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Measuring race relations in society through survey research

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**Environics
Institute**
For Survey Research



A high-angle, top-down photograph of a dense crowd of people. The individuals are diverse in age, gender, and ethnicity, and are dressed in casual, everyday clothing. The crowd is packed closely together, filling the entire frame. The lighting is bright, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall composition is a complex, textured mosaic of human figures.

*How can our profession contribute to
advancing equity and inclusion in society?*

Unique value of survey research

1. Provides a voice to individuals to express themselves privately, without the direct influence of groups and normative pressures.
2. Harnesses the power of statistics and the scientific method to combine those individual voices into a collective voice, one that is credible and widely accepted as representative of the group or population covered.
3. Makes it possible to determine how individuals within the collective are similar and different based on relevant characteristics (where they live, how they identify, their lived experience, and their social values).

What survey research can contribute

- Survey research can help foster better understanding of our society, communities and neighbours
- Build empathy towards others who are different or live different lives
- What is it like to be someone with:
 - *a different religion,*
 - *a different skin colour,*
 - *a different view of what words like "freedom" mean*
- An essential mission in our increasingly diverse and fractured world

Three types of survey research that can make a difference

1. Community-based studies to focus on the lived experience of those not well understood
2. Population surveys with expanded samples to better represent population diversity
3. New research paradigms to focus on social context and social norms

2. Population surveys with expanded samples

- National surveys that more fully represent a country's cultural, ethnic and racial diversity
- Oversampling diverse communities as needed, to identify where perspectives across populations are notably similar, and different
- Build research programs to conduct research over time to measure trends on both generic topics and those specific to equity and inclusion

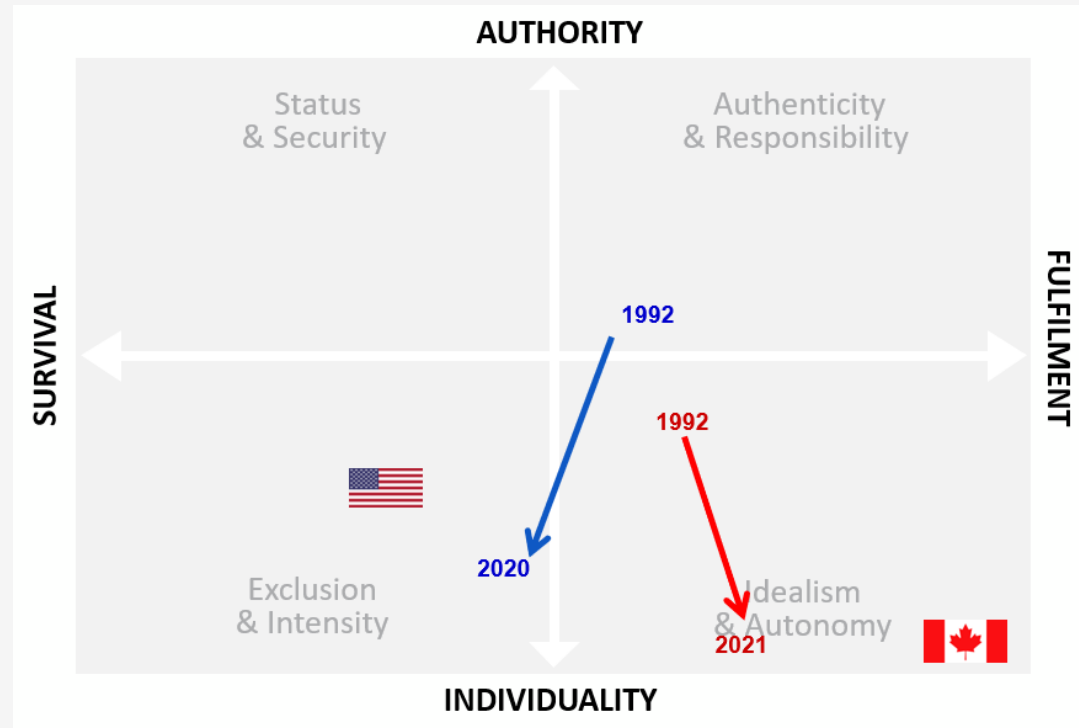
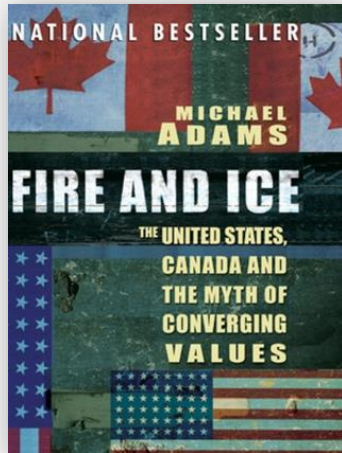
Race relations in Canada research program



- First national survey research program to document how Canadians think about and experience race relations and racism/
- Based on large national samples (N=3,700), including significant representation of the four largest racialized groups (Indigenous, Chinese, South Asian, Black).
- Provides metrics to organizations in all sectors working to address racism
- Benchmark survey conducted in 2019; second wave in 2021
- Partnership between the Environics Institute and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation

Canada is very much like the USA . . . and also very different

Trajectory of social values – 1992 - 2021



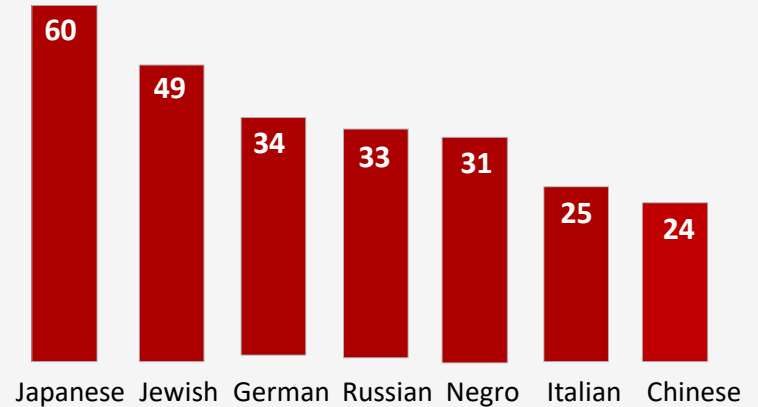
Canada is one of the world's most ethnically diverse societies

- More than four in ten Canadians are first or second generation (>75% in Toronto & Vancouver).
- One in four are classified as “visible minority” – meaning non-white.
- Muslims now number more than 1.6 million (>4% of all Canadians), almost doubling in past decade.
- Indigenous population is over 2 million and growing fast, well surpassing the estimated total pre-European contact.
- Close to one in five members of the Canadian Parliament are foreign-born (15%) or Indigenous (3%).

Canada also has its own legacy of systemic racism

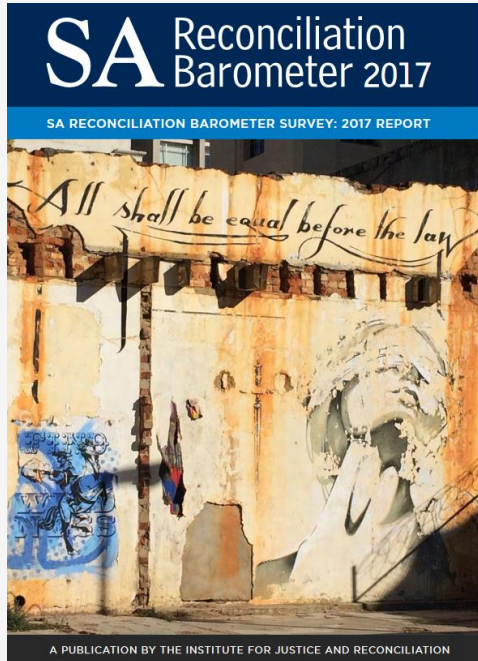
- 1800s: Poor treatment of Irish migrants
- 1930s: Anti-semitism (“None is too many”)
- 1940s: Internment of Japanese and German Canadians
- 21st century: Police profiling racialized minorities
- 1800s – today: “Long assault” on Indigenous Peoples through colonization, forced assimilation and cultural genocide

If Canada does allow more immigration, are there any of these nationalities which you would like to keep out?



Canadian Institute for Public Opinion (Gallup) - 1946

Canadian research inspired by work in other countries



Topics covered



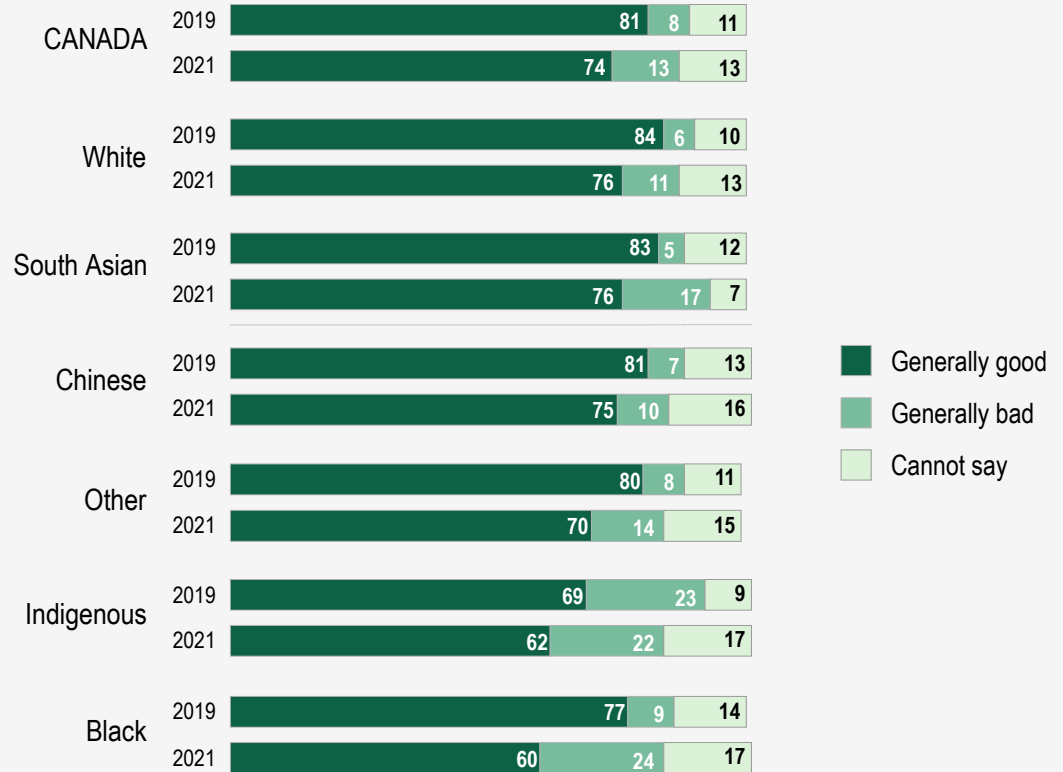
- Perceived state of race relations in Canada
- Attitudes toward other racial groups
- Perceptions of racial discrimination
- Treatment of own racial group
- Personal experience with discrimination & racism
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic (2021)

Selected findings

How well people from different races get along in your community

2019 - 2021 By racial group responding

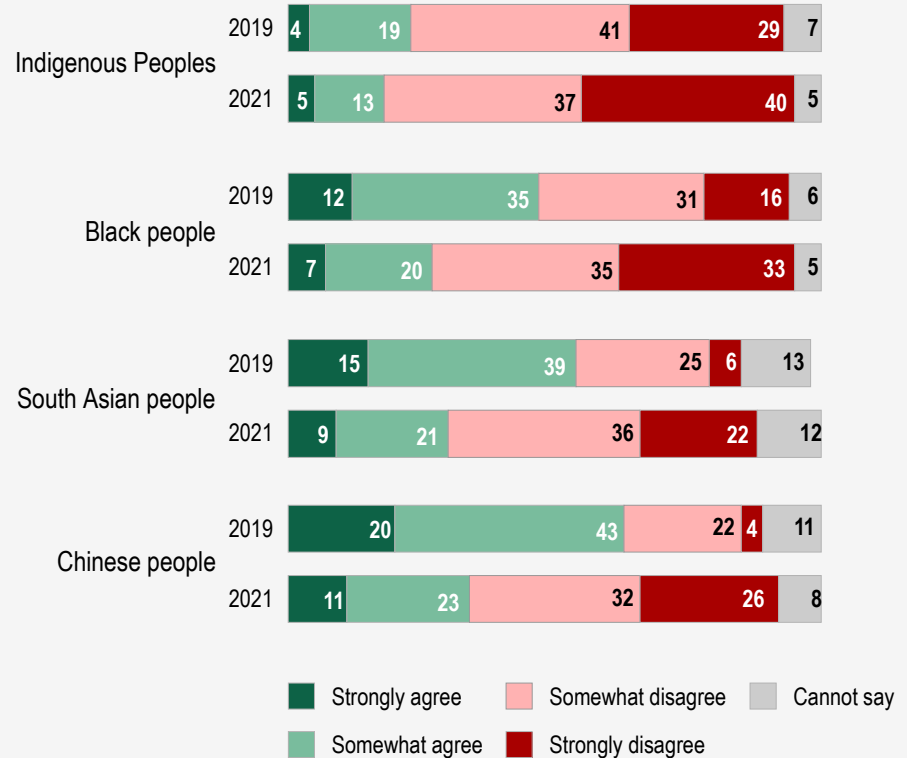
How would you describe the state of race relations in the community where you live in terms of how well people from different races get along?



Agree-disagree: Discrimination against [group] is no longer a problem in Canada

2019 - 2021 By racial group assessed

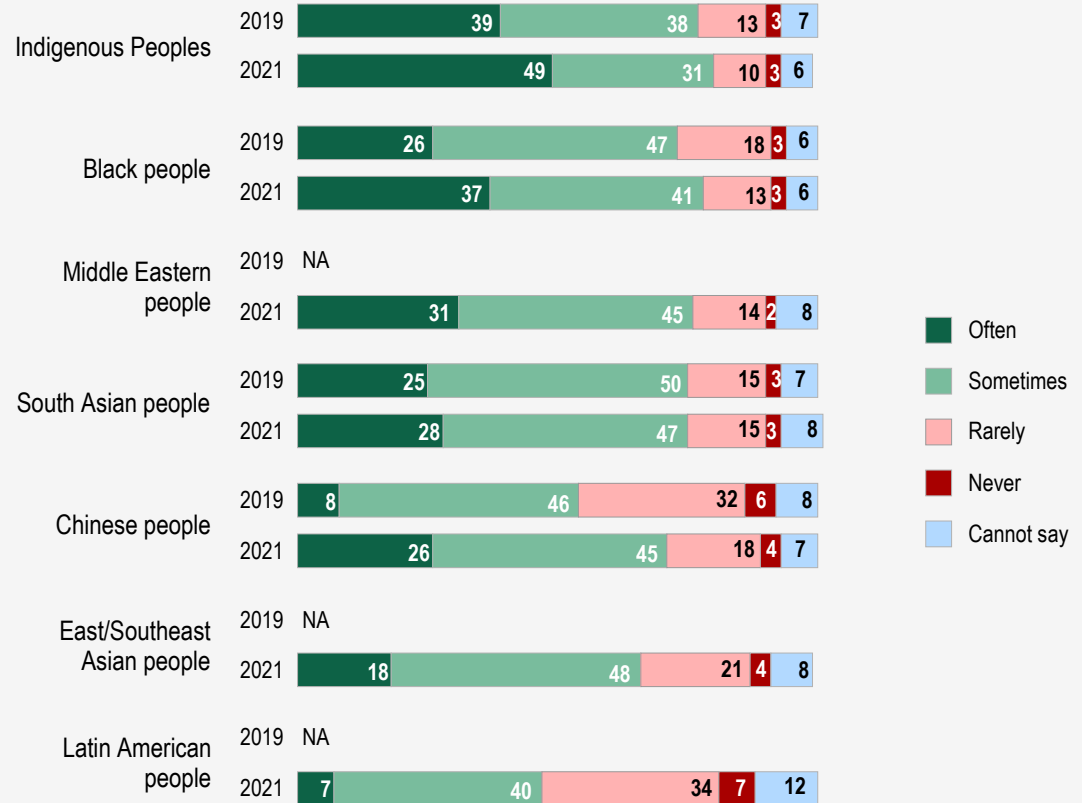
Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the treatment of [Chinese people / Black people / South Asian people / Indigenous Peoples]: Discrimination against [GROUP] is no longer a problem in Canada.



Racial groups believed to be most frequently targeted for discrimination

2019 - 2021 By racial group assessed

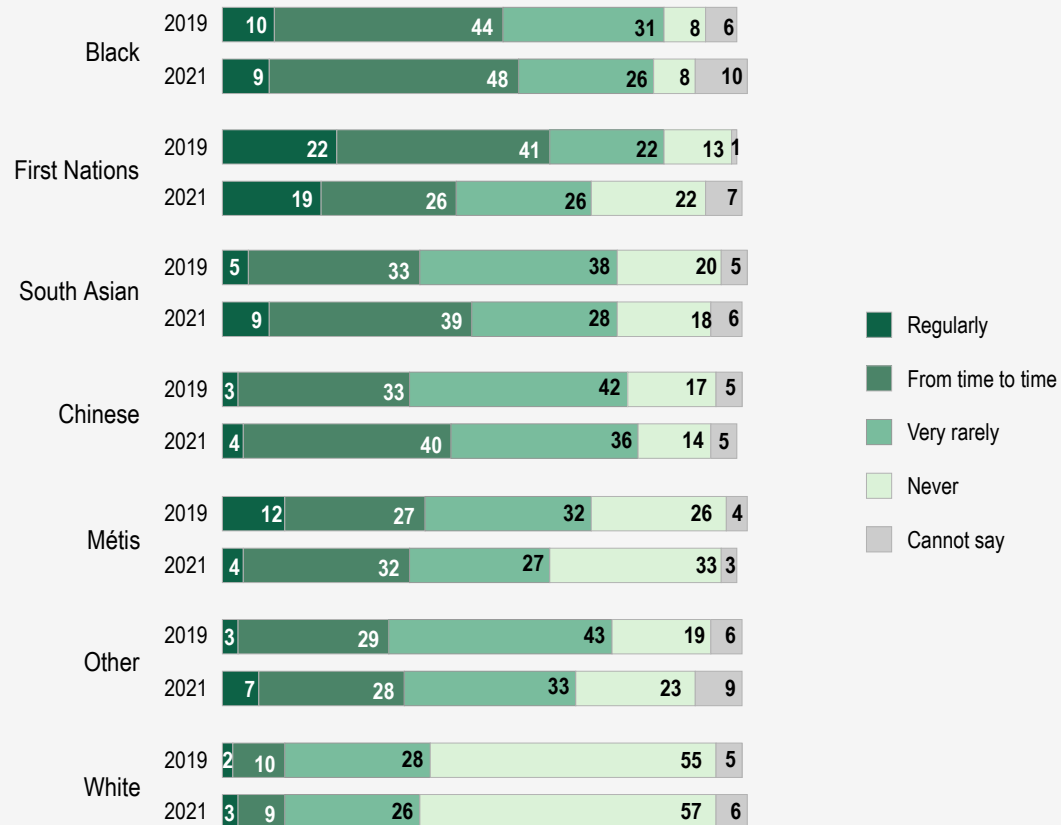
Which ethnic or racial groups do you believe are most frequently the target of discrimination or unfair treatment in Canada today?



Personal experience with discrimination because of one's race

2019 - 2021 By racial group responding

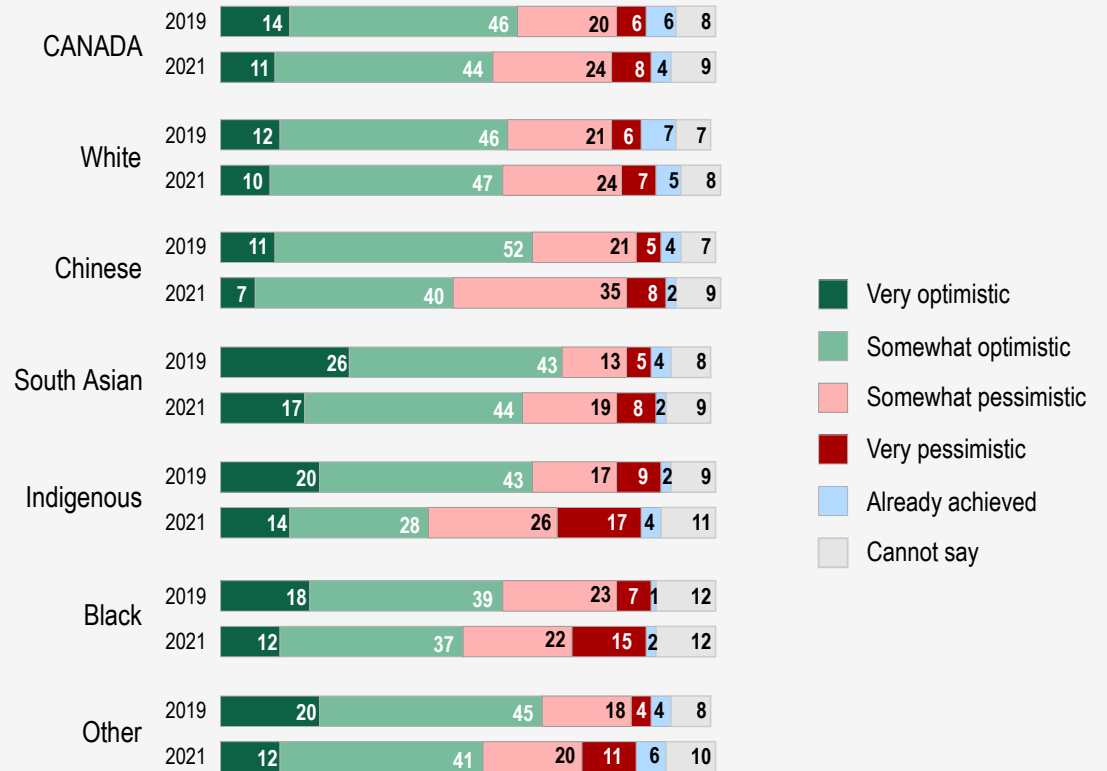
Now thinking about your own experience. Have you ever personally experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly because of your race or ethnicity? If so, has this been . . . ?



Will all racialized people in Canada be treated with respect in your lifetime?

2019 - 2021 By racial group responding

Thinking about the future, are you optimistic or pessimistic that all racialized people in Canada will be treated with the same respect as other people, in your lifetime?



How different racial groups view each other

2019 By racial group responding and asked about

Modern racism index (0 – 100 scale): higher value > more negative opinion

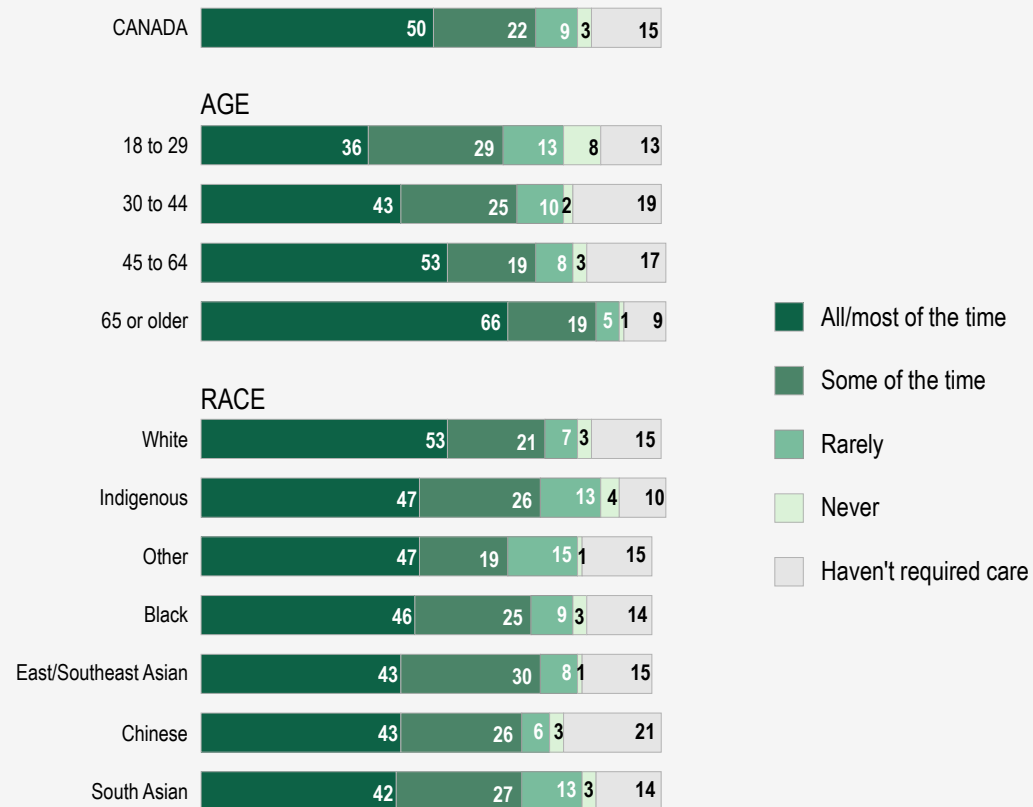
Modern racism is defined as a more subtle form of racism that focuses on racialized people as a group (*rather than as individuals*), and on their place in society (*vs. individual characteristics*).

RACIAL GROUP RESPONDING	RACIAL GROUP ASKED ABOUT					
	White	Chinese	South Asian	Indigenous	Black	TOTAL
White		45.7	47.1	36.9	39.2	42.1
Chinese			41.3	42.4	40.7	41.5
South Asian		47.2		38.8	36.8	41.3
Indigenous		44.1	46.6		40.4	43.4
Black		42.2	39.8	30.2		37.1
Other		46.5	42.5	34.5	36.2	39.5
TOTAL		45.3	45.7	36.6	39.0	41.6

Able to access needed health care over the past (pandemic) year

2021 By age and racial group

Thinking about you and your family's need for health care services and treatment over the past 12 months, how often were you able to get the care or services you needed, when you needed it . . . ?



Conclusions

Key insights from the research

- Research confirms the reality of racism in Canada
- Prevalence of racism is recognized by most Canadians, especially as it is experienced by people who are Indigenous or Black
- Recognition and acknowledgement of racism has expanded over past two years, but for most the experience of racism has not
- Chinese people have experienced increased harassment due to the pandemic, and most other Canadians are aware this is taking place
- Racism is not seen as a major fault line in Canadian society

What this type of research contributes

- Credible, empirical evidence on race relations across society – in the moment and over time to measure progress (or lack thereof).
- An important complement and corrective to competing narratives that oversimplify and sensationalize the social reality we live in.
- A point of common ground that can bring different stakeholders together.



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