



[Doyle, G.](#) (2015) Why ownership pluralism still matters in a multi-platform world. In: Valcke, P., Sükösd, M. and Picard, R.G. (eds.) *Media Pluralism: Concepts, Risks and Global Trends*. Series: Palgrave global media policy and business. Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke, pp. 297-309. ISBN 9781137304292

This is the author's final accepted version.

There may be differences between this version and the published version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/110161/>

Deposited on: 25 September 2015

Enlighten – Research publications by members of the University of Glasgow
<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk>

AUTHOR FINAL DRAFT

‘Why ownership pluralism still matters in a multi-platform world’

Chapter for: *Media Pluralism: Concepts, Risks and Global Trends*

Peggy Valcke, Robert Picard and Miklos Sükösd (Editors)

GILLIAN DOYLE

July 30, 2013

Gillian Doyle is Professor in Media Economics and Director of the Centre for Cultural Policy Research (CCPR) at the University of Glasgow.

Introduction

The publication in November 2012 of the Report of the Leveson Inquiry, a major public enquiry into the culture, practice and ethics of the UK newspaper industry led by Lord Justice Leveson, was heralded as a great landmark for regulation of the press. But on the question of media ownership the Report was relatively silent (Leveson, 2012). The lack of any firm recommendations in this area was surprising since a key event which paved the way for the Inquiry was the proposal from News Corporation in 2010 to acquire the remaining 61% not already owned by the company of BSkyB, the UK's dominant satellite television operator. This bid was seen by many as potentially damaging to the public interest because, in addition to BSkyB's dominance in the UK pay television market, the company is a major provider of news to commercial radio stations across the UK and also its parent company, News Corporation, at that time owned press titles that collectively accounted for a share of the UK national newspaper market of some 37% (Fenton, 2011).

The threat to democracy posed by excessive power on the part of media owners was brought to the fore and illustrated vividly in a series of testimonials gathered in the course of Lord Leveson's Inquiry. His report concluded that, when it comes to ensuring a sufficient plurality of media ownership the current process of adjudication in the UK was not at all satisfactory (Leveson, 2012: 30). However it stopped short of making specific recommendations for regulation, suggesting only that the government should 'ensure there is a mechanism for protecting media plurality' (ibid). How is it that, having demonstrated the obvious deficiencies of a system that relies on politicians (whose careers depend on positive media coverage) to adopt an independent stance in curbing the power of media barons, the Inquiry then failed to prescribe any specific remedial action?

The question of how to regulate ownership of media is always a site for controversy. It is widely accepted that, in the interests of democracy and of social cohesion, individuals and societies need plurality and diversity within media provision (Doyle, 2002: 6). So the main concern for public policy surrounding patterns of media ownership stems from the fact that excessive concentrations of media ownership can lead to over-representation of certain political viewpoints

or values or certain forms of cultural output at the expense of others. But media ownership patterns are important also because they impact on the economics and financial performance of the industry. Restrictions of ownership could, for example, result in duplication of resources which is wasteful and prevents industry from capitalising on the economies of scale that are potentially available.

News Corporation's bid for BSkyB clearly exemplified how, not least in times of technological change, patterns of corporate media ownership are shaped by economic and strategic factors. As digitisation has encouraged greater cross-sectoral convergence, the emergence of new benefits and gains associated with cross-media ownership has provided an extra spur towards strategies of diversification and cross-sectoral enlargement in the media industry. Even so, and despite the transition to a more web-connected era, concerns remain about the power wielded by dominant media organisations in relation to production and circulation of news, ideas and cultural and political values within contemporary societies. But, notwithstanding a House of Lords Select Committee inquiry into media pluralism and a Government consultation on how pluralism should be measured, the lack of any tangible outcome from the Leveson Inquiry (thus far at least) will have disappointed anyone who hoped that revelations from the process would precipitate some form of action to tackle excessive build-ups of media power and/or promote plurality.

This chapter examines the effects of changing technology on landscapes of media provision and consumption and it considers the question of whether the greater choice made possible by advances in digital technology and changing patterns of consumption obviate the need for special interventions to restrict media ownership for the sake of pluralism. In analyzing tensions between, on the one hand, socio-cultural concerns associated with media empire-building and, on the other hand, economic and industrial policy priorities surrounding media ownership, it argues that despite widening product choice and changing patterns of consumption on the part of audiences, pluralism is not a 'natural' feature of markets for mass media and nor should it be assumed that it is likely to become so in the near future.

Concentrated ownership, economic performance and pluralism

Concentrated ownership is a feature of media industries that is observable in very many countries internationally (Noam, 2011). Economic factors may well provide a compelling explanation for this phenomenon but, given the political significance of the industry, other motives can and sometimes do account for the propensity to build sizeable ownership stakes across the media. A notable feature of the industry's economics is that firms in this arena tend to enjoy increasing marginal returns as their output – or, more properly, as consumption of their output – expands. The prevalence of economies of scale is strongly characteristic of media industries and the explanation for this lies in the public good nature of the product and how it is consumed (Picard, 2002). Economies of scope are also common, again because of the public good nature of media output and the fact that a product created for one market can, at little or no extra cost, be reformatted and sold through another. On account of the prevalence of economies of scale and scope, there is a natural gravitation towards oligopoly and monopolisation in media industries (Doyle, 2013).

Spurred on by digital convergence and by dramatic growth in the borderless distribution infrastructure for media which is the internet, the traditional boundaries surrounding media markets have gradually been eroded thus providing further avenues and incentives for media companies to expand (Küng, Picard and Towse, 2008). Media and communications industries have been strongly affected by globalisation and by increasing competition at home and abroad for audience attention and for advertising revenues. Advancing technology has played a role in diminishing traditional geographic market boundaries but also technology – more precisely convergence – has served to blur the boundary lines surrounding and separating different sorts of media products and markets. Enlarged, diversified and vertically-integrated groups appear well-suited to exploit technological and other market changes sweeping across the media and communications industries. Highly concentrated firms who can spread production costs across wider product and geographic markets stand to benefit from natural economies of scale.

In response to digital convergence, many if not most sizeable media firms are now seeking to re-configure their operations – often through expansion and acquisitions – in order to adopt a so-called 'multi-platform' outlook (Doyle, 2010). A multi-platform (or '360-degree' approach)

implies that new ideas for content are considered in the context of a wide range of distribution possibilities (e.g. online, mobile, interactive games, etc.) and not just, say, traditional print or linear television transmission. A key advantage of adopting a multi-platform distribution strategy is that it enables greater value to be extracted from intellectual property assets. In other words, sharing content across different formats and platforms enables additional economies of scale and scope to be reaped, albeit that the risk of illegal copying and intermediation is clearly an important concern in relation to internet distribution of media content.

The prevalence of strategies of expansion and concentrated cross-sectoral ownership reflects the fact that diversified and large scale media organizations are in a good position to exploit common resources across different product and geographic markets. But this situation creates complex challenges for policymakers. In general, the net economic impact of industrial concentration depends on the trade-off between two possible outcomes both of which are instrumental in incentivising firms to expand: increased efficiency (which is obviously beneficial) or increased market power (which has damaging implications for rivals and consumers). So, a major economic concern associated with concentrated media ownership is its impact on competition. Competition is generally regarded as an essential means of fostering economic efficiency and of averting abusive behaviour by dominant firms. On the other hand, a media industry that is too fragmented is also susceptible to inefficiency – a point often emphasized in industry submissions to government when regulation of media ownership is under discussion (Doyle, 2013, 178-9).

However, setting aside the economic implications of industrial concentration, a potentially much more pressing concern for policymakers is the fact that undue concentrations of media ownership can pose a threat to plurality and, in turn, to democracy and social cohesiveness. As discussed elsewhere in this volume, concentrations of media ownership are controversial because of the vital role played by media - television, newspapers, radio and the internet - in supplying the ideas that shape our viewpoints, our politics and our cultures. Pluralism is the principal concern associated with concentrations of media ownership and the desire to safeguard pluralism is the main reason why many countries, including the UK and most European countries as well the US, impose special rules or restrictions over ownership of media.

Since ownership patterns affect not only pluralism but also how well the media industry is able to manage its resources and so, in turn, the efficiency and economic strength of this sector, public policy debates around which configurations and what level of ownership of media ought to be permissible are often a site for conflicting viewpoints (Noam, 2011). One concern is the potential for ownership restrictions to prevent media organisations from growing their activities to whatever size and shape is conducive to maximizing their efficiency and economic strength. For example, in an era when digital convergence has increased the gains available from strategies of multi-platform distribution, a policy of preventing cross-sectoral expansion will inevitably entail opportunity costs. On the other hand, the advantages of allowing unrestrained expansion need to be weighed up against potential threats to competition and, of course, the impact of media empire-building on pluralism.

Affect of changing technology

The impact of digitization on the landscape of media provision has been transformative. Since the 1990s, an ever-higher proportion of the population has become connected to the internet either through fixed line links in the home or workplace or, increasingly, through mobile devices. By 2011 the rate of household take-up of fixed broadband had reached more than 70% in large European countries such as the UK, France and Germany and levels of fixed broadband connectivity continue to grow rapidly in most developed and developing countries (Ofcom, 2012b: 191).

Growth of the internet and of social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter have opened up increasing avenues for distribution of differing viewpoints and of media content of all sorts. Distribution capacity has increased and digital platforms have provided users of media content with search tools that enable more personalized forms of consumption (Kung, Picard and Towse, 2008). Chris Anderson has famously argued that, because the additional capacity provided by the internet marketplace makes it possible to provide retail access to a wide range of relatively unpopular products over an extended time frame, niche items can generate a 'long tail' in terms of the value of sales that accrue over longer periods of time (Anderson, 2006). Judging by the

ongoing predominance in the online environment of strongly branded and popular media content items (evidenced, for example, by a clear skew towards high-profile rather than more obscure shows on catch-up television services such as the BBC iPlayer), it is questionable to what extent, if at all, the internet has – thus far at least - encouraged a rebalancing in media consumption patterns away from best-sellers and in favour of niche items. Nonetheless, it is undoubtedly the case that the internet has precipitated a vast increase in the range of content offerings available to audiences, should they choose to tap in to this choice.

New digital delivery platforms, growing rates of internet connectivity, wider access to content and a rise in user-generated material have engendered significant changes in audience behaviour and contributed to a relentless process of fragmentation of mass audiences (Napoli, 2011). Patterns of media consumption have changed with readership print media in decline and more time being spent online and using mobile devices. Data collected by UK regulator Ofcom demonstrates that despite the ongoing popularity of traditional broadcast media – radio and television – people are spending an ever-increasing amount of time using the internet (Ofcom, 2013: 44). New modes of consumption are reflected, for example, in changing attitudes expressed by UK adults about which media activity they would miss most: although television is and remains the medium which is typically most highly valued, some 16% of consumers surveyed in 2012 said the internet was the media activity they would miss most, up from 8% who said they would most miss the internet in 2005 (ibid:32).

Advertisers have naturally responded to changes in media consumption patterns. In most countries, the share of advertising accounted for by the internet – although frequently lagging behind shifts in audience attention in favour of the internet (PwC, cited in Edgecliffe-Johnson, 2013) - has grown steadily in recent years at the expense of all other media including radio but especially newspapers and magazines. In the UK, the switch to online has advanced more quickly than elsewhere and, in 2011, the share of total advertising accounted for by the internet reached 33% with other countries, including the Netherlands (29%) and Sweden (27%), following closely behind (Ofcom, 2012b:186). Growth in internet advertising has been driven partly by the development of new online intermediaries, especially search engines such as Google and also news aggregators and social networking sites who, while well placed to capture

and direct the attention of online audiences, may not themselves be re-investing to any significant extent in media content production (Doyle, 2013: 158-9).

To the extent that new online intermediaries are capturing an ever-increasing share of advertising expenditures, this raises difficult questions for traditional media suppliers – and, in turn, for international regulators concerned with media pluralism - about the future economic sustainability of some forms of content production, especially news journalism (OECD, 2010: 78-9). Newspapers and especially local titles, who traditionally have tended to rely heavily on classified advertisements (especially advertisements for property, jobs and cars) for a large proportion of their income, have inevitably suffered from the propensity of advertisers to invest in online search and other digital outlets. For many newspaper publishers who until recent years have been profitable, ‘the economics of news production and distribution has been radically altered, in particular in the context of the economic crisis which has accelerated structural changes’ (ibid: 6).

A ‘crisis’ in the economics of newspaper publishing with attendant concern about the future of news journalism (Siles and Boczkowski, 2012) has encouraged calls from many publishers for de-regulation of restrictions over cross-ownership restrictions seen as impeding the sector’s ability to adapt successfully to changing industry circumstances (Barnett, 2010). Indeed, the announcement of News Corporation’s proposed bid for BSkyB in November 2010, which would have increased the company’s exposure to growth opportunities in pay-television markets at a time of declining revenues for print media, was one manifestation of the perceived crisis facing newspaper industry incumbents. For many media companies, the preferred route towards salvation has been to try become, in one form or another, multi-platform players engaged in content delivery across multiple digital platforms. In the UK, the Government in 2010 sought to relieve pressures on local media companies by relaxing local cross-media ownership rules in order to allow these players greater flexibility to evolve into ‘a new generation of multi-media content providers’ (Sweney, 2010). But, notwithstanding changes in media consumption patterns, the extent to which recent changes in technology truly justify a dismantling of traditional regulatory forms of protection for pluralism is questionable.

Has changing technology removed the need for diverse ownership of traditional media?

As more media companies switch to an approach that involves dissemination of content across multiple digital platforms, the volume of outputs and the supply of opportunities to consume media are available to audiences have increased exponentially. With the advent of an apparent digital ‘cornucopia’, some question whether or not special curbs to prevent excessively concentrated ownership of media are still needed.

Although volumes of media output and opportunities for audiences to access it have multiplied, it is debatable whether or not this has contributed positively to diversity and pluralism. One problem is that multi-platform distribution is apt to encourage strategies of brand extension and, in turn, the ‘market ubiquity of a limited number of franchises’ (Murray, 2005: 431). Recent research suggests that much of the media content available on digital platforms reflects the way that, as traditional media organisations mutate into digital multi-platform players, production has become orientated towards supplying multiple versions out of the same individual narratives, stories, content properties and brands (Fenton, 2009; Doyle, 2010).

In the newspaper industry for example, digitisation has removed constraints over distribution capacity and, as confirmed by recent research carried out by this author,¹ the investment made by firms in improved content management systems (CMSs) has made re-versioning of news content easier. CMSs provide the interface for journalists as they input text and these systems facilitate a degree of automation in processes of creating, editing and publishing content and, in some cases at least, of alignment of content across platforms. According to the Managing Director of Commercial Operations at one of the largest UK newspaper groups,² ‘in terms of editorial production, the content management system is everything’ because of the vital role these systems play in ensuring that the way stories are constructed and written up is conducive to effective

¹ The research in question - ‘Multi-platform media and the digital challenge: Strategy, Distribution and Policy’, an ESRC-funded project (ES/J011606/1) - focuses partly on economic and organisational changes at leading national newspaper groups in the UK.

² Interviewed by the author in London on November 6, 2012.

recycling of that material across multiple delivery platforms.

In the television industry, migration to a multi-platform approach has also resulted in at least some forms of pressures *against* rather than in favour of diversity of content. Amongst UK broadcasters, a common strategic response to the problem of how to meet audience and advertiser demand for multi-layered 360-degree output from within static or diminishing content budgets in recent years has been to focus on fewer, high impact ideas (Doyle, 2010). At the BBC for example, the mantra ‘fewer, bigger, better’ was adopted as part of the organisation’s efforts to restructure into a multi-media entity. In the commercial television sector too the need to generate multi-platform output from within static budgets has encouraged greater selectivity in content decisions, with a focus on safe propositions (ibid). So although some argue that it is anachronistic in the digital era for media companies to be prevented from reaping the cost-efficiencies that an extensive cross-platform market presence make possible, it is important to remember that multi-platform expansion is by no means certain to contribute towards greater diversity of content or pluralism.

Growing use of the internet has engendered changes in media supply and consumption which, over time, are likely to pose ever more complex challenges for policy-makers. The rise of search and intermediation have introduced powerful new players and potentially worrying new forms of dominance over access points to media. Search engines have become indispensable in how people find and negotiate access to content on the internet (van Eijk, 2009). Because economies of scale and network effects are prevalent in the search engine business, this industry is highly prone to monopolisation. The tendency for search engines to direct audiences towards content which is already highly popular poses an obvious threat to diversity and, in the context of small countries and minority language regions, may be especially harmful. Google’s dominance across the globe creates many possibilities for abuses of gateway monopoly power and of market power (Doyle, 2013: 184-5). Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter also enjoy increasing power to shape media selection choices as consumers use social networking sites to navigate online content (ibid). For example, Facebook currently generates some 24% of traffic referred to YouTube, as compared with 32% from Google (Ofcom, 2012a: 13). As acknowledged by the Chief Executive of UK communications regulatory body Ofcom, a major challenge for media

regulators in dealing with these new players is to ‘avoid suppressing reward for innovation and risk’ while, at the same time, also not ‘allowing the creation of an enduring monopoly with associated consequences’ (Richards, 2010: 5).

When News Corporation announced its interest in bidding to make a full takeover of BSkyB in 2010, UK Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills Vince Cable responded by asking the communications regulator Ofcom to carry out an investigation into whether or not the deal was likely to act against the public interest. One natural area of concern was the economic health of the media industry and the perception held by some that ‘in the multi-media era we are going to need some very large players’ (Luckhurst, cited in Smale, 2010). Ofcom’s Report on the proposed acquisition duly acknowledged the need for regulation to ensure that media companies have the ‘freedom to innovate in response to market developments [and] to make risky investments and earn suitable rewards...’ (Ofcom, 2010: 15). In weighing up how the deal might impact on future developments, the regulator drew attention to News Corporation’s positive track record of investment in risky new ventures and how, as a well-resourced and innovative company, it might be well placed to develop new business models for online delivery of media (ibid).

However, Ofcom’s main stated concern (in relation to whether the proposed transaction warranted referral for a further stage of investigation) was how the deal would affect pluralism. In order to assess the impact on pluralism, Ofcom examined the number and range of media players involved in news provision in the UK, focusing on ‘their relative ability to influence and inform public opinion’ (Ofcom, 2010: 7). Part of this assessment involved an analysis of patterns of news consumption across television, radio, newspapers and the internet with a view towards assessing the share of ‘voice’ accounted for by leading UK media players. A key finding from this research was that, despite growth of the internet, traditional media still predominate in the consumption habits of most UK adults and most still, to a surprising extent, derive their news and views from traditional media platforms, especially television (ibid: 58) – see figure 1.

figure 1 around here: **UK Adults' main source of news**

In addition, when the internet offerings which are most popular with audiences are analysed, it emerges that the most frequently visited and heavily used online suppliers of news are often websites or services owned and controlled by conventional media organisations such as the BBC or Associated Newspapers, owners of *MailOnline*. Ofcom's report noted that, in 2009, '10 of the top 15 online providers of news' in the UK were dominant traditional media players and the remainder were news aggregators rather than alternative providers of news (ibid:13). The extent to which traditional media players still predominated amongst the most popular news sites in the UK in 2012 can be seen in figure 2.

figure 2 around here: **Most popular news sites in the UK**

Given that, despite a changing media landscape, most people still consume news via television, radio and newspapers, it follows that rules governing ownership in these sectors still have some role to play in promoting healthy levels of plurality. The greater choice made possible by advances in digital technology and changing patterns of consumption, while welcome developments, do *not* as yet remove the need for diverse ownership of traditional media, i.e. press and broadcasting. While the internet has become an increasingly significant source of news over recent years, especially for younger audiences, it is worth remembering that, for most internet users, online news sources serve only as a complement rather than a substitute for conventional news media (Ofcom, 2010: 13; OECD, 2010: 9).

In order to address the specific question of how News Corporation's proposed takeover of BSkyB would affect pluralism, Ofcom utilised a measure based on minutes spent consuming news via newspapers, television, radio and the internet per person per day and, on that basis, arrived at a calculation of the total cross-platform audience share of each of the largest media enterprises in the UK. One weakness with this approach is the assumption that a minute of news

consumption is equal across all platforms whereas it might be argued that, for example, television has far greater immediacy and impact than other media and therefore deserves a heavier weighting (Ofcom, 2010: 57). But no universally agreed methodology for measuring influence exists and adopting minutes of media usage as a proxy is an approach that other prominent consultancies and agencies have also used (Enders and Goodall, 2010). The results produced by Ofcom using this technique indicated that, aside from the BBC, News Corporation was already by far the largest media owner in the UK with a share of voice of 14% and, since BSkyB accounted for a further 10%, allowing combined ownership of the two enterprises would, in Ofcom's view, operate against the public interest (Ofcom, 2010: 12).

Although it initially appeared that Ofcom's advice against allowing the merger was not going to be followed by the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Jeremy Hunt, News Corporation was itself subsequently obliged to withdraw its bid when a scandal erupted unexpectedly in Summer 2011 about the prevalence of unethical journalistic practices at some of its newspaper titles (Ross, 2011:8). The subsequent setting up of a major public Inquiry brought to the fore abundant evidence of unhealthy relationships between UK politicians and press owners and of the sheer ineffectiveness of existing policies intended to curb excessive ownership (Fenton, 2012: 3). Yet two years later there is little sign that the Leveson Inquiry will actually result in more effective legislative protection for pluralism. For cynics, this state of affairs will merely confirm the widely recognised fact that 'the media's unique influence over politically salient public opinion can make politician's reluctant to fight powerful media owners' (Hultén, Tjernström and Melesko, 2010: 14). It is for this very reason of course that, irrespective of changing technologies, policies to ensure diverse ownership remain a crucial safeguard both for democracy and for protection of cultural pluralism more widely.

Acknowledgements:

This chapter draws on a three-year research project entitled ‘Multi-platform media and the digital challenge: Strategy, Distribution and Policy’ funded by the Economic & Social Research Council (ES/J011606/1). Principal Investigator: Gillian Doyle; Co-Investigator: Philip Schlesinger; Research Associate: Katherine Champion.

Bibliography

Anderson, Chris (2006), *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More*, New York: Hyperion.

Barnett, S (2010), *What’s wrong with media monopolies? A lesson from history and a new approach to media ownership policy*, MEDIA@LSE Electronic Working Papers, Mansell, R and Cammaerts, B (Eds), No 18. Available at:
<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/mediaWorkingPapers>

Doyle, G (2002), *Media Ownership: The Economics and Politics of Convergence and Concentration in the UK and European Media*, London: Sage.

Doyle, G (2010), ‘From Television to Multi-platform: Less from more or more for less?’ *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 16(4): 431-449.

Doyle, G (2013), *Understanding Media Economics (2nd Ed)*, London: Sage.

Edgecliffe-Johnson, A (2013), ‘Brics set to eclipse western digital appetite’, *Financial Times*, June 5, at p17.

Enders, C and Goodall, C (2010), *Ofcom Submission Outline Material*, London: Enders Analysis.

Fenton, B (2011a), 'Hunt urged to refer bid for BSkyB', *Financial Times*, January 9. Available at: www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1bf9d524-1c20-11e0-9b56-00144feab49a.html#axzz1DGjiTnX0

Fenton, B (2011b), 'Hunt delays referral of News-BSkyB bid', *Financial Times*, January 25. Available at: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f24f9106-2858-11e0-bfcc-00144feab49a.html#axzz1DGjiTnX0>

Fenton, N (Ed) (2009), *New Media, Old News: Journalism and Democracy in the Digital Age*, London: Sage.

Fenton, B (2012), 'Miliband says Murdoch should lose some papers', *Financial Times*, June 13, at p4.

Hultén, O., Tjernström, S., and Melesko, S. (Eds.) (2010) *Media Mergers and the Defence of Pluralism*, Göteborg: Nordicom.

Küng, L. Picard, R and Towse, R (2008), *The Internet and the Mass Media*, London: Sage.

Leveson, Lord Justice (2012) *Leveson Inquiry: An Inquiry Into the Culture, Practices and Ethics of the Press*, HC 779, London: TSO, 29 November 2012

Murray, S (2005), 'Brand loyalties: rethinking content within global corporate media', *Media Culture & Society*, 27 (3): 415-435.

Napoli, P (2011), *Audience Evolution*, NY: Columbia University Press.

Noam, E (2011) International Media Concentration (September 24, 2011). TPRC 2011. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1979921>

OECD (2010), *The evolution of news and the internet*, Report by Working Party on the Information Economy, DSTI/ICCP/IE (2009) 14/FINAL, 11 June 2010.

Ofcom (2009), *Report to the Secretary of State (Culture, Media and Sport) on the Media Ownership Rules*, London: Ofcom, 17 November 2009.

Ofcom (2010), *Report on public interest test on the proposed acquisition of British Sky Broadcasting Group plc by News Corporation*, London: Ofcom, 31 December 2010.

Ofcom (2013), *Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report*, London: Ofcom, April.

Ofcom (2012a), *Communications Market Report*, London: Ofcom, July.

Ofcom (2012b), *International Communications Market Report*, London: Ofcom, December.

Picard, R (2002), *The Economics and Financing of Media Companies*, New York: Fordham University Press.

Richards, E (2010), 'Competition law and the communications sector', Speech by Ofcom Chief Executive for *UCL Jevons Institute for Competition Law and Economics Annual Colloquium*, 13 July 2010, London: Ofcom.

Ross, A (2011), 'Investors look beyond BSkyB', *Financial Times*, July 16, at p8.

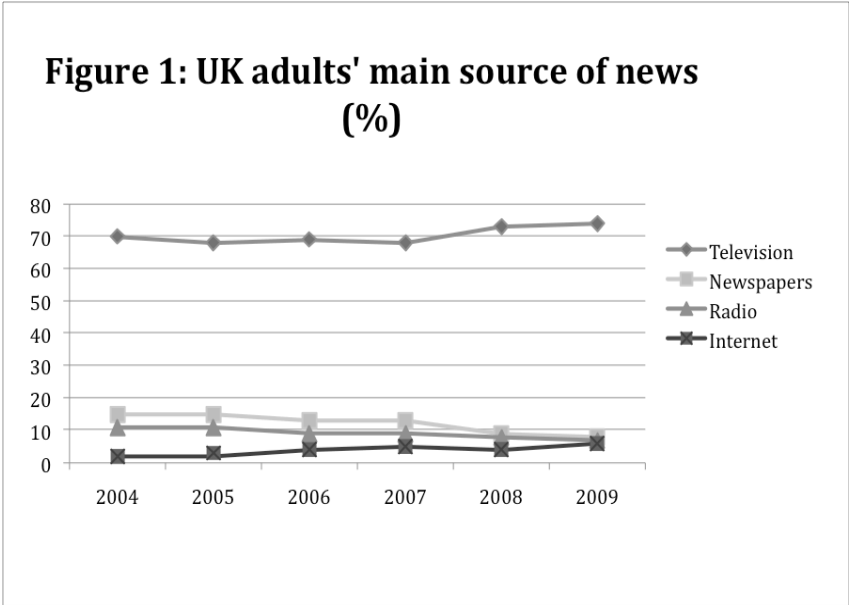
Smale, W (2010), 'Rupert Murdoch's growing multi-media empire', *BBC News*, posted June 15 2010, at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10317856>

Siles I and Boczkowski P (2012), Making sense of the newspaper crisis: a critical assessment of existing research and an agenda for future work. *New Media & Society* 14 (8): 1375-1394.

Sweney, M (2010), Local media ownership rules to go by November, *Guardian.co.uk*, posted 15 July 2010. Accessed at: www.guardian.co.uk/media/2010/jul/15/local-media-ownership-rules

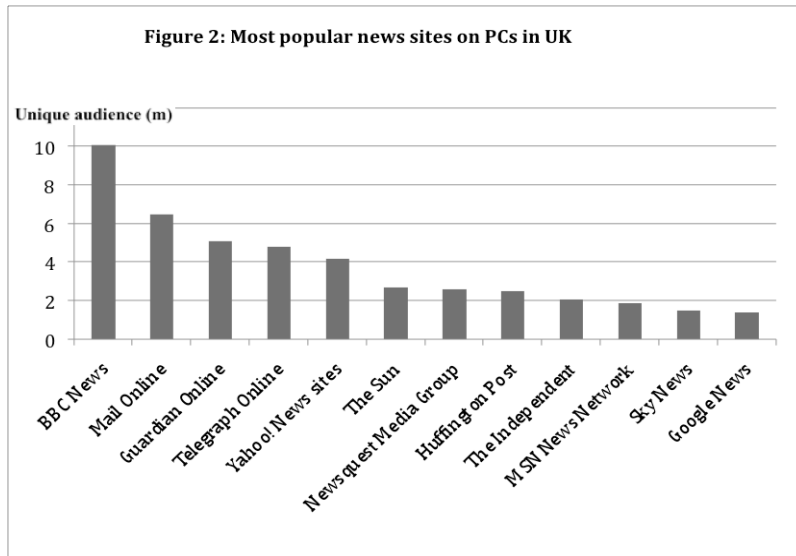
Van Eijk, N (2009), Search Engines, the new Bottleneck for Content Access, in Preissel, B et al (eds), *Telecommunications Markets: Drivers and Impediments*, Springer Phsica-Verlag HD: 141-156.

Figure 1



Source: Based on data from Ofcom media tracker (Ofcom, 2009: 16).

Figure 2



Source: UKOM/Nielsen data for March 2012 in Ofcom, 2012a: 275.