National Voices Project

Understanding barriers
Measuring opportunities
Informing initiatives for change

For children - through the voices of adults in their communities

Impact Report:
Bias in the Media: Girls and Young Women of Color
Introduction

In January/February 2015, the National Voices Project (NVP) conducted the Girls and Young Women of Color survey, in partnership with the National Collaborative for Health Equity (NCHE). The survey was administered by GfK, an international survey research organization that maintains KnowledgePanel®, a nationally representative, web-enabled panel of adults 18 years or older across the United States.

The sample included 10,046 adults from KnowledgePanel® and 1,589 from supplementary households. Respondents working or volunteering on behalf of children or young adults (age 0-25) were eligible to complete the full NVP Girls and Young Women of Color questionnaire. A total of 2,081 respondents from 50 states and District of Columbia completed the survey; 1,132 respondents indicated they have jobs that affect education, health/healthcare/nutrition, economic opportunities, social justice or community and civic engagement for children or young adults. Another 949 respondents identified themselves as volunteering in similar ways that affect children and young adults.

The NVP Girls and Young Women of Color survey was also fielded in Spanish via a supplemental panel who preferred to answer in Spanish. Overall, 1,164 individuals participated by using the Spanish-language version and 229 were eligible to complete the full NVP Girls and Young Women of Color questionnaire.

The final group of respondents included an oversample of individuals who live in seven specific communities across the United States with greater-than-average racial/ethnic diversity, previously identified by the National Collaborative for Health Equity. We describe these as "Collaboratives for Health Equity areas", and we compare them with all other areas in the country, described as "Comparative Communities."

Bias in the media regarding girls and young women from different racial/ethnic groups (n=2,081)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Negative Bias</th>
<th>No Bias</th>
<th>Positive Bias</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab/Arab American</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Hispanic</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian American</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question

Do you think there is a bias in the media regarding girls and young women from the following groups? (Positive bias/no bias/negative bias)

- African American/Black
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Arab/Arab American
- Asian/Asian American
- Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander
- Latino/Hispanic
- White
- Other
How does the media portray girls of color versus White girls in terms of the following? By race of respondent (n=2,007)

### Key Findings

Overall, respondents perceived a greater proportion of negative bias in the media for African American, Arab/Arab American and Latino girls/young women than for American Indian/Alaskan Native, White, Asian/Asian American and Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander girls/young women.

Positive bias in the media for girls and young women was perceived infrequently for all racial/ethnic groups, though most for White girls and young women.

Respondents of color indicated the media portrays girls of color in negative ways (as criminals, poor and violent) more often than White girls compared to White respondents.

Respondents of color also perceived that the media portrays White girls in positive ways (as beautiful, hard working, healthy and intelligent) more often than girls of color.

Respondents of color were more likely than White respondents to perceive that positive characteristics are presented in the media more frequently for White women than for women of color.

### Analyses

This analysis is rather unique, in its clear focus on girls and young women of color as compared with boys and young men of color.

Respondents in Collaboratives for Health Equity areas indicated the media portrayals of girls of color in negative ways (as criminals, poor and violent) more often than White girls compared to respondents in Comparative Communities.

Collaboratives for Health Equity respondents also perceived that the media portrays White girls in positive ways (as beautiful, hard working, healthy and intelligent) more often than girls of color.

Perceptions of negative media biases were generally more common than perceptions of positive media biases, for the vast majority of respondents.

### Future Research

Projects could focus on the impact of negative and positive media biases for girls and young women, in terms of beliefs of girls and young women, themselves, regarding their educational and work goals.

Media leaders could be engaged to encourage more positive presentations of girls and young women of color, and follow-up research would assess whether such outreach is effective.
Mission of the National Voices Project

Led by researchers at the University of Michigan, the National Voices Project is an effort to bring the perspectives of thousands of people in communities across the United States to the national dialogue about opportunities and barriers for children related to race/ethnicity. For more information, visit the project website: NationalVoicesProject.org.

The National Voices Project team is grateful for the support and collaboration of the W.K.Kellogg Foundation, through the America Healing Initiative.

For this survey on Girls and Young Women of Color, NVP partnered with the National Collaborative for Health Equity (NCHE). The mission of the NCHE is to promote health equity by catalyzing collaboration among racial equity advocates, grassroots and community-based organizations, researchers, public health professionals, and other key stakeholders. For more information, visit their website: NationalCollaborative.org.

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