I. Mass Media as a Social Problem

A. Concentration of ownership

1. Areas:

a. Television

i. Viacom

ii. Disney

iii. General Electric

iv. Newscorp

v. Time-Turner-Warner AOL

b. Film

c. Book publishing

d. Radio, magazines, newspapers, music

2. Trend +

a. Telecommunications Act of 1996

b. FCC ruling 6/03, 12/07

c. interlocking directorates

d. shared ownership

e. global

3. Example: Time/Turner/Warner

B. Media and democracy

1. Function: news in democracy

a. inform

b. separate truth from falsehood

c. advocate for people

d. public interest

2. Function commercial news: profit

a. advertisers

i. viewers

ii. content

b. expansion

c. cost reduction

i. close bureaus

ii. cut staff, including reporters

iii. limit investigative reports

iv. hire studio personalities “talking heads”

v. 24hr “new channels”

3. Consequences

a. dependent upon:

i. press releases

ii. press conferences/briefings

iii. experts (former government, military,

think tanks, front groups)

iv. public relations firms (VNR: video news

release)

v. government news releases (GNR)

vi. centralized sources

vii. new journalistic norm: “balance”

b. content (news as entertainment)

i. violence

ii. natural disasters

iii. personalities

iv. political coverage (polls and strategies)

v. “militainment”

vi. fair.org

4. Myth of NPR

E. Example: 2008 campaign coverage

1. The “horse race”

a. polls

i. hundreds

ii. CNN, Gallup, Maris, USA Today,

Newseek

b. who?

i. gender/class specific polls: “white women” “working class white males with high school education”

ii. types of voters: “for sure” “enthusiastic”

iii. Palin vs Biden for Pres

iv. independents

v. age group

c. conclusions and projections

i. red states/ blue states (Obama making inroads in some red states, McCain needs to shift limited resources.)

ii. electoral votes (if then)

2. candidate strategies

1. Republican attacks

i. inexperience, arrogant, elitist, his minister, celebrity

ii. intelligent, Muslim, paling around with terrorists

b. Democratic attacks

i. Bush 3, economy, “straight talk express,”

ii. how many houses? how dumb is Palin?

c. how successful are the strategies (“see polls”)

3. conventions: television spectaculars

4. campaign trail

a. photo ops

i. Palin and son in military

ii. Obama’s “world tour”

iii. post-election: Palin and turkeys

b. fake town hall meetings

c. interviews

d. appearances on late night shows

e. commercials and effectiveness

6. Not covered:

a. electronic voting and optical scanners:

Diebold, ESS

b. minority neighborhoods

i. voter “challengers”

ii. phone calls

iii. radio adds and flyers with false

info

d. Mass media and stupification of the

American public

e. Accuracy of the polls

f. Issues

7. “Uninformed in Alabama”

8. A democratic media: vital interests

a. economic crisis

b. “big money”, media, and democracy

c. health care system

d. role, function, and funding of education

e. “war on terror”