

**Sympathy won't win opposition votes**  
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The process of changing a government is not as simple as the opposition would like it to be. It is not just about liking or not liking or trusting or not trusting some people, or just plain anger at whatever is going on - what would always seem to be the point at opposition 'ceramah' or reading their handouts.

Sure, the opposition was bullied in Ijok to the point perhaps of there being voting fraud, official and unofficial bribery and thuggery, and the unrestrained inequitable media coverage. But looking at it in another way, isn't this what a political campaign is all about - a chance for competing parties to show what they're made off?

The reasonable voter is not stupid, they see all these and they emphasise with the downtrodden. Give BN enough rope and they will hang themselves. The opposition have their work of discrediting BN, all cut out for them. And up close and personal at that too in Ijok.

And yet the opposition did not win enough to overcome the abusive power of incumbency. Why? An eminent human anthropologist once hypothesised that it is basic human instinct to flock to visibly strong leaders for their own survival at whatever moral cost. Alexander the Great or Genghis Khan did not expand their influence by being nice. But they were wise in the ways of taking care of their new subjects.

So could it be that Malaysian voters are also looking for that one thing which the opposition keeps missing - the ability of a regime to keep order ultimately for the voters' own survival? (read: enabling the rakyat to pursue happiness even, at worst, at the most minimum standards of human dignity).

If that be the case, the opposition should just allow BN to run rampage in an election campaign at BN's own peril, and meanwhile concentrate on projecting an image of resourcefulness in adversity; sobriety amidst madness; and most important of all, the ability to manage affairs well in challenging times.

Simply put, the voter's instinct will always revert to assessing if the opposition and their leaders will be up to the mark (including using underhand tactics, if necessary) should things go wrong that may impact his survival. That is why an orderly, efficient, imaginative and well-managed opposition campaign is in itself an advertisement for the opposition. The adage is that, they may not yet have a chance to govern, but they sure have shown that they are up to the mark, if given the chance.

In this respect, the opposition always fails miserably. The opposition campaign in Ijok was in a complete disarray, and it did not take an insider to notice that fact. Voters' empathy or sympathy do not win votes. Their confidence in the opposition's abilities will. Scolding, snapping, whining and complaining are common traits of the desperate and the frustrated.

No matter how valid the anguish, it remains that people look to the alpha-male winners for leaders. Adopting the invalid and the spastic would be just another burden.

Voters are not really interested on reasons why the opposition is intrinsically weak; they

want to see how problems and challenges are overcome by them. So if the opposition has any respect for the voters, try to see things as they see it.

Just because voters don't see things the way the opposition sees it, it doesn't make them stupid - just utilitarian. After all, it's their votes you are after and not the other way round.

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