

**ANANTHA RAMAN** Govindasamy

LAI Yew Meng

Universiti Malaysia Sabah

## **GE14: THE URBAN VOTING PATTERN IN P172 KOTA KINABALU AND P186 SANDAKAN, SABAH<sup>1</sup>**

*This article examines two urban Chinese dominated parliamentary seats in Sabah namely P172 Kota Kinabalu and P182 Sandakan. It will also study the political development within the state assembly seats under these two parliamentary seats. Specifically, the article will explore the candidates and the main contested issues, the voting pattern and the results of the recently concluded 14<sup>th</sup> Malaysian general election. By largely utilising fieldwork observation during the election campaign, this article argues that Pakatan Harapan's huge victory in these parliamentary and state assembly seats are mainly because of the close working relationship with Parti Warisan Sabah, which significantly helped the DAP and PKR candidates to make inroad into Muslim-Bumiputra dominated areas in these Chinese majority parliamentary seats in Sabah.*

**Keywords:** Sabah, Urban Chinese, Pakatan Harapan, Parti Warisan Sabah, 2018 Malaysian General Election

### **Introduction**

The result of the 14<sup>th</sup> Malaysian general election saw the 61 years of Barisan Nasional (BN) dominance in Malaysian politics come to an end. The new coalition called Pakatan Harapan (PH) swiftly took over Putrajaya. In the state of Sabah, equally important political development took place as a direct consequence of the GE14. The state BN led by United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) strongman, and 4-term Chief Minister, Musa Aman, crumbled. Parti Warisan Sabah, a newly formed Sabah based party, with the help of Pakatan Harapan partners such as Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR), Democratic Action Party (DAP) and BN's splinter party, United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (UPKO), managed to form the state government after a brief power struggle at point, after the GE14, Sabah had two 'chief ministers'.

Although such unexpected change in Sabah's political landscape is attributable to the Sabahans in general, one group which was persistent in wanting a political change, was the urban Chinese voters.<sup>2</sup> The urban Chinese voters in Sabah were strategically situated between the Non-Muslim Bumiputra (mainly in rural areas) and the Muslim Bumiputra (mainly in the

coastal and east coast areas of Sabah) localities. Like their counterparts in West Malaysia, the urban voters especially the Chinese were concerned on various issues such as good governance pertaining to Sabah and Malaysia in general. The urban Chinese voters have been very pragmatic in their voting behaviour. In fact, they were always trying to strike a balance between the regional/local needs with a national interest and were also willing to challenge the status quo of the state by voting for the opposition political parties, if necessary. This was made evident during the 2008 and 2013 Malaysian General Elections. Past election results in Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan indicated that opposition parties such as DAP and PKR won in these cities mainly due to the support from the Chinese communities. However, during the 2018 Malaysian General Elections, the result indicated a huge majority win in parliamentary seat such as in Sandakan, that showed that not only the Chinese but the urban Bumiputra-Muslim community had also largely voted for DAP and PKR in these urban Chinese dominated areas. It appears that in the GE14, Parti Warisan Sabah managed to deliver its Muslim-Bumiputra votes to the candidates contesting under the DAP and PKR banner.

By utilising methods such as observation during election campaigns, interviews with candidates, closely exploring primary and secondary sources, this article examines two urban Chinese majority parliamentary seats namely P172 Kota Kinabalu and P186 Sandakan. More specifically, it will closely scrutinise the Chinese voting pattern, their main contested issues, and the results of the 14<sup>th</sup> Malaysian General Election (GE14). This paper is divided into three sections. The first section of this paper briefly discusses the 14<sup>th</sup> Malaysian General Elections outcome in the context of Sabah. The second and third parts will focus on the main contested issues, the voting pattern and the results in P172 Kota Kinabalu and P186 Sandakan.

## **GE14 : In The Context Of Sabah**

When the Sabah state assembly was dissolved on 7 April 2018, the state BN headed by Musa Aman was ‘very confident’ that it will return to power for the fifth term and also deliver at least 20 parliamentary seats for the then Prime Minister Mohd Najib Razak to sustain in Putrajaya. This was based on four assumptions the past track record of Musa Aman in bringing development to the state, various scandals faced by the then Prime Minister Najib Razak is a West Malaysian issue, the fragmented opposition front will benefit the state BN, and finally, Mahathir Mohamad as the Prime Minister candidate for Pakatan Harapan will secure BN’s victory in Sabah.<sup>3</sup> In fact, in every BN campaign, Musa Aman’s track record in developing the state for nearly 20 years was highlighted by BN candidates as part of the BN strategy to win the GE14. When Musa Aman took over as the Sabah chief minister in 2003, he introduced ‘Halatuju Development Framework’ an integrated programme

to develop Sabah's agriculture, tourism and manufacturing. Under this development framework, Sabah managed to secure federal funds to build the new Kota Kinabalu airport terminal, develop Jesselton Point as the modern ferry terminal, and establish the Palm Oil Industrial Clusters to support the growth of agriculture and manufacturing in the East Coast of Sabah.

Moreover, there was a view among the state BN that various scandals faced by the then Prime Minister Mohd Najib Razak's administration will have a limited impact on the voting trend in Sabah. This strategy was demonstrated during BN campaigns in GE14, whereby the state BN candidates largely avoided touching on this subject during their campaigns and only some BN candidates argued that Najib's scandals were the opposition political parties' 'fabrication'. On the other hand, BN candidates focused more on the issues of comprehensive development which have been enjoyed by Sabah since Musa Aman took over as the Chief Minister and the need to have a good relationship with Putrajaya to secure vital developmental projects for the future of the state. The failure of various opposition political parties in Sabah to create a 'grand coalition' was seen as an advantage for BN to win the election. In fact prior to the GE14, the opposition political parties failed to reach an agreement and were fragmented into three major group of alliance. Pakatan Harapan (PKR and DAP) had an election pact with the newly formed Parti Warisan Sabah headed by Shafie Apdal. Other regional Sabah based parties such as Jeffrey Kittingan's the Parti Solidariti Tanah Airku (STAR) created their own coalition called Gabungan Sabah comprising various regional parties such as Sabah Progressive Party, Parti Harapan Rakyat Sabah and Parti Perpaduan Rakyat Sabah. Meanwhile, Wilfred Bumburing created the third opposition alliance when his party Parti Cinta Sabah formally signed a pact with Parti Kerjasama Anak Negeri. From BN's perspective, these 'crowded' opposition candidates will split the votes among the opposition candidates which in return will benefit the BN as it did in 2008 and 2013 Malaysian General elections.

Finally, when Mahathir Mohammad was announced as the Prime Minister in waiting for Pakatan Harapan, it was seen as a move that sealed BN's victory in Sabah. From the state BN's assessment, anti-Mahathir sentiment was still very strong in Sabah and Mahathir's appointment will channel Sabahans anger against the opposition, mainly the Warisan-Pakatan Harapan pact in the state. During the campaigns, Sabah BN used this to portray that the problems currently faced by Sabah such as illegal immigrants, profit sharing related to petroleum royalty to the erosion of Sabah rights under the Malaysian Agreement 1963, were attributable to Mahathir.<sup>4</sup> By contrast, issues such as good governance, cost of living and the return of Sabahans' rights under Malaysian Agreement 1963 (MA63) dominated the opposition political parties election campaigns. These campaign issues were given different level of emphasis depending on the demographic of the voters. For instance, in the majority Muslim-Bumiputra dominated areas, the rise in cost of living has

been highlighted by the opposition parties such as Parti Warisan. However in Chinese dominated areas like Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan and Tawau the issues of good governance prominently dominated the election campaigns. In the rural Kadazan-Dusun-Murut belt, the issues of Sabahan rights as stipulated in the Malaysian Agreement gained prominence, and the need for Borneonisation was widely used in their political campaigns.<sup>5</sup>

Personality politics also played an important role in the election campaign in Sabah. For instance, Shafie Apdal managed to convince the Muslim-Bumiputra voters in Sabah that he was victimised for questioning Mohd Najib Razak on various scandals faced by the Prime Minister. More importantly, Shafie Apdal successfully managed the link the Prime Minister's corruption scandals to the Chief Minister, Musa Aman, by arguing that, like the Prime Minister, Musa Aman failed to provide good governance and economic development; the state's wealth is controlled by a small group of people (friends and relatives) close to the chief minister. During his election campaign trail, Shafie repeatedly said that Musa Aman was trying to create a 'family dynasty rule' in reference to Yamani Hafez (Musa Aman's son) who was then scheduled to contest in the Sipitang parliamentary constituency—a relatively safe seat for BN.

The voting process was generally peaceful throughout Sabah without any major unwanted incidents. However, the release of official results was delayed especially in areas where the opposition seemed to lead. This made Warisan-Pakatan to claim that the Election Commission was working for BN's victory in Sabah. In a number of state and parliamentary seats, the Election Commission ordered a recount as the majority was too small to announce a call-off. Warisan-Pakatan Harapan argued that after each recount, the number of seats and votes reduced drastically. When the final result was announced, it was a major casualty for BN in both parliamentary and state seats in Sabah. BN only managed to win 10 parliamentary seats out of the 25 contested seats. Warisan-Pakatan Harapan won 14 seats (Parti Warisan Sabah 8, DAP 3 and PKR 3 seats). Another one parliamentary seat was won by Parti Solidariti Tanah Airku. Out of the 60 state seats, BN managed to win 29 seats (UMNO 17, PBS 6, UPKO 5 and PBRS 1). Warisan-Pakatan Harapan won a combination of 29 seats as well between them (Parti Warisan Sabah 21, DAP 6 and PKR 2). Parti Solidariti Tanah Airku won another two state seats. Federal ministers like Abd. Rahman Dahlan and Salleh Said Keruak lost to unknown Parti Warisan Sabah's candidates. Others, like Anifah Aman, the former foreign minister, barely won his Kumanis parliamentary seat with 156 majority votes. Parti Warisan Sabah managed to win 8 parliamentary seats mainly in the Bumiputra-Muslim dominated areas which were traditionally dominated by BN. PKR won three parliamentary seats: Putatan, Ranau, and Tawau. DAP managed to increase its influence in the Chinese dominated areas like Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan; surprisingly winning the Non-Muslim Bumiputra dominated area of Tenom.<sup>6</sup>

The outcome of the state assembly results created a deadlock in the formation of the Sabah state government. With BN and Warisan alliance each obtaining 29 seats, suddenly, STAR, a small regional party headed by Jeffrey Kittingan became a kingmaker with two seats the party had won. There was intense lobbying from both sides to get STAR's support. Musa Aman, finally, in a press conference announced that STAR will support BN to form the state government and Jeffrey Kittingan will be appointed as one of the deputy chief ministers. On 10 May 2018, the swearing in ceremony of Musa Aman as the Chief Minister of Sabah took place close to midnight at Istana Negeri facilitated by the Yang di-Pertua Negeri.<sup>7</sup> On the next day (11/05/18), in a press conference, Shafie Apdal together with Wilfred Madius Tangau, the acting President of UPKO, announced that, UPKO is pulling out from the state BN coalition and its five state assemblymen from the party will support Shafie Apdal as the Chief Minister. In less than 48 hours, in a twist of events, Shafie Afdal was sworn in as Sabah Chief Minister by the Yang di-Pertua Negeri, Tun Juhar Mahiruddin, at the Istana Negeri.<sup>8</sup> The swearing in of Shafie Apdal triggered a constitutional crisis as it appeared that Sabah had two Chief Ministers. In fact, soon after Shafie's swearing in ceremony, Musa Aman issued a statement that he is still the legitimate Chief Minister of Sabah. Nonetheless he went missing shortly after and issued a statement that he is in London undergoing medical examinations and will return to Sabah when the time is right.<sup>9</sup>

In this context, a simple perusal on the existing literature on elections in Sabah depicts that themes such as primordial sentiments, patron-client relationship, federal-state relations, politics of development, and good governance have dominated the main discussion on the development of election politics in Sabah. For instance, Ongkili (1992) has argued that the political participation in North Borneo was motivated by ethnicity in order to protect various group interests especially after the formation of Malaysia in 1963.<sup>10</sup> Chin (1994) reaffirmed the role of ethnicity in his observation and argued that primordial sentiments played an important part in the outcome of the election behaviours of voters in Sabah.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, Puyok (2014) has argued that the elections in Sabah are influenced by Kota Kinabalu's relationship with Kuala Lumpur. He used examples from the 1994 Sabah State election whereby Parti Bersatu Sabah managed to win the election but later lost due to the strong influence from Kuala Lumpur hence forcing many of the PBS state assemblymen to jump ship to BN.<sup>12</sup> In fact a close scrutiny of the 2018 Sabah state election result indicated that a growing discontentment against the various policies of Putrajaya played an important part in the rise of Parti Warisan Sabah-Pakatan Harapan coalition in Sabah.

## Kota Kinabalu Constituency Background

Serving as the capital and largest city in Sabah, P172 Kota Kinabalu is considered to be a fully urban parliamentary constituency. Demographically, approximately two-thirds of the electorate are ethnic Chinese, followed by Bumiputera Sabah who accounted for a quarter of the voting population, meanwhile, the Malays form 8 per cent and the remainder are of various other ethnicities. Within this parliamentary district are three state constituencies, namely N14 Likas, N15 Api-Api, and N16 Luyang. In the 2013 general elections, the then opposition Pakatan Rakyat (PR) had a clean sweep of all the contested seats in Kota Kinabalu, where it secured victories with relatively handsome margins in the parliamentary as well as in the three state constituencies. Similar to the national trend, the PR's victory, spearheaded by DAP and PKR, was attributed to the so-called Chinese and urban *tsunami*, where the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties and candidates were roundly rejected by the ethnic Chinese and/or urban voters.

This time, the Kota Kinabalu parliamentary and state constituencies faced mostly three- and four-cornered contests to win over the votes of the urban Chinese majority, with key battles focused primarily on the incumbent opposition Pakatan Harapan (renamed from Pakatan Rakyat) against the respective BN component parties of PBS, LDP and MCA, and the Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP), as well as a newcomer in the guise of Parti Kerjasama Anak Negeri (Anak Negeri). As popularly anticipated, the results of the electoral contests in the Kota Kinabalu parliamentary seat and all three state constituencies went in favour of the incumbent PH parties of DAP and PKR, despite their fielding of new candidates to defend three of the four seats. The comfortable and enhanced margin of victory of DAP and PKR not only replicated their GE13 achievement, but equally indicated the momentum and strengthened foothold of the PH coalition in urban Kota Kinabalu, as the national opposition bloc together with their local counterpart, Parti Warisan Sabah, bulldozed their way to Sabah electoral history by ousting the incumbent BN in a fiercely contested and highly controversial state polls.

## Candidacies And Progress Of The Campaign

The election campaign for the Kota Kinabalu parliamentary and state constituencies had begun way before the official campaign period, with “cybertroopers” from all sides of the political divide firing their early salvos through social media platforms such as *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Whatsapp*. The momentum was furthered by enthusiastic campaigning amongst the contesting parties and candidates throughout the eleven-day campaign period allocated for the 2018 general elections. In the Kota Kinabalu parliamentary seat, the incumbent DAP state assemblyman of Sri Tanjung, Chan Foong Hin, swapped

seats with his colleague, the former Sabah DAP chairman and incumbent of Kota Kinabalu, Jimmy Wong Sze Phin, to stand against Joseph Lee of Barisan Nasional's Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) as well as the former Chief Minister and political stalwart, Yong Teck Lee, from the Sabah's Progressive Party (SAPP). Meanwhile, in the Kota Kinabalu state seat of Likas, DAP's newcomer, Tan Lee Fatt stood against the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) Ir. Chin Shu Ying, who was contesting for the second time running following his unsuccessful maiden attempt in GE13, and SAPP's secretary general, Yong We Kong. In Api-Api, another five-cornered fight similar to GE13 was in the menu, with PKR's Christina Liew Chin Jin defending her seat against her main rival, PBS's Deputy President and former state assemblyman of Api-Api, Yee Moh Chai, who narrowly lost the seat in GE13. The other candidates for this demographically mixed urban seat were SAPP's Lim Kat Chung, Parti Kerjasama Anak Negeri's Land Lip Fong, and Dr Chan Chee Ching, who contested under an independent ticket. Lastly, the Luyang state constituency saw an all-newcomer contest between DAP's Phoong Jin Zhe, SAPP's Gee Tien Song, and Dr Pamela Yong of MCA. Pamela Yong was essentially defending the seat for the BN party which gained control of Luyang following the controversial defection of its DAP assemblymen, Dr Hiew King Cheu, several months after the GE13. Interestingly, Pamela is also the daughter of MCA's Agnes Shim Tshin Nyuk, who contested for this predominantly Chinese majority seat in the previous polls.

### **Campaign Media And Strategies**

Similar to previous general elections, both the Sabah BN component parties and their political rivals, namely the DAP, PKR, SAPP, and Anak Negeri, as well as independent candidates, employed conventional methods of campaigning, such as *ceramah* (political rallies), constituency walkabouts, meet-the-electorate sessions, and mass media coverage to convey their respective election manifestos and messages to the Kota Kinabalu electorate. Likewise, both BN and Pakatan Harapan continued to wage and intensify their propaganda battles in the cyberspace via the mentioned social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp, not to mention, YouTube, political blogs and online news portals, to woo and influence internet-savvy voters from all voting age groups. Apart from utilising their army of "cybertroopers", some candidates also personally took initiatives to engage the online audience as a means to provide a "personal touch" amid the virtual reality of the cyberspace. An interesting example was the innovative use of Facebook by the MCA candidate for Luyang, Dr Pamela Yong, who went on a live dialogue session for an hour, where she communicated and debated with discerning netizens while concurrently advocating her campaign manifesto. A unique development in social media campaigning in this 14th general elections was the significantly

more extensive and expansive utilisation of the *Whatsapp* and *Twitter* platforms for the dissemination of campaign rhetoric, propaganda and even allegedly “fake news”, in spite of the introduction of the so-called “anti-fake news” legislation months prior to the national polls.

Indeed, most contesting parties and their respective candidates adopted relatively similar and wide-ranging election campaign strategies, albeit with qualitative differences when it came to *modus operandi*, with some parties found to be more inclined towards utilising specific platforms and logistical arrangements to cater to their target audience. For example, both national based BN and PH as well as the local Sabah parties namely SAPP and Anak Negeri use of the conventionally popular political *ceramah* rigorously to touch base with the electorate in Kota Kinabalu. However, qualitative differences can be seen in terms of the typical venue and crowd size preferred, not to mention, the innovative strategies employed by the respective parties/candidates to maximise the impact of such sessions.

Similar to the last general elections in 2013, BN component parties appeared to prefer smaller-scale crowds (approximately 150-300 pax) which were usually held in private venues i.e. so-called “BN-friendly” houses and restaurants, whereas Pakatan Harapan consistently garnered large crowds of 1,000–2,000 people at public spaces, such as car parks, schools or public halls, and market foyers. Meanwhile, the SAPP continued with its traditional “*ceramah kopitiam*” at the usual party-friendly coffee shops located in the Chinese majority residential-cum-commercial area of Foh Sang, which has been the traditional bastion of this Sabah-based party. These qualitative differences were possibly due to differing objectives, approaches, and the resources made available for the respective political parties/candidates during such campaigns. For instance, PH’s preference for large-scale *ceramah* at public spaces was possibly due to a combination of several factors, namely their aim of seeking maximum “visibility” and “impact” via limited platforms of political engagement<sup>13</sup> which undeniably was correlated to logistical, funding and other election machinery-related constraints/limitations, which required the opposition coalition to optimise their resources. The PH has even made innovative improvements for the delivery of their *ceramah* with the introduction of “all-in-one” mobile event/campaign trucks, which were used to transport AV equipment and chairs, while simultaneously serving as a makeshift stage for candidates to deliver their speeches, at any suitable public spaces, without the usual logistical hassle.

## **Election Manifestos And Main Issues**

The main issues of the GE 14 campaign in Kota Kinabalu can be discernably classified into three different categories, namely national, state, and locally-oriented issues (unique/constituency specific), which were all encapsulated in



the election manifestos of the respective political parties. All in all, the various parties contesting here presented manifestos and policy promises which were comparatively similar in their priority areas and yet significantly different in perspectives, political undertone and issues. An unmistakably similar element in the respective manifestos was the salience of Sabah (and Sarawak) as a priority area, with both the BN and PH national manifestos vividly emphasising the “Malaysian Borneo” agenda in their respective quest to try defend or gain control of this sizeable electoral region, which had almost always served as a barometer for overall electoral victory nationwide. Expectedly, the Sabah agenda in the BN’s 14 thrusts and 300 initiatives national manifesto were cascaded and manifested in the state BN electoral campaigns, including those in P172 Kota Kinabalu. Likewise, the PH’s “5 Pillars; 10 Promises in 100 Days; 60 Promises in 5 Years; 5 Special Pledges” national manifesto saw “Pillar 4” dedicated exclusively to Sabah (and Sarawak), with nine (9) promises aimed at winning the “hearts-and-minds” of Kota Kinabalu voters, specifically, Sabahans generally.

Having said that, our observations during the electoral campaigns in Kota Kinabalu demonstrated that PH’s campaigns tended to be more inclined towards holistic and nationally-focused issues, such as the national political-economic scandal of the “1MDB”, the “RM2.6 Billion donation” and other governance-related malfeasances, as well as “bread-and-butter” issues namely the escalating cost of living and the Goods and Service Tax (GST), among others. Similar to and carrying on the momentum from GE13, the PH campaign included “pledges to introduce good governance and equitable development in place of the nepotism, cronyism, and corruption which PH alleged are endemic in the entrenched political culture under BN rule”.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, unlike GE13, due diligence to “Sabah” issues was adequately given by the PH this time around, such as pledges for devolution of power to Sabah and power sharing in the Federation, equitable distribution of revenues from petroleum and natural resources, Sabah government institutional reform, respecting customary land rights, quality education and job opportunities for Sabahans, among others. For instance, in the PH political *ceramah* held at the Foh Sang car park which was graced by national DAP stalwart, Lim Kit Siang, a whole range of issues from national to state and locally-centred agenda were touched by all the PH candidates contesting in Kota Kinabalu seats. DAP’s Luyang hopeful, Phoong Jin Sze promised better public transport, improved public safety and healthcare, and stopping “brain drain” amongst the younger Luyang generations, besides vociferously blaming the MCA and BN for aforementioned national scandals. Meanwhile, Lim Kit Siang also promoted what he deemed as a “6-in-1” promise for Sabah, namely a new prime minister and chief minister, a new federal and state government, and the return of Sabah rights as well as the return of the “stolen” country’s wealth, which holistically encompassed both national and state agendas.

Conversely, the related BN component parties of PBS, LDP and MCA focused primarily on the pledge to bring “greater happiness” and “more smiles to the people of Sabah (and Sarawak) by working harder to empower and prosper the two states in the next five years” if granted the political mandate.<sup>15</sup> They included the commitment to defend the rights of Sabah and Sarawak as enshrined in the Malaysia Agreement 1963, safeguarding the security of Sabah, promoting business-friendly policies, introduction of “one nation, one price” scheme, and more initiatives to improve infrastructure, among others. Distinctly different from the rhetoric of the opposition, the BN candidates contesting in Kota Kinabalu made arduous attempts to, either justify and/or advance counter-narratives to the allegations of the mentioned scandals, or divert to local centric issues to prevent tainting the mood of their *ceramah*. A noticeable example was MCA’s Pamela Yong’s effort to subtly disassociate herself from her political affiliation while simultaneously making a thinly-veiled criticism on her young DAP counterpart by emphasising on the need for the Luyang electorate to choose their future representative based on personality and capabilities rather than their political affiliation. The MCA candidate also attempted to share the popular groundswell regarding GST by suggesting that the consumption tax was good but needed tweaking to improve on its implementation. Nonetheless, her focus of campaign was clearly on localised issues such as pledges to transform Luyang into a green and eco-friendly suburb by building more bicycle lanes and upgrading existing parks and gardens, apart from improving on public delivery systems at convenient and accessible locations in Luyang.

## Results and Voting Patterns

In Kota Kinabalu, Pakatan Harapan continued its political stranglehold and incumbency by successfully defending all the related constituencies, with the DAP-PKR partnership emerging victorious in P172 Kota Kinabalu, N14. Likas, N15 Api-Api and N16 Luyang. Even more impressive was the relatively larger vote majority garnered in all four constituencies, despite three of the seats being contested by new faces. In the parliamentary constituency of Kota Kinabalu, DAP’s Chan Foong Hin disposed his nearest contender, BN’s Joseph Lee with a handsome majority of over 23,000 votes, which was twice bigger than the previous elections. Similarly, DAP’s new blood Phoong defeated Pamela Yong of MCA with a 12,408 vote majority, while the former’s running mate in Likas, Tan Lee Fatt secured the Likas seat with a 7,902 vote majority. Even PKR’s incumbent, Christina Liew gained an increased majority in the more challenging five-cornered battle for the mixed seat of Api-Api, by defeating her arch-rival, Yee Moh Chai of BN-PBS. Indeed, similar to GE13, PH’s growing political sphere of dominance also included the semi-urban constituency on the fringes of Kota Kinabalu, notably in Kepyayan, while the

Penampang parliamentary constituency and its other state seat, Moyog, were also comfortably secured by the local Parti Warisan Sabah, who had earlier forged a partnership with PH (see Table 1).

**Table 1: P172 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah: Chinese and Urban Tsunami Redux**

| Constituency   | Party         | Candidate                        | Votes                      |
|--|---------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>P172 Kota Kinabalu</b><br>Voters: 56,220<br>Muslim Bumiputra :22.35%<br>Non-Muslim Bumiputra: 13.82<br>Chinese: 62.52%; Others: 1.31% | <b>PH-DAP</b> | <b>Chan Foong Hin</b>            | <b>31,632</b>              |
|  | BN-PBS        | Joseph Lee                       | 7,546                      |
|  | SAPP          | Yong Teck Lee                    | 3,132                      |
| <b>N14 Likas</b><br>Voters: 15,126<br>Muslim Bumiputra: 12.7%<br>Non-Muslim Bumiputra: 13.7%<br>Chinese: 72%; Others: 1.48%              | <b>PH-DAP</b> | <b>Tan Lee Fatt</b>              | <b>9,163<br/>(7,902)</b>   |
|  | BN-LDP        | Chin Shu Ying                    | 1,261                      |
|  | SAPP          | Yong We Kong                     | 673                        |
| <b>N15 Api-Api</b><br>Voters: 19,279<br>Muslim Bumiputra: 44.41%<br>Non-Muslim Bumiputra: 12.11%<br>Chinese: 42.39%; Others: 1.08%       | <b>PH-PKR</b> | <b>Liew Chin Jin (Christina)</b> | <b>8,174<br/>(2,954)</b>   |
|  | BN-LDP        | Yee Moh Chai                     | 5,220                      |
|  | SAPP          | Lim Kat Chung                    | 598                        |
|  | Anak Negeri   | Len Lip Fong @<br>Land Lip Fong  | 94                         |
|  | Independ't    | Chan Chee Ching                  |                            |
| <b>N16 Luyang</b><br>Voters: 21,815<br>Muslim Bumiputra: 9.49%<br>Non-Muslim Bumiputra: 15.38%<br>Chinese: 73.74%; Others: 1.39%         | <b>PH-DAP</b> | <b>Phoong Jin Zhe</b>            | <b>14,237<br/>(12,408)</b> |
|  | BN-MCA        | Pamela Yong                      | 1,829                      |
|  | SAPP          | Gee Tien Siong                   | 807                        |

Source: Abridged from “GE 14”, <https://election.thestar.com.my/sabah.html> [19August 2018]

A simple perusal and comparison with the 2013 election results presents a similar and indeed increasingly entrenched anti-establishment voting pattern. Firstly, PH’s clean sweep of all parliamentary and state seats suggests that voters in Kota Kinabalu voted for their selected party in a block and not necessarily for the candidates per se. Second, PH’s massive and increased majorities indicate that the urban electorate irrespective of their ethno-religious background has, to a certain degree, shifted support from the BN to Pakatan Harapan. Third, the foundation of PH’s comfortable electoral victory in Kota Kinabalu was undeniably due to the unrelenting “Chinese tsunami” which saw the Chinese voters’ near total rejection of BN, especially MCA and LDP, as well as Sabah-based parties, whom they regarded as no longer relevant and in touch with the political realities of a changing Malaysia and Sabah.

We attribute this increasingly entrenched anti-establishment voting behaviour to several factors. First, there was a growing “trust deficit” suffered by both the incumbent state and federal BN governments as a result of their inability to regain popular trust and confidence from even their hardcore

supporters following the multitude of unresolved scandals involving both national and state BN leaders. Indeed, voters in Kota Kinabalu like many of their national compatriots, have grown increasingly frustrated with BN for failing to provide good governance in solving both national and local issues, let alone the much touted scandal of 1MDB and its related malfeasances. Likewise, the inability of the BN to address the daily “bread-and-butter” issues of rising cost of living and the contentious GST has also drawn the ire of the urban poor and working middle-class electorate, who were hit hardest by the dire economic situation. These failures by the BN has been further compounded by the clever exploitation by Pakatan Harapan candidates, whose *ceramah* and election manifesto vividly highlight issues of good governance and the BN’s failure to deliver on its promises, including (as stressed by local candidates) on those economic and local-centric issues. Conversely, being the incumbent government, the BN had failed to neutralise these opposition accusations in their election campaign. For instance, the BN had not been able to de-link the allegations made by the PH regarding the actual reason for the implementation of the GST and its correlation to the servicing of debts accrued by the alleged mismanagement and misappropriation of 1MDB.

Second, Pakatan Harapan’s election machinery was well-organised and its campaign strategy managed to convince the Kota Kinabalu electorate. In every *ceramah*, candidates from the DAP–PKR–Amanah coalition demonstrated that they were able to work as a team, with Amanah helping to campaign for their coalition partners despite not contesting in the district. Perhaps, more saliently was the ability of PH to forge a partnership and seat sharing agreement with the local based but increasingly influential Parti Warisan Sabah, to ensure that there was no seat that witnessed split votes between the two opposition behemoths. True to form, the political alliance between Warisan and PH succeeded in bringing a political sea change in Sabah, where together they managed to create an upset by dethroning the UMNO-led incumbent BN government, albeit via some highly controversial manoeuvres from both sides that triggered a political standoff/impasse in the swearing in of the new state government post-GE14.

Furthermore, the PH state election machinery received strong support from the national PH leadership with key opposition leaders making time to visit and assist in the campaigning at Kota Kinabalu’s designated constituencies. Such a trend was already in place during GE13 and was again replicated in the GE14 campaign period, with top opposition leaders such as Datuk Wan Azizah and Lim Kit Siang gracing the campaign trail and stage in Kota Kinabalu and neighbouring Penampang. On the other hand, the BN candidates from LDP, PBS, and MCA displayed a lack of team spirit. In fact, it was rare for the BN candidates from UMNO, PBS, LDP, or MCA to take to the same campaign stage with one another during the *ceramah* sessions held in the various Kota Kinabalu constituencies. Furthermore, BN national leaders were

by and large not present at the *ceramah* in Kota Kinabalu. Similar to GE13, the state BN's election strategy probably gave more emphasis to rural seats in Sabah, where BN national leaders, including the prime minister, frequently visited rural Muslim and non-Muslim *Bumiputera* areas.<sup>16</sup> However, urban Chinese-majority areas such as Kota Kinabalu were largely neglected again, as in GE13, possibly due to their anticipation of losing these urban seats.

Finally, the “anti-establishment” political mood and popular groundswell in Kota Kinabalu had been further entrenched since 2013, which was generally reflective of the urban trend nationally. Our interviews and observation of *ceramah* affirmed that urban voters in Kota Kinabalu were looking at and hopeful of bringing a real political change in both the federal and state governments, this time around, after the “false dawn” brought by the then Pakatan Harapan’s “*Ubah*” euphoria in GE13. As noted, when the results came in, it was clear that both the BN and local opposition political parties in Sabah had failed to overturn the growing “trust deficit” amongst the urban and predominantly ethnic Chinese electorate in Kota Kinabalu. The result also somewhat confirmed the loss of political traction of the Sabah BN component parties, especially amongst the Chinese-based parties of MCA and LDP, whose influence on the urban Chinese electorate has so significantly dwindled that they risked falling into political oblivion. Indeed, the loss of traction can be seen in the broader context, where the failure of Sabah BN to retain its political mandate in the GE14 ultimately led to its disintegration, with the coalition’s respective Sabah-based component parties of UPKO, PBS, PBRs, and LDP, among others, bailing out from the proverbial “sinking ship”, while the UMNO self-decimated and became a part of Sabah’s political past/history. Likewise, the results in Kota Kinabalu highlighted the oblivious impact of a fragmented opposition, where the presence of three and four-cornered contests failed to undermine the growing support for Pakatan Harapan as the dominant political opposition in the urban centres of Sabah. Indeed, similar to GE13, the election results show that the presence of the presumed “spoiler parties” did not matter, as all the PH candidates, be they incumbents or newcomers, successfully defended the respective parliamentary and state seats with a much bigger and handsomer majority. It also signalled the growing irrelevance of the local Chinese party of SAPP, where all its candidates, except party president, Yong Teck Lee, lost their election deposits.

## **Sandakan Constituency Background**

The parliamentary constituency of P186 Sandakan consists of two state assembly seats--N45 Elopura and N46 Tanjung Papat. This parliamentary seat is located in the heart of the commercial city centre of Sandakan in the East Coast of Sabah. The majority of the registered voters in this parliamentary and the two state seats are the Chinese followed by the Muslim-Bumiputras and

Non-Muslim-Bumiputras. The city of Sandakan itself was well known as the former capital of North Borneo under the North Borneo Chartered Company. During this time, as systematic Chinese migration was permitted to take part in its commercial, and later, in the commercial agricultural activities such as rubber and oil palm. Since independence Sandakan has been successfully developed as the hub for oil palm production in the East Coast of Sabah. Besides the Chinese, there is a significant number of Muslim-Bumiputra mainly the Bugis, and also other Non-Muslim-Bumiputra communities such as Kadazan.

The state constituency of N45 Elopura is located within the Sandakan parliamentary constituency. The over-development of the old city centre had forced many commercial activities to slowly move towards the fringes of the city, hence creating new townships around Elopura. The Chinese traders have also re-located their traditional businesses from the city centre of Sandakan to the newly created commercial hub on concerns of security. The state constituency of N46 Tanjung Papat is located in heart of the city centre of Sandakan and also covers a cluster of island which becomes part of the election boundary. Although the Chinese are the majority registered voters in this state constituency, in recent years, there has been a wave of Chinese traders, who, once dominated the city centres and now, have slowly moved to the new townships in places like Elopura. The cluster of islands which is located as part of the city is mainly dominated by Muslim-Bumiputra voters.

The parliamentary and state constituency have witnessed frequent change of hands from Independent candidates to BN, and to DAP in recent times. A simple election perusal shows that the voters in Sandakan were well informed with various issues pertaining to the state and Malaysia as a whole. This was reflected in their voting behaviour. For instance, in 2004, Chong Hon Min, an independent candidate, created a discomfort when he unseated Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) deputy president, Lau Ngan Siew, who previously held the Sandakan constituency for two terms under BN. It was noted then, independent candidates' victory were largely influenced by wide discontentment from the Chinese community. The Sandakan Chinese were dominated by NGOs such as Young Malaysian Movement and the Hakka Association; the United Sandakan Chinese Community Association backed the Independent candidates.<sup>17</sup>

During the 2008 General Elections, BN managed to recapture this parliamentary constituency from the Independent candidate with a slim majority of 176. It was a three-corner contest between BN's Liew Vui Keong, DAP's Chong Chu Lin, and the Independent candidate, Fun Vun Fui.<sup>18</sup> It was expected to be a close contest between BN and DAP; DAP candidates were already part of Pakatan Rakyat. BN, however, managed to win this parliamentary seat with a thin majority of just 176 votes because the independent candidate managed to split the votes among the candidates. In 2013 general elections, once again

it was predicted that there will be a close contest between BN and DAP in this parliamentary constituency. When the nomination ended, it was a straight fight between BN and DAP. DAP nominated one of its heavyweights popularly know as Stephen among the local Chinese community. This candidate’s close working relationship with local Chinese based NGOs and his involvement in the Sandakan Chinese Chamber of Commerce gave him an instant advantage over the BN candidate. When nomination ended, it was a two-corner contest between Liew Vui Keong from LDP-BN and Stephen Wong Tien Fatt from DAP. One of the key issues highlighted by DAP back in 2013 election campaigns was to ask the Chinese voters to vote for a change ‘ubah’ in the federal government of Malaysia. When the results were announced, DAP managed to win this parliamentary constituency from BN by obtaining 1088 majority; DAP had obtained 14226 while BN won 13138 votes. In 2014 General Elections BN was completely thrashed by DAP candidates. It was a complete sweep by DAP not only retaining the Sandakan parliamentary constituency which it had won in 2013, but also overwhelmingly taking both the Elopura and Tanjung Papat state constituencies which have traditionally been a stronghold for BN in Sandakan. The key to DAP’s success was the campaign strategy; by securing a pact with Parti Warisan Sabah, DAP had a stronger influence with the Muslim-Bumiputra communities, who, this time around mostly voted for DAP, as part of Pakatan Harapan, to push for a change both in Putrajaya and Kota Kinabalu (see Table 2).

**Table 2:P186 Sandakan, N 45 Elopura, And N46 Tanjung Papat : GE 14: Candidate And Result**

**P186 Sandakan**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Wong Tien Fatt ( PH-DAP)  | 19094 (48.09)  |
| Lim Ming Hoo (BN-LDP)   | 8.996 (22.6)   |
| Registered voters: 39.777<br>Majority : 10.098<br>Spoil Votes : 0 | Demographics<br>Muslim-Bumiputra 43.9%<br>Non-Muslim Bumiputra 5.7 %<br>Chinese 49.29%<br>Others 1.09. |

**N 45 Elopura**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Chung Ket Kiun (PH-DAP)                                       | 12,219 (48.3%)   |
| Chan Tzun Hei (BN-GERAKAN)                                    | 5,572 (22.0%)  |
| Registered Voters:25,285<br>Majority:6,647<br>Spoil Votes:256 | Demographics<br>Muslim Bumiputra 42.65%<br>Non-Muslim Bumiputra 7.17%<br>Chinese 48.86 %<br>Others 1.3 |

**N46 Tanjung Papat**

|                                   |                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Poon Ming Fung (PH-DAP)           | 5,818 (40.1 %) |
| Raymond Tan Shu Kiah (BN-GERAKAN) | 4,002 (27.6%)  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Jafazli Ahmad (IND)   | 533 (3.7%)   |
| Registered Voters: 14,492<br>Majority: 1,816<br>Spoil Votes : 196 | Demographics<br>Muslim Bumiputra 46.09 %<br>Non-Muslim Bumiputra 3.26 %<br>Chinese 50.05 %<br>Others 0.6 % |

Source: Abridged from “GE 14”, <https://election.thestar.com.my/sabah.html>  
[19August 2018]

## GE14 : The Candidates And Campaign

Barisan National started the election campaigns in Sandakan with a sense of confidence winning back the parliamentary seat from DAP and retaining both state seats which they won in 2013 under Gerakan-BN pact. Lim Ming Hoo from Liberal Democratic Party was picked by the BN to run for the Sandakan parliamentary constituency for his influence within the Sandakan Chinese community since he was considered the most appropriate to face incumbent Stephen Wong. Lim was also BN’s secretary for Sandakan and there was widespread confidence that he will be well received by the majority Chinese community in Sandakan. Lim contended that only BN can bring about development, and now the Chinese community were aware that the opposition DAP failed to bring development in Sandakan since 2013.

For Tanjong Papat, the incumbent Raymond Tan was BN’s natural choice. Raymond who is also deputy Chief Minister of Sabah was picked based on his popularity among the Muslim-Bumiputra community, albeit rumours before the election that Raymond will relinquish his seat for a younger BN candidate for the state constituency. Among the Sandakan Chinese, however, Raymond was seen as a candidate who had lost touch with people’s needs. Besides the Sandakan parliamentary and Tanjong Papat state seats, the state seat of Elopura received utmost attention from the local community. Early this year the Elopura Assemblymen, Au Kam Wah, had announced that he will not defend the state seat instead he recommended Elopura’s Community Development leader, Chan Tzun Hei, as his replacement. Chan, like Au Kam Wah, is from the Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) who joined Gerakan when SAPP pulled out from the state BN coalition in 2008.<sup>19</sup>

## The Campaign Style, Strategy And Issues

The BN and the opposition DAP used two different campaign styles and strategies to win the hearts of Sandakan voters. From the start of the campaign BN used more sophisticated and costly method to promote BN candidates in Sandakan. Almost all the billboards around the main Sandakan town were featuring BN candidates. BN was the clear winner when it came to poster war.



BN's meet-the-candidate sessions were small in size, normally around 100 to 200 people, and were held in coffee shops or nearby housing areas. These strategies, according to BN sources, will have a close interaction between candidates and voters in Sandakan. BN's election campaign talk also came with a 'nice dinner' and various souvenirs such as umbrellas, t-shirts and free caps to lure the people to listen to BN campaign talk. This style of election campaign was notable among the BN candidates in Sandakan parliamentary, and the two state constituencies, Elopura and Tanjung Papat.

DAP's election strategy was to organise huge election gathering to put the pressure on the BN candidates. Almost every day during the campaign period, DAP had successfully organised huge election rallies from the city centre of Sandakan to Elopura, and the BN stronghold of Tanjung Papat. In every DAP's rally, members from Parti Warisan Sabah and PKR was given an equal opportunity to support the DAP candidates. In Muslim-Bumiputra areas around Sandakan, members from the Parti Warisan Sabah have taken a centre stage in introducing DAP candidates besides asking the crowd to support Shafie Afdal as the next Chief Minister. The DAP's strategy using local Muslim-Bumiputra leaders made their campaigns to penetrate into the Muslim-Bumiputra areas around Sandakan.

BN candidates touched on the issue of development which Sabah had enjoyed since Musa Aman took over as the Chief Minister in 2003. In every BN election campaign Musa Aman's success story was one of the key highlights. The BN candidate also promised as stated in the State BN manifesto that if BN makes a clean sweep in Sandakan, there will be a comprehensive development package to develop Sandakan as the oil palm hub in the East Coast of Sabah. Besides that, all the BN candidates also stressed the importance of maintaining BN's government in Putrajaya. Some BN candidates even said that frequent visits by PM Najib to Sabah prior to GE14, shows that the Prime Minister is very concerned and sincere about bring development to Sabah. During campaigns the candidates argued also that the rise in cost of living is not caused by GST but created by external factors that were beyond the BN government's control.

The issues of corruption and providing good governance dominated DAP's political campaigns. During a rally in Sandakan, Lim Kit Siang highlighted that the current MP's main vision was to develop Sandakan as a major port-city but it was still unaccomplished because the federal government was controlled by BN. Therefore there was an urgent need to change the federal government as it was heavily corrupt; it also burdened the Rakyat by introducing GST. He added that to bring a change in Sabah there need to be a change in both state and federal governments. He also pointed out that although DAP won this parliamentary seat, nothing much can be done if the state and federal government were still under BN. He urged the Hakka community, mainly, to reject BN and he promised there will be a change of

government after the election. During the campaign, all the DAP candidates both in parliamentary and state promised that if Pakatan Harapan wins, in hundred days, GST will be abolished, the rights of Sabahan as stipulated in Malaysian Agreement 1963 will be given special attention. Most importantly, the economic development of Sandakan will be given special attention.

## **The Result**

When the result was announced with much delay in the Sandakan community hall, it was clear that DAP had won big in Sandakan. DAP not only managed to win but retain the seat with a huge majority; it also won the state seats of Elopura and Tanjong Papat comfortably. Stephen Wong Tien Fatt, the Sabah DAP chairman, had retained this parliamentary seat with an impressive majority of 10,098 votes, beating Lim Ming Hoo, who contested under the Barisan Nasional ticket. Stephen garnered 19,094 votes against Lim's 8996. A total of 28,668 voters casted their votes from 39,777 registered voters in Sandakan.<sup>20</sup> In the two state seats DAP's performance was equally impressive. In the Elopura state seat, DAP's Chong Ket Kiun garnered 12,219 votes and won with a majority of 6647 votes against BN's Chan Tzu who obtained 5572 votes. Another DAP candidate, Frankie Poon Ming Fung won the Tanjong Papat state seat in a three-corner fight against Tan Pai Shu Kiah and Independent candidate, Jufazli Shi Ahmad, won with a majority of 1816. Frankie, Ming Fung, and Jufazli garnered 5818, 4002 and 533 votes respectively.

The outcome of the results in Sandakan can be generalised as follows. Firstly, DAP's strategy to blend the local and national issues in the election campaign had clearly benefitted the opposition DAP. From the beginning of the elections campaign, DAP managed to give equal importance to local and national issues in their election campaign in Sandakan. Local issues such as housing, creating new business opportunities, better schools and hospitals, and reducing the prices of goods and services as well as Musa Aman's failure to revive the once famous Sandakan Port had been highlighted in the election campaign by local leaders both from DAP and Parti Warisan Sabah. At the same time invited speakers from West Malaysia such as Lim Kit Siang had 'creatively' justified BN's corruption practice to the voters in Sandakan and the need for a change in government in Putrajaya. DAP's election campaign was simple and easily convinced the voters in Sandakan.

The DAP candidates' personalities influenced the voters in Sandakan to vote for DAP. Since Steven Wong won the parliamentary seat of Sandakan in 2013, DAP had not only sealed the Chinese support in Sandakan but had also made inroads into Muslim-Bumiputra areas around Sandakan. The personality of Steven largely known as friendly and hardworking, attracted many local admirers in Sandakan. Steven took a personal interest in solving various problems related to the Muslim-Bumiputra community along the coastal areas

of Sandakan. It is not surprising that he won the Sandakan parliamentary seat with a majority of nearly 10,000 votes. Such trust had also been extended to other DAP candidates in Elopura and Tanjung Papat. Lastly, the GE14 winning results are attributable to the pact of Parti Warisan-Pakatan Harapan. From day one of the election campaign in Sandakan, members from DAP, PKR and Parti Warisan Sabah had shown solid solidarity. Campaign platforms and resources were equally shared by the members of Parti Warisan-Pakatan Rakyat pact. Unlike BN, the open, simple and honest display of solidarity from the Warisan and Pakatan Harapan candidates in Sandakan during the nine-day campaign period had earned the trust of the voters. In the Muslim-Bumiputra areas, Shafie Afdal's influence had played an important part in DAP's victory. More importantly, the display of close working relationship between Parti Warisan-Pakatan Harapan convinced the Muslim-Bumiputra voters to vote for DAP in Sandakan.

## Conclusion

The urban voters in Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan have overwhelmingly voted for the Pakatan Harapan candidates from DAP and PKR in both parliamentary and state constituencies. The outcome of the result also indicated that besides the urban Chinese, a significant number of Muslim-Bumiputra had also voted for the opposition political parties in these areas for the first time. Pakatan Harapan candidates' comfortable win in these parliamentary and state seats were due to the issues raised during campaigns that were simple and made sense to the ordinary people in these areas as well as the candidates' personalities which were deemed as hardworking and trustworthy. Finally, the Parti Warisan Sabah and Pakatan Harapan pact had convinced the voters in these areas to vote for the opposition candidates. For BN, there was no clear strategy to win back or defend the state seats won by BN in 2013, especially in Sandakan. A close observation of the BN election campaigns highlighted that BN's coalition members were left alone to contest the election without proper strategy to work together as a team. Even some coalition members from BN accused UMNO members as not supporting their coalition, namely, the PBS, LDP and GERAKAN candidates in these areas.

## Endnotes

1. This paper largely based on fieldwork study conducted from 28 April 2018-8 May 2018 in Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan parliamentary constituencies.
2. Nearly 50% of the registered voters in Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan are ethnic Chinese, <https://election.thestar.com.my/sabah.html> [19August 2018].

3. This assumptions was made based on a fieldwork observation from 28 April 2018-8 May 2018 in Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan parliamentary constituencies.
4. “Anti-Mahathir sentiment strong in Sabah and Sarawak”, *New Straits Times*, 7 May 2018.
5. Fieldwork observations, 28 April 2018-8 May 2018 in Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan parliamentary constituencies.
6. “GE 14 Result”, <https://election.thestar.com.my/sabah.html> [19August 2018].
7. Fatimah Zainal, “Two Sabah Barisan assemblymen meeting with Shafie”, 2018.
8. Lee, “Sabah Bersih Calls for end to Frog Culture”, 2018.
9. Lee, Fatimah Zainal & Joibi, “Shafie Apdal sworn in as Sabah CM, Musa seen leaving official residence”, 2018.
10. Ongkili, “A history of the Development of Federalism in Southeast Asia: the Malaysian Case 1985-1990”, 1992.
11. Chin, “The Sabah State Election of 1994: End of Kadazan Unity”, 1994.
12. “BN Manifesto Promises Greater Happiness for Sabah and Sarawak”, *New Straits Times*, 7 April 2018.
13. Anantha Raman & Lai, “Kota Kinabalu, Sabah: BN Loses Its ‘Fixed Deposit’”, 2014.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *New Straits Times*, 7 April 2018.
16. Anantha Raman & Lai, “Kota Kinabalu, Sabah: BN Loses Its ‘Fixed Deposit’”, 2014.
17. “I’m lucky to have people’s confidence, says Chong”, 24 Mac 2004, <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2004/03/24/im-lucky-to-have-peoples-confidence-says-chong/> [7 August 2018].
18. “Undi info”, <https://undi.info/> [6 August 2018].
19. “BN’s Chan Vs DAP’s Chong in Elopura”, *The Borneo Post*, 6 April 2018.
20. “DAP wins big in Sandakan”, *Daily Express*, 10 May 2018.

## References

- Anantha Raman & Lai Yew Meng. 2014. “Kota Kinabalu, Sabah: BN Loses Its ‘Fixed Deposit’”. In M. Weiss (ed.), *Electoral Dynamics in Malaysia: Findings From the Grassroots*. Singapore: ISEAS.
- Chin, J., 1994. “The Sabah State Election of 1994: End of Kadazan Unity”. *Asian Survey*, 34(10), 904-915.
- Fatimah Zainal. 2018. “Two Sabah Barisan assemblymen meeting with Shafie”. 11 May, <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/05/11/two->

- sabah-barisan-assemblymen-meeting-with-shafie/ [8 August 2018]
- Lee, S. 2018. "Sabah Bersih Calls for end to Frog Culture". 13 May, <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/05/13/sabah-bersih-calls-for-end-to-frog-culture/> [8 August 2018]
- Lee, S., Fatimah Zainal, Joibi, N. 2018. "Shafie Apdal sworn in as Sabah CM, Musa seen leaving official residence", 12 May, <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/05/12/shafie-apdal-sworn-in-as-sabah-cm/> [ 8 August 2018].
- Ongkili, J.P., 1992. "A history of the Development of Federalism in Southeast Asia: the Malaysian Case 1985-1990", *Asian Perspective*, 16 (2): 155-179.
- Puyok, A., 2014. "Sabah's Rise to National Prominence and Deepening UMNO Dominance", In Welsh, B. and Chin, J., (eds.), *Awakening: the Abdullah Badawi Years in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, SIRD, pp. 226-228.

### **Biography Note**

Anantha Raman Govindasamy (anan@ums.edu.my) is a senior lecturer in politics at the Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning, Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

Lai Yew Meng (lyewmeng@ums.edu.my) is Associate Professor in Politics and International Relations at the Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning, Universiti Malaysia Sabah.