



# African Americans and Mass Media: A Case for Diversity in Media Ownership

*Richard T. Craig*

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*African Americans and Mass Media* explores the relationship among the lack of media ownership diversity, political and economical influences, and policy development influencing media ownership. Richard T. Craig addresses the concern of growing media monopolies and the decline in minority media ownership since the passing of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Focusing the policy argument on this act and the deregulation of media ownership, this book explores the jeopardy of diminished ethnic media ownership, as well as the influence on content. Observing Black Entertainment Television in the last five years of African American ownership and the first five years of conglomerate ownership—paralleling the first decade after the Telecommunications Act was passed—the book gives particular attention to the changes made to information programming on the network. Craig asserts despite the overwhelming presence of African Americans holding executive positions with the network, Viacom, BET's current owner, influences the networks programming and relegates the cultural identity of the network to profit interests. BET is observed as a case study reflective of the importance ethnic media and perspectives reflective of cultural ethnic identities, targeting ethnic audiences. The book chronicles the significance of ethnic media, drawing particular attention to African American media in the United States, and advocates for increased communication policy development bolstering minority ownership.

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