

### Using the Term BIPOC

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**Link:** [\(425\) Is It Time To Say R.I.P. to P.O.C.? | Code Switch | NPR - YouTube](#)  
Code Switch NPR Podcasts (2021 [6.5 mins])

The video begins with a reminder to how the term POC or People of Color centered the people reversing previous terms that centered “whiteness” for example “non-white” or “minority”. POC also brought diverse groups closer together creating a “Big Tent” or homogeneity that could translate to power in numbers; in this case the group(s) shared “parallel experiences” of getting, “the short end of the stick” in a racialized white’s only/ white’s first society. But the Big Tent has some flaws in that “globally, white people are the minority.” Another flaw is that using POC can limit a hard look at the oppression of specific groups (Anti-Blackness, racism faced by Indigenous Peoples etc.). BIPOC or Black, Indigenous and POC asks us to name specifically the hierarchy oppressed by white supremacy. But the term is new, not embraced broadly and creates confusion. Also, some groups (Latino/Latino/ Latine/ Latinx) might need to be named as well (BILPOC). “So this is the real superpower of POC or BIPOC—if that’s what we choose to use. They can both describe and create a reality. They can encourage empathy across racial groups, and they can also build political power.”

**Additional Resource:** Listen to the full podcast episode: <https://n.pr/3n78Awm>

**Link:** [\(425\) BIPOC: 4 Reasons to Stop Using the Word...Like Now! - YouTube](#) (2021 [7 mins])

Dr. Omekongo Dibingo is a motivational speaker, trilingual poet, TV talk show host, rapper, and professor of cross-cultural communication at American University. He learned the term BIPOC in 2020, and like many others, he thought it meant bisexual People of Color. After much reflection, Dr. Dibingo believes BIPOC should not be used for four reasons.

1. The term connotes a “double negative” or a “double positive”. It is repetitive as Black and Indigenous people are People of Color.
2. Black People and Indigenous Peoples do not share a history—and we should not blend those two-- even though both have experienced oppression by white people.
3. What all the groups do have in common is oppression and colonizing by whites, so the term BIPOC is simply solidarity “uniting around whiteness” and white oppression. True solidarity, Dibingo argues, can’t be wrapped solely in sharing a “common enemy.”
4. Finally, whites are always called white, but terms for all other people continue to change. For example, Black people have been colored, Negro and African American but whites just stay white as if they are “the original, the center.” We do not need to accept

that “ethnocentric, Eurocentric” approach to defining all people. And that happens when we continually create terms to group people who have unique stories.

Dr Dibinga wants each groups’ unique stories to be lifted, not homogenized. He advocates for naming identities and then learning history from their perspectives.

**Additional Resource:** To learn more history from centering Black stories:  
<https://www.youtube.com/hashtag/blackhistorymonth>

**Link:**[\(425\) As a Diversity Equity & Inclusion Practitioner and Black Woman, Here's Why I Avoid the Term “BIPOC” - YouTube](#) (Adriele Parker 2021 [5 mins])

Adriele Parker, a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Practitioner, and Black Woman begins by explaining that BIPOC is first seen used in 2013 but gains usage in 2020. POC on the other hand has been used for centuries across the world to connote all people who are not white. Ms. Parker expands; many people believe the term BIPOC was created to address the erasure of Black and Indigenous Peoples. But Parker does not like the term, beginning her argument with a belief that it is confusing and hard to pronounce. Secondly, BIPOC (as well as POC) does not address the unique inequities of groups. The third reason that she does not like the term is that it divides Black and Indigenous from People of Color creating hierarchies of oppression. “Unity, empathy and understanding amongst non-white communities is going to be essential for us to dismantle white supremacy... continuing to maintain a divide amongst our various communities just continues to uphold those systems and feed those structures.” Finally, Parker has observed in her work that white people will use POC and BIPOC “when referring to a specific non-white community because they find it more comfortable.” And BIPOC and POC should not be used for white comfort, especially as it erases, “unique histories, experiences and inequities.”

**Additional Resource:** [\(426\) What does the term BIPOC mean? And when should you use it? - YouTube](#) (2021[9 mins])