Title: Framing interethnic conflict in Malaysia: A comparative analysis of newspapers coverage on the keris polemics

Author(s): Fong, YL (Fong, Yang L.); Ishak, MSA (Ishak, Md Sidin Ahmad)

Source: ETHNICITIES Volume: 14 Issue: 2 Pages: 252-278 DOI: 10.1177/1468796813482310 Published: APR 2014

Abstract: The keris is a Malay or Indonesia dagger. In 2005, the then United Malays National Organization (UMNO) Youth Chief and Malaysia Education Minister, Hishammuddin Hussein, wielded the keris at the UMNO Youth general assembly, which he claimed to be a means to motivate the Malays. Following that, the UMNO Youth general assembly in 2006 and 2007 was noted for some racist statements made by several delegates in addition to the keris-wielding action repeated by Hishammuddin. The non-Malays perceived the action of wielding the keris as a gesture meant to defend ketuanan Melayu (Malay supremacy) and to threaten those who opposed Malay special rights. After the political tsunami in 2008, the Malaysian Chinese Association and Malaysian People’s Movement Party (Gerakan) leaders blamed UMNO for their electoral debacle. Hishammuddin also admitted that his raising of the keris was among the causes of the Barisan Nasional’s poor performance in the general election. He apologized to the non-Malays because of the fear to a symbol which was not his intention and to the Malays for not being able to uphold their symbol of heritage. This study aimed to compare the coverage of the keris polemics by mainstream Malay, English and Chinese as well as alternative newspapers. By using framing as the theoretical framework and content analysis as the research methods, it was found that the newspapers framed the issue differently, reflecting the political economic and ideological boundaries within which the journalists work.

© 2018 CLARIVATE ANALYTICS