TAMING FEAR AND ANXIETY : COVERAGE OF INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS IN THE *HARAKAH* FOR THE YEAR 1998 THROUGH 2001

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the 1998-2001 coverage of intercultural relations in HARAKAH, the newspaper for Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS). Results of the content analysis of 178 articles revealed that messages of pluralism featured prominently in the coverage. While there were messages of reconciliation, such messages were not many. A total of twelve main themes emerged from the analysis. Although most of the main themes were positive towards PAS, the HARAKAH has yet to adequately clarify the notion of the Islamic state it envisioned. It appears that the HARAKAH adopted less educational approach but rely more on a public relations approach in its intercultural relations coverage. The coverage also used more self-report approach in reporting PAS relations with non-Muslims. The findings suggest that, while PAS accepts multiculturalism, not much integration has been achieved with the non-Muslim opposition party. Nevertheless, HARAKAH seems to be quite liberal in journalistic approach in terms of the issues and approach of the intercultural relations coverage.

INTRODUCTION

Given the fact that Malaysia is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic country, relations among the various social groups is a salient issue needing close and continuous examination. The need for better interethnic relations becomes more pronounced in light of the development of the political landscape of the country. Presently, the population of Malaysia is 23 million. Malays form the largest ethnic group (66.1%), followed by Chinese (25.3%), and Indians (7.4%)—the two large minorities (Malaysia, 2000). The Malaysian constitution defines "Malay" as a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, and conforms to Malay custom. The Malaysian Chinese and the Indians originally came from China and India during the 19th century when the British, the colonizer, needed labor for the economic exploitation of the Malay states. The British adopted the divide-and-rule policy that kept the different ethnic groups apart so that they could exploit different economic niches. This resulted in structural relations along the economic sector, and this is still true to present day. The general understanding is that the Chinese control the economy, while the Malay has the political power.

Malaysia gained independence from the British on 31st August in 1957. The Malaysian constitution states that any person who was a citizen before independence would continue to be a citizen, and any person born after independence would also be a citizen by law. In exchange for their concession with regard to the question of citizenship, the non-Malay leaders agreed that Malays would be given special privileges in consideration for their economic backwardness. The constitution also states that the Malay language, the Bahasa Melayu, is the official national language, and Islam is the official religion. The constitution guarantees the right to the Chinese and the Indians and other minorities to maintain their own ethnic identity and customs. They are also free to practice their own religion.

While all Malaysians share a common parliamentary system of government, politically they are divided along ethnic lines, with each ethnic group seeking to protect and advance their own ethnic interest. As such the politics of Malaysia has been a politics of protecting and advancing communal interests, along with national interest. The government in Malaysia has been a coalition of ethnic-based political parties, presently known as the National Front or Barisan Nasional (BN). The main long-standing member of the BN are the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan), the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC), the Sarawak United People's party (SUPP), and Sabah United People party (Berjaya). The communal nature of the Malaysian political system has led to a situation of *musyawarah* politics. This is the politics of bargaining and negotiating communal interest by the political leaders in the BN. Controversial issues are resolved through a system of bargaining, negotiating and compromising among the communal political parties. It is through this system that communal interests are regulated.

The opposition political parties provide challenges as well as a system of checks and balances to the ruling allied parties. Among the most visible is the Democratic Action Party (DAP), which claims to be multi-ethnic, but is largely Chinese based. The other is the Partai Islam SeMalaysia (PAS), a Malay party that incorporates Islam into its political ideology. PAS claims that the UMNO is a secular Malay party, and considers itself the Islamic Malay party. To the non-Malays, UMNO seems to be a more acceptable party than the PAS.

PAS as an opposition party was formed in 1953 with a narrow sphere of influence. Its political communication was mainly targeted to the rural and urban Malays. In its early years it was popular among the rural folk particularly in the Eastern and Northern part of the country. In 1973 PAS joined and became a member of the BN (formerly known as Perikatan), but because of some misunderstanding PAS was expelled from the coalition in 1977 (Lokman Sulaiman, 1999). The PAS as an alternative opposition party has not been successful, except in one of the eastern states. To the non-PAS supporters, the Malays and the non-Muslims, PAS is seen as a village political party, lacking in capability of pursuing national socio-economic development. More importantly, PAS is perceived as extremist political party.

The position and role of PAS in the political landscape of the country can not be sidelined easily. As an alternative political party it has made a strong comeback in the middle of the 90s. It has increased its membership to include educated voters as well as professional individuals of various age groups. This can be attributed to the shift in the PAS thinking and paradigm. PAS realized that it could no longer confine itself to the idea of being a "closed" political party. It had to progress in many areas in order to be a

competitive political party. The current PAS leadership recognized that they had to share power with other ethnic political groups and get the support of non-Muslims. As such, one significant move and a major milestone toward its political advancement was the incorporation of an English section in its official party newspaper, the HARAKAH, in 1995. While the HARAKAH has been the media used by PAS to reach its members, it is also accessible to the public, the Malays and the non-Muslims. As the official newspaper, HARAKAH provides information about events, and serves as an image carrier. As explained in agenda setting theory, the press establishes salient issues or images in the mind of the public (Littlejohn, 1999).This purpose of having the English section of the paper is not only to widen its Malay readership to include educated Malays, but also to cross the border to reach the non-Muslims. Indeed, this is a major move in establishing relations with the non-Muslim community in the country, and probably marks a new era of intercultural relations in the PAS political history.

But enacting relations with non-Muslims is not easy because PAS's political ideology is seen intimidating by the non-Muslims. The PAS political ideology is to establish an Islamic state of Malaysia. The Islamic state concept has been an important issue not only to the Malays but also to the Chinese. It has been a source of anxiety and fear among the Chinese and the rest of the non-Muslim community. The non-Muslims are uncertain of their status as citizens. They fear the uncertain consequence if the PAS rules the country. They believe that it is turning back the clock if the PAS is to govern. But PAS categorically asserts that it is an unfamiliarity and lack of understanding of the PAS's version of an Islamic state that is as the source of anxiety and fear.

Previous studies of intercultural relations suggest that one way to improve cultural group relations is to reduce fear and anxiety in inter-group contact and communication, as pointed out by Stephen, Stephen and Gudykunst (1999). Identity recognition is another principle in building intercultural relation, as implied in the Social Identity Theory of group relations (Isajiw, 2000; Kim, 1997). Berry (1997) pointed out that, among the four strategies of intercultural relations discussed in the literature, integration strategy appears to be the most effective strategy. The other three intercultural relations strategies are assimilation, separation, and marginalization. While in the past, the non-Muslims generally have distanced themselves from the PAS, several recent political events have brought the non-Muslims particularly the Chinese opposition party (the DAP), closer to the PAS. And the PAS used this situation to further enhance its image and relations with non-Muslims. Between 1998 and 2000, three events have occurred which directly effected PAS relationship with the non-Muslim political parties.

The first event is the sacking of the Deputy Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim, which occurred in the third quarter of 1989. Following this unprecedented event, a movement organized by a coalition of non-governmental organizations and opposition political parties, known as GERAK, was formed. The objective of GERAK was to fight for political justice and human rights. In the pact, the PAS was given the task to lead the movement. This certainly marked another milestone for PAS's relations with the non-Muslims. The formation of GERAK provided an excellent opportunity for the PAS to improve its image and standing among the non-Muslims, and PAS has seemed to use the occasion to its advantage.

The second event was the formation of Alternative Front known as Barisan Alternatif (BA), a political pact between the PAS and the DAP (together with a few other opposition parties including a newly formed opposition Malay party known as KeAdilan). The

objective of the pact was to increase the opposition's chances of winning the 1999 national election. This was another important event for PAS in strengthening its image as a viable alternative Malay party among the non-Muslims. While some progress in intercultural relations has been made, the non-Muslims are still uncomfortable with the idea of an Islamic state proposed by the PAS.

Unfortunately, the PAS-DAP pact was not long-standing. After about two years of being together, in March 2001 the DAP withdrew from the BA coalition. The DAP pulled out from the pact because of some disagreement with the PAS. This incident was categorically a significant setback for PAS, undermining its relations with all non-Muslims. Hence, it's become more important and pressing for PAS to restore its image among non-Muslims.

RESEARCH QUESTION

In shaping a better future, it is important for PAS to strategically build relationships with non-Muslims. In light of present intercultural relations challenges faced by PAS, the research question posed in the present study is: What kind of intercultural relations approach does PAS adopt in building and maintaining better relations with non-Muslims, as seen in its official newspaper, the HARAKAH? Specifically, the present study attempts to (i) identify the type of intercultural relations message in the HARAKAH, (ii) identify the theme of intercultural relations message in HARAKAH, and (iii) identify the communication strategy employed in the coverage of intercultural relations in the HARAKAH as well as the approach of coverage.

METHODOLOGY

The present study employed content analysis techniques in examining coverage of intercultural relations messages in the HARAKAH. All local news articles concerning intercultural relations, excluding news-in-brief and of one paragraph in length, are content analyzed. The decision to consider a news article as coverage of intercultural relations was either based on the title or the first-two paragraphs of the news article or the accompanying photograph. The researchers looked for words or phrases that directly report, describe or analyze PAS relations with non-Muslims. Such articles include (i) articles which directly help non-Muslims to better understand PAS political ideology, objectives, and programs, and (ii) articles on PAS initiative or moves that enhance its image as a political party in the pluralistic society. Articles with photos of non-Muslims, if relevant, were also included in the analysis.

Sampling

HARAKAH's September 1998 through December 2001 issues make up the sampling frame of the study as they have greater relevant to the objective of the study. The month of September was chosen as the entry point for the sampling because PAS-led GERAK (a social movement for the cause of political justice) started during this period and it marked a new era of PAS relations with non-Muslims. Prior to March 2000 HARAKAH was published twice a week (eight issues per month). Starting March 2000, on the government directive, HARAKAH was published two issues a month.

The samples for the study came from coverage in the 1st issue of September 1998, 2nd issue of October 1998, 3rd issue of November 1998, 4th issue of December 1998, 5th issue of January 1999, 6th issue of February, 7th issue of March 1999, 8th issue of April 1999 and back to 1st issue of May 1999 and accordingly. Since there were only two issues a month beginning March 2000, coverage in the 1st issue and 2nd issue of each month was selected alternatively, that is 1st issue of March, 2nd issue of April, 1st issue of May, 2nd issue of June and accordingly. Altogether 37 issues of HARAKAH were included in the study that eventually yielded a total of 178 news articles that were content analyzed.

Unit of Analysis

News articles of intercultural relations were coded for (i) type of intercultural relations message, (ii) theme of the intercultural relations message, (iii) communication strategy of intercultural relations coverage, and (iv) approach of the coverage. The unit of analysis is the whole item whether it is a news article, in-depth article, editorial article, or letter to the editor. The subsequent section describes the categorization of the variables of the study.

Categorization

Type of intercultural relations message: Drawing from Kim's (1999) typology of interethnic communication messages types, four message types were considered in the present analysis: (i) message of reconciliation, (ii) message of pluralism, (iii) message of assimilation, and (iii) message of extremism. An article is considered as having a message of reconciliation if it has an explicit statement referring to the ideas of moderation, tolerance, accommodation, integration and balance. Examples of this statement or phrase indicating a message of reconciliation are the following: PAS should open-up membership to non-Malays, PAS will not contest a constituency if DAP has fielded its candidate, and PAS will promote a policy of restraint on controversial issues. An article is considered as having message of pluralism if it has an explicit statement referring to the ideas of celebrating diversity and equity, participating in celebrating cultural events of other ethnic group, and accepting the right and distinctiveness of an ethnic group. Examples of statements or phrases indicating messages of pluralism are the following: revalue each other along the lines of respect, depict harmonious relations, seek cooperation and pursue common interest, and PAS will participate in non-Muslim social and religious events. An article is considered as having message of extremism if it has an explicit statement referring to the ideas of separation or extremist views. Examples of statements or phrases indicating message of extremism are as follows: the non-Muslim should not make offensive remarks or comments on issues pertaining to Islam, and non-Muslims can comment or critique PAS's leaders but on the subject of religion. An article is considered as having a message of assimilation if it has explicit statements referring to assimilating the minority into the mainstream culture.

Theme of intercultural relation message: In addition to the type of intercultural relations message, using an open-ended question, coders were asked to write the theme of the intercultural relations message for each of the articles analyzed. The theme refers to the main thesis or idea of the article.

Communication strategy: This refers to the strategy used by the PAS in promoting and enhancing relations with non-Muslims as implied in the articles. Three strategies were

considered in the analysis: (i) educational strategy, (ii) psychological strategy, and (iii) policy strategy. An article is said to employ educational strategy if it is perceived to promote understanding of the concept of an Islamic state, and to correct misperception and negative stereotyping among non-Muslims. An article is said to employ psychological strategy if it appears to create and promote favorable image of PAS through public relations approach. An article is considered to employ policy strategy if it carries a tone of negotiation, compromise and conciliation.

Approach to coverage: Three approaches of coverage were considered in the analysis. An article is categorized as a self-report approach if statements of relations with non-Muslims are PAS' own report of its initiative/achievement/problem of relations with non-Malays. An article is categorized as other-report approach if statements of relations with non-Muslims are comments from non-Muslims of PAS' initiative/achievement/problem of relations with non-Malays/Muslims. And finally, if an article has both self-report and other-report of PAS initiative/achievement/problem of intercultural relations with non-Muslims, the article is said to have a combination of self-report and other-report approach.

Coding Procedures

Two coders, graduate students, were employed to code the selected articles. Coders were instructed to read each article carefully and indicate on a coding sheet their judgment on the type of intercultural relations messages and communication strategy implied in the articles. In addition, coders were asked to write one dominant theme of each article. Prior to actual coding, coders were given the definition of categories, and a briefing on how the coding was to be done. Ten percent of the total number of the articles to be coded was selected for the pre-test articles and to determine inter-coder reliability. Each coder independently code all the articles selected for the study. When the coders disagreed, the researchers make the decision. Holsti's (1969) formula was used to measure the reliability of coders. The average inter-coder reliability is .87.

RESULTS AND DISCUSION

The characteristics of the samples are presented in Table 1. There had been substantial coverage of PAS' relations with non-Muslims in HARAKAH in 1998 through 2001. While the coverage appeared in all the news categories, most of the samples were of current news (61.8%), followed by in-depths articles (14.0%) and letters to editor (11.8%). There was slightly more coverage of PAS relations with the non-Muslims for the year 1999 compared to that of the year 2000 and 2001. This could be attributed to the fact that 1999 was an election year, and PAS took advantage of the unstable political situation that was happening in the country. Furthermore, it is expected that PAS had more coverage of its relations with non-Muslim priors to the 1999 election because PAS was the leader in the social movement (GERAK) for justice and human rights.

Table 1. Profile of the Samples: (Figures are in percentages)

Variable	Year				
	1998 (n=18)	1999 (n=59)	2000 (n=48)	2001 (n=53)	Total (N=178)
Type of news article					
Current article	66.7	72.9	56.3	52.8	61.8
In-depth news	22.2	13.6	14.6	11.3	14
Letter to editor	5.6	8.51	8.8	11.3	11.8
Special column	-	5.1	4.2	20.8	9
Editorial article	5.6	-	6.3	3.3	3.4
Language					
Malay	88.9	76.3	72.9	77.4	77
English	11.1	23.7	27.1	22.6	23
Ethnicity of writer					
Not mentioned	66.7	67.8	56.3	35.8	55.1
Malay	27.8	18.6	31.3	35.8	28.1
Non-Malay	5.6	6.7	12.5	28.4	16.9
News article with photo	27.8	50.8	45.8	47.8	47.8

It is also interesting to note that in 2001 a substantial percentage of the coverage appeared in special columns, more than that of 1999 and 2000. These special columns include a section on Chinese Newspaper Perspective on issues relating to Islam and PAS, and articles in the form of interview report. On the whole, the pattern of findings seems to suggest that while there had been some progress in the PAS-non-Muslims relationship, PAS had not been rigorous enough in communicating its effort in promoting relations with non-Muslims. PAS should have done more, particularly when DAP left the coalitions in early 2001 on the pretext of ideological difference.

Out of the 178 articles analyzed, most were in Malay language (77.0%) and the other 23.0% were in English. A substantial number of the articles were contributed by non-Muslims, and these were mainly the English articles, particularly the in-depth articles and letters to editor. The fact that many non-Muslims wrote in HARAKAH is evidence of PAS' improved relations with non-Muslims.

With regards to intercultural relations messages, four types of messages were examined in the present analysis. Figure 1 summarizes the pattern of type of intercultural relations message appearing in the HARAKAH. The data clearly revealed that PAS did not adopt an assimilation approach in its relations with non-Muslims, as evidence in the results that none of the 178 articles analyzed was classified as assimilation message.

Messages of pluralism were dominant throughout the study period with 1998 having more messages of pluralism (83.8%) compared to that of 1999 through 2001.

Figure 1. Type of Intercultural Relations Messagein the HARAKAH (N=178)
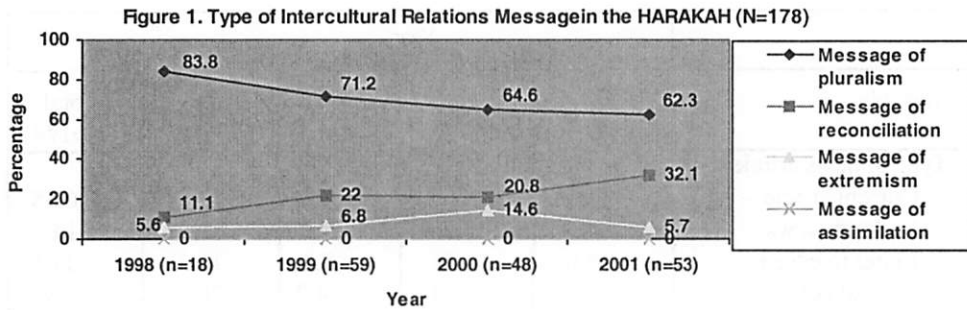
Messages of pluralism were dominant throughout the study period with 1998 having more messages of pluralism (83.8%) compared to that of 1999 through 2001. The next most frequent message type was the message of reconciliation. As shown in Figure 1, the percentages of reconciliation messages increased by year with 2001 registering the highest percentage (32.1%). One probable explanation for this is that PAS had to react when the DAP made known its intent to review ties with PAS in early 2001. Interestingly, HARAKAH did not stop short of sending message of extremism. Further analysis into the data showed that PAS reacted very strongly when non-Muslims made unwelcome or unwarranted remarks about PAS and Islam.

The study also examined the main themes of the coverage. Initially close to 30 themes were identified but these themes were further collapsed into twelve main themes of relations with the non-Muslims, as summarized in Table 2. The frequency of occurrence varies across the study period. However, between September 1998 through December 2001 the theme "There is positive change in the conception and images of PAS held by the non-Muslims" top the list (17.9%), and this is followed with the theme "PAS, DAP together opposition parties achieve mutual understanding and seek greater cooperation" (13.5%), "PAS is a leader in creating a harmonious pluralistic society" (10.7%), and "PAS celebrate multiculturalism" (10.1%).

In 1998, the message that PAS is democratic, non-racist, and tolerant of cultural diversity was more pronounce. This theme fit well in the early development of PAS relations with the DAP, and its expected role as the leader in the GERAK movement. In 1999, the election year, in its effort to court support of the non-Muslims, HARAKAH strategically sent the message that PAS had improved ties with the DAP, and there was positive change in the conception and images of PAS held by the non-Muslims. The message that there was a positive change in the conception and images of PAS held by non-Muslims was repeated in 2000 and 2001. Such a message was probably intended to further strengthen the support of the non-Muslims as PAS had performed well in the 1999 election compared to the previous ten national elections. The coverage in 2000 focused more on the idea that PAS celebrated multiculturalism. In addition to the favorable conception and image of PAS' message, HARAKAH also send the message that PAS is the leader in creating a harmonious pluralistic Malaysia society.

One important concern of the non-Muslims was their status and rights as citizens if PAS were to govern the country. The non-Muslims were assured that they will not be treated as second-class citizens, and they were reminded not to buy the propaganda of the government media that their condition would worsen if PAS were to rule the country. These

Table 2. Theme of Relations with Non-Muslims in the HARAKAH
(Figures are in percentages)

| Theme	Year				
	1998 (n=18)	1999 (n=59)	2000 (n=48)	2001 (n=53)	Total (N=178)
There is positive change in the conception and images of PAS held by non-Muslims	11.1	16.9	16.7	22.6	17.9
PAS, DAP together with other opposition parties achieve mutual understanding and seek greater cooperation	11.1	22.0	12.5	5.6	13.5
PAS is the leader in creating a harmonious pluralistic society	5.6	8.5	6.2	18.9	10.7
PAS celebrates multiculturalism	16.7	8.5	14.6	5.7	10.1
PAS is a just, open and fair Islamic party	16.7	10.2	4.2	9.4	9.0
PAS is a democratic and non-racist political party	16.7	5.1	12.5	5.7	8.4
PAS has and will work more for the welfare and development of the minorities including non-Muslims.	5.6	5.1	12.5	7.5	7.9
PAS is a misunderstood party and the mainstream media paints distorted picture of PAS.	-	5.1	12.5	5.7	6.7
Non-Muslims should not believe the propaganda of BN that their condition will worsen if PAS were to rule the country	-	10.2	2.1	5.7	5.6
Non-Muslims will not be treated as second class citizens	11.1	3.4	2.1	1.9	3.4
PAS' political struggle is an Islamic one and seeks for the establishment of true Islamic state	5.6	3.4	6.3	-	3.4
PAS needs to reassess and clarify its stands on national social issues	-	1.7	4.2	5.7	3.4

themes were more pronounced in 1998 and 1999 compared to that of 2000 and 2001. In spite of the positive tone in most of the coverage, HARAKAH also conveyed, to some extent, an extreme message to its important non-Muslim allies. On certain issues, PAS clearly stated its commitment towards its political ideology and objective of creating a true Islamic state as well as implementing Islamic law. This theme emerged in 1998, 1999 and 2000 coverage, but, surprisingly, was absent in 2001. One probable explanation for this is that PAS did not want to further intensify the issue and the confusion associated with DAP's withdrawal from the PAS-led opposition coalition. It seems that PAS was taking a restraining approach in relation to the problem with the DAP.

In addition to the main theme, the study also identified the communication strategy used in the coverage. Figure 2 presents the distribution of the communication strategy employed by HARAKAH. Out of 178 articles, 66.9% were categorized as employing psychological strategy. Most of these articles seem to promote favorable image through reports of gestures of goodwill, improved image and increased support from the non-Muslims. This is a public relations approach to intercultural relations. The use of public relations strategy is more pronounced during the 1999 election year.

Figure 2. Communication Strategy Employed in the Intercultural Relations Coverage (N=178)
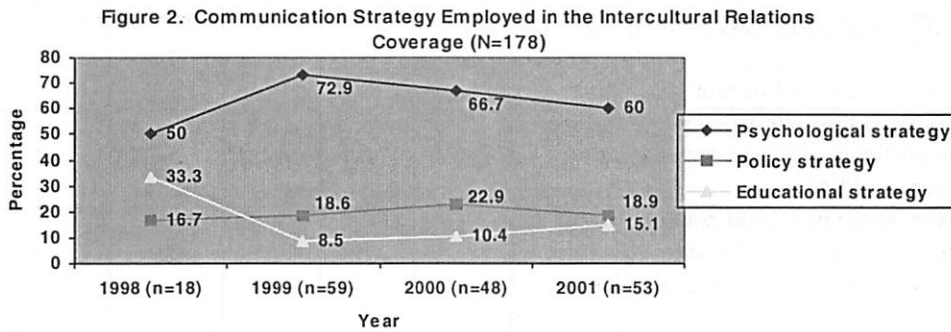
The HARAKAH also seeks support of the non-Muslims through strategic policy initiatives or moves, although not widespread. The reason for the lack of policy strategy cannot be ascertained in the present study. What is apparent is that PAS ought to consider more policy option in resolving its differences with the DAP and other opposition party, and to sustain its relations with its non-Muslims allies. Surprisingly, the HARAKAH has not rigorously adopted educational strategy in its intercultural relations coverage. There are more educational-base articles in 1998 and less of such articles in 1999, 2000 and 2001. This probably explains why a majority of non-Muslims are still apprehensive and fear of the notion of an Islamic state envisioned by the PAS. PAS has not done much to educate the non-Muslims on the concept of Islamic state as envisioned by PAS.

Whose perspective was considered when HARAKAH reported of its PAS relations with non-Muslims? Figure 3 presents the results on the approach of the intercultural relations coverage taken by HARAKAH. Most of the coverage is identified as a self-report approach. Only 27.0% of the articles were considered as having other-report approach. This finding suggests that HARAKAH is not self-centered and ethnocentric in its reports of its progress and achievement, and in fact by having the non-Muslims reports and comments of PAS relations with the non-Muslims would increase the credibility of its reports. Hence, HARAKAH should further intensify the inclusion of the other-report approach in its intercultural relations coverage.

Figure 3. Approach of Intercultural Relations Coverage (N=178)
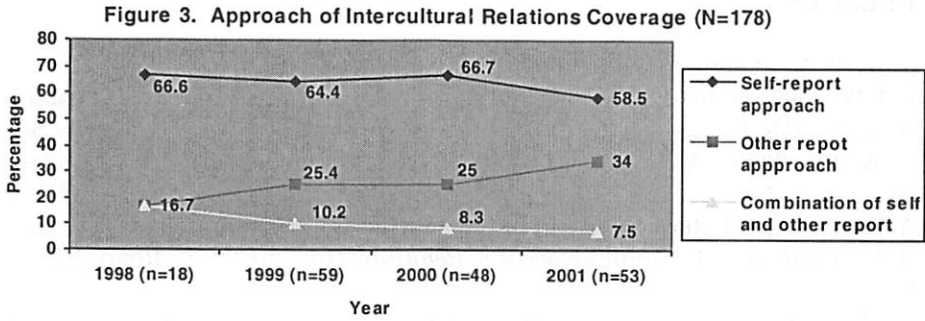
CONCLUSION

The present study gives insights into the approach adopted by the PAS in building relations with the non-Muslims and into the journalistic approach employed by the HARAKAH in its intercultural relations coverage. In terms of approach to intercultural relations, PAS is not taking an exclusionist view, and it is also not accepting the assimilation strategy. While PAS accepts multiculturalism, not much integration has been achieved with non-Muslim opposition parties. Nevertheless, the reports of improvement in relations with non-Muslims, although limited, attest to the widening of PAS's sphere of influence among non-Muslims. The message of pluralism, which is featured prominently in the HARAKAH coverage of intercultural relations, is a good entry point in establishing ties with the non-Muslims, and this is a necessary but not a sufficient strategy. While there has been progress in PAS relations with non-Muslims, it is not good enough. There should be more a message of reconciliation if PAS are to sustain good relations with non-Muslims in the future. As it is for now, it appears that PAS is walking on a thin ice with regard to its relations with non-Muslims.

Has PAS been successful in removing the fear and anxiety of the non-Muslims? Although there was report of improved understanding, the present analysis could not determine how widespread is the improved understanding. The present analysis leads to the conclusion that PAS, through its official newspaper, has yet to adequately clarify the notion of the Islamic state it envisioned. Non-Muslims' fear and anxiety could not be fully removed through a more developed public relations approach. More gesture of reconciliation should be shown. If PAS cannot further improve its relations with non-Muslims, it will be difficult for PAS to elicit the support of or mold a favorable attitude among the non-Muslims. As Ahmad (2002) aptly put it, given the political reality, it is almost impossible for PAS to challenge the modernist Islam projected by UMNO.

Finally, the overall patterns of coverage of intercultural relations in HARAKAH lead to a conclusion that HARAKAH is quite liberal in its journalistic practice. The apparently balanced coverage of intercultural relations, in terms of the issues and approach, suggest that HARAKAH could be a viable alternative newspaper for the public to get political news, particularly with regard to the accomplishments and challenges of PAS' socialization with non-Muslims.

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