

### Overview

For several years, Environics Research Group has been tracking the attitudes of non-Aboriginal Canadians towards the concerns of Aboriginal peoples through two ongoing syndicated Environics studies: *FOCUS Canada*, a survey of 2,000 adult Canadians conducted continuously each quarter since 1976, and *North of 60° and Remote Community Monitor*, a survey of residents in the three territories, Nunavik and Labrador, conducted annually since 1999. Over time, one evident trend in Canadians' attitudes is the growing awareness of an Aboriginal urban presence and a prioritizing of issues related to Aboriginal people in cities over others, such as the settling of native land claims.

As part of the *UAPS*, Environics surveyed a representative sample of Canadians to learn how they view Aboriginal people and what informs these views. The results of the non-Aboriginal survey are based on telephone interviews conducted from April 28 to May 15, 2009 with 250 non-Aboriginal people in each of the same 10 urban centres in which the main survey was conducted: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax (excluding Ottawa). In all, 2,501 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians ("NA urban Canadians") participated, providing a rich picture of how NA urban Canadians see Aboriginal people in cities today.

Topics explored in the survey include non-Aboriginal urban Canadians' perceptions of Aboriginal people in Canada, their awareness of Aboriginal peoples and communities in their cities, their contact and interaction with Aboriginal people, their perspectives on how well institutions respond to the needs of Aboriginal people, their knowledge of salient Aboriginal issues (i.e., Indian residential schools, acceptance of differential systems of justice), and the importance of Aboriginal history and culture in the minds of NA urban Canadians.

As well, some questions asked of urban Aboriginal peoples were also included in the survey of NA urban Canadians to allow for comparisons between the two groups. These comparisons are *not* referred to in this chapter and are cited in the relevant section of the main survey findings.

The following points summarize the main findings around non-Aboriginal people's attitudes towards Aboriginal peoples:

- **NA urban Canadians' first impressions of Aboriginal people are generally positive.** Only a handful of NA urban Canadians express explicitly negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people. Nonetheless, significant minorities in Thunder Bay, Winnipeg and Regina report their impressions of Aboriginal people have worsened in the past few years.
- **NA urban Canadians are almost unanimous in their belief that Aboriginal people are the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today.** This is consistent across cities and socio-demographic groups. However, contact with Aboriginal people influences the extent to which such discrimination is perceived to exist. NA urban Canadians who have frequent contact with Aboriginal people are most likely to think Aboriginal people often experience discrimination. NA urban Canadians living in Thunder Bay, Regina and Calgary are most likely to believe Aboriginal people frequently face discrimination, in contrast with those living in Toronto and Montreal.
- **There is a basic tension in the hearts and minds of NA urban Canadians of where Aboriginal people fit in the Canadian mosaic.** They clearly feel Aboriginal people possess unique cultural identities that other Canadians can learn and benefit from, but NA urban Canadians are divided over whether Aboriginal people hold unique *rights and privileges*, or whether they are just the same as other cultural or ethnic groups in Canadian society.

- **There is a general awareness of Aboriginal peoples and their place in Canada's history, but NA urban Canadians know less about the contemporary situation of Aboriginal peoples.** Majorities of NA urban Canadians view Aboriginal history and culture as an important symbol of national identity, and recognize the contributions that Aboriginal peoples and culture have made in the areas of the environment, and culture and the arts in Canada. But there is a lack of awareness and apparent uncertainty about what the most important issues are facing Aboriginal people today, particularly those faced in Canadian cities. There is a significant gap between Aboriginal peoples' socio-economic reality and the perceptions of NA urban Canadians; Aboriginal people are seen by majorities to be as well off, or better off, compared to other Canadians. Most notably, almost half of NA urban Canadians have never read or heard anything about Indian residential schools, a situation that appears to have changed little following the federal government's official apology in June 2008.
- **Despite their limited knowledge of Aboriginal people and issues, NA urban Canadians demonstrate a desire to learn more.** Indeed, there's an apparent predisposition to be open, and interest in learning more about Aboriginal history, culture and experience. Many NA urban Canadians give Canadians schools a failing grade in terms of fulfilling this objective.
- **At some level, non-Aboriginal people are starting to recognize the urban Aboriginal community and their cultural presence, although this awareness varies substantially by city.** Different city histories and socio-demographic composition, size of the Aboriginal population, and the nature and location of urban Aboriginal organizations all shape NA urban Canadians' awareness of an Aboriginal community. Interestingly, those who are aware of an Aboriginal community in their city are more likely than others to believe Aboriginal people wish to both maintain their culture *and* participate in Canadian society.

NA urban Canadians' views of Aboriginal people vary somewhat by their own place of birth and age:

- **New Canadians** (i.e., those born outside Canada) typically have limited cultural exposure and day-to-day contact with Aboriginal people. They are least able to identify an important issue facing Aboriginal people in cities. Nonetheless, they are more likely than NA urban Canadians born in Canada to think Aboriginal people and culture have made a major contribution to Canada's national identity, and think positively about the presence of Aboriginal people and communities in their city.
- **Younger NA urban Canadians** are more likely than their older counterparts to associate Aboriginal people with arts and culture, and most likely among NA urban Canadians to feel Aboriginal peoples and cultures have made a major contribution to Canada's national identity. They are also more likely to think schools do a good job of teaching Aboriginal history and culture, suggesting a greater Aboriginal focus may be emerging in some school curricula. Most importantly, NA urban youth are more likely than older cohorts to perceive discrimination as the key issue facing Aboriginal people in cities today.

Finally, a segmentation analysis of a large number of questions in the *UAPS* survey reveals there are four distinct “views” of Aboriginal people among non-Aboriginal Canadians, some more negative than others:

- **Dismissive Naysayers.** They tend to view Aboriginal peoples and communities negatively (i.e., unfairly entitled and isolated from Canadian society).
- **Inattentive Skeptics.** Uninformed and unaware, they typically think Aboriginal peoples are no different from other Canadians.
- **Cultural Romantics.** Idealistic and optimistic, they have a strong belief in Aboriginal peoples’ artistic and cultural contributions.
- **Connected Advocates.** They have a high level of contact and strong belief that Aboriginal peoples often experience discrimination.

## 1. Perceptions of Aboriginal people

### Top-of-mind impression

***NA urban Canadians’ most common top-of-mind impression of Aboriginal people revolves around their history as the original inhabitants of Canada.***

What are NA urban Canadians’ top-of-mind impressions of Aboriginal peoples? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), NA urban Canadians express a variety of impressions of Aboriginal peoples, but are most likely to cite the following impressions:

- **First inhabitants.** “The first people” – individuals native to Canada who possess special status by virtue of their original inhabitancy of the country – is the most common impression of Aboriginal people among NA urban Canadians (18%).
- **First Nations/Métis/Inuit.** For one in ten (12%) NA urban Canadians, what comes to mind is simply First Nations, Métis or Inuit, or other terms that are sometimes used to describe Aboriginal people, such as Indians or natives. (There is no indication whether these are positive, neutral or negative impressions.)
- **Mistreatment.** One in ten (9%) of NA urban Canadians’ most top-of-mind impression is of perceptions of abuse and mistreatment experienced by Aboriginal people at the hands of Canadian citizens and governments. Misappropriation of land and the historical marginalization of Aboriginal people in Canadian society are common themes among this group of NA urban Canadians.
- **Culture and art.** NA urban Canadians are as likely to associate Aboriginal people with cultural and artistic traditions (9%) as they are with mistreatment. NA urban Canadians in this group feel Aboriginal people possess a rich and diverse series of cultural practices and traditions that enrich Canadian society.
- **Reserves.** One in ten (8%) first associate Aboriginal people with living on reserves.

Small proportions of NA urban Canadians associate Aboriginal peoples with tax breaks, rights and special privileges (5%), such as government funding of First Nations peoples' post-secondary education, and poverty and poor living conditions (5%), largely as these conditions relate to Aboriginal people living on reserves. Four percent say Aboriginal peoples are no different than other Canadians and three percent point to loss of culture/assimilation/oppression. More negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people, such as reliance on handouts and social assistance (4%), alcoholism and substance abuse (4%), and laziness and lack of contribution to society (3%) are top-of-mind impressions among only a handful of NA urban Canadians. A wide variety of other impressions are cited, but none by more than two percent of NA urban Canadians. One in ten (8%) cannot say what first comes to mind when they think of Aboriginal people.

The impression of Aboriginal peoples as the "first inhabitants" is top-of-mind in most cities and among most socio-demographic segments of the population, but is particularly common in Toronto and Montreal, and among new Canadians (24%), especially those who have been in Canada for less than 10 years (35%). Impressions related to Aboriginal culture and art are more commonly cited by younger NA urban Canadians (12% under 45 years of age) and by those with at least some university education (14%), while reserves are more commonly mentioned by individuals born in Canada (10%) versus immigrants.

## Are NA urban Canadians' impressions changing?

***Most NA urban Canadians say their impressions of Aboriginal people have not changed in the past few years, but this varies by city. Among those whose impressions have changed, they are twice as likely to say their impressions have improved.***

NA urban Canadians are much more likely to say their impressions of Aboriginal people are unchanged in recent years than to report they have changed for better or worse.

Two-thirds (65%) of NA urban Canadians say their impressions of Aboriginal people have stayed the same over the past few years. The status quo prevails most among residents of Halifax (72%) and least among residents of Thunder Bay (45%).

Of the minority who report shifting impressions of Aboriginal people, NA urban Canadians are more likely to say these impressions have improved (21%) than worsened (10%). Similar proportions in each city say their impressions have gotten better. While still a minority, NA urban Canadians in Thunder Bay (25%), along with those in Regina (20%) and Winnipeg (18%) are, on average, more than twice as likely as residents of Toronto (8%), Montreal (10%), Halifax (10%) and Vancouver (5%) to report their impressions of Aboriginal people have worsened in the past few years.

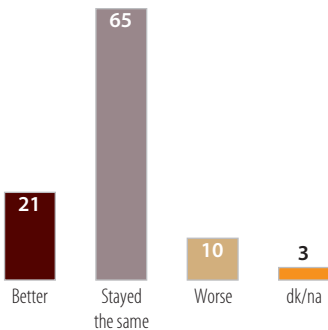
Changing impressions of Aboriginal people are associated with age and with the amount of attention paid to Aboriginal issues. Older NA urban Canadians (27% of those aged 60 or older), and those who pay greater attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people (24%) are more likely than others to say their impressions have recently improved.

**REASONS FOR IMPROVING IMPRESSIONS.** NA urban Canadians who say their impressions of Aboriginal people have improved over time cite three main reasons for this:

- **Personal relationships.** Two in ten (22%) cite a personal relationship with an Aboriginal person as the main reason their impression of Aboriginal people has improved, especially those in Thunder Bay, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina and Winnipeg.

### Stable impressions

Over the past few years, has your impression of Aboriginal people gotten better or worse, or stayed the same?



- **Visibility.** A more visible and positive presence in the local community and media has also contributed to better impressions for two in ten (20%) in this group. Torontonians are more likely than others to mention this visibility as a reason for their improving impressions.
- **Educational, social and economic gains.** Another two in ten (19%) attribute their improved impressions to perceived educational, social and economic gains among Aboriginal people in the past few years. Perceptions of this progress are most common among those in Regina, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay.

Other less common reasons for improved impressions include a better general understanding of Aboriginal culture or issues (13%), or specific knowledge learned through educational or awareness courses (11%). Relatively few individuals associate their more positive impressions with a greater personal maturity or open-mindedness (5%), with the greater recognition or respect that they believe Aboriginal people are getting from governments and ordinary Canadians (5%), with their perception that more government or social assistance opportunities are now available to Aboriginal people (4%), or with the perception that Aboriginal peoples' political leadership has improved (3%).

Younger people under 45 years of age are more likely to associate their improved impressions with either a personal relationship with an Aboriginal person (29%) or education about Aboriginal culture (20%), while older people are more likely to cite perceptions of educational, social and economic progress among Aboriginal people (26%). Reporting better impressions due to a personal relationship with an Aboriginal person is also more common among those in the middle-income brackets (31%) than those with lower or higher incomes. NA urban Canadians with higher household incomes (\$80,000 or more) are more likely to cite greater visibility of (33%), and greater perceived recognition and respect given to (14%) Aboriginal people as reasons why their impression has improved.

**REASONS FOR WORSENING IMPRESSIONS.** Among the one in ten NA urban Canadians who report their impressions of Aboriginal people have worsened, to what do they attribute this change? The most common reason is a perception that Aboriginal people rely on "handouts" and make minimal societal contributions (19%, representing 2% of all NA urban Canadians). Other reasons include the perception that Aboriginal people are constantly making demands or protesting issues such as land claims (15%), especially in Toronto and among those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more; the perception of an increase in Aboriginal crime (15%), which is particularly common among those in Thunder Bay and Regina; and the perception that Aboriginal people abuse privileges or take advantage of laws (13%). Others in this group blame alcoholism, substance abuse and addictions (11%) for their worsening impressions, a view expressed mainly by those in Calgary and Vancouver, and by those under 30 years of age.

Other less common reasons given for deteriorating impressions include negative portrayals of Aboriginal people in the media (9%); a perception that Aboriginal people are not taking advantage of opportunities available to them (9%); a perception that they are refusing to integrate into broader society (7%); or a negative personal experience with an Aboriginal person (7%).

## NA urban Canadians' perceptions of Aboriginal peoples' unique cultural identity:

*[Aboriginal people] have been here longer than most of the people. They have a different culture, with an oral rather than written history. Natural environment plays a bigger role in their culture.*

*[Aboriginal people] are more grounded with nature and land, and [show] more respect towards them.*

*First Nations' traditions and cultures are fuller, with greater spirituality and more [connection] with nature. They are passionate about retaining their culture.*

## NA urban Canadians' perceptions of entitlement:

*The only way (Aboriginal people) are different are the treaty rights.*

*They have no responsibilities. They have lots of rights but no responsibilities. Everyone else has to look after them because they are permanent victims. They aren't the only ones with problems.*

*They're not treated equal as everyone else. Aboriginal people don't pay taxes, they get their education paid for, they don't earn it. They can go to university as many times as they want and don't worry about who is flipping the bill.*

## Perceptions of difference

### **NA urban Canadians typically think Aboriginal people are different from non-Aboriginal people, primarily because they possess a unique cultural identity.**

NA urban Canadians were asked (unprompted, without being offered response options) in what ways, if any, they think Aboriginal people are different from non-Aboriginal people. Most (62%) NA urban Canadians identify at least one difference between the two groups. The following are the top ways in which NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people differ from non-Aboriginal people:

- **Unique cultural identity.** Three in ten (31%) NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people possess a unique cultural identity that sets them apart from the Canadian population at large. NA urban Canadians in this group think Aboriginal peoples' cultural traditions and heritage constitute a unique identity that Canadians can learn and benefit from. Underlying this unique identity, they perceive a distinct set of *Aboriginal* values, such as sharing, a tighter family connection and greater kinship with one another, and a strong connection with the land. This perception of a unique cultural identity is more of a bi-coastal phenomenon – residents of Vancouver (41%) and Halifax (41%) are most likely to think a unique cultural identity sets Aboriginal people apart, whereas residents of Thunder Bay (18%) are least likely to share this view. Stronger perceptions in Vancouver and Halifax may in part be due to their residents' propensity to think Aboriginal peoples and cultures have enriched Canadian culture and the arts, and Canadians' connection with the natural environment (see page 151). Some of these perceptions of a unique cultural identity are presented in the sidebar.
- **Entitlement.** One in ten (12%) NA urban Canadians think Aboriginal people are different from non-Aboriginal people because they are entitled. For some, this is simply a recognition that Aboriginal people possess special constitutional rights and privileges. However, others feel Aboriginal rights and privileges (i.e., tax free status, free education, government funding) are a "free ride" that discourages responsible behaviour and equates to an unfair advantage over other Canadians. NA urban Canadians in the western cities (excluding Regina) are more likely than others to believe that Aboriginal people are entitled. Some of these perceptions of entitlement are presented in the sidebar on this page.

- **Socio-economic disadvantage.** Another way in which NA urban Canadians perceive Aboriginal people as different from themselves is in terms of socio-economic disadvantage (11%). A common theme among these NA urban Canadians is that Aboriginal people have less educational opportunities, greater health needs, and experience more poverty than the average Canadian, and they also believe Aboriginal people have bigger hurdles to overcome because they have been subject to negative stereotypes, discrimination and racism in Canadian society. NA urban Canadians in Toronto (16%) and Winnipeg (15%) are most likely to think Aboriginal people are different from non-Aboriginal people because they experience more socio-economic disadvantage, as are university graduates. Some of these perceptions of socio-economic disadvantage are presented in the sidebar on this page.
- **Separation/isolation.** Finally, a smaller group of NA urban Canadians (9%) think Aboriginal people are different from non-Aboriginal people because they live separately, either on reserves or in their own communities. The Indian reserve is viewed by many in this group as a place where Aboriginal people can “hang on to their identity” and live in the past, which is holding them back from finding a place in broader society. As well, a common perception within this group is that Aboriginal people over-emphasize their cultural identity and “should not try to be so different.” These perceptions do not stand out among any one city or demographic group. Some of these perceptions of separation are presented in the sidebar on this page.

Three in ten NA urban Canadians (31%) maintain there are no differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (another 7% are uncertain). NA urban Canadians in Montreal (41%) are notably more likely than those in other cities to believe Aboriginal people are the same as non-Aboriginal people. Younger NA urban Canadians are also more likely to perceive no difference, as are those who are unaware of an Aboriginal community (i.e., a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community) in their city.

#### **NA urban Canadians’ perceptions of socio-economic disadvantage:**

*This was their country originally, and generally they are treated as second-class citizens.*

*They have been treated in the past unfairly, and are unequally represented in poverty.*

*They have societal disadvantage, they lack cultural capital, they have lots of unresolved issues that affect them generationally, they have different health needs than the average Canadian.*

*They don’t have the same chances as we have. The effect of the residential school has affected their family structure. It has put them at a great disadvantage.*

#### **NA urban Canadians’ perceptions of separation/isolation:**

*They are stuck in a culture that needs to change so that they can become equal partners as Canadians.*

*They use their culture to keep [themselves] from integrating with the rest of Canada.*

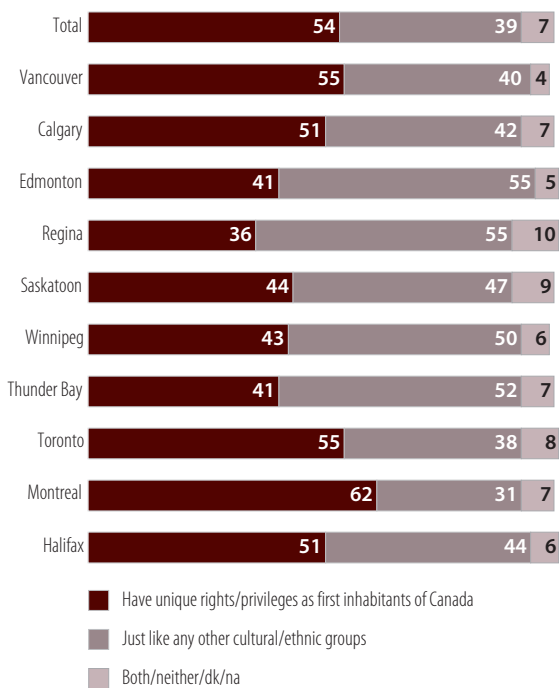
*(Aboriginal people are) different because of the way they are always looking for blame for their past. They don’t seem to want to push ahead and get past the trauma or hardships suffered by [their] ancestors.*

## Unique rights and privileges?

**NA urban Canadians are divided on whether Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada, or are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canadian society. Residents of cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations are more likely than other NA urban Canadians to consider Aboriginal people the same as other cultural or ethnic groups.**

### Unique rights and privileges, or just like other groups?

Which of the following two statements best represents how you think about Aboriginal people?



One of the sharpest divisions among NA urban Canadians exists in their perceptions of whether Aboriginal people hold a distinct status, or whether they are just the same as other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada.

A slim majority (54%) of NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada, whereas four in ten (39%) feel Aboriginal people are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada's multicultural society (4% say they are both equally or neither, while 3% do not have an opinion).

Opinions vary somewhat by city, with the perception that Aboriginal people are just like other cultural and ethnic groups more common in places with a larger relative Aboriginal population. In fact, this is the majority opinion in Edmonton (55%), Regina (55%) and Thunder Bay (52%), and marginally outweighs the belief in a distinct status for Aboriginal people in Winnipeg (50%), while those in Saskatoon (47% just like others, 44% unique) are divided. In contrast, the perception that Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges is most common in Montreal (62%), followed by Toronto (55%), Vancouver (55%), Calgary (51%) and Halifax (51%) – and accordingly, among those reporting the least personal contact with Aboriginal people.

Beyond these city differences, NA urban Canadians' views of Aboriginal people's distinct status, or lack thereof, remain fairly consistent across socio-demographic groups. Roughly half in all age, education and income groups think Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada. The two exceptions are university graduates and those aged 30 to 44, who are more likely than others to believe that Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges.



## Separation, assimilation or integration

**Most NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people want to keep their cultural practices and traditions but actively participate in the larger Canadian society.**

Research suggests that there are several ways in which cultural and ethnic minorities may seek to live in the larger Canadian society.<sup>54</sup> *Assimilation* refers to the preference for abandoning one's culture in favour of the customs and ways of life of the broader society. *Separation* refers to the opposite end of the spectrum, where an individual seeks to protect their culture by avoiding interaction with the larger society. *Integration* refers to the desire to maintain one's culture at the same time as participating in the larger society. (A fourth dimension, called *marginalization*, relates to an individual who does not feel they have a place in either their own culture or in the broader society.)

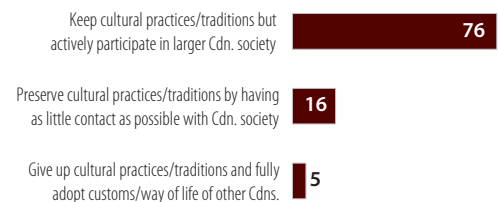
How do NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people seek to live in Canada? The large majority believe that Aboriginal people aspire to integration, rather than separation or assimilation. Three in four (76%) think that Aboriginal people want to keep their cultural practices and traditions but actively participate in the larger Canadian society (integration). Just 16 percent believe Aboriginal people want to preserve their cultural practices and traditions by having as little contact as possible with Canadian society (separation), while five percent believe Aboriginal people want to give up their cultural practices and traditions, and fully adopt the customs and ways of life of other Canadians (assimilation).

These views are generally consistent across cities and socio-demographic groups. The likelihood to believe Aboriginal people aspire to integration is highest in Toronto (85%) and Edmonton (83%), and among those with a university education (83%). Residents of Montreal are most likely to believe that Aboriginal people wish to remain separate (28%); this perception is also stronger among those without a university education (18%).

Frequency of contact with Aboriginal people has little bearing on NA urban Canadians' impressions of how Aboriginal people seek to live in Canadian society. However, those who are aware of an Aboriginal community in their city (i.e., either a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community) (82%) or at the minimum are aware of Aboriginal people living in their city (77%) are more likely than those who are not aware of an Aboriginal presence in their city (67%) to believe Aboriginal people wish to both maintain their culture and participate in Canadian society (integration).

### Separation, assimilation or integration?

Do you think that most Aboriginal people want to . . . ?



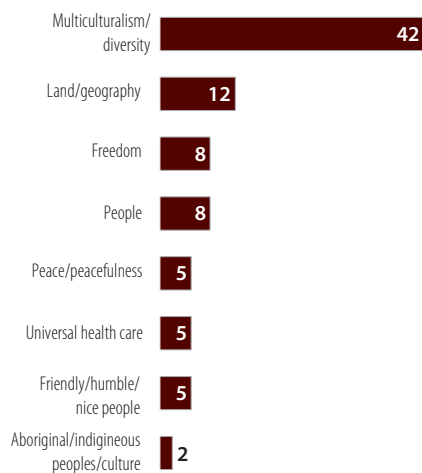
54 Berry, John W. (2005). *Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures*. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*.

## 2. Aboriginal history and culture

### Importance of Aboriginal history and culture in defining Canada

What makes Canada unique?  
What do you think makes Canada unique?

Top mentions



**A majority of NA urban Canadians think Aboriginal history and culture is an important symbol of Canadian national identity, a view that is strongest in Halifax, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver.**

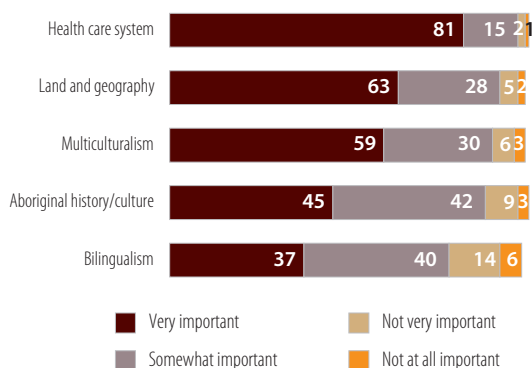
NA urban Canadians do not first think of Aboriginal peoples and culture when they first think of “Canada,” but most consider Aboriginal peoples’ history and culture to be an important symbol of Canadian national identity, a view that is widely shared across most socio-demographic groups.

When asked what they think makes Canada unique (unprompted, without offering response choices), NA urban Canadians are, by a wide margin, most likely to say multiculturalism or diversity (42%). Smaller proportions think land and geography (12%), the people (8%) and freedom (8%) make Canada unique. A wide range of other traits are mentioned (i.e., universal health care, tolerance, natural resources, the weather), but none by more than five percent of NA urban Canadians. Very few specifically mention Aboriginal peoples or their culture (2%).

Yet, when asked how important Aboriginal history and culture is to their definition of Canada, almost nine in ten NA urban Canadians (87%) say Aboriginal history and culture is very (45%) or somewhat (42%) important in defining Canada for them. Similar proportions of NA urban Canadians think multiculturalism, land and geography, and the health care system are important, but they are much more likely to think these three features of Canadian identity are very important compared to Aboriginal history and culture.

### Importance in defining Canada

Do you think each of the following is very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important in defining Canada?



NA urban Canadians living in Halifax (51%), Toronto (49%), Calgary (47%) and Vancouver (46%) are most likely to say Aboriginal history and culture is very important in their notion of “Canada.” Aboriginal history and culture also plays a greater role in defining Canada for individuals with household incomes under \$80,000 (48%) and people born outside of Canada (52%). NA urban Canadians aged 60 or older are most likely to say Aboriginal history and culture is not important in their definition of Canada.

### Contributions of Aboriginal people and culture

**Seven in ten or more NA urban Canadians believe that Aboriginal people and culture have contributed to Canadians’ sense of nature, culture and the arts, and Canada’s national identity.**

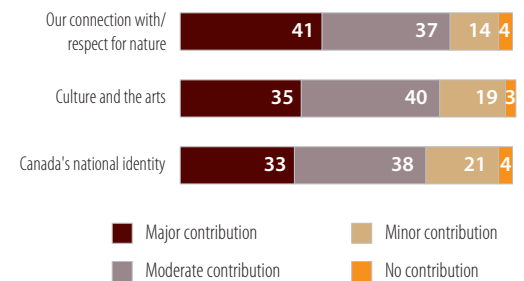
Regardless of how central Aboriginal history and culture is to NA urban Canadians’ idea of Canada, majorities of NA urban Canadians recognize the contributions that Aboriginal people and culture have made in the areas of the environment, culture and arts, and national identity. At least seven in ten NA urban Canadians think Aboriginal people and their culture have made either moderate or major contributions to Canadians’ connection with and respect for nature (78%), culture and the arts (75%), and Canada’s national identity (70%).

NA urban Canadians' perceptions of how much of a contribution Aboriginal people and culture have made vary in the following ways:

- Younger NA urban Canadians (18-29) are most likely to think Aboriginal people and culture have made a *major* contribution to Canada's national identity.
- Residents of Vancouver are considerably more likely than those in other cities to believe that Aboriginal people and culture have made a *major* contribution to culture and arts in Canada, as are those who either often or occasionally have contact with Aboriginal people.
- Residents of Halifax, Montrealers and Torontonians are notably more likely than residents of other cities to feel Aboriginal people and culture have helped strengthen Canadians' connection with and respect for nature.
- NA urban Canadians with at least a high school diploma, those who pay a great deal of attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people, and those who believe Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada are more likely to think Aboriginal people and culture make a *major* contribution in all three areas.

## Contributions of Aboriginal people and culture

How much of a contribution do you think Aboriginal people and culture have made in each of the following areas? Have they made a major contribution, a moderate contribution, a minor contribution, or no contribution to...?



## Understanding Aboriginal history and culture

**Consistent with the value NA urban Canadians place on Aboriginal history and culture, this subject is one they feel is important for them to understand. However, only one in four believe schools do a good or excellent job of teaching students about it.**

Most NA urban Canadians think it is important they understand Aboriginal people's history and culture, but believe Canadian schools do only a poor to fair job of teaching the subject. When asked how important it is for non-Aboriginal Canadians to understand Aboriginal people's history and culture in Canada, more than nine in ten (93%) NA urban Canadians say it is either very (53%) or somewhat (40%) important they understand it. Only six percent say it is not important, although this proportion is substantially higher in Saskatoon (19%).

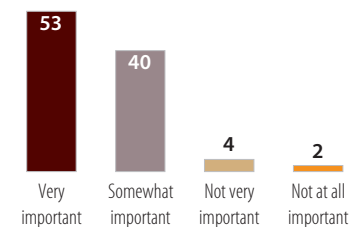
NA urban Canadians who pay a great deal of attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people are substantially more likely to feel that understanding Aboriginal people's history and culture in Canada is very important. This viewpoint also increases with level of education, from 44 percent of those without a high school diploma to 60 percent of those with a university degree.

Yet, despite the value placed on learning about Aboriginal people and their history, more than six in ten (63%) NA urban Canadians think Canadian schools do an only fair (34%) or poor (29%) job of teaching students about this subject. This view is particularly prominent among residents of Toronto (70%), Montreal (68%), Halifax (64%) and Calgary (62%) than in the other cities included in this survey. Those who believe it is very important for non-Aboriginal Canadians to understand Aboriginal history and culture (67%) are more likely than those who consider it is less important (59%) to say that schools are doing a fair-to-poor job of teaching students about this topic.

Only one-quarter of NA urban Canadians think Canadian schools do an excellent (4%) or good (20%) job of teaching students about Aboriginal people and their history. However, this perception is much more common among those aged 18 to 29 (36%) than among older NA urban Canadians (15% of those aged 60 or older), who are in turn more likely to say they do not know how good a job schools are doing in this regard. The perception that schools are doing a good-to-excellent job of teaching about Aboriginal people and their history is also slightly stronger among new Canadians.

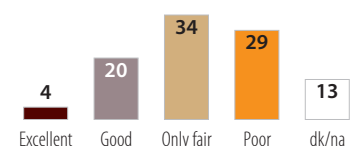
## Importance of understanding history/culture of Aboriginal people in Canada

In your opinion, how important is it for non-Aboriginal Canadians to understand the history and culture of Aboriginal people in Canada?



## Rating of how well schools teach about Aboriginal people and history

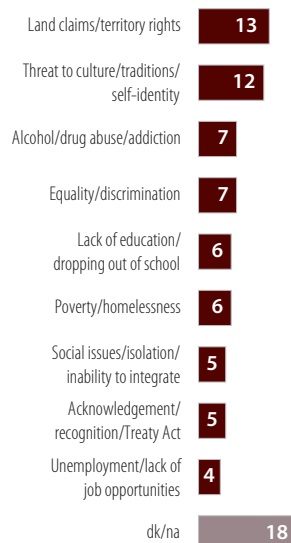
Do you think that schools in Canada do an excellent, good, only fair or poor job of teaching students about Aboriginal people and their history?



### 3. Perceived barriers facing Aboriginal people

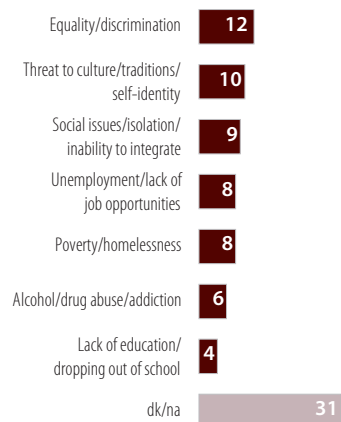
#### Most important issue in Canada (top mentions)

In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Aboriginal people in Canada today?



#### Most important issue in cities (top mentions)

And in your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Aboriginal people living in cities across Canada today?



#### Most important issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada and in cities

**Land claims, and threats to culture and identity are perceived to be the most important issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada today, while discrimination is also considered a significant challenge for Aboriginal peoples living in Canadian cities.**

**MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE.** NA urban Canadians were asked to identify the one issue they consider to be the most important facing Aboriginal people in Canada today (asked unprompted, without offering response choices). There is no consensus among NA urban Canadians in their views of the key challenges facing Aboriginal people. Land claims and territory rights (13%), and threats to culture and identity (12%) are each identified as the most pressing problem by just over one in ten NA urban Canadians. Fewer than one in ten (each) identify substance abuse (7%), discrimination (7%), lack of education (6%), or poverty and homelessness (6%) as the most important issue facing Aboriginal people in Canada today. A wide range of other potential problems are mentioned, but none by more than five percent of NA urban Canadians. One in five (18%) are unable to identify any issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada today.

Mentions of land claims as the primary issue facing Aboriginal people in Canada are higher in Montreal (19%) and Toronto (16%) than in other cities, while mentions of threats to culture and identity are higher in Vancouver (18%) than elsewhere. Substance abuse is mentioned most frequently in Calgary (15%) and Edmonton (12%), while poverty and homelessness is the key issue mentioned in Saskatoon (15%).

There are no meaningful differences between socio-demographic groups in the perceived issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada. However, perceptions do vary by the degree of attention paid to Aboriginal news and issues, and by frequency of contact with Aboriginal people. Those who pay a great deal of attention to Aboriginal news and issues are more likely to say that the most important issue facing Aboriginal people is acknowledgement and recognition, while land claims are more frequently mentioned by those who pay less attention to Aboriginal news and issues. As well, discrimination is more likely to be identified as a challenge for Aboriginal people by those in frequent contact with Aboriginal people.

**MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN CITIES.** NA urban Canadians are even less certain about the important issues facing Aboriginal people living in Canadian cities (asked unprompted, without offering response choices), with three in ten (31%) who are unable to identify what they believe to be the key challenge for urban Aboriginal people. Discrimination is identified as the leading issue for the urban Aboriginal population by one in ten (12%) NA urban Canadians. NA urban Canadians also perceive urban Aboriginal people to be dealing with threats to their culture and identity (10%), issues related to isolation and difficulties integrating into broader society (9%), poverty and homelessness (8%), unemployment and a lack of job opportunities (8%), and substance abuse (6%). A number of other issues are mentioned, but none by more than four percent of NA urban Canadians.

Across cities, discrimination is mentioned more frequently as a challenge facing urban Aboriginal people in Calgary (17%) and Montreal (15%). Mentions of threats to culture and identity are more common in Halifax (17%) and Vancouver (14%), while isolation and integration issues are more frequently identified in Thunder Bay (16%) and Toronto (13%). Substance abuse is also a key issue mentioned in Calgary (14%), Edmonton (13%) and Vancouver (10%). Residents of Saskatoon are more likely to identify

unemployment (15%) as an important issue facing Aboriginal people in cities, while residents of Regina are more likely to mention housing issues and poor living conditions (11%).

Perceptions of the most important issue facing urban Aboriginal people in cities vary by age. Younger NA urban Canadians are more likely to perceive discrimination as the key issue facing Aboriginal people in cities today (18% of those aged 18 to 29). As well, NA urban Canadians aged 60 and older are least likely to identify threats to culture and identity as a pressing problem for urban Aboriginal people. New Canadians, those who pay little or no attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people, and those with the least contact with the Aboriginal population are least able to identify any important issue facing Aboriginal people living in cities.

## Indian residential schools

**Just over half of NA urban Canadians have heard or read anything about Indian residential schools. Majorities think the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities are, at least to some extent, the result of this experience.**

The survey examined NA urban Canadians' awareness of Indian residential schools, and their views of what consequences the Indian residential schools experience has had for Aboriginal people.

**AWARENESS.** Despite being a high-profile issue, the subject of Indian residential schools is not top-of-mind for most NA urban Canadians. Fewer than one percent identify residential schools as the most important issue facing Aboriginal people, either generally or specifically for those living in cities. Once prompted, just over half of NA urban Canadians (54%) report they have read or heard something about Indian residential schools. Awareness appears to have changed little following the federal government's official apology to former students of Indian residential schools in June 2008. A survey conducted for Indian residential schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC) by Environics Research Group in April 2008 found that, prior to the apology, half (51%) of the Canadian population living in urban centres were aware of Indian residential schools.

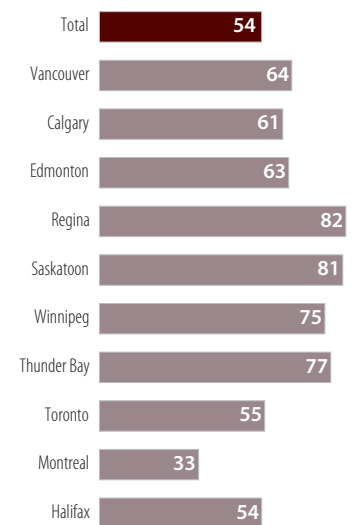
Majorities of NA urban Canadians in almost every city are aware of Indian residential schools, but this proportion is particularly high in those cities with the largest relative Aboriginal populations: Regina (82% awareness), Saskatoon (81%), Thunder Bay (77%) and Winnipeg (75%). The notable exception is Montreal, where only one-third (33%) of NA urban Canadians have heard or read anything about the subject.

**IMPACT.** Among NA urban Canadians aware of residential schools, most feel that Aboriginal peoples' experiences with them have had consequences for their communities. Three in ten (28%) believe that the current challenges faced by Aboriginal communities are, to a great extent, the result of Aboriginal peoples' experiences in residential schools. Another 45 percent feel that, to some extent, the challenges currently facing Aboriginal communities are the result of this experience. One in four see little (18%) or no (5%) relationship between the two.

The IRSRC survey found that, prior to the federal government's apology for Indian residential schools in June 2008, two in ten (21%) Canadians living in urban centres who were aware of these schools believed that they contributed to a great extent to the challenges facing Aboriginal communities. The current *UAPS* data suggests that this sentiment has grown since then.

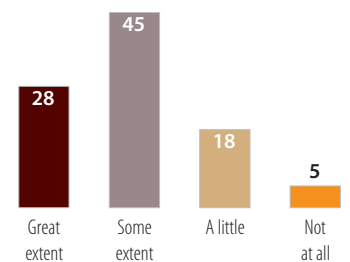
In each city, a large majority of those aware of residential schools believe they have contributed at least to some extent to the challenges facing Aboriginal communities, although this proportion is highest in Montreal (80%), despite low overall awareness, and Vancouver (78%). Notably, although awareness of

Aware of Indian residential schools  
Have you read or heard anything about Indian residential schools?



Impact of Indian residential schools\*

To what extent do you think that the challenges facing Aboriginal communities today are a result of Aboriginal peoples' experiences in residential schools?



\* Subsample: Among those aware of Indian residential schools

Indian residential schools is higher in Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg, residents of these cities are in fact among the least likely to believe these schools had a significant impact. Thunder Bay stands out as having both higher awareness of residential schools and among the strongest belief that these schools have played a role in the challenges facing Aboriginal communities (30% to a great extent).

Among those aware of residential schools, the perception that the challenges facing Aboriginal communities result, to at least some extent, from experiences in these schools is higher among women, younger (18-29) and older (60 and over) NA urban Canadians, and those without a high school diploma (81%), compared to those with a high school diploma or more education (73%).

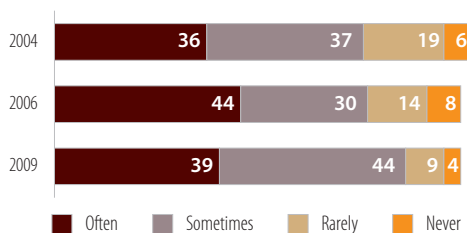
## Perceptions of discrimination

**NA urban Canadians clearly think Aboriginal people experience discrimination – and at least as much as other groups in Canadian society. Those who have greater contact with Aboriginal people are more convinced than others about the amount of discrimination this group faces.**

NA urban Canadians are almost unanimous in their belief that Aboriginal people are sometimes, if not often, the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today.

### Discrimination

Do you think Aboriginal people are often, sometimes, rarely or never the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today?



2006 data from Environics' FOCUS CANADA survey; 2004 data courtesy of Department of Canadian Heritage (omnibus questions placed on FOCUS CANADA); both based on communities of 100,000 or more

Four in ten (39%) NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people are discriminated against often, and an additional 44 percent believe that Aboriginal people experience discrimination sometimes. Only 13 percent believe that Aboriginal people rarely or never experience discrimination.

Historical context for these findings comes from surveys conducted by Environics Research Group in 2004 and 2006, focusing on the data among Canadians living in urban centres with populations of 100,000 or more.<sup>55</sup> The results suggest that NA urban Canadians are now less likely than in the past several years to say Aboriginal people rarely or never face discrimination, and more likely to perceive at least occasional discrimination against this population, which could reflect a better understanding of the experiences of Aboriginal people as a result of the media coverage surrounding the Canadian government's apology for Indian residential schools in 2008.

Large majorities in all cities and socio-demographic groups believe that Aboriginal people are the subject of discrimination at least occasionally. However, contact with Aboriginal people influences the extent to which such discrimination is perceived to exist. NA urban Canadians who often have contact with Aboriginal people (51%) are more likely than those with occasional or even less contact (36%) to think Aboriginal people often experience discrimination.

NA urban Canadians living in Thunder Bay (53%), Regina (52%) and Calgary (50%) are most likely to believe that Aboriginal people frequently face discrimination; those living in Toronto and Montreal are the most likely to say Aboriginal people rarely or never experience discrimination. Perceptions of frequent discrimination towards Aboriginal people are also more common among the most highly educated (47%) and among individuals born in Canada (42%), compared to those born in another country (32%).

Furthermore, majorities of NA urban Canadians think Aboriginal people are subject to the same, if not more, discrimination relative to other groups in Canadian society, such as Jews, Chinese, Blacks,

<sup>55</sup> According to the 2006 Census, there are 33 Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) that currently have populations of 100,000 or more, which include all 10 cities in the UAPS survey of NA urban Canadians.

Pakistanis or East Indians, and Muslims. One in three NA urban Canadians think Aboriginal people endure more discrimination than groups such as Jews (35%) and Chinese (34%), and one in four think they endure more discrimination than Blacks (25%). Some one in five think they endure more discrimination than groups such as Pakistanis or East Indians (18%), and Muslims (17%).

Generally speaking (but not in every case), the perception that Aboriginal people face more discrimination relative to these other groups is higher among men and NA urban Canadians with a university education. Those who pay a great deal of attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people, those in frequent contact with Aboriginal people and those who are aware of an Aboriginal community in their city (i.e., either a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community) are also more likely than others to say Aboriginal people experience greater discrimination than these other groups. By comparison, NA urban Canadians living in Toronto, Montreal and Halifax stand out as more likely than others to believe that Aboriginal people face less discrimination than most of these groups.

## Attitudes of Canadians and their governments

***NA urban Canadians are twice as likely to say the problems faced by Aboriginal people in Canada have largely been caused by the attitudes of other Canadians and the policies of government as by Aboriginal people themselves. These views have remained remarkably stable over the past 20 years.***

NA urban Canadians tend to believe that many of the problems facing Aboriginal people are largely due to external factors over which they have no control. A slim majority (52%) attribute the problems facing Aboriginal peoples to the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments, compared to one-quarter (24%) who say these are problems Aboriginal people have brought upon themselves, and 17 percent who say both are equally responsible.

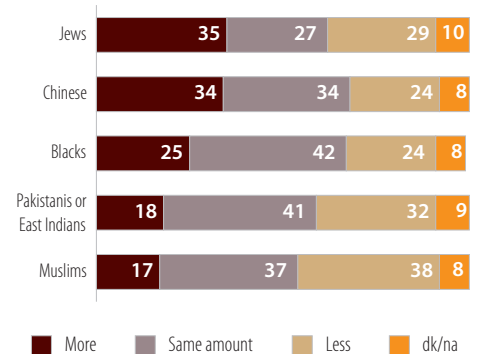
Public opinion on this issue has changed very little since Environics first asked this question of Canadians living in major urban centres almost 20 years ago.<sup>56</sup> Since 1990, the proportion who attribute the cause of Aboriginal peoples' problems to the attitudes of Canadians and policies of governments has consistently outweighed the proportion who attribute it to Aboriginal people themselves. This was the case even in 1997, following the release of the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), when urban Canadians were slightly *less* likely to place responsibility on public attitudes and government policies.

NA urban Canadians in Toronto (59%), Montreal (54%), Halifax (52%) and Vancouver (50%) are most likely to attribute problems faced by Aboriginal peoples to Canadian attitudes and government policies. Residents of Regina, Winnipeg and Saskatoon are divided (between citing Canadian attitudes and government policies, and Aboriginal people themselves).

NA urban Canadians without a post-secondary education are more likely than others to say Aboriginal people have mostly themselves to blame, while those with more education are more likely to divide responsibility equally between public attitudes and government policies, and Aboriginal people themselves.

## Discrimination against Aboriginals relative to other minorities

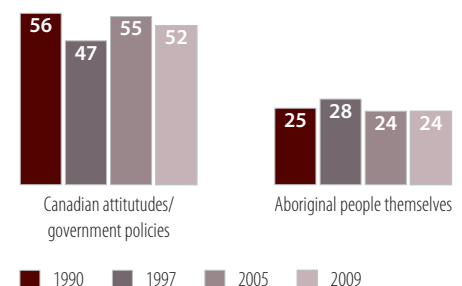
In Canada, do you think Aboriginal people are subject to more, less or about the same amount of discrimination as each of the following groups?



Legend: More (dark red), Same amount (grey), Less (gold), dk/na (orange)

## Responsibility for problems

In your opinion, have Aboriginal people in Canada largely caused their own problems or have the problems been caused primarily by the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments?



Legend: 1990 (dark red), 1997 (grey), 2005 (light grey), 2009 (lightest grey)

Data prior to 2009 from Environics' FOCUS CANADA survey (based on communities of 100,000 or more)

<sup>56</sup> Historical data is based on Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) with populations of 100,000 or more. According to the 2006 census, there are 33 such communities in Canada, which include all 10 cities in the UAPS survey of NA urban Canadians.

As might be expected, NA urban Canadians who pay greater attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people are more likely to attribute the cause of their problems to Canadian attitudes and government policies (56%) than are those who pay little or no attention (43%). This perspective is also more common among NA urban Canadians who believe Aboriginal people are often the subject of discrimination (62%).

## 4. Awareness and perceptions of an Aboriginal community in the city

### Awareness of an Aboriginal community in the city

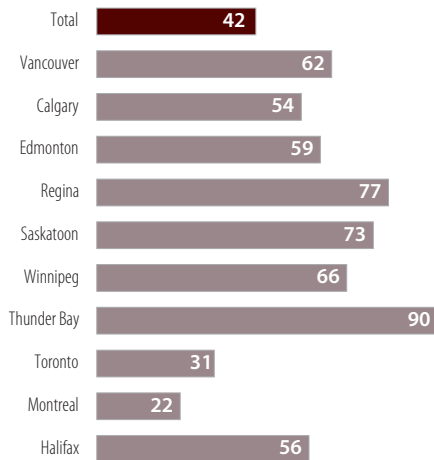
**Majorities of NA urban Canadians know Aboriginal people live in their city, but their awareness of an Aboriginal community varies widely by city.**

The *UAPS* non-Aboriginal survey asked NA urban Canadians how aware they are of Aboriginal people and communities in their city. Majorities know Aboriginal people live in their city, but they are less aware of an Aboriginal *community* (i.e., a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community) in their midst.

#### Aware of Aboriginal community in my city

Are you aware of an Aboriginal community in your city?

By community, I mean either a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community.



Three-quarters (77%) of NA urban Canadians say they know there are Aboriginal people living in their city. Excluding Toronto (73%) and Montreal (54%), the proportion of NA urban Canadians who say they know Aboriginal people live in their city rises to nine in ten or more.

As could be expected, NA urban Canadians in Toronto (31%) and Montreal (22%) are also least likely to be aware of an Aboriginal *community* in their city. In comparison, awareness of an Aboriginal community is highest among NA urban Canadians in Thunder Bay (90%), Regina (77%), and Saskatoon (73%). However, it is noteworthy that awareness of an Aboriginal community does vary considerably among NA urban Canadians in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations, ranging from over one-half (54%) of NA Canadians in Calgary to nine in ten in Thunder Bay.

What explains the variation among NA urban Canadians in their awareness of Aboriginal people and communities in their city? The most obvious explanation is that the relative size of Aboriginal populations is higher in western cities and Thunder Bay than in Toronto and Montreal, making a distinct Aboriginal group and/or community more apparent to NA urban Canadians in the first group of cities. However, this does not entirely explain the variation in levels of awareness among cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations. Other factors that may explain this variation include how Aboriginal people are dispersed across city neighbourhoods, the existence of urban reserves in some cities, and the nature and physical location of Aboriginal organizations in these cities.<sup>57</sup> For instance, among those aware of an Aboriginal community or Aboriginal people living in their city, awareness of any Aboriginal organizations which are run by and provide services for Aboriginal people ranges from a high of 75 percent in Thunder Bay to a low of only 11 percent in Montreal.

Awareness of an Aboriginal community is also higher among NA urban Canadians with a university education, those with household incomes of \$60,000 or more, and those who were born in Canada.

<sup>57</sup> Katherine A.H. Graham and Evelyn Peters, *Aboriginal Communities and Urban Sustainability*, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Discussion Paper F27, December 2002.



## Positive or negative presence

### ***NA urban Canadians are largely positive or ambivalent about the presence of urban Aboriginal peoples and communities in their city.***

How do NA urban Canadians perceive Aboriginal peoples and communities in their cities? When asked, NA urban Canadians aware of Aboriginal people and communities in their city have mixed views about whether their presence is positive or neutral, but few describe it as negative for their city.

More than four in ten (44%) think the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is positive for their city, and this opinion is particularly strong in Toronto (57%). An equal proportion (45%) say they are neutral about the presence of Aboriginal peoples and communities in their city. Only one in ten (9%) view Aboriginal peoples and communities as a negative presence. However, a negative viewpoint is notably more evident in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations, especially Regina (34%), but also Winnipeg (24%), Saskatoon (19%), Thunder Bay (16%) and Edmonton (15%).

These perceptions are influenced by amount of contact with Aboriginal people and awareness of an Aboriginal community: positive and negative assessments are higher among those in frequent contact with Aboriginal people and those who know of an Aboriginal community in their city (suggesting they are more aware of both the benefits and the challenges for their community). Those who only occasionally, rarely or never have contact with Aboriginal people, and those who know Aboriginal people live in their city (but are unaware of a specific community) are more likely to consider the impact on their city to be neutral.

The perception that the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is neutral for their city is higher among men and younger NA urban Canadians (18-29). Positive impressions are stronger among women, those aged 30 or older, and Canadians who were born outside of Canada.

## Contributions and challenges

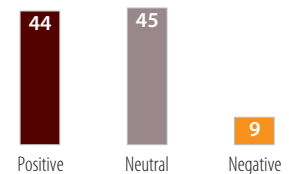
### ***NA urban Canadians who regard Aboriginal people and communities in their city positively typically see them as a positive and vibrant influence on urban artistic and cultural communities. The challenge of crime and gang violence is the most common reason NA urban Canadians view Aboriginal people and communities negatively.***

**REASONS FOR POSITIVE VIEWS.** Among those NA urban Canadians who think the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is positive for their city, in what ways do they think Aboriginal people contribute to their city? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), they are most likely to think Aboriginal peoples and communities contribute in the following main ways:

- **Enrich urban art and culture.** More than one-third (36%) believe Aboriginal people and communities make great contributions to the artistic and cultural life of their city. University graduates are most likely to think Aboriginal people and communities contribute in this way.
- **Add cultural diversity.** Three in ten (30%) believe Aboriginal people and communities add to the general cultural mosaic of their city. This perception increases with education and household income, and is more common among those under 60 years of age.
- **Stimulate city economies.** More than one in ten (13%) note the economic contributions Aboriginal people and communities make to their cities as employees and employers of local businesses. Residents of Saskatoon (33%), Regina (29%), Calgary (27%) and Winnipeg (26%) are twice as likely as average to think Aboriginal people and communities contribute to their city in this way.

### Presence of Aboriginal people and communities\*

Do you think that this Aboriginal community/presence of Aboriginal people is positive, neutral or negative for your city?



\* Subsample: Those who are aware of either an Aboriginal community or Aboriginal people in their city.

- **Make equal contributions.** The fourth main way NA urban Canadians (13%) think Aboriginal people and communities contribute to the city is that they, like anyone else regardless of ethnic or cultural group, are citizens who make an equal contribution to life in their city.

Residents of Thunder Bay are also more likely than others to believe that Aboriginal people and communities contribute by participating in or running Aboriginal outreach or community programs, or by acting as role models (23%); residents are as likely to mention this as they are to note the contributions made to urban art and culture (23%).

**REASONS FOR NEGATIVE VIEWS.** The small proportion of NA urban Canadians who think the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is negative for their city are most likely to associate Aboriginal people and communities with the challenge of increasing crime and gang violence in their cities (29%). Other challenges for their city that individuals relate to the presence of Aboriginal people or communities are poverty and homelessness (17%), and substance abuse (16%). A wide range of other challenges are identified, but none by more than six percent of those asked, and one in five (20%) cannot elaborate on why they feel the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is negative (sample sizes are too small to permit meaningful analysis of differences between groups of NA urban Canadians).

## 5. What informs NA urban Canadians' views of Aboriginal people?

### Attention to news and issues

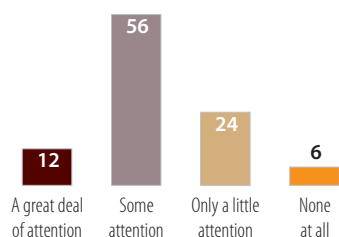
**Majorities of NA urban Canadians report paying some attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people, although few take a lot of notice of information related to this topic.**

To what extent do NA urban Canadians pay attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people? Majorities say they pay at least some attention to this topic, although very few pay a great deal of attention. Seven in ten NA urban Canadians say they pay a great deal (12%) or some (56%) attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people. One-quarter (24%) pay only a little attention, while six percent say they take no notice at all.

The proportions of NA urban Canadians who pay at least some attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people are fairly consistent across cities, with the exception of Thunder Bay, where residents are most likely to notice news and issues about this topic (82%), and Edmonton, where residents are least likely to do so (58%).

Importantly, attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people is generally linked to greater awareness of Aboriginal people and communities, and more positive impressions of Aboriginal people generally, and of Aboriginal people and communities in their city. However, no conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between news exposure and views of Aboriginal people from these findings, since it may be that those who are most positive about Aboriginal people are more likely to seek out or at least make note of information about this population.

Attention to news and issues  
How much attention do you generally pay to news and issues about Aboriginal people? Would you say you pay...?



## Sources of learning

**NA urban Canadians are most likely to have learned what they know about Aboriginal people and their culture through media, television and newspapers, at school or through knowing an Aboriginal person.**

Media, television and newspapers are NA urban Canadians' main source of information about Aboriginal people and their culture, although personal contact with Aboriginal people is a close second.

When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), five in ten (51%) NA urban Canadians say they have learned what they know about Aboriginal people and their culture from media, television and newspapers. A similar proportion (48%) indicate they have learned about Aboriginal people and culture through personal contact, whether it be casual contact with Aboriginal people (28%), or through Aboriginal friends, neighbours or co-workers (27%). Another common source is school (39%), while smaller proportions have learned what they know from books (20%), or family and friends (17%).

Torontonians (61%) are most likely to say they have learned about Aboriginal peoples and their culture through media sources. In contrast, contact and relationships with Aboriginal people are more common sources of learning among NA urban Canadians in Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg and Thunder Bay. For example, in Thunder Bay, NA urban Canadians are almost twice as likely (50%) as NA urban Canadians in Halifax (29%), Montreal (23%) and Toronto (20%) to learn about Aboriginal peoples and their culture through Aboriginal friends, neighbours and co-workers.

Media, television and newspapers are more popular sources of information for NA urban Canadians aged 30 and older. Younger NA urban Canadians, as well as those with more education and higher household incomes, are more likely than others to say they learned what they know about Aboriginal people and their culture in school. Personal contact and schools are also more common sources of this type of learning for individuals born in Canada, while new Canadians are more apt to say they learned what they know about Aboriginal people and culture from books.

## Contact with Aboriginal people

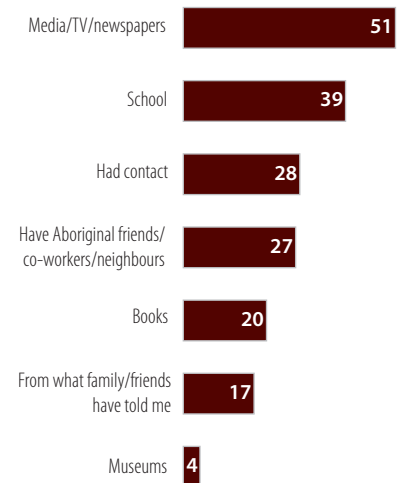
**Relatively few NA urban Canadians have regular contact with Aboriginal people, although this is understandably more common in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations.**

Few NA urban Canadians are in regular contact with Aboriginal people in their daily lives. One in five (20%) NA urban Canadians say they encounter Aboriginal people often, while another third (32%) do so occasionally. Almost half of NA urban Canadians are rarely (25%) or never (22%) in contact with Aboriginal people.

It is not surprising that NA urban Canadians are more likely to encounter Aboriginal people in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations. Frequent contact with Aboriginal people is notably higher among NA urban Canadians living in Thunder Bay (51%), Regina (48%), Saskatoon (48%), Winnipeg (45%) and Edmonton (39%). Residents of Montreal (65%) and Toronto (55%) are most likely to say they rarely or never encounter Aboriginal people; this lack of contact is also higher in Halifax (41%), Vancouver (40%) and Calgary (33%) than in the other western cities and Thunder Bay.

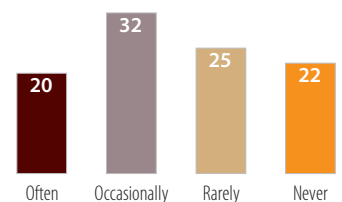
### Sources of learning (top mentions)

From where or from whom have you learned what you know about Aboriginal people and their culture?



### Contact with Aboriginal people

Do you personally have contact with Aboriginal people often, occasionally, rarely or never?



Frequent contact with Aboriginal people is more common among NA urban Canadians under 60 years of age and those who are born in Canada. NA urban Canadians aged 60 and older, and those born outside Canada are more likely to say they never have such contact, as are those without a post-secondary education and those in the lowest income bracket.

How does contact influence NA urban Canadians' opinions and perceptions of Aboriginal peoples? The most notable differences are as follows:

- Positive *and* negative assessments of urban Aboriginal peoples and communities are higher among those in frequent contact with Aboriginal people, suggesting they are more aware of both the benefits and the challenges of the urban Aboriginal presence for their community. Further evidence of this greater awareness is that individuals with the least contact are also the least able to identify any important issues facing Aboriginal people living in cities.
- Although it remains a minority view, NA urban Canadians in frequent contact with Aboriginal peoples are more likely to believe that Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges, and less likely to consider Aboriginal peoples as just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada.
- NA urban Canadians who are often in contact with Aboriginal peoples perceive more frequent discrimination against them, both overall and in comparison to other groups in Canadian society, such as Jews, Chinese, Blacks, Pakistanis or East Indians, and Muslims.

## Aboriginal friends, neighbours and co-workers

***Few NA urban Canadians know Aboriginal people as close friends, neighbours and co-workers, although they display considerable interest in knowing more of them.***

Aside from casual contact, how many NA urban Canadians know Aboriginal people, either as close friends, neighbours or co-workers? Among NA urban Canadians who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in their city, most NA urban Canadians know few or no Aboriginal people as close friends (87%), co-workers (84% among those who are currently employed) or even neighbours (71%).

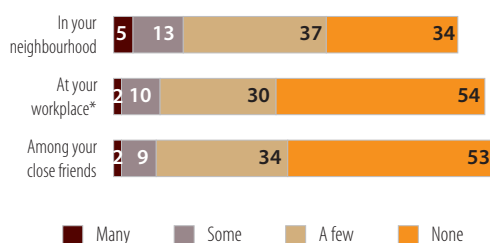
As could be expected, the proportions of NA urban Canadians who have at least some Aboriginal people as neighbours, close friends and co-workers is higher in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations. Thus, NA urban Canadians in Thunder Bay, Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg are, on average, more than twice as likely as other NA urban Canadians to say they have at least some neighbours (38%) who are Aboriginal. Having Aboriginal co-workers is also more common in these four cities, as well as Edmonton, while having close Aboriginal friends is a more common occurrence in Regina, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay than elsewhere.

NA urban Canadians with more education and higher household incomes are less likely than others to have at least some Aboriginal neighbours or friends. Interestingly, individuals born in Canada are twice as likely as new Canadians to have many or some Aboriginal neighbours.

In most cases, NA urban Canadians who have many Aboriginal friends, neighbours or co-workers do not express differing perspectives about Aboriginal peoples. However, there are two exceptions. This group is more likely than others to have heard of Indian residential schools and to believe that these schools have contributed to a great extent to the current challenges faced by Aboriginal communities. They are also more likely than others to be optimistic about the direction in which relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are heading.

### Numbers of Aboriginal people

How many of your neighbours/co-workers/friends are Aboriginal? Many/some/a few, or none?



\* Excludes those who do not work

When asked if they have any interest in having more Aboriginal friends, six in ten (60%) NA urban Canadians who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in their city say they do, especially those in Montreal (69%), Toronto (67%) and Halifax (62%) – the same cities where NA urban Canadians are most likely to currently have no Aboriginal people as close friends.

Significant minorities of NA urban Canadians are more ambivalent about whether or not they want more Aboriginal friends. Three in ten (32%) say “it depends” or are uncertain, rising to four in ten or more NA urban Canadians in Regina (44%), Thunder Bay (43%) and Calgary (40%). Only one in ten (9%) have no interest in more Aboriginal friends.

## Exposure to Aboriginal culture

### **Most NA urban Canadians have had some exposure to Aboriginal people and culture at one time, most likely through movies or TV shows about Aboriginal people.**

The survey explored the exposure that NA urban Canadians have had to Aboriginal culture. NA urban Canadians were asked how recently, if ever, they had participated in six different activities that can provide insight into Aboriginal people and their culture. Overall, seven in ten (71%) have been exposed to Aboriginal culture in at least one of these ways in the past 12 months, and more than nine in ten (94%) have ever had such exposure.

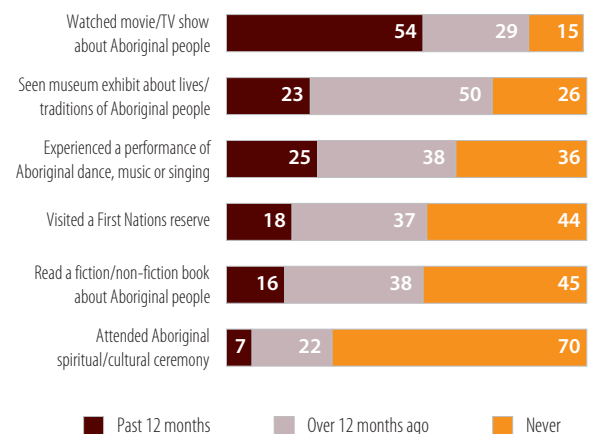
Movies or TV shows about Aboriginal people are by far the most common ways in which NA urban Canadians have been exposed to Aboriginal culture, while only a minority have had the opportunity to experience a ceremony that encompasses the spiritual or cultural traditions of this population. More than eight in ten (83%) say they have **watched a movie or TV show about Aboriginal people** in the past 12 months (54%) or over 12 months ago (29%), while only 15 percent say they have never done so. Most NA urban Canadians have also seen a **museum exhibit about the lives and traditions of Aboriginal people** at some point (73% ever), although they are much less likely to have done so in the past year (23%). Slightly fewer NA urban Canadians say they have **experienced a performance of Aboriginal dance, music or singing** (63% ever; 25% in past 12 months), **visited a First Nations reserve** (55% ever; 18% in past 12 months), or **read a fiction or non-fiction book about Aboriginal people** (54% ever; 16% in past 12 months). NA urban Canadians are least likely to have **attended an Aboriginal spiritual or cultural ceremony** (29% ever; 7% in past 12 months).

Eight in ten or more NA urban Canadians in each of the 10 cities say they have ever watched a movie or TV show about Aboriginal people. In contrast, participation in the other five types of activities varies considerably by city, and is generally lower in cities with smaller relative Aboriginal populations, particularly Montreal. For example, NA urban Canadians living in Montreal are much less likely than others to have seen a museum exhibit about Aboriginal lives and traditions (63% ever), to have read a book about Aboriginal people (41%), or to have experienced a dance, music or singing performance (40%). Torontonians are least likely to have visited a First Nations reserve (46%), and are also among the least likely to have attended an Aboriginal spiritual or cultural ceremony (26%), together with residents of Halifax (20%) and Montreal (13%).

Thunder Bay residents are most likely of all NA urban Canadians to have recently visited (in the past 12 months) a First Nations reserve (46%), and to have recently attended an Aboriginal spiritual or cultural

### Participation in cultural activities

Please tell me if you have done each of the [following activities] in the past 12 months, over 12 months ago or never.



ceremony (21%), which is likely due at least in part to the existence of a First Nations reserve close to the city of Thunder Bay. Residents of Regina are more likely than others to say they have seen a museum exhibit about the lives and traditions of Aboriginal people in the past year (45%).

Participation in all six of these activities (ever) is least common among those without a high school diploma and those in the lowest income bracket, and increases with education and income. Across all six activities, participation is consistently lower among those who have been in Canada for less than 10 years, although participation among those who have been in Canada for 10 or more years either approaches or is equal to that for people born in Canada.

Exposure to these activities also varies with age, although not in a consistent manner. NA urban Canadians aged 60 or older are less likely than others to have watched a movie or TV show (72%) or to have read a book (45%) about Aboriginal people. The youngest group of NA urban Canadians (18-29) is less likely than others to have visited a First Nations reserve (42%), or experienced a performance of Aboriginal dance, music or singing (56%). Both the youngest and oldest NA urban Canadians are less likely than those aged 30 to 59 to have seen a museum exhibit about Aboriginal lives and traditions.

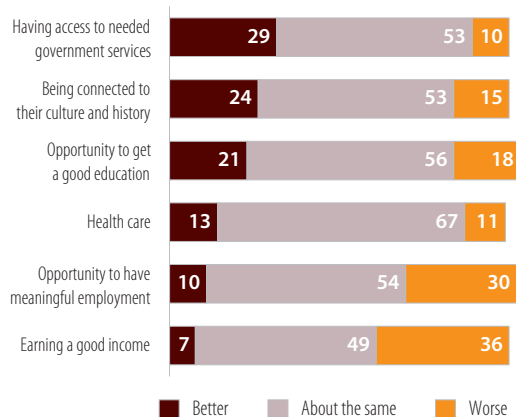
## 6. Perceptions of urban opportunity and services

### Perceptions of opportunities

***There is a significant gap between Aboriginal peoples' socio-economic reality and the perceptions of NA urban Canadians. Majorities of NA urban Canadians feel Aboriginal people have at least the same, if not better, socio-economic and other opportunities as non-Aboriginal people in their city.***

#### Situation of Aboriginal people in cities

Do you think the situation of Aboriginal people in your city is better, worse, or about the same as that of non-Aboriginal people in each of the following ways?



Notwithstanding the socio-economic improvements achieved by Aboriginal people in the past two decades, the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people's quality of life is narrowing slowly. Aboriginal people continue to experience higher unemployment rates, lower incomes and lower educational attainment compared to non-Aboriginal people. Yet, there is a significant gap between this reality and the perceptions of NA urban Canadians.

The *UAPS* non-Aboriginal survey asked NA urban Canadians to assess whether or not the situation of Aboriginal people living in their city is better, worse or about the same as non-Aboriginal people on six dimensions: access to government services, commitment to their culture and history, opportunity to get a good education, health care, opportunity to have meaningful employment, and earning a good income.

Majorities of NA urban Canadians think the situation of Aboriginal people in their city is the same as or even better than that of non-Aboriginal people, across all six areas. NA urban Canadians are most likely to think that Aboriginal people have the same

(53%) or better (29%) **access to needed government services**. Slightly fewer NA urban Canadians, albeit still large majorities, think that the **connection to their culture and history** (24% better and 53% same) and the **opportunity to get a good education** (21% better and 56% same) is at least as good among Aboriginal people as non-Aboriginal people. NA urban Canadians are somewhat less likely to think Aboriginal people have better **health care** (13%), and more likely to think their experience with health care services is similar to that of non-Aboriginal people (67%).

NA urban Canadians are least likely to think Aboriginal people in their city have the same or better employment and income opportunities as non-Aboriginal people. Nonetheless, more than six in ten think Aboriginal people have at least as good an **opportunity to have meaningful employment** as non-Aboriginal people (10% better and 54% the same), and more than one in two say the same about the **opportunity to earn a good income** (7% better and 49% the same). Three in ten or more NA urban Canadians think the situation of Aboriginal people is in fact worse when it comes to employment (30%) or income (36%) opportunities.

Perceptions of the situation of Aboriginal people in relation to non-Aboriginal people vary across the population of NA urban Canadians as follows:

- The proportion of NA urban Canadians who say that Aboriginal people have better access to government services, and better educational and employment opportunities is generally higher in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations, including Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, Regina and Saskatoon.
- Although a minority opinion, the perception that Aboriginal people have a worse connection to their culture and history is higher in Montreal (22%) and Toronto (19%), while the perception that they experience worse health care is higher in Calgary (17%) and Vancouver (16%). The view that the situation of Aboriginal people is worse when it comes to earning a good income is highest in Toronto (41%), Calgary (41%), Vancouver (40%) and Winnipeg (39%).
- NA urban Canadians with a university degree are more likely than others to think that Aboriginal people have poorer educational, employment and income opportunities, and poorer health care, than non-Aboriginal people.
- The proportions of NA urban Canadians who say that Aboriginal people have better access to government services, a better connection to their culture and history, better educational opportunities, and better health care are all higher among those who report more frequent contact with Aboriginal people.
- Those who pay greater attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people are more likely than others to think that the situation of Aboriginal people is worse than that of non-Aboriginal people in most areas, with the exception of having a connection to their culture and history (where opinions are similar regardless of level of attention to this topic).
- Views that health care, access to government services, and employment and income opportunities are worse for Aboriginal people are also more common among those aware of an Aboriginal community in their city (i.e., either a physical area or neighbourhood, or a social community). However, this group is also more likely than others to think that Aboriginal people have a better connection to their culture and history than do non-Aboriginal people.

## Impressions of services provided to urban Aboriginal peoples

***NA urban Canadians tend to give services responding to the needs Aboriginal people in their city a good grade, but are more divided and unsure about the services provided to urban Aboriginal peoples by social housing programs and the child welfare system.***

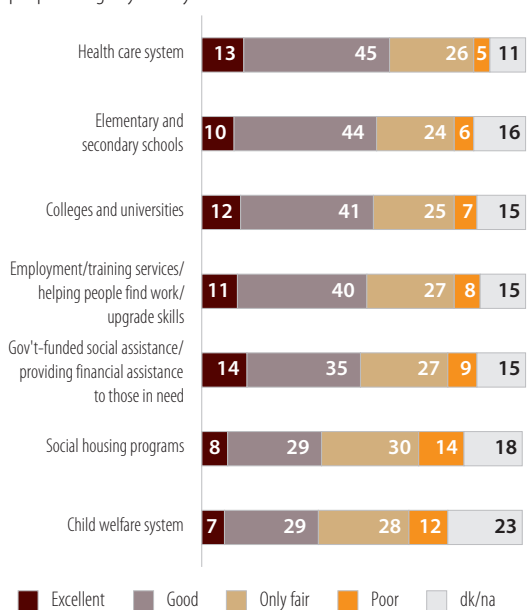
NA urban Canadians were asked to rate how well various services are responding to the needs of Aboriginal people living in their city: the health care system, elementary and secondary schools, colleges

and universities, employment and training services (to help people find work or upgrade their skills), social assistance programs (funded by government, that provide financial assistance to people in need), social housing programs (to help people find housing) and, finally, the child welfare system (which could involve contact with social workers, group or foster care, and adoption services).

In most cases, NA urban Canadians are more likely to rate these services as doing a good or excellent job than only a fair or poor one. The two exceptions are social housing programs and the child welfare system: those who say these services do a fair-to-poor job of responding to Aboriginal people's needs slightly outweigh the proportion who say they do a good-to-excellent job.

## Impressions of services

Are each of the following services doing an excellent, good, only fair or poor job at responding to the needs of Aboriginal people living in your city?



Of the seven services, NA urban Canadians are most likely to think the **health care system** (58%) does a good to excellent job of responding to the needs of Aboriginal people in their city. Close to or just over half each say the same about **elementary and secondary schools** (54%), **colleges and universities** (53%), **employment and training services** (51%), and **social assistance programs** (49%). In each of these cases, between three and four in ten NA urban Canadians say these services are doing an only fair to poor job.

Views are more divided when it comes to social housing programs and the child welfare system. More than one-third (37%) of NA urban Canadians think **social housing programs** do at least a good job of responding to the needs of Aboriginal people in their city, while a slightly greater proportion (44%) think they do only a fair or poor job. Similarly, 36 percent of NA urban Canadians think the **child welfare system** does a good or excellent job, compared to four in ten (40%) who say they do a fair-to-poor job. Also of note is that just over two in ten (23%) NA urban Canadians are unable to offer an opinion on the performance of the child welfare system in relation to Aboriginal people, higher than any of the other six services.

NA urban Canadians' perceptions of how well these services respond to the needs of Aboriginal people vary by city. Generally speaking, those living in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations are more likely than others to have confidence in the job their city is doing. Views that the health care system, and elementary and secondary schools do a good or excellent job responding to Aboriginal people's needs are more common in Thunder Bay, Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg (and in the case of health care, also in Edmonton). NA urban Canadians in Regina, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay are more likely than others to think that colleges and universities do a good or excellent job, while those in Regina and Saskatoon are also more likely to say the same of employment and training centres. Thunder Bay stands out as having a much higher proportion who believe that social housing programs (60%) and the child welfare system (57%) in their city are doing a good-to-excellent job responding to the needs of Aboriginal people. Finally, residents of Vancouver are most likely to give poor ratings to several areas, including the health care system, employment and training services, social assistance programs and social housing programs.

There are relatively few differences by socio-demographic factors in views of the service quality provided to Aboriginal people. The perception that social assistance programs do an excellent or good job responding to Aboriginal people's needs is more common among NA urban Canadians aged 30 to 59, while the view that they do only a fair to poor job in this regard is higher among those aged 18 to 29 (those aged 60 or older are more apt than others to say they do not know).



## Aboriginal people and the justice system

**Six in ten NA urban Canadians believe Canada's justice system treats Aboriginal people fairly. Accordingly, only minorities think the criminal justice system should incorporate a different approach for Aboriginal people.**

**PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS.** Some six in ten NA urban Canadians (58%) believe that Aboriginal people who come in contact with Canada's justice system are fairly treated. This view is most widespread in Regina and Saskatoon, as well as among men and younger Canadians (under 45 years of age), and newer Canadians (i.e., those in Canada for less than 10 years). As well, this view is much more common among NA urban Canadians who believe Aboriginal people are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada's multicultural society (69%).

**SUPPORT FOR AN ALTERNATE APPROACH.** In light of these views, it is not surprising that a minority (38%) of NA urban Canadians agree with the idea that the criminal justice system should incorporate a different approach for Aboriginal people – one that respects Aboriginal concepts of justice, Aboriginal laws and alternatives to punishment such as reconciliation and restoration. Indeed, more than one in two (54%) think an alternate approach to justice for Aboriginal people is a bad idea (8% do not voice an opinion).

Opinions about the value of an alternate approach are linked to perceptions about the fairness of treatment that Aboriginal people receive in the current mainstream justice system. The proportion of NA urban Canadians who say a different approach to justice is a good idea is highest among those who think Aboriginal people are unfairly treated (57%) – although even three in ten of those who believe Aboriginal people are *fairly* treated support this idea (64% say it is a bad idea). Support grows even further to almost two-thirds (65%) of those who think Aboriginal people are unfairly treated *and* that they have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada.

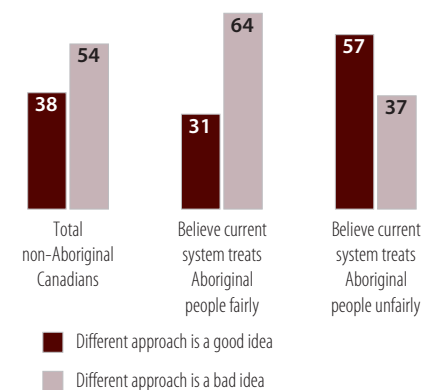
Notably, opposition to this idea increases with frequency of contact with Aboriginal people (from 48% of those who are rarely or never in contact to 63% who are often in contact). This is at least partly explained by the fact that NA urban Canadians in frequent contact with Aboriginal people are more likely to reject the notion of special treatment or privilege for Aboriginal people, and to consider them just like other cultural or ethnic groups in this country.

Opposition to a different approach to justice for Aboriginal people outweighs support in almost all cities, and is particularly strong in Edmonton (66% think it is a bad idea). The exception is Montreal, where opinion on this issue is almost equally divided (45% oppose and 47% support). University graduates, and those who pay the most attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people are more likely than others to support this idea.

NA urban Canadians who *support* the idea of a different approach to justice for Aboriginal people do so because they believe:

- Aboriginal people have a unique culture and history that requires that they be judged within their own value system and by their peers (43%); and
- The current justice system is not working for Aboriginal people, and an approach is needed that focuses on rehabilitation and healing rather than punishment (22%).

Support for different approach to justice for Aboriginal people, by perceptions of fairness



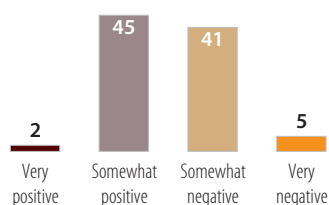
In contrast, eight in ten (80%) NA urban Canadians *oppose* a different approach to justice for Aboriginal people because they do not believe that any one group should receive preferential treatment, and that treating everyone equally avoids discrimination.

In the Prairie cities, particularly Edmonton and Calgary, there is also a sense that previous attempts to pursue alternate approaches have not been effective. Unique to Toronto, some (12%) express concerns that other cultural groups will demand special considerations when it comes to the justice system.

## 7. Relations with Aboriginal people and the future

### Current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people

Would you describe the current relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada today as very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative or very negative?



### Perceptions of current relations

***NA urban Canadians clearly divide into two ‘camps’ of NA urban Canadian world views, one more negative and the other more positive on the current state of relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people.***

Communities and individuals have made much effort in the past two decades to build bridges between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Still, NA urban Canadians are divided over the state of current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people today. Few NA urban Canadians have extreme perceptions of current relations (i.e., say they are very positive or very negative), but similar proportions think current relations are either somewhat positive (45%) or somewhat negative (41%).

Perceptions of current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people vary across cities, likely influenced by the relative size of the Aboriginal population in each city. The view that current relations are negative is the majority opinion in Edmonton (62%), Calgary (55%), Winnipeg (55%), Thunder Bay (55%) and Regina (54%). In contrast, NA urban Canadians in Vancouver, Halifax and Toronto are more likely to be optimistic than pessimistic about their relationship with Aboriginal people. Montrealers and residents of Saskatoon are divided between the two viewpoints.

The view that current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is negative is more common among NA urban Canadians in the highest income bracket and those who were born in Canada. These perceptions are not influenced by amount of contact with Aboriginal people, but they are related to the amount of discrimination NA urban Canadians believe Aboriginal people experience. Those who believe Aboriginal people are often subject to discrimination are more likely to believe current relations are negative (61% vs. 42% of those who believe Aboriginal people experience discrimination less often).

## Perceptions of change

### **NA urban Canadians are more optimistic about the direction of their relationship with Aboriginal peoples than in 2005, but only three in ten think relations are improving.**

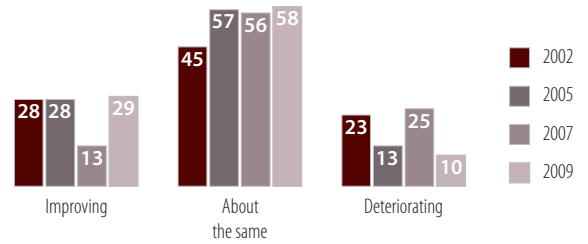
How do NA urban Canadians view the evolution of their relationship with Aboriginal peoples? Currently, a majority (58%) of NA urban Canadians think the relationship is staying the same, while three in ten (29%) think relations are improving and 10 percent think they are deteriorating. NA urban Canadians are more optimistic about relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people than they were two years ago, in the wake of high-profile protest actions (e.g., a blockade of the CN rail line near Deseronto, the occupation of disputed lands in Caledonia) and around the time that the Assembly of First Nations called for a National Day of Action (June 29, 2007). Perceptions of how relations are developing have rebounded from that low point and are now close to what they were in 2005.<sup>58</sup>

Perceptions about current relations influence NA urban Canadians' views of how these relations are changing (or not). Most NA urban Canadians who say the current relationship is negative don't see this changing (66%), with the remainder split between whether it is improving (16%) or becoming even worse (17%). Optimism is higher among those who say the current relationship is positive (42% say relations are improving even further).

Despite the fact that they are generally more negative than positive about the state of current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, NA urban Canadians living in Regina (41%) and Saskatoon (40%) are among the most optimistic that these relations are improving, together with residents of Vancouver (41%). Optimism is also more common among NA urban Canadians in the lowest income bracket, and those who pay at least some attention to news and issues about Aboriginal people. The perception that relations are deteriorating is higher in Thunder Bay (20%) than elsewhere.

### Changing relations

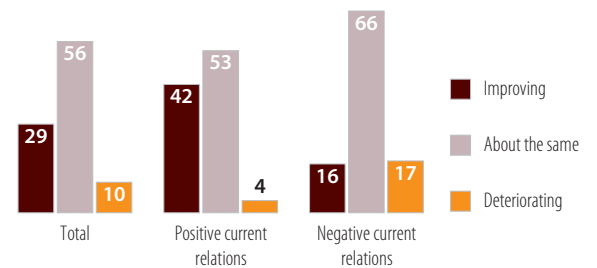
Do you think relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada are improving, deteriorating or staying about the same?



Data prior to 2009 from Environics' FOCUS CANADA survey (based on communities of 100,000 or more).

### Changing relations

Do you think relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada are improving, deteriorating or staying about the same?



<sup>58</sup> Historical data is based on Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) with populations of 100,000 or more. According to the 2006 census, there are 33 such communities in Canada, which include all 10 cities in the UAPS survey of NA urban Canadians.

**Reasons why NA urban Canadians think current relations are improving:**

*I see it in terms of participation in the workforce; more interactions between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. There used to be two solitudes.*

*Because I see more and more a mix of people together, and you see them at more places than you did before, which didn't happen years ago.*

*They are really working hard at getting over what's been done to them. Lots of them are great people and they have been through tough times, and they are coming out of it.*

*They are getting better at communicating their position to the larger society. I also think the present government has taken steps to improving the relationship.*

*People have become educated and informed about Aboriginal people in the news, and that now there is more social interaction and communication between the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people. Better communication.*

*I think that more people are having more exposure to native people and realizing the similarities.*

**REASONS FOR IMPROVING RELATIONS.** Among NA urban Canadians who believe that the relationship between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people is *improving*, what do they think has brought about this change? Most believe it is due to one of two reasons: growing contact and dialogue between the two groups (25%), or greater acceptance by NA urban Canadians of different cultures and values (22%). Beyond these two reasons, some in this group believe that non-Aboriginal people now have a better understanding of Aboriginal people, in terms of the issues they face (10%), but also due to positive media exposure (9%). Others give credit for better relations to Aboriginal people, because they are seen to be better educated than in the past (10%), have more employment opportunities (4%) or are more self-sufficient (4%). Relatively few identify land claim settlements (7%) or the federal government's apology for residential schools (6%) as reasons for improved relations.

Some of NA urban Canadians' reasons why current relations are improving are presented in the sidebar on this page.

**Reasons for improving relations (top mentions)\***

Do you think relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada are improving, deteriorating or staying about the same? Why do you say that?

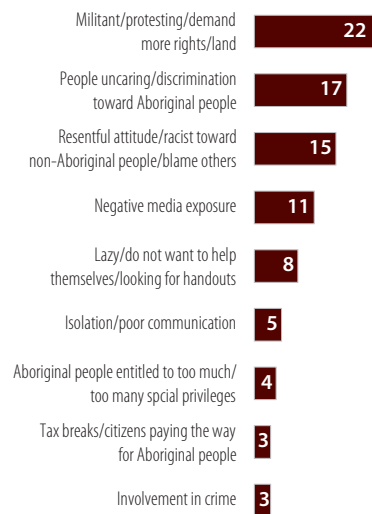


\* SUsample: Those who think relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people are improving.

**REASONS FOR DETERIORATING RELATIONS.** Among urban Canadians who believe that the relationship between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people is *deteriorating*, what do they think are the reasons for this? Most believe that Aboriginal protests and demands for rights or land (22%, representing 2% of all NA urban Canadians) are harming relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. Some in this group blame uncaring or discriminatory attitudes of non-Aboriginal Canadians (17%), or negative media exposure (11%). Others hold Aboriginal people responsible due to what they see as dismissive attitudes towards non-Aboriginal people (15%), laziness or lack of initiative (8%), or involvement in crime (3%). Relatively few say that existing privileges (4%) or tax breaks (3%) to which Aboriginal people are entitled have led to poorer relations.

### Reasons for deteriorating relations (top mentions)\*

Do you think relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada are improving, deteriorating or staying about the same? Why do you say that?



\* SUsample: Those who think relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people are deteriorating.

### Reasons why NA urban Canadians think current relations are deteriorating:

*Because of the way they are going about things, like the blockade in Caledonia and taking people's cottages in the beaches up north.*

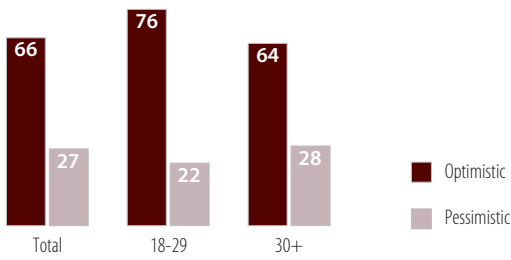
*Aboriginal people are being discriminated against in the job market, in good housing areas.*

*Instead of defending Aboriginal people, they get perceived as uneducated and violent.*

*It seems like the issues, such as residential schools, they seem to bring it forward as an excuse, blaming someone else for their problems.*

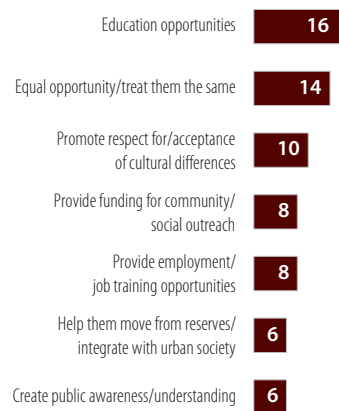
## Views on future quality of life, by age

Looking to the future, are you optimistic or pessimistic that the quality of life for Aboriginal people in your city will improve to the same level as non-Aboriginal people in the next generation?



## How to ensure a better quality of life (top 7 mentions)

What do you think is the most important way your city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people?



## Future quality of life

**Majorities of NA urban Canadians, across cities, are optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life will approach the rest of the population's in the next generation.**

Looking to the future, what do NA urban Canadians foresee for the quality of life of Aboriginal people in their city? NA urban Canadians, especially younger ones, are optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life in the city will improve to the same level as non-Aboriginal people in the next generation. Two-thirds (66%) of NA urban Canadians are optimistic about such progress, and this sentiment rises to three-quarters (76%) of those aged 18 to 29. Only one-quarter (27%) are pessimistic about the future quality of life for Aboriginal people in their city. Notably, the degree of optimism about Aboriginal peoples' future quality of life is remarkably similar in all cities.

How do NA urban Canadians think their cities can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), NA urban Canadians express a range of approaches, but most think greater educational opportunities (16%) or treating Aboriginal people the same as non-Aboriginal people (14%) to be the most important ways their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people. NA urban Canadians also think promoting respect for and acceptance of Aboriginal cultural differences (10%), providing funding for community and social outreach (8%), and providing employment and job training opportunities (8%) would contribute to a better quality of life for Aboriginal people in the future.

Finally, smaller proportions think the most important way their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people is to help them move away from reserves and further integrate into urban society (6%), and for cities to create greater public awareness and understanding of their situation (6%). One-quarter (25%) of NA urban Canadians cannot say what they think is the most important way their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal people.

## 8. The big picture: NA urban Canadians' views of Aboriginal people

In this section of the chapter, results of individual survey questions are reported for NA urban Canadians overall and, where relevant, socio-demographic differences are described. However, when there is a great deal of information available, there is always the danger of missing "the forest for the trees." In other words, the overall picture of what is going on among NA urban Canadians in terms of their attitudes towards Aboriginal people can be somewhat elusive when there are so many individual questions and answers to consider. In order to achieve this overall picture, the examination of the survey results included another level of analysis that involved an in-depth look at the survey items to uncover broad viewpoints – or segments – among NA urban Canadians.

Specifically, this in-depth look involved determining if there are patterns of views among NA urban Canadians that run deeper than their answers to specific questions. To determine this, a segmentation of the data was performed. The goal of the segmentation was to find natural clusters among NA urban Canadians based on their overall attitudes toward Aboriginal culture, responsibility and contribution to Canadian society in order to encapsulate NA urban Canadians' "world views" of Aboriginal people.

An analysis of a large number of questions posed in the UAPS survey reveals four distinct “world views” of Aboriginal people among non-Aboriginal urban Canadians:

**Dismissive Naysayers (24%)**

*Tend to view Aboriginal peoples and communities negatively, i.e., entitled and isolated from Canadian society.*



**Cultural Romantics (45%)**

*Idealistic and optimistic, they have a strong belief in Aboriginal peoples' artistic and cultural contributions.*



**Inattentive Skeptics (14%)**

*Uninformed and unaware, they typically think Aboriginal peoples are no different from other Canadians.*



**Connected Advocates (17%)**

*High level of contact and strong belief that Aboriginal peoples often experience discrimination.*



- **Dismissive Naysayers** are the polar opposite of Connected Advocates. They are most likely among NA urban Canadians to possess a negative outlook towards Aboriginal peoples, namely that Aboriginal people are entitled, isolated from broader Canadian society by their own volition, and largely the cause of their own problems. Nonetheless, Dismissive Naysayers hold some views that are similar to those of Connected Advocates, such as viewing current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people negatively. However, they arrive at these conclusions from very different perspectives. Dismissive Naysayers are a larger proportion of the NA urban Canadian population in western cities (Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg), Thunder Bay and Montreal. Overall, they are the second largest group (24%) of NA urban Canadians.
- **Inattentive Skeptics** are least able to identify an Aboriginal community in their city, have the least amount of personal contact with Aboriginal people and are generally out-of-touch with Aboriginal issues. In general, they know little about Aboriginal people, and are inclined to think Aboriginal people have the same issues and opportunities as anyone else. They span all ages and education levels, but a disproportionate number are French-speaking and live in Montreal. Inattentive Skeptics represent the smallest group (14%) of NA urban Canadians.
- **Cultural Romantics** are the most middle-of-the-road and optimistic of the four segments. They are largely distinguished from other segments in that they possess the strongest belief in the artistic and cultural contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society. They have fairly high cultural and media exposure to Aboriginal people, but little personal contact. Although present in all cities, they include a disproportionate number of Torontonians. Cultural Romantics represent the largest number of NA urban Canadians (45%).
- **Connected Advocates** represent one of two opposing views of Aboriginal people among NA urban Canadians. They are unique from other segments in their relatively high level of contact with urban Aboriginal peoples, and their belief that Aboriginal people have been marginalized and often subject to discrimination in Canadian society. Although present in all cities, they include higher than average proportions of NA urban Canadians in Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. They are also the most educated of the four segments (more than six in ten possess a college/university or post-graduate degree). Connected Advocates represent the third largest group (17%) of NA urban Canadians.

More detailed descriptions of each segment and their geographic distribution is provided in Appendix B.