

**Canadians Have Favorable Opinion of Aboriginals in Canada; especially those in contact with members of aboriginal communities**

**Les Canadiens ont une opinion positive des Autochtones au Canada, particulièrement ceux qui côtoient des membres des communautés autochtones**

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Tomorrow (January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008) Statistics Canada will release the profile of Aboriginal communities in Canada collected from the 2006 census. The condition of aboriginal Canadians across the country varies considerably as the 2001 census revealed. But there remain important pockets of poverty accompanied by serious challenges to be addressed to ameliorate the situation of aboriginal communities. A number of considerations have contributed to the difficult conditions that several aboriginal communities continue to confront. But there does appear to be some improvement on one front and that is with respect to the attitudes of non-aboriginal Canadians. Late in August of 2007 the Association for Canadian Studies commissioned the firm Leger Marketing to ask questions about the degree of contact on the one hand and how favorable opinion on the other hand was of Aboriginal Canadians and francophone minorities outside of Quebec (it also asked about Muslim, Jewish and Sikh Canadians). Over the past two years the ACS has begun tracking opinion on these communities to monitor changes. In this instance the focus is on regional differences in contact and opinion of the groups. The survey was conducted amongst 1 500 Canadians over the period August 22-28<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The poll's margin of error is 3.1% 19 times out of 20.

Demain, le 15 janvier 2008, Statistiques Canada publiera le profil des communautés autochtones au Canada selon les données du recensement de 2006. La condition des Autochtones au Canada varie considérablement à travers le pays, tel que le recensement de 2001 le révélait. Mais il reste d'importantes réalités reliées à la pauvreté et autres points tout aussi majeurs sur lesquels on doit se pencher pour améliorer la situation des communautés autochtones. Nombreuses considérations ont contribué aux conditions difficiles que plusieurs communautés autochtones continuent de vivre. Il semble toutefois y avoir quelques améliorations grâce à l'attitude des Canadiens non autochtones. A la fin du mois d'août 2007, l' Association d'études canadiennes a commissionné la firme Léger Marketing afin d'effectuer un sondage en rapport avec le niveau de contact d'une part et, d'une autre part, sur les Autochtones canadiens et les minorités francophones hors Québec (on a aussi inclus les Canadiens musulmans, juifs et sikhs). Au cours des deux dernières années, l'AEC a commencé à collecter les opinions sur ces communautés afin de déceler les changements. L'emphase est mise sur les différences régionales des contacts et des opinions de ces groupes. Le sondage a été effectué auprès de 1500 Canadiens sur une période du 22 au 28 août 2007. La marge d'erreur est de 3.1% 19 fois sur 20.

As observed below some three-quarters of Canadians report having favorable opinions of aboriginals just behind Jews and francophones outside of Quebec who received the highest rate of favorability.

**Table 1**  
**Would you say you have a Very Favorable, Somewhat Favorable, somewhat Unfavorable or Very Unfavorable opinion of the following groups?**

	TOTAL Favorable	Very Favorable	Somewhat favorable	Total Unfavorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very Unfavorable	Don't Know
Francophones Outside of Quebec	80%	39%	41%	9	7	2	11
Aboriginals	76%	27%	49%	15	11	4	9
Jews	78%	30%	48%	12%	8%	4%	10%
Muslims	61%	18%	43%	27%	18%	9%	12%
Sikhs	53%	15%	38%	25%	16%	9%	22%

As observed in Table 2 when asked about their degree of contact with the groups some 50% of Canadians report either often or occasionally having contact with aboriginals just ahead of francophones outside of Quebec (48%), Jews (44%), Muslims and Sikhs (21%).

**Table 2**  
**Do you have contact with the following groups...**

	Often	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Francophones Outside of Quebec	23%	25%	22%	29%
Aboriginals	20%	30%	21%	28%
Jews	15%	29%	22%	31%
Muslims	13%	24%	23%	39%
Sikhs	7%	14%	23%	53%

On the basis of language background it is the English group that reports a more favorable opinion of aboriginals (80%) followed by francophones (75%) and allophones (67%)-though in the latter case many report formulating no opinion. In the case of allophones it is the aboriginals and Jews that received the highest favorable ratings.

**Table 3**  
**Would you say you have a Very Favorable or Somewhat Favorable opinion of the following groups?**

FAVORABLE	French	English	Allophones
Francophones Outside of Quebec	92%	81%	62%
Aboriginals	75%	80%	67%
Jews	72%	84%	67%
Muslims	53%	65%	60%
Sikhs	44%	58%	50%

When examining the degree of reporting only very favorable ratings a big gap emerges amongst francophone respondents (overwhelmingly in Quebec) who by far express a very favorable opinion of francophones outside of Quebec relative to the other groups included here. English Canadians also report the highest rate of very favorable opinion towards francophones outside of Quebec (40%) followed by Jews (39%) and aboriginals (33%). Amongst allophones there are few differences between the groups in the degree of very favorable ratings accorded.

**Table 4**  
**Would you say you have a Very Favorable opinion of the following groups?**

Very Favorable in percentage	French	English	Other
Francophones Outside of Quebec	47	40	26
Aboriginals	17	33	21
Jews	11%	39%	24%
Muslims	9%	20%	24%
Sikhs	6%	19%	17%

As to contact with the groups, the francophone population at 54% has most contact both often and occasionally with francophones outside of Quebec with near equal degrees of contact with aboriginals, Jews and Muslims. For English Canadians of the five groups identified they report having the most contact (often and occasionally with aboriginals (62%) followed by Jews (50%) and francophones outside of Quebec (49%). For allophones it is Muslims (49%) with whom they report having the most contact either often or occasionally followed by Jews (46%) and thereafter they report equal degrees of contact with aboriginals and francophones outside of Quebec.

**Table 5**  
**Do you often and occasionally have contact with the following groups...**

Often and Occasionally combined	French	English	Other
Francophones Outside of Quebec	54	49	35
Aboriginals	32	62	35
Jews	28	50	46
Muslims	29	37	49
Sikhs	5	26	25

However when asked with which groups they have contact often the Jewish population ranks first with 39% amongst English Canadians and tied for first with Muslims amongst allophones.

**Table 6**  
**How often do you have contact with the following groups...**

Often	French	English	Other
Francophones Outside of Quebec	27	24	15
Aboriginals	10	26	14
Jews	11	39	24
Muslims	7	11	24
Sikhs	1	7	12

**Contact with Aboriginals by Region**

As to contact with aboriginals by region as observed below it is most common in Saskatchewan when it comes to reporting its occurrence often. BC and Manitoba follow next with Ontarians and Quebecers having the fewest contacts.

**Table 7**  
**How often do you have contact with the following groups... / Aboriginal**

	...Often	...Occasionally	...Rarely	...or Never
Saskatchewan	46,0%	28,6%	12,7%	12,7%
Colombie- Britannique	41,3%	32,7%	12,7%	12,0%
Manitoba	37,1%	46,8%	11,3%	3,2%
Nouvelle-Écosse	30,2%	32,6%	16,3%	20,9%
Alberta	26,4%	39,2%	20,8%	13,6%
Nouveau- Brunswick	25,7%	34,3%	20,0%	20,0%
Terre-Neuve	21,1%	21,1%	21,1%	36,8%
Ontario	14,0%	32,5%	25,7%	27,2%
Québec	8,0%	19,5%	23,5%	48,5%
Total	19,3%	29,9%	21,9%	28,3%

As to holding the most favorable opinions of aboriginals it is in New Brunswick where the “very favorable” rating is highest and Quebec where it is lowest. However, overall rates of favorable opinion which combine very and somewhat favorable are similar across the provinces.

**Table 8**  
**Would you say you have a Very Favorable, Somewhat Favorable, somewhat Unfavorable or Very Unfavorable opinion of aboriginals?**

<b>Aboriginals</b>	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable
Nouveau-Brunswick	40,0%	48,6%	2,9%	2,9%
Nouvelle-Écosse	37,2%	53,5%	2,3%	-
Terre-Neuve	36,8%	47,4%	5,3%	-
Manitoba	32,3%	48,4%	6,5%	6,5%
Colombie-Britannique	32,0%	47,3%	8,7%	2,0%
Saskatchewan	31,7%	47,6%	12,7%	4,8%
Ontario	29,2%	47,5%	9,0%	2,8%
Alberta	27,2%	53,6%	11,2%	1,6%
Québec	17,0%	54,3%	17,0%	6,0%
Total	26,9%	50,1%	10,9%	3,6%

It is clear that the more contact one has with aboriginals, the more their opinion is favorable.

**Table 9**  
**Do you have contact with the following groups... / ...Aboriginals- Would you say you have a Very Favorable, Somewhat Favorable, somewhat Unfavorable or Very Unfavorable opinion of the following groups?**

All	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable
...Often	48,1%	40,5%	5,5%	
...Occasionally	28,5%	56,8%	8,2%	2,0%
...Rarely	23,2%	54,9%	13,1%	1,2%
...or Never	13,9%	46,6%	15,8%	9,6%
DNK/Refusal	11,1%	11,1%	11,1%	

This is true for both Anglophone and Francophone respondents and indeed it is safe to conclude that the gap between Quebec and the rest of Canada in favorable ratings of aboriginals is a function of the lesser degree of contact between Quebecers and aboriginals.

**Table 10**  
**Do you have contact with the following groups... / ...Aboriginals \* Would you say you have a Very Favorable, Somewhat Favorable, somewhat Unfavorable or Very Unfavorable opinion of the following groups?**

English	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable
...Often	49,3%	39,8%	4,7%	
...Occasionally	31,1%	54,4%	8,4%	1,9%
...Rarely	28,0%	52,9%	10,1%	,5%
...or Never	14,9%	46,6%	14,3%	8,1%

**Table 11**

**Do you have contact with the following groups... / ...Aboriginals \* Would you say you have a Very Favorable, Somewhat Favorable, somewhat Unfavorable or Very Unfavorable opinion of the following groups?**

French	Very Favorable	Somewhat Favorable	somewhat Unfavorable	Very Unfavorable
...Often	50,0%	42,9%	7,1%	
...Occasionally	18,1%	69,1%	6,4%	2,1%
...Rarely	19,2%	56,6%	18,2%	3,0%
...or Never	12,3%	50,3%	19,8%	11,2%

Aboriginal Languages in Canada : 2006

The census results will reveal generalized growth in the aboriginal communities throughout Canada owing to high birth rates there and by consequence as observed below an increase in the numbers that know aboriginal languages.

**Table 12**

Aboriginal Mother tongue	2001	2006
Canada	187670	210075
Quebec / Québec	35555	40195
Manitoba	33415	35735
Saskatchewan	30465	34145
Alberta	23520	26985
Ontario	20185	23270
Nunavut	18615	20520
British Columbia / Colombie-Britannique	10455	13075
Northwest Territories / Territoires du Nord-Ouest	5345	5720
Nova Scotia / Nouvelle-Écosse	4045	4150
New Brunswick / Nouveau-Brunswick	3010	3070
Newfoundland and Labrador / Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador	2060	2220
Yukon Territory / Territoire du Yukon	760	880
Prince Edward Island / Île-du-Prince-Édouard	230	110

Amongst the provinces it is in Quebec where the aboriginal languages have the highest rate of retention as observed when looking at the number of mother tongue Cree in 2006 versus the number that speak the aboriginal language at home. This is largely a function of the ratio of on reserve to off reserve aboriginals where the former best contribute to the preservation of aboriginal languages.

**Table 13**

	Cree Mother Tongue	Aboriginal Language spoken most often at home
Canada	78855	45260
Quebec	13335	11675
Ontario	3495	1990
Manitoba	19110	10710
Saskatchewan	24255	13275
Alberta	17215	7455
British Columbia / Colombie-Britannique	1145	120