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Concerns about the Disproportionate Use of Economic Research in the FCC'S Media Ownership Studies from 2002-2007

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Abstract

An analysis of the studies used by the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in its media ownership proceedings from 2002-2007 found a disproportionate use of economic research to support the agency's rule changes. The use of this research in policymaking is important because the FCC's reliance on economic literature may have helped justify a “procedural” definition of what constitutes the public interest, and a “neoliberal” faith in the wisdom of market forces to ensure that the public interest is being served. The findings suggest that the inclusion of a broader range of scholarship, especially media research, would not have supported the FCC's decision to further relax media ownership rules.

Notes

A previous version of this paper was presented to the Cultural & Critical Studies Division of the Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication at its annual convention in Chicago, IL, August 6–9, 2008.

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