

FORM: A TERMINOLOGICAL SUGGESTION FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN
VARIATION

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The study of human variation has been one of the oldest and most controversial ones in the field of biological anthropology. Different racial and non-racial approaches are currently utilized in this realm of research. In order to accommodate this plurality of approaches, a terminological change is suggested. The neutral term 'form' should be used, instead of 'race' or 'subspecies', for infraspecific classification of *Homo sapiens*, if such is to be employed. This term is non-committal and compromising between different positions in contemporary biological anthropology. As a neutral term, 'form' enables scientists to make classifications while at the same time stresses the uncertainties surrounding them and allows for the high level of disagreement which have always characterised the study of human variation. 'Form', being a neutral term, also leaves space for those who do not accept the racial classification of *Homo sapiens*. Finally, 'form' does not have the negative emotional connotations which the term 'race' gained during the troubled history of studies of human variation.

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