

Implications of ownership:

Applying the propaganda model to media ownership theory

Patrick T. Lafferty

William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications
The University of Kansas

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Abstract

Patrick T. Lafferty, M.S.
William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications
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University of Kansas

This study evaluates the propaganda model, informed by the media ownership theory, through a quantitative content analysis of 23 major American newspapers' coverage of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) media ownership deregulation of 2003 which led to a "never-before-seen" public outcry evidenced in "the nearly three quarters of a million comments" received by the FCC, "99.9 percent" in opposition to the new regulations (Copps, 2003). This supports propaganda theory (devaluation of the free flow of information in favor of economic and political interests), to the detriment of media ownership theory.

Previous studies of media ownership theory examined two newspapers. This small scope limited generalizability. Examining a wider sample allowed for comparisons between independent and conglomerated news sources. This study found that independent and conglomerated media were similar in content but the conglomerated media had substantially more coverage. The three hypotheses of the study were not supported ($p > .05$).

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Speak your mind, even if your voice shakes!

You can't be King of the world if you are slave to the grind!

I am inspired by the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must act on it.

Being willing is not enough; we must do.

Sic Semper Tyrannis!

So it goes.

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Introduction

Introduction

In the years leading up to 2003, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) lost multiple court cases that revolved around the media ownership regulations that were in place, some of which dated back to the 1940s. In each instance, the court instructed the FCC to either justify the ownership regulation or remove it. This initiated an internal review process at the FCC and led to the current installment of the public debate surrounding the issue of media ownership that continues to this day.

This study's focus was on the attempt by the FCC to reduce ownership regulations for newspapers and television in a way reminiscent of the deregulation of radio ownership under the 1996 Telecommunications Act. It was following that legislation that Clear Channel grew from owning 42 radio stations nationwide in 1995 to more than 1,200 by 2003 (Green, 2003).

In early 2003, word first began to leak out of the FCC about the sweeping changes under consideration, including allowing TV broadcasters to reach 45 percent of U.S. households rather than the current (as of 2003) 35 percent, and ownership changes that would allow a single company to own as many as three television stations and one newspaper in large markets. Consumer groups were alarmed and threatened to protest any new regulations or easing of old regulations (Fost, 2003).

The public alarm, softened by a lack of media coverage, did manage to reach enough people for the FCC to receive an unprecedented 750,000 comments, 99.9 percent against the proposed changes, prior to the scheduled June 2 vote.

On June 2, 2003, the FCC voted 3-2 in favor of the new ownership regulations stated above. This sparked the curiosity of the media, leading to a doubling of the amount of coverage of the issue after June 2, 2003. There were 96 articles written on the topic from January 1, 2003, until June 1, 2003. There were 193 written after the vote.

Months after the passage of the new regulations on June 2, 2003, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals enjoined the FCC from enforcing the regulations, pending judicial review. Congress subsequently vacated the regulations outright, due in large part to the more than two million comments submitted to the FCC before and after the passage of the regulations.

This study approaches the issue of media ownership from the perspective of Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model. It seeks to verify that frame, along with the frame of media ownership theory, as developed by Altschull (1984). While both are legitimate courses of inquiry, they are but two of many approaches to studying this topic, purposely chosen by the author to the exclusion of others. The disciplines of business, economics, sociology, psychology, communications and journalism all provide other methods and theories by which the phenomena of this study could and should be examined.

Review of Literature

Review of Literature

When discussing the current state of American mass media, conversation easily shifts toward ownership. Profits seem to have overpowered the quest for a free exchange of ideas (Bagdikian, 2000; McChesney, 1999). This devaluation of free thought demoralizes journalists who place high value on their autonomy. The American public also suffers from this quest for profit, whether or not they are aware of the damage done. The confinement of message control to the small group of mega media corporations, namely AOL Time Warner, General Electric, Viacom, Gannett, etc., or their smaller siblings such as Sinclair Broadcasting, inherently skews coverage (Houston, 2004). Put concisely, "as one reality comes to dominate all others, the dominant reality begins to seem objective" (Bennett, 1996, p. 149).

News reporting for the public interest, that is, of the mythic old guard style, today finds itself overpowered by the corporate view of news as a "product" and readers or viewers as "customers" (McManus, 1994). The impact on coverage since news became a profit driver for major media conglomerates requires in-depth analysis. While media conglomeration has concerned observers since the 1950s, the beginning of the most recent round of conglomeration occurred in 1985 with General Electric's purchase of RCA, then-owner of NBC among other media entities. GE bought RCA primarily to gain control of NBC, evidenced by GE's divestiture of many RCA assets (Ketupa.net, 2004).

Table 1 (p.4) provides a snapshot of the current conglomeration situation.

**Table 1: Major media conglomerates and a selection of holdings,
plus 2003 revenue (excludes music and book publishing)**

<p>Time Warner - \$39.6 billion</p> <p>Warner Bros, AOL, CNN, HBO, Time Warner Cable, Turner, Cartoon Network, The WB, New Line Cinema, Castle Rock Entertainment, Time, DC Comics, People, Entertainment Weekly</p>	<p>The Walt Disney Company - \$28.4 billion</p> <p>ABC, Disney Channel, ESPN, A&E, History Channel, E! Entertainment, Buena Vista, Touchstone Pictures, 10 TV stations, 66 radio stations, Walt Disney Pictures, Miramax Films, TiVo (partial investment) and theme parks.</p>
<p>Viacom - \$26.6 billion</p> <p>CBS and UPN networks, 40 TV stations, 167 radio stations, MTV, Showtime, Nickelodeon, BET, Paramount Pictures, Blockbuster Video</p>	<p>News Corporation - \$17.5 billion</p> <p>FOX Network, DirecTV, 35 TV stations, National Geographic Channel, FX, 20th Century Fox, the New York Post, The Times (of London)</p>
<p>NBC Universal (GE) - \$13 billion</p> <p>NBC, Telemundo, Universal Pictures, Universal Parks & Resorts, USA Network, CNBC, Bravo, MSNBC, PAX, 28 TV stations, Sci-Fi Channel</p>	

(Rank, 2004, p. 1; CJR, 2004, 2005).

Traditionally, the media business is portrayed as selling the news of the day to the curious public. Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model provides one frame to explain the impact of the mass media today. The propaganda model describes mass media as businesses selling readers and audiences (instead of news) to marketers (instead of the public) (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). The model proposes five classes of "filters" that dictate the news presented by the mass media. These five are:

1. Ownership of the medium
2. Medium's funding sources
3. Sourcing
4. Flak
5. Anti-communist ideology

(Herman and Chomsky, 1988)

Herman and Chomsky consider the first three to be the most important (Herman and Chomsky, 1988).

Mass media failures in research on recent corporate scandals, the war in Iraq, and U.S. government policy since September 11, 2001, are all beacons indicating the derailing of investigative journalism (Houston, 2004). The majority of coverage either ignores or diminishes news that might negatively affect the bottom line of the corporate owners of the news outlet (Houston, 2004). Rather than function as the fourth estate, the mass media have taken on the role of mass propagandist, serving as little more than a mouthpiece for the government and the corporate elite (Chomsky, 2003; Parenti, 1997).

You need something to frighten people with, to prevent them from paying attention to what's really happening to them. You have to somehow engender fear and hatred, to channel the kind of fear and rage – or even just discontent – that's being aroused by social and economic conditions (Chomsky, 1998, p. 41).

This links to Chomsky and Herman's argument that news coverage tends not to question information from the government, instead serving as a megaphone for governmental and corporate propaganda (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). Parenti (1997) agrees, arguing that the mistakes of the media cannot all be innocent in nature. He outlines six key tools the corporate mass media use to stay on message, specifically the message that suits their corporate masters. Those six appear, along with Parenti's explanation of each, in Table 2 (p. 7).

Table 2: Parenti's six tools of corporate mass media

1. Suppression by omission	"Manipulation often lurks in the things left unmentioned." (Parenti, 1997: 1)
2. Attack and destroy the target	"The media move from ignoring the story to vigorously attacking it." (Parenti, 1997: 2)
3. Labeling	"Media people seek to predetermine our perception of a subject with a positive or negative label." (Parenti, 1997: 2)
4. Face-value transmission	"One way to lie is to accept at face value what are known to be official lies, uncritically passing them on to the public without adequate confirmations." (Parenti, 1997: 3)
5. False balancing	"Both sides are seldom accorded equal prominence." (Parenti, 1997: 3)
6. Framing	"By bending the truth rather than breaking it...communicators can create a desired impression without resorting to explicit advocacy." (Parenti, 1997: 3)

(Parenti, 1997)

These six tools ultimately help avoid displeasing those in political and economic power (Parenti, 1997).

This shift in emphasis poses a direct threat to our democracy (Baker, 2000; Barsamian & Chomsky, 2001; Besley & Burgess, 2002; Chomsky, 2003; Holbrook and Garand, 1996; McChesney, 1999, 2004; McChesney & Nichols, 2002; Parenti, 1997; Solomon, 2000). Type the phrase "media conglomerates are good" into the Google search engine. The resulting three links to archives from 1996, 2001 and 2003 all refer sardonically to the search phrase. The abundance of naysayers (see above), some academically viable (some not), speaks volumes about the gut reaction many have to conglomeration. Journalistic instinct (read skepticism) would seem to indicate that something is amiss.

Entman and Wildman (1992) point out the divide between those who have faith in the market economics of the media and those who strive to achieve the social value of the media (namely, the media as a public guardian). Entman and Wildman state that these two groups stay insulated in their own clubhouses. The result is poor analysis of the media landscape and poor decision-making, they write (Entman & Wildman, 1992).

Still, there are arguments in favor of conglomeration. Altschull's (1984) media ownership theory, which states that publicly owned media outlets will provide more balanced coverage than privately held media, withstood scrutiny in the past (Kenney & Simpson, 1993; Coleman & Wang, 2004). The notion of laissez-faire economics holds to "a pure capitalist or free market view, that capitalism is best left to its own devices — that it will dispense with inefficiencies in a more deliberate and quick manner than any legislating body could" (Wikipedia.org, 2004, p. 1).

This reflects the libertarian theory of the press. Libertarian theory places the media in the position of fact-checker and arbiter of truth whereby the people can keep tabs on and evaluate the work of their government (Siebert, et al, 1963, p. 3).

Libertarians believe the most important aspect of the free press is the freedom from all forms of government intervention (Houston, 2004). Anyone concerned about a lack of diversity can become his or her own publisher, solving the problem (Houston, 2004).

There are no rights for the consumers of journalism if no journalist chooses to produce particular kinds of journalism certain consumers want. There is only the right for any citizen to be a journalist and produce them himself -- or for him to try to get his ideas into journalism (Merrill, 1974, p. 111).

Houston (2004) is one among a group who disagrees with Merrill's ideas. He cites Altschull (1994), saying that the shrinking number of media sources is antithetical to the notions of free press supported by our founding fathers.

Start-up costs and the dependence on advertising to sustain existence are two realities that filter out producers of media until only the wealthy are left. One would speculate that the concentration of media since Herman & Chomsky's writing has only made this process even more difficult (Houston, 2004, p. 2).

The idea of citizens taking up the journalistic banner is of particular relevance today in the burgeoning age of the blog and wikinews. Still, the task of reporting requires not only a minimal skill set, but also that you, as the journalist, are a generally informed citizen. The notion of an informed, if not participatory, public is discussed by Delli Carpini. He says that citizens do not have to be political experts. Rather, he suggests "the more citizens are passingly informed about the issues of the day, the behavior of political leaders, and the rules under which they operate, the better off they are." (Delli Carpini, 1999, p. 39)

Besley and Burgess (2002) argue, "understanding what makes government responsive to citizens' needs is a key issue in political economy." (Besley and

Burgess, 2002, p. 1416) They postulate that a more informed and active electorate leads to greater responsiveness from elected officials. Their study examines data from India that show, among other things, that calamity relief expenditures are greater in areas with higher newspaper circulation and increased accountability of elected officials (Besley & Burgess, 2002). One conclusion drawn from this is that mass media play a role in ensuring that policy reflects citizen views (Besley & Burgess, 2002).

Holbrook and Garand (1996) focus on the accuracy of individuals' perceptions of national economic conditions. They follow a survey conducted in Milwaukee County, WI, during the 1992 presidential campaign, that tested audience perception based on four independent variables including perceptions of economic threat and exposure to media sources. Their findings provide support for the notion that some citizens have inaccurate or hyper-inflated perceptions of national economic distress, and these inaccurate perceptions of economic conditions have important political consequences (Holbrook & Garand, 1996).

McChesney (1999) points out an interesting fact about our nation's daily newspapers. Of the hundreds of business reporters, the daily papers combined employ fewer than ten labor writers. He uses this point to illustrate the tilt of coverage in favor of capital to the detriment of labor concerns, what Parenti would call false balancing whereby the public has access to all the news that is fit to print, as long as it favors capital. McChesney contends that the media are now a significant obstacle to democracy both in the United States and around the world (McChesney, 1999).

McChesney (1999) directly confronts the argument made by those who favor media conglomeration, namely that consumers have more choices for information today than ever before, by pointing out that it is better to label those choices as commercial rather than informative. His central thesis is that consolidation of media control is antithetical to participatory democracy. McChesney says that by 1999, even the idea of the Internet as a last bastion of the free press was rapidly disappearing. Instead of giving free information to the masses, the Internet enabled the oligarchy to grow larger and stronger (McChesney, 1999).

While blogging may seem to have placed power in hands outside the corporate newsroom, the same corporations that own the rest of the media host many of those blogs. The nation's largest Internet service provider is Time Warner. Its AOL division controlled 21.4 percent (20.1 million subscribers) of the market in the third quarter of 2005 and its Road Runner division controlled another 5.7 percent (4.8 million subscribers) (Goldman, 2005). This 27.1 percent share of the ISP market is more than three times the next largest ISP, Comcast (8.7 percent of the total market), and nearly four times the third largest, SBC (now AT&T), with 6.9 percent of the total market (Goldman, 2005).

McChesney (2004) clarifies his view of the U.S. media system's core problems – inadequate journalism and hyper-commercialism – detailing the media's attachment to commercial structures and the direct and indirect links to government policies (McChesney, 2004). "The corporate domination of both the media system

and the policy-making process that establishes and sustains it causes serious problems for a functioning democracy and a healthy culture.” (McChesney, 2004, p. 7)

Miller, referring to the big five media conglomerates at the time of his writing (AOL Time Warner, Disney, General Electric, News Corporation, Viacom) as a cartel, says that today we have an evolutionary disaster, where a decrease in the number of outlets has directly caused a drastic decrease in the quality of coverage (Miller, 2001). He goes on to quote Michael Powell, former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, saying, “The night after I was sworn in [as a commissioner], I waited for a visit from the angel of the public interest. I waited all night, but she did not come.”” Miller says this quip is evidence enough that both the Bush administration and the corporate cartel no longer care about the public interest (Miller, 2001, p. 20).

Contrasting the bombast of Miller, McManus provides the most reasoned and balanced discussion of the battle of conglomeration versus divestiture. From an ethical perspective, he focuses on the notion of the public’s right to know. McManus also points out “large corporations may also protect journalistic integrity, helping ensure that the public will get all sides of the story. The conglomerate has its eye on the bottom line, not on the sensitivities of local constituencies.” (McManus, 1994, 1996, p. 5)

This focus on profits over politics is an interesting point to consider, but the argument seems to fall apart when politics can directly affect profits, as is the case when it comes to deregulation by the FCC. Still, McManus correctly notes Jay Harris’

comments on the size of a media outlet. Harris, former chairman and publisher of the San Jose Mercury News, said,

It's not the size of the owner. It's what the owner chooses to do. What are the primary motives of the owner? What are the values? I can see no inherent positive or negative outcome in terms of the way journalism is done from any particular form of ownership (McManus, 1996).

It is interesting to note that Harris resigned from the San Jose Mercury News on March 19, 2001, in protest of the increasing quest for profits by the paper's corporate parent, Knight Ridder. When Harris left in 2001, he wrote a memo to his employees warning that the profit-driven culture developing at the paper risked "significant and lasting harm to the Mercury News -- as a journalistic enterprise and as the special place to work that it is." (Fost, 2001)

Harris, addressing his resignation in a speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) after leaving the Mercury News, referred to Knight Ridder's "myopic focus on numbers," saying, "the drive for ever-increasing profits is pulling quality down" (ASNE, 2001). This follows Bagdikian's (2000) contention that newspapers defuse their news content to assuage the fear that strong news and views may offend a segment of the newspapers readership, causing a circulation decline and subsequent profit drop.

The McClatchy Company, a smaller but more profitable newspaper chain, acquired Knight Ridder on March 13, 2006.

Media ownership theory states that “the content of the press is directly correlated with the interests of those who finance the press” (Altschull, 1984, p. 254). Previous studies by Kenney and Simpson (1993) and Coleman and Wang (2004) have focused on applying Altschull’s (1984) theory to two competing newspapers’ coverage of political campaigns, The Washington Post vs. The Washington Times and The Boston Globe vs. The Boston Herald, respectively.

“When the media outlet fits into what Altschull calls an “interest pattern,” the content mirrors the concerns and objectives of whomever is providing the financing.” (Coleman & Wang, 2004).

This echoes the second of Herman and Chomsky’s filters.

The purpose of this study and the pilot study that preceded it was to expand upon the studies of Kenney and Simpson (2003) and Coleman and Wang (2004). In both of those studies, the examination of two newspapers was a limitation. This study examines 23 newspapers across the United States, both publicly and privately held, with an eye to the legitimacy of both media ownership theory and the propaganda model.

While the FCC deregulation debate of 2003 was certainly a political issue, it serves here as an economic indicator, seeking to determine if journalistic standards fall by the wayside when a media corporation, public or private, covers an issue of personal economic relevance.

Based on the literature, the following three research questions and hypotheses are tested:

RQ1: Does ownership type make a difference in the quantity of news coverage of the FCC deregulation?

H1: The non-conglomerated news sources will provide more coverage than the conglomerated news sources.

RQ2: Do news sources identify conflicts of interest?

H2: The non-conglomerated news sources will identify conflicts of interest (if any) more than the conglomerated news sources.

RQ3: Does conglomeration affect news coverage of deregulation?

H3: The non-conglomerated news sources will provide less favorable coverage of deregulation than the conglomerated news sources.

Definitions

Definitions

A pilot study was conducted in December 2005. Both the pilot study and the full study (the study) followed the definitions laid out by Wang and Coleman (2004). Bias, as defined by Kenney and Simpson, is "more news coverage and more favorable coverage" of one ideology over another ideology, and "a pattern of constant favoritism" of one ideology over the other (Kenney & Simpson, 1993, p. 346).

In this study, the two ideologies are pro-regulation and anti-regulation of media ownership, with objectivity being equated to neutrality on the issue. The definition of objectivity also follows that used by Wang and Coleman (2004), where objectivity is the opposite of bias. Objectivity meant a given article gave both ideologies equivalent attention and coverage, seeking to achieve Boyer's first element of objectivity: "balance and even-handedness in presenting different sides of an issue" (McQuail, 1993, p. 184 cited in Wang and Coleman, 2004). Given that bias and objectivity are countervailing forces, this study tested for objectivity as the absence of bias, through the variable tone.

The independent variable ownership refers to the type of ownership for the news source. It is determined by examining the media properties that are owned by the organization that owns that news source. For the purposes of this study, "independent" media are defined as news sources owned by an individual or organization that does not own other media outlets (i.e. The Christian Science Monitor) and "conglomerated" media are companies that own news sources in varied

mass media such as television, radio, publishing and the Internet (i.e. News Corp) or those that own multiple newspapers (i.e. Herald Media, Inc.) (Wikipedia.org, 2005).

Articles indicate their importance (and the agenda of the medium) by virtue of their placement, length or treatment (Kioussis, 2004). The variables – section, page number and section type – evaluated together, indicate the overall attitude of the newspaper toward its coverage of the consolidation debate. The first two variables required the rater to note the values included in the article heading provided by the database. Section type required a judgment call from the rater in choosing from a list the best match for the section type of the given article, though in many cases this information was provided in the search results. When a section type was not specified in the header or was unclear, the rater chose from a list developed for this study. The choices available appear in Table 3.

Table 3: Section types used

1. Top News / Main Page / Nation / U.S. (etc.)	6. Metro, Local, Region, State, Community, etc.
2. Business (Money, Market, Finance, Industry, Career, etc.)	7. Opinion, Editorial, Views, Columnists, etc.
3. Entertainment (Arts, Culture, Showbiz, Books, etc.)	8. Politics
4. Features (Magazine, Special, In-Depth, Outlook, Week in Review)	9. Living (Style, Lifestyle, Travel, Society, etc.)
5. No section type listed	10. Other _____

(Swain, 2004)

For the purposes of this study, articles placed in the “Top News” section are important for consideration of the variable placement, along with those from other categories that were in section A. Position of an article on a given page was not considered for convenience, due to the use of the database.

The instrument also asked whether the terms or concepts such as the independent/democratic media, public interest/trust, diverse discourse, public

ignorance, public outcry and conflict of interest appear in the article. Conflict of interest indicates when an article identified the owner of the publication in which it appeared. The other concepts derive from language culled from the pilot study. These are concepts, not quotations, so a reference to “indie media” would fall under the heading of independent/democratic media.

This question sought to identify key concepts that indicate the attitude of the journalist/news source toward the issue. For instance, based on the results of the pilot study there appears to be a relationship between the concept of public interest/trust and an unfavorable tone toward deregulation. A pro-regulation article is one that is in favor of the FCC regulating the ownership of media outlets in the United States. An anti-regulation article is one that is opposed to the FCC regulating ownership of media outlets.

When the issue of public interest/trust appeared in an article in the pilot study, 72.7 percent of the time it was a pro-regulation article based on the definition of bias (Kenney & Simpson, 1993). Likewise, if the concept of monopolies appeared in the article, the pilot study data indicated that it was likely to be pro-regulation (70.6 percent).

Conversely, the pilot study showed a relationship between use of the term free market and a perception more in favor of a free market and in favor of deregulation of ownership from the rater (46.7 percent). These relationships led to the inclusion of these terms in the final study.

It is important to note that the presence of both public interest/trust and free market in an article, among other indicators, might indicate a well-written article that approaches all angles of the issue, absent judgment in favor of either faction. This is a complexity addressed in the phrasing of the instrument and the training of the raters, though it is also a limitation inherent to content analysis.

Methodology

Methodology

Content analysis is “a systematic reading of a body of texts, images and symbolic matter, not necessary from an author’s or user’s perspective.”

(Krippendorff, 2003, p. 3)

The term dates to the 1940s, but the concept dates back to the 17th century.

The first newspaper content analysis dates to 1893 and asked the question, “Do newspapers now give the news?”, a question just as relevant today as it was in 1893 (Speed, 1893, cited in Krippendorff, 2003, p. 5).

While there is inherently subjectivity to non-computer-based content analysis, this form of inquiry is still uniquely able to provide the quantitative foundation for journalistic arguments (Krippendorff, 2003). Its proponents vary in time and imminence from the sociologist Max Weber (1911, cited in Krippendorff, 2003) to the researcher of this study.

This study is a quantitative content analysis of 316 articles published from January 1, 2003, until December 31, 2003, in 23 national newspapers. The articles pertain to the nation-wide media ownership debate surrounding the deregulation under consideration by the FCC during summer 2003. The study tested Herman and Chomsky’s propaganda model and the media ownership theory using an adaptation of the method of Kenney and Simpson (1993) and Coleman and Wang (2004), applying that method to a broader population. The study measured what correlation, if any, existed between the type of ownership and the content produced by the media outlets.

Additionally, the data collected allow for suppositions regarding the quality and tone of the reporting.

The study utilizes the LexisNexis Academic database (“the database”). Searches were conducted for each newspaper listed under the “General News” heading and the “Major Papers” subset of the database. This subset includes 51 newspapers. The Miami Herald, Hartford Courant, Newsday (New York), and the Los Angeles Times were excluded for convenience because they have six month “rolling” archives, making the dates in question unavailable through the database.

Of the remaining 47 papers, 30 actually printed articles matching the criteria described above during 2003. Of the 30 that printed articles, 23 are newspapers publishing in the United States. These 23 newspapers were used in the study, which was confined to the United States, where the debate was centered in 2003. While the issue of media ownership is relevant across the globe, the foreign newspapers were excluded for convenience as such research is beyond the scope of this study.

Articles were included if they contained the keywords “media” and “ownership” and “FCC” in the headline or first three paragraphs, as determined by the LexisNexis search function. If the topic of ownership did not appear by the third paragraph, the researcher assumed the article would most likely not be relevant to the study and thus was excluded. Articles were excluded if they were “news roundups” and not substantive articles on the issue. Additionally, articles less than 100 words in length were omitted on the grounds that they tend to lack substantive value (Swain, 2004). Editorial and opinion pieces were included in the study.

Each paper was sought using the syntax of the LexisNexis search itself. For instance, The Buffalo News was searched for using “Buffalo News, The”, which was the text inserted by the automated search capabilities of the site. It is worth noting that using different syntax yields fewer results for each search.

The pilot study, conducted in December 2005, was a proving ground for the coding sheet. It allowed the author to refine the language of the instrument before it using it in the larger study. The pilot study also allowed the author to verify the validity of the methodology.

The coding sheet developed as an adaptation of the coding instrument used by Swain (2004). The pilot study was based on a population of 362 articles. This number is larger than the population used in the final study due to the continual consolidation of the database and the removal of duplicate entries from the database. The pilot population then was limited to articles that met the criteria described on previous pages. Based on the amount of coverage provided by each news source, the sources were divided into two groups: “above median” and “below and including median,” where median refers to the number of articles published in the given time frame. The median was 13 articles, with a minimum amount of one article and a maximum of 48 articles. The total number of articles in the “above median” group was 287. The total of “below and including median” was 87 articles. This amounts to a useable population of 362 articles.

A 15 percent sample size was sought for the pilot study. To achieve this, every third article of the “below and including median” group was selected and every tenth

article of the “above median” group was selected. When a randomly-selected article did not meet the minimum length criteria and the “news roundup” exclusion, the next article on the list was selected. After all disqualifications and selections were made, a sample of 51 articles was evaluated, a 13.6 percent sample of the usable population.

Pilot Study Results

RQ1: Does ownership type make a difference in the quantity of news coverage of the FCC deregulation?

H1: The non-conglomerated news sources will provide more coverage than the conglomerated news sources.

While the “below and including median” group included conglomerated news sources, it also included the two non-conglomerated news sources, the Christian Science Monitor and the St. Petersburg Times. These two papers had six and eight articles, respectively, compared with the 48 articles in The New York Times and 32 articles in Gannett’s USA Today, two of the most prolific conglomerated news outlets. The assumption of the hypothesis had been that the economic interests of the conglomerates, specifically the profit gains offered by deregulation, would compel silence on the issue to avoid public outcry. The limitations of the pilot sample size make the results of **H1** inconclusive. In a larger population, similar results would not support **H1** based on a simple count of the amount of articles.

RQ2: Do news sources identify conflicts of interest?

H2: The non-conglomerated news sources will identify conflicts of interest (if any) more than the conglomerated news sources.

The result of **H2** is less clear. There was a lack of identification of conflicts of interest exhibited by the non-conglomerated sources. When writing about the ownership goals of newspapers, including one's own paper, full disclosure would include mentioning the ownership of the author's paper. In four articles examined from the Christian Science Monitor and the St. Petersburg Times (two each), there was no mention of their ownership. This may be due to the fact that the ownership and independence of both papers is widely known. However, that is a conclusion that cannot be reached based on this measure.

Their conglomerate counterparts at The New York Times (four articles) and USA Today (two articles) also failed to mention the corporate interests. Of note is the comparative candor exhibited by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, owned by Cox Enterprises Inc., and the Minneapolis Star Tribune, owned by The McClatchy Co. The Journal-Constitution identified Cox as its owner in two out of three articles and the Star Tribune identified McClatchy as its owner in one of two articles in the pilot study. Both The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the Minneapolis Star Tribune discussed their owner's interests in the debate.

RQ3: Does conglomeration affect news coverage of deregulation?

H3: The non-conglomerated news sources will provide less favorable coverage of deregulation than the conglomerated news sources.

This is the most subjective evaluation within the study. As mentioned above, importance and agenda are dictated by virtue of their placement, length or treatment (Kiouisis, 2004). The three variables – section letter, page number and section type – taken together form an indicator of the overall attitude of the newspaper toward its topic. However, there is no objective standard available that easily evaluates bias in coverage. In analyzing the data, a correlation between the dependent variables that establish content (section letter, page number, section type, mention, etc.) and the independent variables of ownership and news outlet was sought.

Examining the articles for favorability, the pilot study relied on a judgment call from the rater on this measure. There was no single news outlet that skewed the sample, but there was no definitive standard either. Instead, the overall tone of the article was evaluated, arriving at the favorable-unfavorable-neutral scale used in evaluating **H3** (see Table 4).

Table 4: Frequency of the three values of the variable favorable

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Favorable	7	13.7	13.7	13.7
	Unfavorable	29	56.9	56.9	70.6
	Neutral	15	29.4	29.4	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

In the pilot study, the least favorable coverage came from the Buffalo News, owned by Berkshire Hathaway, with four articles rated as unfavorable and zero

favorable. **H3** predicted that sources such as the Christian Science Monitor, owned by the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, would have met at least this standard. The Monitor had one article rated favorable, one rated neutral and none rated unfavorable. The St. Petersburg Times, owned by the Poynter Institute, did have two articles rated unfavorable. This is not enough to confirm **H3**; therefore, it is not supported.

The Full Study

Based on the results of the pilot study, it was decided that for the full study, a census of the larger sample population was necessary. It was believed this would eliminate the uncertainty found throughout the results. The articles were collected from the database on February 22-23, 2006, for inclusion in the full study. In total, 27 stories were omitted based on these criteria, from a total population of 316, leaving 289 articles in the sample population.

The author developed the coding sheet (see Appendix A). This study utilized two raters, one man and one woman, neither of whom is the author of this paper. They were chosen for their lack of predisposition on the issue. The first rater coded all 289 articles. The second rater coded 21.1 percent of the population coded by the first rater, or 61 articles, to establish inter-rater reliability (Krippendorff, 1980). The coefficient of reliability (Keyton, 2001, p. 350) was used to calculate the reliability of the variables section letter (.918), page number (1.0), section type (.885), tone (.705), mentions (.792), ownership (1.0), and conflict of interest (.951). The acceptable coefficient of reliability was .70 (Keyton, 2001).

Each rater trained on the key concepts contained in the instrument. As the rater read a given article, he/she would highlight the concepts from the instrument. Upon completion of the article, the rater would then mark the code sheet. Data were then collected from those code sheets by the author and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 9.0 and Microsoft Excel 2003 for evaluation.

This study overcame a primary limitation mentioned by Coleman and Wang (2004). By expanding the sample set to include many newspapers from across the country, with varied ownership, the results are much more generalizable, despite the lack of statistical significance. In spite of overcoming this earlier limitation, discussion of the expansion of sources brings up the first limitation: lack of significance. While this study was a census of all the articles in the LexisNexis database for the given criteria, there was still a remarkable lack of parity in the coverage. This limitation is hard to overcome and is more likely an environmental variable for which there is no solution.

Another limitation is the reliance on LexisNexis. While this technology makes access simple, varying how you enter keywords, not the keywords themselves, can yield different search results. Uniform syntax was used to overcome this problem, but the variety of results seems to indicate that the methodology of the LexisNexis database itself is worthy of further study.

The raters used for this study were purposely chosen for their lack of enculturation into the world of journalism. While that did not appear to be a problem

on the surface, the training did bring out some puzzling questions about certain phrases in the instrument that might not have been a question had the raters been familiar with the inner-workings of journalism.

The fact that this study is the first designed and implemented by the author is surely a limitation. Previous research with professors certainly aided the experience, but designing a study from start to finish is a unique experience. Whether it is how to stack your research to avoid its tipping into an indiscernible pile or how to develop the best research instrument, there is something to be said for hindsight.

Finally, while those in the journalism trade seek objectivity above virtually all else, complete objectivity is unattainable (Youden, 1972, p. 1). Personal beliefs and the bias associated with them inevitably seep in to the evaluation, especially on subjective points such as the question of tone in this study. The use of computerized content analysis seems to ameliorate this issue to a degree. Humans still tell the computer what to look for, but the actual “looking” is not subject to eye fatigue and personal bias. Future studies would be wise to pursue that technology.

Results

Results

Quantity of News Coverage (RQ1)

The trends of the pilot study carried over to the entire sample population of articles in the full study. Of the 289 articles coded for the study, 278 were from conglomerated news sources, or 96.2 percent of the population (see Table 5). Eleven articles were included from the two independent news sources, or 3.8 percent (see Table 6, p. 30).

Table 5: Crosstabulation of the name of the newspaper and the type of ownership (p > .05)

Count		Number of Articles per type of Ownership		Total
		Independent	Conglomerated	
Name of Newspaper	Columbus Dispatch		1	1
	Tampa Tribune		4	4
	Minneapolis Star Tribune		4	4
	Cleveland Plain Dealer		3	3
	Times-Picayune		3	3
	Christian Science Monitor	5		5
	Atlanta Journal-Constitution		8	8
	St. Petersburg Times	6		6
	Buffalo News		10	10
	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette		8	8
	Daily News (New York)		11	11
	Seattle Times		12	12
	St. Louis Post-Dispatch		6	6
	San Francisco Chronicle		14	14
	Boston Globe		14	14
	Chicago Sun-Times		5	5
	Denver Post		19	19
	Boston Herald		21	21
	San Diego Union-Tribune		11	11
	USA Today		26	26
	Houston Chronicle		12	12
	New York Times		41	41
	Washington Post		45	45
Total		11	278	289

Table 6: Frequency of each type of ownership

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Independent	11	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Conglomerated	278	96.2	96.2	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

RQ1: Does ownership type make a difference in the quantity of news coverage of the FCC deregulation?

H1: The non-conglomerated news sources will provide more coverage than the conglomerated news sources.

The results of **H1** are not statistically significant ($p > .05$). This result was reached using a chi-square analysis within SPSS 9.0. The considerable discrepancy in total number of articles from each of the two groups is likely the cause of the lack of significance. However, the lack of statistical significance does not diminish the face value of this result. Based solely on a simple count of the articles, this result is compelling.

The assumption of the hypothesis had been that the economic interests of the conglomerates, specifically the profit gains offered by deregulation, would compel silence on the issue to avoid public outcry. Not only did the conglomerates write about the topic, the tone of the articles from both conglomerated and independent sources was heavily pro-regulation (see Table 7, p. 31).

Tone was one of the improvements made from the pilot study. This is, again, the most subjective measure in the study. It relies solely on the interpretations of the two raters and how they viewed the tone of the article towards the issue of the FCC

regulations. It replaced the variable favorable from the pilot study and has three values: pro-regulation (anti-FCC proposal), anti-regulation (pro-FCC proposal) and neutral.

Table 7: Crosstabulation of the type of ownership and the variable tone (p > .05)

Count		Tone			Total
		Pro-regulation	Anti-regulation	Neutral	
Valid	Independent	8	2	1	11
	Conglomerated	177	21	80	278
Total		185	23	81	289

While this result does not explain why there was such little coverage from the independent news sources compared to their conglomerated counterparts, it is clear from these results that **H1** is not supported.

Conflicts of Interest (RQ2)

RQ2: Do news sources identify conflicts of interest?

H2: The non-conglomerated news sources will identify conflicts of interest (if any) more than the conglomerated news sources.

Just as in the pilot study, there was a remarkable lack of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest (see Table 8, p. 32). Full disclosure would include mentioning the ownership of the author's paper, and that was present only 19.7 percent of the time. The results of **H2** are not statistically significant (p > .05). The small data set on the independent side of the chi-square evaluation is again the likely cause.

Table 8: Crosstabulation of conflict of interest and the type of ownership (p > .05)

Count

		Number of Articles per type of Ownership		Total
		Independent	Conglomerated	
Does the article mention the ownership of the paper in which the article was published?	No	11	221	232
	Yes		57	57
Total		11	278	289

When there was disclosure, it was exclusively from the conglomerated news sources. In 11 articles examined from the Christian Science Monitor and the St. Petersburg Times (5 and 6 articles, respectively), there was no mention of their ownership. The reason for this is unclear, though it may be due to the fact that the ownership of both independent news sources is assumed to be widely known therefore they do not report it. Table 9 (p. 33) lists each source included in the study, along with the parent company of each source.

Table 9: The 23 newspapers and their parent companies

Newspaper	Parent Company
Cleveland Plain Dealer	Advance Publications
Times-Picayune	Advance Publications
Buffalo News	Berkshire Hathaway, Inc.
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	Block Communications
San Diego Union-Tribune	Copley Press Inc.
Atlanta Journal-Constitution	Cox Enterprises Inc.
Columbus Dispatch	Dispatch Media Group
USA Today	Gannett Co., Inc.
San Francisco Chronicle	Hearst Communications, Inc.
Houston Chronicle	Hearst Communications, Inc.
Boston Herald	Herald Media, Inc.
Chicago Sun-Times	Hollinger International
Tampa Tribune	Media General
Denver Post	MediaNews Group
Daily News (NY)	Mortimer B. Zuckerman
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	Pulitzer, Inc
Christian Science Monitor	The First Church of Christ, Scientist
Star Tribune	The McClatchy Company
Boston Globe	The New York Times Co.
New York Times	The New York Times Co.
St. Petersburg Times	The Poynter Institute
Seattle Times	The Seattle Times Company
Washington Post	Washington Post Co.

The four most prolific publishers from the conglomerate group, The Washington Post (45 articles), The New York Times (41 articles), USA Today (26 articles) and The Boston Herald (21 articles), performed only slightly better, mentioning the corporate interests 11 times collectively (see Table 10, p. 34).

Table 10: Crosstabulation of the name of the newspaper and conflict of interest (p > .05)

Count		Does the article mention the ownership of the paper in which the article was published?		Total
		No	Yes	
Name of Newspaper	Columbus Dispatch		1	1
	Tampa Tribune	2	2	4
	Minneapolis Star Tribune	2	2	4
	Cleveland Plain Dealer	2	1	3
	Times-Picayune	3		3
	Christian Science Monitor	5		5
	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	1	7	8
	St. Petersburg Times	6		6
	Buffalo News	9	1	10
	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	7	1	8
	Daily News (New York)	11		11
	Seattle Times	8	4	12
	St. Louis Post-Dispatch	3	3	6
	San Francisco Chronicle	3	11	14
	Boston Globe	12	2	14
	Chicago Sun-Times	4	1	5
	Denver Post	12	7	19
	Boston Herald	19	2	21
	San Diego Union-Tribune	10	1	11
	USA Today	20	6	26
	Houston Chronicle	10	2	12
	New York Times	39	2	41
	Washington Post	44	1	45
Total		232	57	289

The San Francisco Chronicle, owned by Hearst Communications Inc., joined the candor exhibited by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution in the pilot study. Cox Enterprises, Inc. owns The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. These news sources, along with the Columbus Dispatch's single article in the study, are the only news sources to mention their ownership more often than not. The Journal-Constitution mentioned its owner 87.5 percent of the time. The Chronicle mentioned its owner 78.6 percent of the time.

Given that the conglomerated sources identified their ownership 57 times, compared to the complete lack of identification from the independent news sources, **H2** is not supported.

Effect of Conglomeration (RQ3)

RQ3: Does conglomeration affect news coverage of deregulation?

H3: The non-conglomerated news sources will provide less favorable coverage of deregulation than the conglomerated news sources.

This is the most subjective evaluation within the study. Reiterating Kiousis (2004), length, placement and treatment are the keystones that show the importance a news source places on a given article. For the purposes of this study, treatment is measured by objectivity, which is the opposite of bias per the definitions of this study. Objectivity is operationalized in the variable tone.

Length

Within the sample population of 289 articles, 74.4 percent were 1,000 words or less (see Table 11, p. 36). Four articles (1.4 percent) were over 2,000 words. All four of those articles were from conglomerated news sources (see Table 12, p. 36). That may be expected given the independent news sources accounting for 3.8 percent of the population. However, these findings, as with the previous two hypotheses, are statistically insignificant ($p > .05$).

Table 11: Frequency of each range of article length

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 101-500 words	89	30.8	30.8	30.8
501-1,000 words	126	43.6	43.6	74.4
1,001-1,500 words	53	18.3	18.3	92.7
1,501-2,000 words	17	5.9	5.9	98.6
More than 2,000 words	4	1.4	1.4	100.0
Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Table 12: Crosstabulation of the range of article length and the type of ownership (p > .05)

Count

		Number of Articles per type of Ownership		Total
		Independent	Conglomerated	
Length of Article	101-500 words	3	86	89
	501-1,000 words	4	122	126
	1,001-1,500 words	2	51	53
	1,501-2,000 words	2	15	17
	More than 2,000 words		4	4
Total		11	278	289

Placement

Seventy-three articles from the total population were found in section A of their respective news sources, or 25.3 percent ($p > .05$) (see Table 13, p. 37). Three articles from the independent news sources were printed in section A, compared to the 70 articles in section A of the conglomerated news sources (see Table 14, p. 37). Sections B and C each contained another 16.6 percent of the articles from the study, all in the conglomerated news sources. 21.4 percent of the articles were deeper than section C.

Table 13: Frequency of each section letter

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Section Letter	None Given	58	20.1	20.1	20.1
	3	2	.7	.7	20.8
	4	2	.7	.7	21.5
	A	73	25.3	25.3	46.7
	B	48	16.6	16.6	63.3
	C	48	16.6	16.6	79.9
	CN	1	.3	.3	80.3
	D	13	4.5	4.5	84.8
	E	37	12.8	12.8	97.6
	F	2	.7	.7	98.3
	H	4	1.4	1.4	99.7
	P	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Table 14: Crosstabulation of the section letter and the type of ownership (p > .05)

Count

		Number of Articles per type of Ownership		Total
		Independent	Conglomerated	
Section Letter	None Given	5	53	58
	3		2	2
	4		2	2
	A	3	70	73
	B		48	48
	C		48	48
	CN		1	1
	D	2	11	13
	E	1	36	37
	F		2	2
	H		4	4
	P		1	1
Total		11	278	289

Three articles from the independent news sources were “Top News,” compared with 32 articles from the conglomerated news sources (p > .05) (see Table 16, p. 38). The most prevalent section type listed is the business section with 141

articles (48.7 percent of the total sample, 50.7 percent of the conglomerated population) (see Table 15). The second most prevalent was the opinion/editorial section, with 64 total articles (58 conglomerated, 6 independent). This is 22.1 percent of the population (20.9 percent of the conglomerated articles and 54.5 percent of the independent articles).

Table 15: Frequency of each section type

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Section Type	Top News	35	12.1	12.1	12.1
	Business	141	48.8	48.8	60.9
	Entertainment	11	3.8	3.8	64.7
	Features	3	1.0	1.0	65.7
	No Section Listed	16	5.5	5.5	71.3
	Metro / Local / Regional	8	2.8	2.8	74.0
	Opinion/Editorial	64	22.1	22.1	96.2
	Living/Style	9	3.1	3.1	99.3
	Other	2	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Table 16: Crosstabulation of the section type and the type of ownership (p > .05)

Count		Number of Articles per type of Ownership		Total
		Independent	Conglomerated	
Section Type	Top News	3	32	35
	Business		141	141
	Entertainment		11	11
	Features		3	3
	No Section Listed		16	16
	Metro / Local / Regional		8	8
	Opinion/Editorial	6	58	64
	Living/Style		9	9
	Other	2		2
Total		11	278	289

Another element that may inform the favorability of coverage is when these articles were published. The point of differentiation for this study is June 2, 2003, which is the date when the FCC voted on the proposed regulations. This is important because it indicates that, if a given newspaper published prior to this date, it was trying to inform the public of news within the government while there was still time for citizen participation in the business of government.

Of the 11 articles from the two independent news sources, four were published before the FCC voted on June 2, 2003 (one appeared on June 1, 2003) (see Table 17). This is 36.4 percent of all independent articles. Ninety-one articles were published in the conglomerated news sources prior to the FCC vote, or 32.7 percent of the conglomerated articles ($p > .05$).

Table 17: Crosstabulation of the month of publication and the type of ownership ($p > .05$)

Count		Number of Articles per type of Ownership		Total
		Independent	Conglomerated	
Month of Publication	January		16	16
	February		10	10
	March		3	3
	April	1	10	11
	May	2	52	54
	June	5	97	102
	July	1	31	32
	August		14	14
	September	2	27	29
	October		3	3
	November		10	10
	December		5	5
Total		11	278	289

Table 18 shows the number of articles published that met the criteria of this study in each month of 2003.

Table 18: Frequency of each month of publication

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Month of Publication 1	16	5.5	5.5	5.5
2	10	3.5	3.5	9.0
3	3	1.0	1.0	10.0
4	11	3.8	3.8	13.8
5	54	18.7	18.7	32.5
6	102	35.3	35.3	67.8
7	32	11.1	11.1	78.9
8	14	4.8	4.8	83.7
9	29	10.0	10.0	93.8
10	3	1.0	1.0	94.8
11	10	3.5	3.5	98.3
12	5	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Tone

The tone of eight articles from independent news sources were deemed pro-regulation by the raters (72.7 percent) (see Tables 19, p. 41). The conglomerated news sources were found to be pro-regulation in 177 articles, or 63.7 percent of the time. From a simple percentage perspective, this seems to support **H3**. However, this result is uncertain given the 278-to-11 difference in the amount of coverage. Both conglomerated and independent news sources exhibited a roughly 8-to-1 ratio in favor of regulation, though that ratio, too, is statistically insignificant ($p > .05$). Therefore, no conclusion can be reached based on this measure alone.

Table 19: Crosstabulation of the type of ownership and the tone (p > .05)

Count		Tone			Total
		Pro-regulation	Anti-regulation	Neutral	
Type of Ownership	Independent	8	1	2	11
	Conglomerated	177	22	79	278
Total		185	23	81	289

The impact of the census is clearly evident in the measure of tone. The small sample of the pilot cloaked the fact that 64 percent of the articles were opposed to the proposed regulations (185 articles) (see Table 20). The New York Times had the highest number of pro-regulation articles and the greatest disparity among pro- and anti-regulation (30 pro- to 2 anti-regulation articles) (see Table 21, p. 42). The Denver Post had the greatest number of anti-regulation articles (5). The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Buffalo News, Chicago Sun-Times, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Columbus Dispatch, Seattle Times, and St. Petersburg Times published a combined 32 pro-regulation articles in 2003 but published zero anti-regulation articles. No news source published anti-regulation articles exclusively.

Table 20: Frequency of each type of tone

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Pro-regulation	185	64.0	64.0	64.0
	Anti-regulation	23	8.0	8.0	72.0
	Neutral	81	28.0	28.0	100.0
Total		289	100.0	100.0	

Table 21: Crosstabulation of each newspaper name and the tone of each article (p > .05)

Count		Tone			Total
		Pro-regulation	Anti-regulation	Neutral	
Name of Newspaper	Columbus Dispatch	1			1
	Tampa Tribune	2	1	1	4
	Minneapolis Star Tribune	2	1	1	4
	Cleveland Plain Dealer	2		1	3
	Times-Picayune	1	1	1	3
	Christian Science Monitor	2	1	2	5
	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	7		1	8
	St. Petersburg Times	6			6
	Buffalo News	6		4	10
	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	4	2	2	8
	Daily News (New York)	6	1	4	11
	Seattle Times	8		4	12
	St. Louis Post-Dispatch	3	1	2	6
	San Francisco Chronicle	6	1	7	14
	Boston Globe	8	1	5	14
	Chicago Sun-Times	4		1	5
	Denver Post	13	5	1	19
	Boston Herald	12	1	8	21
	San Diego Union-Tribune	7	1	3	11
	USA Today	19	1	6	26
	Houston Chronicle	9	1	2	12
	New York Times	30	2	9	41
	Washington Post	27	2	16	45
Total		185	23	81	289

There is data present that both supports and refutes **H3**. Based on the standards of Kiouisis (2004), the result is uncertain.

Discussion

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to expand upon the studies of Kenney and Simpson (2003) and Coleman and Wang (2004). Both of those studies had applied Altschull's (1984) media ownership theory. This study sought to add the element of Chomsky and Herman's propaganda model, developing out of a desire to provide solid facts as support for or against the claims of some in journalistic and political circles that media conglomerates are inferior to independent news sources. From a statistical standpoint, the study discovered little. But from a journalistic, reportorial perspective, the study provided a rich view of the mettle (or lack thereof) of the fourth estate in 2003.

The topic is one in which corporate media conglomerates have a vested financial interest. The assumption was that the independent media would demonstrate more objective, more passionate and, quite simply, more coverage of the issue than the conglomerated media. The data of this study clearly proves this assumption was wrong.

The performance of the news sources in this study leaves much to be desired. After all, this was a national discussion of the regulation of the American free press. The argument can be made that even if these newspapers had covered the story ad nauseum, the public would not have been aware of the FCC proposal. Unfortunately, none of the news sources included in the study felt it necessary to invite the American public to join that conversation, so we will never know. "Nearly 75% of the public had no idea media ownership rules were being revamped" (Gonzalez, 2003).

The independent media failed to provide a compelling alternative to the conglomerated news outlets. As a point of comparison, searching the database for the term “Iraq” for the same time frame as the study and using the same method crashes the search engine, returning this message: “This search has been interrupted because it will return more than 1,000 documents” (LexisNexis Academic database, 2006).

Bear in mind that this study, before exclusions, included a total of 316 articles.

The St. Petersburg Times, an independent news source owned by the Poynter Institute, published 62,472 stories in 2003 (St. Petersburg Times, 2006). Only six of those articles covered the FCC debate, while 2,789 articles contained the keyword “Iraq” (St. Petersburg Times, 2006).

Of the 79,825 stories published by The New York Times in 2003 (New York Times, 2006), 47 articles covered this issue of domestic importance, while 9,621 articles were published that contained the keyword “Iraq” (New York Times, 2006).

The Washington Post published 88,363 articles in 2003 (Washington Post, 2006), 45 of which were about the topic of this study. At the same time, The Washington Post published 8,671 articles containing the keyword “Iraq” (Washington Post, 2006).

It is interesting to note that the largest number of articles printed from a single outlet matching this study’s criteria did derive from a foreign news outlet, the Financial Times of London, with 56 articles printed within the given time frame.

The articles from The New York Times and The Washington Post, the two most prolific news sources in the study, managed to devote 58 thousandths of one

percent (.058 percent) and 51 thousandths of one percent (.051 percent) of their total story budget respectively to the FCC issue. This seems democratic compared to the St. Petersburg Times 96 ten-thousandths of one percent (.0096 percent) commitment to the story. This measure, while not as accepted as measuring column inches, adequately illustrates the absence of the story from the national issue radar.

Of equal concern as the disparate volume of stories is the content of the stories themselves. A Tampa Tribune editorial examined in the study, labeled as “our opinion” at the bottom of the story, read like a brochure endorsing its brand of media convergence. One of the five articles evaluated from the Christian Science Monitor, which amounts to more than nine percent of all the independent articles, referred to the vote in the House of Representatives rolling back the FCC regulations as “little more than an expression of populist spite toward big broadcasters” (Christian Science Monitor, 2003).

This piece, clearly labeled editorial, was without byline. The lack of a byline is common enough, but the noteworthiness comes from this particular attitude in this particular news source. The Monitor editorial went on to mention the hope found in “alternative media on cable, satellite, and the Internet” (Christian Science Monitor, 2003).

It is interesting to note that anti-regulation articles had a near 1-to-1 ratio when mentioning the Internet (12 “no” to 11 “yes”), compared to a near 2-to-1 ratio for pro-regulation articles (121 “no” to 64 “yes”) (see Table 22, p. 46). It seems that the Internet, for those supporting the FCC, serves as a magic bullet to solve the need for

media diversity (see Table 23). This is a dubious claim on the part of the anti-regulation faction when considering the sizeable Internet presence of Viacom (Blockbuster.com), Disney (ESPN.com) and the world's largest media company, Time Warner (AOL). These are just a sample of the vast Internet elements of these media conglomerates (Rank, 2004).

Table 22: Frequency of the article mentioning the Internet

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	177	61.2	61.2	61.2
	Yes	112	38.8	38.8	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Table 23: Crosstabulation of the tone of the article and its mention of the Internet (p > .05)

Count

		Did the article mention the Internet?		Total
		No	Yes	
Tone	Pro-regulation	121	64	185
	Anti-regulation	12	11	23
	Neutral	44	37	81
Total		177	112	289

While the total number of articles written about this debate was less than expected, the length of the articles was also interesting. The four longest articles, all more than 2,000 words, were all from conglomerated news sources (see Table 24, p. 47). The bulk of the articles (74.4 percent) were 1,000 words or less. This might explain the dearth of coverage of the public outcry both before and after the passage of the FCC regulations on June 2, 2003 (Copps, 2003).

Table 24: Crosstabulation of the name of the newspaper and the length range of each article (p > .05)

Count		Length Range					Total
		101-500 words	501-1000 words	1001-1500 words	1501-2000 words	More than 2000 words	
Name of Newspaper	Columbus Dispatch		1				1
	Tampa Tribune	2	1	1			4
	Minneapolis Star Tribune		1	1	2		4
	Cleveland Plain Dealer	1	1	1			3
	Times-Picayune	2	1				3
	Christian Science Monitor	1	3	1			5
	Atlanta Journal-Constitution		6	2			8
	St. Petersburg Times	2	1	1	2		6
	Buffalo News	3	6	1			10
	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette	1	5	2			8
	Daily News (New York)	9	2				11
	Seattle Times	6	4	2			12
	St. Louis Post-Dispatch	3	2	1			6
	San Francisco Chronicle	1	6	5	2		14
	Boston Globe	4	7	3			14
	Chicago Sun-Times		5				5
	Denver Post	5	10	2	1	1	19
	Boston Herald	13	5	3			21
	San Diego Union-Tribune	1	9	1			11
	USA Today	14	7	1	4		26
	Houston Chronicle	5	5	2			12
	New York Times	11	13	12	3	2	41
	Washington Post	5	25	11	3	1	45
Total		89	126	53	17	4	289

The FCC received 750,000 comments prior to its decision on June 2, 2003 (Copps, 2003). Of those comments, 99.9 percent opposed the proposed changes (Copps, 2003). In the following months, when the bulk of the coverage (59.9 percent) appeared, the comments continued to pour in to the FCC. Ninety-six articles were published before the FCC vote. Twenty-six of them (27 percent) mentioned that the public was upset about this (see Table 25, 26, p. 48). Eventually, more than 2 million comments were received (Nichols, 2003). How this “never-before-seen” outcry (Copps, 2003) didn’t get more coverage is a question for the ages.

Table 25: Frequency of mention of the public outcry regarding the proposed ownership regulations under consideration by the FCC in 2003?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	173	59.9	59.9	59.9
	Yes	116	40.1	40.1	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Table 26: Crosstabulation of month of publication and mention of the public outcry (p > .05)

Count

		Did the article mention the public outcry about the proposed FCC regulations in 2003?		
		No	Yes	Total
Month of Publication	1	12	4	16
	2	8	2	10
	3	2	1	3
	4	9	2	11
	5	37	17	54
	6*	56	46	102
	7	15	17	32
	8	4	10	14
	9	19	10	29
	10	1	2	3
	11	7	3	10
	12	3	2	5
Total		173	116	289

*2 articles were published on 6/1/2003, the day prior to the FCC vote.

Table 27: Frequency of mention of the general public's ignorance of the proposed ownership regulations under consideration by the FCC in 2003?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	260	90.0	90.0	90.0
	Yes	29	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Table 28: Crosstabulation of the type of ownership and mention of the public's ignorance of the proposed FCC regulations in 2003 (p > .05)

Count		Did the article mention the general public's ignorance of the proposed ownership regulations under consideration by the FCC in 2003?		Total
		No	Yes	
Type of Ownership	Independent	8	3	11
	Conglomerated	252	26	278
Total		260	29	289

Nichols (2003) put the number of ignorant at 72 percent, those Americans that knew “nothing at all” about the proposed regulations. This is not surprising given that 90 percent of the articles in this study did not mention the public ignorance of the matter (see Table 27, p. 48). Whether the public is ignorant by choice or through the fault of another party is unclear. What is clear is that the news sources did not seem to be interested in educating the public (see Table 28). Future studies should delve into causation of public ignorance. While a qualitative study might give a quick snapshot of this problem, quantitative study is probably necessary.

Further study should also seek to determine just how essential news has become to the media oligarchy, both for profit and public perception, especially after 2003. Since then, Time Warner repositioned AOL within itself, Google has emerged as a major media player and News Corp managed to acquire DirecTV. These are but a few of the major developments in the media world since the time frame of this study. Such a study will likely require insider sources within what Mark Crispin Miller (2001) calls the “cartel.” Interviews with practicing reporters and editors would lend a depth unattainable through content analysis.

A study of the possible fallout from the FCC debate featured in this study, including the replacement of then-chairman Michael Powell, would be fascinating. Has there been any fallout? What is the culture of the FCC today? These are questions that are relevant. This study points to the import of citizens as checks against bureaucracy, evident in the public outcry and the resultant vacating of the FCC regulations. Future studies need to focus on the FCC and the immense power in the hands of that organization.

Studying the problem of conglomeration from a distinctly economic perspective also seems a likely direction. The rationale in favor of conglomeration is clear: profit. There is need for a study to explore the possibility of empirical evidence to the contrary. By examining an individual conglomerate in great detail, looking at all of its holdings, such data may begin to emerge.

Altering the methodology of this study, specifically the categories used, may yield further interesting results. By grouping papers by circulation or by the number of media outlets under a given corporate umbrella may achieve a better grasp on the power of media ownership and its ability to impact the United States and the rest of the world. Also, looking at the patterns of sourcing with these articles may yield more data that speaks to the influence of power on the mass media.

Looking at the effects of conglomeration around the world could provide some perspective that this study lacked. The fact that the Financial Times published more stories about a federal agency in the United States than either The New York Times or The Washington Post begs further inquiry.

Likewise, inclusion of Internet reporting seems necessary given the emergent power of blogging and online reporting. Determining which online news sources are reliable is a study in and of itself. Once that is accomplished, including such online sources of news seems essential to adequately measure any survey of coverage. It is unclear if there was sufficient independent online presence in 2003 to impact the results of this study. That is certainly worthy of future study.

This kind of investigation is a daunting task. It is hard to imagine the scope of a global search. For a nation whose mainstream investigative journalists today seem blinded to the threat posed by their corporate masters' consolidation of power, such a global scope seems nigh-on-impossible. The separation of power, a concept at the very foundation of the United States, is losing strength with each passing day. It is therefore that much more important to keep the constant search for the truth alive, wherever it will flourish. After all, we can't all have Bob Woodward's sources.

Conclusion

Conclusion

Of the three research questions and three hypotheses posited for this study, none was supported. This study was approached from a quantitative, analytical perspective. But this study also represents the hope that there is still hope, hope for the free flow of information. The assumption of the hypotheses was that such hope rest in the hands of the independent news sources. Our republic only flourishes when there is a free flow of information. This study shows that information on critical issues is not reaching the people that need to be aware of it: the citizenry at large. To that extent, hope has faded. But the words of some of the articles still inspire a flickering flame within.

The assumption of media ownership theory is incomplete. While there was negligible difference in the coverage between the public and private corporations in this study, media ownership theory did not address the overall lack of coverage from both groups. The compulsion towards greater coverage expected from the publicly-owned corporations was absent from these results.

It would seem that Herman and Chomsky (1988) are also only partially correct in their assessment of the relationship between corporate news and government, representing economic and political power, respectively. Rather than limiting the criticism to corporate news, it appears necessary to expand the critique to news sources in general. There is no economic rationale for corporate news to question the government, so they simply repeat the official statements (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). This explains why corporate news coverage tends not to question

information from the government. But what is the rationale for the independent news sources? This is an area ripe for further study.

The proponents of media regulation point to valid concerns about the consolidation of power, both political and economic. However, they generally fail to illustrate an economic perspective on the issue. Without this insight, it is difficult to compare the two arguments. More often than not, the argument against conglomeration amounts to little more than “just because.” To confront media conglomeration seriously, opponents would need to make a reasoned economic argument as to the detrimental nature of conglomeration.

The debate on media conglomeration appears to apogee at an economic question of capitalism. Those who support the laissez-faire ideal favor allowing the market to regulate itself. While this may be an effective argument in a vacuum (or in a truly laissez-faire economy), this point of view fails to consider both the economic and social value of free speech. How can we value such a nebulous notion that on its surface appears priceless to so many?

Given the long and varied history of media regulation, which goes well beyond the history of the FCC, it is easy to imagine the difficulty of fitting all the pertinent information into less than 1,000 words for an article undoubtedly under deadline. This task got the better of the writers of many of the articles examined in this study. But Juan Gonzalez at the New York Daily News managed to capture the essence of free information, albeit the day after the FCC passed the proposed ownership regulations.

Since the FCC was created in 1934, the federal government has justified elaborate ownership restrictions because broadcasters - unlike other private companies - function over publicly owned airwaves and are required to operate in the public interest in exchange for their free licenses.

As far back as 1945, the Supreme Court declared that "the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources is essential to the welfare of the public." (Gonzalez, 2003)

The results of the pilot study were less than promising for the free flow of information, let alone diversity or antagonism between the powerful and the powerless. While the results of the full study do not indicate a substantially rosier present or future, those seventy-two words from Gonzalez inspire by clearly and concisely surmising the argument at the root of this debate. It is one that is neither pro-regulation nor anti-regulation. It is the argument in favor of American pluralism.

Citizens should not be afraid to delve into data left untended by journalists. Online databases and search engines such as Thomas (legislative information from the Library of Congress) and Edgar (SEC filings) provide a wealth of knowledge that an informed citizen should have at their disposal. This is a call for active citizenship, but those citizens should not be left to their own devices, fending for themselves.

Journalists should take up the banner thrown down by this study and start distancing themselves from their sources. The chummy relationship of "Scooter" Libby and Judith Miller should not exist. Why? Journalists are human, lest we forget. Who wants to write an article that maligns the person you had a pleasant dinner with

just the night before? The answer: not many people, hence the dearth of such articles in today's newspapers.

Reliance on official sources is sometimes necessary. However, the demands from those sources for "super-secret background" status, and journalists acquiescence to such demands, need to go the way of the dodo. This is something that needs to be taught from day one in journalism schools across the United States.

We have reached a point in the history of this country where objectivity needs to be evaluated, objectively. It is often placed on a pedestal, above reproach.

Unfortunately, most journalists seem to confuse objectivity with the function of a stenographic automaton. Having principles and sticking to them does not preclude objectivity, nor does it necessarily sway coverage towards one worldview or another.

Instead of objectivity, the desire among journalists should drive toward honesty and the free flow of information. The cliché is that information wants to be free. It is up to journalists to enable it to be free. Yes, citizens can pick up the banner, too, through blogging and the like. But journalists continue to profess a desire to exist. If that is the case, it is time for them to start shining light into dark corners. Let's start today.

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Appendix A

Appendix A

MEDIA CONSOLIDATION CONTENT ANALYSIS CODESHEET

___ 1. **Coder's initial** for your last name

___ 2. **Story ID number** (combine story numbers in article header; ex: 12 of 206 = 12206)

___ 3. **Publication** (choose ID number from list of papers)
Other (not on list) _____

___ 4. **Month** (1-12) ___ 5. **Date** (1-31)

___ 6. **Section letter** (or section name if no section letter listed next to page number)

___ 7. **Page number**

___ 8. **Section or desk type** (see header at top of story & select category that *best* matches it):

1. Top News / Main Page / Nation / U.S. (etc.)	6. Metro, Local, Region, State, Community, etc.
2. Business (Money, Market, Finance, Industry, Career, etc.)	7. Opinion, Editorial, Views, Columnists, etc.
3. Entertainment (Arts, Culture, Showbiz, Books, etc.)	8. Politics
4. Features (Magazine, Special, In-Depth, Outlook, Week in Review)	9. Living (Style, Lifestyle, Travel, Society, etc.)
5. No section type listed	10. Other _____

___ 9. **Length** (record numerical word count listed in header and circle the range)

1. 101-500 words	3. 1001-1500 words	5. More than 2000 words
2. 501-1000 words	4. 1501 words-2000 words	

___ 11. **Writer type** - NEWSPAPERS / WIRE STORIES ONLY - Select most specific title below, as indicated in the byline:

1. Staff / general writer	4. Staff reports (no names listed)	7. Other special/guest writer (non-staff)	10. Name but no title given
2. Wire service (AP, Reuters, etc.)	5. Staff plus wire reports	8. Washington DC correspondent	11. No name or byline provided
3. Business writer	6. Professor / researcher	9. Writer from another newspaper	12. Other _____

___ 12. **MENTIONS** - Does the story mention any of the following? (Check all that apply.)

___ 1. Independent/democratic media	___ 5. Propaganda	___ 9. Monopolies
___ 2. Public interest/"the public trust"	___ 6. Local (community) impact	___ 10. Public Outcry
___ 3. Diverse discourse	___ 7. Free market	
___ 4. Public ignorance of proposed changes	___ 8. The Internet	

EXPLANATIONS

___ 13. In this article, are the current (pre-2003) FCC regulations described? 0. No 1. Yes

___ 14. Does it describe the proposed changes to the FCC regulations? 0. No 1. Yes

___ 15. Does it mention why ownership rules were originally implemented by the FCC? 0. No 1. Yes

___ 16. Does it mention the ownership of the paper in which the article was published? 0. No 1. Yes

___ 17. **INTERNET** - How is the Internet defined or described in this article? (Check all that apply.)

___ 1. Just mentioned; not defined	___ 4. Monopoly-buster
___ 2. Democratizing force	___ 5. Other (write below)
___ 3. New media frontier	_____

___ 18. **CORPORATIONS** - Check any of the following media companies that are mentioned in the article:

1. ___ Advance Publications	11. ___ Liberty Media Corp.	21. ___ Sinclair	31. ___ Fox
2. ___ Clear Channel Communications	12. ___ McGraw-Hill	22. ___ Sony	32. ___ NBC
3. ___ Disney	13. ___ McClatchy Company	23. ___ AOL/Time Warner	33. ___ CNN
4. ___ Dow Jones & Company	14. ___ News Corporation	24. ___ Tribune Company	34. ___ Fox News
5. ___ Entercom Communications	15. ___ New York Times Co.	25. ___ Viacom	35. ___ Infinity
6. ___ Gannett	16. ___ Pearson	26. ___ Vivendi Universal	36. ___ Other (list below)
7. ___ General Electric	17. ___ Primedia	27. ___ Vulcan	_____
8. ___ Hearst Corporation	18. ___ Raycom	28. ___ Washington Post Co.	_____
9. ___ Knight Ridder	19. ___ Salem Communications	29. ___ ABC	_____
10. ___ Liberty Group Publishing	20. ___ E.W. Scripps Co.	30. ___ CBS	_____

___ 19. Does the article discuss potential mergers and/or acquisitions that could result from the new FCC regulations?

0. No M&A are mentioned 1. Yes, specific companies are mentioned 2. Yes, generically (no specific companies)

___ 20. Article addresses or speculates about who will gain from the new FCC regulations 0. No 1. Yes

Appendix B

Appendix B

Did the article describe the ownership regulations in effect before 2003?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	125	43.3	43.3	43.3
	yes	164	56.7	56.7	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Did the article describe the proposed ownership regulations under consideration by the FCC in 2003?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	100	34.6	34.6	34.6
	yes	189	65.4	65.4	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Did the article mention why the FCC originally implemented ownership rules?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	275	95.2	95.2	95.2
	yes	14	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Crosstabulation of section type and tone (p > .05)

Count

		Tone			Total
		Unfavorable	Favorable	Neutral	
Section Type	Top News	20	3	12	35
	Business	88	6	47	141
	Entertainment	4	2	5	11
	Features	3			3
	No Section Listed	10		6	16
	Metro/Local/Regional	3	1	4	8
	Opinion/Editorial	48	11	5	64
	Living/Style	7		2	9
	Other	2			2
Total		185	23	81	289

Crosstabulation of writer type and tone (p > .05)

Count

		Tone			Total
		Pro-regulation	Anti-regulation	Neutral	
Writer Type	Staff Writer	49	4	40	93
	Wire	7	1	4	12
	Business Writer	4	2	2	8
	Staff Reports (No Name Listed)			1	1
	Staff plus wire reports	3		2	5
	Professor/Researcher	3		1	4
	Other special/guest writer (non-staff)	8	7		15
	Washington DC Correspondent	15	2	4	21
	Writer from another newspaper	3		2	5
	Name but no title given	59	3	19	81
	No Name or byline provided	18	1	4	23
	Other	16	3	2	21
	Total	185	23	81	289

Crosstabulation of writer type and type of ownership (p > .05)

Count

		Type of Ownership		Total
		Independent	Conglomerated	
Type of Writer	Staff Writer	4	89	93
	Wire		12	12
	Business Writer		8	8
	Staff Reports (No Name Listed)		1	1
	Staff plus wire reports	1	4	5
	Professor/Researcher	1	3	4
	Other special/guest writer (non-staff)		15	15
	Washington DC Correspondent		21	21
	Writer from another newspaper		5	5
	Name but no title given	1	80	81
	No Name or byline provided	3	20	23
	Other	1	20	21
	Total	11	278	289

Did the article mention the concept of an independent or democratic media?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	96	33.2	33.2	33.2
	Yes	193	66.8	66.8	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Did the article mention the concept of public interest or "the public trust"?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	41	14.2	14.2	14.2
	Yes	248	85.8	85.8	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Did the article mention the concept of diverse discourse?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	50	17.3	17.3	17.3
	Yes	239	82.7	82.7	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Did the article mention the concept of propaganda?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	284	98.3	98.3	98.3
	Yes	5	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Did the article mention the local or community impact of the proposed ownership regulations under consideration by the FCC in 2003?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	121	41.9	41.9	41.9
	Yes	168	58.1	58.1	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Did the article mention the concept of the free market?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	85	29.4	29.4	29.4
	Yes	204	70.6	70.6	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Did the article mention monopolistic behavior?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	188	65.1	65.1	65.1
	Yes	101	34.9	34.9	100.0
	Total	289	100.0	100.0	

Crosstabulation of ownership regulations (pre-2003) and tone (p > .05)

Count

		Tone			Total
		Pro-regulation	Anti-regulation	Neutral	
Did the article describe the ownership regulations in effect before 2003?	No	83	14	28	125
	Yes	102	9	53	164
	Total	185	23	81	289

Crosstabulation of ownership regulations (proposed) and tone (p > .05)

Count

		Tone			Total
		Pro-regulation	Anti-regulation	Neutral	
Did the article describe the proposed ownership regulations?	No	65	14	21	100
	Yes	120	9	60	189
	Total	185	23	81	289

Crosstabulation of why the FCC regulates and tone (p > .05)

Count

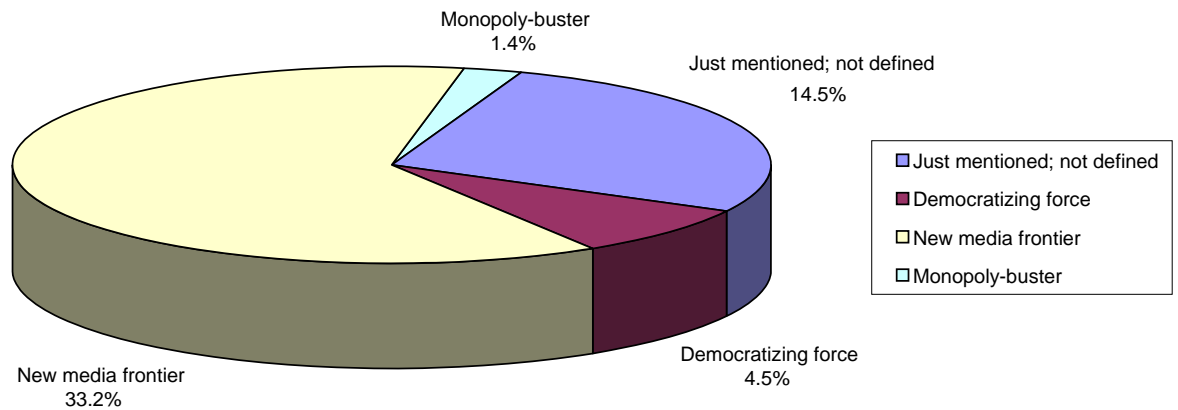
		Tone			Total
		Pro-regulation	Anti-regulation	Neutral	
Did the article describe why the FCC regulates ownership?	No	177	22	76	275
	Yes	8	1	5	14
	Total	185	23	81	289

Crosstabulation of conflict of interest and tone (p > .05)

Count		Tone			Total
		Pro-regulation	Anti-regulation	Neutral	
Did the article identify the ownership of its paper?	No	155	18	59	232
	Yes	30	5	22	57
Total		185	23	81	289

Was the Internet mentioned?

(Percentage of time each option was selected)



**Implications of Ownership:
Applying the propaganda model to media ownership theory**

By

Patrick T. Lafferty

Submitted to the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass
Communications and the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Kansas
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

Chairperson: Kristen Swain, Asst. Professor

Signature: Kristen Alley Swain

Committee Member 1: Barbara Barnett, Asst. Professor

Signature: Barbara Barnett

Committee Member 2: James Gentry, Professor

Signature: James Gentry

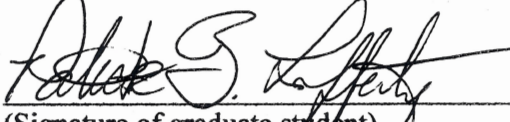
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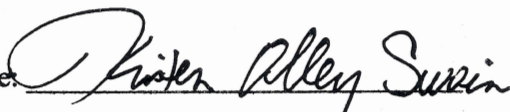
Acceptance Page

Patrick T. Lafferty certifies that this electronically filed version is identical to the one approved by the thesis/project committee identified below:


(Signature of graduate student)

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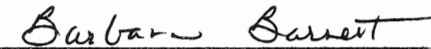
Signature:



Chair*: Kristen Swain, Asst. Professor

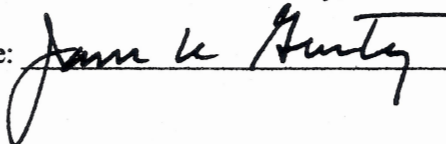
Committee Member 1: Barbara Barnett, Asst. Professor

Signature:



Committee Member 2: James Gentry, Professor

Signature:



Date approved: May 1, 2006

***Adviser original signature is required.**

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