PARLIAMENTARY BEHAVIOUR OF THE OPPOSITION
PAKATAN RAKYAT IN MALAYSIAN POLITICS, 2008-2012

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FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR
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PARLIAMENTARY BEHAVIOUR OF THE OPPOSITION
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KUALA LUMPUR

2017
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the patterns of parliamentary behaviour of Pakatan Rakyat (PR) political parties in the Twelfth Parliament. The study is based upon two significance arguments: first, the opposition Pakatan Rakyat political parties (PAS, PKR, and DAP) for the first time collectively work as a single political force in the Twelfth Parliament; and second, the patterns of behaviour would likely trigger some responses and constraints from the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) government and at the same time would consolidate the oppositional coalition politically. The 2008 Malaysia’s general election was held under very pressurized circumstances. Unfortunately, the election result indicated that the ruling BN was no longer politically durable and thus provided a new political vacuum for the opposition PR to emerge as part of national political alternatives. This is a qualitative study and therefore it will adopt the approach of “content analysis” as a research technique. The data were collected from primary sources such as parliamentary debates (Hansards), government official documents, party’s publications, interviews, and newspapers. As the secondary sources, books and articles were used. By using Shane Martin’s Framework of Parliamentary and Legislative Behaviour, the study reveals that there are several PR patterns of behaviour evident in the 12th Parliament. These main and sub-patterns were manifested in the form of parliamentary struggle and were perceived as a counter-measure to the policies of the ruling BN government. Besides that, the study found that the parliamentary constraints encountered by PR have led towards the consolidation of patterns of behaviour in the Twelfth Parliament. Finally, this study concluded that the parliamentary behaviour of Pakatan Rakyat has strengthened, empowered and consolidated the practice of oppositional parliamentary democracy and the emergence of the newly coined-term known as the “New Parliamentary Behaviour (NPB)”.

iii
ABSTRAK

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2017
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration Page .................................................................ii
Abstract ..................................................................................iii
Abstrak ....................................................................................iv
Acknowledgement .....................................................................v
Table of Contents .................................................................vi
List of Tables ............................................................................ix
List of Abbreviations ..............................................................x

INTRODUCTION

Introduction ................................................................................1
Research Questions ......................................................................3
Significance of the Study ...........................................................3
Research Objectives ...................................................................5
Literature Review ......................................................................5
Theoretical Framework ..............................................................17
Conceptual Framework .............................................................21
Research Methodology ............................................................35
Organization of Chapters ..........................................................37

CHAPTER 1: MALAYSIAN POLITICS: AN OVERVIEW OF ITS
DEVELOPMENT UP TO 2008 ........................................................39

Introduction ................................................................................39
Political Development during Pre-Independence Malaya 1957 .......39
Malay Nationalism .....................................................................46
Japanese Occupation in Malaya, 1941-1945 ...............................52
Malayan Politics and “Malayan Union” in the
Post-Japanese Occupation ........................................................55
Road to Independence of August 1957 ......................................61
Political Development in the Post-Independence 1957 ...............71
1959 Elections ..........................................................................72
The Formation of Malaysia and the 1964 Elections ....................79
Ethnic Politics and the 1969 Elections .........................................90
The Reformasi and 1999 Elections .............................................99
2004 Elections ..........................................................................106
Parliamentary Behaviour in the 11th Parliament .........................113
Conclusion ...............................................................................117

CHAPTER 2: PKR, PAS AND DAP IN 2008 PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS ..............................................................................118

Introduction ..............................................................................118
### CHAPTER 3: PARLIAMENTARY BEHAVIOUR OF PAKATAN RAKYAT POLITICAL PARTIES: PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS (PQs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Questions (PQs) to Ministers as Part of Behaviour</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Questions (PQs) Concerning the Post 2008 Elections</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Questions (PQs) Concerning Local Government</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Questions (PQs) Concerning Parliamentary Constituencies</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Questions (PQs) Concerning International Relations</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Questions (PQs) Concerning Educational Sector</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Constraints</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHAPTER 4: PARLIAMENTARY BEHAVIOUR OF PAKATAN RAKYAT POLITICAL PARTIES: PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Motions as Part of Behaviour</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motions Concerning Malaysia’s Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motions Highlighting the Government’s Projects and Policies</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motions Concerning Government’s Transparency</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motions Concerning People’s Welfare</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary Constraints</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHAPTER 5: PARLIAMENTARY BEHAVIOUR OF PAKATAN RAKYAT POLITICAL PARTIES: PARLIAMENTARY BUDGETING PROCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debating the Budgeting Process as Part of Political Economy Behaviour</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debating the Theme of “Concerned Government”</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.................................................................</td>
<td>.................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>259</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>284</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>294</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>306</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>333</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1.1</td>
<td>Communal Breakdown of the Electorate, 1959 General Election</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1.2</td>
<td>The Results of 1959 Federal Election</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1.3</td>
<td>The Results of 1964 Federal Election</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1.4</td>
<td>General Election Results, Peninsular Malaysia, 1969</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1.5</td>
<td>Parliamentary Seats Won According to Parties in 2004</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1.6</td>
<td>The Results for 1999 and 2004 Parliamentary Elections</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.1</td>
<td>Parliamentary Seats Won By PKR According to States</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.2</td>
<td>Parliamentary Seats Won By PAS According to States</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.3</td>
<td>Parliamentary Seats Won By DAP According to States</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.4</td>
<td>The August 2008 Permatang Pauh By-Election Result</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1</td>
<td>Topics of Motions by the Opposition PR Parties In The Twelfth Parliament, 2008-2012</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AKIM</td>
<td>Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Barisan Alternatif/Alternative Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BN</td>
<td>Barisan Nasional/National Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CM</td>
<td>Chief Minister/ Menteri Besar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAP</td>
<td>Democratic Action Party</td>
</tr>
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<td>DUN</td>
<td>Dewan Undangan Negeri/ State Legislative Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPM</td>
<td>Deputy Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Election Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPTP</td>
<td>First-Past-The- Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GERAKAN</td>
<td>Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMP</td>
<td>Gerakan Mansuhkan PPSMI/PPSMI Movement of Abolition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GST</td>
<td>Goods and Services Tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIPN</td>
<td>Institut Integriti Pilihan Raya Nasional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGP</td>
<td>Inspector General of Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>Malaysian Chinese Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIC</td>
<td>Malaysian Indian Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPs</td>
<td>Members of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoF</td>
<td>Ministry of Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCR</td>
<td>Native Customary Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEP</td>
<td>New Economic Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPB</td>
<td>New Parliamentary Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAS</td>
<td>Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB</td>
<td>Parliamentary Budgeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBB</td>
<td>Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBS</td>
<td>Parti Bersatu Sabah/ Sabah United Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>Party’s Identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKR</td>
<td>Parti KeADILan Rakyat/People’s Justice Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMs</td>
<td>Parliamentary Motions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>People’s Progressive Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPSMI</td>
<td>Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik Dalam Bahasa Inggeris/ Teaching and Learning Mathematics and Science In English Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PQs</td>
<td>Parliamentary Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoD</td>
<td>Politics of Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Pakatan Rakyat/ People’s Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRM</td>
<td>Parti Rakyat Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSM</td>
<td>Parti Sosialis Malaysia/Malaysia Socialist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAPP</td>
<td>Sabah Progressive Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAR</td>
<td>Sekolah Agama Rakyat/ People’s Religious School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCM</td>
<td>Sibu Central Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBN</td>
<td>Sarawak Barisan Nasional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAP</td>
<td>Sarawak National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPNB</td>
<td>Syarikat Perumahan Negara Berhad/ National Housing Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPR</td>
<td>Sarawak Pakatan Rakyat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPP</td>
<td>Sarawak United People’s Party</td>
</tr>
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<td>UiTM</td>
<td>Universiti Institut Teknologi MARA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMNO</td>
<td>United Malays National Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNKO</td>
<td>United National Kadazan Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPKO</td>
<td>United Pasokmomogun Kadazan Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPMO</td>
<td>United Pasok Momogun Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USNO</td>
<td>United Sabah National Organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Malaysia’s political structure is best described as a parliamentary system of government. In this structure, there is a strong connection between the chief executive and the legislature - a fusion of government branches that is absent in the presidential system as it is practiced in United States.¹ In this sense, the parliamentary form of government has revealed its own uniqueness in approaching the study of politics scientifically. As part of democratic indicators, the parliamentary activities and the conduct of elections by all means are necessary to be appropriately preserved. The Malaysian political system has been variously perceived as “quasi-democratic”, “semi-democratic” and “competitive authoritarianism.”²

To a certain extent, the structure of Malaysian political system is also interpreted as “pseudo-democracy” where the procedures are useful in containing the opposition and single party organization can more substantively energize support for the government.³ Not only that, Malaysia has subscribed to this kind of trend for a very long time. This nomenclature of “pseudo-democracy” also offers more to their citizens than plainer authoritarian regimes, the government tolerates opposition parties and hold elections regularly.⁴ Pointing to the sense of toleration offered by the dominant regime, it somehow allows an unhealthy trend of competition. In other words, the quality of electoral competition is portrayed as the regimes allow multiple parties to compete in elections, but

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they do so under patently unfair conditions. However, in the case of the Malaysian political terrain, the concept of genuine parliamentary democracies is politically a misnomer and misplaced until the 2008 Malaysian general elections took place where the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) regime was denied its two-thirds majority in parliament to a combined coalition of opposition parties, namely Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR), Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) and Democratic Action Party (DAP). This event is argued by many to be the extension of the new idiom of politics created in 1998.

Since the 2008 general elections, BN’s political downward slide has led to the subscription of democratization brought by the opposition political parties. The opposition political parties have been united under the banner of a unified coalition known as “Pakatan Rakyat (People’s Coalition/PR)” since then. Therefore, the focus of this study is to analyze the parliamentary behaviour of the opposition Pakatan Rakyat political parties in the post-2008 general elections and more precisely in the Twelfth Parliament (2008-2012) by examining its patterns of behaviour. Most of the time, the focus of behaviour is based upon the activity of debates going on inside the building of Parliament. The Parliament, on the other hand is completely institutionalized as part of legal political institutions operating within the framework of constitutional structure. At this point, academicians like political scientists have a considerable inclination to perceive the legislative or parliamentary behaviour as a mixture of “the interaction of preferences and institutional rules.” When preferences are appropriately allocated then parliamentary behaviour will begin to naturally mould in accordance with a substantial political demands.

Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

First, what are the main and sub-patterns of Pakatan Rakyat in relation to their parliamentary behaviour?

Second, what are the parliamentary constraints encountered by the opposition Pakatan Rakyat (PR) in the Twelfth Parliament?

The period or timeframe of 2008 until 2012 is chosen because this period is regarded as the most significant period of turning point where the establishment of Pakatan Rakyat (PR) for the first five years took place. Some would put forth an argument on why not start from 2008 until 2013? The reason being is that, the year of 2013 is a year where general elections is held and in order to avoid further confusion, it is best to cease in the year 2012 and at the same time making the first five years more analytical to look upon. The trend of opposition Pakatan Rakyat in this period is observed to be the most influential and has its own kind of attraction.

Significance of the Study

This study analyses the patterns of parliamentary behaviour with special reference to the opposition Pakatan Rakyat coalition comprising of PAS, DAP and PKR within a fixed timeframe. Since 2008 until 2012, the national leadership was assumed by two different leaders namely, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (2003-2009) and Najib Tun Razak (2009-present). Most of the cases where certain countries who declared of practicing parliamentary democracy but in reality is different and there is indeed a growing proclivity in realising the tremendous needs to have a robust political opposition.
Under the pretext of Malaysian political setting, political opposition is interpreted as a form of political resistance and dissenting voices. Based on political grounds and distinctive features, the opposition is often associated closely with a strong sense of opposing the current ruling government and the opposition also to a considerable extent plays its roles as the indicator of democracy. Besides that, countries which are labeled as a parliamentary democracy also inclined to pave a great extent of democratization and allow more political participation to be held in the midst of competitive political situation. Even though the literature on political opposition in Malaysia is vast there is lack of research and findings in terms of the changing patterns in parliamentary behaviour.

Western democracies have for long been engaged in the dynamics and the changing processes of parliamentary behaviour. In this regard, the study attempts to seek some sort of answers pertaining to the growing need of including the opposition (Pakatan Rakyat) within the context of Malaysian political system, particularly its legislative behaviour. The post-2008 Malaysian general election period needs to be evaluated systematically. The outcomes of the election results in a blink of an eye had changed everything built by the current ruling government. The mobilization of political opposition has always been challengeable and contestable rather than staying passive and inactive in an embedded political setting.

This study is set within a fixed period of time (2008-2012), since the political oppositions started to gain currency soon after the tremendous 2008 general elections had been concluded and particularly for the first five years of the formation of Pakatan Rakyat. Besides that, the analysis of this study will focus upon the legislative behaviour of PR from 2008 until 2012. It will not examine the period before 2008. The reason behind is to ensure that the ongoing analysis is on the right path. Examining the period 2004 to 2008 of oppositional behaviour would not be useful due to colossal victory of BN in 2004. The
opposition was fragmented and not a single robust coalition as was the case with PR in the post-2008 period.

Therefore, it is quite difficult to trace or to establish an empirical ground, even though it may be done, upon the oppositional outlook in that period (2004-2008). In Malaysia, there are a number of opposition parties that possess the tendency to identify its own socio-political identity by utilizing means that is deemed political. Nonetheless, the identification of the emerging roles of political opposition requires a great deal of interpretation in a more comprehensive ways and to be more particular, the changing patterns of behaviour.

**Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study are:

1) To examine the development of Malaysian politics before 2008.

2) To examine the performance of PAS, PKR and DAP in the 2008 parliamentary election.

3) To analyse the patterns of parliamentary behaviour of the opposition Pakatan Rakyat in the 12th Parliament.

4) To identify issues that reflected PR patterns of parliamentary behaviour.

5) To analyse the parliamentary constraints encountered by the opposition Pakatan Rakyat political parties in the Twelfth Parliament.

**Literature Review**

In the contemporary context of Malaysian political setting, the existence of the political opposition somehow is inclined to be forgotten. Since the political opposition’s resurgence
assumed a great space in the Malaysian political milieu, literatures seem to be complete but unfortunately it poses a serious inadequacy on how the political opposition mobilizes and what are the ramifications that could be identified as well as the outcomes and to a considerable extent, the position of opposition’s identity. As been thoroughly studied by scholars, the study of political opposition marked a significant turning point towards the process of democratic consolidation. The essence of political opposition could not be properly understood without a brief understanding about the democracy. According to Rodney Barker, the term ‘political opposition’ can be divided into six categories.

First, the opposition may mean total resistance to the form and basis of the state and a determination to overthrow it by whatever means. Second, the word may denote resistance to the power of the state when the latter is viewed as an oppressive institution. Third, the word ‘opposition’ may refer to resistance to the group, faction, or dynasty in command of the state, and to a denial of its legitimacy. Fourth, it may be used to denote a loyal opposition which opposes the commanding group without either contesting its legitimacy or threatening or rejecting the basis of the state or the constitution. Fifth, opposition may be used to mean the system of checks and balances whereby the constitution guards against and corrects its own excesses, or to identify a belief in a composite or divided sovereignty. Finally, the term has been used to describe the methods whereby the citizen or group, without condemning government as inherently oppressive, modifies its action, mellows its harshness, and prevent its tyrannies.⁸

The first three definitions seem to have caught an implication towards the nature of the political opposition itself where it strongly denotes about the intended action by utilizing political means that could justify the action and at the same time to achieve the targeted goals that suit with the intended demands by challenging the current regime and

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replace it with a new one. But in contrast, the latter or the last three definitions indicate distinctive connotations.

In a word, it refers to a soft approach of opposing the current regime by mobilizing the groups through institutions. In other words, the opposition groups are mobilized politically within the vessel of institutions and carry out the political agenda by representing the minorities and at the same time to vocalize out the dissenting voices in a more manageable ways. Here it implies the significance of the check and balance towards the institutions. For Garry Rodan, the connotation of the political opposition is simply pragmatic where he states that loyal opposition groups aim to share political power and provide alternatives rather than overthrowing the extant regime and they can often be absorbed into the ruling alliance.\(^9\) He clearly signifies that the behaviour of political opposition itself can be positive rather than negative but in this sense, not much can be deduced from the studies especially when it concerns the identity of the political opposition in a particular level.

Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter study on the political opposition indicated more political shifts. They state that the extent of a regime’s transition from authoritarianism to democracy depends on the dynamics and momentum generated by the political opposition, while its pace depends on the interplay between the ruling and opposition elites.\(^10\) O’Donnell and Schmitter maintain that the role of political opposition is very persuasive and the opposition in this sense could influence the process of democratization and it could stabilize the democratic transition.\(^11\)


\(^11\) Ibid.,
Speaking of the interplay between the ruling party and the opposition, they argue that a cleavage between ruling and opposition elites is likely to be resolved in the form of compromise and power-sharing.\textsuperscript{12} The argument put forth by O’Donnell and Schmitter totally tally when Samuel P. Huntington states that a democratic regime is installed not by trends but by people and democracies are created not by causes but by the people who causes it.\textsuperscript{13} Democratising the ruling regime has never been easy especially when the regime is found unacceptable due to negative charges and in this case, democratising requires a strong and robust political opposition to make things right and to restore administrative values positively. Eilo Yu Wing-Yat and Natalie Chin Ka-Man in their studies of the political opposition has provided solutions on how to initiate negotiation with governing authorities for democratic reform and for that, the opposition has to create strong mass-elite alliances and exert tremendous pressure on the authorities.\textsuperscript{14}

In order to do so, several external and internal constraints need to overcome and Andrew Nathan says that the opposition faces a weak civil society which lacks in civic participation and makes it difficult to engage in mass mobilization. Secondly, it must overcome the challenges posed by a pro-government mass media reluctant to serve as a means by which the opposition can communicate with the masses. Thirdly, the opposition lacks the resources necessary to conduct political campaigns and sustain grassroots support. Fourthly, the opposition is often forced or persuaded to use a ‘soft’ strategy of opposition that impose self-restrictions in pushing for reform and forces or encourages it to assume the role of the ‘loyal’ rather than revolutionary opposition.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} Eilo Yu Wing-Yat and Natalie Chin Ka-Man, \textit{The Political Opposition and Democracy in Macao: Revolutionaries or Loyalists?} (Government and Opposition, Vol. 47, No. 1, 2012), p. 97.
\textsuperscript{15} Andrew Nathan, ‘China’s Path from Communism’, \textit{Journal of Democracy}, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1993, p. 37; also see Francesco Cavatorta and Azzam Elananza, ‘Political Opposition in Civil Society: An Analysis of the
Here the identity of political opposition is ambiguous and it demands answers that could fit the situation and nothing is easy for the opposition to mobilize on behalf the masses and at the same time to urge the current regime to shift. In response to this, Gene Sharp states that opposition should not submit passively to the authorities but instead actively confront them\(^\text{16}\) by actively approaching the masses to gain political support and in response to this, the regime feels threatened and start having a negotiation with the opposition. In doing so, the opposition has to think one step ahead on how to consolidate the political agility of the regime and this can be done by proposing political solutions towards the unresolved issues. As stated by Nicolas Van De Walle, the stronger the opposition, the brighter democratic future appears.\(^\text{17}\)

Studies on political opposition may seem difficult if valuable insights are not properly acquired. Therefore, case studies of the countries must be taken into an account in order to have substantial approaches. Many works have been published between 1950 and 1960 by scholars like W.H. Morris Jones, M. Weiner and R. Kothari in Indian political studies.\(^\text{18}\) In studying Indian politics, they look at the relationship between government and opposition at some points. James Manor in his studies on government and opposition in India argues that even though the interactions between government and opposition have

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become more important and interesting but the topic is getting forgotten.19 Mano further adds that the academic fashions changed, few studies of institutions have appeared, and analysts of interparty relations have focused on dynamics within multiparty ruling coalitions (which have lately loomed large) rather than between ruling and opposition forces.20 He puts forth undivided attention towards the needs of studying the relationship between the regime and the opposition and besides than that, he states that the study needs to be transcended and not only focused on the party’s conflicts without looking at the external milieu as well.

As for Nelson W. Polsby, he particularly reviews the political opposition in terms of how the opposition is expressed and encouraged within the context of United States political system.21 Interestingly, Polsby relates the provenance of political opposition with the US constitutional design and he argues that political opposition in the United States is ubiquitous, constrained and operates in a piecemeal fashion.22 Polsby further argues that the authors of the US Constitution wrote a document which explicitly provided for opposition within its very structure, seeking, as James Madison said, only to contain the effects, not to abolish the causes, of the ‘mischiefs of faction’, i.e those interests, and passions arising from interest, that might be opposed to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.23 The reason behind this constitutional allocation is to cater the needs of political opposition and the same time to propagate the idea of

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20 Ibid.,
22 Ibid.,
23 See also James Madison, Federalist Papers, 10, ‘The …causes of faction cannot be removed and…relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its effects.’ in Nelson W. Polsby, Political Opposition in the United States, p. 511.
democracy. In this context, the provenance of political opposition is really guarded, preserved and is believed to contribute towards the process of check and balance.

Jean Blondel in his studies on political opposition in the contemporary world, states that the word ‘opposition’ is used daily to account for a variety of developments; but its many meanings have not been systematically related to the differences among the political systems of the world. He analyses the interpretation of political opposition in a very restrictive way and tends to disagree with the past literatures related to the study of political opposition and states that there must be a clear cut of distinctive features rather than explanation. Blondel argues that the study of political opposition needs to be tackled comprehensively. For instance, he includes the writing of Robert Dahl in 1966 and claims that Dahl’s study is too classical and further argues that the works on the subject are comparative only in the sense that they deal with more than one country but their scope remains limited to a region or to a particular type of political system. Speaking of the compatibility of the political opposition as a concept, Blondel adds that opposition is a ‘dependent’ concept and the character of the opposition is tied to the character of the government and so to speak, notion of opposition is parasitic on ideas of government, of rule, and of authority. In order to support the statement, as maintained by J.J. Linz and A. Stepan, the existence of a state is a necessary condition for the existence of opposition. In this way, the opposition can only be operated along with the establishment of state and the nature of political opposition and the state is indeed complimentary to each other. In line with this, Blondel concludes that the strength of opposition depends on its

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26 Jean Blondel, Political Opposition in the Contemporary World, p. 463.
cohesiveness and in authoritarian regimes, cohesiveness is likely to be low, at least for such a short periods and when opposition is cohesive, the regime is in imminent danger of collapse.\textsuperscript{28} Whether the political opposition is cohesive or not, that part still does not clearly reflect the identity until a research is carried out to prove so.

Eva Lotta E. Hedman in studying the political opposition found several weaknesses to that study.\textsuperscript{29} There is an evident weakness of political opposition in much of this part of the world today whether the focus is on the commonly capitalised ‘opposition’ denoting ‘a political party opposing or on more variegated lower case ‘alternative oppositions’ often associated with so-called ‘non-governmental organizations’ of some sort to another. Hedman somehow seems to agree with Blondel and to a considerable extent, it stresses the misplaced nomenclature of the political opposition. E. Hedman further puts the study of political opposition in the framework of comparative perspective and tends to examine systematically the significance and role of political opposition by utilising four contextual variables in shaping oppositional trajectories in several countries. Those four variables include the nature of the regime, the constellation of the classes, the legacy of the (defeated) Left, and the institutions of (civil) religion.\textsuperscript{30}

Speaking of political opposition and democracy, Martin Seymour Lipset argues that toleration of opposition was the hardest thing for a new democracy to learn.\textsuperscript{31} Lipset perceives the political opposition role as a form of contribution towards the agenda of democratisation and to consolidate the advent of political opposition in the context of democracy need a determined efforts. In line with this, Stephanie Lawson states that

\textsuperscript{28} Jean Blondel, \textit{Political Opposition in the Contemporary World}, p. 486.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid, p. 580.
\textsuperscript{31} Martin Seymour Lipset, \textit{The First New Nation} (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1967).
constitutional opposition is a necessary condition for democracy.\textsuperscript{32} In this context, the role of political opposition is indeed guaranteed by the formation of constitution and at the same time in order to ensure democratic stability, it is necessary for the opposition to be incorporated into the essence of constitution.

In reaction to this, Robert A. Dahl tends to agree by stating that in his definition of polyarchy, the prerequisite for democracy is built around contestation and competition as well as the characteristics of political opposition.\textsuperscript{33} David Close in his analysis on democratisation and opposition states that political opposition is treated as a political concept and as a concept, political opposition refers to a conscious effort to keep those with state power from exercising it in a certain way.\textsuperscript{34} The controlling of power and how it is exercised has something to do with political opposition and in this context, the opposition provides a permeable action towards those who steer the political administrative gavel and also to make the ruling regime to act under the pretext of transparent.

Ghita Ionescu and Madariaga De Isabel state that the presence or absence of institutionalised opposition can become the criterion for the classification of any political society into one of two categories: liberal or dictatorial, democratic or authoritarian, pluralistic-constitutional or monolithic.\textsuperscript{35} They stress that political opposition assumes a great place in any type of political system but the degree to how it is being appropriately treated is still within the disclosed expectation. Ludger Helms in his writings attempts to relate political opposition and democracy and again he holds that democratic theory acknowledges the principle of legitimate political opposition belongs to the fundamental

\textsuperscript{34} David Close, \textit{Democratization and Opposition} (Paper presented to the XXII International Congress of LASA, Miami, Florida, 2000).
components of any liberal democracy. The position of political opposition is acknowledged throughout the pillars of democracy. In this case, democracy is not confined to a single aspect but it transcends to other dimension as well.

For instance, democratic theory demands several things like freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, rights to have a free and fair trial and rights to cast votes. The attachment of political opposition into the democratic notion ensures the political processes go smoothly. Another study on democratic politics shows that political opposition is not theoretically confined to a democratic process alone and Ian Shapiro argues that democracy is an ideology of opposition as much as it is one of government.

Obviously, political opposition not only gains its currency within the party’s performance but it extends also to governmental milieu. Helms has put forth five ways of institutionalising political opposition and he uses most of the examples from the advanced democratic states like United Kingdom, Germany, French, United States and Switzerland. There are several models of institutionalising that can be used to measure the political opposition at the constitutional level such as parliament-centred opposition with no veto and/or co-governing powers for the minority parties, parliament-centred opposition with strong veto and/or co-governing powers for the minority parties, a parliamentary presidential model of political opposition and a direct-democratic model of opposition. Those models are used to measure and analyse the position of political opposition and to what extent their position is within a set standard of procedures in each of the countries respectively.

38 Ludger Helms, Five Ways of Institutionalizing Political Opposition: Lessons from the Advanced Democracies, p. 25.
Many studies can be found in relation to the study of political opposition in Malaysia. For instance, scholar like Eva Lottie E. Hedman\textsuperscript{39} studies the political opposition in Malaysia in a comparative perspective. Under the pretext of the nature of the regime, E. Hedman argues that Malaysia has witnessed relatively low anti-regime opposition. The most notable such opposition to date has involved an Islamic youth movement, ABIM (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, or Malaysian Muslim Youth Movement), in the 1970s and avowedly Islamist party, PAS (Parti Islam SeMalaysia).

However, both ABIM and PAS have been easily contained through a combination of cooptation and repression since the 1980s and for the constellation of classes. E. Hedman argues that the plural society has left its mark upon subordinate classes in Malaysia and in fact, the Chinese and/or Malay bourgeoisie appear an unlikely suspect for purposes of providing virtually universalist leadership over subordinate classes in opposition to the entrenched UMNO-led regime. In this case, E. Hedman attempts to trace the provenance of political opposition based on two assumptions, nature of the regime and constellation of classes.

Another study conducted by Dan Slater where he clearly emphasises the position of political opposition within the context of Islamist or Islamist opposition.\textsuperscript{40} In Malaysia, Islam is the religion of majority and most of the people who embraced Islam are Malay. The roots of political opposition in Malaysia have a close affiliation with Islam as the religion of majority. Slater uses PAS as the Islamist opposition party to describe the Malaysian political setting. Besides that, Andreas Ufen looks at the transformation of political party opposition in Malaysia by arguing that the increase in the strength and cohesion of political opposition since 1998 has been caused by five combined factors: the

\textsuperscript{39} Eva Lotta E. Hedman, \textit{In Search of Oppositions: South East Asia in Focus}, p. 582.
emergence of pro-democratic segments within a multi-ethnic population, the intensified interaction of political parties and civil society forces, the impact of new media, the eroded legitimacy of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) and the internal reforms within the Islamist opposition party (PAS).41

In terms of mobilisation of political opposition, Muhammad Fuzi Omar analyses the strategies and tactics of opposition political parties in a particular period of time, from 1982-2003 and the focus is on the parliamentary strategies. He found that the opposition parties (DAP, PKR and PAS) were not effective in achieving their goals when they pursued divergent strategies. Secondly, the opposition parties did combine and pursued similar strategies and succeeded in mobilising mass support during the elections. Thirdly, the government response to the opposition actions varied and they were repressive when the opposition resorted to extra-parliamentary strategy.42

So far, many literatures have dealt with the perspective of political opposition, its transformation, strategies and tactics of mobilisation but still neither can be deduced with the identity of the political opposition in Malaysian political setting. Gordon P. Means in his analysis on political Islam in Malaysia examines the revival of opposition coalition during the Malaysia’s 2008 elections.43 Means argues that Anwar Ibrahim as the opposition leader has become the key in forging the opposition coalition and at the same time acting as an intermediary, especially between the DAP and PAS.

Means adds that the ruling government became very concerned over the role of Anwar Ibrahim in mobilising political opposition to the incumbent Barisan Nasional government led by Prime Minister Ahmad Badawi in 2008. In line with this, Hari Singh

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maintains that the role of Anwar in founding the reform movement in Malaysia indicates that Malaysian politics is undergoing a democratic transition, although the contours of such transformation remain in evolutionary mould; reformasi, and Anwar’s philosophical beliefs in particular, corresponded with this democratic wave.\(^{44}\)

The literature to that extent discussed only an individual role in political opposition without inserting the identity of political opposition within the political milieu. In terms of political sociology, Syed Husin Ali analyses the birth of multi-ethnic opposition and he holds that the Barisan Alternatif (BA), consisting of keADILan, Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM), Democratic Action Party (DAP) and PAS can be considered as being the first truly multi-ethnic political opposition coalition in Malaysia.\(^{45}\) Hari Singh, on the other hand argues that for the first time, the leading opposition parties namely PAS, DAP, PRM and PKR joined forces to issue a common election manifesto under the banner of Barisan Alternatif (BA) and this time, the opposition demonstrated a remarkable degree of cooperation and resilience in mapping out a united electoral strategy aimed at denying the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) a two-thirds parliamentary majority.\(^{46}\)

**Theoretical Framework**

Parliamentary system of government is a part of evidence that indicates the democratic procedure is properly being administered where people are allowed to cast votes in order to choose their respective representatives. This study attempts to look at Pakatan Rakyat political parties (PKR, PAS and DAP) in relation to their patterns of parliamentary behaviour. As for the point of clarification, the nomenclature of parliamentary behaviour is


treated as the unit of analysis in this study. It is essential to provide several theoretical underpinnings in guiding the flow of this study. Therefore, this study adopts Shane Martin’s Theory of Parliamentary/Legislative Behaviour for the framework of analysis.

**The Setting of Pakatan Rakyat Behaviour in the 12th Parliament, 2008-2012**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PARLIAMENTARY BEHAVIOUR</th>
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<tr>
<td>PQs*</td>
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- Parliamentary Constraints
- Oppositional Consolidation
- New Parliamentary Behaviour

*Note: This framework is based on author’s own design
*PQs refers to Parliamentary Questions
*PMs refers to Parliamentary Motions
*PB refers to Parliamentary Budgeting Process
Theory of Parliamentary/Legislative Behaviour

In *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies* written by Robert A. Dahl\(^47\), he divided several ways of political oppositions to appear within the political arena, for instance, cohesion, competitiveness, setting, identifiability, goals and strategies. These are all perceived as significant in understanding the dynamic patterns of political oppositions. In regards to the objective of this study, it has something related to what Dahl has argued under the section of “strategy” where the oppositions are expected to resort to a certain strategies for the purpose of altering or halting the conduct of the government\(^48\) and the possible outcome would probably be a setting of a new form of relationship where most of the government policies are either directly or indirectly influenced by the opposition’s strategies.

On the other hand, Shane Martin developed a comprehension of Parliamentary Questions (PQs) in a modern study of parliamentary and legislative behaviour. Martin argues that PQs are a feature of almost all national legislatures where the members table a question to a minister or to a government. It leads to a suggestion that the content analysis of PQs can uncover the role orientation of individual legislators.\(^49\) In parliamentary democracies, the roles of PQs are viable and inevitable where most of government formulated policies will be brought into the Parliament. In ensuring that the pretext of “checks and balance” is well-served, the members of the opposition parties will put forth any relevant questions to the lined-up ministers. Besides that, Martin also argues that PQs are just one of several tools that legislators can use to represent local interests.\(^50\)

\(^48\) Ibid, p. 344.
\(^50\) Ibid, p. 477.
In the case of Malaysia, it is best to refer to the legislators as the Member of Parliaments (MPs). The Legislative is one of the three branches of government after the executive and the judiciary. All laws or policies are designed and approved by the MPs. As the law-making body, MPs are responsible and accountable to the public. Within the context of Malaysian political system, MPs are directly elected by the people based on the constituencies that the MPs are assigned to contest. Once the MPs have secured the electoral victory they automatically have parliamentary access. Most of the issues found within the grassroots level are expected to be brought into the Parliament by the elected MPs. In terms of roles and the functions of PQs\textsuperscript{51}, Martin has elaborated several of them. Firstly, is the executive oversight and accountability where the government under the parliamentary system is accountable to the Parliament. It clearly indicates that as long as the party in the Parliament comfortably enjoys the majority, they will be able to impose some sort of parliamentary constraints on the MPs from the party who are the minority in the Parliament. In Malaysia, the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) has steadily enjoyed a comfortable two-thirds majority in Parliament.

As Martin observes, the accountability of the legislatures is perceived to be stronger under the presidential system such as the United States of America (USA). Secondly, the “intra-party control” where the PQs are expected to be utilised by the opposition to control the government and at the same time factions within the party will use the PQs to observe the party leadership. The utilisation of PQs are commonly initiated by the opposition party where they tend to highlight some of governmental policies and the same time PQs are used to derive a beneficial information regarding the current issues that affects the country. In Malaysia, more or less it is of the same where the opposition MPs fully utilised and

exercised their rights as the law-maker to make sure that the governmental policies will not go unnoticed except it is to be debated first.

Thirdly, to keeping tabs on multiparty government and according to Martin, multiparty government will occur under the parliamentary system when the cabinet is composed of ministers from more than one political party.\(^{52}\) When no single party is found to secure all the seats in the Parliament, that particular party will have to enter into the coalition with other parties for the purpose of governing. In Malaysia, such a case is quite rare. For instance, the Alliance consisted of UMNO, MCA, and MIC combined together and contested in the elections. Once the election is secured and they have access to the Parliament, UMNO, the Malay-dominated political party, is seen as the predominant among the Alliance members. And until today, when the Alliance has changed its name to the Barisan Nasional (BN), UMNO is seen as the superior among the rest and it has been traditionally maintained that way since.

**Conceptual Framework**

Political opposition is regarded as a ‘political party opposing and serving as a check and balance on the party in power’.\(^{53}\) In the context of Malaysian political system as it has been argued, Malaysia is a democratic country where the law recognises the existence of political parties.\(^{54}\) To a certain extent, this is true and makes sense within its embedded principle. However, the reality somehow tells differently. The emerging of the political opposition itself portrayed something which is not in line with the spirit of democracy.

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\(^{52}\) Ibid, p. 12.


Democracy as a Regime

The discourse of democracy is not something new and recent but in fact, it has been brought up to intellectual concerns since the fourth and fifth centuries BC.\(^{55}\) The discourse seems to be continuous throughout the ages regardless in which forms it assumes but still the nomenclature remains the same. The past literature also argues that democracy itself, from a theoretical stand, is put into a practical form of use where the democracy is perceived as a representative system in which free competitive elections are held to choose representatives.\(^{56}\) But in the case of Malaysia as a self-proclaimed practicing democracy and the steady rise of political opposition clearly unfolds that this type of self-proclaimed democracy is not in tandem as in the form of principle laid down by scholars who engaged in political studies. Elections are regularly held from time to time but at the same time, the current regime put certain limitation towards the practice of absolute democracy and at the same time restrict the opposition movement by using several means which are to a certain extent, deemed as too ‘political’ rather than ‘apolitical’.

Politics as a ‘System’: Revisited Gabriel Almond’s Political System

In a language of political science, the study of political system unfortunately falls within the scope of comparative politics.\(^{57}\) Many academics (academicians) have come up with their insights concerning this matter, especially political scientists where they have properly contextualized this matter based on scientific methods. Therefore, the nomenclature of

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\(^{57}\) As defined by Lowell Barrington, ‘comparative politics involves the study of such events- along with others not quite so remarkable- to gain a better understanding of the forces that drive political outcomes around the world and these political outcomes include everything from elections, constitutional reforms and policy changes, to mass protests, coups and civil wars. As a result, comparative politics is demanding’. See Lowell Barrington, *Comparative Politics: Structures and Choices* (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010), p. 2.
‘politics’ alone is deemed to be insufficient and unfit to be critically analysed unless and until it is given major attention and is inserted the word of ‘system’ and when combined the politics as well as system, it gives a new impetus towards the comprehension on how states operate within the defined framework.

The approach, however is convenient. But if it is to be dealt upon the notion of ‘state’, it requires a thorough methodological descriptive analysis. And again in the study of politics, Gabriel Almond offers a new perspective on how to integrate the notion of ‘system’ into the understanding of politics by stating that the theoretical tendency has largely taken the form of applications of ‘system’ theory to the study of politics. Given its profound complexity in measuring the extent of systematic analysis, the integration of the system into the circle of politics is somehow intermingled. Almond further states that the terms “system” has become increasingly common in the titles of texts and monographs in the field of comparative politics. Older texts tended such terms as “governments” or “foreign powers” and the use of the concept of system reflects the penetration into political theory of anthropological and sociological theory of functionalism.

The said nomenclature has been commonly used in any studies conducted or even in research. The reason being is that, the study of “system” in the circle of politics does not come in a single package. It is heavily influenced by other theories as well. In another piece of article, Almond defines political system as a system of action and that the students of political systems are concerned with empirically observable behavior. He is also concerned with norms or institutions in so far as they affect behaviour. In this sense, behaviours are indeed various and the nature is changing from time to time. Behaviour does not involve an

individual only but to an extent, it can also expand by including states, political parties, regimes, elites, civil societies and so on. To further justify, Almond points out that the emphasizing “action” merely means that the description of a political system can never be satisfied by a simple description of its legal or ethical norms.\(^6^1\) So as to say that the standards of behavioural analysis have become more sophisticated and complicated to be discerned. For instance, the formation of political parties will not be analysed within the purview of a single question but the length of its analysis should have included several questions, for instance, why they form the party and how can the party relate to other institutions, what roles can the party play in competitive electoral politics and so on. The description is not limited to a single task and not only for the simple things to answer but how the rest of environment may have contributed to the articulation of ideas and analysis. During the course of ‘term’ selection, the impediment is still and seemed to have burdened many political scientists in this respect.

Almond argues that the term “system” satisfies the need for an inclusive concept which covers all of the patterned actions relevant to the making of political decisions. Most political scientists use the terms “political process” for these purposes. The significance of these differences is simple where the difficulty with the terms “process” is that it means any patterning of action through time. In contrast to “process”, the concept of “system” implies a totality of relevant units, an interdependence between the interactions of units, and certain stability in the interaction of these units and perhaps it is best described as a changing equilibrium.\(^6^2\) The discussion has now been extended to “units”. Units and political systems are interrelated and as stated by Almond the unit of political system is the role. According to Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shills, the role is an organised sector of an actor’s

\(^6^1\) Ibid, p. 393.
\(^6^2\) Ibid.,
orientation which constitutes and defines his participation in an interactive process.\(^63\) Almond continues by stating that a political system may be defined as a set of interacting roles or as a structure of roles, if we understand by structures a patterning of interactions.\(^64\) Each components or units of analysis plays a crucial part in determining the outcome of the events. And once that particular event has been concluded, it simultaneously provides a vacuum for analysis by taking into account the framework of political system into a picture. Making it a possible analysis comes with certain conditions but unfortunately it depends on to what extent the units, roles or components get into some sort of integration in relation to the events occurred.

At this juncture, this study also attempts to re-explain briefly the direction of Malaysia’s political system as part of the Southeast Asian region. Another study that deserves acknowledgement is Robert E. Gamer. Gamer in his analysis on Southeast Asia’s political system attempts to put forth three hypotheses on way the system functions: i) Southeast Asia’s political systems are plural systems ii) Southeast Asia’s political systems have great flexibility to adjust the plural interests of their societies iii) Pluralism can contribute to the integration of the political systems of Southeast Asia.\(^65\) Malaysia has been blessed with multi-ethnic societies due to a colonial policy that took place a long time ago. As a result of colonial policy, ethnics like Chinese and Indians were brought into Malaya (before 1963 Malaysia was called Malaya).

Racial disintegration started off due to a social engineering scheme initiated under the shade of colonial system. Villages are designated places for the Malays, estates were associated with Indians as a place of living and most of Chinese inhabited in the urban

\(^{64}\) Gabriel A. Almond, ‘Comparative Political Systems’, p. 394.
areas. Gamer argues that forces – industrialisation and urbanisation – which lead to the mass society are present in Southeast Asia as they are everywhere else in the world. The analysis is indeed fixed and tally with the current condition and is empirically observed. Malaya is not an exception. Countries which experienced colonial expansion and mobilisation like Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, Philippines, Myanmar and many more also subject to this claim where most of the countries unfortunately found ‘ethnicity’ as its fundamental sources of conflicts.

And again, Malaysia is no exception. Plural societies like Malaysia operate its political institutions at the expense of communal agreement in order to avoid unwanted racial disintegration. In this respect, it can be observed that plural societies have always been challenging to administer and the same time it is difficult to cater a unified interests. This has led to some sort of serious divisions where communal societies vehemently demand to form associations that they think would represent the best out of them and the same time to make sure that the communal demands are answered. Basic communal interests are also included and to be preserved. Any approach, concerning political studies, to look from this point of view is indeed very demanding and interesting. Unity in politics has never been unified at once, diversion replaces the unification and at the same time it plays at the core of the system.

Political parties started to form and it is part of sociological justification and also as means to survive in the manner of political context. Going back to the second hypothesis referring to having a great flexibility to adjust the plural interests of societies, Gamer strongly argues that if political development is considered by people as an emulation of Western forms of government, or preservation of traditional ones; rapid modernisation of the bureaucratic structure, or prevention of change in the bureaucracy, such pessimism,
may be warranted. The argument is indeed necessary to uphold the notion of having developed in its own way. To an extent, the idea thrown is a bit of ‘conservative’.

As mentioned earlier, the context of historical patterns is more reflective of differences rather than similarities. Meaning to say, the Western forms of government, in a general manner, may have achieved a desired thought of maturity in confinement to their societies and political systems. The aim is same but the questions that arise here is, what are the beneficial means or strategies to be implemented. The probability to overcome the desired inflexibility as experienced in the previous communal interaction is once again through the formation of parties. Political parties, in nature, have a very strong proclivity getting into electoral framework. Throughout the elections held and only that remain as part of means of preserving communal mobilisation and this in no doubt justifies the philosophical aspects of achieving power. Once the power is secured, and the hard task is on how to create a political balance and mutual collective agreement.

**Political and Parliamentary Behaviour**

As one of most contested academic disciplines, particularly among the social sciences, political science is proven to be the one that cannot be neglected in terms of how the results are derived and to what extent the analysis is being made could lead to testable results and unexpected outcomes. In this terrain, it shows that politics are manifested in various ways and the way it is manifested are highly dependable based on which platforms it takes. According to Abdul Rashid Moten and Syed Serajul Islam, political activities are manifested in the political behaviour of the people and political behaviour has two

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67 Ibid, p. 179.
dimensions: psychological and social.\textsuperscript{68} They further add that, from the psychological perspective, political behaviour is found in thought, perception, judgment, attitudes and beliefs. On the other hand, the social behaviour is found in action, such as strike, demonstration, election campaign and the like.\textsuperscript{59}

Meaning to say that any policies implemented by the ruling government and also different issues in society are psychologically built-in where political views are derived from their silent attitude. One or another to indicate the extent of politics manifested in various ways. Before going further into the discourse of parliamentary behaviour, it is best to have a look first at the legislatures. Legislatures are part of governmental components where each country in this world possesses one.

As explained by Michael J. Sodaro, legislatures or parliaments are important institutions and their chief functions, especially in democracies are to make laws (sometimes in conjunction with the executive branch) and to represent the people in the lawmaking process.\textsuperscript{70} In a modern state like Malaysia, there at least exist three branches of government which are: legislative (parliament), executive and judiciary. Each of these branches serves its own function and some may be inter-related to one another. As observed by Philip Norton and Nizam Ahmed, in their studies on legislatures in Asia, they put forth a hypothesis that the capacity of the legislature to affect the outcomes of public policy will be determined by variables external to it. The first one is ‘external environment’ which consist of political culture, external patrons, the constitution, the administrative structure, the party and electoral system and the interest groups. The second one is ‘internal

\textsuperscript{68} Abdul Rashid Moten and Syed Serajul Islam, \textit{Introduction to Political Science} (Singapore: Cengage Learning Asia, 2009), p. 6.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 6.
characteristics’ which consist of the chambers, party groups, the committee, members and structure.\textsuperscript{71}

Speaking of the relations between the political culture and parliamentary behaviour, Ailsa Henderson in her study, contends that the culture of an institution can affect the behaviour of those who work within it and the way it is received by those on the outside. Within political systems, the rules and practices of a legislature, for example, can affect the behaviour of legislators and the way it is perceived by the electorate.\textsuperscript{72} The behaviour, therefore not only influenced by the internal surroundings of the parliament itself but in a way it receives some sort of attention from the outside also. Whatever happens on the outside will fortunately have an effect on the outside but the way it is transmitted depended on what kind of surroundings the political system is. Another important work is about the roles of legislative.

Kaare Strom analyses the legislative roles in parliamentary democracies. It has been stated that parliamentary roles, the behavioural patterns or routines that legislators adopt, can be viewed as strategies for the employment of scarce resources toward specific goals. The study has been concluded in a way that the parliamentary behaviour can be understood against the backdrop of four typical and hierarchically ordered objectives that parliamentarians have: reselection, re-election, party office and legislative office.\textsuperscript{73}

Selection or reselection (candidate nomination) is the very first process in the political office before get to the parliament. At this process, it depends on what kind of electoral system is practiced in each of countries. Candidates get shortlisted and this process is done by the constitutional requirements according to countries who adopt


constitution as its highest land of laws and the second goes to party’s recommendations. This stage depends heavily upon the party’s systems. The second process is election. The conduct of election is a must especially for countries with parliamentary democracies as its political basis of governing. Elections are held at the interval time and the winners are concluded. In a way, mandates are earned through the ballots and voices started to be represented according to each of constituencies elected to serve for. The third process is pretty much crucial in upholding the parliamentary democracies which is the party office. At this stage, most of the elected MPs have to give serious thought of the chances to get reselection and re-election and the conduct of this manner is possible and it depends on the behaviour within the party office.

This refers to a ‘cabinet’. In an elected government, portfolios concerning certain aspects of human life are distributed accordingly and the decision to distribute it is determined by party leader or the prime minister. In the classical Westminster tradition, this implies not only cabinet accountability to parliament, but also that members of the cabinet are drawn from the membership of the legislature (and continue to serve there).\(^\text{74}\) The final process in this stage is the legislative office. Legislative office is the final form of the benefits that drive parliamentary behaviour and legislative office. It refers to all those positions in parliament that are involved in the execution of important legislative responsibilities and which are predominantly non-partison or cross-partisan in nature.\(^\text{75}\)

After exploring some of the embedded roles of parliamentary behaviour and now there is an additional of the parliamentary role. In the work of Lieven De Winter where the analysis is made on Belgian MPs, he found that in terms of outputs and activities situated inside and outside parliament, Belgian MPs display a wide variety of behavioural patterns,

\(^\text{74}\) Ibid, p. 168.
\(^\text{75}\) Ibid, p. 169.
between but also within parliamentary groups. Belgian MPs spend nearly 30 hours a week on activities (party and pressure group work, local office, individual and collective constituency service, participation in social life and private occupation). And as far as MPs jobs outside parliament are concerned, about half of their entire time budget is allocated to activities situated inside the constituency, which is also reflected in MPs role attitudes towards their work outside parliament.\textsuperscript{76} An effort leading to a better understanding in terms of external dimensions of parliamentary behaviour is clear. In this case of study, the patterns of behaviour is examined thoroughly by including the outer aspects of political and as well as social life also.

Some people may wonder on what matters exactly the MPs have debated in the Parliament. Are there any questions thrown to one another? The answers to these questions may contribute to a significant outcome especially in analysing the profound conduct of parliamentary behaviour. According to Olivier Rozenberg and Shane Martin, Parliamentary Questions (PQs) have a history dating back at least to the first recorded PQ in the House of Lords in 1721.\textsuperscript{77} Their studies in particular put much emphasise on questions that MPs ask in the parliamentary setting. Point to be noted that legislative or parliament functions in its own way. Parliament serves as a platform where debating among the members occur, be it the ruling government or the opposition in a manner determined by rules and regulations stipulated in respect of constitutional paradigm.

Rozenberg and Martin also come up with an interesting conclusion where it highlights the heuristic potential of PQs and suggests that they should form an important unit of analysis for scholars of legislative studies. PQs offer an original and comparative


basis for measuring both legislators’ individual behaviour and legislatures’ role within the political system. A comparison between oral and written questions indicates that both the institutional designs for asking questions and the frequency of the use of the procedures are non-random and consequential. In most of the debates that take place in the parliament, questions are politically and intentionally designed with the aim of putting forth for the sake of policy implementation.

Not only that, questions are also designed to highlight some governmental inefficiencies and this action explicitly refers to a ‘check and balance’. Somehow, issues that occurred outside the knowledge of parliament are also discussed and debated during the parliamentary sessions. In Malaysia, legislative debates take place at the national level and as well as the state legislative assembly level. Not many scholars of legislative studies or political scientists as a whole have placed this issue into an academic discourse and writings.

**Extra-Parliamentary Opposition**

In a study conducted by Muhamad Fuzi Omar in relation to the mobilisation of the opposition political parties in Malaysia, an extra-parliamentary strategy is defined as “the strategies other than electoral and legislative that are being employed to alter or modify government policies and to create pressure upon the ruling party to accept certain popular demands, and to create public opinion in favour of their alternative policies or programmes.” Fuzi strongly emphasised that the oppositional mobilization was centred on its several of strategies which are considered beneficial to be part of arguments. The opposition political parties such as PAS, PKR, and DAP had opted for means other than the

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78 Ibid, p. 394.
formal ones once they had done within the parliamentary grounds. In this instant, the opposition parties had resorted to some extra-parliamentary activities, for instance, the conduct of mass political sermons (ceramah), publishing books, street demonstrations, issuing press statements and more.

On the other hand, David Bailey noted that an extra-parliamentary activity can also be understood in terms of its potential to constitute new patterns of social conflict, and ultimately changes to the socio-economic and political settlement. In regards to parliamentary conduct, such debates is not the only way to fully utilise the potentiality of the opposition to further participate in a democratic arena. But it has been extended in terms of its usage to another inevitable means such as the conduct of extra-parliamentary politics where the whole conduct is no less than the creativity of the opposition to give a considerable political challenge to the incumbent regime other than the so-called “debate” Parliament.

In regards to the theory of extra-parliamentarism, a substantial study conducted by Philip Resnick argued that the extra-parliamentarism is a form of activity where it involves some of formal political process closely associated with a popular movement. The argument is simply based on a wide practice by political movement in some countries and the way they have operated beyond the parliamentary framework. The struggle to achieve the political power is manifested through the mass uprisings under the normal circumstances and besides that, it is part of an account that the people would react aggressively when the economic situation is unstable. To some extent, Resnick opined that the extra-parliamentarism emphasised on a strain relation between the oppressed and the

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oppressor where the former would resort to a military action in order to curb the injustice from being crucially practiced. Only through this then the political order would be restored and political balances are timely achieved. Fortunately, such argument is found to be in line as Lieven De Winter noted that extra-parliamentary activities are of several forms as the behaviour of Belgian MPs appeared to be the case study.

Those extra-parliamentary activities are categorized as party work, involvement in pressure groups and other organisations, local office, constituency service, and many more. The MPs in this case do not only spend their time on parliamentary matters all the time but when it comes to the role of extra-parliamentary activities, they devoted rest of their times to directly engage with the voters in their constituents. Eventually, the MPs roles would lead to a substantial process of political socialisation when the local demands are remarkably met and materialized during the parliamentary session. Another aggressive instance suggested by John R. Wood where the extra-parliamentary opposition is a serious impediment to the stability of parliamentary democracy when it is viewed as a “populist agitations” that would lead to a street violence and governmental repression. Besides that, Wood specifically looked at the Indian state of Bihar and Gujarat where the incumbent Indira Gandhi’s government was under threat by the opposition. The element of pressurisation had forced the opposition to engage with a form of extra-parliamentary counter-measure.

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82 Ibid, p. 66.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

ARGUMENTS

1) There is a close relationship between the outcome of the 2008 Malaysian general elections and Pakatan Rakyat’s parliamentary mobilisation. Patterns of parliamentary behaviour would likely trigger some responses from the regime and at the same time would consolidate the oppositional coalition politically.

2) The opposition Pakatan Rakyat political parties (PAS, PKR, and DAP) for the first time collectively work as a single political force in the Twelfth Parliament.

Research Methodology

This is a qualitative descriptive study. According to Bruce Berg, qualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings and for qualitative researchers, they are more interested in how human arrange themselves and their settings. Moreover, this study will also look into the changing patterns of Pakatan Rakyat’s parliamentary behaviour by using the approach of ‘content analysis’. Content analysis as a research technique is frequently used among qualitative researchers. According to Klaus Krippendorff, content analysis is defined as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use. Therefore, in this study, recorded speeches and debates (Hansards) in the Parliament are treated as the primary source of data. In this respect, Hansards is defined as an ‘official document’ or a ‘recorded speech’ of the parliamentarians during the parliamentary sessions. It will be analysed in terms of its texts in order to draw

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85 Bruce L. Berg, Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences (USA: Allyn & Bacon, 2001), pp. 6-7.
out the patterns of parliamentary behaviour of Pakatan Rakyat. The rest of primary data include party manifestos, party’s official documents and letters (published and unpublished), government official documents and official electoral results from the Election Commission (EC), the database of the Merdeka Centre survey, interviews with Members of Parliament (MPs), party leaders, experts, personal political blogs and newspapers.

As argued by Angelo Romeo, blogs are part of examples of new communication and it has become a veritable social showcase.\(^87\) It indicates that the use of blogs in the field of research has become prominent. The idea of promoting the usage of blogs is probably due to its embedded nature such as political, intellectuals, comical, and some are focused on specific topic, and eccentric.\(^88\) In this study, blogs are treated as part of qualitative sources where most of parliamentarians do have their own blogs. Blogs are also utilized by them as a social platform where some of their thoughts are shared in the blogs so that the readers will get to know parliamentarians intention and position upon certain issues.

When it comes to newspapers, Micaela Waldman opines that the researchers have long employed newspapers as a unique source of information and it has been used for biographical research and the same time it offers a wealth of first-hand information.\(^89\) Surely it decisively suggests that the newspapers have the tendency to record all the events that happened while the future is remaining unknown. This study will be utilizing the newspapers as part of primary sources. Besides official documents recorded by the governmental agencies, the newspapers can also be crucial since it records most of social and political actions around us. In supporting the statement, Waldman further adds that the

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\(^{88}\) Ibid.,

newspapers provide eyewitness accounts and direct quotations from the participants and it leads to significant primary source documentation for researchers.\textsuperscript{90} Besides that, Avner Segall and Sandra Schmidt maintain that newspapers are never neutral or objective and they are always ideologically positioned and positioning and always embedded in particular ways of seeing and representing the world.\textsuperscript{91} Despite of various characteristics of newspapers, it guides us in understanding the social setting as a whole.

As for the secondary data\textsuperscript{92}, the study will heavily engage on books and scholarly articles which are to be acquired from various educational institutions such as the libraries of International Islamic University (IIUM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), University of Malaya (UM) and the National Library and also from the University flagships journals. The findings and results of this study are provided in the form of content analysis to facilitate the understanding of patterns of parliamentary behaviour of the opposition PR.

\section*{Organization of Chapters}

This study comprises of six chapters:

\section*{Chapter 1}

In this chapter, it attempts to discuss the development of Malaysian politics. Political development before pre-independence Malaya will be analysed by utilizing primary and secondary data provided in the written form of books and articles. Special attention will also be given to the development of electoral politics in Malaysia from the first federal election in Malaya until the 2008 general election.

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\textsuperscript{90} Ibid. p. 71.
\textsuperscript{91} Avner Segall and Sandra Schmidt, ‘Reading the Newspaper as a Social Text,’ \textit{The Social Studies}, Vol. 97, No. 3, 2006, pp. 91-99.
\end{flushright}
Chapter 2
In this chapter, the main focus of this study is to examine the participation of the opposition political parties, PKR, PAS, and DAP, in the 2008 parliamentary election. It will also look into the performance of the opposition parties, their electoral strategies, and manifesto. Besides that, the study will highlight the political change that occurred due to the 2008 election.

Chapter 3
In this chapter, the study will examine the patterns of behaviour of Pakatan Rakyat in the Twelfth Parliament under the pretext of parliamentary questions (PQ). Besides that, it will also examine some of parliamentary constraints encountered by Pakatan Rakyat during the session of parliamentary questions to the ministers.

Chapter 4
In this chapter, the study examines the parliamentary behaviour of Pakatan Rakyat through the conduct of parliamentary motions in the Twelfth Parliament. It will also look into the parliamentary constraints encountered by Pakatan Rakyat during the session.

Chapter 5
In this chapter, the study will examine the conduct of budgeting process in the Twelfth Parliament by focusing on the patterns of behaviour of Pakatan Rakyat political parties during the session. It will also look into the parliamentary constraints encountered by Pakatan Rakyat during the budgeting session.

Chapter 6
This final chapter is a conclusion and it will conclude the discussion.
CHAPTER 1
Malaysian Politics: An Overview of Its Development Up To 2008

Introduction
Many studies pertaining to the position of Malaysia in the framework of politics have been put forth to have a better understanding in numerous analyses conducted in order to show what kind of patterns emerge out of the system built by the political surroundings. Robert E. Gamer, in his analysis on Southeast Asia’s political systems, has narrowed down the need to have a better overview on the position of Malaysia in the context of Southeast Asia’s politics. He states that the comparison of party systems is never an easy task; the literature on the subject largely consists of laments over the inadequacy of extant schemes for such comparison.¹ As one of the developing states within the region of Southeast Asia, Malaysia as a state possesses its own traits in an explicable way. The changing dynamics in the paradigm of the developing nations have thus so far contributed towards the growing needs of defining the balance and at the same time to redress it as a new approach in understanding the whole picture.

Political Development during Pre-Independence Malaya 1957

Before ‘Malaysia’ was known as ‘Malaya’. In regards to the development of its politics before the country gained independence, Malaya used to be one of states colonised by different forms of occupations. As argued by Virginia Hooker, the arrival of the Europeans in the region is described by three eras entitled respectively, ‘The Portuguese Era’, ‘The Dutch Era’, and ‘The English Era’. They are concerned with the occupation of Melaka after the defeat of the Malay Sultanate in 1511 by a series of European trading and administrative regimes and information is not very detailed. However, the section entitled

‘The British in the Malay States, 1786-1941’ is a more expansive examination of the colonial presence’. Point to be noted that there was actually another type of occupation known as the Japanese military occupation in 1942 onwards which will be discussed later.

The Malay Peninsula has become the subject of attraction from the point of view of political history. Throughout the 16th and 17th century, it became part of the centre for the Muslim Malaccan Empire. It has been further argued that during this particular period, the embedded culture in Malacca was religiously shaped by Hindu-Buddhist ideas and values and later on the impact of Islam was slowly felt accordingly and led to the new foundation of law, rights and social contracts between the ruler and the ruled. At this stage also, the mixture of religious and culture later on proceeded to something that could impact the whole societies which resided within the defined empire.

There was an attempt made by the Europeans, especially Portuguese, to seek of external resources that could extend their longevity in terms of natural resources. As a result of encouragement by the ruler and also to a certain extent state sponsored voyage, the Portuguese started to assemble a fleet of eighteen ships and about 1,400 men marched to Malacca and the city was successfully conquered in 1511. The arrival of Portuguese fleets had marked the first European intrusion into the Malay land during that time. The Portuguese not only captured the land of Malacca but in the same time, they were pretty much inclined to have their systems implemented such as “factory-fort” system designed to sustain a monopoly mercantilist system of trade. The entire land was made a center of

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6 Ibid, p. 32.
trade and the impact of the expansion was a bit difficult for the locals where all the trading systems was abolished and replaced by the Portuguese style of trading.

To a certain extent, they even built several trading bases in order to put some sort of security around the archipelago such as Goa in Indian coast, Ambon in Moluccas and also at Timor Island, east coast of Java. The establishment of these bases depicted that the Portuguese were indeed determined in monopolising the spice trade, and later on had prompted Muslim traders to make a choice of relocation. The relocation of Muslim trade networks took place from the conquered port of Malacca to Sumatra’s eastern ports and the relocation was seen as an impetus for Aceh’s economic rise and the same Aceh’s had been assumed as the Asia’s greatest maritime power during that time.7

As has been recorded by local historians, when the Portuguese first came to Malacca, only the port and the city fell but Sultan Mahmud and his son Raja Ahmad successfully escaped and retreated to other places (Johor and Perak) to continue the Malay Sultanate era. The Malaccan Empire was completely now under the administration of military system imposed by the Portuguese.8 The Portuguese occupation in the land of Malacca did not last very long as it intended to be that way. Another major European power also set to sail as far as the Southeast Asia’s region. During the period of 15th century, there were a lot of wars in Europe involving England, Spain and Netherlands. They fought among them for the purpose of power expansion. The Netherlands or the Dutch for the first time set their fleet in Southeast Asia and posed a serious threat to the Portuguese. In 1605, Ambon was recaptured from Portuguese by the Dutch and in 1623 Moluccas felt to the

Dutch. Most of the time especially during this period, process of power consolidation was precisely carried out within the archipelago of Indonesia.

The only fortress available for the Portuguese was Malacca but it did not hold for such a long time. Later on, the Dutch resorted to a military attack on the Portuguese and in 1641, the Portuguese finally surrendered. It marked the beginning of second occupation from Europe. There were several policies implemented when the Dutch first occupied the land, monopoly system of trade was set up and contracts were put into an agreement with local rulers to supply valued products, especially spices.

Besides securing the trade of spices, the Dutch also to a certain extent implemented laws regarding trade activities. Each trading ship intending to enter the port of Malacca had to acquire passes before entering the port and conducting the trade. Apart from that, the Dutch also secured the monopoly of tin trade in Malay states by signing agreements with the Malay kings. Most of the activities which characterized the archipelago during that time was politically economics oriented. Exchanges of goods were practiced as part of bargaining process and the empire was gradually expanded. In 1600, another European player, the British came up with an idea to form the East India Company in order to promote trade in Asia. The conflicts between the Dutch and the British started to occur and later on it led to an open warfare.

In 1786, Francis Light was authorised on behalf of the East India Company to persuade the Sultan of Kedah to set up a base at the Island of Penang. Due to the current status of Kedah as the vessel state of Siam, the Sultan felt that it was indeed necessary to

11 Ibid.,
have aid from the British in case Siam attempted to attack Kedah. Based on this very reason, the Sultan agreed and the agreement was reached for the sake of Kedah’s protection in the future. Another attempt made by the European venture had indeed opened a new dimension in the process of inventing the politics of the Malay land. In 1778, the visitation of 62 British ships in Malacca was recorded. There was also a British group of traders called “Madras Trading Company” which was formed in 1766 and sailed to Aceh and then to Kuala Selangor for the purpose of selling clothes and buying tin.\(^\text{14}\)

The British traders this time came with very substantial reasons in the manner of expanding the territorial conquests by the means of economics. The commencement of ‘British Malaya’ began with the consolidation of British power in the Malay land ruled by the Malay sultanates.\(^\text{15}\) Beginning in 1870, the Malay states started to be gradually entrenched by the British. The idea behind the entrenchment was to have the Malay rulers accept the British as their ‘advisors’ and these Malay rulers were either forced or persuaded to accept the installation ideas. These advisers were known as the ‘Residents’ and acted on behalf of the Malay rulers in matters regarding the state administration and in return, the notable functions of the rulers were reduced from managing the state affairs to the matters concerning the societal customs and religious.

In other words, the system was suitably called as the residential system. This kind of system was treated by the British as the device in securing relationships with the Malay rulers. In effect, treaties reached in four Malay states such as Perak and Selangor in 1874, Negeri Sembilan came by stages between 1874 and 1895 and Pahang in 1888.\(^\text{16}\) In 1895, all of these states joined into a British-protected states called as Federated Malay States (FMS)

\(^{14}\) Mardiana Nordin and Hasnah Hussiin, *Malaysian Studies*, p. 36.


and acted as a centralised administrative form. The rest of Malay states were under the British protection were called Unfederated Malay States (UFM) such as Johor in 1885, and the rest of four northern Malay states which were under the Siamese watch until the treaty of Anglo-Siamese in 1909 where these four states later on transferred under the purview of British, 1910 for Kelantan and Terengganu, 1923 for Kedah and 1930 for Perlis.\textsuperscript{17}

The formation of FMS and UMS had thus led to some sort of British-pattern of governing where it involved most of the divided Malay states that used to operate independently based on their respective Malay rulers in each of states. The advancement of the British in the Malay land brought a new set of political system especially in the field of administration where all of the Malay states were bound to follow the advice offered by the British in matters concerning the state affairs. The reason behind was to create an idea of ‘decentralisation’ of those states and in this manner; the idea of decentralisation dominates much of the literature on Malaya in 1920s and 1930s.\textsuperscript{18} The effect of this, however, was a bit of disarray and far from uniformity.

And in these states also, the British Adviser imposed less control over the Malay Ruler and fewer British officers were placed in the administration.\textsuperscript{19} The system was indeed structurally designed by the British but the way it operated must have had the concerns of the Malay Rulers. The traditional system was never the same as it was gradually penetrated except for certain matters involving Malay sensitive issues such as customs and religion. In this case, the British had been viewed as taking very seriously the legal fiction of British rule on behalf of the Malay Rulers and their subjects. The British had thought that best thing to impose was the assimilation of the Malay character of government and due to this,

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{18} A.C. Milner, \textit{Colonial Records History: British Malaya}, p. 774.
\textsuperscript{19} Gordon P. Means, \textit{Malaysian Politics}, p. 42.
the British provided for the Malays in terms of recruiting systems into the government civil service. Another policy which was taken into account is the changing composition of ethnicity.

The British did not come alone during the colonial period. The Chinese was brought straight from the mainland of China into Malaya and the Indians was brought from India as part of encouragement to fulfil the demand of labour. The very impact of the major entrance was the obvious changing number of the Malayan population. In 1911, the Malays were still a majority in number but in 1931, the Chinese and the Indians exceeded the number of the Malays forming almost 60 percent out of the whole Malaya’s population. Most of the migrants who sought to settle down, their focus was only at the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlement (SS).

Tracing back from 1848, what happened was the grand discovery of tin in Larut districts in Perak. In response to the sudden discovery, few Chinese miners saw this as sort of prospecting in Malaya and attracted a large scale of Chinese immigrants to come to the Malay land. The British colonial occupation brought up few things concerning the development in certain aspects. Gordon P. Means, in his analysis, stated that ‘the colonial era witnessed greatly improved communications and greatly intensified exchanges with foreign cultures. While the most obvious initial changes in Malay society did not involve

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20 Civil service during the colonial times was mostly dominated by the Europeans, especially the British. The highest administrative position held by the government was the Malayan Civil Service (MCS). In order to enter into the MCS, one’s has to take an examination first and this was styled based on British university degree recruitments. For a full account on this civil service system, see Gordon P. Means, Political Islam in Southeast Asia, p. 49.
22 Straits Settlement (SS) consisting of Singapore, Penang and Malacca.
religion, the cumulative effect of improved communications gradually brought about significant changes in Malay religious institutions, beliefs and practices’.  

The idea was to improve the economic conditions in the land of Malaya without being hostile towards the religious activities. But from time to time, the transmission had become more obvious where the people started to comprehend the embedded ambience of colonial intrusion into their daily life. The situation was indeed a bit different. As argued by Means, before the British colonial took place in the hierarchy of the traditional system, the traditional Malay political system strongly emphasised the role of religion in symbolizing the unity of the state and besides that, religion also played some role in legitimising authority.  

As been proven throughout the centuries, religion was the symbol of achieving the political power. In the hierarchy of the Malay Sultanates, Islam as a religion had been utilised as means of claiming the legitimacy (throne). But it gradually changed from time to time especially with the advent of the colonial power. It showed that there was an element of interference. Matters concerning to Malay customs and Islam were the only power that the Sultans had access to.

**Malay Nationalism**

As a result of major influx which occurred, from the era of Sultanate, the Malays now living in Malaysia are the product of fairly recent migration from insular Southeast Asia. However, regardless of their diverse geographical origins of their length of domicile, today the Malays have a strong sense of communal-cultural identity and what is perhaps even

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more significant, their status as the indigenous people is not a subject for political or even academic debate.\footnote{26 Gordon P. Means, \textit{Malaysian Politics}, p. 15.} Throughout historical narratives documented on the early life of the Malays, they actually practiced a simple form of living. They had regarded that the simplicity was the only lifestyle and plus the modernisation came soon after the colonial power set foot. Most of the trade were carried out in the manner of barter. Exchanges of goods took place according to the same will of the parties simultaneously, the buyer and the seller.

For the dwellers alongside the river, food resources never dried out and in fact what they had could be sold to others as well. According to William Roff, he stated that the “Malay society was divided into two main social groups, a ruling class and a subject class. The distinction between them was based on birth and clearly demarcated by custom and belief.\footnote{27 William R. Roff, \textit{The Origins of Malay Nationalism} (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 3-4.}

Soon after the Malays had experienced at least three forms of colonial occupation chronologically, the Malays were in a position to assume a higher position in the hierarchy of society and to a more specific, the politics. At the onset of the century, the reformist of Islamic movement reached Malaya and the movement was started by Syeikh Mohammed Abduh (1849-1950), the founder of \textit{Al-Manar} periodical in Cairo.\footnote{28 Radin Soenarno, “Malay Nationalism, 1896-1941,” \textit{Journal of Southeast Asian History}, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1960, pp. 1-28.} In Malaya, an initiative of the Islamic movement was taken by Shaykh Al-Hadi soon after he returned from Cairo in 1904.

In July 1906, a new Malay periodical entitled \textit{Al-Manar} (The Leader) emerged in Singapore. This periodical was started by a group of four Malay-Muslims. They were
Shaykh Mohd Tahir b. Jalaluddin Al-Azhari from Minangkabau, the first editor; Sayyid Shaykh b. Ahmad Al-Hadi, a Malacca-born Malay-Arab; Haji Abbas b. Mohd Taha, the second editor and Shaykh Mohd Salim Al-Kalali, an Achehnese who was director of Al-Imam during its first two years.\(^{29}\) The first concern of *Al-Manar* was with religion and indirectly with the discourse of social issues, even less with political change. Most of the attention was given to the condition of Malay society during that period. Much of the debates recorded by *Al-Imam* concerned the negative position of the Malays such as the backwardness of the Malays, their domination by alien races, their laziness, their complacency, their bickering among themselves and their inability to cooperate for the common good.

The discourse inside the *Al-Imam* did not only touch the Malay attitudes but in a way the journal offered a reform system, according to religion, as the practical solution towards the improvement of Malay society. One of it was the focus on religious education where the mixture of Arabic and English modern subjects shall be taught.\(^{30}\) One of the group members, for instance, Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin, was closely associated as the Islamic reformer in Malaya for his contribution towards the consolidation of Malays social conditions. Tahir was not really well-versed in regards to social and political works as he was with Islamic studies and therefore he did not produce any major piece concerning the Malay problems.\(^{31}\)

But what he actually contributed was the attempt to put the defined Malay problems by providing an Islamic solution towards that particular matter. Tahir put forth the concept of “true” Islam by laying down the essence from the Quran and Sunnah without the

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\(^{30}\) Ibid, pp. 58-59.

admixture of un-Islamic beliefs and practices. Here, it could be understood that Muslims living in Malaya would have to adopt the values derived upon the Divine Scripture and put it into the form of practice. Tahir further added that ‘the sole basis in distinguishing the “pure” Islam from the “tainted” Islam was the Quran and Sunnah’. In practice, any innovations in religious practice must be rejected except if the innovations are allowed in an Islamic legal way.32 Another argument put forth by Tahir was the negative aspects that surrounded the Malays.

Religious reform was indeed a necessary thing to commit for the Muslims.33 Dating from 1906 till 1926, Malay attitudes passed through their first stage, the religious stage, as argued by Radin Soenarno.34 Soenarno asserted that the action of reform was naturally inevitable. And the intended reform also would lead to a political consciousness and as well as political questions. In 1920, there was a debate concerning politics and religion of Islam in Singapore through the vernacular Malay press.35

The debate was between two sides. The first side known as Kaum Tua (Old Faction), representing the idea of Malay conservatives and the other side known as Kaum Muda (New Faction), representing a strong sense of reform, deriving from Egypt and Al-Manar circle. It also propagates the idea of ‘modernist Islam’, deriving the values from the Islamic sources and the movement of pan-Islamic unity.36 In addition, the Kaum Muda had foreseen the tremendous needs of reform their own fate and through the educational efforts of some of the members in Kaum Muda, the radical ideas and methods of the new generation of Muslim thinkers like Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida were introduced to

32 Ibid, p. 64.
33 Ibid.,
35 Gordon P. Means, Political Islam in Southeast Asia, p. 76.
36 Ibid.,
the Malay-Muslims of the peninsula.\textsuperscript{37} Before the period of Japanese occupation in Malaya, the Malays started to realize the need to have a formal association and political groups.

In 1934, Persatuan Sahabat Pena (Penpals Association) was founded by Shaykh Al-Hadi with the aim of pooling the ideas among the Malay nationalists and most of them were the younger generation.\textsuperscript{38} As a result of this formation, it had attracted young Malays to engage in the process of exchanging ideas among them and also to voice out their dissenting voices about the fate of the Malay Muslims. The meeting of ideas from people of different background led to the formation of the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Young Malays Association/ KMM). Its establishment in 1938 was an initiative of a group of people such as Ibrahim Yaakob (president), Onan Haji Siraj (vice-president), Abdul Karim Rashid (secretary), Ishak Haji Muhammad, Ahmad Boestamam and Sultan Djenain.\textsuperscript{39} Soenarno in his analysis on Malay nationalism argued that the formation of KMM had its own significance in a number of aspects.

Most of the leaders in the KMM were ‘self-made’ in that they emerged out of their own conviction and struggle. This was quite distinct from the leadership of Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (Malay Union of Singapore/ KMS).\textsuperscript{40} Leaders in KMS were all involved in the government sector. Muhamad Eunos Abdullah, for instance was appointed to the Municipal and later to the Legislative Councils before he founded the Union to back him. The KMM leaders on the other hand, were independent individuals without having any governmental appointments.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, pp. 27-28.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{40} Radin Soenarno, Malay Nationalism, 1896-1941, p. 18.
It did not pledge its loyalty to the Sultan nor to the government as had been done by the other Malay associations. In the early years of its existence, their main focus was only to spread the ideology to the people of ‘low class subjects’ and also to the non-English educated.\textsuperscript{41} The essence of political ideologies promoted by the KMM began to assume a place among the Malays. In 1938, KMM became a group of left-wing nationalist and discourses on Malay “nation” was circulated through the press. However, the discourse did not evolve into an ideal polity as long as the people were loyal to the British as the sole of protector.\textsuperscript{42} Not many would have agreed to what was preached by KMM. Adding to this, KMM was branded as a political rival to the Malay organizations associated with the Malay Congress and it openly attacked the Sultans for having “sold the country to the British”.\textsuperscript{43}

An open confrontation persisted and KMM appealed and promised to the people that Malay political power would be secured by dismissing the British administration from Malaya. Not only that, KMM also came up with an idea of unification between the two lands: Malaya and Indonesia, into a union. Many were attracted to the idea of unification especially immigrants from Indonesia. And before the Japanese had full control over Malaya, British perceived this resistance as an inevitable and therefore they were afraid that the KMM would cooperate with all British enemies and for the purpose of containment before the matter could be realised, all the KMM activists were imprisoned in 1940. They were set free by the Japanese.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{42} William R. Roff, \textit{The Origins of Malay Nationalism}, p. 235.
\textsuperscript{43} Gordon P. Means, \textit{Malaysian Politics}, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.,
Japanese Occupation in Malaya, 1941-1945

The Japanese attacked Malaya on December 8, 1941. The Malays, however had played significant role in defending Malaya and Singapore during the Japanese encroachment. Throughout the occupation that lasted for 3 years and 6 months, the Japanese army had to anticipate and to face some sort of inevitable threats in the form of guerrilla-style warfare posed by the Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) in which most of the members dominated by the communists and also influenced by Kuomintang (KMT) ideology. With the advent of this new ‘Eastern’ power (the Japanese), it changed the surrounding conditions of which the British had built.

As a matter of fact, the British had suffered a serious setback. As for the Malays, the situation was a bit different than the Chinese had experienced. The Japanese precisely knew that the Malays embraced Islam as a religion and therefore some of decisions were taken out of respect towards the Malay customs and matters concerning religious activities and those policies were called as ‘non-interference’ policy. Under these implemented policies, much of what had been left by the British was preserved by the Japanese. Matters related to the Sultans for instance, were to be maintained that way. All of the Sultans in each of their states were to be remained as the Head of State and Head of Islam.

47 When the British warships of HMS Repulse and Prince of Wales were made sank by the Japanese, the British had to expect that the game was over. The reality behind was the inability of the British to defend Malaya, Singapore or Hong Kong due to the substantial facts their only warships had been put to an end and gone. In Europe, the same thing that happened was the advances of Nazi forces and in terms of speed and efficiency, the British was incomparable to what the Japanese and the Nazi had. See Farish A. Noor, *Islam Embedded*, p. 33.
And as long as the Sultans did not go against the Japanese order, their status was to be preserved until and unless the Sultans go against the Japanese. Social conducts related to the Sultans was to be monitored by the Japanese governors. In the same time, the Japanese also provided an advisor to each of Sultans in the states and as to what had once been practiced by the British Residential system. This new administration witnessed that the Sultans were provided with honours, titles and stipends by the Japanese and it was formally initiated during the conference involving Sultans in January 1943 held in Singapore.49 During the occupational period, another form of groups were about to set fire against the Japanese. Before the advent of World War II, the relationship between the British and the Parti Komunis Malaya (Malayan Communist Party/ MCP) was profoundly sour. Any activities connected with the PKM were immediately declared an illegal.

PKM’s movement to a certain extent was restricted on the basis that it could influence the Malayan people and spread the ideology brought from the mainland (China). The Japanese advancement in Malaya had caused an impasse for the British military and local fighters. Realizing this matter could get worse as it was, the MCP started to approach the British offering terms of mutual agreement involving military joint-venture.50 At first, the British disagreed with the offer and refused to take any mutual military action with the PKM. But after series of events causing the upside down of the Malaya and finally the British agreed to cooperate with the PKM and the rest of Chinese groups including Kuomintang.

On January 3, 1942, Sir Shenton Thomas, Governor of Strait Settlements and High Commissioner of Federated Malay States, had agreed towards the new series of military

49 Ibid, p. 108.
cooperation soon after it was approved by Lord Moyne, the Secretary of States for the Colonies.\textsuperscript{51} Series of discussions took place for the purpose of defeating the Japanese.

In fact, the cooperation between the KMM and the Japanese had taken place even before the actual invasion in 1941.\textsuperscript{52} A tactical coalition was forged between the PKM and the British where most of the manpower provided by the PKM and the British provided military training.\textsuperscript{53} Later on, a number of Chinese youth were sent as trainers at 101 Special Training School (101 STS) in Singapore. Some of 200 men were given military training and later on they were called as Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA).\textsuperscript{54} Series of guerrilla warfare were launched effectively by this group.

Malay radicals were persuaded by the Japanese administration to the extent that they could contribute something useful for the Japanese strategies in the form of paramilitary organisations.\textsuperscript{55} Due to this, Ibrahim Yaacob cooperated with the Japanese. It all started with the KMM, especially Ibrahim to play a “double-agent” role (supporting the Japanese in one hand and supporting the British on the other hand). The motive was not only to advance his personal interests but also the interests of KMM and Malay Independence.\textsuperscript{56}

On 13 August 1945, the Japanese finally had ended its occupation by surrendering to the British officers. It marked the end of the Japanese era in the Malaya. In Southeast Asia alone, the cost had been unevenly spread. In Indochina, for instance, it was recorded

\textsuperscript{51} Sir Shenton Thomas writes to Lord Moyne, the Secretary of States for the Colonies, in CO 273/669. Quoted in Oong Hak Ching, p. 131.
\textsuperscript{52} Farish A. Noor, \textit{Islam Embedded}, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{54} Virginia Hooker, \textit{A Short History of Malaysia: Linking East and West}, p. 182.
\textsuperscript{55} Farish A. Noor, p. 35.
that over one million Indo-Chinese were killed during the occupation. In Malaya, the Chinese had suffered too much. Thousands had been killed or tortured, imprisoned and forced to become sex slaves for the Japanese army.\(^{57}\)

With the success of the Allied forces in making inroads to Southeast Asia, it gradually opened a way for them especially the American and the Australian forces to penetrate some parts within Southeast Asia under the purview of the Japanese. In the 1945, two of Japan cities in Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed by the American forces. Thus, the Japanese surrendered unconditionally and most of Borneo parts were liberated by the Australian forces and arrangement was put into motion for the future government.\(^{58}\) It was believed that the rice consumption was diverted towards the military use during the transition period of the Japanese proclamation of surrender.\(^{59}\)

**Malayan Politics and Malayan Union in the Post-Japanese Occupation**

On 15 Augusts 1945, a British Military Administration (BMA) was formed soon after the defeat of the Japanese. The idea behind the formation was the restoration of a civilian and effective government of Malaya and Singapore. The British planned on how to accommodate all the races living in Malaya that suit with the proposed policies and each of races are entitled to citizenship. Under the new circumstances, negotiation had to be made between the British and the Malay Sultans over the cause of unification (Malayan Union) in the Malay states.\(^{60}\) Within the context of Southeast Asian politics, the mood was inevitably anti-colonial. Following the struggle of Soekarno and Hatta, Indonesian was proclaimed

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\(^{57}\) Farish A. Noor, *Islam Embedded*, p. 43.


Independent in 1945, while in Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh initiated the Vietnamese Revolution and in India, the mobilisation towards the Independence was highly joined by the people.

Thus, in Malaya, the British sought to implement a standardised system which would unite all political entities. While the discussion on the colonial agenda was taking place, another political development had taken place in the midst of transitional debates (Malayan Union). Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (PKMM)\(^{61}\) was formed on 17 October 1945. PKMM was the first Malay nationalist party.\(^{62}\) PKMM’s formation was followed by its first congress held in Ipoh, Perak on 30 November until 3 December 1945 and its constitution was approved on the same day.\(^{63}\) Among the notable person who mobilised the PKMM was Mokhtaruddin Lasso who served in the MPAJA during the Japanese occupation.

Later on PKMM and KMM merged together. KMM was revived by Dr. Burhanuddin Helmy\(^{64}\) through the establishment of party headquarters in Ipoh and began publishing newspapers to spread the KMM’s doctrine.\(^{65}\) Due to its radical-based approach, the British granted semi-official recognition as a spokesman for the Malays to discuss issues concerning the citizenship within the framework of Malayan Union. PKMM, in a statement, stated that Malaya is part of Indonesia. This stand was also clearly pronounced by the KMM led by Ibrahim and Kesatuan Ra’ayat Indonesia Semenanjung (Union of Peninsular Indonesian/ KRIS).

\(^{61}\) PKMM stands for Malaya Malay Nationalist Party.
\(^{62}\) Farish A. Noor, Islam Embedded, p. 46.
\(^{64}\) For a full account on Dr. Burhanuddin Helmy, see Ramlah Adam, \textit{Burhanuddin Al-Helmy: Suatu Kemelut Politik} (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1996).
\(^{65}\) Gordon P. Means, \textit{Malaysian Politics}, p. 89.
Since Malayan Union was introduced by the British Labour Party, it attempted to accommodate the need of having a structured system of administration and to designate the Malay land as the most strategic location in Southeast Asia. In January 1946, the White Paper outlining the proposals of Malayan Union was made public and subsequently it caught the attention of most people who seemed to oppose it. One of the obstacles was the communal structure embedded in Malaya. As stated by Victor Purcell, racial diversities cannot be swept aside by a mere pronouncement of policy. The clarification was made on the basis of racially equal structure and to what extent that the Malays would have to compete with the Chinese on the basis of equal terms.

At the onset, Sir Harold MacMichael was sent from Britain to Kuala Lumpur on October 11, 1945 to further negotiate the Malay Rulers regarding the proposals of Malayan Union. Anxiety over the contents had led the people who viewed it as something which is must be brought upon the knowledge of public before it gets to be fully implemented. As outlined in the proposals, the British sponsored-scheme of Malayan Union sought to change the fundamental belief which the Malays held before. Malayan Union provided common citizenship to all races and it virtually abolished the power of their Sultan and their state officers and centralized administration under British officials. The non-Malays had hoped to be equally treated especially in matters regarding the citizenship. This had caused inevitable dissatisfactions among the Malays as they saw this as an attempt initiated by the British to allay the fears of the non-Malays by including them part of the Malayan Union proposals.

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When what were laid out in the proposals did not match the needs of the Malays, anti-colonial feeling was aroused throughout Malaya. Malay newspapers such as Warta Negara, Majlis and Utusan Melayu were mobilized as a medium of channelling their dissenting voices and letter of editors published in the columns for the purpose of voicing out their opinions. The effect became became clear and demonstrations were organised throughout Malaya in several major cities. The attempt made by the British to uphold the notion of Malayan Union was seen as an effort to deny the Malays right and to reduce the country’s status to a colony.

Realising this had begun to challenge the normal circumstances, in Johor, the opposition to Malayan Union was mobilised by the Sultan, his adopted son and political advisor, Dato’ Onn bin Ja’afar as well as after that the first Malay Congress was held at the Sultan Sulaiman Club in Kuala Lumpur on 1-4 March 1946. The Congress was officially initiated by the Sultan of Selangor and about 152 delegates from 41 Malay political organisations had attended. PKMM attended the Congress but it had its own different views on the subject matters. As a result of serious discussion that took place in the Congress, Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu (PEKEMBAR) was formed but for a suitable title, it was named as the United Malays Nationalist Organisation (UMNO). Later on, the Second Malay Congress held on 11-12 May 1946 in Johor. During the session, UMNO was officially launched at the Istana Besar in Johor Bahru on 11 May 1946 and

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71 Farish A. Noor, Islam Embedded, p. 49.
72 During the first month of UMNO’s establishment, Dato’ Onn as the President, had been vested by the General Assembly with full powers concerning the Anglo-Malay constitutional negotiations. Dato’ Panglima Gantang was selected as the first Secretary General in May 1946. For a full account on UMNO’s history, see: A.J. Stockwell, ‘The Formation and First Years of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), 1946-1948,’ Modern Asian Studies, Vol. 11, No. 4, 1977, pp. 481-513.
Dato’ Onn Ja’afar, a Johorean aristocrat, was made the first president.\textsuperscript{73} Later on, the opposition bloc (including the Rulers) boycotted the installation of Sir Edward Gent as the Governor.

The British had to be very careful due to the fact that the opposition would lead into fragmented blocs involving the pro-Indonesian radicals and to a certain extent the PKM’s proclivity in politicising issues.\textsuperscript{74} Finally, after facing a hard time in consolidating the proposals, the British had to abandon the scheme which they considered as unfit to be implemented in the midst of robust opposition.

The Malayan Union proposals was not only the beginning of the British attempt to impose a centralised administrative system upon the Malaya even though much of the fierce debate was raised in regards to citizenship arrangement and it could not be materialised. Meaning to say that the Malayan Union proposal was changed to something else. The Malay Rulers and the newly form United Malays National Organization (UMNO) had a discussion among them for replacement of Malayan Union proposal and it was carried out behind closed doors and the session particularly focused on the representation of the Malay community. Most of the people who involved in the circle of meeting were the Colonial Office, the Governor-General Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, Governor Sir Edward Gent, the Malay Rulers and representatives of the United Malay National Organizations.\textsuperscript{75} At the end, the Colonial Office agreed to the replace the Malayan Union proposal with a new form of political structure as discussed before. The new proposal was the drafting of a

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, pp. 49-50.
\textsuperscript{75} Gordon P. Means, \textit{Malaysian Politics}, p. 55.
new constitution for a federation of all the Malay States and the Straits Settlements, excluding Singapore, which would remain a British Colony.\textsuperscript{76}

On 1 February 1948, as a result of negotiation, a new federation known as Persekutuan Tanah Melayu (Federation of Malaya) was proclaimed. The Federation of Malaya was seen as an indirect effort of the British administration to solve the encountered problems especially in maintaining effective centralised control and to preserve the prewar privileges of the Malays.\textsuperscript{77} The contents were indeed different than what had been implemented in Malaya before. Under this newly implemented federal agreement, there was to be a Majlis Raja-Raja (Conference of Rulers) and the power to consider legislation introduced in the federal legislative council was confined within this body.

At the very least, this new arrangement had improved in terms of its contents where it could satisfy the need of Malayan people, especially the Malays. The major predicament to this new federation agreement was the inevitable feedback from the non-Malays. They became alarmed that their rights would be denied and also a possible reversion to the pre-war system of colonial rule with its openly “pro-Malay” policies.\textsuperscript{78} Even before that, there had existed an opposition to the outcome of the negotiation of the Federation of Malaya where another group was put into a formation known as the Pan-Malayan Council of Joint Action (PMCJA), an interracial movement of organizations favouring the immediate establishment of democratic political institutions in Malaya, made known its opposition.\textsuperscript{79} Not only PMCJA, but the rest include also the Pusat Tenaga Ra’yat (PUTERA).

\textsuperscript{76} Virginia M. Hooker, \textit{A Short History of Malaysia: Linking East and West}, p. 188.
\textsuperscript{77} Mohammad Agus Yusoff, \textit{Malaysian Federalism: Conflict or Consensus} (Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2006), p. 54.
\textsuperscript{78} Gordon P. Means, \textit{Malaysian Politics}, p. 55.
Together with the left-wing Malay leaders and non-Malay politicians were mutually set to oppose the idea of the Federation.\textsuperscript{80} PMCJA was at that time under the leadership of Tan Cheng Lock. Later on, PMCJA changed its name to the All-Malayan Council for Joint Action (AMCJA) on August 1947. During its early formative stage as the opposition movement to the Federation of Malaya, there was a noticeable proclivity for the members having their own opinions. For instance, the radical Malay nationalists had to disagree over few embedded issues within the organization.

They could not accept the ideas of having the citizenship to be granted to the non-Malays and unrestricted franchise to be given to all Malayan citizens.\textsuperscript{81} The problem being was to achieve a unified position within the defined communal framework. Soon after the disagreements materialized, the Malay radicals came to the thought of unifying the entire radical and Malay nationalist parties and movements in the country under the single banner of coalition. Conference was held by PKMM in Kuala Lumpur on 22 February 1947 and invited the other Malay organisation, such as the Angkatan Pemuda Insaf (API), Angkatan Wanita Sedar (AWAS), Barisan Tani (BATAS) and Gerakan Angkatan Muda (GERAM). At the end of this meeting, it resulted a new formation known as Pusat Tenaga Rakyat (People’s Movement Centre/PUTERA).\textsuperscript{82}

\textbf{Road to Independence of August 1957}

Indonesia for the first time in August 17, 1945 declared Independent by Soekarno and thus formed the Indonesian republic style of government with him as president and Hatta as vice

\textsuperscript{81} Farish A. Noor, \textit{Islam Embedded}, pp. 52-53.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.,
In Malaya, the case was to be different as series of negotiations took place between the locals and the colonial powers and uncertainty had sometimes influenced the course of actions and it triggered amount of debates among the Malayan people.

Not only that, there was a disturbance caused by the MCP that had changed the Malayan political environment. Central Committee of MCP in their meeting on Mac and early June 1948 had decided to launch an armed insurgency for the solely aim of establishing communist republic in Malaya. Later, on June 16, 1948, the communists had killed three European farmers at Sungai Siput, Perak. Soon after the news reached the British, on June 16, Sir Edward Gent declared an emergency covering several areas which was believed as the communist’s stronghold. The after effect was a major attempt by the British and thus it led to the emergence of an authoritarian state. The British implemented several draconian laws which have been implemented. One of it was the Emergency Regulations of 1948 and this was part of justification for the British administration to curb any suspected unlawful activities within the local domain. Soon after the Emergency was declared, the communist resorted to several strategies of mobilisation for the purpose of capturing and overthrowing the British administration from Malaya.

First, the MCP attacked a number of areas which was regarded as significance economic resources (tin mining and rubber estates) including police station and remote villages. Second, it attempted to consolidate its organisational structure and recruited armies by training new cadets. Third, the MCP threw its focus on several strategic areas, for instance towns and destroyed communications and logistics in which they believed that it

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86 Ibid.,
had any importance to the British economics sources.\textsuperscript{87} The PKM succeeded in creating a chaotic situation all over Malaya and the embedded situation was heavily alarmed.

Indeed, the British administration could not have foreseen this matter as it was all spontaneously occurred. In the following years, the PKM made a bold attempt and in fact they succeeded. Sir Henry Gurney, a British High Commissioner of Malaya, was assassinated by the MCP in October 1951. Thus, it led to the increase of casualties involving the high ranked British officer. At the same time, people were afraid of the event. Gurney’s successor, General Sir Gerald Templer, was appointed as the new High Commissioner and tasked as the director of operations.\textsuperscript{88} Templer was a man of strategy and he was provided with exceptional powers of authority. He began the anti-communist campaign in order to curb the PKM’s mobilisation and gave hope to the Malayan people.

Political activities were not so encouraging due to the Emergency declared by the British administration. This had provided a space for UMNO to dominate local political terrain in the midst of unstable political atmosphere in Malaya.\textsuperscript{89} Back to 1948 where the sense of communalism was initially aroused due to debates over the Federation of Malaya between the ardent Malay supporters of the pre-war conditions in Malaya and the non-Malays who felt that the philosophy of equality should be included in the Malayan Union proposal, but soon after the Emergency began, the disappearance of non-communal parties such as multi-racial AMCJA-PUTERA from Malayan political scene was slowly materialised.\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{87} Ho Hui Ling, ‘Strategi Pergerakan Komunis Dan Parti Komunis Malaya (PKM), 1920-1989,’ p. 91.
\textsuperscript{88} Virginia M. Hooker, \textit{A Short History of Malaysia: Linking East and West}, p. 195.
\textsuperscript{89} Farish A. Noor, \textit{Islam Embedded}, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{90} Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘The Communist Insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-90: Contesting the Nation-State and Social Change,’ p. 139.
The Chinese was recorded as the highest in terms of casualties caused by the PKM as compared to other races. Malay press, on the other hand pressurized the Chinese by referring to their stands towards the communist. Communalism as an embedded issues since the debates of Malayan Union proposals and Federation of Malaya took place, it was afraid that this matter would get worse if it is not to be resolved by the British administration. While assessing the road to Malayan Independence, communal politics to a certain extent and in fact, had played a remarkable role in determining the course of the pre-Independence politics. By all means, the British had to sort out this matter and at the same time to formulate communal-based policy which was believed would prevent the communal gaps.

Taking into account that the Sino-Malay relations would enter into a new complex framework, the Commissioner-General, Malcolm MacDonald, called upon Malay and Chinese leaders to sit down together at Penang to bring forth a necessary solution to avoid further any expected communal tensions. On January 1949, a committee was set up consisting of five Malays and four Chinese with Mr Malcolm MacDonald acting as “liaison officer”. This committee was known as the Communities Liaison Committee (CLC). This newly established CLC laid down several objectives pertaining to the inter-racial collective efforts to put down any communal barriers and the same time to apply non-communal approach towards politics in Malaya.

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91 Ibid, p. 140.
93 A local political historian argues that CLC exhibited a model of ‘consociationalism’ where political leaders from different ethnic groups had an equal opportunity in discussing matters and finding solutions for intercommunal disparities. For a full account on the establishment of CLC, see: Joseph M. Fernando, ‘Elite Intercommunal Bargaining and Conflict Resolution: The Role of the Communities Liaison Committee in Malaya, 1949-51’, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, Vol. 43, No. 2, 2012, pp. 280-301.
The British realized that the CLC was a suitable platform for the Malayan inter-
communal groups for the sake of political stability and also to negotiate terms and solutions
to communal issues. The CLC was also responsible to make several recommendations on
areas such as citizenship, education policy and the introduction of elections to local and
federal councils and economic policies to aid the Malays.\textsuperscript{94} By the time General Templer
assumed office in 1952, his local government policy started to be executed. Meaning to say
that the introduction of election was carried out at the local government levels especially in
Malacca, Penang and Kuala Lumpur and as the leading Malay political party, UMNO, had
made inroads into the Municipal Elections.\textsuperscript{95}

Before it had done so, UMNO was caught in the midst of internal crisis involving
its president, Dato’ Onn, in regards to issues of UMNO’s membership. Dato’ Onn believed
that UMNO should open its membership to non-Malay members but after his ideas was not
very well accepted by the members, Dato’ Onn opted to quit from UMNO and set up a new
party in 1951 called the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP). UMNO saw this as an
electoral challenge before the advent of Kuala Lumpur municipal election and for the sake
of consolidating its party, UMNO made a political pact with the Malayan Chinese
Association (MCA) and it was called the Alliance.

In February 1952, the Alliance, consisting of UMNO and MCA had to face the
IMP, under the leadership of Dato’ Onn. As a matter of fact, in the 1952 Kuala Lumpur
municipal election, the Alliance found its election techniques of securing the votes and it
remained to be that way since. An agreement was reached between the UMNO and MCA

\textsuperscript{94} Gordon P. Means, Ibid. p. 123.
\textsuperscript{95} Francis G. Carnell, ‘Constitutional Reforms and Elections in Malaya,’ Pacific Affairs, Vol. 27, No. 3, 1954,
pp. 216-235.
leaders over the electoral representations where the UMNO candidates were put up in Malay constituency and the MCA candidates were put up in Chinese constituency.\(^{96}\)

The Alliance had anticipated of two basic political facts. First, the segregation patterns in Malayan plural societies existed between the Malays and the Chinese; the two communities everywhere whether in urban or rural areas, tend to live in distinct groups. Second, those early days when elections in Malaya was introduced, voting behaviour is inclined towards a communal basis. The result of the 1952 Kuala Lumpur municipal election was an electoral disaster for the IMP. The Alliance secured nine out of twelve seats contested while IMP managed to obtain two seats and an Independent got one seat.

The Alliance victory had proven the concerted efforts and at the same time it succeeded in denying an electoral path for the IMP, especially Dato' Onn.\(^ {97}\) Political parties contested in the elections had secured legislative seats, except for the IMP. The Malay-Chinese understanding of an electoral agreement had opened up the Alliance eyes to mobilise further to secure future elections and to gain support from inter-communal groups. By February 1953, after a series of meetings between Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tan Cheng Lock, their only concerns fell for the idea of setting up of liaison committees between the local branches of UMNO and MCA.\(^ {98}\) The Alliance had to realize one thing if they really wanted to represent the Malayan people and the same time to further negotiate the terms of Independence, by all necessary political means, they would have to adopt some sort of communal integration among them in the form of political harmony and electoral understanding.

\(^{96}\) Ibid, p. 222.
\(^{98}\) Francis G. Carnell, ‘Constitutional Reforms and Elections in Malaya,’ p. 223.
Without imposing those things, their efforts would be such a waste. In April 1953, UMNO’s General Assembly was held at Malacca to consider the Alliance’s draft plan for Federal Elections.\(^99\) This time, the idea of having the Federal elections was inevitable as the needs of gaining Independence seemed to be just around the corner and also as a part of the British efforts to prepare Malayan people for the self-government in the future. Finally, the first elections to the Legislative Council of the Federation of Malaya took place on July 27, 1955.

It was held eighteen months after the publication of the Report of the Committee appointed to examine the question of Elections to the Federal Legislative Council, thirteen months after the submission of the Report of the Constituency Delineation Commission recommending boundaries for the Federation’s 52 constituencies and just over nine months after the beginning of the period of the registration of electors.\(^100\) The British idea of preparing the Malayans to govern their selves through the conduct of elections was made available. It suggested that the idea of British ‘colonial knowledge’\(^101\) had a profound impact and significance upon the structure of Malayan political system. As the first 1955 federal elections before the attainment of Independence, it was profoundly proven that the election was a strict competition between the Alliance and its opponents. The Alliance

\(^99\) Ibid.,
\(^101\) Colonial Knowledge (CK) is a very crucial concept in social sciences. In a way, colonial knowledge has accentuated the idea of intellectual hegemony within the realm of social sciences as a whole. Not only that, it also served as a platform for a profound determination of social engineering involving the rulers and the ruled. Shamsul (1999) argues that colonial conquest was not just the result of the power of superior arms, military organization, political power, or economic wealth, it was also the result of a cultural invasion in the form of a conquest of the native ‘epistemological space’ or the process of dismantling the native thought system. Besides that, this study argues that the formation of native political system was heavily influenced by the colonial knowledge to the extent that the colonial knowledge was inevitable from the basic structure and the social designation of the decolonized society, for instance, the Malayan people. For a full account on colonial knowledge, see: Shamsul A.B, ‘Colonial Knowledge and the Construction of Malay and Malayness: Exploring the Literary Component,’ \textit{International Journal of the Malay World and Civilisation}, Vol. 17, 1999, pp. 3-17; Bernard S. Cohn, \textit{Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: the British Rule in India} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
consisted of United Malays National Organization (UMNO), Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). The rest of parties included the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP), Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP), Labour Party of Malaya (LPM), The National Association of Perak, Perak Progressive Party (PPP), Perak Malay League and Province Wellesley Labour Party.\textsuperscript{102} The Alliance was seen as the leading party in the run up to the elections. As agreed by the combination of three political parties, the Alliance in their struggle had pursued self-rule more aggressively than any other party.

During the campaign, the Alliance candidates promised to push for full self-rule due to the talks that held on January 1956 involving the Alliance leaders and the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London.\textsuperscript{103} It was expected that the Alliance would win the elections decisively. Most of the voters were persuaded by the Alliance to vote for the independence of Malaya and indeed the Alliance had secured 51 out 52 seats contested.\textsuperscript{104} According to Means, ‘it became apparent from the first returns that the Alliance had engineered a landslide victory that threatened to put every constituency in its column.’\textsuperscript{105}

The victory of the Alliance had pretty much sent a clear message throughout Malaya. Its appeal towards the voters had been the story of success and for instance, the Alliance was able to deny its opponents through an electoral platform. An initial assumption would be that the Alliance had the trust of British in steering the country in the future. The Alliance only had one defeat in a seat lost to Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP) candidate in the constituency of Krian, Perak.\textsuperscript{106} The total votes that the Alliance could

\textsuperscript{102} According to the Report On The First Election Of Members To The Legislative Council, the Province Wellesley Labour Party did not put up any candidates.


\textsuperscript{104} Gordon P. Means, \textit{Malaysian Politics}, p. 166.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.,

garner was 818,013. Meanwhile, Parti Negara obtained 78,909 votes, PMIP, 40,667 votes, National Association of Perak, 20,996 votes, Perak Malay League, 5,433 votes, Perak Progressive Party, 1,081 votes, Labour Party, 4,786 votes and Independents candidates, 31,642 votes.

Even though the total votes secured by Parti Negara was much higher than secured by PMIP, but still Parti Negara could not obtain a single seat compared to the PMIP based on the total votes obtained. The electoral result imposed no serious threat and challenge to the Alliance due to its systematic mobilisation and party organisation and its past electoral record during the Kuala Lumpur municipal elections that took place in 1952.\(^\text{107}\) As for the Parti Negara, its electoral performance was tremendously denied. The defeat of its leader, Dato’ Onn, in his own constituency of Johore Bahru was seen as unacceptable and the defeat marked the end of his political career.\(^\text{108}\)

The PMIP, on the other hand, was a bit lucky and its electoral performance was not in vain. Most of its members were made up of mainly religious teachers and some of whom have been educated in the Middle East and Muslim College of Malaya. Their main focus during the campaign was the idea of an early independence by reassessing the agreement made between the British and the Malay Rulers. The ability of the PMIP to capture even a seat was a remarkable political action compared to those unsuccessful parties, for instance, the National Association of Perak, the Perak Progressive Party and the Perak Malay League.\(^\text{109}\) With this remarkable victory that the Alliance had, Tunku Abdul Rahman, was

\(^\text{108}\)Ibid, p. 319.
\(^\text{109}\)Ibid, p. 320.
given responsibility to lead the first elected government in Malaya and also to execute policies intended for the future of Malayan people at the national level.\textsuperscript{110}

The victory was indeed a clear message to all Malayan where the Alliance had earned the mandate through the elections held. On 2 August 1955, the Alliance government was formed with Tunku Abdul Rahman as the first Prime Minister of Malaya, Tun Razak as the Deputy Prime Minister. The MCA was represented by Leong Yew Koh, H.S. Lee and Too Joon Hin, who held significance posts in the new Cabinet.\textsuperscript{111} The only single opposition representation in the Legislative Council was PMIP. The rest of defeated parties were inclined in forming an effective opposition and challenged the ruling government. However, the Alliance victory over the first federal elections was not the end of political struggle in Malaya. It was just a beginning towards the consolidation of Malayan political development. The British had now gained a robust confidence on whom to transfer the political power to. What had been demonstrated by the Alliance was the integration of inter-communal parties where it had been realised during the 1955 federal elections through an electoral strategy made by the parties.

As one of the conditions set by the British, the realisation of communal harmony had been guaranteed by the Alliance especially the Malay-dominated nationalist party, UMNO. Soon after the elections had been secured and now eyes were set upon towards the suitable date of the Independence proclamation and the only thing left was a conduct of negotiation between the Malayan representative and the British colony. Early 1956 was a significant year for the Malayan people where the direction of local politics was decided in the negotiation. In the same year, the Alliance leaders went to attend talks in London to determine the appropriate date for the Independence.


\textsuperscript{111} Farish A. Noor, \textit{Islam Embedded}, p. 89.
The negotiation concluded with the British agreeing upon the date of Independence as 31 August 1957 and it included also an arrangement for the establishment of a constitutional commission to draft a constitution, and a defence agreement.\footnote{Virginia M. Hooker, ‘A Short History of Malaysia: Linking East and West,’ p. 206.} The Reid Constitutional Commission, named after the chairman, reported in February 1956. The Commission came up with several recommendations on system of government and the organisation and powers of government.\footnote{J. Norman Parmer, ‘Constitutional Change in Malaya’s Plural Society,’ p. 148.} Another important task was the proposed recommendations raised by the Alliance over the issue of citizenship. Among the five members of the Constitutional Commission were Sir Ivor Jennings from the United Kingdom, Sir William McKell from Australia, Justice. B. Malik from India, Justice Abdul Hamid from Pakistan and the Chairman, Lord Reid from the United Kingdom.\footnote{Gordon P. Means, Malaysian Politics, p. 173.} After the Reid Report was made available to the public, the anticipation of the outcomes was a win-win situation, either to oppose or to associate.

Most of the sections included in the Report were based on the recommendations provided by the Alliance.\footnote{Ibid.,} In short, certain sections in the Report remained to be that way and few other things were incorporated based on the negotiation and after series of dissatisfactions went unavoidable. Finally the Independence Day was proclaimed on 31 August 1957 and this eventually signaled a new chapter in the post-1957 Malayan political development.

**Political Development in the Post-Independence 1957**

On August 31, 1957, the Federation of Malaya became a sovereign state. The Alliance consisted of three communal-based political parties were now at the highest point of
political administration. While the opposition groups had sought to find another political means for the purpose of mounting up challenges towards the Alliance.

Its historical records in maintaining a coalition within the communal framework had become a robust ticket for the Alliance to mobilise further and to gain support from the grassroots in order to maintain its electoral performance. And now, the Alliance, especially UMNO as the dominant party among the Alliance, had emerged as the champion of the Malay cause while at the same time projected a solid relation among its Alliance partners. However, the 1955 elections was just the beginning for the Alliance to test its electoral formula upon the competing political parties and there were a number of future elections to be held under the newly installed 1957 constitution. As expected, the first federal elections to the Federal Parliament was held in 1959.116

**1959 Elections**

The remarkable victory achieved by the Alliance was not something new as it had successfully performed even before the 1959 elections. Here, UMNO was making a major move in mobilising its Malay-communal support and soon after the Independence was attained, the need to have an embedded communal harmony remained for the time being but in a way, a growing interests within the community and party were about to seek for the platform to be materialised.117 The Chinese, on the other hand, were represented politically by the MCA and had a few minor problems before the 1959 elections took place, as for instance, a change in the leadership of the MCA occurred in March 1958.118

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117 Ibid, p. 162.
It began when Tan Cheng Lock who led the party since its formation was defeated during the party’s annual meeting for the presidency post by Dr. Lim Chong Eu, a British-trained physician from Penang. Even though the party encountered its internal division, but Lim affirmed that the MCA will maintain its relations with UMNO in the Alliance.\(^\text{119}\) The new front in MCA had several proposals to be discussed with the Alliance parties in regards to educational policies and language. By now, the Alliance, especially UMNO, had to face the shortage of political cooperation unless and until it managed to control its components.

The 1957 Constitution of the Federation of Malaya stated that “the national language shall be the Malay language”. More or less, the Malay language was perceived as ‘lingua franca’ where people will have to communicate to each other by using the Malay language. In the case of Malaya’s plural society, the question of language use and language instruction has always been able to arouse intense feeling.\(^\text{120}\) As a matter of fact, language is highly regarded as part of the component of culture and to what extent the ethnicity is defined. Within the Malayan political framework provided with its inevitable plural societies, the language has never been isolated to become part of controversial issues.

Before the 1959 general election took place, the Alliance had been put to a political test among its component members over the language issue. Lim Chong Eu, representing the MCA, demanded to be given forty federal seats to be contested at the coming general elections, plus the government would have to review completely its language policy.\(^\text{121}\) In April 1959, a conference was held by the Chinese educationists and the conference was

\(^{119}\) J. Norman Parmer, p. 162.
\(^{121}\) Ibid, p. 319.
attended by the MCA also. Those people who attended had made several of demands for submission to the Federal Government.\textsuperscript{122}

Realising that this matter was about to break, the Alliance National Council made an announcement on 11 July 1959 that the elections would be contested without that group of MCA led by its president unless they unconditionally withdrew their demands.\textsuperscript{123} In responding to the said statement, a day after, the MCA publicly announced that they will remain in the Alliance as usual. As a result of this debate, Lim Chong Eu opted to quit from the MCA and formed another party known as Penang-based United Democratic Party (UDP) and he kept fighting for the issue of language. In this manner, UMNO really had its own way in maintaining their policies and was seen as not surrendering to conditions made by the MCA. Finally in August 1959, the first federal election after Independence was held.

In regards to its initial information, there were several changes that occurred in regards to its electoral background. First, there was a steady increase in terms of registered voters, especially the Chinese.\textsuperscript{124} In 1955 elections, the Chinese voters were recorded to be 143,000 or 11.2 per cent but in 1959 elections, the composition changed and increased as much as to 764,000 or 35.6 per cent. The increase on numbers was indeed obviously seen within the communal framework.

\textsuperscript{122} Gordon P. Means, \textit{Malaysian Politics}, p. 203.
\textsuperscript{123} Margaret Roff, p. 320.
Table 1.1: Communal Breakdown of the Electorate, 1959 General Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communal Group</th>
<th>Voters</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>1,217,000</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>764,000</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>159,000</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,144,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Ting Chew Peh, p. 191.

The second inevitable change was the increased number of seats allocation at the parliamentary level. In 1955, it was 52 seats and in 1959 it became 104 seats. In the previous election, the Alliance won handsomely by securing 51 out of 52 seats contested except for a seat left to PMIP. Among the Alliance, UMNO had the biggest number of representation in the Legislative Council due to its decisive victory. With the sizeable numbers increased at the Legislative level, it had suddenly opened up several opportunities for the party’s members to contest those seats to fill in. Before the 1959 election came, there were several local elections held and many parties, including the Alliance, had contested in the election for the purpose of measuring their electoral performance. Unfortunately, by 1957, the Alliance could only secure 19 out of 37 seats contested and this suggested that the Alliance performance was slightly decreased in several spotted areas.\(^{125}\)

Finally on August 18, 1959 the election was held two years after Malaya attained the Independence from the British. In this federal election, several significant things appeared. It was recorded that there were more non-Malay and non-Muslim voters than the

1955 election, especially the Chinese. At the onset of the 1959 election, UMNO leaders resorted to put forth several developmental promises especially to Malay-Muslim voters based in Malay northern states. Much of developmental promises and projects were thrown as part of their electoral campaign and a state like Kelantan was not excluded in this case.

As the predominantly Malay-Muslim majority in the state, the Alliance, especially UMNO, would have to take this communal appeal seriously without being careless. The results of the elections were as expected. The Alliance emerged as the victor by securing 74 out of 104 seats contested but unfortunately its majority dropped from 81.7 per cent in 1955 to 51.5 per cent in 1959. Among the Alliance, UMNO recorded the highest in terms of seats secured which were 55 while MCA managed to obtain 19 seats. Unfortunately, UMNO had a bad performance in the East Coast states of Kelantan and Terengganu. As for the MCA, the second in-command and Chinese representatives in the Alliance had been viewed differently in the 1959 election. One of the obvious indicators was the Chinese voters were dissatisfied towards the MCA and the Alliance. For instance, Tan Siew Sin was more interested in maintaining the business ties with his associates. They became much dependent on UMNO within the Alliance framework and due to this, UMNO was undeniably seen as the dominant Malay-party and plus the MCA lacked of Chinese popular figure and failed to gain an equal political position within the Alliance.

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129 Ting Chew Peh, *The Chinese in Peninsular Malaysia*, p. 204.
Table 1.2: The Results of 1959 Federal Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party Contested</th>
<th>Number of Seats Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Alliance (UMNO and MCA)</td>
<td>74 (UMNO 55; MCA 19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Front (Parti Rakyat and Parti Buruh)*</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Progressive Party (PPP)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parti Negara</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaya Party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Parti Rakyat Malaysia (People’s Party of Malaysia); Parti Buruh Malaysia (Labour Party of Malaysia)

**Source:** Farish A. Noor, Islam Embedded, p. 756.

The opposition parties, on the other hand, had made electoral inroads and the result of elections showed an improvement. PAS was the most remarkable opposition party in terms of its electoral performance. In 1955 elections, PAS was able to secure 1 out of 52 seats contested. In 1959, the number of seats secured had increased to 13 and was regarded as the second highest of seats obtained after the Alliance. PAS also succeeded in capturing two states, Kelantan and Terengganu, and this had consolidated its support base at the state level. During the elections, PAS emphasised Malay nationalism by strongly focusing on frustrations and fears over Malay education. And besides Malay nationalism, PAS also had the proclivity to champion the issue of Islam and fortunately, many influential village religious teachers bought it.\(^{130}\)

Another opposition group that deserved attention was the Socialist Front (SF). SF was a coalition of two left-political parties; People’s Party of Malaysia (PRM) and Labour Party of Malaysia (PBM). Socialist Front was established during the year of Independence

and the formation was carried out by the merger of PRM and PBM. PRM was led under the leadership of Ahmad Boestamam and its first electoral engagement was in the 1959 elections. When Socialist Front was formed, Ahmad Boestamam from PRM became its president while D.S. Ramanathan from PBM became the vice-president.\footnote{Ahmad Nidzammuddin Sulaiman, ‘Aliran Kiri Di Dalam Politik Perkauman Malaya/Malaysia, 1955-1969,’ 	extit{Jebat}, Vol. 16, 1988, pp. 63-80.}

At the parliamentary level, Socialist Front put forth 30 candidates and only 9 out of 30 candidates succeeded. Most of the candidates were placed in non-Malay majority constituencies but still they could survive the elections. As for the strategy of approach, there was a dichotomy within the parties in the Socialist Front. PRM, for instance focused on the Malay peasantry. It can be portrayed that the PRM was the successor of Malay Nationalist Party (PKMM) which was heavily struck down by the British colonial government and most of its political activities were curbed during the early days of the emergency. The PBM, on the other hand, inclined to favour multilingualism, the preservation of communal educational systems and easier citizenship qualifications.\footnote{Michael Swift, ‘Malayan Politics: Race and Class,’ 	extit{Civilisations}, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1962, pp. 237-249.}

Even though these two parties were under the same coalition (SF) but still they had several disagreements. The 1959 election statistics indicated a clear view that the PBM was the dominant force behind the Socialist Front and the PRM came to be the second. Besides that, PRM failure to attract Malay votes was manifested by the fact that all 22 candidates from Socialist Front in Kelantan and Perlis lost their deposits in the state election.\footnote{Gordon P. Means, 	extit{Malaysian Politics}, p. 244.} The outcome of the election was indeed a shock to the many. PAS for instance, had emerged as the biggest threat towards UMNO. Parti Negara on the other hand was effectively wiped out during the election but still Dato’ Onn managed to secure one seat.\footnote{Farish A. Noor, 	extit{Islam Embedded}, p. 156.} As the opposition Islamic party, PAS had steadily mobilised its electoral machinery in the state of Kelantan.
and Terengganu and managed to pool many of its followers on the ground of religious-based appeal.

The Formation of Malaysia and the 1964 Elections

Malayan political development had witnessed the conduct of several elections before another significant event was about to take place. Political parties, on the other hand, were in a mood of competition through an electoral means. The Alliance soon after secured the 1959 elections even though with a minor setback but still had the mandate from the voters to govern the country for another terms. Attainment of Independence was just a beginning in the run up to a Malayan political development. The Alliance, especially UMNO, had been occupied with the needs to have a stable region. By taking several factors which were deemed as significant towards the sustenance of the Malay-based territories and finally a geopolitical decision was taken further. On 27 May 1961 Tunku Abdul Rahman came up with an idea of ‘grand design’ for ‘Greater Malaysia’ by inviting Singapore, Brunei, North Borneo (Sabah) and Sarawak to merge into a single political unit. What was disclosed by Tunku had indeed been perceived as a tremendous shock to the many. This time, the proclamation was not the attainment of Independence but the attainment of the unification of territories.

The idea of creating ‘Malaysia’ by uniting the neighbouring territories was not easy. Because this time, it did not involve merely the Malayans and the British colonial administration but unfortunately the relationship was expanded where it involved another groups which were believed to represent the voice of regions. Obviously, the process of

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inventing Malaysia was crucially facilitated by several factors. First, the major concern was the political unrest in Singapore.

There was a strong belief that Singapore could become like the communist led-state of Cuba as indicated by the fact that Singapore’s internal security witnessed the growth of left-wing radical groups. Due to this, Lee Kuan Yew from People’s Action Party (PAP) had to approach Tunku on the grounds that Singapore’s internal crisis must be solved. Second, the status of Britain’s Borneo state dependencies. The British’s purpose was to alleviate its administrative responsibilities in those regions (Brunei, Sarawak and North Borneo). Besides that, if the merger only occurred between Malaya and Singapore, it would cause a serious racial imbalance in terms of population\textsuperscript{136} and the expected outcome was the Malays would become outnumbered by the Chinese, but if the merger extended to Brunei, Sarawak and North Borneo, the racial imbalance could be overcome. After Tunku’s disclosed his plan of unification, Anglo-Malayan exploratory talks were held in London leading to a mutual statement on 23 November 1961 accepting the idea of ‘Greater Malaysia’ in principle, provided that the Britain could continue using Singapore as a base and promised to set up a commission to conduct a review of Borneo peoples wishes where the British had responsibility upon them\textsuperscript{137}.

The process of including the Borneo regions required substantial evidence showing that the locals must have the willingness to join the federation, not by force. The commission was known as ‘Cobbold Commission’ (after its chair, Lord Cobbold). The commission went to conduct the survey and presented the findings. It was concluded that there were a number of groups responded differently pertaining to the idea of greater Malaysia. The first one third of the population agreed willingly to join, the second third

\textsuperscript{136} Mohammad Agus Yusoff, \textit{Malaysian Federalism: Conflict or Consensus}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{137} A.J. Stockwell, ‘Malaysia: The Making of a Neo-Colony?’, p. 142.
opted to favour the project but with conditions concerning local safeguards and the last third was pretty much inclined towards either the continuation of British rule in Malaya or the attainment of independence in advance of the creation of Malaysia.\textsuperscript{138}

Based on the concluded survey, the British and Tunku came to an agreement. At the very least, the Tunku’s government had secured the position of Sarawak and North Borneo to include them into the formation of Malaysia. However, the only obstacle was the Indonesia’s responses to the idea proposed by Tunku. On January 20, 1963, Indonesia’s Foreign Minister Subandrio proclaimed that Indonesia would impose a policy of “confrontation” against Malaya by arguing that Malaya was a close associate of “neocolonialism and neo-imperialism.”\textsuperscript{139} The allegation made by Indonesia was indeed seriously perceived by many. According to Tunku, the threats that emerged from Indonesia’s behaviour of confrontation were of several categories.

The first one involving armed attacks across the border from Indonesia. Second, the dispatch of secret agents and trouble makers into Malaysia from Indonesia and finally, the ‘confrontation’ had created a serious subversion among Indonesian communities within Malaysia.\textsuperscript{140} From Indonesian perspective, the British colonial policy had a profound impact in Malaya as a whole and to the extent of this, they saw the conduct of British in Malaya was part of creating a political puppet or proxy. Besides Indonesia, Brunei was potentially perceived of displaying an oppositional view towards the Tunku’s plan. It had been initiated by Parti Rakyat (People’s Party), led by A.M. Azahari, a member of Brunei’s

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.


Legislative Council and a former Indonesian military personnel during Indonesia’s revolution against the Dutch.\textsuperscript{141}

The basis of the Parti Rakyat’s oppositional behaviour was simply seen when the said party had a relation with Parti Komunis Indonesia (Communist Party of Indonesia/ PKI) and had fought for the dissenting voices representing the migrant workers from Indonesian Borneo in Brunei. After series of external interventions, and after the inclusion of Singapore into the federation, Malaysia was officially inaugurated on 16 September 1963.\textsuperscript{142} And now, Sarawak, North Borneo (became Sabah after the formation took place) and Singapore is fully confined within the framework of Malaysia as a political entity. Soon after the proclamation of Malaysia’s federation took place, Malaysia was tested once again and this time it involved an internal threat to Malaysia. The threat came from Singapore where it would hold its 1963 elections.

The event of Singapore’s election was viewed and seen as the mobilization of anti-Malaysia opposition activities in Singapore.\textsuperscript{143} Malaysia treated this as part of its major concern where the oppositional activities in Singapore could cause a negative impact towards the consolidation of Malaysia as a legitimate federation. In Singapore, the People’s Action Party (PAP) was not the one to be worried about as it was the pro-Malaysia political party but the concern was the Barisan Sosialis (Socialist Front/ SF) and the United People’s Party (UPP) as they were both supported covertly by Communist and had initiated a campaign against the formation of Malaysia.

The tensions between the PAP and these two leftist-parties were finally broken when Singapore’s general election was held on 21 September 1963, five days after the

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{142} A.J. Stockwell, ‘Malaysia: The Making of a Neo-Colony?,’ p. 152.
\textsuperscript{143} Gordon P. Means, Malaysian Politics, p. 333.
formation of Malaysia. The PAP contested 51 out of 51 constituency seats and the election appeared to be highly contested over the issue of Malaysia.\footnote{Pang Cheng Lian, ‘The People’s Action Party, 1954-1963,’ \textit{Journal of Southeast Asian History}, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1969, pp. 142-154.} The PAP claimed that it represented the pro-Malaysia faction while the Leftist stood hard defending their main oppositional agenda against the unification of Malaysia. As the results were announced, it was on the PAP’s side. The PAP managed to secure 37 seats and 47 per cent of the votes while the Socialist Front obtained 13 seats (32.1 per cent of votes) and the United People Party recorded the lowest where it could only secure 1 seat with 8.3 per cent of total votes. However, there were several contributable factors that led towards the PAP’s victory.

First, the PAP utilized an effective strategy by highlighting the issue of Malaysia. The 1963 Singapore general election was a clear cut electoral competition between the pro-Malaysia and the anti-Malaysia and for the pro-Malaysia faction, it had been proven to be a step ahead compared to anti-Malaysia forces. Second, the participation of UPP had split the votes among the Leftist and this became an additional advantage for the PAP to secure the votes where the UPP decided to go alone in the electoral contest.\footnote{Ibid, p. 154.} Third, the creation of Malaysia was a form of economic assistance towards Singapore, as stated by Lee Kuan Yew. Fourth, the PAP’s previous track records had been identified by the voters especially its housing program. Fifth, an electoral propaganda played by PAP during the elections where it stated that Singapore would have a dark future under the Socialist Front government. Sixth, a systematic pre-campaign of house visits by PAP.\footnote{C. Paul Bradley, ‘Leftist Fissures in Singapore Politics,’ \textit{The Western Political Quarterly}, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1965, pp. 292-308.}

The PAP’s victory had reduced tensions caused by the Leftist political parties who opposed the creation of Malaysia and the same time PAP maintained a good relationship
with Tunku’s Alliance government. In Malaysia, the conduct of 1964 general election was held a year after the formation of Malaysia. The Alliance saw that the federal and state elections must be held within the timeframe due to several motives. Based on previous by-elections that the Alliance had secured, they felt that they possessed an electoral strength as elsewhere. Besides that, Indonesia had claimed that the federation of Malaysia was formed without popular support from the people and this had triggered and compelled Malaysia to deny the Indonesia’s statement through the conduct of the 1964 election in order to highlight Indonesia’s claim which was baseless.\textsuperscript{147}

By all means, the Alliance would have to mobilize and to perform in the general elections as part of robust indicator in refuting the baseless claims by Indonesia. On 25 April 1964, Malaysia general election was held. This election was the first election held after the formation of Malaysia and it also witnessed the entry of Singapore as a political player in the general election. Interestingly, the main theme behind the electoral campaign was “confrontation”.\textsuperscript{148} A total of 279 candidates took part in the 104 parliamentary seats; 168 were Malays, 98 Chinese and 17 Indians.\textsuperscript{149}

At the parliamentary level, the Alliance won 89 out of 104 seats contested and 58 per cent of votes. Within the Alliance framework, UMNO recorded the highest in terms of seats obtained (59 seats), the MCA recorded the second highest (27 seats) and the MIC managed to secure only 3 seats. As for the opposition, PAS obtained the highest seats compared to the rest which are 9 seats. In contrast to 1959 election, PAS could garner only 13 seats but in 1964, PAS did not perform well where it lost 4 seats and managed to sustain only 9 seats.

\textsuperscript{147} Gordon P. Means, \textit{Malaysian Politics}, p. 335.
\textsuperscript{149} Ting Chew Peh, p. 205.
The 1964 election had made PAS realise that facing the Alliance, especially UMNO, was not easy. Apart from that, PAS was suspected of being Indonesian friendly because of its initial opposition to Malaysia. The 1964 election demonstrated that the Alliance received a substantial mandate and the people decisively approved the idea of Malaysia’s formation. Meanwhile, Indonesia would have nothing further to criticize Tunku’s plan of Malaysia due to this remarkable electoral performance of the Alliance. As for the Socialist Front, another form of opposition parties was badly defeated and could only obtain 5 parliamentary seats in the 1964 election.

Compared to its previous performance 1959 election, Socialist Front could not garner more than what they had achieved in 1964. Before the election was due to be held, the government projected several means for the purpose of curbing the Socialist Front political activities. For instance, in the month of April 1964, at least four of its members had been detained in Penang and charged under the Internal Security Act (ISA) laws. The arrest made by the government was seen as a strategy to curtail the Socialist Front members from campaigning in the election. The first non-Malay party, the United Democratic Party (UDP) was formed in April 1962 initiated by former MCA leader.

UDP performed quite well in its first electoral experience where it could establish a party-base in Penang, securing 4 state seats and 1 parliamentary seat in the 1964 election. UDP later on, before the advent of 1969 general election, was dissolved to form the Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysia People’s Movement) in March 1968. The 1964 general election also exhibited the People’s Action Party (PAP) direct involvement for the

150 Farish A. Noor, Islam Embedded, p. 179.
first time within the context of Malaysia’s federation. The PAP’s electoral engagement was not really welcomed especially by the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA). Initially, the PAP had announced it would not contest in the 1964 election but when it did enter suddenly, it caused a shock to the Alliance, especially Tunku. Besides that, the PAP solely focused its target on the MCA due to number of reasons.

One of it was the PAP’s intention to expose the weakness of MCA by using the 1964 election as the platform. The PAP was of the knowledge that the MCA was politically weak and had no financial strength and it needs to be replaced by a party who possessed the strength, either financial power or political power, in order to become part of the Alliance component. For the PAP, the action was justified as part of an attempt to represent the Chinese community and also to gain political support from Chinese community in the hope of replacing the MCA in the Alliance.

Realizing that this matter would break out, Tunku immediately reminded the PAP, especially Lee Kuan Yew, that the action had breached the understanding which was agreed where any political activities concerning the PAP should not be extended to the peninsular and strategies favoured by the PAP must be within Singapore’s territorial limitation. The election result had indicated the obvious for the PAP where out of 11 candidates contested, it could only obtain 1 parliamentary seat.

156 Diane K. Mauzy, Coalition Government in Malaysia, p. 31.
### Table 1.3: The Results of 1964 Federal Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Number of Seats Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Alliance (UMNO, MIC and MCA)</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PAS)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Front (Parti Rakyat Malaysia and Parti Buruh Malaysia)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Progressive Party (PPP)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Development Party (UDP)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Action Party (PAP)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In November 1964, the Alliance government made several changes in terms of financial matters involving business and industrial sectors throughout Malaysia, including Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore. Matters concerning taxes fell under the purview of the Malaysian government.

The intended purpose behind was to make sure that the rapid rise of development was in line with the governmental income spending. However, Singapore was not in favour of this newly announced plan. As the island state who possessed the largest concentration of business and industrial enterprise, it would somehow fear that the outcome could be the economics adjustment made by the Alliance government in terms of increase in taxes.\(^{159}\)

Not only that, under the new financial structure announced in parliament, Singapore was exempted from the five per cent excise duty\(^{160}\) and this had been questioned by Singapore’s representative on this matter. And of course, Singapore, especially the PAP, had sought to

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redress this matter which they viewed as an imbalance policy. The PAP could not agree further to accept the economics plan and resorted to the mobilisation of public opinion for the higher aim of changing the Central Government policy. Initially, the PAP had shown its mood of dissatisfaction over the Alliance idea in planning Malaysia’s economic system accordingly. Later on, the PAP took a drastic action in challenging the embedded norms in Malaysian politics.

In May 1965, the PAP organised the Malaysian Solidarity Convention (MSC) consisting of several opposition parties which were the People’s Progressive Party (PPP), the United Democratic Party (UDP), the Sarawak United People’s Party (SUPP) and the newly organised Machinda party of Sarawak. The formation of this MSC was not really welcomed by the Alliance to the point that MSC had provided a considerable threat towards the position of Malays within the domestic politics.

The MSC resorted to a slogan of “Malaysian Malaysia” to openly indicate that the country belongs completely to all citizens and not exclusively to the Malays. In this disagreement, several points were raised by the PAP especially policies implemented by the government concerning certain privileges, especially for the Malays, in which to the view of PAP was not really the necessary solution. The Malays, represented politically by UMNO, immediately responded to PAP’s action. They questioned the privileges that PAP had enjoyed while PAP was part of Malaysia. When the disagreement with the Singapore’s PAP could not be contained anymore and for the sake of future Malaysian politics, Tunku

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163 Virginia M. Hooker, p. 225.
immediately announced that the Singapore will no longer be part of the Malaysia federation on 9 August 1965.\textsuperscript{164}

The proclamation was delivered under dire circumstances and caught the attention of the public. The Tunku’s government tried to uphold Malaysia-Singapore relations but did not succeed well and Tunku further argued that the separation was due to two factors. First, repressive measures were indeed inevitable to be taken because of the behaviour of some PAP leaders. Second, the decision to sever connection with the Government of Singapore was due to its failure to show loyalty to central government (Malaysia).\textsuperscript{165} Another important thing that had led towards the inevitable separation was the dissatisfaction of the central government over the advancement of Singapore’s PAP as the leading socialist government.\textsuperscript{166} The Alliance believed that if this particular mobilization of PAP was not to be curbed at the early stage of Malaysia’s formation, it would possibly jeopardized Malaysia’s whole political structure.

The central government had resorted to engage in several things involving to sever the bilateral ties with the Singapore. The Malaysian government put forth some sort of political limitation particularly to Singapore parties operating in Malaysia. Their political activities were banned and curbed by the government and they were also claimed by the Malaysian Registrar of Societies as illegal in Malaysia.\textsuperscript{167} As a result, Devan Nair, the PAP Member of Parliament representing the Bungsar constituency had to form another political party which was named as the Democratic Action Party (DAP). At the very least, the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[165] Ibid, col. 1460.
\item[166] Ibid, col. 1461.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Alliance government succeeded in taking out the PAP from mainstream political picture when the separation of Singapore took place effectively.

**Ethnics Politics and the 1969 Elections**

According to Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth A. Shepsle, in their analysis of ethnic politics, the concept of race is somehow regarded as the most controversial term in social science.\(^{168}\)

The establishment of parliamentary democracy in Malaysia under the pretext of multi-ethnic societies comprising of Malays, Chinese and Indians as the first major three ethnic groups was indeed challenging. Throughout historical records, the advent of ethnicity within the framework of Malaysian politics has always been a source of conflict. The advent of ethnicity also to a certain extent has inevitably led to a new dimension of politicisation in the sense of belonging that grew rapidly out of ethnic’s self-consciousness.

Malaysia, in this case, is not excluded. This was largely due to a robust competition between political parties formed on the basis of ethnicity. And these parties sought for their own political identity and at the same time determined to maintain political power. As a matter of fact, the conduct of election is the most beneficial yardstick to measure the dimension of ethnic cooperation from one to another. In one view, the competition of ethnic groups may lead to a strong suggestion that the communal framework in the country more or less needed to be represented socio-politically but on the other hand, the experiment of ethnic politics was not a success story and had led towards communal disparities by

challenging the earlier societal norms. In the word of K.S. Sandhu, ‘communalism has been, and still remains, the curse of Malayan politics’.169

In Malaysia, the ethnic competition has been proven otherwise soon after the 1969 general election was concluded. Previously, in the 1955 elections, the electoral environment was entirely dominated by the anti-colonial issue where the Malayan people sought for their political identity and in 1964 elections, the Alliance attempted to put an electoral focus upon the Indonesian konfrontasi as the major issue.170 But in the advent of 1969 elections, the political patterns were a bit different due to several political players recognized within the framework of Malaysian politics and issues were also differently politicized.

Before the 1969 electoral event took place, there were several newly political parties attempted to gain electoral power, such as, the Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (the Malaysian People’s Movement/ GERAKAN). The DAP had existed in the midst of political turmoil involving two neighbouring countries, Malaysia and Singapore. In a way, the DAP could be argued as the product of unsuccessful foreign policy. When Singapore left the circle of Malaysia’s Federation, the major Singaporean political party, the PAP, sole branch in Malaysia was automatically deregistered by the Alliance government on 9 September 1965. Devan Nair, the only PAP parliamentary representative in Malaysia, was caught up in Malaysia due to his current citizenship status as a Malaysian citizen by birth.

A political initiative was taken by several leaders to rebuild from the deregistered PAP to a registered DAP on 19 March 1966. The formation of DAP after Singapore’s exclusion from Malaysia had presented itself as the champion of Malaysian Malaysia and the efforts taken by the DAP were strongly influenced by its political mission of attracting the Malay support. Besides that, the advent of DAP into the local politics had consolidated the circle of oppositional resistance and at the same time provided electoral competition among the number of opposition parties. The DAP’s political philosophy or the basic guiding policy and principles were put forth in The Setapak Declaration proclaimed on 29 July 1967. The party was substantially attached to the idea of a free, democratic and socialist Malaysia, based on the principles of racial equality and social and economic justice. The party also was politically perceived as non-communal compared to the nature of the Alliance parties and in contrast to UMNO, the DAP drew its support mainly from the non-Malay communities and for instance, the educational and language issues.

As a result, the DAP succeeded in carving out a number of youth supporters mainly from Chinese and Indian communities. The other political party that emerged before the 1969 elections was the GERAKAN. It was formed on 24 March 1968 by several key leaders: Dr. Tan Chee Khoon and V. Veerappan (both former of the Labour Party leaders) and Dr. Lim Chong Eu (former leader of United Democratic Party). Compared to the DAP, the GERAKAN mobilized their political efforts by seeking the support of trade unions and the reason behind was to portray and to present a symbol of non-communal political party

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172 Ibid.,
173 Ibid., p. 160.
174 Ting Chew Peh, p. 208.
due to the embedded image of trade unions as the largest non-political force of non-communal organization.\textsuperscript{175}

The initial political step attempted by GERAKAN was to bring in several important key leaders such as Yeoh Teck Chye (a leading trade unionist) and the President of the Malaysian Trade Union Congress, V. David.\textsuperscript{176} Another significant effort by the GERAKAN was to bring in a very well-known Malay intellectual, Professor Syed Hussein Al-Attas and the purpose behind was to strengthen its image as a non-communal political party.\textsuperscript{177} The amalgamation of different ethnic personalities into the party had been the most difficult task in countering the image of single ethnic-dominated party but GERAKAN succeeded in doing so. On several occasions, the GERAKAN was not in line with the interests of DAP even though both are formally oppositional-oriented. That is, both were opposition parties but had different modes of mobilization.

In 1968, the DAP challenged the GERAKAN leaders over the issue of language. From the GERAKAN point of view, its current position was consistent and firm with the Alliance where the Malay language should be the national and official language as the source of national identity.\textsuperscript{178} Political setting before the 1969 general election had foreseen that the opposition parties were disorganized and displaced over several issues. When the first federal election took place in 1959 soon after the country gained independence, the mood of the masses was perceived differently and it could be described as communally influenced.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid, p. 162.
\textsuperscript{178} Nancy L. Snider, ‘Race, Leitmotiv of the Malayan Election Drama,’ p. 1075.
Most of the people, especially the non-Malays, were inevitably caught in a feeling of insecurity over their socio-political future in the land of Malays. But in 1969, the general mood was different compared to the previous elections.\textsuperscript{179} The tradition of maintaining the inter-ethnic relations which was upheld for such a long time considerably by the Alliance had yielded a positive result. The 1969 general elections was carefully treated by the opposition parties as the election was the only, if not part of it, political platform available for them to pose a serious electoral challenge towards the Alliance. Realizing that the upcoming electoral event was significant and provided with the unbeatable electoral records of the Alliance in each of the elections held, the opposition parties were inclined to have an electoral cooperation among them. For the purpose of facing the Alliance, the negotiation among the opposition parties took place during the months of January and February 1969 involving the DAP, the GERAKAN and the People’s Progressive Party (PPP), excluding the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP/PAS).\textsuperscript{180} According to an analysis conducted by a political scientist, there were actually several reasons why the negotiation initiated by the oppositional forces could be realized.

First, it had something to do with the Alliance. In Parliament, the Alliance frequently enjoyed the parliamentary power of two-thirds majority and this had led to constitutional amendment at will on several occasions fitting their political interests. Second, the opposition strongly realized that the past electoral records had been to the advantage of the Alliance in gaining support in each of the communities. This time, the focus of the electoral cooperation was on the candidates from opposition parties in order to avoid major clashes among them.\textsuperscript{181} Another opposition bloc, the Islamic party PAS, who

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{179} R.K. Vasil, \textit{Ethnic Politics in Malaysia}, p. 163.
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid.,
\end{flushleft}
also participated in the 1969 general elections, had to compete among the oppositional circle.

It had also shown a robust competition to the Alliance, especially in the Malay-dominated party UMNO, before the 1969 events could be concluded. PAS, as one of the most vocal critics of the Alliance, was politically accused of exploiting government’s popularity during the period of electoral campaign.\footnote{Farish A. Noor, \textit{Islam Embedded}, p. 187.} Several of key important figures in PAS, such as Dr. Burhanuddin Helmy and the rest of PAS leaders, mobilized the effort of pressuring the Alliance government and Malaysia in the same time anticipated the impact of economic crises involving the growing rate of deficit and as well as the growing rate of unemployment under the Alliance government. PAS’s view on this national matter was firm and the same time treated it as part of electoral campaigns pointing to the obvious governmental lack of effort to tackle the said issues. Adding to the pre-campaign session, the confrontation between PAS and UMNO was getting worse.

On behalf of UMNO, there was a group known as \textit{Kumpulan Pemuda Tahan Lasak UMNO} (UMNO Hardy Youth Movement) which was mobilised to disrupt the electoral process. PAS concluded that the UMNO’s action as part of a political attempt to undermine PAS efforts to disseminate Islam in the country.\footnote{Ibid, p. 188.} In terms of political strength, PAS was a bit undeveloped in terms of access to political resources. And for UMNO, as the biggest party in the coalition government of the Alliance, it decisively played its roles in a number of significant aspects. One of the cases was the attempt of Alliance to undermine the performance of PAS by treating PAS as the subject of condemnation into the UMNO election manifesto.
Most of the people especially residing in urban areas were reminded that rural development was all the hardwork of UMNO and PAS was viewed as unmatched to UMNO in terms of delivering development and to a great extent, the state of Kelantan under the opposition PAS was further cited as an example of mismanagement and the failure of PAS state government to address the issue.\textsuperscript{184} The pre-1969 election period was heated. Political parties began to mobilise accordingly based on the issues they wanted to debate. Another significant change was the inability of the Alliance to take into consideration the hidden mood of non-Malay voters in its campaign strategy.\textsuperscript{185} While the rest of opposition parties, their proclivity to engage the non-Malay voters were consistent and continous. As for the Malay political parties, UMNO and PAS, their inter-competitive behaviour became part of public debates.

The Alliance, attempted to associate the existence of PAS with the remnants of the Malayan Communist Party around the Thai-Malaysian border and also to highlight the economic backwardness of PAS and their controlled state government of Kelantan.\textsuperscript{186} Finally in April 1969, a serious measure was taken by UMNO and special manifesto entitled “The New Deal” was launched for the electoral purposes of advancing the economic progress of the state of Kelantan. The New Deal manifesto contained a number of promises for the people of Kelantan and all was made under the pretext of material development which was something PAS had failed to do so due to lack of political and as well as financial resources compared to what the Alliance possessed in terms of political and financial strength.

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid, p. 167.
The President of PAS at that time, Dato Mohammad Asri, referred to the Alliance action as “daylight political bribery”. And yet, the electoral ambience became intensified as the Alliance consolidated its electoral performance. The Alliance realised that the only opposition party who could pose a serious threat was the DAP and its electoral approach towards the DAP was aimed to undermine DAP performance. The DAP in this part of campaign was severely and verbally attacked by the Alliance. There were two significant themes of attack.

First, the Alliance held an opinion that the DAP was an anti-Malay oriented political party with the sole aim of expunging the Malays in terms of special rights and status in the country. Second, the DAP was a remnant of the Singapore PAP in which it was outlawed by the government and most of its operation in Malaysia was observed and dictated by the PAP in Singapore. The Alliance had to ensure that the ethnic-based voters, especially the Malays and the Chinese, would buy the claim and also to put some sort of political distance between the embedded ethnics in the campaign session.

Adding to this crucial event, The President of MCA, Tan Siew Sin, put forth MCA’s political stand towards the DAP by stating that the DAP is the only and serious threat to the Chinese compared to PAS. The campaign was not only focused upon the Malay opposition party but it extended well upon the non-Malay opposition party. A slogan of ‘Malaysian Malaysia’ in which the DAP had played out was influenced by the PAP.

The reason behind the Alliance refusal of acknowledging the slogan was the essence carried by the slogan itself where it aimed at breaking the unity of the Malays by installing

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188 Ibid.,
some sort of antagonistic behaviour between the Malays and the Chinese. Finally on May 1969, the election process took place.

**Table 1.4: General Election Results, Peninsular Malaysia, 1969**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Parliamentary</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alliance Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMNO</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAS</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAP</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GERAKAN</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>103</strong></td>
<td><strong>277</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*‘Others’ includes the Socialist Front*

**Source:** Anne Munro-Kua, *Authoritarian Populism in Malaysia*, p. 54.

As has been disclosed, the Alliance had suffered serious setbacks but the worst performance was the MCA. In the state elections, the Alliance managed to secure 162 state seats out of 282 state seats contested which meant 47.95 per cent total of votes. At the state level also, there was a reduction of votes compared to what the Alliance had achieved in 1959, 51.78 per cent equal to 206 state seats and in 1964, 58.37 per cent equal to 89 state seats. The Alliance had experienced the reduction at the state and parliamentary level. At

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190 Ibid, p. 36.
the parliamentary level, the Alliance could only obtain 66 parliamentary seats out of 104 parliamentary seats contested. The very obvious implication was the failure of the Alliance to secure two-thirds of the majority in the parliament and the success of the opposition in denying the two-thirds majority aimed by the Alliance in the parliament. The opposition bloc, especially the DAP, recorded the highest in terms of parliamentary seats secured, which was 13 seats and PAS recorded the second highest after the DAP, which was 12 seats. GERAKAN, on the other hand, managed to obtain 8 parliamentary seats.

**The Reformasi and the 1999 Election**

Malaysia entered a new phase of politics in the midst of economic instability. Malaysia’s financial crisis began when its stock and currency markets fell due to Thailand’s bursting bubble in mid-1997.\(^{191}\) Besides Malaysia, there were several other countries hit by the financial crisis such as Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, and South Korea. Fortunately, the financial crisis impact upon Malaysia was different compared to rest of the affected countries.\(^{192}\) After several measures had been taken by the government under the leadership of Mahathir, Malaysia was again able to get through the crisis. Malaysia’s financial crisis was probably the root cause of the *reformasi* era that fully struck Malaysian political terrain.

Besides that, the defensive measures taken by Mahathir had escalated the fragmentation of societies within the context of local politics. It all began during the UMNO General Assembly in June 1998 when Mahathir’s position as Prime Minister and President of UMNO was challenged by the Deputy Prime Minister and also Finance


Minister Anwar Ibrahim who criticized Mahathir’s administration over the issues of cronyism and in particular the government’s privatization deals.\textsuperscript{193} However, Mahathir had retaliated when he called for the sack of Anwar from the governmental posts on 2 September 1998. Apart from being thrown out from the government, Anwar was charged with alleged sexual misconduct and the police had raided his house the day after he was sacked. On 20 September, he was detained under the oppressive laws of ISA until the hearing took place on 29 September.\textsuperscript{194} Due to this, political demonstrations broke out across the country and it was perceived by political observers as the largest demonstration ever.

The people who participated in the demonstration precisely exhibited their solidarity with Anwar and answered the call of reformasi initiated by Anwar for a total rejection of cronyism, corruption, and many people dissatisfied with Mahathir’s performance in national administration. Mahathir had realized that it was time for the general election to be held in order to ensure that he could secure once again the mandate from the people. Arguably, one of the reasons why Mahathir had called the election early was due to the improvement of political situation of the BN, particularly UMNO.\textsuperscript{195} Anwar underwent a highly politicised trial and was given six years imprisonment. The Anwar affair had led to a speculation that the three branches of government, the executive, legislative, and the judiciary, might have worked together to end Anwar’s political career.\textsuperscript{196}

\textsuperscript{196} See: Jae Hyon Lee, \textit{UMNO Factionalism and the Politics of Malaysian National Identity}, PhD Thesis, Murdoch University, 2005, p. 231. It was argued that the relationship between Anwar and Mahathir became complicated from time to time. The evidence was centred when Anwar started to contest for the post of UMNO’s Deputy President and won in 1993 UMNO’s party election. Anwar led a team known as ‘Wawasan
On the other hand, UMNO’s support from the Malay-majority deteriorated. In response to the injustice caused by Mahathir-led government, the opposition saw that it needed to have a strong political force in order to counter the regime’s policy. On 4 April 1999, Wan Azizah, Anwar’s wife, took an initiative to launch a new non-communal political party even though it was a Malay-based majority known as Parti KeADILan Nasional (National Justice Party/ PKN) or ADIL.\(^{197}\)

To consolidate its position, ADIL engaged with other opposition parties such as PAS, DAP, and Parti Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysian People’s Party/ PRM). Despite the political turmoil between Mahathir’s government and Anwar’s supporters and the erosion of social capital that largely occurred during that time, ADIL was probably perceived as the symbol of unity. Not only that, it managed to bring together the opposition parties under the same banner but also the dissenting voices from the grassroots of different sections of ethnics.\(^{198}\) For instance, PRM made a decision in their Congress to merge with ADIL.\(^{199}\) As expected, the tenth general election was held on 29 November 1999. Surprisingly, the ruling BN maintained the two-thirds majority in the Parliament. At the same time, the ruling BN also experienced an electoral setback, especially UMNO. For the first time non-UMNO parties had won more seats than UMNO.

The Malay-dominated party UMNO could only secure 72 parliamentary seats. Indeed it was a poor performance. In the 1995 election, UMNO did better by securing 85 seats. The 1999 election presented a reduction in UMNO’s electoral performance. Besides

\(^{199}\) Senator Prof. Dr. Syed Husin Ali, Member of Upper House (Dewan Negara) from PKR Party, Interviewed by Author, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, 23 November 2014.
that, the Malays voters were fragmented in terms of vote casting. It was believed that the shift had occurred due to Mahathir-Anwar conflict and the way Anwar was ill-treated by the government. As a matter of fact, UMNO had lost significant votes from the Malays. The worse part was UMNO had lost four cabinet ministers and five deputy ministers, and most of the other ministers had barely secured their seats. Without its component parties that were able to garner more seats than UMNO, it was argued that UMNO would be wiped off from the 1999 electoral map. Clearly, the electorates did not take lightly the current issues involving Anwar and the opposition parties, in a way, had performed even though they did not win entirely.

As for the opposition parties, their presence in the 1999 election was expected. Most of the opposition parties had realized that it would not be that easy to electorally survive the ruling BN-dominated elections and therefore, some sort of political consensus among the parties had been reached despite ideological differences, especially between PAS and DAP in terms of the idea of Islamic state. On 24 October 1999, PAS, DAP, ADIL, and PRM had signed the “Common Manifesto of the Barisan Alternatif (BA”). The effort made by the opposition parties through the materialisation of BA was a historic victory of political consensus among the opposition parties where they had been brought to fight for the same cause under the common platform “Towards a Just Malaysia”.

Even though the entry of DAP into the BA was upon the laid down conditions in which it would not allow PAS to implement the Islamic state agenda but the imprisoned Anwar had given an assurance that PAS could govern based on its previous political history.

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in the state of Kelantan. Such assurance was probably to boost the public morale and also DAP. Based on the 1999 election result, BA had secured 42 out of 193 parliamentary seats and the rest went to the regime’s parties. ADIL or KeADILan managed to garner only five seats.

PAS, however, indicated an impressive performance when it increased the share of its seats from eight seats in 1995 to 27 seats in 1999 and thus, had made it as the leading opposition party in the Parliament. While DAP could only obtain 10 seats. The 1999 result had indicated, for BA, a sign of electoral motivation to compete with the ruling BN regime. Especially PAS, as the leading party in BA, had secured an impressive number of parliamentary seats not only that but it was able to wrest the state of Terengganu from the grip of BN. Besides the defeat of UMNO in Kelantan and Terengganu, PAS also won more parliamentary seats than UMNO in Kedah.

In Pahang, PAS made a viable debut when it managed to increase its majority in Pekan constituency by reducing the majority of votes gained by UMNO Vice-President Najib Tun Razak with a mere 241 votes and fortunately Najib had survived the election. In Perlis, PAS had also won three state seats and almost unseated Perlis Chief Minister Shahidan Kassim if Prof. Dr. Harun Din was cleared to contest as PAS candidate. There were several factors that could explain PAS electoral performance in the 1999 election.

First, the grassroots dissenting voices were not entertained well by the ruling BN and remained ignored until significant Malay votes shifted to PAS. Second, the capability of PAS in highlighting the core of Islam to the public by relating it to Anwar’s event and how the regime had tackled the issues and in a way Anwar was to be credited as PAS had
successfully made an electoral inroad by boosting the public confidence due to the regime’s action of injustice. Third, Mahathir’s administration was deeply tied with his Islamization agenda by launching several so-called Islamic institutions and later on had opened up the eyes of the public in terms of the significance of the so-called agenda.

As argued by Meredith L. Weiss, it was obvious that in the 1999 election, most of votes had swung due to the reformasi and the issues that the movement had brought up to the public awareness.205 The result clearly indicated that the Malay votes had split between UMNO and PAS while Sabah and Sarawak remained as BN’s “safe deposits”. However, only few non-Malay votes had shifted to BA as BA had anticipated.206 As for the DAP, its real contest was with the Chinese-based and Chinese-dominated parties, the MCA and GERAKAN. As part of the ruling BN, MCA and GERAKAN had electorally competed with DAP in ensuring that the Chinese votes would go to them.

DAP, at the same time, had consistently stood up as an ardent opposition in the country and fought for the justice as they believed in. Due to this, the 1999 election appeared to be difficult for DAP to mobilise effectively. Based on the result, DAP could only garner 10 parliamentary seats while MCA made impressive gains of 28 seats and GERAKAN was able to secure seven seats. Obviously, DAP was left behind by MCA in the election. As a matter of fact, MCA and GERAKAN shared the same approach especially in undermining the DAP in the election. For instance, both had utilised a similar strategy of electoral themes. They stated that vote for DAP meant a vote for PAS and the endorsement of the Islamic state idea and to the extreme, they even pointed out in their

political *ceramah* that if non-Muslims are caught under the Islamic laws, their hands would be amputated.\textsuperscript{207}

Besides that, both parties had clarified that the Anwar’s case was purely a Malay affair and it did not concern the Chinese and in order to strengthen the government, they should vote their Chinese representatives to further consolidate the communal grounds. Not only that, it was echoed that if BA won the election, there would be a serious repercussion as in 1969. Last but not least, they had justified that Mahathir was still relevant within Malaysia’s political terrain. It was proven when Mahathir had managed to stabilise the current economic crisis throughout the implementation of capital controls.\textsuperscript{208} By all political means, both MCA and GERAKAN had to make sure that DAP was unseated and in order to achieve the goals, they had to secure the support from the Chinese electorate.

In response, DAP had attempted to regain support mainly from Chinese by highlighting several issues such as the justice for Lim Guan Eng, the Nipah virus issue, and the Tunku Abdul Rahman College (TARC) issue.\textsuperscript{209} Just because the Anwar affair had connection with the abusive of the governmental branches and therefore, the case of Lim Guan Eng was brought up together in order to address the needs of a system that was free from political interference. The TARC issue began when Mahathir announced that MARA Institute of Technology (MIT) would be upgraded to a university status. The decision was a blow to the Chinese community where in the past, MCA stated that TARC could not become a university since it was the Chinese version of MIT.

\textsuperscript{208} Ibid, pp. 288-289.
\textsuperscript{209} Ibid, p. 291.
To the Chinese, what was announced by Mahathir implied that TARC also needed to be upgraded in terms of its institutional status. Therefore, an initiative had been taken by TARC Alumni where a letter had been sent to the MCA asking to cease the MIT from being upgraded but suddenly the issue disappeared unknowingly. MCA argued that if the Alumni still wanted to proceed with the matter, the ruling government would impose a racial quota upon the TARC. DAP had tried to politicise the issue but MCA was able to mitigate the situation. The major reasons why DAP was unsuccessful in politicising those issues was due to the reluctance of Chinese newspapers in allocating them some space during the nine-day campaign.\textsuperscript{210} Obviously, DAP had yet to find its own political support and the public acceptance was still ambiguous despite the strength of Chinese-based parties within the ruling BN components. For instance, in Penang, DAP could only win a single parliamentary seat while Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh had been defeated in the election.

\textbf{2004 Elections}

In the 2004 Malaysia’s general election, political attention was greatly focused upon the BN decisive electoral victory where it succeeded in securing about 62 percent of popular votes and 90 percent of the 219 parliamentary seats.\textsuperscript{211} It was the best ever achievement under the leadership of Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi since it met a colossal defeat in the 1969 elections. The ruling BN parties obtained 199 out of 219 parliamentary seats, giving them a comfortable majority in Parliament. The opposition could only survive with a total of 20 parliamentary seats.\textsuperscript{212} At the state level, the ruling BN was able to grab 453 out of 505 legislative seats. PAS, for instance, had lost the Terengganu state

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{210} Ibid, p. 293.
\textsuperscript{211} Abdul Rashid Moten, \textit{Government and Politics in Malaysia}, p. 286.
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.,
\end{footnotesize}
government to the ruling BN which they had wrestled from the ruling BN government in the 1999 general elections.

Within the BN component parties, UMNO was the highest in terms of winning parliamentary seats. In Terengganu, UMNO took control of all eight parliamentary seats in the state. In Kedah, UMNO managed to wrest 14 out 15 parliamentary seats. The MIC, as one of the BN parties, also performed remarkably. The MCA had won 31 out of 40 seats it contested. The GERAKAN managed to secure 10 out of 12 seats and the MIC able to cleanly grab all the nine seats it contested. The results were a serious indicator that the people had finally endorsed the new Prime Minister. Abdullah as Malaysia’s fifth Prime Minister decisively propagated the agenda of reform and promised to create a better Malaysia.

One of the reforms initiated by him was the release of Anwar Ibrahim, imprisoned on politicised charges, in September 2004. Anwar as the pioneer of the *semangat reformasi* (spirit of reformation), found himself fighting against his mentor, Dr. Mahathir. The opposition political parties, in the meantime, were caught in a crisis since the formation of Barisan Alternatif (Alternative Front/ BA) in 2000. As argued by Welsh, Abdullah steadily controlled the opposition *reformasi* momentum and used it to secure his own mandate. By utilising this kind of strategy, it would be easy for the ruling BN especially UMNO to undermine the opposition electoral capability. Soon after Parliament was dissolved on March 5, 2004, parties started to gear up. Seven days were allocated for the campaign, the shortest in Malaysia’s electoral history. Given the short timing, it affected most the opposition parties as they possessed no access to governmental means. But as for

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the ruling BN and as usual, the government controlled-media had always been ready to serve the BN’s needs in surviving the general elections.215

Table 1.5
Parliamentary Seats Won According to Parties in 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Total of Seats Obtained</th>
<th>Total of Votes Obtained</th>
<th>% Valid Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BN</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>4,434,203</td>
<td>63.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,057,853</td>
<td>15.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KeADILan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>621,330</td>
<td>8.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAP</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>688,630</td>
<td>9.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>133,976</td>
<td>1.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>202*</td>
<td>6,935,992</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The total number of parliamentary seats was 219. The rest of 17 seats did not count due to BN’s won uncontested.

Table 1.6
The Results for 1999 and 2004 Parliamentary Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Seats</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contested</td>
<td>Won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BN</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAS</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KeADILan/PKR</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAP</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Speaking of the opposition political parties, as shown in the Table 1.6, the DAP had the highest in terms of seats obtained. PAS went to the second where it could only garner seven seats and KeADILan was last among the opposition parties where it had won a single seat.

The DAP, as one of the oldest opposition parties in Malaysia had proven to be the BN’s

greatest challenger within the terrain of Malaysian politics. For most of the time, the DAP had become the sole challenger towards the UMNO, MIC, MCA, GERAKAN, and Sarawak United People’s Party (SUPP).

The issues in the campaign which the DAP had utilised was Malay ethno-nationalism propagated by UMNO and the agenda of Islamisation strongly championed by PAS.216 The 2004 general election was also made up of two significant issues. The first was the spirit of reformasi which Wong had argued was an extension of the 1999 election.217 The second involved the Islamisation of Malaysia. The reformasi was part of national issues that the opposition parties treated as a political weapon. Born out of Anwar’s dismissal from the ruling BN government, the reformasi was a spontaneous response towards Mahathir’s regime in 1998. During that period, before and after, Mahathir’s administration was depicted as an authoritarian form of government, filled with cronyism, and mega-projects.

Therefore, the opposition parties had been united under the pretext of injustice since Anwar’s case. As for the Islamisation, it was first initiated as an approach-based policy since 1980. Thus it had led to a serious division among the opposition parties when PAS attempted to put forth its Islamic style of politics and the DAP in response, tried its very best to counter the Islamic-ideological orientation. In the 2004 general elections, issues circulated in previous elections, such as Islam, made inroads again. Islam as the official religion in Malaysia, as stipulated in the Federal Constitution, was raised and became a source of competition. One of the underlying reasons which contributed towards the BN’s remarkable performance was the element of disunity among the opposition political parties. Based on the said issues, the opposition parties could not put aside their disagreement for

the sake of forming a united coalition fighting against the ruling BN in the 2004 elections.\textsuperscript{218} The DAP experienced a tremendous defeat in the 2004 elections.

This was totally different especially based on the results that the DAP had produced in the 1969 elections where a direct-swing of votes shifted from the Alliance to the DAP.\textsuperscript{219} The DAP did not perform well in the 2004 elections. In the Federal Territory alone, the ruling BN managed to secure nine out of 13 seats while DAP was able to retain four seats that it won in the 1999 elections. PAS, as one of the most ardent Islamic-based opposition party, that opted out from UMNO in 1951 did not achieve its electoral objectives in the 2004 elections. As shown in the Table 1.5, PAS experienced a serious electoral backlash where it could only win seven parliamentary seats. In comparison in the 1999 elections, PAS had performed remarkably and was able to wrestle Terengganu from the ruling BN.

PAS as a government at the state level did not last long and its electoral capability was an ephemeral when Abdul Hadi’s PAS state government was retaken by the ruling BN. Purely based on Islamic ideological orientation, PAS had equipped itself with a concrete philosophy of establishing an Islamic state. In the 2004 elections, PAS introduced its manifesto with a theme of “Islam for All” and most of its contents particularly referred to an administrative style based on the Quran verses, a well-planned Islamic-based economic program, and a guarantee of religious freedom for non-Muslims in Malaysia.\textsuperscript{220} It was reported among the mainstream news that PAS leaders claimed that the pro-government voters would end up in a hell and voters were asked to focus upon hereafter.\textsuperscript{221} PAS designations of its approaches towards the voters were not well received as many among

\begin{flushright}


\textsuperscript{221}
\end{flushright}
the voters were quite preoccupied with issues concerning poverty, unemployment, and community wellbeing. This approach was believed to be one of PAS reasons electoral failure in the 2004 elections.

Besides that, in the 2004 elections, PAS was forced to electorally compete against the ruling BN without the support of DAP since the DAP had left the BA coalition.²²² It was PAS former president Ustaz Fadzil Noor who strongly defended the name of BA and succeeded in convincing the rest of party leaders and mutually agreed to fight against the ruling BN in the 1999 election by using the platform of BA.²²³

In terms of PAS’s setback, Case and Tong argued that PAS had thought their losses were caused by the government’s tightening authoritarian controls, prompting the party’s leaders to refuse to recognise the election results.²²⁴ All of these reasons stated by PAS to a certain extent were indirectly true and probably right. Besides the BN “authoritarian” factor, PAS also had placed its electoral defeat upon the unprofessional conduct of the Election Commission (EC).²²⁵

However, PAS defeat in the election had been treated positively. Soon after the election was concluded, PAS had its own post-mortem in getting to know what the actual reasons of its defeat were.²²⁶ The factors of defeat identified were election fraud and the role played by the EC. After a month, PAS attempted to widen the inquiry and this time, for the first time, PAS had invited some of outsiders such as journalists and supporters to provide comments. The inquiry had highlighted some internal reasons such as the

aggressiveness and arrogance of PAS leadership, weak media strategy, and identical failure of reaching out towards young and non-Muslims.\textsuperscript{227} The reasons for the defeat were probably taken by PAS to further sharpen its electoral approaches.

PKR\textsuperscript{228}, on the other hand, was a relatively newcomer within the framework of electoral politics. In its second test in electoral politics, particularly in 2004 election, PKR had only won a single seat. As compared to its performance in the 1999 election, PKR’s first attempt had successfully secured at least five parliamentary seats but in the 2004, it was unexpectedly reduced to a single seat and thus had led PKR to survive with its only single seat until the next general elections, which was the Permatang Pauh seat retained by Anwar’s wife, Wan Azizah. As argued by Smith, the poor performance of Wan Azizah in the 2004 election was due to the Anwar factor where the spirit of reformasi was no longer a political issue upon the wider electorates in Malaysia.\textsuperscript{229}

Not only that, PKR’s poor performance was also due to Abdullah Badawi’s serious attempt in implementing some policies advocated by PKR such as fighting corruption and crime and providing greater social security.\textsuperscript{230} In this way, Abdullah managed to counter its political enemy and later on kept on focusing on the same issue and PKR would have no platform to campaign for its ideas. In the word of Francis, the ruling BN’s decisive victory had been portrayed by the mainstream media as the “Pak Lah” factor.\textsuperscript{231}

\textsuperscript{227} Ibid, pp. 387-388.
\textsuperscript{228} Parti KeADILan Rakyat (PKR) was launched on 4 April 1999 with Wan Azizah as its president. Among the members in the party was Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, Azmin Ali, Ezam Mohd. Nor, Marina Yusof, and Tian Chua. For a full account on PKR, see: Syed Husin Ali, Memoir Perjuangan Politik Syed Husin Ali (Petaling Jaya: SIRD, 2012).
\textsuperscript{230} Abdul Rashid Moten and Tunku Mohar Mokhtar, p. 333.
Parliamentary Behaviour in the 11th Parliament

The ruling BN government under the leadership of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi recorded a colossal victory in the 2004 general elections. Abdullah’s regime was definitely endorsed by the registered voters. On the other side, the opposition political parties comprising of PKR, PAS, and DAP barely survived the elections. PAS, an Islamic-based political party, won only seven seats and lost its eastern state of Terengganu to the ruling BN government. While PKR was able to defend its only seat in Permatang Pauh constituency by Wan Azizah and the rest of twelve seats were secured by the secular multi-racial party, the DAP. It is argued that in the 2004 elections, the ruling BN did not repeat its tremendous performance as it had in the 1999 general elections.  

Most analysis on the 2004 elections swiftly turned attention towards the erosion of PAS’ electoral performance. Soon after the 2004 general elections were concluded, the Eleventh Parliament had resumed. Based on the election result, it indicated that the ruling BN regime had gained additional advantages by sending a number of BN MPs into Parliament. Going by parliamentary logic, a sizeable numbers or the majority usually is portrayed as the dominant force over the minority one. This had left out the opposition parties with insignificant numbers. And probably the opposition parties would encounter a number of parliamentary constraints especially in exercising considerable controls upon the governmental policies.

In the 11th Parliament (2004-2007), Lim Kit Siang of DAP was appointed by the House as the opposition leader. Lim’s appointment was made based on a consensus among the opposition parties and provided that the DAP was the leading opposition besides

PAS and PKR. In terms of party’s strength, DAP had a substantial number even though insignificant within the context of the 11th Parliament. When the first parliamentary question (PQs) was tabled by one of the ruling BN members, Lim immediately interrupted and raised a question concerning the government’s efforts in reforming the Parliament in terms of mindset, culture and practice. Lim proposed to the government that the Parliament be modernised by implementing reforms programme in order to establish a ‘First World Parliament’in Malaysia. When his turn came, Lim was recorded as the first opposition member asking a question in the 11th Parliament. He raised his concerns over the conduct of the 2004 general election and demanded the government set up a Royal Commission of Election which is free and fair for the purpose of investigating the recent election which Lim’s perceived as unfair, embarrassing, and unprofessional.

As expected, the DAP’s inquiry was responded to by the ruling BN and the government stood firm on its decision that there was no need for the establishment of a Commission on the grounds that the government agency had ensured that the conduct for each election in Malaysia was properly carried out. It was understood that the ruling BN had inflicted the behaviour of ‘soft-denial’ towards the DAP’s demands in Parliament. In the case of the 11th Parliament, the mobilization of opposition parties were restricted and curbed based on its insufficient numbers. Credits were given to the so-called ‘Pak Lah Factor’ when the ruling BN easily secured more than two-thirds majority in the Parliament based on BN’s impressive electoral performance.

As for the opposition, their dissenting voices were limited. Insignificant numbers indicated less ideas and arguments. Throughout the 11th Parliament, the opposition party DAP had clearly dominated the parliamentary questions to the ruling BN government. All

234 Ibid, p. 4.
of its twelve members in the House decisively participated in the PQs sessions. One of its significant features of parliamentary behaviour was the role of its opposition leader, Lim Kit Siang. During the PQs, Lim was recorded to participate in almost all meetings. There were a lot of issues and concerns raised by Lim even though the DAP’s party members were not as large compared to the BN members. The Islamic-based party PAS, had also exhibited a moderate approach in terms of parliamentary questions. All of its seven members in the House had participated during the session. Most of their PQs were centred on the issues of government’s accountability, suspected diseases, Israeli occupation upon the land of Palestine, student’s ethics in schools, the quality of domestic flights, and many more. As for PKR, the only seat that represented Permatang Pauh constituency by Wan Azizah in the 11th Parliament had also contributed towards the parliamentary questions.

Clearly, PKR’s parliamentary access in the House was strictly limited and not because it was politically curbed but simply due to its size. Therefore, issues could not be championed alone and the exchange of ideas must be made in a mass numbers. Due to this shortage, the ruling BN could easily break off the morale of PKR in the 11th Parliament and things would become more difficult than the party’s could anticipate. However, outside the Parliament, an extra-parliamentary behaviour was taken. PKR’s had engaged a form of extra-parliamentary strategy when Anwar Ibrahim proposed a robust coalition between PKR, DAP, and PAS. Anwar believed that if opposition parties were able to put aside political differences among them, then it would be possible and easy for a new coalition to be formed and at the same time, the coalition would be an additional political alternative in Malaysia.

Teng Chang Kim of DAP, representing the state constituency of Sungai Pinang, had agreed with Anwar on behalf the DAP. Teng was of the view that so far only Anwar had proven to be the symbol of unity as he was the only figure who was compatible for that particular purpose. Besides that, Anwar was perceived to be fit for the role of middle man in unifying all the opposition parties in the country and the role that he was about to play was highly crucial and challenging under the framework of soft-authoritarian regime. More or less, the clash of ideology could jeopardize the continuous process of parliamentary democracy especially in the 11th Parliament. For instance, the ruling BN had clear ideological settings. Its party’s components were able to manage their own affairs without having too much noise concerning the religious issues. But the BN’s way does not apply within the context of oppositional factions.

The rift of ideology between the DAP who fought for non-Islamic state and PAS who triggered the Islamic state idea had led to an argument that the parliamentary democracy of opposition in Malaysia is conditional. Until and unless the differences could ostensibly be contained. The outcome of this ideological setting required a price to be paid. At the same time, it could lead to a possible loopholes for both DAP and PAS. The ruling BN, by all means, would take this as a golden opportunity to break the oppositional rank, either in the form of electoral or legislative means. The 11th Parliament clearly sent out a signal or as a form of admonition for the opposition parties to establish a substantial support at the electoral levels in order to pave the way for the legislative settings in the future. And this would consolidate further their parliamentary behaviour.
Conclusion

In a nutshell, the politics in the pre-1999 election was highly competitive despite the inevitable economic crisis that impacted most of the public and the Anwar Ibrahim affair which split the Malays into two different blocs. When the 1999 election came, the politics had become tremendously contested when a new form of political understanding was achieved by BA, each political parties had the same objectives which was to topple the longest-serving Prime Minister Mahathir. On the other hand, the 1999 election was a consolation prize for BA but not all the parties within the BA. ADIL, for instance, even though it had won seats but it was regarded as insufficient in terms of seats obtained.

While PAS as the ardent Islamic party that had consistently fought the Malay-based party UMNO since before Independence had produced a positive achievement. They managed to increase the share of votes and recapture the state of Terengganu from the ruling BN. Last but not least, DAP was caught in its own dimension. Its performance was so poor and could not garner as much as PAS did and after the countless efforts had been poured and unexpectedly the Chinese was practically convinced to cast their votes for the ruling BN Chinese-based parties, MCA and GERAKAN.
CHAPTER 2
PKR, PAS and DAP In 2008 Parliamentary Elections

Introduction

The 2008 Malaysian general election was closely contested between the opposition political parties and the ruling BN government. The election also marked the turning point of democracy in the electoral history of Malaysia where the voters finally made their choice. The democratisation of electoral politics was finally realized. As the results disclosed, the most long-standing ruling BN was unexpectedly defeated in many states by the opposition parties of PKR, PAS and DAP. Even though the ruling BN did not fully lose in terms of popularity votes, the opposition parties were able to record the highest compared to the ruling BN component parties.

The ruling BN managed to form a government but without the two-thirds majority except and depended on a slim majority. The event was interpreted as the second major blow for the ruling BN political parties after they had experienced the same downfall in the 1969 general elections. This chapter examines the electoral performance of the opposition political parties (PKR, PAS and DAP) in the 2008 parliamentary elections.

PKR in 2008 Parliamentary Elections

As the youngest party within the oppositional circle, Parti KeADILan Rakyat (PKR) produced a remarkable performance in the 2008 parliamentary elections held on 8 March 2008.
Table 2.1

Parliamentary Seats Won By PKR According to States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>No. of Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kedah</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelantan</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perak</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahang</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negeri Sembilan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The Election Commission of Malaysia, 2008*

As shown in the Table 2.1, PKR had secured a total of thirty-one parliamentary seats in seven states in Malaysia excluding the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur.\(^1\) This even compared to its previous performance in the 2004 election when PKR was heavily defeated by the ruling BN and could not even garner more than a seat except in Permatang Pauh. In 2008 election, the situation was totally different where PKR had gained an increase of thirty seats.

In Kedah, PKR had won five parliamentary seats - Kuala Kedah, Merbok, Sungai Petani, Padang Serai, and Kulim-Bandar Baharu. In Kelantan, a state strongly dominated by

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\(^1\) Kuala Lumpur was created in 1974 as the first federal territory when the capital city of Kuala Lumpur was separated from Selangor. The second federal territory was Labuan where it was created in 1984 and recently Putrajaya was designated as a federal territory for the 2004 elections. For a full account on Malaysia’s electoral system, see: Graham K. Brown, ‘Playing the (Non) Ethnic Card: The Electoral System and Ethnic Voting Patterns in Malaysia,’ p. 431.
PAS-led government, PKR had won three parliamentary seats such as Keterah, Tanah Merah, and Machang. In Penang, a West-coast state of Malaysia that used to be under the GERAKAN, four parliamentary seats fell to PKR such as Permatang Pauh, Nibong Tebal, Bayan Baru, and Balik Pulau. In Perak, three parliamentary seats were secured by PKR such as Bagan Serai, Sungai Siput, and Gopeng. In Pahang, PKR managed to obtain two parliamentary seats such as Indera Mahkota and Kuantan. In Selangor, PKR recorded the highest in terms of its parliamentary performance where it won nine seats such as Hulu Selangor, Selayang, Gombak, Ampang, Kelana Jaya, Petaling Jaya Selatan, Subang, Kapar, and Kuala Langat. In Negeri Sembilan, PKR was able to secure a seat which was the Teluk Kemang seat and in Kuala Lumpur, four seats were won such as Batu, Wangsa Maju, Lembah Pantai, and Bandar Tun Razak. PKR electoral machinery in 2008 election was geared up to the extent that it could wrest thirty one parliamentary seats from the ruling BN.

One of the noticeable points in the election was that Anwar Ibrahim, a PKR advisor, was not allowed to contest according to the electoral laws as he had just been released from the prison and needed to wait until the restriction period was over. According to Anwar, the government’s decision to hold the 2008 election in March was a “shame” as his detention period would end on 15 April 2008. The Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, however, had denied the allegation made by Anwar and argued that Anwar had nothing to do with the date of the general election and was not a factor. The Prime Minister Abdullah had dissolved the Parliament in order to pave the way for the general election to be held in March. Anwar further stated that PKR would hopefully win at least twenty-five parliamentary seats in the general election.

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Anwar also argued that the early conduct of general election was part of attempts to deny his right to contest in the election and in order for him to enter the Parliament, one of PKR parliamentary seats had to be released to pave way for Anwar. At the onset of the general election, PKR had launched its manifesto with a theme “A New Dawn for Malaysia” on 26 February 2008 in Petaling Jaya by PKR President Wan Azizah. The manifesto was introduced with several significant points such as to introduce a minimum wage of RM1, 500 per month, to bring in an investment of RM100 billion within five years, to increase the national economic growth at the rate of five percent, and to encourage freedom of media and justice. These were some of the promises offered by PKR in the general election. Besides that, PKR had also come up with a new electoral strategy together with other opposition parties such DAP and PAS. According to PKR Chief of Information Tian Chua, in the election, 99.9 percent of seats would witness a one-to-one contest. It was part of PKR strategies in fighting against the ruling BN in the election. PKR also had consistently reminded its candidates to focus on several issues during the campaign session such as defending the people, reducing the price of fuel, free education, a professional police force, and freedom of judiciary.

Even though Anwar was not allowed to contest he would observe the PKR electoral machineries. PKR had put forth thirty-six candidates in which eighty percent were below the age of thirty five. At the same time, PKR Chief of Youth Shamsul Iskandar had launched a document entitled “The Document of Hope for the Youth” as part of PKR’s commitment towards the young generation. The strategy was believed to attract more youth

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to participate in political decision-making through the cast of votes in the election. One of PKR’s remarkable performance was in the Lembah Pantai constituency.

Nurul Izzah, Anwar’s daughter defeated the UMNO old-timer Shahrizat Abdul Jalil with a margin of 2,895 votes. In the constituency where the Malays were the majority, the ruling BN was defeated for the first time in Lembah Pantai. The result was a shock throughout the Malaysian political terrain. Back in the 2004 election, Shahrizat won the seat with a margin of 15,288 votes. But in the 2008, the situation went against the prediction. As one of PKR’s young candidates, Nurul had surpassed the ruling BN for the first time in her electoral history by defeating the UMNO strong woman. At first, Nurul was not sure in which constituency she would contest, whether the Lembah Pantai or Wangsa Maju. But eventually she was picked to represent PKR in the Lembah Pantai seat and succeeded in retaking seat from the ruling BN. In the Teluk Kemang constituency in Negeri Sembilan, MIC Vice President S. Sothinathan was confident that he would retain the seat by defeating PKR candidate Kamarul Baharin Abbas. Unfortunately, in 2008 election, Kamarul had defeated Sothinathan with a margin of 2,804 votes. In 2004, Sothinathan secured the seat with a margin of 17,777 votes but in 2008 he had failed to retain the seat. Teluk Kemang was the only parliamentary seat won by PKR in Negeri Sembilan. Sothinathan had earlier rejected a prediction saying that the electorates especially the Indian, had shifted their support to the opposition.

However, with the victory of PKR in Teluk Kemang, it was probably true that the prediction was based on concrete evidence. In Sungai Siput, a constituency which the MIC President Samy Vellu traditionally held, the seat fell finally in the 2008 election. Samy Vellu was defeated with a margin of 1,821 votes by Jeyakumar Devaraj from Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) who contested under PKR’s ticket. In 2004, Samy had retained the seat

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with a margin of 10,235 votes but in 2008, the votes for Samy had dropped to a very critical level. The defeat of Samy signalled that his political career was almost at an end, especially within the MIC. Provided with HINDRAF’s dissatisfaction where the group was of the view that it did not need the MIC to further the cause of Indian community.8

At first, PSM had considered withdrawing from contesting the seat if DAP was to contest the seat. The DAP, however, did not contest and this paved way for PSM. According to PSM Secretary-General S. Arutchelvan, Jeyakumar had worked hard in the constituency and believed that he was a suitable candidate for the seat.9 Besides that, PSM had already initiated its campaign, including conducting political *ceramah* and the distribution of leaflets. The victory of Jeyakumar was due to the avoidance of a three-cornered fight and assistance from the opposition political parties. In Selayang, the seat traditionally belonged to the Minister of Transportation and the incumbent was the MCA Deputy President Chan Kong Choy. Before the 2008 election was held, Chan made an announcement by stating that he would let go his Selayang seat due to health reasons.10 The MCA immediately named the Deputy Chief of Selayang division Lee Li Yew as a candidate to contest the Selayang seat. Unfortunately, Lee was defeated with a margin of 3,567 votes by PKR candidate William Leong Jee Keen.

The result was indeed a frustration for the MCA as Chan could win the seat in 2004 election with a margin of 23,226 votes but the new candidate could not secure the traditional seat. This had led to an assumption that the MCA’s strategy of putting forth new face candidates did not work since the shift of votes had required more than that to achieve the victory. In Kelana Jaya, the situation was a bit unusual. During the campaign session, there was the issue of “Lingam Video Tape” made popular by PKR candidate Loh Gwo

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Burne who claimed to have filmed the video. The Lingam tape was a controversial video that recorded the behaviour of some Judiciary members attempting to fix the appointment of a judge. The video was popularised by PKR as part of their campaign strategies to show to the public that the country was practicing some sort of unequal selection of judges.

Loh secured the Kelana Jaya seat by defeating the MCA candidate Lee Hwa Beng with a margin of 5,031 votes. The MCA performance was marked as the worse since its performance in the 2004 election where the MCA candidate obtained a margin of 21,571 votes. During the campaign period, it had been reported that there was an attempt to buy PKR candidates. The issue was raised by PKR Vice-President Syed Husin Ali as he claimed that one the PKR candidates was offered RM1 million to withdraw from the nomination. Even though he did not specifically refer to which parliamentary seat but in the 2008 election, as rumours went by, UMNO candidate Azalina Othman had won uncontested in Pengerang parliamentary seat in Johor. Besides Pengerang, UMNO candidate had won uncontested in Sementa state constituency, under Kapar parliament.

Abdul Rahman Palil was declared as the winner for Sementa seat when PKR candidate Suzaimi Salam did not come to submit his nomination form. In 2008 election, the practice of offering money was very frequent as revealed by Syed Husin and it involved not only at the parliamentary level but the state level as well. PKR had given their best shot in mobilizing their campaign strategies. Manifestos were proclaimed and people were rallied. PKR had claimed that the ruling BN was unequal and scared of the opposition manifesto. The ruling BN government had negatively responded to PKR manifesto by utilizing its controlled media to direct all the necessary attacks upon PKR. In a political speech

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delivered by Anwar, he stated that if the opposition won the general election, the fuel price would go down.\textsuperscript{14}

He further argued that the profit of RM80 billion enjoyed by PETRONAS would be returned back to the people in the form of reducing the price of fuel. Citing his past experience as a former Minister of Finance from 1991 until 1998, he was of the view that he knew how to manage the country’s economy. The nomenclature of reform which was once promised by the PM Abdullah had turned against himself when the ruling BN could not secure the two-thirds of majority in the Parliament. The shift of votes was so crucial in the sense that the electorates had decisively rejected the PM leadership as compared to the 2004 election where the PM enjoyed a very comfortable majority. Most of the people were experiencing the situation of unstable economics, lack of employment, the rising cost of living and many more. Therefore, it was of no surprise if the shift of votes was manifested due to the said problematic situation and provided that PKR had offered a new future by promising something that the voters might be interested in. PKR’s manifesto was composed of several reform ideas that the ruling BN had probably failed to implement.

On the other hand, PKR had also handed its support towards the Internal Security Act (ISA) Abolish Movement (\textit{Gerakan Mansuh ISA/ GMI}).\textsuperscript{15} The draconian laws of ISA had haunted many oppositional figures such as politicians, reformers, activists, and many more. PKR, in a way, had included the struggle against the ISA in its political agenda and if the opposition party could win the total of 125 parliamentary seats, ISA would immediately be abolished. PKR further stated that the abolishment was possible but provided with a political change. Prior to the electoral campaign, PKR had shifted their focus on the electorates in Kuala Lumpur constituencies. In the 2008 election, PKR had secured at least

\textsuperscript{14} ‘Menang, esok turun harga minyak’, \textit{Malaysiakini}, 26 February 2008.
four constituencies with flying colours. Besides Lembah Pantai which was won by PKR, Batu constituency was also listed as “hot seats”.

In Batu, PKR candidate Tian Chua\(^\text{16}\) had defeated GERAKAN candidate Lim Si Pin with a comfortable margin of 9,455 votes. Compared to the 2004 election, when Tian was badly defeated with a margin of 11,517 votes, he managed to unseat the ruling BN candidate in the 2008 election. As a matter of fact, there were several approaches initiated by PKR in Kuala Lumpur during the campaign period. For instance, several opposition candidates expected to contest in Kuala Lumpur constituencies had mutually joined “The Kuala Lumpur Declaration”. The declaration outlined several points as part of efforts to make Kuala Lumpur a better living place.\(^\text{17}\) Some of the major points were, first, the need to bring back local government elections, second, crime and public safety, third, traffic congestion, tolled highways, and equitable public transportations, fourth, environmental concerns and sustainable development, fifth, rising costs of living, sixth, preserving cultural heritage.\(^\text{18}\) Such declaration effort was not in vain as the rest of two parliamentary seats, Wangsa Maju and Bandar Tun Razak, were retaken by PKR.

In Wangsa Maju, Wee Choo Keong of Malaysia Democratic Party (MDP) had won the seat under PKR’s ticket by defeating the MCA candidate Yew Teong Look with a slim margin of 150 votes. Despite the ruling BN campaign mobilising the “Gerak Gempur”\(^\text{19}\) of UMNO youth delivering their support towards the MCA, Wee was finally able to score

\(^{16}\) During the Reformasi event when the former DPM Anwar Ibrahim was sacked, Tian Chua was inclined to engage in the form of activism. As a result of struggle in a series of demonstrations held, Tian was caught under the charge of ISA and was released in 2003 after being detained for two years. Tian made his first electoral debut in 2004 election in Batu constituency and also in Lunas state constituency in Kedah but lost in both seats. Tian’s electoral defeats had inspired him to the change of strategy. Leading up the 2008 election, Tian had set up an office in Batu and started to rally the publics under the pretext of a displaced working class community. The strategy was proven to be successful as he decisively claimed the seat that he used to lost. For a full account of Tian Chua’s politics, see: Julian C.H. Lee and Others, ‘Elections, Repertoires of Contention and Habitus in Four Civil Society Engagements in Malaysia’s 2008 General Elections,’ Social Movement Studies, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2010, pp. 293-309.


\(^{18}\) The Kuala Lumpur Declaration, 2008.

even with a slim majority. While in Bandar Tun Razak, Abdul Khalid Ibrahim from PKR won the seat with a margin of 2,515 votes by defeating the MCA candidate Tan Chai Ho.

In the east coast state of Kelantan, PKR was able to penetrate several of BN areas by winning three parliamentary constituencies such as Ketereh, Tanah Merah, and Machang. The strategy pursued by PKR in Kelantan was further intensified with the role played by PKR candidate Saifuddin Nasution in reaching out to the whole of Kelantan by managing a total of 99,632 elder people (warga emas) and their families. Saifuddin was working with PAS state government in Kelantan as a manager of “Tabung Amanah Tok Kenali” (Tok Kenali Trust Fund) to manage the affairs of older people. Based on the 2008 result, Saifuddin had secured Machang seat by defeating UMNO candidate Sazmi Miah with a margin of 1,460 votes. In 2004 election, Machang parliamentary seat was contested by PAS candidate but unfortunately was defeated by Sazmi Miah with a slim margin of 135 votes. Saifuddin had promoted PAS candidate Mohd Fadzli Hassan for Temangan state constituency under Machang parliament. It was done due to a “pre-condition of victory” for him to secure Machang seat. Besides Machang, PKR also had a victory in Tanah Merah parliamentary constituency where Amran Ab Ghani defeated the UMNO candidate with a margin of 1,584 votes while in Ketereh constituency, Abdul Aziz Kadir defeated UMNO candidate Annuar Musa with a slim margin of 400 votes.

In these three parliamentary seats won by PKR, there was no three-cornered fight involving PAS and PKR victory in some of Kelantan parliamentary constituency indicated that PKR could establish a support-base and people, especially the electorates, were quite comfortable with an opposition party besides than PAS. In Penang, the opposition parties successfully surpassed the ruling BN-GERAKAN. PKR secured four parliamentary seats in Penang which were Permatang Pauh, Nibong Tebal, Bayan Baru, and Balik Pulau.

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Permatang Pauh, a traditional seat held either by Wan Azizah or Anwar, was remarkably won by PKR after Wan Azizah defeated UMNO candidate Pirdaus Ismail with a huge margin of 13,398 votes.

During the campaign, PKR reported that UMNO had disturbed PKR’s campaign by ordering some local mobs to tear up and throw away PKR’s banners and flags in Permatang Pauh. Anwar participated in a political ceramah held at Han Chiang Indoor Stadium at Jalan Air Itam, where he called for a unity between PKR and DAP to build Penang. The ceramah was attended by thousands of people mainly from Penang. Anwar also appealed to the crowds to vote DAP’s candidates in the 2008 election. However, an allegation made by former GERAKAN President Lim Keng Yai, stated that Anwar was anti-Chinese when he used to be a minister for twelve years.

Unfortunately, such allegation did not undermine Anwar’s spirit and in fact, he had rallied in many parliamentary constituencies in seeking voter support and PKR unexpectedly secured many seats. The performance was against Anwar’s initial expectation in which he had targeted twenty-five seats but more were won. In Nibong Tebal, PKR candidate Tan Tee Beng was able to defeat UMNO candidate Zainal Abidin Osman with a margin of 3,087 votes while in Bayan Baru, PKR candidate Zahrain Mohamed Hashim had won the seat with a huge margin of 11,029 votes by defeating the MCA candidate Ooi Swee Kim. In an early preparation for Bayan Baru seat, PKR electoral machinery was seen as systematic and aggressive while MCA machinery was seen as ineffective and to a certain extent, there was a rumour circulated that Ooi Swee Kim was not very welcomed as the

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23 ‘Anwar was anti-Chinese, Keng Yaik’, The Sun Daily, 3 March 2008.
candidate. In Balik Pulau, PKR candidate Mohd Yusmadi won the seat by a slim margin of 708 votes. It seemed that the ruling BN, especially the GERAKAN, UMNO and MCA, had lost its political grip in the state of Penang.

PAS in the 2008 Parliamentary Elections

As the most ardent Islamic-based opposition political party, Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) had carved out its name when it could create its own minor victory in the 2008 parliamentary election.

Table 2.2
Parliamentary Seats Won By PAS According to States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>No. of Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kedah</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelantan</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terengganu</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perak</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Election Commission of Malaysia, 2008

As shown in Table 2.2, PAS managed to capture twenty-three parliamentary seats in several states including the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. Compared to the 2004 election, PAS could only win seven parliamentary seats but in 2008, PAS performance was

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remarkable in the sense that it managed to compromise its ideological-feud before it entered the 2008 electoral arena.

In terms of seats won, PAS had an increase of sixteen seats. In Kedah, PAS successfully captured six parliamentary seats which were Padang Terap, Pokok Sena, Pendang, Jerai, Sik, and Baling. In Kelantan, PAS was recorded to secure many parliamentary seats compared to the rest of states and those nine were Tumpat, Pengkalan Chepa, Kota Bahru, Pasir Mas, Rantau Panjang, Kubang Kerian, Bachok, Pasir Puteh, and Kuala Krai. Unfortunately in Terengganu, a state that used to be PAS’s stronghold, it captured only a seat. In Perak, PAS was able to secure two seats, Parit Buntar and Bukit Gantang.

In Selangor, four seats were won such as Kuala Selangor, Hulu Langat, Shah Alam, and Kota Raja. Finally in Kuala Lumpur, only one seat had been secured which was Titiwangsa. PAS had repeated the previous success of its electoral history where in 1999 election, PAS decisively penetrated the Parliament by sending twenty-seven of its MPs and also the late Fadzil Noor was appointed as the Leader of Opposition. But it did not last long when the ruling BN had almost entirely swept the parliamentary seats in 2004 election and in 2008 PAS made its political comeback. Even though PAS performance in the 2008 election was sparkling and equal to the rest of its opposition partners and unfortunately, PAS was caught in some sort of political test soon after the 2008 election was concluded. There was an attempt initiated by UMNO to lure PAS by using its “soft spot” which was Islam, to encourage PAS to form a unity government with UMNO in Selangor.

Therefore, a meeting was held at Jalan Bellamy, Kuala Lumpur, between some of UMNO representatives such as PM Abdullah and the former Selangor CM Mohamad Khir

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Toyo and from PAS, Dr. Hassan Ali, the Commissioner of PAS Selangor was invited. UMNO had offered to Dr. Hassan the position of chief minister in Selangor if PAS agreed to form a government with UMNO. The meeting did not further materialise as some of the PAS representatives had rejected the offer. For the opposition, it was a great blast for them where the ruling BN had resorted to such political move for the sake of undoing the victory of the opposition in capturing parliamentary seats and several states.

In June 2007, less than a year before the general election, PAS had its own internal party election where the young moderates were believed to have tightened their grip on PAS’s top positions. Realizing that the general election was just around the corner these moderates with political talents in PAS set out to establish a relationship with the non-Muslim community, especially the Chinese, in an organized campaign in 2007 known as Operasi Bersih (Clean-up Operation). The idea behind it was probably to socially engage with the grassroots and also to establish a political image that PAS was portrayed to be accepted by the masses. Interestingly, in the 2008 election, PAS had announced its manifesto called as “A Nation of Care and Opportunity” where in the manifesto, PAS did not emphasize the call of establishing an Islamic State but instead PAS had promoted the idea of having a just and clean government for a better life. PAS did not really stress on the need to change the government in a total but it was more of the moderate view of “check and balance” process. Due to this, PAS President had launched a website with the address of “pru12.pas.org.my” in order to make it easy for people to access and get to know well the manifesto and the current situation of PAS in the 2008 election.

PAS also came up with an initiative by offering information through the subscription of Short Messaging Services (SMS) for 50 cents. Subscribers would receive latest political news and the information concerning the time and venue of political ceramahs. While in Kelantan, the manifesto was different with the general manifesto where it was themed as “Develop with Islam, lead towards change and achieve blessings”. The central focus of the manifesto was the articulation of PAS performance in Kelantan during the years of ruling such as good administration and municipality, Islamic education, matters concerning women and people’s rights, financial affairs and many more.

In addition to that, PAS promised to transform the state of Kelantan, Kedah and Terengganu into the so-called “welfare state” and the focus would be sharpened on the rural areas. Clearly, it was a new political approach by PAS in fitting itself within the framework of the opposition multi-party system. One of PAS features in the 2008 election was the strong involvement of the PAS’s younger professionals in rallying the support of youth voters. Such approach was perceived as the sources of attraction in nurturing the political consciousness of young electorates while the ulama’ groups maintained their style of delivering political ceramah by stressing the issues of political instability, government mismanagement and the like. In terms of PAS electoral strategy, in the 2008 election, a number of new face candidates were listed, especially women.

Technically, PAS presented thirteen woman candidates, four in parliamentary constituencies and the rest for the state seats and one non-Muslim candidate. R. Kumutha, a non-Muslim candidate from PAS Club of Supporter, was assigned to contest in

32 Farish A. Noor, Islamism in a Mottled Nation, p. 188.
33 Three parliamentary constituencies contested and won by PAS woman candidates are: Rantau Panjang (Kelantan), Titiwangsa (Kuala Lumpur), and Kota Raja (Selangor).
Tiram state constituency in Johor under PKR’s ticket in 2008 election. Even though Kumutha was defeated by UMNO candidate Maulizan Bujang with a margin of 8,178 votes, Kumutha was able to garner a total of 8,827 votes. This probably indicated that Kumutha had a support base in that particular constituency.

In Kelantan, PAS managed to retain nine parliamentary seats. In Tumpat, PAS candidate Kamaruddin Jaafar defeated UMNO candidate with a margin of 9,377 votes. In Pengkalan Chepa, Abd Halim defeated Rahim Mohd Zain from UMNO with a huge majority of 11,311 votes. In Kota Bahru, the capital city of Kelantan, Wan Abdul Rahim defeated Mohd Fatmi from UMNO with a margin of 11,288. In Pasir Mas, Ibrahim Ali under the ticket of PAS had defeated Ahmed Rasdi from UMNO with a margin of 8,991 votes. In Rantau Panjang, Siti Zailah had secured the seat by defeating Mohd Afandi from UMNO with a margin of 4,486. In Kubang Kerian, Salahuddin Ayub won the seat with a huge margin of 10,642 votes by defeating Ab Ghani Mamat from UMNO. In Bachok, Nasharudin Mat Isa defeated UMNO candidate Awang Adek Hussin with a margin of 2,901 votes. In Pasir Puteh, Muhammad Husain defeated UMNO candidate Amran Mat Nor with a margin of 3,968 votes. In Kuala Krai, Dr. Mohd Hatta Md Ramli had won with the margin of 4,984 votes by defeating Che Musa Che Omar from UMNO. Dr. Mohd Hatta used to be one of PAS reformists due to PAS attempt in opening a platform for Muslim intellectuals which was believed to be initiated by the late Yusof Rawa (former PAS President) when the group of ulama’ combined with the group of professionals. Overall, the ruling BN especially UMNO performed poorly in Kelantan due to a strong influence of PAS supporters.

In the 2008 election, UMNO could only secure two parliamentary seats in Kelantan such as Jeli and Gua Musang. Based on the performance of PAS candidates in

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securing parliamentary seats in Kelantan, it indicated that some candidates won with very comfortable margins which were more than 4,000 votes. These included Kamarudin Jaafar, Ab Halim, Wan Abdul Rahim, Ibrahim Ali, Siti Zailah, Salahuddin Ayub, and Dr. Mohd Hatta. The rest of the PAS candidates, even though they had secured the seat their margin was below 4,000 votes and this still showed that they were part of electoral constraints that UMNO had to bear with.

In a way, the ruling BN manifesto in Kelantan was not welcome. In the 2008 election in Kelantan, UMNO had come up with the theme of “Kelantan Baru, Kelantan Maju” (New Kelantan, Develop Kelantan) in their efforts to wrestle the seats from PAS. Besides that, UMNO Kelantan had planned to implement seven ideas concerning the educational sectors, the construction of highways, the improvement of oil and gas sectors, the agenda of agriculture, natural product such as fish to be distributed fairly to the people, the flood prevention projects, and the trade activities for the people of Kelantan.

The ideas proposed by UMNO were probably unwelcome due to PAS victory in holding the state from the 1990 elections. As a matter of fact, what had been offered by UMNO was included in PAS manifesto. For instance, when UMNO planned to improve the people’s lifestyle by utilizing extracting the natural resources from sea and river, PAS had also included the same thing in their electoral manifesto where PAS had offered to provide houses for fisherman families and also to create job opportunities in order to make sure that each of the families receive a monthly income of more than RM1,200 per month.

In the words of the Deputy of Finance Minister Awang Adek, if Kelantan failed to change the government, from PAS to the ruling BN-UMNO, the state could lose a foreign investment worth of RM112 billion in the development of the East Coast Economic

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Region (Wilayah Ekonomi Pantai Timur / ECER). Awang Adek, the BN Director of Election in Kelantan, was expected to be appointed as Kelantan chief minister if UMNO won the election. The politics of development brought by the ruling UMNO was not bought by the electorates as people had become matured in deciding which party they should vote for.

In Terengganu, PAS was unfortunately able to secure one parliamentary seat in Marang. The rest of the seats were captured by the ruling BN. PAS President Abdul Hadi defeated UMNO candidate Ahmad Ramzi with a margin of 2,747 votes. In 2004 election, Abdul Hadi was defeated in Marang seat with a slim margin of 163 votes but able to make a comeback in the 2008 election. One of the probable factors that led to Abdul Hadi victory in 2008 election was believed to be a crisis sparked within the ruling BN members in terms of candidate selection. Abdul Rahman who was also UMNO candidate that won the Marang seat in 2004 election was dropped from 2008 contest and replaced with Ahmad Ramzi. UMNO looked at this situation differently where they had an expectation that it would be hard to recapture the Marang seat from PAS. Abdul Rahman supporters had launched an open protest against the announcement of the new list of candidates. The electorates in Marang prefered Abdul Rahman to contest in Marang based on certain political reasons.

Such internal feud had paved way for Abdul Hadi to represent the only PAS parliamentary seat in Terengganu. During the campaign election in Marang, it was reported that PAS succeeded to collect a total of RM18,000 in a huge political ceramah held at Kampung Pengadang Baru nearby Kuala Terengganu. The ceramah was attended by some of the top PAS leaders such as PAS Spiritual Leader Nik Aziz, PAS Vice-President

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40 Muda Mohd Noor, ‘RM18, 000 derma kilat di Marang’, Malaysiakini, 1 March 2008.
Mohamad Sabu, PAS Commissioner of Terengganu Mustafa Ali, and Abdul Hadi the PAS President. In that particular ceramah, UMNO weaknesses were made known. The strategy employed by PAS was different in terms of generating electoral funds. Compared to the ruling BN, they were synonymous with the 3Ms (money, machinery, and media) and they had a direct access from the federal resources.

But for PAS, they could only depend on the *ceramah*-based activities to generate political funds where people were invited to come and asked to donate sincerely. Due to this, PAS was perceived as close to the grassroots in terms of deriving political support. Besides Marang, Abdul Hadi also won the Rhu Rendang state constituency by defeating UMNO candidate Razali Idris with a margin of 2,686 votes. In the 2004 election, Abdul Hadi secured the same state seat with a margin of 1,435 votes. It was assumed that Abdul Hadi would face a bit of difficulty in making his way into the national politics through the parliamentary means. In Kedah, PAS managed to secure six parliamentary seats. The rest of the seats went to the ruling BN and PKR. In Padang Terap, PAS candidate Mohd Nasir Zakaria defeated UMNO candidate Ghazali Ibrahim with a slim margin of 369 votes.

In Pokok Sena, Mahfuz Omar recaptured the seat with a margin of 5,731 votes by defeating Abdul Rahman Ibrahim from UMNO. Mahfuz was beaten by Abdul Rahman in the 2004 election but in 2008, he secured the seat with a margin less that Abdul Rahman had in 2004. In Pendang, Mohd Hayati Othman defeated UMNO candidate Md Rozai Shafian with a margin of 4,073 votes. Mohd Hayati, in 2004 election, had won Pendang seat with a very slim margin of 50 votes but in 2008 he managed to regain the margins. In Jerai, Mohd Firdaus Ja’afar won the seat with a margin of 2,299 votes by defeating UMNO candidate Badruddin Amirudin. In Sik, Che Uda defeated UMNO
candidate with a slim margin of 481 votes. In Baling, Taib Azamudden won the seat with a margin of 7,613 votes by defeating Abd Azeez Abd Rahim from UMNO.

The victory had indicated that PAS had the biggest number of parliamentary seats in Kedah and besides that, at the state level, the victory had led PAS to form a state government by merging with PKR. In Perak, PAS managed to capture two parliamentary seats. In Parit Buntar, Mujahid Yusof, the son of the late former PAS President Yusof Rawa, won the seat by defeating UMNO candidate Abdul Raman Suliman with a margin of 7,551 votes and in Bukit Gantang, Roslan Shaharum defeated Azim Abadi from UMNO with a margin of 1,566 votes.

At the state level, the opposition parties successfully formed a state government with PAS as the chief minister. In the post-2008 election, PAS had at least produced three chief ministers mainly in Kelantan, Kedah, and Perak. While in Selangor, PAS was able to penetrate the political scene by winning four parliamentary seats. In Kuala Selangor, Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad defeated Jahaya Ibrahim from UMNO with a margin of 862 votes. In Hulu Langat, Dr. Che Rosli Che Mat secured the seat with a margin of 1,745 votes by defeating UMNO candidate Markiman Kobiran. In Shah Alam, the capital of Selangor, Khalid Abd Samad captured the seat with a margin of 9,314 votes by defeating Abdul Aziz from UMNO. In Kota Raja, Dr. Siti Mariah decisively won the seat by a huge margin of 20,751 votes by defeating MIC candidate S. Vigneswaran. It was totally unexpected for Dr. Siti to win in that particular mixed-majority constituency with a very comfortable majority.

The voting trend in Selangor was not confined only to PAS but to the rest of the opposition parties such as PKR and DAP. Another PAS’s electoral success was reported in Titiwangsa, one of Kuala Lumpur constituencies, where Dr. Lo’Lo’ Mohd Ghazali defeated UMNO candidate, Aziz Jamaluddin with a margin of 1,972 votes. PAS
performance, it was argued, would not be the same as in the 2008 election unless and until it jumped into another chapter of coalition together with the rest of opposition parties and put aside its ideological differences for the purpose of convincing the electorates that they could form an oppositional unity in carrying out dissenting voices.

**DAP in the 2008 Parliamentary Elections**

The Democratic Action Party (DAP) was portrayed as the multi-racial party with the Chinese as the majority. In the 2008 election, besides PKR and PAS, DAP had also made some remarkable gains in terms of securing parliamentary seats.

**Table 2.3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>DAP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Penang</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perak</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selangor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuala Lumpur</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negeri Sembilan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melaka</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabah</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarawak</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28 seats</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: The Election Commission of Malaysia, 2008.*
As one of the oldest opposition parties in Malaysia, DAP had successfully created political attraction within Malaysian political terrain after it had suffered big electoral defeats in the previous general elections. But in 2008 election, DAP won twenty-eight parliamentary seats in nine states including the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and thus had made it as the opposition party that succeeded in penetrating states in Malaysia in terms of seats secured including, Sabah and Sarawak.

Compared to PKR, the party could only penetrate eight states while PAS was able to set foot in only six states. DAP had captured the highest parliamentary seats in Penang. Those seven seats were Bagan, Bukit Mertajam, Batu Kawan, Bukit Bendera, Tanjong, Jelutong, and Bukit Gelugor. In Perak, DAP managed to capture six seats such as Taiping, Ipoh Timur, Ipoh Barat, Batu Gajah, Beruas, and Teluk Intan. In Selangor, only four seats were secured such as Puchong, Petaling Jaya Utara, Serdang, and Klang. While in Kuala Lumpur, DAP was marked as the highest in terms of seats captured, compared to PKR and DAP. Those five seats were Kepong, Segambut, Bukit Bintang, Seputih, and Cheras. In Negeri Sembilan, DAP secured two seats in Seremban and Rasah. In the rest of the states, DAP managed to obtain single seats in each of the states, as for instance, Kota Melaka (Melaka), Bakri (Johor), Kota Kinabalu (Sabah), and Bandar Kuching (Sarawak). Before the 2008 election was set to be held, DAP was caught in a problematic situation concerning the lack of candidates to be fielded at the parliamentary and state levels. According to DAP Secretary-General Lim Guan Eng, the party was hoping to resolve the situation by recruiting more candidates especially women, contesting under the DAP’s ticket.\textsuperscript{41}

Besides that, Lim was of the view that DAP’s involvement in the election was not necessarily to win the seats but to increase the share of votes which DAP had garnered in

\textsuperscript{41} ‘DAP may be forced to field some candidates in both state and parliamentary seats’, \textit{The Sun Daily}, 15 February 2008.
the previous elections. DAP, in a way, had intended to put forth some new candidates. In the 2008 election, DAP had mobilised its electoral machinery when the party’s manifesto was launched with the title of “Malaysia Can Do Better!” and the theme of “Jom Ubah” (Let’s Change It). The main target of the manifesto was the conduct of the ruling BN government since it assumed political power.

One of the manifesto contents had particularly touched on the spending of half of the profits from PETRONAS to finance a total of RM35 billion fiscal stimulus plans to upgrade the living standards. There was an argument as to whether DAP’s manifesto was similar to PAS’s manifesto of welfare state but DAP countered that the difference was not about the welfare state but the economic system adopted by most of countries. In stressing the nomenclature of “Malaysia Can Do Better”, eight points were laid down; first, to ensure safer streets for the families, second, a healthy environment for the future generation, third, to achieve a better living standards, fourth, gender equality and youth empowerment, fifth, a strong economy known as “Malaysian First”, sixth, a clean and transparent government, seventh, to improve the quality of education, and finally, democracy and freedom.

DAP was of the opinion that the ruling BN was an inevitable impediment towards the political progress and therefore, the 2008 election was the viable platform of democratic transition. In Penang, DAP’s electoral performance was excellent compared to the rest of the opposition parties where a number of parliamentary seats fell to its grip. In Bagan, DAP candidate Lim Guan Eng defeated the MCA candidate Song Choy Leng with a very impressive margin of 22,070 votes. Back in 2004 election, the Bagan was retained by Lim

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Hock Seng of DAP with a margin of 3,622 votes. In the 2008 election, the voters in Bagan voted for DAP again. In fact Bagan was a DAP’s stronghold since 1986 election.

The victory of Guan Eng in Bagan was welcomed and in the previous two elections, 1999 and 2004, he was banned from contesting in elections due to a conviction for sedition and was imprisoned for three years for questioning the Court in handling a rape case involving the former Melaka Chief Minister Abdul Rahim Thamby Chik.\footnote{‘Ramasamy takes on Koh in Batu Kawan’, *The Sun Daily*, 22 February 2008.} In the context of the 2008 election, Guan Eng performed remarkably especially when he was able to take down one of the ruling BN leaders. Therefore, Bagan status quo was well maintained by DAP with an additional margin of votes. In Bukit Mertajam, the seat was secured by Chong Eng of DAP with the margin of 25,897 votes by defeating the MCA candidate Ong Tang Chuan. In 2004, Chong had maintained the seat by the margin of 8,564 votes. In Batu Kawan, DAP candidate P. Ramasamy defeated the former Penang Chief of Minister Koh Tsu Koon from GERAKAN with a margin of 9,485 votes. During the campaign period, Koh was confident in winning Batu Kawan. An analyst believed that the defeat of Koh was due to the issues involving the Indian community.\footnote{Azharudin Mohamed Dali, ‘Pilihan Raya Umum ke-12 di Pulau Pinang: Ke Arah Politik Baru Pasca Reformasi?’, p. 125.}

The issue began when Koh did not entertain the problems of the Indian voters at Valder Estate, especially the issue of Sekolah Kebangsaan Jenis Tamil (Tamil National Type of School /SJKT). Indian made up of 11,210 voters and DAP realised that the issue in Batu Kawan could be contained and settled by having a DAP candidate from Indian ethnic. Therefore, it was probably expected that the dissenting voice of Indian had translated into the victory of Ramasamy. Even though the ruling BN had accused the opposition parties,
especially in Penang, for playing the racial card of the opposition, the opposition parties had managed to penetrate the state. Besides DAP, the ruling BN also directed the allegation to PKR as well.

However, the result strongly indicated that the communal vote was greatly manifested in the form of the oppositional victory. In Bukit Bendera, DAP candidate Liew Chin Tong had recaptured the seat with a margin of 16,112 votes by defeating GERAKAN candidate Chia Kwang Chye. Bukit Bendera seat was traditionally held by GERAKAN. In 2004 election, a Malay candidate from DAP, Zulkifli Mohd Noor was defeated by Chia with a margin of 10,717 votes. Unfortunately, Chia could not retain the seat in the 2008 election and in fact, Chin Tong was a new candidate. Besides that, DAP’s campaign strategy in Bukit Bendera gained momentum when several issues were raised by DAP concerning the problems in constituency, the Penang Global City Centre (PGCC), allocations of funds in the constituency, affordable houses, and religious freedom. According to the incumbent MP for Seputeh Teresa Kok, in the election campaign, she stated that if voters chose to vote for DAP candidate, Chia could be offered a position as a Senator in the Parliament or another significant position in the government.

It meant that the voters were in a profound win-win situation, they could either vote for DAP or BN. In Tanjong, DAP candidate Chow Kon Yeow defeated GERAKAN candidate Khaw Veon Szu with a margin of 18,489 votes. DAP’s victory in Tanjong was continued from the 2004 election where the same DAP candidate defeated Ooi Swee Hing from GERAKAN with a margin of 4,228 votes. While in Jelutong, DAP candidate Jeff Ooi had recaptured the seat with the margin of 16,246 votes by defeating GERAKAN candidate Thor Teong Ghee. Eventually, Bagan was a three-cornered fight including an Independent

48 ‘Teresa: Vote DAP’s Liew, Chia can be made a Senator’, *The Sun Daily*, 4 March 2008.
candidate but DAP somehow was able to get through the election even though the seat traditionally belonged to GERAKAN.

The seat was also dominated by the Chinese as high as 41,581 voters as the majority but at the same time, as argued, Malay voters would also contribute towards the victory of DAP candidate. It was suggested that even though the Malay was not big enough in terms of numbers but in a way it was perceived as significant. In Bukit Gelugor, Karpal Singh had delivered to DAP with a margin of 21,015 votes by defeating MCA candidate Koay Har Huah. In 2004, Karpal did the same by securing the seat with the margin of 1,261 votes. Karpal’s performance was unbeatable in the sense that the party identification in Bukit Gelugor constituency was so strong. DAP’s campaign strategy in Bukit Gelugor was dominated by some local issues, for instance, the issue of development at Kampung Buah Pala, the unpleasant smell from a rubber factory at Paya Terubung, and traffic congestion at Ayer Hitam. The electorate in Bukit Gelugor had placed great hopes on the opposition to look into the matter. Once the opposition had secured the state, it would be easy for them to have a direct access to the state government.

Overall, DAP’s performance in Penang in terms of parliamentary elections was impressive as the ruling BN could only secure two parliamentary seats - Kepala Batas and Tasek Gelugor. In Perak, DAP managed to wrestle six parliamentary seats and again DAP was the highest among the opposition parties in terms of seats secured. In Taiping, Nga Kor Ming defeated the President of People’s Progressive Party (PPP) M. Kayveas with the margin of 11,298 votes. In 2004, Kayveas won the seat with the margin of 2,172 votes involving a three-cornered fight with DAP and PKR. Taiping was one of the so-called

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50 Ibid.,
parliamentary “hot-seats” where it involved “one-on-one” contest and the candidate who used to contest for the said seat was a well-known politician, PPP president, M. Kayveas.\(^5\)

At first, before the polling, the former Perak Chief Minister Tajol Rosli had claimed that Taiping was one of problematic seats in terms of candidates.\(^5\) The seat was supposed to be given either to GERAKAN or PPP but it was not decided. However, the conundrum was broken when PPP contested the seat. One of the factors that led to victory of Kor Ming in Taiping was the avoidance of three-cornered fight. PKR, on the other hand, had paved the way for DAP to fight against the ruling BN-PPP. In Ipoh Timor, Lim Kit Siang of DAP defeated MCA candidate Liew Mun Hon with a margin of 21,942 votes. It was a direct fight between the DAP and MCA and in 2004 election, Kit Siang secured the same seat with the margin of 9,774 votes and thus had denied the entry of BN even though BN had changed its candidates for the seat. In Ipoh Barat, M. Kulasegaran of DAP managed to secure the seat by defeating Yik Phooi Hong of MCA with the margin of 15,534 votes. In 2004, Kulasegaran had won with a slim majority of 598 votes but in 2008 he made a very impressive increase in terms of votes gained. The party’s identification and the candidate’s personality were additional factors for Kulasegaran and provided that he was a well-known political figure in Ipoh. For instance, during the campaign, he had rallied the Chinese and Indians in his political *ceramah* held in Ipoh.\(^5\) He emphasised the need of having additional Chinese primary schools in the constituency.

In Batu Gajah, Fong Po Kuan of DAP had secured the seat with the margin of 24,627 votes by denying the victory of MCA candidate Cheah Yoke Can. In 2004, Po Kuan’s performance was also impressive where she secured the seat with the margin of

7,927 votes. At first, Po Kuan refused to defend her Batu Gajah seat and had shocked the party but suddenly she reemerged to save the seat. In Beruas, Ngeh Koo Ham of DAP succeeded to recapture the seat from GERAKAN candidate Chang Ko Youn with a majority of 1,828 votes. In 2004, GERAKAN candidate Lim Keng Yaik defeated Nga Hock Cheh of DAP with the margin of 4,564 votes. The total votes obtained by Ngeh was still low compared to what had been achieved by Keng Yaik.

In Teluk Intan, DAP candidate M. Manogaran recaptured the seat from one of GERAKAN’s top leaders, Mah Siew Keong with the margin of 1,470 votes. In 2004, the seat was a three-cornered fight involving GERAKAN, DAP, and PKR. Siew Keong managed to unseat both opposition parties with the margin of 9,836 votes. The contest of parliamentary seats in Perak was a fight between the DAP and GERAKAN/MCA. Even though the ruling BN was leading in terms of parliamentary seats in Perak but at the same time, the opposition, particularly DAP, had slowly made an inroads in the state by denying GERAKAN from setting up electoral bases. In Selangor, DAP had at least captured four parliamentary seat which was also equal with PAS in terms of seats secured while PKR indicated the highest in terms of seats obtained.

In Serdang, Teo Ni Ching of DAP managed to recapture the seat from MCA candidate, Hoh Hee Lee with the margin of 21,025 votes. In 2004, a different MCA candidate Yap Pian Hon defeated Wong Kok Yew of DAP with the margin of 11,280 votes. Interestingly, during a public sermon (ceramah) held by Teo, he had highlighted the performance of Hoh Hee Lee where he had spoken twenty-five times through 11 years in Selangor State Assembly. The point made by Teo was that an MP must be alert to his or her surroundings and also must be aware of the local problems. Even though Teo was a

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newcomer in DAP, her success in securing seats was a signal that the electorate had acknowledged her and probably the party identification that had contributed towards her electoral victory. Besides that, some of DAP’s veterans such as Lim Kit Siang and Lim Guan Eng\textsuperscript{56} were behind Teo all the time in backing the newcomer to become politically confident.

In Puchong, Gobind Singh Deo of DAP recaptured the seat from GERAKAN candidate Lau Yeng Peng with a margin of 12,593 votes. In 2004, the situation was different where the seat was a three-cornered fight including GERAKAN, DAP, and PAS. Therefore, Lau had secured the seat with the margin of 11,882 votes. When PAS had paved way for DAP in 2008, Gobind successfully won the direct contest.

In Petaling Jaya Utara, Tony Pua of DAP defeated MCA candidate Chew Mei Fun of MCA with a huge margin of 19,972 votes. In 2004, Chew defeated DAP candidate Ronnie Liu with the margin of 13,043 votes. Clearly, the voting behaviour in Petaling Jaya shifted to DAP when Pua could gain such a majority and what had been achieved by Chew in 2004 was surpassed by Pua in 2008. Even though Pua was attacked by Chew’s \textit{ceramah} in Petaling Jaya during the campaign by questioning the sincerity of the decision made by Pua when he sold his Singapore-based IT company and joined DAP\textsuperscript{57}, the voters simply ignored it. In Klang, Charles Santiago of DAP recaptured the seat with the margin of 17,701 votes by defeating MCA candidate Ch’ng Toh Eng. In 2004, MCA candidate Tan Yee Kew defeated Wong Ang Peng of MCA with a margin of 13,281 votes but eventually Charles did better when he unseated MCA with a huge margin in terms of votes. DAP’s

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\textsuperscript{57} ‘Failure is business does not equal failure in politics’, \textit{The Sun Daily}, 29 February 2008.
performance in contesting parliamentary seats in Selangor was proven thoroughly where it made a complete sweep of four seats where the Chinese were of the majority.\textsuperscript{58}

DAP was not alone in terms of mobilizing electoral machinery. For instance in Petaling Jaya Utara, Tony Pua was believed to organize his campaign strategy by teaming up with PKR members such as Nurul Izzah and Nik Nazmi. All the parliamentary seats won by DAP in Selangor was above the comfortable margin of 4,000 votes. In Kuala Lumpur, DAP made the highest gain of five parliamentary seats. In Kepong, Tan Seng Giaw of DAP maintained the seat with the margin of 23,848 votes by defeating GERAKAN candidate Lau Hoi Keong. It was not the first victory for Tan and in 2004, Tan secured the seat by defeating GERAKAN candidate Ma Woei Chyi with a margin of 1,854 votes. In Segambut, Lim Lip Eng of DAP had recaptured the seat with a margin of 7,732 votes by defeating GERAKAN candidate Ma Woei Chyi.

When GERAKAN defeated DAP in 2004, the seat was retained with a margin of 16,968 votes. During the 2008 election campaign in Segambut, Lim campaign manager Peh Thiam Hock was detained by the police without any specified reasons.\textsuperscript{59} Lim opined that such incident was part of an attempt to undermine his electoral campaign. Besides that, Peh’s car was abused with paint and acid. In Bukit Bintang, DAP candidate Fong Kui Lun defeated Lee Chong Meng of MCA with the margin of 14,277 votes. In 2004, Fong won the seat with a slim margin of 304 votes in a four-cornered fight involving MCA, MDP, and the Independent.

According to Fong, the electorates had voted for the issues of HINDRAF, inflation, and the decision of the EC on the use of indelible ink.\textsuperscript{60} Not only that, DAP had also secured a sizable number of Indian votes in the constituency even though Indians made up only 10.3 percent but it was still perceived as significant towards the contributive factors of victory. In Seputeh, DAP candidate Teresa Kok had secured the seat with the margin of 36,492 votes by defeating Chew Chee Lin of MCA. There was an increase in terms of votes gained by Teresa, for instance, in 2004, Chin Yen Foo of MCA was unseated by Teresa with the margin of 12,895 votes. In Cheras, Tan Kok Wai of DAP defeated MCA candidate Jeffrey Goh Sim Ik with the margin 28,300 votes. Before this, in 2004, MCA’s attempt to wrest the seat had failed when Tan was able to win with the margin of 11,861 votes. Therefore, all the seats won by DAP indicated that it was a direct contest against either the MCA nor GERAKAN. After the 2002 delineation exercise, there were at least four Chinese majority seats Kuala Lumpur, that is, Kepong, Seputeh, Cheras, and Bukit Bintang.\textsuperscript{61} The reason behind such exercise was to consolidate the ruling BN grounds and also to dilute the Chinese votes but unfortunately, in 2004 election, DAP was seen to gain advantage in seats such as Kepong, Bukit Bintang, Seputeh, and Cheras. Except in Segambut where GERAKAN had won the seat.

In Negeri Sembilan, DAP managed to set foot at least in two parliamentary constituencies such as Seremban and Rasah. Unfortunately, PKR could only obtain a seat in Teluk Kemang while PAS had none. In Seremban, the seat was a direct contest between DAP and MCA. John Fernandez defeated Yu Chok Tow with a margin of 3,948 votes. In 2004, the seat was secured by MCA with the margin of 16,236 votes. Under Seremban parliamentary seat, there were six state seats which were Lenggeng, Nilai, Lobak, Temiang,

\textsuperscript{60} ‘DAP retains Bukit Bintang with increased majority’, \textit{The Sun Daily}, 9 March 2008.
Sikamat, and Ampangan. Out of six state seats, UMNO only won in Lenggeng while DAP captured three (Nilai, Lobak, and Temiang) and PKR managed to secure two (Sikamat and Ampangan).

It probably indicated that the votes received in the state seats had been translated into the victory of John at the 2008 parliamentary level. In Rasah, Loke Siew Fook of DAP defeated MCA candidate Yeow Chai Tiam with a margin of 13,151 votes. In 2004, MCA maintained the seat with the margin of 4,563 votes by defeating the DAP. Clearly, based on the 2008 and 2004 election results, MCA was unable to maintain their status quo. Voting behaviour in the constituencies was in favour of the opposition parties, especially DAP. In Melaka, DAP was the only opposition party which succeeded to penetrate a parliamentary seat. Both PKR and PAS had failed to secure any seat. In Kota Melaka, Sing Tong Him of DAP managed to recapture the seat from Wong Nai Chee of MCA with the margin of 11,390 votes. Eventually in 2004, Wong hardly secured the seat with the margin of 219 votes by defeating DAP candidate Kerk Kim Hock.

In Johor, DAP also made a single inroad where the party had secured the seat of Bakri. Er Teck Hwa defeated Tay Puay Chuan of MCA with the margin of 722 votes. In 2004, Chua Jui Meng of MCA remarkably won the seat with a huge majority of 19,059 votes by defeating a Malay candidate from DAP Azhari Ismail. In the east state of Malaysia, Sabah, DAP succeeded to recapture the Kota Kinabalu seat, the capital of Sabah, with a narrow margin of 106 votes by defeating PKR, PBS, and the Independent. It was argued that if the seat had been contested without PKR, DAP could have garnered more votes. In 2004, the situation was also the same where DAP had a three-cornered fight involving the ruling BN and PKR but unfortunately, the seat was secured by the ruling BN with a huge majority of 10,471 votes.
Finally in Sarawak, DAP recorded an electoral success by winning the seat of Bandar Kuching. Chong Chien Jen defeated the BN-SUPP candidate Sim Yaw Yen with a margin of 9,952 votes. In 2004, Chong secured the same seat with a margin of 2,041 votes. Speaking of campaign in Sarawak, DAP precisely sought the Sarawak Land Code to be amended for the purpose of protecting people’s rights. Most of the time, DAP emphasised more on local issues but as usual, the ruling BN politics of development had prevailed over everything.

**Political Change in Malaysia**

The performance of the opposition political parties in the 2008 parliamentary elections was viable in the sense that it directly posed an electoral threat towards the ruling BN government. Even though the ruling BN component parties were able to form a government, it was built with the reduced two-thirds majority. The 2008 election was an unexpected watershed for the ruling BN as it tremendously experienced an electoral defeat after they had secured a decisive mandate by the electorate in the 2004 election. On the other hand, the failure of the ruling BN government in securing its two-thirds of majority in the Parliament was dubbed as a “Political Tsunami” by some local political observers. It assumed that the voting behaviour within the national context greatly shifted overnight. Therefore, a remarkable oppositional performance had led to a number of changes within the framework of Malaysian politics. For instance, the formation of newly opposition coalition known as Pakatan Rakyat (PR), the end of ethnic politics, PR in the 12th Parliament and the 2008 Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election.

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The End of Ethnic Politics

Ethnicity was an integral part of the characteristics of Malaysian politics. The advent of the multi-racial and pluralistic-society in the country was all due to a long-time creation of colonial knowledge and policy known as “divide and rule”. Besides that, racial constraints were further escalated and developed by electoral means as experienced in the 1969 election where it led to inevitable communal clashes. In responding to the situation, especially in the post-1969, the ruling Alliance government had introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP) to mitigate and to put the dire situation into a compromised political balance.

In an analysis made by Shamsul A.B, the NEP was part of former PM Tun Razak’s effort at that time consisting of some Malay bureaucrats, academics, and technocrats where most of whom were involved in achieving the objectives of Kongres Ekonomi Bumiputera/Bumiputera Economic Congress (KEB) in 1965 and 1968. As a result, in the same year of 1970, the group had published a book known as Revolusi Mental (Mental Revolution) in designing a proper framework concerning the future performance of Malays in socio-politics. According to Jomo, the NEP was perceived as a necessary measure that could not be ignored in order to counter the interethnic outbreak which broke out in 1969. It was the first time in Malaysia’s electoral history that the Alliance comprising of UMNO, MIC, and MCA was rejected by the electorates in Peninsular.

The argument behind that the people were too caught up under the pretext of economic matters and later on the NEP was politically manifested as the so-called “positive

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discrimination”. As analysed by Vejai Balasubramaniam, the main priority for the Alliance in the post-1969 had been sought with embedding the ethnic politics by utilising the NEP as an instrument.\(^{65}\) Since then, local politics was racially divided with a number of Malay votes, either going to UMNO or PAS, the Chinese votes to MCA, and Indian votes to MIC.

As argued, the NEP policy had several indirect outcomes; first, the creation of a Bumiputera “business class” and its relations to politics, second, the development of Bumiputera “entrepreneurship”, the widespread use of money politics in UMNO elections, and the practice of government-promoted projects.\(^{66}\) The idea of political economy based on the NEP had, in a way, produced a fragmented society throughout the country. Not only that, as argued, the impact was the ascendancy of a racialised group of bureaucratic capitalists connected within the circle of elite in the state.\(^{67}\) By all means, other considerable measures were taken for the purpose of consolidating the current political position such as patronage and propaganda to generate political profits derived from the NEP.

The one who benefitted most from such policy was the Malay-dominated party UMNO where it was believed that they had created an immense wealth. Corruption in the country became rampant and the opposition’s role in unearthing the doing was geared up. For instance, after the sack of Anwar from the government and also from UMNO, the Malay votes were against the ruling BN in the 1990 election.

But in 2004, under Abdullah, the ruling BN managed to gain its almost lost momentum by receiving a huge mandate. The promises of reforms were not well


implemented and the issue such as the price of fuel became the source of disgruntlement until it led to the 2008 election where the ruling BN’s traditionally preserved two-thirds majority turned to the victory of the opposition political parties. As explained before, the result of 2008 election had been dubbed as the unexpected “political tsunami”. The Chinese, for instance, had given up their support for BN’s effort to reform and they claimed that they would be a second-class citizens as long as the ruling BN held onto the grip of political power.  

Such political blow was not felt by UMNO alone but worse, its main component parties such as MCA, MIC, and GERAKAN also had the same electoral frustration. It was of a great shock for the communal-based political parties where for most of the time they had enjoyed a substantive political support and the electoral majority in Parliament and the State Assemblies. The shift of voting behaviour had strongly indicated that, especially the non-Malays, where they had found another political alternative to represent their causes besides those of the ruling BN parties. In Penang, for instance, GERAKAN and MCA was heavily defeated by the opposition parties consisting of PKR, DAP, PAS and the opposition could form a new state government. At the parliamentary level, GERAKAN was left with only two seats, Gerik (Perak) and Simpang Renggam (Johor). In the 2008 election, a total of thirty-nine out of 82 parliamentary seats won by the opposition parties were from mixed-majority seats or multi-ethnic constituency. 

In each of the elections held previously, mixed-majority seats were known as the ruling BN’s fortress. Party identification was so strong and the opposition was trying very hard in gaining support from those seats. Therefore, the opposition success in penetrating

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69 PKR won 22 seats, DAP won 12 seats, and PAS won 5 seats. See: Lian Kwen Fee and Jayanath Appadurai, p. 77.
mixed-majority constituencies had suggested that the communal based-voting had ended. The voters were more inclined towards the current issues and how political parties politicize certain issues until the people were moved by it. The recipe of the oppositional electoral success was attributed to the philosophy of unification among the three major opposition parties. Differences in terms of religions and ethnics were put aside and replaced with a political unity. For instance, according to one DAP leader, when PR state government was formed in Penang in the post-2008 general election led by DAP, most of the benefits were channeled to Malay Muslims even though the Chinese were the majority in the state.\(^\text{70}\) Clearly it was an all out effort to fix the current perception that the Malays were being bullied by the non-Malays and provided with an uncontrolled media in which had escalated the debate on the racial discourse in the country. Another instance suggested that during the election, PAS, a Malay-Muslim dominated party, would have won Chinese votes respectively.\(^\text{71}\)

In terms of Malay votes, according to a local political scientist Wong Chin Huat, he was of the opinion that the Malay votes went to the opposition due to several “push and pull” factors such as economy, crime rate and the erosion of legitimacy in the ruling BN government and additionally, Anwar was one of factors that mobilised the Malay support to change.\(^\text{72}\) During the campaign period, Anwar was politically attacked and characteristically assassinated by the ruling BN but political observers stated that it backfired. By looking at the voting pattern, especially in Peninsular, some sensational

\(^{70}\) YB Teresa Kok, Member of Parliament (MP) for Seputeh Constituency in Kuala Lumpur, Interviewed by Author, Parliament Building, Kuala Lumpur, 26 November 2015.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.,

\(^{72}\) ‘Malays join others in moving away from racial politics’, \textit{The Sun Daily}, 11 March 2008.
issues had decisively remained as a critical indicator for the shift of support. As a result, it had been academically termed as the “urban swing”.73

**The Emergence of Pakatan Rakyat (PR)**

The story of the oppositional BA coalition was long dead when DAP opted to leave the circle due to the ideological differences with PAS. One opted for the safeguards of federal constitution while the other was vehemently against the nature of the constitution. After an electoral attempt initiated by the opposition parties in the 2004 election had failed, the 2008 election results had suggested that the nomenclature of democracy was finally put to a balance and the opposition finally gained its political currency due to some sort of mutual political understanding among each other.

According to one DAP member, Liew Chin Tong opined that in studying the nature of PR, it is best to include several of past political events in 1998 involving the reformasi movement and the sack of Deputy Minister Anwar Ibrahim from the government.74 It was further believed that the sack of Anwar was not a one-off but it had developed a new perspective in understanding the nature of Malaysian politics where the formation of BA took place several weeks before the 1999 general election was held. In a way, the ruling BN saw that the escalation of the oppositional coalition as one of potential threats towards the national politics especially when BA came to be materialised and manifested in the form of practical coalition of several main opposition parties.

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74 YB Liew Chin Tong, Member of Parliament (MP) for Kluang Constituency, Interviewed by Author, Jalan Tun Razak, Kuala Lumpur, 10 November 2014.

Notes: In the 12th Parliament, from 2008 until 2012, YB Liew Chin Tong had served for Bukit Bendera Parliamentary Constituency in the state of Penang. And after the 2013 Malaysia’s general election and in the 13th Parliament, YB Liew became an MP for Kluang Parliamentary Constituency in the state of Johor. Therefore, this interview was conducted when YB Liew served for Kluang constituency.
As believed by PAS Vice-President Husam Musa, the combination of PKR, PAS, and DAP was a close call to the winning of 116 parliamentary seats.\textsuperscript{75} As a matter of fact, Husam’s electoral prediction took place before the electorate had cast their votes. He argued that a profound electoral cooperation among the opposition parties was noticed when DAP had mobilised together with PAS and during the campaign period, at some of DAP electoral campaigns, PAS flags and banners were waved. Literally, the need of having a concrete opposition coalition was indeed felt and it was a matter of time before it could really be materialised.

The victory achieved by the opposition was at first blurred until the result was told differently. Besides than the failure of the ruling BN to retain its decisive majority, and at the state level, the opposition was able to capture five states, namely Kelantan, Kedah, Penang, Perak, and Selangor. Before an official coalition was proclaimed, the opposition members had indeed demonstrated a formal unity within the context of state level.

In Selangor, for instance, Kinrara state representative Teresa Kok from DAP had declared her party’s support for PKR Secretary-General Abdul Khalid Ibrahim to be appointed as the new Selangor’s chief of minister.\textsuperscript{76} Not only DAP, even PAS was also at the zenith of political maturity where it stated its concern to work together with DAP as part of state government despite their past ideological feuds. Besides that, another factor that deserved attention in unifying the oppositional circle was believed to be Anwar Ibrahim who acted presumptuously in rallying the so-called public dissenting voices.

As argued by Gordon P. Means, Anwar was the key leader in forging the opposition parties by acting as an intermediary especially between DAP and PAS over the issues

\textsuperscript{75} ‘It was the people’s anger that did it’, \textit{The Sun Daily}, 10 March 2008.
\textsuperscript{76} ‘DAP and PAS support Khalid as Selangor MB’, \textit{The Sun Daily}, 11 March 2008.
concerning the implementation of “Islamic State and the Islamic law of *hudud*”.\(^{77}\) The political comeback made by Anwar was not in a vain as it had yielded a new political momentum of unification from the grassroots level until the emergence of an opposition party system. On the other hand, the ruling BN had also acknowledged the fact that Anwar was behind the failure of the regime to maintain its mandate. According to Annuar Musa of UMNO, Anwar was dubbed as the man that prepared the “*recipe of victory*”.\(^{78}\) And it was because of Anwar it was argued that the three opposition parties had followed a well-blended strategy of mobilisation.

The presence of Anwar had not only impacted at the parliamentary level but also at the state level where BN’s stronghold was finally penetrated due to the shift of votes. Unfortunately, even though Anwar had succeeded in rallying the mass support but in a way he was politically restricted due to his current status as non-MP. Realising that there was a strong need to include Anwar in the Parliament, by all means, he would have to contest for any parliamentary seats secured by his party. According to Lim Guan Eng of DAP, Anwar was in a great need in the Parliament for the purpose of an alternative prime minister in Malaysia.\(^{79}\)

In regards to the statement, it was believed to be a unanimous proposal among the opposition parties to nominate Anwar as the PM if the opposition could secure the government in the future electoral contest. Eventually, soon after the 2008 official result was disclosed, Lim Kit Siang of DAP met Anwar with a proposal to have a political cooperation with PAS.\(^{80}\) A proposal of forming a mixed-government at the state level was presented to PAS President Abdul Hadi and he immediately agreed. After that, several of

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\(^{79}\) ‘DAP: Anwar is alternative PM’, *The Sun Daily*, 16 March 2008.

top opposition leaders in each of parties had a meeting at KeADILan office in Petaling Jaya and after discussion, they had come up with a coalition name of “Pakatan Rakyat (PR)”.

Officially on April 1, 2008, PKR, PAS, and DAP leaders had proclaimed the formation of PR. Besides that, they also stated that the five states secured in the 2008 election would be called as the “PR state government” and any PR implemented policies would reflect first in these five states.

In terms of PR political structure, Anwar stated that a leadership of council would be set up consisting of three party leaders. The name of “Pakatan Rakyat” was in fact given by Anwar Ibrahim. At the same time, the new PR coalition had also planned to have its own newspapers. According to Batu MP Tian Chua, PR had aimed to establish an “alternative paper” to counter the monopoly of the ruling BN media in the country. Clearly, it was a time for PR to undertake the strategy of political marketing by promoting its newly established coalition in the country. As argued by PKR President Wan Azizah, the outcome of 2008 general elections indicated that the people were thirsting for the idea of a “two-party” system in the country. Besides that, PR also believed that it would be able to propagate the notion of people’s supremacy to counter UMNO’s ideology of Malay supremacy.

**Pakatan Rakyat (PR) In The 12th Parliament**

Soon after the opposition PR succeeded in breaking the ruling BN two-thirds majority, they made an inroad into the Twelfth Parliament after the 2008 general elections. The ruling BN not only partially lost the general elections but unfortunately their parliamentary members

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82 YB Teresa Kok, Member of Parliament (MP) for Seputeh Constituency, Interviewed by Author, Parliament Building, Kuala Lumpur, 26 November 2015.
had significantly dropped and the opposition PR took this political chance to mobilise immensely within the parliamentary terrain. What the ruling BN had ceremoniously enjoyed in terms of parliamentary strengths in the Eleventh Parliament unfortunately went south. In terms of PR representatives in the Twelfth Parliament, PKR had the highest which is thirty-one members, followed by DAP twenty-eight and PAS twenty-three representatives.

Overall, PR was able to install eighty-two of its members in the Twelfth Parliament while the ruling BN managed to maintain only one hundred and forty. Those PR representatives came from different states in the Peninsular (except in Perlis) and Sabah and Sarawak. Unfortunately, in the state of Perlis, the opposition PR did not make any electoral gains and all three parliamentary constituencies in Perlis such as Padang Besar, Kangar and Arau were secured by the ruling BN. In the Twelfth Parliament, the opposition PR made a remarkable inroad where some of the members were first time MPs.

Besides that, most of PR parliamentary members were of a different academic background. Some were professionally qualified as trained lawyers, engineers, academicians, and teachers and there was also a medical practitioner. For instance, the leader of PKR, Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail was a medical practitioner from Ireland. DAP leader, Lim Kit Siang was a lawyer by profession where he earned his Law Degree from the University of London. His son, who is a current Chief Minister for the state of Penang, Lim Guan Eng, graduated with a Degree in Economics from Monash University, Australia. As for PAS, its President Abdul Hadi Awang graduated from the Middle East (Al-Azhar University) in the field of Islamic Studies. At this point, these different opposition parties that made up the backbone of PR were led by political figures upon their own intellectual credentials even though from a wide range of disciplines. For instance, PR MPs from DAP
recorded to have more than a dozen well-trained lawyers. This intellectual capability no doubt eventually would play an inevitable part in guiding the promised agenda or a shadowed-based policy.\textsuperscript{85}

Besides that, in the post-2008 election, PR had attempted to establish some sort of political and as well as electoral relationship with the other opposition political party which was not within the circle of PR, such as the Socialist Party of Malaysia \textit{(Parti Sosialis Malaysia/PSM)}. As a matter of fact, PSM contested the 1999 general election by using DAP’s logo where Dr. Jeyakumar of PSM had contested for the Sungai Siput parliamentary constituency and in the 2004 election, PSM did the same by borrowing PKR party logo.\textsuperscript{86} Due to that, it strongly indicated that PSM and the rest of main opposition political parties had been part of historical legacy and shared certain grounds as the justification of the mobilisation. The tradition was believed to have continued even during the Twelfth Parliament. For instance, in 2010, PSM Central Committee had decided to meet several top leaders from PR to discuss political cooperation.\textsuperscript{87} Among other things included in the agenda was the cooperation between PSM and PR within the context of national politics, PSM’s critique towards PR for the purpose of strengthening the pro-active style of engagement, and a proposed mechanism to ensure close cooperation to solve current issues.\textsuperscript{88} In 2011, another political agenda had been endorsed by the Central Committee of PSM to discuss an electoral strategy in the 2013 general election in regards to any possible issues that were likely to be raised during the election period.\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{85} For the list of MPs educational background, See Appendix 1.
\textsuperscript{86} S. Arutchelvan, Secretary-General of Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM), Interviewed by Author, Semenyih, Selangor, 19 January 2016.
\textsuperscript{87} “A Meeting to Discuss Cooperation with Pakatan Rakyat and Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM)”, a private letter sent by PSM to Anwar Ibrahim, 16 August 2010, pp. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{89} “A Meeting to Discuss Cooperation Between DAP-Pakatan Rakyat and Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM)”, a private letter sent to Lim Guan Eng, 18 Mac 2011, pp. 1-2.
In the same year, PSM had once again resorted to meeting with PR leaders. This time, PSM was of the view that they should clear any misunderstandings with PR parties in terms of policies and so on. The idea behind PSM’s call for a meeting was to achieve a common political understanding for the sake of the future so that both of their statements or actions would not simply be politicised by political enemies.⁹⁰ PSM’s political survival indirectly connected with PR’s mobilisation in the post-2008 election especially when PR could deliver a number of MPs into the Twelfth Parliament. At the very least, both of them had articulated the same interests and that suited well for them to further pose a challenge to the ruling BN government. PSM also stated that they were on the side of PR in the Parliament and in the State Legislative Assembly of Selangor and they had no intention of being declared as Independent representative.⁹¹ Eventually, this led to a new form of engagement between PR and the PSM and even though they were not working under the major framework of political cooperation, they had steadily integrated with each other.

Before the Twelfth Parliament started its first session, all the 82 MPs were expected to undergo a briefing session concerning the code of conduct in the Parliament and guidelines were also distributed among the MPs related to what major issues they should raise in the Parliament.⁹² This indicated that PR MPs were prepared in terms of issues and concerns. The degree of the quality of the questions was also taken into account.

⁹⁰ “Cooperation between PSM and Pakatan Rakyat and the 13th General Election”, a private letter sent by PSM to Saifuddin Nasution Ismail (PKR), Mustafa Ali (PAS), and Lim Guan Eng (DAP), 22 December 2011, pp. 1-2.
The Advent of 2008 Permatang Pauh Parliamentary By-Election

In the post-2008 general elections, the political terrain in Malaysian states seemed to be a misnomer, especially in Penang. As argued by Afif Pasuni and Joseph Liow, the wave of sixteen by-elections had gained currency when Anwar Ibrahim won convincingly in the Permatang Pauh Parliamentary by-election. \(^{93}\) Based on this, speculation that the PR started to gain its electoral momentum were felt at other by-elections held soon after the 2008 general elections. The growing momentum had thus alarmed the current position of the ruling BN government.

Therefore, the opposition PR further consolidated their electoral machineries for the by-elections expected to be held. In the state of Penang, the political event had been exploited between the government and the opposition. Before the advent of the 2008 general elections, the ruling BN government had dominated the state politics through its BN coalition GERAKAN. The idea to form the GERAKAN was actually born out of the will of Dr. Lim Chong Eu and Dr. Tan Chee Koon in 1968. \(^{94}\) Based on Penang political history, the GERAKAN came to assume state power after the 1969 general elections and had ruled the state for 39 years until 2008. \(^{95}\) In the 1990 general elections in Penang, Lim Kit Siang of DAP had succeeded in penetrating the state by defeating one of GERAKAN’s leaders, Lim Chong Eu, for the Padang Kota seat. It indicated a major inroad by the opposition political parties at that time. For instance, 14 out of 33 seats were secured by the opposition DAP and unfortunately the MIC and MCA were electorally wiped out. \(^{96}\) There

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\(^{96}\) Ibid, p. 116.
were several political reasons why GERAKAN had lost touch with the grassroots in the 1990 general elections and the most obvious one was the unacceptable autocratic rule of Dr. Mahathir.

Dr. Mahathir’s had his own style in handling some of the issues related to the Chinese interests such as vernacular education. In contrast, the DAP had been consistently rallying the cause of Chinese education in the country. One of the DAP’s strategies was the utilization of Chinese schools to obtain continuous support from the Chinese community. The DAP also brought the said issue and had it debated in the Parliament during the reign of Dr. Mahathir. The relationship between the GERAKAN and its BN component UMNO had detracted from a major support for GERAKAN in the 1990 general elections.

In 2004, the people of Penang gave their Chief Minister Koh Tsu Koon a remarkable victory in the 2004 general elections due to the capacity of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as the Prime Minister who also hailed from Penang. But such victory was perceived as an ephemeral and would not last long by some political observers. As has been analysed, the main reasons behind the defeat of GERAKAN in the 2008 general elections were noticeable. One of it was the issue of leadership where the Chief Minister Koh Tsu Koon was interpreted as a weak leader and to a certain extent he had failed to preserve the interests of Penang people. Realising that the issue was viable and the opposition DAP had its eyes on possible opportunities to surpass the ruling BN government especially the GERAKAN in the state of Penang. In the 2008 general elections, the GERAKAN was electorally wiped out by the opposition political parties in Penang.

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Due to this unexpected victory, the DAP formed a state government with PKR and also PAS. With a new brand of coalition, the PR had now assumed the state’s administration. According to GERAKAN’s advisor Dr. Lim Keng Yaik, it would be difficult to secure the state of Penang if the PR state government could perform better in terms of administration and GERAKAN would also take at least 10 years to achieve the electoral victory but it all depended on how the PR could maintain their administrative performance.\footnote{Soon Li Tsin, ‘Gerakan perlu lebih 10 tahun’, \textit{Malaysiakini}, 1 May 2008.} The competition between the parties, however, did not cease immediately after the 2008 general elections. In fact, it had become heated and the ruling BN government was all the time waiting to exploit the opposition’s loopholes politically.

This was proven when the Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election was held due to the resignation of Dr. Wan Azizah as the MP for Permatang Pauh on July 31, 2008. Her action was decisively perceived to provide an electoral and parliamentary access to her husband Anwar Ibrahim. The DAP, on the other hand, showed its support towards the decision made by Dr. Azizah by sending Tan Kok Wai of Cheras MP to discuss further what could be done by the opposition after the resignation took place.\footnote{Jimadie Shah Othman, ‘Azizah undur, Anwar bertanding di Permatang Pauh’, \textit{Malaysiakini}, 31 July 2008.} As for PAS, even though they did not send their representatives due to the party’s meeting but they fully endorsed the decision made by PKR in Permatang Pauh constituency.

**Electoral Results**

As confirmed by the Electoral Commission (EC), Permatang Pauh by-election was held on August 26, 2008. The date of polling was publicly criticised by the Institute of National Elections Integrity (\textit{Institut Integriti Pilihanraya Nasional/ IIPN}), a non-governmental...
body that observed electoral conduct. The EC was highly criticised due to its decision in hold the polling on a working day. It was a three-cornered fight between the former DPM Anwar Ibrahim from PKR, Arif Shah Omar Shah from BN and Hanafi Mamat of Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia (AKIM).

Table 2.4
The August 2008 Permatang Pauh By-Election Result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates and Parties</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Majority</th>
<th>Spoiled Votes</th>
<th>Voter Turnout</th>
<th>Electorate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anwar Ibrahim (PKR)</td>
<td>31,195</td>
<td>15,671</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>38,279 (81%)</td>
<td>47,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariff Shah Omar Shah (BN)</td>
<td>15,524</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanafi Mamat (AKIM)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As shown in Table 2.4, Anwar Ibrahim of PKR had defeated the ruling BN candidate with a majority of 15,671 votes. The total votes obtained by Anwar was high compared to the 2008 general elections where his wife Dr. Wan Azizah obtained 30,348 votes with a majority of 13,398 votes. It showed that there was a significant increase in terms of votes casted. Even though Dr. Wan Azizah contested in two-cornered fight against the BN in the general elections but the total votes obtained by Anwar was really unexpected due to the three-cornered fight.

On the other hand, the result suggested that the breakdown of votes did not really matter in the case of Permatang Pauh due to infamous participation of candidate from AKIM party. As for the BN candidate, Ariff Shah managed to secure 15,524 votes.

Compared to the previous general elections in 2008, Pirdaus Ismail from BN achieved higher support than Ariff Shah had obtained 16,950 votes. Therefore, it indicated a reduction in terms of votes secured by the BN candidate in Permatang Pauh by-election. Clearly, the three-cornered fight did not affect the electoral setting, especially to Anwar and as matter of fact, it did not influence the current result. The opposition PR through its candidate Anwar Ibrahim had proven that the victory in the Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election became a stepping stone before Anwar could step foot into Malaysia’s politics. There were several of factors which affected the performance of PR in the said by-election.

**Anwar Factor?**

The by-election was held with a three-cornered fight between candidates from different political parties. But the electoral focus was centered on the ruling BN government and the opposition PR. Before Anwar’s wife decided to let go her Permatang Pauh seat, Anwar had already set his eyes on several of parliamentary seats such as Kulim and Lembah Pantai, a seat won by his daughter Nurul Izzah in the 2008 general elections. But that did not happen until Dr. Wan Azizah decided to step down as Permatang Pauh MP.

This led to the question on who would contest the by-election. Anwar’s credibility in mobilising the electoral force was incontrovertibly true. According to Charles Allers, Anwar was a leader to whom superlatives were awarded in the election’s wake. Even though Anwar was surrounded by an allegation of sodomy, but according to a poll conducted by Merdeka Center, only 11% was found to believe the charges and two-thirds believed that the allegation was politically built. The sodomy allegation upon Anwar had

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105 Ibid, 190.
caused a serious crisis of belief among the public and provided with the role of the ruling BN media in spreading the issue.

However, Anwar’s past track record remained successful in securing Permatang Pauh seat in each of the general elections since 1982 and until he was sacked from the government by Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir. On the other hand, BN had chosen Ariff Shah as a candidate to fight against Anwar. Ariff Shah was also a state legislative member for Seberang Jaya constituency. In the 2008 general elections, Ariff Shah achieved a landslide victory by defeating Ramli Bulat from PKR with a majority of 533 votes. There were other possible candidates announced by BN such as Permatang Pauh Chief of UMNO Abdul Jalil Abdul Majid, his deputy, Pirdaus Ismail, and a freelance preacher, Shamsuri Ahmad. Even though rumours suggested that these candidates to fight against the opposition PR, Ariff Shah was confirmed by BN’s top leaders as the by-election candidate.

This more or less gave an impetus for the opposition PR to further mobilise based on BN’s past track record in the Permatang Pauh constituency as well as the previous performance of Ariff Shah in his DUN. According to the Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak, he was of the opinion that it was difficult for BN to win the by-election when Anwar became the candidate and BN’s had to be realistic in facing such a tough constituency. Permatang Pauh had always been the hot seat among the parliamentary constituencies most of the time and each in of elections held, the ruling BN had never tired in trying to wrestle back the seat. In the words of Dr. Mahathir, he was of the view that BN did not have a ‘special candidate’ who was able to defeat Anwar in the scheduled by-

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election. Dr. Mahathir further emphasised that the most important thing was the ‘margin’.

The question was whether BN’s candidate could reduce the margin if defeated by Anwar. As argued by Mutharasan, there are several possible reasons why Anwar opted to contest in Permatang Pauh instead of Kulim or Bandar Tun Razak. Kulim is a parliamentary constituency located in Kedah. If Anwar had won the Kulim seat, it would be difficult for Anwar to mobilize since Kedah was led by PAS state government. And if Anwar had won the Bandar Tun Razak constituency, it would become hard for Anwar to serve his constituency as he was surrounded by the federal government. But the situation would be totally different if Anwar had won the Permatang Pauh constituency. Because of its strategic constituency located at the state of Penang led by the opposition PR with the DAP as the majority in the state assembly, it would be easy for Anwar in seeking any political assistance from his own coalition. As argued by Maznah, Anwar was successful in building up an optimum multiracial consensus, a long-held preserve of the BN, and this was immediately experienced when the opposition political parties managed to penetrate the two-thirds BN majority in the 2008 general elections.

On the other hand, PAS had dropped its Islamic State agenda in the election manifesto soon after Anwar assumed the number one rank in the opposition leadership. This eventually led towards a consolidation of the oppositional forces where policies concerning the nation’s wellbeing were discussed together and mutually agreed.

National Issues and Manifesto

Before the by-election campaign period had started in August, there was a demonstration in Kuala Lumpur two months earlier involving political parties, the public and NGOs. It was held due to the announcement by PM Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to increase the fuel price.\textsuperscript{111} The demonstration was dubbed by the opposition PR as a ‘protest’ and it had mobilised thousands of people showing a dissenting voice towards the infamous policy of the PM. The demonstration was also unanimously endorsed by the opposition where some of the party members were ordered to participate in order to show to the government public dissatisfaction. Anwar had also stated that it was a national task for the voters in Permatang Pauh to cast their votes due to the demand of good governance, eradication of poverty, and a better management of judiciary.\textsuperscript{112} Later on, the electoral machinery of the PKR was launched by Anwar and headed by the Chief of PKR Youth Shamsul Iskandar Md Akin. On behalf the opposition PR, PKR issued a letter to be sent to the factory and company owners in Penang and south Kedah to allow their workers to carry out the duty of casting votes.

The polling day was on a working day and therefore it would be difficult for voters to come back to their hometown. During the campaign session, Anwar had brought up a by-election theme which was called as ‘Pakatan Rakyat Heading to Putrajaya’, ‘Makkal Sakthi’, and ‘A New Hope for Malaysia’.\textsuperscript{113} Anwar also told the voters that voting him would mean access to Putrajaya. At the same time, the opposition PR had put forth a motion of no confidence towards the Prime Minister Abdullah in Parliament.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{111} Abdul Rahim Sabri, ‘Demo terbesar bantah harga minyak’, \textit{Malaysiakini}, 10 June 2008.
Unfortunately the motion was rejected. The motion was tabled on the grounds that the opposition PR was dissatisfied with the BN performance after the 2008 general elections. For instance, Anwar was called by the police to clarify on matters concerning the allegation of sodomy charged upon him. Besides that, the BN’s coalition did not fulfill their promises included in their electoral manifesto in 2008 of not raising the price of fuel but after the elections, BN went against their manifesto and had the price increased.

This matter was brought up during the Permatang Pauh campaign. In order to reach out to voters, PKR had summoned a total of 200 Chief of Divisions throughout the country to broach the subject of attracting the voters and the main focus was the Chinese and Indian voters. The meeting was led by the Deputy President of PKR Dr. Lee Boon Chye and he urged in the meeting to highlight any communal dissenting voices in the Permatang Pauh constituency, for instance, on national unity, economy, and people’s tranquility. At the same time, an initiative of setting up a website had been taken by PKR. The website was known as ‘From Permatang Pauh to Putrajaya/ Dari Permatang Pauh ke Putrajaya’. The idea of a website was designed to channel any relevant information regarding the conduct of Permatang Pauh by-election and it was hoped also to assist the voters, electoral workers (SPR), and media to get the information.

Besides that, the website also intended to deliver electoral information in Chinese and Indian languages. The reason was to reach out to voters concerning the comprehension of national issues involving three different ethnics. The national issues so far had been widely intensified by the opposition PR. Speaking of manifesto, on behalf the opposition PR, Anwar in his political sermons (ceramah), had proposed that if PR governed the

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country, all ISA detainees would be released.\[^{117}\] He also emphasised that he would cure the current condition of economy which was believed to be bad.

In terms of higher education, a 20\% quota was promised to the Chinese and Indians to get enrolled in the Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM).\[^{118}\] However, such manifesto was intercepted. The ruling BN criticised the idea on the grounds that Anwar intended to attract voters based on communal backgrounds. In response, the Deputy Prime Minister Najib, during the launching ceremony of BN’s electoral machinery, had proclaimed that the government promised a ‘present’ in the 2009 budget which was going to take place on 29 August.\[^{119}\] The ruling BN further urged voters not to easily believe the opposition’s promises to reduce the fuel price when they formed the government in the future. As argued, the whole world was experiencing a drop of fuel price and it did not make any sense for the government to set down the fuel price by utilising the profits generated by PETRONAS. Another issue that gained attention was the strategy of the ruling BN in giving ‘money’ to the voters.

PKR claimed that they found out that some of the voters had secretly received RM50 to RM300 per head and a copy of their identity card (IC) was taken.\[^{120}\] Another issue was the action of the ruling BN government in delivering RM6.5 million worth of projects including allocations to mosques and schools.\[^{121}\] As argued by Chen Shaua Fei, in this by-election, treating voters had been the main priority for BN to draw voters out from their

houses to listen to the message of BN leaders.\textsuperscript{122} Technically, the ruling BN possessed three obvious elements that the opposition PR hardly had such as money, media, and machinery.

By having these, they could mobilise their electoral machineries to the fullest. On polling day, on 26 August, five buses containing ‘phantom voters’ was reported to be found.\textsuperscript{123} The incident was noticed by the opposition PR supporters who insisted that the buses be brought to the police station for further investigation.

**A Unified Opposition PR**

In the run up to the Permatang Pauh by-election, Anwar as a PKR candidate was not the only one who fought hard against the gigantic ruling BN machinery. Anwar’s struggle against the current injustice in an embedded political system was accompanied by an oppositional mutual consensus between the DAP and PAS. The Chief of PAS Youth, Salahuddin Ayub who was also a MP from Kubang Kerian had called upon the party to ‘attack in a blitz’ the BN’s electoral fortress.\textsuperscript{124} Speaking in PAS annual meeting, Salahuddin was of the view that the serious involvement of PAS in the by-election was significant and indicated that PAS was loyal to the opposition PR. Under the Permatang Pauh parliamentary constituency, Mohd Hamdan of PAS represented N11 DUN Permatang Pasir at the state level. Going by the logic, all votes at the DUN Permatang Pasir must be directed to Anwar, including votes from the N12 DUN Penanti which was represented by Mohammad Fairus of PKR, except for the N10 DUN Seberang Jaya which was under the BN’s grip.

\textsuperscript{123} Kuek Ser Kuang Keng, ‘5 bas pengundi hantu ditahan’, Malaysiakini, 26 August 2008.
\textsuperscript{124} ‘Pemuda PAS gempur BN demi Anwar’, Malaysiakini, 13 August 2008.
Therefore, a mutual understanding among parties in the PR coalition would not be a problem since some of them had decisively agreed and undividedly supported the action against the ruling BN candidate in the by-election. As argued by Farish A. Noor, the 2008 general elections had demonstrated that PAS could only come to power through the systematic process of a coalition.\footnote{Farish A. Noor, The Malaysian Islamic Party PAS, 1951-2013: Islamism in a Mottled Nation (Petaling Jaya: SIRD, 2014) p. 194.} Meaning to say that it was inevitable for PAS to become the national party if it was to succeed in catering to the needs of non-Muslims within the local political terrain and in the 2008 general elections PAS had proven its political capability in working together with other opposition parties. Therefore, in Permatang Pauh by-election, PAS engaged a form of political strategy by becoming part of PR electoral machinery. During the campaign period, one of the ruling BN strategies was to highlight Anwar’s allegations of sodomy. On nomination day on 16 August, BN supporters shouted ‘sodomy is still sodomy’ (liwat tetap liwat) and PR supporters replied with shouts of ‘Altantuya’ to portray a sort of allegation associated with the DPM Najib.\footnote{“Laungan ‘liwat’ lawan ‘reformasi’, Malaysiakini, 16 August 2008.}

According to PAS President Abdul Hadi, the allegation was a dirty political agenda.\footnote{Muda Mohd Noor, ‘Hadi: Anwar tak perlu bersumpah’, Malaysiakini, 16 August 2008.} The sodomy case was among the cases which was publicly highlighted by the ruling BN government and it continued to be politicised during the campaign for Permatang Pauh. Abdul Hadi stood firmly in terms of his decision that PAS would assist Anwar in winning the by-election. PAS spiritual leader Nik Aziz was also of the same opinion. According to him, people should not opt for an attack on personality during the campaign but rather it must be based upon a debate of policies between the opposition PR and the ruling BN government.\footnote{Muda Mohd Noor, ‘Islam larang kempen malukan orang’, Malaysiakini, 17 August 2008.} Anwar’s sodomy allegation gained political attention when his...
former aide Saiful Bukhari publicly took a Quranic oath on 15 August at the Mosque of Federal Territory claiming that he was sodomized by Anwar.

Besides that, the ruling BN also employed an electoral strategy of dividing the opposition PR supporters by bringing back certain people who used to work with Anwar previously for the purpose of uncovering Anwar’s weaknesses. For instance, Ezam Mohd Noor, who was Anwar’s former political secretary, was summoned during the campaign to deliver words of negativity about Anwar. Saiful’s action of taking an oath was recorded and distributed to the voters to convince them that Anwar should not be voted for due to Anwar’s unaccepted behaviour. In one of BN’s campaign session, Ezam strongly argued that the basic formation of PKR was under the pretext of the Malays but when Anwar was released from the prison, such principal was long gone because Anwar had desired for the votes derived from the Chinese and Indians. But, according to a survey conducted by Merdeka Center during the campaign period, 60 percent of Malay voters believed that the sodomy allegation was politically motivated. This had strengthened the public thought that Anwar was possibly a reliable candidate to retain the constituency despite serious allegations thrown at him.

The DAP, on the other hand, had also immensely contributed towards the campaign for Anwar. For instance, Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng had launched an operations room and suggested that Penang state government would reveal an issue of land mismanagement during the reign of ruling BN government in Penang previously. Lim believed that the process had involved one of BN members in the state and stated that it

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was not easy for the PR to clean up the ‘dirt’ caused by the previous state government. An added advantage for Anwar during the campaign was attributed to PR coalition partners. The state leader was assumed by DAP and therefore, it would be an easy access for the opposition PR to survive the by-election through state means such as funds, ‘location’ for conducting political sermons and state machineries.

**Fragmented BN Coalition**

One of the factors which contributed towards the success of the opposition PR in maintaining the Permatang Pauh constituency was believed to be the fragmentation of BN coalition. Before the campaign took place, the GERAKAN party had questioned UMNO on why they would have a dialogue with the PKR and DAP over the issue of Malay and Islam. One of GERAKAN members Dr. Teng Hock Nan was of the view that UMNO should consult first with its BN coalitions before they could further proceed with the idea of dialogue with the opposition PR. GERAKAN was one of the BN coalitions that fought hard against the idea of Islamic state initiated by PAS and for most of the time PAS had politically confronted the GERAKAN especially on the issue of the implementation of hudud.

They believed that UMNO should strengthen and consolidate the roles of BN coalition. Besides that, during the campaign, BN component was politically tested. It began when UMNO Chief of Division for Bukit Bendera Ahmad Ismail made a racial statement, during his political sermons, by claiming that Chinese people was temporarily staying in the country (menumpang). The statement had trigged communal responses from different political parties especially the GERAKAN and MCA. The statement issued by Ahmad was intentionally aimed to Lim Guan Eng as Penang CM. Ahmad blatantly questioned the

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capability of the Chinese in distributing revenues equally to all races. In response to the racial statement, MCA Chief of Youth Hang Chin Pheng and his fifty supporters gathered in Kuala Lumpur and collected signatures of protest to show their dissatisfaction.

Ahmad also had put all the blame on GERAKAN and stated that they were the main cause that contributed towards the failure of BN in securing Penang during the 2008 general elections. GERAKAN interpreted the statement as a serious instigation and had urged the BN coalitions especially UMNO to take action upon Ahmad’s racial statement. Chinese voters were recorded as the second biggest after Malays in Permatang Pauh constituency. Based on the statement issued by Ahmad, it was felt that the particular remarks could strengthen Chinese inclination towards supporting the opposition PR in the by-election. As stipulated by UMNO Vice President Muhyiddin Yassin, he suggested that BN needed to be healed and rebranded again. He knew that there was a weakness inside the party’s components. The event went beyond control when GERAKAN stated its view to leave the BN circle if UMNO still could not solve the issue concerning the race and religion. PKR Vice President Dr. Jeffrey Kitingan, a Sabah based-politician, made a bold claim that he would bring thirteen Sabah MPs to join the opposition PR. Two out of thirteen from the Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) and the rest from UMNO. According to Jeffrey, they would wait to join the oppositional forces when Anwar could secure the Permatang Pauh seat.

Malaysian Parliamentary System: At a Glance

Within the context of modern democracy, the discourse of Parliament is not isolated. As one of the acknowledged political institutions, it possesses some remarkable characteristics. Most of the time, modern nations adopt Parliament as source of references in terms of managing political affairs. Structurally, Malaysia’s parliamentary system is built upon the notion of a parliamentary democracy, a form of government where the Paramount Ruler (Yang Di Pertuan Agong/YDPA) is made the head of state and the Prime Minister (PM) as the head of government and executive.  

Malaysian parliamentary structures are of two types which are the non-elected members called as the Senators at the Upper House level (Dewan Negara) and elected members called as the Members of Parliament (MPs) at the Lower House level (Dewan Rakyat). The structure is spelled out under the Article 44 of the Federal Constitution. As for the upper house level, there has never been any issues arising where the appointment of its members are without electoral means but the controversial part is presumably at the lower house level and is perceived as a source of tension where the appointment of its members require an electoral procedure. Besides that, there are at least four to five sessions in one parliamentary term and each of these sessions usually will be lead by the YDPA to give an opening address. The YDPA may commence or dissolve Parliament and once the

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138 In most of parliamentary systems of democracy, the term government is used in its narrow sense where it refers to the head of government (usually called the Prime Minister). In this system also, there is no separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches as in the United States; rather, there is a fusion of powers between the legislature (Parliament) and the executive. For a detailed account on Parliamentary Government, see Michael J, Sodaro, *Comparative Politics: A Global Introduction* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), pp. 196-197.


Parliament is dissolved, an election must be held in sixty days from the date of its dissolution.\textsuperscript{142}

Previously in 1969, Malaysia had experienced political turmoil involving its fountain of democracy where Parliament was suspended due to electoral communal backlash and since then it has operated as usual until today. In most developing nations where parliament is an integral part of the democratic indicator, the roles and behaviours of the Members of Parliament (MPs) sometimes depend upon the country’s political ambience. To a certain extent, the so called Dewan Rakyat or Parliament obviously provides a central arena of electoral competition which has nurtured parties for articulating interests that cross communal boundaries.\textsuperscript{143} The competition in this sense is highly inevitable especially between the competing parties, either the dominant regime’s or the opposition, searching for an electoral security before they could make into the Parliament. Certainly, an election is the beginning of a process that the competing parties have to undergo in respective parliamentary democracies.

At this point, the opposition parties are seen as having a strong linkage between them and the people as the people or the voters remain the only source of receiving votes and in return, the voters place a high expectation on the MPs that they have voted in elections for the purpose of interests preservation concerning their constituencies. Contrary to that, the dominant regimes may also possess the same roles as the opposition. Logically, they acquire political power through votes that they have obtained from voters and in this situation, by all means, they will have to maintain the interrelationship between the voters and at the same time avoid the occurrence of a deficit of trust from the voters. The

\textsuperscript{142} See Article 55 in \textit{The Federal Constitution of Malaysia 1957}, p. 54.

parliamentary system in Malaysia operates along the line of ethnicity or in other words the approach is known as the “consociational” system of democracy or multi-racial form of parliamentary democracy.

As part of British colonial product, Malaysia used to be under direct colonial policy and it had to impose the Westminster style of parliamentary system. Besides that, the communal structure in the state was also due to that kind of policy known as the “divide and rule” policy consisting of three main different ethnics: the Malay, the Chinese and the Indians. These three ethnics have since then formed themselves in a communal-based political party and sought to be identified by political means, for instance, electoral involvement and many more. Therefore, the open debate of controversial public policy in the Parliament may be appropriate to democracy but dangerously divisive in the communal society\(^{144}\), pointing to the fact that the communal deflection may strongly lead to unwanted political instability. In the case of Malaysia’s Parliament, the roles played by the opposition political parties (PKR, PAS and DAP) are politically effective and remarkable within the parliamentary terrain.

It is argued that the opposition is widely perceived as an alternative government\(^ {145}\) but the main obstacle remains the same in which the ruling BN government is unbeatable as they consistently survived all the elections held. However, the effort of maintaining the two-thirds majority in Parliament was running out and in the 2008 general elections, BN’s expectation in securing the election suddenly faded as their parliamentary muscle was finally penetrated by the opposition Pakatan Rakyat political parties. Based on the results, it


clearly indicated a growing resentment among the voters and suggested a robust rejection of the idea that the BN could remain in power forever by mobilising race-based politics.\textsuperscript{146}

The nature of Malaysian parliamentary system in a way is related to the practice of delimitation or scientifically known as ‘gerrymandering’. Kai Ostwald opined that a practice of gerrymandering includes the conduct of splitting territory. The focus is given to a territory where the opposition is found to be the majority and that particular territory will be divided until the opposition becomes a minority.\textsuperscript{147} From time to time, this practice has signaled a clear cut of victory for the ruling BN government. As they are the government in charge, they are able to control the electoral mechanisms of dominating the possible outcomes in each of the elections held. Due to this, elected representatives from the opposition parties are vulnerable, especially their seats. The practice of gerrymandering is very obvious within Malaysia’s electoral system and is proven to be the source of victory for the ruling BN government. As argued by Joseph Chinyong, gerrymandering has become one of the factors in the 2004 general elections where the ruling BN regime had gained from it to ensure their victory.\textsuperscript{148} Gerrymandering, in a way, is a significant tool for the ruling BN to undermine the mobilisation of opposition political parties.

Besides that, the conduct of delineation which was carried out in April 2003 displayed a substantial change in the composition of parliamentary seats.\textsuperscript{149} For instance, states which were believed to be the ruling BN’s stronghold had received additional seats, such as, Johor, Sabah, Selangor and Pahang. States such as Kedah, Perlis, and Terengganu

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\textsuperscript{147} Kai Ostwald, ‘How to Win a Lost Election: Malapportionment and Malaysia’s 2013 General Election,’ \textit{The Round Table}, Vol. 102, No. 6, 2013, pp. 521-532.
\end{flushright}
did not receive any new seats due to its status as “PAS’s stronghold” and Malay voters in these states, almost if not all, favoured PAS as political alternative. The ruling BN frequently encountered difficulties when it comes to states like this. As the national government which held power at each of the governmental layers, the ruling BN realised that if they granted additional seats to PAS’s stronghold states, it would jeopardize BN’s political power at the national and parliamentary level. In this sense, the conduct of gerrymandering is to ensure that the oppositional representatives in the Parliament could be reduced. In a study of the linkage between delimitation, electoral outcomes, and communal representation, Tunku Mohar argued that the delimitation exercises conducted in 1974, 1984, 1994, and 2003 had contributed towards additional Malay-majority constituencies. The findings also strengthened the argument that the ruling BN will always dominate the electoral scenes from time to time and provided that they are well equipped with gigantic machinery that they have accessed to.

Even though the opposition Pakatan Rakyat did not manage to obtain the two-thirds majority but in a way it succeeded in breaking the regime’s tradition of maintaining majority as ceremoniously been enjoyed in previous parliamentary sessions and at the same time contributed towards the changing composition in the Parliament.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the opposition political parties were remarkable. Even though they did not fully grab all the seats but in a way they had decisively denied the two-thirds majority of the ruling BN parties in the Parliament. Besides that, the opposition performance largely contributed towards some sort of mutual political understanding by each of the parties and

when they got through the general election with an improvement and later on the co-operation was further manifested in the form of a unified coalition known as Pakatan Rakyat.

The opposition Pakatan Rakyat proved to be accepted by the electorate based on the popular votes that they had obtained and at the state level, the opposition was able to form at least five state governments. Due to this, it would be a continuous constraint for the ruling BN especially in strategising to maintain their status quo as they had achieved in 2004. The result clearly indicated that the mandate was for the opposition parties. Therefore, the 2008 general election had led to a several political changes at the national level and state level. The newly formed of PR managed to penetrate the Twelfth Parliament while at the same time they were able to form a government at the state level.

The most crucial part in the post-2008 general election was the advent of Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election. The by-election served as an electoral test for PR as well as the ruling BN government. The decision made by Dr. Azizah to let go her parliamentary constituency to Anwar really caught the public sphere and the ruling BN would not let this go unnoticed unless to put forth their candidate to make sure that PR will not win freely. The electoral struggle began to take place and Anwar in fact had won higher votes than his wife had achieved in the 2008 general election. The by-election result decisively argued that the ruling BN government was not a choice at the national and state level. Thus it changed the whole perception. Anwar’s victory in the by-election strongly indicated that he would secure a place in the Twelfth Parliament as new MP and the result, perhaps, would hold the ruling BN government more accountable at the national level, for instance, in parliament.
CHAPTER 3

Parliamentary Behaviour of Pakatan Rakyat Political Parties: Parliamentary Questions (PQs)

Introduction

According to Lowell Barrington, the parliamentary system is a conventional approach to democracy, particularly in Europe and Asia.\(^1\) The implementation of the parliamentary system is considered as part of the democratic pillars. But the extent of the utilisation of parliament is indeed different from one country to another. As stated by Philip Norton and Nizam Ahmed, legislatures or the body for making laws are pervasive and most countries have one.\(^2\) Given that kind of particular assessment, legislature or ‘the Parliament’, has become part of analytical studies in the field of political science or political studies. They both further argue that the legislatures in Asia are worthy of study.\(^3\) They maintain that the study of legislatures in Asia is less academically researched compared to the study of Western legislatures and this is something to look into for the purpose of academic inquiry, especially in the discipline of political studies.

Legislature or parliamentary system differs from one country to another. Given the context of developing countries, particularly Southeast Asian countries, Malaysia as a developing country is not excluded from the development of parliamentary discourses. As observed by Muhamad Fuzi, the Parliament is a legislature or a representative assembly that enacts law.\(^4\) But to a certain extent, the function of parliament is not only enacting the laws but is beyond that. Therefore, this particular chapter will analyse the patterns of

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\(^3\) Ibid.,

Pakatan Rakyat political parties with reference to their behaviour in respect of parliamentary questions (PQs) in the Twelfth Parliament soon after they made an inroad due to the results of 2008 general elections.

Parliamentary Questions (PQs) to Ministers as Part of Behaviour

According to Shane Martin, parliamentary questions (PQs) are a feature of almost all national legislatures.\(^5\) In this respect, the study of PQs cannot be isolated from the field of legislative studies as well as political science as it would fulfill a gap in the context of methodology. At this juncture, PQs can be understood as some sort of questions initiated and thrown by MPs, normally by the opposition members, for the purpose of seeking clarification from the government over current or specific issues.

Besides that, Shane also suggests in his study that an analysis of PQs provides unique opportunities to identify effectively the behaviour of individual parliamentarians and the function of modern legislatures.\(^6\) PQs are not simply a bunch of questions thrown at will outside of parliamentary context but the questioning process is systematic and in tandem with the demand of political systems. Most MPs have the proclivity to throw relevant questions, especially the opposition political parties, in the context of domestic politics. In the Malaysian political system, Parliament is the crucial platform soon after the 2008 Malaysian general elections were concluded.

The changing pattern of composition in Malaysian parliament was obviously seen as a threat by the incumbent ruling government the Barisan Nasional. The opposition political parties had entered towards a new dimension of unification due to the

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\(^6\) Ibid, p. 259.
establishment of Pakatan Rakyat (PR) as the unified opposition coalition. When Parliament was dissolved on Feb 13, 2008, general elections was held at the parliamentary and the state level. Therefore, the Twelfth Parliament was expected to reconvene on April 28, 2008 under the constitutional provision as contained in Clause (4), Article (55) of Federal Constitution. On April 30, 2008, the appointment of the leader of the opposition was satisfactorily made by all the members of opposition political parties who unanimously appointed Wan Azizah Wan Ismail as the leader of opposition as announced by the speaker of the House. For the first time in the Twelfth Parliament, the Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was asked by the Barisan Nasional members to state the new approach and how the government plans to improve the quality of citizen’s life especially in consolidating the purchasing power of consumers, public safety and ethnic integration.

Abdullah stated that the first Ministerial Cabinet Meeting held on April 9 had taken into consideration especially the results of 2008 general elections and issues connected with people’s interests. The conclusion of 2008 general elections was a tremendous blast towards the ruling Barisan Nasional where the opposition succeeded in denying the two-thirds majority of Barisan Nasional. The 2008 election was the second electoral damage experienced by the ruling government since the first after the 1969 general elections.

The ruling Barisan Nasional failed to capture more parliamentary seats compared to the 2004 elections. Therefore, the result of ministerial discussion was made public in the parliament when Abdullah announced several measures to tackle the outcomes of the elections. First, in regards to the increase of price of goods, relatively due to the increase in

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8 Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail is a Member of Parliament (MP) for the parliamentary constituency of Permatang Pauh. She is also the wife of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.
price of oil which was USD120 per barrel. The argument was that the people suffered in this situation as the increase in oil price led to the increase of other things, such as transportation and so on. Realising that these issues had become part of people’s burden, the ruling government had taken steps to ameliorate these issues such as the formation of committees comprised of governmental officers for the purpose of seeking solutions to the said issues.

In addition, RM4 billion had been allocated for that particular purpose. Second, the government proposed to conduct a review called as ‘midterm review’ for the Ninth Malaysian Plan (RMK-9) where the main objective was to maintain the projects related to people known as ‘people-oriented’ project. The allocations prepared in the RMK-9 were introduced so that the people could adapt to current demands. For instance, the price of oil, where the government intended to set the price in a much affordable rate compared to the previous method. Besides that, the government set reduce the disparity in income between communal groups in this country and the same time to make sure that the principal of equality among people was observed. The effort to maintain the communal integration was under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage to make sure that communal integration could be achieved. RMK-9, for instance, included the development of Kampung Baru (New Village)\textsuperscript{11} as part of the master plan in the midterm review of RMK-9.\textsuperscript{12}

On July 2, 2009, PR released a list of committees of PR parliamentary members according to ministries.\textsuperscript{13} The initial aim for the committees was to create a robust division

\textsuperscript{11} During the March 2008 electoral campaign, the Barisan Nasional had included the development of Kampung Baru (New Village) as part of their electoral manifesto.
\textsuperscript{12} Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session, no. 3, (Wednesday, 30 April 2008), pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{13} Jawatankuasa Ahli Parlimen Pakatan Rakyat Mengikut Kementerian, Pakatan Rakyat’s Press Statement, 2 July 2009. For a full account on the list, See: Appendix 2.
of members assigned to each ministerial portfolios so that the MPs could focus on the issues within the ministerial parameters. The membership of this committee included experts in a specified discipline to assist PR MPs in Parliament.\footnote{Ibid.,} In a way, this special assignment could determine the degree of quality, particularly the parliamentary questions posed by PR MPs. The basic idea was to ensure that the opposition PR was fully prepared and could behave in a systematic way in the 12\textsuperscript{th} Parliament.

\textbf{Parliamentary Questions (PQs) Concerning the Post-2008 General Elections}

Parliament was reconvened soon after the 2008 general elections took place. Even though the ruling BN government had lost their two-thirds majority in the Parliament they eventually formed the government based on the basis of a simple-majority. It had once again provided them with legal power in Parliament and the ruling BN was portrayed as substantial obstacles towards the opposition PR. At this parliamentary stage, the opposition PR would throw relevant questions and these were expected to be answered by the government ministers. In regards to electoral matters, PAS member, Abd Halim Abd Rahman, from Pengkalan Chepa constituency raised a significant question by asking when the registration of all electors will be initiated and if the government would agree to compulsory registration for citizens of 21 years old and above and as to when the government would revise the Election Act.\footnote{Parliamentary Debates, 12\textsuperscript{th} Parliament, First Session, no. 21, (Wednesday, 25 June 2008), p. 8.}

The ruling BN responded to the questions. The minister stated that the government had yet to decide on compulsory registration for electors as the government believed that the current registration system was suitable for the electors and were afraid that the compulsory system would lead to dissatisfaction. The minister further argued that the
compulsory system was totally against Article 5 of the Federal Constitution which stipulated the individual rights and democracy as practiced in this country.\textsuperscript{16}

Abd Halim further added a question concerning the failure of the Election Commission (EC)\textsuperscript{17} to attract unregistered voters especially among the Malay youths, and asked what useful steps were proposed by the government to attract these unregistered voters. The government replied that it will make sure that the EC conducted a roadshow domestically for the purpose of attracting the unregistered voters and facilities would be provided, such as a registration table, at places like shopping malls in which young people are inclined to spend their time. Gwo Burne Loh, a PKR member from Kelana Jaya constituency, asked the Minister to state the need for the postal votes in the next general elections after a series of mismanagement in its implementation and the filing of many electoral petitions.\textsuperscript{18} The Minister responded that the voters who do not vote on the Election Day are entitled to postal voting and according to Election Regulations 3 (1) the voters living outside their constituencies have the rights to cast their votes through postal voting. The Minister further claimed that the postal voting was still relevant as emphasised under the Election Regulations.

The justification for postal voting was based on several reasons. First, it gives an opportunity to the armed forces and students who are working and studying abroad to fulfill their responsibility of casting the votes. However, the government was still studying ways to improve the postal voting. Gwo also raised some electoral demands by the group

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{17} The Elections Commission of Malaysia or \textit{Suruhanjaya Pilihan Raya Malaysia} (SPR) was formed on 4 September 1957 according to Article 114 Federal Constitution of Malaysia. This body is responsible for the conduct of elections throughout the country.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Parliamentary Debates, 12\textsuperscript{th} Parliament, First Session}, no. 35, (Monday, 18 August 2008), pp. 4-5.
BERSIH\textsuperscript{19} regarding the use of permanent inks, the abolishment of postal voting and to clear the elector’s registration. The opposition PR wanted to know whether the government would respond to some of these demands. The Minister clarified that the demands made by the group of BERSIH was subject to the government’s review.

The use of permanent inks during the casting votes had been a part of heated debates between the opposition PR and the ruling BN government. The opposition PR believed that the permanent inks was not properly administered and thus had triggered the opposition PR to demand some necessary answers from the Ministers in Parliament. On the same issue, Gwo asked the Ministers why there was a contradiction involving verbal answers from the Prime Minister when the police report was made upon the illegal activity of smuggling the permanent inks and suddenly the case had been silenced.\textsuperscript{20} The Minister stated that the report on the permanent inks was made and the EC had been asked to revise the implementation of the inks and the case had been investigated by the police.

The DAP member, Dr. P. Ramasamy, from Batu Kawan constituency posed a question regarding the wellbeing of ethnic minority such as Indians and Orang Asli (aborigines) soon after the 2008 electoral tsunami took place.\textsuperscript{21} The DAP wanted to know what were the intended steps taken by the ruling BN government to ensure that the ethnic minority was preserved, protected and acknowledged so that they could be part of government agencies. The DAP question was not entertained as the Speaker of Parliament did not allowed it to be debated.

\textsuperscript{19} The Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections is better known as BERSIH is a group of 89 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) pushing for a thorough reform of the electoral process in Malaysia through rallies and demonstrations. It was officially launched on 23 November 2006 in the Parliament building. For a further details on BERSIH, see: Khoo Ying Hoi, ‘Mobilization Potential and Democratization Processes of the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih) in Malaysia: An Interview with Hishamuddin Rais,’ \textit{Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies}, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2014, pp. 111-120.


Another PKR member, Azmin Ali, from Gombak constituency also raised an issue involving some electoral promises made by the ruling BN government during the general elections of 1999, 2004 and 2008. In each of general elections held, the ruling BN government promised to distribute the plantation land of FELDA to FELDA explorers where 10 acres were to be given to each person but until today none of them had received the portion as promised. However, the issue posed by the opposition PR member was not properly answered due to time constraints during the question session.

**Parliamentary Questions (PQs) Concerning Local Government**

Local government is the third type of government after the federal and the state government. One of the features of local government in Malaysia is that they are not political sub-divisions of the state but as an administrative organisation and its jurisdiction is under the state government except for the Kuala Lumpur City Council (Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur/DBKL) which is directly accountable to the federal government. In the post-2008 general elections, when the opposition PR succeeded in reducing the parliamentary majority of the ruling BN government, in a way, they had the opportunity to bring forth local matters or issues concerning the local well-being in Parliament. One of the serious matters that deserved special attention was the development of local government.

Soon after the opposition Pakatan Rakyat was formed, PR MPs immediately raised issues involving the DBKL. Ten MPs in Kuala Lumpur had mobilised together to deliver a memo to the mayor of DBKL. It was understood that the PR MPs resorted to the

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conduct of extra-parliamentary strategy by using means outside the legislature and elections. The memo sent to Dato’ Abdul Hakim Borham stated several points that the DBKL should look into in order to ensure future improvements. Concerns over the conditions of DBKL were made visible since the opposition PR political parties won 11 out of 12 seats in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. The victory suggested that the voters in Kuala Lumpur made a significant shift and wanted change and also endorsed the proposed PR policies. By this, the DBKL would be monitored closely in terms of its local operations. In a way, the opposition PR would bridge the gap between the voters and the local government of DBKL. People’s dissatisfaction, complaints, and recommendations could be properly channeled and at the same time the embedded transparency and the local government accountability were to be fairly observed.

The opposition PR treated the issues of local government in the Parliament for the purpose of seeking clarification from the Ministers on the extent of its implementation and as well as its performance. The DAP member, Dr. Tan Seng Giaw, from Kepong constituency asked the relevant minister regarding the phase of taking over the possession of solid waste throughout the whole country including the roles of local government.26 The Minister stated that the management of solid waste in this country would have to undergo a serious change once the Solid Waste Management and Public Cleansing Management Act 2007 was enforced. This Act provided special executive powers to the Federal Government to take over solid waste management from the local government.

Due to this, the Minister added that the government had formed two agencies, were

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25 The Ten MPs are: Tan Seng Giaw (Kepong), Lo’ Lo’ Ghazali (Titiwangsa), Tian Chua (Batu), Wee Choo Keong (Wangsa Maju), Fong Kui Lun (Bukit Bintang), Nurul Izzah Anwar (Lembah Pantai), Teresa Kok (Seputeh), Tan Kok Wai (Cheras), Lim Lip Eng (Segambut), and Abdul Khalid Ibrahim (Bandar Tun Razak).
and Public Cleansing, for the purpose of ensuring that the local operation was smooth. At the same time, the local authority would monitor these agencies’ work carefully. As a point of clarification, the DAP once again asked the Minister to state whether those two agencies had started to operate and the reply was in the positive. Another DAP member, Chow Kon Yeow, from Tanjong constituency threw a question over the performance of the Board of Solid Waste Management.\(^{27}\) As stated by the Minister, the main function was to administer and to enforce solid waste laws and a total of 354 vacancies had been approved by the government at the state level and the district level.

The DAP member, Gobind Singh Deo, from Puchong constituency also asked the Minister whether the government would abolish the concept of “build and sell” within the authority of local government and what action the government could implement to guarantee that housing projects would not be abandoned.\(^{28}\) The ruling BN responded by saying that the concept would not be abolished for the time being as it was practical. To avoid housing projects being abandoned, the government proposed several measures such as tightening the procedure and conditions for issuing the licenses to the developers, to monitor the housing projects and to monitor the financial position of the developers. In this matter, Gobind argued that there were thousands of houses being built but when it was almost complete, it was left abandoned for years.\(^{29}\)

PKR also posed a question on the management of local government. PKR member, N. Gobalakrishnan from Padang Serai constituency asked the Minister to clarify the plans and proper methods introduced to dispose of solid waste and the steps taken to educate

\(^{27}\) *Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session*, no. 14, (Thursday, 22 May 2008), p. 3.


\(^{29}\) Ibid, p. 9.
people about the recycling programmes. The Ministry of Local Government replied that it would utilise a proper method to tackle the raised issues.

PAS member, Dr. Siti Mariah Mahmud, from Kota Raja constituency, on the other hand, highlighted an important issue concerning the well-being of *peneroka* (local settlers). The question was directed to the relevant minister asked clarification on the number of people who received resettlement in a low cost house subsidised by the state government. The Minister stated that until March 31, 2008, a total of 30,072 families had been moved and placed in houses under the People Housing Programme (*Programme Perumahan Rakyat* PPR) and the houses were rented to those families as the government suggested.

Therefore, the housing programme was intended to help the people who could not afford to buy houses and, as clarified by the Minister, they were only required to pay a monthly rent of RM124 for each units to the government. The PQs session, in a way, had given an advantage for the opposition PR to bring forth issues concerning the well-being of local government and in what way the local government was going to deliver their services to the people.

PKR member, S. Manikavasagam, from Kapar constituency, had touched on the issue of environment concerning the involvement of local government in maintaining the surroundings. The Minister was asked about the approaches taken by the government to guarantee a much safer environment and the total allocations to be spent. The ruling BN answered that the short term approach consisted of activities in the form of development at the federal, state and local government level. The programmes included the upgrading of

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the basic facilities to curb criminal activities in certain areas. As for the long term approach, the Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government ensure implementation of their designated policies and strategies which pointed towards civilization-oriented development and basic facilities would also be provided in several places.\(^{32}\)

Another significant question was raised by a DAP member, Liew Chin Tong, from Bukit Bendera constituency where the relevant minister had been asked to state the reasons why the Moneylender Act of 1951 was still being managed by the Ministry of Local Government and the Central Bank of Malaysia (\textit{Bank Negara/ BNM}).\(^{33}\) The DAP was curious over its arrangement as it could lead towards illegal operation of loan sharks. The Minister stated that the Moneylender Act of 1951 had been reviewed by the Judiciary before the Ministry of Local Government could take back that responsibility from August 1, 1979.

The purpose was to strengthen the monitoring process upon the moneylender activities and also to curb moneylender activities without licenses. On November 1, 2003, the Ministry of Local Government had taken over the management of Moneylender Act of 1951 and it was still applicable until today. Realising that the answer needed further clarification, the DAP asked who was responsible for the enforcement of the particular Act and anyone had wrongfully trespassed the Act.

The answer given was that the Ministry of Local Government had been given responsibility to monitor and to control any unlicensed moneylender’s activities and that there were a total of 144 local authorities under the Ministry and the same time they cooperated with the Royal Police of Malaysia (\textit{Polis DiRaja Malaysia/ PDRM}). The

\(^{32}\) Ibid, p. 9.
Minister further added that most of the illegal activities carried out by the individuals or companies had been monitored thoroughly.

Dr. Tan had once again raised the issue involving local government. He emphasised that the local government had to be more sensitive towards people’s hardships and difficulties. The point was strongly highlighted by the DAP especially for the people who were living within the city of Kuala Lumpur due to the implemented policy of car park tickets in certain places in the city. It was argued that the most affected people would be those who reside in the city especially when the business activities had dropped 50% and thus had caused them to bear a heavy burden due to the current imbalance economic situation.

Prior to this, DAP had urged, especially to DBKL, to reconsider and to stop implementing the car park system. In Kuala Lumpur, DBKL is mainly responsible to manage the local well-being including the city’s cleanliness, solid waste management, maintaining the recreation centers, car park tickets, parking system, granting license to conduct business and many more. The opposition PR took this matter seriously and PAS member, Dr. Lo’ Lo’ Mohamad Ghazali, from Titiwangsa constituency intervened during the question session.

Dr. Lo’ Lo’ opined that the government should take reasonable action to tackle this matter and to reduce the burden of those who were affected by the car park ticket system. Besides Dr. Tan and Dr. Lo’ Lo’, Dato’ Kamarudin Jaafar, a PAS member, from Tumpat, also dissented. Dato’ Kamarudin asked the relevant minister to respond to the issues.

36 Ibid.,
brought up by Dr. Tan for the sake of clarifying the government policies towards the debated issues.

Chua Tian Chang of PKR from Batu constituency had asked the Minister of Federal Territory, Dato’ Sri Zulhasnan Rafique about important conditions in the agreement with the DBKL on the privatisation of collection of payment for car parks in Kuala Lumpur.37 Structurally, the DBKL is one of the form of local governments in Malaysia and it is accountable and answerable directly under the purview of the Minister of Federal Territory and this had shown that the characteristics of DBKL was different from the rest of local governments, as for instance, Majlis Perbandaran Sepang/ Sepang Municipal Council (MPS) and Selayang Municipal Council where they are accountable directly to the state government of Selangor.

Responding to Chua question, the Minister stated a number of important conditions. First, the companies were responsible to provide, to set in position and to maintain the machines. Second, the machines must be able to use coins approved by the Central Bank of Malaysia. Third, the agreed tariff was 80 cents per hour within the city center and 50 cents per hour outside the city. Fourth, the operating hours was from Monday to Saturday except Sunday and public holidays. Last but not least, if the machines were found not to function properly, the contractors would be fined RM35 per day. The answers given were perceived as part of the opposition PR’s strategies in deriving some valuable information from the ruling BN government in terms of the implementation of policies within the context of local government. It was also part of PR’s concerted effort to ensure that the public would be fairly served by the local government.

On the other hand, Azmin Ali of PKR had asked the ruling BN minister to state the total number of incinerators bought by the government including its purchasing cost, its maintenance and whether the incinerators had begun operation.\(^\text{38}\) The minister replied that the Ministry of Local Government had since 1996 provided mini incinerators using Switzerland technology to be utilised in Pulau Langkawi, Pangkor, Tioman and Labuan with a total cost of RM 12.4 million. However, the incinerators could not be used due to unaffordable maintenance cost and the local government was no longer able to operate it.

Due to this, the Ministry was developing five more mini incinerators in Pulau Langkawi, Pulau Pangkor, Pulau Tioman, Cameron Highlands and Labuan with a total cost of RM 187.7 million to replace the used incinerators. The answers given by the relevant minister was deemed sufficient. In this matter, the purpose of asking to clarify the said issue was to shed clarification on what was going on concerning the local government authority and at the same time to monitor the government activities. Besides that, Tan Tee Beng of PKR, from Nibong Tebal constituency, also had his own intriguing thought on the matter related to the appointment of contractors.\(^\text{39}\) Most of the appointments were conducted under the purview of the Ministry of Local Government.

Therefore, there was a pressing need in knowing its operation. As answered by the relevant minister, it was stated that the ministry had ordered not to sign long-term contracts but preferred monthly contracts for the services of solid waste management and public cleanliness. The concession agreement would be signed between the federal government and the concession companies and this gave an opportunity for the concession companies to appoint sub-contractors to provide services within their areas. The answer was given by the relevant minister and thus had caused no further questions from the opposition PR.

\(^{39}\) Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session, no. 73, (Thursday, 4 December 2008), p. 17.
Parliamentary Questions (PQs) Concerning Parliamentary Constituencies

Parliamentary constituencies here refer to electoral constituencies secured by the opposition PR political parties during the 2008 general elections. By denying the ruling BN government a two-thirds majority in the Parliament, the opposition PR had also succeeded in fielding their members in the Parliament and this gave an unexpected predicament to the ruling BN parties where they would be questioned in terms of their performances if they are found not to serve the people or their constituencies. Out of 222 parliamentary seats contested, the opposition political parties managed to wrestle 82 out of 222 seats and the rest were maintained by the ruling BN political parties.

Meaning to say that the opposition PR had now 82 different areas that automatically fell under their parliamentary jurisdictions and at the same time they had direct access to their constituencies and that had given them an impetus to boost their political performances by reaching out to voters concerning local issues. In the Twelfth Parliament, Tan Kok Wai of DAP from Cheras constituency had asked a question concerning his parliamentary constituency to the Minister of Works on the reasons why the responsible Ministry was allowing the Grand Saga Sdn Bhd to block the entrance road at the Bandar Mahkota Cheras and what steps were being taken to assist the people who had been denied their rights of entrance.

Tan added a question since the answer given by the Minister was not satisfying. The second question was why the ruling government that was supposed to provide necessary aid to the people had turned their back by helping the governmental cronies to impose the

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40 Grand Saga Sdn Bhd is the toll concessionaire of the Cheras-Kajang Highway entrusted by the government to provide highway-related services to the commuters and be the connecting gateway for the surrounding communities in the area of Cheras and Kajang. For a full account on Grand Saga Sdn Bhd, see: http://grandsaga.com.my/corporate.html <accessed on August 7, 2016>.

blockage of the entrance for the purpose of setting up tolls at the Bandar Mahkota Cheras. The opposition PR believed that the governmental projects of setting up tolls could directly contribute towards the burden of the people especially if the tools were imposed in their particular constituencies.

Realising that this was something that could be utilised against the ruling BN government, the DAP on behalf the opposition PR had the chance to throw relevant questions and at the same time to represent the affected constituencies. Another member of DAP, M. Manogaran from Teluk Intan constituency asked the same ministry over the issue of a mainroad in the constituency. Manogaran asked whether the Ministry intended to widen the road from Bidor to Teluk Intan. The relevant minister immediately responded by stating that the project of widening the road had been listed under the Ninth Malaysian Plan (RMK-9) but unfortunately the project was not a selected under the said RMK-9. However, the ministry was building a shortcut road for the users and the project was expected to be completed in September 2009.

After it was answered, Manogaran resorted to an additional question to get a full picture over the debated issue concerning the constituency and again the question was positively answered by the relevant minister. Besides that, M. Kulasegaran of DAP from Ipoh Barat constituency had the opportunity to bring forth the matter concerning his constituency into the Parliament. He questioned the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment by asking to clarify the plans on tackling the issue of flooding during the wet monsoon season around Kinta river in Ipoh. The Minister replied that a total of RM3 million in the Seventh Malaysian Plan (RMK-7), RM 5.7 million in the Eight Malaysian

Plan (RMK-8) and RM 3.5 million in the Ninth Malaysian Plan (RMK-9) had all been spent for the purpose of this project.

The answers given by the relevant minister indicated there was a governmental involvement in the said constituency where the relevant minister disclosed a series of projects listed in the Malaysian Plan. In a way, this had given an additional advantage especially to the opposition PR to force the ruling BN government to reveal their plans. Not only that, the opposition PR also was wondering whether the ruling BN government could give them, especially to the Chief Minister (MB) from PR state of government an equal opportunity to be interviewed by the Malaysia Broadcasting/Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) to explain their formulated policies at the state level of government. The opposition PR responded that the RTM was ready to provide spaces for the purpose of conducting the interviews including leaders from the opposition PR.

Another issue affecting the parliamentary constituency was pointed out by Amran Abdul Ghani of PKR from Tanah Merah constituency. The PKR had raised a relevant question concerning the environment in the said constituency and demanded the ruling government take drastic action towards the pollution (smell and chemical gas) caused by the Rubber Lee factory situated in the city of Tanah Merah. The issue was seen and taken seriously by the PKR since people living in the area had complained about it. The answer given by the relevant ministry was that the actual cause of pollution was the storing of rubber and the Department of Environment/Jabatan Alam Sekitar (JAS) had issued an order to the Rubber Lee factory to provided security devices that can deter the smell for the purpose of controlling it and the factory also had been ordered to move to a new place. The

answers given were a bit convincing and the PKR further asked to quicken the process of moving.

Issues concerning the people who are living in certain constituencies, especially the opposition PR, had become a source of heated debate in Parliament. Even though some of the opposition MPs had won seats or parliamentary constituencies they had no direct access in terms of funds to upgrade and to provide facilities in their constituencies as they were not part of the ruling government. And the only thing that they were able to do was to force the ruling BN through the debating session in the Parliament. In this way, the opposition PR could bring up matters and demand necessary answers and responses concerning the wellbeing of the particular constituency.

In regards to the total of allocation in the year of 2008 given for the welfare activities to each of parliamentary constituencies, Dr. Lo’ Lo’ of PAS from Titiwangsa constituency, had asked the relevant minister to clarify the allocation.\(^{47}\) The total of allocation provided to each parliamentary constituencies was RM15,330,000, as stated by the relevant minister. PAS further clarified that, in terms of parliamentary allocation, the proposed amount was not received by the opposition PR members and that sparked a question over the objective of the said allocation.\(^{48}\) In this case, PAS was profoundly curious and therefore the ruling BN must be held responsible to justify where the allocation had gone. Without the proper ‘check and balance’ as demonstrated by PAS concerning the issue of allocation, the political behaviour of ruling BN government would go unchecked. This would jeopardize the notion of parliamentary accountability and transparency.

\(^{47}\) *Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session*, no. 36, (Tuesday, 19 August 2008), p. 22.

\(^{48}\) Ibid, p. 23.
In the east side of Malaysia, the opposition PR had particularly touched on the issue that involved constituencies in the state of Sarawak. Chong Chien Jeng of DAP from Bandar Kuching constituency had asked the relevant minister concerning one of local schools situated within the Bandar Kuching constituency. Sarawak is one of states in Malaysia and for most of the time had been considered as the ‘fixed-deposit’ of the ruling BN government.

Politics of Development (PoD) has always been the major theme especially when state elections were held. In the 2008 general elections, the opposition could only secure one of 31 parliamentary seats contested. Therefore, Bandar Kuching was the only PR’s representation at the east side of Malaysia and this had suggested that the state of Sarawak indirectly contributed towards the consolidation of the ruling BN government as it was one of few states that contributed a number of parliamentary seats to the current regime.

In representing Bandar Kuching constituency, the DAP made its first attempt in the Parliament by asking the relevant minister about the school buildings which were identified as ‘dangerous’ and asked whether the government could take any action to solve it. The issue was that the DAP believed that the government may have practiced a one-sided policy by not providing funds to the said school and further asked the government to state on why the local school did not receive any funds. According to Chong, an allocation of RM20,000 was promised by the ruling BN government during the 2008 general elections. If the ruling BN government had fulfilled the promised, the case would not be debated in Parliament and the opposition members could focus on other pressing issues in their parliamentary constituencies.

Another DAP member, Gobind Singh Deo from Puchong constituency, had asked the relevant minister to state whether the government was planning to build a hospital around the Puchong area and if not, what were the steps taken to upgrade the government clinics in Puchong area.\(^{50}\) The answer was that the government had never planned to build hospitals in Puchong under the Ninth Malaysian Plan (RMK-9) but several measures had been designed to upgrade the health facilities in Puchong. Among them was the establishment of Health Clinic 2 (Klinik Kesihatan / KK 2), to upgrade the x-ray unit and dentistry lab and to upgrade the Mother and Child’s Clinics including the Department of Outpatients (Jabatan Pesakit Luar).

The DAP had again asked the relevant question. It was stated by the DAP that in Puchong alone there were a total of 78,000 registered voters and further justified that the particular area lacked hospitals and therefore it difficult to accommodate all the people in the same hospital. Realising that the constituency was in a dire need of an effective health system, the DAP had asked the government to give their guarantees to build a hospital in the constituency.

Fong Po Kuan of DAP from Batu Gajah constituency had also voiced out the issue involving the constituency. According to Fong, when she visited her constituency, particularly an Indian community living there, she found a mother whose husband was imprisoned, having seven kids, and working as a bottle cleaner with a wage of RM15 per day.\(^{51}\) The relevant minister was then asked by the DAP to immediately provide assistance to these people. The DAP had justified that by asking this particular question they could ensure that the ruling government was well aware of the situation and might be able to reduce the burden.

\(^{50}\) *Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session*, no. 41, (Wednesday, 27 August 2008), p. 10.

\(^{51}\) *Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session*, no. 47, (Thursday, 16 October 2008), p. 16.
In terms of issues concerning local health in the constituency, Dr. Mohd Hatta of PAS from Kuala Krai constituency asked the relevant minister to clarify how many *kepialu* cases had occurred and the cause of the ‘outbreak’ *kepialu* (fever) at the Chuchuh Puteri village in Kuala Krai.\(^5\) It was stated by the relevant minister that the case had been examined and 137 food operators had been inspected and it was found that one of the operators did not have a license and was suspected as the main cause of the spread of the said disease. The relevant minister further added that steps had been taken to make sure that the situation in the village was under control and free from the epidemic. Even though Kuala Krai constituency was under the PAS-led state government the discourse of health was under the Federal List in accordance to the Article 74 of Federal Constitution and therefore it was probably practical for the ruling BN government to uphold the constitutional spirit by looking into the said matter properly and at the same time it was suggested that the positive action of the ruling BN government in tackling the issue could maintain the federal-state relations in the future.

The spread of that particular epidemic was taken seriously by PAS’s representative and thus had further added a question to inspect the government performance in handling the matter.\(^5\) The relevant minister was again asked by PAS whether the government had formulated any plan to increase the education of health especially in places suspected of having a particular disease. Another PAS member, Muhammad bin Husain from Pasir Puteh constituency also raised a question concerning the casualties caused by a several boats when caught fire in Tok Bali port in June 2007.\(^5\)

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\(^5\) Ibid, p. 16.
According to the relevant minister, an assessment was made and it indicated that the total of loss was RM3 million. PAS also asked whether the government had a plan to set up a security system within the Tok Bali villages for the purpose of monitoring foreigners (especially from Thailand) who came in and at the same time to guarantee the local security. The relevant minister promised that the local security was going to be preserved. While still debating the same issue, another PAS member, Siti Zailah Mohd Yusoff from Rantau Panjang constituency, took a chance to question the relevant minister on what were the guarantees by the government to settle the indemnity towards the loss of boats as it involved local people. As stated by the relevant minister, the incident and the loss was not part of the government liability and the boat owners were requested to apply for insurances and any demand should be directed towards the insurance companies.

Tan Tee Beng of PKR from Nibong Tebal constituency had asked the relevant minister on the issue of water pollution in Pulau Burung, Penang. The relevant minister was asked if there any proactive measures or steps taken by the government to tackle the pollution issue and if the fishermen were able to pay the fine for the pollution they had caused (decided by the government) to the affected victims. The ruling BN responded that the Department of Environment (JAS) was always monitoring the surrounding and because the pollution did not occur, so the issue of paying the damage did not arise. The PKR further asked and this time they believed that the waste and water operation at Pulau Burung area was run by UMNO’s crony and further believed that the government did not take any action to prevent it. However, the relevant minister did not accept the PKR’s question.

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55 Ibid, p. 18.
56 *Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session*, no. 55, (Tuesday, 4 November 2008), p. 11.
Ab. Halim Ab. Rahman of PAS from Pengkalan Chepa constituency had directed his question towards the Minister of Transportation by asking when the government was going to make the Sultan Ismail Petra Airport/Lapangan Terbang Sultan Ismail Petra (LTSIP) as a cargo transportation facility for agricultural products and small industry products to be exported.\(^5\) And according to the relevant ministry, all matters regarding the land cargo needed to apply and get approval first and the application could be made through the Malaysian Airline System (MAS) cargo. The main purpose of PAS’s question was to upgrade the status of LTSIP and at the same time to increase the export activities especially the local products. And thus, PAS had added a question by asking if government had any plan to make the LTSIP for the purpose of allowing any companies in South East Asia to export. The relevant minister justified by stating that there were no sizable demand yet received by MAS and if there was a need to do so then MAS would play its role.

Another issue that involved the utilisation of airport, Dr. Hiew King Cheu of DAP from Kota Kinabalu constituency had asked the Minister of Transportation to clarify the reasons why the government had moved the operation of Air Asia 2 which had spent hundreds of million to the Main Terminal after it was completed.\(^6\) The DAP wanted to make sure that the government would admit that this was a mistake and also part of an uncontrolled spending under the government radar. The relevant minister immediately stated that the question posed by the DAP was baseless and further justified by providing several reasons on why the conduct of moving the operation was carried out by the government.

Gobind Singh Deo of DAP from Puchong constituency had also directed his question to the relevant minister over an issue of traffic congestion involving the tolls

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\(^5\) *Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session*, no. 56, (Wednesday, 5 November 2008), p. 3.

\(^6\) Ibid, p. 11.
around the Puchong area. The DAP had asked about the steps taken by the government to tackle the issue of congestion. The relevant minister replied that the government had implemented a promotion to encourage the car users in that particular highway to make a toll payment by using an electronic way such as “TouchNGo” or “Smart Tag”. Traffic congestion had become one of the most debated topics between the ruling BN government and the opposition PR. In a developed city, for instance, Kuala Lumpur, Ampang, Klang, Shah Alam, Puchong, and Cheras, the issues of congestion were critical and the opposition PR realized that the ruling BN government had a proper mechanism to prevent the congestion effectively.

The opposition PR took this matter into Parliament for the purpose of reminding the ruling BN government to address the issue properly. For instance, some of parliamentary constituencies situated around the city of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor areas were heavily affected by traffic congestion and therefore, it had been the main task of the opposition PR to debate this matter for the sake of finding a solution in the Parliament. The DAP added some questions to get a clearer picture over the debated matters and for that particular purpose, the relevant minister was asked whether the government would stop collecting the payment of tolls from the people and if there was any effort to provide an alternative route to overcome the traffic congestion especially in the Puchong area.

Besides that, Rashid Din of PKR from Merbok constituency had brought up an issue concerning his constituency where he had asked the Minister of Finance (MoF) to clarify how many low-cost house projects were being implemented at Merbok, Kedah and to list the nature of projects including its contractors as planned in the Ninth Malaysian

\(^{59}\) Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session, no. 64, (Wednesday, 19 November 2008), p. 10.

\(^{60}\) Ibid, p. 11.
Plan (RMK-9).\textsuperscript{61} According to the relevant minister, a total of 411 units had been completed and Kedah Sato Sdn. Bhd. had been appointed as the contractor who was responsible for the housing construction. In addition to that, the National Housing Company/Syarikat Perumahan Negara Berhad (SPNB)\textsuperscript{62} was planning to develop another 344 units and the current status of the project was still being planned.

Rashid Din brought up another issue and this time he wanted to know whether the ruling BN government could further develop a Tanjong Dawai town, a place where most of the people were fishermen, to make it more developed. The PKR argued that the ruling BN government had no plans or efforts to develop this town even though they were in political power for more than 50 years. The relevant minister immediately replied that if there any plans or projects involving the development of the town, it may be directed to the SPNB.

Mohd Nasir Zakaria of PAS from Padang Terap constituency had asked the Ministry of Health to clarify the total number of patients who received treatment at the Kuala Nerang hospital and the types of disease the people had.\textsuperscript{63} According to the relevant minister, in 2006, the total number of patients was 33,943 and in 2007, the total was 46,140 and in 2008 (until June), the total was 23,333. As for the diseases that had compelled them to come to the hospital were, for instance, lung problems and heart attacks.\textsuperscript{64} After that, PAS further argued that the population of Padang Terap was almost 66,000 and many were complaining that the hospital lacked of well-trained doctors.

Kuala Nerang hospital was also lacking in medical assistants. Therefore, the PKR asked the government to take this matter seriously. The session was unexpectedly

\textsuperscript{62} Syarikat Perumahan Negara Berhad (SPNB) is owned by the Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MoF Inc.) and it was established on 21\textsuperscript{st} August 1997 to make sure in providing an affordable quality houses to each of families in tandem with the Objective of National Housing (OPN).
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid, p. 19.
interrupted by another PAS member from Pendang constituency, Dr. Mohd Hayati, who asked when the government was going to build a hospital at Pendang area.

As regards to educational concerns, M. Manikavasagam of PKR from Kapar constituency requested the relevant minister to clarify how much of the allocations given to the Tamil school of Tepi Sungai Klang was for the purpose of constructing new buildings and when the construction was expected to complete. The total amount was RM1.36 million to accommodate the cost of construction and the project started in January 2008 was expected to complete in 2009, stated the relevant minister. Besides that, the PKR had voiced out its dissatisfaction towards the failure of the ruling BN government to provide schools for students in the Kapar constituency. The relevant minister, however, did not perceive that particular constituency as the opposition’s area and promised to look into the issue.

Dr. Lo’ Lo’ of PAS from Titiwangsa constituency had also touched several issues involving her constituency during the debate session. The question was directed to the Minister of Federal Territory and Dr. Lo’ Lo’ had specifically asked about the government’s plan on two land sites at Kerayong village and Indian Settlement village within the Titiwangsa constituency. The ruling BN responded that the land site of Kerayong village was under the ownership of National Sport Council/Majlis Sukan Negara (MSN) and the land site of Indian Settlement village was owned by the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur/ DBKL) and other land sites were owned by the Federal Government. Titiwangsa is a parliamentary constituency situated in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur and not under the state jurisdiction. It might probably be difficult for PAS

67 Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session, no. 73, (Thursday, 4 December 2008), p. 12.
to negotiate the status of land in Kuala Lumpur because the ruling BN government practically had the access to the federal lands.

The relevant minister further clarified that the DBKL had no plans to develop the land sites. Dr. Lo’ Lo’ further asked, in terms of compensation, what were the government offers to the people instructed to move out from the village. The relevant minister stated that the people were provided with the People’s Housing Programme/Program Perumahan Rakyat (PPR)\textsuperscript{68} to settle down.\textsuperscript{69} Under the PPR scheme, local squatters could live in houses provided by the government. Besides that, Johari bin Abdul of PKR from Sungai Petani constituency had requested the relevant minister to state the total cost for the construction of the MARA Junior Science College (Maktab Rendah Sains MARA/ MRSM) at Merbok, Kedah.\textsuperscript{70} The minister replied that the total cost was RM65.3 million, including the land cost, building cost, consultation cost, equipment and furniture cost.

The PKR was intrigued over the procedure of the construction and whether the draft plan had the approval of the Sungai Petani Municipal Council/Majlis Perbandaran Sungai Petani (MPSP). The relevant minister further justified that the construction was carried out according to rules and procedures which was enforced during that time and, MPSP had also approved the design and plan of the construction. In this sense, the objective of the questioning was to make sure that any form of development projects that took place, particularly in the opposition PR constituencies, was made transparent by the ruling BN government.

\textsuperscript{68} People’s Housing Program or PPR is a program initiated by the government for the resettlement of squatters and residence requirements for low-income earners. Ministry of Housing and Local Government is the main implementing agency for the PPR projects throughout Malaysia.

\textsuperscript{69} Parliamentary Debates, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{70} Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session, no. 75, (Thursday, 11 December 2008), p. 3.
The PKR was not the only opposition’s representative who asked about the construction project involving the ruling government but at the same time, PAS also made a stand by putting forth a question concerning the construction of Police Stations at Pendang, Yan and Kuala Muda and the current status of those projects.71 PAS noted that the projects were actually initiated during the 2002 Pendang by-election and until today the projects were incomplete and asked for appropriate punishment for the company responsible for abandoning the construction.

The relevant minister stated that the project was terminated by the government. The opposition PR in a way had the chance to deliver some of their constituency’s problems through the debate in the Parliament and by this official way, they could admonish and also monitor the performance of the ruling BN government in delivering promises made during elections held in the country.

Parliamentary Questions (PQs) Concerning International Relations

International relations is synonymous with inter-state relation and it is also a study of state behaviour and state interaction.72 The section of this study will highlight significant issues concerning parliamentary questions (PQs) that took place between the opposition PR and the ruling BN government within the context of international relations. In the Twelfth Parliament, Dr. Tan Seng Giaw of DAP from Kepong constituency had brought up an issue which was related to Malaysia’s behaviour in responding to the case of earthquake.73

The DAP asked the relevant minister to state Malaysia’s contributions towards the countries affected by the earthquake and typhoon such as China and Myanmar. It was

stated that the government had donated a total of RM3.3 million for Myanmar alone for the purpose of re-construction and re-development. Besides that, Malaysia had also sent humanitarian aid such as blankets, clothes, dried foods and medicines costing a total of RM500,000.74 The aid was sent on May 12, 2008. As for China, a donation of RM1.5 million had been sent in the form of camping equipment and medicines. Besides that, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had set up an ‘earthquake fund’ for the purpose of assisting countries affected by natural disasters, and this fund was to be collected from the public. As for the DAP, the aim was to provide a check and balance towards the government’s performance in handling matters concerning foreign matter and also to monitor the flow of funds.

Within the same context of international relations, Wee Choo Keong of PKR from Wangsa Maju constituency had directed a question to the relevant minister in regards to the issue of open burning of forest in Sumatera which had caused a haze in Malaysia.75 The issue was taken seriously by the PKR as the haze would jeopardise the health of the people and therefore, the government was asked on what would be the proper solution towards the issue. The relevant minister clarified that there was a technical committee which was formed under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for information and there was a mutual agreement between the ASEAN countries in resolving the haze situation crossing the boundary. Besides that, there was another committee which was called “Sub-regional Ministerial Steering Committee on Trans Boundaries Haze Pollution” and the committee was limited to five countries- Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei and Thailand.

74 Ibid, p. 3.
Many programmes were implemented mutually and the Government of Indonesia had allocated 800 billion Rupiah to tackle the problems and Malaysia had also been involved to find concrete solutions to resolve the situation. At this juncture, the PKR had the chance of making the relevant minister disclose Malaysia’s potential programmes that was believed to be necessary towards the solution of the haze problem. Apart from that, the relations between Malaysia and the rest of ASEAN nations could be bridged in a positive manner through a proper mechanism taken by the ruling government.

Another significant issue that involved ASEAN nations had been brought up by Azmin Ali of PKR from Gombak constituency.76 At this point, Azmin was a bit intrigued over the issue of Malaysia-Singapore’s relations and asked the relevant minister to clarify why the federal government had frequently lost when dealing with the Government of Singapore, as for instance, in the water supply agreement, the loss of Batu Putih Island77, the termination of the construction of the “bent” bridge (jambatan bengkok) at Selat Tebrau.

The relevant minister refuted the question asked by the PKR. In regard to the water supply agreement, the agreement had been signed by both parties (Malaysian and Singapore) in 1961 and 1962 and series of negotiations had been held since 1998 but mutual consensus had not been achieved. And Malaysia would not agree to something which was not in its national interest. As for the case of Batu Putih, the relevant minister argued that the results of the International Court and Justice (ICJ) must be viewed from a wider perspective.

77 Batu Putih Island or called as Pedra Branca is an island dispute between Malaysia and Singapore. The dispute was believed to initiate in February 1980 when Singapore stood up against the 1979 Malaysian map that included Pedra Branca in its territorial waters. For a detailed account Pedra Branca issue, see; Terence Chong, ‘Singapore In 2008: Negotiating Domestic Issues, Confrontations and Global Challenges’, Southeast Asian Affairs, 2009, pp. 289-304.
One of the impacts was that local fishermen from Malaysia could fish freely without any intervention from Singapore’s government.\textsuperscript{78} As emphasised by the relevant minister, the ICJ’s results did not only favour Singapore but in a way it benefited Malaysia. In terms of the construction of the bent bridge in Selat Tebrau, the relevant minister referred to the opinions delivered by the Attorney General’s Chamber (\textit{Jabatan Peguam Negara} JPN) where the JPN had maintained that the efforts to construct the bridge could not be continued based on the legal reasons as they did not follow rules laid down by an international law. The debate session suggested that the opposition PR managed to obtain valuable information from the ruling BN government through the PQs activities in the Parliament. Within the context of Malaysia’s international relations, it was highly important for the country to have a good relationship with its neighboring nations in whatever circumstances. In a way, the debate of the PQs had provided a platform for the opposition PR to strengthen its fundamental roles in a parliamentary democracy so as to bridge the gap between the people and the institutions.

Another case which involved Malaysia’s international relations was raised by Chua Tian Chang of PKR from Batu constituency.\textsuperscript{79} Chua asked the relevant minister concerning the Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF)\textsuperscript{80} and whether the government had asked Britain’s government to monitor Waytha Moorthy’s, the HINDRAF Chairman’s activities in Europe. The relevant minister was of the opinion that the government for now had no any consideration to engage in any activity to monitor P. Waytha Moorthy overseas

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Parliamentary Debates}, Ibid, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{80} Basically HINDRAF was formed in December 2005 as part of the incidents which had caused a religious sensitivity, especially the Hindus in Malaysia. HINDRAF was known to public when the press had reported in August 2007 that they had submitted 18 memorandums to the Malaysian Government. For a detailed discussion on HINDRAF, see: Sivachandralingam Sundara Raja and others, ‘Malaysia’s Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF): A Perspective From a Malay Mainstream Daily,’ \textit{International Journal of Academic Research}, Vol. 5, No. 5, 2013, pp. 89-93.
activities. The PKR, on the other hand, was dissatisfied with the answers given and kept demanding the answers from the government on why there was no strict action taken towards HINDRAF. In replying to the question, the relevant minister stated that this issue was under the police jurisdiction.

**Parliamentary Questions (PQs) Concerning Educational Sector**

In most developing nations, education is treated as one of the most significant part of the political processes. It is also perceived as promoting national unity, social equality and economic development. In the case of Malaysia, the issue of education had been debated for quite some time in Parliament. Educational issues were incontrovertibly significant and therefore, the role of the opposition PR in the Twelfth Parliament was derived from the PQs that they had directed to the ruling BN government. Roslan Shaharum of PAS from Bukit Gantang constituency had touched on the issue that involved the MARA Junior Science College/Maktab Rendah Sains MARA (MRSM). The ruling BN was asked how many rural students had entered the MRSM since it was first established by the federal government.

The relevant minister clarified that the enrollment of students were not based on geographical factor and pointed out a total of 64,341 of MARA students came from a background of poor and low-income earner parents such as farmers, hawkers, fishermen and also members from FELDA who lived in the rural areas. The PQs initiated by the opposition PR concerning the student’s enrollment of MARA was an initial step taken for the purpose of ensuring that the government could realise its educational agenda in the long-term prospects.

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84 Ibid, p. 5.
Another contentious issue brought by the opposition PR was the Teaching and Learning of Science and Mathematics Subjects in English/Pengajiran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik Dalam Bahasa Inggeris (PPSMI).\(^{85}\) Nga Kor Ming of DAP from Taiping constituency had asked for clarification in regard to the total allocation which had been spent to implement the PPSMI policy since the year 2003. According to the relevant minister, the total of allocation was RM2.21 billion for the supply of ICT equipment’s, RM2.4 million for ICT software, RM317 million for pre-service training of teachers and RM638 million for the payment of teachers involved in the PPSMI policy.

Besides that, at the tertiary level, the opposition PR had requested the government to revise the irrelevant courses at the university level which were not compatible with the demands of local market and at the same time to reduce the unemployment rates among the fresh graduates.\(^{86}\) In this matter, Pua Kiam Wee of DAP from Petaling Jaya Utara constituency had asked the government to clarify the strategies taken to produce more quality graduates to serve in the educational sector and asked whether the teacher’s salaries would be increased.\(^{87}\) According to the relevant minister, the strategies were to upgrade the system of teacher’s selection, to strengthen the teacher’s training, to strengthen the teacher’s careers and to provide allowances to the teachers. In terms of salary, it was decided by the Education Service of Commission/Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Pelajaran (SPP) based on the qualification.

Muhammad Husain of PAS from Pasir Puteh constituency had the opportunity to ask the relevant minister on the issue of the Department of Community Development/Jabatan Kemajuan Masyarakat (KEMAS), particularly on the pupils who

graduated from KEMAS kindergarten. The relevant minister was asked to state the percentage of the pupils who could read before they could embark on the elementary schools. According to the research carried out by KEMAS at the end of October 2007, it found that there was a substantial development progress for kids especially in reading Malay and English languages. PAS further added a question by asking the relevant minister to state whether the weakness of KEMAS kindergarten had something to do with political programmes in that particular school. As replied, the political involvement was denied and clarified that those teachers were not involved in politics.

Besides that, another important point concerning the status of secondary schools was raised by R. Sivarasa of PKR from Subang constituency. The relevant minister was requested to clarify why the name of a total of sixty-four Secondary School of Technical/Sekolah Menengah Teknik (SMT) was changed to the Secondary School of Vocational/Sekolah Menengah Vokasional (SMV). The Ministry of Education replied it did not plan to change the name from technical to vocational but in fact, its streams of learning that were offered for now had been widened and strengthened. The aim of expanding the stream in the technical and vocational schools was to equip students with technical skills especially to students who were inclined towards that particular field.

Besides that, Mohd Yusmadi of PKR from Balik Pulau constituency had also touched on the issue of lack of scientists. The relevant minister was asked to clarify the steps taken to tackle that particular problem and to attract interest in engaging with research and innovation within the local universities. According to the relevant minister, the

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89 Ibid, p. 23.
91 Ibid, p. 5.
government had laid down a Higher Education Strategic Plan/Pelan Strategik Pengajian Tinggi (PSPT) with the aim of empowering the research sectors and innovation and to increase the number of scientists, engineers and researchers. Among the steps taken by the government was the implementation of the “My Brain” Programme in producing Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) holders with the target of achieving 60,000 PhD holders. Second, to continue the Native Academic Training Scheme /Skim Latihan Akademik Bumiputera (SLAB) for the purpose of producing lecturers within the local universities. The answers given by the ruling BN had indicated that the government managed to maintain the strategy in producing researchers within the local universities.

Speaking of students’ performance within the educational sector in Malaysia, the opposition PR had attempted to highlight a number of significant points for the purpose of providing a check and balance towards the regime’s performance in making sure that the educational development was in the right direction. Zuraida Kamaruddin of PKR from Ampang constituency was of the opinion that the government must encourage the students especially in mastering the field of Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Therefore, the relevant minister was asked whether the government was ready to provide free low-cost laptop to students as for example, such as One Laptop Per-Child (OLPC) policy as initiated by developed nations. The minister replied that the government now was not ready to provide laptop for free due to high cost of allocation for the purpose. However, the Ministry of Education was still studying the importance of OLPC policy through the programme of Intel School Adoption Project (ISAP). The opposition PR in this sense had delivered an idea of the OLPC and the government had taken it into the consideration.

93 Ibid, p. 6.
In the Twelfth Parliament, the opposition PR had to ensure that the local education was in tandem with international demands. For instance, M. Manogaran of DAP from Telok Intan constituency wanted information from the relevant minister concerning the performance of Malay students in utilising English as a second language.\textsuperscript{95} The DAP further asked whether the government had organised any English language programmes to increase the level of competence among the Malay students so they could compete with other students once they entered secondary schools. The government replied it was not only considering the Malay students but all races and considered it as an ‘inclusive’ approach.\textsuperscript{96}

It was added that the Ministry of Education had carried out programmes extensively concerning the performance of students. First, Children’s Contemporary Literature (CLL) was specifically designed for students in standard four and six, and it was initiated in rural schools. Second, Extensive Reading (ER) for schools which had low performance in English language was conducted. Third, Science and Mathematics Readiness Programme (SMRP) were introduced for students who were in the early secondary schools. Fourth, was the implementation of the Teaching and Learning Courseware for English (TLCE).

Dr. Che Rosli of PAS from Hulu Langat constituency requested the Minister of Higher Education to explain the level of proficiency that the government used to measure the level of leadership particularly for a graduate student.\textsuperscript{97} He asked whether the government had taken into consideration several factors involving the Emotion Quotient (EQ) and Spiritual Quotient (SQ) in measuring a graduate student. According to the said minister, the government had implemented programmes through the Institute of Higher Education/Institut Pengajian Tinggi (IPT) which was based on a holistic approach and the

\textsuperscript{95} Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session, no. 59, (Tuesday, 11 November 2008), p. 6.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid, p. 7.
main target of that particular programme was to produce a person with a deep knowledge of an academic subject and to produce expertise in tandem with the national philosophy of education under the Education Act of 1996. Dr. Rosli’s question was positively responded to and it indicated that the PQs had provided a platform of alternatives and at the same time had encouraged the exchange of ideas between the both sides in Parliament.

The opposition PR, particularly in Parliament, had given thought to the improvement of the educational sector by posing significant questions which they believed could contribute towards the betterment of society. For instance, another PAS member from Baling constituency, Taib Azamudden, had asked the relevant ministry to clarify why the appointment of Vice-Chancellor/Naib Canselor (VC) in universities was not based on academic qualifications and was still based on political influence.  

According to the relevant minister, the appointment of the highest management position in universities especially Vice-Chancellor was executed by a free body which was appointed by the government known as the Search Committee (Jawatankuasa Pemilihan SC). Identified candidates would be listed and filtered first through a series of interviews and assessed based on certain criterias. The answer given had shown that the selection process of the VC was conducted in an appropriate manner without any political interference. In this respect, the opposition PR, by all political means, had the opportunity to gauge any hidden issues involving the conduct of the ruling BN government. Concerning the nomenclature of integrity in the educational sector, the opposition PR had placed a high hope in maintaining the parliamentary transparency during the PQs sessions.

An initiative of maintaining the educational progress was put forth by Tan Kok Wai of DAP from Cheras constituency in terms of mother tongue language for each ethnic

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The Ministry of Education replied that it had implemented programmes such as The Poor Students’ Trust Fund (*Kumpulan Wang Amanah Pelajar Miskin* / KWAPM), The Textbook Loan Scheme (*Skim Pinjaman Buku Tekst* / SPBT), The Supplementary Food Programme (*Rancangan Makanan Tambahan* / RMT), The Tuition Aid Scheme (*Skim Bantuan Tuisyen* / SBT), and Scholarship. As stated, the purpose of the implemented programmes was to make sure that the children went to school and the aid was provided equally and without taking into account the type of school. Besides that, the Ministry of Education had also executed the policy of compulsory education started in 2003 as provided under Section 29A Education Act of 1996. Under this Act, the position of Chinese and Tamil as the mother tongue language remained as the medium of instruction in the Tamil and Chinese schools. The answer was clearly delivered in regard to the question proposed by the DAP.

Speaking on education and unemployment, the opposition PR had also seized the opportunity that they got in the Parliament to investigate the rate of unemployment involving the graduates for the past 3 years and the government’s efforts to overcome the situation. According to the relevant minister, in 2005, a total of 32,279 graduates had been registered with Jobs Malaysia portal, 40,498 in 2006, 41,579 in 2007, and 84,701 until November 2008. Therefore, the actual rate of unemployment was not known by the government as they did not have a system to indicate people categorised as unemployed.

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making sure that the problem could be solved, the relevant minister had prepared to provide a number of programmes to cater the needs in accordance with the job market. The question concerning the rate of unemployment raised by the opposition PR was perceived as part of its parliamentary strategies in making the ruling BN government disclose some factual information that the opposition PR deemed was significant towards the advancement of graduates.

Besides that, Nurul Izzah of PKR from Lembah Pantai constituency had requested the relevant minister to clarify the steps taken by the government to strengthen the Malay language as an official language. The Ministry of Education responded that it had taken several measures to improve the usage of Malay language by implementing several programmes such as The Language Month and National Literature/Bulan Bahasa dan Sastera Negara (BBSN), The Conference of Malay Language which was participated by several foreign countries, The Writing of Creative Arts/Karya Penulisan Kreatif (KPK), The Component of Literature/Komponen Sastera (KOMSAS), and many more. The opposition PR had succeeded in asking the relevant ministry to disclose some potential programmes which were considered as useful towards the development of Malay language for students in the country. And at the same time, it was believed to strengthen the position of Malay language as stipulated in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia.

In terms of educational competition between the local and foreign students, the opposition PR had asked the relevant minister to clarify the number of foreign students who studied in local public universities (Institut Pengajian Tinggi Awam/ IPTA) and if their entry requirements were the same with the local students. According to the data released

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102 Ibid, p. 5.
by the relevant minister, it was stated that there were a total of 16,991 foreign students who studied in IPTA up til September 2008. Besides that, all the IPTAs were given their own autonomy in selecting students based on the conditions laid down. Certain type of examinations were required to be fulfilled by the foreign students before they could further their studies in the IPTA and they were required to sit for an examination such as Test of English As Foreign Language (TOEFL) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

**Parliamentary Constraints**

In modern parliamentary democracies, the notion of parliamentary constraints is commonly found and this is proven useful at least to the perspective of the opposition political forces in the Parliament. In the case of Malaysia, it was no exception. Parliamentary constraint in this sense is understood as an impediment towards the debates and most of the time, the opposition will likely be impacted by it. It means that the opposition parties are striving in the Parliament or the House in a manner of asking relevant questions to the relevant Ministers in the Parliament.

In terms of parliamentary questions (PQs), usually the questions would be submitted a month before the parliamentary session took place. As for the opposition PR, the nature of its PQs was varied and was not spontaneous. Most of the time, PR members would spend time to research the PQs first and later on would design the PQs based on the debated issues involving the public. PR also conducted a fieldwork, especially within their constituencies, and asking around about people’s basic problems and the

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104 In the 12th Parliament, the opposition PR were given a month, before the session, to submit five verbal questions and another five written questions to the Parliament.
105 YB Dr. Siti Mariah Mahmud, PAS Member of Parliament (MP) for Kota Raja Constituency in the 12th Parliament. Phone Interviewed by Author. 27 November 2017.
answers they obtained from the electorates would become a foundation for the designation of the PQs. When it comes to parliamentary constraints in the 12th Parliament, Dr. Siti argued that the hardest part was the “research”. Some of PR members did not have research assistants to assist them to conduct a research on identical problems in the constituency. In Parliament, the opposition PR usually received the PQs from the ruling BN government a day before the session took place. In this case, the ruling BN was succeeded in imposing their parliamentary hegemony throughout the politicization of time-consuming.

It is argued that in the Malaysian Parliament, it is quite difficult for the opposition to ask for an accurate answer if the relevant Ministers or their Deputies do not know how to respond to the questions properly. When that particular situation is compromised, the opposition would appeal to the Speaker. As expected, the appeal would not be entertained due to the time constraint. Perhaps, the ruling BN government wanted to debate other matters.

The 12th Parliament was one of the mobilisational means for the opposition PR to express their parliamentary demands towards the ruling BN regime. Besides the conduct of elections, one of the legal means for PR to put forth issues concerning the national matters and the like is through the Parliament. In the Twelfth Parliament which had been summoned from 2008 until 2012, the kind of parliamentary constraints encountered by PR was ‘mild’ constraints rather than a heavy constraint. It showed that all parliamentary questions brought up by PR political parties was deliberately responded by the ruling BN regime in the Parliament. It showed that there is a sense of cooperation rendered by the ruling BN in the form of providing considerable rejoinders towards the PR. On the other

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106 Ibid.,
107 YB Dr. Ong Kian Ming, DAP Member of Parliament (MP) for Serdang Constituency in the 13th Parliament, Interviewed by Author, Penang Institute Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Lumpur, 19 May 2016.
hand, the Ministers representing the ruling government had also come up with facts and figures to the questions raised.

For instance, Mohd Hayati Othman of PAS had asked the relevant minister regarding the total of allocation paid to the members of Election Commission (EC), the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM), the Maintainenance of Police, the Appointment of Judge, and the Anti-Corruption in a year.\(^{108}\) The relevant minister responded that for the EC members, it was paid a total of RM862,128.48 a year and for SUHAKAM, the total was RM1,503,600.00 a year. The minister further stated that the payment for the rest of the agencies was still under a discussion and had not received approval from the Ministry of Finance (MoF). The question posed by PAS was properly attended to as it had included some figures showing the total of allocation spent by the government. On June 22, 2009, PR met other parliamentary constraints when PR attempted to question the classified scandal involving some government members known as Port Klang Free Zone/Zon Bebas Pelabuhan Klang (PKFZ) scandal in Parliament.

The PKFZ scandal had sparked a heated debate between the opposition PR and the ruling BN government on the grounds that the said scandal had tarnished the national reputation. Realising that the scandal must not freely go unnoticed, PR blatanty questioned the extent of the scandal before Parliament. It was suspected that there must be misconduct and mismanagement activities concerning the PKFZ project in which billions of ringgit had gone undetected. Lim Kit Siang of DAP kept pressuring Parliament and the Ministers to provide an explanation regarding the issue. Lim seemed dissatisfied when the Ministers did

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not reveal who was the responsible for the scandal as Lim claimed that the person was a “culprit”.

In addition to the Minister’s response, Azmin Ali of PKR stated that the explanation given by the Ministers was too brief and had no meaning. The PKFZ scandal had alarmed the whole nation politically and by all means the scandal had suggested that the ruling BN government must be held responsible as the decision-makers either at the Parliament or at the executive level to contain those matters in a formal way. When the Deputy of Speaker Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar claimed that PR’s was solely motivated on a personal basis regarding the questions thrown, and suddenly all PR members, as a sign of protest, had stood up and left Parliament. Few months later, on October 19 and during the PQs session, Lim had raised his dissenting voice in the Parliament when he suddenly realised that his questions pertaining the PKFZ scandal went missing from the list of questions prepared for Parliament. The Speaker reasoned that Lim’s questions on PKFZ scandal did not disappear but was adjourned to the month of December. The PKFZ scandal had directly triggered the government to engage in some sort of approaches in tackling that particular matter.

As acknowledged by Parliament, the PKFZ scandal was numerous questioned by the opposition PR especially Lim Kit Siang. Besides that, the relevant Minister issued a ‘Ministerial Statement’ regarding the said issue as demanded by PR in Parliament. To the knowledge of the Parliament and the Speaker, the matter had been under police investigation and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC). To a certain

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110 Parliamentary Debates, Ibid.
extent, it seemed that PR had successfully moved the ruling BN to further act considerably upon the debated issue.

Another incident involving one of the PR members from DAP was the controversial arrest of Teresa Kok under the Internal Security Act (ISA) on September 2008. Teresa was arrested with other two people, the editor of *Malaysia Today*, an independent web, Raja Petra Kamaruddin and a reporter from *Sin Chew Daily*, Tan Hoon Cheng. The opposition PR viewed that particular arrest as an injustice and the spirit of the constitution. The Deputy of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Tan Sri Ismail Omar at that time had confirmed that Teresa’s arrest was in accordance with Section of 73 (1) ISA.\(^\text{114}\) The opposition parties in Malaysia had a familiar experience with the draconian law of ISA and in the post-2008 general elections, ISA had once again been materialised especially when it involved a member of parliamentary opposition.

The incident of arrest had occurred due to a report made towards Teresa that she had interfered with Islamic affairs. The ISA’s issue did not only touch within the domestic context and unfortunately it gained foreign attention towards the practical abuse of such law. For instance, the government of the United States of America (USA) had called Malaysia’s ambassador to Washington to protest the action of Malaysian government towards the three ISA’s victims immediately.\(^\text{115}\) The USA government seriously took this issue at hand and consistently pressured Malaysia’s to act normally within the constitutional framework. The PR opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim had claimed that the


illegal arrest was part of government tactics in installing fear in parliamentary members and the public and the action was clearly viewed as violating the concept of human rights.116

In response, Anwar demanded to meet the Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to discuss the matter after leaders from DAP and PAS had endorsed the plan of meeting. PR also was of the view that there might be more arrests involving opposition members. Besides that, PR had organized an anti-ISA forum in Penang for the purpose of explaining the current situation.117 During the forum, Dr. Mujahid of PAS claimed that PR had sent an official letter to the YDPA. At the very least, they hoped that the YDPA could grant an approval for a meeting and to address this particular matter neutrally. On the other hand, PR claimed that the action was completely unconstitutional and if Teresa was proven to be guilty, the case must be brought before a Court and she must be put on trial first. Therefore, utilising political power through the ISA indicated that parliamentary politics in the post-2008 was having a serious democratic erosion. In a way, the draconian laws of ISA had consolidated the parliamentary authoritarian regime in the country.

In a way, parliamentary constraints anticipated by PR had been translated into a practical practice initiated by the ruling BN government outside the context of the Parliament. For instance, in the month of September 2009, the Cabinet had decided and called for an investigation to be made by forming a special team led by the Chief of National Secretary/Ketua Setiausaha Negara (KSN) Tan Sri Sidek Hassan.118 The special investigation team consisted of the Ministry of Transportation, the Office of Attorney’s General and some professionals selected by the government. It seemed that PR members had consistently raised relevant questions and debated the issues in the hope that the ruling

118 ‘Kabinet tubuh pasukan petugas khas siasatskandal PKFZ’, Malaysiakini, 9 September 2009.
BN government would take necessary action to uncover the wrongdoings behind the PKFZ scandal involving public money. Therefore, the crackdown on the opposition members was not something new under the framework of authoritarian regime. The previous Mahathir’s government had also demonstrated that particular conduct of oppressing the opposition members, for instance, the Llang Operation (Ops Lalong) in October 1987 where more than a hundred people were arrested under ISA.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell, one of the major patterns of PR behaviour was the parliamentary questions (PQs). In this chapter, it suggested that PR members had sufficiently used the parliamentary platforms to engage with the ruling BN government through the appropriate utilisation of question times (QTs). According to David Yoong, QTs is defined as an opportunity for parliamentary members to question the government, represented by various ministries, regarding any issue or current events relating to the country and the ministries are obliged to respond. For a further detailed on the Question Times (QTs), see: David Yoong, Orderly and Disorderly Practices of Personal Pronouns during Question Time in the Malaysian House of Representatives, *Journal of Modern Languages*, Vol. 21, 2011, pp. 33-47.

In the case of the Twelfth Parliament, PR had worked out accordingly in terms of parliamentary procedures where almost all of its members decisively participated during the PQs session.

In terms of portfolios allocation, PR carefully assigned its MPs accordingly in each of ministerial responsibilities. For instance, PR was inclined to assign most of its party leaders within the section of Prime Minister Office/Jabatan Perdana Menteri (PMO). Theoretically, PMO is one of the crucial parts of ministerial portfolios in Malaysian political system and therefore ministers are provided with responsibilities to monitor specific matters such as religious, laws, cabinet, and many more. Some of governmental
policies involving people’s daily life are discussed at the PMO level. PR was of the view that the PMO must be held accountable by placing some of its top leaders to watch over the ministerial conduct. In addition to this, particularly in the Twelfth Parliament, Anwar Ibrahim of PKR, Abdul Hadi Awang of PAS, and Lim Kit Siang of DAP were attached to the PMO for the purpose of parliamentary debates. The placement of those top PR leaders was aimed at strengthening the oppositional parliamentary ground. In a way, the systematic allocation of PR members according to ministeries delineated a clear-cut focus and at the same time managed to evade the possibility of overlapping questions to the relevant ministers.

Besides that, PR had also engaged in a form of extra-parliamentary behaviour, for instance, when the opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim and PAS President Abdul Hadi Awang received a memorandum regarding the abolishment of the PPSMI educational agenda initiated by the government.\textsuperscript{120} NGO-based GMP handed over the memorandum at the Parliament building. The memorandum was believed to be signed by some local academicians and the opposition PR stood firmly and stated that they would together fight until the PPSMI is abolished. Later on, the opposition and GMP went to the street demanding the government take action upon the PPSMI policy as they believed that PPSMI is going to burden the students at school level and the same time the PPSMI would incline to jeopardize the Malay language as the medium of instruction in the field of education.

On the other hand, Kelantan state government through its representative Husam Musa issued a letter of appeal to the ruling government at the Parliament lobby concerning the discussion of oil royalty.\textsuperscript{121} The opposition PR realized that the parliamentary ground is somehow insufficient to obtain or demand substantial answers from the ruling BN.

\textsuperscript{120} Jimadie Shah Othman, ‘GMP ke Parlimen serah memo bantah PPSMI’, Malaysiakini, 17 February 2009.
\textsuperscript{121} ‘Husam mahu jumpa PM isu royalti minyak’, Malaysiakini, 2 December 2009.
Therefore, PR had to resort to an extra-parliamentary behaviour so that the ruling BN would possibly attend to the proposed demands. As a Chairman for Kelantan State Petroleum Committee, Husam had consistently urged the ruling government to execute the royalty payment to the Kelantan state government. The action exhibited that the ruling BN government was turning away from their promises. Under the pretext of parliamentary authoritarian regime, the opposition PR could achieve considerable success during the PQs session but the guarantee towards success was conditional. At the same time, the PR had imposed a form of admonition to the behaviour of the regime. So that the ruling government would not take lightly the mass demands and the same time to ensure that the Parliament is profoundly functional to the expense of desired accountability.

This had led towards the revealing of several minor patterns of behaviour, for instance, issues concerning the-post 2008 general elections, local government affairs, significant of parliamentary constituencies, matters concerning national education and international relations. In a way, the process of check and balance was observed within the legislative terrain even though PR had to anticipate a form of ‘positive’ parliamentary constraints. By all means, PR had to gear up its capability in throwing relevant questions for the purpose of serving the goals of parliamentary democracy. Questions were studied and researched first in order to cater to the social and political needs outside the context of parliament. In a way, the opposition PR political parties would be able to ensure and to guarantee that the ruling BN government will hold the democratic principles and also to perpetuate the ideal spirit of Parliament for the future reference on Malaysian politics.
CHAPTER 4

Parliamentary Behaviour of Pakatan Rakyat Political Parties: Parliamentary Motions

Introduction

The Parliamentary Motion (PM) is an integral part of the procedure of the Malaysian parliamentary system. Therefore, different kind of motions have been introduced in parliament by the opposition members as well as the ruling government members. As argued by Kari Palonen, a “motion” is the simplest parliamentary concept in the Westminster vocabulary.¹ In this sense, a motion unfolds two kind of understandings, first, to move a thing which is the setting of a motion to a parliamentary agenda and, second, to propose something by using a motion in the debates.

Usually in the Malaysian Parliament, a motion is closely associated with some sort of planned or unplanned agenda to be tabled before the House in order to seek an approval from the Speaker or the majority of members before it can be brought further for the purpose of discussion. Palonen associates the nomenclature of ‘motion’ with the practice of ‘moving’ as part of parliamentary concepts where the main idea is to making a motion.² Whenever a motion is moved by the opposition and by all parliamentary means they will have to persuade the majority of members in the Parliament to consider the motion. Usually this kind of appeal is made to the ruling government because they are the majority in Parliament. As argued by Mariska Goeree and Roel Popping, each of the motion proposed can be seen as an expression of the negotiation processes in the House or the Parliament.³

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In a way, a motion tabled by the minority or the opposition in the Parliament is normally perceived as a bargaining process. External conditions or political issues outside Parliament will indirectly influence the opposition bargaining process through the tabling of a motion. Therefore, this chapter will analyse the patterns of PR behaviour in the Twelfth Malaysian Parliament by considering the parliamentary motions. It will also consider the parliamentary constraints encountered by PR during the session of parliamentary motions. It will also look to what extent the politics of parliamentary motions played out under the pretext of parliamentary authoritarian regime in Malaysia.

**Parliamentary Motions as Part of Behaviour**

According to Bessie F. Barber, a main or principal motion is a motion made to bring before the group, for its discussion, any special or particular subject and it also takes precedence of nothing— that is, it cannot be made when any other subject is being considered.\(^4\) Within the context of competitive parliamentary democracies, the debates among the groups in the Parliament are most expected.

Whenever there are some issues concerning the governmental policies, either to improve or to be given assent, it must be brought into parliament and be debated to be made sure of its elasticity to fulfill the demand of the masses. As a matter of fact, the questions intended to be raised are considered as parliamentary as long as the protocol is served and is considered unparliamentarily if the official channel is improperly observed. In a systematic study of parliamentary behaviour and parliamentary strategies of opposition political parties in Malaysia conducted by Muhamad Fuzi, a motion had been defined as “the proposal put forward by a member to the House for its decision and the decision

arrived at by the House after debating on the motion is termed as a resolution.”  

The motions are of two types. The first motion is considered as an adjournment motion where it relates to a definite matter of urgent public importance. This type of motion is known as a private motion and Minister or Deputy Ministers are not allowed to introduce it. The subject matter of it must be within the definite, urgent and public importance. The second type of motion is known as the government motion and is normally introduced by the Minister of Finance.6

Therefore, the aim of this particular section is to analyse the patterns of the opposition PR in the Twelfth Parliament through the conduct of parliamentary ‘motions’. During the session of the Twelfth Parliament, the study found that there were a total of 104 motions proposed by the opposition PR and these motions were considered as significant in measuring the extent of the opposition PR’s performance in an embedded democratic parliamentary system. Therefore, the motions were grouped under several types or categories: (1) Motions that concerned Malaysia’s foreign affairs, (2) Motions that highlighted some of governmental projects and policies, (3) Motions that concerned government’s transparency, (4) Motions that concerned people’s welfare (See Table 4.1).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Motions</th>
<th>PKR</th>
<th>PAS</th>
<th>DAP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government’s Projects</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government’s Transparency</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Welfare</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The number of motions appeared was selected based on days.

**Source:** Government of Malaysia, *Parliamentary Debates, Various Issues (2008-2012)*

**Motions Concerning Malaysia’s Foreign Affairs**

As shown in Table 4.1, PAS recorded the highest number in terms of proposing motions concerning Malaysia’s foreign issues (50%). In the Twelfth Parliament, PAS had put forth several motions which had been characterised as significant towards the consolidation of country’s stand on particular foreign issues. Abdul Hadi Awang of PAS from Marang constituency had suggested the government object to the 60th celebration of Israel’s illegal settlement in Palestine.⁷

The illegal occupation of Palestine land by Israel had been debated for quite a long time and this was not a recent topic as it had gained attention throughout the world, including Muslim and Western world. PAS justified why that particular matter should be brought to the central attention of the Parliament. In Palestine, people were chased out of their hometown and the Zionists kept launching attacks on the people. And the most significant point presented by PAS objection to Israel could deliver a concrete message throughout the world (especially to Israel, the United States and the Western powers) that

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the Malaysian MPs took this matter seriously in fighting Israel’s brutality and inhumane actions.

Israeli’s military behaviour upon the Palestinian had triggered the international communities to criticise the inhumane actions. The government of Malaysia was also involved in pressuring the state of Israel. Lim Guan Eng, on behalf of DAP, thanked the ruling BN government for immediately taking the matter into account. At the same time, DAP urged the ruling government to call the American ambassador in Malaysia for the purpose of delivering the objections of the people of Malaysia towards Israel. Responding to the alarming situation, the ruling government agreed to convene a special session in Parliament. This indicated that PR’s parliamentary behaviour in the Parliament had managed to influence the conduct of Malaysia’s international relations. The government’s agreement of the special parliamentary session also exhibited that they have a common interest with the opposition PR when it comes to the matters related to Israel. In this case, the ruling BN government and the opposition could agree to disagree mutually.

On the other hand, Salahuddin Ayub of PAS from Kubang Kerian constituency had also put forth a motion which he perceived as urgent and of public importance by proposing that the ICJ’s results of Batu Puteh Island be brought to parliamentary attention. PAS was of the opinion that the defeat of Malaysia to the Singapore must not be taken lightly and the country’s legitimacy must be preserved undividedly. Besides that, PAS also had thought that the national lawyers did not perform well during ICJ’s session and emphasised that the loss must be studied and analysed thoroughly.

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8 Hentikan serangan ketenteraannya ke atas Gaza, Lim Guan Eng’s personal statement, 12 January 2009.
10 Ibid, p. 23.
Nasir Zakaria of PAS from Padang Terap constituency had proposed a motion concerning the killing of Muslims in Southern Thailand.\footnote{Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, Second Session, no. 26, (Thursday, 18 June 2009), p. 17.} According to PAS, on June 9, 2009, the world was shocked by the killing of Muslims who were performing prayers in the mosque of Al-Furqan, in the district of Narathiwat which had caused the death of 11 people and 13 were injured. Among the suggestions proposed by PAS was: (1) Malaysia had to take an initiative to hold a special session with ASEAN to tackle this matter, (2) Malaysia had to force the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to pay attention and also to acknowledge Malaysia as the middle-man to solve the issue, (3) to force the Government of Thailand to form a committee for the purpose of investigating the matter, (4) asking Malaysia to negotiate with Thailand’s authorities to rescind an Emergency Order which had been declared in several provinces such as Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani.\footnote{Ibid, p. 18.} These were several suggestions proposed by PAS in the hope that the Parliament would accept those and immediately put into a practical motion by the Malaysian government. The suggestions were also considered as part of practical solutions and effective mechanisms that the government should heed for the sake of people’s lives. Besides that, the same PAS’ representative also brought a motion concerning the strained condition in Libya.\footnote{Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, Fourth Session, no. 9, (Monday, 21 Mac 2011), p. 21.}

Basically, Libya was one of the countries in the Middle East affected by the so-called “Arab Spring” which was initiated on December 2010 when a Tunisian fruit vendor set himself on fire as part of the action of protesting corruption\footnote{Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, “Democratization and the Arab Spring,” International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations, Vol. 38, No. 5, 2012, pp. 722-733.} in the country and later had sparked a mass protest throughout the Arab countries. In this particular matter which was proposed, PAS was of the view the government should immediately take action towards the casualties caused by the Libyan Civil War and besides that, Libya was one of
the OIC members and the ruling BN government by all means should interfere in matters concerning this.

Therefore, PAS had brought forth several suggestions: (1) the government should immediately send humanitarian forces to Libya, (2) restrict the Qaddhafi’s movement through the ratification of 1970 resolution of the United Nations (UN, (3) any concerted efforts should be mobilised to curb and contain the civil war from spreading, (4) humanitarian aid must be sent, for instance, foods and medicines to several of provinces (Zawiyah, Ras Lanuf, Brega and Benghazi), (5) to force the ongoing session of the Twelfth Parliament without any delay to propose to several international organisations such as OIC, UN, Arab League (AL), European Union (EU) and African Union (AU) to come up with initiatives and to solve by negotiations the said matter, (6) to hasten the Parliament to send special delegations to Libya to gauge information related to the incident.

PKR was recorded to put forth 37.5% of the motions concerning foreign issues in the Twelfth Parliament. Dr. Wan Azizah of PKR from Permatang Pauh constituency had proposed in Parliament that the Government of Malaysia should force the Military Junta of Myanmar to postpone the plan for constitutional referendum.\(^{15}\) The referendum was part of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)-sponsored constitution plan to obtain a substantial mandate from the people of Myanmar.\(^{16}\) Donald M. Seekins argued that the referendum was the culmination of a long process that began with the first meeting of a National Convention (NC) in January 1993 to discuss the basic principles of a new constitution.\(^{17}\) The reason behind the proposal was, as clarified by PKR, due to the natural disaster of Nargis typhoon that struck Myanmar and which had claimed the life of 100,000

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\(^{17}\) Ibid, p. 169.
of people. PKR was of the view that the Myanmar government must rescind the referendum plan in order to allow the international agencies to provide aid to the affected victims.

PKR also urged the Government of Malaysia to utilise all diplomatic influence to apply pressure towards Myanmar government in the hope that they could defer the plan of democratizing the country in a military way. PKR added that the action of Myanmar had attracted negative feedback and was criticised throughout the world especially, from the United Nations (UN) and international human rights groups and the plan was perceived as improper and unjust towards the people of Myanmar. The conduct of referendum was feared would be manipulated by some irresponsible people.\(^\text{18}\)

Another significant proposal which had been brought up by PKR was the cession of oil field (Block L and M) to Brunei and the violation of state’s legitimacy.\(^\text{19}\) That particular proposal which was moved by the leader of Malaysian opposition PR, Anwar Ibrahim from Permatang Pauh\(^\text{20}\) constituency, had gained parliamentary attention at that time. In justifying the motion to the Parliament, Anwar was of the view that the Malaysians for the first time needed to know that two oil fields belonging to the country was given to Brunei by the federal government.\(^\text{21}\)

The motion was perceived as sensational and sensitively treated as it involved national interest. According to Anwar, the cession of oil fields was completed on March 16, 2009, 17 days before Abdullah Ahmad Badawi stepped down as Malaysia’s Prime Minister on April 3, 2009. The cession was publicly known when the former PM Tun Dr. Mahathir

\(^{18}\) Ibid, p. 23.
\(^{19}\) Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, Third Session, no. 25, (Monday, 7 June 2010), p. 94.
\(^{20}\) Anwar Ibrahim made his inroad into the Parliament through the conduct of Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election when his wife, Dr. Wan Azizah stepped down as the Permatang Pauh MPs and thus let her husband to contest the seat and Anwar’s had won the by-election and on 28 August 2008, he was appointed as the leader of opposition political parties in the Parliament, particularly the leader of Pakatan Rakyat (PR). See: Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session, no. 42, (Thursday, 28 August 2008), p. 1.
\(^{21}\) Ibid, p. 95.
accused Abdullah of giving those fields to settle the dispute of Limbang border in Sarawak.\textsuperscript{22}

Writing in his personal blog, Dr. Mahathir had asserted that Abdullah’s action had caused Malaysia to lose at least US$100 billion or RM320 billion from oil incomes. Anwar added that the cession was made in secret and out of public knowledge and was publicly revealed only a year after the cession was concluded. It was a shock to the nation because it concerned territorial sovereignty, and was of significant maritime and economic importance.

Besides the motions of forcing the Myanmar’s regime and the cession of oil fields to Brunei, the opposition PR had proposed another motion involving the well-being of a Malaysian, Yong Vui Kong, a youth from Sabah, who had been caught carrying 47.27 grams of heroine in Singapore on June 13, 2007.\textsuperscript{23} Vui Kong was sentenced to death on January 7, 2009 under the Section of 5 (1), Singapore’s Act of Drugs Misuse. PKR further justified why Vui Kong’s case should be given priority and the opposition PR believed that the case must be judged fairly based on Vui Kong’s merits.

Vui Kong was also denied an amnesty from the Singapore’s President based on the remarks made by Minister of Home Affairs and Law, K. Shanmugam.\textsuperscript{24} Therefore, the opposition PR based on their capacity as parliamentarians had urged the government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take a reasonable action in giving a second chance to Vui Kong for a fair trial.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid, p. 120.
The DAP, on the other hand, had been recorded to propose at least 12.5% of the motions concerning Malaysia’s foreign affairs during the session of the Twelfth Parliament (See Table 4.1). Liew Chin Tong of DAP from Bukit Bendera Constituency had proposed to the House that the government could initiate a process to suspend Myanmar from ASEAN.25 The DAP was of the opinion that the occurrence of injustices in Myanmar should be put to stop immediately and the country was not supposed to be administered by the military regime because the people had suffered due to the form of military administration. The DAP further added that the Malaysian government should take drastic action by suspending Myanmar’s membership in the ASEAN until the democratic process was restored.

**Motions Highlighting the Government’s Projects and Policies**

In the Twelfth Parliament, the opposition PR had proposed 14.3% of motions which were considered significant in highlighting the government’s projects and policies. In other words, the existence of the opposition PR in Parliament had contributed towards the consolidation of democratic parliamentary system by monitoring governmental activities especially the federal projects and the implementation of any intended policies by the ruling BN government. This kind of motion intended to be raised was of the view that the ruling government, by parliamentary means, must disclose or reveal to the public what had they promised under certain circumstances such as electoral promises, governmental responsibilities and many more. As shown in Table 4.1, the DAP recorded the highest in terms of proposing motions concerning the projects and policies initiated by the ruling government. In this respect, the study found several of selected motions proposed by the opposition PR which had consistently been perceived as a parliamentary reminder towards

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the ruling BN government in ensuring that the process of check and balance was decisively served and observed.

There were at least 78.5% of motions brought into the Parliament by DAP alone. All of these motions brought by DAP had been perceived as significant topics such as the New Economic Policy (NEP), the registration of new voters, the abandoned housing projects, the educational policy and many more. There were several motions rejected by the House. For example, first, DAP had proposed to the Parliament concerning the repossession of market land at Bukit Bintang. It was argued by DAP that the action of government to repossess that land was to give the land to the 1 Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) for the purpose of developing the Kuala Lumpur International Financial Centre (KLIFC). Many hawkers would lose their livelihood as most of them depended on that land site to conduct business. Second, a motion proposed by DAP which was concerned with the ‘Interlok’ novel as the component of literature books in schools. The DAP was of the opinion that Malaysia’s ethnic relations was eroding due to the decision of the Ministry of Education, stating that the government would use the book in the schools. M. Manogaran of DAP from Telok Intan further argued that the book contained certain racial elements that could lead towards uneasiness among students.

The issue was not only debated in the Parliament but outside Parliament. It had attracted representatives of Indian Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who demanded that the book should be withdrawn. Third, Fong Kui Lun from Bukit Bintang constituency had proposed a motion which was considered as important concerning the taking over of land at Jalan Sultan and Jalan Bukit Bintang for the purpose of

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28 Ibid., p. 24.
It was argued that most of buildings in the areas were heritage buildings and once the land was taken over the country would lose the heritage sites. Besides that, most hawkers would be deprived of their sources of income if the plan was continued especially at Jalan Bukit Bintang. This matter was seriously taken up by the opposition PR which urged Parliament to curb the action.

As for PKR, at least 6 motions were brought in Parliament by highlighting matters related to government’s projects and policies. These motions were: the privatisation policy after 25 years, investigation on the approval of high speed broadband project, housing project of DBKL and recreational park, freedom of media, an immediate action of government upon the death of young Diplomatic Administrative Officer/Pegawai Tadbir Diplomatik (PTD) officer, the ruling (fatwa) of forbidding the Bersih 3.0 against the concept of “Amar Makruf Nahi Mungkar” (enjoining the good, forbidding the evil). One of the motions was rejected by the House. For instance, Anwar Ibrahim had urged Parliament to consider the motion which was brought by him concerning the investigation of high speed broadband project.

Anwar argued that, on September 16, 2008, the Deputy Prime Minister and also the Minister of Finance, Mohd. Najib Tun Razak, had approved the said project costing RM11.31 billion without going through an open tender process. The matter was inevitably perceived as significant as it involved much public funds and therefore, Anwar suggested that a Royal Commission be formed through Parliament for the purpose of investigation and to make sure that the project was being implemented appropriately. As expected, the House rejected the motion and deemed it did not meet the criteria of urgency.

PAS, on the other hand, succeeded in bringing forth 7.2% of motions. Those were: the policy of terminating the printed notes of RM500 and RM1000, and the policy of Teaching of Math and Science in English (PPSMI). Unfortunately, the House had rejected a motion brought up by PAS. Ibrahim Ali from Pasir Mas constituency proposed a motion concerning the termination of printed money of RM500 and RM1000. The Central Bank/Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) made an announcement on November 27, 2007 that those who possessed the printed money of the said amount could redeem it at the same amount.

PAS further argued that the exchange process for the printed notes may be influenced by certain elements that could jeopardise the financial and country’s economics. The House immediately responded to the motion by stating that it did not meet the requirement of urgency and therefore it was not further debated.

**Motions Concerning Government’s Transparency**

As shown in Table 4.1, the DAP had the highest proposed motions concerning the government’s transparency. In total, there were at least 68.7% motions proposed by the DAP. However, there were five motions rejected by the House. First, a motion was moved by M. Kula Segaran from Ipoh Barat constituency involving the Malaysia Railway/Kereta Api Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) scandal. According to DAP, the scandal was serious and need to be addressed urgently. A lot of money had been spent for the project of upgrading the railways but the people could not still use it. The government, on the other hand, did not observe its practice of providing contracts except for the aim of obtaining

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33 Ibid, p. 2.
A demonstration was held on May 11, 2008 by the people of Malaysia throughout the country to protest against the brutality of the Internal Security Act (ISA) and urged the government to release all ISA detainees who were imprisoned. It was further argued that the demonstrations were curbed by the police and some were detained. The action was perceived as being against the constitutional spirit of voicing out dissent on the injustices of the institution. To opposition PR, the utilisation of ISA was perceived more or less as political repression. Third, a motion was moved by Lim Kit Siang from Ipoh Timur constituency concerning the formation of a Royal Investigation Commission /Suruhanjaya Siasatan DiRaja (SSD) pertaining to the issue of Port Klang Free Zone/Zon Bebas Pelabuhan Klang (PKFZ) scandal and the audit report of “Price Water House Coopers” on PKFZ. The scandal had involved the amount of RM12.5 billion. As stated by one of BN’s ministers, the PKFZ scandal was one of the reasons why BN’s had almost lost the 2008 general elections. Therefore, it was a political as well as a social task for the opposition PR to move a motion in the hope that the Parliament could allow a Commission to be formed as part of investigating a huge amount of money which was unwisely spent. Fourth, Lim Kit Siang had moved a motion that concerned the death of a Customs Officer at the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission/Suruhanjaya Pencegahan Rasuah Malaysia (SPRM) building.

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38 ‘Skandal PKFZ; Tee Keat dakwa terima ugutan bunuh’, *Malaysiakini*, 16 July 2009.
The case had alarmed the whole country as it involved governmental agencies. The opposition PR, in handling the matter, had mobilised some of their parliamentary members to hand over a memorandum to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Ismail Omar for the purpose of urging the police to take an action immediately.\textsuperscript{40} As argued by Lim, the death of Ahmad Sarbaini was a bit confusing. He was found dead at the SPRM building on April 6, 2011 and no evidence that associated him with corruption were found as he had lived a simple life.\textsuperscript{41} The admonition was directed by Lim to the Malaysian Royal Police/Polis DiRaja Malaysia (PDRM) to investigate the matter in a transparent manner. This was important so that public confidence would be regained and restored towards those governmental institutions. All of the motions moved by the opposition PR were negatively responded and rejected by the House.

Besides that, PKR had also moved some motions (25\%) which were perceived as significant towards the consolidation of governmental transparency in handling official public matters. First, Anwar Ibrahim moved a motion concerning the outflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) on a large scale.\textsuperscript{42} It was argued that based on a statement released by United Nation Conference on Trade and Development World Investment Report 2008, the outflow had reached RM38 billion compared to the inflow of RM29 billion in 2007 and had caused the country experiencing the negative flow of FDI which was RM9 billion. Anwar emphasised that the government had to take reasonable action to tackle the negative flow of FDI which did not suit the current FDI’s reading experienced by the ASEAN countries. Second, a motion concerning PETRONAS report on the first half year of 2009 which was also moved by Anwar.\textsuperscript{43} PETRONAS was a classic example for the backbone of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{40} Teoh El Sen, ‘Ahmad Sarbaini’s Death: Police Must Explain’, \textit{Free Malaysia Today}, 1 June 2011.
\item \textsuperscript{41} \textit{Parliamentary Debates}, p. 20.
\end{itemize}
Malaysian economy. As argued by Bruce Gale, the establishment of PETRONAS coincided with other moves to control and regulate Malaysian economy.\textsuperscript{44} The opposition PR realized that any matters concerning the condition of PETRONAS must be observed closely in terms of its management.

In this sense, Anwar was of view that PETRONAS’ performance was a bit worrying and urged Parliament to give full attention. It was further stated that the performance was seriously dropped in which was RM58 billion or 37.5%. Basically, the government was depending more than 40% of its revenues from tax and PETRONAS’ dividend.\textsuperscript{45} In a way, the PETRONAS’ financial report which was released had caused a panic towards the country’s economy position. Unfortunately, the motion was rejected by the House as it was not categorised as an urgent matter.

**Motions Concerning People’s Welfare**

Another categorisation of motions as concerning the people’s welfare had been proposed by the opposition PR in the Parliament. As shown in Table 4.1, DAP recorded the highest in terms of proposing the motions (84.2%), PAS came to the second (10.5%) and PKR the third (5.3%). All of the motions proposed by the opposition PR related to the people’s welfare in the country. The DAP alone had brought up motions which were considered as significant towards the consolidation of social stability. First, Fong Po Kuan of DAP from Batu Gajah constituency had moved a motion concerning the safety of National Service Training Programme/Program Latihan Khidmat Negara (PLKN) trainees.\textsuperscript{46} As argued, the issue behind it was the death of several trainees during the ongoing PLKN session and this


\textsuperscript{46}Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session, no. 9, (Tuesday, 13 May 2008), p. 24.
particular issue also was seriously taken by DAP and later on had urged the relevant ministry to bear the responsibility concerning the condition of trainees during the session. Second, the issue involving the strikes which was launched by fishermen due to the rising cost of diesel.\textsuperscript{47}

Chong Chieng Jen from Bandar Kuching constituency was of the opinion that the ruling government policies were not friendly enough and did not cater the needs of local fishermen and had led towards strikes. The strikes would impact most fishmongers in the country and the situation indicated the failure of the ruling government to deliver their promises. Third, Er Teck Hwa from Bakri constituency had proposed a motion concerning the giving of incentives to the peasants and farmers.\textsuperscript{48} At first, the government had proclaimed that the incentives would be given to farmers starting from June 2008 onwards. However, on June 2008, those farmers who possessed more than 20,000 thousand of chickens were not given the incentives. The DAP argued that if the policy was dropped from the government plans, it would impact many of chicken producers all over the country and many farmers could inevitably cease to operate. Fourth, the DAP moved a motion related to the police shooting of five men and called for an open investigation.\textsuperscript{49} On November 8, 2009, five Indian men were shot dead by the police at Lorong Sungai Keramat, Klang. The police denied the accusation and claimed that they had never wrongfully utilised their power. M. Kula Segaran argued that one of the family’s victims, R. Sita, had told that her brother was not a criminal and never had any criminal records, was imprisoned or been to the police station. Therefore, DAP had urged the government through the Parliament to form an open investigation on the reasons behind the police

\textsuperscript{47} Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session, no. 79, (Thursday, 18 December 2008), p. 2.


\textsuperscript{49} Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, Second Session, no. 54, (Wednesday, 18 November 2009), p. 21.
shooting. Fifth, the DAP put forth a motion on the historical value and heritage of Pudu prison.\(^{50}\) The Pudu prison (penjara Pudu) was first built in 1895 and was demolished by the DBKL on June 21, 2010 for the purpose of constructing the road at the Pudu land site.

The Deputy of Financial Minister, Awang Adek Hussin, had stated in the Parliament that the Pudu prison was not something that we could be proud of and the government had further decided not to declare the Pudu prison as a heritage site.\(^{51}\) Realising that the Pudu prison was full of historical values and cultures, Fong Kui Lun had urged the government to reconsider the action of demolishing the buildings. Sixth, Lim Kit Siang had moved a motion concerning racial statement issued by certain government servants.\(^{52}\) The issue began when two teachers from Johor and Kedah had uttered racial words and insulted the students.

Those who were responsible for the action still did not receive any punishment from the government. Therefore, the DAP had argued that the punishment must be immediately taken in order to avoid the incident. At the same time, the teacher’s actions could jeopardise the country’s tranquility which was tightly preserved all the time. Last but not least, a motion concerning the formation of Royal Commission to investigate the actual cause of bus express accident was moved by the DAP.\(^{53}\) The tragedy took place on October 29, 2010 which had claimed seven lives and 39 injured. The DAP had emphasised that the accident involving a bus was not the first to happen. Therefore, the Parliament was urged to form a Royal Commission to further investigate the main cause of the incident.

\(^{50}\) Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, Second Session, no. 38, (Tuesday, 29 June 2009), p. 23.
\(^{53}\) Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, Third Session, no. 64, (Wednesday, 3 November 2010), p. 19.
As for PAS, there were at least three motions presented in the House. First, concerning the issue of oil royalty and the issue had been debated after the conclusion of 2008 general election. It was also portrayed as the source of tensions between the federal and state government. One of the cases was during the 1999 general election in the state of Terengganu. The ruling BN government fell tremendously and was replaced by the opposition PAS-led state government. The issue became the headline when the Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir stated publicly that the royalty payment of 5 percent was a mistake and Terengganu was given the said payment due to its status as the “poor state”. The attempt made by the federal government was seen as a strategy to undermine the state government of PAS due to PAS unexpected victory in the state election. Besides that, the federal government was of the opinion that the PAS could not maintain the welfare of the people of Terengganu. Therefore the federal government had stressed that the BN’s task was to make sure that the people of Terengganu would be represented and taken care under the federal government. And again the issue of oil royalty had appeared and this time throughout the unification of opposition political parties by utilising the parliamentary means. One of PAS members, Salahuddin Ayub from Kubang Kerian constituency, had put forth the motion of oil royalty in the hope it would be given attention by the House. PAS had suggested to adjourn the meeting to pave way for the motion to be discussed.

The issue was due to an agreement in 1975 between two parties, the ruling BN government and the opposition PAS. As clarified further, the approach taken by the federal government in 2000 to set up the Federal Government Special Funds/Dana Khas Kerajaan Pusat (DKKP) to channel the money throughout the developmental programmes

to the state of Terengganu had been simply turned off. The demand made by PAS was to remind the federal government to give back what was rightfully owned by the people of Terengganu and to add 10% more as to what had been demanded by the state of Sabah and Sarawak. Unfortunately, the motion was not considered as an urgent matter and was rejected. Secondly, another motion which was moved by Salahuddin was the rising cost of rice in the country.\footnote{Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session, no. 59, (Tuesday, 11 November 2008), p. 19.}

As the main food consumed in the country, rice was carefully monitored and restricted by the ruling government in terms of its prices. The opposition PR raised an issue concerning its prices in the markets. The increase was recorded between 15\% to 40\% especially local rice such as Jati and also imported rice such as Wangi Siam. PAS had vocalised the dissenting voices towards the action of the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism and in fact the relevant ministry had given their word and promised to monitor the price but suddenly the price went up.

Thirdly, Mohd Hayati Othman of PAS had proposed a motion concerning a crack at the building of Queen Elizabeth’s hospital.\footnote{Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session, no. 5, (Tuesday, 6 May 2008), p. 21.} Queen Elizabeth’s hospital was located in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah and the hospital was ‘controversial’ in terms of its poor maintenance. It began when a local media had reported on November 6, 2008 that the hospital was used even though the crack that occurred on the building had been there for almost a year. Complaints were made but no action had been taken.

This had motivated the opposition PR to bring up this matter into the Parliament for a further debate concerning the patient safety in the hospital. Realising a pressing need for the hospital to be re-built, PAS had urged the government to form an Investigation
Committee to find out the core issue involving the hospital’s construction. The motion was presented by PAS as they believed that this matter would impact the people of Sabah in receiving a proper health services. Unfortunately, the House had rejected that motion on the grounds that it was not considered as an urgent motion.

PKR, on the other hand, had proposed a motion concerning the tragedy of landslide at Bukit Antarabangsa.\textsuperscript{58} Azmin Ali is a State Legislative Assemblyman for Bukit Antarabangsa constituency in the state of Selangor and also MP for Gombak parliamentary constituency. The tragedy was not the first to occur. On December 11, 1993, the landslide of Highland Towers condominium had claimed 40 lives and the other landslide incident which had occurred on November 20, 2002 also had caused the death of eight families. Therefore, Azmin had urged the government to cease all developmental projects within the area of Bukit Antarabangsa in order to avoid further incidents. He further stated that Parliament is the proper platform to discuss the matter and had urged the government to rethink their developmental policies which could possibly harm the people in the future.

**Parliamentary Constraints**

In the Twelfth Parliament, it seemed that the PR members could not escape from constraints during the session of parliamentary motions. Confirming the arguments presented by Goeree and Popping where a motion expresses an opinion on the policy has confirmed the relationship between the opposition and the ruling government.\textsuperscript{59} Besides that, Barber maintained that the original motions are those which were brought before the House, for instance, a number of subjects for discussion or action.\textsuperscript{60} The Twelfth

\textsuperscript{58} *Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session*, no. 74, (Wednesday, 10 December 2008), p. 20.
\textsuperscript{59} Mariska Goeree and Roel Popping, ‘Types of Motions as Proposed in the Dutch House of Representatives,’ p. 3257.
\textsuperscript{60} Bessie F. Barber, ‘Parliamentary Procedure: Motions and Amendments’, p. 1101.
Parliament had provided similar reasons to the said case which was the identical structure of the relationship between the opposition PR and the ruling BN government. On the other hand, motions were found challenging due to its profound nature of urgency. It was found that the opposition PR had encountered a serious constraint based on the nature of motions that they proposed before the House.

For instance, under the motions concerning Malaysia’s international relations, the response received by the opposition PR was out of expectation as the Speaker rejected the motion based on the grounds that what had happened in Myanmar was not related with Malaysia and deemed that the Government of Malaysia should not interfere with Myanmar’s local affairs. And for the suspension of Myanmar’s membership from ASEAN, the relevant minister had stated that Malaysia for now had no intention to suspend the membership and was of the opinion that such drastic action was not a good move. Therefore, the motions raised by DAP was not further debated.

In the case of motions tabled by the leader of opposition Anwar Ibrahim regarding the cession of Oil Blocks to Brunei, the irony was that the exposure had been decisively made by oil companies appointed by PETRONAS and was not through the Foreign Ministry or the Parliament. Unfortunately, the response given to the opposition PR was not encouraging and the relevant ministry had justified that the cession did not violate the national sovereignty and in fact had opened a new phase of relationship between Malaysia and Brunei.

In the case of a Malaysian citizen from Sabah who was caught by Singapore government of carrying drugs seemed to encounter a constraint. As a result of the debate, the government seemed to comprehend the proposal and stated that they would always take

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care of their citizens but at the same time, it stood firmly on respecting Singapore’s domestic affairs and believed that Malaysia had no right to interfere in the business.\footnote{Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, Fourth Session, no. 29, (Monday, 27 June 2011), Ibid, p. 121.} Under the motions highlighting the government projects and policies, all thirty-three motions were brought into the Parliament but unfortunately all were rejected on the grounds that the motions did not meet the requirements of urgency and public importance. PKR also met the same fate of rejection when Anwar’s motions concerning the investigation of high speed broadband project was rejected by the Speaker. PAS, on the other hand, had the same fame as its PR partners where the motions were rejected due to lack of conditions to further debate.

As for the motions of government’s transparency, PR was completely blocked by parliamentary means where the Speaker decided that the motions did not fulfill the criteria of debates. Even though arguments and justifications were exchanged between the House and the PR but the motions was not accepted since only the Speaker had the authority either to approve it or not. When it comes to the motions concerning the people’s welfare, among all of the motions presented by DAP, only two out of seven were allowed by the House to be further debated, as for example, the second and the last motions. The reasons behind it were the motions had fulfilled the requirements and had also satisfied the House and the rest were not further discussed. Fortunately for PAS, one of its motions was accepted, for instance, the rising cost of rice. The Speaker had allowed PAS’s motion to be debated on the grounds that the matter was perceived as ‘specific’, ‘public importance’ and ‘urgency’. This had indicated that the opposition PR had succeeded in persuading the House and the same time had gained parliamentary attention where the matter had forced the relevant ministers to clarify why such things had occurred. As for PKR, in regard to the landslide
tragedy which led to casualties, the response given by the Speaker was positive and the motion was allowed to be debated and the relevant ministers were asked to give their feedback. Azmin’s motion on the issue had been perceived as one of the opposition PR success stories in the Twelfth Parliament as the style of argument had substantially convinced the House and therefore had obtained parliamentary consent to discuss the issue.

In the words of Ngeh Koo Ham, in terms of motions, almost all emergency motions filed by the opposition are rejected by the Speaker in his chambers even before they are listed in the parliamentary agenda on the ground that the government is already looking into or taking action on the matters raised. With regard to normal motions, all of them are listed in the parliamentary agenda but never allowed to be moved and debated because there are always government matters that will take precedence. An exception is the motion filed by MP for Marang, Abdul Hadi Awang during the current 13th Parliamentary session where he was allowed to move the motion but it was never debated. After a motion is moved and seconded, the Speaker must fix a time for MPs to debate it. It clearly indicated that the opposition PR encountered continuous constraints in terms of parliamentary motions. The frequent rejection also exhibited that the parliamentary authoritarian regime is maintaining its playing field based on the assumption that the parliamentary behaviour between the two blocks is competitive in nature.

63 YB Ngeh Koo Ham, Member of Parliament (MP) for Beruas Constituency. Email interviewed by Author. 11 October 2017.
Conclusion

In a nutshell, parliamentary motion was one of the major patterns of PR behaviour. In the Twelfth Parliament, several of sub-patterns related to parliamentary motions were identified, for instance, motions concerning Malaysia’s international relations, government’s projects and policies, government’s transparency and people’s welfare. PR members from three different major opposition political parties (PKR, PAS and DAP) had taken part in engaging with the ruling BN government directly over some significant issues. Parliamentary attempts were remarkably carried out by PR members on the grounds that they provided justifications and arguments to each motions they presented before the House. Most of the motions were categorised as ‘urgent’ to the perspective of PR and most of the time during the motions session, they demanded that the Parliament should immediately respond to the motions. Even though PR members met a serious impediment as part of its parliamentary constraints, they were able to convince the Speaker to approve and release, if not all, some of its motions due to the need of urgency. The approval to some PR motions given by the Speaker strongly indicated that the PR had decisively played its political role under the banner of parliamentary democracy even though the PR’s mobilisation during the motions’ sessions was curbed and strictly limited under the pretext of competitive parliamentary authoritarianism. In a way, the conduct and process of parliamentary motion revealed the ongoing nature of Malaysian parliamentary system.
CHAPTER 5

Parliamentary Behaviour of Pakatan Rakyat Political Parties:
Parliamentary Budgeting Process

Introduction

The outcome of 2008 Malaysian General Elections had tremendously altered the landscape of local politics, especially its parliamentary structures. The reasons being the electoral capability of the opposition political parties to shift the level of support from the ruling BN government and at the same time to engage in a more active political style to attract voters. The outcome of 2008 election has also displayed a sense of unity within the oppositional terrain and led towards the formation of a very concrete oppositional party system which was the Pakatan Rakyat (PR).

According to Wong, “the real significance of the March 8, 2008 election in the state of Selangor is not just party alternation at the state level nor as a precursor to that at the federal level, but as a historic opportunity to affirm federalism which has been eroded since the formation of Malaysia”.¹ In this sense, the outcome was fashioned in many forms of arguments, for instance, stretching from electoral perspectives, political system and also public administration. Therefore, this particular chapter attempts to present an analysis of the parliamentary behaviour of Pakatan Rakyat (PR) political parties in the Twelfth Parliament (2008-2012) by looking at the patterns of debating the budgeting process which was initiated by the ruling BN government before they could release their budgeting plans to the public. As the apex of a democratic political system, the role of the opposition in the Parliament is viable and inevitable.

DEBATING THE BUDGETING PROCESS AS PART OF POLITICAL ECONOMY BEHAVIOUR

This section of the study attempts to contextualise a concrete relation between the budgeting process and parliamentary behaviour of political economy, in particular, the existence of the opposition Pakatan Rakyat (PR) in the Twelfth Parliament. The budgeting process is one of the significant tools to measure the governmental performance of the ruling BN regime. By focusing on the budgeting process which has been initiated by the government in the Parliament, the opposition, in a way, could provide a set standard of indicator to make sure that the ongoing process is transparent and accountable.

As argued by Tan and Mohamed, “the nation’s lawmakers and bureaucrats have significantly emphasised the annual budget as a tool to achieve macroeconomic stability as well as to produce high and sustainable economic growth”. ² Policymakers have their own ways in implementing certain economic policies upon the country by taking into account a number of reasonable factors that could affect the society as a whole. By focusing on the Twelfth Parliament, the study found that there were several budgeting themes initiated by the ruling BN government and the behaviour of the opposition PR political parties in responding to each of themes debated. Even though one of the governmental tasks is to deliver the budget outcomes to the people, but in parliamentary democracy, special provisions are allocated to the opposition political parties to question the relevancy of the budget issues. As defined by Tan and Mohamed, “the budget is a comprehensive economic plan because it involves not only governmental financial plans for the following year, but also incorporates the objectives or aims of medium- or long-term economic development

plans”. It has been a continuous tradition in the Malaysian political system for the ruling government to table the budget in the Parliament for the purpose of discussion among the parliamentary members.

**Debating the Theme of “Concerned Government”**

On August 29, 2008, the Prime Minister of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had tabled the national budget of 2009 in the Parliament. That particular session of budgeting process was strongly focused since the first time admission of the opposition PR in the Parliament. The 2009 Budget, according to the PM, would focus on three specific strategies: first, to guarantee people’s prosperity, second, to develop human capital and third, to consolidate the national interests. The ruling government, within the budget contents, had also disclosed some of its policies concerning the uplifting of people’s burdens. The ruling government laid down a policy of increasing the standard of household incomes from RM400 per month to RM720 per month in Malaysia’s Peninsular and RM830 per month for Sarawak and RM960 for Sabah. This step had increased the allocation of RM500 million as clarified by the ruling government. The 2009 Budget had attracted the opposition PR to take part in the debate session.

**Parliamentary Constraints**

Anwar Ibrahim, as the leader of the opposition, was given an opportunity to further discuss the budgeting theme. He was of the opinion that there was a noticeable difference between the policies initiated by Pakatan Rakyat (PR) and the ruling BN government. Anwar further questioned the government in terms of relevancy to continue the outdated budgets

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proposed by the government without taking into account certain factors such as facts and data. Anwar also questioned the unrealistic form of budgeting that did not meet the requirement of facts and uplift the country’s economy. He argued that, compared to Singapore’s economy, the state was one step ahead from Malaysia and Singapore’s economy was substantial in the sense that they could handle their domestic economies.\textsuperscript{6}

But the situation was entirely different in Malaysia where the relevant minister of finance was kept busy with the endorsement of certain mega projects and kept portraying that Malaysia’s economy was stable. Therefore, the opposition PR leader had proposed several suggestions for improving the condition of Malaysia’s economy such as; to pool all the strengths of economic experts, inside and outside the government, at the Central Bank of Malaysia (BNM), Economic Planning Unit (EPU) and many more. It was highlighted that the economic system would survive if the government really observed its plan properly. Lim Kit Siang of DAP, on the other hand, had contributed towards the budgeting debates by asking the ruling BN government in terms of preparation in order to encounter the global economic crisis.\textsuperscript{7} Historically, Malaysia used to be economically tested when it was caught in the 1997/1998 financial crisis. The crisis first began when the Thai Baht collapsed in July 1997 and fortunately, even though Malaysia was part of the crises it did not seek financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).\textsuperscript{8}

Based on this premise, the opposition PR saw the need to emphasise on the government performance in consolidating Malaysia’s economic condition in the long term plan. Another important point according to Anwar, was the adjustment of allocations given

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid, p. 22.
to all ministries.\textsuperscript{9} There were a lot of ministerial cabinet positions in the country and the need to downsize it was inevitable. The idea of minimizing the size of ministerial cabinet was to save and preserve the public revenues. As further argued by the opposition PR, there were several strategies to overcome the economic predicaments in the country. First, in terms of the consumption of oil and gas, 44 per cent of national income mainly came from this sector. The issue began when Anwar had asked the government to reduce the price of fuel and the suggestion was ignored by the ruling government. The idea of reducing the price was publicly debated by Anwar and one of BN’s ministers, Ahmad Shabery Cheek.\textsuperscript{10} Perhaps, the open debate between Anwar and Ahmad Shabery provided a clear-cut policy between the opposition PR and the ruling BN government and at the same time, the public had a tendency to judge the debate based on the knowledge and facts that the debaters presented.

During the debate, Anwar had emphasised that the ruling government needed to have a systematic management for the economic section and the abolishment of corruption. Once all of them had been achieved and the nation could save the costs and the same time the price of fuel could be reduced to 50 cents. Second, the incomes from oil palm. The development of Malaysia’s economics could also be obtained from this type of revenue but it must be analysed first. Third, the country is engaging with the export activities. An admonition was delivered to the ruling BN government in terms of their style in managing the exports activities. Fourth, the pressure of the inward and outward flow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into the country. The calculation made by the government did not fit as the county had now been listed as the 71\textsuperscript{st} in terms of attracting the FDI.\textsuperscript{11} A number of

\textsuperscript{9} Parliamentary Debates, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{11} Parliamentary Debates, p. 25.
opposition representatives from PR had also voiced out opinions. For instance, Saifudin Nasution from Machang constituency and Azan Ismail from Indera Mahkota constituency, had questioned the relevancy of this budgeting before it could be gazetted by the Parliament.\textsuperscript{12} The point which was raised by them concerned the estimation of precise figures made by the government. All of the suggestions proposed by the opposition PR was a wise approach for the government to rethink and revise the budgeting which took place on August 29, 2008. Lim Kit Siang, on the other hand, had demanded to form a revised version of 2009 budgeting.\textsuperscript{13} Unfortunately, the demand was not adopted.

As the second reading began, the opposition PR immediately came to the front presenting an economic-based suggestion before the implementation of the 2009 budgeting took place. The opposition PR leader had asked the relevant minister on what were the steps taken to heal the country’s competitive advantage.\textsuperscript{14} Anwar had stressed several points concerning the downward performance of country’s economics such as the ruling BN’s practices in conducting the business based on relations and not by merits. If the ruling government continued such practice, it could slow down the growth of development. According to a foreign-based Data Company Ltd, Malaysia had been recorded among the highest involving the costs for management which was 21 per cent compared to the rest of countries in Asia. It was further argued that the managing costs could be further controlled if the government could guarantee that there was no corruption and could be efficient in administration. Besides that, the opposition PR had also emphasised on changing the Poverty Line Index (PLI) which was used by the ruling BN government to indicate the

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, pp. 32-33.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{14} Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, First Session, no. 28, (Tuesday, 14 October 2008), p. 21.
level of poverty in Malaysia. As argued, the PLI was indeed outdated and was not useful to calculate or to measure the actual number of poverty.\textsuperscript{15}

The government version of PLI had disclosed a few things which were believed to be the actual figure of poverty and the fact that the level of poverty found in the state of Sabah and Sarawak was much severe. The opposition PR further justified that its way of solving the core issues was entirely different compared to the ruling BN government. For instance, the suggestion of reducing the fuel price and to guarantee a royalty for states who produced oil under the pretext of tightly controlled financial management. The issue of good ‘governance’ was also pointed out during the debate on the budgeting theme. The opposition PR was of the view that a number of oppressive laws initiated by the ruling BN government must be abolished by all means. It had been recorded that the budget allocation for the police had noticeably increased but the fundamental question was not well answered whether the crime’s statistics had dropped or not. As revealed by one of the local channels, NTV7, it was stated that an online survey had disclosed 98\% of respondents which had urged the 2009 budgeting to be tabled or revised again and only 2\% had supported the budgeting.\textsuperscript{16}

The results derived from that particular survey had been used as a tool of indicator by the opposition PR to strengthen their views on the 2009 budgeting. Finally, the opposition PR had come out with a shadow budget entitled “fixing the economic crisis and reviving the confidence”\textsuperscript{17} to counter the ruling BN government version of budgeting.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{16} The figure was revealed by Azan Ismail from Indera Mahkota constituency during the debate session, see: \textit{Parliamentary Debates}, p. 26.
Debating the Theme of “1 Malaysia, Mutual Prosperous”

The 2010 budget was tabled on October 23, 2009. The most noticeable difference of this budgeting was due to the change of leadership where Najib Tun Razak, the son of Abdul Razak who was the second Prime Minister, had assumed the number one position in the country and as the sixth Prime Minister. Thus, it had unfolded a new chapter in the discourse of Malaysian politics. The theme of 1 Malaysia (Satu Malaysia), as of the budget’s heading, had inevitably gained public attention throughout the country. At the same time, when he first took the helm, a slogan of “1 Malaysia, People First, Performance Now” was introduced.

According to James Chin, although the slogan was never defined properly, it was brilliant in that it appealed to the non-Malay population which had abandoned the ruling BN government in the 2008 general elections. The ruling BN government tremendously performed in the 2008 elections and with the appointment of a new Prime Minister, it was believed to heal some of the negative perspectives held by people towards the current regime. Even though the slogan or the concept of 1 Malaysia was delivered in a manner of mutuality in all aspects but in reality, it was more or less perceived as a philosophical rhetoric and yet to be proven as part of endorsement by the public. The Prime Minister announced many policies to gain some political momentum and as a strategy to undermine the opposition PR in the eyes of the public. There were several policies which were outlined by Prime Minister in the 2010 budgeting.

Those policies were primarily believed to be derived from the notion and spirit of 1 Malaysia’s concept. As part of strengthening and stimulating the economic performance, 18

the Prime Minister had liberated 27 sub-sector for services and financial.\textsuperscript{19} Second, the implementation of Key Performance Index (KPI) and National Key Results Areas (NKRA) and as part of the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) initiated by PM, NKRA consisted of six immediate focuses such as accessibility to quality and affordable education, crime reduction, battling graft, improvement of living standards, rural development and the improvement of public transport. As stated by Chin, in order for Prime Minister to show a sense of seriousness, he had brought in Idris Jala, an ethnic of Kelabit from Sarawak, into the NKRA. Jala’s record was remarkable as he saved Malaysian Airlines from being declared insolvent.\textsuperscript{20}

In short, NKRAs was understood as a combination of short-term priorities to address urgent public demands and medium and long-term issues and challenges that require most of the government’s action.\textsuperscript{21} Third, the abolishment of the Foreign Investment Committee (FIC) and the formation of Ekuiti Nasional Berhad (EKUINAS). FIC was abolished due to its style of forcing the foreign investors to take bumiputera shareholders where the EKUINAS was set up in order to safeguards the bumiputera interests and also to encourage the local bumiputera entrepreneurs.\textsuperscript{22} Fourth, the implementation of a Programme that could reduce the people’s burden such as People Housing Programme/Program Perumahan Rakyat (PPR) and rural infrastructures. Fifth, the initiation of Amanah Saham 1 Malaysia/1 Malaysia Trust Fund (AS1M) to encourage investments and to generate incomes.

\textsuperscript{19} Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, Second Session, no. 39, (Friday, 23 October 2009), p. 2.
\textsuperscript{22} James Chin, Ibid, p. 167.
Parliamentary Constraints

Initially, the constraints presented by the opposition PR were inevitable and perceived as an integral part of the budgeting session. The 2010 budgeting which was proposed by the ruling BN government was vulnerable and the opposition PR was incontrovertibly firm in pointing out any loopholes which they considered needed to be fixed. Among the leader of PR political parties, Anwar was among the obvious speakers who frequently sparked the debate. The very first thing which he decisively touched was the differences of that 2010 budgeting compared to the previous years.²³

In regards to the economics and fiscal framework, there were not many new things appeared and the government was not aggressive in tackling the taxation issues. Anwar also had emphasised the importance of reducing income tax and by doing that, people would have a choice to opt for other things and the same time could stabilize their buying power. The subsidy given to the Independent Power Producers (IPP) was also highlighted. Anwar argued that in 2008, a total of RM20 billion was given to the IPPs concession and it has increased to RM22 billion in 2009 and most of the IPPs were owned by cronies and relatives of some senior leaders in the country.²⁴ The opposition PR had strongly against the idea and urged the government to rethink and revise the agreement with the IPPs concessions. Consumer Association of Penang/Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang (CAP) had also voiced out their dissatisfaction towards the treatment given by the government to the IPPs.²⁵ In a way, the opposition PR and the people outside the Parliament, for instance, the CAP had a mutual interest in observing the ruling BN behaviour concerning federal projects and allocations.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 22.
The irony was that, according to Syed Husin Ali, a PKR Senator, the reduction of subsidies for certain goods like fuel and sugar had affected the low-income earners and at the same time the IPPs received RM19 billion from the government and this did not make sense.\textsuperscript{26} Besides that, regarding issues on administration, Anwar had deliberately admonished the ruling BN’s style of managing the governmental sectors. Billions had been unwisely channeled by the government, for instance, the case of Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ), Perwaja, Scorpene, and Sukhoi commission. These cases were widely publicised throughout the country and some of it was fully utilised by the opposition PR as the main source of voters’ attraction in a series of by-elections held.

As highlighted by Barry Wain, in his controversial book entitled “\textit{Malaysian Maverick: Mahathir In Turbulent Times}”, about the total loss of Perwaja, a local steel company, were all caused by the former Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir involving billions of ringgit.\textsuperscript{27} The purchase of Scorpene submarine was also part of central issues politically treated by the opposition PR and was a debateble topic during the early reign of the Prime Minister Najib. The purchase of Scorpene by the Malaysian government had involved the French government and the purchase was secretly conducted in an ambiguous manner. The Voice of the Malaysian People/Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM) as one of the leading NGOs which consistently fought for human rights had requested three French human rights lawyers to investigate the purchase made by the Malaysian government.\textsuperscript{28} While questioning the government transparency over the purchase of Scorpene, the opposition PR was politically affected when the government drastically took an action by seizing Pakatan’s tabloid known as “Kabar Era Pakatan”.

\textsuperscript{27} Salhan K. Ahmad, ‘Wain: Seleweng RM100 billion Dr. M disokong bukti’, \textit{Malaysiakini}, 21 May 2010.
According to the publication’s chief editor Mat Zahari Ali, the government had seized about 3,000 copies from distributors based in Ipoh and Taiping, Perak, and Gombak, Selangor. The reason behind the seizure was about the tabloid’s contents which had included the Scorpene’s discussion. Among other significant constraints presented by the opposition PR in debating the 2010 budgeting was about the national debt. The opposition PR believed that the expected growth of national debt from time to time could immensely jeopardise the national development and lead to uncontrolled deficit. Plus, the national debt in 2008 had increased 18.3% from RM3.6 billion to RM362.5 billion in 2009 and the national debt had increased since 2006. The action of seizure had exhibited that the ruling BN government decisively imposed its authoritarian form of extra-parliamentary behaviour in order to minimize political threats from the opposition PR.

The argument on national debt was based on the premise that the deficit and the debt had been caused by lack of transparency and the priority had been misled. In terms of audit report, an admonition was delivered by the opposition PR to government concerning the irrelevancy of its results. The results which were disclosed by the Department of Audit had triggered the opposition PR to further impose a political pressure towards the ruling BN government. The audit had included several negative outlooks such as waste, corruption, unlimited spending, flaws in infrastructure, government building and many more. The results also caught the concern of GERAKAN, one of BN component parties which demanded the ruling government set up an investigation to further look into the matter. 

According to the Financial Statement of the Federal Government in 2008, the investment of RM24.21 billion in 89 companies in 2008 and RM23.23 billion in 2007\(^{32}\) indicated that the government had a specific interest according to Anwar. It was stated that the managerial cost was higher than the developmental cost and further emphasised that the government had to control the spending. Besides that, the ruling BN government was advised to observe governmental projects especially when it involved tenders. A lot of money could be unwisely spent and the government was supposed to tighten its developmental activities by making sure that the elements of corruption did not exist.

Among other things which had been pointed out by Anwar, based on the audit report, the total cost of maintaining 15 schools in Sabah, Kelantan, Melaka, Kedah and Selangor was RM111.5 million but it was not being implemented properly.\(^{33}\) The actual cost was totally different from the cost paid by the government and thus had led towards the assumption that the corruption had indeed existed. Realising that the audit’s results were in a critical position, the opposition PR intentionally delivered a specific example concerning good governance and efficiency in allocating the revenues. There were at least two things which were pointed out by the Chief Auditor concerning the PR state government of Kedah under the leadership of Ustaz Azizan of PAS such as the strategy of saving cost policy and the ability to boost state’s revenues.\(^{34}\) These two approaches were brought up by the opposition in defending the PR state policies and at the same time to counter the irrelevancy of the 2010 budgeting.

As a matter of fact, Kedah was not the only PR state government that approached the state’s economy efficiently but Selangor, on the other hand, was the richest state in


\(^{33}\) Parliamentary Debates, p. 31.

\(^{34}\) Ibid.,
Malaysia, according to Bardai, based on Selangor gross domestic product (GDP) of RM114.3 billion in 2009 and the per capita income of RM22,860 which was comparable to the nominal per capita values of Western Europe and Hong Kong. The opposition PR performance in boosting the state’s economies was remarkable provided that Selangor was well equipped with a number of expertise among the members in the coalition of state government.

The PR had brilliantly engaged a dynamic strategy in leading the states of Selangor out of recession. It was initiated by PR state government, first, designing a plan to rehabilitate and clean up the Klang River and set up development along the river and its reserves. It was expected to attract investments of RM20 billion. Second, the idea of improving the public transport system in several remote areas where the locals would have an access from one place to another. Third, the restructuring of water facilities where the PR had to take over the assets of Air Selangor (Selangor Water) by Pengurusan Aset Air Berhad (PAAB) and the sole aim was to remove unnecessary water distributors and create a single operator. Fourth, to revive some developmental activities in certain abandoned areas such as Petaling Jaya and Klang. Fifth, the restoration of abandoned housing projects by allocating a budget of RM8 billion to complete what was left by the developers. These initiatives attempted by the PR state government had been marked as viable stepping stones in convincing the public of their developmental-friendly policies. The fall of Selangor from the ruling BN to the PR state government in 2008 had carved out a new chapter of democratisation where the nomenclature of transparency was promised in the midst of political competition between both sides. The advent of PR as Selangor state government in

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the post-2008 had ceremoniously enjoyed an economic supremacy at the state level and in terms of economic decisions, only PR had the legal authority to implement financial policy and to distribute the revenues in the state accordingly.

Once the PR state government had provided the positive progress of its economic performance, especially in Selangor, and PR would utilise it as the main progressive yardstick to counter political means expected from the ruling BN government. For instance, when Selangor Chief Minister Abdul Khalid Ibrahim of PKR was asked about the preparation of Selangor state government in facing the uncertainties of economics and the answer was that PR would not repeat the mistake of the previous BN state government.37 During the budgeting debate, the opposition PR highlighted that, according to the audit report, the Ministry of Defense (MINDEF) had excessively spent of RM658 million.38

Besides that, the opposition PR had also brought up an issue concerning the distribution of allocations among the MPs constituency. The total amount of allocations was RM500,000 for each parliamentary constituency but most of the opposition MPs had never been consulted before they could receive the allocation and suddenly the allocations were approved and endorsed by the Department of Development through the UMNO Chief of Divisions. It was viewed by the opposition PR as practicing double-standard and immediately urged the ruling BN to abolish such practice. The opposition PR had proposed a mutual cooperation between Pakatan and Barisan Nasional in any matters concerning the country’s well-being such as economic development. Therefore, the idea of good governance could not be removed in debating the budgeting as it would lead towards a steady growth under the pretext of transparent development.

37 Selangor State Legislative Assembly (DUN) Hansards, Twelfth Assembly, First Session, (Monday, 20 October, 2008), pp. 11-12.
38 Parliamentary Debates, p. 33.
The opposition PR had emphasised the importance of democratising the national economy. Democratisation of economy here is understood as the process of liberating the previous economic system to a well-developed one and free from ambiguous elements that could disrupt the progress. Reflecting the said nomenclature, the opposition PR had the proclivity of democratising based on its electoral manifesto during the 2008 general elections and Selangor was one of the states which had experienced such reformation. During the first year of ruling, in Selangor, the PR state government launched a Selangor’s People-based Economy (Merakyatkan Ekonomi Selangor), consisting of several programmes.

In Parliament, while debating the budget, the DAP stated that Malaysia could become the highest income earning nation by democratising the economy, reforming the public sectors and liberating the force of creativity and the innovation of human resources. The proposal of democratising the economy had been well-documented by DAP known as “DAP Alternative Budget” consisting of several approaches such as the abolishment of centralized fiscal, restructuring and reallocating, and capacity building. As echoed by Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, soon after the PR had formed the state government in Penang, the PR immediately launched a notion of Competency, Accountability and Transparency (CAT) which had been part of Penang’s style of administration and CAT was also acknowledged by the Chief of National Audit and Transparency International (TI). Therefore, it was hoped by the DAP that the federal government could accept and integrate the ideas for the sake of development in each of states in the country.

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40 Parliamentary Debates, p. 54.
41 DAP Alternative National Budget, 7 October 2009.
42 Parliamentary Debates, p. 58.
Debating the Theme of “Transformation towards a Developed High Income Nation”

The 2011 national budget was presented in Parliament on October 15, 2010 and it was themed as “The Transformation towards a Developed High Income Nation (Transformasi ke Arah Negara Maju Berpendapatan Tinggi)”. The budgeting was delivered in the midst of political conundrum where the uncertainty of country’s political direction had remained the same. As usual, since the inception of the new PM in 2009, the national political temperature was highly intensified and dominated with the new nomenclature of 1 Malaysia as part of Najib’s political belief in uniting the fragmented societies since BN’s tremendous electoral performance in the 2008 general elections.

In the word of Chin, “The 1 Malaysia slogan allows UMNO to deflect accusations that it is practising the ideology of Malay Supremacy (Ketuanan Melayu)”\(^{43}\) and had been used for most of the time as part of UMNO’s ideology in deriving sources of support mainly from the Malay in rural and urban areas. The 1 Malaysia concepts which was proposed by Najib did not come in a single package. The prevalence of the said concept was indeed fashioned by several strategies in undermining the mobilization of the opposition PR at the national and state level. In order to win support from the middle working class section, the ruling BN government had resorted to the idea of “1 Malaysia Help the People” (Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia/ BR1M).\(^{44}\) Among other things which had been included in the scheme was giving RM500 to the poor households and needy people. Besides that, all students had received RM200 book vouchers scheme and the ruling BN government in same time had launched a “1 Malaysia People’s Supermarket” (Kedai Rakyat 1 Malaysia/ KR1M) where most of the goods and items were sold in the subsidized


\(^{44}\) Ibid, p. 272.
forms. This was perceived by many as some sort of political and social efforts to revamp the electoral performance and at the same time to gain the public confidence which faded due to the shift of support to the opposition political parties in the 2008 elections.

The year 2010 was initiated by Najib with full of political questions and a number of outstanding issues either directly or indirectly linked to him before he had assumed the number one position in the country.\textsuperscript{45} The impact of the 2008 elections had also urged Najib to change his economic-based approach for the purpose of gaining a profound public momentum and also to alter the public’s perspectives towards the ruling BN performance in the country’s administration. To justify his action, an economic reform was promised which was known as the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) and this ETP was believed to conflict with Malaysia’s high deficit spending.\textsuperscript{46} Therefore, initiatives were disclosed with the aim of increasing the public trust and at the same time to divert a number of sensitive issues faced by his administration.

Unfortunately, according to O’Shannassy, “with the presentation of the 2011 budget in mid-October 2010 and the launch of the ETP roadmap later that month, many analysts were left wondering where all the reforms had gone.”\textsuperscript{47} This had provided some reasons for the opposition PR to consolidate further their parliamentary behaviour and mobilisation in the run up against the ruling BN government under certain circumstances. In Parliament, Najib had proposed four strategies in the 2011 budget.

Those were, first, to increase the private investment. Under this pretext, the implementation of 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEA) was expected to generate an

investment of more than RM1.3 trillion and create 3.3 million of job opportunities. Second, to develop human capital (modal insan) where, as stated by Najib, the most important asset in the country is human capital. And through this, the government had allocated RM29.3 billion for the Ministry of Education (MoE), RM10.2 billion for the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), and RM627 million for the Ministry of Human Resources. The idea behind the allocation was to attract more talented people through the educational sectors and at the same time to produce more experts in various fields. Third, to prosper people’s life by allocating RM1.2 billion to the Ministry of Women Development, Family and Society where several of welfare-based programmes would be implemented. Fourth, to consolidate the public sector’s delivery by increasing the country’s productivity through the aid of 1.2 million public servants in the country. The irony was that, even though the 2011 budget and the ETP were part of Najib’s initiatives in championing the minor reforms but a proclivity towards the deep liberalisation of political, social, and economic goals of Vision 2020 remained absent. Issues such as ethnic politics, rule of law, and governmental transparency had immensely haunted the ruling BN performance. However, the ruling BN government laid down a clear cut policy concerning economic development in the form of published report soon after budgeting session took place.

Parliamentary Constraints

Soon after the 2011 budget was tabled, it had immediately invited criticisms mainly from the opposition PR. In one of political forum organised by DAP at Petaling Jaya, some of experts had stated that the 2011 budget had failed in pointing out governmental

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“transformation” Programme to develop Malaysia as a high-income society.\textsuperscript{51} In Parliament, the opposition PR leader Anwar Ibrahim had initiated the debate against the 2011 budget proposed by the ruling BN government.\textsuperscript{52} The opposition PR was of the view that the 2011 budget had to be first critically consulted before being gazetted by the Parliament as it would impact people’s life in wider circumstances. As argued by Anwar, Malaysia’s economic growth was only at the rate of 7\% in 2010. As compared to Thailand, the state had recorded the growth at 6.5\% to 7.5\% even though it was caught under political instability sometimes but still Thailand could perform better. Based on the presented figure, it indicated that Thailand was one step further above Malaysia.

Anwar further argued that, according to World Investment Report 2010, an obvious deterioration of inward FDI indicated that the investors had no confidence in the country’s economy or in other words, Malaysia was the only country among ASEAN that had been experiencing a serious ‘negative inflow’. The 2011 budget was critically approached by the opposition PR where Anwar had pointed out the issue of deficit and the government’s dependency towards oil revenues from PETRONAS which were around RM57.6 billion.\textsuperscript{53} Not only that, the reduction of investment in the country could lead towards the increase of debt since the government did not have many sources to derive from. Anwar emphasised that the public debt to the Malaysia’s Gross Domestic Products (GDP) in 2009 was at the level of 54\% and this matter was not included in the 2011 budget to be solved and it was afraid that it would impact the people in the future if this ‘debt’ was not properly managed. There were several negative elements which had been ignored in the 2011 budget such as

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\item Ibid, p. 22.
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the uncontrolled waste, corruption issues, and the priority of mega projects that did not benefit the people.

Therefore, the opposition PR proposed the ruling BN government come up with a detailed solution on how to tackle the national debt for the next five years by reducing the deficits, reducing waste, cutting off unnecessary allocations, and many more as has been reported by PEMANDU.\(^{54}\) Anwar had also highlighted that the current regime repeated the same mega projects which had been done by the previous Prime Minister. For instance, the construction of Warisan Merdeka building which consists of 100 storeys with the cost of RM5 billion, Kuala Lumpur International Financial District (KLIFD) which costs RM26 billion and RM10 billion for Sungai Buloh land, and the cession of critical land of Sungai Buloh to the 1 Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and Jho Low.\(^{55}\)

The mega projects which were included in the 2011 budget had been publicly criticised. The Prime Minister eventually justified that the RM5 billion plan constructions were not a waste but to generate some income and to create Malaysia’s modern pinnacle.\(^{56}\) In response, some DAP MPs went to the proposed site and called for the media conference to explain the reasons why the construction should not be initiated.\(^{57}\) The opposition PR was accused by the ruling BN government of politicizing the said issue and they had urged to opt for ‘people power’ in halting the plans. As argued by Selangor Chief Minister Abdul Khalid, the plan of constructing the Warisan Merdeka building did not precede the people’s

\(^{54}\) Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) was created by the government under the Prime Minister’s Office and the main responsibility of PEMANDU is to monitor and to improve governmental ministries through effective implementation and coordination of GTP. For a full account on PEMANDU, see; Noore Alam Siddiquee, ‘Malaysia’s Government Transformation Programme: A Preliminary Assessment,’ p. 16.

\(^{55}\) Parliamentary Debates, Ibid, p. 22.

\(^{56}\) ‘Najib: Menara 100 tingkat bukan pembaziran’, Malaysiakini, 19 October 2010.

\(^{57}\) Hazlan Zakaria, ‘DAP mahu ‘kuasa rakyat’ tentukan Warisan Merdeka’, Malaysiakini, 19 October 2010.
interests. As of 1MDB mega project affiliation, before it was brought up in the 2011 budgeting debates, Anwar, in his political speech at Selayang had stated that a millionaire known as Low Taek Jho or Jho Low had been given a contract for re-developing the Sungai Besi air base. Jho Low was portrayed as a mysterious man and suddenly had emerged in the United States of America (USA) and was caught partying with a famous American singer, Paris Hilton. The opposition PR was of the strong views that the agreement of RM500 million had something to do with Jho Low due to his involvement with the Terengganu Investment Authority (TIA) which was incorporated to become 1MDB.

In relation to 1MDB, Anwar argued that until August 17, 2010 and after the opposition PR had done the investigation with the Companies Commission of Malaysia/Suruhanjaya Syarikat Malaysia (SSM) and no data was found on the establishment of the 1MDB including its business address and appointed auditors. The discovery had at least applied some pressure towards the ruling BN government in defending the rationality of the 2011 budget. There were a lot of things which were dug by the opposition PR in determining the current status of the 1MDB and its capability in handling some governmental contracts but unfortunately it went south. The 1MDB was severely questioned on what grounds the government had granted consent to its formation. Therefore, the existence of 1MDB was completely a misnomer in the sense that it could be a very concrete political weapon against the ruling BN government especially in the Parliament. The ruling BN government, on the other hand, went all-out in justifying their action and the exchange of arguments between both sides suggested that the competitive nature of Malaysian parliamentary system was viable.

58 ‘Menara 100 tingkat: Khalid perjelas kenyataannya’, Malaysiakini, 9 November 2010.
Speaking on educational sector, the opposition PR highlighted the issue especially when it involved the teachers’ welfare in the country and its performance. In the 2011 budget, the government had included a plan of importing 375 teachers from United Kingdom (UK) and Australia. PR urged the plan to be revised in accordance to the standard need of the country and at the same time to make sure that the local graduates were guaranteed in terms of employment.

For instance, Nasharuddin Mat Isa of PAS, argued that, according to the data received from the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), the total of students who graduated in the field of arts and social sciences, in 2008, was 39,645 from 20 Public Institutions of Higher Education/Institut Pengajian Tinggi Awam (IPTA). Nasharuddin specifically asked the government on the statistic of students who graduated in the field of TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) and the total of teachers who taught an English subject in the schools. Most of public universities in Malaysia offered this course and the opposition PR was intrigued whether the government’s decisions in hiring foreign teachers had something to do with the quality of local graduates in the field of TESL.

Many questions were raised to measure the rationality behind the decision such as to improve the TESL local graduates and to encourage TESL graduates to specialise in their own academic field. The opposition PR believed that the presence of these 375 teachers could impact local teachers in terms of the salary grade. The foreign teachers may demand more than what the local teachers received. In a way, it would create a new competitive situation among teachers in Malaysia and that was not encouraged for the well-being of local teachers. Therefore, the plan was perceived as unnecessary provided that the cost of

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61 Parliamentary Debates, no. 53, (Friday, 15 October 2010), p. 19.
RM213 million could be used to upgrade the performance of local graduates, the opposition PR believed.

The opposition PR, on the other hand, had concluded that the 2011 budget did not serve people’s interests and had focused towards short-term plans rather than long-term. Many things, in relation to the 2011 budget contents, were deemed as misnomer in terms of the budget direction. Nurul Izzah of PKR argued that the government should utilise RM5 billion to produce 10,000 expert researchers with a qualification of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) instead of spending that particular amount in constructing a 100 storey skyscraper such as Menara Warisan. Among other controversial issue which was given an attention was the allocation of RM111 million to the PERMATA Programme.

This particular allocation had escalated some of dissenting voices especially from the opposition PR. As stated by PAS President Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang, such allocation did not make any sense as it concerned specific persons and it indicated that the government’s focus had diverted from its main aim of prioritising the people. The opposition PR had also made some relevant comparisons of the PERMATA Programme and the rest of allocations. According to Dzulkefly Ahmad of PAS, this time the Prime Minister’s Office/Pejabat Perdana Menteri (PMO) had received an allocation of RM15 billion but unfortunately Parliament was allocated of RM78 million only and less than the People Religious School/Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) had received which was RM90

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64 Pusat Anak Permata Negara (National Diamond Children Centre/ PERMATA) is a programme for children and teenagers and it was initiated by the wife of PM Najib Tun Razak, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor in 2007.
65 “Hadi kritik PERMATA Rosmah”, Malaysiakini, 18 October 2010.
million. The comparative argument provided by PAS was aimed to hold the ruling BN accountable concerning the public spending.

The pattern and trend of the 2011 budget was depicted as same from the previous budget presentations in 2009 and 2010. The opposition PR perspective towards the 2011 budget was differently discerned and more concerned on the human capital building rather than material development which the ruling BN government decisively focused on. Nurul Izzah argued that the 2011 budget should include the effort of democratic treatment including the formation of several commissions concerning the women and children’s rights, freedom of media, and the empowerment of SUHAKAM (The Human Rights Commission of Malaysia). SUHAKAM was introduced by the ruling BN government in April 1999 in the Parliament and it was understood as an advisory body to the government and was mandated to provide human rights education, and to investigate cases related to violence. Nurul also quoted a very practical example carried out by the PR state government in Selangor where its DUN had introduced an Enactment or a Bill (at the Federal level) known as the Freedom of Information Act (The State of Selangor) (2010) and Nurul further justified Selangor’s action as a political reformation that the ruling BN government should follow.

The Enactment was basically introduced by PR in the State Legislative Assembly on 14 July 2010. Elizabeth Wong of DAP, in her argument, had clarified that the PR state government would take the notion of ‘People’s Supremacy’ as their main principle in

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67 Parliamentary Debates, p. 42.
68 For a full account on the introduction of SUHAKAM in Parliament, see: Parliamentary Debates, 9th Parliament, Fifth Session, no. 10, (Wednesday, 21 April 1999), p. 73; no. 15, (Monday, 26 July 1999), p. 2. Minister for Foreign Affairs Syed Hamid Syed Jaafar Albar, on behalf the ruling BN government, proposed to table a draft on SUHAKAM in Parliament. Finally the draft became the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia Act 1999 after it was passed by the Parliament.
Selangor. The said notion had become as part of stimulation towards the mobilisation of reformation by the PR state government and also to reform, to fix, to adjust, and to elevate the status of Selangor’s state administration as compared to the previous poor performance of the ruling BN regime in Selangor before 2008.

Speaking of the East Malaysia States of Sabah and Sarawak, the opposition PR had urged the ruling BN government to implement some policies or allocations which could benefit the people equally without having a bias treatment. Hiew King Cheu of DAP from Kota Kinabalu constituency had decisively questioned the concept of 1 Malaysia where in the 2011 budget, the state of Sabah and Sarawak had to share an allocation of RM9.55 billion. Throughout Malaysia’s political history, the state of Sabah and Sarawak were recognized as the most obvious in terms of its patterns of ethnic politics. According to Farish A. Noor, the ruling BN government since the 1960s was of the view that both of these states were crucial states and whose participation in the Malaysian political domain and representation in government underscore the idea of Malaysia as a plural and multi-ethnic federation of states. Therefore, the ruling BN government had to seriously consider the political participation of people from Sabah and Sarawak and for social science scholars, Sabah and Sarawak were considered as a ‘fixed-deposit’ for the ruling BN government to consolidate their parliamentary strength.

This was incontrovertibly true, for instance in Sarawak, the ruling BN through its local BN representative known as the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) had consistently succeeded in delivering to the federal government more than two-third of seats

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70 Selangor State Legislative Assembly (DUN) Hansards, Twelfth Assembly, Third Session, (Wednesday, 14 July 2010), p. 27.
71 Parliamentary Debates, p. 60.
in the state election. But the issue of ‘development’ in these both states was still ambiguous and the opposition PR had noticed some ‘developmental loopholes’ caused by the ruling BN at the state level. As argued by Cheu, the states of Sabah and Sarawak had contributed more than 42% from national incomes but at the end the ruling BN allocated only 8% from the 2011 budget to Sabah and Sarawak. The allocation was perceived as unfair and bias. In an agreement between the PETRONAS and the state of Sabah, the rate of division for oil and gas in which Sabah had received was 5% and since the agreement was signed, Sabah only received RM5.3 billion in 40 years while Sabah’s contributions towards the national income was RM120 billion.

The opposition PR had further questioned the rate of 5% which was too small and insufficient for Sabah’s development. In the long run, if the federal government kept downsizing the allocation, it would cause a slow growth and would fail to attract foreign investments. And again, the opposition PR consistently questioned the relevancy of the idea of constructing the building which costs RM5 billion in Kuala Lumpur instead of developing Sabah with that sum of allocations.73 Cheu was of the opinion that the government plan to allocate RM100 million for the upgrading of facilities the Nexus Resort Karambunai in Sabah was irrational and unnecessary.

Besides that, the ruling BN government was believed to have practiced a contract system where the project was granted directly to a contractor or based on negotiation.74 As stated, this particular practice could lead towards the misuse of power and corruption. The logic behind the federal projects was inappropriately implemented since a lot of issues involving people in Sabah who did not get a direct access towards electricity, water, and road, especially the people living in rural areas.

73 Parliamentary Debates, p. 61.
74 Ibid, p. 62.
The opposition PR had given their dissenting thoughts towards the 2011 budget by criticising and proposing something which could benefit the whole people. The four strategies which were included by the ruling BN government in the 2011 budget seemed to be misnomer and did not fit with the current national needs. Therefore, the opposition PR had to ensure that the objective of parliamentary democracy was achieved. As maintained by scholars, the ‘making and breaking of government’ is highly influenced by the role of legislatures in parliamentary democracy.\textsuperscript{75} In the case of Malaysian parliamentary system, such argument may not be applicable and compatible since the maintainence of the ruling BN government was due to electoral settings. As long as the ruling regime enjoyed the mandate they obtained from the electorates, they would be in power and possessed means to control the parliamentary settings. Due to this, the 2011 budget was endorsed by the Parliament.

\textbf{Debating the Theme of “National Transformation Policy: Budget Defending the People and Prosperous the Nation”}

In the previous 2011 budget, speculations were rife that the next general election was around the corner based on the budgeting patterns. This time, the year of 2011 had been marked as the year of political turmoil revealing the indirect contest between the opposition PR and the ruling BN government. One of the political events which had surrounded Malaysia’s political scene was the organisation of BERSIH rally on 9 July 2011 which was held a few months before the 2012 budget was tabled in the Parliament. In response, Malay groups such as UMNO and Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa/Mighty Native Organisation

(PERKASA) immediately escalated the situation by declaring that they would also join the rally for the purpose of implementing constraints to the BERSIH.\textsuperscript{76}

Several demands were made by the protestors such as the reform of the postal ballot, a clean electoral roll, a minimum of 21 days of campaigning periods, the use of indelible ink during the voting, and an end to money politics.\textsuperscript{77} The BERSIH rally had finally met with a force initiated by local authority and many political figures were detained, such as the leaders of BERSIH, Ambiga Sreenivasan and Maria Chin Abdullah. The rally was internationally covered by some of foreign media criticising the way of the ruling BN government handled the public event. Realising that the situation was getting intense, the ruling BN government finally announced the formation of a parliamentary select committee (PSC) comprising of members from the government and the opposition to review the demands made by the people such as the improvement of electoral system and recommend changes.\textsuperscript{78}

Not only that, Prime Minister Najib had caught attention of all Malaysians when he proclaimed to repeal the draconian law of Internal Security Act (ISA) which had abused the freedom of human rights in Malaysia. The action was perceived by many as part of strategies to contain the public and the same time to cover up any of political loopholes which had been caused either intentionally or not. In an attempt to cover the political crisis, the Prime Minister finally tabled the 2012 budget on October 7, 2011 and it was tabled under the theme of “National Transformation Policy: Budget Defending the People and Prosperous the Nation/Dasar Tranformasi Nasional: Bajet Membela Rakyat, Mensejahtera

\textsuperscript{78} Michael O’Shannassy, p. 170.
Negara.” In the 2012 budget, there were several approaches which were included such as; first, to escalate the investment; second, to prioritise the human capital, to discern the creativity and to spark the innovation; third, rural transformation programme; fourth, to transform public services; fifth, to reduce the inflation and to uplift the people’s life.79

Parliamentary Constraints

At the onset, the 2012 budget were not well received. According to the President of Transparency International (TI) Paul Low, “we did not see any focus on improving the integrity of government financial management.”80 On behalf of TI, they had further vocalised their disappointment by stating that the 2012 budget had failed in tackling the issue of integrity particularly for the defence expenses as they had advocated before. In the Parliament, the PR leader, Anwar had initiated the debate against the 2012 budget. Realising that the 2012 budget did not meet the opposition expectation, Anwar had put forth some ideas such as political and institutional reformation81 in the hope that the ruling BN government could integrate together for the sake of political as well as economic development.

Those ideas, for example, to fully implement promises in the ‘Grey Book’ or Buku Jingga, including the abolishment of the ISA, Official Secret Act (OSA), University and College Act (AUKU), the abolishment of specific laws concerning the abuse of democratic principles, to implement immediately all demands made by BERSIH, and to reshuffle all governmental departments and be accountable towards the Parliament. It seemed that the opposition PR had their own 2012 shadow budget before they debated the national budget. The opposition PR delivered the shadow budget on October 4, 2011, four days before the

Prime Minister tabled the 2012 budget in the Parliament. Besides that, Anwar questioned the absence of the audit report as the 2012 budget was tabled before the audit.

This had led towards the perception held by the opposition PR that the ruling BN government was politically up for something. The announcement made by the ruling BN in the budget concerning the reimbursement of RM232.8 billion, as argued by Anwar, was not clear and provided with the increasing burden of people’s and national debt.\textsuperscript{82} Not only that, the central issue the opposition PR had touched was the uncontrolled spending. Meaning that most ministries were given a big amount of allocation and less were given to development in the 2012 budget and this specific trend had gained its currency soon after the Prime Minister Najib assumed the number one position in the country.\textsuperscript{83}

The 2012 budget was seen as double-sided when most of the allocations were primarily spent for mega projects and at the same time, the allocations for the Ministry of Education and Health were cut in making way for the unnecessary projects. The opposition PR decisively stood with its opinion in defending their own version of budget in the Parliament. Based on the 2012 PR shadow budget, a number of suggestions were never the same with the contents in 2012 national budget especially in terms of ‘number’ or the amount of allocation and therefore had urged the Parliament to adopt it before the national budget could be finally gazetted and implemented throughout the country. The opposition PR budget was known as the ‘2012 Prosperous Budget’ and it was themed as ‘Prosperous for All’.\textsuperscript{84} Many of approaches were inclined towards the uplifting of people’s burden. In this sense, the opposition PR hoped that all people could share the benefits from the

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, p. 27.
economic growth by increasing around 60 percent of household in Malaysia whose incomes were less than RM3,000 per month.

In the 2012 PR budget, it had been stated that Malaysia was a ‘rich country with poor people’ and this must be adjusted by realising the aim of allocating scarce resources appropriately. Besides that, Saifuddin Nasution of PKR from Machang constituency had stated about ‘debt’. Based on a report recently released by the Council of National Financial/Majlis Kewangan Negara (MKN), it had been indicated that the national debt had increased significantly after Najib became the Prime Minister. In 2009, the debt was RM382.4 billion, in 2010 RM407.1 billion, and it increased to RM436.8 billion in 2011. Those years had been marked as a pattern of gradual increase and this had alarmed the opposition PR to further debate this matter. Another tremendous finding which was concluded by the non-profit body Research for Social Advancement (REFSA), was that if the federal government debt grew at RM50 billion a year, it could reach RM1 trillion in 2020.

They further justified that the government had added their ‘debt’ for the past years compared to before 2004 and after the Independence. The opposition PR insisted that the 2012 budget had ignored the guidelines concerning the ‘debt’ including a report revealed by the Council of National Financial (MKN). In solving the issue of national debt, the opposition PR hoped that the ruling BN could extract the ideas from the PR proposed 2012 budget which was to introduce the implementation of tax and excise upon luxurious goods including handbags, cosmetic, and clothes. It was decisively justified to increase the minimum wage of people to RM1,100 per month and as argued by Anwar, this rate was

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85 Parliamentary Debates, p. 28.
87 Parliamentary Debates, p. 34.
able to be imposed by the government and it would not affect the economy. At the same time, PKR Chief of Strategy, Rafizi Ramli, had defended the 2012 PR shadow budget which was announced by the leader of opposition PR as consistent with PR policy and not as a ‘sweet bait’ as claimed by the ruling BN government.\textsuperscript{88}

In Selangor, the PR state government was the first to implement the minimum wage of RM1,500.\textsuperscript{89} The announcement was made by Chief Minister Khalid Ibrahim when presenting Selangor’s budget in the State Legislative Assembly. It was further stated that the ruling BN government had yet to implement what was suggested by the opposition PR. Due to this, the action of providing the minimum wage was echoed by the opposition PR in the Parliament. The 2012 budget was, indeed, unanimously perceived by the opposition PR as the ‘one-off’ budget. According to Charles Santiago of DAP from Klang constituency, he was of the view that the 2012 budget was a ‘one-off’ electoral budget as equivalent to some sort of ‘promised candies’ to all layer of societies.\textsuperscript{90}

The opposition PR argued that the 2012 budget did not have a multiple effect or force because the focus was mainly on the expenditures and not for the long-term development and thus could not generate more revenues.\textsuperscript{91} It had indicated a serious increase in terms of spending from a year to another. For instance, RM181 billion was allocated for the management of federal government and compared to previous years in 2000, the allocation was only RM51 billion during the reign of former Prime Minister Tun Mahathir Mohamad. And for the next five years in 2005, the allocation was RM97.7 billion during the time of former Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and it increased to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{88} Aidila Razak, ‘Bajet Pakatan bukan untuk pancing undi’, \textit{Malaysiakini}, 6 October 2011.
  \item \textsuperscript{89} Nigel Aw, ‘Gaji minimum RM1, 500 bagi firma kerajaan negeri Selangor’, \textit{Malaysiakini}, 9 November 2011.
  \item \textsuperscript{90} Joseph Sipalan, ‘Bajet ‘one-off’ pilihanraya, kata Pakatan’, \textit{Malaysiakini}, 8 October 2011.
  \item \textsuperscript{91} \textit{Parliamentary Debates, 12th Parliament, Fourth Session}, no. 39, (Tuesday, 11 October 2011), p. 38.
\end{itemize}
RM151 billion in 2009. In terms of statistics, it presented a negative outlook from time to time and the opposition PR requested Parliament to look into this matter.

The 2012 budget at the same time, as argued by Azmin Ali, had neglected the focus upon the future development and further urged the Parliament to consider several sectors and investments which should be highlighted. First, in the educational sector where an investment was highly welcomed for the purpose of shaping technical skills to upgrade the level of workforce in the future. The ruling BN government could also invest more in the sector of research and development (R&D). Second, to give a particular attention in the most desperate sector such as biotechnology and green industry and it was justified in terms of its significance in preparing the country from having to face the shortage of fuel and gas in the future. Therefore, the 2012 budget was not well received by the opposition PR due to its loopholes and a number of considerable inadequacies.

The budget reimbursement proposed by the ruling BN government to a certain extent was politically encountered and the opposition PR took this opportunity to put forth an administrative example in the hope that the federal government could imitate its ways of doing the administrative tasks. The opposition PR stated that in 2011, the state of Selangor had at least engaged in an investment of RM5.2 billion and this had led Selangor to become the main contributor of FDI in the country.\(^\text{92}\)

Wong Ho Leng of DAP from Sibu constituency had admonished the irrelevancy of the 2012 budget by focusing on deficit.\(^\text{93}\) In his argument, the deficit in 2012 was RM51.2 billion and the government debt rose to RM455.75 billion and it indicated that each of Malaysians owed RM16,000 due to government debt. Wong also warned Parliament that

\(^{92}\) Ibid, p. 40.
the ruling BN government would impose the government services and tax (GST) soon after the next general elections. Wong’s statement was indeed supported by Pahang Commissioner of PAS Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man, stating that several new taxing methods would be imposed while the subsidy would be dismissed after the 13th general elections.\(^{94}\) Unfortunately, Wong’s prediction was proven right. On April 1, 2015, GST was imposed throughout the country.\(^{95}\) The economic decision of implementing the GST was totally against the ruling BN manifesto in the 2013 general election and such decision meant that the cost of goods would increase and the buying power would be reduced. The opposition parties strongly condemned the implementation of GST, for instance, the state of Selangor openly declared to reject the implementation of GST because it was a ‘cruel’ form of taxation system.\(^{96}\)

Tuan Ibrahim further argued that in the 2012 budget tabled by the ruling BN government, the Prime Minister did not announce any way of reducing the corruption, mismanagement, misuse of power, and cronyism. As one of Sarawak’s representatives, Wong had particularly touched on Sarawakians welfare. Speaking of oil royalty which the states of Kelantan and Terengganu consistently fought for, Sarawak was also supposed to receive the royalty. The opposition PR at the Sarawak state level had requested the federal government to revise the 5% of royalty. The royalty issue had also been debated in the Sarawak DUN but it remained the same and nothing had changed. As argued, even though Sarawak had substantially contributed to the country in terms of oil and gas but the demand of 20 percent royalty had been refused and denied.\(^{97}\) Another significant point related to the development of deficit was highlighted by Siti Zailah of PAS from Rantau Panjang

\(^{94}\) ‘PAS jangka rakyat akan ditekan selepas PRU-13’, *Malaysiakini*, 10 October 2011.
\(^{95}\) ‘Cukai GST halal, tegas Najib’, *Malaysiakini*, 1 April 2015.
\(^{97}\) *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 86.
constituency. She argued that the rate of debt had exceeded more than 53% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Provided with a slow increase in inflation and the slow growth of economy had all led towards the national burden.\(^\text{98}\) Therefore, she urged to all political leaders in the country to cease luxurious lifestyles as it would affect economic stability.

For instance, as highlighted by Siti Zailah, from 2006 until 2010, the government had spent RM49 million to maintain the official residences of Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister where the average cost was RM18,318 per day. The average of RM5,704 for electrical cost per day and RM1,093 for water per day and it was further argued that such cost could benefit thousands of families. As observed by the opposition PR, in 2011 there were only 21 ministries which spent 51% from the allocations given and furthermore the 2012 budget was tabled without the release of reports from the audit sector. Due to this, the opposition PR believed that the ruling BN government had to cover up some sort of weaknesses before the next general elections were summoned.\(^\text{99}\)

The 2012 budget was criticised from many angles and one significant aspect which the government did not pay attention to was the effort in safeguarding women. Apparently this was not included in the said budget and the opposition PR took the chance to vocalize the profound needs of women’s security and also the welfare of housewives. Besides that, the channel of receiving aids from the Department of Social Welfare/Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat (JKM) was deemed as weak. One of the problems was the lack of capable officers and each of them had to take care at least of a thousand of people. This in turn would cause a deadlock for the rest of people to receive services and aid. To a certain extent, matters concerning the people’s wellbeing were among the most to be debated.

\(^{99}\) Ibid, p. 44.
Conclusion

In a nutshell, the Parliament had been the most remarkable apex of democratic political system. It also served as an official platform for exchanging ideas by political means. The scenario after the 2008 general elections had somehow changed the landscape of Malaysia’s political terrain. Provided with the growing sense of dissenting voices towards the ruling BN government and which later on had been translated into the shifting of votes during the elections. The resounding victory over in obtaining a number of seats in the Parliament had led to another formation of particular patterns of performance. The way that the opposition PR politically behaved had directly contributed towards the inevitable constraints faced by the ruling BN government and at the same time to consolidate the performance by observing the notion of check and balance in Parliament. This in turn had left the ruling BN government to resist any attempts made by the opposition PR which sought to introduce policies that could benefit the public. This chapter found that one of the PR patterns in the Twelfth Parliament was resistance political economy behaviour with reference to the debate of budgeting process that regularly took place from time to time in the Parliament. PR consistently debated the budgeting themes proposed by the ruling BN government especially when Anwar Ibrahim vehemently exercised his capability as PR opposition leader during the parliamentary budgeting process. Each of these themes were questioned and debated by PR in accordance with the pursuit of parliamentary goals. PR had also posed a substantial constraint towards the ruling BN government where the application of parliamentary attacks was made necessary to the extent that the ruling BN had to carefully provide satisfactory arguments in terms of policies questioned. This was the part where the opposition PR went all out in exercising its role by holding Parliament to become more accountable as it is supposed to be.
CHAPTER 6
Conclusion

In a nutshell, this study defined parliamentary behaviour as a systematic code of legislative conduct for parliamentarians. This study examined the patterns of behaviour of the opposition Pakatan Rakyat political parties in the Twelfth Parliament. PR parliamentary behaviour was evident under the pretext of modern parliamentary democracy. By using the Theory of Legislative Behaviour developed by Shane Martin, the study was able to trace and highlight several of significant patterns, the major patterns as well as the sub-patterns. In the post-2008 Malaysian general election, local political ambience had changed drastically out of nowhere. At the parliamentary level, the opposition PR managed to challenge the long-standing position of the ruling BN government by denying it a two-thirds majority in the Twelfth Parliament.

While at the state level, the PR was able to seize at least five different states in the Peninsular, namely Selangor, Perak, Penang, Kedah and Kelantan and this led to the formation of PR state governments in these states. The ruling BN government had to assume the status of “opposition” in the states which were secured by PR. The 2008 election result was devastating for the BN incumbent in the sense that they were able to secure a very robust margin in the 2004 general election but had almost failed when their two-thirds majority was lost in 2008. The ruling BN’s failure to maintain its electoral majority had suggested that the masses had finally made their decision. Despite negative perceptions towards the ruling government, an inevitable erosion of social capital, the abusement of the freedom of speech, widespread corruption as claimed by the social media and many more, the BN political parties remained at the crucial juncture. Therefore, the minor victory of the opposition PR had paved an avenue for Parliament and inroads were remarkably made by the members from
the three major opposition political parties. As argued by Musolf and Springer, the legislatures have been a natural focus of studies in Western democracies.¹ In Southeast Asia, Malaysia was a good example to apply the approach of parliamentary politics under the framework of authoritarian regime. The role of parliament or the legislatures are sometimes central towards the policymaking. This, somehow, produced a direct impact upon the availability of the embedded political opposition in each parliamentary systems in most countries in the world in terms of their parliamentary roles in ensuring the goals of democracy.

As stated by Noor Alam Siddique, Parliament or the House of Representatives, is the prime political institution of a country where the only purpose is to hold the government accountable and public officials, as servants of the public, are accountable to the latter through the Parliament.² As part of the Westminster design of legislatures, the Malaysian parliament presented a better insight in terms of its operation and to what extent the opposition members could contribute in order to ensure that the Parliament is not going against the wishes of people. William Case, on the other hand, argues that political parties have also been resilient in Malaysia and the opposition in the Parliament engages in a variety of well-honed strategies to try to hold the executive at least mildly accountable.³

Judging by this kind of argument, the position of the oppositional players in the Parliament could hardly survive under the framework of authoritarian regime where the executives were always dominant and fully equipped in terms of political and financial resources while the opposition merely held onto its supporters for the purpose of mobilization.

In this study, the approach of content analysis has been used as part of the qualitative method of research. The data were gathered and selected appropriately. In Chapter Three of this study, the debates or the parliamentary Hansards were analysed. In regards to the patterns of behaviour of Pakatan Rakyat political parties in the Twelfth Parliament, the study found that the main pattern of behaviour is the parliamentary questions (PQs). Adam Ladley argues that PQs constitute an enormous information resource about what is going on in the government and it is part of an important instrument of ministerial responsibility for the conduct of public affairs. Based on the argument presented, Ladley pointed out his focus upon the branches of the government where the appointed ministers are situated in one of the branches, for instance, the Executive branch. The probability of the ministers dominating Parliament is high but this could only be achieved through the electoral contest at the national level. Once the candidates from the government party are elected by the voters, automatically he or she would represent a constituency of their own.

On the other hand, the utilisation of PQs proved to be remarkable in the Twelfth Parliament where the PR had played its role in order to prevent the executive branch from being abused politically. As one of the branches of government after the Executive and the Judiciary, the PR had the only political access to the Legislative by electoral means. This provided an upper hand to the ruling BN government where they could maintain all the branches of government as long as they assume the majority or simple majority in the Parliament. When the 2008 general election had tremendously changed the ruling BN’s status quo, it gave an ample opportunity for some of the PR members to represent constituencies in the Twelfth Parliament even though they were not the decisive force in the House. Besides that, under the major pattern of PQs, the study found that there were several significant sub-patterns of behaviour, for instance, PQs concerning the-post 2008 general elections, local

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government, parliamentary constituencies, international relations and educational sector. It was revealed that these sub-patterns were not merely standing on its own and these patterns were largely influenced by a number of surrounding issues outside the context of the Parliament. So as to confirm that the PQs were initiated by the opposition PR on behalf of the masses to deliver their dissatisfaction in terms of policies, public agenda and many more in the Parliament.

PQs were prepared in advance and the relevant ministers were expected to provide answers to each of PQs raised by the PR members. In a sense, a process of information was exchanged between the both sides in Parliament. The relevant ministers were held accountable to each of PQs addressed to them and they were expected to have the PQs researched first before responding. In the Twelfth Parliament, the PR members actively took part during the PQs session even though they were strictly limited in terms of numbers. The frequency of PR patterns of behaviour was manifested in several forms of sub-patterns.

First, the PQs concerning the post-2008 election was raised, PR was of the view that, for instance, the 2008 general election must be revised in terms of electoral matters such as the compulsory registration for voting, the use of permanent inks and the revision of the Elections Acts. The PR members believed that the electoral system must be democratised and transparent and therefore, they had urged the ruling BN government to guarantee the fair conduct of the government machinery. Therefore, the opposition PR consistently questioned the action of the ruling BN government in handling certain national matters and the people’s interests. Second, matters concerning the local government affairs were raised. For most of the time, the opposition PR had consistently fought for the implementation of local government election in the country. The idea behind the implementation was to ensure that the members of local government are elected and chosen by the people and not to be blindly selected by the government. Realising that the local government system was
underrepresented and the opposition PR had to monitor the local government activities in terms of its scopes and capacity in rendering services to the public. And this had to be done when PQs related to local government were frequently addressed to the relevant ministers in the Parliament.

Third, PR looked into the issues in the parliamentary constituencies. In the Parliament, stress was made upon the significance of constituencies among the PR members. Some PR members presented their underlying issues in their constituencies. Going by the logic, PR had the least in terms of access towards funds or governmental machinery. This, for some time, had slowed down the progress of developing the significance of constituencies. For instance, people who resided in the constituency maintain a tendency of asking things or something that could benefit them in a form of material development such as roads, schools, and access to health, education, safety of the surroundings, and many more. The public’s situation was indeed very demanding and eventually PR was obliged to ensure that those needs are to be secured. It was timely manifested in the form of PQs where the ruling BN government should heed and address particulars points raised by PR.

Fourth, the opposition PR dealt with some particular issues on Malaysia’s international relations in the Parliament. As the de facto national government, the ruling BN had to pay crucial attention towards its foreign policies and how are they going to manage its foreign affairs in accordance with the standard of international demands. PR attempted to question over some of foreign issues to keep observing the government’s action by posing relevant questions with reference to the conducts.

Last but not least, the PQs concerning the educational sector. As has been argued previously in the Chapter Three where the growing needs of education is significant within the framework of political process. Due to this, government policies in regard to the quality
of education delivered to the public had become part of a heated debate in Parliament. A number of issues were raised besides the quality, such as the relations between education and politics in particular. For instance, PR questioned the Minister on the involvement of politics within the context of educational sector. Clarifications were made on behalf of the government and PR moved further to question the issues and policies that related to education for the sake of maintaining the level of transparency throughout the process.

As a result of parliamentary activity and precisely the PQs, the opposition PR had encountered a positive constraint in the PQs session of the Twelfth Parliament. Most of the PQs laid down by PR were positively responded to by Parliament where the PQs were answered within the capability of the relevant ministers. Except in a case involving a serious national matter in which one DAP member was denied an opportunity to debate the matter on the grounds that the Speaker had the legal authority to decide the possibility of a discussion.

To a certain extent, the PR directly applied parliamentary pressure where they had attempted to raise and debate the same matter. For instance, the PKFZ scandal was brought before the House frequently. Fortunately, the issue had triggered a desired response from the ruling BN government in which they had promised to set up an inquiry on that particular scandal. In this sense, the opposition PR had partially succeeded in Parliament to the extent that they fully utilised all resources and information in bringing about a greater deal of democratic accountability.

In terms of parliamentary motion, the study found that there were several motions which were frequently raised by PR in the Twelfth Parliament. These motions directly formed the patterns of PR behaviour due to its level of frequency. The first pattern concerned with Malaysia’s international relations. Among PR members, PAS was the most frequent in raising a motion on international relations. For instance, PAS strongly urged the government
to refute the idea of Israel’s 60th celebration since its inception in Palestine. The current situation and religious struggle in Palestine probably motivated PAS to raise such a motion to be heard before Parliament. Besides that, PR also touched on some issues involving the abuse of human rights in Myanmar and many more. In a way and by looking at this pattern of parliamentary motion, PR merely acted as a reminder to the ruling BN government to respond directly to a certain foreign issues rather than sitting idle.

At the very least, on behalf of the nation, the opposition PR and the ruling BN government could deliver their concerns and sensitivities. Second, PR had extensively raised motions on governmental projects and policies. In this sense, any suspected irregularities of the government would be given a prority if and unless the Parliament had granted its approval to further debate the issue. Probably if the ruling BN was proven to be involved, the PR may later extend the issue for the future electoral references where the public would have to judge this matter. Third, PR attempted to highlight a motion on government’s transparency. This particular motion had an impact value upon the governmental conduct. Some of issues were brought to the attention of parliamentary members for clarification. Normally it has been a norm and practice for the government to handle some of developmental projects involving a huge amount of money. For PR, they believed that these sources came from taxpayers’ money and therefore had to ask whether this money was properly allocated or not. For instance, the Kereta Api Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) scandal was decisively questioned by PR. Last but not least, the motion with reference to people’s welfare. This motion was considered as significant towards the progress of human development in the country. Difficulties that the people had during those times were manifested in the form of a motion backed by PR in the Parliament.

For instance, PAS has fought for oil royalty in Kelantan and Terengganu. They demanded that the ruling BN federal government fulfill their promises in giving the royalty
money to the people. To a certain extent, this issue has been translated into a form of electoral manifesto where it is politicised by the opposition in the election. At the end of the motion session, PR was ignored. It exhibited that not all parliamentary motions proposed by PR were approved by the Speaker. It is suggested that PR encountered a “serious” form of constraint when its proposals were rejected for debate. This was expected since they are not strong in terms of parliamentary muscles. At this point, the ruling BN gained advantages over the minority PR in the Twelfth Parliament.

As for the final part of analysis under the section of parliamentary budgeting process, the study found that PR parliamentary pattern was synonymous with the behaviour of political economy. The ruling BN’s financial proposals were laid down in different themes initiated by the Prime Minister. It was highlighted that PR was pro-actively taking part in each of these themes in particular the leader of opposition Anwar Ibrahim. Even though the ruling BN possesses an executive power to execute the budgeting means, according the current standard principle, the budget has to be brought first in the Parliament and debates are expected to be carried out procedurally. Besides the PQs and motions where PR gained less advantages over the issues, in the budgeting process the outcome or the constraints were held by the ruling BN government. At this level, the ruling BN was impacted most. PR rendered considerable parliamentary attacks to each of budgeting proposals to the extent that the ruling BN had to respond with information and evidence. In a way, PR believed that the budgeting process was part of the development of national agenda and therefore the possible outcome from it would more or less affect every layer of society.

Interestingly, the study also suggested that there was a close relationship between the outcome of the 2008 Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election and the opposition PR behaviour in the Twelfth Parliament. As analysed earlier in the Chapter Two, political decision made by Dr. Wan Azizah was completely unexpected. The advent of that particular
by-election had become part of political changes in Malaysia in the post-2008 general elections. At first, Anwar had become the key of unification among the opposition political parties in Malaysia and later on he realised that he must possess a parliamentary power and therefore had contested the vacant Permatang Pauh seat made available by his wife and tremendously denied the ruling BN opportunity in terms of votes obtained. According to the standard practice of Malaysian political system, anyone who demands to be the MP, have to contest and win the election first. In this case, Anwar did extremely well due to the mandate that he received from Permatang Pauh voters. Once he was inside Parliament in the capacity of the opposition leader and only then he could provide a delicate balance in the Twelfth Parliament.

Another point to be made here is that Pakatan Rakyat also exhibited a remarkable electoral performance during the 2011 state elections held in Sarawak. Another form of electoral tsunami had occurred at the state level when the opposition Pakatan Rakyat for the first time had obtained fifteen (15) out of seventy-one (71) seats contested in the April 2011 election. The minor victory of PR was significant as it indicated that Sarawakian voters started to favor change gradually. As argued by Wilson Woon, there were at least three patterns of democratic transition in Sarawak such as the revolt of urban voters, the emergence of a strong opposition coalition and the impending resignation of Taib Mahmud as Chief Minister of Sarawak. It was almost impossible for the democratic change to persist without a concrete mutual electoral pact among the parties and later on the coalitional pact would be materialised by rallying to lobby the voters in accordance with the designated aim and policies.

The study concluded that the patterns of PR parliamentary behaviour in the Twelfth Parliament had led towards the oppositional consolidation in which each of PR political parties took part in the respective sessions in the Parliament. PR had to ensure that all the policies designated or formulated by the ruling BN government would not go unnoticed. Pressure was applied towards the ruling BN in the hope that the exchange of information was secured and PR would be able to evaluate the necessities of its future implementation in terms of proposed policies or any of governmental conduct. In a way, the study suggested that PR parliamentary behaviour in the post-2008 election and in the Twelfth Parliament would possibly contribute towards the nomenclature of ‘new parliamentary behaviour (NPB)’. This study also proposed to coin the concept of NPB to further comprehend the behaviour of PR within the context of parliamentary soft-authoritarian regime.

Previously, scholars were inclined to classify the nature of Malaysian politics based on the performance of ruling BN government, either in electoral or legislative terms, particularly the Malay-based party UMNO. As argued by William Case, Malaysian politics could be perceived as “semi-democratic” because the ruling government imposed considerable limitations upon the societal organisations and the transfers of power at the federal level through electoral means were denied.\(^6\) At the state level, the transfers of power were realised but not at the federal level. Based on this outlook, this study attempted to draw a robust relationship between the opposition Pakatan Rakyat new parliamentary behaviour and the notions of “soft-authoritarian”, “pseudo-democracy”, “quasi-democracy” and the “semi-democratic” nature of Malaysian politics. The concept of NPB is possible where the discourse of democratisation is made visible and political participation is substantially to be encouraged and people will have an ample opportunity to shift away from a parochial form of politics to a more healthy and pro-active political participation. NPB would only work and

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operate until and unless the parliamentary opposition decisively plays their legislative roles under the embedded circumstances of parliamentary soft-authoritarianism.

Besides that, the patterns of Pakatan Rakyat parliamentary behaviour with reference to the Twelfth Parliament (2008-2012) had consolidated the degree of oppositional inter-party system. Having made their electoral gains from the 2008 general elections and obtained parliamentary access signalled the assumption of ‘balance of power’ to the dominant BN regime in the practice of parliamentary democracy. Pakatan Rakyat political parties, through the Twelfth Parliament, had ample opportunities, though restricted, to exchange their shadowly-designated policies among the parties and later on would propose to the House or the ruling government. Each opposition parties contributed their political resources, for instance, research skills, financial aids, intellectual capability, legislative consensus and many more. In a way, PR demonstrated a form of parliamentary resilience in accordance with the identifiable nature of Malaysian politics. The nature of Pakatan Rakyat inter-party system in the Twelfth Parliament revealed a new finding based on the Shane Martin’s framework of parliamentary/legislative behaviour. The opposition PR fully utilised their legislative capability based on their own terms. Three different parties (PKR, PAS and DAP) under Pakatan Rakyat symbolises three different ideas and a full-fledge force. Logically, a single opposition party, without establishing a set of relationship, in the Parliament may be found as ‘isolated’. The voices were not heard well and no exchange of oppositional strategies would persist. But the case would be different if the so-called single party gets to form a coalition with other parties. And this would assure that the oppositional coalition could hold the ruling government more accountable than it did previously.

For the future prospects of Pakatan Rakyat, they would have to scrutinise further the electoral grounds so that they could secure greater votes, either at state or national level. Therefore, the ‘New Parliamentary Behaviour’ strongly suggested that the opposition Pakatan
Rakyat political parties could perform beyond the parameter and for them to secure legitimacy and mandates in the next 2013 general elections require a critical and strategic thinking. Strategies of mobilisation are to be systematically drawn and the local needs must be met. Under the ruling BN regime or the so-called factor of ‘soft-authoritarianism’, political parties compete to the extent of political imbalance. With the ruling BN vastly equipped with electoral machinery grounds, the opposition Pakatan Rakyat substantially depended on grassroot support and this will determine to what extent the venture of competition makes sense. If the oppositional victory is not being denied in the future 2013 elections and provided with additional constituencies that they could have had secured, the ruling BN government would be held far more accountable than it was. This study, in a way, suggested that the opposition political parties in Malaysia could be perceived as the strongest opposition in Southeast Asia based on its previous recorded performances, determination, and the level of consistency in imposing challenges towards the authoritarian regime. Pakatan Rakyat parliamentary behaviour will also strengthen the exchange process of check and balance throughout the layers of government. It also served as a ‘gentle admonition’ to the current regime so that they could accommodate and celebrate the different views upon their political performances. At the same time, the establishment of a robust inter-party system could gain beneficial experiences based on the consensus they made. The oppositional circle would be matured across time and also become a demanding alternative. Only then, the parliamentary democratisation could be materialised and realised based on the built-in demands.
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## APPENDIX 1

LIST OF PAKATAN RAKYAT (PR) MEMBERS IN THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Ahmad Kassim</td>
<td>PKR</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Kuala Kedah- Kedah</td>
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<td>2) Rashid Din</td>
<td>PKR</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Merbok- Kedah</td>
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<td>3) Johari Abdul</td>
<td>PKR</td>
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<td>4) N. Gobalakrishnan</td>
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<td>5) Zulkifli Noordin</td>
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<td>6) Abdul Aziz Kadir</td>
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<td>7) Amran Ab Ghani</td>
<td>PKR</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Tanah Merah- Kelantan</td>
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<td>8) Saifuddin Nasution Ismail</td>
<td>PKR</td>
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<td>9) Anwar Ibrahim</td>
<td>PKR</td>
<td>Bachelor’s in Malay Studies</td>
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<td>10) Tan Tee Beng</td>
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<td>11) Zahrain Mohamed Hashim</td>
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<td>12) Mohd Yusmadi Mohd Yusoff</td>
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<td>13) Mohsin Fadzli Haji Samsuri</td>
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<td>14) Michael Jeyakumar Devaraj</td>
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<td>16) Azan Ismail</td>
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<td>17) Fuziah Salleh</td>
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<td>18) Zainal Abidin Ahmad</td>
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<td>19) William Leong</td>
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<td>20) Mohamed Azmin Ali</td>
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<td>21) Zuraida Kamaruddin</td>
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<td>29) Nurul Izzah Anwar</td>
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<td>30) Abdul Khalid Ibrahim</td>
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<td>31) Kamarul Baharins Abbas</td>
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<td>32) Mohd Nasir Zakaria</td>
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<td>57</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>Tony Pua</td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>Charles Santiago</td>
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<td>Tan Kok Wai</td>
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<td>77</td>
<td>John Fernandez</td>
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<td>Loke Siew Fook</td>
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<td>81</td>
<td>Hiew King Chiew</td>
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<td>82</td>
<td>Chong Chien Jen</td>
<td>DAP</td>
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</table>
# APPENDIX 2

LIST OF COMMITTEES OF PAKATAN MP’s ACCORDING TO MINISTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>PKR</th>
<th>PAS</th>
<th>DAP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Home Affairs/Kementerian Dalam Negeri (KDN)</td>
<td>1) Johari Abdul 2) Salahuddin Ayub 3) Karpal Singh</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Finance/ Kementerian Kewangan (MoF)</td>
<td>1) Azmin Ali 1) Dr. Zulkifli Ahmad</td>
<td>1) Lim Guan Eng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Transportation/ Kementerian Pengangkutan</td>
<td>1) Zahrain Mohamed Hashim 1) Khalid Samad 1) Tan Kok Wai</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Works/Kementerian Kerja Raya</td>
<td>1) Kamarul Bahrin Abbas 1) Mahfuz Omar</td>
<td>1) Gobind Singh Deo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kementerian Perusahaan Perladangan dan Komoditi</td>
<td>1) Rashid Din 1) Wan Abdul Rahim 1) Er Teck Hwa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water/ Kementerian Tenaga, Teknologi Hijau dan Air (KeTTHA)</td>
<td>1) Tian Chua 1) Nasir Zakaria 1) Charles Santiago</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of International Trade and Industry/Kementerian Perdagangan Antarabangsa dan Industri (MITI)</td>
<td>1) William Leong 1) Dr. Hatta Ramli</td>
<td>1) Teresa Kok</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry/Kementerian Pertanian dan Industri</td>
<td>1) Ahmad Kassim 1) Taib Azamuddin 1) Sim Tong Him</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism /Kementerian Dalam Negeri dan Hal Ehwal Pengguna</td>
<td>1) Azan Ismail</td>
<td>1) Mohd Abdul Wahid Endut</td>
<td>1) Jeff Ooi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Education/Kementerian Pelajaran</td>
<td>1) Yusmadi Yusoff</td>
<td>1) Che Uda Che Nik</td>
<td>1) Chong En</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Information/Kementerian Penerangan, Komunikasi dan Kebudayaan</td>
<td>1) Amran Abdul Ghani</td>
<td>1) Mahfuz Omar</td>
<td>1) Teo Nie Ching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Human Resource/Kementerian Sumber Manusia</td>
<td>1) Abdullah Sani Abdul Hamid</td>
<td>1) Muhammad Husin</td>
<td>1) M. Kulasegara n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation/Kementerian Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi</td>
<td>1) Nurul Izzah</td>
<td>1) Che Rosli Che Mat</td>
<td>1) Chow Kon Yeow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Housing and Local Government/Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan</td>
<td>1) Hee Loy Sian</td>
<td>1) Siti Mariah Mahmud</td>
<td>1) Nga Kor Ming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry of Defence/Kementerian Pertahanan</td>
<td>1) Saifuddin Nasution</td>
<td>1) M. Nizar Jamaluddin</td>
<td>1) Liew Chin Tong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Rural and Regional Development/Kementerian Kemajuan Luar Bandar dan Wilayah</td>
<td>1) Ab Aziz Ab Kadir</td>
<td>1) Abd Halim Abd Rahman</td>
<td>1) M. Manogaran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Kementerian Luar Negeri</td>
<td>1) Sivarasa Rasiah</td>
<td>1) Kamarudin Jaffar</td>
<td>1) P. Ramasamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Youth and Sport/Kementerian Belia dan Sukan</td>
<td>1) Tan Tee Beng</td>
<td>1) Firdaus Jaafar</td>
<td>1) Loke Siew Fook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry of Health/Kementerian Kesihatan</td>
<td>1) Lee Boon Chye</td>
<td>1) Mohd Hayati Othman</td>
<td>1) Tan Seng Giaw</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry of Woman, Family and Community Development/Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita dan Masyarakat</td>
<td>1) Zuraidah Kamaruddin</td>
<td>1) Siti Zailah</td>
<td>1) Fong Po Kuan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry of</td>
<td>1) Manikavasagam</td>
<td>1) Wan Abd Rahim</td>
<td>2) Fong Kui Lun</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministries and Departments</td>
<td>1) Wee Choo Keong</td>
<td>1) Lo’ Lo’ Mohd Ghazali</td>
<td>1) Lim Lip Eng</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Federal Territory/Kementerian Wilayah Persekutuan</td>
<td>1) Zulkifli Nordin</td>
<td>1) Salahuddin Ayub</td>
<td>1) Tony Pua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Higher Education/Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi</td>
<td>1) Gobalakrishnan</td>
<td>1) Mujahid Yusof Rawa</td>
<td>1) Chong Chien Jen</td>
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</table>
**APPENDIX 3**

**LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What are the issues raised by the opposition PAS, PKR and DAP in the 2008 general elections?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What are the parliamentary constraints encountered by Pakatan Rakyat in the Twelfth Parliament?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To what extent the relationship between PRM and KeADILan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To what extent the nomenclature of “pseudo-democracy” in Malaysia?</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Even though PAS adopts an Islamic-based ideology but still DAP could cooperate with PAS in the post-2008 general elections, why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Was DAP-PAS cooperation due to the factor of Tuan Guru Nik Aziz?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Was there any “concensus” policy among Pakatan Rakyat?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Did Pakatan Rakyat discuss about <em>Hudud</em> before it was formed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Was there any relationship between the conduct of parliamentary by-election in the post-2008 with the development of parliamentary politics?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>What was the impact of 2008 Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election towards Malaysian politics?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>What are the factors that influenced the formation of questions asked by PR? Was it spontaneously or specifically designed by a research team?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>What was the significance of 2008 Permatang Pauh parliamentary by-election?</td>
</tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>What are the roles of the opposition leader of Pakatan Rakyat in the Parliament?</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>To what extent did Anwar Ibrahim perform in the Twelfth Parliament?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Was Pakatan Rakyat performance in the Parliament considered as “collective”?</td>
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