⁸ *Borneo Post*, 5 September 1996
- ⁴⁹ *Borneo Post*, 14 September 1996
- ⁵⁰ *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 February 1997
- ⁵¹ DAP Press Release quoted in Andrew Aeria, "Election Bribery Exposed", in *Aliran Monthly*, 17(1), 1997, p.4.
- ⁵² Apart from direct financial handouts, other inducements like liquor, food and other

provisions are also distributed. (Personal interviews, members of the public, Tasik Biru, September 1996 and Bukit Begunan, March 1997).

⁵³ Personal interviews with various journalists, September 1996.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of these reasons, see Andrew Aeria, "Winds of Change. An Analysis of the 1996 Sarawak State Elections", in *Aliran Monthly*, 16(9), 1996, pp.33-40.

⁵⁵ *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 September 1996

⁵⁶ *Borneo Post*, 13 September 1997

⁵⁷ Radio Australia Interview with John Lombard, 11 April 1987, quoted in Leigh "Money Politics" pp. 192. Leigh observes that these estimated expenses only reflect expenditures by one side of the electoral contest. The overall figures should thus be much higher if expenditure by both parties are taken into consideration.

⁵⁸ *The Star*, 16 February 1997

⁵⁹ Aeria, "Election Bribery Exposed"

⁶⁰ Milne, "Patrons, Clients and Ethnicity"

⁶¹ Majid Cooke "Politics of Sustainability"

⁶² *Asian Wall Street Journal*. 7 February 1990, quoted in Majid-Cooke, "Politics of Sustainability" pp. 227.

⁶³ *Asiaweek*, 25 November 1988 quoted in Majid Cooke. "Politics of Sustainability", pp. 227.

APPENDIX

Politics of Development and Electoral Handouts: A Partial Compilation of Statements and Official Development Project and Financial Handouts During the Seventh Sarawak State Election Campaign, 15 August - 8 September 1996.

- William Mawan, caretaker Assistant Minister for Finance and Public Utilities, presents state grants worth RM51,000 to 82 recipients at the Pakan District Office (*Sarawak Tribune*, 24 August 1996).
- James Masing, caretaker Assistant Minister for Tourism, announces that the BN "will offer projects, some running into millions of ringgit, which will not only benefit one or two but also many people" (*Sarawak Tribune*, 24 August 1996).
- Sng Chee Hua, PBDS/BN candidate for Pelagus, makes a press statement saying there is no room for macho politicians in Sarawak ostensibly because "...some candidates spend millions out of their own pockets in their constituencies. So, the question that all aspiring candidates should ask is whether they can deliver if they are elected" (*Borneo Post*, 25 August 1996).
- Abang Hj. Abdul Rahman Zohari, caretaker Minister for Industrial Development, presents a state government grant of RM600,000 for street lights at the Satok/Kg. Patingan area (*Borneo Post*, 26 August 1996).
- Abang Hj. Abdul Rahman Zohari presents a state government grant of RM30,000 to the Chung Hwa Middle School Alumni Association (*Borneo Post*, 27 August 1996).
- Celestine Ujang, state assemblyman (ADUN) (returned unopposed) for Kemena, presents Temporary Occupational Licences (TOL) to 69 people at Bintulu and urges them to support the BN in the forthcoming state elections (*Borneo Post*, 27 August 1996).
- William Mawan presents cheques worth RM128,000 to 52 longhouses and two primary schools at Bayong and Sbangkoi in Sarikei (*Borneo Post*, 27 August 1996).
- Abdul Taib Mahmud, ADUN for Asajaya (returned unopposed) and caretaker Chief Minister, declares open the Tondong-Batu Kawa road

project in Bau District (*Utusan Borneo*, 29 August 1996). He also announces the proposed new Bau township project at a cost of more than RM10 million.

- James Wong, ADUN (returned unopposed) for Limbang, pledges to build 700 new low-cost houses and a new airport for Limbang for returning him unopposed on nomination day (*Sarawak Tribune*, 28 August 1996).
- Sim Kheng Hui, the BN candidate for Pending, distributes RM315,000 in Sarawak state grants to 52 local organisations at the SUPP Headquarters in Kuching (*Sarawak Tribune*, 28 August 1996).
- Sulaiman Daud, federal Minister of Agriculture and PBB Vice-President, hands over *pukat tunda* licences to 105 people from 13 villages in Kuching District and *sampan* licences to 278 people from 18 villages (*Borneo Post*, 30 August 1996).
- Abang Hj. Abdul Rahman Zohari, BN candidate for Satok, announces an allocation of RM1 million in state and federal grants for the rehabilitation of tiger prawn aquaculture projects at Mukah (*Borneo Post*, 30 August 1996).
- Abdul Taib Mahmud, together with Chua Jui Meng, federal Minister of Health, opens the new Miri hospital in Lopeng and announces the federal government's approval of 72 health projects worth RM345 million in Sarawak under the Seventh Malaysia Plan (*Utusan Borneo*, 31 August 1996).
- James Wong announces a state government allocation of RM1.6 million to the Subis District Council in the Lambir constituency to improve infrastructure (*Borneo Post*, 31 August 1996).
- Abdul Taib Mahmud officiates at the joint earth-breaking ceremony for the new Dalat Township and the new Dalat District Hospital (*Sarawak Tribune*, 2 September 1996).
- Abdul Taib Mahmud announces the Igan bridge project at West Sibu worth RM40 million under the Seventh Malaysia Plan (*Utusan Borneo*, 3 September 1996).
- Abdul Taib Mahmud launches the new Sibu Town Square (*Borneo Post*, 3 September 1996).

- Abdul Taib Mahmud terminates the RM10 million offer to redevelop the Bau township citing that it had been turned into a political issue by Dr. Patau Rubis, the opposition State Reform Party candidate for Tasik Biru. Abdul Taib Mahmud also opines that the Bau Chinese shopkeepers do not support the new township (*Sarawak Tribune*, 3 September 1996).
- George Chan, BN candidate for Piasau, presents a Sarawak state government grant of RM50,000 for a football field project at Miri (*Borneo Post*, 4 September 1996).
- Sualiman Daud presents seeds, agricultural equipment and grants to various bodies and schools at Kg. Selanyau-Danau, Subis, and calls on voters to support Aidan Wing, the BN candidate for Lambir (*Borneo Post*, 4 September 1996).
- George Chan commissions a RM677,000 electricity supply project for Kg. Skio, Kg. Segubang, Kg. Seromah and Kg. Sogo at the Serumbu area (*Borneo Post*, 5 September 1996).
- Dr. Wong Soon Kai, BN candidate for Bukit Assek and caretaker Deputy Chief Minister, announces that the Sarawak state government has approved a tax exemption fund of RM3 million for the Sibü Sacred Heart Chinese School (*Borneo Post*, 5 September 1996).
- Abdul Taib Mahmud opens the RM450,000 Belaga Information Department (*Borneo Post*, 5 September 1996).
- Abdul Taib Mahmud pledges RM20 million for Tasik Biru facilities (*New Straits Times*, 6 September 1996).
- Abang Hj. Abdul Rahman Zohari announces a federal government allocation of RM624,700 for a rural area project at the Serdeng constituency (*Borneo Post*, 6 September 1996).
- Anwar Ibrahim, Deputy Prime Minister, initiates the Simunjan water treatment project worth RM17 million and launches the Jalan Bukit Punda-Simunjan road upgrading project. Anwar Ibrahim also launches an oil palm estate project in Stenggang, Bau District, and later opens the RM30 million Tun Jugah interchange in Kuching (*New Straits Times*, 6 September 1996).