

Regulating cross media ownership assignment



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Regulating Cross-Media Ownership According to political theorists Noam

Chomsky and Edward Herman The media is unable to satisfy our democratic needs because: They are profit-seeking businesses, owned by very wealthy people (or other companies); they are funded largely by advertisers who are also profit-seeking entities, and who want their ads to appear in a supportive selling environment.

The media are also dependent on government and major business firms as information sources, and both efficiency and political considerations, and frequently overlapping interests, cause a certain degree of solidarity to prevail among the government (as cited in Levin 39). Therefore, with aforementioned factors, large corporations and government entities control the flow of information. The fact is much of the information audiences receive via media outlets, provide us with the “ successes and failures of government” (Levin 39), meaning the media tells us what to think and how to take action.

It is crucial for viewers alike to obtain a variety of news, opinions, and freely expressed ideas. The media has the power to greatly influence; much like the three branches of U. S. government, the media must have check-and-balance provisions set in place so to alleviate any possible abuses made by those with majority power. Similarly, the media must ensure that “ proprietors’ pursuit of their private interests correspond to the public good... (which) produces a press which is diverse, accountable and representative [of its viewers, respectively],” (Levin 39).

The fact is, those who have the control matter. “ Media ownership regulations focus on who controls the particular media company,” therefore, they have control over editorial content, and utilize the media outlets by promoting their own “ commercial or political interests” (Levin 39). And, because most enterprising media players have “ friends in high places” – e. g. politicians, lobbyists, etc. – messages are presented in a biased manner, rather than remaining impartial to their allies and presenting all possible facts with all possible sides.

One way to remedy this situation would be to “ separate editorial leadership within each commonly owned media outlet” (Levin 40), so as to secure an unguarded democracy guided by competition, diversity, and localism. In 1996, the Telecommunications Act required the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to review its media ownership rules, seeing that all rules are still relevant to the technologically advancing times, while remaining in the public interests of its viewers, which is the first and foremost principle to be “ protected above all remains... to which these proceedings must refer” (Obar 521).

As well, Congress allowed the FCC “ to take deregulatory steps to eliminate barriers that discouraged entry by new competition” (“ Limits on Media Concentration” 2003). Essentially, the premise behind the rules of media ownership are that they provide a safeguard for the American populace and subsequently ensure our First Amendment rights establishing not only a diverse media market, but one with driving competitive forces, vital for any form of democracy (“ Limits on Media Concentration”).

Again, rules have and always will change with society's modern advances; for example, " Efforts are underway to drop the rules allowing television broadcasters to own more local stations and to permit media cross-ownership in a single market", and " Opponents say that the rules would give giant corporations too much clout at the expense of communities... quashing opportunities for independent companies" (Limits of Media Concentration").

In addition, rising media market shares providing its viewers with less varied news sources and journalistic quality, leaving us with a vertically homogenized media model, ignoring community interests, diversity, and values. Given the efforts, as previously stated, it is vital for smaller media players to have a voice so that viewers may be presented with diverse regional and local content, allowing us to make our own decisions, rather than being told which side to reason with.

In whole-hearted agreement with Levin, " It is crucial that we continue to scrutinize what is presented to us for underlying context and perspective (or lack of it), regardless of who owns the media outlet that presents it. " For years, the views we are presented have been consolidated by a handful of high playing media corporations; limited information is being carried through to its audience, and of which, it is presented in a biased fashion.

If society does not scrutinize the content its being served and by whom, varied political, social, and cultural perspectives will be restricted causing a one-way, carbon copy of chosen information. Society must lobby for more media dissemination; however, " Media policy makers have struggled to

construct policies that will widen the available viewpoints to include those of minorities, women, and individuals representing [varied social and cultural perspectives]..." (Hillard 56).

Promoting diversity within the media will come through greater ownership restrictions, promotion of ownership by women and minorities, "the Fairness Doctrine, [and] equal time requirements", therefore impeding the parochial media model as set forth today. According to Hillard, "... the need to preserve public policies favoring diversity and antitrust provisions that restrict monopolization of markets by media companies is clear", hence the reason why we must limit monopolizing media mergers and create opportunities for independently owned outlets in television, radio, and the newspapers.

As Walter Lippman once wrote, "The theory of the free press is that truth will emerge from free discussion, not that it will be presented perfectly and instantly in any one account." Bibliography Compaine, Ben. "Domination Fantasies. (Cover story)." *Reason* 35. 8 (2004): 26-33. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Web. 9 Dec. 2010. Hillard, Robert and Picard, Robert. "Plurality, Diversity, and Prohibitions on Television- Newspaper Crossownership." *Journal of Media Economics* Vol. 2 Issue 1 (1989): 55-65. *Communication & Mass Media Complete*. EBSCO. Web. 9 Dec. 2010. Levin, Jane. "CROSS-MEDIA OWNERSHIP: THE DEBATE CONTINUES." *Australian Screen Education* 33 (2004): 38-41. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Web. 7 Dec. 2010. "Limits on Media Concentration." *Congressional Digest* 82. 8 (2003): 230. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Web. 8 Dec. 2010. Marks, Alexandra. "Media future: Risk of monopoly?" *Christian Science Monitor* 19 <https://assignbuster.com/regulating-cross-media-ownership-assignment/>

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