



# Urban Aboriginal Voices:

A Landmark Study of Canada's Urban Aboriginal Peoples

Toronto Findings

Wednesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011

ENVIRONICS  
• INSTITUTE •

# The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study (UAPS)...

- Landmark survey research project of national scope
- Conducted with First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit living in major Canadian cities
- Focuses on values, experiences, identities and aspirations (vs. economic and social statistics)

# Objectives of UAPS

- 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

# 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



# 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
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- Peter Menzies Centre for Addiction Mental Health
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- 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

# Execution

- Toronto research conducted by Douglas Sinclair and a committed team of community interviewers
- Aboriginal organizations, agencies and Friendship centres
- Three separate research elements:
  - Aboriginal survey, non-Aboriginal survey, survey of National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation scholars
- UAPS video archive (First Nations University)

# Adapting research methods to fit

- Quota sampling based on 2006 Census profiles
  - Identity: First Nations/Métis/Inuit, Gender, Age, Education
- Range of methods to recruit eligible respondents
- In-person interviews
  - 1-2 hours in length
  - 150 questions

# Toronto UAPS respondent profile

	Actual (Unweighted)(#)	Weighted (%)
First Nations	174	69
Métis	68	31
Inuit	9	*
18-24	38	14
25-44	123	50
45+	90	36
Men	91	40
Women	137	52
Two-spirited	23	8
No degree	33	22
High school completed	90	27
College diploma	70	35
University degree	57	15



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

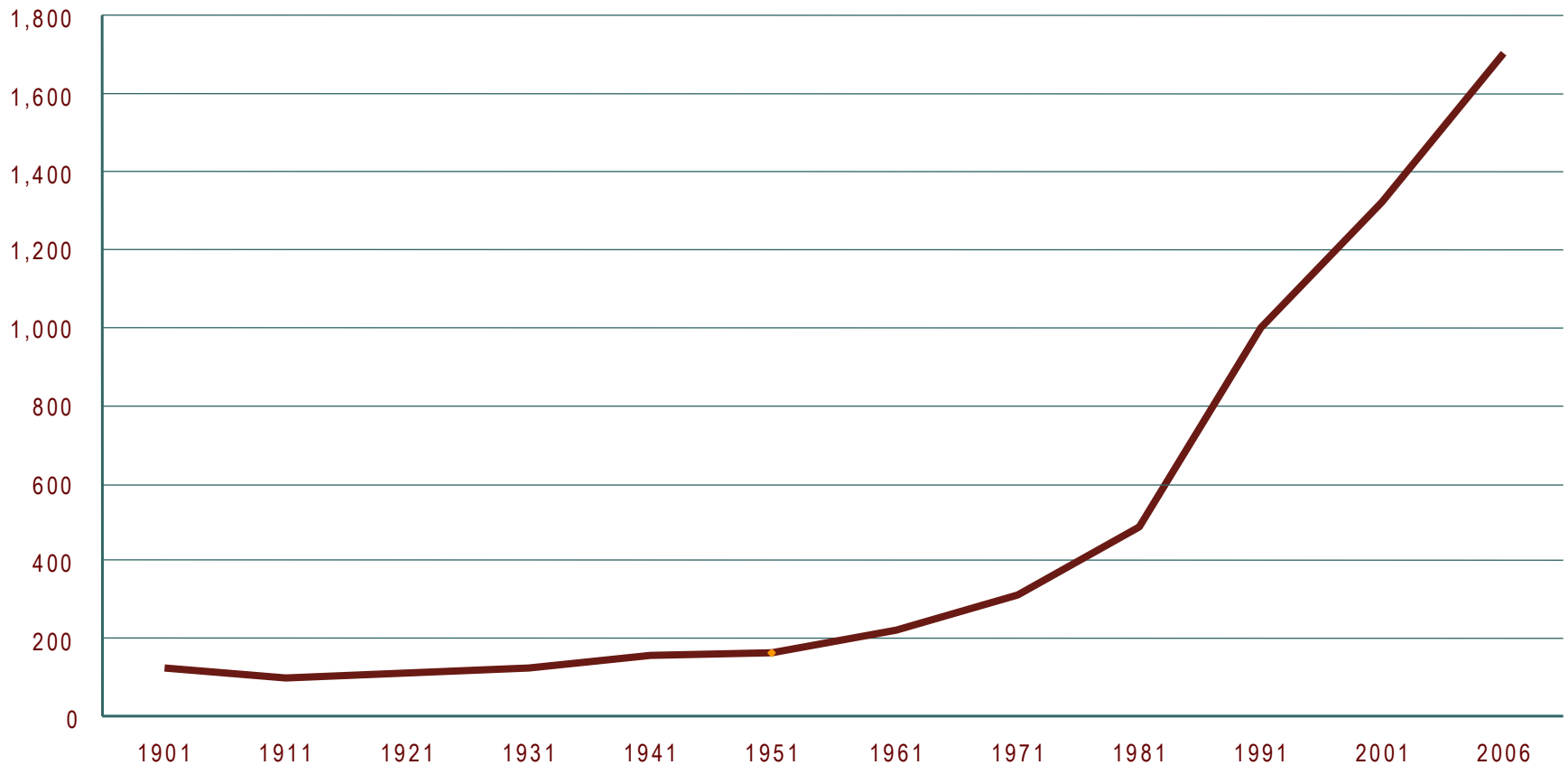


# Why we need to pay attention

- 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

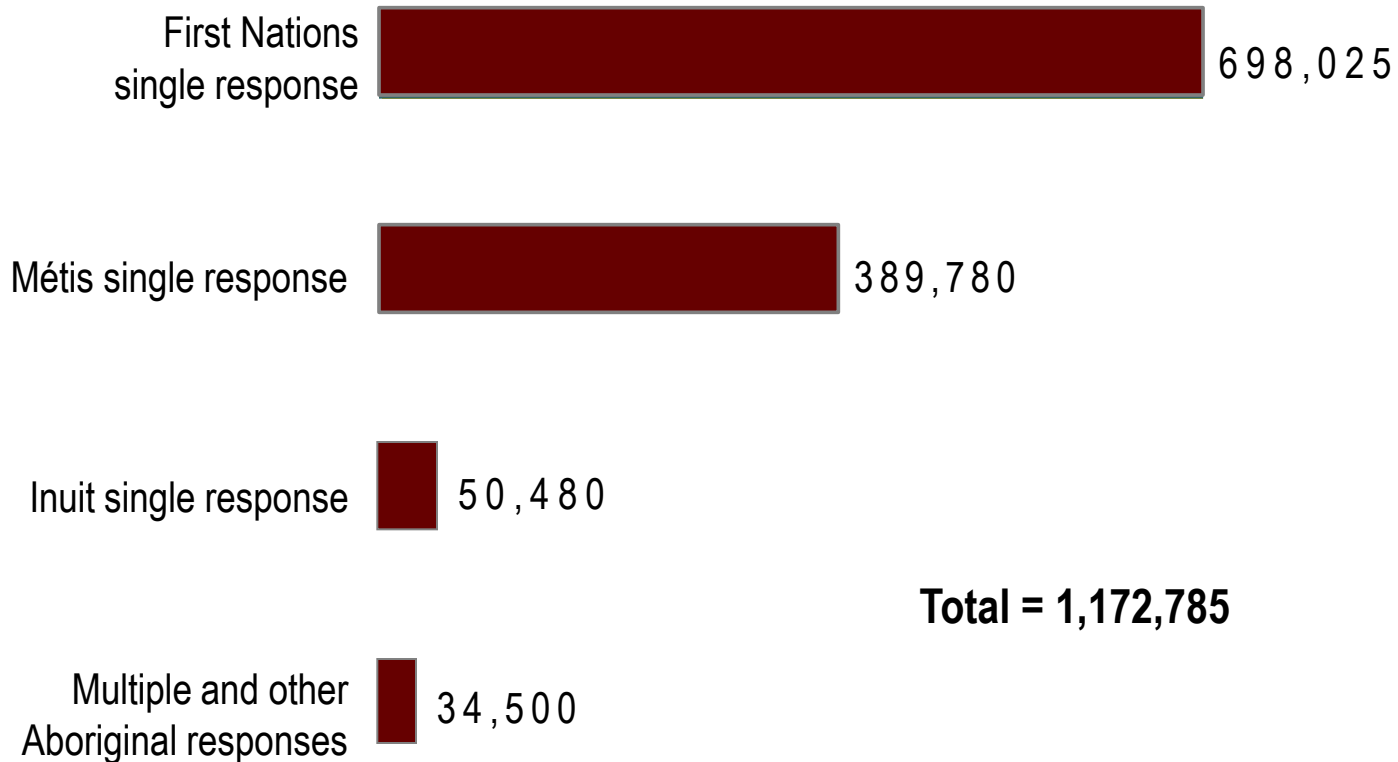
# Canadian population at 33 million in 2006, with nearly 1.8 million reporting Aboriginal ancestry

## Aboriginal Ancestry Population

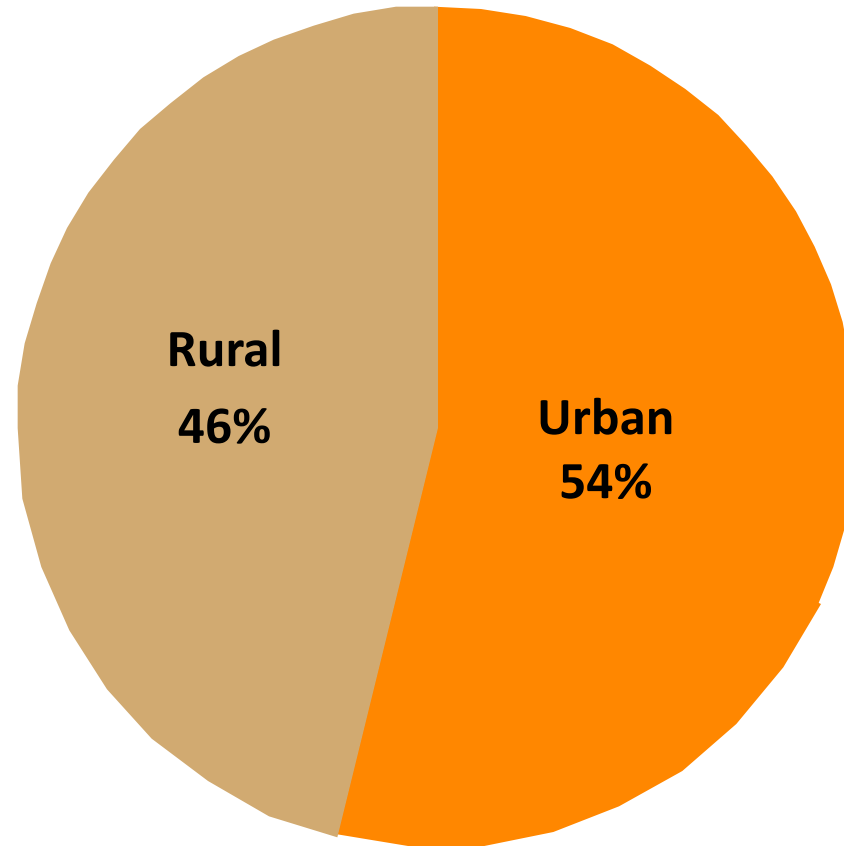


# Of these, 1.2 million report Aboriginal identity, in three distinct groups

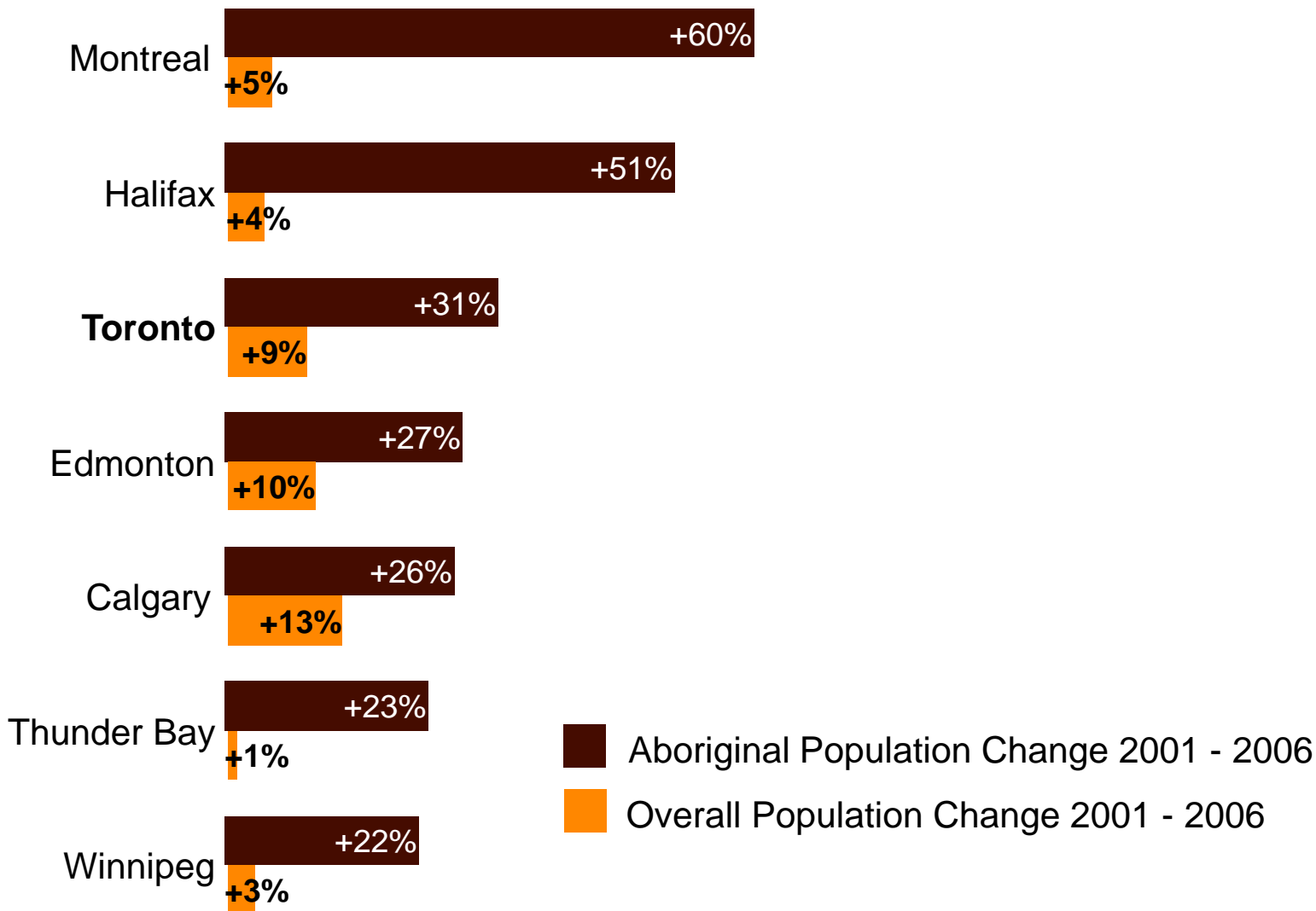
## Aboriginal Identity Population




# 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)**



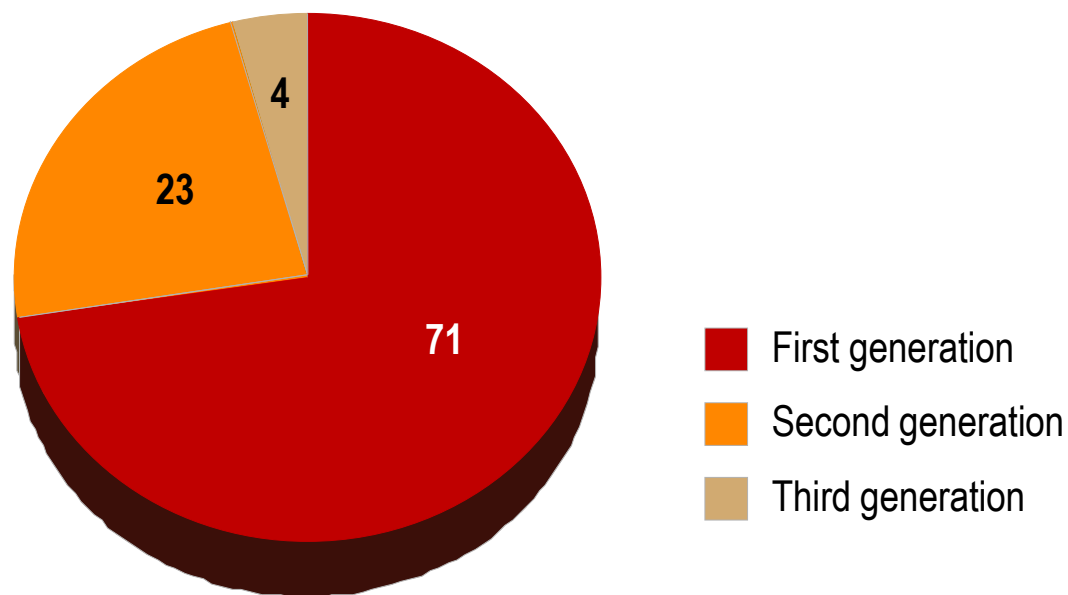


The Enchanted Owl: Stone Owl 1980: Cape Girardeau: Duffin Island 1980: Momojudo

## Research Findings



# The majority of Aboriginal Torontonians are first generation residents.



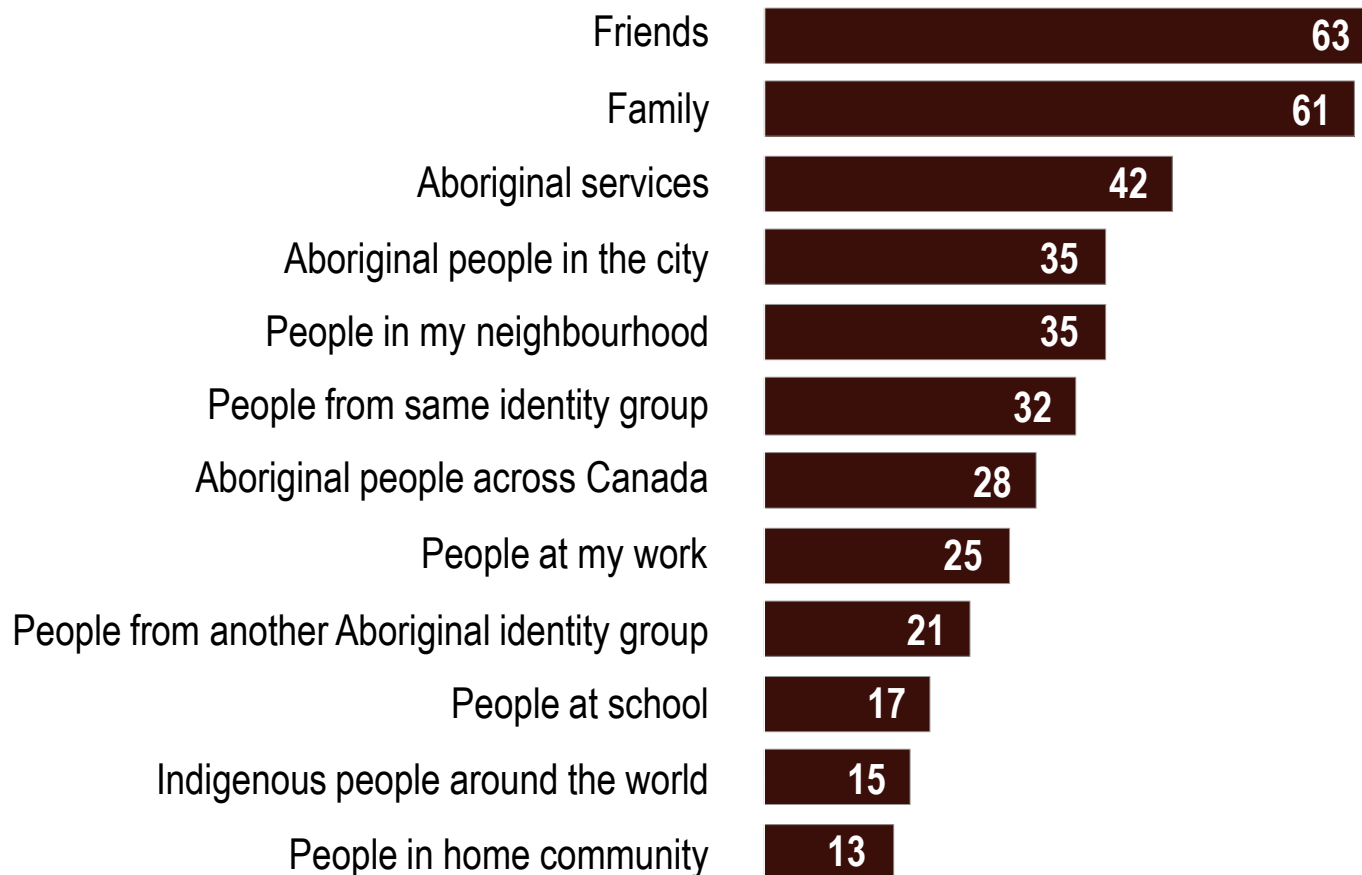
# Many feel they belong to a diverse community within Toronto.

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



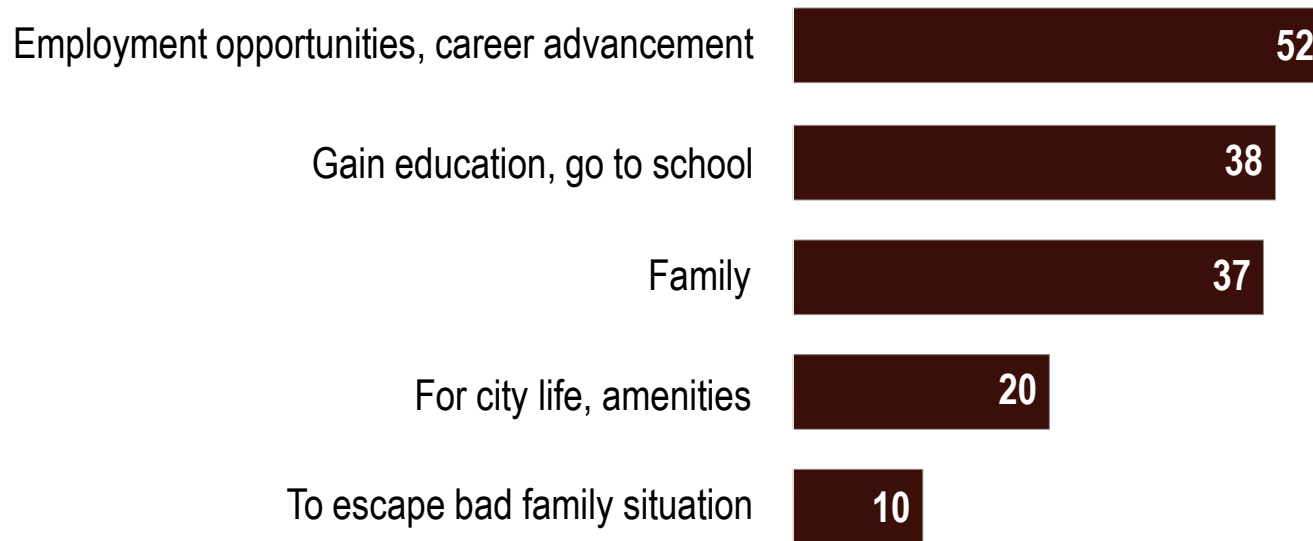
# Definitions of the urban community for Aboriginal Torontonians.

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



# They move to Toronto to take advantage of the opportunities for quality of life.

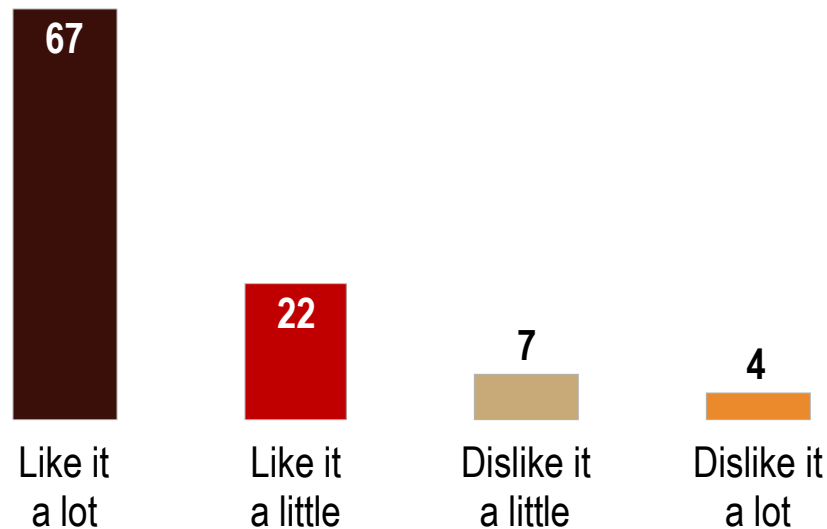
What is the most important reason why you first moved to Toronto?\*



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

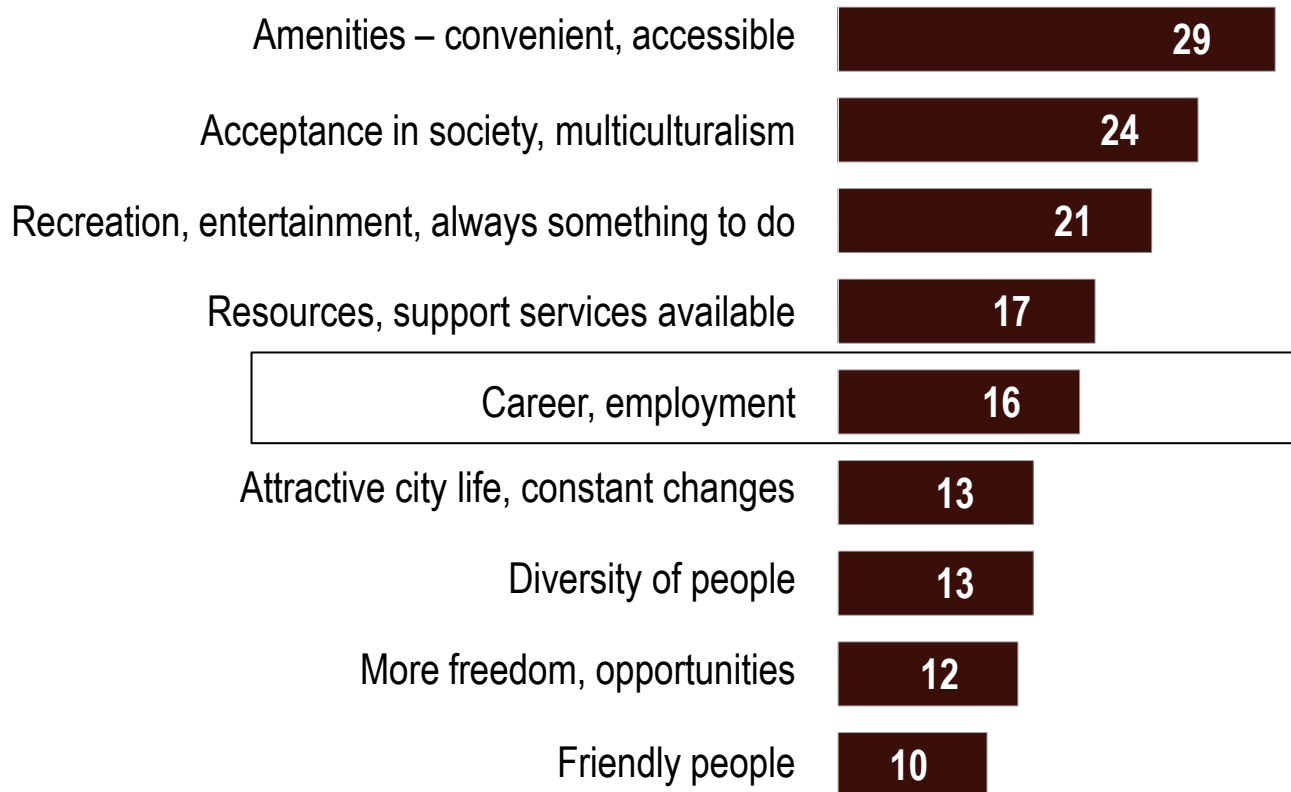
## And they like living in Toronto.

How much do you like living in Toronto?



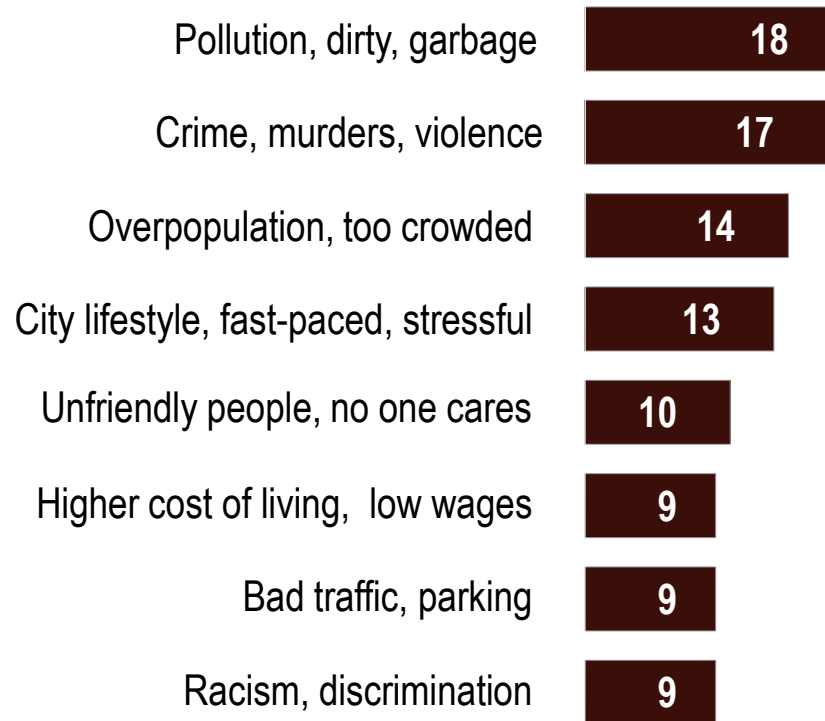
# Many enjoy big city life...

What is it you like most about living here?



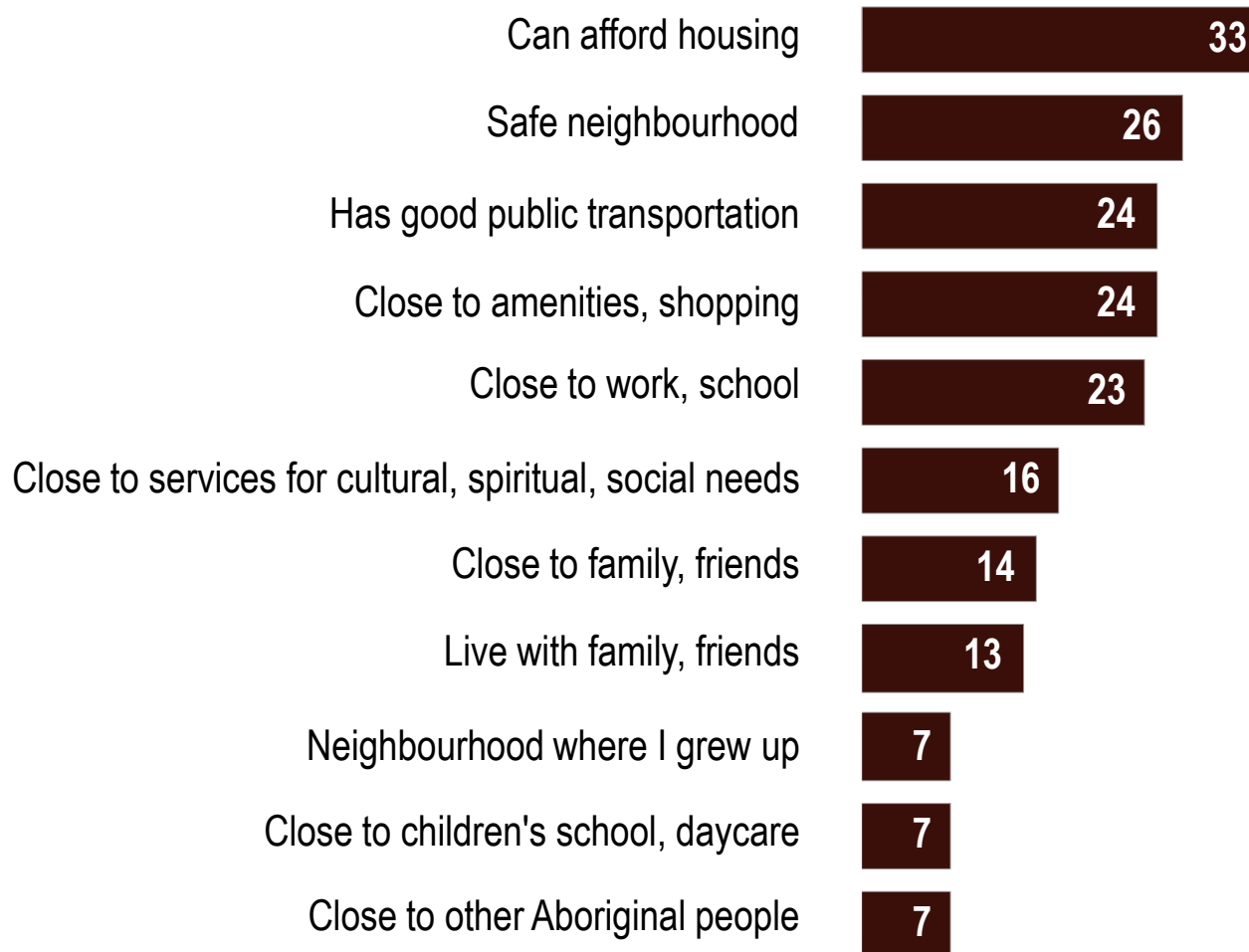
## ...but don't feel safe and dislike the urban pressures that life in a big city brings.

And what do you like least about living here?



# Affordable and safe housing are the main reasons for neighbourhood choice.

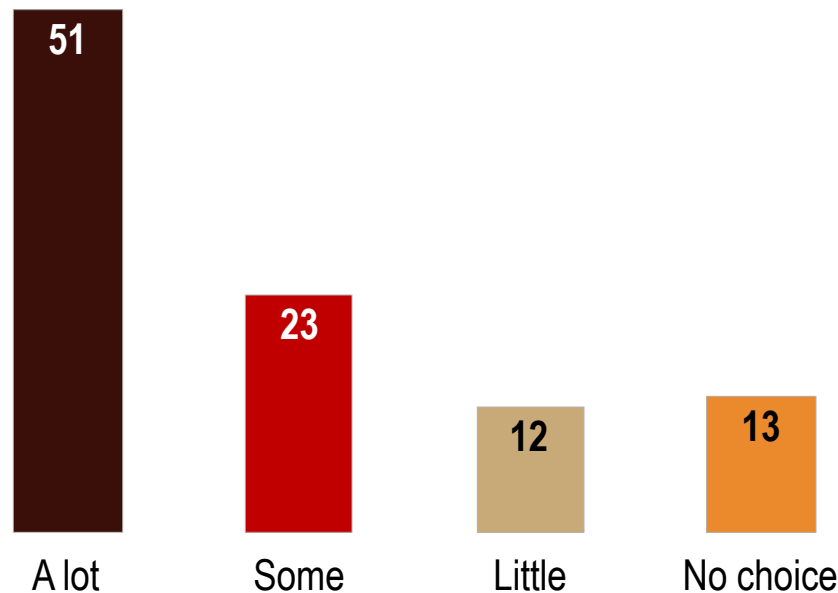
Why do you live in the neighbourhood you do?





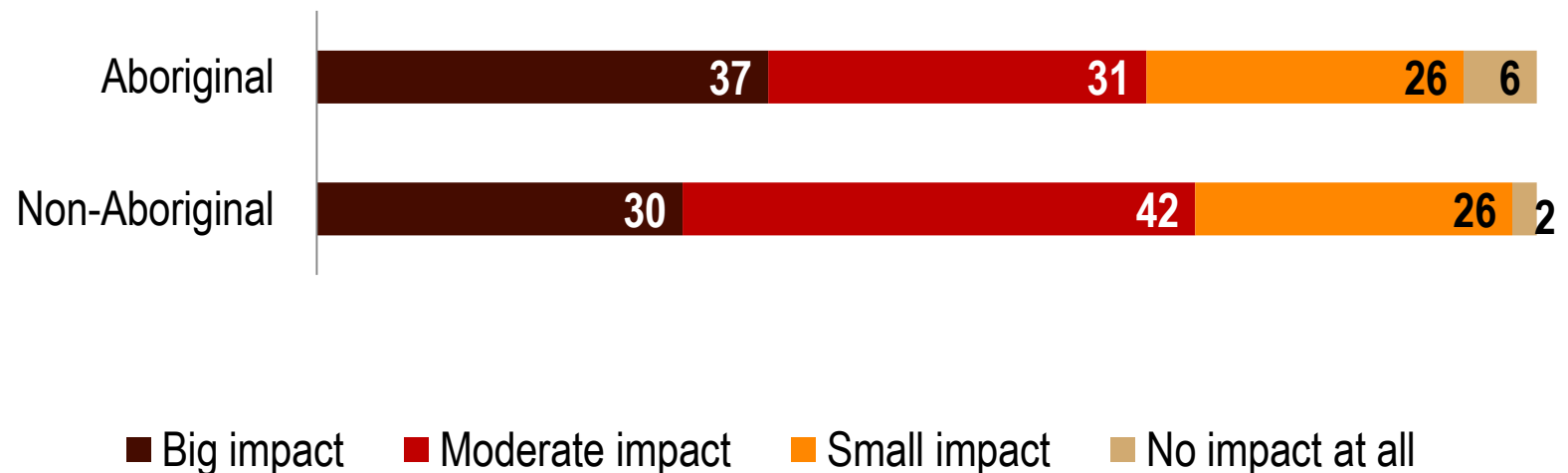
## Despite the cost of housing, many feel that they have choice in where they live.

To what extent do you feel you have a choice about the neighbourhood you live in?



## And many feel that they can make a difference in making Toronto a better place to live.

Overall, how much impact do you think people like you can have in making your city a better place to live?

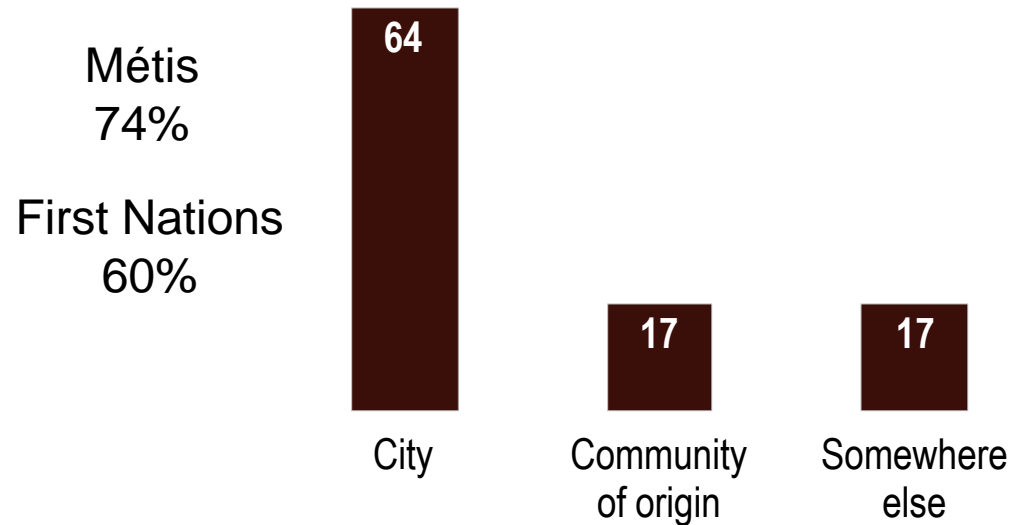


Aboriginal people are *not* rooted in remote communities



# Most feel that the City of Toronto is home.

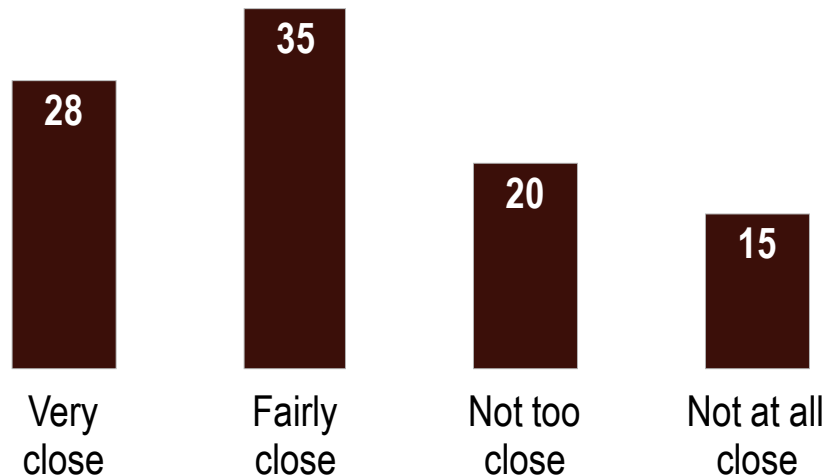
Where is home for you? Is it your city of residence, your home community, or somewhere else?



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

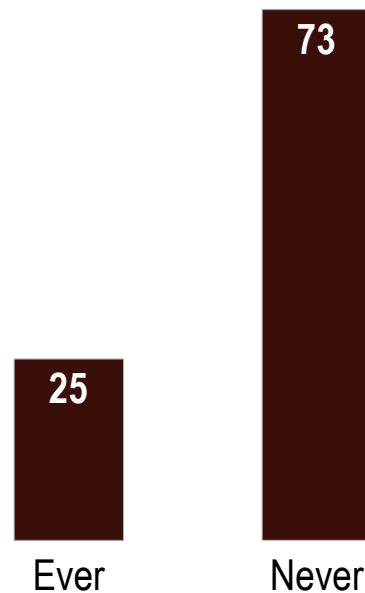
# The connection to *home* remains strong, but there is disconnect.

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



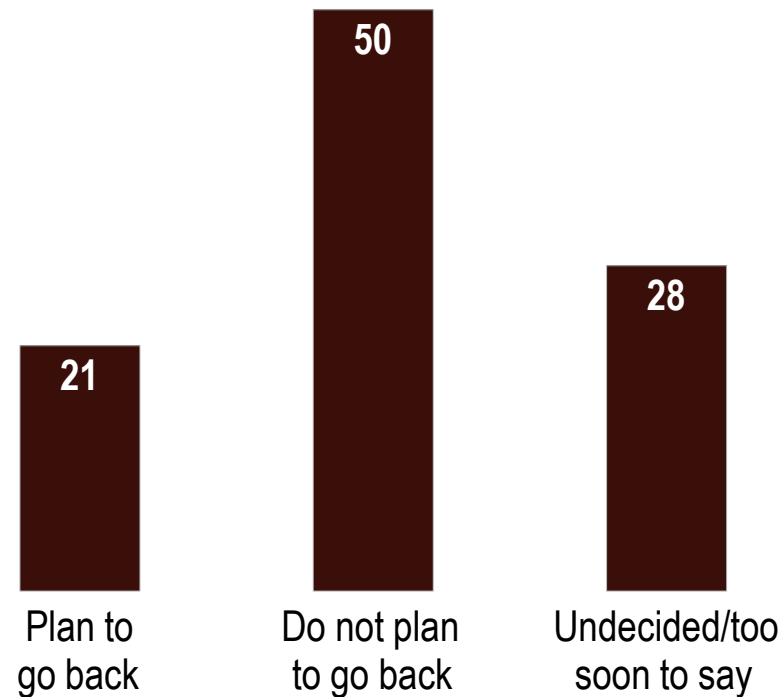
# A majority have never moved back to their community since moving to Toronto.

Since you first moved to Toronto, have you ever moved back to your home community?



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

Do you plan to go back to live in your home community/place where your parents/grandparents are from permanently one day, or not?





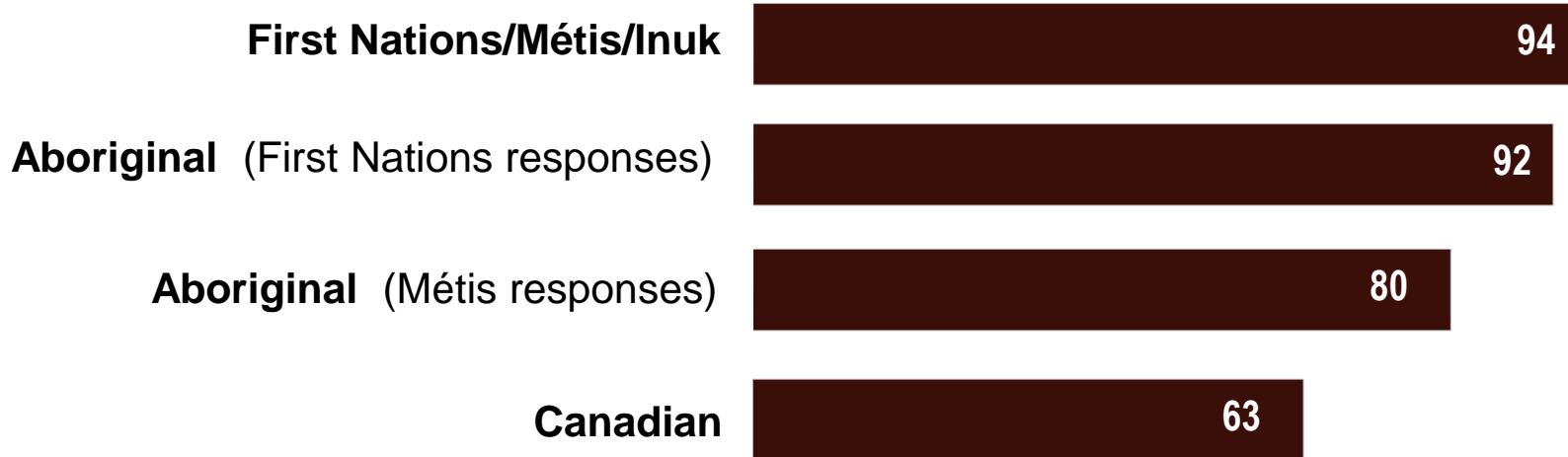
# Identity and Culture





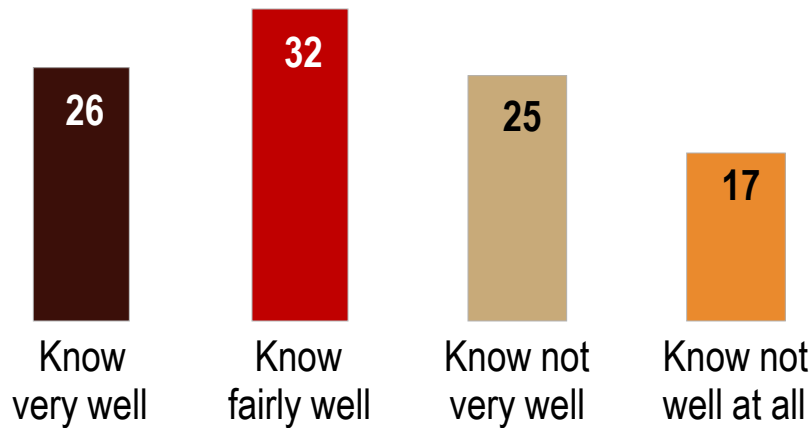
# There is strong Indigenous pride... ...and pride in Canada.

Would you say you are very proud to be ...



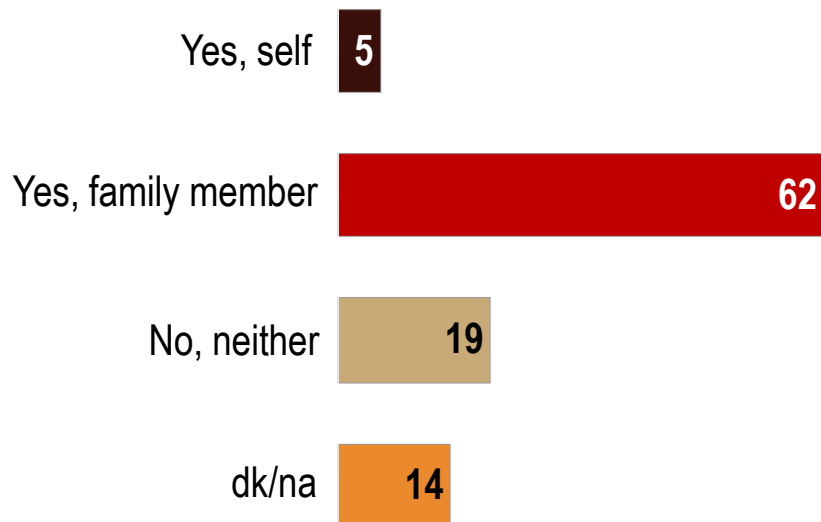
## And the majority has a connection to their heritage, although some do not.

How well do you know your family tree, that is, who your Aboriginal ancestors are?



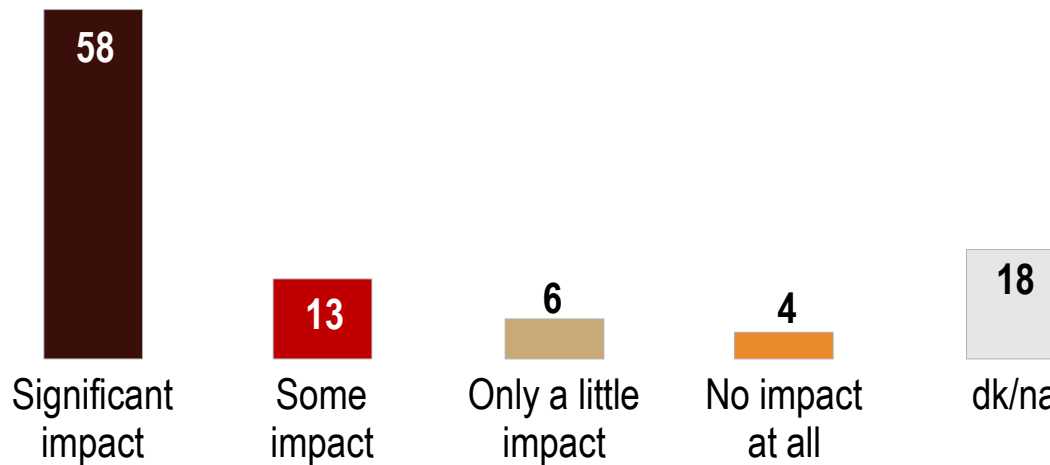
# Many have been personally affected by Residential Schools.

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



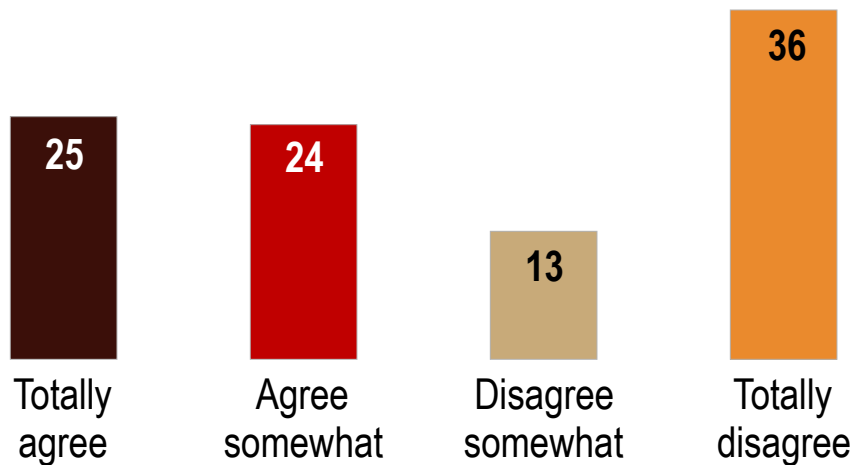
## And it continues to significantly impact them today.

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



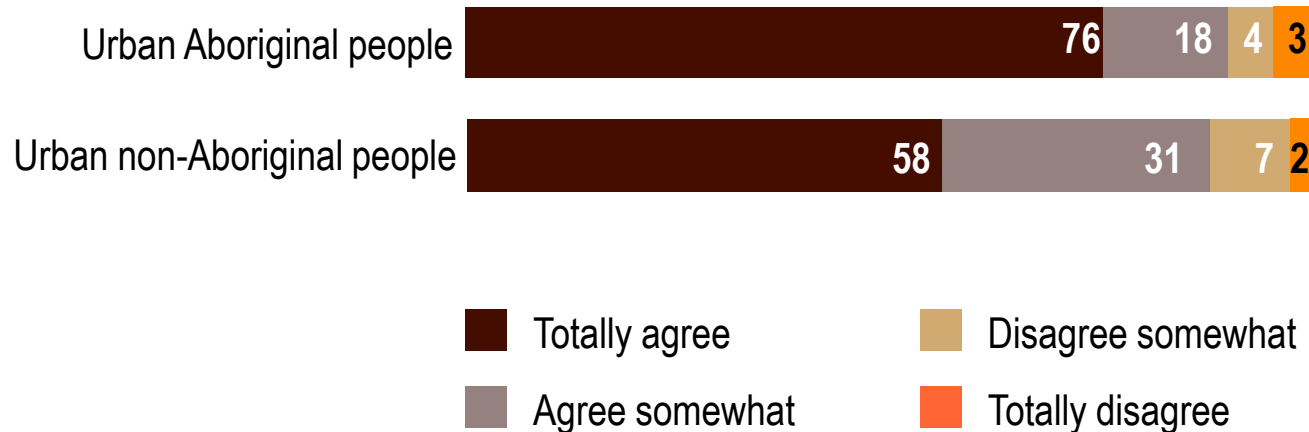
## Those who say they are concerned about *losing* their cultures are in the minority...

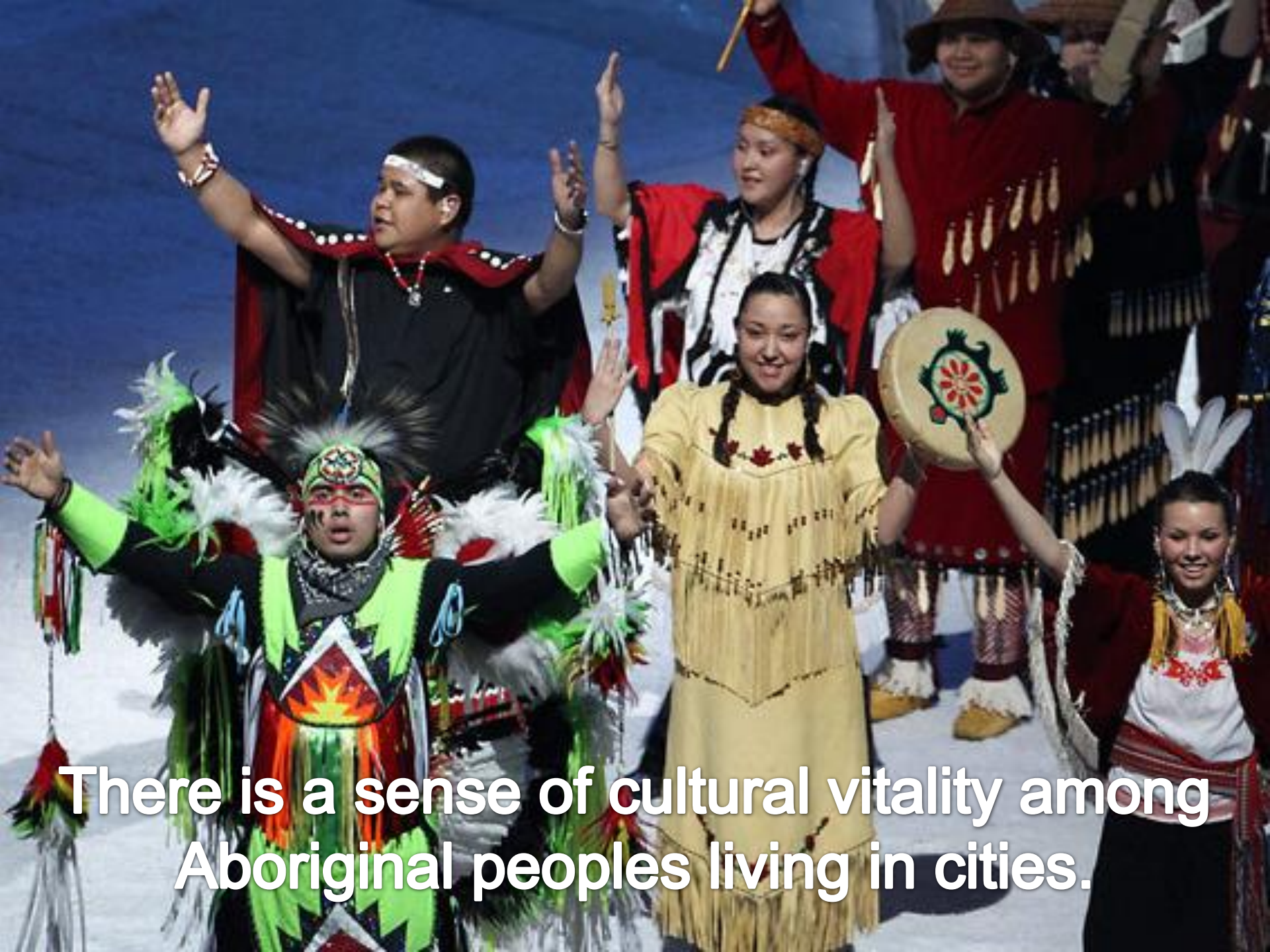
*"I am concerned about losing my cultural identity."*



**... and a large majority embrace pluralism...  
even more so than non-Aboriginal Canadians.**

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

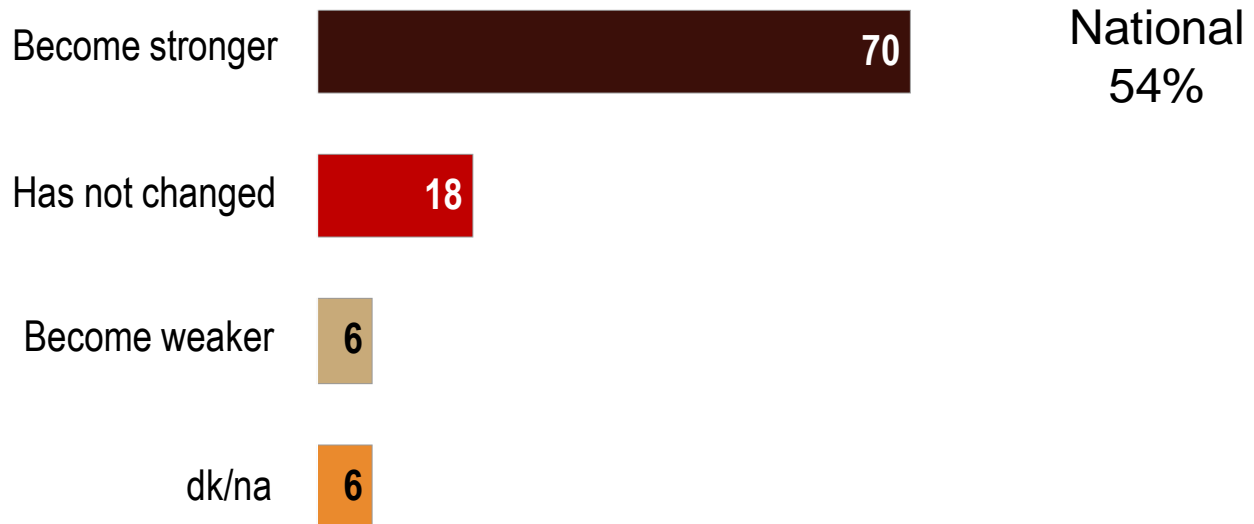




There is a sense of cultural vitality among  
Aboriginal peoples living in cities.

# A majority feel that Aboriginal culture in Toronto has grown stronger than weaker.

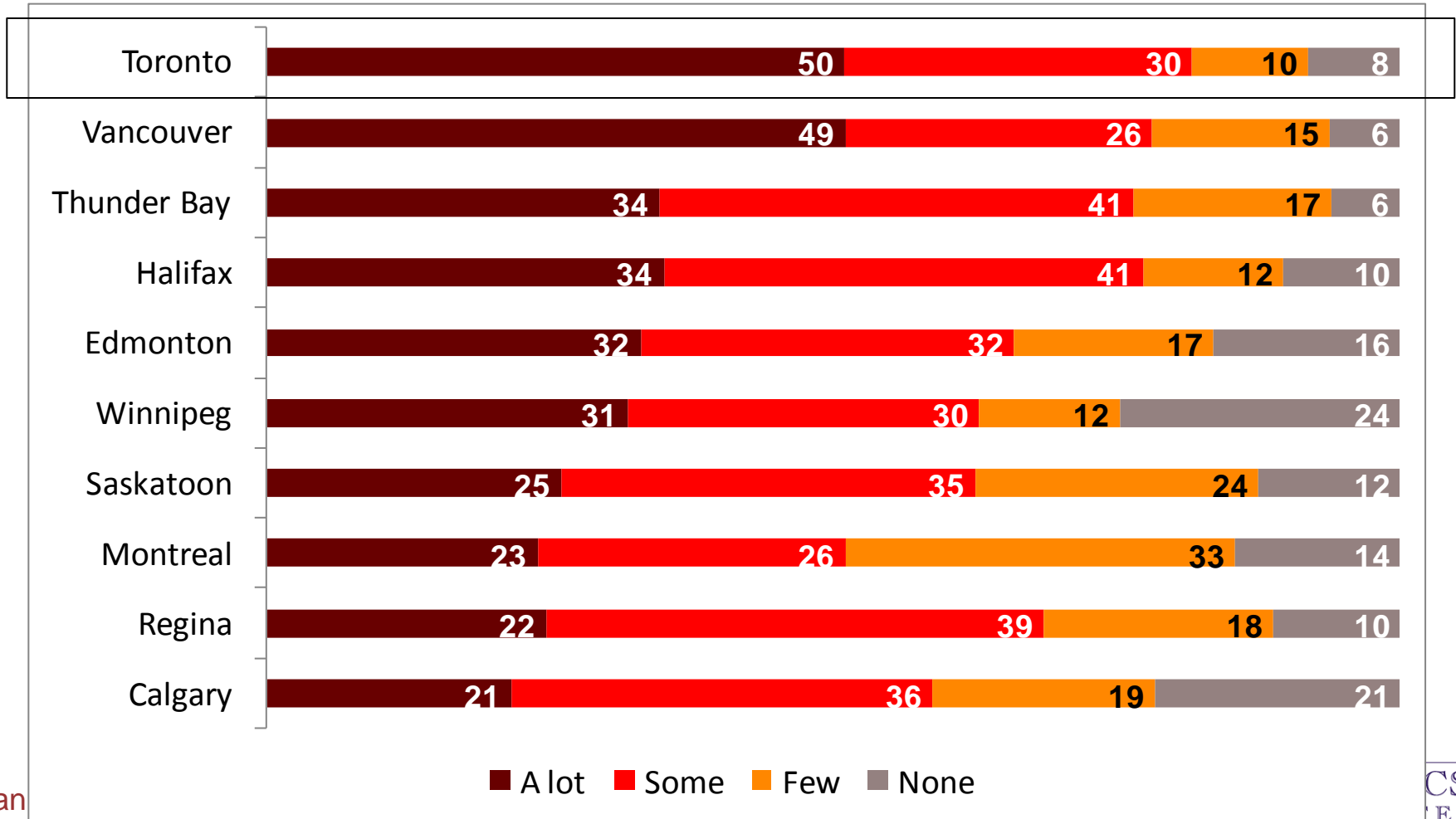
In the last five years, do you think that Aboriginal culture in your community has become stronger, become weaker or has not changed?





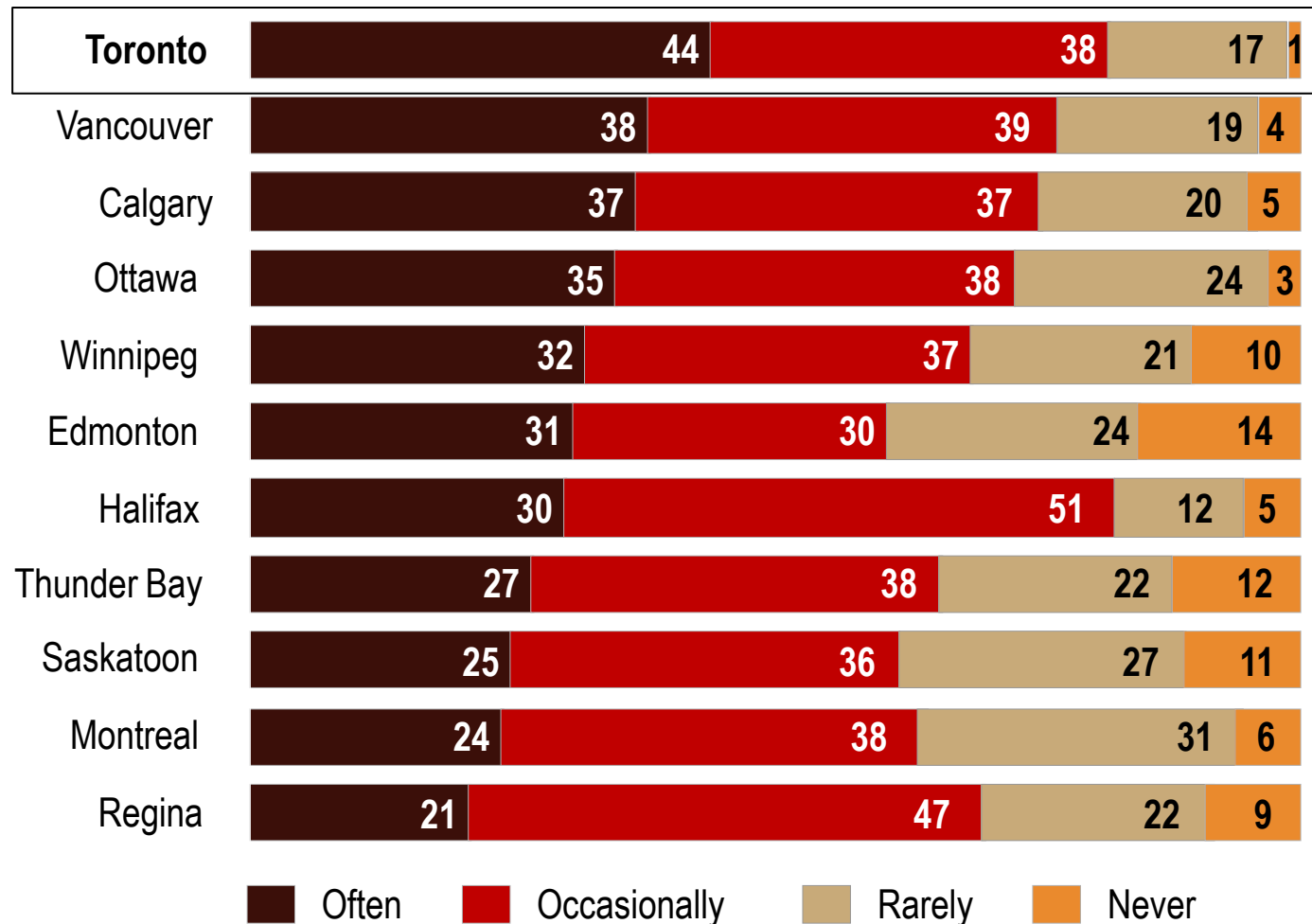
# Many are aware of cultural activities within the city, although some are not.

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



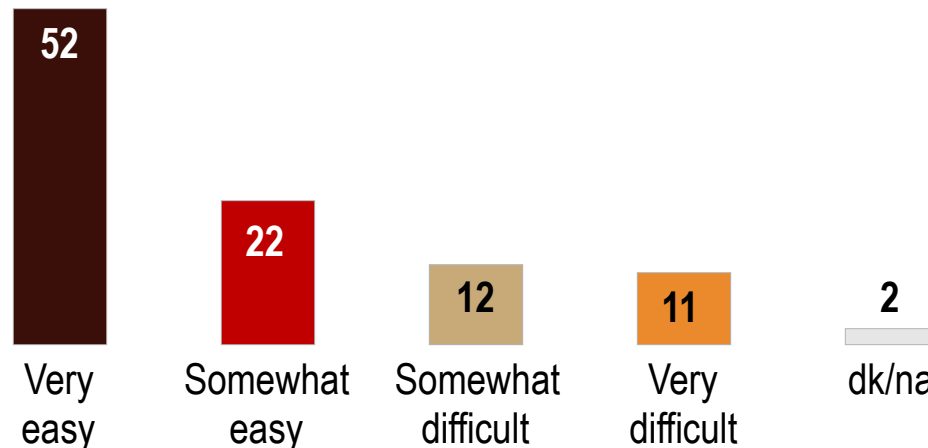
# And still Aboriginal Torontonians *often* participate in cultural activities.

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



## They also feel they have access to traditional healing supports.

How easy or difficult is it for you to access traditional healing practices, such as natural medicines, healing circles and other ceremonies, and the counsel of elders?

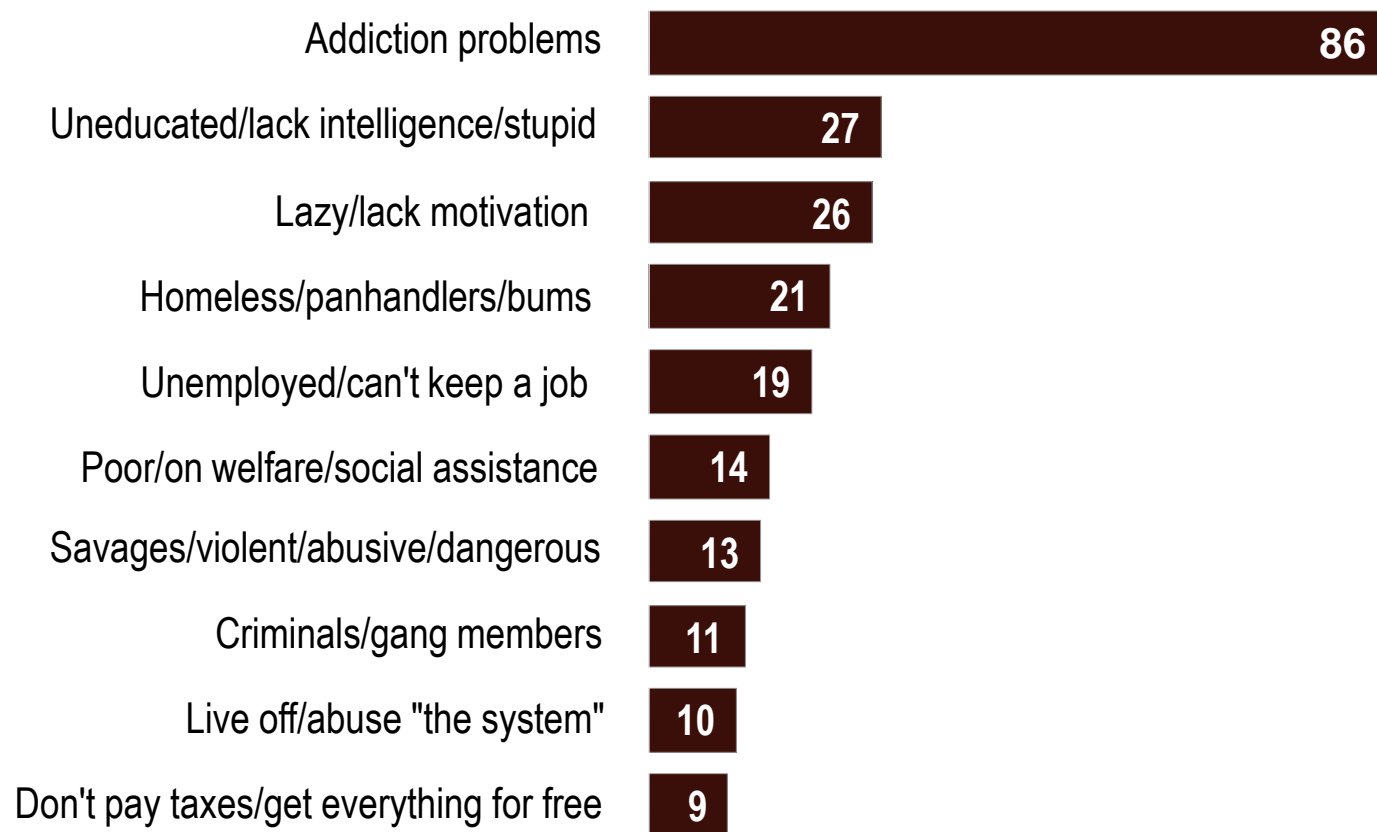




**The picture is far from perfect...**

# Many Aboriginal Torontonians feel that 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.

	% Agree	% Disagree
"I think others behave in an unfair/negative way toward Aboriginal people"	<b>90</b>	9
"I have been teased/insulted because of my Aboriginal background"	<b>78</b>	18

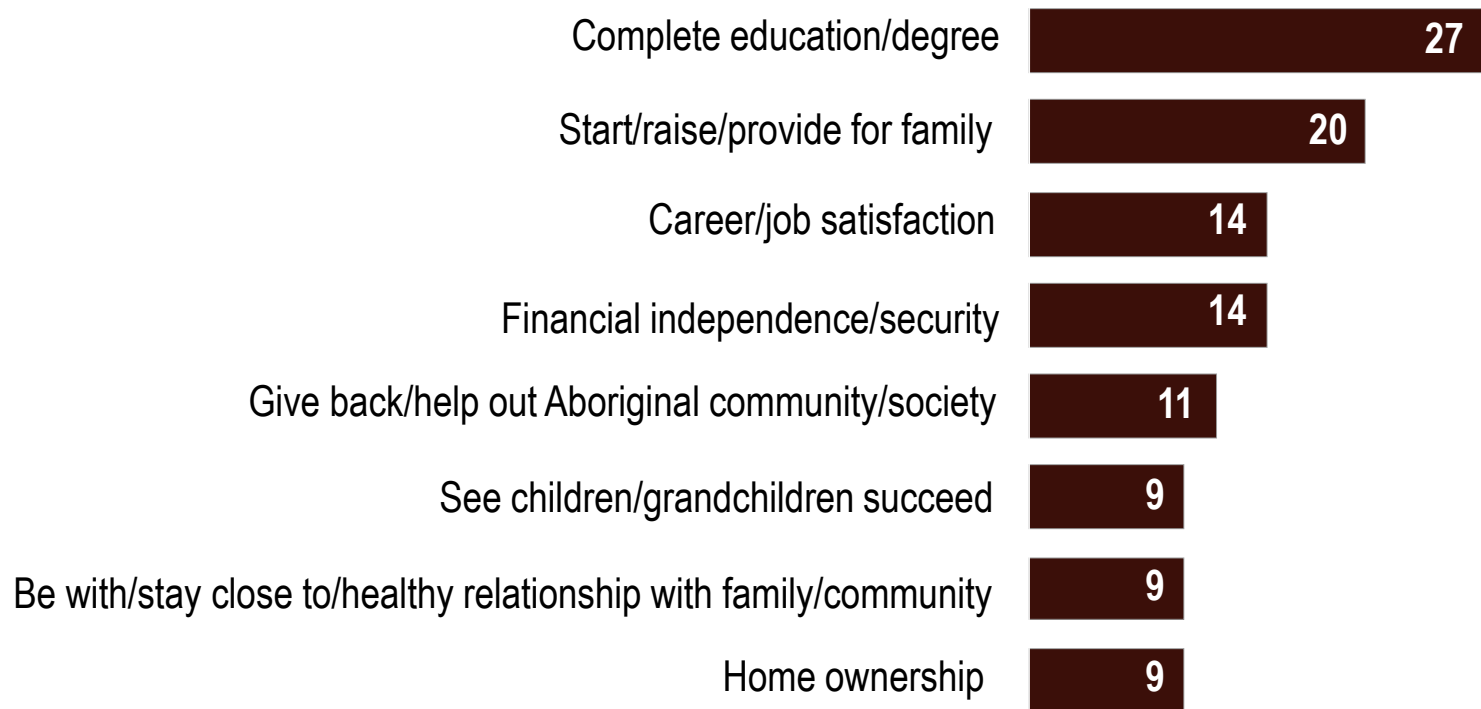


**Education is the enduring  
aspiration for urban Aboriginal  
peoples and their children.**



# Aboriginal Torontonians desire to be successful in mainstream ways...

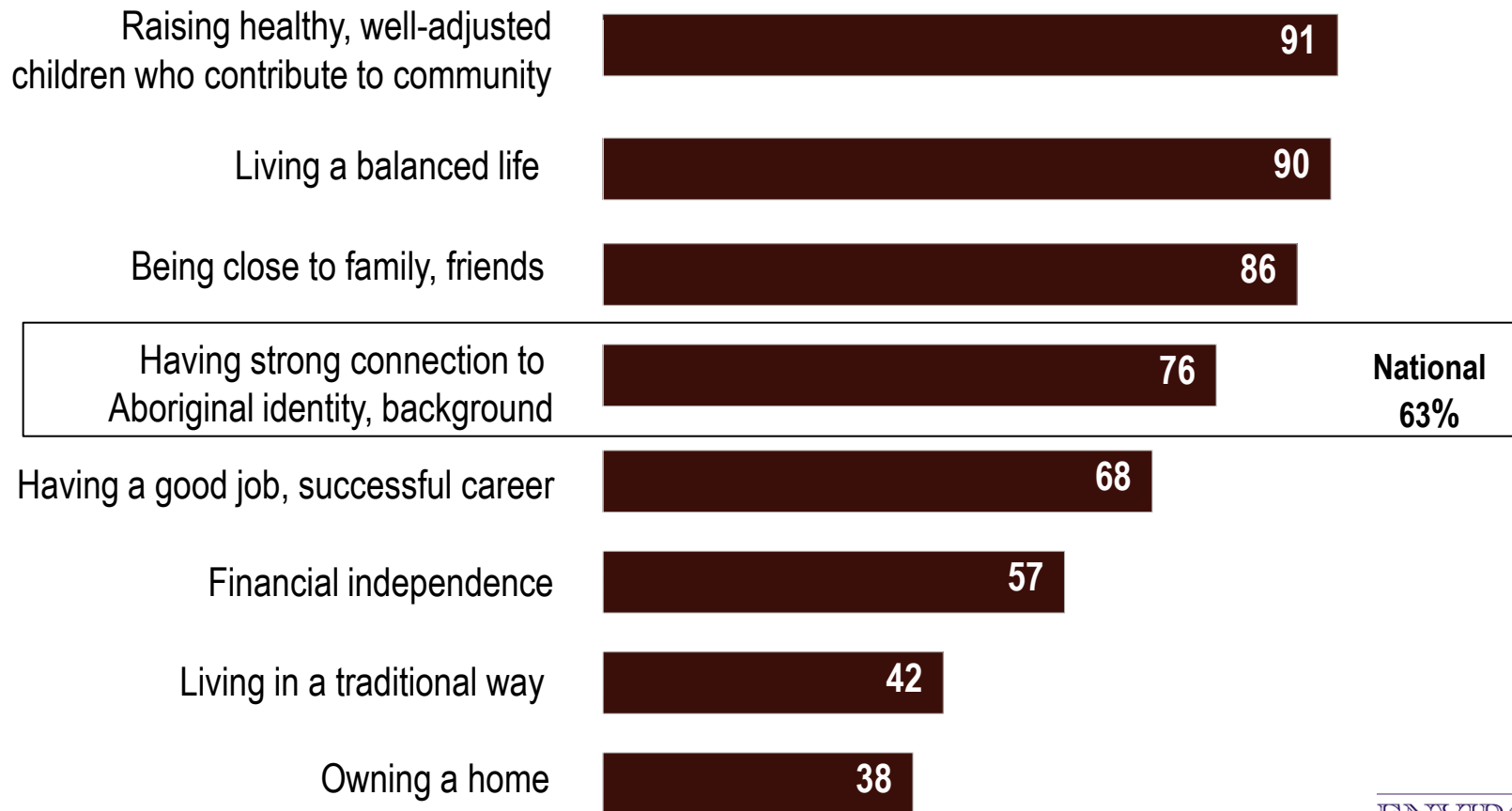
What are the things you most want to achieve in your lifetime?





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

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



# Cultural continuity is a top priority for the next generation.

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

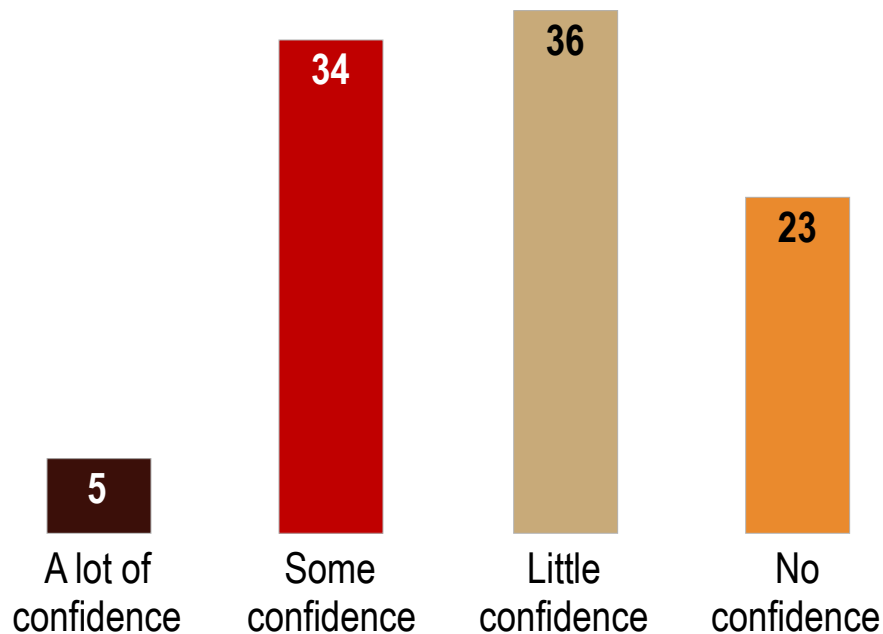




**Aboriginal people in Toronto  
have little confidence in the  
Canadian justice system.**

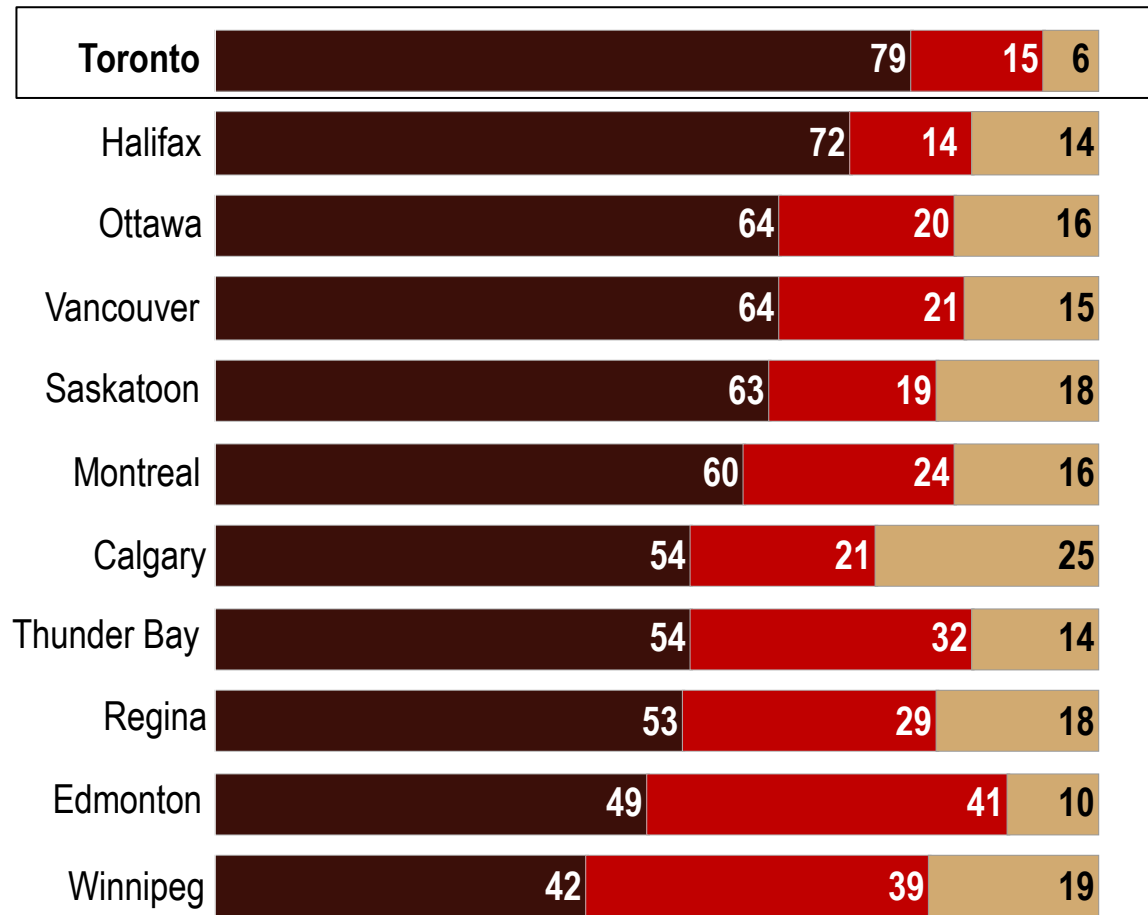
# Many feel that the Canadian justice system isn't working.

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?



# And a significant majority 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?

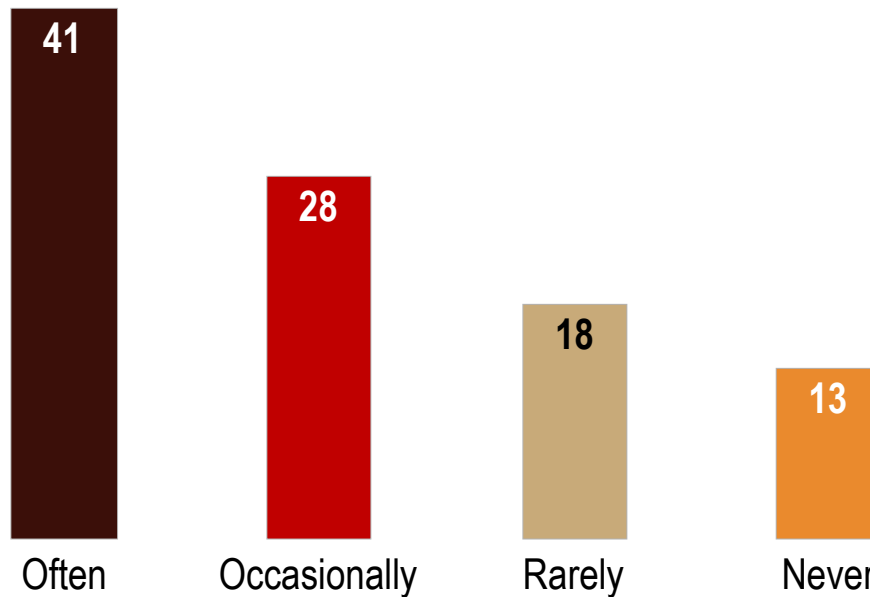




# Organization and Political affiliations

# The majority of Aboriginal Torontonians use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations.

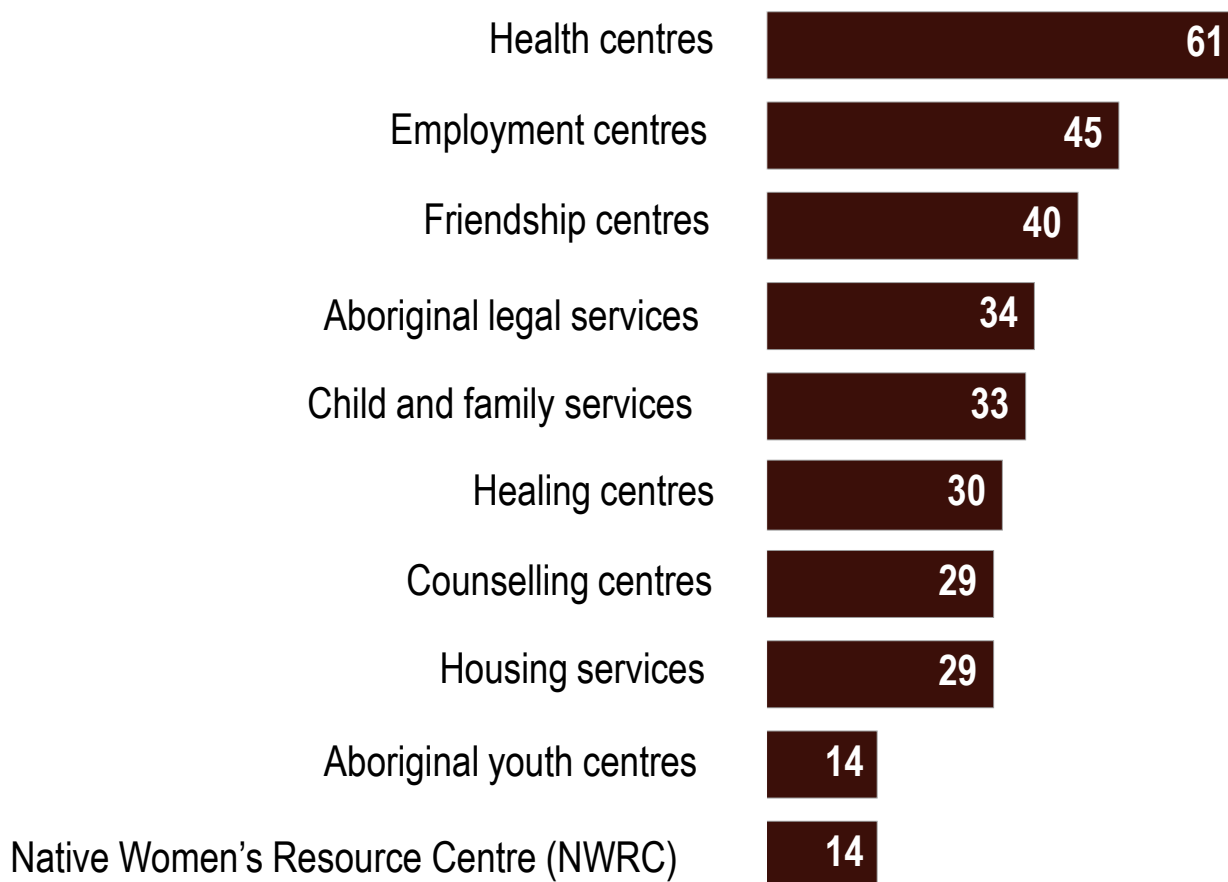
How often do you use or rely on Aboriginal services or organizations in Toronto?





## And value a variety of organizations and services.

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

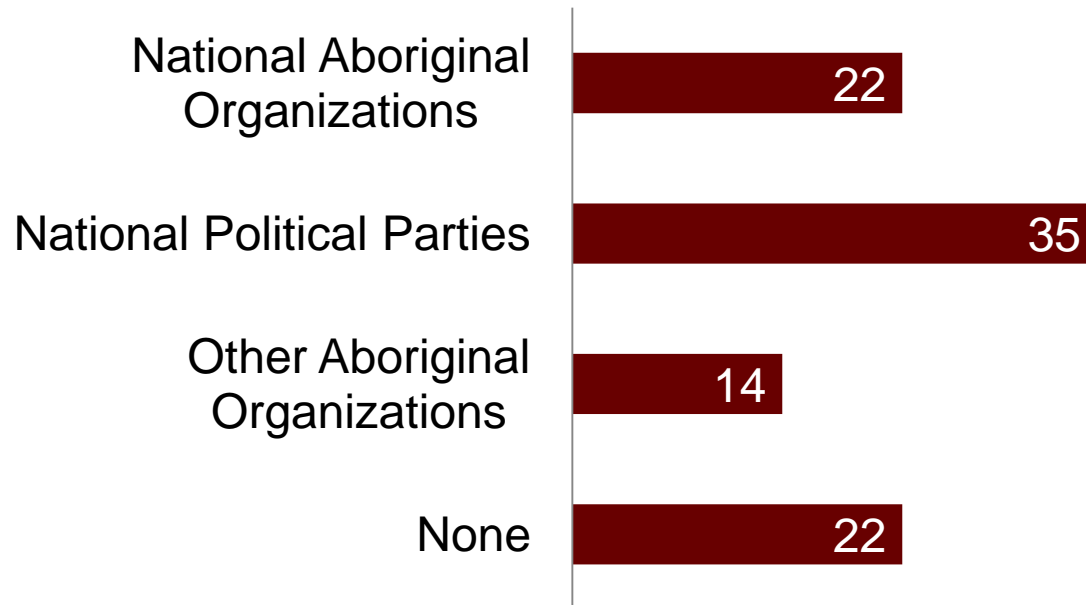




**They identify with a diverse array of political organizations.**

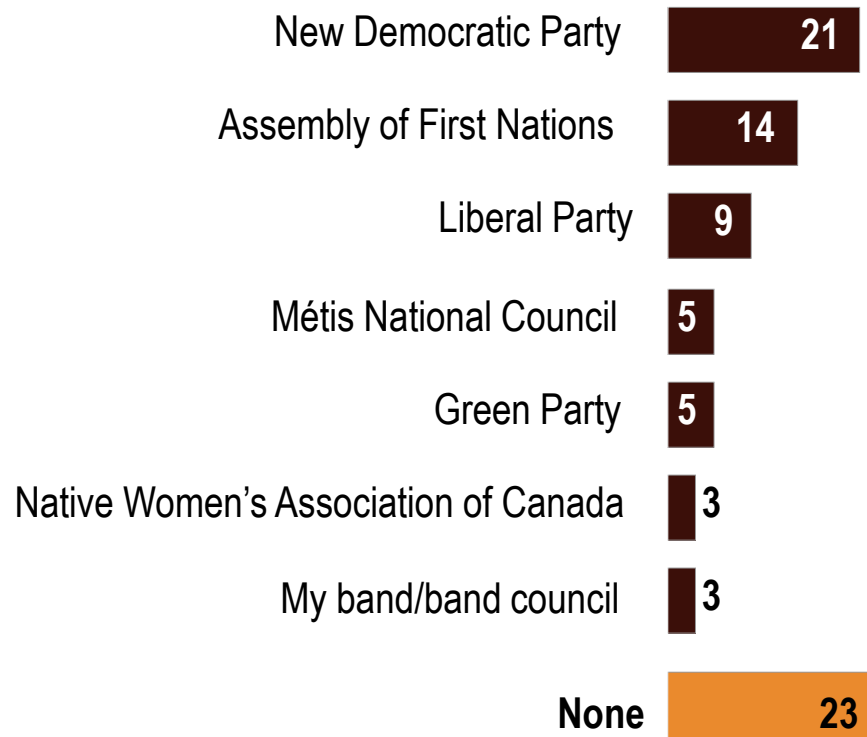


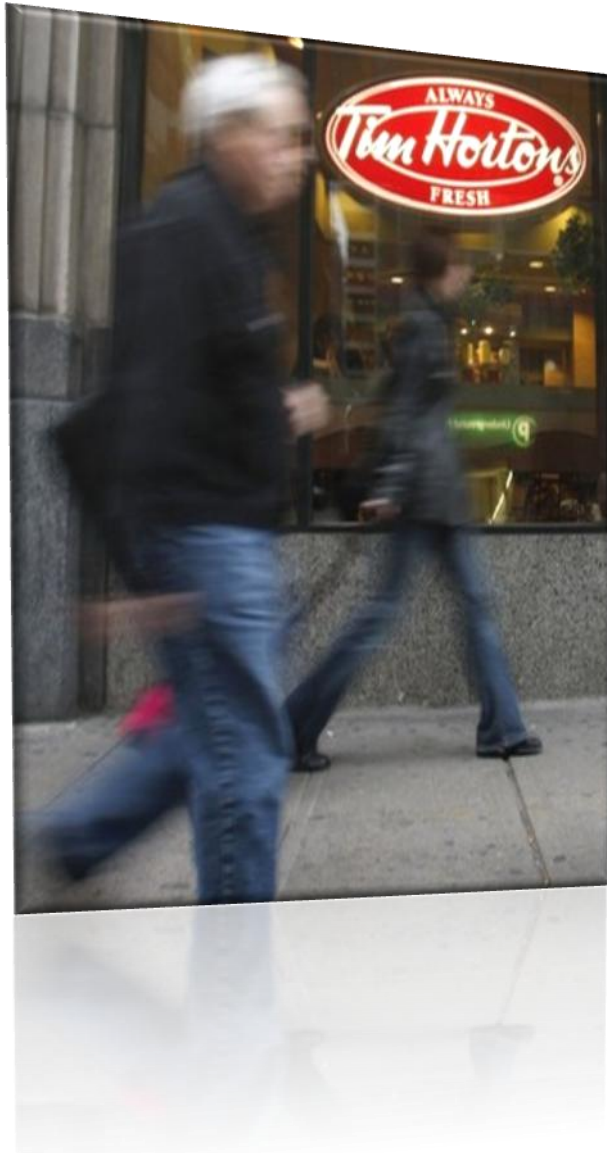
**But a significant minority feel that no political party or organization best represents them.**



# Mainstream political parties top the political representation list.

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

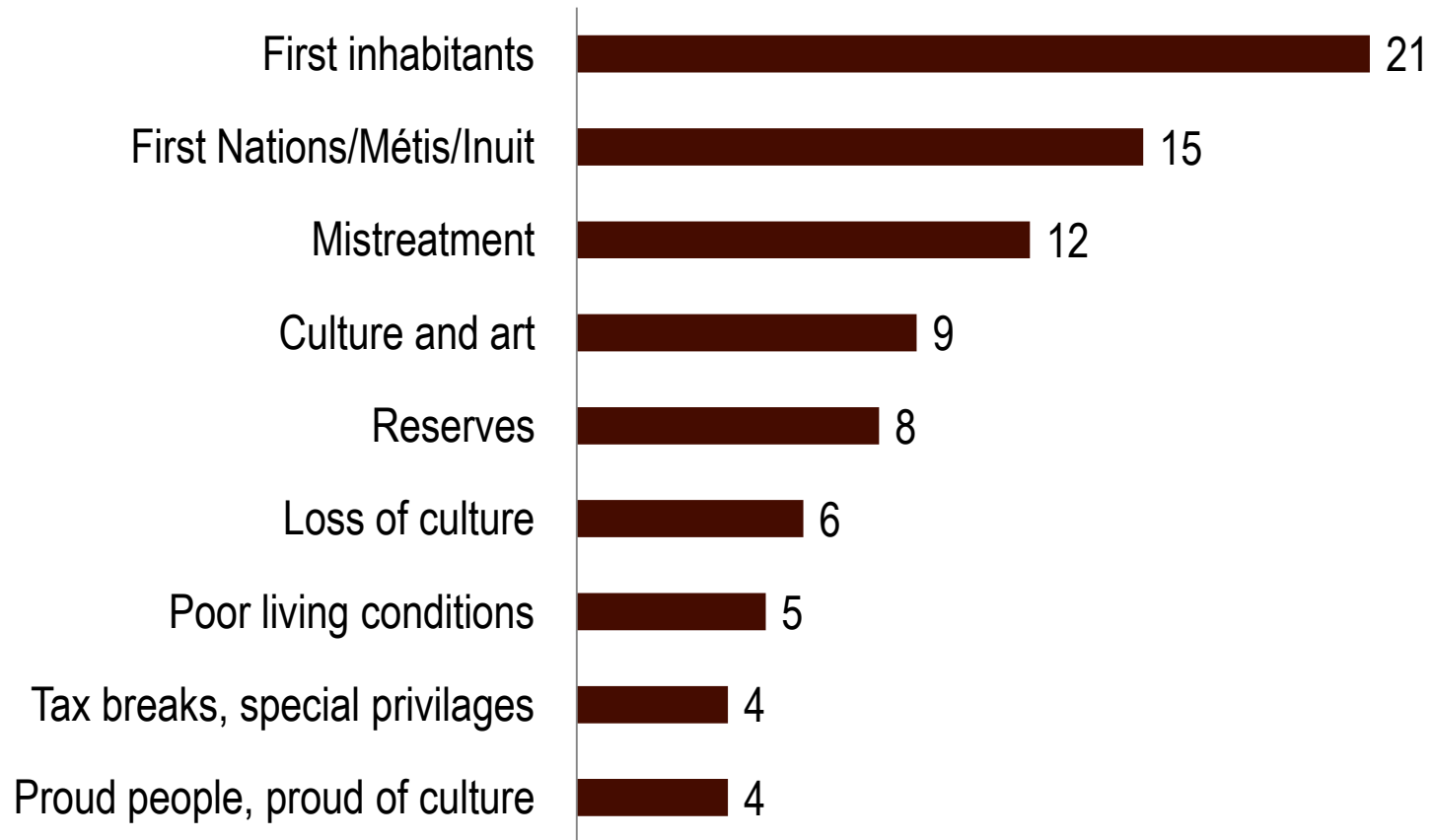




## Non-Aboriginal perspectives in Toronto

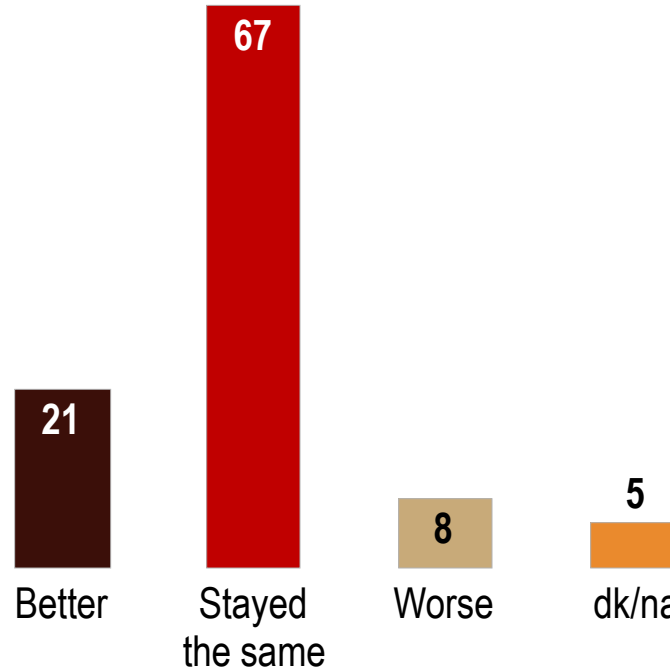
# NA first impressions are generally positive.

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



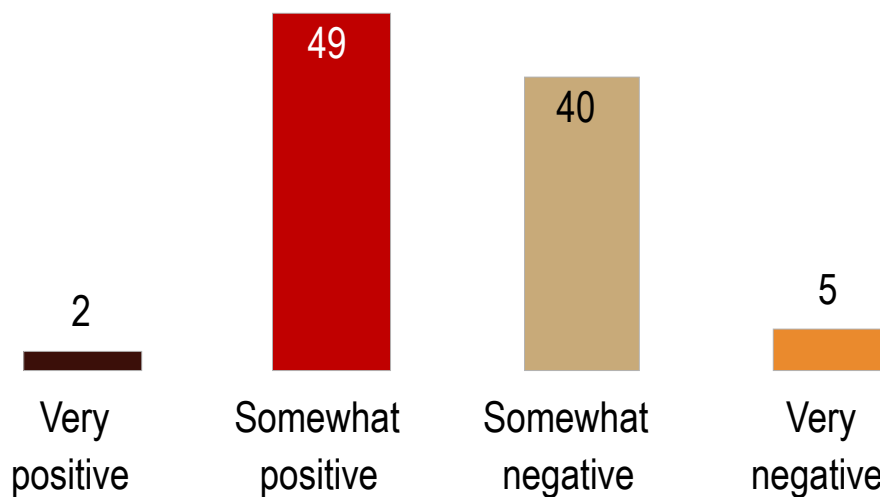
## These impressions remain stable.

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



## While many feel that current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are mixed...

Would you describe the current relations between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people in Canada today as...?



## ... NA Torontonians do possess distinct perspectives, some more negative than others.

### Dismissive Naysayers (13%)

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

(National, 24%)

### Cultural Romantics (55%)

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

(National, 45%)

### Inattentive Sceptics (17%)

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

(National, 14%)

### Connected Advocates (15%)

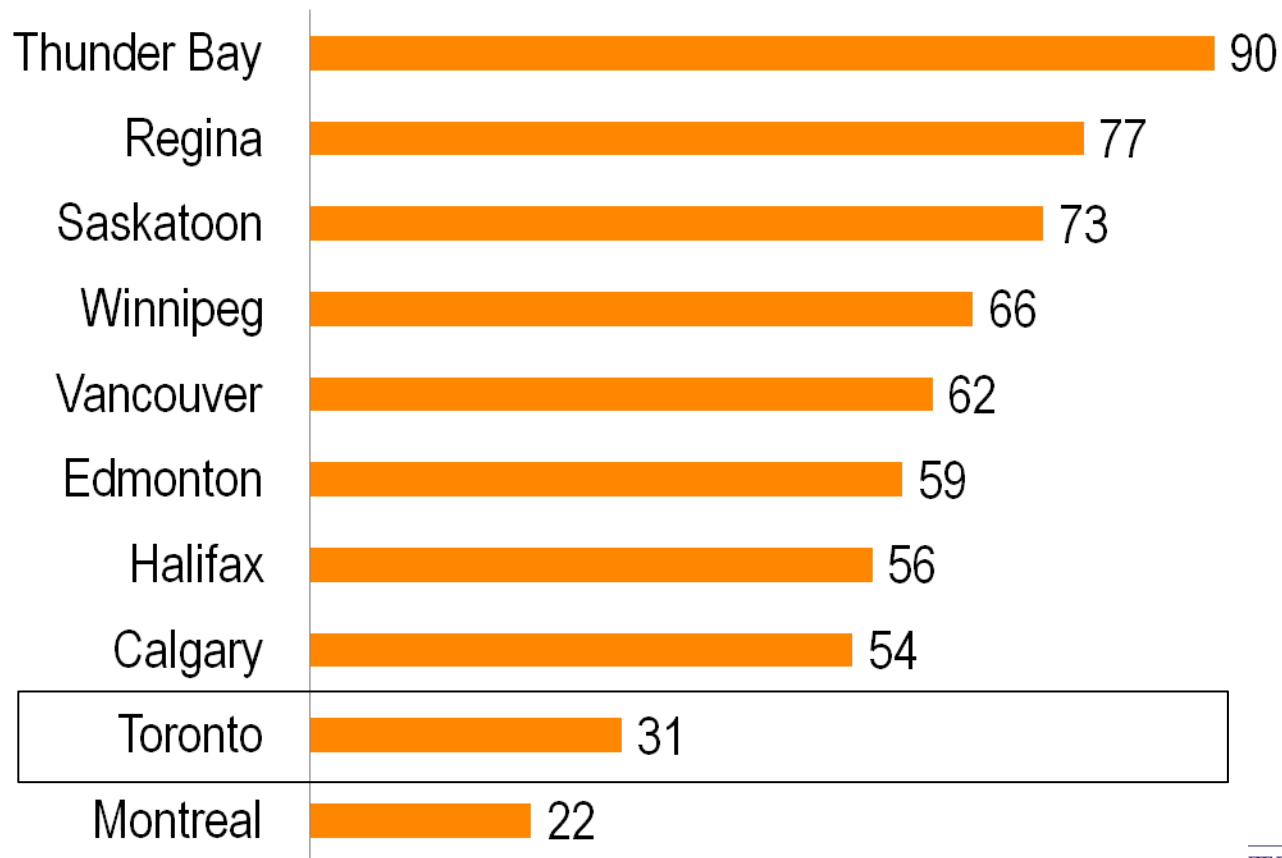
High level of contact and strong belief that Aboriginal peoples often experience discrimination.

(National, 17%)



# A minority report a general awareness of the local urban Aboriginal community in Toronto.

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

Globe editorial

## Canada's urban aboriginals are gaining confidence

A detailed survey on urban aboriginals is encouraging evidence of their adaptation to contemporary society as a whole, and of eagerness to pursue education.

## The city is home



THE OTTAWA CITIZEN   APRIL 13, 2010

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

CANADA  
**Hope in the city**

## Most urban aboriginal people opt to stay in city

The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study from the Environment Canada provides a picture of aboriginal Canadians that shatters stereotypes.

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**

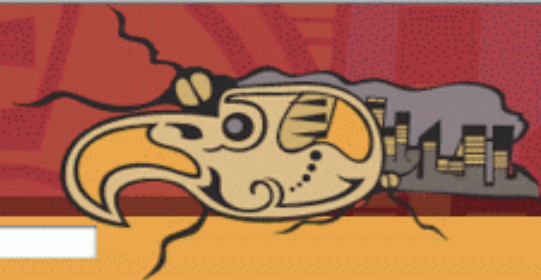
## Aboriginal urbanites aspire first to higher education

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](#)

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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**

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ENVIRONICS  
• INSTITUTE •

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**The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study – Toronto –  
would not be possible without the support of our  
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