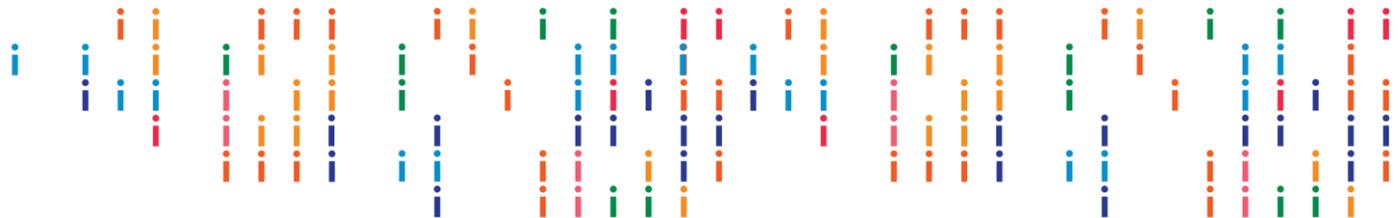


# Canadian social norms and racism 2022 Benchmark survey

Final Report

**Environics  
Institute**  
For Survey Research



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# Executive summary

# Executive summary

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## Background

Social norms play a key role in the dynamics of racism and prejudice because they reflect powerful boundaries defining how people act toward others who they see as different. While references to norms are common in general conversation, there has yet to be any focused attention or research looking at social norms and how this perspective can support anti-racism strategies.

The Environics Institute conducted the first-ever national survey about social norms in Canada as they pertain to racism. The purpose of this research is to:

- Generate new metrics that serve as indicators of racism;
- Identify the presence and strength of social norms around selected race-directed behaviour;
- Establish benchmark indicators by which racism can be measured over time;
- Create a methodology for social norm measurement that can be applied in other settings; and
- Demonstrate the value of a “social norms lens” in addressing racism and other collective behaviour challenges.

# Executive summary

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## Research methods

A new method was developed to measure social norms at the population level, adapted from a well-established conceptual model of social norms. The model incorporates four dimensions that together compose a social norm around specific race-directed actions (the four dimensions are: empirical expectations, personal norm, normative expectations, and consequences & sanctions).

The research consisted of a national survey conducted online in February and March 2022 with a representative sample of 6,601 Canadians (ages 18+), including an oversample of Black and Indigenous participants.

The survey measured social norms as they apply to 12 hypothetical scenarios, each of which presented a typical form of racist or anti-racist (bystander) action directed toward someone who is Indigenous or Black. Each scenario was presented in the form of a vignette, followed by a set of questions for participants to answer that covered cover the four dimensions. The data for each scenario was combined to produce an overall social norm index.

# Executive summary

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## Survey results

Results show a significant minority of Canadians have personally witnessed, or know someone who has seen, each of the 12 racist or anti-racist actions against Indigenous or Black people described in the vignettes (a measure of empirical expectations). In most cases, a majority personally believe the racist actions are morally wrong (personal norm), but are less certain about the extent to which other people they know would agree with them about this (narrative expectations) or would speak up to say something to the person committing the action (consequences and sanctions). This means that social norms for these types of racist-directed actions are not very strong and so have limited influence on discouraging negative actions or encouraging positive ones.

Across the range of scenarios presented there is modest variation in the strength of social norms. These norms are stronger for situations involving support for bystander intervention than those involving disapproval of racist actions; this suggests it may be easier for people to imagine there is collective support for someone else who speaks up to call out racist actions than it is to think there is collective opposition to such behaviour.

# Executive summary

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## Survey results (continued)

Racism expressed through online posts are seen to be prevalent but also more widely considered socially unacceptable and likely to elicit pushback from others. By comparison, the act of claiming that racism doesn't exist (or is overblown) is also seen to be commonplace and socially unacceptable, but Canadians are less certain about what others think and how they would react if confronted with this behaviour. Finally, appropriating Indigenous or Black attire at a party is believed to be relatively uncommon, and not so big a social transgression.

The social norms measured are notably consistent across the Canadian population, by region, demographic strata and race. On average, these social norms tend to be a bit stronger among women, people ages 18 to 29, and those with a university degree, but the magnitude of these differences is small. There is even less variability across regions of the country, and between people living in urban and rural communities. What matters more are attitudes about relevant issues. Social norms as they apply to race-directed actions are stronger among people who believe that one should be careful to avoid offending others, that racism is a problem in Canada, and who support current immigration levels. Notably, the strength of such norms expressed by Indigenous and Black survey participants do not differ much from that of other Canadians.

# Executive summary

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## Conclusions

This research represents a first step in understanding the dynamics of social norms as they apply to racism in Canada, and how this knowledge can be meaningfully applied. While by no means the final word on the topic, the research:

- Demonstrates that social norms can be effectively measured at a population level; people are able to provide meaningful answers to the central questions that identify the presence and strength of norms as they apply to situations involving racist actions in their social context;
- Provides new metrics documenting the extent of racism in Canada overall and across relevant subgroups of the population. These metrics can be added to the growing body of evidence documenting racism and updated over time to identify trends; and
- Provides empirical evidence for the important role that social context plays in the expression of racism in daily life in Canada which, along with institutional racism and individual prejudice, should be recognized as a key dimension to both understanding racism in society and how to address it.

# Executive summary

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## Conclusions (continued)

Expanding the scope opens up new opportunities for developing strategies to change not minds (i.e., peoples internal values and attitudes) but the social rules in ways that can effectively reduce racist behaviour in our communities. The social norm model developed through this research could be applied in specific organizational and group settings such as companies, government departments, professional associations and social clubs where race-directed behaviours need to be addressed.

The social norms model offers an opportunity to expand our understanding of racism in society from one that focuses primarily on racist perpetrators and racialized victims. Race relations involves everyone, not because all of us are racists or victims, but because we are all part of the social milieu in which racism takes place. And so we are connected to others in how the rules of behaviour and social norms are constructed and maintained. None of us as individuals can do much to change such norms, but collectively we can make a difference through collective actions

Finally, the relevance of social norms extends well beyond issues of racism, to other collective problems encompassing politics and public health. How we understand and address these latest collective challenges will be informed by attention to a social norms perspective.

# Background

# Race relations and racism in Canada

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Canada is among the world's most ethnically and racially diverse societies. At the same time, racism and discrimination continue to be an underlying reality, with racialized people facing ongoing challenges at both a personal and institutional level. Progress has been achieved over the past few decades in making the country more inclusive, but racism remains firmly embedded in society,

Anti-racism strategies have focused on education and changing attitudes, based on an underlying assumption that racism stems primarily from what is in people's heads, in the form of ignorance and prejudice. This approach has met with limited success, in part because beliefs and attitudes are highly resistant to change (as they are grounded in one's upbringing and emotional states), and in part because outward expressions of intolerance are as likely (if not more so) to be governed by the social context in which people live and interact with others. How people behave is strongly influenced by what they believe others around them think and do, and what they think is expected or acceptable to those whose opinions they care about.

Shifting the focus from individuals' internal prejudice to how people behave in the context of others provides a valuable new perspective that can contribute to more effective strategies for reducing racism in society.

# Social norms and why they matter

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Social norms are widely-held expectations about what is, and is not, acceptable or appropriate behaviour in a particular setting or situation. Such norms are unspoken rules about how to behave. They can be well entrenched but also may change over time, in some cases as a result of intentional efforts. A good example is the successful campaign to “de-normalize” smoking tobacco in public, which over the course of a generation went from being cool to be almost nonexistent.

Social norms play a key role in the dynamics of racism and prejudice because they reflect powerful boundaries defining how people act toward others who they see as different. While internal attitudes and beliefs are difficult to change, behaviour (actions and speech) are more amenable to social influence and normative pressures. Changing social norms may prove to be an effective strategy for reducing racism and prejudice in a sustained way.

While references to “norms” are common in general conversation, there has yet to be any focused attention or research looking at social norms as they relate to racism, and how they might provide a valuable perspective in guiding anti-racism strategies.

# Canadian social norms and racism – 2022 Benchmark survey

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In early 2022, the Environics Institute for Survey Research conducted a national survey about social norms in Canada as they pertain to racism. This is the very first population-based survey of its kind anywhere in the world to focus on social norms in this way.

This research is supported through a contract for syndicated public opinion research with the Government of Canada and Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

# Research objectives

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Developing strategies for normative change first requires a basic understanding of the nature and prevalence of social norms around racism in the population. This research represents the first step, with the following objectives:

- Generate the first-ever metrics of social norms, as indicators of racism in Canadian society;
- Identify the presence and strength of social norms around selected types of racist and anti-racist actions;
- Establish benchmark indicators of social norms in Canada, from which racism in this form can be measured over time, to identify trends;
- Create a methodology for social norm measurement that can be applied in other settings (e.g., within organizations); and
- Demonstrate the value of a “social norms lens” in addressing racism, as well as other public policy challenges involving collective behaviour (e.g., public health).

# Research methods

# Research approach

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The research consisted of a national survey of Canadians, designed to measure the presence and strength of social norms as they pertain to selected situations involving racist or anti-racist behaviour directed at someone who is Indigenous or Black.

A new method was developed for measuring social norms through a population survey, drawing from the current academic and public health literature. This method was based on a conceptual model of social norms developed by Dr. Cristina Bicchieri, a leading international expert on social norm theory and measurement.

The survey was conducted online by Environics Research between February 18 and March 31, 2022, with a representative sample of 6,601 Canadians (ages 18 plus) that includes an oversample of Indigenous and Black participants. The sample was drawn from panels supplied by Asking Canadians and Dynata, with a combined contact rate of 91% and a participation rate of 88%. Quotas were established to ensure representation by province, gender, age and education, and the data were weighted by these strata so that the national sample is proportionate to the population (based on the 2016 Census). The survey was conducted in English and French.

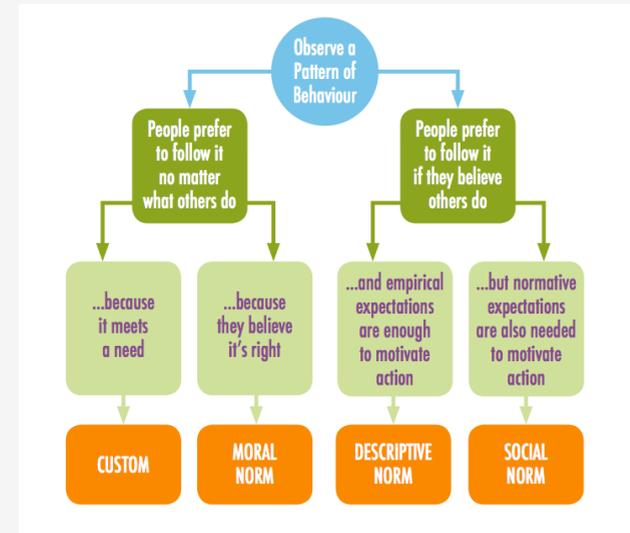
A copy of the questionnaire is provided under separate cover.

# Social norms model

The conceptual model of social norms includes four dimensions:

1. **Empirical expectations:** Extent to which one believes a specific type of action (behaviour or speech) is prevalent among one's relevant social group(s).
2. **Personal (moral) norm:** How one feels personally about the rightness or wrongness of the action.
3. **Normative expectations:** Extent to which one believes that the action is seen to be right or wrong by others in relevant social groups (*the most essential component of a social norm*).
4. **Consequences and sanctions:** How likely one believes there will be some form of consequences or sanctions applied to someone who takes the action.

Diagnostic model of norms\*



\*Bicchieri, C., *Norms in the Wild* (2017)

# Social norms apply to specific situations

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Because social norms are specific to actions and situations, they need to be measured as such. Twelve (12) hypothetical scenarios were selected to cover a range of racist or anti-racist (e.g., bystander) actions directed at Indigenous or Black people. These scenarios were developed in consultation with advisors from both communities.

## Indigenous-directed actions

- A1 – Speaking up when someone tells an insensitive joke (*bystander*)
- A2 – Appropriating Indigenous attire at a party or event (*racist*)
- A3 – Making a racial gesture at a sporting event (*racist*)
- A4 – Claiming that racism against Indigenous Peoples doesn't exist (*racist*)
- A5 – Speaking up when an Indigenous person is being hassled in public (*bystander*)
- A6 – Posting derogatory comments on a Facebook group (*racist*)

## Black-directed actions

- B1 – Speaking up when someone tells an insensitive joke (*bystander*)
- B2 – Appropriating Black attire at a party or event (*racist*)
- B3 – Asking a Black person where he/she came from (*racist*)
- B4 – Claiming that racism in Canada doesn't exist (*racist*)
- B5 – Speaking up when a Black person is being hassled in public (*bystander*)
- B6 – Posting derogatory comments on a Facebook group (*racist*)

# Use of vignettes to present representative scenarios

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Scenarios were presented on the survey as short vignettes or stories, which is an established technique for describing situations that participants can then respond to. It is an effective way to measure social norms because it provides distance between the participant and the situation (it is not about their own actual or potential actions). Each survey participant was presented with a randomized selection of six of the 12 vignettes (3 for Indigenous Peoples, 3 for Black people). All 12 vignettes are presented in the Appendix.

## Examples

**Claiming that racism against Indigenous Peoples doesn't exist (A4).** Judy is a white woman in her early 30s. She is at the bar one evening with her friends to have a good time. The conversation turns to the treatment of Indigenous people in their town by the local police. Judy insists that racism and racial profiling against Indigenous people in their town isn't as bad as some people say. She says the media gives this issue too much attention.

**Speaking up when someone tells an insensitive joke (B1).** Jonah is a white man in his 30s. One day he is on a coffee break with other guys in his office, and they are chatting about the cars they drive. Sam is another white man in the group, and he is joking with Chris, who is Black. Sam asks Chris if he is able to afford to drive such a nice car because of the money he earns dealing drugs. Several others laugh, but Jonah is bothered by what Sam said. He speaks up right away. He tells Sam that his joke is out of line and not funny.

**Making a racial gesture at a hockey game (A3).** Rick is a white teenager. He attends a hockey game where the local team is playing a visiting team that includes a couple of Indigenous players. When the home team scores a goal, Rick celebrates by making a vigorous tomahawk gesture along with a loud whooping cry.

# Social norms model

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Dimension	Definition	Survey questions
<b>Empirical expectations</b>	Extent to which one believes a specific type of action (behaviour or speech) is prevalent within one's relevant social group(s).	<i>Have you seen someone do this action, or know someone else who has seen it?</i> <i>How common is it today that someone would do this, among people you know (family, friends, co-workers)?</i>
<b>Personal (moral) norm</b>	How one feels personally about the rightness or wrongness of the action.	<i>Do you think personally that what this person did was right or wrong?</i>
<b>Normative expectations</b>	Extent to which one believes the action is seen to be right or wrong <u>by others</u> in relevant social groups	<i>How many of the people you know/in your community, would say what this person did was right/wrong?</i>
<b>Consequences &amp; sanctions</b>	How likely one believes there will be some form of consequences or sanctions applied to someone who takes the action.	<i>How likely do you think other people would have said something to this person about what he/she did?</i> <i>(If so) What do you think others might say to this person about what he/she did? (open-ended response)</i>

# Survey results

# Empirical Expectations: Witnessed racist actions by others against Indigenous Peoples

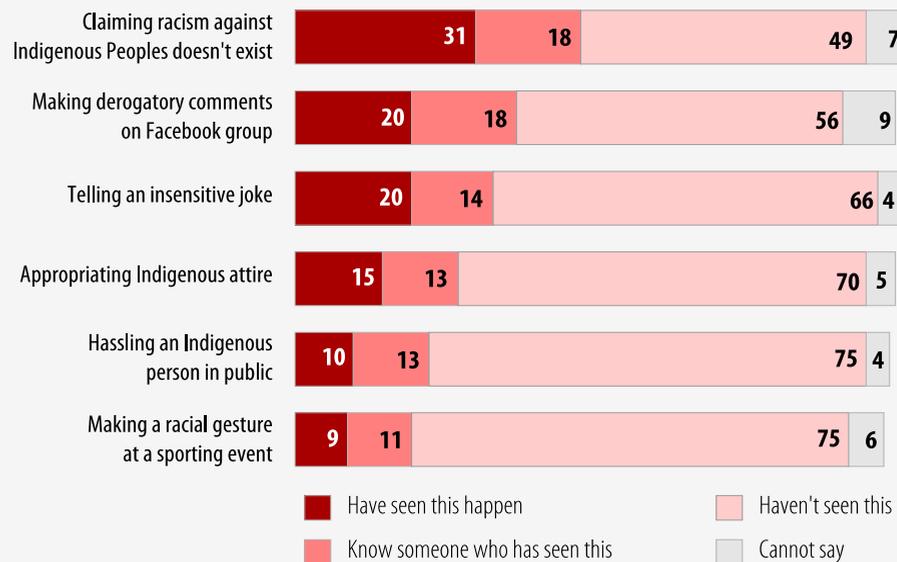
Significant minorities of Canadians have either personally seen, or know someone who has seen, each of these six racist actions directed at Indigenous Peoples.

Most common is witnessing others making claims that racism against Indigenous Peoples doesn't exist (49% self or someone you know), posting derogatory comments on Facebook (38%), or telling an insensitive joke about Indigenous people (35%).

People are least apt to say they have seen others hassling an Indigenous person in public (22%) or making a racial gesture at a sporting event (21%).

Most Indigenous survey participants have witnessed, or know others who have witnessed, each of these racist actions (most notably claims that racism doesn't exist (93%) and negative Facebook comments (87%).

You or people you know have seen this type of racist action directed at Indigenous Peoples



*a. Have you seen someone do this action, or know someone else who has seen it?*

# Empirical Expectations:

## Witnessed racist actions by others directed at Black people

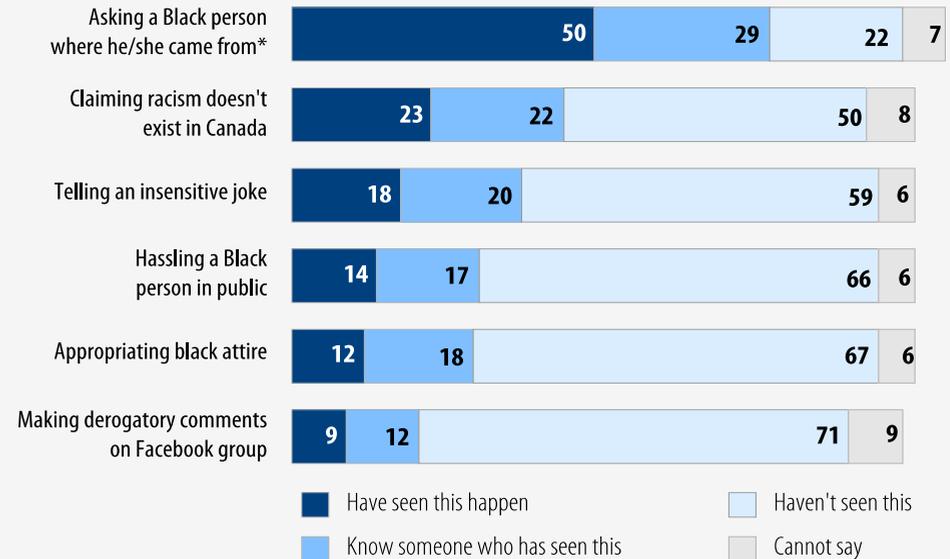
Significant minorities have also witnessed, or know others who have seen, similar racist-directed actions against Black people, most noticeably others claiming that racism doesn't exist in Canada (45% self or other).

Least apt to be seen are others appropriating Black attire at a party or event (30%) or making derogatory comments on Facebook (22%) (noticeably less common than seeing such comments directed at Indigenous people).

Three-quarters of Black survey participants say they have personally been asked where they came from (43%) and/or know someone who has experienced this (32%).\* Most Black participants also report having witnessed, or know someone who has seen, each of the other racist actions presented.

\*This action was only presented to survey participants who self-identify as Black.

You or people you know have seen this type of racist action directed at Black people



*a. Have you seen someone do this action, or know someone else who has seen it?*

# Empirical Expectations:

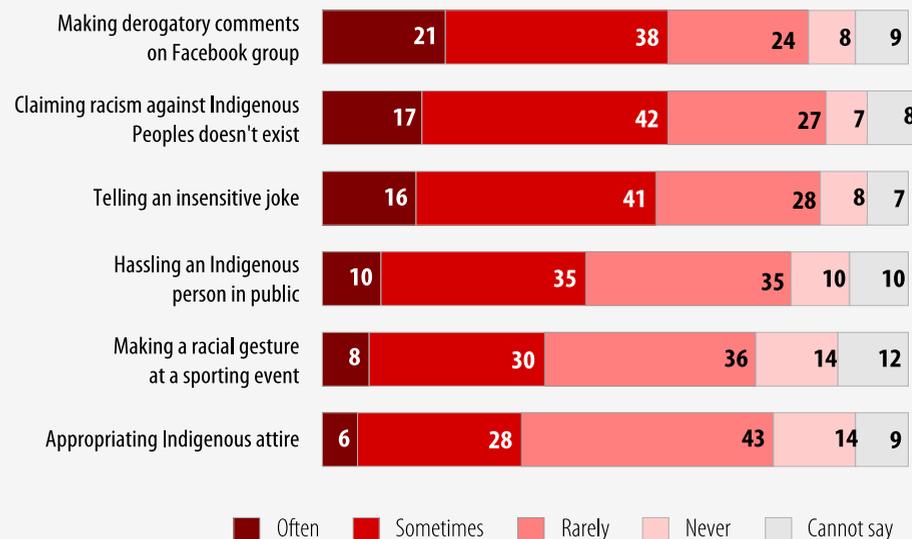
## Perceived prevalence of racist actions directed at Indigenous Peoples

Canadians, as a whole, believe each of the six racist actions against Indigenous Peoples is prevalent among people they know. A majority say three of the six happen sometimes if not often; noticeable minorities believe this applies to the other three racist actions.

The actions most commonly perceived to happen are others posting derogatory comments on Facebook (60% believe this happens often or sometimes), claiming that racism doesn't exist (59%), or telling insensitive jokes (56%). Least apt to be considered prevalent are others making racial gestures at sporting events (37%) or wearing Indigenous attire at a party or event (34%).

Indigenous participants are more likely than other Canadians to see each of these racist actions as taking place among people they know, by roughly a 20-percentage point margin.

Prevalence of racist actions against Indigenous Peoples among people you know



*b. How common is it today that someone would do this, among people you know (family, friends, co-workers)?*

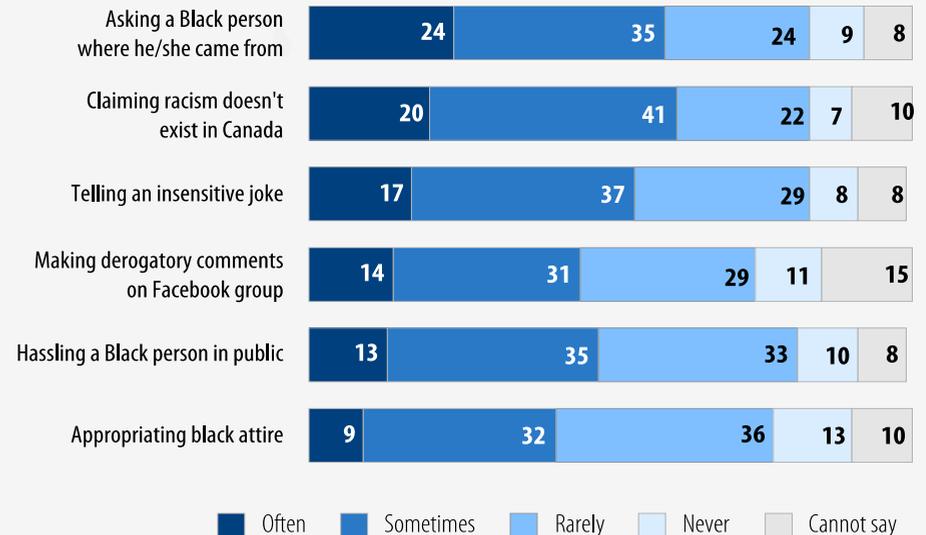
## Empirical Expectations: Perceived prevalence of racist actions directed at Black people

Canadians also believe each of the six racist actions against Black people is common among people they know, similar to views about the experiences of Indigenous Peoples .

Among the actions presented, the perceived incidence is greatest when it comes to others asking a Black person where he/she came from (59% often or sometimes), claiming racism in Canada doesn't exist (60%), or telling an insensitive joke (54%). Least common is the appropriation of Black attire at a party or event (41%).

Black participants are more likely than other Canadians to see each of these racist actions as taking place among people they know.

Prevalence of racist actions against Black people among people you know



*b. How common is it today that someone would do this, among people you know (family, friends, co-workers)?*

# Empirical Expectations: Perceived prevalence of bystander intervention in response to racist actions

Canadians are more likely than not to think that people they know would be very or somewhat likely to intervene in situations involving racist actions against Indigenous and Black people, in situations involving someone else telling an insensitive joke or hassling another person in public (e.g., on a bus). However, the proportion who think this is very or somewhat likely is not much greater than the proportion who believes it is not very or not at all likely to happen.

Perceptions about the likelihood of such bystander intervention are similar across the population. Those most apt to say this would be “very likely” to happen include Canadians 18 to 29 years of age.

Prevalence of bystander action among people you know

### Indigenous-directed action



### Black-directed action



Very likely
  Somewhat likely
  Not very likely
  Not at all likely
  Cannot say

c. How common is it today that someone would do this, among people you know (family, friends, co-workers)?

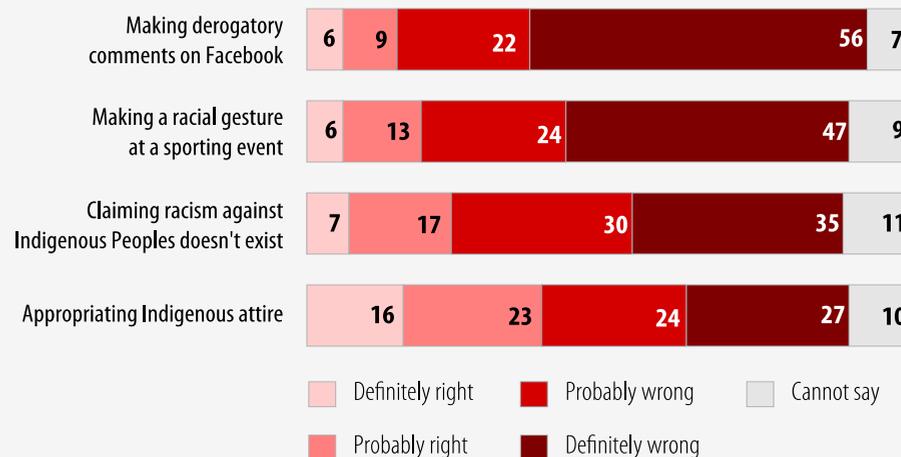
## Personal norm: Acceptability of actions directed at Indigenous Peoples

Canadians personally believe most of these racist-directed actions against Indigenous Peoples are wrong, especially in the cases of making derogatory comments on Facebook (55% say this is definitely wrong) or making racial gestures at sporting events (47%). In both cases only six percent maintain these actions were “definitely right.”

By comparison, Canadians are more divided on whether it is right (39%) or wrong (51%) to wear Indigenous attire at a party or event.

These actions are most likely to be seen as “definitely wrong” by women and Canadians 18 to 29, and in some cases those who are Black. Surprisingly, Indigenous survey participants are more likely than other Canadians to view each of these actions as definitely or probably OK.

Do you personally think this action was right or wrong?



*d. Do you think personally that what this person did was right or wrong?*

## Personal norm: Acceptability of actions directed at Black people

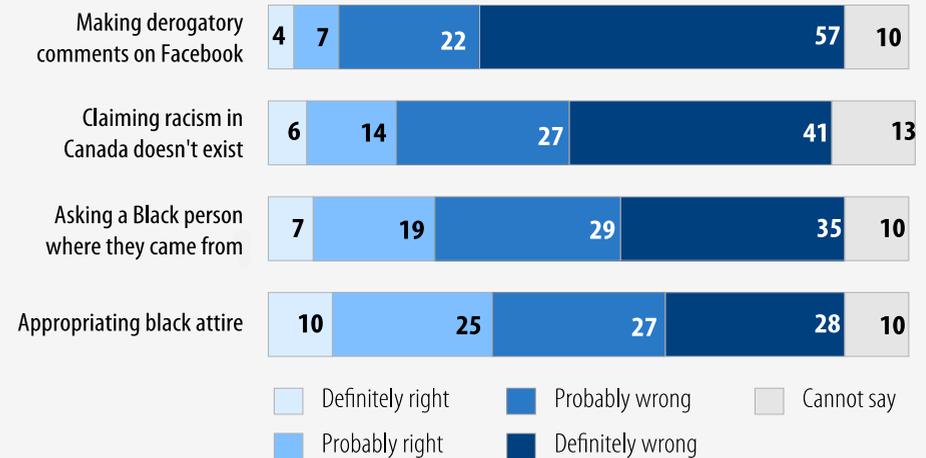
Most Canadians also say they personally believe these racist-directed actions against Black people are wrong, especially in the cases of making derogatory comments on Facebook (57% say this is definitely wrong and another 22% say probably wrong) or claiming that racism in Canada doesn't exist (40% and 27%, respectively).

As with the Indigenous example, Canadians are least apt to see a problem with white people dressing up in Black attire at a party or event, although the balance of opinion is that it is wrong (54%) versus right (35%).

These actions are more apt to be seen as definitely wrong by women and anglophones, with a less consistent pattern by age.

Black survey participants tend to be more critical than others, but not to a significant degree. In some cases, white participants are almost as likely as Black participants to deem these actions as definitely wrong.

Do you personally think this action was right or wrong?



*d. Do you think personally that what this person did was right or wrong?*

# Personal norm: Acceptability of bystander intervention in response to racist actions

Most Canadians personally believe that what bystanders did in responding to witnessing racist actions was the right thing to do, with roughly half saying it was “definitely right.” Opinions are generally similar across the four bystander scenarios, but bystander endorsement is most widespread for speaking up when someone hassles an Indigenous person in public (59% say it was definitely the right thing to do).

In all four scenarios, women are more likely than men to say what bystanders did was definitely the right thing to do. Responses do not vary noticeably by age or other demographic characteristics.

The opinions of Indigenous participants do not vary noticeably from other Canadians. In contrast, Black participants are more apt than others to say bystanders were “definitely right” to intervene in response to racism directed at Black people.

Do you personally think this bystander action was right or wrong?

### Indigenous-directed action



### Black-directed action



Definitely right
  Probably right
  Probably wrong
  Definitely wrong
  Cannot say

*d. Do you think personally that what this person did was right or wrong?*

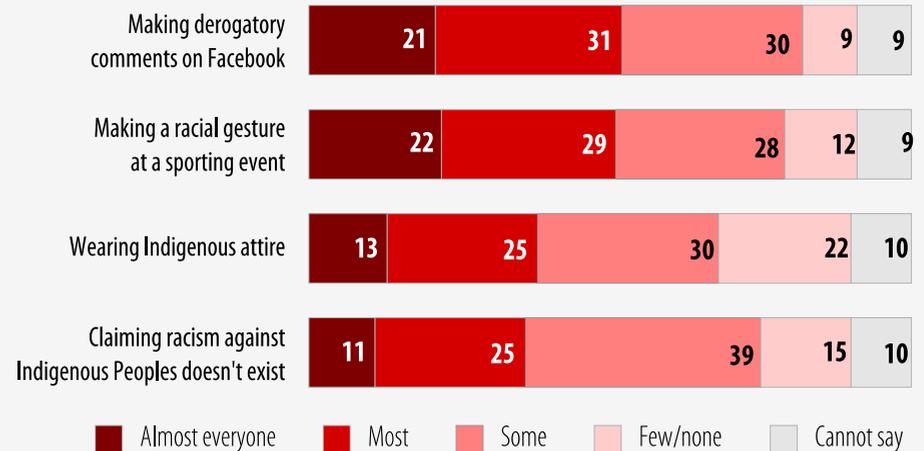
# Normative expectations: Community acceptance of racist actions against Indigenous Peoples

What do Canadians believe people they know and those in their community would think about the acceptability of these racist actions directed at Indigenous Peoples?

In all four cases, opinions are mixed. Canadians are more likely than not to believe that all or most of the people they know would consider making derogatory Facebook comments (52%) or racial gestures at sporting events (51%) to be wrong. Fewer than four in ten think their community would also condemn wearing Indigenous attire at a party (38%) or claiming racism against Indigenous Peoples doesn't exist (36%).

Indigenous survey participants' views are similar to those of other Canadians. The one exception is they are more likely to say all or most of the people they know would consider making claims denying racism against Indigenous Peoples to be wrong.

How many others would say this action was wrong or insensitive?



*e. How many of the people you know/in your community, would say what this person did was right/wrong?*

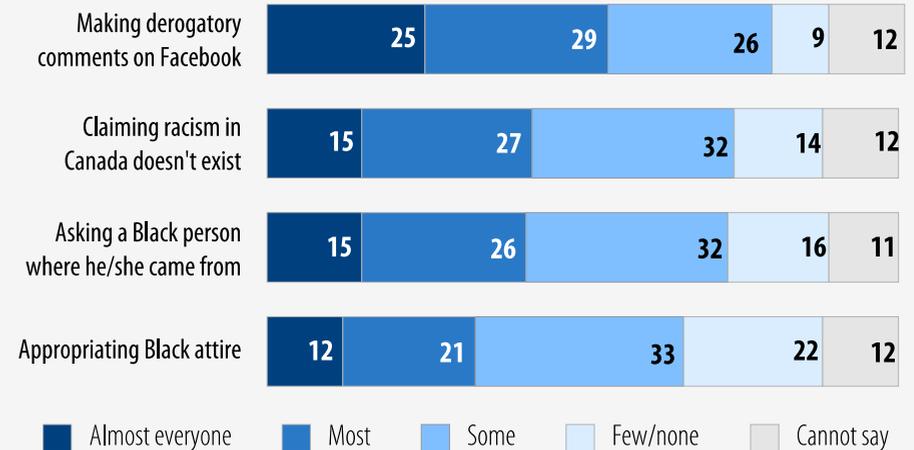
# Normative expectations: Community acceptability of racist actions directed at Black people

Opinions about community acceptance of racist actions directed at Black people are similar to what is thought to be the case for Indigenous Peoples.

A majority believe all or most would say making derogatory comments on Facebook is wrong (54%), but fewer than half would say this is the case when it comes to claiming racism in Canada doesn't exist (41%), asking a Black person where he or she came from (41%), or wearing Black attire at a party (33%).

Black survey participants' perceptions of the likely response to these racist actions are not significantly different from those of other Canadians. They are somewhat more apt to say the collective view of these actions is negative in the case of wearing Black attire, but less so in terms of making derogatory Facebook comments or Black people being asked where they come from.

How many others would say this action was wrong or insensitive?



*e. How many of the people you know/in your community, would say what this person did was right/wrong?*

# Normative expectations: Community acceptability of bystander interventions in response to racist actions

Canadians' sense of what others think about people intervening in the face of racist actions against Indigenous and Black people varies somewhat by target and situation. The balance of opinion is more positive than negative, but there is no predominant collective view in any of the scenarios.

People are most likely to say others they know would approve of intervening when someone Indigenous or Black is being hassled in public (54% say almost everyone or most would approve). Fewer than half say this would be the case for intervening when someone tells an insensitive joke about Black people (47%) or Indigenous Peoples (43%). In three out of four cases, the proportion who believe almost everyone would approve is more than double the proportion who think few or none would agree.

The normative expectations of Indigenous and Black survey participants do not differ noticeably from those of other Canadians.

How many others would say this bystander action was the right thing to do?

## Indigenous-directed action



## Black-directed action



Almost everyone
  Most
  Some
  Few/none
  Cannot say

*e. How many of the people you know/in your community, would say what this person did was right/wrong?*

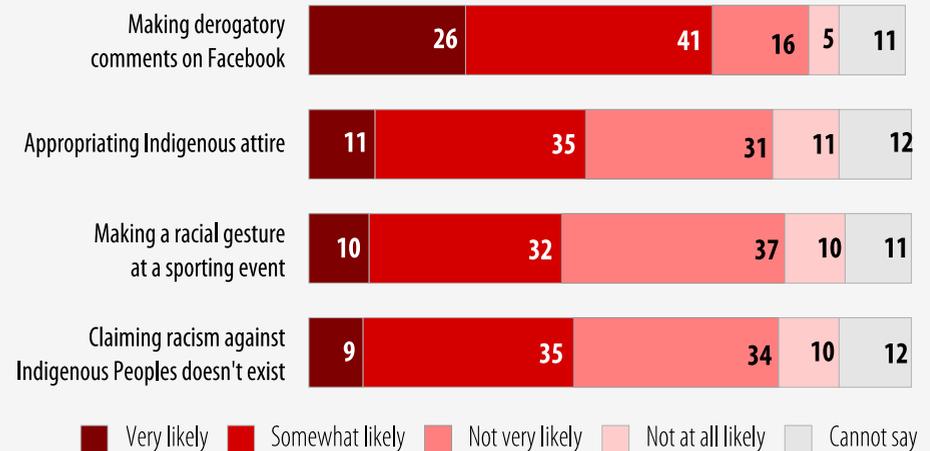
# Consequences and sanctions: Community response to racist actions directed at Indigenous Peoples

How likely do Canadians think others present would say something to the person committing the racist action against Indigenous Peoples, about what he or she did?

People are most likely to think this would happen in response to someone making derogatory comments on Facebook (67% say very or somewhat likely). Fewer than half predict this in the case of appropriating Indigenous attire at a party or event (46%), someone making claims about racism not existing (45%) or making a racial gesture at a sporting event (42%).

Indigenous survey participants are noticeably more likely than others to say someone would be very or somewhat likely to speak up in these four situations, especially in response to someone claiming that racism against Indigenous Peoples doesn't exist.

How likely do you think others would say something to this person?



*f. How likely do you think other people would have said something to this person about what he/she did?*

## Consequences and sanctions:

### What people imagine others might say to the person committing the racist action

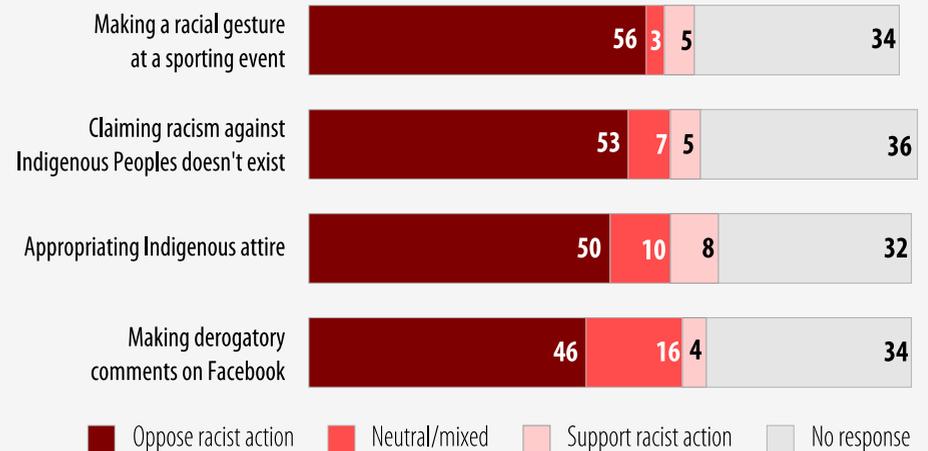
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Among those who think it is very or somewhat likely that others would say something to the person committing these racist actions against an Indigenous person, what do they imagine might be said (this question was open-ended, allowing participants to respond in their own words)?

Participants offered a range of responses to this question, which can be categorized into a few broad categories. About half believe other people would challenge or criticize the person committing the racist action, while very few think these actions would be supported. Others imagine the reception would be either neutral in tone or mixed (both positive and negative), while about one third who were asked this question did not offer any response.

Although Indigenous participants are more likely than others to believe people would say something to the offending person, they are less apt to believe this would entail a direct challenge or criticize the racist action.

What do you think other people might say to [this person] about his/her action? (*express support or opposition to this action*)



*g. What do you think other people might say to [this person] his/her comments? Or what do you think they might say about him/her to other people, because of his/her comments about racism?*

# What people imagine others might say to those committing racist actions directed at Indigenous people – Selected verbatim responses

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## In response to Judy claiming racism against Indigenous people isn't all that bad:

*I believe people would say that Judy was insensitive and was ignorant of what is happening to Indigenous people today. I don't believe that people would embrace her comments.*

*People may say she is a racist, but we all have the right to free speech. Also, the media and social media are much to blame for urging on racism. Finally, I like the comment Morgan Freeman said to the question of racism. He was asked, 'How do we stop racism?' His answer was very succinct. all he said was 'Stop talking about it.' I tend to agree.*

*I, and the people I know, would feel very uncomfortable in the moment. There would be silence (loud and long enough Judy would feel the impact she did something wrong, though isn't mature enough to understand why) and then we would be polite and carry on. You have to pick your time and place to say something as not to embarrass anyone.*

## In response to Helen posting a derogatory comment on Facebook about Indigenous people:

*Helen would have been called out immediately by myself or anyone I know. Anyone and everyone deserves clean drinking water even if they don't live in Canada. Helen is extremely self centered and unaware.*

*They might say Everyone is entitled to their opinion. They might say Helen is right about the government giving enough funding already, but she shouldn't say it on social media*

*I suspect there may be a great deal of comment about what she posted, both for and against. I doubt there will be any serious blowback on Helen because the people she hangs out with know the type of person she is and her boss probably isn't trolling her on FB.*

*g. What do you think other people might say to [this person] his/her comments? Or what do you think they might say about him/her to other people, because of his/her comments about racism?*

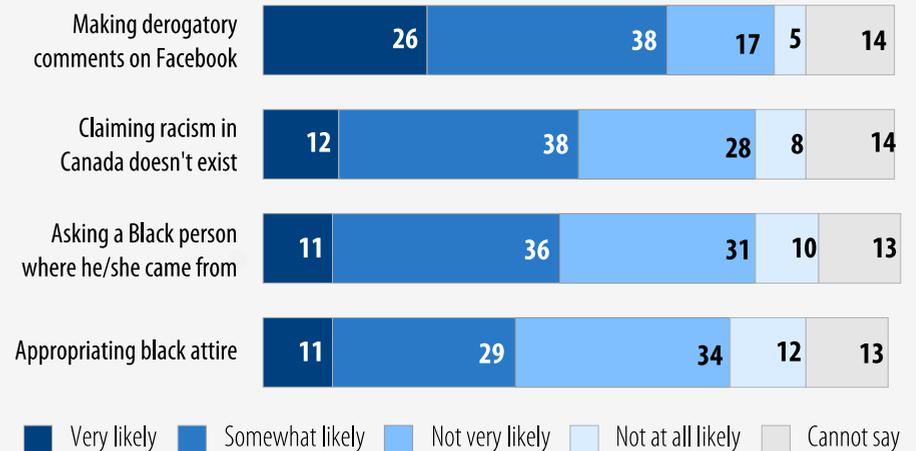
# Consequences and sanctions: Community response to racist actions directed at Black people

People express similar opinions about the likely response of other people witnessing someone commit racist actions against Black people.

As with Indigenous Peoples, a majority of Canadians say it is very or somewhat likely someone would say something to the person posting a derogatory comment about Black people on Facebook (64%). Fewer than half think this outcome is likely to happen in response to someone claiming racism in Canada doesn't exist (49%), asking a Black person where he or she came from (46%), or wearing Black attire at a party or event (41%).

Black survey participants are more apt to expect others to say something to the person committing these racist actions, especially in the case of someone wearing Black attire.

How likely do you think others would say something to this person?



*f. How likely do you think other people would have said something to this person about what he/she did?*

## Consequences and sanctions:

### What people imagine others might say to the person committing the racist action

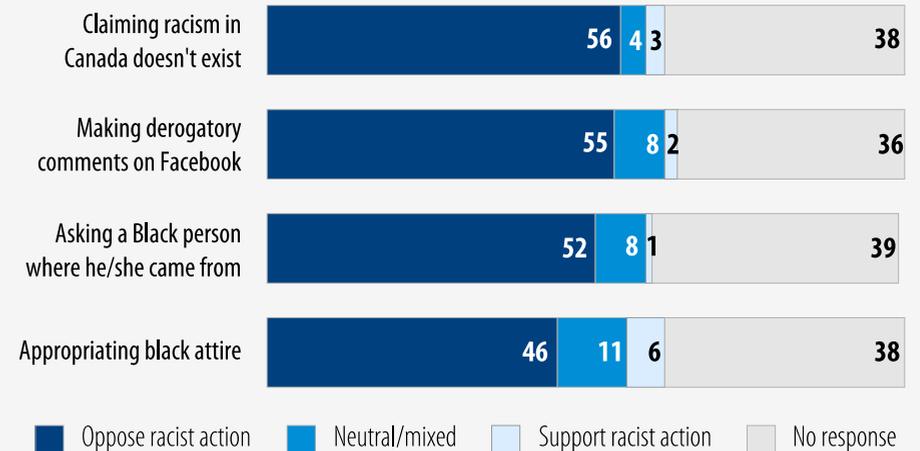
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What participants imagine others would say to someone committing racist actions against a Black person are very similar to what is mentioned with reference to actions against Indigenous Peoples.

Roughly half responding to this question believe others would challenge or criticize the person committing the racist action against a Black person, with very few think such actions would be verbally supported. The remainder imagine the reception would be either neutral in tone or mixed (both positive and negative) or do not provide a response to the question..

Black participants' perspectives on this question are largely similar to those expressed by others. Notably, it is Indigenous participants who are among the least likely to expect that others would speak up to directly challenge or criticize people committing racist actions against Black people.

What do you think other people might say to [this person] about his/her action? (*express support or opposition to this action*)



*g. What do you think other people might say to [this person] his/her comments? Or what do you think they might say about him/her to other people, because of his/her comments about racism?*

# What people imagine others might say to those committing racist actions directed at Black people – Selected verbatim responses

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## In response to Bob attending a Halloween party dressed in Black attire:

*Others would say to Bob that it was very inappropriate what he wore and how he spoke, he could've selected any other costume that was not insulting to people. It was very insensitive of him to do that, and he owes the host and guests of the party an apology.*

*It's Halloween. He can choose any costumes he wants to wear.*

*I think that they would have either criticized Bob and ran him down or defended him realizing that it was a dress-up party, and he was insensitive but not actually meaning to be cruel. Some would think that racial profiling has become both political motivated and magnified as a result. He may have been unaware of the offence he was creating and only needed to be reminded of the appropriateness.*

*they'd probably make more fun of him than actually criticize him ... I think a lot of people might find it funny watching try to act like a black rapper*

## In response to Angela asking Grace what country she came from:

*Most people know and would comment to Angela that her comment was inappropriate and insensitive.*

*Angela may simply have been a bit naïve. Asking someone about their background I believe is just fine, as long as there is no hidden agenda or motive, and the question is genuine and authentic.*

*Oh lord I can't tell me how many times I have dealt with this extremely offensive statement. Enemy after you tell the person making the inquiry you are born and raised in Nova Scotia they will follow with this statement. No, where are you really from? My final response my mother's womb.*

*g. What do you think other people might say to [this person] his/her comments? Or what do you think they might say about him/her to other people, because of his/her comments about racism?*

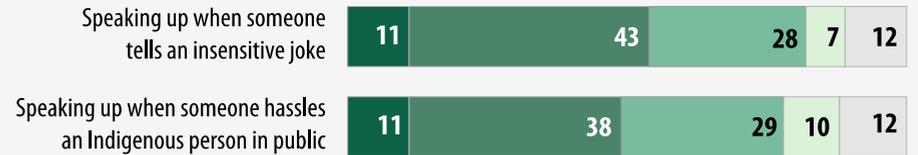
# Consequences and sanctions: Community response to someone intervening in response to racist actions

Canadians are more likely than not to think others would say something to someone committing racist actions against Indigenous and Black people, although few believe this would be very likely. Opinions are similar across groups targeted and situations.

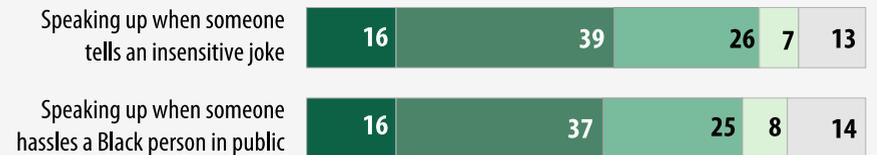
Indigenous and Black survey participants are somewhat more likely to believe others would speak up in these situations (especially in the case of someone hassling an Indigenous person in public).

How likely do you think others would say something to this person?

## Indigenous-directed action



## Black-directed action



Very likely   Somewhat likely   Not very likely   Not at all likely   Cannot say

*f. How likely do you think other people would have said something to this person about what he/she did?*

# Consequences and sanctions: What people imagine others might say to the person intervening in support

As with the imagined response to racist actions, participants are more likely than not to say that others would speak up to verbally support those who step up to intervene when witnessing such actions. This is especially likely in the case when someone intervenes when seeing an Indigenous or Black person being hassled in public.

Once again, Indigenous participants are more likely than others to believe people would say something to those who intervene when an Indigenous person is the target of such action, but less apt to expect that what they say reflects unqualified support.

Black participants also are among those most apt to expect people would speak up when seeing someone intervene when a Black person is being affected and are more likely to think the comments would be clearly supportive in the case involving an insensitive joke, while somewhat less so when it involves being hassled in public.

What do you think other people might say to [this person] about his/her action? (*express support or opposition to this action*)



*g. What do you think other people might say to [this person] his/her comments? Or what do you think they might say about him/her to other people, because of his/her comments about racism?*

# What people imagine others might say to those intervening when someone else commits racist actions

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## In response to Ben speaking up when someone tells an insensitive joke about Indigenous people:

*They would tell Ben he did the right thing. I believe when friends speak up to someone making racist remarks it has more of an effect & makes them realize the impact of the remark.*

*Most people would say Ben was right to speak up, but some would say it is just a joke and to calm down.*

*I really don't know what people may or may not say. Some people are more sensitive to this than others. We really don't know what kind of punishment that Jason put his truck through on or off the Rez.*

## In response to Victor speaking up when someone is hassling a Black teenager on a bus:

*I think that Victor should be applauded for what he did and most people I know would do the same.*

*To mind his own business. That you don't know the young person's situation. And it's wrong to assume things.*

*Victor should shut up before he gets punched in the head.*

*g. What do you think other people might say to [this person] his/her comments? Or what do you think they might say about him/her to other people, because of his/her comments about racism?*

# Social norm index

# Social norm index

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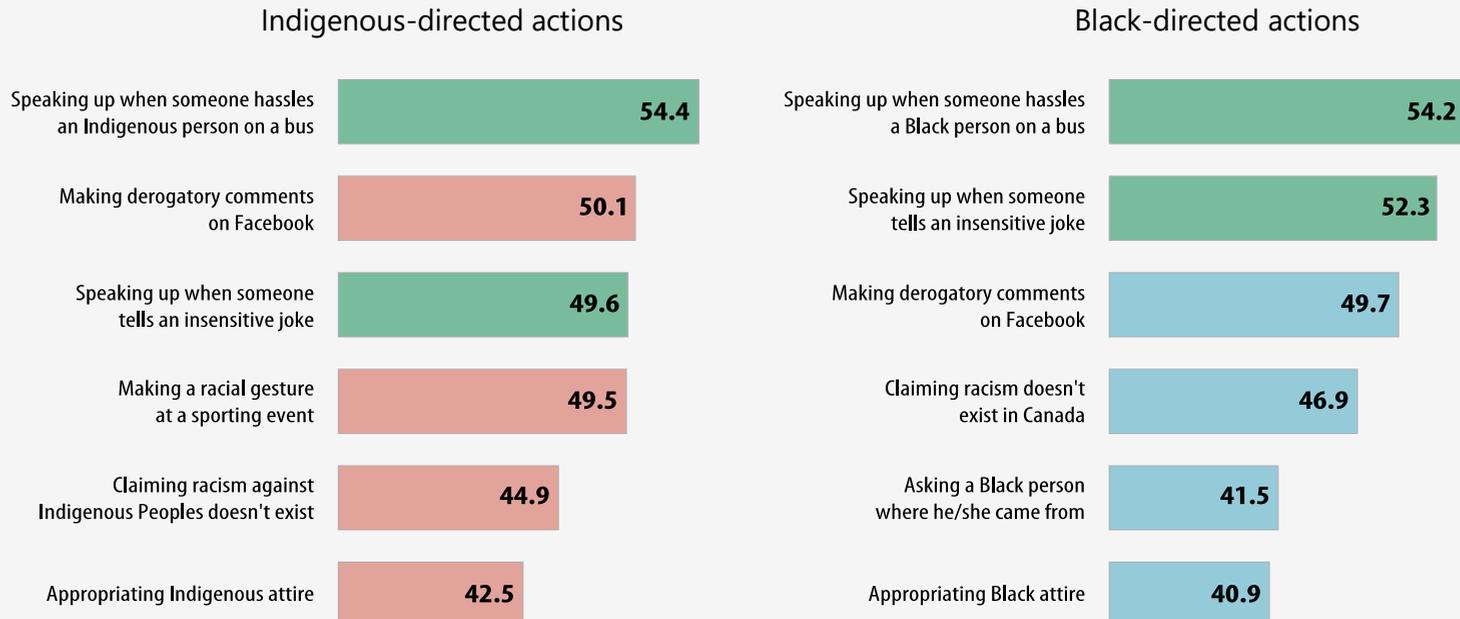
The four dimensions were combined in an additive formula to produce a single index of social norms for each of the 12 actions. This index provides a summary measure of social norms that is useful for comparison across actions and population groups.

Empirical Expectations, Personal Norm and Consequences & Sanctions each contribute 20% to the total Social Norm score, while Normative Expectations contributes 40% to reflect its importance in the conceptual model. The Social Norm Index is scored on a scale from "0" (complete absence of a social norm) to "100" (maximally strong social norm).



# Social norm index - by racist/bystander action

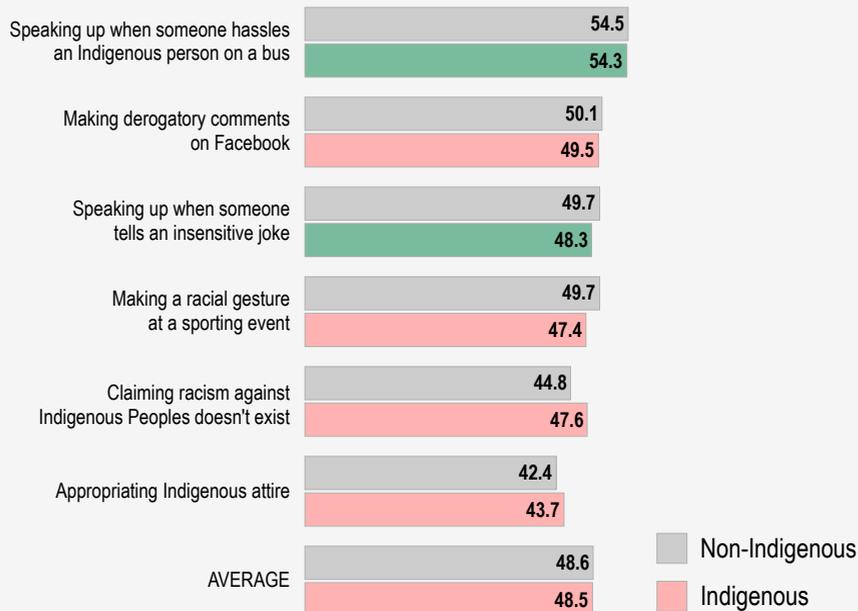
Social norm scores (scaled from "0" to "100") reveal a modest range from strongest to weakest. Positive (bystander) actions are among the strongest. The weakest norms are those for claiming racism doesn't exist, appropriating attire and asking Black people where they came from. Social norm scores are very similar for comparable Indigenous and Black-directed actions (*Note: green bars denote positive (bystander) actions; red and blue bars denote negative (racist) actions*).



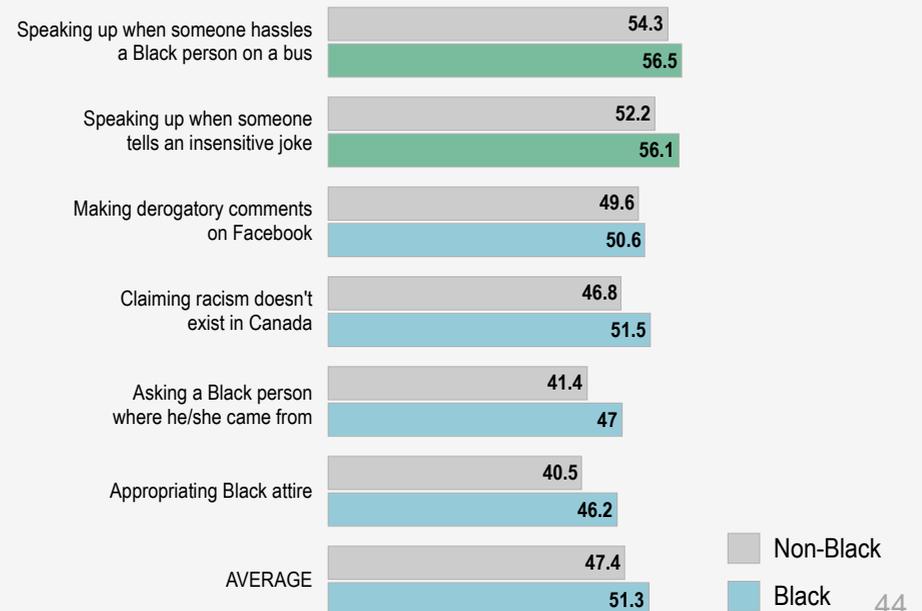
# Social norm index – group comparisons

Social norm scores for Indigenous and Black participants do not differ significantly from those of other Canadians. Average Indigenous scores are the same as those of non-Indigenous participants, but average Black scores are almost four points higher than those of non-Black participants.

Indigenous-directed actions



Black-directed actions



Each dimension of the Social Norm index is scored on a scale from “0” (weak) to “10” (strong).

A higher score reflects a larger contribution to a strong social norm:

For negative (racist) actions:

- Empirical Expectations: high score means action isn’t seen as prevalent.
- Personal Norm: high score means action is seen as definitely wrong.
- Narrative Expectations: high score means people believe all or most others would also see action as wrong.
- Consequences & Sanctions: high score means people believe others would say something to the person committing the action.

Social Norm Dimension Sub-index scores	Empirical Expectations	Personal Norm	Narrative Expectations	Consequences/ Sanctions	SOCIAL NORM
	EE	PN	NE	CS	SNorm
<b>INDIGENOUS ACTIONS</b>	Indigenous / Non-Ind.				
Speaking up when someone hassles Indigenous person on bus	<b>5.5</b> (5.8 / 5.4)	<b>7.8</b> (7.9 / 7.8)	<b>5.5</b> (5.0 / 5.5)	<b>3.1</b> (3.3 / 3.1)	<b>54.4</b> (54.3 / 54.5)
Making derogatory comment on Facebook	<b>4.9</b> (5.2 / 4.8)	<b>7.4</b> (6.5 / 7.4)	<b>5.3</b> (5.2 / 5.4)	<b>2.1</b> (2.6 / 2.1)	<b>50.1</b> (49.5 / 50.1)
Speaking up when someone tells an insensitive joke	<b>5.4</b> (6.0 / 5.4)	<b>7.3</b> (7.6 / 7.3)	<b>4.6</b> (3.9 / 4.7)	<b>2.8</b> (2.8 / 2.8)	<b>49.6</b> (48.3 / 49.7)
Making racial gesture at sporting event	<b>4.8</b> (5.2 / 4.8)	<b>6.8</b> (5.8 / 6.9)	<b>5.2</b> (4.8 / 5.2)	<b>2.8</b> (3.1 / 2.8)	<b>49.5</b> (47.4 / 49.7)
Claiming racism against Indigenous Peoples doesn't exist	<b>5.1</b> (5.4 / 5.1)	<b>6.1</b> (6.1 / 6.1)	<b>4.2</b> (4.3 / 4.2)	<b>2.8</b> (3.6 / 2.8)	<b>44.9</b> (47.6 / 44.8)
Appropriating Indigenous attire	<b>5.0</b> (5.4 / 5.0)	<b>5.0</b> (4.8 / 5.0)	<b>4.2</b> (4.3 / 4.2)	<b>2.9</b> (3.2 / 2.9)	<b>42.5</b> (43.7 / 42.4)
<b>BLACK ACTIONS</b>	Black / Non-Black				
Speaking up when someone hassles a Black person on bus	<b>5.9</b> (6.1 / 5.8)	<b>6.7</b> (7.5 / 6.7)	<b>5.6</b> (5.6 / 5.6)	<b>3.4</b> (3.6 / 3.4)	<b>54.2</b> (56.5 / 54.3)
Speaking up when someone tells an insensitive joke	<b>5.9</b> (6.0 / 5.9)	<b>6.8</b> (7.6 / 6.7)	<b>5.1</b> (5.3 / 5.1)	<b>3.3</b> (3.8 / 3.3)	<b>52.3</b> (56.1 / 52.2)
Making derogatory comment on Facebook	<b>4.3</b> (4.3 / 4.3)	<b>7.6</b> (7.7 / 7.6)	<b>5.5</b> (5.8 / 5.5)	<b>1.8</b> (1.9 / 1.8)	<b>49.7</b> (50.6 / 49.6)
Claiming racism doesn't exist in Canada	<b>4.6</b> (4.8 / 4.6)	<b>6.5</b> (7.1 / 6.5)	<b>4.6</b> (5.1 / 4.6)	<b>3.2</b> (3.7 / 3.2)	<b>46.9</b> (51.5 / 46.8)
Asking a Black person where he/she came from	<b>2.7</b> (4.6 / 2.7)	<b>6.1</b> (6.5 / 6.1)	<b>4.5</b> (4.7 / 4.5)	<b>3.0</b> (3.0 / 3.0)	<b>41.5</b> (47.0 / 41.4)
Appropriating Black attire	<b>4.7</b> (4.8 / 4.7)	<b>5.3</b> (5.9 / 5.3)	<b>3.9</b> (4.6 / 3.8)	<b>2.6</b> (3.2 / 2.6)	<b>40.9</b> (46.2 / 40.5)

# How dimensions determine strength of social norms on racism

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The table on the previous page presents the dimension sub-index scores that reveal how they contribute to the strength of social norms across the 12 racist/bystander actions.

In all cases, the personal norm (PN) score is higher than the narrative expectations (NE), in some cases by a significant degree (2.0 points or greater). This means that Canadians tend to see these actions as wrong (or right if it involves speaking up), but are less certain about whether others they know hold the same opinion. This gap is largest in the cases of the two bystander actions involving Indigenous Peoples, and those in which someone makes derogatory comments on Facebook. This gap suggests there is public agreement about the acceptability of these actions, but this hasn't yet translated into strong social norms, in part because this knowledge has not yet filtered through the relevant communication channels.

The actions with the strongest social norms (SNorm scores above 55 out of 100) have higher than average scores for personal norms (PN), narrative expectations (NE) and (with one exception) consequences and actions (CS). These include three of the four bystander actions (with the fourth falling just below this SNorm threshold). This indicates that norms are stronger when they pertain to endorsing positive actions to call out racism, compared with those involving disapproval of negative actions.

Continued/ ...

## How dimensions determine strength of social norms on racism (cont.)

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The actions involving negative Facebook comments (Indigenous and Black-directed) are among the most likely to be seen as personally wrong and are also ones that people believe are most apt to elicit a response from other people. At the same time, the strength of the social norms against this type of behaviour is diminished by the fact that they are also seen to be prevalent; that is, current norms are not strong enough to prevent people from making such racist comments online.

Some actions with weaker social norm scores (claiming racism doesn't exist, asking a Black person where he/she came from) are low primarily because they are believed to be among the most prevalent among the actions presented. And while Canadians are more likely than not to say these actions are wrong (higher PN scores), they are also unclear how many other people they know would agree or say something about it (lower NE and CS scores).

By comparison, the action involving making a racially inappropriate gesture at a sporting event is believed to be relatively uncommon, but also unacceptable behaviour. Yet Canadians are not particularly sure that most people they know would agree with them about this or would say anything if they witnessed it (lower NE and CS scores).

The actions involving appropriating Indigenous or Black attire have the weakest social norms, not because they are seen to be prevalent (higher EE score) but because they are less likely to violate personal norms (lower PN score), and less apt to be thought unacceptable among other people they know (lower NE score).

# Social norms – Comparisons across region and demographic groups

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How do social norms pertaining to the 12 actions directed at Indigenous and Black people compare across the Canadian population?

**By region.** The strength of these social norms (as measured by the Social Norm Index) is similar across regions of the country. No region stands out as having significantly higher or lower scores across all or most of the actions presented. Averaging across the 12 actions, social norms are strongest in Atlantic Canada (50.0), and weakest in Quebec (46.2), most noticeably for actions involving appropriation of attire.

**By age.** Across age cohorts, Canadians ages 18 to 29 show the highest average social norm score (50.8), with older cohorts averaging around 48 points out of 100). For this youngest cohort, higher scores are noticeably higher for those actions involving the appropriation of attire and claims of racism not existing; differences are minor for the other actions. Social norm scores for Canadians 65 and older do not stand out as either stronger or weaker than other cohorts.

**By gender.** Among demographic characteristics, gender shows one of the most consistent differences on the strength of social norms, with the average score for women (49.9) higher than for men (46.1). Women have higher scores than men in all 12 cases, most noticeably for actions involving bystander intervention and claims about racism against Indigenous Peoples.

**By community size.** Social norm strength are similar across Canadians living in cities and suburbs (48.4), towns and villages (47.9), and rural areas (46.7). Scores for rural residents tend to be a bit lower in most cases by only a marginal degree.

**By education.** Social norm strength increases modestly by educational attainment, rising from 45.1 among those without a high school diploma to 49.2 among those with a university degree. The difference across education levels is not significant in most cases, and most evident for actions involving appropriating Indigenous attire, intervening when an Indigenous person is hassled in public and when someone tells an insensitive joke about Black people.

# Social norms – Comparisons by opinions about cancel culture

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While social norms do not appear to be strongly influenced by region or demographics, they are related to relevant opinions and attitudes.

**Perspective on “cancel culture.”** The survey included a question about the politics of speech in today’s society (drawn from a 2020 Pew Research Center survey of Americans).

19. Please tell me which statement is closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right.

01 – People should be careful what they say to avoid offending others

02 – People today are too easily offended by what others say

99 – *Cannot say*

Nationally, Canadians select the first statement (*People should be careful . . .*) over the second (*People today are too easily offended . . .*) by a two-to-one margin (63% versus 32%). The view that people should be careful is most widely expressed among women (69%), Canadians with a university degree (69%), first generation Canadians (70%), those who are Black (76%) or South Asian (72

Canadians who subscribe to the majority view express stronger social norms across the full range of 12 actions. The social norm scores among those who say people should be careful what they say are, on average, 6.3 points higher than those who believe people today are too easily offended. This gap is largest (8.0 points or more) for actions involving appropriate of Indigenous attire (10.4) and claims refuting racism against people who are Indigenous (8.0) or Black (8.0).

# Social norms – Comparisons by attitudes about racism in Canada

Social norms are also linked to attitudes about racism in Canada.

**Agree-disagree: Discrimination against [racialized group] is no longer a problem in Canada.** This question included a reference to one of four racialized groups in Canada (Black, Indigenous, South Asian, Chinese). The national results combined across groups are presented in the box to the right, with 25 percent in agreement, compared with a clear majority (63%) who disagree.

Canadians who disagree with this statement have higher social norm scores than those who agree with it, in some cases by a significant degree. Comparisons between those who *strongly disagree* and those who *strongly agree* reveal a difference in average scores of 12.9 points, with the largest gaps (> 15 points) for actions involving denying the existence of racism against Indigenous or Black people, and appropriating Indigenous attire.

**Agree-disagree: Racial discrimination is the main reason why many in {racialized group} cannot get ahead these days.** Canadians are divided on this question (43% agree, versus 39% disagree). Agreement is most evident among those who are Black (56%) or South Asian (58%), as well as Canadians ages 18 to 29 (57%).

Opinions on this questions are also less strongly linked to social norms. The difference in average scores between those who *strongly agree* and those who *strongly disagree* is 8.7 points. The largest gaps (>13 points) are for actions involving appropriation of attire and claims about racism not existing (both Indigenous and Black), as well as making racialized gestures at a sporting event.

## National results

	<u>%</u>
- Strongly agree	8
- Somewhat agree	17
- Somewhat disagree	33
- Strongly disagree	30
- Cannot say	13

## National results

	<u>%</u>
- Strongly agree	13
- Somewhat agree	30
- Somewhat disagree	23
- Strongly disagree	16
- Cannot say	18

# Social norms – Comparisons by attitudes about immigration and government

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Social norms are also linked to attitudes about immigration levels and government control over people's lives.

**Agree-disagree: Overall there is too much immigration to Canada.** Canadians, as a whole, are more likely to disagree (48%) than agree (42%) with this question about immigration levels.

Opinions about immigration levels are linked to social norms. Those who disagree with the statement have stronger social norm scores on all 12 actions. The average gap between those who *strongly disagree* and those who *strongly agree* is 10.4 points. The largest gaps are for actions involving appropriation of Indigenous attire (15.8) and claims that racism in Canada doesn't exist (12.4).

**Agree-disagree: The government should not tell average citizens like me what we can and cannot do.**

Canadians are marginally more likely to agree (49%) than disagree (44%) with this statement, with agreement most widespread among those without a high school diploma (60%) and those who are struggling financially (60%) as well as Indigenous Peoples (63%).

Opinions are modestly linked to social norms. Social norms are stronger among those who *strongly disagree* with the statement, by an average margin of 6.6 points. This gap is most pronounced for actions involving intervening when witnessing a Black person being hassled in public (11.3).

## National results

	<u>%</u>
- Strongly agree	17
- Somewhat agree	25
- Somewhat disagree	27
- Strongly disagree	21
- Cannot say	10

## National results

	<u>%</u>
- Strongly agree	19
- Somewhat agree	30
- Somewhat disagree	32
- Strongly disagree	12
- Cannot say	7

# Conclusions

# Conclusions

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This research contributes to the growing body of evidence documenting the prevalence of racism against Indigenous and Black people in Canada, by measuring what people across the country see or hear about the experiences of others in their communities and social circles. Significant minorities of those surveyed say they have personally witnessed, or know others who have seen, each of the 12 types of racist (or anti-racist) actions taking place, whether online, in public settings, or at informal social get togethers. This finding in itself is not surprising given that it corroborates what is already known about the reality of racism from other sources (including research conducted by the Environics Institute). What is notable is what the survey reveals in the extent to which Canadians from all backgrounds are aware of and acknowledge these types of racist actions taking place in their midst. This may come as a surprise to those who believe most non-racialized people are oblivious to, or prefer to deny, the existence of racism where they live or work.

This initial study of social norms around racism in Canadian society reveals that such norms do exist but are not well established. This is evident by the very fact that these types of racist actions are so prevalent; stronger norms would make them broadly unacceptable and keep their incidence to a minimum. As important, the research shows that most Canadians believe these racist actions are morally wrong but at the same time are unsure whether other people they know agree with them about this. When confronted with someone acting in racist manner, most people may recognize what is happening and conclude it is wrong yet feel uncertain about how others present think about it and whether or not to say something; everyone may in fact agree but not realize it (a situation labelled “pluralistic ignorance”). These situations occur when there is no easy opportunities to exchange views about what is happening and what should be done about it.

# Conclusions (cont.)

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The research covers a selected range of scenarios involving racist or anti-racist actions, and the results show a modest variation in the strength of social norms across them. Such norms are somewhat stronger for situations involving support for bystander intervention than for those entailing disapproval of racist actions; this suggests it may be easier for people to imagine there is collective support for someone else who speaks up to call out racist actions than it is to think there is collective disapproval of such behaviour.

Racism expressed through online posts on such platforms as Facebook are seen to be prevalent but also more widely considered socially unacceptable and likely to elicit pushback from others. By comparison, the act of claiming that racism doesn't exist (or is overblown) is also seen to be commonplace and socially unacceptable, but Canadians are less certain about what others think and how they would react. Finally, appropriating Indigenous or Black attire at a party is assumed to be relatively uncommon, and not considered to be as big a social transgression.

The social norms measured are notably consistent across the Canadian population, by region and demographic strata. On average, social norms tied to these types of race-directed actions tend to be a bit stronger among women, people ages 18 to 29, and those with a university degree, but the magnitude of these differences is relatively small. There is even less variability across regions of the country and between people living in urban and rural communities, which is counter intuitive given common stereotypes. What matters more are attitudes about relevant issues. Social norms tend to be stronger among people who believe one should be careful in speech to avoid offending others, that racism is a problem in Canada, and who support current immigration levels.

## Conclusions (cont.)

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Counter intuitively, the strength of social norms expressed by Indigenous and Black survey participants do not differ much from that of other Canadians, as they apply to situations involving racist and anti-racist actions directed at people of their own type. That is, they generally agree with the broader population about what is considered socially acceptable behaviour in the situations involving racist or anti-racist actions directed at other Indigenous or Black people, even if they view these actions to be morally wrong. Perhaps this should not be surprising as it indicates that people across racial groups are reading the social dynamics of these situations in the same way (whether they agree with them or not).

Continued/ ...

# Conclusions (cont.)

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This research represents a first step in understanding the dynamics of social norms as they apply to racism in Canada, and how this knowledge can be meaningfully applied. While by no means the final word on the topic, the research:

- Demonstrates that social norms can be effectively measured at a population level; people are able to provide meaningful answers to the central questions that identify the presence and strength of norms as they apply to situations involving racist actions in their social context;
- Provides new metrics documenting the extent of racism in Canada overall and across relevant subgroups of the population. These metrics can be added to the growing body of evidence documenting racism and updated over time to identify trends; and
- Provides empirical evidence for the important role that social context plays in the expression of racism in daily life in Canada which, along with institutional racism and individual prejudice, should be recognized as a key dimension to both understanding racism in society and how to address it.

Continued/ ...

# Conclusions (cont.)

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Expanding the scope opens up new opportunities for developing strategies to change not minds but the social rules in ways that can effectively reduce racist behaviour in our communities and workplaces. The social norm model developed through this research could be applied in specific organizational and group settings such as companies, schools, government departments, professional associations and social clubs where race-directed behaviours need to be addressed. It is in such contexts that relevant types of behaviours and the group norms associated with them can be clearly identified.

Changing social norms – that is, strengthening positive ones and/or weakening negative ones – is not an easy feat but possible through proper diagnostics and targeted interventions aimed at changing social expectations among those in the target group(s). This may be a simple or complex task depending on the dynamics of the existing norms. For instance, changing norms are much easier when it's a matter of pluralistic ignorance (where each person is making the same wrong assumption about what everyone else is thinking) and requires only the sharing of information to connect the dots. It becomes more difficult when most in the group hold positive beliefs about negative actions, which means progress requires changes in both personal beliefs and normative expectations.

Social change often relies on “trendsetters”, individuals, groups and sometimes the media who are first movers to initiate change through bold (and sometimes risky) speech and action that leads by example that others decide to follow, and then expands to alter what is considered acceptable or expected behaviour.

# Conclusions (cont.)

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Beyond the application to specific organizations and interventions, the social norms model offers an opportunity to expand our understanding of racism in society from one that focuses primarily on racist perpetrators and racialized victims. Race relations involves everyone, not because all of us are racists or victims, but because we are all part of the social milieu in which racism takes place. And so we are connected to others in how the rules of behaviour and social norms are constructed and maintained. None of us as individuals can do much to change such norms, but collectively we can make a difference through collective actions. In part this involves paying attention and talking more about racism as it surfaces in our communities, workplaces and social networks.

Public conversation may be an important activity by bringing to the surface what we think and where we find agreement. An increasing majority of Canadians understand racism is pervasive and do not personally condone it. The more we come to appreciate this the less likely we may be to tolerate it among our friends and acquaintances.

Finally, the relevance of social norms extends well beyond issues of racism. The deterioration of public discourse in politics revealed through unprecedented public expressions of hatred toward elected officials and public health authorities reveals how social norms are quickly changing. Social media is serving as an accelerant because it largely frees individuals from normative constraints in how they interact with others. How we understand and address these latest collective challenges will be constructively informed by attention being paid to a social norms perspective.

# Appendix: Vignettes

# Vignettes - Indigenous-directed actions

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**Speaking up when someone tells an insensitive joke (A1).** Ben is a white man in his 30s. One day he is on a coffee break with other guys in his office and they are chatting about the cars they drive. Jason is another white man in the group and he is joking with Paul, who is an Indigenous man. Jason asks Paul if his pick-up truck is so beat-up because he drives it all over” the Rez.” Several others laugh, but Ben is bothered by what Jason said. He speaks up right away. He tells Jason that his joke was out of line and not funny.

**Appropriating Indigenous attire (A2).** George is a white man in his early 20s. He is invited to a friend’s Halloween party where people are encouraged to come dressed in costume. George decides it would be fun to go as an Indian chief. He wears a feathered headdress and a buckskin vest that he purchased online.

**Making a racial gesture at a hockey game (A3).** Rick is a white teenager. He attends a hockey game where the local team is playing a visiting team that includes a couple of Indigenous players. When the home team scores a goal, Rick celebrates by making a vigorous tomahawk gesture along with a loud whooping cry.

**Claiming that racism against Indigenous Peoples doesn’t exist (A4).** Judy is a white woman in her early 30s. She is at the bar one evening with her friends to have a good time. The conversation turns to the treatment of Indigenous people in their town by the local police. Judy insists that racism and racial profiling against Indigenous people in their town isn’t as bad as some people say. She says the media gives this issue too much attention.

**Speaking up when someone is hassling an Indigenous person in public (A5).** Alexa is a white woman in her early 50s. She is riding the bus home from work one day and sees an older white man angrily speaking to another passenger, who is an Indigenous teenager. The older man is telling the teenager he should dress in cleaner clothes or stay on his reservation. Alexa speaks up to tell the older man to leave the teenager alone, and to mind his own business.

**Making derogatory comment on Facebook (A6).** Helen is a white woman in her 40s. She belongs to a social media Facebook group in her community. One day, someone else in the group posts a story about new government funding to repair the drinking water system at an Indigenous community up north. Helen responds by writing a post of her own in which she says that Indigenous people already get too much government funding, and they should do a better job of looking after themselves.

# Vignettes - Black-directed actions

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**Speaking up when someone tells an insensitive joke (B1).** Jonah is a white man in his 30s. One day he is on a coffee break with other guys in his office, and they are chatting about the cars they drive. Sam is another white man in the group, and he is joking with Chris, who is Black. Sam asks Chris if he is able to afford to drive such a nice car because of the money he earns dealing drugs. Several others laugh, but Jonah is bothered by what Sam said. He speaks up right away. He tells Sam that his joke is out of line and not funny.

**Appropriating Black attire (B2).** Bob is a white man in his early 20s. He is invited to a friend's Halloween party where people are encouraged to come in costume. Bob decides it would be fun to go as a Black rapper, with clothes and accessories he purchased online. At the party he jokes around by pretending to speak as he imagines Black rappers do.

**Asking a Black person where he/she came from (B3).** Angela is a white woman in her 40s. One day while at work, she is introduced to a new colleague, Grace, who is a Black woman. Angela asks Grace what country she came from. Grace tells her that she grew up a city nearby, which happens to be the very same city where Angela grew up. Angela expresses surprise and tells Grace she isn't sure how this could be true since she never saw Black people growing up.

**Claiming that racism doesn't exist in Canada (B4).** Martin is a white man in his early 30s, One evening he is at his local bar with friends. The conversation turns to the topic of race and the treatment of Black people by local police. Martin insists that racism and racial profiling against Black people happens in other countries like the USA, but not in Canada.

**Speaking up when someone is hassling a Black person in public (B5).** Victor is a white man in his early 40s. One afternoon while riding the bus home from work, he sees an older white man angrily speaking to another passenger, who is a Black teenager. The older man tells the teenager he should dress in cleaner clothes or go back to where he came from. Victor speaks up to tell the older man to leave the teenager alone, to and mind his own business.

**Making a derogatory comment on Facebook (B6).** Janet is a white woman in her 40s, She belongs to a social media Facebook group about women's fashion. One day someone else in the group posts a story about new fashion trends. In response, Janet posts a comment complaining about how Black culture has had too much bad influence on what is considered good fashion



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