



confederation  
of tomorrow

# 2019 Survey of Canadians

TOWARD RECONCILIATION: INDIGENOUS  
AND NON-INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

**Final Report**

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**Environics  
Institute**  
For Survey Research

  
CENTRE D'ANALYSE POLITIQUE  
CONSTITUTION FÉDÉRALISME

**Mowat Centre**  
ONTARIO'S VOICE ON PUBLIC POLICY

**CANADAWEST  
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**IRPP** INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH  
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# Introduction

## Background

For much of the late 20th century, Canadian politics was dominated by high-stakes attempts to remake or dismantle the country's federation. First ministers met regularly for mega-constitutional deal-making, while successive Quebec and federal governments wrestled with iterations of pre- and post-referendum strategies. The 1990s alone witnessed a national referendum on the Constitution, a second and closely-contested referendum on Quebec independence, and two new regionally-based political parties – Reform and the *Bloc Québécois* – taking turns as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

In recent years, it has appeared that such storms have now finally passed. A new generation of Canadians has come of age with no direct memories of national unity crises. Regional party fragments have once again coalesced around the traditional left-centre-right national options. And as other countries wrestle with the rise of inward-looking nativism, Canada appears to offer hope as a successful example of multiculturalism and multinational federalism capable of reconciling unity and diversity.

In fact, Canada's sesquicentennial in 2017 marked one of the only times the country has been able to celebrate a significant birthday in the absence of a serious national unity crisis. Canada's 50th birthday fell in the midst of the First World War and a crisis over conscription that split the country between British and French. The country's 75th birthday found it fighting another world war, with a second conscription crisis just over the horizon. The centennial, while full of optimism, coincided with the Quiet Revolution, and preceded the founding of the *Parti Québécois* by only one year. The country's 125th birthday, in 1992, was almost forgotten in the run-up to the referendum on the Charlottetown Accord – with the dramatic electoral gains of the *Bloc Québécois* and the Reform Party, and the re-election of a *Parti Québécois* government soon to follow.

Even though such events have receded into the past, the current political agenda remains full of unresolved issues that can easily divide Canadians along the fault lines of region and identity. Controversies over transnational pipelines are pitting erstwhile regional allies against one another, while the country's plan to meet international climate change obligations is at risk from several provinces challenging the wisdom of carbon pricing. As the resource-led boom in and around Alberta turned to bust, Albertans' support, not only for environmental policies, but also for broader wealth-sharing arrangements within the federation has come into question.

Meanwhile, the Quebec government's position paper on its "way of being Canadian" was launched in 2017 without sparking a serious reply from its partners in Confederation. This was followed by the province's only avowedly federalist political party not only losing power but receiving its lowest ever share of the popular vote. Atlantic Canada, for its part, continues to search for ways to offset its declining demographic and economic clout. In the North, the three territories are implementing different forms of devolution of power, both from Ottawa to territorial governments, and from territorial government to forms of Indigenous self-government. And the lack of concrete actions to match verbal commitments toward reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples threatens to undermine the country's harmony at home, as well as its reputation abroad.

In short, as Canada moves past its 150th birthday, new dimensions and challenges to the country's structure and governance are once again demanding greater attention. These issues are being considered by governments, think-tanks and universities, but it is also important to hear from the rest of Canadians, who have both a say and a stake in the outcomes. And it is important to hear what a new generation of citizens has to say, both about the unresolved challenges they have inherited and the emerging challenges they are called upon to confront.

## Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey

This is the goal of the 2019 Confederation of Tomorrow survey. The name “Confederation of Tomorrow” is taken from the landmark Confederation of Tomorrow conference, convened and hosted in November 1967 by Premier John Robarts of Ontario. The event allowed political leaders from all 10 provinces to share their perspectives on the country’s promising future, and to lay the foundations for a stronger federation amid the energy and excitement of the country’s centennial. It was a conference whose purpose was not to pretend that there were simple solutions to complex problems, but to ensure that there was an opportunity for each region’s distinctive perspectives on the country to be expressed and heard.

It is in that spirit that the 2019 Confederation of Tomorrow survey was conducted with representative samples of Canadians from every province and territory, to hear their perspective on the country’s federal system as it is today and what it might be. The research draws from previous

national surveys conducted over the past several decades to understand not only what Canadians think today, but how public perspectives have evolved over time.

The research was conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with five leading public policy organizations across the country: the Canada West Foundation, the Mowat Centre, the Centre D’Analyse Politique – Constitution et Fédéralisme, the Institute for Research on Public Policy, and the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government at Saint Francis Xavier University.

The research consisted of a national public opinion survey conducted online (in the provinces) and by telephone (in the Territories) with a representative sample of 5,732 Canadians (ages 18 and over), including 645 persons who identified themselves as Indigenous, between December 14, 2018 and January 16, 2019. Further details on the survey sample are provided in Appendix II.

## About this report

This report is the third of three that presents the results of this research. It focuses on how Indigenous Peoples see the country and their place in it, how non-Indigenous people view the situation of the Indigenous Peoples in Canada, and how both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people think that the process of achieving reconciliation should be advanced. The first two reports, *Canada: Pulling Together or Drifting Apart?* and *Making Federalism Work*, were published earlier this year. Additional details are provided under separate cover that provides the results for each survey question by region and jurisdiction, demographic characteristics and other population segments. All results are presented as percentages unless otherwise noted.

## Acknowledgements

This research was made possible with the support from a number of organizations and individuals. The study partners would like to acknowledge the contributions of Ginger Gosnell-Myers for her comments on an earlier draft; Darcy Zwetko and Tom Hatry at Elemental Data Collection Inc.; and Steve Otto, Elaine Stam and Cathy McKim for their excellent work in the final report production. Finally, much appreciation is expressed to the 5,732 Canadians, including the 645 Indigenous persons, who took the time to share their perspectives on the Confederation of Tomorrow.

## Note on terminology

The term “Indigenous” is used throughout the report to refer to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. Those who do not identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) are referred to in this report as “non-Indigenous people” or “non-Indigenous Canadians.” When the report refers to all survey respondents, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, they are often described simply as “Canadians.”

The overall survey sample is large enough to allow for results to be presented separately for each province and territory, when relevant. The non-Indigenous sample is large enough to allow for results to be presented separately for each province, but not each individual territory. As the Indigenous sample is smaller, results for Indigenous Peoples can only be broken down geographically by three major regions: Atlantic and Central Canada (comprising the four Atlantic provinces, Quebec and Ontario), Western Canada (comprising the four Western provinces) and the North (comprising the three territories). In this report, the term “North” thus refers to the three territories, and “Northerners” or “Northern Canadians” refer to residents of the three territories.

# Executive Summary

In its most formal sense, the Canadian federation is comprised of 13 provincial and territorial jurisdictions. But Canada as a political entity took shape and developed within the wider context of a series of arrangements with the Indigenous Peoples who lived on its lands for thousands of years before the first European explorers, traders and settlers arrived; arrangements that were elaborated on in the form of treaties, royal decrees and, more recently, constitutional provisions recognizing the distinctive rights of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. Canada's federal structure and division of powers, therefore, is enveloped within the broader constitutional reality that includes Indigenous rights.

More generally, the Canadian political community that emerged after Confederation was always more than a partnership among sub-national units; it was also an attempt to accommodate, within a single state, the needs and interests of different peoples. Though this aspect of Confederation may originally have been conceived of as a partnership between British and French, it has over time been contested and reconceived to become more inclusive, first of a wider group of European and then other non-Indigenous ethnicities, and subsequently of the Indigenous Peoples living within Canada.

For these reasons, no attempt to assess, modernize or reimagine the Canadian federation today is complete without including the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples, and addressing issues relating to the prosperity and well-being of Indigenous Peoples and communities. This is the focus of this report, the third in the series presenting the results of the Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey of Canadians.

The first report, *Canada: Pulling Together or Drifting Apart?*, examined Canadian identities, as well as perspectives on how well the federation is responding to the interests of each of the 13 provinces and territories. The second report, *Making Federalism Work*, focused on the ways in which the country's federal, provincial and territorial governments should work together as federal partners to address key issues.

This third report turns to examine how Indigenous Peoples see the country and their place in it, how non-Indigenous people view the situation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, and how both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people think that the process of achieving reconciliation should be advanced. The report finds that most Canadians believe that individuals like themselves have a role to play in moving reconciliation forward. There is also a recognition within Canadian society of the gaps in the standards of living between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and of the need to address them. Most Canadians support a number of specific policies that could improve Indigenous well-being and advance reconciliation, such as increases in government funding for Indigenous schools, as well as the transfer of the powers of self-government to Indigenous communities. And majorities of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are confident in the ability of Canadians to resolve their internal differences. At the same time, only a minority of non-Indigenous Canadians view Indigenous Peoples as possessing unique rights that differentiate them from other ethnic or cultural groups in Canada, or are certain that resource development on Indigenous lands should not proceed in the absence of consent from the Indigenous Peoples concerned. It thus appears that the support within Canadian society of specific steps to advance reconciliation is not always underpinned by an awareness of the different constitutional and legal realities that affect the status of the country's First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

Here is a summary of the specific findings:

## Identity

The first report in this series, *Canada: Pulling Together or Drifting Apart?*, confirmed that most Canadians have nested or overlapping identities, combining identification with both Canada and their province or territory, as well as other identities related to their language, ethnicity, gender or religion. This report finds that the same is true for Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Three in four Indigenous people express some combination of Indigenous and Canadian

identities (whether Indigenous first, but also Canadian; equally Indigenous and Canadian; or Canadian first, but also Indigenous). Relatively few identify exclusively as one or the other. One in three identify themselves as first or only Indigenous, with this proportion being higher among First Nations peoples, and lower among Métis and Inuit.

At the same time, eight in ten Indigenous Peoples say their Indigenous nation or community is important to their personal sense of identity. And the proportions saying language, region or province, and gender are important to their personal sense of identity are just as high. Those who identify as Inuit are particularly likely to say that their region, gender, language and religion are very important to their own sense of identity.

## **Indigenous Peoples in Canada: Non-Indigenous Perspectives**

Despite the entrenchment of Indigenous rights in Canada's constitution, the understanding of Indigenous Peoples as holders of unique rights is not the predominant perspective among non-Indigenous Canadians. While two in five Canadians see Indigenous Peoples as having unique rights as the first inhabitants of the continent, a slightly higher proportion (almost half) sees them as being just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada's multicultural society. In the North, about seven in ten think about Indigenous Peoples as having unique rights as the first inhabitants of the continent – a much greater proportion than in any other part of Canada. Among the provinces, support for the notion of Indigenous people possessing unique rights is higher than average in Quebec and New Brunswick, and lower in the Prairies, Newfoundland and Labrador, and PEI. On this question, views are similar between men and women, across age groups, and among those with different levels of education.

In contrast, there is much broader public recognition among Canadians regarding the gap in the standard of living between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Three-quarters of non-Indigenous Canadians say that, from what they know or have heard, there is either a large or a moderate gap in the standard of living between Indigenous Peoples and other Canadians.

While non-Indigenous Canadians may recognize the disadvantages that many Indigenous Peoples face, many

are reluctant to single themselves or their governments out for blame. A plurality of non-Indigenous Canadians say that the attitudes of the Canadian public, the policies of Canadian governments, and Indigenous Peoples themselves are all equal obstacles to achieving economic and social equality for Indigenous Peoples. But three in ten say that the biggest obstacle is Indigenous Peoples themselves. Combining these two responses reveals that seven in ten non-Indigenous Canadians believe that Indigenous Peoples are at least partially responsible for obstacles to equality. The proportion that says the biggest obstacles is Indigenous Peoples themselves is twice as big as the proportion that singles out the policies of Canadian governments, and more than three times the proportion that points to the attitudes of the Canadian public.

## **Toward Reconciliation**

Large majorities of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians support a number of specific policies to address reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, such as providing government funding to ensure all Indigenous communities have clean drinking water and adequate housing, or increasing funding for education in Indigenous schools so that it matches funding for other schools. The main difference between the views of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is that the former are more likely to express strong support for these policies. None of the policies are opposed by more than one in four non-Indigenous Canadians. Support for each of these four policies is highest in the three Northern territories and lowest in the Prairie provinces.

A majority of Canadians also believe that individual Canadians like themselves have a role to play in efforts to bring about reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This view is shared by more or less equal proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, but is held more strongly among the former. Only about one in seven Canadians do not see a role for individual Canadians in efforts to bring about reconciliation.

## **Indigenous Self-Determination**

A majority of Canadians support the transfer of the powers of self-government to Indigenous communities, although support is both higher and stronger among Indigenous

Peoples compared to non-Indigenous people. Overall support is similar among First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, but the proportion that strongly supports self-government is higher among Inuit and First Nations peoples than among those who identify as Métis.

Canadians are open to the sharing of the wealth generated from the development of natural resources with the Indigenous Peoples on whose traditional lands these resources may be found, but are less certain about the need for Indigenous Peoples to consent to the development of these resources in the first place. Specifically, a plurality of Canadians agree that Indigenous Peoples should be entitled to a fair share of the royalties earned on the development of natural resources that are located on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples. But while a majority of Indigenous Peoples say that governments should hold off on proceeding with resource development on traditional Indigenous territories until consent is given by Indigenous Peoples, non-Indigenous people are more equivocal: about a third of non-Indigenous people concur, but a slightly higher proportion says it would depend on the circumstances. Fewer than one in four, however, say that development should proceed even in the absence of Indigenous consent.

## **Attitudes toward Government and the Federation**

Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have similar views on many general questions about the role of government and the Canadian federation. Indigenous Peoples are only slightly less satisfied than non-Indigenous people with the way things are going in our country today. Satisfaction is lower among those who identify as Métis, compared to those who identify as First Nations (especially those living on-reserve) or Inuit. When asked about the most important problem facing Canadians today, Indigenous Peoples are most likely to cite income inequality, poverty and homelessness, followed by unemployment, and government and political representation.

With one important exception, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada have similar opinions on how well the Canadian federation is working. The exception relates to the question of the relevance of the federal government. Indigenous Peoples are significantly more likely than non-

Indigenous people to agree that the federal government has become virtually irrelevant to them; the proportion ascribing to this view is especially high among Inuit.

Finally, majorities of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada are confident in the ability of Canadians to resolve their internal differences. Inuit and First Nations peoples are more likely to express a great deal of confidence than are Métis peoples; First Nations peoples on-reserve are especially likely to express a great deal of confidence.

## **Varying Perspectives across the Country**

The survey results highlight a number of important differences among groups within both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Among Indigenous Peoples, there are sometimes important differences in the strength of feeling among those who identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit. Among non-Indigenous people, there are typically differences among provinces and regions, with residents of the Territories consistently being more supportive of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous rights, and those in the Prairies often being the least so.

In addition, among non-Indigenous people, occasional differences in opinion emerge between men and women, and across age groups. On two questions, these differences intersect, so that the biggest contrast is between the views of older men and younger women. Older men are more than twice as likely as younger women to blame Indigenous Peoples themselves for the economic and social inequality they face. Older men are also the least supportive of postponing natural resource development in the absence of Indigenous consent, while younger women are the most supportive.

These variations notwithstanding, in some cases, it is the absence of significant differences among age groups within the non-Indigenous population that stands out. For instance, on the questions of whether Indigenous Peoples are best understood as having unique rights, and of whether there is a role for individual Canadians in advancing reconciliation, the views of younger and older non-Indigenous Canadians do not differ significantly from one another. A generational gap in views relating to Indigenous Peoples is therefore evident on some but not all of the issues covered in the survey.

# Chapter 1: Identity

## A. Overlapping Identities

Most Indigenous Peoples combine Indigenous and Canadian identities: they identify themselves as both a Canadian and an Indigenous person, rather than as exclusively one or the other.

Studies of identity in the Canadian context have traditionally explored the ways in which Canadians express nested or overlapping identities, combining identification with both Canada and their province or territory, as well also other identities related to their language, ethnicity or religion. This study also explored the issue of the overlapping identities of Indigenous Peoples.

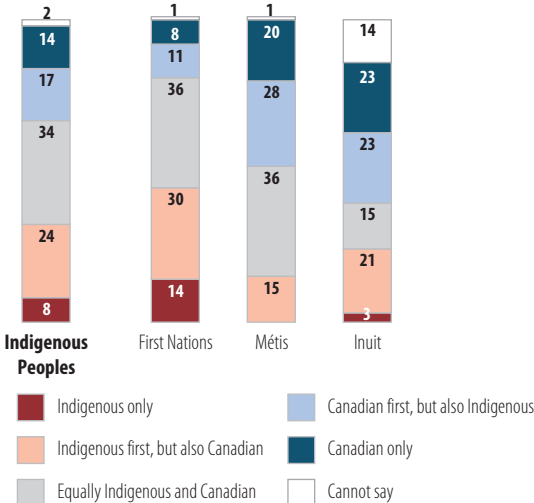
The survey results show that most Indigenous Peoples identify themselves as both a Canadian and an Indigenous person, while relatively few identify themselves exclusively as either one or the other. Three in four (75%) express some combination of Indigenous and Canadian identities, compared to eight percent who identify themselves as exclusively Indigenous (but not Canadian), and 14 percent who identify themselves as exclusively Canadian (but not Indigenous).

First Nations people are more likely to identify themselves as Indigenous only or first and less likely to identify as Canadian only or first. Forty-three percent of those who identify as First Nations say they are Indigenous first or only, compared to 24 percent of Inuit and 15 percent of Métis. Conversely, 48 percent of Métis and 46 percent of Inuit say they are Canadian first or only, compared to only 19 percent of First Nations people. Inuit people are more likely not to choose any option (14% cannot say).

Among Indigenous Peoples, the proportion that identifies themselves as Indigenous first or only does not vary significantly by age or gender.

### Overlapping identities

2019 Indigenous Peoples



Q3b  
People have different ways of defining themselves. Do you consider yourself to be ... ?

### Overlapping identities

2019 Indigenous Peoples

	Indigenous	First Nations	Métis	Inuit
Any combination of Indigenous and Canadian	75	77	79	59
At least partly Indigenous (not Canadian only)	83	91	79	62
At least partly Canadian (not Indigenous only)	89	85	99	82
Indigenous only or first	32	43	15	24
Canadian only or first	31	19	48	46

Q3b.  
People have different ways of defining themselves. Do you consider yourself to be ... ?

## B. Aspects of Personal Identity

A large majority of Indigenous Peoples say their Indigenous nation or community is important to their personal sense of identity. Other factors are also important to most Indigenous Peoples' personal sense of identity, including language, region or province, gender and religion.

Eight in ten Indigenous Peoples say their Indigenous nation or community is important to their personal sense of identity. This includes 51 percent who say it is very important, and 30 percent who say it is somewhat important. Only 15 percent say their Indigenous nation or community is either not very (9%) or not at all important (6%) to their personal sense of identity.

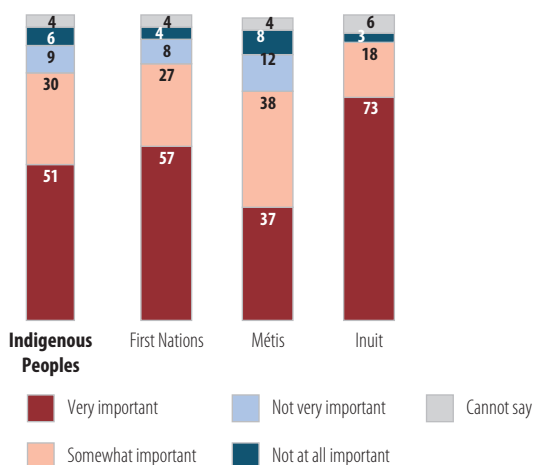
Inuit people are especially likely to say that their Indigenous nation or community is important to their own sense of identity: 90 percent of Inuit hold this view; this includes 73 percent who say it is very important, compared to 57 percent for First Nations peoples and 37 percent for Métis.

One's Indigenous nation or community is equally important to the personal sense of identity of Indigenous men and women. There are no significant differences in views among Indigenous Peoples across different age groups.

Other factors are also important to Indigenous Peoples' personal sense of identity, including language (80%), region or province (83%), gender (83%) and religion (57%). Indigenous Peoples age 55 and older are more likely than their younger counterparts to say that language, region or province, and gender are very important to their own sense of identity (there is no corresponding difference between the older and younger age groups in the case of the importance of religion).

Indigenous Peoples are more likely than non-Indigenous people to say these factors are very important to their personal sense of identity. Those who identify as Inuit are particularly likely to say that their region (75%), gender (74%), language (69%) and religion (47%) are very important to their own sense of identity.

Importance of Indigenous nation or community  
2019 Indigenous Peoples



Q4e.

I will read you a number of factors which may contribute to one's personal feeling of identity. For each, please tell me whether each of the following it is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important to your own sense of identity.

## C. Canadian Values

Indigenous and non-Indigenous people provide similar responses to questions that touch on the values that Canadians have in common.

The survey included two questions that examine the values that Canadians have in common. The first asked whether Canadians basically have the same values regardless of which region of the country they live in. There is no significant difference in the views of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples on this question, with about three in five agreeing with the statement in each case.

The second question asked whether the person responding to the survey feels they have more in common with Americans living in the states that border their province than they do with Canadians living in other provinces. In this case, there is no difference between non-Indigenous and Métis respondents, with only 23 percent and 24 percent, respectively, agreeing with the statement. However, agreement is higher among First Nations (34%) and Inuit peoples (46%); it is also higher among Indigenous Peoples in the three territories (41%).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This finding is curious, as the question was originally conceived of as being about provinces with U.S. states bordering them to the south, with limited applicability to Canada's North. It is possible, however, that Northern Indigenous Peoples, and especially Inuit, interpreted the question in such a way that allowed them to think of what they had in common with other Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic, including perhaps in Alaska.

# Chapter 2: Indigenous Peoples in Canada: Non-Indigenous Perspectives

## A. The Rights of Indigenous Peoples

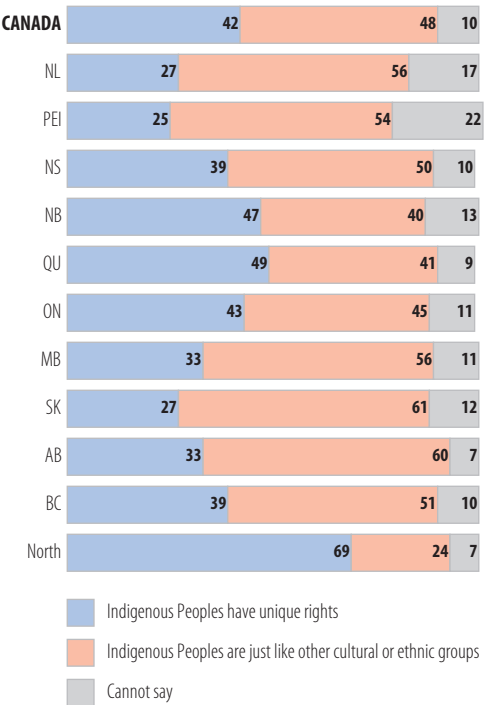
Canadians’ perspectives of the rights of Indigenous Peoples are divided between those who see Indigenous Peoples as being just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada’s multicultural society, and those who see them as having unique rights as the first inhabitants of the continent. Support for the view of Indigenous Peoples as having unique rights is much higher in the North.

Indigenous Peoples in Canada have distinctive rights enshrined in constitutional law and convention. These include, but are not limited to, the rights that stem from historical and modern treaties, and rights that stem from their status as the original occupants of territories within Canada that have never been ceded through treaties or otherwise.

The survey asked non-Indigenous Canadians about how they think about Indigenous Peoples: whether they seem them as having unique rights as the first inhabitants of the land, or as being just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada’s multicultural society. The purpose of this question was not so much to test Canadians’ knowledge of the rights of Indigenous people, but to more generally gauge how they see Indigenous Peoples as fitting into their conception of Canadian society.

On the whole, non-Indigenous Canadians are divided on this question: 48 percent see Indigenous Peoples as being just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada’s multicultural society, while 42 percent see them as having unique rights as the first inhabitants of the continent. However, views vary significantly across the country. In the North, about seven in ten think about Indigenous Peoples as having unique rights as the first inhabitants of the continent – a much greater proportion than in any other part of Canada. Support for this view is also higher than average in Quebec (49%) and New Brunswick (47%), and at the average in Ontario (43%). Support for the notion of Indigenous Peoples possessing unique rights is lower in Manitoba and Alberta (33% each), Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador (27% each), and PEI (25%).

Do Indigenous Peoples have unique rights or are they just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada?  
2019 Non-Indigenous people



Q34. Which of the following two statements best represents how you think about Indigenous Peoples?

In contrast to these significant regional differences, there are few significant differences among demographic groups. Views are similar between men and women, across age groups, and among those with different levels of education. Recent immigrants are, however, less likely than established immigrants or non-immigrants to see Indigenous Peoples as having unique rights.

## B. Gap in the Standard of Living

A large majority of non-Indigenous people in Canada recognize the existence of the gap in the standard of living between Indigenous Peoples and other Canadians.

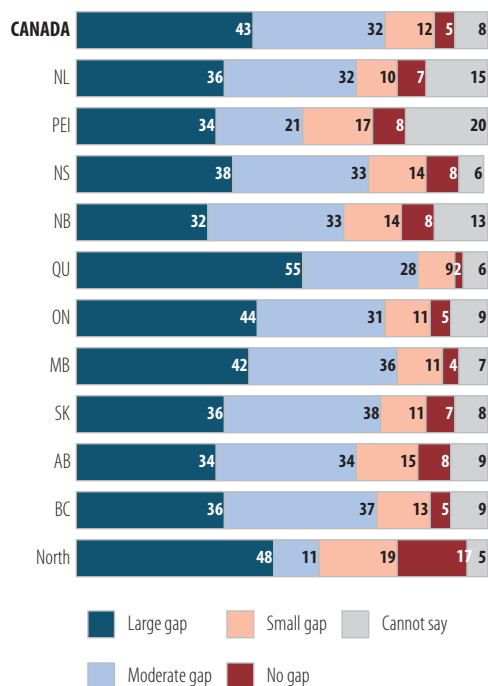
The gap in the standard of living between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is well-documented. It is also recognized by a large majority of non-Indigenous people in Canada. Three-quarters of non-Indigenous Canadians say that, from what they know or have heard, there is either a large (43%) or a moderate (32%) gap in the standard of living between Indigenous Peoples and other Canadians. Twelve percent say there is only a small gap, and five percent say there is no gap (an additional 8% cannot say).

Among the provinces, Quebecers are the most likely to say there is large or moderate gap (83%), and residents of Alberta (68%) and Prince Edward Island (55%) are the least likely to say so. In no province, however, is the proportion that says there is no gap greater than one in ten.

Interestingly, residents of the three Northern territories are less likely than those to the South to say there is a large or moderate gap in the standard of living between Indigenous Peoples and other Canadians: only 59 percent of Northerners hold this view, compared to 36 percent who say there is either a small gap (19%) or no gap at all (17%). It is possible that views in the North are more reflective of the comparative standards of living within that region in particular, rather than across Canada as a whole.

The view that there is a large gap in the standard of living between Indigenous Peoples and other Canadians is somewhat higher among women, older Canadians and those with a post-secondary education, and somewhat lower among recent immigrants.

Gap in the standard of living between Indigenous Peoples and other Canadians  
2019 Non-Indigenous people



Q.35.

*From what you know or have heard, would you say there is a large gap, a moderate gap, a small gap, or no gap at all in the standard of living between Indigenous Peoples and other Canadians generally?*

## C. Obstacles to Achieving Equality

A plurality of non-Indigenous Canadians say that the attitudes of the Canadian public, the policies of Canadian governments, and Indigenous Peoples themselves are all equal obstacles to achieving economic and social equality for Indigenous Peoples. Three in ten say the biggest obstacle is Indigenous Peoples themselves.

While non-Indigenous Canadians may recognize the disadvantages that many Indigenous Peoples face, many are reluctant to single themselves or their governments out for blame.

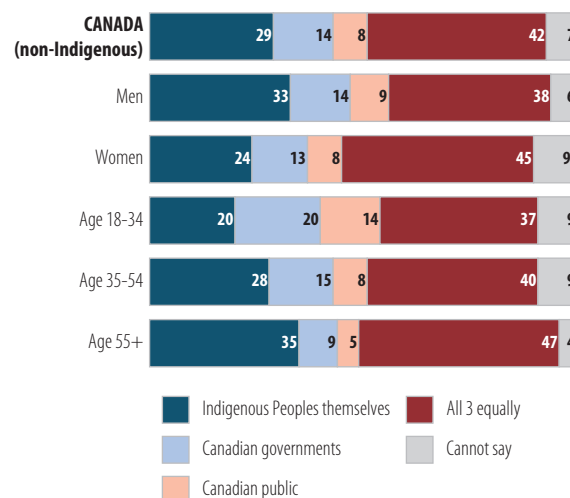
The survey asked whether the biggest obstacle to achieving economic and social equality for Indigenous Peoples is the attitudes of the Canadian public, the policies of Canadian governments, Indigenous Peoples themselves, or all three equally. A plurality (42%) of non-Indigenous Canadians say that it is all three equally, followed by Indigenous Peoples themselves (29%). The proportion that says the biggest obstacle is Indigenous Peoples themselves is twice as big as the proportion that singles out the policies of Canadian governments (14%) and more than three times the proportion that points to the attitudes of the Canadian public (8%).

There is a significant variation in views across the country. Non-Indigenous Canadians in the North are much less likely to say that Indigenous Peoples themselves are the biggest obstacle to achieving equality: only 16 percent in the region hold this view. Those in the Maritimes, Quebec and Ontario are also less likely than average to blame Indigenous Peoples for the economic and social inequality they face. Non-Indigenous Canadians in the Prairie provinces, however, are much more likely to hold this view; the proportion in the Prairies reaches two in five (40%), including almost half (48%) of those in Saskatchewan.

The proportion of non-Indigenous people who say that Indigenous Peoples themselves are the biggest obstacle to achieving equality is higher among men (33%) than women (24%), as well as among those age 55 and older (35%) compared to those age 34 and under (20%). Age and gender also intersect, with the biggest contrast between older men and younger women: men age 55 and older are more than twice as likely (39%) as women age 34 and under (17%) to blame Indigenous Peoples themselves for the economic and social inequality they face.

### Biggest obstacle to achieving equality for Indigenous Peoples

2019 Non-Indigenous people

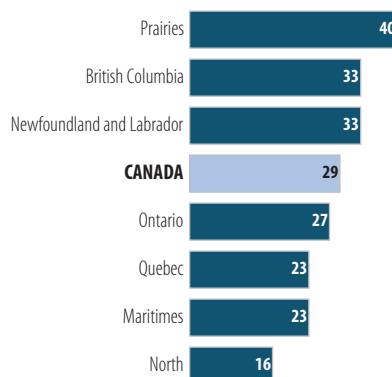


Q.36.

Would you say that the biggest obstacle to achieving economic and social equality for Indigenous Peoples is ... ?

### Biggest obstacle to achieving equality for Indigenous Peoples

2019 Non-Indigenous people, % saying "Indigenous Peoples themselves"



Q.36.

Would you say that the biggest obstacle to achieving economic and social equality for Indigenous Peoples is ... ?

# Chapter 3: Toward Reconciliation

## A. Policies to Address Reconciliation

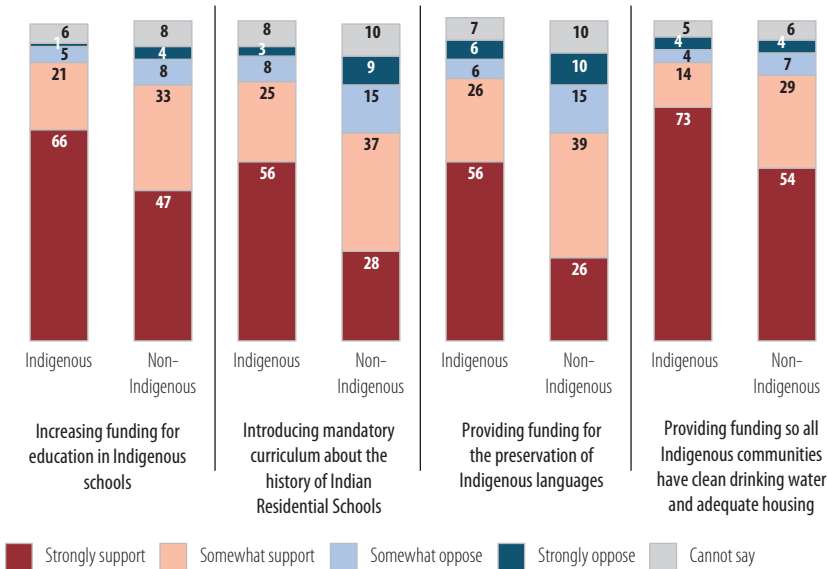
Large majorities of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians support a number of specific policies to address reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Support for each of these four policies is highest in the three Northern territories and lowest in the Prairie provinces.

Large majorities of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians support a number of specific policies to address reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. The main difference that emerges is that Indigenous Peoples are more likely to express strong support for these policies, while non-Indigenous people are more likely to say they are somewhat supportive. None of the policies

mentioned in the survey is opposed by more than one in four non-Indigenous Canadians.

The policy that attracts the strongest support is that of providing government funding to ensure all Indigenous communities **have clean drinking water and adequate housing**: 87 percent of Indigenous Peoples and 83 percent of non-Indigenous people support this policy. The same proportion of Indigenous Peoples (87%), and 80 percent of non-Indigenous people, support the policy of **increasing funding for education in Indigenous schools** so that it matches funding for other schools in their province or territory.

Support for steps to address reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people 2019



Q.37. As you may know, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established by the federal government to hear testimony from residential school survivors across the country, and to make recommendations for how to move forward toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and institutions. Please tell me whether you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose each of the following steps to address reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Two other policies attract strong support of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the support of a somewhat smaller majority of non-Indigenous people:

- Eighty-two percent of Indigenous Peoples support **introducing mandatory curriculum in all schools** to teach about the history of Indian Residential Schools, as do 66 percent of non-Indigenous people. About one in four (24%) non-Indigenous people somewhat (15%) or strongly (9%) oppose this policy.
- Eighty-two percent of Indigenous Peoples support **providing government funding to ensure the preservation of Indigenous languages**, as do 65 percent of non-Indigenous people. One in four (25%) non-Indigenous people somewhat (15%) or strongly (10%) oppose this policy.

Support for each of these four policies is highest in the three Northern territories and lowest in Saskatchewan and Alberta. High levels of support in the North are due in part (though not only) to the very high levels of support among Indigenous Peoples in that region.

In the four Western provinces<sup>2</sup> taken together, fewer than one in four non-Indigenous people strongly support introducing mandatory curriculum in all schools to teach about the history of Indian Residential Schools, or providing government funding to ensure the preservation of Indigenous languages – in both cases, support is less than half as strong as that among Indigenous Peoples in the region. However, roughly three in five non-Indigenous people in the region strongly or somewhat support these two measures.

## Support for policies to address reconciliation

2019 By region

	EASTERN & CENTRAL CANADA		WESTERN CANADA		NORTHERN CANADA	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
<b>STRONGLY SUPPORT</b>						
Increasing funding for education in Indigenous schools so that it matches funding for other schools in their province/territory	65	50	62	38	85	57
Introducing mandatory curriculum in all schools to teach about the history of Indian Residential Schools	53	30	58	24	63	41
Providing government funding to ensure the preservation of Indigenous languages	56	28	49	22	83	55
Providing government funding to ensure all Indigenous communities have clean drinking water and adequate housing	74	57	69	46	88	78
<b>STRONGLY OR SOMEWHAT SUPPORT</b>						
Increasing funding for education in Indigenous schools so that it matches funding for other schools in their province/territory	87	82	85	75	97	65
Introducing mandatory curriculum in all schools to teach about the history of Indian Residential Schools	78	67	83	61	88	73
Providing government funding to ensure the preservation of Indigenous languages	82	68	78	60	95	86
Providing government funding to ensure all Indigenous communities have clean drinking water and adequate housing	89	85	85	79	95	91

Q.37.

*As you may know, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established by the federal government to hear testimony from residential school survivors across the country, and to make recommendations for how to move forward toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and institutions. Please tell me whether you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose each of the following steps to address reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.*

<sup>2</sup> B.C. is added to the three Prairie provinces here in order to ensure an adequate sample of Indigenous respondents for the sake of the comparison. In the case of non-Indigenous respondents, it should be noted that residents of Manitoba and B.C. are more supportive of the policies than are those of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Women are slightly more likely than men to strongly support these measures, although in most cases they are equally likely to at least somewhat support them. Younger Canadians are slightly more likely to support the introduction of mandatory curriculum in all schools to teach about the history of Indian Residential Schools, and the provision of government funding to ensure the preservation of Indigenous languages.

The effect of age is not consistent across the four policies, however, as Canadians age 55 and older are slightly more likely to support raising the funding level for Indigenous schools, and ensuring Indigenous communities have clean drinking water and adequate housing. Canadians with a university education are slightly more supportive of each of these measures, but the effect of educational attainment in these cases is not substantial. Support for these four policies does not vary significantly between those born in and outside of Canada, or between recent and established immigrants.

## B. The Role of Individual Canadians in Reconciliation

A majority believe that individual Canadians have a role to play in efforts to bring about reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. The main difference in views between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples on this question is in the strength of feeling.

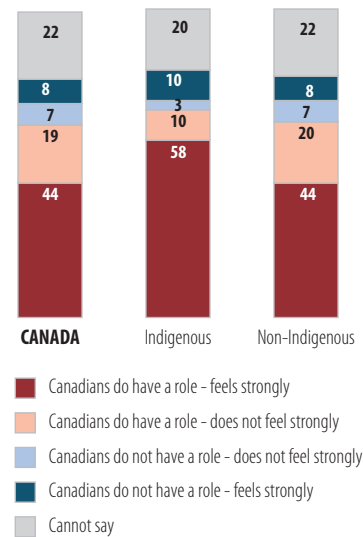
A majority (64%) of those surveyed believe that individual Canadians have a role to play in efforts to bring about reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This includes 44 percent who feel strongly that this is the case, and 19 percent who do not feel strongly. Fourteen percent do not see a role for individual Canadians, while 22 percent cannot say.

The main difference in views between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on this question is in the strength of feeling. Sixty-eight percent of Indigenous Peoples see a role for individual Canadians in bringing about reconciliation, as do 64 percent of non-Indigenous people. But a greater proportion of Indigenous Peoples feel strongly about this (58% vs. 44% among non-Indigenous people). The proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people choosing not to provide an opinion either way is similar (20% and 22%, respectively).

Support for the notion that individual Canadians have a role to play in efforts to bring about reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people does not vary significantly among the provinces, but is higher in the North. Higher overall support in the North, however, is partly a reflection of the fact that Indigenous Peoples make up a greater share of that region's population. Seventy-two percent of Indigenous Peoples in the North strongly believe that individual Canadians have a role to play in advancing reconciliation, a much higher proportion than that for non-Indigenous people in the North (46%), or either Indigenous Peoples (56%) or non-Indigenous people (44%) in the South.

Answers to this question do not vary significantly by gender, age or immigration status. However, they are shaped in part by educational attainment. Fifty-eight percent (39% strongly) of those without a post-secondary education say that individual Canadians have a role in advancing reconciliation, compared to 65 percent (44% strongly) of those with a college diploma, and 69 percent (49% strongly) of those with a university degree.

Reconciliation: the role of individual Canadians?  
2019



Q.38.  
Now thinking about Canadians generally, do you believe that individual Canadians do, or do not, have a role to play in efforts to bring about reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?

# Chapter 4: Indigenous Self-Determination

## A. Indigenous Self-Government

A majority of Canadians support the transfer of the powers of self-government to Indigenous communities, although support is both higher and stronger among Indigenous Peoples compared to non-Indigenous people. Support for Indigenous self-government is higher in the North.

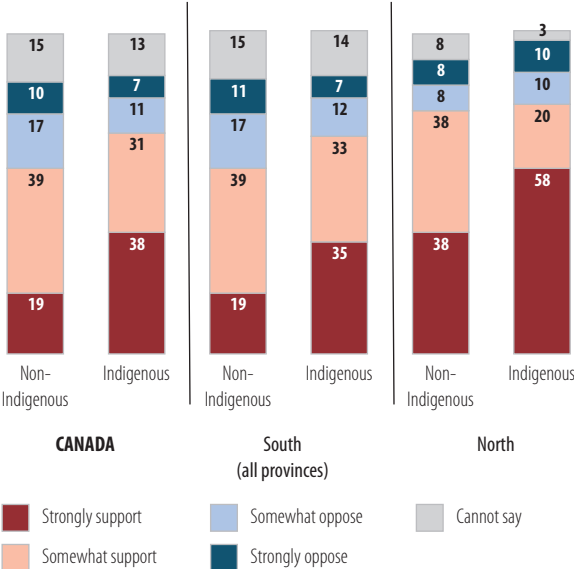
The past decades have seen a steady strengthening of the powers and capacities of many Indigenous governments by means of treaties, land claims agreements, and other agreements involving Indigenous Peoples and the federal, provincial and territorial governments. These range from the creation of the territory of Nunavut in 1999, to comprehensive land claims settlements in the North and B.C., to agreements devolving specific powers to individual First Nations across Canada.

A majority of Canadians support the transfer of the powers of self-government to Indigenous communities that choose to pursue this option. Specifically, 58 percent support self-government, described in the survey as a new arrangement between the federal government and some Indigenous communities in which the latter assume responsibility for local self-government to manage their own affairs in such areas as education and policing. Twenty-seven percent of Canadians oppose this, and 15 percent cannot say.

Support is both higher and stronger among Indigenous Peoples compared to non-Indigenous people. Sixty-nine percent of Indigenous Peoples support self-government, including 38 percent who strongly support it. In the case of non-Indigenous people, the figures are 58 percent and 19 percent, respectively. Overall support is similar among First Nations (69%), Métis (67%) and Inuit (72%) peoples, but the proportion that strongly supports self-government is higher among Inuit (47%) and First Nations (42%) peoples than among those who identify as Métis (26%).

There is some variation in support for self-government among provinces, with the highest support in Nova Scotia (65%) and PEI (64%), and the lowest support in

Support for self-government for Indigenous communities 2019



Q.39. The federal government has jurisdiction over the governance and funding of Indigenous reserve communities, under the Indian Act that was passed in 1876. Some Indigenous communities are now negotiating a new arrangement with the federal government in which they assume responsibility for local self-government to manage their own affairs in such areas as education and policing. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the transfer of self-government to Indigenous communities that choose to pursue this option?

Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Newfoundland and Labrador (52% each). Support is higher in the North, at 77 percent. This includes 78 percent of Indigenous Peoples in the North (58% of whom strongly support self-government), and 75 percent of the region’s non-Indigenous people (38% of whom strongly support self-government).

Fifty-nine percent of Quebecers support the transfer of the powers of self-government to Indigenous communities, which is not significantly different from the Canadian average.

It is notable, however, that support is at least no lower, and in some cases is higher, among more nationalist Quebecers. For example, support is as high among Quebecers who identify as a Quebecer only (but not Canadian) as it is among those who identify as Canadian only (but not as a Quebecer). It is also just as high among Quebecers who disagree that sovereignty is an idea whose time has passed as it is among those who agree; and just as high among Quebecers who support a more decentralized federation as among those who want more power for Ottawa. And support is actually higher among Quebecers who identify as mainly sovereigntist than it is among those who identify as mainly federalist.

These findings suggest that Quebecers who are seeking more autonomy for their province (whether within or outside of the Canadian federation) are generally also open to supporting the parallel pursuit of greater autonomy by Indigenous communities and nations.

Support for the transfer of the powers of self-government to Indigenous communities that choose to pursue this option is somewhat higher among men than women, but does not vary significantly among age groups, or by educational attainment or immigration status. Those who are less supportive, such as women, are more likely to be unsure, rather than opposed.

## B. The Development of Natural Resources

A plurality of Canadians agree that Indigenous Peoples should be entitled to a fair share of the royalties earned from the development of natural resources that are located on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples. While a majority of Indigenous Peoples say that governments should hold off on proceeding with resource development on traditional Indigenous territories until consent is given by Indigenous Peoples, non-Indigenous people are less certain.

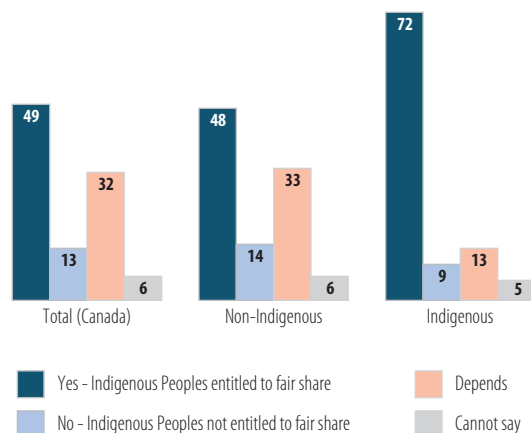
**Sharing royalties.** The history of relations between Indigenous Peoples and Europeans and their descendants in North America can, in many ways, be told as a series of struggles over access to and control over the continent’s vast array of natural resources – from fur and fish, to wheat and lumber, to minerals and oil. Over the centuries, the relationships upon which this acquisition of resources depended shifted from one of alliance and trade, to one of colonization and displacement. More recently, Indigenous Peoples have reasserted their claim to their traditional territories, and their right to decide whether and how resources are harvested.

In the current context, a plurality (49%) of Canadians agree that Indigenous Peoples should be entitled to a fair share of the royalties earned on the development of natural resources (such as oil and gas, and lumber) that are located on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples, as established through treaties and land claims. A third (32%) are not sure, saying that it depends on the particular resource or circumstances. Only 13 percent say that Indigenous Peoples should *not* be entitled to a fair share of the royalties earned on the development of natural resources in these cases.

Agreement that Indigenous Peoples should be entitled to a fair share of the royalties is much higher among Indigenous Peoples, reaching 72 percent, compared to 48 percent among non-Indigenous people. Indigenous Peoples (13%) are much less likely to say that their answer would depend on the resources or the circumstances than are non-Indigenous people (33%).

Among Indigenous Peoples, agreement is highest among those who identify as First Nations (80%) and somewhat lower among those who identify as Métis (60%).

Access to royalties from development of natural resources located on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples 2019



Q.20.

*Some of the country’s natural resources, such as oil and gas, and lumber, are located on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples, as established through treaties and land claims. When these natural resources are developed, do you believe the Indigenous Peoples should be entitled, or should not be entitled, to a fair share of the royalties earned on this development?*

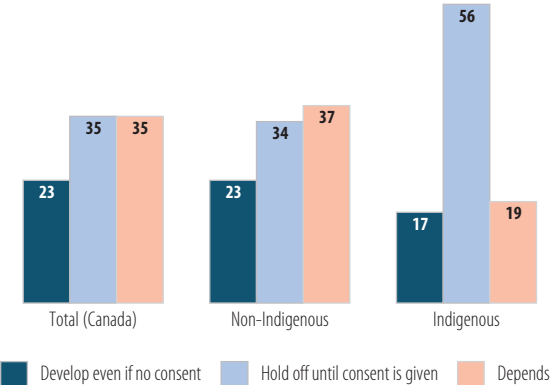
Among the provinces, agreement is highest in PEI (58%), Nova Scotia (55%) and Quebec (54%), and lowest in Alberta (37%). Regionally, the gaps in the views of Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous people on this question are widest in the West, where 69 percent of Indigenous Peoples, but only 38 percent of non-Indigenous people agree (16% of Indigenous Peoples and 36% of non-Indigenous people in the region say it depends, while 11% of Indigenous Peoples and 20% of non-Indigenous people do not support the payment of a fair share of the royalties earned). Note that among non-Indigenous people in the West, agreement is higher in Manitoba (43%) and B.C. (41%), and lower in Saskatchewan (35%) and Alberta (35%).

Agreement is also higher in the North (82%). This is not only because Indigenous Peoples form a much greater share of the population in the North, but also because the survey in the North was conducted in such a way that the option of saying “it depends” was not immediately offered to respondents.<sup>3</sup> In the absence of the prompted option to say “it depends,” a large majority (77%) of non-Indigenous people in the North express support for the entitlement of Indigenous Peoples to a fair share of the royalties earned on the development of natural resources on traditional Indigenous territories. Among Indigenous Peoples in the North, 85 percent are in agreement.

Support for the entitlement of Indigenous Peoples to a fair share of the royalties earned on the development of natural resources on traditional Indigenous territories does not vary significantly by gender, age, educational attainment or immigrant status.

**Consent to development.** The survey addressed the issue of the control the development of natural resources on traditional Indigenous territories. Canadians were asked about situations where Indigenous Peoples oppose the development of natural resource projects like oil and gas, or lumber, in order to protect their ability under international human rights standards to consent to development on their traditional territories. Canadians are both divided and somewhat unsure as to what should happen in this situation.

Control of development of natural resources located on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples  
2019



Q.21. Sometimes Indigenous Peoples oppose the development of natural resources projects like oil and gas, or lumber, in order to protect their ability under international human rights standards to consent to development on their traditional territories. When this happens, do you believe that ... Governments should go ahead with resource development even if consent is not given by the Indigenous Peoples on the territories in question ... Governments should hold off proceeding with resource development until the consent is given by Indigenous Peoples on the territories in question ... Depends?

<sup>3</sup> In the provinces, the survey was conducted online, and, for this question, “it depends” was as option available to all respondents. In the Territories, the survey was conducted by telephone, and “it depends” was unprompted, meaning it was not offered to respondents, but was recorded if respondents nonetheless chose to respond that way.

Just over a third of Canadians (35%) believe that, when this happens, governments should hold off on proceeding with resource development until consent is given by Indigenous Peoples on the territories in question. An identical proportion (35%) is unsure, saying it depends on the resource or the circumstances in question. Fewer (23%) insist that governments should go ahead with resource development even if consent is not given by the Indigenous Peoples on the territories in question (an additional 7% cannot say).

As was the case with the question about royalties, Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada provide very different responses, mostly because Indigenous Peoples are more certain in their view, and much less likely to say that it depends on the resource or the circumstances. A majority (56%) of Indigenous Peoples say that governments should hold off on proceeding with resource development until consent is given by Indigenous Peoples, while only 19 percent say it depends and 17 percent say resource development should proceed even without consent. In the case of non-Indigenous people, 34 percent favour holding off on development; 37 percent say it depends; and 23 percent want development to proceed, even in the absence of consent.

Responses by region show a similar pattern to that for the question on royalties. The proportion favouring holding off on development until consent is given is highest in Nova Scotia (41%) and PEI (38%) – and on this question, it is almost as high in Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba (36% each). Support for the alternative option of proceeding with development in the absence of consent is highest in Alberta (36%) and Saskatchewan (32%).

The notion that development should not proceed in the absence of consent attracts much higher support in the North (75%) – again, both because of the greater proportion of Indigenous Peoples in that region, and because the option

of saying “it depends” was not prompted on the telephone version of the survey conducted in the Territories.<sup>4</sup>

In contrast to some of the previous questions, there are differing views on this question among men and women, and age groups.

- Among non-Indigenous Canadians, men (28%) are more likely than women (18%) to say that governments should go ahead with resource development even if consent is not given by the Indigenous Peoples on the territories in question.
- Younger non-Indigenous Canadians are much more likely than their older counterparts to say that development should be postponed until consent is given by Indigenous Peoples: 42 percent of 18 to 34-year-olds hold this view, compared to 34 percent of 35 to 54-year-olds, and 28 percent of those age 55 and older.
- Age and gender differences also have a combined effect: women age 34 and younger (44%) are the most supportive of postponing development in the absence of consent, while men age 55 and older (26%) are the least so.

Finally, it is worth noting the relationship between Canadians’ views on the importance of Indigenous consent to resource development on Indigenous lands, and their views on the rights of Indigenous Peoples more generally. Among those who recognize Indigenous Peoples as having unique rights as the first inhabitants of the land, 51 percent say that resource development should not proceed in the absence of consent, with a further 35 percent saying it would depend; only 10 percent of this group say that development should go ahead. In contrast, among those who see Indigenous Peoples as being just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada’s multicultural society, only 22 percent say that development should be delayed, and 38 percent say it should go ahead (37% say it would depend).

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<sup>4</sup> See footnote 3.

# Chapter 5: Attitudes toward Government and the Federation

Significant differences in opinion between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on general questions about the role government and the Canadian federation are the exception rather than the rule. However, Indigenous Peoples, especially Inuit, are significantly more likely than non-Indigenous people to agree that the federal government has become virtually irrelevant to them.

The Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey included a number of questions that, while they do not touch directly on Indigenous issues, can provide some insight into how Indigenous Peoples in Canada feel more generally about government and the Canadian federation.

- **Satisfaction with the way things are going in our country today.** Indigenous Peoples (41%) are slightly less satisfied than non-Indigenous people (47%) with the way things are going in our country today. Satisfaction is lower among those who identify as Métis (35%), compared to those who identify as First Nations (42%) or Inuit (46%). Satisfaction is higher among First Nations people living on-reserve (56%). Indigenous Peoples are just as satisfied as non-Indigenous people in the Western provinces (38% and 39%, respectively) and in the North (50% for both groups), but in the Eastern and Central provinces, Indigenous Peoples are less satisfied (41% and 51%, respectively).
- **Most important problem facing Canadians today.** Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people provide a wide range of responses to an open-ended question about the most important problem facing Canadians today. Overall, among Indigenous Peoples, the most frequently mentioned problems are income inequality, poverty and homelessness (10%), followed by unemployment

(8%), and government and political representation (8%). In general, Indigenous Peoples are less likely than non-Indigenous people to mention the economy (4% vs. 11%), and are more likely to mention poverty, income inequality and homelessness (10% vs. 4%), social issues and prejudice (5% vs. 2%), and the treatment of Indigenous Peoples (5% vs. less than 1%). Inuit (32%) are especially likely to mention poverty, income inequality and homelessness, while the treatment of Indigenous Peoples is more likely to be mentioned by First Nations people living on-reserve (10%).

- **The size of government.** Indigenous Peoples are more likely to prefer a larger government with more services (34%) than a smaller government with fewer services (19%), though a plurality prefer neither of these options in particular (36%) and 10 percent cannot say. There are no significant differences between the views of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on this question. However, Indigenous Peoples in the North, and Inuit in particular, hold distinctive views on this question: over half of Indigenous Peoples in the North (56%) and Inuit (61%) prefer a larger government with more services.
- **The impact of government.** Almost half (48%) of Indigenous Peoples say that governments have a negative impact on most people's lives, while 23 percent say they have a positive impact and 20 percent say governments don't have much of an impact on most people's lives (an additional 9% cannot say). Non-Indigenous people (44%) are almost as likely to say that governments have a negative impact on most people's lives. The proportion saying that governments have a negative impact on most people's lives is higher among Métis (55%).

- **The federation.** With one important exception (discussed in the following bullet), there are either small or negligible differences in the opinions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada on how well the Canadian federation is working. For example, Indigenous Peoples (40%) are only slightly less likely than non-Indigenous people (45%) to say that their province or territory is treated with the respect it deserves in Canada. Similarly, 49 percent of Indigenous Peoples, compared to 43 percent of non-Indigenous people, say that their province or territory receives less than its fair share of federal transfers. There are no differences in the proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who say that their province or territory has less than its fair share of influence on important national decisions in Canada.

However, in some cases, the small differences at the national level mask larger ones at the regional level. In particular, Indigenous Peoples in the North are less satisfied with how their territory is treated in the federation than are non-Indigenous Northerners. In the North, 55 percent of Indigenous Peoples, compared to 36 percent of non-Indigenous people, say their territory is *not* treated with the respect it deserves. More starkly, in the North, 51 percent of Indigenous Peoples, compared only with 14 percent of non-Indigenous people, say their territory receives less than its fair share of federal transfers.<sup>5</sup>

- **The relevance of the federal government.** There is one question relating to the federation where a more significant difference between the views of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is evident. When asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement that the federal government has become virtually irrelevant to them, Indigenous Peoples (56%) are significantly more likely than non-Indigenous people (41%) to agree, and less likely to disagree (32% vs. 50%). Moreover, the proportion strongly agreeing is twice as high among Indigenous Peoples (23%) as among non-Indigenous people (12%). The proportion agreeing with this statement is especially high among Inuit (64%).
- **The ability of Canadians to resolve their internal differences.** Majorities of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada are confident in the ability of Canadians to resolve their internal differences. Sixty-three percent of Indigenous Peoples have a great deal of confidence (22%) or some confidence (41%) in our ability to resolve our internal differences, compared to 66 percent of non-Indigenous people (including 16% with a great deal of confidence and 50% with some confidence). Inuit (30%) and First Nations (25%) peoples are more likely to express a great deal of confidence than are Métis (10%); First Nations peoples on-reserve are especially likely to express a great deal of confidence (40%).

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<sup>5</sup> For more on the views of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Northerners on the territorial and federal governments, see the second report in this series: *Making Federalism Work*.

# Appendix I: Exploring Changes over Time

Several of the questions included in the Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey of Canadians were also asked in previous surveys conducted by the Environics Institute, most notably in 2016.<sup>6</sup> The surveys, however, were conducted differently: whereas the previous surveys were conducted by telephone, the Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey was conducted for the most part online (in the North, the survey was conducted by telephone). This switch in survey mode means that comparisons of the results over time should be interpreted with some caution, for two reasons.

First, recent evidence suggests that changes in survey mode may be particularly important when dealing with opinions about minority or marginalized groups, since respondents to earlier telephone surveys may have been more likely to provide answers that are perceived as more socially desirable.<sup>7</sup> Second, compared to telephone surveys, respondents to online surveys can be less likely to take firm positions, and more likely to answer by saying they don't know, or cannot say. The increase in the proportion that says "don't know" produces an offsetting reduction in the proportion that might, for instance, agree or disagree with the question. But this change may be less reflective of a real evolution in attitudes, and more a reflection of respondents being less reluctant to avoid choosing one side or another.

Both of these factors could mean that any evolution of survey results over time is, at least in part, a by-product of the change in the way the survey was conducted.

That said, there are legitimate reasons to expect that Canadians' attitudes toward Indigenous Peoples are issues may either have softened or hardened over time. On the one hand, the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's calls to action in 2015, or the 2019 report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, could be expected to have had a positive impact on Canadians' awareness of the issues facing Indigenous Peoples and communities, and to have deepened support for actions toward reconciliation. On the other hand, in the period since 2015, initial interest may have waned, or Canadians (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) may have grown frustrated with the apparent lack of progress in improving economic and social outcomes for Indigenous Peoples. In this period, some Canadians may even have grown to feel that Indigenous issues have begun to garner too much attention.

Keeping in mind that it will be difficult to determine the degree to which changes in the data reflect substantive changes in opinion, as opposed to changes in survey mode, the following is an overview of how opinions have evolved since 2016:

- The proportion of non-Indigenous Canadians who see Indigenous Peoples as having unique rights as the first inhabitants of the land, rather than being just like other cultural or ethnic groups in Canada's multicultural society, is 10 points lower in 2019 (42%) than it was in 2016 (52%).

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<sup>6</sup> See Environics Institute, *Canadian Public Opinion on Aboriginal Peoples: Final Report* (June 2016); <https://www.environicsinstitute.org/projects/project-details/public-opinion-about-aboriginal-issues-in-canada-2016>.

<sup>7</sup> See C. Breton, F. Cutler, S. Lachance, and A. Mierke-Zatwarnicki, "Telephone versus Online Survey Modes for Election Studies: Comparing Canadian Public Opinion and Vote Choice in the 2015 Federal Election," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (2017), pp. 1022 ff.

- The proportion of non-Indigenous Canadians who say that, from what they know or have heard, there is large gap in the standard of living between Indigenous Peoples and other Canadians is 16 points lower in 2019 (43%) than it was in 2016 (59%).
- Support among non-Indigenous Canadians for specific policies to address reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people also appears to be lower in 2019 compared to 2016.
  - In 2016, 91 percent supported the policy of **increasing funding for education in Indigenous schools** so that it matches funding for other schools in their province or territory, compared to 80 percent in 2019.
  - In 2016, 90 percent supported the policy of providing government funding to ensure all Indigenous communities have **clean drinking water and adequate housing**, compared to 83 percent in 2019.
  - In 2016, 87 percent supported **introducing mandatory curriculum in all schools** to teach about the history of Indian Residential Schools, compared to 66 percent in 2019.<sup>8</sup>
  - In 2016, 78 percent supported **providing government funding to ensure the preservation of Indigenous languages**, compared to 65 percent in 2019.
- The proportion of non-Indigenous Canadians who believe that individual Canadians have a role to play in efforts to bring about reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is 20 points lower in 2019 (64%) than in 2016 (84%). However, an earlier telephone survey conducted on behalf of Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) found results very similar to the 2019 survey (with 67% of Canadians in 2008 saying that individual Canadians have a role to play.)<sup>9</sup>

Across all of these questions, the general pattern is the same: over the past three years, non-Indigenous Canadians appear to have become less supportive of Indigenous rights and policies to advance reconciliation.

In some cases, though not all, the extent of the shift is clearly exaggerated by the increase in the number of respondents saying they don't know or cannot say. For instance, on the questions about the role of individual Canadians in efforts to bring about reconciliation, the proportion saying they don't know or cannot say increased from four percent in 2016 to 22 percent in 2019. If these respondents are excluded from the analysis, the decrease in the proportion agreeing that individual Canadians have a role to play falls from 20 points to six points. This example notwithstanding, the increase in the proportion of respondents who decline to take a position clearly does not account for all of the change in support across all of the questions under consideration.

It is possible that the change over time reflects less of a real change in attitudes and more the presence of a "social desirability" effect, wherein some non-Indigenous Canadians feel reluctant to express opposition to Indigenous rights to claims when speaking to a live interviewer. If this is the case, then it doesn't mean that one of the two surveys (either the 2016 or the 2019) is more correct; rather, the two different survey methods produce somewhat different results (different mostly in degree rather than in direction), and that difference is instructive – it reveals something important about how Canadians approach these issues (including the fact that there may be some ambivalence or uncertainty that is not well captured in agree/disagree survey questions).

Finally, it is possible that attitudes toward these issues have shifted over the last several years. Further studies of public opinion will be needed to determine if this is indeed the case.

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<sup>8</sup> The question wording in 2016 was slightly different, referring to "mandatory curriculum in all schools to teach about Aboriginal history and culture" rather than "mandatory curriculum in all schools to teach about the history of Indian Residential Schools."

<sup>9</sup> See Environics Institute, *Canadian Public Opinion on Aboriginal Peoples*, p. 35.

## Appendix II: The Survey Sample

The Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey of Canadians was conducted online (in the provinces) and by telephone (in the Territories) with a sample of 5,732 Canadians (age 18 and over) between December 14, 2018 and January 16, 2019. This sample included 645 persons who identified themselves as Indigenous by responding “yes” to the following question at the outset of the survey: “Are you an Indigenous person, that is, First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit)?” The 645 self-identified Indigenous respondents represent an oversample of Indigenous persons in that the number of Indigenous respondents is greater than would be the case in a strictly representative sample.

The overall survey results (for the total sample, including both Indigenous and non-Indigenous respondents) are weighted for age, gender, region, education, language and Indigenous identity – meaning that the results were adjusted to reflect those that would result from a sample that resembled the actual distribution of these groups within the Canadian population.

The sample of Indigenous persons was not weighted separately to adjust for the actual distribution of factors such as region, age or gender within the Indigenous population. However, as shown in the adjacent table, the weighted Indigenous survey sample reasonably resembles the actual composition and distribution of the Indigenous population within Canada. In particular, the weighted distribution of First Nations (on- and off-reserve), Métis and Inuit respondents within the Indigenous sample approximates the actual distribution within the Indigenous population. At the same time, the survey sample is slightly younger and more female than a strictly representative sample would be, and Northern Indigenous persons are slightly over-represented.

### Description of Indigenous respondents compared with 2016 census

	2016 Census	Number of survey respondents (unweighted)	Proportion of survey respondents (weighted)
<b>Proportion within the total sample:</b>			
Total survey respondents	100.00%	5,732	100.00%
Indigenous respondents	4.90%	645	5.70%
<b>Proportion of Indigenous respondents within regional samples:</b>			
Atlantic and Central Canada	8.10%	224	3.10%
Western Canada	16.40%	271	9.40%
Northern Canada	53.30%	150	63.50%
<b>Distribution within the Indigenous sample:</b>			
First Nations	60.00%	335	57.20%
Métis	36.10%	210	31.00%
Inuit	4.00%	78	8.10%
Other/cannot say	–	22	3.80%
Total	100%	645	100%
Male	48.60%	249	40.10%
Female	51.40%	393	59.00%
Other/cannot say	–	3	0.90%
Total	100%	645	100%
Age 15-34	42.40%	284	50.80%
Age 35-54	33.90%	242	32.40%
Age 55+	23.70%	119	16.80%
Total	100%	645	100%
Atlantic and Central Canada	41.00%	224	36.70%
Western Canada	55.40%	271	51.10%
Northern Canada	3.60%	150	12.20%
Total	100%	645	100%
<b>Distribution within First Nations sample:</b>			
Living on-reserve	34.20%	88	31.50%
Living off-reserve	65.80%	236	68.10%
Cannot say	–	5	0.40%
No response	–	6	–
Total	100%	335	100%



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