

Saskatchewan's Human and Social Capital: An Interprovincial Comparison

Doug Elliott
Sask Trends Monitor
444 19th Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4N 1H1
Tel: 306-522-5515
Fax: 306-522-5838
Email: sasktrends@sasktel.net
Internet: www.sasktrends.ca

Background and Data Source

- This survey of aspects of human and social capital is organized into five general categories:
 - physical and mental health;
 - formal education;
 - social participation;
 - civic participation; and
 - beliefs and values.

- This is a snapshot of data for 2003 and does not examine trends over time because all of the information was derived from a one-time survey conducted by Statistics Canada (cycle 17 of the General Social Survey). The survey consisted of a telephone interview of all Canadian residents 15 years of age and older except those living in the northern Territories and on-Reserve. The sample size was 25,000 nationally with 1,280 in Saskatchewan. Responsibility for the accuracy of the data and the validity of the conclusions drawn from the analysis remains with *Sask Trends Monitor*.

- The survey was conducted during the Quebec referendum; some responses from Quebec residents appear to have been affected by that environment. The large number of people in Quebec means that the national averages are materially affected so the summary at the end of each section compares Saskatchewan with only the three prairie provinces.

- This is an interim report. The results of the analysis will be included in a formal final report to be released in November 2005.

Topics Covered

■ Physical and Emotional Well Being

- health and activity limitations
- stress
- happiness and satisfaction
- work-life balance
- life mastery

■ Educational Attainment

- completed education
- participation

■ Social Participation

- contact with friends and relatives
- giving and receiving help
- neighbourhood
- fear of crime

■ Civic Participation

- belonging
- volunteering and donations
- membership in organizations
- voting

■ Beliefs and Values

- trust in other people
- trust in institutions

■ Key Findings

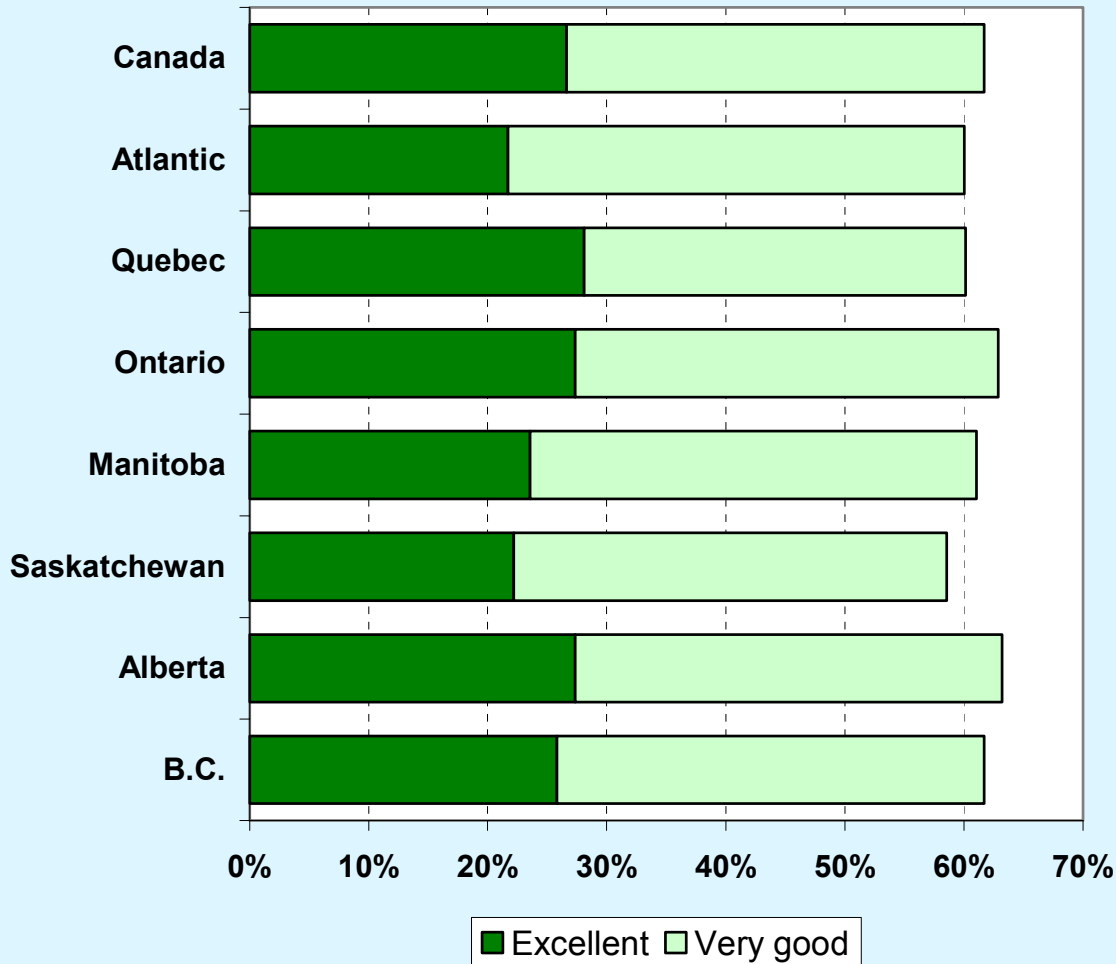
Demographic and Economic Variables Included

- The analysis focuses on the differences between Saskatchewan residents and those in other provinces. For comparison purposes the four Atlantic provinces were aggregated.
- An analysis of economic and demographic variables was undertaken although the detailed results are not included here. (Some of the significant differences are reported in the notes.) The variables included in this analysis are defined below.
 - gender;
 - age group (under 35, 35 to 54, 55 and older);
 - completed education (less than grade 12, grade 12/some post-secondary, post-secondary graduates);
 - rural/urban (urban includes communities with a population greater than 10,000, that is, Estevan and larger);
 - household income in four categories; and
 - employment status (paid worker, self-employed including farmers, not working).
- These demographic and economic variables are inter-related in many ways. Income, for example, is higher among those in the middle age groups who are working and have higher levels of education. Self-employment, to take another example, is more common in rural areas than urban areas because most farmers are classified as self-employed.
- The analysis by demographic and economic variables will be included in the final report.

Physical and Emotional Well Being

Self-Assessed Physical Health

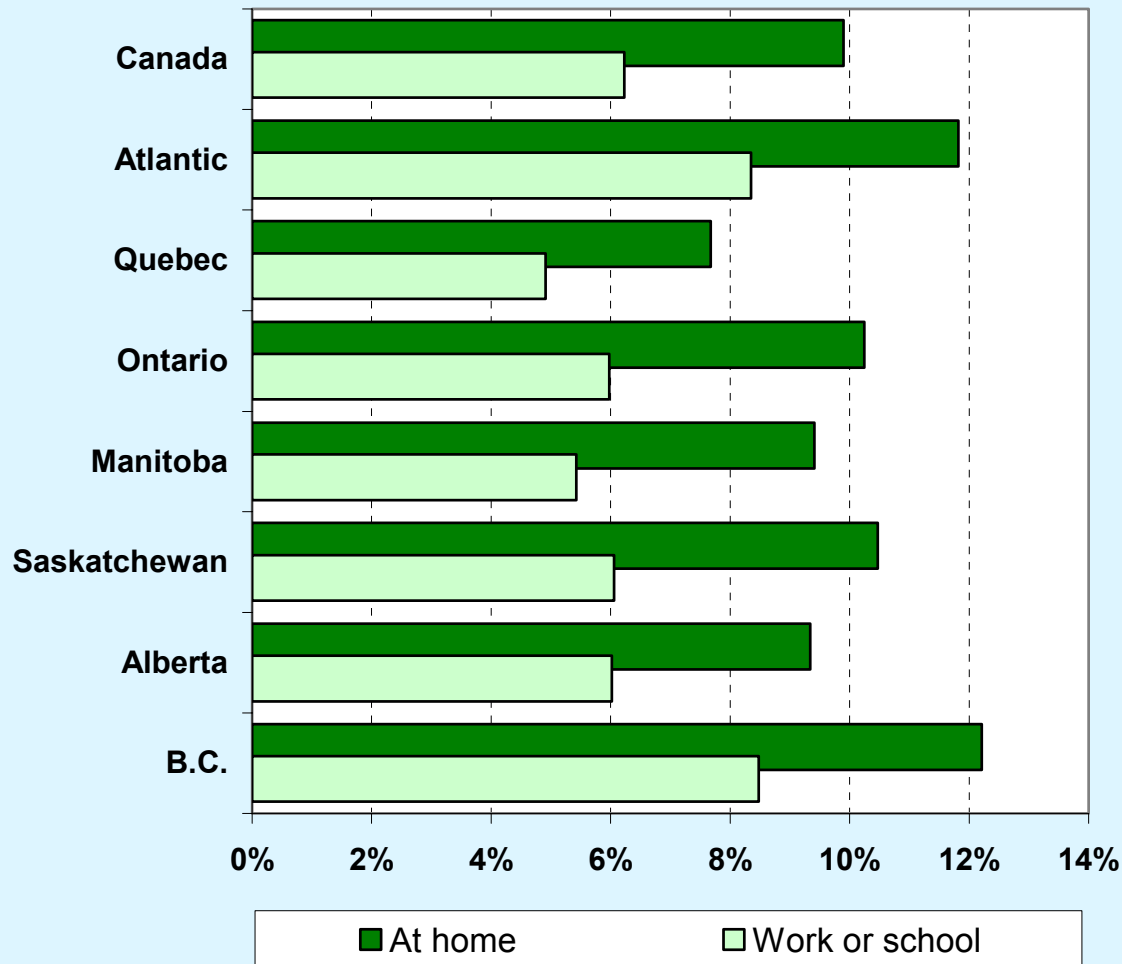
Self-Assessed Health Status



- Researchers have found that one of the best ways to measure overall health status is simply to ask people to rate their own health.
- Relative to other provinces, Saskatchewan residents are somewhat less likely to report their health status as “excellent” or “very good” - 59% did so compared with the national average of 62%.
- At least some of the difference can be explained by the relatively large number of seniors in the province. Seniors tend to report poorer health status than other residents.
- Health status is higher among those who are working and among those who have higher levels of income and education.

Activity Limitations

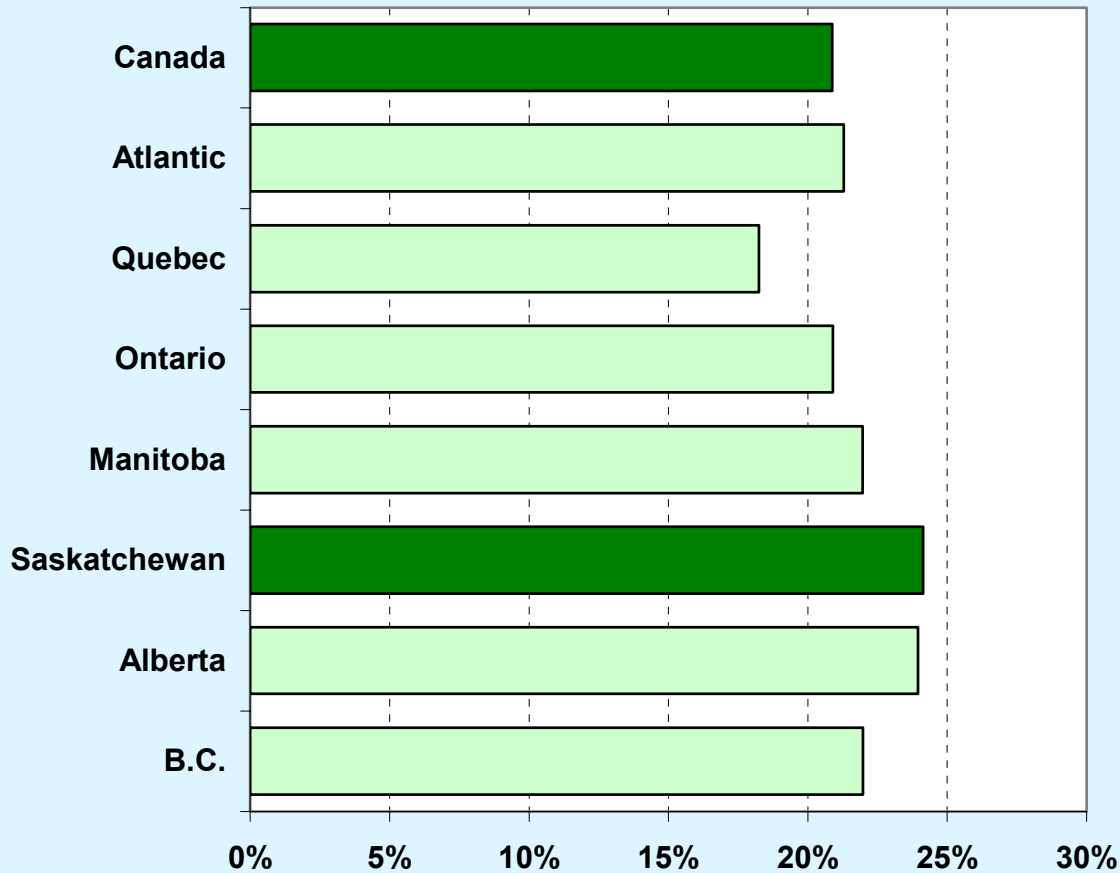
Limited in Kind or Quantity of Activity



- The poorer health status reported by Saskatchewan residents does not translate into activity limitations at work.
- Compared with other provinces, a higher proportion of Saskatchewan residents report an activity limitation at home but a lower proportion report an activity limitation at work/school.
- In 2003, 5.4% of Saskatchewan residents report an activity limitation at work or school compared with the national average of 6.2%.
- Activity limitations at work or school are strongly correlated with education and income levels and with age. Men and those in rural areas are more likely to report an activity limitation than women or those who live in urban areas.

Trouble Sleeping

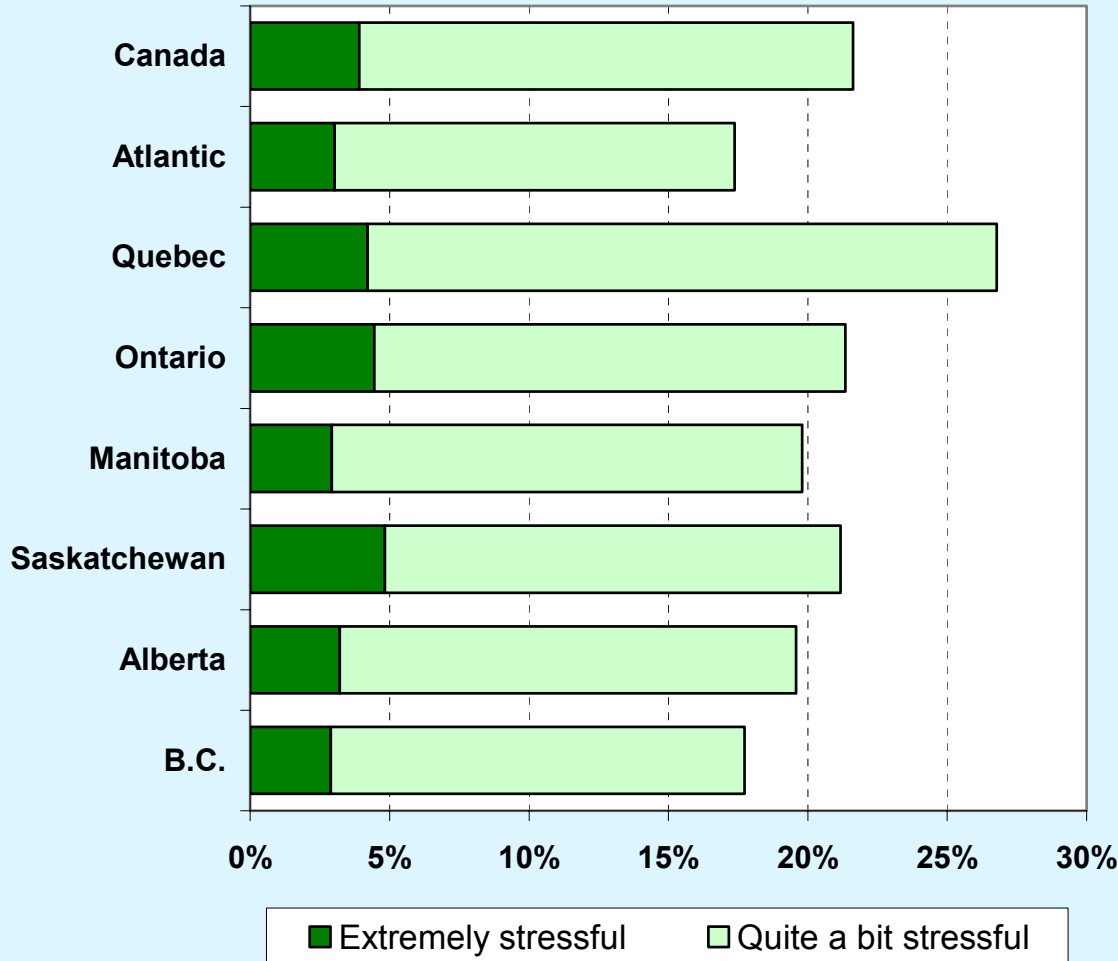
Regularly have Trouble Falling Asleep or Staying Asleep



- One general indication of high stress and/or poor health is trouble falling to sleep or staying asleep.
- Among Canadian residents, those in Alberta and Saskatchewan are the most likely to report trouble sleeping.
- Trouble sleeping is more common among those who are not working, in higher age groups, and with lower levels of income and education. Women are more likely than men to report trouble sleeping.

Self-Assessed Stress Levels

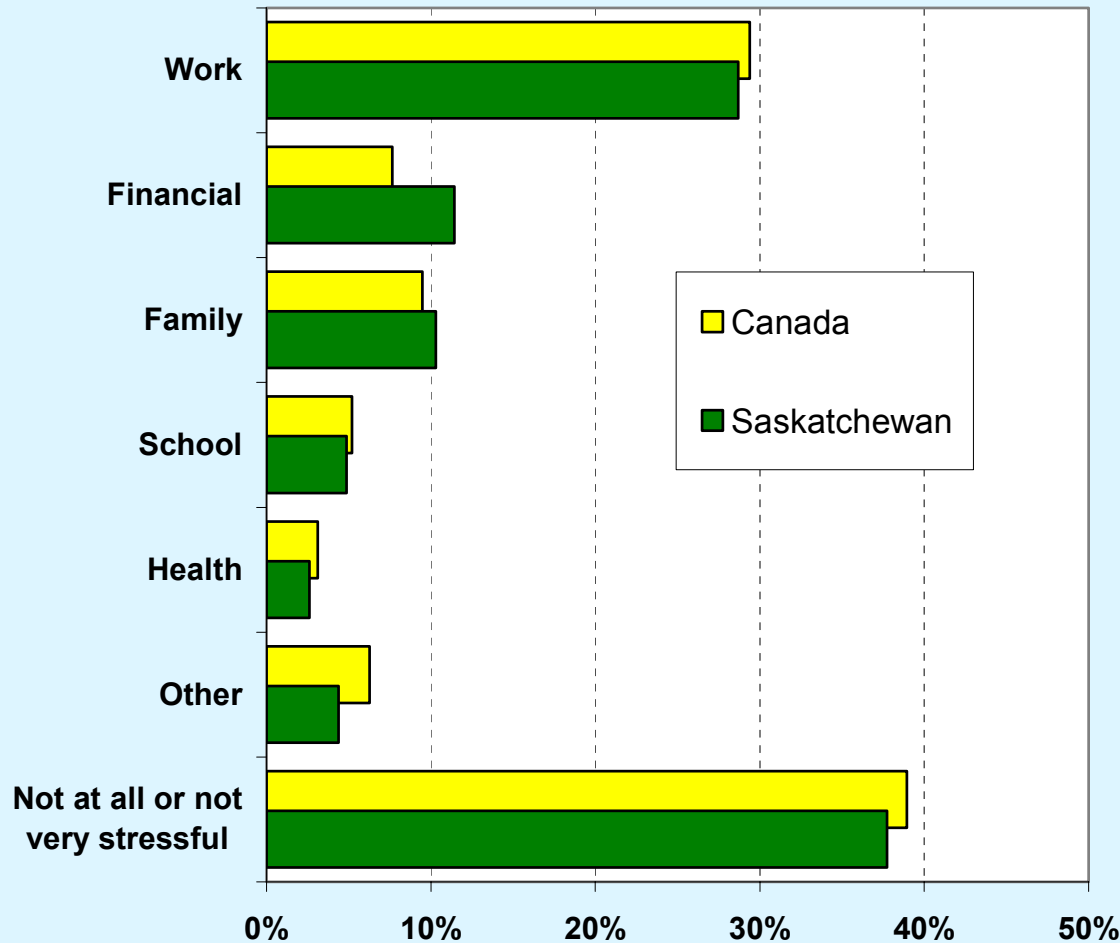
Self-Assessed Level of Stress



- These responses are based on the question “Thinking about the amount of stress in your life, would you say that most days are...”.
- Saskatchewan residents report a typical level of stress in their lives compared with other provinces - 21% report quite a bit or extreme stress compared with 20% in Manitoba and Alberta and 22% in Canada as a whole.
- The relatively few (5%) respondents who reported that their lives were “extremely stressful” is higher in Saskatchewan than in other provinces.
- Stress levels are generally higher among those in the 35 to 54 age group, in urban areas, with higher incomes, and among the self-employed.

Main Source of Stress

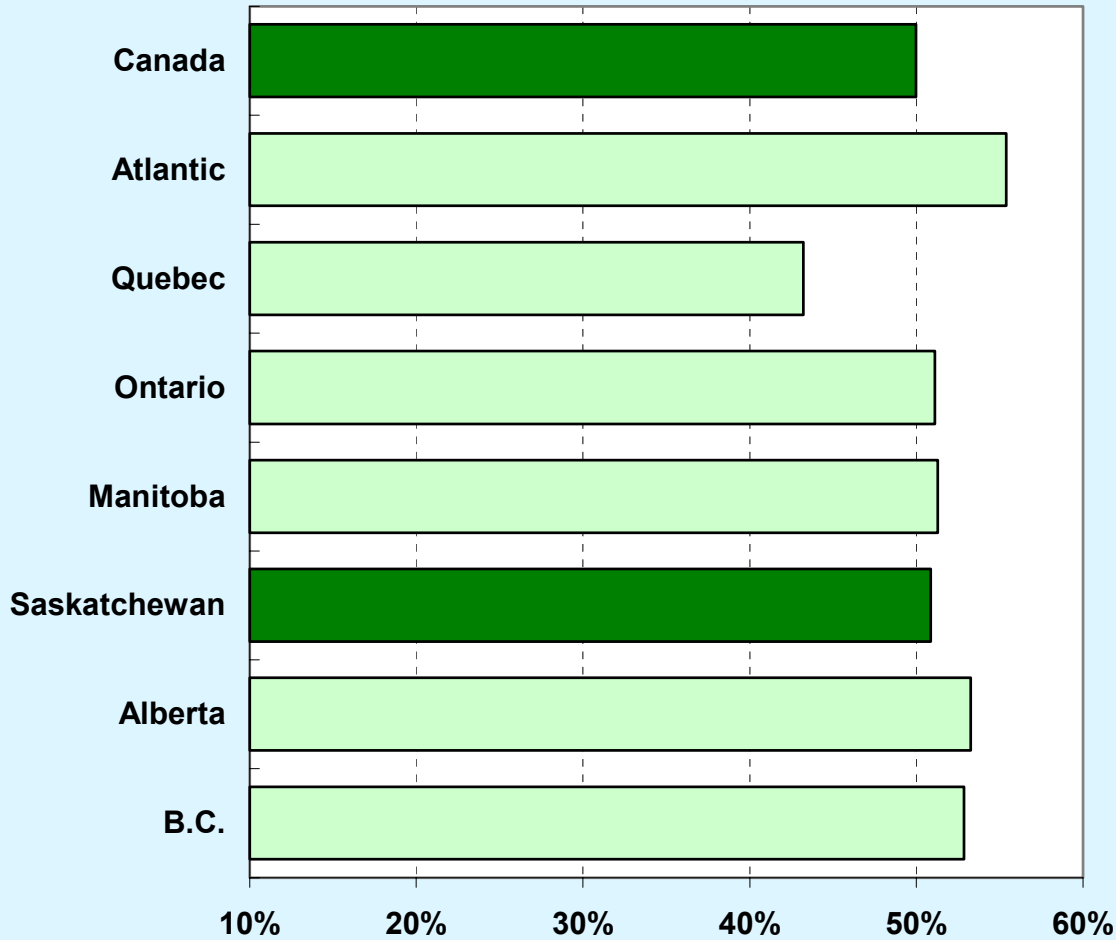
Main Source of Stress



- Among those who report at least some stress in their lives (62% of respondents), the most common source of stress is work.
- Compared with the national average Saskatchewan respondents were more likely to report concerns about their financial situation and less or equally likely to report stress from the other factors.
- Work-related stress is noticeably higher among men and those with higher levels of income and education.

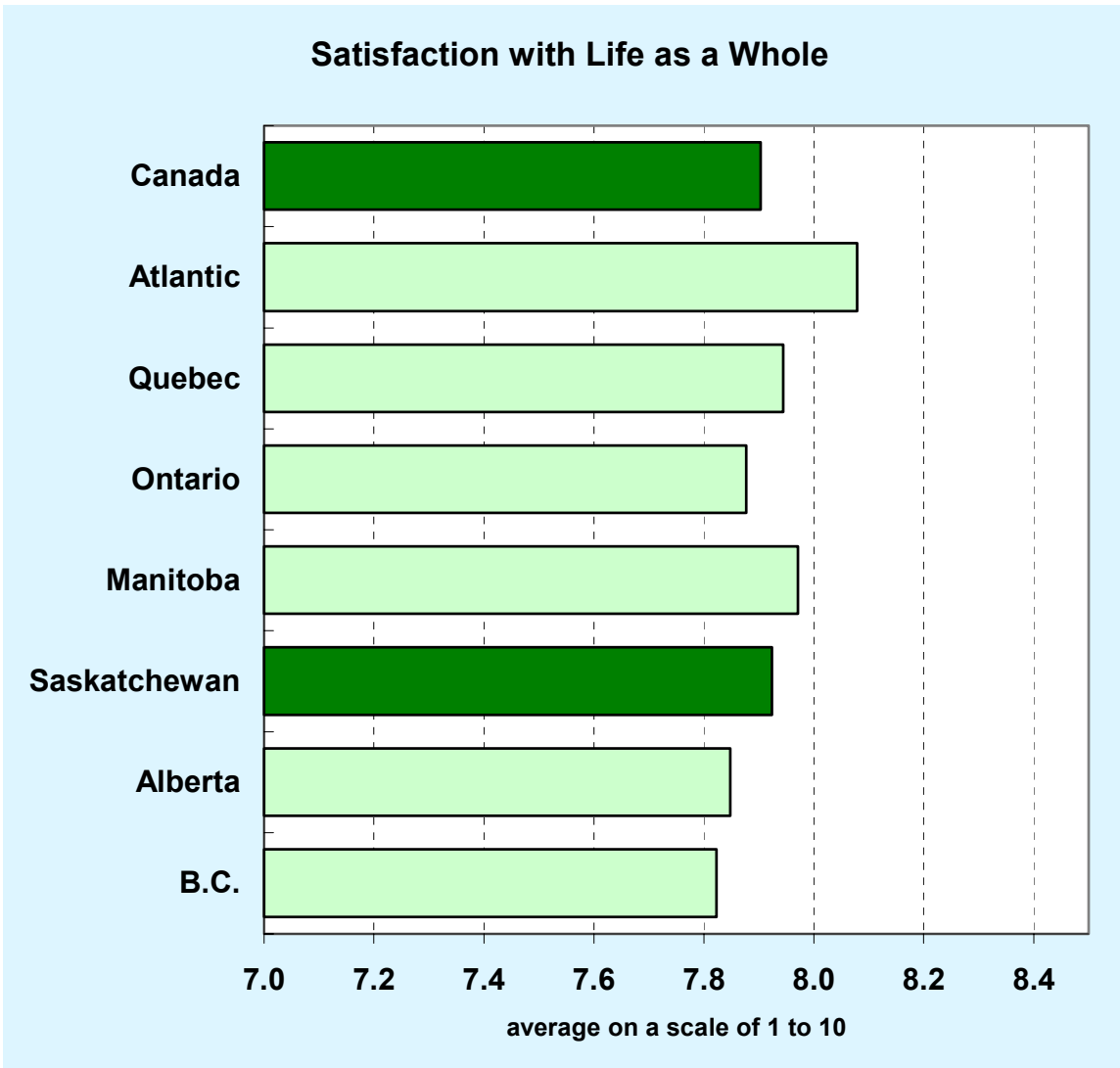
Self-Assessed Happiness

Residents who Describe Themselves as "Very Happy"



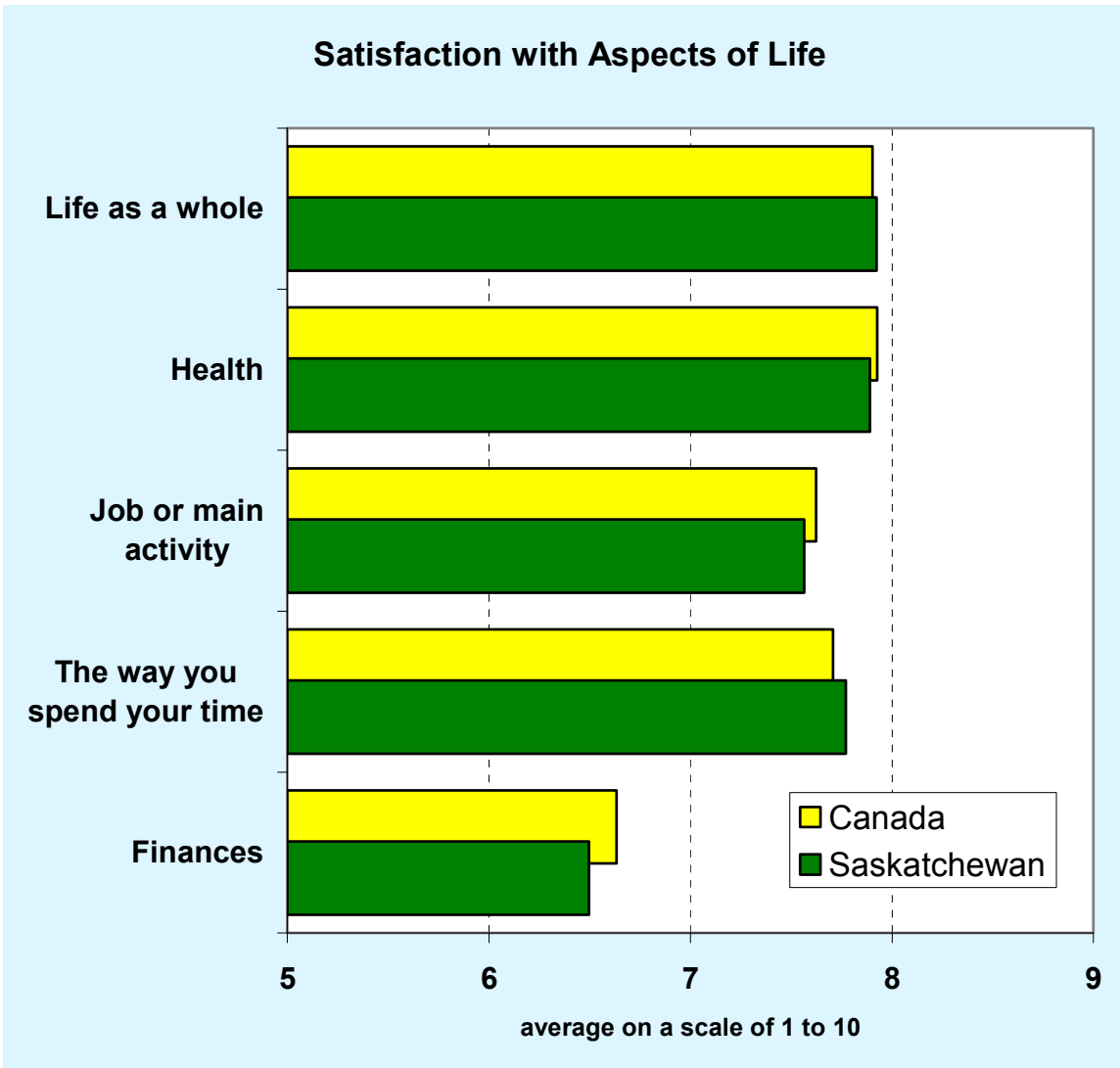
- Just over one half of Saskatchewan adults say they are presently "very happy". This proportion is near the national average and only slightly below the proportion the Atlantic provinces.
- The proportion who are very happy is higher among those with higher incomes.

Satisfaction with Life as a Whole



- Asked to rank their level of satisfaction on a ten-point scale with 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied, virtually all Saskatchewan respondents (97%) gave a ranking of five or more.
- The average ranking of 7.9 in Saskatchewan was near the national average, lower than in the Atlantic provinces but higher than in Alberta or B.C.
- Satisfaction with life in general is higher among:
 - women;
 - those in rural areas;
 - those with higher incomes; and
 - those under 35 years of age.

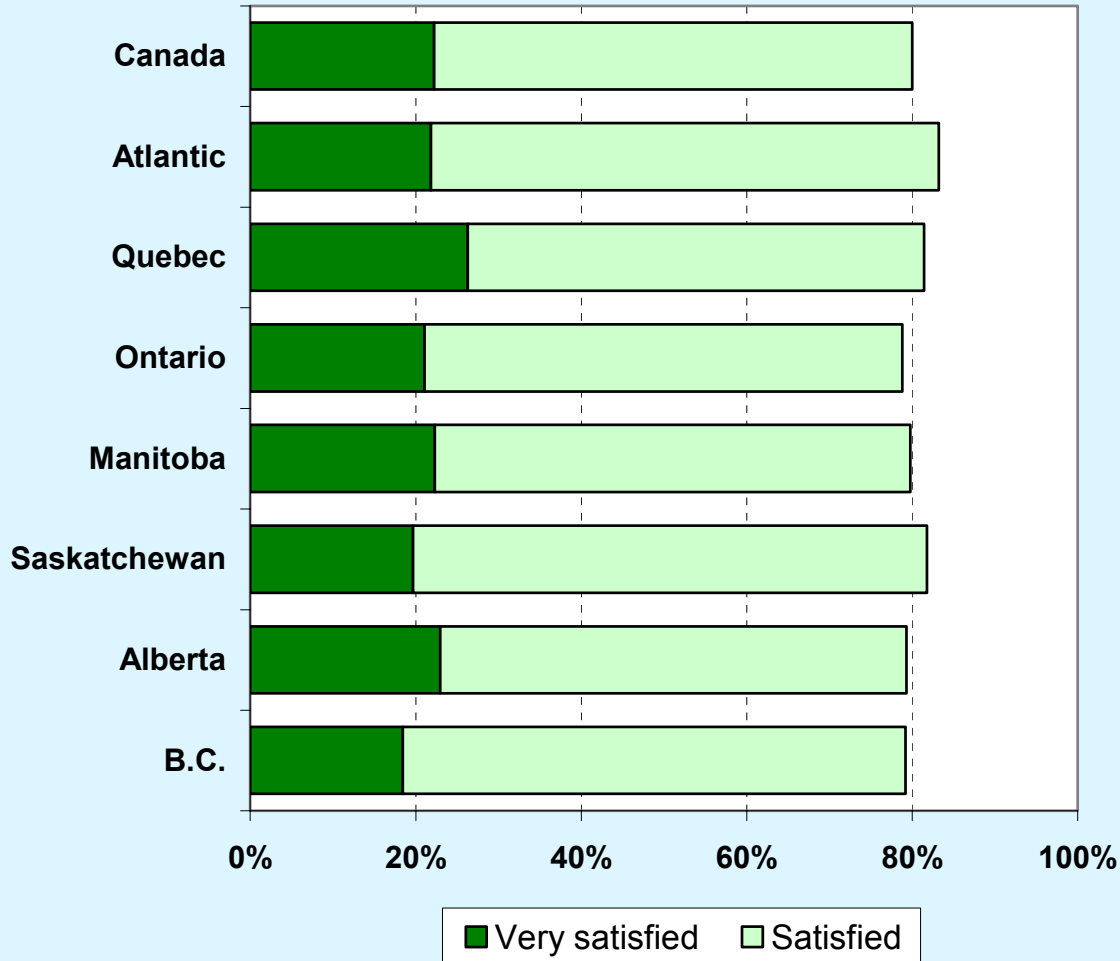
Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Life



- Using the same ten-point scale, Saskatchewan residents are generally more satisfied with their health, job, and other activities than with their financial situation.
- The same is true for Canadian residents.

Work/Family Balance

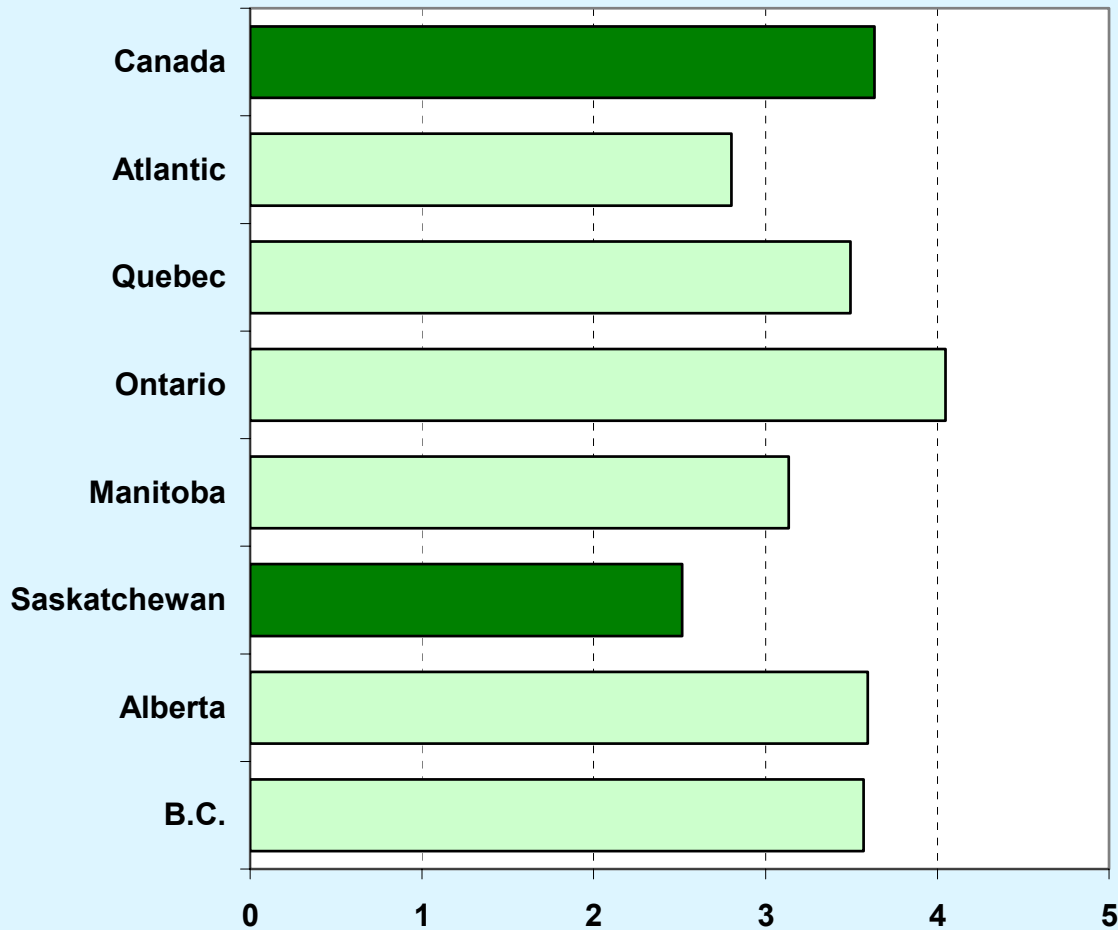
Satisfaction with Work/Family Balance



- Eight out of ten of Saskatchewan residents who are working are satisfied with the balance between work and family. This is similar to the proportion in Canada as a whole.
- The proportion who are satisfied is much higher (92%) among those 55 years of age and older.

Commuting to Work

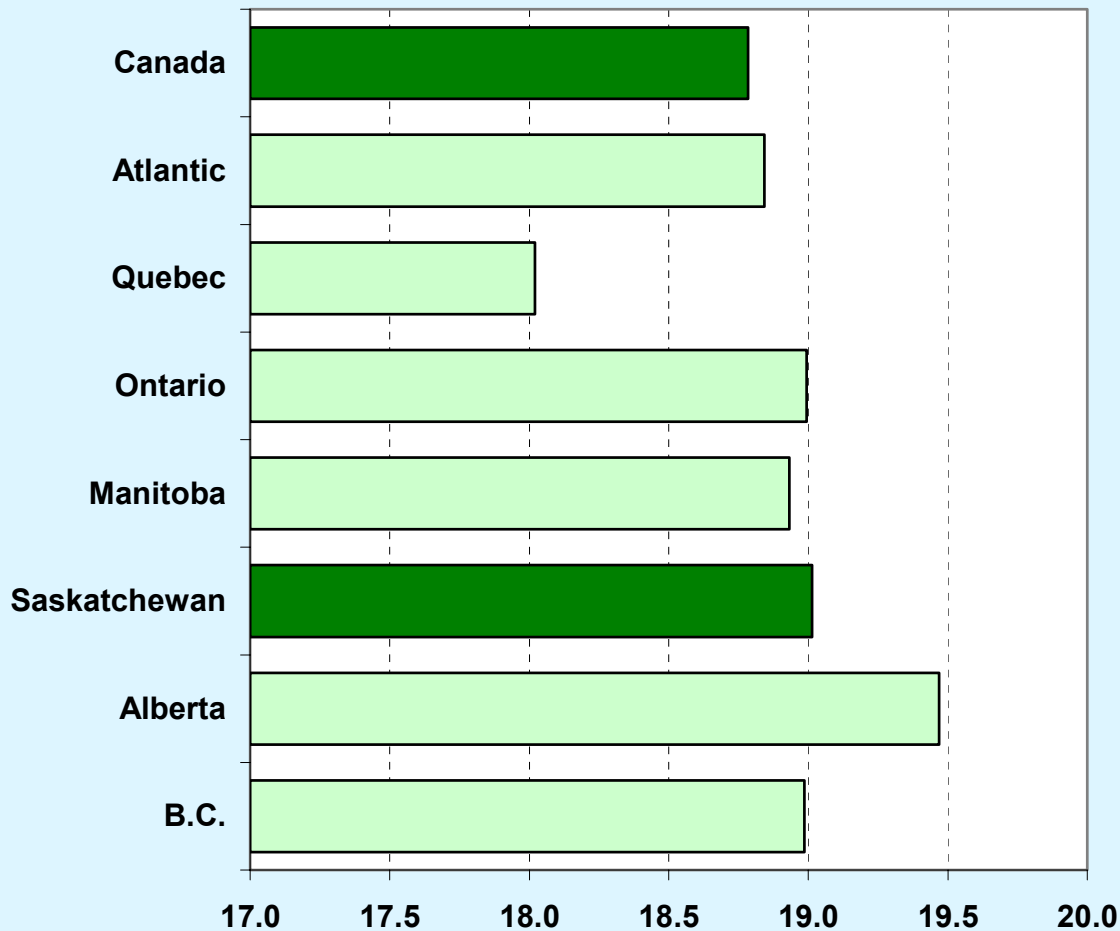
Average Weekly Hours Spent Commuting to/from Work



- In an average week, Saskatchewan workers spend an average of 2½ hours commuting to/from work. This is below the national average of 3½ and one of the lowest in Canada.
- Commuting times are typically longer for those with higher levels of education and are higher, in fact, for those in rural areas than urban areas.

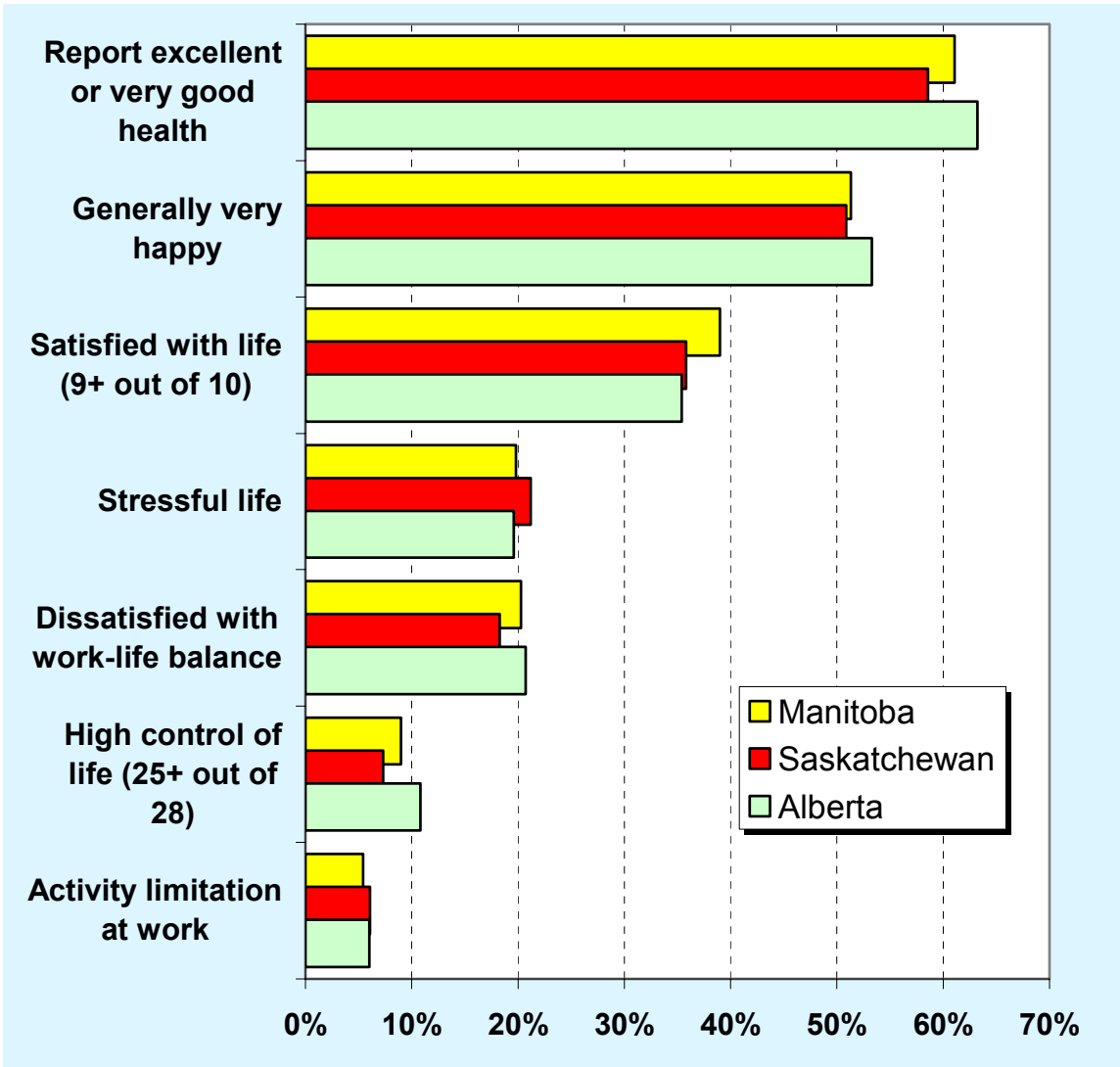
Life Mastery

Life Mastery Scale (out of 28)



- The life mastery scale from 0 to 28 is based on seven questions designed to measure the extent to which individuals believe that their life chances are under their control. Higher scores indicate the belief in more control.
- Saskatchewan residents are above the national average on the life mastery scale with an average rank of 19 out of 28. Life mastery is noticeably higher in Alberta and noticeably lower in Quebec.
- Higher scores on the scale are correlated with education and income levels. Those in younger age groups and in paid employment are more likely to feel in control than older people, the self-employed, or those out of work. The sense of mastery is higher in urban areas than rural areas.

Summary of Physical and Emotional Well Being

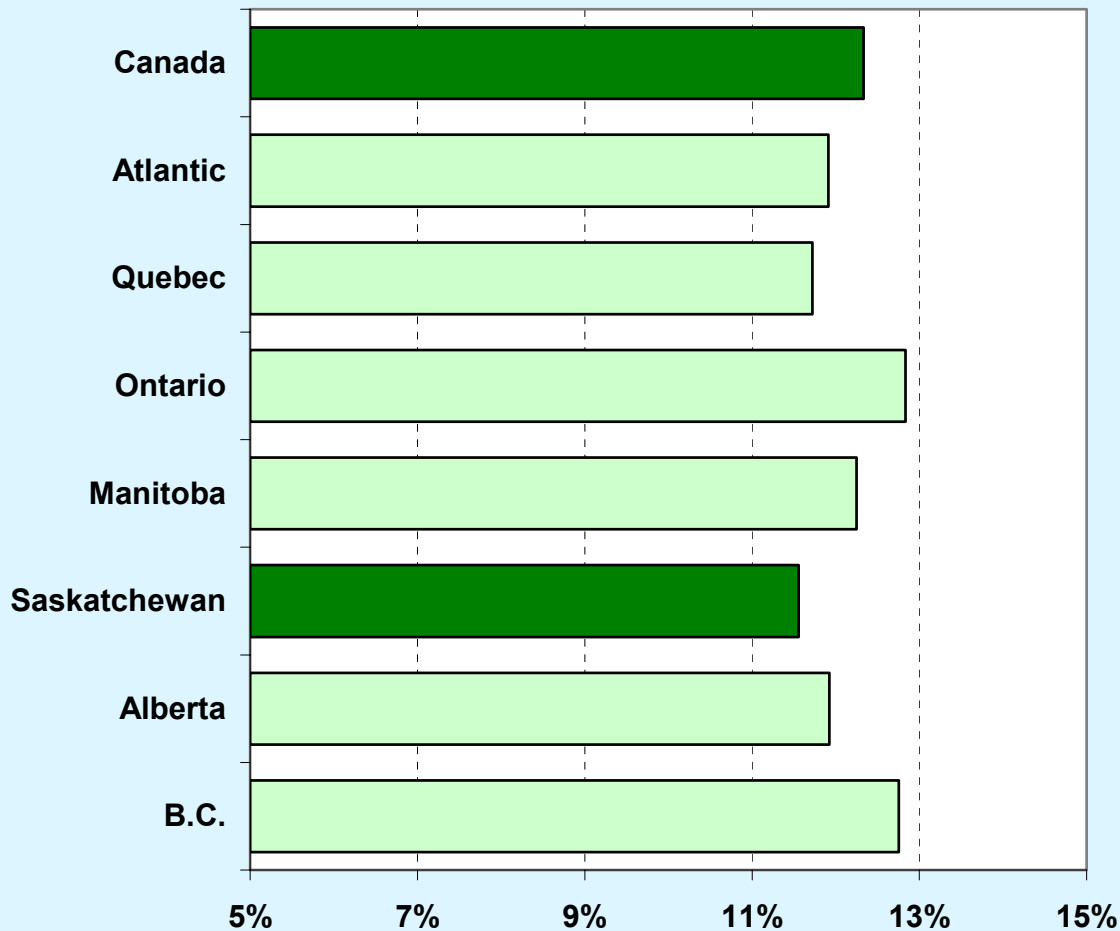


- Relative to other prairie residents Saskatchewan residents are somewhat less likely to report good physical health status but equally likely to report an activity limitation at work.
- Compared with Alberta, a slightly lower proportion of Saskatchewan residents are generally happy but are equally likely to be satisfied with their life as a whole.
- One in five residents report quite a bit or extreme stress in their lives and a similar proportion report dissatisfaction with the balance between work and family life.
- Only 7% of Saskatchewan adults feel they are completely in control of their lives, a noticeably lower proportion than in Alberta.

Educational Attainment

School Attendance

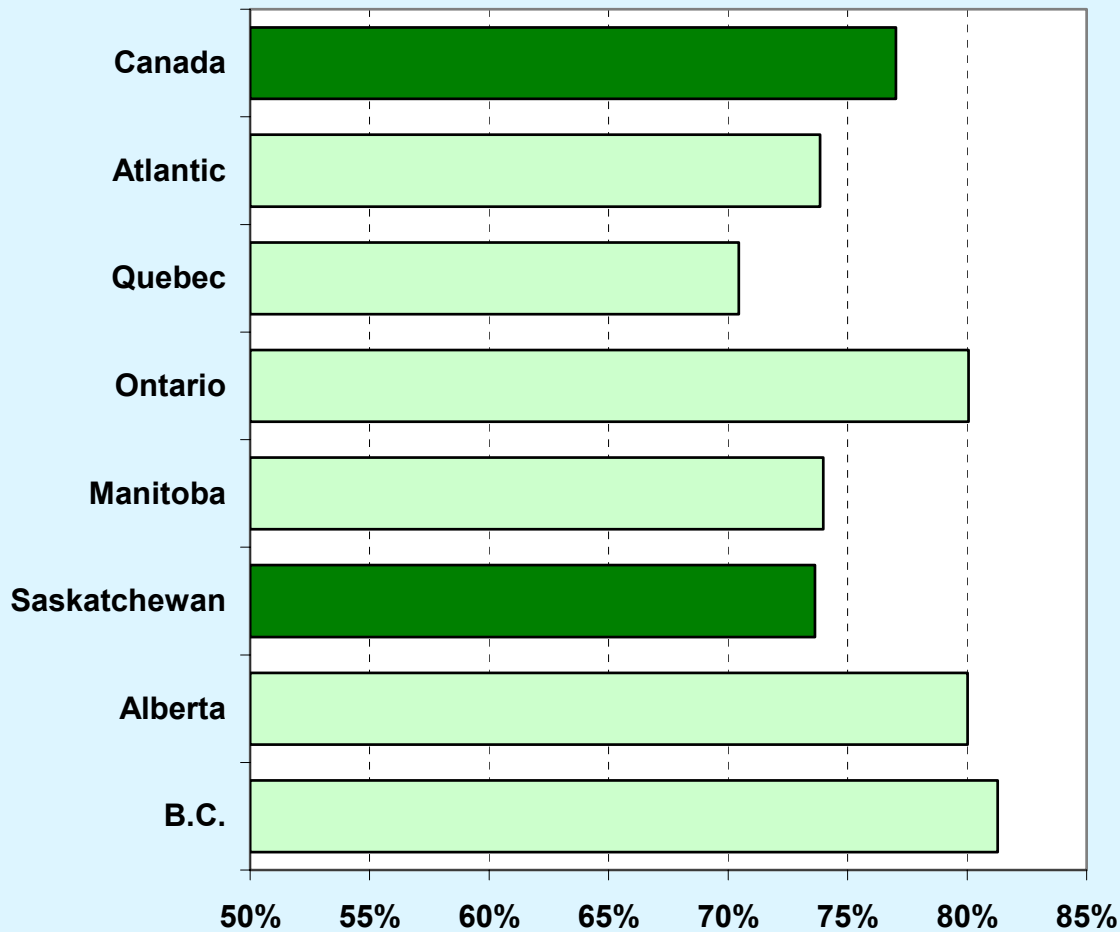
Attending School on a Full-time or Part-time Basis



- Saskatchewan residents are less likely than other Canadians to be going to school - either high school or a post-secondary institution, on either a full-time or part-time basis.
- In 2003, 11.6% were going to school compared with the national average of 12.3%.
- The proportion is higher among women than among men.

High School Completion

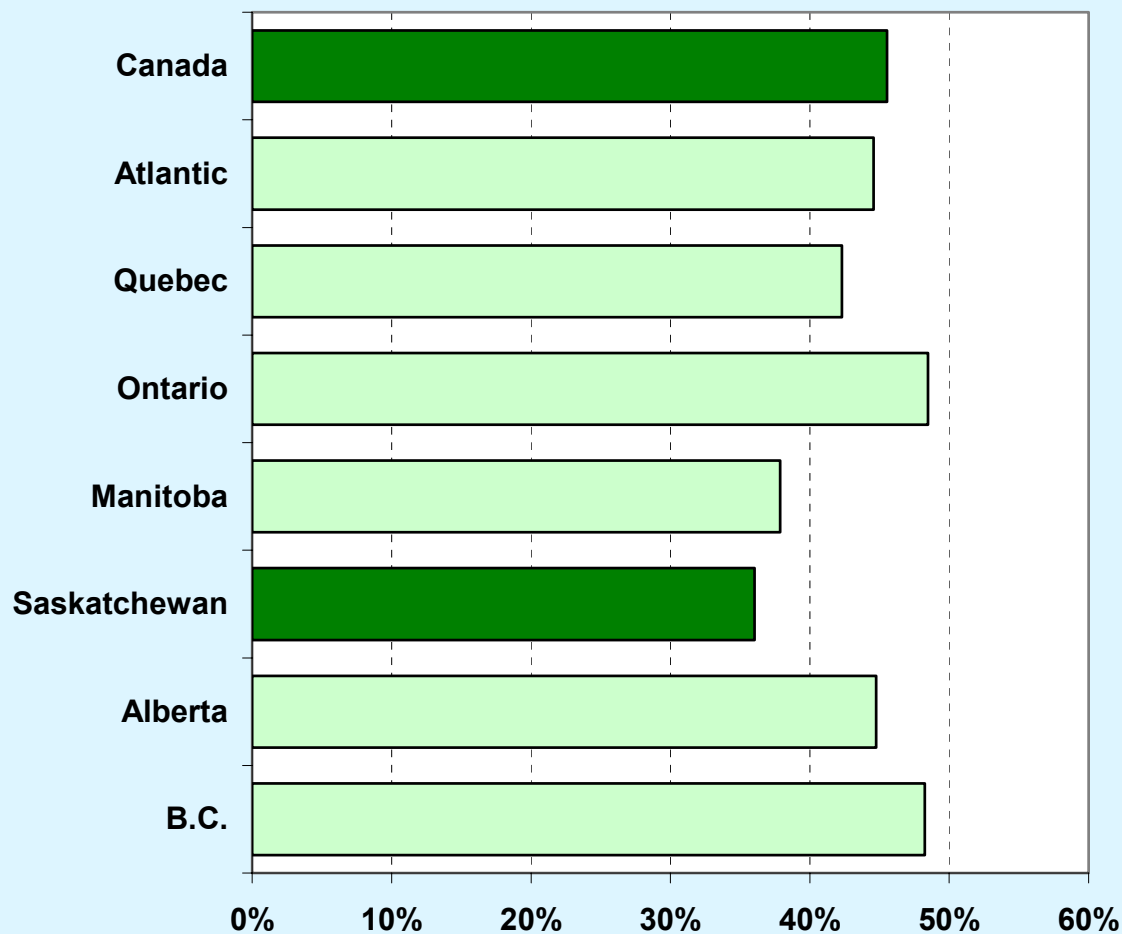
Have Completed High School



- Compared with other provinces, fewer of Saskatchewan adults have completed grade 12 - 74% compared with 77% nationally.

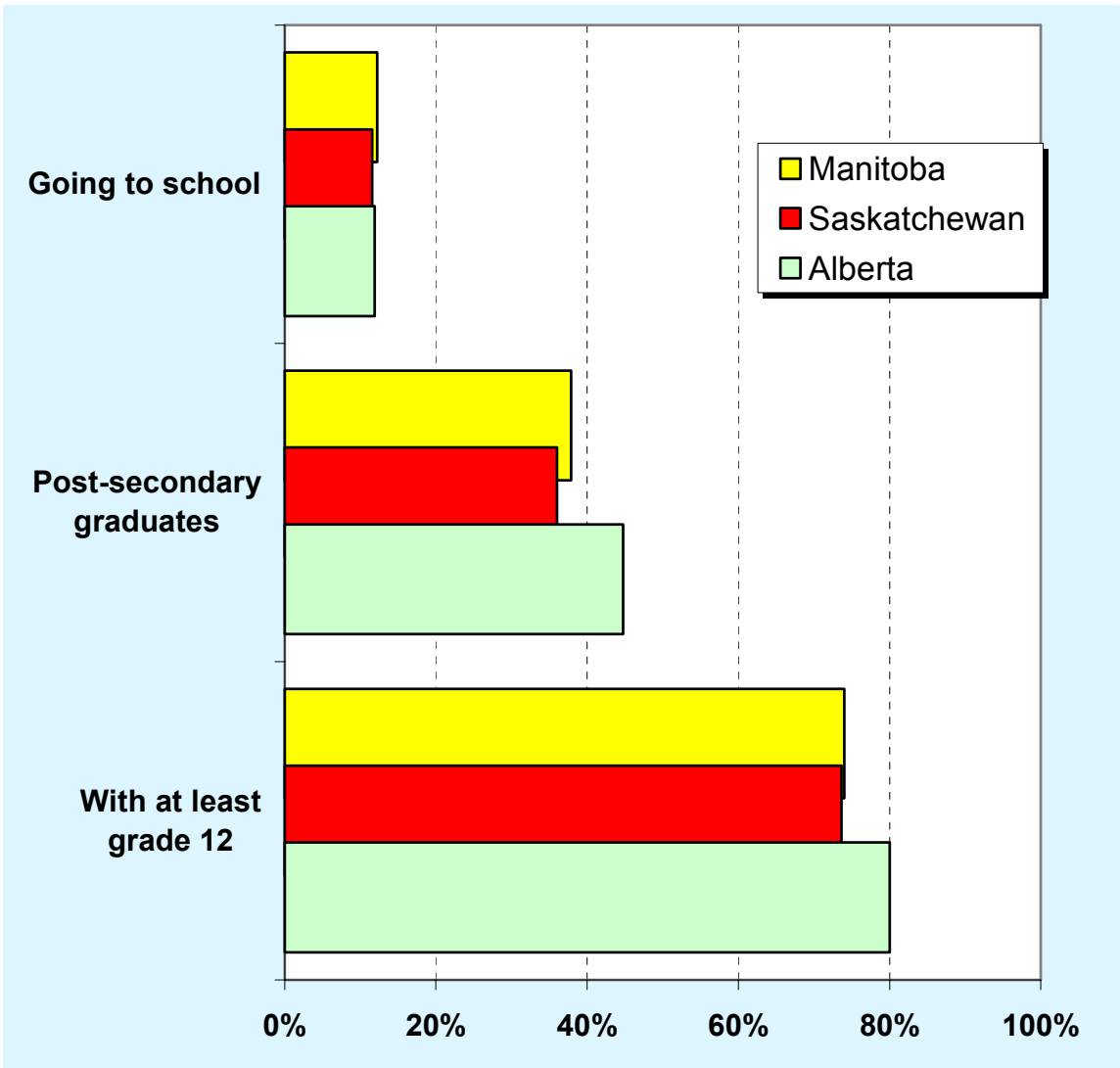
Post-Secondary Graduates

Post-Secondary Graduates



- Saskatchewan residents are less likely to be post-secondary graduates than those in other provinces - 36% compared with a national average of 46%.
- The proportion is lower for both university graduates (14% vs. 21%) and those with a diploma or certificate (22% vs. 24%).

Summary of Education

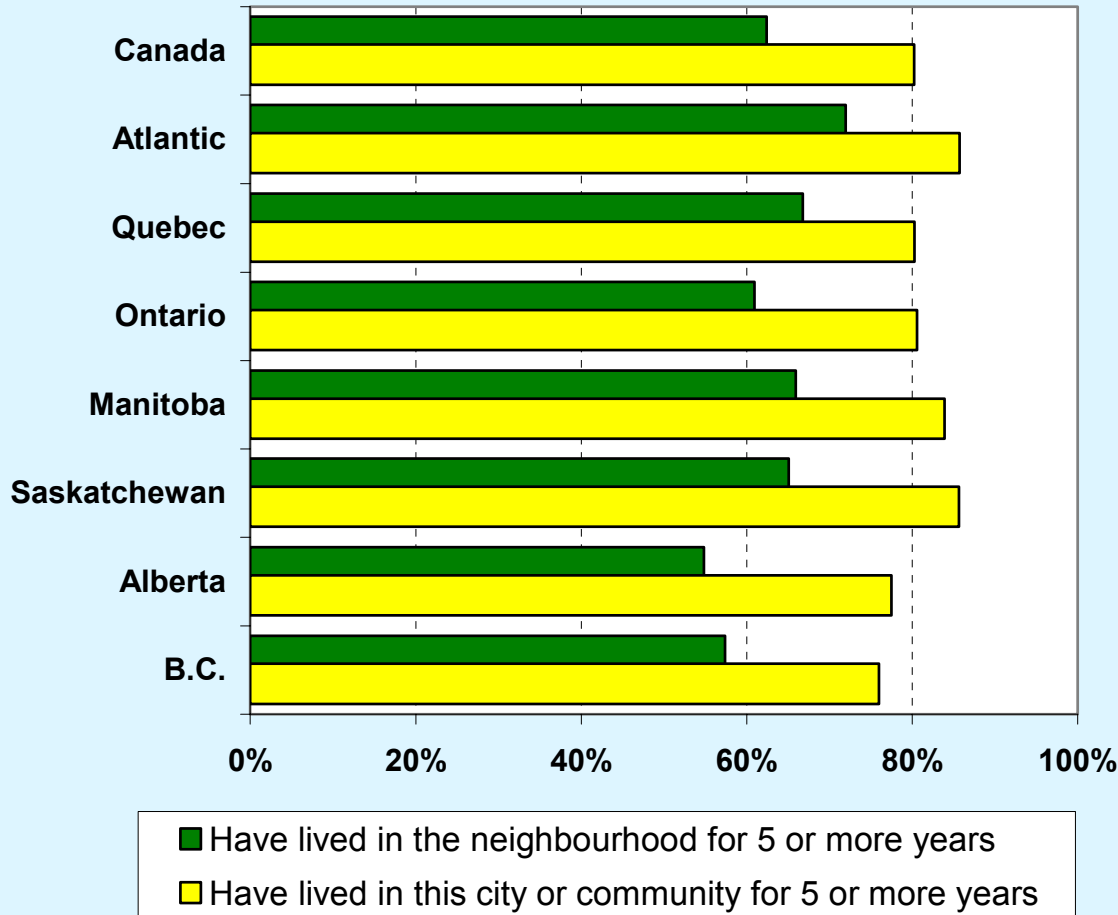


- Saskatchewan residents have lower levels of completed education than those in Alberta and a similar proportion to those in Manitoba.
- Saskatchewan residents are equally likely to be attending school.

Social Participation

Neighbourhood Stability

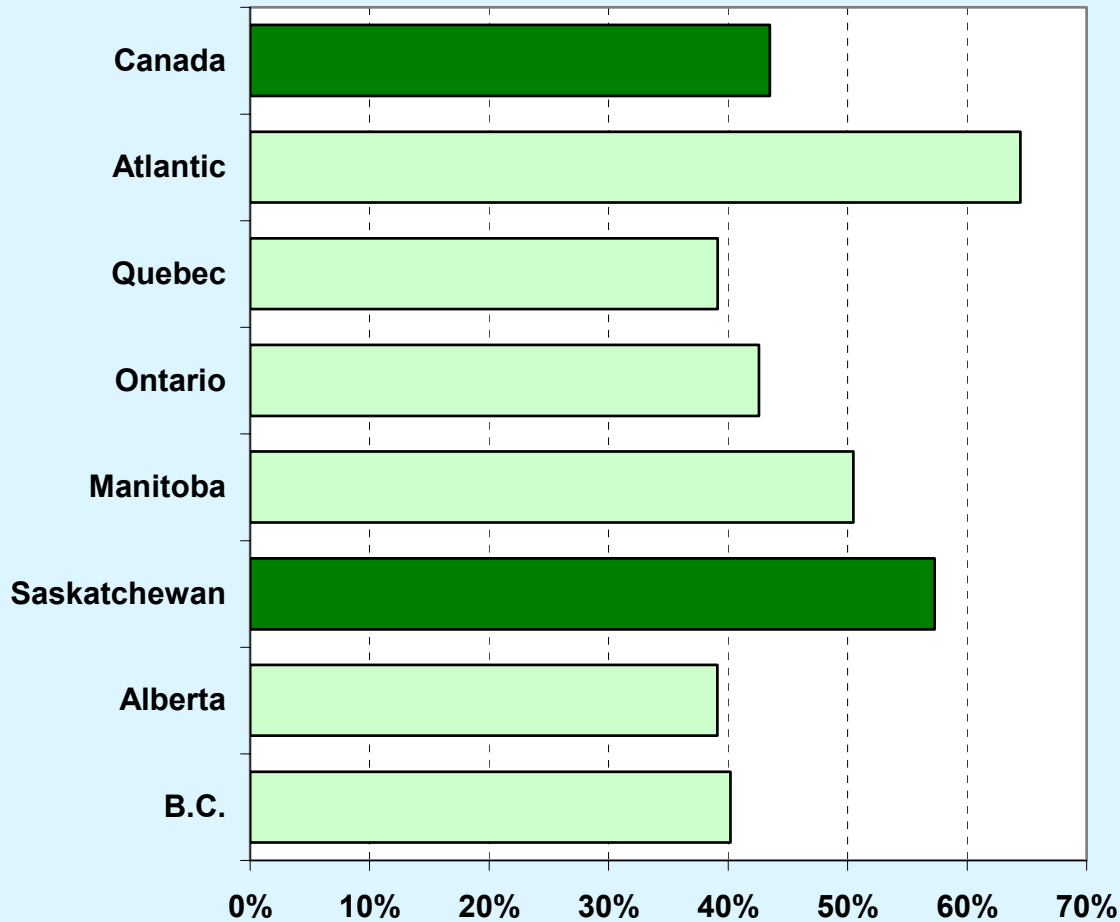
Have Lived in Neighbourhood or Community for Five or More Years



- In terms of living arrangements, Saskatchewan residents are more stable than those in other provinces. In 2003, 86% had lived in their current community for at least five years and 65% had lived in their current neighbourhood for at least five years.
- Both proportions are above the national average generally and Alberta specifically.
- Stability is lower among those with higher incomes and higher levels of education.

Knowing your Neighbours

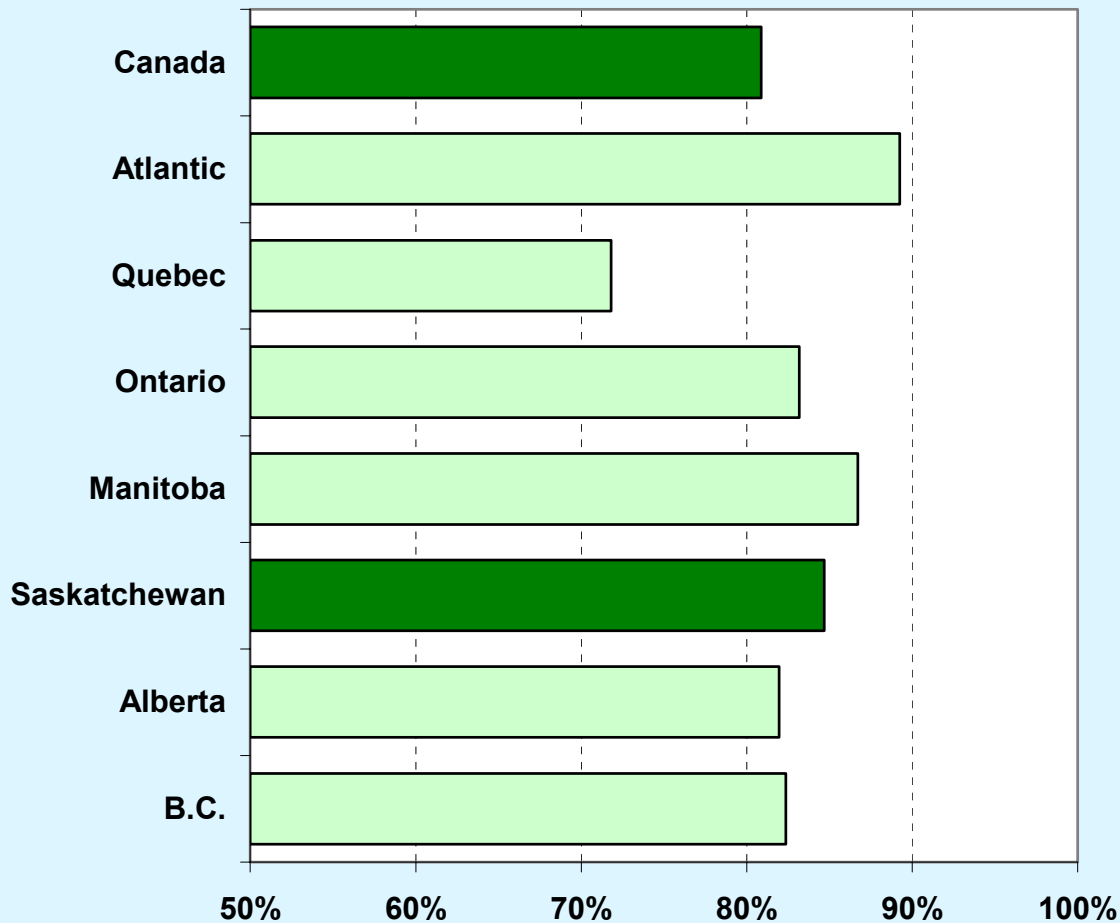
Know Many or Most of Your Neighbours



- Saskatchewanians and residents of the four Atlantic provinces are the most likely to report that they know many or most of their neighbours.
- The proportion is much higher (84%) in rural areas than in urban areas (39%).

Neighbourhood is a Helping Place

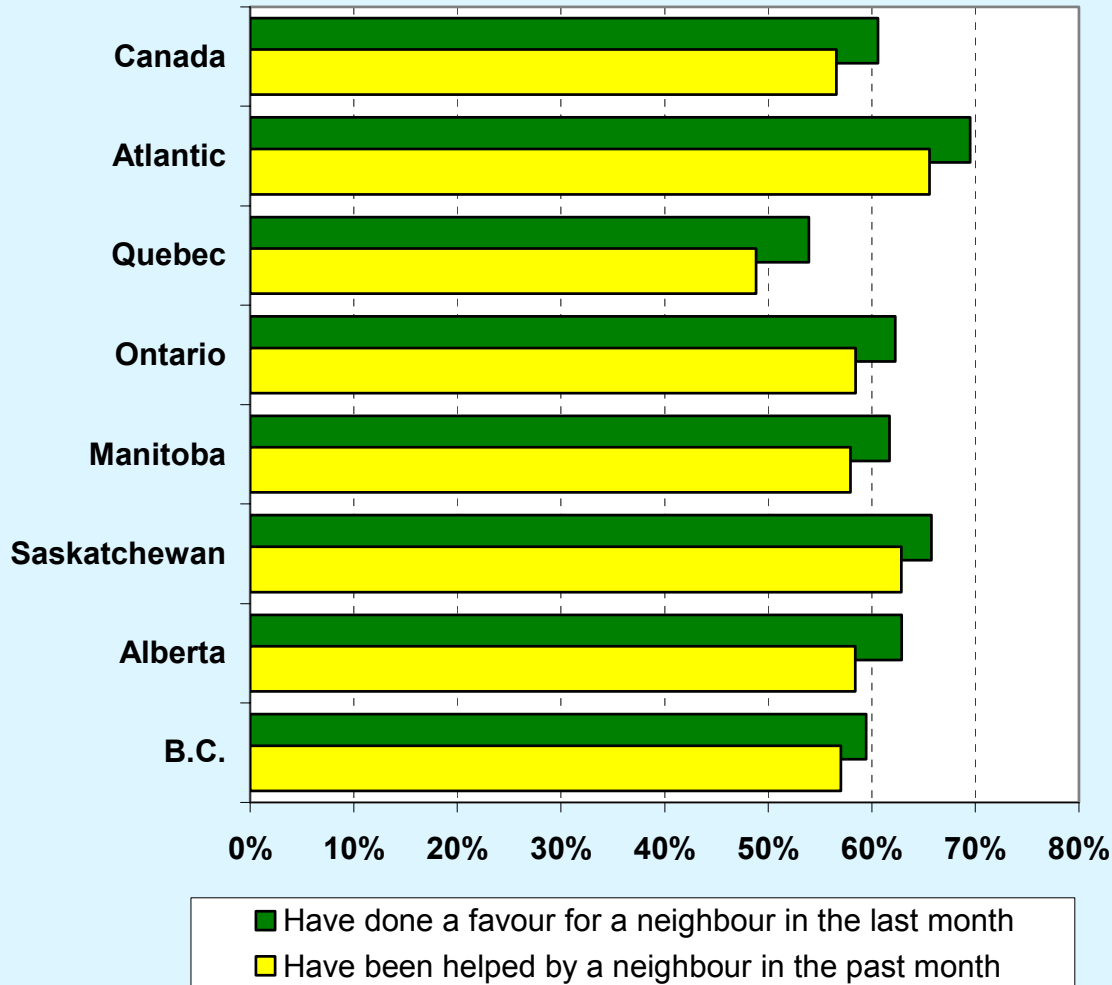
Neighbourhood is a Place Where People Help One Another



- Almost all (85%) of Saskatchewan residents say that their neighbourhood is a place “where people help one another”. This is above the national average of 81%.
- The proportion is higher (90%) among residents living in rural areas.

Helping Neighbours

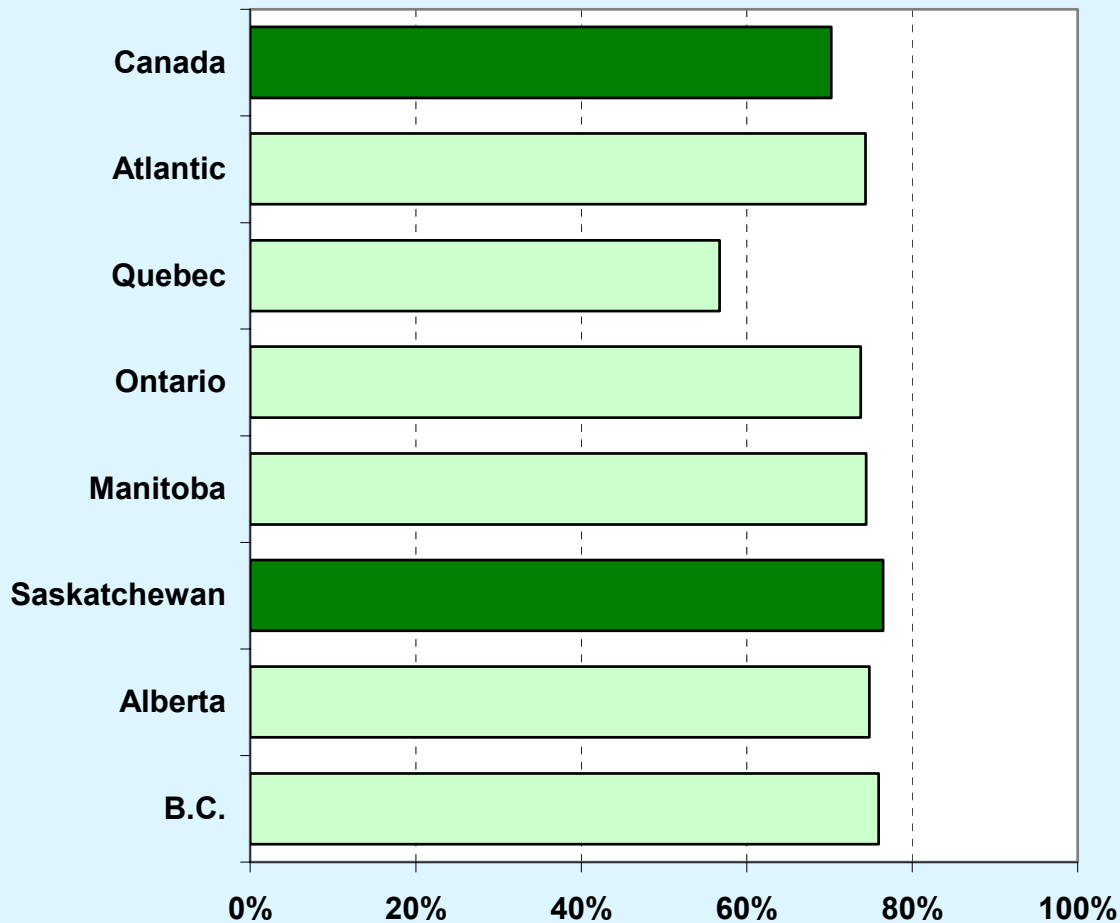
Neighbourhood Help



- In the month before the survey, two thirds of Saskatchewan residents reported doing a favour for a neighbour or being helped by a neighbour. Both proportions are above the national average.
- Both proportions are higher among those with higher incomes and both are higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

Friendships

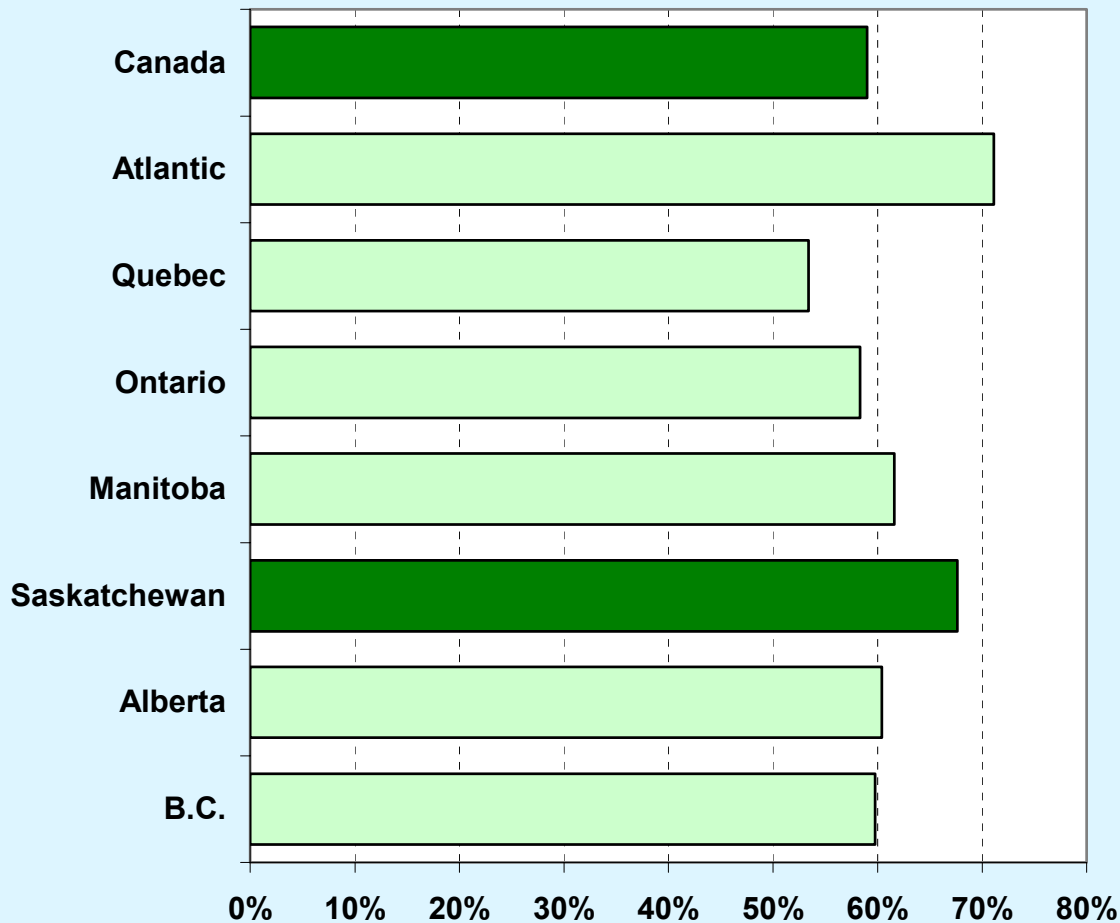
Have Three or More Close Friends



- More than three quarters of Saskatchewan residents report that they have three or more close friends, that is, “people who are not your relatives but who you feel at ease with, can talk to about what is on your mind, or call on for help”. The proportion is higher than the national average.
- Those with three or more close friends tend to be younger and live in urban areas.
- Those who are working are more likely to report having a large number of friendships than those who are not. In fact, one quarter of those who are working report that they socialize with their co-workers at least a few times a week.

Contact with Friends

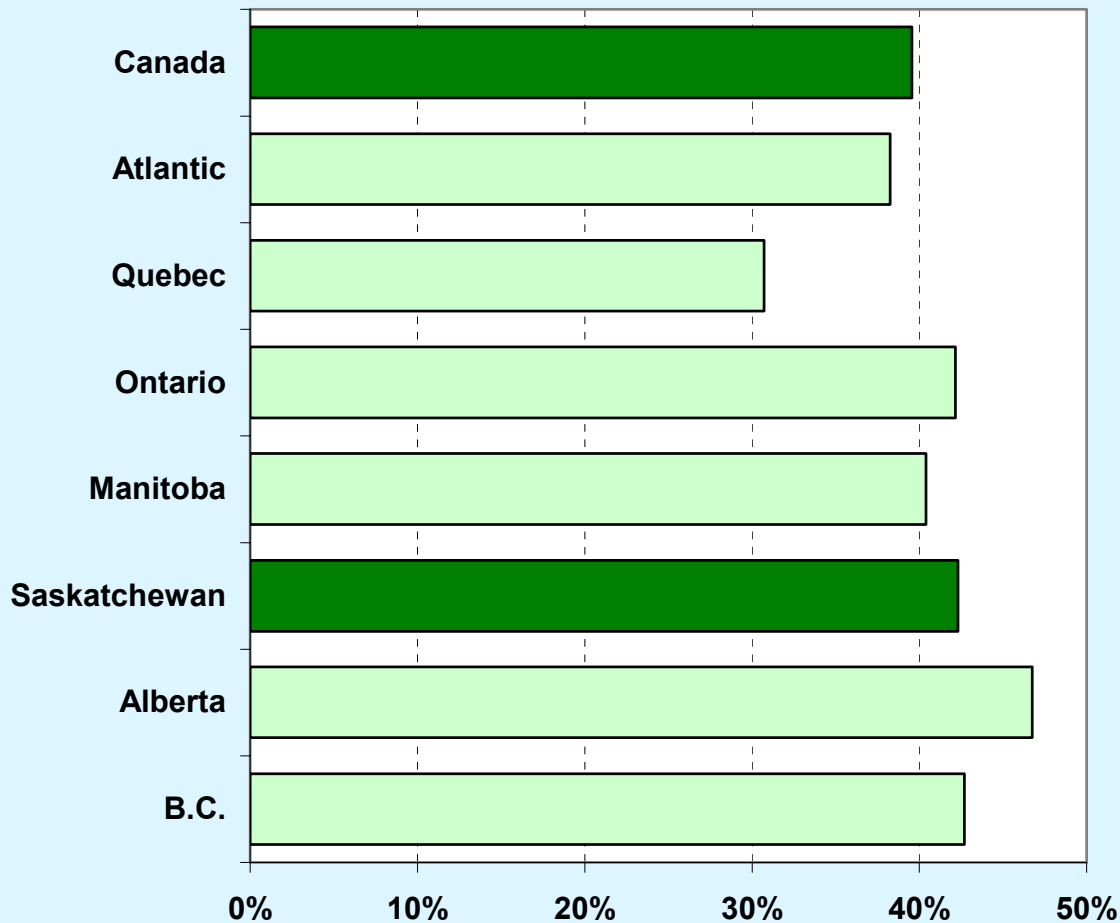
See Friends at Least a Few Times a Week



- Saskatchewan residents are more likely to see their friends (in person) than those in most other provinces.
- In 2003, 68% reported seeing their friends at least a few times a week compared with 59% nationally.
- The proportion is higher in urban areas than in rural areas.

Making New Friends

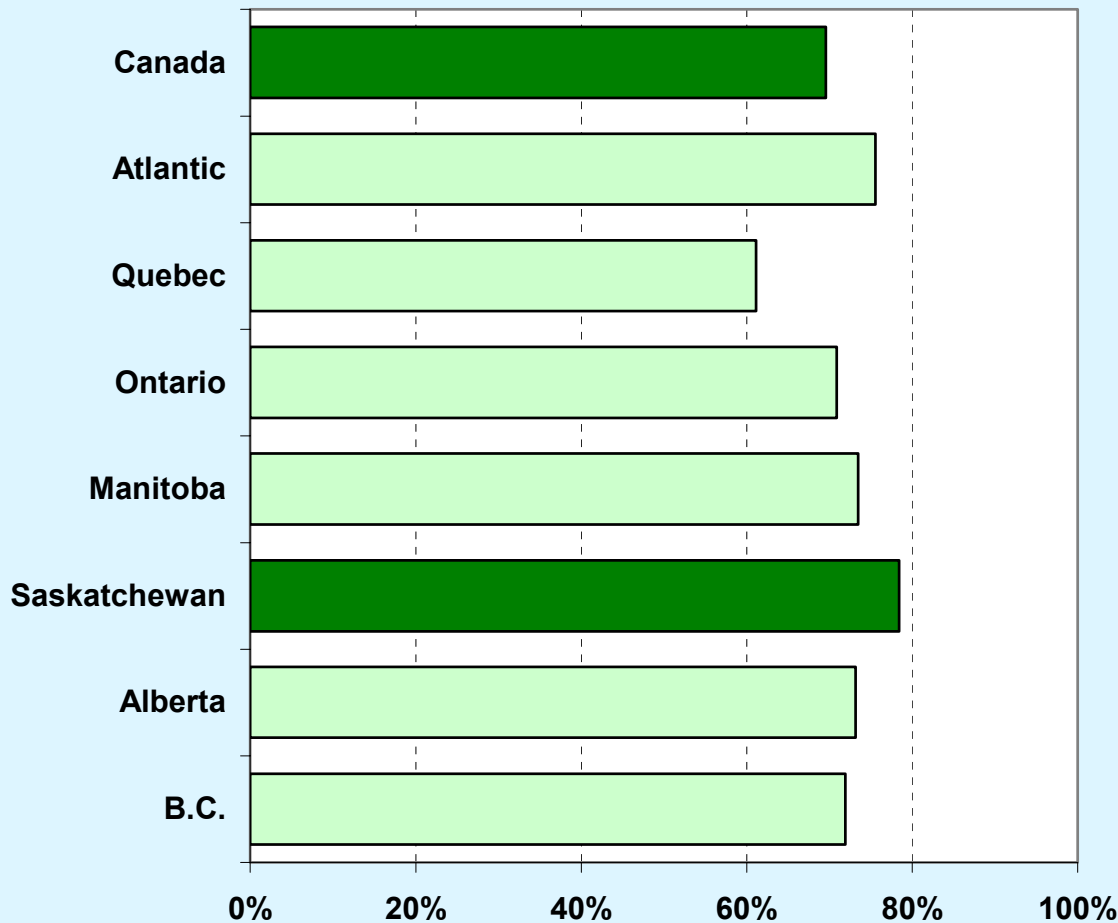
Have Met a New Person in the Past Month



- Four out of ten Saskatchewan residents reported that they had met someone new in the past month that they expected to keep in touch with. This is above the national average.
- New friendships are more common among young people, men, and those living in urban areas.

Close Relatives

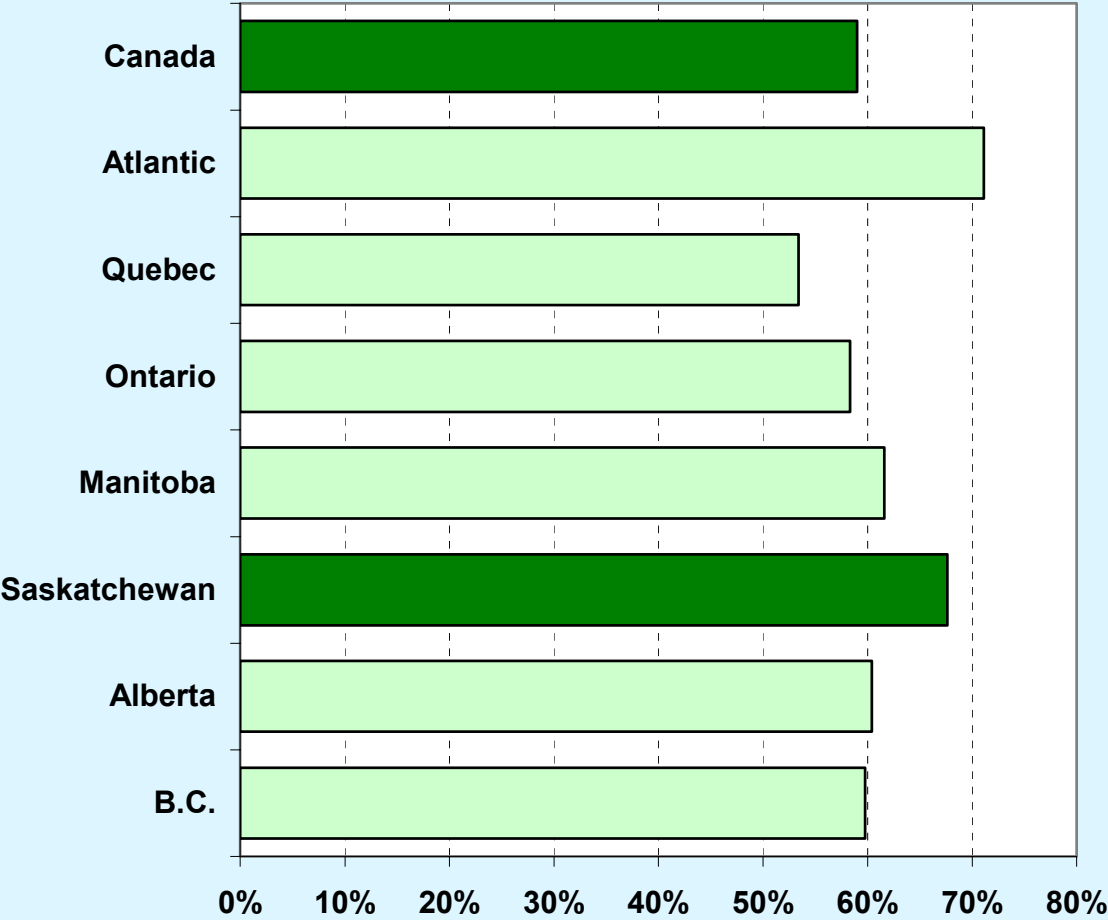
Have Three or More Close Relatives



- Four out of five Saskatchewan residents reported that they have at least three relatives that they feel close to. The proportion is also above the national average.
- The proportion is relatively uniform across demographic and economic subgroups.

Contact with Relatives

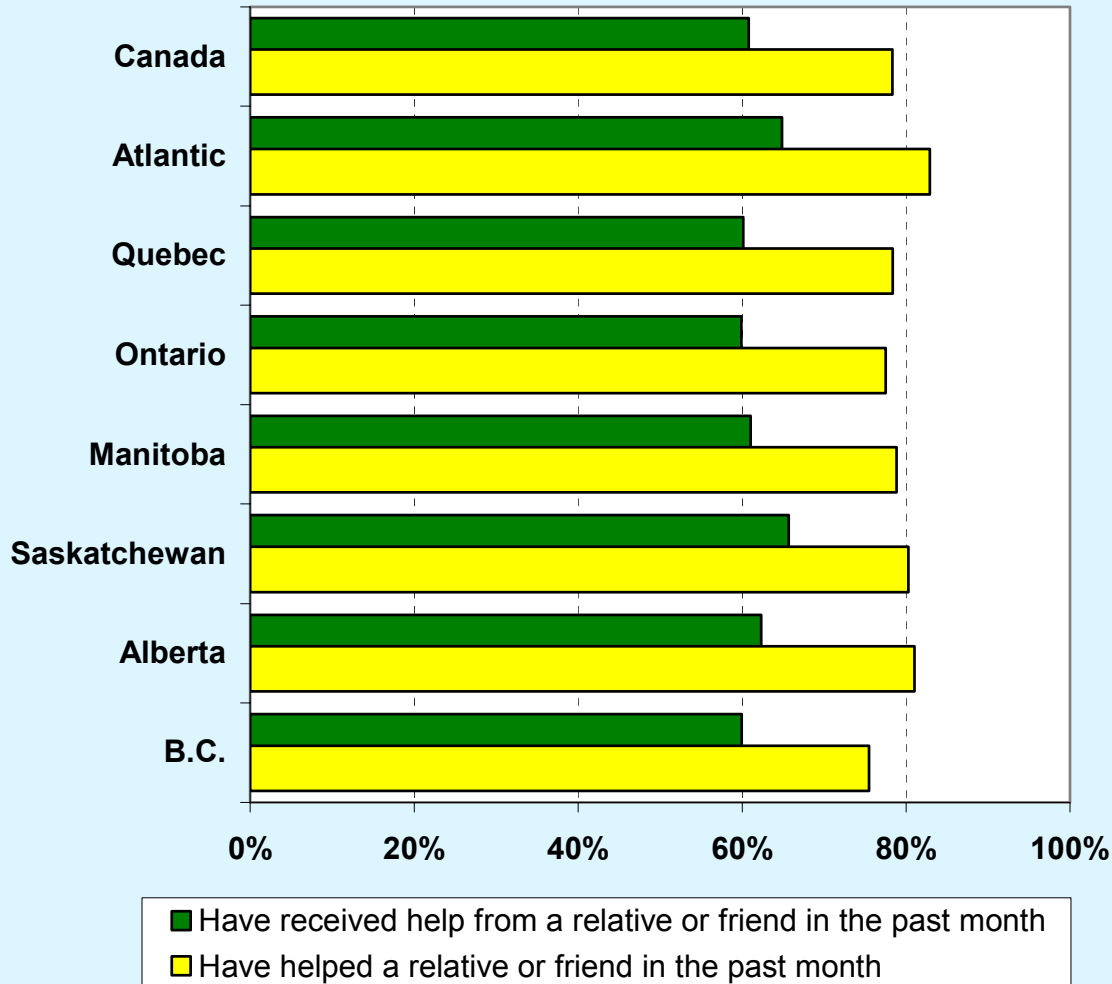
See Relatives at Least a Few Times a Week



- Saskatchewan residents and those in the Atlantic provinces are more likely than those in other provinces to have regular contact with their relatives (in person).
- The proportion is relatively uniform across demographic and economic subgroups.

Helping Friends and Relatives

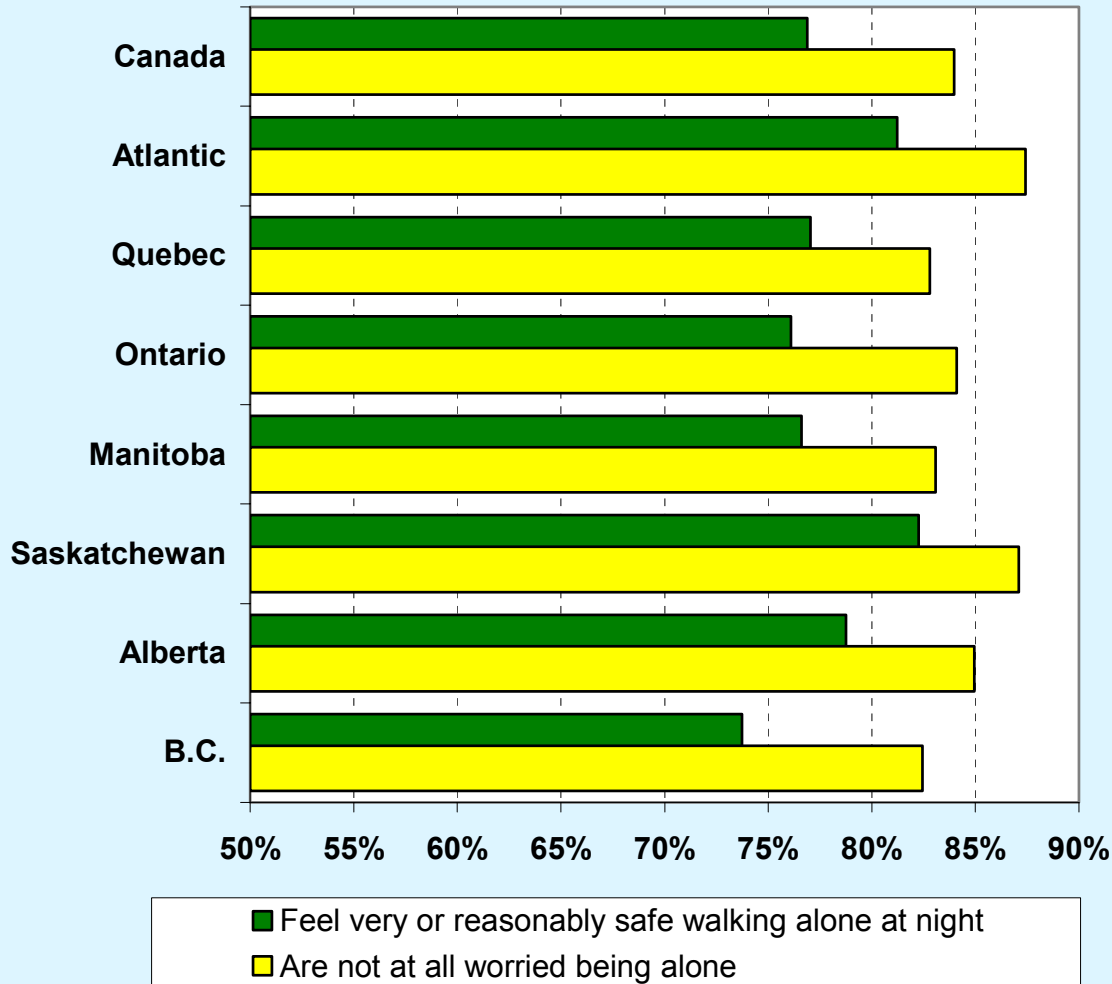
Helping Friends and Relatives



- Saskatchewan residents are more likely than those in other provinces to report that they have received help from or helped a friend or relative in the past month.
- Those in younger age groups are somewhat more likely to have received help than those in older age groups.
- The most common type of help given or received was:
 - emotional support; and
 - providing transportation.

Fear of Crime

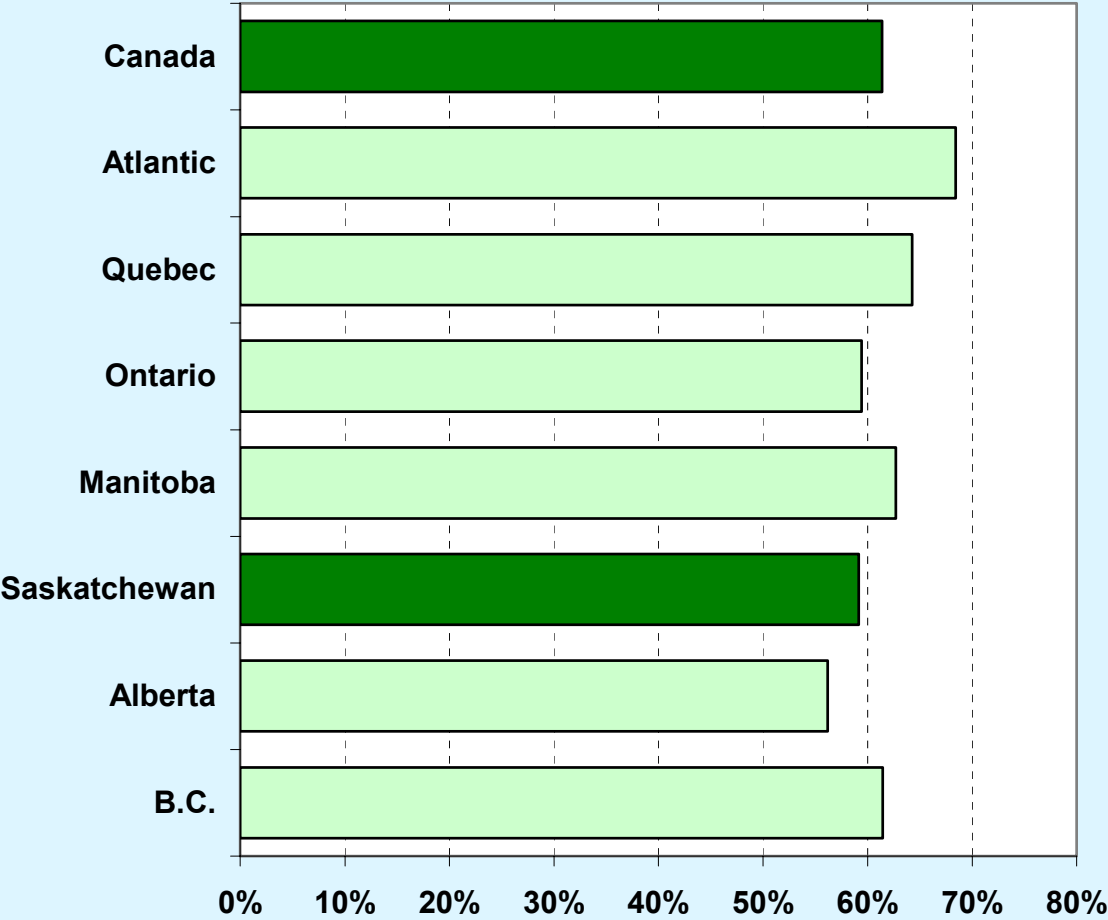
Fear of Crime



- In spite of Saskatchewan's high crime rate, residents are more likely than those in other provinces to feel safe being alone at home or walking alone at night.
- The proportion who feel safe is somewhat higher among men and those in rural areas and among those with higher levels of education and income.

Importance of Social Participation

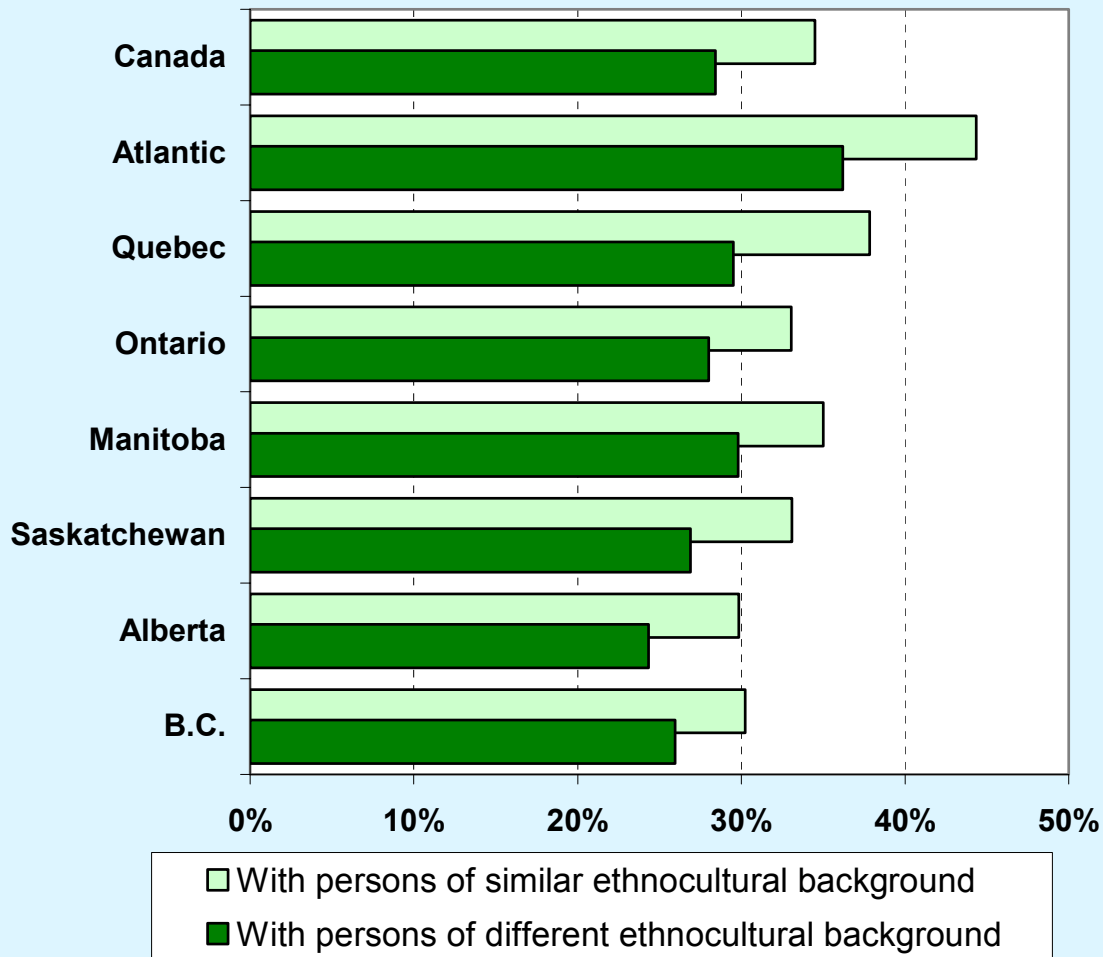
Very Important to Develop/Maintain Ties with Other People



- In spite of the strong social participation of Saskatchewan residents, they are no more likely than other Canadians to report that they feel developing or maintaining ties with other people is “very important”.
- The proportion who think that social participation is very important is higher among women and those in rural areas.

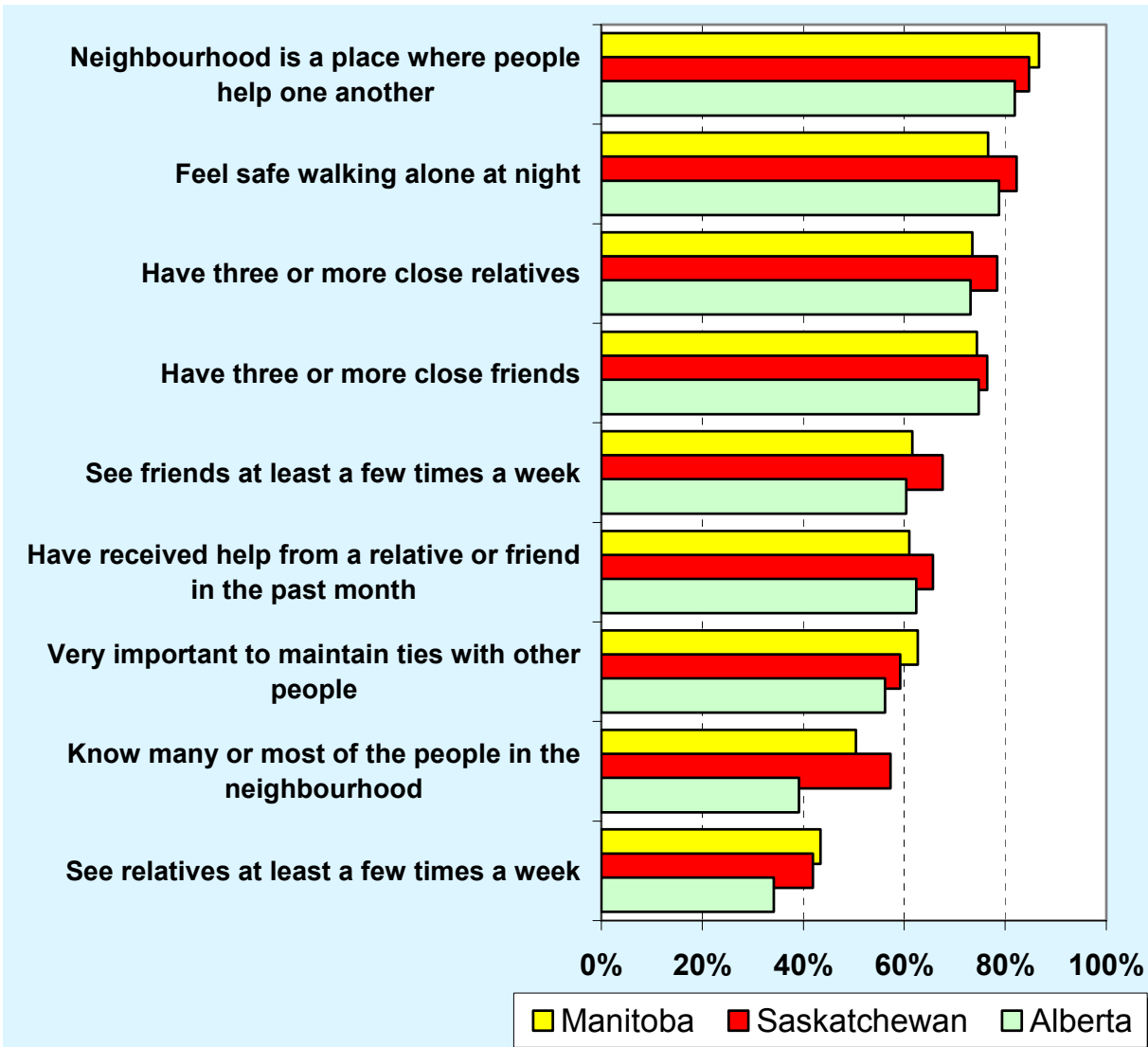
Diversity in Friendships

Very Important to Develop/Maintain Ties with Other People



- Saskatchewan residents were less likely than other Canadians to feel that those friendships should take ethnic and cultural background into account.
- One third felt that it was “very important” to develop or maintain ties with people with a similar ethnic or cultural background and a slightly lower proportion felt that diversity was very important.
- The proportion who thought diversity was very important was higher in rural areas and among those with lower levels of completed education.

Summary of Social Participation

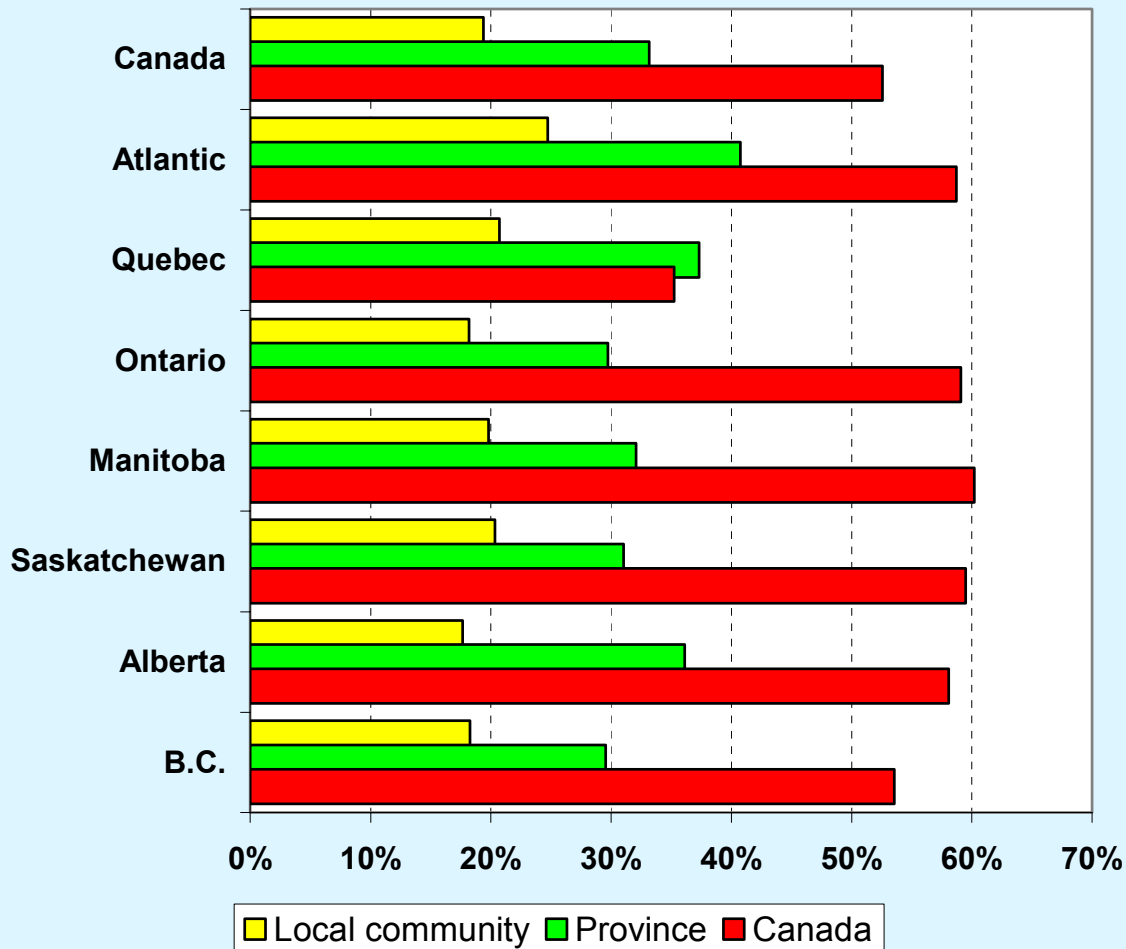


- Saskatchewan residents are generally well connected to the large number of neighbours, friends, and relatives that they know.
- People tend to know their neighbours, help one another, and visit their friends and family frequently.
- This is true even when compared with other prairie provinces which generally have higher values than in other provinces.
- Saskatchewanians feel safer from crime than those who live in provinces with a lower overall crime rate.

Civic Participation

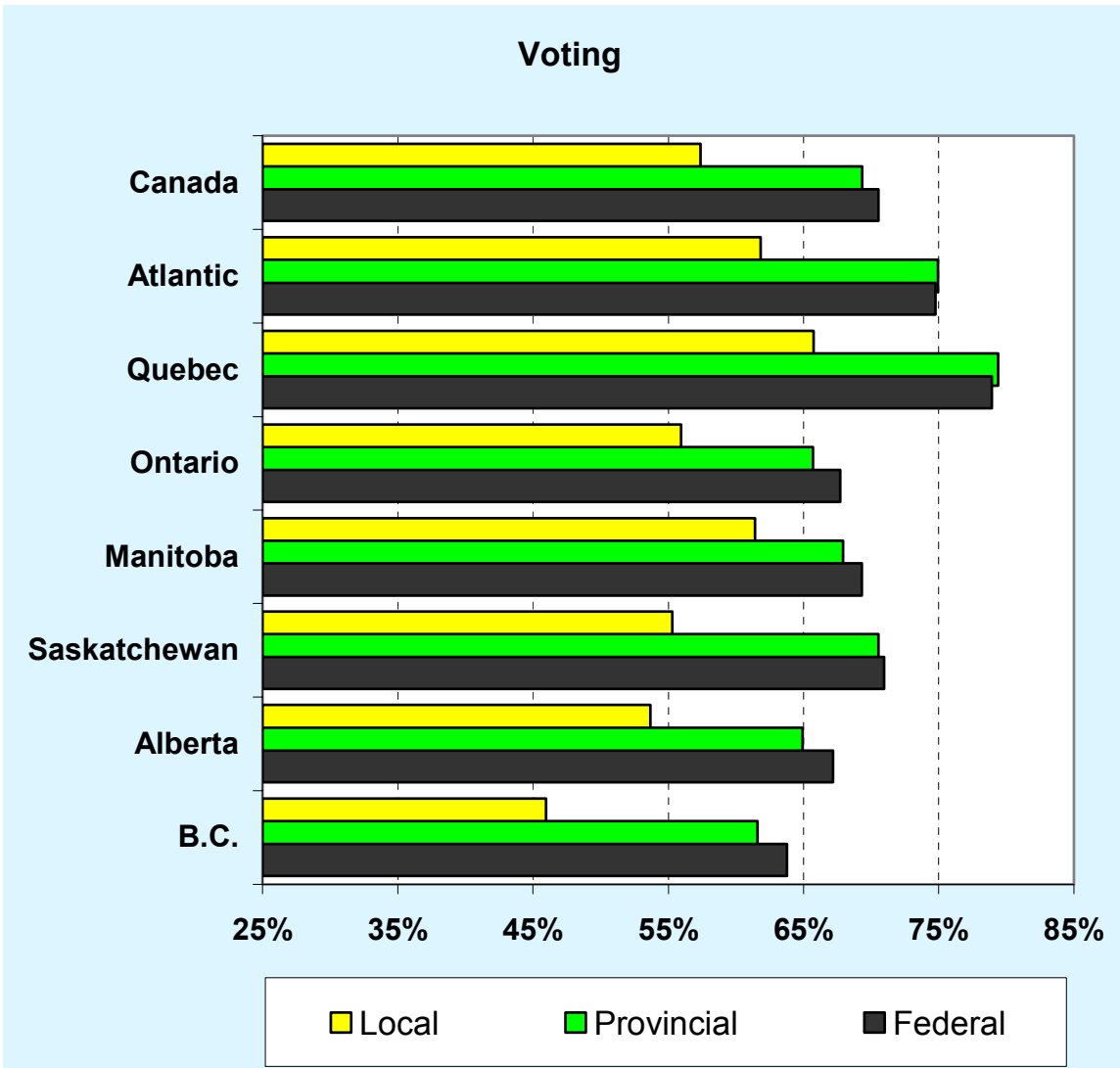
Sense of Belonging

"Very Strong" Sense of Belonging



- Compared with other Canadians Saskatchewan residents are more likely to report a strong sense of belonging to their local community and to Canada as a whole. In most cases, they are less likely to report a very strong sense of belonging to their province.
- Higher levels of belonging to the local community are evident in rural areas and among those in older age groups.
- Higher levels of belonging to the province are evident among women whereas the sense of belonging to Canada is uniform across demographic and economic subgroups.

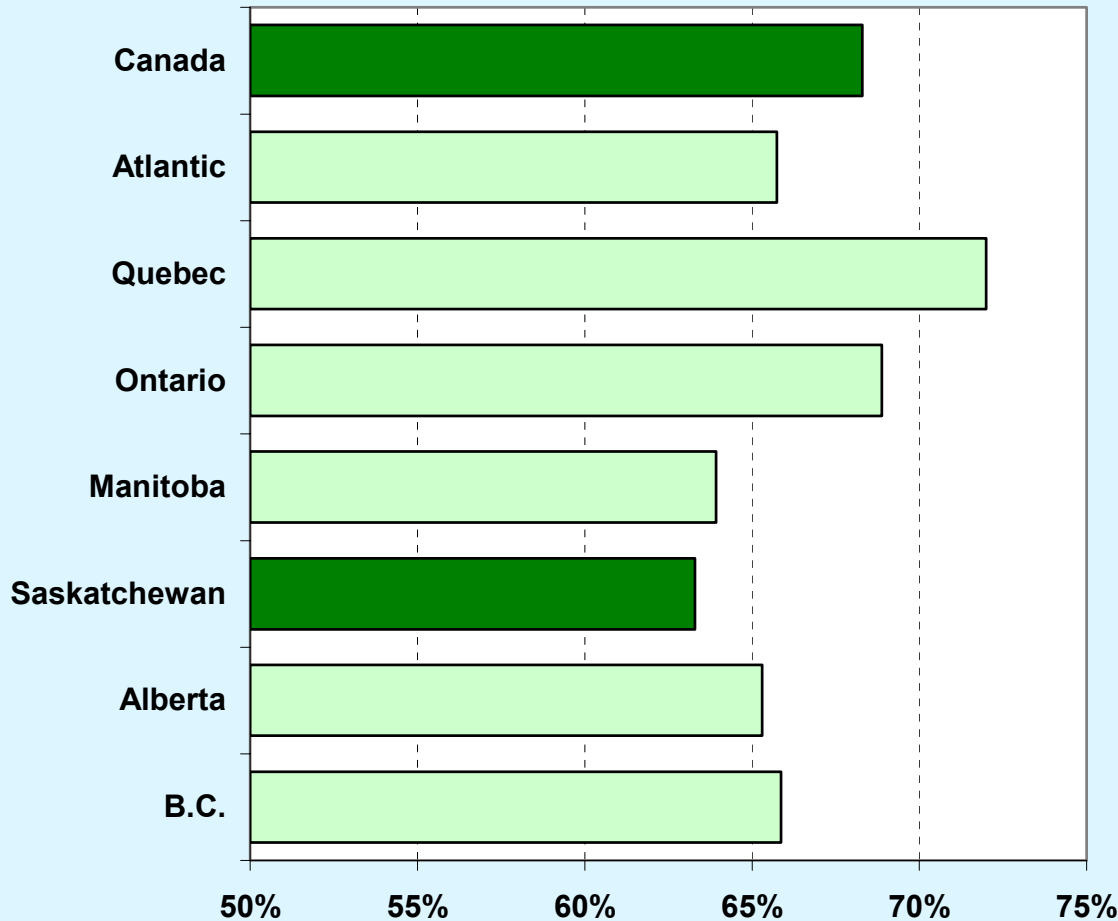
Participation in Elections



- Saskatchewan residents were less likely than those in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces to vote in the last federal and provincial elections. They were, however, more likely to do so than those in Manitoba or Alberta.
- A bare majority voted in the last local election - a lower proportion than in Canada as a whole and Manitoba in particular.
- In all three situations voting is more common among those in older age groups, those in rural areas, and those in higher income categories.

Following Current Events

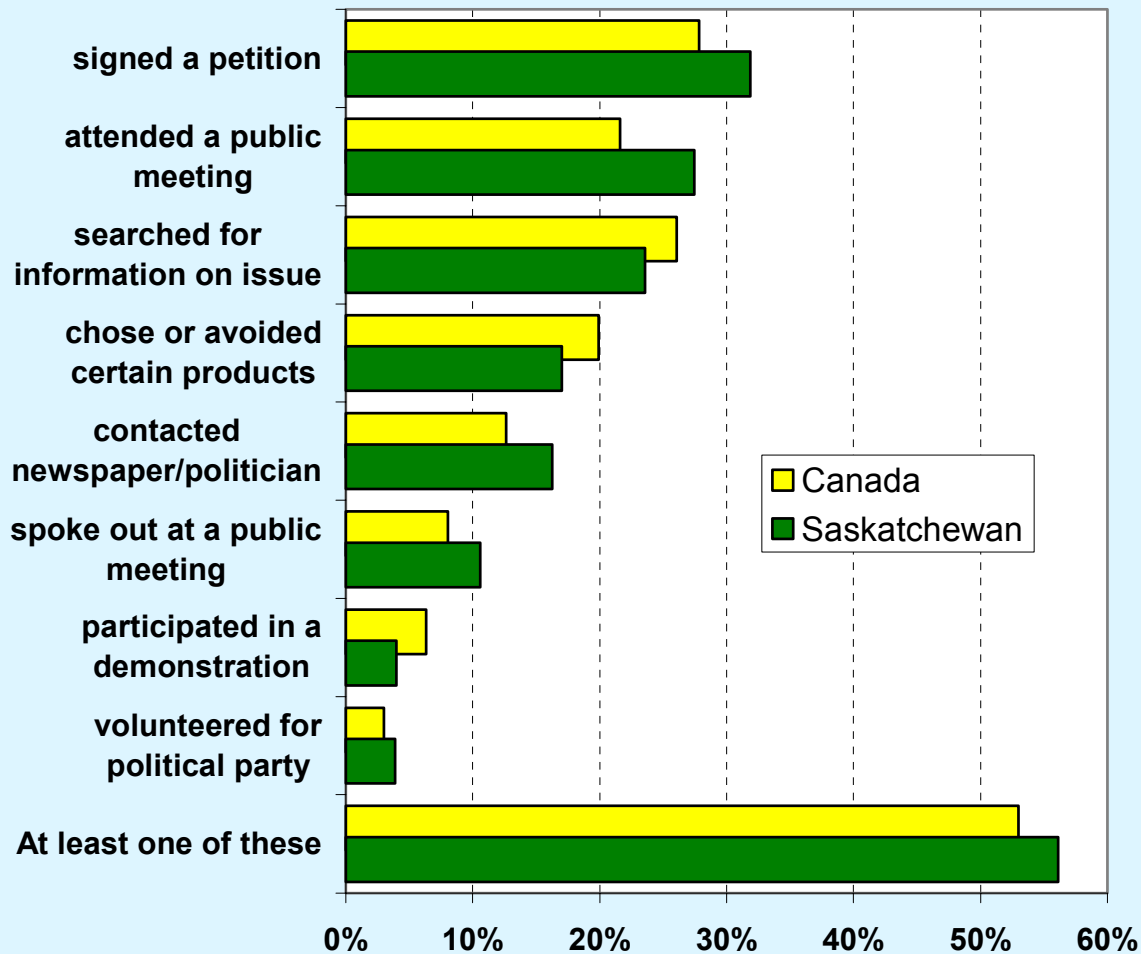
Follow News or Current Affairs Daily



- Saskatchewan residents are somewhat less likely to follow news or current events on a daily basis than those in other provinces. In 2003, 63% did so compared with 68% in Canada as a whole.
- The percentage who follow current events regularly is much higher among those 55 and older (87%) than among those under 35 years of age (45%).

Political and Civic Actions

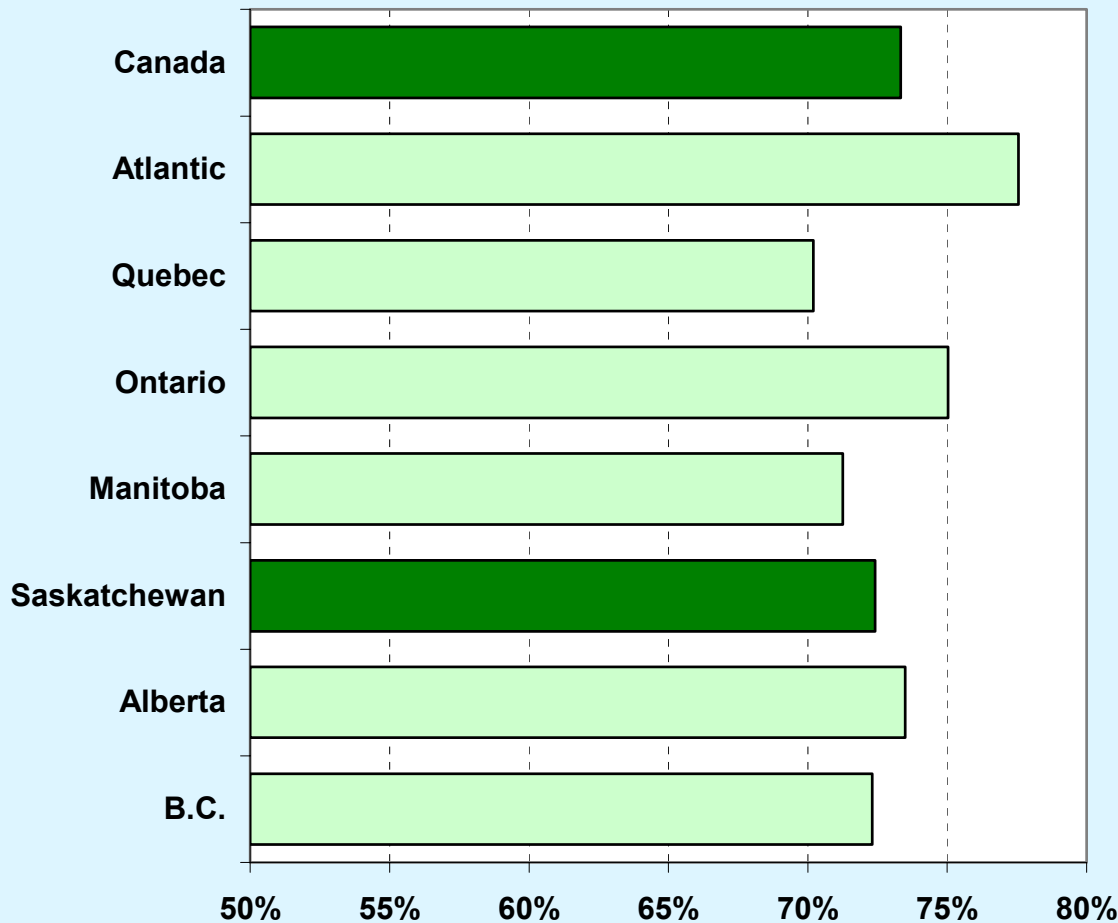
Percent who Have Taken Part in the Last Year



- More than half of Saskatchewan residents have participated in at least one of a list of eight civic actions in the past year.
- In terms of participation, Saskatchewan residents were most likely to sign petitions, attend public meetings, or make direct contact. They were less likely than other Canadians to participate in demonstrations or boycott products.

Charitable Contributions

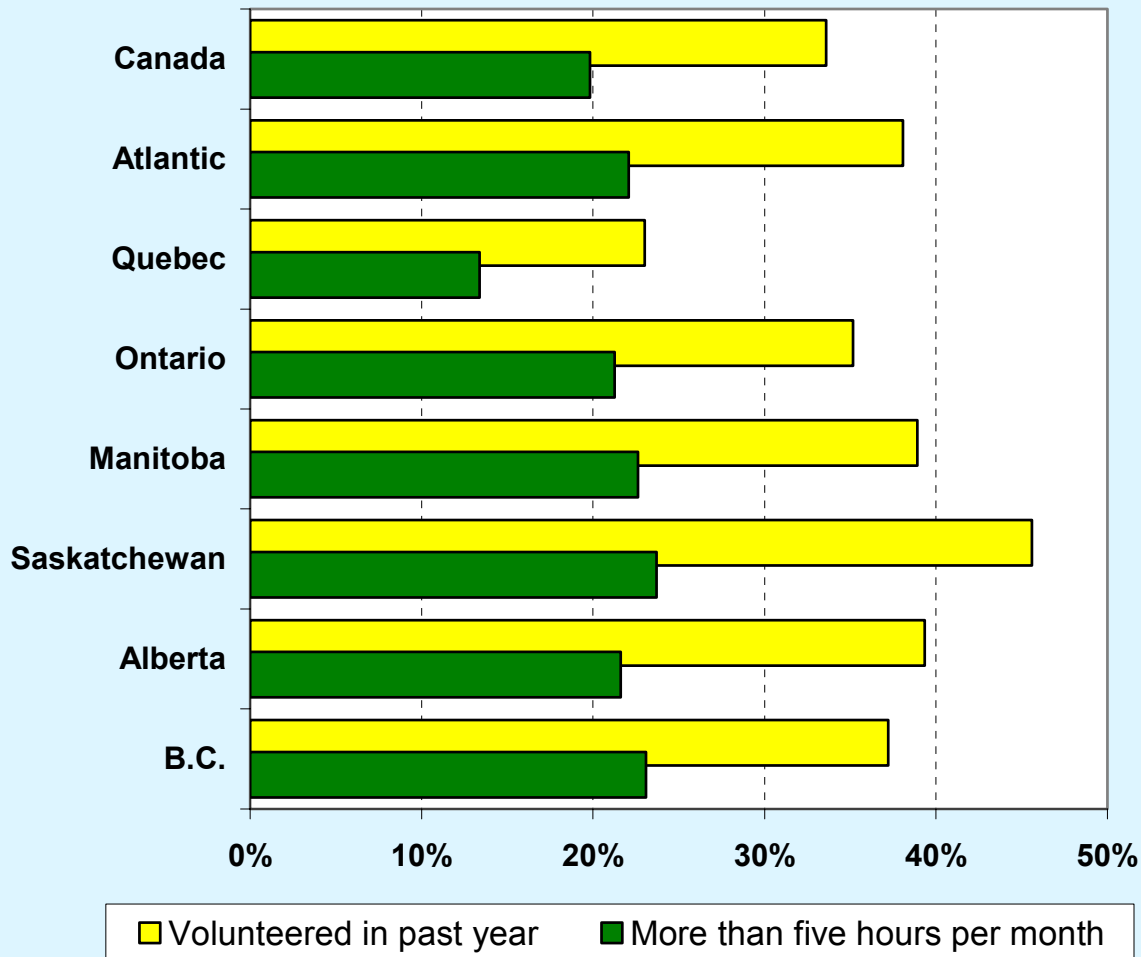
Made a Charitable Contribution in the Past Year



- Just under three quarters of Saskatchewan residents made a charitable contribution in the past year. The proportion is near the national average.
- The incidence of charitable giving (of any amount) rises with age, income, and levels of completed education.

Volunteering

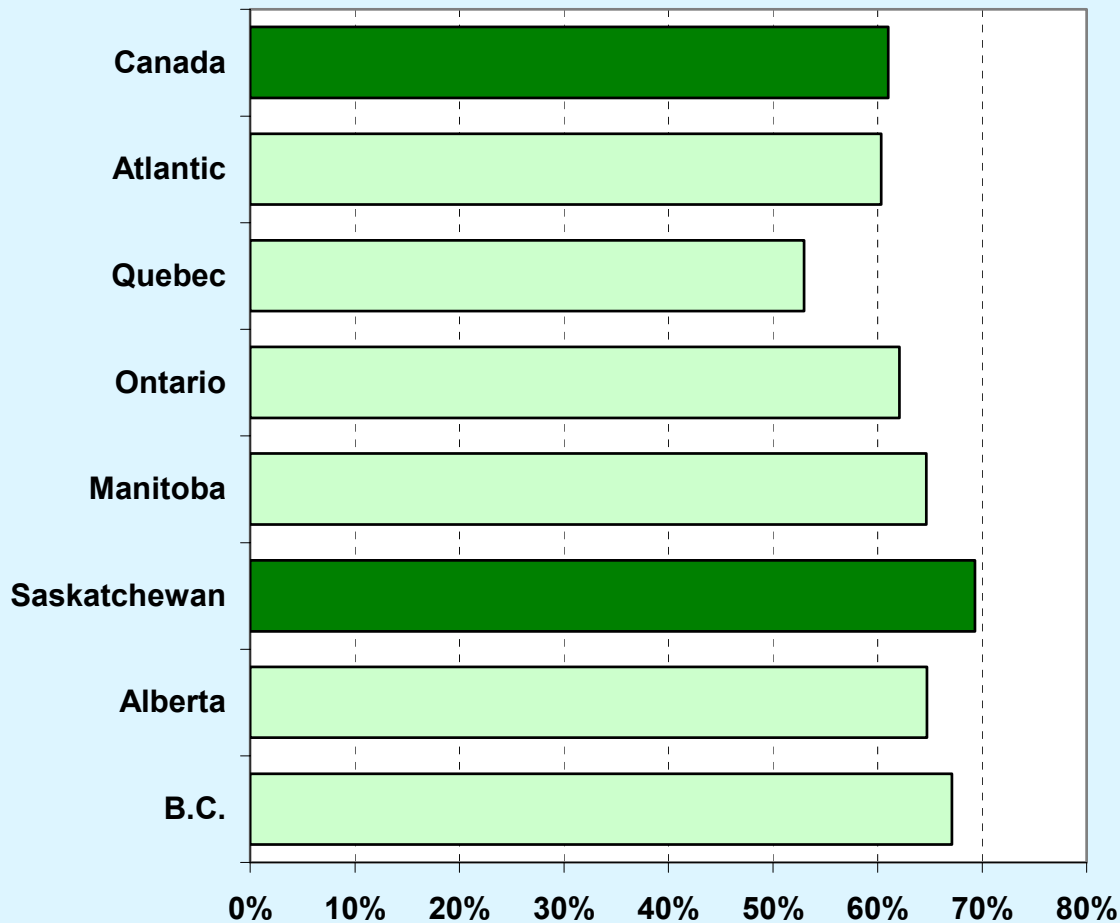
Volunteer Activity in the Past Year



- Saskatchewan residents were much more likely to volunteer than other Canadians - 46% had done so in the previous year compared with 34% nationally.
- The level of intensity is also higher with 24% participating in their volunteer activities for at least five hours a month.
- Volunteer activity is much higher among those with higher levels of income and education and among those in rural areas.

Membership in Organizations

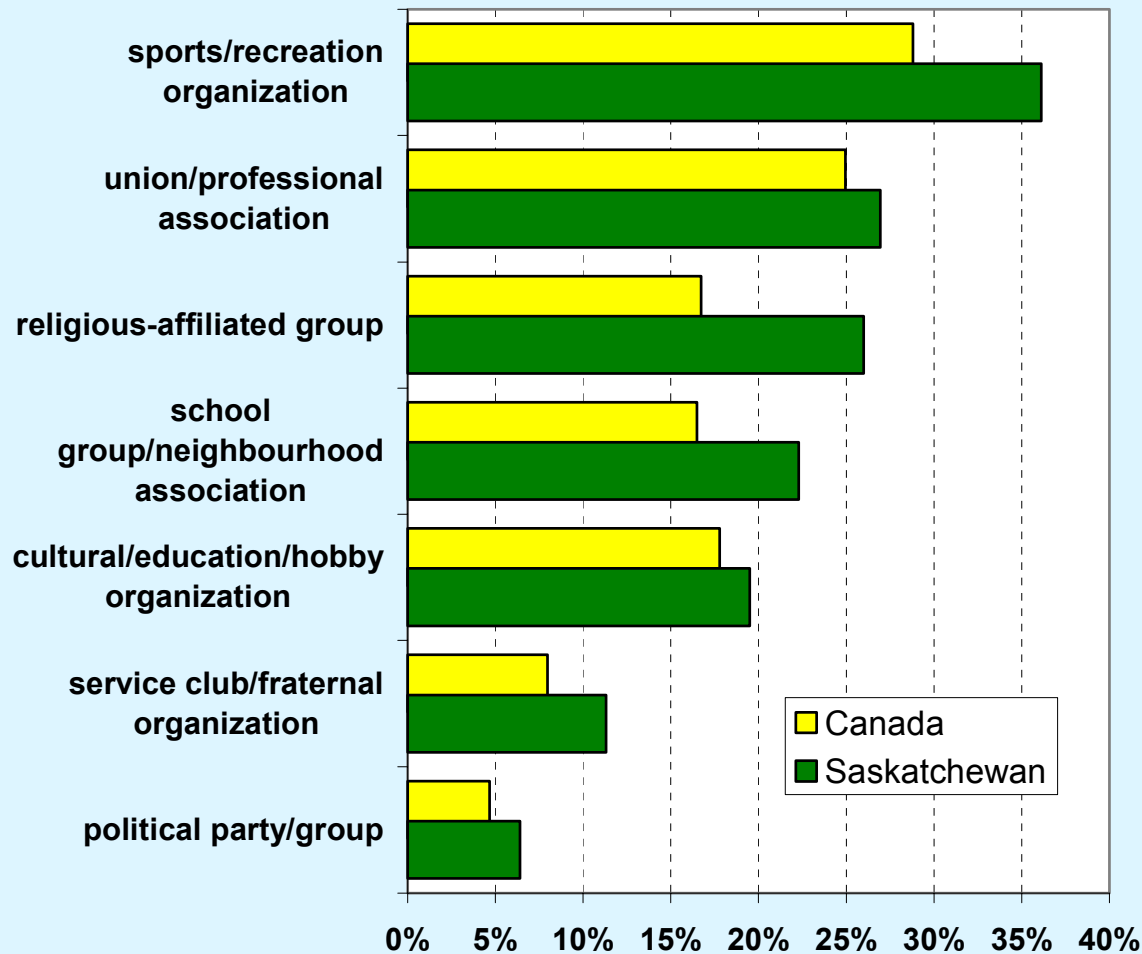
Member of a Civic Organization



- Saskatchewan residents were more likely to be a member of a civic organization than those in other provinces.
- 22% of respondents reported that their level of activity had increased in the past year and 41% reported that they participate at least a few times a month. Both percentages are above the national average.
- Membership in civic organizations is more common among those with higher levels of income and education.

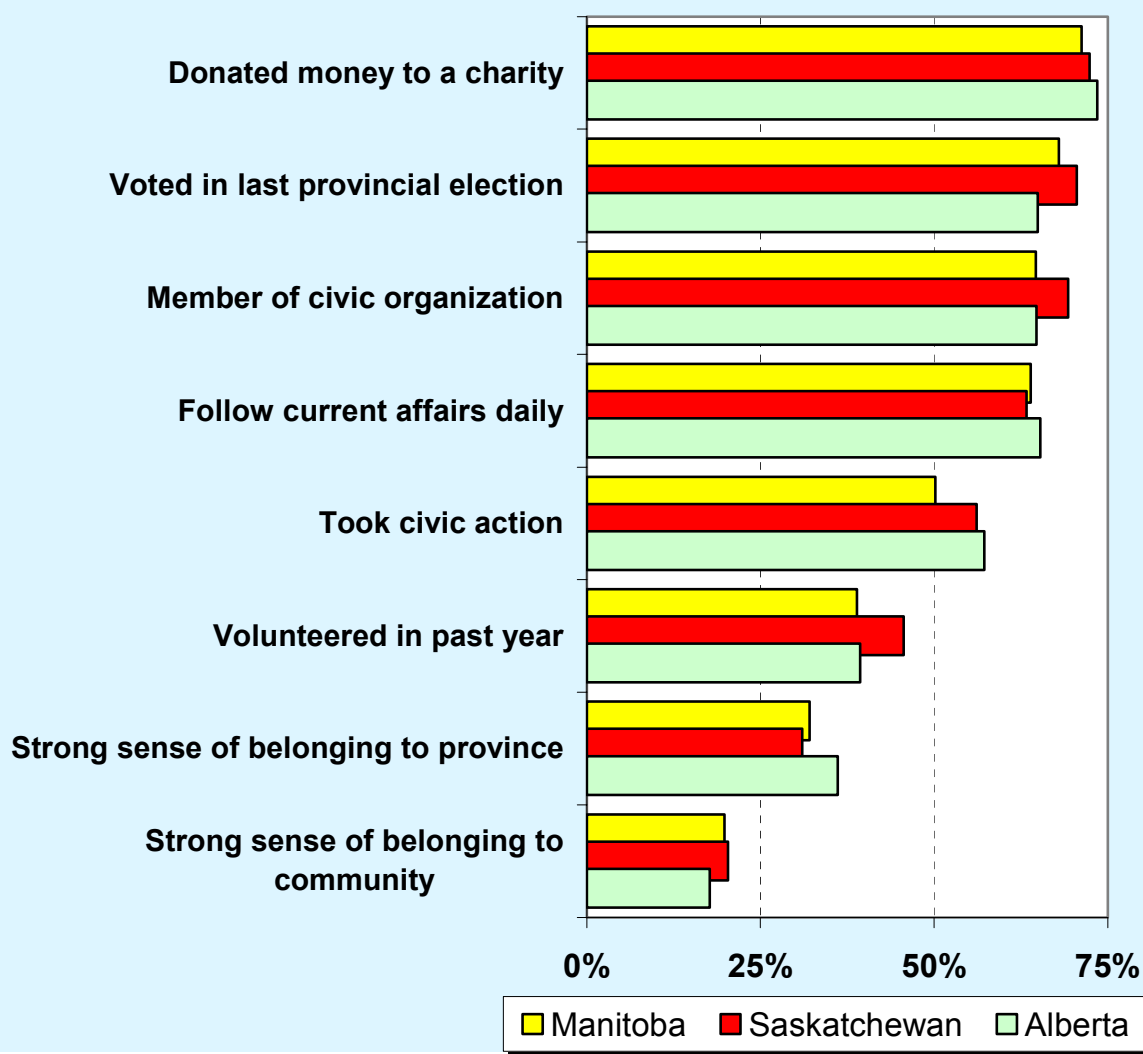
Types of Membership

Membership by Type of Civic Organization



- Membership is higher than the national average in each of the surveyed categories of civic organizations.
- Relative to the national average, it is particularly strong in sports and recreation organizations and religious groups.

Summary

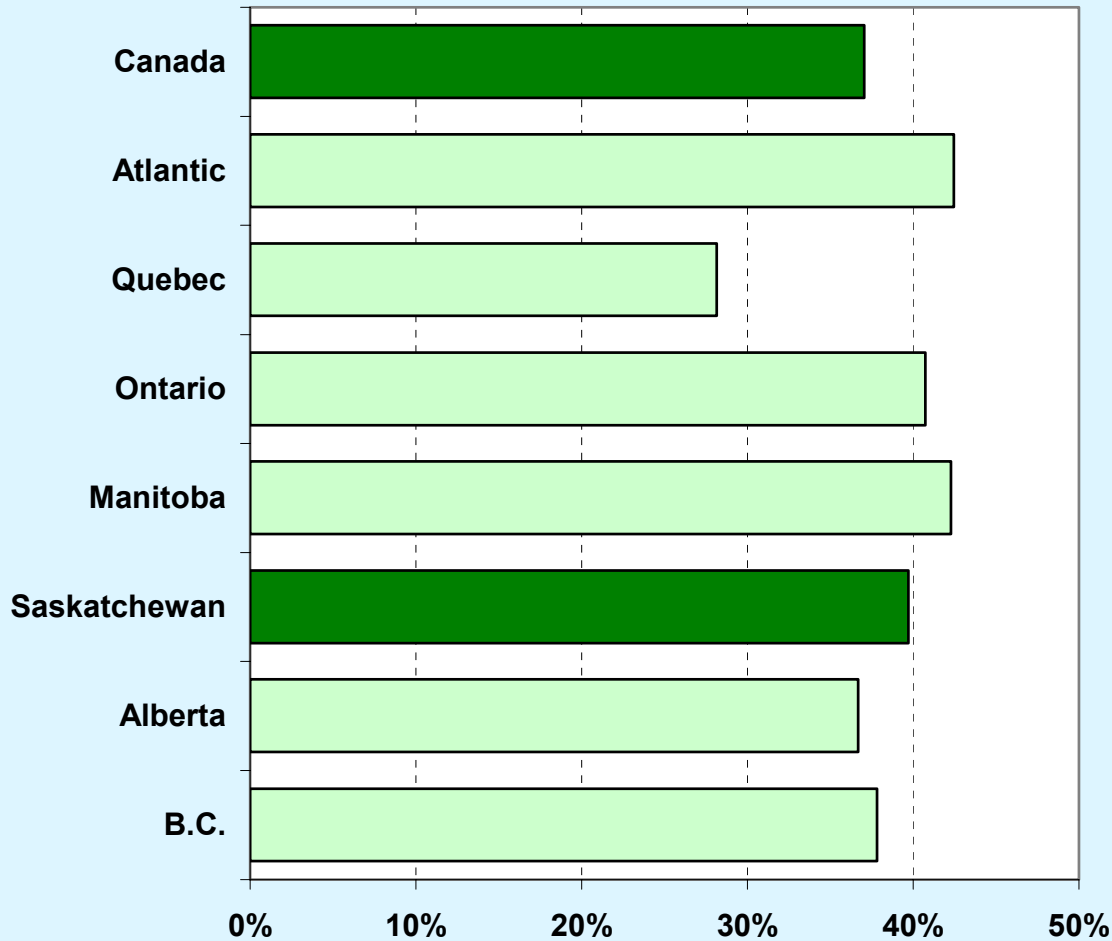


- Saskatchewan residents are strongly connected to their communities in the sense that they are more likely than other Canadians to be a member of a community organization and to volunteer their time.
- Voting is slightly above average and their sense of belonging to their community is strong although their sense of belonging to the province is lower than in Alberta.
- Compared with other prairie province residents, they are equally likely to make a charitable donation, to follow current affairs, and to take civic action.

Beliefs and Trust

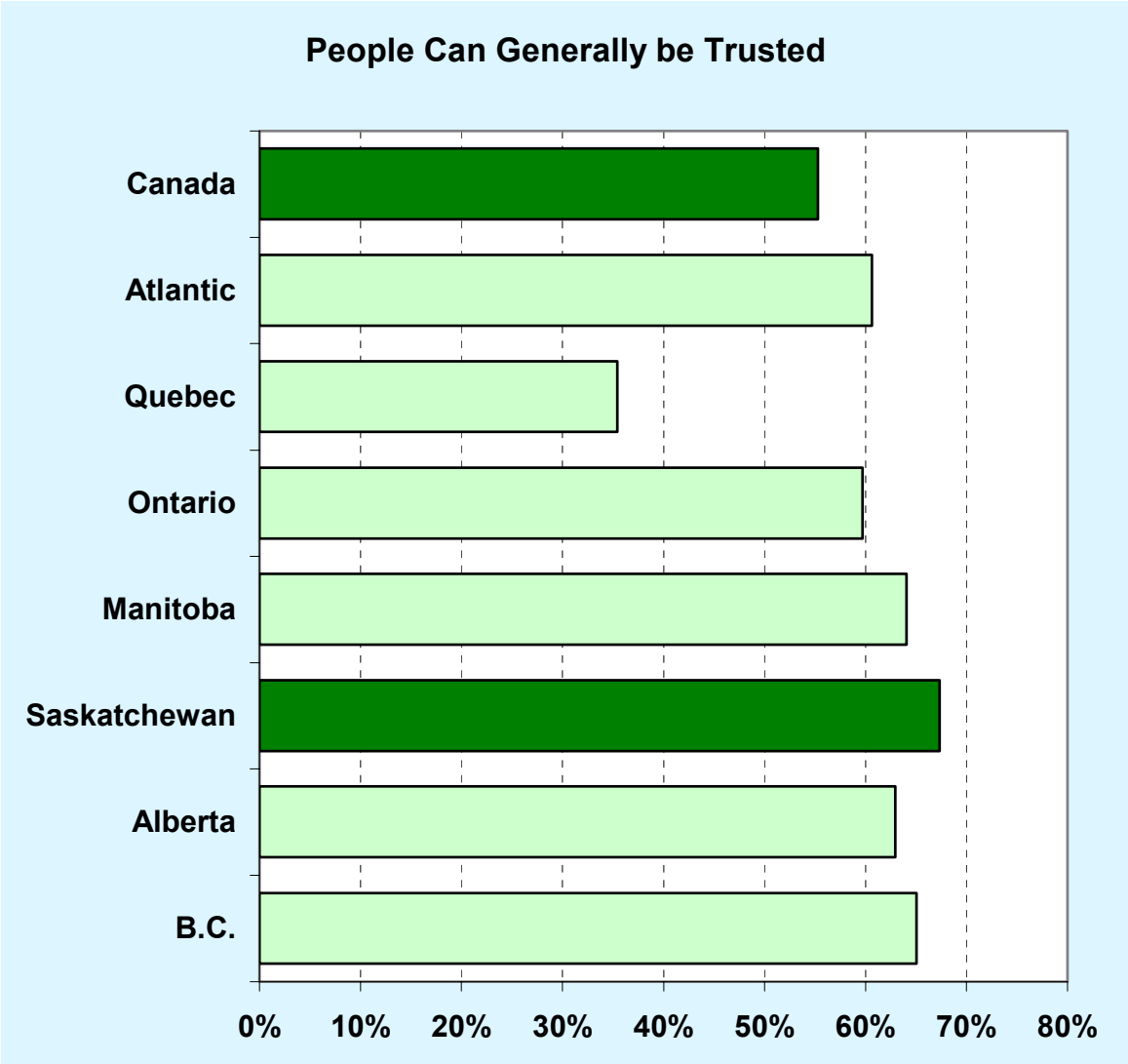
Religious and Spiritual Values

Religious/Spiritual Beliefs are Very Important in How to Live Life



- Four out of ten residents reported that religious/spiritual values were very important in determining how to live their lives. This is slightly above the national average but lower than in Manitoba and the Atlantic provinces.
- Spiritual values are more important among women and those in rural areas. There is a strong correlation with age.

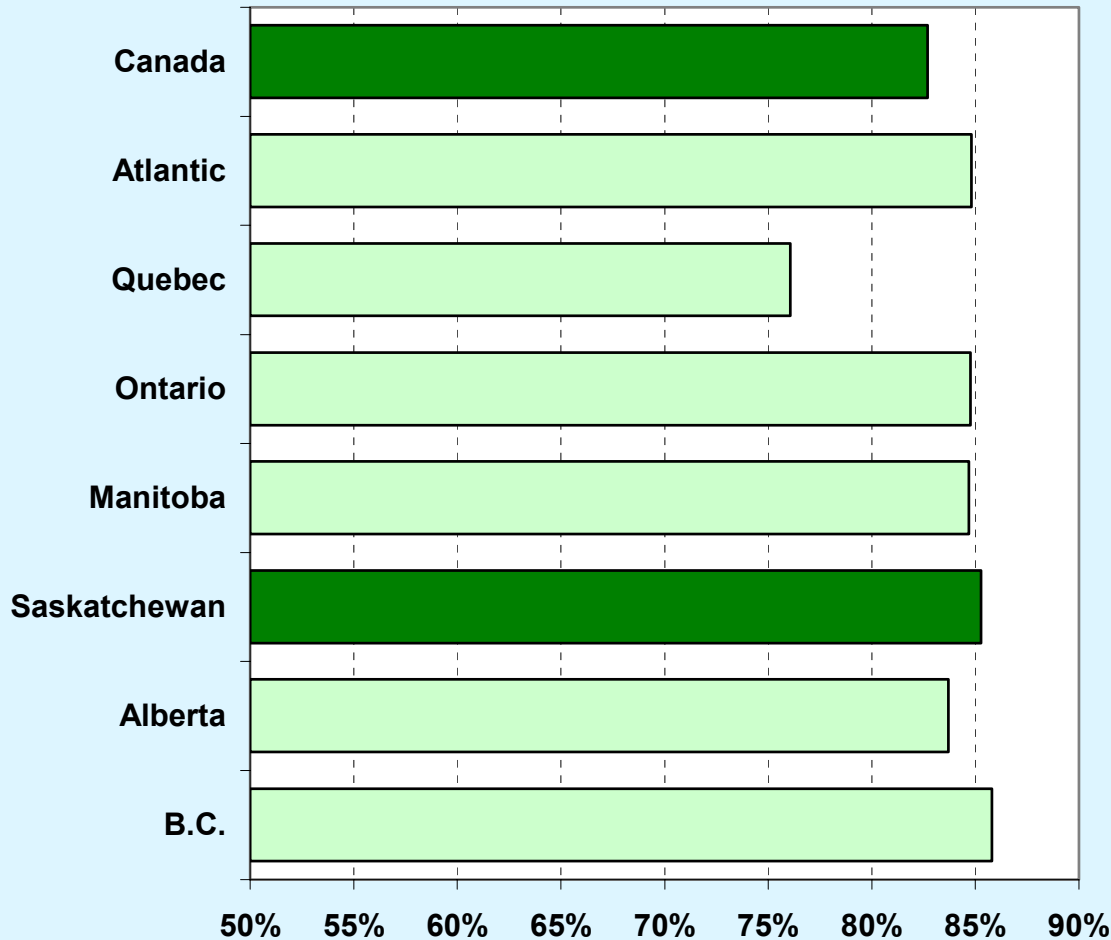
General Level of Trust in People



- In response to the question, “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people?”, two thirds of Saskatchewanians chose the first option. This is the highest level in Canada.
- The general level of trust in people is uniform across demographic and economic characteristics.

Trust in Family Members

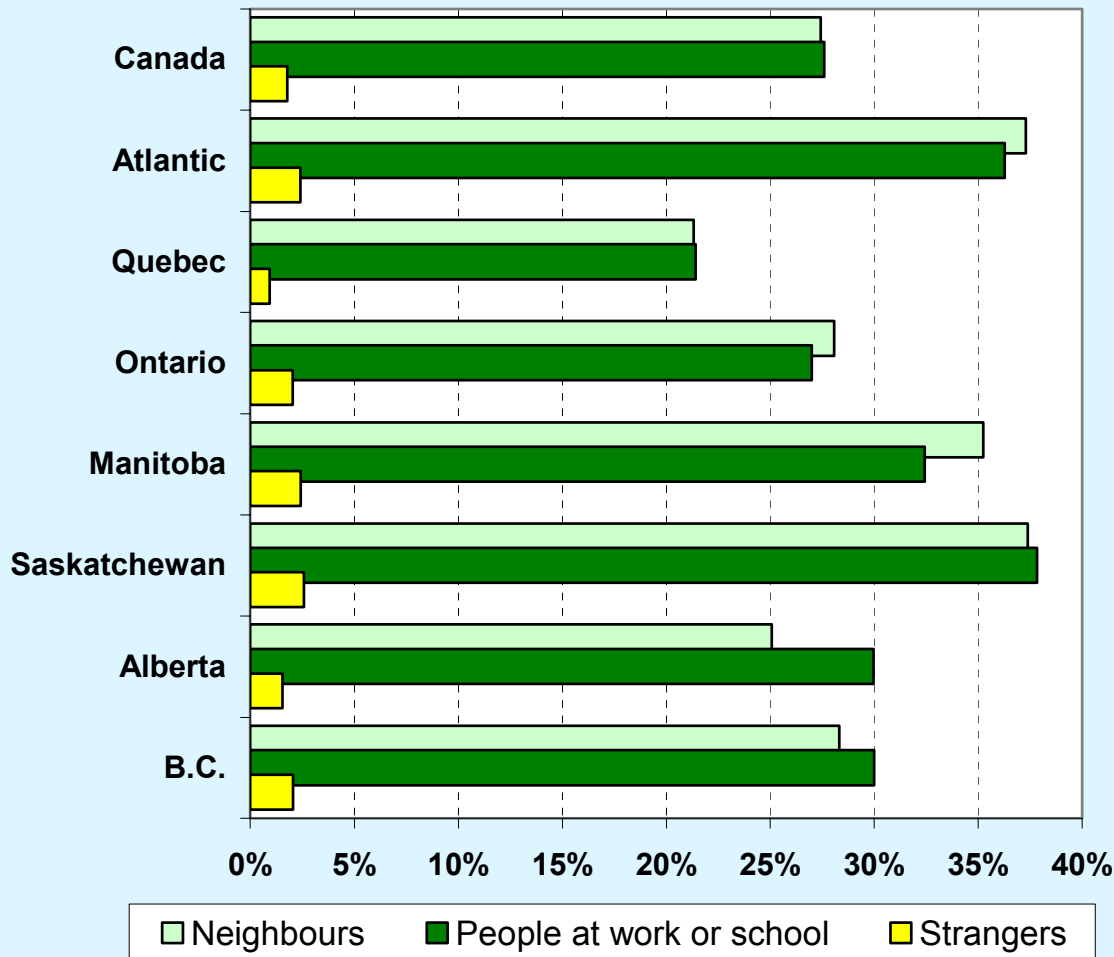
Family Members Can be Trusted a Lot



- On a five-point scale, 85% of Saskatchewan residents reported that family members can be trusted “a lot” - the maximum on the scale. This is near the proportion in other provinces with the notable exception of Quebec.
- Trust in family members is somewhat higher among those in rural areas, with higher incomes, and in older age groups.

Trust in Others

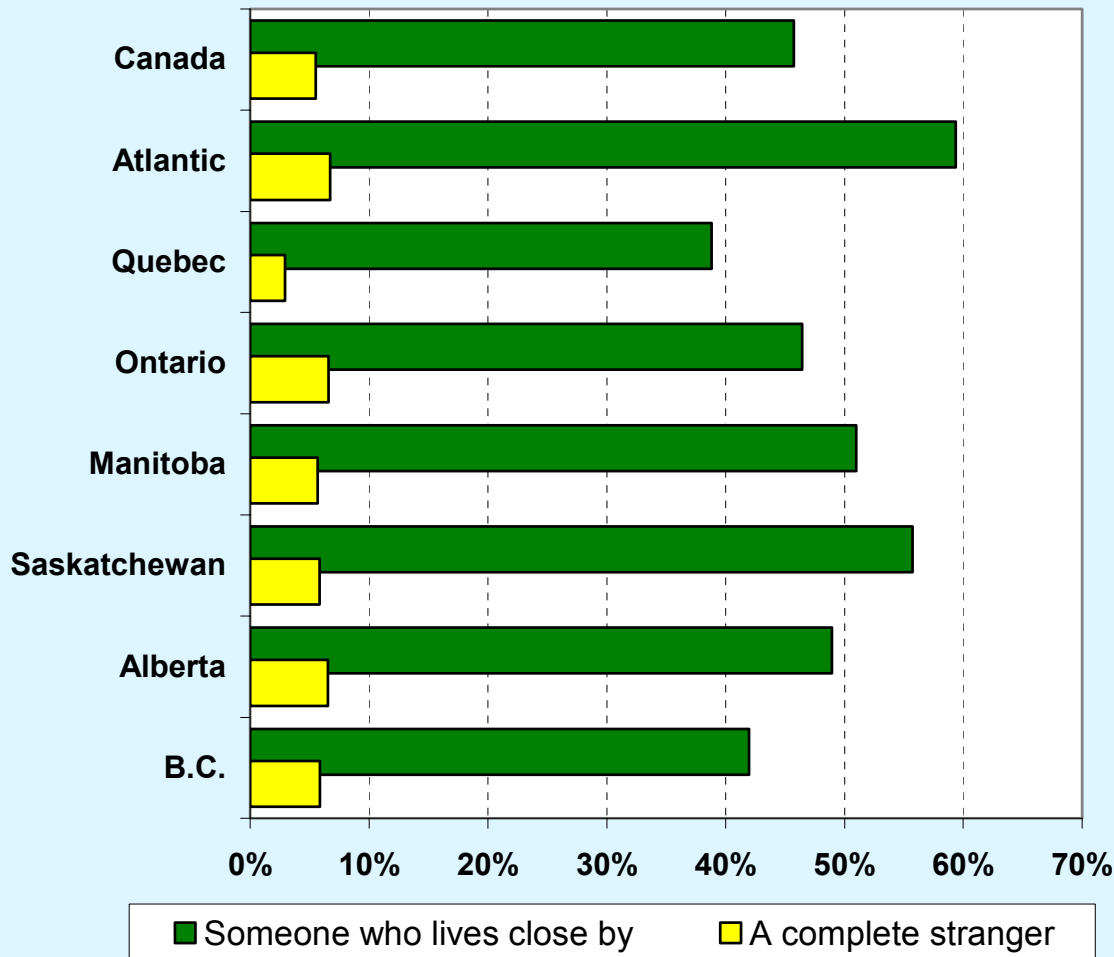
People Can be Trusted "a Lot"



- The general level of trust extends to neighbours and people at work or school. More than a third of Saskatchewan residents feel that they can trust their neighbours or people they work with "a lot", a higher level of trust than in other provinces.
- The higher level of trust, relative to the Canadian average, extends to strangers as well although only 3% of respondents felt they could be trusted "a lot".
- These higher levels of trust are most evident among rural residents and among those in older age groups.

Trust in Others

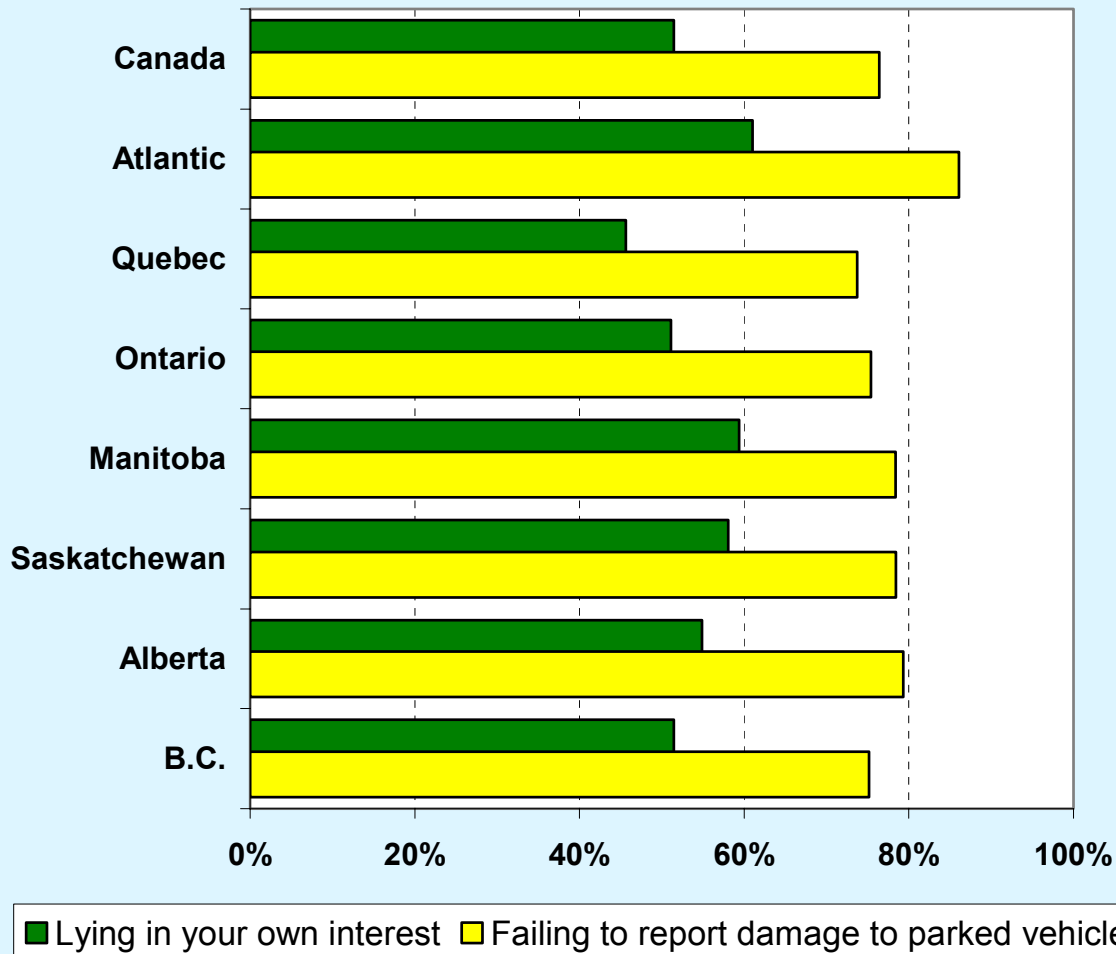
Very Likely a Lost Wallet Would be Returned by:



- Respondents were asked “if you lost a wallet or purse that contained two hundred dollars, how likely is it to be returned with the money in it if it was found?”.
- As one aspect of trust in friends and neighbours, more than one half of Saskatchewanians felt that it is very likely it would be returned by someone who lives nearby whereas only 6% think the same would be true for a complete stranger. Both of these proportions are generally higher than in other provinces.
- Trust in neighbours rises with age and income and is higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

Values

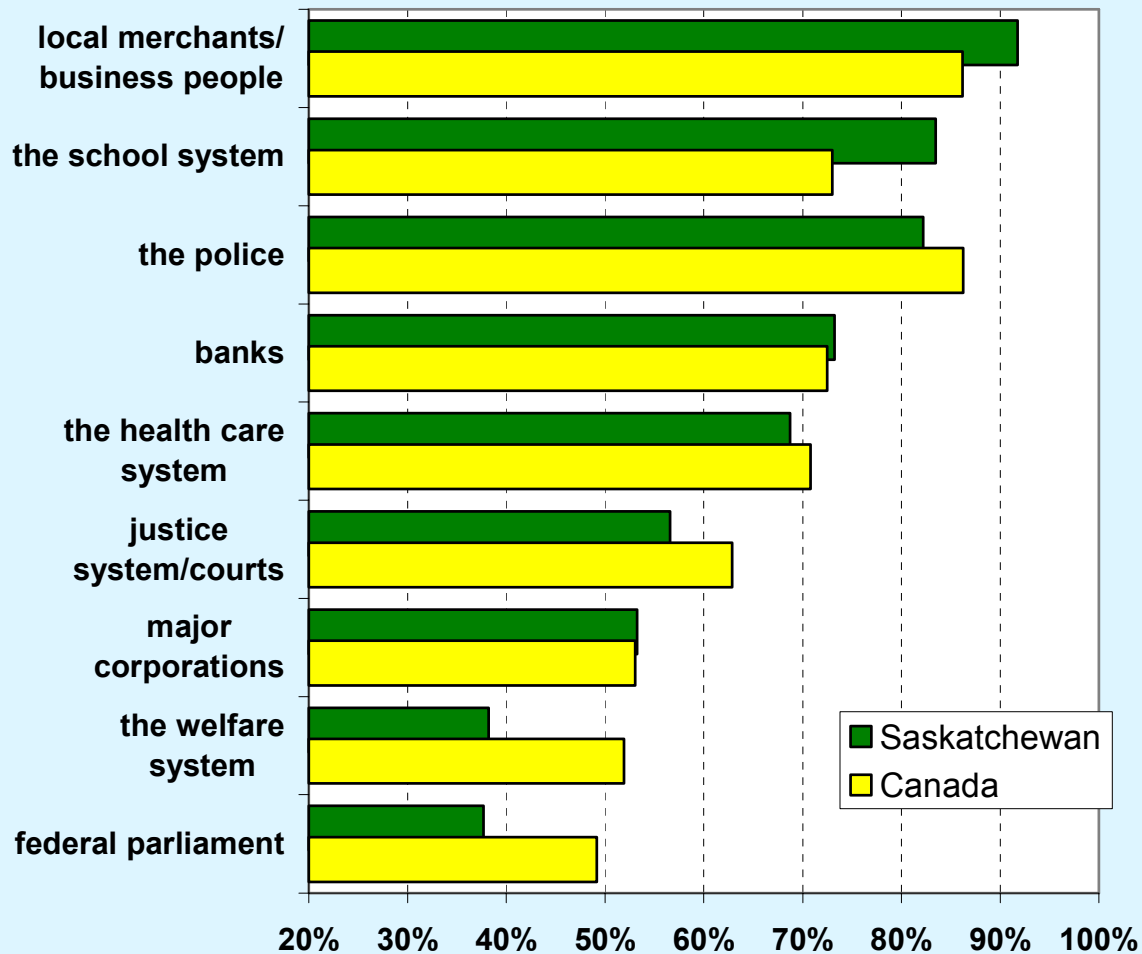
Can Never be Justified



- On a five point scale, 78% of respondents felt that failing to report damage to a parked vehicle "can never be justified", the maximum on the scale, and 58% felt the same about lying in your own interest.
- In both cases, the proportions are near or above the national average and in both cases, the proportions are higher among those in older age groups.

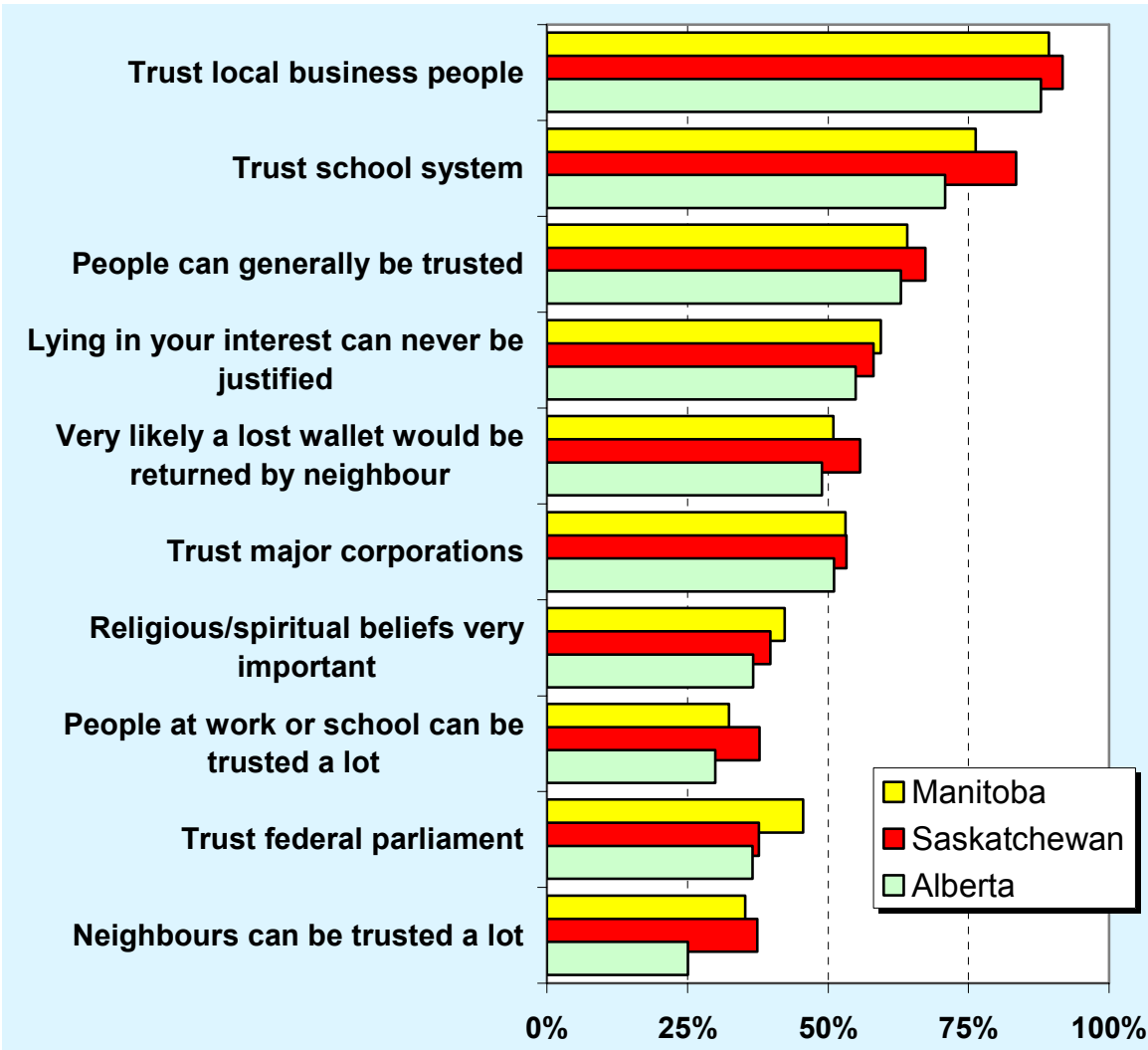
Confidence in Institutions

Quite a Lot or a Great Deal of Confidence



- Survey respondents were asked about confidence in nine institutions using a four-point scale. More than three quarters of respondents reported “quite a lot” or “a great deal” of trust in:
 - local merchants and business people (92%);
 - the school system (83%); and
 - the police (82%).
- Trust was lowest for the welfare system and federal parliament.
- Relative to other Canadians, Saskatchewan residents have more trust in local business people and the school system and less in the justice system, the welfare system, and the federal parliament.

Summary of Beliefs and Trust



- Saskatchewan people are more likely to trust others than those in other prairie provinces.
- The trust does not seem to be related to religious or spiritual convictions but rather to a general belief that people, especially those in the community can be trusted.
- This higher level of trust is most evident among neighbours, people at work or school, and local business people. It also extends to the health and education system but not to government organizations.

Key Findings

Key Findings

- For economic and demographic indicators such as income, employment, and population, Saskatchewan residents are often below the national average. The elements of human and capital, with one exception, show the opposite pattern, namely a high degree of social and civic engagement and a high level of physical and emotional well-being among Saskatchewan residents.
- The one exception is for levels of completed education where Saskatchewan lags other provinces, partly but not entirely because of the high proportion of seniors in the population.
- Saskatchewan residents, compared with those in other provinces, display a good deal of trust in other people particularly if they are friends, relatives, or community members. They also have a high level of confidence in the health and education systems. A lower level of trust for government proper is evident.
- In particular, more than one half of Saskatchewan residents have “quite a lot” or “a great deal” of confidence in:
 - local business people (92%);
 - banks (73%);
 - major corporations (53%).
- Saskatchewan people seem to be more connected to their community than they are to the world at large. The level of civic engagement generally, and volunteerism particularly, is relatively high whereas the proportion who follow news and current affairs is below average.