ELECTORAL DYNAMICS IN SARAWAK
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ELECTORAL DYNAMICS IN SARAWAK
CONTESTING DEVELOPMENTALISM AND RIGHTS

Edited by Meredith L. Weiss and Arnold Puyok

Strategic Information and Research Development Centre
Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
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This volume presents the findings of one prong of a multi-year, multi-country, many-person effort to examine the role of political networks and patronage flows as part of electoral cycles in Southeast Asia. In connection with that project, we have thus far deployed large teams across Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines to conduct ethnographic field research on the conduct of elections: Malaysia’s 13th general election in 2013, Indonesia’s legislative election in 2014, the Philippines’ general election in 2016, and now the Sarawak state election, also in 2016. (Plans to include the Thai general election of 2015 were disrupted by the coup and subsequent emergency rule.) Guided by a set of central research questions and concepts, the researchers, distributed among a reasonably representative set of electoral districts, track the conduct of the campaign there, as situated within local history, issues, and socioeconomic context. The approach allows subnational, national, and cross-national comparisons about the composition, function, penetration, and durability of political networks; the mix and relative prevalence of material, affective, and ideological factors shaping voting behaviour; and the balance among individual-level (particularistic), community-level (meso-particularistic), and non-contingent and non-exclusive (programmatic) policies elections are likely to produce.

This effort is very much a collective endeavour, reliant on a large number of individuals and institutions. Our primary debt in this case is to the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), including Dean Neilson Ilan Mersat. A team of researchers from UNIMAS (supplemented by one Sarawakian from Universiti Malaya) participated in the research; four from that group...
went on to contribute chapters to this volume, based on their findings. That team put tremendous effort into what is inherently challenging research and writing; the chapters here aim to present empirically rich and analytically trenchant, thought-provoking contributions to the study of politics in Sarawak and Malaysia generally. Credit is due also to the co-principal investigators of the overarching project, together with editor Weiss: Edward Aspinall (who participated also in the workshop to develop this volume), Allen Hicken, and Paul Hutchcroft. The support of all three has been invaluable.

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Glossary & Definitions

1MDB  1Malaysia Development Berhad
ADMO  Alliance Direct Membership Organisation
Amanah Parti Amanah Negara, National Trust Party
BN  Barisan Nasional, National Front
Bumiputera  Malays and non-Malay indigenous peoples of Malaysia
Ceramah  Political rallies, usually centred around stump-speeches
DAP  Democratic Action Party
EC  Election Commission (see SPR)
Gotong-royong  Cooperative community work effort
JASA  Jabatan Hal Ehwal Khas, Department of Special Affairs
JKKK  Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung, Village Security and Development Committee
KEMAS  Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat, Community Development Department
NCR  Native customary rights (particularly to land)
PAS  Parti Islam seMalaysia, Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party
PBB  Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu, United Bumiputera Heritage Party
PBDSB  Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak Baru, New Sarawak Dayak People’s Party
Pembangkang  Political opposition
PKR  Parti Keadilan Rakyat, People’s Justice Party
Electoral Dynamics in Sarawak

PRS
Parti Rakyat Sarawak, Sarawak People’s Party

S4S
Sarawak for Sarawakians

SABERKAS
Pertubuhan Belia Kebangsaan Bersatu Sarawak, Sarawak United National Youth Organisation

SIB
Sidang Injil Borneo, Borneo Evangelical Mission

SNAP
Sarawak National Action Party

SPDP
Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party

SPR
Suruhanjaya Pilihan Raya, Election Commission (see EC)

SSE
Sarawak state election

STAR
State Reform Party

SUPP
Sarawak United People’s Party

TERAS
Parti Tenaga Rakyat Sarawak, Sarawak People’s Energy Party

_Turun padang_
Going ‘down to the ground’ (walkabouts)

_Ubah_
Change

UEC
Unified Examination Certificate

UMNO
United Malays National Organisation

UPP
United People’s Party
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