

## **Recommendations from People of Color for Proposed News Studies**

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On January 12, 2007, approximately 45 people of color gathered in a special session titled “Whose Voices, Whose Media?” at the third annual National Media Reform Conference, in Memphis, Tennessee. The session was organized and facilitated by four graduate students from Howard University: Branden Adams, Carla Brooks, Candace Calloway, and Linda Jones. Sponsorship for the panel was from the Ford Foundation.

Participants in the session raised a number of issues about media content and ownership of particular concern to people of color and their communities. We have selected and organized these comments as they relate to several of the 10 proposed economic studies, to be conducted by researchers for the FCC, in response to the reconsideration of women and minority ownership concerns resulting from the Prometheus case. We hope these comments will be useful to the authors of the studies in formulating research questions.

We ask the Commission to make the researchers aware of these comments.

### **Study 1: How People Get News & Information. Author: Nielsen**

#### ***Session Comments:***

- Most images of Black youth in the news and in television programming are negative – they are depicted as criminals, thugs, pimps, and unproductive. These stereotypical images socialize all members of the audience but have a particularly serve to reinforce Black youths’ views of themselves.
- News coverage of Hurricane Katrina was short-lived and missed the big stories for African-American people, including the effect of rising prices on survivors, the feeling of abandonment by the government agencies, and the large-scale assistance provided to the Gulf Coast from Black communities around the country.
- News coverage of Katrina made African-American women invisible and silent – they comprise nearly 40% of the population in New Orleans, and were disproportionately affected, yet they were seldom seen or heard in news coverage.
- Many African-American women in the New Orleans area believe they did not receive adequate, timely warnings of the danger from the news media – something that would have helped them escape or plan. Why not?
- Violent, misogynistic images and language in Hip Hop records and videos have negative effects on African-American communities.

**Study 3: Effect of Ownership Structure and Robustness on the Quantity and Quality of TV Programming. Author: Gregory Crawford**

***Session comments:***

- Black news and public affairs programming are disappearing, an apparent outcome of media consolidation, through which Black-owned media companies have been bought out by White-owned companies (e.g., Viacom's purchase of BET). The effect of this is serious within African-American communities, as well as the mainstream news audience that benefits from more diverse news content.
- Dramatic programming with Black-dominant casts and themes is absent from TV.
- Expanding the markets for Hip Hop (i.e., to White audiences and those in other countries) has helped to encourage a shift from political expression to violent sexuality that degrades women.

**Study 4: News Operations. Authors: Kenneth Lynch, Daniel Shiman, and Craig Stroup.**

***Session comments:***

- What are the demographics of journalists and managers at radio and television stations today, both White-owned and Minority-owned?
- Are there case studies of stations owned by minorities that have more Black-oriented content?