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In order to determine the relative importance of minority and female ownership of television and radio broadcast stations in the United States as well as to give a sense of the accuracy of the information, two separate data sources are relied upon. The first source is the FCC report on broadcast station totals as of September 30, 2004 and released as an unofficial announcement on November 3, 2004. The second source is the 2003 filing of FCC Form 323 (Ownership Report for Commercial Broadcast Stations). All commercial and noncommercial educational television, AM radio, and FM radio broadcast station licensees are required to file this form at two year intervals. Commercial stations file Form 323 and noncommercial educational stations file Form 323-E. The latter form does not collect information on minority or female ownership. Licensees that are sole proprietorships and partnerships composed entirely of natural persons are exempt from this biennial filing.

Response Rates

Based on the FCC unofficial announcement, there were 1366 commercial and 382 educational TV stations operating in the United States as of September 30, 2004. A total of 1475 stations identified themselves as TV stations on Form 323 filed for 2003. A comparison of these values indicates that there is a discrepancy between the number of commercial TV stations operating in the United States identified by the FCC and the number actually filing Form 323 of 109 stations or 8.0 percent.

One of the shortcomings of the Form 323 filings is the failure of respondents to answer questions relating to gender and the ethnic and racial characteristics of owners. For TV stations, there were 844 responses useable in identifying female owners (a 57.2 percent response rate) and 868 responses useable in identifying minority owners (a 58.8 percent response rate).

There were 6217 commercial and 2512 educational FM radio stations and 4770 AM radio stations in the United States as of September 30, 2004 reported on the FCC unofficial announcement. A total of 5278 stations identified themselves as commercial FM radio stations and a total of 2919 stations identified themselves as AM radio stations on Form 323 filed for 2003. Thus, there is a discrepancy between the number of commercial FM radio stations operating in the United States identified by the FCC and the number actually filing Form 323 of 939 stations or 15.1 percent. For AM radio stations, the discrepancy is 2359 stations or 44.7 percent.

From the Form 323 filed for 2003 for FM radio stations, just 3356 responses were useable in identifying female owners (a 63.6 response rate) and 3436 were responses useable in identifying minority owners (a 65.1 response rate). For AM radio stations, there were 2545 responses useable in identifying female owners (a 87.2 response rate) and 2618 responses useable in identifying minority owners (a 89.6 response rate).

Note that a useable response occurred when there was a non-NULL response to the gender question or when there was a non-NULL response to either the ethnicity and/or race questions.

Women and Minority Ownership

From the useable responses on the Form 323 filing for 2003, it is possible to compute the number of female and minority owners of broadcast stations in the United States. Interpretation of the computed values and any inferences drawn, however, should be placed in the context of the relatively low response rates to both the Form 323 filing and to the gender and ethnicity and racial questions on that form.

There are 60 TV stations owned by women in the United States where female ownership of a station is defined to be ownership where women in the aggregate (i.e., one or more) have a greater than a 50 percent voting interest in the television station.

There are 15 TV stations owned by minorities where minority ownership of a station is defined to be ownership where one or more minorities have a greater than a 50 percent voting interest in the television station. Of these stations African-Americans own one, Hispanics own eight, Asians own four, and American Indians own two. Note that "Hispanic" is an ethnic category but responses checking this category are included in calculating the number of stations owned by minorities.

There are nine TV stations owned by women who are also minorities including six stations owned by Hispanic women and three stations owned by Asian women.

There are 357 FM radio stations and 335 AM radio stations owned by women in the United States where, as in the case of TV stations, female ownership of a station is defined to be ownership where women in the aggregate have a greater than 50 percent voting interest.

There are 123 FM radio stations and 212 AM radio stations owned by minorities in the United States where, analogous to the TV stations calculations, one or more minorities have a greater than a 50 percent voting interest in the station. Of the minority-owned FM stations African-Americans own 48, Hispanics own 52, Asians own 13, American Indians own 6, and Native Hawaiians own 4. Of the minority-owned AM radio stations, African-Americans own 82, Hispanics own 93, Asians own 26, American Indians own 10, and Native Hawaiians own one.

There are 31 FM radio stations owned by women who are also minorities including nine owned by African-American women, eight owned by Hispanic women, eight owned by Asian women, three owned by American Indian women, and three owned by Native Hawaiian women. There are also 43 AM radio stations owned by minority women including nine owned by African-American women, 24 owned by Hispanic women, and 10 owned by Asian women.