



# Urban Aboriginal Voices:

A Landmark Study of Canada's Urban Aboriginal Peoples

Edmonton Findings

ENVIRONICS  
• INSTITUTE •

# The study is an initiative of the Environics Institute...

- Non-profit foundation, established in 2006 by Environics Research co-founder Michael Adams
- Dedicated to the study and execution of opinion research on issues of public importance
- Seeks to inform and stimulate dialogue by:
  - Commissioning original survey research
  - Working with media partners to disseminate results
  - Instigate public engagement to discuss implications of the research

# Approaching the initiative as an independent actor.

- No previous profile or position on Aboriginal issues
- Contacted and consulted a wide range of stakeholders, early and often
- Non-profit model featured:
  - Hands-off involvement by sponsors
  - Full public release of research
  - No position on study implications for policy
  - Commitment to making results useful to Aboriginal community, other stakeholders



# About the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study

# Objectives of UAPS

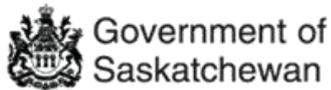
- Understand the experiences, identities, values, and aspirations of urban Aboriginal peoples
- Use survey research to give voice to good news, positive narratives and hopeful scenarios for the future
- Provide new insights that help reframe the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people
- Build capacity to support further research and understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit living in Canadian cities

# Execution

- The research team in Edmonton, led by Dr. Maisie Cardinal (Harvard Fellow)
- Three separate research elements:
  - Aboriginal survey, non-Aboriginal survey, survey of National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation scholars
- UAPS video archive (First Nations University)
- Study design and interpretation guided by an Advisory Circle of recognized experts from academia and the Aboriginal community

# UAPS Advisory Circle

- Allan Benoit Métis Nation
- John Berry Queen's University
- Ellen Bielawski University of Alberta
- Lewis Cardinal Cardinal Strategic Communications
- Hayden King McMaster University
- Peter Dinsdale National Association of Friendship Centres
- Calvin Helin Lawyer, author of *Dances with Dependency*
- Calvin Hanselmann Research Director, National Association of Friendship Centres
- Corinne Jetté President and CEO, Mount Pleasant Educational Services Inc.
- Caroline Krause Former principal Grandview Elementary School, Faculty of Educ., UBC
- Peter Menzies Centre for Addiction Mental Health
- Katherine Minich University of Toronto
- David Newhouse Trent University
- Andrew Parkin Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation
- John G. Paul Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs
- Evelyn Peters University of Saskatchewan
- Mark Podlasly N'laka'pmx First Nation / Harvard/Queens (fellow)
- Jennifer Rattray Peepeekisis First Nation / University of Winnipeg
- John Richards Simon Fraser University
- Pamela Sparklingeyes Aboriginal Learning Services, Edmonton Catholic School Board
- Noella Steinhauer National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation



Δοδ' CAn' baCT  
INUIT TAPIIRIT KANATAMI



JOHN LEFEBVRE



# Adapting research methods to fit

- Quota sampling based on 2006 Census profiles
- Range of methods to recruit eligible respondents
- In-person interviews

# UAPS Edmonton respondent profile

	Actual (Unweighted)(#)	Weighted (%)
First Nations	130	50
Métis	106	49
Inuit	14	1
18-24	60	21
25-44	111	47
45+	79	32
Men	94	44
Women	156	56
No degree	72	34
High school completed	71	25
College diploma	66	35
University degree	41	6

**In-person survey with 2,614 urban Aboriginal peoples in 11 cities ...the 10 main cities encompass 46% of the urban Aboriginal census population.**

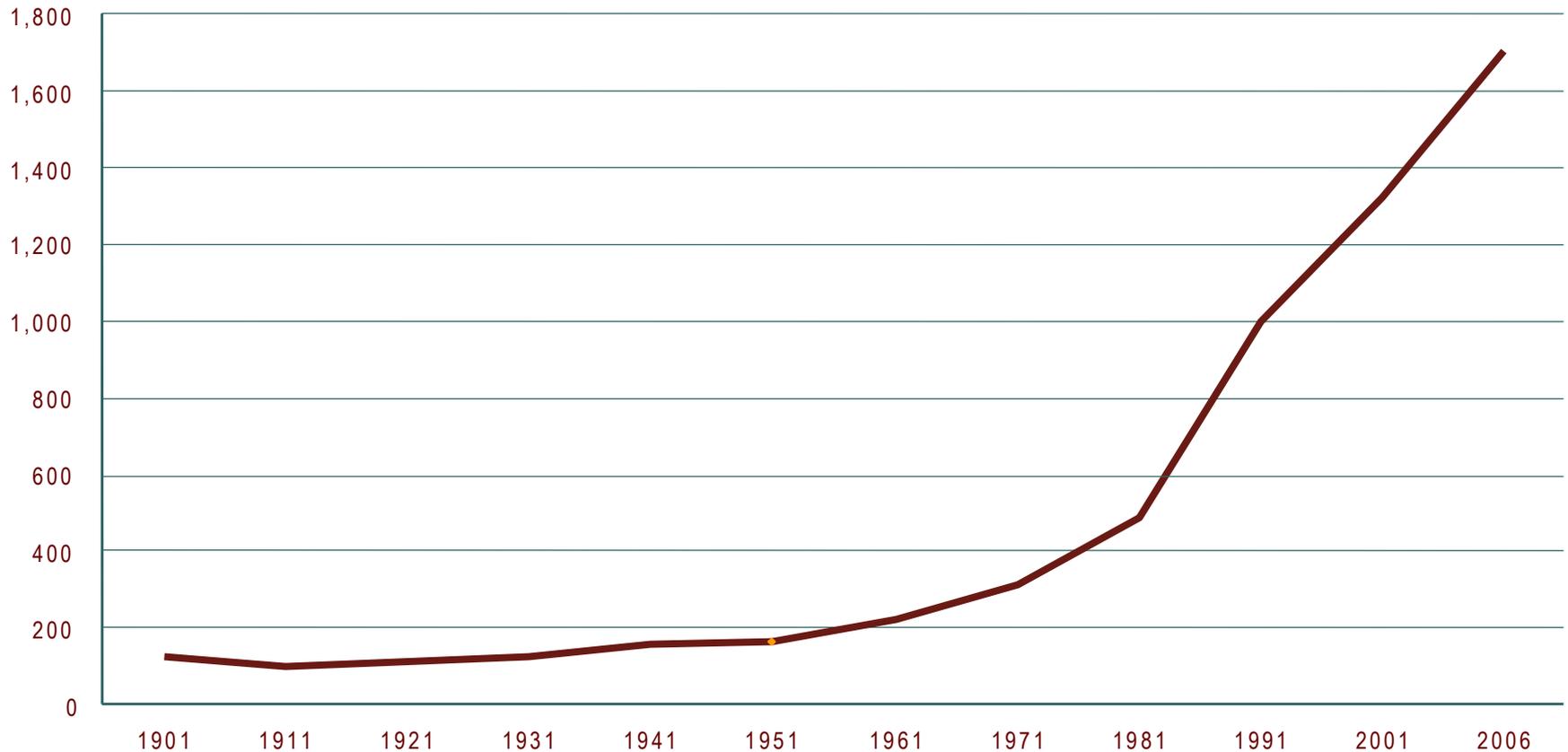


# Why we need to pay attention

- Growing presence in our cities today
- Canada has yet to come to terms with this reality
- Our focus has been on reserve issues and on problems

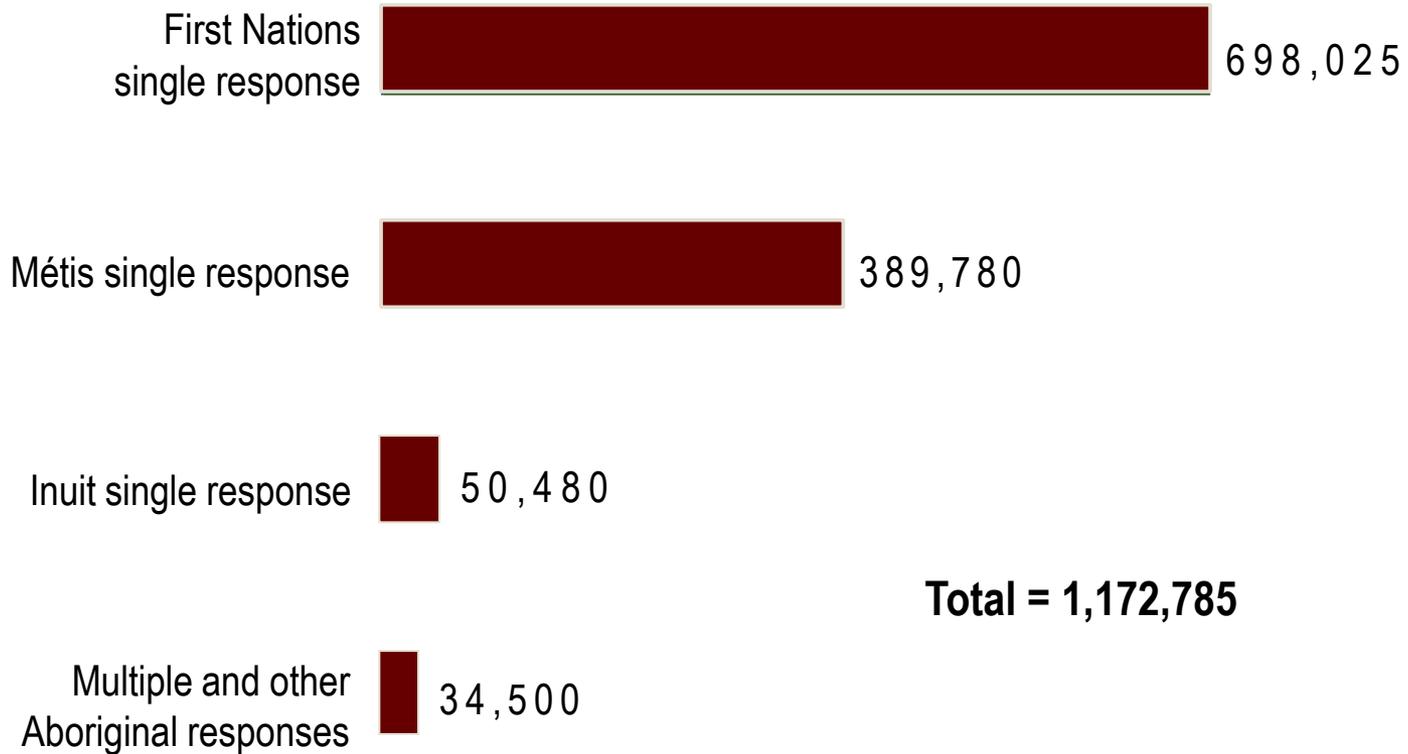
# Canadian population at 33 million in 2006, with nearly 1.8 million reporting Aboriginal ancestry

## Aboriginal Ancestry Population

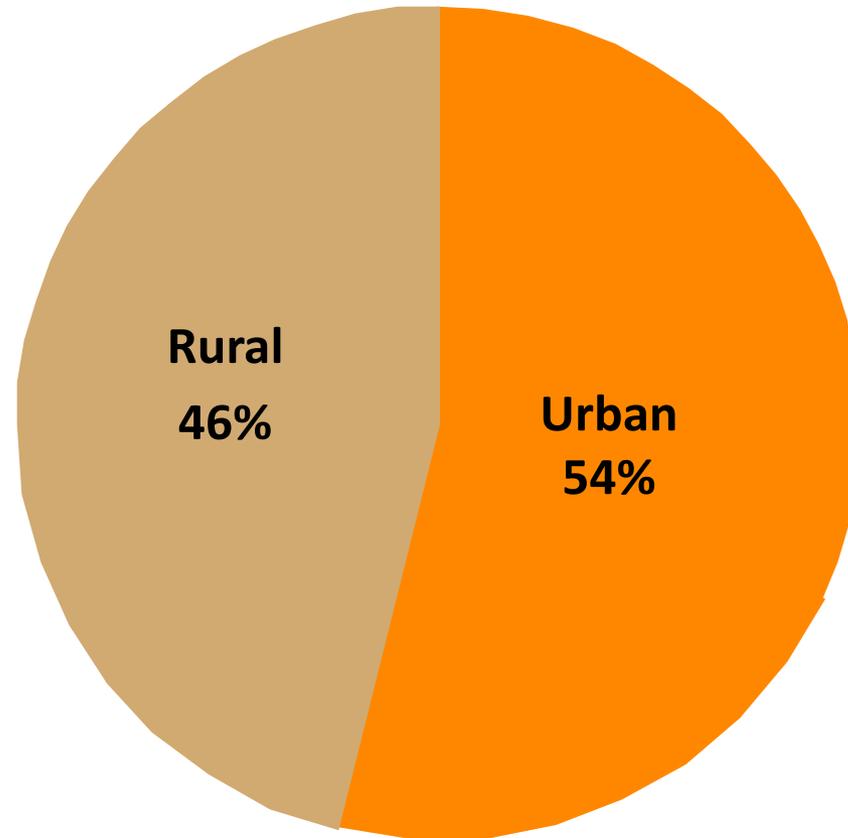


# Of these, 1.2 million report Aboriginal identity, in three distinct groups

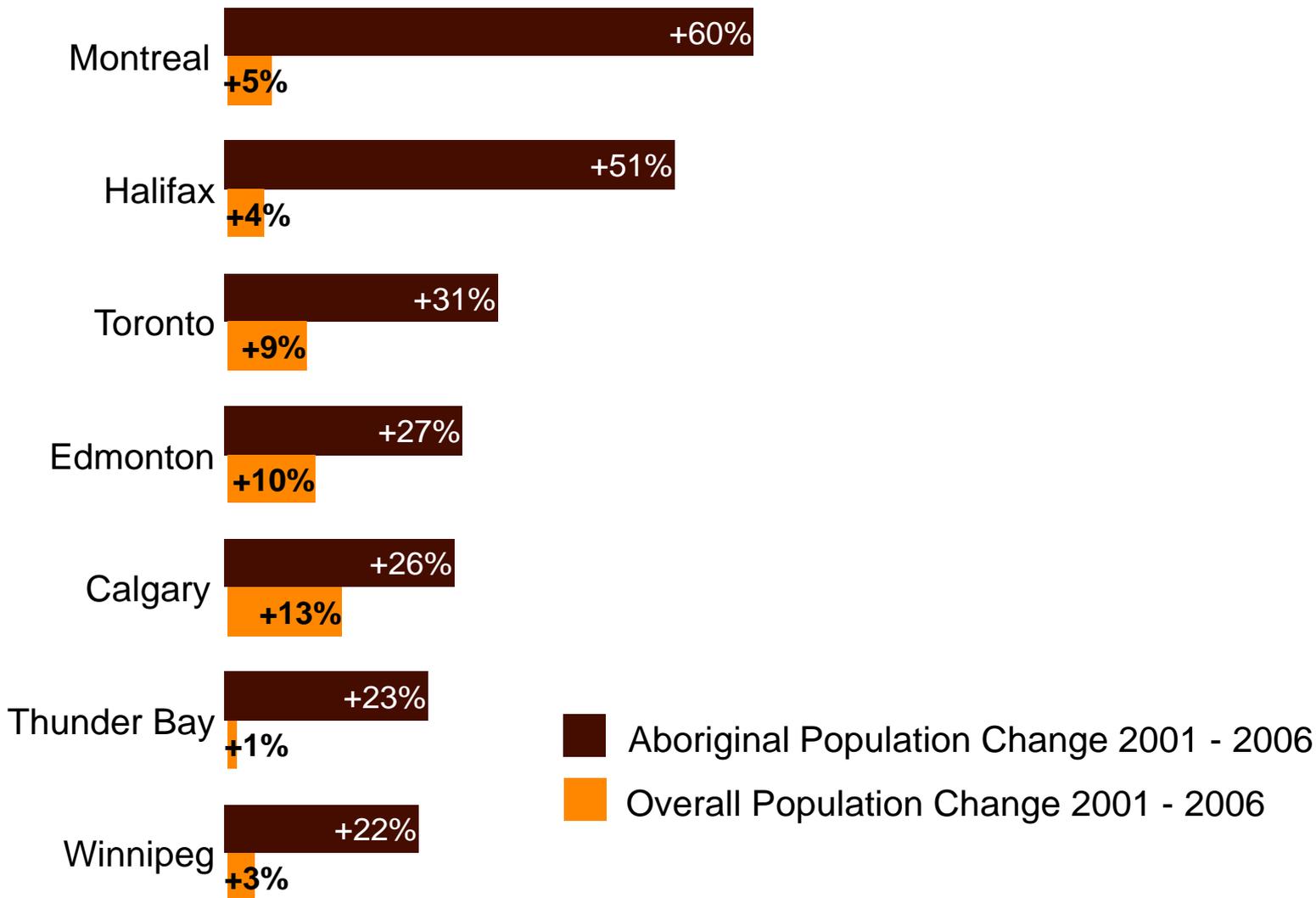
## Aboriginal Identity Population



# One in two of that Aboriginal population live in urban areas...



# ... and these numbers are increasing.





***“Canada is about to become a whole lot  
different in the next couple of generations...”***

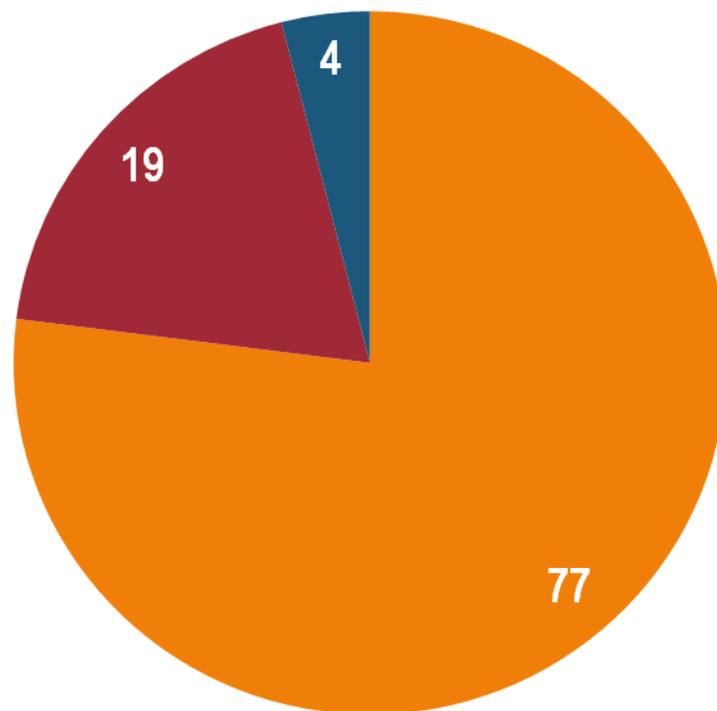
**Waubgeshig Rice  
Broadcast journalist and writer  
The Globe and Mail online (July 20, 2009)**



The illustration is composed of several parts: The tail feathers, the body, the head, the feet, and the beak. Each part is labeled with a name in a small font.

## Research Findings

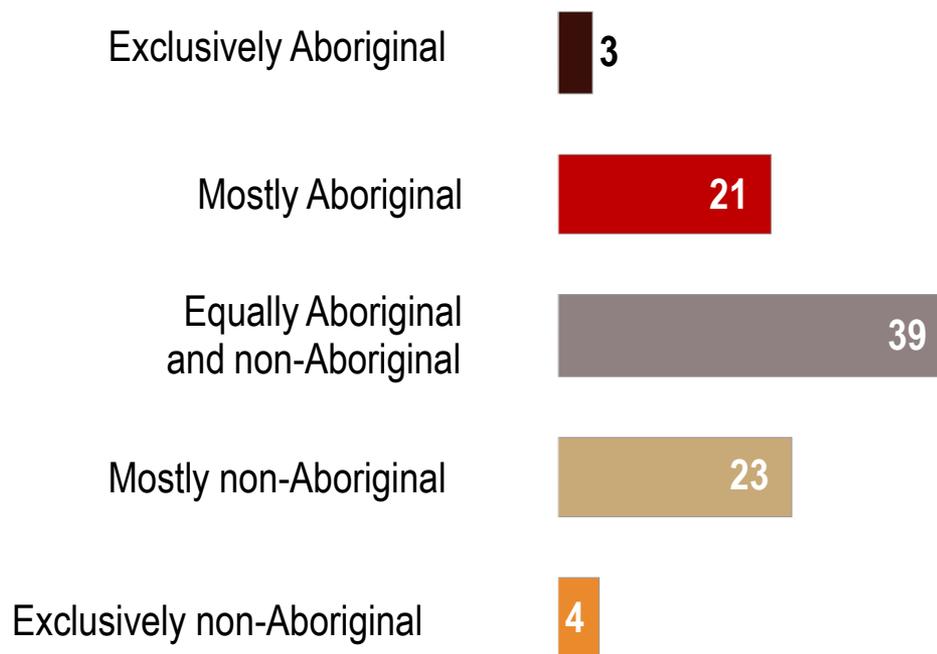
## The majority of UAPS Edmonton participants are first generation residents.



■ First generation ■ Second generation ■ Third generation

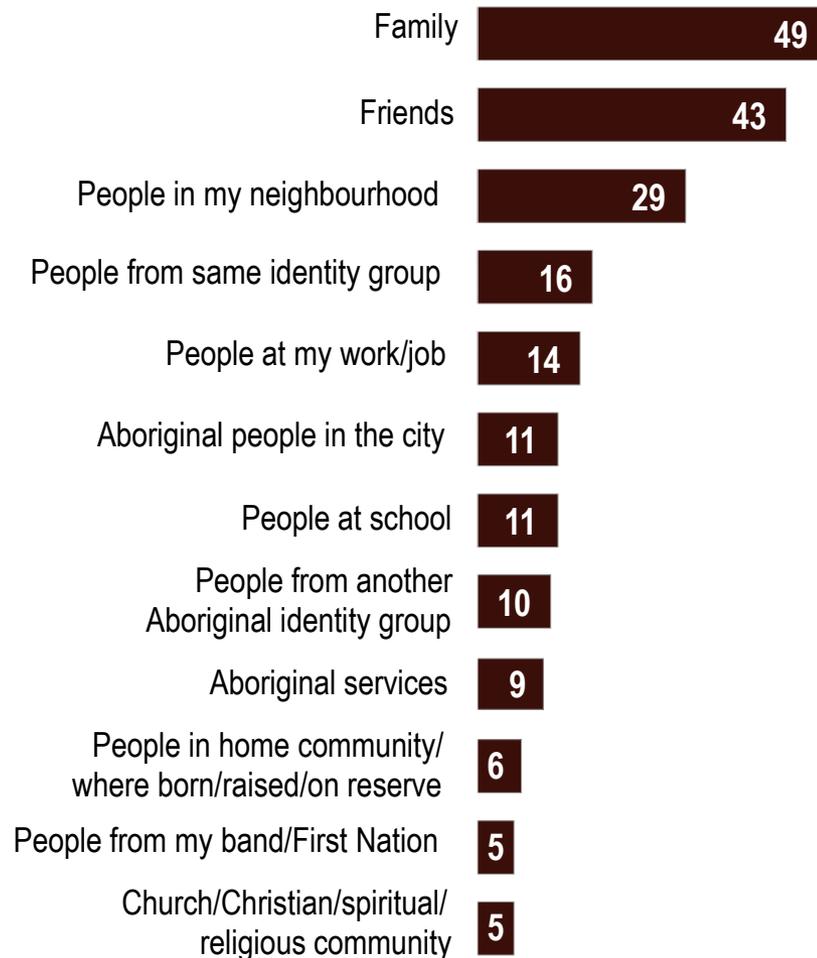
# Many feel that they belong to a diverse community.

Do you feel that the community you belong to is... ?



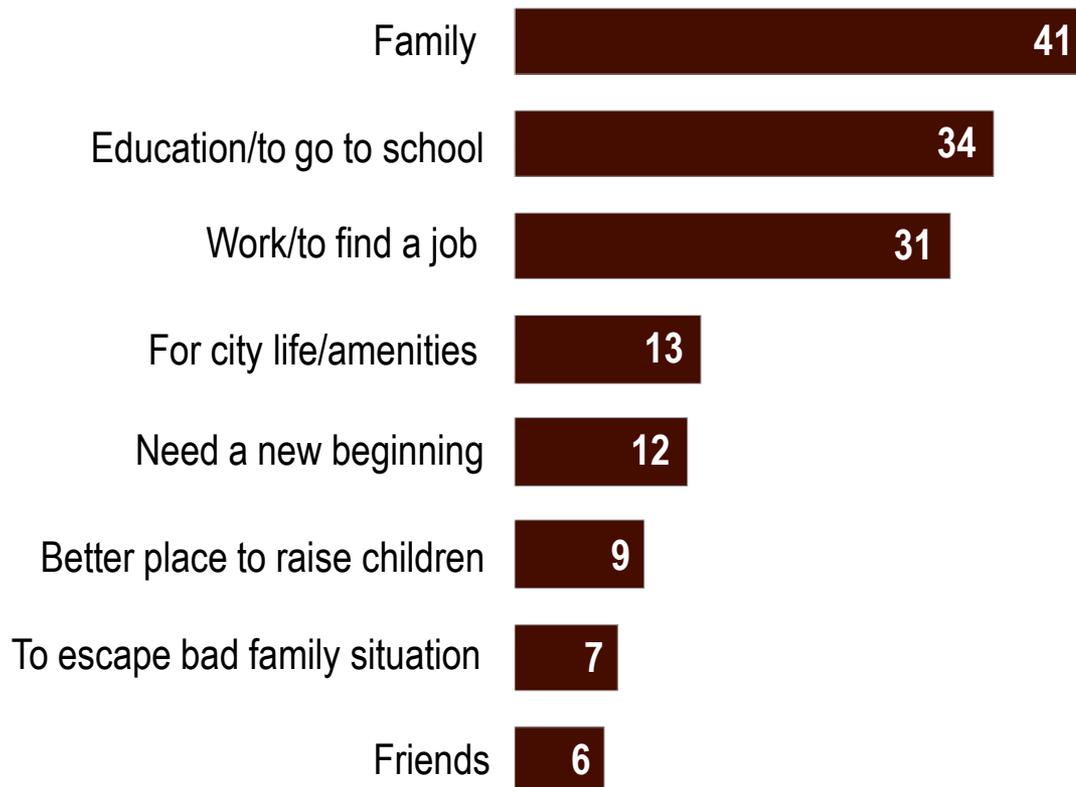
# Definitions of the urban community for Edmontonians.

Who or what do you consider to be a part of your community?



# Building a life for one's family is the main reason for moving to Edmonton.

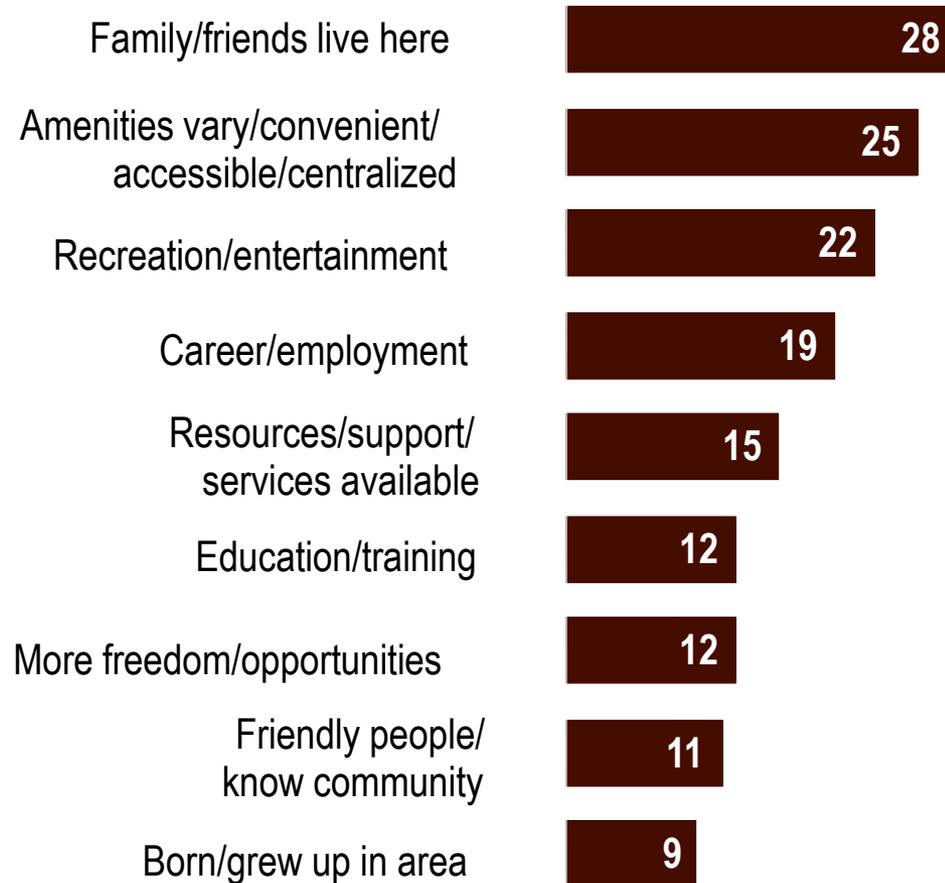
Why did you first move to Edmonton?\*



\*Subsample: Among those who were not born or raised in Edmonton.

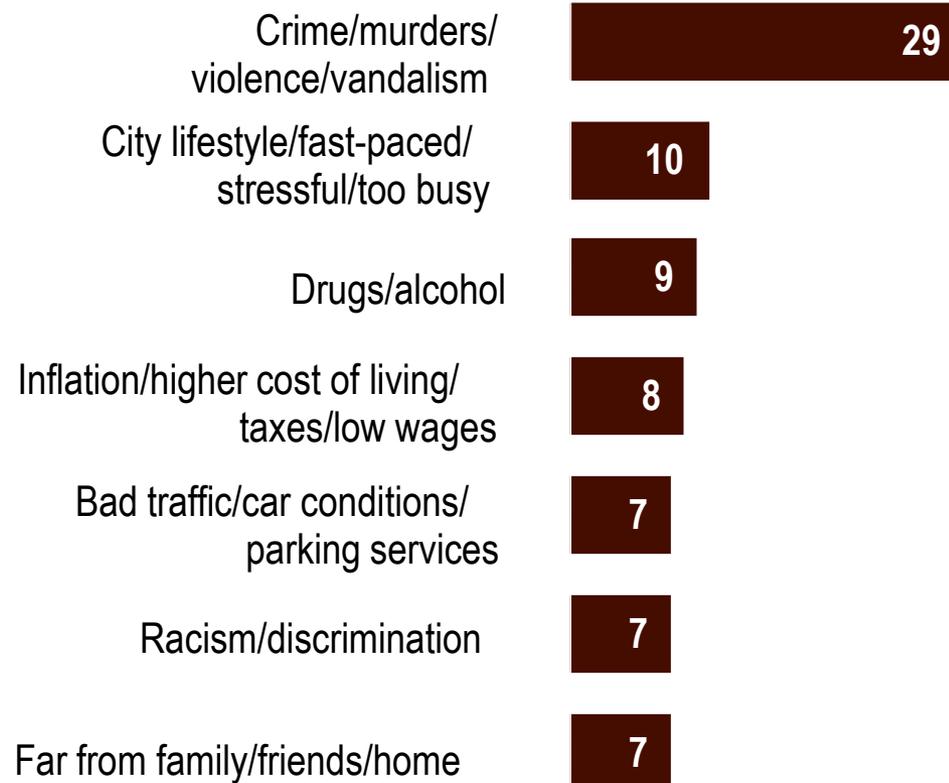
# Many enjoy the big city life...

What do you enjoy most about life in Edmonton?



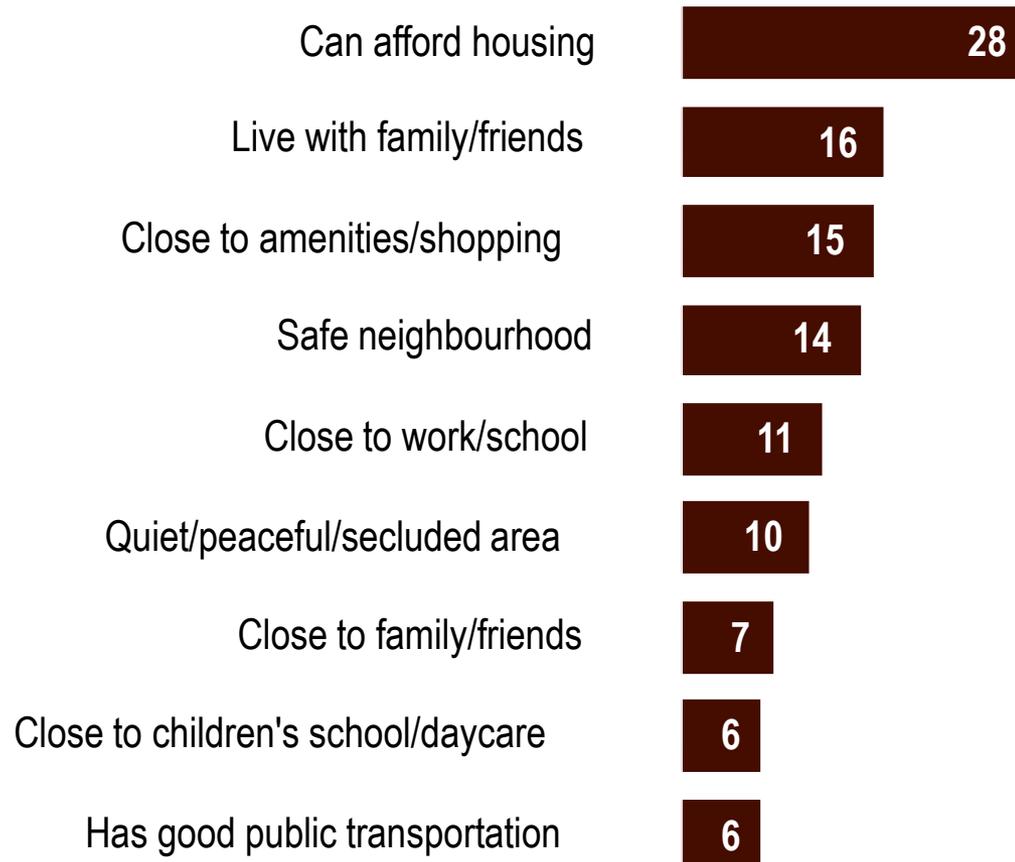
## ...but do not feel particularly safe.

What do you like least about living here?



# Neighbourhood choice is influenced primarily by cost.

Why do you live in the neighbourhood you do?

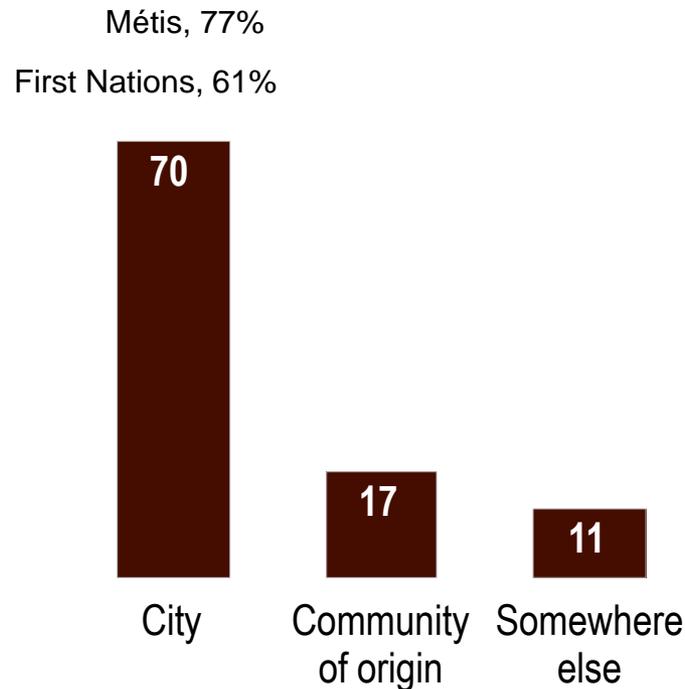


Aboriginal people are *not* rooted in remote communities



# Most feel that the city of Edmonton is home...

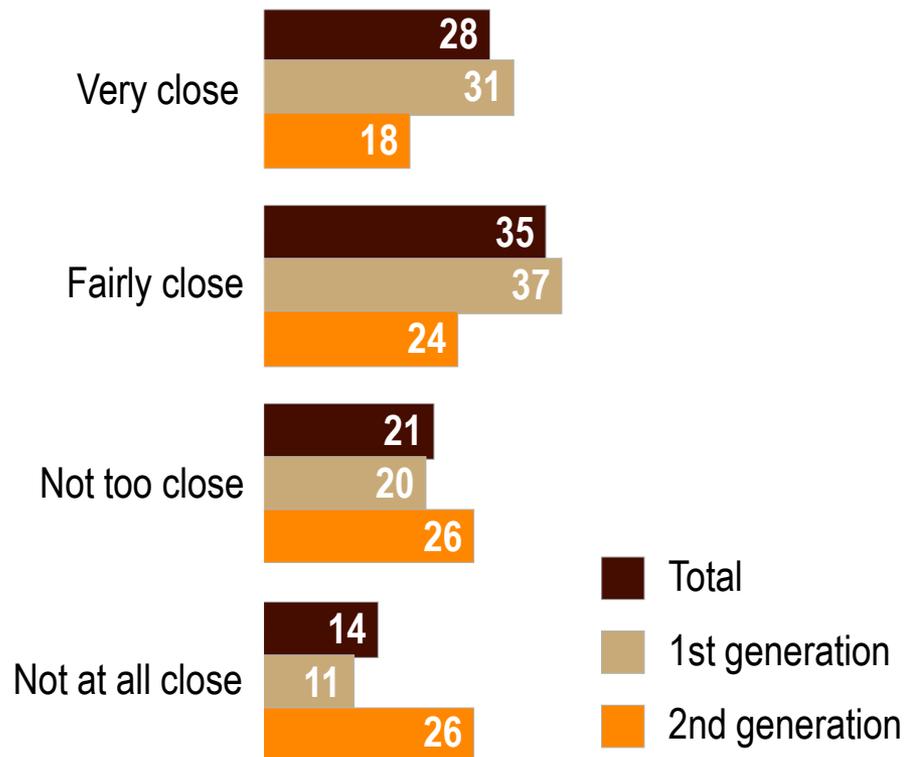
Where is home for you? Is it your city of residence, your home community, or somewhere else?



\* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in Edmonton; those who have lived in Edmonton all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

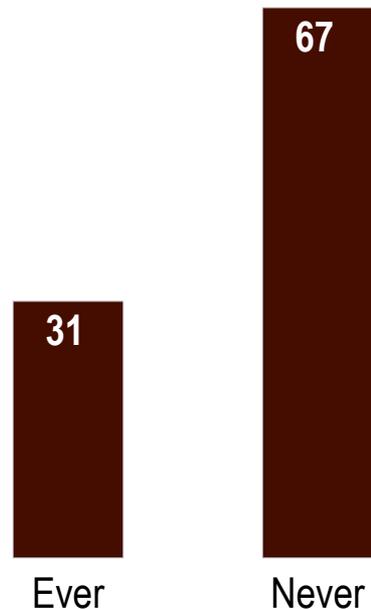
# The connection to home remains strong, but there is disconnect.

How close a connection do you feel to your home community?  
How close a connection do you feel to *the place where your parents and grandparents are from?*



# A majority have never moved back to their community since moving to Edmonton.

Since you first moved to Edmonton, have you ever moved back to your home community?\*

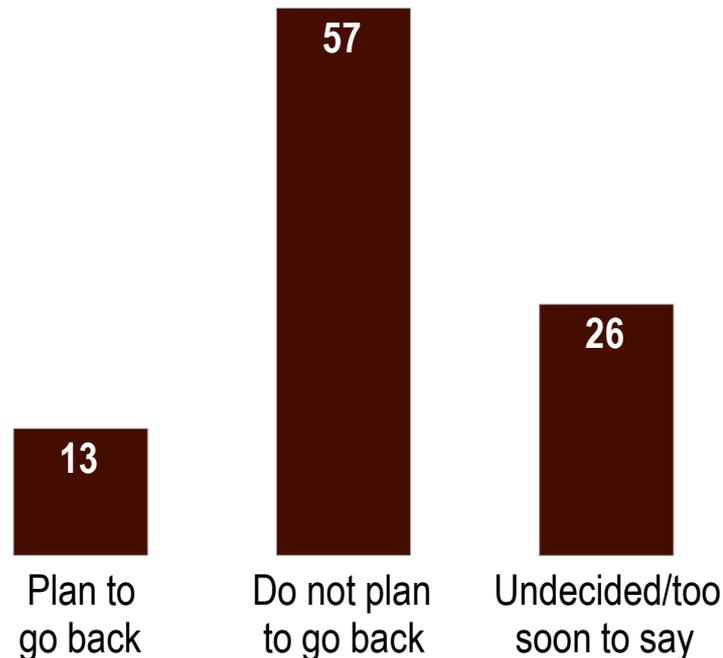


Note: 2% said dk/na

\* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in Edmonton.

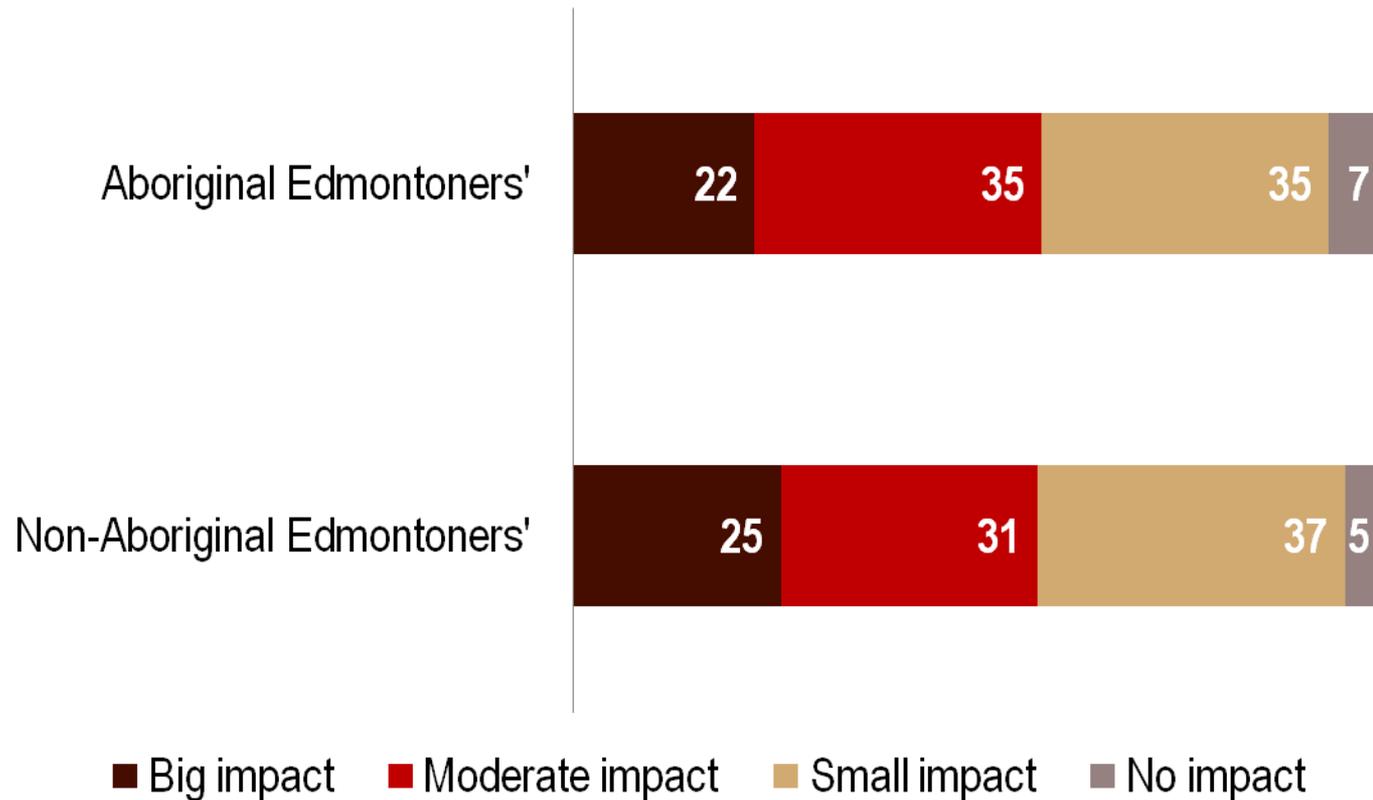
# Only a minority plan to return to their home communities permanently.

Do you plan to go back to live in your home community/community of origin permanently one day, or not?\*



\* *Subsample:* First and second generation UAPS participants.

# They feel they can make Edmonton a better place to live.

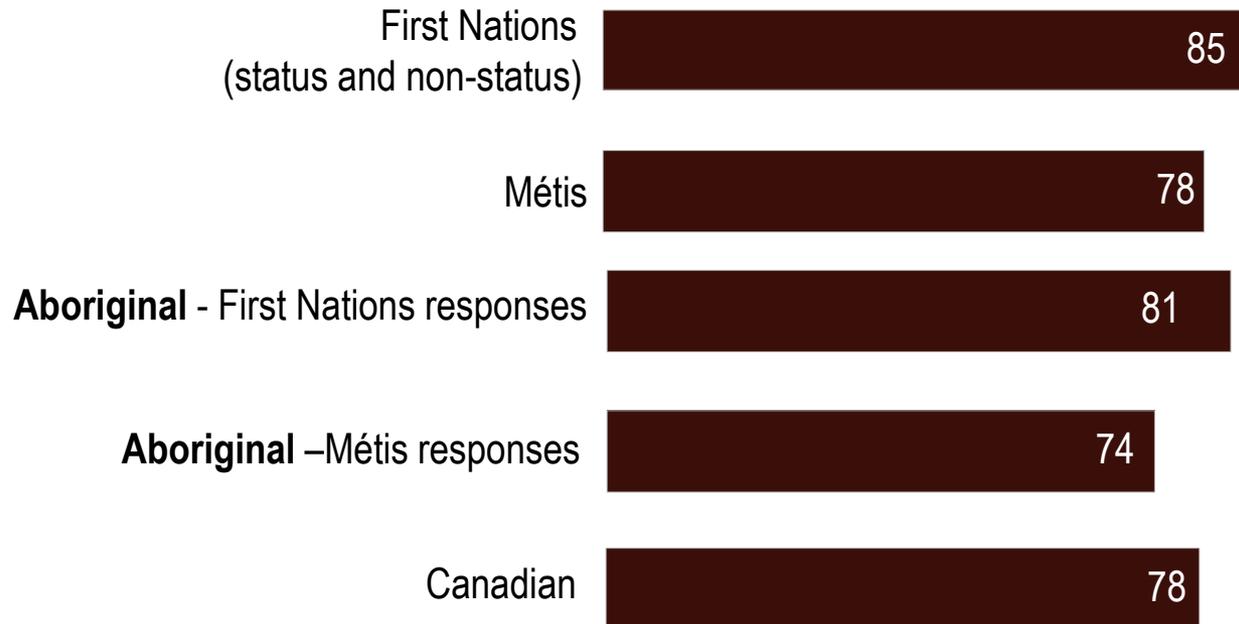


# Identity and Culture



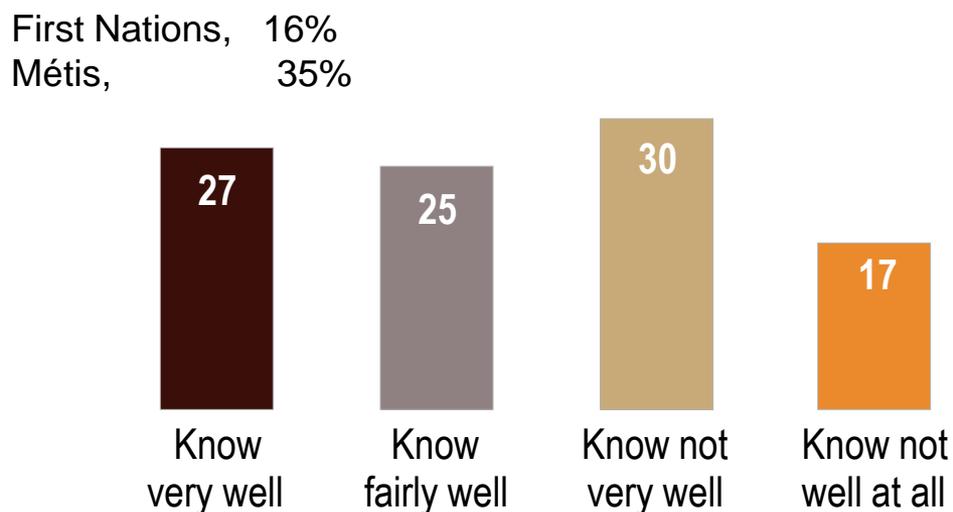
# There is strong Indigenous pride... ...and pride in Canada.

Are you very proud to be...



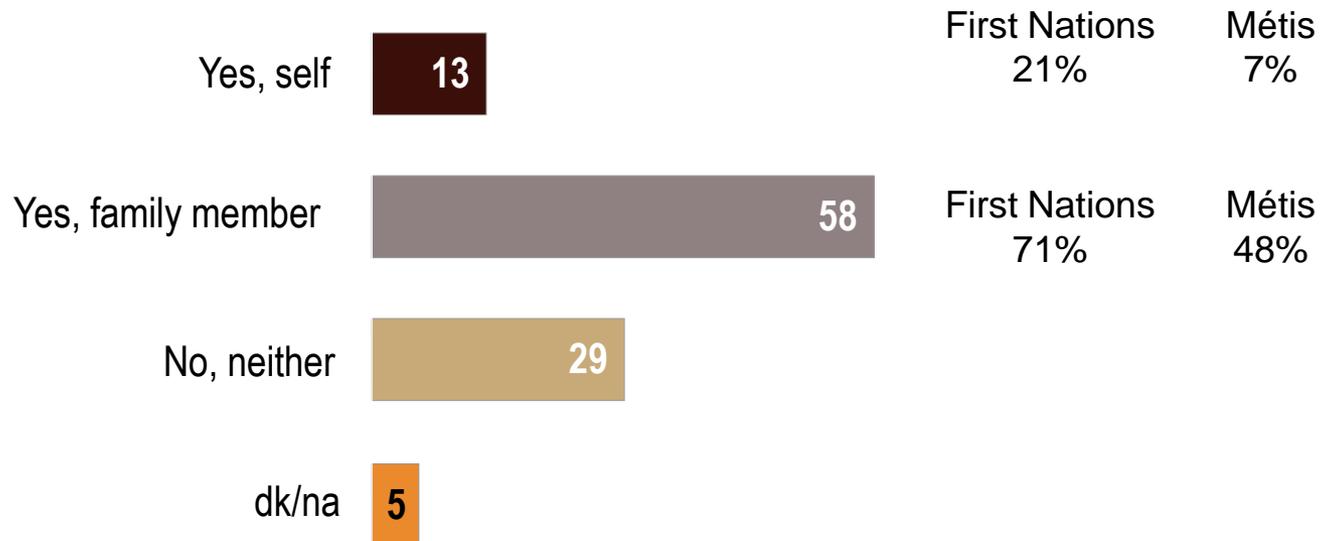
# And the majority has connection to their heritage, although some do not.

## Knowledge of family tree



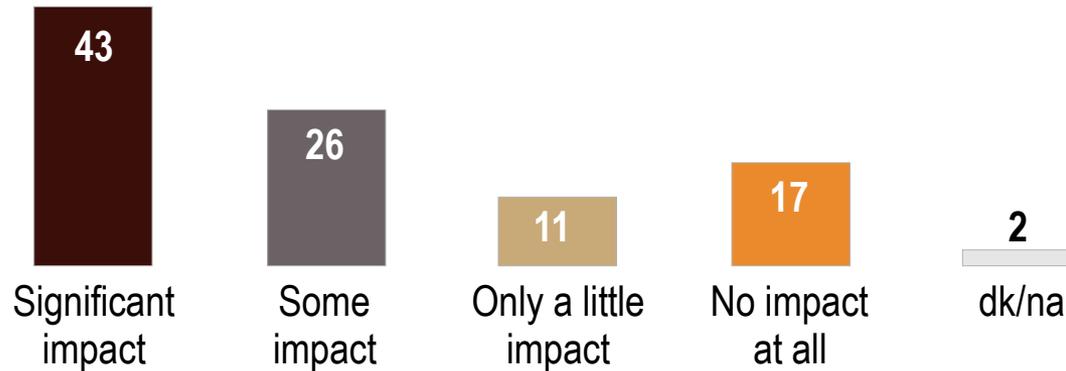
# Residential schools have had a lasting effect.

Were you, or any member of your family, ever a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school?



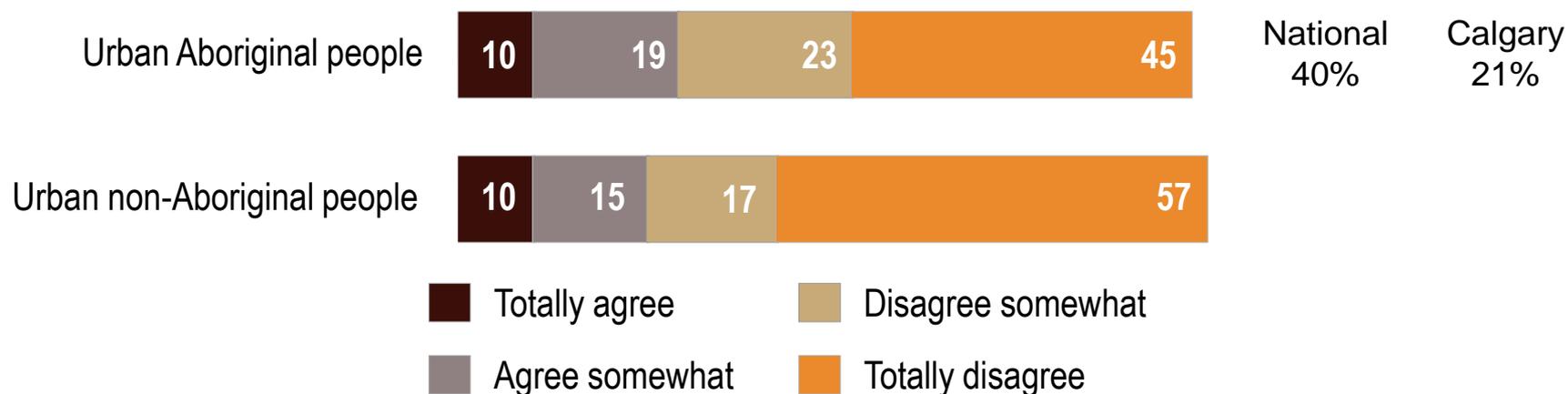
# And many still feel its impact today.

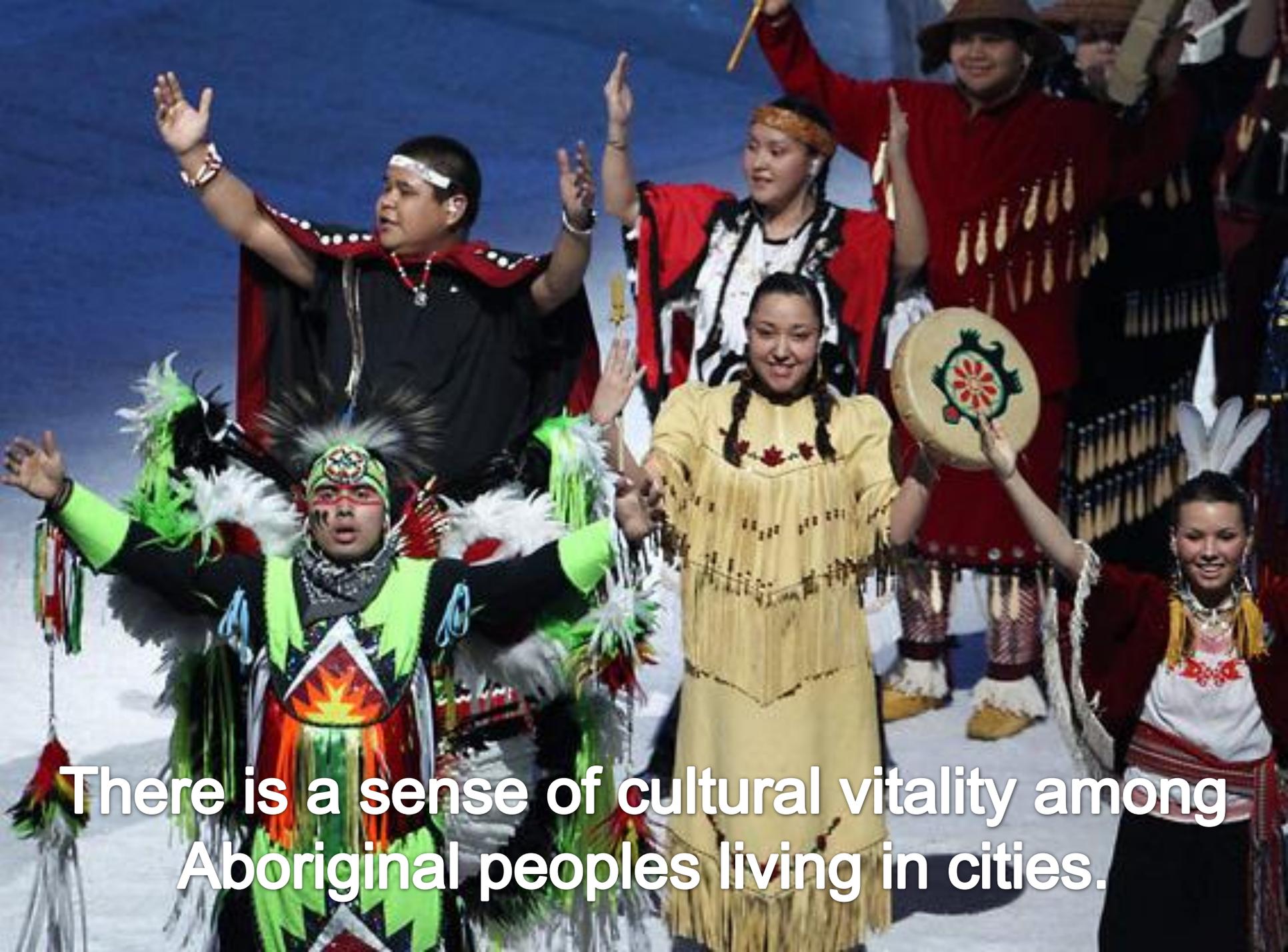
To what extent has this experience shaped your life and who you are today?



# Those who say they are concerned about losing their cultures are in the minority...

“I am concerned about losing my cultural identity”

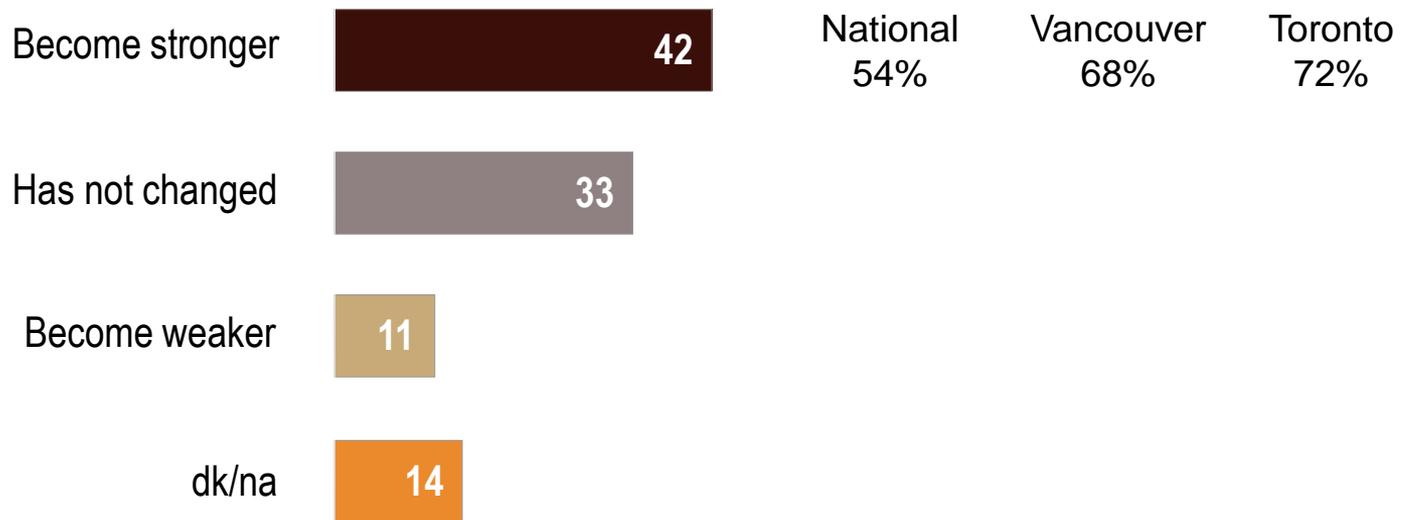




**There is a sense of cultural vitality among  
Aboriginal peoples living in cities.**

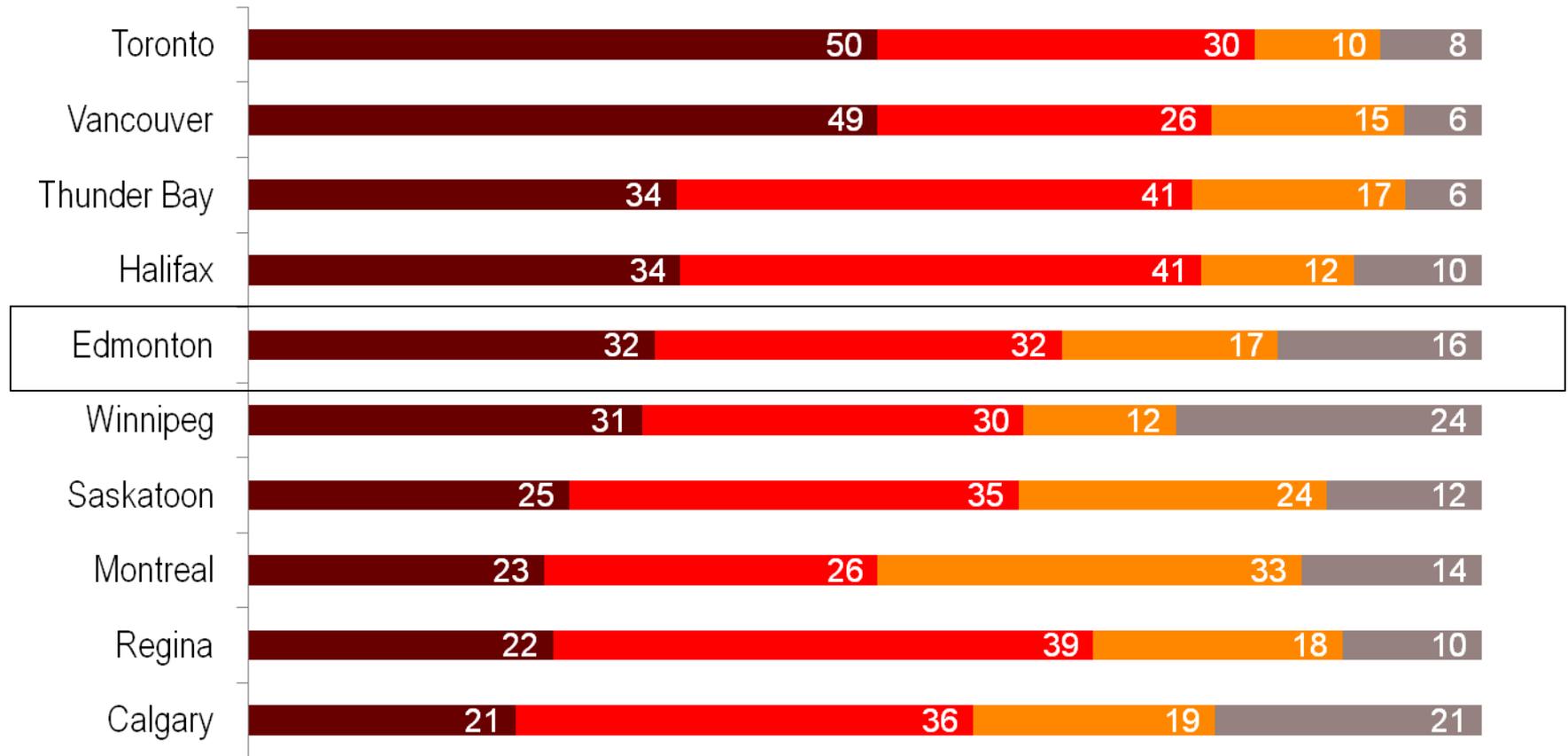
# Aboriginal Edmonton residents are more likely to think that Aboriginal culture has grown stronger than weaker ...but not by much.

In the last five years, do you think that Aboriginal culture in your city has become...



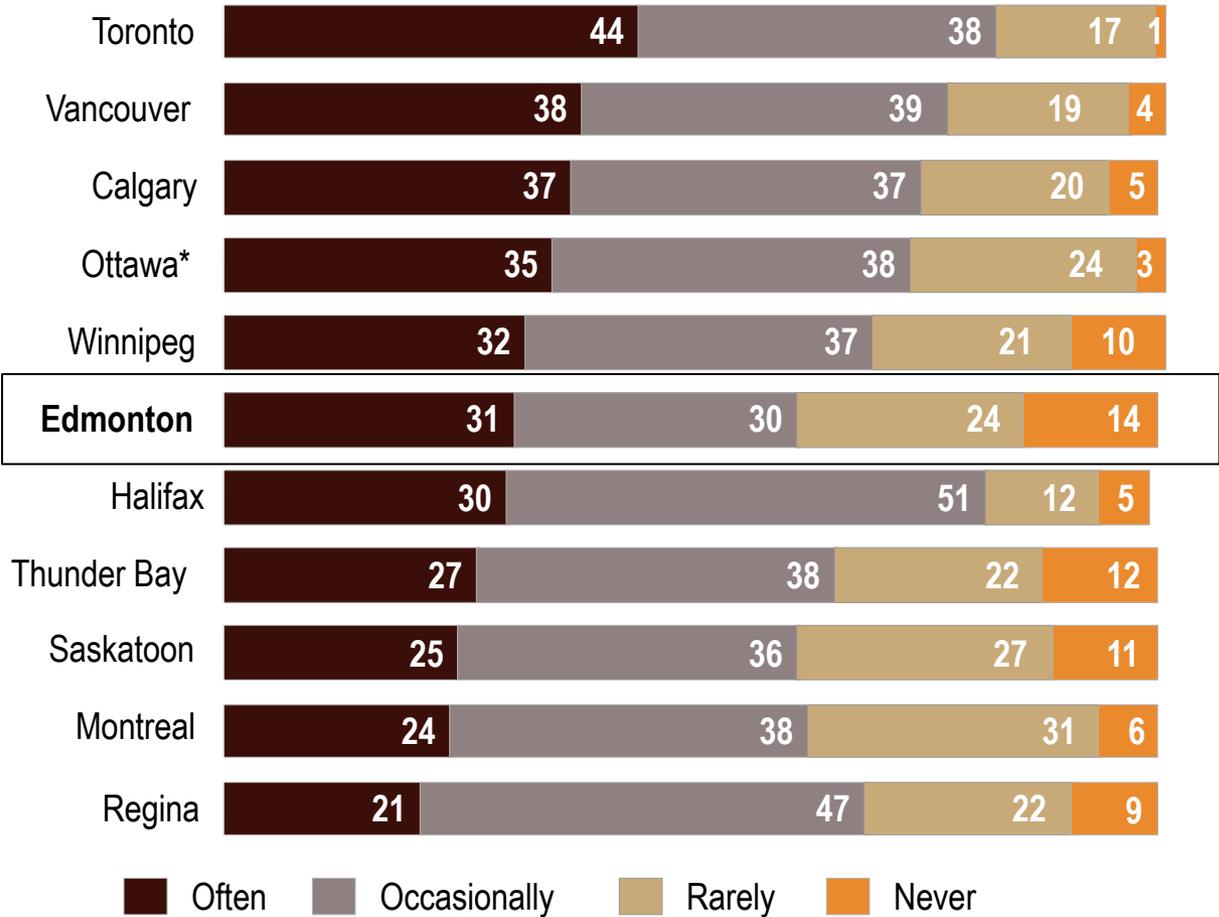
# Many are aware of cultural activities within the city, although some are not.

Are there any, a lot, some, a few, or no Aboriginal cultural activities available in your community?



# And the majority participate in these cultural activities at least occasionally.

How often do you personally participate in these Aboriginal cultural activities?



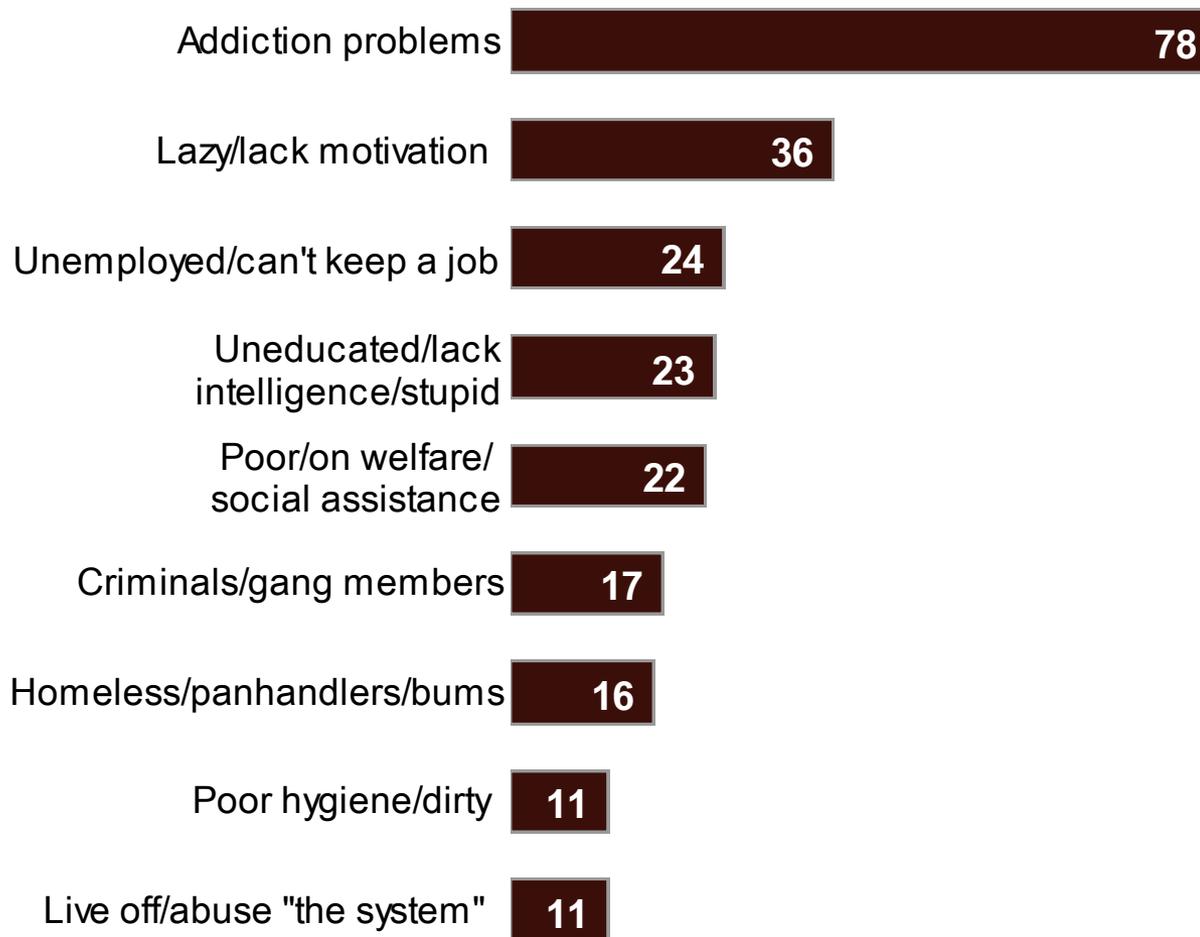
\*Inuit only



# Perceptions of others

# Many Aboriginal people feel they are perceived negatively...

What do you believe are the most common stereotypes that non-Aboriginal people hold about Aboriginal people, if any?

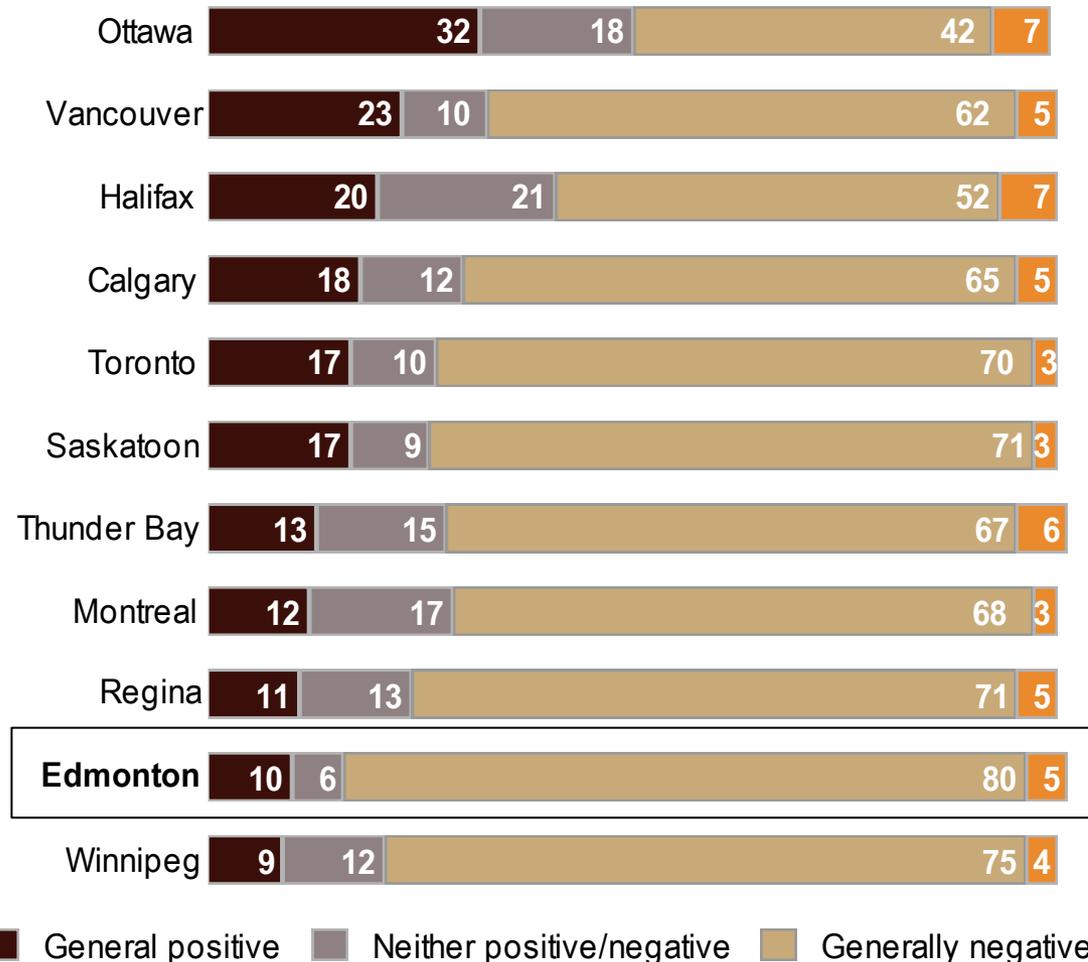


# ...and experience discrimination.

	<b>% Agree</b>	<b>% Disagree</b>
“I think others behave in an unfair/negative way toward Aboriginal people”	<b>91</b>	<b>7</b>
“I have been teased/insulted because of my Aboriginal background”	<b>70</b>	<b>28</b>

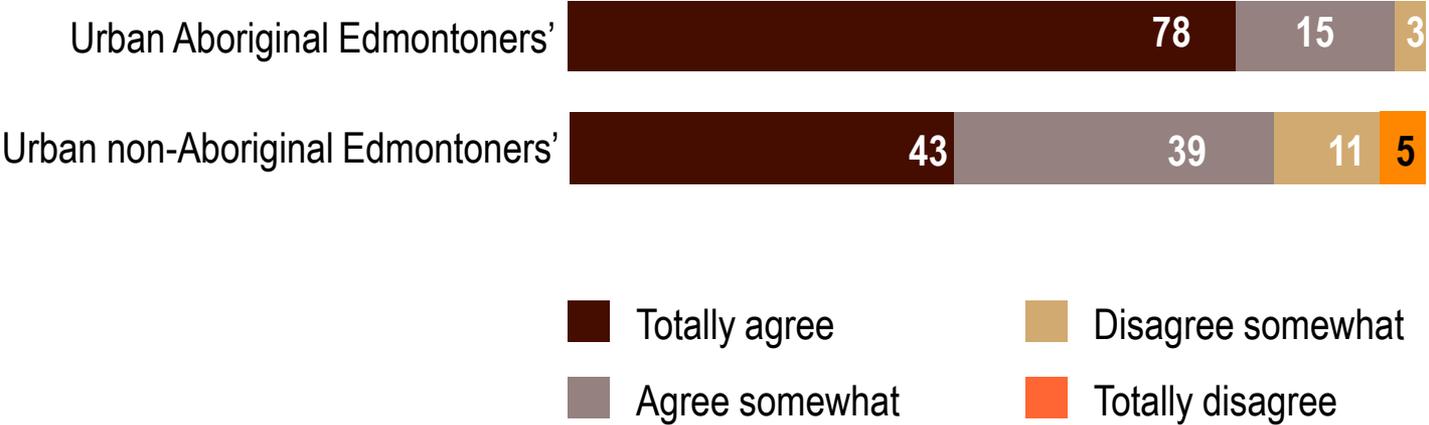
# Aboriginal Edmontonians are more likely to think that perceptions are negative.

Do you think non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people is generally positive or negative?



# But still a large majority embrace pluralism... even more so than non-Aboriginal Edmontoners’.

“There is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country”

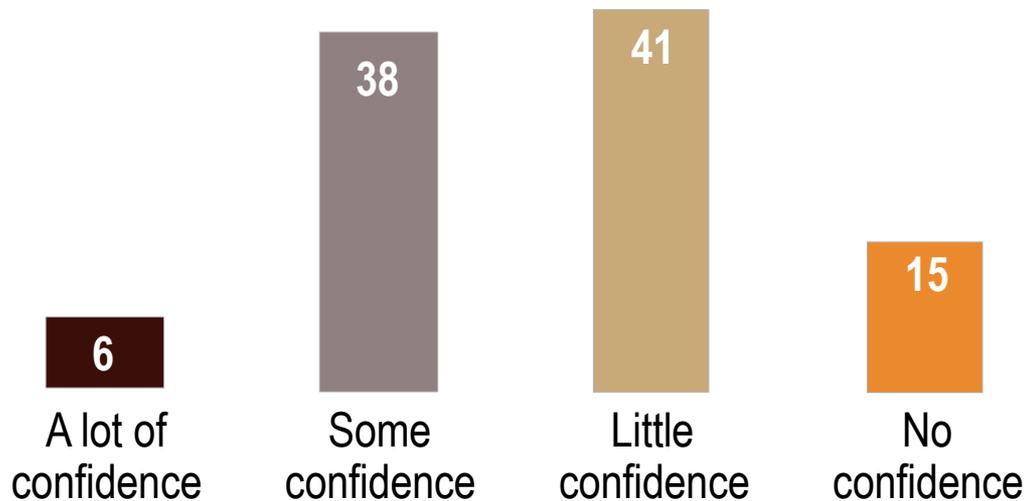




**Aboriginal people in Edmonton  
have little confidence in the  
Canadian justice system.**

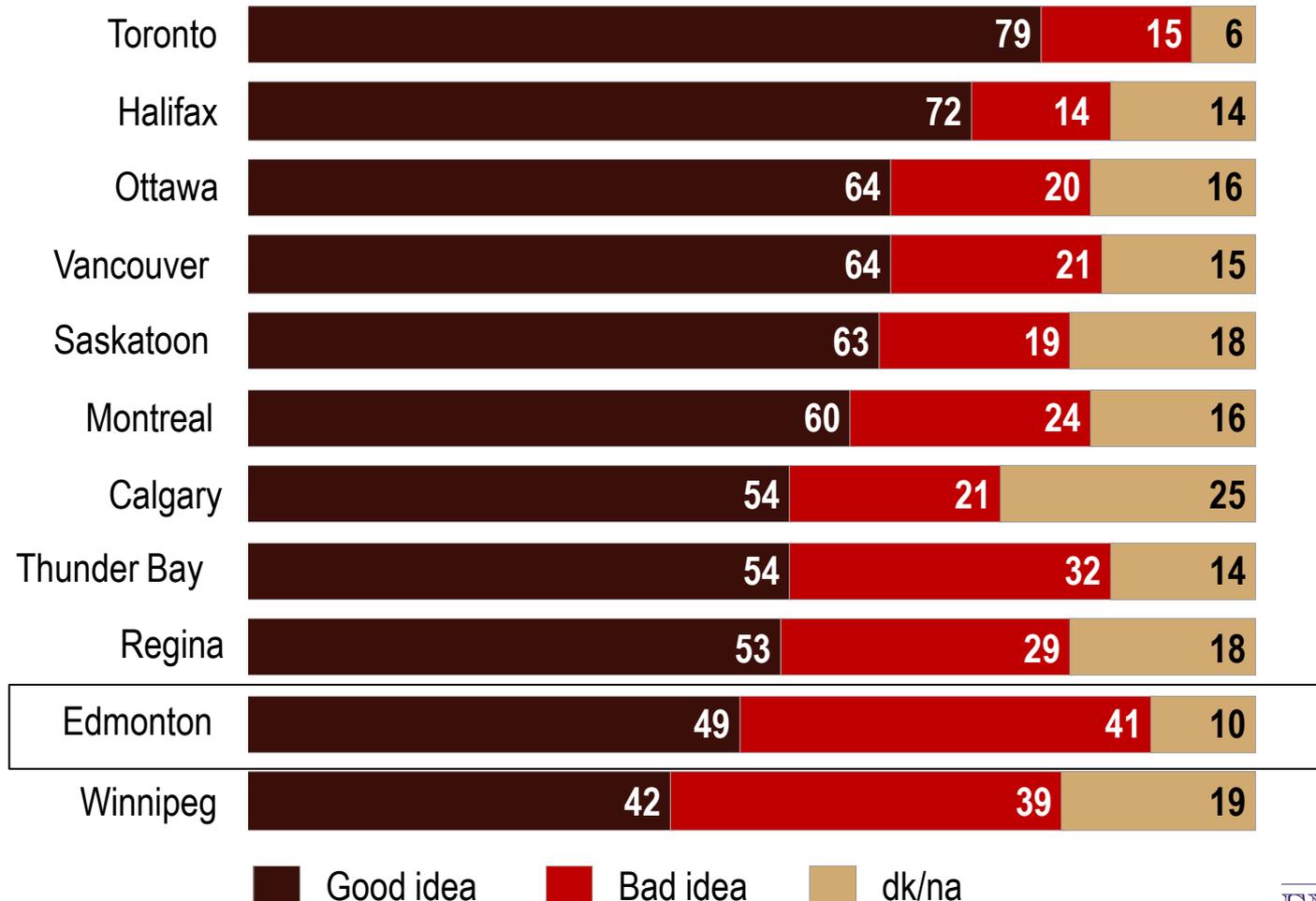
# Many feel that the Canadian justice system isn't working.

In general, would you say you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, little confidence or no confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada?



# A slim majority would welcome Aboriginal methods of justice.

Do you think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea or bad idea?

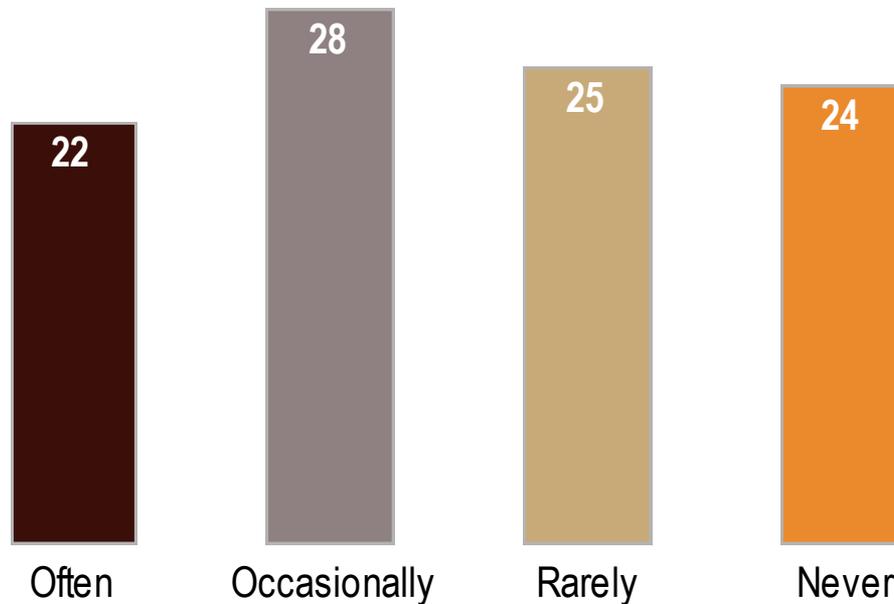




# Organization and Political affiliations

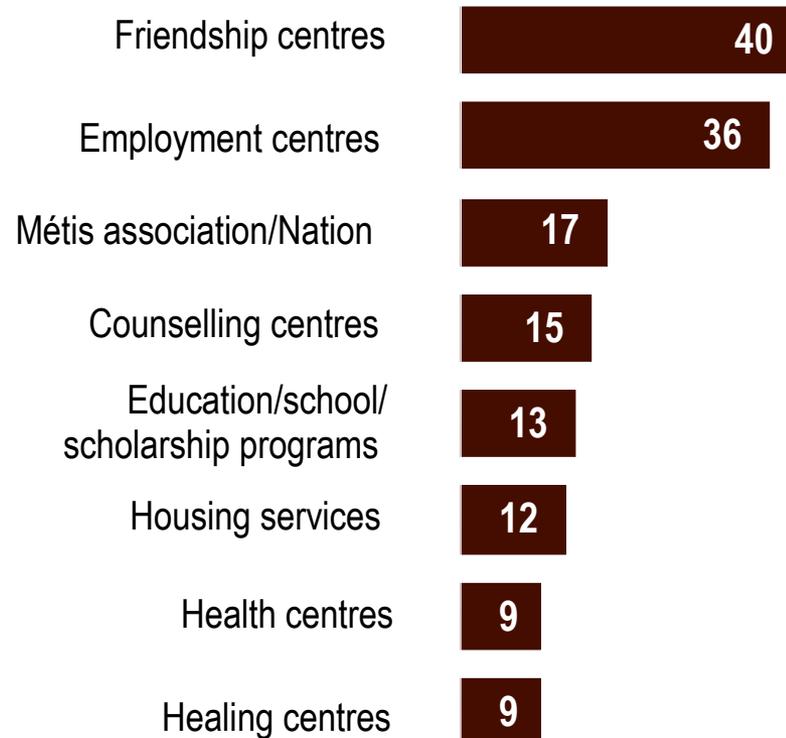
# Half of urban Aboriginal people in Edmonton use and rely at least occasionally on Aboriginal services and organizations...

How often do you use or rely upon Aboriginal services or organizations in Edmonton?



## ... and value a variety of services and organizations.

What kinds of Aboriginal services or organizations have you found to be particularly useful?

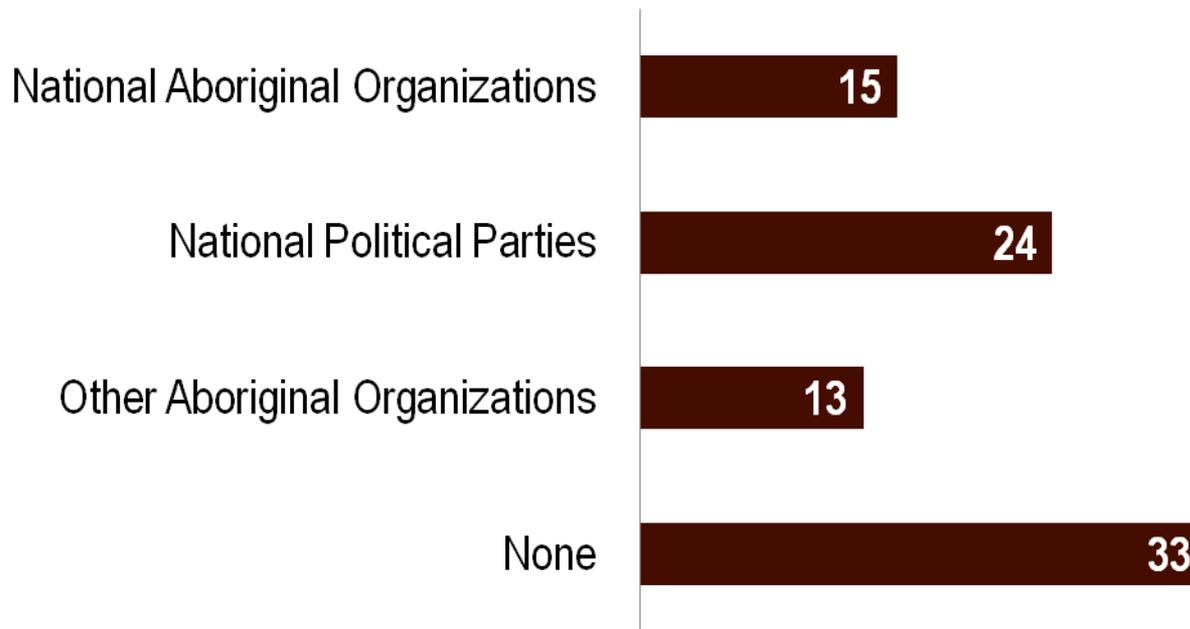


**They identify with a diverse array of political organizations.**

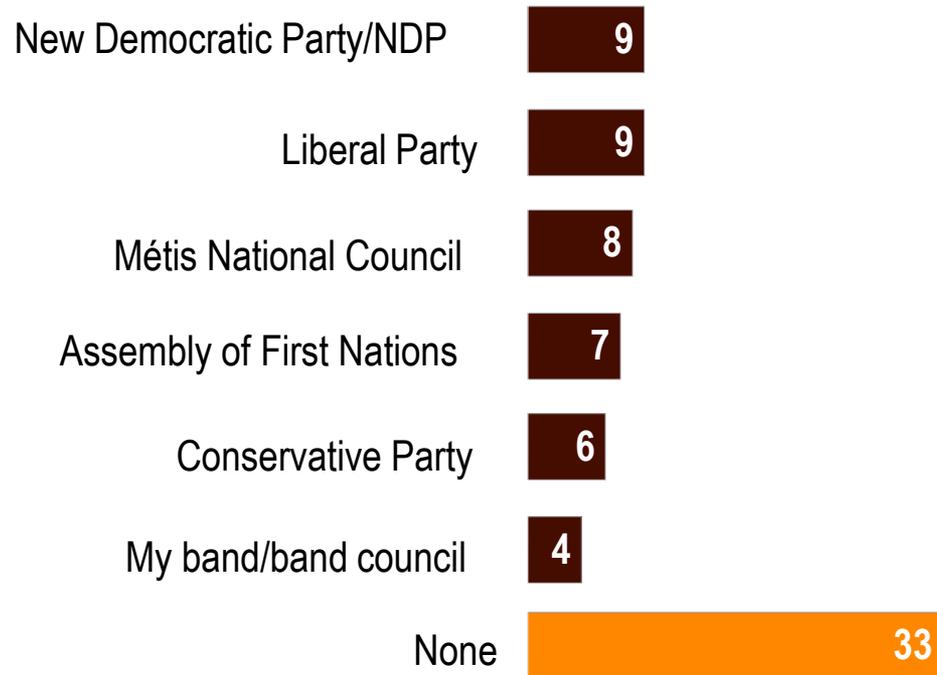


## But a significant minority feels that no political organization or party best represents them.

Thinking about *both* Aboriginal political organizations and Canadian political parties, is there one that you feel *best* represents you?



# Mainstream political parties top the list among those named that best represent them.

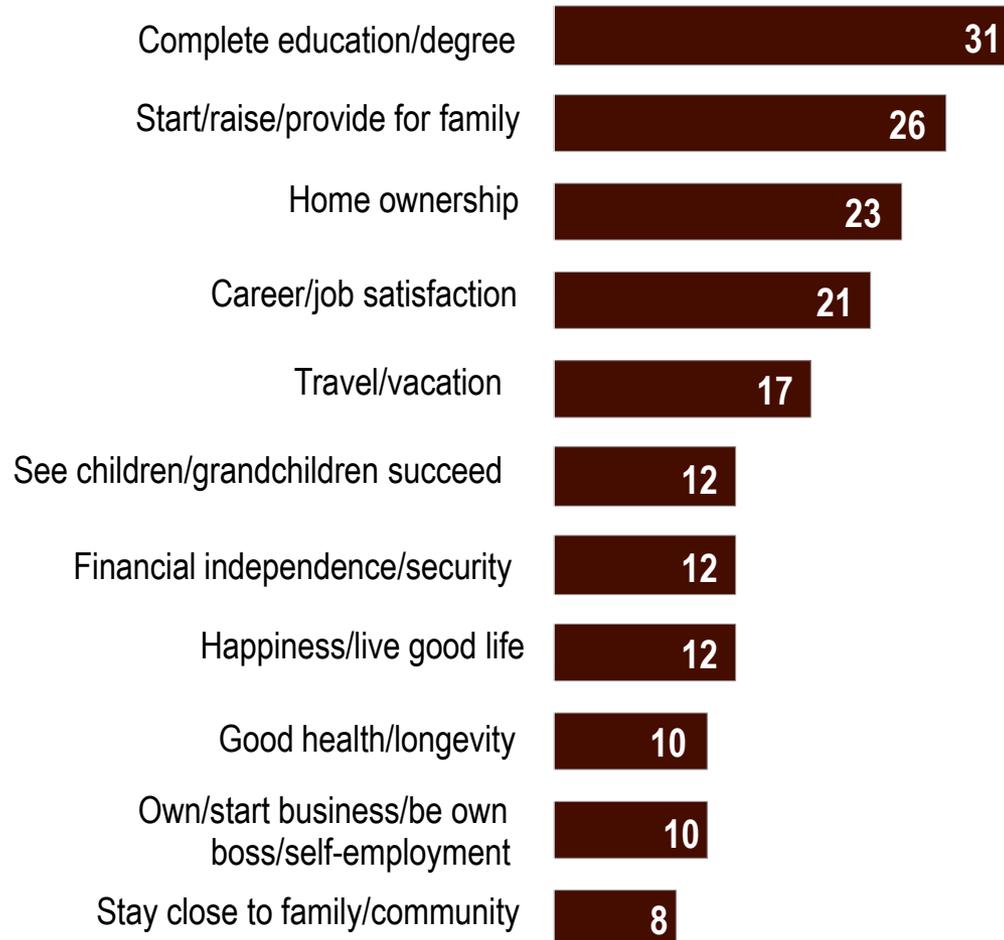




# **Aspirations for a good life**

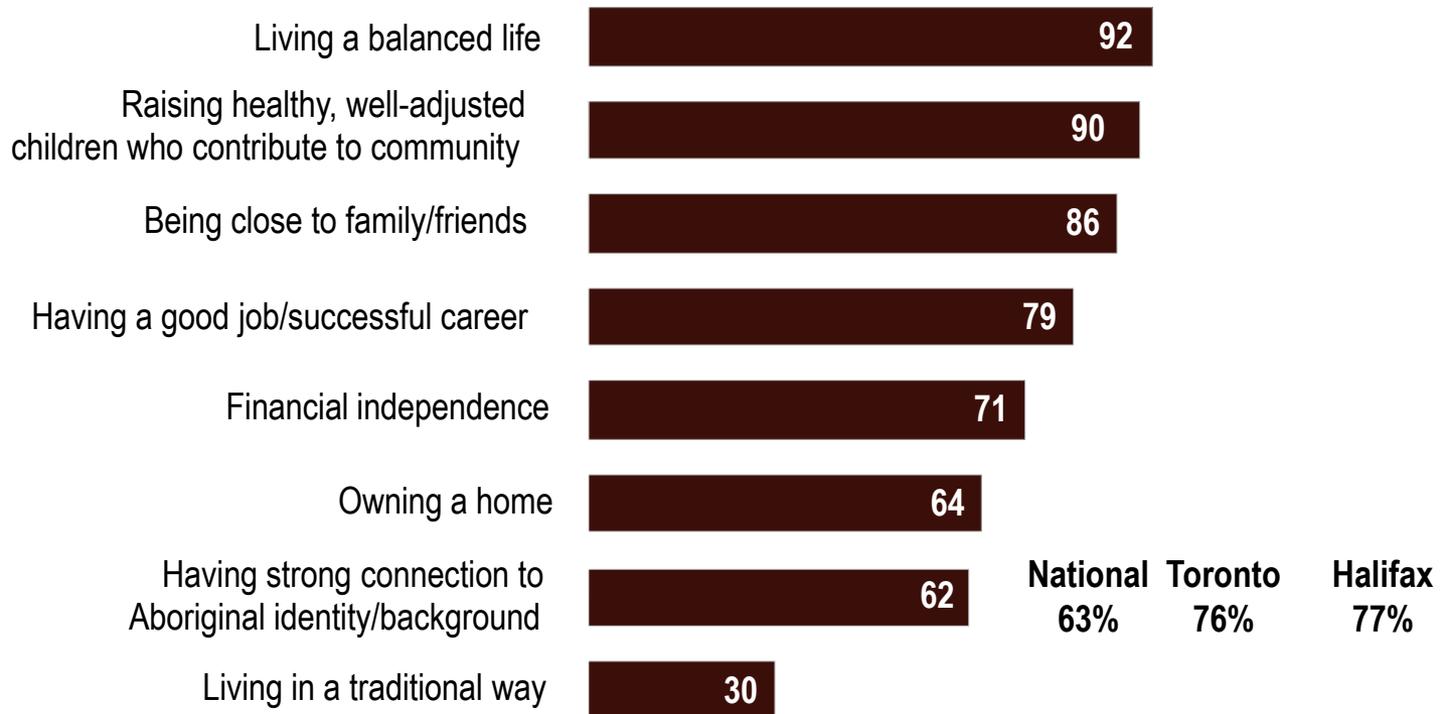
# Aboriginal peoples in Edmonton desire to be successful in mainstream ways...

What are the things that you most want to achieve in your lifetime? (top mentions)



# ... and share universal definitions of a successful life.

Are the following very important to your idea of a successful life?

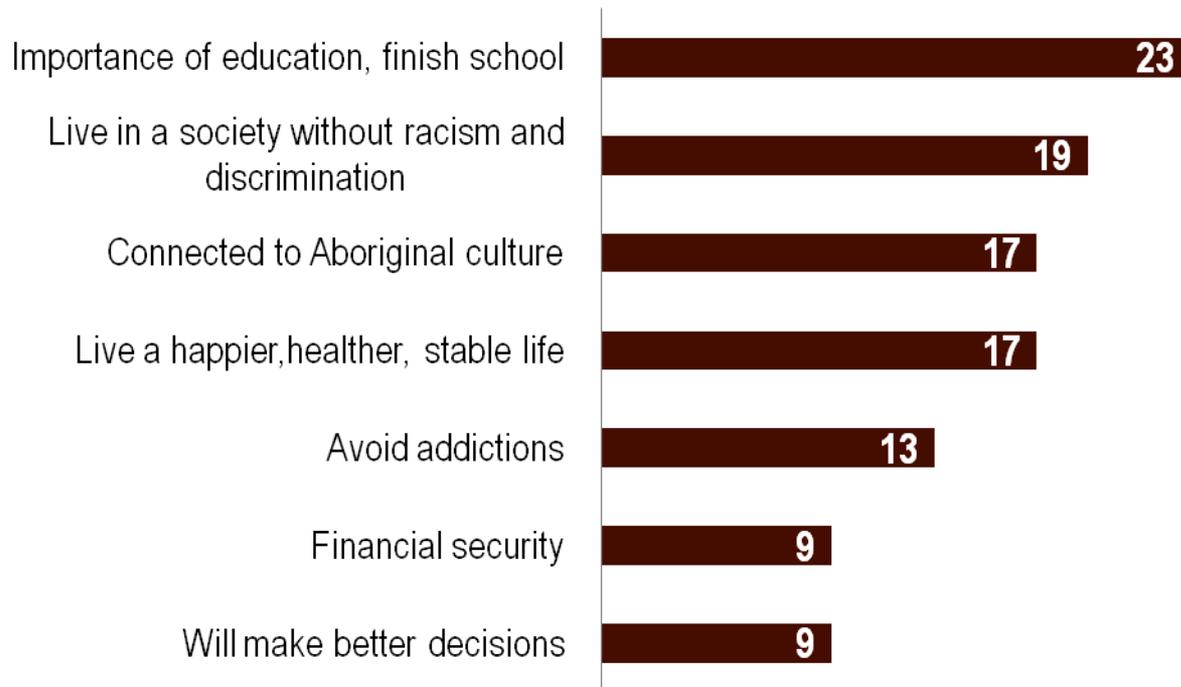




**Education is the enduring aspiration for urban Aboriginal peoples and their children.**

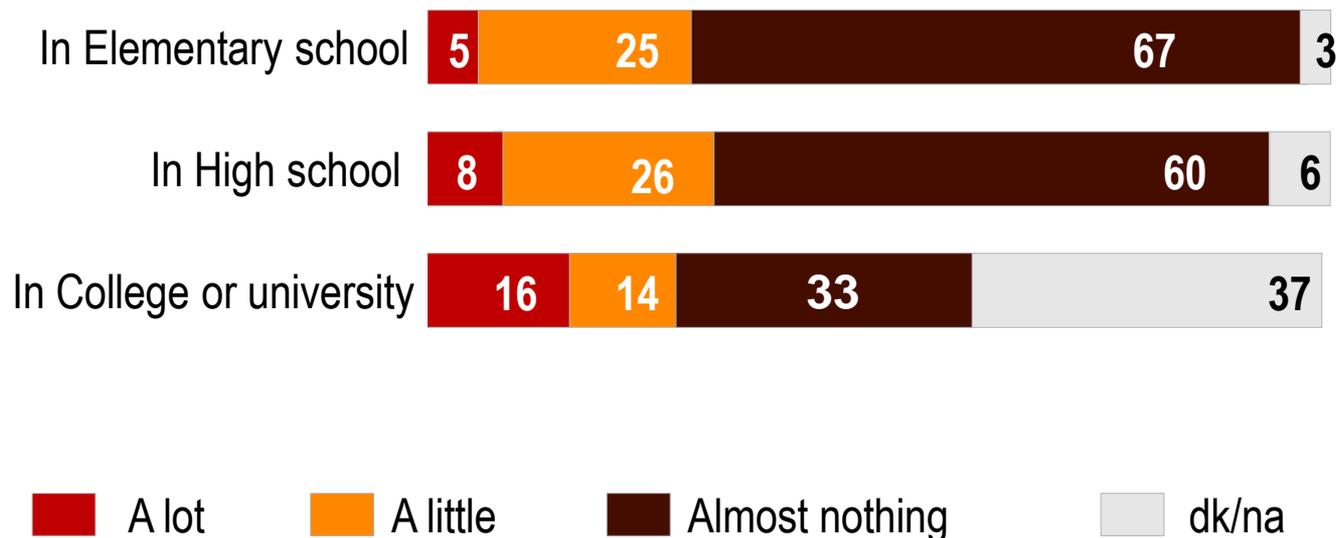
# Education is a top priority for the next generation...and so is a society free of racism.

Are there ways in which you hope your childrens' and grandchildren's lives will be different from yours?



# ...and there is very little cultural transmission in schools.

## Exposure to Aboriginal culture

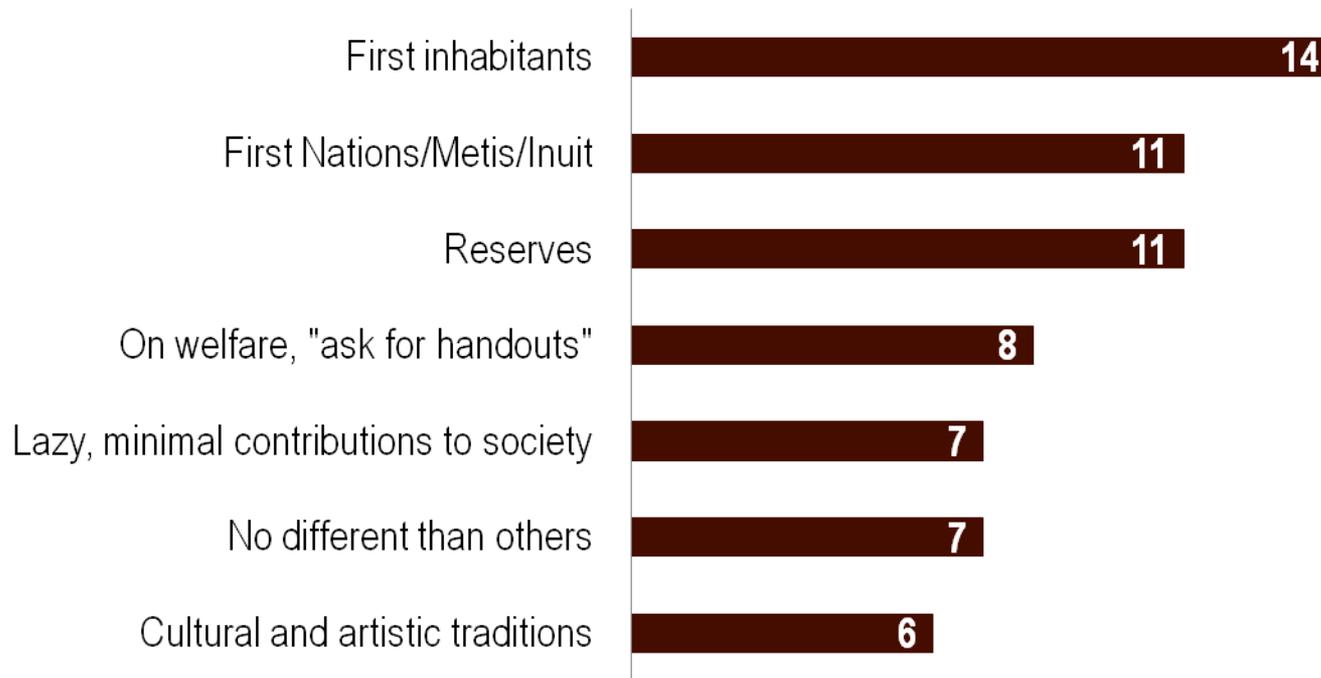




# Non-Aboriginal perspectives

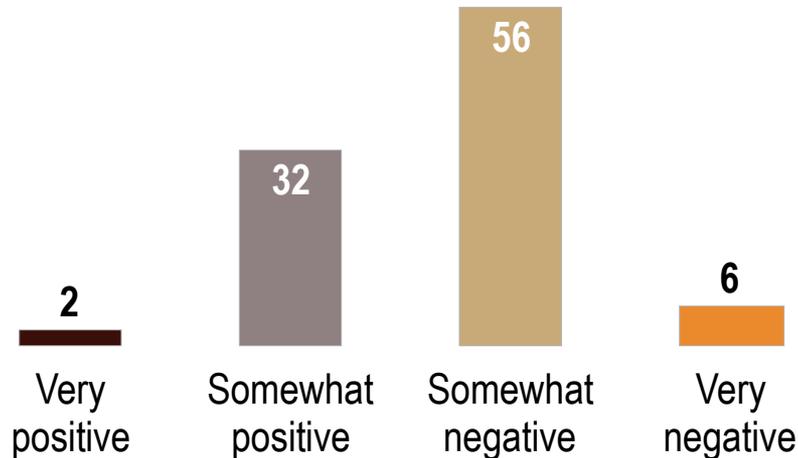
# NA first impressions are generally positive.

What first comes to mind when you think of Aboriginal people?



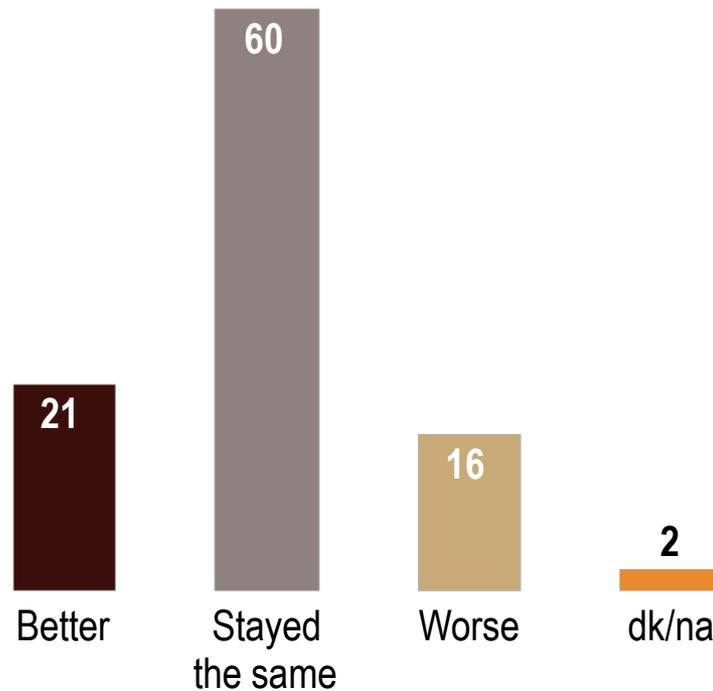
# A majority view current relations with Aboriginal people as being negative...

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?



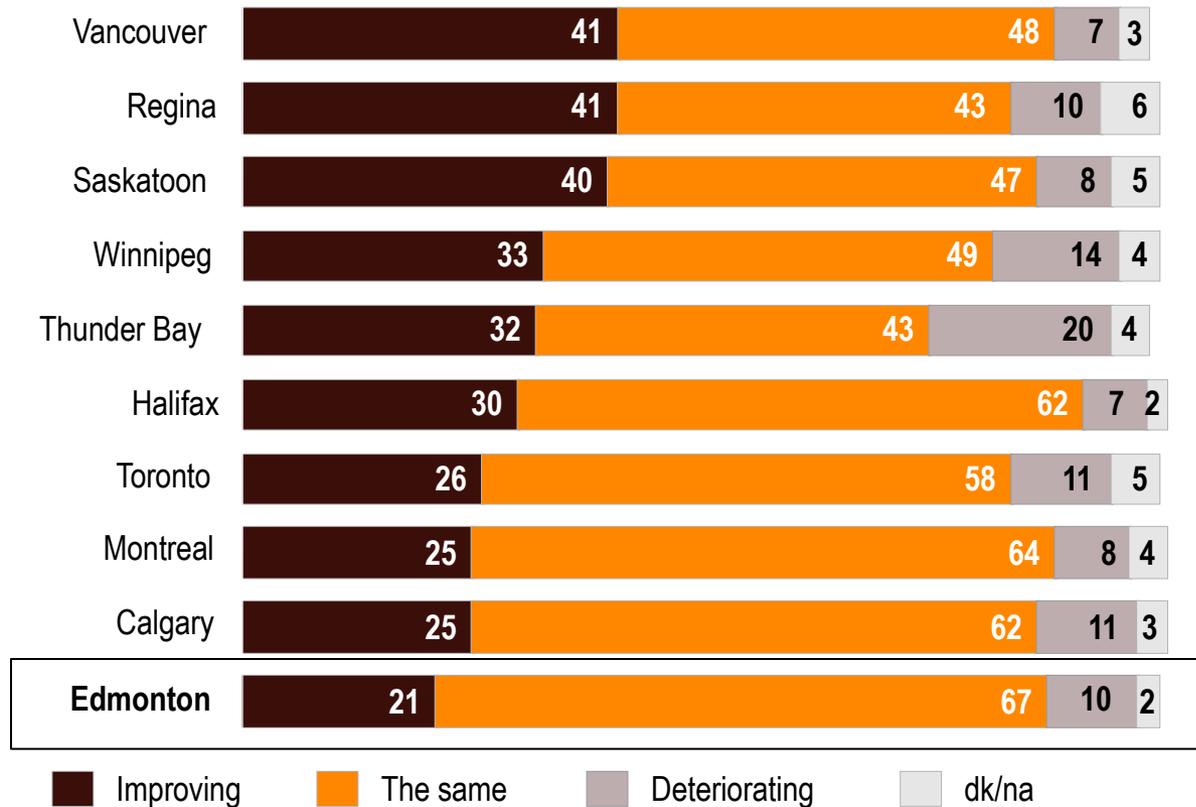
## ...and the impressions are not changing too much...

Over the past few years, has your impression of Aboriginal people gotten...



# ...the attitude in Edmonton is largely negative.

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



**... but, they do possess distinct perspectives,  
some more positive than others.**

**Dismissive Naysayers**  
(36%)

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

National (24%)

**Cultural Romantics**  
(41%)

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

National (45%)

**Inattentive Sceptics**  
(5%)

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

National (14%)

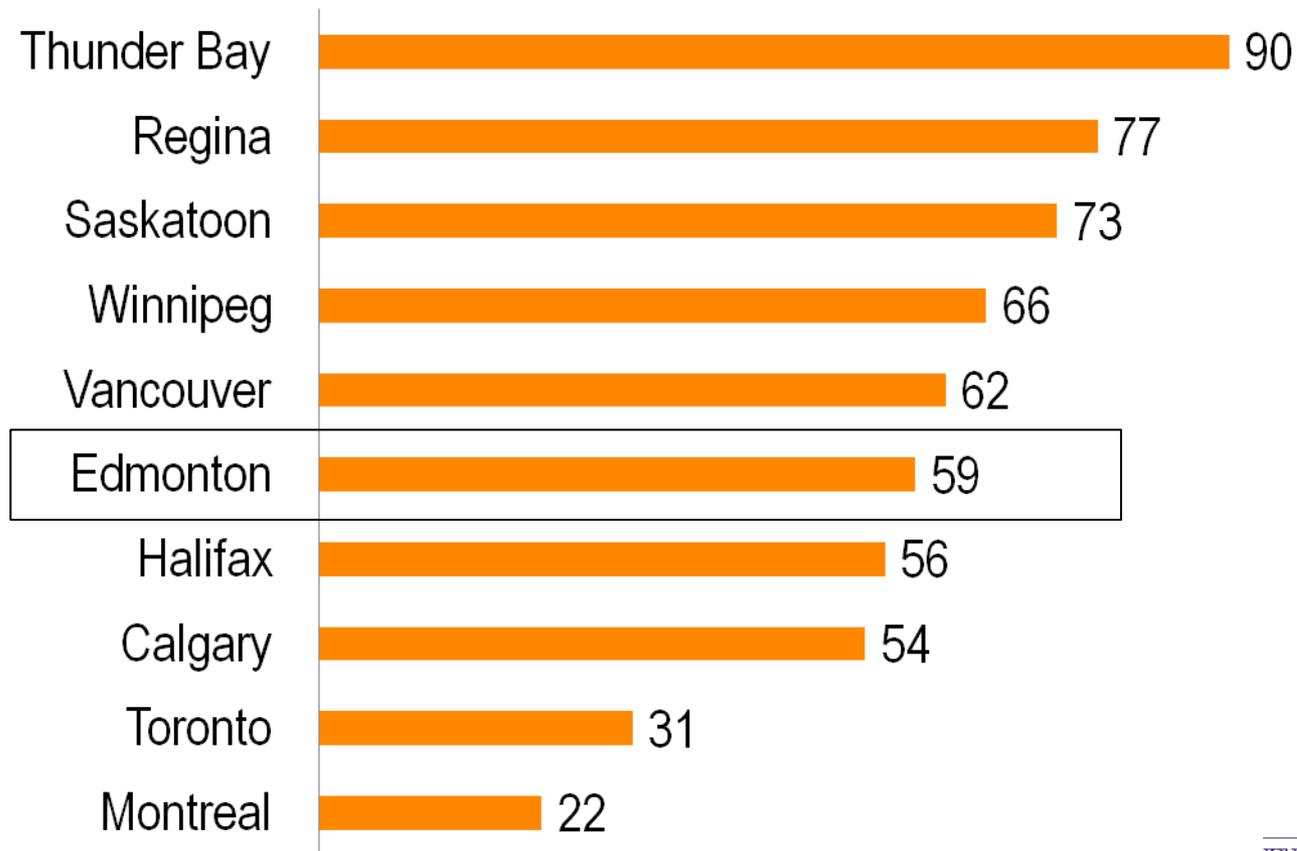
**Connected Advocates**  
(18%)

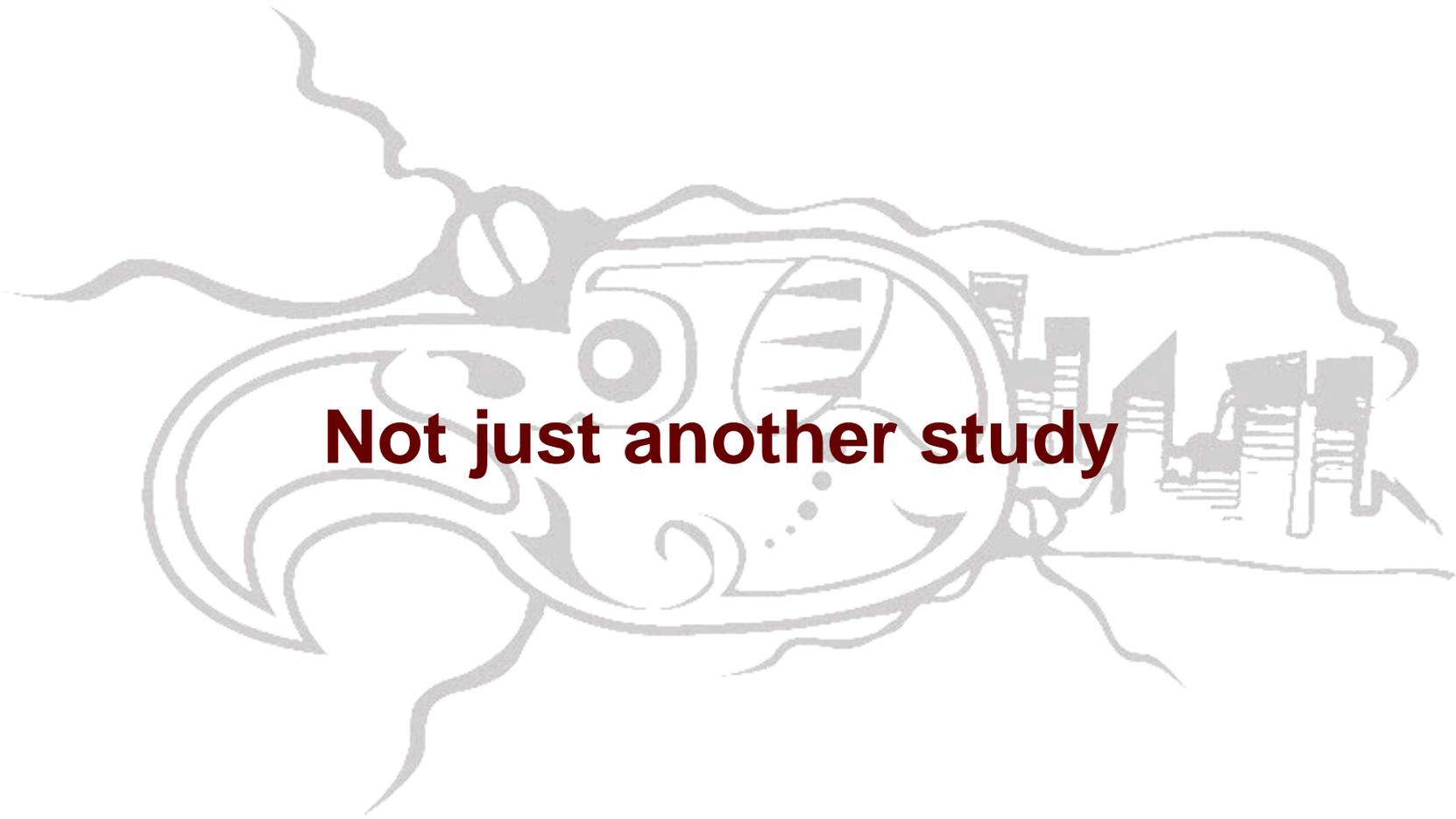
High level of contact and strong belief that Aboriginal peoples often experience discrimination.

National (17%)

# And there is a general awareness of the local urban Aboriginal community in the city.

Are you aware of an Aboriginal community in your city?  
(Either a physical area, neighbourhood, or social community.)





**Not just another study**

## Urban aboriginals strive to make significant difference in their communities, report says

But many first nations people feel negative preconceptions persist about addiction and poverty

BY KIM PEMBERTON, VANCOUVER SUN APRIL 7, 2010

## The city is home

THE OTTAWA CITIZEN APRIL 13, 2010

A funny thing happened when interviewers set out to talk to Metis, Inuit and First Nations residents in cities: they discovered a sense of optimism.

The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study from the Environics Institute shows a picture of aboriginal Canadians that shatters stereotypes.

CANADA  
**Hope in the city**

## Most urban aboriginal people opt to stay in city

Last Updated: Tuesday, April 6, 2010 | 10:48 AM ET  
Comments 290 Recommend 146  
CBC News

Winnipeg Free Press - PRINT EDITION

## Urban natives content: study

Survey shows happiness in white society, lingering stereotype fears

NEWS: Nunavut April 06, 2010 - 2:58 pm

Urban Inuit aspire to the “good life,” study says  
Most have no plans to return to north

## Aboriginal urbanites aspire first to higher education

Environics research finds that postsecondary learning is viewed as route to empowerment.

# Evidence of success

- Successful completion of the research
- Legitimacy with Aboriginal community
- Policy impact to date
- Building Aboriginal research capacity

# Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study



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UAPS participant voices, produced by INCA, First Nations University

[See All Videos »](#)

## This study is about the future, not the past.

The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study is an extensive new research study that has gone beyond the numbers to capture the values, experiences and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples living in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and Ottawa.

Speaking directly with a representative group of 2,614 First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit living in these major Canadian cities, as well as 2,501 non-Aboriginal Canadians, the Environics Institute, led by **Michael Adams**, has released the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study, which offers Canadians a new perspective of their Aboriginal neighbours. Guided by an Advisory Circle, Aboriginal people designed the research themes, methodology, and executed the main survey.

[Click here for the UAPS report summary, full report, or quick key findings from the study.](#)

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- **UN PERMANENT FORUM**  
April 21, 2010  
United Nations, New York » [more](#)
- **INCLUSION WORKS 2010**  
April 29, 2010  
Aboriginal Human Resources Council, Toronto  
» [more](#)

[» See All Events](#)

### NEWS

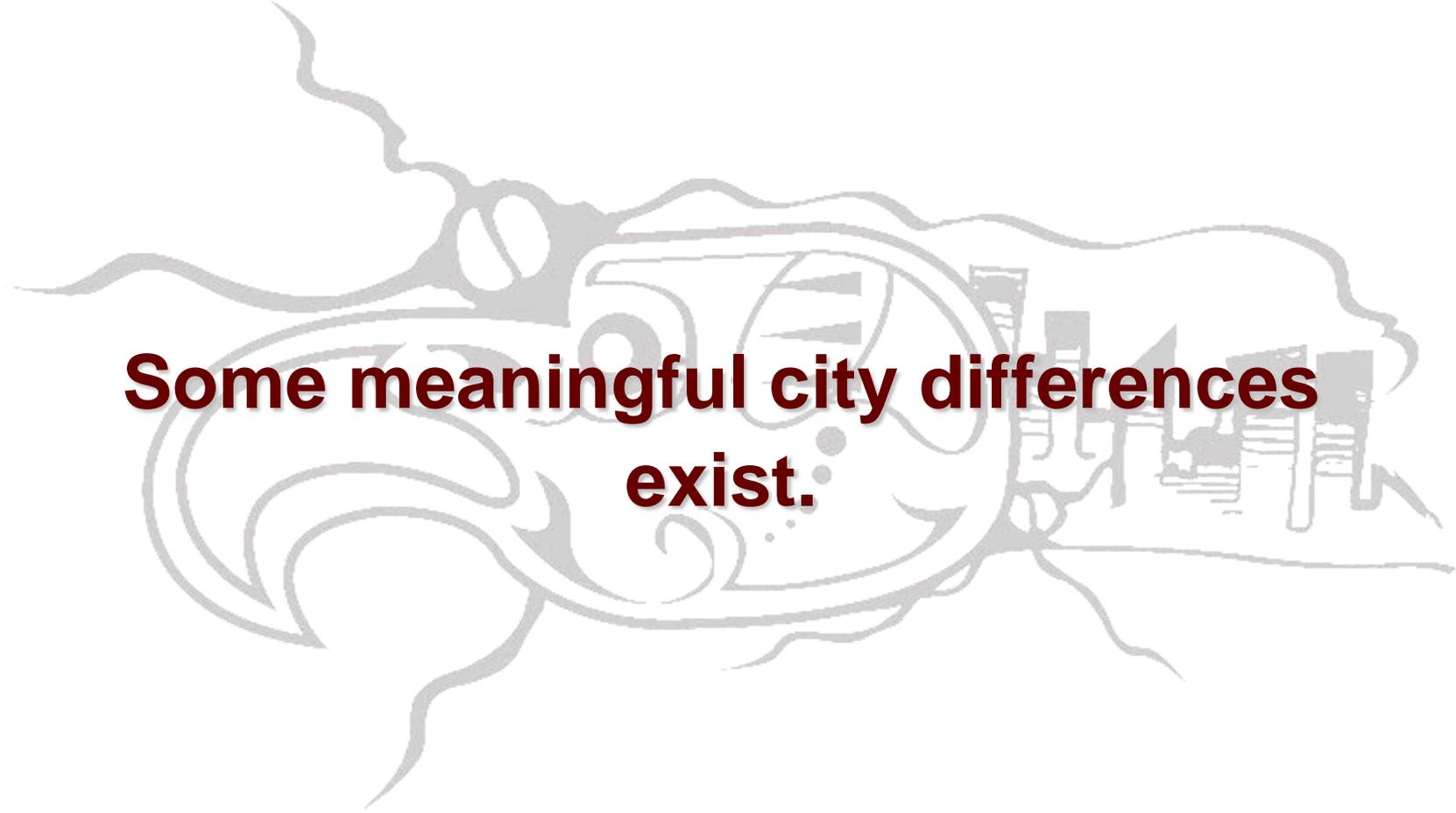
- **IT'S TIME FOR US TO WORK TOGETHER WITH OUR ABORIGINAL NEIGHBOURS**  
*Globe and Mail, April 23, 2010* » [more](#)
- **NATIVE IDENTITY DOES NOT GET LOST IN THE CITY**  
*Globe and Mail, April 19, 2010* » [more](#)

[» See All News](#)

### REGISTER FOR EMAILS

Email:

[www.uaps.ca](http://www.uaps.ca)



**Some meaningful city differences  
exist.**

# City differences

Who is **most** satisfied with life in their city?

**Vancouver and Halifax**

Who is **most** likely to believe they can make their city a better place to live?

**Toronto and Vancouver**

Who is **least** likely to say Aboriginal cultural activities are available?

**Calgary, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina**

Who is **least** confident in the criminal justice system?

**Edmonton and Toronto**

Who is **most** likely to believe they are perceived negatively?

**Edmonton**

Who is **least** likely to feel accepted by their non-Aboriginal neighbours?

**Saskatoon and Regina**

Thanks to the support of our generous local funders, with whom this study is made possible.



**United Way**  
Alberta Capital Region



**Indian and Northern  
Affairs Canada**