

# Portrait of the social, political and economic participation of racialized groups

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In response to [Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy](#), Statistics Canada's Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics is releasing an initial set of 13 data tables on social inclusion. Nearly 100 indicators can now be used to examine various socioeconomic facets of racialized groups.

The concept of racialized population is measured with the 'visible minority' variable in this release. 'Visible minority' refers to whether or not a person belongs to one of the visible minority groups defined by the *Employment Equity Act*. The *Employment Equity Act* defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour" (for more details, please refer to Note to readers).

These indicators provide valuable information to develop policies to combat racism and discrimination, and they reflect the agency's commitment to greater insights through the use of disaggregated data. The new data sheds light on the unique experiences of racialized Canadians, whether they immigrated to Canada or were born in the country.

The indicators published today are organized into a wider framework of themes for measuring social inclusion within Canada's diverse population. The themes are the following: participation in the labour market; civic engagement and political participation; representation in decision-making positions; basic needs and housing; health and well-being; education, training and skills; income and wealth; social connections and personal networks; local community; public services and institutions; and discrimination and victimization.

This article provides an overview of social inclusion of racialized populations under the two themes: civic engagement and political participation, and representation in decision-making positions. It looks at key indicators of participation in community groups and organizations, representation in senior management, and voting in elections and political engagement. The analysis focuses on the seven largest racialized groups in Canada: South Asian; Chinese; Black; Filipino; Latin American; Arab; and Southeast Asian Canadians.

The findings show that while the rates of civic participation of racialized Canadians are generally similar to the rest of the population, their representation in management positions is considerably lower, and their voter turnout and political engagement are somewhat lower compared with other Canadians. There are also important differences amongst the racialized groups on these measures of social inclusion.

## **Civic engagement: Among racialized groups, Black, Filipino and Latin American Canadians are most likely to participate in a community group, organization or association**

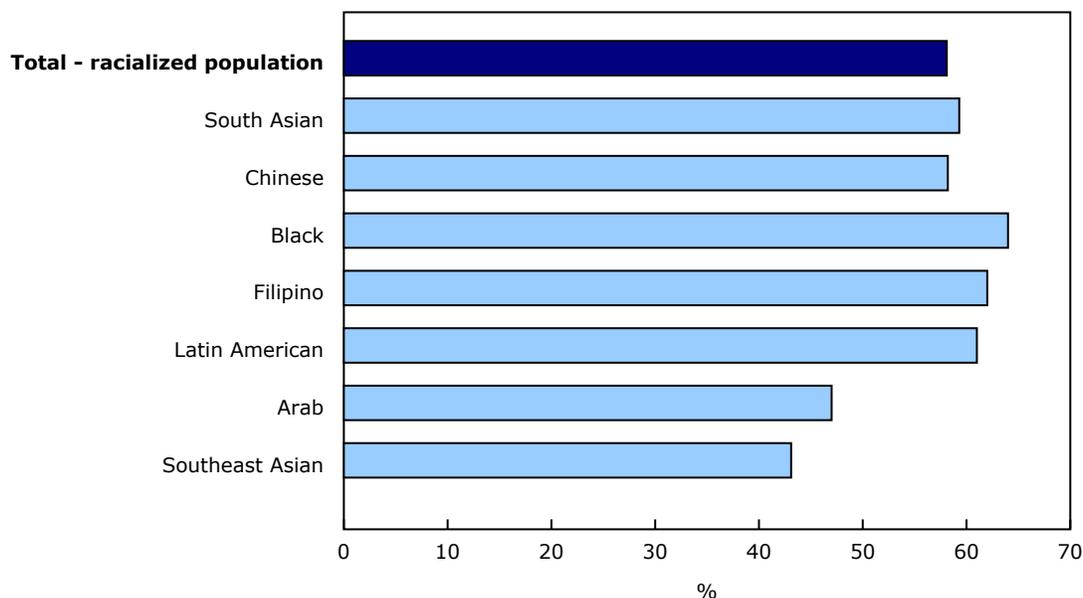
Participation in community groups, organizations and associations reveals the strength of social ties and the individual potential to draw social support in communities. Civic engagement encourages multiple and diverse interactions between individuals and groups and contributes to forging relations of interdependence and solidarity. For these reasons high levels of civic engagement are markers of social inclusion.

According to data from the 2020 General Social Survey on Social Identity (GSS SI), among Black (64%), Filipino (62%) and Latin American (61%) Canadians, more than 6 in 10 participated in at least one social or community group, association or organization, a rate similar to community participation of the rest of the population (60%).

In comparison, less than half of Arab (47%), and Southeast Asian Canadians (43%) participated in such organizations. It is worth noting that there was no significant difference in the participation in social or community groups between the racialized population groups born in Canada and their counterparts who were foreign-born and came to Canada through the immigration process.



**Chart 1**  
**Membership or participation in at least one group, organization or association, by racialized group, 2020**



Source(s): General Social Survey – Social Identity, 2020 (5024).

### Participation in a sports organization is the most common form of civic engagement among the racialized population

The most common forms of civic engagement for the racialized population include participation in sports organizations (22%), religious groups (20%), cultural, educational and hobby organizations (19%), and unions or professional associations (18%).

### Participation in a specific type of community organization varied by racialized group

While Black, Filipino and Latin American Canadians showed the highest rate of civic engagement overall, participation in a specific type of community organization varied by racialized group. For example, participation in sports organizations was highest for Chinese (27%), and lowest for the Southeast Asian Canadians (15%), with South Asian Canadians (20%) close to the average of all racialized groups.

South Asian Canadians (18%) participated in humanitarian or charitable organisations more than Black (14%) and Filipino (10%) Canadians, who were usually more likely to participate in community groups, organizations or associations. On the other hand, South Asian Canadians (20%) showed a lower rate of participation in religious-affiliated groups than the Black population (31%).

## **Representation in decision-making: racialized individuals are less likely to hold a senior management position**

Full inclusion and participation in various social, political and economic institutions requires that everyone has the opportunity to progress within society and eventually reach management positions associated with decision-making functions in public administration, institutions and businesses (see Note to readers for the description of management occupations). The advancement of employees to these positions is often associated with the process of social, economic and professional mobility.

In the three censuses analyzed here (2006, 2011, and 2016), racialized Canadians aged 25 to 64 years were about half as likely as the rest of the population to hold senior management positions. In 2016, 15 workers per 1,000 who were part of the rest of the population were in a senior management position compared with 7 workers per 1,000 of racialized groups.

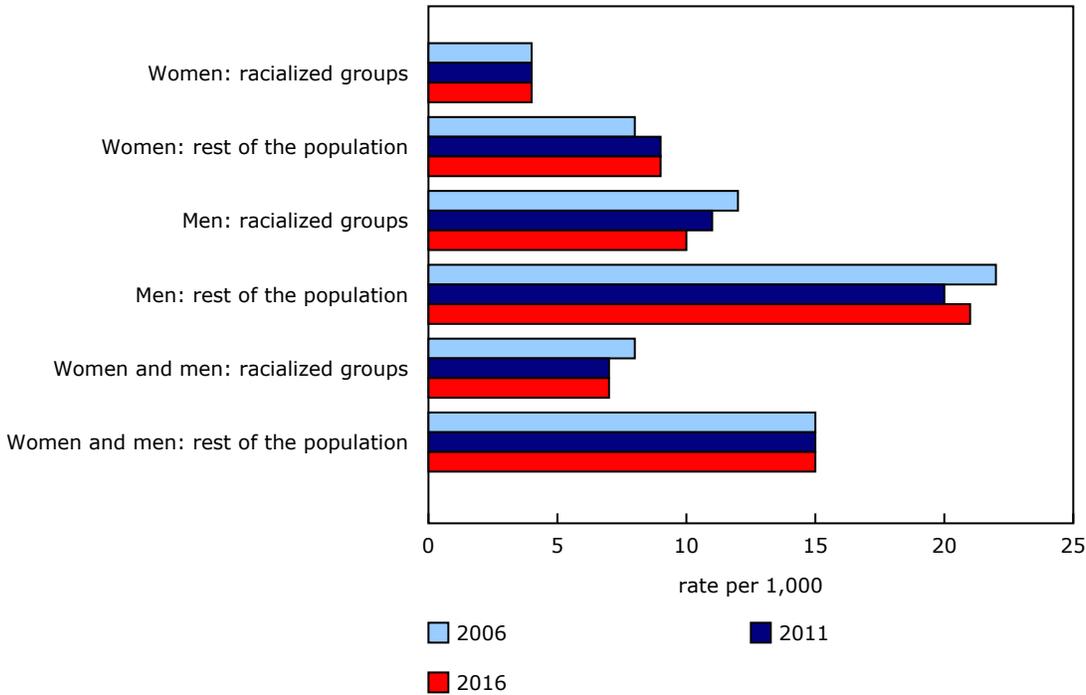
Within the racialized population, there were differences between immigrants and non-immigrants in the same age group, where 9 non-immigrants per 1,000 held senior management positions compared with 7 immigrants per 1,000 in 2016.

The representation in senior management positions also varied by gender. In the 25 to 64 age group, men were twice as likely to be in senior management positions compared to women in both the racialized population and the rest of the population.

Furthermore, racialized men and women were two times less likely to be in senior management than men and women of the rest of the population, and these differences persisted over time. For instance, 10 racialized men per 1,000 held senior management positions in 2016 compared with 21 per 1,000 men of the rest of the population. These rates were 9 per 1,000 for women not designated as racialized and 4 per 1,000 for women designated as racialized.

**Chart 2**

**Representation of the employed population aged 25 to 64 years in senior management occupations, by group (racialized or the rest of the population), 2006, 2011 and 2016**



Source(s): Census of Population, 2006 and 2016 (3901); National Household Survey, 2011 (5178).

**Arab and Chinese Canadians have the highest proportions of senior managers among populations designated as a racialized group**

Among the racialized groups, Arab (12 per 1,000) and Chinese Canadians (10 per 1,000) were the most likely to hold senior management positions in 2016 compared with South Asian (8 per 1,000) Latin American (5 per 1,000) and Black Canadians (4 per 1,000).

Just as the overall trend for all racialized groups, the rates of representation in senior management positions from 2006 to 2016 barely changed for the largest racialized groups, with the exception of Arab Canadians, for whom the rates declined from 17 per 1,000 in 2006 to 12 per 1,000 in 2016.

**Table 1**  
**Representation of the employed population aged 25 to 64 years in senior management occupations, by the seven largest racialized groups and the rest of the population, 2006, 2011 and 2016**

	2006	2011	2016
	rate per 1,000		
Total - racialized population	8	7	7
South Asian	9	8	8
Chinese	10	9	10
Black	5	5	4
Filipino	2	2	2
Latin American	5	5	5
Arab	17	13	12
Southeast Asian	4	6	4
Not racialized	15	15	15

Source(s): Census of Population, 2006 and 2016 ([3901](#)); National Household Survey, 2011 ([5178](#)).

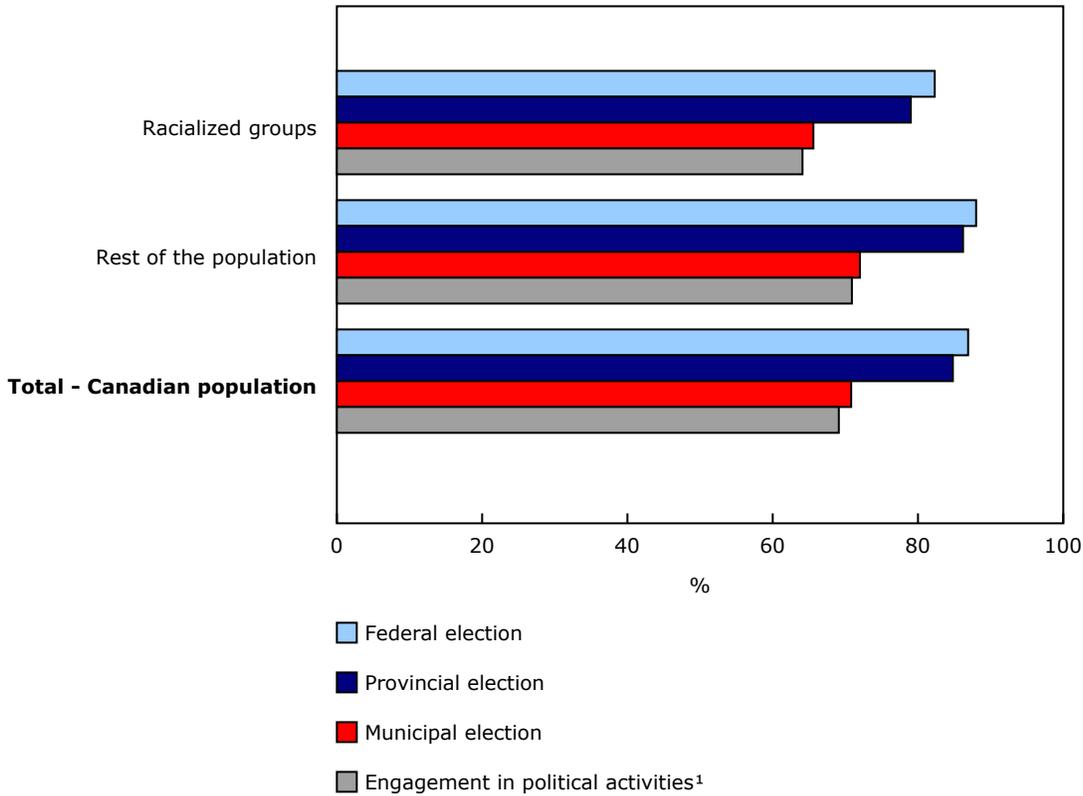
### **Vote and political engagement: the racialized population is less likely to vote or be engaged in political activities**

Political participation is an important aspect of social inclusion. By casting their ballot and being engaged in politics, citizens can exercise their democratic rights and influence the political direction of the country. Political participation can be assessed by looking at two indicators: the voter turnout and engagement in political activities other than voting.

According to the 2020 GSS SI, 87% of Canadians who were eligible to vote reported having cast a ballot in the 2019 federal election, 85% in the last provincial election and 71% in the last municipal election. It is worth noting that self-reported participation in elections tends to be overestimated in surveys such as GSS (for further information, refer to [Elections Canada](#)).

The pattern of voting at the three levels of government (i.e., higher participation in federal elections and lower participation in municipal elections) was similar for racialized Canadians and the rest of the population. However, racialized Canadians were less likely to participate in the electoral process. They were 6 to 7 percentage points less likely to vote in the last elections compared with citizens forming the rest of the population.

**Chart 3**  
**Voting in federal, provincial and municipal elections and political engagement, by group (racialized or the rest of the population)**



1. Other than voting.  
 Source(s): General Social Survey – Social Identity, 2020 (5024).

Engagement in political activities is another measure of political participation. It includes a wider spectrum of political activities (other than voting), such as seeking information or expressing an opinion on a political issue, contacting a newspaper or a politician, participating in a meeting or a demonstration, signing a petition, boycotting or choosing a product for ethical reason, wearing signs in support of a political or social issue, or volunteering for a political party. These activities are more regular in nature than voting in elections, and include online and in-person engagement. The participation rate in these activities was 64% for racialized Canadians and 71% for the rest of the population.

Within the racialized population, the political engagement of Canadian-born and immigrant racialized individuals varied significantly. The Canadian-born racialized population (80%) was much more engaged in non-electoral political activities than their immigrant counterparts (59%).

This difference can partially be attributed to age as the Canadian-born racialized population is younger than the immigrant racialized population, and younger people are generally more politically and socially active. In fact, the study "[Political participation and civic engagement of youth](#)" has shown that younger people, while less likely to vote, are more likely to participate in non-electoral political activities than older people.

## South Asian Canadians were most active in recent elections, while Black Canadians were most engaged in non-electoral political activities

The patterns of voting and engagement in non-electoral political activities were also different for specific racialized groups. In 2020, Filipino, Southeast Asian, and Black Canadians were the least likely to vote in the most recent elections of any level of government, while South Asian Canadians were the most active in voting in all three electoral processes.

Black Canadians were the most engaged in non-electoral political activities (70%). Among Black Canadians, 81% reported that they voted in the federal election, but the proportions of their participation in provincial (71%) and municipal (58%) elections were lower.

Overall, South Asian, Arab and Latin American Canadians were most actively involved in democratic life, since political participation among these racialized groups was above 65% for all three electoral processes and for political engagement.

**Table 2**  
**Voting in federal, provincial and municipal elections and political engagement of the seven largest racialized groups**

	Voter turnout in the last federal election	Voter turnout in the last provincial election	Voter turnout in the last municipal election	Engagement in political activities (other than voting)
	%			
South Asian	89.8	88.9	76.4	69.6
Chinese	81.0	76.6	62.8	60.9
Black	81.1	70.9	57.6	70.1
Filipino	77.6	76.3	67.7	47.9
Latin American	84.6	82.0	68.3	65.3
Arab	85.5	80.2	68.3	66.8
Southeast Asian	76.9	81.0	59.3	55.1

Source(s): General Social Survey – Social Identity, 2020 (5024).

## Note to readers

This release provides an overview of the state of social inclusion in Canada. It uses data from the 2006 and 2016 censuses, the 2011 National Household Survey, and the 2020 General Social Survey on Social Identity (GSS SI).

The concept of racialized population is measured with the 'visible minority' variable in this release. 'Visible minority' refers to whether or not a person belongs to one of the visible minority groups defined by the Employment Equity Act. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese. In this article, only the seven largest groups from the visible minority variable are analyzed. As the sample sizes for the categories of "West Asian," "Korean," "Japanese," "Visible minority not included elsewhere," "Multiple visible minorities," and "Not specified" are small in the GSS SI, they are included in "Total - Visible minority population" (presented as "Total - Racialized population" in the charts and tables) but not displayed in this article for data quality reasons or to meet the confidentiality requirements of the Statistics Act as well as for consistency throughout the article.

The graphs and tables in this article reflect the variable and concept of 'visible minority'.

The gender question was introduced in the Census of Population in 2021. Prior to 2021, the census only collected information on sex, which referred at the time to whether the person was male or female. Although sex and gender refer to two different concepts, the terminology related to gender is used throughout this Daily article to make it easier for readers. The introduction of gender is not expected to have a significant impact on data analysis and historical comparability, given the small size of the transgender and non-binary populations. For additional information on changes of concepts over time, please consult the [Age, Sex at Birth and Gender Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021](#).

'Civic engagement' refers to the respondent's participation in groups, organizations or associations over the 12 months preceding the survey. Groups, organizations or associations can be formally organized or informal groups (where people meet regularly for an activity or to discuss various topics). This includes online groups of which the respondent may have been a member or participant. GSS SI identifies 12 types of organizations: sports organizations; cultural, educational or hobby organizations; unions or professional associations; political parties or organizations; religious-affiliated groups; school groups, neighbourhood associations, civic or community associations; humanitarian organizations, charities or service clubs; seniors clubs; youth organizations; immigrant or ethnic associations; environmental groups; and other types of groups, organizations or associations.

The senior management categories are from the four-digit National Occupational Classification and are divided into six subcategories: legislators; senior government managers and officials; senior managers – financial, communications and other business services; senior managers – health; senior managers – education, social and community services and membership organizations; senior managers – trade, broadcasting and other services; senior managers – construction, transportation, production and utilities. The senior management position in any of these categories is the one that is held the longest in the census year or the year preceding it.

Participation rates in the last federal, provincial and municipal elections are calculated for Canadian citizens aged 18 years and older who were eligible to vote.

'Engagement in political activities other than voting' (political engagement) refers to respondents' engagement in at least one of the following non-electoral political activities in the 12 months preceding the release: searching for information on a political issue; volunteering for a political party; expressing views on an issue by contacting a newspaper or a politician; expressing views on a political or social issue through an Internet forum or news website; signing a petition on paper; signing an Internet petition; boycotting or choosing a product for ethical reasons; attending a public meeting; speaking out in a public meeting; participating in a demonstration or march; or, wearing a badge, T-shirt or displaying a lawn sign in support of or opposition to a political or social cause.

To access the tables released today on Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics Hub: [Gender, diversity and inclusion statistics](#).

**Available tables:** [13-10-0841-01](#), [13-10-0842-01](#), [43-10-0061-01](#), [43-10-0062-01](#) and [43-10-0064-01](#) to [43-10-0072-01](#).

**Definitions, data sources and methods:** survey numbers [3901](#), [5024](#) and [5178](#).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [infostats@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)) or Media Relations ([statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca)).