

3-29-1974

## Letter to Roger J. Traynor

Harry Kalven Jr.  
*The University of Chicago*

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### Recommended Citation

Harry Kalven Jr., *Letter to Roger J. Traynor* (1974).  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE LAW SCHOOL

1111 EAST 60TH STREET  
CHICAGO • ILLINOIS 60637

March 29, 1974

The Honorable Roger Traynor  
2643 Piedmont Avenue  
Berkeley, California 94704

Dear Roger:

Just a few lines to sketch out a little further the new study I was suggesting over drinks.

The access study, as I see it, is pretty strictly a legal document study and is a very good and very useful one, which would substantially help public and professional debate of the access issue. It would, I think also be appropriate for the Council to now sponsor, perhaps in a more leisurely way, an empirical study of the degree of access there is in mass communications today. This is obviously not the kind of problem that can be put to rest by the collection of a few facts. But I do think an empirical try at it would add a useful perspective.

There are pretty obviously two empirical wings. The first is the familiar one of the degree of concentration of ownership in mass communications. All that need be done is to make a current summary of what I take to be regularly available data. It is the second aspect that intrigues me. It would run something like this. Obviously there is no simple one-to-one relationship between how representative owners may be of the spectrum of public opinion and how representative their publications may be. What is important is not the literal access of people who do not own means of communication, but rather the representation of points of view in the public debate. It must in fact be much like the political process itself. We don't literally have to run the government ourselves to have it reflect our views.

The empirical question then is whether it is possible to in any way study and measure the career of unpopular ideas. The proposal would be to select a sample of presumptively unpopular ideas and to check the degree to which they break into the general public debate. Technically the study would be difficult both in terms of the sampling problems, the content analysis problems, and the development of some sort of index of saliency in public debate. Since we have some journalism school professionals among our advisors, it would, I think, be quite profitable to explore the feasibility of such a study further.

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I enjoyed the last meeting enormously and genuinely benefited from it.

Our warmest best as always to Madeleine and yourself.

Cordially,



Harry Kalven, Jr.

HKjr/mns