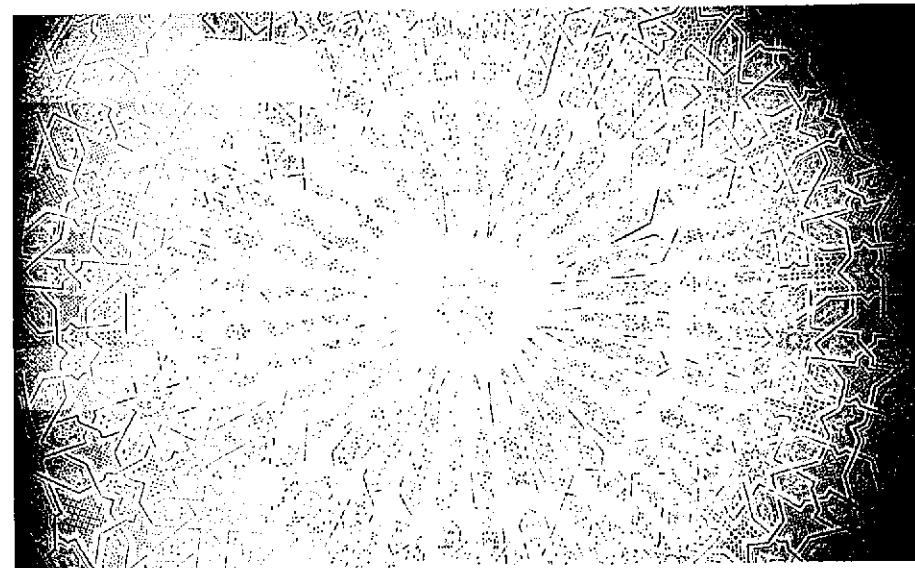


The opposition parties joined hands under the leadership of Anwar Ibrahim and capitalised on the public anger over transparency and accountability. Using alternative media, they highlighted the weaknesses of the government and campaigned effectively to deny the BN the two thirds majority. They promoted multiculturalism and the electorate obliged by voting across ethnic boundaries. They also benefited from inter-party and intra-party factionalism in the BN. Anwar's PKR which won only one seat in 2004 emerged as the largest opposition party in 2008. Anwar emerged as a unifying leader of the opposition. Thus, Anwar has undermined part of Abdullah's rationale for calling a snap election aimed at pre-empting Anwar's return to the political scene. The poor election results weakened Abdullah's position within his United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), which heads the BN. Abdullah Badawi was replaced by Najib Tun Razak as the sixth Prime Minister of Malaysia. The success of the new Prime Minister in convincing the voters, who deviated from their normal choice, to return to the BN depends upon the manner he successfully resolves the issues dear to the voters.



CHAPTER 12

Human Rights

El Fatih A. Abdel Salam