

Chapter 1

Introduction:

The Electoral System's Impact on Outcomes

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PREAMBLE

Much has occurred on the political stage even within a year after the 13th general election (GE13) on 5 May 2013. In terms of electoral politics, there have been six by-elections at the time of writing; one resulted from the untimely death of Karpal Singh, the veteran Democratic Action Party (DAP) politician, and another from the death of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) Menteri Besar of Kedah. The by-elections were held in Kuala Besut (Terengganu state seat) on 24 July 2013; Sungai Limau (Kedah state seat) on 19 October 2013; Kajang (Selangor state seat) on 23 March 2014; Bukit Gelugor (Penang parliamentary seat) on 25 May 2014; Teluk Intan (Perak parliamentary seat) on 31 May 2014; and Pengkalan Kubor (Kelantan state seat) on 25 September 2014.

Barisan Nasional (BN) retained the Kuala Besut seat, thus holding on to its thin two-seat majority in the state. This was to prove a little problematic later when the Menteri Besar of Terengganu and another member of the State Assembly announced that they had resigned from the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) in mid-May 2014, although they soon recanted their intention to do so.¹ The Kajang by-election was a complex move by the Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) to initially provide its leader Anwar Ibrahim with the opportunity to be in the Selangor state government,

if not even to undertake leadership of the state. In the event, Wan Azizah Ismail, his wife, stood in his place and won the seat after Anwar was disqualified on technical grounds. Bukit Gelugor proved to be a 'shoo-in' for Karpal Singh's son, Ramkarpal, who won the seat with a majority of 41,242 votes. All his three opponents lost their deposits.² BN retained the Pengkalan Kubor seat with a larger majority when UMNO's Mat Razi Mat Ali defeated his PAS opponent by 2,635 votes.

Of the six by-elections, the Teluk Intan contest proved to be the most interesting. DAP took a major risk by choosing the 27-year-old Dyana Sofya Mohd Daud, Lim Kit Siang's political secretary, largely to test the waters of non-ethnic voting or, alternatively, for DAP to build up Malay support in a Chinese-majority but mixed constituency. Party strategists such as Tony Pua (who orchestrated the campaigning) and Ong Kian Ming were also trying to improve DAP's image as a multiracial party. Dyana's image of youth, her gender and good looks generated a political reflexivity quite beyond the party's calculations, but certainly captured the national imagination. In the event, she lost to the veteran BN candidate Mah Siew Keong, Gerakan party's president, by only 238 votes. Voter turnout of 67 per cent was inadequate to swing a sufficiently large number of Chinese voters to her favour and she lost a significant 15 per cent of Chinese votes to Mah. This could be explained by the lack of outstation voters, probably young, who did not – or could not – return to vote in this by-election. However, Dyana did pick up 3 per cent more Malay votes while losing 10 per cent of Indian votes.³

Also impacting on the political scene since the GE13 has been the resurrection of the issue of hudud (Islamic criminal law). This surfaced after PAS indicated its intention in April 2014 to implement hudud in Kelantan. PAS had planned to introduce an enabling legislation for hudud through Parliament, angling for support from UMNO members. However, the Islamic party retracted its move after the Najib government apparently approved the setting up of a national-level technical committee, with PAS's involvement and participation, to study the long-term feasibility of hudud.⁴ This political development could have grave implications for the future of coalition and power-sharing politics in Malaysia as non-Muslim parties in both the ruling and Opposition coalitions are steadfastly opposed to the implementation of hudud.

From about February till late September of 2014, a series of events gave rise to what has been dubbed the Selangor Menteri Besar (MB) crisis. It all started when PKR sacked incumbent MB Khalid Ibrahim when he refused to relinquish his post as MB and the Opposition alliance, Pakatan Rakyat (PR), could not come to a unanimous decision to accept Wan Azizah Ismail as the new MB. Furthermore, the Sultan of Selangor rejected PKR's first choice, Wan Azizah, who had won the Kajang by-election mentioned above. The crisis was eventually resolved on 23 September when the Sultan appointed PKR's Azmin Ali as the MB. The crisis brought PR to near collapse, but the appointment of Azmin Ali to the post seems to have restored the status quo.⁵

We will now briefly discuss the character of Malaysia's electoral system, its history, the amendments made to it, its biases, and the manner it has given great advantage to the ruling coalition. We give primary focus in this introduction to how the structure of the electoral system has affected the outcome of elections and to provide the reader with an overall frame for understanding the nuances of electoral results at various levels of contestation and on different terrains of political contests. Most importantly, we hope to shed light on how or whether a stable two-party or two-coalition system could eventually emerge in Malaysian electoral politics despite the constraints of the electoral system.

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Malaysia's two-coalition electoral politics has remained in place since the watershed 2008 election when the ruling coalition BN lost its customary two-thirds control of Parliamentary seats. In the much-anticipated GE13, which is the subject of this book, there was the not unreasonable expectation that BN could slip even further. In the event, BN lost the popular vote to PR but still retained the reins of government. What seemed to be increasingly evident in Malaysia's electoral politics was that the ruling coalition, which has helmed Malaysia for more than five decades, may have lost its 'first mover advantage' and was only able to hold on to power due in particular to the character of Malaysia's electoral model – its first-past-the-post (FPTP) single member plurality system. This sort of system has given rise, in the parlance of electoral studies, to 'manufactured majorities', i.e. electoral outcomes that confer a majority of seats (simple or large) to a single party or

a coalition of parties which do not command a majority of the popular vote. As stated by Douglas Rae in his classic work on the political consequences of electoral laws, parliamentary majorities can be achieved in two basic ways: by winning a majority of the popular vote and receiving a proportionate number of seats or by winning less than a majority of the popular vote but receiving a bonus of seats as an artefact of the electoral system. The first type of majority is 'earned', while the second type is 'manufactured' (Rae, 1967: 74–7).⁶

Malaysia's FPTP system, imbued as it is with a generous proportion of 'rural weightage', continues to favour BN, oftentimes generating large manufactured parliamentary majorities.⁷ This feature has led to a massive mal-apportionment of seats to constituencies that are the traditional strongholds of BN. While mal-apportionment is not inherently a function of the FPTP system, Malaysia is now famously among the worst culprits on this score, in the same league as Zambia and Ghana.⁸ Without doubt, the rural constituencies have favoured BN while the urban middle classes, now constituting a majority of voters in urban and semi-urban constituencies, have clearly shown a preference for the Opposition coalition. However, these constituencies do not command a majority of seats in Parliament. Some may argue that electoral politics has reached an impasse but, after two general elections, Malaysia's two-coalition system seems to have gained some traction and, thanks to federalism, PR has considerable control of state governments in the Malay heartland and control of the more urbanised states of Selangor and Penang.

Malaya's electoral system as it stands today harks back to the 1954 report of the Constituency Delineation Commission for the Federation of Malaya, headed by Lord Merthyr (hereafter, Merthyr Commission), which recommended the delimitation of the 52 constituencies in Malaya's first federal election of 1955.⁹ The report goes into considerable detail in making its recommendations, including the reasons for the adoption of the FPTP single-member constituency model and the reasons for the appropriate system of electoral representation that should be adopted in the then Malayan Federation. The issues of apportionment or distribution of voters and rural weightage and their rationale were considered along with the role and powers to be given to the Election Commission. The Reid Commission, which crafted the Malayan Constitution, largely adopted an electoral system

based on that proposed by the Merthyr Commission, but it was no doubt also influenced by the conduct of the first election of the Members of the Legislative Council of the Federation of Malaya held in 1955. The smooth conduct of that election coupled with the detailed study by the Merthyr Commission no doubt gave assurance to the Reid Commission in their recommendations for the kind of electoral system to be established in an independent Federation of Malaya.

The Commission first recommended that the 1955 legislature be dissolved by 1959 (under provisions of Article 154 of the new Constitution) so that elections for the newly constituted Malayan Parliament could be held between 1 January and 30 August 1959.¹⁰ The delimitation of constituencies was to be undertaken by an independent Election Commission of three members appointed by the Yang Di Pertuan Agong, with the authority and status equivalent to Supreme Court judges (Article 108).¹¹ As they say, these decisions are now history. There have been many amendments to the manner in which Malaysian elections are now conducted and many of their earlier procedural features and constraints on executive control have been greatly eroded. Although significant changes were introduced, the simple plurality single-constituency FPTP model has remained intact. The first major change that was made to the electoral system occurred in the early 1960s.

The first review of the electoral constituencies was initiated by the Election Commission (EC) soon after the 1959 general election, but was not well received by UMNO which had lost Malay ground to PAS, particularly in the east coast states of Kelantan and Terengganu.¹² The government then introduced the Constitutional (Amendment) Act 1962 'that not only annulled the revised constituencies but also removed the EC's final power of decision on electoral constituencies and transferred it to a simple majority in parliament' (Lim, 2005: 253). This meant that henceforth the EC could only submit reviews to the Prime Minister, who can make revisions before they are presented to Parliament. The 1962 Act also effectively annulled the EC's new delineations and reverted them to the 1959 situation and virtually emasculated the EC's impartial and independent role in constituency delimitations.

The next round of amendments to the electoral system came in 1973. The context was the 1969 general election, which had sparked ethnic rioting

on 13 May. Following the Alliance's worst ever outcome, amendments to the constitution included proscribing discussion of 'sensitive' issues such as the position of the Malays and the rulers and the stopping of all public rallies during election campaigns. The Alliance then morphed into the current Barisan Nasional (BN) which brought many more parties into its fold on the Peninsula and in East Malaysia. The New Economic Policy (NEP), the affirmative action policy for Bumiputeras, was also subsequently proclaimed and implemented. Obviously it was not just the electoral system that was restructured; the very character of the political regime also changed. The material change that occurred with regard to electoral politics came in the form of the Constitutional (Amendment) Act (No. 2) of 1973. This act removed the EC's power to apportion parliamentary constituencies among states and the number was now specified in Article 46 of the Federal Constitution, amendable by the government with a two-thirds majority vote. The 1973 Act also removed numeral or percentage limits to rural weightage with the wordings 'a measure of weightage ought to be given to such (i.e. rural) constituencies' (Lim, 2002: 111). Another change was the creation of the federal territory of Kuala Lumpur, whose non-Malay voters had probably caused the 1969 impasse in the Selangor state election which, some argue, sparked the KL riots.

Another important change to the electoral system came in 1990.¹³ An amendment to the Elections Act of 1958 enabled votes to be counted at polling stations; also, voters would vote according to their respective 'streams' (*saluran*), each of which was initially capped at a maximum of 700 voters but over time could exceed 1000 voters. The *saluran* system has turned out to be a positive rather than a negative development and allowed for a more efficient administration of voting. The fear of victimisation is more likely to be of importance in rural (rather than urban) constituencies, where streams are small in number and voting preferences can easily be identified. However, the sword cuts both ways as the Opposition could also use the fine data obtained from *saluran* votes to identify and target areas of support and weakness.

At intervals of no less than eight years, a review of electoral boundaries or delimitations must be undertaken by the EC. The most extensive enhancement of constituencies occurred after the 1999 general election, from July 2002 till May 2003. Prior to this there had been

delimitation exercises in 1974, 1984 and 1994. Up until 2003, the EC's own strictures allowed for disparities of 3.5 times between the smallest and largest constituencies. Controversy always revolved around the EC's implementation of a highly liberal measure of rural weightage, with DAP voicing objections every time a delineation exercise was carried out. After the 1984 exercise, DAP leader Lim Kit Siang argued that rural weightage had nullified the one-man-one-vote principle and even MCA was unhappy with the extent of the de-amplification of the urban vote (Lim, 2005: 266–7). Alarm bells were also sounded by civil society groups prior to the 1999 GE, with the *suqiu* group of Chinese organisations calling for a return to the 15 per cent upper limit of discrepancy between constituencies (Loh and Saravanamuttu, 2003: 13, 284). Delineation exercises have evidently hugely benefited UMNO through rural weightage and a disproportionate number of Malay-majority constituencies, which today is arguably also an advantage to PAS. Interestingly, the disproportionate electoral power given to the Bumiputera communities of Sabah and Sarawak has also become salient and crucial to Malaysian politics. This could, of course, be justified as an affirmative action owing to the economic underdevelopment of the two states. However, as noted by analysts, federal electoral manipulations of these states also produce their own reflexive local impacts, intended or otherwise (Loh, 2005). As noted by Lim (2005: 270), the 1994 exercise in Sabah raised to 26 (out of 48) the previous 18 Bumiputera-majority constituencies, thus effectively placing control of the state government in the hands of the Muslim Bumiputera who comprised 40 per cent of the population. The Sabah re-delineations provided the structural basis for UMNO's entry into Sabah state politics, and by 1999 it effectively captured state power via BN.¹⁴ In the more complex situation of Sarawak, it was allotted 62 state constituencies in the state-level exercise of 1995, but no group controls a majority of them, with Muslim-Melanau Bumiputera in effective power with about 28 per cent of the population while Dayaks (mainly divided between Iban and Bidayuh) comprise about 40 per cent of the population. According to Lim (2002: 271), delineations in Sarawak have clearly benefited the Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB), UMNO's electoral partner, giving it clout to resist Dayak electoral inroads.

The outcome of the 1999 GE, which saw PAS making considerable inroads into UMNO territory, no doubt gave great impetus for the new

delimitation exercise conducted from July 2002 to May 2003 which created 25 new Parliamentary seats and 53 new state seats. As the Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives) was about to approve the delineations on 8 April 2003, 44 opposition members walked out as a protest against both the proposal and BN's alleged abuse of parliamentary procedure.¹⁵ DAP's challenge against the delineations under the EC's grievance process had earlier been rejected by the EC's chairman on the grounds that 'although [DAP] did submit a personal letter asking me to reconsider the State's proposal on the delineation, [it] could not come up with a counter proposal which can grant a representation to be made and enable the EC to conduct [a] local inquiry to hear and consider appeals or objections.'¹⁶ Many of the new delimitations seem to ignore population trends. For example, Selangor, with a population of 4.19 million and an annual growth rate of 6.1 per cent since the 1991 census, received five new seats while Johor, with a population of 2.74 million and an annual growth rate of 2.6 per cent, was granted six new seats. The 2003 delimitation produced the highest population variations of any delimitation exercise. The Johor Bahru constituency had an electorate of approximately 90,000 voters while Lenggong (in Perak) had about 21,000 voters, a disparity of over 325 per cent.

A study by Brown (2005) dissects the 2003 delineations, but also draws extensively from electoral data in the 1986, 1990, 1991 and 1999 exercises. Brown makes the argument that the most recent delineations could have actually reduced ethnic bias (i.e. Malay electoral strength) and given more advantage to particular geographical areas and distributions of ethnicity favourable to BN. This may have been BN's manner of checking PAS's advance in the 1999 GE, but it also had unintended consequences by 2008. Brown's interesting thesis provides us with the basis for an important explanation of why the 2003 delineations may not have been structurally detrimental to the Opposition coalition, which had begun to adopt electoral strategies much like those of BN to gain cross-ethnic votes in mixed seats.

Brown's study shows that the FPTP electoral system had always favoured BN by conferring it large 'manufactured majorities' and thus until 2004 the ruling coalition had consistently won a two-thirds majority in Parliament despite capturing much less than that proportion of popular votes, as shown in Table 1.1. Extrapolating from Brown's analysis, one could argue that the new delineations of 2003 were of definite benefit to BN up until 2004, when

it was able to capitalise on particularly the mixed seats in the impressive swing of popular votes to the Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (Pak Lah) regime. However, by the same token, when the electoral swing went against Pak Lah in 2008, the vast majority of mixed seats went to the Opposition, thus explaining the 'political tsunami' of that election. In 2013, as the analyses in this book will show, the Opposition coalition has continued to hold sway in the mixed seats while losing some ground in the Malay constituencies and failing to gain a significant foothold in rural seats in East Malaysia. Table 1.1 shows the outcome of elections in terms of votes and seats won since 1959, illustrating synoptically how the ruling coalition has held sway over all general elections although it had lost the popular vote in 1969 and 2013 and came within a hair's breath of losing it in 2008.

Table 1.1: Percentage of Vote Share and Seats Won

	Alliance/BN vote share (%)	Alliance/BN seats won	Difference
1959	51.8	71.2	19.4
1964	58.4	85.6	27.2
1969	48.4	58.4	10.0
1974	60.7	87.7	27.0
1978	57.2	87.1	27.9
1982	60.5	85.7	25.2
1986	57.3	83.6	26.3
1990	53.4	70.6	17.2
1995	65.1	84.4	19.3
1999	56.5	76.2	19.7
2004	63.8	90.4	26.6
2008	50.1	63.1	13.0
2013	47.4	59.9	12.5

Source: Election Commission & Brown (2005: 5).

In this study of GE13, contributors will examine the emergence of new currents of electoral politics as well as 'old' currents of ethnically anchored politics, the stability of Malaysia's ethnic power-sharing coalition politics, the impact of mal-apportionment on electoral outcomes, the significance of FELDA seats as a 'vote bank' of BN, the role of non-governmental

organisations (NGOs), civil society and the social media in affecting the electoral outcome, the changing character of electoral campaigns, its socio-economic implications as well the future trajectory of Malaysian politics. The book also examines the crucial electoral outcomes in Sabah and Sarawak and the issues animating East Malaysian politics, Malay voting behaviour in Kelantan and Terengganu and PR's foray into Johor.

Following this introduction, Yang Razali Kassim in Chapter 2 argues that GE13 has accelerated the evolution of Malaysian politics away from the traditional paradigm of race and ethnicity. Some argue that the idea of 'new politics' first emerged in the 1990s following the rupture in UMNO triggered by the sacking of Anwar Ibrahim that gave rise to the Reformasi movement. Consistent with this development, the trend of new politics arguably gathered momentum as manifested in subsequent general elections and seemingly climaxed in GE13. The road to the next general election to be held by 2018 may be a path strewn with uncertainty in Malaysia's transition from old politics to new politics. Given its twists and turns, the question may also be posed as to whether the road ahead will indeed lead to a 'new politics' or to an 'old politics' in a new garb.

Johan Saravanamuttu's chapter then examines what he terms an 'impasse' in electoral politics because of BN's failing consociational model of politics as evidenced in GE13. However, this failure applies more to the Peninsula than to East Malaysia where multi-ethnic coalition politics has held firm for BN. Moreover, while BN has lost much ground in urban and non-Malay terrains it has buttressed its rural Malay support in the Peninsula as well as Bumiputera strongholds in Sabah and Sarawak. Pakatan Rakyat, while winning the popular vote in GE13, has failed to capture a significant national share of Malay and Bumiputera support, advancing significantly only in its urban, non-Malay constituencies. The author observes through tracking the popular vote since 1995 that the Opposition continues on an upward trend in Peninsular states despite the dip for Kedah and Kelantan in 2013. Saravanamuttu shows through an analysis of 'cross-ethnic voting' of the 2008 and 2013 outcomes that a trajectory of success in mixed constituencies has continued for the Opposition. The author thus argues that GE13 has provided further evidence of path-dependent tracking of twin-coalition electoral politics. He suggests finally that the ruling coalition faces a 'legitimacy crisis' as its non-Malay Peninsula parties have begun to

lose their *raison d'être*, while the Opposition's chief weakness remains its lack of capacity in East Malaysia.

In Chapter 4, Lee Hock Guan focuses on the rise of the ethnic party system in Malaysia and how BN has strategically manipulated the opposition and the electoral system in order to remain in power. Since independence, BN has systematically racialised politics by 'mobilising affective ethnic ties', and by UMNO's 'playing up Malay-Muslim fear of the Chinese and non-Muslims and disbursing patronage through Malay preferential policies'. Voting choice in Malaysia thus becomes circumscribed by ethnicity. Non-ethnic parties became marginalised and politics became dominated by ethnic parties where in Malaysia political conditions and circumstances created a dominant multi-ethnic party state. 'Through constitutional amendments and personnel appointments, [BN] gradually exerts its control over the EC and through the latter manipulated the electoral system to shore up BN's dominance.' Gross inequities in its representative apportionment resulted as BN manipulated to make the most of the pattern of ethnic support for the coalition, especially UMNO's ability to win a majority of Malay support and BN's vote-pooling advantage. Until 2008 BN had won nearly all the mixed constituencies due to its vote-pooling advantage over the opposition. In 2008 and again in GE13, PR appears to have attained the upper hand over BN in terms of ethnic vote pooling. The end result is that BN has remained in power through 'manufactured majorities', that is, due to mal-apportionment that disproportionately benefited the coalition, in particular UMNO.

Chapters 5 and 6 focus on an analysis of FELDA land schemes, serving as UMNO's 'Malay rural fortress' and a captive vote bank of BN. There has been much allusion in the past to the role of FELDA in UMNO electoral politics, but scant empirical analysis of this crucial aspect of UMNO's electoral strength. In Chapter 5 Khor Yu Leng takes us through FELDA's history as a land scheme of household settlers, which has now morphed into a global venture with settlers being mere shareholders. Money politics has been crucial in ensuring that the 1.2 million voters in FELDA schemes have become a vote bank for UMNO. FELDA schemes are coterminous with some 54 rural parliamentary seats, and herein lies their importance to UMNO. In three case studies of FELDA seats in GE13, Khor shows that voter behaviour – through analysing voting streams (*saluran*) and drawing

on interviews on the ground – that UMNO's money politics held sway despite some erosion of votes. The fear of 'Chinese DAP rule' and the failure to secure youth votes were crucial factors in the Opposition's failure to gain ground in the FELDA areas.

Maznah Mohamad, in Chapter 6, shows that while FELDA schemes have become a vote bank for UMNO, the Malay vote is, in fact, fragmented. The maps that have been reproduced by Maznah indicate the almost perfect fit of FELDA schemes with seats won by UMNO in states which have these schemes. Maznah's study confirms that there is a total of 54 FELDA parliamentary seats. Most significantly, states without FELDA schemes, such as Kelantan, have fallen to the Opposition, while Johor, because of the concentration of FELDA schemes, has remained a bastion of UMNO. According to the author, the FELDA factor has created UMNO 'clientelist politics' through the 'corporatised village' where voters have become beholden to politicians rather than the other way around. However, Maznah suggests that FELDA settler-cultivators represent only one stream of Malay voters, those captured by UMNO, while two other streams – urbanites and traditional villagers – have split their support between BN and PR. It remains a Herculean task for PR to penetrate FELDA areas to gain electoral ground.

In Chapter 7, Tessa Houghton and Zaharom Nain convey the findings of a comprehensive survey of media and media coverage during GE13. The study of 'Watching the Watchdog', which spanned 27 of the most influential media in Malaysia, not surprisingly confirms that the government-owned or government-backed print and television media in English and Malay were greatly skewed to support the BN coalition during GE13, the worst offender being Bernama, the national news service. However, the Mandarin print media and the English and Malay online websites provided more balanced coverage. Content analysis of 450,000 data points coded from over 17,000 news articles showed a consistent pattern of biased tonal coverage by the media in favour of BN over PR. Houghton and Nain then discuss whether the internet and social media have 'equalised the playing field', but suggest that – contrary to conventional wisdom – research shows that 'legacy media power' has transitioned onto the online media environment. The authors conclude that the 52 per cent of Malaysians who want a change in government must seek out new media platforms to construct their national imaginings.

James Chin's chapter draws on the notion of 'developmentalism' and on the importance of strong regional sentiments to explain what underpins the outcome in Sarawak. The author gives play to what he terms the 'Pek Moh' factor in Sarawak electoral politics – a reference to the political sway-cum-corrupt power of Chief Minister Taib Mahmud. As expected, the Sarawak BN led by Taib Mahmud won the bulk of rural and Muslim seats, while conceding only six urban seats to PR, thus living up to its reputation as a 'fixed deposit' for the national BN. The big loser on the BN side was the fading Chinese-based SUPP which could only muster one seat. Despite Sarawak having a new chief minister, the author avers that the elevation of Taib Mahmud as Governor of Sarawak augurs for a status quo in politics. Chin concludes that the GE13 confirmed what is widely known about Sarawak – that the voting pattern in urban areas is becoming more similar to national trends while the rural areas are still driven by local dynamics.

In his chapter on Sabah, Arnold Puyok claims that 'despite changes in Malaysian politics since 2008', Sabah's political leaders have continued to focus on regional issues, such as the Borneo Agenda, to win support. The Borneo Agenda refers to the 20-point agreement which was supposed to safeguard the interests, rights and autonomy of the people of Sabah upon the state joining the federation of Malaysia in 1963. In GE13, two local parties – STAR (State Reform Party) and SAPP (Sabah Progressive Party) – made the Borneo Agenda their central platform, and this subsequently influenced BN and PR to also incorporate the Borneo Agenda, albeit in varying forms, in their manifestoes for Sabah. The GE13 outcomes showed that the Borneo Agenda 'was widely supported by the Kadazandusun electorates but shunned in the Muslim-Bumiputera constituencies'. A majority of the Kadazandusun voters supported the opposition, but because STAR, SAPP and PKR could not form a united front the Kadazandusun vote was split among the three parties, thus benefiting BN. Importantly, even among STAR, SAPP and PKR, the latter frequently received more support from the Kadazandusun than STAR and SAPP because its platform, besides advocating selected aspects of the Borneo Agenda, also promised development agendas.

Choong Pui Yee in Chapter 10 suggests that GE13 was arguably one of the most closely fought elections in Malaysia. The more popular and united opposition, Pakatan Rakyat (PR), posed a real threat to the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition in this attempt to assume power. While PR generally

espoused ideas of social justice, welfare state and needs-based policy, BN continued to celebrate its track record in governing Malaysia with its service-oriented approach. An examination of the election campaign, where PR used the slogan of 'Ubah' (Change) and BN campaigned along 'Janji Ditepati' (Promise Fulfilled), seemed to suggest a decline in racial appeals and that both coalitions were moving towards centrist stances. However, a careful analysis of Titiwangsa constituency suggests that campaigning along the lines of racial segmentation is here to stay although not as starkly as before.

In Chapter 11, Afif Pasuni shows that Islamic issues dominated the discourse prior to the election in the Malay-majority states of Kelantan and Terengganu, with each side promising economic and religious developments to entice voters. In addition to the prevalence of personality politics, popular religious preachers were exploited to garner support. In using the same religious platform – Islam – to further their cause, these competing political entities displayed varying degrees when it came to religion; UMNO's adamant stance on issues pertaining to Malay-Muslim rights effectively forced PAS to abandon its more inclusive position. Such attitudes contributed to the persistence of Islamisation in Malaysian elections, in addition to a more complex situation where the line between the Islamic and Malay identities is ultimately being blurred.

Mustafa Izzuddin's chapter focuses on four parliamentary contests in Johor, a state he aptly calls the 'jewel in Barisan Nasional's crown'. BN has indeed hitherto achieved an almost 100 per cent triumph in Johor; it had won every Parliamentary seat in past general elections held except for 1978 and 2008 when it lost a single seat. Johor has remained a BN fortress because the coalition has, without fail, received an overwhelming majority of the Malay vote and a middling majority of the state's Chinese and Indian support. However, in GE13 BN lost its majority Chinese support; it 'plummeted from 52.7 per cent in GE12 to 21.3 per cent in GE13', and only managed to 'win a slight majority of the Indian vote which plummeted from 65.2 per cent in GE12 to 51.6 per cent in GE13'. Johor Malays, however, continued to staunchly support BN, which received nearly 82 per cent of the Malay vote. Thus, PR (DAP) won the Chinese majority seats of Kluang and Gelang Patah while BN (UMNO) won the Malay majority seat of Pulai. On the other hand, BN (MIC) won the Chinese majority seat of Segamat

while PR (PKR) won the Malay majority seat of Batu Pahat. Mustafa's detailed study of the Kluang, Gelang Patah, Pulai and Segamat electorates shows that while most voters vote according to party, other factors also do influence voting behaviour – such as the character and ethnicity of candidate, campaign style, and so on. The ethnic voting pattern in Johor in GE13 undoubtedly shows that it is becoming more similar to that of the other peninsular states.

In the final chapter of the volume, Mohamed Nawab Mohamed Osman avers that GE13 symbolised a new chapter in Malaysian political development. The election saw the Malaysian government losing more political legitimacy when the ruling coalition lost the popular vote for the first time in the country's history. The election is set to change the Malaysian political configuration. This new configuration is likely to see the current consociational model of governance being replaced by a Bumiputera-dominant model which will result in the political strengthening of Bornean Malaysians. UMNO is also likely to enact new policies aimed at assuaging the Malay community; these include enhancing the country's Islamisation drive and dishing out more economic goods to the Malays. On the part of PR, a more multi-cultural coalition with strong democratic credentials is likely to emerge. However, this is highly dependent on whether PAS will continue to take the rational approach of remaining in the coalition.

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Notes

- ¹ The brouhala was resolved when the Prime Minister stepped in to pacify MB Ahmad Said and probably to accede to some of his requests, including gracing the occasion of his daughter's wedding. See <http://www.thestar.com.my/News/Nation/2014/05/18/Tganu-political-saga-ends-on-positive-note-All-is-well-as-Najib-attends-wedding-of-Ahmad-Saids-daugh/> (accessed 24 May 2014).
- ² The 56 per cent turnout was among the lowest in elections because BN pulled out of the contest and Ramkarpal's opponents were not serious contenders. The Parti Cinta Malaysia (PCM) candidate, Huan Cheng Guan, garnered a near-respectable 3,583 votes. The other two independent candidates, Mohamed Nabi Bux Mohd Nabi Abd Sathar (799 votes)

- and Abu Backer Sidek Mohd Zan (225 votes) provided much comic relief to the voters. See Netto: <http://anilnetto.com/malaysian-politics/malaysian-elections/live-bukit-gelugor-election/> (accessed 4 June 2014).
- ³ For an analysis of the by-election, see http://www.malaysia-chronicle.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=293692:unprecedented-mania-despite-loss-dyana-broke-new-ground-daps-post-mortem-on-poll&Itemid=2#axzz33MCosF8n and <http://anilnetto.com/malaysian-politics/malaysian-elections/teluk-intan-election-went-wrong-dyana-sofya/> ((accessed 4 June 2014).
 - ⁴ Most news reports have alluded to the 'proposed' setting up of this technical committee, comprising shariah experts, announced by Deputy Premier Muhyiddin Yassin. PAS decided not to introduce its private member bills in Parliament in June after being invited to participate in this committee. See <http://www.nst.com.my/latest/umno-proposes-national-level-hudud-technical-committee-1.580535> (accessed 23 May 2014).
 - ⁵ There has been a flood of media commentaries on the episode. A chronology of some of the major events can be found in: <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/selangor-mb-crisis-chronology-of-events> (accessed on 23 October 2014).
 - ⁶ See also the prodigious work of Lijphart (1977, 1994, 1999) on democracy in plural societies, electoral and party systems, where he invariably alludes to manufactured majorities and their relevance to plural societies and consociational politics in many electoral systems. See further the comprehensive study of electoral systems by Nohlen (1996).
 - ⁷ On the issue and analysis of rural weightage in Malaysian elections, see the extensive work of Rachagan (1984, 1993) and Lim (2002, 2005).
 - ⁸ See Ostwald (2013), who has systematically analysed the extent of mal-apportionment in the GE13 and also the chapters by Saravanamuttu and Lee in this volume.
 - ⁹ The Commission was appointed by Sir Donald MacGillivray, the British High Commissioner for Malaya; the members were Lord Merthyr (chairman), Mr W.C.S. Corry, Mr E.G. Farrington and Mr T.E. Smith (secretary). Prior to the setting up of the Commission, a 46-member committee of the Federal Legislative Council deliberated on the type of electoral system Malaya should adopt. On the basis of their deliberations, the terms of reference were set for the Methyr Commission. See Lim (2002: 103–4) for a recounting of the issues, debates and recommendations of this committee.
 - ¹⁰ The narrative here is drawn from pp. 29–35 of the Reid Commission report (1957).

- ¹¹ See Reid Commission (1957: 30), which notes that an EC member can only be removed in the manner one removes a Supreme Court judge.
- ¹² Lim (2002) notes that UMNO was particularly peeved by the EC's adherence to the Reid Commission's stipulations on limits to weightage which drastically reduced urban-rural disparities would have given major disadvantages to the ruling party.
- ¹³ See Crouch (1996: 61) for an explanation of the rationale of this change. The secretary of the EC offered this reasoning: 'we do not want the voters to wait in long queues, especially under the burning sun' (ibid.).
- ¹⁴ See Loh (2005: 107-14) for a chronology of the delimitation exercise in Sabah and its effects.
- ¹⁵ We draw on the report from: http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/bd/bdy/bdy_my, accessed 21 October 2013 (written by Jeremy Grace, USAID sponsored Delimitation Equity Project).
- ¹⁶ See *ibid.*