



Urban Aboriginal Voices:

A Landmark Study of Canada's Urban Aboriginal Peoples

Vancouver Findings

Monday, June 20th, 2011

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 Vancouver, led by Chris Atchison
- Three separate research elements:
 - Aboriginal survey, non-Aboriginal survey, survey of National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation scholars
- UAPS video archive (First Nations University)

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

Adapting research methods to fit

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

Vancouver UAPS respondent profile

	Actual (Unweighted)(#)	Weighted (%)
First Nations	168	60
Métis	85	40
Inuit	8	*
18-24	42	16
25-44	141	47
45+	78	37
Men	112	46
Women	149	54
No degree	54	24
High school completed	79	29
College diploma	73	38
University degree	55	9

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

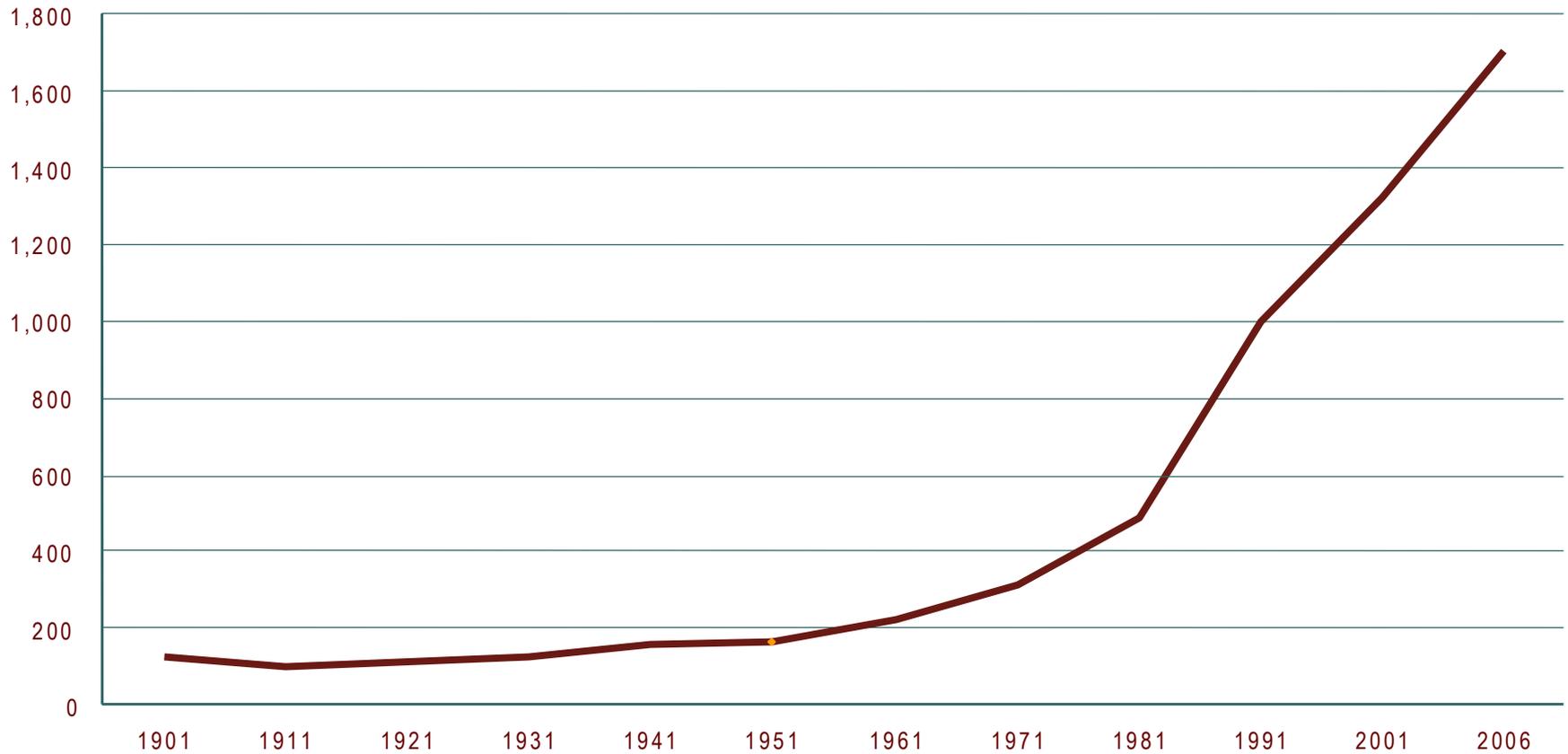


Why we need to pay attention

- 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

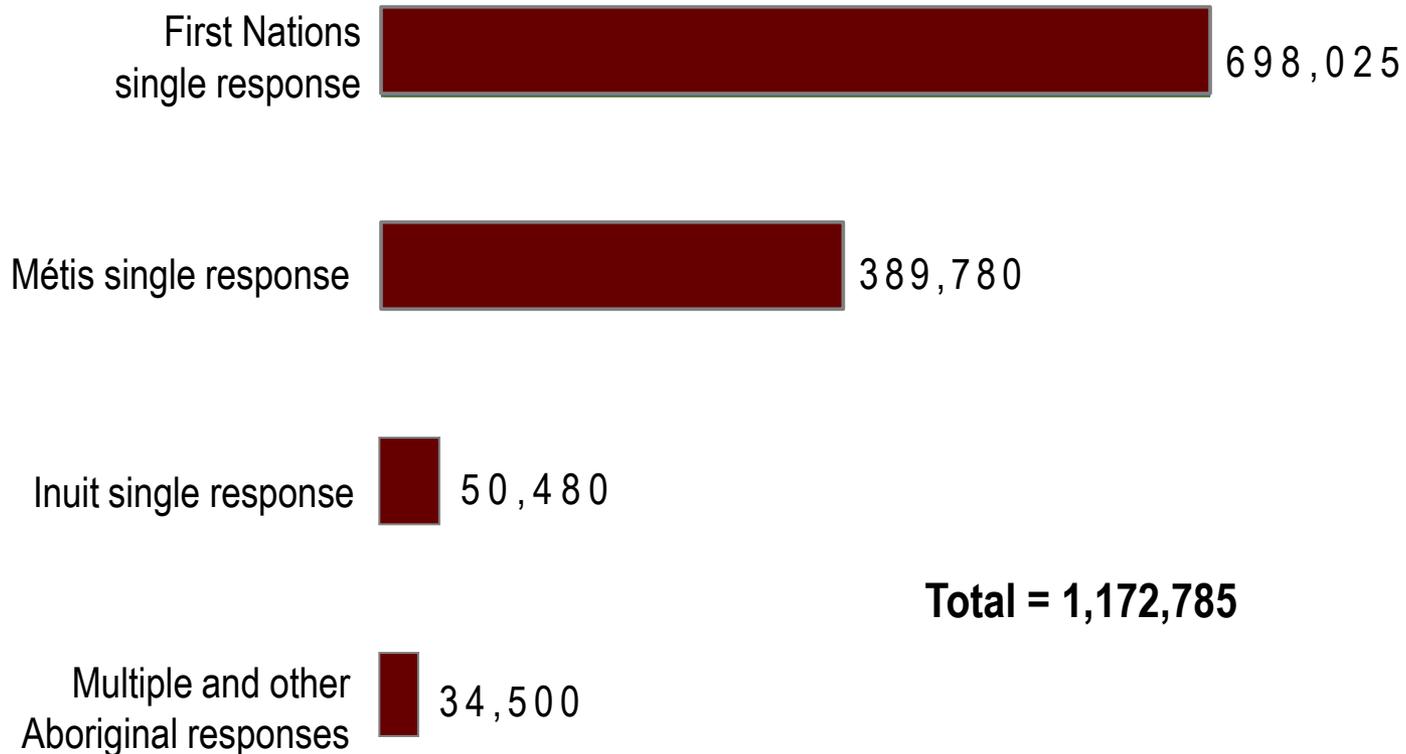
Canadian population at 33 million in 2006, with nearly 1.8 million reporting Aboriginal ancestry

Aboriginal Ancestry Population

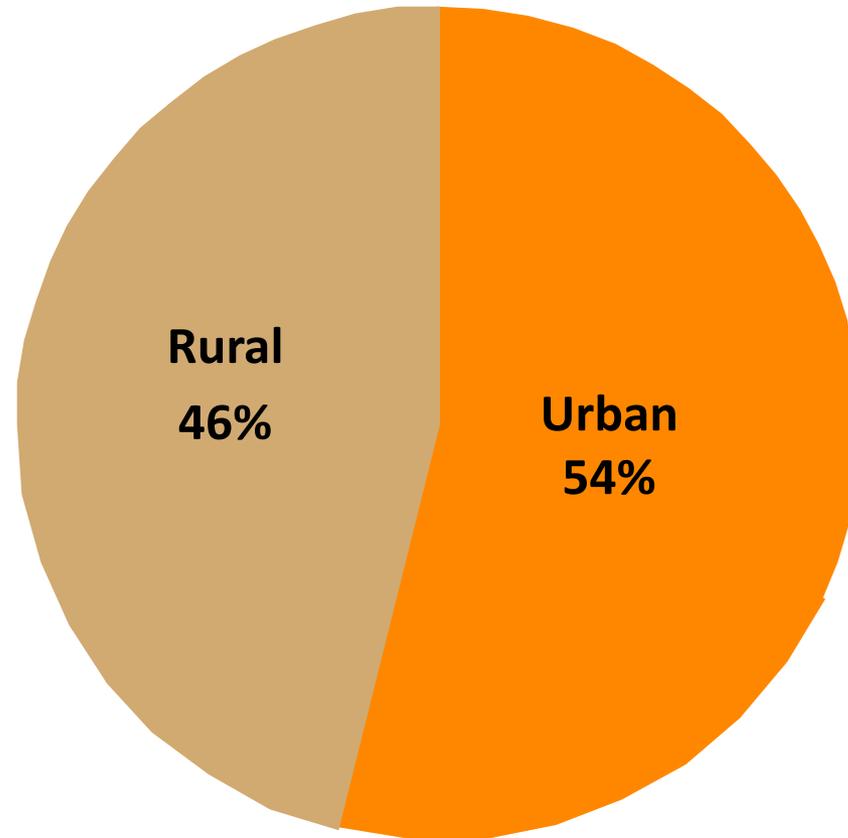


Of these, 1.2 million report Aboriginal identity, in three distinct groups

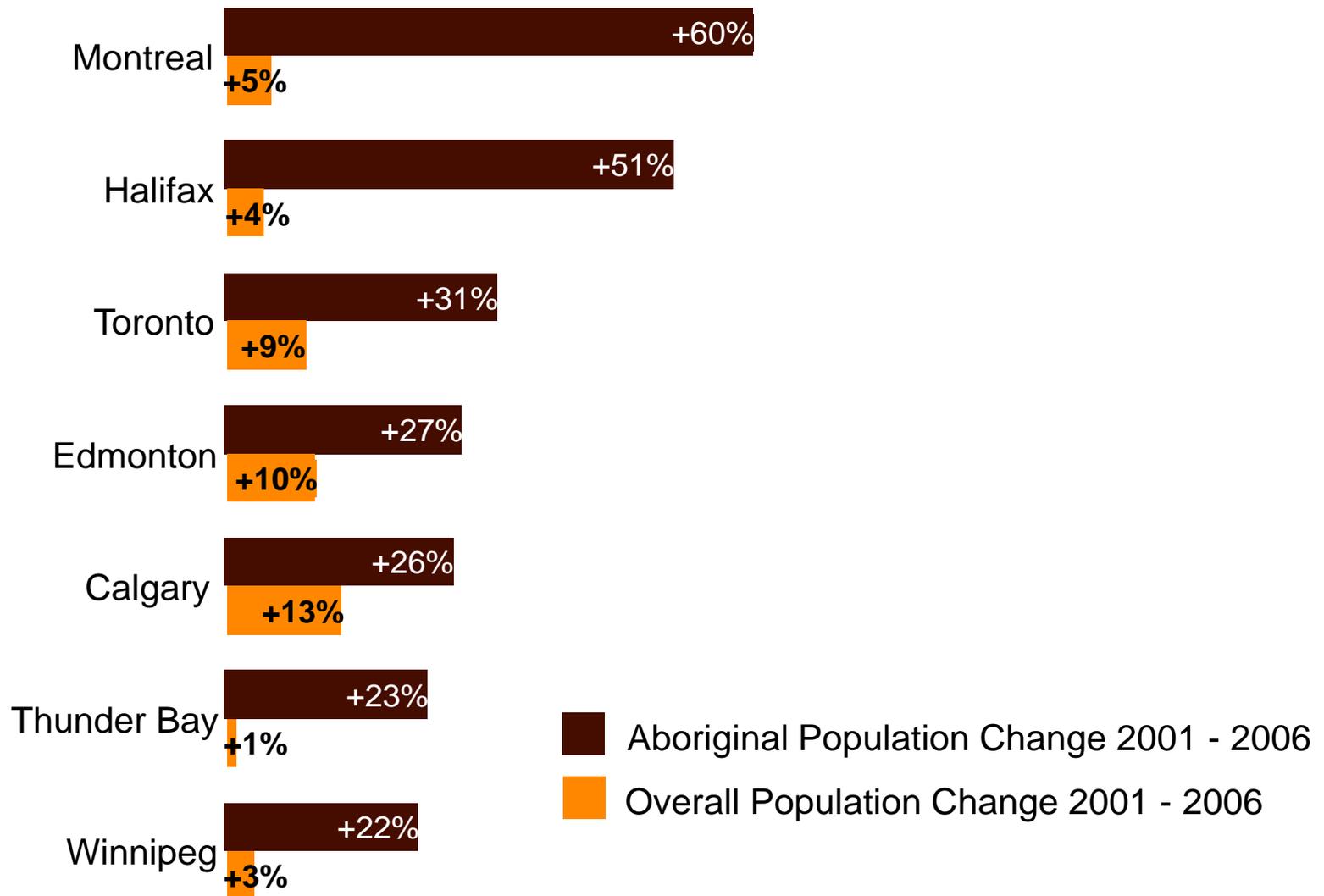
Aboriginal Identity Population



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)**

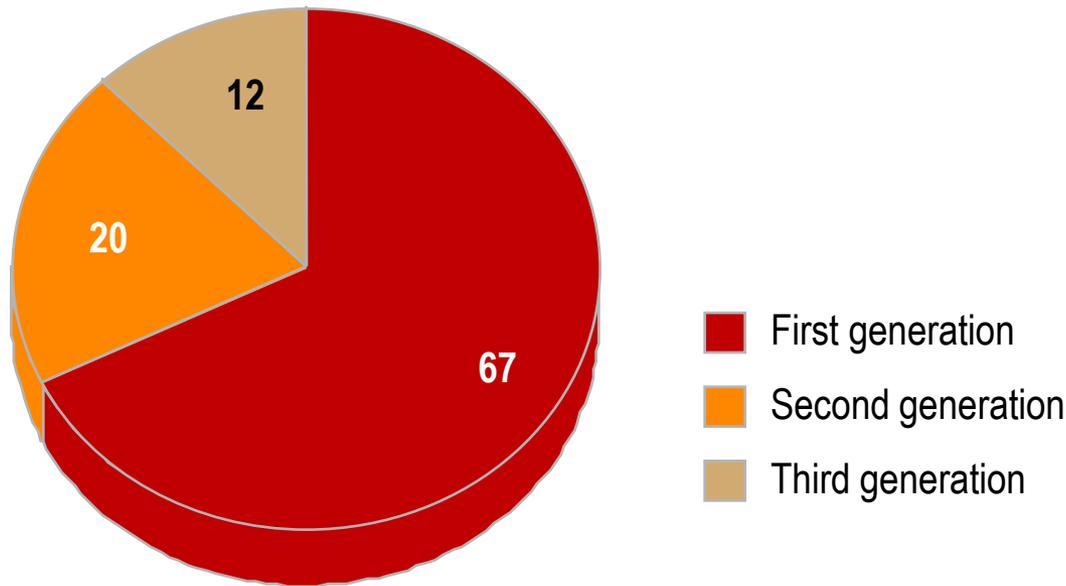


The illustration is composed of several parts: The tail feathers, the body, the head, the feet, and the beak. Each part is labeled with a name in a small font.

Research Findings

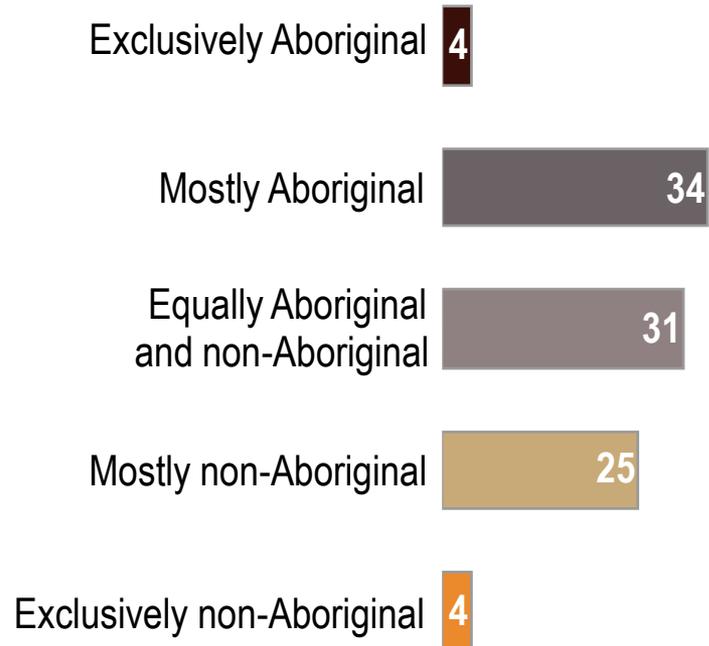
The majority of UAPS Vancouver participants are first generation residents.

First, second and third generation Vancouver residents



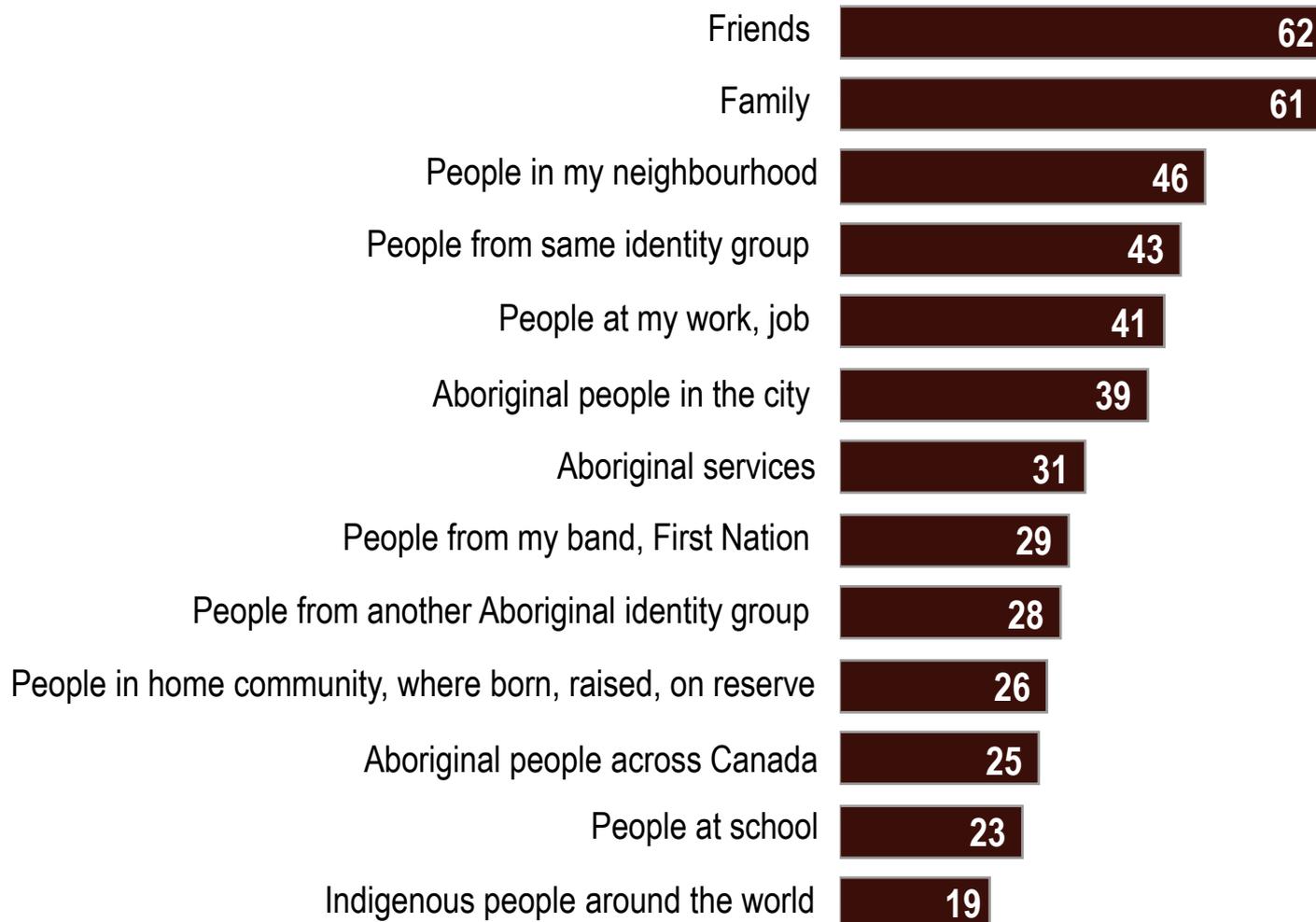
Many feel they belong to a diverse community.

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



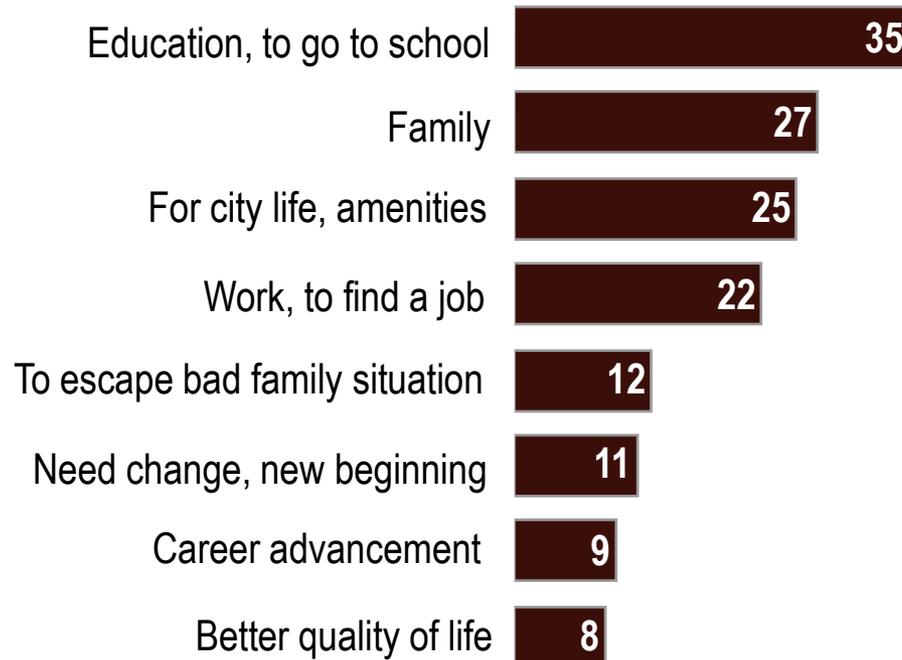
Definitions of the urban community for Vancouverites.

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



They move to Vancouver to pursue an education and to be amongst family.

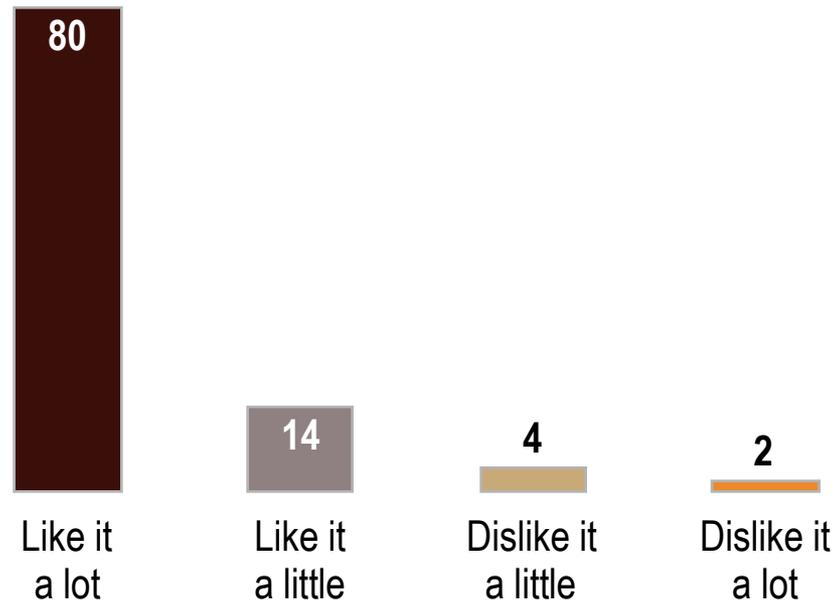
What is the most important reason why you *first* moved to Vancouver?



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

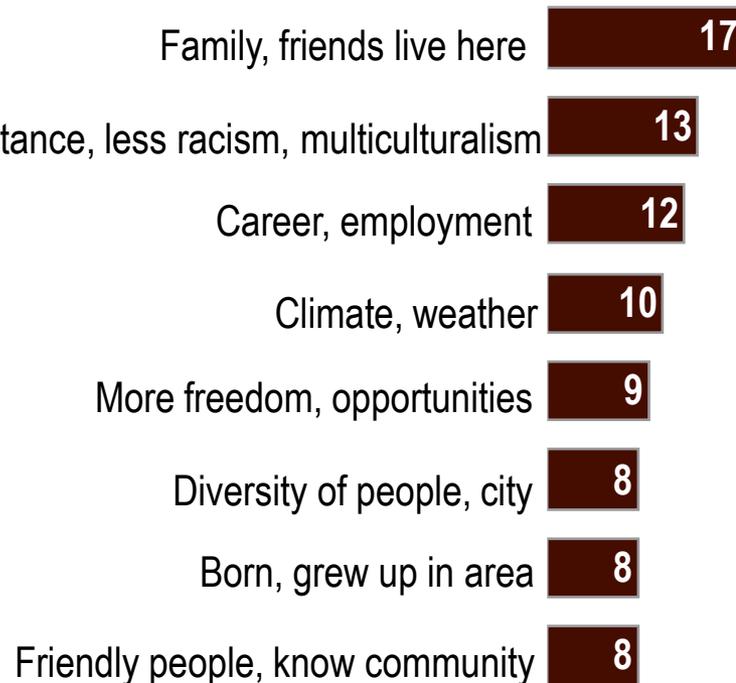
And the majority like living in Vancouver a lot.

How much do you like living in your city?



They like that they have family and friends who live here, but there is no clear consensus on what they like most.

What is it you like most about living here?



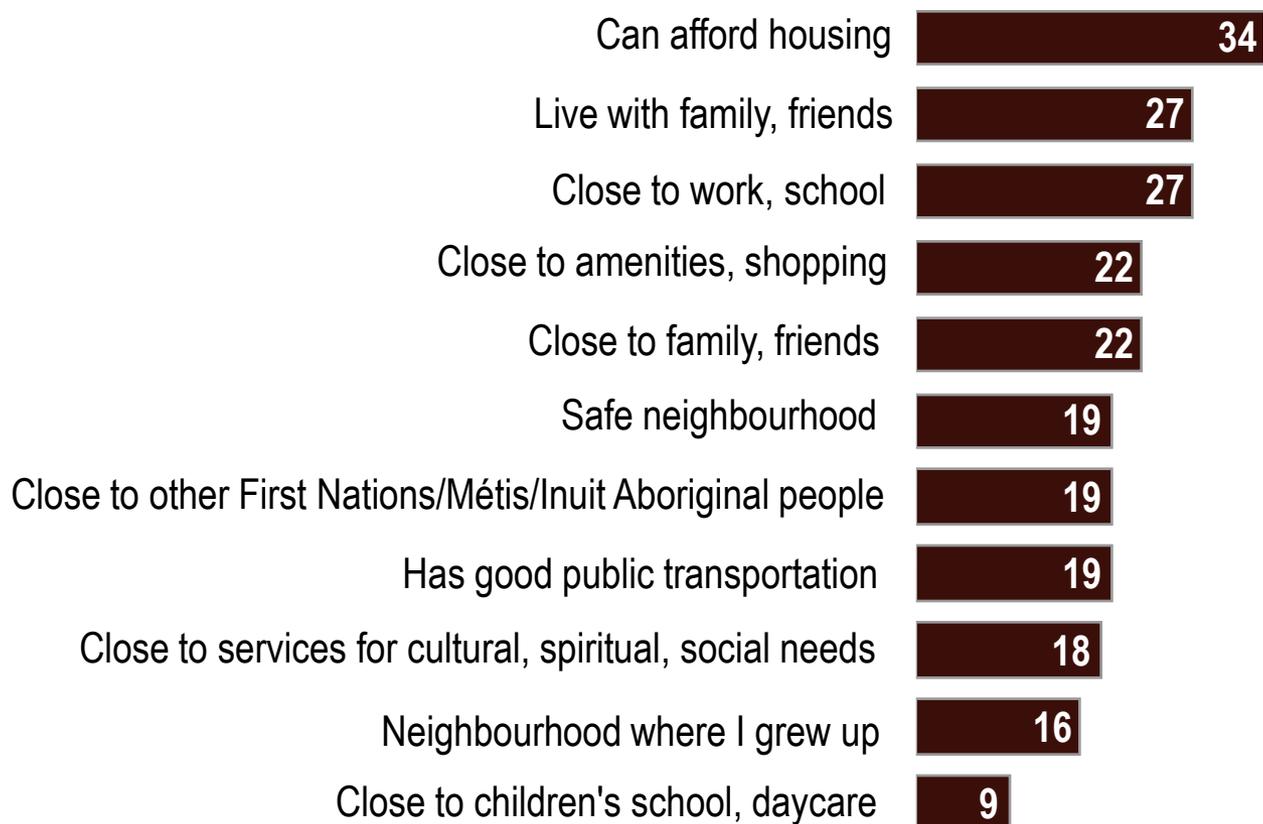
There is no agreement on what they like least about living in Vancouver.

What do you like least about living here?



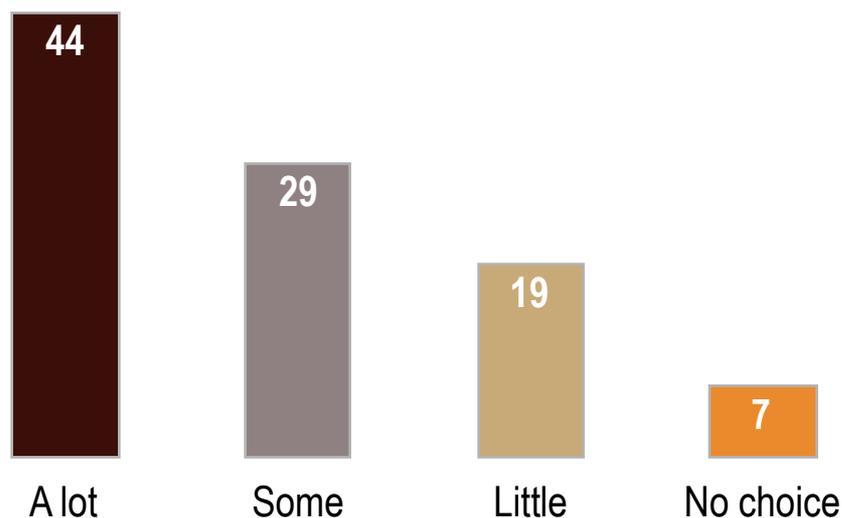
Neighbourhood choice is influenced primarily by cost.

Why do you live in the neighbourhood you do?



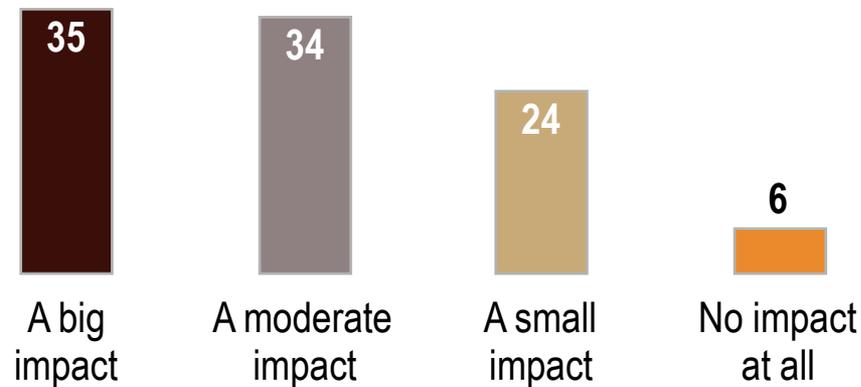
Aboriginal Vancouverites feel like they have a lot of choice in where they can live in the city.

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



And a majority feel they can make Vancouver 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?

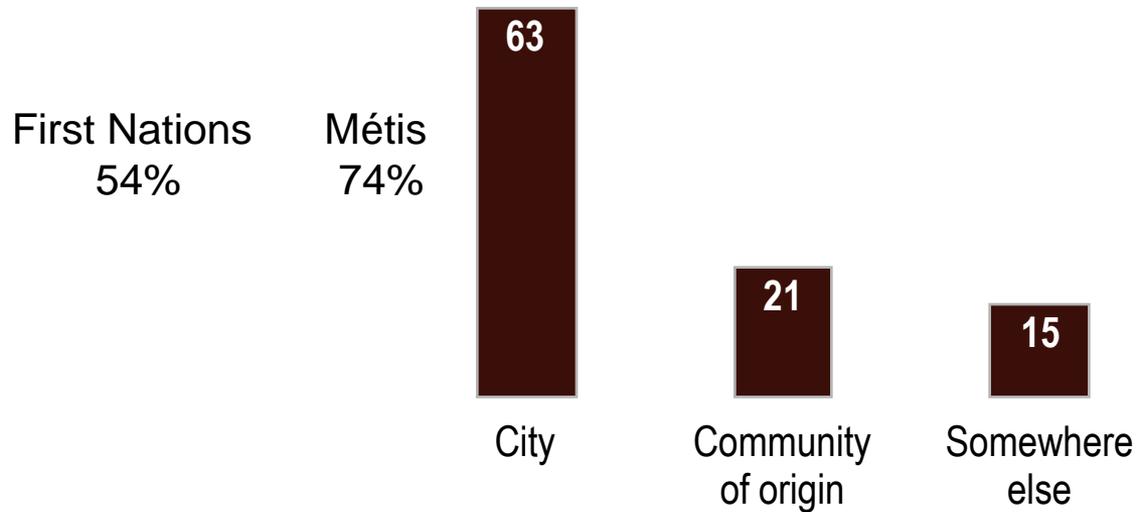


Aboriginal people are *not* rooted in remote communities



Many feel that Vancouver is home.

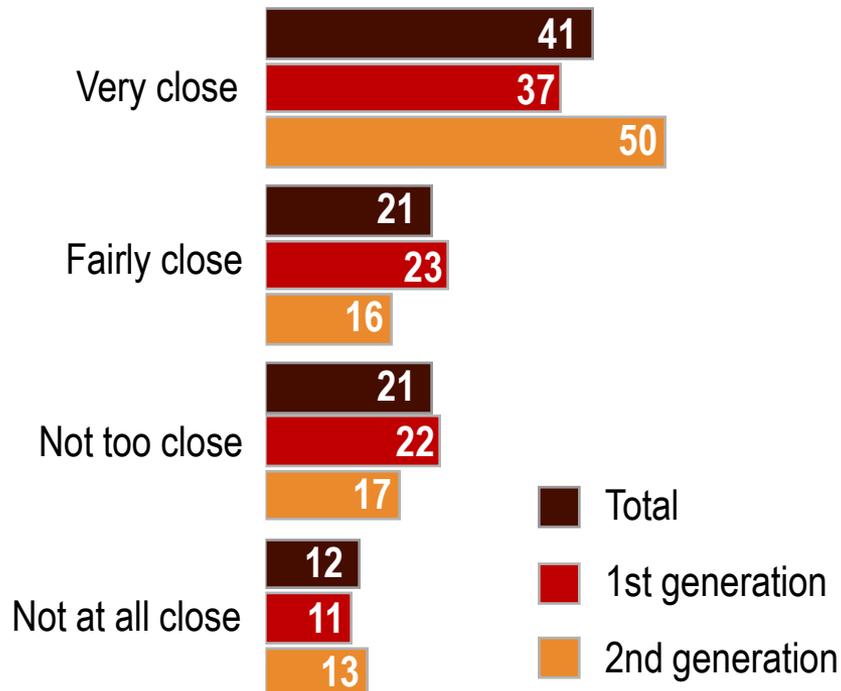
Where is home for you? Is it Vancouver, your home community, or somewhere else?



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

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

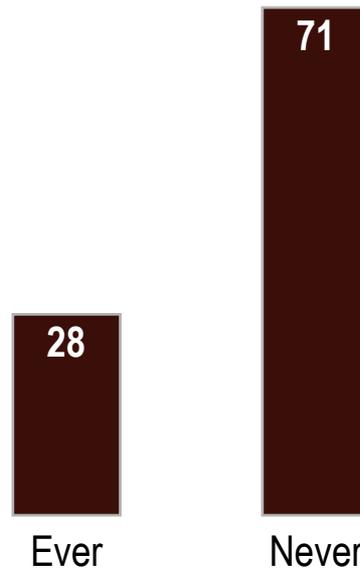
How close a connection do you feel to your home community (the place where your parents and grandparents are from)?



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

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

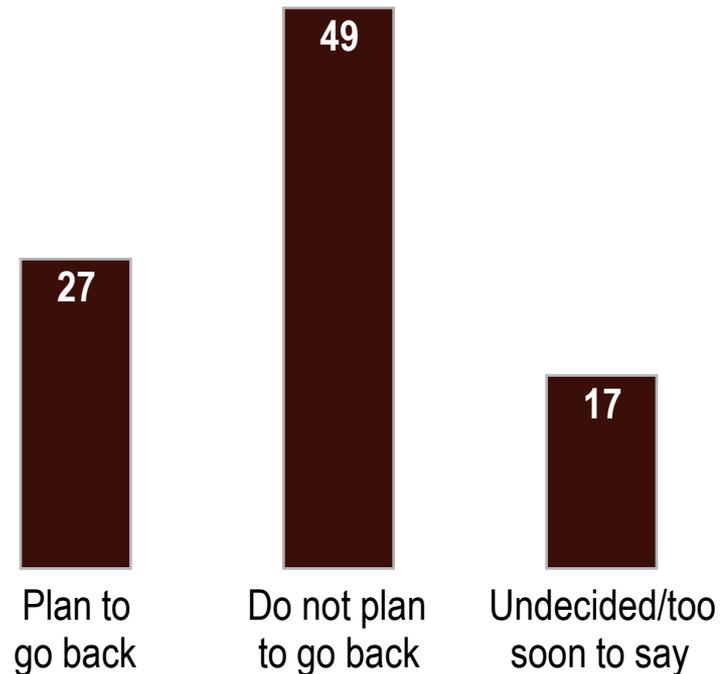
Since you first moved to Vancouver, have you ever moved back to your home community?



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

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?



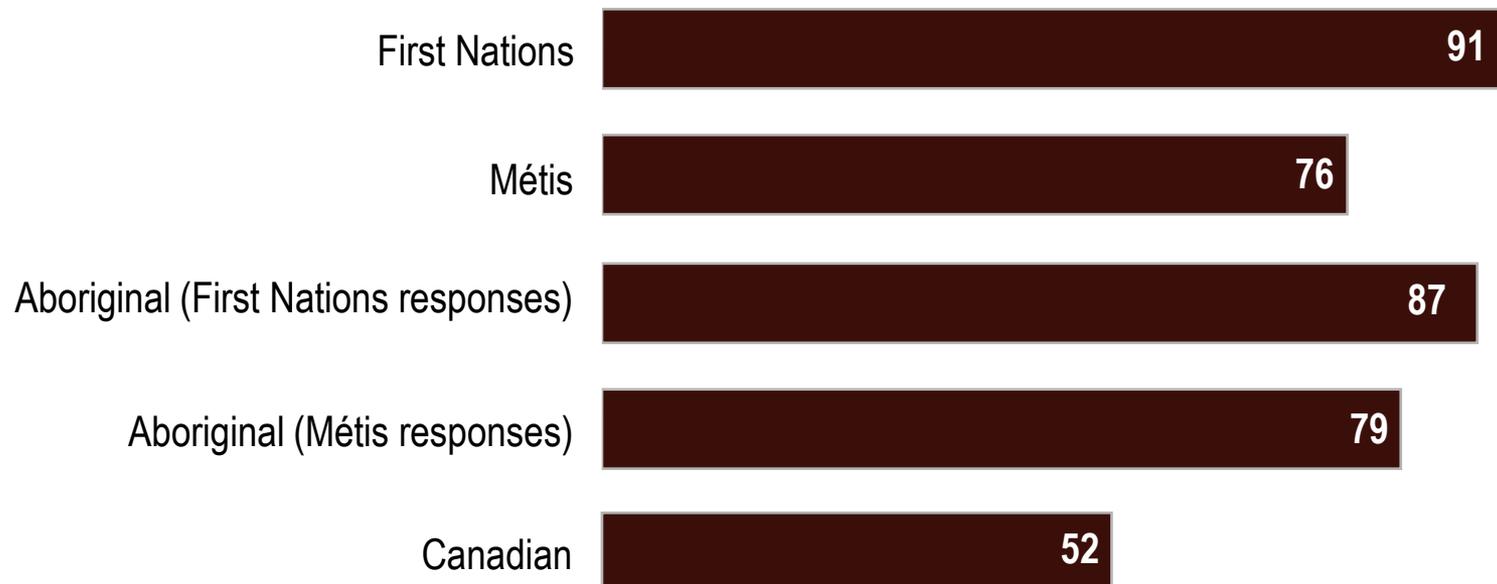
* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in Vancouver; those who have lived in their city of residence all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

Identity and Culture



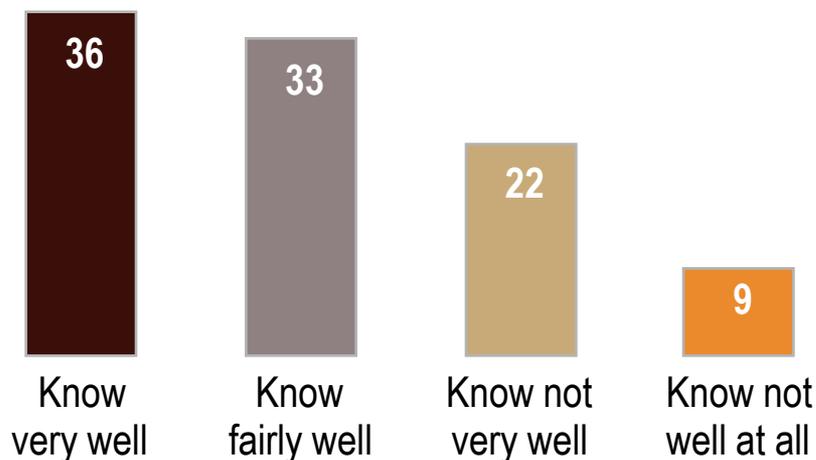
There is strong Indigenous pride... ...and pride in Canada.

Are you very proud to be...



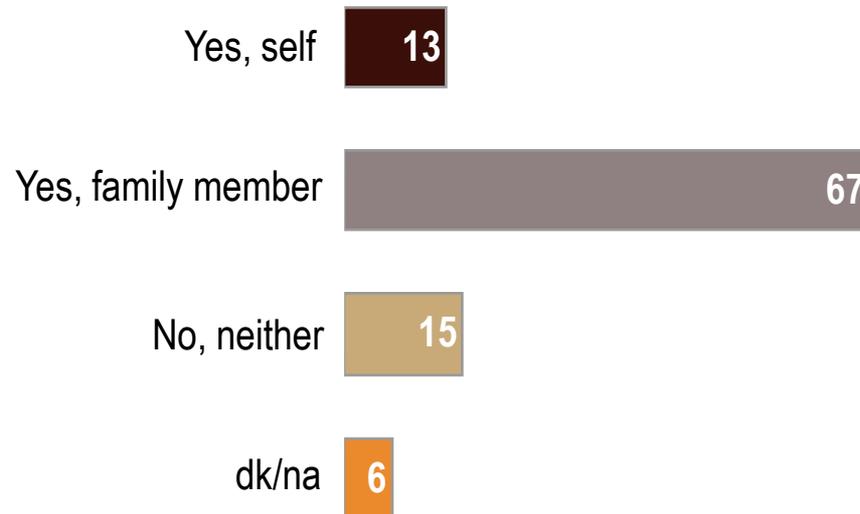
A majority have a connection to their heritage, but many do not.

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



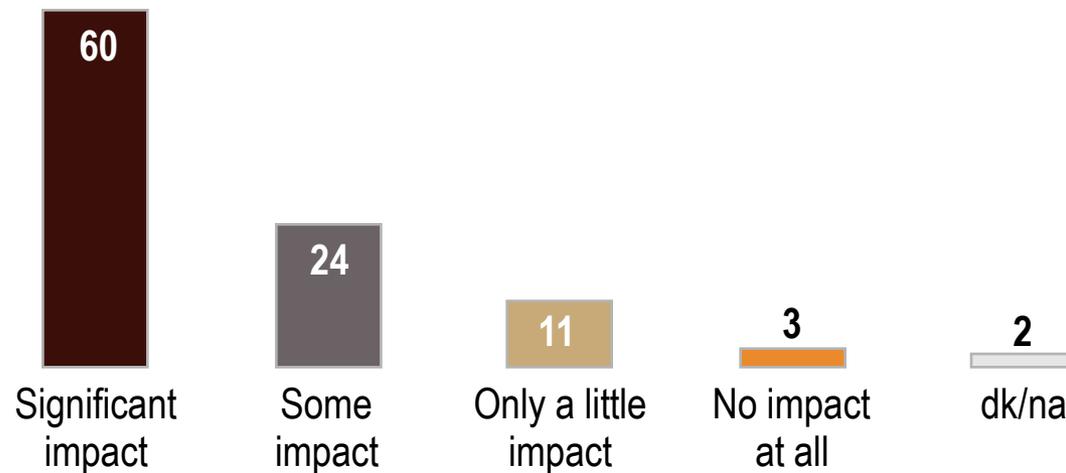
Many have been personally affected by Residential Schools.

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



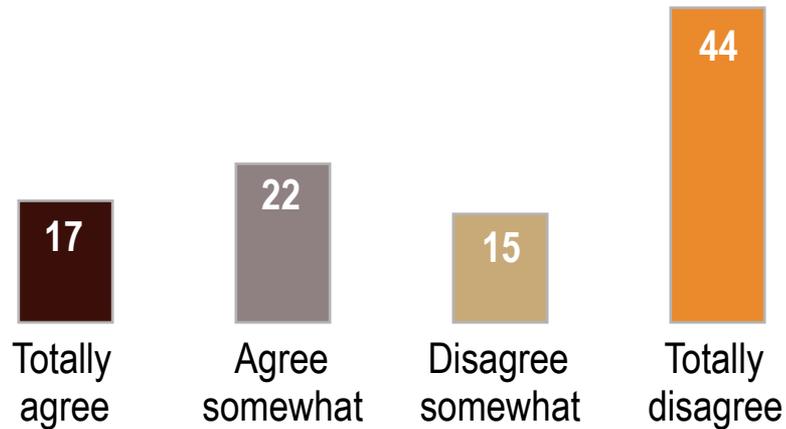
And it continues to impact them today.

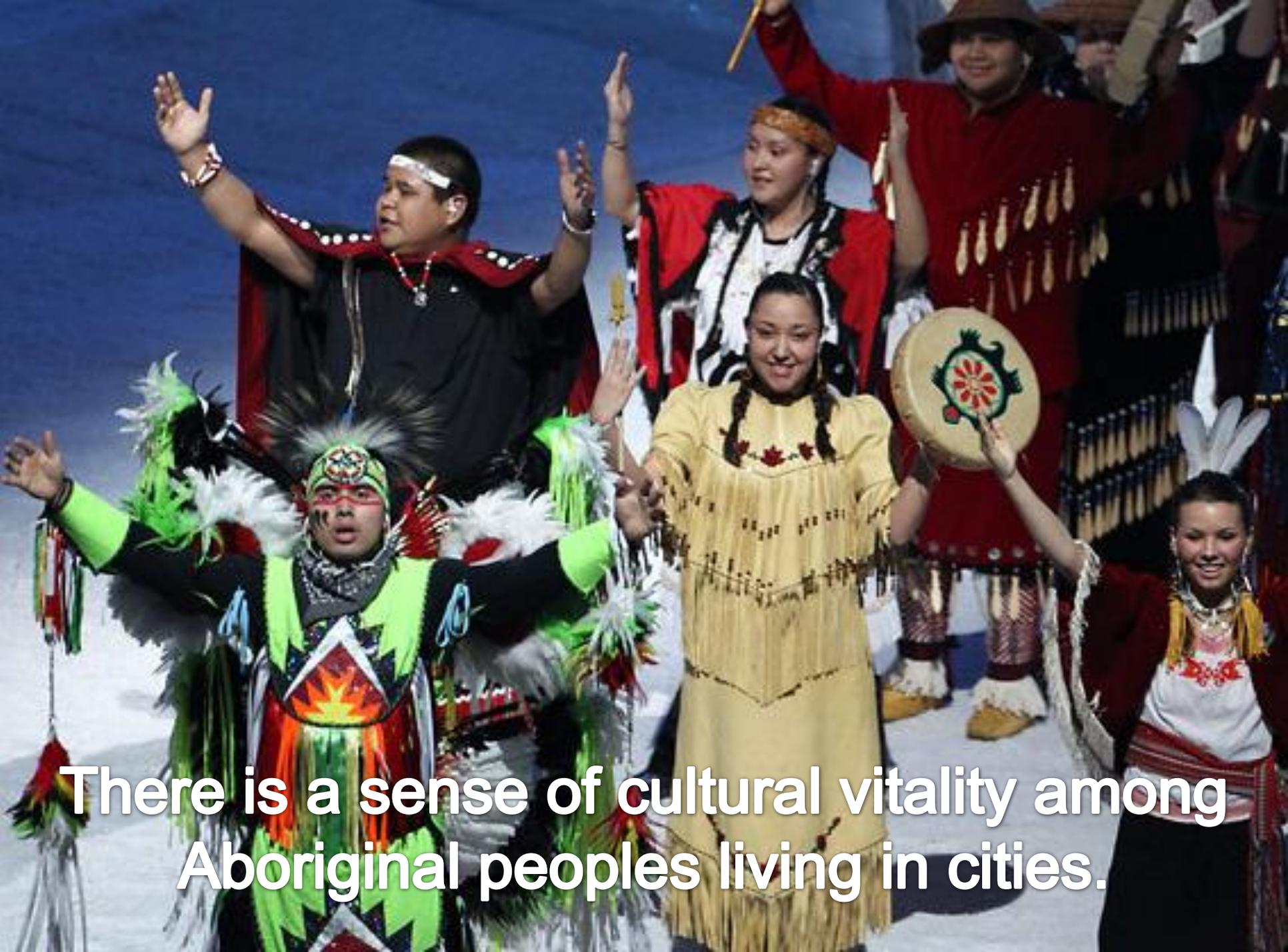
To what extent has this experience shaped your life and who you are today?



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

“I am concerned about losing my cultural identity.”

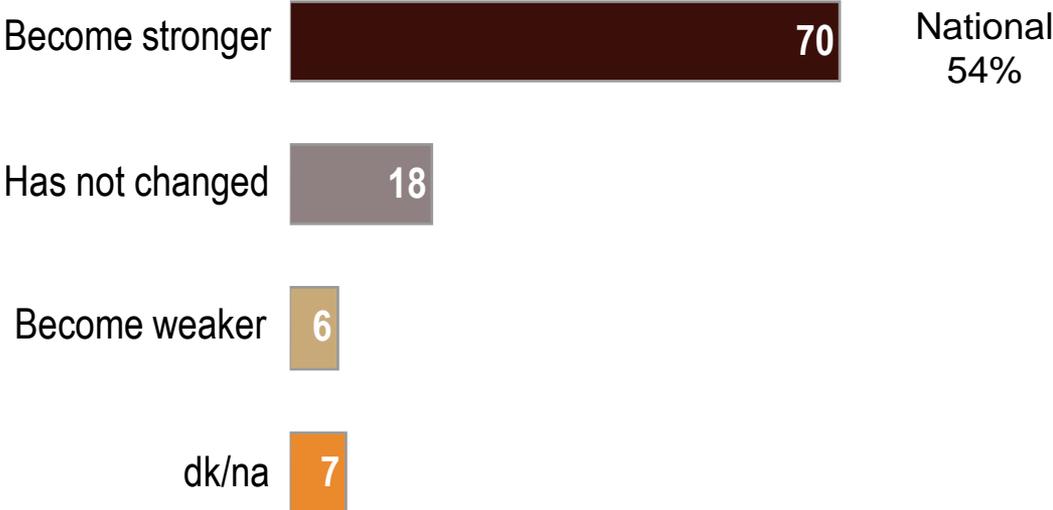




**There is a sense of cultural vitality among
Aboriginal peoples living in cities.**

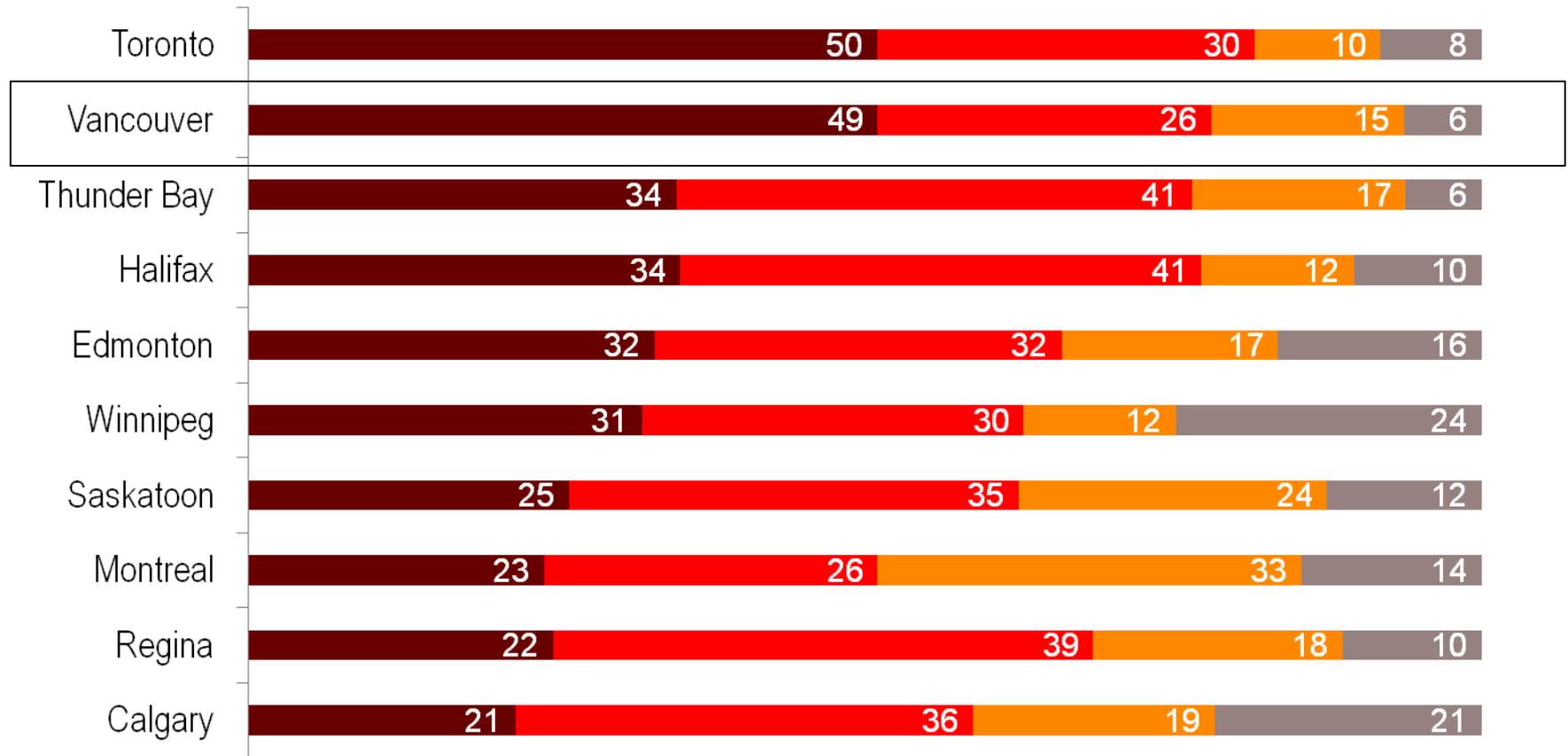
A majority feel that Aboriginal culture in Vancouver has grown stronger, rather than weaker.

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



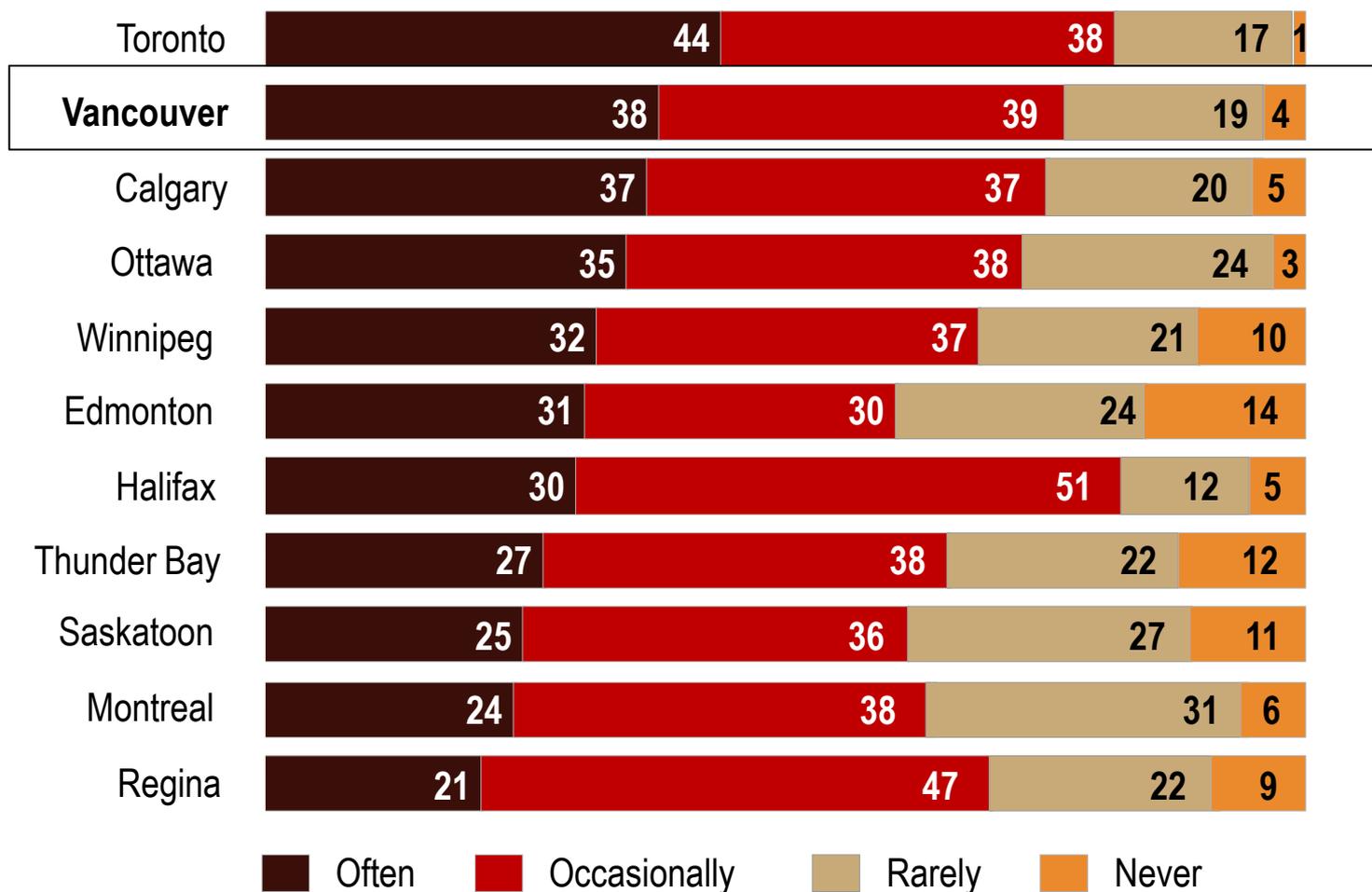
Many are aware of cultural activities within the city, although some are not.

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



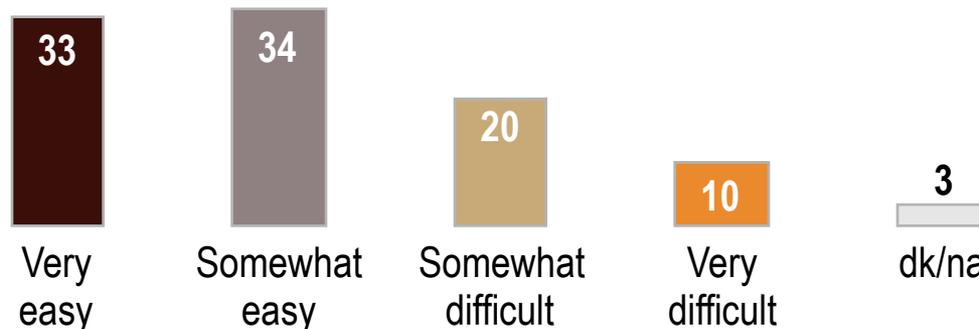
And Aboriginal Vancouverites *often and occasionally* participate in cultural activities.

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



While some feel they have access to traditional healing practices, others do not.

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?

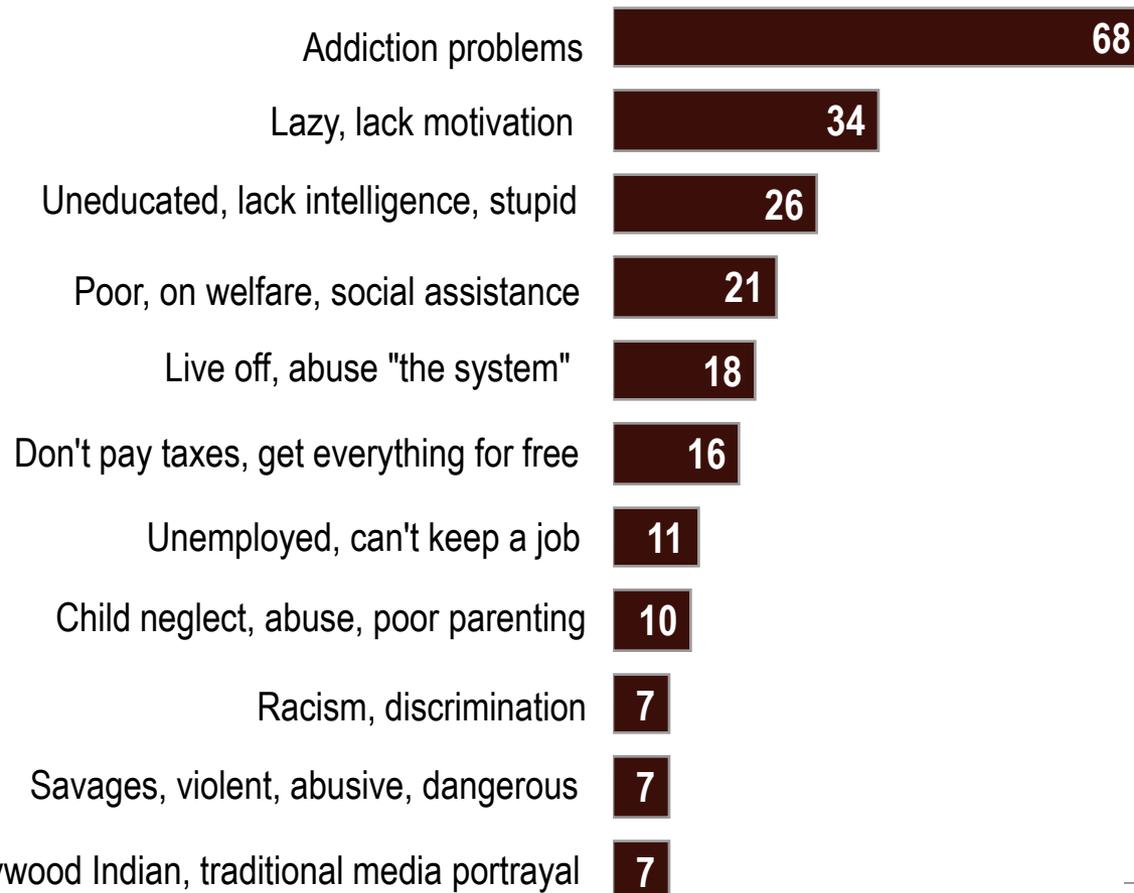




The picture is far from perfect...

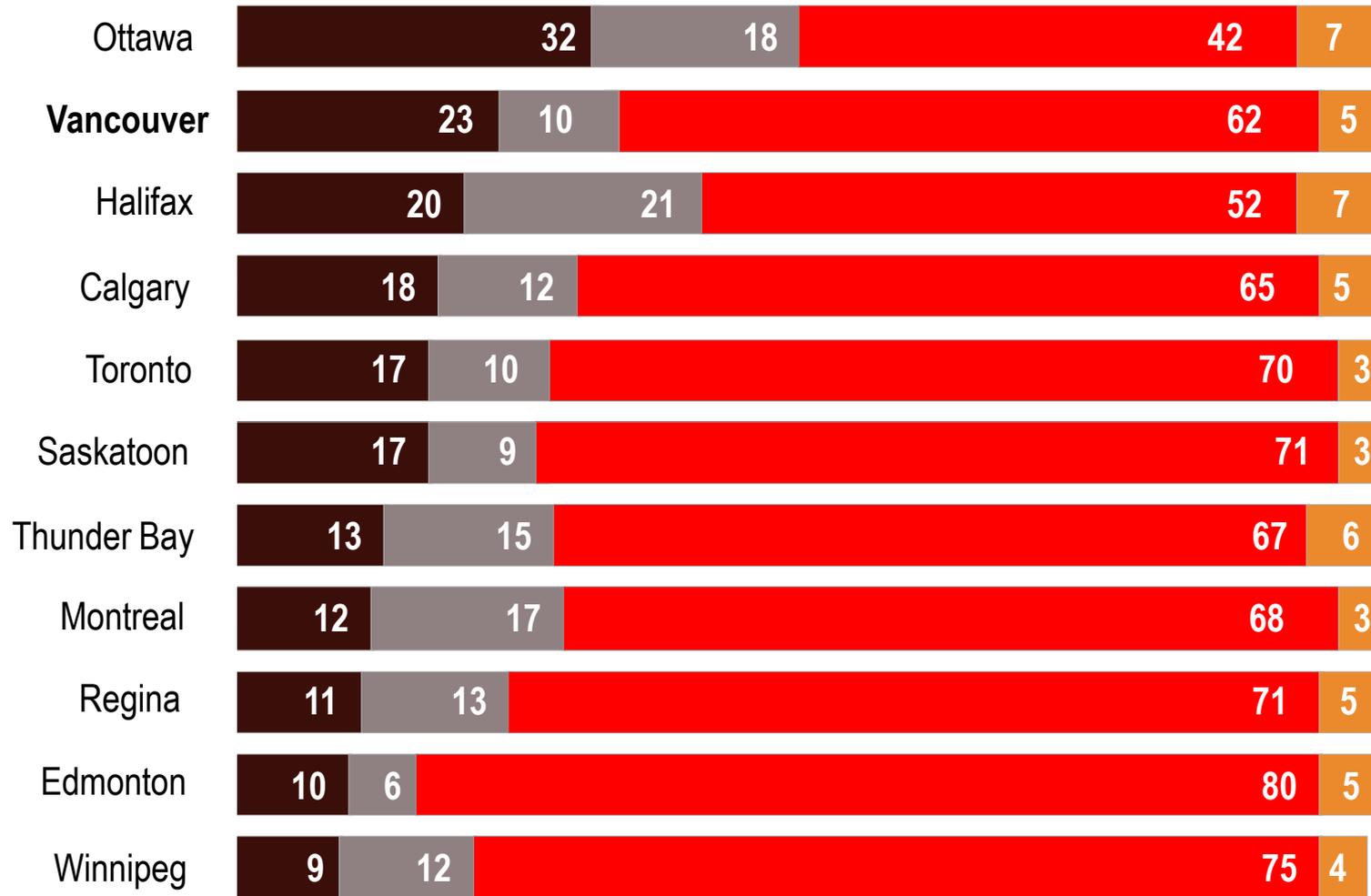
Many Aboriginal Vancouverites feel they are perceived negatively.

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



Perceptions of non-Aboriginal peoples impressions

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



General positive

Neither positive/negative

Generally negative

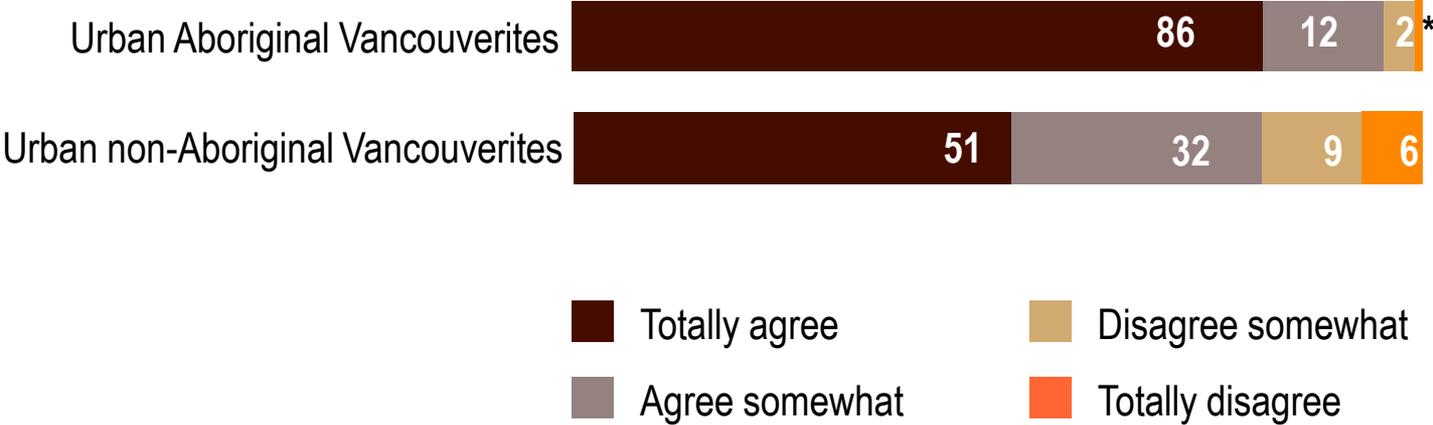
dk/na

...and experience discrimination.

	% Agree	% Disagree
“I think others behave in an unfair/negative way toward Aboriginal people”	84	14
“I have been teased/insulted because of my Aboriginal background”	73	27

... 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”

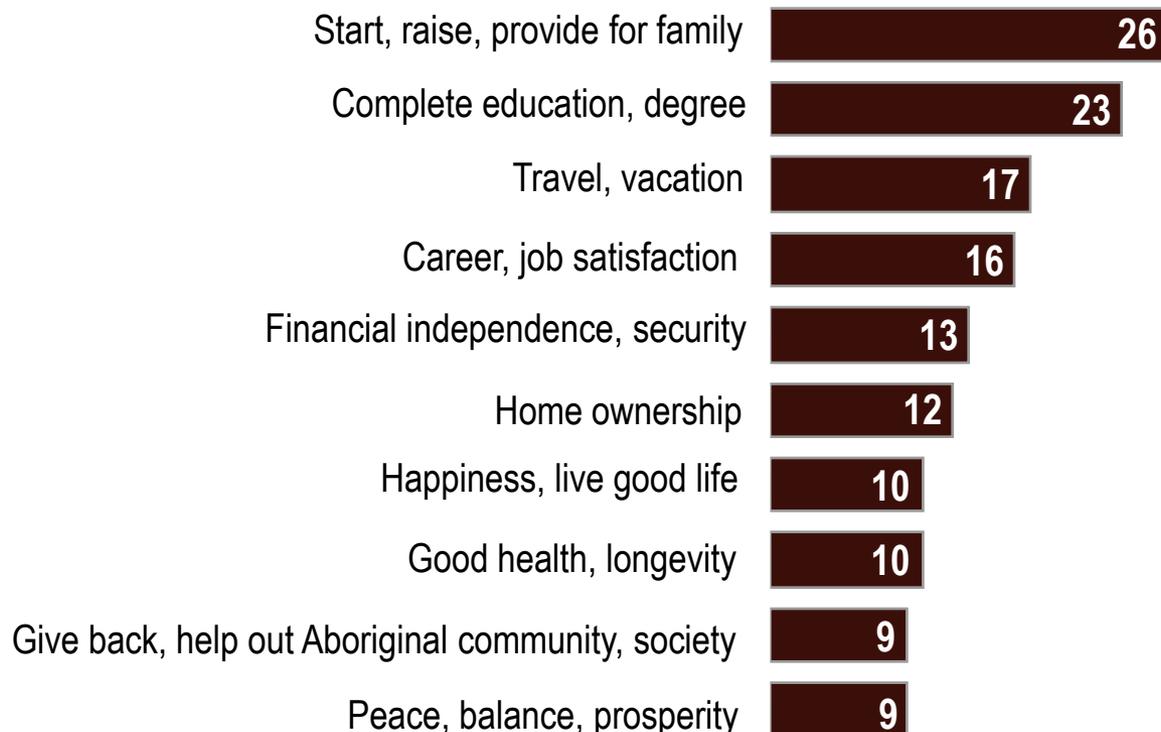




Education is the enduring aspiration for urban Aboriginal peoples and their children.

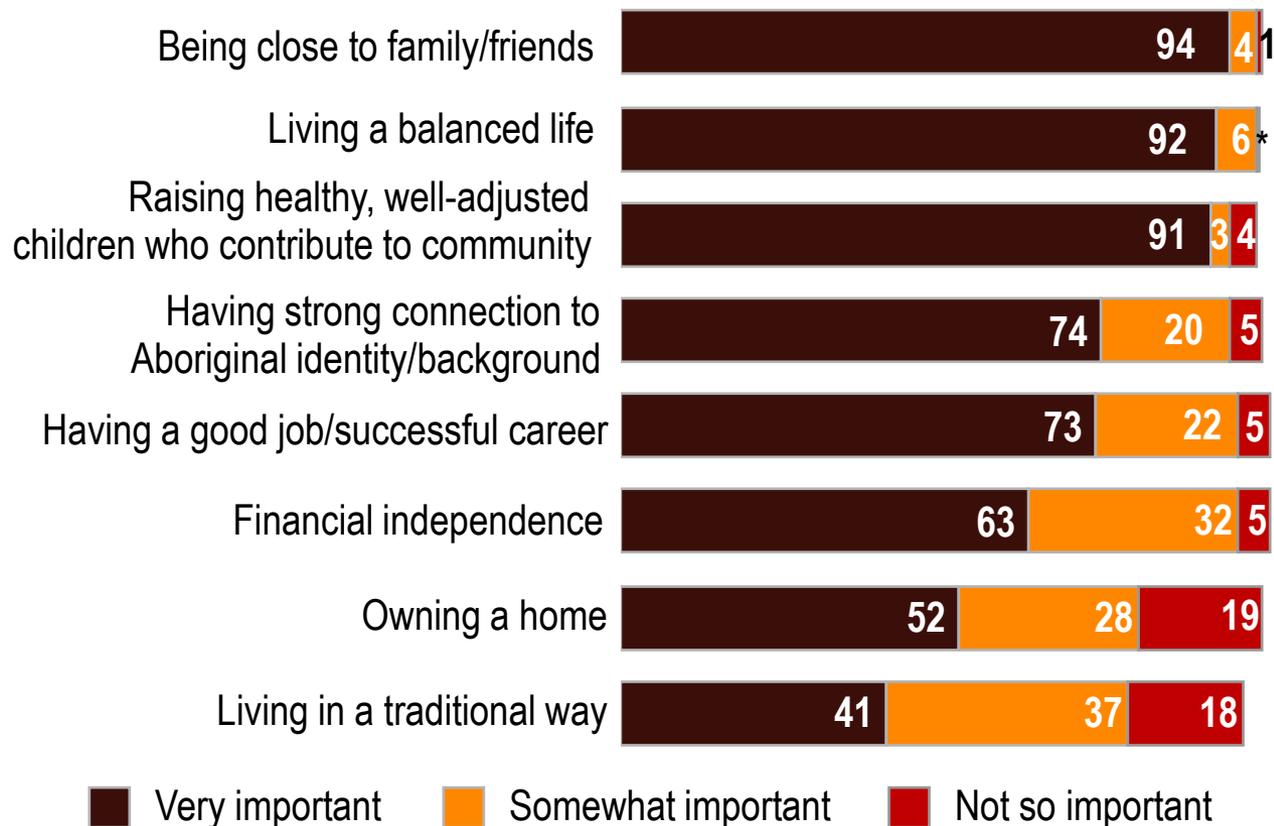
Aboriginal Vancouverites desire to be successful in mainstream ways...

What do you most want to achieve in your lifetime?



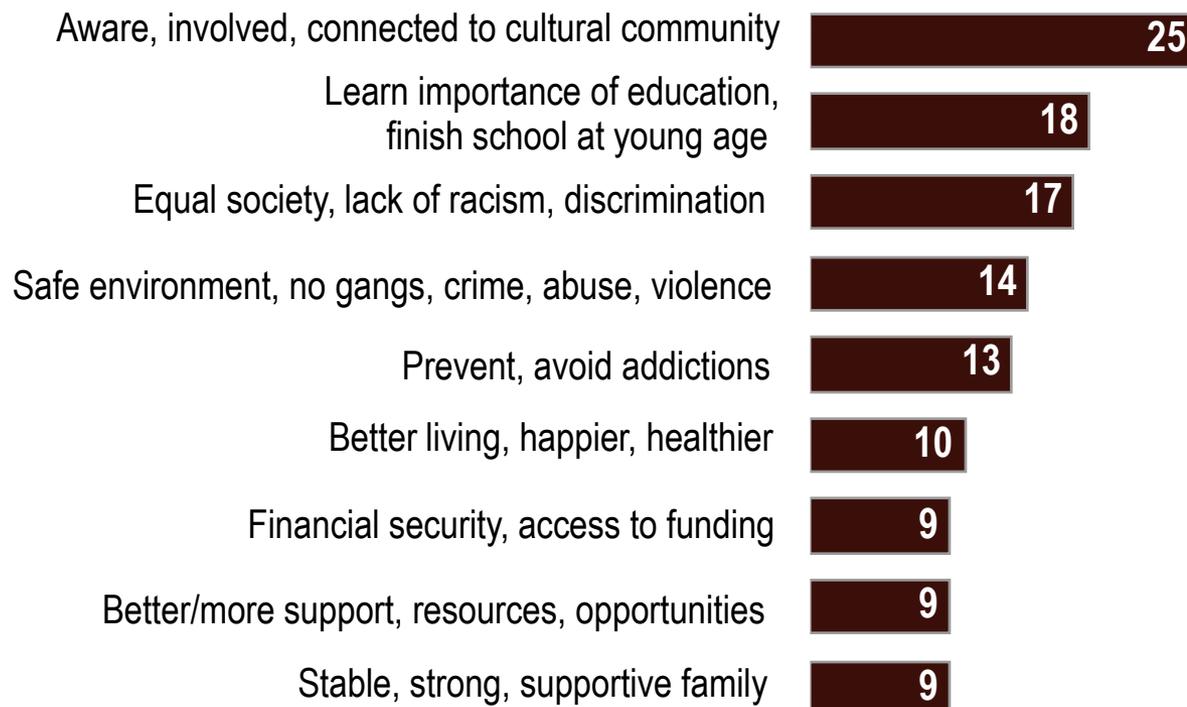
...and share universal definitions of a successful life.

People define a successful life in a many different ways. Are the following important to your idea of a successful life?



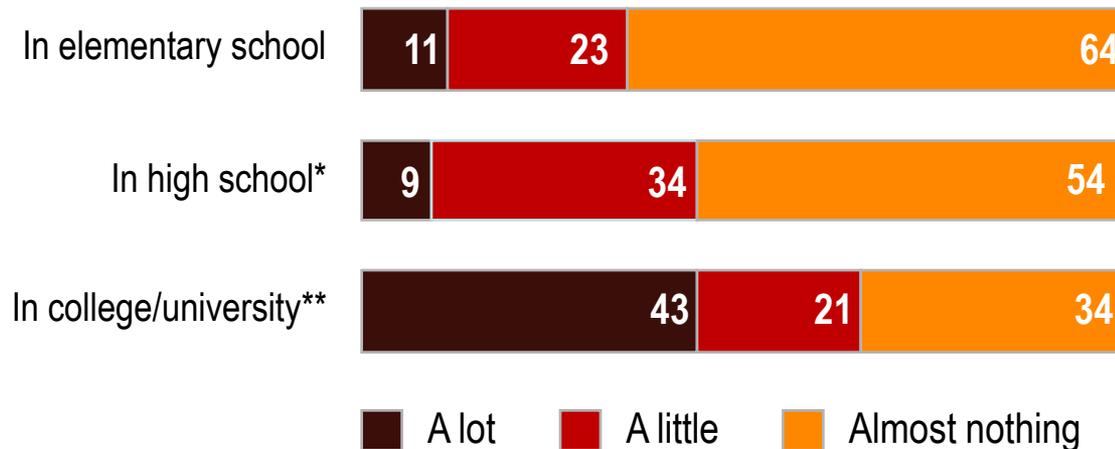
Cultural continuity is a top priority for the next generation...

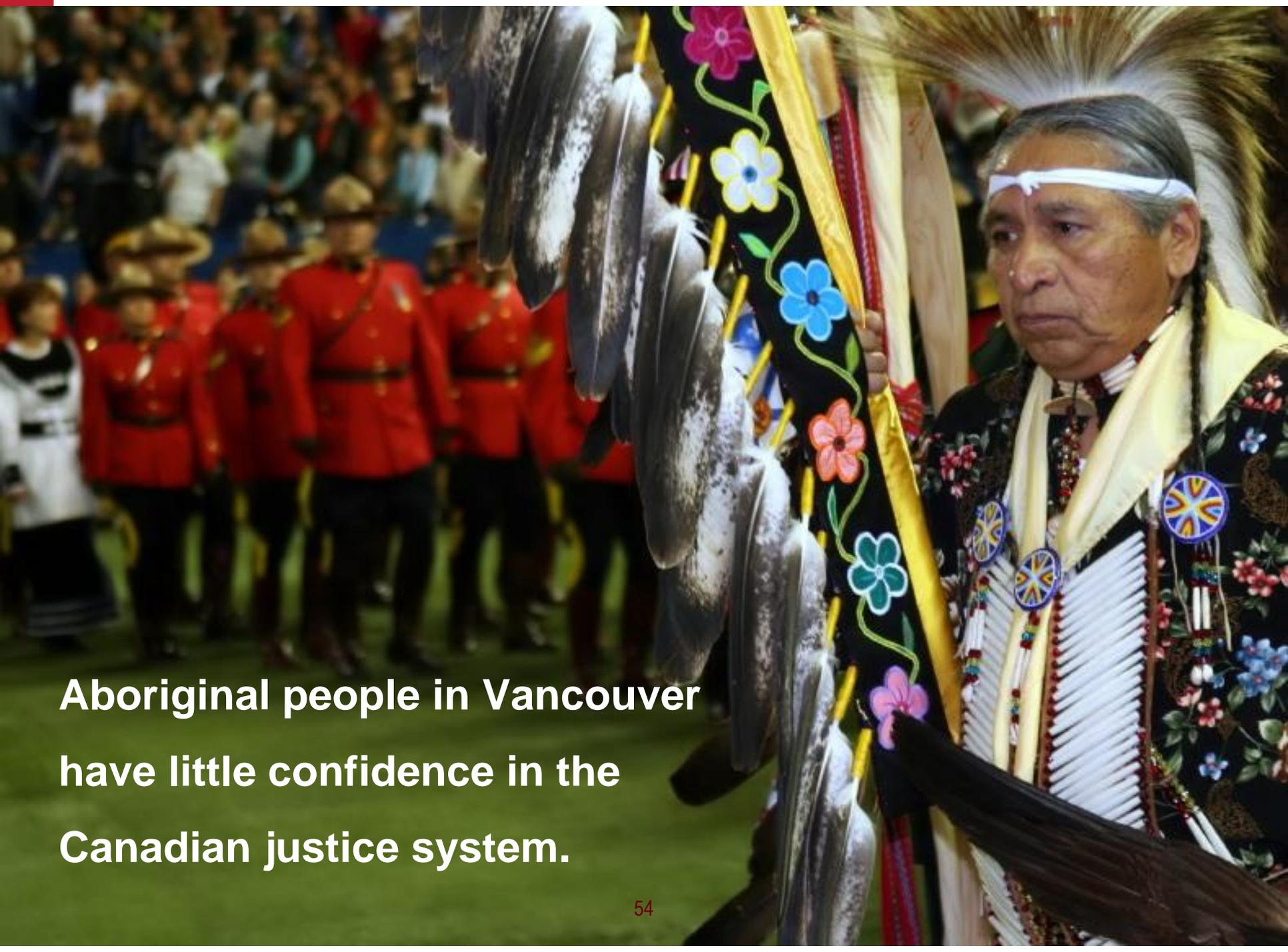
Turning now to the future, are there ways in which you hope your children's and grandchildren's lives will be different from yours?



...yet there is very little cultural transmission in schools.

Would you say you have learned a lot, a little or almost nothing about Aboriginal people, history and culture in ... ?





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

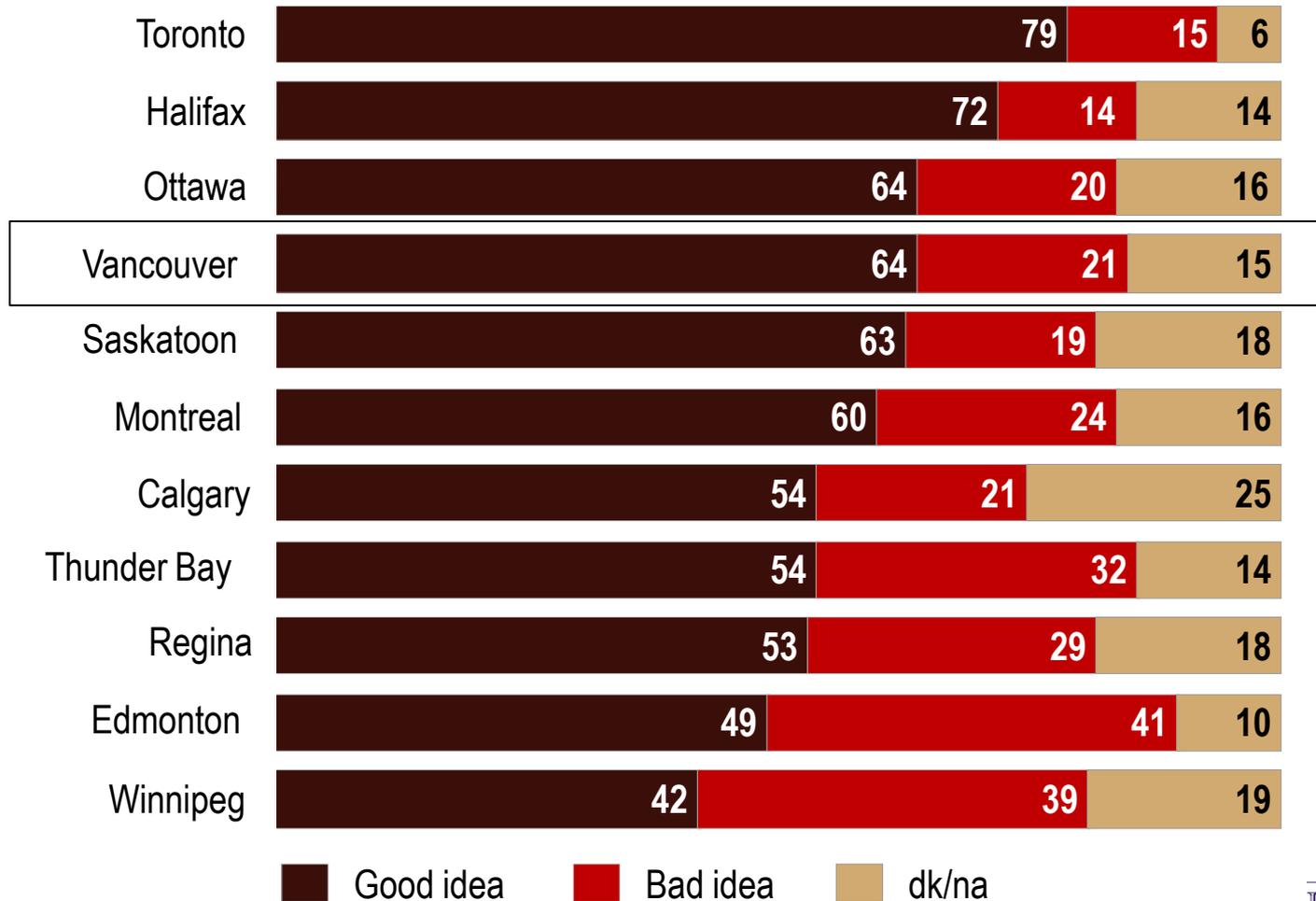
The majority have little to no confidence in the Canadian criminal justice system.

In general, how much confidence do you have in the criminal justice system in Canada?



And 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?

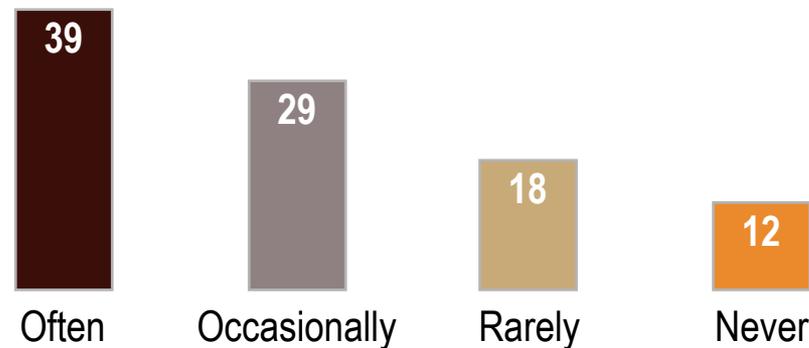




Organization and political affiliations

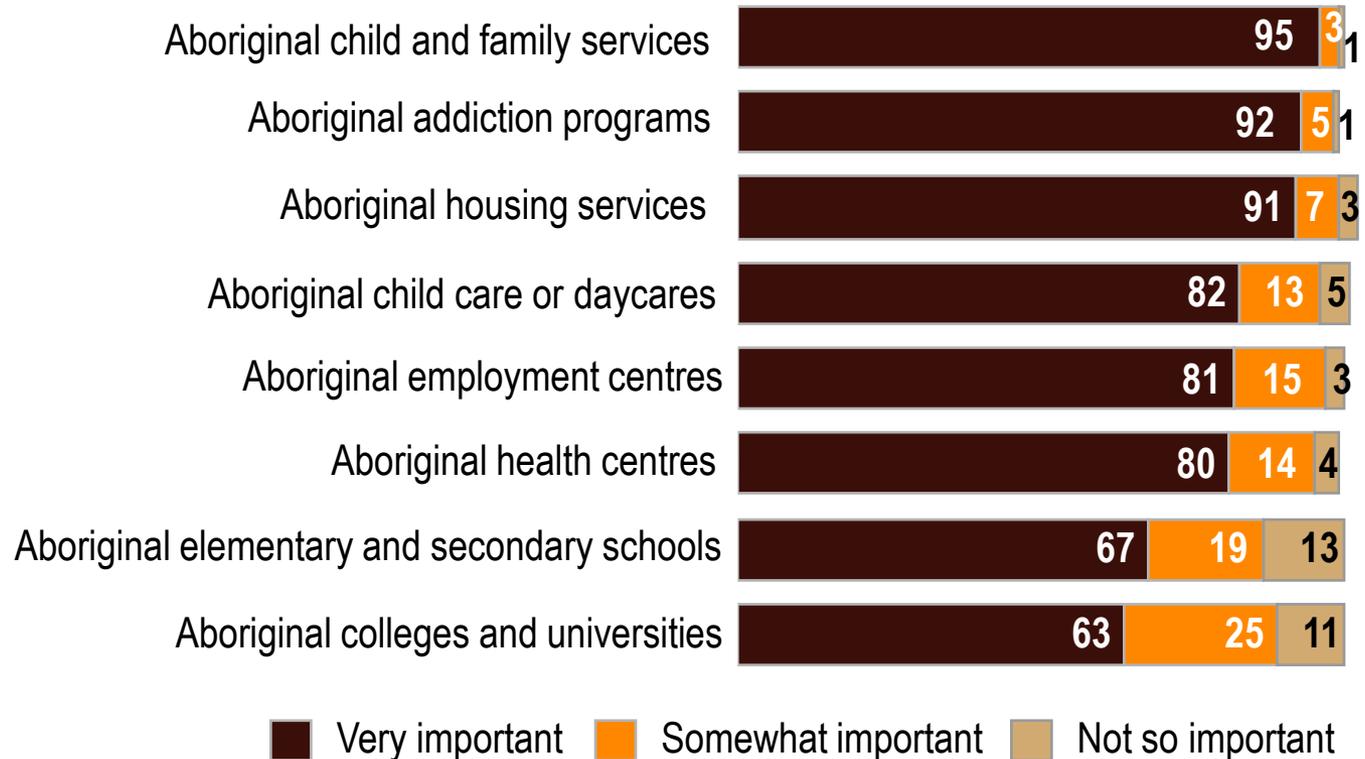
The majority of Aboriginal Vancouverites use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations.

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



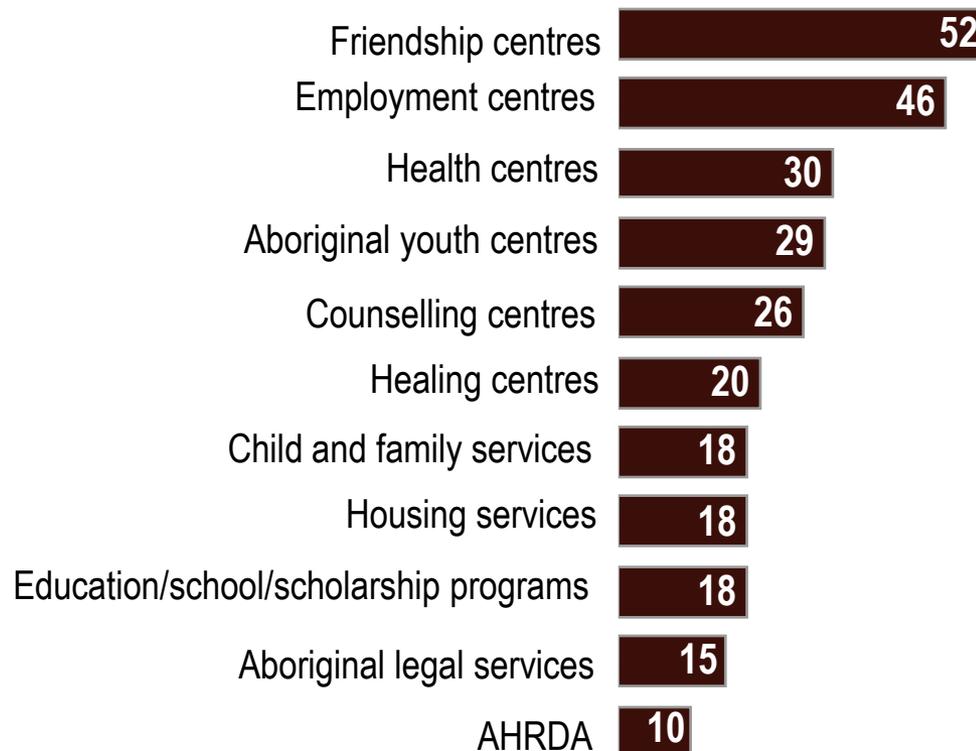
Many Aboriginal specific services are seen as valuable, some more so than others.

How important do you think it is that the following Aboriginal services exist in addition to non-Aboriginal ones?



The Friendship Centre and employment services are singled out as being very useful.

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



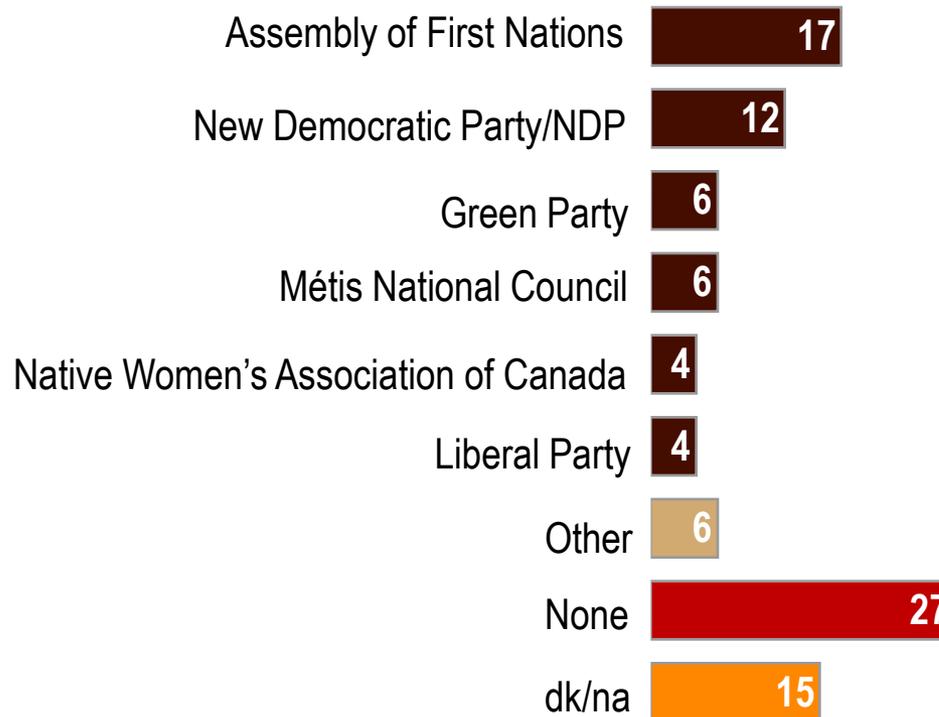
*Subsample: Those who have used Aboriginal services in their city.

They identify with a diverse array of political organizations.



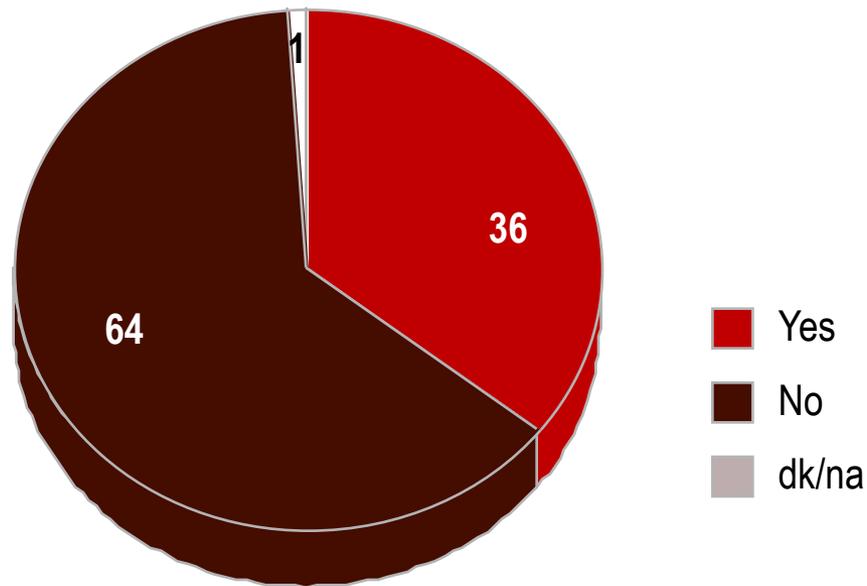
But a significant minority feels that no political organization or party best represents them.

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



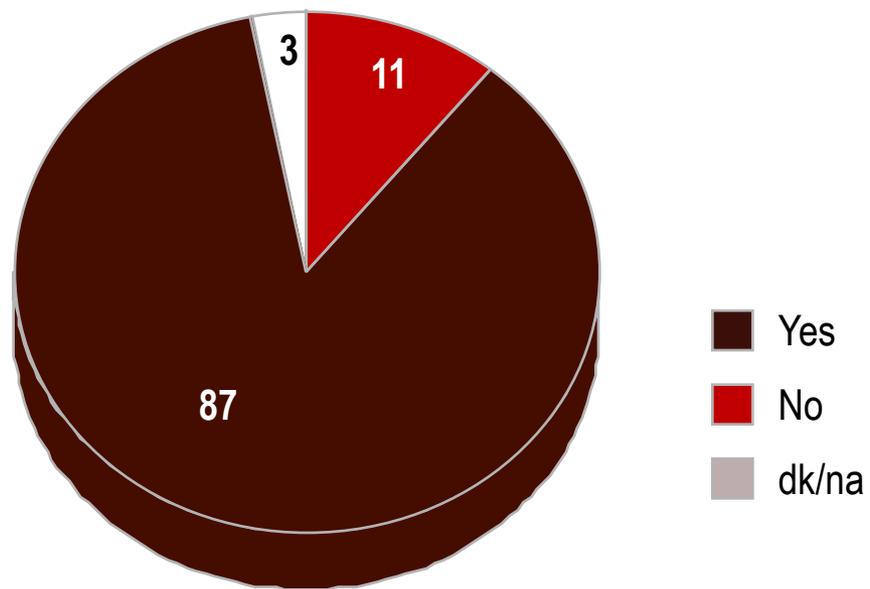
Still, there is a small majority who do not belong to any Aboriginal political organizations.

Do you belong to any Aboriginal political organizations?



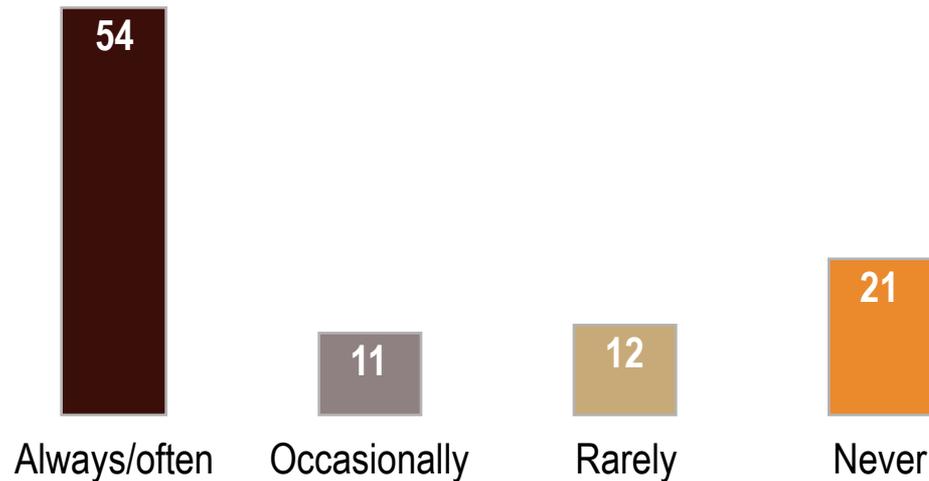
And a small number who belong to a Canadian political party.

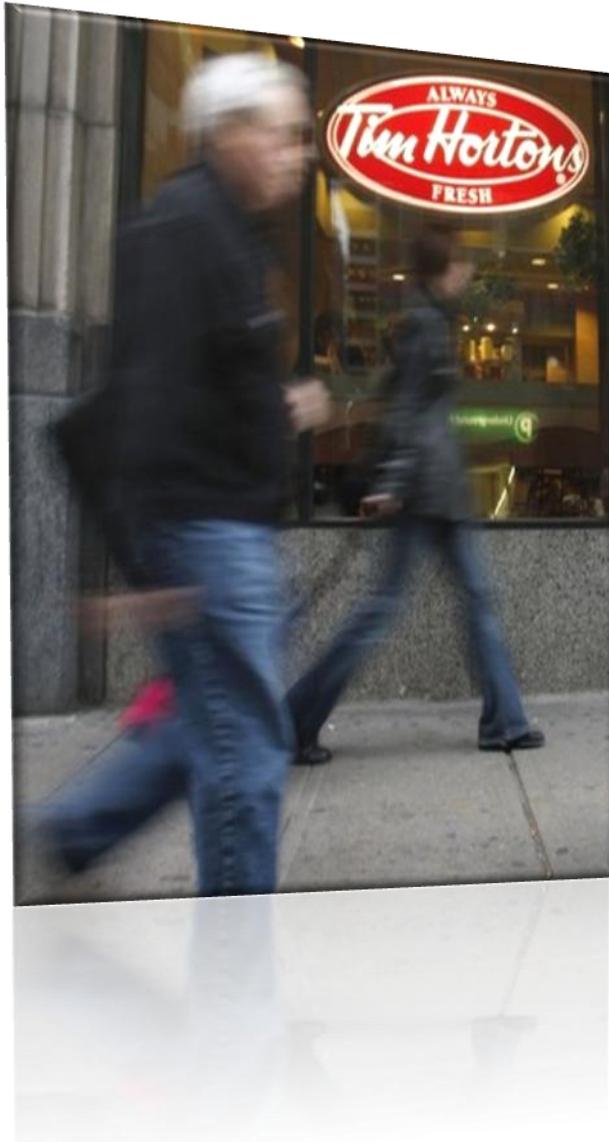
Do you belong to any Canadian political parties?



Many still turn out to vote in general elections.

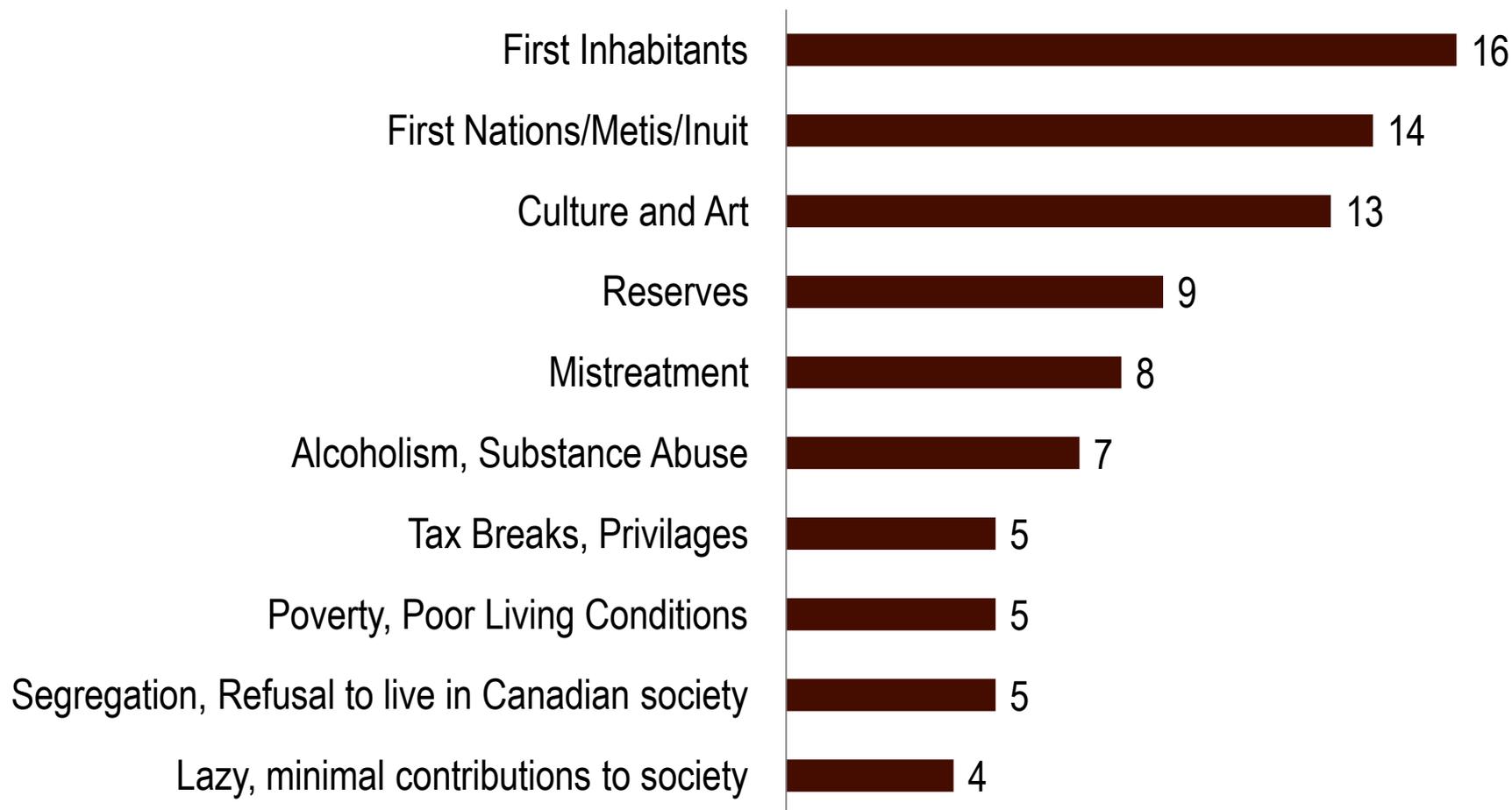
How often do you vote in Canadian elections at either the federal, provincial or municipal level?





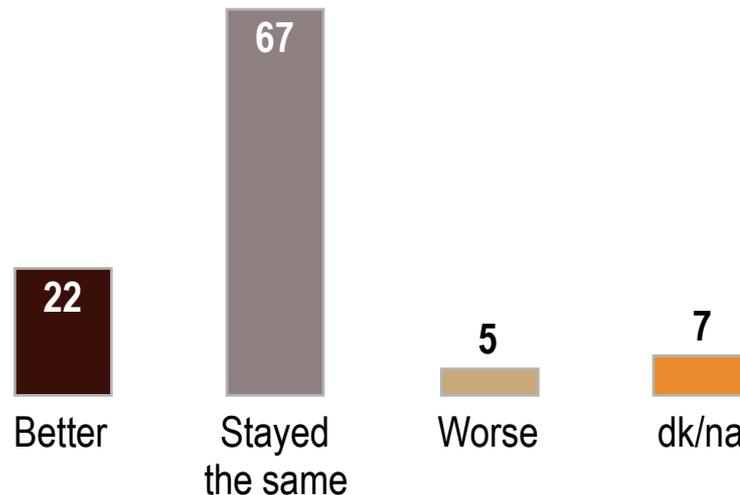
Non-Aboriginal perspectives in Vancouver

NA impressions are mostly positive, but there is no common impression.



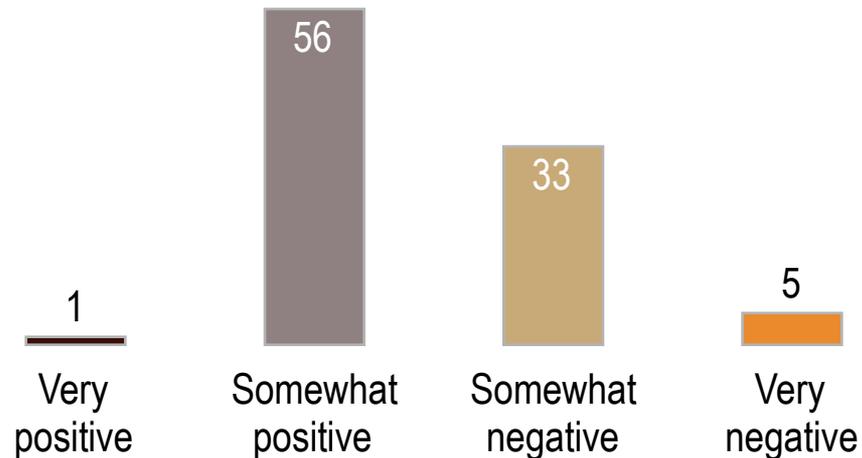
These impressions remain stable, with some positive change taking place.

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



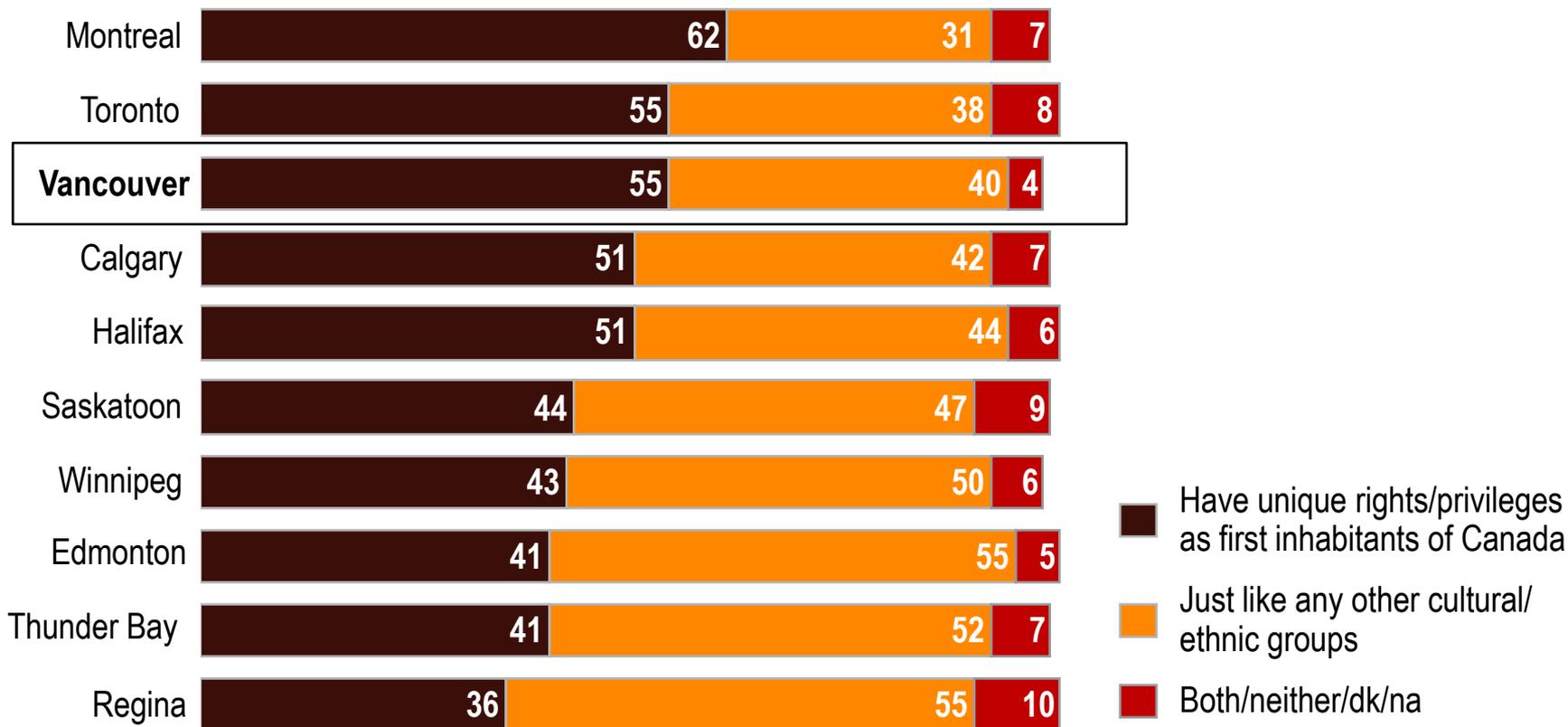
More feel that relations across Canada are growing positive, though this view is not widely shared.

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



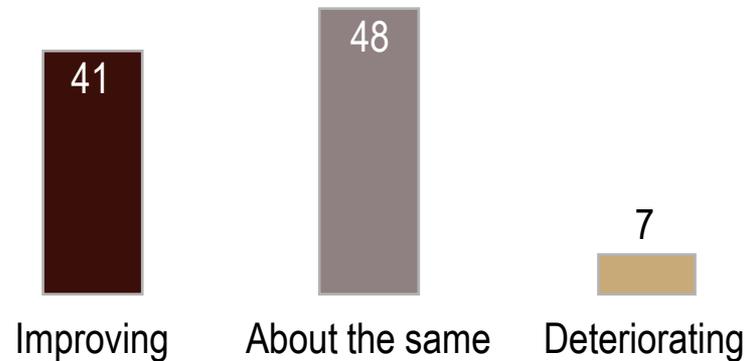
A small majority recognize Aboriginal rights, yet there are still many who do not.

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



Some still say they see these relations as improving.

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 negative than others.**

Dismissive Naysayers

(25%)

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

(National 24%)

Cultural Romantics

(45%)

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

(National 45%)

Inattentive Sceptics

(10%)

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

(National 14%)

Connected Advocates

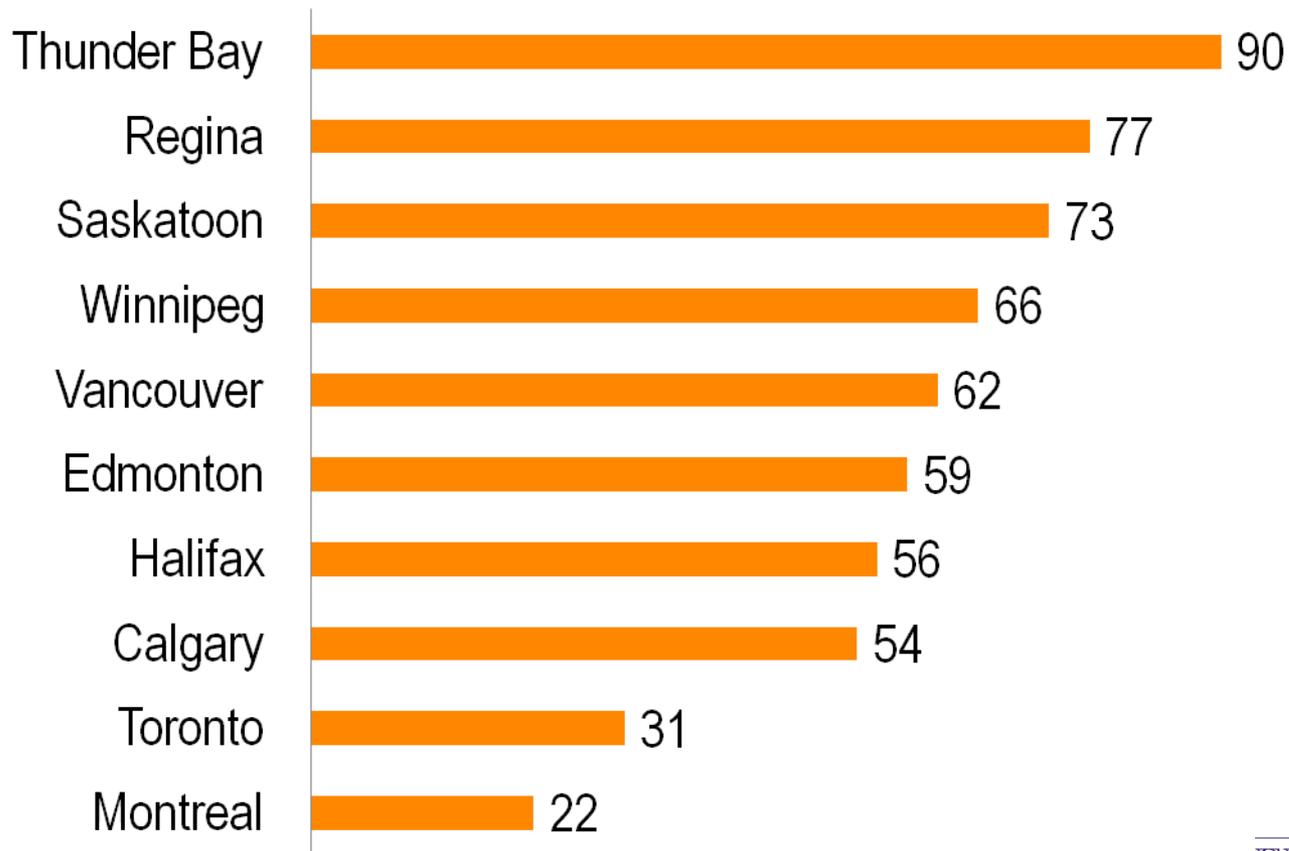
(20%)

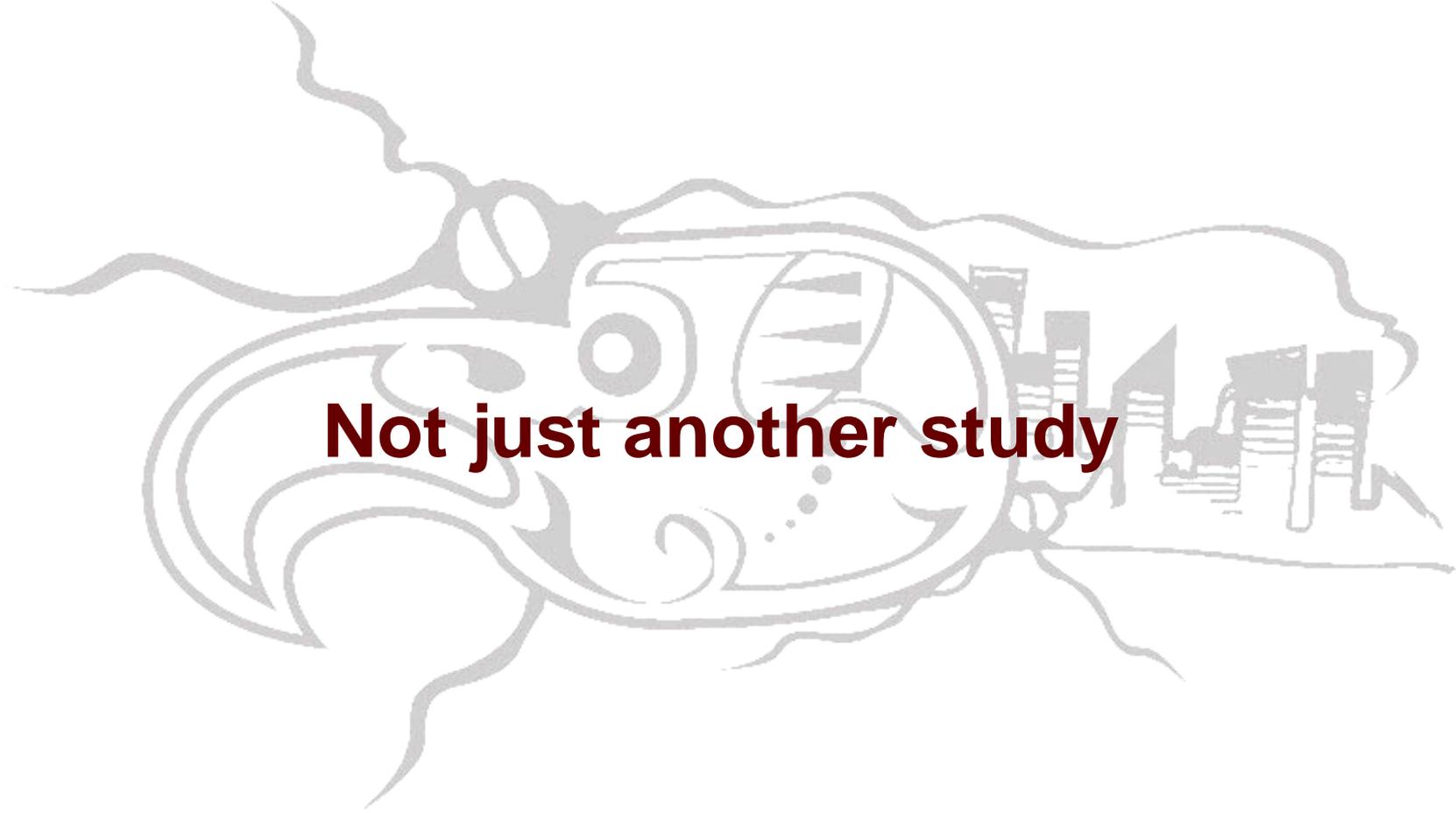
High level of contact and strong belief that Aboriginal peoples often experience discrimination.

(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 provides 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



[Home](#) | [About UAPS](#) | [UAPS Sponsors](#) | [Knowledge](#) | [Surveys / Data](#) | [Media](#) |



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

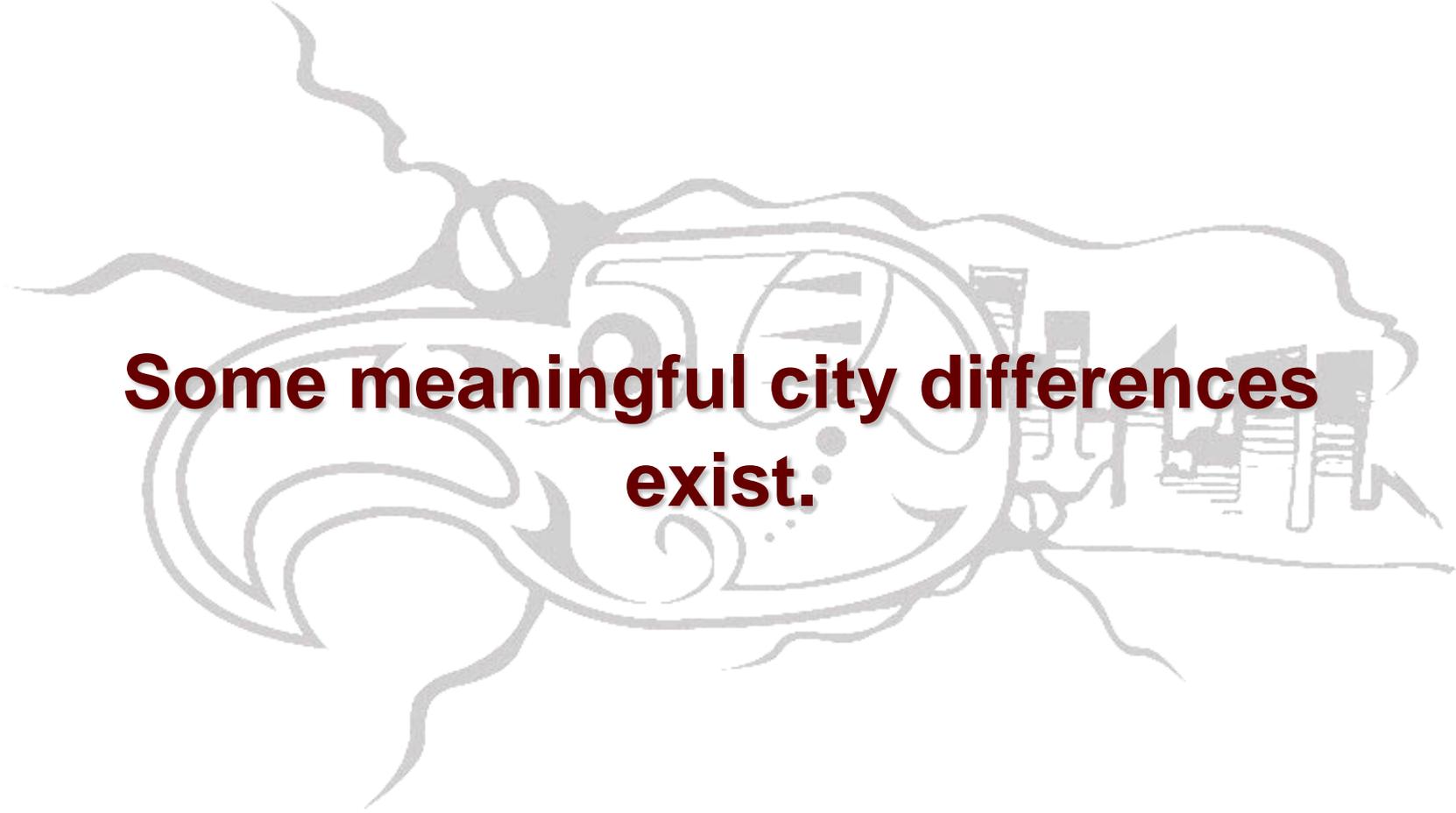
- **IT'S TIME FOR US TO WORK TOGETHER WITH OUR ABORIGINAL NEIGHBOURS**
Globe and Mail, April 23, 2010 » [more](#)
- **NATIVE IDENTITY DOES NOT GET LOST IN THE CITY**
Globe and Mail, April 19, 2010 » [more](#)

[» See All News](#)

REGISTER FOR EMAILS

Email:

www.uaps.ca



**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

**Environics would like to thank our sponsors,
without whom this study would not be possible!**



**Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada**



Canada

vancouver
foundation

TIDEScanada
uncommon solutions for the common good

JOHN LEFEBVRE