



# Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study

MONTREAL REPORT



ENVIRONICS  
• INSTITUTE •

Published by

**Environics Institute**

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- commissioning original survey research;
- funding academic studies related to polling and public opinion; and
- working with media partners to disseminate the results of its research.

Founded in 2006, the Institute has already conducted a number of groundbreaking studies, including a survey of Canadian Muslims, a survey of the people of Afghanistan, and a study (undertaken in partnership with Canada's World) of Canadians' personal engagement with people and issues around the world.

The Environics Institute sees public opinion research as a valuable lens through which Canadians can examine and better understand their own diverse and evolving society.

## About the Environics Institute

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## What is the *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study* and why now?

The *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study (UAPS)* is a snapshot of the hundreds of thousands of Aboriginal people who now live in urban centres. Conducted by the Environics Institute, and guided by an Advisory Circle of recognized experts from academia and from Aboriginal communities, the study is an enquiry into the values, experiences, identities and aspirations of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit living in Canada's major urban centres.

The urban Aboriginal population in Canada now numbers over 600,000 and is at an all time high. There are now more Aboriginal people living in urban centres across Canada than there are living in Aboriginal territories and communities on reserves, in Métis settlements and in Inuit communities. Aboriginal people now constitute a permanent presence in Canadian cities, and promise to be an important part of multicultural urban Canada.

The *UAPS* sprang from discussions with diverse stakeholders and opinion leaders across the country who recognized these trends, as well as the need for well-designed empirical research that would credibly express evolving urban Aboriginal perspectives.

## How was the research done?

The *UAPS* investigated a range of issues including (but not limited to) urban Aboriginal peoples' communities of origin, Aboriginal cultures, community belonging, education, work, health, political engagement and activity, justice, relationships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, life aspirations and definitions of success, and experiences with discrimination.

The study involved *in-person* interviews, one to two hours in length, with 2,614 Métis, Inuit and First Nations (status and non-status) individuals living in 11 Canadian cities from Halifax to Vancouver. With input from the *UAPS* Advisory Circle, individual questions were organized under four overarching themes:

- *identity*: who are you?
- *experiences*: what's your everyday life like?
- *values*: what's important in your life?
- *aspirations*: what do you want for your future?

In each city, the Environics Institute engaged a small team of local Aboriginal people to construct a 250-person sample and organize the interviews. Key to the study's legitimacy was that the sample be representative of the urban Aboriginal population: that it not select solely among those living in serious poverty or those who are succeeding. The Institute used the 2006 Canadian Census profile of Aboriginal people in each city (defined as the Census Metropolitan Area, or CMA) ) to design an "ideal sample," based on such characteristics as identity group, age, educational attainment and gender. Local research teams in each city then searched out individuals that fit this sample profile.

The study also investigated how non-Aboriginal people view Aboriginal people in Canada today, through a telephone survey with 2,501 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians living in these same cities (excluding Ottawa).



## What did the study find?

Many of the UAPS findings suggest that Canadian cities are becoming sites of connection, engagement and cultural vitality for a large number of Aboriginal peoples. Although many segments of First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations in Canada face substantial challenges, the picture in cities is more diverse – and in many cases more hopeful – than public perceptions and media coverage often acknowledge.

In April 2010, the Institute released a national report of the study's findings (*Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study – Main Report*, [www.UAPS.ca](http://www.UAPS.ca)). Among the main findings described in the report:

- **For most, the city is home, but urban Aboriginal peoples stay connected to their communities of origin.** Six in ten feel a close connection to these communities – links that are integral to strong family and social ties, and to traditional and contemporary Aboriginal culture. Notwithstanding these links, majorities of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit consider their current city of residence home (71%), including those who are the first generation of their family to live in their city.
- **Almost eight in ten participants say they are “very proud” of their specific Aboriginal identity (i.e., First Nations, Métis or Inuk).** Slightly fewer – 70 percent – say the same about being Canadian.
- **Urban Aboriginal peoples are seeking to become a significant and visible part of the urban landscape.** Six in ten feel they can make their city a better place to live, a similar proportion to non-Aboriginal urban dwellers.
- **Six in ten are not concerned about losing contact with their culture, while a minority totally (17%) or somewhat (21%) agree that they are concerned.** As well, by a wide margin (6:1), First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit think Aboriginal culture in their communities has become stronger rather than weaker in the last five years.
- **They display a higher tolerance for other cultures than their non-Aboriginal neighbours:** Seventy-seven percent of urban Aboriginal peoples believe there is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country, in contrast to 54 percent of non-Aboriginal urbanites.
- **A majority believe they are viewed in negative ways by non-Aboriginal people.** Three in four participants perceive assumptions about addiction problems, while many feel there are negative stereotypes about laziness (30%), lack of intelligence (20%) and poverty (20%).
- **Education is their top priority, and an enduring aspiration for the next generation.** Twenty percent want the next generation to understand the importance of education, 18 percent hope younger individuals will stay connected to their cultural community and 17 percent hope the next generation will experience life without racism.



## What does the *UAPS* tell us about Aboriginal peoples who live in Montreal?

According to the 2006 Census, Montreal is home to more than 17,000 Aboriginal peoples. Although this is similar, for example, to the Aboriginal populations in Regina and Saskatoon in terms of absolute number, it is among the smallest per capita Aboriginal populations of the *UAPS* cities (representing 0.5 percent of the total population of Montreal, compared to 8.9 percent and 9.3 for Regina and Saskatoon, respectively).

The *UAPS Montreal Report* is the ninth of a series of city reports, following the release of the main report of the *UAPS* on April 6, 2010. In Montreal, the main survey consisted of in-person interviews with 250 First Nations peoples (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit (18 years and older), between May 1 and July 7, 2009.

An analysis of the *UAPS* Montreal data reveals the following about the identities, experiences, values and aspirations of Aboriginal residents of Montreal:

- **A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal consider the city to be their home, but this sentiment is less widespread here than in any other *UAPS* city.** This appears to be in large part because Montreal has the largest proportion of first generation residents (i.e., Aboriginal peoples born and raised in a community other than Montreal). Aboriginal Montrealers are also more likely than average to report a close connection to their home community, and to say they plan to return there permanently one day.
- **This does not preclude a sense of satisfaction with their current city, on par with other *UAPS* participants.** Aboriginal peoples like living in Montreal, due to the quality of life and the city life available to them. They also tend to believe they can make a positive difference in the city. Their main concern centres on common urban pressures such as traffic and pollution, and they are much less likely than average to express concerns about crime.
- **Aboriginal Montrealers also express appreciation for the sense of social acceptance they find in the city, a view that is almost exclusive to Montreal and Toronto, where the size and diversity of the population likely makes it easier to “blend in.”** As well, while a majority say they have personally been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background, this proportion is smaller here than in Toronto and the *UAPS* cities west of Winnipeg.
- **Nonetheless, consistent with other *UAPS* participants, most Aboriginal Montrealers feel discrimination of Aboriginal peoples is a pervasive problem.** The predominant stereotype of Aboriginal peoples is believed to be about substance abuse. A minority believe that non-Aboriginal attitudes are improving, but the balance of opinion in Montreal is that they remain unchanged.
- **There is strong Indigenous pride among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal. Most are very proud of their specific *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* identity and of their collective *Aboriginal* identity.** While Aboriginal peoples in most other cities are similarly proud of their Canadian identity, strong pride in being Canadian is noticeably lower in Montreal than in any other city except Vancouver.

- **There is no consensus among Aboriginal Montrealers about the type of community to which they belong.** They are more oriented towards a non-Aboriginal community than those in any other *UAPS* city except Toronto, reflecting the fact that these two cities have the smallest relative Aboriginal populations. Majorities are aware of and report participation in Aboriginal cultural activities, but to a lesser extent than in some other cities.
- **Despite these challenges, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal express a modest sense of confidence in their ability to retain their cultural identity in the city.** Montreal is, in fact, the only *UAPS* city where Aboriginal residents express *less* concern in this respect than do non-Aboriginal residents, reflecting the unique cultural concerns of Quebecers as francophones in a primarily anglophone country.
- **There is widespread agreement in Montreal that Aboriginal services are needed addition to mainstream services.** Half say they rely at least occasionally on Aboriginal services and organizations in Montreal, and more so than average, friendship centres are identified as being of particular value. Compared to those living in other *UAPS* cities, Aboriginal Montrealers are among the most convinced of the need for Aboriginal child and family services.
- **The top life aspirations for Aboriginal peoples in Montreal include raising a family and higher education.** These are largely consistent with the life aspirations of Aboriginal peoples living in other *UAPS* cities. Family and friends, and a balanced lifestyle are considered the primary yardsticks of a successful life; particularly compared to *UAPS* participants in smaller cities, they place comparatively less value on financial independence and home ownership.

## How do non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal perceive Aboriginal people?

As part of the *UAPS*, Environics surveyed a representative sample of non-Aboriginal Canadians to learn how they view Aboriginal peoples 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, Thunder Bay, 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.

A closer look at the responses of non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal yielded the following insights into their attitudes toward Aboriginal people, their awareness of Aboriginal people and communities in their city, their perceptions of the top issues facing Aboriginal people today and, finally, their perceptions of future relations with Aboriginal people. Specifically:

- **Among non-Aboriginal people in Montreal, the most common top-of-mind impression of Aboriginal peoples revolves around their history as the first inhabitants of Canada.** The majority say their impressions have not changed over the past few years (rather than having improved or worsened).
- **Non-Aboriginal Montrealers are twice as likely to say that Aboriginal people have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada as to say they are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canadian society.** Belief in the unique rights of Aboriginal people is more common here than in any other *UAPS* city.
- **A slim majority of Montreal residents know Aboriginal people live in their city, but they are the least aware of those in any *UAPS* city of an Aboriginal community (either physical or social) in their midst.** Indeed, very few non-Aboriginal Montrealers have regular contact with Aboriginal people (which is understandably more common in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations), and they are among the least likely to know Aboriginal people as close friends, neighbours and co-workers. Although they represent a minority, the proportion of *Inattentive Skeptics* (individuals who are uninformed and unaware of Aboriginal peoples) is more prominent here than in any other city.
- **Land claims are perceived to be the most important issue facing the Aboriginal population in Canada overall, while discrimination is considered the top challenge for urban Aboriginal peoples.** However, substantial minorities in Montreal cannot identify any key challenges. Indeed, awareness of Indian residential schools is lower in Montreal than in any other *UAPS* city. The balance of opinion in Montreal is that the problems faced by Aboriginal people in Canada have largely been caused by the attitudes of other Canadians and the policies of government than by Aboriginal peoples themselves.
- **Montreal residents clearly recognize that Aboriginal people experience discrimination, and at least as much as other groups in Canadian society.** Nonetheless, the minorities who do not believe such discrimination exists are somewhat larger in Montreal than in most other *UAPS* cities except Toronto.
- **Opinion is divided about whether the current state of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada is positive or negative, and the majority of non-Aboriginal Montrealers are not seeing any change in this relationship over time.**

## Next steps

All *UAPS* reports are freely available via the study's website, [www.uaps.ca](http://www.uaps.ca). The *UAPS Montreal Report* and other city reports will all be posted on this site as they are available.

The Environics Institute is also committed to making the study data accessible to the public. The results of all the *UAPS* survey questions can be freely accessed through data tables on the website, or by contacting the Institute directly (see the Acknowledgements section of this report for contact details).

In addition, the recent release of the *UAPS* main report offers a unique window into establishing new and meaningful dialogue with Aboriginal Peoples in Canada's major cities. More than ever, a public forum in Canadian cities across the country is required that brings people from all sectors, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, together to take action on the needs of and opportunities for urban Aboriginal communities in this country

To that end, the *UAPS Public Engagement Strategy* has been designed using the study as a platform for community dialogue and discussion. The broad goal of this strategy is to promote collaborative engagement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in determining the implications of *UAPS* research findings for urban Aboriginal communities. The Institute hopes to organize forums in each *UAPS* city that bring together Aboriginal organizations, policy-makers and *UAPS* participants to build a deeper collective understanding of the values and experiences of urban Aboriginal peoples, and identify the next steps for supporting the urban Aboriginal community in a given city.

For more information on *UAPS* public engagement, please contact Ginger Gosnell-Myers, *UAPS* Public Engagement Director, at [ginger.gosnell-myers@environics.ca](mailto:ginger.gosnell-myers@environics.ca).

## About the Research

**BACKGROUND.** The urban Aboriginal population in Canada now numbers over 600,000 and is at an all time high. The largest Aboriginal community is no longer a reserve but Winnipeg itself, with a diverse Aboriginal population that exceeds 60,000 people. Urban Aboriginal populations are permanent populations, and promise to be an important part of multicultural urban Canada.

The *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study* sprang from discussions with diverse stakeholders and opinion leaders across the country that recognized these trends, as well as the need for well-designed empirical research that would credibly express evolving urban Aboriginal perspectives. Throughout 2009, the Environics Institute, a not-for-profit foundation established by Environics Research co-founder Michael Adams that supports original research on important issues of public policy and social change, oversaw with its Advisory Circle community-based research in 11 Canadian cities: Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver.

The objectives of the *UAPS* are to better understand the perspectives of urban Aboriginal peoples as complex individuals and communities, and provide new insights that stimulate dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal urban communities across Canada. Designed to be an enquiry about the values, experiences, identities and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples living in cities, the study investigated a range of issues including (but not limited to) urban Aboriginal peoples' communities of origin, Aboriginal cultures, community belonging, education, work, health political engagement and activity, justice, relationships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, life aspirations and definitions of success, and experiences with discrimination.

**UAPS IN MONTREAL.** The *UAPS Montreal Report* constitutes the ninth of a series of city reports, following the release of the main report of the *UAPS* on April 6, 2010. In Montreal, the main survey consisted of in-person interviews with 250 First Nations peoples (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit (18 years and older) between May 1 and July 7, 2009.

Key to the study's legitimacy was that the sample be representative of the Aboriginal population in Montreal: that it not select solely among those living in serious poverty or those who are succeeding. The Institute used the 2006 Canadian Census profile of Aboriginal people in Montreal to design an "ideal sample," based on such characteristics as identity group, age, educational attainment and gender. The Montreal research team, consisting of a Project Co-ordinator (Allan Vicaire) and a team of interviewers, then searched out individuals who fit this sample profile. The research team worked with local Aboriginal agencies and other organizations to build community awareness and support for the study, and to identify survey participants.

The table on the next page presents a profile of the final sample of participants, by such characteristics as identity, gender, age and education. While the sampling approach was generally successful in most cities, insufficient numbers of Métis were identified in Montreal (additional interviews were conducted with Inuit participants to reach the overall quota of 250 interviews); the lack of clarity within the community-at-large around the definition of Métis may be a contributing factor. At the analysis stage, data were weighted so that the final sample accurately reflects the distribution of the population according to the 2006 Census. The table presents the actual number of participants (unweighted) within each subgroup, as well as the weighted proportion each subgroup represents within the total sample.

The results contained in this report are based on the total sample; the sample size is not sufficiently large to allow for analysis by characteristics such as age and education.

In addition to the main survey, a telephone survey was conducted with 250 non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal (18 years and older) between April 28 and May 15, 2009. This is an important component

of the *UAPS* because it reveals how the non-Aboriginal population views the experiences of Aboriginal peoples, reflecting some of the barriers and opportunities facing the Aboriginal community. The margin of error for a probability sample of 250 is plus or minus 6.2 percentage points, 19 times in 20.<sup>1</sup>

Further details on the methodology of both *UAPS* surveys can be found in the main report on the *UAPS*, available at [www.uaps.ca](http://www.uaps.ca).

**IN THIS REPORT.** The *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study – Montreal Report* is organized into nine chapters.

**Chapter 1, The Urban Context**, provides a demographic snapshot of the Aboriginal population in Montreal, and information on where study participants are from, how long they have lived in the city, and the strength of their connection to Montreal and to their home community.

**Chapter 2, Identity and Culture**, delivers the key findings on Aboriginal peoples’ expressions of Aboriginal identity and their connection to Aboriginal culture in the city.

**Chapter 3, Experiences with Non-Aboriginal People**, summarizes how Aboriginal peoples living in Montreal feel perceived by the non-Aboriginal population-at-large.

**Chapter 4, Experiences with Aboriginal Services and Organizations**, explores study participants’ perceptions of and interactions with Aboriginal services and organizations in Montreal.

**Chapter 5, Urban Experiences**, explores how Aboriginal peoples feel about living in Montreal.

**Chapter 6, Urban Aspirations**, delves further into contemporary Aboriginal urban experience and explores Aboriginal peoples’ life aspirations and definitions of success.

**Chapters 7 and 8** are Special Themes in the Montreal report: **Confidence in the Criminal Justice System** and **Inuit in Montreal**.

**Chapter 9, Non-Aboriginal Perspectives**, the final chapter of the report, captures non-Aboriginal Montrealers’ perceptions of Aboriginal peoples, including their awareness of and level of contact with Aboriginal people, their knowledge of salient Aboriginal issues, and the perceived importance of Aboriginal history and culture.

An overview at the beginning of each chapter summarizes the main *UAPS* findings.

*Unless otherwise noted, all of the numbers in the graphs are percentages.*

## *UAPS* participant profile in Montreal

	# (Unweighted)	% (Weighted)
<b>IDENTITY</b>		
First Nations	163	67
Status	146	60
Non-status	16	7
Métis	24	30
Inuit	63	3
<b>GENDER</b>		
Men	111	50
Women	139	50
<b>AGE</b>		
18-24	52	14
25-44	115	39
45+	83	47
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
No diploma	63	23
High school diploma	68	24
College degree	68	41
University degree	51	12
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>		
<\$10,000	62	21
\$10,000 – \$30,000	66	30
\$30,000 – \$60,000	47	18
\$60,000+	33	19
Refused	42	12
<b>LIVING SITUATION</b>		
Renting an apartment or house	148	55
Homeowner	22	16
Living with friends or family	28	9
Renting a room in a rooming house/hostel	19	9
Living in a temporary shelter	21	4
Other (incl. homeless)	12	7
<b>ELDER</b>		
Yes	25	12
No	225	88

<sup>1</sup> Because the sample for the main survey is based on individuals who initially “self-selected” for participation, no estimate of sampling error can be calculated for the main survey. It should be noted that all surveys, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error, including but not limited to sampling error, coverage error and measurement error.

# I.0 The Urban Context

The urban Aboriginal population in Canada now numbers over 600,000 and is at an all-time high. There are more Aboriginal people living in urban centres across Canada than there are living in Aboriginal territories and communities on reserves, in Métis settlements and in Inuit communities. Aboriginal people now constitute a permanent presence in Canadian cities, and promise to be an important part of multicultural urban Canada.

As a starting point, the *UAPS* asked Montreal participants a number of questions to establish where they were from, how long they had lived in Montreal, and how they felt about Montreal (i.e., did they consider it or another community to be home?). Answers to these questions are summarized in this chapter, following a demographic snapshot of the Aboriginal population in Montreal based on the 2006 Census.

## Key findings

- ***UAPS* participants in Montreal have long-standing ties to the city.** They are largely first generation residents (i.e., born and raised somewhere other than Montreal), and more so than in any other *UAPS* city. Yet they are also long-term urban residents: more than half of this group has lived in Montreal for 10 years or more.
- **Aboriginal peoples move to Montreal to pursue educational opportunities, and to a lesser extent for employment, for family reasons and for the city life.** These reasons are generally common to Aboriginal peoples in all 11 *UAPS* cities.
- **Montreal is “home” for a majority of Aboriginal peoples in the city, although this feeling is less widespread than the national average.** This is likely due to the higher than average proportion of Aboriginal peoples who are the first generation of their family in the city, which also manifests itself in a strong sense of connection to their communities of origin. While only a minority plan to return to their home community permanently, this proportion is higher among Aboriginal residents of Montreal than in any other *UAPS* city.



## 1.1 The Aboriginal population in Montreal

The Aboriginal population in Montreal is similar in terms of absolute number to the Aboriginal populations in Regina and Saskatoon, and yet has among the smallest per capita concentrations of the *UAPS* cities. According to the 2006 Census, a total of 17,870 people in the Montreal census metropolitan area (CMA) identified themselves as Aboriginal, that is, as First Nations, Métis or Inuit (this compares to 17,105 in Regina and 21,535 in Saskatoon). However, Aboriginal peoples account for just 0.5 percent of the total population of Montreal, on par with Toronto, and well below the per capita concentrations in Regina (8.9%) and Saskatoon (9.3%).

Montreal's Aboriginal population is growing at the fastest rate of all the *UAPS* cities (an increase of 60% between 2001 and 2006). During the same time period, the total population of Montreal grew by just over five percent.

As of 2006, First Nations peoples are the largest Aboriginal group in Montreal, accounting for almost six in ten (57%) of the Aboriginal population. Métis account for 34 percent of the Aboriginal population, while three percent identified as Inuit, and six percent offered other or multiple responses. The increase in the Aboriginal population in Montreal is due equally to growth among First Nations peoples (up 65% between 2001-2006) and Métis (up 62%).

According to 2006 Census data, the demographic profile of the Aboriginal population in Montreal is closer to that of the non-Aboriginal population than is the case in most of the other *UAPS* cities. Nonetheless, the Aboriginal population is slightly younger than the non-Aboriginal population (with a median age of 37 years, compared to 39 years for the non-Aboriginal population),<sup>2</sup> and has slightly higher unemployment rates and slightly lower education and income levels. As well, Aboriginal children have a much greater likelihood of living in a single-parent household.

## 1.2 Residency in the city

***Almost nine in ten UAPS participants in Montreal are first generation residents, more than in any other UAPS city.***

In 2006, 50 percent of the Aboriginal population in Canada lived in urban centres (including large cities or census metropolitan areas and smaller urban centres), up from 47 percent in 1996. In turn, the proportion of the Aboriginal population that lives on-reserve or in rural (off-reserve) locations has declined. The movement of Aboriginal people to Canadian urban areas has been occurring for several decades, with Aboriginal populations in some cities constituting the largest Aboriginal communities in Canada.

Exploring the movement of Aboriginal people over time to Montreal is beyond the scope of the *UAPS*. Nonetheless, the survey did provide the opportunity to document one distinction considered particularly relevant to the urban Aboriginal experience: Are you originally from the city (i.e., born and raised in Montreal) or are you from somewhere else?

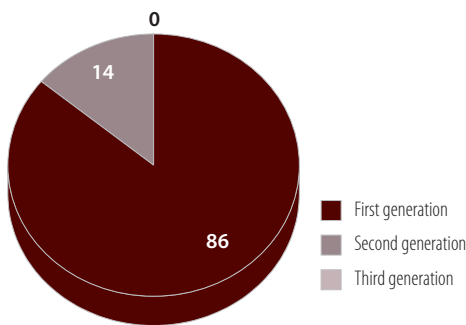
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<sup>2</sup> The median age is the point where exactly one-half of the population is older and the other half is younger.

The data revealed two main groups of people: those who were born and raised somewhere other than Montreal (“first generation”); and those who were born and raised in Montreal but whose family is from another place (“second generation”).

In Montreal, most (86%) *UAPS* participants are “first generation” residents born and raised in a community, town, city or reserve other than Montreal. The remainder (14%) are “second generation” residents born and raised in Montreal whose parents and/or grandparents are from another place.

### First, second and third generation Montreal residents

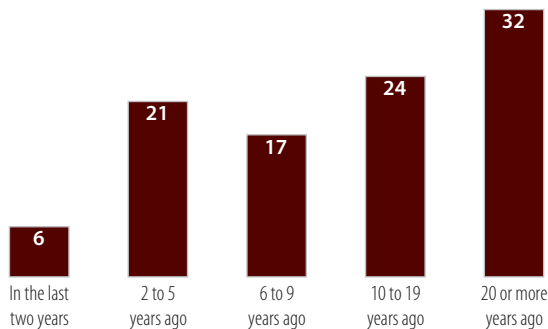


Of the *UAPS* cities, Montreal has the largest proportion of Aboriginal residents born and raised somewhere other than the city (i.e., first generation), and accordingly, a smaller than average proportion of second generation residents. Moreover, no individuals in Montreal identified as “third generation” residents (i.e., born and raised in Montreal whose parents/grandparents are also from Montreal), although this group represents nine percent of Aboriginal peoples on average across all the *UAPS* cities.

Among first generation residents, a majority are long-term residents of Montreal. More than half (56%) first came to Montreal at least 10 years ago, including three in ten (32%) who arrived 20 or more years ago. The remainder (44%) have arrived in the past 10 years, including fewer than one in ten (6%) who first came in the last two years. The average year of arrival in Montreal among first generation *UAPS* participants was 1993; this is on par with the average arrival time for first generation *UAPS* participants in other cities.

### Time of arrival\*

When did you first come to Montreal?



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

### 1.3 Reason for moving

**The decision to move to Montreal was prompted primarily by a desire for educational opportunities, but also for employment opportunities, family and city life.**

Why do Aboriginal peoples move to Montreal?

Among the wide variety of reasons cited by first generation UAPS participants in Montreal for why they first moved here, education emerges at the top of the list, followed by employment, family and city life.

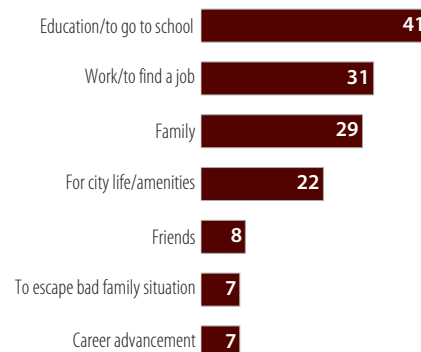
When first generation Aboriginal residents of Montreal are asked (unprompted, without response options offered) why they first moved to the city, the largest proportion (41%) say they did so to pursue an education. Slightly smaller, but still significant, proportions say they moved for employment opportunities (31%), for family reasons (29%) and/or for the city life (22%).

Other reasons for moving to Montreal include being near friends (8%), for career advancement (7%), the desire to escape a bad family situation (7%) and to meet new people (6%). Five percent or fewer each mention a variety of other reasons for moving to Montreal.

Overall, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal express similar reasons for moving to their city as do first generation Aboriginal residents of other cities. Although only a small proportion say they moved to meet new people, this reason is more commonly expressed by UAPS participants in Montreal than by those in any other city.

#### Top reasons for moving to Montreal\*

What is the most important reason why you first moved to your city?



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

### 1.4 Connection to Montreal

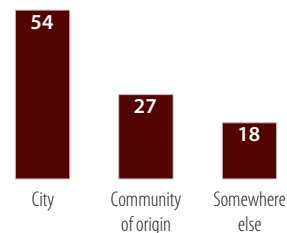
**For just over half of Aboriginal peoples in the city, Montreal is “home.” Yet, due to the relatively large proportion of first generation Aboriginal residents, this sentiment is less pronounced in Montreal than in any other UAPS city.**

Overall, when asked “Where is home for you?” a slim majority (54%) of UAPS participants say it is Montreal.<sup>3</sup> Fewer equate “home” with their community of origin (27%) or another community (18%). Nonetheless, the view that the city is home is less evident in Montreal than in any other UAPS city. This reflects, at least in part, the fact that Aboriginal residents of Montreal are among the most likely to be the first generation of their family living in the city.

Although UAPS participants report an important connection to the city in which they are living, clearly their sense that Montreal is home does not preclude a relationship with their community of origin. The following section (1.5 Connection to community of origin) explores the relationship to a community of origin as reported by UAPS participants.

#### Where is home for you?\*

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 Montreal; those who have lived in Montreal all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

<sup>3</sup> The question “Where is home for you?” was not asked of third generation UAPS participants (0% of UAPS participants in Montreal).

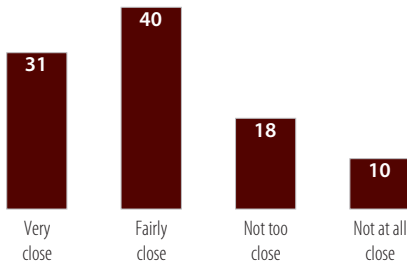
## 1.5 Connection to community of origin

**Seven in ten Aboriginal peoples in Montreal retain links with their community of origin, whether it be their own or that of their parents/grandparents. The minority who are planning to return to their home community is higher in Montreal than in any other UAPS city.**

Previous research has found that many urban Aboriginal peoples have maintained links with their community of origin (i.e., one's home community or the home community of parents/grandparents) because of the proximity of First Nations and Métis communities to cities, the history of mobility of Aboriginal people, the fact that the land is such a fundamental source of traditional and contemporary culture, and the continuance of strong family and social ties to the communities.<sup>4</sup>

### Connection to community of origin\*

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?



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

Such connections are clearly evident among *UAPS* participants in Montreal, who are more likely than average to say they maintain at least a fairly close connection to their community of origin.<sup>5</sup> This is due at least in part to the larger than average proportion of Aboriginal peoples who are the first generation in their family living in Montreal.

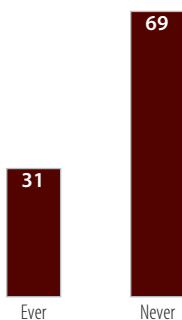
Overall, seven in ten say they feel a very (31%) or fairly (40%) close connection to their community of origin. Two in ten (18%) say they feel not too close to these communities and one in ten (10%) would say they feel not at all close.

It is clear from the data that the majority of *UAPS* participants in Montreal maintain links to their communities of origin, even though they have long tenure within the city. Nonetheless, only three in ten (31%) first generation *UAPS* participants have moved back to their home community at least once since they first moved to Montreal (representing 27% of *UAPS* participants in Montreal overall). Seven in ten (69%) say they have never moved back to their home community since coming to Montreal. This pattern is similar to that of first generation *UAPS* participants in other cities.

While Aboriginal residents of Montreal are among the most divided of the *UAPS* cities about whether or not they intend to return to their communities of origin to live permanently in the future, the minority who do plan to go back is higher than in any other *UAPS* city.

### Have you moved back to your home community?\*

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



Note: Less than 1% said dk/na

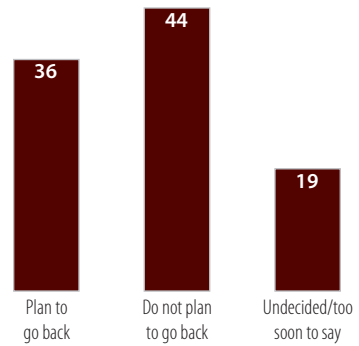
\* Subsample: Those who were not born or raised in Montreal.

4 *Urban Aboriginal Task Force Final Report, 2007, p.65.*

5 This question was not asked of third generation *UAPS* participants (0% of *UAPS* participants in Montreal).

When asked if they plan to go back and live in their communities of origin permanently one day (whether it be another community, town, city or reserve),<sup>6</sup> one in three (36%) say they plan to return, while a slightly higher proportion (44%) do *not*. A total of two in ten either say they are undecided or that it is too soon to say (19%) or offer no opinion (1%) on the question.

Plans to go back to live in community of origin\*  
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 Montreal; those who have lived in their city of residence all their life and whose parents/grandparents are from another place.

6 The question “Do you plan to go back to live in your home community (either your own or that of your parents/grandparents) permanently one day?” was not asked of third generation UAPS participants (0% of UAPS participants in Montreal).

## 2.0 Identity and Culture

One of the reasons cited in existing research for the increased tendency of people to identify as Aboriginal (a major factor in the substantial increases in urban Aboriginal populations between 1981 and 2006<sup>7</sup>) is that contemporary urban Aboriginal peoples, in particular, are more positive about their Aboriginal identity than at any time in the recent past.<sup>8</sup>

Key aspects of Aboriginal identity considered in this chapter include knowledge of family history, pride in Aboriginal and Canadian identities, community belonging, and the continuing intergenerational effects of “colonial projects” upon the identities of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian cities, namely Indian residential schools, mission and day schools, and other policies of assimilation. This chapter also examines other critical aspects of identity, such as participation in urban Aboriginal cultures.

Aboriginal Montrealers express a strong sense of pride in their unique identity, and are more confident than not in their ability to retain it.

### Key findings

- **There is strong Indigenous pride among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal.** A large majority take great pride in both their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* and their collective *Aboriginal* identities. Half also say they are *very* proud to be *Canadian*, but they are among the least likely (together with Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver) to express pride in this aspect of their identity.
- **A majority say they know their Aboriginal ancestry well, consistent with those in other UAPS cities.** A sense of family heritage, survival and tradition, and a stronger sense of self are the top ways knowledge of one’s family tree has made a difference for Aboriginal peoples in Montreal. Those who are less knowledgeable about their ancestry attribute this primarily to a lack of opportunity, rather than a lack of interest.
- **Half of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member.** Such experience is less widespread in Montreal than in other UAPS cities, with the exception of Halifax and Winnipeg. However, those with first- or second-hand Indian residential schools experience are more likely than average to say it has had a significant impact in shaping their life and who they are today.
- **Majorities are aware of and report participation in Aboriginal cultural activities in Montreal, but to a lesser extent than in some other cities.** Nevertheless, on par with other UAPS cities, there is a moderate sense of cultural vitality in Montreal, with half believing that local Aboriginal culture has become stronger in the past five years.
- **There is a modest sense of confidence in their ability to retain their cultural identity in the city.** Just under six in ten Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are unconcerned about losing their cultural identity, which is consistent with the views of urban Aboriginal peoples generally. Notably, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal express *less* concern about this issue than do non-Aboriginal residents of the city, which is the opposite of the pattern in other UAPS cities, and reflects the unique cultural concerns of Quebecers.

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7 Statistics Canada

8 Craig Proulx, “Aboriginal Identification in North America Cities,” the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 2006:26:2, p.405.

- There is no consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal about the type of community – mostly Aboriginal, mostly non-Aboriginal, or equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – to which they belong. Notably, they are more oriented towards a non-Aboriginal community than in any other UAPS city except Toronto, reflecting the fact that these two cities have the smallest relative Aboriginal populations. At the same time, many UAPS participants in Montreal report strong social connections to their own identity group in the city and to members of other Aboriginal groups, although the latter is more widespread among Inuit (who are a minority Aboriginal group in Montreal) than among First Nations peoples.

## 2.1 Pride in Aboriginal and Canadian identity

**Most Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are very proud of their First Nations/Métis/Inuk and Aboriginal identities. They are noticeably less likely to express strong pride in being Canadian.**

An important part of the UAPS was to understand how proud urban Aboriginal peoples are of their identity and, specifically, to what extent their pride is tied to three distinct aspects of identity: being *First Nations/Métis/Inuk*, *Aboriginal* and *Canadian*.

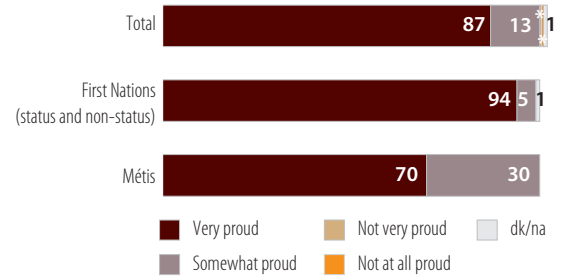
The results show that Aboriginal peoples in Montreal take equal pride in their specific Aboriginal identity (that is, their First Nations, Métis or Inuk identity) and in being part of a larger Aboriginal identity. However, being Canadian has noticeably less resonance in Montreal.

**PRIDE IN BEING FIRST NATIONS/MÉTIS/INUK.** The large majority (87%) of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal say they are very proud of their specific Aboriginal identity (i.e., *First Nations, Métis or Inuk*), which is similar to the degree of pride expressed by urban Aboriginal participants in general.

**PRIDE IN BEING ABORIGINAL.** Most (87%) Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are also very proud of their collective *Aboriginal* identity, consistent with the high level of pride found among Aboriginal peoples in the other UAPS cities.

### Pride in being *First Nations/Métis/Inuk*

Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be *First Nations/Métis/Inuk*?

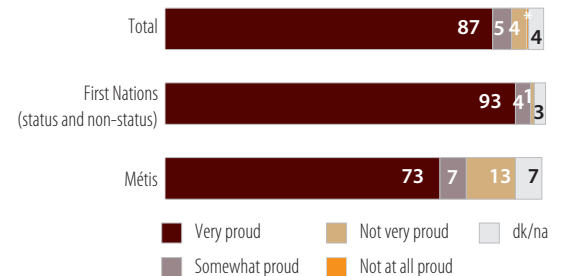


\* Less than one percent

Note: Total data include Inuit (n=63)

### Pride in being *Aboriginal*

Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be *Aboriginal*?

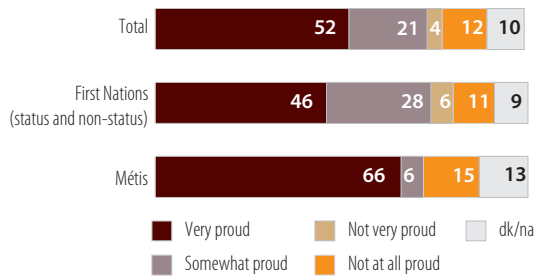


\* Less than one percent

Note: Total data include Inuit (n=63)

## Pride in being *Canadian*

Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be *Canadian*?



Note: Total data include Inuit (n=63)

**PRIDE IN BEING CANADIAN.** Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are least proud to be *Canadian*, with just half (52%) who say they are very proud of this aspect of their identity. Notably, strong pride in being *Canadian* is lower in Montreal than in most other *UAPS* cities, with the exception of Vancouver (52%).

What shapes urban Aboriginal peoples' pride in their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk, Aboriginal* and *Canadian* identities? The sample size for Montreal alone (250 survey participants) is too small to allow for a detailed analysis by socio-demographic factors. However, the national *UAPS* survey data (across all 11 cities) indicate that pride in these aspects of identity vary by age, sense of community and knowledge of their family tree. For instance, majorities in all socio-demographic groups are very proud of their *First Nations/Métis/Inuk* identity, but strong pride is most evident among older urban Aboriginal peoples (45 years of age and over), those who feel they belong to a mostly or exclusively Aboriginal community, and those who know their family tree very well.



## 2.2 Knowledge of Aboriginal ancestry

**Six in ten Aboriginal peoples in Montreal know their Aboriginal ancestry at least fairly well, with parents and grandparents being the primary sources of this information.**

The legacy of policies of assimilation in Canada and their outcomes have contributed to multiple, ongoing challenges experienced by Aboriginal people, not least of which is the disconnection from their heritage and culture that many have experienced, and the resulting struggle to reclaim and reconstruct their Aboriginal identity.

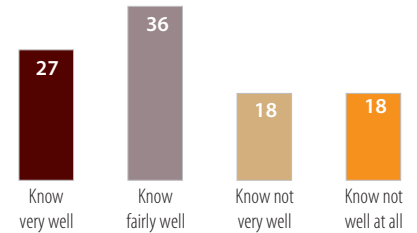
The UAPS results indicate there are varying degrees of familiarity with their family tree (i.e., who their Aboriginal ancestors are) among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal. Six in ten know their family tree very (27%) or fairly (36%) well, while just under four in ten say they know their family tree not very (18%) or not at all (18%) well, which is similar to the average for all 11 UAPS cities.

By far, parents and grandparents are the key sources of this information. When asked from where or from whom they have learned what they know about their Aboriginal ancestry (asked unprompted, without offering response choices), Aboriginal peoples in Montreal identify their parents as their main source of learning (52%), followed by their grandparents (33%).

Smaller groups of Aboriginal peoples say they have learned what they know about their family tree from immediate family relatives such as aunts and uncles (17%), extended family (15%), from doing their own research (5%) or from siblings (4%). A range of non-family sources is also mentioned, such as home communities and community members, Elders, archives and historical records, and genealogy courses, but none by more than three percent (each) of the population.

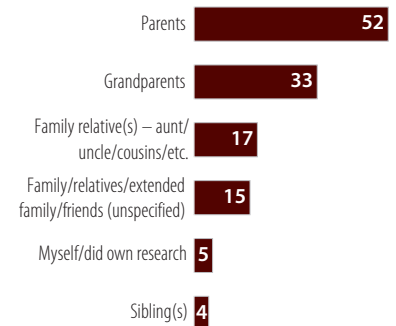
### Extent of knowledge of family tree

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



### Sources of learning about family tree/ Aboriginal ancestry

From where or from whom have you learned what you do know about your family tree?



## The impact of knowing one's family tree on the personal lives of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal:

*I think it is important to know our origins, to see where we come from. To know traditional life and the difficulties my family has surpassed. My grandfather taught me to respect the environment.*

*It has made me want to learn more on our family history and to contribute as much as I can within my own family. I want to help them and bring healing.*

*I am very proud of my family and their success. My cousin was even the Chief of Liturgy. My uncle taught me so much about music.*

*It has been important as long as I can recall. My parents would always explain to us who and how we are related to others. Now as a parent, I too can pass this knowledge to my son.*

*It means everything. It grounds me. It has a huge impact on my life, it gives me a sense of culture and identity, and from there I formulate my own identity.*

*It was a scary transition to meet my traditional family but very gratifying. I am proud to be the Aboriginal woman I am today.*

*It's made me feel very secure in my Native identity. Especially when you live in the city and it's constantly being called into question.*

*It became a source of identification, a source of belonging. I can trace back my family tree to Louis Riel. I can tie my whole heritage to Métis culture, Cree beginning, and the beginning of Canada as a nation, understanding the importance of language.*

## Impact of family tree

***A sense of family heritage, survival and tradition, and a stronger sense of self are the top ways that knowledge of one's family tree has made a difference for Aboriginal peoples in Montreal.***

Beyond how well they know and learn about their family tree, what does this knowledge mean to urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of themselves?

First Nations peoples and Métis in Montreal believe that knowledge of their family tree has had a significant personal impact on their lives and how they see themselves. UAPS participants cite four main ways in which knowing their family tree has contributed to their lives:

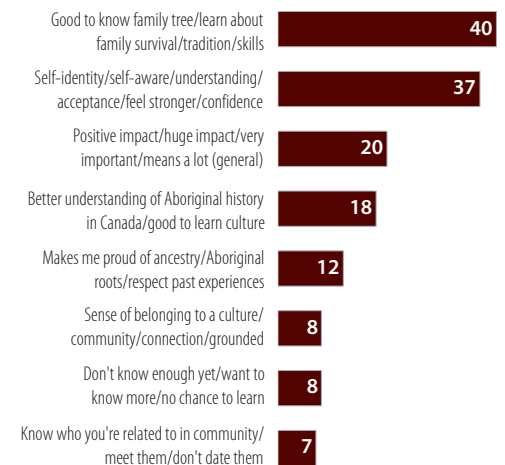
- **Understanding of family survival and cultural endurance.** Four in ten (40%) Aboriginal peoples in Montreal say that, through knowing their family tree, they have learned stories of family survival, endurance and long-held cultural traditions that have deeply affected them.
- **Greater self-identity and self-awareness.** Aboriginal peoples in Montreal also mention the greater sense of self-identity and self-awareness they have derived from knowing about their Aboriginal ancestry (37%). Aboriginal residents of Montreal are among the most likely participants in all UAPS cities to say they have gained a greater sense of self-awareness, together with residents of Toronto (38%) and Vancouver (34%).
- **Greater personal meaning.** Two in ten (20%) Aboriginal peoples in Montreal emphasize the greater personal meaning they've gained from knowing their family tree.
- **Greater overall knowledge of history.** Another two in ten (18%) mention that knowing their family tree has given them a better understanding of Aboriginal history. This more widely mentioned in Montreal than in any other UAPS city.

Smaller proportions of UAPS participants (12% or fewer each) mention other ways in which knowing their family tree has had a meaningful impact on their lives, including making them proud of their Aboriginal "roots" and instilling a greater respect for their families' past, providing a sense of belonging or community, and getting to know their relatives.

Thirteen percent say knowing their family tree has had only a little (5%) or no (8%) impact on their lives. Only two percent say that knowing their family tree has had a negative impact on their lives.

### Impact of family tree

What has it meant for you personally, or what impact has it made on your life, to learn what you do know about your family tree?

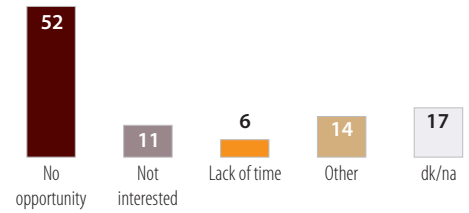


Why do some Aboriginal peoples in Montreal know their family tree and others do not? There are many reasons why urban Aboriginal peoples may or may not know their family tree that are not possible to capture in this study. The *UAPS* simply asked those who do not feel they know their family tree very well to identify if this was due to lack of interest or opportunity. Consistent with those in other *UAPS* cities, lack of opportunity, not lack of interest, is the main reason why Aboriginal peoples in Montreal say they do not know their family tree very well.

Half (52%) of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal who do not know their family tree very well say it is because they have had no opportunity to learn more. In turn, three in ten (31%) say they are either not interested (11%) or cite other reasons (20%) why they do not know their family tree very well (such as a lack of time, information that is lost when relatives or Elders pass away or family secrecy). Fewer than two in ten (17%) are unable or unwilling to say why they have not learned more about their family tree.

### Reason for lack of knowledge of family tree\*

Is the main reason you have not learned more about your family tree because you have not had the opportunity, or because you are not particularly interested?



\* Subsample: Those who do not feel they know their family tree "very well."

## 2.3 Indian residential schools

***Half of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member; this is lower than in most other UAPS cities.***

On June 11, 2008 the Government of Canada issued a formal apology to the former Aboriginal students of residential schools, affirming the disruptive impact of historical policies and legislation. The apology formally recognized that “this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in [this] country.”<sup>9</sup>

The Indian residential school system predates Confederation and grew out of the missionary experience in Canada’s early history. Indian residential schools existed, at one time or another, in all Canadian provinces and territories except Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

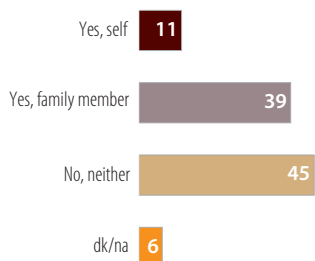
The residential school system left in its wake a tragic legacy. It is estimated that as many as 150,000 Aboriginal children attended these institutions. Many former students have reported undergoing hardship, forcible confinement, and physical and sexual abuse while attending the schools. In addition, these students were also not allowed to speak their language or practice their culture. While most residential schools were closed by the mid-1970s, the last school did not close until 1996.<sup>10</sup>

First Nations, Métis and Inuit children had varied residential school experiences, both in intensity and duration. Regardless, the residential school had a direct impact on Survivors and has spilled over to their descendants, creating challenges pertaining to identity, culture and parenting.<sup>11</sup>

UAPS participants in Montreal are less likely than urban Aboriginal peoples in general to say they have been affected by Indian residential schools, either personally or through a family member. When asked, five in ten (50%) say either they themselves (11%) or a family member (39%) were a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school. Reported attendance at Indian residential schools is lower in Montreal than in any other UAPS city except Halifax and Winnipeg.

### Indian residential schools

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



9 Canada, Office of the Prime Minister, “Prime Minister Harper offers full apology on behalf of Canadians for the Indian Residential Schools system,” *Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada* [website], [www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=2149](http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=2149) (accessed December 2009).

10 Environics Research Group, report prepared for the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *2008 National Benchmark Survey*, May 2008, p.9.

11 Although status Indians formed the majority of attendees at any given time, many Métis children were accepted, often to boost school enrolment figures. Meanwhile, the number of Inuit children grew quickly in the 1950s when a network of schools was built across the North. Roughly 10% of the Aboriginal population in Canada self-identify as Survivors of the residential school system. *Aboriginal People, Resilience and the Residential School Legacy*, Aboriginal Healing Foundation Series, 2003.

## Impact of residential schools

**Most Aboriginal peoples in Montreal with first- or second-hand Indian residential schools experience say it has had at least some impact in shaping their life and who they are today.**

The Indian residential schools experience continues to shape the lives of urban Aboriginal peoples today. Among those Aboriginal peoples in Montreal who say they or a family member were a student in one of these schools,<sup>13</sup> eight in ten say this experience, or the experience of their family member, has had either a significant impact (60%) or some impact (20%) in shaping their life and who they are today. This represents four in ten (39%) of all *UAPS* participants in Montreal.

Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are more likely than average to feel the Indian residential schools experience has had a *significant* impact on their lives, along with those living in Vancouver (60%), Toronto (58%) and Calgary (58%).

## 2.4 Aboriginal cultural activity in the city

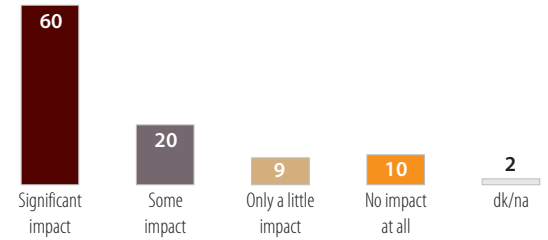
**Half of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal say there are Aboriginal cultural activities available in the city, but fewer than in other cities believe there are “a lot” of such opportunities.**

Opinions are divided about the availability of Aboriginal cultural activities in Montreal. Half of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal say there are either a lot (23%) or some (26%) Aboriginal cultural activities available in the city, while the other half say there are only a few (33%) or no (14%) such activities available to them.

The proportion in Montreal who believe there are a lot of Aboriginal cultural activities available to them is among the lowest of the *UAPS* cities (similar to Saskatoon, Regina and Calgary). Of all *UAPS* participants, Aboriginal peoples living in Toronto (50%) and Vancouver (49%) are by far the most likely to believe there are a lot of Aboriginal cultural activities where they live.

### Impact of Indian residential schools\*

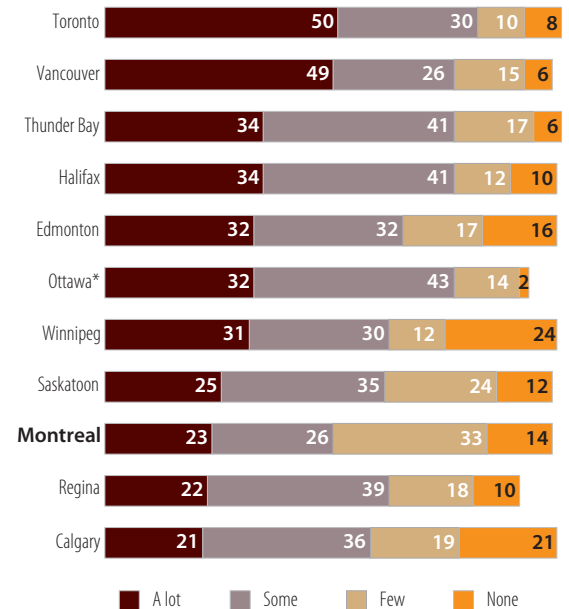
To what extent has [this experience/or the experience of your family member] shaped your life and who you are today?



\* Subsample: Those who were, or whose family member was, a student at a federal residential school or a provincial day school.

### Aboriginal cultural activities available in your community, by city

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

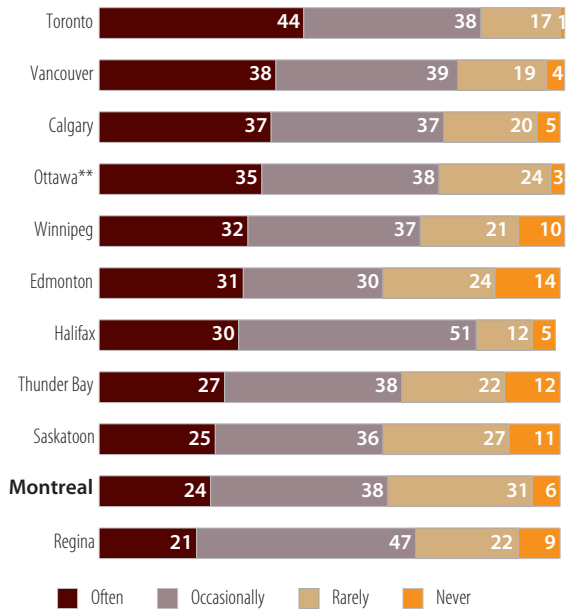


\* Inuit only

Note: Percentages do not add to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer the question

## Frequency of participation in cultural activities,\* by city

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



\* Subsample: Those who have Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community.

\*\* Inuit only

## Frequency of participation in cultural activities

**Six in ten Aboriginal peoples in Montreal who are aware of cultural activities in their city participate at least occasionally, but the rate of frequent participation is lower than average.**

Among those Aboriginal peoples who say Aboriginal cultural activities are available in Montreal, a majority say they participate in them at least occasionally. Six in ten say they often (24%) or occasionally (38%) participate in these activities, compared to about four in ten who rarely (31%) or never (6%) do.

Frequent participation in Aboriginal cultural activities in Montreal is lower than average (but similar to that reported by Aboriginal residents of Thunder Bay, Saskatoon and Regina).

## Strength of Aboriginal culture

**Half of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal believe that Aboriginal culture in their city is becoming stronger, a view that is largely consistent with than in other UAPS cities.**

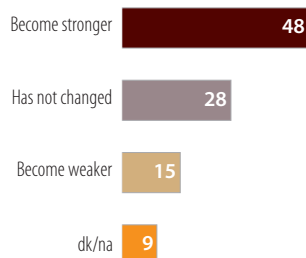
There is a sense of optimism about the direction of Aboriginal culture in Montreal in recent years.

Overall, half (48%) of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal think that Aboriginal culture in the city has become stronger in the past five years. Only a minority (15%) say it has become weaker, although this viewpoint is more common than average for the UAPS cities. Another three in ten (28%) say Aboriginal culture has not changed in the past few years; nine percent offer no opinion on the direction of Aboriginal culture in Montreal.

Optimism about the direction of Aboriginal culture is most evident in Vancouver (70%) and Toronto (70%) compared to other UAPS cities.

## Strength of Aboriginal culture

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



## 2.5 Maintaining Aboriginal cultural identity

**Aboriginal peoples in Montreal believe language is the most important aspect of Aboriginal culture to be passed on to future generations.**

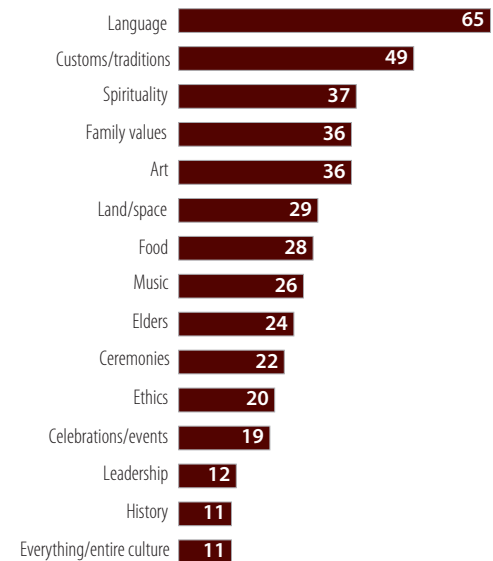
Aboriginal peoples in Montreal believe there are numerous aspects of Aboriginal culture that should be passed on to future generations, but feel language is the most important.

When Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are asked what aspects of Aboriginal culture are most important to be passed on to their children or grandchildren, or to the next generation (unprompted, without response options offered), they are most likely to mention language (65%). Half mention Aboriginal customs and traditions (49%), while close to one in three each mention spirituality (37%), family values (36%) and art (36%). Slightly fewer mention maintaining a connection to the land (29%), food (28%), music (26%), Elders (24%), Aboriginal ceremonies (22%), ethics (20%), and Aboriginal celebrations and events (19%). This set of cultural priorities is similar to that found among urban Aboriginal peoples in general.

### Most important aspects of Aboriginal culture to pass to next generation

In your opinion, what aspects of Aboriginal culture are most important to be passed on to your children or grandchildren, or to the next generation?

Top mentions



## Concern over losing cultural identity

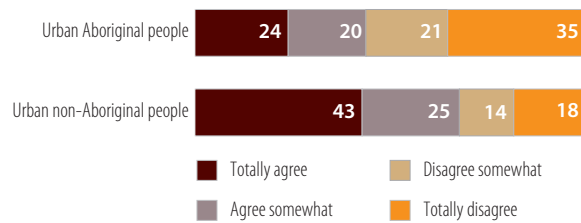
**A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are reasonably confident they can protect their cultural identity, and in contrast to other UAPS cities, express less concern about this issue than do non-Aboriginal residents of the city.**

As the previous results demonstrate, many Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are aware of and involved in Aboriginal cultural activities, and have a sense of cultural growth. Moreover, as is the case for urban Aboriginal peoples generally, they are more confident than not in their ability to protect against a loss of cultural identity

When posed with the statement “I am concerned about losing my cultural identity,” Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are modestly more likely to *disagree* than to *agree*. Just under six in ten (56%) disagree at least somewhat that this is a possibility, while just over four in ten (44%) agree at least somewhat. Moreover, strong confidence (35% totally disagree) outweighs strong concern about this issue (24% totally agree).

### Concern over losing cultural identity

Do you totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or totally disagree with the following statement: “I am concerned about losing my cultural identity.”



**ABORIGINAL VERSUS NON-ABORIGINAL PERCEPTIONS.** As part of the *UAPS*, a separate survey was conducted with non-Aboriginal residents of the same 10 cities (excluding Ottawa). Some questions were asked in both the main and the non-Aboriginal surveys, to allow for direct comparisons between the two groups.

Aboriginal people in Montreal are distinguished from those in the other *UAPS* cities in that they are noticeably *less* concerned than their non-Aboriginal neighbours about losing their cultural identity. In fact, non-Aboriginal people in Montreal (43%) are almost twice as likely as Aboriginal residents (24%) to totally *agree* with the statement “I am concerned about losing my cultural identity.” In other cities, the opposite pattern is true, with Aboriginal peoples expressing greater concern than non-Aboriginal residents about the potential loss of their cultural identity.



## 2.6 Communities and connections

**Aboriginal peoples in Montreal define their community in a variety of ways, but as in other UAPS cities, family and friends are top-of-mind.**

Communities play a pivotal role in shaping individual identities. Parents, family, friends, neighbours, members of one's own Aboriginal group, other Aboriginal persons and non-Aboriginal persons transmit social values and understandings that influence Aboriginal identity in cities.

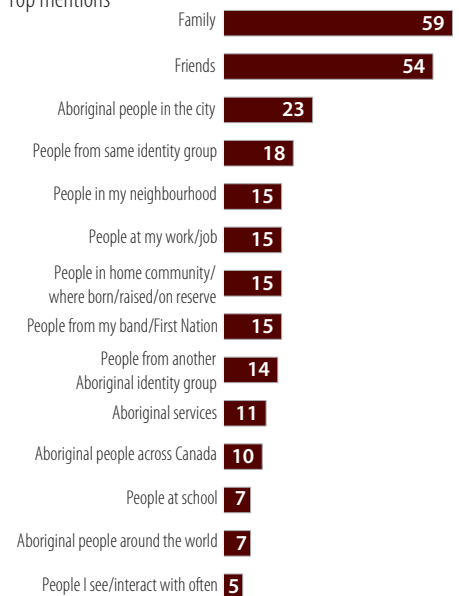
In order to better understand what community ties are important, and determine what community means in the lives and identities of Aboriginal peoples living in Canadian cities, the UAPS survey explored how participants define their community, along with their sense of belonging and connection to various groups and entities.

Who or what do Aboriginal peoples in Montreal consider to be a part of their community? UAPS data show attachment to family and friends is top-of-mind for majorities of urban First Nations, Métis and Inuk residents in Montreal, which is consistent with those living in other UAPS cities.

When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), Aboriginal people in Montreal most frequently mention family (59%) or friends (54%) as part of their community. Others mention Aboriginal peoples in the city (23%), people from their own identity/cultural group (18%), people from their band/First Nation (15%), people in their home community (15%), people in their neighbourhood (15%), co-workers (15%), people from another Aboriginal identity group (14%), Aboriginal services such as friendship centres, healing centres and counselling centres (11%), and Aboriginal people across Canada (10%).

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

Top mentions



## 2.7 Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal communities

**Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are divided about the type of community to which they feel they belong, ranging from mostly Aboriginal to mostly non-Aboriginal to somewhere in between.**

### Belonging to Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal community

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



To what extent do Aboriginal peoples in Montreal feel they belong to an Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal community?

In fact, there is no one type of community to which Aboriginal peoples feel they belong. There is no consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal about whether they belong to a community that is mostly non-Aboriginal (32%), mostly Aboriginal (27%), or equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (23%). Relatively few describe their community as exclusively Aboriginal (6%) or exclusively non-Aboriginal (9%).

It is not surprising that the view that they belong to a non-Aboriginal community (mostly or exclusively) is most widespread in Toronto (40%) and Montreal (41%) compared to other *UAPS* cities, since these two cities have the smallest relative Aboriginal populations.

### Connection to Aboriginal peoples in the city

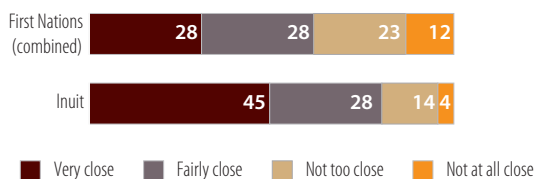
**Urban Aboriginal peoples generally feel connected to their own Aboriginal group in Montreal. Inuit feel a closer connection to Aboriginal groups other than their own than do First Nations peoples.**

A majority of First Nations peoples and Inuit feel a close connection to members of their own identity group and to other Aboriginal people in Montreal.

**CONNECTION TO OWN ABORIGINAL GROUP IN THE CITY.** How close a connection do Aboriginal peoples in Montreal have to members of their own Aboriginal group? Overall, Inuit feel a closer connection to other Inuit in Montreal than do First Nations peoples to other members of their First Nation in the city.<sup>12</sup> Three-quarters (73%) of Inuit feel either a very or fairly close connection to other Inuit in Montreal. By comparison, over half (56%) of First Nations peoples feel a close connection to other members of their own First Nation in Montreal, on par with other *UAPS* cities.

### Connection to Aboriginal group, by identity group

How close a connection do you feel [to members of your own Aboriginal group]?



Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

In fact, First Nations peoples are more likely to feel a close connection to members of *other* First Nations in Montreal (70% very or fairly close), illustrating the diversity of the First Nations population in Montreal, and the challenges in finding and connecting with members of one's own specific First Nation. First Nations peoples in Montreal, as well as those living in Vancouver (70%) and Toronto (71%), are the most likely among all *UAPS* participants to feel a close connection to members of other First Nations.

<sup>12</sup> The sample size of Métis (n=24) in Montreal is too small to analyze the sense of connection to members of their own identity group in the city.

**CONNECTION TO OTHER ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN THE CITY.** How strong a connection do First Nations peoples and Inuit feel to *other* Aboriginal peoples in Montreal? <sup>13</sup> Inuit (75%) are more likely to feel connected to other Aboriginal peoples in the city (First Nations peoples and Métis) than First Nations peoples (45%) are to feel toward Métis and Inuit.

## Friendships in the city

**Majorities of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal report close friendships with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. However, they are the least likely of any UAPS city to report having close Aboriginal friends.**

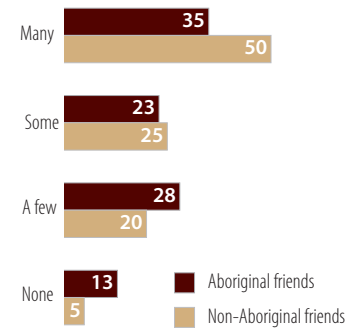
Beyond their sense of connection to members of their own or other Aboriginal groups, the UAPS asked Aboriginal residents of Montreal about their friendships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

**FRIENDSHIPS WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE.** Overall, six in ten (58%) Aboriginal peoples in Montreal say they have many (35%) or some (23%) close friends in the city who are Aboriginal, a proportion that is lower in Montreal than in any other UAPS city.

**FRIENDSHIPS WITH NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLE.** UAPS participants in Montreal are slightly more likely to report having close non-Aboriginal friends as close Aboriginal friends in the city. Three in four (75%) say they have many (50%) or some (25%) close friends who are non-Aboriginal, which is consistent with other UAPS cities.

### Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends

Do you have many, some, a few, or no close friends in Montreal who are Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal?



<sup>13</sup> The sample size of Métis (n=24) and Inuit (n=63) in Montreal is too small to analyze the sense of connection felt by these groups to other Aboriginal peoples in the city.

## 3.0 Experiences with Non-Aboriginal People

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996 report devoted a chapter, *Urban Perspectives*, to the experiences of Aboriginal peoples living in urban centres. The chapter begins with cultural identity and then proceeds to a section on racism. The segue is intentional, as the consequences of racism and discrimination on identity can be profound – generations of Aboriginal people have struggled to assert their identity amidst a pervasive sense that they are perceived negatively by the non-Aboriginal population-at-large.

Most *UAPS* participants (across all cities) feel discrimination of Aboriginal people is a pervasive problem, and that stereotypical attitudes are frequently expressed through negative behaviours, such as insults and unfair treatment, that the majority have personally experienced – and this is similarly true for Aboriginal peoples in Montreal.

This chapter also explores encounters and experiences with non-Aboriginal services in the city such as schools, banks, the health care system, and government programs such as social assistance programs, and employment and training programs.

### Key findings

- **Aboriginal peoples in Montreal – like their counterparts in other *UAPS* cities – widely believe that they are viewed negatively by non-Aboriginal people.** There is a very strong perception among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal that non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of negative and distorting stereotypes about them, the most common being about substance abuse. Stereotypes relating to getting a “free ride” and being violent are more commonly mentioned in Montreal than average. Although a minority believe that attitudes are improving, the balance of opinion is that they remain unchanged
- **Most Aboriginal peoples in Montreal agree that others behave in an unfair or negative way toward Aboriginal people.** A majority say they have personally been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background, although to a lesser extent than in Toronto and the *UAPS* cities west of Winnipeg. At the same time, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are more likely than not to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.
- **Aboriginal peoples in Montreal report a substantial amount of contact with non-Aboriginal banks and the health care system.** Recent experience with the health care system, and with non-Aboriginal employment and training programs, are lower than average. Positive assessments of these experiences largely outweigh negative ones, including in the case of the child welfare system (where, in most other cities, negative experiences outweigh positive ones). Negative experiences are generally related to being poorly treated by the people who deliver the services or about the process of accessing the service.

### 3.1 How Aboriginal peoples feel they are perceived by non-Aboriginal people

#### Non-Aboriginal perceptions – positive or negative

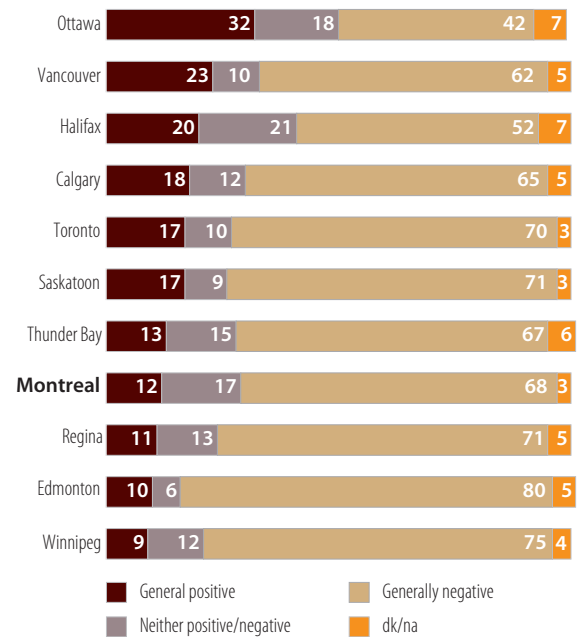
*Seven in ten Aboriginal peoples in Montreal believe that they are seen in a negative light by non-Aboriginal people, a perception that is similar to that expressed by urban Aboriginal peoples in general.*

A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal believe that non-Aboriginal people view them negatively, a perception that is consistent with that expressed in other UAPS cities.

Seven in ten (68%) UAPS participants in Montreal believe non-Aboriginal people’s impressions of Aboriginal people are generally negative. One in ten (12%) think non-Aboriginal people’s impressions are generally positive, and just under two in ten (17%) think they are neither positive nor negative.

#### Perceptions of non-Aboriginal people’s impressions of Aboriginal people

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



**Common stereotypes of Aboriginal people, in the words of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal:**

*They think that we don't pay taxes and they're not happy with us not speaking French.*

*That we all sniff gas. That we want to rob you.*

*That we don't pay taxes. That we get everything for free. That we have a special, magical connection to the earth.*

*We like to drink. We like to party. We're lazy, we're uneducated.*

*Just those kinds of stereotypes that we are lower than everyone else, that's the feeling I got. And that non-Aboriginal people think we don't pay taxes.*

*That we're drunks, dirty. Sometimes at work I get questions asking if they can get weed on the reserve. They ask if they're allowed to go there or if they'll get beat up.*

*That we are not capable of achieving, that we are hopeless.*

*The Quebec people think that we are savages, that we are incapable of living properly.*

*That we're alcohol addicts, violent and aggressive, stupid and lazy.*

## Perceptions of non-Aboriginal stereotypes of Aboriginal people

**Aboriginal peoples in Montreal believe that non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of negative and distorting stereotypes of Aboriginal people, with addiction problems leading the list. They are more likely than average to think that Aboriginal peoples are seen as “getting everything for free” and being prone to violence.**

Overwhelmingly, Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples in Montreal believe non-Aboriginal people hold a wide range of stereotypes of Aboriginal people, and that these most commonly relate to addiction problems (alcohol and drug abuse). Some of the stereotypes they believe non-Aboriginal people hold are presented in participants' own words in the sidebar on this page.

Specifically, when UAPS participants in Montreal are asked (unprompted, without response options offered), what they believe are the most common stereotypes that non-Aboriginal people hold about Aboriginal people, one stereotype dominates: seven in ten (69%) believe that non-Aboriginal people associate them with drug and alcohol abuse.

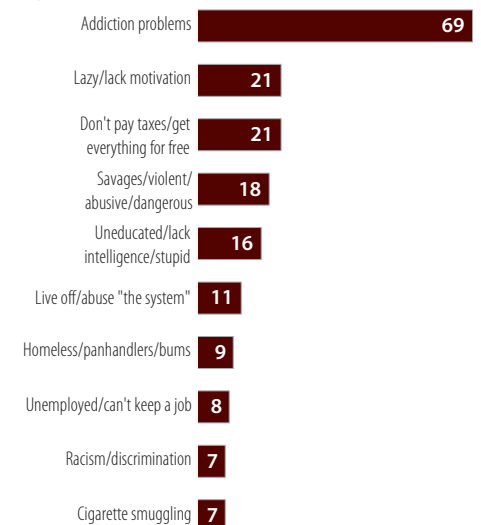
About two in ten each believe non-Aboriginal people think Aboriginal people are lazy and unwilling to work hard to get what they want and need (21%); don't pay their taxes or “get a free ride” (21%); are violent, abusive or dangerous (18%); or lack intelligence or education (16%). Smaller proportions of UAPS participants in Montreal (11% or fewer) mention other negative stereotypes, including that Aboriginal people take unfair advantage of government benefits, are homeless, perennially unemployed and unable to keep a job, poor or on welfare, and/or often involved in criminal activities.

Notably, perceptions that they are associated with unemployment, reliance on social assistance and criminal activity are less widely held by Aboriginal peoples in Montreal, particularly in comparison to the Prairie cities. In turn, they are more likely than average to feel they are seen as not paying their fair share, and as violent or dangerous.

### Common stereotypes of Aboriginal people

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

#### Top mentions



## Do Aboriginal peoples believe non-Aboriginal impressions are changing?

***The balance of opinion is that there has been little change in non-Aboriginal people's impressions of Aboriginal people over the past few years, although three in ten are optimistic that attitudes are improving.***

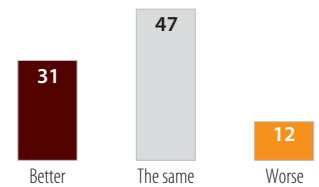
In Montreal, the view that perceptions of Aboriginal people have not changed in recent years outweighs the belief that they are improving, while only a small minority think perceptions have deteriorated.

When asked about the change in non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people over the past few years, about half (47%) of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal think impressions have stayed the same. Three in ten (31%) think impressions have become better. Only 12 percent believe non-Aboriginal people's impressions of Aboriginal people have gotten worse over the past few years.

Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are more likely than average to perceive no change in non-Aboriginal people's impressions; by comparison, optimism that attitudes are improving is strongest in Vancouver (53%) and Toronto (48%).

### Change in impressions

Over the past few years, do you think that non-Aboriginal people's impression of Aboriginal people has gotten better, or worse or stayed the same?



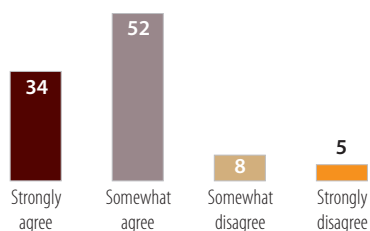
## 3.2 Experiences of discrimination

*Just under nine in ten Aboriginal peoples in Montreal agree that others behave in an unfair or negative way toward Aboriginal people as whole, and seven in ten report that they personally have been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background.*

Not only do Aboriginal peoples in Montreal feel that they are viewed negatively by their non-Aboriginal neighbours, but they also report widespread experience (personally and as a group) with negative or unfair treatment because of who they are.

### Negative behaviour

"I think others behave in an unfair/negative way toward Aboriginal people."



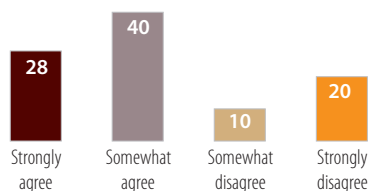
**NEGATIVE AND UNFAIR BEHAVIOUR TOWARD ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN GENERAL.** Most Aboriginal peoples in Montreal agree with the statement "I think others behave in an unfair or negative way towards Aboriginal people." Just under nine in ten (86%) strongly (34%) or somewhat (52%) agree with this statement, while one in ten (13%) disagree. This perception is equally strong in Montreal as in the other *UAPS* cities.

**PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH INSULTS AND TEASING BY NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLES.** A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal also say they have personally experienced insulting treatment because of who they are. When posed with the statement "I have been teased or insulted because of my Aboriginal background," seven in ten strongly (28%) or somewhat (40%) agree, and three in ten somewhat (10%) or strongly (20%) disagree.

Strong agreement with the statement is lower in Montreal than in Toronto and the cities west of Winnipeg.

### Unfair treatment

"I have been teased or insulted because of my Aboriginal background."





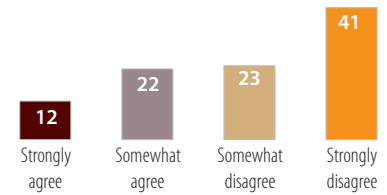
## Sense of acceptance

***A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people, a view that is consistent with that found among urban Aboriginal peoples in general.***

Despite the consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal that they personally, and as a group, suffer widespread prejudice, there are nonetheless more likely than not to feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.

About two in three (64%) UAPS participants in Montreal either strongly (41%) or somewhat (23%) disagree with the statement “I don’t feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people”, compared to one in three (34%) who strongly (12%) or somewhat (22%) agree that they do not feel accepted. The degree of acceptance felt by Aboriginal peoples in Montreal is similar to that reported by urban Aboriginal peoples overall.

Sense of acceptance by non-Aboriginal people  
“I don’t feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people.”



## Impact of experiences with non-Aboriginal people

***Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are most likely to say they have responded to their experiences with non-Aboriginal people by becoming stronger and more motivated to succeed.***

For the most part, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal indicate that their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have, ultimately, compelled them to become stronger, better individuals.

When asked in what ways, if any, their experience with non-Aboriginal people has shaped their life and who they are today (unprompted, without response options offered), Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are most likely to frame the impact in a positive light. Summarized, their responses fall into the following five main categories:

- **Greater motivation.** A greater sense of motivation and desire to achieve is one of the top ways in which Aboriginal peoples in Montreal feel their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have had an impact (mentioned by 31%). They express this greater sense of motivation in a variety of ways, including the belief that their experiences with non-Aboriginal people made them place more emphasis on their education, gave them needed encouragement and support, made them more ambitious and drove them to work harder.
- **More tolerant and accepting.** Two in ten (21%) Aboriginal peoples in Montreal also feel they developed more tolerance and acceptance of other people through their experiences with non-Aboriginal people. Specifically, they feel these experiences gave them a perspective on other cultures, and taught them to be more adaptable in non-Aboriginal society. They are also more likely than average to say these experiences made them more understanding and tolerant.
- **Grew up in a non-Aboriginal community.** Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are among the most likely of *UAPS* participants to say that growing up in a non-Aboriginal community, or with a non-Aboriginal identity, had an impact on their life (16%).
- **Mentoring and a sense of direction.** More than one in ten (14%) Aboriginal peoples in Montreal report how a non-Aboriginal teacher, professor or other individual helped them change perspectives or gave them opportunities at a critical point in their life.
- **Sense of self.** One in ten (12%) say that their interactions with the non-Aboriginal community gave them a greater sense of themselves as an Aboriginal person.

Two in ten (19%) Aboriginal peoples in Montreal also cite ways in which their experiences with non-Aboriginal peoples have had a *negative* impact on their lives. These individuals cite such negative experiences as exposure to racism and discrimination, feelings of distrust and anger, and loss of their connection to their Aboriginal identity and language.

One in ten (11%) Aboriginal peoples in Montreal say their experiences with non-Aboriginal people have had no impact at all on them.

### 3.3 Experiences with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

#### Extent of contact with non-Aboriginal services

**Aboriginal peoples in Montreal report a substantial amount of contact with non-Aboriginal banks and with the health care system, but much less contact with other services offered. They are less likely than average to report use of both the health care system, and employment and training programs.**

As a final dimension to better understanding urban Aboriginal peoples' perceptions of and experiences with non-Aboriginal people, the UAPS asked participants about their experiences with non-Aboriginal services and organizations. Specifically, the survey explored how much contact they have with these services and organizations, and the nature of their experience.

To what extent do Aboriginal peoples in Montreal have contact with non-Aboriginal services or organizations? Of the seven non-Aboriginal service types included in the survey, the banks or credit unions (83%), and the health care system (67%) have been the most widely used within the past year. Notably, however, reported use of the health care system is lower in Montreal than in any other UAPS city except among Inuit in Ottawa.

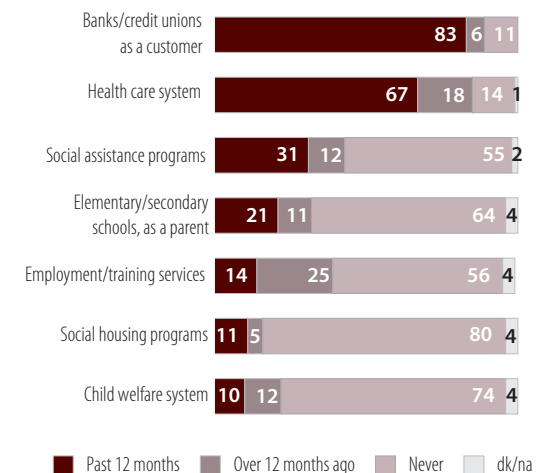
There is a substantial gap between these two non-Aboriginal services and others in degree of contact reported. Minorities report using non-Aboriginal social assistance programs (31%), or elementary and secondary schools as a parent (21%) within the past year.

Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are least likely to report recent experience with employment and training services (14%), social housing programs (11%) and the child welfare system (10%). In fact, large majorities say they have never used social housing programs and the child welfare system (80% and 74%, respectively).

The UAPS found some variation in contact with these non-Aboriginal services across the 11 cities, perhaps due to the specific needs of the community and/or the varying availability of *Aboriginal* services in these areas. In addition to less widespread use of the health care system, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are less likely than average to have had recent contact with non-Aboriginal employment and training programs.

#### Contact with non-Aboriginal services and organizations

Have you made use of or been in contact with the following non-Aboriginal services in Montreal in the past 12 months, over 12 months ago or never?



Note: Percentages don't add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

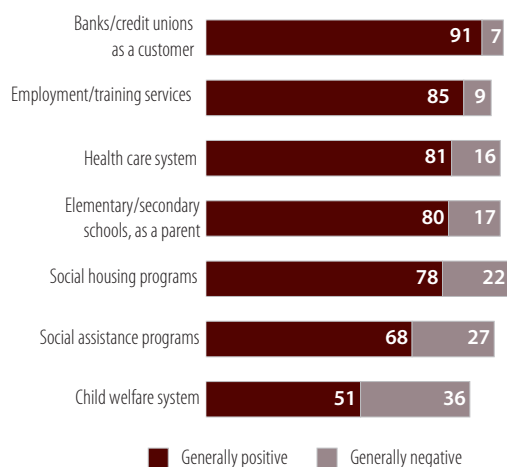
## Assessing experiences with non-Aboriginal services

***Those who have been in contact with non-Aboriginal services in Montreal are largely positive about their experiences, including for the child welfare system.***

Positive experiences with non-Aboriginal services in Montreal tend to far outweigh negative ones. The child welfare system elicits the most negative reviews, but even here, positive experiences predominate.

### Experience with non-Aboriginal services\*

Was your experience with this service generally positive or generally negative?



\*Subsample: Those who have used the services

Note: Percentages don't add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

Aboriginal peoples in Montreal who have ever used or made contact with specific non-Aboriginal services were asked if the experience was generally positive or generally negative. They are most likely to report positive experiences with banks and credit unions (91%), and employment and training services (85%), the health care system (81%), elementary or secondary schools as a parent (80%), and social housing programs (78%). Positive experiences are the case for fewer, but still a majority, of those who have accessed social assistance programs (68%). In each of these cases, relatively few (ranging between 7% and 27%, respectively) say they had a negative experience.

Among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal who have ever had contact with the child welfare system, positive experiences (51%) outweigh negative ones (36%), which is the opposite pattern to most western cities and Toronto (where negative experiences outweigh positive ones).

**NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES.** Urban Aboriginal peoples who have had negative experiences with non-Aboriginal services were asked to describe the experience (unprompted, in their own words). Concerns stem primarily from problems with the process involved in getting the service and the way they feel they were treated, as opposed to the availability of resources. Some of these experiences are presented in the sidebar on this page.

Four in ten (38%) say their experience was negative because of racism or discrimination; they were treated unfairly or disrespectfully; or they encountered staff that were judgmental, mean or rude, or lacked empathy, or didn't understand their needs or culture. Three in ten (32%) had problems with process, particularly long waiting lists or wait periods, but also complicated paperwork or expensive fees.

Fewer than two in ten (16%) question the effectiveness of the service, saying it was not supportive, unhelpful and didn't actually achieve its goal. Five percent have concerns that the services lack resources, particularly funding, and therefore provide poor or disorganized service.

Other negative experiences relate to having an application rejected (8%), being misinformed or misdiagnosed (6%), being abused as a child by authority figures (4%), or having a child removed from their home (4%).

**What Aboriginal peoples in Montreal say about their negative experiences with non-Aboriginal services:**

*Sitting in the welfare office is like getting your teeth pulled. No one is willing to really help you. You have to jump through a hoop of fire and then fill out 50 pages of forms.*

*Very slow and very rude. It feels like they do not care.*

*They always give me a hard time when I cash my cheque, even though I cash it there every month. One lady in particular is so rude and tries to hold it. She doesn't know I speak French and she was trying to freeze my cheque.*

*In the eastern part of Montreal, there seem to be fewer Aboriginals. I get the impression that my kids are the only Aboriginal kids in their school. I always have to come in because they get blamed for many things. They try to defend themselves, but the teachers seem to only see them as causing the problem.*

*They look at me differently, and mention my long black hair.*

*The child welfare system took away my children and they don't allow me to talk with them. I'm not even allowed to call them on their birthdays.*

## 4.0 Experiences with Aboriginal Services and Organizations

As part of understanding urban Aboriginal peoples' experiences in Canadian cities today, the *UAPS* explored study participants' perceptions of and interactions with Aboriginal services and organizations. Growing out of the friendship centre movement, a large network of institutions has emerged within urban Aboriginal communities that provide a range of services such as, but not limited to, education, training, employment, economic development, child care, health, housing, cultural support and corrections. Of note, over the last two decades in particular, urban Aboriginal organizations are assuming key roles in the delivery of health services. Many aspects of urban Aboriginal life are mediated through a vast array of Aboriginal cultural, artistic, heritage, educational, economic, community development and political institutions.

There is considerable reliance on Aboriginal services and organizations in Montreal, and *UAPS* participants in this city are clearly convinced of the importance of these services to the well-being of their community.

### Key findings

- **Half of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal use and rely at least occasionally on Aboriginal services and organizations in the city, similar to the proportion in other *UAPS* cities.** They are used both because they provide a sense of community and for specific services. Users of Aboriginal services in Montreal are more likely than average to identify friendship centres as the most useful to them.
- **Regardless of how much interaction they have with Aboriginal services, there is a strong consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal that they are very important.** Recognition of a need for Aboriginal child and family services is greater in Montreal than average.

## 4.1 Use of urban Aboriginal services and organizations

### Extent of use of services

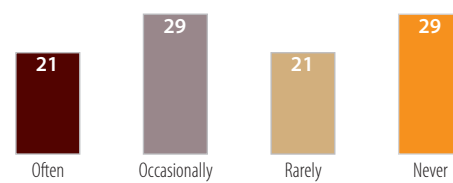
***Half of Aboriginal peoples use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations in Montreal at least occasionally, which is on par with reported use in most other UAPS cities.***

Many Aboriginal services and organizations promote culture and identity for urban Aboriginal peoples through the types of services they offer, the events they sponsor and simply through their existence as Aboriginal organizations in Montreal. The *UAPS* asked participants how often, and why, they use these services and organizations, and which they find most useful.

Half (50%) of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal use or rely on the city's Aboriginal services or organizations either often (21%) or occasionally (29%), while the other half (50%) say they rarely (21%) or never (29%) do so. Reported use is similar to the average for the *UAPS* cities, but is not as widespread as in Toronto (69%) and Vancouver (68%), and among Inuit in Ottawa (67%).

What explains the use of Aboriginal services and organizations in cities? The sample size for Montreal alone (250 survey participants) is too small to allow for a detailed analysis by socio-demographic factors. However, the national *UAPS* data (across all 11 cities) indicate that use varies by age and income, but not by length of time in the city. Frequent use of Aboriginal services and organizations is more common among Aboriginal peoples aged 45 years and older, and the less affluent (use of these services and organizations steadily declines as household income increases). However, use of Aboriginal services is similar among those new to their city (i.e., those who arrived in their city within the last two years) and long-time residents (i.e., those who arrived in their city 20 or more years ago).

Use of Aboriginal services or organizations  
How often do you use or rely on Aboriginal services or organizations in Montreal?



## Why urban Aboriginal peoples in Montreal use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations:

*I am Aboriginal. It's there for us, so I have to take advantage of it. They have a deeper understanding of our needs. Our needs are different than the mainstream population.*

*Because when I need help, they will help me. They will get you a lawyer, police officer, services of any kind.*

*It's probably the first thing I look for. If there's an Aboriginal organization that can help me, then I will probably rely on it more than a non-Aboriginal one. When I look for information, I first look up an Aboriginal organization. I feel that they know the specific needs of my culture.*

*I like the people at the student centre. The computers are available there and I like it there. I feel like I belong there.*

*Because it gives me a sense of community. It's nice to be with people who care and understand.*

*To save food at home, and use their clothing depot; being on welfare is not easy.*

*Because they are helpful. The centre for native education at Concordia University offers a program that promotes native heritage. We did beadwork, and there is an Elder who offers insight into particular needs of Native groups. It's good just meeting native students from across Canada.*

## Reasons for use

### ***As in other UAPS cities, Aboriginal services and organizations in Montreal are used both for specific services, and for their sense of community and belonging.***

Beyond asking Aboriginal peoples in Montreal how often they use and rely on Aboriginal services and organizations, the UAPS also explored why some use these services more regularly than others (unprompted, without response options offered).

**WHY THEY USE.** Aboriginal peoples in Montreal who are regular users<sup>14</sup> of the city's Aboriginal services and organizations say they are motivated by the positive environments they find and/or the specific services offered. These are largely consistent with the main reasons for use mentioned in other UAPS cities. Some of these reasons are illustrated in verbatim comments in the sidebar on this page.

**Positive environment.** Five in ten (48%) users of Aboriginal services and organizations say they are drawn by the presence of positive environments, whether it be a greater degree of comfort, the connection to Aboriginal culture, the supportive community and/or the personal relationships that they offer.

**Specific resources.** Four in ten (40%) regular users of Aboriginal services and organizations are motivated by a desire/need for specific resources. Programs and social services, education and employment services, health supports, and services related to Aboriginal benefits or advocacy, are the most typical resources they describe using. They are more likely than average to report using food bank services (13%) and specific amenities or facilities such as computers (9%).

**Employee/volunteer.** One in ten (9%) are connected to Aboriginal services and organizations because they are either employed by them, or volunteer their time and services.

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14 Those who report using services often or occasionally (50% of UAPS participants in Montreal overall).



**WHY THEY DON'T USE.** Those who rarely or never use Aboriginal services and organizations (50% of UAPS participants in Montreal overall) typically indicate they have no need for them (54%), including because they don't want to become reliant on these services (48%), or feel their needs are being met elsewhere (9%). Considerably fewer do not use them because they are unaware of what is available (17%), feel the services aren't helpful (15%, including 10% who are frustrated with the process or red tape), or can't access or don't qualify for these services (10%). Ten percent say they don't use the services now but would know where to go if they needed them. Some of the reasons why Aboriginal services are not used more often are illustrated in verbatim comments in the sidebar on this page.

## Most useful Aboriginal services and organizations

**Users of Aboriginal services in Montreal are more likely than average to identify friendship centres as the most useful to them, while no other service comes close.**

Aboriginal peoples who have used Aboriginal services and organizations in Montreal have found a wide range of these to be useful, but first and foremost value friendship centres (56%). Smaller proportions have found employment centres (20%), health centres (16%) and AHRDA services (11%) to be helpful.

Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are more likely than average to mention friendship centres, student/university services (14%) and parenting programs/drop-ins (9%) as being particularly valuable.

### Most useful Aboriginal services and organizations\*

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

Top mentions



\* Subsample: Those who have used Aboriginal services in Montreal.

### Why urban Aboriginal peoples in Montreal do not use or rely on Aboriginal services and organizations:

*I simply don't need them. I get what I need.*

*I offer my own services to people in the community instead of using the services.*

*Because I had a job right away when I got here, and I never felt the need to use any services.*

*I guess it has to do with the fact I don't know many Aboriginal people here. And because I know few people, these services seem less accessible, but I'm not sure if they are.*

*I don't feel it was my place to go, and I don't have a card.*

*I don't feel comfortable there.*

*I'm not sure if I'm welcome there. I'm non-status so I feel kind of in-between. So it's hard for me to show up, especially since I look white. I avoid rejection.*

*It's because a lot of the programs and a lot of the activities are all related toward social services. I don't have an alcohol problem. I don't have drug problem. If there was a language program, I would go to that. I would send my daughter, but it's not advertised.*

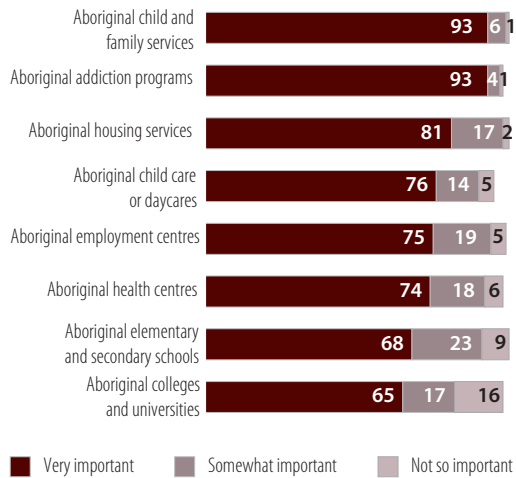
## 4.2 Importance of Aboriginal services in addition to non-Aboriginal services

**Large majorities of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal believe it is very important to also have Aboriginal services. They are more convinced than average of the need for Aboriginal child and family services.**

There is a strong consensus among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal that it is important for *Aboriginal* services to exist in addition to non-Aboriginal ones.

### Importance of Aboriginal services

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



Note: Percentages don't add up to 100% due to those who said they don't know, or chose not to answer this question.

Nine in ten each say it is *very important* to have Aboriginal addiction programs (93%), and child and family services (93%). Eight in ten say the same of housing services (81%), and three-quarters each say the same of child care or daycares (76%), employment centres (75%) and health centres (74%). Two-thirds each say it is *very important* to have Aboriginal elementary and secondary schools (68%), and Aboriginal colleges and universities (65%). Most of the remaining participants say having these Aboriginal services is somewhat important, and no more than 16 percent say any of the services is not so important.

The perceived importance of Aboriginal child and family services is higher in Montreal than average.

In general, how do Aboriginal peoples feel about the city they live in? Beyond the themes discussed so far in this report, the *UAPS* also explored how much participants like living in Montreal, their reasons for choosing their neighbourhood (and the extent to which they feel they have a choice), how much they believe they can make Montreal a better place to live, along with their openness to other languages and cultures.

### Key findings

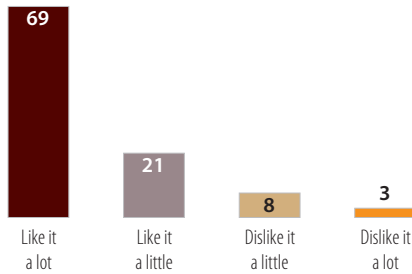
- **Most urban Aboriginal peoples (across all cities) like living in their cities, and this is also true for Aboriginal peoples living in Montreal.** Residents like Montreal for the quality of life and the city life (particularly the entertainment opportunities) available here. A sense of social acceptance also ranks high on their list of “likes,” a perspective almost exclusive to those living in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. Their primary concerns about life in the city centre around common urban pressures like traffic and pollution; they are more likely than average to also mention issues related to immigrants and language barriers, but are much less likely than average to express concerns about crime in the city.
- **Affordability of housing, and proximity to family and friends, are the most common reasons for choosing a neighbourhood.** Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are among the most likely to feel they have a lot of choice as to where they live in the city.
- **Aboriginal peoples are confident they can make Montreal a better place to live, and their level of confidence is on par with that found among non-Aboriginal people in Montreal.**
- **Like their counterparts in other *UAPS* cities, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are strongly accepting of other languages and cultures, and much more so than non-Aboriginal people in Montreal.**

## 5.1 Satisfaction with city life

**Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are very positive about living in their city, due to the general quality of life, the urban amenities available to them and the sense of social acceptance.**

### Like living in Montreal

How much do you like living in your city? Would you say you like it or dislike it?



Urban living can be difficult for many Aboriginal people. They typically face urban violence, poverty and health challenges on a greater scale than the population-at-large. However, there is another side to these urban communities, a side not often featured in popular discourse and media. Thousands of First Nations people, Métis and Inuit are establishing themselves, or continuing long histories of multi-generational residence, in Canadian cities, including Montreal.

Almost all Aboriginal peoples say they like living in Montreal. When asked, seven in ten (69%) like it a lot, while another 21 percent indicate they like it a little. One in ten say they dislike living in their city a little (8%) or a lot (3%). These sentiments are similar to those expressed by *UAPS* participants in general.

What do *UAPS* participants like most and least about living in Montreal? General quality of life and city life are among Montreal's most appreciated features, while certain city conditions (i.e., traffic) are what they like least about the city.

**LIKE MOST.** When asked what they like most about living in Montreal (unprompted, without response options offered), Aboriginal peoples are most likely to cite three main features:

- **Quality of life.** One of the most common reasons why Aboriginal peoples like living in Montreal is the quality of life it offers. A total of four in ten (41%) indicate this is what they most like about living in the city. They place the greatest emphasis on the variety and convenience of amenities (29%), but also mention good neighbourhoods (8%), and the resources and services (5%).
- **City life.** Aboriginal peoples in Montreal (40%) are more likely than those in any other city except Toronto to say what they most like is the city life that is available to them, particularly the recreation and entertainment opportunities (20%), as well as the fast pace of city life, and the cultural and artistic events. They are also more likely than average to mention social life and networking possibilities (12%).
- **Social acceptance.** One in three (34%) Aboriginal peoples like the social acceptance they experience in Montreal. This perspective is almost exclusive to those living in Montreal and Toronto (33%), and to a lesser extent, in Vancouver (19%); only a handful of Aboriginal peoples in smaller cities (6% or fewer) say they like living in their city for this reason.

Smaller proportions of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal say they appreciate having family and friends in the city (12%), the career and employment opportunities (10%), the friendly people (7%), the feeling of freedom and having lots of opportunities (7%), the transportation services (7%), education and training opportunities (6%), and the feeling of privacy and anonymity (6%).

**LIKE LEAST.** What do Aboriginal peoples like least about living in Montreal? Although they mention a broad range of issues, their responses clearly reveal one main concern. A universal complaint of all city-dwellers, just under half (45%) of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal most dislike the urban pressures, including the traffic, the pollution, the noise, the pace of life and the higher cost of living.

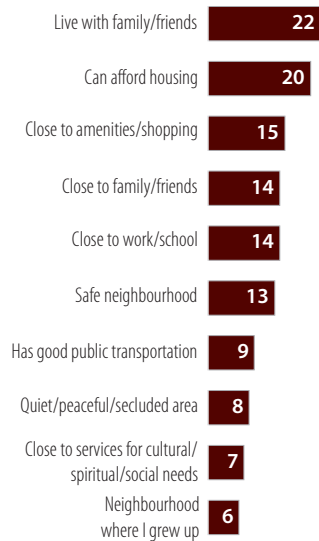
Montreal is the only city where a significant proportion of Aboriginal peoples mention issues related to immigrants (17%) and language barriers (8%). They are also more likely than average to say they dislike the poverty and homelessness evident in the city (11%), and being far from family and friends (9%).

Very few in Montreal (3%) mention issues related to crime and violence, well below the proportions in the Prairie cities and Halifax (ranging from 29% to 45%) who voice such concerns.

## 5.2 Reasons for choice of neighbourhood

Why do you live in your neighbourhood?

Why do you live in the neighbourhood you do?



**Proximity to family and affordable housing are the most common reasons for Aboriginal peoples' choice of neighbourhood in Montreal. The belief that they have a lot of choice about where to live is more pronounced in Montreal than among urban Aboriginal peoples in general.**

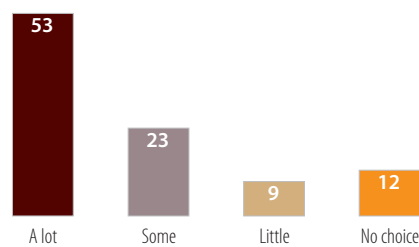
Aboriginal peoples in Montreal choose their neighbourhood for a range of reasons, most typically because of the availability of affordable housing, as well as proximity to family and friends, and to school or work.

When asked why they live in their neighbourhood (unprompted, without response options offered), Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are most likely to say their choice was influenced by the opportunity to live *with* (22%) or *close to* (14%) family and friends, the affordability of the housing (20%), the desire to be close to amenities (15%), the area's proximity to work and/or school (14%) and/or because it offers a safe environment (13%). A variety of other reasons are mentioned, but none by more than nine percent (each) of participants.

**EXTENT OF CHOICE.** To what extent do Aboriginal peoples in Montreal feel they have a choice about the neighbourhood they live in? When asked directly, three-quarters say they have either a lot (53%) or some (23%) choice about where they live in the city, compared to two in ten who feel they have either a little (9%) or no choice at all (12%). Compared to those in other *UAPS* cities, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are among the most confident that they have a lot of choice in where they can live.

How much choice do you feel you have in where you live?

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



### 5.3 Personal impact on city

**More than half of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal believe they can have a least a moderate impact on making their city a better place to live.**

In addition to enjoying living in their city, many Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are confident that they can make the city a better place to live.

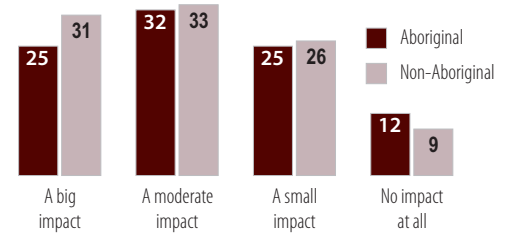
A majority of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal think people like themselves can have either a big (25%) or moderate (32%) impact in making the city a better place to live. One in three (37%) believe they can have only a small impact (25%) or no impact at all (12%) on their city.

This sense of being able to make a difference is similar to that of urban Aboriginal participants in general, although it trails the sense of empowerment found in Vancouver and Toronto (35% and 37%, respectively, say they can have a big impact).

UAPS participants' widespread belief in their ability to be positive agents of change in Montreal mirrors the belief *non-Aboriginal* people have in their own ability to affect change, including similar proportions who think they can have a *big* impact on Montreal (25% and 31%, respectively).

#### Making Montreal 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?



### 5.4 Attitudes toward multiculturalism

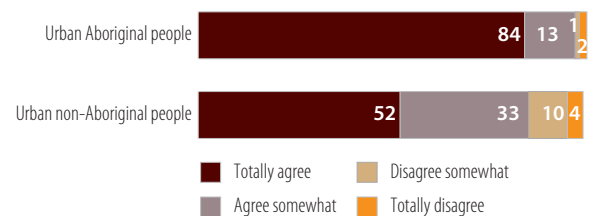
**Like Aboriginal peoples in other cities, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are strongly accepting of other languages and cultures, and much more so than non-Aboriginal people in Montreal.**

Virtually all Aboriginal peoples in Montreal totally (84%) or somewhat (13%) agree that Canada is a country where there is room for a variety of languages and cultures. This view is largely shared with Aboriginal peoples living in other UAPS cities, although the proportion in total agreement is highest in Vancouver and Montreal.

**ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL PERSPECTIVES.** Notably, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal express a much greater tolerance for other languages and cultures than do non-Aboriginal people. Using data from the UAPS survey of non-Aboriginal people, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal (84%) are considerably more likely than non-Aboriginal people in the city (52%) to totally agree that there is room for a variety of languages and cultures in Canada. This pattern is consistent across most UAPS cities, with the exception of Calgary.

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

Do you totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or totally disagree with the following statement: "There is room for a variety of languages and cultures in this country."



## 6.0 Urban Aspirations

An important goal from the outset of the *UAPS* was to learn about urban Aboriginal peoples' aspirations. The *UAPS* Advisory Circle and research team sought to include questions in the *UAPS* that would consider urban Aboriginal peoples, so often described in terms of "need" or "lack," from a more positive vantage point, in order to learn what they most wanted for their life and those of future generations, and how they defined success.

Pursuing higher education proved to be the leading life aspiration of urban Aboriginal peoples. Not only did they see higher education as a path to a good job or career for their own generation, many said that they hope higher levels of education will be key to how future generations of Aboriginal people distinguish themselves from their ancestors. This is also true for Aboriginal peoples in Montreal, whose top life aspirations are largely consistent with those held by Aboriginal peoples living in other *UAPS* cities.

### Key findings

- **Completing or achieving higher education, and raising a family are the top life aspirations for Aboriginal peoples in Montreal.** Learning the importance of education and completing school is also among the most prominent hopes for future generations of Aboriginal peoples, together with a stronger cultural connection and a happier, healthier and more stable life.
- **Family and a balanced lifestyle are considered the most important ingredients of a successful life.** Similar to Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver and Toronto, Aboriginal peoples living in Montreal place less value on financial independence and home ownership than do those living in smaller centres.



## 6.1 Life aspirations

**The top life aspirations for Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are raising a family and completing their education.**

What do Aboriginal peoples in Montreal consider to be a good life? To explore what urban Aboriginal peoples aspire to for their futures, *UAPS* participants were asked (unprompted, without response options offered) what three things they most want to achieve in their lifetime.

The most widely mentioned life aspirations among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are raising or providing for a family (21%), and completing their education (19%). Other aspirations include home ownership (16%), happiness (14%), travel (14%), success (12%), giving back to the Aboriginal community (12%), seeing their grandchildren become educated and succeed in life (11%), being a success in the arts (10%), financial security or independence (10%), having a good job or career (9%), having one's own business (9%) and a comfortable retirement (9%).

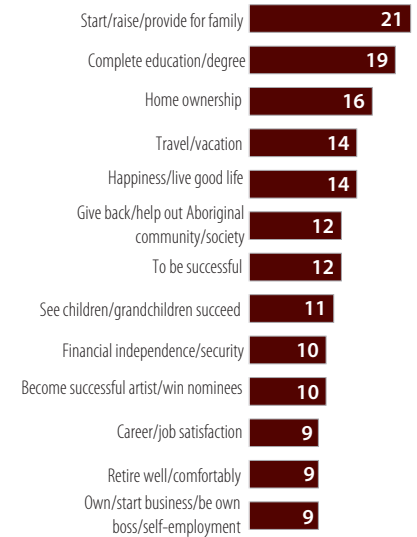
A wide range of other aspirations are mentioned by six percent or fewer, including good health, peace and balance, becoming fluent in other languages, good family relationships and being the best that one can be.

The life aspirations of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are largely consistent with those held by Aboriginal peoples living in the other *UAPS* cities. However, they are more likely than average to mention giving back to the Aboriginal community, being generally successful, retiring comfortably and becoming a successful artist.

### Life aspirations

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

#### Top mentions



## 6.2 Definitions of “success”

**Aboriginal peoples in Montreal most associate success with family and friends, and a balanced lifestyle. Compared to UAPS participants in smaller cities, they place less emphasis on financial independence and home ownership.**

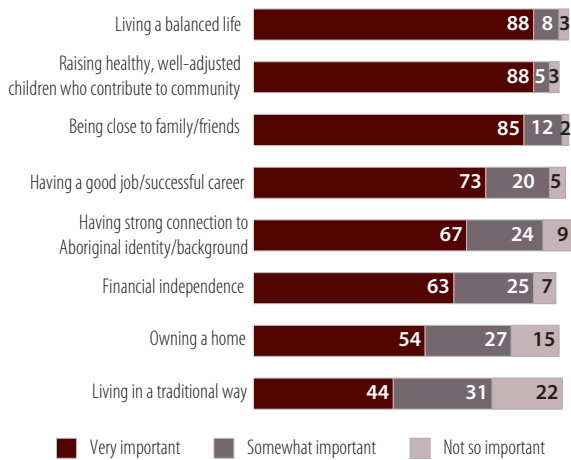
The UAPS asked urban Aboriginal peoples to rate the importance of eight factors to their idea of a successful life: financial independence; having a strong connection to their Aboriginal identity or background; owning a home; having a good job or a successful career; being close to family and friends; living a balanced life; living in a traditional way; and raising healthy, well-adjusted children who contribute to their community.

Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are most likely to consider family and a balanced lifestyle central to a successful life. Between eight and nine in ten each say it is very important to live a balanced life (88%), to raise healthy, well-adjusted children who contribute to their community (88%), and to be close to family and friends (85%).

Smaller but still substantial majorities place the same degree of importance on having a good job or a successful career (73%), having a strong connection to one’s Aboriginal identity or background (67%), and financial independence (63%). Just over half highly value home ownership (54%).

### Definition of a successful life

People define a successful life in a many different ways. Please tell me if the following are very important, somewhat important or not so important to your idea of a successful life.



By comparison, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal have mixed opinions about the importance of living in a traditional way: over four in ten (44%) say it is very important to a successful life, while three in ten (31%) say it is somewhat important and two in ten (22%) say it is not so important.

These definitions of success are largely shared by urban Aboriginal participants in general. However, Aboriginal peoples in the larger urban centres (Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver) place less relative importance on financial independence and owning a home than do those living in smaller cities.

## 6.3 Hopes for the future

**Aboriginal peoples in Montreal hope that future generations are better educated; have a stronger connection to their Aboriginal culture; and lead happier, healthier and more stable lives.**

When asked to think about the future and in what ways they hope their children's and grandchildren's lives (or the lives of the next generation) will be different from their own (unprompted, without providing response options), the most prominent hopes are for education, cultural connection and happiness. Some of these hopes are presented in participants' own words in the sidebar on this page.

Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are most likely to hope that future generations will learn the importance of education and finishing school (22%); be more aware of, involved in and connected to their Aboriginal cultural community (22%); and live happier, healthier and more stable lives (19%).

They are also hopeful that their children and grandchildren will make better decisions than they themselves have (14%); live in a society free of racism and discrimination (13%); and have access to more/better resources (13%).

A wide range of other hopes for future generations were expressed, such as greater financial security (9%); strong and stable family relationships (8%); a healthy environment (8%); and a strong sense of spirituality (7%).

These aspirations are largely similar to those expressed by urban Aboriginal peoples in general, although Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are among the most likely to mention a desire for future generations to lead happier, healthier and more stable lives.

**The hopes of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal for future generations:**

*I want them to have more education and have more job options. It is important they continue their schooling and go to university.*

*I would like them to live in a safe environment, and to know their language and where they come from. I want them to finish high school, college and university. That they have better jobs and better homes.*

*I hope that they will never be ashamed of who they are, and that they will not stop pursuing what they want to do, even if that means leaving the community. Native kids shouldn't feel like they will be less Native if they leave the community.*

*I want them to finish high school, go to university, be dependable, all the things I wasn't. I don't want them to be hooligans or scoundrels. I want them to learn from my experiences and be better.*

*More emphasis on cultural identity than on the colour of your skin. Confidence in themselves and who they are. And more political power in the mainstream and that they feel they can make a change. And that Aboriginal culture and values are reflected everyday and in mainstream institutions and not just on "Aboriginal Day."*

*I hope that they will have an easier time with self-esteem and a better understanding of the traditions that came before them and how to integrate these into their lives.*

## 7.0 Special Theme: Justice

Aboriginal peoples are over-represented as offenders in the criminal justice system. According to Statistics Canada, in 2007/2008, Aboriginal people represented just one percent of Quebec's total population, but made up two percent of individuals sentenced to custody in the province's correctional system.<sup>16</sup> The representation of Aboriginal adults in provincial/territorial sentenced custody outweighs their representation in the general population in all provinces and territories, although the gap is particularly large in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Compared to their counterparts in other *UAPS* cities, Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are the most divided in their confidence in Canada's criminal justice system, and yet are as likely as in other cities to support the idea of a separate Aboriginal justice system.

### Key findings

- **Aboriginal peoples in Montreal express mixed confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada.** At the same time, they are more than twice as likely to endorse as to oppose the creation of a separate Aboriginal justice system, a belief that is driven by perceptions that the current system is unfair to Aboriginal peoples, and does not reflect their values or culture.
- **There is strong majority support among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal for a criminal justice system that incorporates alternate approaches to justice.** Aboriginal peoples in Montreal believe alternate approaches (such as incorporating Aboriginal concepts of justice, or having Aboriginal police, judges and courts) would help reduce Aboriginal crime rates, improve community safety and increase their confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada.

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<sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada. 2009. Incarceration of Aboriginal people in adult correctional services. *The Daily*. July 21. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 11-001-XIE.

## 7.1 Confidence in the criminal justice system

**Aboriginal peoples in Montreal express mixed confidence in the criminal justice system in Canada, but the proportion who say they have no confidence far outweighs that who say they have a lot of confidence.**

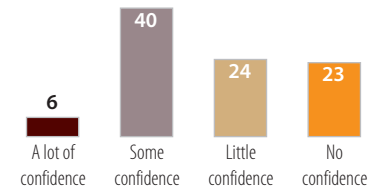
There is no consensus among Aboriginal residents of Montreal about the criminal justice system in Canada. Close to half (46%) say they have at least some confidence in this system, but this includes only a few (6%) who have a lot of confidence. The other half (47%) say they have little (24%) or no (23%) confidence.

No more than one in ten in any UAPS city express a great deal of confidence in the criminal justice system. Lack of confidence is most evident among Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (64%), Saskatoon (63%), Winnipeg (60%), Toronto (59%) and Edmonton (55%); elsewhere (with the exception of Montreal), majorities say they have at least some confidence in the criminal justice system.

What influences urban Aboriginal peoples' confidence in the criminal justice system? The sample size for Montreal alone (250 survey participants) is too small to allow for a detailed analysis by socio-demographic factors. However, the national UAPS survey data (across all 11 cities) suggest that confidence is lower among urban Aboriginal peoples who have had some type of serious involvement with the justice system in Canada (i.e., they have been a victim of a crime, a witness to a crime, or arrested or charged with a crime). The proportion of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal who report serious involvement of this sort (49%) is on par with the average for all 11 UAPS cities.

### Confidence in Canada's system of justice

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?



## 7.2 Support for an Aboriginal justice system

### Good idea or bad idea

**Support for a separate Aboriginal justice system outweighs opposition among Aboriginal peoples in Montreal, a finding that is consistent with views in most UAPS cities.**

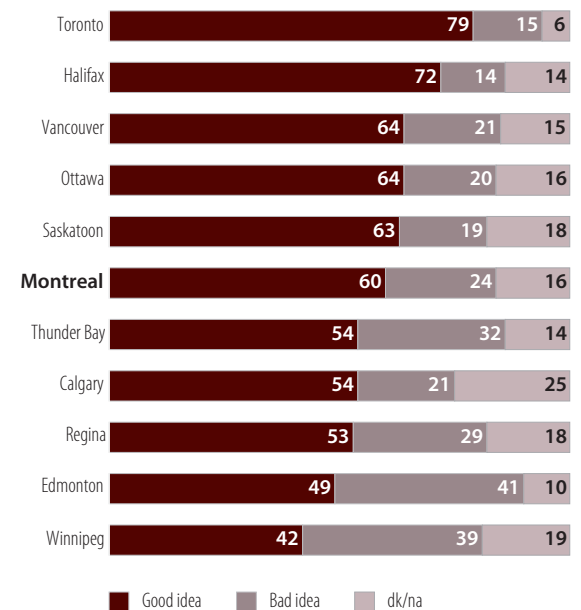
Aboriginal peoples in Montreal are much more likely to support than to oppose the creation of an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system.

Six in ten (60%) Aboriginal peoples in Montreal think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a good idea, clearly outweighing the just over two in ten (24%) who believe it is a bad idea. Just under two in ten (16%) offer no opinion.

Support for the idea of a separate Aboriginal justice system is highest in Toronto (79%) and Halifax (72%). Opposition to the concept is a minority view in all cities, but is highest among Aboriginal peoples in Edmonton (41%) and Winnipeg (39%).

### Aboriginal justice system

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



## Reasons why Aboriginal peoples in Montreal think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is

### ...a good idea:

*I have been a supporter of an Aboriginal justice system for decades. I believe it is important for Aboriginals to be judged under our own laws. I feel Aboriginals are not treated fairly.*

*Our values are not the same; our cultures are not the same. You can't mandate policies for us the same way as non-Aboriginals. We need restorative justice.*

*It goes back to the cultural differences. ... I think it's best for Aboriginal people to deal with Aboriginal issues. There are other ways of dealing with these issues, such as healing methods, that are closer to our traditions.*

### ...or a bad idea:

*Ideally, the main criminal system in place should work for all criminals.*

*What is more important is that Aboriginals become lawyers, crown prosecutors and judges, and enter into the justice system, not create a separate system.*

*I don't think that there should be anymore segregation than there already is. I really just don't think it would be beneficial. I see Canada as a country that includes Aboriginals. This means that people should abide by the same rules. I think more people will be screaming "special treatment" to Aboriginal people with their own justice system. It will just make things worse.*

**WHY A GOOD IDEA?** When asked why they think creating an Aboriginal justice system separate from the mainstream system is a *good* idea (unprompted, without response options offered), supporters in Montreal offer a number of reasons. They believe it would offset a current justice system that they perceive to be biased and that treats Aboriginal people unjustly (27%); would offer a setting that is more culturally comfortable for Aboriginal peoples (26%); and that Aboriginal people would be better served by a system that allows them to be judged within their own value system and by their own peers, and that respects Aboriginal history and culture (22%). Others base their support on the belief that a separate system would provide greater rehabilitation, healing and reduce recidivism (12%), and/or that it would recognize that Aboriginal peoples have different values and orientations toward justice (10%).

**WHY A BAD IDEA?** Aboriginal peoples in Montreal who think creating a separate system is a *bad* idea were also asked the reason for their opinion (unprompted, without response options offered). Those opposed to this idea are most likely to say it is because they feel Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people should be treated equally to avoid discrimination (43%). Smaller proportions base their opinion on the belief that a separate system would unnecessarily segregate and isolate Aboriginal people (25%), encourage other cultural groups to demand their own separate systems (17%), and/or create resentment among non-Aboriginal people (10%). Some say that it would be better to fix the current system of justice than to create a new, separate system (15%).

## Perceived impact of alternate approaches

**Aboriginal peoples in Montreal believe that alternate approaches to justice would help reduce Aboriginal crime rates, improve their confidence in the justice system and improve community safety.**

Aside from their opinions about the value of an Aboriginal justice system, what do Aboriginal peoples in Montreal think would make a difference in reducing Aboriginal crime rates, improving community safety, and improving their own confidence in the criminal justice system?

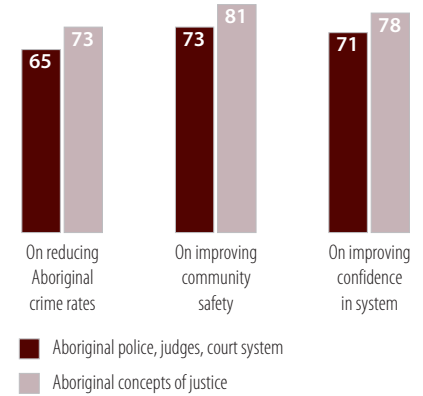
Urban Aboriginal peoples were asked to evaluate the potential impact of two alternate approaches to justice:

- A system that incorporates Aboriginal police, Aboriginal judges and an Aboriginal court system to work with Aboriginal people who come in contact with the criminal justice system; and
- A system that incorporates Aboriginal concepts of justice, such as sentencing circles and healing circles, Aboriginal laws, and alternatives to punishment such as reconciliation and restoration.

Overall, majorities feel both approaches would have a beneficial impact. Between six and eight in ten Aboriginal peoples in Montreal say that each of these two approaches would have at least a moderate impact on reducing Aboriginal crime rates, improving community safety and improving their confidence in the justice system. These views are largely consistent with those of urban Aboriginal peoples in general.

### Impact of alternate approaches to justice

Big or moderate impact



## 8.0 Special Theme: Inuit in Montreal

Inuit are the smallest of the three Aboriginal “identity groups” (Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples), and also the least likely to live in urban centres. In the 2006 Census, 50,485 individuals in Canada self-identified as Inuit, representing four percent of the Aboriginal population. Only a minority (17%) of Inuit live in urban centres outside Inuit Nunaat (the Inuit “homeland” that stretches from Labrador to the Northwest Territories), although this proportion has grown since 1996 (when it was 13%). The urban centres outside Inuit Nunaat with the largest Inuit populations are: Ottawa-Gatineau (population of 725), Yellowknife (640), Edmonton (590), Montreal (570) and Winnipeg (355).

In recognition of the importance of including an urban Inuit community in the *UAPS*, Ottawa was added as an 11th city at the research design stage. In addition, a substantial number of interviews were conducted with Inuit participants in Montreal (63 in total).<sup>16</sup> The purpose of this section of the report is to explore the values, experiences, identities and aspirations of Inuit living in Montreal.

The findings highlighted below are based on unweighted data. Because Inuit represent only three percent of Aboriginal peoples in Montreal, the Inuit interviews effectively disappear when the final sample is weighted to accurately reflect the overall Montreal Aboriginal population. Given the importance of ensuring the voices of Inuit were heard, and that their experiences and perspectives were included, it was decided the unweighted data was appropriate to use for this Special Theme.

The profile of these 63 Inuit living in Montreal spans all ages and education levels. A plurality are aged 25 to 44 (44%), while the remainder are equally divided between younger (27% aged 18-24) and older (29% aged 45 or older) participants. A minority have a post-secondary education from a college (22%) or university (13%); most have a high school diploma (35%) or less education (30%). Among Inuit participants in Montreal, women (59%) outnumber men (41%).

Overall, the results of the *UAPS* suggest that, while almost all of this group of Inuit are not originally from the city, many enjoy living here and have made it their home. However, being such a small community within the broader Aboriginal community does pose challenges. Despite fairly strong connections to their ancestry, to their community of origin, and to other Inuit in the city, half of Inuit in Montreal are concerned about how to maintain their cultural identity in the city.

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<sup>16</sup> In Montreal, an insufficient number of Métis were identified for participation, so additional interviews were conducted with Inuit to reach the overall city quota of 250 interviews.



**THE URBAN CONTEXT.** Most Inuit have come to Montreal from another community, to which they continue to have a close bond. Only a minority (10%) say they have lived in Montreal all their lives; most (90%) say they were born and raised elsewhere. This latter group retains a relatively strong connection to their communities of origin (70% say they have a very or somewhat close connection).

Nonetheless, a majority of those born outside Montreal consider the city to be their home. When asked “where is home for you?,” six in ten (58%) say it is Montreal, compared to one-quarter (26%) who say it is their home community and a small minority (12%) who say it is another community.

Inuit who are originally from somewhere other than Montreal are divided about whether they intend to go back to their home community one day. Close to four in ten (37%) say they do plan to go back permanently, while an identical proportion (37%) have decided they will not; the remainder (27%) say they are undecided or it is too soon to say.

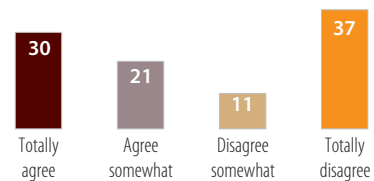
**IDENTITY AND CULTURE.** Inuit in Montreal take great pride in their Inuk identity (87% are very proud) and are knowledgeable about their ancestry (78% say they know their Aboriginal ancestors very or fairly well). Nonetheless, there are mixed views about their ability to protect against the loss of their cultural identity: half (51%) agree that they are concerned about losing this identity, while the other half (48%) disagree.

The extent of this concern is likely related to being not only a minority group within Montreal, but also within the pan-Aboriginal community. For example, while half (48%) of Inuit say they are a lot or some Aboriginal cultural activities available in their community, these activities are much more likely to be related to First Nations culture than specific to Inuit culture.

Within Montreal, there is no consensus about the type of community to which Inuit feel they belong, but they are most likely to be oriented towards an Aboriginal community (45%) rather than a non-Aboriginal community (30%), or one that is equally Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (22%). They are equally likely to feel a connection to other Inuit in Montreal (70% report a very or fairly close connection) as to First Nations people and Métis in the city (73%).

### Concern over losing cultural identity

Inuit Do you totally agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or totally disagree with the following statement: “I am concerned about losing my cultural identity.”



Subsample: Those who are Inuk

**ABORIGINAL SERVICES AND ORGANIZATIONS.** Among Inuit in Montreal, there is a fairly high degree of reliance on Aboriginal services and organizations. Just over six in ten (63%) say they use such services at least occasionally, with friendship centres identified as, by far, the most useful.

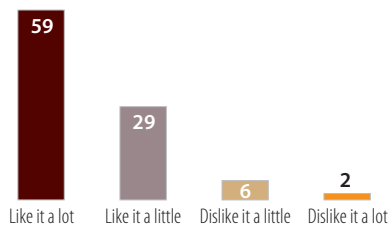
There is also a clear consensus that there should be Aboriginal services and organizations in addition to non-Aboriginal ones. Inuit in Montreal consider it most important to have Aboriginal addiction programs (91% say these are *very* important), followed by Aboriginal child and family services (81%), health centres (78%), employment centres (76%), daycares (76%) and housing services (75%). The perceived need for Aboriginal elementary and secondary schools (65%), and colleges and universities (60%) is less pronounced, but only 13 percent each say it is not important to provide Aboriginal-centred versions of these educational facilities.

**EXPERIENCES WITH NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLE.** As is the case for urban Aboriginal peoples across the board, a majority of Inuit in Montreal believe that non-Aboriginal people have generally negative perceptions of Aboriginal people (60% vs. 19% who say non-Aboriginal perceptions are generally positive<sup>17</sup>).

Most (86%) Inuit in Montreal believe that others behave in an unfair or negative way towards Aboriginal people, and a majority (68%) say they themselves have been teased or insulted because of their Aboriginal background. Yet at the same time, Inuit in Montreal are more likely than not to say they feel accepted by non-Aboriginal people (56% vs. 38% who do not feel accepted).

### Like living in Montreal

Inuit How much do you like living in your city? Would you say you like it or dislike it?



Subsample: Those who are Inuk

**URBAN EXPERIENCES.** Inuit in Montreal are generally positive about the city. The large majority (88%) say they like living in Montreal a lot (59%) or a little (29%). City life is the most common reason for liking Montreal; other reasons include the quality of life, a sense of social acceptance, and the privacy and anonymity of the city. Urban pressures (e.g., pollution, overcrowding, noise) are what Inuit like least about the city, followed by racism and discrimination. There are mixed perceptions about whether they can help make their city a better place to live, with just over half (54%) who feel they can have a big or moderate impact, compared to just over four in ten (44%) who feel they can only have a small impact or none at all.

**URBAN ASPIRATIONS.** The aspirations of Inuit in Montreal centre on education, either for themselves (27%), or for their children and grandchildren (13%). Other common life aspirations include a good job or career, travel and raising a family.

The leading hallmarks of success are living a balanced life (89% say it is *very* important), raising healthy children who become productive citizens (87%), and being close to family and friends (84%). There is comparatively less emphasis placed on living in a traditional way (52%) or owning a home (49%).

<sup>17</sup> The remaining 21 percent say perceptions are neither positive nor negative, or did not offer an opinion.

## 9.0 Non-Aboriginal Perspectives

For several years, Environics Research Group has been tracking the attitudes of non-Aboriginal Canadians toward 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 between 1999 and 2007. 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 approximately 250 non-Aboriginal people in each of the 10 of the 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 participated, providing a rich picture of how NA urban Canadians see Aboriginal people in cities today.

Topics explored in the survey include non-Aboriginal 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 non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal.

### 9.1 Perceptions of Aboriginal peoples

#### Top-of-mind impression

***Among non-Aboriginal people in Montreal, the most common top-of-mind impression of Aboriginal peoples revolves around their history as the original inhabitants of Canada. This perception is more common in Montreal than in any other UAPS city except Toronto.***

What are the top-of-mind impressions of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal people in Montreal? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), non-Aboriginal people in Montreal express a variety of impressions, but are most likely to cite the following:

- **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 peoples among non-Aboriginal people in Montreal (20%).
- **Mistreatment.** The most top-of-mind impression for one in ten (9%) non-Aboriginal Montreal residents is of perceptions of abuse and mistreatment experienced by Aboriginal peoples at the hands of Canadian citizens and governments.
- **Reserves.** For an additional one in ten (9%), reserves are what first come to mind when thinking of Aboriginal peoples.
- **Tax breaks and privileges.** Another one in ten (9%) identify tax breaks, and additional rights and privileges as their initial thought of Aboriginal peoples, an impression more common in Montreal than in other *UAPS* cities.

Smaller proportions of non-Aboriginal people in Montreal associate Aboriginal peoples with First Nations, Métis or Inuit, or other terms that are sometimes used to describe Aboriginal peoples, such as Indians or natives (7%); history, cultural traditions and art (6%); smuggling and cheap cigarettes (5%); or poverty and poor living conditions (4%). Six percent say Aboriginal peoples are the same as other Canadian citizens.

A wide variety of other impressions are cited, but none by more than three percent of non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal. Seven percent cannot say what first comes to mind when they think of Aboriginal peoples.

## Are non-Aboriginal impressions changing in Montreal?

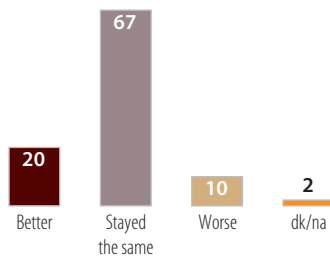
***The majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal say their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have not changed in the past few years.***

Non-Aboriginal Montreal residents are more likely to say their impressions of Aboriginal peoples are unchanged in recent years than to report their views have changed for better or worse.

Two-thirds (67%) of non-Aboriginal people in Montreal say their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have stayed the same over the past few years. Of the minority who report shifting impressions, non-Aboriginal people in Montreal are more likely to say these impressions have improved (20%) than worsened (10%). Montreal residents are among the least likely to report their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have recently worsened, consistent with perceptions in Vancouver (5%), Toronto (8%) and Halifax (10%).

### Stable impressions

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



**REASONS FOR IMPROVING IMPRESSIONS.** Non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal who say their impressions of Aboriginal people have improved over time cite four main reasons for this:

- **Visibility.** Two in ten (18%) cite a more visible and positive presence in the local community and media as the main reason their impression of Aboriginal peoples has improved.
- **Better understanding.** Close to two in ten (17%) attribute their improved impressions to a better general understanding of Aboriginal culture or issues.
- **Perception of progress.** Fifteen percent attribute their improved impressions to improvements in the economic, social or educational circumstances of Aboriginal peoples.
- **Public recognition.** Increased recognition of, and respect for, Aboriginal peoples among citizens and the government has contributed to better impressions for 14 percent of this group.

Fewer associate their more positive impressions with becoming more mature and open-minded (9%), a personal relationship with an Aboriginal person (8%), or learning more about Aboriginal cultures through educational courses (7%).

**REASONS FOR WORSENING IMPRESSIONS.** The small group of Montreal residents who say their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have worsened primarily attribute this change to the perception that Aboriginal peoples abuse privileges and take advantage of laws. However, the sample size of non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal who report their impressions of Aboriginal peoples have worsened (n=29) is too small to provide a meaningful basis for further analysis or conclusions.

## 9.2 Unique rights and privileges

**Non-Aboriginal people in Montreal are more likely than those in any other UAPS city to say Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges as the country's first inhabitants.**

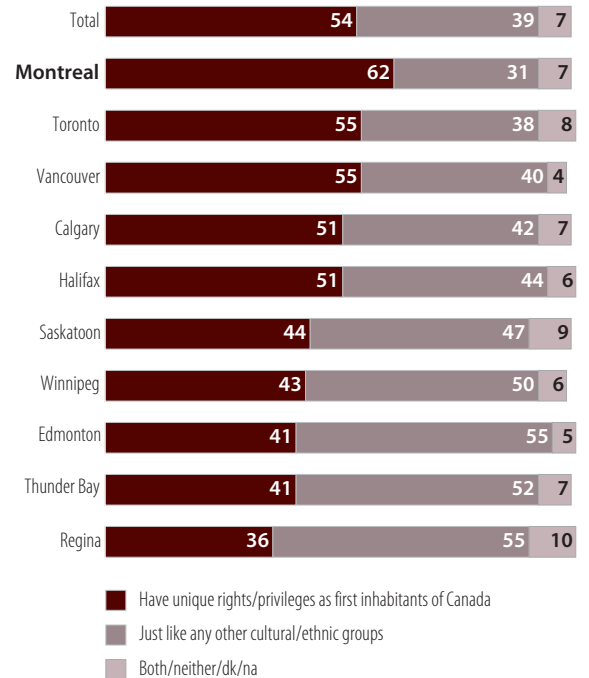
The majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal believe Aboriginal people hold a distinct status as the first inhabitants of Canada.

Six in ten (62%) non-Aboriginal people in Montreal believe Aboriginal peoples have unique rights and privileges as the first inhabitants of Canada, whereas three in ten (31%) feel Aboriginal peoples are just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada's multicultural society (4% say they are both equally, while 2% say neither).

Compared to non-Aboriginal people in other UAPS cities, those in Montreal are most likely to believe in Aboriginal peoples' unique rights and privileges, comparable to residents of Vancouver (55%) and Toronto (55%). Typically, it is residents of cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations (e.g., Prairie cities and Thunder Bay) who are more likely 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?



## 9.3 The big picture: explaining views of Aboriginal peoples among non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal

***There is no consensus view of Aboriginal peoples among Montreal residents. Although they represent a minority, the proportion of Inattentive Skeptics, individuals who are uninformed and unaware of Aboriginal peoples, is higher in Montreal than in any other UAPS city.***

The overall picture of what is going on among Montreal residents in terms of their attitudes toward Aboriginal peoples can be somewhat elusive when there are so many individual questions and answers to consider. In order to achieve this overall picture, our 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 non-Aboriginal people living in the UAPS cities.

Specifically, this in-depth look involved determining if there are patterns of views among non-Aboriginal 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 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians based on their overall attitudes toward Aboriginal culture, responsibility and contribution to Canadian society in order to encapsulate non-Aboriginal urban Canadians' broader viewpoints of Aboriginal people.

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

- ***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 believe Aboriginal peoples are just the same as 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 with Aboriginal peoples, and a strong belief that Aboriginal peoples often experience discrimination.

Non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal are most likely to be Cultural Romantics (37%) or Dismissive Naysayers (31%), although the former group is smaller than average, while the latter group is slightly larger than average. Inattentive Skeptics (21%) represent the third largest group of non-Aboriginal people in Montreal, a proportion that is higher than in any other *UAPS* city. Finally, Connected Advocates (11%) represent the smallest group of non-Aboriginal Montreal residents.

**Cultural Romantics (37%)**



**Dismissive Naysayers (31%)**



**Inattentive Skeptics (21%)**



**Connected Advocates (11%)**



## 9.4 Awareness and perceptions of an Aboriginal community in Montreal

### Awareness of an Aboriginal community in Montreal

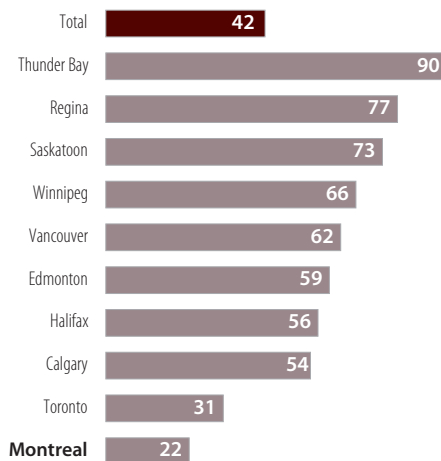
**Residents of Montreal are the least likely of any UAPS city to be aware of an Aboriginal community or that Aboriginal people live in their city.**

The UAPS non-Aboriginal survey asked non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal how aware they are of Aboriginal people and communities in the city. A slim majority 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.



Over half (54%) of Montreal residents say they know there are Aboriginal people living in their city, the lowest level of awareness of any UAPS city.

Montreal residents (22%) are also the least likely to be aware of an Aboriginal *community* in their city. Awareness of an Aboriginal community is highest among non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay (90%), Regina (77%) and Saskatoon (73%).

What explains the variation among non-Aboriginal 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, Montreal and Halifax, making a distinct Aboriginal group and/or community more apparent to NA urban Canadians in those 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. 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.



## Positive or negative presence

***Non-Aboriginal people in Montreal largely believe the presence of Aboriginal peoples has a positive or neutral impact on the city.***

How do Montreal residents perceive Aboriginal peoples and communities in their city? When asked, residents who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city offer mixed views about whether this presence is positive or neutral, but very few describe it as negative for Montreal.

Half (49%) of non-Aboriginal residents aware of Aboriginal people or communities in Montreal believe this is a neutral presence in their city, while over four in ten (44%) think it is positive. Only seven percent view the presence of Aboriginal peoples or communities as negative for the city; this point of view is more prevalent in the Prairie cities and Thunder Bay than elsewhere in Canada.

## Contributions and challenges

***Montreal residents who view Aboriginal people and communities in their city positively typically believe they contribute to Montreal's cultural diversity.***

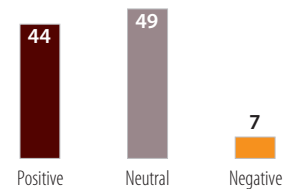
In what ways do those who believe the presence of Aboriginal people and communities is positive for their city think Aboriginal people contribute?<sup>18</sup> When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), they are most likely to think Aboriginal peoples and communities contribute to Montreal in the following main ways:

- **Add cultural diversity.** One in three (35%) believe Aboriginal people and communities contribute different perspectives and add to the general cultural mosaic of Montreal.
- **Enrich urban art and culture.** Two in ten (21%) believe Aboriginal people and communities make contributions to Montreal's artistic and cultural life.
- **Good neighbours.** Some Montreal residents say Aboriginal peoples are friendly, good neighbours with whom they enjoy socializing (15%).
- **Stimulate city economies.** Montreal residents also note the economic contributions Aboriginal peoples make to the city as employees or employers of local businesses (6%), and by paying taxes (6%).

An additional 15 percent of non-Aboriginal people in Montreal say Aboriginal peoples are citizens that contribute to society the same as everyone else.

### 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 Montreal.

<sup>18</sup> The subsample of Montreal residents who believe the presence of Aboriginal peoples is negative for the city (n=9) is too small for meaningful analysis of the reasons for this perception.

## Contact with Aboriginal people

**Very few non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal have regular contact with Aboriginal people, which is understandably more common in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations.**

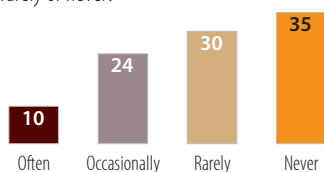
Among non-Aboriginal people in Montreal, relatively few are in contact with Aboriginal peoples in their daily lives.

One in ten (10%) Montreal residents say they often encounter Aboriginal people and another one in four (24%) do so occasionally. The remaining two thirds of non-Aboriginal Montrealers rarely (30%) or never (35%) have contact with Aboriginal peoples, the highest proportion of any UAPS city.

Not surprisingly, NA urban Canadians in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations (i.e., Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay) are the most likely to regularly encounter Aboriginal people, while this is least common in Toronto and Montreal.

### Contact with Aboriginal people

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



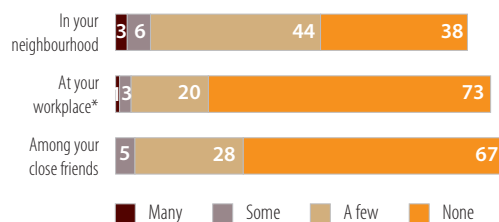
## Aboriginal friends, neighbours and co-workers

**Montreal residents are among the least likely to know Aboriginal people as close friends, neighbours and co-workers, although they display among the greatest interest in knowing more.**

Aside from casual contact, how many Montreal residents know Aboriginal people, either as close friends, neighbours or co-workers? Among Montreal residents who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city, only very small proportions know many or some Aboriginal people as neighbours (9%), close friends (5%) or as co-workers (4% of those who are currently employed). In each case, the large majority know only a few or no Aboriginal people in those ways.

### 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

As could be expected, the proportions of NA urban Canadians who have at least some Aboriginal people as neighbours, close friends and co-workers are higher in cities with larger relative Aboriginal populations, such as Regina, Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Thunder Bay.

When asked if they have any interest in having more Aboriginal friends, the majority (69%) of Montreal residents who are aware of Aboriginal people and communities in the city say they are. Few (9%) say they are not interested, while two in ten say “it depends” (20%). The level of interest in having more Aboriginal peoples as friends is higher than in the Prairie cities and Thunder Bay, and similar to interest expressed in Toronto and Halifax.

## 9.5 Perceived barriers facing Aboriginal people

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

*Land claims are perceived to be the most important issue facing the Aboriginal population in Canada today, while discrimination and equality issues are considered the top challenge for urban Aboriginal peoples.*

**MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE.** When non-Aboriginal people in Montreal are 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 in their views. The problem most frequently mentioned as facing Aboriginal peoples is land claims and territorial rights (19%). Other problems identified as facing Aboriginal peoples include threats to culture and self-identity (10%), substance abuse and addiction (8%), isolation from society (8%) and discrimination (6%). A wide range of other potential problems are mentioned, but none by more than five percent (each) of Montreal residents. Two in ten (18%) are unable to identify any issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada today.

**MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN CITIES.** When asked about the issues facing Aboriginal people living in Canadian cities specifically, non-Aboriginal people in Montreal do not have any better sense of the most important (asked unprompted, without offering response choices). They are most likely to identify discrimination (15%) as the leading concern for the urban Aboriginal population, followed by threats to culture and self-identity (11%), and isolation (8%). Some Montreal residents also perceive urban Aboriginal people to be dealing with substance abuse (5%), unemployment (4%) and poverty (4%). A number of other issues are mentioned, but none by more than three percent each, while four in ten (39%) cannot identify any issues facing Aboriginal people in Canadian cities today.

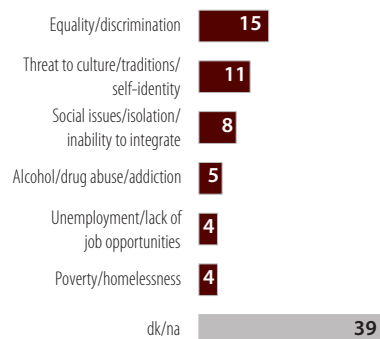
### Most important issue in Canada (top mentions)

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?



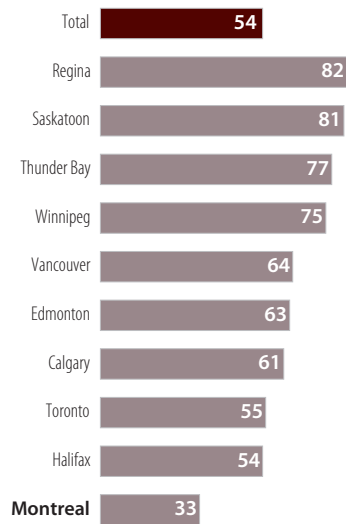
## Indian residential schools

***Montreal residents are less aware of Indian residential schools than those in other UAPS cities. However, those who are aware are among the most likely to believe the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities are, at least to some extent, the result of this experience.***

The survey examined awareness of Indian residential schools among non-Aboriginal people in Montreal, and their views about the consequences this experience has had for Aboriginal people.

### Aware of Indian residential schools

Have you read or heard anything about Indian residential schools?

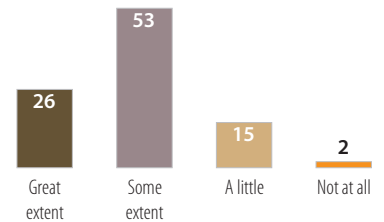


**AWARENESS.** One in three (33%) non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal report they have read or heard something about Indian residential schools. This level of awareness is the lowest of all UAPS cities, even compared to residents of Toronto (55%) and Halifax (54%), cities that also have small relative Aboriginal populations.

**IMPACT.** Residents of Montreal who are aware of residential schools recognize that these institutions have had a significant impact on Aboriginal peoples. Of those who are aware of residential schools, eight in ten think that the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities today are, to a great extent (26%) or to some extent (53%), the result of Aboriginal peoples' experiences in residential schools. Only a minority see little (15%) or no (2%) relationship between the two. Non-Aboriginal Montrealers are among the most likely of the UAPS participants to say that current challenges facing Aboriginal peoples are, at least to some extent, the result of residential schools (together with Vancouverites).

### Impact of Indian residential schools\*

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



\* Subsample: Among those aware of Indian residential schools

## Perceptions of discrimination

**Montreal residents clearly think Aboriginal people experience discrimination – and at least as much as other groups in Canadian society. Nonetheless, the minority who do not believe such discrimination exists is somewhat larger in Montreal than in most other UAPS cities.**

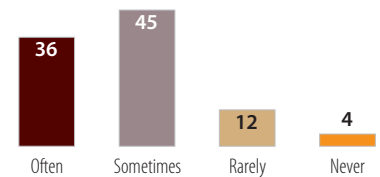
There is widespread recognition among non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal that Aboriginal peoples are the subject of discrimination in Canadian society today. Eight in ten Montreal residents believe Aboriginal peoples often (36%) or sometimes (45%) face discrimination; one in ten (12%) believe they rarely do and four percent say they never experience discrimination. These views are consistent with the average for non-Aboriginal UAPS participants in general.

Furthermore, majorities of non-Aboriginal people in Montreal think Aboriginal people are subject to the same, if not more, discrimination relative to other groups in Canadian society, such as Jews, Chinese, Blacks, Pakistanis or East Indians, and Muslims. Three in ten Montreal residents think Aboriginal people endure more discrimination than groups such as the Chinese (31%) and Jews (27%), and close to two in ten think they endure more discrimination than Blacks (17%). Slightly fewer think Aboriginal people endure more discrimination than groups such as Pakistanis or East Indians (15%), and Muslims (15%).

Notably, perceptions that Aboriginal people face less discrimination relative to most of these minority groups is more common among non-Aboriginal people in Montreal and Toronto than among those living in other UAPS cities.

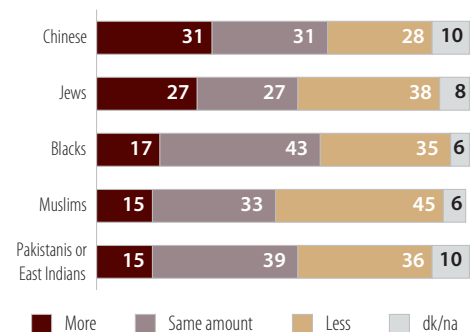
### Discrimination

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



### 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?

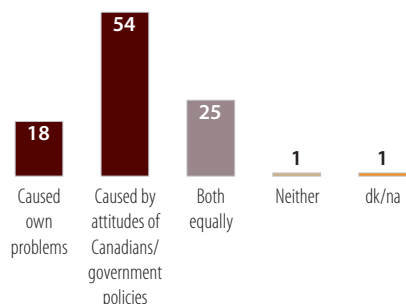


## Main source of problems facing Aboriginal peoples

***The balance of opinion in Montreal is that the problems faced by Aboriginal peoples have largely been caused by the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of government rather than by Aboriginal peoples themselves.***

### 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?



Non-Aboriginal people in Montreal tend to believe that many of the problems facing Aboriginal people are largely due to external factors over which they have no control. Over half (54%) of non-Aboriginal people in Montreal attribute the problems faced by Aboriginal peoples to the attitudes of Canadians and the policies of governments, compared to two in ten (18%) who say these are problems that Aboriginal people have brought upon themselves. One in four (25%) say both parties are equally responsible, a view that is more widespread in Montreal than in most other *UAPS* cities except Saskatoon.

These views are closer to those expressed in Halifax, Toronto and Vancouver than to those in the Prairie cities of Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg (where opinion is divided between the two viewpoints).

## 9.6 Relations with Aboriginal people and the future

### Perceptions of current relations

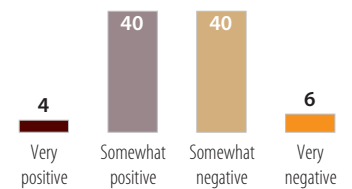
**Non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal are ultimately divided about the current state of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.**

There is no consensus among Montreal residents about the state of current relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. More than four in ten (44%) believe current relations are positive, while an equal proportion (46%) describe them negative; few have an extreme perception of current relations (i.e., say they are very positive or very negative). The remaining 10 percent say relations are neither positive nor negative, or have no opinion.

The view that current relations are positive is most pronounced in Vancouver (58%) and Halifax (56%), followed by Toronto (50%). In contrast, non-Aboriginal residents of Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Regina and Thunder Bay are more pessimistic than optimistic about their relationship with Aboriginal people. Residents of Montreal and Saskatoon are most evenly divided between the two viewpoints.

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 change

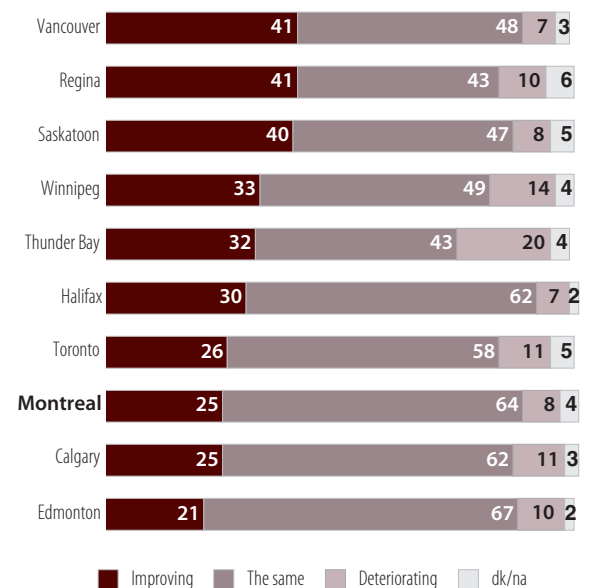
**Non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal are more likely to say relations with Aboriginal peoples are staying the same than improving or deteriorating.**

The majority of non-Aboriginal people in Montreal see little change in the evolution of the Aboriginal-non-Aboriginal relationship. More than six in ten (64%) say relations between the two groups are staying the same, while one in four (25%) say they are improving; only a small minority (8%) believe relations are deteriorating.

Montreal residents are among the most likely to perceive the status quo in relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. By comparison, optimism that relations are improving is highest in Vancouver, Regina and Saskatoon.

### Changing relations

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

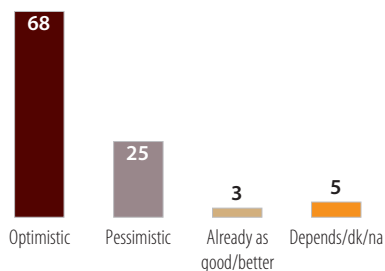


## Future quality of life for Aboriginal peoples

**The majority of non-Aboriginal residents of Montreal are optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life will approach that of the rest of the population's in the next generation.**

### Views of future quality of life

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?



Looking to the future, what do Montreal residents foresee for the quality of life of Aboriginal peoples in their city? Residents of Montreal are largely optimistic that Aboriginal peoples' quality of life in the city will improve to the same level as that of non-Aboriginal people in the next generation. Seven in ten (68%) non-Aboriginal people in Montreal are optimistic about such progress, compared to one in four (25%) who are pessimistic. Notably, the degree of optimism about Aboriginal peoples' future quality of life is similar across all UAPS cities.

How do Montreal residents think their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal peoples? When asked (unprompted, without response options offered), non-Aboriginal people in Montreal suggest a range of approaches, including moving away from reserves in the interest of integrating Aboriginal peoples into Canadian society (15%); promoting acceptance and respect of cultural differences (11%); fair and/or equal treatment and opportunity for Aboriginal peoples (8%); and the creation of greater educational opportunities (8%). Also mentioned are providing funding for community and social outreach (5%), providing employment and job training opportunities (5%), and increasing public awareness of the situation faced by Aboriginal peoples (5%).

### How to ensure a better quality of life (top 6 mentions)

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



A wide range of other approaches are mentioned, but none by more than four percent each of the population. One-quarter (25%) of Montreal's non-Aboriginal residents have no suggestions for ways in which their city can help ensure a better quality of life for Aboriginal peoples, while two percent say they feel the city is doing everything it possibly can.