

PERSPECTIVE

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Voting Behaviour in FELDA Parliamentary Constituencies since 2004

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Demographic differences between FELDA-occupied parliamentary constituencies make it difficult to conceive of FELDA settlers as a coherent, disproportionately large, pro-Barisan Nasional (BN) voting bloc.
- FELDA schemes are distributed in a highly uneven manner among affected constituencies.
- Many FELDA constituencies are also heterogeneous in voter ethnic composition. In 2013, one-third of FELDA wards had less than 60 per cent ethnic Malay voters.
- BN's vote share has fallen significantly in nearly three-quarters of all FELDA-occupied constituencies since 2004, including rural seats harbouring above-average numbers of FELDA schemes.
- Going into the 14th Malaysian general election, FELDA constituency voting behaviour appears to be shaped mostly by each constituency's ethnic mix of voters, the peculiarities of individual parliamentary candidates, and the likelihood of three-cornered fights between parties from Barisan Nasional, Pakatan Harapan, and Gagasan Sejahtera.

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INTRODUCTION¹

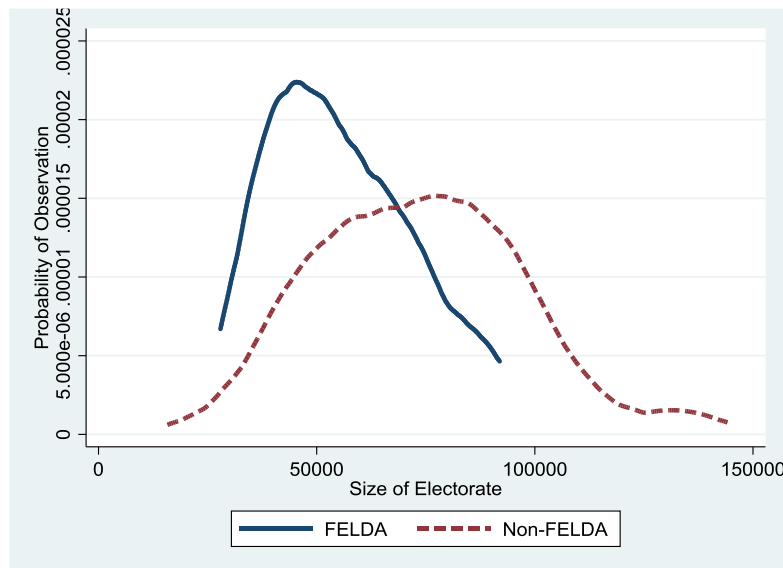
With ruling coalition Barisan Nasional (BN)'s urban vote share plunging since Malaysia's 2008 general elections, political observers have been keen to sniff out hints of changing behaviour in the Malaysian countryside. Agricultural settlers sponsored by Malaysia's Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA), in particular, are believed to be a prime mover of rural voter preferences.² From the late 1950s to 1990, roughly 120,000 low-income households recruited by FELDA benefitted from over 300 agency-led land development schemes, occupying over half a million hectares of farmland. Virtually no Malaysian state was left untouched by these endeavours, save Penang, Sarawak, and the Federal Territories.

FELDA settlers, most of whom are ethnic Malays, have generally been strong BN supporters in past elections; a trend that analysts believe continues until the present day. Indeed, FELDA's long history of establishing self-contained settlements, accompanied by strong economic and institutional links with BN (via the United Malays National Organisation), has prompted some observers to label FELDA schemes as a ready-made 'vote bank' for the ruling coalition.³

IS THE FELDA VOTE EXCEPTIONAL?

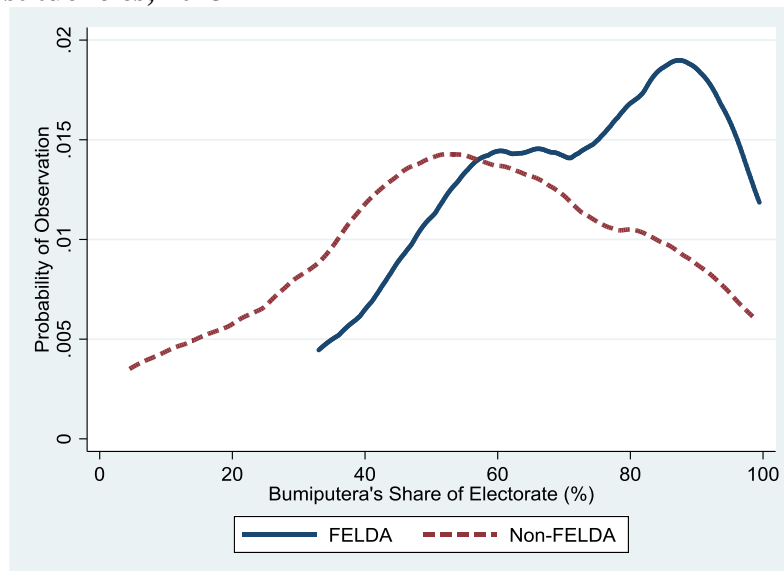
With over three decades of FELDA-dominated agricultural expansion, the Malaysian voting landscape has been increasingly penetrated by FELDA settler preferences. One recent estimate – which takes into account the original recruited settlers, as well as their dependents, adult children, and associated workers – pegs the present FELDA voter base at somewhere between 1 to 1.2 million, which would approximate 6 per cent of Malaysia's current eligible voter base of 14.9 million.⁴ But because of what observers have labelled as gerrymandering and malapportionment of electoral seats in favour of BN's predominantly rural ethnic Malay voter base, FELDA-occupied wards take up a much higher share of parliamentary seats than their voter numbers might suggest; by one educated estimate, as many as 54 out of 222 seats, 46 of which voted for the BN coalition in 2013.⁵ Indeed, as **Figure 1** shows, FELDA-occupied wards tend to have a median of 20,000 less registered voters when compared with Peninsular Malaysia's non-FELDA constituencies.⁶ Similarly, FELDA-occupied seats usually have higher proportions of ethnic Malay voters than non-FELDA wards in Peninsular Malaysia; over 20 per cent more, by our count (**Figure 2**).⁷

Figure 1: Electorate Distribution, FELDA vs. Non-FELDA Constituencies, 2013



Sources: See Appendix 1.

Figure 2: Distribution of Ethnic Malay Share of Electorate, FELDA vs. Non-FELDA Constituencies, 2013



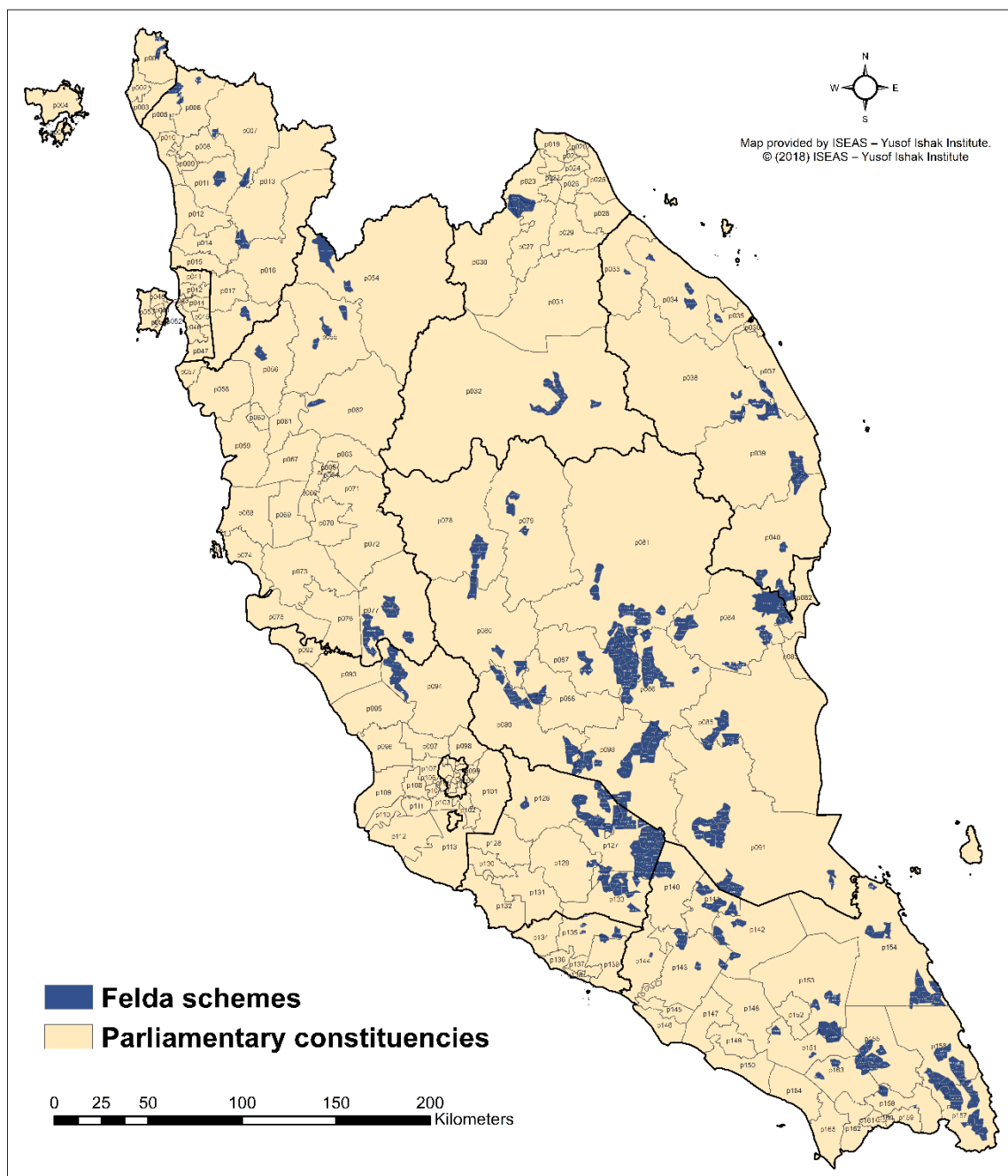
Sources: See Appendix 1.

One would therefore expect ‘FELDA constituencies’ to be predominantly of Malay ethnicity, have a disproportionate influence on Malaysia’s election outcomes, and lean strongly towards BN. But how far are these three expectations justified when we look more closely at individual FELDA-occupied seats?

‘DIVERSITY IN UNITY’

In reality, the so-called FELDA-occupied voting bloc harbours considerable variation between individual wards. This paper’s analysis, made possible by reconstructing known FELDA scheme locations across Peninsular Malaysia, contends that FELDA-occupied constituencies are considerably heterogeneous in voter composition. To begin with, while FELDA settler schemes are profusely scattered across the Peninsula, they are not evenly distributed. Instead, they tend to clump together in a relatively small number of locales, leaving vast areas drained of FELDA voter influence (**Map 1**).

Map 1: Peninsular Malaysia Parliamentary Constituencies and FELDA Schemes, 2017



Sources: See Appendix 1.

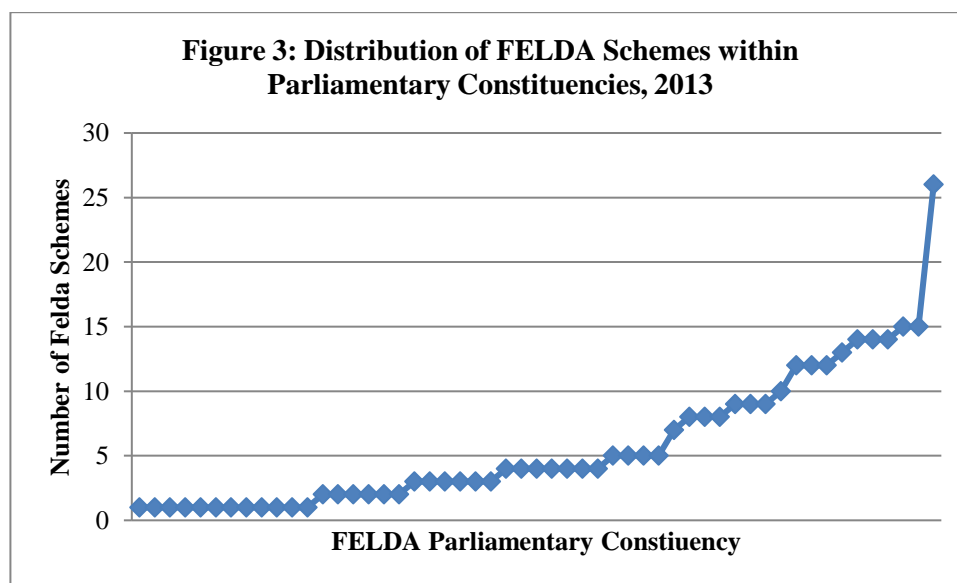
We can further illustrate such ‘lumpiness’ by tallying the number of schemes within each FELDA-occupied ward. Out of the 305 FELDA settler schemes known to still be in existence, over half are concentrated in just 11 parliamentary constituencies (**Table 1**), leaving 42 constituencies to divide up the rest.

Table 1: FELDA Parliamentary Seats with 10 or More Schemes, 2013

No	State	Parliamentary Constituency	Number of FELDA Settler Schemes
1	Negeri Sembilan	Jempol	26
2	Pahang	Kuala Krau	15
3	Pahang	Rompin	15
4	Pahang	Jerantut	14
5	Pahang	Paya Besar	14
6	Pahang	Bera	14
7	Negeri Sembilan	Jelevu	13
8	Pahang	Maran	12
9	Johor	Mersing	12
10	Johor	Pengerang	12
11	Perak	Tanjong Malim	10
TOTAL			157

Sources: See Appendix 1.

At the other end of the spectrum, a whopping 24 constituencies have three or less FELDA schemes each. Between these ‘mega-FELDA’ and ‘mini-FELDA’ extremes lie the remaining 18 ‘middle-FELDA’ constituencies, each hosting four to nine schemes (**Figure 3**).



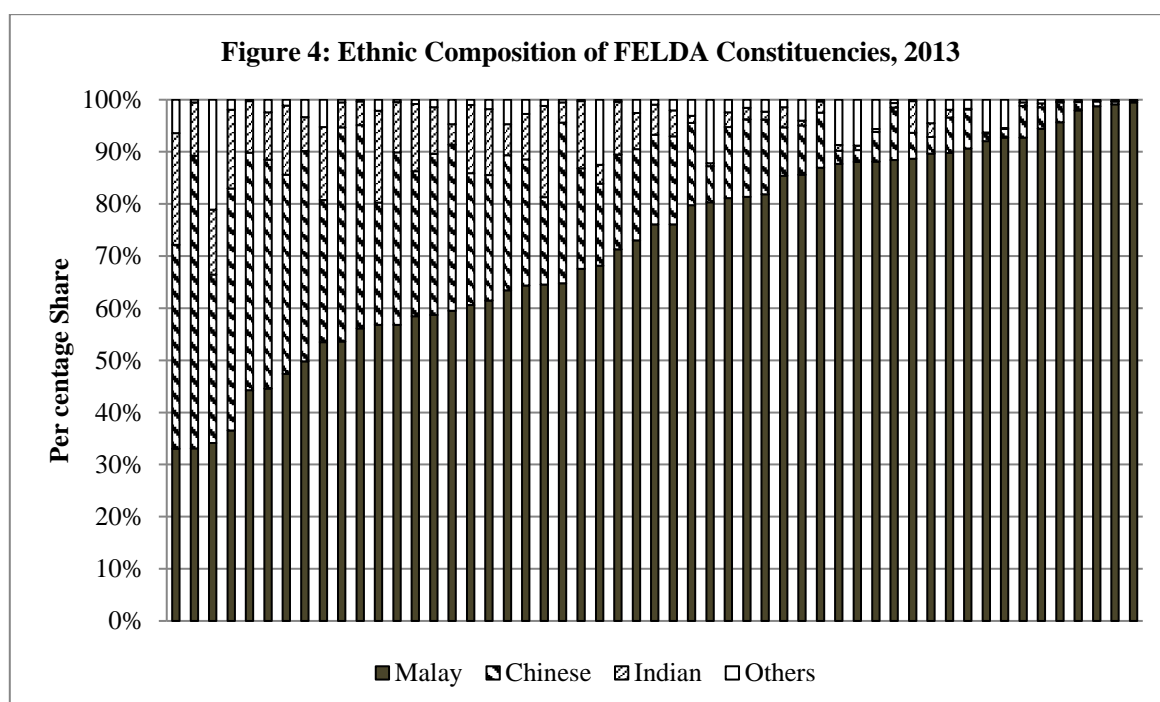
Sources: See Appendix 1.

Given that constituencies vary widely in electorate size, the weight that FELDA votes carry within each constituency also matters. For instance, although Pengerang constituency has 12 schemes compared to Rompin’s 15, the former’s lower total electorate size appears to give Pengerang’s FELDA settlers far greater influence at election time.⁸

One independent estimate pegs Pengerang’s 2018 voter base at around 24,300, or 60 per cent of the electorate.⁹

Building accurate estimates of actual eligible FELDA voters per constituency, however, is difficult and time-consuming. The exact number of settler households in each scheme is publicly available only up to 2005. We do not yet know of any national-level open data circulating regarding current settler family size and age range, let alone the extent to which household members have moved outstation, working, living – and voting – elsewhere. This could be one area ripe for further research.¹⁰

Finally, FELDA-occupied parliamentary constituencies differ considerably in their ethnic make-up. In 2013, one-third of such wards had less than 60 per cent Malay voters, and more than 25 per cent Chinese voters (**Figure 4**). These relatively mixed areas even included seats with large numbers of FELDA schemes, such as Jempol, Jelebu, Bera, and Tanjong Malim (see **Table 1**). To be sure, the remaining 37 FELDA seats had Malay-led electoral bases (over 60 per cent of eligible voters). But over half of these wards had only three schemes or less. FELDA’s actual political impact on a large number of Malay-dominated constituencies is therefore probably quite weak.



Sources: See Appendix 1.

In short, the idea of a disproportionately large FELDA voting bloc within Peninsular Malaysia is rather problematic. Schemes and their voters are distributed between affected wards in a grossly uneven manner, with the majority of wards having a marginal FELDA presence. Furthermore, some FELDA seats – despite groaning with settlers – have relatively high proportions of eligible Chinese voters, complicating the notion that FELDA-heavy constituencies typically vote according to rural Malay preferences.

FELDA CONSTITUENCY VOTING PATTERNS

Bearing in mind these demographic differences, we can now turn to the recent voting record of FELDA parliamentary seats. In the previous three general elections (2004, 2008 and 2013), candidates representing Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS), Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR), the Democratic Action Party (DAP), and Parti Socialis Malaysia (PSM), had, by our count, emerged victorious at one time or another in 13 different FELDA-occupied constituencies (**Table 2**).

Table 2: FELDA Seats held by non-Barisan Nasional Candidates, 2004-2013

Year	Parliamentary Constituency	Ethnic Make-up, 2013*	FELDA schemes	Winning Party	Majority (%)
2004	Pendang (Kedah)	-	1	PAS	50.1
2008	Tanah Merah (Kelantan)	-	4	PKR	50.2
2008	Hulu Selangor (Selangor)	-	4	PKR	50.2
2008	Padang Terap (Kedah)	-	2	PAS	50.6
2008	Pendang (Kedah)	-	1	PAS	54.0
2008	Sik (Kedah)	-	1	PAS	50.7
2008	Merbok (Kedah)	-	1	PKR	53.2
2008	Kulim Bandar Baharu (Kedah)	-	1	PKR	57.2
2008	Sungai Siput (Perak)	-	1	PKR/PSM	51.5
2013	Dungun (Terengganu)	≥ 85% Malay	5	PAS	52.6
2013	Kulai (Johor)	Mixed	5	DAP	59.0
2013	Raub (Pahang)	Mixed	4	DAP	53.2
2013	Temerloh (Pahang)	≥ 60% Malay	2	PAS	51.0
2013	Kuala Nerus (Terengganu)	≥ 85% Malay	1	PAS	50.5
2013	Sungai Siput (Perak)	Mixed	1	PKR/PSM	53.2

*Mixed = Below 60 per cent Malay, or 25 per cent and over Chinese. Precise ethnic breakdowns are currently unavailable for years 2004 and 2008. See Appendix 1 for sources.

Table 2 suggests three things. First, FELDA seats slipping in and out of BN's hands have tended to host relatively small numbers of FELDA schemes. Second, politicians contesting these seats have usually battled all the way down to the wire, except in some areas with a more ethnically-mixed voter base. This tendency is connected with a third, important point: PAS, while in coalition with PKR and DAP, has tended to clinch FELDA seats in Malay-dominated wards (over 60 per cent Malay). Meanwhile, PKR, PSM and DAP have had success winning votes in more ethnically diverse constituencies (over 25 per cent Chinese). These findings suggest that marginal FELDA seats are being heavily influenced by trends at the broader Peninsular level, namely that non-BN parties have decided, with some success, to reach for the spoils of victory with ethnic considerations in mind, somewhat mimicking BN's own coalition-based ethnic campaign strategy.¹¹

These recent dynamics also extend somewhat to the remaining 40 FELDA parliamentary seats that have waved BN's flag uninterruptedly since 2004. **Table 3** shows the voting record of each ward between 2004 and 2013:

Table 3: BN vote share change in 40 FELDA constituencies, 2004-2013

No	Parliamentary Constituency	Ethnic Make-up	Urban Devt Category	FELDA Schemes	BN Vote Decline, 2004-2013	BN vote share, 2004 to 2013 (%)			Main Contending Parties	GE-14 PH contest plans ¹²
						2004	2008	2013		
1	Kuala Krau (Pahang)	≥ 85% Malay	Rural	15	Slight	64.9	59.7	58.4	PAS	PPBM
2	Rompin (Pahang)		Rural	15	Stable	65.9	66.7	66.8	PAS	PKR
3	Maran (Pahang)		Rural	12	Slight	65.0	63.2	60.1	PAS	PPBM
4	Pengerang (Johor)		Rural	12	Stable	N/A**	N/A	83.6	PKR	PPBM
5	Kota Tinggi (Johor)		Rural	9	Stable	N/A	85.9	84.0	PAS	PPBM
6	Kemaman (Terengganu)		Semi-urban	8	Moderate	63.9	60.3	57.8	PAS (2004); PKR (2008/2013)	PKR
7	Pekan (Pahang)		Rural	8	Stable	78.0	78.7	76.6	PAS (2004); PKR (2008/2013)	PPBM
8	Padang Besar (Perlis)		Rural	3	Slight	66.9	59.3	60.5	PAS	PPBM
9	Setiu (Terengganu)		Rural	3	Slight	58.9	57.9	56.8	PAS	PPBM
10	Hulu Trengganu (Terengganu)		Rural	3	Slight	59.7	61.6	57.4	PAS	PPBM
11	Jerlun (Kedah)		Rural	2	Stable	53.0	53.0	53.6	PAS	PPBM
12	Kubang Pasu (Kedah)	Semi-urban	1	Moderate	67.3	58.5	59.3	PAS	PPBM	
13	Besut (Terengganu)	Semi-urban	1	Slight	59.7	61.0	56.7	PAS	PPBM	
14	Larut (Perak)	Rural	1	Slight	62.5	53.2	56.4	PAS	PPBM	
15	Jerantut (Pahang)	Rural	14	Moderate	62.3	52.6	54.7	PAS	PPBM	
16	Paya Besar (Pahang)	Rural	14	Moderate	72.0	64.1	59.3	PKR	PPBM	
17	Mersing (Johor)	Rural	12	Slight	80.5	75.9	71.5	PAS	PPBM	
18	Gua Musang (Kelantan)	Rural	9	Slight	66.1	59.3	62.3	PAS	PPBM	
19	Tampin (Negeri Sembilan)	≥ 60% Malay	Urban	9	Rapid	80.4	68.7	61.7	PAS	Amanah
20	Tenggara (Johor)		Rural	7	Moderate	88.3	79.3	75.1	PAS	PPBM
21	Lenggong (Perak)		Rural	3	Moderate	67.4	64.4	59.0	PAS	PPBM
22	Gerik (Perak)		Rural	2	Moderate	74.9	64.3	61.7	PAS	PPBM
23	Lipis (Pahang)		Rural	2	Rapid	69.0	59.8	56.0	PAS	PPBM
24	Kuala Pilah (Negeri Sembilan)		Semi-urban	1	Moderate	71.6	66.2	62.3	PKR	PPBM
25	Jasin (Melaka)		Rural	1	Rapid	76.0	64.6	60.6	PAS (2004); PKR (2008/2013)	Amanah
26	Jempol (Negeri Sembilan)	Mixed*	Rural	26	Rapid	74.0	66.1	58.0	PAS	PPBM
27	Bera (Pahang)		Rural	14	Rapid	58.3	55.9	51.8	PAS (2004/2008); PKR (2013)	PKR
28	Jejebu (Negeri Sembilan)		Rural	13	Rapid	77.9	70.8	59.6	PAS	Amanah
29	Tanjong Malim (Perak)		Rural	10	Rapid	71.7	57.4	54.2	PKR	PKR
30	Bentong (Pahang)		Rural	8	Rapid	72.5	66.6	50.4	DAP/PKR	DAP
31	Sekijang (Johor)		Rural	5	Rapid	80.4	68.9	54.1	PKR	PKR
32	Sembrong (Johor)		Rural	5	Rapid	88.3	73.7	65.2	PAS (2004); PKR (2008/2013)	PKR
33	Cameron Highlands (Pahang)		Rural	4	Rapid	72.1	60.2	45.9	DAP	DAP
34	Alor Gajah (Melaka)		Rural	4	Rapid	80.2	66.2	60.8	DAP	PPBM
35	Labis (Johor)		Rural	4	Rapid	74.2	58.8	50.6	DAP/PKR	DAP
36	Pagoh (Johor)		Rural	4	Moderate	82.8	71.3	66.2	PAS	PPBM
37	Segamat (Johor)	Rural	3	Rapid	63.9	55.2	51.6	DAP/PKR	PKR	
38	Simpang Renggam (Johor)	Rural	3	Rapid	79.7	65.7	58.4	PAS	PPBM	
39	Tebrau (Johor)	Semi-urban	2	Rapid	84.1	65.8	51.1	PAS (2004/2008); PKR (2013)	PKR	
40	Ledang (Johor)	Rural	1	Rapid	76.9	58.9	51.7	PAS (2004); PKR (2008/2013)	PKR	

*Mixed = Below 60 per cent Malay, or 25 per cent and over Chinese. **N/A = Walkover.

Sources: See Appendix 1.

Since 2004, support for BN has generally fallen across the board, but the degree of the slide strongly correlates with the ethnic make-up of each FELDA ward's total voter base. Constituencies with extremely high proportions of ethnic Malay voters have tended to support BN consistently, or, at worst, have withdrawn support only slightly over the past decade. Support for BN tends to drop in FELDA wards with lower proportions of Malays,

to the point where wards with less than 60 per cent Malay voters or more than 25 per cent Chinese voters – even rural ones – have invariably seen BN’s vote share plunge, sometimes within a hair’s breadth of victory for the leading opposition candidate.

Surprisingly, the actual number of FELDA schemes per constituency appears to play a secondary role in past electoral outcomes. Many ‘mini-FELDA’ wards, such as Jerlun, Besut and Larut, have consistently resisted anti-establishment overtures. Conversely, some ‘mega-FELDA’ wards like Jempol, Bera, and Jelebu have become much more susceptible to opposition overtures than their counterparts like Kuala Krau, Rompin, Maran, and Pengerang. Differences in ward ethnic composition might be responsible, but perhaps so is the varying popularity of individual members of parliament. Kuala Krau, Rompin, Maran, and Pengerang are represented by well-known BN incumbents (in the case of Rompin going back to 1990), whereas Jelebu’s current MP is a first-timer.

Having high numbers of FELDA schemes within a constituency may even work to the advantage of anti-establishment campaigners. Although Jempol’s voters are very familiar with their current parliamentary representative, Tan Sri Mohd Isa bin Abdul Samad, his leadership of key FELDA bodies since 2011 has sown unhappiness within FELDA settler ranks.¹³ Not only was his appointment as chair of FELDA Settlers’ Cooperative seen as illegal by many households, but his wresting of FELDA Holding’s valuable land and oil palm produce marketing assets from settler control – in order to prepare Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd for an initial public offering – provoked considerable discontent within settler communities, both in Jempol and elsewhere.¹⁴

CONCLUSION

If FELDA schemes do represent a vote bank for BN, it is one that has shrunk considerably in recent times. In our view, only 14 FELDA-occupied parliamentary wards – those with stable or slight declines in BN support since 2004 – represent reasonably safe seats for BN in the 2018 general election (see **Table 3**, constituencies highlighted in **bold**).

There is, however, a major caveat to this long-term trend. PAS has exited the opposition coalitions formed since 1999. Candidates from Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM), and Parti Amanah Negara (both campaigning under opposition party PKR’s flag) are now vying for rural Malay votes, a role previously allocated to PAS before 2015 (**Table 3**). Now leading a coalition of Islamist political parties known as Gagasan Sejahtera, PAS is likely to contest many of the same FELDA seats in which Malay-centric parties from BN and PH will clash head-on. The resulting multi-cornered fights may split the anti-establishment vote. Observers differ on the likely outcomes of such splits, but many believe they work to BN’s favour. In short, how FELDA settlers vote may have less electoral impact in upcoming elections than the multiple lines along which the entire rural Malay voting base will eventually fracture.

Appendix I: FELDA Scheme-occupied Parliamentary Constituencies, 2004-2017

No	State	Parliamentary Constituency (Number)	Total Electorate (2013)	Voter Ethnic Composition (2013) (%)				Urban Devt Category (2013)	FELDA Schemes	Settler Households (2005)
				Malay	Chinese	Indian	Others			
1	Perlis	Padang Besar (1)	41,974	85.6	9.5	0.9	4.0	Rural	3	869
2	Kedah	Jerlun (5)	52,383	90.6	7.5	0.1	1.7	Rural	2	316
3	Kedah	Kubang Pasu (6)	65,550	85.4	9.3	3.9	1.5	Semi-urban	1	376
4	Kedah	Padang Terap (7)	41,960	92.1	1.4	0.2	6.3	Rural	2	951
5	Kedah	Pendang (11)	70,135	88.2	5.7	0.6	5.6	Rural	1	523
6	Kedah	Sik (13)	46,786	92.7	1.6	0.2	5.5	Rural	1	623
7	Kedah	Merbok (14)	85,908	64.5	16.8	17.5	1.2	Semi-urban	1	270
8	Kedah	Kulim Bandar Baharu (18)	60,910	67.6	19.3	12.9	0.3	Semi-urban	1	180
9	Kelantan	Tanah Merah (27)	58,237	94.5	4.1	0.8	0.7	Rural	4	1,278
10	Kelantan	Gua Musang (32)	40,176	80.3	6.9	0.6	12.2	Rural	9	2,378
11	Terengganu	Besut (33)	72,566	97.9	1.6	0.1	0.4	Semi-urban	1	290
12	Terengganu	Setiu (34)	67,280	99.5	0.4	0.0	0.2	Rural	3	912
13	Terengganu	Kuala Nerus (35)	76,238	98.7	0.9	0.1	0.2	Rural	1	213
14	Terengganu	Hulu Terengganu (38)	63,543	99.1	0.6	0.1	0.3	Rural	3	1,096
15	Terengganu	Dungun (39)	78,174	95.7	3.8	0.2	0.3	Semi-urban	5	2,186
16	Terengganu	Kemaman (40)	91,942	92.7	6.1	0.7	0.5	Semi-urban	8	3,176
17	Perak	Gerik (54)	32,725	68.1	15.7	3.6	12.5	Rural	2	489
18	Perak	Lenggong (55)	27,950	81.9	14.3	1.5	2.3	Rural	3	457
19	Perak	Larut (56)	46,577	88.7	5.0	6.0	0.3	Rural	1	605
20	Perak	Sungai Siput (62)	51,596	33.0	39.2	21.4	6.4	Semi-urban	1	393
21	Perak	Tanjong Malim (77)	64,499	53.5	27.3	14.0	5.3	Rural	10	4,164
22	Pahang	Cameron Highlands (78)	27,980	34.2	32.3	12.5	21.1	Rural	4	1,194
23	Pahang	Lipis (79)	32,324	76.1	17.2	5.8	0.9	Rural	2	256
24	Pahang	Raub (80)	54,214	49.8	40.3	6.5	3.4	Rural	4	1,366
25	Pahang	Jerantut (81)	58,364	81.1	13.7	2.8	2.4	Rural	14	5,059
26	Pahang	Paya Besar (84)	48,067	81.4	14.9	2.2	1.6	Rural	14	5,480
27	Pahang	Pekan (85)	80,260	88.1	2.3	0.9	8.8	Rural	8	3,353
28	Pahang	Maran (86)	38,436	89.8	6.9	1.5	1.9	Rural	12	4,736
29	Pahang	Kuala Krau (87)	43,003	89.7	3.2	2.6	4.5	Rural	15	6,456
30	Pahang	Temerloh (88)	66,105	64.3	24.2	8.7	2.7	Semi-urban	2	950
31	Pahang	Bentong (89)	62,266	44.6	43.9	9.1	2.4	Rural	8	3,269
32	Pahang	Bera (90)	50,997	59.5	31.9	3.9	4.7	Rural	14	5,402
33	Pahang	Rompin (91)	53,596	87.7	2.5	1.2	8.7	Rural	15	5,970
34	Selangor	Hulu Selangor (94)	85,697	56.8	23.5	17.6	2.1	Semi-urban	4	1,936
35	Negeri Sembilan	Jelebu (126)	44,937	63.4	25.9	6.0	4.7	Rural	13	4,191
36	Negeri Sembilan	Jempol (127)	65,213	60.6	25.3	13.1	1.0	Rural	26	9,317
37	Negeri Sembilan	Kuala Pilah (129)	47,671	76.1	16.9	5.0	2.0	Semi-urban	1	349
38	Negeri Sembilan	Tampin (133)	57,268	61.5	24.1	12.7	1.8	Urban	9	4,083
39	Melaka	Alor Gajah (135)	63,591	58.5	27.8	12.9	0.9	Rural	4	954
40	Melaka	Jasin (139)	64,455	71.3	18.1	10.2	0.4	Rural	1	382
41	Johor	Segamat (140)	47,009	44.3	45.6	9.9	0.3	Rural	3	804
42	Johor	Sekijang (141)	43,066	56.1	39.0	4.6	0.3	Rural	5	2,382
43	Johor	Labis (142)	37,714	36.5	46.5	15.1	1.9	Rural	4	1,382
44	Johor	Pagoh (143)	46,793	64.8	30.8	3.9	0.5	Rural	4	1,385
45	Johor	Ledang (144)	69,316	53.6	41.1	4.8	0.5	Rural	1	54
46	Johor	Simpang Rengam (151)	40,143	56.8	33.1	9.7	0.4	Rural	3	937
47	Johor	Sembrong (153)	41,588	58.7	30.9	9.0	1.4	Rural	5	1,823
48	Johor	Mersing (154)	44,497	79.8	15.8	1.3	3.1	Rural	12	3,383
49	Johor	Tenggara (155)	39,694	73.0	17.5	7.0	2.5	Rural	7	2,917
50	Johor	Kota Tinggi (156)	41,894	87.0	10.5	2.1	0.4	Rural	9	4,383
51	Johor	Pengerang (157)	37,999	88.4	10.1	0.9	0.7	Rural	12	5,828
52	Johor	Tebrau (158)	90,482	47.4	38.2	13.3	1.1	Rural	2	782
53	Johor	Kulai (163)	83,991	33.1	56.1	10.3	0.5	Semi-urban	5	1,977
GRAND TOTALS									305	114,485

Data Sources:

FELDA scheme locations (2004-2017) and settler household numbers (2005): Tunku Shamsul Bahrin and Lee Boon Thong, *FELDA: Three Decades of Evolution* (Kuala Lumpur: FELDA, 1988), Appendix I; Lee Boon Thong and Tunku Shamsul Bahrin, *Felda's Fifty Years: Land Pioneers to Investors* (Kuala Lumpur: FELDA, 2006), Appendix A; FELDA's official website: <<http://www.felda.net.my/index.php/hubungi/pejabat-wilayah-rancangan>> (accessed 11 April 2018); author's own estimates.

Electoral constituency maps (2004-2017): Election Commission, Malaysia, *50 Years of Democracy and Elections in Malaysia* (Putrajaya: Election Commission, Malaysia, 2007), p. 196; Ahmad Atory Hussain, *Politik Melayu Di Persimpangan: Suatu Analisis Pilihan Raya Umum 2008* (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributors, 2009), passim; personal communications with Pearlyn Pang.

Electoral constituency voter figures and election results (2004-2013): Election Commission Malaysia. *Report of the General Election Malaysia 2004*. Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Berhad, 2006; Election Commission Malaysia. *Report of the 12th General Elections 2008*. Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Berhad, 2009 ; Election Commission Malaysia. *Report of the 13th General Election 2013*. Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Nasional Malaysia Berhad, 2015.

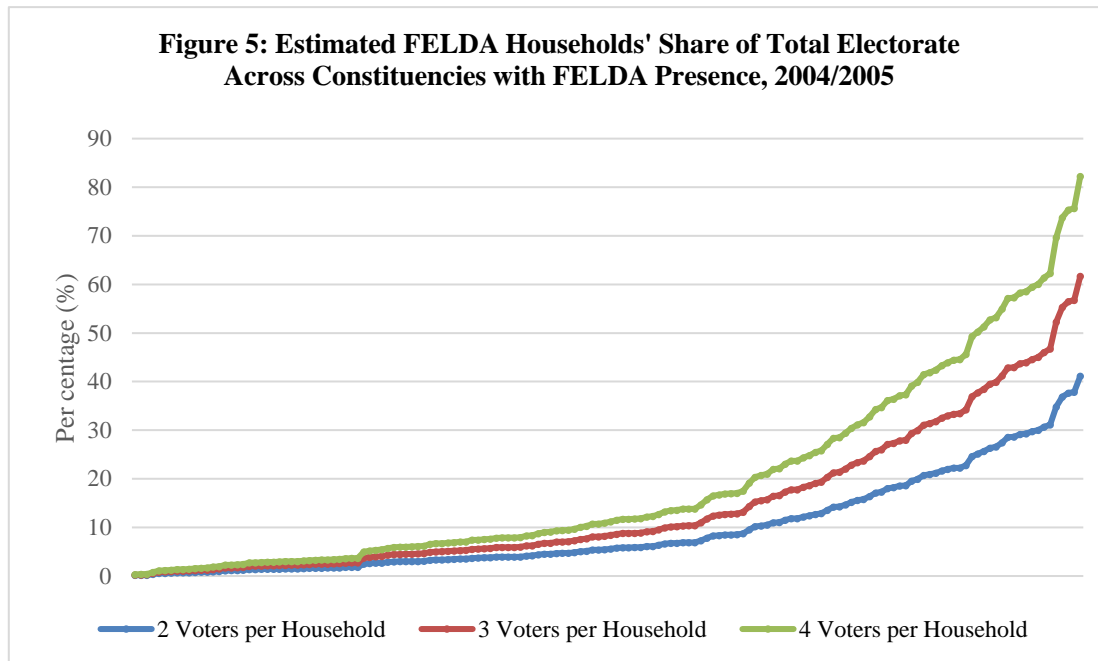
Ethnicity estimates (2013): Data collated by Tindak Malaysia.

Rural-urban classification (2013):

Politweet database: <<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18UxUPG3POCvRlzRW-IY9aAI3361xHuHcCBRqE-PEG5s/edit#gid=0>> (accessed 17 April 2018); also see Maznah Mohamad, "Fragmented but Captured: Malay Votes and the FELDA Factor in GE13", in *Coalitions in Collision: Malaysia's 13th General Elections*, edited by Johan Saravanamuttu, Lee Hock Guan and Mohamad Nawab Mohamed Osman (Petaling Jaya / Singapore: SIRD / ISEAS, 2015), pp. 132, 156 fn. 4.

Appendix 2: Estimates of FELDA settler shares of total electorate within each constituency

Given existing data limitations, only blunt estimates of FELDA’s share of each electoral ward can be offered at present. We have constructed different scenarios in which each settler household is assumed to have either two, three or four actual resident voters. In each scenario, the projected FELDA voter figure is then divided by total electorate numbers, per constituency, for 2004 (Figure 5).



Source: See Appendix 1 for references.

As we can see, the range of FELDA voter influence varies widely, from almost nothing at one extreme to over 80 per cent at the other (under the most generous assumptions for 2004/2005). Seen in this light, we can detect considerable similarities between the number of FELDA schemes in each constituency and their constituency vote share, notwithstanding some shifts around the upper end of the scale.

¹ I would like to thank Ooi Kee Beng, Cassey Lee, Francis Hutchinson, and Norshahril Saat for their feedback on earlier drafts. In addition, both Cassey Lee and Pearlyn Y. Pang made this paper possible by painstakingly assisting with data sources, statistical analysis, associated charts, and mapping expertise. I am also grateful to Danesh Chakko and Khor Yu Leng for helping with additional data sources. The usual caveats apply.

² This study focuses on FELDA parliamentary seats within Peninsular Malaysia. Sabah hosts another 7-9 FELDA settler schemes in its Tawau and Lahad Datu districts, but the East Malaysian state's peculiar demographic profile and economic trajectory puts it beyond this essay's scope. The analysis also excludes state-level seats (which are nearly triple that of federal parliamentary constituencies), due to time and space limits.

³ Chan Kok Leong, "Opposition can't touch BN's Felda vote bank", *The Malaysian Insight*, 16 Aug 2017 <<https://www.themalaysianinsight.com/s/11084/>> (accessed 19 April 2018); Nadirah H. Rodzi, "Opposition's pledges target BN vote bank", *The Straits Times*, 8 April 2018 <<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/oppositions-pledges-target-bn-vote-bank>> (accessed 19 April 2018); Razak Ahmad, Mazwin Nik Amis, Sarban Singh, Ivan Loh, Han Sean Ong, and Mohd Farhaan Shah, "Felda voters could be kingmakers", *The Star*, 12 April 2018 <<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/04/12/felda-voters-could-be-kingmakers-highstakes-battle-set-for-malay-heartland>> (accessed 15 April 2018); Maznah Mohamad, "Fragmented but Captured: Malay Votes and the FELDA Factor in GE13", in *Coalitions in Collision: Malaysia's 13th General Elections*, edited by Johan Saravanamuttu, Lee Hock Guan and Mohamad Nawab Mohamed Osman (Petaling Jaya / Singapore: SIRD / ISEAS, 2015), p. 124.

⁴ Khor Yu Leng, "The Political Tussle over FELDA Land Schemes - Umno Strengthens Its Malay Rural Fortress in 13th General Election", *Kajian Malaysia* 32, no. Supp. 2 (2014), pp. 90, 99; Ead., "The FELDA Quarrel and Its National Ramifications", *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 51 (2017), p. 5.

⁵ Maznah Mohamad, "Fragmented but Captured", pp. 133-5.

⁶ See Appendix 1 for references.

⁷ See Appendix 1 for references.

⁸ See Appendix 1 for each constituency's electorate size in 2013.

⁹ See Razak Ahmad et al., "Felda voters".

¹⁰ See Appendix 2 for preliminary estimates.

¹¹ Johan Saravanamuttu, *Power Sharing in a Divided Nation: Mediated Communalism and New Politics in Six Decades of Malaysia's Elections* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2016), pp. 198-207.

¹² PH also plans to defend FELDA-occupied seats in Kulai, Raub, and possibly Sungei Siput (if the latter's incumbent MP chooses to run solely under the PSM banner, outside the coalition).

Meanwhile, Dungun is currently under PAS, while Pendang is under BN; PH claims it will contest both seats. See Anon., "Pakatan Harapan Parliamentary seat distribution for GE14", *The Star*, 9 January 2018 <<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/01/09/pakatan-harapan-parliamentary-seat-distribution-for-ge14/>> (accessed 19 April 2018); V. Anbalagan, "Pakatan gives PKR, DAP lion's share of NS seats for next GE", *Free Malaysia Today*, 28 January 2018 <<http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2018/01/28/ph-unveils-seat-distribution-for-negeri/>> (accessed 19 April 2018).

¹³ Tan Sri Isa was formerly Negeri Sembilan's Chief Minister for 22 years, and subsequently Federal Territories Minister between March 2004 and October 2005. His United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) membership was suspended from 2005 to 2011 after UMNO's Disciplinary Board found him guilty of buying votes to win the UMNO vice-president's post in 2004. In 2017, amid allegations of corruption and corporate governance violations, Isa relinquished first his chairmanship of FELDA and then that of Felda Global Venture Holdings Bhd. He is now acting chairman at Malaysia's Land Transport Public Commission. See Trinna Leong, "Felda unit's head quits amid graft claims, given govt post", *The Straits Times*, 20 June 2017 <<http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/felda-units-head-quits-amid-graft-claims-given-govt-post>> (accessed 18 April 2018).

¹⁴ Jan Willem van Gelder, Eric Wakker, and Barbara Kuepper. *Felda Global Ventures Holdings* (Amsterdam: Profundo, 2012), pp. 2-5.

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