

Which Canadians believe they live on unceded Indigenous territory?

Jack Jedwab

Who believes they live on unceded lands?

Recently elected officials, policy-makers, academics and others have made frequent reference to the fact that Indigenous peoples never ceded or legally signed away their lands to the Crown or to Canada. Additionally, Canadians have increasingly heard a land acknowledgement at an introduction to an art, sporting, cultural, academic or a civic event. The Maritimes, nearly all of British Columbia, and a large swath of eastern Ontario and Quebec (including Ottawa) sit on territories that were never signed away by the Indigenous people who inhabited them before Europeans settled in North America. A June 2021 ACS-Leger survey of Canadians asked whether Canadians felt “that they are currently living on unceded Indigenous territory”. Some 25% agreed, 42% disagreed and 33% didn’t know. An ACS-Leger July 8-10 survey framed the question simply as “Yes” and “No” (without the option to say “ I don’t know”) and one third said that they lived on unceded land while two-thirds said No. Proportionately distributing those responding “I don’t know” for the June 2021 survey suggests that between 2021 and 2022 there was a slight decline in the share of Canadians that believe they live on unceded Indigenous lands.

The findings arise from a Leger survey for the ACS that was conducted between July 8 to July 10, 2022 via web panel with 1764 Canadians. No margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample (Web panel in this case). However for comparative purposes, a probability sample of 1764 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20

A majority of British Columbians believe that they live on unceded Indigenous territory, in contrast to Quebec where only twenty percent hold that view

I live on unceded indigenous territory (the territory was never legally relinquished by Indigenous peoples) - Please respond with Yes or No to the following:	Total	Atlantic	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario	Quebec
Yes	34.0%	25%	56.3%	34.2%	34.6%	35.5%	32.5%	20.6%
No	66.0%	75%	43.7%	65.8%	65.4%	64.5%	67.5%	79.4%
	100.0%	100%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Vancouver, Ottawa and Edmonton residents are most likely to believe that they live on unceded Indigenous territory, while Montrealers are least likely to feel that way

I live on unceded Indigenous territory (the territory was never legally relinquished by Indigenous peoples) - Please respond with Yes or No to the following:	MTL RMR	Greater Ottawa area	Greater Toronto area	Hamilton - Niagara Peninsula	Calgary	Edmonton	Greater Vancouver (Metro)
Yes	20.6%	49.3%	34.1%	29.4%	32.4%	47.0%	56.2%
No	79.4%	50.7%	65.9%	70.6%	67.6%	53.0%	43.8%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Some 44% of Canadians under the age of 45 believe that they live on unceded Indigenous territory, compared with 25% of Canadians over the age of 45

I live on unceded Indigenous territory (the territory was never legally relinquished by Indigenous peoples) - Please respond with Yes or No to the following:	Between 18 and 24	Between 25 and 34	Between 35 and 44	Between 45 and 54	Between 55 and 64	Between 65 and 74
Yes	45.1%	44.9%	44.3%	28.8%	29.1%	22.4%
No	54.9%	55.1%	55.7%	71.2%	70.9%	77.6%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Francophones are least likely to think that they live on unceded Indigenous territory, while allophones are most likely to think so

I live on unceded Indigenous territory (the territory was never legally relinquished by Indigenous peoples) - Please respond with Yes or No to the following:	French	English	Other	Born in Canada	Born outside of Canada
Yes	22.7%	36.5%	47.6%	34%	34%
No	77.3%	63.5%	52.4%	66%	66%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100%	100%

For some Indigenous peoples, Turtle Island refers to the continent of North America. A majority of Canadians have never heard the term, but 46% of Canadians who say they have heard the term also claim they to live on unceded Indigenous territory. Meanwhile only 25% of those claiming not to have heard the term believe they live on unceded Indigenous territory.

	I have heard of something called 'Turtle Island' - Please respond with Yes or No to the following		Total
	Not Indigenous person ()	Indigenous person (First Nations, Inuk (Inuit) or Métis)	
Yes	42.2%	68.2%	43.4%
No	57.8%	31.8%	56.6%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

I live on unceded Indigenous territory (the territory was never legally relinquished by Indigenous peoples) - Please respond with Yes or No to the following:	I have heard of something called 'Turtle Island' - Please respond with Yes or No to the following:	
	Yes	No
Yes	46.2%	24.7%
No	53.8%	75.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

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