

Petros Iosifidis on competition policy and media plurality

Petros Iosifidis, Reader in Media Policy at City University, questions the role of competition policy in addressing media plurality issues. Petros shares chapter 4 of his 1996 PhD thesis, 'Media Concentration Policy in the European Union and the Public Interest', which closely resemble current plurality debates.

During the March 2nd 'Assessing Media Plurality' workshop, we spent some time discussing 'weighting' issues concerning different media and I think this brings us back to where the whole thing started, i.e. to the question (dominating the early/mid 1990s) of identifying a method for establishing influence/impact in the so-called 'market place for ideas'. It was at this the time that I was attempting to identify a suitable unit for measuring shares in the political/cultural market as part of my PhD thesis. In my view the issues explored in my PhD thesis very much relate to what we discussed yesterday. It appears that these issues are still unresolved and continue to return to the agenda. [Chapter 4](#) offers insight on these issues and this agenda.

Abstract

Technological developments are breaking down the barriers between previously distinct media sectors. The current media ownership regulations are considered to be too inflexible to allow firms to take full advantage of the multimedia opportunities offered by new technologies. Thus a search is on for new methodologies to measure and control concentration of media ownership, including cross-media ownership. Both the European Commission and various Member States seem to favour a new ownership control regulatory regime which would reflect these market changes. A fresh framework of rules for calculating limits to concentration in the media market as a whole is now under consideration. The dual objective of such regulation is to allow the media industry to exploit new opportunities (here, competition policy has a prominent role), while at the same time safeguarding the public interest in media pluralism and diversity (here, sector-specific structural and content rules may apply). Various proposals have been put forward for the measurement of media market shares in light of the two above objectives. These include measurement of audience share and of revenue share. Chapter 4 assesses the feasibility and effects of these various proposals. It examines the problems associated with all types of concentration measures and assesses their appropriateness in the broad context of media concentration's impact on the public interest. At the end alternative proposals are put forward for a better measure.

A version of this chapter is published as an article in *Media Culture & Society* titled 'Methods of Measuring Media Concentration' (Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 643-663).

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