

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Political Change and Economic Development Among the Ibans  
of Sarawak, East Malaysia

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of  
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by

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To my parents

Jawan A. Empaling and  
Luli A. Pengabang.

## Autobiographical Sketch

Jayum A. Jawan was born in Sibul, Sarawak in 1958. He received his primary education from the Methodist School, Sibul and his secondary education from St. Thomas's, Kuching and Ling Chu Ming School, Sibul. He received his B.A. in Politics and Economics from the University of North Carolina at Asheville in 1980 and his M.A. in Political Science from the Appalachian State University at Boone, North Carolina in 1982. At Appalachian, he was supported by a scholarship grant from the Federal government of Malaysia; based on merit, he was also awarded a Teaching Assistantship in the Department of Political Science.

In May 1982, he took up an appointment as a Political Science Lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences, University of Agriculture, Serdang. During his tenureship as a lecturer, he developed a keen interest in Iban politics, a subject in which he has written, presented and published several papers, both at the local and international levels, including at the Centre for Asian Studies, the University of Sydney in 1986 and at the Centre for South-East Asian Studies, the University of Hull in 1988.

In October 1989, he was given three-years' study leave by the University of Agriculture and a scholarship by the Federal government of Malaysia to undertake doctoral study at the Centre for South-East Asian Studies, the University of Hull. In the summer of 1990,

he undertook field research in Sarawak; part II of the thesis that follows arises from the fieldwork. He intends to resume his appointment at the University of Agriculture in January 1992.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASBS	Annual Statistical Bulletin Sarawak.
ASN	Amanah Saham Nasional.
Bid.	Bidayuh.
BPM	Bank Pembangunan Malaysia.
CDWF	Colonial Development and Welfare Fund.
Chi	Chi-square.
CN	Council Negeri.
Co-eff	Co-efficient.
df	Degree of Freedom.
DO	District Officer.
DUN	Dewan Undangan Negeri.
FELDA	Federal Land Development Authority.
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
INDEP	Independent.
ISA	Internal Security Act.
MARA	Majlis Amanah Rakyat.
Mel.	Melanau.
MP	Member of Parliament.
MP (1...5)	Malaysia Plan (First...Fifth).
MRP	Minor Rural Project.
MSBS	Monthly Statistical Bulletin Sarawak.
NEP	New Economic Policy.
O/Ulu	Orang Ulu.

- PERNAS Perbadanan Nasional.
- PTA Parent-Teachers' Association.
- RES Rural Electrification Scheme.
- RIDA Rural Industrial Development Authority.
- SADIA Sarawak Dayak Iban Association.
- SAO Sarawak Administrative Officer.
- SDFC Sarawak Development Finance Corporation.
- SDNU Sarawak Dayak National Union.
- SEDC Sarawak Economic Development Corporation.
- Sig. Significance (either degree or level of).
- SLDB Sarawak Land Development Board.
- SP Sarawak (Development) Plan.
- UDA Urban Development Authority.

For abbreviations of political parties, see Appendix A.

## GLOSSARY OF INDIGENOUS WORDS AND TERMS

- Abang* Prefix to a Malay name, indicating the aristocratic origin of its holder.
- Adat* Traditional laws and customs.
- Agong* Supreme, as in Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King).
- Amanah Saham Nasional* National Trust Unit: a special government investment arm set up for *bumiputera* to invest in a scheme with guaranteed minimum returns.
- Anak* Son, daughter, or child.
- Anak asi* Beloved child.
- Anak Bujang/Dara* Young man/maiden; second stage in Iban socialisation.
- Anak Mit* Small child; the first stage in Iban socialisation.
- Anembiak* The corruption of the word "anak" (sons or daughters) and "biak" (young); lit. "young children"; the term is also used to denote followers.
- Antu* Spirit or ghost.
- Antu jai* Evil spirit.
- Antu pala* Human skull.
- Apai* Father.
- Apai/Indai Orang* Lit. somebody's parent; parenthood--the third stage in Iban socialisation.
- Arrack* Alcoholic drink; in Iban, it is spelt "arak".
- Batu* Stone.
- Batu Pemanggol* Ritual whetstone.

- Baum* Conference, meeting or gathering held in a longhouse (usually presided over by a *tuai rumah*).
- Be-ambu kaban/madi* The act of adopting person(s) as a friend or relative.
- Bebiau* v.f. *biau*; to invoke blessings, whereby a cock is waved over the anointed person(s) or audience.
- Bedara* The first stage in a series of ceremonies (*gawai*) that an Iban man can hold.
- Bedurok* Labor exchange, usually undertaken either between individuals or *bilik*-families.
- Bejalai* Lit. to walk; used to refer to the undertaking of a journey, usually for material gain; also referred to as *belelang*.
- Bekelakar* Disagreements.
- Belaya* Disagreement or argument, usually verbal.
- Bepalu* A contest to settle disputes by wooden clubs.
- Beranyam tikai* Weaving the mat.
- Berekak* Disagreement or argument, usually accompanied by physical confrontation.
- Beselam* A diving contest, in which the victor is the one who stays the longest under water.
- Betugong* Both a noun and a verb, referring to a gathering of people on the *ruai* for a specific purpose.
- Betampil* Refers to the act of joining, e.g. of two *bilik*-families through marriage.
- Betempoh* Similar in meaning to *bepalu*.

- Beterang* v.f. terang, meaning clear or to clear, e.g. to declare an intention of marriage usually in front of a *tuai* (i.e. *tuai rumah* or *penghulu*).
- Bibat* Wrestling.
- Bilik* Lit. a room; but used to refer to the compartment belonging to a *bilik*-family, usually comprising more than one room.
- Bilik asal* Original or main *bilik*; refers to the *bilik* from which a person comes (or originates).
- Bilik-family* Refers to a small family of two or three generations living under the same roof (or in the same *bilik*).
- Bumiputera* Combination of the words "*bumi*" (earth) and "*putera*" (prince); lit. sons of the soil; indigenes; natives.
- Dacing* Lit.: refers to a weighing scale; used by the Barisan Nasional as their party symbol.
- Dandong* The equivalent of a Malay sarong; used by both Iban men and women; when used by men, it is referred to as *dandong*.
- Dapur* Kitchen.
- Dewan Undangan Negeri* State Legislative Assembly.
- Dinga ke penemu orang tuai* Lit.: Listening and learning from elders.
- Dini indu mangat lebih agi penemu ari orang laki* Women are generally expected to be less knowledgeable than their men.
- Diri sebilik* Of the same *bilik*-family.
- Disema ke orang, baka sano belaya diri sebilik* Become the talk of the neighbours.

- Enda bisa* Lit. not effective, especially referring to extractive capabilities (e.g. of a *manang* in relation to his act of curing the sick, or of elders or leaders in their leadership).
- Enda kala pungkang lauk/pemakai* Never short of poultry or rice; state of being sufficient.
- Enda mereti* Bad or ill mannered.
- Ensera* Saga, story, legend, mythology.
- Ensumbar* Nickname or pet-name.
- Gawai* A festival; usually referring to one held marking the end of the harvest season.
- Gerakan* Malay term meaning movement; also an abbreviation of Parti Gerakan.
- Ia udah besai, udah patut nemu* He is big [old] enough and should know.
- Indai* Mother.
- Jalan* Malay term for road, e.g. Jalan Raja (Raja Road).
- Jati* Malay term meaning genuine.
- Jikeidan* Japanese term referring to the vigilante system introduced during the Occupation of Sarawak.
- Kayau* Warfaring expedition.
- Keling* Male deity who resides in a legendary place called *Panggau Libau* and whose exploits are usually in warfaring; husband of *Kumang*.
- Ken Sanji* Japanese term referring to the councillor system of local administration introduced during the Occupation.

- Kumang* A female deity from *Panggau Libau*; wife of *Keling*.
- Klinik Desa* Rural Clinic.
- Klinik Kesehatan Besar* Major Health Clinic.
- Kuo Yii* Chinese national language: Mandarin.
- Kurang ajar* Lack of discipline.
- Lanting* Refers to that parcel of property still held by the father or mother, after dividing the *bilik* property; thus, the *lanting* accrues to the son or daughter, who nurses them in their old age.
- Lemambang* A bard.
- Malu alah* Ashamed to be defeated.
- Malu didinga orang* Ashamed to be heard by others; usually in the context of a quarrel within a *bilik*-family.
- Manang* Medium; medicine man.
- Mandal* Assistant or deputy, as in *Mandal Tr.* (Deputy Tr.).
- Manok sabong* Lit. a fighting cock; also refers to warriors, particularly those in the frontline.
- Masuk Melayu* Lit. to become a Malay; more specifically, it is an Iban term referring to a person who embraces Islam.
- Melah pinang* Lit.: splitting the betel (or areca) nut; part of an Iban marriage ritual.
- Menua tasik* Lit. land over the seas; used to refer to foreign lands.
- Menteri Besar* The equivalent of a Chief Minister in the Malaysian states with a Malay ruler.

<i>Mubok menua</i>	The opening up of new land to settle.
<i>Mungkul</i>	An Iban measurement of a fine for transgressing the <i>adat</i> ; one <i>mungkul</i> is equivalent to a dollar.
<i>Mungut</i>	A basket used by Brunei tax collectors to measure the amount of <i>padi</i> taxable from the Ibans.
<i>Nadai adat</i>	Deviance; behaviour not conforming to the <i>adat</i> .
<i>Nanya penemu apai/indai dulu</i>	To ask for the opinion of one's parents.
<i>Negara</i>	Malay term meaning state, nation or country.
<i>Negeri</i>	Can be both a Malay and an Iban term and is similar in meaning to <i>Negara</i> ; but in Iban it is pronounced "Nengri".
<i>Negeri, Yang di-Pertua</i>	Head of state (e.g. Governor).
<i>Nemu begulai enggau orang</i>	Have the skill to mix with people at different levels.
<i>Ngajat</i>	Traditional Iban dance; spelling variations are <i>ajat</i> , <i>kajat</i> .
<i>Ngalah kadiri</i>	To withdraw from an argument; to give up in argument.
<i>Ngayap</i>	Iban courtship whereby a young unmarried man visits the girl in her sleeping quarters.
<i>Ngayau</i>	Similar in meaning to <i>kayau</i> (headhunting or warfaring expedition).
<i>Ngelanggar adat</i>	An act of violating the <i>adat</i> .
<i>Ngelesong (padi)</i>	v.f. <i>lesong</i> , meaning mortar; <i>ngelesong padi</i> --breaking the husks from the <i>padi</i> .
<i>Ngetau</i>	Harvesting.



<i>Nie ko Apai tuai, nya meh ia</i>	Whatever my husband says, that's it; used in the context of showing female subservience.
<i>Nubai</i>	One method of fishing by releasing poisonous roots to stun fish (see also <i>tubai</i> ).
<i>Nugal</i>	Dibbling.
<i>Nungku</i>	Threshing the padi to separate it from the husk using the feet.
<i>Nunu</i>	To burn, e.g. as in burning to clear the land for farming.
<i>Nya ukai cara akie/inie kami</i>	That's not the way of our forebears.
<i>Nyelambau</i>	Fishing, usually done at night, by suspending a net strapped across two poles stretched across the river.
<i>Nyengok ke tanju</i>	Lit. to peek onto the <i>tanju</i> ; one stage of a <i>gawai</i> .
<i>Nyungkup</i>	Last ritual festival for dead relatives.
<i>Nyut</i>	Swinging cradle; similar in meaning to <i>wua</i> .
<i>Orang bisi utai</i>	A person(s) of means.
<i>Orang Kaya</i>	Lit. a rich person; it is also a Malay honorary title, which continued to be awarded during the Colonial period, but which has now been largely discarded.
<i>Orang Ulu</i>	Lit. people of the interior; used in the text to refer collectively to Kayans, Kenyahs, Kelabits and other smaller indigenous groups of Sarawak.
<i>Orang nadai adat</i>	A person who has no <i>adat</i> ; referring to the act of deviance.

- Orang tuai* Lit. old people; the fourth stage in Iban socialisation.
- Padi pun* A sacred strain of ritual *padi*.
- Padi Sangking* A strain of *padi* having been attached to *padi pun* and being transformed to *padi pun* for a member of a *bilik*-family who sets up his own *bilik*.
- Panau* White circular spot (patches); traditionally, an indication of beauty.
- Pasar* Town or trading centre.
- Pasu* A small jar, pot (as in a flower pot).
- Pegai* Area of jurisdiction (e.g. of a *tuai rumah* or *penghulu*).
- Pemali* Fines or restitutions, especially relating to wrongs against the *petara*.
- Pemanca* A traditional leadership position above the *penghulu*; before, it was known as *pengarah* (lit. Director).
- Pencha* A form of Iban martial arts.
- Pendam* A burial ground; cemetery.
- Pengap* Chant sung by the *lemambang*.
- Pengarah* A traditional leadership position above the *penghulu*; see also *Pemanca*.
- Penghulu* A supra-regional institution created by Charles Brooke; his *pegai* extends over several longhouses.
- Penghulu dalam* *Penghulu* in the inner circle.
- Penglima* A Malay title; usually indicating the holder's skill in the art of warfare.

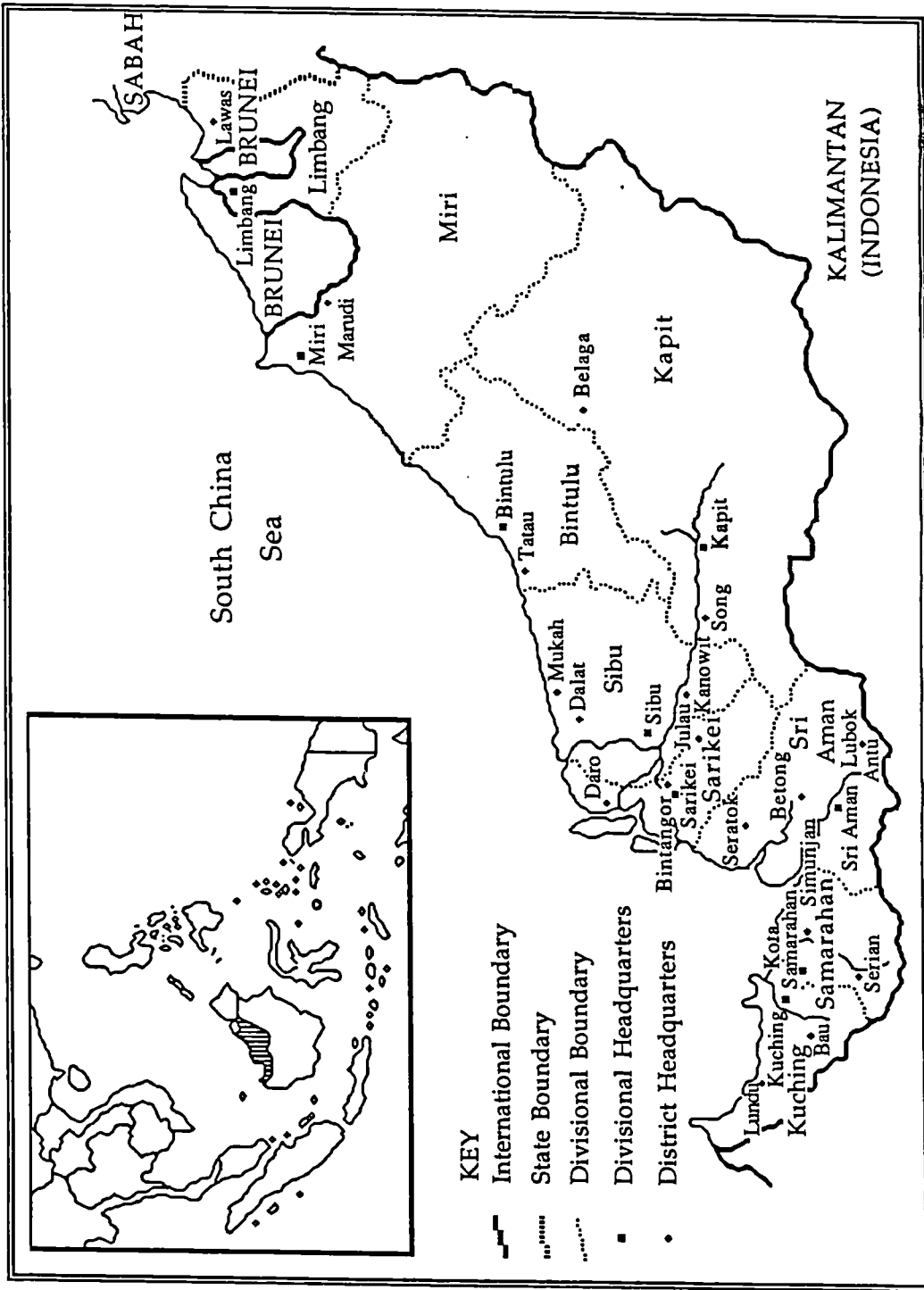
<i>Pengulu</i>	One who leads.
<i>Perkhidmatan Doktor Udara</i>	Flying Doctor's Service.
<i>Persatuan</i>	A Malay term meaning an association.
<i>Pesaka</i>	Heirlooms; priceless possessions or inheritance such as jars.
<i>Petara</i>	Gods, deities.
<i>Pindah</i>	To move; migration.
<i>Pupu</i>	Collection.
<i>Pupu pintu</i>	Door tax; first imposed by the Brookes; also known as <i>pupu taun</i> (yearly tax).
<i>Purih sanu</i>	Descendant of a particular <i>bilik</i> -family.
<i>Pusat Kesihatan Kecil</i>	Small Health Centre.
<i>Ra'ayat</i>	A Malay term meaning people or citizens; now spelt "rakyat".
<i>Racun rumput</i>	Weed-killer.
<i>Raja Berani</i>	Lit.: the rich and the brave; a social status; in the text, used to denote the highest traditional leadership position.
<i>Raja Ribai</i>	A legendary figure in <i>ensera</i> .
<i>Raun</i>	A trip taken for pleasure.
<i>Ruai</i>	Roofed balcony, stretching the length of a longhouse.
<i>Rumah</i>	House; also used in the context of identifying a particular longhouse under the jurisdiction of a certain <i>tuai rumah</i> --e.g. <i>Rh. Ranggau</i> (the longhouse of Ranggau).
<i>Rumah panjai</i>	Lit. a long house, comprising several <i>bilik</i> -families.

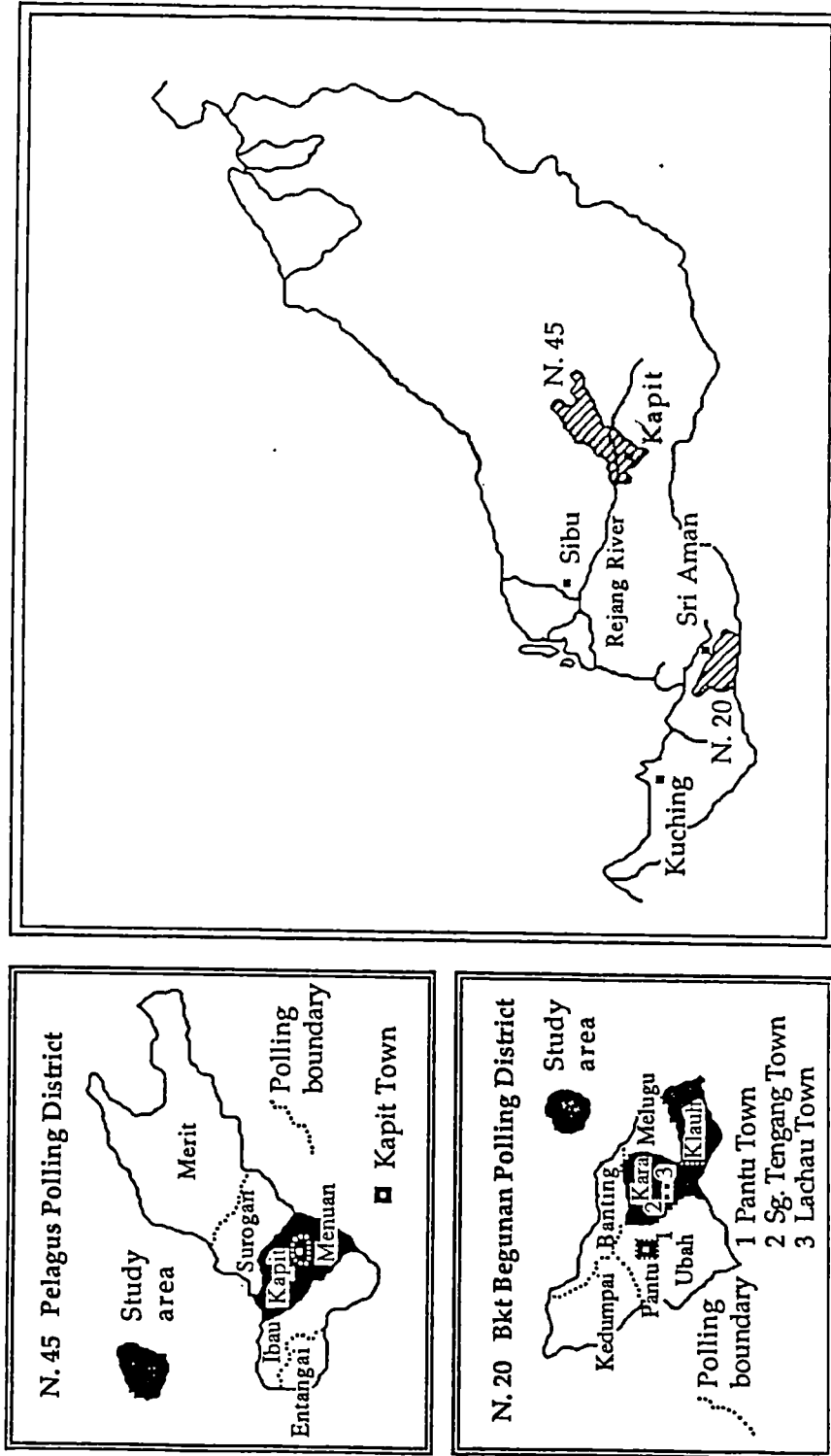
<i>Rumah papan</i>	House constructed of planks.
<i>Sadau</i>	The loft.
<i>Sandau ari</i>	The third stage in a series of <i>gawai</i> ; takes place on the <i>tanju</i> .
<i>Sapit tuai rumah</i>	Deputy or assistant <i>tuai rumah</i> ; see also <i>Mandal Tr.</i>
<i>Sebayan</i>	Afterworld; also referred to by the term <i>batang mandai</i> .
<i>Surau</i>	Muslim prayer house (usually smaller than a mosque).
<i>Tangga</i>	A ladder.
<i>Tanju</i>	The open platform of a longhouse.
<i>Tau serang</i>	Lit. one who knows how to launch an attack.
<i>Temenggong</i>	A Malay term in origin; it has been adopted by the Ibans to refer to the highest leadership position in their traditional society.
<i>Temuda</i>	Fallow land as part of the swidden cycle.
<i>Timang</i>	Incantations sung by <i>lemambang</i> .
<i>Tua Pek Kong</i>	Chinese temple (or prayer house).
<i>Tuai</i>	Lit. old; elder, denoting a social status.
<i>Tuai adat</i>	Adat leaders.
<i>Tuai bilik</i>	Household head, in most cases, male adult.
<i>Tuai burong</i>	Sign reader; bird elder; augur.
<i>Tuai kayau</i>	Warleaders.
<i>Tuai menua</i>	Chiefs.

- Tuai rumah* Headman of a longhouse; abbreviated as *Tr.*
- Tuak* Rice wine.
- Tubai* Poisonous roots; used in *nubai* (*tubai* root concentrates are released into streams to stun fish).
- Tukang tusut* Genealogical experts.
- Tulah enda datai berauh* The ills of *tulah* (being cursed) do not warn of their wrath.
- Tulah ngelaban apai/indai* Cursed for going against their elders.
- Uchu asi* Beloved grandchild.
- Ukum* Punishment or fine for the transgression of *adat*; more general term than *pemali*, which specifically addresses the restitution of wrongs against nature and *petara*.
- Ulu* Interior; remote.
- Wua* Similar in meaning to *nyut*.

## A NOTE ON THE SPELLING OF INDIGENOUS WORDS AND TERMS

Usually, spelling of a native word in its plural form is treated in the same manner as in English; if it is without an 's', it is intended to be a singular noun, for example, *penghulu*; those with an 's' added, such as *penghulus* and *temenggongs*, are plurals. However, an exception to the above rule is when a noun comprises two or more native terms, such as *tuai rumah* and *raja berani*; in such cases, the 's' is not added to the plural form since this usage is awkward and not very common in the literature.





Map 2: Geographic Location of Study Longhouses (Polling Districts)



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. Brief Outline of the Study

There are two main themes of my study on the Ibans of Sarawak. The first examines processes of political change from independence within the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 to the present. The second focuses on the course and consequences of economic development during the same period. Both themes are examined against the backdrop of the Brooke and Colonial eras in order to establish the extent to which these two preceding periods can contribute to our understanding of political and economic change since independence. In addition, the relationships between Iban politics and economic development will be examined. The study is also supplemented by a case study of 300 samples drawn from selected Iban longhouses in the Second and Seventh Administrative Divisions of Sarawak. The purpose of the case study is to test a number of popular and widely accepted assumptions about the political and socio-economic behaviour and attitudes of the Ibans. Specifically, it seeks to establish the validity or otherwise of certain generalisations about them. Furthermore, my survey is also used to test the applicability of some assertions about patterns of Iban behaviour, which have been forwarded by previous writers,

and whether these continue to be valid, if they ever were, or have been transformed.

This thesis tries to make up for the relative scholarly neglect of the study of Iban political activities and organisation. Material on Iban politics in the Brooke and Colonial periods is very sparse, but it is also limited even in the post-independence period. Detailed studies of Iban politics began to appear in the early 1970s, but the more recent period of the 1980s is not covered in detail. On the other hand, there have been a reasonable number of economic studies, but they do not relate economic development to matters of political control and influence. I shall return to the published material later.

## **II. Approaches to Political Change**

The examination of the processes of political change covers the period from 1963 to 1990. In this respect, my study is a reasonably comprehensive treatment of Iban politics. One disadvantage of earlier studies was that they were of necessity limited in terms of their time span. What is more, the volatile and fluid nature of the early period of independence has subsequently rendered some of their findings and conclusions irrelevant. For instance, the feature of regionalism among Ibans which Leigh revealed and emphasised in the late 1960s and early 1970s, has become relatively insignificant since the mid-1970s. It was also of little importance in the 1987 state

general election when the majority of Ibans voted for candidates from Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS).<sup>1</sup> In addition, Searle's study of the early 1970s stressed the importance of the revival of the Sarawak National Party (SNAP) as a vehicle of Iban political expression. However, following his work, SNAP became marginalised and Iban political interest has since been represented in PBDS. Nevertheless, the decline of SNAP has not in any way affected the Iban desire to unite. Indeed, the general desire for unity, however difficult this task is for the Ibans, has to be weighed against narrow party considerations.

The main focus of my examination of political change is on the detailed analysis of the results of elections to the State Legislative Assembly (*Dewan Undangan Negeri* [DUN]),<sup>2</sup> particularly with regard to Iban, and to a lesser extent, Dayak seats,<sup>3</sup> both in terms of the numbers of seats won by them and the pattern of votes that accrued to individuals or political parties. Results of parliamentary elections in Sarawak will only be drawn on

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<sup>1</sup> For brief background on PBDS (as well as on other political parties that are mentioned in subsequent sections or chapters of the thesis), see Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> Previously known as the Council Negeri, the change to DUN was made in 1976, when the title of the Governor was also changed to Yang di-Pertua Negeri. However, when reference is made to the pre-1976 period, the term "Council Negeri" (or CN) is used, but, for all practical purposes, the two are synonymous.

<sup>3</sup> Strictly, the term Dayak comprises the Sea Dayaks (Ibans) and Land Dayaks (Bidayuhs); however, since 1987, it has become increasingly common to refer to the Ibans, Bidayuhs and Orang Ulu [the various smaller non-Muslim indigenous groups] as Dayaks.

when they deviate significantly from the general trends of the state elections; in such instances, certain results of parliamentary elections held after the state elections in question may serve to highlight changing political perceptions and attitudes.<sup>4</sup> Although the focus of my analysis is therefore similar in form to that of Leigh<sup>5</sup> and, to a lesser degree, Searle,<sup>6</sup> it differs substantially in other ways in that I attempt to establish the political behaviour patterns of the Ibans based on the analysis of five state general elections.<sup>7</sup>

The examination of political change emphasises state rather than parliamentary elections because the former are the main determinant of the distribution of power and the allocation of goods and services in Sarawak.

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<sup>4</sup> In the last six parliamentary general elections, only the first two were held simultaneously with the state elections (i.e. 1969/70 and 1974); the rest were held about a year preceding the state general elections.

<sup>5</sup> Leigh's analysis focused on the results of the direct election to District Councils and the indirect elections to the Divisional Advisory Council, Council Negeri and Parliament in 1963, and the first direct election to Council Negeri and Parliament in 1970, Michael Beckett Leigh (1971). *The Development of Political Organization and Leadership in Sarawak, East Malaysia*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, pp.103-25 and 234-47; the thesis was later published in 1974 as *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*. Sydney: Sydney University Press.

<sup>6</sup> Although Searle devoted some attention to the 1974 election, this analysis is not one of the major strengths of his work; the main thrust of his study was based on his examination of political attitudes/behaviours in a sample of longhouses, Peter Searle. (1983). *Politics in Sarawak 1970-1976: The Iban Perspective*. Singapore: Oxford University Press; the subject covered in this study was first presented as a Master's thesis to the Department of Politics, Monash University, Australia.

<sup>7</sup> They were the state general elections of 1969/70, 1974, 1979, 1983 and 1987.

Competition in these state elections is stiff and has not always been confined to a simple contest between ethnic blocs; sometimes intra-ethnic competition has also occurred. This highly competitive environment can be explained by the fact that politics, as Laswell succinctly puts it, deals with "Who Gets What, When and How?".<sup>8</sup> In fact, in Sarawak it is still a widely held belief that politics holds the key to gaining wealth. This idea is, of course, supported by the fact that timber concessions have generously been distributed among selected groups of elected officials (both from the DUN and Parliament) who have supported key leaders within the ruling coalition.

My analysis of election results isolates the factors that helped shape voting behaviour. These include, among others, Iban cultural patterns, the nature of socialisation, and post-independence responses to and experiences of modern politics. The voting patterns are also analysed in terms of how close these processes of political change have been able to bring Ibans towards a set of interrelated and desired objectives, such as political consolidation, accelerated social and economic development, and, ultimately, the ascent to state leadership.

To define the processes of political change in these terms is obviously to oversimplify a complex phenomenon.

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<sup>8</sup> Harold Laswell (1950). *Who Gets What, When and How?* New Haven: P. Smith; for a similar observation, see also Robert Dahl (1961). *Who Governs?* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Political change has been conceived of in different ways by different scholars, for example, as "political modernisation" or "institutionalisation" or more loosely, "political development".<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, whichever terms of reference are used, one common feature of these changes is that they are associated with a political entity--the state. The term "political development" then refers to a particular stage of change achieved by a defined political unit; it is said to be achieved through the transformation of a traditional, less developed political order as a result of the acquisition of new, modern features derived from "developed" industrial states.<sup>10</sup> It is also said to be achieved when the old political system has developed "new capabilities",<sup>11</sup> such as a particular level of political differentiation and specialisation.<sup>12</sup> In other words, a major focus is the degree of flexibility of the political system in accommodating diverse political factions or interests. If

<sup>9</sup> Lucian W. Pye (1965). "The Concept of Political Development", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 358, (March), pp.1-13.

<sup>10</sup> Pye, 1965, *Ibid*; see also Samuel P. Huntington (1966). "Political Modernisation: America vs Europe", *World Politics*, 18(3), (April), pp.378-414, where he discusses the successful importation of traditional political institutions and practices from Europe to the North American state.

<sup>11</sup> Gabriel A. Almond (1970). *Political Development: Essays in Heuristic Theory*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., pp.166-68.

<sup>12</sup> Huntington also argued that political development is dependent on the scope and strength of political organisations and procedures in a political community, Huntington (1965). "Political Development and Political Decay", *World Politics*, 17(3), (April), pp.386-430; see also his publication, (1968), *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven (CT): Yale University Press.

the system is too rigid, then it will inevitably result, in Huntington's terms, in "political decay", or a breakdown in its overall ability to function.<sup>13</sup>

My approach differs from these models in certain respects. First, I am only really concerned with one element in the so-called political system of Sarawak, and that is the Ibans and their political behaviour. Secondly, I have concentrated on one administrative unit--that is Sarawak--in the broader Federation of Malaysia. I am therefore not concerned with the nation-state as such, but only in so far as it is relevant to local politics. Thirdly, there are important ingredients in my analysis which tend not to be covered in this literature, especially the whole problem of political culture. Ibans have various cultural attributes which are interrelated with politics, and it is in relation to this cultural system that Iban political and socio-economic behaviour must, in part, be understood and by means of which Ibans interact with other ethnic groups, namely the Malay/Melanau and the Chinese, who comprise subsystems in the larger political system. Furthermore, the Western-derived models of Huntington, Pye and others do not take sufficient account of certain persisting organisational elements which are particularly important in Sarawak politics; I have in mind such matters as ethnic difference and the conflict to which it gives rise.

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<sup>13</sup> Huntington, 1965, op cit.

What the developmental models do point to, however, is the problem of the interrelationships between certain non-Western traditions and processes, and so-called modern Western ones. Now it is true that Sarawak has adopted electoral politics and various democratic institutions from the political framework bequeathed by the British. But various non-Western political processes, related especially to Iban culture, ethnicity and the historical experiences of Sarawak in general and the Ibans in particular, continue to have influence, and they are especially relevant to our understanding of Iban political behaviours. Therefore, although I am using aspects of these Western models, I recognise that the processes and consequences of Sarawak political action may be different from those specified by Western writers. Nonetheless, as with the modernisation theorists and developmentalists, I do set out certain desirable goals or outcomes in my specific analysis of Sarawak politics, but these may not necessarily be defined by others as "modern" or "developmental".<sup>14</sup> I am therefore stating my ideals, my value judgements, which others may, of course,

<sup>14</sup> A major criticism of the developmental models which have dominated political analysis for the last 30 years is that they evaluate change in Western political terms. Reactions to these models have led to the emergence of new concepts such as dependency, corporatism and bureaucratic-authoritarianism. However, developmentalists may find consolation in the fact that while their approaches have failed to explain why, for example, higher literacy levels have not led to more open societies, in the long run political changes do seem to be closely related to the processes of democratisation, see Howard J. Wiarda (1989). "Rethinking Political Development: A Look Backward over Thirty Years, And a Look Ahead", *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 24(4), (Winter 1989/90), pp.65-82.



wish to question. My justification for proposing them is that they are also, I would maintain, the ideals of the majority of Ibans.

With respect to what constitutes "desirable goals" in Iban political change, two factors are important in their formulation: (a) the population size of the Ibans in relation to other ethnic groups in Sarawak and (b) the concept of power-sharing which many Ibans embrace. Based on these two factors, there are three "desirable goals" which are important for the Ibans; these are as follows: (a) political consolidation of the Ibans within a single political party; (b) more access to the state decision-making apparatus; and (c), as a direct consequence of the previous two, accelerated economic development for the Iban community. The extent to which there has been a movement towards Iban political consolidation can be established through my examination of voting patterns in five state general elections. This pattern can then be correlated with that of economic development in order to demonstrate the extent to which there is a relationship between the two. This is another concern which distinguishes my study from some earlier ones.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> For example: Leigh, 1971, op cit, concentrates entirely on the political dimension; Vinson H. Sutlive, Jr. (1972). *From Longhouse to Pasar: Urbanization in Sarawak, East Malaysia*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Pittsburgh, only on urbanisation; Peter Mulok Kedit. (1980). *Modernisation among the Ibans of Sarawak*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, on modernisation in general; and Searle, 1983, op cit, on the economic consequences of behavioural differences between the ulu, semi-pasar and pasar Ibans.

The ultimate goal of political change among the Ibans should ideally be their consolidation behind one political party. The extent to which this occurs can be seen from observing voting patterns, that is, the numbers of Iban (Dayak) seats won and Iban (Dayak) votes polled by one political party, be it by the PBDS, SNAP, the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) or the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB). In that sense, I am particularly interested in patterns of support among the Iban (Dayak) grassroots. Thus, as far as I am concerned, Iban unity can, in theory, be shown in the support for either the PBDS, SNAP, SUPP or the PBB. Nevertheless, I do acknowledge that the likelihood of Iban (Dayak) political consolidation behind SUPP or PBB is rather remote due to the fact that the former is ethnically dominated by the Chinese and the latter by the Malays/Melanaus. Hence, Iban support for one or the other party is not likely to secure a greater political role for the Ibans.

Neither do I believe that the Iban-based PBDS would provide an attractive and effective political platform for future Iban unity; this is for several reasons. First, if Ibans wish to secure the political leadership of the state, they must shed the narrow appeal of the ethnically based PBDS in order to allay the fears and suspicions of the Malays/Melanaus and the Chinese, whose support would be needed to form a working majority. Secondly, they must also play down the concept of

"Dayakism",<sup>16</sup> which has generated the fear among the other ethnic groups that if Ibans (or Dayaks) are at the helm of government, then their leaders would embark on the "economic warpath" to correct various injustices to which they perceive the Ibans have been subject. Thirdly, Iban political consolidation should be realistically seen in the context of the need to increase Iban (or Dayak) leverage within the state government; and to form the government they would require the legislative support of the Malays/Melanaus and the Chinese. Therefore, the leaders of the PBDS need to put forward a more appropriate alternative to the present government, instead of creating inter-ethnic divisions and rivalries.<sup>17</sup> For the above reasons, this Dayak party will not be able to attract any significant support from the other ethnic groups. Therefore, in my opinion, there are two alternatives for achieving Iban political consolidation, and subsequently their effective political participation in the state. The first is either the revival of Iban (or Dayak) unity in SNAP, which, being multi-ethnic, would be more acceptable to the other ethnic groups. The second alternative is for the Ibans to form a new broad-based Iban-dominated political party. But whichever political organisation emerges it must

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<sup>16</sup> This is discussed in detail in the section on Ethnicity.

<sup>17</sup> The PBDS was successful--in terms of the numbers of Dayak seats that it won in the 1987 election--in consolidating the Dayaks; as they were outside the government, the consolidation did not bring any leverage within the government.

accommodate all Iban (Dayak) political leaders. Although this may seem difficult, it is, nevertheless, essential to ensure that there will not be a credible political challenge from any Ibans excluded from the new political organisation. In 1987, the failure of PBDS to accommodate some Dayak leaders was one of the main reasons for its failure to win all the Iban (Dayak) seats. However, it was widely believed that all Dayak political leaders (i.e. those in PBB, SNAP and SUPP) were, in fact, approached by the PERMAS-PBDS<sup>18</sup> opposition coalition to join them, and although some did not join, it was widely believed at the time that, if the opposition had won a simple majority to form a new government, then many of those reluctant leaders would align themselves with PERMAS-PBDS.

In addition to discussing the general pattern of movement towards political consolidation, my analysis also focuses on the factors that made it possible for the transitory Iban (Dayak) unity in SNAP in the mid-1970s and in PBDS in the mid-1980s. In this regard, I analyse Iban culture and their pre-independence political experiences.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, my study also examines the reasons for Iban disunity which has been a continuing problem since independence. In this respect, I shall bring into focus the factors of ethnicity,<sup>20</sup> ethnic

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<sup>18</sup> PERMAS--Persatuan Rakyat Malaysia Sarawak.

<sup>19</sup> These are discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>20</sup> See section on Ethnicity, immediately following the next section.

competition and conflict, and the difference political experiences of the various groups in the 1960s, in order to arrive at a broader perspective of the issue of Iban unity and factionalism.

### III. A Perspective on Economic Development

Since the inception of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in Malaysia in the early 1970s, discussion of the economic problems and achievements of the *bumiputeras* (literally, "sons of the soil" or simply "natives") have centred on analysing to what extent development targets have either come close to or fallen short of the objectives of the NEP. The broad aims of the policy are twofold: first, to eradicate poverty irrespective of race; and second, to accelerate the restructuring of Malaysian society to correct economic imbalances, specifically, to address the fact that domestic wealth up to 1970 was concentrated heavily in the hands of the Chinese, who made up only about 30% of the total Malaysian population.<sup>21</sup> To this end, the NEP has sought to distribute wealth among the various ethnic groups in proportion to their respective demographic importance. Based on the population proportions of the various groups, this means that about 50% of any development benefits should ideally accrue to the Malays, about 30% to the Chinese, about 10% to the Indians and another 10%

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<sup>21</sup> A more detailed discussion of the NEP is found in the section below on the Economic Dimension.

to the "others".<sup>22</sup> In crude terms, this means that for every 100 Malaysians who attain a certain level of prosperity, about a half should be Malays, 30 Chinese, 10 Indians and another 10 the "others".<sup>23</sup>

My analysis of economic issues among the Ibans is based on the above principle. It is against this background that the economic development of the Ibans in the post-independence period is examined. The NEP is a 20-year economic blueprint; its term expired in 1990. Hence, the most important question to be asked is: To what extent have Ibans benefited from the policy? Although the NEP has been in existence since 1970, so far there has been no systematic study undertaken of its impact on the Ibans.

In line with the NEP objectives, it is appropriate that discussion should now turn to determining the Iban "share" of the development benefits. This then would facilitate an examination as to whether Ibans have, since independence, received a broadly fair share of the development benefits promised by the NEP. In 1988, the population proportions of the various ethnic groups in Sarawak were as follows: Ibans 30%, Bidayuhs 8%, Orang Ulu 5%, Malays 21%, Melanaus 6%, Chinese 29% and others 1% (see Table 1.1). Based on "proportional sharing",

<sup>22</sup> The category "others" includes, for example, the Sarawak and Sabah native populations.

<sup>23</sup> However, an initial target of 30% was set in the NEP for the *bumiputera* group as a whole, including those in Sarawak and Sabah; it was, however, the ultimate intention to raise that target to about 50%.

Ibans should theoretically reap about 30% of the benefits of economic growth within the state.<sup>24</sup>

However, it is more difficult to determine the Iban proportion within the national context, as that for Sarawak as a whole is not easily definable. At times, that proportion may also depend on the relationships between the state and federal leaders.<sup>25</sup> Of course, I recognise that these are ideals, but I think it justifiable to examine to what extent national targets have been attained in relation to particular ethnic groups.

The question as to whether Ibans have shared in economic development can be tackled by at least studying how close they have come towards achieving the 30% target in the Sarawak context. For this purpose, I have chosen to concentrate my analysis on two broad areas: (a) the pattern of employment; and (b) education. With respect to these issues, I examine the extent to which there is adequate Iban participation in all the different categories of employment and in all levels of education in the state. In other words, ideally there should be

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<sup>24</sup> Setting objectives dominates economic analysis in much of the development literature; scholars have been criticised for selecting goals that are self-serving; but in my case, the goal has been clearly defined by national interests, although, undoubtedly one could argue about the decision to establish 30% as the initial target.

<sup>25</sup> Naturally, it is to be expected that the share of economic benefits may be severely limited in the case of Sabah and Kelantan, in which the state governments are controlled by the opposition Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) and Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) respectively.

about 30% Ibans in the various categories of employment, be they in agriculture, or the semi-skilled, skilled, or professional sectors; similarly, there should also be about 30% Ibans who have either completed primary, secondary or tertiary education. Although it is not to be expected that Ibans would achieve their 30% target by 1990,<sup>26</sup> the comparative analysis of the different levels of attainment of the different ethnic groups in terms of moving closer towards their respective targets, can be taken as an indication that some groups might have been favoured more than the others or that, for some reason, they have been more dynamic and assertive than others. My view is that one of the main reasons lies in the political sphere. In addition to the examination of patterns of employment and education, my study also focuses briefly on the issues of poverty reduction with regard to the differences among the various ethnic groups.

The fruits of economic growth are scarce and there is competition for them in any given society. This is very much so within a society such as Sarawak which is sharply divided by such factors as ethnicity and religion. In the process of competition between ethnic groups sometimes, as in Malaysia, an elite cartel, comprising representatives of the various ethnic groups,

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<sup>26</sup> According to some forecasts, *bumiputera* economic achievement is expected to fall below the 30% target by 1990 and it is widely expected that the restructuring policy will continue beyond 1990, although it may take a new form.



emerges, which dominates or monopolises the allocation of resources. In turn, this domination leads to further competition and conflicts which may not be confined solely to these ethnic-based groups, but which cut across the lines of ethnicity, religion and other shared interests. In other words, tensions and struggles between social classes might become increasingly significant. This, in turn, might result in further elite consolidation between potentially competing ethnic elite factions who see the need to unite to preserve their common interests against the encroaching masses and the leaders who are representing them.

In the interest of maintaining this domination or monopoly, it is likely that this combined elite then precipitates and intensifies conflicts along ethnic lines in order to diffuse the concentration on its own position and interests. Neglect and the exclusion of some groups from the benefits of development are the hallmark of policies pursued by such elites or leaders. The emergence of rival groups is seen as a source of possible challenge to the established leadership. Thus, the increase in strength and numbers of the rival groups is closely monitored lest it pose a threat to the continuity of the current leadership.

#### **IV. Ethnicity**

Unlike the Peninsular states of the Federation, Sarawak boasts no single ethnic group that commands an

absolute majority, both in terms of its population or its legislative status. The major ethnic groups in Sarawak are the Ibans (Sea Dayaks), Chinese, Malays, Bidayus (Land Dayaks), Melanaus and the Orang Ulu (a collection of smaller groups such as Kayans, Kenyahs, Kelabits and other indigenes).<sup>27</sup> According to the latest report on the population census, the population by ethnic groups in Sarawak is as follows: Ibans--471,000 (30%); Chinese--463,000 (29%); Malays--330,000 (21%); Bidayus--133,000 (8%); Melanaus--92,000 (6%); Orang Ulu--86,000 (5%); and Others--18,000 (1%).<sup>28</sup> The population distribution of the various ethnic groups has remained relatively constant over the last thirty years (Table 1.1); the only major change in the ethnic composition of the state population between 1950 and 1988 was with regard to the Iban. In 1950, the Iban proportion, which made up about 35% of the total population, was down to 32% in 1960, 31% in 1970 and 30% in 1970 and 1988. During the same period, there was an overall marginal increase for the Malay, except in 1960, when its proportion was down by 1% from about 18% in 1950. There were no percentage changes for the Bidayuh, Orang Ulu and Melanau over the same census periods, which comprised about 8%, 5% and 6%, respectively. For the Chinese, there has been a modest

<sup>27</sup> I have opted to use the term "Orang Ulu" as opposed to "Other Indigenous" because the former is a popular and acceptable form of describing them in Sarawak at the present time.

<sup>28</sup> Sarawak, Department of Statistics (1989). *Annual Statistical Bulletin Sarawak (ASBS) 1988*. Kuching: Department of Statistics Malaysia (Sarawak Branch), (October), p.9.

increase from 27% in 1950 to about 29% in 1988. The "others" category was relatively constant at about 1%; it includes minority groups such as Indians, Eurasians, and Europeans.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> In the 1970 and 1980 census, the following were the terms used for ethnic classifications:

In 1970:

<u>Ethnic terms</u>	<u>Comprises</u>
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Sea Dayak:	Ibans;
Land Dayak:	Bidayuhs;
Other indigenous:	Bisayahs, Kedayans, Kayans, Kenyahs, Kelabits, Muruts, Punans and others;
Malay:	Malays;
Melanau:	Melanaus;
Chinese:	dialect groups such as Cantonese, Foochow, Hakka, Henghua, Hokkien, Hainan, Teochew and other Chinese;
Others:	people of Indian, Indonesian, European, Eurasian and other origins.

In the 1980 census, the Indian category was added and it includes those who trace their origins from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka; the second change was an addition of Vietnamese in the category "Others".

Source: Malaysia, Department of Statistics (1983). *Population and Housing Census of Malaysia 1980*. (2 Vols.). Kuala Lumpur: Gov't Printing Office, (June), p.651.

Table 1.1  
Population and its Distribution by Ethnicity,  
Sarawak: 1950-1988.

Ethnicity	Numbers ('000)					Percentage				
	'50	'60	'70	'80	'88	'50	'60	'70	'80	'88
Iban	190	238	303	396	471	35	32	31	30	30
Bidayuh	42	58	84	108	133.	8	8	8	8	8
Orang Ulu	30	38	51	69	86	5	5	5	5	5
Malay	97	129	181	258	330	18	17	19	20	21
Melanau	36	45	53	75	92	6	6	6	6	6
Chinese	145	229	294	385	463	27	31	30	30	29
Others	5	8	10	17	18	1	1	1	1	1
Total*	540	737	966	1,291	1,575	100	100	100	100	100

Sources: *Population and Housing Census 1960, 1970 and 1980; MSBS, Dec. 1987; and ASBS 1988.*

Note: Numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand, and percentages have been rounded by one decimal point.

Table 1.2  
Ethnic Concentration by Division: 1980.

Division	Iban		Bidayuh		Orang Ulu	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kuching	21,648	5	64,673	60	1,448	2
Sri Aman	99,595	25	576	1	128	*
Sibu	76,131	19	615	1	873	1
Miri	43,797	11	1,214	1	32,907	48
Bintulu	29,812	8	142	*	3,189	5
Sarikei	47,902	12	312	*	168	*
Kapit	48,475	12	124	*	12,039	17
Samarahan	22,130	6	39,747	37	88	*
Limbang	6,790	2	146	*	18,225	26
All Divisions	396,280	100	107,549	100	69,065	99

Source: ASBS 1988; p.13.

Note: \* negligible.

Table 1.3  
Ethnic Concentration by Division: 1980.

Division	Malay		Melanau		Chinese	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kuching	119,990	47	1,545	2	153,540	40
Sri Aman	46,303	18	421	1	18,628	5
Sibu	16,004	6	34,293	46	96,711	25
Miri	24,106	9	5,201	7	41,582	11
Bintulu	3,940	2	8,224	11	11,867	3
Sarikei	8,303	3	24,773	33	37,025	10
Kapit	1,392	1	422	1	4,360	1
Samarahan	24,930	10	86	*	14,686	4
Limbang	12,836	5	161	*	6,762	2
All Divisions	257,804	101	75,126	101	385,161	101

Source: ASBS 1988, p.13.

Note: \* negligible.

Tables 1.2 and 1.3 show where particular ethnic groups are concentrated by Administrative Division, while Table 1.4 shows which ethnic group constitutes the majority within a given Division.

For the Dayak group,<sup>30</sup> only the Ibans have absolute dominance over three Divisions, while the Bidayuhs and the Orang Ulu have a plural majority<sup>31</sup> in one Division each (Table 1.4). Iban absolute majorities are found, in order of the degree of their dominance, in Kapit, Sri Aman and Bintulu. In addition, Ibans also form plural majorities in two Divisions, that is, in Sarikei and

<sup>30</sup> Statistics in the pre-independence period frequently used Dayak to include not only these three groups, but also the Melanau; in this thesis, it refers to Ibans, Bidayuhs and the Orang Ulu.

<sup>31</sup> A plural majority is defined as a Division which is dominated by any given ethnic group (i.e. either by the Dayak, Malay/Melanau or the Chinese) with a total population ranging between 34% to 49%, as opposed to a simple or absolute majority, in which case the proportion is at least 51%; the concept is further elaborated in Chapter 3.

Miri, although the margin of their plurality in the latter Division is rather small. While the Saribas area (i.e. the Sri Aman Division) continues to be dominated by Ibans, there have been some changes in Iban traditional dominance in the Third Division;<sup>32</sup> presently, only the Kapit Division is still strongly dominated by them. On the other hand, the Bidayuhs have a plural majority in only the Samarahan Division;<sup>33</sup> although they are also concentrated in the Kuching Division, there they only form the third largest ethnic bloc. Similarly, the Orang Ulu also form a plural majority in only one Division and that is in Limbang.

Table 1.4  
Percentage Distribution of Population  
by Division and Ethnicity, Sarawak: 1980.

Division	Iban	Bidayuh	O/Ulu	Malay	Melanau	Chinese	Total
Kuching	6.0	17.8	0.4	33.1	0.4	42.3	100.0
Sri Aman	60.1	0.4	0.1	28.0	0.3	11.2	100.1
Sibu	33.9	0.3	0.4	7.1	15.3	43.1	100.1
Miri	29.4	0.8	22.1	16.2	3.5	27.9	99.9
Bintulu	52.1	0.3	5.6	6.9	14.4	20.8	100.1
Sarikei	40.4	0.3	0.1	7.0	20.9	31.3	100.0
Kapit	72.6	0.2	18.0	2.1	0.6	6.5	100.0
Samarahan	21.8	39.1	0.1	24.5	0.1	14.4	100.0
Limbang	15.1	0.3	40.6	28.6	0.4	15.0	100.0

Sources: Tables 1.2 and 1.3. Key: O -Orang.

<sup>32</sup> In 1973, the Third Division, covering the Rejang river basin, was subdivided to form three new Divisions, namely the Third Division (or Sibu, covering the middle part of the Rejang River basin); the Sixth (Sarikei, extending from the coast to the boundary of Sibu); and, the Seventh (Kapit, covering the upper part of the Rejang River basin); see, *ASBS 1988*, p.12, footnote 1.

<sup>33</sup> In the early 1980s, the Kuching Division was subdivided into the Kuching and Samarahan Divisions.

Unlike the Dayaks (especially the Ibans), the Malays/Melanaus and the Chinese do not form majorities in any Division. While almost half of the Malay population is found in the Kuching Division (see Table 1.3), they do not even form the largest ethnic bloc there. Neither do the Malay or Melanau groups constitute a plural majority in any Division (Table 1.4). Basically, the Malay population continues to be confined to "Sarawak proper", covering Kuching town and its immediate vicinity, stretching as far as the Saribas river system, while the Melanaus, mainly a coastal population and one of the smaller ethnic communities, are concentrated in the coastal Divisions of Sibü, Sarikei, and Bintulu.

Despite the fact that the Chinese form the largest population in the Kuching Division, they do not form the dominant group there (Tables 1.3 and 1.4). However, they manage to form plural majorities in two urban Divisions of Kuching and Sibü, while in Miri, they have almost equal numbers with the Ibans. Similar to the Iban population pattern, the Chinese are spread throughout the Divisions; but the Chinese differ in that they are mainly concentrated in the urban centres, while the Ibans tend to be dispersed in the *ulu* (interior) areas.

Lastly, it is also pertinent to present the population picture in terms of the three largest political blocs, the Dayak, Malay/Melanau and the Chinese.<sup>34</sup> With respect to the above ethnic

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<sup>34</sup> The rationale for such a consideration is further explored in later sections, including the political history section.

classification, Dayak dominance is found in six Divisions; in order of the strength of their domination, they are Kapit, Samarahan, Sri Aman, Bintulu, Limbang, and Miri. In the three remaining Divisions, the Dayaks constitute a plural majority in Sarikei and the Chinese in Sibiu and Kuching.

Knowledge about the distribution of these ethnic groups becomes important when we consider political change and economic development among the Ibans in order to discern the relationship between potential political strength and ethnicity in different parts of Sarawak. It also puts into proper perspective the Iban claim to a share in the leadership, or more appropriately equal partnership in the governing of Sarawak and the receipt of a fair share of the benefits of economic growth. However, the population distribution and composition provides only a partial picture in relation to the real political strength of the various ethnic groups as it is mainly dependent on the distribution of the legislative seats. In five previous state elections, there were 48 state legislative seats.<sup>35</sup> Of the 48, 28 (58%) are Dayak seats--17 Iban, five Bidayuh and three Orang Ulu; 15 Malay/Melanau<sup>36</sup> and eight Chinese.<sup>37</sup> Of the 28 Dayak

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<sup>35</sup> In 1988, the number of seats was increased to 56; the current term of the Council Negeri, based on 48 seats, expires in 1992.

<sup>36</sup> In post-independence statistics, the Melanaus are frequently grouped with the Malays, thus, Malay/Melanau--either for practical or, perhaps more convincingly, for political purposes (see later).

<sup>37</sup> The subject is further elaborated in Chapters 3 and 4.



seats, 23 were absolute majority seats (i.e. they comprised 51% or more of the voters of any given constituency) and five marginals (i.e. they constituted 49% or less), but comprised the single largest number of voters compared to other ethnic groups.<sup>38</sup> In the 1970s, the Ibans were overrepresented in the state legislature by about 11% (i.e. in terms of their population size, which was about 31%,<sup>39</sup> they had 42% [20] of the 48 seats). This overrepresentation was slowly reduced to reflect a more balanced distribution when in the mid-1980s, their majority seats were reduced to 17 (35%).<sup>40</sup> The gain in three seats went to the Malays/Melanaus, who increased their representation from 12 (25%) in the 1970s to 15 (31%) in the mid-1980s. However, after the 1988 delineation exercise, when the number of legislative seats was increased to 56, the Malays/Melanaus have become overrepresented in the state assembly; while they constitute about 26% of the total voters, they have 18 (32%) of the seats.

## V. Political History

While there are many and diverse ethnic groups within Sarawak, there is some proximity between certain

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<sup>38</sup> See also Jayum A. Jawan (1987a). *The Sarawak State Election of 1987: The Dayakism Factor*. Kuala Lumpur: Maju Tulis, where I deal with these classifications in the evaluation of the 1987 election.

<sup>39</sup> The electoral composition in the late 1960s was as follow: Dayaks about 46%, Malays/Melanaus 26% and Chinese 28%; see Leigh, 1974, op cit, Table 31, p.136.

<sup>40</sup> Refer also to Table 4.7, Chapter 4.



of them. In Sarawak politics, it is a common tendency for political observers to think of these various groups in terms of three large and competing categories, namely the Dayak, Malay/Melanau and the Chinese.<sup>41</sup> This classification is a simplified one and intra-ethnic conflicts do arise and political affiliations cut across ethnic lines. For example, within the Dayak category, there has been the general feeling among some Ibans that they have been conceding too much in terms of granting government appointments in SNAP and PBDS to the Bidayuh and Orang Ulu in order to retain their loyalty. Among the Chinese, there is the long-standing conflict within the SUPP between the Foochows and Hokkiens for the control of the party, and between the Malays and Melanaus for the control of the Malay/Melanau wing of the PBB.

This broad classification into Dayak, Malay/Melanau and Chinese can be explained by three factors. The first lies in the claim of the indigenous population to being the original (or the first) group to inhabit Sarawak; hence, arises the division between *bumiputera* and the non-*bumiputera*, the latter mainly comprising the immigrant Chinese.<sup>42</sup> The second and most important factor

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<sup>41</sup> Although, the term Dayak was used during Brooke times, it was not until the 1987 election that it gained widespread political acceptance in Sarawak, especially among the electorate.

<sup>42</sup> For the express purpose of preferential treatment of natives, the federal constitution defined the following groups to be natives of Sarawak: Iban, Bidayuh, Malay, Melanau, and Kayan, Kenyah and Kelabit (whom I have referred to as the Orang Ulu) and 21 smaller indigenous groups, Article 161(A)[6], *Federal Constitution of Malaysia*.

is religion, which gives rise to the division within the *bumiputera* category between the Muslim and non-Muslim *bumiputeras*. Although it is constitutionally acknowledged that (Sarawak) *bumiputeras* comprise various indigenous groups, it is not generally understood that there is a sharp division between Muslim and non-Muslim natives. The Malays and, to a large extent, the Melanaus, are Muslims, while the rest are non-Muslims. For the Malays/Melanaus, Islam provides a strong unifying force. But among the Dayaks, there is an absence of a common identity; neither Christianity, which is widespread among them, nor traditional beliefs serve to unify them. Nevertheless, the general opposition of the Dayaks to Islam is expressed in their strong commitment to their traditions.<sup>43</sup> Even among those who profess Christianity, many still practice their pagan beliefs, for example, by holding various *gawai* (such as *sandau ari*, *gawai kenyalang*, or *kelingkang*) and making offerings to seek divine favours.<sup>44</sup> Conversion to Christianity among the Dayaks would not have been very successful if it had not been for the missionaries' flexibility in generally ignoring these practices. On the other hand, the Chinese, although a diverse group based on dialect differences, have more or less been politically united in SUPP, which

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<sup>43</sup> Among the Ibans, Searle drew attention to their unity based on culture, particularly language and religious beliefs; see Searle, 1983, *op cit*, p.49.

<sup>44</sup> The concept of *gawai*, its purposes and the various stages associated with it is further elaborated in Chapter 2.

was formed with the initial intention of integrating the various Chinese business organisations.

The third factor is the federal influence upon ethnic alignments within the state. It is clear that the special constitutional position of the natives of Sarawak (and Sabah) arose from the extension to them of the privileges of the Malays enshrined in the Constitution of the then Federation of Malaya. However, the insistence of the federal authorities on a power balance between the Ibans and the Malays/Melanaus in the formation of the first state government served to confirm the Muslim-non-Muslim division; it was further exacerbated when Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, a Muslim Melanau, took over as Chief Minister and the office of the Governor was not given to a non-Muslim native.<sup>45</sup>

Since independence, the federal influence has exerted itself on several occasions, most of which worked to the disadvantage of the Ibans or Dayaks, who formed the largest ethnic group (and also to the Kadazans of Sabah). In Sarawak, it has worked for the removal of Kalong Ningkan and ultimately the installation of a Muslim Chief Minister in 1970. In the early 1970s, the federal leaders worked hard to assist the Alliance (BUMIPUTERA) in the 1970 and 1974 elections; it helped install BUMIPUTERA as the leading Alliance partner and excluded SNAP, which had the majority support from the

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<sup>45</sup> This issue is further discussed in Chapter 3 in relation to the formation of the state government after the 1970 state general elections.

Dayak community; this ran counter to their earlier assertion that power should properly be shared between Ibans and the Malays, or more generally, between non-Muslims and Muslims.<sup>46</sup>

Having discussed briefly the parameters of ethnic classification in Sarawak, it is appropriate that attention should now be focused on each category. Within the Dayak category, the most important are the Ibans. Although they can be seen as a defined cultural entity and therefore in the Sarawak context a potential political grouping, the Ibans have never been a united people.<sup>47</sup> Well before independence and in the period of heightened political activity following the plan to form the Federation of Malaysia, the Ibans were divided in terms of their riverine settlements. They classified themselves according to river systems, for example, *kami* (we of) Skrang, *kami* Batang Rejang, and *kami* Saribas. Thus, when the Federation of Malaysia was formed, Ibans of these various riverine groupings attempted to establish political parties based on these divisions. SNAP, which was established by Saribas Ibans, received widespread support from that area but not elsewhere. Similarly, Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (PESAKA) catered to the Ibans in the Rejang river basin of the Third Division. Yet, while two political parties were formed by and for Ibans in different parts of Sarawak, there were

<sup>46</sup> Much of this is discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>47</sup> Their unity has been markedly cultural and linguistic rather than political.

also sizeable numbers of them who supported the other political parties, most notably the SUPP.

Despite these sharp divisions, Ibans have from time to time demonstrated a desire for unity. This can be seen in the political bargaining carried out between the Alliance components of SNAP and PESAKA in 1963 regarding which party should provide the first Chief Minister. Based on the number of seats won by the respective Alliance component parties (PESAKA 11, SNAP six, BARJASA five and SCA one), it might have been expected that PESAKA should provide the CM. However, an agreement was reached whereby PESAKA's *Temenggong* Jugah would be supported as the Alliance candidate for the Governorship of Sarawak and SNAP's Stephen Kalong Ningkan the Chief Minister. Although Jugah did not eventually become Governor,<sup>48</sup> the continued cohesion of SNAP and PESAKA in the Alliance that enabled Kalong Ningkan to continue to occupy the Chief Minister's post must also be seen as a demonstration of a spirit of cooperation between the two separate groups of riverine Ibans. But the events which ultimately brought down Kalong Ningkan's government in 1966,<sup>49</sup> and the subsequent withdrawal of PESAKA's support

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<sup>48</sup> This was due to the federal objection that since the post of the Chief Minister was filled by an Iban, the Governorship should be given to a Malay; see Leigh, 1974, *op cit*, p.79.

<sup>49</sup> Kalong Ningkan's strong position on the preservation of Sarawak's rights as a defined state brought him into constant conflict with the federal government; his insistence on the strict observation of the terms of the London Agreement annoyed federal leaders who wanted Sarawak to be brought quickly into line with other states in the Federation.

for SNAP, were probably of Kalong Ningkan's making: for example, Ningkan did not give PESAKA representation in the state cabinet, though Jugah was given a federal ministerial post that had been specially created for him.<sup>50</sup>

The divisions in the Iban community provide a sharp contrast with their counterparts, the Malays/Melanaus and the Chinese. For much of the period from 1963 until 1974, Ibans had been divided between SNAP and PESAKA, while the Malays/Melanaus and the Chinese had gradually been consolidating behind Parti Bumiputera (BUMIPUTERA) and SUPP respectively. It was only after the 1974 state general elections that Ibans began to rally behind SNAP. From 1974 to 1982, it could safely be said to be a period of relative calm. Following the 1974 election, SNAP maintained the steady support of the Ibans, as reflected in the number of CN seats held during this period.

But Iban unity and their support for SNAP were severely tested in 1983 when a group of second generation Iban leaders in SNAP quit the party to set up a Dayak-based party, the PBDS. By this time, the SNAP leadership had passed from an Iban to a Chinese, James Wong. The up-and-coming young Iban leaders questioned his position. They felt that SNAP should promote an Iban image instead of a multi-ethnic one. They had a strong case, for all of the CN seats held by SNAP, except that of James Wong, were from Iban or Dayak majority constituencies. As such,

<sup>50</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, pp.79 & 82-83.

these Ibans argued that not only should SNAP project an Iban image but it must also be an Iban party led by the Iban themselves. Earlier in the party convention to elect new office-bearers, Leo Moggie,<sup>51</sup> leading these second generation Iban leaders in SNAP, challenged James Wong and his supporters for the control and leadership of SNAP. Unfortunately, while the Iban or the Dayak sentiment in SNAP was then high, they failed in their bid to oust Wong, a failure Leo Moggie's group attributed to the over-representation of Chinese strength in the party general assembly to the disadvantage of the Ibans. These clashes soured relationships between the two groups, which finally resulted in Iban leaders leaving the party.

The formation of PBDS in July 1983 was opportune because the state general election was called in December 1983. The election gave these Dayak leaders (by then they were increasingly referring to themselves as Dayak [instead of Iban]) an immediate chance to test their support in a new party. The spirit of Iban nationalism (or "Dayakism" as it was popularly termed in 1987) was reawakened. The 1983 election was a battle royal between SNAP and PBDS to determine whether SNAP, under the presidency of James Wong, or PBDS, a Dayak-based party under the leadership of Leo Moggie, commanded Iban support. The election gave rather mixed results. Both parties won an almost equal number of seats, all of which had originally been held by SNAP.

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<sup>51</sup> For a brief profile, see Appendix B.



Almost from its inception, PBDS was co-opted into the Barisan Nasional (BN [or National Front]).<sup>52</sup> Because of a strong objection from SNAP against the inclusion of PBDS in the BN, the Front's leader, Abdul Taib Mahmud, co-opted PBDS by announcing the "Barisan Nasional Plus Government" (i.e. BN Plus PBDS). In announcing such an arrangement, Taib Mahmud reasoned that the Ibans, under the newly formed PBDS, and its leaders should not be excluded from the government. Furthermore, it may not have been wise to side with either party at that stage as neither faction's strength had been tested in a proper election. As such, PBDS, although not formally a member of the National Front, was considered to be a party friendly to it. Under such an arrangement, PBDS, like other component parties, was subject to BN decisions about how many DUN seats it could contest.

The motive behind the concept of the Barisan Nasional Plus Government became clear when decisions were announced about the number and location of the seats which the BN component parties were going to contest in the next election. It was decided that SNAP and PBDS should fight it out against each other in the constituencies they had collectively held when they were in SNAP. This was seen as a way of settling their long-standing dispute. Such an arrangement also provided opportunities for the other BN components to "steal"

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<sup>52</sup> BN then comprised the component parties of the PBB (a merger of BUMIPUTERA and PESAKA), SUPP and SNAP.

these disputed constituencies by supporting independent candidates against both SNAP and PBDS. As it turned out, three constituencies formerly held by SNAP and PBDS were wrested from them by other BN components through independent candidates.

The most recent test of Iban unity came in the 1987 election. If anything, it was an attempt at renewing Dayak unity. It was quite different from the circumstances that prevailed in the 1983 election. The championing of "Dayakism" in the 1987 election was calculated to try to bring Ibans into the centre of political decision-making and possibly removing the control of government from Taib Mahmud, the Malay/Melanau-dominated PBB and the PBB-dominated BN. In 1987, PBDS teamed up with some discontented elements of the ruling Malay/Melanau wing of the PBB, the dominant partner of the Barisan Nasional. In terms of the number of seats won by PBDS in 1987 there was not much doubt that it managed to pull a sizeable number of Ibans and other Dayaks behind its cause. However, due to the usual political manoeuvring after the elections, and before the first meeting of the Assembly, PBDS had lost five of its 15 assemblymen, who had switched their allegiance to the Barisan Nasional.

The second category or ethnic bloc comprises the Malays/Melanaus, defined mainly by their religious affiliation to Islam. By constitutional definition, a Malay is a person who professes the Muslim faith and

practises Malay culture.<sup>53</sup> The strong association between the Melanaus and the Malays is perhaps best explained by the fact that the first Muslim Chief Minister of Sarawak was a Melanau, who championed the general Muslim and Malay cause; he was then followed by his nephew, Taib Mahmud, another Muslim Melanau closely associated with the Peninsular and Sarawak Malays. However, this does not mean that all Melanaus are Muslims; a number of them are, in fact, Christians. Basically, the Malay/Melanau group has supported singlemindedly the Malay/Melanau wing of the PBB (formed through the merger of PESAKA and BUMIPUTERA).

In the early 1960s, Malay/Melanau political divisions between Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA, mostly Melanaus and led by Rahman Ya'kub and Taib Mahmud) and Parti Negara Sarawak (PANAS, mostly Malays and led by the Malay aristocrats of Kuching) were not sufficiently marked to present problems for future collaboration.<sup>54</sup> In 1966, the two parties merged to form BUMIPUTERA; since then Malay and Melanau support has been thrown solidly behind the new party. It was only after the 1987 state election that there was some evidence of discontent among the Malay/Melanau group, which gave rise to the Persatuan Rakyat Malaysia Sarawak (PERMAS). PERMAS was formed by disgruntled elements from the PBB's Malay/Melanau wing and in the 1987 election, it teamed up with PBDS to try

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<sup>53</sup> Article 160(2), *Federal Constitution of Malaysia*.

<sup>54</sup> Refer to Leigh, 1974, *op cit* and Searle, 1983, *op cit*.

to topple PBB and Taib Mahmud. PERMAS did not erode much of the Malay/Melanau support for PBB but it did sufficiently well in the 1987 election to cause concern to Taib Mahmud. The total number of Malay/Melanau seats lost by PBB to PERMAS was three. For the moment, the political position of Taib Mahmud and the PBB within Malay/Melanau society is still strong. In the recently concluded parliamentary elections in 1990, PBB denied PERMAS further support by winning all the parliamentary seats from the Malay/Melanau parliamentary constituencies.

The third major ethnic category is the Chinese. Overall, Chinese unity has been in part due to the recognition that they need a suitable environment for the success of their business interests. To these ends, the Chinese were exposed quite early to organised activities mainly in the form of commercial associations. The Sarawak United People's Party was formed out of a need to centralise the numerous Chinese commercial organisations and to unite the Chinese in the face of the proposed Federation of Malaysia. SUPP was formed as a multi-ethnic party but it was apparent that the majority of its support came from the Chinese community. Of the native groups who supported the SUPP, the Ibans were the most important.

The formation in 1962 of the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA), which was modelled after the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) of West Malaysia, did not prove

to be popular and failed to present a clear alternative and a formidable challenge to SUPP. Nevertheless, SCA was represented in the first two state governments under Kalong Ningkan and *Penghulu Tawi Sli*. However, its position in the government failed to enhance its Chinese support and it disappeared from the political scene after the 1974 election. Similarly, the multi-ethnic SNAP also failed to attract significant numbers of Chinese despite the position of James Wong in SNAP and as Deputy Chief Minister in the first government under Kalong Ningkan.

Chinese support for SUPP has been relatively stable and strong since the party's inception. This unity may have been sustained for two reasons. First, the Kalong Ningkan and Tawi Sli administrations had been formed without major Chinese political representation.<sup>55</sup> Hence, the Chinese perceived that they could be politically dispensable if they did not band together. Secondly, the Chinese must also have realised that in the presence of strong native sentiments against them exercising any major role in government, they would never be in a position to lead in a state dominated by natives. Thus, the best they could hope for was to be a power-broker among rival native groups. In order to exercise this role effectively, they had to sustain their unity.

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<sup>55</sup> Although the Chinese were represented by the SCA in the Kalong Ningkan and Tawi Sli governments, the majority of the Chinese grassroots supported the SUPP, which was in opposition until 1970, when SUPP support was important in the formation of the state government under Rahman Ya'kub and his party, the PBB.

Sarawak politics are characterised by constant competition and political manoeuvring between the various political parties representing these three major ethnic categories. Given the number of Assembly seats which are controlled by natives, competition for the control of the state government is basically between Muslim and non-Muslim natives. There are so many safeguards to protect native rights that it is, in effect, impossible for a Chinese party to gain power, though it can be influential in a coalition, as has been the case since the 1970 state election. Due to their role as brokers, the Chinese are exercising considerable leverage over the Malays/Melanaus and have greater access to power than the Ibans and other Dayaks. Rahman Ya'kub's position after the 1974 state election was critically determined by Chinese support to the exclusion of the Ibans, who overwhelmingly backed SNAP.

The issue of access to power is also not determined solely by the population of Sarawak. Since independence the central government (more specifically, the federal UMNO leaders) has played a considerable role in the formation of various state governments.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, it was the federal government's conflict with Kalong Ningkan that led to the latter's downfall, and subsequently its outmanoeuvring of PESAKA after the 1970 election which helped clear the way for the ascent of Rahman Ya'kub.

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<sup>56</sup> UMNO--United Malays National Organisation.

Control of the state political process is crucially linked to the distribution of economic resources in Sarawak. The Land Bill crisis of 1965 is a good example of a calculated display of power between leaders within the Alliance components over access to and control of land. The Bill, if passed, would have opened up lands held under native customary rights to all. This would have allowed its purchase by the Chinese, who were complaining of lack of land for agriculture. There was strong opposition from the natives and more notably the Malay/Melanau leaders of BUMIPUTERA. The Land Bill issue threatened Kalong Ningkan's two-year old government and, consequently, he never brought it before the Council Negeri. It is perhaps not too difficult to understand why Kalong Ningkan had wanted to introduce the Bill. James Wong, as Deputy Chief Minister in the Ningkan government, had teamed up with Ningkan in SNAP. If passed, the Bill would have shown SNAP as the champion of Chinese rights, thus strengthening James Wong's position in the party and as a Chinese leader. At the same time it would also have made SNAP a viable alternative to SUPP. All this would have increased the power base of Kalong Ningkan and his party.

During *Penghulu* Tawi Sli's term in office as the Chief Minister from 1966 until 1969, two Malay/Melanau state ministers, Taib Mahmud and Awang Hipni, and one federal minister, Rahman Ya'kub, from BUMIPUTERA were accused of working only for their own ethnic group and

neglecting the others. As leader of PESAKA, *Temenggong Jugah* openly accused the three BUMIPUTERA leaders when he was delivering a welcome speech for Tun Razak. *Temenggong Jugah* charged that they

were working only for the Malay community. Large sums of money were being allocated for the building of mosques everywhere and very little was being given to the Dayaks in the *ulu* areas.<sup>57</sup>

The formation of the coalition government after the 1970 election was a landmark in the power struggle between the Ibans and the Malays/Melanaus, a struggle which focused on the most important question-- "Development for whom?". Since their relegation to the margins of power, the position of the Ibans (Dayaks) in shaping the distribution of economic benefits has been severely restricted. In addition, the competition for these benefits is now increasingly confined to various competing groups within the Malay/Melanau-wing of the PBB. This competition led to an open confrontation in 1987, when, not only the Malay/Melanau, but also all other ethnic communities, were dragged in to settle the economic competition between Rahman Ya'kub's and Taib Mahmud's factions. Specifically, the dispute involved, among other things, the awarding of timber concessions-- or what has been popularly termed "timber politics". However, it is not directly relevant to discuss the

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<sup>57</sup> See, *The Vanguard*, 9 October 1967.



timber issue with regard to Iban or Dayak politics; until they are in a position to effect the distribution of concessions, there is hardly any conflict over them. For some Ibans or Dayaks who have received timber concessions, this merely represents a political gesture from the PBB leaders because the Ibans or Dayaks are not, in effect, in a political position to demand them.

Since Rahman Ya'kub's assumption of power, economic disparities between the Dayaks, on the one hand, and the Malays/Melanaus and the Chinese, on the other, have continued to widen. Despite the implementation of the NEP in 1970, the Dayaks, contrary to the intent and the objectives of the NEP, have lagged behind in development. In order to arrive at a clearer picture of how the Ibans, and more broadly the Dayaks, have lagged behind in a number of fields, it is necessary to understand the NEP and its objectives.

## **VI. The Economic Dimension**

The New Economic Policy (popularly known by its acronym the NEP) was introduced in 1971 in the Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975. It was a response to the May 13, 1969 race riots which threatened to widen the political and economic cleavage between the Peninsular Malays and the Chinese. In the 1969 general election, the federal Alliance party, consisting of UMNO, MCA and the MIC<sup>58</sup> had won the election but lost the two-thirds majority it had

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<sup>58</sup> MIC--Malaysian Indian Congress.

previously enjoyed (excluding the number of seats the Sarawak and Sabah partners would win, as the elections there had been suspended following the declaration of an emergency, precipitated by the race riots). The outbreak of the riots can be traced to incidents that happened during the election victory rallies, when abuse and insults were exchanged between government and opposition supporters.<sup>59</sup> Tan Chee Koon, leader of opposition Parti Gerakan Rakyat (GERAKAN), who had won a seat, decided to stage a victory procession as a way of thanking his voters. He applied and obtained a police permit to stage the procession on the 12th of May. However, the Democratic Action Party (DAP) supporters who had also applied to stage a similar procession the next day joined that of GERAKAN. The crowd was bigger than anticipated and became uncontrollable. During the rally, some GERAKAN and DAP supporters began hurling insults at the Malays. In response, the Malays decided to stage their victory procession, proceeding from the Selangor Menteri Besar's residence in Jalan Raja. Two Malays, while on their way to Jalan Raja to join the procession, were attacked by the Chinese. The Malays, who had gathered at Jalan Raja, then attacked and killed two passing Chinese. Immediately, as Tunku Abdul Rahman put it, "all hell broke lose".<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> See, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Alhaj (1969). *May 13: Before and After*. Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Melayu Press, p.94.

<sup>60</sup> Tunku Abdul Rahman, 1969, *Ibid*.

The result of the parliamentary election of 1969 showed how vulnerable the Malay political position was. The race riots were a response to this vulnerability. Goh Cheng Teik pointed out that they represented the Malay reaction to the "... perceived change in the ethnic configuration of power ...".<sup>61</sup> This dominant political position was the only leverage and safeguard the Malays had against any Chinese encroachment, since the domestic economy was already substantially in the hands of the Chinese. When the Chinese in GERAKAN and DAP celebrated their electoral victory by staging a procession and in the process insulted the Malays, it was the last straw. With their lack of economic control, and with their political position upstaged after the 1969 election, it was just too much to bear.

In the aftermath of the race riots, the NEP was introduced and incorporated in the Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975. Its two main objectives were (1) to eradicate poverty by raising income levels and increasing employment opportunities for all Malaysians, irrespective of race, and (2) to accelerate the process of restructuring Malaysian society to correct economic imbalances, so as to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function.<sup>62</sup> In 1970, of a total Peninsular population of about 9.3 million,

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<sup>61</sup> See Goh Cheng Teik (1971). *The May Thirteen Incident and Democracy in Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, p.8.

<sup>62</sup> See, Malaysia (1973). *Mid-Term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan 1971-1975 (MP2)*. Kuala Lumpur: Gov't Printing Office, p.1.

the Malays numbered 4.6 million (52%), Chinese 3.1 million (35%), Indians 0.9 million (10%) and others 0.7 million (0.3%) (adjusted figures).<sup>63</sup> The mean monthly income for a Malay household in 1970 was a mere M\$179 compared to M\$387 and M\$310 for the Chinese and the Indian households respectively (for detailed breakdown by income range, refer to Table 1.5).<sup>64</sup> In 1970, out of the total employment of about 2.8 million, Malays accounted for about 51%, Chinese 37% and Indians 11%.<sup>65</sup> This was well in line with the racial composition of the population. However, there was a racial imbalance in the sectorial distribution of employment. For instance, Malays accounted for about 67% of employment in agriculture, 25% in mining and quarrying, 29% in manufacturing, 24% in commerce and 22% in construction. This imbalance becomes evident when the figures for the Malays are contrasted with those for the Chinese, which were as follows: 66% in mining and quarrying, 65% in manufacturing, 65% in commerce and 72% in construction.<sup>66</sup> In the corporate sector these imbalances were no less pronounced. In 1970, foreign interests owned 61% of the share capital of all limited companies, while the Chinese

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<sup>63</sup> *Mid-Term Review MP2, Ibid, p.25.*

<sup>64</sup> *Mid-Term Review MP2, Ibid, p.3.*

<sup>65</sup> *Mid-Term Review MP2, Ibid, p.9.*

<sup>66</sup> *Mid-Term Review MP2, Ibid, p.10.*

owned 22.5% and the Malays a token 1.9% (for more details, refer to Table 1.6).<sup>67</sup>

Table 1.5  
Distribution of Household Income\*,  
Peninsular Malaysia: 1970

Income Range (Per Month) (In Ringgit)	Ethnicity				Total
	Malay	Chinese	Indian	Others	
1 - 99	84.5	9.6	4.9	1.0	100
100 - 199	60.8	24.9	14.0	0.3	100
200 - 399	40.3	46.0	13.5	0.2	100
400 - 699	31.6	55.7	12.1	0.6	100
700 - 1,499	23.2	61.4	12.5	2.9	100
1,500 - 2,999	14.0	62.1	13.6	10.3	100
3,000 and above	12.1	52.0	17.3	18.6	100
% of total+	56.7	31.3	11.2	0.8	100
Mean Income*	178.7	387.4	310.4	950.5	268.7
Median Income**	122.3	271.1	195.5	324.2	168.6

Source: *Mid-Term Review of MP2*, p.4.

Notes: + -As a percentage of total household.  
\* -Mean household income per month in ringgit.  
\*\* -Median household income per month in ringgit.

<sup>67</sup> *Mid-Term Review MP2*, Ibid, p.83.

Table 1.6  
Ownership of Share Capital of Limited Companies  
by Race and Sector, Peninsular Malaysia: 1970.

Industries	Malay In Malaysian Ringgits	Chinese	Indian	Foreign	Total*
	(in percentage)				
Agri/Forestry & Fisheries	13,724 (0.9)	177,438 (22.4)	16,191 (0.1)	1,079,714 (75.3)	1,432,400 (100)
Mining and Quarrying	3,876 (0.7)	91,557 (16.8)	2,488 (0.4)	393,910 (72.4)	543,497 (100)
Manufacturing	33,650 (2.5)	296,363 (22)	8,880 (0.7)	804,282 (59.6)	1,348,245 (100)
Construction	1,258 (2.2)	30,855 (52.8)	447 (0.8)	19,937 (24.1)	58,419 (100)
Transport & Communication	10,875 (13.3)	35,498 (43.4)	1,903 (2.3)	9,845 (12)	81,887 (100)
Commerce	4,715 (0.8)	184,461 (30.4)	4,711 (0.7)	384,549 (63.5)	605,164 (100)
Banking & Insurance	21,164 (3.3)	155,581 (24.3)	4,434 (0.6)	332,790 (52.2)	636,850 (100)
Others	13,349 (2.3)	220,330 (37.8)	13,348 (2.3)	182,862 (31.4)	582,516 (100)
Total	102,349 (1.9)	1,192,083 (22.5)	52,402 (1.0)	3,207,889 (60.7)	5,288,978 (100)

Source: *Mid-term Review of the MP2*, p.83.

Note: \* The total excludes share capital ownership by Federal and Statutory bodies and other Malaysian residents (individuals and Nominee and locally controlled companies), amounting to about M\$734 million. In this Table, the racial shares in each sector exclude these two groups.

Key: Agri. -Agriculture.

In line with the objectives of the NEP, various restructuring measures were introduced which continue to this day. A certain number of places in universities and a large number of scholarships are reserved for *bumiputera* students. *Bumiputeras* who wish to go into business get special treatment in terms of special loan facilities. A certain number of government tenders are reserved for *bumiputeras* or for joint venture companies that are controlled by *bumiputera* interests. A *bumiputera* can also accumulate an investment of up to 50,000 units in the Amanah Saham Nasional (ASN-National Trust Unit); it is fully backed by government and investors are guaranteed a net 10% profit per annum. These various measures are intended to increase the *bumiputera* share of the economic wealth to an initial 30% by 1990 and subsequently to a proportion reflecting their composition in the national population. This policy has caused some resentment among the non-indigenous groups, especially the Chinese, who see it as benefiting the *bumiputeras* at their expense.

In principle, the NEP objectives seem very attractive to all the *bumiputeras*. But one pertinent question to ask with regard to the Ibans and the other Dayaks is, "Where do they stand vis-à-vis the Malays/Melanaus on these issues and how have the former benefited from the policy?". It must be stressed again that the ultimate objective of the NEP is to restructure the economy so that the distribution of national wealth

accords approximately with the population proportions. According to the 1988 population census, the percentages of population by ethnic group in Sarawak are as follows: Ibans 30%, Bidayuhs 8%, Orang Ulu 5% (Dayak group--43%); Malays 21%, Melanaus 6% (Malay/Melanau--27%); and the Chinese 29%. According to the NEP, these should ideally provide the guide to the distribution of goods and services. However, in reality the situation is very different.

The pattern of employment in Sarawak over a period of thirty years from 1960 to 1980 has remained unchanged. In fact, Dayak economic identification with such pursuits as farming, hunting, fishing, and gathering has been reinforced. In the 1960 census, 50% (120,000) of all those engaged in agriculture and agricultural related activities were Ibans (or 66% [159,000] for the Dayak group). These numbers increased markedly to 53% (130,000) (70% [176,000] for the Dayak group) in 1970 and then again to 55% (142,000) (74% [191,000] for the Dayak group) in 1980.<sup>68</sup> These increases were in sharp contrast to the other ethnic groups, namely the Malay/Melanau and the Chinese (refer to Table 1.7). While the Malays/Melanaus and the Chinese have been moving into the more lucrative sectors, the number of Ibans and other Dayaks in low income activities has been increasing (Table 1.7). Agricultural activities are broadly

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<sup>68</sup> Figures quoted from ASBS 1970, p.41; ASBS 1980, pp.18-19; and ASBS 1984, pp.37-38.



synonymous with poverty, and the *Mid-term Review of the Fourth Malaysia Plan 1981-1985*<sup>69</sup> confirmed that as of 1982, as many as 49% of the Ibans lived below the poverty line, in sharp contrast to the Malay poverty rate of 22%, the Melanau at 18% and the Chinese at 9%.<sup>70</sup>

Table 1.7  
Agricultural Occupations by Ethnicity: 1960-1980.

Ethnicity	1960		1970		1980	
	'000	(%)	'000	(%)	'000	(%)
Iban	120	50	130	53	142	55
Bidayuh	22	9	27	11	29	11
Orang Ulu	17	7	19	6	20	8
Malay	30	13	30	12	26	10
Melanau	15	6	11	5	11	4
Chinese	34	14	29	12	28	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>99</b>

Sources: ASBS 1970, p.41; ASBS 1980, pp.18-19; and ASBS 1984, pp.37-38.

Note: All figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred; and, the total excludes other races.

The sluggish economic development experienced by the Ibans and the other Dayaks, in terms of employment, is not compensated for by development in other areas, notably education. Certainly, their educational achievements from the 1960 to the 1980 census period have not been encouraging. In education, all ethnic groups have experienced increases in the numbers of students who completed their lower certificates and school

<sup>69</sup> Malaysia (1983). *Mid-Term Review of the Fourth Malaysia Plan 1981-1985 (MP4)*. Kuala Lumpur: Gov't Printing Office, p.97.

<sup>70</sup> *Mid-Term Review MP4*, Ibid.

certificates between census years 1970 and 1980 (refer to Tables 1.8 and 1.9 respectively). Nevertheless, these statistics can be misleading without close scrutiny. By the 1980 census year, all the ethnic communities had almost tripled the numbers of their students who had completed the lower certificate level, except the Chinese whose increase was about 60%. However, these increases must be viewed in the light of the proportion of participation in education by the different ethnic groups. When this is considered, the Ibans or the Dayaks are nowhere near the targets set by the NEP, either in the numbers who received their lower certificates and school certificates or who completed a diploma or a degree course.

Table 1.8  
Level of Education Completed by Ethnicity: 1970.

Level	Iban '000	Bidayuh (as percentage of total)	O/Ulu	Malay	Melanau	Chinese
Primary	8.4 (13.0)	4.5 (7.0)	2.0 (3.0)	13.0 (21.0)	3.4 (6.0)	30.9 (40.0)
L.Sec.	1.6 (12.0)	0.8 (6.0)	0.3 (2.0)	2.6 (19.0)	0.5 (3.0)	7.6 (56.0)
U.Sec.	0.4 (5.0)	0.2 (3.0)	0.07 (1.0)	0.8 (11.0)	0.09 (1.0)	5.1 (74.0)
H.S.C.	0.06	0.03	0.01	0.1	0.01	1.2
Total	(3.0) 10.5	(2.0) 5.5	(1.0) 2.4	(5.0) 16.5	(1.0) 4.0	(57.0) 44.8

Source: Malaysia (1970). *Population and Housing Census of Malaysia 1970*. Vol.I, Part XIII. Kuala Lumpur: Gov't Printing Office, pp.132-55.

Key: L. -Lower U. -Upper Sec. -Secondary.  
H.S.C. -Higher School Certificate.

Table 1.9  
Level of Education Completed by Ethnicity: 1980.

Level	Iban '000	Bidayuh (as percentage of total)	O/Ulu	Malay	Melanau	Chinese
Primary	29.0 (18.0)	11.9 (7.0)	6.0 (4.0)	33.0 (21.0)	9.5 (6.0)	69.5 (43.0)
L.Sec.	5.7 (17.0)	2.4 (7.0)	1.2 (4.0)	9.7 (29.0)	1.6 (5.0)	12.5 (37.0)
U.Sec.	3.0 (9.0)	1.7 (5.0)	0.9 (3.0)	6.6 (19.0)	1.0 (3.0)	20.1 (59.0)
H.S.C.	0.2	0.1	0.07	0.05	0.07	2.2
Total	(6.0) 37.9	(3.0) 16.1	(2.0) 8.17	(17.0) 49.35	(2.0) 12.17	(64.0) 104.3

Source: *Population and Housing Census of Malaysia 1980*, pp.502-597.

## VII. Review of Literature

I am mainly concerned with post-Second World War studies of the Ibans and, although there are still gaps in our knowledge, there is an impressive literature on Iban society and culture, including the classic work on Iban social organisation and agriculture by Freeman;<sup>71</sup> migration and Iban responses to changing socio-economic conditions by Padoch<sup>72</sup> and Austin;<sup>73</sup> urbanisation and its effects on the Ibans by Sutlive;<sup>74</sup> Iban religion by

<sup>71</sup> Derek Freeman (1970). *Report on the Iban*. London: Athlone Press; first published in 1955a under the title, *Report on the Iban of Sarawak*. (2 Vols). Kuching: Gov't Printing Office, and (1955b). *Iban Agriculture: A Report on the Shifting Cultivation of Hill Rice by the Iban in Sarawak*. Colonial Research Paper, No.18, London: HMSO.

<sup>72</sup> Christine Padoch. (1978). *Migration and its Alternatives among the Ibans in Sarawak*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University.

<sup>73</sup> Robert F.Austin. (1977). *Iban Migration: Patterns of Mobility and Employment in the Twentieth Century*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan.

<sup>74</sup> Sutlive, 1972, op cit.

Jensen,<sup>75</sup> Uchibori<sup>76</sup> and James Masing;<sup>77</sup> Iban adat by Heppell;<sup>78</sup> and Iban folklore and oral tradition by Benedict Sandin.<sup>79</sup> However, studies on Iban politics have been rare, with the exception of Searle's monograph in 1983.<sup>80</sup> In addition, there was a much earlier but very brief study by Komanyi on the role of Iban women in decision-making.<sup>81</sup> Apart from these two studies, there was also some attention to Iban politics in Leigh's general study of political organisation and leadership in Sarawak between 1963-70.<sup>82</sup> Some information on Iban politics can also be found in general studies on federalism in Malaysia (especially those that examine Sarawak [and

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<sup>75</sup> Erik Jensen (1974). *The Iban and their Religion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>76</sup> M. Uchibori (1978). *The Leaving of this Transient World: A Study of Iban Eschatology and Mortuary Practices*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, Canberra.

<sup>77</sup> James J. Masing (1981). *The Coming of the Gods: A Study of an Invocatory Chant (Timang Gawai Amat) of the Ibans of the Baleh River Region of Sarawak*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, Canberra.

<sup>78</sup> M. Heppell (1975). *Iban Social Control: The Infant and the Adult*. Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, Canberra.

<sup>79</sup> Among others are the following: (1962a). *Singalang Burong*; (1962b). *Duabelas Bengkah Mimpi Tuai Dayak-Iban*; (1968). *Raja Simpulang Gana*, all published by Borneo Literature Bureau, Kuching; (1967a). *The Sea Dayaks of Borneo Before White Rajah Rule*. London: Macmillan.

<sup>80</sup> Searle, 1983, op cit.

<sup>81</sup> Margit Ilona Komanyi. (1973). *The Real and Ideal Participation in Decision-Making of Iban Women: A Study of a Longhouse Community in Sarawak, East Malaysia*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, New York University. However, Komanyi's approach was more anthropological than political.

<sup>82</sup> Leigh, 1971 and 1974, op cit.

Sabah] responses to incorporation); for example, by Roff,<sup>83</sup> Milne and Ratnam,<sup>84</sup> and Ross-Larson.<sup>85</sup>

With respect to Leigh's study, there were two fundamental issues which he sought to investigate in relation to Sarawak politics; first, the state of party formation and political development following the 1963 District Council elections, and secondly, the characteristics of the elected leaders, which he asserted were important factors that would indicate "... the direction of political change, for the criteria employed in the selection of leaders reflect prime values and the distribution of power in society".<sup>86</sup> In the course of his analysis, he made a number of passing references to the Ibans.

Leigh's study coincides with the formative years of modern Iban politics. The year 1963 was crucial for Sarawak, and especially for the Ibans, as up to that time they had had no formal political institutions which had united them above the longhouse level. The value of

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<sup>83</sup> Margaret Clarke Roff. (1974). *The Politics of Belonging: Political Change in Sabah and Sarawak*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

<sup>84</sup> R.S.Milne and K.J.Ratnam. (1974). *Malaysia--New States in a New Nation: Political Development of Sarawak and Sabah in Malaysia*. London: Frank Cass.

<sup>85</sup> Bruce Ross-Larson (1976). *The Politics of Federalism: Syed Kechik in East Malaysia*. Singapore: B.Ross-Larson; this is a political biography portraying Syed Kechik in his capacity as political advisor of Tun Mustapha and his party, the United Sabah National Organisation and to a lesser degree Syed Kechik's role in influencing early political development in Sarawak.

<sup>86</sup> Leigh, 1971, op cit, p.260.

Leigh's study lies not so much in his knowledge about Iban politics, but the fact that he identified a crude framework for the study of inter-ethnic political relations--that is, a tri-polar model comprising relations between the Ibans (Dayaks), the Malays/Melanaus and the Chinese. It was evident from his analysis of the formation of the first, second and third Sarawak governments after independence within Malaysia, that political power initially resided with the native groups--that is, the Ibans (Dayaks) and the Malays/Melanaus--while the Chinese acted as power-brokers between the indigenous groups. Leigh dwelt at great length on the formation of political parties. Among the Ibans, he found that regional cleavages were reinforced through the formation of two rival parties; the Ibans of the Saribas area, or the Second Division, supported SNAP, while those of the Rejang area, or the traditional Third Division, supported PESAKA. Leigh never explored the historical reasons for the socio-cultural or socio-economic dimensions of these divisions. We need to examine these to arrive at a fuller understanding of the nature of the relations between the Ibans of Saribas and Rejang. Without this knowledge, we will not be well equipped to explain the irregular occurrence of unity among them. For example, Leigh might have been able to explain, in apparent contrast to the Iban experience, why it had been possible for the Chinese to consolidate behind SUPP almost as soon as the party was formed in 1959; indeed,

in the early 1960s the SCA had also played a prominent role in representing Chinese in the government. Furthermore, he might have addressed the reasons why the Malays and Melanaus eventually united behind BUMIPUTERA, although both groups had previously been divided between PANAS and BARJASA. Indeed, Iban political divisions were exacerbated when PESAKA merged with BUMIPUTERA to form the PBB.<sup>87</sup>

Through an elaborate analysis of the election results of 1963,<sup>88</sup> Leigh confirmed the division among the various ethnic groups in Sarawak; the Chinese generally supported the SUPP, the Malays/Melanaus PANAS and BARJASA, and the Ibans either SNAP or PESAKA. Furthermore, Leigh argued that the Ibans of Saribas tended to support SNAP while those of the Rejang area generally voted for PESAKA. These ethnic cleavages and the Iban regional divisions were demonstrated in Leigh's analysis of the total vote cast for each party;<sup>89</sup> the votes cast were then compared to the composition of the

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<sup>87</sup> The formation of PBDS in 1983 can also be seen in terms of these divisions; but, if we go back to the early 1970s, Iban divisions did not fall strictly along regional lines as political parties drew support from other Iban areas as well.

<sup>88</sup> Previously councillors had been nominated, but in 1963 they were directly elected to the local District Councils; members of the local councils formed an electoral college for the Divisional Advisory Committee, which in turn elected members to the Council Negeri; finally, members of the Council Negeri formed an electoral college to elect members to the national parliament.

<sup>89</sup> These figures included actual votes cast and projected votes cast in Districts where a party candidate won uncontested. In the 1963 District Council election, there were 73 candidates who had won uncontested--34 from the Alliance party, 28 independents, six PANAS, and five from SUPP, see Leigh, 1971, op cit, p.103.

registered electorate in every polling district. The conclusions he drew from his analysis seem obvious since political party formation in Sarawak was ethnically motivated. Nevertheless, its value lies in its attempt to determine the degree of support that each of the parties really received from the various communities; for example, how many and what percentage of Ibans, Kayans, Kenyahs and Kelabits supported SNAP, PESAKA and other political parties?<sup>90</sup> However, the method of merely analysing election results might be open to some criticism especially when dealing with constituencies with a mixed electorate of various ethnic groups; in these cases, it is not possible to determine the party support coming from a particular ethnic group on the basis of the statistics available. However, in a constituency where all voters were, say Ibans, the problem of uncertainty does not arise as to how many of them supported SNAP, PESAKA and SUPP.

Therefore, although Leigh's analysis confirms what could have been easily established through casual observation,<sup>91</sup> the manner in which he derived his conclusions is open to some doubt. He placed great importance on the percentage of votes polled by the

<sup>90</sup> I am still puzzled by the way Leigh reaches his conclusions because there is not readily available data for the determination of voting patterns among the various ethnic groups and in every polling district. However, if his study had been based on a random sampling of voters, he should have stated this.

<sup>91</sup> For example, by observing the ethnic affiliation of a successful candidate, his ethnic background and the type of constituency in which he had been elected.



various communal parties in relation to the ethnic composition of each election district. In that way, he argued that the high positive "parsonian" correlations he computed made it very probable that one ethnic group had voted for candidates from their own community and in other cases they had not. Although my study also emphasises election results (i.e. votes cast in Iban [Dayak] constituencies) as my determinants of Iban (Dayak) voting behaviour, I do not encounter the problems that Leigh had for two reasons. First, most electoral boundaries for the Council Negeri are conveniently drawn to reflect ethnic divisions as opposed to those for the District Councils, which resulted in highly mixed constituencies;<sup>92</sup> hence, a given CN constituency is clearly dominated either by the Ibans (Dayaks), Malays/Melanaus or Chinese (i.e. in terms of registered voters). Secondly, the majority of the Iban CN seats that I am concerned with have a clear majority of Iban voters, ranging between 59% to 99%.<sup>93</sup> Therefore, my analysis of the votes cast is not marred by the uncertainty which Leigh faced concerning who had voted for whom and in what percentages. Nevertheless, I do realise that there are also non-Iban (non-Dayak) voters in a given constituency, but their numbers are rather insignificant as to influence the final outcome of elections.

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<sup>92</sup> See Leigh, 1974, op cit, pp.57-59, and Jawan, 1987a, op cit, p.44.

<sup>93</sup> Jawan, 1987a, Ibid, pp.6-8 & 44.

There are other problems with Leigh's study. He sometimes presents overly simple observations and explanations of Iban behaviour. For example, he concluded: (1) that the Ibans were inexperienced in politics; (2) because political activity was a completely new sphere to them and (3) that this inexperience had caused a number of serious blunders in the political and administrative careers of earlier Iban leaders.<sup>94</sup> He cited Kalong Ningkan, whose political attitudes he believed had led to his downfall, and the ineffectiveness of the first Secretary of State, an Iban, Gerunsin Lemat. It is easy to fault Kalong Ningkan and Gerunsin Lemat in order to justify one's argument; but it would have been more objective to have dealt with their policies and practices instead of other personal traits. In fact, he never explains why, in his view, Ningkan or the Dayak society in general was inexperienced and the other communities, the Malay/Melanau and the Chinese, were more skilled in politics. Instead he simply dismisses the issue either by referring to the fact that in Malay/Melanau society there existed some educated leaders such as Rahman Ya'kub and Taib Mahmud, and among the Chinese such figures as Stephen Yong and Ong Kee Hui. To some extent, one can agree with Leigh, and furthermore, it is certainly not easy to provide unequivocal evidence of Iban political experience, but Iban leaders were not entirely novices.

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<sup>94</sup> Leigh, 1974, *op cit*, pp.7 & 147-49.

Since recorded times and certainly long before 1963, one can find many examples of political leadership in Iban society.<sup>95</sup> Wandering (*bejalai*) and warfaring groups of Ibans had been led by successful leaders such as Libau "Rentap", Munan and Dana.<sup>96</sup> More recently, there were also such prominent Iban men as *Temenggong Jugah*<sup>97</sup> and *Temenggong Koh*. What is more, if Iban leadership in the past can be taken as a base from which modern Iban political experiences were derived, then Iban politics can be characterised, to some extent, as "confrontationist".<sup>98</sup> This might be explained by the Ibans' fierce sense of individualism and competition and their constant desire to better themselves or outdo others. Leigh pointed to this characteristic in Kalong Ningkan's leadership but never sought to fully explain it, simply reducing it to Ningkan's disposition and temperament. It is the nature of traditional Iban political experiences that clearly handicapped their transition to modern-style politics. This might explain the "confrontationist" approach of the Ningkan government

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<sup>95</sup> I am using a wider definition of political experiences than Leigh, because I believe this gives us a clearer picture of Iban political performance and activities in the period of independence. See my discussion on Iban Political Experience in Chapter 2.

<sup>96</sup> See for example, Sandin, 1967a, op cit, Appendix B.

<sup>97</sup> He was affectionately referred to as *Apai* (or Father) by those who came in contact with him.

<sup>98</sup> While this may be taken as a general observation of traditional Iban leaders, Sutlive may not agree with this in regard to *Temenggong Jugah*, a traditional leader but one who is considered to have been more accommodationist, Sutlive, mss.

when dealing with the federal leaders whom Ningkan thought to be excessively interfering in Sarawak affairs. Perhaps Leigh should have attempted to understand Iban political culture. This is another area in which my study attempts to fill a vacuum in earlier studies such as that of Leigh. Besides establishing patterns of Iban political behaviour, this thesis also attempts to draw on Iban culture and their historical experiences to explain political variations and continuities since 1963.

Leigh's study of political leadership was descriptive as well as analytical. He argued for the importance of studying the characteristics of the elected leaders, comprising District Councillors, members of the Council Negeri and the Federal Parliament; together, about 1,500 individuals. He wished to determine which political parties had a broad spectrum of leaders drawn from various backgrounds and which had a narrow one.<sup>99</sup>

While I can also agree with Leigh's proposition that knowing the background of those elected can provide us with some means of plotting, however speculatively, the direction of future political change, he offers us no sketch of what Sarawak politics in the future is likely to be. What he has done is to identify the various stages of leadership formation; he discerns four such phases as

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<sup>99</sup> His study was based on a general survey of the following characteristics of the elected leaders: (a) personal characteristics such as age, ethnic group, religion; and acquired characteristics such as size of their present locality, spatial mobility, occupation, officially-sponsored leadership, and education (by [a] level attained, [b] medium of instruction and [c] type of school attended); Leigh, 1971, op cit, p.261.

follows: 1950-54, the introductory phase; 1955-59, the phase during which elections were gradually introduced; 1960-62, elective but pre-political party phase; and 1963, the political party phase.<sup>100</sup> With respect to these various stages, he examined, for example, how the median age, the ethnic composition,<sup>101</sup> and the education of the elected leaders in a particular political party had changed over time.

However, there must be caution when drawing conclusions from these data on leadership. Leigh studied the background of leaders in relation to their party affiliation to try to reach conclusions about the kinds of political change that could be expected from such a combination. In conventional theory, a person joins a political party because of a certain compatibility, usually ideological. In the 1963 election, there were about 120 independent councillors of which about half later joined one or another political party. This was significant as the admission of these formerly independent councillors had a direct bearing on the selection of the Council Negeri members. While the councillors who had won their elections as party candidates may reflect party values, the same cannot really be said of the independent councillors who had

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<sup>100</sup> Leigh, 1971, Ibid, pp.262-63.

<sup>101</sup> Leigh, 1971, Ibid, p.269; for example, he also examined the scope of appeal of the various political parties and, in 1963, he found BARJASA to be the only party that had the broadest political appeal for all ethnic groups.

joined a particular party only after winning. In addition, in their attempts to increase their political leverage, the party may also ignore ideological compatibility or allegiance in recruiting new members. Thus, there is still a danger that studying leadership characteristics based on such a large group of elected individuals, may render one's predictive capability low and perhaps misleading too. In effect, major policy is only usually drafted by Cabinet members, who comprised a handful of individuals, and policy is acted upon by only 48 members of the Council Negeri.

Furthermore, there were some biases associated with the indices which Leigh chose in studying the characteristics of the leaders, particularly education and occupation. As much as he tried to avoid "... skewing [the analysis of leadership] in an artificial direction and masking local political change", he may have unintentionally done just that through his lack of local understanding.<sup>102</sup> Specifically, the distortion might have been caused by the unqualified indices of education and occupation; the standard measurement and understanding of education is formal education in either English, Malay or Chinese medium. Against these indices and background, most Iban leaders, and especially Iban councillors, fared worse than their Malay/Melanau and Chinese counterparts.<sup>103</sup> Iban traditional leaders were appointed

<sup>102</sup> Leigh, 1971, Ibid, p.262.

<sup>103</sup> Leigh, 1971, Ibid, p.299.

as *tuai rumah* and *penghulus* on the basis of their knowledge of local customs and traditions and not on modern educational attainment. However, these facts of local knowledge are often neglected when using educational measures that conform to normal conventions, and which are based on largely Western-derived perspectives.

However, although I have used the same indices--occupation and especially education--in my case study survey, the context in which I used them differs from Leigh. In my survey, it was used to determine the extent to which there are behavioural differences in political affairs based on exposure to education. Leigh, on the other hand, used formal educational indices to evaluate political leadership qualities across different ethnic categories. An example of the problem of adopting a narrow definition of education can be seen in the comparison of the leadership of *Temenggong Jugah* and Ong Kee Hui. Jugah, unlike Ong, who went to College, did not have any formal education, and it would have been easy to conclude that his leadership was insignificant, when in fact, the reverse was true. Therefore, I would argue that leadership is a universal phenomenon found in all cultures, and its success or otherwise cannot easily be evaluated in terms of formal educational qualifications.

While Leigh described the characteristics of elected leaders, he did not evaluate the kinds of political behaviour which might derive from them, for example,

conservative or liberal attitudes and actions. He noted that, with the passage of time, Iban traditional leaders were being phased out of elective office. However, he did not correlate this with either the emergence of new values or the continuation of the old ones in SNAP and PESAKA; neither did he evaluate how the emergence of the new (Iban) leaders affected Iban political behaviour towards the Chinese or the Malays/Melanaus or in respect of non-Iban-based political parties. Thus, what he has done is outline the changes in leadership characteristics over time but he has not looked at the kinds of political behaviour which might accompany these changes.

What is more, his examination of leadership leads him to stress the point that ethnic cleavages are but one among a host of other important factors that divide the various ethnic groups.<sup>104</sup> In my view, ethnicity is a much more important factor than Leigh maintains. In this respect, he demonstrates the lack of a deeper understanding of ethnicity and the importance of the socio-cultural and religious institutions of the different ethnic groups. Furthermore, he does not take into proper account the consequences of the May 13 race riots in Kuala Lumpur.<sup>105</sup> Since the 1970s and the

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<sup>104</sup> Leigh, 1971, Ibid, p.322, wrote: "To focus our analysis upon the sole criteria of race is to simplify needlessly at the risk of forfeiting a realistic understanding of politics. There is no single all-pervasive cleavage ...".

<sup>105</sup> However, he did mention in his concluding remarks that ethnicity has the potential of being an all-pervasive cleavage, Leigh, 1971, Ibid, p.323.



introduction of the NEP, the ethnic factor has been the main consideration in the policies and practices of government. Political, economic and social competition and issues have been defined by the boundaries of ethnicity; consequently, goods and services are also to be distributed along the same lines. The significant influence of ethnicity in understanding Sarawak politics is one of the main arguments of my study. In fact, my analysis and discussion of economic development among the Ibans is pitched in terms of ethnic divisions and issues.

In addition, Leigh does not demonstrate how the diverse backgrounds of councillors relate to the direction of political change; instead he only draws our attention to indicators (i.e. the characteristics of the leadership) that can be used to observe the processes of change.<sup>106</sup> A more meaningful correlation could have been established if he had concentrated on the influential few, such as the top party leaders and cabinet members, and examined how these groups influenced the overall direction of change, be that change in party politics or government policies.<sup>107</sup> This focus can also provide a more realistic depiction of the process of leadership

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<sup>106</sup> He argues that the direction of change can be seen from studying the characteristics of newly-elected leaders and by "... observing which economic, cultural or geographic groups are gaining or losing representation amongst the elected leadership.", Leigh, 1971, Ibid, p.260.

<sup>107</sup> For example, Dahl, 1961, op cit is one of the classic texts on the study of elites and how they exercise power in a small community.

recruitment, because it is the party elite which selects candidates who stand on their party's ticket.

Nevertheless, to be fair to Leigh, there is value in studying the diverse groups of councillors, especially in the early period of independence. First, party politics in the early 1960s was not yet developed. Second, there was a high turnout of independent candidates, and many of them actually won their seats. But since Leigh's study, the situation has changed in three important respects. First, there are only about 72 elected offices (i.e. 48 DUN and 24 parliamentary seats).<sup>108</sup> Second, the various party elites have the ultimate power to select candidates for their respective parties. Lastly, the chances of an independent candidate being successful is now rather low, although there have been a few occasions when independents have won seats in both the DUN and Parliament. In my study, I have focused mainly on elected Iban state assemblymen, numbering not more than 17, which is the number of constituencies with majority Iban voters.

With respect to the Ibans, Leigh's study on Sarawak political organisation and leadership made several general observations,<sup>109</sup> which he did not fully explore because he was basically concerned with Sarawak politics

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<sup>108</sup> In 1988, the numbers of CN and Parliamentary seats have been increased to 56 and 27 respectively.

<sup>109</sup> For example, about Iban political behaviour and the overemphasis on regional cleavage (see later). With regard to Sarawak politics in general, he failed to give due emphasis to the factor of ethnicity.

in general. My study is intended to contribute to a better understanding of Iban politics, which has obviously not been adequately treated in Leigh's work.

Searle's study is quite different from that of Leigh; it represents the first attempt to understand the details of Iban political behaviour. It has similarities with my study, but a major difference is that Searle only focused on the 1974 state general elections, a period when the political fortunes of SNAP were on the rise. In my case, with the benefit of data on several elections I have been able to present a more comprehensive evaluation of Iban politics and with the benefit of hindsight re-evaluate the early period of the 1960s and 1970s, and especially the 1963, 1970 and 1974 elections. In this regard, I have provided some reassessment of both Leigh's and Searle's observations and conclusions.

In his study, Searle sought to explain: (a) why Ibans were unable to assume leadership in state politics despite their superior numbers and their status as *bumiputeras*; and (b) the reasons for the Iban consolidation behind SNAP in the early 1970s, as shown by the numbers of Council Negeri seats won by SNAP in 1974, and their almost total desertion of PESAKA.<sup>110</sup> In addition, he was also interested in examining in detail the development of Sarawak politics from 1970 until 1974.

His empirical studies were also supplemented by a case study of Iban respondents drawn from 21 longhouses

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<sup>110</sup> Searle, 1983, *op cit*, pp.3-4.

in three selected Iban areas (there were five longhouses in the Saribas, 10 in Kapit and six in Kalaka Districts).<sup>111</sup> Theoretically, conclusions drawn from his case study are questionable for two reasons: (1) he does not say whether he had subjected his samples to stringent random selection techniques, although he was very clear about the kind of samples he wanted; and (2) consequently, his inferences from his findings to the larger Iban political world may be suspect. Nevertheless, some of the important findings of his case study should not be ignored. The significance of his survey is the identification of an important variable and that is, the distance of the respondents' settlement to the *pasar* in relation to differences in political behaviour.<sup>112</sup> Hence, his analysis concentrated on identifying the similarities and differences in the political behaviour of his respondents whom he classified into either *ulu*, semi-*pasar*, and *pasar*-based Ibans. He maintained that "... the nature of a longhouse's relationship with the *pasar* provided many useful indicators to their political attitudes".<sup>113</sup>

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111 Samples from Saribas and Kapit represented two different traditional Iban areas, while those from Kalaka combined the social characteristics that were found in the two former areas; in addition, four other longhouses in Engkilili, Nanga Kumpang, *ulu* Skrang and *ulu* Kalaka were also visited and interviewed by the author, see Searle, 1983, *Ibid*, pp.72-74.

112 Searle, 1983, *Ibid*, pp.75-76.

113 Searle, 1983, *Ibid*, p.76.

Searle found the *pasar* Ibans to be politically conscious; they had greater opportunity to establish rapport with various government agencies and officials; consequently, they were exposed to contemporary issues and also had a strong feeling of belonging to the political system.<sup>114</sup> In addition, they exhibited strong solidarity and were highly committed in their support of a particular political party; in other words, they did not change their allegiance very much. Searle also found his *pasar* respondents to be relatively self-sufficient economically, and mobile and aggressive seekers of opportunities in the *pasar*. However, they were, to a certain degree, dependent on these expanding opportunities to provide for their livelihood. He also noted that they were generally literate with a large number professing the Christian religion.

In contrast, Searle found that among his semi-*pasar* respondents, there was little agricultural or occupational diversification; they tended to be over-dependent, relying heavily on government handouts to meet their needs. They were a less educated group than the *pasar* Ibans and, consequently, occupational mobility was restricted. Politically, they were very fickle; they sought individuals or political parties able to help them; consequently, their political allegiance changed as often as there were offers of help from different political quarters. Solidarity among the semi-*pasar*

<sup>114</sup> Searle, 1983, *Ibid*, pp.76-78.

respondents was low, as competition for opportunities divided them. Hence, their longhouses tended to be small in size as competition split them into various competing factions. Their partial isolation from the *pasar* meant they could not effectively forge links with politicians, and government agencies and officials. Besides, their divisions also reduced their political bargaining power. In Searle's words, they were the "half-way houses" having the worst of both worlds.<sup>115</sup> The *pasar* had a pervasive and destructive effect on semi-*pasar* respondents; while they wished to emulate the lifestyle of the *pasar*, they were unable to do so.

At the other extreme were the *ulu* respondents who exhibited different political behaviour altogether.<sup>116</sup> Due to their remoteness from the *pasar*, they were highly independent and self-sufficient farmers. Their relative isolation encouraged communal solidarity and close cooperation. They had a strong attachment to traditional *adat*, which was manifested in their daily lives; there were also some who were Christian. Politically, they had strong convictions. Contacts with politicians and government agencies and officials were limited due to the difficulty of communication. Hence, *ulu tuai rumah* tended to be more authoritative and exercised substantially more power compared to their *pasar* and semi-*pasar*

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<sup>115</sup> Searle, 1983, *Ibid*, pp.78-79.

<sup>116</sup> Searle, 1983, *Ibid*, pp.79-80.

counterparts. Being independent, they were not easily influenced to change their political allegiance.

Besides showing how political behaviour changed in relation to the pattern of settlement of his respondents, Searle's survey was also intended to corroborate his empirical observation of Iban consolidation behind SNAP. According to Searle, 1970 to 1974 was a transitional period in Iban politics in which divisive factors were increasingly being overridden by common socio-economic and political experiences and aspirations.<sup>117</sup> Despite the fact that divisions still existed, he believed that the longhouse electorate was moving towards political unity in order to solve common problems and attain common goals.

Searle's particular interest in the Saribas area was for a very good reason: the Saribas Ibans were withdrawing from SNAP, while Ibans from all other areas of Sarawak were beginning to consolidate behind the party. According to Searle there were several reasons for this change among the Saribas Ibans.<sup>118</sup> First, they had become used to being close to government. Important personages in government, such as Kalong Ningkan and Gerunsin Lemat, had been from the Saribas. Furthermore, SNAP had been dominated by Saribas Ibans. When Kalong Ningkan was ousted from government, all these privileges suddenly disappeared. The Saribas clients felt removed

<sup>117</sup> Searle, 1983, Ibid, p.69.

<sup>118</sup> Searle, 1983, Ibid, pp.83-92.

from the centre of power. Their close association with government that extended to Charles Brooke's days were suddenly brought to an end. Secondly, after its loss of power, SNAP began the rapid expansion of its power base in other regions of Sarawak in the hope that this might help it to regain a position in government. This, Searle argued, might also have contributed to the withdrawal of Saribas Iban support from SNAP. Thirdly, the declining socio-economic position of the Ibans in Saribas relative to those in other parts of Sarawak fuelled resentment against Ningkan. Because the Saribas was an area of mixed *ulu* and *pasar* longhouses, falling rubber prices and increases in the prices of essential commodities had affected the *pasar* longhouse Ibans greatly. They were, according to Searle, adopting the social, economic and political characteristics of the semi-*pasar* longhouses--having the worst of both worlds. The *ulu* Ibans were angry and resented SNAP because they had not benefited from its years in power.

While SNAP was losing ground in the Saribas, their fortunes in Kapit were changing. SNAP's popularity there was also linked to the Rejang Ibans' increasing distaste for PESAKA.<sup>119</sup> Several factors contributed to PESAKA's decline in its heartland. First, the people resented PESAKA's leadership, comprising the *penghulus*, who were becoming wealthy through timber concessions at the expense of the longhouse people. Secondly, PESAKA was

<sup>119</sup> Searle, 1983, *Ibid*, pp.104-121.



seen as subservient to the Malays/Melanaus and BUMIPUTERA, and unable to bring development to the people. These worsening economic conditions experienced by ordinary people were not helped by the curfew imposed due to communist terrorist activities at that time. Thirdly, PESAKA was unable to meet the rising expectations of Ibans. While education gradually improved, PESAKA was unable to help the people obtain scholarships or jobs. Among those who were still loyal to PESAKA, in the face of stiff competition from SNAP, were those longhouses that, through their *tuai rumah's* close links with the PESAKA leadership, were able to secure some benefit from development. These were usually the well-to-do longhouses. PESAKA also had support from the extremely poor longhouses who still hoped to get something from the party.

In addition, Searle attributed the declining overall political support, and specifically Chinese support in Kapit, for SUPP to the spill-over effect from disenchanted Chinese who resented the party leaders' decision to join the government. Because of this the Chinese refused to promote SUPP among the Ibans. While support for PESAKA and SUPP were declining, support for SNAP was strong and cut across the *ulu*, *semi-pasar* and *pasar* distinctions. In the *pasar* longhouses, Searle found the Ibans responsive to SNAP's call for fairer representation and development for the Ibans.

In contrast to Saribas and Kapit, competition between SNAP, PESAKA and SUPP for Iban support in Kalaka was extremely keen.<sup>120</sup> The Kalaka District lies on the border of SNAP's heartland to the south (of the Saribas) and PESAKA's heartland to the north towards the Rejang river. Geographically, the Malays settled the coastal area, which was more fertile compared to the *ulu* where Ibans lived; there were also considerable numbers of Chinese farmers. The Malays generally supported BUMIPUTERA, the Ibans were torn between SNAP and PESAKA and to a lesser degree SUPP, while the Chinese were firm supporters of SUPP. Changes in the socio-economic conditions of the area and party re-alignments after the 1970 general election affected the support of the Ibans and the Chinese alike. Disenchantment with PESAKA, which was rampant among the Rejang Ibans, soon spread to the Kalaka Ibans, who, like their Rejang counterparts, began to reject PESAKA because of the party's ineffective leadership in the Alliance. Hence, many turned to SNAP in the hope that the party might be able to address their problems. Iban support for SUPP there also declined, partly because disenchanted Chinese no longer supported SUPP and the Chinese had previously been using their influence as patrons of Iban farmers to attract considerable Iban support for the party.

In his discussion, Searle made a number of observations that need to be re-evaluated, because,

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<sup>120</sup> Searle, 1983, *Ibid*, pp.98-104.

although they may have been relevant in the 1970s, they have since become redundant because of socio-economic changes. First, his classification of Ibans into three distinct groups may require rethinking. Improved communications and expanding opportunities may have blurred the boundaries between *ulu*, *semi-pasar* and *pasar* longhouses. For this reason, I have used in my survey a more refined *ulu-pasar* distinction. The basic determinant I have used in identifying longhouses as either *ulu* or *pasar* is their accessibility to given commercial centres. Their accessibility is measured in terms of travelling time, either by road or river.<sup>121</sup> In this sense, my classification, I maintain, takes account of the realities of access, whereas Searle's distinctions were based simply on physical distances from the *pasar*. In my case, certain physically distant upriver longhouses may be classified as *pasar* if the travelling time by river from them to the *pasar* is not more than three hours; in contrast, some longhouses physically closer to the *pasar* but which have some communication problems may be classified as *ulu* communities. My reason for this is simple. Accessibility determines the amount and level of exposure of the longhouse Ibans to the influence of the *pasar*. The difference in their exposure is not adequately accounted for by the measurement in terms of physical distance.

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<sup>121</sup> This is further elaborated in Chapter 6.

Secondly, Searle also discussed some salient features of Iban society such as the uniformity of their language, their corpus of beliefs and their *adat* as sources of Iban communal solidarity. However, he found that these features were being overridden by socio-economic change, and even the divisive historical factors such as the animosity between the Second and the Third Division Ibans, fuelled by Brooke policy, were being overcome by forces of modernisation. Although this is theoretically sound, what must be remembered is that despite the overall improvement in socio-economic conditions, there are still relative differences between socio-economic classes. Therefore, regardless of the general welfare of Sarawak's population, there are a large number of Ibans who continue to live in poverty. Consequently, dependence on political handouts will continue to dictate political preferences for some members of this group. Overall, Searle's proposal that increasing socio-economic development will result in expanding political maturity and therefore changes in Iban political ideologies has to be qualified.

Lastly, Searle also touched on the *bumiputera* issue, which he failed to elaborate sufficiently; he asked "... why the Ibans were unable to marshal either their superior numbers or their constitutional *bumiputera* status to advantage".<sup>122</sup> He attributed the problem mainly to the constraints placed on the electoral process and

<sup>122</sup> Searle, 1983, op cit, p.3.

free expression by Rahman Ya'kub, who threatened to use the Sedition Act against his political opponents.<sup>123</sup> However, to have asked such a question indicates that he could not have fully understood the implications of the squabble in which the federal leadership had objected to the appointment of *Temenggong* Jugah, an Iban, as the first Governor of Sarawak, because the Chief Minister was also an Iban. The ethnic issue was very clear to the federal authorities. However, Searle may not have been able to foresee that the question of ethnic affiliation might not only coalesce around the Malay/non-Malay division but also around the Muslim/non-Muslim native distinction. In this regard, I maintain that the concept of *bumiputera* was a convenient device to appease the non-Malay natives of East Malaysia when the Federation of Malaysia was proposed; it was designed to "extend" theoretically the constitutional privileges enjoyed by the Peninsular Malays to the non-Malay natives of Sarawak and Sabah. If we follow Rahman Ya'kub's wide interpretation of the term *bumiputera* to encompass all indigenous groups, whether Muslim or not, then this clearly runs counter to the earlier federal decision to reject Jugah, an Iban, as Governor because Ningkan, also an Iban, was the Chief Minister at the time. The federal

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<sup>123</sup> Searle, 1983, *Ibid*, pp.141-43; threats by the Chief Minister to invoke the Act were made publicly and in a session of the Council Negeri; refer to *The Sarawak Tribune*, 10 March 1972; *The Vanguard*, 5 April 1973; and also *The Sarawak Digest*, No.3, 1974, pp.21-22, which reported an instance of the threat made in the Council Negeri session, 25-29 March, 1974.

authorities were of the view that the two highest positions in the state should be shared between Muslim and non-Muslim natives.<sup>124</sup>

Besides Searle, Komanyi undertook empirical research on issues relevant to Iban politics, specifically on the role and position of Iban women in decision-making.<sup>125</sup> She studied the Iban community of Samu in the Second Division of Sarawak, seeking to explain why Asian women could occupy high political office in their societies. She therefore examines Iban cultural norms which facilitate female participation in the decision-making process.<sup>126</sup> She observed that Iban women were ideally equal before the *adat* and that in reality, they were also equally powerful *vis-à-vis* their male counterparts.<sup>127</sup> Nonetheless, she did recognise that there are subtle differences between the "real" and "ideal" participation of Iban women, especially in leadership, legal and religious matters, and in work roles.

Her study suffers from several deficiencies. She concluded that there was only a small difference between the "ideal" and "real" participation of Iban women in the decision-making process. In my view, this is mistaken.

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<sup>124</sup> Of course, Rahman Ya'kub manipulated the variable meaning of the concept of *bumiputera* to his own advantage. Sometimes he stressed the Malay/non-Malay division, at other times the Muslim-non-Muslim division, at still other times the native-non-native division; see also Searle, 1983, *op cit*, p.141.

<sup>125</sup> Komanyi, 1973, *op cit*.

<sup>126</sup> Komanyi, 1973, *Ibid*, p.1.

<sup>127</sup> Komanyi, 1973, *Ibid*, pp.124-28.

First, her conclusion might be attributed to her lack of understanding of the Iban language, which could have impaired her interpretation.<sup>128</sup> Secondly, she seems to have relied heavily on *adat* pronouncements, yet she did not fully explore how *adat* regarded Iban women in relation to their male counterparts and how it affected the "real" participation of Iban women in decision-making. Although the *adat* may make no distinctions between men and women (e.g. either pertaining to fines or the division of *bilik* property); it would be erroneous to conclude that these translate into absolute equality. If Komanyi had examined the pattern of Iban socialisation in more detail, she would have seen a fundamental division between the ways in which young men and women are socialised into their respective roles. Although both young males and females are taught to be aggressive and competitive as well as cooperative, there is a clear difference in socialisation which inevitably leads to women displaying more submissive behaviour.<sup>129</sup> Women (and even children) may participate in longhouse conferences (*baum*), but Komanyi has exaggerated the role that they play when she concludes that "in reality, however, the women exercised more power in deciding whether to accept or reject a proposal presented at the conferences".<sup>130</sup> Her

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<sup>128</sup> This may have resulted from inadequate communication with informants and interpreters.

<sup>129</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>130</sup> Komanyi, 1973, *op cit*, p.119.

conclusion seems to have been based largely on observations of the roles of wives of *tuai rumah*, who are not representative of ordinary Iban women.<sup>131</sup> It would normally be expected of wives of *tuai rumah* to play a leading role and set an example to other longhouse women. Thirdly, the role of *tuai rumah* is not the "highest leadership position" in Iban society; that position is held by regional leaders such as *penghulus* and above them, the *pemancas* and *temenggongs*. Komanyi limited herself to an analysis at the longhouse level; she did not examine the total reality of Iban socio-economic and political structures. Therefore, the contribution of the Iban case study towards the general understanding of cultural factors which permit "other" Asian women high positions in their society is questionable. In concluding that "ideally men and women participate together, in reality men and women are equally powerful", she made particular reference to Freeman's observation of the classlessness and egalitarianism of Iban society. This is an attempt to support a weak conclusion by referring misleadingly to established work.<sup>132</sup>

The relevance of Komanyi's work to my study is limited. In my survey on political behaviour and attitudes, I have ignored the distinction between husbands and wives. Instead, I interviewed male household heads, and, only when they were not available, their

<sup>131</sup> Komanyi, 1973, Ibid, p.120.

<sup>132</sup> Komanyi, 1973, Ibid, pp.124-25.



wives; in many cases, both husbands and wives were also present. I have disregarded Komanyi's conclusion that there is an "absolute" equality between Iban men and women. Based on my own experience, Iban women are more submissive, especially in decision-making and they follow their husbands in voting in elections. In fact, during interviews, the wives were generally silent, but, when pressed for some opinion, many simply said: " *ni ko apai tuai nya meh ia*" (whatever my husband says).<sup>133</sup> Although the *adat* may have given such an impression, the reality is that Iban women tend to leave major decisions to their men; hence, another Iban expression: "*dini indu mangat lebih pintar ari orang laki* (women are generally less cunning than men). The equality of decision-making should not be confused with the superior role of women in decision-making in fields that are reserved for them (i.e. regarding domestic matters and in some ritual practices, for example, *nyungkup* [last rites for dead relatives]).

There are other studies in which Iban politics has been given some attention, for example, in the work of Ongkili,<sup>134</sup> Roff,<sup>135</sup> and Milne and Ratnam.<sup>136</sup> Roff, and

<sup>133</sup> Literally, *apai tuai* means old father, but when used in that context it refers to a husband.

<sup>134</sup> James P. Ongkili (1972). *Modernization in East Malaysia 1960-1970*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press; this is a revised version of his earlier M.A. thesis entitled *Borneo Participation in Malaysia 1963-1966 (The First Three Years)* submitted to the University of Queensland in 1967; Ongkili surveyed the general reaction of the Borneo states towards their inclusion in the Federation of Malaysia.

<sup>135</sup> Roff, 1974, op cit.

Milne and Ratnam examine political change in Sarawak and Sabah. Roff emphasises the process of incorporation of Sarawak and Sabah into the wider Federation and the problems and prospects of this in the context of the constitutional relations between Peninsular and East Malaysia and the possible areas of continued conflict between them.<sup>137</sup> The extent of Roff's and Milne's and Ratnam's coverage of the Iban component of Sarawak politics is comparable to Leigh's study, but some of their observations of Iban politics do differ. For example, while Leigh found Kalong Ningkan to be relatively inexperienced in politics, Roff commented "... for a man, who, it was alleged, had been the mouthpiece for Europeans and Chinese near to him, this (Ningkan's appeal to the Privy Council to annul the proclamation of the Emergency) was surely evidence of great tenacity of purpose and force of individual will".<sup>138</sup> Similarly, Milne and Ratnam observed that Ningkan possessed "... a high degree of personal and political confidence and courage" and also had "... a quick mind and administrative skill in making good use of advisers".<sup>139</sup> However, the lack of detail on Iban politics in all these studies was simply a result of the fact that these scholars were studying

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136 Milne and Ratnam, 1974, op cit.

137 Roff, 1974, op cit, see Chapter 6 on Incorporation.

138 Roff, 1974, Ibid, p.157.

139 Milne and Ratnam, 1974, op cit.

Sarawak (some included Sabah) in general and the Ibans were only one of the many elements covered.

Other literature on the Ibans that has some bearing on my own research is that by Christine Padoch. She studied Iban responses to changing environmental conditions and found that those Ibans of the Engkari were apparently adaptable and adopted "alternatives" to a pattern of constant expansion (migration).<sup>140</sup> Briefly, Padoch found that the Ibans of Engkari were innovative in a number of ways. First, because of the hostile environment of Engkari, which was very hilly, broken and watered by numerous rushing streams, the Engkari Ibans had adapted to a continuous cycle of hill padi (*padi bukit*) cultivation instead of swamp padi (*padi paya*). And secondly, because of the scarcity of arable land, they had also adopted a practice of land borrowing, which had arisen out of land inequality there. Because the Ibans of Engkari were not pioneers, in contrast to those of the Baleh region studied by Freeman,<sup>141</sup> shortage of arable land was a problem.

Similar adaptive capabilities of the Ibans were also recorded in Sutlive's study of the Ibans of Sibu District in their responsiveness to the influences of urbanisation.<sup>142</sup> Realising that they were in Sibu to stay, the Ibans of Bawang Assan constructed the first permanent

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140 Padoch, 1978, op cit, p.211.

141 Freeman, 1970, op cit.

142 Sutlive, 1978, op cit.

longhouse built of plank (*rumah papan*). Those who settled the banks of major rivers had adopted the cultivation of swamp padi. Their proximity to town had also allowed them not only to take advantage of various new agricultural methods to increase their yields but also to seek wage employment either to supplement their family incomes or progressively move out of the rural economy. Put simply, this evidence of adaptability should be borne in mind in studies of Iban politics.

Aside from the major studies above, a handful of contemporary studies on various themes and disciplines relevant to Sarawak politics have been published;<sup>143</sup> but few have dealt exclusively with the Ibans. Despite these, it is still safe to say that Iban politics is a relatively unexplored field of study and this thesis attempts to provide much needed empirical material and political analysis on post-independent Sarawak. In previous studies of the Ibans, there has been little mention of Iban political culture and its relations to political action. Neither has there been any attempt to examine in depth earlier Iban political experiences as a

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<sup>143</sup> For example, a general survey of Sarawak politics by Robert O.Tilman (1964). "The Sarawak Political Scene", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.XXXVII, No.4, (Winter 1964/65), pp.412-25; Michael B.Leigh (1979). "Is there Development in Sarawak?: Political Goals and Practices", in James C.Jackson and Martin Rudner (eds). *Issues in Malaysia Development*. Singapore: Heinemann Asia, Chapter 11, pp.339-74; (1980). "Sarawak at the Polls", in Harold Crouch, Lee Kam Hing and Michael Ong (eds). *Malaysian Politics and the 1978 Election*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, Chapter 10, pp.240-54; and (1983). "Reflections on Political Change, Sarawak in Malaysia, 1963-1983", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, Vol.XXXII, No.53 (new series), (August), pp.159-65.

basis for their political behaviour in the post-1963 period.

I should add that I have published several brief studies of recent Iban politics, including two which address the 1983 and 1987 state elections.<sup>144</sup> Much of this material is utilised in later chapters, but it is useful to summarise my conclusions here. With respect to the 1983 election, my basic argument then was that the erosion of Iban power in SNAP need not have happened. Although James Wong headed the party, most of the important government positions allocated to SNAP, in fact, went to the Ibans. Therefore, the call by some Iban leaders for Wong to step down was an unwise move that tore the party apart and eroded the power base of the Ibans in SNAP. Furthermore, according to my earlier interview with Luhut Wan,<sup>145</sup> Wong was willing to compromise with Leo Moggie's faction by not standing for re-election at the next party conference. To some extent and as we shall see later, Luhut's argument that the

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<sup>144</sup> Jayum A. Jawan (1984a). "Pilihanraya Sarawak 1983: Satu Tinjauan" (The Sarawak Election of 1983: An Overview), *Ilmu Masyarakat*, Vol.5, (January/June), pp.56-70; 1987a, op cit, and (1990). "The Dayak of Sarawak: Politics and Participation in National Development" in Victor T.King and Michael J.G.Parnwell (eds). *Margins and Minorities: The Peripheral Areas and Peoples of Malaysia*. Hull: Hull University Press, Chapter 9, pp.147-62.

<sup>145</sup> This interview was in conjunction with my 1983 study, Jawan, 1984a, op cit; in my recent interview with Luhut Wan, it was his opinion that the rejection of SNAP by Iban voters in 1987 would probably spell the end of the party, unless, he maintained, SNAP was revitalised with the emergence of a new generation of educated leaders (SNAP Vice-President, Federal Deputy Minister and MP for Baram Datuk Luhut Wan), Interview by author, 18 August 1990, Damansara Heights, Kuala Lumpur; for a brief background, see Appendix B.

action of disaffected Iban leaders in leaving SNAP to set up PBDS would not solve anything has been vindicated. Even if PBDS had won all the seats it contested against SNAP in the 1983 election, it was unlikely that these would have given them the new leverage against the PBB; it would have simply transferred the Iban power base in SNAP to the new party. Secondly, I also sensed that the destruction of SNAP was a cunning political manoeuvre by the leaders of PBB to break SNAP's hold on the 18 Council Negeri seats. The destruction of SNAP's strength by instigating the formation of another rival Iban party ensured the supreme position of the PBB in the ruling coalition.

With respect to the 1987 election, I was basically interested in examining the effect of "Dayakism" or "Dayak nationalism" on Iban voting. Although I was initially inclined to support the general assumption that "Dayakism" might have been responsible for the unprecedented success of the PBDS in 1987, upon closer scrutiny of the pattern of vote changes polled by PBDS candidates between the 1983 and 1987 elections, I became convinced that it was the local personality of the respective candidates that was the main factor. For example, in the 15 Iban seats contested by the PBDS, there were only marginal vote variations between what the candidates polled in 1987 compared to 1983.<sup>146</sup> Again, I shall take this issue up in Chapter 4.

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<sup>146</sup> Jawan, 1987a, op cit, pp.53 & 56.

With respect to various socio-economic problems facing the Ibans, I have also undertaken two previous studies. In my paper on "Socio-economic Questions of the Ibans"<sup>147</sup> and "Incidence of Poverty Among the Ibans",<sup>148</sup> I drew attention to the problem associated with the term *bumiputera*. I argue that it has hampered the implementation of the objectives of the NEP among the Ibans (as well as the Bidayuhs and the Orang Ulu) in Sarawak. I have stressed the need to recognise the existence and significance of the Muslim-non-Muslim *bumiputera* distinction, and that evaluation of the benefits of economic development should take into proper consideration the welfare of the non-Muslim natives. In that respect, I place great emphasis on the factor of ethnicity as the sole criteria by which the development of the various ethnic groups should be understood and assessed.

#### VIII. Methodology

Part I of this thesis, which comprises an examination of political change and economic growth and development among the Ibans, will rely heavily on data from the following sources: (1) population censuses and

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<sup>147</sup> Jayum A. Jawan (1987b). *Persoalan Sosioekonomi Masyarakat Iban (Socio-economic Questions of the Ibans)*. Paper presented at a National Unity Seminar held at the Northern University, Kedah, 26-28 March 1987.

<sup>148</sup> Jayum A. Jawan (1984b). "Kemunduran di Kalangan Masyarakat Iban" (Incidence of Poverty among the Ibans), *Ilmu Masyarakat*, Vol.6, (October/December), pp.55-67.

surveys, (2) Election Commission Reports on the Elections, (3) Parliamentary and State Assembly debates, (4) Sarawak Museum Archives, (5) newspapers: the *Sarawak Tribune*, *Borneo Post*, and *The People's Mirror* are among the major Sarawak papers, (6) political party Annual/General Assembly Reports, and (7) personal interviews with selected leaders. Part II comprises a case study, which uses structured and unstructured interviews conducted among Iban leaders and a group of 300 selected respondents, to substantiate conclusions that have been drawn from the studies of the secondary and primary literature.

The study of political change among the Ibans is concerned with establishing patterns of political behaviour based on their voting in CN or DUN elections. An analysis of Iban political experiences before independence and of their culture are drawn upon to help explain the variations in or persistence of their political behaviour and attitudes since 1963.

The patterns of Iban political change will be examined in the following ways. First, the 48 state constituencies (representing the 48 state assembly seats) of Sarawak will be classified according to ethnicity, either Iban-, Bidayuh-, Orang Ulu-, Malay/Melanau-, or Chinese-dominated. The classification is based on two categories: majority- or marginally-dominated seats, depending on the percentage of the electorate, according to ethnic group, which dominates the constituency. For



example, an Iban majority constituency would be one in which the Iban electorate makes up not less than 51% of the registered voters; while an Iban marginal constituency would be one in which the percentage of Iban registered voters is between 34%-49%. In a marginal constituency an Iban candidate would require the cooperation of one or more other ethnic groups in order to enhance his chance of electoral success. According to this classification and based on the 1987 electoral registration, Table 1.10 below identifies the number of seats by ethnicity.

Table 1.10  
State Constituencies by Ethnicity  
(Based on Registered Voters 1987).

Ethnicity	Majority		Marginal		Total	
Dayak	-	21	-	4	-	25
Iban	(15)	-	(2)	-	(17)	-
Bidayuh	(3)	-	(2)	-	(5)	-
Orang Ulu	(3)	-	(0)	-	(3)	-
Malay/Melanau	-	14	-	1	-	15
Chinese	-	8	-	0	-	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>(21)</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>(25)</b>	<b>48</b>

Secondly, having established how many constituencies are dominated by which ethnic group and by what percentage, the analysis then focuses on the pattern of political change as reflected by the variations or shifts of concentration of the 17 Iban seats between political parties. By examining the successive election periods since the first election in 1963, I have tried to

establish changing integrative alignments or tendencies, which have been measured in terms of the capabilities of any single party to consolidate behind it the 17 Iban seats.

Explanations for these shifts will be established through studying the number of Iban seats or constituencies won by individuals or political parties, also taking into account the post-election allegiance of assemblymen,<sup>149</sup> and the voting patterns.<sup>150</sup> Political consolidation then will be measured not only through the number of Iban seats a political party had won, but also in terms of the variations in the number of votes secured by each of the party's candidates and the fluctuations in the total votes accruing to that political party between elections.

The second section of part I, the study of economic growth and development, will rely heavily on data from government documents on employment, education and poverty. The main task here is to set out the main features of economic development among the Ibans from the early 1960s to 1990, examining the distribution and level of poverty and employment and educational opportunities.

In this study, economic development is defined as the attainment of or the movement towards a set of specified targets. These economic goals are those which

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<sup>149</sup> This assumes that some assemblymen had switched after the election.

<sup>150</sup> This is determined from votes cast for individuals and the totals for the political parties.

have been set down in the New Economic Policy, launched in the early 1970s. Thus for the Ibans, economic development refers to the processes which bring Ibans into the mainstream of national and state development by increasing their participation in all spheres of economic activity, particularly with regard to their population size as a proportion of the total population of Sarawak. In this way, the examination of Iban economic achievement inevitably invites a comparison with the other communal groups. Such an analysis reveals the degree to which the government's policies towards achieving equitable development according to ethnic group have been successful.

Finally, part I of the study will conclude with an attempt to make connections between the patterns of political change and economic development. The ups and downs of Iban political consolidation will be correlated with their economic performance over the same period. In so doing, a relationship can be established between the state of political change and economic development among the Ibans.

Part II of the thesis comprises the results of scheduled and unscheduled interviews. The scheduled interviews were used in a case study of 300 husband-wife teams from Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus state constituencies in the Second and Seventh Divisions respectively. These relate to issues raised in part I of the study. On the other hand, the unscheduled interviews were undertaken

with Iban community and political leaders. With community leaders such as the *tuai rumah* and *penghulus*, discussions were used either to substantiate or cross-check the responses of the respondents in the two study areas.

The case study materials on political and socio-economic opinions and behaviour are then examined in relation to those generally accepted political and socio-economic behavioural patterns and opinions presumed to be characteristic of the Ibans. Where these two sets of data differ, I also offer explanations for the variations.

In addition, the case study also attempts to highlight some of the emerging patterns of Iban political and socio-economic thought. In this respect, I seek to answer such questions as: What are the basic problems of Iban political unity?; How might the problem of unity be overcome? What are the factors that dominate Iban political behaviour? In the economic realm, it seeks to establish Iban views about the following issues: How do Ibans feel about the NEP?; To what extent do they feel that they are deriving benefits from the policy? To what do they attribute their economic difficulties? Furthermore, the fieldwork also seeks to ascertain the extent to which contemporary Iban politics subscribes to or deviates from the patterns that have emerged in my earlier discussion in previous chapters, for example, in terms of parochialism (regionalism) versus unity (supra-regionalism) and the pattern of alternation between the two; the upholding of the characteristically Iban

traditional virtues of individualism, egalitarianism, competition and cooperation; and, the extent to which the *ulu-pasar* dichotomy of Iban political behaviour still plays a role in their political thinking. While the conclusions of the case study cannot be used to generalise about Iban politics, it is possible to establish connections between the findings of the case study and the general patterns of Iban political and socio-economic behaviour in the wider Iban world.

#### **IX. Research Design of the Case Study**

The case study comprised 300 respondents from Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus state constituencies in the Second and Third Divisions respectively. Both areas were randomly selected within these two Divisions; Bkt. Begunan was selected from the six possible state constituencies in the Second Division and Pelagus from the three in the Seventh Division. Although a structured questionnaire was used, respondents were also encouraged to elaborate on their responses about the subject matter being sought.

During the fieldwork, I was fortunate in having the assistance of one research assistant and four experienced political workers, whose insights into the local political scene were invaluable. My research assistant and I trained the enumerators, whose task it was to conduct the survey on a one-to-one basis; the enumerators were to take notes from the respondents who wished to

make further comments on any of the questions being asked. With the assistance of six enumerators, a sample of about 150 households from each study area was successfully collected in the space of about six weeks.

The analysis of the survey data utilised the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSSx). Discussion of the findings is based solely on interpreting the percentile distributions of the respondents' responses.

## **X. Summary**

Having set down the main themes of the study, it is appropriate that the following chapter focuses on an examination of early Iban political experiences and the elements of their culture which have relevance to political behaviour. As I have previously asserted in my critique of earlier studies, these data are essential in any attempt to understand Iban political behaviour and attitudes in post-independent Sarawak.

To put it popularly, culture is the basic element that makes Ibans "tick" politically. Iban culture evolved and was strengthened by their traditional lifestyle of warfaring and migration. By understanding the circumstances in which Iban cultural attributes emerged, we might be able to understand better why some of these persist and others have been more easily discarded as Ibans have become increasingly involved in the arena of modern politics.

Having established a context in which we can appreciate the historical and cultural roots of Iban political behaviour, I then examine the processes of and Iban responses to political change in the post-independence period in Chapters 3 and 4. This then leads conveniently in Chapter 5 into my related concern of Iban economic development and its associated problems. Chapter 6 discusses the findings of the survey and focuses on a number of vital issues: (1) the validity of some general assumptions about Iban politics; (2) the relevance today of some earlier established patterns of Iban politics such as regionalism; and (3) the identification of emerging patterns of Iban political and socio-economic behaviour and their attitudes on a range of current political and economic issues. Finally, Chapter 7 discusses the major findings and contributions of this study to the literature on Iban politics and identifies possible areas for future political research on Ibans.

## CHAPTER 2

### IBAN TRADITIONS OF LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL CULTURE

#### I. Introduction

Much of what is known about the Ibans is from literature dating back to the reign of the first Rajah of Sarawak, James Brooke. These writings were mostly in the form of government reports<sup>1</sup>--including correspondence between the Rajah and his servants,<sup>2</sup> studies undertaken by the Rajah's personnel and officers,<sup>3</sup> and personal memoirs.<sup>4</sup>

Before 1841, much of what constitutes Iban history remained largely in the domain of Iban genealogical experts (*tukang tusut*)<sup>5</sup> and bards (*lemambang*) who could recall vividly Iban history. Through tracing kin ties, a

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Britain (1955). *An Economic Survey of the Colonial Territories: The Far Eastern Territories, The Federation of Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, Brunei, North Borneo and Sarawak*. Vol.5. London: HMSO; see also A.B. Ward (1927). "Outline of Sarawak History 1839-1917", *Eastern Pamphlet*, No.24, 8 Volumes.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, J.C. Templer (1853). *The Private Letters of Sir James Brooke*. London: Bentley.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Hose and William McDougall (1912). *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo*. London: Macmillan; Hose was Resident of the Fourth Division from 1888 to 1904; and, Hugh Low (1848). *Sarawak: Its Inhabitants and Productions*. London: Bentley; Low was a Resident in the Third Division from 1875 to 1887.

<sup>4</sup> For instance, The Ranee Margaret of Sarawak (1986). *My Life In Sarawak*. Singapore: Oxford University Press; reprint, London: Methuen, 1913; and also The Ranee Sylvia of Sarawak (1936). *Sylvia Brooke Of Sarawak: An Autobiography*. London: Hutchins.

<sup>5</sup> See Sandin, 1967a, op cit.



knowledgeable<sup>6</sup> *tukang tusut* could establish the history of migration because he would then be involved in establishing a person's identity and origin--i.e. relating the person to his ancestors, and specifically how and by what route the person had come to be settled in his present home. Similarly through *pengap* (chanting) sung by *lemambang*, we can also learn something of Iban history, because in these chants there are repeated references to pioneers and leaders, who had been successful in various ways. But because the art of the *tukang tusut* and *lemambang* is slowly disappearing, it is feared that much of the valuable pre-Brooke history of the Ibans may have already been lost. Nevertheless, efforts at recording this early history have been meticulously undertaken by Benedict Sandin.<sup>7</sup> However, Sandin, who as a self-taught folklorist was uncoached in the conventions of social science, has been criticized by

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<sup>6</sup> I have deliberately chosen "knowledgeable" as an adjective as opposed to Pringle's "skilful", which to me implies the general possibility of creating non-existent kinship links through skilful manipulation by the *tukang tusut*, as Pringle implies when he wrote: "the most interesting thing about Iban genealogy is that it could ... establish a desired relationship. If the genealogist is skilled and determined enough, he could find them." Instead, I would prefer to see the *tukang tusut* as knowledgeable about family history. Kinship links are very difficult to establish out of thin air although presumably this objective was sometimes achieved. The *tukang tusut*'s usual role was therefore rediscovering the family links between two individuals, who, to Pringle, seem unrelated. See Robert Pringle (1970). *Rajahs and Rebels: The Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841-1941*. London: Macmillan.

<sup>7</sup> Some of them are as follows: 1967a, op cit; (1967b). *Peturun Iban*. Kuching: Borneo Literature; and (1970). "Iban Leaders", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, Vol. XVIII, Nos. 36-37, (new series), (July/December), pp. 89-161.

Freeman for his sometimes confusing accounts, especially with reference to dates of events.<sup>8</sup>

Any study of the cultural values of the Ibans will have to start with an examination of the *bilik*-family and the longhouse. For it is these institutions which give the Iban a real sense of group identity.<sup>9</sup> Regardless of Iban physical mobility and their relatively fluid settlement patterns,<sup>10</sup> an Iban will always identify himself first with a particular *bilik*-family (*purih sanu* [descendant of such and such a *bilik*-family]). Then he or she identifies with a particular longhouse situated in a particular river system. Formerly, Iban did not have clearly defined and formalised social and political structures and institutions above those of the longhouse.

## II. *Bilik*-family and Tuai *Bilik*

The concept of a *bilik*-family has been discussed and described in great length by Freeman.<sup>11</sup> The term *bilik*-family refers to the family unit which occupies one and only one compartment, called *bilik*,<sup>12</sup> within the

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<sup>8</sup> Derek Freeman (1981). *Some Reflections on the Nature of Iban Society*. An Occasional Paper of the Department of Anthropology, Advanced School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.

<sup>9</sup> Refer to Freeman, 1970, *op cit*, especially Chapter 1.

<sup>10</sup> See Padoch, 1978, *op cit*; Sutlive, 1972, *op cit*; and Sutlive (1978). *The Ibans of Sarawak*. Arlington Heights (Ill.): AHM Publishing Corp.

<sup>11</sup> See Freeman, 1970, *op cit*, especially Chapter 1.

<sup>12</sup> Literally *bilik* means room but when used to refer to an individualised family compartment within a longhouse, then often

longhouse. It is not uncommon to find a *bilik*-family consisting of three generations--parents, their children and their children's children.

A *bilik* compartment would normally consist of sections of the *tanju* (the open platform) and a *ruai* (roofed balcony running the length of the longhouse), as well as a *bilik* (the enclosed, private family compartment), a *sadau* (the loft) and a *dapur* (the kitchen). A *bilik* serves as the sleeping quarters for the members of the family; however, nowadays, a lounge area and several enclosed sleeping spaces are common features within a *bilik*. Freeman's description of the Iban *bilik* took into consideration the prevailing social and economic conditions of his time. Thus, in the 1940s, the collection of gongs, brassware, china jars and *antu pala* (human skull trophies) were still the standard measures of how well off one *bilik*-family was in comparison with others. With a few exceptions, such as the sacred strains of rice (*padi pun*), various heirlooms, like gongs, could be purchased. Today, modern indicators of wealth have changed and now comprise such consumer goods as Hi-fi sets, colour televisions with video-cassette players and modern settees. For residents of longhouses where there are road networks, ownership of motorbikes and cars is becoming increasingly common. However, this is not to say

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the meaning extends to a residential unit comprising more than just one room.

that traditional heirlooms are no longer important for the Ibans.

The *bilik*-family is an important social, economic and political institution of the Ibans. In these respects, it provides Ibans with a sense of belonging, an interdependent network to cater for their economic needs and with the authority to legitimise their social, economic and political relations with others.

The *bilik*-family performs a number of social functions on behalf of its members. First, an individual is born into the *bilik*-family.<sup>13</sup> Through the *bilik*-family, he or she acquires an orientation with which to deal with his or her outside worlds.<sup>14</sup> The more remote the *bilik*-family to major trading centres (*pasar*) the greater the family members are dependent upon each other for their immediate needs.<sup>15</sup> Where distances from the *pasar* are significant, this circumstance has vigorously reinforced self-sufficiency, the goals of which are pursued through a high level of both competition and cooperation. In all activities--be they sports, courtship or war--an Iban individual feels greatly ashamed to be defeated (*malu alah*) by his peers. Even in cooperative ventures, an Iban

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<sup>13</sup> Freeman, 1970, *op cit*, identifies a number of ways by which an individual can become a member of the *bilik*-family apart from being born into it; for example, by marrying into the *bilik*-family; by being adopted; by being incorporated (i.e. the children of a divorcee, who remarries, are incorporated into the *bilik*-family of his or her new spouse).

<sup>14</sup> For socialization refer to, Richard E. Dawson and Kenneth Prewitt (1969). *Political Socialization*. Boston (Mass.): Little, Brown.

<sup>15</sup> See Searle, 1983, *op cit*.

wants to excel and outdo his peers. Thus, in hunting expeditions, he wants to be the person to have shot the wild boar, and traditionally in war expeditions, the one to have taken the most enemy heads.

These values are transmitted to Iban children quite early in their life. In his observations of the Baleh Ibans of Rumah Nyala, Freeman indicated that these values were already being imparted to children between the ages of 11 to 15 years old.<sup>16</sup> Children were made to realise the importance of fending for themselves and their younger siblings. The elder children were often expected to look after their younger siblings, while their parents were out in the farm. The girls would have learned how to cook, fetch water and wash clothes by the age of ten, while the boys of similar age would have learned to gather firewood and, perhaps, chop it too, feed their domestic animals and hunt.<sup>17</sup> While they would not realise it at this early age, the children were being taught the importance of competition, cooperation and the division of labour essential towards the goals of self-sufficiency. Children learned to measure up to what was expected of them through parental encouragement; they were praised for jobs well done and made to feel ashamed when they did not display abilities similar to their peers. The value of cooperation and the sexual division of labour is learned early as a result of necessity.

<sup>16</sup> Freeman, 1970, op cit, pp.219-22.

<sup>17</sup> Sutlive, 1978, op cit, pp.92-103.

While an Iban might be pressured to be highly competitive, this value must not be seen as directly opposed to the equally important spirit of cooperation. While competition serves to push Iban to the utmost limits of their potential, cooperation has always been emphasised as well. An Iban individual is highly competitive, but exhibiting such virtues does not always bring individual economic rewards. For example, in building a local community hall, church or school, an Iban would work hard and try to outperform his peers, but the fruits of his labours would be enjoyed equally by the entire community. In this case then, the drive to compete is purely for social praise but the consequences help to strengthen and support community resources. For young men, this esteem gives them an edge with the young maidens who prefer their suitors to work hard and demonstrate skills in a variety of crafts. In the old days, industrious persons made highly suitable prospective spouses as they were seen to be able to contribute towards the overall economic success of the *bilik*-family. However, nowadays, industriousness is viewed in a different light. Although it is still valued, especially in the traditional context of farming, hunting and gathering, Ibans are increasingly emphasising success in education. Hence, individuals who have some education, a steady job and a stable source of income are desirable candidates as prospective spouses.<sup>18</sup> The changing

<sup>18</sup> In the early 1960s and well into the 1970s, Iban military personnel were said to be particularly sought after by prospective

perceptions of the Ibans about the virtues of industry are closely connected to their attempts to escape the uncertainties of rural life.

The *bilik*-family also functions as an economic institution. Besides, acting as a property-owning unit, it is also an institution which helps foster cooperative as well as competitive values among members of different *bilik*-families. This is important in further demonstrating that Ibans have the natural tendency to both compete and cooperate beyond the *bilik*-family in order to realise their full potential in any given task. In farming, cooperation between several *bilik*-families is known as *bedurok* (labour exchange). *Bedurok* entails that all participating families work each other's farms in rotation. *Bedurok* can be carried out at any point in the farming cycle, be it *nunu* (burning), *nugal* (dibbling), *ngetau* (harvesting) or *nungku* (threshing the *padi* from the husk). Cooperation is also common among young children who go on hunting or fishing trips; those who manage to catch or collect the most usually share with those less fortunate. However, this does not undermine their competitiveness; they would still want to be the one to have caught many fish or gathered more wild ferns than their peers.

*Bedurok* was common until the adoption of new methods in Iban agriculture. The difficulty in clearing farm land

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in-laws; not only were they viewed as industrious and brave but they were also seen as a ticket out of poverty.

has been made easier by the use of chain saws, and the problem of weeding by the use of *racun rumput* (weed-killer). Due to the impact of urbanisation, Ibans are increasingly being drawn to towns searching for more stable sources of income. Thus, modern farms are tending to become smaller in size thereby reducing the need for cooperation. It is not uncommon now for some *bilik*-families to be entirely dependent on earned income to purchase rice to meet their annual needs. In spite of increasing dependence on new types of economic activity, some still maintain a token farm in order to extend the life of their most sacred *padi pun*. As Ibans turn in increasing numbers to urban-based, non-farm activities, there is even more emphasis being placed on competition and individualism than cooperation.

The *bilik*-family is not only a social, economic and property-owning unit, but is also an important political institution. While Ibans may be individualistic and competitive, this individualism must be qualified when referring to members of the same *bilik*-family. In the *bilik*-family, the elder's authority is substantial, although not absolute. This means that there is always room for dissension among members, which may eventually lead to *bilik* partition; usually the senior members relent for the sake of harmony and to avoid soured relations. But there are also many cases where sons or daughters, who have set up their own *bilik*-families, have consulted their parents (*nanya penemu apai/indai dulu*)



before making major decisions. This is especially so if they still reside within the same longhouse. While the authority of the parents over married children who live separately may gradually decrease, the same cannot be said of those who still live with the parents in the same *bilik*. The latter do have greater obligations to obey and follow their parents.

The salient feature of power relations among Ibans in the *bilik*-family, as well as in the longhouse, is that of consensus. Not only must all parties be satisfied with a decision arrived at, but all parties must also be consulted. However, the practice of consensus must not be interpreted as representing political equality; far from it, there exist degrees of influence that members of a *bilik*-family exercise, especially between male adults as well as between male and female members. Normally, the *tuai bilik* (or household head and usually male) exercises a greater degree of influence than others in decision-making. Consensus, therefore, can be seen as an attempt to attract support for the decisions already made. However, there are exceptions when other members may exercise greater influence than the *tuai bilik*. For example, in making preparations to hold a *gawai*, the eldest person within a *bilik*-family may dictate the procedures to follow, because as the elder, he or she is seen as the custodian of the traditions of the *bilik*-family. With regard to exclusively female pursuits, naturally women decide; in *gawai nyungkup*, for example,

the major part of the activities is performed by women, who weave baskets, mats and other handicrafts, which are later sent to the graves of dead relatives.<sup>19</sup> Aside from this differentiation, I would argue that generally, the household heads, in most cases male, exercise greater influence than any other *bilik*-family members.

What is more, relations between children and their parents or elders are controlled by the *adat*. While the individual Iban is assertive, children rarely go against the wishes of their elders; they may disagree with or be angered by their decisions but children seldom exhibit disrespectful behaviour publicly. Doing so would only bring shame upon themselves; a person who does behave inappropriately is referred to as *enda mereti* (bad mannered) and said to be *tulah ngelaban apai/indai* (cursed for going against their elders). The reluctance of children to go against their seniors is more to do with their anxiety about misfortune which might result from being cursed than any threat of physical punishment that might be administered by parents. The Ibans say *tulah enda madah ia datai* (a curse does not warn of its wrath).

Similarly, the relations between members of the various *bilik*-families in the longhouse are defined by the *adat*. The feeling of shame for not following the *adat* is as greatly felt by longhouse members as it is by those

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<sup>19</sup> *Nyungkup* can be performed as early as the next *gawai Dayak* following the deaths of relatives; it can be performed individually or by several *bilik*-families.

within a given *bilik*-family. Thus, to be assertive against the wishes of the majority is also seen in this light. In the longhouse, the *tuai rumah* is figuratively the elder of the larger *bilik*-family--that is, the longhouse; going against the decision of the *tuai rumah*, which has been reached with careful consultation and deliberation, then is tantamount to a child rebelling against his elders. Dissension of a few individuals or *bilik*-families against the collective will of the longhouse is not uncommon; but the recalcitrant few are usually drawn back to the majority view by peer pressure, coaxing or by their own repentance. If reconciliation is not possible then those who disagree usually leave the community. Nevertheless, it is difficult to visualise a highly assertive and uncompromising Iban individual in the longhouse environment even though competition and individualism are valued. For if he is too assertive, he risks distancing himself from the community, and moving to join another longhouse will still mean that he has to subject himself to collective decisions. In other words, the freedom of an individual to express himself is constrained within certain parameters.

### **III. Longhouse**

A longhouse consists of a series of *biliks* or compartments, which are joined together to produce a long house (*rumah panjang*--literally, "a long house"). The only part of a longhouse that may be considered communal, in

terms of free access, is the *ruai*. The *ruai* is the focal point for interaction among the longhouse Ibans. It is in the *ruai*, clustering around the *tuai rumah*'s compartment, that *baums* are usually conducted. While a *gawai*, such as *bedara* or *sandau ari*<sup>20</sup> might be an individual *bilik*-family's affair, it is always conducted on the *ruai* with the participation of other members of the longhouse. In fact, parts of the various processes and stages of *gawai*<sup>21</sup> require the use of the *ruai* and the *tanju*. Depending on the scale of the celebration of the *gawai* and also on the means of the person who holds it, the ceremony may involve close kin of several *bilik*-families or the entire longhouse; these other house residents then volunteer their help.

Another important feature of the longhouse that balances the values of individualism and competition with that of cooperation is the close relationship that exists among members of different *bilik*-families, who are usually related by kinship and marriage. Because of such ties, it is not uncommon to find a high level of

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<sup>20</sup> See the following footnote.

<sup>21</sup> There are various stages of *gawai*. The very first time a person holds a *gawai* he starts with the *bedara* (makes an offering), which is conducted in the *bilik*; the next stage is the *nyengok ke tanju* (to peek onto the *tanju*), conducted, of course, on the *tanju*; and finally the *sandau ari* (the *gawai* proper), also conducted on the *tanju*; it is only after the *gawai sandau ari* that Iban individuals can hold other types of ceremony such as *gawai kenyalang*, *gawai kelingkang* and so on. For ordinary Ibans who have never left the longhouse, the first three stages must be followed before they can *begawai* the other higher ceremonies. However, exceptions are recognised for those who have gone on *bejalai* (a journey) or who are persons of renown, for they may skip the preliminary stages and proceed to *begawai* proper.

solidarity among the many *bilik*-families, although this may not necessarily translate into a high degree of corporateness.<sup>22</sup> But what these ties do is ensure that some unfortunate members have somebody to turn to in times of need.

The concept of corporateness seems to be alien to the individualistic Iban. In his study of the Baleh Ibans, Freeman found "... the absence of any kind of productive activity by the long-house as a whole".<sup>23</sup> But the reasons for the lack of corporatism among the highly cooperative and competitive Ibans may be explained by the basic needs of self-sufficiency. Iban life in the rural areas revolves almost entirely around the longhouse and its environs. Their immediate needs are limited to securing adequate food, clothing and shelter, although once in a while they like to visit the *pasar*, either for pleasure (*raun*) or to purchase essential items that they do not produce themselves, such as salt and textiles. Specialisation did not go beyond the *bilik*-family. In fact, it is not necessary because if some *bilik*-families cannot meet all their needs from their own resources then they can satisfy them through cooperation, exchange or by simply learning the skills necessary to acquire them.

Corporate activities among the Ibans only began to arise out of development schemes dating back to the colonial period. In the community development scheme of

<sup>22</sup> Freeman, 1970, op cit, Chapter 2 and especially pp.108-9.

<sup>23</sup> Freeman, 1970, Ibid, p.109.

Budu, for instance, Iban were introduced to collective activities in building infrastructure for schools, clinics and stores.<sup>24</sup> These activities involved not one but many longhouses in the area. Though it was very much the organisational efforts of John Wilson that gave rise to the emergence of a Budu "elite", who were trained and given education in Scotland, it was also the collective efforts of the Budu community which enabled some ten Budu youths to be sent to Scotland.

#### IV. The Institution of Leadership

A leader is "a person who rules, guides and inspires others".<sup>25</sup> Among the Ibans, the equivalent term is *pengulu* (one who leads); *pengulu* is derived from the verb *ulu*, meaning to lead.<sup>26</sup> But the Iban term *tuai* is a popularly accepted synonym. Actually, *tuai* means old or elder, denoting a social status closely linked to knowledge. Hence, a leader is one who assumes the position of leadership based on deep personal knowledge and experience of the task at hand.

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<sup>24</sup> John K. Wilson (1969). *Budu or Twenty Years in Sarawak*. North Berwick: Tantallon Press. This is the success story of a community development scheme; progress was achieved through common efforts, making use of the local resources -the people and local skills. The Budu project demonstrates that given the opportunity, the Iban child could excel by exploiting his potential outside traditional agriculture; that the Ibans could be a united community committed to progress; and, that they could be receptive to change within the confines of their traditional way of life.

<sup>25</sup> William T. McLeod (ed) (1989). *The Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus in one Volume*. London: Collins.

<sup>26</sup> But depending on the context in which it is used, it can also mean other things, for example, "interior" (rural).

In traditional Iban society, there were many different leaders whose knowledge or expertise were appropriate to rather different tasks, such as the opening up of new land (*mubok menua*), headhunting (*ngayau*), or in trading expeditions. Thus, there were various *tuai* such as *tuai menua* (territorial chiefs), *tuai kayau* (warleaders), *tuai adat* (adat leaders), *tuai burong* (bird elders) and *tuai rumah* (longhouse headmen).<sup>27</sup> But many of these positions did overlap; in other words, one person may have held more than one leadership position simultaneously. However, many of these leadership institutions gradually disappeared from the mid-nineteenth century. This was a direct consequence of a number of interrelated events. The most important of them was the establishment and expansion of Brooke rule into Iban areas. The Brookes outlawed Iban warfaring and subsequently their practices of migration were also significantly restricted.

At the present time, there is only one traditional Iban leadership position which has definitely survived the effects of modernisation, and that is, the *tuai rumah*. It is a localised institution confined to a given longhouse. The post of *tuai burong*, an important position in the *adat*, also remains, but it is an institution which is fast fading. In addition to the *tuai rumah*, there are several regional leaders such as the *penghulus*, *pemancas* and *temenggongs*; these have been institutionalised and

<sup>27</sup> See for example, Sandin, 1970, op cit.

become part of the Iban community leadership structure. But the position of the *penghulu* was created by the Brookes in their efforts to unite Ibans within a riverine system.

Although *penghuluship* is not strictly a traditional Iban institution, it can be seen as an extension and formalisation of pre-Brooke Iban cooperation, which had successfully involved Ibans in various longhouses from a particular riverine system, especially in warfaring. Furthermore, the appointment of *temenggongs* can be seen as an attempt by the Brookes to create a higher level of Iban integration above the regional authority of the *penghulus*.<sup>28</sup> The granting of a *temenggongship* took into consideration the deeds of individuals in their community, and especially services to the government. Several individuals were appointed to the position, but these posts were scattered, based on individual achievements and were not integrated into any formal system of government.

For the purpose of my discussion of Iban political organisation, I have identified three levels of authority. The first is the *tuai bilik*<sup>29</sup> and *tuai rumah*, which I shall refer to as local-level institutions; the second, the *penghulu*, *pemanca*, and *temenggong* as regional institutions; and, the third, modern political party

<sup>28</sup> Above the *penghulu*, there were also the positions of a *pemanca* or *pengarah*. In the late 1970s, the term "*pemanca*" was increasingly being used instead of "*pengarah*".

<sup>29</sup> This has been discussed in the earlier part of the Chapter.



leadership as a supra-regional institution. The first two leadership hierarchies were well established before independence, while the third only emerged from the early 1960s. However, unlike the longer established regional institutions which enjoyed some success in uniting Ibans within riverine systems, political party leaders have had greater difficulty in uniting Ibans from the various riverine systems into a supra-regional organisation.

#### A. Tuai Rumah: A Local-Level Institution

Every longhouse has a *tuai rumah*, and occasionally a *sapit* or *mandal tuai rumah* (a deputy *tuai rumah*) who acts in the absence of the *tuai rumah*. The *tuai rumah* is elected through a *baum* held on the *ruai* of the longhouse. A ballot is cast by a simple show of hands. The term of office of a *tuai rumah* is not specified; it is rare that the post changes hands except due to old age, when the incumbent is unable to discharge his duties, or death. In most cases, the office is likely to be taken up by one of the descendants of the incumbent. Usually, the office of *tuai rumah* is held by a man.<sup>30</sup>

The functions and authority of a *tuai rumah* are somewhat limited. His authority is somewhat analogous to that of a *tuai bilik* at the level of the family, and although a *tuai rumah* may experience more opposition to

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<sup>30</sup> There are exceptions. For example, during her fieldwork, Komanyi observed one instance of a female *tuai rumah*, Komanyi, 1973, op cit; at the present, one longhouse community in the Penasu area of the Batang Igan, near Sibu is also headed by a female *tuai rumah*.

his authority than a *tuai bilik*, this should not be construed as representing a lack of respect for the position of *tuai rumah*. However, it is an institution which Freeman seems to have *underrated* when he concludes that the authority of the *tuai rumah* is nominal and that the latter could not really exert influence over the *bilik*-families (*anembiak*) within his domain.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, he is quite right in saying that the authority of a *tuai rumah* is limited to that of custodian of *adat* and arbiter in disputes between members of the longhouse.<sup>32</sup>

The problem in defining the scope of authority of a *tuai rumah* lies in its informal character. As a non-formal institution, a *tuai rumah* can neither enforce compliance nor exact punishment among his *anembiaks* when they fail to follow his decisions. Nevertheless, while his authority may be restricted, there are several factors that help enhance and legitimise his actions. First and most important is the *adat*. This is an aspect which Freeman did not fully explore in his examination of the institution of *tuai rumah*. The *adat* is perhaps the singlemost important influence on Iban life. All aspects of life revolve around observing its sanctions and restrictions. From childbirth through to the passage to *sebayan* (the afterworld), the Ibans surround themselves

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<sup>31</sup> Freeman, 1970, op cit, pp.113-16; this is also the opinion of Jensen, 1974, op cit, p.24.

<sup>32</sup> Freeman, 1970, op cit, pp.109-16.

with sacred rituals. In his study of the Ibans, Freeman fails to see how the position of even the weakest of *tuai rumah* might be enhanced by the support of the *adat*. Ibans revere their *adat*, and an individual is greatly shamed to be called *orang nadai adat*<sup>33</sup> (a person not conforming to *adat*) or to be fined by the *tuai rumah* because the *adat* has been transgressed.

Secondly, the democratic process by which a *tuai rumah* has been selected ensures that he is acceptable. The openness of the manner in which the *tuai rumah* arbitrates disputes and his consultation with other elders serve to confirm that his decisions are guided by precedent; recourse to established *adat* helps to legitimise his authority with his fellow residents. Therefore, going against decisions of a *tuai rumah* would be tantamount to turning one's back on the community and more importantly the *adat*.

Thirdly, the authority of a *tuai rumah* is also enhanced by his personal qualities. As custodian of *adat*, a *tuai rumah* is expected to have a deep knowledge of the subject. But *adat* alone is not enough to retain the loyalty of the *anembiak*. Besides knowledge of the *adat*, a *tuai rumah* must also be a man of good character, impartial and of great oratorical skill. In many disputes, his role is more of a "peacemaker" than an arbiter. When disputes are lodged with him, he first

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<sup>33</sup> Literally, *nadai* means no or not having.

attempts to calm the contending parties; if this fails then the case is brought into a *betugong*.<sup>34</sup>

Fourthly, the authority of a *tuai rumah* is also enhanced by his socio-economic standing. In other words, he must also be a man of means (*orang bisi utai*). His duty is not solely confined to overseeing the general welfare of his *anembiak*, but he is also expected to receive occasional visitors, be they government officials or simply passing travellers. At various *gawai* conducted in the name of the longhouse, the *tuai rumah* is expected to contribute substantially more towards the cost of holding such functions, whether it is in terms of providing *tuak* (rice wine) or purchasing other provisions. In many activities that are conducted on his *ruai* he is expected to supply food and drinks.

Fifthly, the longhouse headman must also be someone chosen or favoured by the *petaras* (spiritual beings or gods) and who has had the necessary dreams.<sup>35</sup> This is an integral part of the concept of Iban leadership; traditional leaders such as *tuai menua* and *tuai kayau* should have had contacts with their *petaras*. Through dreams, which bring mortals and their *petaras* together, great leaders are created since the *petaras* can foretell

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<sup>34</sup> Both a noun and a verb, referring to a gathering of people on the *ruai* for a specific purpose--especially to discuss or decide certain matters of interest to the longhouse.

<sup>35</sup> See Sandin, 1962b, op cit. In his book, Sandin related how 12 Iban leaders had one or more necessary dreams in which they met the *petaras* from *Panggau Libau* and were foretold of their impending greatness.

the fortunes of mortals. Sandin gives an account of one such dream and its interpretation. In it, a man called Dana, together with Randi, had met *Kumang* (a female legendary heroine) who spoke to Dana:

... laban seduai sama-sama enda tetiap ka panau ba dada aku, nya-alai bisi siko orang enda ulih alah ka seduai. Enda lama agi ila, iya deka datai ari tisau langit ari sepiak mata-hari mati. Iya nya Raja Ribai, idong iya manchong, mata iya bular lalu bok iya pirang. Iya enda ulih laban seduai ...<sup>36</sup>

(translation)

... because both of you failed to keep count of the white circular spots on my chest, there is a person whom both of you cannot defeat. Soon, he will come from afar, from the opposite side where the sun sets. He is Raja Ribai, his nose protruding, his eyes blue and his hair white. Both of you cannot defeat him....

Dana's dream foretold two things. First that he would be a great war leader but second, there would be one person whom he (and also Randi, who also appeared in his dream) could not defeat; the person is *Raja Ribai* (i.e. the White Rajah). *Kumang* also warned Dana to caution his descendants that they too would not be able to defeat Raja Ribai. Sandin<sup>37</sup> noted that by the time James Brooke came, Dana was old and managed only to hold his ground at Nanga Padeh in Saribas in 1843 against the

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<sup>36</sup> Sandin, 1962b, op cit, pp.5-14, quote from p.13.

<sup>37</sup> Sandin, 1962b, Ibid, for an account of a dream and its interpretation.

attacking Rajah and his party. When he died his sons Nang, Aji and Luyoh, not heeding the dreams of their father, made a number of unsuccessful attempts to confront the Rajah. Aji's sons, Senabong and Timban, despite their grandfather's dream, were adamant in confronting and avenging their father's death. They perished while on their way to Sabah in search of charms to make them formidable against the Rajah.

The significance of the above example is that it shows leaders are a special group favoured by the *petaras*; thereby, they are a group above ordinary mortals. This esteem is acknowledged in the *gawai*. Although the details of dreams may not actually be told to the *gawai* revellers, the successful worldly exploits of those who hold *gawai* serve to reinforce their special relationship with the *petaras*. Hence, they are people to be respected and even feared.

Sixth, the office of *tuai rumah* may not traditionally have been separate from other leadership positions such as *tuai menua* and *tuai kayau*. A longhouse headman might also have been a warleader or a pioneer and therefore, he carried over the respect and admiration that he had already acquired in other fields to the institution of *tuai rumah*. What is more, the authority of the *tuai rumah* has been further enhanced by government recognition of his vital role in the longhouse. Nowadays, the *tuai rumah* serves as a spokesman for his *anembiak* and a link between them and government officials and

politicians. Politicians canvassing for support seek out the *tuai rumah*; they are usually consulted to assess the development needs of the *anembiak*.

Besides the *tuai rumah*, an equally important position in traditional longhouse society was that of the *tuai burong*--literally, bird elder, sign reader, or to use Freeman's term, augur.<sup>38</sup> A *tuai burong* is the ritual leader of the longhouse as well as the intermediary between the mortals and their *petaras*. As ritual leader, the *tuai burong* interprets the favours or disfavours of the *petaras* as communicated through various omens, such as the movements or sounds of birds or animals, to mortal Ibans.<sup>39</sup> The *tuai burong* is an intermediary because through his expertise and experience in the system of bird augury, messages of favours or displeasure from the *petaras* are made clear and understood by ordinary mortals. Through the augur's interpretation, rituals of appeasement might then be correctly initiated, corresponding to the nature and gravity of the wrath of the *petaras*.

In contrast to the office of *tuai rumah*, that of the *tuai burong* in the Iban community is not recognised by the government. Despite that, he occupies a significant

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<sup>38</sup> Freeman, 1970, op cit, p.117. See also Jensen, 1974, op cit, p.60, for a more detailed discussion, refer to the whole of part 2, Chapter vi.

<sup>39</sup> For instance, in the *gawai sandau ari*, a ritually prepared pig is slaughtered and its liver extracted. The appearance of the liver, such as its contours and the lines crisscrossing here and there, are interpreted for divine messages, in light of the nature of the *gawai*; See also Freeman, 1970, op cit, p.117.

position among the longhouse community, whose whole life (and death) revolves around the close observation of the many rituals. The positions of the *tuai rumah* and *tuai burong* might be compared to the division of power between the temporal (state) and spiritual (church) leaders, but unlike the latter, there is no conflict of roles and hegemonic tendencies between their respective spheres of influence and activity. Instead, their roles are clearly defined and complementary: the *tuai rumah* is the custodian of *adat* and arbiter of disputes and the *tuai burong* is the augur and intermediary between mortals and their *petaras*.

As Freeman and Jensen discovered, the positions of the *tuai rumah* and the *tuai burong* may be held by separate individuals or by the same individual.<sup>40</sup> In the latter case, the authority of the *tuai rumah* is further enhanced by his other equally important position. The office of the *tuai burong*, as with any other kind of Iban leadership, is not a hereditary one. A person's ability to acquire the knowledge necessary to become a *tuai burong* does not necessarily guarantee him such a position. Nevertheless, a person who has managed to secure a deep knowledge of the art of augury would be placed high up on the list to take over the office. In addition to this knowledge, a person must have the favour of the *petaras*.<sup>41</sup> For should he become a *tuai burong*, he

<sup>40</sup> Freeman, 1970, *Ibid*, p.109; and Jensen, 1974, *op cit*, p.60.

<sup>41</sup> Sandin, 1962b, *op cit*. Sandin called it having the "necessary dreams". See also, Jensen, 1974, *op cit*, p.60.



may be replaced, if, during his tenure, the community experiences recurring misfortune, bad harvests and other disasters. The failure of the community to produce good harvests or to prosper in farming is particularly disastrous for the *tuai burong*, for he is then *enda bisa*<sup>42</sup> (literally, not powerful) in that he is unable to elicit the favours of the *petaras*.

Despite its traditional importance, the institution of *tuai burong* has diminished significantly. It is not uncommon to find that there might not be a *tuai burong* in some contemporary longhouses. This is not to imply that there is not a single individual within a particular longhouse who would not know the art of augury, but few would admit to it; furthermore, neither do they receive any special recognition. In such longhouses, their members would normally search outside for such a person to lead them in important *gawai*.

#### **B. The Penghulu: A Regional Institution**

The institution of *penghulu* was created during the reign of the second Rajah, Charles Brooke.<sup>43</sup> It was hoped that the *penghulu* would exert authority over many longhouses. The creation of the position of *penghulu* might be seen as a stabilising factor for the authority of the *tuai rumah*. Instead of longhouse residents

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<sup>42</sup> *Enda bisa*: *enda* -not; *bisa* -powerful, forceful (referring to individual potential in extracting or soliciting something).

<sup>43</sup> See Pringle, 1970, *op cit*, p.33.

resisting and challenging the *tuai rumah*'s decisions in disputes, whenever they were discontented, thereby undermining the headman's authority, now they had a higher authority to whom they could appeal. The division of authority between a *penghulu* and the *tuai rumah* was defined by the gravity of fines that would be incurred with respect to litigations.<sup>44</sup>

Like the *tuai rumah* and other leaders in the Iban community, the *penghulus*, who were appointed by the Rajahs, had also been self-made men. They were individuals who had been pioneers, who had demonstrated prowess in warfare, leadership abilities, oratorical skills, and had been blessed with the necessary dreams.<sup>45</sup> Bearing in mind the above prescribed characteristics and Brooke intentions, it was the normal practice of the Rajahs to try to keep the offices of the *penghulu* within close kin circles, usually passing the post between fathers and sons or sons-in-law<sup>46</sup> and so on down the line. Nevertheless, this was not always possible, because the power of men was also determined by individual charisma, success and bravery. The Brookes intended that the *penghulu* would act as the intermediary between the government and the people; in effect he became a

<sup>44</sup> In the 1950s, the fine limit for a *tuai rumah* was six *mungkuls* (which is equivalent to M\$6.00), see Freeman, 1970, op cit, p.110; later, Jensen, 1974, op cit, p.25 puts the limit at M\$16.00; see also A.J.N. Richards (compiler) (1963). *Dayak Adat Law in the Second Division*. Kuching: Gov't Printing Office.

<sup>45</sup> Sandin, 1962b, op cit.

<sup>46</sup> Pringle, 1970, op cit, p.158.

government agent. Among the duties of the *penghulus* were settling disputes that were referred to them and also accompanying government officials in their travels through Iban country under their respective jurisdictions (*pegai*).

*Penghulus* were appointed by the Residents of a given Division, subject to the approval of the Rajah. The appointment of a *penghulu* was normally done in consultation with the various longhouses within the jurisdiction of that particular post. Subsequently, during Rajah Vyner Brooke's reign, *penghulus* were elected by the longhouse headmen.<sup>47</sup> Other than retaining a ten percent commission on door taxes and fines, the *penghulus* were basically non-salaried officials. However, towards the end of the second Rajah's reign, *penghulus* were being given a small monthly salary and only in the third Rajah's reign, were they given monthly salaries in lieu of the commissions they had previously retained.

The persons appointed as *penghulus* had been leaders who were successful in helping the Brookes put down rebellions against the government. The appointment was, in a sense, a reward for their services as well as recognition of their prestige as successful warleaders. They were then given authority over those Ibans from the various longhouses which they had led in successful war expeditions. Pringle related how Munan, a well-known Iban leader who had migrated into the Rejang, was appointed

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<sup>47</sup> Pringle, 1970, *Ibid*, pp.159-60.

*penghulu dalam* (*penghulu* in the inner circle) after proving his worth as a warleader in several government-sponsored headhunting expeditions.<sup>48</sup>

In order to gain a better understanding of the fragile political stratification of the Iban, the position of the *penghulu* must also be viewed within the wider context of traditional regional leadership; formerly the warleaders (*tuai kayau* [*ngayau*]) were able to exert some influence over several longhouses. However rudimentary this form of association, it must be acknowledged that *tuai kayau* had been successful in bringing together scattered groups of Ibans for warfare; *ngayau*, though not a permanent arrangement, demonstrated that longhouses could cooperate with one another periodically and that political organisation could be extended beyond the local community.

Thus, the observation that there was some sort of political order above the longhouse might seem to contradict long-established notions that Ibans had no leadership or ordered associations above the local level. Freeman<sup>49</sup> mentioned briefly a loose 'tribal' organisation, based on interlocking kindred networks within a river basin, although Pringle<sup>50</sup> saw this as a very weak system

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<sup>48</sup> Pringle, 1970, *Ibid*, pp.178-86; Despite the earlier government ban on further Iban migrations, Munan was granted permission to migrate to Sibu in the Rejang with as many followers as chose to move with him.

<sup>49</sup> Freeman, 1955a, *op cit*, p.31.

<sup>50</sup> Pringle, 1970, *op cit*, p.31.

of order because riverine Ibans were frequently at war with one another. In his fascination with the well ordered stratification system of the Sarawak Kayans, Rousseau<sup>51</sup> might have over-emphasised the coherence of the Iban supra-local political order, and Freeman<sup>52</sup> has been severely critical of Rousseau's view. But it is clear that one is able to discern a traditional political organisation above that of the longhouse. The fact that the Brooke government created a formal regional political institution should not lead us to assume that this was completely novel for the Ibans, since they already had a loosely defined regional system, comprising the warleaders. Sandin's account using *tusut* was relatively elaborate on those warleaders who had led their followers into Sarawak and who had opened up new land (*mubok menua*) to settlement. These men, as Sandin related, were powerful, for they could command and were readily followed. A good example is Manggi, a pioneer who had led his men into Tisak, in Batang Skrang; he ordered his followers to kill Jelapi, a *manang* (medicine man) whom he had accused of using charms to cause the death of his daughter.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> J. Rousseau (1980). "Iban Inequality", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 136, pp.52-63.

<sup>52</sup> Freeman, 1981, op cit. In fact Freeman's article was a rebuttal of Rousseau who, according to Freeman, had not done any fieldwork on the Iban and therefore his observations were "far-fetched" based on a "superficiality of knowledge about the Ibans".

<sup>53</sup> Sandin, 1967a, op cit, p.10.

Through the incantations (*timang*) of the *lemambang* (bards) in the various stages of *gawai*, the names and deeds of these courageous pioneers and warleaders were often recited in praise of the individual who was holding the ceremony, so that he too would attain the heights of such heroes. In the eyes of the Ibans, these leaders were their *raja berani* (wealthy and brave: wealthy by securing bountiful harvests and brave by having been pioneers and successful in headhunting). Thus these *raja berani* became political role models for Iban men to follow, emulate and, if possible, surpass.

The adulation of these *raja berani* was also coupled with deep respect as well as fear of their achievements, since their success meant that they had the favours of the *petaras*. However, relations of respect and deference did not always necessarily mean that the *raja berani* had the power of life and death over ordinary Ibans. But they certainly did have some influence and decision-making abilities, subject to *adat*.

The possession of a distinctive *adat* is perhaps the most important and undisputable unifying factor among Ibans, irrespective of where they live. The early study of Ibans as a single coherent and homogeneous group had been made difficult because of the several divisions among them, the hostilities between regions or river systems, reinforced by Brooke use of Iban mercenaries from certain areas to subdue others, and by their high rate of mobility in search of new land. Except for minor

variations in the methods of restitution for wrongdoing, the *adat* is relatively uniform among all Ibans with regard to what are permitted and prohibited patterns of behaviour and action.<sup>54</sup> All Ibans direct their lives to the same *petaras* and the same *antu*. Thus, the *adat* defines what is and is not allowed; even the *raja berani* were not exempt, but perhaps they were revered because their prestige and position were founded on their profound subservience to the *adat*.

In addition to the *penghulu*, there were also various other titled positions which also qualified as regional institutions. They comprise *Temenggong*, *Orang Kaya*, *Pemanca*, *Datu*, *Datu Patinggi* and *Panglima*.<sup>55</sup> But in the pre-Brooke times, these titles had been given in an *ad hoc* way by the Brunei Sultanate to various warleaders without due consideration to regional integration. Although not all of the above titles persisted during the Brooke Raj, some, especially *Penghulu*, *Pemanca* and *Temenggong*, continued to be awarded to acknowledge warfaring abilities and success in promoting regional integration.

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<sup>54</sup> Since 1973, efforts have been undertaken by the Majlis Adat Istiadat under the Chief Minister's Office to list and standardise *adat* and fines; the draft of the Iban Adat Law (previously known as *Tusun Tunggu*) is in process of being printed after its approval by the Council Negeri, *Beritan Harian*, 25 July 1990.

<sup>55</sup> See Sandin, 1967a, *op cit*, Appendix B: The Genealogies.

### C. Party Leadership: A Supra-regional Institution

While the Brooke efforts in uniting Ibans through the creation of a regional institution met with limited success, there was a total absence of a similar effort in forging Iban unity at the supra-regional level. Neither did the Colonial government attempt to unite Ibans across various Divisional boundaries. The first effort at supra-regional integration represented an exclusively Iban initiative through the formation of SNAP in 1961. But even in SNAP, the aim was initially confined to the Saribas area; subsequently PESAKA was formed in 1962 to represent the Ibans in the Rejang area.

Since much of the discussion of party leadership is to be found in the section on Iban political experience, I shall focus briefly here on the concept of "supra-regional institution". I am using the term to refer specifically to superior positions, which represent the apex of the Iban leadership structure.<sup>56</sup> The formation of Iban or Iban-dominated political parties can be seen as moves towards the creation of such leadership positions. Although in the initial formation of SNAP and PESAKA, recruitment was confined to the Second and Third Divisions respectively, they, nevertheless, showed that there was some success in forging supra-regional integration. But since independence, the movement towards

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<sup>56</sup> This superior position may be seen as the equivalent of the traditional position of the Sultan in the traditional Malay states, which united various Malay groups each under the control of regional leaders.



forging an overall unity for all Ibans in one political institution has had mixed fortunes. This can be seen from the pattern of support based on the number of Iban seats that the Iban-dominated SNAP and PBDS secured in elections. If Iban unity and supra-regional leadership can be measured by the numbers of Iban seats a single party managed to win, then modern Iban politics can be said to be characterised by a cyclical pattern, whereby there were periods in which the divided Ibans became united. The divided political support which Ibans gave to various political parties in the 1960s was later integrated behind SNAP in the mid-1970s. This pattern was later repeated, when in the early 1980s, Iban political unity in SNAP was eroded; but the disintegrating effect of the formation of PBDS in the early 1980s was compensated for by the rise of its popularity among the Ibans by the mid-1980s.

#### D. Summary

In terms of leadership structure, traditional Iban patterns can be said to comprise two levels. Within the two levels, there are several leadership positions with varying influence and power. The first level comprises the *bilik*-family and the longhouse, and the second consists of the *penghulu*, *pemanca* and *temenggong*.<sup>57</sup> The basic difference in the leadership positions within the

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<sup>57</sup> A *penghulu* is appointed for several longhouses, a *pemanca* for every administrative district, and a *temenggong* for every Division; *Briefing Notes*, District Office, Sri Aman, undated.

two political hierarchies is the degree to which their power and influence are felt by longhouse individuals. In this respect, the *tuai bilik* is probably the most influential position as far as individuals are concerned. This is particularly so because there is a clearly defined power relationship between the constituent members based on *adat*.

Although the positions of the *tuai rumah*, and especially the *penghulu*, *pemanca* and *temenggong* are further removed from the individual, this does not mean that their influence and authority are insignificant. While the *adat* did not traditionally provide for the categorisation of power and authority of the *penghulu*, *pemanca* and *temenggong*, the institutionalisation of the *adat* that began during the Brooke Raj clearly demarcated the political spheres in which they had jurisdiction. This has been further enhanced by the recent codification and standardisation of the Iban *Adat Law*, which has also been the subject of legislation in the DUN. Although the extent of their power depends on the *adat* and their personal leadership qualities, the legislation of the *adat* means that even the weakest of these leaders can rely on formal authority to back their decisions.

Since the Brookes first introduced the institution of *penghulu* in order to provide a regional leadership, there have been a number of changes, the most important being the politicisation of *penghuluship* (as well as that of *pemanca* and *temenggongship*). All, except the *tuai*

*rumah*, receive a monthly remuneration from the government. Unlike the Brooke period when the Resident of a Division had the power to recommend the appointments of these leaders, nowadays, local politicians (from the ruling coalition) exercise considerable influence in making these recommendations to the government.

In addition to *tuai rumah*, *penghulu*, *pemanca* and *temenggong*, today there is also a group of councillors. Like *penghulus*, councillors are appointed to serve at the District level as members of a local Council. Although the councillors can be traced back to Brooke days, it was not until the Colonial period that their office was clearly defined in terms of functions and appointments.<sup>58</sup> It was in the 1963 District Council elections that they last exercised a significant degree of power, when they formed an electoral college to elect members of the Divisional Advisory Council. With the introduction of direct elections to the Council Negeri and Parliament, their positions became merely nominated ones. Today, they function as a link between the people in their respective Districts and the government. In this respect, their roles resemble those of other traditional leaders, but they differ in several important aspects. Councillors are members of an administrative unit--the District Council. They are not salaried, but receive allowances when attending Council meetings. Councillors are usually

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<sup>58</sup> Ian Morrison (1949). "Local Self-Government in Sarawak", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. XXII, No. 2, (June), pp. 178-85.

allocated a specified amount of development monies that they can use in carrying out minor development projects within their respective areas.

In addition to discussing the two levels of Iban traditional political hierarchies, there is also the need to consider a third level, the supra-regional leadership, which has emerged as a result of Iban involvement in party politics and which I shall consider in more detail in subsequent chapters.

Despite strong Iban devotion to their *adat*, it has failed to promote a high degree of political unity beyond the longhouse level (see discussion later). In addition, supra-regional integration within one political party has been restricted. Instead, there are many regional and supra-regional leaders in the many localities inhabited by Ibans. This disunity is also further worsened by differences in Iban socio-economic backgrounds, which had their origin in the Brooke and Colonial periods (see the economic chapter). It is with this background in mind that the problems and possibilities of Iban national political identity must be viewed and to which I now turn.

## **V. Iban Political Experience**

The basic problem underlying the discussion of Iban political experience, especially in the pre-Brooke period, has been impaired by limitations in the conventional definition of the kinds of activity that

constitute "political actions". This is clearly highlighted by Leigh, who observed that, at the time of independence, "For almost all who can be called Dayak, political activity was a completely new sphere".<sup>59</sup> The above conclusion tells us two things: first, Leigh did not put into proper perspective Iban leadership experience in the pioneering and Brooke periods; and secondly, he adopts a limited frame of reference in defining what should constitute political action. He appears to have defined it solely in terms of the Western-derived concept of a political system, in which there is an organised party, elections, democratic institutions and a well-defined constitution.<sup>60</sup>

In my opinion, defining political action in the broadest sense possible serves better to understand early Iban society. In my view, political action should encompass all activity which arises from power relations between individuals. Based on this definition and my preceding description of Iban leadership, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Ibans did enjoy some political experience even before the Brooke and the Colonial periods. In the pioneering period, this experience can be seen from numerous planned *pindah* (migration) or *mubok menua*, *ngayau* or *bejalai* in which Ibans had been led by successful leaders, who displayed

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<sup>59</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.7.

<sup>60</sup> The imposition of Western-defined models constitutes one of the serious shortcomings in understanding non-Western societies, which was highlighted in the developmental approach in Chapter 1.

significant wisdom in strategy and diplomacy. These successes led to their recognition not only within their own society but outside, because several renowned leaders had been "ennobled" by the Brunei Sultanate.<sup>61</sup>

Hence, to label Ibans as not having had any political experience before independence is to dismiss the significance of pioneering activity and the implications of this for modern Iban political behaviour. The coming of the Brookes, the granting of Crown Colony status to Sarawak and then Sarawak's subsequent independence were all part of a continuing process of change that moulded the political process among the Ibans.

#### **A. Iban Political Experience during Brooke and Colonial Rule**

During Brooke rule, Iban political activities were still very much confined to Brooke-sanctioned war expeditions, in which successful warleaders were rewarded by being appointed *penghulu*, *temenggong* or to serve in various nominal positions in the government.<sup>62</sup> The process of institutionalisation of the Iban regional leadership began when Charles Brooke started naming Ibans for the

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<sup>61</sup> Sandin, 1967a, op cit.

<sup>62</sup> For example, Koh anak Jubang was appointed *penghulu* and later *temenggong* for, among other things, his services to the Rajahs, Steven Runciman (1960). *The White Rajahs: A History of Sarawak from 1841-1946*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.238.

post of *penghulu* in 1855.<sup>63</sup> The Rajah chose men who had been successful pioneers and warleaders, and to encourage these positions to be later conferred upon their direct descendants. By doing so the Rajah had hoped to reinforce existing regional leadership as a stable political institution.

Thus, Ibans who were appointed to administer and represent their people in the Brooke government, can be categorised overall as *raja berani*. Munan, for instance, who was appointed *penghulu dalam*, was generally recognised as the Iban leader of the Sibu or lower Rejang area, although he had migrated from the Saribas. In the Saribas, the Rajah had ruled through two leading families, namely those of Dana and Bunyau.<sup>64</sup> The title of *Orang Kaya Pemanca*,<sup>65</sup> which was conferred on Dana, was passed on to his son, Nanang, who, in turn, was succeeded by his son, Insol.

It was also characteristic of former Iban regional leadership that it was dominated by family members of the *raja berani*. Iban scholars such as Sandin, Freeman, Pringle and Runciman have noted these tendencies.<sup>66</sup> They

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<sup>63</sup> But it was Hugh Brooke Low, then Resident of the Third Division, who first conferred the title officially in 1883, Pringle, 1970, p.157; see also *Sarawak Gazette*, 212, 1 September 1883.

<sup>64</sup> Pringle, 1970, op cit, pp.154-55.

<sup>65</sup> *Orang Kaya Pemanca*--literally, *orang kaya* means a rich person, while *Pemanca* is derived from the word *panca(r)*, which means to radiate (i.e. light [or figuratively "authority"]).

<sup>66</sup> Sandin, 1967a, op cit; Freeman, 1970, op cit; Pringle, 1970, op cit; and, Runciman, 1960, op cit.

were clearly demonstrated in Sandin's<sup>67</sup> tusut of earlier pioneers and warleaders, and confirmed in the contemporary leadership of the Baleh region, which has been dominated by one famous family, that of *Temenggong Koh anak Jubang*.<sup>68</sup>

The institutionalisation of regional leaders during Brooke rule was an ongoing process. As we have seen, well before the Brookes, various Iban warleaders had been receiving titles<sup>69</sup> but in contrast to the Brooke era, these titles, which were given to famous warleaders, did not extend the authority of those upon whom they were bestowed. They simply remained titles of esteem. However, during the Brooke era, some famous warleaders, who were given these titles, very frequently were also made agents of government with some authority over certain administrative Divisions. They were made collectors of door taxes (*pupu pintu/taun*) and other fines, and judges for minor civil and criminal cases, responsible also for mustering armies when needed by the Rajah. When the

<sup>67</sup> See Sandin, 1967a, op cit., see for instance Appendix B: Genealogy 6, 9, 10, and 11.

<sup>68</sup> Refer to the *Sarawak Museum Journal*, July/December 1970, pp.145-49; also quoted in Searle, 1983, op cit, p.109, figure 3.

<sup>69</sup> I noted that, in Sandin's genealogies, the title *Penghulu* occurred frequently but only much more recently, coinciding with the Brooke era, see Sandin, 1967a, op cit, pp.77-80 and Appendix B: Genealogy. In the pre-Brooke period, such titles were conferred on Ibans by Malays, acting as agents of the Brunei Sultanate; Sandin also described how Iban contacts with the coastal Malays had led to their ennoblement by the Malays; Sandin also described how Mujah, one of the early pioneers in the Julau area, had been decorated with the Malay title "Penglina" by Sharif Masahor, after Mujah successfully established himself and his followers against the earlier settlers of Julau.



second Rajah relaxed his autocratic grip, the government of Sarawak utilised some of these titled war or regional leaders to sit on the various advisory bodies.

Throughout much of the Brooke and colonial periods, very little time or thought were devoted to redirecting the energies of the headhunting Ibans. The suppression of headhunting and the pacification of the Ibans by the early 1940s were not coupled with any constructive alternatives. The first Rajah was happy to leave the Ibans as they were, "happy savages in happy, savage surroundings".<sup>70</sup> Thus, very little was done to help the Ibans adjust to the new world in which they were later to find themselves.

In the Brooke government, the Ibans played relatively limited and insignificant roles compared to the Malays of aristocratic origin. While the erection of forts may be seen as the first Iban contact with Brooke government, these contacts were essentially to establish government domination over the natives. Europeans or local Malay officers were appointed to administer certain geographical Divisions focussed on strategic fortifications.<sup>71</sup> Schools were built but catered mostly for the aristocratic Malays, who were being prepared to

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<sup>70</sup> C.D. Dawson. Private Paper. 7 November 1950. (typescript); also quoted by Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.33.

<sup>71</sup> Forts were established as a means to suppress Iban headhunting and raiding. They were erected at the Skrang river in 1850, Lingga/Batang Layar 1852, Betong, (Saribas) 1858, Kabong/Krian Rivers 1865 and Lubok Antu/Batang Lupar in 1868; Pringle, 1970, op cit.

serve in the lowest echelons of Brooke government, the Native Officers Corp.<sup>72</sup> Education among the Ibans was left entirely to missions, the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which operated in the Second Division, and the Roman Catholic Church in the Third Division.

The Brooke Rajahs justified their exclusion of the Ibans from development and government by stating that it was their policy to preserve local customs, traditions and ways of life.<sup>73</sup> Their perception of socio-economic and political change was that it should not be antagonistic to the policy of preservation, and therefore change should be controlled and selective. The second Rajah's attitude towards educating Ibans is well summarised by Pringle:<sup>74</sup> "teaching Dayak to read and write in any language, even their own, would be tantamount to destroying their particular genius ...", which in the Rajah's mind could not be learned in school.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Pringle, 1970, *Ibid*, pp.138-39.

<sup>73</sup> By 1941, there were only three Iban native officers: Francis Ansin, Bennett Jarrow, and Michael Sadin, in spite of the recommendation contained in the Le Gros Clarke Report to bring more Ibans into the government services, see R.H.W. Reece (1982). *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp.138-39.

<sup>74</sup> Pringle, 1970, *op cit*, p.139; see also Reece, 1982, *op cit*, pp.43-44; Reece summarised the philosophy of Rajah Vyner Brooke as essentially one of "resisting change and preserving peace and harmony" which meant "compartmentalising the Ibans, Malays and the Chinese and slowing down the pace of economic development".

<sup>75</sup> *Sarawak Gazette*, 321, 1 October 1892.

However, there were a number of activities among the Ibans preceding independence which are relevant to the later period of party politics, despite Iban isolation from many of the major changes in Sarawak. First was the cooperative movement among the Ibans of the Paku, Rimbas and Krian rivers in the Second Division in the late 1930s. This movement gave birth to the first Iban trading company--the Dayak Co-operative Society,<sup>76</sup> which was re-established as the Sea Dayak United Company after the war. The development of the cooperative was due to two self-reinforcing factors. First, the fall of commodity prices, especially the price of rubber, severely affected many Iban smallholders who had increasingly become dependent on rubber cultivation. And secondly, the adversity caused by falling rubber prices was aggravated by the high prices of provisions that they had to purchase from Chinese traders. Thus, in October 1939, the Ibans of Paku and Rimbas began purchasing their provisions directly from Kuching in order to avoid having to pay higher prices to the local Chinese.<sup>77</sup> In 1938, J.H. Chambai, Manggai, and Langi toured the Ulu Paku, Rimbas, and Krian rivers to raise capital for an Iban trading company. By 1941, sufficient pledges had been obtained and a share capital of M\$20,000 collected.<sup>78</sup> Reece<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Reece, 1982, op cit, pp.137-38.

<sup>77</sup> This was reported by the Resident of the Second Division in *Sarawak Gazette*, 1 December 1939.

<sup>78</sup> See Reece, 1982, op cit, pp.137-38, citing the Bay (Eliab Bayang) Papers, 23 March 1949.

observed that the significance of the cooperative movement was the high level of "communal solidarity" in the face of stiff competition from the Chinese traders, whereby members agreed not to float any potentially competing trading company without first obtaining the Cooperative's approval. Secondly, there were some Ibans who had been educated in the mission schools and employed in the government services. These Ibans formed the nucleus of the Iban community in the Kuching area. Most were related to one another, and their descendants had migrated from the Kumpang Valley to the Second Division and had been associated with the Brooke government.

Thirdly, there were community development schemes, the most successful of which was at Budu, under the zealous John Wilson,<sup>80</sup> which in Wilson's words created the Budu "elites". Between 1951 and 1963, about 13 community development projects were implemented throughout Sarawak.<sup>81</sup> Among the Ibans, these projects included the Adult Literacy Scheme: Paku-Saribas (1950);<sup>82</sup> the Rural Improvement School, Kanowit (1951-57);<sup>83</sup> the multi-purpose

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<sup>79</sup> Reece, 1982, op cit, pp.137-38.

<sup>80</sup> For a comprehensive account of Wilson's success story see, Wilson, 1969, op cit.

<sup>81</sup> "Community Development in Sarawak", *Sarawak Gazette*, Vol.LXXXVII, No.1238, 30 April 1961, pp.57-59.

<sup>82</sup> A straightforward literacy campaign; its success was hampered by lack of interest among the target group; *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> The basic aim was to provide training in modern and efficient farming methods and home crafts to selected pupils, who, in turn, would return to their community to introduce these changes; see also *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, Ibid.

development scheme: Budu (1953-64),<sup>84</sup> Entabai (1957-63)<sup>85</sup> and the Iban Teams (1959-63);<sup>86</sup> Rural Home Craft Instructors (1957-60); Lubok Antu (Lemanak) Scheme (1961-63),<sup>87</sup> and the Survey of Nutrition.<sup>88</sup>

Of the three developments above, the spread of education is related, in part, to the rise of party politics among the Ibans in the post-independent period. As we shall discover later, the first Iban political party was formed by certain Ibans who had acquired some level of education.

#### **B. Iban Political Experience in the Post-Independence Period**

Modern political experiences had been few and far between, although they should not be left aside as having no significance whatsoever. To all intents and purposes,

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<sup>84</sup> The approach in Budu was integrated development--i.e. education for the young, in addition to adult, vocational training, instilling proper sanitation habits and cooperative activities in developing the local school, dispensary and rural cooperative society; *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, *Ibid*; see also Wilson, 1969, *op cit*.

<sup>85</sup> The scheme followed the pattern developed in Budu.

<sup>86</sup> This represented an attempt to spread the Budu/Entabai-type of community development by carefully selecting eight individuals--to be trained at the Budu and Entabai centres--who would then be assigned to manage eight specially selected areas.

<sup>87</sup> A recently conceived idea, the scheme was implemented for Iban in the "transition area"--situated mid-way between the country and town; therefore the target group differed from Budu, which was isolated from the influences of the town.

<sup>88</sup> A preliminary study was carried out in Budu to ascertain whether a general survey on nutritional needs could be undertaken in Community Development Centres; *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, *op cit*.

these three developments (cooperative development, the spread of education and community development schemes) were insufficient to act as a catalyst for the overall mobilisation of the Ibans into the new arena of politics. Each of them was a remarkable success in itself but unfortunately they did not trigger any similar developments in other parts of Iban country. Thus, most Ibans were left, as the Rajahs wished, fragmented and alienated, each with their own *raja berani* who, by the time of the establishment of a Crown Colony in 1946, were disadvantaged in the transition to modern politics. It is clear that many of the later political problems among the Ibans, more especially their unity, can be attributed to some of these historical experiences.

Therefore, it is fair to say that when the proposal for the incorporation of Sarawak into the Federation of Malaysia was forced upon the communities there, the Ibans were not well prepared politically. For the past hundred years the Ibans had become dependants of the Rajahs, who had acted as protectors of their interests, as these were perceived by the Brookes. The political and leadership experiences of the Ibans had been different from those which were necessary for the post-colonial, independence period. Undoubtedly there were many *raja berani* whose leadership qualities were impeccable. They had been excellent warleaders, in raids in which there can be only one winner, and in which victory was measured by the total submission and humiliation of one's opponents.

Thus, their perception of politics had been formed in the experience of war. Such was the background of Iban political experience and it was this which guided their politicking into the earlier years of the independence period.

On the eve of the birth of the Federation of Malaysia, Iban politics was dominated by two types of *raja berani*. The first group comprised the traditional warleaders or their direct descendants, who had been conferred the various titles of *temenggong* and *penghulu*. The second group consisted of the "new leaders" who were self-made men in the new environment, away from the life of the jungle and the excitement of warfaring. These were the Ibans who had received some education and had assumed some position in government and the private services. They had also undertaken *bejalai* outside their own area, some to Malaya, Singapore and Brunei.

In the early 1960s before Malaysia, two Iban political parties emerged. The first, SNAP was dominated by the characteristically new Iban leaders, the self-made men in the new environment. In order to have a clearer picture of these new leaders, it is useful to examine the characteristics of four founder members of SNAP. These were J.S. Tinker, Edward Howell, Lionell Bediman, and Stephen Kalong Ningkan.<sup>89</sup> All had gone on *bejalai*, worked outside the traditional economy of farming, and remote

<sup>89</sup> J.S. Tinker, founder President; Edward Howell and Lionell Bediman, founder Vice-Presidents; and Stephen Kalong Ningkan, founder Secretary-General.

from the experience of headhunting expeditions, and had obtained some degree of education. Tinker had been educated at Sabu (Betong), in the Second Division and had worked with Shell in Brunei before entering government service in Kuching, where he served as District Officer during the Japanese Occupation. Edward Howell had been educated at St. Andrew's (Betong) and the Raffles Institution, Singapore, and had also worked for Brunei Shell, while Lionell Bediman, who came from a prominent Saribas family, had been on *bejalai* to Malaya and Singapore and had worked for the Food Control Department in Betong during the Japanese Occupation before joining Brunei Shell. Kalong Ningkan had been a hospital assistant in Brunei Shell, after leaving the police service in the Third Division where he was stationed in the Kapit District during the Japanese Occupation. These Ibans were predominantly from the Second Division, long open to modernising influences from Anglican missionary activities, education and a money economy.

In contrast to SNAP, PESAKA was more traditional in outlook. It was led by traditional *raja berani* and their descendants who had been conferred titles. Unlike SNAP, which was formed from the initiative of the Iban themselves, PESAKA was formed at the encouragement of an expatriate officer who saw that the Rejang Ibans were largely fragmented in the face of impending Sarawak independence within the Federation of Malaysia.<sup>90</sup> As it

<sup>90</sup> Refer to, *Sarawak Tribune*, 18 June and 20 July 1962.



was, much persuasion was needed to coax *Temenggong Jugah* to leave PANAS, which he had joined and where he had been the Vice-Chairman, and to lead PESAKA as its founder President. Among the other founder members were *Penghulu Masam anak Radin*, *Tr. Francis Bujang anak Manja*, *Penghulu Francis Umpau*, *Pengarah Banyang*, all from Kanowit, and *Penghulu Chundi anak Resa* of Aup, Sibu. In addition to these, some other influential founder members, though junior, were the characteristically new Iban leaders, such as Jonathan Bangau, who was a school teacher and an enterprising businessman. In fact, *Penghulu Francis Umpau* and his brother-in-law, Francis Bujang, had been school teachers themselves.

Although the historical cleavage between the Second and Third Division Ibans was a known fact, as Leigh<sup>91</sup> has rightly asserted, nevertheless the electoral pact between SNAP and PESAKA and the subsequent electoral result obtained by the respective parties during the 1963 election, cannot fully support such a contention. Table 2.1 (Appendix C) shows SNAP and PESAKA councillors elected during the 1963 three-tier election.

Whatever historical cleavages that had existed between the Second and the Third Division Ibans, which supposedly corresponded to the emergence of SNAP and PESAKA, these had been overcome to some extent by the time the Alliance party was formed preceding the 1963 election and independence. Both SNAP and PESAKA were

<sup>91</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, pp.32-39.

constituent parties of the Sarawak Alliance. The result of the election was clear. SNAP had elected councillors drawn exclusively from the First and Second Divisions, while PESAKA-elected councillors were exclusively from the Third Division.<sup>92</sup> However, this should not be taken as absolute proof of the historical cleavage, since both SNAP and PESAKA were in the Alliance, and the allocation of seats in the contest had been jointly determined and decided. SNAP concentrated on the First and Second Divisions and PESAKA on the Third Division. Thus, the election results cannot be taken as conclusive evidence as to whether the Ibans of the two areas had in fact voted on the basis of these regional considerations. Had SNAP and PESAKA fought each other in all Iban-dominated District Councils, which would have been a better test of regional support, then the electoral result would most probably have been broadly indicative of such a split, but in my view it would not have been absolute.

Furthermore, it was the combined strength of SNAP and PESAKA that had enabled the Saribas Iban and SNAP's Stephen Kalong Ningkan to become the first Chief Minister. At the time, it might have been expected that a PESAKA man would have become Chief Minister because, among the Alliance partners, PESAKA had the most seats in

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<sup>92</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.70. The total 48 elected councillors of SNAP were drawn from the First Division (11), Second Division (26), Fourth Division (10) and Fifth Division (one); while PESAKA's 43 were drawn from the Third Division (42) and Fourth Division (one).

the Council Negeri.<sup>93</sup> The fact that a compromise could be reached between these supposedly hostile groups of Ibans should have dispelled the view that the historical cleavage played a significant role at that time in shaping the political attitudes of the Second and Third Division Iban political leaders, though it played some role in Iban politics.

If there was any lesson that came out of the 1963 election, it was probably that the Iban attitude to politics was marked by its flexibility and adaptability. Despite the immaturity of the process of political institutionalisation started by the Brookes, the Ibans had been quick to adjust and adapt to modern politicking, which was a trademark of their earlier leadership experiences. In raiding, if one war party could not defeat the other, it was not unthinkable to establish an alliance between the two warring parties. Consequently the relationship between the two contending leaders might be cemented in ceremonies, where they would adopt each other as friends or brothers (*be-ambu kaban, be-ambu madi*).<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> The determining factor of legislative strength was the number of Council Negeri seats held; among the Alliance partners, Pesaka had 11 Council Negeri seats, SNAP six, BARJASA five and SCA one. The councillors that were elected formed the electoral college, which elected from among themselves the Divisional Advisory Councils; the DACs in turn elected members of the CN.

<sup>94</sup> See Sandin, 1967a, op cit, pp.18-20. Sandin related how the Iban warleader Tindin of Ulu Enteban met a Bukitan chief Entingi of Paku. They started fighting but could not kill each other for both, after revealing their *ensumbar* (nicknames), were favoured by Kumang, a female legendary heroine. So they went their separate ways. Later after learning that Paku was a very fertile land, Tindin launched an attack on Paku against Entingi. During the

Although the Brooke government had previously compartmentalised the various riverine Ibans under various Brooke-decorated war or regional leaders without overarching supra-regional leaders, this compartmentalisation did not produce insurmountable problems for the immediate post-colonial period, especially during the 1963 election. It must be understood that SNAP and PESAKA evolved from the efforts of two entirely different types of Iban leaders--traditional and new men. But even in PESAKA itself, with the exception of *Temenggong Jugah*, it is doubtful whether the other traditional *raja berani* had themselves been engaged in any headhunting, except perhaps some military experience during the Japanese Occupation. Thus, the use of the term "traditional" here refers only to the fact that titles were held by those leaders, rather than suggesting that this office implies the performance of any heroic acts. It must be noted that headhunting had been suppressed during the previous reign of Rajah Charles Brooke.<sup>95</sup>

The only link, if any, of the new Iban leaders in SNAP to the traditional *raja berani* was by descent. But, unlike PESAKA's *raja berani*, they had not been conferred

course of the fighting and after some of their warriors had been killed, Entingi called Tindin by the Bukitan word *Isan*, which was used in Iban to refer to parents of two children who were married. In the ensuing conversation, Tindin and Entingi agreed to offer their daughter and son respectively in marriage, and consequently to settle their quarrel peacefully.

<sup>95</sup> Ulla Wagner (1972). *Colonialism and Iban Warfare*. Stockholm: OBE-Tryck Sthlm, pp.147-74.

such coveted titles. These new leaders had also been self-made and mobile men in their new environment. They had made their mark in education, which had brought them good jobs. Because of their education and their search for employment, they had also embarked on *bejalai*. In a sense they were also pioneers because they were among the first from their community to have attained such positions. The hostilities between the Second and the Third Divisions during the early Brooke era were quite detached from the two groups of Iban leaders. Thus, the animosity of the Brooke period did not hamper political cooperation between the traditional *raja berani* of PESAKA and the new Iban leaders of SNAP, respectively, who had different backgrounds and experiences.

### C. Summary

From the preceding discussion on Iban political experience, it is evident that there were significant political activities among the pioneers, who became prominent regional and supra-regional leaders. However, the difference between the pioneering and later political experiences was in the arena in which those activities were carried out: the former mainly in warfaring expeditions and the latter in the Brooke government. In the later period, it represented mainly the absorption of some traditional leaders who were being appointed into positions within the Brooke Raj.

The importance of portraying the early political experience of the Ibans lies not so much in refuting earlier observations that Ibans were politically inexperienced but on discovering specific cultural values, in particular a political culture, that has helped mould their behaviour in power relations. It is these cultural values that have shaped their orientations and reactions to the outside world. Having discussed the traditional institution of leadership and the formative political experiences of the Iban, it is appropriate that attention should now turn to an examination of their political culture.

## VI. Iban Political Culture

Various meanings of political culture have been offered by different scholars.<sup>96</sup> Almond defines political culture as a "particular orientation to political action";<sup>97</sup> later, he revised it to mean the "distribution of patterns of orientation".<sup>98</sup> There again Rosenbaum defines it as the basic psychological orientation of an individual or groups of individuals towards the essential elements in their political system.<sup>99</sup> Despite the

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<sup>96</sup> Stephen Chilton (1988). "Defining Political Culture", *Western Political Quarterly*, 41(3), (September), pp.419-45.

<sup>97</sup> Gabriel Almond (1956). "Comparative Political Systems", *Journal of Politics*, 18, pp.391-409.

<sup>98</sup> G. Almond and S. Verba (1963). *The Civic Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<sup>99</sup> Walter A. Rosenbaum (1975). *Political Culture*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, pp.3-5.

diversity of definitions, one common feature among them is that they address the way in which individuals deal with and respond to the symbols, institutions and rules that constitute the fundamental political order in their society.

To discuss what constitutes Iban political culture, it is first necessary to discuss the traditional Iban political system, however fluid it may be. A political system might be defined as a system of recurring patterns of interaction involving changes in the equations of power and exchanges of goods and services which these equations entail. Hence, an Iban man who performs a *begawai* ceremony interacts with his fellow men in his political system because the success of these rituals could alter the power relations between him and them. If he does get the desired response from his *petaras*, he may become either a good warrior (*manok sabong*) or even better a warleader (*tuai kayau*), which would place him above ordinary Ibans. In this respect, the *petaras* might be likened to one set of actors in Almond's political conversion process, in other words the legislators; for it is the *petaras* who act upon the ritual performed by the individual by granting or refusing his requests, and therefore providing or withholding outputs or benefits in political terms. However, in another respect the *petaras* differ from Almond's legislators because the former are not a rational element; their acts are, more often than not, unpredictable. Appeasement and offerings might fall

on deaf ears, or those who have done nothing special to elicit their favours might nevertheless receive them.

#### A. The Iban Political System

An attempt to define the Iban political system in concrete terms is a difficult exercise. In the strictest sense of the term, the Ibans do not have a political system, if we adopt the conventional Western-derived concept of a political system comprising recognisable institutions and procedures for the exercise of power and its legitimisation as formal authority. Although there were many kinds of traditional Iban leaders, none were endowed with formal authority to enforce sanctions when there were behavioural deviations.<sup>100</sup>

However, it is still possible to conceptualise the Iban political system in broader terms. In my previous discussion, I have argued that Ibans do have forms of leadership which do entail the exercise of decision-making on behalf of others and which impose a certain order above the level of the *bilik*-family. Furthermore, there are observable recurring patterns of interaction which are defined by and are subject to the *adat*. Although the *adat* does not provide individuals with formal authority, this does not mean that social interactions based on it are any more chaotic than

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<sup>100</sup> This contrasts with the traditional political system of the Malays (of the then Malaya) in which there was a definite institutional structure endowed with formal authority to extract loyalty and ensure conformity; see J.M.Gullick (1958). *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*. London: Athlone.



relations based on formal rules and procedures found in a political system which has recognisable state or governmental institutions. However, clearly there is one missing element in the Iban political system which has an obvious consequence for modern politics, and that is that there was no overall political institution which expressed and promoted the unity of the Iban people as a whole. In the pioneering period, *temenggongship*, which was the highest position bestowed on Iban individuals, was still limited in its scope, in regional terms and in relation to the machinery which the office carried. It was only after independence that there emerged a party leadership which could fill this gap. Nevertheless, to date, it has not been completely successful in integrating the Ibans, as it has been for the Malays/Melanaus or the Chinese.

Having already conceptualised the Iban political system as consisting of three distinct levels of leadership (i.e. *tuai bilik* and *tuai rumah* [the local level], *penghulu* [regional]<sup>101</sup> and a party leader [supra-regional]), it is appropriate to further elaborate the pattern of Iban interactions within that system. For this purpose, I draw upon Almond's model of interaction within a political system. Almond defines a political system as comprising three major interacting components, that is, inputs, processes and outputs.<sup>102</sup> For example, a demand by

<sup>101</sup> Including higher positions of *pemanca* and *temenggong*.

<sup>102</sup> Almond (1965) "A Developmental Approach to Political Systems", *World Politics*, 17(2), (January), pp.183-214.

an individual represents an input, which is then acted upon by legislators (as the second component) and the outcomes of that process provide the third component which could be in the form of either a policy or the implementation of a project.

Iban political interactions can also partly be understood in terms of the Almondian model. But before proceeding to discuss them, it is necessary to point out the fundamental difference between this model and my reconstruction of it in the specific context of Iban politics. The basic difference lies in the "process" and "output" components. With respect to "process", my modified model comprises two basic ingredients as opposed to Almond's one, which is the legislative body; my "process" comprises certain institutions of man as defined by the *adat*, as well as the actions of the *petaras*. With regard to output, the difference lies in the fact that in Almond's model it is backed by formal authority while mine relies on the appeal to the *adat* to extract compliance. The two components of "process" in my modified Almondian model are not mutually exclusive, as the functions of the *petaras* are complementary to the institutions of men. In his account of the interactions between *petaras* and mortals, Sandin relates how the gods had chosen to bestow favours on some future Iban leaders.<sup>103</sup> It is difficult to be precise about the nature of the relationship between the institutions of men and

<sup>103</sup> Sandin, 1962b, op cit.

*petaras* because the actions of the latter are characterised by a high degree of uncertainty: what is certain, at least to the Ibans, is that those who are bestowed favours will outshine others in competition for positions of power.

#### **B. Components of Iban Political Culture**

Political culture is the soul of a political system. It defines rules and procedures by which individuals interact with one another within their political system. Basically, Iban political culture can be defined as that aspect of the *adat*, customs and traditions that maintain patterns of interaction with regard to power relations. Although they are non-formal rules and procedures, there is a high degree of compliance to *adat*, customs and traditions among the Ibans.

Iban society has been described as classless, egalitarian, individualistic, aggressively competitive,<sup>104</sup> and self-sufficient. These value orientations have been shaped by the hostile environment in which the Iban have found themselves and are reinforced through their relative isolation from the outside world. While not much is known about Ibans in the pre-Brooke period, considerable post-Second World War literature based on *tusut* and oral traditions can only trace their historical and socio-cultural experiences back to the fifteenth century and their occupation of the Kumpang valley. This

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<sup>104</sup> Freeman, 1970, op cit, p.129.

known period in Iban evolution also coincided with their aggressive expansion, partly because of increasing Muslim religious hegemony around the west coasts of Borneo and the subsequent attempts to convert Ibans to the Islamic faith, and partly due to the constant need to search for new, fertile land for rice cultivation.

As Iban society experienced increasing contacts with the outside world, first during the Brooke era then by the incorporation of Sarawak into the Federation of Malaysia, these values have slowly been eroded. The sudden transformation of Sarawak politics into modern, party politics represented a formidable challenge for Ibans. The loosely organised Iban regional leadership above the longhouse level had not been fully institutionalised before they were forced to face yet another challenge to unite at the national level. Before analysing the effects of these transformations, discussion of these basic values of Iban political culture is necessary.

#### 1. *Iban Adat*

For the Ibans, *adat* is one of the most important unwritten rules governing proper conduct in any given situation. All aspects of Iban life revolve around observing the *adat*. Yet, it is rather difficult to be precise about what it is that comprises the whole complex called *adat*.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that *adat* deals

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<sup>105</sup> Attempts at understanding *adat* have been concerned, for example, with listing various offences and their related fines;

with proper conduct between individual mortals and also between them and their *petaras*. In that sense, *adat* prescribes the proper ways of maintaining a harmonious balance in society. Transgressions against the *adat* are taken seriously for they not only disturb the harmonious relationship between individuals but also between the temporal and the spiritual worlds. Therefore, individuals who violate the *adat* (*ngelanggar adat*)<sup>106</sup> are made to pay restitutions (*pemali* or *ukum*)<sup>107</sup> in order to restore the balance. The mechanisms of upholding the *adat* are mainly mediated through *tuai rumah*.<sup>108</sup> With the creation of the office of *penghulu*, the guardianship of the *adat* was shared between these two posts.

In the pioneering period, there was no formal authority that could enforce sanctions to support the *adat*. Hence, the *adat* is analogous to natural justice prevailing in a Lockean state of nature;<sup>109</sup> therefore, "an eye for an eye" is one means of recourse to justice in

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see for examples, Richards, 1963, op cit; and Benedict Sandin (1980). *Iban Adat and Augury* (with an Introduction by Clifford Sather). Penang: Universiti Sains Malaysia.

106 Literally "going against the *adat* ways" or, to use Sather's term, *penyalah* (wrongful acts), see Clifford Sather, "Introduction", in B.Sandin (1980). *Iban Adat and Augury*. Penang: Universiti Sains Malaysia, p.xiii.

107 *Ukum* (punishments or fines); but *pemali* more specifically refers to *ukum* that are directed towards ritual restoration of transgression; for gradations of fines, see Sandin, 1980, op cit, pp.3-4.

108 Sandin, 1980, op cit, p.3.

109 See John Locke (1966). *The Second Treatise of Government*. (3rd ed.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

relation to wrongs that have been committed between individuals.<sup>110</sup> But with the coming of the Brookes, this changed. First, Brooke rule provided the formal authority which backed the rule of *adat*. Secondly, some of the "adat-sanctioned" restitutions, which the Brooke government considered to be too harsh, were eliminated, for example, contests such as *bepalu*, *betempoh* and *beselam*.<sup>111</sup> In the Colonial period, there were attempts to codify and standardise the *adat*.<sup>112</sup>

## 2. *Classlessness and Egalitarianism*

According to Freeman,<sup>113</sup> Iban society is classless and egalitarian. Indeed there is no marked social stratification system such as in the caste system of India or the social classes found among the Kayan society of central Borneo.<sup>114</sup> However, this should not lead us to

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<sup>110</sup> Among forms of dispute settlement were, for example, *bepalu* (a private retaliation in which the injured party uses a club) and *betempoh* (a public contest or duel between two individuals using clubs), see Sandin, 1980, *op cit*, pp.8-9, where he described some ordeals in the restitution of wrongs.

<sup>111</sup> A diving contest, in which the victor is the one who stays the longest under water.

<sup>112</sup> See Richards, 1963, *op cit*; the latest was undertaken in 1973 by the Majlis Adat Istiadat under the Chief Minister's Office; it has taken the Council almost 30 years to produce the document, which has finally been presented and approved by the Council Negeri in 1990, as binding upon all Ibans, in addition to the civil law enforced by the state.

<sup>113</sup> Freeman, 1970, *op cit*, p.129.

<sup>114</sup> J. Rousseau (1979). "Kayan Stratification", *Man*, 14, pp.215-36; also (1974); *The Causes Of Stratification Among The Kayans*. Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association Meetings, for the Symposium on the Social Anthropology of Borneo.

assume that all Ibans are basically the same and are equal, because they are not. Iban society may have been egalitarian in theory and principle,<sup>115</sup> but that does not mean that all Ibans possess wealth, power and influence in equal measure. Rather, Iban society is equal in terms of access to opportunities. All Ibans have equal access to resources; there is no institutionalised inequality.

Yet to describe Iban society as classless is not entirely correct, neither is the alternative description of the Ibans as having hereditary "tripartite ranking".<sup>116</sup> Because our perception of class has been influenced by analyses of caste and the division of society into hereditary statuses of nobility and serfs and by studies of Western class systems, we have overlooked some important elements of division within Iban society. There were marked differences among Ibans based on at least two factors: first, physical abilities and second, and more especially the "favours of the *petaras*", which Sutlive described as the element of "luck".<sup>117</sup> These two factors are interdependent and do give rise to socio-economic and especially social status differences. With respect to farming, the physically able *bilik*-family usually had access to enough land to produce rice to meet its annual needs. Although the surplus might often not be large enough to produce significant disparities between

115 Freeman, 1970, p.129.

116 Rousseau, 1980, op cit.

117 Sutlive, 1978, op cit, p.112.

individual *bilik*-families, nevertheless, economic differences did arise.<sup>118</sup> In addition, those who received the favour of the *petaras* went on to become great warleaders, thereby exercising greater power over their fellow men; but this power need not necessarily translate into command of life and death over their followers, and the number of warleaders was usually small. Furthermore, there is also some social difference based on the accumulation of prized collections of jars, gongs and human skulls, which were either acquired from *bejalai* or warfaring expeditions.

Although Iban society may still be described as egalitarian in terms of the *adat*, the term is less applicable to other aspects of contemporary Iban life, including that which is still conducted in longhouses. Socio-economic disparities between *bilik*-families within and between longhouses are highly visible, for example, in the pattern of ownership of consumer goods. The physical appearance of the individual *bilik*-family is a good indicator as to how well one *bilik* has fared against others. Even in resettlement schemes, where longhouses are either partially or fully financed by government, possessions within the *bilik* provide evidence as to its socio-economic standing in comparison to others.

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<sup>118</sup> One of the basic characteristics of an egalitarian society is the absence of a systematic difference in wealth, see Ron Brunton (1989). "The Cultural Instability of Egalitarian Societies", *Man*, 24(4), (December), pp.673-81.



### 3. Favours of the petaras

The concept of the "favour of the petaras" is a powerful social as well as spiritual force that contributes to social inequality among the Ibans. But it is an element in Iban culture which is difficult to explain. As much as the "favour of the petaras" creates great warleaders, it may also have a psychological effect on the recipient; in other words, it has the effect of a "self-fulfilling prophesy". For instance, a person who receives such a sign may experience behavioural modification to suit the supposedly great position he is to achieve; consequently, he may become one of the few individuals who may be worthy of that great position--be it, for example, as a *tuai rumah* or *penghulu*.

The "favour of the petaras" cannot really be equated with the biblical concept of a "just god" or the notion that "all men are created equal". In Iban mythical belief, the *petaras* are not just gods, for they choose individuals on whom they bestow their favours, and while men may have been created equal, those that have been endowed with favours usually succeed above those who have not. Thus, we find among one longhouse or within one riverine system a few *raja berani*. It is not the social prestige and position of the *raja berani* themselves that are passed down through the generations but the patronage of the *petaras*, in certain cases, passed on to their direct descendants, to sons and sometimes to sons-in-law. However, those who inherit the favour of the *petaras* will

still have to prove their individual worth in their locality.

The endowment of favour by the *petaras* is not something that mortal Ibans can successfully obtain through *bedara* or *begawai*. An Iban could perform *bedara* or *begawai* endlessly and then still end up poor as a consequence. The end which is sought after is not always assured. However, uncertainty has not prevented Ibans from continuing to perform such *gawai*. In fact, it has become institutionalised to the extent that, for some Ibans, it is an accepted routine.

Although the "favour of the *petaras*" is much sought after, I would argue that contemporary Ibans do not rely solely on it as a means to progress in modern society. It is a bonus to have received it, but if it does not come, there are now many other roads to wealth and fame. One of the more popular contemporary avenues is education, which has given rise to many "new leaders". This does not mean that Ibans now neglect the practice, but for some, who have established themselves in the *pasar*, their life becomes less dependent on supernatural support.

#### 4. *Individualism and Mobility*

The Ibans are highly individualistic and mobile people. While they may be members of a *bilik*-family and a longhouse, they are basically persons unto themselves. They make their own decisions when it comes to joining or breaking away from a longhouse. The *bilik*-family is, to a

large extent, independent and autonomous of others. Even within the family, there is a high degree of individualism, and adult members can usually establish their own separate family within the longhouse at any time. By so doing, the new *bilik*-family establishes its independence and autonomy.

Freeman noted the individualistic character of the Ibans when he described the *bilik*-family as the only corporate unit in their society, in contrast to the longhouse for which the only items held in common are the *pendam* (burial ground) and the main *tangga* of the longhouse.<sup>119</sup> According to him, the jurisdiction of the longhouse over forest did not mean that this was held in common by members but that the Ibans (of the Baleh region) had equal access to it. Those then who first felled an area within it could claim that portion of land as their own and subsequently pass it to their descendants as *pesaka* (priceless possessions or inheritance).

Physical mobility is also one of the strong cultural values among Ibans. Since the pioneering days, they have been a highly mobile people in search of new frontiers, wealth and adventure. Mobility also serves to reinforce individualism. It was also through their mobility that various Ibans established themselves as leaders in various fields such as *tuai mubok menoa* and *tuai kayau*,

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<sup>119</sup> Freeman, 1970, op. cit, pp.104-8.

some of whom then earned the coveted title of *raja berani*.

Individualism and mobility are among the few pioneering virtues that have persisted among contemporary Ibans. For the modern Ibans, these values have assisted them in adjusting to the modern environment. Many have moved to *pasar* centres in search of opportunities that are available there; some have even gone beyond their local District or Division. However, the disadvantage of mobility in a modern context is that it tends to break up the close bond and mutual support that existed not only within but also between members of *bilik*-families. Time and energy are increasingly being viewed in terms of their monetary value instead of the satisfaction of simply helping each other and fulfilling one's obligations. In addition, observance of traditions also tends to decrease as the individually-designed *pasar* dwelling does not easily permit close interaction and the staging of *gawai* and other related rituals.

##### 5. *Competition and Cooperation*

The values of competition and cooperation have been elaborated in the earlier section on the *bilik*-family. Therefore, in this section, I am only reviewing them very briefly in relation to their relevance to modern Iban politics. Both values have persisted among present-day Ibans. The dominance of one over the other differs

between those Ibans who live in the longhouse or in the *ulu* and those who reside in the *pasar*.

For *ulu* Ibans, there is the perceived need to maintain a balance between cooperation and competition. This need might stem from the general difficulties that prevail in the *ulu*, and, more especially, because of close kin relations between *bilik*-families. Hence, while one may prosper, in terms of having better harvests than others, one is also sympathetic to others who are less fortunate. Therefore, cooperative activities are means to render help to relatives in times of need. While overall the cooperative activities might have been previously limited, the number of such activities among present longhouse members has tended to increase. These have been facilitated by the implementation of minor rural projects by local assemblymen, who, through their yearly development allocations, provide supplies of materials for longhouse improvement. In most cases, projects given by local members of parliament or the state assembly would only cover the cost for the purchase of materials, such as electricity generators, planks or water pumps. These projects are given to the *tuai rumah*, who then institutes a committee, which then takes the responsibility for organising any labour requirements or other materials needed. The longhouse is never deficient in labour which can be called on for community works.

On the other hand, the value of competition seems to be more dominant among the *pasar* Ibans, where kin

relations do not determine the pattern of their residence. Hence, there is less cooperation between individual families, but more cooperation in higher level organisation such as cultural associations and political parties, in which all participants stand to benefit. Otherwise, there is little desire on the part of *pasar* Ibans to be involved in cooperative ventures.

#### 6. *Self-sufficiency*

Finally, Iban society is self-sufficient. Most of the basic needs are met through the labour of members of the *bilik*-family. What is not attained through the *bilik*-family is met through relations of support in the longhouse. It might be suggested that the longhouse form of dwelling was traditionally necessitated by security needs in a context of endemic warfare. The longhouse gave better security as opposed to small, scattered groups. But the longhouse must also have given rise to an *esprit de corps*, especially illustrated in the system of *bedurok* (labour exchange which is now commonly known as *gotong royong*). The clearing of primary jungle for farming is a difficult task to be undertaken, even by the strongest and most physically able. *Bedurok* is the solution. It must be noted that *bedurok* is not necessarily confined to labour exchange in a similar category of agricultural activities; in other words, one *bilik*-family may need its farm cleared, for example, while another requires assistance in harvesting. However, such an occurrence is

not very common because all families follow a similar farming cycle. In agriculture, *bedurok* is commonly used when the family feels that the farm work is progressing too slowly.

While Ibans have been described as individualists, they have sympathies for those less fortunate. Thus, even though some *bilik*-families might not have participated in cooperative work, such as the building of a communal wharf, they would not be excluded from using it. The community spirit of *gotong royong* has been reinforced since the early 1970s through the implementation of the minor rural projects discussed earlier.

The other values that have been discussed are very important in reinforcing self-sufficiency. The Ibans pride themselves on producing enough rice for their *bilik*-family into the next farming cycle, and they are ashamed if they fall short. Hence, a competitive spirit drives them to work hard to meet their rice needs; what they cannot achieve individually (through the *bilik*-family) they strive for by cooperating with others. For most activities, the Iban are entirely dependent on members of their *bilik*-family. But since Ibans have diversified into other types of economic activities, insufficient annual rice needs can now be met through incomes earned from salaried work. In some cases, rice insufficiency may in fact have arisen as a direct result of working in the *pasar*. Thus, some aged parents are left to farm while other members are working away: they simply

do not have the strength and physical ability to succeed in farming.<sup>120</sup>

## VII. Political Socialisation:

### The Process of Cultural Transmission

Having discussed the basic cultural and political values of the Ibans, it is pertinent to examine how these values are transmitted in the Iban community. Ask an Iban parent why it is that his twelve year old son is already skilled with an axe, he will probably answer: "*Ia udah besai, udah patut nemu*" (he is big [old] enough and should know). The answer underlies the whole process of socialisation among the Ibans. Fuelled by the needs of self-sufficiency and relative isolation, young children were made to mature fast to supplement the *bilik*-family's labour resources. By the age of about 16, young Iban men were expected to have developed the urge to *bejalai*, even if it meant a journey to a neighbouring area to work in sawmills. And at about the same age, marriage would probably already be on their minds. Before proceeding to examine the process of political socialisation, it is necessary to examine the concept itself.

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<sup>120</sup> In a number of studies, the problem of rice insufficiency has been found among Ibans of different areas; for example, in Batang Ai by R.A. Cramb (1979b). *A Farm Plan for the Proposed Batang Ai Resettlement Area*. Kuching: Department of Agriculture, Report No.32, p.15; and in Engkilili, Lubok Antu, Nanga Spak and Julau by T.Hatch (1982). *Shifting Cultivation in Sarawak--A Review*. Kuching: Department of Agriculture, cf. V.T.King (1986b). "Land Settlement Schemes and the Alleviation of Rural Poverty in Sarawak, East Malaysia: A Critical Commentary", *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 14(1), pp.71-100.



Political socialisation is the process by which political culture is maintained and transmitted through the generations. The process operates at two levels: the individual, and the community levels.<sup>121</sup> At the individual level, the process is concerned with the way in which the individual acquires his political orientation.<sup>122</sup> At this level, one needs to examine the important agents that help mould an individual's political worldview. At the community level, political socialisation is concerned with the development of group identity and group subscription to community norms,<sup>123</sup> in other words, the transmission of "the Iban way of doing things".

Conventionally, when discussing the process of socialisation, a neat series of stages based on age can be defined and includes the following: childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age.<sup>124</sup> However, such

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121 Dawson and Prewitt, 1969, op cit, p.13, where they identified political socialisation as a cultural transmission (at the community level) and individual learning (at the individual level), both of which are complementary processes.

122 Borrowing Mead's concept of the "self", political scientists have coined the term "political self" in describing that complex political orientation of an individual; see: Dawson and Prewitt, 1969, op cit, p.17, see also: George Herbert Mead (1934). *Mind, Self and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, especially Part III, pp.135-222.

123 In the expression of Freud, norm conformity is the "superego" component of the "self", See: Sigmund Freud (1923). *The Ego and the Id*. New York: Norton.

124 Some scholars discuss three phases of the life cycle: childhood, adolescence, and adulthood; some of the phases are then further subdivided, for example, childhood into early, middle, and late childhood and adulthood subdivided to include a later phase of old age, see, for instance: John E. Conklin (1984). *Sociology: An Introduction*. New York: Macmillan, pp.82-83.

stages may reflect the biases of industrially advanced societies. Not only do these stages correspond to the definitive age of universal suffrage but they are also guided by the need to keep children occupied so that their parents may attend to the daily demands of work. However, in less technologically developed societies and, especially among the Ibans, children mature faster out of necessity.

#### A. Stages in Iban Socialisation

The stages of socialisation among the Ibans might be identified by the following terms of reference: *anak mit* (small child), *anak bujang/dara* (young man/maiden), *apai orang/indai orang* (somebody's father/mother) and *orang tuai* (the elders).

##### 1. *Anak Mit*

This stage covers the period roughly from childbirth to about 12 years old. The young child is pampered. He is the "anak asi" (beloved child) of his parents and "uchu asi" (beloved grandchild) of his paternal or maternal grandparents.<sup>125</sup> The over-indulgent parents or grandparents may still carry their three year old child in a "dandong"<sup>126</sup> (a type of cloth) suspended on their

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<sup>125</sup> Depending on whether the child's parents lived in the *bilik*-family of his/her father or mother.

<sup>126</sup> *Dandong* is a piece of cloth stitched at both ends; when used by men, it is referred to as *dandong*; however, if it is used by women, it is simply called *kain* (lit. cloth, skirt); in Malay, it is referred to as *sarong*.

back. The child is quickly attended to when (s)he cries and rocked to sleep in a "nyut" or "wua" (a dandong suspended on a spring). The young child is never left alone but is always under the watchful eyes of his/her parents, grandparents or elder siblings.

The second phase of the *anak mit* stage is roughly around six years old. By this time, the child begins to learn some of the tasks of the parents. And by the age of ten the girls would be expected to be able to boil rice, collect ferns, wash clothes and fetch water, while the boys would have been expected to be able to use knives and axes to clear undergrowth at their farm and collect firewood. At this age also, the child is expected to be able to care for his/her younger siblings while the parents are away at the farm.

Besides learning these domestic responsibilities, the child also spends considerable time socialising with his/her peers in the *ruai* and the surroundings of the longhouse. The young like to earn the praise of others. The child tries to surpass his/her peers either in work or play. The girl likes to excel in carrying bigger pails of water while the boy would pride himself in being able to carry heavier loads of firewood. While this spirit of competition serves to divide children, there is also cooperation. For instance, when going on a fishing trip, or collecting ferns or sea shells, those who had more would give some to the others who were not so lucky that day. This giving may not have been motivated entirely by

altruism but with the anticipation that when one has bad days, one's friends would offer help and support.

## 2. *Anak Bujang/Dara*

The second stage of socialisation starts at about 13 to 16 years of age. At this time, the child becomes aware of his/her coming of age physically. The term "*anak bujang*" or "*anak dara*" denotes eligible sons or daughters. Such a status would carry special respect for the family concerned. Those eligible for marriage would, occasionally, be only too willing to lend a hand in work in the hope of gaining an edge over their peers in the marriage stakes. At least, for the man, it is hoped that the parent of an "*anak dara*" might not be over-protective if "*ngayap*"<sup>127</sup> is undertaken with their daughter.

By this time, the young maiden would be discreet in socialising with her peers on the *ruai* lest it give her a bad image of laziness, aimlessness and so on, which would not only bring shame upon herself but would diminish her prospects of betrothal. However, there are times when the young maidens come out of their *bilik*. This would be during "*beranyam tikai*" (weaving mats), "*ngelesong padi*" (breaking the husks from the rice in a rice mortar)

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<sup>127</sup> *Ngayap* -courtship whereby a young unmarried man would creep in to visit the girl in her sleeping quarters. If his visit is accepted, he usually stays, chatting the night away with the young maiden; for a brief account of the *ngayap* custom, see Paul Beavitt (1967). "*Ngayap*", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, Vol.XV, Nos.30-31, (new series), (July/December), pp.407-13; in addition to describing courtship, Beavitt also examined how Christianity changes the perceptions and practices of it.

washing and bathing and of course during the *gawai*, especially *Gawai Dayak* day, when young maidens would be at their best, trying to outdo their peers in "ngajat" (dance).

In this stage of socialisation, the *anak bujang* would also no longer be the naughty lads they were, pulling all kinds of tricks on each other. Their activities were absorbed very much into those of their parents--farming, hunting, fishing ("tuba" fishing, "nyelambau").<sup>128</sup> Their image among the young and eligible maidens would be enhanced by their industry measured by their *bilik*-family who "enda kala pungkang lauk/pemakai" (was never short of poultry or rice). An *anak bujang* wants to be praised either in his daily activities or in festivities such as *Gawai Dayak* day, where he would participate in various of the traditional games such as *ngajat*, *bibat* (wrestling), and *pencha* (martial arts).<sup>129</sup>

### 3. *Apai Orang/Indai Orang*

As the above terms suggest, *apai orang/indai orang* (somebody's father or mother) is broadly the stage of parenthood. It is rather difficult to be precise about the age at which a person progresses to this stage, but the determining factor is marriage. Among the Ibans, it

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<sup>128</sup> *Nyelambau*: usually done at night by suspending fishing nets strapped to two poles across the river.

<sup>129</sup> For a list of some Iban games and their descriptions, see Joseph Ingai (1967). "Iban Games", *Sarawak Gazette*, Vol.XCIII, No.1314, (31 August), pp.193-94.

is not uncommon for individuals to get married by the age of 15. Thus, the boundary between *anak bujang/dara* and *apai/indai orang* is blurred.

The *apai orang/indai orang* stage may be said to be the period of establishing a separate identity for the newly married couple. It is only at this stage that partition from the main *bilik*-family is conceivable. As an unmarried young man or maiden, an individual Iban is very much under the authority of the eldest member of the *bilik*-family. But after marriage, the mark of adulthood, their opinions are sought and considered before any major decision affecting the *bilik*-family is made. Although Ibans are aggressively individualistic, family feuds (*belaya* [verbal] or *berekak* [physical]) and disagreements (*bekelakar*) are kept to a minimum and are best concealed and confined to the *bilik*. Ibans are ashamed to be heard by other *bilik*-families (*malu didinga orang*) if they are quarrelling *diri sebilik* (within the *bilik*-family), lest they *disema ke orang, baka sano belaya diri sebilik* (become the talk of the longhouse, like so and so quarrelling among themselves). Thus, when they disagree they retreat from the argument (*ngalah kadiri*).

#### 4. *Orang Tuai*

The fourth and last stage in the socialisation process is the *orang tuai* stage. Contrary to what the term might suggest, individual Ibans that fall into this category are young when compared to those considered to

be in old age in the industrially advanced societies.<sup>130</sup> Because of the tendency for early marriage among the Ibans, an individual who marries as early as 16 and has a first child, say, by the age of 18, would be likely to be a grandparent between the age of 35 to 40.

Thus the *orang tuai*, the grandparents, are likely to be young and very authoritative in the main *bilik*-family. In a given *bilik*-family, there is likely to be a number of elderly members--grandparents and great-grandparents. While it is common among the Ibans for elders to exert authority in the *bilik*-family, it is unlikely that great-grandparents would exert any temporal authority. This does not mean that their opinions are not sought on key decisions affecting the *bilik*-family, but more importantly, they are the ritual authority--the keepers of family traditions.<sup>131</sup> In any ceremonies the *bilik*-family holds, the elderly members would always lead and initiate for they know "the traditional ways" of doing things.

#### **B. Important Agents of Iban Socialisation**

Having defined the various stages in Iban socialisation, I now turn to the processes by which the politically relevant values, called the political

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<sup>130</sup> See Conklin, 1984, *op cit*, p.83.

<sup>131</sup> The most important of all "*keresa*" (inheritance) is the "*padi pun*" which is not partible and stays with the "*pun bilik*" (main *bilik* from which the married siblings may choose to part from and establish their own *bilik*), see: Freeman, 1970, *op cit*, p.60.

culture, are acquired and the media by which they are transmitted.

There are not many socialising agents with which Iban individuals who live in the rural areas come into contact. This is especially so in the pioneering period but to a large extent it is still the case today for some communities that are isolated from the *pasar*. Usually the earlier part of their lives is centred mainly around their *bilik*-families and longhouses. Besides, exposure to the other agents outside their society at a later stage may have little impact as the basic political outlook may have been strongly moulded by earlier experiences. However, specifically Iban socialising agents may not be present or meaningful for those who live in the *pasar*.

As such, politically relevant activities are also limited. Children are not exposed to leadership training found in such clubs as the Boy Scouts or the Girl Guides. Despite the above deficiency, Iban children still learn the basic values of leadership, competition or cooperation that are also imparted through those clubs. Instead of learning them through mock activities, Iban children learn them through the necessity of survival.

In a social order such as that of the Iban, where there is no formal authority to sanction actions of individuals, the importance of maintaining proper relations is governed by the *adat*. Although the *adat* provides for restitution of wrongdoing, an injured individual is actually powerless in extracting



compensation for the wrongful actions of others. But the power of the *adat* and therefore its custodian rests on its moral authority. Based on the fact that the Ibans revere their *adat* and that to be seen to oppose it is shameful (*malu*), the *adat* is potentially a powerful instrument in maintaining harmonious relations.

There are three significant socialising agents among rural Ibans, namely, the *bilik*-family, the peer group and the longhouse. These are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they are complementary. For example, the *adat* concept of treating elders with respect is learned not only from the *bilik*-family but also in interaction with others in one's peer group and in the longhouse.

#### 1. *The Bilik-Family*

The *bilik*-family is the most important agent of socialisation. An individual's whole life is centred on his/her *bilik*. Although many Ibans either eventually move away to set up their own families or to work in the *pasar*, they still maintain close links with their original *bilik* (*bilik asal*).

The *bilik*-family is the institution through which the basic socio-cultural and political orientations of individuals are created, moulded and reshaped. In the *bilik*, the father, as *tuai bilik*, is the authority. Children learn this not only through the fact that the father is responsible for their general well-being but they are also told so because it is stipulated thus in

their unwritten *adat*. Likewise, children are told to respect their elders who have more experience and can therefore advise their offspring.

The *bilik*-family is also the institution in which individuals learn the importance of various values which guide relations between them and others and the procedures for the *gawai* and related rituals. Children are quickly reprimanded when they violate the *adat*. It is impressed upon them that to go against the *adat* is a misdemeanour (*enda mereti*) and they risk not only being called *orang nadai adat* (person who has no *adat*) but one who also has lack of discipline (*kurang ajar*); this last label usually implies a lack of parental guidance. Hence, to misbehave not only brings shame to the offenders but also to their parents. It is also through the *bilik*-family that children learn to participate in various rituals and *gawai*, both those conducted by individual *bilik*-families and those held in conjunction with members of others.

The important role played by the *bilik*-family in socialisation was unchallenged in the pioneering period. But with the spread of education into the rural areas,<sup>132</sup> the school has become increasingly important. However, the role of schools in shaping the Iban worldview should not be overemphasised, because during the Colonial period, they only catered for the first six years of

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<sup>132</sup> Beginning with the introduction of Local Authority Schools in the Colonial period.

(primary) education. But schools did give other kinds of skills and trades in addition to the values and ideas acquired from their parents, peer groups and the longhouse.

As education continues to spread to a wider community of Iban youth, a greater portion of the *anak mit* and *anak bujang/dara* stage of their lives is increasingly coming under the influence of schools. This has also involved some young people leaving their environment to pursue secondary education provided elsewhere in their District or Division. It is at this stage of their life, especially for those who attend (secondary) school, that education exposes them to alternative patterns of socialisation, which complement their upbringing by their parents. It is at school that children experience the influence of formal authority figures--the teachers and headmaster--whose instructions they must follow otherwise they quickly learn the consequences of disobedience.

## 2. *Peer Group*

A considerable portion of an individual's childhood is also spent with peers. As toddlers, Ibans spend time socialising with their peers on the *ruai*; the close ties continue well into their *anak bujang/dara* stage, although the form and type of relations evolves into more productive enterprises such as going on fishing or hunting expeditions.

It is actually in this later stage that socialisation takes a more serious form in which competitive as well as cooperative values emerge. Although hunting and fishing can be undertaken individually, it is more often that these activities are carried out in groups, especially among the young. As much as such group activities arose from the need to cooperate and the desire for security, they must also have been a product of the sheer pleasure of sharing company.<sup>133</sup>

Although considerable time is spent with peers, it is hardly likely that peer relations contribute specifically to the learning of values since these have already been gained from the *bilik*-family. Mixing with a peer group, which comes from the same socio-economic and political background, is unlikely to expose members to a wide variety of ideas and experiences. However, the importance of peer relations lies in the fact that they provide avenues by means of which one can practice the values that have been learned from the individual *bilik*-families, such as cooperation, competition and respect for authority.

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<sup>133</sup> For example, despite provision of piped water into individual *biliks*, many women also choose to go down to the river to wash and bathe, because this gives them the chance to chat and catch up on the latest gossip.

### 3. *The Longhouse*

Politically relevant activities in the longhouse are limited to the irregular *baum* conducted on the *ruai* of the *tuai rumah*. There is no restriction as to who can attend these meetings, which, after all, are conducted on the open *ruai*; neither are *baum* restricted by gender or age. However, this does not imply that all are free to participate. There are various Iban expressions that indicate the restrictions on full participation. For example, a child is expected to listen and learn from elders (*dinga ke penemu orang tuai*); and women are not expected to be assertive, for they are generally expected not to place themselves above their men (*dini indu mangat lebih agi penemu ari orang laki*).<sup>134</sup>

Cooperative activities among individuals within the longhouse are also limited. In *bedurok*, for example, it is unlikely that, at any one time, it involves the whole longhouse. But in activities which produce benefits for the entire community, the cooperation of all *bilik*-families is generally expected, either in the direct contribution of labour or of monies required for projects.

In the pre-Brooke period, the Iban worldview<sup>135</sup> was limited to the longhouse and its immediate environment.

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<sup>134</sup> This observation naturally runs counter to what Komanyi found among her samples from Samu longhouse; see Komanyi, 1973, op cit.

<sup>135</sup> See Jan B. Avè and Victor T. King (1986). *Borneo: The People of the Weeping Forest--Tradition and Change in Borneo*. Leiden (Netherlands): National Museum of Ethnology, pp.33-36, where they discuss the worldview of the Dayak--including the Iban.

The Iban world was populated with *petaras* and *antu jai* (evil spirits). If an individual fell sick, he sought the *manang* (shaman) to drive away the evil spirits; when he had a bad harvest, he blamed it on the work of the spirits and made offerings to the *petaras* to help increase his harvest. Although Ibans have traditionally been mobile people, their contacts with other races gained them little new knowledge. They preferred to take enemy heads rather than their know-how. Their propensity to learn has always been impeded by their attitude of "that's not the way of our ancestors" (*nya ukai cara akie/inie kami*).

The intrusion of government brought about a major change in the Iban political system. It superimposed on the "institutions of men" a wider governmental structure. The institutions of *tuai rumah* and *penghulu* were displaced to some extent by Brooke government and relegated to being its agents. Since then, Iban socialisation of the politically relevant values have been affected by the needs to buttress support for the new order.

Thus, in the pioneering period, Iban political socialisation centred around the institutions of the *bilik*-family, peer group, the longhouse, and the *petaras*. These were the institutions that commanded their loyalties and looked after their immediate needs. Interaction between the various components of the political institutions were defined by the *adat*.

**C. Contemporary Patterns  
of Socialisation among Ulu and Pasar Ibans**

In contemporary Iban society, two distinct patterns of political socialisation can be identified; first, that among the *ulu* Ibans and secondly, that of the *pasar* Ibans. The differences in the patterns and processes of political socialisation between the *ulu* and the *pasar* Ibans arise from several factors. First, unlike the *pasar* Ibans, those in the *ulu* are exposed to a limited range of media. For example, not many *ulu* Ibans can afford televisions and daily newspaper services do not reach them. Second, the dominance of the agricultural economy chains the *ulu* Ibans to numerous labour-intensive activities in the pursuit of their everyday needs; this differs from the economy of the *pasar* Ibans, who, more often than not, are salaried workers, who work from 8:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., five and a half-days per week, thereby giving them some time for other social activities. In many ways, the pattern and process of political socialisation among the *ulu* Ibans resemble those of the pioneering period.

From *anak mit* to the *orang tuai* stage, the *ulu* Ibans learn that authority lies within the *bilik*-family and the longhouse. In the *bilik*, younger members are quick to realise that authority resides with the elders. As a child, he or she is taught to obey the elders. Although Iban children are pampered, disobedience would bring punishment. While an obedient child may be rewarded, be it being taken on a journey to a nearby Chinese trading

post or to visit nearby relatives, the disobedient ones are reprimanded, by being ordered to stay in the *bilik*. More importantly, the latter are made to feel ashamed of their misconduct.

Beyond the *bilik*-family lies the authority of the *tuai rumah* and the *tuai burong*; the latter may be less powerful than the former because the *tuai burong* deals with the more abstract authority--the *petaras*--although at times, the functions of the two institutions might be held by the same individual. The *tuai burong*, being the spiritual leader, deals with the ritual aspects of life, the effects of which are rather removed from most Ibans. In a sense, the *tuai burong* is the keeper of the ritual and the longhouse traditions; he is consulted when a *bilik*-family wishes to make offerings, such as a *bedara* or in a *begawai*. However, the authority of the *tuai rumah* is often felt when fines are imposed for the transgression of *adat*. Furthermore, many aspects of relations between individuals of different *bilik*-families are mediated through the *tuai rumah*--be these marriage (e.g. *beterang*),<sup>136</sup> division of *bilik*-family property as a consequence of partition, and so on.

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<sup>136</sup> *Beterang* -v.f. *terang* meaning clear, explain, or declare. Thus, to *beterang* is to make known certain intentions. Ibans marry according to the *adat* law. A marriage can be as simple as *beterang* before a *tuai rumah* (headman), witnessed by relatives. But it can be elaborate. The prospective bridegroom's parents and their party go to the prospective bride's parents asking whether a marriage would be possible. If it is, a date is then set for "*ngambi indu*" (taking the bride), in which case, the prospective bridegroom's parents and their party would proceed once more to the bride's house to take her back where a *melah pinang* (splitting the betel nut) ceremony will be performed and guests invited. While Iban may marry according to *adat* law, it must also be registered with the



Iban individuals also learn at an early age the importance of the *petaras*. This is because the *bilik*-families' life revolves around the worship of these many deities. In a year, there are bound to be many *gawai* in which they participate. Another way in which they learn about these *petaras* are from *ensera*<sup>137</sup> (fables), which are told to them on the *ruai* by their elders. Not only do they begin to idolise the various characters in the *ensera*, they also worship and make offerings to request favours from these *petaras*. These demigod figures were institutionalised by using their names as personal names for mortals; grandparents would call their grandsons by the pet-name "Keling"<sup>138</sup> and the granddaughters "Kumang".<sup>139</sup>

The importance of the discussion of the *petaras* and the relation of the deities to Ibans lies not in the fact that the former may actually dispense favours and charms, but the effects they have on the complex psychological

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Registrar of Marriage in order for the marriage to be recognised in civil law; for details of Iban traditional marriage, see Alli Majang (1962). *Melah Pinang*. Kuching: Borneo Literature Bureau.

<sup>137</sup> Listening to *ensera* is one of the Iban pastimes; interest in *ensera* is not limited to young children, but adults as well. The more skilful the story-teller (usually *lemambang*), the more he is able to elaborate on the exploits of both mortals and the *petaras*-especially those from *Panggau Libau* (the legendary place of the *petaras*). For examples of these *ensera*, see Sandin, 1962a, op cit, 1968, op cit and (1964). *Raja Durong*. Kuching; Borneo Literature Bureau; and, Henry Gerijih (1963). *Kumang Betelu*. and (1967). *Raja Berani*, both published by the Borneo Literature Bureau, Kuching.

<sup>138</sup> *Keling* -the male legendary hero in Iban *ensera*, whose exploits are usually in *ngayau*.

<sup>139</sup> *Kumang* -the female legendary heroine in Iban *ensera*; *Keling's* wife.

orientation of the Ibans. They provide Ibans with a socio-religious explanation of the way things are -some are brave and wealthy because they had the necessary dreams; others are poor, perhaps because they are less industrious, but more importantly, because they are not favoured by the *petaras*. Thus, the more fortunate ones are not to be resented but respected, lest hostility brings down the wrath of their *petaras*. Iban perceptions of the *petaras* provide the justification for the fortunate few individuals to hold the various *gawai*, and the *gawai* itself gives an opportunity for the host/holder to solicit further favours and charms in order to improve his status in the society.

The Iban worldview has undergone continuing changes since the colonial period. These were caused by the spread of education and development into the Iban areas. However, the rate of these changes is dependent upon the intensity and scope of development to which Ibans are exposed and also the distance (i.e. in terms of travelling time) of their communities from major urban centres. Pronounced differences characterise the *ulu* and *pasar*. The *ulu* Ibans are heavily dependent on subsistence agriculture, and are generally of low educational attainment. The *pasar* Ibans are a recent phenomenon. Many have either migrated and settled in town because, with some education, they are able to find employment in various government or private agencies, while others may

have been resettled near major towns.<sup>140</sup> Unlike the *ulu* Ibans, they are not largely self-sufficient; their economic activities are dependent upon salaried work.

The *ulu* Ibans, unlike those in the *pasar*, are least affected by changes; their contacts are limited to the yearly door taxes (*pupu pintu*) that they pay through their *penghulu*. Beginning with elective government, their contacts with their representatives are limited to the latter's visit during election periods. For this group of people who are still isolated from the government and development, the old worldview and the traditional processes of political socialisation still dominate their lives. The old boundary of their political system may have been extended and their former decision-making institutions displaced by higher authorities--the government machinery; but for all practical purposes and like the differential favour of the *petaras*, support for the new "decision-makers" has not yielded consistent rewards from the government.

The impact of education was not felt uniformly among the Iban community. Rural schools did not penetrate the Iban community before the 1950s. Those that were established after the 1950s had little influence in terms of changing their basic socio-religious values. Parents' attitudes then and the need of labour for their farms meant that children had probably spent only a short time at school before they dropped out; parents were unable to

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<sup>140</sup> An instance of this is the Sekuau Resettlement Scheme, about 10 miles from Sibuluan, where about 1,000 Ibans had been resettled.

see the benefits of sending their children to school compared to putting their children to work on the farms, where the benefits, the harvest, were clearly seen.

Thus, the figures of authority that matter most to these Ibans are their elders in the *bilik*-families and headmen of the longhouses. Adulation and worship of the *petaras* are as strong as ever, as they continue to solicit favours in order to improve their lot. Besides the infrequent visits from government officials, their other contacts with the outside world are through the transistor radio; they hear of development but see that not much is taking place in their community.<sup>141</sup>

In the *ulu*, politically relevant activities are limited. Some political parties may have individuals representing them in certain *ulu* areas, but organised political activities coincide mostly with elections. There are no social clubs in which the people may be exposed to certain leadership and organisational qualities. Thus, some avenues from which certain of these values may be learned are still based on communally organised traditional activities, including hunting, fishing and farming. In all these activities, there is no fixed pattern to follow; it arises out of individual initiatives. Even the advent of party politics in the

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<sup>141</sup> The Iban section of Radio Malaysia Sarawak broadcasts programmes which are dominated by the following themes: news (which representative is opening which development projects and where), agricultural programmes (*betanam betupi* [farming and husbandry]) and entertainment (song requests and dedications and *pantun* [traditional songs]).

early 1960s had relatively little effect upon the *ulu* Ibans. They are competitive and at the same time, cooperative; but party politics is competitive and destructive, and therefore it is opposed to their basic values. The relative equality that persists among the *ulu* Ibans means that the emergence of party leaders, who are sometimes over-assertive, conflict with certain Iban values.

In sharp contrast to the *ulu* are the *pasar* Ibans; having some level of education, they are employed in various government and private agencies. This group is generally removed from the environment of the longhouse; their only remaining contact with tradition is perhaps their infrequent visits home during *gawai*. They are increasingly being absorbed into the *pasar* (modern) ways; their children spend the early part of their life in school. While they may be strong defenders of their traditions, the old ways of life have slowly disappeared. Rationalisation of differences between individuals is no longer explained in simple socio-religious terms arising from the discriminating *petaras*, but in the individual motivation to improve themselves through education.

For the *pasar* Ibans, the important agents of political socialisation vary from those of the *ulu* because of different childhood and adolescent experiences.<sup>142</sup> In the *pasar*, Iban children start school

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<sup>142</sup> For the *pasar* Ibans, Western-derived stages of socialisation may be more applicable.

much earlier, by going to kindergarten (nursery school). They are exposed to many other children whose backgrounds are quite different from theirs. From the primary school age (7-12 years old), they can see clearly the differences; some come to school by bus, others are sent by their parents in cars and on motorbikes. The value of education is impressed upon them. They are told to study hard so that they can get good jobs and ride in cars to work.

Iban children of the *pasar* are also exposed to various forms of political socialisation. In schools they are encouraged to be members of their school societies, be these Boys Scouts, Girl Guides or the Red Cross. Their *bilik*-families are no longer the sole authority that affects them. In school, they are disciplined for misbehaviour; in the streets they see uniformed policemen, government buildings are all around them. Signs of the extent of authority that the government commands, which may have been learned at school, reach them in practice.

The *pasar* Ibans tend to be politically conscious. They are generally aware of the various issues that affect them and their community. At school, they see that the majority of the students are either Malays/Melanaus or Chinese. Working in government offices, they see many of the workers are Malays/Melanaus, and in private agencies, mainly Chinese.

#### D. Summary: The Relevance of Cultural Values

In Iban society, the process of individuals acquiring particular values and motivations is congruent with the objectives of securing conformity or a community orientation.<sup>143</sup> Indeed the two are merged through the *adat*. While the Iban individual may be self-assertive, his actions must be those that are approved by the *adat*. From an early age, individuals are taught that their actions and behaviour must be those that conform with *adat*. It is prevailed upon them that to act otherwise is to incur shame upon themselves (*malu*) and risk being called *nadai adat* or *kurang ajar*.

The *adat* ways are inculcated in them from the *anak mit* stage and their instruction is well advanced in the *anak bujang/dara* stage. Early on, perhaps still unaware, they learn the necessity of cooperation. While parents are out in the farm, they are cared for by their elder siblings, and when they are old enough, they take the same responsibilities towards their younger siblings. In the longhouse, they learn that cooperation is necessary not only within the *bilik*-family, but that it also extends to members of other *bilik*-families within the longhouse. While Ibans are highly competitive, they also value the spirit of cooperation and give-and-take, for in sharing they in turn receive assistance when in need.

Thus, while Ibans are often described as egalitarian, individualistic and competitive, those

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<sup>143</sup> See Dawson and Prewitt, 1969, op cit, p.13.

characteristics are constrained in various ways. Iban society has also been seen as classless, but within that classlessness, there are those *bilik*-families which are wealthier in having more brass gongs, jars, and bountiful harvests. After all, all Ibans know that there is only a handful of *raja berani*, *bilik*-families with bountiful harvests, and, traditionally *manok sabong*<sup>144</sup> with skull trophies. Thus, there is a loose stratification based on wealth, which is measured by the acquisition of brass gongs and jars, surplus rice and, in the past, skull trophies. To increase his *bilik*'s social standing within the community, an Iban would go on *bejalai* in search of these goods.

Mobility has been another key component of Iban culture. Through their recorded history, wealth and social prestige have been acquired by the highly mobile *tuai mubok menua* and *tuai kayau*. Pioneering is but one method by which adventurous and brave Ibans established themselves as leaders; they had to be leaders to be able to attract followers who would go with them in search of new lands. Thus, these pioneers--the *raja berani*--were leaders of the Ibans.

In conclusion, the unique leadership renewal process among the Ibans has often not been understood in its proper context. Instead, it has led to a simplistic view that Iban society is classless, without a hierarchy

<sup>144</sup> *Manok Sabong*: literally, a fighting cock, but Sandin used the term to refer to Iban warriors, see: Benedict Sandin, 1970, op cit.



extending beyond the *bilik*-family and longhouse. It has been argued that cultural values such as egalitarianism, individualism and mobility have undermined the development of any higher political order above that of the *bilik*-family. By the application of this logic, the authority of the parents or the elders in a *bilik*-family amount to no more than influence which can be ignored because Ibans are highly individualistic and egalitarian.

It is my view that the cultural values discussed earlier have tended to give rise to strong leadership qualities which must be constantly kept in check. Since the Ibans, theoretically, do not have any inherited political positions within their society, emergence of leaders can only mean that the best people emerge from the masses. The strong tendency towards social mobility reinforces the values of personal achievement. The possibility that, one day, a person who was led is the next day leading, lends stability to the notion of leadership.

Ibans can also be said to be flexible, adjusting to situations in which they find themselves. They are capable of compromising if they are unable to overcome opponents and competitors. Traditionally they were not excessively envious of the success of others; they attributed this to the favour of the *petaras*.

### VIII. Conclusion

There are now three levels of leadership in Iban society. In descending order, these are the party leaders (supra-regional or state level), the *penghulu* (regional),<sup>145</sup> and the *tuai rumah* and *tuai bilik* (local level). The first and highest level, the state-level leadership, emerged in the post-independence period, beginning with attempts by SNAP and PESAKA to unite Ibans, first within their respective heartlands, and secondly, on a state-wide basis. This was not an entirely new political experience but rather an extension of riverine-based integration, which had some scattered success even before Brooke intervention; the Brookes then attempted to institutionalise regional leadership among the dispersed Ibans. However, their government paid no attention to creating a supra-regional institution that would form links among the various regional settlements. At the second level then, traditionally, Ibans within a particular river system had successfully united for specific purposes and for a limited period (e.g. warfaring). In such cases, Iban unity was accomplished through a famous warleader, who could appropriately be called the *raja berani*. The second level leadership has not generally been acknowledged by Iban scholars because of its fluid and flexible nature and intermittent occurrence. Despite its limited applicability then, the regional leadership was nevertheless important because it

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<sup>145</sup> Including *pemanca* and *temenggong*.

demonstrated that wider integration was possible. In contrast to the state and regional leaderships, the longhouse and the *bilik*-family levels were generally accepted as well defined political institutions. While the *tuai rumah* would have to be leaders of proven accomplishment, their leadership was acknowledged to be of lower status than those of the warleaders. However, where *tuai rumah* happened to be famous in other fields, their authority would certainly be enhanced by the overlapping roles that they played. While the longhouse-level leadership is generally accepted as well defined, it is, as with higher level leadership, fluid. Changes may be frequent as new leaders emerge. This differs from the institution of *tuai bilik*, where roles, power and authority are clearly defined and are immune from the fierce individualism which characterises the other levels and institutions of Iban leadership.

Iban traditional leadership was characterised by its versatility and martial values. Leaders were highly individualistic, competitive and, at other times, cooperative. These values operated within the egalitarian socio-economic and political environment and reinforced each other. Incidentally, the traditional leaders were also men who had been endowed with the favour of the *petaras*. Leaders emerged because of their physical prowess in warfare; therefore, they were the *orang berani* (the brave ones), who had taken the heads of enemies. They were also wealthy (*raja*), not because they had

looted the property of fallen enemies, although there were such instances, but as a result of their physical abilities, they were able to tend to large farms, thereby harvesting more *padi* to last them through to the next season. In the pioneering era, the emergence of leaders was frequent as there were no restrictions on who could or could not initiate *mubok menua* and organise headhunting expeditions. While *mubok menua* may have partly arisen from the unquenchable Iban thirst for *ngayau*, the search for fertile land and the custom of *bejalai* were equally responsible. Leadership in Iban society is highly fluid; except for *tuai bilik*, leaders were never permanent. Leaders emerged and were subsequently replaced by new ones. In that way, they had to be on their toes at all times in order to prolong their reign over their *anembiak*.

The elite leaders are the *raja berani*. While their position might be open to "all males",<sup>146</sup> this should not be taken to suggest that any leader could simply earn the title. The problem associated with the title was that its characteristics were not clearly defined. Any leaders who had gone on *ngayau*, were wealthy, received favours of the *petaras* and had personal followings could be called *raja berani*. Thus, in every riverine system, there existed a few *raja berani*, the elite leaders. However, when viewing Iban leadership as a whole, that is as the conglomeration of many riverine systems, one has to exercise extreme

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<sup>146</sup> Sutlive, 1978, op cit, p.27.

care so as not to equate the various riverine-based *raja berani* as the leaders of the society as a whole. Instead, one has to acknowledge that there were "core leaders" among this elite who were even more illustrious in war and highly successful in farming. In that way, one acknowledges the varying standards upon which these riverine-based *raja berani* had attained their positions. Thus, while in theory it might be open to all males, it is clearly an elite position, which only a few will eventually be able to attain, measured by a standard which is not predetermined but which varies in time, thereby guaranteeing that those who were called *raja berani* were those who were above their peers.

Although it was the policy of the Brookes to leave the Ibans in their traditional world, the Ibans were not totally excluded from the transformations which took place. It was true that Iban economic activities had remained largely unchanged, but the same could not be said of their political institutions. While the Brookes attempted to institutionalise Iban leadership by appointing descendants of the traditional leaders to their government, they had not provided the means to vet these new leaders. The achievement orientation, which was one of the major factors in Iban traditional leadership, was clearly underplayed. This may be one factor which can explain the diminishing roles played by the traditional leaders in modern Iban politics, as Ibans looked up to the new leaders, who exhibited the spirit of the

traditional *raja berani* in new fields of activity--i.e. education and important positions in private or public enterprises.

The new characteristics of leadership reflected a shift in emphasis in the culturally relevant values. *Pasar Iban* values tend to be fluid, adjusting to the overall pattern of change taking place in the larger society, while the *ulu Ibans*, who are generally removed from the hustle and bustle of the town, tend to be more resolute in their outlook; their perceptions are not easily influenced by the outside; they take much persuasion to alter their views.

While these traditionally relevant values remain important, the Iban must also adjust to the overall culturally relevant values of the larger Sarawak society. This means that the equivalent of the traditional values of bravery is political boldness buttressed by skilled and knowledgeable judgement. It is by adopting these values that some of the new Iban leaders have emerged. Initially, they comprised individuals who had received some level of education, had been on *bejalai*, and had worked as minor officials, either in the public or private sector.

The spread of education and development, has given rise to the emergence of this second echelon Iban leadership. They have returned from *bejalai*, from as far away as the USA, England and Australia, bearing with them their paper qualifications, instead of the usual *antu*

pala. At about this time, political institutionalisation was building up behind SNAP, through which these leaders were elected to the state assembly. However, the process was abruptly interrupted in the early 1980s due to two factors; first, leadership factionalism within SNAP and secondly, the re-emergence of regional loyalty. These changes will be examined in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4 through the analysis of Iban voting patterns from the 1960s to the 1980s.

In conclusion, contemporary Iban political and supra-regional leadership can be said to be marked by a cyclical pattern of change--i.e. between factionalism and political consolidation. Political factionalism may be traced to the emergence of traditional (regional) leaders, who held personal followings within various river systems, while political consolidation on a wider scale is a recent, post-independence political phenomenon. The first movement towards political consolidation was in the mid-1970s, when SNAP was strengthened by support from the majority of the Ibans and secondly, in the late 1980s when PBDS won majority support from the Dayaks (the Ibans, Bidayuhs and the Orang Ulu). Hence, if we consider Iban politics since 1963 to the present, the pattern of political disunity, which characterised the society between the late 1960s to mid-1970s, was replaced by strongly unified Iban support in SNAP, especially after the 1974 state general election. Since then, there was a period of relative

stability as far as Iban support behind a supra-regional institution (i.e. SNAP) was concerned. The 1963-1974 pattern of Iban political support was again repeated in the 1980s. The leadership battle between Leo Moggie and James Wong in SNAP in 1981 was only one of the factors that directly contributed to the political conflict that later engulfed the Ibans; this later led to the split of Iban leadership. The formation of PBDS in 1983 represented the lowest ebb of Iban unity in one political party since the mid-1970s. By 1987, there was again an upsurge of Iban unity in PBDS, but by the close of the 1980s, there were signs of cracks opening up again in the unity of the Ibans in PBDS. More importantly, their political strength, as measured by the number of DUN seats they had won in 1987, had been reduced from 15 to 10 by the subsequent defections to the ruling coalition.

However, the Iban consolidation behind SNAP in the mid-1970s and PBDS in the late 1980s differed in one important respect. The consolidation behind SNAP in 1974 was based on the emergence of new leaders, that is most of those who won state assembly and parliamentary seats for SNAP then were newcomers, while those who won for the PBDS in 1987 were incumbent assemblymen, who had defected to PBDS. Thus, the political consolidation behind PBDS was leader-oriented integration, but for SNAP then, it was grassroots-oriented integration. In short, the political support behind PBDS placed by defecting assemblymen behind PBDS in the late 1980s camouflaged the



real extent to which there was a massive grassroots support for the party.

Much of the discussion of the issue of supra-regional institutions and leadership is found in the following two Chapters, which discuss post-independence democratic experiences among the Ibans. While I am mainly analysing voting patterns to establish Iban political behaviour since 1963, it is the understanding of their earlier political experiences and culture that provides us with the tools necessary to better comprehend more recent Iban political activities.

## CHAPTER 3

### POLITICAL CHANGE AMONG THE IBANS: POST-INDEPENDENCE POLITICS I

#### I. Introduction

The examination of Iban politics in the post-independence period is divided into two parts. Part I, in this chapter, examines the following: (1) the political experiences of the Ibans in the Brooke and colonial periods, and (2) Iban politics from 1963 to 1979. Part II (in Chapter 4) discusses Iban politics from 1980 to 1990.

The 1963 to 1979 period represents the first stage in the cycle of Iban politics, that is the gradual change from a political organisation comprising widely dispersed riverine groups to one which became increasingly unified; this unity had never been experienced in the pre-independence period. This dispersion-unity cycle (or the movement from regionalism to supra-regionalism) was again repeated between 1980 to 1990, when political divisions began to re-emerge in the early 1980s. But before proceeding to discuss these post-independence patterns, it is necessary to examine Iban political experiences in the Brooke and the Colonial periods in order to assess the extent to which they have contributed to modern Iban politics.

## **II. Background: The Brooke and Colonial Periods**

It has been observed in the previous chapter that the Brooke and the Colonial periods had brought about some major transformations in Iban society and in their socio-cultural and political orientations. Even the European neglect of the Ibans in such areas of Sarawak's life as education and administration obviously had implications for later Iban political activities.

The Rajahs had few, if any, well-ordered policies to prepare the Ibans for the wider changes which were taking place in Sarawak. The suppression of headhunting and migration had brought about a more stable and settled Iban society. However, the Rajahs had no concrete plans to divert the enormous energies of these former headhunters into more profitable and productive pursuits. To a large extent and with a few exceptions, those Ibans of the remote interior of Sarawak remained largely untouched by developments that dominated and which were confined to the urban centres, especially Kuching. Government schools had been established but catered mainly for Malays who were being prepared to enter the civil service as native officers. In any case, educational provision was largely at primary level. Most of the government schools were located in major districts and towns.

An important educational development after the Second World War was the establishment of the Local

Authority Schools.<sup>1</sup> Local Authorities were made responsible for education in their respective areas. In areas where there were no Local Authorities, the indigenous people were encouraged to open private-aided schools controlled by Committees comprising the local representatives; these schools were eligible for financial assistance from the central government. Table 3.1 below shows the types and numbers of schools and their student enrolment at the end of 1949.

Table 3.1  
Types of Schools,  
Number of Teachers and Student Enrolments.

Type of Schools	Numbers	Student Enrolment	Numbers of Teachers
Government	56	4,080	104
Local Authority	18	804	21
Private	30	1,563	47
Mission	56	5,724	196
Chinese	204	21,282	679

Source: St. Hepburn, 1949, op cit, pp.130-34.

The differences between the five types of schools listed above were in the amount of financial assistance they received from the government and the medium of instruction. All schools received varying amounts of grant-in-aid from the government. Except for the Chinese schools, which followed closely the curriculum of schools

<sup>1</sup> B.A. St. Hepburn, Secretariat. (1949). *The Handbook of Sarawak*. Singapore: Printed by Malaya Publishing House for the Colonial Government of Sarawak, p.129.

in China and used the Chinese national language, *Kuo Yii* (Mandarin), the rest either used English, as was the case for mission schools, or Malay, and followed relatively similar syllabi.

To meet the pressing educational need, the Batu Lintang Teacher Training Centre and Secondary School was established.<sup>2</sup> Its primary purposes were threefold: first, to meet the demand for teachers at the primary school level; secondly, to prepare qualified trainees to fill the civil service; and, thirdly, to bring selected people from the primary school level and prepare them for the Cambridge School Certificate. In 1948, the camp in Batu Lintang, which had previously been used by the Japanese for internment, was converted to house the school. Initially, the college was headed by an education officer; in 1949, John Wilson was appointed principal, until his resignation in 1953, to take up assignment in the Budu community development scheme.

In addition to all these schools, one Rural Improvement School was also established in 1948 in Kanowit, in the Third Division. It was designed to meet the needs of the large Iban-speaking population living in the interior. The philosophy behind the school was that if education was to be successful among the Ibans, their parents must also be made to see the benefits of it. Thus, this school was academic as well as vocational in outlook, disseminating knowledge of improved agricultural

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<sup>2</sup> St. Hepburn, 1949, *Ibid*, pp.132-33.

methods, animal husbandry, elementary hygiene and infant welfare, simple market arithmetic and elementary civics.<sup>3</sup>

As in education, the Brooke reign did little to acquaint the Ibans with the processes and structure of government, whether in the lowest echelons as native officers or in the highest, the Council Negeri and the Supreme Council. To some extent, the Brooke attitude in such matters was guided by their fascination with the Ibans and their way of life, and therefore the desire was to preserve them in their natural habitat. But such an attitude was a consequence of their policy of 'divide and rule'. The Malays served as their administrators, the Chinese as money-makers and the Ibans as warriors and mercenaries.

Consequently, Ibans and their traditional *raja berani* did not play any significant role in the Brooke government. Those *raja berani* who did sit in the Council Negeri or the Supreme Council were there more for symbolic purposes. Their appointments were intended primarily to reinforce their traditional authority over their *anembiak*. Although the Rajah constituted the Council Negeri and the Supreme Council, he still ruled with absolute and arbitrary power.

During the Rajahs' reign, there had been various constitutional changes. The Supreme Council was introduced by the first Rajah in 1855 and the Council

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<sup>3</sup> St. Hepburn, 1949, *Ibid*, pp.133-34.

Negeri by the second in 1867.<sup>4</sup> The composition of the Supreme Council as at 1949 did not include any Ibans. However, the Malays and the Chinese were each represented by two members; one of the Malays and one of the Chinese were life members.<sup>5</sup> The Council Negeri comprised members drawn from four categories.<sup>6</sup> There were nine ex-officio posts--all occupied by Europeans; five official--three European, one Malay<sup>7</sup> and one Iban;<sup>8</sup> eleven unofficial--three Chinese, three Malays, three Ibans<sup>9</sup> and two remained vacant; and 14 standing members--all Malays.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, in the civil service Iban native officers were relatively few, as shown in Table 3.2. However, local authorities seemed to be dominated by the *raja berani*, who made up about a third of the total force in all five Divisions (see Table 3.3). The majority of the *raja berani*, who were members of the local authorities, were mostly of the rank of *penghulu*; only one, Koh anak Jubang, was a *temenggong*; in the First Division, the six were the decorated *orang kaya*; three in the Third

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<sup>4</sup> St. Hepburn, 1949, *Ibid*, p.25; see also Reece, 1982, *op cit*, p.8.

<sup>5</sup> Ong Tiang Swee (life member), Ong Hap Leong, Datu Amar Abang Sulaiman (life member), and Datu Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha.

<sup>6</sup> St. Hepburn, 1949, *op cit*, pp.44-45.

<sup>7</sup> Datu Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha.

<sup>8</sup> Philip Jitam.

<sup>9</sup> *Temenggong* Koh, Ignatius Klumai, and Edward Jerah; see St. Hepburn, 1949, *op cit*, pp.44-45.

<sup>10</sup> All, except two--a Haji and a Pengiran--were of aristocratic origin.

Division and four in the Fourth Division were *tuai rumah*. In contrast, all the Malays, who were members of the local authorities, were only of the rank *tua kampong* (the Iban equivalent of a *tuai rumah*).

Table 3.2  
Native Officers by Division and Ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Division:					Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Iban	0	0	6	2	1	9
Malay	7	13	13	10	3	46
Total	7	13	19	12	4	55

Source: St. Hepburn, 1949, op cit, pp.46-60.

Table 3.3  
Membership in Local Authority by Ethnicity and Division.

Ethnicity	Division:					Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Iban	6	20	39	9	-	74
Malay	4	8	7	-	11	30
Chinese	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total	10	28	46	9	12	105

Source: St. Hepburn, 1949, op cit, pp.77-81.



Another development after the war, which had an impact on the Iban, as well as on the other ethnic groups, was the introduction of the Community Development Committee in 1951<sup>11</sup> whose main purposes were

- (1) to examine and report on future Community Development policy; and
- (2) to be responsible for all Community Development undertakings.<sup>12</sup>

Among the more promising schemes that were carried out among the Ibans was the Budu Community Development project and its satellite schemes of Entabai, Nanga Entaih and the Iban Teams.<sup>13</sup> While Community Development in Budu succeeded in creating the Budu "elite", it did not produce a chain reaction in other Iban areas because there was insufficient time before local leadership could take over.<sup>14</sup> More importantly, government attitudes had

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<sup>11</sup> *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, op cit; this was when the Community Development Committee was set up, which emerged from the reconstitution of the Adult Education Committee, originally established in 1948.

<sup>12</sup> *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> For a more comprehensive account, see Wilson, 1969, op cit, Wilson had been the principal of Batu Lintang Teachers' Training College, Kuching from 1949, until he resigned at the end of 1952 to take up appointment in Budu the following year; see also, Mora Dickson (1971). *Longhouse in Sarawak*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., for a brief account of Wilson's work in Budu.

<sup>14</sup> At the height of enthusiasm for the schemes, the Budu Community under the guidance of John Wilson was able to send ten local boys to be trained at Nairn Academy, Scotland in anticipation of them taking over the leadership at Budu upon their return, see Wilson, 1969, op cit.

hardened against innovation and new ideas.<sup>15</sup> The expatriate officer behind the successful Budu, John K. Wilson, was unceremoniously asked to leave Sarawak in 1968. In the words of Wilson:<sup>16</sup>

No reasons were given but it was common knowledge that my influence and affection for the remote Dayak peoples was considerable although I had been most careful to remain quite neutral in all things political. I had also consistently refused despite considerable pressures to use that influence in the political issues, which were due to be settled in the General Elections to be held in August 1969.

Another important development towards moulding leadership among the Ibans during the colonial period was the formation of the first Dayak Co-operative Society in 1941, covering Ibans living in the Ulu Paku, Rimbas and Krian river system.<sup>17</sup> Although the cooperative folded in 1950, the development was important for it signalled the emergence of modern collective activities among the individualistic Ibans. It was from this cooperative society that members of the Perimpunan Dayak (Dayak Association) were largely drawn.<sup>18</sup> The leadership of the Perimpunan Dayak and the Iban community around Kuching was monopolised by these Ibans who shared similar

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<sup>15</sup> See Sidi Munan (1970). "Community Development", *Sarawak Gazette*, Vol.C, No.1401, (30 November), pp.238-40.

<sup>16</sup> Wilson, 1969, *op cit*, see Epilogue.

<sup>17</sup> Reece, 1982, *op cit*, pp.137-39.

<sup>18</sup> Reece, 1982, *Ibid*, p.145.

characteristics. They had migrated from the Second Division and their forebears had been associated with the Brooke government prior to the Japanese Occupation.<sup>19</sup> They had received some education and had themselves served in the Brooke government prior to the Occupation.<sup>20</sup> Together, these groups provided a sort of unofficial leadership of the small Iban community in Kuching.

Although some politically relevant experiences had existed in the Brooke and the Colonial periods, it was not entirely these experiences that guided Ibans into post-independence politics. In fact, it had been a mixture of traditional and modern leadership experiences, which were represented, respectively, by Iban leaders in PESAKA (i.e. the traditional *raja berani*) and SNAP (i.e. the new leaders). As the initial post-independence decade of Iban politics had shown, traditional leadership in its primordial form had not only become archaic but it had also been reduced to the periphery of modern politics; the last Iban state assemblyman, who held the post of *penghulu*, had been ousted from his seat by the mid-1970s. Since then, traditional leaders had played the roles of

<sup>19</sup> For example, the Bays--Eliab, Henry Satab and Barbara; the Bays (Bayang) were direct descendants of *Orang Kaya Ijau* of Banting, Lingga-, and Eliab's wife, Chela, was the great grand-niece of *Orang Kaya Dana Bayang* of Padeh, Saribas, one of James Brooke's most formidable enemies; related to the Bays were the Jitams, Philip and Robert; see Reece, 1982, *Ibid*, pp.138-40.

<sup>20</sup> Eliab Bay--educated first, at the SPG mission school at Merdang and later at St. Thomas, Kuching--had worked in various capacities in the civil service; Charles Mason, President of Perimpunan, a Balau Iban who had been educated at King Edward Medical College, Singapore and had worked in the Medical Department; Barbara Bay was a trained nurse.

community leaders, as links between the grassroots on the one hand, and the elected Iban representatives on the other, as well as acting as agents of the government.<sup>21</sup>

Interestingly enough, the new Iban political leaders in SNAP emerged from outside the general circle of Iban leadership then. They were not government-recognised leaders such as the *penghulus*.<sup>22</sup> Nor were they associated with the early movement of Iban political expression in the Dayak Association.<sup>23</sup> However, similar to those traditional *raja berani* in PESAKA, the new leaders in SNAP were also achievement-oriented, having attained some level of education and been on *bejalai*. From the mid-1970s, Iban political leadership has been dominated by these new leaders. Although the arena from which these latter drew their political experiences was different from their predecessors, several traditionally relevant cultural values are still dominant, especially individualism, competitiveness and cooperation. In post-independence politics, two conflicting political orientations are vigorously reinforced by these old values. The first is the politics of personal followings (i.e. factionalism [or regionalism]) and secondly, the politics of consolidation (i.e. institutional or supra-

<sup>21</sup> Like government civil servants, the traditional leaders are now commonly referred to as the *kakitangan perintah* (Malay)--literally the hands (*tangan*) and legs (*kaki*) of government (*perintah*)--or, in Iban, simply as *kaki perintah* (meaning supporter of government).

<sup>22</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, pp.32-38.

<sup>23</sup> Prominent leaders of the Dayak Association were Eliab Bayang and Robert Jitam, Leigh, 1974, op cit, pp.32-38.

regional loyalty); these two orientations are not mutually exclusive, although both phenomena covary inversely. Supra-regional loyalty cannot flourish when there are strong attachments by the grassroots to their regional (or individual) leaders; this is because strong regional leaders undermine collective leadership in supra-regional institutions. The analogy of the servant who cannot be loyal to two masters at the same time best exemplifies the dichotomous relationship between 'factional' and 'institutional' politics. Iban politics has been dominated by these two orientations, which have occurred in a cyclical fashion. From the early 1960s, factionalism emerged through the District Council elections; then in the mid-1970s, it was replaced by political consolidation behind SNAP. This pattern repeated itself from the early 1980s when Iban political consolidation was eroded and Iban support split between SNAP and its splinter party, the PBDS; in the mid-1980s, Iban political consolidation re-emerged through the PBDS. However, the PBDS' legislative strength was shortlived; after the 1987 general election and just before the first assembly sitting, five of its assemblymen defected to the Barisan Tiga, leaving the PBDS with 10 seats. Therefore, if the past patterns can be taken as predictive of future political behaviour among the Ibans and their leaders, it will be about another 10 years before Iban political strength will again reach its peak.

**III. The Stephen Kalong Ningkan Government:  
The Alliance of SNAP AND PESAKA in 1963  
and the Problems Facing Ningkan.**

When Independence and universal suffrage came in 1963, it was fair to say that Iban traditional political experiences were still dominant. Despite having some access to education, the new educated group of Ibans was largely ignored by the Colonial government. They were not really recognised as a source of potential leadership and the government continued to rely on traditional leaders.

Despite their peripheral political position, the new generation of educated Ibans experienced tremendous initial success in supra-regional politics by uniting the Ibans of Saribas behind SNAP. This was a significant development, as there had been previously no attempt at such an integration. Furthermore, it was undertaken by the new leaders, whose successes and experiences had been different from the generally recognised traditional prestigious activities such as warfaring and the opening up of new land.

In 1962, in anticipation of the coming District Council elections in the following year, Stephen Kalong Ningkan, the Secretary-General of SNAP, initiated the first attempt to forge an alliance among the fragmented native parties in opposition to the well-organised SUPP. Although the native leaders realised the need for a united front in opposition to the Chinese-dominated SUPP, the formation of the Sarawak Alliance Party in October

1962 was beset by numerous problems.<sup>24</sup> Some of the major difficulties faced by the Alliance were the questions of its leadership, the future division of the spoils and the general mistrust of each other.<sup>25</sup>

Based on the number of members of the Council Negeri elected through the three-tier system of election, it was obvious that the Alliance had won the mandate to form the first state government. It was also obvious that the Chief Minister should have been a PESAKA man or, at the least, a Dayak (refer to Table 3.4).

Table 3.4  
Members of District Council,  
Council Negeri and Parliament by Party.

Party	District Council	Council Negeri	Parliament
ALLIANCE:	212	23	18
SNAP	(73)	( 6)	(4)
PESAKA	(61)	(11)	(6)
BARJASA	(73)	( 5)	(5)
SCA	( 5)	( 1)	(3)
SUPP	123	5	3
PANAS	63	5	3
INDEP	31	3	-
Total	429	36	24

Source: Leigh, 1974, op cit, Tables 19 and 20, pp.70-71.

<sup>24</sup> *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 November 1962; the Sarawak United Front was launched in October 1962, and a month later it was transformed into the Sarawak Alliance, which comprised SNAP, PESAKA, BARJASA, PANAS, and SCA; see Appendix A.

<sup>25</sup> Competition drove a wedge between BARJASA and PANAS, which ended in the latter's withdrawal from the Alliance, see *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 May 1962.

However, a federal suggestion that Rahman Ya'kub, a BARJASA leader, be made the Chief Minister, although he had been defeated in his local ward, heralded the influence of the federal authorities in the local political scene.<sup>26</sup> The federal government soon flexed its muscles in the nomination for the positions of Chief Minister and Governor. While a compromise for a Dayak Chief Minister under SNAP's Stephen Kalong Ningkan was acceptable to the federal leadership, a similar compromise for the post of Governor to be held by PESAKA's *Temenggong* Jugah was rejected on the grounds that the two top posts should not be held simultaneously by Dayaks.<sup>27</sup> Much to the disadvantage of the Dayaks, this unwritten "principle" was later to be breached in 1970 when the post of the Chief Minister and the Governor were simultaneously held by Muslims sympathetic to the Malay cause.<sup>28</sup>

The Iban agreement between SNAP and PESAKA in the Sarawak Alliance was precarious. It had been made possible because PESAKA had hoped that its leader, *Temenggong* Jugah, would be made Governor. Failing that,

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<sup>26</sup> See, *The Straits Times*, 25 June 1963.

<sup>27</sup> Leigh's interview with Rahman Ya'kub, see Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.79.

<sup>28</sup> It was said that Rahman Ya'kub used the argument that he was not a Malay but a Muslim Melanau. Therefore his appointment as Chief Minister did not breach the unwritten "principle" that the Chief Ministership and the Governorship should not be held by members of the same religious group; see also Article 160[2] *Federal Constitution of Malaysia* for the definition of a Malay, for which the Islamic religion is a central characteristic.



another compromise was reached whereby *Temenggong Jugah* was made the Federal Minister for the newly created post of Sarawak Affairs. At the state level, Kalong Ningkan did little to ameliorate PESAKA's disadvantaged position and *Temenggong Jugah's* discontent at not being appointed Governor. Perhaps Kalong Ningkan's biggest mistake was that his cabinet did not include any PESAKA representatives; it was an indication of the antipathy between SNAP and PESAKA, although they had cooperated for political convenience.<sup>29</sup>

From the start, it was clear that Kalong Ningkan's leadership in the Alliance and government was plagued by numerous problems. First, he was dependent upon PESAKA's continued support. He was not dependent so much on BARJASA, which at the time (after the election) could not put up a credible challenge because, first, BARJASA's prominent leader (Rahman Ya'kub) was defeated in his local ward, and second, the Malays and Melanaus were divided between BARJASA and PANAS. Their electoral strength was therefore comparatively weak compared to the divided Ibans who were at least both represented in the Alliance. Second, the support of the federal government was also crucial and because of Kalong Ningkan's confrontation with Tunku Abdul Rahman, the former did not

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<sup>29</sup> Stephen Kalong Ningkan's cabinet consisted of: himself (SNAP) as Chief Minister, James Wong (SNAP) Deputy Chief Minister, Dunstan Endawie (SNAP) Minister for Local Government, Teo Kui Seng (SCA) Minister for Natural Resources, Taib Mahmud (BARJASA) Minister for Communications and Works, and Awang Hipni Pengiran Anu (BARJASA) Minister for State.

have that support. And thirdly, Kalong Ningkan's leadership style did nothing to maintain his support within the Alliance and by the federal leaders.

Kalong Ningkan's reliance on his "kitchen cabinet"<sup>30</sup> alienated both the BARJASA and PESAKA leaders and ministers from the decision-making process, and thereby earned himself the reputation as a stooge of the expatriates and imperialists.<sup>31</sup> The problem was further compounded by his uncompromising stand against the status of Malay as the national language, particularly with regard to its adoption in Sarawak, and the slow pace of Borneanisation of the civil service. Their distance from the centre of power was upsetting for the Sarawak Malays who had always been close to the government in Brooke times but who also had the view that they should play a dominant role in politics despite their numerical inferiority. Such discontent found its ally in PESAKA, which like BARJASA, was being moved to the periphery of decision-making and upon whose strength Kalong Ningkan had depended but had not rewarded accordingly.

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<sup>30</sup> From his interviews with the cabinet ministers, Leigh reported that Stephen Kalong Ningkan would meet first with his State Secretary, Tony Shaw, his State Financial Secretary, John Pike, and his political secretary, Ting Tung Ming; then he would meet with SNAP and SCA ministers before convening the full cabinet, by the time major decisions had already been made; see Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.83, footnote no.4.

<sup>31</sup> See Tunku Abdul Rahman as reported by Reuters, 17 May 1966 and reprinted by *The Mirror* (Singapore), 23 May, 1966.

#### **A. Sarawak UMNO?**

For the next three years, Kalong Ningkan's government was plagued by a power struggle, with the Malays wishing to replace Ningkan with a Muslim.

The first move towards toppling him was a proposal to launch a Sarawak branch of UMNO which was designed to bring together members of BARJASA and PANAS.<sup>32</sup> The federal leaders were not secretive about such a move. After the inauguration of Malaysia, UMNO leader Ghazali Jawi came to Sarawak to study the feasibility of setting up branches in Sarawak, with the leaders of BARJASA and PANAS assuming leadership at the state level.

The formation of an UMNO Sarawak branch did not materialise as the party's assessment showed that it had little chance of success without the support of the other native groups,<sup>33</sup> namely the Dayaks, who made up about 50% of the total Sarawak population then.

#### **B. The Land Bill Crisis of 1965**

The proposal to open up native land for purchase by Chinese provided yet another opportunity to challenge Kalong Ningkan. As Searle noted "... much of the opposition arose not so much from the bill itself as from the opportunity it provided for political manoeuvre".<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See *Sarawak by the Week*, Week No.40, 1963, and also *Sarawak Tribune*, 7 October 1963.

<sup>33</sup> See *Borneo Bulletin*, 10 October 1964, and *Sarawak Tribune*, 31 October 1964. The Malays and Melanaus comprised no more than 25% of the total Sarawak population.

<sup>34</sup> Searle, 1983, op cit, pp.36-37.

In opposition to the Bill, the Native Alliance was to be formed consisting of BARJASA, PANAS and PESAKA. It was not difficult to seduce PESAKA, which was unrepresented in the Ningkan government, with the promise of a more prominent role in the new coalition. SNAP was excluded because it was not considered native enough.<sup>35</sup> The Bill was subsequently withdrawn. PESAKA reaffirmed its support of the Alliance under Kalong Ningkan and accused Taib Mahmud of attempting to split Iban unity.<sup>36</sup> BARJASA was expelled.

Although the Land Bill was never introduced in the Council Negeri session, it provided an opportunity to renegotiate the partnership in the Sarawak Alliance. As a consequence, BARJASA, which had been expelled earlier, was readmitted and their ministers reinstated, and PANAS was brought into the Sarawak Alliance. Three new ministers were appointed, two from PESAKA and one from PANAS.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, pp.86-88; Searle, 1983, op cit, pp.36-37; Milne and Ratnam, 1974, op cit, p.220.

<sup>36</sup> Milne and Ratnam, 1974, Ibid, p.221, and Searle, 1983, op cit, p.37.

<sup>37</sup> The two from PESAKA were *Penghulu* Francis Umpau, Minister for Land and Mineral Resources, and Tajang Laing (a Kayan), Minister for State; the one from PANAS was Abang Othman Abang Haji Moasili (Malay) Minister for Welfare. The appointment of these three was made in place of the three expatriate officers who had to give up their cabinet posts. With the new appointments there were then three ministers from SNAP, one SCA, two PESAKA, two BARJASA and one PANAS.

### C. The National Language Issue and the Borneanisation of the Civil Service

A basic condition for Sarawak's entry into the Federation of Malaysia was that the implementation of Malay as the official language and the language of instruction in schools was contingent upon the passing of an act in Sarawak's state legislature. In any case, the issue was not to be discussed until after 1973.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps, the attempt to accelerate the use of Malay in Sarawak was yet another political manoeuvre to corner Kalong Ningkan; being a strong supporter of state rights, such a move would clearly be certain to provoke him. The provision for the national language was rather vague and it was really up to the state legislature whether or not to introduce it as the national language, even after the ten-years' grace period.<sup>39</sup> The choice in confronting Kalong Ningkan with the language issue bore fruit for the federal leaders as it placed Ningkan in a very bad light.<sup>40</sup> Through his assertions about the provisions of the Malaysia Agreement, Kalong Ningkan was made to look

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<sup>38</sup> Britain (1963). *Malaysia, Agreement Concluded between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Federation of Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore*. London: HMSO.

<sup>39</sup> See Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.89 whose statement was precise: There was no requirement for the Borneo State Legislatures to act in 1973. Legally they had the option to delay implementation of Malay as the official language as long as they wished.

<sup>40</sup> The battle of words between Ningkan and Tunku Abdul Rahman ensued with numerous exchanges of unstatesmanlike remarks. For example, the Tunku was reported as saying "Just because the people of Sarawak had learned English for the last few years did not mean that [Sarawak] should become a bastard [state]", *Suara Malaysia*, 7 July 1966, see also Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.91.

as though he was anti-Malaysia. But during all these exchanges what went unnoticed was increasing federal intervention and domination over the internal administration of Sarawak.

Another area for clashes between Kalong Ningkan and the federal government was on the issue of Borneanisation of the Sarawak Civil Service. Kalong Ningkan was seen as too slow in replacing expatriate officers from the Civil Service. Instead he opted to retain their services until such time as he considered it was suitable for a local to take over. This frustrated the federal leaders, especially when their directives and plans were rebuffed by these very expatriate officers.<sup>41</sup>

#### **D. Kalong Ningkan's Dismissal**

The removal of Ningkan was the culmination of the protracted power struggle between SNAP and BARJASA, or more specifically between Ibans and Malays. On 12 June 1966, Ningkan dismissed, for the second time, Taib Mahmud of BARJASA from the cabinet, accusing the latter of trying to topple his government.<sup>42</sup> Following Taib Mahmud's

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<sup>41</sup> See Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.100, when he recounted from his interview with a high official from Kuching that: "The central government repeatedly sent directives and plans to Kuching only to receive a detailed reply that, under the terms of the IGC Agreement, the central government could do a, b and c, but not d, e or f, for the latter conflicted with Section X. It was obvious to Kuala Lumpur that this was not the work of Dayaks who had received a primary school education". However, it is unlikely that Iban ministers were totally dependent on and led by expatriates.

<sup>42</sup> Milne and Ratnam, 1974, op cit, p.224; see also, Searle, 1983, op cit, p.38.

dismissal, PESAKA and BARJASA ministers resigned the following day.

Twenty-one of the Alliance's thirty-two members in the Council Negeri signed a petition calling for Ningkan's resignation, for it was claimed that they had lost confidence in him. Ningkan refused to resign stating that such a matter must be decided in the Council Negeri and not from Kuala Lumpur.<sup>43</sup> The Tunku conferred with the Governor. Convinced by the argument presented by the Tunku, the Governor dismissed Ningkan and his government on 17 June 1966 and on the same day appointed *Penghulu Tawi Sli* in his place.<sup>44</sup>

*Penghulu Tawi Sli's* initial cabinet<sup>45</sup> was shortlived for Ningkan obtained a High Court ruling that his dismissal was unconstitutional and that the Governor had acted outside (*ultra vires*) the constitution by dismissing him.<sup>46</sup> When Ningkan was reinstated, he refused to convene the Council Negeri, instead he sought to dissolve it and call for a fresh election. Both moves

<sup>43</sup> A similar but unsuccessful attempt was later used to try to bring down Taib Mahmud's government in 1987. This will be discussed in Chapter 4.

<sup>44</sup> Milne and Ratnam, 1974, op cit, p.225; see also, Searle, 1983, op cit, p.38.

<sup>45</sup> *Penghulu Tawi Sli's* cabinet consisted of: himself (PESAKA) Chief Minister, *Penghulu Francis Umpau* (PESAKA) Minister for Land and Mineral Resources, *Tajang Laing* (PESAKA) Minister for Communications and Works, *Taib Mahmud* (BARJASA) Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, *Awang Hipni* (BARJASA) Minister for Welfare, Youth and Culture, and *Abang Abdulrahim* (PANAS) Minister for Local Government.

<sup>46</sup> See *Vanguard*, *Sarawak Tribune* and *The Straits Times*, of 8 September 1966.

would have bought him time to woo back some defecting Alliance members. Thus, to undermine his possible influence, there seemed to be only one option left open to the federal leaders and the dissidents, that was to invoke the emergency regulations. Leigh observed that "tensions appeared to be artificially stimulated in order to create a situation that would require a declaration of emergency";<sup>47</sup> there was no general unrest to justify the imposition of the emergency rule. However, there had been a demonstration against Ningkan by about 200 Malay Alliance supporters. In addition to that, Tawi Sli, the Alliance puppet, who was removed from the Chief Ministership as a consequence of the Court ruling, complained of harassment of his supporters; he sought police protection, which was denied, as the expatriate Police Commissioner, Roy Henry, deemed it unnecessary; however, Henry's decision was overruled by the federal government, which ordered the latter's Deputy to comply with their order. In addition, there was also the Alliance's fear of facing an impending state general election; when Ningkan was reinstated, he called for an immediate general election as he believed that not only the legitimacy of his government was in question but that of the positions of the state assemblymen, who kept switching sides as the political fortunes swayed.<sup>48</sup> On 15

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<sup>47</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.110.

<sup>48</sup> *Sarawak Tribune*, 9 September 1966; see also Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.108.



September, an Emergency was declared, paving the way to amend the constitution empowering the Governor to call for a meeting of the Council Negeri.<sup>49</sup> Ningkan was removed by twenty-five votes of no-confidence and, in his place, the Governor reappointed *Penghulu Tawi Sli*.<sup>50</sup>

#### E. SNAP Expansion 1966-1970

After Ningkan had been ousted from power, SNAP concentrated on the expansion of its base. Initially, it had been labelled as a Saribas party. In his study, Searle noted that SNAP was essentially the mouthpiece of the Saribas and the Second Division Ibans.<sup>51</sup> Not only did SNAP and the Saribas produce the first Chief Minister, but they also produced the first State Secretary, Gerunsin Lemat, the first Iban Resident of a Division, Peter Tinggom, and the first local Curator of the Sarawak Museum, Benedict Sandin.<sup>52</sup> More importantly, almost the entire first SNAP Executive Committee was composed of Ibans from the Saribas.<sup>53</sup>

To a large extent, the observation that SNAP was a Saribas party was plausible. The number of District

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<sup>49</sup> For events and justifications surrounding the declaration of the emergency, see the government white paper, (1966). *The Communist Threat to Sarawak*. Kuching: Gov't Printing Office.

<sup>50</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, pp.110-11.

<sup>51</sup> See Leigh, 1974, Ibid, pp.113-18; and Searle, 1983, op cit, pp.85-86.

<sup>52</sup> Pringle, 1970, op cit, p.209; Searle, 1983, op cit, pp.85-86.

<sup>53</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, pp.32-35.

Council seats won by SNAP in the 1963 election seemed to lend weight to that observation. Of the forty-eight seats won, 26 (or 54%) were won from the Second Division.<sup>54</sup> However, this was soon to change. For after it was removed from power, SNAP began to expand its base beyond the Second Division, putting in danger its support from the Saribas Ibans. Searle noted two reasons for increasing Saribas desertion of SNAP. First, the Saribas Ibans were attached to SNAP's Saribas image. And second, perhaps more importantly, because SNAP was no longer the party that benefited them, in terms of bringing development and making them the centre of regular visits by top government officials.<sup>55</sup>

In anticipation that they could wrest power away from the new Alliance of PESAKA, BARJASA, PANAS and SCA in the coming election, SNAP expanded its base and opened as many as 35 branches.<sup>56</sup> This almost doubled its existing branches in the First, Third and Fifth Divisions.

#### **IV. The Penghulu Tawi Sli Government**

The government of *Penghulu Tawi Sli* must be seen in the context of the ongoing power struggle between SNAP,

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<sup>54</sup> Eleven out of the possible 19 from Batang Lupar, eight out of the possible 20 from Saribas, and seven out of the possible 18 from Kalaka. The numbers of SNAP District Council seats by Division were as follows: First Division 11, Second Division 26, Third Division none, Fourth Division 10, and Fifth Division one, see Table 2.1 (Appendix C).

<sup>55</sup> Searle, 1983, op cit, pp.86-92.

<sup>56</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, pp.114-15.

representing Ibans, and BARJASA, representing the Malays and Melanaus, which was to culminate in the eventual installation of a Malay-oriented Chief Minister. Except for his being a *penghulu*, Tawi Sli was not much of a personality. In the words of Ross-Larson, Tawi Sli was timid, uneducated, simplistic in his approach to politics, and not a natural politician.<sup>57</sup> While the assessment of Tawi Sli's ability was probably true, his ascent to the chief ministership must also be seen in terms of the perspective of the ongoing process of a power struggle between the Iban leaders of SNAP and the Muslim leaders of BARJASA. If a more qualified and independent-minded Iban candidate (i.e. Kana) had emerged in place of Tawi Sli, it would have prevented the realisation of the aim of BARJASA (and the federal leaders) to topple Ningkan. Hence, the issue that a place could not be found for Kana to enable him to assume the Chief Ministership did not arise.<sup>58</sup>

Tawi Sli governed through his "kitchen cabinet" composed of Thomas Kana, the PESAKA Secretary-General, Taib Mahmud, member of the state cabinet, and Rahman Ya'kub, then a Federal Deputy Minister. The three men

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<sup>57</sup> Ross-Larson, 1976, op cit, pp.41-42.

<sup>58</sup> Thomas Kana was mentioned as a possible PESAKA candidate to take over from Ningkan. However, Ross-Larson, 1976, op cit, indicated, rather simplistically, that he might well have been the choice had it not been for his position as a federal MP and that the cabinet posts were already filled. However, if the concern to find the most suitable Iban candidate as Chief Minister had been genuine-- i.e. in the person of Kana--ways could have been found to relocate one of the three nominated members of the Council Negeri, thereby enabling Kana to assume the Chief Ministership under PESAKA.

were his key decision-makers, much to BARJASA's liking, as Taib Mahmud was in the cabinet, giving him an edge over Thomas Kana. Hence, BARJASA's aim of being the dominant partner in the Alliance was accomplished with Tawi Sli's appointment as Chief Minister. However, Tawi Sli's nominal role as Chief Minister cannot really be seen as representing the weakness of being a "traditional leader" in modern political settings, as he was hardly a traditional leader in the true sense of the word, other than the fact that he then held the office of *penghulu*. He had some education and had been a teacher before entering priesthood training; he was a petition writer before being appointed a *penghulu*. Therefore, he was hardly a "traditional leader" comparable in status to such persons as *Temenggong Koh* or *Temenggong Jugah*.<sup>59</sup>

PESAKA's subservient role to BARJASA soon proved unpopular among its Iban supporters, even those in its traditional hold of Kapit. Its leadership in the Alliance was seen as too weak against the encroachment of BARJASA. Searle attributed PESAKA's decline to a number of factors.<sup>60</sup> First, PESAKA was dependent on the local *penghulus* who were seen as getting wealthier while their *anembiak* remained poor. Thus, those who benefited tended to remain loyal to PESAKA, while those who did not, tended to look elsewhere in the hope that supporting other political leaders might bring them change for the

<sup>59</sup> For a brief profile of Tawi Sli, see appendix B.

<sup>60</sup> Searle, 1983, op cit, pp.104-17.

better. Second, PESAKA's subservience to BUMIPUTERA<sup>61</sup> and its lack of strong leadership angered and alienated many of its supporters. And thirdly, PESAKA's inability to provide opportunities congruent with changing socio-economic conditions weakened its support.

The conflict between PESAKA and BARJASA intensified to the extent that PESAKA had to demand the expulsion of Taib Mahmud in order to placate its supporters. The expulsion seemed to be the way to tone down the role of BUMIPUTERA's dominance within the Alliance. Taib Mahmud accepted his expulsion on condition that his policy of freezing timber licences was to be observed.<sup>62</sup> In addition, the PESAKA Chief Minister also reshuffled his cabinet and reallocated the more important ministries to PESAKA's nominees--i.e. Ministries of Land and Mineral Resources, and Agriculture and Forestry.<sup>63</sup> At one point, PESAKA's position as the leading component of the Alliance looked very untenable when the party's leadership was accusing the Malay/Melanau ministers of "working for the Malays and not doing the same for the natives (Ibans)", when it was PESAKA which was the backbone of the government and which provided the Chief

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<sup>61</sup> Parti BUMIPUTERA formed in November 1966, from the merger of the predominantly Malay Parti Negara (PANAS) and BARJASA, made up mainly of Melanaus.

<sup>62</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.116, see also *Sarawak Tribune*, 23 September and 24 October 1967; Until his expulsion, Taib Mahmud was Minister for Agriculture and Forestry.

<sup>63</sup> In the reshuffle, there were four PESAKA ministers, three BUMIPUTERA and two SCA; see *Sarawak Tribune*, 29 November 1967.

Ministership. *Temenggong Jugah*, as leader of PESAKA was prevailed upon to attack the Malay ministers in his welcoming speech for the visiting Malaysian Deputy Premier.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, fragile political relations between Ibans in SNAP and PESAKA were largely being undermined by BARJASA, which sought not only to undermine Iban unity, which did exist, but also to take over the leadership of the Sarawak Alliance. The precarious relations were not at all helped by SNAP's attitude in 1963-66 of excluding the PESAKA from the realm of state decision-making. PESAKA was not represented in Ningkan's cabinet; therefore, it was easy for BARJASA to incite PESAKA's resentment against the Chief Minister.

Ningkan's temperament was, of course, not to his advantage. He was, as Ross-Larson noted, well-known for his occasional outbursts of rage, when he would not hesitate to threaten people with bodily harm, detention and deportation.<sup>65</sup> Such temperament was not uncommon among traditional Iban leaders (*raja berani*), who might have found the modern political manoeuvring so complicated. Among the *raja berani*, methods of settling disagreements were simple; for example, *betempoh* (a fight where two

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<sup>64</sup> *Vanguard*, 9 October 1967.

<sup>65</sup> On occasion when people did not listen to him, he would, in the middle of a meeting or discussion over dinner, overturn tables; this was related by Pengabang anak Impak, who was a former *penghulu* and a SNAP member from Sibu Rural; Former *Penghulu* and SNAP member Pengabang anak Impak, interview by author, 1 June 1990, *Rh. Ranggau*, Sungei Assan, Sibu.

sides used only wooden clubs).<sup>66</sup> While these values were not inherited, they were vigorously socialised through the *bilik*-family in the longhouse.<sup>67</sup>

#### V. The 1969 State General Election

The Malaysian Parliament and all State Legislative Assemblies in Malaysia, except that of the state of Kelantan, were dissolved on 20 March 1969. According to the Malaysian Constitution, upon the dissolution of Parliament and the State Assemblies, an election must be held within 30 days for the states in the Peninsula and 90 days for the states of Sarawak and Sabah.<sup>68</sup>

Nomination was fixed on 15th April 1969. Polling commenced on the 10th May 1969. In the Peninsular states, polling could be completed in one day. But in Sarawak, because of the difficulty of communication and staffing, staggered polling commenced on the 10th May 1969 and was scheduled to be completed on the 7th June 1969. However, because of the outbreak of communal violence in Kuala Lumpur on 13th May 1969,<sup>69</sup> polling was suspended following the declaration of the state of emergency. Polling in

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<sup>66</sup> Sandin, 1980, op cit, see Chapter 1.

<sup>67</sup> For processes of political socialisation, see Chapter 2.

<sup>68</sup> Article 55(4), *Federal Constitution of Malaysia*.

<sup>69</sup> For accounts of the events leading to the outbreak of communal violence, see: Tunku Abdul Rahman, 1969, op cit; Goh, 1971, op cit; and Malaysian National Operations Council (1969). *The May 13 Tragedy*. Kuala Lumpur: Gov't Printing Office; see also, "Sarawak Elections Suspended" *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 May 1969; and "Tunku Explains Suspension of Elections", *Sarawak Tribune*, 19 May 1969.

Sarawak resumed in early June 1970 with a ban on campaign activities.

For the peoples of Sarawak, the general election was the first direct opportunity to elect their representatives to both the houses of Parliament and the Council Negeri. Previously, elections to the Council Negeri and Parliament had been through indirect elections, where the people cast their votes for local councillors, who in turn elected members of Divisional Advisory Councils. Members of the DACs then elected members of the Council Negeri, who in turn, elected members of Parliament. Prior to the 1969 election, the number of seats in the Council Negeri had been increased to forty-eight and the number of parliamentary seats stood at twenty-four.<sup>70</sup>

The general election was much awaited by SNAP. Since its loss of power, SNAP had been preoccupied with strengthening its base of support with the ultimate hope of recapturing state power from the ruling Alliance. Thus, for the Ibans and in the Iban state and federal constituencies, the election was a test of their national (i.e. supra-regional) unity. The choice was clear: either support and strengthen PESAKA in the Alliance or throw Iban weight behind SNAP and hope that the latter could recapture state power. Either way it was still uncertain

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<sup>70</sup> See Table 3.29 (Appendix C) for a list of the 48 state constituencies and the proportion of the electorate by ethnicity. In the previous election (1963), the number of state seats was 42, including three nominated and three ex-officio, refer also to Table 3.30 (Appendix C).



whether Iban power could be maintained at the centre of state decision-making.

#### A. Iban Issues at the Poll

Before proceeding to examine the election results and voting trends among the Ibans, it is important to look at the background issues to Iban voting patterns in 1969.

Historically, Ibans were divided by their riverine settlement. However, this division may have been important internally, but in terms of ethnic identity with reference to non-Ibans, the Ibans had an all encompassing expression for themselves as "Orang Iban" (the Iban people) or "Kami Iban" (we Iban). This loose association of the Ibans was based on their adat and religion, which is basically the same for all Ibans with minor variations. But in my view, to suggest that riverine divisions had a major role even in the 1963 election, as Leigh and Searle had concluded, is an overstatement.

Since the formation of the first state government, Iban suspicion of Kuala Lumpur had been aroused. Kuala Lumpur's veto of *Temenggong Jugah's* candidacy as the first Governor could have been accepted on the basis of power-sharing among the native communities. But Ningkan's dismissal orchestrated by Kuala Lumpur was in a sense unexpected. The changing mood among the Ibans, which was

to SNAP's advantage, was noted by Leigh when he observed that

Twelve months after its ouster from government SNAP was so popular amongst the Iban that it was on the verge of capturing majority support even in the Kapit District, where PESAKA had easily won virtually every seat in the 1963 election.<sup>71</sup>

The new Iban government of *Penghulu Tawi Sli* was transitional. Perhaps Kuala Lumpur felt they had to appoint an Iban for a number of reasons. First, the notion of power-sharing, which was used to reject *Temenggong Jugah's* appointment as Governor, could only mean that an Iban should be appointed lest it risk more unpopularity among the Ibans. Second, and perhaps more importantly, was the fact that PESAKA was the leading Alliance component with 11 Council Negeri seats compared to the divided Malays and Melanaus. The Melanau-dominated BARJASA held five seats while PANAS held two, having lost two members who withdrew. Changes in the number of Council Negeri seats held by parties is recorded in Table 3.30 (Appendix C).

There were three important issues that confronted Ibans in the 1969 election. First, there was the inter-ethnic power struggle between the Ibans and the Malays; the efforts of the latter group were strongly coordinated not by the Malay leaders *per se*, but by influential Muslim Melanaus using the Muslim-Malay label. Secondly,

<sup>71</sup> Leigh, 1974, *op cit*, p.115.

there was excessive federal interference which favoured the Muslim group; this gave the edge to the Muslim Malays and Melanaus in the inter-ethnic power struggle between them and the non-Muslim Ibans. Thirdly, there was the issue of improving state-federal relations, which was stressed by both the federal and state politicians to generate support for BUMIPUTERA, which was deemed more acceptable to the federal leaders. However, these three issues were eclipsed in turn by the communist threat prevailing in the state then, which also worked to the advantage of the federal leaders in support of BUMIPUTERA.

Although the main contest in the elections was between the Alliance, which comprised BUMIPUTERA, PESAKA and SCA, and the opposition SNAP and SUPP, attacks and counter-attacks were not confined to these divisions, but also took place even within the Alliance components. There was an uneasy alliance between PESAKA and BUMIPUTERA, despite the fact that both parties were members of the state Alliance. A BUMIPUTERA leader, Rahman Ya'kub, accused PESAKA of bribing BUMIPUTERA members to join PESAKA,<sup>72</sup> a charge to which PESAKA's Secretary-General, Thomas Kana, subtly replied that such matters should be discussed amicably at a round table conference, in recognition of the fact that both parties

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<sup>72</sup> See "BUMIPUTERA Chief Accuses 'Bribe Charge'", *Sarawak Tribune*, 3 January 1969.

were members of the state Alliance.<sup>73</sup> In its political broadcast, PESAKA affirmed that, although the party was open to natives only, it believed in multi-racial policies for an alliance government they hoped to form was not only representative of the natives but of all peoples of Sarawak; in addition, it also stressed the achievement of PESAKA under the Chief Ministership of Penghulu Tawi Sli.<sup>74</sup> In the subsequent political broadcast, PESAKA attacked SUPP as anti-Malaysian and its members as guilty of harbouring subversive elements; SNAP was also attacked for being equivocal about its support for Malaysia.<sup>75</sup>

#### **B. Nature of the State Constituencies**

Based on the ethnic composition of the electorate of any given constituency, the forty-eight state constituencies can be classified as either Iban, Bidayuh, Orang Ulu, Malay/Melanau or Chinese.<sup>76</sup> Those which can be classified as either Iban or Bidayuh can be further

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<sup>73</sup> "'Bring Problems to Round Table Talks'--Kana", *Sarawak Tribune*, 21 February 1969.

<sup>74</sup> "Party PESAKA's Political Broadcast", *Sarawak Tribune*, 2 May 1969; in its first broadcast, the party outlined its election manifesto.

<sup>75</sup> "Party PESAKA's Third Political Broadcast", *Sarawak Tribune*, 3 May 1969; The SCA also stressed its multi-racial stand despite its image as a Chinese party; it also emphasised the need for a stronger Chinese representation and drew attention rather vaguely to the accomplishments of the SCA within the Alliance, "SCA Political Broadcast", *Sarawak Tribune*, 4 April 1969.

<sup>76</sup> For the percentage of voters by ethnicity, refer to Table 3.29 (Appendix C).

divided into absolute and simple or plural (marginal) majority seats.

An Iban absolute majority constituency is one in which Ibans constitute at least 51% of the total electorate. In theory, and assuming that Ibans vote for an Iban candidate in an Iban majority constituency, the candidate could win even without the cooperation of voters from other ethnic groups.

However, an Iban plural (or marginal) majority constituency is one in which Ibans make up between 34% to 49% of the total electorate. Again, and hypothetically assuming that the voters of other ethnic groups did not vote Iban, then an Iban candidate would not be able to win. This of course also assumes that the other ethnic groups cooperate against the Ibans. Otherwise, if the other ethnic groups were also contesting against each other strictly along communal lines, the Iban would stand a better chance of winning in the Iban plural majority constituencies.

In 1969, and based on the above classification and criteria, 20 state seats can be said to be Iban constituencies. Table 3.31 (Appendix C) lists the 20 constituencies, of which 16 were Iban absolute and four plural majority constituencies. Similarly, Table 3.32 (Appendix C) lists Bidayuh constituencies, while Table 3.33 (Appendix C) lists those of the Orang Ulu, which were all Orang Ulu absolute majority constituencies. The

Bidayuh had four out of its five constituencies as absolute majority seats.

With reference to these non-Muslim native (i.e. Dayak) populations, it has been a common tendency to speak of them as a single group. Collectively, these three peoples should have been able to command 28 state seats in 1969, which should have been sufficient to form a Dayak government and which, to say the least, would have given them a strong claim to the state leadership. However, five out of the 28 seats were plural or marginal constituencies, which, according to the earlier definition, could not be counted on. Thus, the problem that seemed to plague these three groups prior to the 1969 election was unity, in that they could not agree to act in concert to ensure that these seats could be won. Besides, there was a strong challenge put forward by the SUPP in the Bidayuh and Orang Ulu areas; and with the competition between PESAKA and SNAP for Bidayuh and Orang Ulu support, the SUPP was able to wrest three of the five Bidayuh seats and one of the three Orang Ulu from the Dayaks in the state general election.

Another 12 state constituencies were Malay/Melanau (see Table 3.34 [Appendix C]). Out of the 12, only one, that is the Muara Tuang constituency, was marginal in that the Malay and Melanau voters accounted for about 46.7% of the total electorate. The problem of Malay and Melanau unity had to a large extent been overcome by the merger of BARJASA, the predominantly Melanau party, and

PANAS, the Malay-dominated one. While the problem of Malay and Melanau unity was far from being solved with the merger, there was no other Malay or Melanau communal party to divert support from the newly-founded party, the Parti Bumiputera.

The Chinese controlled eight state constituencies, mainly the urban-based ones (see Table 3.35 [Appendix C]). Of the eight, one, that of Binatang, was a Chinese marginal constituency in which the Chinese electorate accounted for 45.3% of the total. In contrast to the divided support among the native parties, the SUPP had enjoyed considerable Chinese support. In fact, the legislative support of the SCA, the other Chinese party, was derived mainly from the native areas. In 1963, SCA won three council seats, all of which were derived from the native areas--two from Kapit (an Iban area) and one from Upper Sadong (a predominantly Bidayuh area). In the three seats that it won, SCA probably rode to victory due to the fact that it was affiliated to the Alliance, where SNAP had won 33% of the council seats in the Upper Sadong District; similarly, the other two it won in Kapit could be linked to PESAKA, which won about 88% of the total seats for the Kapit District. Thus, it might be hypothesised that SCA was then kept within the Alliance, initially under Ningkan, in order to project Chinese representation in the state government, although it had received minimal Chinese support, and under Tawi Sli's government, to continue the tradition.

### C. The Election Result in 20 Iban Constituencies

Several observations about voting trends can be made from the results of the general election in the 20 Iban constituencies. First, SNAP and PESAKA were on equal terms as far as the number of Iban constituencies each had won. SNAP had won eight while PESAKA secured seven (see Table 3.36 [Appendix C]).

Second, the Iban polarisation between the Second Division Ibans voting for SNAP and the Third Division Ibans voting for PESAKA was eroded in the 1969 election. This was apparent not only from the number of Iban constituencies won by SNAP and PESAKA respectively, which did not correspond with their "home" divisions, but also from the voting trends. Of six Iban constituencies in the Second Division, four were won by SNAP and two by PESAKA. In the Third Division, there were nine Iban constituencies. Four were won by PESAKA, two by SNAP, two by SUPP and one by an Independent Iban.

However, the analysis of seat counts must also be supplemented by close scrutiny of the vote counts in each constituency in order to ascertain the depth of the voting trends by division and their polarisation. However, there must be a word of caution in analysing these trends. Without knowing exactly the voter turnout by ethnic group and whether members of a given group indeed voted communally, relationships and patterns established in certain constituencies can only be very approximately determined.



1. *Voting Patterns in the Second Division.*

Voting trends appear to have blurred the formerly relatively clear demarcation of the Second Division as SNAP's traditional heartland. Of the four Iban constituencies SNAP had won, only three showed undisputed support for the party; these were in Krian, Layar and Simanggang, where SNAP gained as much as four times the support that was given to PESAKA (see Table 3.5). In the fourth, the Ulu Ai, the margin of 45 votes was rather small indicating a fairly equal division between SNAP and PESAKA.

The significance of PESAKA's win in Lingga-Sebuyau and Engkilili-Skrang belies the small margin by which the two constituencies had been won. The victory marked the breaking down of long-held historical cleavages between the Second and the Third Division Ibans.

Table 3.5  
Iban Voting Patterns in the Second Division.

Constituency	Votes Polled		Votes Variation
	SNAP	PESAKA	
Won by SNAP:			
S.18 Ulu Ai	934	889	45
S.22 Krian	2,933	872	2,061
S.20 Layar	2,546	713	1,833
S.16 Simanggang	2,513	718	1,795
Won by PESAKA:			
S.15 Lingga-Sebuyau	1,915	2,134	219
S.17 Engkilili-Skrang	946	1,101	155
Total	11,787	6,427	n.a.

However, there was another trend in Iban voting in the Second Division. This involved two non-Iban parties, SUPP and BUMIPUTERA, which obtained considerable support in Simanggang and Engkilili-Skrang (see Tables 3.6 and 3.7). In Simanggang, Dayak Ibans made up roughly about 63.8% of the voters, the Malays 18.2% and Chinese, 18.0%. A number of observations can be made based on certain assumptions. First, assuming that all ethnic groups voted communally, clearly the 25.7% of the votes that SUPP polled must have come from the other communities and since the SUPP candidate was an Iban, it was very likely that support had come from the Ibans. Second, it is also highly probable that most, if not all, votes polled by the BUMIPUTERA candidate had come from the Malay voters. Thirdly, as was concluded earlier, it is safe to say that Simanggang was indeed a SNAP area, and when SNAP and PESAKA, each represented by an Iban candidate, were pitted against each other, the non-Ibans would play an important balancing role.

Table 3.6  
Voting Trends in Simanggang.

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of Cast Votes
Nelson Liap Kudu	SNAP	2,513	34.47
Hollis ak. Tini	SUPP	1,879	25.78
Rabaie b. Ahmad	BUMI	1,048	14.38
Jimbai ak. Maja	PESAKA	718	9.85
4 Independent and and Spoilt votes	-	1,132	15.53
Total	-	7,290	100.00

Key: BUMI -Parti Bumiputera

Engkilili-Skrang differed from Simanggang in that it had a higher percentage of Iban voters. Engkilili-Skrang comprised 86.2% Ibans, 1.4% Malays and 12.4% Chinese. Based on data presented below, it is clear that SUPP had a share of the Iban votes making it then comparable to SNAP.

Table 3.7  
Voting Trends in Engkilili-Skrang.

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of Cast Votes
Simon Dembab Maja	PESAKA	1,101	30.26
Chang Shui Foh	SUPP	976	26.82
Pengiran Bilang	SNAP	946	26.00
Legan P. Narok	INDEP	225	6.18
Spoilt Votes	-	391	10.74
Total	-	3,639	100.00

## 2. Voting Patterns in the Third Division

In comparison to the Second Division, it is much harder to establish, through the voting trends in the nine Iban constituencies, that the Third Division was indeed a PESAKA area. Out of the nine Iban constituencies, PESAKA had won only four--Pakan, Machan, Pelagus and Baleh--while SNAP won two (see Table 3.8). Of the remaining three, one each was won by SUPP, SCA and an Iban independent. What is clear is that PESAKA was the dominant party among the Ibans of the Third Division. The second place was shared equally between SNAP and SUPP, the latter not in terms of the number of Iban

constituencies won but by the total votes collected in all Iban constituencies that it had contested.

Table 3.8  
Iban Voting Trends in the Third Division.

Constituency	Votes Polled .		Votes Variation
	SNAP	PESAKA	
Won by PESAKA			
S.33 Pakan	667	748	81
S.35 Machan	327	2,459	2,132
S.38 Pelagus	716	1,389	673
S.39 Baleh	1,528	1,953	425
Won by SNAP			
S.34 Meluan	880	810	70
S.37 Song	1,614	1,294	320
Won by SCA:			
S.29 Igan	213	-	-
Won by SUPP:			
S.30 Dudong	1,138	1,434	296
Won by Independent:			
S.36 Ngemah	603	660	57

In the area commonly associated with the home of *Temenggong Jugah*, its founder President, PESAKA had not fared well in terms of the votes it received in comparison to SNAP. In Pelagus and Baleh respectively, PESAKA had received 673 and 425 votes more than SNAP. Surprisingly, it received substantial support in Machan, in the lower part of the Rejang area, where it had polled 2,132 votes more than SNAP. Although PESAKA had also won Pakan, its 81 vote margin over SNAP was narrow indeed.

However, even in the three Iban constituencies that PESAKA had won, SNAP had to be content with its subservient position to SUPP. In Machan there were 68%

Iban voters, 3.8% Malays and 28.2% Chinese. The voting pattern in Machan is presented in Table 3.9. The votes cast in Machan establish clearly that PESAKA had overwhelming Iban support even if all Chinese and Malays had voted for SUPP.

Table 3.9  
Voting Trends in Machan.

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of Cast Votes
Thomas Kana	PESAKA	2,459	55.31
Kong Foh Kim	SUPP	1,589	35.74
Stephen Sanggau	SNAP	327	7.35
Spoilt Votes	-	71	1.6
Total	-	4,446	100.00

Voting trends in Pelagus and Baleh are presented in Tables 3.10 and 3.11. The voting trend in Pelagus was very similar to that in Machan in that SNAP trailed behind SUPP in the support it received from the Pelagus Ibans. However, Pelagus differed from Machan in that the former was "more Iban" by having 79.8% Iban voters, 3.7% Malays and 16.5% Chinese. Assuming that Malays and Chinese had voted SUPP, still SUPP had doubled its Iban votes compared to that of SNAP.

Table 3.10  
Voting Trends in Pelagus.

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of Cast Votes
Bennet Jarrow	PESAKA	1,389	40.67
Jugah ak. Lasah	SUPP	1,069	31.30
Francis ak. Nyuak	SNAP	716	21.00
Spoilt Votes	-	241	7.06
Total	-	3,415	100.00

The Baleh case was rather unique. Not only was it the home area of *Temenggong Jugah*, the famous traditional *raja berani* of the Rejang Ibans and PESAKA founder President, but PESAKA's candidate in Baleh, Kanyan, was the son of another of the Rejang Iban traditional *raja berani*, the illustrious *Temenggong Koh*. Although PESAKA had won through the candidacy of Kanyan anak *Temenggong Koh*, his majority hardly expressed his stature.

Table 3.11  
Voting Trends in Baleh.

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of Cast Votes
Kanyan T. Koh	PESAKA	1,953	37.92
Wesley A. Nabau	SNAP	1,528	29.67
Kulleh ak. Samada	SUPP	806	15.65
Pengarah Sibat	INDEP	492	9.55
Spoilt	-	371	7.20
Total	-	5,150	100.00

In the two Third Division constituencies of Meluan and Song where SNAP had won, the former was contested by SNAP and PESAKA and two other Iban independent candidates. The support for SNAP and PESAKA of the Meluan Ibans, who comprised 94% of the voters, was rather evenly divided, although the constituency was won by SNAP with a narrow margin of 70 votes (see Table 3.12). The Iban constituency of Song, which SNAP had won, is another interesting case. It is Iban country, where 94.8% of the voters were Ibans, but SUPP had posed a strong challenge not only to the victorious SNAP but to its rival the PESAKA (see Table 3.13).

Table 3.12  
Voting Trends in Meluan.

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of Cast Votes
Gramong Jelian	SNAP	880	33.52
Philip Nyandang	PESAKA	810	30.86
Empaling	INDEP	381	14.51
Tedong ak Entalai	INDEP	234	8.91
Spoilt Votes	-	347	13.22
Total	-	2,625	100.00

Table 3.13  
Voting Trends in Song.

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of Cast Votes
Ngelambong Bangau	SNAP	1,614	35.81
Manggai Lajang	PESAKA	1,294	28.71
Dingai Ujom	SUPP	1,204	26.71
Spoilt votes	-	395	8.76
Total	-	4,507	100.00

### 3. *SCA and SUPP in the Iban Country of the Third Division*

Two Iban constituencies were won by a Chinese communal party, the Igan by SCA and Dudong by SUPP. Igan was different from all other Iban constituencies, including Dudong, discussed thus far. It was an Iban marginal constituency where Iban voters comprised 46.1%, the Chinese 38.3% and Malay/Melanau 15.6%. Table 3.14 presents voting trends in Igan, and it is not an exaggeration to say that SNAP was thrashed when it only managed to secure a token 213 (3.48%) votes. The battle

was essentially between SCA and SUPP. PESAKA was not contesting, probably because it had bowed out in favour of SCA, who was the weaker component of the Sarawak Alliance.

Table 3.14  
Voting Trends in Igan.

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of Cast Votes
Ling Beng Siong	SCA	3,264	53.26
Wong Tuong Kwang	SUPP	2,495	40.71
Gelanggang Mujan	SNAP	213	3.48
3 Independent and Spoilt Votes	-	156	2.55
Total	-	6,128	100.00

In Dudong, SUPP success was contingent upon Iban support. Ibans constituted about 70% of the voters, the Chinese 28.3% and the Malays/Melanaus 1.7%. SUPP success in Dudong demonstrates the clear disadvantage for two contesting Iban candidates or parties which obviously led to a split in the Iban vote.

Table 3.15  
Voting Trends in Dudong.

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of Cast Votes
Kong Chung Siew	SUPP	1,675	34.60
Jonathan Bangau	PESAKA	1,434	29.62
Sandah P. Jarraw	SNAP	1,138	23.51
2 Independent	-	314	6.49
Spoilt votes	-	280	5.78
Total	-	4,841	100.00



Finally, there was one unique occurrence among the Iban constituencies of the Third Division. An Iban independent candidate won in Ngemah. In fact, it was the only area to be won by an independent in Sarawak's 48 constituencies. What made it even more unique was the fact that the Iban independent had won the Ngemah constituency against the traditional *raja berani*, *Penghulu* Francis Umpau, who had been a state minister in *Penghulu* Tawi Sli's government.

#### 4. *Iban Constituencies Outside Iban Country*

There are five Iban constituencies outside the historically acknowledged Iban regions of the Second and Third Divisions. They are as listed in Table 3.16, which also shows the number of votes obtained by four contesting parties. Gedong is in the First Division, Tatau, Kemena and Subis in the Fourth, while Limbang is in the Fifth.

In the Fourth Division, the two Iban seats were split. SNAP won Subis, the Iban marginal constituency, which had 47.6% Iban voters, 37.4% Malay/Melanau and 14.9% Chinese; PESAKA won the Iban majority constituency of Kemena, where Ibans comprised 71.1% of the voters, the Malays/Melanaus constituted 20.7% and the Chinese 8.2%. In addition to Subis, SNAP also won Limbang in the Fifth Division where Ibans constituted 49.1% of the voters, the Malays/Melanaus 39.5% and the Chinese 11.3%.

Table 3.16  
Iban Constituencies Outside the Traditional Areas.

Constituency	SNAP	PESAKA	BUMI	SUPP
S.18 Gedong	1,647	600	*1,757	522
S.41 Tatau	1,191	415	*1,340	827
S.42 Kemena	884	*1,366	1,155	733
S.43 Subis	*1,728	832	-	733
S.47 Limbang	*2,935	-	1,068	-

Note: . \*Indicates winning party.

##### 5. BUMIPUTERA in Iban Constituencies

The Malay/Melanau group was successful in two Iban constituencies--Gedong and Tatau. Gedong is an Iban marginal constituency where Ibans constituted about 47% of the voters, the Malays/Melanaus 42.1% and the Chinese 10.9%, while Tatau is an Iban majority constituency with 57.9% Iban voters, 28.3% Malay/Melanau and 13.8% Chinese. The defeat in Gedong constituency, as was the case in Dudong, might be attributable to an Iban split vote, not only between SNAP and PESAKA but also SUPP which had fielded an Iban candidate. Tables 3.17 and 3.18 present voting trends in Gedong and Tatau, respectively.

As far as Table 3.18 shows, the votes polled by BUMIPUTERA approximated their total voter percentage, while the Chinese votes were about 4% above their voter percentage. Voter turnout for Tatau was 73.2%. Unless, the Malay/Melanau and the Chinese turnout was 100%, the only possible explanation for the higher proportion of the BUMIPUTERA and SUPP poll was that Iban votes were widely dispersed among the four contesting parties.

Table 3.17  
Voting Trends in Gedong.

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of Cast Votes
Abg. Abdulrahim	BUMI	1,757	36.31
Kapitan Liew M.C.	SNAP	1,647	34.04
Andrew J. Landau	PESAKA	600	12.40
Entri ak. Tusan	SUPP	522	10.79
Spoilt votes	-	313	6.47
Total	-	4,839	100.00

Table 3.18  
Voting Trends in Tatau.

Candidate	Party	Votes	% of Cast Votes
Awg. Ismail	BUMI	1,340	28.38
Nanang ak Entigai	SNAP	1,191	25.22
Goh Ngiap Joon	SUPP	827	17.51
Juhaili Latib	INDEP	571	12.10
Penghulu Engkalom	PESAKA	415	8.79
Meng Cheng	INDEP	125	2.65
Spoilt votes	-	253	5.36
Total	-	4,722	100.00

**D. Summary of the 1969 Election in Iban Constituencies.**

The election results in six Iban constituencies in the Second Division give rise to a number of observations. First, the traditional and historical cleavage, once assumed to be a dominant factor of behaviour of the Second Division Ibans, had waned. Second, there was a third force--the SUPP.

The fact that SNAP had won four out of six Iban constituencies showed that it commanded considerable support from the Second Division Ibans. However, its previous dominance had definitely been eroded because

PESAKA was able to muster sufficient votes to win the remaining two. SNAP's total vote polled in the six constituencies was 11,787 to PESAKA's 6,427, the latter being a little more than half of SNAP's support. There was also the SUPP factor. Although SUPP had not won any Iban seats from the Second Division, the total votes polled in each of the five constituencies it contested showed that it had made inroads into these Iban areas. The relative strength of SUPP in relation to SNAP and PESAKA in the five constituencies is shown in Table 3.19.

Table 3.19  
Votes Polled in Five Iban Constituencies by Party.

Constituency	SNAP	PESAKA	SUPP
S.15 Lingga-Sebuyau	1,915	2,134	1,160
S.16 Simanggang	2,513	718	1,879
S.17 Engkilili-Skrang	946	1,101	976
S.18 Ulu Ai	934	889	531
S.22 Krian	2,933	872	824

In Lingga-Sebuyau, where Chinese constituted a mere 10.2%, SUPP had polled 1,160, which was about 17.82% of the total vote cast. Similarly, in Simanggang it polled 25.55% of the total vote, in Engkilili-Skrang 26.84%, in Ulu Ai 16.41% and Krian 16.37%, where Chinese constituted about 18%, 12.4%, 2.2% and 7.7% of the total voters respectively.

In the Third Division, the whole assumption of the Rejang as the traditional heartland of PESAKA has to be reassessed. Table 3.20 shows the votes polled by SNAP, PESAKA and SUPP in the nine Iban constituencies there.

Table 3.20  
 Votes Polled in Iban Constituencies  
 in the Third Division by Party.

Constituency	SNAP	PESAKA	SUPP
S.29 Igan	213	*n.c.	2,495
S.30 Dudong	1,138	1,434	1,675
S.33 Pakan	667	748	n.c.
S.34 Meluan	880	810	n.c.
S.35 Machan	327	2,459	1,589
S.36 Ngemah	603	660	428
S.37 Song	1,614	1,294	1,204
S.38 Pelagus	716	1,389	1,069
S.39 Baleh	1,528	1,953	806
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,686</b>	<b>10,747</b>	<b>9,230</b>

Key: n.c. -not contesting.

Notes: \* -PESAKA did not stand in favor of SCA,  
 who polled 3,264 to win Igan over SUPP.

In the seven Iban constituencies that SUPP contested, the Chinese made up an average of 17.41% of the total while the Iban averaged 78.71%. Nevertheless, PESAKA took four of the nine constituencies with a total vote of 10,747 in all the nine constituencies. SNAP won two seats with total votes of 7,686 votes in the nine, while SUPP won only one Iban seat, but with total votes above those of SNAP, and received from only seven constituencies.

#### VI. The 1963 and 1969 Elections Compared

Extreme care must be exercised in making comparisons between the results of the 1963 and 1969 general elections. In the case of the former, it was an election to the 429 District Council seats. These councillors elected 109 members to the five Divisional Advisory Councils which formed the electoral college to elect 36

members to the Council Negeri. In 1969, there was direct election to the Council Negeri. Thus the number of choices put to the people was greatly reduced.

For the Iban in their homeland, the reduction meant they had to choose only 15 Iban candidates as against about 100 in the District Council elections of 1963.<sup>77</sup> Thus, the election of 1969 saw a number of traditional *raja berani* and new leaders pitted against each another.

The apparent polarisation which Leigh<sup>78</sup> observed in the 1963 voting cannot easily be correlated to reflect strong historical and regional cleavages between the Second and the Third Divisions, because it must be remembered that SNAP and PESAKA were then contesting on the same ticket--the Alliance. Therefore, the test of regionalism can only be really ascertained through the direct election in 1969/70, in which both parties were contesting against each other in Iban constituencies. Depending on which criterion one chooses to interpret the election results, either the number of seats won or votes polled, there is bound to be some disagreement as to the

<sup>77</sup> About 80% of SNAP's 73 and PESAKA's 61 councillors were Ibans, see: Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.168.

<sup>78</sup> Leigh, 1971, op cit, p.123 observed that "there was a distinct geographical character to voting, and it seems appropriate at this stage to look more closely at the support given to each of the Alliance component parties. PESAKA councillors were concentrated in the third division and SNAP in the second." Without attempting further investigation, Searle, 1983, op cit, p.57, had taken for granted Leigh's observation when he concluded that "it has been pointed out that the basic political cleavage within the Iban community between two predominantly Iban parties--SNAP, centred on the Second Division and PESAKA, on the Third--in large part reflected the contrasting historical and socio-economic experiences of the Iban in those areas."

extent of the impact of regionalism on Iban voting behaviour. From the number of seats won, it was clear that SNAP had more support in the Second Division and the PESAKA in the Third Division (refer to Tables 3.5 and 3.8); however, when taking into account the votes polled by the contesting parties, there is some room for doubt as to whether one or the other party has exclusive monopoly of influence in its supposed heartland (see the vote variations in Tables 3.5 and 3.8 between SNAP and PESAKA). In terms of electoral strength (i.e. total votes) that each party had in the two Iban areas, SNAP was the leading but not absolutely dominant Iban party in the Second Division; PESAKA was thus in the Third Division, with second place there being equally shared by SNAP and SUPP, in terms of the number of seats held. Thus, the traditional hostility that might have existed between the Ibans of the Second and the Third Divisions had been diluted by the time they went to the polls, first in 1963, when they were able to forge a coalition within the Alliance, and again in the 1969/70 election, when no absolute dominance can be demonstrated of a given party in a given region.

#### **VII. The 1974 State General Election**

The Council Negeri was dissolved on 31 July 1974 paving the way for the second direct election. The Election Commission fixed nomination on 8 August 1974 and

polling was to be conducted over three weeks from 24 August to 14 September 1974.<sup>79</sup>

The period between 1970 and 1974 was marked by a number of developments in the state. First, the merger of PESAKA and BUMIPUTERA into Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) was concluded in January 1973.<sup>80</sup> PESAKA's reasons for the merger were well articulated through its "second echelon" leader, notably Linggi Jugah, whose views can be summarised as follows: (1) the main problems among the Ibans derived from poverty, (2) solutions to these problems depended on Iban leaders being at the centre of the decision-making process, and (3) thus, the merger of PESAKA with BUMIPUTERA would achieve the second objective, by bringing Ibans into the mainstream of development.<sup>81</sup>

The second important development was the agreement reached between PBB and SUPP at the end of 1973, whereby they agreed to contest as a united front, which led to the adoption of a common political symbol<sup>82</sup> and an agreement over the allocation of seats to contest in the forthcoming state general election.

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<sup>79</sup> Malaysia, Election Commission (1975). *Report on the Parliamentary and State Legislative Assembly General Election 1974 of the States of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak*. Kuala Lumpur: Gov't Printing Office.

<sup>80</sup> PESAKA's Temenggong Jugah was elected president of the new party, Taib Mahmud, then Federal Minister for Primary Industries, vice-president, and Rahman Ya'kub, Secretary-General; see *Sarawak Tribune*, 9 January 1973.

<sup>81</sup> Searle's interview with Linggi, see Searle, *op cit* 1983, p.152-53.

<sup>82</sup> The Alliance symbol was the sailing boat.



The third development was the formation of Barisan Nasional (BN--National front). A Tun Razak (the Malaysian premier) creation, the term was first used by the Prime Minister in his National Day address in August 31, 1972, when he spoke of the possibilities of a "National Front" working together in facing national problems.<sup>83</sup> On 1 June 1974, the Barisan Nasional came into being.<sup>84</sup> Consequently, the coalition of the Sarawak Alliance and SUPP was transformed into the state Barisan Nasional, with a new political logo, the *dacing* (the weighing scale) to symbolise justice. The state general election in Sarawak was then mainly a contest between the state Barisan Nasional and SNAP. While the dates for the parliamentary and state general elections were strategic for the West Malaysian states, the same could not be said for Sarawak. The election dates, as Mauzy observed,<sup>85</sup> had been chosen based on three considerations; first, Tun Razak's visit to China and his meeting with Mao Tse-tung had been popular with the Malaysian Chinese; second, the hosting of the Fifth Islamic Conference of Foreign

<sup>83</sup> Diane K. Mauzy (1983). *Barisan Nasional*. Petaling Jaya (Selangor): Maricans, pp.75-77, noted that the premier was probably referring to the possibility of coalition between UMNO and Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS), the other Peninsular Malay-Islamic party, which is more fundamentalist in persuasion, in the new coalition to be styled "Barisan Nasional".

<sup>84</sup> The Barisan Nasional comprised the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), PAS, People's Progressive Party (PPP), Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan), SUPP, PBB and Sabah Alliance, see *Star*, 2 June 1974; for more information on these parties, refer to Appendix A.

<sup>85</sup> Mauzy, 1983, op cit, p.87.

Ministers in Kuala Lumpur had pleased the Malays, and third, the worst effects of inflation relating to the price of Arab oil had been curbed.

#### A. Iban Issues at the Poll

There was a number of issues confronting Ibans in the 1974 election. The most important, perhaps, was the concept of power-sharing among the native communities. It was recalled that *Temenggong* Jugah's nomination as the first Governor was rejected on grounds that the two highest offices should not be held by one ethnic community. However, when Rahman Ya'kub was appointed Chief Minister, the Governorship was also held by a Muslim. It can be argued that Rahman Ya'kub was not a Malay, but a Melanau, and therefore the principle of inter-ethnic power-sharing was sustained. However, it is also clear that some Muslim Melanaus identify closely with the Malay community and are concerned to promote the interests of Islam and the use of the Malay language. In light of the controversy that the principle raises, it is only pertinent to examine its initial intention, which was to prevent the concentration of too much power in the hands of one ethnic group to the exclusion of the others. Thus, in 1970, Tunku Abdul Rahman advised Rahman Ya'kub that the latter should not accept the nomination to be Chief Minister since the Governorship was already held by a Malay (Muslim).<sup>86</sup> Based on the Tunku's opinion, it is

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<sup>86</sup> This was related by Rahman Ya'kub in an interview with Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.79, see footnote no. 57.

fairly safe to conclude that the principle was meant to promote power-sharing between the Muslim and non-Muslim indigenes. Besides, the Malaysian Constitution is rather specific and defines a Malay to be

a person who professes the Muslim religion, habitually speaks the Malay language, conforms to Malay custom.<sup>87</sup>

The main political issues of the mid- to late 1960s continued to dominate Iban politics in the first half of the 1970s. The ousting of Ningkan had not gone down well among the Ibans. Nor had it been forgotten. PESAKA's brief ascent to power from 1966 to 1970 was far from able to dispel its image as a subordinate party to that of the BUMIPUTERA within the Alliance. Added to that was PESAKA's reliance upon the *penghulus* who were seen as getting wealthier from logging activities at the expense of their *anembiak*. The resentment against PESAKA by ordinary Ibans was not at all removed by its merger with BUMIPUTERA in January 1973, although the reason for the merger was well-founded. It was looked upon by Ibans as the final act of BUMIPUTERA's domination of Ibans and PESAKA since 1966.

There was also the issue of rising expectations among Ibans as a consequence of socio-economic changes. The spread of education had not provided Ibans with increased opportunities to seek employment in the

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<sup>87</sup> Article 160[2], *Federal Constitution of Malaysia*.

government and private sectors. The impact of change on Iban politics in the Second and Third Divisions has been discussed at length by Searle.<sup>88</sup> In his explanations for Iban political behaviour he concentrated on the "distance" of communities from the major trading centres. He noted that Ibans in the semi-pasar and pasar longhouses were most susceptible to fluctuating political behaviour because of their exposure to rapid socio-economic change, while the ulu longhouse Ibans, who were more immune to these changes, exhibited more stable political loyalties. In the Saribas, Searle noted that Ibans began to shy away from SNAP, contrary to what he found in the Third Division, because they were accustomed to having good representation and influence in government when Ningkan and SNAP were still in power. Thus, when Ningkan was ousted, the Saribas Ibans began to turn to those who could fill the gap as a consequence of Ningkan's downfall.

This phenomenon was in sharp contrast to that which Searle found in the Third Division, and especially in the upper Rejang area, which was the home territory of PESAKA. Searle attributed declining Third Division Iban support for PESAKA to a number of reasons; first, PESAKA's subservience to BUMIPUTERA even when it was, in terms of numbers of seats, dominant in the Alliance and

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<sup>88</sup> Searle, 1983, op cit, especially Chapters 5 and 7 where he talked about the differences between the ulu, semi-pasar and pasar longhouses and the reasons for declining Iban support for PESAKA and SUPP.

controlled the Chief Ministership; secondly, the waning support of longhouse Ibans for the *penghulus*, who were the backbone of PESAKA's support. Ordinary people saw that the *penghulus* were benefiting from their alliance with PESAKA to the former's disadvantage; thirdly, the rise in education among the Ibans of the Third Division was not met by increasing opportunity, especially in seeking jobs. This dissatisfaction fell on PESAKA's shoulders; the party was in government yet unable to overcome these criticisms.

#### **B. The Election Result in Iban Constituencies**

The election result in the Iban constituencies was conclusive; the majority of the Ibans were voting for SNAP; they wanted a change because Iban representation in the PESAKA-wing of the PBB had not only been ineffective and unresponsive to Iban needs but had also been dominated by BUMIPUTERA.

Table 3.21 shows the seats won by SNAP, PESAKA,<sup>89</sup> and SUPP in the Iban constituencies.<sup>90</sup> In the Second Division, SNAP had done no better than in the previous election; it only managed to retain the number of seats that it had won in 1969. However, its popularity among the Third Division Ibans was overwhelming. SNAP had increased its

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<sup>89</sup> For clarity, reference to PESAKA is maintained in the 1974 analysis, but in effect, it refers to Iban leaders from the PESAKA-wing of the new PBB; similarly, BUMIPUTERA refers to the Malay/Melanau-wing of the PBB.

<sup>90</sup> For the full election result to the CN, see Table 3.37 (Appendix C).

seats from two in 1969 to seven in the 1974 election, at the expense of PESAKA and SUPP.<sup>91</sup> This was probably for two reasons. First, the shift in political loyalty reflected resentment against PESAKA. Secondly, it was also a rejection of PESAKA and SUPP, which were unable to accommodate Iban aspirations generated by changing socio-economic conditions (such as the spread of education and the introduction of the cash economy).<sup>92</sup> In Iban constituencies outside Iban country, SNAP also did no better than previously; it merely managed to retain its previous number of seats, which was two.

Table 3.21  
Iban Constituencies Won by Party in 1970 and 1974.

Division	1969 Election			1974 Election	
	SNAP	PESAKA	SUPP	SNAP	Barisan
2nd Div.	4	2	0	4	2
3RD Div.*	2	4	1	7	2
Others**	2	1	0	2	3
Total+	8	7	1	13	7

Notes: \* -One, Igan was won by SCA and another Ngemah by an Independent.  
 \*\* -Gedong and Tatau were won by BUMIPUTERA.  
 + -Total for the 1969 and 1974 should match, that is 20; however, the remaining four, one each won by SCA and an independent and two by BUMIPUTERA were not tabulated.

The total votes polled in 1969 and 1974 are presented in Table 3.22. Overall, in Iban constituencies,

<sup>91</sup> SCA had been dissolved by June 1974; most of its members had joined SUPP.

<sup>92</sup> See Searle, 1983, op cit, especially Chapters 5 and 7.

SNAP had increased its votes polled of 27,949 in 1969 to 44,573, while PESAKA and SUPP through the Barisan Nasional (formerly the Alliance) had a negligible increase from 39,280 to 42,883. One possible explanation why SNAP votes polled had increased; while those of the Barisan Nasional had remained more or less constant, was the absence of a third candidate in many Iban areas. So, it is highly probable that the increase in votes for SNAP came from those Ibans who had formerly supported independents.<sup>93</sup> In 1969, there were 27 independents competing in the 20 Iban constituencies compared to only four in 1974.<sup>94</sup> All Iban constituencies, except for Dudong, Ngemah, Kemena and Limbang, were essentially a two-corner fight between SNAP and the Barisan Nasional.

Table 3.22  
 Votes Polled in Iban Constituencies  
 by Division and Party in 1969 and 1974.

Division	1969 Election			1974 Election	
	SNAP	PESAKA	SUPP	SNAP	Barisan
Second	11,878	6,427	*6,125	13,977	13,491
Third	7,686	+10,747	**9,266	17,224	16,022
Others	8,385	++3,213	*+3,502	13,372	13,370
Total	27,949	20,387	18,893	44,573	42,883

Notes: + -Not contesting in Igan.  
 ++ -Not contesting in Limbang.  
 \* -Not contesting in Layar.  
 \*\* -Not contesting in Pakan and Meluan.  
 \*+ -Not contesting in Limbang.

<sup>93</sup> The total votes cast in 1969 and 1974 were relatively constant, with an increase or decrease of about 5%, see: Malaysia, Election Commission, 1972 and 1974, op cit.

<sup>94</sup> Malaysia, Election Commission, 1972 and 1974, Ibid.

But from the number of seats and votes won by SNAP, its popularity among Ibans is clear. In all the Iban constituencies that it had won, the votes polled by its candidates had increased markedly over those in 1969 (See Table 3.23).

Table 3.23  
Votes Polled in Iban Constituencies Won by SNAP.

Constituency	1969	1974
<u>(Second Division):</u>		
S.15 Lingga-Sebuyau	1,915	3,389
S.17 Engkilili-Skrang	946	1,815
S.18 Ulu Ai	934	1,479
S.22 Krian	2,933	3,339
<u>(Third Division):</u>		
S.30 Dudong	1,138	2,164
S.33 Pakan	667	1,896
S.34 Meluan	880	1,896
S.35 Machan	327	2,110
S.36 Ngemah	603	1,382
S.38 Pelagus	716	1,974
S.39 Baleh	1,528	2,344
<u>(Other Divisions):</u>		
S.41 Tatau	1,191	2,751
S.47 Limbang	2,935	3,224
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,949</b>	<b>44,573</b>

While it is conclusive that 13 out of 20 Iban constituencies voted for SNAP to represent them in the Council Negeri, those Ibans in the 13 constituencies that did not vote for SNAP must also be considered. For this discussion, a few constituencies with an overwhelmingly Iban vote have been selected. This reduces the uncertainty associated with highly mixed constituencies like Igan, where Ibans made up only 46% of the total voters.



In five Iban constituencies--Ulu Ai, Pakan, Meluan, Ngemah, and Baleh--Ibans constituted 97.2%, 98%, 94.3%, 92.4%, 94.8%, 99.9% of the voters respectively. The votes polled by SNAP and Barisan Nasional (represented by PESAKA) are as shown in Table 3.24. In all five, SNAP won, but with votes ranging from about 27% to 43% of the total vote cast. Between 25% and 46% of the voters did not vote for either SNAP or Barisan. Based on the seat count, SNAP might have won these Iban constituencies. Nevertheless, there was still a sizeable number of Ibans who supported the Barisan Nasional.

Table 3.24  
Votes Polled in Five Iban Constituencies.

Constituency	SNAP	BN	Spoilt Votes	Total Voters
S.18 Ulu Ai	1,479 (31%)	1,280 (27%)	357 (8%)	4,774 (100%)
S.33 Pakan	1,896 (43%)	1,129 (25%)	290 (7%)	4,445 (100%)
S.34 Meluan	1,891 (40%)	928 (20%)	349 (7%)	4,745 (100%)
S.36 Ngemah	1,382 (27%)	977 (19%)	401 (8%)	5,123 (100)
S.39 Baleh	2,344 (33%)	1,842 (26%)	479 (7%)	7,143 (100%)

A number of general observations can be made about the result of the 1974 election. First, the election left no doubt as to SNAP's image as the Iban party. Second, it dispelled the notion of riverine cleavage which was presumed to have dominated the District Council elections

in 1963.<sup>95</sup> To suggest, as Leigh and Searle do, that a cleavage divided Ibans between the two Divisions seems premature without the popularity of either party being tested.

Third, the election also showed that there was a high degree of unity among the Ibans. This unity arose from a number of politically relevant cultural factors, which have been discussed in detail earlier.<sup>96</sup> These factors transcended any cleavage and were indicative of Iban flexibility in exercising political choice.

Fourth, there is evidence in the election of the persistence of some traditional cultural values, but clearly others had been changed or undermined. The defeat of Ningkan could be interpreted as the beginning of the undermining of the politically relevant cultural values of the bygone era of warfaring. Ningkan was described by Searle<sup>97</sup> as having a "volatile temperament" which he attributed to Ningkan's defeat in Layar. Ningkan's defeat might be seen as a changing Iban attitude towards the traditional values of assertiveness. In traditional Iban society, the flexing of one's muscles and raising one's voice by the *raja berani* might be enough to attract the

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<sup>95</sup> Refer to earlier discussion on the 1963 election.

<sup>96</sup> See Chapter 2, section on Political Culture.

<sup>97</sup> Searle, 1983, op cit, p.93, noted that Ningkan's "... volatile temperament was also a significant factor contributing to the reaction against SNAP in Saribas" and that "... PESAKA's Alfred Jabu was able to cause a major upset in the 1974 general election when he (Jabu) convincingly defeated Ningkan, SNAP's President ...".

attention of others. However, such archaic virtues were no longer appropriate in modern politics, especially when one needed to solicit votes which were cast secretly.

Lastly, the election saw the emergence of the "new leader". The characteristics of the new leaders were similar to the culturally relevant virtues of their traditional *raja berani*. They were also men who had been on *bejalai--to menoa tasik* (land over the seas) to various institutions in various countries. They were also pioneers, not in *mubok menua*, but by being the first few to have received their education in various fields, and whose trophies were, not *antu pala*, but diplomas in various disciplines of specialisation. Thus, while the politically relevant values were somewhat similar, the fields upon which these experiences were drawn from differed--i.e. traditional versus modern experiences; and it was these modern experiences which helped to forge greater Iban unity, supported by a favourable political and economic environment for SNAP leaders. However, as I shall argue later, there were certain inadequacies in modern Iban leadership, particularly with regard to the degree of assertativeness in championing Iban interests.

### C. Summary

In terms of the number of seats that SNAP had won from the 20 Iban constituencies, it is clear, as Searle concluded, that the 1974 election was the culmination of Iban consolidation behind SNAP. It also eroded further

the factor of regionalism once presumed to be a significant factor in relations between the Second and the Third Division Ibans and instead buttressed support for the emergence of supra-regional loyalty.

SNAP's support also signalled that a majority of the Ibans were dissatisfied with the way they had been treated in their rightful role in state politics. Even when *Penghulu Tawi Sli* was Chief Minister, Ibans were generally discontented with the way BUMIPUTERA leaders had performed in the PESAKA-led government. Any sense of Iban dominance was lost when BUMIPUTERA led the Alliance after the 1969 general election. Furthermore, it also removed any notion of power-sharing between the Muslim and non-Muslim natives.

While abstract issues such as the power struggle between Ibans and the Malays/Melanaus, the NEP and the general state of the economy may not have directly affected Iban political behaviour, nevertheless they were responsible for Iban difficulties which were not overcome by the governments of *Penghulu Tawi Sli* and *Rahman Ya'kub*. These issues became closely identified with the Iban cause; Ibans felt they could not secure employment congruent with the spread of education, and government inability to keep cash crop prices stable affected those who had turned heavily to these new agricultural activities.

### VIII. The 1979 State General Election

The state general election of 1979 was relatively calm compared to the two previous ones. Since SNAP had joined the Barisan Nasional, there was no strong opponent to challenge the ruling coalition.

SNAP announced on 22 March 1976 that it was joining the Barisan Nasional. Since winning 17 seats from the predominantly Iban, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu constituencies,<sup>98</sup> SNAP was faced with the question of how best to represent and bring development to their predominantly rural supporters. The possibility of SNAP joining the Barisan was increased by internal development within SNAP's leadership. The defeat of Ningkan at the polls and the detention of James Wong<sup>99</sup> paved the way for SNAP's possible reconciliation with the ruling party.

At the party convention on 18 July 1975, the Ibans elected the second echelon of the characteristically new Iban leaders;<sup>100</sup> this comprised such people as Dunstan

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<sup>98</sup> Taking into account one Bidayuh and two Orang Ulu seats it had won, SNAP's total of the non-Muslim constituencies was 17; it also won one Chinese constituency of Kuching Timor, bringing its overall total to 18.

<sup>99</sup> Searle, 1983, op cit, p.184, argued that James Wong's arrest was motivated by two factors; first, a case of personal revenge by the Chief Minister for being humiliated in the election, and second, in order to deprive SNAP of its financial support. For a personal account of the incidents, see: James Wong Kim Min (1983). *The Price of Loyalty*. Singapore: Summer Times.

<sup>100</sup> Ningkan's leadership has been described earlier as the new leadership in Iban society, because of its departure from the characteristics that dominated the leadership of PESAKA--those of the *raja berani*. Thus, when Searle, 1983, op cit, p.185, used the term "new Iban leaders" to persons such as Moggie, Tajeim and Jawie Masing, I assume that he was actually referring to what I call the second echelon Iban leaders.

Endawie,<sup>101</sup> Leo Moggie,<sup>102</sup> Jawie Masing<sup>103</sup> and Daniel Tajeim.<sup>104</sup> The second echelon leaders had not really been part of the bitter dispute that had characterised the earlier relationship between SNAP and the federal government. In addition, they were also young and had obtained a relatively higher level of education than their predecessors (i.e. the Ningkan group). The educational achievement of the second echelon Iban leaders put them on par with those leaders from component parties within the Alliance-SUPP coalition.<sup>105</sup>

The reasons for the eventual entry of SNAP into the Barisan Nasional coalition was well articulated by the second echelon leaders. First, they were concerned that the confrontational style of the Ningkan era would not only deprive the people of effective representation in the government, but it could also bring about the demise of SNAP through government proscription. It has been shown that the federal government had not hesitated to regulate the democratic process when the position of the government-aligned party was floundering against the

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<sup>101</sup> Endawie was elected president; see Appendix B.

<sup>102</sup> Leo Moggie was elected unopposed as Secretary-General; see Appendix B.

<sup>103</sup> Jawie Masing is a medical practitioner; one of the ten Budu boys to be sent to Nairn Academy; see Appendix B.

<sup>104</sup> For more information on Tajeim, see Appendix B.

<sup>105</sup> For example, BUMIPUTERA's leaders, Rahman Ya'kub and Taib Mahmud were both lawyers; SUPP's Ong Kee Hui was from a leading Chinese family in Kuching and a businessmen, while Stephen Yong was a lawyer by training.

opposition--the cases being the emergency of 1966 to dismiss Ningkan, and again the emergency of 1969 following the Kuala Lumpur race riots, which also suspended the staggered polling of the general elections in Sarawak.<sup>106</sup> Second, it was argued that SNAP joined the coalition from a position of strength. With 18 seats, SNAP's electoral strength was comparable to PBB, which had the same number of seats from the combined Iban, and predominantly, Malay/Melanau constituencies.

Third, entry into the coalition meant bringing their rural constituents into the mainstream of development--in terms of benefitting through the allocation of minor rural projects;<sup>107</sup> a similar argument was earlier presented as one of PESAKA's reasons for its merger with BUMIPUTERA in PBB.

Mauzy<sup>108</sup> noted that SNAP's entry into the Barisan Nasional was at the insistence of the federal leaders. Rahman Ya'kub was not at all enthusiastic about the federal recommendation because he feared that once in Barisan, SNAP could easily undermine his position in the government by allying with the Ibans from PBB. Besides, he thought that SNAP's entry was a potential

<sup>106</sup> This fear was not unfounded; for on 8 November 1977, it was again shown that the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King), acting upon the advice of the government, declared a state of emergency in Kelantan, to defend an unpopular BN-selected Menteri Besar (the equivalent of the Chief Minister for states with a Malay ruler).

<sup>107</sup> The coalition members of Parliament and the State Assembly were each allocated a certain amount of funds yearly to carry out minor projects in their respective constituencies.

<sup>108</sup> Mauzy, 1983, op cit, p.107.

destabilising factor in the balance that had worked so well between PBB and SUPP.

There was another important development preceding both the parliamentary election in 1978 and the state general election in 1979. This was the formation of Parti Rakyat Jati Sarawak (PAJAR). It was formed with the sole aim of competing against the Muslim sector of the PBB.<sup>109</sup> It was hoped that PAJAR would be an alternative party for the Malays/Melanaus. The formation of PAJAR reflected rising discontent against the state government, in which the Chief Minister found himself in the hot seat for alleged mismanagement and corruption. Although rumoured to have the support of some federal leaders, PAJAR did not attract important defections from the Malay/Melanau-wing of PBB. In the parliamentary election, following its formation, and which provided the testing ground for the extent of support it might attract, PAJAR failed to make any impression, and thus, its survival was in question.<sup>110</sup>

Against this background, the general election to the state legislative assembly of Sarawak was relatively devoid of its usual glamour. It was, in a sense, an election in which the Barisan Nasional was seeking an endorsement from its electorate. The state general

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<sup>109</sup> Mauzy's interview with an unidentified Kuala Lumpur source, see Mauzy, 1982, *Ibid*, pp.121-22.

<sup>110</sup> For an account of the rise of PAJAR, see Alli Kawi (1988). *It has been Worth the Pain*. Kuching: Sarawak Publishing House; this is a political autobiography of the author narrating the rise of resentments against Rahman Ya'kub, which culminated in the formation of PAJAR.



election was not held simultaneously with the parliamentary election in 1978 but a year later. Searle<sup>111</sup> concluded that this was because Rahman Ya'kub had calculated that his chance of retaining power would be improved if the election was held later. Immediately following the 1978 election, the electoral roll for Sarawak was revised. Registration of new voters was carried out for 42 days, the maximum allowed by law, and held from 28 September to 8 November 1978.<sup>112</sup>

The State Assembly was dissolved on 11 August 1979. Nomination was fixed for 29 August 1979 and staggered polling to commence from 15 September 1979 and to end on 22 September 1979. In the 48 state constituencies, Barisan candidates either faced the independents or weak opponents put up by the Sarawak People's Organisation (SAPO), Parti Umat Sarawak (UMAT), PAJAR or the Democratic Action Party (DAP).<sup>113</sup> PAJAR nominated a total of 17 candidates, DAP 11, SAPO five and UMAT one.

#### **A. Iban Issues at the Poll**

If the previous general elections had been characterised by sensationalism, the general election of

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<sup>111</sup> Searle, 1983, op cit, p.197.

<sup>112</sup> Malaysia, Election Commission (1981). *Report on the State Legislative Assembly General Elections Sarawak 1979*. Kuala Lumpur: Gov't Printing Office, p.18, where 56,000 voters were registered as new voters. The turnout was higher in the recorded history of the registration exercises, perhaps, because of the impending general election to the state assembly.

<sup>113</sup> DAP: Semenanjung-based multi-racial party; predominantly Chinese; basically an opponent of SUPP in Chinese constituencies.

1979 was marked by its absence. A number of important developments since the first election and the formation of the first government, which dominated Iban politics, had been relegated to the periphery. While the problems of poverty, education and employment were still pressing, as they had been in the 1960s, SNAP's campaign themes had shifted to ones that called for redirecting Iban support for government. This was evidenced from a headline in one major daily which read: "Endawie: Hussein a man we can trust".<sup>114</sup>

The allocation of seats among the three BN component parties was made on the basis of the number of seats each had held prior to the 1979 election. Thus, PBB and SNAP were allocated 18 seats each, while SUPP was given 12 seats. Most of the seats assigned to the respective parties reflected a communal cleavage between the three components; the majority of SNAP's seats were in the Iban-dominated, rural constituencies, while PBB's were in the Malay/Melanau-dominated ones, and SUPP in the Chinese-dominated urban constituencies.

#### **B. The Election Result**

When nominations closed, four BN candidates won in their respective constituencies unopposed; two were from SNAP--in Batang Ai and Meluan, and another two from PBB--

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<sup>114</sup> *The New Straits Times*, 1 July 1978; Endawie was SNAP's President. The headline appeared during the parliamentary general election of 1978. Hussein (Tun) was the Prime Minister, succeeding Tun Razak, who died suddenly of a heart attack in January 1976.

in Layar (the Iban wing) and Balingian (the Malay/Melanau wing).<sup>115</sup> The opposition challenge showed a clear pattern; SUPP was opposed by DAP especially in Chinese constituencies; PBB by PAJAR in the Malay/Melanau and some Iban constituencies; and, SNAP by a number of opposition parties and scores of independent candidates.<sup>116</sup> But unlike the challenge posed by opposition parties in PBB and SUPP areas, opposition in SNAP's constituencies was rather scattered--in some areas it was challenged by SAPO, PAJAR, or DAP, but mostly by independents.

The overall result, seats won and votes polled by political parties contesting in the state general election, is presented in Table 3.25. The result clearly challenged some of the basic democratic tenets--equal representation and the protection of minority rights.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> For the full election result, see Table 3.38 (Appendix C).

<sup>116</sup> The majority of SNAP's opponents were independent candidates; DAP contested in only one, i.e. Dudong, constituency, SAPO two, in Tatau and Marudi, Pajar one, in Tebakang, and Umat one, in Baleh. It was alleged that SUPP backed three independents against SNAP's candidates in Tasik Biru, Padungan and Limbang; in Padungan, the alleged SUPP-backed independent won. It is most probable that SUPP had planted independents in these three constituencies because they had substantial Chinese voters; as a Chinese party, it could only be expected that the SUPP leadership had resented the decision to allocate these constituencies to SNAP.

<sup>117</sup> This problem is as old as the democratic tradition itself and is aggravated by the use of a simple majority in determining victors in elections. In parliament, this is overcome by the appointment of a person (or persons) representing special interests not adequately represented through the electoral process; but the person (or persons) appointed has always been a candidate chosen by the ruling government--either as rewards for party members, a means to bring into government members who had failed in elections or as political payoffs for potential rivals.

From the voting pattern of the state general election of 1979, it was clear that the Barisan, which had polled 205,095 (or 62%) of the total votes, had been over-represented in the state legislative assembly, when it had won 41 (or 93.2%) of the 44 contested seats. Thus, due to the "simple majority" method of determining victors in elections, some 63,569 voters who had supported PAJAR, DAP, SAPO and UMAT were theoretically not represented in the state legislative assembly, a combined vote which surpassed that of SNAP, which had won 14 seats, and almost equal to that of SUPP, which had 11 seats. Then, there was another group, the Independents, whose combined vote was as large as those of the combined opposition parties, but only three candidates were elected to the Assembly. In Sarawak, there is thus far no mechanism to overcome this problem; it is a case of winner takes all.

Table 3.25  
 Votes Polled and Seats Won  
 by Party in the State General Election 1979.

Party	Votes Polled	Percentage	No. of Seats Won	Percentage
Barisan	205,095	62.0%	41	93.2%
SNAP	*54,129	16.4%	14	31.8%
PBB	**86,220	26.0%	16	36.4%
SUPP	+64,746	19.6%	11	25.0%
PAJAR	17,256	5.2%	0	0
DAP	32,893	10.0%	0	0
SAPO	13,182	4.0%	0	0
UMAT	238	0.1%	0	0
INDEP	61,944	18.7%	3	6.8%
Total	++330,608	100.0%	44	100.0%

Notes: \* In 16 constituencies. \*\* In 16 Constituencies.  
 + In 12 constituencies. ++ Excludes spoilt votes.

To overcome the problem posed by the "simple majority" rule, political theoreticians have presented an alternative, that is proportional representation. By this method, the contested seats would be distributed among political parties based on the percentages of votes polled; the individuals elected are party candidates with the highest votes. Thus, based on such a system, the allocation of the 44 contested seats would have consisted roughly of 27 (or 62%) BN members (PBB 11, SNAP seven and SUPP eight) and 15 (or 38%) of the opposition candidates, comprising eight (or 18.7%) Independents, four (10%) DAP, two (5.2%) Pajar and one (4%) SAPO.

However, for the multi-ethnic Sarawak, such an alternative would only present more problems than solutions. As it is generally understood, the precarious balance in Sarawak, and indeed Malaysia, has been maintained on the presumption that since the economy is mainly in Chinese hands, political supremacy must reside with the natives. Any attempt to change this would be tantamount to a declaration of war between the natives and the Chinese;<sup>118</sup> the May 13 incident is enough of a reminder of the potent consequences of changes in this balance. Clearly, the hypothetical case discussed above would change that balance.

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<sup>118</sup> This was the case in 1969, when the balance was perceived to change as a result of a poor electoral performance of the UMNO-led Alliance; refer to Chapter 1, and also, Tunku Abdul Rahman, 1969, op cit; and Goh, 1971, op cit.

In the "proportional representation" scenario, the Chinese, who make up roughly one-third of the population, would be politically powerful, second only to the Ibans and the Dayak group. Second, proportional representation would increase urban bias as the Chinese are basically an urban population, thereby giving more legislative weight to the urban centres at the expense of the sparsely populated rural and native constituencies.<sup>119</sup>

The pattern of analysis employed in the two previous elections is not appropriate in examining the pattern of voting trends in Iban constituencies for the 1979 state general election. This is due to the fact that long-established parties, such as PBB, SNAP, and SUPP are no longer in direct competition in Iban constituencies. The formation of the Barisan removed any such competition. Besides, scattered and weak individual challenges put up by the opposition do not lend themselves to meaningful analysis either in the Iban or other ethnic constituencies.

The general discussion of Iban voting patterns can only be centred upon the retentive power of SNAP in Iban constituencies vis-à-vis the PBB and SUPP in the Malay/Melanau and Chinese constituencies, respectively. The bargaining power of the three component parties within BN is then determined by their performance in

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<sup>119</sup> Presently, all major urban centres are dominated and represented by Chinese--i.e. Kuching, Sibul, Bintulu, and Miri--either in the state or federal assemblies.

successive elections; whether or not they were successful in retaining the assigned legislative seats for the BN.

Of the three BN component parties, the PBB won a clean sweep of the seats that it was assigned to contest. SNAP won 16, including two seats won unopposed in the constituencies of Batang Ai and Meluan, and lost two others--Tasik Biru and Padungan; both were lost to independent candidates. SUPP won all but one--Belaga--of the twelve seats assigned to it. The number of seats won and votes polled by the three BN component parties is presented in Table 3.26.

Table 3.26  
Votes Polled and Number of Seats Won by BN Components.

Party	Total Cast	Votes Polled	% of Total	No. Seats
SNAP	104,235	54,129	52	*14
PBB	104,778	86,220	82	+16
SUPP	117,180	64,746	55	*+11

Notes: \* -Excludes two won uncontested but includes two in which it lost.  
+ -Excludes two won uncontested.  
\*+ -Includes one in which it lost.

SNAP suffered a setback when it lost two state constituencies to two independents in what seems to have been a relatively safe election; one a Bidayuh constituency and the other a Chinese. A glance at Table 3.26 shows a weak correlation between SNAP and its Iban voters, although SNAP had won all of its Iban constituencies. However, the false perception is due to

the inclusion of five non-Iban constituencies, especially the Chinese one of Padungan which had 16,110 voters, in which SNAP was not doing well. Like Padungan, Tasik Biru is a constituency with a large number of voters, 10,047, most of whom were either Bidayuhs or Chinese. The average voter size for Iban constituencies is about 5,500 voters. Thus, when examining SNAP's performance in Iban constituencies, in isolation from the Bidayuh and Chinese constituencies, the Iban support behind SNAP becomes apparent. In 10 Iban constituencies it contested, SNAP polled 33,004 votes (or 62.4%) out of 52,900 cast in the 10 constituencies.<sup>120</sup> Table 3.27 shows the variations of votes polled by SNAP over the three successive elections.

Table 3.27  
 Votes Polled by SNAP in 10 Iban  
 Constituencies: 1970, 1974 and 1979.

Constituency	1970	1974	1979
S.15 Lingga	1,915	*3,389	*3,602
S.17 Engkilili	946	*1,851	*2,583
S.22 Krian	*2,933	*3,339	*4,496
S.30 Dudong	1,138	*2,164	*4,125
S.33 Pakan	667	*1,896	*2,281
S.35 Machan	327	*2,110	*2,919
S.36 Ngemah	603	*1,382	*3,194
S.38 Pelagus	716	*1,974	*2,863
S.39 Baleh	1,528	*2,344	*3,723
S.41 Tatau	1,191	*2,751	*3,218
Total Votes	11,964	23,200	33,004

Note: \* -Indicates seats won.

<sup>120</sup> The 10 Iban constituencies are: Lingga-, Engkilili, Krian, Dudong, Pakan, Machan, Ngemah, Pelagus, Baleh and Tatau.



For the Malay/Melanau, the election of 1979 left little doubt that PBB had the overwhelming support of its voters in 16 constituencies that it contested. Of the total vote cast, PBB received 82%. Even discounting four constituencies of Tarat, Gedong, . Katibas and Kemena, where its one Bidayuh and three Iban candidates had polled 4,913, 3,067, 2,115 and 6001 respectively, PBB's percentage of the total votes polled is much higher at 86% (70,129), that is in 12 other Malay/Melanau constituencies.<sup>121</sup> Thus, the PAJAR challenge did not create any storm among the Malay/Melanau community.

SUPP was another BN component to suffer a setback when it lost one constituency to an independent. However, this loss should not be taken to indicate its weakness in Chinese constituencies because it was an Orang Ulu seat. Nevertheless, one can still conclude that it was relatively weak in comparison to the PBB and SNAP. In seven Chinese constituencies that it contested, its percentage of the total votes was slightly higher than its overall percentage, which is 58% and 55%, respectively.<sup>122</sup>

The votes polled by the opponents of PBB and SNAP can be simply dismissed. PAJAR, the former's opponent, received only very modest support--17,256 votes (or

<sup>121</sup> Total vote cast in the 12 constituencies is 84,863, excluding spoilt votes; the 12 constituencies are: Petra Jaya, Satok, Sebandi, Muara Tuang, Semera, Saribas, Kalaka, Kuala Rejang, Matu Daro, Oya, Subis and Lawas.

<sup>122</sup> The seven constituencies are: Stampin, Batu Kawa, Repok, Meradong, Maling, Seduan and Miri.

5.2%)--in direct competition with the PBB; while SNAP's main rival was largely the disorganised independents. The case for SUPP is different. In direct competition with the DAP in five Chinese constituencies, SUPP received a total of 33,363 (or 57%) votes, while the DAP polled 21,602 (or 37%)<sup>123</sup> (refer to Table 3.28 for breakdown of votes in the five constituencies).

Table 3.28  
Votes Polled by SUPP and  
DAP in Five Chinese Constituencies.

Constituency	SUPP Votes		DAP Votes		Vote Cast
	Number	%	Number	%	
S. 4 Stampin	10,924	71	3,809	25	15,363
S.25 Repok	4,601	52	4,262	48	8,927
S.26 Meradong	3,126	40	2,187	28	7,889
S.27 Maling	9,839	55	8,109	45	18,051
S.27 Seduan	4,873	58	3,235	39	8,368
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,363</b>	<b>*57.0%</b>	<b>21,602</b>	<b>*37.0%</b>	<b>58,598</b>

Notes:\* -Indicates average percentage of votes for the five constituencies.

-All five were won by SUPP.

The above voting patterns in five Chinese constituencies serve to caution against a simplistic conclusion that because SUPP had won all five Chinese constituencies against the DAP, it had therefore received the mandate from the Chinese community.<sup>124</sup> In Repok and

<sup>123</sup> The five predominantly Chinese constituencies in which SUPP was challenged by DAP are in: Stampin, Repok, Meradong, Maling and Seduan.

<sup>124</sup> This is excluding the SUPP-backed independent, who won in Padungan; otherwise, it was a clean sweep in the eight Chinese constituencies.

Maling, the total votes polled by DAP was rather large to dismiss it simply as insignificant.

### **C. Summary**

The state general election of 1979 gave an overwhelming mandate to the ruling Barisan. It can be said that the general election reinforced the established pattern of communal polarisation which marked previous general elections: the Malay/Melanau supported the PBB, the Chinese the SUPP and the majority of the Ibans supported SNAP--based on the 1974 seats held, two Iban seats of Simanggang (Sri Aman) and Dudong were allocated to SUPP and three (Layar, Kemena and Song [Katibas]) were assigned to PBB.

### **IX. Conclusion**

The political processes and events in the first 16 years since independence had brought about some important transformations among Ibans. Contrary to what was earlier assumed about the almost complete lack of Iban political experience before independence, they had done fairly well in their first exposure to organised party politics. Despite divisions exacerbated by the Brookes, the Ibans were able, to a large extent, to transcend the divisive riverine cleavage (regionalism), thereby enabling them to pool their numerical strength to back the first Iban Chief Minister (supra-regional leader). Compared to the leadership of PANAS, BARJASA and SUPP, the Ibans who led SNAP and PESAKA were relatively less learned. Except for

some leaders in PESAKA, SNAP's leaders were relatively unknown, having held no formal or ceremonial positions in the Brooke or colonial governments.

The first 16 years also saw the emergence of the new leaders taking over the roles that had been provided by the traditional *raja berani*. In the Council Negeri, the only remnants of persons who might be associated with the status of *raja berani* were Tawi Sli and Abok Anak Jalin, both by virtue of being *penghulus*; the rest of the Iban Council Negeri members were characteristically the new leaders--with some education and with the experience of *bejalai*.

The entry of SNAP into the Barisan in 1976 also served to institutionalise some Council Negeri members in their respective areas. The turbulence of the 1970 and 1974 elections had diminished in the 1979 elections; there was no major opposition capable of undermining the strengthened Barisan Nasional, comprising the four formerly competing parties.

Another significant feature of Iban politics which emerged during this period is the decentralisation of the Iban political base.<sup>125</sup> While the majority of the Ibans supported SNAP, there were also considerable numbers of Iban supporters dispersed in PBB and SUPP--this is

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<sup>125</sup> I have discussed this observation in my unpublished paper entitled *Political Development in the Dayak Society*, 1985; a similar line of argument was later developed for a talk on Dayak Iban politics at the Centre for Asian Studies, University of Sydney, Australia, on 18 March 1986; and see also my publication, 1990, *op cit*.

reflected by the number of Iban seats held by PBB (3) and SUPP (2), prior to SNAP's entry into the Barisan; in the subsequent election, allocation of seats was based on these numbers. This is in sharp contrast to the PBB and SUPP who claim all the Malay/Melanau and Chinese seats exclusively. Therefore, one could say that a tri-polar balance of power in the Iban community co-existed between SNAP, and the Iban leadership in PBB and in SUPP. This balance of power is not really determined by numerical strength; it is determined more by the rapport that the tripartite Iban leadership has with the Malay/Melanau leadership within the PBB.

For the past 25 years, the Iban leadership in the PBB has been exercised by the Linggi Jugah group--comprising Linggi, Jabu (the Deputy Chief Minister) and Ujang (Minister). Although these three could be considered to be unified, they were not without their own personal interests and frequently they did not see eye-to-eye on matters affecting the Iban as a whole. In terms of their power base within the Iban community, this group commanded a mere three seats--Layar (Jabu's seat), Kemena (Ujang's seat) and Katibas (Linggi's proxy). While they may have only held these constituencies, their overall political influence, stemming from their positions within the PBB leadership, was enormous compared to those Ibans within SNAP and the SUPP. It might be hypothesised that they were maintained by the Malay/Melanau leadership in order to project some Iban support for the PBB and the

Barisan government. After the state general election of 1974 and before SNAP's entry into the coalition in 1976, Ibans were heavily under-represented in the state government. Since the PESAKA merger with BUMIPUTERA in 1973, the Iban wing of the PBB never commanded substantial support from the Ibans; in fact, in the 1974 general election following its merger, the former PESAKA support, derived from seven Iban constituencies, was drastically reduced to three, the number that was subsequently allocated to and which was maintained by the Iban wing of the PBB in the 1979 state general election. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to say that while the Linggi Jugah group had previously been maintained by the PBB as window-dressing since the early 1970s, they had now become a liability to it; the Malay-Melanau leadership had to accommodate to their personal interests, lest they rebelled against the party. With the combined, accumulated fortunes of the "big three" Ibans in PBB, the re-emergence of Iban power would not have been inconceivable if the three Iban leaders could have been persuaded to underwrite an exclusively Iban-based (or Dayak-based) political party. Therefore, while these three Iban leaders may have become liabilities, it was also in the Malay/Melanau interest to keep them within the PBB at any cost.

Although SNAP had the majority support of the Ibans, there were no key Iban individuals wealthy enough to underwrite its financial needs. In the early 1960s and

1970s, it was alleged that SNAP was heavily dependent upon James Wong to finance its political activities. One basic shortcoming of the first Iban state government was that it did not create any wealthy Ibans who were able to take over James Wong's role.<sup>126</sup> This might be attributed, in part, to Ningkan's miscalculation of compromising on the freezing of timber concessions in order to secure Taib Mahmud's resignation from his cabinet. Due to this financial weakness, SNAP was not in a position to make any demands. This therefore seriously undermined its ability to address the uneven development in Sarawak which affected the rural Ibans in particular. Even upon joining the Barisan, the SNAP leadership had to suffer the humiliation of waiting to be invited to join the cabinet.

The Iban support for SUPP was expressed through the two state seats it held--Simanggang and Igan. As far as the Chinese are concerned, the two seats probably did not bring any real Iban participation in the party and government; it was held more to increase Chinese bargaining power in the Barisan. Thus, there is no foreseeable influence that Iban leadership in SUPP could derive within the Barisan; any authority that could be exercised was expressed through group interests (i.e. to benefit the Chinese).<sup>127</sup> Up to 1979, there was still no

<sup>126</sup> See James Wong, 1983, op cit.

<sup>127</sup> The general feeling that Dayaks were not being fairly treated in the party is best expressed by the former MP for Serian, Richard Dampeng anak Laki, who maintained that, among other things, no political appointments from the party have been given

Iban representation in the state government from SUPP. However, in 1976, the SUPP nominated an Iban--Jawan Empaling--to represent the party at the federal government level.<sup>128</sup> In any event, the benefit of such an appointment was only for one particular constituency--Rejang--in terms of the increase in allocations for minor rural projects. In terms of other benefits, such as the SUPP Iban nominee filling a particular SUPP-allocated appointment, the benefits accrued exclusively to the Chinese members.

The institutionalisation of the decentralised Iban power in PBB, SNAP and SUPP--ordered in terms of their direct dependence on the Malay/Melanau leadership--continued to undermine Iban political aspirations in the 1980s to achieve an equitable balance of power between non-Muslim and Muslim natives and a fair share of the economic pie as defined by the NEP. As long as the PBB and the SUPP have been able to maintain their small number of Iban seats, Iban support behind SNAP could be easily dismissed by arguing that the Iban community was already represented by other (non-Iban dominated) parties

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to its Dayak members, and until lately, no Dayaks have been included in the party's recommendations for state decorations (e.g. datukship), Former SUPP MP for Serian Richard Dampeng anak Laki, interview by the author, 16 June 1990, Serian, Sarawak; But of course, there are some SUPP appointees to the local level leadership such as *penghulu* and councillors, as correctly maintained by the SUPP Chairman and State Minister, Datuk Amar Dr. Wong, correspondence interview by author, 5 November 1990.

<sup>128</sup> He was seconded as the SUPP nominee for the post of Parliamentary Secretary in 1976, "A Sarawak Malaysian Diary", Sarawak Gazette, Vol.CII, No.1423, 30 Sept 76, pp.180-84, cited p.181; see Appendix B.



in the coalition government. For much of the period up to the mid-1970s, the PBB and SUPP had been successful in retaining about three Iban (or Dayak) seats each. With the success and influence of these Iban candidates, both parties had been able to nominate Iban (or Dayak) to the state cabinet, thereby dismissing the allegation that the Iban (or the Dayak) community, which, at any given time, might have overwhelmingly supported the opposition, was not represented in the state's highest decision-making body.

## CHAPTER 4

### POLITICAL CHANGE AMONG THE IBANS: POST-INDEPENDENCE POLITICS II

#### I. Introduction

This chapter continues the examination of political changes among the Ibans in the post-independence period, beginning with the state general election of 1983 to the present. The process of political transformation among the Ibans, since independence, can be divided into two periods. The first epoch is roughly from 1963, the period centred around Sarawak's independence within the Federation of Malaysia, to roughly the late 1970s. This is the period of Iban consolidation, when regional cleavages begin to break down and have little significance for wider political participation. The process of development that was started in Iban country in the late 1950s began to have some impact on certain segments of the population. Slowly these groups, the educated, became the catalyst for further change, although the effect was rather slow to penetrate the wider Iban society. Nevertheless, the emergence and the absorption of the educated Iban into politics provided the basis for some fundamental changes in Iban attitudes towards politics--from confrontation to cooperation.

The second period can be said to begin somewhere in the early 1980s, specifically with the formation of PBDS

in July 1983, which reflected a growing discontent among the Ibans. This is the period marked by attempts to promote Iban political and socio-economic interests within Sarawak, the consequence of which has been protracted political confrontation.. In a sense, it is a period of the reassertion of certain fundamental political questions which had gradually been taken for granted in the first epoch: that is the Iban right to a share of political power as an indigenous population and their corresponding right to appropriate benefits from economic development, as defined by the NEP. Thus, Daniel Tajeim's call to Ibans to be "Generals" and not be content being "Corporals" underlies the political sentiment of Ibans in the second epoch.<sup>1</sup>

## II. The 1983 State General Election

The Sarawak state general election of 1983 was important for the Iban community for a number of reasons. First, the question of Iban unity and political loyalty to the second echelon Iban leaders--the Leo Moggie faction--was put to the test by the formation of PBDS, which sought to establish a Dayak-based party, led by

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<sup>1</sup> This was contained in Daniel Tajeim's address to the PBDS General Assembly in February 1987 held in Sibu. It is my opinion that his address has been misunderstood and blown out of all proportion by certain quarters, in order to scare the other ethnic groups which might cooperate with the PBDS. It has been convenient to associate such an address with extreme racism, especially when the call was made before an election in which the Barisan Nasional was facing a major political crisis.

Ibans.<sup>2</sup> The basic resentment of the second echelon Iban leaders in SNAP was that, while SNAP had an Iban image derived from its extensive Iban support, it was led by a Chinese, James Wong. Thus, the election, which was held on 28 and 29 December 1983, about five months after the formation of PBDS, provided an ideal testing ground for the newly formed Dayak party.

Secondly, the election also served to test Iban political vulnerability. It is widely held that the desertion of SNAP by the Leo Moggie faction had been the work of PBB's leadership, who saw the strong SNAP as a potential rival. It must be recalled that Rahman Ya'kub was not at all enthusiastic about SNAP's entry into the Barisan. Thus, although SNAP had joined Barisan in 1976 from a position of strength, it had to settle for less important ministries; it might be added that SNAP appointees had to wait almost a year before they were invited to join the state cabinet.<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly, the leadership fiasco between the Leo Moggie and James Wong factions also served to test the political maturity of the Iban voters. The position of both parties in the Barisan government was not at stake; almost immediately from its inception, PBDS was certain to be accepted. However, because of SNAP's veto, Taib

<sup>2</sup> With reference to the PBDS, the term "Dayak" is generally accepted to encompass other non-Muslim native groups as well.

<sup>3</sup> See Searle, 1983, op cit, p.189; the SNAP leadership had hopes that the portfolio of Agriculture would be given to one of their appointees, in which case it would have helped them in channelling funds to their rural constituents.

Mahmud circumvented the problem by establishing the Barisan Nasional Plus government--meaning Barisan Nasional plus PBDS.<sup>4</sup> In the general election, it was decided that SNAP and PBDS should contest against each other in 16 of the 18 seats, formerly held by both factions in SNAP; this was decided because SNAP and PBDS could not agree to the number of seats that were allocated to them. Thus, voting SNAP or PBDS did not involve forsaking the government and its patronage, but it merely enabled former SNAP supporters to decide between the PBDS or SNAP, both of which were already in government.

#### **A. Leadership Crisis in SNAP**

The crisis in SNAP between the Leo Moggie and James Wong factions centred on the leadership of the party. The Leo Moggie faction felt the need for the party to be led by an Iban for two reasons; first, SNAP was generally identified with the Ibans<sup>5</sup> and secondly, the political strength of SNAP was dependent upon Iban, both in terms of the party's membership and the assembly seats that it

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<sup>4</sup> The general rule in Barisan is that an application to accept any new component members must be unanimously agreed by all members. SNAP had objected to PBDS's application then.

<sup>5</sup> And therefore in Masing's reflection on the event then, a Chinese President was seen as a rebuke against Iban, as though there was no capable Iban to lead SNAP; PBDS Vice-President and Publicity Chief, and Member of the State Assembly for Baleh Dr. James Jemot Masing, interview by author, 14 June 1990, Kuching.

held, which were all from the Iban-dominated constituencies.<sup>6</sup>

Against this background, the Leo Moggie group challenged the James Wong faction for control of the party; the former lost. The Leo Moggie faction attributed their loss in the contest to the unbalanced representation between Iban and Chinese delegates to the general assembly; they alleged that the Chinese were overrepresented when each branch sent equal numbers of delegates to the assembly. Many of these branches did not have elected assemblymen and the practice therefore did not give due consideration to the branches that did have elected assemblymen.<sup>7</sup>

As a conciliatory move, James Wong offered the post of Deputy President to Leo Moggie. However, the move did not succeed in mending the rift; the supporters of Leo Moggie had hoped for important posts within the party. The problem reached its critical point prior to the 1982 parliamentary election, when James Wong excluded some of Leo Moggie's staunch supporters as candidates in the

<sup>6</sup> In the first direct election to the state assembly, two Chinese were elected under the SNAP banner; one from the Chinese constituency of Subis and another, James Wong, from a mixed constituency, where Ibans formed the largest group of voters. In 1974, SNAP's Chinese assemblymen increased to three; one from the Chinese constituency of Kuching Timor--later delimited and renamed Stampin in 1979, another elected from the Bidayuh-dominated area of Bau, and the third from Limbang. In 1979, only one of SNAP's 18 seats was held by a Chinese, James Wong, re-elected from his former constituency of Limbang.

<sup>7</sup> SNAP Vice-President, Parliamentary Secretary and MP for Baram Lohat Wan, interview by author, 15 March 1984, Damansara Heights, Kuala Lumpur; the interview was conducted for my article on the 1983 election, see Jawan, 1984a, op cit.

parliamentary general election. However, it was the expulsion from SNAP of Daniel Tajeim, who was SNAP's appointee as Deputy Chief Minister, that triggered an open confrontation. Tajeim was expelled from SNAP on allegations that he had helped campaign for independent candidates against SNAP's candidates. The allegation was probably linked to two former SNAP Members of Parliament, Edmund Langgu<sup>8</sup> and Edwin Tangkun<sup>9</sup> who, after having been dropped as party candidates, contested as independents and won in their respective constituencies. After Tajeim's expulsion, an exodus of SNAP assemblymen followed. This group formed the PBDS.

In forming the PBDS, the Leo Moggie faction was very clear about its immediate objectives, which were limited to challenging SNAP over the leadership of the Iban (Dayak) community. PBDS's declaration of the limited scope of its immediate aims could be assumed to reflect its short-term thinking dominated by the personal political interests of its leaders. But, such a declaration also served to remove any fear within the Barisan--especially from the PBB and SUPP--that PBDS wished to challenge the wider state leadership. As it turned out, Daniel Tajeim and Gramong Juna, both members

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<sup>8</sup> He was SNAP's nominee as Federal Deputy Minister of Agriculture, until his expulsion from SNAP and consequently his federal cabinet post; see also Appendix B.

<sup>9</sup> A staunch SNAP supporter, who had been with SNAP, first as its elected councillor in 1963. From 1970 onwards he had been elected four times (1970, 1974, 1978 and 1982) as Member of Parliament for Batang Lupar; he retired from active politics in 1986; see Appendix B.

of the state cabinet as SNAP nominees, were not required to resign their posts, although technically, they were no longer members of the Barisan; this was, of course, to the disadvantage of SNAP. This special arrangement could be seen as a moral boost for the PBDS.

**B. The Allocation of Seats among the Barisan Nasional Plus Component Parties**

The temporary political arrangement of including the PBDS in the Barisan Nasional Plus government was convenient for the Barisan leadership in order to regulate competition and conflict between SNAP and PBDS, and at the same time to prevent the conflict from affecting other coalition components. The PBB took the opportunity created by the SNAP-PBDS fiasco to increase its allocation by two to 20 seats, while SUPP was allocated 12 seats, the same number it had been given in the previous election; in the case of SNAP and PBDS, it was decided that they should fight against each other in 16 constituencies--those that were formerly held by the two rival factions in SNAP--using their own party banners instead of the Barisan's *dacing*, which was used by the other Barisan components (see Table 4.1 for seats held before and after the election). The decision to allocate 16 constituencies was based on the number of seats that SNAP had won in 1979. However, SNAP went against the BN's decision and contested in 18, while PBDS preferred to contest in only 14.



Table 4.1  
 Seats Held Prior to Election  
 and Allocation of Seats in the 1983 Election.

Party	No. of Candidates	Council Negeri 1983	Seats 1979
Barisan:	48	38	45
PBB	20	19	18
SUPP	12	11	11
SNAP	16	8	16
PBDS	14	6	-
DAP	7	0	0
INDEP	79	4	3
Total	148	48	48

The 1983 election attracted considerable interest from independent candidates; a total of 79 was recorded. However, the true affiliations of these independent candidates became apparent during the campaigning period. In fact, three of the four independents who won were aligned to PBB and SUPP; the one in Bengoh with PBB, and the other two, in Engkilili and Dudong, with SUPP. The fourth independent, Bolhassan bin Kamar, who won in Tatau, had registered as an independent, but before polling began, he had declared his support for PBDS.<sup>10</sup> The circumstances surrounding Kamar's switch to PBDS was as peculiar as PBDS' reason for accepting him: a Dayak-based party accepting a non-Dayak. The PBDS Secretary-General, Joseph Samuel, who was nominated to stand in Tatau, had had his nomination paper rejected by the Election

<sup>10</sup> Bolhassan Kamar's admission into PBDS became one of the main issues used by SNAP to discredit PBDS' claim to be a Dayak party. The extent to which this argument caught the attention of Dayaks only serves to underlie the importance attached to the distinction between non-Muslims (i.e. Dayaks) and Muslims (i.e. Malays and many Melanaus).

Commission's Returning Officer on the grounds that it had been improperly filed. Since Joseph Samuel was a veteran politician, it was rather difficult to comprehend how he could have made some mistakes that were serious enough to disqualify him from contesting in Tatau. Thus, although strange as it may seem, it could only be hypothesised that they had coaxed Bolhassan Kamar to represent them there out of desperation and did not want to give SNAP's candidate an easy win against two independents--including Kamar--both of whom were Malays.

When nominations closed on 8 December 1983, three Barisan candidates were returned unopposed; two from PBB, in Matu-Daro and Oya, and one from SUPP, in Miri.<sup>11</sup>

### **C. Iban Issues at the Poll**

The political fiasco created by the leadership clashes between SNAP and PBDS opened opportunities for a limited inter-party competition among the Barisan components as each party sought to increase its leverage in the post-election coalition.<sup>12</sup> Besides contesting in 20 seats, the PBB was alleged to have backed several independent candidates in the SNAP-PBDS free fight areas as well as in some SUPP areas. The SUPP leadership was

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<sup>11</sup> For the full election result, see Table 4.9 (Appendix C).

<sup>12</sup> However, there was also a disadvantage as a BN-backed independent, especially when public opinion of government was low, as Joseph Jingtut experienced when he lost in Baleh against James Masing, who was portrayed as the "poor man or working class" candidate, Kapit District Council Chairman Joseph Datuk *Temenggong* Jingtut, interview by author, 12 July 1990, KDC Office, Kapit.

unhappy about two independent candidates in Lundu and Bengoh, where they believed that their candidates were being challenged by the PBB-backed independents; SUPP independents were confined to the SNAP-PBDS free fight areas in Engkilili and Dudong. On the other hand, it was widely held that SNAP, aside from contesting in 18 seats using its own banner, was also supporting independent candidates in 25 other constituencies, with the hope of having a long shot at forming the next state government; the Chief Minister was outraged when he found out that an independent candidate contesting against him in Sebandi was a former SNAP member. Thus, there were accusations and counter-accusations being thrown back and forth between the various Barisan Plus components as each sought to discredit the other.

For the Ibans, the important theme of the election campaign was the PBDS call to Dayaks to vote for a Dayak party. PBDS was rumoured to have received considerable support among the educated Ibans, who saw that some good might come out of such a rallying cry. Most notably among these educated Ibans were the teachers, who were serving in the *ulu* areas, and a sizeable portion of Iban civil servants. These two groups provided the source for much of the campaigning at the grassroots level; furthermore, their status as the "educated" commanded some respect, which their opponents found difficult to dilute. Another group of Ibans that were drawn towards the PBDS were the university students; for some time, the political call to

unite behind PBDS created polarisation between Dayak and non-Dayak students. One common factor that drew these three groups towards PBDS was the common difficulty that they all experienced--relative deprivation, whether in terms of promotion for teachers and civil servants or the lack of opportunities for pursuing further studies for the students. On the other hand, for the ordinary longhouse Ibans, the PBDS move was rather difficult to understand; the most perturbing question on the campaign trail was why did these intellectual, second echelon Iban leaders, pull out of SNAP?; Did it really matter that SNAP was led by a Chinese?; James Wong served the party and waited for his turn to assume the leadership, so why was it that these young educated Iban leaders could not wait for their turn?.<sup>13</sup>

The PBDS and SNAP clashes dominated Iban politics during the 1983 election. Many explanations were offered for the events leading to the breakaway of Iban leaders from SNAP. But among the more plausible ones was that the clashes might have been fuelled by the Malay/Melanau leaders of PBB. It was easy to see that when SNAP joined the Barisan with 18 seats, the stability of PBB leadership within the Barisan was put at risk, because any re-alignment within the Barisan component could

<sup>13</sup> It was said that James Wong agreed to relinquish the post of the presidency when his term expired, but he was unwilling to be pushed out of the leadership, to make way for the second echelon Iban leaders; James Wong felt that after serving the party, he did not deserve to be dumped unceremoniously; SNAP Vice-President, Parliamentary Secretary and MP for Baram Luhut Wan, interview by author, 15 March 1984, Damansara Heights, Kuala Lumpur.

displace the PBB as the dominant partner. So, the only way to trim down the possible SNAP threat was to undermine its political strength. The strategy worked well because there was a willing group of Iban leaders within SNAP. Thus, there was an inherent benefit for both parties; for the PBB, it was a calculated move in which they hoped that by supporting the breakaway group, it would eliminate the SNAP threat, while the latter seized upon the opportunity to bring down the Chinese leadership and replace it with Iban.

The manner by which the PBB leadership handled the crisis and the formation of PBDS lent some justification to the allegation that PBB was working behind the scenes. When Daniel Tajeim was expelled from SNAP, there was no move to sack him from the cabinet; neither did he intend to resign. Instead, the Chief Minister exercised his prerogative not to dismiss him.<sup>14</sup> Again, when PBDS applied to join the state level Barisan Nasional, Taib Mahmud announced the formation of the Barisan Nasional Plus Government in order, temporarily, to co-opt PBDS, which was strongly opposed by SNAP. During the campaign period, various actions of Taib Mahmud could also be construed to favour the PBDS. The access to government facilities for some of the SNAP ministers was curtailed by the state

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<sup>14</sup> It is convention that when a person is no longer a member of a political party which nominated him to a political post, the person should resign. When M.G. Pandithan was expelled from the Malaysian Indian Congress (one of the components of BN at the National level) and because he refused to voluntarily resign, he was dropped in a subsequent cabinet reshuffle.

government; normally, such facilities were to the advantage of the incumbent cabinet members of the ruling party.<sup>15</sup>

#### **D. The Election Result**

The election result was clear; the electorate returned the Barisan Nasional, for the second time, with an overwhelming majority, that is 44 out of the 48 state seats. If one takes into account the affiliations of the four victorious independent candidates then it can be said that the Barisan had secured all the 48 seats.

These four independent candidates were actually backed by PBB, SUPP and PBDS. Wilfred Nissom (Bengoh) was backed by PBB; he contested against William Tanyuk, the Barisan candidate from SUPP and polled 5,720 votes to Tanyuk's 4,594. Both independent candidates, who won in Engkilili and Dudong, were backed by SUPP. Both were Iban majority constituencies and formerly held by SNAP. Engkilili and Dudong were areas in which SNAP and PBDS were pitted against each other. In both constituencies, their candidates lost to SUPP-backed independents. The loss of Dudong to SUPP is excusable, since the SUPP-backed independent was an Iban; however, the loss of Engkilili to the SUPP-backed Chinese independent was a little hard to accept. It is highly probable that the

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<sup>15</sup> One of SNAP's nominees in the federal cabinet complained of this impairment; SNAP Vice-President, Parliamentary Secretary and MP for Baram Luhut Wan, interview by author, 15 March 1984, Damansara Heights, Kuala Lumpur.

marginal Chinese voters, in both areas, had been a significant factor for the defeat of both the SNAP and PBDS candidates. Another successful independent candidate was Bolhassan Kamar in Tatau, who had been co-opted by the PBDS.

The Iban leadership fiasco provided both the PBB and SUPP with the opportunity to increase their electoral strength in the State Assembly; PBB seats increased to 20 from the previous 18 and the SUPP to 13 from 12. SNAP won eight while the PBDS won seven, one through their non-Dayak independent. Thus, the crisis had been a loss to both the SNAP and PBDS. First, their former political strength, which could only have been envied by SUPP and feared by the PBB, had been shattered. Secondly, the leadership split had drastically reduced the bargaining power of both factions within the Barisan; consequently, neither faction in SNAP and PBDS could strongly claim that it was the Iban (or Dayak) party.

The result of the electoral contest between SNAP and PBDS in 15 Dayak constituencies<sup>16</sup> was rather inconclusive in determining whether one party or the other was more Iban or Dayak than the other. This is because there were 25 Dayak seats,<sup>17</sup> but the PBDS only chose to contest in 14, their reason being that their differences were only with SNAP. Table 4.2 shows votes polled and seats won by SNAP and PBDS in those constituencies where they had

<sup>16</sup> This includes the Iban, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu constituencies.

<sup>17</sup> 17 Iban, five Bidayuh and three Orang Ulu.

contested against each other. Based on that result, it can be concluded that the leadership clashes between the James Wong and Leo Moggie factions did not have much impact on the community, which is reflected in their voting patterns. In the 15 constituencies, SNAP and the PBDS each won six;<sup>18</sup> the total votes polled by both parties were also roughly equal, 35,606 (or 39%) for SNAP and 33,702 (or 37%) for PBDS.

Table 4.2  
Votes Polled by SNAP and PBDS: 1983.

Constituency	SNAP	PBDS	INDEP	Total+
S.12 Tebakang	*4,046	2,949	n.a.	10,123
S.15 Lingga	3,167	*4,562	n.a.	8,197
S.17 Engkilili	1,043	984	*1,461	5,007
S.18 Btg. Ai	*1,421	1,413	n.a.	3,923
S.22 Krian	2,307	*2,752	n.a.	6,216
S.30 Dudong	2,695	2,387	*2,870	8,064
S.33 Pakan	1,779	*2,040	n.a.	4,094
S.34 Meluan	*1,977	1,966	n.a.	4,239
S.35 Machan	2,134	*3,017	n.a.	5,266
S.36 Ngemah	1,468	*1,948	n.a.	4,376
S.38 Pelagus	*2,567	1,988	n.a.	5,161
S.39 Baleh	1,646	*2,717	n.a.	5,787
S.41 Tatau	1,988	n.a.	*2,342	4,801
S.45 Marudi	*3,969	3,114	n.a.	7,227
S.47 Limbang	*3,399	1,865	n.a.	8,414
Total	35,606 (39%)	33,702 (37%)	n.a. n.a.	90,895 (100%)

Notes: + -Total vote cast. \* -Indicates victors.  
n.a. -not applicable.

<sup>18</sup> For the PBDS, the total does not take into account the independent candidate who won in Tatau, who was aligned to it; for SNAP, it does not include the two other seats it won, where PBDS was not contesting, the SNAP overall total is therefore eight.



In order to have a clearer picture of the pattern of Iban voting in the 15 constituencies, it is necessary to examine the personalities involved in the contest, especially the status of the incumbents. In the six constituencies that SNAP won, three--in Tebakang, Marudi and Limbang--were won by their incumbent assemblymen, while the other three--in Batang Ai, Meluan and Pelagus--were won by their newcomers;<sup>19</sup> however, in nine others that it lost--six to PBDS and three to independents, it was represented by nine new faces. In contrast, in six constituencies that PBDS won, four were won by their incumbent assemblymen and two by newcomers;<sup>20</sup> in nine other constituencies that it lost, three were lost to SNAP through their incumbent assemblymen--in Batang Ai, Meluan and Pelagus.<sup>21</sup> Thus, there is some correlation between being the sitting assemblymen and one's chances of retaining the seat either for SNAP or the PBDS; in the case of PBDS, the correlation is higher since five--one a member of parliament--of the six who won for PBDS were incumbents.

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<sup>19</sup> The three incumbents were Michael Ben in Tebakang, Edward Jeli in Marudi and James Wong in Marudi.

<sup>20</sup> The two newcomers were Edmund Langgu in Krian and James Masing in Baleh; however, for Langgu, the state election was his first state election, having thus far been elected to parliament from the Saratok parliamentary constituency since the direct election in 1969/70. Thus, if one considers Langgu's parliamentary exposure, PBDS had only one new successful face.

<sup>21</sup> The three incumbents, who won their seats in 1979 while in SNAP, were David Jemut in Batang Ai, Ambrose Gramong in Meluan and Jonathan Sabai in Pelagus.

## E. Summary

There are a number of observations that can be made about Iban politics following the election of 1983, which might have some implications for the future. First, it reinforced the pattern of communal politics for Ibans and other ethnic groups; the Chinese in SUPP, the Malay/Melanau in PBB and the Dayaks in PBDS and SNAP. While it can easily be argued that PBB is an open party--open to *bumiputera*--and SUPP is a multi-racial party, it is also true that, since the merger of PANAS and BARJASA, the Malays/Melanaus have never been divided; similarly, the Chinese have strongly supported SUPP since its inception. However, the formation of PBDS has provided an alternative party for the Iban besides SNAP; this is not to dismiss a scattering of Ibans who, because of political circumstances, held seats for SUPP<sup>22</sup> and PBB.<sup>23</sup>

Secondly, the formation of PBDS served to further institutionalise the dichotomy of non-Muslim and Muslim natives; the former being identified with "Dayak" and PBDS, the latter with PBB. Because of this division, competition and conflict between the two groups is likely

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<sup>22</sup> Since the 1970 state general election, SUPP has held the Iban seats of Sri Aman and Igan; however, Igan was lost in the 1987 election when its incumbent defected and stood on the opposition PERMAS' ticket. Except for the 1983 election period, when it held four Iban seats, SUPP has held only two Iban seats. In between the 1970 and 1987 state election, it has also held two other Bidayuh seats of Lundu and Bengoh; see also Table 4.5.

<sup>23</sup> Since PESAKA's merger with BUMIPUTERA in 1973, Iban support for the PBB has been measured in terms of three Iban seats--i.e. Layar, Kemena and Song (later renamed Katibas); however, in 1987, it had been reduced to two, when Katibas was lost to the PBDS.

to intensify, to the detriment of both and to the advantage of the Chinese, whose role as the power broker in forming governments has continued to be much sought after.

Third, the election of 1983 saw the re-emergence of parochialism (regionalism) in Iban politics. Parochialism, as an electoral factor in Iban politics, has not been fully explored in any detail by earlier scholars.<sup>24</sup> Of the 12 candidates that won in the SNAP-PBDS free fight areas (six SNAP and six PBDS), eight were incumbents and four newcomers. Thus, it is highly probable, that if these eight had stayed put in SNAP or all had stood in PBDS, they might just as well have won their seats either for SNAP or PBDS. Thus, Iban politics was also based on individual personalities--support for an individual, rather than support for the party or for supra-regional loyalty.

Lastly, the 1983 state general election was a crucial watershed in Iban politics. It was a period of political disintegration, in which political consolidation was eroded due to the leadership conflict in SNAP. Thus, Iban politics of the early 1980s duplicated the earlier period of the 1960s, when confrontation and factionalism dominated.

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<sup>24</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, focused on Iban regionalism, which was later re-emphasised by Searle, 1983, op cit, although it apparently had begun to break down due to the socio-economic changes that were penetrating the Iban community.

### III. The 1987 State General Election

The Sarawak state general election of 1987 was called following an attempt to force the Chief Minister, Taib Mahmud, to step down. Rather like the unsuccessful move to topple Ningkan outside the state legislative assembly, twenty-eight state assemblymen laid down a motion of no-confidence in Taib Mahmud. The 28 state assemblymen, who had assembled in Kuala Lumpur's Ming Court Hotel,<sup>25</sup> comprised eight from the Malay/Melanau wing of PBB,<sup>26</sup> eight PBDS,<sup>27</sup> five SNAP,<sup>28</sup> four from SUPP<sup>29</sup> and three independents.<sup>30</sup>

The move to topple Taib Mahmud caught the government--both at the state and federal levels--by

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<sup>25</sup> Hence the term 'Ming Court Affair' to refer to the incident.

<sup>26</sup> The eight PBB were all Malay/Melanau assemblymen and some were former ministers in Taib Mahmud's cabinet, such as Datuk Hafsah Harun, Leader of the PBB's Women's Section and Minister for Social Development, and Datuk Mohd. Noor Tahir, Minister for Environment and Tourism, see *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 March 1987, and *The Straits Times*, 11 March 1987.

<sup>27</sup> The eight PBDS assemblymen included Datuk Daniel Tajeim, who was one of the three Deputy Chief Ministers and Gramong Juna, an assistant minister, *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 March 1987, *Ibid*, and *The Straits Times*, 11 March 1987.

<sup>28</sup> SNAP assemblymen of former ministerial level were Datuk Edward Jeli, former Minister and SNAP's Deputy President, a man closely aligned to James Wong during the James Wong-Leo Moggie clash, and Michael Ben, Assistant Minister for Culture and Sport, *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 March 1987, *Ibid* and *The Straits Times*, 11 March 1987.

<sup>29</sup> One of the four SUPP assemblymen, Hollis Tini, was the former Assistant Minister for Welfare; another two, Wilfred Kiroh and Sim Choo Nam, were formerly independent candidates closely aligned to SUPP, who had won in the 1983 general election, *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 March 1987, *Ibid*, and *The Straits Times*, 11 March 1987.

<sup>30</sup> Two independents--Wan Habib and Saadi Olia--were former members of the PBB, *Sarawak Tribune*, 10 March 1987, and *The Straits Times*, 11 March 1987.

surprise. It is rumoured that a no-confidence motion had been planned to take place at the forthcoming Assembly sitting, but because of a leak, it was decided that the move should go ahead.<sup>31</sup> The group of 28 applied various tactics to pressure Taib Mahmud to step down; these included calling on support within the federal capital<sup>32</sup> and electing a Chief Minister designate--Noor Tahir.<sup>33</sup> To prevent the further erosion and the undermining of his government and leadership, Taib Mahmud, with the consent of the Yang di-Pertua Negeri (Governor), dissolved the legislative assembly, to seek a fresh mandate and settle the crippling problem posed by the 28 state assemblymen.

While the move to oust him from the Chief Ministership seems to bear some similarity with the unconstitutional removal of Ningkan, Taib Mahmud had several advantages which Ningkan did not have. First, the federal leaders were not visibly supporting the opposition, mounted by the 28 assemblymen who had first

<sup>31</sup> Interview with a reliable source within PBDS in April 1987 in conjunction with my publication on the 1987 election, *Jawan*, 1987a, op cit.

<sup>32</sup> It was alleged that the move to topple Taib Mahmud by calling for his resignation from Kuala Lumpur was, at the urging of the Deputy Prime Minister, Ghafar Baba, "to save the face of the Chief Minister", who, otherwise, would have been embarrassed by the passing of the no-confidence motion in the state assembly, see *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 March 1987. This allegation was later denied by the Deputy Prime Minister, see *Sarawak Tribune* 18 March 1987, and subsequently by Rahman Ya'kub--the leader of the group of 28, see *Sarawak Tribune* 19 March 1987.

<sup>33</sup> "Disappointing day for Datuk Haji Noor Tahir" read a headline in the *Sarawak Tribune*, 12 March 1987, after he unsuccessfully tried to meet the Governor to hand him a letter signed by the 28 assemblymen; only the previous day, he had been elected by the group to be the new Chief Minister-designate.

called themselves, the Bersatu and later the Maju group. Secondly, there was no apparent conflict between the state and the federal leaders that would warrant a new leadership in Sarawak. Thus, the move to topple Taib Mahmud could be seen as a conflict between two groups within the Malay/Melanau wing of PBB--the Malays and the Melanaus, and also the old guard (i.e. Taib Mahmud, who is the last of the independence leaders in PBB) and the new post-independence leaders.

#### **A. Crisis Leading to the State General Election**

Many theories have been proposed for the emergence and escalation of conflicts which led to the necessity of calling for the snap election in 1987. The first theory is that the political crisis had developed from a personal clash between Taib Mahmud, the Chief Minister, and his uncle, Rahman Ya'kub, the former Yang di-Pertua Negeri and Chief Minister.<sup>34</sup> The clash was presumed to have started in 1983, when Rahman Ya'kub, then the Governor, openly criticised Taib Mahmud at a public function--the opening of the Bintulu port--in the presence of Menteri Besar<sup>35</sup> and Chief Ministers; Taib Mahmud walked out during the function. Although the incident may have calmed down when Taib Mahmud apologised

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<sup>34</sup> "Sarawak family affairs that turned sour" read a headline in *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 March 1987.

<sup>35</sup> Menteri Besar: the term is the equivalent of the Chief Minister, but used to refer to the Chief Executives of states with a Malay ruler (Sultan or Raja).

to the then Governor, it was not the only source of friction between the two men. Taib Mahmud's allegation that Rahman Ya'kub interfered with the day-to-day running of the government was another source of their friction. Relationships between the Chief Minister and his uncle worsened, when the latter appeared in the Oya constituency in support of an independent--Salleh Jafaruddin--against the PBB.<sup>36</sup>

The second theory, linked closely to the first, centres around the possible conflict over who should benefit from the accelerated economic development in Sarawak, especially from timber concessions and the awarding of government contracts. From Rahman Ya'kub's ascent to power in the early 1970s, the granting of timber licenses increased markedly; the former Chief Minister's argument being that it was necessary to create rich *bumiputera* (the Malay/Melanau) businessmen, who would be able to underwrite political parties,<sup>37</sup> thereby maintaining native political supremacy divorced from dependence on rich Chinese entrepreneurs. Thus, during Rahman Ya'kub's reign, there emerged the "favoured boys", who not only benefited from the accelerated economic development but who also occupied high offices in the

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<sup>36</sup> Salleh Jafaruddin was the PBB state assemblyman for the Oya constituency. Preceding a dispute with the PBB leadership, the former resigned from the party. The Oya by-election was held following his resignation; he subsequently lost in the by-election.

<sup>37</sup> See Leigh, 1983, op cit.

expanded government agencies and statutory bodies.<sup>38</sup> When Rahman Ya'kub retired from politics in 1981, he was subsequently appointed Governor; his term expired in 1985 and his clients began to feel that they were being eased out, as the new Chief Minister built up his own supporters.<sup>39</sup> So the argument goes, the former group prevailed upon their mentor to confront Taib Mahmud in the hope of getting some concessions; when that failed, a direct confrontation was inevitable.

Thus, it is suggested that the Rahman Ya'kub faction within the PBB became critical of Taib Mahmud and his "leadership style", which could be construed as resulting from their exclusion from timber concessions and government contracts. Consequently, the 'politics of development',<sup>40</sup> as espoused by Taib Mahmud became the object of severe criticism. In June 1986, Salleh Jafaruddin, who had been openly critical of Taib Mahmud, resigned from the PBB and subsequently from his seat in the Oya state constituency. Hence, the by-election was to be a test case and the culmination of the protracted on-off confrontations between the factions of Taib Mahmud and Rahman Ya'kub; the former group won the by-election, through their proxy, Wan Madzihi, by a comfortable margin

<sup>38</sup> See Leigh, 1980, op cit; see also *Sarawak Tribune*, 30 October 1977.

<sup>39</sup> See Tables 4.10 and 4.11 (Appendix C) for forest concessions held by the Taib Mahmud and Rahman Ya'kub groups, respectively.

<sup>40</sup> "Politics of development" is but a slogan of the Chief Minister to describe his efforts to bring development to all ethnic communities in Sarawak.



of 1,755 votes. The Rahman Ya'kub group's efforts to register the United Sarawak Native's Association (USNA)<sup>41</sup> prior to the Oya by-election did not go through; neither did it materialise before the parliamentary election in August 1986. In the parliamentary election that followed, the group put up a total of 16 candidates; all lost.

The third theory is that the crisis was a political drama staged brilliantly by the two principal actors, the nephew and his uncle. It is further argued that the crisis was needed in order to identify who the supporters and opponents of the Chief Minister were, especially within his own party. The move was necessary in order to preserve the Melanau dynasty through the PBB, which was becomingly increasingly resented by the Malay faction of the Malay/Melanau wing in PBB. Thus, the political crisis would have guaranteed that Melanau power would continue, either through Taib Mahmud, if he was returned, or Rahman Ya'kub, if the opposition won.<sup>42</sup> According to this theory, it was inconceivable that Taib Mahmud and Rahman Ya'kub, who are relatives, would continue to be locked in such

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<sup>41</sup> United Sarawak Native's Association (USNA) was to be the initial platform for the faction opposed to Taib Mahmud; it was to open its doors to all natives. However, the disappointment brought about by Salleh's defeat in 1986 in the Oya by-election and its dismal performance in the parliamentary election in the same year probably thwarted its formation; see Yu Loon Ching (1987). *Sarawak: The Plot that Failed*. Singapore: Summer Times, see Introduction; the text comprises newspaper clippings surrounding the eventful election of 1987 and a rather unbalanced and incomplete representation of the events, mostly centring on selected press statements from the Barisan Tiga.

<sup>42</sup> Through the whole political crisis, Rahman Ya'kub was linked with the group of 28 as the "invincible rich hands" which were calling the shots, see *The People's Mirror*, 11 March 1987.

bitter feuds, as it was argued that "blood is thicker than water".

However, regardless of their plausibility, the three theories must also be examined together and in the context of Sarawak politics as a whole in order to arrive at a more balanced judgement of the 1987 crisis. To conclude that one of the theories is more plausible than any other is to simplify the whole complex picture. Several observations can be made. First, it was the culmination of a power struggle within the Malay/Melanau faction of the PBB--more specifically between the first and second echelon leaders. The first echelon was represented by Taib Mahmud, while the second can be said to comprise such persons as Salleh Jafaruddin, Wan Madzihi, Wan Habib and Bujang Ulis, who were eager to take over the PBB leadership. Therefore, the key issue was not the return of Rahman Ya'kub, whose mental and physical capabilities had been in question due to his age. He was drawn into the conflict to provide an authority figure and lend stability and credibility to the opposition group. Had it not been for his presence in the group, there would have been a power struggle with respect to the appointment of the new Chief Minister in the eventuality that the group could capture power. Equally important was the fact that Rahman Ya'kub was there to provide the financial backing for the group.

Secondly, the political crisis is connected to the leadership cycle within the PBB. If the short history of

the PBB state leadership under Rahman Ya'kub can be taken as a lesson, then there had emerged a leadership cycle of popularity--immediately following the appointment--and decline--beginning in the second term. Rahman Ya'kub ascended to the state leadership and promoted economic development, producing the spoils which were enjoyed by the favoured clients; in time, the development strategies of Rahman Ya'kub became unpopular because it concentrated wealth among a small group and in the urban centres, an issue which became one of the rallying points used to bring him down;<sup>43</sup> he subsequently resigned in favour of Taib Mahmud in 1981. In his second term, Taib Mahmud's alienation of Rahman Ya'kub's clients became one of the foci of resentment against his leadership, which exploded into a crisis.

Thirdly, the issue of development, especially urban-rural inequalities and the problems of the Ibans, could not be expected to be addressed through the new government under Rahman Ya'kub, whose past record had been to exaggerate such inequalities; what would come out of the change in government would be to redefine which group had greater access to wealth--Rahman Ya'kub or Taib Mahmud's Malay/Melanau supporters. The problem of urban-rural bias is an inherent dilemma facing any government,

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<sup>43</sup> Leigh, 1980, op cit, pp.240-54, observed that the fact that Rahman Ya'kub was able to lead for a third term could perhaps be attributed to two factors: first, Pajar, an alternative party which derived support from the Kuching Malays, had not done well in the parliamentary election; and second, he was able to mend his relationship with the federal leaders; see also Kawi, 1988, op cit.

one of whose tasks must be to determine an appropriate gap, between urban and rural, a gap which should be maintained but one which cannot be eliminated. Thus, based on this assumption, some explanations for the Chinese and Iban support for the two opposing groups within PBB can be offered. For the Chinese, supporting either faction would bring no real change in the fortunes of its grassroots supporters. The ascent of the opposition would not bring about a halt to development in the urban areas, in which most of the Chinese reside.<sup>44</sup> However, with no significant defections, the Chinese supported Taib Mahmud from a position of strength, which was rewarded with one ministerial position.<sup>45</sup> However, for the Ibans in PBDS, there were three possible explanations. First, supporting Rahman Ya'kub's group would provide the PBDS with an opportunity to increase its electoral strength. Secondly, it provided the necessary financial support for the election. Thirdly, it opened the possibility of real or felt partnership with the Malay/Melanau leaders, who shared characteristics with leaders of PBDS--i.e. they were the post-independence leaders of their communities.

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<sup>44</sup> This has been one of the major explanations which Malaysian scholars have used to account for why the DAP has been successful only in major urban constituencies. It is argued that the federal government is not simply going to stop development in Kuala Lumpur because it is being represented by the DAP assemblymen.

<sup>45</sup> George Chan was promoted to full minister, making three from the SUPP.

**B. Political Alignment  
Prior to the State General Election**

The political realignment following the move to topple Taib Mahmud was mainly a native matter; more specifically involving the Malay/Melanau group--those within and without the PBB. While that is the case, Dayak enthusiasm generated by these events must not be underestimated. The Taib-Rahman clash had given them the opportunity to ride along, providing them with a number of potential advantages in the event of a general election.

First, it made the PBDS an important ally for Rahman Ya'kub's group, which was bent on trying to wrest power from Taib Mahmud. Due to the significance of their alliance, the PBDS was assured funds, which would have been their major problem in an election. Second, the political crisis provided PBDS with the opportunity to test the extent of their Dayak support; in 1983, the party only contested 14 out of the 25 Dayak constituencies. The Chinese political leaders in SUPP were largely unaffected by the political crisis; there were no defections of assemblymen who held the eight Chinese-dominated constituencies. The two Chinese assemblymen from SUPP, elected from Igan and Engkilili, who defected to the Rahman Ya'kub-PBDS alliance, should not be seen as representing Chinese sentiments. This is because both of them had been elected in Iban constituencies.

The opposition comprised the alliance between two political parties--PERMAS and the PBDS. A week after the dissolution of the state assembly, the Rahman Ya'kub group received the certificate of registration for PERMAS.<sup>46</sup> With that, the 20 assemblymen who had defected were realigned within the two parties, which later called themselves the *Maju* Group (literally, group for progress); the nine Dayaks joined PBDS, while nine Malays/Melanaus and two Chinese joined PERMAS.<sup>47</sup> The *Maju* group contested in 42 state constituencies, the majority of which were the Malay/Melanau and Dayak constituencies. PBDS represented the group in 15 Iban, four Bidayuh and two Orang Ulu constituencies;<sup>48</sup> in the Iban constituencies of Igan and Kemena, they opted out in favour of PERMAS; in Engkilili and Tatau, the party was represented by a Chinese and a Malay, respectively. PERMAS contested in the other 21 seats; 15 were in the Malay/Melanau constituencies, two Iban, one each in the Bidayuh and Orang Ulu, and two in the Chinese constituencies.<sup>49</sup>

The position of the state Barisan Nasional was seriously threatened. With the defection, the BN was left

<sup>46</sup> *Sarawak Tribune*, 20 March 1987.

<sup>47</sup> *Sarawak Tribune*, 14 March 1987.

<sup>48</sup> The constituencies were: Lingga, Sri Aman, Engkilili, Batang Ai, Layar, Krian, Dudong, Pakan, Meluan, Machan, Ngemah, Katibas, Pelagus, Baleh and Tatau.

<sup>49</sup> The 21 constituencies, by ethnic breakdown were: Malay/Melanau--Petra Jaya, Satok, Sebandi, Muara Tuang, Semera, Gedong, Saribas, Kalaka, Kuala Rejang, Mato-Daro, Balingian, Oya, Subis, Limbang and Lawas; Iban--Igan and Kemena; Bidayuh--Lundu; Orang Ulu--Belaga; and Chinese--Batu Kawa and Seduan.

with 20 seats: nine held by the PBB, eight by SUPP and three by SNAP.<sup>50</sup> While there might have been an uneasy alliance among the 28 defecting assemblymen,<sup>51</sup> the BN was clearly not in a position to entice any of them; they were being kept and their movements closely monitored at the Ming Court--the initial headquarters of the *Maju* group. Thus, the only alternative left to the BN was to call a snap election. The withdrawal of PBDS from the state Barisan Nasional paved the way for a direct confrontation; hitherto, the PBDS had been banking on the decision of the BN Supreme Council that the election was to be a "free-for-all" contest among the component parties of BN, each using their respective party symbols;<sup>52</sup> and that the coalition in the post-election period be determined by how well each party had fared in the election. However, when the National Supreme Council of the BN decided that all component parties (i.e. PBB, SUPP, SNAP and PBDS) would contest under one banner--the BN's *dacing*, the PBDS was in a dilemma, as that would mean it could contest in only eight seats it had previously held. The decision to stay within the BN would therefore jeopardise the position of the assemblymen, who had defected to the party. Consequently, the PBDS decided

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<sup>50</sup> See *The New Straits Times*, 11 March 1987.

<sup>51</sup> Initially the *Maju* group claimed to have 32 assemblymen on their side, whom the group had lured to the federal capital, on the pretext that some important meetings were scheduled or that some important federal leaders wanted to meet them.

<sup>52</sup> *The People's Mirror*, 2 April 1987.

to leave the BN at the state level, while maintaining their position at the federal level.<sup>53</sup>

With the exit of PBDS, the state BN was restyled Barisan Nasional Tiga (BN3)--comprising the PBB, SUPP and SNAP. In the 48 state constituencies, the BN Tiga was represented by the PBB in 23, SUPP in 14 and SNAP in 11. Among the 23 seats allocated to PBB, 14 were in Malay/Melanau constituencies, seven in Iban and one each in the Orang Ulu and the Bidayuh areas;<sup>54</sup> the 14 SUPP seats were drawn from the eight Chinese constituencies, four Iban and two Bidayuh;<sup>55</sup> while the 11 allocated to SNAP were in six Iban constituencies, two each in the Bidayuh and Orang Ulu areas, and one in the Malay/Melanau marginal constituency.<sup>56</sup>

The DAP, which made its first state election debut in 1979, filed 11 candidates; eight in the Chinese constituencies, two in Iban--Tatau and Kemena--and one in

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<sup>53</sup> This followed a precedent set by the political turmoil in Sabah in 1985, in which the then ruling Parti Bersatu Sabah and the opposition United Sabah National Organisation were both members of the BN at the federal level; see Tan Chee Koon (1986). *Sabah: A Triumph for Democracy*. Petaling Jaya (Selangor): Pelanduk.

<sup>54</sup> For the 15 seats in the Malay/Melanau constituencies, see footnote no. 45; the other constituencies were as follows: Iban--Layar, Meluan, Machan, Katibas, Pelagus and Kemena; Orang Ulu--Belaga and Telang Usan; and Bidayuh--Tarat.

<sup>55</sup> The ethnic distribution of seats allocated to SUPP were as follows: Chinese--Padungan, Stampin, Batu Kawah, Repok, Meradong, Maling, Seduan and Miri; Iban--Sri Aman, Engkilili, Igan and Dudong; and Bidayuh--Lundu and Bengoh.

<sup>56</sup> The six Iban constituencies were Lingga, Batang Ai, Krian, Pakan, Baleh and Tatau; Bidayuh--Tasik Biru and Tebakang; Orang Ulu--Marudi and Telang Usan; and the Malay/Melanau marginal constituency of Limbang.



the Malay/Melanau area of Subis. Other than candidates of political parties, there was a scattering of independents and one BERSATU party candidate in Satok. Otherwise, it was basically a two-cornered fight in most constituencies between the BN Tiga and the Maju group.<sup>57</sup>

### C. Campaign Issues

There were many issues that dominated the state general election of 1987; personal, economic and ethnic. But for the Malay/Melanau in the Maju group, the concerns centred around the leadership style of Taib Mahmud, his development priorities and favouritism; while for the Dayaks, it was basically the exclusion of Dayaks from the benefits of development.

The Taib-Rahman clash can be said to focus on access to economic power, through procuring timber concessions and government contracts. Thus, the issue of the leadership style and development priorities of Taib Mahmud were but camouflage for the real issue at stake. During the campaign, the electorate was exposed to accusations and counter-accusations about the plundering of Sarawak's forests during the past 20 years. (see Tables 4.10 and 4.11 [Appendix C]).

On the issue of leadership, PERMAS's concern seemed to centre on what they alleged to be Taib Mahmud's concessionist policy towards the Chinese. They felt that

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<sup>57</sup> Parti Bersatu contested in four seats in 1983, mainly in the PBB Malay/Melanau areas.

the Chief Minister was giving in too much to Chinese demands at the expense of the native Malays/Melanaus; however, there were no details given.

The response of the Dayaks and their leaders to the political crisis was reactionary. Thus, the PBDS campaign evolved from the themes that were the cornerstone of PERMAS's criticism of Taib Mahmud; the latter's leadership style. PBDS also raised the issue of underdevelopment in the Dayak community. However, the rebuttal was well summed up by Justine Jinggut, the Acting Secretary-General of SNAP, in his interview with the *Borneo Post*, when he said that the PBDS had nobody to blame but themselves for not striving hard enough to make their community progressive, when some of their party leaders were in the key positions to do so.<sup>58</sup> Those PBDS assemblymen who were in the state cabinet were Daniel Tajeim, Deputy Chief Minister, Edward Jeli, Cabinet Minister, Hollis Tini, Michael Ben and Gramong Juna, Assistant Ministers; and in the federal government, they were represented by Leo Moggie as a Federal Minister.

PBDS relied heavily on the factor of 'Dayakism'. However, the term was wrongly used to label Dayaks as extremists and to scare the Malays/Melanaus and the

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<sup>58</sup> *The Borneo Post*, 23 March 1987; the same argument was also evidenced from my later interview with him, SNAP Secretary-General and former MP for Ulu Rejang Justine Datuk Temenggong Jinggut, interview by author, 4 August 1990, SNAP Headquarters, Kuching.

Chinese. In fact, it differs from other "isms", for example, communism and nationalism, in that it did not have an established ideology and a coherent programme espoused by its leaders; it arose spontaneously in 1987. The phenomenon of Dayakism should more appropriately be linked to Dayak economic demands.<sup>59</sup> The common characteristic of the Ibans, Bidayuhs and Orang Ulu, who, in 1987 preferred to call themselves "Dayaks",<sup>60</sup> was their generally lowly economic position.<sup>61</sup> The leadership crisis within Malay/Melanau circles simply provided the opportunity for possible political consolidation for the attainment of economic advancement. For most of the Dayaks, who are rural dwellers, the issues posed by the Malay/Melanau leaders were rather remote from their daily experience. Thus, Dayakism was a pragmatic response to changing political circumstances and a convenient rallying point for a number of native groups.

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<sup>59</sup> This is my earlier assertion, when I argued that Dayakism basically arose from political and economic deprivation; it argued for greater political participation in decision-making and a fair share of economic development, 1987, op cit.

<sup>60</sup> In the 1960s, the use of "Dayak" to refer to Ibans was viewed as denigrating; calling any native "Dayak" would be almost certain to invite a fight. However, in their study, Avé and King, 1986, op cit, pp.34-36, observe the cultural proximity of the Dayak groups in terms of "... their religious ideas ... [which are]... fundamentally alike" and that "all Dayak groups recognised a principal deity, often responsible for the creation of the world and all within it".

<sup>61</sup> Economic development among the Ibans will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

While the PBDS was riding high with Dayakism, SNAP called for moderation and the ills of associating with the former Chief Minister, who had been responsible for the fall of the first two Iban Chief Ministers. In his "Message to the Dayaks", the SNAP Acting Deputy President, outlined the mistreatment of Dayaks under Rahman Ya'kub, which can be summed up as follows:<sup>62</sup>

1. he helped toppled Ningkan and Tawi Sli as Chief Ministers;
2. he did nothing to help Dayaks attain their share of the "economic pie";
3. he did nothing to bring more Dayaks into the civil service and into positions of responsibility; and
4. a government under Rahman Ya'kub would only mean more development for the urban centres.

Although the DAP had not won any seats in the previous state elections, there was cause for SUPP alarm; the DAP campaign was drawing big crowds compared to theirs. While the SUPP campaigned on such issues as the dangers of racial extremism,<sup>63</sup> the DAP was more sympathetic to the emotions that Dayakism had aroused

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<sup>62</sup> "Message to the Dayaks", *The People's Mirror*, 8 April 1987.

<sup>63</sup> In an open letter to his old friend, Wong Soon Kai, the then SUPP Secretary-General, Rahman Ya'kub warned the SUPP of the danger of provoking the Dayaks with their heavy criticism, *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 April 1987; see *The People's Mirror*, 9 April 1987 in which a SUPP Minister attacked "Dayak" racial extremists.

among the Ibans. Thus, the DAP Sarawak State Chairman and candidate in Meradong said in a statement that it was

unwise and indeed dangerous for certain SUPP leaders to portray Dayaks as racialists, to create suspicion and fear in the minds of the Chinese, to breed ill-feelings among racial groups in Sarawak.<sup>64</sup>

#### D. The Election result

The state general election of 1987 returned to power the BN Tiga, and the leadership of Taib Mahmud for a third term. The coalition won a simple majority; it secured 28 seats; 14 for the PBB, 11 for SUPP and three for SNAP. Nevertheless, it was one of the lowest legislative majorities secured by the coalition, which had, since the 1979 election, easily won with a two-thirds majority (see Table 4.3).<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 April 1987; in his statement released to the press, the DAP Chairman also spoke of the Dayak right to have a bigger say in government because of their demographic strength of 25 seats. However, this statement may have been motivated by the fact that he was standing in Meradong, which, although a Chinese majority area, has about 30% Dayak voters.

<sup>65</sup> For the full election result, see Table 4.12 (Appendix C).

Table 4.3  
Legislative Majority  
of the Coalition Government: 1969-1987.

Party	1969	1974	1979	1983	1987
SNAP	11	18	16 ]	8 ]	3 ]
SUPP	* 12	12 ]	11 ]	11 ]	11 ]
SCA	* 3	- ]	- ]	- ]	- ]
PESAKA	* 8 )+	- ]	- ]	- ]	- ]
BUMIPUTERA	* 12 )	18 ]	18 ]	19 ]	14 ]
PBDS	-	-	-	6 ]	15
INDEP	1	0	3	4	0
PERMAS	-	-	-	-	5
Total	48	48	48	48	48

Notes: \* -Sarawak Alliance; SUPP and PESAKA joined after the election.  
+ -PESAKA and BUMIPUTERA merged into PBB.  
] -BN component parties.

The 14 seats PBB won comprised 10 from the Malay/Melanau areas, two from the Iban and one each from the Bidayuh and Orang Ulu constituencies. Thus, for the first time since he assumed the leadership of PBB and the state government in 1981, Taib Mahmud had been awakened to the harsh reality that he no longer enjoyed the full support of the Malay/Melanau community. When he took over the Chief Ministership from his uncle, Rahman Ya'kub, Taib Mahmud had inherited a united Malay/Melanau community. The dismal performance of the PBB in the Iban constituencies should not have come as a surprise; since PESAKA's merger into PBB, Iban support for the party had been on a steady decline. Another BN Tiga component, the SUPP retained all the Chinese constituencies, despite indications of a strong DAP challenge. SUPP's ability to retain their constituencies thus far might be attributed to the Chinese fear of a weak SUPP, which would reduce

their bargaining power vis-à-vis the other communities.<sup>66</sup> In addition to the eight Chinese seats, SUPP candidates also won in one Bidayuh and two Iban constituencies. The third BN Tiga component, SNAP, was badly defeated at the hands of the PBDS. Its image as the Iban party was tarnished when it was successful in winning only one of the six Iban constituencies allocated to it; incidentally, the one seat it won was in Lingga, where Daniel Tajeim, the Deputy President of PBDS, was defending his former seat. SNAP also won two others; one in a Malay/Melanau marginal constituency, through James Wong, its President, and another in the Bidayuh area.

The opposition success was mainly attributed to a huge seat haul by the PBDS--15 seats. With another five won by PERMAS, the *Maju* group was able to deny the Barisan Tiga a two-thirds majority, the minimal number required to pass any major piece of legislation in the state assembly. Among the 15 seats PBDS won, 11 were from the Iban areas and two each from the Bidayuh and Orang Ulu areas; while the five seats PERMAS won were all, except for one (Igan), from the Malay/Melanau constituencies.

The result of the state general election of 1987 was clear: the majority of the Dayaks supported the PBDS; the loss of four of the 14 Malay/Melanau seats by the PBB,

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<sup>66</sup> The DAP only managed to win two Chinese parliamentary seats--Sibu and Bandar Kuching--in the 1982 parliamentary general election; in 1986, the DAP MP from Bandar Kuching was the sole party representative from Sarawak, when their other candidates were defeated by SUPP, including the DAP MP from Sibu.

sent strong messages of Malay/Melanau discontent to the government. There were a number of factors presumed to have an important influence on the pattern of voting of the Dayaks, Malays/Melanaus and the Chinese; these factors were not mutually exclusive.

It might be assumed that the electoral success of PBDS was due mainly to the phenomenon of Dayakism. However, it was clearly not the only factor. An equally strong if not more important reason than Dayakism, was personal followings. Many of the candidates who won for PBDS were established representatives in their respective areas; thus, even if they had stayed and contested for their former parties, it is highly probable that they would have succeeded. In order to have a clearer picture, it is necessary to examine the voting patterns in these constituencies. Table 4.4 presents the results in the 15 Dayak constituencies that PBDS contested. Of the 11 candidates that won, nine were incumbent assemblymen, who were defending their seats and there were two newcomers in Katibas and Pelagus.<sup>67</sup> In another four areas, one PBDS newcomer and three incumbents lost. One of those losers was Daniel Tajeim. One might ask how it is possible for a man who had incited much emotion among Ibans to aspire to be "Generals", and he as the PBDS General, to be defeated by a relatively unknown SNAP candidate in his home

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<sup>67</sup> In Pelagus, the candidacy of Philimon Nuing was his first electoral outing, but the fact that his father was the former incumbent may lend less weight to his classification as a newcomer.



territory of Lingga.<sup>68</sup> In all probability, Tajeim should have rode to victory on a number of factors. First, his previous position as Deputy Chief Minister should have attracted for him a considerable personal following in the constituency. Secondly, he should have had access to larger development funds when he was Deputy Chief Minister; therefore, the distribution of minor rural projects should also have cemented his personal following. Thirdly, his role as the "General" of the PBDS should also have had some impact on the voters, which in all probability should have at least won him the seat, if not increased his majority. However, there were a number of possible explanations for his defeat. It cannot be denied that the state ruling components had been granting considerable "on-the-spot" minor rural development projects--i.e. electric generators, footpaths, building and piping materials, most of which were given and/or completed before the polling days. However, this is not only for Lingga, where Tajeim stood, and in the 1987 election; in fact it has become the standard political tactic since the early 1960s. But in the case of Lingga, it was crucial that the "General" was defeated so as to create disarray and demoralise the PBDS in the eventuality that the opposition won. Because Moggie, the

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<sup>68</sup> It was rumoured that the PBDS President, Leo Moggie, had contemplated relinquishing his post as federal minister to lead the party in the state general election. However, he decided otherwise after assessing that his chances were not too promising. Besides, it was also believed that the incumbents in his home constituencies of Machan and Ngemah were both unwilling to make way for him to stand in either area.

then PBDS President, was not standing, the defeat of Tajeim would, it was hoped, send PBDS into a quandary as to who would be their leader in the new state government. This assumption would of course fit the third theory of the political crisis--the Rahman-Taib-staged political drama, whereby, the discord in the PBDS would pave the way for an unchallenged or a compromise leadership from PERMAS within the Maju group.

In terms of votes polled by these incumbents, there was a marginal variation in the majority counts in most constituencies. For instance, in Baleh, the majority polled by James Masing, the PBDS Publicity Officer, in 1983 was 1,071 votes, and in 1987 1,091; thus, although he had won in Baleh, the victory could hardly be linked to the phenomenon of Dayakism. Similarly, Edmund Langgu's majority variation of a loss of 31 votes and Jawie Masing's loss of three cannot simply be explained in terms of Dayakism; neither can Daniel Tajeim's defeat in Layar, in which his vote fell by 1,336 votes. However, there were two unique cases which could reasonably be linked to Dayakism. The first case is the constituency of Engkilili, where PBDS had nominated a Chinese, Sim Choo Nam, who polled 1,461 votes, a majority variation of plus 1,360. Choo Nam won the Engkilili seat in 1983 as an independent candidate, when the PBDS candidate then polled only 984 votes. Assuming that the 984 voters who voted for PBDS in 1983 also voted for it through Choo Nam, the remaining 385 votes then might somehow be linked

to the effect of Dayakism. Thus, in Engkilili, one might conclude that the ethnic background of the candidate did not matter to the voters, as long as he or she was from the PBDS. This might also have been the case with Geman Itam, formerly of SNAP, who was the only Iban candidate of PBDS to obtain a sizeable majority variation of 1,033 votes.

Table 4.4  
Voting Patterns in 15 Iban Constituencies.

Constituency	Candidate	1983		1987	
		Votes Polled		Majority	
S.15 Lingga	Daniel Tajeim (Incumbent)	W=4,526 1,395	L=4,409 -59		
S.16 Sri Aman	Hollis Tini (Incumbent)	W=4,104 1,440	L=4,762 -816		
S.17 Engkilili	Sim Choo Nam (Incumbent)*	W=1,461 418	W=3,839 1,778		
S.18 Btg Ai	Mikai Mandau (Incumbent)	W=2,342 304	W=2,761 8		
S.20 Layar	David Impi (Newcomer)	- -	L=2,691 -1,725		
S.22 Krian	Edmund Langgu (Incumbent)	W=2,752 445	W=3,751 414		
S.30 Dudong	Wilfred Kiroh (Incumbent)*	4=2,870 175	L=4,406 -313		
S.33 Pakan	Jawie Masing (Incumbent)	W=2,040 261	W=2,453 258		
S.34 Meluan	Giman Itam (Incumbent)+	W=1,977 11	W=3,135 1,044		
S.35 Machan	Gramong Juna (Incumbent)	W=3,071 883	W=3,426 988		
S.36 Ngemah	Joseph Kudi (Incumbent)	W=1,948 480	W=2,427 359		
S.37 Katibas	Banting Jibom (Newcomer)	- -	W=2,624 544		
S.38 Pelagus	Philimon Nuing (Newcomer)	- -	W=2,242 16		
S.39 Baleh	James Masing (Incumbent)	W=2,717 1,071	W=3,516 1,091		
S.41 Tatau	Bolhasan Kamar (Incumbent)	W=2,342 354	W=2,555 245		

Key: W/L -Won or Lost.

Notes: \* -Formerly SUPP members.  
+ -Formerly SNAP members.

Thus, the PBDS victory in 11 Iban constituencies was probably due to more important factors than Dayakism; first, the factor of incumbency; and secondly, the general attitude of Ibans towards politics. These two factors are closely interrelated. It must be understood that the Iban voters are mostly rural and characteristically *ulu*.<sup>69</sup> Generally, the political behaviour of the *ulu* Ibans does not fluctuate very much; once they support one faction, it is unlikely that the next day, the people's attitude will shift towards another. After several successive elections, the promises of economic development, which are part-and-parcel of politics, do not seem to have had much influence on their choices; instead, the personal character of their local representatives seems to be the determining factor in their allegiance. Similarly, these factors may be able to explain voting behaviour among the Bidayuh and Orang Ulu voters; except in Tebakang, the majority variations in the other constituencies were too small to justify any significant effect of Dayakism (see Table 4.5).

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<sup>69</sup> Refer to political socialisation in Chapter 2.

Table 4.5  
Voting Patterns in Bidayuh and Orang Ulu Constituencies.

Constituency	Candidate	1983 Votes Polled	1987 Majority
S.10 Bengoh	Sora Rusah (Newcomer)	-	W=5,648 219
S.12 Tebakang	Michael Ben (Incumbent)	W=4,046 1,097	W=7,723 4,357
S.45 Marudi	Edward Jeli (Incumbent)	W=3,963 849	W=4,156 1,054
S.46 Telang Usan	Balan Seling (Incumbent)	W=3,019 581	W=2,878 234

Note: Except Sora Rusah, all were formerly from SNAP.

While many historical factors may have been rendered obsolete, the factor of loyalty which is deep-rooted among personal followings, is still significant in contemporary Iban politics. The second echelon of the new Iban leaders may have been more appropriately equipped with a higher level of education and the necessary experience for modern politicking than their predecessors, but the resurgence of the fundamental values of the pioneering Ibans had accounted for the return of the same representatives in many Iban areas. In post-independence politics, political loyalty has been expressed in two patterns, that is in terms of individual leaders and later an institution (i.e. political party). Between the 1960s and 1980s Iban political behaviour exhibited these two cycles in alternation. In the 1960s, it was a period of the erosion of political loyalty attached to individual leaders, where the participation

of the traditional leaders (the *raja berani*) was slowly being phased out. Beginning with the three-tier, indirect elections to the Council Negeri and Parliament, about half (46%) of PESAKA's representatives to the state and federal assemblies were of the *.penghulu*, *pengarah* and *temenggong* ranks, while for SNAP they were about 22%; the percentage declined for SNAP to about 10% in 1970, while Pesaka's remained about the same at 50%.<sup>70</sup> In the following general election, these traditional leaders had completely disappeared, a consequence which relegated them to the position of community leaders or as "links" between the grassroots Ibans and the political leaders. The decline in the participation of Iban traditional leaders coincided with the institutionalisation of Iban leadership in SNAP, which had won 12 Iban majority seats during the 1974 state general elections (see Table 4.13 [Appendix C]). It must be noted that when Iban voted for SNAP then, the party was in opposition and therefore did not have the advantages of a ruling party. The Iban support that rallied behind SNAP then rested on the hope that the party would be able to form the government, thereby enabling it to change the thrust of development experienced during the Tawi Sli and Rahman Ya'kub periods. In the 1974 general election, eight of the 12 that won on SNAP tickets were newcomers to the state assembly, thereby lending support strongly to the fact

<sup>70</sup> Leigh, 1974, op cit, Tables 54 and 55; the percentage of the traditional *raja berani*, who were elected councillors was 40% for Pesaka and 23% for SNAP.

that Ibans had identified closely with the party; it is highly probable that those candidates won because they had stood on a SNAP ticket as against the factor of personal following. As far as the state general elections of 1979 was concerned, it was a further stage in the process of institutionalisation of the individual Iban leaders and Iban leadership in SNAP, in which all but two previous holders were returned in their respective seats; the minor exception being in Machan, where Moggie left the state to contest in the federal constituency, and Ngemah, in which *Penghulu* Umpau had been replaced by another SNAP nominee; thus, the two cases--especially in Machan where a newcomer had won--further strengthened the Iban identification with SNAP.

However, the process of institutionalisation of Iban leadership in SNAP was shattered by the internal squabbling within the party, which led to the formation of PBDS. The result of the state general election in 1983 in the 17 Iban constituencies revealed a number of characteristics such as the resurgence of individualism--i.e. personal followings--and the erosion of party allegiance. The majority of those who won for PBDS--about 71%--and SNAP--about 50%--were previous holders of the seats, thereby indicating that the factor of individualism had played a greater part than allegiance to either party. For the Iban leaders in PBB, the election was a further reinforcement of the extent of their influence in which the party had only managed to



retain the three seats since 1974; while for the SUPP, it was successful in gaining another two Iban seats, making a total of four. Generally, the 1983 state general election can be seen as a period of leadership renewal where a total of six new individuals had emerged--two each from PBDS, SNAP and SUPP. The 1983 election reflected to some extent the period of political division of the early 1970s, which was also coupled with the weeding out of the traditional leaders. However, the 1987 election period could not really be equated with the institutionalisation of Iban leadership that occurred within SNAP in 1974, because of a number of trends associated with Iban voting for PBDS in 1987. First, the SNAP turnover of newcomers was eight out of 12 (or 67%) compared to PBDS's two out of 11 (18%); thus, the probability of loyalty to SNAP then was higher than it was for PBDS in 1987. Secondly, the high rate of success that PBDS experienced in 1987 was attributed to the personal followings of the nine incumbents, including three who had switched to the PBDS prior to the general election. Thirdly, the political phenomenon was similar in that consolidation behind a single political party occurred when both parties were outside the government.

Thus, the two alternating cycles--factionalism (i.e. individualism, parochialism) and consolidation (i.e. institutionalisation)--which dominated Iban politics give rise to a number of puzzling questions because they contradict normal, commonly assumed expectations about

Iban and rural voting patterns. The general expectation is that rural voters would vote for the ruling party because through it they would be able to receive the benefits of development. During elections, this expectation is reinforced through the liberal distribution of minor rural projects by the caretaker government in order to ensure the peoples' support for the ruling party. Misleadingly, the ruling party has been equated as a government party, which, in a real democratic sense, is a neutral institution governed by a victorious majority. Thus, there is no single explanation that adequately accounts for Iban voting behaviour throughout the two epochs--1960s to 1970s and the 1980s onwards--but a combination of several factors.

Personal influence has accounted for the success of many individual leaders, regardless of the party in which they stood as candidates. The effect of individualism can be explained in terms of the sentiments attached to individual leaders, which had been the hallmark of the traditional leaders, who had great power and influence over their followers. Ibans prefer to deal with known and proven characters than elect to work with those whom they do not know. Therefore, despite choices of candidates provided by the ruling party, the Iban opted to work with the leaders whom they knew--either those in or outside the ruling coalition. The achievement factor, another trademark of the pioneering Ibans, has to some extent been influential. The second echelon Iban leaders who

emerged in 1974 shared characteristics which were similar to the traditional leaders; they were also achievement-oriented leaders, educated and had been on *bejalai* and whose successes became role models and were deeply respected by the community. Hence, the Iban support for SNAP in 1974 was an expression of unity based on relative deprivation of development benefits and exclusion from participation in the decision-making process; the consolidation sought to change these deficiencies. While the Iban support for PBDS in 1987 was similar to that which SNAP received in 1974, it also differed in that the factor of incumbency (or individualism) featured prominently for the PBDS.

#### **E. Summary**

There are several concerns which arise from the state general election of 1987, such as the question of political stability, Dayak representation in government and inter-ethnic relations. The political stability of the BN Tiga government was clearly in jeopardy because of the relatively small margin provided by its 28 seats in a 48 seat state assembly. Election fever still gripped the people well after the election was over; this was because of an anticipated change of government due to the rumour that the opposition was trying to lure some of the BN Tiga assemblymen. However, the rumour was put to rest when the opposite occurred and BN Tiga was successful in

recruiting five PBDS assemblymen,<sup>71</sup> thereby achieving the required two-thirds legislative majority. In the first State Assembly sitting, the BN Tiga tabled an amendment to the state constitution that would declare vacant the seat of an assemblyman, who resigns from the party which had nominated him for the election. Similarly, an assemblyman who is expelled from his party, would meet the same fate.<sup>72</sup>

The question of Dayak representation in government must be examined from several perspectives; first, in terms of the post-election number of Dayak assemblymen in the BN; secondly, in terms of the number of Iban ministers; and, thirdly, in terms of development potential in Iban areas not represented by the BN Tiga. Before the 1987 elections and the defections of the five PBDS assemblymen, the Dayak community was represented by nine assemblymen in the government--four in the PBB, three in SUPP and two in SNAP.<sup>73</sup> In the state cabinet, there were three Iban ministers and two Iban and two Bidayuh assistant ministers. Subsequently, the post-election composition of the cabinet comprised two Dayak-

<sup>71</sup> Edward Jeli, Michael Ben, Gramong Juna, Balan Seling and Sora Rusah.

<sup>72</sup> The PBDS welcomed the government's move and voiced their opinion that the effective date of the amendment should be backdated to cover any defections of assemblymen since the 1987 general election, but the latter was not approved.

<sup>73</sup> The four in PBB were Frederick B. Manggi (Tarat), Alfred Jabu (Layar), Celestine Ujang (Kemena) and Nyipa Bato (Belaga); the three in SUPP: Ramsey Jitam (Lundu), Michael Pilo (Sri Aman) and Jawan Empaling (Dudong); and two in SNAP: Patau Rubis (Tasik Biru) and Donald Lawan (Lingga); see Appendix B.

Iban ministers and one Dayak-Bidayuh assistant minister (see Table 4.6 for the composition of the state cabinet). Ambrose Blikau, the only Iban assistant minister, who was appointed to the caretaker government<sup>74</sup> in a reshuffle following the mass resignation but prior to the election, failed to retain his seat in Katibas; there were no further appointments made after the election. There was also the fear that the Dayak areas held by the opposition would be deprived of development. While the concern might be genuine, it must also be seen in the light of the development that Dayak society received when all their assemblymen were in the government. Thus, the realistic concern stems not from possible deprivation, but selective development, where members, who were known to support the PBDS, are deprived; development will still come to these areas but the most likely recipients are the Barisan supporters.

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<sup>74</sup> *The New Straits Times*, 13 March 1987.

Table 4.6  
 Composition of the State Cabinet:  
 Pre- and Post-1987 Election.

Before Election		After Election
<b><u>Minister:</u></b>		
<b>PBB</b>	Abdul Taib Mahmud* Mohd. Noor Tahir* Hafsah Harun* Alfred Jabu**	Abdul Taib Mahmud* Abang Johari* Adenan Satem* Alfred Jabu** Celestine Ujan**
<b>SUPP</b>	Sim Kheng Hong+ Wong Soon Kai+	Sim Kheng Hong+ Wong Soon Kai+ Chong Hong Nam+
<b>SNAP</b>	Edward Jeli**	James Wong+
<b>PBDS</b>	Daniel Tajeim**	-
<b><u>Assistant Minister:</u></b>		
<b>PBB</b>	Abang Johari* Adenan Satem*	Wahab Sanusi* Sharifah Mordiah* Ambrose Blikau**
<b>SUPP</b>	Chan Hong Nam+ Chong Kiun Kong+ Hollis Tini**	Teng Lung Chi+ Chong Kiun Kong+ Ramsey Jitam++
<b>SNAP</b>	Michael Ben++	Patau Rubis++
<b>PBDS</b>	Gramong Juna**	-
Notes: * -Malay/Melanau.                      ** -Dayak-Iban		
+ -Chinese.                                    ++ -Dayak-Bidayuh.		

#### **IV. The Sarawak State Constituencies 1969 to 1988: Changes and Implications**

In Sarawak, as well as in other states within the Federation, universal suffrage is extended to all citizens, who have attained the age of 21 years; however, eligibility to vote in elections is contingent upon registration as a voter; registration exercises are held at regular intervals. The 48 state constituencies of Sarawak, which were drawn for the first direct election in 1969, have undergone several changes. The registration exercises were held yearly from 1974 to 1978, and the latest in 1988. All previous exercises saw minor adjustments in terms of increases in voters in the effected constituencies; the exception being the registration in 1979, which also included the renaming of certain constituencies, mainly in the First Division.<sup>75</sup> However, the registration and delineation exercises in 1988 brought a number of changes and some important implications for the future inter-ethnic political struggle; the state assembly was expanded to accommodate 56 members. The importance of the expansion lies in the new ethnic alignment of the 56 constituencies; either one or the other ethnic group has lost, maintained or gained strength as a result of some redrawing of the state constituencies, and consequently there is the question of a fair representation vis-à-vis their total population.

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<sup>75</sup> The constituencies involved in the renaming exercise were: Bau which became Tasik Biru; Kuching Barat--Padungan; Kuching Timor--Stampin; Sameriang--Petra Jaya; Sekama--Satok.

Table 4.7 shows the changes in the ethnic characteristics of the 48 state constituencies between 1969 to 1987 and the nature of the 56 seats. The overrepresentation of the Ibans, by about 10%, in 1969, had been reduced by about 7% in 1987, through the registration of new voters, where three seats had changed status to that of Malay/Melanau-dominated constituencies. In the 1988 exercise, the addition of eight new constituencies did not effect the total number of Iban-dominated constituencies, which stood at 17; neither did it effect the Bidayuh, which maintained their previous number of five, but the Orang Ulu constituencies have been reduced to two from the previous three. However, it increased both the Malay/Melanau- and Chinese-dominated constituencies by three seats each, increasing their total seats to 18 and 11, respectively; then, there are another three constituencies, which are mixed, having two different ethnic groups sharing equal numbers of voters-- Simunjan and Limbang, between Iban and Malay/Melanau and Kidurong, between the Iban and Chinese.



Table 4.7  
State Assembly Seats by Ethnicity and Year.

Ethnicity	(State Seat/ Percentage)						Pop. Voters	
	1969 %		1987 %		1988 %		1986	1988
Iban	20	42	17	35	17	30	30	29
Bidayuh	5	10	5	10	5	9	8	8
Orang Ulu	3	6	3	6	2	4	5	3
Malay/Mel.	12	25	15	31	18	32	27	26
Chinese	8	17	8	17	11	20	30	34
Mixed*	0	-	0	-	3	5	-	-
Total	48	100	48	100	56	100	100	100

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission (1990). *Bilangan dan Peratus Pemilih Berdaftar mengikut Pecahan Kaum di Sarawak 1988*. Typescript, made available by SUPP.

Note: \* -Simunjan and Limbang had equal numbers of Ibans and Malays/Melanaus, while in Kidurong it is between the Ibans and Chinese.

The increase of the state assembly to 18 (32%) for the Malay/Melanau reflected an overrepresentation based not only on their population proportion of 27% but also on their voter percentage of 26%. However, the underrepresentation of the Chinese by simply analysing the assembly seats to their population proportion must be examined together with another factor--urban/rural distribution of Chinese--in order to arrive at a clearer picture (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8  
Urban-Rural Population by Ethnicity: 1960-1980.

Ethnicity	1960		1970		1980	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Iban	0.9	99.1	2.3	97.7	4.8	95.2
Bidayuh	1.4	98.6	2.5	97.5	4.9	95.1
Orang Ulu	0.6	99.4	2.6	97.4	5.3	94.7
Malay	14.3	85.7	17.6	82.4	17.8	82.2
Melanau	4.3	95.7	6.7	93.3	14.0	86.0
Chinese	29.4	71.6	34.7	65.3	38.4	61.6
Total	12.6	87.4	15.5	84.5	18.0	82.0

Source: Sarawak (1983). *State Population Report, Sarawak*.  
Kuching: Department of Statistics.<sup>76</sup>

Table 4.8 shows that the majority of the Chinese population is urban; thus, "by coincidence" all the 11 Chinese constituencies are urban-based.<sup>77</sup> Together with some native-dominated, semi-urban centres, the urban centres have been slightly overrepresented compared to the rural areas. The Chinese urban pattern of settlement has been their major disadvantage in terms of the number of seats that they could otherwise get, proportional to their population size.<sup>78</sup>

There are several implications arising from the characteristics of the 56 state constituencies. First,

<sup>76</sup> Cited from James Jemot Masing (1988). "The Role of Resettlement in Rural Development", in R.A. Cramb and R.H.W. Reece (eds). *Development in Sarawak: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Monash Paper on Southeast Asia, No.17, Monash University, Chapter 5, pp.57-68.

<sup>77</sup> They are mostly in the major towns of the nine Divisions--i.e. Kuching (four), Sibu (four), Bintangor (two) and Miri (two).

<sup>78</sup> The number of Chinese voters are also markedly higher compared to native-dominated constituencies; sometimes the ratio is as high as 4:1 to their disadvantage--i.e. compare Pending and Belaga.

the division of the 56 constituencies eliminate any remote chance of a possible Dayak domination; in the previous 48 seat assembly, there was a distant possibility because the Dayaks held 25 state constituencies as opposed to 24 after the 1988 delineation. Secondly, the 1988 delineation elevated the Malays/Melanaus to political parity with the Ibans; the only edge over the Malays/Melanaus now rests upon the maintenance of a fragile political unity between the three Dayak groups--the Ibans, Bidayuhs and the Orang Ulu. If the events of the 1987 election, in which five Dayak assemblymen switched over to the Barisan even before the first assembly sitting, can be taken as an indication of Dayak political behaviour, then Dayak politics ahead will prove to be very challenging and a constant source of instability. Thirdly, parochial politics will continue, if not intensify, as most of the constituencies are clearly dominated by one ethnic group. Therefore, there is no real opportunity for political cooperation among the three ethnic groups at the grassroots level, but only at the elite level (i.e. the party leaders). Thus, political consolidation behind a single political organisation becomes the only real source by which development may be secured (i.e. through elite accommodation as to how the division of the spoils should be secured for the respective communities). Fourthly, the Chinese community will continue to play the crucial balancing role between the Dayaks and the

Malay/Melanaus; whichever group offers more benefits will become attractive to the Chinese.

## V. Conclusion

There have been several developments in the second epoch, some of which were continuations of the changes that started in the earlier period and others comprising the resurgence of some fundamental values of traditional Iban society. The standard measures of values placed on achievement-orientation among the Ibans have shifted away from the values commonly associated with the pioneering period. Contemporary Iban leaders are not pioneers in the traditional sense of the word; nevertheless, they were pioneers in their own right in many modern-day pursuits; they were ex-teachers, civil servants, graduates as well as postgraduates and professionals. As prowess in traditional pursuits had brought about fame and fortune for the pioneering Ibans, so too did the new socio-economic successes which increased the social and economic standing of their holders.

The politicisation of the offices of the traditional leaders, which began when Rahman Ya'kub took over the Chief Ministership in 1970, served to reinforce the relegation of the traditional leaders to the periphery of politics and the circumscription of their participation to that of serving the government of the day.<sup>79</sup> By 1974

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<sup>79</sup> Searle, 1983, op cit, p.138; see also *Sarawak Tribune*, 12 November 1972 and *Sarawak Digest*, No.1, 1974, p.25; after the 1987 failed coup against Taib Mahmud, many community leaders--i.e. *penghulu* were retired for openly supporting the opposition.

one *penghulu*--Francis Umpau--was elected to the state assembly compared to four in the previous state elections (see Table 4.13 [Appendix C]). While the participation of these traditional leaders may have been removed by 1979, the influences that they exercised over the areas that they were appointed to serve must not be underestimated. For it is these community leaders that shared closely the problems of the average Ibans and it is through them that they seek immediate redress. Suffice it to say that the removal of those who had supported the opposition during the 1987 election underscored their importance.

In the history of universal suffrage in Sarawak, the Ibans have exhibited highly rational thinking; this was so in the state general elections of 1974 and 1987. Despite a massive distribution of "election projects", the majority of the Ibans turned to the opposition, which questioned Iban representation in the governments formed in the respective periods. In both cases, the rationale was simple: after receiving what was promised--the development projects--there were no further reasons to vote for the ruling party but voting for the opposition would only double the development, which the opposition could only deliver when it came to power. Such rationalisation would only serve to strengthen Iban support either for individual leaders or a single political party.

Since participatory democracy, the basic problems of Iban unity have been twofold--individualism (or

regionalism) versus party politics (supra-regionalism). The two are not mutually exclusive but they have not been fully explored in order to arrive at some level of compromise necessary for the creation of Iban unity. Iban do not have a medium in which these problems might be discussed. First, there is no forum which brings together Ibans from various parties--either at the leadership level or the grassroots. Due to this relative isolation, the pattern of Iban politics, based on personal followings, has frequently thwarted the institutionalisation of party politics, a failure which is partly attributed to the leadership. For instance, the failure in the attempt to displace James Wong from assuming the SNAP leadership was attributed to poor logistics. It was almost impossible for James Wong, who held no party and government post then, to beat the Iban faction which consisted of Iban leaders, who held posts both in the party and the government. It has been suggested that the Iban leaders decided to contest for the top party posts only weeks before the general assembly when James Wong had worked long before then to secure pledges from various branches.<sup>80</sup> Secondly, the Iban leadership can be said to have encouraged the practice of individualism. The political activities of the leaders, who are commonly identified as Iban leaders--e.g. Linggi, Jabu, Moggie and Tajeim--are highly regionalised, and are

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<sup>80</sup> SNAP Vice-President, Parliamentary Secretary and MP for Baram Luhat Wan, interview by author, 15 March 1984, Damansara Heights, Kuala Lumpur.

often confined to their state or federal constituencies; thus, Ibans in other areas may have heard of but not seen them.

The third problem in Iban unity is the decentralisation of Iban leadership in PBB, PBDS, SNAP and SUPP. Until a solution can be found to overcome this situation, Iban political and economic fortunes are not likely to change from current patterns. There are various obstacles that must first be overcome to pave the way for a possible reconciliation of these four centres of Iban power. First, an accommodation has to be made, whereby all key individuals from the four centres of Iban power can be fitted into a new organisation, where none must appear to have lost any of their former prestige and position. Secondly, such a possibility would, of course, give rise to a certain amount of anxiety for the PBB, which will then have an equal competitor for power. Unlike the pre-1988 delineation period, the PBB fear arose not from its possible exclusion from the government, but that its edge as the dominant party in any coalition negotiations might be eroded. After all, the possibility of a Dayak government has been completely put to rest by the delineation exercise, where the Dayaks now hold 24 seats--Ibans 17, Bidayuhs five and Orang Ulu two, the Malays/Melanaus 20, Chinese 12, and three others are mixed constituencies. In a new scenario based on these distributions, the need for Iban unity becomes imperative in order to secure their fair participation in

the decision-making processes and in the distribution of development benefits. Although the Malay/Melanau and the Dayak seats are almost equal in strength, the Iban leadership within the PBB will continue to be important for the non-Iban leaders in order to protect continued Iban support of the Malay/Melanau leadership. Therefore, as in the previous decades, the Iban leadership within the PBB will continue to play a significant role, although their electoral strength derived from the Iban areas will continue to be questioned.



## CHAPTER 5

### IBAN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY: TRADITIONS AND CHANGE

#### I. Introduction

Iban economic activities can be considered in terms of four broad periods, that is, the pioneering period, the Brooke era, the brief period of the Crown Colony and then independence. The level of economic development attained in preceding periods was important, for it laid the foundations for participation in subsequent periods. Therefore, the extent to which a particular ethnic group has been prepared and included in the overall development plans of the preceding periods significantly determines how much it might benefit from future developments. In view of the introduction of the NEP in 1970, which has attempted to encourage increasing economic parity between various ethnic groups, it is important to review the economic policies and development of the past periods. This is because, despite the NEP, the development gap between various ethnic groups, especially the Dayak and the Malay/Melanau, have continued to widen. In part, the problems may be traced to the Brooke era, which practised development discrimination, leaving the Ibans in their traditional pursuits, while the Malays became junior administrators, and commerce was encouraged among the immigrant Chinese.

In the pioneering period, the Iban economy was largely sustained through traditional agricultural activities (i.e. shifting cultivation, hunting and gathering). The Ibans were relatively isolated; therefore, self-sufficiency was vital for their survival. They provided for their needs through the utilisation of the labour of the *bilik*-family. What they could not obtain through the family, they secured through cooperating with members of other families; sparingly, this cooperation was also extended to the inter-regional level, where it concentrated essentially on warfaring expeditions.

While the Iban economy did not change much, the traditional practice of migration to sustain swidden agriculture was severely curtailed by the Brookes. Generally, the level of economic development during the Brooke era was low. This was attributed to several factors, some of which have been briefly discussed in previous chapters. Among the most significant were the Brooke attitude towards development, the general terrain of Sarawak and the relative instability of the earlier period; in limiting Iban raiding and coastal piracy, Brooke resources were significantly diverted to military expenditure. Although the Brookes established little in the way of economic development policies, they nevertheless provided Sarawak with political stability through the suppression of headhunting, piracy, and the

incorporation of Malay aristocrats and the Iban *raja berani* as the leaders of their respective communities.

Under the Colonial administration, more effort and resources could be devoted to development. This was due to a more stable political environment under the protection of Britain. Partly, it was also due to more substantial resources available to the Colonial administrators as opposed to the limited policies of the earlier Brooke government. Thus, Ibans, as well as other ethnic communities, were introduced to a wider range of opportunities, for example, the community development schemes.

Since independence, development efforts for the natives, who were lagging behind the Chinese, have been intensified. The thrust of native development was clearly spelt out in the NEP. However, despite such efforts, the economic development of the Dayak (Iban, Bidayuh and the Orang Ulu) communities has lagged behind other ethnic communities, especially the Chinese and the Malay/Melanau. For much of the period since independence, Iban (Dayak) discontent has been expressed by voting for opposition parties; the majority of Ibans (Dayaks) supported SNAP in 1974 and the PBDS in 1987.

In order to arrive at a better understanding of the problems and prospects of Iban economic development in the post-independence period, it is necessary to examine briefly the preceding periods--the Brooke and the Colonial periods.

## II. Economic Development during the Brooke Period

Throughout much of their reign, the Brookes did not have any clear plan of development; it was largely carried out on an *ad hoc* basis. This can be attributed to a number of factors. First, there were limited resources that were then available to the Brookes, in terms of both finance and manpower. Second, the general terrain of the country made development efforts difficult; the lowlands were swampy, while the interiors were hilly and covered with dense forest, thereby making communication and consequently economic development difficult. Third, the general instability of the country diverted much of the government effort into peace-keeping. Thus, the priority was the creation of stable political conditions rather than economic development.<sup>1</sup> In one of his private correspondences, James Brooke wrote about the general disorder which characterised the territories then under the Brunei Sultanate; for that reason, he observed, trade was minimal and oppression widespread, as the stronger looted from the weak.<sup>2</sup> Fourth, the low level of economic development of Sarawak has also been attributed to the Brooke perception of change as a threat, which could undermine their position as the sovereign rulers. Reece, for example, has argued that "the preservation of

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<sup>1</sup> J.M. Reinhardt (1970). "Administrative Policy and Practice in Sarawak: Continuity and Change under the Brookes", *Journal of Asian Studies*, 24, pp.851-62.

<sup>2</sup> James Brooke (1842). *Letter From Borneo*. London: Seeley; the letter was written to James Gardner, within two years of Brooke's ascent as ruler of Sarawak.

traditional ways of life (of the Sarawak natives) was self-serving because it protected the power-position of European officers (i.e. the Brookes and their administrators)".<sup>3</sup> Change was seen as potentially dangerous to the precarious Brooke position in the earlier period. Because the attitude of the Brookes had been conservative and self-serving, foreign investment was shunned and viewed as potentially destabilising. Thus, while local resources may have been limited, there was no intention to solicit foreign investment. However, it has also been suggested by Harrison rather simplistically that the limited development in Sarawak might also be attributed to the moderate intelligence of the Brookes themselves, who were "middle class men of West England, with moderate intelligence and plenty of temper ...".<sup>4</sup> This line of argument, which constituted the fifth factor, might be supported to some extent by the background of the Rajahs themselves. For instance, James was not the typical, educated Englishman. In the autobiography of the three Rajahs, the Raneé narrated how James, who had joined the Madras Infantry (India) and had been promoted to the rank of Sub-Assistant Commissary-General, felt unfit for the post because of his lack of

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<sup>3</sup> Reece, 1982, op cit, p.12; see also, (1988). "Economic Development under the Brookes", in R.A.Cramb and R.H.W.Reece (eds). *Development in Sarawak: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Monash Paper on Southeast Asia, No.17, Monash University, Chapter 2, pp.21-34.

<sup>4</sup> See Tom H. Harrison (1970). *The Malays of South-West Sarawak Before Malaysia*. London: Macmillan, p.24.

education.<sup>5</sup> But, contrary to Harrisson's observations, Pringle has argued that

the impact of the Brookes must be measured not against the records of other states far better endowed with immediately exploitable resources, both human and natural, but in relation to the political and social fabric of Sarawak itself on the eve of Brooke rule.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, the Brooke performance can be supported by Baring-Gould's and Bampfylde's comparison of the revenue performances of the colonies of Sarawak, Singapore and Penang about 50 years since their establishment.<sup>7</sup> In 1900, fifty years after it was founded, Sarawak's revenue stood at \$915,966 per annum. In 1875, fifty-six years after its founding, Singapore's revenue was \$967,235 and Penang, founded in 1786, eighty-nine years before, was \$453,029. Therefore, when one compares Sarawak's economic achievements to the long-established colonies like Singapore and Penang, the former was not doing too badly under the Brookes. Pringle also noted, however, that the environment was the major obstacle to development, a factor which would have posed similar difficulties for any would-be ruler of the state (with moderate

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<sup>5</sup> The Ranee Sylvia of Sarawak (1939). *The Three White Rajahs*. London: Cassell, p.5.

<sup>6</sup> R.M. Pringle (1971). "The Brookes of Sarawak: Reformers in Spite of Themselves", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, Vol.XIX, Nos.38-39, (July/December), pp.53-76.

<sup>7</sup> S.Baring-Gould and C.A. Bampfylde (1909). *A History of Sarawak under its two White Rajahs 1839-1908*. London: Sotheran, p.426.

intelligence or otherwise). Similar comments have also been made by Longhurst, who observed that not only were the physiographical conditions of Sarawak unfavourable but there was also social and political unrest; he observes that

A man never knew when within a few days all that would be left of him might be his head, baked, shrivelled, and suspended with others from a pole, like so many Spanish onions.<sup>8</sup>

In any case, the first Rajah's period was devoted mainly to maintaining law and order, for example, the pacification of the warfaring and migratory Ibans in order to create a peaceful environment in which trade might prosper.<sup>9</sup> As James Brooke saw it, there were basically three immediate objectives of government.<sup>10</sup> First, it was to relieve the unfortunate Land Dayaks (Bidayus) from oppression; secondly, restore the peaceful pursuits of the Sea Dayaks (Ibans), whose obsession with taking heads had been exploited by piratical Malays; and thirdly, to suppress headhunting. The general policies of the first Rajah can be outlined as follows:<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Henry Longhurst (1956). *The Borneo Story*. London: Newan Neame, p.19.

<sup>9</sup> Pringle, 1970, op cit; see also Ulla Wagner, 1972, op cit, for an account of the government expeditions against the warfaring Ibans.

<sup>10</sup> Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, 1909, op cit, pp.88-89.

<sup>11</sup> Runciman, 1960, op cit, pp.68-69.

1. to create general stability;
2. to introduce a stable government;
3. to issue codes of law;
4. to encourage limited commercial contacts with the outside world so as to minimise risk that could undermine his position in Sarawak; and
5. to divide and rule the indigenes: leave the Dayaks to themselves, create a modest bureaucracy staffed by the Malays, and encourage the development of moderate trading activities through immigrant Chinese.

Little is known of the exact amount and the proportion of total government expenditure spent on peace-keeping, as it was usually measured in terms of numbers and size of boats, and numbers of men that went on expeditions.<sup>12</sup> However, a large portion must have gone on the many government-sponsored expeditions and the building of forts, for example, at Skrang river in 1850, Lingga/Batang Lupar in 1852, in Betong on the Saribas river in 1858, in Kabong on the Krian river in 1865 and in Lubok Antu on the Batang Lupar in 1868, which also served as outstation posts for the Rajah's officers.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ulla Wagner, 1972, *op cit*, tried unsuccessfully to put a dollar figure on these peacekeeping activities; instead, she had to be content with calculations in terms of boats and men; even boats had different sizes, therefore skewing the projection of how many men actually constituted one boat force; for instance, Pringle, 1970, *op cit*, pp.81-82, described the forces of the Rajah's party in the Battle of Beting Marau as comprising the latter's war-boat of 18 boatloads of Malays, 300 Sebuyau Ibans and 800 Balau Ibans of Banting, as well as the Royal Navy ships *Albatross*, *Royalist* and the *Nemesis*.

<sup>13</sup> See Runciman, 1960, *op cit*,



Initially, James Brooke had to use his inherited fortune to finance some of the necessary government spending; this was perhaps done more to stabilise his shaky rule in the early years than out of his consideration for the welfare of his state and the peoples whom he governed. It was out of the need to generate income for the state that the extraction of minerals such as antimony ore was made a state monopoly.<sup>14</sup> However, the volume was low, due not only to the primitive methods of extraction but also the shortage of labour. The natives were more interested in their traditional pursuits--the Malays as subsistence fishermen and padi farmers and the Dayaks as shifting cultivators. In their place, the Rajah encouraged the importation of overseas Chinese labourers to work the several mines monopolised by the government.<sup>15</sup> In addition, there had been some modest trade in native products, notably sago by the coastal Melanaus; during the entire Brooke period, the sago trade featured prominently as one of Sarawak's major export earners. Although taxation was introduced, its collection was always uncertain, especially from those living outside Kuching. Although it has been argued that the collection of door taxes (in the form of rice) was probably undertaken more for its symbolic value in

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<sup>14</sup> Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, 1909, op cit, p.87.

<sup>15</sup> For discussion of the Chinese system of labour--"the kongsi", see Wang Tai Peng (1977). *The Origins of Chinese Kongsi, with Special Reference to West Borneo*. M.A. thesis, Australian National University, Canberra.

demonstrating obedience to the Rajah, nevertheless, initially, its continuation by the Brookes was needed to finance the first European officer posted to an outstation, outside Kuching.<sup>16</sup>

The main source of state revenue at that time was derived from taxes on the farming of opium, arrack (spirit drink), pawnbroking and royalties from mineral extraction--especially antimony. During the first Rajah's reign, there was also modest import-export activities; among the export items were antimony, gold, diamonds, sago, beeswax, bird's nests, tortoise shell, fish and fish products, vegetable tallow, damar, rice, ebony, rattans, Malacca canes and salt fish, while imports consisted of salt, opium, silks, brass cooking-pots, coconut oil, brass wire, Javanese handkerchiefs, European cloth and earthenware, and coarser earthen manufacture of China.<sup>17</sup> No specific details of the above items can be presented because records of most of the first twenty years of Brooke rule were destroyed during the Chinese rebellion of 1857.<sup>18</sup> Table 5.1 shows state revenue and expenditures and Table 5.2 shows some of the major items in the export list for 1870.

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<sup>16</sup> Pringle, 1970, op cit, p.87; this coincided with the posting of William Brereton to the Skrang Fort in the late 1840s.

<sup>17</sup> Low, 1848, op cit, p.134; see also Table 5.2 for major export items by 1870.

<sup>18</sup> For an account of the rebellion, see Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, 1909, op cit.

Table 5.1  
Revenue and Expenditure: 1870.

Revenue item	In dollars	Expenditure head	In dollars
Farm, Opium etc.	47,420	Civil list &	
Import/Export duties	7,449	Public offices	37,689
Exemption/Dayak tax	3,885	Military	21,599
Mining royalties	20,171	Public works	14,125
Assessment	993	Tax Dept.	494
Outstation receipt	20,849	Royalties	6,427
Land sales	1,812	Outstation	17,842
Court receipts, etc	2,291	"Royalist"	28,209
Miscellaneous	6,599	Debt repayment	21,769
Dues from 1869	7,566	-	
"Royalist"	43,696	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>162,731</b>		<b>148,154</b>

Source: *Sarawak Gazette*, No.120, 2 June 1876.

Table 5.2  
Extract of Major Export Items: 1870.

Export item	In dollars	As % of Total
Treasure	92,040	9.55
Cloth	11,542	1.20
Rice	20,637	2.14
Gutta Percha	62,127	6.45
India rubber	41,965	4.35
Beeswax	7,436	0.77
Bird's nest	30,313	3.15
Fish & fish products	26,646	2.76
Damar	6,588	0.68
Rattan	63,976	6.64
Timber	61,024	6.33
Raw sago	11,535	1.20
Sago Flour	312,351	32.41
Quicksilver	81,800	8.49
Antimony	70,050	7.27
Others*	63,660	6.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>963,690</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: *Sarawak Gazette*, No.120, 2 June 1876.

Note: \* -Includes 26 other individual items, which ranges in values from \$200 to about \$5,000.

When Charles Brooke ascended to the Rajahship in 1868, he continued the main policies and practices of James Brooke. The differentiated functions of the various native groups under James persisted. Nevertheless, one advantage that Charles had, when he took over the administration of Sarawak from his uncle, was the fact that Charles had had about 20 years' experience in Sarawak.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, he was more familiar with local conditions than James, who had to start his administration from scratch. Three factors were important in shaping the second Rajah's policies; first, the influence of his predecessor; secondly, the ideology of nineteenth century liberalism, which guided the Rajah and thirdly, Charles' own experience in Sarawak.<sup>20</sup> Thus, as was the case with James, Charles was also wary of the impact that an accelerated pace of change would have on Sarawak: this aspect of his policy probably had the greatest influence on the interior Dayaks, whose life had been changed by contacts with the Brooke regime but, who continued to benefit little from the limited economic development available. The Rajah's romantic attachment to the Sarawak he first discovered as an outstation officer shaped his conservative attitude towards it. Unlike other imperialist powers elsewhere in the Far East, he was determined not to force changes but to preserve local customs and tradition; where changes became necessary, he

<sup>19</sup> The Ranee Sylvia of Sarawak, 1939, op cit, pp.59-114.

<sup>20</sup> Pringle, 1970, op cit, p.135.

tried to take into account the many facets of local custom and tradition to achieve these desired changes.

While Charles' attitude may have been conservative, it was during his reign--the longest of the three Rajahs--that many transformations did take place (for example, in the development of natural resources and social infrastructure). Two major economic developments were in the fields of agriculture and mining. In agriculture, Rajah Charles encouraged the planting of crops such as gambier, pepper, coffee and tea. For these reasons, the large immigration of overseas Chinese was encouraged to undertake these projects. As incentives, the government offered land and even free shipping to Chinese immigrant labourers who were willing to work in these agricultural activities.<sup>21</sup> Despite government encouragement, large scale plantations did not develop as the immigrants, who were recruited, lacked the financial capital; this differed from the development of tin mines and agricultural plantations in Malaya, where they were financed by the wealthy Straits merchants.<sup>22</sup> For much of the early part of the 1900s, the importation of Foochow immigrants to colonise and farm in the Binatang (now renamed Bintangor) area had been the source of much of the Dayak-Chinese friction. Due to no fault of the immigrant Chinese, they had been given land, which was, in fact, Iban temuda (fallow land as part of the swidden

<sup>21</sup> See Reece, 1988, op cit, pp.21-34.

<sup>22</sup> See Reece, 1988, Ibid.

cycle); the Ibans reacted violently when their *temuda*, which had been planted with various fruit trees, was cleared by the Chinese; these clashes resulted in bloodshed.<sup>23</sup> While the planting of these crops had been encouraged in the hope that they would develop into large scale-enterprises, rubber was not on the Rajah's agenda. Charles' attitude towards the planting of rubber was expressed in his reply to Harry, his youngest son, who had applied on behalf of a British consortium, to develop rubber estates in Sarawak. He wrote:

I have had frequent applications of a similar kind from many countries within the last month--but not believing in the permanence of the rubber boom I don't wish Sarawak to be a great producer of this article--except it can be planted by natives who could afford to sell it a 20th part less than European Companies, and this is what it will come to another and not too distant day... I hate the name of rubber and look upon it as a very gigantic gamble, as is now turned to account in making the fortunes of many and another day will be the means of depriving the poor and ignorant shareholders of their hard earned savings.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, in the same year, the government had turned down no less than five applications from companies, which sought to develop rubber plantations, on the grounds that rubber speculation was a "mania at the present which did

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<sup>23</sup> See Pringle, 1970, op cit, p.311; this and related later incidents had marked Iban-Chinese relations, which were typical in the Third Division and extended well into the early years of independence.

<sup>24</sup> Charles Brooke to Harry, 15 March 1910, cited by Pringle, 1970, op cit, p.360; also cited by Reece, 1988, op cit, footnote 25.

not suit the quite non-speculative spirit of the country".<sup>25</sup> To prevent these investors from privately acquiring land in order to set up their rubber plantations, the Rajah issued a special Order forbidding sales of land to European firms or individuals.<sup>26</sup>

In the development of the state mineral resources, the extraction of coal, gold and oil had been providing the government with some revenue. Generally, Sarawak was known to have been endowed with deposits of several types of minerals such as antimony, coal and gold. Even before the coming of the Brookes, trading in these minerals had been carried out. For instance, antimony had already been mined when the Brunei Sultanate had exercised indirect control over Sarawak through its resident Governor, Pengiran Mahkota.<sup>27</sup> The Sadong coal mines were opened in 1872; by 1874, these had produced sufficient coal supplies for use by government-owned coastal vessels and steam launches.<sup>28</sup> In 1877, the government signed a contract with local Chinese contractors to extract coal from the Silantek (Lingga) mines;<sup>29</sup> in 1888, the government purchased the coal mining concession at

<sup>25</sup> *Sarawak Gazette*, 16 May 1910; also cited by Reece, 1988, op cit, footnote 26.

<sup>26</sup> "Sale of Rubber Plantations", *Sarawak Gazette*, 1 November 1910; see also Reece, 1988, op cit, footnote 27.

<sup>27</sup> Joan Rawlins (1965). *Sarawak 1839 - 1963*. London: Macmillan, p.15.

<sup>28</sup> A.H. Moy-Thomas (1961). "Economic Development under the Second Rajah", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, Vol.X, Nos.17-18, (July/December), pp.50-58.

<sup>29</sup> Moy-Thomas, 1961, Ibid.

Brooketon (Muara) in Brunei; it was abandoned by Vyner, the third Rajah, due subsequently to heavy financial losses.<sup>30</sup> Gold mines were opened in Bau and Bidi in 1881 and 1890 respectively. Native reactions to the prospects of work in the opening of these mining activities were lukewarm. Since the early 1880s, Chinese labourers had been attracted to mining; in the Brooke period, they continued to play an important part in the Rajah's schemes to develop these industries.

During the second Rajah's reign, the biggest generator of state revenue continued to be duties from the opium, gambling, arrack, and pawn farms, whose contribution to the state coffers ranged from 28.7% to 52% per annum over the 30-year period (see Table 5.3; for the monetary value that corresponds to each percentage, refer to Table 5.30 [Appendix C]). Customs duties on import and export activities constituted the second major source of funds, but by 1900, it had been overtaken by revenues from mining. The third main source comprised taxes on the Dayaks (i.e. the yearly door tax in cash or in kind [usually rice]); From 1885 onwards, the collection of door taxes from the Dayaks continued to be significant for overall state revenues; however, this changed from the 1900s when the economy expanded and customs and mining became the significant contributors to the state.

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<sup>30</sup> See Reece, 1988, op cit.



Table 5.3  
Percentages of State Revenue  
by Sectors of Origin: 1875-1905.

Sources	1875	1885	1891	1895	1900	1905
Farms	28.7	48.4	52.0	39.1	30.8	29.9
Customs	10.8	17.2	17.5	18.9	31.7	12.0
Dayak revenue	20.4	10.0	9.2	7.5	4.9	3.0
Exemption tax	-	7.4	6.6	5.6	3.5	2.4
Mining	6.6	4.4	3.6	1.7	6.1	30.1
Buoy/Light dues	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.3
Post/Shipping	23.4	0.2	0.6	1.6	1.9	1.3
Land	-	0.1	0.3	0.1	1.0	0.9
Assessment	7.4	2.6	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.5
Court Account	-	6.1	7.4	8.4	5.7	5.0
Miscellaneous	2.45	3.0	1.2	1.3	2.1	1.7
Reimbursement	-	-	-	14.4	11.1	12.1
Total Revenue	100.0	100.0	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.2

Source: See Table 5.30 (Appendix C).

Table 5.4  
Percentages of State Expenditure by Sectors: 1870-1905.

Sector	1870	1875	1885	1891	1895	1900	1905
Civil List	21.6	37.5	42.0	44.9	44.0	34.9	34.9
Military	28.6	38.8	28.5	27.2	26.1	25.5	18.3
Public Works	8.1	4.4	10.0	10.0	12.6	13.9	28.4
Light houses	-	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3
Royalties	3.7	5.0	5.3	4.5	2.8	1.7	1.1
Tax Dept.	0.3	2.6	2.4	2.1	1.8	1.3	1.2
Immigration	-	-	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.1
Plantations	-	-	0.3	2.3	4.6	15.2	9.4
Mining	-	3.2	1.4	1.1	1.0	0.1	0.5
Miscellaneous	37.7	8.1	9.8	7.4	6.5	6.7	6.0
Total	100.0	99.9	100.2	100.1	100.1	100.0	100.2

Source: See Table 5.31 (Appendix C).

During the 35 years, from 1870 to 1905, military spending constituted the second highest area of public expenditure (see Table 5.4; Table 5.31 presents the dollar value of the expenditure [see Appendix C]). Although peace had generally been achieved, there was still some isolated instability, which required government military expeditions. In fact, in 1868, the year he ascended to the Rajahship, Charles had to send an expedition to the upper Batang Lupar with the intention of punishing the famous Dayak war-leader, Ngumbang, because the latter and his followers had refused to pay door taxes and had been taking the heads of their neighbours.<sup>31</sup> During the entire reign of the second Rajah, there were no less than 10 similar expeditions to areas such as Batang Lupar, Bukit Batu, Kedang, Mujong and Kanowit.

Considering the fact that when Charles inherited the Rajahship the state's debts were about £15,000, a large sum in relation to state revenues of about \$100,000,<sup>32</sup> the government enjoyed some prosperity due to a more stable environment. The government had a modest income, and kept public expenditure within its means. It was during the second Rajah's reign that some infrastructure development began to take shape, although it was largely confined to Sarawak proper (i.e. Kuching and its environs). However, there were some limitations that the government faced.

<sup>31</sup> Pringle, 1970, op cit, p.216.

<sup>32</sup> Baring-Gould and Bampfylde, 1909, op cit, p.164.

The most obvious was, of course, capital; secondly, the general inaccessibility of the interior made not only development efforts in outlying areas difficult, but at times impossible; and thirdly, modest state revenues had still to meet military needs. Thus, at a glance, the public expenditure outlay does not indicate that any native groups of the interior benefited from the developments confined to Kuching. Hence, there was already an urban bias in development; the natives were paying taxes to subsidise urban development and in return they were subjected to "punitive" expeditions because periodically they went against government and refused to acknowledge its authority.<sup>33</sup>

Several major advances were made: street lighting came into being in 1906; by 1907, Kuching was served by improved water supplies.<sup>34</sup> The first major road linking Kuching, Serian and Simanggang was completed in the early 1920s; the first 10 miles of a railway track were built and opened to traffic by 1915, but these were soon replaced by a road; consequently, the railway was closed in 1931. Telegraphic communication with all major government posts was operating by the eve of World War I; the Brooke Dockyard was opened in 1912.

Throughout the period of their reign, "divide and rule" was the hallmark of Brooke policy. Each ethnic

<sup>33</sup> A government-sponsored expedition against Ngumbang and his followers was an example, although the expedition was not entirely due to Iban refusal to pay taxes to the Rajah's government.

<sup>34</sup> Moy-Thomas, 1961, op cit.

group had specific functions. The Ibans were their warriors, whom the Brookes saw as having a rich non-literate tradition, which they were determined to preserve; the Malays served as the junior administrators, who benefited from the limited educational opportunities that were then available; and the Chinese were the money-makers, who provided the government with the labour for industrial and agricultural development. This compartmentalisation of the various ethnic groups was enhanced during Charles Vyner's reign, from 1917 to 1941.<sup>35</sup> Whether this policy had been continued out of the wishes of his father, it was difficult to say precisely. But one thing was certain; Charles had intended, as far as was possible, that his policies and practices were maintained. As Runciman observed, rather cynically,

The old Rajah intended to rule Sarawak even after his death. In his will he repeated for the last time the principles according to which he had governed and which he wished his successors to maintain. He had feared lest the new Rajah would wish to spend too much time and too much money in England. He urged him to remain in Sarawak for at least eight months of each year ...<sup>36</sup>

The provisions, as outlined in the second Rajah's will, may have arisen out of his mistrust of the young Vyner, who had had several arguments with his father; Charles had been resentful of Vyner's extravagant lifestyle and

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<sup>35</sup> The political aspects were discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>36</sup> Runciman, 1960, op cit, p.231.

especially the latter's marriage to Sylvia Brett, whom the late Rajah accused of having a bad influence on the heir presumptive.<sup>37</sup>

The discrimination in policies and practices by the Brookes was more pronounced in the field of education, where there were negligible provisions for the interior Dayaks; consequently, few, if any, Dayaks, served as Native Officers in the Rajah's civil service. Although some traditional leaders generally maintained close relations with the government, few actually served in any official capacity in either the Supreme or General Councils. On the whole, education did not receive any special attention among the Brookes and the limited facilities that were later available catered mainly for the Malays, who were being prepared for the lowest echelons of the civil service (i.e. as Native Officers). Early educational efforts were those provided by the Borneo Church Mission, which initially served Kuching residents--the European community and some locals, including some Malays, who were of aristocratic origin.<sup>38</sup> For a start, mission schools were concerned with teaching students the ability to read, write and do simple arithmetic. For the later Brooke period and during the

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<sup>37</sup> Reece, 1982, op cit, p.14; see also Charles Brooke to Charles Willes Johnson, 21 April 1912, Brooke Papers, Vol.4, cited by Reece.

<sup>38</sup> For a history of Mission education, see Brian Taylor (1983). *The Anglican Church in Borneo 1848-1962*. Sussex: New Horizon; and Graham Edward Saunders (1989). *Bishops and Brookes: The Anglican Mission and the Brooke Raj in Sarawak 1848-1941*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull.

Crown Colony days, education was mainly at primary level; it was only with the formation of the integrated Batu Lintang Teacher Training College and Secondary School that some pupils had the opportunity to be prepared for higher level education (i.e. Cambridge level examinations). While the Rajahs encouraged Missions to propagate Christianity among the Dayaks, they had also seen it expedient to separate the different denominations according to Divisional boundaries; the Anglican Church and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel dominated the Second Division (Saribas), while the Roman Catholics and Methodists dominated the Third Division (Rejang).

The economy of the country continued to enjoy some prosperity. It was also clear that from the beginning of Vyner's reign, the Sarawak economy was moving into a position of dependence on the world market, especially as a result of the cultivation of such crops as rubber and pepper, whose prices were determined by the overall world demand. In the 1920s and 1930s, the drop in the price of gold, the world slump and the fluctuations of rubber prices demonstrated just how vulnerable Sarawak's economy had become, when the overall state revenues fluctuated. By the end of WWI, revenue was just over \$1.7 millions; in 1921, it was up to \$2.1 million, but fell in 1922 due to the drop in the price of gold. After having recovered from the decline in the early 1920s, state revenues dropped once again in the 1930s to \$3.5 million, due to

the world slump.<sup>39</sup> As a signatory to the 1934 International Rubber Restriction Scheme, Sarawak had to ensure that its production of rubber was within the assigned export quota.<sup>40</sup> Thus, to restrict output, two measures were enforced; first, "tapping holidays" were introduced to restrict the number of days when rubber could be tapped, and secondly, a coupon system, which limited the quantity of rubber that could be sold by an individual smallholder.

During the entire Brooke period, the relationship between the state and the economy was intertwined.<sup>41</sup> The Borneo Company Limited, founded in 1856,<sup>42</sup> provided a substantial portion of the state revenue; in turn, the Company enjoyed concessions for the development of the state's natural resources (i.e. gold, antimony, coal, timber, sago, pepper and government-organised trade).<sup>43</sup> The Company's contributions to the state coffers was in the form of royalty payments for the mining of minerals such as antimony ore, gold and coal, and for the export of timber and sago. In addition, the Company operated

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<sup>39</sup> Runciman, 1960, op cit, p.233.

<sup>40</sup> Reece, 1982, op cit, pp.55-56; see also Reece, 1988, op cit.

<sup>41</sup> In his foreword to Longhurst, 1956, op cit, Rajah Charles Vyner Brooke wrote: "so strong was the link between the state of Sarawak and the Borneo Company in the very early days that Sarawak and the Borneo Company were almost synonymous terms".

<sup>42</sup> Runciman, 1970, op cit, p.101; initially the Borneo Company was incorporated to develop Sarawak but later it acquired interests outside the country; see also Longhurst, 1956, op cit.

<sup>43</sup> Longhurst, 1956, op cit.

shipping lines between Kuching and Singapore, one of the principal trading partners of Sarawak. The Company also ran a number of rubber and pepper estates. Before 1909, the Borneo Company was the only European enterprise operating in Sarawak. However, with the discovery of oil in Miri, the Sarawak Oil Company was formed; it was financed by British Shell. The mining of oil boosted state revenues through royalty payments; however, production was low as the best oil wells had been discovered in Brunei territory.<sup>44</sup> In addition, a sizeable portion of the state revenue was also derived from personal taxes, which were imposed at varying rates among the different native groups; only those personnel in the government services were exempt.<sup>45</sup>

The one hundred years of Brooke rule clearly brought many changes to Sarawak and its indigenes, in terms of their traditional political and social life and their economic institutions. Foremost among these changes was the establishment of political stability, which was essential to settled social life and peaceful economic pursuits. The need for political stability was the main

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<sup>44</sup> As with the setting up of the Borneo Company, the Rajah was cautious of Shell coming into Sarawak; he feared the unscrupulous exploitation of his subjects by private enterprises. But he was also realistic in that Sarawak needed the capital inflow for development; *Sarawak Gazette*, No.561, 1 August 1910; No.576, 1 August 1914; Runciman, 1960, op cit, p.217.

<sup>45</sup> Runciman, 1970, op cit, p.164, noted that the taxable Malays were individually assessed at \$2 per head while the Ibans were at \$3 per family, bachelors at half the amount; there was no mention of the amount that was imposed on the Chinese, perhaps, the taxes were satisfied by imposition of fees through their trade.



preoccupation of the first Rajah; indeed, peace-keeping expeditions were still necessary well into the second Rajah's reign, although it was acknowledged to be a period when most economic development took place. Not many economic initiatives can be attributed to the third Rajah, who continued the Brooke tradition (i.e. selective changes and preservation of native customs). Nevertheless, the third Rajah's accomplishments might be said to be more in the political sphere than in the economic; there was, for example, increased native participation in the political process, however limited this may have been.

The Brooke Rajahs were romantics. This was particularly true when it came to their dealings with the Dayaks, especially the Ibans. They admired the Ibans for their physical prowess in warfaring and their rich non-literate tradition. The admiration of martial virtues could, perhaps, be linked to the first Rajah's passion for adventure and his military enthusiasm; personally, the Rajah was not much of a soldier, having been discharged from the army due to a severe injury incurred in a military operation.<sup>46</sup> It might be argued that he admired in the Ibans the war prowess that he once desired, but which he lost as a consequence of his mishap. Based on this admiration, the Brookes argued for the need to preserve Iban traditions from the adverse

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<sup>46</sup> Robert Payne (1987). *The White Rajahs of Sarawak*. Singapore: Oxford University Press; reprint, London: Hale, p.18.

effects of change, a policy and practice which had fatal consequences when it became necessary to compare the pace of development of the Ibans against those of the Malays and the Chinese.

During Brooke rule, Iban society remained to a large extent one of traditional shifting cultivators. However, there were some Ibans who had been affected by the introduction of cash crops such as rubber and pepper, especially those of the Saribas area and some in the lower Rejang. In terms of education, the Rajahs' provision for the Ibans was negligible; much of the expanded educational opportunities for the Ibans in the 1930s had been through the work of the Christian Missions, such as St. Augustine's (Betong) and St. Luke's (Simanggang).<sup>47</sup>

Inter-ethnic relations were marked by polarisation.<sup>48</sup> Iban-Malay relations in the Second Division had been less than cordial. While good relations might have arisen from their occasional joint adventures in coastal raiding and piracy, Iban-Malay relations in the Second Division were hindered by their trading relations. In the Second

<sup>47</sup> Reece, 1982, pp.128-30; see also J.M.Seymour (1970). "Education in Sarawak under Brooke Rule 1841-1941", *Sarawak Gazette*, (30 June), pp.114-19; (31 July), pp.139-45; and (31 August), pp.156-59.

<sup>48</sup> However, my observation (that Ibans were confined to the military, the Malays to administration and the Chinese to commerce) differs from Pringle's, 1970, op cit, p.329, who maintained that it was easy to accuse the Brookes of practising the policy of "divide and rule" when, as he maintained "they did not "divide" so much as take advantage of what seemed to them to be the three self-evident and significant categories in an almost infinitely divisible local population". But what Pringle did not indicate sufficiently was that Brooke policies and practices enhanced the ethnic divisions.

Division, the swindling of Ibans by Malay traders, who exploited Ibans both as tax collectors for the Brunei Sultanate and in selling fake antique Chinese jars, had marred otherwise potentially good relations developed on the high seas as fellow marauders.<sup>49</sup> With the building of Fort Alice in Simanggang, Malay settlements, which had been previously intermingled with the Ibans of the interior, began to be concentrated around the new fort. Thus, segregation was initiated and this also coincided with the decline of Malay dominance in river commerce; trade was gradually taken over by the Chinese, who, through commercial contacts began to develop a better rapport with the interior Ibans. The better relations between the Ibans and Chinese in the Second Division contrasted with those found in the Third Division, where Ibans relations with the Malays were good, but not with the Chinese. This was the consequence of the Chinese colonies that came to settle the lower Rejang as competitors for agricultural land instead of as traders. The Binatang incident mentioned earlier serves to illustrate such friction.

Thus, in my opinion, the important legacy left by the Brooke Rajahs was divided ethnic communities, compartmentalised by various gaps in development between

<sup>49</sup> Sandin 1967a, op cit, p.61, related how Malay tax collectors such as Datu Patinggi Kedit and Udin cheated when they collected "padi tax" by making use of "mungut (a basket), which in theory held one pasu [measurement] of padi ... but the basket was cleverly constructed in such a way to hold double the amount", and how the Iban plundered many Malay settlements at various places along the coast in revenge.

them. Furthermore, among the Ibans, these developmental inequalities existed between those of the Second Division, who were more exposed to change through mission work and the introduction of cash crops and a money economy, compared to the Third Division Ibans, where transformation occurred much later. Brooke rule came to an abrupt end in 1941 prompted by several factors; first, the Japanese occupation of Sarawak; secondly, considerations of post-war reconstruction; thirdly, British pressure to bring Sarawak under its wing to ensure that it developed at an appropriate pace along with other British territories; and finally, the problem of a suitable successor to Vyner. It may not have been difficult to imagine the continuation of Brooke rule under Anthony, the Rajah's nephew and the then heir-presumptive, if the circumstances under which Vyner himself had ascended the Rajahship can be taken as any indication. Initially, Rajah Charles had thought that Vyner, for reasons discussed earlier, was unsuitable, but, when he became Rajah, Vyner proved that he was just another Brooke, who continued the policies of his predecessor. Therefore, the succession by Anthony may well have served, among other things, to exacerbate ethnic polarisation, which was the policy characteristic of the earlier Brookes. On the other hand, there might have been a chance that Anthony would have changed direction. As Runciman noted, some of the Vyner-Anthony clashes were due to administrative arguments compared to

the personal nature of the Charles-Vyner antipathies.<sup>50</sup> Reece paints a picture of Anthony as a desperate heir-presumptive seeking to make an impression and find allies in order to legitimise his claim to the Rajahship. While he served as a junior administrative officer, Anthony was already trying, perhaps, to make an impression by acting beyond the jurisdiction of a District Officer, a position he held in Mukah District. The opportunity came with the dismissal of F.L. Crossley, an Assistant District Officer in Oya, the subdistrict of Mukah. Following Crossley's dismissal Anthony set up an inquiry to probe the circumstances surrounding the dismissal. The consequence of the inquiry was the purging of a number of senior administrators, which was somewhat regretted by Rajah Vyner, although the Rajah himself had earlier approved of Anthony's action; in fact, to dismiss any criticism from other quarters that Anthony was not fit to hold an inquiry into the behaviour and action of his senior officers, the Rajah appointed Anthony the Rajah Muda.<sup>51</sup> If there is any conclusion that can be drawn from this purge, it must be that Anthony had created a situation where the Rajah had been put in an unfavourable position of having to take sides in the administrative dispute; he supported the Administrative Service (consisting of the

<sup>50</sup> Runciman, 1970, op cit, pp.243-45; the clash culminated in the withdrawal of the title Rajah Muda from Anthony, who received the news from Vyner while the former was still on his honeymoon tour in Europe, on the grounds that he was "not yet fitted to exercise the responsibilities of this high position".

<sup>51</sup> Reece, 1982, op cit, pp.61-69.

DOs and Residents) backed by Anthony, against the Kuching bureaucracy (that is the Committee of Administration, represented by Edward Parnell, the Chief Secretary, and H.M. Calvert, the Financial Secretary). While this incident may have given a negative impression of Anthony, the latter's rule as Rajah Muda, during the absence of the Rajah, did little to improve his image as a suitable successor. During his short administration, he could justly be seen as a radical in his streamlining of the administration; he replaced the post of Chief Justice with a junior one, the Judicial Commissioner; he wanted to abolish altogether the Committee of Administration; and he promoted Malays to posts traditionally reserved for Europeans (for example, he appointed a Malay as Adjutant and Assistant Commissioner of the Sarawak Constabulary).<sup>52</sup> Yet, another incident that had obviously enraged the Rajah was Anthony's open criticism of events surrounding the introduction of the 1941 Constitution and the constitutional provisions, which, in Anthony's view, provided excessive funds for the Rajah and his dependents. Based on the above trends of events and considerations, if Anthony had have ruled, he might have brought about changes, arising from his constant need to seek allies to support his policy initiatives.

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<sup>52</sup> Reece, 1982, op cit, pp.67-68.

### III. Development during the Colonial Period

The initial period of the Colonial administration was marked by post-war reconstruction and rehabilitation. Not only was physical destruction widespread but the people's attitude towards the Brooke government must have been at its lowest ebb. It must be recalled that on the eve of the Japanese occupation, neither the Rajah, nor the heir-apparent, the Tuan Muda, and the recently dismissed Rajah Muda, were in the country.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, their presence would have made little difference to resistance efforts, as Sarawak did not have the military capability to counter a full invasion. Much of the physical destruction was self-inflicted so as to deprive the invading Japanese military forces of the use of various government installations and infrastructure.<sup>54</sup> For instance, two months preceding the outbreak of war between the Allied powers and Japan, important machinery was dismantled such as in the oilfields of Miri; consequently, following Japan's declaration of war, the equipment not yet dismantled was destroyed to prevent it falling into enemy hands.<sup>55</sup> Seventeen school buildings

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<sup>53</sup> Runciman, 1970, op cit, p.253.

<sup>54</sup> Runciman, 1970, Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Sarawak, Colonial Government (1948). *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1947*. Kuching: Gov't Printing Office, p.1; Japanese forces occupied Sarawak from 24 December 1941 to September 1945; the interim period of late 1945 to mid-1946 being under British Military Administration, until Sarawak was ceded to Britain as a Crown Colony on 1 July 1946, pp.2 & 8.

were destroyed while another 35 were damaged.<sup>56</sup> When news reached Kuching that the invading Japanese were proceeding from Miri to Kuching, the airfield was blown up and many of the ships and launches were rendered inoperable. Thus, when the Japanese arrived in the capital, the government, then run by some expatriate officials, was ready to surrender to the enemy. Damage was probably more extensive during the reoccupation, when the Australian Forces launched air attacks.<sup>57</sup> Generally, the hardship caused by the occupation was felt more by the people in towns and the easily accessible coastal areas, where the Japanese concentrated their control, than the countryside.

The Japanese military occupation brought several social services to a standstill. For example, light and power generating stations of major towns deteriorated due to neglect and lack of maintenance. School attendance was generally low in the schools which were allowed to operate (that is in some Malay and Chinese institutions); mission schools were closed and the teaching of English ceased.<sup>58</sup> Inter- and intra-ethnic relations were strained as the Japanese introduced the *jikeidan* (the vigilante system),<sup>59</sup> which literally meant that the people were

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<sup>56</sup> Sarawak, Colonial Government (1949). *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak 1948*. Kuching: Gov't Printing Office, p.32.

<sup>57</sup> *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1947*, op cit, p.2.

<sup>58</sup> *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1947*, p.32.

<sup>59</sup> Reece, 1982, op cit, p.146.



asked to spy on their neighbours and lodge reports of any anti-Japanese activity. Besides introducing the *jikeidan*, the *ken sanji* (councillor) system was also created; it drew its membership from the established local leaders of Kuching, that is the Malay *perabangan*, and established Chinese and Iban leaders.<sup>60</sup>

The question of Sarawak's future in the post-war period had been discussed even before the Japanese surrender in 1945. During the reoccupation by Australian troops, talks were already well under way regarding Sarawak's future as a Crown Colony. There were numerous considerations that paved the way for the eventual cession of Sarawak to the British government.<sup>61</sup> First, it was observed that the Rajah, who was then 72 years old, had no intention of returning to Sarawak to continue his rule. Secondly, the Rajah, whose relationship with his nephew, Anthony Brooke, the sometime Raja Muda, was one of mistrust, doubted Anthony's suitability as his successor; the possibility that Bertram Brooke, the Tuan Muda (heir-presumptive), might ascend to the Rajahship was remote, as the latter was as old as Rajah Vyner himself. Thirdly, there were increasing pressures from the British government, which saw the necessity of

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<sup>60</sup> The Malays--*Datu Amar, Datu Pahlawan*, Malay native officers (i.e. Abang Openg, Tuanku Bujang and Haji Abdul Rahman); the Chinese--Ong Kuan Hin, the son of Ong Tiang Swee, and Lee Wing Thong, the leader of the main Cantonese Association; the Ibans--Charles Mason and Philip Jitam (the leaders of the Perimpunan Dayak); Reece, 1982, op cit, p.144.

<sup>61</sup> Reece, 1982, Ibid, pp.191-92.

bringing Sarawak into line with their other colonies, in terms of its administration and general development.

In the end, Rajah Vyner decided that, in the best interests of Sarawak, the country should be ceded to the British Crown. However, the cession was not without resistance and subtle coercion. The people were divided on the issue. There was much doubt as to whether, without the expatriate votes, the Cession Bill, which was passed by 19 to 16 votes, might have made it through the Council Negri.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, Sarawak became a Crown Colony on 1 July 1946.

The Colonial period marked the first attempt at a concerted effort to develop Sarawak and its indigenous populations. The first official census was taken in 1947; Sarawak's population and its ethnic composition then is presented in Table 5.5; the main indigenous groups are listed as Sea Dayaks (Ibans), Malays, Melanaus, Land Dayaks and the "other indigenous" (Kayans, Kenyahs, Bisayahs, Kedayans, Kelabits, Muruts and many others).

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<sup>62</sup> Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1947, op cit, p.8.

Table 5.5  
Population by Ethnicity: 1947.

Ethnicity	Numbers	% of Total
European	692	0.1
Sea Dayak	190,387	34.9
Land Dayak	42,195	7.7
Malay	97,540	17.8
Melanau	35,553	6.5
Other Indigenous	29,754	5.5
Chinese	145,119	26.6
Others	5,121	0.9
All groups	546,361	100.0

Source: *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1947*, p.23.

Besides the population census, numerous other Colonial innovations emerged during the initial development period (1946-50).<sup>63</sup> Among these were, first, agricultural surveys and the study of soil samples in order to determine how these could be enriched to increase harvests; secondly, the strong emphasis on rural development as the Colonial government acknowledged that the livelihood of the peoples of Sarawak would, for sometime to come, continue to be dependent on agriculture; in this regard, there were efforts to provide rubber smallholders with high yielding materials for replanting and new planting; thirdly, due to the high demand for education, the government opened the Teacher Training Centre and School in order to meet the increasing need for teachers; fourthly, by 1950, the

<sup>63</sup> *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1947*, Ibid; *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1948*, op cit; *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1950*, op cit; see chapters on social services.

government medical services were operating 16 mobile and 24 static outstation dispensaries. The mobile dispensaries also doubled up as river ambulances; finally, a Registrar of Co-operative Societies was appointed and sent for a one-year overseas study tour;<sup>64</sup> it was hoped that this department would later play an important role in development.

In order to have a better grasp of the problems that they were dealing with, the Colonial government also commissioned studies on the various communities.<sup>65</sup> Several anthropological fact-finding studies were carried out over several years. They were as follows; studies on the Ibans by Freeman (1955);<sup>66</sup> the Bidayuhs by Geddes (1954);<sup>67</sup> the Melanaus by Morris (1953);<sup>68</sup> the Kelabits and Muruts (1957), and the Malays by Harrisson (1970);<sup>69</sup> the Penans by Needham;<sup>70</sup> and the Chinese by Tien (1953).<sup>71</sup>

<sup>64</sup> *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1947*, op cit, p.5.

<sup>65</sup> For a critical review of these and later studies, see Victor T. King (1986c). "Anthropology and Rural Development in Sarawak", *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 36(57), (new series), pp.13-42.

<sup>66</sup> Freeman, 1970, 1955 and 1955a, op cit.

<sup>67</sup> W.R. Geddes (1954). *The Land Dayaks of Sarawak*. London: HMSO, was a report submitted to the Colonial Social Science Research Council; a general description of the people, their customs and ways of life.

<sup>68</sup> H.S.Morris (1953). *Report on a Melanau Sago Producing Community in Sarawak*. London: HMSO, again a Colonial Social Science Research Council Report.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas Harnett Harrisson (1957). *The Peoples of Sarawak - The Kelabits and Muruts*. typescript; it was a general description of the people and their customs and ways of life; see also Harrisson, 1970, op cit.

<sup>70</sup> Rodney Needham (1953). *The Social Organisation of the Penan*. Unpublished D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford; see also, (1954).

However, these and other studies were not taken seriously by the Colonial government; their findings were ignored as far as policy formulation was concerned. King attributed the Colonial government's lukewarm reception of this research to a number of reasons.<sup>72</sup> First, there was the problem of "generalising their in-depth local community studies". Thus, the studies gave rise to the question of relevance to the wider and more diverse environment. Secondly, the presence of foreign scholars generated resentment from local government officials, who felt that "they knew their jobs, subjects and the local languages and cultures far better". Thirdly, the anthropologists themselves had several reservations when it came to making recommendations, which reflected, in part, their own modest assessment of their findings. And lastly, much of the earlier research was individually-oriented and rather academic, without very specific application to policy problems and project implementation.

To a large extent, the development of Sarawak, undertaken during the Colonial period, was carried out on an annual assessment basis as there was much uncertainty

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"Penan and Punan", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol.27, pp.73-83. Needham worked among the Penans between 1951 to 1962.

<sup>71</sup> Tien Ju-Kang (1953). *The Chinese of Sarawak: A Study of Social Structure*. Monograph on Social Anthropology, No.12, London School of Economics and Political Science, London: a study commissioned by the CSSRC.

<sup>72</sup> King, 1986c, op cit.

about the income potential of the government to be able to finance ambitious development programmes; besides, there were also the problems of lack of skilled manpower and basic information about Sarawak. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, the government did draw up long-term plans, which were to be carried out as and when there were enough funds or when surplus money became available.<sup>73</sup> Due to the immediate needs of revitalising the government and economy, the initial stage of development emphasised the strengthening and equipping of the various government departments, surveys and experimentations as a prelude to opening up land, and the development of new fields of agricultural production, and the promotion of necessary skills for government staff. Much of the late 1940s was devoted to just these programmes.

The first development plan of the Colonial government was the 1947-56 Development and Welfare Plan; it was later revised and new projects added from 1951 to 1957 when more funds became available in the 1950-51 boom years.<sup>74</sup> Under the period covered by the first Colonial development plan, Gross Domestic Product was reported to be \$375 millions in 1955; GDP increased to \$460 million

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<sup>73</sup> *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1947*, op cit, p.14.

<sup>74</sup> Sarawak, State Development Office (n.d.). *Development Plan 1964-68*. Kuching: Gov't Printing Office, p.1; this was in conjunction with the evolution of the Consultative Committee of the Colombo Plan in 1951; the Committee wanted the plan in order to be able to assess the sectors which most needed external aid.

by the end of 1961, reflecting an annual growth rate of 3.4% per annum.<sup>75</sup> During the same period, government revenues were derived principally from the main export items such as rubber, sago and pepper.<sup>76</sup> Table 5.6 tabulates sources of government revenue, where custom duties constituted the single biggest source of state income (i.e. about 62.9% of all revenue received in 1947 to about 57.4% in 1955 [for the dollar value of state revenue, refer to Table 5.32 [see Appendix C]]).

Table 5.6  
Percentage Distribution of  
State Revenue by Sectors of Origin: 1946-1955.

Category	1946	1947	1950	1955
Customs	62.9	66.7	71.6	57.4
Fee of Court etc	5.5	7.1	1.7	2.0
Forest	-	1.5	1.2	3.0
Government Property	5.7	0.4	0.3	2.2
Income tax**	-	-	0.2	12.5
Interest	2.9	4.2	3.1	6.2
Land*	2.4	2.6	2.2	2.9
Licenses etc	7.2	5.4	5.2	6.1
Marine	-	1.3	0.5	0.5
Municipal	-	4.4	1.7	0.5
Post/Telegraph	4.6	3.5	2.4	1.7
Rehabilitation loan	-	0.1	0.2	0.3
Grants+	-	0.9	6.9	-
Others	8.8	1.8	2.8	4.6
Total	100.0	99.9	100.0	99.9

Source: *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Years 1947-1963.*

Notes \* -Land & land sales.  
\*\* -Company (income) tax introduced in 1949.  
+ -Colonial Development and Welfare Grants.

<sup>75</sup> *Development Plan 1964-68, Ibid, p.2.*

<sup>76</sup> *Development Plan 1964-68, Ibid.*

Table 5.7 presents major export items during the first Colonial Development Plan (Table 5.33 [see Appendix C] presents the dollar values of the export items). Besides petroleum, three items, rubber, sago and pepper, featured prominently in Sarawak's foreign exports; they accounted for the large part of the customs duties. The balance of trade during the period of the First Development Plan was favourable up to 1955; from then onwards Sarawak experienced a deficit (see Table 5.8). There was no detailed explanation for this, except that it was said to be due rather obviously to the fact that the country was "exporting too little and importing too much".<sup>77</sup> That might be the case because upon examination, the export volumes and values of the three major export items had remained almost constant over the period of deficit.<sup>78</sup> However, if the import and re-export of Brunei oil, which was refined in Sarawak, is taken into account, then the Sarawak trade balance was favourable throughout the Colonial period.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Sarawak, Colonial Government (1959). *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1958*. Kuching: Gov't Printing Office, p.29.

<sup>78</sup> Sarawak, Colonial Government (1963). *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1962*. Kuching: Gov't Printing Office, pp.38-41.

<sup>79</sup> *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1958*, op cit, p.29.



Table 5.7  
Major Export Items (in Percentages): 1940-1955.

Items	1940	1946	1947	1950	1955
Petroleum	25.0	15.3	49.7	61.0	69.0
Rubber	57.5	70.2	25.2	30.2	16.5
Sago	4.8	4.0	10.3	2.5	0.4
Pepper	0.9	3.3	3.1	1.1	6.6
Jelutong	1.8	0.4	2.6	0.5	0.2
Sundries	9.9	6.5	7.8	3.1	2.3
Guttas	0.2	*	0.8	0.1	-
Damar	*	0.4	0.5	0.1	-
Copra	*	-	-	0.7	0.1
Timber	-	-	-	0.7	4.6
Illipe-nuts	-	-	-	-	0.2
Sundries	9.9	6.5	7.8	3.1	2.3
Total	100.1	100.1	100.0	100.0	99.9

Source: *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Years 1947-1955.*

Key: \* -negligible

Table 5.8  
Balance of Trade (in Millions of Dollars): 1946-1962.

Year	Total Export	Total Import	Total Trade	Balance of Trade
1951	212	121	333	+91
1952	140	112	252	+28
1953	134	131	265	+3
1954	136	135	271	+1
1955	160	149	309	+11
1956	134	150	284	-16
1957	126	144	270	-18
1958	119	133	252	-14
1959	182	161	343	+21
1960	203	205	408	-2
1961	178	222	400	-44
1962	183	206	390	-23

Source: *Colonial Annual Report on Sarawak for the Year 1962, p.46.*

Public expenditure under the First Colonial Plan 1947-57 is listed in Table 5.9; these figures are taken at intervals. Although the Colonial government stressed rural development, these expenditure figures were relatively low for the initial period. This may be partly explained by the need for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of government equipment as a result of the occupation; thus about 90% of total public spending went on various government departments and infrastructure development (see allocations under Public Works and Others). The incredibly high allocation for the two sectors dominated the entire period of the First Plan and stretched well into the second half of the 1950s. Thus, there was a clear urban bias in the development allocation, which seemed to indicate to the rural dwellers that they had to wait while the government was strengthening urban areas and the country's economy. From a meagre allocation of about \$100,000 for the agricultural sector, the percentage increase for the following year was large (double or 100% of the previous year). However, the increase in the allocation must be viewed in the context of total public expenditure, the total population engaged in agriculture (the latter comprised more than half of the economically active population) and government priorities said to be in agriculture and rural development. Generally, there was a meagre allocation for sectors such as agriculture, education, local authorities and medical facilities.

Table 5.9  
Public Expenditure: 1946-1955.

Category	1946	1947	1950	1955
	In millions (as % of total)			
Agriculture	0.1 (1.0)	0.2 (1.7)	0.3 (1.6)	0.8 (2.4)
Education	0.1 (2.2)	0.2 (2.1)	0.4 (2.4)	1.3 (3.7)
Local Authority*	-	0.1 (1.1)	0.2 (1.2)	0.5 (1.6)
Medical	0.4 (6.3)	1.0 (8.8)	1.4 (8.5)	3.7 (10.8)
Public Works	0.4 (6.6)	1.7 (15.6)	3.3 (19.7)	5.5 (16.0)
Others	5.5 (83.9)	7.8 (70.7)	11.2 (66.6)	22.5 (65.5)
Total	6.61 (100)	10.97 (100)	16.86 (100)	34.43 (100)

Source: *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Years 1947-1955.*

Note: \* -Local Authority & Native Affairs.

The Second and Third Colonial Development Plans of 1955-60 and 1959-63, respectively, were direct continuations of the First. There was no change in the emphasis on development, which, among other things, meant the strengthening of the country's economy, expansion of infrastructure, developing the rural economy so as to increase the self-sufficiency level of the rural inhabitants, and the increase of provision to meet the demands for education. Table 5.10 reveals that there had been a modest increase in allocations specifically affecting the rural population. For instance, from a small allocation of \$0.1 million (or 1% of total expenditure, Table 5.9) in 1946, the agricultural sector

received a boost when, in 1962, it was allocated a total of \$7.2 millions (or 5.7% of the total expenditure); this included capital expenditure of about \$5.0M (E2, Table 5.10), which was the allocation from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund (CDWF); in 1960, development funds from CDWF were listed under Part II (capital expenditure) of the state expenditure. In addition to the agricultural allocation, the rural inhabitants also benefited from the introduction of community development schemes and the creation of the Co-operative Societies, which, in 1960, were allocated separate budgets. The emergence of these new programmes was made possible as a result of increased revenue and not because of any change in development emphasis.

Table 5.10  
Public Expenditure (in Millions of Dollars): 1958-1962.

Category	1958		1960		1962	
	E1	E2	E1	E2	E1	E2
Agriculture	1.3	-	1.6	4.4	2.2	5.0
Community dev.	+	-	-	0.3	-	0.4
Co-op dev.	0.2	-	0.3	-	0.3	-
Education	8.7	-	9.7	1.9	11.8	3.5
Local Authority*	1.6	-	2.5	-	2.9	-
Medical	5.2	-	6.0	1.9	7.2	1.5
Public Works	3.8	-	4.7	3.9	4.1	4.9
Others	37.3	-	58.5	16.1	53.8	29.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>83.3</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>82.0</b>	<b>44.9</b>

Source: *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Years 1947-1963.*

Key: E1 -Recurrent Expenditure. E2 Capital Expenditures.

Notes: \* -Local Authority & Native Affairs.  
+ -Recurrent expenditures only (amount negligible). From 1950s onwards, state expenditure was itemised under Recurrent and Capital expenditures.

Generally, a review of the three Colonial Plans shows that the Sarawak economy was heavily dependent upon agricultural activities, which provided employment for fourth-fifths of the country's total labour force. The agricultural sector contributed about 45% of the total domestic product, and generated 85% of exports by value;<sup>80</sup> the major export earners were rubber, sago, pepper, jelutong and timber (see Table 5.7). Over the entire Colonial period, agricultural products continued to be the biggest generators of income. Over the same period, rubber constituted on average about 35% of total exports, pepper 3.5%, sago 3.4% and jelutong 0.9%; timber production in the 1940s was basically for domestic consumption and it was not until 1950 that it began to be exported, averaging about 6.1% of total exports (see Table 5.7 ).<sup>81</sup>

The overall pattern and emphasis of development may be best summarised by the Third Development Plan 1959-63, when more revenue was generally available through the strengthened economy. For this purpose, reference will be made to Table 5.11, which presents monetary allocations to the various sectors.

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<sup>80</sup> *Development Plan 1964-68*, op cit, p.3.

<sup>81</sup> The oil trade was frequently excluded from consideration as it tended to skew the real value of imports and exports; it constituted Brunei oil refined in Sarawak and then re-exported.

Table 5.11  
Expenditure under 1959-1963 Plan.

Category	\$M	%
Agriculture	27.8	17.4
Transport	58.2	36.3
PWD-Plant & Equipment	13.3	8.3
Communications	5.3	3.3
Utilities	11.9	7.4
Industry	0.4	0.3
General	11.2	7.0
Social Services	32.1	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>160.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: *Development Plan 1964-1968*, p.6.

It has been said that the major thrust of Colonial development was the strengthening of the economy, expansion of the basic infrastructure, development of the rural economy, education and social services. In the first two Plans, development priorities had been complicated by the immediate need of post-war reconstruction. Therefore, a more detailed analysis of the Third Plan, when public expenditure had accelerated to \$80.3 millions in 1962 alone compared to \$6.6 millions in 1946 (Table 5.9), is more meaningful and serves to establish how strong the commitment was to rural development.

Among the major programmes financed by the agricultural allocation were rubber and coconut planting schemes and subsidies to padi planters. The rubber planting scheme was started in 1956 with a target acreage of 10,000 to be planted in five years; thus, during the 1959-63 development plan, much of the rubber production

had come from private investment and smallholders.<sup>82</sup> The rubber planting scheme gave to an approved applicant \$250 per acre as a subsidy for new planting and \$450 per acre for replanting of trees; \$200 worth of subsidy was given in kind. In addition, there was rural credit made available to rubber planters. The coconut planting scheme was of two types, either on a domestic or plantation scale. For domestic planting, approved applicants were given a maximum of 15 palms only; for plantation planting, a cash subsidy of \$2.00 per palm tree was given, up to a maximum of 500 palms. The third agricultural scheme was the subsidy for padi planters in terms of provision of tools and materials for building sluices and watergates, in addition to a small cash subsidy.

The biggest share of the development fund on transport was not only for the reconstruction of roads wrecked by the war but their expansion to serve major towns. Indeed it was an ambitious programme to link most major towns from the First to the Fifth Divisions at a cost which averaged from \$32,000 per mile for the Lundu-Serayan link to \$228,000 per mile for the Serian-Simanggang connection.<sup>83</sup> With regard to the social services allocation, much (about \$17.5M) of it was spent on improving educational services. Among the medical innovations of the Colonial government was the

<sup>82</sup> *Development Plan 1964-68*, op cit, pp.3-7.

<sup>83</sup> *Development Plan 1964-68*, Ibid, p.9.

introduction of travelling dispensaries, comprising a medical dresser equipped with medical supplies travelling the major river systems.

One of the most significant developments initiated during the Colonial period was the community development schemes in the early 1950s.<sup>84</sup> The Development Committee in charge of the schemes was set up in 1951; it was the enlarged body of the former Adult Education Committee established in 1948, whose responsibility was to supplement the efforts of the local authorities, especially in remote areas. In the early 1960s, the Development Committee was incorporated as another departmental branch within the State Secretariat; the governing members were as follows:

Deputy Chief Secretary	Chairman
Secretary for Local Government	Member
Deputy Financial Secretary	"
Director of Education	"
Director of Agriculture	"
Director of Medical Services	"
Principal Assistant Secretary (Local Government)	Secretary

The Committee's main tasks were: (1) to examine and report on future Community Development Policy; and (2) to be responsible for all Community Development

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<sup>84</sup> Sarawak Gazette, 30 April 1961, op cit.



undertakings.<sup>85</sup> The philosophy behind the strategies of the development schemes can be summarised as follows: bringing development to the people and tailoring it to meet local skills, talents and cultural limitations. As the programmes were based on the concept of "self-help", the monetary allocation from the government was small, averaging about \$0.3 million in the 1960s; it was only from the late 1950s that there was a specific allocation for it under capital expenditure (see Table 5.10). As the programme was also tied to the setting up of schools under the management of Local Authorities, it may have benefited from some of the local authority allocation.

Between the 1950s and 1960s, a total of 13 community development schemes were carried out among various ethnic communities: six among the Ibans,<sup>86</sup> one Chinese,<sup>87</sup> one Malay,<sup>88</sup> one Bidayuh,<sup>89</sup> one Orang Ulu<sup>90</sup> and three that cut across the various communities.<sup>91</sup> Among the Ibans, the first was the Adult Literacy Scheme in the Paku-Saribas area in 1950. While the programme was successful in

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<sup>85</sup> *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> This has been discussed in Chapter 2.

<sup>87</sup> The Heng Hua Fishing Village (1954); *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, *op cit.*

<sup>88</sup> The Muara Tuang Scheme (1952-57); *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Padawan Centre (1956-63); *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> The Long Lama School (1956-63); *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, *Ibid.*

teaching some adults to read and stimulating the production of a vernacular magazine (the "*Pemberita*"), further development of the programme was thwarted by lack of interest among the local population and the undue wealth and rivalry that had penetrated the Iban community of the area.<sup>92</sup> The Paku-Saribas Scheme was followed by the Rural Improvement School in Kanowit in 1951. The strategy of the Kanowit Scheme was based on the selection and training of local pupils in modern and efficient farming methods. It was hoped that these pupils, upon the completion of their training, would return to their respective villages, to introduce these new techniques. Like the first scheme, it was also a failure, as some of the pupils opted not to return to their community but sought employment elsewhere; among those that did return to their villages, the farming methods they had learned were not easily adaptable to the conditions that prevailed in the villages (e.g. the use of machinery, which was not only unsuitable but also costly); the scheme was consequently discontinued in 1957. The third scheme introduced into the Iban community was that of Budu started in 1953. Unlike the first two, Budu was a multi-purpose scheme; that is, it was concerned with producing an "elite" group, as well as the improvement of

<sup>92</sup> While the Community Development report was not specific about what activities distracted adult concentration on the literacy programme, it is highly likely to have been commercial agriculture to which the Paku-Saribas Ibans had been exposed early on; interestingly, it was the youths who were unduly attracted to the programme, but they had already been catered for in the schools run by the local authority.

standards of living and the integration of community efforts for the welfare of all. The ultimate aim of the scheme was the training of locals who would be able not only to manage the scheme but also precipitate similar developments in other Iban areas. The success of Budu also motivated the rise of other similar centres, especially in Nanga Budu and Nanga Gringgang. In 1957, the Entabai Scheme was started and patterned after that of Budu.

The success of the Budu and Entabai schemes gave rise to the Iban Teams scheme in 1959. The Iban Team was directed to spreading the success of Budu/Entabai to other Iban areas by selecting potential areas and training selected individuals, who would run the centres. Initially, these selected areas would be run by a provisional Committee of Progress under the supervision of an expatriate field worker, who would relinquish control upon the return of the trainees.<sup>93</sup> The last scheme to be implemented among the Ibans in the Colonial period was that in Lubok Antu (Lemanak) in 1961. Different from the preceding schemes, the Lubok Antu scheme was implemented for Ibans caught in the "transition area"; in other words, Ibans located between the *pasar* and the *ulu*, who were between the worst of two worlds.<sup>94</sup> While the Lemanak scheme resembled the others, there were

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<sup>93</sup> *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, *op cit*; for details of the Budu and the satellite schemes, see Wilson, 1969, *op cit*.

<sup>94</sup> Searle, 1983, *op cit*.

differences in that there was relatively extensive government involvement in it, for example, in the provision of subsidies for the planting of some cash crops such as rubber. The objectives of the scheme also included an attempt to convert Iban antagonism towards authority to a positive attitude which could be usefully integrated with local government.<sup>95</sup> Lemanak was one of the depressed areas of the Second Division, where land had become in short supply. Traditionally, migration (*pindah*) would solve this problem; however, the Lemanak Ibans blamed their problem on the government, which prohibited migration. Therefore, the government's attempt to develop the area had been wrongly taken as trapping them in the depressed area and their anger was expressed in an uprising over the payment of tax. The problem of the Lemanak Ibans reflected problems associated with long settled areas, where, due to increasing population pressure, the demand for land for shifting cultivation became acute. But, unlike those in the *ulu*, the Lemanak Ibans did not possess an abundance of land on which to practise shifting cultivation. Furthermore, the prohibition on migration severely restricted the traditional solution. Consequently, the Lemanak Scheme came into being; it was said to be the prototype of the

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<sup>95</sup> See Erik Jensen (1966b). "The Lemanak Community Development Scheme", *Sarawak Gazette*, Vol.XCII, Nos.1302 & 1303, part I, (31 August), pp.271-76, and part II, (30 September), pp.299-300.

comprehensive land development programmes which were established in Sarawak after the formation of Malaysia.<sup>96</sup>

Generally, the Community Development Schemes carried out among other ethnic communities were less successful in guiding target groups towards achieving some set goals. Among the Chinese, the Heng Hua Fishing Village Scheme was undertaken in 1954. This was primarily a resettlement project involving a Chinese fishing community near Kuching. The scheme was undertaken by the Co-operative Development Department, a separate body from the Community Development Committee. As the Scheme was within the Kuching district, some developments, such as the improvement of roads and water supply, were subsequently undertaken by the Public Works Department. The Muara Tuang Scheme was established in 1952 for the coastal Malays of the First Division. It consisted of an Adult Literacy campaign and teaching improved methods of farming, improved living and health standards and some marketing techniques. It was not too successful due to the general lack of Malay interest, which needed continuous stimulus from the outside. Among the Land Dayaks, the Padawan centre was established in 1956, involving 15 Land Dayak villages in the First Division. The Scheme aimed at introducing the Land Dayaks to the cash crop economy as a prerequisite to achieving better living standards; thus, it placed emphasis on improved agricultural techniques. For the Orang Ulu (Kayans and

<sup>96</sup> Jensen, 1966b, Ibid.

Kenyahs) the Long Lama School was established in 1956, which served not only as a higher primary school but also as a vocational centre, teaching technical skills such as carpentry, metal work and improved agricultural techniques.

Besides the 10 schemes above, a feasibility study was carried out among the Melanau community to ascertain their development needs; however, nothing further came of it.<sup>97</sup> In addition, there were three other programmes meant to supplement the Community Development Scheme; the Rural Home Craft Instructors (1957-60)--initially this was an experiment to assess development needs among rural women; the Survey of Nutrition in the late 1960s--to study the nutritional needs and standards among the settlers of the development schemes; and, the United Kingdom Student Volunteers, where British students, who were awaiting entry into universities, volunteered their services in various welfare and related activities.<sup>98</sup>

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the patterns and priorities of development promoted by the Colonial government. First, it cannot be denied that there had been an overall development of the country since the days of the Brooke Rajahs, be it in the advancement of social and medical services, infrastructure development or in economic activities. Secondly, it was also clear that, while rapid changes had

<sup>97</sup> The Melanau Needs (1957); *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, op cit.

<sup>98</sup> *Sarawak Gazette*, 30 April 1961, Ibid.

taken place during the Colonial period, the rural sector had taken second place to urban centres, despite the fact that the bulk of the population resided in the countryside, and that development was supposed to have benefited the greatest number of people. Increasingly, the common explanations for rural neglect had been such things as the wide dispersion of the rural population and communication problems. Thirdly, there was a heavier concentration of community development effort among the Ibans than some other native groups, though in total the effort was still very limited. This is evidenced from the number of such schemes that were promoted among the various communities in Sarawak.

The implementation of these schemes among the Ibans probably had something to do with the long established connections between government, that is the Brooke regime, and the Saribas and Skrang, which continued to be acknowledged as the traditional Iban country. Out of the six schemes for the Ibans, five were implemented in the Second Division and only one, the Rural Improvement School in Kanowit, in the lower Rejang, was in the Third Division. This bias in the Iban areas served only to reinforce the cleavages between the Second and the Third Divisions, which was first encouraged by the Brookes. Brooke policies not only introduced the Ibans of the Second Division early on to the cash economy but also to education through mission schools. The extent to which these differences influenced Iban political behaviour in

the two Divisions has been studied briefly by Leigh and was found by Searle to be still significant in the early 1970s. But from the mid-1970s, these cleavages began to be eroded as the Third Division Ibans caught up in development terms. However, in my discussion on the elections since the 1960s, I have found that even in those early years, the development gap between the Second and the Third Divisions Ibans did not play any major part in creating Iban political divisions, although SNAP and PESAKA were initially established on the basis of regional cleavages.<sup>99</sup>

#### **IV. Post-Independence Development, 1963 Onwards**

Since attaining independence from Britain in 1963, Sarawak and its indigenes have undergone some fundamental changes. While many may have benefited from the accelerated development, there are also those who have been neglected. Thus, there has emerged an uneven pattern of development not only between regions but also between and within ethnic groups. Several of the more obvious patterns of uneven development are to be found within the following dichotomies: urban-rural, *bumiputera*-Chinese and Dayak-Malay/Melanau.

There have been numerous explanations put forward for these inequalities. It is easy to blame the Brookes, who had adopted discriminating policies of development based on their romantic attachment to the natives.

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<sup>99</sup> See Chapters 2 and 3.



Nevertheless, some of their policies did contribute not only to the rural-urban biases but also to the disparities between and within ethnic communities. Ibans, in particular, were generally left behind in development terms, and divided between, for example, those of the more prosperous and modernised Second Division and the relatively backward, physically remote Third Division.

Despite more rigorous efforts undertaken during the Colonial period, Ibans were still not benefiting sufficiently from development as compared with the other ethnic groups. Undoubtedly, the Colonial government sought to address this low level of Iban development through the implementation of community development schemes, but one result was to reinforce the divisional cleavage, as all the Iban schemes with the exception of one, were undertaken in the Second Division.

Having investigated the Brooke and the Colonial patterns of development, I shall now examine how and to what extent post-independence development served either to exacerbate or ameliorate the legacies of the two previous regimes. Since independence, the direction and thrust of Sarawak development has invited general public discontent, which, not unlike that of the Brooke and Colonial periods, centres on the urban-rural divide and disparities between and within ethnic groups.<sup>100</sup> Among the Ibans, discontent has led to the raising of such issues

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<sup>100</sup> The political consequences of such discontent have been discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

as whether it is a deliberate government policy to neglect Iban areas--the Ibans are after all removed from the main centres of power--and whether such neglect arises from strategic considerations to suppress the possible increase of political, social and economic awareness arising from development. In an attempt to establish the pattern of social and economic development in the post-independence period, it is first necessary to examine public expenditure in the various development plans.

#### **A. Pattern of Public Development Expenditure**

Since 1963, there have been six development plans: the Sarawak Development Plan 1964-68 (SP); and Sarawak development allocations under the First Malaysia Plan 1966-70 (MP1), Second Malaysia Plan 1971-75 (MP2), Third Malaysia Plan 1976-80 (MP3), Fourth Malaysia Plan 1981-85 (MP4), and Fifth Malaysia Plan 1986-90 (MP5). The SP was implemented when Kalong Ningkan was Chief Minister; the MP1 under Tawi Sli's administration, the second Iban government; the MP2 and MP3 under the Chief Ministership of Rahman Ya'kub, a Muslim-Melanau; and, the MP4 and MP5 under Taib Mahmud, the second Muslim-Melanau Chief Minister, who is still in office. The significance of these distinctions lies in the fact that under the first two Iban Chief Ministers, a significant proportion of total public spending was devoted to agriculture and rural development. This pattern changes, at least in

terms of percentage, in the Second and subsequent five-year Malaysian Plans, when Rahman and then Taib took over as Chief Ministers, although the absolute monetary values of the later allocations were, of course, larger.

Despite some similarities, from 1964 to 1970, state expenditure can be contrasted between the Kalong Ningkan and Tawi Sli administrations. The development thrust of the two Plans, which covered this period, will be derived from comparing the former's proposed development allocations and the latter's proposed and actual development spending. This qualification is necessary because the original Development Plan for 1964-68 was later revised in 1966,<sup>101</sup> when expenditure between 1966 and 1970 was absorbed into the First Malaysia Plan. Furthermore, such a comparison can only be meaningfully confined to an examination of the movement of percentages within the various development sectors, for example, agriculture, transport, utilities and others. However crude this may be, such an approach is inevitable because these are the only suitable statistics which we have, and the percentages for expenditure in each category do indicate the various policy priorities of the government.

The thrust of Sarawak's development for the period 1964-68 is best summarised by the then Chief Minister's foreword to the Plan. He stated that

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<sup>101</sup> This was the period when Tawi Sli was manoeuvred to replace Kalong Ningkan; it also coincided with the expiry of the former five year Malayan Plan 1961-65 (before Malaysia).

the main aim [of the Development Plan 1964-68] is rural economic and social development. This does not mean that the towns will be neglected, but the fact is that four-fifths of Sarawak's people live in the rural areas, and the economy is very largely dependent on what they produce. Also, the towns are already relatively well provided with amenities. It is therefore fair and reasonable that the main effort under the Plan should be concentrated on rural development.<sup>102</sup>

The broad objectives of the Sarawak Development Plan 1964-68<sup>103</sup> were as follows:

1. to improve the farmer's livelihood and make the countryside a pleasant place to live in;
2. to provide employment for the country's population of working age;
3. to raise the per-capita output of the economy and to protect per-capita living standards against the adverse effects of a probable decline in rubber prices;
4. to widen the variety of Sarawak production, emphasising the development of other suitable agricultural products in addition to rubber and also giving encouragement to industrial expansion; and
5. finally, while stressing the importance of development which will meet production and employment requirements, to improve and expand the social services needed to provide educational opportunities for the rapidly growing school-age population, to extend the public health services over a wider coverage of the rural as well as urban population, and to provide more adequately for rural utilities.

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102 *Development Plan 1964-68, op cit, see Preface.*

103 *Development Plan 1964-68, Ibid, p.18.*

The basic strategy of Kalong Ningkan was to stimulate rural development through the opening up of land for agriculture in selected Development Areas (either by resettlement or *in-situ* development) and providing them with basic amenities such as schools and medical facilities.<sup>104</sup> In this way, the government hoped to "make the countryside an attractive place to live in" and so prevent the emigration of rural labour to the towns. In addition to developing selected areas, government efforts in rural development were also concerned with raising the general income levels of farmers by increasing their agricultural productivity. To achieve these ends, the government established various planting and assistance schemes to farmers, many of which were implemented through the Department of Agriculture.

Under Kalong Ningkan, the government's strong commitment to rural development is clearly seen from the first post-independence public expenditure Plans in comparison to spending under the Third Colonial Development Plan 1959-63 (see Table 5.12 for Public Development Expenditure for the 1959-63, 1964-68 and 1966-70 Plans). In the 1964-68 Plan, the allocation for the agricultural sector almost doubled in terms of the overall percentage, from 17.4% in 1959-63 to 31.7%; in monetary terms, it was also the biggest historical increase for the agricultural sector, almost fourfold the

<sup>104</sup> *Development Plan 1964-68*, Ibid, p.28; rubber planting was the focus of the first land development schemes in the post-independence period, see also King, 1986b, op cit.

previous allocations compared to other sectors, whose monetary increases were approximately doubled. While the monetary increases for the non-agricultural sectors almost doubled, they nonetheless reflected a percentage decrease of about 3%, for example, Transport, from 36.3% to 32.2%; PWD Plant, 8.3% to 5.8%; Communications, 3.3% to 1.9%; Utilities, 7.4% to 5.6%; Industries, 0.3% to 0.2%, and Social Services, from 20% to 14.5% (see Table 5.12). In the adjusted public expenditure that was finally incorporated into the First Malaysia Plan, the agricultural and rural development allocations for Sarawak increased by a further 2%, that is to 34%.

Table 5.12  
Public Development Expenditure for Sarawak.

Sector	1959-1963		1964-1968		1966-1970	
	\$M	%	\$M	%	\$M	%
Agriculture	27.8	17.4	108.6	31.7	130.1	34.3
Transport	58.2	36.3	110.6	32.2	111.9	29.5
PWD Plant	13.3	8.3	20.0	5.8	*	-
Communication	5.3	3.3	6.6	1.9	24.1	6.3
Utilities	11.9	7.4	19.0	5.6	15.4	4.0
Industry	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.2	2.5	0.7
Social Services	32.1	20.0	49.6	14.5	81.4	21.4
General	11.2	7.0	27.8	8.1	14.3	3.8
All Sectors	160.2	100.0	343.0	100.0	379.7	100.0

Source: *Development Plan 1964-1968*, pp.33-34 and Sarawak (n.d.). *Sarawak Development Progress 1968-1970*. Kuching: Gov't Printing Office, p.12

Note: \* -Reclassified under transport. Because of reclassifications, figures may differ from one source to the other.

Under the 1964-68 Plan, \$108.6 million (32% of total spending) was allocated for agriculture and rural development. Of that amount, \$57.7 million (or 53%) was for rubber planting schemes.<sup>105</sup> This allocation was mainly for the subsidy scheme; approved applicants were given cash subsidies of \$250 per acre for new planting and \$450 for replanting; another \$200 was given in kind, either in the form of high-yielding rubber seedlings or a cash grant. The next sizeable portion of the agricultural allocation went to rural credit (\$10M) and coconut planting (\$9.5M). About \$9.5 million (or 9% of the agricultural allocation) allocated for coconut planting was also in the form of direct cash subsidies, whereby approved applicants were given \$2.00 per tree, up to a maximum of 500 trees per applicant.<sup>106</sup> The allocation as rural credit, administered by the Sarawak Development Finance Corporation and the Co-operative Central Bank, was to be granted as loans to supplement capital needs which were not adequately met by other incentive schemes described above; it was given out mainly as loans for building low cost rural houses and the maintenance expenditure of rubber and pepper gardens. There were also four other agricultural development sectors which were allocated between \$4 to \$5 million each (4% to 5%): (1) land development, where the allocation of about \$4 million was to be used to purchase land for development;

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<sup>105</sup> *Development Plan 1964-68*, op cit, pp.6 & 34-35.

<sup>106</sup> *Development Plan 1964-68*, Ibid, p.7.

(2) drainage and irrigation, where \$5 million was provided as subsidies to help farmers improve their land under cultivation (that is wet padi cultivation and coconut planting); (3) training and extension services, where \$5.2 million was to be spent on establishing an agricultural school in Semongok (outside Kuching) in order to meet the need for extension workers; and, (4) research, which was allocated \$4.5 million for the establishment of two research stations, one in Kuching and the other in the Fourth Division with funds for research into new economic crops. In addition to the above, there were also smaller allocations for the following: \$2 million (2%) for the development of oil palms; \$2 million for the improvement of fish rearing and subsidies to farmers who construct new ponds; \$2 million to assist the development of livestock farming. Another \$4 million allocated under "other schemes" represented overlapping expenditures; these were actually spent on various other schemes already discussed earlier, such as the assistance to padi planters, fertiliser subsidies, fruit production, and farm development and mechanisation.<sup>107</sup> Lastly, some \$14 million was spent on research, training and development expenses for the Department of Agriculture, which was the main state agency involved in agriculture and rural development.

However, it would be erroneous to judge the rural development efforts of the government solely from its

<sup>107</sup> *Development Plan 1964-68*, Ibid, Appendix X.



allocations for the rural sector. This is due to the fact that while rural development may have benefited directly from the specific allocations above, it also received funds from some other non-rural categories of expenditure, notably from social services, such as utilities, medical and school allocations. For instance, in education, it was the government's objective to provide "by 1968 a place in a primary one class for every child who is likely to be able to go to school"; in the medical services, the government sought to further extend the facilities to the rural areas, including a \$2 million allocation for New Rural Treatment Centres and \$5 million for rural water supplies.<sup>108</sup>

Under the Chief Ministership of Tawi Sli, a similar concern for agriculture and rural development was continued. In the MP1, public spending was dominated by the agricultural allocation, which by then had increased to about 34%. However, the deep concern for rural development of the two previous Iban governments was not so clearly expressed in the subsequent governments of Rahman Ya'kub (1970-81) and Taib Mahmud (1981 to the present). This conclusion is based on the pattern of allocations for agriculture and rural development, which began to plummet in the early 1970s in terms of its percentage of total public spending (see Tables 5.13 and 5.34 [Appendix C--for the monetary values]). Percentage

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<sup>108</sup> *Development Plan 1964-68*, Ibid, pp.48-49 and Appendix X; no figures were available for the total numbers of school-age pupils.

distributions of public spending by sector show that agriculture and rural development no longer dominated government spending. Beginning with the Second Malaysia Plan, Sarawak development expenditure for agriculture and rural development declined in terms of its overall percentage to total public expenditure; from a substantial percentage of 32% in the 1964-68 Plan and 34% in the MP1, it had decreased to 19% in the MP2, increased to 27% in the MP3, was at its lowest at 17% in the MP4 and then recovered slightly to 22% in the MP5. However, in terms of the dollar values, the agricultural allocation increased from \$130 million in the MP1 to \$160 million in the MP2, \$445 million in the MP3, dropped to \$440 million in the MP4 and subsequently peaked at \$587 million in the MP5. While the monetary allocations for agriculture and rural development have increased substantially over the period of the five Malaysia Plans, the overall drop in its percentage over the same period signalled some shift in emphasis in the overall development objectives. The shift in the development thrust might have been prompted, in part, by Rahman's perceived political need to "create a rich group of bumiputeras (the Muslim Malays/Melanaus)", who would be able to sponsor a political party (i.e. presumably the PBB); in that way, reducing dependence on rich Chinese entrepreneurs and sustaining the political supremacy of the Malay/Melanau-dominated PBB. Under the administration of Taib, the slogan "*politik pembangunan*" (politics of

development) dominated the period; simply, it arose from the Chief Minister's conscious effort to spread development to "all corners" of Sarawak, although the results of such an effort and policy were found to be wanting.

Table 5.13  
Public Expenditure - Sarawak (in Percentages).

Category	SP	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4	MP5
Agriculture	32	34	19	27	17	22
Resource development	0	0	0	*	*	*
Industry	*	1	4	6	3	5
Transport	38	30	28	24	31	24
Communication	2	6	9	5	4	*
Utilities	6	4	10	10	23	21
Research/Study	0	0	1	*	*	*
Social Services	15	21	13	19	15	18
Internal Security	0	0	6	5	2	7
General Admin.	8	4	11	5	3	2
Others	0	0	0	0	4	-
All	101	100	101	101	102	99

Source: *Sarawak Development Plan 1964-1968*, pp.33-34; *Sarawak Development Progress 1968-1970*, p.12; MP3, pp.240-41; MP4, Appendix A; and MP5, Appendix A.

Key: SP -Sarawak Development Plan 1964-68.  
\* -negligible.

#### B. The New Economic Policy (NEP)

The New Economic Policy was the most important policy statement of the independence period. It was a 20-year long-term socio-economic plan. The significance of the NEP lies not only in its objectives of restructuring Malaysian society to reflect a balanced distribution of wealth and access to opportunities, but more importantly,

it removed any vagueness in the overall objectives of previous development plans.<sup>109</sup> The policy was "a blueprint for rapid socio-economic development, a development in which all Malaysians have the opportunity, the right and the responsibility to participate and share equitably".<sup>110</sup> More specifically, the NEP spelt out the terms by which the benefits of development were to be shared by the various ethnic groups. In the strictest sense, it addressed the basic question of equality, either with regard to the opportunity to acquire wealth or the ownership of economic resources; this economic equality was seen in terms of the sharing of the benefits of development in relation to the proportion of each ethnic group to the total population. To that end, a 30% *bumiputera* corporate ownership in the commercial and industrial sectors was set as a target to be achieved by 1990.<sup>111</sup> *Bumiputera* corporate ownership of about 55%, to reflect their total numbers in relation to the national population, would be the eventual target.

Thus, any discussion of development has to take into account the principles of the NEP; this is because of its immediate and far-reaching implications for *bumiputera* participation in all sectors of development. It is necessary then to examine Iban development alongside the

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<sup>109</sup> MP2, op cit; see also chapter 1 for background to the introduction of the NEP.

<sup>110</sup> MP2, op cit, p.1; *Mid-Term Review of MP2*, op cit, p.iii.

<sup>111</sup> MP2, op cit, p.41.

NEP so as to see both the extent to which the Ibans had benefited from the NEP as well as the extent to which they had been neglected. Before proceeding any further, it is pertinent to mention briefly some points about the NEP.

The principles of the NEP were embodied in four successive five-year Malaysia Plans, beginning with the Second Malaysia Plan 1971-75. It was a comprehensive set of political and socio-economic programmes. Consequently, it defined clearly relations between *bumiputera* and non-*bumiputera* groups in two areas, that is, in politics and economics. In the political field, it established the Malay (*bumiputera*) dominance, while on the economic side, it sought to distribute the benefits of development in proportions congruent to the total number of *bumiputeras* in the national population. With regard to the economic dimension, the implementation of the NEP has elicited general discontent among the Chinese because of the special treatment accorded to the *bumiputeras*, for example, in setting up commercial enterprises, in competition for contracts from government departments and agencies, and in scholarships for and admissions to institutions of higher learning. Despite this resentment, the government justified the special treatment of *bumiputeras* by maintaining that it was a necessary measure in order to make the disadvantaged *bumiputeras* more competitive.

Before going on to discuss the various measures which were undertaken in order to increase *bumiputera* participation to about 30% in all sectors, it is important to discuss briefly the general picture of pre-1970 *bumiputera* participation, which had brought about the policy in the first place. Two examples will suffice: that is, the pattern of employment, and income and wealth ownership.

In West Malaysia, general income imbalances were found in five sectors of employment: modern urban, modern rural, government, traditional urban and traditional rural.<sup>112</sup> High income levels and potential were found in the modern urban sector, which comprised technically advanced manufacturing, construction, commerce, utilities, transport, communications and modern services, including the professions and the tourist trade. Medium income potential was found in the government sector (federal, state and local government administration and public authorities, as well as in the police and armed forces) and in the modern rural sector (in estate cultivation of rubber, oil palm, coconut, tea and cocoa), FELDA doubled-cropped padi schemes, commercial forestry, modern fishing and modern tin-mining. Low income potential was located in the traditional urban sector (in manufacturing, construction, commerce, transport and services), in which work was undertaken with little use of modern equipment or techniques by small artisans,

<sup>112</sup> *MP2*, Ibid, pp.36-37.

petty traders, hawkers, stallholders, and others whose activities required little or no initial skill or training, and the traditional rural sector (comprising uneconomic smallholding rubber, single-cropped padi farms, traditional livestock and other agricultural enterprises, gathering jungle produce, inshore fishing, and *dulang* [tray] washing and small pump-mining for tin). In the three income levels, the majority of the Malays are found in the lower level and the traditional rural sector, where they outnumbered the non-Malays by about three to one; in the traditional urban sector, the position was reversed. In the modern rural and urban sectors, the non-Malays outnumbered the Malays by five to two, while in government, Malays outnumbered the non-Malays by about five to three.<sup>113</sup> Table 5.14 presents the employment for West Malaysia by sector in 1970. Although the respective percentages of the labour force reflected the ethnic proportions, for example, the Malay population was 51% of the total Malaysian population and their labour participation was 53%, total participation by sectors was uneven, where 68% of Malay labour was concentrated in the traditional rural sector. The more lucrative sectors were dominated by the non-Malay labour force by 69% and 61% respectively.

Similarly, the general pattern of wealth ownership was not in favour of the indigenous Malay population. For example, as of 1969, ownership of share capital of all

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<sup>113</sup> MP2, Ibid, p.38.

limited companies in West Malaysia was largely controlled by foreign interests (at 62.1%). The Chinese controlled another 22.8% compared to the Malays 1.5% and the Indian 0.9% (see Table 5.15).

Table 5.14  
Employment by Sector and Ethnic Group: 1970.

Sector	Malay		Chinese		Indian		Total	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Primary	951	68	301	21	142	10	1,394	50
Secondary	173	31	335	60	52	9	560	20
Tertiary	312	38	398	48	104	13	814	30
Total	1,436	51	1,034	37	298	11	2,768	99
Population	4,822	53	3,274	36	978	11	9,074	100
Labour	1,563	52	1,112	37	334	11	3,009	100
Unemployment	126	-	77	-	37	-	241	-
Unemployment	8%	-	7%	-	11%	-	8%	-

Source: MP3 1976-1980, pp.78-79.

Notes: Primary -Agriculture.  
 Secondary -Mining, manufacturing, construction, utilities and transport.  
 Tertiary -Wholesale and retail trade, banking, public administration, education, health and defence.



Table 5.15  
Ownership of Share Capital  
of Limited Companies in West Malaysia: 1969.

Shareholder	All Industries	
	(\$000)	As % of total
Residents:		
Malay	49,294	1.0
Malaya interests	21,339	0.5
Chinese	1,064,795	22.8
Indian	40,983	0.9
Fed./State Gov't	21,430	0.5
Nominee company+	98,885	2.1
Others+	470,969	10.1
Foreign*	282,311	6.0
Non-residents	1,235,927	26.4
Foreign investment**	1,391,607	29.7
Total	4,677,540	100.0

Source: MP2 1970-1975, Table 3.1, p.40.

Notes: + No other information given.

\* Foreign controlled companies in Malaysia.

\*\* Investment through head office by West Malaysian branches of companies incorporated abroad.

The general pattern of employment in the West Malaysian states was also prevalent in Sarawak by the close of the 1960s. Table 5.16 lists the number of Sarawak workers in three categories. The majority of the labour force was in the primary (agriculture) sector, that is 238,000 (or 82.3% of the total labour force), half of which comprised Ibans. The secondary sector comprised 21,600 workers, representing 7.5% of the total. According to the population proportion (or ratio), the Ibans were heavily under-represented by about 29%; the Melanau and the Orang Ulu labour forces were well within their population proportion, while the Chinese and the Malays were over-represented. A similar pattern of

unbalanced employment can also be observed in the tertiary sector. The imbalance becomes even more acute when the concentration of the ethnic groups in particular employment sectors are compared. The highest concentration in the primary sector (i.e. the low income sector) was recorded for the Dayak *bumiputeras*. Of the 122,700 total Iban labour force, 120,000 or 98% were engaged in this sector; for the Bidayuh and the Orang Ulu, the corresponding percentages were 95% and 90%, respectively. These were in contrast to the percentages of 87%, 73% and 52% for the Melanaus, Malays and the Chinese, respectively.

Table 5.16  
Occupation by Community and Industry: 1960.

Industry	Iban In thousands	Bid. In thousands	O/Ulu In thousands	Malay In thousands	Mel. In thousands	Chinese In thousands	Total In thousands
	(percentage of total)						
Primary	120 (50)	22 (9)	17 (7)	30 (13)	15 (6)	34 (14)	238 (99)
Secondary	0.7 (3)	0.3 (1)	0.9 (4)	6.1 (28)	1.5 (7)	12.1 (56)	21.6 (99)
Tertiary	2.0 (7)	0.8 (3)	1.0 (1)	5.2 (18)	0.8 (3)	19.7 (67)	29.5 (99)
Total	122.7 (42)	23.1 (8)	18.9 (7)	41.3 (14)	17.3 (6)	65.8 (23)	289.1 (100)
Population	238 (32)	58 (8)	38 (5)	129 (18)	45 (6)	229 (31)	737 (100)

Source: *Annual Statistical Bulletin Sarawak 1970*, p.41.

In Sarawak, one problem which has marred the implementation and monitoring of NEP achievement lies in the complication arising from the use of the term *bumiputera*.<sup>114</sup> In the West Malaysian states, where the principal *bumiputera* population comprises the Malays, the target group is clear; but with regard to the East Malaysian state of Sarawak, as well as Sabah, where the principal indigenous groups are the Dayaks and the Kadazans respectively, the interpretation of the term *bumiputera* has always been used deliberately to embrace all the indigenous groups; there has been little effort to account for their individual identity within the larger category. The development planners and policy-makers have not, or have perhaps refused to come to terms with the fact that the Muslim (Malay/Melanau) and the non-Muslim (Dayak) *bumiputeras* of Sarawak are not one and the same. Clearly, there is a need to identify different ethnic groups within the *bumiputera* category. Thus, when referring to the sharing of the benefits of development along the lines established by the NEP, a different formula has to be applied in Sarawak (as well as Sabah), where the indigenous ethnic composition is not predominantly Malay. Based on the latest population census of Sarawak, this means a distribution of the development benefits on a 4:3:1:1:1 ratio for the Iban,

<sup>114</sup> The term *bumiputera* is a post-Malaysia concept; it has arisen from the need to reclassify indigenous populations so as to include the non-Malay and non-Muslim native populations of Sarawak and Sabah, the majority of whom were pagan and Christian Dayaks and Kadazans respectively.

Malay, Bidayuh, Melanau and the Orang Ulu communities respectively.<sup>115</sup> It is only through observing the participation of the various ethnic groups based more or less on this formula that there can be a just development for all. As has been demonstrated by the employment pattern above, there is a clear need to monitor separately as best we can the development achievements of the various *bumiputera* groups in order to ensure that the progress attained by them is broadly equivalent so that development does not lead to the emergence of inter-ethnic economic cleavages.

#### **C. Measures for Increasing Bumiputera Participation**

In line with the objectives of the NEP, various institutional measures were introduced. For Sarawak, many of these were not new but they represented the revitalisation of development strategies dating back to the Colonial period, and even as far back as the Brooke regime. The measure which has had the most affect on the Ibans and which is of serious concern to the people is undoubtedly land development. Generally, some of these measures can be discussed under three broad headings, namely, rural development, manpower training and entrepreneurial development.

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<sup>115</sup> Computation based on the 1986 population census, Sarawak, Department of Statistics (1987). *Monthly Statistical Bulletin Sarawak*. Kuching: Department of Statistics Malaysia (Sarawak Branch), (December).

### 1. Rural Development

Two strategies dominated rural development in the post-independence period: they are land development and direct material assistance to farmers.<sup>116</sup> The former consisted of either resettlement, which involved the movement of a group of people to pre-selected "development areas", or *in-situ* land development, which involved developing "already settled" areas. Direct material assistance came in the form of subsidies, either in cash or in planting materials; to a large extent, these were undertaken by the Department of Agriculture. Increasingly, development allocations through the minor rural projects have contributed significantly to direct material assistance; these were implemented through the federal and state assemblymen, who used them to provide such amenities as electric generators, the erection of plankwalks, piped water supplies and, in some cases, the rebuilding of longhouses, in their respective constituencies.

The Divisional Development Committees were responsible for selecting development areas. Initially, these schemes were administered by the Department of Agriculture, but in 1968 they were taken over by the Sarawak Development Finance Corporation (SDFC), which in 1972, was reorganised into two statutory bodies; the Sarawak Land Development Board (SLDB), which took on

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<sup>116</sup> See for instance, *MP1*, op cit, p.67, and *MP2*, op cit, p.134, where the opening up of land is stressed.

responsibilities for the Corporation's agricultural programmes, and the Sarawak Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), which catered for the non-agricultural, urban-based ventures.

The history of land resettlement dates back to 1964 with the introduction of Rubber Planting Scheme B (Scheme B).<sup>117</sup> In each of the Scheme B settlements, the following provisions were given: (1) large area of block-planted rubber ranging from 800 to 3,000 acres, where each settler family would eventually be given 8 acres; (2) a mixed farming area, where each family would also get two acres; and (3) the creation of a village, where social amenities are to be provided.<sup>118</sup> By 1970, seven such schemes had been completed; they were at Triboh (First Division), Melugu and Skrang (Second Division), Meradong, Sibintek and Lambir (Third Division), and Lubai Tengah (Fifth Division).<sup>119</sup> In each of the schemes, it was intended to provide such basic social amenities as piped water, a co-operative shop, community hall, school and clinic; the total number of families estimated to be involved in the seven schemes was about 1,500. While the objectives of Scheme B may have been to "help rural communities achieve a new way of life by adopting a

<sup>117</sup> Sarawak, State Development Office (n.d.). *Sarawak Development Progress 1968-70*. Kuching: Gov't Printing Office; see also King, 1986b, op cit and (1988). "Models and Realities: Malaysian National Planning and East Malaysian Development Problems", *Modern Asian Studies*, 22(2), pp.263-98.

<sup>118</sup> *Sarawak Development Progress 1968-70*, op cit, p.18.

<sup>119</sup> *Sarawak Development Progress 1968-70*, Ibid, pp.18-19.

progressive way of earning a living", there were also other factors which were equally significant. First, there was the problem of communist insurgents, who harassed peripheral groups in order to obtain supplies of food and other provisions. Secondly, there was also the problem posed by Indonesia's confrontation with Malaysia; thus, there was the need to resettle the Ibans from the border areas of the Second Division. Thirdly, there was also the need to alleviate the problem of land shortage for the Chinese colonies which had settled the lower Rejang area, and therefore some Chinese were also included in certain schemes.<sup>120</sup> Early on, it has been mentioned that the Foochow colonies which were brought in and settled into the lower Rejang, had created a new demand for land; the colonies had then come into open confrontation with the Ibans, whose *temuda* had been taken over to open up rubber holdings.<sup>121</sup> This problem persisted into the early period of independence and was further compounded by communist insurrection and Confrontation with Indonesia.

Due to the prolonged low price of rubber, these programmes have been discontinued. In addition, settler attitudes about the programme of assistance also contributed to its failure; settlers took subsidies and loans from the government agencies, but when it came to selling their rubber, they preferred to dispose of it in

<sup>120</sup> See also King, 1986b, *op cit*.

<sup>121</sup> See Pringle, 1970, *op cit*, p.311.

outside markets where they could keep the full amount from the sale; this contrasted with selling to the appointed government agencies, where a proportion of the purchasing price would be deducted to repay the loans which had been advanced to the settlers.

In addition to the earlier schemes, several later resettlement projects have also been implemented as a result of strategic or security considerations. With regard to the Batang Ai project, King has noted that it "... is not a straightforward land settlement project implemented purely in the interests of agricultural 'modernisation'".<sup>122</sup> To some extent, this forced resettlement differs from the general approach of FELDA (Federal Land Development Authority) in West Malaysia; there participants have the option of whether or not to join the schemes and, in fact, many farmers have even resorted to lobbying for inclusion. This is because they are landless and from economically backward areas. In contrast to FELDA settlers, the Batang Ai Ibans were not landless people: in fact, they had an abundance of land held under native customary rights. They had to be resettled because their longhouses were situated at the site of a proposed hydro-electric dam.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, the

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<sup>122</sup> Victor T.King (1986a). *Planning for Agrarian Change: Hydro-Electric Power, Resettlement and Iban Swidden Cultivators in Sarawak, East Malaysia*. Occasional Paper, No.11, Centre for South East Asian Studies, University of Hull, England, p.3.

<sup>123</sup> King, 1986a, *Ibid*, and 1986b; see also Evelyn Hong (1987). *The Natives of Sarawak: Survival in Borneo's Vanishing Forests*. Pulau Pinang: Institut Masyarakat.



inevitable consequence of resettlement was to force Ibans to part with their land. Undoubtedly there are some advantages of the scheme: for example, the condition of the longhouses is better; there is electricity and treated water supplies; various agricultural projects including the cultivation of pepper, cocoa, oil palm and vegetables, and fish farming are integrated into one overall enterprise. Besides, it has also provided an opportunity for the Ibans to escape from the generally depressed socio-economic situations prevalent in the area.<sup>124</sup> However, the disadvantages seem to have outweighed the advantages. The initial Iban fear of losing their heritage was well-founded; this factor was vital in the deliberations of the majority of the Ibans there who did not favour the hydro-electric project and resettlement in the first place.<sup>125</sup> There were numerous post-resettlement problems: such as the problem of loan repayments for individual *bilik*-families; monthly rates for utilities; problems associated with land and the rapid depletion of the compensation monies; perhaps more important was the erosion of the cultural identity of the Batang Ai Ibans, who are generally "traditional" in

<sup>124</sup> King, 1986a, op cit, p.2; refer also to Jensen's study of Lemanak near Engkilili, where he examined the importance of land development schemes, (1966a). *Money for Rice. The Introduction of Settled Agriculture based on Cash Crops among the Ibans of Sarawak, Malaysia*. Copenhagen: Report for the Danish Board for Technical Cooperation with Developing Countries.

<sup>125</sup> Sarawak, Department of Museum. (1979). *Batang Ai Hydro-Electric Project. Survey on the Attitudes of the Affected People Towards the Project and Resettlement*. Kuching: Sarawak Museum, Report No.1, July; Cf. King, 1986a, op cit.

outlook and orientation and committed to longhouse domicile.<sup>126</sup> Thus, not only did the Ibans lose their customary land but the project clearly benefited outsiders more than it did them; for example, most of the electricity generated is transmitted to Kuching and is not used locally.

Other major resettlement projects among Ibans were those at Nanga Tada, Nanga Jagau and Nanga Ngungun in the Kanowit District, and in Sekuau at Oya, Sibuh (all in the Third Division). These schemes were implemented in the early 1970s due to security considerations. They were introduced in order to protect Ibans who were exposed to communist activities in the interior. However, despite repeated government claims that the communist threat has been successfully subdued (mainly through the effort of RASCOM),<sup>127</sup> there has been no change in official attitudes to allow any study or survey to be conducted there. The standard official reply to any research application has been that these resettled communities had arisen out of security needs and therefore cannot be appropriately

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<sup>126</sup> King, 1986a, Ibid, p.5; see also Kedit, 1980, op cit, p.189.

<sup>127</sup> Sarawak, Information Services (1988). *Sarawak 25 Tahun Merdeka (Sarawak 25 Years after Independence)*. Kuching: Printed by Lee Ming Press for the Malaysian Information Services (Sarawak), pp.221-22; RASCOM (Rejang Security Command) is a joint civil, police and military establishment which was formed in the early 1970s to counter the threat of the communist terrorists; according to the 1988 official estimates, there are only about 42 communist terrorists who are still active and in hiding in the interior of Sarawak.

studied through conventional methods.<sup>128</sup> Not much is known about these schemes from official publications, but through casual discussion with settlers from the areas, it seems that "normal" amenities accorded any resettlement were also provided in these projects (e.g. better-constructed longhouses, a rural clinic, community hall, cooperative shop and various types of agricultural schemes). But they differed from "normal" resettlement since all the costs of the security projects were borne by the government. Except for the failure of the schemes to generate stable incomes and alternative cash cropping activities, the problems that these security settlers have faced are, as far as I can gather from talking to them, perhaps, less acute than those in the Batang Ai. There have also been cases of Iban lands being purchased from the resettlement area, but there were no major activities planned there from which outsiders profited significantly.

With respect to land development affecting Ibans, several issues arise. In view of the pattern of development taking place in Batang Ai,<sup>129</sup> one cannot but ponder a question raised early on: Are the Ibans being short-changed in development because they are removed from the centres of power? However, while the answer to

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<sup>128</sup> Personal communication from State Department of Development, Kuching, 2 August 1989, in reply to a research application sponsored by UPM to be conducted in Sekuau and Nanga Tada.

<sup>129</sup> It is not possible to make an extensive comparison between the Batang Ai and the security schemes of Kanowit and Sibu because of the lack of data on the latter.

the question might be positive, it must also be remembered that at present there are about 17 Iban state assemblymen.<sup>130</sup> This then leads to another question: how can the assemblymen be so muted on the issue of the lack of development among their people? There are no easy answers to these questions but one thing is clear: Iban political leaders are playing safe to guard their respective positions in the party and government. But there is also the possible fear of detention, stemming from the invocation of the Internal Security Act (ISA), which can be used to detain indefinitely a person (or persons) defined to be involved in activities against the national interest. Organising an opposition to fight for a better deal for Ibans relieved of their land could easily be defined as anti-national. In this respect, it is fairly safe to say that some of the characteristically brave virtues of the traditional *raja berani* are clearly missing from some contemporary Iban political leaders, who act only when the odds are not high.

The plight of the settlers of Batang Ai is grave enough to demand a rethinking of Iban political strategy so that if, in the future, there are forced resettlements, the previous holders of land are guaranteed some long-term sustained benefits instead of immediate cash payments. Perhaps these could take the

<sup>130</sup> Up to 1987, there were 17 Iban seats in the legislative assembly; with the exception of the constituencies of Igan, Dudong, Engkilili and Tatau, which were at times held by non-Ibans, all were held by Iban assemblymen; see Table 4.13 (Appendix C).

form of a certain percentage interest in future development: this arrangement is not new especially in the commercial development of land in urban centres, where land-owners have been given some agreed upon numbers of housing units when their land is being developed into a housing estate or a commercial centre. In the case of Batang Ai, the Ibans had clearly been short-changed in the resettlement, where the benefactors of the schemes are the contractors and financiers, who have links with certain influential persons within the state and federal governments. It is clear that resettlement implemented since the early 1970s has not been generally beneficial to Ibans. Whether or not it is coincidental, these developments were implemented during the administration of Rahman and Taib, who have both been said to be unfavourably disposed to Iban problems and aspirations.

## 2. *Manpower Training and Entrepreneurial Development*

While acknowledging that rural development is important because the majority of the *bumiputeras* reside in the countryside, the government is also equally concerned about indigenous participation in the industrial sector. This is because only through expanding the economy, both rural and urban, can the objectives of wealth-sharing and proportional participation by *bumiputeras* be fully achieved. To attain these objectives, the *bumiputera* labour force, which is heavily

concentrated in the low income level of the traditional rural sector, needs to be trained in order to be able to move into the high income modern urban sector, and at the same time provided with the necessary training to gain more control of the economy. Towards these ends, programmes of manpower training and entrepreneurial development are important, because the numbers of *bumiputeras* that will emerge from them will help bridge the gap between the *bumiputera* and non-*bumiputera* groups as well as within the various *bumiputera* groups themselves.

Programmes of manpower training were facilitated by the special attention given to *bumiputera* in-takes into trade schools and institutions of higher learning. In the 1970s, there was a rapid expansion of tertiary education in order to cater for these needs. By 1975, three more universities had been created, bringing the total to five, including the University of Malaya and the University of Science. The newly established universities were: the University of Agriculture, created by the upgrading of the former Agriculture College; the University of Technology upgraded from the former National Institute of Technology; and the National University; in the mid-1980s, a sixth, the Northern University, was added.<sup>131</sup> At the college level, there are, for examples, the MARA Institute of Technology, Ungku Omar Polytechnic, Tunku Abdul Rahman College and the

<sup>131</sup> MP4, op cit, p.92.

Dusun Tua Youth Training Centre; these centres provided facilities for secondary education as well as vocational training to impart semi-skilled and skilled knowledge.<sup>132</sup>

For entrepreneurial development, institutional support was made available to the *bumiputeras* by means of banks and other institutions such as: Bank Bumiputera (established in 1965), Bank Pembangunan Malaysia (BPM), Urban Development Authority (UDA, established in 1972) and, MARA (established in 1966 from the reorganised Rural Industrial Development Authority (RIDA); these institutions provided facilities for small business loans to potential *bumiputera* businessmen. In addition to that, there is the Perbadanan Nasional (PERNAS) which began operation in 1970; among its many functions is to acquire and hold in trust capital equity for later transfer to *bumiputeras*. Furthermore, companies enjoying fiscal incentives provided by the government are also required to set aside at least 30% of their share capital for the *bumiputeras*.<sup>133</sup>

#### **D. Iban Economic Achievements since the Introduction of the NEP**

The achievements of the various ethnic groups, in particular the Ibans, can be examined from several perspectives. First, it can be evaluated from the pattern

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<sup>132</sup> MARA: Majlis Amanah Rakyat (Council for Citizen's Trust); MIT and University of Agriculture have branch campuses in Kuching and Bintulu, Sarawak, respectively, while the National University has a branch campus in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

<sup>133</sup> MP4, op cit, p.5.

of Iban labour movement from the traditional low income to the high income sector; secondly, from the incidence of poverty within the group; thirdly, from the level of educational attainment achieved. Finally, an analysis of the comparative achievement of the various ethnic groups is appropriate in order to see both the extent to which the *bumiputera*, as a category, has achieved progress vis-à-vis the non-*bumiputera*, as well as to reveal the achievements of the various components within the *bumiputera*.

1. *Pattern of Deployment of the Iban Labour Force*

The distribution of the Iban labour force in 1960 has been described earlier.<sup>134</sup> It has been found that the Ibans (and Dayaks) were concentrated in the primary (agricultural) sector, acknowledged to be of low income potential. In 1970, the Iban labour force in agriculture had increased to about 53% (or 130,000 of the state total of 246,000); this reflected a 3% increase from the 1960 figures (Table 5.17). Similarly, the Bidayuhs and the Orang Ulu had also experienced increases in agricultural labour by about 2% and 1% respectively; these increases contrasted with a decrease experienced by the Malays (minus 1%), the Melanaus (minus 4%) and the Chinese (minus 2%). Although the percentage increases for the Ibans were relatively small, nevertheless, these trends ran counter to the objective of the NEP to encourage

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<sup>134</sup> Refer to the section The New Economic Policy in this Chapter.



*bumiputeras* to move into the high income sector within the modern rural and urban centres of industry. In 1970, the secondary sector (i.e. the high income sector), was still dominated by the Chinese; 52% of its total labour force comprised Chinese and, to a lesser extent, Malays, who comprised about 28%. Although there had been some substantial increases in the numbers of *bumiputeras* in the secondary sector, the overall percentage changes had been rather small, despite the many measures that had been instituted by the government to correct these imbalances. The same adverse pattern of employment can be observed for the high income potential secondary and tertiary sectors, where the Ibans were under-represented.

Table 5.17  
Occupation by Industry and Ethnicity: 1970.

Industry	Iban In thousands	Bid. (percentage of total)	O/Ulu (percentage of total)	Malay	Mel.	Chinese	% of Total
Primary	130 (53)	27 (11)	19 (8)	30 (12)	11 (4)	29 (12)	246 (76)
Secondary	4 (8)	2 (4)	1 (2)	12 (24)	3 (6)	26 (52)	48 (15)
Tertiary	3 (10)	2 (7)	1 (3)	10 (33)	1 (3)	13 (43)	30 (9)
Total	137 (42)	31 (10)	21 (6)	52 (16)	15 (5)	68 (21)	324 (100)
Population 1970	303 (31)	84 (9)	51 (6)	181 (19)	53 (5)	294 (30)	966 (100)

Source: ASBS 1980, pp.18-19.

Table 5.18  
Occupation by Industry and Ethnicity: 1980.

Industry	Iban	Bid.	O/Ulu	Malay	Mel.	Chinese	Total
	In thousands (percentage of total)						
Primary	142 (56)	29 (11)	20 (8)	25 (10)	11 (4)	28 (11)	255 (100)
Secondary	11 (12)	4 (4)	3 (3)	21 (23)	5 (6)	46 (51)	90 (99)
Tertiary	8 (14)	4 7	2 (4)	19 (34)	2 (4)	21 (37)	56 (100)
Total	161 (40)	37 (9)	25 (6)	65 (16)	18 (4)	95 (24)	401 (99)
Population 1980	396 (31)	108 (8)	69 (5)	258 (20)	75 (6)	385 (30)	1,291 (100)

Source: ASBS 1984, pp.37-38.

Almost 10 years later, since the implementation of the NEP, there was no discernible change in the pattern of Iban labour deployment. As was the case in the 1960s and the 1970s, the Ibans continued to dominate the low income, traditional rural economic activities. In fact, the total number of Iban labour employed in agriculture continued to rise, from 120,000 (or 50% of Sarawak's total) in 1960 to 142,000 (or 56%) in 1980 (refer to Table 5.18). For the Ibans, this means that 98% of their total labour force in 1960 was engaged in agriculture, 95% in 1970 and 88% in 1980 (see Table 5.19). While the percentage of Iban labour engaged in the primary sector has decreased, it is still very high, and the total numbers have increased over the 20-year period. These patterns were also observed for the Bidayuh and the Orang Ulu communities. However, for the Malays, Melanaus and

the Chinese, their percentage decreases were also followed by real decreases in the numbers who were actually engaged in the primary sector (for example, for the Malays, the percentage decrease was from 73% in 1960 to 58% in 1970 and 38% in 1980, which was accompanied by real decreases in the numbers from 30,000 to 29,000 and 25,000 respectively, see Table 5.19). In the secondary and tertiary sectors, which have high income potential, Iban labour participation has seen a modest increase in terms of its total number, but it still lags far behind the stipulated target set by the NEP. Thus by the 1980s, the imbalances that existed between the *bumiputeras* and non-*bumiputeras* had been little altered since the introduction of the NEP. Furthermore, the imbalances between the *bumiputera* groups themselves had been exacerbated; 88% of the economically active Iban population was engaged in the low income agricultural sector compared to 61% Melanaus, 38% Malays and 29% Chinese. In the high income potential sector, which required semi-skilled, skilled and professional knowledge, Iban participation has been generally low compared to the Melanaus, Malays and the Chinese. By the 1980s, only 7% of their labour force was engaged in the secondary sector, while another 8% was employed in the tertiary sector compared to the Melanaus, whose percentages were 28% and 11%, the Malays, 32% and 29%, and the Chinese, 48% and 22%, respectively.

Table 5.19  
 Percentage of Labour Force  
 by Ethnicity and Sector: 1960-1980.

Industry		Iban	Bid. O/Ulu	Malay	Mel.	Chinese		
		In thousands (in percentage)						
Pri.	'60	120	22	17	30	15	34	
		(98)	(96)	(89)	(73)	(88)	(51)	
	'70	130	27	18	29	11	29	
		(95)	(87)	(90)	(58)	(73)	(43)	
	'80	141	29	20	25	11	28	
		(88)	(78)	(80)	(38)	(61)	(29)	
	Sec.	'60	1	0.3	1	6	1	12
			(1)	(1)	(5)	(15)	(6)	(18)
		'70	4	2	1	12	3	26
(3)			(6)	(5)	(23)	(20)	(38)	
'80		11	4	3	21	5	46	
		(7)	(11)	(12)	(32)	(28)	(48)	
Tert		'60	2	1	1	5	1	20
			(1)	(3)	(5)	(12)	(6)	(30)
		'70	3	2	1	10	1	13
	(2)		(6)	(5)	(19)	(7)	(19)	
	'80	8	4	2	19	2	21	
		(5)	(11)	(8)	(29)	(11)	(22)	
	All	'60	123	23	19	41	17	66
			(100)	(100)	(99)	(100)	(100)	(99)
		'70	137	31	21	52	15	68
(100)			(99)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	
'80		161	37	25	65	18	95	
		(100)	(100)	(100)	(99)	(100)	(99)	

Source: Tables 5.16, 5.17 and 5.18.

Note: All figures rounded to the nearest hundred, therefore percentage total may not add up.

Using the most recent statistical data,<sup>135</sup> employment opportunities for each ethnic community cannot be ascertained because of the way in which the various ethnic communities are categorised. While data for the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s reported labour participation by each ethnic community so that the *bumiputera* category was consistently subdivided, the 1988 data reclassified the various indigenous groups, sometimes, into "Dayak" and "Malay/Melanau", and at other times into "Bumiputeras", which includes all the indigenous populations. If the trend to simplify ethnic classification persists, the task of analysing ethnic development will be rendered particularly problematic. In the most recent publication of the *ASBS 1988*, classifications such as "Dayak" (including the Ibans, Bidayuhs and the Orang Ulu), "Malay/Melanau" and "Chinese" are used. In the same issue, an oversimplified classification such as "Bumiputera" (comprising all indigenes) and "Chinese" is also used.<sup>136</sup>

Table 5.20 below illustrates the nominal value of such simplified data. While they highlight the plight of an under-qualified *bumiputera* labour force (where, in 1982, 46% of the total *bumiputera* labour force had no formal education and 36% in 1986), the data did not reveal the proportion for each indigenous ethnic group.

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<sup>135</sup> *ASBS 1988*, op cit.

<sup>136</sup> Refer for examples to the labour force statistics (p.136) and the education statistics (p.213), *ASBS 1988*, Ibid.

With such an oversimplification of ethnic classification, a government, which discriminates against one or more ethnic groups, can easily deflect criticism as long as the group can be said to be included and favoured within the larger *bumiputera* category.

Table 5.20  
Percentage Distribution of Labour Force  
by Education and Ethnicity.

Education	<i>Bumiputera</i>			Chinese		
	1982	1984	1986	1982	1984	1986
No education	45.8	39.8	36.9	8.1	6.1	5.6
Primary	32.7	32.5	31.7	42.0	38.8	35.9
Lower secondary	12.9	17.0	18.3	22.1	26.3	27.2
Upper secondary	6.3	8.2	10.2	20.7	22.0	23.2
Sixth Former	0.4	0.8	1.0	2.2	2.5	3.1
College/University	1.9	1.7	2.0	4.8	4.4	5.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ASBS 1988, 1989, p.137.

## 2. Pattern of Educational Development among the Iban

In 1958, there were 20,847 Dayak pupils in the primary and secondary levels, comprising Ibans, Bidayuhs, Orang Ulu and Melanaus (see Table 5.21). From this figure, it is not known how many were from the respective communities that comprised the Dayak category. For the Dayaks, making up about 51% of Sarawak's total population, the number of students at 20,847, which was about 23.1% of the total pupil population then, was

discernibly low compared to the Malays, who constituted 17% of the population and whose student population comprised 15.1% of the total. The largest student population of 61% came from the Chinese community, which then constituted about 31% of the total population.

The differences in educational attainment between the three main communities can be attributed to three factors. First, the low educational position of the Dayaks is historical and it can be directly linked to Brooke rule, which had encouraged limited education among the Malays and the Chinese but had, to a large extent, neglected the Dayaks. The educational opportunities that were available to the latter in the remote interior were provided by Mission schools, which operated on marginal budgets, while the Brookes concentrated educational provision among urban, Kuching-centred Malays. The Chinese, being the more prosperous population, were able to provide financial support for the establishment of Chinese private schools; partly this arose from the consciousness of the importance of education and partly from the need to maintain their traditions and cultural links with their homeland. Secondly, the educational neglect of the Dayaks can be attributed to the limited financial capabilities of the Colonial government to provide universal education in Sarawak. Like the Brookes, the Colonial government was forced to confine educational development to urban and more accessible outstation centres. The limited participation of the Dayak

population in education at this time also reflected the limited abilities of the Colonial government, whose main task had been the reconstruction and, when finances permitted, the development of areas within easy reach of Kuching and some outstations. Thirdly, perhaps due to their long neglect under the Brookes, there was a general lukewarm Iban attitude to education; returns from it were not perceived to be immediate compared with expanding their efforts in farming, hunting and gathering. But, even where there was Iban interest in education, those of the interior had to provide for the basic facilities for the establishment of rural primary schools in their respective areas. The locals would normally be required to provide labour for the construction of the school buildings and teachers' quarters in order to stretch the meagre state allocations for rural primary schools. These schools were administered by Committees under the charge of Local Authorities.



Table 5.21  
Number of Pupils by Ethnicity: 1958.

Ethnic	No. Pupil	Percentage of: Pupil Pop.	of: of Pop.	Pop ('60) ( '000)+*
Dayaks*	+20,847	23.1	6.5	379 51%
Malay	**13,605	15.1	11.5	129 17%
Chinese	++55,816	61.8	28.2	229 31%

Source: *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1958*, p.188.

- Notes: +\* -Figures rounded to nearest thousand.  
 \* -The Sarawak Annual Report, as with all previous issues, classified Dayak to include Ibans, Bidayuhs, Orang Ulu, and Melanaus.  
 + -20,357 in primary and 490 in secondary.  
 \*\* -13,122 in primary and 483 in secondary.  
 ++ -48,155 in primary and 7,661 in secondary.

Table 5.22  
Number of Pupil Population by Ethnicity: 1962.

Ethnic	No. Pupil	School Age Pop	% School Age Pop	Pop ('60) '000 (%)*
Dayak	**32,453	107,688	30	379 (51)
Malay	+16,658	39,030	43	129 (17)
Chinese	++64,514	83,206	78	229 (31)

Source: Sarawak, Colonial Government (1963). *Colonial Annual Reports on Sarawak for the Year 1962*. Kuching: Gov't Printing Office.

- Notes: \* -Figures rounded to nearest thousand.  
 \*\* -31,072 in primary and 1,381 in secondary.  
 + -15,330 in primary and 1,328 in secondary.  
 ++ -52,637 in primary and 11,877 in secondary.

In 1962, there had been some improvement in student enrolment among the Dayaks. The Dayak percentage of the school age population in school was about 30%, reflecting a percentage increase of about 7% from 1958 (see Table 5.22). The biggest improvement in student enrolment was experienced by the Malay community, which had more than doubled its percentage (from 15.1% in 1958 to 43% in 1962). Overall, the enrolment of 32,453 Dayak pupils represented about 29% of the total student population; the Malays (16,658) about 15% and the Chinese (65,514) about 57%.

The imbalance in educational attainment between the ethnic groups during the 1950s and 1960s continued into the 1980s. This is evidenced from changes in the total numbers of enrolments by ethnic group and in changes of enrolment by level of education completed.<sup>137</sup> At the primary level, Iban students comprised 13% of the total school population in 1970 and 18% in 1980.<sup>138</sup> (See Tables 5.35 and 5.36 [Appendix C] for the numbers of enrolment for 1970 and 1980 respectively). In terms of total enrolment for the state, the 5% overall increase for the Iban community (from 13% [or 8,400] in 1970 to 18% [or 29,000] in 1980) reflected a 245% increase in enrolment among the Iban student population (see Table 5.23). This

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<sup>137</sup> But the 1958 and 1962 figures cannot be compared with the 1970s and 1980s because there was no breakdown by ethnicity within the Dayak group in 1958 and 1962.

<sup>138</sup> From the 1960s, the Dayak figures were broken down by ethnicity--i.e. Ibans, Bidayuhs, Orang Ulu and Melanaus.

increase meant that in 1980, their numbers were more than double those of the 1970s. The second biggest increase was recorded by the Orang Ulu, 200%, followed by the Melanaus, 179%, the Bidayus, 164%, the Malays 154% and the Chinese 125% (Table 5.23). Although the increases seemed to favour the Ibans and the other natives, the big increases came from a small base and there was not much change in terms of the overall percentages of students from each ethnic group in relation to Sarawak's total primary school population. For example, the Ibans, whose student population was about 13% in 1970 was about 18% in 1980; the Malays, 21%, which remained constant over the 1970s and 1980s; and the Chinese, 40% in the 1970s and 43% in the 1980s.

Table 5.23  
Percentage Changes in Student  
Attendance by Ethnicity: 1970-1980.

Level		Iban % Variations*	Bid. Variations*	O/Ulu / (% Increase)+	Malay Increase)+	Mel.	Chinese
Primary	*	+5	0	+4	0	0	+3
	+	(245)	(164)	(200)	(154)	(179)	(125)
L.Sec.	*	+5	+1.6	+2	+10	+2	-19
	+	(256)	(300)	(400)	(270)	(220)	(64)
U.Sec.	*	+4	+2	+2	+8	+2	-15
	+	(650)	(750)	(1185)	(725)	(1011)	(294)
H.S.C.	*	+3	+1	+1	+12	+1	-7
	+	(233)	(233)	(600)	(400)	(600)	(830)

Source: See Tables 5.35 and 5.36 (Appendix C).

Notes: \* -Percentage variation between 1970 and 1980.  
+ -Overall percentage increase.

As in the 1950s and 1960s, educational development continued to be dominated by the Chinese and the Malays. In terms of the goal of balanced development between the various ethnic groups, the Malays, who constituted about 20% of the population, can be said to have attained their rightful proportion, when in 1980, Malay students comprised 21.7% of Sarawak's total student population (refer to Table 5.36 [Appendix C]). The same can also be said of the Melanau and the Chinese community, whose educational attainment closely approximated their total populations. Six per cent of all students who completed all levels of education were Melanaus, whose population was about 6%, while another 30% were Chinese, who comprised about 30% of the population. However, this favourable pattern was not observed for the Orang Ulu, Bidayuhs and especially the Ibans, who constituted about 5%, 8% and 30% of the state population respectively. Iban students, who had completed all levels of education, constituted 16.7% of the total student population; for the Orang Ulu and the Bidayuhs, they were 3.6% and 7.1%, respectively.

Chinese and Malay domination in education was not just confined to the higher proportion of their school populations, but also extended to higher education. Although the percentage distribution of student populations at all levels of education was about equal for all ethnic groups, nevertheless Chinese and Malay dominance can also be found in the higher numbers and

percentages of students who actually completed each level. For example, the percentage of Iban students who completed primary education was 77% compared to the Malays at about 66% and the Chinese 67%; but in real terms, Iban students constituted only 18% of the total numbers of all students who completed primary six; the Malays and Chinese were about 21% and 44% respectively (Table 5.24). Similarly, in the Lower and Upper Secondary, and Higher School Certificate levels, the percentage distributions of students between different ethnic groups were about equal. But in real terms the distribution favoured the Chinese and the Malay communities. In 1980, Iban students constituted only about 6% (or 200) of the total numbers of student who completed the higher school certificate level compared to the Malays at about 16% (or 500) and the Chinese at about 70% (2,200) (Table 5.24). In 1980, of the 3,878 Sarawakians who had degrees, 0.3% (or 11) were Ibans, 1.4% (55) Bidayuhs, 0.9% (36) Orang Ulu, 10.1% (393) Malays, 1.4% (56) Melanaus, 56.3% (2,183) Chinese, and 24.6% (955) others.

Table 5.24  
 Student Population  
 by Level of Education and Ethnicity: 1980.

Level	Iban In thousands	Bid. In thousands	O/Ulu (as % between & within group)	Malay	Mel.	Chinese	Total*
Primary	29.0 (18) [77]	11.9 (8) [74]	6.0 (4) [73]	33.0 (21) 66	9.5 (6) [78]	69.5 (44) [67]	158.9 (101) n.a.
L.Sec.	5.7 (17) [15]	2.4 (7) [15]	1.2 (4) [15]	9.7 (29) [19]	1.6 (5) [13]	12.5 (38) [12]	33.1 (100) -
U.Sec.	3.0 (9) [8]	1.7 (5) [11]	0.9 (3) [11]	6.6 (20) [13]	1.0 (3) [8]	20.1 (60) [19]	33.3 (100) -
H.S.C.	0.2 (6) [0.5]	0.1 (3) [1]	0.07 (2) [1]	0.5 (16) [1]	0.07 (2) [0.5]	2.2 (70) [2]	3.14 (99) -
Total+	37.9 (17) [100]	16.1 (7) [101]	8.2 (4) [100]	49.8 (22) [99]	12.2 (5) [100]	104.3 (47) [100]	228.5 (100) -

Source: *Population and Housing Census of Malaysia 1980: State Population Report Sarawak, October 1983, pp.502-97.*

Notes:\* -State total. () -distribution between ethnics.  
 + -Ethnic total. [] -distribution within ethnic.  
 -Due to rounding, percentage may not equal 100.

Unlike the statistical data for the past periods, the 1988 data did not provide figures for each indigenous group. Instead, the education figures for 1988 only gave three categories: Dayak, Malay/Melanau and Chinese. In order to present a consistent picture of educational advancement, the 1970s and the 1980s figures were retabulated in terms of the ethnic classifications used in the ASBS 1988 and are presented in Table 5.25 (where the figures for the Ibans, Bidayus and Orang Ulu are

regrouped under Dayak and the Malays and Melanaus under Malay/Melanau). From Table 5.25 it seems that equitable proportions of the student population to their total population size had been achieved by 1988. But again there is no way of retabulating the 1988 figures for each ethnic group and therefore, it is impossible to detail the educational advancement of the Ibans, vis-à-vis the Malay and the Chinese community. This lack of information by ethnicity in the 1988 figures caused particular problem in comparing relative performance by ethnicity. This statistical deficiency is particularly disturbing since Ibans are always claiming that they are lagging behind in development, including in education. Now, whether or not the lack of such details is a deliberate manipulation of the statistical data is left to one's imagination. Nevertheless, these figures only represent educational achievement; the real test is the extent to which increasing education can improve the developmental benefits for those who have access to it. The high 1988 figure for Dayak participation in education may also be partly explained by the Bidayuh component, which is essentially a semi-pasar community found mainly in the Kuching division. Bidayuh access to the Capital, and the fact that the community has easier access to the main towns of Serian, Tebakang, Sri Aman and Kuching may have had an effect in raising the Dayak participation rate overall.

Although the educational statistics lack details in term of ethnicity, it does not mean that an overall picture of development with regard to education cannot be determined. For instance, while the total numbers of Ibans who have acquired some formal education may have tripled over the 1970-80 period and their intakes to universities may have also increased, their participation, for instance, in government civil services has not been encouraging. Although there are a number of Ibans who found employment in government, very few actually head any important government or statutory body.<sup>139</sup> Again, the overriding consideration of development is the ethnic participation by their respective population proportions. For example, although the intake of Iban or Dayak students into local universities has generally increased, their numbers in relation to the overall intake of Sarawak students continued to lag behind those of the Malays/Melanaus.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> For example, to a large extent, the ethnic composition of the Sarawak civil services can be determined from the Telephone Directory, which lists heads of government and statutory bodies; in 1984, based on the above method, I made an observation that there were only a handful of Dayaks (Ibans, Bidayuhs and Orang Ulu) who head either government or statutory bodies; see, Jawan, 1984b, op cit.

<sup>140</sup> This is based on personal observation and working with the Sarawak Student Association of the Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, where I was a member of the Association's Advisory Board from 1983-89.



Table 5.25

Pupil Population by Ethnicity: 1970, 1980 and 1988.

Year	Level	Dayak		Mal/Mel		Chinese		Total	
		'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
70	Pri.	14.9	24	16.4	26	30.9	50	62.2	100
	Sec.	3.5	16	4.1	19	13.9	65	21.5	100
	All	18.4	22	20.5	25	44.8	53	83.7	100
	Pop.	438.0	45	234.0	24	229.0	30	901.0	98
80	Pri.	46.9	30	42.5	27	69.5	44	158.9	101
	Sec.	15.3	22	19.0	27	34.8	50	69.1	99
	All	62.2	27	61.5	27	104.3	46	228.0	100
	Pop.	573.0	43	333.0	25	385.0	30	1291.0	99
88	Pri.	92.6	43	63.1	29	62.0	29	217.7	101
	Sec.	48.6	40	32.3	27	40.7	34	121.6	101
	All	141.2	42	95.4	28	102.7	30	339.3	100
	Pop.	690.0	44	422.0	27	463.0	29	1575.0	100

Sources: *Population and Housing Census of Malaysia 1970*, Vol.I, Part XIII, pp.132-55; *Population and Housing Census of Malaysia 1980: State Population Report Sarawak*, pp.502-96; and *ASBS 1988*, pp.9 & 213.

Despite gradual improvement in the educational fields, the literacy rates of the various ethnic groups do vary. From Table 5.26 it can be seen that all the Dayak groups had literacy scores below the state average of 55%. Of all ethnic groups, the Ibans had the lowest level of 35% in 1980. The literacy pattern in Table 5.26 correlates with the overall pattern of educational development, that is, low educational attainment coincides with a low level of literacy.

Table 5.26  
Literacy Rates by Ethnicity: 1947-1980  
(Pop.: Age 10 and Over).

Ethnic	Percentage of Pop. Literate			
	1947	1960	1970	1980
Iban	3	7	20	35
Dayak	8	11	27	45
Orang Ulu	3	11	28	45
Malay	18	25	43	62
Melanau	10	18	31	52
Chinese	42	53	60	74
All group	17	25	38	55

Source: Cited from J.K.T.Khoo, *Sarawak Gazette*, Vol.CX, Nos.1485 & 1491, 1984 & 1985.

### 3. *The Question of Poverty*

The problem of poverty has long perplexed scholars. The controversy centres around operationalising and conceptualising what it is precisely and what indices to use to measure and define it. Incorporating non-economic variables, such as quality of life criteria further

compounds the problem of quantification.<sup>141</sup> Despite dissension there has been a general consensus among observers that there is indeed a problem to be tackled. It has been recognised that the problem of poverty is multi-dimensional and cross-cuts several disciplines and many studies have attempted to quantify indices of poverty in monetary terms.<sup>142</sup>

In Malaysia, and in the state of Sarawak in particular, the study of poverty is not only made difficult by the problem of deciding on and quantifying indices but also by the sheer lack of reliable data. This sentiment was also early on expressed by Cheong and Fredericks, and Salih for Peninsular Malaysia.<sup>143</sup> Similar difficulty has also been more recently observed for Sarawak; King has stated that "there is little hard-and-fast information on poverty in the state"; he further lamented that as late as 1976 and well into the Third

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<sup>141</sup> K.C. Cheong and L.J. Fredericks (1977), "Theory and Measurement of Poverty: Tentative Views on an Amorphous Topic", in B.A.R. Mokhzani and Khoo Siew Mun (1977). *Some Case Studies on Poverty in Malaysia: Essays Presented to Professor Ungku A.Aziz*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Ekonomi Malaysia, pp.3-21.

<sup>142</sup> See for instance: Mckinley L. Blackburn (1990). "Trends in Poverty in the United States, 1967-84", *Review of Income and Wealth*, 36(1), (1 March), pp.53-66.

<sup>143</sup> Cheong and Fredericks, 1977, op cit; Kamal Salih (1977), "Unbalanced Growth and Persistent Poverty: the Consequences of Unequal Access in Urban and Rural Development" in B.A.R. Mokhzani and Khoo Siew Mun (eds). *Some Case Studies on Poverty in Malaysia: Essays Presented to Professor Ungku A.Aziz*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Ekonomi Malaysia, pp.22-40.

Malaysia Plan period, concrete poverty figures for Sarawak were still not available.<sup>144</sup>

In Malaysia, official discussions about poverty mainly focus on identifying a minimum income level by which family units need to survive. Families below this line are considered to be in poverty. While the determination of the poverty line is arbitrary, it also takes into account non-economic variables such as 'education; environmental quality; health; housing; income distribution;<sup>145</sup> population; public safety; and quality of working life": in short, "a condition necessary to acquire basic needs".<sup>146</sup> Despite acknowledging the importance of "quality of life" and "basic needs" in the computation of minimum income, there is still disagreement on what these criteria properly should constitute and how they should be measured. These disagreements are underscored in King's argument:

... insufficiency and basic needs cannot properly be established in absolute terms, and though in Malaysia the majority of people have food, clothing and housing, these are not

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<sup>44</sup> King, 1986b, op cit; this observation has not changed since King reported on it; in fact, statistics in the recently published *ASBS 1988* do not provide information for the study of poverty, and the results of the 1990 census are not expected to be published for sometime.

<sup>45</sup> Malaysia, Treasury. (1974, 1975 & 1976). *Economic Report*. Kuala Lumpur: Treasury, cf. from Cheong and Fredericks, 1977, op cit.

<sup>46</sup> Syed Husin Ali (1983). *Poverty and Landlessness in Kelantan, Malaysia*. Bielefeld Studies on the Sociology of Development, Vol.20., Saarbrucken/Fort Lauderdale, Verlag Breitenbach Publisher, cf. King, 1986b, op cit.

always adequate in terms of average levels of provision and general social expectations in the country.<sup>147</sup>

Furthermore, frequent changes are made in the elements (and their definition) which go to make up a minimum acceptable sufficiency.<sup>148</sup> For instance, Husin Ali referred to M\$25 per capita, or M\$150 for a family of six members;<sup>149</sup> Young, Bussink and Wing refer to a poverty line of M\$180 per household at 1970 prices,<sup>150</sup> while Salleh and Osman stated that, in the late 1970s, it was about M\$246.<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, King again remarks about Sarawak's and more generally Malaysia's data:

... we cannot be absolutely certain of any of these figures. Even the poverty lines which I have referred to may be wrong. They do not coincide between different sources, and the criteria used to establish them may well differ.<sup>152</sup>

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147 King, 1986b, op cit.

148 For an example of how different methods and models used in poverty line computation can give different poverty levels, see: Blackburn, 1990, op cit.

149 His figures were taken from the Government of Malaysia Treasury, Economic Report for 1974-75; cf. King, 1986b, op cit; see also Husin Ali, 1983, op cit.

150 Kevin Young, William C.F. Bussink and K.F. Wong. (1980). *Malaysia: Growth and Equity in a Multiracial Society*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, World Bank Country Economic Reports.

151 M. Zainudin Salleh and Zulkifly Osman. (1982). "The Economic Structure", in E.K. Fisk and H. Osman Rani (eds). *The Political Economy of Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp.125-47.

152 See King, 1986b, op cit, commenting on the several measurements he was trying to disentangle among the many cited by different scholars.

Poverty is one of the major concerns of the Malaysian government and it is acknowledged to be particularly associated with the rural population and the traditional low income agricultural sector.<sup>153</sup> Thus, the New Economic Policy emphasised the importance of rural development.<sup>154</sup> Yet despite these efforts over 20 years, poverty still looms large.<sup>155</sup> Although the poverty rate is reported to have decreased over the years, its incidence is still very high among rural dwellers. Table 5.27a, b and c provide data for Peninsular Malaysia for 1970, 1975 and 1980 respectively. Although the incidence of poverty had declined to about 49.3% in 1970, its occurrence was highest among rubber smallholders (28.6% [or 64,700] of the total poor households), followed by planters of other agricultural crops (16.0%) and padi farmers (15.6%). Of the 791,800 poor households, 89.2% were rural (Table 5.27a sub-total in Column IV). In 1975, the situation had not changed very much; the overall incidence had dropped to about 43.9%, which reflected a net annual reduction of about 1.1%; but the rural share of poor households was still high at about 87.4%, just 0.8% below the 1970 rate, representing an annual reduction of a mere 0.16% for the 1970-75 period. The problem of rural poverty continued to be a major concern

<sup>153</sup> Employment patterns have been discussed in the earlier part of the Chapter.

<sup>154</sup> Refer to the various Malaysia Plans discussed earlier.

<sup>155</sup> It is the intention of the government to bring down poverty rates for Peninsular Malaysia to about 16.7% by 1990; no specific target was set for Sarawak (and Sabah); see *MP4*, op cit, p.32.

even by 1980 when the rural poor still constituted about 85.3% of the total poor households, even though the overall rate for Peninsular Malaysia had dropped to 29.2%, representing an annual reduction of about 4.0% for the 1975-80 period (Table 5.27c).

Table 5.27a  
Incidence of Poverty - West Malaysia: 1970.

Strata	Total households	Total poor*	Rate of poverty+	Percentage among poor
<u>Rural:</u>				
Agriculture	852.9	582.4	68.3	73.6
Rubber	350.0	226.4	64.7	28.6
Oil Palm	6.6	2.0	30.3	0.3
Coconut	32.0	16.9	52.8	2.1
Padi	140.0	123.4	88.1	15.6
Other agri.	137.5	126.2	91.8	16.0
Fishing	38.4	28.1	73.2	3.5
Estate	148.4	59.4	40.0	7.5
Other Industries	350.5	123.5	35.2	15.6
Sub-total (A)	1,203.4	705.9	58.7	89.2
<u>Urban:</u>				
Mining	5.4	1.8	33.3	0.2
Manufacturing	84.0	19.7	23.5	2.5
Construction	19.5	5.9	30.2	0.7
Transport/Utilities	42.4	13.1	30.9	1.7
Trade/Services	251.3	45.4	18.1	5.7
Sub-total (B)	402.6	85.9	21.3	10.8
Grand Total (A+B)	1,606.0	791.8	49.3	100.0

Source: MP4, Table 3-2, p.34.

Notes: \* -Total poor households.  
+ -Incidence of poverty.

Table 5.27b  
Incidence of Poverty - West Malaysia: 1975.

Strata	Total households	Total poor	Rate of poverty	Percentage among poor
<u>Rural:</u>				
Agriculture	915.1	576.5	63.0	69.0
Rubber	396.3	233.8	59.0	28.0
Oil Palm	9.9	0.9	9.1	0.1
Coconut	34.4	17.5	50.9	2.1
Padi	148.5	114.3	77.0	13.7
Other agri.	157.4	124.1	78.8	14.9
Fishing	41.6	26.2	63.0	3.1
Estate	127.0	59.7	47.0	7.1
Other Industries	433.3	153.4	35.4	18.4
Sub-total (A)	1348.4	729.9	54.1	87.4
<u>Urban:</u>				
Mining	5.3	2.0	37.7	0.2
Manufacturing	120.4	21.0	17.4	2.5
Construction	25.5	6.1	23.9	0.7
Transport/Utilities	64.4	13.8	21.4	1.7
Trade/Services	337.4	62.3	18.5	7.5
Sub-total (B)	553.0	105.2	19.0	12.6
Grand Total (A+B)	1,901.4	835.1	43.9	100.0

Source: MP4, Table 3-2, p.34.



Table 5.27c  
Incidence of Poverty - West Malaysia: 1980.

Strata	Total households	Total poor	Rate of poverty	Percentage among poor
<u>Rural:</u>				
Agriculture	963.2	443.7	46.1	66.6
Rubber	425.9	175.9	41.3	26.4
Oil Palm	24.6	1.9	7.7	0.3
Coconut	34.2	13.3	38.9	2.0
Padi	151.0	83.2	55.1	12.5
Other agri.	172.2	110.5	64.1	16.6
Fishing	42.8	19.4	45.3	2.9
Estate	112.5	39.5	35.1	5.9
Other Industries	546.4	124.8	22.8	18.7
Sub-total (A)	1,509.6	568.5	37.7	85.3
<u>Urban:</u>				
Mining	5.4	1.8	33.0	0.3
Manufacturing	182.3	24.4	13.4	3.7
Construction	34.0	5.9	17.4	0.9
Transport/Utilities	84.0	16.3	19.2	2.4
Trade/Services	467.7	49.2	10.5	7.4
Sub-total (B)	774.4	97.6	12.6	14.7
Grand Total (A+B)	2,284.0	666.1	29.2	100.0

Source: MP4, Table 3-2, p.34.

While Peninsular Malaysia has shown some promising trends over the 1970-80 period, the same cannot be said of Sarawak. Until 1976, poverty rates for the state were not available.<sup>156</sup> Figures for 1976 then became available in 1977 (see Table 5.28). From a total of about 207,100 households, 107,100 (or 51.7%) were poor; this represented the third highest incidence of poverty among the thirteen states of Malaysia surpassed only by

<sup>156</sup> MP4, Ibid, p.43.

Kelantan (59.21%) and Kedah (55.1%).<sup>157</sup> Of the 107,100 poor households, about 100,700 (or an overwhelming 94%) were rural dwellers and 6,400 (or 6%) urban.<sup>158</sup>

Table 5.28  
Incidence of Poverty - Sarawak: 1976..

Strata	Total households	Total poor*	Rate of poverty*	Percentage among poor+
Rural	167.8	100.7	60.0	12.8
Urban	39.3	6.4	16.3	6.8
Total	207.1	107.1	51.7	12.2

Source: MP4 1981-1985, Table 3-2, p. 34.

Notes: \* Incidence (in the state). + % (in Malaysia).

Clearly the high level of rural poverty corresponds to its high incidence among the indigenous groups because the majority of them are found in the rural areas. For example, in 1976, indigenous Malay households constituted about 75.5% (519,400) of the total poor households in West Malaysia; of the 519,400, about 93% (483,100) were rural Malays.<sup>159</sup> A similar case can also be observed in Sarawak. Table 5.29 presents the incidence of poverty by ethnicity. In 1976, the highest incidence occurred among

<sup>157</sup> See Table 3-4, MP4, Ibid, p.44.

<sup>158</sup> Calculation:  
(100,700/107,100) X 100 = 94.02; and  
(6,400/107,000) X 100 = 5.98.

<sup>159</sup> In 1976, the total poor households for West Malaysia was about 688,300; 606,300 (88.09%) comprised rural and 82,000 (11.96%) urban dwellers; see MP4, op cit, pp.46-48.

the Ibans.<sup>160</sup> Of the 107,100 total poor households in Sarawak, 48,500 (45.3%) were Ibans and of the 48,500, rural Ibans constituted about 47,600 (98.1%).<sup>161</sup> The corresponding percentages for other groups, in descending order, were as follows: Orang Ulu, almost all poor came from the rural areas; Bidayuh, 99.2%; Melanaus, 96.2%; Malays, 93.3%; and Chinese, 74.7%.<sup>162</sup>

Table 5.29  
Sarawak: Incidence of Poverty by Ethnicity: 1976.

Ethnicity	Rural		Urban		Total	
	I '000	II %	I '000	II %	I '000	II %
Iban	47.6	47.3	0.9	13.9	48.5	45.3
Bidayuh	12.0	11.9	0.1	0.8	12.1	11.3
Orang Ulu	4.1	4.0	-	0.3	4.1	3.8
Malay	18.2	18.1	1.3	21.0	19.5	18.2
Melanau	7.5	7.4	0.3	4.7	7.8	7.3
Chinese	11.3	11.2	3.7	58.5	15.0	14.0
Others	-	0.1	0.1	0.8	0.1	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>107.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Distribution+</b>	<b>94.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: MP4, Table 3-2, p.34.

Key: I -Total poor households. II -Percentage among poor.

Note: + -Percentage distribution within the total.

While the rural poverty rate may have been low at 39.3% in 1982, nearly a half (48.7%) of the Ibans and

<sup>160</sup> In 1960, about 99.1% Ibans lived in rural areas; in 1970, it was 97.7% and in 1980 95.2%; see Chapter 4, Table 4.8.

<sup>161</sup> Calculation: (Rural poor/Total poor) X 100 gives the percentage of rural poor; figures from Table 5.29.

<sup>162</sup> Calculation: (Rural poor/Total poor) X 100; figures from Table 5.29.

more than a half (64.9%) of the Bidayuhs were poor.<sup>163</sup> Except for some minimal changes among the Iban, Malay and Melanau groups, there had been some noticeable changes in the rates of poverty among the Bidayuhs, Orang Ulu and Chinese. For the Chinese, there was a reduction from about 14% in 1976 to about 8.5% in 1982. However, for Bidayuhs and the Orang Ulu, there had been an alarming increase from 11.3% and 3.8% in 1976 to about 64.9% and 17.9% in 1982 respectively.<sup>164</sup>

Having described the general trends in poverty incidence, it is only appropriate to review some studies that have been conducted on poverty among the Ibans. Several of these have focused on self-sufficiency in padi as one way of identifying poor households. For example, a study by Cramb in 1977, found that only about 20% of his sample Iban households in the Batang Ai region were self-sufficient in rice; generally, the sample households met only about one-third of their annual rice needs.<sup>165</sup> In another study, Cramb and Dian found an acute shortage of rice among Ibans of the long-settled areas of Engkilili, Lubok Antu, Nanga Spak and Julau.<sup>166</sup> Sidu's survey

<sup>163</sup> Rates of poverty among the various Sarawak ethnic groups were as follows: Ibans--48.7%; Bidayuhs--64.9%; Orang Ulu--17.9%; Malays--22.1%; Melanaus--18.2%; and Chinese--8.5%; see *Mid-Term Review of MP4*, op cit, p.90.

<sup>164</sup> No explanations have been found for such a big increase for the Bidayuhs and Orang Ulu; more recent figures are not yet available.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. King, 1986b, op cit; see also R.A.Cramb and J.Dian (1979). *A Preliminary Social and Economic Survey of the National Extension Project in Sarawak: Summary and Conclusions*. Kuching: Department of Agriculture, Planning Division, Report No.4.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. King, 1986b, op cit.

revealed that the Mujong-Baleh Ibans met only about one-third of their annual rice needs.<sup>167</sup> Although the conclusions of these studies point to the fact that there are general deficiencies in rice, they do not put a dollar value on them; measurements are given in terms of rice. For instance, in the Batang Ai, the average yield of dry rice was about 50 gallons in the 1976-77 season,<sup>168</sup> while that of the Julau and Kanowit Districts of the lower Rejang was slightly under 100 gallons in the 1977 season.<sup>169</sup>

As I have already said, there are some problems in fixing dollar values to calculate a poverty line. Among the Iban households, these problems are even more complex. For instance, there is the difficulty of unreported incomes, especially remittances from members of the *bilik*-family who are on *bejalai*, and occasional income from irregular fishing or hunting trips and from other agricultural activities. Thus, although households may not be self-sufficient in rice production, these deficiencies may be made up by these occasional "off season" incomes. Yet despite these, the Ibans are still relatively poor.

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<sup>167</sup> Cf. King, 1986b, *Ibid*; see also Jirum Sidu (1981). *A Socio-economic Survey of the Mujong-Baleh Area in Kapit District, Seventh Division*. Kuching: Department of Agriculture, Planning Division, Report No.5.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. King, 1986b, *op cit*.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. King, 1986b, *op cit*; see also R.A.Cramb (1979a). *A Social and Economic Survey of the Julau Extension Region*. Kuching: Department of Agriculture, Planning Division, Report No.3.

The pattern of poverty among the Ibans correlates with the pattern of employment and education discussed above. While the problems of measurement continue to hamper the proper monitoring of these patterns, I would argue that the Iban level of education must first be raised. Only through the acquiring of skills and qualifications can Ibans begin to move from the traditional low income sector into the more prosperous ones in order to escape the cycle of poverty.

#### **V. Conclusion**

For almost a hundred years of Brooke rule, the longhouse way of life of the Ibans remained very much intact. The only tradition that changed dramatically was Iban warfaring and headhunting, which was banned by the Rajahs. The Brooke policy of "divide and rule" coupled with their romantic perpetuation of the "Ibans primitive environment" alienated the latter. They were left to carry on with their traditional lifestyles of hunting, fishing and farming. In part, Brooke policy can be blamed for Iban backwardness, which later contributed to them lagging behind other ethnic groups, notably the Malays and the Chinese, who were encouraged to develop in the administrative and commercial fields respectively.

Although the Brookes introduced door or yearly taxes among the Ibans, it was a token tribute valued more for its symbolic significance. It did not accelerate direct Iban involvement in government, which was mainly the

preserve of Malay aristocrats. The only Iban participation was confined to occasional "call-ups" by the Rajahs to serve in peacekeeping expeditions.

The granting of British Crown Colony status to Sarawak brought accelerated development to the country, and the Ibans in particular. While development continued to be dominated by major urban centres, there was an appreciable share directed to the rural communities. Iban involvement in activities outside their "traditional preserve", especially in education, can be said to have taken place when the Christian missions began to spread their teaching into the rural areas. However, as in the Brooke period, the success of the missions was restricted by finance, which depended entirely on private contributions and meagre government support.

One significant development introduced during the Colonial period was the resettlement scheme, a "total development" concept, aimed at changing the rural communities into self-sufficient production units. Generally, Iban reception of the idea was positive. For example, the Budu scheme proved to be a successful development mechanism for the Ibans, and it illustrated that they were generally receptive to education and commerce.

The pre-independence period can be said to be an era when Ibans were being introduced to various changes (education, cash cropping) and were being removed from their traditional preserve of hunting, fishing and

farming. Generally, there was an increased expectation that these new developments could bring about a better and more stable way of life and that the success of Budu could be expanded. These expectations were further fuelled with impending independence brought about by the proposal that Sarawak was to be incorporated within a new Federation of Malaysia.

Under the first two Iban governments, the general expectation of accelerated rural development was justified, when both governments allocated the highest percentage of public spending for agricultural and rural development. But when both Iban leaderships were outmanoeuvred, there was a clear shift of public expenditure in favour of urban development, followed by increasing opportunities for non-Ibans in government and the private sector.

One of the tragic consequences of being exposed to development at a later time than other groups is that there are usually enormous obstacles to closing the gap. For instance, although there has been a large increase in the numbers of Ibans who have completed their secondary education, many have not been admitted to local universities because they failed to meet the admission standards; these have been continually raised, thereby serving the more prosperous urban-based groups. Therefore, feelings of exclusion, discrimination and favouritism continue to run high among the Ibans. In the business field, there is little opportunity for them as



not only do they lack capital, but political considerations also come into play.<sup>170</sup> Political affiliations come under scrutiny; association with the political opposition is the main reason to deny a person opportunities, while membership in the ruling coalition parties does not necessarily guarantee favourable treatment unless that person is considered to be a member of the "inner clique".

Since the 1970s, Ibans have expressed their displeasure at their treatment by government by voting for opposition parties; in 1970 for SNAP, and again in 1987 for PBDS. From the pattern of development in terms of employment, educational opportunities and poverty, Ibans grievances are fully justified. Despite the fact that it is the national policy to restructure Malaysian society in accordance with ethnic distribution, Sarawak is nowhere near meeting these goals. High position in government service continues to be dominated by the Malays/Melanaus, and the business sector by the Chinese. While the NEP has enriched a number of Malays/Melanaus, there is only a handful of Ibans who have secured any benefits.

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<sup>170</sup> I have frequently said to my informants that there are some Ibans in high places such as ministers and members of boards of important government and statutory bodies, who would surely help deserving Ibans and that they should not be unduly worried about being discriminated against. Most of the responses, either from politicians, civil servants or the Iban masses, can be summarised as follows: these leaders are not going to help, either in education or business, because of the fear that once more Ibans are educated or rich, then their leadership position will be challenged.

After having presented such a gloomy picture of Iban economic history, it is pertinent to ask: What are the factors that have given rise to Iban underdevelopment? What or who can be blamed for their backwardness? Are Ibans themselves to be blamed for their own predicament? and What are the future prospects for them and more broadly the Dayaks?

While the Brooke and the Colonial periods have partly contributed to Iban problems, political changes and economic development in the post-independence period have also perpetuated them. Theoretically, independence was supposed to be beneficial to the people; they are then free to determine their own destiny, based on the principle of self-determination. In other words, it was assumed that the local leaders knew better than their colonisers what kind of development best suited them. While this may generally be the case, post-independence politicking in a multi-ethnic society like Sarawak has resulted in discrimination and favouritism. In Sarawak, the problem is more acute because of the multi-faceted nature of inter-ethnic relations within the state and also between the state and the federal government. First, Sarawak was incorporated within the Federation of Malaysia; it was not direct independence in the full sense of the word, in that Sarawak was not ceded by the British to form an autonomous nation. Thus, there is the federal factor to consider in examining local level--as opposed to national--inter-ethnic politicking; the ethnic

group which the federal government seeks to support usually has an advantage over the others. Since independence, federal influence can be seen in a number of events in the state--for example, the unconstitutional removal of Kalong Ningkan as the first Chief Minister; the manner in which Bahasa Malaysia was imposed in schools and the state government, which was seen as contrary to the terms laid down in the London Agreement, and the equivocal stand taken by the federal government in the 1987 state leadership crisis.<sup>171</sup>

Secondly, Sarawak has three major ethnic groups: the Iban, or more broadly, the Dayak, the Malay/Melanau and the Chinese. No group has an absolute population or legislative majority; therefore, unlike West Malaysia, where the Malays have both population and legislative majorities, there can be no direct political dominance by one ethnic group. Hence, any Iban "claim" to political dominance is rather weak and is based on the fact that they have the largest proportion of the state population and the most legislative seats compared with either the Malays/Melanaus or Chinese. Even in the larger "Dayak" category, which includes Ibans, Bidayuhs and Orang Ulu, there is still no absolute majority. Since independence, competition for political dominance has been intense not only between but within ethnically-based political parties. While there are three categorically important

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<sup>171</sup> All of these events have been covered in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

groups, close cooperation then did not follow strictly along ethnic lines. While the Malay and Melanau communities have been successful in forging closer cooperation through PBB, and the Chinese through SUPP, the Ibans have not been able to unite behind a single political party. Despite that, there have been isolated cases when they have displayed a higher level of political unity. The fact that Kalong Ningkan became the first Chief Minister can be attributed to the joint strength and cooperation of SNAP and PESAKA in the Alliance; this cooperation should be sufficient to demonstrate the declining effect of the regional cleavages among Ibans.

Third there is what one might call the disguising of the real nature of political parties which, since the early 1970s, has served to balance political bargaining between the Malays/Melanaus in PBB and the Chinese in SUPP. Political dominance within the multi-*bumiputera* PBB and the multi-ethnic SUPP is undoubtedly exercised by the Melanaus in the former and the Chinese in the latter. Their Iban components are kept alive within these ostensibly plural parties for different reasons. For the PBB, the strategy is to maintain its political legitimacy; it must demonstrate that it represents the *bumiputeras*. And for SUPP, it is simply to add advantage to their nominal legislative position: the Chinese alone controlled only eight seats until the 1988 delineation exercise, and only 11 thereafter. Therefore, as long as

the PBB and SUPP have some Iban leaders who are willing to toe the line, they will continue to exclude the majority of other Iban leaders who truly represent their community.

Fourthly, there is also the religious factor. Islam has a special place in the Federal Constitution, and according to the constitutional provision, a Malay is a Muslim by faith and those who embrace Islam also become Malays (*masuk Melayu* or *Islam*).<sup>172</sup> Islam and the Malay special position in the constitution are forbidden subjects to discuss openly but ones which the Malay leaders themselves can use, to some extent, to promote unity and suppress competition. In West Malaysia, the Islamic factor has served to unite the indigenous Malays vis-à-vis the Chinese and the Indians. However, in Sarawak, it has served to divide the various indigenes into Muslim indigenes (that is, the Malays and, to some extent, the Melanaus) and non-Muslim indigenes (that is, the Ibans, Bidayuhs and Orang Ulu). There are several instances in which the Muslim and non-Muslim division might have played a dominant role, not only in the political realignment within the state but also in the determination of which side the federal leadership might choose to support in situations of inter-ethnic rivalry in Sarawak in particular and in Malaysia as a whole: first, in Kalong Ningkan's removal from the office of

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<sup>172</sup> Literally, *masuk* means "to enter"; but to "*masuk Melayu*" mean to become a Malay; *masuk Melayu* and *masuk Islam* are synonymous.

Chief Minister, the "Malay" or "Islamic" element played a role in the controversy; secondly, in the equivocal stand taken by the federal government in the Sarawak crisis of 1987, in which another Malay/Melanau group had sought unsuccessfully to remove Taib Mahmud; and finally, in the recently concluded state elections of Sabah, in which popular support swept the Christian Kadazan-dominated Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) into government for a third term.<sup>173</sup> The PBS ascent to power deserves further elaboration as it duplicates the earlier confrontational approach of Kalong Ningkan in dealing with the federal government. In the 1990 state general election, PBS' election manifesto called for, among other things: (1) the return of Labuan to the state;<sup>174</sup> (2) the creation of the state television station; (3) the review of oil royalty payments; and (4) the review of the Internal Security Act.<sup>175</sup> Undoubtedly, these demands put the PBS leaders on a collision course with the federal leaders.

Having sketched briefly the political scenario for the Ibans, it can be concluded that their underdevelopment is partly a consequence not only of the neglect of the Brooke and Colonial periods but it also

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<sup>173</sup> *New Straits Time*, 18 July 1990; for a brief history of PBS, see, Tan, 1986, op cit.

<sup>174</sup> The island of Labuan, off the Sabah mainland, was ceded by the previous Berjaya government to be created as a second federal territory.

<sup>175</sup> "PBS Manifesto Sore Point of Contention", *The Borneo Post*, 12 July 1990; for some rebuttals to these demands see, "UMNO Youth Criticises PBS Election Manifesto", *The Borneo Post*, 13 July 1990; "Labuan Issue: 'Only Parliament Can Decide'", *The Borneo Post*, 21 July 1990;

stems from their relative political isolation from the centres of power and the quality of Iban political leadership. Earlier, I showed that there had been changes in emphasis in rural and agricultural development policy—that is, in the overall percentage reduction of allocations for the two sectors. This happened when Rahman Ya'kub, a Malay/Melanau, took over as Chief Minister in 1970; the percentage allocations to these sectors never fully recovered to their former position. Although the Ibans have been represented in all governments formed since independence, they were only at the helm during the first three years under Kalong Ningkan. Despite the fact that Kalong Ningkan was replaced by another Iban, *Penghulu* Tawi Sli, the real power of the Chief Minister was exercised by Tawi Sli's advisers, two of whom were Malay/Melanau from the then BARJASA. In the next 6 years (1970-76), the majority of the Ibans were outside the government when SNAP went into opposition. For about 7 years (1976-83) since joining the BN in 1976, Iban leaders in SNAP stood as strong contenders for the state leadership. But the situation changed in favour of the PBB when SNAP was outmanoeuvred and the Iban leaders split, giving rise to PBDS. While the Iban leaders of PBDS and SNAP were subsequently retained within the BN after the 1983 election, Iban political strength within the BN was seriously eroded. Consequently, whether or not it was the direct result of that or of other factors, PBDS took a gamble when they

withdrew from the BN in 1987 to forge an alliance with discontented Malays/Melanaus from the PBB. Thereafter, PBDS, which won a majority of the Dayak seats and which also subsequently lost five of its assemblymen through defection, remained in opposition.

While political isolation has been a major obstacle to development, one must also direct attention to inadequacies in Iban (or Dayak) leadership. But who are these leaders? In previous discussions, I have frequently and loosely equated this leadership with senior Ibans from SNAP and PBDS. The leadership identification is based on the electoral strength polled by both parties from the Iban community. In the 1960s and 1970s, Iban leaders were found mainly in SNAP and in the 1980s in PBDS. In addition, there are also a handful of Iban leaders found in SUPP and PBB; although smaller in number in comparison to SNAP and PBDS, the Iban leaders in PBB tend to exercise greater power.

Historically, the Iban (or Dayak) leadership has not been totally excluded from the governments of Rahman Ya'kub and Taib Mahmud despite general allegations to the contrary. When SNAP joined the BN in 1976, three of the five party's nominees for cabinet posts were Ibans, including one who was given the post of Deputy Chief Minister.<sup>176</sup> A similar number of Iban ministers from SNAP

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<sup>176</sup> Dunstan Endawie, Deputy Chief Minister; Leo Moggie, minister; and Ambrose Gramong, assistant minister; in addition, there were three assistant ministers, that is, Joseph Balan Seling, a Dayak Orang Ulu, and Lo Foot Kee, a Chinese.



were also in Taib Mahmud's cabinet.<sup>177</sup> These were in addition to two other Iban ministers from the PBB in both Rahman Ya'kub's and Taib Mahmud's governments.<sup>178</sup> Therefore, questions to be asked are: What roles have the Iban leaders played in the state cabinet to ensure that their community's interest are protected, and what have they done to justify the mandate that they received from their community? When PBDS withdrew from the state coalition in 1987, many of their leaders criticised the government for its failure to help the Ibans. Such criticism coming from former members of the cabinet should not make the truth of the accusation any stronger; instead attention should be focused on these very leaders. The extent to which the allegation is true reflects not only the discrimination against the Ibans but more importantly the nature and qualities of these Iban leaders. It is rather surprising and highly irregular to criticise the development policies and practices of a government of which they had been members. While PBDS leaders may have argued that they were not able to do much to help their community because their roles were strictly limited, the question still remains to be answered: Why did it take about 11 years for them

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<sup>177</sup> Daniel Tajeim ak. Miri, Edward Jeli and Gramong Juna took over the posts of Endawie, Moggie and Ambrose Gramong respectively; Balan Seling's post was given to another Dayak Bidayuh, Michael Ben; meanwhile, Moggie was appointed Federal Minister along with two other SNAP members who were appointed parliamentary secretaries.

<sup>178</sup> Alfred Jabu ak. Numpang, Deputy Chief Minister, and Celestine Ujang Jilan, Minister.

to realise this? Dayak opposition in the 1970s and the 1980s provides an interesting comparison and contrast. SNAP's popularity among the Ibans may be explained partly by the Iban leadership provided by Kalong Ningkan; his short term of office makes an evaluation of his leadership difficult, but at least he was a preferred alternative to the weak Tawi Sli. On the other hand, PBDS's popularity was instantaneous; it may have had the same intensity that SNAP enjoyed in 1970 coupled with Iban hopes of gaining greater influence from the earlier SNAP in the new government. Nevertheless, it differed because its popular support seems to have been based on irrational political reasoning: first, PBDS' track record in government did not warrant the popular mandate; and secondly, PBDS' support for Rahman Ya'kub's return and leadership also contradicted their earlier accusation that Ibans had generally been neglected in development.

Lastly, it is also important to understand the general disposition of the Iban masses in order to have an overall view of their problems. In my opinion, Ibans have been wrongly accused of being wasteful shifting cultivators and tradition-bound. While they have been encouraged to change their traditional habits and enter into more stable and lucrative trades, they have not been provided with adequate measures to ensure that these changes would not make them far worse off than they already were. In the process of development, why should Ibans lose their possessions, especially land, when

development is supposed to benefit them? In expressing their discontent against government, the Iban masses have displayed a high degree of unity--that is by backing SNAP in 1970 and PBDS in 1987--despite various antics and inducements offered by the ruling coalition. Nevertheless, such unity has not been equally rewarded by their leaders; the community's interests were not protected even when their leaders were in government; furthermore, frequent defections to rival parties among Iban leaders serve to underscore narrow personal interests.

Thus, having identified major political and economic factors which contributed to Ibans socio-economic and political backwardness, my discussion will now centre on the contemporary socio-economic and political aspirations of the Ibans. Some of the recent views of Ibans on these issues are further elaborated in Chapter 6, which presents the findings of a survey research conducted among selected Iban communities in the Saribas and Rejang areas.

## CHAPTER 6

### CURRENT QUESTIONS AMONG CONTEMPORARY IBANS: A CASE STUDY

#### I. Geographical Location of the Case Study

For the case study, one state constituency each in the Second and Seventh Divisions were selected.<sup>1</sup> The two Divisions were selected because: (1) they were the Divisions most heavily populated by Ibans; and (2) they represented traditional Iban areas. In addition, in terms of the current state of and prospects for development, the two areas represent relatively contrasting cases: the Second Division being more prosperous than the generally less developed Seventh Division.

In the Second Division, samples for the case study were selected from the Bukit Begunan state constituency, in the western part of Sarawak, and in the Seventh, the Pelagus constituency, in the east. Bukit Begunan is in the Sri Aman (or the Second) Division and is also one of the two state constituencies, the other being Simanggang, under the Sri Aman parliamentary constituency; Pelagus is in the Kapit (or the Seventh) Division<sup>2</sup> and one of the

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<sup>1</sup> With the latest delineation exercise carried out by the Election Commission in 1988, the total number of seats has been increased from 48 to 56 (and the parliamentary seats from 24 to 27). Of the 56, 17 (or 30%) are Iban majority constituencies, where Iban registered voters constitute between 51.3% of all voters, as in the Simanggang constituency, and 99.1%, as in the Baleh constituency.

<sup>2</sup> Previously the traditional Third Division.

two state constituencies, the other being the Katibas, under the Kapit parliamentary constituency.<sup>3</sup>

#### A. Sri Aman: the Second Division

Sri Aman<sup>4</sup> is the Second Administrative Division within Sarawak. It is located in the south-west of Sarawak. On its western side, it shares its boundary with the Samarahan Division and to its east is the Sarikei Division. Sri Aman Division is divided into four Districts; these are further divided into 13 sub-districts. It has a total land size of about 9,647 sq. km. and a total population of about 166,000.<sup>5</sup> Table 6.1 below shows the land area and population distribution by Districts and subdistricts. Sri Aman, comprising about 7.7% of the total land area for Sarawak, is the fifth largest Division and has a population density of about 17 persons per sq.km.,<sup>6</sup> which is slightly above the average state density of 11 persons per sq.km.

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<sup>3</sup> This means that for one Member of Parliament, there are two state assemblymen; the exception being the parliamentary constituencies of Bandar Kuching and Kuala Rejang, where both have three state assemblymen each; for the discussion of the Sri Aman and Kapit Divisions, an unbalanced picture is inevitable because background information from the respective Division and District Offices are less detailed for Kapit than for Sri Aman.

<sup>4</sup> Formerly known as Simanggang.

<sup>5</sup> *Briefing Notes*, Sri Aman District Office, op cit; figures cited in the *Briefing Notes* were taken from the 1980 Census; there may be slight variations between these figures when compared to those in the latest *ASBS 1988* due mainly to "adjustment for under-enumeration"; for instance, while the *Briefing Notes* cited 68,405 as the population size of the Sri Aman District, the latest re-adjusted figures reported in the *ASBS 1988* is 70,000; where there is such a variation, the latest *ASBS 1988* figures are used.

<sup>6</sup> *ASBS 1988*, op cit, p.12.

Table 6.1  
Sri Aman Division: Districts,  
Sub-Districts, Land Area and Total Population.

District	Sub-District	Land area (Sq. Km.)	Population*
Sri Aman:		3,848	70,000
	1. Sri Aman	(2,359)	
	2. Pantu	(782)	
	3. Lingga	(228)	
	4. Meludam	(479)	
Lubok Antu:		2,335	21,000
	1. Lubok Antu	(1,341)	
	2. Engkilili	(994)	
Betong:		1,862	39,000
	1. Betong	(595)	
	2. Spaoh	(543)	
	3. Debak	(284)	
	4. Pusa	(440)	
Saratok:		1,658	36,000
	1. Saratok	(867)	
	2. Roban	(372)	
	3. Kabong	(419)	
Total		9,703	165,403

Source: *Briefing Notes*, Sri Aman District Office, op cit.

Note: \* -Total District population; ASBS 1988 figures.

Table 6.2 shows Sri Aman's population breakdown by ethnic group and District. Except for Betong District, which is dominated in almost equal proportions by the Ibans and the Malays, the rest of the Districts are predominantly Iban, making up as high as 84% of the Lubok Antu population, 63% in Sri Aman and 58% in Saratok.

Table 6.2  
Population by Ethnicity and District: 1980.

Ethnicity	Sri Aman		Lubok Antu		Betong	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Iban	43.8	63	17.8	84	17.2	44
Bidayuh	0.4	1	0.1	1	*	*
Orang Ulu	0.1	*	*	*	*	*
Malay	15.2	22	0.8	4	18.5	48
Melanau	0.3	*	*	*	0.1	*
Chinese	9.9	14	2.4	11	3	8
Others	0.2	*	0.1	1	*	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>69.9</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>38.9</b>	<b>100</b>

Ethnicity	Saratok		All Districts	
	'000	%	'000	%
Iban	20.8	58	99.6	60
Bidayuh	0.1	*	0.6	*
Orang Ulu	*	*	0.1	*
Malay	11.8	33	46.3	28
Melanau	0.1	*	0.5	*
Chinese	3.3	9	18.6	11
Others	*	*	0.3	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>99</b>

Source: ASBS 1988, p.13.

Key: \* <100 and <0.5%.

There are three levels of administration in the Sri Aman Division. At the top of the hierarchy is a Resident; assisting the Resident are four District Officers (DOs), each in charge of a District; Districts are further divided into sub-districts, each under the charge of a Sarawak Administrative Officer (SAO).

### 1. *Sri Aman District*

Bukit Begunan state constituency falls within the Sri Aman District. As such, it is pertinent to describe the District before proceeding to elaborate on the constituency itself. Sri Aman District has four sub-districts, namely Sri Aman, Pantu, Lingga and Meludam. It has a total land area of about 3,848 sq.km. and a population of about 70,000 (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2 [ethnic breakdown]). Sri Aman is under the immediate charge of a District Officer; he is assisted by four SAOs.

It is reported that about 50% of the longhouses in the Sri Aman District have individual electricity generators;<sup>7</sup> these had been given out through the Minor Rural Project (MRP) and Rural Electrification Scheme (RES). A mini-hydro at Batu Lintang provided electricity to about 183 nearby longhouses. Most longhouses in the Sri Aman District are served by a gravity-feed water supply. It is estimated that about 200 longhouses, covering about 4,097 bilik-families or 20,000 people, benefit from this service. About 100 longhouses in the District can be reached by a motorable road network from the main town (i.e. Sri Aman); another 170 can be reached by river only; while the rest (about 120) can be reached by footpath, river or road.

Residents of Sri Aman District are served by one General Hospital, located in Sri Aman town and five

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<sup>7</sup> *Briefing Notes, Sri Aman District Office, op cit.*



health centres located in Sri Aman, Pantu, Lingga, Tanjong Bijat and Nanga Entaban.<sup>8</sup> Based on the same source, it is reported that there are four secondary and 64 primary schools located in the Sri Aman District; there are also five civic centres in the District--i.e. one each in Kampong Hilir, Sri Aman, Bakong, Lingga, Banting and Nanga Entaban; there is one public library. In the rural areas, it is reported that there is one primary school each serving the needs of about 10 longhouses, though not all the longhouses are fortunate enough to be within reasonable distance of the school.<sup>9</sup>

The majority of the Sri Aman District residents are engaged in agriculture and agricultural-related activities--e.g. padi farming; pepper, cocoa or vegetable planting; fishing; rubber or oil palm schemes; and government service. Table 6.3 shows the percentage distribution of the Sri Aman District labour force by type of occupation.

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<sup>8</sup> *Briefing Notes*, Department of Information, Sri Aman; typescript, undated; the General Hospital in Sri Aman also served the whole Division.

<sup>9</sup> *Briefing Notes*, Department of Information, Sri Aman, Op cit; and *Briefing Notes*, Sri Aman District Office, op cit.

Table 6.3  
 Sri Aman District:  
 Distribution of Labour Force by Occupation.

Types of Work	Percentage
Government Officers	6
Private Firm/Business	6
Factory Workers	2
Farmers	59
Fishermen	4
Smallholders	16
Others	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>

Sources: *Briefing Notes*, Department of Information,  
 Sri Aman, op cit.

Note: Due to rounding, figures do not add to 100%.

## 2. *Bukit Begunan State Constituency*

Bukit Begunan constituency is situated in the Sri Aman Division. It covers part of the Sri Aman District; a small portion of the area to the west being part of the Simanggang state constituency. Sub-districts that fall under the jurisdiction of Bukit Begunan state constituency are Lingga, Pantu and part of Sri Aman.

Bukit Begunan is one of the constituencies that was renamed in the 1988 delineation exercise carried out by the Election Commission. Formerly, the area was known as Lingga (1979-87 period) and before that Lingga-Sebuyau (1969-74 period). These minor changes were the result of exercises in the delineation process, but the 1988 changes resulted not only in the renaming of several constituencies, both parliamentary and state, but also

saw an increase in the number of electoral constituencies for both levels.

Bukit Begunan has always been an Iban majority constituency. What the 1988 delineation exercise has done is to increase its "Iban" character. In the 1960s and 1970s, the percentage of Iban registered voters was about 66%; in the 1980s, it had increased to about 71%; and in the post-1988 period, it had reached 92%.<sup>10</sup> The constituency was first won by Dato Penghulu Tawi Sli, then the Chief Minister, in the first direct election to the state assembly; he had stood on a PESAKA ticket against Alliance and SNAP candidates. In the 1974 state general election, Daniel Tajeim, who stood for SNAP, an opposition party then, won the seat. Tajeim won the seat in two subsequent general elections--i.e. in 1979, for SNAP after it had entered the Barisan Nasional coalition, and again in 1983, for the newly formed PBDS. However, in the election of 1987, Tajeim lost the seat by a narrow margin of 59 votes to the BN3 candidate from SNAP, Donald Lawan. Nevertheless, Tajeim is still the MP for Sri Aman parliamentary constituency, which he had won in the last parliamentary election of 1986 and retained in the 1991 election.

For the purpose of polling, Bukit Begunan constituency is divided into seven polling districts,

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<sup>10</sup> See Jawan, 1987a, op cit, Appendix III, p.44; refer also to Table 3.31 [Appendix C]; Malaysia, Election Commission (1990). *Bilangan dan Peratus Pemilih Berdaftar Mengikut Pecahan Kaum Di Negeri Sarawak, 1988*. Typescript, the SUPP's copy which was made available to the author.

namely, (1) Kedumpai, (2) Ubah, (3) Pantu, (4) Banting, (5) Kara, (6) Melugu and (7) Klauh. There is a total of 10,055 registered voters: 1,848 in Ubah polling district, 1,690 in Pantu, 1,508 in Kara, 1,313 in Banting, 1,121 in Melugu, 1,531 in Klauh, and 1,044 in Kedumpai.<sup>11</sup> Of the 10,055 voters, about 92.1% are Ibans, 6.2% Chinese, 1.7% Malays/Melanaus<sup>12</sup> (see Table 6.4).

Table 6.4  
Bukit Begunan Constituency:  
Registered Voters by Ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Numbers	Percentage
Iban	9,258	92.1
Bidayuh	0	0
Orang Ulu	0	0
Malay/Melanau	175	1.7
Chinese	621	6.2
Others	1	n.
Total	10,055	100.0

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission, 1990, op cit.

Key: n. -negligible.

<sup>11</sup> Malaysia, Election Commission, 1990, Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> These percentages are taken from Malaysia, Election Commission, 1990, Ibid.

## B. Kapit: the Seventh Division

Kapit is the Seventh Administrative Division. Formerly incorporated within the Third Division, the present Seventh Division came into being in 1973.<sup>13</sup> Kapit Division is located in the south-east of Sarawak. To the north, it shares its Divisional boundary with Bintulu, to the north-east, Miri, to the west, the Sibuan, Sarikei and Sri Aman Divisions and to the south, the Sarawak-Kalimantan international border.

There are three Districts within the Kapit Division, namely, Kapit, Song and Belaga. The Kapit Division has a land area of about 38,934 sq.km. (or 31.3% of the total Sarawak land size), making it the biggest Division within Sarawak. It has a population of about 67,000,<sup>14</sup> giving it a very low population density of about 2.3 persons per sq.km. (Table 6.5). Of the total Kapit Division population of about 67,100, the majority are estimated to comprise Ibans (about 72% [48,500]). The ethnic composition of the population by District are as shown in Table 6.6.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> ASBS 1988, op cit, p.12.

<sup>14</sup> ASBS 1988, op cit, pp.12-13.

<sup>15</sup> The discrepancy in the population figures found in the *Profil Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit* may be attributed to the "re-adjustment for under-enumeration" undertaken in the latest report of the ASBS 1988; where such discrepancies occur, the ASBS 1988 figures substitute the former.

Table 6.5  
Kapit Division: Districts,  
Land Area, Population and Population Density.

District	Land area (Sq. Km.)	Population*	Pop. Density Persons/sq.km.
Kapit	15,596	38,000	2
Song	3,935	17,000	4
Belaga	19,403	12,000	1
Total	38,934	67,000	Avg. 2.3**

Sources: ASBS 1988, op cit, pp.12-13; *Profail Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit*, Jabatan Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit, undated, typescript.

Key: Avg. -average.

Notes: \* -Total District population.  
\*\* -Kapit average (State average is 11).

Table 6.6  
Kapit Division:  
Population by Ethnicity and District, 1980.

Ethnicity	Song		Kapit		Belaga		Total	
	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%	'000	%
Iban	15.2	92	32.8	85	0.5	4	48.5	72
Orang Ulu	*	*	1.4	4	10.6	88	12.0	18
Bidayuh	*	*	0.1	*	0	*	0.1	*
Malay	0.4	2	0.7	2	0.3	3	1.4	2
Melanau	0.1	1	0.3	1	0.1	1	0.5	1
Chinese	0.9	5	3.1	8	0.4	3	4.4	7
Others	*	*	0.1	*	0.1	1	0.2	*
Total	16.6	100	38.5	100	12.0	100	67.1	100

Sources: ASBS 1988, p.13; *Profail Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit*, op cit.

Note: \* <100 and <0.5%.

The Kapit population is dispersed into three types of settlement; longhouses, Malay kampongs and towns.<sup>16</sup> It is estimated that the Ibans are scattered in about 483 longhouses found in all three Districts;<sup>17</sup> most of these longhouses are located away from the Kapit, Song and Belaga town centres and in the interior. The Malay population is found in three Malay kampongs, one in each of the three town centres; while the Chinese are mostly found in the three town centres.

Except for the towns of Kapit, Song and Belaga, which have power generating stations, the longhouses generally lack these facilities. Of the 301 longhouses in the Kapit District, only 71 (or about 24%) have electricity generating facilities supplied through the Rural Electrification Scheme; some 20 (or 36%) of the 56 longhouses in Belaga and 27 (or 21%) of the 126 longhouses in Song have similar facilities.<sup>18</sup> Most of the longhouses in the Division have gravity-feed water supply. Of the 275 longhouses in the Kapit District, 234 (85%) have a supply while 128 (or 93%) of the 138 longhouses in Song District and 38 (or 68%) of the 56 longhouses in Belaga have similar facilities.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Profail Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit*, op cit.

<sup>17</sup> *Profail Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit*, op cit, based on ASBS 1988 figures.

<sup>18</sup> *Profail Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit*, op cit, based on ASBS 1988 figures.

<sup>19</sup> These figures are based on data from the Divisional Medical Office, Kapit, as of 31 December 1988; Apparently, since the 1980 census, there have been some changes in the number of longhouse settlements in Kapit and Song Districts; for Kapit, the number of

In terms of medical services, there are several types available to serve the needs of the inhabitants in the Kapit Division. There is one General Hospital in Kapit town, one dental clinic, three Major Health Centres (*Klinik Kesihatan Besar*), eight Rural Clinics (*Klinik Desa*), 13 Small Health Centres (*Pusat Kesihatan Kecil*), and the Flying Doctor Services (*Perkhidmatan Doktor Udara*). In addition to the government services, there are two private clinics in Kapit town; there is no mention of the existence of such private practices in Song and Belaga Districts.<sup>20</sup>

On the education side, there are a total of 84 schools in the Division. Six are secondary, 66 primary and 12 national-type primary schools.<sup>21</sup> There are no religious schools at present. As of 1989, there were an estimated 4,590 students in the secondary schools, staffed by about 226 teachers, 30 of whom had university qualifications. At the primary level, there were an estimated 12,452 students; none of the 756 primary school teachers had university qualifications.<sup>22</sup> To meet

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longhouse settlements has decreased from 301 in 1980 to 275 in 1988, while for Song, it has increased from 126 in 1980 to 138 in 1988. There was no explanation given to account for the changes, especially those of Kapit; *Profail Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit*, op cit.

<sup>20</sup> *Profail Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit*, op cit; these figures were taken from the Divisional Medical Office, Kapit, 1989.

<sup>21</sup> *Profail Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit*, op cit. Note: national-type schools are schools that use either Mandarin or Indian language, rather than the national language, as their medium of instruction.

<sup>22</sup> *Profail Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit*, op cit; the education figures were taken from the Divisional Education Office, Kapit and the



religious needs, there were three churches for the Christians, four mosques and three *surau* (prayer room, usually much smaller than a mosque) for the Muslims, and two *Tua Pek Kong* (Chinese prayer house) for those of the Buddhist faith.<sup>23</sup>

### 1. Kapit District

Kapit District, which has a land size of about 15,596 sq.km. (or about 13% of the whole state), is the third largest District in Sarawak.<sup>24</sup> It has a population of about 38,000 and a population density of about two persons per sq.km. (see Table 6.5). Based on the ethnic background of its population, Kapit District, like Song, can be said to be Iban country. About 85% of its population are Ibans, about 8% Chinese, 4% Orang Ulu, 2% Malays and 1% Melanaus; a relatively small number are Bidayus and "others"--e.g. Indians, Indonesians, etc. (refer to Table 6.6); however, for Song, the "Ibanness" of the District is clearly evident with a higher concentration of Iban at 92%. But the Belaga District is undoubtedly the Orang Ulu area, where their population is estimated to be about 88%.

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figures are for 1989; the ethnic background of the pupils was not available.

<sup>23</sup> *Profail Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit*, op cit.

<sup>24</sup> The second largest District, Belaga with about 19,403 sq.km. (or 16% of the state's total), is also found in the Kapit Division. The largest District is Marudi, in the Miri Division; it has an area of about 22,070 sq.km. (or 18% of the state's total).

Kapit town can be reached by air and river transport only. There is no trunk road linking it to other commercial centres--i.e. Song, Kanowit, Sibul or Kuching. From Kuching, the state capital, Kapit can be reached by commercial flights, which transit through Sibul airport; the capital is not linked by direct commercial flights. Nevertheless, the two weekly services between Sibul and Kapit are rather uncertain as they are dictated by weather conditions. Another means of reaching Kapit is by river. Again, Sibul serves as the main port of entry. There are several express launches which ply between Sibul and Kapit; the journey normally takes between 4-5 hours. Of course, one can always take the long- or speed-boat; depending on the horsepower of the engine, the trip can take anywhere from 3-4 hours at a relatively higher cost.

Kapit District, as well as the Division itself, has often been described as a very hilly and mountainous area. This is one of the problems faced in developing the area and in introducing large-scale agricultural projects.<sup>25</sup> A large portion of the arable land is already being used for shifting cultivation (See Table 6.7). Another occupational opportunity open to residents is provided by the timber industries. It is reported that as many as 45 licences cover approximately 70% of the total forested area. The industry is estimated to provide

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<sup>25</sup> Kapit Divisional Development Officer Joshua Melling, interview by author, 13 July 1990, Resident's Office, Kapit.

employment to about 5,410 individuals, whose minimum pay is in the region of about M\$400.00 per month.<sup>26</sup>

Table 6.7  
Kapit Division: Area and Land Use.

Land Use Classes	Hectare (ha.)	Percentage
Settlement(1)	388	0.01
Horticulture(2)	104	*
Permanent crops(3)	7,640	0.20
Crop land (wet & hill padi)	456,484	11.73
Unused land(4)	363	0.01
Swamp forest	544	0.01
Dry forest land	3,427,350	88.04
<b>Total land use classes</b>	<b>3,892,873</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Reproduced from *Profail Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit*, op cit.

Key: \* negligible.

Notes: (1) and associated non-agricultural land.  
 (2) miscellaneous cultivation, including small area of fruit trees.  
 (3) for example, rubber, cocoa and pepper.  
 (4) sheet lalang and other secondary growth.

## 2. Pelagus State Constituency

The Pelagus state constituency is located in the Kapit Division. It covers about half the area of the Kapit District; the other half falling within the Katibas state constituency. For the most part, journeys to the various longhouses can only be undertaken by river.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Profail Pembangunan Bahagian Kapit*, op cit.

<sup>27</sup> For instance, a journey to a longhouse situated at the farthest point along the Menuan river takes a good day's boat trip; travel is facilitated during high water level, which may cut travel time by a few hours.

Pelagus and Katibas constituencies come under the Kapit parliamentary constituency.

Despite several changes since the state constituency delineation for the first direct election in 1969, Pelagus has maintained its character; that is, it is an Iban majority constituency and the percentage of Iban registered voters has not fluctuated much (i.e. about 80% in the 1970s and 1980s, and 79% following the 1988 delineation exercise).<sup>28</sup> Pelagus constituency was first represented by Bennet Jarraw from PESAKA, who won it in the first direct election to the state legislative assembly in 1969, despite a strong challenge from the SUPP candidate; Jarraw won by 320 votes, polling 1,389 against his closest rival, SUPP's Jugah anak Lasah, who polled 1,069. However, in the 1974 general election, Linggi, who contested on PBB's ticket, lost the seat to SNAP's Jonathan Sabai Ajing in a two-cornered fight; the former lost by a margin of 97 votes, polling 1,877 to Sabai's 1,974. The loss can probably be attributed to the rising discontent against PESAKA. Furthermore, there was a general upsurge of SNAP popularity state-wide following its removal as the dominant partner in the Alliance coalition. In the 1979 state general election, Sabai was returned in Pelagus when he contested the seat under a Barisan Nasional banner, following SNAP entry into the coalition in 1976. In the 1983 state general election,

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<sup>28</sup> See Jawan, 1987a, op cit, Appendix III, p.44; refer also to Table 3.31 [Appendix C]; Malaysia, Election Commission, 1990, op cit.

Nueng anak Kudi retained the seat for SNAP when Sabai decided to defend his seat for the newly formed PBDS.<sup>29</sup> In the 1987 election, Nueng did not defend his seat; his son, Philimon, stood and won the seat for the opposition PBDS. The 1987 election gave the PESAKA wing of the PBB an opportunity to contest the seat using the Barisan banner. However, the PBB candidate, Kenneth Kanyan, the son of the famous Iban leader *Temenggong Koh*, lost in his bid to regain the seat for PBB; he lost by a margin of 16 votes, polling 2,226 votes to Philimon's 2,242.<sup>30</sup>

Pelagus constituency has six polling districts: (1) Entangai, (2) Ibau, (3) Menuan, (4) Kapit, (5) Surogan, and (6) Merit. There are 9,841 registered voters in the Pelagus constituency: 478 in Entangai, 1,746 in Ibau, 1,717 in Menuan, 2,803 in Kapit, 1,282 in Surogan, and 1,815 in Merit. Of the 9,841 registered voters, about 78.5% are Iban, 0.7% Orang Ulu, 4.2% Malay/Melanau and 16.5% Chinese (see Table 6.8).

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<sup>29</sup> For discussion of the political crisis leading to SNAP and the newly formed PBDS contesting the 1983 election using their respective party banners instead of the Barisan banner, see Chapter 4.

<sup>30</sup> See Jawan, 1987a, *op cit*, for some discussions of the 1987 election; refer also to Chapter 4.

Table 6.8  
 Pelagus Constituency:  
 Registered Voters by Ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Numbers	Percentage
Iban	7,727	78.5
Bidayuh	0	0
Orang Ulu	69	0.7
Malay/Melanau	415	4.2
Chinese	1,626	16.5
Others	4	*
Total	9,841	99.9

Source: Malaysian Election Commission, 1990, op cit, typescript, op cit.

Key: \* -negligible.

## II. Sampling the Population under Study

Selection of respondents for the case study survey on *Political Attitudes among the Contemporary Ibans of Sarawak* was based on a combination of the stratified and random sampling techniques. Respondents from two state constituencies in the Second and Seventh Divisions were selected because they were supposed to be representative of Ibans in general. Furthermore, there was also a need to maintain a balance of different political factions in the samples from both areas in order to reflect the overall actual voting patterns of 1987. Therefore, some basic knowledge about both constituencies was essential. This information was acquired by various means as follows: (1) through informants, who were knowledgeable about local politics;<sup>31</sup> (2) discussion with personnel from

<sup>31</sup> cited here are only those informants who wish to be quoted; others preferred to remain anonymous: *Mandal Tr.* Gani anak Tindin and *Tr.*

the Resident and District Offices in the two areas;<sup>32</sup> and, (3) published materials, such as party pamphlets, newspaper clippings and most importantly, election reports.<sup>33</sup> Based on these sources, the most important background factors were identified and used as guides in selecting samples from the two study areas. They are as follows:

1. The percentage of votes polled by the candidate and his party:

This is important so that the number of respondents actually selected for the study does not overrepresent any one political party, which would then inevitably distort the popular support of any one philosophy. This factor was much easier to take into account in the Bukit Begunan constituency because, in the general election of 1987, there were only two candidates representing two political parties.<sup>34</sup>

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Rawai anak Ngelambong of Sri Aman Division; Mandal Tr. Kendawang anak Sabang (Menuan) and Tr. Tuba anak Kaing (Ng. Enselai) of Kapit Division.

<sup>32</sup> All opted to remain anonymous.

<sup>33</sup> For example, Malaysia, Election Commission, 1988, op cit.

<sup>34</sup> Datuk Daniel Tajeim anak Miri, the Deputy President of PBDS, polled 4,409, while Donald Lawan, representing PBB, polled 4,468.

At the moment, there is much confusion surrounding Lawan's political affiliation. On record, he had stood and won the Lingga (Bukit Begunan) constituency on SNAP's allocation (one of the members of the Barisan Nasional Tiga coalition), but the popular opinion, supported by his close association with the PBB, is that he is a PBB member. My research in Bukit Begunan seems to confirm

In Pelagus, the task was more complex because there were four candidates, supposedly representing four different political philosophies. Nevertheless, it was widely held that the contest in Pelagus was really a battle between the opposition, represented by the PBDS, and the ruling party, represented by the PBB.<sup>35</sup> The votes won by the third candidate were rather dismal and did not indicate any widespread support for his platform. Furthermore, rather more impressive support for the fourth candidate, a Chinese, cannot really be taken as anything but Iban protest votes. Thus, for the purpose of sampling, there were three types of voting behaviour that were directly relevant--i.e. those who voted for the opposition (PBDS), the ruling party (PBB) and the protest votes (for either two of the Independents).

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the latter. When we asked about this confusion, *Mandal Tr.* Gani anak Tindin explained: "We (meaning the PBB) provided the candidate (Donald Lawan) because SNAP does not have a potentially strong candidate; the overriding objective then was to put up a strong candidate to defeat Tajeim."

<sup>35</sup> The votes polled by the four candidates are as follows: Philimon anak Nueng (PBDS-2,242 votes); Kenneth Kanyan anak *Temenggong* Koh (PBB-2,226 votes); Jangi anak *Penghulu* Jemut (Independent-433); and Sng Chee Hua (Independent-1,289); see Malaysia, Election Commission, 1988, op cit; and also Jawan, 1987a, op cit.



2. Political affiliation/inclination of the various longhouses:

Knowledge about the political affiliations and inclinations of the various longhouses was also important. It helped not only to facilitate the selection of longhouses to approach but also to decide on the maximum number of respondents to draw from them. This information was particularly useful, especially when dealing with longhouses where political affiliations and inclinations were highly varied.

3. Rural-urban dichotomy of the voters and longhouses:

Generally, the rural-urban dichotomy features prominently in the literature on the Iban, especially in the work of Searle.<sup>36</sup> However, Searle's study was undertaken during the 1970s and since then there has been some general improvement in communication. In the 1960s and 1970s, it took public launches a good day's trip to reach Kapit from Sibu; however, today one can do an average of three return-trips in the same day. While travel within, say the Pelagus or Bukit Begunan areas themselves is difficult, these difficulties have not prevented a huge volume of rural traffic into the

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<sup>36</sup> Searle, 1983, op cit.

urban commercial centres. Thus, contact, which was lacking in the past and in the period of Searle's study, has greatly increased and with it, the people's awareness of their environment.

Perhaps, the one important indicator to replace the simple rural-urban one is that of income variability among Iban rural dwellers. This is because, I suggest, the behavioural differences among Iban found by Searle were probably attributable to Iban class division between the "haves" and the "have-nots", regardless of locality. However, data on income patterns among Iban rural dwellers are generally lacking. This shortcoming is exacerbated by the problems of quantifying incomes from the various Iban occupations--i.e. shifting cultivation, hunting and gathering, fruit farming, and other cash cropping. Incomes from these activities is usually not reported and therefore there are no sources from which to develop a database. Any attempt to conduct surveys to develop such a database would be an enormous task, both in terms of the capital and manpower required, as Iban settlement is widely dispersed.

Thus, due to lack of data on rural income patterns, my study inevitably had to take into consideration the crude rural-urban dichotomy in its sampling.

Similar sampling techniques were used for selecting respondents in Bukit Begunan and Pelagus constituencies, although prevailing local constraints meant that the process varied slightly. For example, in Bukit Begunan, most longhouses are within easy reach, although sometimes accessible only on foot. However, in Pelagus, except for the Kapit town area, within the Menuan polling district, all other parts of the area can only be reached by river; therefore, to keep travelling time to a reasonable level the survey area covered was limited to two polling districts--i.e. Menuan and Kapit.

#### A. Selection of Respondents in Bkt. Begunan

In Bukit Begunan, three polling districts were identified as a pool from which respondents were drawn. Table 6.9 shows some characteristics of the voters found in the three polling districts: the total voters; average voter size; their range and the mean size for the longhouses in the three districts.

Table 6.9  
Electoral Characteristics of the Longhouses by District.

District	Total	Average	Range	Mean
Pantu	1,690	48	16-135	53
Kara	1,508	82	20-162	81
Klauh	1,531	48	4-149	34
All Avg.	1,576	59	13-149	56

Source: Table constructed from figures taken from Malaysia, Election Commission, 1990, op cit.

Three longhouses in each electoral district were visited and their inhabitants interviewed. With the assistance of a local informant, Gani anak Tindin,<sup>37</sup> the longhouses selected were as follows: one which was known to have supported the ruling PBB in the last election, another which supported the opposition PBDS, and a third, a longhouse which had mixed characteristics in terms of their voting preferences. Based on Gani's knowledge, all the longhouses were divided into three groups and randomly selected. From the nine longhouses selected, interviews were conducted for all the *bilik*-families at home when our team paid its visits. In all longhouses studied, about 85% of the *bilik*-families were available, while the others were away for various reasons--for example, at their padi farms or in their cocoa or pepper gardens. The target respondents are the *tuai bilik* (heads of households defined to include both the husband and wife).

Besides visiting the nine longhouses, a random sampling of respondents was also conducted in three small-size commercial centres found within the study area in order to extend the base of the sample. They were the pasar centres of Sungei Tengah, Pantu and Lachau Quarry. Pasar Lachau Quarry and Sungei Tengah are about 15 minutes drive apart on the Sri Aman-Kuching trunk road,

<sup>37</sup> One of the active grassroots supporters of the present state assemblyman from Bukit Begunan; my research team was based at Gani's longhouse in Lachau, which is about two hours drive from Kuching, the capital, and about 40 minutes drive from Sri Aman town; Lachau is situated on the Sri Aman-Kuching trunk road.

while pasar Pantu is about 25 minutes from Lachau. Most of the respondents interviewed in the pasar centres were from the longhouses within the polling districts which we did not visit.

One hundred and fifty responses were collected from the nine longhouses and in the three pasar centres. Except for the fifty samples from the three pasar centres, all were the result of interviewing a husband-and-wife team. The distribution of the total samples collected from Bukit Begunan constituency are shown in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10  
Sampling in Bukit Begunan Constituency.

Area	Sample Size
Pantu longhouses	30
Kara longhouses	35
Klauh longhouses	35
Pasar Lachau Quarry	10
Pasar Sungei Tegang	20
Pasar Pantu	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>

#### B. Selection of Respondents in Pelagus

In the Pelagus constituency, two polling districts, Menuan and Kapit, were chosen as the pool from which 150 respondents were drawn. Except for the Kapit polling district, most of the other areas in the remaining five polling districts in the Pelagus constituency are

accessible only by means of river transport; they are rural. Travel to the main town centre, Kapit, is by means of privately-owned engine-driven longboat.

For the purpose of drawing samples from the Kapit and Menuan polling districts, a similar approach to that which was applied in Bukit Begunan was utilised. In the Kapit polling district, samples were drawn from two identified locations, namely from the town and the longhouses located along the Selirik road. In town, the target respondents were Iban civil servants working in several local and state agencies such as the Kapit District Council (KDC), the District Office, the Resident's Office, the Forestry Department and the Education Department. Along the Selirik road, two longhouses were randomly selected from about seven located there. From the Menuan polling district, four longhouses along the Menuan river system were randomly selected. Some 10 longhouses along the Menuan river system were classified as either pro-government (PBB) or pro-opposition (PBDS); from these two groups, two longhouses each were picked and visited.<sup>38</sup> In addition, effort was also made to extend the coverage of the sample size to as wide as possible an area of Menuan. In order to do this, time was also spent in Kapit town, picking at

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<sup>38</sup> For the Pelagus constituency, we relied on a number of informants whose knowledge was invaluable as inputs into the process of identifying and selecting the respondents from the Menuan river system; among them were *Mandal Tr. Kendawang* anak Sabang of Menuan; *Tr. Tuba* anak Kaing of Ng. Enselai, Menuan; Rev. Kamarau Kabus, of the Iban Methodist Church, Kapit; and numerous others who wished to remain anonymous.

random Ibans who came to the town; care was exercised to ensure that those picked were from the Menuan polling district; for this, Kendawang anak Sabang assisted. The distribution of samples collected from these different areas are as shown in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11  
Sampling in Pelagus Constituency.

Area	Sample Size
<u>Kapit Polling District:</u>	
Kapit District Council	10
District Office	5
Resident Office	5
Forestry Department	5
Education Department	5
Selirik Road Longhouses	50
<u>Menuan Polling District:</u>	
Menuan River System	50
<u>Pasar Kapit:</u>	20
Total	150

### III. Some Research Hypotheses and Questions

In Part I, several conclusions have been drawn about the changing social, economic and political nature of Iban dispositions. While some of these conclusions were based on contemporary manifestations of Iban behaviour, some were also refutations of assumptions which had been drawn by earlier scholars (e.g. the existence of regional cleavage between the traditional Second and Third Divisions by Leigh, and the *ulu*, semi-pasar and pasar divisions asserted by Searle). The basis of my criticisms was not the *de-facto* existence of these divisive factors,

but the fact that they had been overemphasised in relation to the political and socio-economic disparities among Ibans. Besides, I believe these factors have lost much of their strength in explaining contemporary socio-economic and political behaviour among Ibans.

Some of the hypotheses tested are as follows:

A. Regional cleavage:

In the immediate post-independence period, regional cleavage had been the overriding explanation of the rise of SNAP in the Second Division, which was then linked to the Saribas Ibans, and PESAKA in the Third Division supported by the Rejang River Ibans. Thus, I wanted to try to answer through my case study the research question: Does regional cleavage still play a significant factor in Iban politics? If so, what is the strength of this factor in influencing contemporary Iban political behaviour? In an attempt to provide answers to this, the political preferences of Ibans from Bukit Begunan (the Saribas area) and Pelagus (the Rejang area) are compared. These comparisons are confined to their voting preferences in the 1983 and 1987 state general elections, and their stated preferences for future elections.

In addition to the above, but not specifically to test for regional cleavages, comparisons are also



made of their political outlook on matters relating to the socio-economic and political issues facing Iban society.

B. Ulu, Semi-Pasar and Pasar division:

The *ulu*, *semi-pasar* and *pasar* divisions have been recorded as one of the major factors explaining differences in Iban socio-economic and political behaviour. The underlying factor in explaining these divisions was the degree of social and economic self-sufficiency of a particular community. More stable political behaviour was said to be characteristic of the *ulu* and, to a lesser degree, the *pasar* Ibans, while highly volatile behaviour was exhibited by the *semi-pasar* Ibans. Thus, the second research question is: To what extent does Iban socio-economic and political behaviour change in relation to their place of residence? If so, how does the residence factor relate to their behavioural patterns?

C. Leadership Values

With regard to the leadership question, the goals of the survey are as follows: (a) To find out what value Ibans attach to contemporary leadership--i.e. what are the factors that influence them to choose one leader over another?; (b) To compare the contemporary set of values attached to leadership

with that of the traditional ones in order to assess their relationships--i.e. to see whether there has been some changes in emphasis and if so, to what extent and in what direction?; and, (c) To find out what values are likely to be strongly stressed in future?

#### D. Dayakism

Dayakism is a recent phenomenon. Although the concept emerged in 1983, it was not until the 1987 state general election that it gained widespread popularity. However, there are some political analysts who may want to argue that the sentiment expressed by Dayakism had indeed emerged in the early 1970s and then found its vehicle of expression through SNAP. Although there is some validity in the latter argument, it must also be noted that there was a fundamental difference in the expression of communal solidarity then in SNAP and later in the PBDS. In the early 1970s, the expression had a less ethnic overtone. Although SNAP was dominated by Ibans, it had a multi-ethnic approach to politics; the loss of its non-Iban candidates apparently made the party appear to be more Iban. However, in the mid-1980s, the expression had a strong ethnic (Dayak) overtone; its appeal was confined solely to one community, by means of which the party sought, perhaps, to dominate the state government. This

orientation is similar to the political arrangements in the West Malaysian states where UMNO dominates the ethnic-based components within the Barisan Nasional.

With respect to the phenomenon of Dayakism, I wished to establish from my sample the extent to which Ibans had exhibited this sentiment in past elections and the likelihood that it would influence their future voting patterns. In addition, I also wished to establish where my sample stood in relation to commonly-held assumptions about Ibans. For example, it has generally been assumed that the majority of the young and "educated" Ibans were responding spontaneously to Dayakism and that this was the major source of support for the PBDS. While I have already dismissed such general assumptions in my earlier study,<sup>39</sup> I still wanted to demonstrate the extent to which such a pattern is indeed identifiable in my sample.

Consistent with the theme of Dayakism, I also sought to survey my samples' opinion on a host of other issues; for example, how they feel about "power-sharing", what they think are the sources of their political and socio-economic problems, and the ways these might be overcome.

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<sup>39</sup> Javan, 1987a, op cit.

#### IV. Background of the Samples: A Statistical Description

The survey comprised 300 respondents surveyed from Bukit Begunan and Pelagus. Of the sample, 257 (86%) comprised husband and wife teams and 43 (14%) single respondents, including 24 females whose husbands were not available, and 4 divorced household heads. Thus, in fact, the actual numbers of persons interviewed for the survey were 557; nevertheless, this study assumes that there is little significant variation between the opinions of husbands and their wives; as the Iban saying goes: *enti enda tetarit ka bini diri empu, baka ni ka narit orang bukai* (if one is unable to influence one's own wife, what else could be said of one's ability to influence others), implying, to a certain degree, that the unity of opinion between husband and wife is almost unquestionable.

Due to the research design, some of the background variables may not provide for relevant statistical correlations. Among some variables, there is a high degree of probability that they do not present contrasting patterns of distribution; for example, between the factors of *ulu-pasar* and the distance of the longhouses to major commercial centres, and between education and occupation. The absence of any significant correlation is rather obvious and can be explained by the close proximity of the two variables in question. For instance, conventionally, it is reasonable to assume that those who do not have any formal education tend to occupy more menial and lowly paid jobs, while those who have

some formal education tend to pursue a higher income career; in such cases, one variable only has been chosen for determining correlations with patterns of voting and the issues of the 1983, 1987 and future elections.

The statistical description of the sample is presented in two sections, as follows: (a) the general socio-economic background; and (b) the media of exposure. The first section comprises basic background variables; the second constitutes variables covering the modes of socialisation, which, directly or indirectly, influence the level of political and socio-economic consciousness of the respondents.

#### **A. The Socio-economic Background**

It has been established that generally socio-economic indicators provide one of the strongest bases for explaining behavioural variations. This is based on the presumption that different experiences mould different orientations and perceptions. The main socio-economic variables which were used in the survey are discussed below.

##### *1. Gender*

While the gender of the respondents was recorded, it should not be considered as an influential behavioural factor. For our purposes, the survey targeted both husband and wife teams for interview. Nevertheless, a total of 24 female respondents were recorded; 11 from Bkt. Begunan and 13 for Pelagus (Table 6.12).

Table 6.12  
Respondents by Gender.

Area	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan	139	93	11	7	150	100
Pelagus	137	91	13	9	150	100
Total	276	92	24	8	300	100

## 2. Age

The age factor constitutes an important variable in explaining variations in behaviour patterns. Unlike gender, there was no sampling restriction in the ages of the respondents selected. The age of the respondents was categorised into two groups, that is, 21 to 55 years old and 56 years old and above. The decision to classify ages into two categories with 55 years as the cut-off point is that this represents the mandatory retirement age from the civil service; my assumption was that those who are no longer in government employment may not be wary of freely expressing their political choices and affiliations, while those who are still in service tend to be constrained in their overall opinions and activities. The pensionable age also applies to those in the private sector, although their employment may not necessarily dictate their free expression; but where politics has a direct control over the operation of private firms, especially those that depend heavily on government contracts and concessions, there may be some degree of wariness of free expression. The respondent

distribution by age group is presented in Table 6.13. Overall, about 74% (222) of the respondents fell within the 21 to 55 age category; in Bkt. Begunan, it was about 69% while in Pelagus it was about 79%.

Table 6.13  
Respondents by Age Group.

Area	21 to 55		56 & Above		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	103	69	47	31	150	100
Pelagus	119	79	31	21	150	100
Total	222	74	78	26	300	100

### 3. Marital Status

Marital status is another factor which might provide some explanation for behavioural differences. But in most cases husband and wife teams were interviewed; thus, the majority of the respondents were married individuals (Table 6.14): 140 (93%) of the sample from Bkt. Begunan constituted married couples, and 141 (94%) from Pelagus.

Table 6.14  
Respondents by Marital Status.

Area	Married		Divorced		Single		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan	140	93	5	3	5	3	150	99
Pelagus	141	94	0	0	9	6	150	100
Total	281	94	5	2	14	5	300	101

#### 4. Size of the Bilik-family

With respect to the number of children, two categories were chosen, that is, 0 to 3 children as a small *bilik*-family, and 4 and more children as a large *bilik*-family. Overall, there is a balance in the study samples between those respondents who come from small-sized and those who come from large-sized *bilik*-families.

Table 6.15  
Respondents by Number of Children.

Area	0 to 3		4 and More		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	59	39	91	61	150	100
Pelagus	94	62	56	38	150	100
Total	153	51	147	49	300	100

#### 5. Pattern of Residence

The pattern of residence of the respondents can be measured by two methods, that is, either in terms of the rural-urban (*ulu-pasar*) dichotomy or the distances (or accessibility) of their home to major commercial centres. The survey took into consideration both methods. The second measurement did not attempt to replace the first, but merely to seek a more appropriate measure to explain behavioural differences. It is, in effect, a better measure because it does not simply classify all longhouses as rural but takes into account the accessibility of residents of a given longhouse to major urban centres. This measure is more appropriate as it



also makes some allowance for improvements in river communication, which have brought the *ulu* dwellers into closer contact with the greater pace and change of the urban centres. Tables 6.16 and 6.17 present the distribution of the respondents by their patterns of residence, based on the rural-urban classification and the distance of their home to major commercial centres respectively.

Table 6.16  
Respondents by Pattern of Residence: *Ulu* or *Pasar*.

Area	<i>Ulu</i>		<i>Pasar</i>		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan	139	93	11	7	150	100
Pelagus	97	65	53	35	150	100
Total	236	79	64	21	300	100

With regard to the distance of the respondents' home from major commercial centres, two classifications were used, that is whether accessibility was easy or difficult. Accessibility is defined in terms of travel times by car and boat between the respondents' home and major commercial centres: easy accessibility is defined by travel times of about 0 to 2 hours by car and/or 0 to 3 hours by boat, and difficult accessibility, 2 hours and more by car and/or 3 hours or more by boat. Based on accessibility, it can be observed that there is a fundamental change to the classification of these

respondents. Although the majority of the respondents have been described as *ulu* dwellers (about 79% [Table 6.16]) and hence, by definition, they are rural respondents who are assumed to live deep in the interior, in terms of the distance (or accessibility) to the *pasar*, about 63% (190) of them were actually within easy access of major commercial centres (Table 6.17); in Bkt. Begunan, about 57% and in Pelagus about 69%.

Table 6.17  
The Distance of the Respondents' Home to Major Commercial Centres.

Area	Easy		Difficult		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan	86	57	64	43	150	100
Pelagus	104	69	46	31	150	100
Total	190	63	110	37	300	100

The importance in the variation presented by the *ulu-pasar* dichotomy and accessibility to the *pasar* lies in the assumption that differences in socio-economic and political consciousness are generated, in part, by relative exposure to major growth centres; in this matter, accessibility is the better indicator.

#### 6. Occupation and Income

Two categories were used to classify respondents in terms of different status and class levels. With respect to occupation, they were either classified as farmers or

non-farmers; the latter include those in the private, government sector as well as those who were self-employed in non-farming activities (Table 6.18). For income, respondents were either grouped together as those who earned a maximum monthly income of not more than M\$500, and those whose monthly incomes exceeded M\$501 (Table 6.19).

Table 6.18  
Occupational Categories.

Area	Farming		Non-farming		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan	141	94	9	6	150	100
Pelagus	56	37	94	63	150	100
Total	197	66	103	34	300	100

Based on income, the majority of the respondents (56%) were in the lower income group (Table 6.19). In Bkt. Begunan, there was a higher percentage at about 74% whereas in Pelagus the majority of the respondents (58%) came from the higher income group. From the distribution in Tables 6.18 and 6.19, there is a correlation between occupation and income, that is, farming respondents from both areas tend to have low monthly incomes compared to the non-farming respondents.

Table 6.19  
Income Range.

Area	Below M\$500		M\$501 & Above		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan	82	74	29	26	111	100
Pelagus	53	42	72	58	125	100
Total	135	57	101	43	236	100

### B. Exposure to Media of Information

In addition to the socio-economic variables, the degree of exposure to media of information is important in moulding as well as changing socio-economic and political orientations and outlook. These exposures directly influence the level of a person's socio-economic and political awareness not only of his environment but also that of others; consequently, a person's conviction either becomes stronger or changes to reflect new information available.

Examining the pattern of ownership of household items such as a radio, television, outboard engine or car can furnish clues as to how much the owners are exposed to information; the first two items provide opportunities for news exposure while the third gives mobility leading to a similar end. In addition, membership in a political party and in social or welfare organisations also facilitates the receipt of information. And, of course, education provides not only direct access to information but also the means by which it can be interpreted.

### 1. Ownership of Household Items

Ownership of selected household items was an important measure not only of the socio-economic status of respondents but more importantly, it indicated both the degree of a person's exposure to the various media of information and physical and social mobility. Only about 7% (11) of the total sample did not provide responses to this section; in fact, all were respondents from Bkt. Begunan (Table 6.20). Radios and televisions seemed to dominate as the most likely sources of information; about 50% (75) of the respondents in Bkt. Begunan and about 80% (119) in Pelagus had radios and televisions; almost half (43% or 130) of the total respondents had both items.

Table 6.20  
Ownership of Household Items.

Items	Begunan		Pelagus		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Radio	38	25	8	5	46	15
2. Television	26	17	4	3	30	10
3. Outboard Engine	0	0	15	10	15	5
4. 1 and 2	75	50	55	37	130	43
5. 2 and 3	0	0	4	3	4	1
6. 1, 2 and 3	0	0	64	43	64	21
7. None of Above	11	7	0	0	11	4
Total households	150	99	150	101	300	99

### 2. Sources of Information

Based on responses to a question asking how information and news on current affairs were received, radios or televisions seemed to provide the single most important source of information for about 21% (62) of the

respondents, followed by *berandau* (talking--either casually or in *baum* [conferences]), which accounted for about 12% (36). The print media provides the least likely avenue of information.

As it stands, the information presented in Table 6.21a does not allow me to establish meaningful relationships with other variables, because it lacks details, such as length of viewing and the types of programmes that were commonly watched. While it would have been easy to collect information on viewing habits, such data tend to be biased in favour of urban-based respondents. It would tend to project urban-based respondents as being more exposed and informed since their viewing times are not restricted by the electricity supply. This differs from the rural-based respondents whose individually-operated electricity supplies, which normally run between 6:00p.m. to about 10:00p.m., interfere with the emergence of independent viewing habits. In addition, the heavy toll and long hours of work among rural farmers may reduce the likelihood that they would have much time for television viewing. This contrasted with urban settlers for whom the physical constraints of work are less. Thus, correlating the length of television viewing to other variables would give a misleading view of their relationships. For these reasons, the information in Table 6.21a was intended only to present a broadly descriptive background.

Table 6.21a  
Source of Information by Area

Items	Begunan		Pelagus		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Radio or TV	45	30	17	11	62	21
2. Newspaper	6	4	14	9	20	7
3. Talking	24	16	12	8	36	12
4. 1 and 2	2	1	30	20	32	11
5. 2 and 3	2	1	4	3	6	2
6. 1 and 3	61	41	38	25	99	33
7. 1, 2 and 3	10	7	35	23	45	15
Total households	150	100	150	99	300	99

Related to the formation of socio-economic and political orientations is the frequency with which political discussion took place not only within a *bilik*-family but especially between members of different *bilik*-families. Tables 6.21b and 6.21c present the frequency of such discussions. Generally, the majority of the respondents (167 or about 56%) did not hold any political discussion within their *bilik*-families (Table 6.21b). However, in Pelagus, there is a higher occurrence of *bilik*-families which did not hold any political discussion at all compared to those from Bkt. Begunan. Among the *bilik*-families that did hold them frequently, a much higher percentage was found among those from Bkt. Begunan than in Pelagus. With regard to the frequency of holding political discussion among peers, about 45% of the respondents held them at irregular intervals, about 26% frequently, while about 29% did not hold them at all. Again, it can be seen that more active discussion of

politics is found among the Bkt. Begunan respondents (Table 6.21[b]).

Table 6.21b  
Frequency of Political Discussion within the Bilik-family.

Area	Frequent		Infrequent		Never		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan	25	17	56	37	69	46	150	100
Pelagus	6	4	46	31	98	65	150	100
Total	31	10	102	34	167	56	300	100

Table 6.21c  
Frequency of Political Discussion With Peers.

Area	Frequent		Infrequent		Never		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan	56	37	60	40	34	23	150	100
Pelagus	23	15	75	50	52	35	150	100
Total	79	26	135	45	86	29	300	100

### 3. *Level of Education Attained*

The education indicators are an interesting set of factors to examine in relation to behavioural variations. In the history of Iban politics, the majority of the "educated" Ibans had always been seen to be highly united in opposition to the ruling party. Thus, the question was asked; How and to what extent do behavioural patterns vary with the level of education attained?



Data on education did not provide a comprehensive picture on the spread of education among the respondents. Perhaps this could have been anticipated from the nature of the targeted samples. Of the five categories, there was not a single respondent who had received a university education, including those from the urban-based samples (Table 6.22a). Of the two areas, the Pelagus samples had a wider spread of respondents in the four categories: about 37% (55) had no schooling, about 18% (27) primary education, about 39% (59) secondary education, and about 6% (9) vocational or trade training. This contrasted with Bkt. Begunan, where about 57% (85) respondents had had no schooling, about 39% (59) had primary and only about 4% (6) had secondary education; there were none who had had any vocational or trade training.

Although the spread of educational attainment differs considerably between the two areas, it is still possible to correlate it to other variables in order to find the degree of its influence on behavioural variations. However, before that can be done, the education factor has to be regrouped into only two categories: (a) no schooling; and (b) some schooling as presented in Table 6.22b. Then, not only can correlations with other variables be made but comparisons between and within the two areas can also be established.

Table 6.22a  
Level of Education Attained.

Level	Begunan		Pelagus		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No Schooling	85	57	55	37	140	47
Primary	59	39	27	18	86	29
Secondary	6	4	59	39	65	22
Vocational	0	0	9	6	9	3
Total	150	100	150	100	300	100

Table 6.22b  
Level of Education Attained.

Level	Begunan		Pelagus		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No Schooling	85	57	55	37	140	47
Some Schooling	65	43	95	63	160	54
Total	150	100	150	100	300	101

#### 4. *Membership in a Political Party*

Membership in a political party is another factor that directly affects the level of political awareness of an individual. However, the amount and level of information that may be passed on to party members directly depends on their status in the party hierarchy, and therefore their involvements in the day-to-day running of the party.

Table 6.23 shows party affiliations. In Bukit Begunan, for those in political parties, membership was spread across four parties. There were about 58% (68) PBB members, about 9% (11) SNAP, about 7% (8) SUPP and about 27% (31) PBDS. Therefore, the PBB has relatively wide

support among the Iban in the area, which is rather surprising considering the popularity of PBDS among the Ibans in the late 1980s, and also the fact that its Deputy President is a local and had represented Bukit Begunan in the last three assembly terms. However, it is apparent that party membership alone did not determine voting trends in the 1987 election, in which Daniel Tajeim, the PBDS Deputy President, lost by a margin of 57 votes.<sup>40</sup> Obviously, the balance was then held by SNAP and SUPP members in addition to a sizeable number of fence-sitters (about 21%).

In contrast to Bkt. Begunan, there was a more even spread of party membership among the 150 Pelagus respondents (Table 6.23). Competition for power is the prerogative of three political parties (i.e. SNAP, PBDS and the PESAKA-wing of PBB). However, unlike Bkt. Begunan, there is a higher percentage of respondents who expressed no party affiliation (about 42%). For the 87 who indicated their party preferences, about 36% (31) were from PBB, about 28% (24) SNAP, about 8% (7) SUPP and about 29% (25) PBDS. Although the ruling coalition comprises PBB, SNAP and SUPP, their total membership was still low at about 41% (62 out of the 87). Theoretically, while they may nominate and support a single coalition candidate from any one of the member parties, their membership alone is rather low to be able to give them an advantage in an election. However, while this may be

<sup>40</sup> This has been discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

generally so, it is not always the case. The political balance is held by the non-committed independents. As in Bkt. Begunan, the party membership pattern in Pelagus cannot provide the full explanation as to why the PBDS candidate had won by a 16 votes margin, when the party membership was low (at about 29%) compared to the PBB (at about 36%). Furthermore, the combined grassroots membership of the coalition partners was about two-and-a-half times (71%) more than the PBDS. Thus, explanation must lie in the wavering voter behaviour among the coalition memberships and the pivotal support of the independent voters.

The factor of party membership provides an explanation not only for the pattern of how people are likely to vote, but also reveals the reason for selecting one political party as opposed to another. In other words, it tells us not only how people expect to benefit from being a member of one party and not another as well as their political disposition.

Table 6.23  
Membership by Political Party.

Area	PBB	SNAP	SUPP	PBDS	Total	PARTY*	INDEP	Total
Begunan	68	11	8	31	118	118	32	150
	58%	9%	7%	27%	101%	79%	21%	100%
Pelagus	31	24	7	25	87	87	63	150
	36%	28%	8%	29%	101%	58%	42%	100%
Total	99	35	15	56	205	205	95	300
	48%	17%	7%	27%	99%	68%	32%	100%

Note: \* -Total Party-affiliated respondents.

#### 5. Membership in Social/Welfare Organisations

Another avenue for socio-economic and political awareness is through active participation in social organisations such as in the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and religious, youth and ethnic associations. Table 6.24 shows membership of 102 respondents in four social-based organisations. In both areas, the Dayak-based organisations (for example, Sarawak Dayak National Union [SDNU] and Sarawak Dayak Iban Association [SADIA]) appeared to be the most popular.

Table 6.24  
Membership by Social Organisations

Area	PTA	Religion*	Youth	Dayak	Total
Begunan	11	3	0	17	31
	35%	10%	0%	55%	100%
Pelagus	12	16	10	33	71
	17%	23%	14%	46%	100%
Total	23	19	10	50	102
	23%	19%	10%	49%	101%

Note: \* -Religious-based organisations

Having described the social background of the study samples, it is important to stress that the selection of those variables to be correlated with the voting patterns was determined by the research hypotheses and questions. The main variables are as follows: (a) regionalism, that is, Bkt. Begunan-Pelagus; (b) the *ulu-pasar* dichotomy;<sup>41</sup> (c) age group; (d) the level of education attained; and (e) the exposure to party politics.

## V. Research Findings

Responses of the surveyed *bilik*-families from Bukit Begunan and Pelagus were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSSx).<sup>42</sup> The analysis focuses heavily on discussing the percentage distribution of cross-tabulated data, and the tests of significance and correlation will therefore be determined from the values of the chi-square, degrees of freedom, lambda and the contingency co-efficient.<sup>43</sup> Conventionally, the level of significance for chi-square is established at 0.05 (or written as  $P=0.05$ ); any cross-tabulation with  $P<0.05$  is considered "probably significant",  $P<0.01$ , "significant"

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<sup>41</sup> While I earlier maintained that the distance to the pasar centres provides a better measure of behavioural variations than the simple *ulu-urban* one, upon cross-tabulating my data, I found that there were no significant variations based on either measure.

<sup>42</sup> SPSS Inc. (1988). *SPSS-X User's Guide*. (3rd ed.). Chicago: SPSS Incorporation; E.Terence Jones (1984). *Conducting Political Research*. (2nd ed). New York: Harper and Row.

<sup>43</sup> These readings are appended to the respective cross-tabulated data. The following abbreviations are used: Chi=chi-square; Sig.=significance; df=degree of freedom.

and  $P < 0.001$  "highly significant".<sup>44</sup> The lambda value is used to indicate the level of error reduction in any one cross-tabulation,<sup>45</sup> while the contingency co-efficient value establishes the degree of association or correlation between the two cross-tabulated variables.<sup>46</sup>

The survey was highly opinion-oriented and therefore the analysis will focus heavily on determining frequency (percentage) distributions of responses on various topical, contemporary political and socio-economic issues facing the sampled respondents. Where relevant, it will also take into account differences of opinion in relation to several key factors such as regionalism, the *ulu-pasar* dichotomy, age, the level of education and the party status of the sampled respondents. Some of these key factors have been elaborated in earlier sections on the main hypotheses of the case study and the statistical description of the samples.

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<sup>44</sup> See M.J. Moroney (1990). *Facts From Figures*. London: Penguin Books, especially Section 13; however, it must be noted that the shortcoming of chi-square is revealed when there are missing or zero observations in one or more boxes in the cross-tabulation, which then seriously impairs the computation of its value and therefore the significance of any given cross-tabulated data.

<sup>45</sup> For example, a lambda value of 0.25 means that an error reduction by 25% is recorded for given cross-tabulated data, see Jack Levin and James Alan Fox (1988). *Elementary Statistics in Social Research* (4th ed.). New York: Harper and Row, pp.350-54.

<sup>46</sup> For 2 by 2 tables, the phi co-efficient is used and for tables larger than 2 by 2, the contingency coefficients are more applicable; for example, coefficients of 0.10, 0.30, 0.60 and 1.00 indicate weak, moderate, strong and perfect associations or correlations respectively; the correlation can be either positive or negative, depending on the value computed for any given cross-tabulation, see Levin and Fox, 1988, op cit, especially Chapter 13.

Besides stressing frequency distributions as measures of the dispersion of opinions among the sampled respondents, the statistical tests of significance will show the strength of certain correlations in order to explain certain political and socio-economic attitudes and preferences among them. With regard to pre-existing assumptions about Iban political behaviour in general, this study seeks to examine these patterns in relation to the sampled household heads from Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus; in this respect, it hopes to demonstrate the extent to which these general patterns are exhibited by Ibans from the two case study areas.

The research findings are presented in three subsections: (A) Voting patterns and preferences; (B) Contemporary views on political issues; and (C) Contemporary views on socio-economic issues.

#### **A. Voting Patterns and Preferences**

In this section, voting patterns are discussed in relation to how the study samples had voted in the state general elections of 1983 and 1987. These two were chosen because they represented periods when significant developments occurred in Iban politics: in 1983, it was the erosion of Iban political consolidation behind SNAP, and in 1987, the resurrection of that unity in PBDS.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to establishing voting patterns, it is also the aim of the study to examine issues that had

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<sup>47</sup> For a more detailed discussion, refer to Chapter 4.



played an important part in influencing the voting behaviour of the respondents in the elections of 1983 and 1987 respectively. Here, respondents were asked to identify issues which had the most impact on their voting behaviour at the respective election periods. The respondents' behavioural patterns on voting and on issues will also be correlated with the selected background factors referred to above in order to establish the extent to which political behaviour varied with these factors.

Lastly, the respondents were also asked about their preferences in future elections, and factors that are likely to be significant in their choice of candidates.

#### 1. *The 1983 State General Election*

Due to factors already discussed earlier, competition between SNAP and PBDS was stiff as the leadership of the Iban community hung in the balance and had to be decided by the outcome of the election. In Bkt. Begunan (then Lingga), the election was a five-cornered fight, in which three independent candidates joined the fray;<sup>48</sup> and in Pelagus, it was a three-cornered contest with only one independent candidate. The overall pattern of voting in 1983 among the study samples seemed to indicate that they then favoured the continuity of Iban

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<sup>48</sup> Including Donald Lawan, who is the present assemblyman for the area; then he had stood as an independent and lost his election deposit because he had secured less than 10% of the votes polled by the winner.

leadership under SNAP; about 39% (95) of them said that they had voted for the party then, in contrast to about 28% (68) for the PBDS and about 33% (81) for independent candidates (Table 6.25). However, there was a difference in the voting patterns between the two areas: in Bkt. Begunan, the overall preference for independent candidates then was much higher at about 38% (53), followed by the PBDS at about 34% (47), and SNAP at about 28% (38);<sup>49</sup> in contrast, the voting preference in Pelagus then was much higher for SNAP at about 54% (57), the independent at about 26% (28) and the PBDS at about 20% (21).<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Based on the 1983 state general election, where the PBDS won, the voting pattern was as follows: PBDS polled 55.7% (4,562), SNAP 38.6% (3,167) and the three independents 4.4% (360); spoilt votes were 108; total vote cast was 8,197 (or 73% of the total electorate); Ibans then constituted about 70% of the total electorate.

<sup>50</sup> Based on the 1983 state general election, when SNAP won, the voting pattern was as follows: SNAP polled 50% (2,567), PBDS 39% (1,998) and the independent 9% (453); spoilt votes were 143; total vote cast was 5,161 (or 68% of the total electorate); Ibans then constituted about 80% of the total electorate.

Table 6.25  
Voting Preference by Party: 1983.

Area	SNAP		PBDS		Independent		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	38	28	47	34	53	38	138	100
Pelagus	57	54	21	20	28	26	106	100
Total	95	39	68	28	81	33	244	100

Chi=17.56                      df=2                      Sig.=0.0002<sup>51</sup>

Based on the voting patterns of the study samples, several conclusions can be drawn. First, support for the independents can be construed as a protest vote against the leadership tussle within SNAP, which had not only led to factionalism but also the resulting overall reduction of Iban political strength in a single party. When considered individually, the votes for each independent candidate were much lower compared to those that were cast for either SNAP or PBDS; thus, generally, regional preference then was for party-based candidates, that is PBDS in Bkt. Begunan and SNAP in Pelagus. Despite the general similarity in the pattern of support for party-based candidates in the two distinct regions, there was a clear difference in the strength of their support for either party; the preference for SNAP among the Pelagus respondents was much higher at about 54% compared to preference for the PBDS among the Bkt. Begunan respondents at about 34%. Secondly, despite the apparent

<sup>51</sup> P<0.01; Lambda=0.13; Co-eff=0.26, thereby indicating a weak relation between regionalism and party voting.

regional difference in the pattern of support that emerged from Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus, there was also little evidence to suggest that it was anything other than superficial. In both areas, there was no significant difference in choice between the PBDS or SNAP as both, although contesting against each other, were components of the ruling BN coalition. It was not an all-out contest in which either party risked being removed from the coalition. Thirdly, it can be said that the sample voting trends were conservative. Sampled respondents from both areas opted for continuity; in Pelagus, that meant voting for the party (i.e. SNAP) while in Bkt. Begunan it was for personality, that is Daniel Tajeim, who was the PBDS Deputy President and their former state assemblyman before defecting from SNAP. Fourthly, there was an apparent division of political orientation of the study samples. As my survey was a case study and therefore limited in scope, the extent to which there was a division in the wider Iban political world cannot be properly established from the sample. However, based on the actual voting pattern of the 1983 election, there was clear evidence to suggest that there was a generally stronger preference for PBDS than SNAP. For example, in three constituencies in the Second Division in which the two parties were contesting against each other, two were won by PBDS and one by SNAP;<sup>52</sup> in the Rejang area (the

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<sup>52</sup> PBDS won Lingga and Krian while SNAP won Batang Ai.

former Third Division), SNAP won two and PBDS four;<sup>53</sup> and in one Bidayuh and one Orang Ulu constituency, both were won by SNAP.<sup>54</sup> Hence, in these nine Iban seats alone, six were won by the PBDS and three by SNAP (Table 6.26). But from the survey, it was not at all apparent that there was a singular preference for the PBDS among the respondents from the two areas; even in Bkt. Begunan, in which the PBDS had a slight edge over the other party, its support of about 34% was rather low to indicate the general popularity the PBDS received state-wide. Fifthly, it can also be said that, based on the respondents' voting patterns then, there was little evidence to suggest that the PBDS created any significant impact among the respondents; in the wider Iban political world, this was also confirmed by the generally dismal performance of the PBDS.<sup>55</sup> Lastly, the leadership issue of the Iban community remained unresolved as neither the PBDS nor SNAP secured decisive support either in the study samples or in the actual election in 1983.

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<sup>53</sup> PBDS won Pakan, Machan, Ngemah and Baleh, while SNAP won Meluan and Pelagus.

<sup>54</sup> The Bidayuh and the Orang Ulu seats were Tebakang and Marudi. In two other seats that they contested in Dudong and Engkilili, both were lost to SUPP-backed independents.

<sup>55</sup> See also Jawan, 1984a, op cit.

Table 6.26  
Numbers of Seats Won in a Direct Contest: 1983.

Party	2nd Div.	3rd Div.	Others	Total
PBDS	2	4	0	6
SNAP	1	2	2	5
Total	3	6	2	11

Key: Div. -Division  
Others -one Bidayuh and one Orang Ulu seat.

In addition to asking how they had voted then, respondents were also asked to state the most important factor(s) that influenced their voting; that is, whether their choice of a candidate was dictated by: (1) their membership in political parties, (2) their kinship ties to candidates, (3) the opportunity to get rural projects instantly implemented, (4) the candidate's educational background, (5) the candidate's personality, or (6) Dayakism. Their responses are presented in Table 6.27a.

Table 6.27a  
Most Important Issues in 1983 Election by Area.

Issue	Begunan		Pelagus		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Party	69	50	60	57	129	53
Kinship	0	0	11	10	11	5
Project	25	18	9	8	34	14
Education	0	0	4	4	4	2
Personality	44	32	22	21	66	27
Total	138	100	106	100	244	101

Chi=27.46

df=4

Sig.=0.001<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup>  $p < 0.01$ ;  $\lambda = 0.06$ ;  $Co\text{-}eff = 0.31$ .

Overall, there were three very significant factors which influenced voting patterns. In order of importance, they were party membership (about 53% (or 129 of the 244 voting respondents), personality of the candidate (27% [66]) and the opportunity to secure development projects (14% [34]) (Table 6.27a). In Bkt. Begunan, only these three factors were of importance. However, among the Pelagus respondents, the factor of kinship was third in importance after party (57% [or 60 of 106]) and personality factors (21% [or 22]); about 10% (11) of the respondents said that kinship was important. The high percentage of responses for the party factor in both areas might have been generated by the intense leadership conflict between SNAP and PBDS, in which both parties, which before the election then commanded almost equal numbers of legislative seats, tried to outdo each other. From Table 6.27a, it is clear that even based on the political preference then, there was little difference of opinion on what the Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus respondents felt to be the most important voting factor in 1983, that is, party membership. However, there were no recorded responses for Dayakism, which was already apparent in the establishment of the PBDS. For example, for those who voted for party-based candidates (either SNAP or PBDS), an overwhelming majority considered the party factor to be important (i.e. 73% among those who voted SNAP and 72% among PBDS) (Table 6.27b). But for those who voted for the various independent candidates, a majority (51%)

considered the personality of the various candidates as important.

Table 6.27b  
Partisan Voting by Most Important Issues: 1983.

Party	I		II		III		IV		V		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
SNAP	69	73	3	3	16	17	0	0	7	7	95	100
PBDS	49	72	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	28	68	100
INDEP	12	15	4	5	20	25	4	5	41	51	81	100
Total	130	53	7	3	36	15	4	2	67	27	244	100

Chi=90.43

df=8

Sig.=0.001<sup>57</sup>

Key: I -Party            II -Kinship            III -Projects  
IV -Education        V -Personality

Despite the intense competition for the leadership of the Iban community and the rise of "Dayakism" through the formation of PBDS, Dayakism then was still relatively unimportant as an election issue--at least, among the respondents. The relative insignificance of the factor was also clear in the wider Iban political world; in the 1983 elections, the lacklustre performance by the PBDS certainly did not change that perception. Although the party had won relatively more Iban (Dayak) seats compared

<sup>57</sup>  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\Lambda = 0.27$ ;  $Co\text{-}eff = 0.52$ .



to SNAP, it could not convincingly claim to be the dominant political voice within the Iban community.

Having described the voting patterns and identified the important voting issues, my attention will now focus on determining whether the variation or similarity in the voting patterns and the opinion as to which issues were most important in 1983 can be further understood in terms of the respondents' residence, age, educational level and party status.

Based on the pattern of residence, it can be observed that stronger support for SNAP came from the *ulu* respondents from Pelagus (56%); in Bkt. Begunan, the larger proportion of the support from the *ulu* respondents went in equal proportion (about 35% each) to the PBDS and the independents; SNAP's support was slightly lower at about 30% compared to that of the PBDS (Table 6.28).

Table 6.28  
Voting Patterns by Residence Pattern: 1983.

Party	Ulu		Pasar		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan: <sup>58</sup>						
SNAP	38	30	0	0	38	28
PBDS	45	35	2	22	47	34
INDEP	44	35	9	78	53	38
Total	127	100	11	100	138	100
Pelagus: <sup>59</sup>						
SNAP	48	56	9	43	57	54
PBDS	21	25	0	0	21	20
INDEP	16	19	12	57	28	26
Total	85	100	21	100	106	100

With respect to the factor of age, the younger respondents in both areas threw their support behind SNAP; it was the largest proportion of about 37% in Bkt. Begunan and the majority of about 51% in Pelagus. In comparison to SNAP, support for the PBDS among this age group was considerable in Bkt. Begunan and relatively low in Pelagus (Table 6.29).

<sup>58</sup> Chi=10.04; df=2; Sig.=0.007; P<0.01; Lambda = 0.01; Co-eff = 0.26.

<sup>59</sup> Chi=15.13; df=2; Sig.=0.0005; P<0.001; Lambda=0.04; Co-eff=0.35.

Table 6.29  
Voting Patterns by Age: 1983.

Party	21 to 55		56 & Above		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan: <sup>60</sup>						
SNAP	35	37	3	7	38	28
PBDS	29	31	18	41	47	34
INDEP	30	32	23	52	53	38
Total	94	100	44	100	138	100
Pelagus: <sup>61</sup>						
SNAP	38	51	19	61	57	54
PBDS	13	17	8	26	21	20
INDEP	24	32	4	13	28	26
Total	75	100	31	100	106	100

Based on the social background factor of education, it was found that the larger proportion of about 43% of the Bkt. Begunan respondents, who did not have any formal education, supported the PBDS and the majority of about 52% of the same category of respondents in Pelagus supported SNAP (Table 6.30). For those respondents who had some formal education, the majority of them in both areas had supported SNAP; the strength of that support was lower in Bkt. Begunan (41%) than in Pelagus [56%]. In Pelagus, none of the 54 educated respondents indicated that they had voted for the PBDS.

<sup>60</sup> Chi=14.19; df=2; Sig.=0.0008; P=<0.001; Lambda=0.04; Co-eff=0.31.

<sup>61</sup> Chi=4.28; df=2; Sig.=0.12; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.20.

Table 6.30  
Voting Patterns by Education: 1983.

Party	Non-educated		Educated		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan: <sup>62</sup>						
SNAP	14	18	24	41	38	27
PBDS	34	43	13	22	47	34
INDEP	31	39	22	37	53	38
Total	79	100	59	100	138	100
Pelagus: <sup>63</sup>						
SNAP	27	52	30	56	57	54
PBDS	21	40	0	0	21	20
INDEP	4	8	24	44	28	26
Total	52	100	54	100	106	100

Briefly, a number of conclusions can be drawn for both Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus with respect to the pattern of support based on the four social factors of region, the *ulu-pasar* dichotomy, age, and education. First, based on region, and ignoring the clustering of support for the three independents, there was an almost equal strength of support for SNAP and the PBDS (refer to Table 6.25). But in Pelagus, the majority support accrued to SNAP and to a lesser degree the one independent candidate and the PBDS. It was concluded earlier that, although these patterns were different between the two regions, the limited basis of the competition between SNAP and the PBDS meant that the two parties did not represent clear and distinct

<sup>62</sup> Chi=10.87; df=2; Sig.=0.004; Lambda=0.10; Co-eff=0.27.

<sup>63</sup> Chi=35.42; df=2; Sig.=0.0001 (P=<0.001); Lambda=0.21; Co-eff=0.50.

alternatives for the electorate. Secondly, the respondents' pattern of support based on residence undermines the popular opinion that *ulu* Ibans are generally parochial and would readily support a Dayak-based party; while the case study cannot properly reject this popular notion about Ibans in general, it is clear that it was not true of the 300 respondents in the study. The survey also disproved the popular notion that the *pasar* Ibans, considered to be more politically conscious, would therefore, in large numbers, necessarily support a Dayak-based party; in both Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus, they had supported the independents. Thirdly, the findings concerning the age of the respondents in relation to the pattern of support also depart from generally accepted ideas. Younger persons were assumed to be more politically conscious and therefore would tend to support a Dayak-based party. However, my argument differs. Although I find the above assumption to have some substance, I am also convinced that the views of younger persons were guided by considerations which limited open expression. In other words, although they may not have eventually cast their vote for the ruling component, they tended to be more tactful by not being seen to be politically against the ruling coalition. Some, subject to pressure, may also have canvassed for the coalition. In the case study, it was found that support among the younger respondents in Bkt. Begunan was rather divided while in Pelagus, there was a strong preference for SNAP

(refer to Table 6.29). Finally, the respondents' behaviour pattern based on education also contradicted the general assumption that the higher educated Iban tended to support the PBDS. The larger proportion of those who had some formal education supported SNAP; the strength of the support was about 41% in Bkt. Begunan and about 56% in Pelagus (refer to Table 6.30). On the other hand, support among those who had no formal education was divided between two parties; the larger proportion of those in Bkt. Begunan supported the PBDS and the majority of those in the similar category in Pelagus supported SNAP.

## 2. *The 1987 State General Election*

Based on factors that led to the snap election in 1987 and the withdrawal of PBDS from the state coalition, political competition was not only stiff in Dayak, but in all constituencies as well, as the outcome of the elections would determine not only the new axis of state power but also the leverage that each of the ethnically-based parties within the new coalition would exercise in relation to the others.<sup>64</sup> In most Dayak constituencies, candidates from the caretaker government of BN Tiga (or simply BN3, less the PBDS) were opposed by those from PBDS. BN3 was represented either by candidates from the PBB, SNAP or SUPP; the PBDS contested in the majority of the Dayak seats while their opposition partner, PERMAS,

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<sup>64</sup> Much of this has been discussed in Chapter 4.

contested in some, concentrating mainly in the Malay-Melanau seats. With respect to Bkt. Begunan, the BN3 was represented by SNAP in a direct contest against the PBDS,<sup>65</sup> while in Pelagus BN3 was represented by a candidate from the PBB in a four-cornered contest with PBDS and two independents.

Table 6.31 presents the distribution of voting among the 263 respondents. The overall voting pattern shows that the coalition components (SNAP or the PBB) were preferred by an overwhelming 68% (179 voting respondents out of 263) and the PBDS by about 32% (84). In Pelagus, none of the respondents indicated that they had then cast their votes for either one of the two independents who contested there. In comparison to the 1983 election, the coalition appeared to have benefited the most from the independent vote, while the PBDS, on the other hand, gained a small percentage. Support for the coalition increased by about 29%, from about 39% in 1983 to about 68% in 1987; support for the PBDS increased by about 4% from about 28% in 1983 to about 32% in 1987.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> The status of the SNAP-nominated candidate in Bkt. Begunan has been discussed in the earlier section of this chapter.

<sup>66</sup> Refer to Tables 6.25 for the respondents' voting pattern in 1983 and 6.31 for the 1987 figures.

Table 6.31  
Sample Voting Patterns by Party: 1987.

Area	BN3*		PBDS		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	95	66	49	34	144	100
Pelagus	84	71	35	29	119	100
Total	179	68	84	32	263	100

Chi=0.44                      df=1                      Sig.=0.51<sup>67</sup>

Note: \* -Refer to SNAP in Bkt. Begunan and  
PBB in Pelagus.

A discussion of the voting pattern would be incomplete without examining it in relation to the respondents' area of origin. Comparison of votes polled by the coalition components in both areas showed that there was a much stronger preference for the PBB in Pelagus than there was for SNAP in Bkt. Begunan: the PBB received about 71% of the respondents' support compared to SNAP which was about 66% in Bkt. Begunan (refer to Table 6.31). Whether or not the weakness of SNAP in Bkt. Begunan could be linked to its declining popularity among the respondents there is rather difficult to say precisely. The ambiguous status of the party's candidate in 1987 had also caused much confusion among the respondents, since it was claimed in certain quarters that he was actually a PBB man on loan to SNAP.<sup>68</sup> Hence, there were SNAP members who were offended at the above

<sup>67</sup> Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.30.

<sup>68</sup> This has been further explored in an earlier section.



suggestion and had voted for the opposition in protest. In comparison to the 1983 voting pattern, only SNAP, contesting in Bkt. Begunan, appeared to have benefited from the switch of the independent votes; from a support of about 28% in 1983, SNAP increased its support to about 66% in 1987, while the PBDS's support remained constant at about 34% between the two election periods (see Table 6.32). In Pelagus, while the coalition seemed to have increased its support considerably, the PBDS appeared to have lost some of its support in comparison to its polls in the 1983 state election; in 1983, about 54% of the respondents supported the coalition (SNAP) while in the 1987 election it had increased to about 71%; for the PBDS it was about 29% in 1983 and about 20% in 1987.<sup>69</sup>

Table 6.32  
Respondents' Voting Pattern in 1983 and 1987.

Area	Year	BN		PBDS		INDEP		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	1983*	38	28	47	34	53	38	138	100
	1987*	95	66	49	34	0	0	144	100
Pelagus	1983*	57	54	21	20	28	26	106	100
	1987+	84	71	35	29	0	0	119	100

Sources: Tables 6.25 and 6.31.

Note: \* -SNAP + -PBB

<sup>69</sup> Refer to Tables 6.25 and 6.31.

While the respondents' voting pattern, which was generally favourable to the coalition, can be said to conform roughly to the actual voting pattern in Bkt. Begunan,<sup>70</sup> in which SNAP won, the same cannot be said of Pelagus, in which the PBB candidate lost to the PBDS.<sup>71</sup> For practical reasons, the question of compatibility of the respondents' voting pattern with the actual voting pattern is not of any major concern; when they correlate, it may serve as a strong enforcement of the actual voting pattern and when they do not, it is reasonably predictable because the case study only examined the Iban component of the mixed electorate in both areas. It must be remembered that Malays and Chinese also made up the total electorate in both constituencies. Similarly, a close resemblance between the two patterns of the sample and actual voting cannot be taken as an indication of how the total population in either area had actually voted then. However, what is interesting is the fact that in the 1987 election, not a single respondent in Pelagus voted for independents as opposed to the 1983 election. This change may be explained by the excitement generated by the all-out contest undertaken by the PBDS in 1987,

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<sup>70</sup> In the two-cornered contest in Bkt. Begunan, SNAP's candidate polled 4,468 (49.6%) votes and the PBDS' 4,409 (48.9%); there were 136 spoilt votes; total vote cast was 9,013 (or about 71% of the total electorate); Ibans then constituted about 70% of the total electorate.

<sup>71</sup> In Pelagus, the PBDS candidate polled 2,242 (35.7%) votes, PBB 2,226 (35.4%) and the two independents together, 1,722 (27.4%); there were 99 spoilt votes; total vote cast was 6,289 (or 76% of the total electorate); Ibans then constituted about 80% of the total electorate.

which differed considerably from 1983, when the contest was limited to constituencies that were being disputed between PBDS and SNAP. In 1987, the contest put up by the PBDS had far-reaching implications. For example, the PBDS challenge in 1987 may have been seen by the Dayak masses as a genuine effort to unite the Dayak community behind the party: to this end, the BN3 components were faced with the rising feeling of "Dayakism"<sup>72</sup> and consequently, because of the insignificant position and influence of Dayak leaders in the Chinese-dominated SUPP, the Malay-Melanau PBB and the Chinese-led SNAP, it was becoming increasingly difficult for the latter parties to appeal to the Dayak masses.<sup>73</sup> Accompanying this rising Dayak sentiment, there was also the rising expectation that the electoral success of the PBDS-PERMAS opposition pact would give Dayak leaders increased leverage in the new government, and consequently the ability to redress past injustices in their community.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the 1987 voting pattern of the respondents. First, it is clear that the political crisis in 1987 had affected the respondents' preference for independents, whom they had

<sup>72</sup> The concept of "Dayakism" has been briefly dealt with in Chapter 1.

<sup>73</sup> This feeling was also acknowledged by the newly elected SUPP Chairman and state minister Datuk Amar Dr. Wong Soon Kai, correspondence interview by author, 5 November 1990, in assessing the recently concluded 1991 parliamentary election, where SUPP (Dayak) candidates lost to the PBDS-backed (Dayak) independents in the Bidayuh and Iban areas of Serian and Selanggau respectively; in his words, "... extreme racial politics triumphed over a moderate and multi-racial stand of the SUPP."

abandoned in favour either of the ruling components or the PBDS. From earlier discussion, it was clear that the coalition components benefited tremendously from the shift in the voting preferences of the independent supporters, while the opposition PBDS gained marginal support in the Pelagus area only. In Pelagus, the decision to allow the PBB, instead of SNAP, to contest the area represented a comeback effort for the PESAKA component of the PBB.

Secondly, the rejection of the PBDS in Bkt. Begunan, as shown not only through the respondents' voting patterns, but also by the actual voting pattern, in which the SNAP candidate won, was particularly surprising for two reasons: (1) the party's defeat in Bkt. Begunan ran counter to the general popularity of the party elsewhere in the Dayak constituencies; (2) the defeated candidate in Bkt. Begunan was the PBDS' Deputy President, who, amid the rising feeling of Dayakism, represented that movement; his candidacy therefore had "symbolic significance" for the party and its supporters.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, my interviews with some members of the community there suggested several important reasons for his rejection: first, they felt that he had brought little development to the people there despite the fact that he had been their assemblymen for quite some time and had also occupied high positions in government;

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<sup>74</sup> Briefly, PBDS won 11 of the 17 Iban majority seats, two of the five Bidayuh seats and two of the three Orang Ulu seats, bringing their total Dayak seats to 15.

secondly, they felt that he had been given ample time to bring development to the area and that it was time to give a similar chance to another person.<sup>75</sup>

Lastly, the respondents' voting pattern highlights the dangers of generalising from the empirically observable pattern of behaviour in a section of Iban society. With regard to the sampled respondents, it is clear that their preferences ran against the general pattern thought to be prevalent among the Ibans. Even in Pelagus, in which the PBDS actually won the election, I found that popular support among the respondents was not for the PBDS but for the coalition.

With respect to the 1987 election, there were also some changes to the order and nature of the three most important issues that affected the respondents' overall voting pattern. As in 1983, the factor of party membership continued to be the most important consideration, despite the fact that in 1987, it only accounted for about 42% (110 out of 263) of the responses compared to about 53% in 1983 (Tables 6.33a for 1987 and 6.27a for 1983). The opportunity to get development projects implemented in the local area was the second issue with about 32% or 83 responses; this changed from 1983 when it was third with only about 14% of the responses. The third most numerous response was recorded

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<sup>75</sup> From interviews with several *tuai rumah* who had supported Daniel Tajeim while he was still an aspiring leader in SNAP; while some had abandoned him in favour of perceived changes that might result from being in PBB, there were also some who stuck to him hoping that better times were still to come.

for the factor of Dayakism, which accounted for about 16% (41 responses); the factors of personality, kinship and the education of the candidate accounted for about 5%, 4% and 2% respectively. Despite rising Dayak sentiment generated by the PBDS, Dayakism was not among the top priorities for Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus respondents.<sup>76</sup> Despite the overall similarity in the ranking of election issues in 1987 between the two groups of respondents, there are also some differences. When separate frequency distributions for Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus are examined, there are some fundamental differences. For the Bkt. Begunan respondents, as in 1983, only three issues were significant for them: the most important was the party factor (54%), followed by the prospect of development (31%) and Dayakism (15%); the changes between 1983 and 1987 comprised the easing out of the personality factor from second position in favour of development prospects, while Dayakism took third place. In Pelagus, responses were recorded for six issues; in order of importance, they were: (1) the prospect of development 32%; (2) party factor 28%; (3) Dayakism 16%; (4) personality 12%; (5) kinship 9%, and (6) education 3%. In comparison to 1983, it is clear that the emphasis on development had taken priority over the party factor, which took second place and Dayakism third. The changes were the relegation of

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<sup>76</sup> Again, this illustrates my earlier conclusion that Dayakism cannot be used as an explanation for the success of PBDS in Iban (or Dayak) constituencies, see, Jawan, 1987a, op cit.

the kinship and personality factors, which in 1983 came in second and third respectively.

Table 6.33a  
Most Important Issues in the 1987 Election by Area.

Issue	Begunan		Pelagus		Total*	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Party	77	(54)	33	(28)	110	(42)
Kinship	0	(0)	11	(9)	11	(4)
Project	45	(31)	38	(32)	83	(32)
Education	0	(0)	4	(3)	4	(2)
Personality	0	(0)	14	(12)	14	(5)
Dayakism	22	(15)	19	(16)	41	(16)
Total+	144	(100)	119	(100)	263	(101)

Chi=45.44

df=5

Sig.=0.001<sup>77</sup>

Table 6.33b shows a strong relationship between partisan voting and the election issues. Two relationships between voting pattern and election issues deserve mention as they reflect the type of issue that correlated with voting for either the coalition or the opposition. Although the general survey of election issues (in Table 6.33a) did not reveal any significant impact of "Dayakism", a closer examination of the election issues and partisan voting showed a strong relationship between "Dayakism" and voting for the PBDS on the one hand, and the "development projects" and voting for the ruling coalition on the other. For those who voted for the coalition in 1987, the most important considerations were development projects (48%), party

<sup>77</sup> P<0.01; lambda=0.13; Co-eff=0.38.

membership (39%), personality (6%), kinship (4%), and education (2%). On the other hand, for those who voted for the PBDS, the most important issues were "Dayakism" (49%), party membership (48%) and personality (4%). For the 83 respondents who considered it important to get "development projects", all had voted for the coalition, while all the 41 respondents who considered "Dayakism" to be an important consideration voted for the PBDS. With respect to the issues of kinship and education, the number of respondents who considered them to be important was rather marginal, although, based on the distribution, all of them had voted for the coalition.

Table 6.33b  
Party Voting by Most Important Issues: 1987.

Party	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	Total
BN3	67	7	83	4	11	0	172
*	(39)	(4)	(48)	(2)	(6)	(0)	(99)
+	(63)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(79)	(0)	(67)
PBDS	40	0	0	0	3	41	84
*	(48)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(4)	(49)	(101)
+	(37)	(0)	(100)	(100)	(21)	(100)	(33)
Total	107	7	83	4	14	41	256
*	(42)	(3)	(32)	(2)	(6)	(16)	(101)
+	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

Chi=131.70                      df=5                      Sig.=0.0001<sup>78</sup>

Key:        I    -Party                      II    -Kinship                      III    -Projects  
              IV   -Education                      V    -Personality                      VI    -Dayakism

Note: \* Row percentage + Column percentage.

<sup>78</sup> P=<0.001; Lambda=0.25; Co-eff=0.58.



Having described the patterns of voting and voting issues, let us now examine the respondents' social background in order to determine if it has any significance for our further understanding of the variation in the respondents' voting patterns. For purposes of discussion and comparison, the following variables are selected: (1) residence pattern; (2) age group; (3) education; (4) membership in political party.

Firstly, in considering residence, it appears that both the *ulu* and *pasar* respondents in Bkt. Begunan threw their support behind SNAP, which was the BN3 coalition component contesting in the area: the majority of about 65% of the *ulu* and about 82% of the *pasar* respondents supported SNAP in comparison to about 35% and 18% for the PBDS respectively (Table 6.34). Similarly, in Pelagus, there was majority support for the PBB, which was the BN3 coalition component contesting there; the strength of the support was about 68% among the *ulu* and about 78% among the *pasar* respondents. In both areas, support for the coalition components was higher among the *pasar* than the *ulu* respondents.

Table 6.34  
Voting Patterns by Residence Pattern: 1987.

Party	Ulu		Pasar		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan: <sup>79</sup>						
SNAP	86	65	9	82	95	66
PBDS	47	35	2	18	49	34
Total	133	100	11	100	144	100
Pelagus: <sup>80</sup>						
PBB	63	68	21	78	84	71
PBDS	29	32	6	22	35	29
Total	92	100	27	100	119	100

In comparison to 1983, there was a marked shift in the pattern of support among the *ulu* and *pasar*-based respondents. While the *ulu* respondents of Bkt. Begunan were generally divided in their support and the majority of those in Pelagus supported SNAP, the *pasar* respondents in both areas were generally backing the independents.<sup>81</sup> But in 1987, there was a pronounced shift among the *ulu* and *pasar* respondents towards the ruling coalition.<sup>82</sup> In 1987, the strength of the support for the coalition from the *pasar* respondents was much higher than that given by the *ulu*-based respondents; in Bkt. Begunan about 82% of the *pasar* respondents supported the coalition compared to

<sup>79</sup> Chi=0.68; df=1; Sig.=0.41; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.10.

<sup>80</sup> Chi=0.48; df=1; Sig.=0.49; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.09.

<sup>81</sup> Refer to Table 6.28.

<sup>82</sup> Compare the pattern of support among the *ulu* and *pasar*-based respondents in Tables 6.28 (for 1983) and 6.34 (for 1987).

about 65% among the *ulu*, while in Pelagus it was about 78% and 68% respectively.

Majority support for the ruling coalition was also found among both the younger and older respondents in both areas. In Bkt. Begunan, about 68% of the younger-age respondents supported the coalition compared to about 75% from the same age group in Pelagus (Table 6.35). Although much lower compared to the support from the younger respondents, nevertheless, support for the coalition was still <sup>high</sup> from the older respondents (about 62% in Bkt. Begunan and about 58% in Pelagus).

Table 6.35  
Voting Patterns by Age: 1987.

Party	21 to 55		56 & Above		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Bkt. Begunan:<sup>83</sup></b>						
SNAP	66	68	29	62	95	66
PBDS	31	32	18	38	49	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Pelagus:<sup>84</sup></b>						
PBB	66	75	18	58	84	71
PBDS	22	25	13	42	35	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100</b>

Generally, support for the coalition from the younger and older respondents had improved since the 1983

<sup>83</sup> Chi=0.32; df=1; Sig.=0.57; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.06.

<sup>84</sup> Chi=2.40; df=1; Sig.=0.12; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.16.

election. The shift of this support towards the coalition was more apparent and reflected a complete turnabout among the respondents of Bkt. Begunan, where about 68% and 62% of the younger and older respondents respectively supported the coalition compared to about 37% and 7% from the respective age groups in 1983.<sup>85</sup> In Pelagus, on the other hand, changes in 1987 were confined to an increase in the number and percentage of votes it secured in 1983.

With respect to the educational background of the respondents, majority support for the coalition also came from both categories, that is, among those who have and those who do not have formal education alike. In both areas, support for the coalition from the educated was much higher (about 73% in Bkt. Begunan and about 84% in Pelagus) compared to the percentages that came from the non-educated respondents, which was about 61% and 55% respectively (Table 6.36). In comparison to the pattern of support received by the coalition in 1983, this represented a sharp increase in the numbers of educated people voting for it.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Compare the pattern of the respondents' votes based on age factor in Tables 6.29 (for 1983 figures) and 6.35 (for 1987 figures).

<sup>86</sup> Compared Tables 6.31 and 6.36.

Table 6.36  
Voting Patterns by Education: 1987.

Party	Non-Educated		Educated		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan: <sup>87</sup>						
SNAP	50	61	45	73	95	66
PBDS	32	39	17	27	49	34
Total	82	100	62	100	144	100
Pelagus: <sup>88</sup>						
PBB	30	55	54	84	84	71
PBDS	25	45	10	16	35	29
Total	55	100	64	100	119	100

Briefly, besides confirming the generally favourable pattern of support for the coalition components, and the difference in the strength of support that each coalition component received in Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus, the examination of the voting pattern based on three social background factors also shows the extent to which popular support for the coalition cuts across different dichotomies within the pattern of residence, age and the education of the respondents. Generally, the support for the coalition, especially from the *pasar*, younger and educated respondents contradicted the generally accepted notion that these groups, being more politically and ethnically conscious, would be more inclined to support the Dayak-based PBDS. Thus, while the above proposition may be so, the 1987 voting pattern in my case study

<sup>87</sup> Chi=1.63; df=1; Sig.=0.20; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.12.

<sup>88</sup> Chi=11.28; df=1; Sig.=0.001 (P<0.01); Lambda=0.17; Co-eff=0.33.

certainly raises some doubts about the legitimacy of such a generalisation. Furthermore, there are two problems in the proposition that "Dayaks will vote for a Dayak party": first, it takes for granted the unity of the widely-dispersed Iban (Dayak) population and assumes that unity comes spontaneously; and secondly, it underrates the rational capacity of the Iban masses and assumes that one set of interests prevails among Iban individuals.

The wide dissension among Ibans was not only evidenced from the pattern of support shown by the respondents in the election of 1983 and 1987 but also by the votes in all Iban (Dayak) constituencies. Although the opposition PBDS had won 15 out of the 25 Dayak seats, many of them were won with only small variations in the majority counts of the party's candidates, thereby suggesting the minimal impact of "Dayakism" state-wide and the fact that divisions within the Iban community remained as wide as they had ever been. If the opinion of the respondents on issues can be taken as an indication of Iban opinions in the wider political world, it is clear that Iban dissension was also rooted in their different priorities at elections, for example, party membership, the opportunity to get development projects implemented, kinship relations, Dayakism, education and the personality of the candidate. An approach which emphasised the need to secure development projects was perhaps more practical for the development-starved Ibans

than to be seduced by the rhetorical appeal of "Dayakism" which "promised" ever greater levels of development.

### 3. *Future State Elections*

To the question "Suppose the state general election is to be held today and that all political parties are contesting in your area, which political party would you be most likely to vote for?" About 32% (96) said that they would vote for the PBB compared to about 9% (27) for SNAP, 4% (12) for SUPP and about 29% (87) for the PBDS; there were about 26% (78) undecided responses (Table 6.37). From the overall pattern of preference for the various political parties, it is clear that the undecided responses should play a dominant role in determining which of the political parties would be likely to secure a majority among the respondents. Even after taking into account the fact that PBB, SNAP and SUPP are in the same ruling coalition, which then brings their total strength to about 45%, the uncommitted responses would still determine the outcome of a future election. Thus, theoretically, if winning an election is going to be decided by these 300 respondents, the question as to which party triumphs depends on drawing crucial support from the "fence-sitters".

However, the influence of the undecided responses in Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus differs considerably. In Bkt. Begunan, the level of undecided responses is much lower at about 18% in comparison to about 34% in Pelagus, where

they are also much higher than the support pledged to any one political party. Therefore, the impact of the fence-sitters on the outcome of a contest would be considerable in Pelagus. In addition, it can also be observed that the preference for the PBDS among Bkt. Begunan respondents is surpassed by preference for the PBB by a thin margin of about 1%; and in Pelagus, the margin was slightly larger at about 5%.

Table 6.37  
Pattern of Future Voting Preference: by Area and Party.

Area	PBB		SNAP		SUPP		PBDS		UN/D		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	54	36	8	5	8	5	53	35	27	18	150	99
Pelagus	42	28	19	13	4	3	34	23	51	34	150	101
Total	96	32	27	9	12	4	87	29	78	26	300	100

Chi=18.85

df=4

Sig.=0.0001<sup>89</sup>

Key: UN/D -Undecided.

If the general pattern of the respondents' preferences can be taken as an indication of how the Ibans of Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus are going to vote in future elections, several conclusions are apparent. First, it is clear that SNAP is losing ground in both areas in which the party had enjoyed popular support since the mid-1970s. In Bkt. Begunan, the party lost that popular support when Daniel Tajeim left to found the PBDS in 1983; consequently, Tajeim also won the seat for the

<sup>89</sup> P=<0.001; Lambda=0.12; Co-eff=0.24.



PBDS in an election in the same year. Although SNAP won back the seat from the PBDS in 1987, the party status of the assemblyman who won the seat for SNAP was ambiguous; many believed that he was closely associated with the PBB. In Pelagus, the PBB took over from SNAP in fielding the candidate on behalf of the coalition in what can be seen as an attempt to revive the politically dormant PESAKA-wing within the PBB; however, the attempt then was not successful.

Secondly, it does appear that in a future election, Iban candidates from the PBB would stand a better chance of retaining Bkt. Begunan for the coalition and at the same time provide a credible challenge to the PBDS in Pelagus. These conclusions may also be further strengthened by several suppositions: (1) it may be timely for the PESAKA-wing of the PBB to make a comeback in Pelagus; (2) after such a long absence from the area, the old resentment against the PESAKA may have subsided; and (3) a more prudent choice of candidate is necessary if the PESAKA-wing of the PBB is to stand any chance of a successful comeback; this may entail looking for candidates outside those who may have close ties to the former traditional leaders of PESAKA.

Thirdly, the future pattern of preference also shows to some extent that Iban politics transcends parochialism. However, this is not meant to suggest that there was a period following independence when Iban politics was parochial. On the contrary, it has been

broad-based and continues to be so; for example, while the majority of the Ibans have supported the multi-ethnic SNAP, there are some who supported the Malay/Melanau-dominated PBB and the Chinese-dominated SUPP. Even during the intense period of Dayakism in the late 1980s, some Iban support, either in terms of the presence of Iban leaders, the numbers of Iban (or Dayak) seats won by non-Iban-based parties, and votes polled in Iban (or Dayak) constituencies, has continued to be found in other non-Iban based parties.

Fourthly, the future pattern of the respondents' preference repudiates the widely-held suggestion that the tide of "Dayakism" might spread within the Iban (Dayak) community and that the probability of "an Iban (Dayak) voting for an Iban (Dayak)" or "for an Iban- or Dayak-based party" would also increase. However, the probability of that happening does not depend solely on raising "Dayak" sentiment; proponents of "Dayakism" have agreed that it also depends on a rise in the socio-economic status of Ibans in general. When the level of poverty declines, so the argument goes, people will be less dependent on government handouts, thereby giving them greater freedom to exercise their voting rights. For the proponents of "Dayakism", these rights would, naturally, translate into votes for the Dayak-based party. While the above argument is theoretically sound, one must also not lose sight of the fact that poverty is a relative phenomenon; hence, there will always be some

elements in Dayak society who are "poor" and hence, dependent on government assistance.

Finally, the pattern of future political preferences cannot be used to hypothesise much about the propensity of the respondents to support the SUPP. Iban SUPP members in Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus are quite realistic about their role, which is to support the coalition representatives there; they know that their party would not stand a chance compared to either the PBB or even SNAP. The party's influence in the two areas has faded since it last contested there in the first direct election in 1969.

With regard to future elections, respondents were also asked to rate how strongly they felt about the following factors: (1) ethnicity, that is, the extent to which the ethnic background of a candidate is an important consideration (for example, would they vote for a non-Iban should their party support a non-Iban candidate in their area?); (2) locality, that is, the extent to which they would vote for an Iban candidate who comes from outside their area; and (3) education, that is, the extent to which education is an important prerequisite for their support of a candidate.

In respect of the ethnic factor, there is a strong overall tendency to reject non-Iban candidates, even though the candidate may be supported by the party. Of the 300 respondents, about 35% (104) said they would not vote for a non-Iban compared to about 27% (82) who would;

there were about 38% (114) uncommitted responses (Table 6.38). The majority of the uncommitted respondents said that they would have to evaluate the circumstances under which non-Iban have been nominated; only if they were satisfied with the reason given by the party, might they follow the party line and, in any event, they still preferred an Iban. Thus, it is fairly safe to say that in Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus, there is only a very slim chance that a non-Iban would win in an Iban majority constituency, in contrast to the case of Engkilili in 1987. The general resentment against non-Iban candidates was much stronger in Pelagus, where 35% (53) said they would definitely not vote for them compared to about 19% (28) who would; however, in Bkt. Begunan, the opinion is almost equally divided between those who would and would definitely not vote for an Iban. In both areas, there are equally high proportions of uncommitted respondents, about 30% in Bkt. Begunan and about 46% in Pelagus.

Table 6.38  
Probability of Voting for a Non-Iban Candidate.

Area	Yes		Undecided		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	54	36	45	30	51	34	150	100
Pelagus	28	19	69	46	53	35	150	100
Total	82	27	114	38	104	35	300	100

Chi=13.34                      df=2                      Sig.=0.0001<sup>90</sup>

In addition, if these future preferences can also be taken as some indication of how Ibans in the wider political world feel, it is unlikely that the historic event of 1987 in Engkilili will ever be repeated. At that time, it showed the weakness of the PBDS in succumbing to suggestions that the candidacy be given to a Chinese to represent them. There was the allegation that the Chinese who stood in Engkilili was actually a member of PERMAS. But it was more practical that he be seen as a PBDS candidate in view of the fact that he stood in an Iban majority constituency. However, the PBDS defended the decision and argued, perhaps rather curiously, that the ability of the Chinese to retain his seat for the group showed the extent to which Dayakism was working for them.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, the event can also be construed as a snub for the Ibans in general, and of Engkilili in

<sup>90</sup>  $P < 0.001$ ;  $\Lambda = 0.10$ ;  $Co\text{-}eff = 0.21$ .

<sup>91</sup> PBDS Vice-President and Publicity Chief, and Member of Council Negeri (Baleh) Dr. James Jemot Masing, interview by author, 14 June 1990, Kuching; refer also to Chapter 4 where there is a more detailed discussion.

particular; does this mean that there were no Ibans capable of representing them in the area? If the voters of Engkilili had displayed unimpaired rationality and had not been swept along easily by the wave of Dayakism, the selection of a non-Iban candidate could have backfired on the party.

The strong resentment against non-Iban candidates in Iban majority constituencies cuts across the differences in the political preferences of the respondents (see Table 6.39). Excluding SNAP and the SUPP from our discussion,<sup>92</sup> it can be seen that the would-be PBDS supporters display a somewhat higher degree of party solidarity than potential supporters of the PBB. Of the 87 who said they would vote for the PBDS, 44% (38 out of 78) would also vote for a non-Iban party candidate compared to about 18% (27 out of 96) of the PBB supporters. Nevertheless, there is also a sizeable number of PBDS supporters (36 or 41%) who would not do so and it is even higher at about 52% (50) from among the PBB supporters.

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<sup>92</sup> The low overall probable voter turnout for both parties is rather inconsequential and therefore it tends to skew our observation.

Table 6.39  
 Future Party Preference  
 and the Issue of Non-Iban Candidacy.

Area	Yes		Undecided		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	17	18	29	30	50	52	96	100
SNAP	2	7	25	93	0	0	27	100
SUPP	8	67	4	33	0	0	12	100
PBDS	38	44	13	15	36	41	87	100
Undecided	17	22	43	55	18	23	78	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Chi=90.39                      df=8                      Sig.=0.0001<sup>93</sup>

The extent to which opinion on a particular issue differs according to party preference requires further analysis in order to examine the degree to which differences are based on the respondents' area of origin. In other words, does opinion on, say the issue of non-Iban candidacy, differ between those respondents who support the same political party but who come from either Bkt. Begunan or Pelagus? Attention is given to two political parties, namely the PBB and the PBDS, and the uncommitted responses. From distributions presented in Table 6.40, it is clear that while there are some similarities, there are also differences. Among those who would vote for the PBB, there is a strong agreement between respondents of the two areas on the issue of a non-Iban candidate contesting in an Iban majority constituency; of the 54 respondents in Bkt. Begunan and

<sup>93</sup>  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\Lambda = 0.22$ ;  $Co\text{-}eff = 0.48$ .

42 in Pelagus likely to vote for the PBB, about 50% (27) and 55% (23) of the respondents respectively, said that they would reject a non-Iban candidate, even though the candidate may have the support of the party; in contrast, there are about 17% (31) of the respondents in Bkt. Begunan who would also stick by the party even if that meant voting for a non-Iban party candidate, while none in Pelagus would do so. On the other hand, a similar pattern, as described above, is also found among those respondents who would vote for the PBDS. An almost equal proportion of about 40% in Bkt. Begunan and 44% in Pelagus was against the idea of a non-Iban candidate; while about 30% in Bkt. Begunan and only 8% in Pelagus are receptive to the idea. Among the fence-sitters, there is a general indecision on the matter; of the 27 undecided respondents from Bkt. Begunan, about 85% (23) have no firm commitment on the matter, while the 51 from Pelagus are about evenly divided--that is, 31% (16) would support, 39% (20) were undecided, and another 29% (15) would reject the idea of a non-Iban candidate contesting in their area.



Table 6.40  
 Future Party Preference  
 and the Issue of Non-Iban Candidacy by Area.

Area	Yes		Undecided		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bkt. Begunan: <sup>94</sup>								
PBB	17	31	10	19	27	50	54	100
SNAP	2	25	6	75	0	0	8	100
SUPP	4	50	4	50	0	0	8	100
PBDS	30	57	2	4	21	40	53	101
Undecided	1	4	23	85	3	11	27	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>
Pelagus: <sup>95</sup>								
PBB	0	0	19	45	23	55	42	100
SNAP	0	0	19	100	0	0	19	100
SUPP	4	100	0	0	0	0	4	100
PBDS	8	24	11	32	15	44	34	100
Undecided	16	31	20	39	15	29	51	99
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100</b>

The importance of the factor of ethnicity lies in the extent to which Iban or rather the respondents' political outlook is parochial or broad-based. Partly, this line of inquiry was introduced because Ibans in at least two areas, that is, in Igan and more recently in Engkilili, had voted for non-Iban candidates despite the fact that they are both Iban majority constituencies. From my findings, it can be concluded with some confidence that Iban politics as exhibited by the respondents is not generally parochial; even in the wider Iban political world, non-Ibans have, since independence,

<sup>94</sup> Chi=77.64; df=8; Sig.=0.001 (P<0.001); Lambda=0.32; Co-eff=0.58.

<sup>95</sup> Chi=60.04; df=8; Sig.=0.0001 (P<0.001); Lambda=0.11; Co-eff=0.53.

been elected from Iban constituencies, whereas the same has not been so in the Chinese and the Malay/Melanau constituencies.

The second factor examined in relation to future voting is regionalism or locality; respondents were asked to indicate whether a candidate's area of origin would affect their preference? In other words, can an individual, who maintains residence outside either Bkt. Begunan or Pelagus, contest in either area and not suffer discrimination? Of the 300 respondents, about 44% (132) said that they would not stress the factor of origin compared to only about 10% (30) who said they would; meanwhile, about 46% (138) of the respondents were undecided on the issue (Table 6.41). But for the undecided, the political background of the non-local candidate was emphasised strongly; in any case, they would only be likely to vote for the non-local candidate if his track record appeared to be better than that of their previous local representative and that, in addition, he had the support of their respective parties; indirectly, this would mean that a relatively unknown party-sponsored outsider would stand little chance compared to, say, another political lightweight but locally-based candidate. The marginal consideration given to the factor of residence in Bkt. Begunan can be seen from the responses of about 57% of the sample who would not consider it to be a hindrance in supporting a non-resident candidate compared to about 31% in Pelagus;

furthermore, there is also a much lower uncommitted response of about 32% in Bkt. Begunan compared to about 60% in Pelagus.

Table 6.41  
Probability of Voting or a Non-Resident Iban Candidate.

Area	Yes		Undecided		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	86	57	48	32	16	11	150	100
Pelagus	46	31	90	60	14	9	150	100
Total	132	44	138	46	30	10	300	100

Chi=25.04                      df=2                      Sig.=0.0001<sup>96</sup>

The general reception to the possibility of supporting non-local candidates cuts across party differences. Among the 96 who were likely to vote for the PBB, 38 (about 40%) of them were unequivocal in their support for such a candidate compared to 17 (about 18%) who were not (Table 6.42). Among those who were likely to vote for the PBDS, about 71% (62) would support a non-local candidate compared to about 7% (6) of them who would not. The majority of those who were likely to support SNAP and the fence-sitters had no firm commitment on the issue. The 12 respondents likely to support SUPP were all favourable to the suggestion.

<sup>96</sup> P=<0.001; Lambda=0.26; Co-eff=0.28.

Table 6.42  
 Future Party Preference and  
 the Issue of a Non-Resident Iban Candidate.

Area	Yes		Undecided		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	38	40	41	43	17	18	96	101
SNAP	4	15	21	78	2	7	27	100
SUPP	12	100	0	0	0	0	12	100
PBDS	62	71	19	22	6	7	87	100
Undecided	16	21	57	73	5	6	78	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Chi=82.76

df=8

Sig.=0.0001<sup>97</sup>

The third issue was the educational background of a candidate. An overwhelming percentage of the respondents from both areas considered the factor to be an important asset for their prospective representatives (Table 6.43). Of the 300 respondents, about 87% (261) said that they would be looking for candidates with some level of formal education; the importance of education was stressed by about 92% (138 out of 150) of the respondents from Bkt. Begunan and by about 82% (123) from those in Pelagus.

<sup>97</sup> P=<0.001; Lambda=0.26; Co-eff=0.46.

Table 6.43  
The Importance of the Candidate's Educational Background.

Area	Yes		Undecided		No		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	138	92	3	2	9	6	150	100
Pelagus	123	82	12	8	15	10	150	100
Total	261	87	15	5	24	8	300	100

Chi=7.76                      df=2                      Sig.=0.02<sup>98</sup>

The similarity in the pattern of responses to the importance of the educational factor transcended party preference. The majority of the respondents, regardless of which party they would be likely to support in future elections, shared the view that the educational background of a candidate is going to play an important part in their future considerations (Table 6.44). While education will undoubtedly continue to be important, there are also other considerations which will demand attention; they are kinship, party affiliation, the prospect of getting development projects, and the personality of the candidates themselves. We have seen the importance of these factors in my previous discussion, and the fact that their magnitude varied according to the prevailing mood in which elections were held. It is not only difficult to anticipate what issues are likely to be most important in future elections but it is also unreasonable to expect an analysis of them. The difficulty in hypothesising revolves around two

<sup>98</sup>  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\Lambda = 0.08$ ;  $Co\text{-}eff = 0.16$ .

factors. First, there is an inevitable point of departure between the general frame of reference and that of the respondents; this is to say that what was thought to be the general expectation in a particular situation may differ from the expectations of an individual or group of individuals. Secondly, the social and political climate preceding elections determines to a large extent the shape of that working framework. To some extent, the 1987 state general elections may serve to illustrate my point. In my earlier discussion, we have seen the problem of assuming that "Dayakism" would generate strong ethnic sentiments among the Iban, given the unexpected defeat of Daniel Tajeim in Bkt. Begunan. Generally, it was assumed that Dayakism was responsible for the success of PBDS; this seems reasonable if we merely consider the number of seats the party had won in the Dayak constituencies. But I have shown that it is highly probable that the PBDS election success can be more appropriately explained by the factor of personality;<sup>99</sup> in that respect, I have examined the vote changes for the PBDS candidates individually and found the variations--that is, what they had polled in previous elections compared to what they polled in 1987--to be insignificant. Thus, while there were some Ibans who may not have been influenced by "Dayakism", it should not be construed as in some way irrational behaviour. When confronted with the difficult choice of voting for either continuity or change, they

<sup>99</sup> Javan, 1987a, op cit.

opted for continuity and voted for their former local representatives who then had either stayed with the BN3 coalition or switched to the opposition camp.

Table 6.44  
Voting Preference and the Importance of  
the Candidate's Educational Background.

Area	Important		No Opinion		Not Important		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	85	89	8	8	3	3	96	100
SNAP	23	85	0	0	4	15	27	100
SUPP	12	100	0	0	0	0	12	100
PBDS	74	85	7	8	6	7	87	100
Undecided	67	86	0	0	11	14	78	100
Total	261	87	15	5	24	8	300	100

Chi=19.06                      df=8                      Sig.=0.01<sup>100</sup>

There are several brief observations on the opinion of the respondents regarding the issues of non-Iban candidacy in Iban majority constituencies, candidacy of non-resident Iban, and the importance of the educational background of future candidates. First, there is a strong tendency to reject non-Iban candidates in Iban majority constituencies. The opinion is strongly shared by the respondents from Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus. The exception to the above observation was expressed only by the respondents from Bkt. Begunan who would be likely to support the PBDS in future elections (refer to Table 6.40). Secondly, the proposition of a non-Iban resident candidate contesting was favourably received only by

<sup>100</sup> p=<0.05; Lambda=0.03; Co-eff=0.24.

respondents from Bkt. Begunan. It was particularly well received by those who are most likely to support the PBDS (Table 6.42).<sup>101</sup> Thirdly, there was a unanimous consensus among all respondents from both areas that the educational background of future candidates is important (refer to Tables 6.43 and 6.44).

Having discussed the respondents' future voting preferences and a number of issues that might dictate their future political behaviour, attention will now focus on the extent to which their future choices are influenced by differences in their social background--that is, the pattern of residence, age and the level of education of the respondents.

Table 6.45 presents the pattern of pledged support among the respondents who come from the *ulu* and the *pasar*. With respect to the *pasar* respondents, the majority, about 55% (6 out of 11) pledged support for the PBB, about 27% (3) were undecided, and about 18% (2) were likely to vote for the PBDS; in Pelagus, there were about 42% uncommitted responses, about 32% pledged support for the PBB compared to about 19% for the PBDS. In contrast, the *ulu* respondents tended to divide their support evenly between the coalition PBB and the opposition PBDS, aside from the larger proportion of about 30% uncommitted responses in Pelagus. Support for SNAP and SUPP was

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<sup>101</sup> This observation, of course, ignores the preference of those who are likely to support SUPP, which is the least likely of all the coalition components to contest in either area.



generally minimal, except for the pledged support of about 15% for SNAP from the *ulu* respondents in Pelagus.

Table 6.45  
Pattern of Pledged Support by Pattern of Residence.

Party	Ulu		Pasar		Ulu		Pasar	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	(Bkt. Begunan) <sup>102</sup>				(Pelagus) <sup>103</sup>			
PBB	48	35	6	55	25	26	17	32
SNAP	8	6	0	0	15	15	4	8
SUPP	8	6	0	0	4	4	0	0
PBDS	51	37	2	18	24	25	10	19
Undecided	24	17	3	27	29	30	22	42
Total	139	101	11	100	97	100	53	101

There is a general division in the pledged support of *ulu* respondents in Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus compared to a more clear-cut support for a particular faction among the *pasar* respondents. Among the *ulu* respondents, support for the coalition component PBB and the opposition PBDS was about equal in strength in both areas. In contrast, the majority of the *pasar* respondents in Bkt. Begunan pledged support for the PBB, while in Pelagus, the larger proportion was uncommitted.

In Bkt. Begunan, support for the PBB and the PBDS seems to be evenly spread among the two age categories: among the 103 respondents who fell within the 21 to 55 age category, an equal proportion of about 32% (33) pledged their support for both parties and among those of

<sup>102</sup> Chi=3.96; df=4; Sig.=0.41; Lambda=0.03; Co-eff=0.16.

<sup>103</sup> Chi=6.25; df=4; Sig.=0.18; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.20.

56 years old and above, the difference between the proportion that pledged support for the PBB, which was about 45%, and the PBDS, about 43%, was rather narrow for any precise conclusion (Table 6.46). On the other hand, the fence-sitters comprised mainly those in the 21 to 55 age category, at about 22% compared to about 9% from those of 56 and above. In Pelagus, there was, however, a generally uneven distribution of support between the two age categories; a larger proportion of the pledged support from the 21 to 55 age category was shared between the PBB and the fence-sitters, while the bigger proportion from the 56 and above category was shared equally between the PBDS and the uncommitted.

The differences between the patterns of support between the two regions may be explained by the different employment opportunities there. In Pelagus, besides traditional shifting cultivation, the people are generally dependent on logging activities and there are limited vacancies in the local authority. Unlike Bkt. Begunan, the area is largely covered by steep, hilly and mountainous terrain, thereby making large-scale agricultural activities virtually impossible.<sup>104</sup> Hence, there was perhaps a tendency to be silent about one's support if it was not for the ruling coalition in order not to damage one's prospects of getting help or finding work with government or government-related bodies. This

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<sup>104</sup> Kapit Divisional Development Officer Joshua Melling, interview by author, 13 July 1990, Resident's Office, Kapit.

contrasted with the 56 and above category, in which support for the coalition component was insignificant. Thus, it is clear that for those who are still of employable age, there is the tendency to either support the government or simply remain neutral. Such a line of thinking did not matter so much to those above 55--i.e. of retirement age; uninhibited, they expressed themselves without fear. This differs from the Bkt. Begunan respondents' who were not overdependent on opportunities provided by private firms and local authorities; of course, their closeness to Kuching opened greater opportunities compared to those respondents in Kapit. Hence, it can be argued that they were, to some extent, more free to express themselves.

Table 6.46  
Pattern of Pledged Support by Age.

Party	(Bkt. Begunan) <sup>105</sup>				(Pelagus) <sup>106</sup>			
	21 - 55		56 & >		21 to 55		56 & >	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	33	32	21	45	37	31	5	16
PBDS	33	32	20	43	25	21	9	29
Undecided	23	22	4	9	42	35	9	29
SNAP	6	6	2	4	15	13	3	13
SUPP	8	8	0	0	0	0	4	13
Total	103	100	47	101	119	100	31	100

<sup>105</sup> Chi=9.67; df=4; Sig.=0.05; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.25.

<sup>106</sup> Chi=18.31; df=4; Sig.=0.001; Lambda=0.03; Co-eff=0.33.

Among the respondents who had no formal education, the PBDS received a larger proportion of their pledged support, about 38% of the respondents in both Bukit Begunan and Pelagus (Table 6.47). But among those who had some formal education, the PBB was the favourite with about 46% (30 out of 65) of the pledged support in Bkt. Begunan. On the other hand, in Pelagus, the majority (about 40%, 38 out of 95) of the respondents were uncommitted, otherwise the 34% (32 out of 95) of the pledged support for the PBB was clearly substantial in comparison to about 14% for the PBDS.

However, the above findings may seem to contradict the generally accepted notion that the PBDS is gaining popularity not only among the Iban in general, but also among the newly emerging Iban intellectuals. The observation that the educated respondents tended to either support the ruling party or remain neutral may be explained in one of several ways: either the data as presented in Table 6.47 may not have reflected the true feelings of the respondents; or, the generally accepted notion is false and has been based on hearsay; to date, there has been no detailed study of the matter;<sup>107</sup> thirdly, the generally accepted notion is true and my findings apply only to the case study; lastly, the generally accepted notion is true but the difference observed among the respondents may indeed indicate a

<sup>107</sup> My earlier study focused only on examining the pattern of vote changes in relation to the phenomenon of Dayakism, Jawan, 1987a, op cit.

softening of support for the PBDS. In my view, there is a distinct possibility that the generally accepted notion is true but that support has diminished over time due particularly to the unsuccessful attempt by the PBDS to become the major partner in a coalition government which they claimed would bring greater spoils for the Dayak community. There is also a general apprehension in expressing overt support for the PBDS, because it is in opposition; hence, being uncommitted protects individuals against purges especially if one is employed in the government sector.

Table 6.47  
Pattern of Pledged Support by Education.

Party	(Bkt. Begunan) <sup>108</sup>				(Pelagus) <sup>109</sup>			
	No School		School		No School		School	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	24	28	30	46	10	18	32	34
PBDS	32	38	21	32	21	38	13	14
Undecided	17	20	10	15	13	24	38	40
SNAP	8	9	0	0	7	13	12	13
SUPP	4	5	4	6	4	7	0	0
Total	85	100	65	99	55	100	95	101

<sup>108</sup> Chi=10.28; df=4; Sig.=0.04 (P<0.05); Lambda=0.09; Co-eff=0.25.

<sup>109</sup> Chi=21.87; df=4; Sig.=0.001 (P<0.001); Lambda=0.13; Co-eff=0.36.

#### 4. *Summary*

Several observations can be drawn about the political behavior of the samples. Firstly, there is no fundamental differences in the political behavioural patterns of the respondents from the two study areas. However, there were slight variations in the percentages of support that respondents gave to different political parties, but they were low enough to justify concluding that they were due to regional cleavage. In the wider Iban political world, the insignificance of the regional factor can also be established from the popular appeal of the Iban-based parties SNAP and PBDS, and also through votes polled by either party in state elections.

Secondly, my findings on election issues dispute the popular opinion that Dayakism was the most important consideration in the elections of 1983 and 1987. However, for those respondents who voted for the PBDS, Dayakism was indeed very important. On the whole, the two most important factors were political affiliation and the opportunity to secure development projects.

Thirdly, similar to the above controversial finding, popular support among the samples seemed to increase for the coalition instead of the PBDS, which was supposed to have benefited from the rising popularity of Dayakism; in 1987, the coalition, rather than the PBDS, was given greater support by the respondents. These general observations can be seen from the patterns of support

based on the respondents' residence, age and educational level.

Fourthly, a widespread preference was expressed for PBB in any future election among respondents from both areas. Nevertheless, there is a sizeable number of fence-sitters; hypothetically, if elections are to be decided by the samples, these fence-sitters will inevitably influence their outcome.

Lastly, there is a generally mixed reaction to the importance of the ethnic, residential and educational status of future candidates. Although the prospect of voting for non-Iban candidates did not find favour among the respondents, they were quite receptive to the idea of non-resident Iban candidates; they also strongly stressed the importance of the educational background of prospective candidates.

#### **B. Contemporary Views on Political Issues**

In this section, the consideration of views on political issues will be divided into three themes. The first focuses on wider political topics such as the concept of power sharing, and the danger and the regional consequences of polarisation. The second concentrates on the respondents' views on the issues that may have been the likely causes of Iban political weakness; and the third, on Iban opinions about leadership qualities.

### 1. General Political Issues

With regard to the issue of power-sharing, there was a high degree of agreement among the respondents that it was probably the most appropriate political set-up in a multi-ethnic society like Sarawak, in which no single ethnic group commanded an absolute majority both in terms of its population and in the state legislature. About 81% of the respondents agreed with the suggestion that power-sharing is vital (Table 6.48a). About 7% of the respondents who disagreed with the need for power-sharing were rather idealistic about the prospect that the Dayak community could actually command an absolute majority of 25 Dayak seats out of the 48-seat state legislature. What they fail to understand is the fact that out of the 25 seats, only 21 were Dayak majority constituencies. In the other four, Dayak candidates can easily be defeated by non-Dayaks.

Table 6.48a  
The Importance of Power-Sharing between Ethnic Groups.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	124	83	20	13	6	4	150	100
Pelagus	119	79	15	10	16	11	150	100
Total	243	81	35	12	22	7	300	100

Chi=5.36                      df=2                      Sig.=0.07.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Lambda=0.05; Co-eff=0.13.



Based on their region of origin, there was a negligible divergence in the opinion of the respondents on the issue of power-sharing; about 83% of the respondents from Bkt. Begunan and about 79% from Pelagus agreed that power-sharing was the better alternative of government in a multi-ethnic society. Among those who shared similar views on power-sharing, their general agreement can be further summed up as follows: that is, power-sharing entailed more than just mere representation of Ibans (Dayaks) in the state cabinet, but it had to include the broadening of the scope for greater Iban (Dayak) participation and opportunities in various sectors, for example, in civil appointments, in the allocation of university places and government scholarships, and in assistance to participate in the commercial sector.

Based on a number of social background factors, there was some similarity in the pattern of opinion regarding the issue of power-sharing. For example, based on residence, age and education, the percentage responses in favour of power-sharing were all equally high for the respondents from both areas. In spite of the apparent overall similarity, there was a discernible correlation between *pasar*, younger-age group, and educated respondents and higher degree of agreement about the desirability of power-sharing compared to the *ulu*, older-age group and non-educated respondents (see Table 6.48b). Except for the *ulu-pasar* categories, the percentage

differences were large enough to be able to conclude that there was a distinction in political behaviour between the younger-older and educated-non-educated respondents.

Table 6.48b  
Responses to the Concept of Power-Sharing  
by (1) Pattern of Residence; (2) Age; and (3) Education.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>(1) Residence:<sup>111</sup></b>								
Ulu	190	81	27	11	19	8	236	100
Pasar	53	83	8	13	3	5	64	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(2) Age:<sup>112</sup></b>								
21 to 55	187	84	25	11	10	5	222	100
56 & above	56	72	10	13	12	15	78	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(3) Education:<sup>113</sup></b>								
No School	107	76	14	10	19	14	140	100
Some School	136	85	21	13	3	2	160	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

There was also some noticeable differences in the opinion of those respondents who belonged to different political parties (Table 6.48c). The only diverging view was expressed by those respondents who were members of the PBDS in comparison to views expressed by those who

<sup>111</sup> Chi=0.86; df=2; Sig.=0.7; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.05.

<sup>112</sup> Chi=10.54; df=2; Sig.=0.005 (P<0.01); Lambda=0.01; Co-eff=0.18.

<sup>113</sup> Chi=15.23; df=2; Sig.=0.0005 (P<0.001); Lambda=0.08; Co-eff=0.22.

were members of the ruling coalition. Among the coalition components, a higher percentage of favourable responses was recorded for those who were members of the PBB at about 86% and less from among SNAP and SUPP members at about 72% and 53% respectively. However, among the respondents who were members of the PBDS, there were split responses, in which about 45% (25 out of 56) of them favoured the idea and an equal proportion were also against the idea of power-sharing (Table 6.48c).

Table 6.48c  
Responses to the Concept of Power-Sharing  
by Party Membership.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	95	96	4	4	0	0	99	100
SNAP	32	91	3	9	0	0	35	100
SUPP	8	53	3	20	4	27	15	100
PBDS	28	50	13	23	15	27	56	100
INDEP	80	84	12	13	3	3	95	100
Total	243	81	35	12	22	7	300	100

Chi=72.61                      df=8                      Sig.=0.001.<sup>114</sup>

With respect to the question concerning political and ethnic polarisation, about 64% of the respondents saw the danger of such a pattern developing in their respective areas (Table 6.49a). In Bkt. Begunan, a much higher percentage at about 71% of the respondents acknowledged its danger not only in inter-ethnic politics but also in politicking between and within longhouse

<sup>114</sup> Lambda=0.09; Co-eff=0.44.

communities; the same observation was also recorded for the Pelagus respondents at about 57%. With respect to political relations, party polarisation had a greater affect on intra-Iban affairs as opposed to ethnic polarisation which affected inter-ethnic relations between the Ibans and the other ethnic communities. The former mainly manifested itself in the political cleavages that permeated the Iban community in general and especially those who lived in longhouses. It is less apparent among the pasar Ibans who tend to live in individual housing units and who communicate and associate less with each other.

Table 6.49a  
The Danger of Political and Ethnic Polarisation.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	106	71	41	27	3	2	150	100
Pelagus	86	57	46	31	18	12	150	100
Total	192	64	87	29	21	7	300	100

Chi=13.08                      df=2                      Sig.=0.001.<sup>115</sup>

However, with regard to social background factors, a slight difference can only be observed between the ulu and pasar respondents. Among the ulu respondents, the danger of political and ethnic polarisation was acknowledged by about 67% compared to 53% of the pasar

<sup>115</sup> p<0.01; Lambda=0.08; Co-eff=0.20.

respondents (Table 6.49b). Again, this can be linked to the pattern of settlement. In the longhouse, the extent to which party polarisation affects the people can be easily seen from the general cohesiveness that prevails. In the longhouse that is badly affected, communications between *bilik*-families who support different political parties often break down. In most cases, it leads to the erection of partitions on the *ruai*. *Bilik*-families that support one party would not attend functions organised by those who support another.

Based on party membership, the majority of the respondents who professed membership in one of the coalition parties agreed on the dangers of political and ethnic polarisation (Table 6.49c). In contrast to that, there was a much lower level of positive responses (about 48%) from the PBDS supporters as well as those who were politically uncommitted; there was also a sizeable percentage of the PBDS supporters and the fence-sitters who had no opinion on the matter, which was about 45% and 37% respectively.

Table 6.49b  
The Danger of Political and Ethnic Polarisation  
by: (1) Pattern of Residence; (2) Age; and (3) Education.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>(1) Residence:<sup>116</sup></b>								
Ulu	158	67	61	26	17	7	236	100
Pasar	34	53	26	41	4	6	64	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(2) Age:<sup>117</sup></b>								
21 to 55	139	63	62	28	21	9	222	100
56 & above	53	68	25	32	0	0	78	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(3) Education:<sup>118</sup></b>								
No School	90	64	41	29	9	6	140	99
Some School	102	64	46	29	12	8	160	101
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6.49c  
The Danger of Political and Ethnic Polarisation  
by Party Membership.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	85	86	11	11	3	3	99	100
SNAP	22	63	13	37	0	0	35	100
SUPP	12	80	3	20	0	0	15	100
PBDS	27	48	25	45	4	7	56	100
INDEP	46	48	35	37	14	15	95	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
Chi=46.52                      df=8                      Sig.=0.0001. <sup>119</sup>								

<sup>116</sup> Chi=5.36; df=2; Sig.=0.07; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.13.

<sup>117</sup> Chi=7.97; df=2; Sig.=0.02 (P=<0.05); Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.16.

<sup>118</sup> Chi=0.13; df=2; Sig.=0.9; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.02.

<sup>119</sup> P=< 0.001; Lambda=0.11; Co-eff=0.37.

The threat of political and ethnic polarisation was acknowledged by about 68% of the respondents in their daily life (in Bkt. Begunan by about 71% and in Pelagus by about 64%) (Table 6.50a). There was a higher incidence of respondents from the *ulu* who had experience of political polarisation (about 70%) compared to those who lived in the *pasar* (about 58%) (Table 6.50b). These responses were also confirmed through *berandau* (casual discussion) with the respondents; in addition, I had the opportunity to observe some of these political divisions in Bkt. Begunan. Among the communities that had suffered the impact of political polarisation, longhouses tended to be smaller because political differences led to some families splitting off and moving elsewhere. In other cases, partition boards were built across the *ruai*; *bilik*-families that supported one political party would not attend ceremonies that were being held by other *bilik*-families who were known to support another party. Communications broke down and animosities developed. In such a longhouse, I had the experience of being welcomed by one political faction, while the other would meet us in the absence of their political adversaries.

Table 6.50a  
The Local Effect of Political and Ethnic Polarisation.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	107	71	30	20	13	9	150	100
Pelagus	96	64	20	13	34	23	150	100
Total	203	68	50	17	47	16	300	101

Chi=11.98                      df=2                      Sig.=0.003<sup>120</sup>

Similarly, there was also a discernible difference on the felt impact of polarisation between those respondents who had had no formal education (about 74%) and those who had had some (which was much lower at about 63%) (Table 6.50b). There was, however, no detectable difference on the issue according to the age of the respondents. The observable difference based on education might be explained by the relative mobility of those respondents who had some education; hence, their wider contacts with people outside their community, may have served to dilute the feeling of polarisation because they associate with others of different political persuasion.

<sup>120</sup> P=<0.01; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.13.



Table 6.50b

The Local Effect of Political and Ethnic Polarisation by:  
 (1) Pattern of Residence; (2) Age; and, (3) Education.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<hr/>								
(1) Residence: <sup>121</sup>								
Ulu	166	70	39	17	31	13	236	100
Pasar	37	58	11	17	16	25	64	100
<hr/>								
Total	203	68	50	17	47	16	300	101
<hr/>								
(2) Age: <sup>122</sup>								
21 to 55	151	68	37	17	34	15	222	100
56 & above	52	67	13	17	13	17	78	101
<hr/>								
Total	203	68	50	17	47	16	300	100
<hr/>								
(3) Education: <sup>123</sup>								
No School	103	74	15	11	22	16	140	101
Some School	100	63	35	22	25	16	160	101
<hr/>								
Total	203	68	50	17	47	16	300	100
<hr/>								

From Table 6.50c, it can be concluded that the effect of polarisation was experienced by respondents of different political parties. The highest incidence was acknowledged by the PBB (with about 85% of its members), followed in descending order by members of SNAP (about 71%), PBDS (about 64%), the fence-sitters (about 57%) and finally SUPP members (about 27%).

<sup>121</sup> Chi=5.70; df=2; Sig.=0.06; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.14.

<sup>122</sup> Chi=0.08; df=2; Sig.=0.9; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.02.

<sup>123</sup> Chi=6.93; df=2; Sig.=0.03 (P=<0.05); Lambda=0.01; Co-eff=0.15.

Table 6.50c  
The Local Effect of Political and Ethnic Polarisation  
by Party Membership.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	84	85	6	6	9	9	99	100
SNAP	25	71	3	9	7	20	35	100
SUPP	4	27	3	20	8	53	15	100
PBDS	36	64	13	23	7	13	56	100
INDEP	54	57	25	26	16	17	95	100
Total	203	68	50	17	47	16	300	100

Chi=41.94

df=8

Sig.=0.0001.<sup>124</sup>

## 2. Sources of Iban Political Weakness

With regard to probable sources of Iban political weakness, several possible explanations were introduced in the questionnaire. They were as follows: (1) political division at the leadership and grassroots levels and hence, the absence of a strong central leadership; (2) the lack of a forum which could bring together both the leaders and grassroots supporters into dialogue thereby reducing divisive forces; and, (3) vacillating loyalty of local level leaders with, for example, frequent defections from one political camp to another by elected representatives. Responses from the study sample were recorded according to how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the above suggestions.

According to the percentages of responses to the above suggestion, an overwhelming 93% (280 out of 300)

<sup>124</sup> P=<0.001; Lambda=0.10; Co-eff=0.35.

thought that Iban political weakness was attributed to their political division; about 62% (186) to the lack of a forum in which leaders and the grassroots of different political faiths could meet to thrash out their differences; and about 87% (260) attributed it to the weak loyalty of certain elected leaders (see Tables 6.51a, 6.53a and 6.54a respectively). With regard to the issue of political division, there was strong agreement among the respondents of both areas that it was probably the single most important source of Iban political weakness. About 95% (143 out of 150) of the respondents from Bkt. Begunan and about 91% (137) from Pelagus thought it to be so.

Table 6.51a  
Political Division at Leadership and Grassroots Levels.

Area	Agree		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	143	95	7	5	150	100
Pelagus	137	91	13	9	150	100
Total	280	93	20	7	300	100

Chi=1.34                      df=1                      Sig.=0.25.<sup>125</sup>

Based on residence, there was no discernible difference in the opinion of the respondents who came from the *ulu* and the *pasar*. However, there was a greater tendency among the respondents in the younger age group (about 71%) and those with some formal education (about

<sup>125</sup> Lambda=0.04; Co-eff=0.08.

72%) to agree to the suggestion that political divisions within the Iban leadership and the community were the main cause of their political weakness.

Table 6.51b  
Responses to Political Division at Leadership and Grassroots Levels by (1) Pattern of Residence; (2) Age; and (3) Education.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>(1) Residence:<sup>126</sup></b>								
Ulu	53	83	8	13	3	5	64	101
Pasar	190	81	27	11	19	8	236	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(2) Age:<sup>127</sup></b>								
21 to 55	157	71	22	10	43	19	222	100
56 & above	42	54	10	13	26	33	78	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(3) Education:<sup>128</sup></b>								
No School	84	60	10	7	46	33	140	100
Some School	115	72	22	14	23	14	160	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on party membership, there were varied opinions as to whether political division was the main contributing factor to Iban political weakness. The PBB and SNAP members expressed the opinion that political division was the main contributing factor, while there

<sup>126</sup> Chi=0.86; df=2; Sig.=0.65; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.05.

<sup>127</sup> Chi=7.83; df=2; Sig.=0.02 (P<0.05); Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.16.

<sup>128</sup> Chi=15.73; df=2; Sig.=0.0004 (P<0.001); Lambda=0.10; Co-eff=0.22.

was generally much lower support for this view from among the SUPP and the PBDS members (Table 6.51c). The low level of affirmation from the PBDS members might have been influenced by the fact that their party had done extremely well in the 1987 state general election despite the fact that there was already a political division among Iban (Dayak) leaders and the grassroots. In other words, it would not have been logical for them to agree to such a supposition in view of the fact that their party had won many Iban (Dayak) seats. On the other hand, the responses from the PBB and SNAP members to the issue can only be construed to be an expression of pro-Iban (or pro-Dayak) sentiment, although they were not necessarily an endorsement of the PBDS as the Iban or Dayak political representative.

Table 6.51c  
Responses to Political Division at Leadership and  
Grassroots Levels by Party Membership.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	71	72	11	11	17	17	99	100
SNAP	30	86	0	0	5	14	35	100
SUPP	8	53	3	20	4	27	15	100
PBDS	25	45	6	11	25	45	56	101
INDEP	65	68	12	13	18	19	95	100
Total	199	66	32	11	69	23	300	100

Chi=26.94                      df=8                      Sig.=0.001, 129

129      Lambda=0.03; Co-eff=0.29.

While there was a general acknowledgement that Iban political weakness was probably caused by the presence of political divisions, there were more diverse opinions on the issue of the absence of a central leadership which might contribute to the strengthening of that political position. Opinions on the issue were similar among the respondents in Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus (Table 6.52a). About 52% of the respondents agreed that there was the absence of a strong central political figure that could unite the Iban leaders and grassroots; about 27% of them disagreed with the suggestion, arguing that there was a central leadership. For this group, the issue lay in the problem of retaining support by this Iban central authority, which had been continually undermined, first, in SNAP during the 1970s, and later in the PBDS in the 1980s.

Table 6.52a  
The Absence of Strong Central Leadership.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Begunan	78	52	32	21	40	27	150	100	
Pelagus	78	52	31	21	41	27	150	100	
Total	156	52	63	21	81	27	300	100	
Chi=0.03		df=2		Sig.=0.99,130					

130 Lambda=0.003; Co-eff=0.01.

Among the *ulu* and older respondents, there was less support for the view that the lack of a strong central leadership constituted the overall weakness in the political position of the Iban (48% and 42%, see Table 6.52b), while *pasar* and younger respondents were more positive about the proposition (at 67% and 55%).

Table 6.52b  
Responses to the Absence of a Strong Central Leadership by: (1) Pattern of Residence; (2) Age; and (3) Education.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<hr/>								
(1) Residence: <sup>131</sup>								
<i>Ulu</i>	113	48	55	23	68	29	236	100
<i>Pasar</i>	43	67	8	13	13	20	64	100
<hr/>								
Total	156	52	63	21	81	27	300	100
<hr/>								
(2) Age: <sup>132</sup>								
21 to 55	123	55	46	21	53	24	222	100
56 & above	33	42	17	22	28	36	78	100
<hr/>								
Total	156	52	63	21	81	27	300	100
<hr/>								
(3) Education: <sup>133</sup>								
No School	74	53	35	25	31	22	140	100
Some School	82	51	28	18	50	31	160	100
<hr/>								
Total	156	52	63	21	81	27	300	100
<hr/>								

<sup>131</sup> Chi=7.75; df=2; Sig.=0.02 (P<0.05); Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.16.

<sup>132</sup> Chi=5.03; df=2; Sig.=0.08; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.13.

<sup>133</sup> Chi=4.33; df=2; Sig.=0.11; Lambda=0.02; Co-eff=0.12.

The majority of the respondents who were members of the ruling coalition expressed their general agreement that Iban political problems stemmed from the absence of a strong central political figure that could unite both the Iban leaders and the grassroots; the percentage of agreement was about 63%, 69% and 53% for respondents who claimed membership in PBB, SNAP and SUPP respectively (Table 6.52c). On the other hand, the majority of those who were members of PBDS disagreed with the above suggestion; about 43% disagreed compared to about 39% who did agree. The degree of disagreement probably reflected the better performance of the PBDS in recent elections in which it had supposedly overcome the problem of disunity.

Table 6.52c  
Responses to the Absence of a Strong Central Leadership  
by Party Membership.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	62	63	15	15	22	22	99	100
SNAP	24	69	3	9	8	23	35	101
SUPP	8	53	3	20	4	27	15	100
PBDS	22	39	10	18	24	43	56	100
INDEP	40	42	32	34	23	24	95	100
Total	156	52	63	21	81	27	300	100

Chi=25.82

df=8

Sig.=0.001.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Lambda=0.06; Co-eff=0.28.



About 62% (186 out of 300) respondents blamed the weakness in Iban political leadership on the lack of a forum which could bring together their leaders and the grassroots in a dialogue; the percentage among the respondents of Bkt. Begunan was slightly higher at about 66% compared to Pelagus' at about 58% (Table 6.53a). In my opinion, the lack of a forum has contributed to the animosity between Ibans who support different political parties. The consequences of that antagonism has resulted in intense competition and back-stabbing even among Ibans who have supported different parties in the coalition. In many previous elections, this has expressed itself in the coalition components supporting independent candidates in attempts to undermine the power base of another.

The effect of the lack of a forum in contributing to a wider Iban unity was acknowledged by about 56% *pasar*, about 68% of the younger-age group and about 71% of the educated respondents (Table 6.53b).

Table 6.53a  
The Lack of a Forum for Dialogue.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Begunan	99	66	39	26	12	8	150	100	
Pelagus	87	58	29	19	34	23	150	100	
Total	186	62	68	23	46	15	300	100	
Chi=12.77		df=2		Sig.=0.002,135					

135 Lambda=0.08; Co-eff=0.20.

Table 6.53b

## Responses to the Lack of a Forum for Dialogue

by: (1) Pattern of Residence; (2) Age; and (3) Education.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
(1) Residence: <sup>136</sup>								
Ulu	54	84	3	5	7	11	64	100
Pasar	132	56	65	28	39	17	236	101
Total	186	62	68	23	46	15	300	100
(2) Age: <sup>137</sup>								
21 to 55	152	68	36	16	34	15	222	99
56 & above	34	44	32	41	12	15	78	100
Total	186	62	68	23	46	15	300	100
(3) Education: <sup>138</sup>								
No School	72	51	51	36	17	12	140	99
Some School	114	71	17	11	29	18	160	100
Total	186	62	68	23	46	15	300	100

With regard to the party membership of the respondents, there was a wider divergence of views on the issue of the lack of a forum as a contributory factor to Iban political weakness. While there was a general consensus among supporters of the ruling coalition, there was a massive split in the opinion of those who claimed membership of the PBDS. Only about 43% of the PBDS

<sup>136</sup> Chi=19.20; df=2; Sig.=0.0001 (P=<0.001); Lambda=0.00; Coeff=0.25.

<sup>137</sup> Chi=21.44; df=2; Sig.=0.0001 (P=<0.001); Lambda=0.00; Coeff=0.26.

<sup>138</sup> Chi=28.41; df=2; Sig.=0.0001 (P=<0.001); Lambda=0.13; Coeff=0.29.

supporters were amenable to the suggestion while another 41% did not have any opinion on the matter (Table 6.53c).

Table 6.53c  
Responses to the Lack of a Forum by Party Membership.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	67	68	19	19	13	13	99	100
SNAP	24	69	3	9	8	23	35	101
SUPP	12	80	3	20	0	0	15	100
PBDS	24	43	23	41	9	16	56	100
INDEP	59	62	20	21	16	17	95	100
Total	186	62	68	23	46	15	300	100

Chi=21.04                      df=8                      Sig.=0.007.<sup>139</sup>

The last issue raised with the respondents was that of the characteristics of leaders, especially locally elected ones, who frequently switched political camps; in local terminology, these leaders were often referred to as "frog-leapers". Respondents were asked whether they agreed that "frog-leaping" has in any way contributed to the problem of maintaining Iban political unity and thereby of consolidating their political strength. About 87% (260 out of 300) of the respondents agreed with the suggestion that the "frog-leaping" propensity of elected leaders did contribute to the overall problem of Iban unity (Table 6.54a). The percentage response in agreement

<sup>139</sup> P<0.01; Lambda=0.02; Co-eff=0.26.

was much higher among the Bkt. Begunan respondents at about 92% compared to Pelagus' at about 81%.

Table 6.54a  
The Issue of Uncommitted Leaders

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	138	92	3	2	9	6	150	100
Pelagus	122	81	9	6	19	13	150	100
Total	260	87	12	4	28	9	300	100

Chi=7.56                      df=2                      Sig.=0.02.<sup>140</sup>

There was a generally higher percentage of positive responses among the *ulu*, older and non-educated respondents on the issue as opposed to the *pasar*, younger-age and educated respondents (Table 6.54b). The difference in these opinions may be explained by the fact that the *ulu*, older and non-educated respondents might have evaluated the "frog-leaping" characteristic as fickle-mindedness and in terms of loyalty to a political institution alone, whereas the *pasar*, younger and educated respondents might have evaluated it in terms of the background of the leaders and the issues giving rise to the change in loyalty, in other words, that there might be mitigating circumstances.

<sup>140</sup> Lambda=0.08; Co-eff=0.16.

Table 6.54b  
 Responses to the Issue of Uncommitted Leaders  
 by: (1) Pattern of Residence; (2) Age; and (3) Education.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>(1) Residence:<sup>141</sup></b>								
Ulu	210	89	8	3	18	8	236	100
Pasar	50	78	4	6	10	16	64	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(2) Age:<sup>142</sup></b>								
21 to 55	189	85	9	4	24	11	222	100
56 & above	71	91	3	4	4	5	78	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(3) Education:<sup>143</sup></b>								
No School	133	95	3	2	4	3	140	100
Some School	127	79	9	6	24	15	160	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

With reference to party membership, there was a high degree of agreement that "frog-leaping" did not contribute to building a strongly unified Iban leadership. In order of positive responses, they were as follows: SNAP at 100%, PBB 97%, PBDS 89%, SUPP 73%, and the fence-sitters 72% (Table 6.54c).

The overall agreement might be attributed to the experiences that all the political parties have gone through: that is, the coalition partners lost their

<sup>141</sup> Chi=5.17; df=2; Sig.=0.08; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.13.

<sup>142</sup> Chi=2.23; df=2; Sig.=0.3; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.09.

<sup>143</sup> Chi=16.16; df=2; Sig.=0.0003 (P<0.001); Lambda=0.03; Co-eff=0.23.

elected representatives who switched political allegiance to the PBDS in the 1987 political crisis, and the PBDS, shortly after the 1987 election, lost their elected state representatives who reverted back to the ruling coalition after having won their seats on the PBDS ticket.

Table 6.54c  
Responses to the Issue of Uncommitted Leaders  
by Party Membership.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	96	97	0	0	3	3	99	100
SNAP	35	100	0	0	0	0	35	100
SUPP	11	73	0	0	4	27	15	100
PBDS	50	89	3	5	3	5	56	99
INDEP	68	72	9	9	18	19	95	100
Total	260	87	12	4	28	9	300	100

Chi=40.78                      df=8                      Sig.=0.0001.<sup>144</sup>

### 3. *The Issue of Leadership Qualities*

With regard to leadership, the respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of educational and personal qualities;<sup>145</sup> in that respect, they were asked to state the extent to which they thought the two qualities were important in the future leaders whom they were going to elect. About 63% (190 out of 300) respondents said

<sup>144</sup> P=<0.001; Lambda=0.10; Co-eff=0.35.

<sup>145</sup> Only two qualities are presented in this section, as others such as factors of locality and ethnicity, have been more appropriately discussed in a different section.

that the educational qualities were very important (Table 6.55a).

Table 6.55a  
The Importance of Educational Quality in Leadership.

Area	Very Impt.		Important		Not Impt.		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	90	60	27	18	33	22	150	100
Pelagus	100	67	32	21	18	12	150	100
Total	190	63	59	20	51	17	300	100

Chi=5.36                      df=2                      Sig.=0.07.<sup>146</sup>

There was a distinct pattern of difference in the responses of the *ulu* and *pasar* respondents; the former seemed to value the educational background of elected leaders more than did the latter; there was about 67% favourable responses from the *ulu* compared to about 50% from the *pasar* respondents (Table 6.55b). However, based on the social background factors of age and education, there seems to be a correlation between younger and educated respondents and the importance of educational qualities. On the other hand, there seems to be less emphasis on educational qualities among the older and non-educated respondents.

<sup>146</sup> Lambda=0.06; Co-eff=0.13.

Table 6.55b  
 Responses to the Importance of Educational Quality in  
 Leadership by (1) Pattern of Residence; (2) Age;  
 and (3) Education.

Area	Very Impt.		Important		Not Impt.		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<hr/>								
(1) Residence: <sup>147</sup>								
Ulu	158	67	45	19	33	14	236	100
Pasar	32	50	14	22	18	28	64	100
<hr/>								
Total	190	63	59	20	51	17	300	100
<hr/>								
(2) Age: <sup>148</sup>								
21 to 55	152	68	37	17	33	15	222	100
56 & above	38	49	22	28	18	23	78	100
<hr/>								
Total	190	63	59	20	51	17	300	100
<hr/>								
(3) Education: <sup>149</sup>								
No School	79	56	37	26	24	17	140	99
Some School	111	69	22	14	27	17	160	100
<hr/>								
Total	190	63	59	20	51	17	300	100
<hr/>								

There was also concern expressed by respondents from different political parties regarding the question of the educational background of elected leaders. The stress was greatest among SNAP members (91% favourable responses), followed by members of the PBB, PBDS, the uncommitted and the SUPP at about 76%, 57%, 49% and 27% respectively (Table 6.55c).

<sup>147</sup> Chi=8.41; df=2; Sig.=0.01 (P=<0.05); Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.17.

<sup>148</sup> Chi=9.75; df=2; Sig.=0.008 (P=<0.01); Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.18.

<sup>149</sup> Chi=8.10; df=2; Sig.=0.02 (P=<0.05); Lambda=0.06; Co-eff=0.16.



Table 6.55c  
 Responses to the Importance of Educational Quality in  
 Leadership by Party Membership.

Area	Very Impt.		Important		Not Impt.		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	75	76	9	9	15	15	99	100
SNAP	32	91	3	9	0	0	35	100
SUPP	4	27	8	53	3	20	15	100
PBDS	32	57	15	27	9	16	56	100
INDEP	47	49	24	25	24	25	95	99
Total	190	63	59	20	51	17	300	100

Chi=42.67                      df=8                      Sig.=0.0001.<sup>150</sup>

On the personal qualities of leadership, it was explained to the respondents that they should perceive the concept to be broad, encompassing traits such as oratorical skill, interpersonal relations and personal character. About 78% of the respondents said that they would stress the importance of the quality; there was not much divergence in the opinion of the respondents from either Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus to the overall percentage of about 78% (Table 6.56a). Only a small percentage (about 11%) did not consider the factor to be of any significance.

<sup>150</sup> P<0.001; Lambda=0.09; Co-eff=0.35.

Table 6.56a  
The Importance of Personal Quality in Leaders.

Area	Very Impt.		Important		Not Impt.		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	120	80	6	4	24	16	150	100
Pelagus	113	75	28	19	9	6	150	100
Total	233	78	34	11	33	11	300	100

Chi=21.26                      df=2                      Sig.=0.0001.<sup>151</sup>

The importance of personal qualities was stressed by only about 48% of the *pasar* respondents compared to about 86% of the *ulu* respondents (Table 6.56b). Similarly, there was also a much lower emphasis on these qualities by the educated respondents at about 71% compared to the non-educated at about 85%. Based on the factor of age, there was not much difference in the opinion of the younger and the older respondents.

<sup>151</sup> P=<0.001; Lambda=0.10; Co-eff=0.26.

Table 6.56b  
 Responses to the Importance of Personal Quality in  
 Leadership by (1) Pattern of Residence; (2) Age;  
 and (3) Education.

Area	Very Impt.		Important		Not Impt.		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>(1) Residence:</b> <sup>152</sup>								
<i>Ulu</i>	202	86	13	6	21	9	236	101
<i>Pasar</i>	31	48	21	33	12	19	64	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(2) Age:</b> <sup>153</sup>								
21 to 55	175	79	23	10	24	11	222	100
56 & above	58	74	11	14	9	12	78	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(3) Education:</b> <sup>154</sup>								
No School	119	85	9	6	12	9	140	100
Some School	114	71	25	16	21	13	160	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

There was also a similarly high level of favourable responses to the importance of the personality factor based on party membership: all SNAP members considered the issue to be very important; among members of the PBB, PBDS, the uncommitted and SUPP, the responses were about 79%, 75%, 74%, and 53% respectively (Table 6.56c).

<sup>152</sup> Chi=46.51; df=2; Sig.=0.0001 (P<0.001); Lambda=0.06; Co-eff=0.37.

<sup>153</sup> Chi=0.89; df=2; Sig.=0.64; Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.05.

<sup>154</sup> Chi=8.80; df=2; Sig.=0.01 (P<0.05); Lambda=0.02; Co-eff=0.17.

Table 6.56c  
 Responses to the Importance of Personal Quality in  
 Leadership by Party Membership.

Area	Very Impt.		Important		Not Impt.		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PBB	78	79	9	9	12	12	99	100
SNAP	35	100	0	0	0	0	35	100
SUPP	8	53	4	27	3	20	15	100
PBDS	42	75	5	9	9	16	56	100
INDEP	70	74	16	17	9	9	95	100
Total	233	78	34	11	33	11	300	100

Chi=20.58                      df=8                      Sig.=0.008.<sup>155</sup>

In the absence of a rank-order in the importance of various leadership qualities, it is not possible to establish the absolute importance of one factor over another. Nevertheless, their relative importance may be suggested by examining the percentage distribution of responses in each case. From Table 6.57, it can be seen that the personality factor is likely to play a dominant role in influencing the respondents' future choices between competing candidates; the next in importance would be the factors of education, locality and ethnicity.

<sup>155</sup> P=<0.001; Lambda=0.03; Co-eff=0.25.

Table 6.57  
 The Total Number and Percentage of Responses  
 based on Selected Leadership Qualities.

Quality	Table	Responses	Percentage	Rank
1. Ethnicity	6.38	82/300	27	4
2. Locality	6.41	132/300	44	3
3. Education	6.55a	190/300	63	2
4. Personality	6.56a	233/300	78	1

#### 4. Summary

On the wider political issue, there is a generally high degree of agreement on the importance of power-sharing, whether that is based on the factor of regionalism, residence, age or education. It is strongly agreed that power-sharing entails more than just physical representation of the Ibans in government, it must also involve equal participation in decision-making and the sharing of the benefits of economic growth. The only diverging opinion on the issue was expressed by PBDS members, who, envisaged a government, perhaps not exclusively Dayak, but dominated by them. With regard to the dangers and the consequences of ethnic polarisation, the only divergent view was from those of the *ulu* and, to a lesser degree, the educated respondents. The greater effect of polarisation was felt by the *ulu* respondents because of the socially integrated nature of their settlements; in these situations where there are close contacts between people of different political

persuasions, conflict is more likely and is felt to have a significant impact. For the pasar respondents, it may be felt in the form of punitive measures taken against them, especially among those in government employment.

Similarly, there is also widespread agreement that political division contributed to the weak leadership position of the Ibans. Again, the only divergent view was from PBDS members, who saw the party as the focus of Iban political expression. However, the reason for the different views deserves further discussion. The differences may have emanated from two perceptions of Iban power. The view held by PBDS members was undoubtedly influenced by the number of seats that the party had won in 1987; consequently, they saw neither division within the Iban community nor weakness among its leaders. On the other hand, their opponents (i.e. PBB, SNAP and SUPP Ibans) may have focused on the idea that that strength could have been better expressed if it had been consolidated within the coalition.

With respect to the probable sources of Iban political weakness, there is a widespread consensus that it may have been due to the absence of a strong central leadership, the lack of a common forum for political debate and the vacillating loyalty of elected representatives. But for many PBDS members, they did not think that Ibans lacked a strong central leadership and a forum in which to hold discussions.

On the characteristics of prospective leaders, a large majority of the respondents expressed the opinion that the personality, education level, place of residence and ethnic identity would be important considerations in their future voting decision.

### **C. Contemporary Views on Economic Issues**

The economic issues will be discussed in two sections: the first focuses on the respondents' responses to several probable reasons for Iban economic problems, while the second on the responses to some possible solutions to these problems.

#### *1. Probable Reasons for Iban Economic Problems*

With respect to the probable causes of Iban economic problems, five issues were introduced to which responses were recorded. These were as follows: (1) the remoteness of Iban settlement to major *pasar* centres; (2) the dispersion of Iban settlement; (3) Iban attitudes in resisting development; (4) government discrimination; and, (5) the neglect of the Brooke period. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed that Iban economic problems stemmed from these origins. These issues were introduced in order to calibrate the respondents' opinion on the general nature of Iban economic problems.

The problem of the remoteness of the Iban community from the major urban centres has long been argued as the main obstacle to development. In fact, even the

government has frequently used the same argument to explain the slow pace of development among the Ibans. This problem was also acknowledged by about 83% of the respondents; there was only a small difference of about 8% between the positive responses from the two areas (Table 6.58). However, while acknowledging it to be a problem, some of the respondents were unhappy that it had been used continuously as a justification for avoiding addressing the problem of Iban development.

Table 6.58  
The Problem of Remoteness.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	119	79	25	17	6	4	150	100
Pelagus	130	87	3	2	17	11	150	100
Total	249	83	28	9	23	8	300	100

Chi=23.03                      df=2                      Sig.=0.0001.<sup>156</sup>

The dispersion of Iban settlement has also been used as a reason by government for the lower rate of development among the Ibans. It has been argued that the cost of providing basic amenities to the scattered Iban longhouses is prohibitive. While about 82% of the respondents understood the nature of the problem posed by the dispersion of Iban longhouses (Table 6.59), the

<sup>156</sup> P=<0.001; Lambda=0.11; Co-eff=0.27.



majority of them were annoyed at the government for its lack of innovativeness in addressing the problem.

Table 6.59  
The Dispersion of Iban Settlement. .

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	127	85	10	7	13	9	150	101
Pelagus	120	80	5	3	25	17	150	100
Total	247	82	15	5	38	13	150	100

Chi=5.65                      df=2                      Sig.=0.06.<sup>157</sup>

On the issue that Ibans generally resisted change in order to preserve their traditional way of life, the majority of the respondents disagreed with such a suggestion (about 58%, see Table 6.60a). On the contrary, many of them indicated how they had sought better opportunities by foregoing the shifting cultivation of *padi* in favour of a more stable source of income in the form of employment in the *pasar*. But without proper education, many of those who sought opportunities in the *pasar* found themselves in no better position than they were before leaving their communities; and many would end up in the slum areas of the town. However, there was also a sizeable portion of the respondents (about 36%) who agreed with the suggestion that there was general resistance among Ibans to development. They believed that

<sup>157</sup> Lambda=0.06; Co-eff=0.14.

such resistance would decrease when development was properly planned and took into account the local situation, needs and sentiments. In other words, planning must involve the target group in order to avoid misunderstandings arising at a later date.

Table 6.60a  
Iban Resistance to Change.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	53	35	13	9	84	56	150	100
Pelagus	56	37	4	3	90	60	150	100
Total	109	36	17	6	174	58	300	100

Chi=5.65                      df=2                      Sig.=0.06.<sup>158</sup>

There was a distinct difference in the opinion of the *ulu* and the *pasar* respondents on the issue of Iban resistance to change. While the majority of both categories of respondents disagreed with the suggestion that Ibans were generally resistant to change, there was a significant difference in the percentage of *ulu* (about 41%) and *pasar* respondents (about 20%) who agreed to the above proposition (Table 6.60b). The difference may be attributed to two different lifestyles and perceptions: the *ulu* respondents may, by virtue of their environmental setting, be more conservative and prefer the security of a traditional way of life; on the other hand, the *pasar-*

<sup>158</sup> Lambda=0.06; Co-eff=0.14.

based respondents are likely to be more amenable to change which is, in any case, the main reason for migration to the pasar in the first place.

Table 6.60b  
Responses to the Issue of Iban Resistance to Change by Pattern of Residence.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Ulu</i>	96	41	10	4	130	55	236	100
<i>Pasar</i>	13	20	7	11	44	69	64	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Chi=11.36                      df=2                      Sig.=0.003.<sup>159</sup>

With respect to the suggestion that the problems of Iban economic development may have stemmed from government discrimination against Ibans, a majority of about 77% of the respondents strongly felt this to be so (Table 6.61a). The responses of about 81% in Bkt. Begunan were much higher than those in Pelagus at about 74%. This observation was rather interesting in view of the fact that Bkt. Begunan was at one time represented by an assemblyman who rose to be the Deputy Chief Minister. Hence, the widespread feeling of powerlessness among the Bkt. Begunan respondents seems to be somewhat unjustified. Be that as it may, it is also generally

<sup>159</sup> P=<0.01); Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.20.

understood that despite being a DCM, Daniel Tajeim was indeed powerless.<sup>160</sup>

Table 6.61a  
Government Discrimination.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	121	81	20	13	9	6	150	100
Pelagus	111	74	12	8	27	18	150	100
Total	232	77	32	11	36	12	300	100

Chi=11.43                      df=2                      Sig.=0.003.<sup>161</sup>

Based on the factors of residence, age and education, there was a much stronger feeling of government discrimination among the *ulu*, older and non-educated respondents (Table 6.61b). About 84% of the *ulu* compared to about 53% *pasar* respondents felt that there was some discrimination in the manner in which government handled the development of the various ethnic groups.

<sup>160</sup> This was the basis of the PBDS's explanation as to why the party and its government ministers were unable to do much for the Dayaks; but I would ask: "why has it taken them such a long time to realise it?"

<sup>161</sup>  $P < 0.01$ ;  $\Lambda = 0.08$ ;  $Co\text{-}eff = 0.19$ .

Table 6.61b  
 Responses to the Issue of Government Discrimination  
 by (1) Pattern of Residence; (2) Age; and (3) Education.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>(1) Residence:<sup>162</sup></b>								
<i>Ulu</i>	198	84	20	8	18	8	236	100
<i>Pasar</i>	34	53	12	19	18	28	64	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(2) Age:<sup>163</sup></b>								
21 to 55	170	77	19	9	33	15	222	101
56 & above	62	79	13	17	3	4	78	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>(3) Education:<sup>164</sup></b>								
No School	117	84	13	9	10	7	140	100
Some School	115	72	19	12	26	16	160	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

On the question of the status of the Iban leadership, there was generally a mixed reaction. For instance, about 33% of the respondents in Bkt. Begunan attributed the economic problems facing the Iban community as stemming from the weak and divided Iban leadership; about 31% had no opinion and about 36% did not think that the Iban had a weak leadership (Table 6.62). In Pelagus, except for the higher percentage of affirmative responses, there was also generally divided

<sup>162</sup> Chi=28.78; df=2; Sig.=0.0001 (P<0.001); Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.30.

<sup>163</sup> Chi=9.46; df=2; Sig.=0.009 (P<0.01); Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.20.

<sup>164</sup> Chi=6.95; df=2; Sig.=0.03 (P<0.05); Lambda=0.00; Co-eff=0.15.

opinion on the issue of the status of the Iban leadership in terms of its ability to wield power.

Table 6.62  
Weak Leadership.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	50	33	46	31	54	36	150	100
Pelagus	67	45	33	22	50	33	150	100
Total	117	39	79	26	104	35	300	100

Chi=4.76                      df=2                      Sig.=0.09.<sup>165</sup>

From the distribution of responses from Table 6.63, it can be said that not much was remembered of the Brooke era, about which 71% of the respondents said that they had no opinion. Only about 20% could vaguely remember the era and attributed their problem to it. Even in Bkt. Begunan, an area closer to Sarawak proper, which formed the nucleus of Brooke development, there was only a small percentage of respondents who could remember something definite about the era and its contribution to present-day Iban economic problems.

<sup>165</sup> Lambda=0.06; Co-eff=0.13.

Table 6.63  
The Brooke Neglect of Iban Development.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	44	29	103	69	3	2	150	100
Pelagus	16	11	109	73	25	17	150	101
Total	60	20	212	71	28	9	300	100

Chi=30.52                      df=2                      Sig.=0.0001.<sup>166</sup>

## 2. Probable Solutions to Iban Economic Problems

Two broad plans were presented in the questionnaire as possible alternative development strategies; they were land development, which would involve resettlement, and in-situ development, in which existing settlements were provided with the basic amenities. The responses to the two strategies of development are presented in Tables 6.64 and 6.65.

Only about 46% (139) of the 300 respondents favoured development through resettlement; about 24% were undecided and about 30% against it (Table 6.64). There was a much higher percentage of favourable responses (about 55%) to the resettlement plan in Bkt. Begunan compared to about 38% in Pelagus. The difference in the two areas may be explained by two factors: first, Bkt. Begunan respondents are more exposed to commercial cash cropping, and second the difference in local conditions,

<sup>166</sup>  $P < 0.001$ ;  $\Lambda = 0.12$ ; Co-eff = 0.30.

in that in Pelagus, they are not generally favourable to large-scale cash cropping.

Among those who either had no opinion or were against resettlement, there was a general apprehension that resettlement may not actually alleviate their socio-economic problems. The respondents were quick to highlight the plight of resettled Ibans in Batang Ai.<sup>167</sup> Among the most feared consequences of resettlement are the loss of traditions and customary land; although compensation has been paid for land released for development, in the case of the Batang Ai, for example, it has been found that these monies dried up quickly thereby rendering some settlers in a much poorer state than they were before resettlement.

Table 6.64  
Responses to Land Development  
as a Strategy for Developing the Iban Community.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	82	55	39	26	29	19	150	100
Pelagus	57	38	32	21	61	41	150	100
Total	139	46	71	24	90	30	300	100

Chi=16.56                      df=2                      Sig.=0.0003.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>167</sup> For an overview of resettlement in Sarawak, see V.T. King and Jayum A. Jawan, "Resettlement in Sarawak" in Victor T. King and Nazaruddin M. Jali (eds). *Issues in Rural Development in Malaysia*, a forthcoming Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka publication, Kuala Lumpur; King has also published several articles on the subject, which have frequently been cited in Chapter 5.

<sup>168</sup> P<0.001; Lambda=0.12; Co-eff=0.23.



About 40% of the respondents were undecided as to whether they might be willing to participate in resettlement should a project be instituted in their area (Table 6.65). About 9% of the respondents in Bkt Begunan indicated outright that they would not participate in such a scheme. Among those who would participate, about 28% of the respondents (drawn exclusively from Pelagus) would be willing to bear some cost towards their resettlement; about 33% would only provide cost in the form of manual labour; and, about 13% would only be willing if resettlement did not incur any cost to them.

Table 6.65  
Willingness to Participate in Resettlement.

Responses	Bkt. Begunan		Pelagus		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Partial cost	0	0	28	19	28	9
Provide labour	55	37	45	30	100	33
Yes, if free	21	14	19	13	40	13
Not willing	13	9	0	0	13	4
Undecided	61	41	58	39	119	40
Total	150	101	150	101	300	99

Chi=42.18

df=4

Sig.=0.0001<sup>169</sup>

On the other hand, there was a much higher positive response of about 85% of the 300 respondents to the in-situ type of land development (Table 6.66). The positive responses to the in-situ plan were equally high in both areas, which confirm the widely-held notion that traditions must not be sacrificed too much for the sake

<sup>169</sup> P=<0.001; Lambda=0.37; Co-eff=0.35.

of development. This conclusion has a clear implication for policy-makers. The acceptability of the in-situ alternative may indeed stem from the fact that it does not uproot existing communities but instead directs attention to the provision of facilities that are lacking. In-situ type development has been well received; it has taken the form of minor improvements through the efforts of various government departments: for example, agricultural subsidies, the rural electrification programme, rural water supplies, and the medical department's rural sanitation programme. The only complaint against these forms of assistance has been that they tend to be politically-dispersed in favour of supporters of the ruling coalition.

Table 6.66  
Responses to In-situ Land Development  
as a Strategy for Developing the Iban Community.

Area	Agree		No Opinion		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Begunan	123	82	20	13	7	5	150	100
Pelagus	132	88	15	10	3	2	150	100
Total	255	85	35	12	10	3	300	100

Chi=2.63                      df=2                      Sig.=0.27.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>170</sup> Lambda=0.05; Co-eff=0.09.

Along with the in-situ type development, there was also a widespread feeling that the economic development of the Iban can also be better served by improving the communication system, guaranteeing the market and controlled commodity prices for their produce, and the upgrading of facilities and more qualified staffing of rural schools.

### 3. *Summary*

The respondents' opinion on the probable reasons for Iban economic problems can be summarised by comparing their responses to the five main factors considered (see Table 6.67). It appears that there was a general understanding of the nature of their rural location settlement and which were seen as a major development obstacle. Despite being a popular election issue, alleged government discrimination came in third place followed by Iban attitudes towards development and Brooke neglect. Nevertheless, the feeling of being discriminated against ran high in all categories based on regional, residential, age, and educational backgrounds.

Table 6.67  
 The Number and Percentage of Affirmative Responses  
 based on Probable Reasons for Iban Economic Problems.

Quality	Table	Responses	Percentage	Rank
1. Remoteness	6.58	249/300	83	1
2. Dispersion	6.59	247/300	82	2
3. Attitude	6.60a	109/300	36	4
4. Discrimination	6.61a	232/300	77	3
5. Neglect	6.63	60/300	20	5

With regard to the two development strategies, the in-situ approach seems to be the popular alternative among the respondents in comparison to resettlement. With respect to the latter approach, only 42% were certain about participating, while the rest of the respondents were either undecided, unwilling or only willing if all costs were borne by the government authorities (Table 6.65).

## VI. Conclusion

It has been stressed at the outset that my survey is a case study. It is a specific examination of the political and socio-economic attitudes of 300 Ibans from selected longhouse communities in a few chosen polling districts of Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus. As such, firm conclusions cannot be drawn from the findings about the larger Iban political and socio-economic worlds, either of Bkt. Begunan and Pelagus, or of Ibans in general. The decision to undertake a case study instead of a random

sample to represent the larger Iban population reflected practical considerations due to a number of problems that would have hampered the latter method. The dispersion of Iban settlements in far-flung areas of the ulu would not only have made research costs prohibitive but travel difficult; a longer period of study would have been required.

Despite the qualifications needed to make direct inferences from the sample to the wider Iban community, I have frequently made comparisons between the political and socio-economic behaviour of the samples and the Ibans in general. In many instances, it has been found that these patterns are, to some extent, similar. But these comparisons have been made not only with regard to the Ibans of the sample findings but also on the basis of empirical observations, interviews, general knowledge of the Ibans, and my experience of living and working among Ibans and being conscious of wider opinions and of information from newspapers and other literature. For example, it was found in the survey that Dayakism was the least important consideration in elections; although this finding cannot be used to draw conclusions about the political behaviour of Ibans in general, the examination of the voting trends in Iban constituencies does suggest a similar observation--that is, the PBDS won the majority of the Dayak seats in 1987 due not to the effect of

Dayakism but other factors; among them, the personality of candidates.<sup>171</sup>

It has been shown in the case study that the political and socio-economic behavioural patterns of a selection of Ibans do not conform to a number of generally observable and established patterns. In that respect, some of my findings highlight the risks involved in generalising, more generally, from the empirically observable patterns of behaviour to all sections of Iban society. In addition, they also serve to cast some doubts on the validity of generally accepted views about Iban politics, particularly the regional (or division) cleavage and the behavioural patterns defined by the *ulu*, *semi-pasar* and *pasar* distinctions.

Rapid development, both in politics and economics, has made regional (divisional) cleavages less significant. This can be seen from the broad appeal of the Iban-dominated SNAP in the 1970s and the Iban-based PBDS in the 1980s. The lack of importance of this factor has also been demonstrated by my research findings; there were no significant variations in the political and socio-economic behaviours of the respondents from the Second (i.e. Bkt. Begunan) and the Seventh (Kapit) Divisions.

With respect to behavioural variations based on the rural-urban (or the *ulu-pasar*) dichotomies, I believe the variable can be refined, by determining the accessibility

<sup>171</sup> See Jawan, 1987a, op cit.

of longhouses to major urban centres. While I took into consideration the accessibility factor in categorising my respondents into rural or urban, my correlations did not reveal any significant difference in the opinion patterns of my sample which I have categorised into either rural or urban based on accessibility and their observed pattern of residence (i.e. longhouse and non-longhouse Ibans automatically categorised as rural and urban respectively). While I found that there were behavioural differences, they ran against popularly held notions about them. Although *ulu* respondents are generally more self-sufficient and *pasar* more politically conscious, the majority of the *ulu* respondents were not necessarily more inclined to support PBDS; instead, the practical considerations of the desire for development prevail over limited political ambitions.

As for leadership qualities, the majority of the sampled Ibans held the broadly defined personality factor to be of utmost importance, followed by the educational factor. The emphasis on the personality of candidates and leaders underpins the whole complex of Iban values; it also reflects the desire to sustain the traditional values of leadership, such as oratorical and interpersonal communication skills, innovativeness, competitiveness, firmness, compassion and cooperativeness. While education was valued for its ability to produce some of the above values, the

respondents stressed that it is very important for their prospective leaders to be able to communicate at their level as well as socialise with them.

Generally, it has also been established that the respondents' political outlook is not parochial and racist as has been alleged in certain quarters. To a large extent, the Ibans realise that power-sharing is the only alternative to a stable government. Although the actions of some respondents, especially PBDS supporters, invites parochialistic and racist labels, it merely reflects an idealistic approach to solving the political problems among the Dayaks. It is idealistic because to realise the objective that Ibans should dominate in Sarawak, as do the Malays in West Malaysia, requires the complete rearrangement of political alignments. In an attempt to do that, resentment will come not only from various political groupings within Sarawak itself but from the federal leaders as well. Such an arrangement would inevitably lead to Iban political prominence; hence, I would ask: "Are federal leaders ready to see another state being lead by a non-Malay, who is also likely to be a non-Muslim as well?".<sup>172</sup>

Finally, contrary to popular allegations, Ibans are not generally resistant to change. At least, this was not

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<sup>172</sup> The Sabah case in which a Christian Kadazan-dominated PBS is alleged to be constantly undermined demonstrates just how difficult it would be for a non-Malay and non-Muslim-led government to sustain its position.



the case among my respondents. What they feared was improperly planned development that ran counter to their established lifestyles, customs and tradition. I would argue if development takes into proper account these views, antagonism and misunderstandings will be greatly reduced.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSIONS

#### I. Summary of Main Findings

Early Iban experiences in the pioneering, Brooke and the Colonial periods contributed, to some extent, to Iban underdevelopment in the post-independence period. In pre-Brooke times, their experiences were rather different from the requirements of independent and modern-state activities (that is, in terms of what are generally recognised to be modern and Western-defined political and socio-economic activities). In fact, if the Brooke intervention in Sarawak in 1841 and its subsequent expansion into Iban country can be said to mark the advent of modern government and socio-economic organisations, then Iban participation in those innovations was very limited indeed. Initially, that involvement focused on the Brooke concern to utilise Iban war prowess in order to suppress rebel groups which opposed the Raj. In addition to that, some Iban leaders (i.e. the *raja berani*) were invited to sit on certain advisory bodies; but the value of their services was merely to legitimise Brooke rule and to serve as a conduit for the Rajahs to summon Iban mercenaries whenever the need arose. In terms of economic activities, there were no real efforts by the Raj to acquaint Ibans with modern pursuits (i.e. education, commercial farming

or business) away from their *ulu* environs. While some changes occurred in the Iban economy, such as the cultivation of rubber, the Rajahs remained reluctant to bring Ibans into direct contact with the outside world, for they subscribed to the belief that it was in the Iban interest to continue, as far as possible, with their established ways of life.

Therefore, it is not an understatement to say that the Brooke period did not generate any aspirations among the Ibans to participate more fully in the changing affairs of Sarawak. Instead, through their policies and practices, the Rajahs reinforced Iban identification with the rural areas and agriculture. While they outlawed warfaring and severely restricted migration, they did not provide the Ibans with any clear alternatives to pursue.

The brief period of British Colonial rule (i.e. 1946-63) did not improve the disadvantaged political and socio-economic position of the Ibans *vis-à-vis* the Malays, who had been preferred by the Rajahs as their junior administrators, and the Chinese, as their entrepreneurs. Although the Colonial period brought Ibans into closer contact with development, the effect was still limited in comparison with the Malays and Chinese.

Nevertheless, there were some significant changes among the Ibans during the Colonial period as a result of more determined efforts by the new government, supported by its access to greater resources to promote development. The cultivation of cash crops such as rubber

continued, the availability of education improved, especially for those who were situated in and around Kuching, and various community development schemes were established. Furthermore, these changes, begun in a very limited and localised way during the Brooke period, also gave rise to a cleavage between the generally more prosperous Saribas Ibans and their more backward Rejang cousins. In the immediate post-independence period, these divisions were reflected in the emergence of SNAP, which initially served the Saribas Ibans, and PESAKA, which catered to the Rejang Ibans.

While the Saribas and Rejang Ibans were initially represented by two different political parties, there was no fundamental difference in the general policies and orientations of the two political parties. It has been asserted that PESAKA was more traditional because it was led by "traditional leaders", who held such ranks as *temenggong* and *penghulu*, while SNAP had "new Iban leaders", who had had some education and were not part of the traditional hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> Based on this distinction, early scholars have concluded that early post-

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<sup>1</sup> However, in his research on Jugah's biography, Sutlive portrays Jugah as being "modern" (in fact, more modern than Kalong Ningkan); this he deduces from Jugah's accommodating political stand, relating to, for example, PESAKA's merger with BUMIPUTERA, its role in ousting Kalong Ningkan and its part in the state government led by Rahman Ya'kub after the 1970 election, Vinson H. Sutlive, Jr., mss. However, I would argue that Jugah's accommodating style represented not "modern" features but "leadership weakness" attributed mainly to his lack of education; he had--as described by Sutlive--been over-dependent on his advisers, who had their own political ambitions, to feed him information before he could make a decision.

independence Iban politics was dominated by the regional cleavage between the Saribas and the Rejang. However, this conclusion is erroneous for reasons I have already discussed. Briefly, it overemphasised these divisions, which had obviously been largely overcome even before the District Council elections of 1963, when SNAP and PESAKA became partners in the Sarawak Alliance. Furthermore, previous scholars have not examined the "real power groups" behind both SNAP and PESAKA, which were similar in character. While it is clear that SNAP then was led by the "new and educated leaders", it is not so obvious with regard to PESAKA, with such ostensibly traditional leaders such as *Temenggong* Jugah. Be that as it may, the driving force behind PESAKA when *Penghulu* Tawi Sli became Chief Minister comprised "new leaders", especially Thomas Kana, Jonathan Bangau and Alfred Mason. Even *Penghulu* Tawi Sli's status as a "traditional leader" is questionable; other than the fact that he had been appointed a *penghulu*, Tawi Sli can also be said to possess some of the features of the "new leaders" in SNAP.

It has been shown, not only through my analysis of election data between 1963 and 1987, but also from my case study, that regional cleavage has not been a significant feature of Iban politics recently nor was it an important political consideration even in the 1960s. Therefore, the erosion of the regional cleavage, which had begun to be established during the Brooke period, had

paved the way for moves towards Iban supra-regional integration, first through cooperation between Ibans in SNAP and PESAKA in the Alliance in the late 1960s, and later, intermittently, in SNAP in the 1970s and, more recently, in the PBDS.

When Sarawak became independent from the British with its incorporation into the Federation of Malaysia, one of the basic political problems facing the Ibans has been sustaining supra-regional unity as a vehicle for political negotiation *vis-à-vis* the united Malays/Melanaus and the Chinese. However, these divisions (or cleavages) must not be confused with that which separated the Saribas and Rejang Ibans. The traditional divisions that were presumed to dominate the Saribas and Rejang Ibans were based on region; those that I am referring to, and which present problems for supra-regional integration are based on several factors (for example, political, ideological, and socio-economic), and are not purely regional ones.

As a consequence of the fragile nature of their unity, the Ibans usually bargained from a position of weakness. Therefore, many issues of socio-economic development, such as education and employment, in which Ibans lagged behind the Malays/Melanaus and the Chinese, and the need to bring Ibans into the mainstream of Sarawak development so that these inter-ethnic inequalities might be narrowed, could not be properly addressed. Despite the seven years of Iban government

under Kalong Ningkan and Tawi Sli, the problems were not attended to for a number of reasons: for example, the Kalong Ningkan period (1963-66) was devoted entirely to efforts to stabilise the regime, which in the end was brought down, and replaced by the pseudo-government of Tawi Sli (1966-70), basically run by the Melanaus led by Taib Mahmud and Rahman Ya'kub.

Indeed, when the government eventually fell formally into Melanau hands from the beginning of the 1970s, the question of bringing socio-economic development to the Ibans became even more remote. One obvious pattern of development in Rahman Ya'kub's period was the latter's desire to create a "wealthy *bumiputera*" class which could underwrite political parties in order to free natives, especially the Malays and Melanaus, from their dependence on Chinese entrepreneurs. It was also evident, from my earlier discussion, that under Rahman Ya'kub, more development funds, in terms of the percentage of total spending, were concentrated in developing urban areas, as opposed to the Kalong Ningkan and, to a lesser extent, Tawi Sli governments, when priority was given to rural development.

Since the 1970s, Iban resentment against the government has grown. Basically, there is a widespread feeling that it discriminates against the Ibans, whether in terms of equal access to scholarships, university admissions or business opportunities, or in securing employment in public and statutory bodies. The feeling of

discrimination is further compounded when Ibans perceive that they are not receiving a reasonable share of the benefits of development as stipulated by the NEP, which, after all, has sought to ameliorate the disadvantaged position of *bumiputeras* as against the Chinese. In this respect, they argue that the Malays/Melanaus have benefited at the expense of the Ibans, and more widely the Dayaks.

At what point this resentment might be translated into Iban unrest and rebellion against the government is very difficult to determine precisely. But I would argue that the situation is becoming critical. The only major factor holding back an Iban uprising is that Ibans are basically a rural population; therefore, the problems that they face are not yet as serious as they might have been had they been mainly *pasar*-based settlers. For example, if they cannot find employment and opportunities in the *pasar*, they can simply go back to their longhouses and still maintain some level of existence. However, this insurance against deprivation is being rapidly undermined, as the exploitation of the rainforests have continued apace. Unless, Iban problems are sincerely and quickly addressed by the government, I would suggest that the prospects for more active Iban protest in order to attract the attention of government to their plight are increasingly likely.

There are a number of problems associated with Iban politics which have impeded their socio-economic



development. The most important of them is that of the oscillation of Iban political behaviour, between regional (i.e. based on personal followings) and institutional (i.e. supra-regional) loyalty. This situation of flux has meant that it has been difficult to crystallise Iban unity within a single political party. The politically fragmented Ibans began uniting behind SNAP and PESAKA in the 1960s and in SNAP from the mid-1970s; this was followed by the re-emergence of regionalism, when Iban unity in SNAP was eroded and divided between SNAP and the PBDS. In 1987, PBDS represented a resurgence of Iban unity. However, this supra-regional unity under PBDS in 1987 differed in character from that in SNAP in 1974, as the former was based on an uneasy alliance of established regional leaders (i.e. the assemblymen) and the latter, on the emergence of new leaders (i.e. newly elected assemblymen). Nevertheless, the circumstance in which supra-regional unity occurred was similar in both periods, in that it emerged in a political party that opposed a government perceived by the Ibans to be led by an "unjust" coalition.

In 1987, Iban (Dayak) supra-regional integration in PBDS was rather short-lived. Although PBDS won the majority of the Dayak seats (i.e. 15 out of the 25 [or 11 out of 17 Iban seats]), almost immediately after the election, five of its assemblymen had rejoined the BN3. The defection confirms my earlier conclusions that: (1) the PBDS major victory in 1987 cannot be conclusively

linked to "Dayakism"; (2) the alliance of regional leaders in the party in 1987 (comprising mainly Iban (or Dayak) assemblymen who had left SNAP and SUPP) was a fragile one; and (3) the PBDS victory can more appropriately be linked to the influence of the "personal followings" (regional loyalty) of incumbent assemblymen, who had switched political camps to the PBDS just before the 1987 election.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, there is also the problem of sustaining Iban supra-regional loyalty. This has been explored both at the grassroots and the leadership levels. From the grassroots perspective, there is an increasing awareness of the need to unite Ibans within a single political party. This is vigorously expressed by the majority of the respondents and many community leaders, whom I came into contact with in the Sri Aman, Sibuan and Kapit Divisions. The majority of them seem to realise the need for power-sharing between the various ethnic groups and thereby securing a fairer distribution of the benefits of development. Despite this realisation, there is a general divisive tendency among the Iban masses. This can be seen from the voting patterns since the first direct election in 1969/70. In all Iban constituencies, whether state or parliamentary, elections have been fiercely fought and victories have not been very decisive. In other words, the majority of Iban assemblymen, who have won in their

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<sup>2</sup> Similar observations were made in my previous study, see Jawan, 1987a, op cit.

respective constituencies, had secured narrow majorities; at times, these margins were below 50 votes, and in no case have Iban assemblymen won by denying their closest opponents the 10% vote margin (i.e. 10% of total votes polled by the winner), which would have made their closest challengers lose their election deposits. This contrasts with the Malay/Melanau and, especially, Chinese assemblymen, who, in most cases, won their seats with convincing majorities, and in some, caused their opponents to forfeit their deposits. This pattern of Iban voting was also in evidence as recently as in 1987, although PBDS had won decisively in terms of the number of Dayak seats.

At the leadership level, there is the problem of the decentralisation of Iban leadership. Since independence, the PBB has moulded and projected a small group of Ibans (i.e. the Linggi-Jabu-Ujang group) as leaders of the Iban community. Specifically, the party has continued to work to promote a multi-bumiputera image, although the Iban group has not received widespread electoral support among the Ibans in general. To some extent, the PBB strategy has also been emulated by the SUPP, which has also not commanded more than three Dayak seats after any given state election. But the latter differs from the PBB in at least one respect; SUPP has not taken special care of its Dayak supporters, who have congregated around three key Dayak personalities (i.e. until 1986, Richard Dampeng of the Serian [Bidayuh] area [First Division], Jawan

Empaling of the Dudong [or Sibu] area and until 1987, Hollis Tini of Sri Aman). For example, since the party's inception and its entry into government in 1970, I could not trace a single Iban (or Dayak) having been nominated by the party to receive the state decoration of a datukship;<sup>3</sup> neither has the party nominated any Iban (or Dayak) for any political appointments to either the public or statutory bodies allocated to the party.<sup>4</sup>

However, the more important issue with regard to Iban leadership is the characteristics of the group frequently referred to as the "Iban leaders". In this thesis, I have defined them as the persons able to command the confidence of the majority of Iban legislative representatives. In other words, those senior leaders who have the support of most of the (Iban or Dayak) state assemblymen and in turn their constituents. Thus, as far as I am concerned, there are two different groups of Iban leaders; first, more generally, the

<sup>3</sup> However, Ramsey Jitam, a Dayak Bidayuh and a SUPP Assistant Minister is the first Dayak to hold a datukship while in SUPP; but it is very likely that he received his honour in recognition of his previous record in the police service, when he was the Deputy Police Commissioner for Sarawak before joining SUPP.

<sup>4</sup> For example, when Richard Dampeng ak. Laki and Jawan Empaling lost in the parliamentary election of 1986 in Serian and Rejang respectively, they were then largely ignored by SUPP; this continues to be true of Dampeng, but less so for Jawan, who was recruited back by the party to stand (and win) in the state election of 1987. Dampeng was angry at his treatment, as he maintained that after being the MP for SUPP since 1974, he deserved a better deal from the party, Former SUPP MP for Serian, Richard Dampeng ak. Laki, interview by author, 16 June 1990, Serian, Sarawak. But in 1991 and for the first time in history, SUPP helped secure a job (in a private firm) for its defeated Iban candidate (Jerome Runggol in Selangau [formerly Rejang]), even though it was not a political appointment.

elected assemblymen (and parliamentarians), and second, the senior leaders, who are either elected assemblymen or parliamentarians and who also occupied important positions (e.g. Presidents, Deputy Presidents, Secretaries-General) within a political party.

In the 1960s and in terms of their background, Iban leaders comprised two distinct groups, the traditional leaders (or the *raja berani*) and the "new leaders", new because their political experiences were derived from non-traditional exploits and they were self-made men in a modern environment. Since the mid-1970s, there have emerged the second echelon leaders represented by such persons as Moggie and Tajeim in SNAP. Unlike their predecessors, who dominated the 1960s, they were thought to be men with a "vision" for the Ibans in Sarawak politics. Hence, their "noble idea" was to bring SNAP into the coalition in 1976. But the problem with this group of leaders is that they are procrastinators; it took them 11 years to argue the issue that the Ibans were still not benefiting from development, despite the fact that these visionaries had held important positions in the governments of Rahman Ya'kub and Taib Mahmud. Thus, amid the so-called spirit of "Dayakism" which they generated in 1987, the question remains "What were they doing about the neglect of the Ibans from 1976 to 1987?". Among some SNAP members in the state cabinet then, Tajeim was one of three Deputy Chief Ministers, and Moggie was, and still is, a full Federal Minister, which meant that

Ibans did have some representation at the centre of decision-making processes. Hence, I am inclined to say that even if PBDS had been party to a successful opposition bid to grab power from the BN3 in 1987, their leadership in government would not have been likely to bring about any major change for Ibans at large. In 1987, they had cooperated with PERMAS, led by Rahman Ya'kub, a person who has probably done no more than Taib Mahmud, as far as Iban or Dayak interests are concerned.

Another problem with the Iban leadership is that it still, to some extent, comprises persons who are rather mediocre personalities and only moderately qualified. There is a substantial number who have received only secondary level education and have worked either as school teachers or in the lower echelons of the civil service.<sup>5</sup> Hence, "when the going gets tough", they waiver and desert the party for which they had been elected.<sup>6</sup> This has been one of the major problems among Iban assemblymen since the early 1970s. In addition, there was also nothing substantially "new" about the PBDS' call to

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Gramong Juna (PBDS--Machan, now in PBB), Joseph Kudi (PBDS--Ngemah), Felix Bantin (PBDS--Song), Philimon Nuing (PBDS--Pelagus), Donald Lawan (SNAP--Bkt. Begunan), Edmund Langgu (PBDS--Krian), Geman Itam (PBDS--Meluan) and Ujang Jilan (PBB--Kemena). These are some of the Iban leaders elected in 1987 to the DUN; the number of individuals whom I would add to this group would be greater if all Iban leaders elected from 1963, both from the CN (or DUN) and parliament, are considered. However, I admit that, through time, some might have gained leadership experience.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Gramong Juna and Michael Ben (Tebakang), who were formerly elected under the PBDS, had defected to the PBB; and, Edward Jeli (Marudi) and Sora Rusah (Bengoh), formerly PBDS, are now in SNAP.

Ibans in 1987 to unite behind the party. It had also been made by the same group of leaders in SNAP from the mid-1970s; the only difference was that in 1987 it was made by another party.

The Iban political problem does not exist in isolation. It has to be seen in the context of the aspirations of other ethnic groups, whether they be those within or outside the state. In Sarawak, the dominant political role of the minority Melanaus has been secured through the dynamic personalities of Rahman Ya'kub and Taib Mahmud, who have astutely manipulated both constitutional and political processes. First, they have used their religious affiliations within the Islamic faith to integrate the Muslim Melanaus and the Malays as one definitive group, thereby playing down the Malay-Melanau distinction to their political advantage. This has worked well for them, initially, in denying Jugah the Governorship, and later, in allowing the ascent of Rahman Ya'kub to the Chief Ministership, despite the fact that the Governorship was then already occupied by a Malay, and the two highest offices should have been shared between the non-Muslim and Muslim natives. Secondly, they have managed to placate and neutralise some Ibans, whom they have maintained within the PBB, in order to project a multi-bumiputera image. Thirdly, Taib Mahmud successfully achieved a compromise on the freezing of timber licenses as a pre-condition for his resignation from his cabinet post under Kalong Ningkan. As much as it

has been the result of this compromise, it was equally Kalong Ningkan's fault that he did not build up a group of "wealthy Ibans" to underwrite SNAP; instead, he relied heavily on the Chinese. The problem of underwriting Iban- or Dayak-based political parties has been a major problem ever since, to the extent that political compromises with members of other ethnic groups have been deemed desirable (i.e. first, in accommodating James Wong as President, and an important financial patron of the Iban-dominated SNAP in 1981, and secondly, in forming an uneasy alliance with Rahman Ya'kub's PERMAS in order to generate funds for the 1987 election). In fact, several Dayak candidates, who stood as PBDS candidates in 1987, were actually pledged to PERMAS;<sup>7</sup> hence, even if the PBDS-PERMAS alliance had secured a sufficient majority to form the government in 1987, it is doubtful whether the PBDS could have, first, provided the candidate for the Chief Ministership, and secondly, failing the first, could have exerted its authority in the new coalition.

Another important factor to consider is the influence of the federal, more specifically UMNO leaders on Sarawak politics. The general assumption among non-Malays in the country is that the UMNO leaders would prefer, if possible, to work with state governments led by their Muslim counterparts. This feeling is not at all alleviated by what many view to be undue federal

<sup>7</sup> Former member of SUPP, DUN for Sri Aman, and Assistant State Minister Hollis ak. Tini, interview by author, 3 August 1990, Sri Aman, Sarawak.



harassment of the Christian-dominated PBS-led government in Sabah. In Sarawak, the Ibans first experienced federal interference when the Prime Minister insisted in 1963 that Jugah could not be seconded as Governor because he was an Iban. While Jugah's nomination as Governor was halted, federal interference did not stop there, although a Malay had by then been appointed as Governor. Federal intervention was also responsible for the downfall of Kalong Ningkan and his replacement by a more amenable Tawi Sli. While it may be unfair to accuse the federal leaders of being anti-Iban at that time, this feeling among Ibans of discrimination was strengthened when the then Prime Minister failed to exert his influence to secure the appointment of an Iban Chief Minister in 1970, when the Governorship was already held by a Malay. In any case, there was no effort to appoint an Iban Governor (or Yang di-Pertua Negeri) when the opportunity came in 1977, 1981 and 1985, when the Chief Ministership had been held continuously by the Muslim group.

However, in 1987, it might be argued that the federal leaders were more accommodating to the Ibans by not expelling the PBDS from the Barisan coalition at federal level, when the party chose to withdraw from the state-level Barisan. But this must also be seen in the wider context of federal influence in the internal politics of Sarawak. The apparently equivocal position of the federal leaders with regard to the PBDS might have been the result of their wish to remind Taib Mahmud that

they could use the PBDS card if the Chief Minister became too detached and independent from them. Secondly, it could also have been a genuine federal concern for Taib Mahmud's crumbling influence. Expelling PBDS at the federal level, might well have generated greater Iban resentment against the coalition, thereby making PBDS more appealing to Dayak voters.

Many of the issues above were elaborated in the case study survey carried out among respondents from Bukit Begunan and Pelagus. Generally, there was no "significant" difference of opinion between the respondents from the two areas. Neither was there any "significant" difference in the patterns of opinion of those who came from the *ulu* or *pasar*, were either educated or non-educated, or were younger- or older-respondents, both within and between the two regions.

The main findings of the case study can be summarised under three main headings, namely, politics, leadership and development. With respect to politics, there were two important sets of opinion. First, there is clearly a growing political consciousness and impatience among the Ibans concerning their disadvantaged political and socio-economic position. This awareness centres on the issues of power-sharing and the proper political position of the Ibans vis-à-vis the other ethnic groups in the decision-making processes; secondly, it is also reflected in their perceptions of the need to create an Iban political unity to strengthen their bargaining

position relative to other ethnic groups. This consolidation could be in PBDS or in a new political platform, whichever is deemed more expedient in the future.

With respect to leadership, there was a generally mixed reaction to the kinds of leadership qualities that are to be emphasised among future Iban leaders. While the majority said that they favoured leaders who had had some level of education, they also stressed the importance of personal qualities. Among other things, this would include oratorical skill and the ability to talk to the longhouse people "at their level". Generally, what this seems to mean is that the politics of regionalism (i.e. personal followings) and supra-regionalism (i.e. institutional or party loyalty) will continue to dominate the respondents' future political behaviour. The important implication of this Iban disposition is that future Iban leaders who seek to unite the Ibans (or at least the 300 respondents) must take into account these attitudes. More specifically, to be successful at promoting supra-regional integration, future Iban leaders must be able to reconcile the leadership characteristics derived from the new fields of experience (e.g. education) and some of the highly-held traditional virtues (e.g. the ability to "talk" or "mix" with the longhouse people). The Ibans, especially those who come from the longhouse communities, are indeed very

particular people; they welcome those who *nemu begulai enggau orang*.<sup>8</sup>

With regard to development, there was a general scepticism towards government initiatives, especially those that dealt with land resettlement. The majority seemed to prefer either outright agricultural grants or increased opportunities in employment and education. Many expressed the fear of being made the victims of developments similar to those experienced by the Ibans of Batang Ai.

## **II. Suggestions for Future Research on Iban Politics and Economic Development**

Although I have claimed that my research is an attempt to examine Iban politics and its relationship to economic development as comprehensively as possible, there are some issues that I would have liked, if I had not been constrained by space and time, to have treated in much more depth. I shall briefly outline these topics on which, I think, future research on Iban politics and economics should concentrate.

The first is the need to study the larger Iban population. Previous scholars of the Iban, including myself, have generally confined themselves to case studies, which cannot authoritatively generalise about the wider society. My decision to undertake a case study was largely determined by my limited resources. With the

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<sup>8</sup> *Nemu begulai enggau orang*: have the skill to mix with people at different levels.

rapid rate of socio-economic development taking place in Sarawak, the problem of communication has, to some extent, been overcome, thereby making more Iban communities generally accessible. But large-scale research of this kind requires considerable funding and ideally multi-disciplinary team-work.

Secondly, Iban political culture needs to be examined in more depth. What I have done in my thesis is to summarise the key cultural values which were predominant in the pioneering period and which I perceive to have had some relevance to certain aspects of Iban political behaviour in the period of independence. However, obviously some of the earlier values have been transformed and are no longer of any significance. In that respect, my discussion serves as a benchmark for further studies. Due to the accelerated changes that are taking place in contemporary Iban society, it might be more appropriate for other scholars to examine these values by means of a detailed survey; this might serve not only to reduce misconceptions about what are generally perceived to be components of Iban political culture and what it actually comprises, but it might also expand upon what I have considered to be the main features of Iban political culture.<sup>9</sup>

Thirdly, there is also the need to study Iban leadership more fully. My definition of Iban leaders

<sup>9</sup> Specifically, I am referring to the type of survey that Almond and Verba undertook for their cross-national studies of civic culture, Almond and Verba, 1963, op cit.

covers no more than 27 Iban (or 38 Dayak) state assemblymen and parliamentarians. It is not therefore an enormous task to concentrate on this group in a single study. Perhaps, as a start, there are the unexplored areas of Ningkan's and Tawi Sli's leadership in the early days of modern Iban politics. There is also a need to study the second generation leaders and their background. I have supplemented previous studies by selected interviews with some of these leaders, but there are still gaps. Most importantly, there has been no attempt to examine in detail the views of these leaders about Iban society, its leadership, its political values and the politics which they have tried to pursue.

We know little about the inner workings of cabinets, inter-ethnic political negotiations, the roots of the alliances and factions which have been formed over the years, and the process of building and manoeuvring political support and clienteles in the constituencies. In particular, there is the need for some studies of inter-ethnic politics at the Sarawak level. The politics of the Ibans or Dayaks, Malays/Melanaus and Chinese do not exist in a vacuum; there is a need to understand them in relation to one another.

Fourthly, the question of poverty has not been well developed in the previous literature on the Ibans, particularly in relation to politics. This, as I have acknowledged, stems from the general lack of data on income and its measurement. Hence, with regard to the

question "Are poor Ibans more likely to vote for government candidates who can provide them quickly with rural projects?", I was only able to answer it partially. I have assumed that "poor" Ibans would normally be expected to be found among the *ulu* respondents, although here there is the problem of the distinction between absolute and relative poverty between the *ulu* and *pasar* respondents. As a general rule, the majority of the *pasar* respondents who fall within the M\$500 per month and above category might also consider themselves to be a "poor" group among the generally well-to-do *pasar* dwellers.

### **III. Iban Politics and Economic Development in the Wider Context of Ethnic Politics**

My study of the Ibans should also be seen in the light of its contribution to the more general understanding of the ethnic dimension in the processes of political change and economic development. Generally, Malaysia has attracted considerable scholarly attention for its success in maintaining a stable democracy, despite the presence of potentially explosive ethnic divisions. This is particularly true in the context of the inter-ethnic rivalries in the Peninsula, especially between the Malays and Chinese. However, with regard to the majority non-Malay populations of Sarawak and Sabah, the success has been achieved to date by constraining the democratic process and using the federal domination, politically and economically, to undermine the position of non-Malay populations in the two East Malaysian

states. In turn, this domination has, to some extent, generated widespread political resentment. In Sabah, this has led to the emergence of a Christian Kadazan-dominated multi-ethnic PBS, which displaced a Muslim-dominated multi-ethnic BERJAYA. For much of the period since then, political friction has intensified; but the extent to which Kadazan nationalism might lead to secession from the federation is, at the moment, considered to be remote. In Sarawak, despite a strong sense of ethnic nationalism among the Ibans, political domination of the federal government through the minority Muslim Malays/Melanaus has not been severely threatened due, perhaps in part, to the narrow ethnic basis of the PBDS in 1987, which reduced its appeal to other ethnic groups needed by the party to form a working majority. This contrasts with the PBS of Sabah, which, although Christian Kadazan-dominated, is a multi-ethnic party. As a consequence of this ethnic dimension, the objectives of the NEP, as far as Sarawak and Sabah are concerned, have not been realised, as much as they have been for the Peninsular Malays. Instead, uneven development, which continues to persist among the various ethnic groups in the two East Malaysian states, has gradually escalated into a potentially explosive situation which threatens inter-ethnic relations.

Until the second half of the twentieth century, ethnicity did not feature prominently in the literature



on processes of political stability.<sup>10</sup> This early neglect stemmed from a number of factors: for example, (1) it was largely ignored in the modernisation paradigm; (2) its importance was not properly understood; (3) it was seen as a consequence, rather than a cause of political instability; and (4) it was seen as one of a host of factors that contributes to political instability.<sup>11</sup> However, in the second half of the twentieth century, there has been an increasing awareness of the importance of the issue of ethnicity. This was generated mainly by ethnic uprisings, especially in such Third World countries as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines. For these countries, the main concern is how to maintain stable polities, which are beset by the problem of ethnicity.

With respect to the relationship between political stability and the existence of a multiplicity of ethnic groups, Malaysia stands out as one of the most successful states in containing its multi-ethnic problems. In a brief comparative review of Sri Lanka<sup>12</sup> and Malaysia, Horiwitz observes that Sri Lanka is in the "midst of an ugly ethnic war" and that Malaysia has been "relatively

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<sup>10</sup> See Walker Conner (1972). "Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying", *World Politics*, 24(3), (April), pp.319-55; but where it was stressed, the tendency was to overemphasise its significance, Lucian W.Pye (1958). "The Non-Western Political Process", *Journal of Politics*, 20(3), (August), pp.468-86.

<sup>11</sup> David Brown (1989). "Ethnic Revival: Perspective on State and Society", *Third World Quarterly*, 11(4), (October), pp.1-17.

<sup>12</sup> There are two main ethnic groupings: the Tamils and the Sinhalese; the former constitute about 11% of the total population.

at peace".<sup>13</sup> This is in spite of the fact that the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka is less pronounced than that of Malaysia. Horiwitz observes that: (1) the 11% ethnic Tamils are small in numbers in comparison with Malaysia's Chinese and Indians, who form about 40% of the national population; (2) the Tamils can be said to be "indigenous" to Sri Lanka, having arrived there about a thousand years ago and are citizens, compared to the Chinese and Indians who were recent arrivals, and were initially not citizens of Malaysia (or of the then Malaya); (3) in Malaysia, events before independence were not conducive to inter-ethnic relations, but they were generally peaceful in pre-independence Sri Lanka; (4) the Malays, Chinese and Indians had been structurally divided in Colonial and post-Colonial Malay(si)a (e.g. in terms of education), whereas, it was the reverse in Sri Lanka (where the Tamils and Sinhalese had been brought together through common educational provision); and (5) Malay politicians were more cautious in their political and economic dealings with the Chinese and the Indians, while the Tamils and Sinhalese were relatively open in their political relations.<sup>14</sup>

Horiwitz attributes the success in containing inter-ethnic conflict in Malaysia to the presence of a viable conflict management system, which was not present in Sri

<sup>13</sup> Donald L. Horiwitz (1989). "Incentives and Behaviour in Ethnic Politics of Sri Lanka and Malaysia", *Third World Quarterly*, 11(4), (October), pp.18-35.

<sup>14</sup> Horiwitz, 1989, Ibid.

Lanka.<sup>15</sup> Basically, this lies in the fact that in Sri Lanka, political parties,<sup>16</sup> which were ethnically-based, continued to compete openly along ethnic lines, while in Malaysia, there was little inter-ethnic competition between the Malay UMNO, the Chinese MCA and the Indian MIC. Furthermore, inter-ethnic competition in Malaysia has been substantially reduced by the institution of a grand coalition of ethnic-based political parties.

The success of a grand coalition government has been hailed by political scientists as a possible political solution for a society deeply divided by the factor of ethnicity. Lijphart terms this political arrangement "consociational democracy". There are four main features of this arrangement:<sup>17</sup> first, a grand coalition of various ethnic groups,<sup>18</sup> which represents their respective communities;<sup>19</sup> secondly, mutual veto or a "concurrent majority" to protect vital minority interests, in other words, "all" leaders of the segments must agree to a

<sup>15</sup> Horiwitz, 1989, Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> For example, the Tamil United Liberation Front (successor to the Federal Party and Tamil Congress) and the United National Party (Sinhalese).

<sup>17</sup> Arend Lijphart (1977). *Democracy in Plural Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p.25.

<sup>18</sup> Or "segments" which represent major interests--be they cultural, religious or ideological--in society.

<sup>19</sup> Lijphart uses the term "segment" to refer to what I narrowly call an "ethnic group", Lijphart, 1977, op cit, p.25. However, I realise that there are many "segmental cleavages" of which an ethnic group is only one. For a basic discussion of the term "ethnic group" and related concepts, see Jason W. Clay (1989). "The Ethnic Future of Nations", *Third World Quarterly*, 11(4), (October), pp.223-233.

decision; thirdly, the upholding of the principle of proportionality with regard to political representation and the division of the spoils; finally, a high degree of autonomy for each ethnic group in the running of its own internal affairs.

The essence of "grand coalition" or "consociational" politics is elite cooperation or a "cartel". In that sense, it differs from the British government-versus-opposition model because a grand coalition proscribes democracy and generally maintains the leaders of various "segments" in their position despite the fact that they might be unpopular. In the case of Malaysia, all ethnic groups have been represented in the national government, although the power that each exercises within the grand coalition does vary.<sup>20</sup> This depends on the balance of power as determined to a large extent not only by the population proportions but also the legislative seats that each group commands. Overall, the balance of power is supervised and maintained by the Malays.<sup>21</sup> In Sarawak and Sabah, however, there are differences. In Sabah, the Kadazans have power; they have managed to translate their favourable population numbers and proportion of legislative seats in the state into control of decision-making, though they are still constrained by federal

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<sup>20</sup> Until 1990, this national "grand coalition" also included the Christian Kadazan-dominated PBS, which has since withdrawn.

<sup>21</sup> But the Malay argument is that political power must remain theirs because economic power is, to a large extent, already in the hands of the Chinese.

actions. In Sarawak, Dayak demographic dominance has yet to be translated into political supremacy at the state level. One of the basic tenets of a grand coalition is the presence of a balance of power between various ethnic groups which is generally acceptable to them. Where there is no balance, but instead the extension of domination by one group increasingly seen to be unacceptable and illegitimate, than there is a danger of political hegemony by the dominant party which more and more frequently intervenes in the affairs of the weaker partners. In Sarawak, this has been in the form of bringing to bear federal support on the minority Muslim Malay/Melanau group to sustain Muslim political supremacy; in Sabah, it has taken the form of trying to destabilise the legitimate government led by the Christian Kadazan-dominated PBS. Recently, there is increasing evidence to suggest that UMNO is exerting its dominance within the grand coalition. For example, the poor election performance of the MCA in 1990 was partly attributed to the latter being seen as ineffective in striking a political bargain with respect to matters of interest to its community (for example, the issue of the national-type [Mandarin] Chinese schools). In another instance, after the 1990 election, the Prime Minister insisted on including two MIC leaders as federal Deputy Ministers in his cabinet, although the MIC President had wanted someone else;<sup>22</sup> the compromise was that one of the

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<sup>22</sup> Normally, a party's representatives in government are subjected to the party's recommendation.

two was eventually included but the other was the MIC's choice.

While Malaysia has generally been acknowledged as the model state of consociationalism, the above developments are a potential threat to its continued success. Unless these events are kept in check and sincere efforts are made to address the unjust treatment of some ethnic groups, it is my view that political instability will increase. They undermine the basic framework upon which inter-ethnic cooperation has, to a large extent, depended and which has provided the country with general political stability and steady economic progress for the past three decades.

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## APPENDIX A

### BRIEF SKETCHES OF POLITICAL PARTIES

#### Alliance:

The history of the formation of the Alliance party system dated back to an *ad hoc* electoral pact worked out between UMNO and MCA. As the pact proved beneficial, in terms of winning nine out of the 12 seats in the Kuala Lumpur Municipal elections, the electoral arrangement was cemented in a formal coalition styled the National Alliance Organisation on 23 August 1953; in September 1954, an inter-party National Council was established as its supreme body; in the following month, the MIC decided to join the Alliance. At the national level the Alliance was headed by the UMNO President; first by Tunku Abdul Rahman, then by Tun Razak, until the latter transformed the Alliance into Barisan Nasional (BN).

The Sarawak Alliance, the state component of the National Alliance, emerged from the transformation of the Sarawak United Front and consisted of SNAP, PESAKA, BARJASA, PANAS and SCA; PANAS withdrew shortly before the general election in 1963 due to disagreement about which party should exercise a dominant role in the Alliance and over the division of the spoils after the election. Until the Alliance party system was restyled Barisan Nasional in 1976, it had provided the first three Chief Ministers: Ningkan, Penghulu Tawi Sli and Rahman Ya'kub.

**Barisan Nasional (BN):**

Barisan Nasional is the result of the transformation of the Alliance party system. The term, Barisan Nasional (National Front), was first used by the second Prime Minister, the late Tun Razak, in his Independence Day radio and television broadcast in 1972, when he spoke of the possibility of a National Front among parties working to face national problems. He was then specifically referring to the possibility of PAS joining the Alliance.

The Barisan Nasional was formally registered on 1 June 1974 and comprised the following political parties: UMNO, MCA, MIC, PAS, PPP, GERAKAN, PBB, SUPP, and the Sabah Alliance. The highest body of the BN is the Supreme Council (*Majlis Tertinggi*), where each component party is represented by its senior leadership. Tun Razak became its first Chairman; upon the sudden death of Razak in January 1976, Datuk Hussein Onn, who had become the UMNO President, almost automatically assumed its Chairmanship; it is currently being headed by Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir, who became UMNO President in 1981, upon Hussein's retirement from active politics.

**Barisan Nasional Plus (BN Plus):**

Barisan Nasional Plus was a temporary electoral arrangement introduced by Taib Mahmud in 1983; specifically it refers to the Sarawak state level BN, comprising the PBB, SNAP and SUPP, Plus the newly formed PBDS. The political arrangement was created in order to accommodate the leaders of the newly founded PBDS, the

breakaway Iban leaders of SNAP. The importance of the arrangement was that the PBDS was, like other BN component parties, subject to the BN Plus's decisions on the allocation of seats to contest. Due to the unresolved conflict between the PBDS and SNAP before the 1983 election, it was decided that both parties were to contest against each other, under their respective party banners, in seats that were previously held by SNAP.

After the election, the Barisan National Supreme Council admitted PBDS, thereby dismantling the temporary political arrangement, which had been devised because SNAP had earlier objected to PBDS's admission. In the Barisan, a decision to admit new members, among other matters, had to be unanimous.

**Barisan Nasional Tiga (BN Tiga or BN3):**

Barisan Nasional Tiga (BN 3) was a coalition of three political parties (i.e. the PBB, SUPP and SNAP) after the withdrawal of PBDS from the state-level Barisan Nasional. But, the PBDS is still a component at the federal (national) level. It is pertinent to note that, except for the PBB and SUPP, which were the former components of the Alliance formed in 1970, and from 1974 transformed into BN, SNAP and the PBDS had been admitted individually into the BN, the former in 1976 and the latter in 1983.



**Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA):**

Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak, the second Malay party, was formed in 1961. The formation of BARJASA reflected divisions within the Malay community; BARJASA was anti-cession, while PANAS was pro-cession. Among the prominent leaders of the party were Tuanku Bujang, its founder President, Taib Mahmud, Rahman Ya'kub and Abang Han Abang Ahmad. While BARJASA may have been seen as a Malay party, it became increasingly dominated by the Muslim Melanau leaders, notably Rahman Ya'kub and Taib Mahmud.

BARJASA was the only component of the first state Alliance coalition that represented the Malays and Melanaus; PANAS withdrew prior to the first state general election. Its leaders were instrumental in toppling Kalong Ningkan and exercised considerable influence in the interim government of Tawi Sli from 1966 to 1970. In 1967, it merged with the other Muslim party, PANAS, to form Parti Bumiputera, the backbone of the Alliance governments formed after the 1970 and 1974 state general elections.

**Democratic Action Party (DAP):**

The Democratic Action Party is a multi-ethnic party based in Semenanjung (West Malaysia). It was formed by former members of the People's Action Party in 1966, following Singapore's separation from the Federation of Malaysia. Although multi-ethnic, it received majority support from the Chinese in the Peninsula; thus, it was

in competition with the other Chinese-based parties such as the MCA and GERAKAN, both Peninsula-based parties.

The DAP Sarawak branch is, in Sarawak, in competition with the Chinese-based party, SUPP. Since its first state election debut in 1979, the Sarawak DAP has yet to win a state seat. Nevertheless, its fortunes in the federal constituencies have been better; the DAP won Bandar Kuching and Sibul in 1982; it retained Kuching in 1986 and in 1990, besides regaining Lanang (formerly Sibul) in 1990. The prominent figures of the DAP are Lim Kit Siang (Secretary-General); in Sarawak, its state-level leadership centres around Sim Kwang Yang (its present MP for Bandar Kuching) and Ling Sie Ming (one time MP for Sibul).

**Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (GERAKAN):**

Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia, which was formed on 25 May 1968, comprised key individuals, who were formerly members of the MCA (e.g. Lim Chou Eu and his followers) and members of the United Democratic Party founded by Lim but later dissolved due to dissension, as well as some academicians (e.g. Professor Syed Hussein Alatas, who became its founder Chairman). Although multi-ethnic, it is predominantly Chinese and Peninsular-based. It has held power since 1969 in Penang, a predominantly Chinese state, under the Chief Ministership of Datuk Lim Chou Eu, and presently under Dr. Koh Tsu Koon. Gerakan's formal ties with the Alliance dated back to February 1972, when

its prospect of retaining power was eroded due to the internal politicking to topple Lim; the formal ties strengthened Gerakan, which the federal leaders preferred over any other parties to lead the Penang state government.

**Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA):**

The Malaysian Chinese Association is a Peninsular-based party founded in 1949; Tun Tan Cheng Lock was its founder President. Since its coalition with UMNO in 1952, it has been the pillar of Chinese representation in government, although the support for the party from the Chinese masses has varied considerably since then. Currently, the party is led by Datuk Seri Dr. Ling Liong Sik, who first took over the leadership in the mid-1980s by default; the immediate past President, Tan Koon Swan, resigned from the party after having been sentenced to a term in prison in Singapore because of his alleged business malpractices relating to the collapse of the trading house, the Pan-Electric.

**Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC):**

The Malaysian Indian Congress is a Peninsular-based party founded in 1946; John Thivy was its founder President. Since its decision to enter into coalition with UMNO and the MCA in October 1954, it has been the pillar of Indian representation in government. Presently, it is headed by Datuk Seri Samy Vellu, who is its sole

member holding full ministerial status in the federal cabinet.

**Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS):**

Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak was formed in July 1983 by former Iban leaders of SNAP, who were dissatisfied with the leadership of James Wong. Having failed to wrest power from the James Wong faction, they left the party. Among the more prominent of these leaders were Datuk Leo Moggie, Datuk Daniel Tajeim and Joseph Mamat Samuel who became the founder President, Deputy President and Secretary-General, respectively.

In its first election outing, the PBDS won eight seats out of the 16 designated as the SNAP-PBDS free-fight constituencies. In the 1987 state general election, it won 15 Dayak seats, of which 11 were from the Iban constituencies; however, five of the party's assemblymen defected to the BN 3 before the first state assembly sitting in 1987.

**Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS):**

Parti Bersatu Sabah is a Kadazan-dominated multi-ethnic party. It was formed in March 1985 by Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan, a former member of the ruling Parti Berjaya. Pairin left Berjaya, and consequently, Berjaya leader, Datuk Harris Salleh, forced the former's resignation from his Tambunan state seat by forwarding Pairin's undated resignation letter to the Sabah Assembly (Note: It is a common practice for some parties to ask

their candidates to sign an undated resignation letter, which the party can later use in the event that the member does not toe the party line). On receiving the resignation letter, the Tambunan seat was declared vacant and a by-election was held. Pairin, who then stood as an Independent, won. In retaliation, the Berjaya abrogated the district status of Tambunan. The excessive behaviour of the ruling party generated a public outcry and resentment against Berjaya.

In April 1986, about a year after winning its first election, PBS decided to dissolve the government and seek a fresh mandate to govern; in that election, it increased its legislative majority to 35 seats. In 1990, it was again returned to power. However, despite its general popularity, the party's rule has been turbulent because it does not enjoy the favour of the federal UMNO leaders. During the parliamentary election of 1991, the party withdrew from the Barisan and aligned itself with Semangat 46, a splinter party of some Malay leaders opposed to Mahathir in UMNO. Whether it was a direct consequence of PBS's "stab in the back" of Barisan, as the UMNO leaders termed it, the PBS leadership is presently beset by severe problems. Following the 1990 parliamentary election, Pairin and his top aids have been subjected to numerous charges of corruption. For example, Pairin has been charged with corruption relating to a number of business dealings involving his relatives; his brother, Datuk Dr. Jeffrey Kitingan, who is the Director

of the Sabah Foundation and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), the government think-tank, has also been charged with corruption; and Dr. Max Ongkili, the Deputy Director of IDS, has also been detained under the ISA, but has since been released without charge.

**Parti Bumiputera (BUMIPUTERA)**

Parti Bumiputera was formed in 1967 from the merger of the Melanau-dominated BERJASA and the Malay-dominated PANAS. The prominent leaders of BERJASA, Rahman Ya'kub and Taib Mahmud, went on to dominate the leadership of the newly-founded BUMIPUTERA. See also BERJASA and PANAS.

**Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS):**

Parti Islam Se-Malaysia is an Islamic-based Peninsular party formed on 24 November 1951. Its power base is concentrated in a few north-eastern states, especially Kelantan and Terengganu. Since the first election in 1959, following Malaya's independence from Britain in 1957, the party has ruled in the states of Kelantan and briefly in Terengganu. PAS lost its control in Terengganu in the 1969 elections and Kelantan in 1978. In the 1990 elections, PAS recaptured Kelantan in an electoral pact with Semangat 46; the party won enough seats to form the state government on its own.

**Parti Negara Sarawak (PANAS):**

Parti Negara Sarawak was formed on 9 April 1960. The party grew partly out of the perceived need to unite the Sarawak natives in order to protect them against the growing influence of the SUPP, and partly as a response to the anti-cession movement; PANAS was pro-cession. Although a multi-ethnic party, it was dominated by the Malay Abangs (aristocrats); Abang Mustapha was its founder President, while his brother, Abang Othman, was the Secretary-General.

The party opted out of the Alliance in 1963 but was coopted into the government in the realignment following Kalong Ningkan's removal. In 1967, it merged with BARJASA to form Parti Bumiputera.

**Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (PESAKA):**

The Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak was formed in 1962 to unite the Rejang Ibans; they were not adequately represented in SNAP, which concentrated its initial activities in the Second Division. Key Iban leaders in the formation of PESAKA were *Penghulu* Masam anak Radin, *Penghulu* Francis Umpau, *Pengarah* Banyang, *Tr.* Francis Bujang and *Penghulu* Chundi ak Resa. *Temenggong* Jugah, who was then PANAS Vice-President, had to be persuaded to leave PANAS and lead the party as its founder President.

PESAKA was one of the component parties in the first state Alliance party system; it provided the candidate for the Chief Ministership after the removal of Kalong Ningkan in 1966. After the 1970 state general election,

its dominant position within the Alliance was reduced due to the strengthened position of the Malays/Melanaus in the new party, the BUMIPUTERA. In 1973, it merged with BUMIPUTERA to form the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB).

Since its merger, the PESAKA component of the PBB has been dominated by four Iban personalities: Tun Jugah and later his son, Datuk Amar Leonard Linggi; Datuk Amar Alfred Jabu (Layar area); and Datuk Celestine Ujang (Kemena area).

**Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB):**

The Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu was founded on January 1973 on the merger of PESAKA and BUMIPUTERA. *Temenggong* Jugah, then the Federal Minister for Sarawak Affairs and President of PESAKA, was elected as its founder President, while Taib Mahmud and Rahman Ya'kub were elected its founder Vice-President and Secretary-General, respectively. Since its inception, the Malay/Melanau wing has dominated the party. The dismal election performances of the Iban wing since 1974 have not helped increase its political role within the party. On the whole, the party has never managed to win more than three seats from the Iban constituencies; despite the larger number of Iban seats it contested in 1987, it only won two; those of Jabu and Ujang.

Prominent Iban figures in the PBB are the party's Secretary-General, Datuk Amar Leonard Linggi, its Youth



leader, Datuk Celestine Ujang and one of the party Deputy Presidents, Datuk Amar Alfred Jabu. On the Malay/Melanau side, are the party President, Tan Sri Datuk Patinggi Abdul Taib Mahmud, as well as Datuk Abang Abu Bakar, Datuk Dr. Sulaiman Daud and Abang Johari Tun Abang Openg.

**Parti Rakyat Jati Sarawak (Pajar):**

The Parti Rakyat Jati Sarawak (literally the Party of the Natives of Sarawak) was formed in February 1978 by ex-Police Chief (Special Branch), Alli Kawi. The party was formed and supported by some discontented Malays who resented, among other things, the nepotism of the Melanau leadership in the Malay/Melanau wing of PBB, and the alleged corruption and concentration of wealth in the hands of a few favoured individuals.

Although rumoured to have some federal backing, its dismal electoral showing, both in the parliamentary election of 1978 and the state general election of 1979, did not help build up its potential as a viable alternative to the PBB.

**Persatuan Rakyat Malaysia Sarawak (PERMAS):**

The Persatuan Rakyat Malaysia Sarawak was formed in March 1987 by some former members of PBB, who staged a revolt against the leadership of Taib Mahmud; this led to a snap election in the same year. In contrast to the PBB, PERMAS is multi-ethnic; but, it arose in direct competition to the PBB for control of the Malay/Melanau areas.

Among the key figures in PERMAS were: Tun Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, who is one of the former founder members of the PBB, Datuk Salleh Jafaruddin, Datuk Mohd. Noor Tahir, Datuk Hafsa Harun, Wan Madzihi and Wan Habib. In 1987, PERMAS teamed up with the PBDS to challenge the BN3; however, due to PERMAS' dismal performance, they failed to wrest power from the BN3 (i.e. PERMAS won five seats and the PBDS 15 [10 after the defection of five members]) but they comprise a strong opposition group in the state assembly.

**Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA):**

The Sarawak Chinese Association was formed in 1962 as a result of the perceived need for an alternative party for the Chinese who would not support the SUPP. As the SUPP was seen as too left-wing, it was then felt that a moderate alternative acceptable to the government could represent the Chinese in the coalition government.

Its founder President was William Tan, who had been the President of the Kuching Municipal Council from 1956 to 1959 and a member of the Supreme Council from 1957 to 1959. Tan was later given the ceremonial position of party patron in favour of Datuk Ling Beng Siong's presidency; Ling was able to underwrite the party finances for the 1963 election. With the formation of the Alliance, SCA had been the Chinese representative in government, although it received considerably less

Chinese support in Sarawak than the SUPP. It was dissolved in 1974 and most of its members joined SUPP.

**Sarawak National Party (SNAP):**

The Sarawak National Party established on 10 April 1961 was the first Iban party formed by the Saribas or Second Division Ibans. For sometime, it was identified closely with the Saribas Ibans; it was also associated with the new Iban leaders, who were characteristically different from the PESAKA's traditional *raja berani*; they had received some education, had not worked in the traditional occupations of farming and had been on *bejalai*, not to conquer but to work and gain experiences in various fields of commerce and education.

Of the founder members, Datuk Amar Stephen Kalong Ningkan, who was its first Secretary-General, was the best known, having being the Chief Minister in the SNAP-led Alliance, as well as being the first Chief Minister to be unconstitutionally removed. After Kalong Ningkan, Datuk Amar Dunstan Endawie, the second echelon Iban leader, had a brief spell as its President in the mid-1970s, before he was unceremoniously removed (following the failed alliance between SNAP and SUPP to topple Rahman Ya'kub) by being offered an ambassadorship to New Zealand; thereafter, Datuk Amar James Wong took over the party's leadership. Until the conflict between the Iban and Chinese leadership in SNAP, some of the promising

Iban leaders in SNAP were Datuk Leo Moggie, Datuk Daniel Tajeim, Dr. Jawie Masing and Datuk Edmund Langgu.

**Sarawak People's Organisation (SAPO):**

The Sarawak People's Organisation was formed in early 1978. A Chinese-based party, it contested in the parliamentary general election in 1978 in one Chinese constituency of Lambir and won, at the expense of the SUPP. In 1979, it contested and lost in all the four state constituencies of Miri, Subis, Marudi and Tatau.

**Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP):**

The Sarawak United People's Party, which was formed on 12 June 1959, is the oldest political party in Sarawak. SUPP grew out of the need to centralise the many Chinese social and commercial organisations in order to better protect their interests. Although a multi-ethnic party, the native Iban and Malay members have never exercised any real power. While some Iban and Bidayuh supporters continue to stay with the party, the Malay and Melanau membership continued to decline with the formation of PANAS and BARJASA; presently, the support of the latter two communities is negligible.

The founder Chairman was Tan Sri Ong Kee Hui, who retired in the mid-1980s, when the chairmanship went to Datuk Amar Stephen Yong, who, since its inception had been the party Secretary-General. In 1991, Datuk Amar Dr. Wong Soon Kai ascended to the leadership, when Yong stepped down, following his defeat in the parliamentary

election in Bandar Kuching. Its Secretary-General is Dr. George Chan. Although a multi-ethnic party, all elected positions in the party have been held by Chinese members, while its non-Chinese members have tended to be nominated to their posts. But in 1990, at an unprecedented delegates conference, all, except one post, were uncontested. Consequently, two non-Chinese made it into the state-level party line-up as the party's Deputy Secretary General (Datuk Ramsey Jitam, its assemblyman for Lundu and an Assistant Cabinet Minister) and one of its three Vice-Chairmen (Jawan Empaling, its assemblyman for Dudong and Chairman of Sibul Rural District Council).

**United Malays National Organisation (UMNO):**

The United Malays National Organisation was formed on May 1946, amid rising Malay nationalism and resentment against the proposal for the creation of a unitary Malay state, the Malayan Union. Onn Jafaar, who was elected its founder President, left the party in July 1951, when his proposal to open up UMNO to all ethnic groups was rejected by party members; he went on to form the multi-ethnic party, the Independence of Malaya Party on 16 September 1951; the reception it got was disappointing and in the Kuala Lumpur election of 1952, it managed to win only two seats against the alliance of UMNO and MCA. In Onn Jafaar's stead, Tunku Abdul Rahman was elected UMNO President. Since then, the UMNO has been led by Tun

Razak (1970-76), Tun Hussein Onn (1976-81) and currently by Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamed (1981 to the present).

Since the formation of the first coalition government (the Alliance of UMNO and MCA) in January 1952, the UMNO has been the pillar of the coalition government and has supplied all four Prime Ministers.

## APPENDIX B

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF SELECTED POLITICAL PERSONALITIES

#### Prologue

This section provides sketches of some key political personalities (mainly those from the post-independence period) referred to in the previous chapters. It is, however, not an exhaustive list of individuals who deserve mention in relation to Sarawak politics; neither does it provide an in-depth coverage of the contributions that they have made to the development of Sarawak politics. Its purpose is to give the reader a quick review of the main biographical features of each personality in order to place their roles in proper perspective in relation to the issues and developments discussed in the thesis. As a general guide, the following information has been given priority: (a) social background; (b) education; (c) career prior to entering active politics; and (d) highest positions held, that is, both in party and government.

#### **Abdul Rahman, Putra Alhaj, Tunku:**

Born in 1903 of the royal house of Kedah. He received his early education from the prestigious English-medium Penang Free School. He was awarded the Kedah Government Scholarship to study at Cambridge; there, he was the first Malay to graduate from the University with a Bachelor of Arts. He returned for the

second time to England, where he obtained his legal qualification from the Inner Temple.

He became the leader of UMNO on Onn Jaafar's resignation. He was the first Prime Minister of Malaya and then Malaysia. He is recognised as *Bapa Merdeka* (Father of independence) and *Bapa Malaysia* (Father of Malaysia), for his role as the architect of the nation's independence and the formation of the Federation respectively. He retired from active politics in 1970 due not only to mounting resentment against his leadership but also due to the ascent of the Sultan of Kedah to the Kingship (*Yang di-Pertuan Agong*). The Tunku felt it was not proper that he, as an uncle to the Sultan of Kedah, should be subordinate to his nephew, who had been elected King.

Although retired, he expressed his opinions freely on most subjects through his weekly column in *The Star* newspaper. He was actively involved with the Semangat 46, an UMNO splinter group, which attempted to topple Mahathir.

**Abok ak. Jalin, Datuk Temenggong.**

Born on 10 June 1924 in Sebauh, Bintulu. He was a native leader, having been appointed *penghulu* in 1948. He first stood and won for PESAKA in the Kemena state constituency in the 1969/70 election. During the volatile period of negotiations between various parties to form the state government in 1970, he was appointed (without



PESAKA's approval), as a Cabinet Minister under Rahman Ya'kub's first state government (1974-74). He did not seek re-election in 1974. In 1975, he was appointed a *Temenggong* for the Fourth Division.

**Balan Seling, Joseph, Datuk:**

Born in 1936 in Baram of Orang Ulu origin. He received his early education from St. Joseph's School, Kuching, and later, his Licentiate in Theology from Melbourne College of Divinity, Australia.

He first won in Telang Usan state constituency in 1970 for SNAP. He went on to win four successive re-elections in 1974, 1979, 1983 and 1987; the last of which was contested for the opposition party PBDS. He served as a state minister after being appointed to the post during the second term of Rahman Ya'kub's government (1974-79). Until his defection to the PBDS in 1987, he was a SNAP member. Soon after the 1987 election, but before the first DUN sitting, he left the PBDS to rejoin the coalition component of PBB.

**Bangau anak Renang, Jonathan:**

Born in 1924 in Sibul. He received his education from St. Thomas's School, Kuching. He was a school teacher (1949-53) as well as a businessman, a dealer in ammunition and a shareholder in sawmills. He was a member of the CN and Supreme Council between 1957-59. He was previously a SUPP member (as its Vice-Chairman 1959-61) before resigning to join PESAKA as its founder Treasurer-

General. In 1970, he stood and lost in Dudong state constituency under PESAKA.

**Barbara Bay Mendu:**

Born in 1900 in Sungei Tanju, Kuching to the established family of Orang Kaya Ijau of Banting, ardent supporters of the Brookes. She received her early education from St. Mary's School, Kuching, before undergoing nursing training in Malacca General Hospital. She holds the distinction of being the first qualified Iban nurse. She was also active in local politics; she is also one of the founder members of SUPP. However, her bid to enter active politics received a setback when she was defeated in her election debut in Lingga-Sebuyau in 1970.

**Ben ak. Panggi, Michael:**

Born in 1935 in the village of Bunan, Serian, he is a Dayak Bidayuh by origin. He received his early education from St. Mary's and St. Theresa's schools, Serian. He was in the civil service prior to active involvement in politics.

He first won in Tebakang state constituency in 1970 for SNAP. Since then, he has won four successive re-elections in 1974, 1978, 1983 and 1987; the last was won under the PBDS banner. Until his defection to the PBDS in 1987, he had been a state Assistant Minister. He was one of the five PBDS assemblymen to defect to the coalition after the 1987 election.

**Dampeng ak. Laki, Richard:**

Born in 1939 in the village of Mantung Marau, First Division and a Dayak Bidayuh by origin. His first election debut as the SUPP candidate in the state constituency of Tebakang in 1970 was unsuccessful. However, in 1974, he won in the Serian parliamentary constituency under the SUPP banner. He went on to retain his seat for two successive terms, that is, in 1978 and 1982; he lost the seat in 1986.

Similar to his other Dayak colleagues in SUPP, he has also held several party posts as a nominated member; upon his retirement in 1982, he went on to become a relatively successful pepper planter.

**Donald Lawan:**

Born in 1943 in Sri Aman. He received his early education from St. Thomas's School, Kuching. He was a civil servant, and a sometime teacher, before setting up his own business, dealing in Japanese reconditioned cars.

He first won in Bkt. Begunan state constituency in 1987 under the SNAP ticket. However, his party status is still unclear as there are widespread claims that he is actually a PBB man.

**Edwin ak. Tangkun, Datuk:**

Born in 1923 in Simanggang (Sri Aman). He received his early education from St. Luke's School, Simanggang. Active in local politics since the Colonial period in the then Simanggang Division, he had held such positions as

member of the Simanggang District Council and the Divisional Advisory Council.

He was first elected Member of Parliament for Simanggang in 1970 for SNAP. He successfully defended his parliamentary seat in three consecutive elections (i.e. 1974, 1978 and 1982), including the last as an independent candidate, after being expelled from SNAP.

**Endawie ak. Enchana, Dunstan, Datuk:**

He was first appointed a minister under Kalong Ningkan (1963-66). In 1969/70, he won in Krian (Karian) state constituency; he defended the seat in two consecutive elections in 1974 and 1979. When SNAP joined the coalition (BN), he was appointed as one of three Deputy Chief Ministers. He was the third President of SNAP, after Kalong Ningkan, until he retired from active politics to take an ambassadorial appointment in New Zealand in the early 1980s.

**Gramong Juna:**

Born 1946 in Bukong, Kanowit. His initial career was in education, having served as a school teacher, and then rising to the rank of School Inspector prior to his entry into active politics in 1978.

He first contested the Machan state constituency in 1978 under the SNAP ticket. He has served as Assistant Minister, first appointed under Taib Mahmud's first term of government (1981-87). He retained his ministerial position when, in 1983, he left SNAP for the newly-formed

PBDS. In the same year, he won re-election in Machan for the PBDS. In 1987, he resigned his post as Assistant Minister to join the Maju group, which sought to topple Taib Mahmud. In the election that followed, he was re-elected in Machan for the PBDS. Soon after the election, he left the PBDS to rejoin the coalition component of PBB. He was subsequently re-appointed as Assistant Minister. Presently, he is also a member of the PBB Supreme Council.

**Hafsah Harun, Datuk Hajjah:**

Born in 1940 in Kuching. She was a teacher before being drawn into active politics within the PBB, where she was the leader of the PBB Women's Section. She first contested in a by-election in 1976 in Semariang state constituency, and in 1979 she won in Petra Jaya state constituency. Thereafter, she was first appointed Assistant Minister and later full Minister. She successfully defended her seat in 1983. In 1987, she resigned her ministership to join a PBB splinter group, which sought to topple Taib Mahmud. She is one of the founder members of PERMAS. She stood but lost in her former constituency of Petra Jaya under PERMAS.

**Hollis Tini:**

Hailing from Simanggang, he is one of the founder members of SUPP. He was Chairman of SUPP Simanggang (Sri Aman) Branch from 1960 to 1987. He has been active in local politics since the Colonial period, having held

various positions in the Simanggang District and Divisional Advisory Councils.

He first contested and lost in the Simanggang parliamentary and state elections in 1970 under the SUPP banner. In the 1974 election, he won in Simanggang state constituency. Since then, he has successfully defended the seat for SUPP in two consecutive terms (i.e. 1979 and 1983). In mid-1985, he was appointed state Assistant Minister, a position he held until 1987, when he left SUPP to join the Maju group. In the election of 1987, he failed to retain his seat as the PERMAS-PBDS coalition candidate.

**J.S.Tinker:**

Born in Padeh (Betong), Second Division. He was educated in Sabu. He worked in Brunei Shell before entering government service in Kuching in the later 1920s. He was a District Officer during the Japanese Occupation. One of the prime movers in SNAP, he was its founder President.

**Jabu anak Numpang, Alfred, Datuk Amar:**

Born in 1940, he received his early education from Nanga Ajau Local Authority School, Betong and St. Thomas's School, Kuching, before pursuing his agricultural science degree at the Lincoln College University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

He was an agricultural officer attached to RASCOM before shooting into the political limelight in 1974,

when, contesting on the PBB ticket, he beat Kalong Ningkan in Layar. Since then, he has been returned to the Layar seat in three consecutive terms, that is, in 1978, 1983 and 1987. In addition, he had also been elected as a Member of Parliament for Betong in 1982. He was briefly a state minister before being promoted as one of three Deputy Chief Ministers in 1974; he is also presently one of two PBB Deputy Presidents.

**Jawan Empaling:**

Born in 1938 in Sibü. He received his early education from Rejang Secondary School, Sibü, and his Licentiate of Theology from the Methodist Theological School, Sibü. He has served in various capacities as a pastor in the Methodist Church in Sarawak before pursuing his B.A. (International Politics) at George William College (Illinois) and an M.A. (Far-Eastern Politics and Philosophy) at the New York University, USA. He worked briefly at SESCO before entering active politics.

He first won the Rejang parliamentary constituency in a by-election in 1974 under the SUPP banner. Since then, he has been returned to the seat in three consecutive elections, that is, in 1974, 1979, 1982. Until he lost his seat in 1986, he was also a federal parliamentary secretary. In 1987, he stood and won the Dudong state constituency; in addition, he is also the present Chairman of Sibü Rural District Council. He is one of three Deputy Chairmen of SUPP.

**Jawie Masing, Dr.**

Born in 1942. He received his early education from the Nairn Academy, Scotland and his university education from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, and the University of Singapore. He was a medical officer in the state civil service before entering active politics. He first contested the Machan state constituency in 1974 under SNAP. Since then, he has successfully defended the seat in three consecutive terms (i.e. in 1979 under SNAP, in 1983 and 1987 under the PBDS). He is the founder Treasurer-General of PBDS.

**Jeli anak Blayong, Edward, Datuk:**

Born in 1924 in Tatau. He received his early education from St. Joseph's School, Miri. He has worked for various firms such as Sarawak Shell, Brunei Shell and the Labour Office in Lutong.

He first entered active politics in 1970, having been elected in the Marudi state constituency. Since then, he has successfully defended the seat in four successive elections, that is, in 1974, 1979, 1983 and 1987; the last as PBDS candidate. Until his defection to the PBDS in 1987, he was a SNAP Deputy President and a state minister.

**Jemot Masing, James, Dr.:**

Born in 1949 in Kapit. He received his early education from the Methodist Secondary School, Sibuh. He received his B.A. (Education) from Victoria University,



Wellington. He was a headmaster of the Methodist Secondary School, Kapit, before pursuing his M.A. and Ph.D. (both in Anthropology) from the Australian National University, Canberra. Before entering active politics, he was a SESCO Senior Research Officer.

He first contested and won Baleh state constituency under the PBDS banner in 1983 and was re-elected in 1987. In addition to being the PBDS Vice-President, he is also the party's Publicity Officer.

**Jim bun ak. Pungga, James:**

Born in 1939 in Baleh, Kapit. He received his early education from the Methodist schools in Kapit and Sibu. He holds a B.Sc. from Lamberth College, Tennessee, USA and a Diploma in Public Administration from Universiti Malaya. He has served in various capacities in the state civil service, rising to the post of Principal Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Forestry, before going into active politics.

He first contested the Kapit parliamentary constituency in 1986. He was returned in the seat in 1990. He is a member of the PBB Supreme Council.

**Joseph Datuk Temenggong Jinggut:**

Born in 1954 in Kapit. He received his early education from St. Joseph's School, Kuching, and his B.A. (Economics and Political Science) from Westmar College, Iowa, USA.

His entry into active politics has been marred by two unsuccessful attempts in the state elections of 1983 and 1987, the former as an Independent and the latter as a SNAP candidate. He is a member of SNAP's Central Executive Committee. In addition to being a businessman, he is also the Chairman of Kapit District Council.

**Jugah Anak Barieng, Temenggong, Tun Datuk Patinggi:**

Born in 1903 in Kapit, Seventh Division. He is generally recognised as the traditional native leader (or *raja berani*) of the Rejang Ibans. He was active in politics from the Colonial period, including being a member of the early Council Negri. He was considered to be instrumental in influencing Iban opinion towards accepting Sarawak's independence within the Federation of Malaysia.

In July 1962, he left PANAS, where he was its Vice-President, to become PESAKA's founding President. He was first elected Member of Parliament (Kapit) in 1963 and re-elected in 1969/70. He was appointed a Federal Minister for Sarawak Affairs, a post specially created for him, after his nomination as Sarawak's first Governor was rejected. He retired from politics in 1974; subsequently, he was appointed as President of Majlis Adat Istiadat, a Council responsible for the codification and standardisation of Iban Adat. He passed away in 1981 and was posthumously decorated with the highest federal award which carried the title "Tun"; he was also

affectionately referred to by Sarawakians as "Apai" (father).

**Justine Datuk Temenggong Jingtut:**

Born in Kapit to a prominent local family, he is also the younger brother of Joseph (see Joseph Jingtut). He received his higher education from the United States. He was active in the family business before standing for the first time in 1982 in the Ulu Rejang parliamentary constituency as a SNAP candidate; in his election debut, he won unchallenged. He was one of the founder members of PBDS, but left the party to rejoin SNAP due to some disagreements, partly because his brother (Joseph) had stood as an Independent candidate against a PBDS (see also, Masing) in Baleh in the 1983 state election. Upon rejoining SNAP, he was later appointed its Secretary-General. He successfully defended his seat in 1986, but was beaten in 1990 by a PBDS-backed Independent.

**Kalong Ningkan, Stephen, Datuk:**

Born in 1920 in Betong, Saribas. He received his early education from St. Augustine's School, Betong. He had worked in various fields including the Sarawak Constabulary, as a teacher, and a hospital assistant in Shell Hospital, Brunei.

A founder Secretary-General of SNAP, he became its Chairman in 1961 and President in 1974. He was the prime mover in the first coalition, the Sarawak Alliance, between SNAP, PESAKA, PANAS, BARJASA and SCA. Elected a

member of the Council Negri in 1963, he also became the first Chief Minister (1963-66); when ousted from government in 1966, he became the state opposition leader. He was re-elected to the Council Negri in 1969/70 from Layar state constituency. He retired from active politics in the mid-1970s, following his failure to retain Layar in the 1974 election; however, he still maintains his link with SNAP by being the party's Advisor.

**Langgu ak Saga, Edmund, Datuk:**

Born in 1936 in Saratok. He received his early education from St. Augustine's School, Betong and Batu Lintang Teacher Training College, Kuching.

Active in politics even before independence, he has held various positions such as a member of the District and Divisional Advisory Councils, Second Division. He first contested the Saratok parliamentary constituency in 1970 under the then opposition SNAP. Since then he has been returned to the seat in two consecutive terms (i.e. 1974 and 1978), including in 1978 after SNAP joined the Barisan coalition. When SNAP joined the coalition, he was the party's representative in the federal government as Deputy Minister until 1982, when he was expelled from the party. After his expulsion, he defended his Saratok seat in 1982 as an Independent and won. He was one of the key founder members of PBDS, when it was formed in 1983. In the state election of 1983, he won the Krian state

constituency for PBDS; he went on to retain the state seat in two consecutive elections (i.e. 1982 and 1987).

**Linggi Tun Jugah, Leonard, Datuk Amar:**

Hailing from Kapit, he is the son of the prominent Iban leader, Tun Jugah. His active political career was rather brief, although he holds the important position of Secretary-General of PBB.

A British-educated lawyer, he first entered active politics by winning the Pelagus state constituency in a by-election in 1971 under PESAKA; he was subsequently appointed a state minister. However, he lost his ministership when he failed to retain Pelagus in the election of 1974. In addition to having served in the CN, he has also served as Member of Parliament for Kapit for two consecutive terms (i.e. after winning in 1978 and unchallenged in 1982).

**Lionell Bediman:**

Founder Vice-Chairman of SNAP. He came from a prominent Saribas family. He had a moderate level of education, which served him well in several occupations which took him to *bejalai* to such places as Malaya, Singapore and Brunei. He worked in the Food Control Department (Betong) during the Japanese Occupation, before moving over to Brunei Shell. In Brunei, he was Vice-President of the Dayak Association there.

**Luhah Wan, Datuk:**

Born in 1944 in Baram. He is a Dayak Orang Ulu by origin. He worked as an Agricultural Assistant before entering active politics.

He was first elected to parliament from Baram in 1974 under the SNAP ticket. When SNAP joined the Barisan in 1976, he was the party representative to the federal government, where he initially served as Parliamentary Secretary and was later promoted to Deputy Minister. From 1974, he successfully defended his Baram seat in three consecutive elections, that is, in 1979, 1982 and 1986; he lost the seat in 1990 and his deputy ministership. He is presently one of the SNAP Vice-Presidents.

**Moggie anak Irok, Leo, Datuk:**

Hailing from Kanowit, he holds a Master's degree from Otago University, New Zealand and Pennsylvania State University, USA. He was in the state civil service before resigning in 1974 to contest, under the SNAP ticket, the state seat of Machan and the parliamentary seat of Kanowit. When SNAP joined the Barisan in 1976, he was appointed as a state minister; later, he relinquished his state seat and ministership to take up appointment as a Federal Minister. Since 1976, he has successfully defended his Kanowit seat in four consecutive elections, that is, in 1979, 1982, 1986 and 1990; the last two being contested for the PBDS. He left SNAP in 1983, following a failed attempt to unseat James Wong as SNAP President.

**Noor Tahir, Datuk Haji:**

He started his early political career as political secretary to Rahman Ya'kub. In 1979, he stood as the PBB candidate in the Lawas state constituency; he successfully retained the seat in 1983. He was a state minister until his resignation in April 1987.

He was a member of the Maju group, which sought to topple Taib Mahmud. He was the CM-designate supported by the group to take over the leadership from the Taib Mahmud-led coalition. However, he failed in his election bid in Lundu in 1987. He is also one of the key founder members of PERMAS, the other half of the PERMAS-PBDS opposition coalition.

**Ong Kee Hui, Tan Sri Datuk:**

Born in Kuching in 1914, he is the grandson of Ong Tiang Swee, one of the most prominent and powerful Chinese leaders during the Brooke period. He received his education at St. Thomas's, (Kuching), St. Andrew's (Singapore) and the Serdang College (the forerunner of the contemporary University of Agriculture). For about 10 years, from 1936 to 1946, he served in the Department of Agriculture, stationed, for the most part, in Kapit.

He was active in local politics, having served in various capacities in the Kuching Municipal Council, including being the Council's representative in the CN from 1956 to 1963, and he served concurrently as member of the Supreme Council. He was the founder Chairman of SUPP, the first political party in the state. In 1969, he

stood and won in Bandar Kuching parliamentary constituency. He held the seat for another two terms, when he was re-elected in 1974 and 1978. When SUPP joined Barisan in 1970, he was the party's representative in the federal government, holding a full federal ministerial portfolio of Science, Technology and Environment, a post he held until his retirement in 1981.

**Rahman Ya'kub, Abdul, Tun Datuk Patinggi Haji:**

Born 3 January 1928 in Bintulu, Sarawak, he is a Muslim Melanau by origin. He received his early education at Anchi Malay School and St. Joseph's English School in Miri. He served for two years (1947-48) as Probationary Native Officer in the Colonial civil service before going on a government scholarship to read law at Southampton. He qualified as Barrister-at-Law from the Lincoln's Inn.

Upon returning to Sarawak, he joined the Legal Department as Deputy Public Prosecutor, but in 1963, he resigned from government service to enter active politics. One of the prime movers of BARJASA, he served in various capacities in the party, as well as being the party's representative in the state and federal governments, for example, as Federal Assistant Minister--1964-65; Federal Minister--1965-70; and Chief Minister of Sarawak--1970-81.

Upon retirement from active politics in 1981, he was appointed *Yang di-Pertua Negeri* (Governor) for a 4-year term. In 1987, he came out of political retirement to



lead the opposition Maju group, which sought to oust Taib Mahmud. Though the attempt failed, it succeeded in denying the BN3 a two-thirds legislative majority.

**Salleh Jafaruddin, Datuk:**

A British-trained lawyer, he was a PBB member and also a nephew of Rahman Ya'kub. He first contested and won the Balingian state constituency in 1974. In 1977 he was appointed a Senator and thereafter a federal Deputy Minister of Education. In 1978, he contested and won the Mukah parliamentary constituency. Due to health reasons, he resigned from parliament and the deputy ministership in 1979. In 1983, he re-emerged again in active politics by winning the Oya state constituency, but in 1986, he voluntarily relinquished the seat when he fell out of favour with the PBB leader, Taib Mahmud. In the by-election that followed, he lost to a PBB candidate. Following his exit from PBB, he went on to become one of the founder members of PERMAS, which was formed in 1987 to provide an alternative party for the Malays/Melanaus; in the snap election of 1987, he lost in Subis.

**Tajang Laing, Datuk:**

Born in 1938 in Long Beraan, Balui, Belaga, he is a Dayak Orang Ulu by origin. He received his early education from Batu Lintang College, Kuching. Active in local politics since the Colonial period, he has held such positions as a member of the District and Divisional Advisory Councils.

He first contested and lost in Belaga state constituency under the PESAKA banner in the election of 1970. In the 1974 election, he was also unsuccessful in Belaga, where he had stood as an Independent candidate. However, he won in Belaga the third time around in 1979. In 1983, he successfully defended his seat under the PBB banner, but lost in his third bid to retain the seat under PERMAS.

**Taib Mahmud, Abdul, Tan Sri Datuk Patinggi:**

Born in 1936 in Miri, Sarawak, he is a Muslim Melanau by origin. He received his early education from St. Joseph's School, Kuching and his law degree from Adelaide, South Australia, in 1960. He served as Crown Council from 1962-63.

He left the civil service when he was appointed member of the state legislative assembly in 1963. As one of the prime movers of BARJASA, he has held various important posts both in the party, and in the state and federal governments. For example, he has been a state minister for Communication and Public Works under Kalong Ningkan (1963-66); dismissed under Kalong Ningkan, he was later reappointed to the cabinet under Tawi Sli (1966-70) in charge of the Development and Forestry portfolio; and from 1968 to 1981, he served in various capacities as his party's representative to the federal government, for example, holding the posts of Federal Assistant Minister, Deputy Minister from 1970 and Minister from 1972. He was

first elected to the parliamentary seat for Samarahan in 1970 and since then, he has been successfully re-elected to the seat in 1974, 1978, 1982 and 1986; in 1982, he won unopposed.

In 1981, he returned to Sarawak to assume the leadership of PBB and the post of Chief Minister, succeeding his uncle, Rahman Ya'kub. Despite an attempt to topple him in 1987, he still managed to hold on to his position, both as President of PBB and as leader of the state government.

**Tajeim anak Miri, Daniel, Datuk:**

Born in 1936 in Sungai Tanju, Kuching. He received his early education from Batu Lintang Secondary School and St. Thomas's, Kuching and his legal education from the University of Victoria, New Zealand.

He came into the political limelight after winning Lingga in 1974 for SNAP. He defended the seat successfully for another two terms, in 1979 and 1983. He served as one of the state's Deputy Chief Ministers, an appointment made while he was still a member of SNAP and one which he carried over to the PBDS, when, in 1983, he went on to become its founder Deputy President. He lost his state seat of Lingga in 1987 but retained his parliamentary seat of Sri Aman in 1990.

**Tawi Sli, Penghulu, Datuk:**

Born in 1912 in Banting, Lingga. He received his early education at St. Luke's Mission School and St. Thomas's, Kuching. He was a school teacher between 1931-33 before pursuing priesthood training at St. Ephiphany Theological College, Kuching. In 1937, he entered government service but left in 1960 to become a petition writer. He was appointed a *penghulu* in 1963 and in the same year he was also elected member of the CN; subsequently, he was appointed Chairman of the Batang Lupar District Council. In 1966-70, he was the PESAKA's nominee as Chief Minister, except for a brief period when Ningkan was reinstated. Until 1965, when he resigned to join PESAKA, he was a SNAP member.

**Thomas Kana:**

The characteristically "new Iban leader" hailing from Kanowit, Third Division, he had a moderate level of education and had also undertaken *bejalai*, including working as a hospital assistant in Brunei Shell in the early 1960s. He was an appointed Member of Parliament in the early 1960s, a condition which made it difficult for him to be nominated by PESAKA for the Chief Ministership. Nevertheless, as Secretary-General of PESAKA, he was seen as the "shadow Chief Minister" during Penghulu Tawi Sli's tenure as CM. He served briefly in the CN, having been elected from Machan in 1970; in 1971, he was appointed a Senator.

**Ujang anak Jilan, Celestine , Datuk:**

Born in 1947 in Bintulu. He completed secondary education. His early career was as a Sarawak Administrative Officer, a position in which he served in various Districts from 1966 to 1971. In 1971, he was appointed to serve in various capacities as an assistant to state ministers.

He resigned from government service in 1974 to contest in Kemena under the PBB and has since won three successive re-elections in 1979, 1983 and 1987. He has served as state minister and Speaker of the State Assembly. In 1987, he was reappointed a minister to the caretaker government, following a mass resignation of cabinet ministers in a bid to topple Taib Mahmud. In addition to serving as a PBB minister, he is also one of the nine PBB Vice-Presidents, as well as its Youth Leader.

**Wong Kim Min, James, Datuk Amar:**

Born in 1922. He received his early education from St. Mary's and St. Thomas' schools, Kuching and his higher education training from Serdang College.

His early involvement in active politics included serving as a nominated member of Limbang District Council (1952-63); in 1963, he was also elected as a member of the Limbang Divisional Advisory Council and the Council Negri. Since 1970, he has stood and won in Limbang state constituency in four successive elections in 1974, 1979, 1983 and 1987. In addition, he also won the Miri-Subis

parliamentary constituency in 1970, but lost it in 1974; and in 1990, he stood and won in Bintulu parliamentary constituency.

At the behest of the British to maintain an ethnic balance in Sarawak, he was appointed Deputy Chief Minister in Kalong Ningkan's government in 1963; consequently, he joined SNAP and was elected as its Deputy Chairman in 1964. He was opposition leader in parliament, when SNAP was in opposition from 1966. In 1975, he was detained under the Internal Security Act and released in 1976, following SNAP's entry into the coalition. In 1987, when BN3 was faced with the leadership crisis, he was invited to rejoin the cabinet as a state Minister.

Presently, he is SNAP President, having been elected to the post in 1981. Besides politics, he is also a keen writer, having written *The Price of Loyalty*, which was his version of events surrounding his detention under the ISA.

**Wong Soon Kai, Datuk Amar Dr.:**

Born 1927 in Sibul. He received his early education from Sibul Chinese High School and St. Anthony's School, Singapore and his medical degree from the University of Malaya, Singapore; he is also a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons (England and Edinburgh). He entered government medical service in 1955 but left to set up private practice in 1970.

He first entered active politics in 1974, when he stood and won the Sibuluar state constituency on the SUPP ticket. He was first appointed minister under the second reign of Rahman Ya'kub (1974-79). In 1979, he contested in and won the Maling state constituency; he went on to win in two successive elections in 1983 and 1987. In addition, he was also a one-term MP for Sibuluar, having won the seat in 1978. He was the party's Secretary-General until 1990, when he was elected unopposed as its Chairman.

**Yong, K.T., Stephen, Datuk Amar:**

Born in 1921 in Simunjan, First Division, he is the founder Secretary-General of SUPP. He received his early education from Thai Thong and St. Thomas's School, Kuching, before taking up his law studies at Nottingham; he qualified as a barrister-at-law from the Lincoln's Inn.

Before entering active politics, he had a legal practice and some business interests. He was first elected MP in 1963 and to the CN in 1970. When SUPP teamed up with BUMIPUTERA to form the state government in 1970, he was appointed as a Deputy Chief Minister (1970-74). He held the DCM post for one term only, as he lost his re-election bid in Kuching Timor state constituency in 1974; however, he was elected to parliament from Padawan constituency, a seat he successfully defended in three consecutive elections, that is, in 1978, 1982 and

1986. Upon Ong's retirement in 1981, he was elected SUPP Chairman and consequently appointed federal minister. He resigned as party Chairman in 1991, following his defeat in Bandar Kuching parliamentary constituency.



**APPENDIX C**

Table 2.1  
Councillors Elected by Party.

District Council	SNAP	PESAKA	Dayak/Voters (% of Total)	Total
Lundu	3	-	41.7	12
Bau	1	-	58.6	16
Kuching Municipal	-	-	1.9	27
Kuching Rural	-	-	22.2	34
Upper Sadong	5	-	77.5	15
Lower Sadong	2	-	34.5	12
<b>First Division</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>116</b>
Batang Lupar	11 (1)	-	72.9	19
Lubok	-	-	89.7	15
Saribas	8 (1)	-	49.9	20
Kalaka	7 (2)	- (1)	63.6	18
<b>Second Division</b>	<b>26 (4)</b>	<b>0 (1)</b>	<b>67.1</b>	<b>72</b>
Sarikei	-	1 (1)	20.6	17
Binatang	-	5 (1)	36.2	15
Matu-Daro	-	1	0.2	13
Mukah	- (9)	-	53.3	19
Sibu Rural	-	3 (3)	42.8	22
Sibu Urban	-	1	1.5	21
Kanowit	-	16 (4)	88.1	24
Kapit	-	15	95.7	17
<b>Third Division</b>	<b>0 (9)</b>	<b>42 (9)</b>	<b>56.2</b>	<b>148</b>
Bintulu	6 (1)	1	67.7	14
Subis	2 (3)	-	45.4	13
Miri	2	-	6.5	19
Baram	- (4)	- (8)	83.4	17
<b>Fourth Division</b>	<b>10 (8)</b>	<b>1 (8)</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>63</b>
Limbang	1 (3)	-	41.6	15
Lawas	- (1)	-	35.9	15
<b>Fifth Division</b>	<b>1 (4)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39.2</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>All Divisions</b>	<b>48 (25)</b>	<b>43 (18)</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>429</b>

Source: Table reconstructed from Leigh, 1974, op cit, Tables 18 and 19, pp.70-71.

Note: Figures in brackets show the totals after the realignment of some Independent members.

Table 3.29  
Sarawak State Constituencies by Ethnicity: 1969.

Constituency	Dayak	Malay	Chinese
S. 1 Lundu	48.6	323.8	18.5
S. 2 Bau	58.6	6.1	35.0
S. 3 Kuching Barat	2.0	52.6	44.3
S. 4 Kuching Timor	1.2	5.7	92.4
S. 5 Semariang	7.4	75.1	17.5
S. 6 Sekama	4.3	28.0	67.6
S. 7 Sebandi	7.2	73.3	19.5
S. 8 Muara Tuang	23.9	46.7	29.1
S. 9 Batu Kawah	26.8	18.0	53.8
S.10 Bengoh	75.9	0.6	23.5
S.11 Tarat	71.4	9.0	19.6
S.12 Tebakang	78.3	9.4	12.3
S.13 Semera	19.3	69.1	11.6
S.14 Gedong	47.0	42.1	10.9
S.15 Lingga-Sebuyau	65.8	23.9	10.2
S.16 Simanggang	63.8	18.2	18.0
S.17 Engkilili	86.2	1.4	12.4
S.18 Ulu Ai	97.2	0.5	2.2
S.19 Saribas	29.0	66.6	4.4
S.20 Layar	72.1	18.5	9.4
S.21 Kalaka	37.5	55.3	7.2
S.22 Krian	82.7	9.7	7.7
S.23 Kuala Rejang	33.4	53.3	13.4
S.24 Repok	18.4	1.2	79.3
S.25 Matu-Daro	1.2	93.2	5.6
S.26 Binatang	35.7	19.0	45.3
S.27 Sibu Tengah	2.1	11.7	84.9
S.28 Sibu Luar	9.0	21.7	69.3
S.29 Igan	46.1	15.6	38.3
S.30 Dudong	70.0	1.7	28.3
S.31 Balingian	38.3	51.1	10.5
S.32 Oya	41.7	50.9	7.4
S.33 Pakan	98.0	0.2	1.8
S.34 Meluan	94.3	0.3	5.4
S.35 Machan	68.0	3.8	28.2
S.36 Ngemah	92.4	0.2	7.0
S.37 Song	94.8	1.6	3.6
S.38 Pelagus	79.8	3.7	16.5
S.39 Baleh	99.9	-	-
S.40 Belaga	99.9	-	-
S.41 Tatau	57.9	28.3	13.8
S.42 Kemena	71.1	20.7	8.2
S.43 Subis	47.6	37.4	14.9
S.44 Miri	12.2	32.8	54.6
S.45 Marudi	72.8	9.2	18.0
S.46 Telang Usan	98.0	-	1.9
S.47 Limbang	49.1	39.5	11.3
S.48 Lawas	38.1	51.4	10.5

Source: Extracts from Tables 31 and 32, Leigh, 1974, op cit, pp.136-37.

Table 3.30

## Membership of the Council Negri by Party Allegiance.

Party	1963 elected	1963 Oct.	1964	1965 July	1966 May	1966 Oct.	1968
Alliance*	23	27	27	30	32	25	26
SNAP	*6	*7	*7	*6	*6	7	6
PESAKA	*11	*11	*11	*13	*15	*15	16
SCA	*1	*3	*3	*3	*3	*3	3
BARJASA	*5	*6	*6	*5	*5	*[5	7
PANAS	5	4	3	*3	*3	*[2	
SUPP	5	5	6	6	5	5	5
MACHINDA	-	-	1	1	1	-	-
Independent	3	3	2	2	1	2	2
Ex-officio	-	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total	36	42	42	42	42	42	42

Source: Reproduced from Table 3.21, Leigh, 1974, op cit, p.95.

## Notes:

1963: Three Council Negri members were officially nominated, two SCA and one BARJASA. Leong Ho Yuen resigned from PANAS and became an Independent, preparatory to founding MACHINDA in 1964.

1964: The Datu Bandar (PANAS) died and the first Divisional Advisory Council elected a SUPP member, Sim Kheng Hong, in his stead.

1965: Pengarah Storey (SNAP) and Tutong anak Ningkan (BARJASA) both left their respective parties and joined PESAKA. Both are Second Division Ibans.

1966: Prior to the removal of Ningkan, Penghulu Tawi Sli (SNAP) joined PESAKA as did a Fifth Division Independent, Racha Umong. SNAP gained Charles Linang (from SUPP) and Abang Othman (from PANAS), the latter after the September Alliance crisis.

At the end of 1966, BARJASA and PANAS merged to form Parti Bumiputera (BUMIPUTERA).

1968: Kadam Kiai (SNAP) died and the Second Division Advisory Council elected a PESAKA member, Langgi anak Jilap, in his stead.

\* -Indicates a component of the Sarawak Alliance.

Table 3.31  
Iban Constituencies: 1969.

Constituency	Ethnic Composition (percentage)		
	Iban	Malay	Chinese
S.14 Gedong	47.0+	42.1	10.9
S.15 Lingga-Sebuyau	65.8*	23.9	10.2
S.16 Simanggang	63.8*	18.2	18.0
S.17 Engkilili	86.2*	1.4	12.4
S.18 Ulu Ai	97.2*	0.5	2.2
S.20 Layar	72.1*	18.5	9.4
S.22 Krian	82.7*	9.7	7.7
S.29 Igan	46.1+	15.6	38.3
S.30 Dudong	70.0*	1.7	28.3
S.33 Pakan	98.0*	0.2	1.8
S.34 Meluan	94.3*	0.3	5.4
S.35 Machan	68.0*	3.8	28.2
S.36 Ngemah	92.4*	0.2	7.0
S.37 Song	94.8*	1.6	3.6
S.38 Pelagus	79.8*	3.7	16.5
S.39 Baleh	99.9*	-	-
S.41 Tatau	57.9*	28.3	13.8
S.42 Kemena	71.1*	20.7	8.2
S.43 Subis	47.6+	37.4	14.9
S.47 Limbang	49.1+	39.5	11.3

Notes: \* -Absolute majority (16).  
+ -Simple (marginal/plural) majority (4).

Table 3.32  
Bidayuh Constituencies: 1969.

Constituency	Ethnic Composition (percentage)		
	Bidayuh	Malay	Chinese
S. 1 Lundu	48.6+	32.8	18.5
S. 2 Bau	58.6*	6.1	35.0
S.10 Bengoh	75.9*	0.6	23.5
S.11 Tarat	71.4*	9.0	19.6
S.12 Tebakang	78.3*	9.4	12.3

Notes: \* -Absolute majority (4).  
+ -Simple (marginal/plural) majority (1).

Table 3.33  
Orang Ulu Constituencies: 1969.

Constituency	Ethnic Composition (percentage)		
	Orang Ulu	Malay	Chinese
S.40 Belaga	99.9*	-	-
S.45 Marudi	72.8*	9.2	18.0
S.46 Telang Usan	98.0*	-	1.9

Note: \* -Absolute majority (3).

Table 3.34  
Malay/Melanau Constituencies: 1969.

Constituency	Ethnic Composition (percentage)		
	Dayak	Malay	Chinese
S. 3 Kuching Barat	2.0	52.6*	44.3
S. 5 Semariang	7.4	75.1*	17.5
S. 7 Sebandi	7.2	73.3*	19.5
S. 8 Muara Tuang	23.9	46.7*	29.1
S.13 Semera	19.3	69.1*	11.6
S.19 Saribas	29.0	66.6*	4.4
S.21 Kalaka	37.5	55.3*	7.2
S.23 Kuala Rejang	33.4	53.3*	13.4
S.25 Matu-Daro	1.2	93.2*	5.6
S.31 Balingian	38.3	51.1*	10.5
S.32 Oya	41.7	50.9*	7.4
S.48 Lawas	38.1	51.4*	10.5

Note: \* -Absolute majority (12).

Table 3.35  
Chinese Constituencies: 1969

Constituency	Ethnic Composition (percentage)		
	Dayak	Malay	Chinese
S. 4 Kuching Timor	1.2	5.7	92.4*
S. 6 Sekama	4.3	28.0	67.6*
S. 9 Batu Kawah	26.8	18.0	53.8*
S.24 Repok	18.4	1.2	79.3*
S.26 Binatang	35.7	19.0	45.3+
S.27 Sibul Tengah	2.1	11.7	84.9*
S.28 Sibul Luar	9.0	21.7	69.3*
S.44 Miri	12.2	32.8	54.6*

Notes: \* -Absolute majority (7).  
+ -Simple (marginal/plural) majority (1).

Table 3.36  
The Result of the State General Election  
in 1969 in 20 Iban Constituencies.

Constituency	Candidate	Party	Votes
Gedong (S.14)	Abg Abdulrahim	All.-Bumi	*1,757
	Kapitan Liew M.C.	SNAP	1,647
	A. Jika Landau	PESAKA	600
	Entri ak. Tusan	SUPP	522
Lingga-Sebuyau (S.15)	Penghulu Tawi Sli	PESAKA	*2,134
	Augustine Jangga	SNAP	1,915
	Barbara Bay	SUPP	1,160
	Awg.Morni Jaya	BUMI	698
	Sydney Sentu	INDEP	98
Simanggang (S.16)	N.Liap Kudu	SNAP	*2,513
	Hollis ak. Tini	SUPP	1,879
	Rabaie bin Ahmad	ALL.-BUMI	1,048
	Jimbai ak. Maja	PESAKA	718
	Awg. Johari Azid	INDEP	279
	Joshua Jangga	INDEP	192
	Goh Teo Chun	INDEP	143
	Anthony Jiram	INDEP	73
Engkili-Skrang (S.17)	S. Dembab Maja	PESAKA	*1,101
	Chang Shui Foh	SUPP	976
	Pengeran Bliang	SNAP	946
	Legan Narok	INDEP	225
Ulu Ai (S.18)	David ak. Jemut	SNAP	*934
	Tutong Ningkan	PESAKA	889
	Rabit ak. Nanang	SUPP	531
	Penghulu Manau	INDEP	351
	Ebai ak. Inyang	INDEP	86
	Ahmad b. Ibrahim	ALL-BUMI	80
Layar (S.20)	Kalong Ningkan	SNAP	*2,546
	Charles Ingka	INDEP	1,157
	Edmund Derom	PESAKA	713
	Juing Insol	INDEP	209
Karian (S.22)	Dunstan Endawie	SNAP	*2,933
	Meling ak. Jan	PESAKA	872
	Robinson Jelemim	SUPP	824
Igan (S.29)	Ling Beng Siong	ALL.-SCA	*3,264
	Wong Tuong Kwang	SUPP	2,495
	Gelanggang Mujan	SNAP	213
	Tr. Ampi Matari	INDEP	75
	Jawi ak. Sureng	INDEP	46
	Penghulu Pengabang	INDEP	35

Dudong (S.30)	Kong Chung Siew	SUPP	*1,675
	Jonathan Bangau	PESAKA	1,434
	Sandah ak. Jarraw	SNAP	1,138
	Galau Kumbang	INDEP	195
	Langgai ak. Abol	INDEP	119
Pakan (S.33)	Mandi ak. Sanar	PESAKA	*748
	Lau Mee Ee	INDEP	677
	Dundang ak. Ibi	SNAP	667
	Laiyau Boleng	INDEP	305
Meluan (S.34)	Gramong Jelian	SNAP	*880
	Nyandang Janting	PESAKA	810
	Empaling	INDEP	381
	Tedong Entalai	INDEP	234
Machan (S.35)	Thomas Kana	PESAKA	*2,459
	Kong Foh Kim	SUPP	1,589
	Stephen Sanggau	SNAP	327
Ngemah (S.36)	Lias ak. Kana	INDEP	*796
	<i>Penghulu</i> Umpau	PESAKA	660
	Jarrau ak. Serit	SNAP	603
	Guntol ak. Bana	INDEP	539
	Ansi ak. Anyau	SUPP	428
	Unggai Sumpon	INDEP	47
	Ujok ak. Andeng	INDEP	33
Song (S.37)	Ngelambong Bangau	SNAP	*1,614
	Mangai Lajang	PESAKA	1,294
	Dingai ak. Ujom	SUPP	1,204
Pelagus (S.38)	Bennet Jarrow	PESAKA	*1,389
	Jugah ak. Lasah	SUPP	1,069
	Francis Nyuak	SNAP	716
Baleh (S.39)	Kanyan ak. T. Koh	PESAKA	*1,953
	Wesley Ajan	SNAP	1,528
	Kulleh Semada	SUPP	806
	<i>Pengarah</i> Sibat	INDEP	492
Tatau (S.41)	Ismail Zainuddin	ALL.-BUMI	*1,340
	Nanang Entigai	SNAP	1,191
	Goh Ngiap Joon	SUPP	827
	Juhaili Hanaffie	INDEP	571
	<i>Penghulu</i> Engkalom	PESAKA	415
	Meng Cheng	INDEP	125
Kemena (S.42)	<i>Penghulu</i> Abok	PESAKA	*1,366
	Aghar Khan	ALL.-BUMI	1,155
	Ting Liang Tung	SNAP	884
	Png Tai Yok	SUPP	733
	Medan ak. Suhang	INDEP	212

Subis (S.43)	Francis Loke	SNAP	*1,728
	Lee Founq Chew	SUPP	1,420
	Hashim Hj. Ladis	INDEP	1,387
	Jackie Yong	PESAKA	832
Limbang (S.47)	Wong Kim Min	SNAP	*2,935
	Bakar Abdullah	ALL.-BUMI	1,068
	Pugi ak. Yabai	INDEP	385
	Tahir b. Hassan	INDEP	226

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Distribution of Seats by Party:

Party	No. of Seats Won
SNAP	8
PESAKA	7
ALLIANCE-BUMI	2
ALLIANCE-SCA	1
SUPP	1
INDEP (Independent)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission (1972). *Report on the Parliamentary and State Legislative Assembly General Elections 1969 of the States of Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak.* Kuala Lumpur: Election Commission.



Table 3.37  
The Result of the State General Election: 1974.

Constituency	Candidate	Party	Votes
Lundu (S.1)	Chong Kim Mook	BN-SUPP	*3,150
	Micheal Bong	SNAP	2,159
Bau (S.2)	Ong Ah Khin	BN-SUPP	3,392
	Lee Nyan Choi	SNAP	*4,301
Kuching Barat (S.3)	Abg Abu Bakai	BN-PBB	*6,637
	Dawi b. A.Rahman	SNAP	4,034
Kuching Timur (S.4)	Stephen Yong K.T.	BN-SUPP	4,228
	Lo Foot Kee	SNAP	*5,663
Sameriang (S.5)	Ajibah Bt Abol	BN-PBB	*4,921
	A.Rahim Tun Openg	SNAP	1,147
	Awg Wal b A.Abu	INDEP	175
Sekama (S.6)	Sim Kheng Hong	BN-SUPP	*4,728
	Sim Pan Chi	SNAP	3,575
Sebandi (S.7)	Abdul Rahman Hamzah	BN-PBB	*4,778
	Bujang Pulo	SNAP	1,355
Muara Tuang (S.8)	Mohammed Musa	BN-PBB	*2,468
	Tahir b Sham	SNAP	1,147
	F.Dustine Sirau	BISAMAH	71
Batu Kawah (S.9)	Chong Kiun Kong	BN-SUPP	*4,287
	Chin Poh Luke	SNAP	2,784
	Augustine Sirau	BISAMAH	147
Bengoh (S.10)	Segus ak Ginyai	BN-SUPP	*2,286
	Bernabas Kulur Kaos	SNAP	1,869
	William Nais	BISAMAH	203
Tarat (S.11)	Arthur Madeng	BN-PBB	*3,421
	Bangik ak Kandong	SNAP	2,751
	Lawrence Pohan	BISAMAH	716
Tebakang (S.12)	Dagok ak Randan	BN-PBB	3,025
	M.Ben ak Panggi	SNAP	*3,256
	Banggeh ak Janta	INDEP	257
	Bong Kim Yuh	INDEP	288
Semera (S.13)	Mohammed Puteh	BN-PBB	*3,337
	Wan Alkap	SNAP	1,563
Gedong (S.14)	Mohammed H.Tawan	BN-PBB	*2,450
	Liew Ming Chung	SNAP	2,422
Lingga-Sebuyau (S.15)	Penghulu Tawi Sli	BN-PBB	2,663
	Daniel Tajem	SNAP	*3,389

Simanggang (S.16)	Holis ak Tini Nelson Liap Kudu	BN-SUPP SNAP	*3,726 3,184
Engkilili-Skrang (S.17)	Simon Dembab Maja Nadeng ak Lingoh	BN-PBB SNAP	1,359 *1,851
Ulu Ai (S.18)	B.Bujang ak Tembak David ak Jemut	BN-PBB SNAP	1,280 *1,479
Saribas (S.19)	Abg Ahmad Urai Chong Kai Hong	BN-PBB SNAP	*3,224 2,161
Layar (S.20)	A.Jabu ak Numpang Stephen K. Ningkan	BN-PBB SNAP	*2,851 2,347
Kalaka (S.21)	Ahmad Azidi Senawi b Sulaiman	BN-PBB SNAP	*3,163 1,878
Krian (S.22)	Luk ak Tungku Dunstan Endawie	BN-PBB SNAP	1,612 *3,339
Kuala Rajang (S.23)	Abd Rahman Ya'kub S.Melling ak Kiun	BN-PBB SNAP	*3,667 1,029
Repok (S.24)	Chong Siew Chiang Ngo King Huong	BN-SUPP SNAP	*2,667 1,849
Matu-Daro (S.25)	Awg Hipni P. Annu Abg Amin Abg Salam	BN-PBB SNAP	*4,447 539
Binatang (S.26)	Teo Tiao Gin Salang ak Gadam	BN-SUPP SNAP	*4,494 2,642
Sibu Tengah (S.27)	Chew Kim Poon Aloysius Tan	BN-SUPP SNAP	*4,038 3,372
Sibu Luar (S.28)	Wong Soon Kai Tay Aik Loong	BN-SUPP SNAP	*3,220 1,801
Igan (S.29)	Ling Beng Siong Pao Kiew King	BN-SUPP SNAP	*3,583 1,853
Dudong (S.30)	Ting Ing Mieng Sandah ak P.Jarraw Kong Soew Yong	BN-SUPP SNAP INDEP	2,017 *2,164 115
Balingian (S.31)	Salleh Jafaruddin Kassim ak Tindin	BN-PBB SNAP	*4,008 1,251
Oya (S.32)	Edward Esnen Sim Boon Liang	BN-PBB SNAP	*3,558 2,230
Pakan (S.33)	Jagok ak Mandi Jawie Masing	BN-PBB SNAP	1,129 *1,869
Meluan (S.34)	Janggu ak Banyang Ambrose Gramong	BN-PBB SNAP	928 *1,891

Machan (S.35)	Thomas Kana Leo Moggie ak Irok	BN-PBB SNAP	1,846 *2,110
Ngemah (S.36)	Lias ak Kana Penghulu F. Umpau John Gawong Migi	BN-PBB SNAP INDEP	977 *1,382 613
Song (S.37)	Ngelambong Banggau Kuin ak Kedal	BN-PBB SNAP	*1,823 1,610
Pelagus (S.38)	L.Linggi Jugah J.Sabai Ajing	BN-PBB SNAP	1,877 *1,974
Baleh (S.39)	Kenneth Kanyan Peter Gani ak Kiai	BN-PBB SNAP	1,842 *2,344
Belaga (S.40)	Nyipa Kilah Tajang Laing	BN-SUPP INDEP	*1,419 1,382
Tatau (S.41)	Ting Ning Kiong Joseph M. Samuel	BN-PBB SNAP	2,484 *2,751
Kemena (S.42)	C.Ujang ak Jilan Baran ak Nalo Julaihi Hanafiah	BN-PBB SNAP INDEP	*2,429 2,140 676
Subis (S.43)	Mumin b Kader Loke Francis	BN-PBB SNAP	*3,783 2,835
Miri (S.44)	Chia Chin Shin Chiew Choon Lim	BN-SUPP SNAP	*5,495 3,674
Marudi (S.45)	Chan Choon Kay E.Jeli ak Belayong	BN-SUPP SNAP	2,228 *3,438
Telang Usan (S.46)	Timothy Wan Ullok J.Balan Seling	BN-PBB SNAP	1,862 *2,315
Limbang (S.47)	Mustapha b Bosar James Wong Kim Min Lim Choin Song	BN-PBB SNAP INDEP	2,224 *3,224 157
Lawas (S.48)	Awg Daub P.Matusin Balang Itai	BN-PBB SNAP	*3,461 1,47

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Distribution of Seats by Party:

Party	No. of Seats Won
PBB	18
SNAP	18
SUPP	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission, 1975, op cit.

Table 3.38  
The Result of the State General Election: 1979.

Constituency	Candidate	Party	Votes
Lundu (S.1)	Chong Kim Mok	BN-SUPP	*2,861
	Jonathan Saban	INDEP	290
	Jipen ak Nayok	INDEP	920
	Shamsuddin Mohtar	INDEP	2,854
Tasik Biru (S.2)	Lee Nyan Choi	BN-SNAP	1,518
	Patrick ak Uren	INDEP	*5,127
	Foo Fot Nam	INDEP/SUPP	2,675
	A. Dom ak Nyan	INDEP	543
Padungan (S.3)	Hj. Shahbudin Cheng	BN-SNAP	1,861
	Tan Meng Chong	INDEP/SUPP	*8,041
	Sieh Tzu Tsing	INDEP	59
	Tan Tak Seng	INDEP	174
	Sim Kwang Yang	DAP	5,877
Stampin (S.4)	Sim Kheng Hong	BN-SUPP	*10,924
	Peter Ang Eng Lim	INDEP	164
	Chan Key Heng	DAP	3,809
	Junaidi b Samail	INDEP	293
Petra Jaya (S.5)	Hafsah Harun	BN-PBB	*6,183
	Lorna Osman	PAJAR	1,643
Satok (S.6)	Abg Abu Bakar	BN-PBB	*10,506
	Wan Ahmadul Ibrahim	PAJAR	2,293
	Abdullah Kho K.H.	INDEP	740
Sebandi (S.7)	Sh Mordiah bt Fauzi	BN-PBB	*3,966
	Nassir Daing Hossen	PAJAR	703
Muara Tuang (S.8)	Adenan Hj Satem	BN-PBB	*4,227
	Bujang b. Nor	PAJAR	805
Batu Kawa (S.9)	Chong Kiun Kong	BN-SUPP	*7,208
	Angga ak Soret	INDEP	2,046
Bengoh (S.10)	Stephen Yong K.T.	BN-SUPP	*4,115
	Shyu Li Hua	DAP	159
	Wilfre Nissom	INDEP	3,894
Tarat (S.11)	Robert Jacok Ridu	BN-PBB	*4,913
	Johnny Rueh	PAJAR	2,410
Tebakang (S.12)	Micheal Ben Panggi	BN-SNAP	*4,224
	Cho Jun Fatt	INDEP	2,434
	Joseph Khoo	PAJAR	1,035
Semera (S.13)	Abg Ahmad Urai	BN-PBB	*4,173
	Ambi b. Nen	PAJAR	1,635

Gedong (S.14)	Mohd Hilary Tawan Hj Bujang Hj Amir James Gilbert Jenta Bong Jangtin	BN-PBB PAJAR INDEP INDEP	*3,067 738 924 137
Lingga (S.15)	Daniel Tajem Kho Su Meng Wan Lias	BN-SNAP INDEP INDEP	*3,602 3,161 436
Sri Aman (S.16)	Hollis Tini Bruce ak Nadong Thomas Laman	BN-SUPP DAP INDEP	*4,502 641 3,220
Engkilili (S.17)	Nadeng ak Linggoh Luta ak Majing	BN-SNAP INDEP	*2,583 1,674
Batang Air (S.18)	David Jemut	BN-SNAP	unopposed
Saribas (S.19)	Azinuddin Satem Hj Allli Kawi Abg Hipni Trukey Mara ak Unjah	BN-PBB PAJAR INDEP INDEP	*3,613 1,978 161 82
Layar (S.20)	Alfred Jabu	BN-PBB	unopposed
Kalaka (S.21)	Wan Yusof Suip b Samik	BN-PBB PAJAR	*4,489 1,243
Krian (S.22)	Dunstan Endawie Germany ak Sangkam	BN-SNAP INDEP	*4,496 1,097
Kuala Rejang (S.23)	Asfian Awg Nassar Abdullah b Gulau Hj Bohari Hj Bujang Allen ak Enlai	BN-PBB PAJAR INDEP INDEP	*3,716 532 71 552
Matu-Daro (S.24)	Abd Rahman Ya'kub Eden b Abdullah	BN-PBB PAJAR	*6,827 542
Repok (S.25)	David Teng Lung Chi Chong Siew Chiang	BN-SUPP DAP	*4,601 4,262
Meradong (S.26)	Anthony Teo T.G. Tang Ling Tung Teo Siang Hai Mohd Azin n Suip Robinson Nyanggau	BN-SUPP DAP INDEP INDEP INDEP	*3,126 2,187 1,831 194 449
Maling (S.27)	Wong Soon Kai Ling Sie Ming	BN-SUPP DAP	*9,839 8,109
Seduan (S.28)	Ting Ing Mieng Sia Chiew King Abg Latif Abg Haron	BN-SUPP DAP INDEP	*4,873 3,235 191

Igan (S.29)	David Tiong C.C.	BN-SUPP	*2,455
	Wong Teck Nai	DAP	2,183
	Harry Kiroh Rayon	PAJAR	399
Dundong (S.30)	Sandah ak. Jarrow	BN-SNAP	*4,125
	Chan Hiu Sei	DAP	883
	Liaw Yew Ming	INDEP	1,898
	Alexandar ak Seli	INDEP	239
	Yun ak Janang	INDEP	454
Balingian (S.31)	Wan Habib Mahmood	BN-PBB	unopposed
Oya (S.32)	Edward Esnen	BN-PBB	*3,241
	Gerald Bujal	PAJAR	113
	Kalumai b. Mawar	INDEP	229
	Imelda John Arun	INDEP	557
	Edward Atit	INDEP	463
Pakan (S.33)	Jawie Masing	BN-SNAP	*2,281
	Jagok ak Mandi	INDEP	1.049
Meluan (S.34)	Ambrose Gramong	BN-SNAP	unopposed
Machan (S.35)	Gramong Juna	BN-SNAP	*2,919
	Chua Poh Ho	INDEP	1,753
Ngemah (S.36)	Joseph Kudi	BN-SNAP	*3,194
	Endol ak Kude	INDEP	422
	<i>Penghulu Lias</i>	INDEP	550
	Hajan ak Seli	INDEP	782
Katibas (S.37)	Ambrose Belikau	BN-PBB	*2,115
	Gira ak Jugah	INDEP	1,119
Pelagus (S.38)	Johathan Sabai	BN-SNAP	*2,863
	Kumbong ak Gernang	DAP	1,548
Baleh (S.39)	Peter Gani	BN-SNAP	*3,723
	Nyuak ak Sibat	INDEP	864
	Tr. Tuan ak Antau	UMAT	238
Belaga (S.40)	Nyipa Bato	BN-SUPP	1,206
	Tajang Laing	INDEP	*1,966
Tatau (S.41)	Joseph Samuel	BN-SNAP	*3,218
	Lim Cheng Hui	SAPO	725
Kemena (S.42)	Celestine Ujang	BN-PBB	*6,001
	Mohd Mawi	PAJAR	854
Subis (S.43)	Abd Mumin Kadir	BN-PBB	*5,760
	Anthony Sia	INDEP	1,313
	Entalai Sawing	SAPO	2,273
	Hj Salim Hj Gapor	INDEP	52
	Simai b Dollah	PAJAR	196

Miri (S.44)	Chia Chin Sin	BN-SUPP	*9,036
	Raymond Szeto	SAPO	7,500
Marudi (S.45)	Pan Igata Limau	SAPO	1,609
	Edward Jeli	BN-SNAP	*4,834
Telang Usan (S.46)	Paul Kallang	SAPO	994
	Kho Thien Seng	INDEP	231
	J.Balan Seling	BN-SNAP	*3,667
Limbang (S.47)	Francis Mambong	INDEP	442
	Lim Chong Heng	INDEP/SUPP	743
	Hasbollah Majid	INDEP	623
	James Wong K.M.	BN-SNAP	*5,021
Lawas (S.48)	Loh Teng Kong	INDEP	537
	Yusof Buaya	INDEP	137
	Pinai Sigar	INDEP	1,087
	Mansor Osman	PAJAR	93
	Hj Noor Tahir	BN-PBB	*3,246

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Distribution of Seats by Party:

Party	No. of Seats Won
PBB	18
SNAP	16
SUPP	12
INDEP	2
Total	48

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission, 1981, op cit.

Table 4.9  
The Result of the State General Election: 1983.

Constituency	Candidate	Party	Votes
Lundu (S.1)	Winston T. Pata	INDEP	44
	Ahmad B. Som	INDEP	208
	Jehim ak. Milos	INDEP	891
	Ramsey N. Jitam	BN-SUPP	*4,146
	Mohd. Shamsuddin	INDEP	2,092
	Hasssan B. Mawi	INDEP	127
Tasik Biru (S.2)	Patau Rubis	SNAP	*7,064
	Peter Minos	BN-PBB	4,389
	Aloysius D.Nagok	INDEP	144
Padungan (S.3)	Shek Kwon Bun	SNAP	1,058
	Song Swee Guan	BN-SUPP	*11,665
	Sim Kwang Yang	DAP	8,121
Stampin (S.4)	Yong Sen Chan	DAP	6,719
	Sim Kheng Hong	BN-SUPP	*15,429
Petra Jaya (S.5)	Eden B. Abdullah	BERSATU	544
	Mohd Pauzi	INDEP	1,265
	Hafsah bte. Harun	BN-PBB	*6,107
Satok (S.6)	Abg.Johari T. Openg	BN-PBB	*10,234
	Abg. Ariffin A.Sebli	INDEP	1,638
Sebandi (S.7)	Bujang Bakar	INDEP	1,406
	Abg. Saufi A. Adenan	INDEP	66
	Abd Taib Mahmud	BN-PBB	*3,720
Muara Tuang (S.8)	Abd Mohd Kassim	BERSATU	292
	Abg Ibrahim	INDEP	822
	Adenan b. Satem	BN-PBB	*4,518
Batu Kawah (S.9)	Chong Kiun Kong	BN-SUPP	*7,517
	Lawrence ak. Soret	INDEP	984
	Peter ak Nuab	INDEP	1,441
Bengoh (S.10)	Wilfred Nissom	INDEP	*5,720
	W. Tanyuk ak Nub	BN-SUPP	4,594
	George Si Ricord	INDEP	96
Tarat (S.11)	Robert Jacob Ridu	BN-PBB	*3,950
	Rahun ak Dabak	INDEP	3,502
	Bangkit ak Kandong	INDEP	105
	Chai Mok Shin	INDEP	633
	N. Sachi	INDEP	574
Tebakang (S.12)	F. Bayoi Manggie	INDEP	2,507
	N. Kundai Ngareng	INDEP	359
	Michael Ben	SNAP	*4,046
	Lainus ak A. Luak	PBDS	2,949



Semera (S.13)	Tan Guek Liang	INDEP	1,198
	Wan Alkap b. T. Esim	INDEP	1,666
	Salleh b. Zen	INDEP	43
	Wan Abdul Wahab	BN-PBB	*2,426
Gedong (S.14)	Mohd. Hilary Tawan	BN-PBB	*2,675
	Ahmad Jeraie Rahman	INDEP	1,211
	Mathew Ain ak Numon	INDEP	205
	Junaidi b. Bolhassan	INDEP	203
	Bujang b. Ibrahim	INDEP	297
Lingga (S.15)	Wan Akil b. T.Mahmud	INDEP	116
	Donald Lawan	INDEP	122
	Daniel Tajeim	PBDS	*4,526
	Mohd Morshidi b. Umi	INDEP	122
	Jacob ak Imang	SNAP	3,167
Sri Aman (S.16)	Ngu Piew Seng	INDEP	2,661
	Abg Taha Abg Zain	INDEP	1,527
	Hollis ak Tini	BN-SUPP	*4,104
	Shamsuddin Abdullah	INDEP	136
Engkilili (S.17)	Johnathan Narwin	PBDS	984
	Choo Nam @ Panang	INDEP	*1,461
	Simon Dembab Maja	INDEP	495
	R.Tawan ak Sedu	INDEP	921
	Kua Siang How	INDEP	29
	W. Allie ak Banyie	SNAP	1,043
Batang Ai (S.18)	Langit ak Uming	SNAP	*1,421
	David ak Jemu	PBDS	1,413
	B. Bujang ak Tembak	INDEP	1,009
Saribas (S.19)	Mohd Parhi b. Bujang	INDEP	1,893
	Zainudin Satem	BN-PBB	*3,119
	Abd Madzhi A. Dahlar	INDEP	1,467
Layar (S.20)	Jabu ak Numpang	BN-PBB	*5,053
	Razali Sabang	INDEP	1,326
Kalaka (S.21)	Jong Nam Hin	INDEP	690
	Mohd Ramli b. Omar	INDEP	1,055
	Wan Yusof	BN-PBB	*3,828
	Jong Thai Bee	INDEP	528
	Othman b. Kawi	INDEP	120
Krian (S.22)	Peter Tinggom	SNAP	2,307
	Andau ak Japar	INDEP	162
	J.Antau ak Linggang	INDEP	853
	E. Langgu ak Saga	PBDS	*2,752
	Solomon Buyong	INDEP	65
Kuala Rejang (S.23)	Sa'adi b. Olia	BN-PBB	*3,305
	Udie Salaleh	INDEP	1,850

Matu-Daro (S.24)	Wahab b. Dollah	BN-PBB	unopposed
Repok (S.25)	D. Teng Lung Chi Chong Siew Chiang	BN-SUPP DAP	*5,719 5,065
Meradong (S.26)	Wan Zainal Abidin T. Hii King Hiong Salang Teo Siang Hui Ting Yii Hiep	INDEP BN-SUPP INDEP INDEP DAP	101 *3,857 2,960 33 2,095
Maling (S.27)	Ling Sie Ming Wong Soon Kai	DAP BN-SUPP	5,583 *21,803
Seduan (S.28)	Mohd Syaiffuddin Wong Sie Lee Ting Ing Mieng	INDEP INDEP BN-SUPP	176 1,887 *7,445
Igan (S.29)	B.Jubilee b. Genam D. Tiong Chiong CHu Linus M. ak Lembang Neo ak Senen	INDEP BN-SUPP INDEP INDEP	365 *2,813 927 399
Dudong (S.30)	Joseph Tang W. Kiroh ak Jeram R.Sabang ak Lambang	SNAP INDEP PBDS	2,695 *2,870 2,387
Balingian (S.31)	Awg Morshidi A. Buyu Wong Sing Hong Enggai ak antasin Wan Habib Mohmud	INDEP DAP INDEP BN-PBB	640 737 1,111 *3,777
Oya (S.32)	Salleh Jafaruddin	BN-PBB	unopposed
Pakan (S.33)	Jawie Masing William Mawan Kasa ak Jingga	PBDS SNAP INDEP	*2,040 1,779 202
Meluan (S.34)	Brayan ak Jalang Entingi ak Manggoi Geman ak Itam A. Gramong ak Jelian	INDEP INDEP PBDS SNAP	105 97 *1,977 1,966
Machan (S.35)	Gramong Juna S.Jinggut ak Ajub Aji ak Lanyau	PBDS SNAP INDEP	*3,017 2,134 82
Ngemah (S.36)	T. Babai ak Lias J.Unting ak Umang Josph ak Kudi	SNAP INDEP PBDS	1,468 860 *1,948
Katibas (S.37)	Toh Tze Hua Tawai ak Lalang A.Blikau ak Enturan Baleng ak Jengin	INDEP INDEP BN-PBB INDEP	460 216 *2,155 1,636

Pelagus (S.38)	Lawrence ak Baling	INDEP	453
	Nueng ak Kudi	SNAP	*2,567
	J.Sabai ak Ajing	PBDS	1,998
Baleh (S.39)	Peter Gani	SNAP	1,646
	Joseph ak Jenggot	INDEP	1,300
	James J. Masing	PBDS	*2,717
Belaga (S.40)	Ajang Batok	INDEP	575
	Nyipa Batok	INDEP	1,261
	Tajang Laing	BN-PBB	*1,900
Tatau (S.41)	Hj Suhaili	INDEP	375
	Ting Ling Kiew	SNAP	1,988
	Bolhassan Kambar	INDEP	*2,342
Kemena (S.42)	C. Ujang ak Jilan	BN-PBB	*6,703
	P.Chan Hwa Tat	DAP	2,926
	Mohd b. Nawi	INDEP	536
Subis (S.43)	D.Milai ak Unting	INDEP	3,937
	Usop b. Wahab	BN-PBB	*5,605
	J.Saong ak Mamat	INDEP	236
Miri (S.44)	G.Chan Hong Nam	BN-SUPP	unopposed
Marudi (S.45)	E.Jeli ak Blayong	SNAP	*3,963
	P.Sibat ak Sujang	PBDS	3,114
Telang Usan (S.46)	J.Baln Seling	SNAP	*3,019
	Kebing Wan	INDEP	2,438
Limbang (S.47)	James Wong K.M.	SNAP	*3,399
	Mohd b. A.Bakar	INDEP	2,945
	C.Sawan ak Jiram	PBDS	1,865
	Ang Ek Meng	INDEP	102
Lawas (S.48)	Pagag Agong	INDEP	1,984
	Hj Nor Tahir	BN-PBB	*4,194

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Distribution of Seats by Party:

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Party	No. of Seats Won
PBB	19
SUPP	11
SNAP	7
PBDS	7
INDEP	4
Total	48

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Source: Malaysia, Election Commission (1985). *Report on the State Legislative Assembly General Election Sarawak 1983*. Kuala Lumpur: Election Commission.

Table 4.10

Forest Concessions: Taib Mahmud's Group.

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Company:	Seatex Plantation Sdn. Bhd.	
Size of Concession:	30,000 ha.	
Owners/Shareholders:	Douglas Ugah (MP)	Jabu Nominee.
	Alex Linggi	Linggi's son.
	Khalit Marzuki	
	Empiang Jabu	Jabu's wife
Company:	Bumi Hijau Berkembang Sdn. Bhd.	
Size of Concession:	26,000 ha.	
Owners/Shareholders:	K.B.C. group	Huang Ee Hoe.
		King's Centre.
	Douglas Sullang	Jabu's group.
	Richard Mullok	Jabu's group.
	Kenneth Kanyan	PBB member.
Company:	Sarimas Sdn. Bhd.	
Size of Concession:	32,000 ha.	
Owners/Shareholders:	Bustari Yusof	CM's nominee.
	Empiang Jabu	Jabu's wife.
	Alex Kok	West Malaysian
	James Jimbun	PBB MP
Company	Sarako Sdn. Bhd.	
Size of Concession	36, 000 ha.	
Owners/Shareholders	Linggi Jugah	PBB member.
	Abng Abu Bakar	PBB federal minister.
	Lau Ngau Chung	CM's nominee.
Company	C.D.C. Joint Venture Sdn. Bhd.	
Size of Concession	50,000 ha.	
Owners/Shareholders	Overseas (names not listed)	
Company	Gerogo Quarry Sdn. Bhd.	
Size of Concession	not listed	
Owners/Shareholders	Ambrose Blikau	PBB member & Asst. Minister
	Ujang Jilan	PBB member & Asst. Minister
	Douglas Ugah	)
	Douglas Sullang	)Jabu's group.
	Edmund Abitt	)

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Source: *Sarawak Tribune*, 11 April 1987.

Note: The above was published under the heading Taib's Misdeeds. Note the "interlocking ownership", one of the theses in elitist theory of wealth concentration.

Table 4.11

Forest Concessions: Rahman Ya'kub's Group.

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Company:	Baltim Timber Sdn. Bhd.	
Acreage:	48,763 hectares. (120,444 acres)	
Directors:	Wan Habib Syed Mahmud	PERMAS
	Wan Madhizi Mahdzar	PERMAS
Company:	Syarikat Delapan Sdn. Bhd.	
Acreage:	67,476 hectares (166,665 acres)	
Directors:	Debong Anyi	Tajang Laing's wife
	Norlia Abd Rahman	Rahman's daughter
	Zainuddin Satem	PERMAS
Company:	Lembah Mewah Sdn. Bhd.	
Acreage:	94,126 hectares (232,491 acres)	
Directors:	Debong Anyi	Tajang Laing's wife
	Khadijah Rahman )	Rahman's daughters
	Norlia Rahman )	
Company:	Kehutanan Sentiasa Sdn. Bhd.	
Acreage:	30,829 hectares (76,147 acres)	
Directors:	Deli A. Rahman	Rahman's henchman
	Salleh Jafaruddin	PERMAS
	Wan Ali T. Mahdi	PERMAS
Company:	Berbet Sdn. Bhd.	
Acreage:	35,554 hectares (87,818 acres)	
Directors:	Norlia Abd. Rahman	Rahman's daughter
Company:	Shobra Sdn. Bhd.	
Acreage:	1,163 hectares	
Directors:	Abg. Yusof Puteh	PERMAS
	Salleh Jafaruddin	PERMAS

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Source: *The People's Mirror*, 12 April 1987

Note: *The People's Mirror* is a pro-government paper established during the election, while the *Sarawak Tribune* is pro-Rahman. As a consequence of the crisis, all government departments' subscriptions to the *Tribune* were replaced by *The People's Mirror*.

Table 4.12  
The Result of the State General Election: 1987.

Constituency	Candidate	Party	Votes
Lundu (S.1)	Ramsey N. Jitam	BN-SUPP	*4,890
	Haji Noor Tahir	PERMAS	3,561
Tasik Biru (S.2)	Patau Rubis	BN-SNAP	*6,569
	Wilfred Nissom	PBDS	6,152
Padungan (S.3)	Song Swee Guan	BN-SUPP	*14,499
	Cheng Hui Hong	DAP	8,538
Stampin (S.4)	Sim Kheng Hong	BN-SUPP	*16,790
	Sim Kwang Yang	DAP	9,724
Petra Jaya (S.5)	S. Mordiah T.Fauzi	BN-PBB	*6,006
	Hafsah Harun	PERMAS	2,696
Satok (S.6)	Abang Johari T.Openg	BN-PBB	*9,760
	Wan Ali B T.Madhi	PERMAS	4,175
	Abg Ariffin A.Sebli	BERSATU	84
Sebandi (S.7)	Abdul Taib Mahmud	BN-PBB	*4,397
	Wan Yusuf	PERMAS	2,203
Muara Tuang (S.8)	Adenan Haji Satem	BN-PBB	*5,196
	Abdul Rahman Hamzah	PERMAS	1,755
Batu Kawa (S.9)	Chong Kiun Kong	BN-SUPP	*8,228
	Japat ak Simol	PERMAS	2,407
	Lim Guan Sin	DAP	2,041
Bengoh (S.10)	Louis Nigel Gines	BN-SUPP	5,429
	Sora ak Rusah	PBDS	*5,648
	Chong Kuek Bui	INDEP	230
Tarat (S.11)	F.Bayoi Manggie	BN-PBB	*5,107
	Richard Riot Jaen	PBDS	3,994
	Lai Boon Luan	INDEP	405
Tabakang (S.12)	A.Bujang Barieng	BN-SNAP	3,366
	Micheal Ben	PBDS	*7,723
Semera (S.13)	Wan Wahab B Sanusi	BN-PBB	*3,614
	Wan Zainal Sanusi	PERMAS	2,779
Gedong (S.14)	Khaider B Zaidell	BN-PBB	2,342
	Mohd Hillary Tawan	PERMAS	*3,482
Lingga (S.15)	Donald Lawan	BN-SNAP	*4,468
	Daniel Tajem	PBDS	4,409
Sri Aman (S.16)	Micheal Pilo	BN-SUPP	*5,578
	Hollis Tini	PBDS	4,762

Engkilili (S.17)	Intal ak Rentap Sim Choo Nam	BN-SUPP PBDS	2,061 *3,839
Batang Ai (S.18)	Nicholas Bawin Mikai ak Mandau	BN-PBB PBDS	2,020 *2,761
Saribas (S.19)	Rolhassan B Dee Zainuddin Satem Ahmad B Johan	BN-PBB PERMAS INDEP	*4,620 3,184 108
Layar (S.20)	A.Jabu ak Numpang David Impi	BN-PBB PBDS	*4,416 2,691
Kalaka (S.21)	Abdul Wahab B Aziz Yusuf Puteh	BN-PBB PERMAS	3,608 *3,685
Krian (S.22)	P.Nyarok ak Entre Edmund Langgu Saga	BN-SNAP PBDS	3,337 *3,751
Kuala Rajang (S.23)	Hamden B Ahmad Saidi Olia	BN-PBB PERMAS	*3,251 2,110
Matu-Daro (S.24)	Wahab Dollah Abdul Rahman Yakub	BN-PBB PERMAS	*5,302 3,677
Repok (S.25)	D.Teng Lung Chi Wong Sim Nam	BN-SUPP DAP	*6,479 5,564
Meradong (S.26)	T. Hii King Hiong Chong Siew Chiang	BN-SUPP DAP	*5,371 4,134
Maling (S.27)	Wong Soon Kai Ling Sie Ming	BN-SUPP DAP	*19,239 9,858
Seduan (S.28)	Ting Ing Mieng Lee Hie Kui Ling Heng Kwong Lo Ngee Hock	BN-SUPP PERMAS DAP INDEP	*7,023 684 2,331 155
Igan (S.29)	Wong Soon Koh David Tiong A. Nait ak Mani	BN-SUPP PERMAS INDEP	2,402 *2,425 81
Dudong (S.30)	Jawan Empaling Wilfred Kiroh Siew Chee Kiong	BN-SUPP PBDS INDEP	*4,717 4,406 232
Balingian (S.31)	Abdul Aziz Majid Wan Habib S.Mahmud	BN-PBB PERMAS	*5,104 3,473
Oya (S.32)	M. Ghaazali Kipli W.Madzihi W.Mahdzar	BN-PBB PERMAS	2,705 *4,679
Pakan (S.33)	W.Mawan ak Ikom Jawie Masing	BN-PBB PBDS	2,195 *2,453

Meluan (S.34)	Janggau ak Banyang Giman ak Itam	BN-PBB PBDS	2,091 *3,135
Machan (S.35)	Martin ak Charlie Gramong Juna	BN-SNAP PBDS	2,438 *3,426
Ngemah (S.36)	Tan ak Seliong Joseph Kudi	BN-PBB PBDS	2,068 *2,427
Katibas (S.37)	A.Belikau ak Enturun Banting ak Jibom A.Kuin ak Kedal	BN-PBB PBDS INDEP	2,080 *2,624 139
Pelagus (S.38)	K.Kanyan ak T.Koh Phili Mon ak Nuing Sng Jee Hua Jangi ak P.Jemut	BN-PBB PBDS INDEP INDEP	2,226 *2,242 1,289 433
Balleh (S.39)	Joseph ak T.Jinggut James J. Masing	BN-PBB PBDS	2,425 *3,516
Belaga (S.40)	Nyipa Batok Tajang Laing	BN-PBB PERMAS	*2,934 1,501
Tatau (S.41)	Daniel Sigah Bolhassan Kamar Jatan ak Linting	BN-SNAP INDEP DAP	2,310 *2,555 356
Kemena (S.42)	Celestine Ujang Victor T.Angang Chiew Chin Sing	BN-PBB PERMAS DAP	*6,581 4,623 2,462
Subis (S.43)	Yusuf Sani Wahab Chong Kong Fatt Salleh Jafaruddin Ali B Mana David ak La Linggi ak Balong	BN-PBB DAP PERMAS INDEP INDEP INDEP	5,672 254 *6,390 95 42 81
Miri (S.44)	G.Chan Hong Nam Richard Wong Ho Leng	BN-SUPP DAP	*14,352 6,079
Marudi (S.45)	Aton ak Chuat Edward Jeli A.Bakar B Abdullah	BN-SNAP PBDS INDEP	3,102 *4,156 278
Telang Usan (S.46)	Kebing Wan Joseph Balan Seling	BN-SNAP PBDS	2,644 *2,878
Limbang (S.47)	James Wong Munir B Karim Ang Thian Eng Ali B Abdullah	BN-SNAP PERMAS INDEP INDEP	*4,555 4,168 271 89



Lawas	Awg Tengah A. Hassan	BN-PBB	*3,722
(S.48)	A.Yusuf P.Bongsu	PERMAS	495
	Micheal Labo	INDEP	2,912

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Distribution of Seats by Party.

Party	No. of Seats Won
PBDS	15
PBB	14
SUPP	11
PERMAS	5
SNAP	3
Total	48

Source: Malaysia, Election Commission (1988). *Report on the State Legislative Assembly General Election Sarawak 1987*. Kuala Lumpur: Election Commission.

Table 4.13  
State Assembly Members Elected between 1970-1987.

Constituency	1970	1974	1979
S. 15 Lingga	P.Tawi Sli*	Tajeim+	Tajeim+
S. 16 Simanggang	Kudu+	Hollis**	Hollis**
S. 17 Engkilili	Dembab*	Nadeng+	Nadeng+
S. 18 Ulu Ai	D.Jemut+	D.Jemut+	D.Jemut+
S. 20 Layar	Ningkan+	Jabu*	Jabu*
S. 22 Krian	Endawie+	Endawie+	Endawie+
S. 29 Igan	Ling B.S.**	Ling B.S.**	Tiong C.C.**
S. 30 Dudong	Kong C.S.**	Sandah+	Sandah+
S. 33 Pakan	P.Mandi*	Jawie+	Jawie+
S. 34 Meluan	G.Jelian+	A.Gramong+	A.Gramong+
S. 35 Machan	Kana*	Moggie+	G.Juna+
S. 36 Ngemah	P.Lias++	P.Umpau+	J.Kudi+
S. 37 Song	Ngelambong+	Ngelambong*	Blikau*
S. 38 Pelagus	Linggi*	Sabait+	Sabait+
S. 39 Baleh	Kanyan*	Gani+	Gani+
S. 41 Tatau	Awg.Ismail++	Samuel+	Samuel+
S. 42 Kemena	P.Abok*	Ujang*	Ujang*

1983	1987
Tajeim^	Lawan+
Hollis**	Pilo**
Sim C.N.**	Sim C.N.^
D.Jemut+	Mikai^
Jabu*	Jabu*
Langgu^	Langgu^
Tiong C.C.**	Tiong C.C.++
Kiroh**	Jawan**
Jawie^	Jawie^
Geman+	Geman^
G.Juna^	G.Juna^
J.Kudi^	J.Kudi^
Blikau*	Bantin^
N.Kudi+	PhiLimon^
J.Jemot^	J.Jemot^
Bolhassan^	Bolhasan^
Ujang*	Ujang*

Distribution of Seats by Party:

Party	1970	1974	1979	1983	1987
PESAKA/PBB *	7	3	3	3	2
SNAP +	6	12	12	3	1
SCA/SUPP **	2	2	2	4	2
Others ++	2	-	-	-	1
PBDS ^	-	-	-	7	11

Table 5.30  
State Revenues: 1875-1905.

Sources	1875	1885	1891	1895	1900	1905
(in Thousands of Straits Dollars)						
Farms*	67	150	211	201	282	404
Customs**	25	54	71	97	291	162
Dayak revenue	47	31	37	38	45	41
Exemption tax	n.	23	27	29	32	32
Mining	15	14	15	9	56	407
Buoy/Light	n.	2	3	3	3	4
Post/Shipping	54	1	2	8	18	18
Land	n.	n.	1	n.	9	12
Assessment	+17	8	4	5	7	20
Court	+n.	19	30	43	52	67
Miscellaneous	6	9	5	7	19.	23
Reimbursement	++	++	++	74	102	164
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>916</b>	<b>1,354</b>

Sources: *Sarawak Gazette*, No.12, 28 February 1871; No.118, 22 April 1876; Vol.XVI, No.244, 1 May 1886; Vol.XXVI, No.363, 1 April 1896; and Vol.XXXVI, No.484, 4 May 1906.

Notes: \* -Opium, Gambling, Arrack & Pawn Farms.  
 \*\* -Export/Export duties.  
 + -In 1875, assessment rates and court accounts were merged.  
 n. -negligible  
 ++ -heading not included for respective periods.  
 -All figures rounded; original itemisation has been reclassified to maintain consistency.

Table 5.31  
State Expenditures: 1870-1905.

Sector	1870	1875	1885	1891	1895	1900	1905
(in Thousands of Straits Dollars)							
Civil List	38	91	135	187	232	314	433
Military	50	94	91	114	137	230	226
Public Works	14	11	32	42	66	125	352
Light houses	++	1	1	1	2	2	3
Royalties	6	12	17	19	16	16	13
Tax Dept.	1	6	8	9	10	11	15
Immigration	++	++	n.	1	2	4	1
Plantations	++	++	1	9	24	137	116
Mining	++	8	4	4	5	1	6
Miscellaneous	66	20	32	31	34	60	74
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>1,204</b>

Source: see Table 5.30.

Note: ++ -heading not included for respective periods.

Table 5.32  
Statement of State Revenue.

Category	1946	1947	1950	1955	1960	1962
(in Millions of Dollars)						
Customs	3.5	8.6	22.6	28.6	46.8	38.5
Court fees etc.	0.3	0.9	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0
Forest	-	0.2	0.4	1.5	5.2	4.1
Govt Property	0.3	0.1	0.1	1.1	1.4	1.5
Income tax**	-	-	0.1	6.2	12.4	11.5
Interest	0.2	0.5	1.0	3.1	4.0	6.3
Land*	0.1	0.3	0.7	1.5	1.5	3.5
Licenses etc.	0.4	0.7	1.6	3.5	4.1	3.9
Marine	-	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.9
Municipal	-	0.6	0.5	0.2	-	-
Post/Telegraph	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.8	2.4	3.1
Rehab. loan	-	-	-	0.1	0.3	0.2
Grants+	-	0.1	2.2	-	-	-
Others	0.5	0.2	0.9	2.3	4.7	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>84.5</b>	<b>80.3</b>

Source: Colonial Reports Sarawak (1947 -1963), op cit.

Notes: \* -Land & land sales.

\*\* -Company (income) tax introduced in 1949.

+ -Colonial Development and Welfare Grants.

Table 5.33  
Major Export Items: 1940-1962.

Items	1940	1946	1947	1950	1955	1960	1962
	(in Millions of Dollars)						
Petroleum	11.4	4.2	51.2	230.3	329.6	288.0	226.1
Rubber	26.2	19.3	26.0	114.0	78.7	122.4	72.6
Sago	2.2	1.1	10.6	9.3	2.0	2.8	4.2
Pepper	0.4	0.9	3.2	4.1	31.6	17.2	23.9
Jelutong	0.8	0.1	2.7	1.8	0.9	0.8	1.8
Guttas	0.1	*	0.8	0.3	-	-	-
Damar	*	0.1	0.5	0.5	-	-	-
Copra	*	-	-	2.6	0.5	-	-
Timber	-	-	-	2.8	22.0	43.6	40.8
Ilipe-nuts	-	-	-	-	0.9	-	16.0
Sundries	4.5	1.8	8.0	11.7	11.2	8.4	17.7
Other	-	-	-	-	-	5.0	4.1
Total	45.6	27.5	103.0	377.4	477.4	488.2	407.2

Source: *Colonial Reports Sarawak (1947 -1963)*, op cit.

Key: \* -negligible

Table 5.34  
Public Expenditures - Sarawak.

Category	SP	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4	MP5
	(in Millions of Dollars)					
Agriculture	109	130	160	445	440	587
Resource dev.	0	0	0	2	5	10
Industry	1	3	37	101	83	119
Transport	131	112	238	396	796	620
Communication	7	24	72	76	109	9
Utilities	19	15	84	158	586	545
Research/Study	0	0	5	6	1	17
Soc. Services	50	81	108	308	379	482
Int. Security	0	0	49	80	52	178
Gen. Admin.	29	14	90	86	65	64
Others	0	0	0	0	93	-
All	346	379	843	1,658	2,609	2,631

Table 5.35

Education Completed by Ethnicity: 1970.

Level	Iban In Thousands	Bid. In Thousands	O/Ulu (as percentage of total)	Malay	Mel.	Chinese
Primary	8.4 (13.0)	4.5 (7.0)	2.0 (3.0)	13.0 (21.0)	3.4 (6.0)	30.9 (40.0)
L.Sec.	1.6 (12.0)	0.8 (6.0)	0.3 (2.0)	2.6 (19.0)	0.5 (3.0)	7.6 (56.0)
U.Sec.	0.4 (5.0)	0.2 (3.0)	0.07 (1.0)	0.8 (11.0)	0.09 (1.0)	5.1 (74.0)
H.S.C.	0.06 (3.0)	0.03 (2.0)	0.01 (1.0)	0.1 (5.0)	0.01 (1.0)	1.2 (57.0)
All Level	10.5	5.5	2.4	16.5	4.0	44.8
% Total	(12.5)	(6.6)	(2.9)	(19.7)	4.8	(53.5)
Pop. 1970	303	84	51	181	53	229
% of Total	(31)	(8)	(5)	(19)	(5)	(30)

Source: *Population and Housing Census of Malaysia 1970*,  
Vol.I, Part XIII, pp.132-155.

Key: Bid. -Bidayuh; Mel. -Melanau  
Sec. -Secondary; L. -Lower; U. -Upper.  
H.S.C. -Higher School Certificate.

Table 5.36

Education Completed by Ethnicity: 1980.

Level	Iban In Thousands	Bid. In Thousands	O/Ulu (as percentage of total)	Malay	Mel.	Chinese
Primary	29.0 (18.0)	11.9 (7.0)	6.0 (4.0)	33.0 (21.0)	9.5 (6.0)	69.5 (43.0)
L.Sec.	5.7 (17.0)	2.4 (7.0)	1.2 (4.0)	9.7 (29.0)	1.6 (5.0)	12.5 (37.0)
U.Sec.	3.0 (9.0)	1.7 (5.0)	0.9 (3.0)	6.6 (19.0)	1.0 (3.0)	20.1 (59.0)
H.S.C.	0.2 (6.0)	0.1 (3.0)	0.07 (2.0)	0.05 (17.0)	0.07 (2.0)	2.2 (64.0)
All Level	37.9	16.1	8.2	49.4	12.2	104.3
% Total	(16.6)	(7.1)	(3.6)	(21.7)	(5.3)	(45.7)
Pop. 1980	396	108	69	258	75	385
% of Total	(30)	(8)	(5)	(20)	(6)	(30)

Source: *Population and Housing Census of Malaysia 1980*,  
pp.502-597.

APPENDIX D

Centre for Southeast Asian Studies,  
University of Hull,  
ENGLAND

**To:** Respondent  
(Tuai Bilik).

**From:** Jayum A. Jawan.

**Subject:** Opinion Poll.

**Message:** This Poll is conducted in conjunction with research I am currently undertaking on Dayak Ibans. Your truthful responses are deeply appreciated. I undertake to uphold the confidentiality of your responses and will not reveal them to a third party.

I thank you for your time and cooperation.

---

**I. Background of Respondent:**

1. Sex:

Male   
Female

/5/

2. Age Group:

21 - 34   
35 - 55   
56 & over

/6/

Leave this column blank

---

--	--	--

/1/2/3/  
Case No:

--

/4/  
Respondent  
code:

3. Marital status:

Single  
Divorcee  
Married

  
  
  
/7/

4. Size of your *bilik*-family:

[Enter the number by age group]  
[in the box below ]

20 yrs. & below  
21 yrs. & above

  
  
/8/

5. (A) Place of residence:

Live in the *pasar*  
Live in a longhouse

  
  
/9/

(B) If living in the longhouse, how far is it from the nearest *pasar*?

[Answer either (i) or (ii),]  
[whichever is relevant ]

(i) In terms of boat ride:

0 - 1/2 hrs.  
1 - 2 hrs.  
3 & more hrs.

  
  
  
/10/

(ii) In terms of car ride:

0 - 1/2 hrs.  
1 - 2 hrs.  
3 & more hrs.

  
  
  
/11/



6. What is your occupation?

Farming   
Gov't employee   
Private firm   
Retired   
Others, Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

/12/

(B) If you tick farming, please specify, by stating acreage in the relevant boxes.

[You may tick one or more]  
[responses below].

Wet paddy   
Dry paddy   
Pepper   
Cocoa   
Fruit trees   
Others, Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

/13/

(C) If gov't employee, state category:

Division A Officer   
Division B Officer   
Division C Officer   
Division D Officer

/14/

(D) If you tick private sector, please specify.

Operate own business   
Company Executive   
Clerical staff   
Daily labourer

/15/

7. What is your income range per month?

[Note: For self-employed farmer, ]  
[refer to appendix I for computation]  
[of income. ]

0 - 500   
501 - 1,000   
1,001 - 2,000   
2,001 & above

/16/

8. Have you attended any school?

No schooling   
Primary   
Secondary   
Vocational   
University

/17/

9. Do you own any of the following items?

Radio   
Television   
Outboard engine   
Cars/Bikes   
Others, specify:  
\_\_\_\_\_

/18/

II. General Information:

10. Where do you get most of the news about politics and government -i.e. elections, political parties, and political, economic and social issues?

Radio   
Television   
Newspaper   
Talking to people   
Others (Specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_

/19/

11. Do you talk about politics:

(A) with family members?

Very frequent  
Frequent  
Seldom  
Very seldom  
Not at all

/20/

(B) with friends/office colleagues?

Very frequent  
Frequent  
Seldom  
Very seldom  
Not at all

/21/

12. (A) Are you a member of any political party?

SNAP  
PBB  
PBDS  
SUPP  
Not member of any

/22/

(B) If a member, state your position:

[Enter the relevant choice in the]  
[box below ]

1. Ordinary member.
2. Committee member at local branch.
3. Committee member at state level.
4. Others, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

/23/

(C) Are you a member of any other organisations?

Parent-Teacher Assn.  
Religious group.  
Youth club.  
Dayak society.  
Others, specify:

/24/

III. Political Issues:

13. Identify, by ticking the appropriate column, how you feel about the following issues:

(A) Power-sharing among all ethnic groups is important in a multi-ethnic state like Sarawak.

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Don't know  
Disagree  
Strongly disagree

/25/

(B) Compared to the Malay/Melanau and the Chinese, the Iban leaders are less effective in government because they are divided.

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Don't know  
Disagree  
Strongly disagree

/26/

(C) Inter-ethnic politics at grassroots level is becoming increasingly dangerous because political leaders encourage ethnic division at the grassroots level.

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Don't know  
Disagree  
Strongly disagree


/27/

(D) Racial politics espoused by political figures has affected ethnic relations in my area.

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Don't know  
Disagree  
Strongly disagree


/28/

14. When you are not satisfied with government policy, how do you express these feelings? Do you communicate them to any of the following persons?

Own peer group  
Community leaders  
Local representative  
Party leaders  
Ministers


/29/

15. In your opinion, how are the elections, including by-elections, important to you?

[Enter the relevant choice in the  
[box below ]

1. Exercise right to vote.
2. Get instant project implemented.
3. Chance to choose C.N./M.P.
4. Chance to affect gov't policy.
5. Others, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

/30/

16. It has been suggested that one of the problems among the Ibans is that they lack a forum, where they could sit down with each other and discuss their common problems.

Do you:

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Don't know  
Disagree  
Strongly disagree

/31/

[For the following questions, please tick]  
[the responses that best reflect how ]  
[strongly you identify with the following]  
[issues: ]

17. Iban political weakness is explained by  
the following factors:

(A) Iban are divided.

Strongly agree   
Agree   
Don't know   
Disagree   
Strongly disagree

/32/

(B) Iban have no strong, central  
leadership.

Strongly agree   
Agree   
Don't know   
Disagree   
Strongly disagree

/33/

(C) Iban leaders change party too often,  
therefore creating confusion as to  
what they stand for.

Strongly agree   
Agree   
Don't know   
Disagree   
Strongly disagree

/34/

(D) Iban attach their loyalty to their individual local leaders (CN/MP) instead of the party.

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Don't know  
Disagree  
Strongly disagree

/35/

(E) Ibans have no able leaders compared to the Malays/Melanaus and the Chinese.

Strongly agree  
Agree  
Don't know  
Disagree  
Strongly disagree

/36/

If agree or strongly agree (to E above), what are your reasons?

1. No strong, central leadership.
2. Iban leaders are divided.
3. Iban grassroots are divided.
4. No charismatic leader.
5. Others, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Enter choice here:

/37/

18. In the last five years, which Iban leaders have visited your area -i.e. other than your local assemblyman?

Please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

/38/



19. In casting your vote for a candidate,  
what factor influences you the most?

(A) candidate's education:

Strongly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not so strong	<input type="checkbox"/>	/39/
Makes no difference	<input type="checkbox"/>	

(B) candidate's personality:

Strongly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not so strong	<input type="checkbox"/>	/40/
Makes no difference	<input type="checkbox"/>	

(C) candidate must be a local person:

Strongly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not so strong	<input type="checkbox"/>	/41/
Makes no difference	<input type="checkbox"/>	

(D) candidate of your own party:

Strongly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not so strong	<input type="checkbox"/>	/42/
Makes no difference	<input type="checkbox"/>	

(E) candidate must be from the same  
ethnic group:

Strongly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not so strong	<input type="checkbox"/>	/43/
Makes no difference	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A. The 1983 General Election:

20. (A) Did you vote in the 1983 State General Election?

Yes   
No

/44/

If no, state reason:

Not interested   
Away from home   
Cannot leave work

/45/

(B) Are there any other members of your *bilik*-family who voted then?

State the number:

/46/

21. (A) Which candidate did you vote for?

SNAP   
PBDS   
Others

/47/

(B) Did members of your *bilik*-family vote for the same candidate whom you had voted for?

Same candidate   
Different candidate   
Don't know

/48/

(C) What were the factors that influenced you to vote for him?

Same party   
Kinship (*kaban*)   
Whoever gives projects   
Education   
Personality

/49/

22. According to your recollection of the campaign in 1983, which of these issues were most talked about in your area?

Support Dayak party  
SNAP/PBDS crisis  
Minor rural projects  
New Economic Policy

/50/

B. The 1987 General Election:

23. (A) Did you vote in the 1987 State General Election?

Yes  
No

/51/

If no, state reason:

Not interested  
Away from home  
Cannot leave work

/52/

(B) Are there any other members of your *bilik*-family who voted then?

State the number:

/53/

24. (A) Which candidate did you vote for?

SNAP  
PBDS  
Others

/54/

(B) Did members of your *bilik*-family vote for the same candidate whom you had voted for?

Same candidate  
Different candidate  
Don't know


/55/

(C) What were the factors that influenced you to vote for him?

Same party  
Kinship (*kaban*)  
Whoever gives projects  
Education  
Personality  
Dayakism  
Other, specify:  

---


/56/

25. According to your recollection of the campaign in 1987, which of these issues were most talked about in your area?

Dayaks vote for Dayaks  
New Economic Policy  
Taib-Rahman clash  
Timber politics  
Minor rural project


/57/

IV. Socioeconomic Issues:

26. In the following questions, several factors are listed as probable causes of contemporary Iban socio-economic problems; please indicate how strongly you feel that they were or were not the major causes?

(A) Most Ibans live in the *ulu*; little development is given to the *ulu* area, but many to the *pasar*.

Strongly agree   
Agree   
Don't know   
Disagree   
Strongly disagree

/58/

(B) Most *ulu* Ibans are dispersed, thereby making development efforts difficult and expensive.

Strongly agree   
Agree   
Don't know   
Disagree   
Strongly disagree

/59/

(C) Ibans are generally resistant to change; they prefer to live in the rural areas and maintain their traditional ways of life.

Strongly agree   
Agree   
Don't know   
Disagree   
Strongly disagree

/60/

(D) Iban leaders are not powerful in soliciting development for their people.

Strongly agree   
Agree   
Don't know   
Disagree   
Strongly disagree

/61/

(E) Government favouritism, which gives advantages to certain ethnic groups only.

Strongly agree   
Agree   
Don't know   
Disagree   
Strongly disagree

/62/

(F) A Malay/Melanau Chief Minister, who is less sympathetic to the nature of Iban problems.

Strongly agree   
Agree   
Don't know   
Disagree   
Strongly disagree

/63/

(G) Iban socio-economic problems date back to their neglect during the Brooke era.

Strongly agree   
Agree   
Don't know   
Disagree   
Strongly disagree

/64/

27. In the following are listed some of the possible solutions to contemporary Iban problems. For each solution listed, please indicate how strongly you feel that each may contribute to the amelioration of these problems.

(A) Land resettlement, e.g. like those of the Batang Ai.

Strongly agree   
 Agree   
 Don't know   
 Disagree   
 Strongly disagree

/65/

(B) In situ development -i.e. developing and providing already-settled areas with basic infrastructure and various agricultural schemes.

Strongly agree   
 Agree   
 Don't know   
 Disagree   
 Strongly disagree

/66/

(C) Supposing that the government is going to partially sponsor either a resettlement or an in-situ development in your area, to what would you be willing to contribute to make it a success?

Bear some cost   
 Provide labour only   
 Willing only if its free   
 Not willing to participate   
 Undecided

/67/

(D) If you are involved with either one of the above ([A] or [B]) developments, which of the following agricultural activities would you favour most?

Rubber planting   
Cocoa planting   
Pepper planting   
Palm oil   
Vegetable farming   
Fruit farming   
Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_

/68/

(E) Improve communication and river transport systems to existing patterns of Iban settlement in order to link them to the pasar centres.

Strongly agree   
Agree   
Don't know   
Disagree   
Strongly disagree

/69/

28. Are you aware of the New Economic Policy (NEP) and its objectives?

1. Fully aware; know its specific objectives.
2. Aware; but don't know its specific objectives
3. Do not know anything about it.

Enter choice in the box:

/70/



29. How have you and your family members benefited from economic development under the NEP?

[You may tick more than one responses]  
[to this question ]

Minor rural project  
Agricultural assistance  
Education  
Business opportunities  
Others, specify:  
\_\_\_\_\_

/71/

V. Conclusion:

30. In future state general elections:

(A) Would you vote for an Iban candidate, who comes from outside your area?

Yes  
Maybe  
No

/72/

(B) Would you vote for a non-Iban candidate supported by your party?

Yes  
Maybe  
No

/73/

(C) Would the candidate's educational background be of any significance in your decision?

Very important  
Important  
Don't know  
Not so important  
Least important


/74/

31. If the state general elections were held today, and all parties were contesting in your area, which candidate or party would you be likely to vote for?

Candidate from SNAP  
Candidate from PBDS  
Candidate from PBB  
Candidate from SUPP  
Undecided


/75/

## Appendix I

### Guide for Computation of Farm-derived Earnings

#### I. Padi Production:

$$EAIP = \text{---} AP(g-s) \times \text{---} p.g-s.$$

where:

AP(g-s) = Annual Production  
p.g-s = Price per guni-sack  
EAIP = Estimated Annual Income from  
Padi Production

#### II. Cash Crop Production:

$$EAIC = \text{---} AP(n) \times \text{---} p/u.$$

where:

AP(n) = Annual Production of (n = 1 - 5)  
p/u = price per unit  
EAIC = Estimated Annual Income from  
Cash Crop Production

n: 1 = pepper  
2 = rubber  
3 = cocoa  
4 = fruit trees  
5 = others

#### III. Poultry Farming:

$$EAIp = (n/p \times u/p) + (n/c \times u/p) + (v/p \times up)$$

where:

n/p = number of pigs reared  
n/c = number of chickens reared  
v/p = estimated value of vegetable production  
EAIp = Estimated Annual Income from  
Vegetable Production

#### IV. Total Estimated Annual Income:

$$EAI = EAIP + EAIC + EAIp$$

where:

EAI = Estimated Annual Income.