

Policy Note 51 | March 2023

Tangled Lines: Unraveling the Racism and Discrimination Divides in North Bay

What Makes a Welcoming Community? (Series)

By: Rachel Rizzuto



ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH

NORTHERN
POLICY INSTITUTE

INSTITUT DES POLITIQUES
DU NORD

Giwednong Aakomenjigewin Teg
ᑲ ᐃᑕᑦ-ᑲᑦ-ᑲᑦ ᑲ-ᑲᑦᑲᑦ ᑲᑦᑲᑦ
Institut d'Politik di Nor
Aen vavnd nor Lee Iway La koonpayeen

NPI – Who We Are

President & CEO

Charles Cirtwill

Board of Directors

Florence MacLean
(Chair)
Kim Jo Bliss
(Vice Chair Northwest)
Dwayne Nashkawa
(Vice Chair Northeast)
Kevin Eshkawkogan
(Secretary)
Pierre Riopel (Treasurer)
Charles Cirtwill
(President & CEO)

Cheryl Brownlee
Dr. Harley d'Entremont
Ralph Falcioni
Christine Leduc
Dr. Michele Piercey-Normore
Eric Rutherford
Douglas Semple
Mariette Sutherland
Brian Vaillancourt
Wayne Zimmer

Advisory Council

Michael Atkins
Johanne Baril
Martin Bayer
Pierre Bélanger
Chief Patsy Corbiere
Katie Elliot
Neil Fox
Shane Fugere

George Graham
Gina Kennedy
Winter Dawn Lipscombe
Dr. George C. Macey
John Okonmah
Bill Spinney
Dr. Brian Tucker

Research Advisory Board

Dr. Heather Hall (Chair,
NPI Research Advisory Board)
Dr. Hugo Asselin
Dr. Clark Banack
Riley Burton
Dr. Ken Carter
Kim Falcigno

Dr. Katie Hartmann
Carolyn Hepburn
Dr. Peter Hollings
Brittany Paat
Dr. Barry Prentice
Dr. David Robinson
Dr. David Zarifa

Land Acknowledgement

NPI would like to acknowledge the First Peoples on whose traditional territories we live and work. NPI is grateful for the opportunity to have our offices located on these lands and thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land.

We recognize and appreciate the historic connection that Indigenous peoples have to these territories. We support their efforts to sustain and grow their nations. We also recognize the contributions that they have made in shaping and strengthening local communities, the province, and Canada.

Permission Statement

NPI encourages the re-use and redistribution of its published materials provided such reuse or redistribution is done at no cost to the end user. We also ask that the end use be consistent with NPI's mandate as a federally registered charity for educational purposes dedicated to supporting evidence-based investigation of policy options and impacts. We are especially pleased when our material is used by, or in support of, youth. Permission is hereby given for reuse of our published material on this basis provided that proper credit is given to NPI as the original source. We would also appreciate being advised of such re-use or redistribution wherever possible via email at communications@northernpolicy.ca

This report was made possible through the support of our partner, Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation. Northern Policy Institute expresses great appreciation for their generous support but emphasizes the following: The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Institute, its Board of Directors or its supporters. Quotation with appropriate credit is permissible.

Author's calculations are based on data available at the time of publication and are therefore subject to change.

Editor: Gisele Regimbal

© 2023 Northern Policy Institute

Published by Northern Policy Institute

874 Tungsten St.

Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 6T6

ISBN: 978-1-77868-014-4

About the Author

Rachel Rizzuto



Rachel Rizzuto is the former Research Manager for Northern Policy Institute. Originally from the United States, Rachel attended the University of Guelph and the University of Waterloo, earning her B.A. (Honours) and M.A. (co-op) in Political Science, respectively. Throughout her academic and professional careers, Rachel has pursued the study of community and economic development, an enthusiasm borne out of travel throughout rural and urban China. Rachel provides research expertise and passion for seeing northern and rural communities thrive.

About the Partner

Environics

ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH

Environics has been a leading supplier to the Government of Canada for nearly 40 years, and has undertaken significant projects for almost every federal government department, Crown Corporation and agency. Environics has held Standing Offer contracts with the federal government for public opinion research since their inception, and consistently receives top scores based on technical and value-for-money criteria. Finally, as one of the very few wholly Canadian-owned research firms, Environics commands an unparalleled reputation for accuracy, integrity and insight. This reputation substantively enhances the credibility of the research we conduct on behalf of our clients with respondents, internal and external stakeholders, and the general public.



NPI is pleased to have the support of FedNor for this important work to assess the impact of the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot in Northern Ontario.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 5

Introduction 6

Methodology 6

Snapshot of Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Efforts in North Bay 7

Findings 7

 Demographics 7

 Overall Welcoming 8

 Interactions, Experiences and Treatment 9

 Confidence in Local Systems and Institutions 12

 Setting up for Success 12

Conclusion 13

References 14



Executive Summary

Creating welcoming communities requires the participation of all community members. As such, Northern Policy Institute and Environics Research asked the question, what are the current racism and discrimination realities in Northern Ontario communities that might impact welcoming efforts?

Online and telephone surveys were conducted in February 2022 as part of a broader initiative to collect comparable, consistent data across the regions of Northern Ontario. The results of the Anti-Racism Survey showed a mixed picture.

For example, while most respondents agreed that people of different backgrounds get along, Indigenous peoples were found to have more negative experiences. Another finding highlighted that individual prejudice against visible minorities and Indigenous peoples tended to be a bigger issue compared to discrimination built into laws and institutions, although some respondents felt both were equally a problem.

Based on the findings, there were several recommendations provided.

- Aim for a higher number of responses from visible minorities and Indigenous peoples.
- Continue measuring racism and discrimination in the community.
- Further investigation into media confidence.
- Continued public education in all spaces.
- Ask who is not around the table and why.
- Spotlight what works and implement where possible.



Introduction

Confronting racism and discrimination takes more than just words on a page. They are issues that require continued effort by everyone. The purpose of this paper is to help define a starting line in order to measure racism and discrimination moving forward.

In February 2022, Northern Policy Institute (NPI), in partnership with organizations across the regions of Northern Ontario, carried out a survey initiative aimed at collecting consistent, comparable data about racism, discrimination, welcoming communities, and the like, to inform decision-making at the local, regional, provincial, and national levels.

As many of Northern Ontario's regions are experiencing an aging workforce, out-migration among younger generations seeking education or employment, and declining birth rates, it is more important than ever that resources be focused on ways to attract and retain individuals and families. Ensuring northern communities are welcoming is a key part of this effort. Anti-racism, anti-discrimination and reconciliation are components of a welcoming community.

Naturally, a part of this work involves understanding and measuring racism and discrimination in communities. The Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination survey focused on not only what current interactions are like between peoples of different racial backgrounds, but how welcoming a community is, if all individuals are set up for success, confidence in local institutions, and how well one's community is expected to mitigate racism and discrimination going forward.

The focus of this paper will be on the community of North Bay in Northeastern Ontario. Similar papers are available for Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, and Sudbury.

Finally, some of the themes in this paper may evoke an emotionally upsetting response given the sensitive nature of this topic. If at any point you need support, please reference the list of supports provided by the Canadian Mental Health Association (ontario.cmha.ca/provincial-mental-health-supports).

Methodology

The Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination survey was distributed online via a survey link, and also administered via telephone. The survey was conducted in partnership with Environics Research.¹ The Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination survey is part of a six-year project that includes two surveys that will alternate each year. There is the survey that measures racism and discrimination and a second survey that measures attitudes towards immigrants.

The link to the online survey was made available on NPI's website and was also distributed via partner organizations, newsletters, and through targeted advertisements on social media and Google. Direct follow ups were also conducted. With reference to the telephone survey, Environics Research targeted 250 responses in each of the communities of Thunder Bay,

Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, and North Bay via landline. These communities are the five largest centres in Northern Ontario and act as hubs for surrounding communities. They are also the communities participating in the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot program, which is an initiative focused on attracting and retaining newcomers to Canada to help address labour market gaps.

The Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination survey was open from February 1 to February 22, 2022, and anyone residing in Northern Ontario was eligible to complete it. The survey was made available in both English and French. Overall, from the City of North Bay, there were 250 unique responses collected via the telephone survey and 16 unique responses to the online survey.

¹ For further information, please visit <https://environics.ca/about-us/>.

Snapshot of Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Efforts in North Bay

Offered through the North Bay & District Multicultural Centre, the Anti-Racism Lending Library offers free resources for teachers, schools, and other community groups that are looking for materials on cultural awareness, anti-racism, and diversity (North Bay & District Multicultural Centre n.d.). In the past, the Multicultural Centre held its Evening of Applause event, which occurs in conjunction with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (NBDMC n.d.-2).

Additionally, in 2020, the group 'Equity Inclusion North Bay' was formed to focus on creating a welcoming North Bay community. As of September 2021, they were in the process of becoming incorporated in order to access more funding for projects (Equity Inclusion North Bay n.d). While these are but a few examples, they highlight some of the initiatives that the community is undertaking to make North Bay a welcoming community.

Findings

Demographics

North Bay is the fourth largest community in Northern Ontario. In 2021, there were 71,736 residents and since 2006, the population has grown (Statistics Canada, various censuses).

Table 1 detailed the demographics of survey respondents for both the online and telephone surveys. More respondents were over the age of 55 and most were born in Canada. More female respondents answered the online survey. The telephone survey had a greater gender split.

Table 1: Demographics of Telephone vs Online Survey

Characteristic	Online	Telephone
Age	More than half of people were older than 55.	62 per cent of people were above the age of 55.
Language	Everyone was fluent in English. Very few of the respondents spoke French fluently or at an advanced level.	23 per cent of English speakers could speak French fluently or were advanced in the language.
Citizenship	Majority were born in Canada.	Majority were born in Canada.
Ethnic Background	There was a fairly even mix between ethnic backgrounds – White ² , Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit), and other visible minorities.	84 per cent of people were white.
Gender-Identity	Overwhelming majority were females.	Nearly even split between females and males.
Income	Near even spread of people across a variety of yearly household income levels.	A higher percentage of people were at the lower end of the household income spectrum – 43 per cent were earning under \$60,000 per year.

² Caucasian, European, Italian, Polish, Scottish, Swedish.

Overall Welcoming

When asked about the overall ‘welcoming-ness’ of one’s community to visible minorities^{3,4} and Indigenous peoples, online respondents were almost evenly split between welcoming or not welcoming for visible minorities. For Indigenous peoples, on the other hand, most online respondents said the community was either somewhat or very unwelcoming. A large majority (90 per cent) of telephone respondents, said the community was welcoming to both visible minorities and Indigenous peoples. More people indicated somewhat welcoming as opposed to very welcoming with regard to Indigenous peoples.

A factor to note about the differences that can be found between the telephone and online survey respondents is mode effect. In short, someone may provide more civil answers over the phone when responding to a survey of sensitive nature given the personal interaction. Comparatively, online surveys have a greater sense of anonymity, thus producing more candid responses (Keeter 2015).

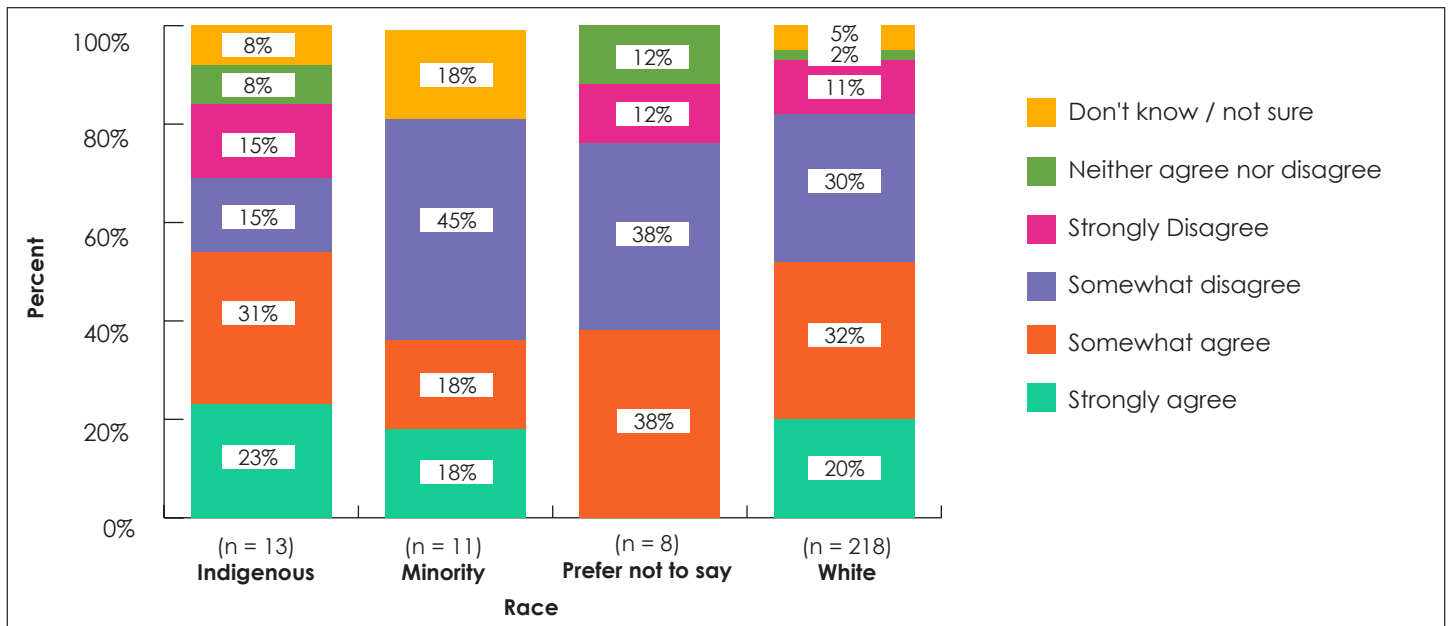
Diving into this a bit further, the online survey found that most respondents disagreed that discrimination was no longer a problem in their community for both visible minorities and Indigenous peoples. Fifty-one per cent of telephone respondents indicated that they agreed that discrimination was no longer an issue for visible minorities in the community. Thirty-eight per cent of respondents agreed that this was also the case for Indigenous peoples. Of those who agreed, a higher percentage (25 per cent) indicated that they somewhat agreed as opposed to strongly agreed.

Figures 1 and 2 break the telephone responses down further by racial background. The total number of Indigenous and other visible minority respondents was lower compared to those who identified as white. A significant percentage of Indigenous respondents disagreed that discrimination was no longer an issue against Indigenous peoples.

Figure 1: Discrimination against Visible Minorities No Longer an Issue – categorized by Racial Background of Telephone Respondents

North Bay

Discrimination against visible minorities is no longer a problem



Note: n=250

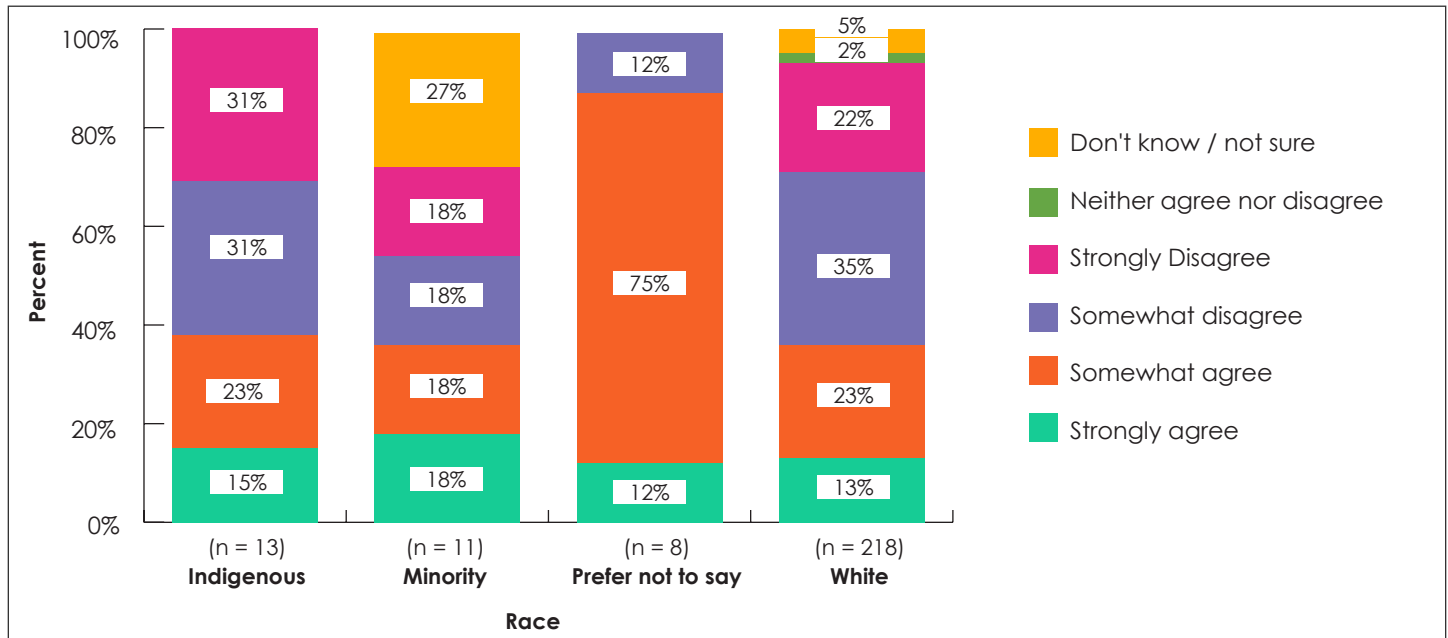
³ In the survey, whenever a question was asked about visible minorities, three races were specified: Black, Chinese, and South Asian. It is important to note that there may be visible minorities who identified with a particular community and/or group that completed the survey.

⁴ The author wishes to acknowledge that concerns have been expressed about the use of the term "visible minority". The term remains, however, the standard data label used by Statistics Canada and is used here for data comparability and consistency. Statistics Canada cites the Employment Equity Act for the definition of the term for research purposes.

Figure 2: Discrimination against Indigenous Peoples No Longer an Issue – categorized by Racial Background of Telephone Respondents

North Bay

Discrimination against Indigenous peoples is no longer a problem



Note: n=250

Finally, respondents were asked about what they felt was the bigger problem for visible minorities and Indigenous peoples: individual prejudice or discrimination built into laws and institutions. Responses from online respondents about visible minorities were similar between those who indicated *individual prejudice was the bigger issue* versus those who felt *both issues were equally a problem*. Online responses were almost the same for Indigenous peoples – nearly the same number of people indicated *discrimination built into laws and institutions* compared to those who said *both were equally a problem*.

According to the telephone respondents, a higher percentage of respondents said individual prejudice was the bigger of the two problems for both visible minorities and Indigenous peoples (74 and 64 per cent, respectively).

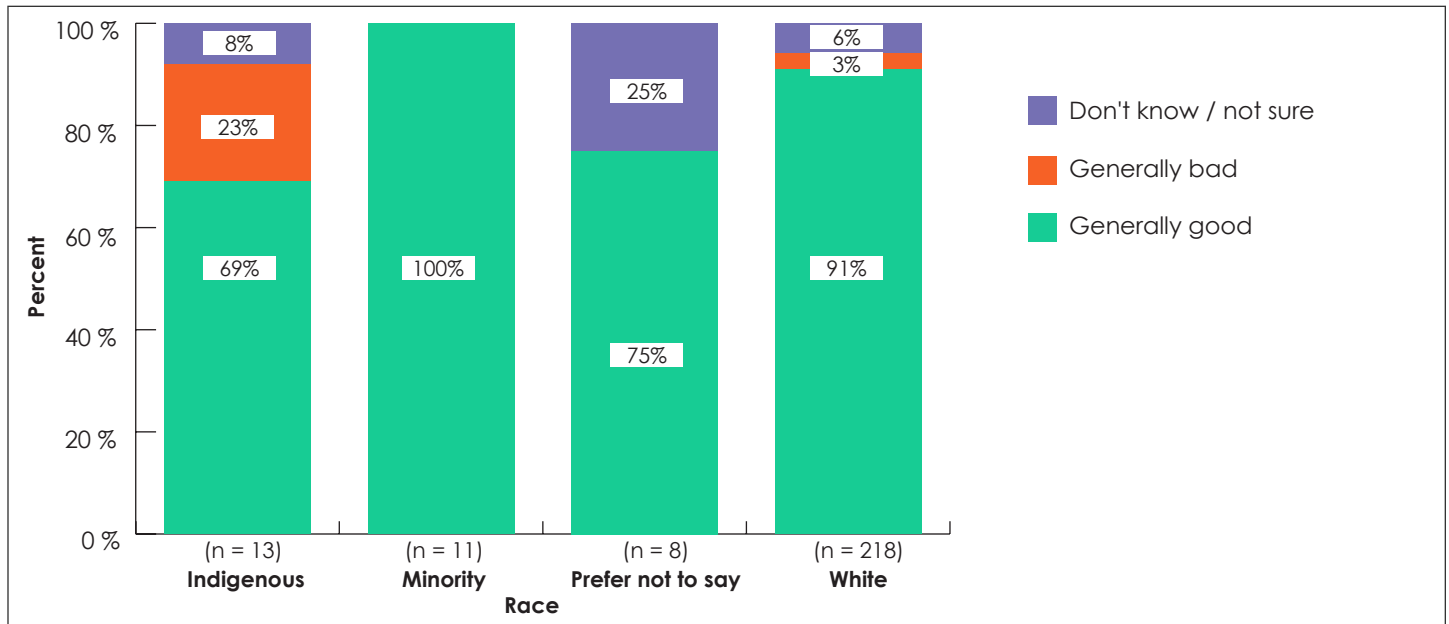
Interactions, Experiences and Treatment

When people were asked how well people of different racial backgrounds get along, a greater number of the online respondents indicated in the positive, which is similar to the results of the telephone survey (90 per cent). Figure 3 shows these percentages by different racial backgrounds of telephone respondents. Relatedly, when asked how frequently they are in contact with people of different racial backgrounds, a majority of people in both surveys said often or occasionally.

Figure 3: How Well People from Different Racial Backgrounds Get Along, Telephone Respondents

North Bay

Race relations in terms of how well people from different races get along



Note: n=250

In terms of witnessing acts of racism, nine of the online respondents said occasionally, followed by fewer than five that said frequently. The telephone survey, on the other hand, found that more often than not people rarely or never witnessed an act of racism. In fact, 48 per cent said rarely. When asked about whether they had personally experienced racism, online responses were fairly spread out between never, occasionally, and rarely, making it difficult to extrapolate analysis. For the telephone survey, 56 per cent stated they have never personally experienced racism, followed by 29 per cent that said rarely.

Finally, regarding whether visible minorities and Indigenous peoples were treated the same in comparison to white people, online respondents tended to state that visible minorities were treated less fairly at work, school, and public places more generally, and when dealing with police or the courts. Similar results were found for Indigenous peoples (Table 2).

Table 2: Treatment of Visible minorities and Indigenous peoples compared to White Individuals (#), Online survey

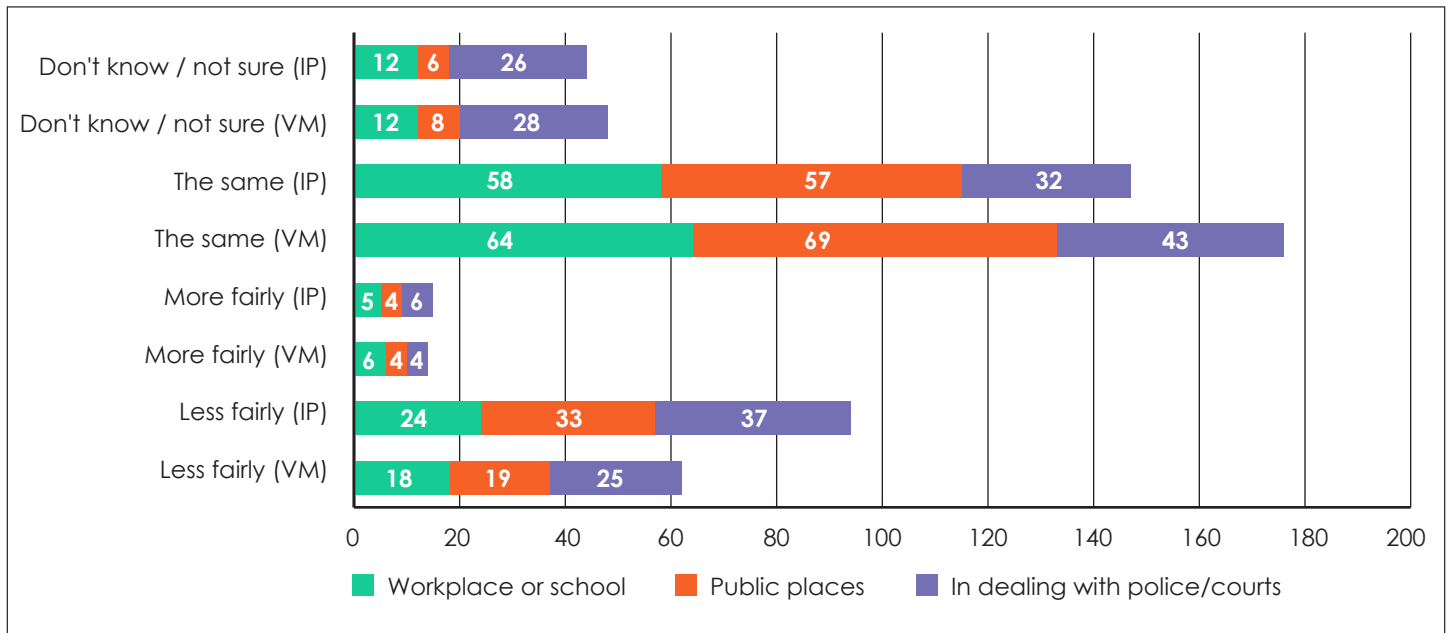
	Less fairly (VM)	Less fairly (IP)	More fairly (VM)	More fairly (IP)	The same (VM)	The same (IP)	Don't know / not sure (VM)	Don't know / not sure (IP)
Workplace or school	10	13	-	-	-	-	-	0
Public places	12	13	0	-	-	-	-	-
In dealing with police/courts	10	11	-	0	-	-	-	-

Note: VM = Visible minorities and IP = Indigenous Peoples. N = 16. Any results 5 and under were suppressed and noted with “-“.

With regard to the telephone survey, 64 per cent of people said that visible minorities were treated *the same* at work or school – 69 per cent said the same for public places (Figure 4). When it came to dealing with the police or courts, the percentage of those who said treatment was the same plummeted to 43 per cent. Across all three situational categories, the percentage of those that said *more fairly* was very low.

For Indigenous peoples, a close percentage of telephone respondents stated there was *similar treatment* at work/school and in public places more generally (58 and 57 per cent, respectively). When it came to dealing with police and courts, 37 per cent of people believed treatment was *less fair* while only 32 per cent responded *similar* treatment. Interestingly, the percentage of respondents who said *don't know* or were unsure was higher for both population groups when they were asked about dealing with the police or courts compared to work, school, and public places.

Figure 4: Treatment of Visible Minorities and Indigenous Peoples compared to White Individuals (%)



Note: VM = Visible minorities and IP = Indigenous peoples. N = 250



Confidence in Local Systems and Institutions

In general, people were asked about their confidence in the police, the justice system, and the media. Of the online respondents, not many people have a lot or a little confidence in the three systems. People tend to be 'middle ground' in this regard.

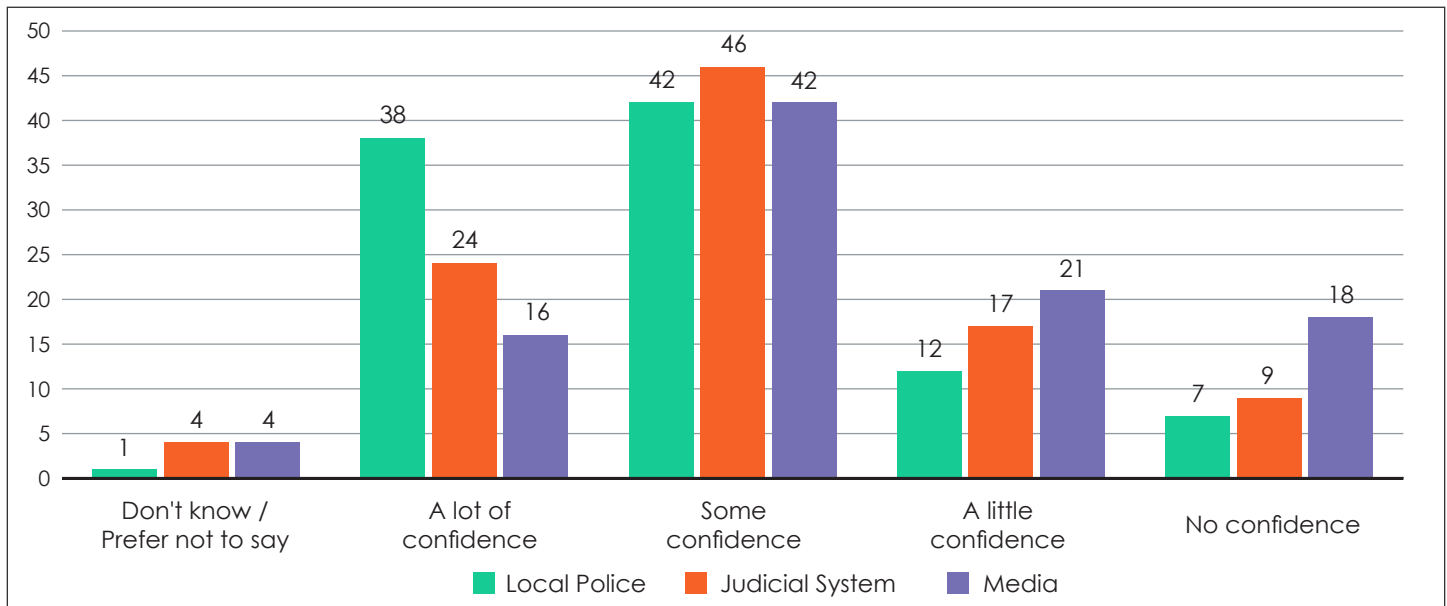
Table 4: Confidence in the Local Police, Judicial System, and Media (#), Online survey

	Local Police	Judicial System	Media
Don't know / Prefer not to say	-	-	-
A lot of confidence	-	-	-
Some confidence	-	6	6
A little confidence	6	6	8
No confidence	-	-	-

Note: N = 16. Any results 5 and under were suppressed and noted with "-".

In terms of confidence in the police and the justice system, 80 and 70 per cent of telephone respondents, respectively, maintained confidence in these two systems. Although, for both, the percentage that said some confidence tended to be higher than a lot of confidence. While 42 per cent of respondents said they had some confidence in the media, the percentage of those that responded as having little or no confidence in the media compared to the local police and the judicial system is a notable result for further exploration.

Figure 5: Confidence in the Local Police, Judicial System, and Media, Telephone Survey (%)



Note: n=250

Setting up for Success

Not everyone is at the same starting line as it relates to how well all citizens are set up for success. There are various socio-economic reasons as to why this line differs among people. In this same vein, the survey wanted to know whether relations between different races are generally good or generally bad in terms of people of all racial backgrounds having an equal chance to succeed in life. The majority (12 out of 16) online respondents stated *generally bad*, while the telephone survey was the opposite – 78 per cent said *generally good*.

On a related note, people also asked whether things have changed over the past 10 years. More online respondents indicated that *things had stayed the same* as opposed to having improved or worsened. Just under 50 per cent of telephone respondents said *things had improved*, while 40 per cent said things have stayed the same.

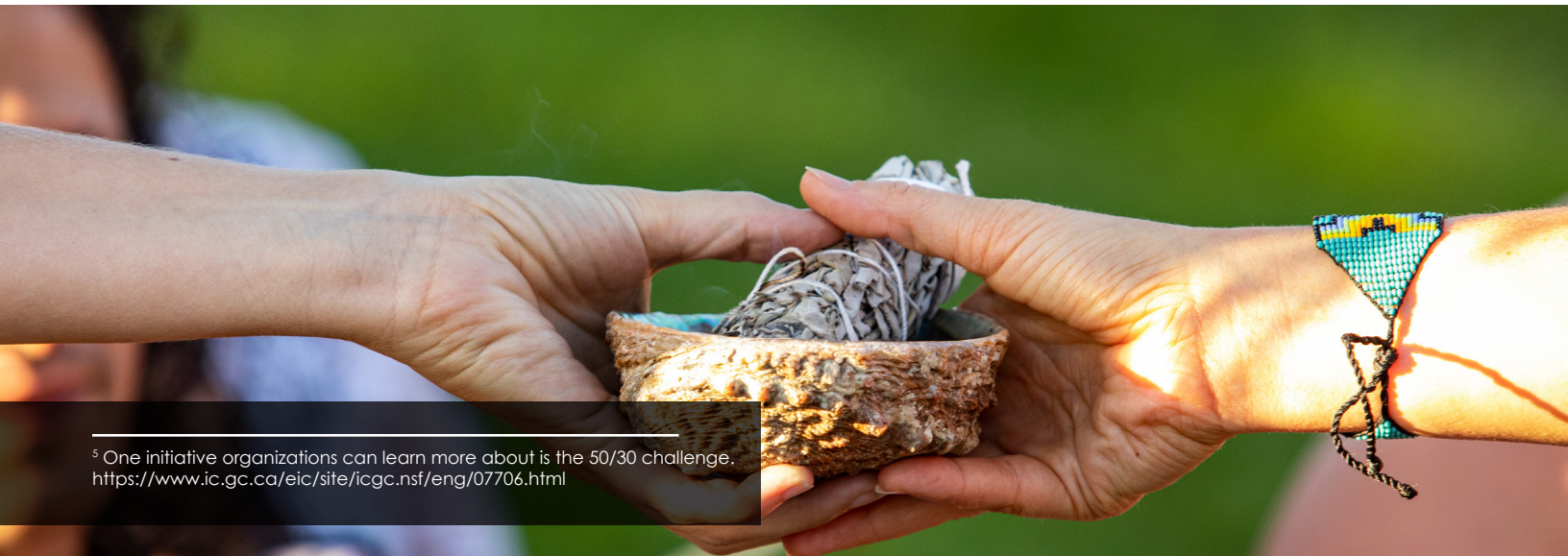
Finally, people were asked whether the way North Bay addresses racism and discrimination will improve over the next 10 years. More online respondents stated things will likely stay the same, while 60 per cent of telephone respondents said things will likely have improved.

Conclusion

Overall, based on the online and telephone survey results, there are clearly areas of concern, particularly regarding Indigenous peoples. There are also concerns around confidence in the media and individual prejudice against visible minorities and Indigenous peoples in the community.

Based on these findings, to address racism and discrimination, there are several recommendations that ought to be carried out in tandem with concrete actions. By no means are these recommendations the be-all-end-all nor can they all be completed immediately. Addressing the issues of racism and discrimination, which can be generational, takes time.

- **Aim for higher responses from visible minorities and Indigenous peoples.** Of course, this is not so straightforward. There are many reasons why we may not have a greater number of responses from these groups. Individuals may not feel comfortable coming forward or may feel the survey is simply another checkbox exercise; or perhaps they did not receive the survey. Targeted and meaningful efforts are required on this front moving forward. As well, these results could help decision-makers and others build and strengthen meaningful relationships with Indigenous peoples in the community and address continuing areas of concern.
- **Continue measuring racism and discrimination in the community.** If we are to understand if the needle is moving on these issues, continued measurement is required. This information can inform local decision-making on ongoing and future initiatives.
- **Further investigation into media confidence.** Whether it be the influence of “fake news” dialogue, the feeling that media is only sharing one side of the story, or other reasons, the relationship between media and the people is not overly strong at the moment. Further research into why this is could be beneficial for both residents and media institutions.
- **Continued public education in all spaces.** Given the concerns around individual prejudice, continuing to educate all community residents about, among other things, cultural practices, beliefs, existing resources and initiatives is a must. However, it cannot just be passive messaging. Ensuring there are opportunities for residents to be together in safe and open spaces is a way to encourage learning opportunities.
- **Ask who is not around the table and why.** Whether it be your Board of Directors, a networking event, or a working group, it is important to ask who is not currently at the table and why.⁵ Diverse backgrounds and experiences can provide new insight as well as aid individuals to see others of similar culture, linguistic, ethnic, gender, and so on in various roles. However, a key point here is that these actions ought to be meaningful in order to build strong and sustainable relationships.
- **Spotlight what works and implement where possible.** If a local organization is undertaking a successful initiative focused on diverse youth leadership, highlight that success. If a town elsewhere in Canada has completed a successful pilot project on anti-racism practices that have proven to work, consider scaling it to the North Bay community. Now, of note, spotlight and implementing initiatives should not be the responsibility of one. If funding is a concern, consider partnering with like-organizations or ones that have similar programming available.



⁵ One initiative organizations can learn more about is the 50/30 challenge. <https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/icgc.nsf/eng/07706.html>

References

"Evening of Applause." North Bay & District Multicultural Centre. Accessed March 13, 2022. Online at <https://www.nbdmc.ca/en/eveningofapplause>.

Keeter, Scott. "From Telephone to the Web: The Challenge of Mode of Interview Effects in Public Opinion Polls." PEW Research Centre, (2015).

"Our Story." Equity Inclusion North Bay. Accessed March 13, 2022. Online at <https://equityinclusionnorthbay.ca/our-story/>.

"PROVINCIAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS." Canada Mental Health Association. Accessed March 12, 2022. Online at ontario.cmha.ca/provincial-mental-health-supports.

Statistics Canada, various censuses (2011, 2021). <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm?MM=1>.

"The Anti-Racism Lending Library." North Bay & District Multicultural Centre. Accessed March 13, 2022. Online at <https://www.nbdmc.ca/en/antiracism-lending-library>.



About Northern Policy Institute

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent, evidence-driven think tank. We perform research, analyze data, and disseminate ideas. Our mission is to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts our communities, our province, our country, and our world.

We believe in partnership, collaboration, communication, and cooperation. Our team seeks to do inclusive research that involves broad engagement and delivers recommendations for specific, measurable action. Our success depends on our partnerships with other entities based in or passionate about Northern Ontario.

Our permanent offices are in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, and Kirkland Lake. During the summer months we have satellite offices in other regions of Northern Ontario staffed by teams of Experience North placements. These placements are university and college students working in your community on issues important to you and your neighbours.

Related Research

Northern Attraction Series
Christina Zefi

Addressing the Cuts Left Behind: Anti-Racism and Discrimination Initiatives for an Inclusive Northern Ontario
Larissa Yantha

Connecting the Dots: Lessons from the International & Community Matchmaker Northwest Pilot
Anthony Noga

To stay connected or get involved, please contact us at:

info@northernpolicy.ca www.northernpolicy.ca



NORTHERN
POLICY INSTITUTE

INSTITUT DES POLITIQUES
DU NORD

Giwednong Aakomenjigewin Teg
b ΔC2-4σ-4\ P-7N.σ\ <D^9:ΔbΓ^
Institi dPolitik di Nor
Aen vawnd nor Lee Iway La koonpayeen

northernpolicy.ca