

III. Urban Aboriginal Peoples' Sense of Place

Overview

David Newhouse and Evelyn Peters, in their 2003 book *Not Strangers in These Parts*, note that “Aboriginal people are now part of the urban landscape and will remain so, most likely in increasing numbers, over the decades to come. Understanding this complex reality in sufficient detail and depth is a major re-research challenge.”¹³ In order to better understand this complex reality, this report begins with a chapter on a fundamental aspect of identity: urban Aboriginal peoples’ sense of place.

The focus of the *UAPS*, in part, is to understand how Aboriginal peoples, in the midst of this process of urbanization, feel about living in their cities. Thus, a first step for the *UAPS* was to determine how long urban Aboriginal peoples have lived in their cities; specifically, if they were born and raised in their city of residence, or if they were born and raised elsewhere. Another important step was to explore urban Aboriginal peoples’ connection to their city of residence and the degree to which it, or another place, is *home* for them. From there, what is it that urban Aboriginal peoples like most and least about living in their city, and do they believe they can make their city a better place to live?

An important note about the terminology used in this chapter. To determine if urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in their city of residence have different views from those who were not born and raised in their city, comparisons are made between the two groups throughout the chapter. For ease of understanding, these two groups are referred to as “first generation” urban Aboriginal peoples (i.e., those not born and raised in their city of residence) and “second generation” urban Aboriginal peoples (i.e., those born and raised in their city of residence whose family is from another place). “Born and raised” is defined as one’s home community, or the community that had the most influence on an individual as they were growing up.

The following points summarize the main findings around urban Aboriginal peoples’ sense of place:

- ***UAPS* participants are largely first generation residents.** In other words, they were born and raised in another community, town, city or reserve other than their current city of residence. However, they are also typically long-term urban residents, as a significant number have lived in their city for 10 years or more.
- **Aboriginal peoples move to the city for family, education and work opportunities, and the amenities and services available.** These reasons are generally common to First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit. However, women move to the city for somewhat different reasons than men, with family and education more typically the reason women moved to their city, in addition to a small group who say they first moved to escape a bad family situation and find a better place to raise their children. Men are more likely to have moved to their city to find work.
- ***UAPS* participants stay connected to their communities of origin, though only a minority has ever returned.** Majorities of Aboriginal peoples (first and second generation) in Canadian cities today retain a sense of connection to their home communities and places of origin, either their own, or that of their parents and grandparents. This is particularly true for those who strongly identify as Aboriginal (i.e., those who feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community and know their family tree very well). Nonetheless, only two in ten have ever moved back to their community of origin or plan to return permanently.

13 David Newhouse and Evelyn Peter (eds.), *Not Strangers in These Parts*, Policy Research Initiative, 2003.

- **Today, Aboriginal peoples' sense of place is defined as much by the cities they live in as elsewhere.** The urban Aboriginal population is a permanent population. Their links to their communities of origin are integral to strong family and social ties, and to both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal cultures. Notwithstanding these links, many First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit consider their current city of residence as *home*, including majorities of first generation individuals and those who strongly identify as *Aboriginal*.
- **UAPS findings reveal that urban Aboriginal peoples – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – like living in their cities and believe they can make their city a better place to live.** Indeed, urban Aboriginal peoples feel they can make a positive difference in their cities, and have as strong a sense of their potential impact as non-Aboriginal people in these same cities. Notably, a connection to their past is clearly a feature of those who think they can change the future: those who know their family tree very well are among those *UAPS* participants most likely to think they can have a *big* impact on their city.

The following paragraphs elaborate on aspects of urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of place among First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit.

First Nations

Three-quarters of First Nations *UAPS* participants are first generation residents of their cities. They are most likely among *UAPS* participants to say they first moved to their city of residence to pursue higher education.

As is the case with Inuit and Métis, a minority of first generation First Nations peoples have moved back to their home community at one time, and among this minority few have moved with any frequency. However, overall, among those who have moved back, they are more likely to be First Nations peoples (and Inuit).

Furthermore, although the city is home for a majority of First Nations peoples, a significant minority of *status* First Nations peoples (three in ten) do plan to return to their home communities permanently one day, especially those born and raised on First Nations reserves.

Status and non-status First Nations peoples also differ in how much they like living in their cities.

Although non-status First Nations peoples are among the most urbanized of Aboriginal groups in Canada (i.e., as of the 2006 Census, a large majority of non-status First Nations peoples lived in urban centres), they are much less likely to like living in their cities compared to status First Nations peoples.

Finally, First Nations peoples (status and non-status) are as likely as other *UAPS* participants to think they can make their city a better place to live.

Métis

Métis are among the most urbanized of Aboriginal groups in Canada.¹⁴ Accordingly, fewer, albeit still majorities, are first generation residents of their cities. Métis are also most likely among *UAPS* participants to have lived in their cities for some time (close to half first arrived in their city at least 20 years ago), and to consider their city home, and least likely among urban Aboriginal peoples to have ever moved back to their community of origin.

Métis are as likely as other *UAPS* participants to think they can make their city a better place to live.

14 2006 Statistics Canada.

Inuit

Almost nine in ten Inuit are first generation urban residents, reflecting the fact that Inuit are the least urbanized of Aboriginal groups in Canada. They are most likely among *UAPS* participants to feel a very close connection to their home community and have plans to return there permanently one day. Nonetheless, majorities feel their city of residence is home, although this feeling is less widespread compared to Métis and First Nations peoples.

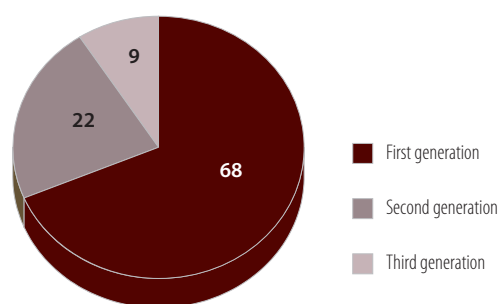
Finally, Inuit are as likely as other *UAPS* participants to think they can make their city a better place to live.

1. Communities of origin

First and second generation residents

The majority of UAPS participants are first generation residents.

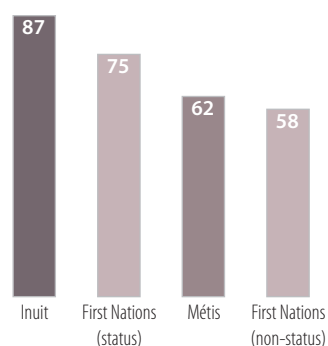
First, second and third generation city residents



Exploring urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of place is complicated by the variety of communities to which people have connections. For example, a person could have parents and grandparents who are each from a different community; could have personally moved several times in their life, due to education, family reasons or marriage; or could have multiple families due to foster/adoption situations. While it was outside of the scope of the survey to document all of these links, one distinction was considered particularly relevant: Are you originally from the city (i.e., born and raised here) or are you from somewhere else?

The data reveal two main groups of people: those who were born and raised somewhere other than their current city of residence ("first generation"); and those who were born and raised in their city of residence but whose family is from another place ("second generation"). A third, smaller group is comprised of urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in their city whose parents and/or grandparents are also from the same city ("third generation").

First generation residents, by identity group



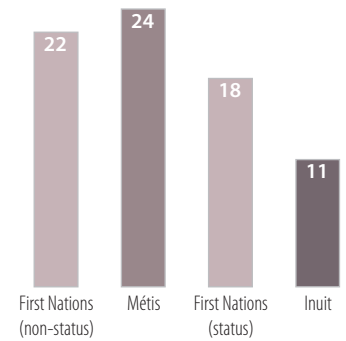
"FIRST GENERATION." The first group is comprised of urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in another *community, town, city or reserve* other than their current city of residence and represents 68 percent of *UAPS* participants. A majority within each Aboriginal identity group are from somewhere other than their city, although this is most common among Inuit (87%), followed by status First Nations peoples (75%),¹⁵ Métis (62%) and non-status First Nations (58%). Montreal (86%) and Halifax (80%), followed by Edmonton (77%) and Calgary (76%), have the largest proportion of "first generation" urban Aboriginal peoples. Older people (77% of those aged 45 and older) are more likely than younger people (60% of those aged 18 to 24 and 64% of those aged 25 to 44) to be "first generation" urban Aboriginal peoples.

15 Specifically among "first generation" First Nations peoples, 44 percent of those with status and seven percent of those without status come from a reserve, while 54 percent and 93 percent, respectively, come from another community, town or city (not a reserve).

“SECOND GENERATION.” The second group consists of urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in their city of residence whose parents and/or grandparents are from another place. This group represents 22 percent of the urban Aboriginal population. Being “second generation” is most common among non-status First Nations (22%) and Métis (24%), followed by status First Nations (18%), and is least common among Inuit (11%). Regina (29%) and Winnipeg (26%) (i.e., cities with larger Métis populations) and Thunder Bay (25%) have the largest proportion of “second generation” urban Aboriginal peoples. Younger people (27% of those aged 18 to 24, and 24% of those aged 25 to 44) are more likely than older people (16% of those aged 45 and older) to be “second generation” urban Aboriginal peoples.

“THIRD GENERATION.” A third group of urban Aboriginal peoples born and raised in their city whose parents/grandparents are also from the same city represents nine percent of the urban Aboriginal population. This group is a small minority within each Aboriginal identity group, but is more common among non-status First Nations (15%) and Métis (12%) than among status First Nations (6%). (Not surprisingly, only one percent of Inuit in the study indicated that they had been born and raised in their city whose parents/grandparents are also from the city.)

Second generation residents, by identity group



Arrival in the city

UAPS participants are typically long-term urban residents, with a significant number having lived in their city for 10 years or more.

As a first step to determine their connection to their city of residence, the *UAPS* survey asked first generation *UAPS* participants when they first came to their city.

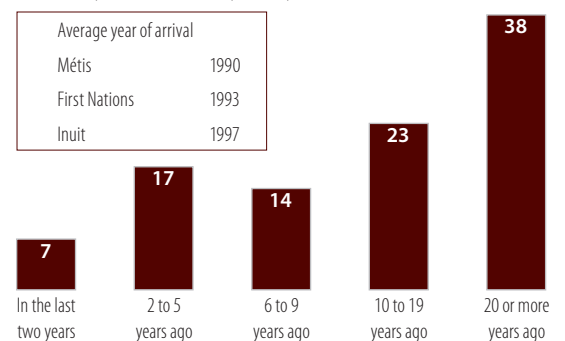
Six in ten first came to their city at least 10 years ago, rising to seven in ten Métis.

When asked when they first came to their city, a majority of *UAPS* participants say they arrived either 20 or more years ago (38%) or 10 to 19 years ago (23%). Fewer have arrived in the last 10 years (14% six to nine years ago and 17% two to five years ago). Less than one in ten (7%) have arrived in the last two years.

Typically, Métis have lived in their city the longest, reflecting the fact that they are the most urbanized of Aboriginal groups in Canada (as of the 2006 Census, 69% of Métis lived in urban centres, followed by 45% of First Nations peoples and 37% of Inuit¹⁶). While similar proportions of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit are recent arrivals (i.e., within the last five years), over the longer term Métis are most likely among *UAPS* participants to have arrived in their city 20 or more years ago (42%, compared to 36% of First Nations peoples and 19% of Inuit). To look at it another way, among first generation *UAPS* participants, the average year of arrival in their city for Métis is 1990, compared to 1993 for a First Nations person and 1997 for an Inuk.

Urban Aboriginal peoples’ length of time in their city does not vary substantially across cities, but where such differences exist it reflects the characteristics of the city’s Aboriginal population. For example, Winnipeg, by far, has the longest term residents (55% say they first came to Winnipeg 20 or more years ago) as a result of its large Métis population.

Time of arrival*
When did you first come to [your city]?



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

16 Urban centres include CMAs (census metropolitan areas) and urban non-CMAs.

Reason for moving

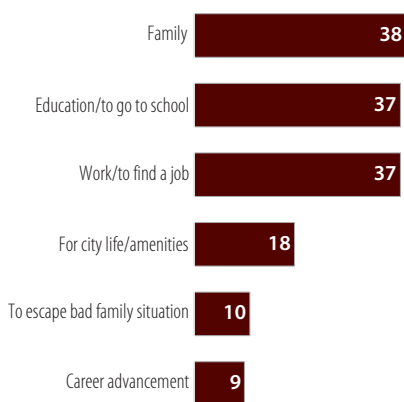
Three main reasons fuel the move to the city: family, education and training, and employment opportunities. But women are more likely than men to say they first moved to their city for family, education and to escape a bad family situation.

Why do Aboriginal peoples move to the city?

While first generation *UAPS* participants cite a wide variety of reasons for why they first moved, family, education and employment are, by far, their most common reasons.

Top reasons for moving to the city

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



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

When asked (unprompted, without response options offered) why they first moved to their city, equal proportions cite the opportunity to be closer to family (38%), and the pursuit of education (37%) and employment opportunities (37%). Smaller proportions say they moved to their city because it offered better amenities (18%), the chance to escape a bad family situation (10%) and the opportunity for career advancement (9%).

Smaller groups of *UAPS* participants (7% or fewer) mention other reasons for moving to the city such as friends, the need to find a better place to raise children and give them opportunities, the need for a change and new beginning, and the chance to access better health care and housing.

Overall, First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit share similar reasons for moving to their city. However, education is the top reason First Nations peoples (43%) moved to their city, whereas the pursuit of work and employment opportunities is the top reason among Métis (41%).

Men and women move to their city of residence for somewhat different reasons. Specifically, women are more likely than men to say they first moved to their city for family, education, to escape a bad family situation and/or find a better place to raise their children, whereas men are more likely to say they first moved in order to find work. Otherwise, there are few further socio-demographic differences worthy of note among the reasons why *UAPS* participants first moved to their city.

2. Connection to community of origin

A majority of urban Aboriginal peoples retain links with their community of origin, whether it be their own, or that of their parents/grandparents.

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.¹⁷

Such connections are clearly evident among *UAPS* participants. A majority of both first and second generation individuals say they maintain a close connection to their community of origin.

Overall, six in ten say they feel a very (30%) or fairly close (31%) connection to their community of origin. Fewer urban Aboriginal peoples say they feel not too close (22%) to these communities, while a small group feel not at all close (14%) to their community of origin.

¹⁷ Urban Aboriginal Task Force, Final Report 2007, p.65.

Who is most likely to describe themselves as having a very close connection to their community of origin? Inuit (43%) are more likely than First Nations peoples (32%) or Métis (28%) to feel a very close connection, as are residents of Halifax (46%) and Vancouver (41%). Notably, those who feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community (39%) and, particularly, those who know their family tree very well (48%), are among those most likely to feel very closely connected to their community of origin.

Greater economic means enables some to stay connected with their home communities more easily than others. While some three in ten in most income groups say they have a very close connection to their community of origin, this rises to four in ten among those with household incomes of \$80,000 or more (representing 10% of UAPS participants overall), corroborating other research that has found that those who visit their communities of origin most often are those with the highest economic ability to do so.¹⁸

Notably, first and second generation urban Aboriginal peoples express a similarly strong connection to their community of origin (64% and 55%, respectively, say they have at least a fairly close connection, and similar proportions of both groups express a very close connection). Nonetheless, each of these groups has some notable characteristics:

FIRST GENERATION. First generation individuals with a very close connection are most likely to be Inuit (almost one-half of Inuit feel they have a very close connection, compared to three in ten First Nations and Métis) and strongly identify as Aboriginal (i.e., they know their family tree very well and are more likely to feel they belong to a mostly Aboriginal community).¹⁹

Across cities, similar proportions of first generation individuals maintain very close links with their home communities. The one exception is Halifax, where a much higher proportion of residents (47%) say they have a very close connection with their home community.

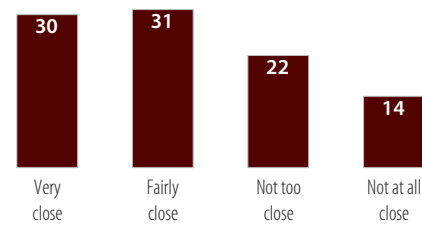
SECOND GENERATION. Similar proportions of second generation First Nations peoples and Métis feel they have a very close connection to their home community,²⁰ but this sense of connection is much stronger among those aged 45 and older (50% versus 19% of those under 45 years of age).

A strong knowledge of one's family history also sustains a strong connection to the home communities of parents and grandparents. Second generation individuals who know their family tree very well are twice as likely as those who are less knowledgeable to feel a very close connection to where their parents/grandparents are from. Note, however, that second generation urban Aboriginal peoples are almost as likely to feel the community they belong to is *non-Aboriginal* as *Aboriginal*.

Finally, second generation Aboriginal Vancouverites are much more likely to feel they have a very close connection with their home community compared to those in other cities.

Connection to community of origin*

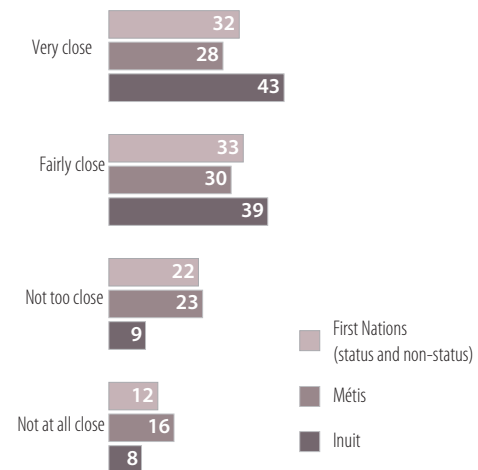
How close a connection do you feel to your home community?/
How close a connection do you feel to the place where your parents and grandparents are from?



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

Connection to community of origin, by identity group*

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

18 Urban Aboriginal Task Force, Final Report, 2007, p.67

19 Important to note is that causality in this instance is difficult to determine: a very close connection with one's home community may promote one's knowledge of their family history and/or sense of belonging to a mostly Aboriginal community, or a stronger sense of these aspects of Aboriginal identity may encourage a closer connection with one's home community.

20 The subsample of second generation Inuit is too small to permit comparison with First Nations peoples and Métis.

3. Mobility

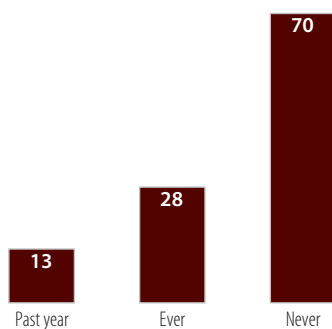
Moving back to home communities

Three in ten first generation urban Aboriginal peoples have moved back to their home community since they first came to their city. Some UAPS participants move back and forth between their city and home community frequently, but the vast majority do not.

Six in ten UAPS participants feel a close connection to their home communities, but do they ever move back to these communities, and how often?

Have you moved back to your home community?*

Since [you first moved to your city], have you ever moved back to your home community?



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

These were important questions in the UAPS survey, as urban Aboriginal peoples are typically described as a highly mobile group of people. Census data show that all Aboriginal groups experience significantly higher mobility compared to the non-Aboriginal population, although mobility patterns and levels do differ across Aboriginal groups, reflecting group differences in regional distribution, urbanization and registered status.²¹

In order to understand their level of mobility, the UAPS survey asked first generation participants how often they have moved back to their home communities since they first moved to their city of residence. (It did *not* ask how often they have moved within communities in their city of residence, which is another important aspect of mobility among Aboriginal peoples that was beyond the scope of UAPS).

Only a minority of first generation UAPS participants have moved back to their home community at least once since they first moved to their current city of residence.

Within this group, First Nations peoples and Inuit, and those who have lived in their city for 10 years or more are most likely to have moved back at one time.

When asked if they have ever moved back to their home community, three in ten (28%) first generation urban Aboriginal peoples say they have moved (representing 19% of UAPS participants overall). Most (70%) say they have never moved back to their home community since they first moved to their city.

First Nations peoples (33%) and Inuit (33%) are more likely than Métis (22%) to have moved back to their community of origin recently. The proportion that have moved back also rises the longer they have lived in their city (from 19% of those who have lived in their city for less than 10 years to 34% of those who have lived in their city for 10 years or more).

Similar proportions of UAPS participants across cities, in all age and income groups, and equal proportions of men and women have moved back to their home communities at one time.

RECENT MOVES. The UAPS survey also explored how many participants have moved back and forth between their city of residence and home community recently (i.e., in the past year).

Among those who have ever moved back, almost half (46%) say they have moved back in the past year. In other words, just over one in ten (13%) first generation individuals (representing 9% of UAPS participants overall) have moved and back and forth in the past year.

21 Katherine A.H. Graham and Evelyn Peters, *Aboriginal Communities and Urban Sustainability*, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Discussion Paper F27, December 2002.

Among those who have moved in the past year, few have moved back and forth between their city of residence and home community frequently (i.e., two or more times) in the past year. More than half (56%) of those who have moved in the past year did so only once. The remainder moved back and forth either *twice* (15%) or *three or more times* (28%).²² Those who have moved frequently (i.e., two or more times in the past year) represent only a handful of *UAPS* participants overall (less than 5%). To look at it another way, individuals who moved back and forth between their city of residence and their home community in the past year did so an average total of 2.7 times.

Who moves back and forth between their cities and home communities most frequently? As could be expected, individuals currently attending university move with greater frequency than others, as do individuals with higher household incomes (i.e., \$60,000-\$80,000). However, caution is required with these results as these groups are very small.

Finally, although other research has found that women tend to go back to their community of origin somewhat more frequently than men, among *UAPS* participants men, on average, moved back and forth in the past year more frequently than women (averaging 3.7 moves, compared to 2.0 moves among women).

Plans to return permanently

Most urban Aboriginal peoples do not intend to return to their communities of origin to live permanently in the future, but some (first and second generation) either plan to return or remain undecided.

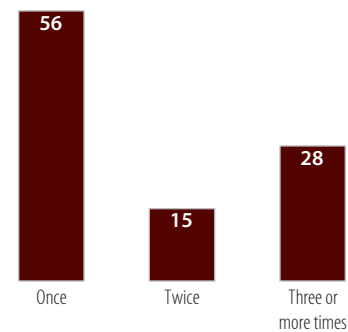
Only a small group of *UAPS* participants move back and forth between their city of residence and their community of origin with any frequency. However, given the widespread connection to these communities that they retain, do any plan to return to these communities permanently one day?

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),²³ two in ten (20%) say they plan to return. Half of *UAPS* participants say they do not plan to return (52%), while the remainder say they are undecided or that it is too soon to say (23%); three percent are unable or unwilling to offer information about their future plans.

While only two in ten plan to return to their communities of origin, this rises to three in ten among Inuit (32%) and status First Nations peoples (28%), compared to Métis (12%) and non-status First Nations peoples (15%). Plans to return are also more common among those who strongly identify as *Aboriginal* (i.e., they are more likely to feel they belong to an *Aboriginal* community and know their family tree very well). As well, those who plan to go back to live in their community of origin are among those who move back and forth between their city of residence and this ancestral place (62% of those who plan to go back have moved back and forth at least once in the past year, compared to 43% of those who do not plan to go back).

Frequency of moves back to home community in the past year*

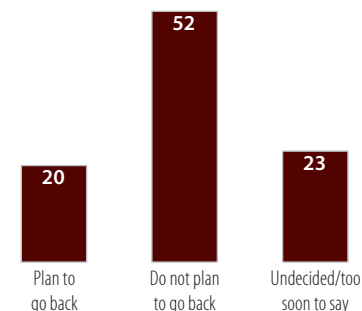
How many times have you moved back and forth between your city of residence and your community in the past year?



* Subsample: Those who have moved back to their home community in the past year.

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

22 A note to the reader to be cautious with this finding – one year provides characteristics for a given year, but the limitation is that it could be an unusual or volatile time period and may not be typical of the longer trends.

23 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 (9% of *UAPS* participants overall).

In general, similar proportions of *UAPS* participants in all age, income and education groups plan to return to their home communities. This is also the case for first *and* second generation *UAPS* participants (22% of first generation and 16% of second generation plan to return permanently to their communities of origin).

What characterizes those *UAPS* participants who are undecided about returning to their community of origin? Those in this small group vary little socio-demographically from others, but they are more typically first generation individuals and those dissatisfied with their jobs.

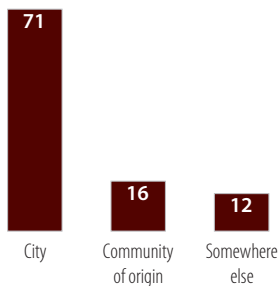
4. Defining home

Urban Aboriginal peoples may stay connected to their communities of origin, but for most the city is home.

Notwithstanding the sense of connection majorities of urban Aboriginal peoples have to their communities of origin, the large majority of urban Aboriginal peoples feel their current city of residence is home.

Where is home?*

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



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

When asked “Where is home for you?” seven in ten (71%) *UAPS* participants say it is their current city of residence.²⁴ Significantly fewer (16%) say it is their community of origin, while the remainder (12%) indicate that another community other than their city of residence or home community is home to them.

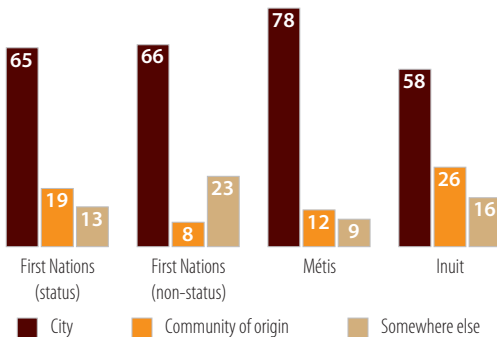
Majorities of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit consider their city of residence home. But Métis are most likely to consider their city home (78%, compared to 64% of First Nations peoples and 58% of Inuit), reflecting the fact that Métis are more likely than others to be second generation. In addition, although similar proportions of non-status and status First Nations peoples consider their city of residence home, status First Nations peoples are more likely to regard their community of origin as home, whereas non-status First Nations peoples are more likely to feel somewhere other than their city of residence or community of origin is home.

Notably, those who strongly identify as *Aboriginal* (i.e., those who feel they belong to an *Aboriginal* community and those who know their family tree very well) are as likely as others to consider their city of residence to be home.

Who are those *UAPS* participants who consider their communities of origin to be home? They are typically first generation residents who have lived in their city for less time (i.e., less than five years). They are among those who move back and forth most frequently between their city and home community. As could be expected, they are also among those most likely to plan to return to their home communities to live permanently one day. Finally, a majority (58%) of those in this group come from a First Nations reserve and likely retain the option of living there.

Where is home? by identity group*

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

24 The question “Where is home for you?” was not asked of third generation *UAPS* participants (9% of *UAPS* participants overall).

5. Satisfaction with city life

How much urban Aboriginal peoples like living in their city

A positive story emerges of an urban population – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – that likes living in their cities, generally feels they have a choice in where they live and believes they can make their city a better place to live.

As a final dimension of understanding urban Aboriginal peoples' sense of place, the UAPS survey also explored how much they like living in the city, their reasons for choosing their neighbourhood (and the extent to which they feel they have a choice) and how much they believe they can make their city a better place to live.

The large majority of urban Aboriginal peoples like living in their city. When asked, two-thirds say they like living in their city a lot (65%), while a much smaller group indicates they like it a little (24%). Only one in ten dislike living in their cities a little (6%) or a lot (4%).

Status First Nations peoples, Inuit and Métis differ little in how much they like living in their cities. The one exception is non-status First Nations peoples (a small proportion of UAPS participants overall) who are less likely than others to say they like living in their cities a lot (52%, compared to 65% of urban Aboriginal peoples overall) and are twice as likely as others to *dislike* living in their cities (21%, compared to 10% of urban Aboriginal peoples overall).

A strong sense of their Aboriginal heritage also characterizes those who like living in their cities. The proportion of urban Aboriginal peoples who like living in their cities *a lot* steadily rises with knowledge of their family tree (from 56% of those who do not know their family tree at all to 72% of those who know their family tree very well). This finding may offer some explanation for the smaller proportion of non-status First Nations peoples who like living in their city, as they are also among the least likely to have some knowledge of their family history.

Finally, the degree to which urban Aboriginal peoples like living in their cities varies little by socio-demographic characteristics, with two important exceptions. Residents of Halifax (81%) and Vancouver (80%) are considerably more likely than those in other cities to like living in their city a lot, which may reflect characteristics of these particular coastal cities.

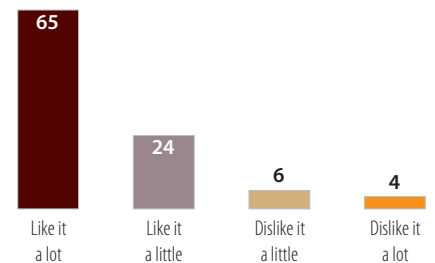
What do UAPS participants like most and least about living in their cities? General quality of life and city life, along with proximity to family and friends, are among those features most prominently mentioned, while certain city conditions (i.e., traffic, cost of living, etc.) and crime are what they like least about their cities. Specifically:

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

- **Quality of life.** The most common reason urban Aboriginal peoples like living in their city is the quality of life it offers. Four in ten (39%) urban Aboriginal peoples indicate this is what they most like about living in their cities, particularly the variety and convenience of amenities available. As well, urban Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver (25%) strongly associate their quality of life in their city with the green spaces and landscapes at their doorstep.

Like living in the city

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



- **City life.** Another major reason urban Aboriginal peoples enjoy their city is the city life available to them. One-quarter (26%) most enjoy the recreation and entertainment offered in their city, the cultural and artistic events, and the fast pace of city life. Aboriginal residents of Montreal (40%) and Toronto (39%) are most likely to enjoy these aspects of their city, as are university graduates (36%).
- **Family and friends.** The third most common feature urban Aboriginal peoples most like about living in their cities is their proximity to family and friends (23%). Individuals in Regina (39%) are most likely to cite this as what they most like about living in their city.
- **Career/employment.** The fourth most common feature urban Aboriginal peoples like most about living in their cities is the career and employment opportunities (16%) available to them. This is a more appealing aspect of the city to individuals aged 25 and older.
- **Social acceptance.** A fifth feature enjoyed by smaller proportions of urban Aboriginal peoples is the social acceptance (11%) they experience in their city. Importantly, this perspective is almost exclusive to those who live in Montreal (34%), Toronto (33%) and, albeit to a lesser degree, Vancouver (19%); only a handful of Aboriginal peoples in other cities (6% or fewer) say they like living in their city for this reason.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (9% or fewer) mention other features they like most about living in their city. These include a sense of community in the city, and the perception of greater freedom and opportunity, a feeling of comfort and familiarity that comes with growing up in their city, and proximity to other Aboriginal peoples.

LIKE LEAST. What do urban Aboriginal peoples like least about living in their city? Their responses reveal two main reasons:

- **Urban pressures.** A universal complaint of all city-dwellers, urban Aboriginal peoples similarly dislike certain urban pressures (34%), such as bad traffic, the higher cost of living, pollution, and a too busy and stressful pace of life. Urban Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (55%) and Calgary (48%) are most likely to dislike this feature of city living.
- **Crime.** The second most commonly disliked aspect of urban life, crime (28%) (i.e., violence, vandalism and gang activity), is especially top-of-mind among those living in Winnipeg (45%), Saskatoon (41%), Regina (36%), Halifax (33%), Edmonton (30%) and Calgary (29%). In particular, concerns about violence and murders are prominent in Winnipeg, while gang activity is largely a concern of those living in Saskatoon and Regina.

Smaller proportions of *UAPS* participants (9% or fewer) mention other features they like least about living in their city. These include the weather and climate, experiences with racism and discrimination, the presence of drugs and alcohol, a lack of security and safety in the city, and distance from family and friends. However, Aboriginal peoples in Regina (20%) are more than twice as likely as those in most other cities to say racism and discrimination is what they like least about living in their city. Finally, even smaller groups (less than 5%) dislike poverty and homelessness, poor housing conditions, high rental fees, and the lack of community and support for Aboriginal peoples.

Reasons for choice of neighbourhood

Affordable housing is the most common reason for urban Aboriginal peoples' choice of neighbourhoods, but their reasons do vary across cities and reflect unique urban realities.

UAPS participants choose their neighbourhoods for a range of reasons, most typically because they offer affordable housing, as well as a safe environment, the chance to either live with or be close to family and friends, and proximity to work and school.

When asked why they live in their neighbourhood (unprompted, without response options offered), three in ten (29%) urban Aboriginal peoples say it is because they can afford the housing. Two in ten also say their neighbourhood offers either a safe environment for themselves and their families (21%), the chance to live with family and friends (21%), or the ability to be close to work and/or school (21%). Smaller proportions also live in their neighbourhoods because they are close to city amenities and shopping (17%), close to family and friends (15%), good public transportation (13%), and cultural and spiritual services (10%) in their city.

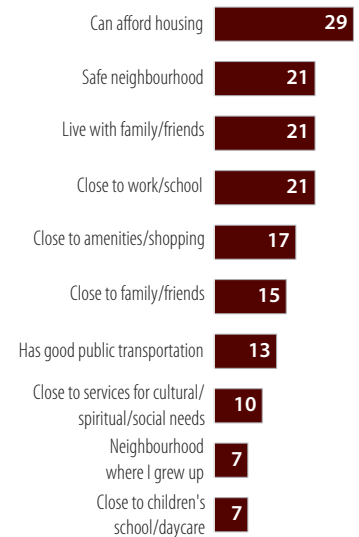
Smaller groups (7% or fewer) choose to live in their neighbourhoods because they are the places where UAPS participants grew up, are close to their children's schools, daycare, or other First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit, or because they feel their neighbourhoods are peaceful and quiet.

First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit choose to live in their neighbourhoods for similar reasons. As well, Aboriginal peoples across cities share the same top reasons. However, some reasons are more prominent among residents of particular cities and clearly reflect unique urban realities. Specifically:

- Aboriginal residents in Calgary are more likely than those in other cities to live in their neighbourhood because they can afford the housing.
- Choosing their neighbourhood because it is seen as a safe environment is most common among UAPS participants in Regina.
- Aboriginal peoples in Halifax and Calgary are more likely than others to live in their neighbourhood because it is close to work and/or school.
- In Winnipeg and Vancouver, individuals are more likely than those in other cities to live in their neighbourhood because it is close to family and friends.
- Finally, residents of Vancouver and Toronto are much more likely than others to say they live in their neighbourhood because it is close to Aboriginal organizations that provide cultural and spiritual services.

Why do you live in your neighbourhood?

Why do you live in the neighbourhood you do?



EXTENT OF CHOICE. To what extent do urban Aboriginal peoples feel they have a choice about the neighbourhood they live in? When asked directly, seven in ten feel they have either a lot (43%) or some (27%) choice about where they live in their city, but a significant minority feel they have either a little (17%) or no choice at all (11%).

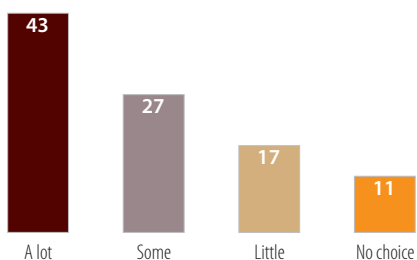
Who is most likely to feel they have *a lot* of choice about where they live in the city? *UAPS* participants in this group are more likely to be Métis (45%) and First Nations peoples (41%) than Inuit (31%), and live in cities such as Toronto, Montreal and Halifax, where one in two residents (each) feel they have *a lot* of choice about the neighbourhood they live in. They are typically older (28% of those aged 18 to 24 feel they have a lot of choice, rising to 44% of those aged 25 to 44 and 49% of those aged 45 and older) and, as could be expected, more educated and more affluent (the proportion of *UAPS* participants who feel they have a lot of choice steadily rises with level of education and household income).

In addition, those who feel they have a lot of choice about the neighbourhood they live in also possess greater knowledge of their Aboriginal heritage. Regardless of education and affluence, *UAPS* participants who know their family history well are considerably more likely than others to feel they have a lot of choice in where they live in the city (56% of those who know their family tree very well feel they have a lot of choice, compared to 31% of those who do not know their family tree at all). This is independent of the kind of community *UAPS* participants feel they belong to, as those who feel they belong to a more *non-Aboriginal* than *Aboriginal* community are more likely than others to feel they have a lot of choice about where they live.

Finally, it is in Saskatoon (46%) and Regina (40%) where residents are most likely to say they have *little* to *no* choice in what neighbourhood they live in.

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...?



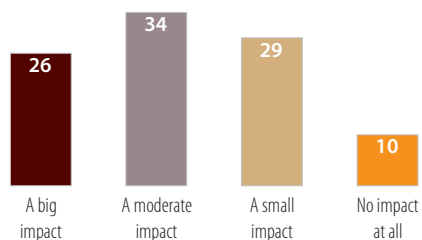
Impact on city

More than half of urban Aboriginal peoples think they can make their city a better place to live, and have as strong a sense of empowerment as non-Aboriginal people.

Beyond the fact that many urban Aboriginal peoples like living in their cities is a widely-held belief that they can make their city a better place to live, a sentiment that is comparable to the perspective of non-Aboriginal people in their city.

Making the city 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?



Six in ten *UAPS* participants think people like themselves can have either a big (26%) or moderate (34%) impact on making their city a better place to live, and majorities of First Nations peoples, Métis and Inuit share this view. By comparison, four in ten believe they can have only a small impact (29%) or no impact at all (10%) on their city (2% are unable to offer an opinion).

A strong sense of empowerment is particularly evident among certain groups of urban Aboriginal peoples. Across cities, individuals in Toronto (37%) and Vancouver (35%) are most likely to believe they can have a big impact in making their city a better place to live. This belief also strengthens with age (only 19% of those aged 18 to 24 believe they can have a big impact, compared to 30% of those aged 45 years and older) and education (just 53% of those with no formal education believe they can have at least a moderate impact, compared to 70% of those with a university degree).

UAPS participants' widespread belief in their ability to be positive agents of change in their city mirrors the belief *non-Aboriginal* people have in their own ability to affect change, including equal proportions who think they can have a *big* impact on their city (26% and 27%, respectively).

In addition, a connection to their past is clearly a distinctive feature of those urban Aboriginal peoples most likely to think they can change the future. Those who know their family tree very well are much more likely than others to feel they can have a *big* impact: the proportion of *UAPS* participants who believe they can have a big impact rises from 19 percent of those who know their family tree not at all to 35 percent of those who know it very well.

Not surprisingly, urban Aboriginal peoples who believe they can have no impact at all in making their city a better place tend to be among urban society's most disadvantaged. Those in this small group (10% of *UAPS* participants overall) are more likely to have no formal education, be unemployed or receiving social assistance, and feel their health is only fair to poor. It is worthwhile to note, however, that similar proportions in all income groups (with the exception of those whose household incomes are \$80,000 or more) believe they can have no impact at all on their city.

Making the city 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?

