



Measuring discrimination in social surveys: Experiences from Canada

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October 4, 2006
Lisbon, Portugal

11th International Metropolis Conference



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What is the Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS)?

- Post-censal survey which targeted non-Aboriginal individuals aged 15 and older living in private dwellings in Canada's ten provinces
- One of main objectives of the survey was to provide information on ethnic diversity in Canada and how ethnicity relates to peoples lives today
- **Telephone** interviews conducted across Canada between April and August 2002
- 42,500 respondents

Objectives of questionnaire design

- Questions to be asked of a diverse population, with diverse experiences, but questions have to be applicable to everyone
- Questions need to be easily understood
- Have to limit response burden: survey length and question sensitivity important considerations
- Need for high quality data: standardization of concepts

Challenges in collecting discrimination data

- Data on discrimination had not been collected in a large-scale survey in Canada in the past
- There are many dimensions of discrimination which could be assessed
- Difficult concept to measure
- Data collected are based on personal perceptions
- Potentially sensitive area

Results of testing and consultations: clarifying the concepts

- Lead-in: “Discrimination may happen when people are treated unfairly because they are seen as being different from others”.
- “Treated unfairly”: indicates that questions are asking about negative types of discrimination.
- Focussed solely on discrimination/unfair treatment due to ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour; language, accent or religion.
- Qualitative testing showed that some respondents had difficulties in answering if they had been discriminated against and for what reason(s) because the concept was based on perception

Lead-in: Feeling uncomfortable or out of place

How often do you feel uncomfortable or out of place in Canada now because of your ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, language, accent or religion? Is it....

All of the time?

Most of the time?

Some of the time?

Rarely?

Never?

For which reason or reasons did you feel uncomfortable or out of place? Was it because of...

your ethnicity or culture?

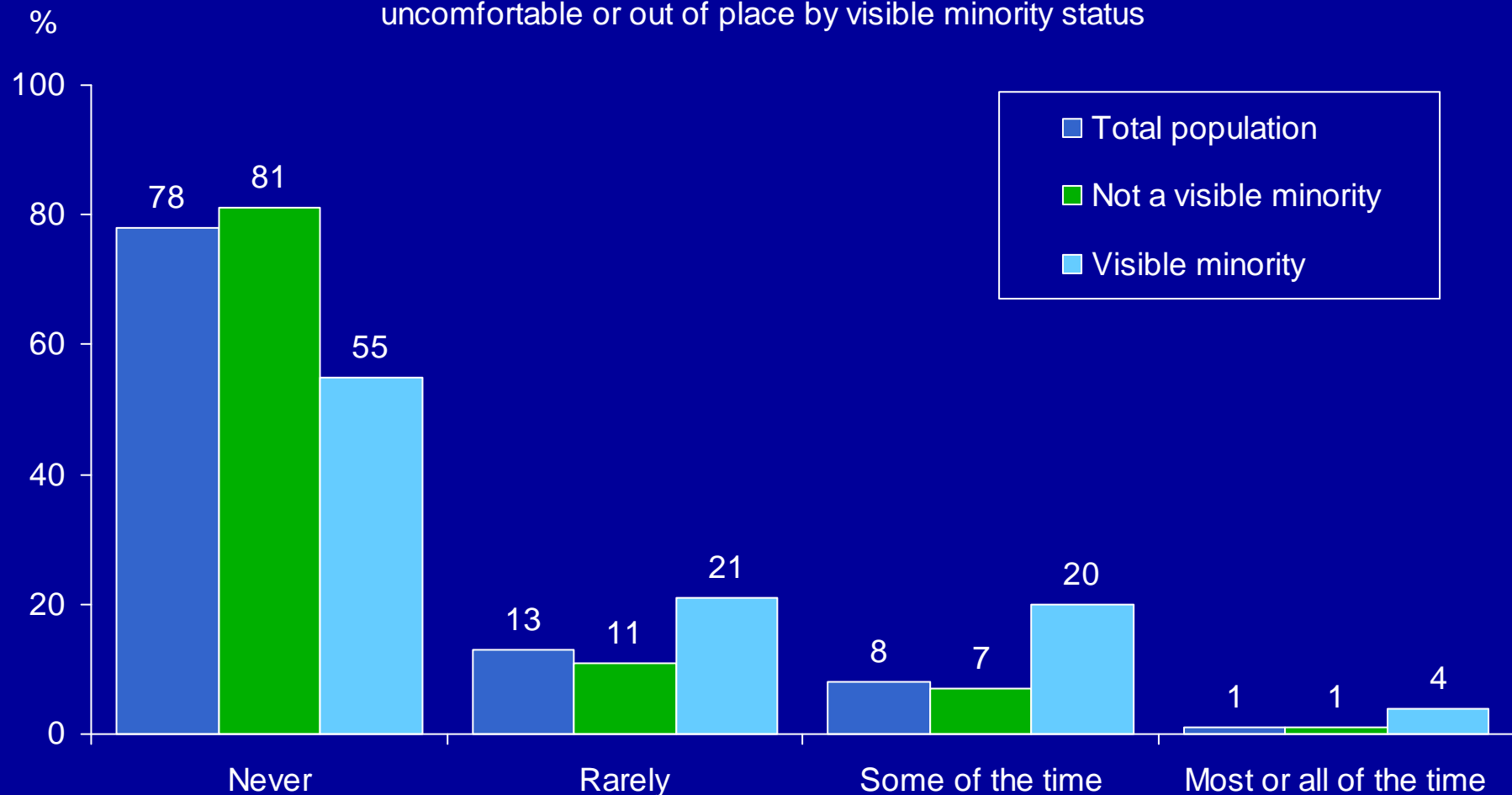
your race or skin colour?

your language or accent?

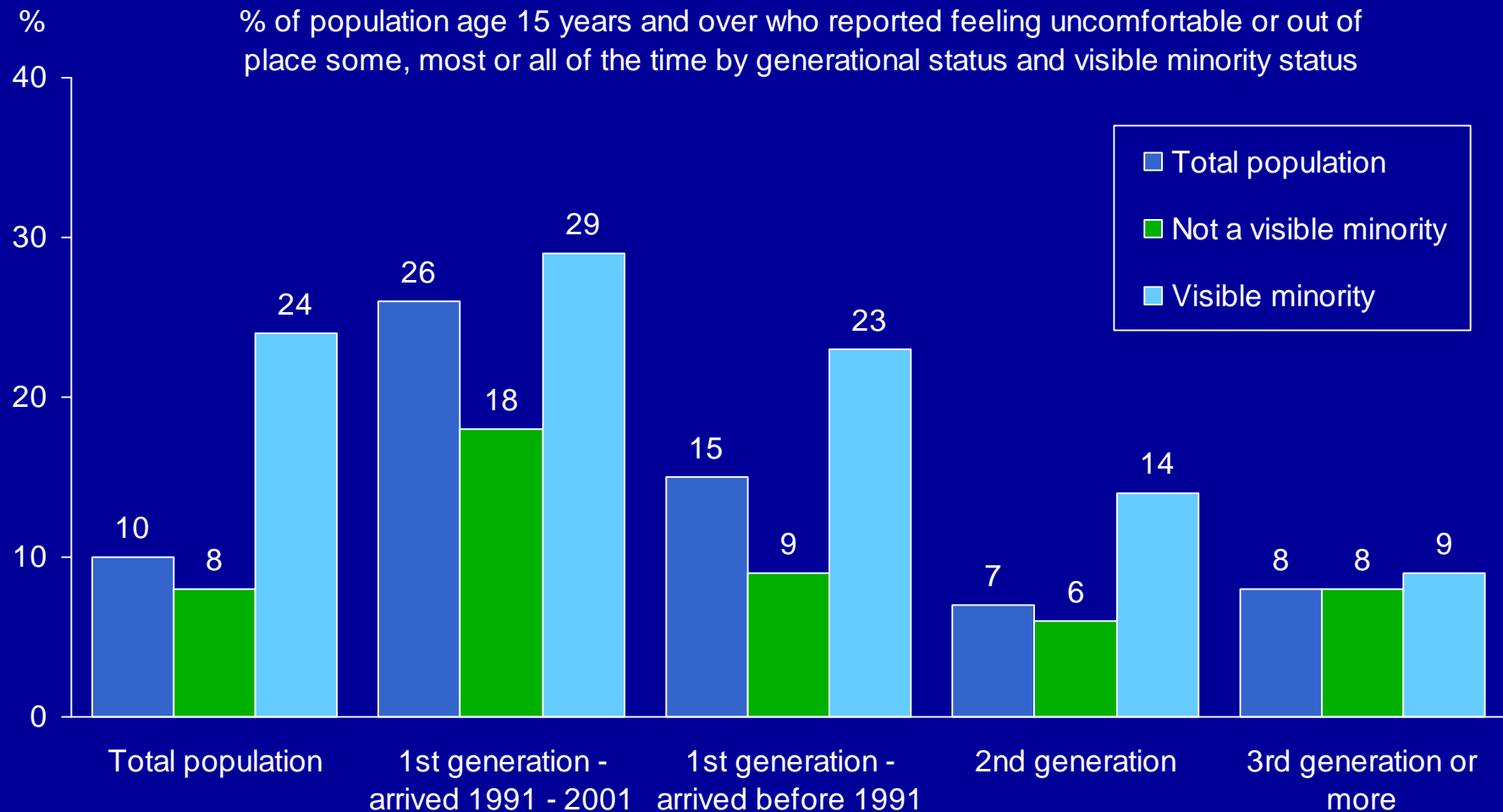
your religion

Majority had never felt uncomfortable or out of place

% of population age 15 years and older reporting experience of feeling uncomfortable or out of place by visible minority status



Recent immigrants more likely to report feeling uncomfortable or out of place



Perceived discrimination or unfair treatment

Discrimination may happen when people are treated unfairly because they are seen as being different from others.

In the past 5 years, do you feel that you have experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly by others in Canada because of your ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, language, accent or religion?

yes?

no?

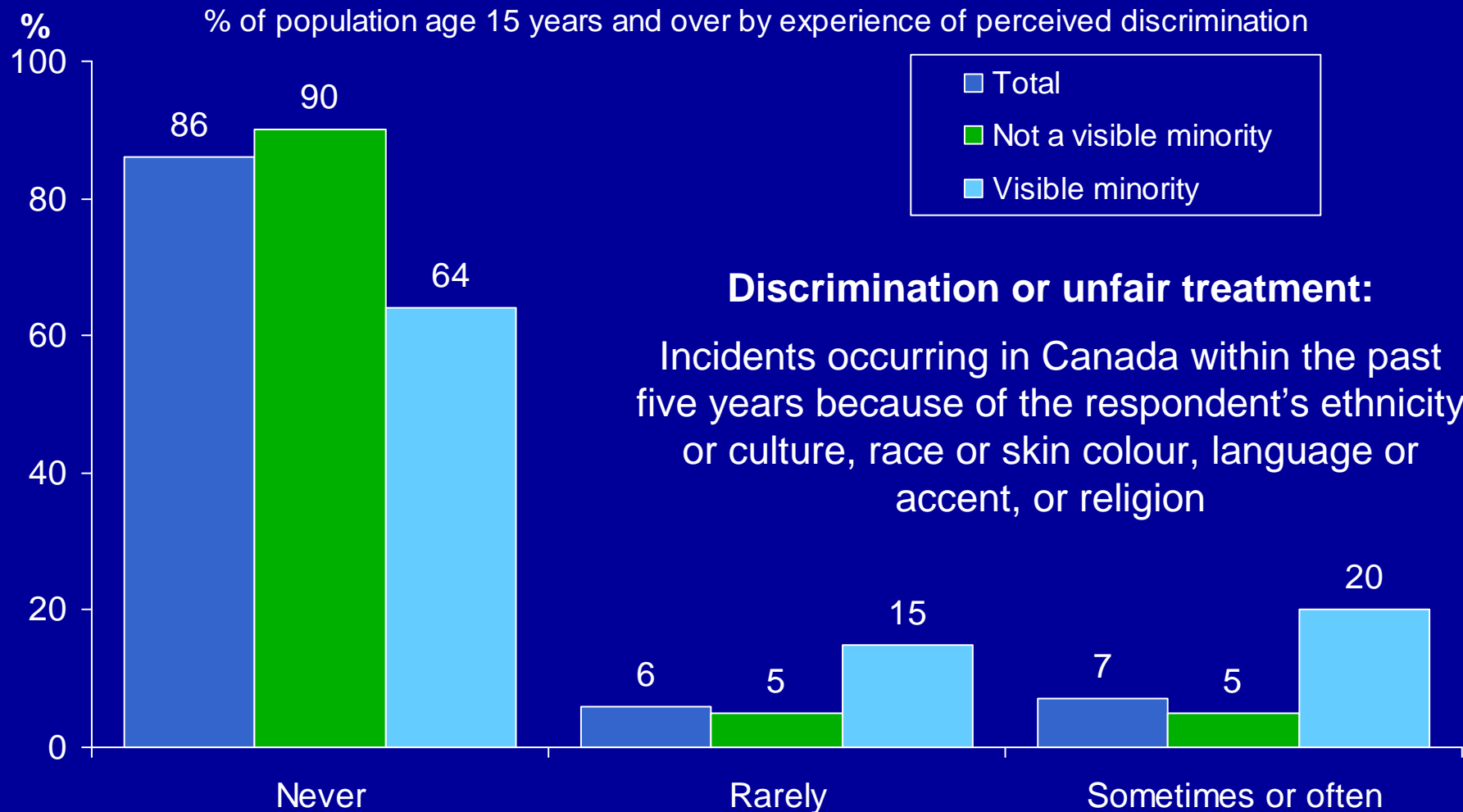
*In the past 5 years how often do you feel that you have experienced such discrimination or unfair treatment in Canada?
Was it or is it ...*

often?

sometimes?

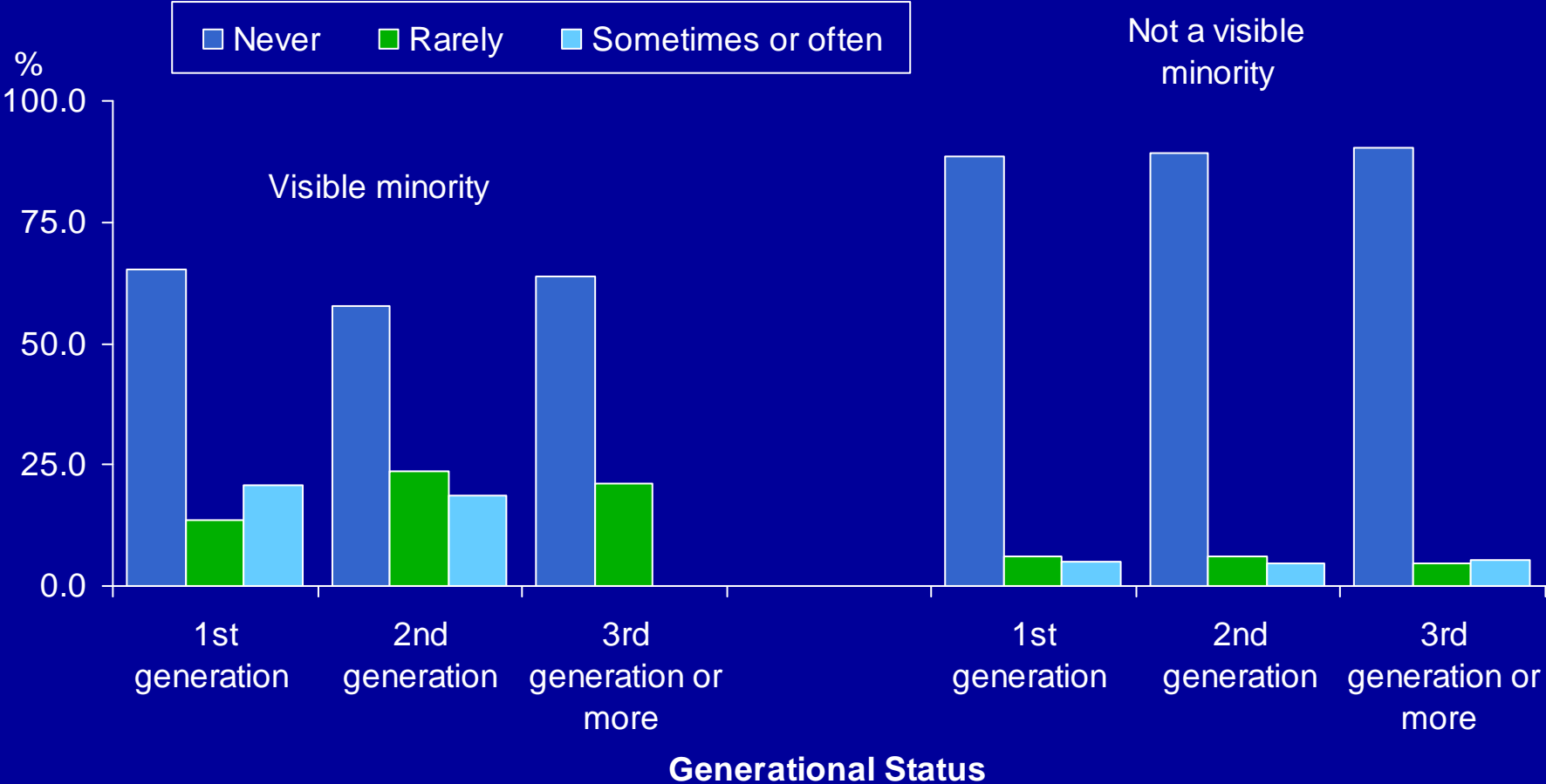
rarely?

Majority reported to have never experienced discrimination or unfair treatment

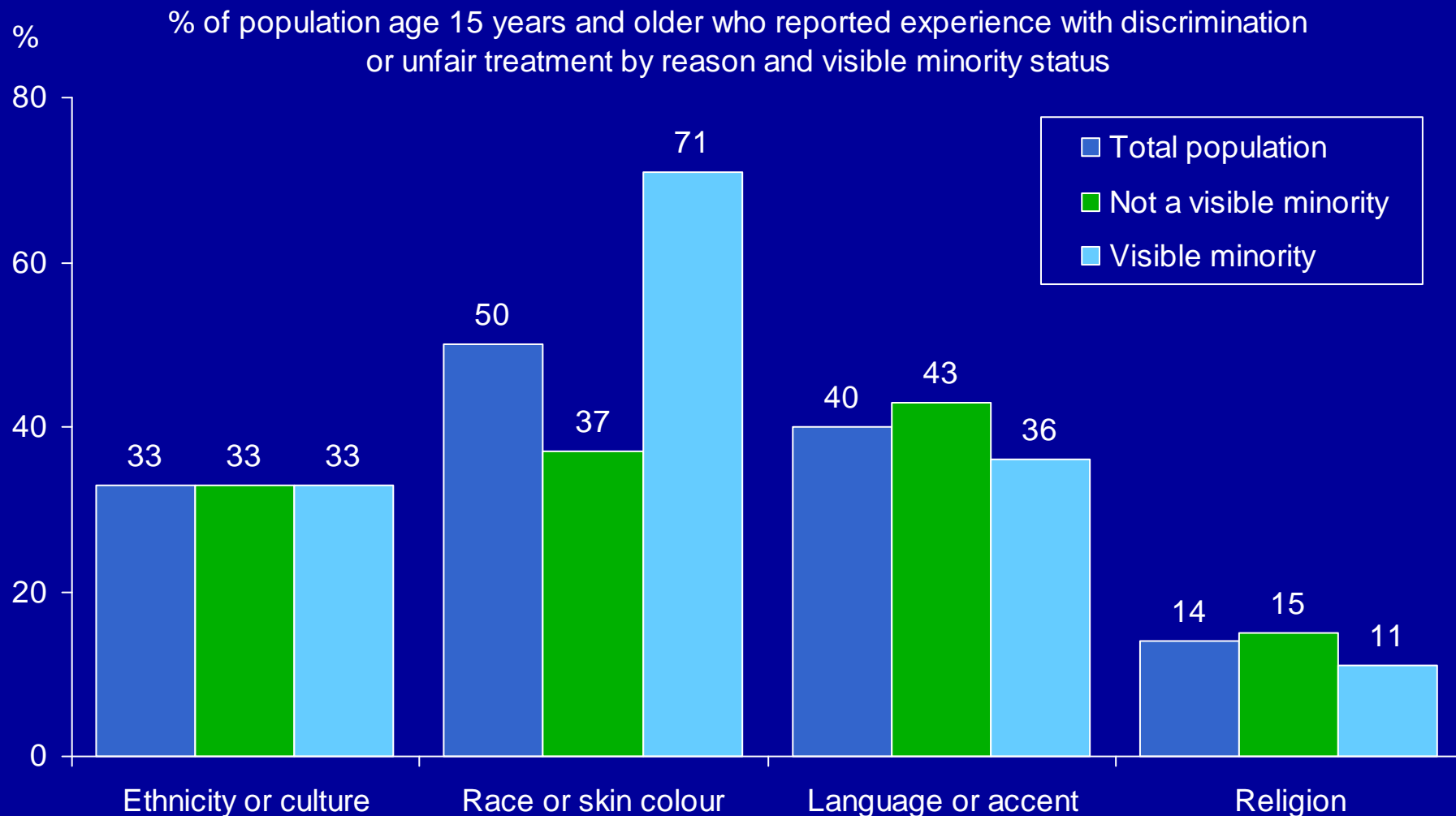


First generation visible minorities more likely to report discrimination occurring sometimes or often

Population who experienced discrimination by generations in Canada and visible minority status



Race or skin colour was the most commonly identified reason for visible minorities



*Because more than one reason could be reported, the total of all reasons added together is greater than 100%.

Places or situations where perceived discrimination occurred

In the past 5 years, in which places or situations do you feel that you have experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly in Canada? Was it ...

on the street?

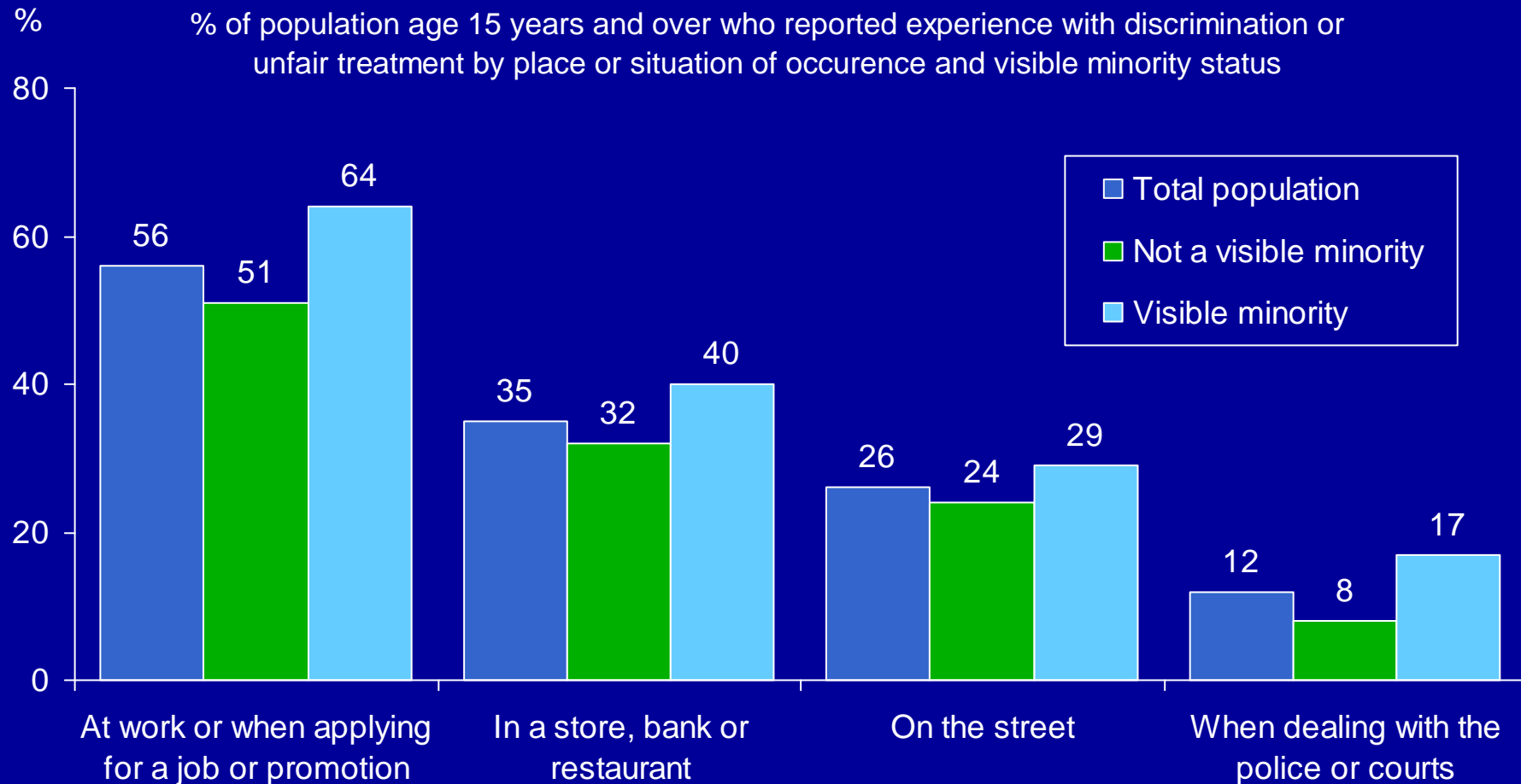
in a store, bank or restaurant?

at work or when applying for a job or promotion?

when dealing with the police or courts?

or somewhere else?

Most often took place at work or when applying for a job/promotion



* Because more than one type of place/situation could be reported, the total of all situations added together would be greater than 100%. Not all types of places/situations reported are shown in this chart. Categories shown were read aloud.

Around the world

- 57th Eurobarometer survey

- Spring 2002 in the 15 European Union countries
- Survey population → EU citizens
- Extent of discrimination personally experienced

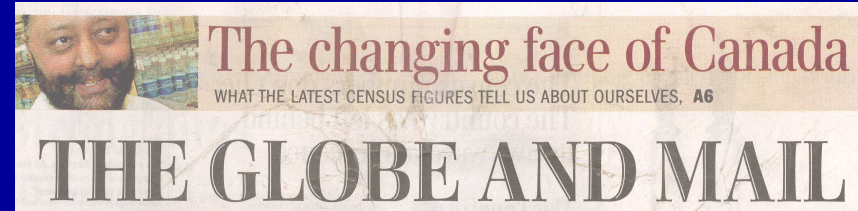
e.g. In the past two years, have you personally felt discriminated against or harassed <at work> because of your...

- *Race or ethnicity*
- *Religion or beliefs*
- *Physical disability*
- *Learning difficulties or mental illness*
- *Age*
- *Sexual orientation*

Lessons learned and knowledge gained

- Sensitive for some respondents, but questions were better received than initially expected.
- Many qualitative testing participants stated that they felt that the questions on discrimination were very important and were quite willing to answer them.
- Non-response to these questions was relatively low.
- Discrimination questions adopted in other surveys at Statistics Canada (i.e. LSIC)
- Questions on hate crimes were also asked at the end of the module on the EDS

The headlines



› TORONTO STAR ‹ September 30, 2003

Racial bias 20% feel the sting; Time doesn't aid visible minorities One in five has felt unfairly treated

OTTAWA CITIZEN July 19, 2004

Discrimination not as common as Canadians think, study finds: Minority groups report fewer cases than widely believed

THE GLOBE AND MAIL August 31, 2006

Ottawa launches program to combat racism

The Gazette (Montréal) September 14, 2006

Quebec to tackle problem of racism:
Committee hearing from range of groups