

Pathways to Mino Biimadiziwin in the City

A Profile of Urban Aboriginal Economic Success in Sudbury



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Community Driven Research By KINXUS Aboriginal Urban Resources Sudbury

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In spite of the growth of urban Aboriginal economic success in cities across Canada, there has been very little research in this area to date. Initiated by KINXUS Aboriginal Urban Resources, this community driven research project has sought to better understand and support Aboriginal economic success and the development of a community network of Aboriginal professionals and community leaders in Sudbury. It has been designed to build directly upon the 2007 Urban Aboriginal Task Force which identified the emergence of an ‘outsider’ urban Aboriginal middle class who ‘appeared to be moving away from the Aboriginal social service community’. To this end, this research focuses on Aboriginal people experiencing economic success outside of the social services, while exploring the following topics:

- Demographic profiles of Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury
- Perceptions of home and community in Sudbury
- Aboriginal cultures in the city
- Racism and internal discrimination in Sudbury
- The path to a professional life: key supports and challenges
- Economic and political relations
- Defining success and future aspirations

According to the 2011 Census, of the 13,405 Aboriginal people living in Sudbury, 3,565 (27%) had household incomes in excess of \$40,000. In contrast to trends that point to Métis over-representation in the urban Aboriginal middle class in major cities across Canada, the majority (71%) of Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury are Anishnaabe, First Nation, with Indian Status. This segment of the population is

either employed full-time or is self-employed; while working in a diversity of fields and reporting excellent job satisfaction.

Although most participants were not born in Sudbury, many consider it to be home and live in a diversity of neighbourhoods outside of the downtown core. The majority own their homes and like living in Sudbury because it is close to family and friends and offers a good quality of life overall. Just over half of the participants have never lived in a First Nation community, but of those that have, many continue to visit this community occasionally to visit family and friends, for holidays and cultural reasons, and for weddings and funerals.

In the paragraphs below you will find a summary of the main topics of this research and a series of recommendations that are in keeping with the overall vision of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada, namely: to support strong Aboriginal communities as part of a rebuilding of good, mutually beneficial relations with non-Aboriginal society.

Aboriginal Cultures and Community Living in Sudbury

Participants spoke of an urban Aboriginal community that was divided along the lines of the social services (of which the N'Swakamok Friendship Centre and the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre are the two main hubs) and the University and Colleges. Although many spoke of having a strong sense of community participation in a diverse array of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, many also feel isolated and excluded from the Aboriginal social services community and that their contributions often go unnoticed and unappreciated. Overall, it was felt that urban Aboriginal living in Sudbury lacked a sense of community cohesion as well as a connection with the mainstream, non-Aboriginal community.

Almost all participants take part in a diversity of non-Aboriginal cultural events in the city, while also considering Aboriginal specific cultural events and practices to be important to living a good life in the city. For many participants, there has been very little exposure to learning about their Aboriginal communities, histories, cultures, and languages within the provincial school system.

In addition to having a healthy and happy family life and good career, the ability to maintain a strong Aboriginal identity and to stay connected to the Aboriginal community was identified as an important marker of success in one's life. There is a strong desire for more cultural based programming and services in a number of areas including language, medicine and health, ceremony and teachings, and traditional hunting and food practices that are not social services focussed.

And lastly, almost all participants felt that there was an absence of Aboriginal cultural visibility in Sudbury; which is the result of a generalized ignorance and racism against Aboriginal people that must be addressed.

With the understanding that urban Aboriginal people experiencing economic success already play an important role in community development in Sudbury and are looking for more opportunities to connect and contribute, the following recommendations focus on the need for a more integrated and welcoming urban Aboriginal community, for shared spaces of common interest, and for a greater recognition of successes and contributions.

We recommend that representatives from both the Aboriginal social service community and the university and colleges' Aboriginal communities meet to discuss and promote:

Recommendation 1: The coordination of Aboriginal culture and language programming across sectors with a view to meeting the cultural education needs of Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury.

Recommendation 2: The creation of Aboriginal professional development programming that focuses on a number of issues relating to Aboriginal economic development including: professional networking, entrepreneurship, business and personal finance, and home ownership.

Recommendation 3: The creation of an integrated urban Aboriginal communications network across all sectors which is inclusive of Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury.

Recommendation 4: The creation of a series of community-based, Sudbury Aboriginal Excellence awards that recognize individual achievements in education, professional success, and community contribution.

With a view to creating more integrated and equitable Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations through cultural education and understanding and enhancing the visibility of Aboriginal people in Sudbury over all, the following recommendations focus on the creation of both a shared space of common interest and a local awareness raising campaign that celebrates the many successes and community contributions of Aboriginal people living in Sudbury. We therefore recommend that a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community leaders in Sudbury convene a meeting to discuss

Recommendation 5: The establishment of an Aboriginal cultural education centre in downtown Sudbury. Focused exclusively on cultural programming, the centre could be the cultural hub for all Aboriginal organizations and university and

colleges in Sudbury while providing an integrated space that is welcoming for those Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people presently outside of the social services sector.

Recommendation 6: Significantly increasing the visibility of Aboriginal people throughout Sudbury through the creation of designated spaces, monuments, artwork, and city murals that raise the visibility and highlight the longstanding presence, successes and community contributions of Aboriginal people in Sudbury.

The Ongoing Challenge of Racism

The vast majority (78%) of Aboriginal people experiencing economic success consider racism against Aboriginal people by non-Aboriginal people to be a significant and long standing social problem that is expressed in a systemic way in virtually every aspect of daily life. In spite of some noted improvements in the use of status cards at retail outlets, and in some public places that provide areas for smudging and ceremony, the need to address racism and for respect and inclusion was the number one hope for change for economically successful Aboriginal people living in Sudbury.

Racism and discrimination internal to the urban Aboriginal community is also seen as a major social problem that is expressed as lateral violence, nepotism, and diverse forms of discrimination that divide the community and alienate economically successful Aboriginal people from the social services community.

The following recommendations echo those made in the 2007 Sudbury Urban Aboriginal Task Force Report where nearly a decade earlier racism and discrimination were also found to be a major social problem in Sudbury. What was key to

those recommendation and what still holds true today is that anti-racism initiatives must be accompanied by greater social integration, community building, and friendships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Sudbury. Integration in these ways helps to foster understanding and empathy while dispelling racial stereotypes in more permanent and enduring ways. Overall, many of the recommendations in this report are focused on this vision of social inclusion, equity, and the elimination of racism against Aboriginal people.

We therefore recommend that a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community leaders in Sudbury convene a meeting to discuss:

Recommendation 7: The development of strategies for the elimination of anti-Aboriginal racism in Sudbury, which may include:

- The establishment of an office of an Aboriginal Ombudsman with sufficient independence, authority and staff to investigate complaints of racism,
- The establishment of an Anti-Aboriginal Racism Committee in Sudbury,
- The creation of a series of anti-Aboriginal racism initiatives such as: public awareness campaigns, cross-cultural awareness workshops, affirmative action programs etc.,
- The creation of media focused workshops designed to address pervasive Aboriginal stereotyping.

Recommendation 8: That Aboriginal representatives from the social services, the university and college and the wider community in Sudbury meet to discuss the raising of awareness and elimination of lateral violence and divisiveness among members of the Aboriginal community with specific focus on how it affects Aboriginal people experiencing economic success.

The Path to Economic Success: Key Challenges and Supports

Participants spoke of their path to economic success as having two key stages, the early years at home with family, and then their time away at school. Many spoke of the love and encouragement that they received early on in life and the presence of parental role models and Elders that instilled a strong work ethic, a pride in one's Aboriginal cultural identity, and an appreciation for the importance of education. It was from this supportive family and cultural foundation that participants, in spite of the majority experiencing poverty as children, were able to advance along their educational path.

Once at university or college, continued family supports were complimented by a number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies and programs that assisted with meeting basic needs and overcoming barriers relating to: funding for tuition, housing, day care, transportation, and racism. Having completed university or college programs, participants then transitioned to working life and eventual economic success.

In terms of programs and services today, many participants spoke of the need for Aboriginal specific business and professional development training and networking opportunities as well as family and cultural services that are not social services focused.

We therefore recommend that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community leaders in collaboration with urban and First Nations community education councils in Sudbury convene a meeting to discuss:

Recommendation 9: That strong Aboriginal families are recognized and fully supported culturally and economically in their important role in helping Aboriginal children and youth

overcome the many barriers faced along their education and employment path.

Recommendation 10: Enhance and integrate Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal programs and services to Aboriginal students once at college and university in order to address the many barriers to success including: funding, housing, day care, transportation, and racism.

Economic and Political Relations: The Emergence of Middle Class, Aboriginal- Canadians Who Vote for the NDP

The majority of participants stated that they were dual Aboriginal and Canadian citizens that are both proud to be Canadian and highly critical of the many ways in which Canada has not lived up to its treaty obligations and continues to fail Aboriginal people. In terms of economic and professional development, almost all participants felt that, because of having similar interests, values and aspirations, they belonged to the general, non-Aboriginal middle class in Canada. Many also expressed a strong interest in developing a professional network that supports Aboriginal economic growth and entrepreneurship.

In terms of voting preferences and the need for political representation, although there continues to be an association with Aboriginal organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis Nation of Ontario, and the Native Women's Association of Canada, Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury are far more likely to vote in non-Aboriginal elections and tended towards the NDP. Many respondents spoke of moving away from Aboriginal political involvement due to both a general lack of confidence

in Aboriginal political organizations and simply being too busy with work and family life. Nonetheless, a majority of participants continue to be involved politically with the Aboriginal community in ways 'other than voting' such as attending advocacy events such as Idle No More and Sisters in Spirit.

Recommendations stemming from these findings are in keeping with the overall research vision of supporting both a more integrated and welcoming urban Aboriginal community, enhanced better relations with non-Aboriginal people in Sudbury. In terms of internal political processes,

Recommendation 11: That Aboriginal representatives from the social services, the university and college and the wider community in Sudbury meet to discuss the idea and feasibility of establishing a politically representative urban Aboriginal Governing Council in Sudbury.

Such a council could provide for municipal level Aboriginal political representation of economically successful Aboriginal people in Sudbury, while being the focal point of political relations with the three levels of non-Aboriginal government.

In addition to creating an urban Aboriginal political forum in Sudbury, supporting both a more integrated and welcoming urban Aboriginal community and enhancing better relations with non-Aboriginal people in Sudbury can also be take the form of an economic and professional development association.

Recommendation 12: There is the need for Aboriginal economic leaders in Sudbury, in cooperation with mainstream private sector representatives, to meet to discuss the idea and feasibility of establishing a Sudbury Urban Aboriginal Professional Network as a partnership between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal private sector.

The mandate of this type of council would be to oversee the development of Aboriginal owned and operated businesses and other economic development initiatives in Sudbury. The Council could foster such activities as: information sharing, networking, assistance with business plans, peer support, investment clubs, joint-venture initiatives, entrepreneur role models and training programs.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aboriginal Urbanization in Canada

The majority of Aboriginal people in Canada now live in cities. The 1951 census recorded that only 6.7 per cent of the Aboriginal population resided in Canadian cities; by 2011 this number had increased to 56 per cent. In spite of popular stereotypes and misconceptions of Aboriginal people living primarily on remote reserves far from urban life, there is actually a long-standing Aboriginal connection to Canadian cities. Former Aboriginal settlements and gathering places have been transformed over time into cities, and many like Sudbury continue to be contested under outstanding land claims.¹

According to the most recent 2011 census data, in excess of 1 million people (1,400,685) now self-identify as Aboriginal persons², comprising 4.3 per cent of the total Canadian population. Notably, of those who identify as Aboriginal in

¹ Including areas within and/or adjacent to the cities of Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Ottawa. The Mississaugas of New Credit land claim covering much of the GTA was recently signed in 2010.

² Please see Appendix 1 for Statistics Canada definitions of Aboriginal identity.

Canada, a minority (24 per cent) live on a reserve, while the remaining 77 per cent live off-reserve in both rural (21 per cent) and urban (56 per cent) settings. The on-reserve population is comprised primarily (96 per cent) of registered Indians, while they account for only 50 per cent of the urban Aboriginal population, with Métis, Inuit, and non-Status populations making up 30%, 4%, and 15% respectively.

With 13,405 Aboriginal people now living in Sudbury, it has the fourth largest urban Aboriginal population in Ontario. The three other cities with larger Aboriginal populations are Toronto (36,995), Ottawa-Gatineau (30,570) and Thunder Bay (11,670). From a population of 2140 in 1981, the Aboriginal community in Sudbury has grown by a remarkable 526%, one of the fastest growth rates of any city in Canada, second only to Ottawa-Gatineau.

1.2 General Findings and Trends from Existing Research

This dramatic urbanization of Aboriginal people in Canada has inspired a growing body of research and publication over the last several decades³ which point to the following key findings and trends:

- There is a considerable and sustained growth of Aboriginal populations in urban areas over the past 30 years such that the majority of Aboriginal people now live in cities across Canada.

³*Not Strangers in These Parts 2003, Urban Aboriginal Task Force 2007, Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study 2010, Toronto Aboriginal Research Project 2011, Urban Aboriginal Communities in Canada 2011, Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian Cities 2011, and Well-Being in the Urban Aboriginal Community 2012, Indigenous in the City 2013, Urban Aboriginal Community 2012, and Indigenous in the City 2013.*

- While the on-reserve population is comprised primarily (96 per cent) of Registered Indians, they account for only 50 per cent of the urban Aboriginal population, with Métis, non-Status, and Inuit populations making up 30%, 15%, and 4% respectively.
- Urban Aboriginal communities today are extremely complex; they are generally young, culturally diverse, highly mobile, and home to an increasing number of newly identifying ‘new comers’.
- There is a strong sense of Aboriginal cultural vitality in the cities.
- Many members of urban Aboriginal communities maintain diverse ties to FN communities such as visiting family, holidays, and ceremonies.
- Urban Aboriginal communities are engaging in diverse practices of community and culturally-based organizational development and governance; processes that present many opportunities as well as challenges.
 - Institutional development has been focused primarily on the provision of culturally based, social services.
- The funding of urban Aboriginal organizations has been based upon the perceived needs of community members/ clients and not in response to urban Aboriginal rights claims.
- Urban Aboriginal communities are home to a number of ‘new arrivals’ or those recently choosing to identify as Aboriginal.
 - This relates closely to the legislative changes on Indian Status in Bill C-31 and Bill C-3 and the growth of Métis and Aboriginal ancestry populations.

- Recent statistical trends have pointed to improvements in educational levels, income, and employment rates for urban Aboriginal people.
- However, when compared to the overall population, urban Aboriginal residents trail behind on most indicators of community health.
- The persistent challenges for urban Aboriginal communities in Canada include: poverty and homelessness, racism, and language loss.
- Many members of urban Aboriginal communities experience varying degrees of poverty, while an emerging minority is increasingly affluent.

1.3 Aboriginal Economic Success in the City: Existing Research

When talking about urban Aboriginal economic success it is important to understand that this is happening as part of a much larger trend in Canada of income polarization. In other words, as a minority of urban Aboriginal people become economically successful, there is a larger counter trend towards poverty for the majority of urban Aboriginal people in Canada (Heisz 2007, 6). From 1981 to 2001 there was a 281 per cent growth in the number of Aboriginal employment income earners making \$40,000 or more. At the same time, however, those employed and making less than \$15,000 grew by 550% (Siggner and Costa 2005, 39).

In keeping with the Siggner and Costa study from 1981 to 2001 noted above, 2011 Census data reveals that those earning between \$40,000 and \$80,000 per year-- occupied a minority position of 23 per cent of the urban Aboriginal population. Seventy percent (70%) were either without an income or were part of the working poor, meaning that they earned less than

\$40,000 per year. As articulated in greater detail in The Basis of this Research 1.5 section of this report, it is hoped that better understanding the experiences of economic success will contribute to our knowledge of the pathways out of poverty.

In addition to Census data, a number of recent studies have also confirmed the emergence of a minority of urban Aboriginal people earning in excess of \$40,000 per year. The 2007 Urban Aboriginal Task Force (Ontario Final Report) and the 2012 Toronto Aboriginal Research Report identified 25% and 37% respectively. The 2012 National Aboriginal Peoples Survey further found 45% of the urban Aboriginal population in Canada making over \$30,000 and 21% making over \$60,000.

Some of the key findings and trends from research on this emerging minority of urban Aboriginal people experiencing economic success include:

- High levels of education and employment, stable family lives, and some home ownership.
- Many consider the city to be home.
- Living in diverse neighborhoods across the city.
- Equal numbers are both involved and not involved with urban Aboriginal community life.
- There is a great importance placed on maintaining Aboriginal cultural identities in the city and there is regular participation in cultural activities.
- There is a preference for cultural-based associations and events held outside of the social service network and there is little available outside of the Aboriginal Arts community.
- Those experiencing economic success tend to belong more to non-Aboriginal associations and feel more represented by non-Aboriginal political parties and this increases with income earned.

- There is participation in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in the city.
- There are few urban Aboriginal organizations designed to meet the needs of those experiencing economic success in the city.
- The Métis and those reporting Aboriginal ancestry rather than identity (‘new arrivals’) account for a significant proportion of those urban Aboriginal people experiencing economic success.
- There are tensions related to class/ethnicity. Some who are experiencing economic success are either moving away from or not engaging with the Aboriginal social services community.
 - There are significant experiences with ‘lateral violence’ and discrimination internal to the urban Aboriginal community.
- The economically successful urban Aboriginal people who are not working in the social services sector appear to be moving away from the Aboriginal community.

1.4 The 2007 Urban Aboriginal Task Force Sudbury Report: Aboriginal Economic Success

The 2007 Urban Aboriginal Task Force (UATF) report was an Ontario-wide, community based study that explored the overall experiences of the urban Aboriginal communities in five cities: Sudbury, Ottawa, Barrie-Midland, Kenora, and Thunder-Bay. The intent of the study was to guide the development of policy and programming at the local, provincial, and federal levels. An overarching finding of the UATF was that, despite

the large number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies providing programs and services to Aboriginal people living in the city, there remain significant gaps in services in a number of areas including: the persistent and serious problem of racism against Aboriginal people, finding affordable housing, securing stable employment, completing high school and postsecondary education, assisting the poor and at risk community members, accessing appropriate healthcare services, and building inclusive, culturally vibrant communities (UATF 2007).

Economic success and internal discrimination within the urban Aboriginal community were not originally intended as research topics for the UATF. However, they did nonetheless emerge in a significant and interrelated way in all five sites in Ontario. In terms of those members of the community experiencing economic success or what the UATF called the 'emerging middle class' of those making over \$40,000 per year, the UATF found that the majority of the middle class research participants were part of the local Aboriginal social service network either as Executive Directors or as Staff and that those 'middle class', urban Aboriginal people outside of this sector were under-represented in the UATF.

The following list summarizes the key UATF Sudbury Report findings of the emerging 'middle class' in Sudbury:

- Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the Sudbury Aboriginal population earns over \$40,000 per year and 16% earns over \$60,000 per year.
- There are several factors that contributed to economic success, including: the importance of culture, education, the basic necessities of transportation and daycare, supportive programming and over-coming racial barriers.
- There are no programs or services aimed at meeting the needs of those Aboriginal people experiencing economic

success in Sudbury. The focus is on meeting the pressing needs of those experiencing poverty and related challenges.

- For reasons such as the lack of relevant services and internal discrimination, a segment of the urban Aboriginal ‘middle class’ is increasingly moving away from the Aboriginal social services sector.
- There is a desire for Aboriginal education and cultural programming outside of the social services sector.

1.5 The Basis of this Research: Motivations and Research Methods

In spite of this growing reality of urban Aboriginal economic success and the associated tensions of internal discrimination, community fragmentation, and gaps in cultural programs and services, there has been very little research on economic success and its impact on community political development and social cohesion.

Initiated by KINXUS Aboriginal Urban Resources⁴, this ‘community driven’ research project has sought to better understand and support urban Aboriginal economic success, community development and cohesion, and the building of an engaged community network of Aboriginal entrepreneurs in Sudbury. To this end, this research explored the following topics:

- Demographic profiles of those Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury

⁴Membership includes: N'Swakamok Friendship Centre, Métis Nation of Ontario, Greater Sudbury Police (Aboriginal Liaison Office), University of Sudbury, Indigenous Studies, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Northern Aboriginal Services), Youth Innovation.ca, Suzanne Shawbonquit (Chair of KINXUS), Ontario Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration, and a Local Entrepreneur.

- Perceptions of home and community in Sudbury
- Aboriginal cultures in the city
- The reality of racism and internal discriminations in Sudbury
- The path to a professional life: key supports and challenges
- Economic and political relations
- Defining success and future Aspirations

Research Methods

This research adhered to the ‘Utility, Self-Voicing, Access and Inter-relationality’ (USAI) Research Framework Principles of the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centers.⁵ It emerged directly out of the priorities of KINXUS Urban Aboriginal Resources and may be considered as a guide for economic advancement, urban Aboriginal community engagement, contribution, and overall community development and cohesion in Sudbury.

The research has been ‘Self-Voicing’ in that the research team and process was overseen by KINXUS at all stages of the research and that KINXUS determined the authorship of the report and the presentation of the findings in a way that appropriately recognized participants for their contributions. There was a diversity of access possibilities for the research findings and the final report including local community organizations, the UAKN network, and scholarly venues. And lastly, the research highlights the many relationships involved in its production and included a diversity of perspectives in its findings.

⁵For further readings please see http://www.ofjfc.org/pdf/USAI_Research_Framework_Booklet.pdf

So as to build upon the work of the 2007 UATF Sudbury study by focusing on Aboriginal people experiencing economic success outside of the Aboriginal social service network, the following three criteria for research participants were stipulated:

- Having a household income over \$40,000,
- Not being employed with the social services sector, and
- Coming from a diversity of backgrounds (gender, culture, age)

Intended as an in-depth look into urban Aboriginal economic success in Sudbury this research blended qualitative and quantitative methods. The research sample size of 82 participants was distributed across the following three methodologies:

- In-depth key respondent interviews (49)
- 2 Sharing and discussion circles (30)
- 3 Individual sharing of life stories (3)

In terms of the size of the sample and the reliability of our quantitative findings illustrated in the charts below, we relied on the 2011 Census figures of 13,405 Aboriginal people living in Sudbury and 3,565 (27%) having household incomes in excess of \$40,000. Estimating those Aboriginal people not employed in the social services sector to be 2,800 allowed for a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 12% for an interview sample size of 49 participants. The addition of 33 participants providing qualitative findings within the discussion circles and life stories lends further weight to the reliability of the quantitative findings.

CHAPTER 2

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE EXPERIENCING ECONOMIC SUCCESS IN SUDBURY

Summary of Key Points in Chapter

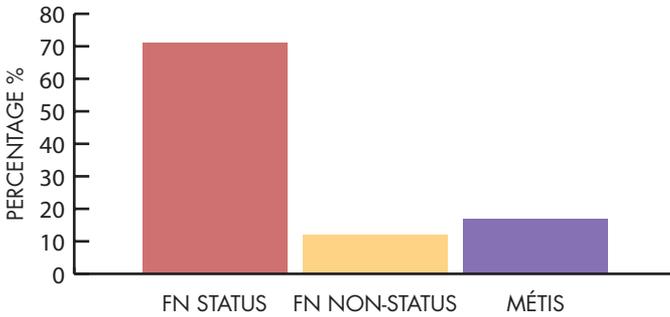
- According to the 2011 Census, of the 13,405 Aboriginal people living in Sudbury, 3,565 (27%) had household incomes in excess of \$40,000.
- In contrast to existing research that points to a high proportion of Métis people falling in the category of economically successful, the majority (71%) of Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury are First Nations/Status people.

- The vast majority (86%) of Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury are Anishnaabe.
- Within this group we see a preference for a stable married life and a small nuclear family.
- Forty nine percent (49%) of participants are earning between \$40,000 and \$70,000 per year, while 43% are earning \$80,000 and above.
- Participants are working in a diversity of fields including education, business and finance, government, law, communications and media, health, retail, mining, and food services, with 82% employed full-time or self-employed and experiencing overall good job satisfaction.

According to the 2011 Census, of the 13,405 Aboriginal people living in Sudbury, 3,565 (27%) had household incomes in excess of \$40,000. In contrast to existing research in this area which has found a relatively low proportion (50%) of First Nations, status people experiencing economic success in the city and high percentages of Métis, non-Status, as well as ‘new comers’ to Aboriginal identity, Charts 1 and 2 illustrates that the vast majority (71%) of participants identify as First Nations with Status and that all of the First Nations Status participants are Band Members, while only forty percent (40%) of non-Status participants are Band members. There are no Métis participants that are also First Nations Band members.

As well, only a small minority in each group (6% First Nations Status, 17% First Nations non-Status, 13% Métis) indicated that they were newly identifying as an Aboriginal person.

CHART 1: HOW DO YOU SELF IDENTIFY?
(N=49)



Of those interviewed, 71% self-identify as First Nation Status, 12% First Nations non-Status, and 17% Métis.

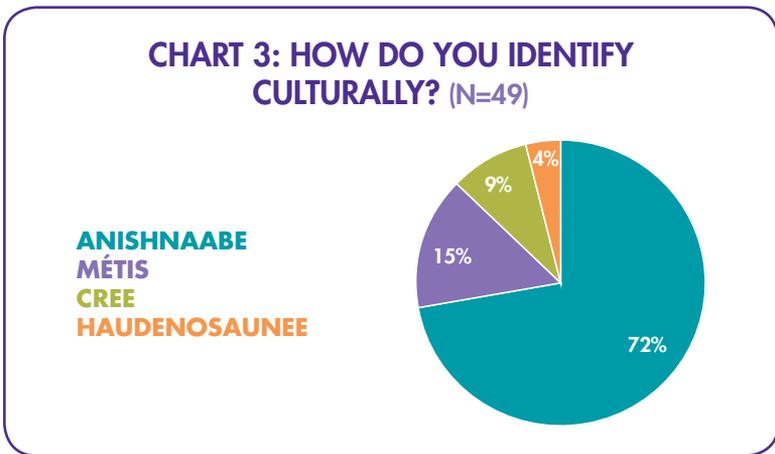
CHART 2: ARE YOU A FIRST NATIONS BAND MEMBER (N=47)



100% of First Nations Status are Band Members whereas only 40% of First Nations non-Status are Band members. There are no Métis that belong to a First Nations Band.

In contrast to the Aboriginal, cultural complexity found in larger urban centres, the 2007 UATF Sudbury study revealed that the vast majority (86%) of Aboriginal people in Sudbury

are Anishnaabe.⁶ Reflecting this cultural milieu, we see in Chart 3 that those Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury are primarily (72%) Anishnaabe as well. This is however in direct contrast to general trends in urban Aboriginal economic success that point to a high proportion of Métis people occupying the ranks of the economically successful.⁷ In Sudbury, the Métis account for only 15% of those experiencing economic success.



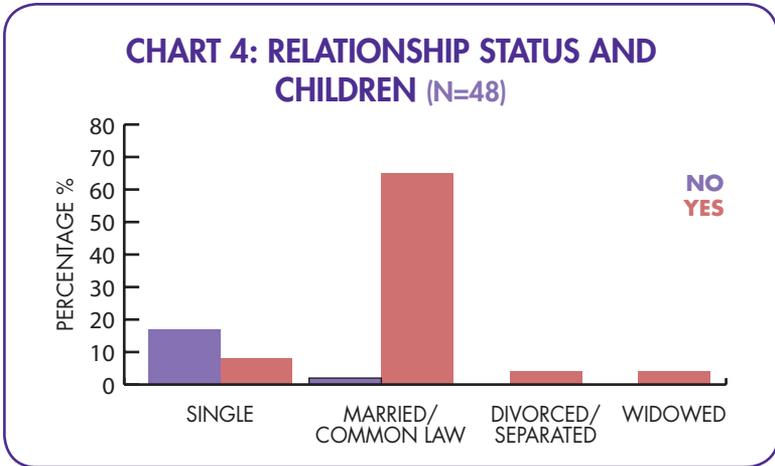
The vast majority (72%) of Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury are Anishnaabe, followed by Métis (15%), Cree (9%), and the Haudenosaunee.

In terms of age, gender, and marital status, eighty percent (80%) of participants were between the ages 25 and 54 and there were an equal split between men and women, with a small minority (2%) identifying as 2-Spirited.

⁶UATF Sudbury Report 2007. Please see at: <http://ofifi.org/sites/default/files/docs/UATFSudburyFinalReport.pdf>

⁷Parriag, A. and Chaulk, P. 2013 *The Urban Aboriginal Middle-Income Group in Canada: A Demographic Profile Vol 2, No 2 Aboriginal Policy Studies*. Please see at: <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/aps/article/view/19005>

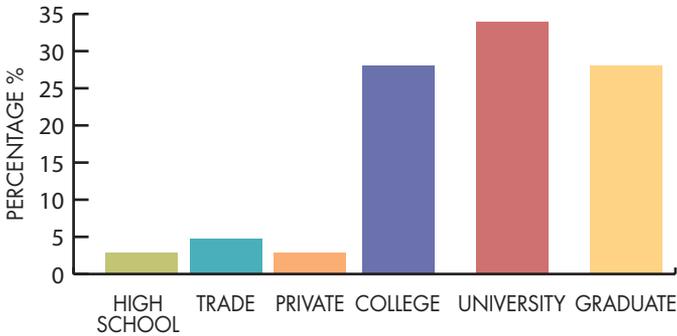
Within this group we see a preference for a stable married life and a small nuclear family; almost all (94%) indicating that they did not have any members of their extended family living with them. Sixty-five percent of respondents indicated that they were either married or common law. From Chart 4 we see the prevalence (65%) of marriage/common law with children, the majority (81%) of those having 1 to 3 children.



The majority (65%) of respondents were married with children.

From Chart 5 we see that the majority (92%) of participants have completed post secondary education at either a college or university and that 29% have completed a graduate degree at university.

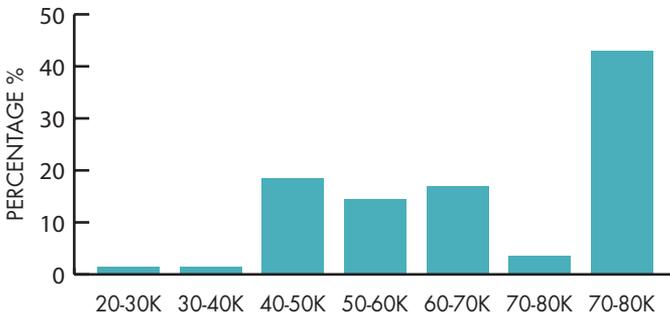
CHART 5: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED (N=49)



A significant Majority (92%) went to either college or university.

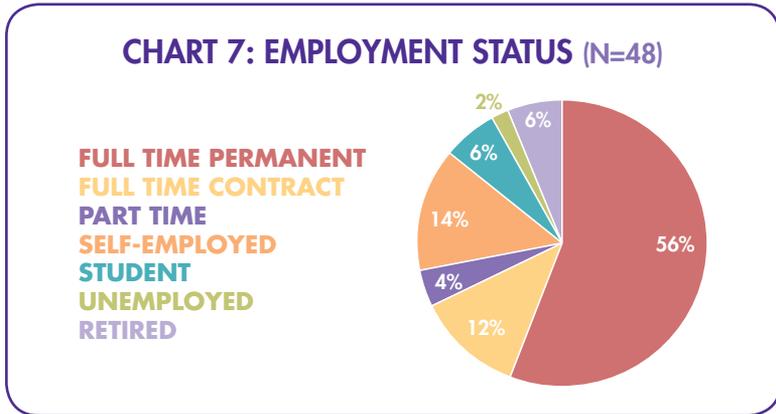
We see from Chart 6 that forty nine percent (49%) of respondents are earning between \$40,000 and \$70,000 per year, while 43% are earning \$80,000 and above. Not surprisingly there is a positive correlation between income and a university education and more specifically with a university graduate degree.

CHART 6: TOTAL FAMILY INCOME (N=49)



In terms of total family income, 49% of respondents are making between \$40-70K per year while 42% are making over \$80K per year.

We also see from Chart 7 that the majority (82%) of respondents are employed either as full-time permanent or full-time contract employees or are self-employed.



The majority (82%) of respondents are employed either as full-time permanent or full-time contract employees or are self-employed. Only a minority (4%) are working part-time. Six percent (6%) are either students or retired.

The vast majority (86%) are working in a diversity of fields including education, business and finance, government, law, communications and media, health, retail, mining, and food services, with 82% employed full-time or self-employed. Moreover, participants are experiencing overall good job satisfaction with 88% being either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. Notably, job satisfaction increasing substantially with increased income, with approximately half (50%) of those reporting being either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘somewhat satisfied’ making over \$80,000 plus per year.

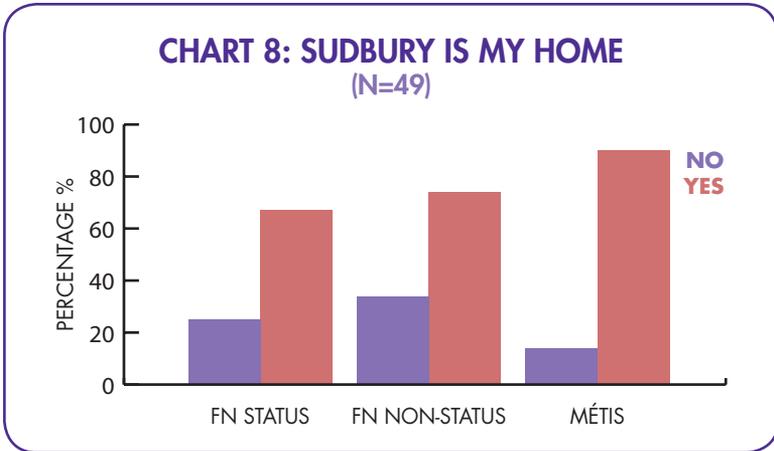
CHAPTER 3:

SUDBURY AS HOME

Summary of Key Points in Chapter

- Although most (70%) of participants were not born in Sudbury, almost all said that they liked living in Sudbury and (76%) consider it to be home.
- Participants spoke of Sudbury as their home because of the presence of their family, friends and community and a significant number are long-term residents having lived in Sudbury for more than 10 years, while many have lived in Sudbury for more than 25 years.
- Participants are living in a diversity of neighborhoods across the city. The majority of participants (63%) own their homes and were able to choose their neighbourhood.
- Just over half of the respondents (53%) have never lived in a First Nation's community, which includes 37% of those identifying as First Nations Status and 83% of those identifying as First Nations non-Status.
- Of those having lived in a First Nations community, a majority (63%) visit this community periodically to visit family and friends, for holidays, cultural reasons, and for weddings and funerals.

Although most (70%) of participants were not born in Sudbury, the vast majority (76%) consider it to be home and almost all of the respondents (92%) said that they liked living in Sudbury. From Chart 8 below we see that although a majority of participants consider Sudbury to be their home, this response was more prevalent for the Métis followed by the First Nations Status and then the First Nations Non-Status.



Almost all (90%) of the Métis and a majority of First Nations Status (74%) and First Nations Non-Status (67%) participants consider Sudbury to be home.

From the quotes below we see that respondents spoke of Sudbury as their home in terms of the presence of their family, friends and community, the comfortable size of Sudbury as being not too big, but still large enough to offer opportunities not available in their communities of origin.

*It is home for me. My family is here and we love the area. It is small enough with good access to the green space and nature. Toronto is too crazy and Wiki is too small.
(Key Respondent Interview)*

It is my hometown. All of my family lives here... it is really the only place that I have lived for any period of time.
(Key Respondent Interview)

Sudbury is my home. My family is all here and we love the area. The city is small enough that we are still able to get out fishing and we love the green space throughout the city.
(Key Respondent Interview)

I consider Sudbury my home now. I have lots of friends here, I am involved in the community. I have a girlfriend here and I hope to buy a nice house on the lake and start a small family with her. There are way more opportunities here for education, employment and learning about my traditions. I do miss some of my friends and the community of Moosonee. It was very close, everyone knew what each other was doing and looked after each other. I feel like I belong here, very rarely do I go a day without seeing someone I know. Here at Laurentian we have a lot of events that bring students together. I have no family in Sudbury, just friends. (Life History Participant)

When asked specifically about what they liked about living in Sudbury, respondents pointed to the many benefits of living in a mid-sized city with a diversity of positive attributes such as good schools, professional opportunities, health services, cultural and recreational events, community living and with easy access to the natural environment.

Sudbury has a lot to offer our family, there are good schools, health care, and a lot of activities for my kids as well as festivals year around. (Key Respondent Interview)

We like that our kid's school is involved with the community and there are good job opportunities. But we do miss our friends and family in Moosonee. (Key Respondent Interview)

Because of friends and community as well as work, education, and health services and recreation ...not too big of a city but the roads are terrible. (Key Respondent Interview)

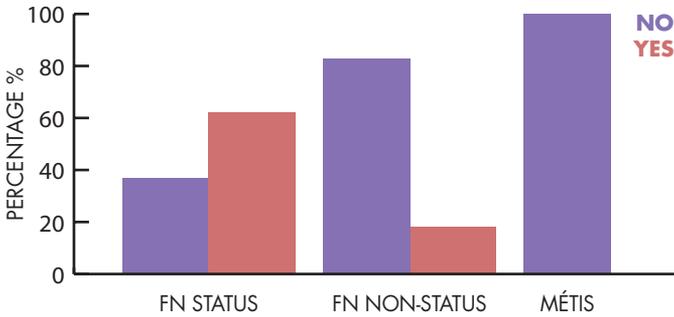
We love Sudbury. This is where our family and friends live and we have much community involvement with both the Aboriginal and mainstream communities here. (Key Respondent Interview)

One respondent did also note their experiences with homophobia in Sudbury and the lack of services for transgendered people.

There is a real lack of services for transgendered people in Sudbury and a generalized homophobia in the services that are available....there is much work that needs to be done to create an inclusive community here in Sudbury. (Key Respondent Interview)

A significant number of participants moved to Sudbury from the surrounding First Nations or towns and a minority arrived from southern Ontario and the northern coastal communities. From Chart 9 we see that just over half of the respondents (53%) have never lived in a First Nation's community, which includes 37% of those identifying as First Nations Status and 83% of those identifying as First Nations non-Status.

CHART 9: HAVE YOU EVER LIVED IN A FIRST NATION COMMUNITY? (N=49)



The vast majority (83%) of First Nations Non-Status and all (100%) of the Métis participants have never lived in a First Nations community. In contrast, a minority (37%) of those identifying as First Nations Status have also never lived in a First Nations community.

Of those primarily First Nations Status respondents that indicated having lived in a First Nations community, there continue to be family and cultural ties. A majority (63%) indicated that they visit this community periodically either once a month or several times a year on average to visit family and friends, for holidays, cultural reasons, and for weddings and funerals.

**TABLE 1: REASONS FOR VISITING
FIRST NATION COMMUNITY**

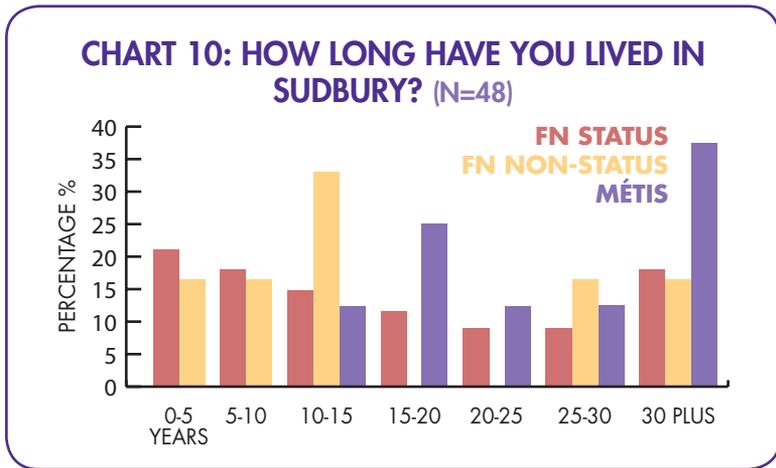
RANKED IN ORDER TO IMPORTANCE	
Reason	Ranking
Visit Family and Friends	1
Cultural Practices	2
Funerals and Weddings	3
For Holidays	4
Political Involvement	5
Employment	6
Other	7

I continue to relate to my community mostly through the internet. I love the internet. I get to talk to people back home, I keep in touch with family, I am on face book. I have gotten closer to my mom's side and her family tree through the internet. I get to keep in touch with my childhood friends. I get to talk more with people than I ever have. I have learned about my family tree and extended family. The last time I was back in my community was in 1996 to attend Sunny's funeral and even then I felt like I was in a strange place and strange people. No one even acknowledged me except for family. (Life History Participant)

Many respondents have lived in Sudbury for a long time. Some were born here, while others have come to the city in recent years. The vast majority (69%) of respondents are long-term

residents having lived in Sudbury for more than 10 years, while 31% have lived in Sudbury for more than 25 years.

From Chart 10 we see that Métis participants have generally lived in Sudbury longer than the First Nations Status and non-Status who are more highly represented in the 0-10 years range. Of those that moved to Sudbury, the majority moved for post secondary education, employment opportunities, and to be close to family and friends, in that order.



First Nations (Status and non-Status) have tended to live in Sudbury for less time when compared to the Métis who are more highly represented in the 20 to 30 plus years categories.

From the map below we see that participants are living in a diversity of neighborhoods across the city. In particular we see a number of respondents living in the suburbs of New Sudbury, Hanmer, and Lively as well as in the Downtown and Old Hospital/Kingsmount neighbourhoods.

It is important to note that a significant majority of those interviewed (85%) indicated that they did not consider their neighbourhood to be part of their community.

It's comfortable and close to things and family. We have a pool and nice yard and it is close to trails. (Key respondent Interview)

We live in a good neighbourhood. It is safe and we have good neighbours and a nice yard backing on to bush. (Key respondent Interview)

I love my home. We have a big house with a big yard and pool. We live in a nice neighbourhood and it is home away from my adopted family. (Key respondent Interview)

We live in a large house and a decent neighbourhood; close enough to access downtown core but far enough to be removed from the negativities of downtown. (Key respondent Interview)

We own our home and live on the outskirts, but still close to amenities. I like the area, it is safe, close to trails, in a nice neighbourhood, and not too far from work. It is a great property for kids. (Key respondent Interview)

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNITY LIVING IN SUDBURY

Summary of Key Points in Chapter

- There is a strong (76%) sense of community belonging in the city and participation in a diverse array of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.
- The urban Aboriginal community in Sudbury is diverse in terms of cultures, First Nations-urban connections, social services, and postsecondary institutions.
- The urban Aboriginal community is focused around two main hubs: the social services (primarily the N'Swakamok Friendship Centre and the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre) and the University (Laurentian University/University of Sudbury) and colleges.
- Aboriginal people experiencing economic success feel isolated and excluded from the social services community and tend to gravitate towards the university and college Aboriginal communities.

- The urban Aboriginal community is not internally cohesive and is separate and not well connected to the mainstream, non-Aboriginal community.
- Participants have a strong sense of their overall contribution to the urban Aboriginal community as a whole, but feel that these contributions often go unnoticed and are not appreciated.

In terms of community living, a majority (76%) of participants indicated having a sense of community belonging in the city and participation in a diverse array of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities including the arts, culture, sports and recreation, and their professional community. Some of the specific clubs and associations referred to include: the Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, Laurentian University and Cambrian College Boards and Committees, the Ontario College of Teachers, the United Way, the Aboriginal Business Association, the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board of Ontario, Northern Youth Services, Rethink Green Membership Committee, and the Knights of Columbus. Many further indicated family, friends and an educational institution (Laurentian University, University of Sudbury, and/or Cambrian College) as the focus of their community.

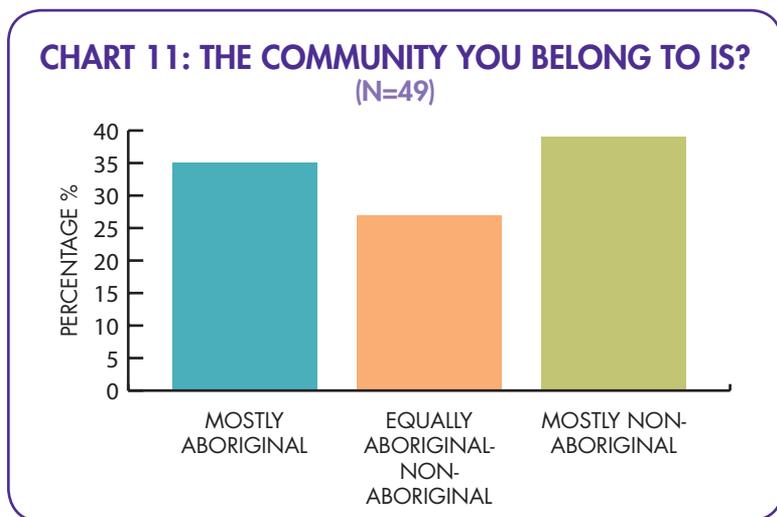
*Sports, work, Laurentian University, Cambrian, Friends...
I really belong to many different communities in Sudbury.
(Key respondent Interview)*

I have invested thousands of hours into the general Sudbury community through culture and art activities with arts organizations and education institutions. I really feel the need to help make Sudbury more culturally aware and inclusive and creative. (Key respondent Interview)

I belong to several groups and participate in many different activities. I am involved in the labor movement here in Sudbury and so I am on the District Labor Council and also I am on the United Way Board. (Key respondent Interview)

I play a lot of sports and belong to a variety of leagues. I also have a church group and spend time with co-workers, and my neighbours. (Key respondent Interview)

From the charts below we see an overall sense of belonging to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Sudbury where the vast majority (72%) of participants have either many or some non-Aboriginal friends. Notably, in Chart 11 there is roughly an equal division between those who say that their community is either mostly Aboriginal or it is mostly non-Aboriginal.

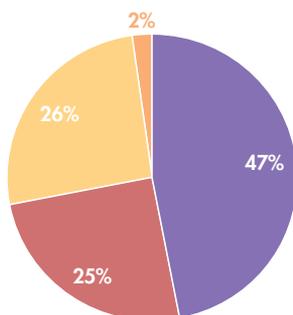


There is roughly an equal division between those who say that their community is either mostly Aboriginal (35%) or it is mostly non-Aboriginal (39%).

CHART 12: NON-ABORIGINAL FRIENDS

(N=49)

MANY
SOME
A FEW
NONE



The vast majority of participants (72 %) have either many or some non-Aboriginal friends

Almost all of those interviewed (92%) spoke of the presence of an urban Aboriginal community in Sudbury that is diverse in terms of cultures, First Nations-urban connections, social services, and postsecondary institutions and which tends to focus around three main hubs: the N'Swakamok Friendship Centre, the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre, and the University (Laurentian University/University of Sudbury and colleges.

Yes I belong to the Aboriginal community in Sudbury. Everyone knows everyone. There is no specific gathering place but it still feels like community. (Key respondent Interview)

There are several Aboriginal communities in Sudbury. There is a community on campus, one at the Health Centre, The Friendship Centre and the Aboriginal professional community also. (Key respondent Interview)

There are really three Aboriginal communities in Sudbury: the Friendship center, the health center, and the post secondary community. (Key respondent Interview)

There is a large network or community of Aboriginal people here in town who are connected and meet at ceremonies, workshops, workplace, etc. (Key respondent Interview)

There is the Métis community, the community at University of Sudbury, The Atikameksheng FN community also which is very active, but not recognized by mainstream. (Key respondent Interview)

There are Powows and First Nation communities around Sudbury, There are lots of people back and forth adding to the Native community here in town. (Key respondent Interview)

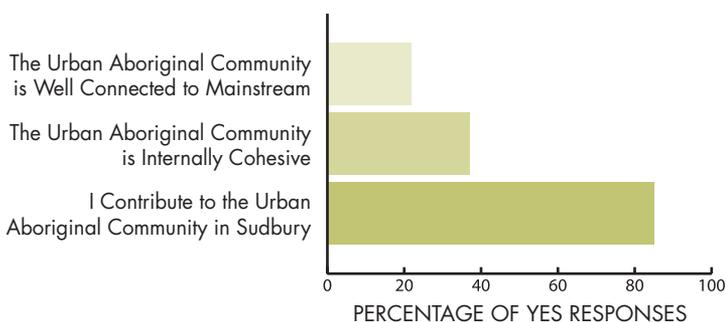
There are three main Aboriginal communities in Sudbury, the Shkagamik-Kwe programs, the N'Swakamok Group, and the University Indigenous Student Circle. (Key respondent Interview)

We are visibly present, you can drive down the street and see us. We attend gatherings at the health centre, the friendship centre, the university, the college, the powwows, there are enough of us that you can see us in community. And there is a lot of solidarity stuff that we do which is very visible. (Key respondent Interview)

In Chart 13 below we see the vast majority (86%) indicated that they contributed to the overall Aboriginal community in Sudbury, but felt that it was neither internally cohesive nor well connected to the mainstream.

CHART 13: COMMUNITY LIVING IN SUDBURY

(N=49)



Eighty-six percent (85%) of participants indicated that they contribute to the urban Aboriginal community in Sudbury, while only a minority (37%) felt that it was internally cohesive and only 22% indicated that it was well connected to the non-Aboriginal community.

Many of the respondents spoke of their contributions to the urban Aboriginal community in terms of their participation in cultural and ceremonial practices, the sharing of cultural knowledge, and their work for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations towards improving relations overall.

I am an active member of the Métis community in Sudbury and I am a Métis Elder at Laurentian. I went on the water walk, and I am a Regional Counselor for the Métis Nation of Ontario for this region. (Key respondent Interview)

I attend ceremony... select ones not all. Occasionally we have ceremony at home with the kids as there is a lack of tradition and culture based activities at their school. I also teach at the university here in Sudbury. (Key respondent Interview)

I attend cultural events here in Sudbury and I am an advisor in the Aboriginal department at Cambrian College. (Key respondent Interview)

I sit on the Board as the First Nation Rep. at the United Way. I am also in a drum group in the city and work at the Native Centre at the college. (Key respondent Interview)

I sit on various committees in the city and work with industry to connect training initiatives to Aboriginal people in the community to help align opportunities with needs. (Key respondent Interview)

I contribute through the Knights of Columbus and as an environmentalist, through my hunting I am able to feed my family and friends by sharing meat. (Key respondent Interview)

Through my work and though volunteering at the school, and as a committee member with the Little NHL. (Key respondent Interview)

I volunteer in the community in many ways; I am a Board Member for community organizations, through my artwork and my work generally, by providing education supports to youth, through the 'Open Doors' event, through drumming and singing at powwows and celebrations and in bringing culture to both Aboriginal and mainstream facilities. I like to focus on bridging access to programs and services and increasing positive visibility. (Key respondent Interview)

From Chart 13, we see that only a minority (37%) of participants felt that the urban Aboriginal community in Sudbury is internally cohesive. When asked to elaborate on this question, many pointed to cultural and regional differences within the community.

We are connected, but still very different. There are diverse cultures around First Nations and Métis, and there are Anishnaabes from other areas with diverse customs and general ways of relating. (Key respondent Interview)

There are so many different types of Aboriginal people in Sudbury. Some are unaware of culture and are more mainstream while others are very culturally connected. (Key respondent Interview)

People can be at different stages. Not every person is working together and helping. There is still a lot of intergenerational trauma and still a lot of healing to do. (Key respondent Interview)

Lots of people turn out at events and people help each other out. Most people get along, but there is a group of certain individuals that does not get along well. (Key respondent Interview)

As well, a key finding of the Sharing Circles was the challenges of lateral violence and nepotism within the community such that many of those experiencing economic success expressed a feeling of being pushed out or excluded from the social services community.

The only time I felt comfortable in the Aboriginal community was at Cambrian College or Laurentian university. All the other places I find have a lot of cliques. Either you're in or you're not. They're not very connected, if you do not have any personal connections with any one in the community then you won't know about events (Sharing Circle)

In terms of the community in Sudbury, I feel more comfortable with the non-Aboriginal community. I have a good sense of who I am. I love my work, home, and family life. I really have to force myself to go to Aboriginal events. But I do it for my kids..to teach them about who they are. But these events are really uncomfortable for me. What can I say, I enjoy my life, but I feel out of place in the Native community. (Sharing Circle)

There is a lot of lateral violence and harassment in the community. There needs to be more value and respect of Anishinaabe successes. (Key respondent Interview)

The community can be very cliquish if you're not a part of a particular group or family... then you are kind of left on the outside and excluded and this can lead to nepotism and hurt your opportunities for employment. (Key respondent Interview)

We don't celebrate our Aboriginal professionals enough. We had our first medical doctor graduate in Wiki in 1951 you would think this guys name would have been kicked around our schools as a role model. (Sharing Circle)

There is a split between the Successful Aboriginal people and the downtown Aboriginal people. There is one main community and it is the social services community.. although there are Aboriginal student communities in the post secondary schools. (Sharing Circle)

How you're connected to people in the community dictates your welcoming. People are not to good if you are from the outside. (Key respondent Interview)

There is no way to get the news...no organized communication system. It is hard to get in touch with people and to hear what's going on. (Key respondent Interview)

I do a lot with the urban community like the diabetes group, the Friendship Centre, and healthcare, but the programs are not promoted for new people. It is almost like there is a secret club. Key respondent Interview)

When you work in mainstream it's hard unless you're going to an event on the weekend – other than that, there's not really much. Go to events on occasion in White Fish but usually only go there to get gas. (Sharing Circle)

Unless you access the services downtown, you're not really involved. If you're not part of the Friendship Centre circle form a young age then you really don't feel apart of that community. You just can't walk in and feel comfortable or welcome. So you just stay away and don't get involved. (Sharing Circle)

The successful middle class may have different cultural needs and places they would feel comfortable gathering and socializing. We need to establish more mainstream venues where the successful people who are also experiencing a sense of isolation can get together and have a community of their own. (Sharing Circle)

The absence of a coordinated and inclusive communications network were discussed as barriers to Aboriginal community building in Sudbury.

There is not enough knowing what is going on and where things happen, so people know what's out there and available. There are a lot of people left out because of this... (Key respondent Interview)

I don't know of the events and I am not made aware of them. I am more focused on being in Hanmer and my life there. I would like to be more informed of events....I guess I am a little shy to be more involved. (Key respondent Interview)

From Chart 13 above, we also see that only a small minority (22%) of participants felt that the urban Aboriginal community in Sudbury is well connected to the mainstream, non-Aboriginal community. When asked to elaborate on this question, many pointed to an overall separation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Sudbury and the challenging prevalence of racial stereotypes against Aboriginal

people in the media. There was some acknowledgement of relationship building happening in the schools and some other public institutions, but overall it was felt that working towards more connections between the communities would help to better understanding and foster more equitable relations.

I think the Aboriginal community needs to take more leadership and be more connected. Mainstream is very racist against Aboriginal people. There is never anything positive in the media about Aboriginal people. There are many good stories to share about our community. (Key respondent Interview)

In some ways there is progress happening through Aboriginal representation in the schools and other public institutions, but there is a long way to go towards bringing Native and non-Native people together and having a better understanding of issues and struggles and ending racism. (Key respondent Interview)

There is only bad representation in media. No one knows anything about us, who we are, how long we have lived here, how many Native communities are close by...the news media is very biased against us and people really believe the stereotypes in mainstream. (Key respondent Interview)

Things are very separated. Aboriginal people keep to themselves for the most part and don't invite or advertise for outsiders. At gatherings there are mostly Aboriginal people even if non-Aboriginal people are invited they don't really attend. (Key respondent Interview)

We live in an "apartheid society". People don't like to hear that and we all don't agree on this, but its the truth; everything is SO separated between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. (Key respondent Interview)

The City doesn't support Aboriginal initiatives or cultural initiatives. The connection with 'the city' (municipal government) isn't strong and could be better. (Key respondent Interview)

There is a lot of work to do to deal with the misconceptions on both sides. There is not mutual respect happening right now. (Key respondent Interview)

CHAPTER 5

ABORIGINAL CULTURES IN THE CITY

Summary of Key Points in Chapter

- Participants spoke of culture as the daily living as an Aboriginal person, a ‘shared worldview’ or common experience of languages, foods, traditions, the arts, knowledge, and in connecting and identifying with the earth and one’s ancestors.
- The vast majority (82%) of participants participated in a diversity of non-Aboriginal cultures in the city, including festivals and parades throughout the year and being involved in philanthropic and professional associations.
- Almost all participants (94%) consider Aboriginal specific cultural activities to be important for a number of reasons, including: a positive sense of Self, living a good life in the city, instilling a sense of pride and respect within Aboriginal children and youth, and fostering feelings of community belonging.

- For many, Elders play important roles in their lives while only a minority (27%) reported being able to speak an Aboriginal language.
- There has been very little exposure to learning about their communities, histories, cultures, and languages along their educational path.
- There is a strong desire for more cultural based programming and services in a number of areas including language, medicine and health, ceremony and teachings, and traditional hunting and food practices.
- The vast majority of participants (82%) felt that there was an absence of Aboriginal cultural visibility in Sudbury and that this needed to be changed.

One's culture is often difficult to define as it can be used to describe all aspects of everyday living that can change over time and place in relation to others. This research has found that for Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury, Aboriginal culture is considered integral for living a good life in the city, feeling part of the Aboriginal community, and instilling a sense of pride and respect for young people. As was also found in this research, colonial racism can lead to a negative questioning of culture and one's cultural authenticity, often leading to experiences of social exclusion and community divisions.

When asked their views on the meaning of 'culture' generally, many participants spoke of the many ways of living and knowing who you are as an Aboriginal person. It is a 'shared worldview' or common experience that includes, languages, foods, traditions, the arts, knowledge, and in connecting and identifying with the earth and one's ancestors.

Culture is a way of life and living. It is to live the good life with one's teachings, in balance, and with our language and identities. (Key respondent Interview)

When I think of Aboriginal culture I think of smudge, songs, drum, teachings, mother earth, hunting and learning more about my people and acknowledging that I am Aboriginal and being proud of our culture. (Key respondent Interview)

Culture to me is the arts as well as leisure activities, going to powwow, foods, cooking, and also symbols. Culture is our unique humour expressed in our language and the music of various groups like country and Native artists. (Key respondent Interview)

I am First Nations. Culture to me is about our background, family history, and traditions. It is where you have come from and where you're going in the future, and being able to identify with a culture. (Key respondent Interview)

Culture is in our bodies, minds, and spirits. It is a way of life. It is how we identify with mother earth, how close we are tied to the land and territory and in understanding that everything works in cycles. (Key respondent Interview)

You grow up in culture. It is the words we use like 'chum' and it is our humour, foods, and how you view your family... my mother is part of my immediate family. (Key respondent Interview)

Culture is knowing who you are, your identity. Knowing that you are part of a community that is similar in beliefs, interests and values. (Key respondent Interview)

Culture is our language and teachings. I am proud of the movement of cultural revival which is connected to the good care for the earth but which also evolves with new times and technologies. (Key respondent Interview)

It is a shared worldview that expresses itself through language, beliefs, customs, food, dance, arts of a particular

group of people. It is not 'racial', but it is connected to one's ancestors. (Key respondent Interview)

For Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury, the vast majority (82%) participate in diverse non-Aboriginal cultures in the city. Many participants spoke of attending the many festivals and parades throughout the year and being involved in philanthropic and professional associations.

I attend both mainstream and Aboriginal events here in Sudbury like the Italian and Greek festivals and I especially like Canada day where everybody seems to come out and share their cultures. (Key respondent Interview)

My family goes to all kinds of festivals and parades as well as the heart and stroke events and the dragon boat festival. (Key respondent Interview)

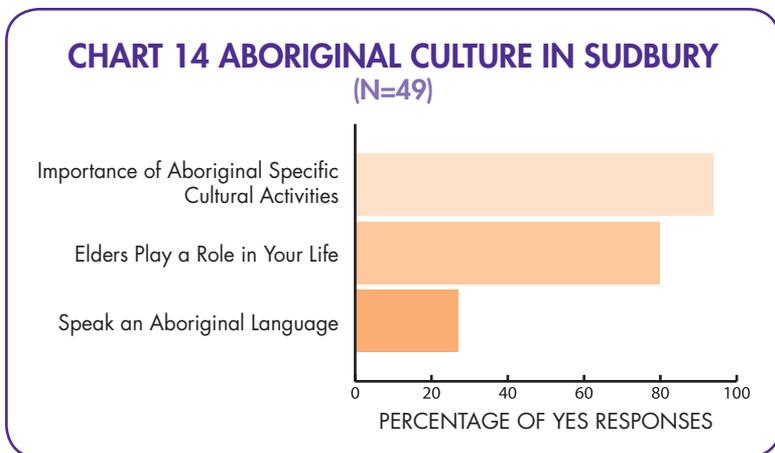
We go to lots of cultural events which includes work related and our kids school events. We also participate in the Down Syndrome Association events during the year. (Key respondent Interview)

One Life History participant spoke of the need for flexibility in understanding what is culturally Aboriginal and/or non-Aboriginal as there are often overlapping boundaries.

Non-Aboriginal activities? I don't know if there is such a thing. If we think of Aboriginal activities as hunting, fishing, Powwows, or all things culturally attached; then it leaves little room in discussing things like entrepreneurship and economic development, etc. I do engage in activities such as going to the movies, going to science north, volunteering at various organizations, and attending lectures. It doesn't make the activity or myself more or less Aboriginal. It just

means I have more opportunity to engage in things that are typically found in an Urban setting. I can't just decide I want to start goose hunting in the middle of Ramsey Lake, although there are a lot of geese that molt there in the spring. Likewise I can't just engage in post-secondary education unless I have things to assist in my learning such as computers or high speed internet. (Life History Participant)

As we can see in Chart 14, almost all participants (94%) consider Aboriginal specific cultural activities to be important. Participants spoke of the relationship between culture and a positive sense of Self. The opportunity to participate in Aboriginal cultural activities is considered essential to living a good life in the city, for instilling a sense of pride and respect within Aboriginal children and youth, and being able to pass it along to future generations. Participants also spoke of the need for more Aboriginal cultural events and opportunities to feel a part of the Aboriginal community.



Ninety-four Percent (94%) consider Aboriginal specific cultural activities to be important and 80% indicated that Elders play a role in their lives. Only a minority (27%) speak an Aboriginal Language

I want to learn more for myself and my children so that we can keep our traditions and pass them down to next generation like male and female traditional roles, men keeping fire, women keeping water. We would lose our cultures and knowledge if we did not participate with like-minded people. It allows us to feel wanted, accepted and understood. (Key respondent Interview)

I have always made it a point to participate. This shows and gives respect for others and self because I am an Aboriginal person. I like to connect with other Aboriginal people and support the culture. (Key respondent Interview)

For me, it makes me feel connected and grounded for my kids. I like to show my kids more than I did growing up. I did not grow up knowing anything or going to events, but I know it is good for kids to participate. (Key respondent Interview)

It gives us an opportunity to honour connection to ancestors and our origins. It grounds me and ties me to culture and a better sense of myself. Keeps you grounded as to where you came from, family, ancestor connection learning is key to keeping a culture thriving. (Key respondent Interview)

It reminds me of who I am and why I am proud of who I am. It give me a sense of pride to live it daily and to keep it alive and to grow within it and to pass it along by involving children and grandkids and always discovering more about myself. (Key respondent Interview)

This is how I live up to my responsibility to keep it alive and strong and to keep up with my heritage; learning, staying involved, and not losing our traditions. (Key respondent Interview)

It is about learning and practicing it; celebrating who we are and to be around the Aboriginal community. It is about

healing and staying balanced to remember who you are; to keep our culture strong, and to pass on to future generations. (Key respondent Interview)

From Chart 14 we also see that for a significant majority of participants, Elders play important roles in their lives while only a minority (27%) speak an Aboriginal language. Participants placed a very high value on their relationships with Elders and consider them as key advisors and confidants for important life decisions. They go to Elders for spiritual guidance, counselling, healing, and traditional teachings and language. Elders are the role models in the community and they carry and practice the cultural knowledge, can conduct ceremony, and are always there to mentor and help people along their life path.

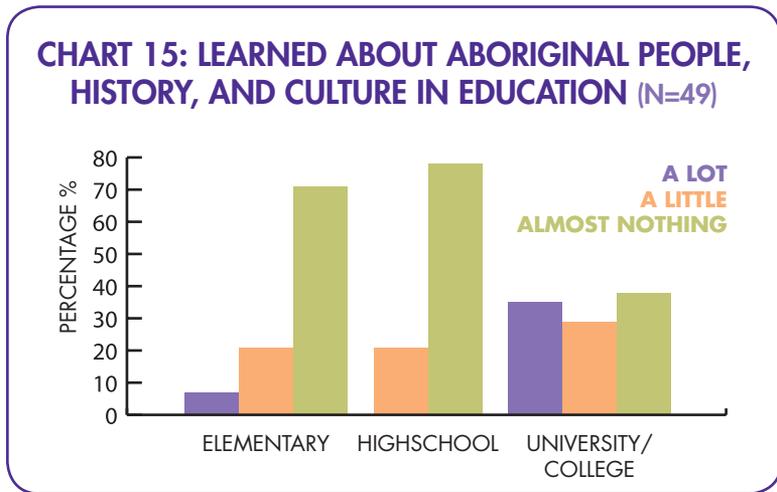
They are my advisors and reminders of what is important in life. Elders are always there to give support, companionship, wisdom and knowledge. They have the experience and knowledge of medicine, healing, and teaching. (Key respondent Interview)

Elders are confidants, friends and teachers. They do the fasting and sweats and they teach us how to live well and give us a sense of continuity. (Key respondent Interview)

I go to them for life questions and teachings and always feel humble in their presence. I listen to their words and they guide me with my healing and share traditional teachings and language. (Key respondent Interview)

I receive guidance and advice from Elder; which enhance my own life and well being. They influence my decisions with their wisdom and are my role models and keep me grounded and always make me laugh! (always a good sense of humour is important). (Key respondent Interview)

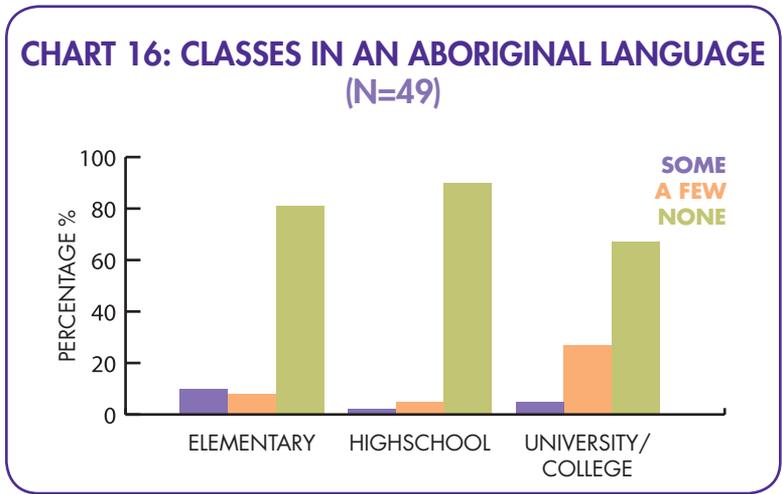
In spite of the expressed importance of Aboriginal culture and the role that Elders play in the lives of the majority of participants, Chart 15 indicates that those experiencing economic success in Sudbury have had very little exposure to learning about their communities, histories, and cultures along their educational path. The vast majority (70 to 80%) indicated that they had almost no exposure to these topics in elementary and high school and roughly sixty-four percent (64%) indicated that they only began to have some exposure to these topics at the university and college level.



Almost no exposure in elementary (71%) and high school (78%), but 35% and 29% indicating ‘a lot’ and ‘a little’ exposure respectively to these topics at the university and college level.

Chart 14 above also illustrates that only a minority (22%) indicated being able to speak an Aboriginal language well enough to carry on a conversation. It is important to note that this percentage of responses is less than half of what was indicated by the general Aboriginal population in the Urban Aboriginal Task Force Study of 2007, where 58% of respondents indicated being able to speak an Aboriginal language (UATF, 2007).

This discrepancy is in keeping with the significant downward trend in Aboriginal language use on reserves and in cities across the country (including Sudbury)⁸, but may also point to less Aboriginal language proficiency among those experiencing economic success than that of the general Aboriginal population in Sudbury. Chart 16 below further indicates that, similar to having had very little exposure to learning about their communities, histories, and cultures along their educational path, the vast majority (80 to 90%) of those experiencing economic success in Sudbury has had no classes in an Aboriginal language in elementary and high school and only twenty-seven percent (27%) indicated that they only began to have some exposure to Aboriginal languages at the university and college level.



Eighty percent (80%) and (90%) indicated no classes in an Aboriginal language in elementary and high school and only twenty-seven percent (27%) indicated having some exposure at the university and college level.

⁸For further reading please see, Fitzmaurice, K. and McCaskill, D. 2015. *Aboriginal Communities in the City: Reflections Along the Path to Self-Government in Visions of the Heart*. Pages 330-331

When asked what types of specific Aboriginal programs or services in Sudbury would improve your quality of life, a majority (60%) of participants spoke to the need for cultural and language learning opportunities in a number of areas from traditional hunting and fishing practices, foods, and traditional medicines and health.

*There is not enough funding for traditional activities, like medicine picking and food preparation, and other cultural activities so that people can go out and learn together.
(Key respondent Interview)*

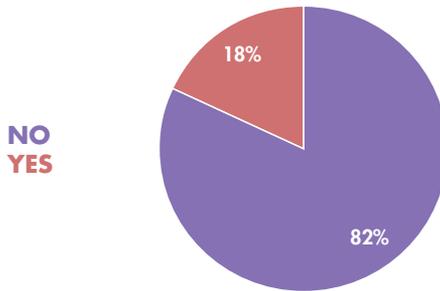
It would be great to have more opportunities for ceremony and teachings where our children can spend time with Elders. (Key respondent Interview)

We need more cultural programs and Language courses. We used to have some, but now we don't seem to and it is so important as it connects everything... (Key respondent Interview)

Better education and more program funding would mean more courses to learn how to hunt traditionally and butcher a moose. We need more Native traditional courses overall and in the language. (Key respondent Interview)

Closely related to the view that the urban Aboriginal community in Sudbury is not well connected to the mainstream, non-Aboriginal community and the challenging prevalence of racial stereotypes against Aboriginal people in the media, Chart 17 further shows that the vast majority of participants (82%) also felt that there was an absence of Aboriginal cultural visibility in Sudbury.

CHART 17: IS ABORIGINAL CULTURE VISIBLE IN SUDBURY? (N=49)



The vast majority of participants (82%) felt that there was an absence of Aboriginal cultural visibility in Sudbury.

When asked to elaborate on this question, participants spoke to some visibility in public institutions, like the government buildings, schools, and the hospital, but very little overall. Many suggested more community and cultural events where both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people could come together to help address misconceptions and stereotypes as well as the creation of monuments, designated Aboriginal event and teaching spaces, and signage in the Anishnaabe language. Increasing the visibility of Aboriginal people in a significant way by providing diverse, public opportunities for the recognition of Aboriginal people, communities, and the treaty was viewed as essential to building bridges with non-Aboriginal people in Sudbury.

I don't remember anything remotely Aboriginal growing up in Sudbury especially in the schools. When there was the idle no more event in the shopping centre we took over this one spot in the mall. I used to hang out there as a kid and I never really thought that at some day a whole bunch of Aboriginal people would be taking over a spot there. (Sharing Cirlce)

There is some visibility with the Friendship Center, the schools, hospital, and some public buildings and of course the flags on the Bridge of Nations...but really there is very little Aboriginal public presence in Sudbury... (Key respondent Interview)

We are kept in the background. Sudbury is not proud of Native people. Our language is not reflected in the city. There could be more bilingual signage in the Aboriginal language and a monument to represent the missing and murdered women, and Aboriginal veterans. (Key respondent Interview)

Other than Aboriginal Day and the annual general meeting at the MNO, I am not aware of any cultural events in the city. (Sharing Circle)

All government buildings should acknowledge the land they are on as a start and there should be more recognition of Aboriginal people. There could be bill boards, a dedicated park for Aboriginal events. There could be monuments that recognize the treaty of this area or the Native war veterans... there are lots of possibilities. (Key respondent Interview)

The stereotypes and racism are so bad. The city needs to spread more accurate awareness of Aboriginal cultures and their meanings and place in society. But first the city needs to understand what Aboriginal culture is for Sudbury. This is Anishnaabe land, totem poles and Inukshuks don't work here. That is not us. (Key respondent Interview)

There really needs to be something at Science North. Why isn't there? How many people come to Sudbury and go to Science North and this is what Sudbury means to them and there is nothing about Aboriginal people there... (Key respondent Interview)

As a city we need to embrace Aboriginal culture more. More Aboriginal events, public acknowledgement of treaty and territory and Anishnaabe language signage. Signs in our language would be really good! (Key respondent Interview)

There should be an Anishinaabek Nation / Métis Flag at City Hall. Definitely tri-cultural approach should be taken that includes our history, our symbols and our language. (Key respondent Interview)

We need a designated space or center for Aboriginal people in the city. It could be a cultural center or museum. It could draw people in and help to educate people about us and our history with non-Aboriginal people. (Key respondent Interview)

I believe that there needs to be more artwork of Aboriginal people in public institutions as well as monuments, and statues in public areas to recognize Aboriginal history and presence. (Key respondent Interview)

We need to be included in City Council and have more of a voice in the City and more of a visual presence that incorporates the culture into our tourism, schools, and work force. The City needs to involve the Aboriginal community in making the decisions to make things better. (Key respondent Interview)

There needs to be more community and cultural events, family events and more advertisement. More funding for this so all can attend, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to bring about more education and less racism. (Key respondent Interview)

Some cities have symbolism, sculptures, parks, events, arts, restaurants, celebrations, but does the city of Sudbury provide this and promote the rich Native history of the

area and do tourists know we even exist when they come to Sudbury? (Sharing Circle)

Racism emerged as a significant finding in this study and is addressed in detail in the next chapter. In terms of the overall visibility of Aboriginal culture in Sudbury, a majority of participants (55%) felt that anti-Aboriginal racism and lack of understanding was a major barrier to increasing the visibility of Aboriginal people and cultures in the city.

There is so much racism here still. It has crushed a lot of people and can be felt anywhere, whether you are riding a bus, going to stores, trying to get a loan. People are rude to me, I am followed in stores, I can't get housing...it affects everything I do. (Key respondent Interview)

It's hard to be out as an Aboriginal person because of the racism. Sudbury is a segregated place and we are guilty of this too as we mostly keep to ourselves. (Key respondent Interview)

There is much stereotyping from non-Natives, lack of understanding, and ignorance. There are a lot of negative judgements against us... (Key respondent Interview)

There seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding of Aboriginal people from the general public. People need to be more aware of the history of Aboriginal people and more informed of Aboriginal culture. (Key respondent Interview)

CHAPTER 6

THE ONGOING CHALLENGE OF RACISM

Summary of Key Points in Chapter

- Aboriginal people experiencing economic success consider racism against Aboriginal people by non-Aboriginal people to be a significant social problem that is expressed in a systemic way including places of work, in the housing sector, at schools, at restaurants and malls, in their dealings with the police or the court system, in the media, on the street, in parks and in other public places.
- There have been some improvements in the acceptance and accommodation of Aboriginal differences in terms of the use of status cards in retail outlets, and in some workplaces, schools, and hospitals that provide Aboriginal spaces for smudging and ceremony.

- Racism and discrimination internal to the urban Aboriginal community is also seen as a major social problem that is expressed as lateral violence, nepotism, and diverse forms of social exclusion.

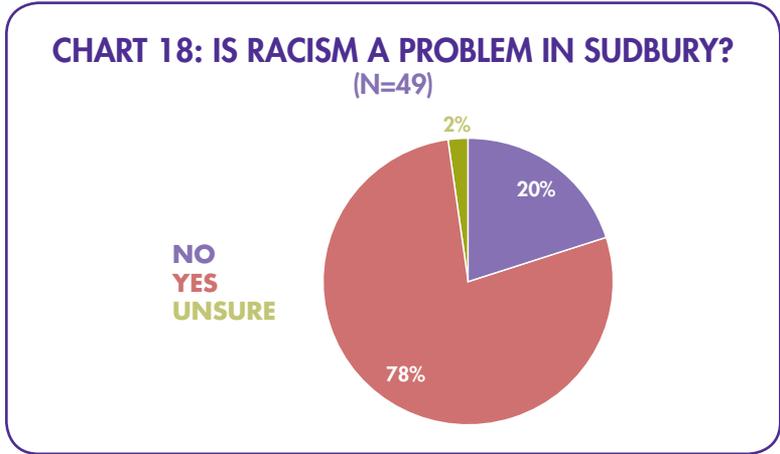
6.1 Racism Against Aboriginal People

The wide-spread prevalence of racism against Aboriginal people has been well documented as a long-standing, major social problem in Canada across a diversity of sectors, most notably in education, the criminal justice system and child welfare. Recent work on urban Aboriginal issues in Ontario alone⁹, including the 2007 Urban Aboriginal Task Force for Sudbury identified racism against Aboriginal people as a pressing social problem.

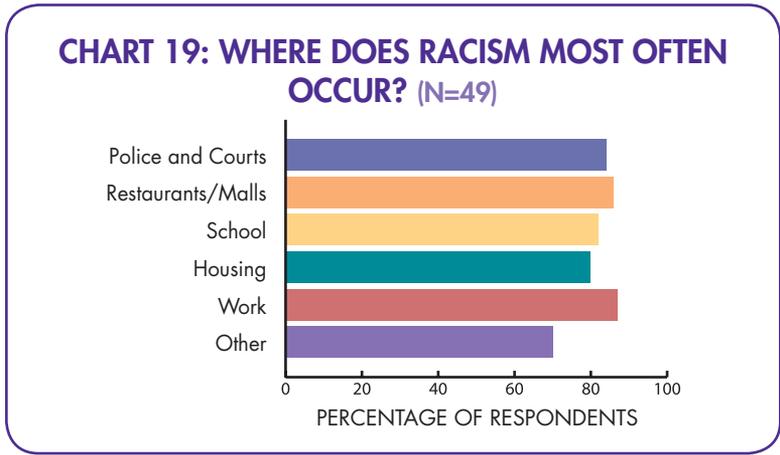
Based upon a now invalidated understanding of race as a biological category, racism is understood as the unequal and prejudicial treatment of one group of people by another group with more social power. As a scientific category, race has been consistently dismissed by the scientific-genetics community for roughly three decades now. Nonetheless, race as a socially constructed concept of inferior and fixed (stereotypical) differences continues to have negative effects on ‘racialized’ minorities, intersecting with colonialism to oppress Aboriginal people. Colonial racism occurs in both individual attitudes and actions and in systemic ways through institutional practices that give social privileges to Settlers, while disadvantaging Aboriginal people.

⁹McCaskill and Fitzmaurice, 2012 *Toronto Aboriginal Research Project*, McCaskill and Fitzmaurice, 2007. *Urban Aboriginal Task Force*, Curry, D. 2004. *Debuewin: A Three-city Anti-racism Initiative in Northern Ontario in North Bay, Timmins and Sault Ste. Marie*. Haluza-DeLay, 2002. *A Community of Acceptance: Respect for Thunder Bay's Diversity, and People Shouldn't Have to Live This Way: A Report on Homelessness in Kenora*

In Charts 18 and 19 we see that in keeping with existing research, the vast majority (78%) of Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury indicated that racism against Aboriginal people by non-Aboriginal people is a problem that is expressed in a systemic way.



Seventy-eight percent (78%) indicated that racism against Aboriginal people by non-Aboriginal people is a problem in Sudbury



Eighty (80%) to eighty-seven percent (87%) indicated that they experience racism at work, in their housing, at school, at restaurants and malls, and in their dealings with the police or the court system.

As Chart 19 specifies, at least eighty percent (80%) of participants indicated that they experience racism at work, in their housing, at school, at restaurants and malls, and in their dealings with the police or the court system. Within the Other category, participants spoke of racism in the media, on the street, in parks and in other outside public places.

Racism is everywhere because it is deep-seeded colonialistic perspective that people continue to believe and which precipitates a nastier form of racist which is often a more subtle racism. (Key respondent Interview)

At work you are really doing two jobs: the job you were hired for and for being the token Indian that can answer all the cultural questions. You are also fighting racism and stereotypes in the workplace. We should be making more to do our jobs and being an Aboriginal specialist. What we offer is not valued or respected the way it should be. (Sharing Circle)

You shouldn't have to answer all the Indian questions just because your Native in a mainstream organization. You shouldn't have to do that especially without being compensated or valued. (Sharing Circle)

There is such a thing as the porcelain ceiling...if you are not white, your not moving into the senior positions. (Sharing Circle)

I am followed around stores like I am going to steal something and I often receive rude comments and remarks when using my status card. (Key respondent Interview)

I am followed in stores when shopping and people call me 'a drunk Indian' when they see me walking down town. I don't even drink. (Key respondent Interview)

*I hear it and see it every day in subtle forms and more obvious forms as well. It seems like Aboriginal people experience more racism than any other minority.
(Key respondent Interview)*

Security guards are always following me around. I can't smudge at work, housing was hard to find, and there was a lot of colonial violence in school. (Key respondent Interview)

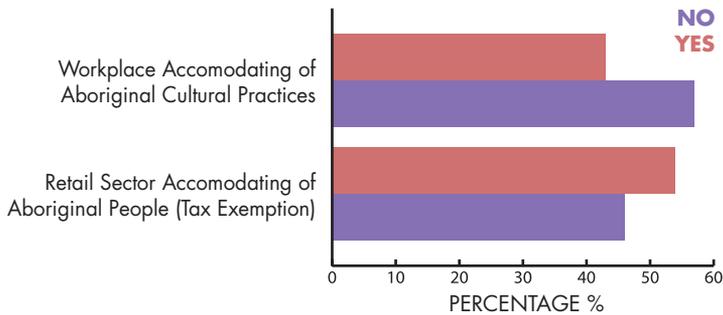
A lot of retail stores get upset when we pull out status cards, government made it more difficult with HST and not all places accept status cards. (Key respondent Interview)

*I hear overt comments even by professionals in Sudbury's health care system and the police are not nice to Aboriginal people. So many people are not educated about Aboriginal people. There is a real ignorance out there. I believe that it stems from a lack of understanding of key historical events.
(Key respondent Interview)*

Aboriginal people are not self-identifying because they do not want to be singled out. My niece is in the Midwifery program at LU and she chooses to not self-identify. There is a lot of backlash based on stereotypes of free education and not paying taxes. (Sharing Circle)

Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury also spoke to some accommodation happening in retail stores where cashiers have been trained in Status card processing for point of sale provincial tax exemption. As well, some workplaces, schools, and hospitals provide Aboriginal spaces for smudging and ceremony. Chart 20 points to just over 50% of participants indicating that the retail sector is accommodating of Aboriginal tax exemption requests, while only 43% felt that workplaces were accommodating of Aboriginal cultural practices.

CHART 20: ACCOMODATION OF ABORIGINAL DIFFERENCE: RETAIL/WORKPLACE (N=49)



Fifty-four percent (54%) indicated that the retail sector is accommodating of Aboriginal tax exemption requests, while only 43% felt that workplaces were accommodating.

The stores are not too bad. I use my status card at most places and I just don't stop at stores that are rude about status card – I just stop shopping there. (Key respondent Interview)

I believe that businesses could do more to attract and accommodate Aboriginal people. they should make it easier for them to use their tax cards and also provide them with better service. (Key respondent Interview)

I am really missing my cultural connection at the Health Unit because they don't give us space or the option to practise our culture at work. The hospital has the healing room. They're actually respecting a little bit about our culture, but it only took them thousands of years to do it. (Sharing Circle)

A lot of workplaces are starting to be, but have a lot further to go. The postsecondary schools are doing a good job! (Key respondent Interview)

It seems to me that Aboriginal people need to work very hard to have their cultural practices recognized in their workplace. At the moment it depends where you work. CAS has a smudging area, but not legal aid. (Key respondent Interview)

When worked in the Catholic School board, [they] used to smudge and were accommodating in the school environment. (Key respondent Interview)

I can't smudge in that school that I work at and generally the mainstream doesn't honour Aboriginal holidays, or cultural ceremonies, and traditions. (Key respondent Interview)

Lots of uneducated people about practices such as smudging; people complain, my workplace is 24/7 365 days a year, cultural days I'm required to work. (Key respondent Interview)

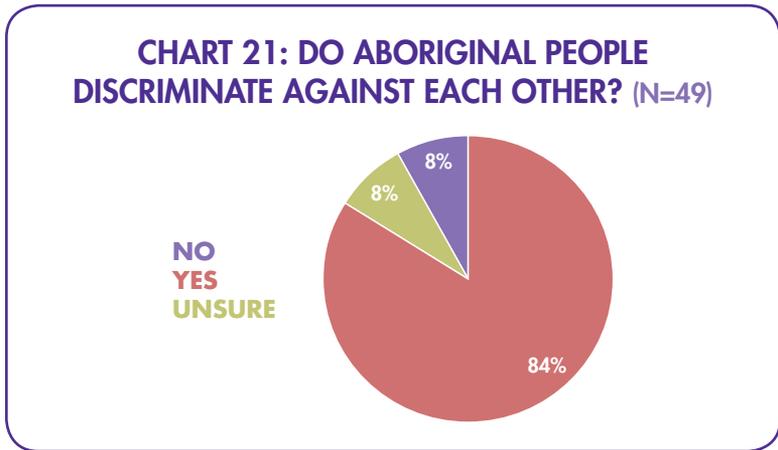
Smudging medicines like tobacco are seen by the mainstream as cigarette tobacco; which is not allowed and so issues and complaints arise. There is a real need for an appreciation of our culture. (Key respondent Interview)

Everything is geared towards being as equal or the same as possible. There is no allowance for cultural expression in my work place... just do your job and go home. (Key respondent Interview)

6.2 Racism and Discrimination Internal to the Aboriginal Community

In keeping with the research findings of the Urban Aboriginal Task Force 2007 and the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project 2012, internal Aboriginal racism and discrimination (that is racism and discrimination among Aboriginal people

themselves) emerged as a significant challenge for those experiencing economic success in Sudbury. As seen in Chart 21, the vast majority (84%) of participants indicated Aboriginal people discriminate against each other.



Eighty-four percent (84%) of participants indicated that Aboriginal people discriminate against each other.

From the quotes below we see that internal discrimination within the Aboriginal community can be expressed in a number of ways; which include lateral violence, nepotism, and diverse forms of social exclusion and which revolve around questions of racial and cultural authenticity, a hierarchy of legal and national identities, as well as experiences of economic success or poverty.

I hear a lot of 'you don't look Native' or 'you're too white or not Native enough' (Key respondent Interview)

Culture is expressed at the organizational level, but also at the family level and with friends. And of course at pow wows, but I personally can't stand pow wows...and I can't believe that I am saying this, but they are noisy and dirty and I can't keep track of my kids. They just give me a lot

of anxiety. And I feel really bad in saying this because you know there is this idea that pow wows are really Aboriginal and so what does this say about me. (Sharing Circle)

Yes of course, we have been told that we are no good for how long... mainstream society is still telling us this and we internalize it and it use against each other. I believe that this is called 'internalized oppression', but we all call it 'crabs in the bucket' we pull each other down when we start succeeding. (Key respondent Interview)

For sure the Cree are not treated the same way at the Friendship Centre as the Ojibway. (Key respondent Interview)

First Nations discriminate against the Métis, because they can say that it means nothing to be Métis. And the Métis are against the First Nations and the Status are against the non-Status and vise-versa. (Key respondent Interview)

There is a lot of gauging as to whether someone is actually Aboriginal or not. A lot of people say that the Métis are not really Native. (Key respondent Interview)

I am also asked about hunting and fishing ...and I can't answer because I know nothing about this (Sharing Circle)

And for me well, I love hunting and fishing and does that make me more Native. The stereotypes are really difficult at times and if I wasn't into it, I shouldn't be made to feel bad about it. (Sharing Circle)

You know whether or not someone is a 'true Indian' or mixed. Whether they are Status or non-status. Are they language speakers? Are they traditional? The Métis often get discriminated from First Nations. (Key respondent Interview)

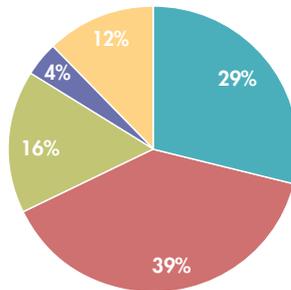
There are a lot of new Indigenous people and they are really emerging with how Indigenous they are...and certainly facebook is important in all of this as people really try to show how Indigenous they are with all of their posts. I refuse to do this...putting myself out there like that looking for approval. (Sharing Circle)

Successful people are criticized by the non-successful people and vice-versa the successful Aboriginal people may look down on the unsuccessful Aboriginal people. (Key respondent Interview)

Chart 22 highlights the extend to which internal discrimination and negativity is felt by Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury where 84 Percent of participants are within the range from ‘Somewhat Agree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’ with the statement that ‘if some Aboriginal people obtain financial success, there will be others who try to put them down’.

CHART 22: IF SOME ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OBTAIN FINANCIAL SUCCESS, THERE WILL BE OTHERS WHO TRY TO PUT THEM DOWN? (N=49)

STRONGLY AGREE
AGREE
SOMEWHAT AGREE
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
STRONGLY DISAGREE



Eighty-four percent (84%) indicated ‘Somewhat Agree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’ that ‘if some Aboriginal people obtain financial success, there will be others who try to put them down’.

From the quotes below we see the many ways in which this discrimination and negativity are expressed such as: social isolation, jealousy, racialization, nepotism, resentment, and name calling.

I feel very isolated because of the jealousy that others feel towards me. People say that I have abandoned them and the community. (Key respondent Interview)

It is like there is a 'Haves' versus 'Have-nots'. When someone has nice things it is like a reverting back to colonialism and people say that I am no longer Aboriginal because I am successful. People feel left behind and they try to bring you down by saying things like, 'he is white now because he is doing well'. (Key respondent Interview)

Our own people try to drag you down through politics, rumors, and negativity. It is like there is this idea that Native people don't deserve good things even if we work for it. It is a kind of racism that works like 'crabs in a bucket' bio-racism. (Key respondent Interview)

Some friends resent or disagree with our middle class life style and think we are 'sell outs'. Then you hear rumours about all the bad things from your past and people gossip and then there are put downs. It feels very ostracizing. (Key respondent Interview)

Success can be seen a threat to others and it can create a lot of jealousy. (Key respondent Interview)

CHAPTER 7

THE PATH TO ECONOMIC SUCCESS: KEY CHALLENGES AND SUPPORTS

Summary of Key Points in Chapter

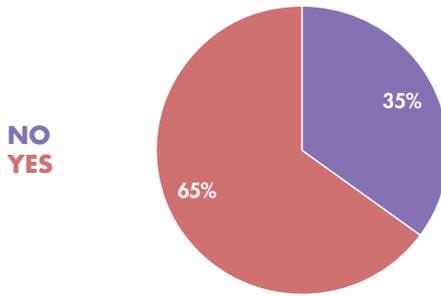
- The majority of Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury experienced poverty as a child.
- Those participants that experienced poverty as children were less likely to be in the top earning bracket and to graduate with a university graduate degree.
- A number of important factors contributed to economic success, including: early family supports education, Aboriginal culture, the basic necessities of transportation and daycare, supportive programming and overcoming racial barriers.

- Education was considered a key factor that significantly improved one's life.
- Family supports played an important supportive role along the educational path in terms of having role models, encouragement and motivation, and cultural teachings.
- A diverse array of Aboriginal organizations and Aboriginal specific educational funding played an important support role.
- Some of the important challenges to economic success include: having little financial support early along their path while having the responsibilities of children and a young family, the lack of affordable daycare, racism and discrimination, and a lack of confidence within the non-Native school system.
- In terms of needed programs and services today, many participants spoke of the need for Aboriginal specific business and professional development training and networking opportunities as well as family and cultural services that are not social services focussed.

In this chapter we look at both some the contributing factors that helped participants achieve economic success as well as the barriers that were overcome along the way.

From Chart 23 we see that a majority (65%) of participants experienced poverty as children.

CHART 23: DID YOU EXPERIENCE POVERTY AS A CHILD? (N=49)



Sixty-five percent (65%) of participants experienced poverty as a child.

Of those that did experience poverty as children many shared that these early times motivated them to work hard and to have a sense of gratitude for what they have been able to accomplish.

Being poor and going without teaches you to be thankful for what we have. It made me work hard. Because we were poor I was brought up to work hard to survive. (Key respondent Interview)

I left home at 16 and this really opened my eyes. I saw so many people falling through cracks, so much desperation. I knew that I never wanted to be poor again and I worked hard to get out of it. (Key respondent Interview)

Everybody wants to make sure their kids have a better life than they did and to make things better for our kids and so we work hard for better opportunities for them. Growing up poor gave me the will to succeed in life. I never gave up, otherwise I knew that if I did I would never come out of that situation. (Key respondent Interview)

I appreciate what I have. I mean I still like ketchup sandwiches, but I did not ever want my kids to live that way and I didn't want to live that way now. I gave myself options. (Key respondent Interview)

There was malnutrition and a lack of opportunities, but this motivated me to work hard for a better life and now I can pay for extra curricular activities, I can afford these things now. (Key respondent Interview)

Poverty made me work harder. I always wanted a better life for myself and my kids. (Key respondent Interview)

We were not given an opportunity to advance economically. There was limited family support and guidance and a lack of emotional stability. We had to be self motivated and driven. (Key respondent Interview)

Many of these same participants also spoke of the difficulties of growing up poor and how this has carried over into their present life in terms of having to overcome challenges relating to intergenerational trauma, adoption, addictions, and finances.

I was given up at the age of one. My adoptive family was white and wealthy, but my birth family was poor. I lived in nine different foster homes before the age of two. This was a difficult beginning I suppose and led to some not so good choices. But I eventually quit drinking and changed my lifestyle. (Key respondent Interview)

I am more cynical now about people and the way the real world functions; it is a tough place. Intergenerational trauma from the residential schools has been really hard to overcome. (Key respondent Interview)

Yes well, my relationship with money isn't stable. I take risks with it and I am not very conscientiousness about money and I go through feast or famine cycles a lot. (Key respondent Interview)

I think that growing up poor made me want to spend money as soon as I got it. I didn't save and was never taught how to maintain finances. (Key respondent Interview)

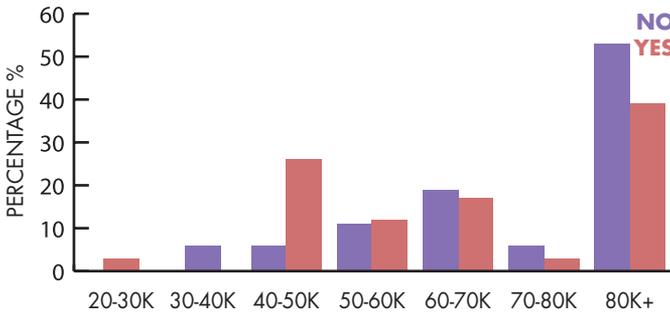
My challenges with learning and communicating stem from my childhood experiences with poverty. I was not able to talk for a long time. (Key respondent Interview)

In comparing those economically successful Aboriginal people that experienced poverty as children (65%) and those that did not (35%), we see a notable difference in income earnings and educational attainment.

From Charts 24 and 25 we see that having experienced poverty as children presents a possible barrier to the level of economic and educational success attainable. More specifically, we see in the below charts that those whom experienced poverty as children were less likely (14% difference) to be in the top earning bracket of +\$80,000 per year and more likely (20% difference) to be earning between \$40-\$50,000 per year.

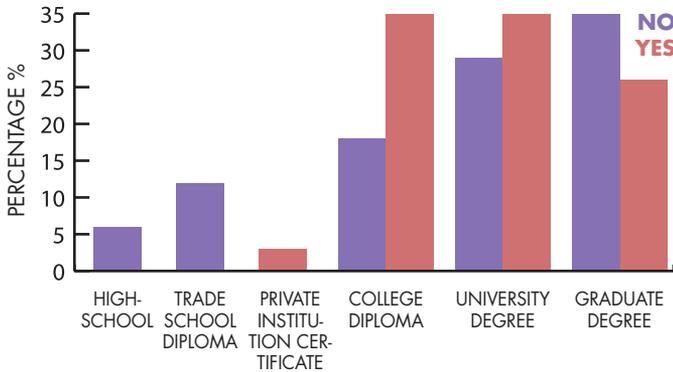
As well this is reflected in education levels where those that experienced poverty as children were less likely (9% difference) to graduate with a university graduate degree and more likely (17% difference) to be have a college diploma.

CHART 24: EXPERIENCE OF POVERTY AS A CHILD AND PRESENT INCOME (N=49)



Those whom experienced poverty as children were 14% less likely to be in the top earning bracket of +\$80,000 per year

CHART 25: EXPERIENCE OF POVERTY AS A CHILD AND EDUCATION (N=49)

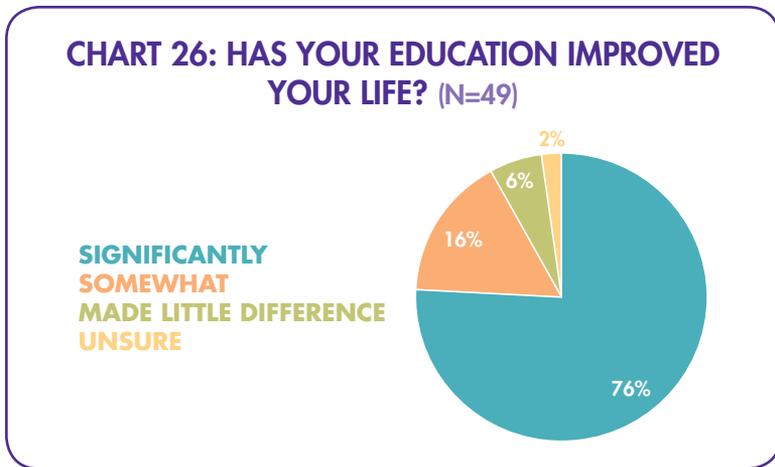


Those whom experienced poverty as children were 9% less likely to complete a university graduate degree and 17% more likely to be have a college diploma.

Overall, participants spoke about several factors that contributed to their success, including: family supports the importance of education, culture, the basic necessities of

transportation and daycare, supportive programming and overcoming racial barriers.

Almost all (92%) of the participants of this study have either college or university degrees and in Chart 26 we see that the vast majority (76%) of Aboriginal people in Sudbury experiencing economic success point to education as significantly improving their life.



Seventy-six percent (76%) point to education as significantly improving their life.

Roughly half (50%) spoke of the desire for job security and giving back to the Aboriginal community as important motivators for pursuing a post secondary education. A minority were also motivated by a desire to learn about their cultural background through college and university Aboriginal programming.

I pursued a degree in Native Studies so I could get to know more about culture while getting accreditation to work in multiple areas. (Key respondent Interview)

I got into Social Work to help others also learn more about myself and my culture. (Key respondent Interview)

I wanted to break the cycles in my family and I hoped that education would get me a good job. I saw that it helped my father and so I thought that it could do that for me also. (Key respondent Interview)

I wanted a job that was secure. I have a giving personality and I wanted a giving profession. I wanted to help people as part of my work. (Key respondent Interview)

Out of High School I was only accepted at one school, Laurentian. I was drinking a lot back then, but after sobriety I volunteered in an outreach program in Sudbury. I liked the work so I went to school to get security in a job helping others. (Key respondent Interview)

I went to college first in Sudbury in the Correctional Worker Program. I didn't think at the time that I was smart enough to go to university. I did become bored with that career choice and thought to try out university and went to Nipissing. I always wanted to be a lawyer but did not commit enough and also had a child then and a lack of confidence. Only after getting Social Work and a Master's degree did I think that I could do law school. I now like law and advocating for people. (Key respondent Interview)

I wanted to follow my passion for health and to be a good example for my cousins and family members. (Key respondent Interview)

I knew that education would allow me to achieve success and to develop to my highest potential. (Key respondent Interview)

I listened to the Elders when in the 60s they removed all nuns and priests from teaching our kids. The Elders wanted

Native educators so I stood up and said I would do that work. This was the first step in ending subjugated knowledge. (Key respondent Interview)

For many others, post secondary education was simply the best path to employment and a stable income.

I wanted to go to school to be a welder because it was the only thing I was good at. I could not pick some other work as my parents could not help with homework as they were not formally educated either. So I took up a trade. (Key respondent Interview)

I went to college to get a good job in the trades and have a stable income. (Key respondent Interview)

I went to school so that I could get a job in mining because its relevant in Sudbury. (Key respondent Interview)

I was not really sure at first. Post secondary was something I thought I wanted, but I ended up in mining by taking a heavy parts mechanic trade. (Key respondent Interview)

Just wanted a good stable job with limited to no politics so decided to drive a bus. (Key respondent Interview)

I went to college for a better life, money, stable income job, and I always wanted to be a cop. (Key respondent Interview)

A majority (60%) of participants overall spoke of the challenge of little financial support early along their path while having the responsibilities of children and a young family. The lack of affordable child care overall was identified as a major challenge in this regard. Many participants also spoke of the challenge of racism and discrimination in the classroom and having to overcome their own lack of confidence while being in the non-Native school system.

I have a hard time with mainstream education and some of the ignorant people that participate in classes. (Key respondent Interview)

Some of our people believe when you get an education you cease to be an Indian. We still face systemic racism everyday. (Sharing Circle)

We struggled with finances. I was very hard working while going to school and raising a family. The apprenticeship program was very competitive. (Key respondent Interview)

Yes the lack of money was a big problem. It was difficult to get an education and live on my own while supporting my daughter. (Key respondent Interview)

I was accepted twice to university but could not get funded through my Band. As a single parent needing daycare, I really needed the support. (Key respondent Interview)

I needed to stay away from the reserve so I didn't get caught up in drugs, alcohol, in the community. It was also difficult to be poor while going to school. (Key respondent Interview)

I struggled with a lack of self-confidence and self-doubt and I did not have family members for support... especially financial. (Key respondent Interview)

I was always short of money. I didn't get band funding and I was raising kids and working. I moved off reserve to go to school and I had a new baby and needed childcare. I ended up working two jobs. (Key respondent Interview)

In law school I was immersed in a European way of learning that was very competitive and I lacked self-confidence. I am not a competitive person and I am not sure if Aboriginal people are generally competitive culturally. (Key respondent Interview)

Early family supports played a key role in building a culturally grounded sense of confidence and self esteem and in supporting the educational path for a majority (70%) of participants in terms of acting as role models, providing encouragement and motivation as well as cultural teachings. Some also spoke of mentors at college and university that encouraged them along their path as well as the need for more mentors.

My cultural ways helped me. I learned to work for the people, to be healthy and strong and to be a good role model. It was always for the people, always. People come first. I was raised to believe that I am a helper and I am a strong person. That I must be healthy at all times physically and spiritually. My dad helped with this a lot. He praised me and encouraged me a lot so I grew up taking pride in everything I did. I try to pass this on to the children and I tell them don't get sloppy because sloppy is not pride. (Life History Participant)

My grandmother is a very positive person in my life. She is very patient and encouraging. She made me realize that we needed each other to teach each other. (Key respondent Interview)

Elders have really helped me by my participation in teaching lodges and understanding my worldview that comes from the language. (Key respondent Interview)

My Dad was very encouraging. He believed in me and gave me a lot of confidence and a good work ethic. (Key respondent Interview)

The biggest support for me was my dad. He gave me that strong pride in who I am. In the face of racism or humiliating actions from Non-Natives I never felt diminished. My dad gave me the strength to stand up to all the stuff I went through. My mother in law also helped me a lot in supporting me and teaching me and introducing me to the community. (Life History Participant)

My older brother was a big influence. He is an officer in Sudbury. (Key respondent Interview)

My wife really helped because she was very well educated and able to help where I had problems. (Key respondent Interview)

My parents, relatives, and school teachers all helped. These were well-educated people pushing me all the time. (Key respondent Interview)

I was the youngest of seven kids and the first to complete high school and get a college and university degree. I was a trailblazer and I had many mentors along the way both Native and non-Native like Roger Spielman, Jim Dumont, and others. (Key respondent Interview)

One challenge for First Nations youth is that they wish they had more mentors that could guide and lead them like a big brother or big sisters program for Native youth. The opportunity helps older people learn how to lead and creates more hope for the young people. They have a program like this in Alberta...it is called 'Adopt an Elder'. (Sharing Circle)

Many participants (55%) indicated that they received various forms of assistance along their learning path by one or more Aboriginal organizations including: a First Nation, the N'Swakamok Friendship Center, the local Aboriginal Employment Center (Gezhtoojig), Aboriginal Student Services at Laurentian and Cambrian, the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO), the RCMP, the Canadian Forces Raven Program, The YMCA Sudbury, and the Waubetek Business Development Corporation.

I was the only female Aboriginal student in the whole school of Human kinetics that was visibly brown. I felt a bit isolated and lost but I kept pushing forward and became resourceful as a student and reached out and sought services that would help me find myself. It took about 8 months for me to have pride and strength to walk to the school of Kinetics, and be like, 'I'm First Nation, this is my culture, this is me'. This is my future that I want to contribute to my community. The Native Student Associations in post secondary really helped me, I just wish they were offered in the public school for the younger people. (Sharing Circle)

There were a number of supports that have helped me over the years including Indspire, the National Aboriginal Job Recruitment Fair, and the Aboriginal pre-cadet training with the RCMP. (Key respondent Interview)

Through my Métis status I was able to acquire a bursary through Waubetek Business Development Corporation. (Key respondent Interview)

The Friendship Centre, and Health centre both helped me do my placement which was a vital part of my education and it opened the door to my employment path. (Key respondent Interview)

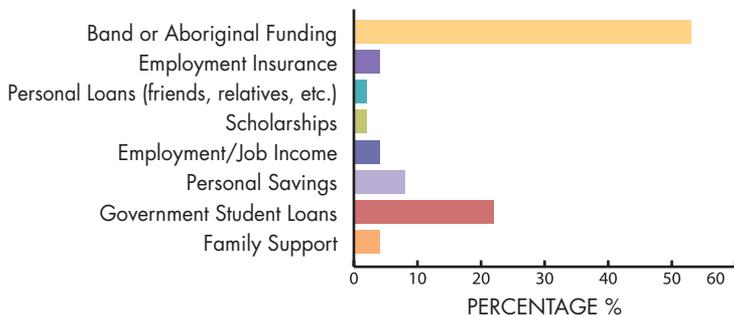
There can be funding for Native people that live off-reserve. I received Band funding for school and that really helped a lot. (Key respondent Interview)

Had I not had the funding from my Band I would have not received the education that I did. My parents did not have the money to send me to school. I saw it as an opportunity to advance myself. Mainstream society sees it as a hand out but it is an opportunity to exercise our treaty rights. Education is never wasted. (Sharing Circle)

My parents kept telling me that school was very important and they demonstrated a good work ethic. I did use Band funding and I did not have to get into a huge school debt. I applied to teachers college and got in because there were seats for Aboriginal people. I am successful because of a lot of help along the way. Even to this day there are thousands of teachers applying for few jobs and they are saving spots for Aboriginal teachers. I don't think I would be where I am if I was not Aboriginal. I am an Aboriginal success. (Sharing Circle)

In terms of financial assistance for education, although many participants spoke to the financial hardship that they experienced while at college or university and noted that they did not receive funding support from their First Nation Band, Chart 27 indicates that Band, or Aboriginal specific educational funding was nonetheless the primary source of financial support for a majority (54%) of participants, with government student loans being the next common source of funding for 22% of participants.

CHART 27: PRIMARY SOURCE OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING (N=49)



Fifty-four percent (54%) indicated Band, or Aboriginal specific educational funding and 22% indicated student loans

When asked what types of urban Aboriginal programs and services would improve your present quality of life in Sudbury, many participants spoke of the need for Aboriginal specific business and professional development training and networking opportunities.

It would be really helpful to have some training opportunities and an Aboriginal business connection or network to that we could share ideas and opportunities with each other within the Aboriginal community. (Key respondent Interview)

We definitely need business support services beyond beginning and launch. We must have must have follow-up, monitoring, and consistent support. (Key respondent Interview)

We need more Aboriginal specific jobs right across Sudbury. An Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce would be a great way to bring middle class people together. As well as a speaker series would be good to bring us together and build networks and community. (Sharing Circle)

I don't know any Aboriginal owned companies businesses. I am from out of town and so it would be good to have an association or network to help us to work together and to support each other. (Key respondent Interview)

We really need a network of Native people in decision-making roles across the city. I am not from here, so I had to break into the Native community. (Key respondent Interview)

We need to know what is going on in the community...we need to be connected through information...one source for everyone. Like for example an Aboriginal newsletter or something similar.

Many participants in the Sharing Circle spoke of the need for Aboriginal specific services separate from the social services and the need for an overarching Aboriginal organization to bring the community together and to help educate non-Native society and build better relations overall.

Services for families would be helpful. I used the friendship center family services when my kids were small, but I always felt bad about it because I thought I was taking somebody else's place who was financially worse off. I would be happy to pay for Friendship Center style family and cultural services. (Sharing Circle)

It would be great to have a cultural centre where we could go and learn from Elders and speak the language and even have an Aboriginal film festival, art exhibits, and things like that. (Sharing Circle)

We really need a champion organization to unite the various Native organizations in the city, showcase the success stories, and to develop an urban Aboriginal community strategy (Sharing Circle)

There is almost nothing helping non-Aboriginal people to learn about us. Science North is really a focal point for Sudbury (people come from very far away to go to Science North) and there is nothing about Aboriginal people there. One of the biggest challenges for us is the ignorance in the non-Aboriginal community in Sudbury. (Sharing Circle)

CHAPTER 8

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONS: THE EMERGENCE OF MIDDLE CLASS, ABORIGINAL- CANADIANS WHO VOTE FOR THE NDP

Summary of Key Points in Chapter

- Although there continues to be an association with Aboriginal organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis Nation of Ontario, and the Native Women's Association of Canada, Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury are far more likely to vote in non-Aboriginal elections and tended towards the NDP.

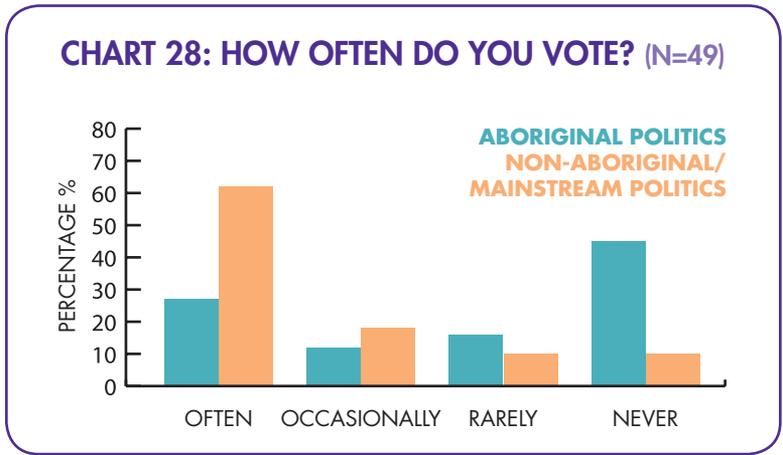
- Many respondents expressed a lack of confidence in Aboriginal political organizations and referred to negative organizational practices for their moving away from Aboriginal political involvement.
- Many also expressed that they were simply too busy with work and family life and did not have time to be involved with Aboriginal political organizations.
- Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury continue to be involved politically in ways ‘other than voting’ such as attending Aboriginal advocacy political events such as Idle No More and Sisters in Spirit.
- The majority of participants stated that they were dual Aboriginal and Canadian citizens that are both proud to be Canadian and highly critical of the many ways in which Canada has not lived up to its treaty obligations and continues to fail Aboriginal people.
- Almost all (81%) of participants felt that because of having similar interests, values and aspirations, they belonged to the general non-Aboriginal middle class.

8.1 Political Representation

In this chapter we explore some of the ways that Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury relate politically and economically in the city.

Although there continues to be an association with Aboriginal organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis Nation of Ontario, and the Native Women’s Association of Canada, participants overall, are far more likely to vote in non-Aboriginal elections and tending to vote for the NDP. From Chart 28 we see that the majority (80%) indicated that they ‘often’ or ‘occasionally’ voted in mainstream, non-Aboriginal

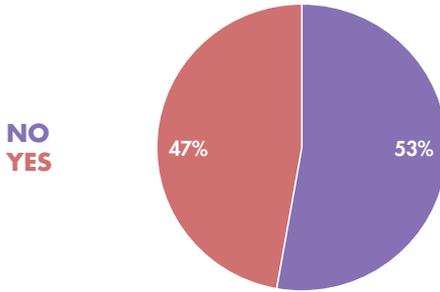
elections while only 39% indicated the same for elections held by Aboriginal organizations. As well we see in Chart 28 that 45% of participants stated that they ‘never’ voted in Aboriginal elections, with only 10% indicating the same for non-Aboriginal elections.



Eight percent (80%) indicated that they ‘often’ or ‘occasionally’ voted in mainstream, non-Aboriginal elections while only 39% indicated the same for elections held by Aboriginal organizations and Forty percent (45%) indicated that they ‘never’ voted in Aboriginal elections, with only 10% indicating the same for non-Aboriginal elections.

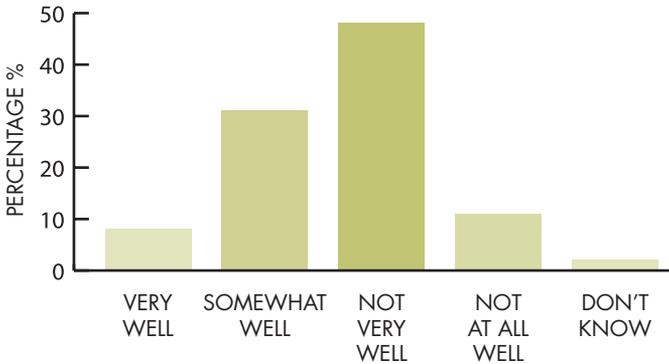
This movement towards more mainstream political engagement and away from Aboriginal politics is further evident in the below charts where Chart 29 shows that a majority (53%) of participants who are First Nations members do not vote in their Band elections and Chart 30 further highlights that 59% of participants generally feel that Aboriginal organizations represent their interests either ‘not very well’ or ‘not at all well’.

CHART 29: IF YOU BELONG TO A FIRST NATION DO YOU VOTE IN BAND ELECTIONS? (N=49)



Fifty-three percent (53%) of participants who are First Nations members do not vote in their Band elections

CHART 30: DO ABORIGINAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATION REPRESENT YOUR INTERESTS? (N=49)



Fifty-nine percent (59%) indicated that Aboriginal organizations represent their interests either 'not very well' or 'not at all well'.

When asked to elaborate on their reasons for moving away from Aboriginal political involvement, roughly half (50%) of respondents expressed a lack of confidence in Aboriginal political organizations and referred to negative practices such as the abuse of power, nepotism, and lack of fairness.

Aboriginal political organizations are modeled after mainstream, non-Native political structures; which are oppressive and power abused and which also ignore tradition. (Key respondent Interview)

I just have a bad view of the whole thing. I don't like to get involved, as things just aren't run well. I prefer to advocate from the sidelines. (Key respondent Interview)

Aboriginal politics are just too messed up and caught up in complicated family obligations. (Key respondent Interview)

The system isn't fair and I am just tired of nothing ever happening. Others are maybe better qualified to be involved politically. I feel all in all that it can be very futile. (Key respondent Interview)

There is just too much nepotism. Aboriginal politicians take care of their own family first and then the rest goes to poverty. (Key respondent Interview)

It is interpersonal politics rather than real issues related. (Key respondent Interview)

Another common reason expressed by a number (20%) of participants for not being more involved in Aboriginal politics was simply a lack of time and being too busy with work and family life.

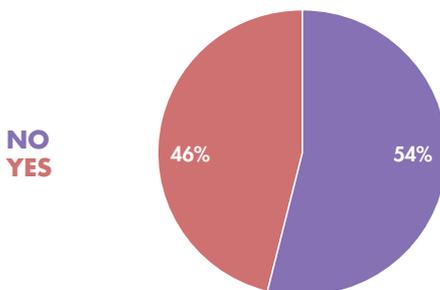
Business is just more of a priority than politics. I am really always working and rarely at home even. (Key respondent Interview)

I am too busy with daily responsibilities. I am not even sure how I could be more involved even if I wanted to.
(Key respondent Interview)

I have no time to be involved politically. I am too busy with life, work and school. (Key respondent Interview)

In spite of the findings above that point to a movement away from involvement with Aboriginal political organizations and toward more mainstream political participation, Chart 31 highlights that a number (46%) of Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury continue to be involved politically in ways ‘other than voting’.

CHART 31: INVOLVED WITH ABORIGINAL POLITICS IN WAYS OTHER THAN VOTING (N=49)



Forty-six percent (46%) indicated being involved politically in ways ‘other than voting’.

From the quotes below we see a continued involvement in Aboriginal advocacy events relating to Aboriginal rights, environmental protection, and ending violence against Aboriginal women and girls such as Idle No More, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women as well as providing an Aboriginal voice on the Boards of local community organization.

*I have participated in Marches for Missing Aboriginal Women “Sisters in Spirit”. This is very important to me.
(Key respondent Interview)*

*I have been involved with Idle No More and have participated in a number of their marches and dances and have donated money and attended, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women/Sisters in Spirit events as well as well as the local ‘Water Walk’ to help protect the water.
(Key respondent Interview)*

In provincial or federal elections I only vote for Native candidates. (Key respondent Interview)

I sit on the Board for the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO). I think that sitting on Boards and being a Métis elder can be very political as it affects change. (Key respondent Interview)

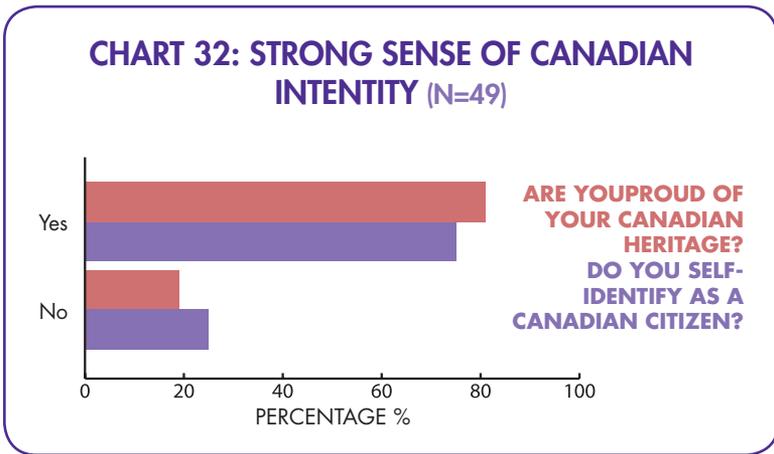
I have worked on the local poverty study and this involves working with Aboriginal people and working for change. I also go to protests as well. (Key respondent Interview)

*I sit on the Canadian Labour Congress as a First Nations Representative (National). This can be very political.
(Key respondent Interview)*

I have been the Tribal Chair for the United Chiefs and Council of Mnidoo Mnising UCCM for five years and I have served on a number of other committees. (Key respondent Interview)

What is important to note about this continued political involvement of Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury is how it translates into a collective understanding of a mixed Aboriginal-Canadian identity that combines a pride in being Canadian, while retaining

a strong anti-colonial stance. As seen in Chart 32, the vast majority of participants indicated both self-identifying as a Canadian citizen (75%) and being proud of their Canadian heritage (81%).



Seventy-five percent (75%) self-identify as a Canadian citizen and 81% are proud of their Canadian heritage.

The majority (70%) of participants stated that they were dual citizens as Aboriginal and Canadian and the quotes below point to a complex, hybrid identity that is both proud in Canada's accomplishments internationally as a peace keeping nation and at home as a peaceful, culturally diverse society with opportunities for a good quality of life, while also being highly critical of the many ways in which Canada has not lived up to its treaty obligations and continues to fail Aboriginal people.

I am proud that Canada has a history of negotiating treaties even if it hasn't lived up to them....it is a good first step and much different from many other countries in the world. Treaties are the beginning of our relationship and there is much work to still be done for Canada to live up to them. (Key respondent Interview)

I embrace the good points of Canadian culture...of course because of colonization and how Canada was created, these things I am not proud of. I don't agree with colonization; there is too much corporate greed attached to it, but outside Canada, in an international sense when compared to other countries I can be proud. (Key respondent Interview)

I am proud of my Aboriginal heritage first. I am proud to be a First Nations person. Sometimes I am embarrassed to be a Canadian citizen because of how Canada treats First Peoples as second class citizens. There is no respect of First Peoples. (Key respondent Interview)

Canada is a good country compared to others. It is made up of all types of races and nationalities and I am proud of my own. Canadians are respected around the world for their views of tolerance. (Key respondent Interview)

I am Aboriginal first, Canadian second. My Canadian identity is second to that of my Aboriginal for obvious reasons. (Key respondent Interview)

As an Aboriginal Canadian citizen I'm Aboriginal but born in Canada and Canada in a lot of ways supports First Nations people financially, but there is a lot more to be done. (Key respondent Interview)

My father fought for this country in the war. He fought for Canada as part of this ongoing Nation to Nation treaty relationship we have. We are First Nations first, then Canadian second or Aboriginal Canadians. (Key respondent Interview)

I am Canadian but also Métis and I am proud of this heritage. This is a good place to live because we have freedom and security. Not all countries have this. (Key respondent Interview)

I am not proud of the history of Canada, but say that I am Canadian. It just doesn't sound right because of the history of Canada and the treatment towards First Nations people. I am proud of my Aboriginal ancestry, and feel like the double loyalty is a bad thing. (Key respondent Interview)

8.2 Class Consciousness

Self-identification into social classes is popularly linked to household income. In its recent public opinion polls, the Environics Institute reported that

‘Canadians identifying as lower class are principally those earning household incomes of less than \$30K, while the upper class group is weighted towards those earning at least \$100K. But the “middle class” designation is more evenly distributed across income strata, and is as likely to be used by those in the \$100K plus income group as those earning \$30 to 60K.’¹⁰

In efforts to better understanding poverty and inequality however, the concept of ‘class’ has developed from a focus on income to include a broader notion of ‘social class’ that incorporates three distinctive kinds of capital: economic capital (wealth and income), cultural capital (tastes, interests, and activities), and social capital (your social networks, friendships, and associations).¹¹ Social class analysis further argues that class does not simply exist as a neutral social or statistical group, but is maintained through competitive class relations and the ability

¹⁰For further reading please see: *The Environics Institute, ‘Focus Canada 2012: Public opinion research on the record serving the public interest since 1976’ at <http://www.environicsinstitute.org/uploads/institute-projects/environics%20institute%20-%20focus%20canada%202012%20final%20report.pdf>*

¹¹Forth further readings please see *Savage, M. 2015 Social Class in the 21st Century.*

to secure ones own welfare and social standing as part of the subordination of others of lower classes.¹²

To date, there has been very little research and analysis on social class relations for Aboriginal people in Canada; Aboriginal diversity being understood for the most part in terms of standard demographic considerations as well as in terms of diverse cultures and legal identities. Moreover, there seems to be some reluctance to discuss possible class stratifications and disparities within Aboriginal communities as it can be seen as divisive, Eurocentric, and ‘contrary to Indigenous aspirations for healing, wholeness, and nationhood’¹³.

Nonetheless as highlighted in the ‘General Findings from Existing Research’ section of this report, there are extreme socioeconomic (income, education, and living conditions) inequalities in the city whereby the majority of Aboriginal people are experiencing poverty, while an emerging minority is increasingly affluent. Most recently the Ontario Urban Aboriginal Task Force (2007), the national Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study (2010), and the Toronto Aboriginal Research Report (2012) identified the emergence of an Aboriginal middle class in the city.

For Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury, we see in the Charts below that almost all participants understand that, in terms of having similar interests, values and aspirations, they belonged to the general non-Aboriginal middle class.

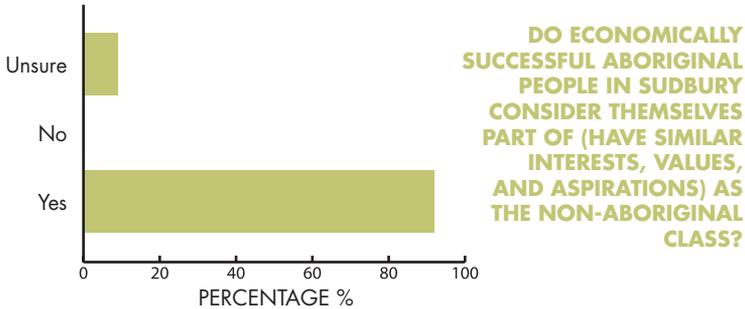
Chart 33 reveals that that 92% of participants feel that economically successful Aboriginal people in Sudbury consider

¹²For further reading please see Wotherspoon, T. 2003. ‘Prospects for a New Middle Class Among Urban Aboriginal People’ in *Not Strangers in These Parts at: <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/CP22-71-2003E.pdf>*

¹³*Ibid*

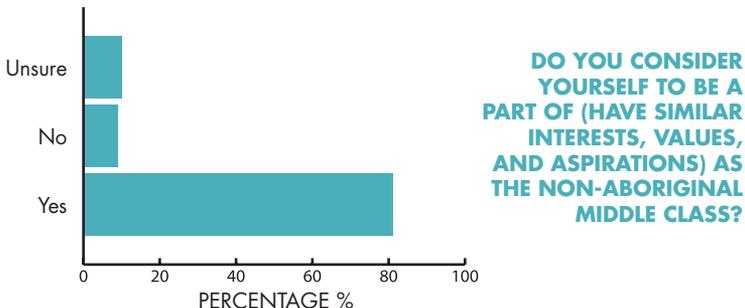
themselves to be part of the non-Aboriginal middle class. And in Chart 34, the majority of participant (81%) further stated that they personally feel that they belonged to the non-Aboriginal middle class.

CHART 33: SENSE OF GENERAL BELONGING TO NON-ABORIGINAL MIDDLE CLASS (N=49)



Ninety-two percent (92%) of economically successful urban Aboriginal people consider themselves to be part of the non-Aboriginal middle class.

CHART 34: SENSE OF PERSONAL BELONGING TO NON-ABORIGINAL MIDDLE CLASS (N=49)



Eighty-one percent (81%) indicated personally feeling that they belonged to the non-Aboriginal middle class.

From the quotes below we see that participants spoke of having the same interests, values, and aspiration as the non-Aboriginal middle class in terms of the desire for a good life materially and professionally; which includes a safe neighbourhood, owning a nice home, taking vacations, good food, and educational opportunities for their children. Many also spoke of sharing the more mundane aspects of middle class living with non-Aboriginal people such as paying bills, going to work everyday, and taking care of the house.

Of course we want a comfy lifestyle, a nice home, lots of money, a nice car and toys, etc. We all have those interests, everybody wants a good quality life in these ways. (Key respondent Interview)

We share going out for dinner, shopping, kids in sports activities and lessons... you know the things that middle class people tend to do. (Key respondent Interview)

I have a lot of non-Aboriginal friends and colleagues and we have nice houses and toys and a good life and good jobs and we work hard to keep that lifestyle. (Key respondent Interview)

There are things in common like job prestige, financial security, a good education and the desire to be an important member of society and looked up to. (Key respondent Interview)

I own a house with a garage and white picket fence. I am not raising my family in low-income housing. I have had a chance to have something nice; to live in nice neighbourhood with safe housing. (Key respondent Interview)

People I associate with are more at my level in social, family, and professional areas and this provides good networking

and learning opportunities and healthy relationships. We share recreational interests, camping, hanging out with family and friends and when I retire I will have a pension and travel and help raise my grandchildren close to family. (Key respondent Interview)

I just want to be like everybody else with a nice home, good neighbourhood, and vacations. The kids to do well in school and socially well and that they take part in extra curricular activities...we are financially stable. Our lifestyle is the same as other middle class people. (Key respondent Interview)

The non-Aboriginal Middle Class strives for a good education for their kids and a good home life, etc. This is the same for middle class Aboriginal families. (Key respondent Interview)

A number of participants spoke of the aspects of middle class life held in common with non-Aboriginal people, while also commenting on the importance of Aboriginal cultural distinctiveness.

For the most part, I live a fairly regular mainstream life but I also share many common interests values and aspirations with Aboriginal people generally. (Key respondent Interview)

Yes I am middle class, but I also want to be Aboriginal culturally. (Key respondent Interview)

I live an urban lifestyle plain and simple, but I still maintain strong connection to my First Nations community. (Key respondent Interview)

A number of participants further spoke of the tensions between fitting into non-Aboriginal middle class life as part of a denying or turning away from the Aboriginal community.

Some people I know deny being Aboriginal and just consider themselves mainstream because they are afraid of the negative judgement. (Key respondent Interview)

I've met some Aboriginal people who have no interest in Aboriginal cultural connections and are strongly connected to mainstream middle class society. (Key respondent Interview)

I know some that never go home and visit. They say there's nothing there for them. That's pretty harsh, but some people make it to the top by conforming, but I don't think that this is success. (Key respondent Interview)

CHAPTER 9

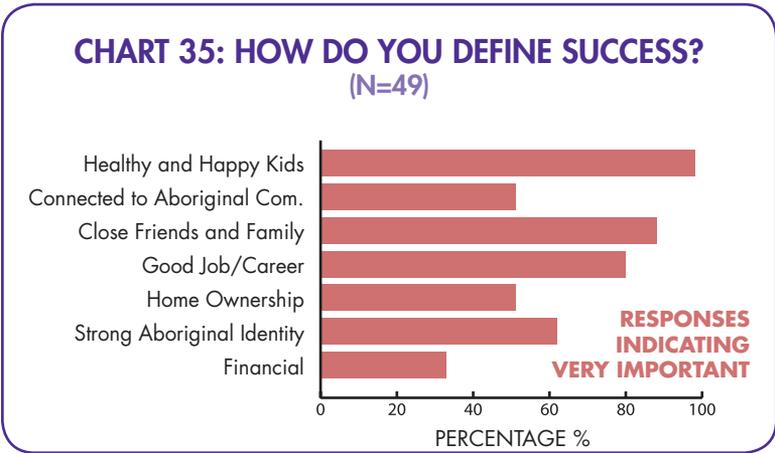
MINO BIIMADIZIWIN IN THE CITY: DEFINING SUCCESS AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS TOWARDS 'GOOD LIVING'

Summary of Key Points in Chapter

- For Aboriginal people experiencing economic success in Sudbury, having healthy and happy children, close friends and family, and having a good job/career are important measures of success.
- Success is also measured in terms of the ability to maintain a strong Aboriginal identity and to stay connected to the Aboriginal community.
- Key aspirations for those experiencing economic success in Sudbury are for more respect and inclusion and less racism by non-Aboriginal society, followed by the need for more

education that includes Aboriginal knowledge and languages, and for the reduction of poverty for Aboriginal people.

Mino Biimadiziwin is the Anishannabe concept of ‘the good life’ which encompasses notions of ‘wholeness’ and ethical relationship principles as a guide to balanced living and as a key life aspiration.¹³ In this closing chapter we explore what overall success means to participants. From Chart 35 we see in the top three responses a close correspondence with the common middle class values expressed in the previous chapter, namely: healthy and happy children, close friends and family, and a good job/career. The fourth and fifth responses are distinctive however and speak to the common desire to maintain a strong Aboriginal identity and to stay connected to the Aboriginal community.



The top three responses are healthy and happy children (98%), close friends and family (89%), and good job/career (80%). The fourth and fifth responses are to maintain a strong Aboriginal identity (61%) and to stay connected to the Aboriginal community (50%).

¹³For further reading please see Hart's 2002 *Seeking Mino-Pimatisiwin: An Aboriginal Approach to Helping* and Simpson's 2011 *Dancing On Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-creation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence*.

When asked to elaborate on the definition of success the connection to the Aboriginal community and a strong Aboriginal identity emerged strongly in the comments offered.

Success is being able to be a positive role model and to give back to the Aboriginal community and being satisfied with your place in the community. (Key respondent Interview)

Being Native doesn't mean that I won't do non-native things or live a middle class lifestyle. We are multidimensional people. I try to live Native ethics, morals, and principles. (Key respondent Interview)

Success is following cultural teachings, having integrity, overcome obstacles, and having inner strength. (Key respondent Interview)

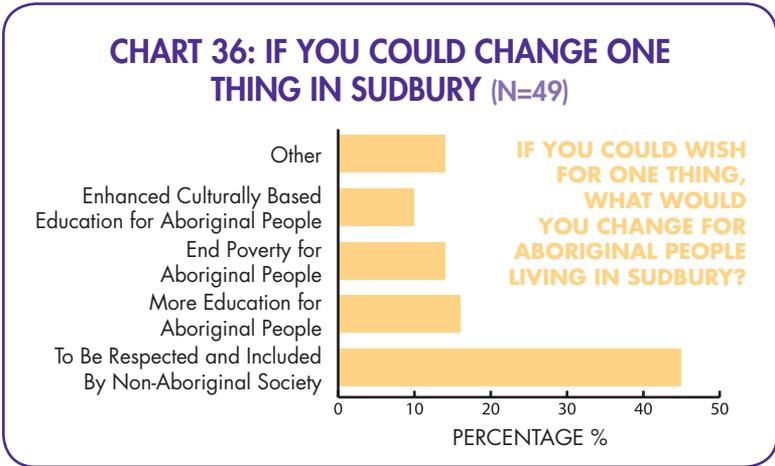
Success is being Ojibway and having the language. (Key respondent Interview)

Yes it is good to have financial success have nice things, but for me success is having personal integrity, positive relationships, and being at peace with a strong spiritual base...having a strong connection to your own spirituality. (Key respondent Interview)

For me success is having an education and a good job. It means to have a strong sense of my Aboriginal Identity, being close to family and friends, and having a close connection to the Aboriginal Community. (Life History Participant)

The last two Charts point to two key themes of this study, the desire for respect and inclusion and to end racism. When asked if they could wish for one thing, what would you change for

Aboriginal people living in Sudbury, Chart 36 and the below quotes, highlight the need to be respected and included by non-Aboriginal people, followed by the need for more education, the ending of poverty, and enhancing culturally-based education for Aboriginal people.



Forty-five percent (45%) indicated the need to be respected and included by non-Aboriginal people, followed by the need for more education for non-Aboriginal people (16%), the ending of poverty (14%), and enhancing culturally-based education for Aboriginal people (10%).

I want to help create a city where you are not made to feel ashamed of your Aboriginal heritage. (Key respondent Interview)

I would like equal opportunities with the mainstream, where they understand our true history and where they treat us like brothers and sisters and not as the enemy. (Key respondent Interview)

We need cultural education to be implemented in all schools from primary to post-secondary. This will help our kids as well as helping non-Native children become more aware of who we are and the significant events in our history. (Key respondent Interview)

We need equal opportunities, harmony, mutual respect, and equality. We just want our fair share and to be able to contribute and gain. (Key respondent Interview)

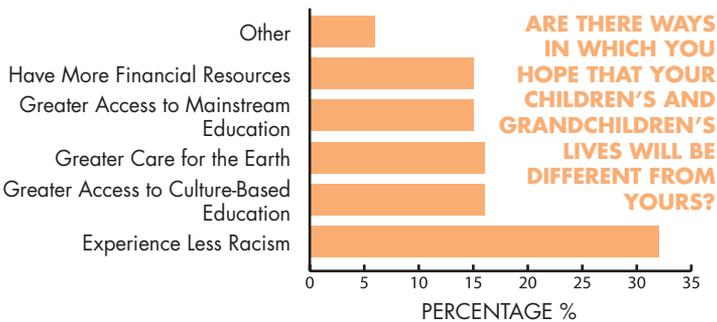
A greater focus on educational opportunities and to make education culturally relevant so that we can feel welcome in any institution of higher learning. (Key respondent Interview)

To have non-Aboriginal people understand the impacts of colonization, and to better our relations. (Key respondent Interview)

*To be accepted as a credible, positive, self-sustaining, and **VISIBLE** force in this city. (Key respondent Interview)*

When asked if there are ways in which you hope that your children's and grandchildren's lives (or at least the lives of the next generation) will be different from yours, Chart 37 and the below quotes, highlight the need to end racism, followed by the need for more cultural-based education, and greater care for the earth, as well as more financial resources for Aboriginal people.

CHART 37: HOPES FOR NEXT GENERATIONS (N=49)



Thirty-two percent (32%) indicated the need to end racism, followed by the need for more cultural-based education (16%), greater care for the earth (16%), and greater access to education generally (15%), as well as more financial resources for Aboriginal people (15%).

For Canadians to embrace our shared history, government honouring the letter and spirit of the treaties, our inclusion in all levels of government, with Aboriginal people as true partners in Canada's future. I want to abolish the senate and replaced it with a First Nation's house, and for better education and employment opportunities for Aboriginal children, and a safe society to live in. (Key respondent Interview)

For them to have the confidence and opportunity to function and contribute to both Aboriginal and mainstream societies. (Key respondent Interview)

I wish for them an end of racism and more support with education as well as more job opportunities. (Key respondent Interview)

Not to have to struggle so hard. To have a strong sense of identity and to be proud of who they are. To be able to proudly acknowledge who they are and who their home community is. (Key respondent Interview)

I hope that they speak the language and participate in culture and have a strong Native identity. And that they won't be subject to same amount of discrimination as now and that relations will be better with non Aboriginal people. (Key respondent Interview)

I wish they would know their self worth and have pride. I wish that my grandchildren learn and carry on traditions. I want them to understand the ceremonies, to know them and to go there and feel like a part of it. Many don't know what the circle means or the medicines or the people mean and that is sad. It's not easy to get the youth to take pride like I do but I try to teach them. (Life History Participant)

For a healthy earth and to be judged and treated for who I am. (Key respondent Interview)

Not to be harassed by non-Natives, not to be looked down upon, racism, discrimination, acceptance from non-native community. (Key respondent Interview)

I really hope that they don't come across the same racism as I did and I hope that the Canadian government does not continue to oppress us. (Key respondent Interview)

I hope that there will be a lot more love and peace in the world so that people can finally understand how interdependent and connected we are to one another. (Key respondent Interview)

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Economic Success and the Pathways to Mino Biimadiziwin: Themes and Aspirations

This research has revealed a number of key themes and aspirations that contribute to living the good life of Mino Biimadiziwin in the city and which speak to the importance of a supportive early family life, culture and language, a strong urban Aboriginal community, and the elimination of racism.

A supportive early family life that is rooted in Aboriginal culture

One of the key themes to emerge from this research is the critical importance of a culturally grounded, supportive early family life that provides the foundation to educational and employment success. Many spoke of the love and encouragement that they received early on in life and the presence of parental role models and Elders that instilled a strong work ethic, a pride in one's Aboriginal cultural identity, and an appreciation for the importance of education. It was from this supportive family and cultural foundation that participants, in spite of the majority experiencing poverty as

children, were able to advance along their educational and employment path. Once at university or college, continued family supports as well as supportive Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educational programs and services assisted with meeting basic needs and overcoming barriers.

A strong cultural identity within a more prominent urban Aboriginal community

In addition to having a healthy and happy family life and good career, the ability to maintain a strong Aboriginal identity and to stay connected to the Aboriginal community was identified as an important marker of success and living the good life in the city. For many participants, there has been very little exposure to learning about their Aboriginal communities, histories, cultures, and languages along their educational path.

There is strong desire for more opportunities for cultural learning in a number of areas including language, medicine and health, ceremony and teachings, and traditional hunting and food practices which are not based within the social services. Many participants also spoke to the lack of visibility of the urban Aboriginal community in Sudbury as a major challenge that needed to be addressed

An urban Aboriginal community that is welcoming and cohesive and which is well connected with the non-Aboriginal community

The need for greater internal community cohesion as well as a connection with the non-Aboriginal community in Sudbury

also emerged as an important theme of this work. Many spoke of an urban Aboriginal community divided along the lines of the social services (of which the N'Swakamok Friendship Centre and the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre are the two main hubs), and with the University and Colleges as the community focus for Aboriginal people experiencing economic success.

Many also spoke of moving away from Aboriginal political involvement due to both a general lack of confidence in Aboriginal political organizations and simply being too busy with work and family life. Nonetheless, a majority of participants continue to be involved politically with advocacy events such as Idle No More and Sisters in Spirit.

Respect, inclusion and the elimination of racism

Racism against Aboriginal people in Sudbury is a significant and long standing social problem that is felt in virtually every aspect of daily life. The challenge of racism was reported on in the 2007 Urban Aboriginal Task Force (Sudbury) and emerged as an important theme in this work as well. While there have been some improvements, the need for greater respect and inclusion from non-Aboriginal society and the elimination of racism was the number one hope for change for economically successful Aboriginal people living in Sudbury.

Racism and discrimination internal to the urban Aboriginal community is also seen as an important challenge that is expressed in a number of different ways that divide the community and alienate economically successful Aboriginal people from the social services community.

APPENDIX 1

‘Aboriginal identity’ refers to whether the person reported being an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or being a Registered or Treaty Indian, (that is, registered under the Indian Act of Canada) and/or being a member of a First Nation or Indian band. Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the Constitution Act, 1982, section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

‘Registered or Treaty Indian Status’ refers to whether or not a person reported being a Registered or Treaty Indian. Registered Indian refers to persons who are registered under the Indian Act of Canada. Treaty Indians are persons who belong to a First Nation or Indian band that signed a treaty with the Crown. Registered or Treaty Indians are sometimes also called Status Indians.

‘Non-status Indians’ commonly refers to people who identify themselves as Indians but who are not entitled to registration on the Indian Register pursuant to the Indian Act. Some of them may be members of a First Nation.

(Source: Statistics Canada 2011 National Housing Survey)

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