



## Objectives/ Background

As part of its multi-year public affairs campaign to address bias, MTV Strategic Insights partnered with David Binder Research in 2014 on a study that provides an in-depth look at millennials & bias. This research was designed to understand and measure how young people are experiencing, affected by and responding to issues associated with bias.

The study design was a collaboration between MTV and David Binder Research. Funding for the study was provided by MTV.

## Key Findings

### 1. Millennials are coming of age in a racially sensitive society.

**They were raised to believe that they should treat everyone the same and shouldn't acknowledge racial differences.**

- 84% say their family taught them that everyone should be treated the same, no matter what their race.
- And as such (89%) do believe that everyone should be treated the same no matter their race.
- Only 37% of our respondents were brought up in families that talked about race (30% White and 46% POC\*).

**A belief in equality has become this generation's 'first commandment' – true across all races.**

- 91% of respondents believe in equality and believe everyone should be treated equally.

\*POC = persons of color

### 2. The majority of millennials believe that their generation is post-racial.

**And think that racism is a problem for previous generations.**

- 72% believe their generation believes in equality more than older people.
- 58% believe that as their generation moves into leadership roles, racism will become less and less of an issue.

**Having a black president has helped confirm this belief.**

- 62% (58% for POC, 64% white) believe that having a Black President demonstrates that racial minority groups have the same opportunities as white people.
- 67% believe it shows race does not have to be a barrier to accomplishments.

**But despite having a black president, they still feel the country is deeply divided.**

- 67% agree that America is still a deeply divided place despite having a Black President and this is stronger for people of color (70% vs. 64% for our white audience).

### 3. Millennials feel that 'colorblindness' is something to strive for yet also believe in 'celebrating diversity'.

**Millennials believe 'colorblindness' is an aspirational goal.**

- 73% believe never considering race would improve society.
- 68% believe focusing on race prevents society from becoming colorblind.

- 70% say they don't see racial minority groups any differently than they see white people.

**And this seems counter to their equally strong belief in celebrating difference.**

- 81% believe embracing diversity and celebrating differences between the races would improve society.

**4. Despite this universal belief in equality, real world experiences differ greatly.**

**Race plays a big role in determining how millennials experience the world.**

	White	POC
My race is well represented in the media	64%	33%
I am often asked "Where are you from?"	26	58
I am often asked about my ethnic background	19	60
When people meet me, my race is usually the first thing they notice	15	43
I have been treated differently by a teacher because of my race	13	33
I often feel excluded at school or work because of my race or ethnicity	10	23
I personally have been hurt by microaggressions*	25	45
Individual microaggressions, when added up, have had a serious effect on me	28	49
Microaggressions are a problem for me personally	38	58

**Despite the reality of their experience, their unwavering belief in equality trumps all else and makes it difficult for them to support affirmative action (Note - there was no statistical difference by race for first two bullets).**

- 88% believe that favoring one race over another is unfair, because of their belief in equality.
- 90% believe that everyone should be treated the same regardless of race.
- 70% believe it's never fair to give preferential treatment to one race over another, regardless of historical inequalities. (65% for POC, 74% for White).

**And this leads to some key differences in some core beliefs.**

	White	POC
Today, discrimination against White people has become as big a problem as discrimination against racial minority groups	48%	27%
White people have more opportunities today than racial minority groups	39	65
The government pays too much attention to the problems of racial minority groups	41	21

\*Microaggression defined as *microaggressions are brief and commonplace actions or words that are subtle examples of bias. Microaggressions can be intentional or unintentional, and often communicate negative feelings towards people of color.*

## 5. The modern day face of bias is more subtle and most Millennials see it in their lives.

**Discrimination today is more subtle than that experienced by previous generations.**

- 60% say most of the bias seen is mostly subtle bias that is small but real.
- 56% believe bias exists but is subtler today than previous generations.

**More than 9 in 10 of millennials have seen examples of bias\* in their lives (94%).**

- More than three in four (79%) admit they are friends with people with biases.
- When asked, 41% admit that they have their own biases now and the majority – 58% – says they have had biases in the past.
- The majority of respondents (60%) say they have worked hard to eliminate biases they have.
- Racial biases are the most frequently cited types of biases.

**Most millennials have personal experience as the target of bias.**

- 61% say they have been the target of bias - this is higher for the LGBT respondents (83%), POC (69%) and women (64%)

\*Bias defined as *“treating someone differently – and often unfairly – because they are a member of a particular group,”*

## 6. Millennials believe open conversation about bias will reduce prejudice, but they're uncomfortable with the subject and don't know how to start the discussion.

**Being raised not to acknowledge race means they struggle with how to talk about the subject.**

- Half of respondents (48%) believe it is wrong to draw attention to someone's race even if you are being positive.
- And most (54%) agree that it is hard to have a respectful conversation about bias in person or online.
- This translates to just 20% who are comfortable having a conversation about bias.

**But they definitely think it would help.**

- 73% think we should talk more openly about bias.
- 73% believe having more open constructive conversations about bias would help people become less prejudiced.

**And there is a real hunger to talk more.**

- 69% would love the opportunity to have an open respectful and judgment free conversation about bias.

## 7. They don't just want to talk about it – they're ready to take action.

**Millennials agree that it is important to address bias when encountered.**

- More than three in four (78%) agree that everyone has a responsibility to help tackle bias.
- Nine in ten (90%) say that it is important to make their community a less biased place.

**But currently it feels a little risky.**

- Most (61%) agree that, “it's easier to see the risk of calling out bias, than it is to see the immediate benefit.”
- The biggest concern of addressing bias is creating a conflict or making the situation even worse. 79% worry about this.

**The majority of this generation feel like they don't have the tools to start to tackle bias in themselves and in others.**

- Most (65%) say that they, “wish that they knew more about how to address bias when they see it.”
- 80% would want to know if they had biases they were not aware of.
- 80% would want to know if they had ever inadvertently exhibited bias towards someone.
- 65% would be interested in a tool to help them work on their biases.

**They want to join a campaign to understand more, talk more and develop tools to help combat bias.**

- Two in three (68%) say that they want to join a campaign that, “*aims to start a conversation around bias, empowering America's youth to better recognize bias in themselves and their surroundings, challenge it when they see it, and help create a future with more equal opportunity.*”
- The majority (56%) says they are likely to “*do something to get involved in this campaign, like starting a conversation around bias, recognizing bias in yourself or your surroundings, or speaking out when you see it.*”

## **Methodology**

### **Qualitative Research**

Eight in person focus groups were conducted in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Denver, Colorado, and Memphis, Tennessee from December 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Each group included a diverse selection of 8 young people between 18 and 24 years old.

Two online discussion panels were conducted with participants from across the country in February 2014. Each panel was conducted over five days and included a diverse selection of 20 to 25 young people ages 18 to 24 years old.

### **Quantitative Research**

These surveys were conducted by David Binder Research. The surveys used a cross-section of online panels that are representative of the United States population. Participants were screened for those who were 14 to 24 years old and excluded those who do not currently – and never will – watch any MTV programming. The parents of participants under 18 years old provided permission for their children to participate before their children were invited.

Stage 1: Interviews were conducted in English between February 24<sup>th</sup> and March 2nd 2014 with 2,000 young people ages 14 to 24 years old. The overall margin of error is +/- 2.2% percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Stage 2: Interviews were conducted in English between April 4th and April 9<sup>th</sup> 2014 with 1,000 young people ages 14 to 24 years old. The overall margin of error is +/- 3.1% percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data are collected and made final, a post-stratification process is used to adjust for any survey non-response as well as any non-coverage or under- and oversampling resulting from the study-specific sample design. Post stratification variables included, age, sex, race, and metropolitan status. The corrected data, which reflect the United States population of 14 to 24 year olds, were used for all analyses.