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**EFFECTS OF OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL:
NEWS REPORTING OF THE CHINESE DAILIES
DURING THE 1995 GENERAL ELECTIONS**

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ABSTRACT

This study sets out to examine the effects of ownership and control on the news reporting of Chinese dailies in Peninsula Malaysia. A case study based on the 1995 General Elections was carried out in the form of news treatment analysis to measure these effects.

The history of Chinese dailies showed that the owners had followed closely the political movement in China and later in Malaya. In the 1990s, owners of the contemporary Chinese dailies no longer participate actively in local politics. On the contrary, they are capitalists who are profit-oriented and have manifested political power to support their effort of capital accumulation.

Today, the intention to own a newspaper may have changed, but Chinese dailies remain as a convenient tool to serve the political, economic or private interests of their owners. On the other hand, journalists and editors who are aware of their owners' interests constantly struggle for autonomy in the newsroom to provide a more balanced news reporting to the readers.

Within the broader context of Malaysian politics, the local dailies have been controlled by the state and the private sector via press laws, ownership and self-regulation. Despite private ownership of the Chinese dailies, the dailies had supported the *Barisan Nasional* coalition in the 1995 General Elections. This further supports the argument that owners

had shown their political affiliations towards the ruling coalition via Chinese dailies to serve their economic interest in other businesses.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki kesan-kesan pemilikan dan pelbagai kawalan terhadap pelaporan berita akhbar harian Bahasa Cina di Semenanjung Malaysia. Satu kajian kes dalam bentuk analisa berita berdasarkan Pilihanraya Umum 1995 dijalankan untuk mengukur kesan-kesan tersebut.

Sejarah awal akhbar Bahasa Cina menunjukkan bahawa pemilik-pemilik akhbar telah mengikuti perkembangan gerakan politik di Negara China dan kemudiannya di Semenanjung Tanah Melayu. Bagaimanapun, menjelang tahun-tahun 90an, pemilik-pemilik akhbar Bahasa Cina tidak lagi melibatkan diri secara aktif di arena politik tempatan. Mereka merupakan golongan kapitalis yang mementingkan keuntungan melalui manifestasi kuasa politik demi menyokong usaha mengumpul modal dan kekayaan.

Biarpun hasrat untuk memiliki akhbar telah berubah, namun akhbar-akhbar Bahasa Cina kekal dijadikan alat yang digunakan oleh pemiliknya untuk menjaga kepentingan politik, ekonomi atau kepentingan peribadi masing-masing. Sementara itu, wartawan dan editor yang menyedari akan kepentingan-kepentingan majikan mereka terus berusaha mengekalkan kuasa membuat keputusan di bilik berita bagi menyediakan laporan berita yang lebih seimbang untuk para pembaca.

Di dalam lingkungan konteks politik Malaysia yang lebih meluas, akhbar-akhbar tempatan memang dikawal oleh negara dan sektor swasta melalui undang-undang persuratkhabaran, pemilikan dan kawalan diri. Sungguhpun semua akhbar Bahasa Cina dimiliki oleh sektor swasta, akhbar-akhbar ini telah menyokong perikatan Barisan Nasional pada Pilihanraya Umum 1995. Kenyataan ini turut menyokong hujahan bahawa pemilik-pemilik akhbar mempamerkan kecenderungan politik masing-masing terhadap parti pemerintah melalui penggunaan akhbar Bahasa Cina demi kepentingan ekonomi dalam bidang-bidang perniagaan yang diceburinya.

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