

Visible Minority vs Racialized...and the winner is...neither

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'Racialized' a term with little resonance amongst Canadians

The Employment Equity Act and Statistics Canada use the term “visible minority” to define “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.” This definition is used throughout the federal public service and is a term generally used only in Canada. A UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has on three occasions called on Canada to reconsider using the term “visible minority.” In July 2021, the Government of Canada announced the creation of a task force to review the Employment Equity Act which called for it to study whether the term “visible minority” should be replaced. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has recommended that, where it is necessary to use a broad, general term, the terms “racialized person” or “racialized group” be used. As we await the results of the 2021 census on ‘visible minorities’ the debate is ongoing and there appears to be a wide gap between many policy makers and members of the academy that prefer the term racialized and the Canadian public where uptake for that term is especially low. As revealed in a Leger-ACS July survey that asked which term makes the most sense when referring to persons who are Black or Asian, the preference by far is persons of color followed by visible minorities with racialized groups yielding less than ten percent as a preferred option

The findings arise from a Leger survey for the ACS that was conducted between July 8 to July 10, 2022 via web panel with 1764 Canadians. No margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample (Web panel in this case). However for comparative purposes, a probability sample of 1764 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20

The largest plurality of Canadians choose persons of color as most sensible when asked about how best to refer to persons who are Black or Asian; visible minorities is the second most popular term with less than one in ten selecting racialized groups

	Rank in order which of the following terms you think makes most sense when referring to persons who are Black or Asian?				
Respondents identifying as	Total Canada	Black	Chinese	Indigenous	White
Persons of Color	43.6	35.5	26.2	49.4	46.5
Visible Minorities	30.2	44.3	51.8	22.4	27.9
Racial Groups	7.0	1.6	7.2	11.6	6.6
Racialized Groups	8.6	11.3	3.5	10.6	7.7
Non-White	10.7	4.9	12.0	5.8	11.2

Sense of attachment to visible minority/racialized identities has little impact on which term is best suited

	Rank in order which of the following terms you think makes most sense when referring to persons who are Black or Asian?			
Sense of attachment to Visible Min/Racialized	Very strong sense of attachment	Somewhat strong sense of attachment	Somewhat weak sense of attachment	Very weak sense of attachment
Persons of Color	37.4%	44.3%	42.3%	37.5%
Visible Minorities	35.8%	28.3%	28.4%	30.8%
Racial Groups	5.7%	7.7%	9.8%	7.7%
Racialized Groups	8.8%	11.1%	9.2%	6.7%
Non-White	12.3%	8.7%	10.4%	17.5%

Visible minorities is the preferred term amongst persons born outside of Canada

	Rank in order which of the following terms you think makes most sense when referring to persons who are Black or Asian?	
	Born in Canada	Born Outside of Canada
Persons of Color	45.3%	33.3%
Visible Minorities	29.2%	35.6%
Racial Groups	7.1%	6.5%
Racialized Groups	8.4%	10.2%
Non-White	10.0%	14.7%

Racialized groups has better uptake amongst respondents under the age of 25 but still falls behind persons of color and visible minorities

	Rank in order which of the following terms you think makes most sense when referring to persons who are Black or Asian?					
Respondents identifying as	Between 18 and 24	Between 25 and 34	Between 35 and 44	Between 45 and 54	Between 55 and 64	Between 65 and 74
Persons of Color	39.1%	47.0%	40.7%	44.8%	42.4%	49.3%
Visible Minorities	28.6%	29.1%	25.7%	30.6%	34.7%	26.4%
Racial Groups	5.7%	10.5%	10.4%	8.3%	3.9%	4.7%
Racialized Groups	24.0%	8.4%	11.8%	5.2%	7.4%	4.4%
Non-White	2.3%	5.1%	11.4%	11.1%	11.7%	14.9%

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