ELECTIONS AND ITS IMPACT ON
DEMOCRACY AND BUSINESS:
A STUDY OF THE SARAWAK EXPERIENCE
(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BIDAYUH
MAJORITY CONSTITUENCIES)

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By

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I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a research paper for the degree of Corporate Master in Business Administration.

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This research paper was submitted to the Faculty of Economics and Business, UNIMAS and is accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Corporate Master in Business Administration.

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DECLARATION AND COPYRIGHT

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I hereby declare that this research is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references and a bibliography is appended.

Signature : [Signature]
Date : 15th April, 2002

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I was initially quite apprehensive about the prospect of having to write a research paper as partial fulfilment for the degree of Corporate Master in Business Administration – certainly not after having left school for almost three decades. When finally pressed for a research proposal, I was naturally quite inclined to write on a topic that has occupied much of my time and energy since the early 1980s – politics.

I wish to thank the Post-Graduate Committee therefore for having approved the topic I submitted albeit with an amendment to relate the topic I suggested to incorporate the relationship of politics to business. The change, though slight, would have given me insurmountable problems as to how to approach the amended topic had it not been for the guidance and advice of Professor Michael Leigh who have kindly consented to be my Supervisor and to whom I would forever be grateful.

I wish also to thank my many course-mates, Choo Meng Chung, Dharshan Singh, Sie Chic, Gom Raway, Samson Ertebang, and Anthony Tanjong, to name a few, who unwittingly helped me plod along to complete this paper – unknown to them, their exasperated expression about not having done much to complete their respective research papers every time we met for drinks, reminded me that I too needed to put that extra effort to complete this paper.

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ABSTRACT

Participation of the citizenry in elections and thereafter collective involvement of the elected officials in the decision-making process are important ingredients for the gradual establishment of democracy. Elections serve as devices for legitimacy, identification, communication, socialization and mobilization. Key (1995)

Indeed it would be simplistic to argue that elections always lead to democratic systems. Elections can lead to either stability or it can have destabilizing effects. In some cases, they can contribute to political development or political decay. Elections can also establish, maintain, and promote democratic systems - elections can thus be nation-oriented and can contribute to nation-building.

Over the last four decades (1963 - 2001), Sarawak has held multiparty elections with the view to establish a viable democratic system. The persistent appeal by political leaders to their ethnic groups during elections has however made Sarawak electoral process somewhat, as is the case in most countries around the globe, to be more ethnic-centered as opposed to issue-centered interest. Control of state power translates into socio-economic and political benefits and voters view political leaders, the apparent “controllers” of the state as their potential sources of income – whether through employment or development.

This paper seeks to identify the factors at play that has shaped the electoral process we now see in Sarawak and how these, in concert with others, have impacted democracy and the ensuing business that democracy sets out to serve.
PART I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Malaysia’s political system is largely a legacy of British colonization. From its federal parliamentary democratic system with a constitutional monarchy (the difference with Britain in that the head of state, the Yang Di Pertuan Agung is elected from the nine hereditary Malay Sultans for a four-year term) to a two-chamber parliament consisting of the House of Representatives (Dewan Rakyat) and the Senate (the upper house or Dewan Negara) to Malaysia’s practice of the simple plurality system more commonly known as the first-past-the-post-system, Malaysia’s political system is very British.

The Malaysian Constitution provides for the establishment of an election commission consisting of a Chairman, a Deputy Chairman and three additional members. The members of the Commission are appointed by the Yang Di Pertuan Agung after consultation with the Conference of Rulers, having regards to the importance of securing an election commission that enjoys public confidence. The three main functions of the Commission are: 1) to conduct the review and delimitation of constituency boundaries; 2) to conduct the registration of electors and the revision of the electoral roll; and, 3) to conduct elections, both general elections as well as by-elections.

This paper will touch on the direct function of the Commission and how the conduct of election as practiced in Malaysia have impacted Malaysian democracy and, strange as it may sound, business, as well. The essential principle of democratic government is government by the people, government that derives its “just powers from the consent of the governed”. The basic institution for ensuring truly democratic government is the regular holding of free elections at which the legitimate authority of public officials to govern is renewed or terminated by the sovereign people.

It cannot be over emphasized that political interplay that result from ‘governments’ is a by-product of business – Adam Smith’s enunciation that historical human exchange began with barter of commodities of mutual interest, progressed to the invention of a common exchange
called money, and finally, led to the growth of wealth and power, based on accumulation of especially desired commodities - mediated by supply and demand equity - and, all of that, finally finding organization in bounded units called "governments".

As is with Malaysia's political system, many of its existing economic and political institutions, and problems are rooted in the colonial experience, Gomez (1996). All three major political parties of United Malays National Organization (UMNO), Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) directly or indirectly are creatures of the British hand. UMNO was born with primary purpose of opposing the Malayan Union, the British proposal of placing all nine Malay states and the Straits Settlement of Penang and Malacca under one government. The awareness amongst the Malays of their economic condition vis-à-vis other immigrant communities who were controlling their economic fate created fear among them that one day, they would be swamped by these immigrant communities. This awareness and fear were amongst reasons for their rejection of the Malayan Union; MCA was born out of the British's need for an alternative Chinese party that was conservative yet pliant to British interest after the Chinese-based Malayan Communist Party, a collaborator of the British against the Japanese during the WWII, was banned in 1948.

The MIC was formed in August 1946 after Indians were encouraged by the visiting Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to in remain Malaya Stenson (1980). The formation of the Triparty Alliance in the early 1950s comprising the three political parties was linked directly to the British colonial government's development of the Malayan economy, which grew around the international trade in tin and rubber, which was controlled by the British and to a lesser extent the Chinese. See Puthucheary (1960).

When in 1963, Sarawak together with Singapore and Sabah, in unity with Malaya, formed a larger federation, Malaysia, the same legacy the British left the Malay states were transposed onto the Sarawak political system as well.

What needs to be understood as a result of the above is the nature of government and politics in Malaysia, especially in the interconnection of politics and planning and how, to ensure continuity, elections as an
institution of democracy has been structured to ensure the attainment of the desired result.

It must be understood that nationally, the care of the state apparatus is in the hands of the Malaysian Administrative and Diplomatic Service (MADS) and all the most important officials, especially those in critical positions are in MADS and come largely from the Malay community.

The government since independence (Malaya in 1957 and Malaysia in 1963), on the other hand, has been in control of the same coalition of parties, which was called the Alliance in the early years and presently the Barisan Nasional (National Front) with an enlarged membership of parties. The Alliance originated ostensibly as a result of a social bargain. The “deal” was that in return for recognition of special Malay rights, the immigrant communities (Chinese and Indians) were given citizenship status.

However, another real and practical reason was that with the coming of self-government, a coalition of interests was hatched between the traditional Malay elite (which has now embraced within its membership senior government officers and land owning families), a group manifested in UMNO, and the Chinese “Towkays” represented by the MCA, which had the effect of strengthening the political authority and economic position of the former and the business interest of the latter. Gullick (1986).

In this arrangement, ethnicity is kept alive as a convenient “cause celebre” for gathering support among their own groups. Within this upper class, however, there has always been a strong tendency for the members to be integrated inter-ethnically. Hence, the Alliance, and later the Barisan Nasional, was a coalition of class fractional interests, sharing a common stake in the preservation of the capitalist order. It functions like a large power syndicate or a conference of warlords which allocates the political cake and its benefits according to the political strengths and weaknesses of each party or representation. The task of governing as well as the need to maintain political unity so that they can be sufficiently strong to remain in power, seems to hold at least the top-level leadership of the BN together. No one gains if the coalition collapses and racial disorder occurs.
This governing group has used the state apparatus not only to serve the interests of the dominant classes in general, but also to expand its social bases and to consolidate itself economically. In furtherance of this, care was taken to ensure that the decision-making bodies at every level were saluted with BN politicians, especially UMNO. There were even arrangements for upward mobility from the administrative service to the political arena and the Cabinet. A classic example is that of the current Deputy Prime Minister, Dato’ Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who was a technocrat before his plunge into politics.

Within this political environment, the BN government, especially UMNO, has therefore developed an intricate relationship with the agents of state, whose interests corresponded and were interwoven with the governing group. Hence, UMNO Supreme Council, through its surrogates in the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) and the National Development Planning Committee (NDPC), have had strong influences in national planning. And since NDPC and EPU (which also acts as a secretariat to NDPC) were responsible for formulating and reviewing plans and were in effective control of national planning under the Prime Minister’s direction (as head of BN), it is an exaggeration to say that the policies which were arrived at by compromise among the ruling elite groups would not be likely to upset the apple cart. Like a business cartel, presented with outside pull and push, members of the group naturally would be apt to take a course that would in the first instance protect and further their own interests. Hence the basic commitment to vested feudal and capitalist interest as a whole remained unaltered for the last thirty-seven years at least. For this reason, within the BN, the ethnically distinct political parties which it convenes, a return of political patronage in which both politicians and civil servants interact, extends outwards to the population at large and which effectively controls and emasculates the expression of public interests.

Having to deal with a plural society with great diversification, a hallmark of Malaysian planning is that there are too many objectives. Furthermore, the nature of Malaysian politics means that they have to serve a coalition of powerful (and contradictory) elites as well. The need to satisfy everybody meant certain degree of hypocrisy and rhetoric in Malaysia’s political setup. But when several objectives are to be achieved, trade-offs and compromises are inevitable.
1.2 Objectives of the Study

This paper sets out to:

i) To provide an overview and understanding of the Malaysian political system in comparison to that of the Western model of liberal democracy;

ii) To provide an understanding of the relevance of political economy approach to Malaysian development;

iii) To study the impact of elections on democracy and business within the confines of the Malaysian political environment with special reference to Bidayuh areas in Sarawak.

This study will therefore examine the correlation between business, which includes government initiated development projects, and democracy (represented for purposes of this study by its important instrument – elections).

1.3 Significance of the Study and Limitations

Elections, despite its impact on democracy has never occupied a place of importance in most people’s minds. Elections is the key to the voter’s freedom of choice and sovereignty. Freedom of choice perceived to be entailed in competitive elections is central for two reasons — 1) the voter has the freedom to elect candidates at all levels in the political system, and 2) the voter is exposed to different platforms of the competing political parties. His or her choice of a particular platform may lead to the establishment of a desired type of government. This in turn can constitute an important factor in determining governmental policies directly or indirectly. The central point to stress is freedom and rights of the individual to determine a government of his or her choice.

This model, competitive multi-party electoral model comprises of various identifiable elements such as the freedom of voters; competition between candidates and political parties without interference; accountability; the effects that elections have on governmental policies; nationally-oriented electoral process, particularly from the top leadership; and freedom of choice by voters
among candidates. The argument here is that competitive multi-party elections consistently carried out as provided for in the constitutional machinery can lead to the establishment of a democratic electoral system.

As elections happen at irregular intervals, and each has its own peculiar features, it is therefore difficult to know whether the evidence for any single election confirms a trend or conceals it. The erratic nature of the evidence thus make it difficult to prove any theories about voting behaviour.

The obvious limitation of this study is its inability to come up with a quantitative analysis of the impact of elections on democracy and business, both of which are immeasurable.

1.4 Sources of Data and Methodology

In this study, qualitative analysis will be adopted in trying to understand the impact of election on democracy and business. This study will, by way of background, rely on previous studies by social scientists on subjects central to this study – that of capitalism and democracy, political economy, etc. This study will rely on archives, results of past elections to analyze the impact of elections on democracy and business using logic and traditional observation to study political phenomena.

1.5 Organization of the Parts of the Study

This study is divided into five parts, the first being the introduction which highlights the nature of the study, objectives of the study, sources of data and methodology and the techniques of analysis. Part Two discusses the various literatures on topics related to the subject of this study. Part Three describes the research method with highlights of research approach, outline of how data collection is done, data processing and analysis. Part Four of this study discusses the political development of the various communities in Sarawak and how their political participation have dove-tailed into the wider federal-state political interrelationship. Inter-ethnic politicking, rampant in the 1960s and 1970s have left their marks in Sarawak politics and the findings show how these, in concert with others, have impacted the political destiny of the various communities.
Part Five concluded that elections, as an instrument for legitimacy, has truly impacted democracy and business in Malaysia. It is concluded that that business has a more discernable relationship on elections and democracy compared to the reverse of the impact of elections on democracy and business.

PART II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

There are a number of theoretical and empirical literature dealing with the themes of the positive and negative interaction between capitalism and democracy.

The relation between capitalism and democracy dominates the political theory of the last two centuries with all logically possible points of view represented in a rich literature. It is this ambivalence and dialectic, this tension between two major problem solving sectors of modern society - the political and economic - that will be covered in the following paragraphs.

2.1 Capitalism Supports Democracy

Various political theorists have argued that capitalism is positively linked with democracy, shares its values and culture, and facilitates its development. This case has been made in historical, logical and statistical terms.

An examination of the values, manners, and morals of capitalism, and their effects on the larger society and culture from the view that the douceur of commerce, its “gentling” civilizing effect on behavior and interpersonal relations to the view that the culture of capitalism is crassly materialistic, destructively competitive, corrosive of morality, and hence self-destruction, though a sharp almost 180-degree shift in point of view among political theorists implies, however, an early positive connection and a later negative capitalism-democracy connection. Hirschman (1986).

Capitalism and democracy were mutually casual historically, and are mutually supportive parts of a rising civilization. Schumpeter (1942). It is an historical fact that modern democratic institutions have existed in countries with predominantly privately-owned, market-oriented
economies or capitalism. Dahl (1990). Peter Berger (1986) presents four propositions on the relations between capitalism and democracy:

1) Capitalism is a necessary but not sufficient condition of democracy under modern conditions;
2) If a capitalist economy is subjected to increasing degrees of market forces, a point (not precisely specifyable at this time) will be reached at which democratic governance becomes impossible.
3) If a socialist economy is opened up to increasing degrees of market forces, a point (not precisely specifyable at this time) will be reached at which democratic governance becomes a possibility.
4) If capitalist development is successful in generating economic growth from which a sizable proportion of the population benefits, pressures towards democracy are likely to appear. (Berger, 1986).

This positive relationship between capitalism and democracy has also been sustained by statistical studies. The “Social Mobilization” theorists of the 1950s and 1960s which included Daniel Lerner (1958), Karl Deutsch (1961), S.M. Lipset (1959) amongst others, demonstrates a strong statistical association between GNP per capita and democratic political institutions. There is a logic in the relation between level of economic development and democratic institutions. Level of economic development has been shown to be associated with education and literacy, exposure to mass media, and democratic psychological propensities such as subjective efficacy, participatory aspirations and skills.

2.2 Democracy Fosters Capitalism

Historically there can be little doubt that as the suffrage was extended in the last century and as mass political parties developed, democratic development impinged significantly on capitalist institutions and practices.

Historical experience of literally all of the advanced capitalist democracies in existence however hold true the opposite argument that these now welfare states with some form and degree of social insurance, health and welfare nets, and regulatory frameworks that mitigate the harmful impacts and shortfalls of capitalism. Instead, the welfare state is accepted all across the political spectrum. It might
even be argued that had capitalism not been modified in this welfare direction, it is doubtful that it would have survived.

It can be concluded that democracy and capitalism are both positively and negatively related, that they both support and subvert each other.

2.3 Political Economy Approach to Malaysian Development

Development is essentially an interactive phenomenon, and, as such, can be best explained by political economy approach which studies interaction, discussion and integration.

Malaysian development has been made possible by cooperation, compensation, and coordination between business and government. Malaysia’s philosophy of development is based on marketism and the framework of a market economy has been taken on the basis of Malaysian growth strategy which has been accepted on the basic terra firma in the East Asian economies.

The role of state in the dynamics of development is highly significant in Malaysia. The state in Malaysia is highly potent, powerful and effective – the state in Malaysia remains very decisive and strong. The Visible Hands of state can virtually change anything into anything else. Ghosh, (1999).

There are many approaches that can be used to analyze Malaysian political and economic development, which in turn, may give different interpretations of Malaysian politics, economy and society.

To better understand Malaysia’s current socio-politico-economic state of affairs, this paper will briefly discuss the consociational model and conflict-regulation scheme.

Conventional democracy is a government by elite cartel designed to turn democracy with fragmented political culture into a stable democracy. Lipphart (1969). This view was however adjusted and consociational democracy is defined in terms of:

i) “a fraud coalition of the political leaders of all significant segment of the plural society”;

ii) the mutual veto or “concurrent majority” rule;

iii) “proportionality on the principle standard of political representation, civil service appointments and allocation of public funds”; and
iv) “a high degree of autonomy for each segment to run its own affairs” Lijphart (1977).

The two primary features of the consociational model are: 1) that of an overarching elite cooperation, and 2) that of a stable non-elite support Lijphart (1977) which necessitates the cooperation and commitment of the elite for the maintenance of the system while, at the same time, retaining support of their followers.

In his analysis of consociational democracy in non-Western plural societies, Lijphart concluded that Malaysia is one of the “reasonably successful” examples of consociational democracy for the period 1955 - 1969. Lijphart views the Alliance as the all-important consociational device of Malaysia in which the principal Malay, Chinese and Indian political parties formed a grand coalition. He views the Alliance:

“to have adhered to the rule of proportionality only of the political and economic spheres are constituted together. The original agreement that created the Alliance regime was a trade-off: political and government superiority for the Malays and continued economic hegemony for the Chinese. Lijphart, (1977).”

Lijphart says that “Malaysia since 1955, in spite of a temporary breakdown in 1969” can be counted as one of the consociational cases that have maintained “peace and democracy for long periods” Lijphart (1985).

Another theory which complements the consociational model is Nordlinger’s conflict-regulation scheme. Like Lijphart, Nordlinger testifies that the success of conflict-regulation scheme depends on the “purposeful behaviour of political elites”. He observes that the Alliance adhered to one of six effective conflict-regulating practices in the stable government coalition. The racial “bargain” arrived at by the Alliance leaders on the eve of Independence is what Nordlinger considers to be the type of compromise most conducive to conflict-regulation. The trade-offs between the Malays and non-Malays on divisive issues has resulted in neither party being “sufficiently unhappy to render the outcome unacceptable” Nordlinger (1972). Nordlinger also points out the importance of economic motives in regulating the Chinese-Malay conflict. The pressing need of the Malays for the achievement of their economic goals and the concern of the Chinese for the maintenance of their non-economic gains have contributed to Malaysia’s survival as a plural society.
of the Chinese for the maintenance of their economic predominance have resulted in both to yield to each other's demands and facilitate control adjustment (ibid, p.47).

The review of the foregoing literature suggests that the ethnic problems in Malaysia are largely resolved through a strategy based on accommodation, bargaining and conflict management. Accordingly, it is logical to formulate the hypothesis that:

III Notwithstanding that communalism, as a sense of loyalty to ethnic, religious, linguistic or regional group or any combination thereof, rather than the nation as a whole, determines political attitudes, expectations and loyalties of all the ethnic communities, as well as the nature of participation in the political process, in Malaysia, the delicate bargain reached amongst the races needs to be upheld at all costs, including instituting in place statutory and legal safeguards.

2.4 Malaysia: An Historical Perspective

Malaysia possesses many similar characteristics of Third World countries and faces similar challenges in her search for national unity, political stability, and the promotion of social and economic development. Colonial legacy continues to affect the society profoundly, and the multiethnic character of the population influences the pattern of socio-economic development and the accommodation of communal groups in the political system.

Malaya or Peninsular Malaysia first came under British rule in 1785 with the acquisition of Penang. By 1914, the British established control throughout Malaya and the island of Singapore at the tip of the Malay Peninsula. By virtue of its earlier and longer experience under British rule, Peninsular Malaysia is considerably more advanced socially, economically, and politically than the states of Sabah and Sarawak, both of which were invited into the Malaysian federation in 1963 to counterbalance Singapore's Chinese population. Thus it is no surprise that the Peninsular Malaysian political system, autonomous within the larger federation, is far more politically developed than that of the eastern states of Sabah and Sarawak.
Sarawak’s political development is strikingly different from those of Peninsular Malaysia which was ruled directly by the British Colonial Office for most of the nineteenth century until independence. Sarawak, on the other hand, was first ruled by the Brunei Sultanate from around the seventeenth century through to the early nineteenth century. On September 24, 1841, Sarawak was ceded, as a reward for his services, to James Brooke, the English adventurer who was instrumental in the suppression of the Chinese miners’ rebellion against the Sultan of Brunei.

James Brooke had apparently accepted to rule Sarawak thinking that the arrangement would only be temporary and had expected the British Government to take over control and bring Sarawak under its protection. This was not to be until May 21, 1946 on which date, Charles Vyner Brooke, the third and last Rajah ceded the State to the British Crown. Bujang Mohammed Nor, (1999).

The cession drew mixed response. The Malays opposed cession for fear of losing the political preference accorded them by the Brookes who have always favoured them in the recruitment of indigenous officers into the Brooke’s administration. The Dayaks being more submissive supported cession as it was the “Rajah’s desire” provided their rights adat lama were protected. The Chinese considered cession the “white men’s” politics and were generally a disinterested lot but those amongst them that did, generally supported the cession for the opportunities, economic and political, that cession brings. Chin Ung-Ho (1997).

Just as the cession drew mixed response, the proposal of a federation formed out of “political and economic co-operation” first mooted by Tunku Abdul Rahman in a speech given at a Singapore Press luncheon on May 27, 1961, was received with understandable reservations and scepticism. The response was varied, divided according to asymmetric perceptions and racial lines. Sarawak United People’s Party (SUPP), ostensibly a Chinese party was opposed to Malaysia preferring instead to an outright Independence. Party Negara (PANAS), essentially a Malay-Muslim party was pro-Malaysia. The Dayaks were unable to understand the significance of the decisions they were to make on the proposed federation. Sutcliffe Jr (1992). Michael Leigh (1974) aptly characterizes the positions of the major groups in Sarawak as follows:
By and large the Islamic communities were enthusiastic in their support for Malaysia and the Chinese were opposed to it. The Dayaks as a whole were ill-equipped to assess the merits of the scheme; the minority Kenyahs and Kayans were quite hostile to it.

This characterization was appropriately re-phrased by Malaysia’s first Prime Minister, when in the foreword to *Sarawak A Gentleman’s Victory for Taib Mahmud*, Ritchie (1987) he writes:

"Each community is divided not so much on racial background as on their merit interest in their own welfare. The Dayaks are the indigenous people but they lead a simple tribal existence with hardly any political or business interests, but a few are English-educated and aware of their rights and are trying to assert it with the backing of the people who form the racial majority. The Chinese are holding on to their business dominance in the State through politics, while the Malays, on the other hand, are honestly conscious of their political right. They were the first to demonstrate their absolute confidence in the Independence of Sarawak through Malaysia."

It was against this background that communal politics in Sarawak, if left to their own devices, may not have evolved into the major political parties we witness today. It cannot be denied that some European officers, then serving under the Colonial Government and also with Shell, have contributed greatly into bringing the political development in Sarawak to an early maturity. Key figures worthy of mention include Peter Ratcliffe, former British military intelligence officer during the war, then the Government Information Officer, Austin Coates, then Secretary for Chinese Affairs and D.L. Bruen, then Kanowit District Officer, who was instrumental in persuading Temenggong Juhah together with Penghulu Montegrai and Penghulu Umpau to form their own Third Division Dayak Party Pesaka Anak Sarawak (PESAKA) in July 1962. Reece (1993).

The period preceding Sarawak’s Independence through Malaysia was thus hectic with six political parties formed between 1959 through 1962. SUPP, Sarawak’s first political party, was registered on 12 June 1959; PANAS, led by Datu Bandar Abang Haji Mustapha followed with its registration in April 1960. Sarawak National Party (SNAP), a party formed by a group of Second Division Ibans, all former employees of Shell and led by Kalong Ningkan was registered in March 1961. Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak (Barjess) representing a Sibu Malay group opposed to Datu Bandar and PANAS, was formed in December 1961. A group of Chinese who felt marginalized in the SUPP power structure, formed Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA)
in July 1962. The Iban, mainly from the Rejang area soon followed with the formation of PESARA in August 1962.

Following this highly divisive political beginnings, it is reasonable to hypothesize that:

H2.1 The Malays in Sarawak, though divided in their approach, were conscious as to what to expect in the formation of the federation of Malaysia – that of strengthening the political authority and economic position for the Malays.

H2.2 The Chinese were more articulate in their pursuit of their socio-economic and cultural interests – hence their active participation in local affairs, including local politics.

H2.3 The Dayaks were politically inexperienced, less articulate and were essentially driven into forming political groupings by events happening around them that were completely beyond their control.

2.5 The Bidayuhs

Unlike the other communal groupings, the Bidayuhs did not have any political parties to call their own on the eve of Independence, leaving the more politically-conscious amongst them to join the then existing parties PANAS, SUPP, SNAP or BARJASA. This could have been attributed to them (the Bidayuhs) being linguistically divided into four main heterogenous subgroups spread wide across the present day Kuching and Samarahan Divisions as Bakar-Sadong of Serian District, Biatoh of Kuching District, Bau-Jagoi of Bau District and Selako-Lara of Lundu District. The lack of educated Bidayuhs then to lead them could have been another factor for their apparent disinterest in the political development in the early days of Independence.

The Bidayuhs have been viewed as not aggressive but possess courage of the quieter and unobjectionable kind Geddes (1954). This trait, sometimes mistaken as docility, in reality conceals a latent side of their nature – an instinctive defense mechanism using the diplomacy of personal relation to diffuse conflicts, and an ability to adjust to situations in order to move ahead, or at least not be swamped. The Bidayuhs believe that everyone has the right to do the

3.0 Overview

This paper is a comprehensive analysis of Sarawak’s business, which includes government and non-government assistance, private and public sectors. These have included businesses, churches, and educational institutions.

This paper provides a basic understanding of Sarawak's economy and the role of foreign capital in the system as it relates to the development of Sarawak’s independence.
best he can for himself or find the best solution to his choice dilemma Geddes (1954) – a characteristic that find expression in their independence and the desire to break out of the mould when they do not serve their interest. This inclination makes the Bidayuhs receptive to change and development, especially when they know that the course they take will bring them greater benefits. It was the sum total of these characteristics and traits in an environment of continuing political change that have made the Bidayuhs, already plagued by contentious party politics with members of the community arrayed over the whole political spectrum, quite irrelevant in Sarawak’s political equations. Following this, it is reasonable to hypothesize that:

H2.4 The Bidayuhs, as a small, economically “marginalised” and historically-neglected community, have no direct say in their own political destiny allowing others from outside their community instead to dictate them as they think fit.

PART III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This paper sets to examine elections and its impact on democracy and business, which, for purposes of the study of the Sarawak experience, includes government-initiated development programs, which, for the predominantly rural Bidayuhs, have been the provision of two forms of assistance: basic amenities and agricultural projects. These amenities have included piped water and electricity, health services, schools, churches, community halls, roads, bridges, and improved telecommunication services.

This paper will examine the extent to which electoral processes since Sarawak’s independence through the formation of Malaysia have created conditions, though inconsistent with democratic electoral system as may be viewed from the Western model, fits in very well with the need to maintain the “bargain” first agreed to prior to independence.
3.1 Research Methodology

While political scientists study politics with three goals in mind: description, prediction and prescription, this paper will deal mainly with the oldest and most fundamental goal of political science – description.

To achieve this stated goal, this paper will rely on logic, traditional observations and where possible, quantitative analysis as well, though the latter is doubtful. This research relies on election results figures of past Sarawak elections and uses these data to adequately describe, predict and where possible, come to normative conclusions. Random interviews with grass-root Bidayuh politicians would have been ideal to establish how communalism, as a factor, has determined the Bidayuh's political attitudes, expectations, as well as their perception of the nature of the community's participation in the country's political process.

In the absence of readily available data required for statistical analysis (which would have been best procured through random interviews with grass-root politicians), the study has necessarily resorted to descriptive method based on first hand observation.

As indicated in the foregoing paragraph, the socio-economic and political changes during the last four decades which have influenced Bidayuh's communal concerns, level of education, and exposure to the mass media, as well as their agricultural productivity, income, and social mobility – all these developments having profoundly altered Bidayuh's political awareness, concerns about politics, opinions and expectations of the government, and participation in the political process – all of these would have been best answered by random interviews with grass-root politicians but for the constraint of time within which to conduct and complete this study. The answers to these pertinent issues have, for purposes of this study been left to the author's own observation and perception instead.

3.2 Data Collection

As stated in 3.1, this research relies heavily on secondary data, in this case data of past elections results collected from the Malaysian Election Commission.

Various Malaysian laws pertaining to the conduct of elections will also be perused to ascertain whether the Visible Hands of the state have left any marks to perpetuate certain protective practices in the name of