

**Malaysian politics: Two party or too racial?**

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Has the present political situation, where opposition parties are alleged to be supported by the Chinese while BN still maintains Malay support, become 'too racial' for the country?

It did happen after the 1969 elections. BN was formed with a noble objective of reducing 'racial sensitivities' by incorporating many parties of various races.

Over the years however, it has failed as a fair and just political coalition.

Firstly, the overwhelming dominance of Umno and its ketuanan Melayu policies have made the other political parties almost weak and redundant.

Many racial imbalances have arisen from the Umno-BN policies leading to the frustration of many Malaysians.

Even after the 2004 elections, when MCA, Gerakan and other non-Malay parties in BN won many seats, they were still marginalised in terms of cabinet representation. Their voices were seldom raised, or if they were, was often ignored and even ridiculed!

The dominance of Umno-BN has led to privileges that were distributed to Umno vested interests, thus not benefiting even many bumiputeras.

The dominance of Umno-BN has led to gross corruption with little accountability and opposition and perhaps tacit support from the other coalition parties.

The Umno-BN government is in fact now more sensitive to the needs of the people of all races with the increased opposition since the March 8 tsunami.

The emergence of Pakatan Rakyat, another coalition of multiracial and multi-religious parties provide an alternative. Though not as cohesive in structure, yet they are more equitable in interparty approach to the issues facing the country.

It may not be better than BN but then democratic processes allow the people to make the choice every five years.

Thus the emergence of two opposing coalitions augur well for the future and may even lead to less 'racial problems' than in the past.

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