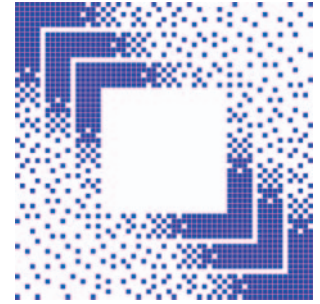




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# 2003 General Social Survey on Social Engagement, cycle 17: an overview of findings



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Statistics Canada  
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## **2003 General Social Survey on Social Engagement, cycle 17: an overview of findings**

Written by Grant Schellenberg, Demography Division

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- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0<sup>s</sup> value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- <sup>P</sup> preliminary
- <sup>r</sup> revised
- x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- <sup>E</sup> use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the course of their lives, Canadians engage in many types of civic and social activities. They donate their time and money to charity; they become members of organizations; they vote in elections and engage in other political activities; they attend religious services; and they establish social networks with friends, neighbours, co-workers and acquaintances.

These activities play a vital role in the health and vitality of our country. For example, evidence from the most recent National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participation underscores the importance of volunteer work and charitable giving (Hall et al. 2001). Canadians gave more than \$5 billion in financial support to charitable and non-profit institutions in 2000, and over one-quarter of all adult Canadians had done some volunteer work over the previous year.

In terms of political activities, declining rates of voter turnout in Canada and elsewhere have raised concerns that some citizens are disengaging from a critical part of the democratic process. At the same time, the political activities that people are engaged in outside of the polling booth are garnering attention, as some analysts have argued that demonstrations, petitions, boycotts and other activities once considered ‘unconventional’ are now routine for many citizens (Inglehart 1990).

Civic and social engagement has certainly been pushed to centre-stage by widespread interest and discussion regarding ‘social capital.’ Although there is ongoing debate about how best to define and measure social capital, a common theme is that “...how we associate with each other, and on what terms, has enormous implications for our well-being” (Woolcock 2001). Robert Putnam has been a leading figure in this field (Putnam 2001). Drawing on American data from a variety of sources, Putnam argues that various forms of social engagement have declined markedly since the 1970s. Putnam argues that this is not without consequence as across the 50 American states there are strong correlations between social capital and various other indicators of well-being, such as child welfare, educational performance, violent crime, health and tax evasion.

There is now broad interest in social capital, as researchers and policy makers are keenly interested in developing a better understanding of how social networks and norms of trust and reciprocity may contribute positively to individual and social outcomes.

It was in this environment that the 2003 General Social Survey (GSS) on Social Engagement was developed. It was designed to collect information on a wide range of activities in which Canadians are engaged, such as their social contacts with family, friends and neighbours; their involvement in formal organizations, political activities and volunteer work; their values and attitudes; the level of trust they have in people and in public institutions; the care they provide or receive on an informal basis; and so on. Overall, the survey provides comprehensive information on the many ways that Canadians engage in civic and social life.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of survey highlights. Descriptive statistics are provided on various measures of social engagement, with variations highlighted across selected characteristics, such as age, province of residence and educational attainment. The

report is intended to be illustrative, providing a broad snapshot of the outlooks and activities of Canadians in 2003.

The report is divided into three sections. In Section One, the attitudes and outlooks of Canadians are considered using three sets of indicators: (1) the extent to which individuals feel a sense of belonging to Canada, to their province, and to their community; (2) the level of confidence that individuals have in public institutions, such as the health care system and the federal parliament; and (3) the level of trust individuals have in other people.

In Section Two, the focus is shifted from the outlooks of Canadians to the activities in which they are engaged. More specifically, we consider (1) involvement in various types of organizations, such as fraternal orders, hobby groups, and sports organizations; (2) the political activities in which Canadians are engaged; and (3) participation in religious services.

In Section Three, a brief overview of the social networks in which Canadians are engaged is provided.

## **SECTION 1: THE PERCEPTIONS OF CANADIANS**

### **Sense of Belonging**

Individuals who responded to the 2003 GSS were asked a series of questions about their sense of belonging, specifically:

*How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community? Would you say it is very strong, somewhat strong, somewhat weak or very weak?*

*What about your sense of belonging to your province?*

*What about your sense of belonging to Canada?*

Respondents were not provided with a definition of ‘belonging’, but rather, based their responses on their own understanding of the term.

Overall, 85% of Canadians described their sense of belonging to Canada as ‘very strong’ or ‘somewhat strong’ – about one-half describing it as ‘very strong’ and about one-third describing it as ‘somewhat strong’ ([Chart 1](#)). By contrast, 13% of individuals described their feelings of belonging to Canada as ‘somewhat weak’ or ‘very weak’.

The majority of Canadians also said they felt a ‘very strong’ or ‘somewhat strong’ sense of belonging to their province and their local community, although such views were less prevalent than they were at the national level.

## Sense of belonging to Canada

A number of demographic characteristics were associated with feelings of belonging to Canada ([Appendix Table 1](#)). The vast majority of individuals in all age groups (78% or more) described their sense of belonging to Canada as somewhat or very strong ([Chart 2](#)). However, ‘very strong’ feelings of belonging were more prevalent among older than younger individuals.

It may be the case that young people have always been less likely than older individuals to feel a sense of belonging, and in this respect, today’s youth may be no different from previous generations. Alternatively, the relationship shown in [Chart 2](#) may reflect generational differences, meaning that today’s youth are less likely than youth in previous generations to feel a sense of belonging and will continue to feel this way as they get older.

Outside of Quebec, provincial differences in feelings of belonging to Canada were quite modest, with the prevalence of such feelings ranging from 87% in British Columbia to 95% in Prince Edward Island. Similarly, in most provinces 57 to 61% of individuals described their sense of belonging to Canada as ‘very strong’ ([Chart 3](#)). Such views were less prevalent in Quebec than elsewhere, but still, 74% of Quebecers described their sense of belonging to Canada as somewhat or very strong.

Within Quebec, feelings of belonging to Canada were differentiated along linguistic lines, with individuals who spoke French in the home less likely to describe their sense of belonging to Canada as ‘very strong’ compared with those who spoke English in the home (at 29 and 66% respectively ([Chart 4](#))). Nonetheless, the majority of Quebec residents who spoke French in the home described their sense of belonging to Canada in positive terms, with 70% describing this as ‘very strong’ or ‘somewhat strong.’

Outside of Quebec, feelings of belonging to Canada did not vary much between individuals who spoke French or English in the home.

Immigration is a central feature of Canada’s demographic landscape and in 2001, the share of Canadians who were born outside of the country – at 18% - was higher than it had been in 70 years.

The vast majority of immigrants described their sense of belonging to Canada as very or somewhat strong. This was the case for 84% of immigrants who arrived in Canada since 1990. That being said, immigrants who arrived in the 1990s were somewhat less likely than earlier arrivals to describe their sense of belonging as ‘very strong’ ([Chart 5](#)). This may be due to the fact that they had resided in Canada for less time than others and had had less opportunity to cultivate a strong sense of attachment.<sup>1</sup> As documented below, feelings of belonging were also associated with the length of time that individuals had resided in a province or city.

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<sup>1</sup> The smaller share of recent immigrants who described their sense of belong to Canada as ‘very strong’ was not attributable to the younger age profile among this group compared with Canadian-born persons.



Feelings of national belonging were prevalent among immigrants who arrived in Canada before 1980, reflecting the fact that most of these individuals were aged 50 or older when they responded to the GSS in 2003.

Feelings of belonging to Canada did not vary significantly across levels of educational attainment or household income.

### **Sense of belonging to province of residence**

The majority of Canadians (78%) described their sense of belonging to their province in positive terms – that is, as ‘very’ or ‘somewhat strong’. As with feelings of national belonging, such views were most prevalent among individuals in older age groups. Likewise, the majority of immigrants described their sense of belonging to their province in positive terms ([Appendix Table 2](#)).

Across the provinces, ‘very strong’ feelings of provincial belonging were most prevalent in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island (at 53 and 46% respectively) and somewhat less prevalent in Ontario and British Columbia (at 29% -- [Chart 6](#)). Nonetheless, the majority of individuals in all ten provinces described their sense of provincial belonging as ‘somewhat’ or ‘very strong’. The figures for Quebec were comparable to the other provinces, although this conceals differences between French-speaking and English-speaking people in the province ([Chart 7](#)). French-speaking Quebecers had an attachment to their province ([Chart 7](#)) that was comparable to the attachment expressed by individuals in most other provinces ([Chart 6](#)).

Feelings of belonging to a province were also associated with whether or not an individual had been born there. More specifically, 34% of Canadians residing in their province of birth said they have a ‘very strong’ sense of provincial belonging, while this was the case for 26% of Canadians who were not residing in their province of birth. Across regions, feelings of ‘very strong’ provincial belonging were most prevalent among individuals who were born in, and still resided in Atlantic Canada (at 44%) ([Chart 8](#)).

### **Sense of belonging to one’s community**

Finally, GSS respondents were asked about their sense of belonging to their local community. Respondents were not provided with a definition of ‘local community’, but rather, based their responses on their own understanding of the term.

The majority of Canadians assessed their sense of belonging to their local community in positive terms, with 19% describing this as ‘very strong’ and 49% describing this as ‘somewhat strong.’ Age was again correlated with feelings of belonging in the same way as documented above ([Appendix Table 3](#)).

Feelings of community belonging were more prevalent among individuals who had lived in their area for longer periods of time ([Chart 9](#)). For example, individuals who had lived in their community for 5 years or more were about twice as likely to feel a ‘very strong’ sense of

belonging as those who had been there for less than three years. Comparable proportions of individuals residing in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver said they feel a very strong or somewhat strong sense of community belonging, with this ranging from 62 to 66%.

Finally, when individuals who had resided in their area for five years or more were considered, those in rural areas and smaller towns<sup>2</sup> were more likely than those in large cities to describe their sense of community belonging as somewhat or very strong ([Chart 10](#)).

### **Confidence in Institutions**

Public institutions, such as the health care system, the education system and the federal parliament, play an important role in shaping the lives of Canadians. In recent years, there has been much discussion about whether and how such institutions ought to be changed. GSS respondents were asked about the level of confidence they have in various institutions.<sup>3</sup> Canadians provided their most favourable assessments to the police, with 35% of respondents saying they have “a great deal” of confidence and 48% saying they have “quite a lot” of confidence in the police ([Chart 11](#)). Local business people and merchants also ranked high, with 80% of Canadians saying they have “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in this group.

About two-thirds of Canadians said they have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the health care system (67%) and the school system (65%), while smaller proportions said they have confidence in the justice system (57%). The welfare system and the federal parliament were at the bottom of the list of public institutions in which Canadians said they have confidence, although significant proportions of respondents were unable to answer or declined to answer these questions.

There were considerable inter-provincial variations in the extent to which individuals have confidence in public institutions ([Table 1](#)). Such variation was smallest in terms of confidence in the police, with 79 to 87% of respondents in all provinces saying they have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of confidence in police organizations. Variations across provinces were larger for the other five public institutions, with differences of 18 percentage points or more between the lowest and highest. For example, 56% of individuals in British Columbia said they have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of confidence in the health care system, while this was the case for 74% of individuals in Quebec. More broadly, individuals in Quebec were consistently more likely than those in other provinces to have said they have high levels of confidence in public institutions. Confidence in the federal parliament and the justice system was less prevalent in the Western provinces than elsewhere.

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<sup>2</sup> Rural and small town areas are areas outside the commuting zone of Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) and Census Agglomerations (CAs). CMAs and CAs are large urban areas (known as urban cores) together with adjacent urban and rural areas that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the urban cores. A CMA has an urban core population of at least 100,000 and a CA has an urban core population between 10,000 and 100,000 based on the previous census.

<sup>3</sup> Specifically, they were asked whether they have a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence, or no confidence at all. Respondents were not provided with a definition of confidence, but responded to the question based on their own understanding of the term.

Individuals residing in households with higher incomes were somewhat more likely than others to say they had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the police and the justice system ([Table 2](#)).

There was a relationship between the degree to which individuals expressed confidence in institutions and the sense of belonging they felt towards Canada, their province and their local community. To document this relationship, individuals were grouped into one of four categories based on the number of institutions in which they said they had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence. The share of individuals in each group who said they felt a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging to Canada, their province and their local community was subsequently determined. The results are shown in [Chart 12](#).

Feelings of belonging were most prevalent among individuals who expressed confidence in many or most of the institutions about which they were asked, and least prevalent among individuals who expressed confidence in few or none of those institutions. This was most evident in terms of belonging to one's province or local community. For example, 87% of individuals who said they had confidence in 8 or 9 institutions described their sense of belonging to their province in positive terms, while this was the case for 75% of those who said they had confidence in 4 or 5 institutions, and for 67% of those who said they had confidence in 3 or less of those institutions.<sup>4</sup>

## Trust

In recent years, there has been considerable interest among researchers in the level of 'trust' present within countries and regions. Economists, for example, have been interested in determining if economic growth is associated with the level of trust that citizens have in one another.

GSS respondents were asked:

*Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people?*

Overall, 53% of Canadians said that people can be trusted while 43% said that one cannot be too careful in dealing with people ([Table 3](#))<sup>5</sup>. Women and men had comparable views in this respect, as did individuals in different age groups.

Individuals with higher levels of educational attainment and those residing in households with higher incomes were more likely than others to say that people can be trusted. Systematic differences were not evident across immigration status.

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<sup>4</sup> Respondents who had been unable or unwilling to answer 5 or more of the 9 questions pertaining to confidence in institutions were excluded from these calculations.

<sup>5</sup> Just under 5% of respondents were either unable or unwilling to answer the question.

When comparisons are drawn across provinces, a relatively small share of Quebec residents said that people can be trusted. Indeed, just over one-third of Quebecers (35%) said people can be trusted while this view was expressed by over 60% of individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador, P.E.I., Nova Scotia and in all the provinces west of Ontario ([Chart 13](#)).

It is interesting to note that, compared with individuals in other provinces, those in Quebec were less likely to express trust in other individuals but more likely to express confidence in institutions.

To further gauge levels of trust, GSS respondents were also asked about what they thought would be the likely outcome if they lost a wallet or purse containing \$200. More specifically:

*“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 ...by a complete stranger ... by someone who lives close by? Would it be...*

*Very likely?*

*Somewhat likely?*

*Not at all likely?”*

Most Canadians (55%) said that it would be ‘not at all likely’ that their wallet or purse would be returned with the money in it if found by a complete stranger, while 32% said it would be ‘somewhat likely’ and 5% said it would be ‘very likely.’<sup>6</sup>

Expectations were more optimistic if the wallet had been found by someone living close by. In this case, only 15% of respondents said it would be ‘not at all likely’ that their wallet or purse would be returned with its contents, while 36% said it would be ‘somewhat likely’ and 43% said it would be ‘very likely.’<sup>7</sup>

Individuals in the Atlantic provinces had the highest levels of trust when measured in this way, with at least 46% or more individuals in these provinces saying it would be ‘somewhat’ or ‘very likely’ that their wallet or purse would be returned if found by a stranger, and 88% or more saying it would be ‘somewhat’ or ‘very likely’ to be returned if found by someone living nearby ([Charts 14 and 15](#)). Again, levels of trust were far lower in Quebec than elsewhere.

The size of the city in which individuals lived was associated with levels of trust, with expectations of the wallet or purse being returned least prevalent among individuals in Canada’s largest urban centres.

Individuals residing in households with higher incomes were more likely to expect that their wallet or purse would be returned than those in households with lower incomes ([Table 4](#)).

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<sup>6</sup> The remaining 9% of respondents were either unable or unwilling to answer the question.

<sup>7</sup> 7% of respondents were unable or unwilling to answer the question.

## SECTION 2: THE ACTIVITIES OF CANADIANS

We now turn from the views and attitudes of Canadians to the activities in which they are engaged.

### Organizational involvement

Canadians were asked about groups, organizations, networks or associations to which they belong, including "...formally organized groups or just groups of people who get together *regularly* to do an activity or talk about things."

Overall, 61% of Canadians belonged to at least one such group or organization, while 38% did not ([Chart 16](#)).<sup>8</sup> Sports and recreational organizations, such as hockey leagues, health clubs or golf clubs, were mentioned most often (29%), followed by unions and professional associations (25%), cultural, education or hobby groups (e.g. bridge club or book club), religious-affiliated groups (e.g. church choir or youth group<sup>9</sup>) and school, neighbourhood or community-associated groups (e.g. block parents or alumni). 8% of Canadians belonged to a service club or fraternal organization.

Among the non-elderly population, there was relatively little variation in the overall incidence of organizational membership/participation across age groups, with this ranging between 60 and 64% among persons aged 15 to 64. The incidence was lower among seniors, due in part to less involvement in sports and recreational organizations and in unions and professional associations.

Organizational involvement was strongly associated with education and household income ([Chart 17](#)). Among individuals aged 25 to 54, 78% of those with a university degree were involved in at least one organization, while this was the case for 56% of those with high school and 40% of those with less than high school. Similarly, individuals residing in households with higher incomes were more likely to be involved in at least one organization than individuals residing in lower income households. And finally, immigrants who had arrived in Canada since 1980 were less likely than earlier arrivals and Canadian-born persons to have been involved in at least one organization.

In terms of organizational involvement in different provinces, the most noticeable fact was that the incidence of involvement ranges between 60 and 65% in most provinces, but was somewhat lower in Quebec (at 53%) ([Chart 18](#)).

Of those individuals who were involved in at least one organization or group, 40% participated in activities or meetings at least once a week, 20% participated a few times each month, and 18% participated at least once a month. The remainder participated once or twice a year (15%) or had not participated at all in the past year (6%).

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<sup>8</sup> The other 1.2% of respondents did not answer the question.

<sup>9</sup> Note that religious-affiliated groups do not include membership in the respondent's church or religion itself, only to specific affiliated groups such as a choir or youth group.

Overall, about one-half of Canadians (48%) belonged to a group or organization **and** participated in meetings or activities at least once a month.

About one-quarter of individuals who were involved in at least one organization or group (23%) conducted at least part of their involvement through the internet.

All GSS respondents, regardless of whether or not they were involved in an organization, were asked if their involvement in organizations had increased, decreased or stayed the same over the past five years. Just over one-half of Canadians (55%) said their level of involvement had stayed the same over that period, 20% said their involvement had increased and 23% said their involvement had decreased.<sup>10</sup>

As one might expect, individuals who were involved in groups or organizations were more likely than those who were not involved to say that they felt a sense of belonging to their local community<sup>11</sup>. This relationship was not evident in terms of belonging to Canada or their province of residence.

### **Political Involvement**

Over the last 15 years there has been a steady decline in the rate of voter turnout in federal elections, declining from 75% in 1987, to 67% in 1997 and to just over 61% in 2000 (Elections Canada, cited in Seidle 2001). Younger people are far less likely to vote than older Canadians, and evidence suggests people are continuing to abstain from voting as they grow older (O'Neill 2001).

Some analysts have suggested that the decline in voter turnout rates does not signal a decline in civic participation, but rather is part of a shift in civic participation away from 'traditional' forms of political engagement, such as voting, to more 'unconventional' activities, such as participating in petitions, boycotts and public demonstrations (Barnes and Kasse 1979).

GSS respondents were asked if they had participated in specific types of political activities over the previous 12 month period ([Chart 19](#)). Over one-quarter of Canadians (28%) had signed a petition or had searched for information on a political issue (26%), while about one-in-five Canadians had attended a public meeting or boycotted / chosen a product for ethical reasons. About one-in-eight Canadians (13%) had expressed their views on an issue by contacting a newspaper or a politician, while 6% had participated in a march or demonstration.

The proportion of individuals who had participated in certain political activities in the previous year varied across age groups. As shown in [Table 5](#), individuals under 30 were more likely than those in older age groups to have searched for information on a political issue and to have

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<sup>10</sup> The remaining 2% said they did not know or refused to answer the question.

<sup>11</sup> Of those individuals who were not involved in any group or organization, 62% described their sense of belonging to their local community as very or somewhat strong. This was the case for 67% of individuals who belonged to one group or organization and for 76% of individuals who belonged to two or more groups or organizations.

participated in a march or demonstration. Individuals aged 65 or older were less likely than others to have signed a petition or to have boycotted or chosen a product for ethical reasons.

Educational attainment and household income were also associated with participation in political activities. For example, among individuals aged 25 to 54, 31% of those with a university degree had attended a public meeting in the previous year while this was the case for 19% of those with a high school diploma ([Table 6](#)). The same pattern was evident for all the political activities shown. Furthermore, the likelihood of having engaged in political activities was generally higher among individuals who resided in households with higher incomes.

Participation in political activity differed between immigrants and persons born in Canada. More specifically, immigrants (aged 25 to 54) who had arrived in Canada since 1990 were less likely than Canadian-born persons to have signed a petition, boycotted or chosen a product for ethical reasons or attended a public meeting.

Participation in political activities was associated with whether or not individuals said they had voted in the most recent federal and provincial elections<sup>12</sup>. For example, among individuals aged 25 to 54, 36% of those who said they had voted in both the most recent federal and provincial elections had signed a petition in the previous year, while this was the case for 18% of those said they had not voted in either election ([Table 7](#)). Similarly, individuals who said they had voted in both elections were about twice as likely as those who had not voted in either election to have attended a public meeting as (at 27 and 13% respectively).<sup>13</sup>

Finally, one might expect that individuals who express less confidence in major institutions may be more likely than others to voice their concerns through political activities such as petitions or public meetings. There is modest support for this interpretation. As shown in [Table 8](#), individuals who expressed confidence in eight or nine of the institutions about which they were asked (out of a total of nine institutions) were less likely than others to have boycotted or chosen a product for ethical reasons, signed a petition or to have expressed their views by contacting a newspaper or politician in the past year. However, differences in the level of participation in other types of political activities were modest or non-existent.

## **Religious involvement**

The majority of Canadians said that religious or spiritual beliefs were very important (36%) or 'somewhat important' (33%) to the way that they live their life<sup>14</sup>. However, while most Canadians attached importance to religious and spiritual beliefs, far fewer were regular participants at religious services.

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<sup>12</sup> Readers are reminded that the GSS data were collected throughout 2003 and that the phrase "most recent federal and provincial elections" refers to the elections prior to the data collection.

<sup>13</sup> This relationship remained when other factors, such as age, education and household income, were taken into account (data not shown).

<sup>14</sup> 29% of GSS respondents say that religious or spiritual beliefs are 'not very important' (16.3%) or 'not at all important' to the way they live their life.

Aside from special occasions, such as weddings or funerals, just under one-third of Canadians (30%) had attended religious services or meetings at least once a month over the previous year<sup>15</sup>, while about one-quarter had attended services at least once or a few times during the year. 18% of Canadians had not attended a religious service or meeting and 25% identified themselves as agnostic, atheist or said that religious or spiritual beliefs were not at all important to them. Individuals in this latter group were not asked about how often they had attended religious services.<sup>16</sup>

Frequency of attendance at religious services was greatest among individuals in the Atlantic region – particularly in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island where about one-half of adults<sup>17</sup> had attended religious services at least once a month. Frequency of attendance was lowest in Quebec and British Columbia, where less than one-quarter of adults had attended services at least once a month. The share of individuals with little or no involvement in religious services was highest in British Columbia (at 57%). This includes individuals: (1) who said that they had not attended a religious service in the past year, (2) who identified themselves as atheist or agnostic or (3) who said that religious and spiritual beliefs were not at all important to how they live their life ([Chart 20](#)).

Frequency of attendance at religious services or meetings was strongly associated with age. While almost one-half of seniors had attended religious services at least once a month over the previous year, this was the case for less than one-quarter of individuals between the ages of 15 and 35 ([Chart 21](#)).

Among individuals aged 25 to 54, those who were born in Canada were less likely than immigrants to have attended religious services in the past year. Indeed, 39% of immigrants who arrived in Canada during the 1990s had attended services on a monthly basis in the previous year while this was the case for 22% of Canadian-born persons ([Chart 22](#)).

Overall, while places of worship were central to community life in years past, most Canadians today do not have a long standing attachment to a place of worship. Only 37% of all Canadians attended religious services or meetings at least once in the previous year **and** had attended the same place of worship for more than five years.

### SECTION 3: SOCIAL CONTACTS

Canadians engage in various social networks comprised of different people, including family and close friends; colleagues, customers and business contacts; neighbours; and even acquaintances on the street. Membership in social networks can provide many benefits to individuals, such as emotional support, information and goods and services.

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<sup>15</sup> 19% attend on a weekly basis while 11% attend at least once a month.

<sup>16</sup> 4% of respondents were unable or unwilling to answer this question.

<sup>17</sup> Adults are defined as all persons aged 15 or older.



## Family and friends

GSS respondents were asked a series of questions about the number of people with whom they have relationships. Specifically,

*How many relatives (excluding those who live in your household) do you have who you feel close to, that is, who you feel at ease with, can talk to about what is on your mind, or call on for help?*

*How many close friends do you have, 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?*

*How many other friends do you have who are not relatives or close friends?*

*In the last month, how many new people did you meet outside of work or school, that is people who you hadn't met before and who you intend to stay in contact with?*

The number of social contacts reported by Canadians is shown in [Chart 23](#). The vast majority of Canadians (92 to 93%) reported that they have at least one relative or one friend with whom they are close; 6 to 7% said they have no close relatives or no close friends. Most Canadians (58%) said they have 1 to 5 relatives with whom they are close, while 63% said they have 1 to 5 close friends. Similarly, most Canadians (55%) said they have more than 10 other friends, in addition to their 'close friends'.

About one-third of Canadians said that in the past month they had met 1 to 5 new acquaintances with whom they intended to stay in touch, while 7% of Canadians had met 6 or more new acquaintances.

There are noticeable differences in the social contacts maintained by individuals in younger and older age groups. More specifically, individuals under 30 years of age typically have larger networks of friends and acquaintances than those in older age groups. For example, individuals under age 30 were less likely than those in older age groups to have said they have no close friends, and were more likely to have said that they have many 'other friends' or new acquaintances ([Table 9](#)). This likely reflects the fact that many of these young people have not yet married, had children and 'settled down.'

GSS respondents were asked about how often in the last month they had seen their relatives and friends, and how often they had communicated with relatives and friends by telephone and email.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Specifically, respondents were asked: *Now I want to ask you some questions about contacts you have with your relatives, including all relatives such as aunts, uncles, cousins, and in-laws. Exclude people who live in your household.*

*In the last month, how often did you see relatives (outside of people you live with)? Was it...every day, a few times a month, once a month, not in the last month?*

*In the last month, how often did you communicate with relatives by telephone (remember to exclude people you live with)?*

*In the last month, how often did you communicate with relatives on the Internet (including by e-mail)?*

The same set of questions was asked with respect to friends.

In the previous month, 38% of Canadians had seen their relatives at least once a week (not counting family members with whom they lived), 43% had seen their relatives at least once, and 18% had not seen their relatives at all. Most Canadians (92%) had spoken with their relatives by telephone during the previous month, with most (56%) having done so on a weekly basis.

Many Canadians (39%) had communicated with their relatives in the previous month using the internet, with individuals under 30 years of age most likely to have done so (at 70%). One-third of individuals aged 50 to 64 (33%) had communicated with their relatives using the internet, while this was the case for 12% of persons aged 65 or older.

When asked about their friends, most Canadians (55%) said they have seen their friends on a weekly basis during the previous month while 34% had seen their friends at least once during that period.<sup>19</sup> Most Canadians (87%) had spoken with their friends by telephone during the previous month, with most (55%) have done so on a weekly basis.

The internet played an important role in the maintenance of friendships. Over one-quarter of Canadians (27%) said that in the previous month they had communicated with their friends on a weekly basis using the internet, while another 18% said they had communicated with friends at least once in this way during the month.<sup>20</sup>

Among persons aged 25 to 54, use of the internet to communicate with family and friends was more prevalent among individuals with higher levels of educational attainment and among those who lived in households with higher incomes (Table 10). Furthermore, immigrants who arrived in Canada since 1990 were more likely than others to use the internet to communicate with their relatives. This is probably because the internet was a cost-effective way for immigrants to communicate with family members in other countries, as well as because recent immigrants have, on average, higher levels of educational attainment than Canadian-born persons.

### **Familiarity with one's neighbours**

In addition to the networks maintained with family and friends, Canadians also have ties in the neighbourhoods in which they live. More specifically, GSS respondents were asked:

*Now I would like to ask you a few questions about your more immediate neighbourhood.*

*Would you say that you know...*

*most of the people in your neighbourhood?*

*many of the people in your neighbourhood?*

*a few of the people in your neighbourhood?*

*nobody else in your neighbourhood?*

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<sup>19</sup> The remainder had not seen their friends during the month (5%), reported that they had no friends (2%) or were unable or unwilling to answer the question (4%).

<sup>20</sup> The remainder had not communicated with friends using the internet in the previous month (24%), did not use the internet for any purposes (27%), reported that they had no friends (2%) or were unable or unwilling to answer the question (2%).

Respondents were not provided with a definition of “your more immediate neighbourhood” but answered the question based on their own understanding of the term.

Over one-quarter of Canadians (27%) said they know most of the people in their neighbourhood, while 16% said they know many of them. Combining these two categories, 43% of Canadians have fairly extensive contacts in their immediate neighbourhood.

Just under one-half of Canadians (48%) said they know ‘a few of the people’ in their neighbourhood, suggesting that these individuals do not have extensive contacts in the area, and finally, about 7% said they know ‘nobody else’ in their neighbourhood.<sup>21</sup>

The 2003 GSS confirms the image of rural and small town areas as places where people are most ‘neighbourly’. Indeed, over one-half (54%) of individuals who lived in these areas said they know most of the people in their neighbourhood, while this was the case for 17% of individuals in Canada’s largest cities. As shown in [Chart 24](#), the share of Canadians who know most of their neighbours declined steadily as urban size increased.<sup>22</sup>

The length of time that individuals had lived in their neighbourhood was strongly associated with the extent to which they know their neighbours. Among individuals residing in CMAs, just under one-half of those who had lived in their neighbourhood for five years or more said they know most or many of their neighbours, while this was the case for 19% of those who had been in the neighbourhood for 1 to 3 years and only 10% of those who had been in the neighbourhood for less than a year ([Table 11](#)).

There was also a correlation between the type of dwelling in which people live and the extent to which they know their neighbours. [Table 12](#) shows the extent to which people who lived in single family homes, apartments, or other types of dwellings know their neighbours. The information is presented separately for people residing in CMAs and elsewhere and is limited to individuals who have lived in their neighbourhood for five years or more.

Considering individuals in CMAs, 51% of those residing in single detached homes know most or many of the people in their neighbourhood, while this was the case for only 28% of those residing in apartments.

---

<sup>21</sup> The other 2% were unable or unwilling to answer the question.

<sup>22</sup> One might suggest that this variation across urban size is attributable to differences in how respondents interpreted the question cited above. More specifically, it may be impossible for individuals in large cities to know ‘most’ of the people in their neighbourhood given that thousands of individuals live in residential areas in cities such as Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. For individuals in small towns, neighbourhoods are smaller, making it more feasible to know ‘most’ of one’s neighbours. However, GSS respondents were asked about their “*more immediate neighbourhood*” and it was left up to them to determine how to define this concept. Because one’s *immediate neighbourhood* could be defined as the houses on one’s street or the few blocks in the immediate area, there is scope for individuals in large cities to answer the question using the full range of response categories. Moreover, individuals with certain characteristics in large cities did say they know most of the people in their neighbourhoods, indicating that this response category was meaningful and applicable to them.

## CONCLUSIONS

As noted at the outset, there is broad interest among policy makers, researchers, community leaders and others in the social and civic activities in which Canadians are engaged. This is largely driven by the implications that social engagement and social networks may have for a broad range of outcomes, such as public health, economic growth and innovation, educational achievement and community development (Woolcock, 2001).

An analysis of the linkages between such outcomes and the views, activities and networks of Canadians is beyond the scope of this paper. However, we conclude by providing some descriptive information on the relationship between these characteristics and the assessments that Canadians provided of their happiness and satisfaction with life.

GSS respondents were asked:

*Presently, would you describe yourself as very happy, somewhat happy, somewhat unhappy, very unhappy?*

One-half of Canadians (aged 15 and older) said that they were ‘very happy’, while just under one-half (46%) said they were ‘somewhat happy’. The remaining 4% said they were ‘somewhat’ or ‘very unhappy’.

The degree of happiness expressed by Canadians was associated with many of the attitudes and activities discussed above. For example, individuals who described their sense of belonging to Canada, to their province or to their local community as very strong were more likely than others to have said they were very happy ([Chart 25](#)).

Similarly, individuals who reported higher levels of trust and greater confidence in institutions were more likely than other individuals to have said they were very happy, while this was also the case for those who were involved in at least one group or organization or who knew many or most of the people in their neighbourhood ([Chart 26](#)).

The same patterns were evident when respondents were asked about their satisfaction with life overall. More specifically, GSS respondents were asked:

*I am going to ask you to rate certain areas of your life. Please rate your feelings about them using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means “Very dissatisfied” and 10 means “Very satisfied”... Using the same scale, how do you feel about your life as a whole right now?*

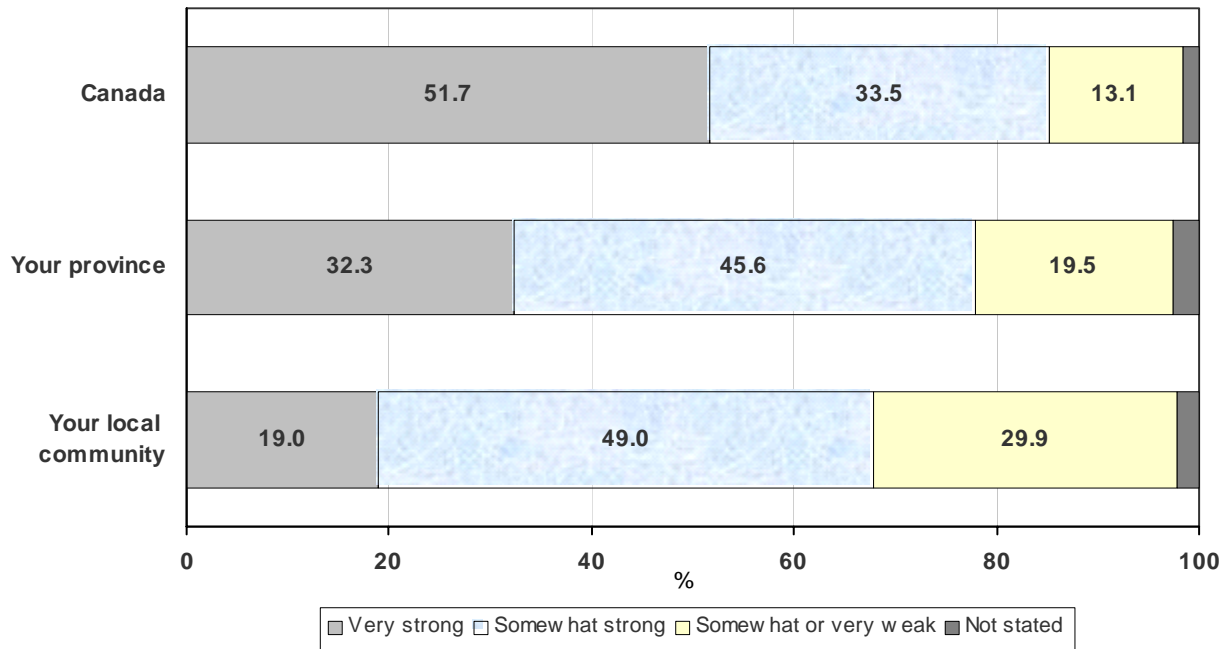
As shown in [Chart 27](#), levels of satisfaction were highest among individuals who described their sense of belonging to their community as very strong, among those who expressed trust in others, among those who were involved in one or more groups or organizations, and among those who expressed confidence in public institutions.

The relationship between life satisfaction and these aspects of social engagement generally remained significant when other characteristics, such as personal health and household income, were taken into account (data not shown).

To conclude, the role that social engagement and social networks play in the well-being of individuals and society has garnered tremendous interest among researchers, practitioners and policy-makers in fields such as health, education, economics and community development. Statistics Canada's 2003 General Social Survey offers a rich source of data and will serve to advance research and understanding in this area.

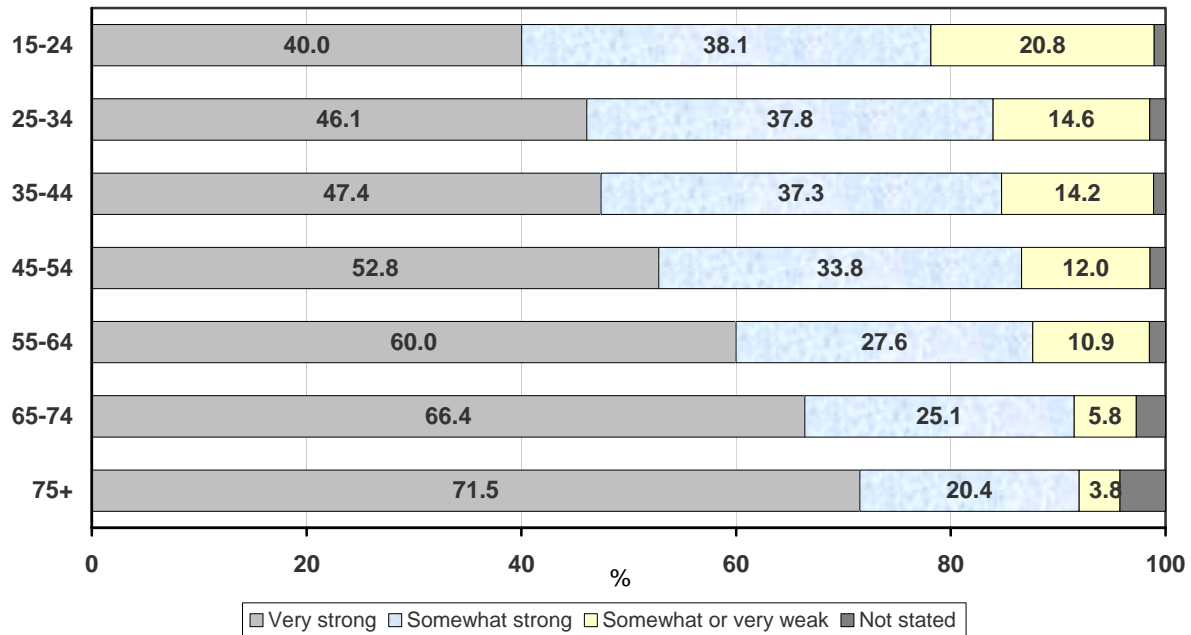
## CHARTS

**Chart 1**  
**How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to Canada, their province and their community, Canada, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

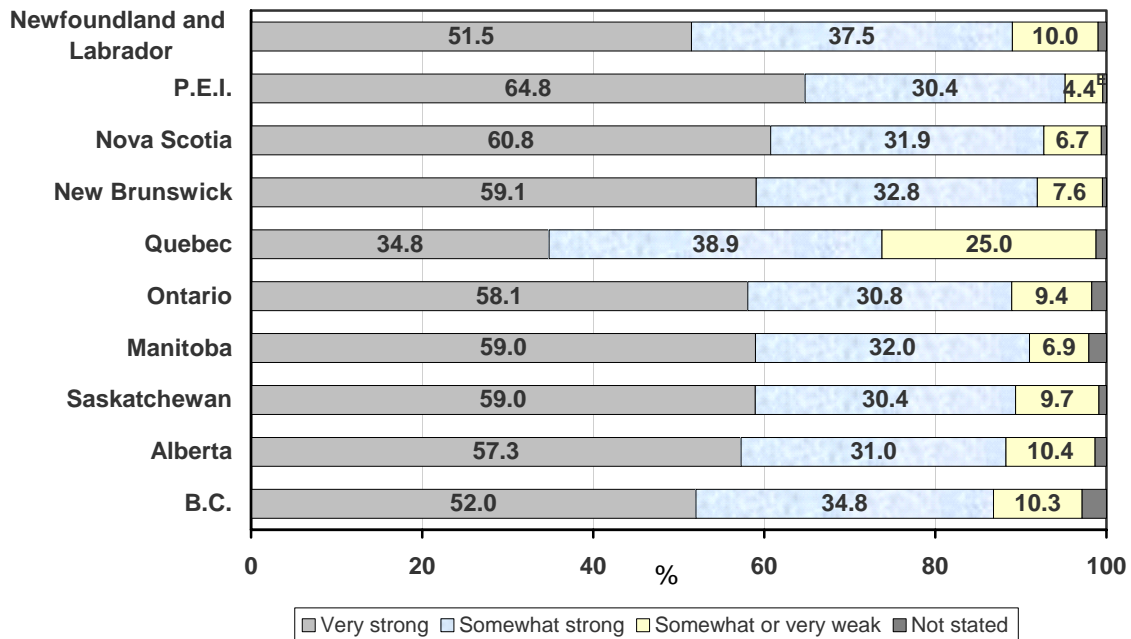
**Chart 2**  
**How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to Canada, by age group, Canada, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

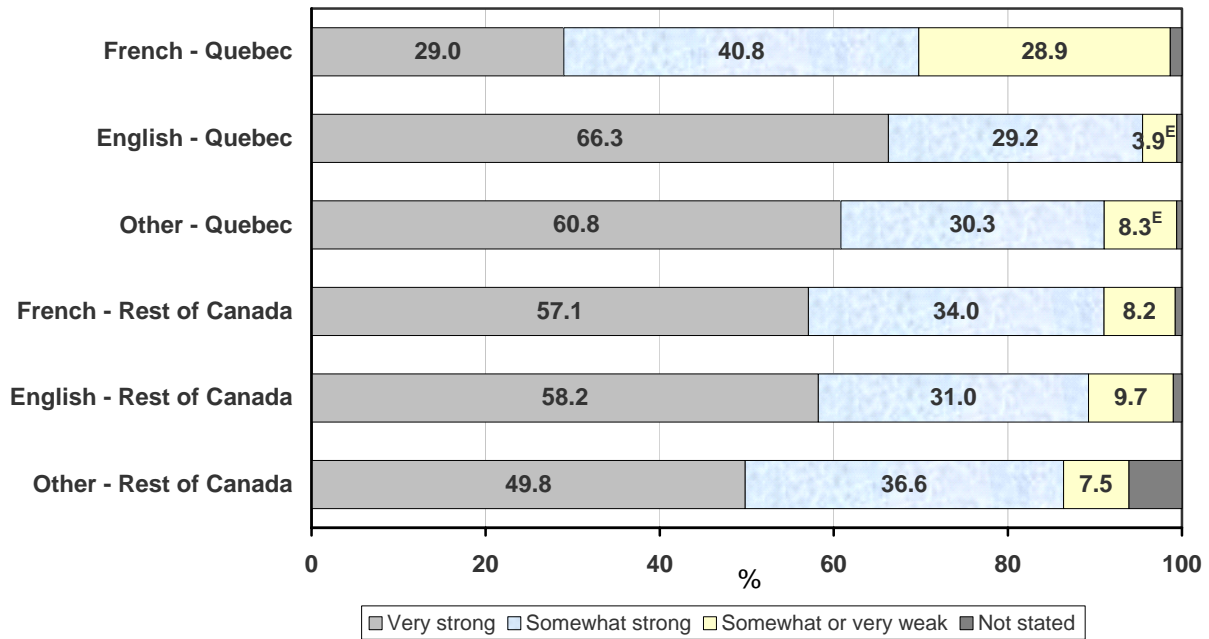


**Chart 3**  
**How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to Canada, by province of residence, 2003**



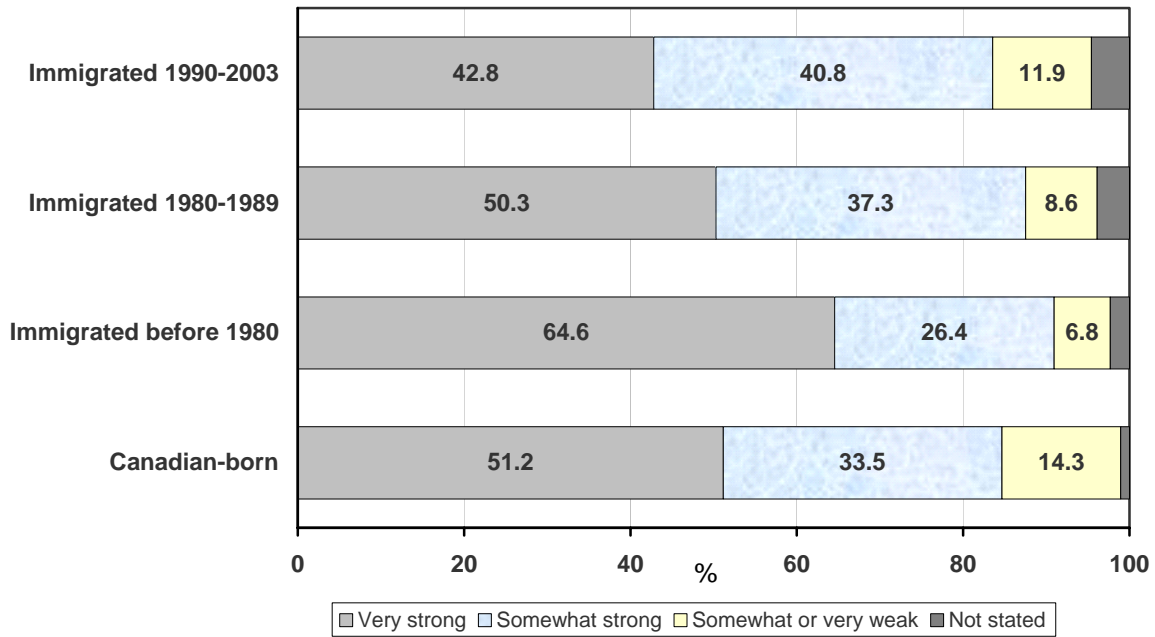
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Chart 4**  
**How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to Canada, by language used at home and region, 2003**



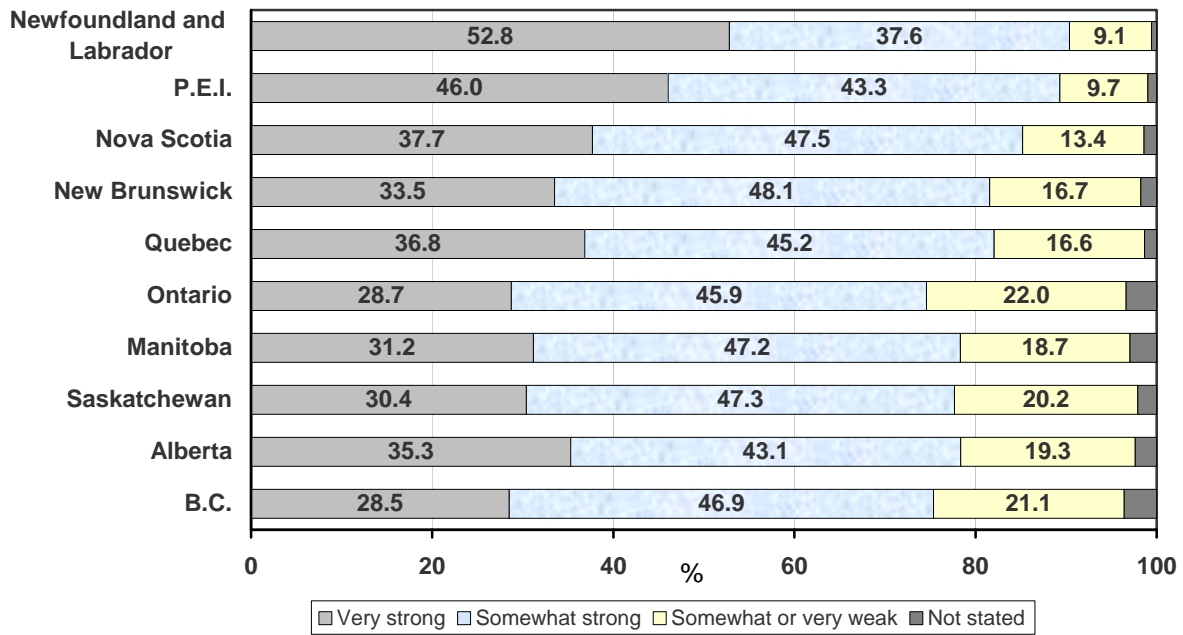
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Chart 5**  
**How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to Canada, by immigration status, Canada, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

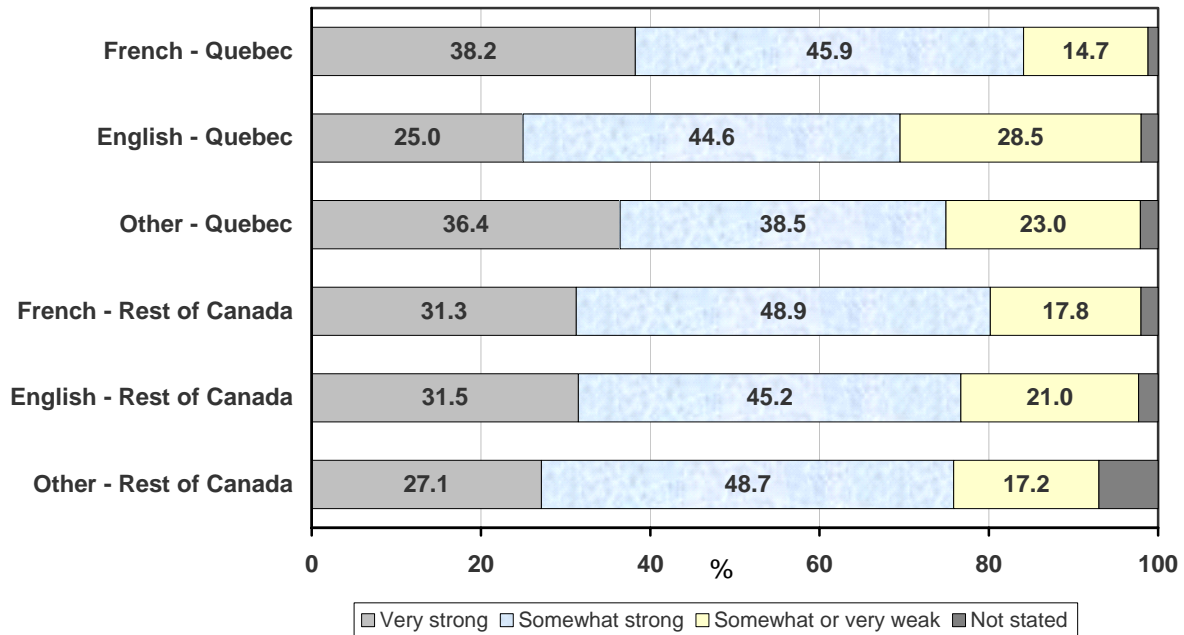
**Chart 6**  
**How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to their province, by province of residence, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Chart 7**

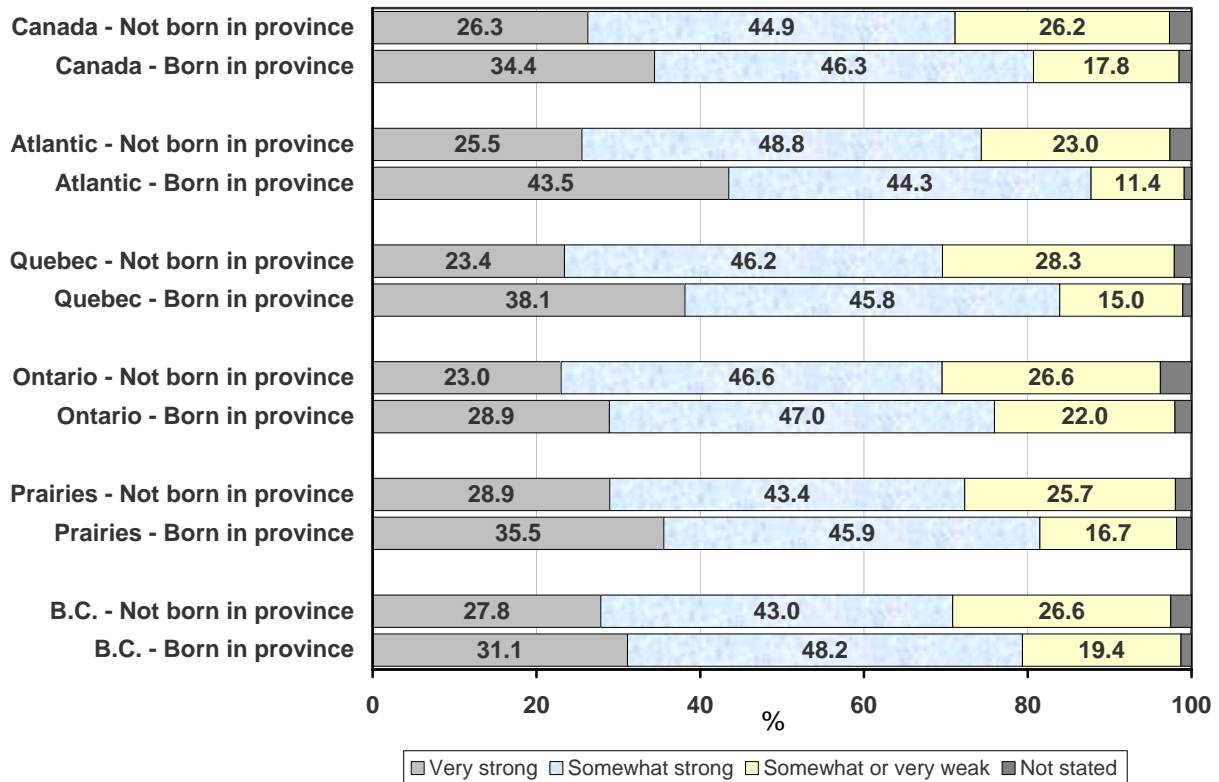
**How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to their province, by language used at home and region, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

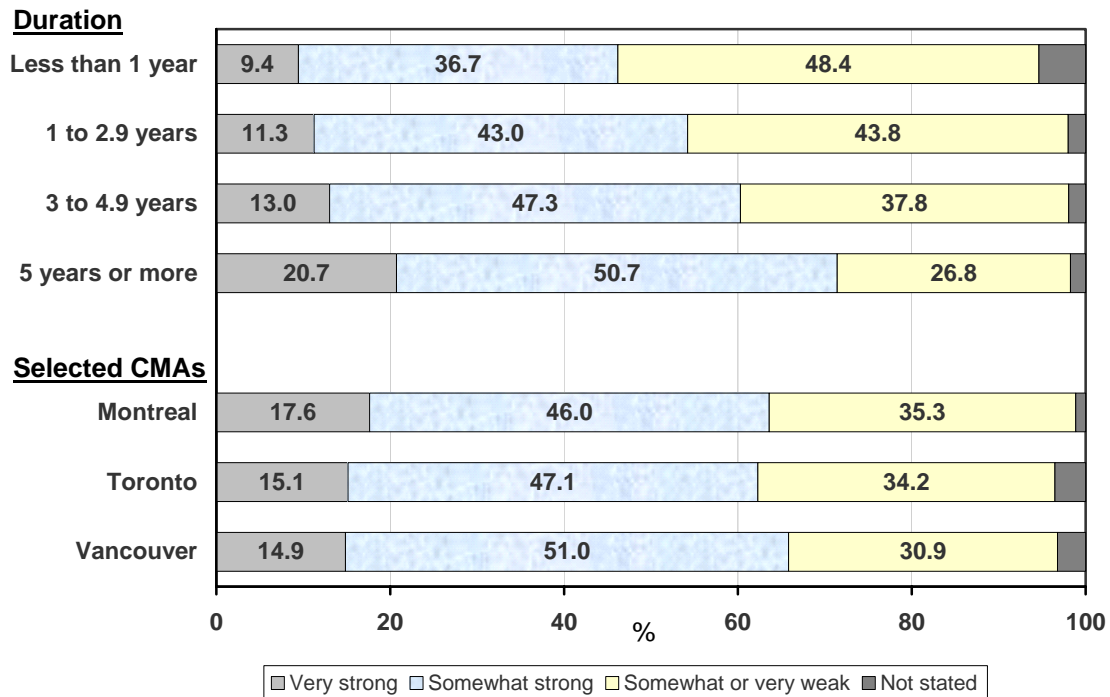
**Chart 8**

**How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to their province, by province of birth and current region of residence, 2003 (Canadian-born only)**



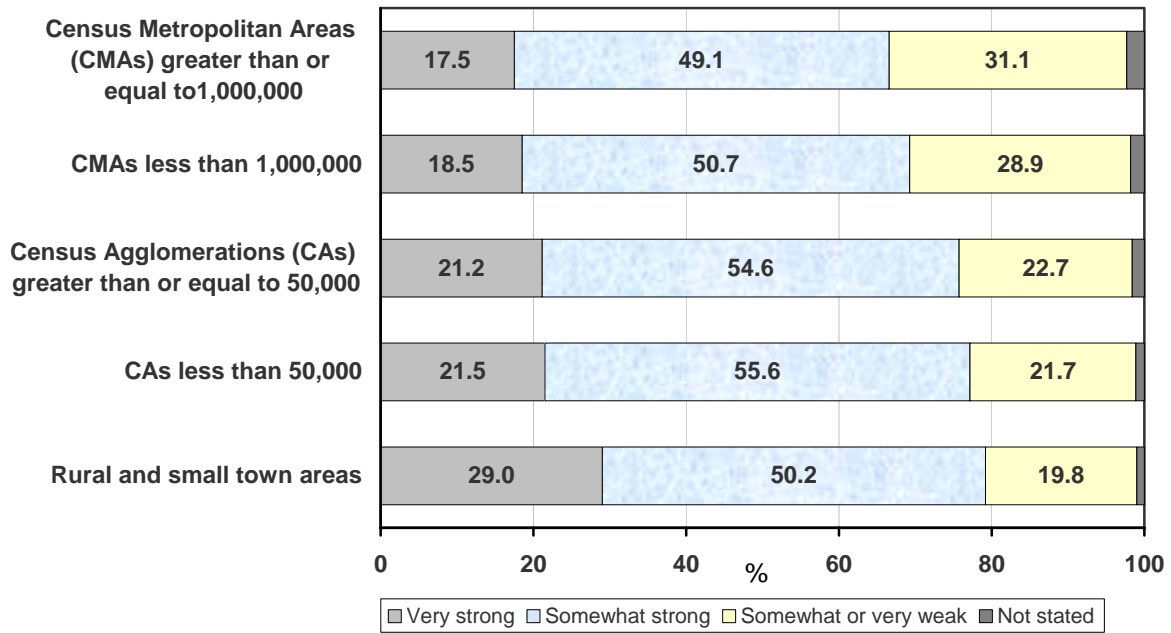
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Chart 9**  
**How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to their local community,**  
**by duration of residence and selected CMAs, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

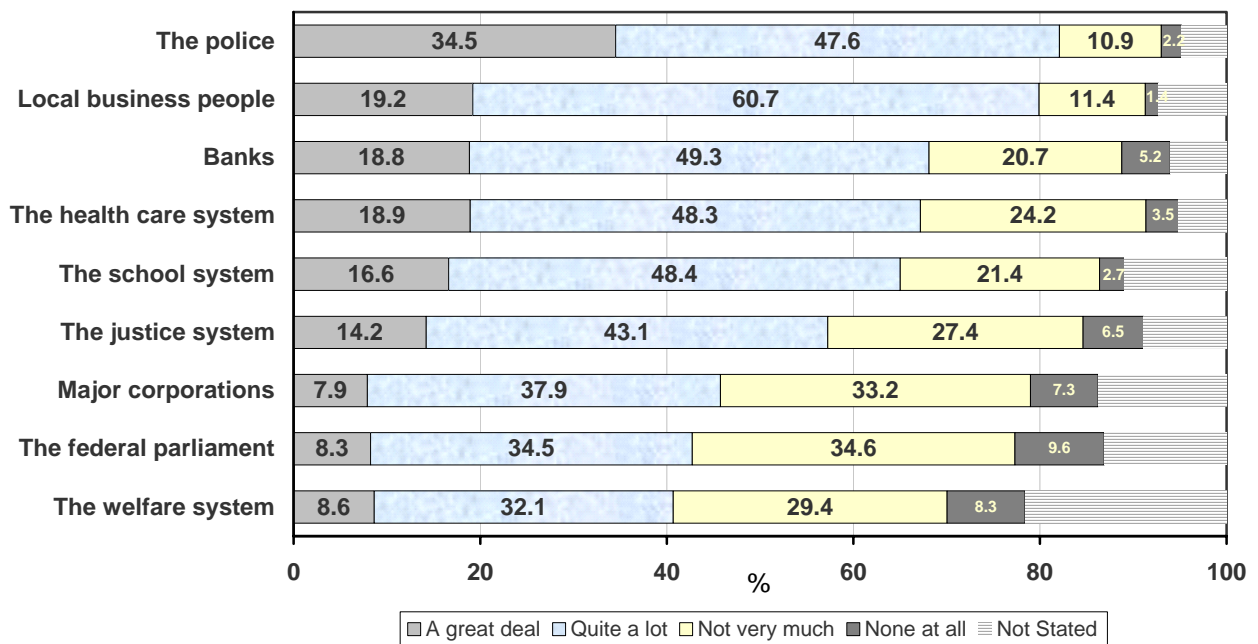
**Chart 10**  
**How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to their local community, by urban size, 2003** (Resided in their area for 5 years or more)



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

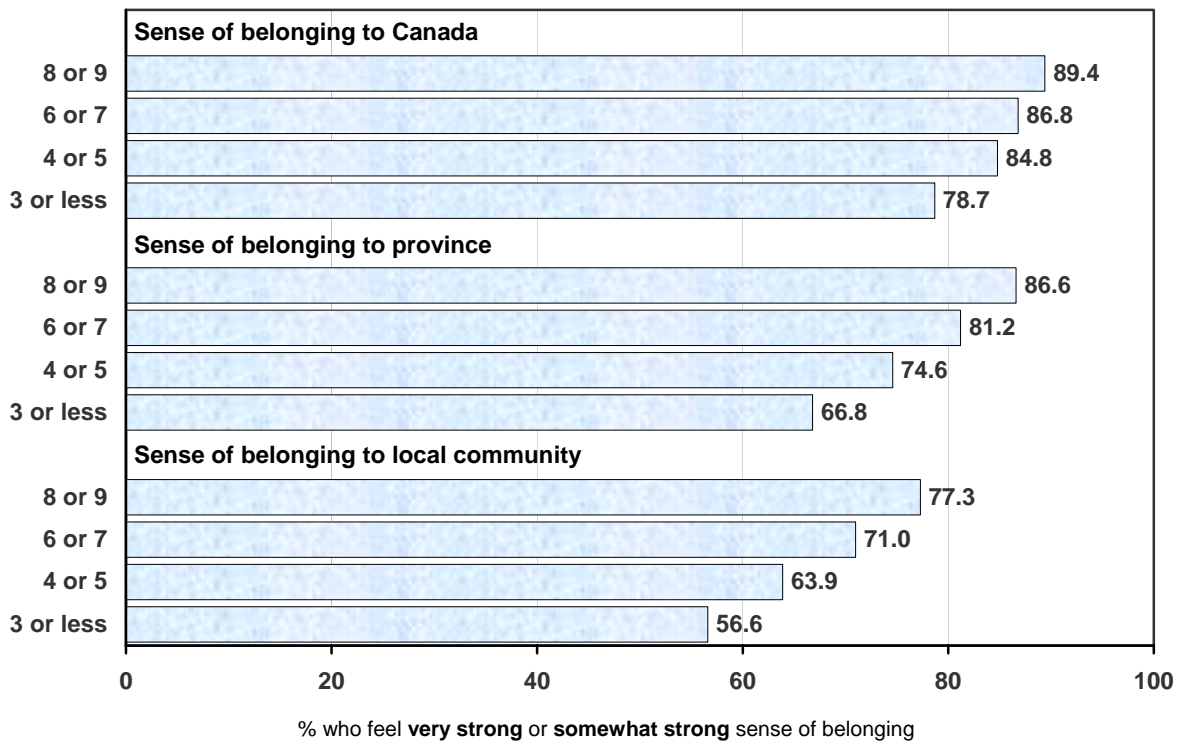


**Chart 11**  
**The confidence Canadians have in various institutions, Canada, 2003**



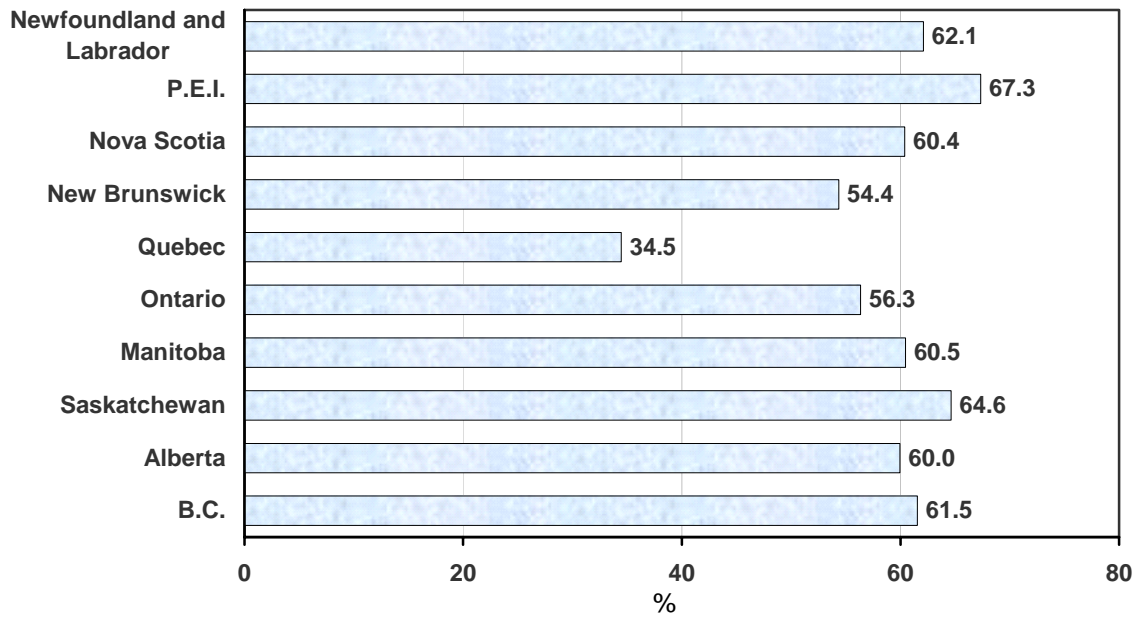
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Chart 12**  
**Feelings of belonging by number of institutions in which individuals have confidence, 2003**



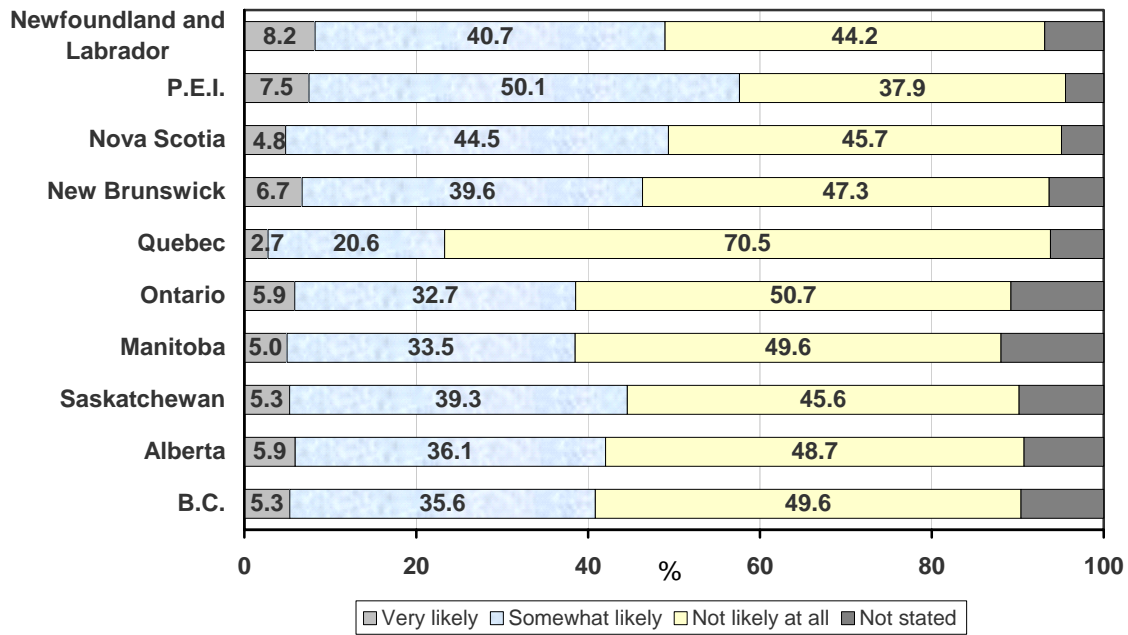
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Chart 13**  
**Percentage of Canadians who feel that 'people can be trusted', by province, 2003**



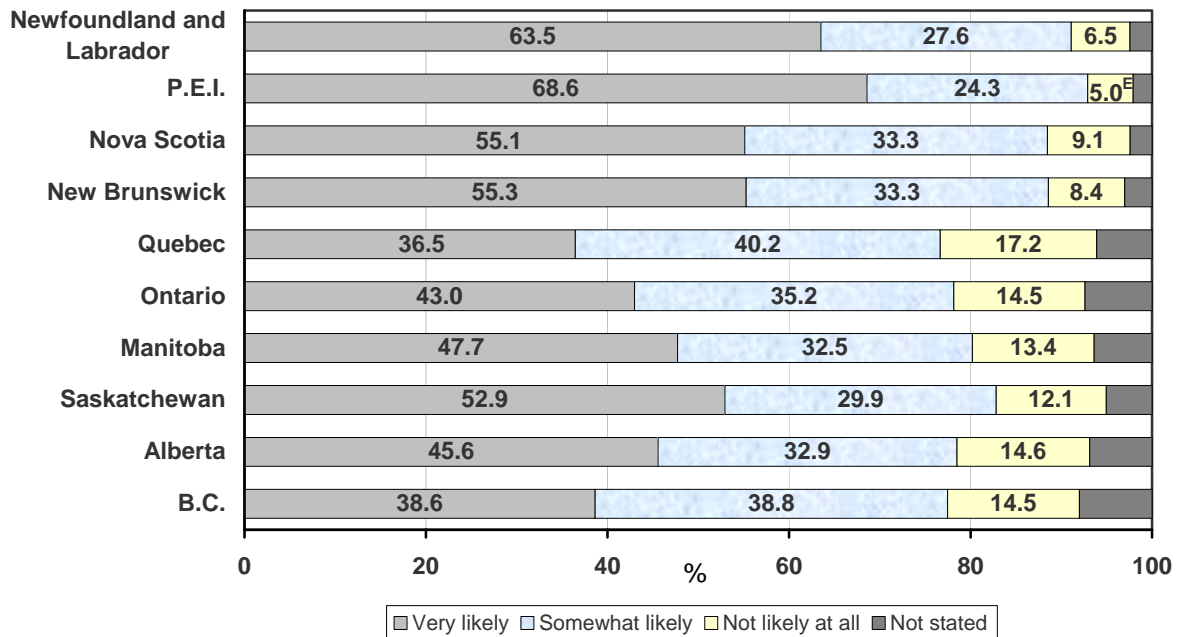
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Chart 14**  
**Perceptions of how likely a wallet would be returned with its contents if found by a stranger, by province, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

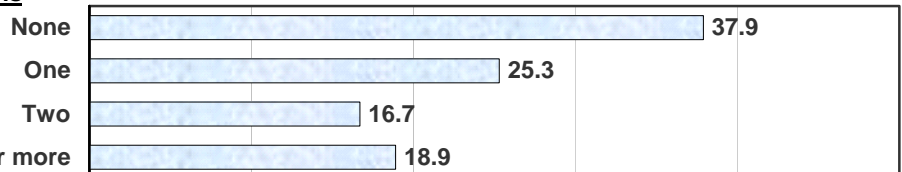
**Chart 15**  
**Perceptions of how likely a wallet would be returned with its contents if found by someone living nearby, by province, 2003**



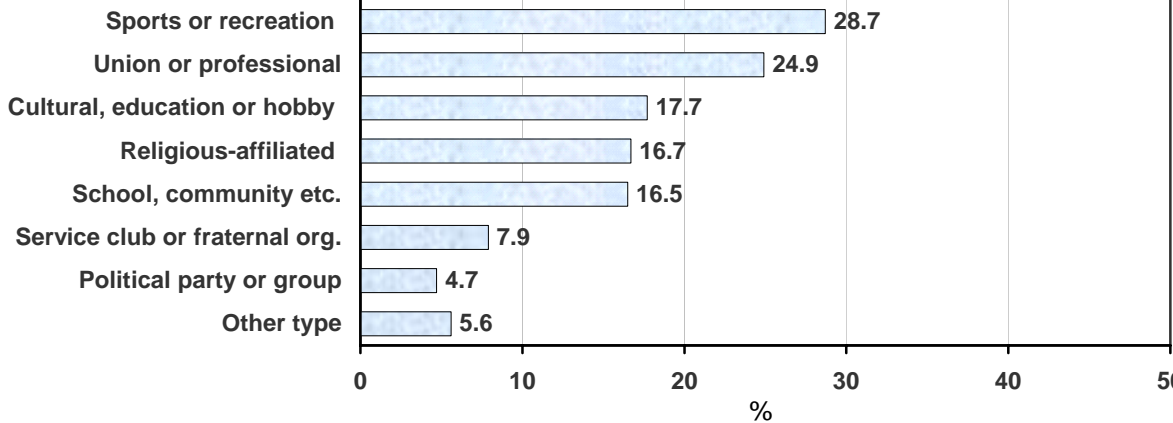
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Chart 16**  
**Number and type of organizations in which Canadians are involved, Canada, 2003**

**Number of organizations**



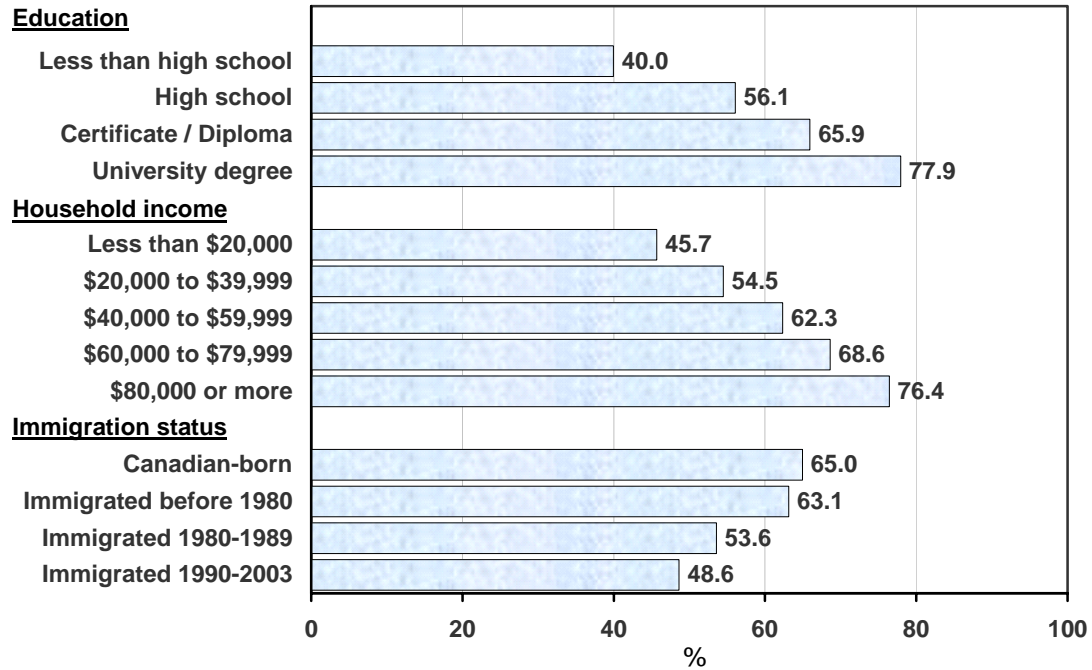
**Types of organizations**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

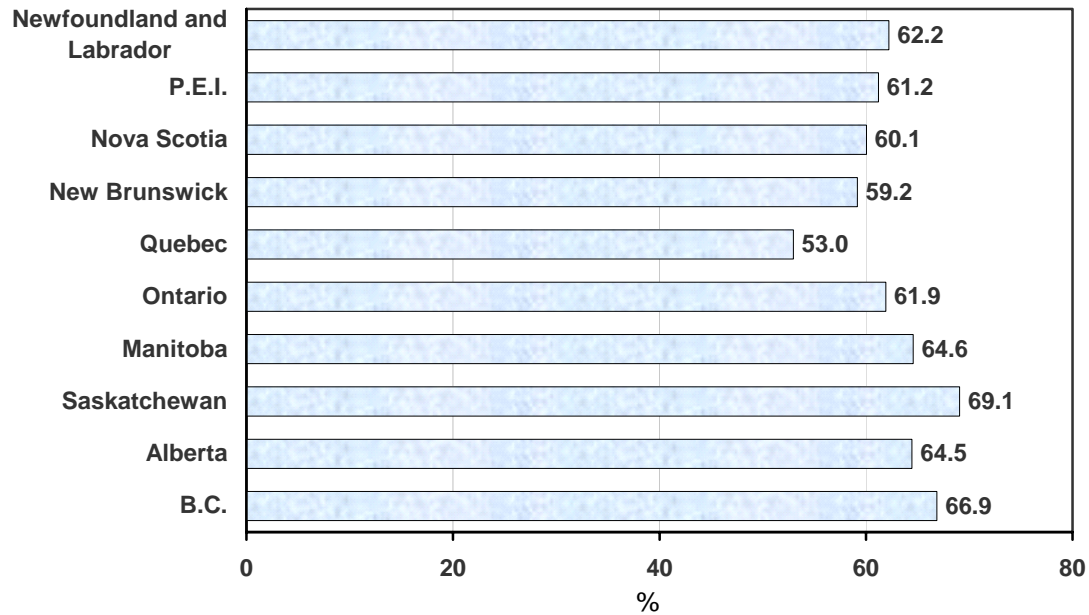
**Chart 17**

**Percentage of individuals aged 25 to 54 who were involved in at least one organization, by selected characteristics, Canada, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

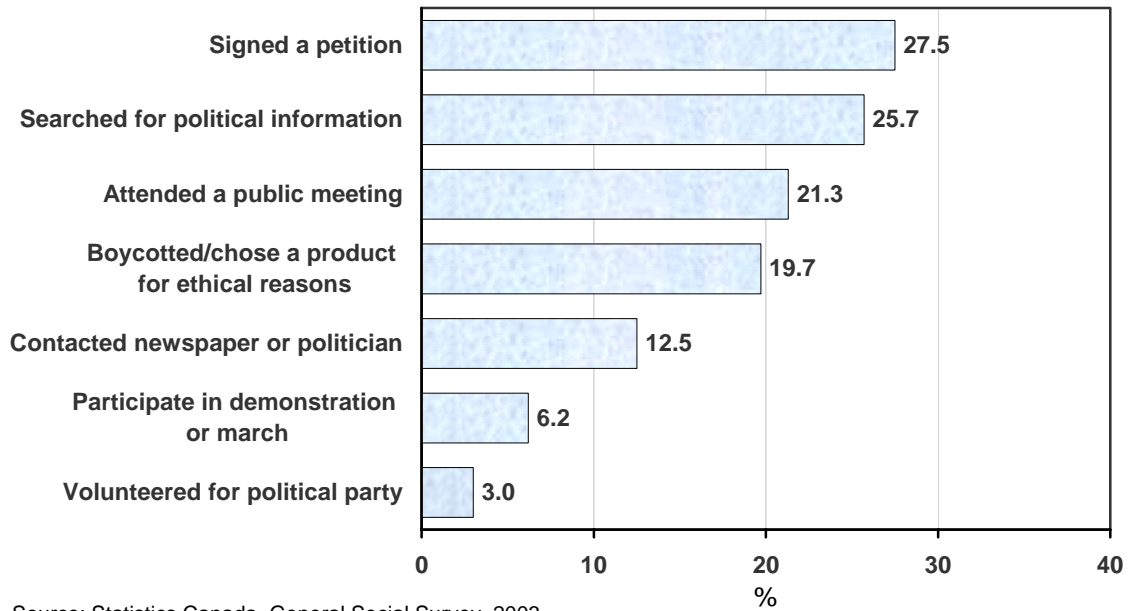
**Chart 18**  
**Percentage of individuals who are involved in at least one organization, by province, Canada, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

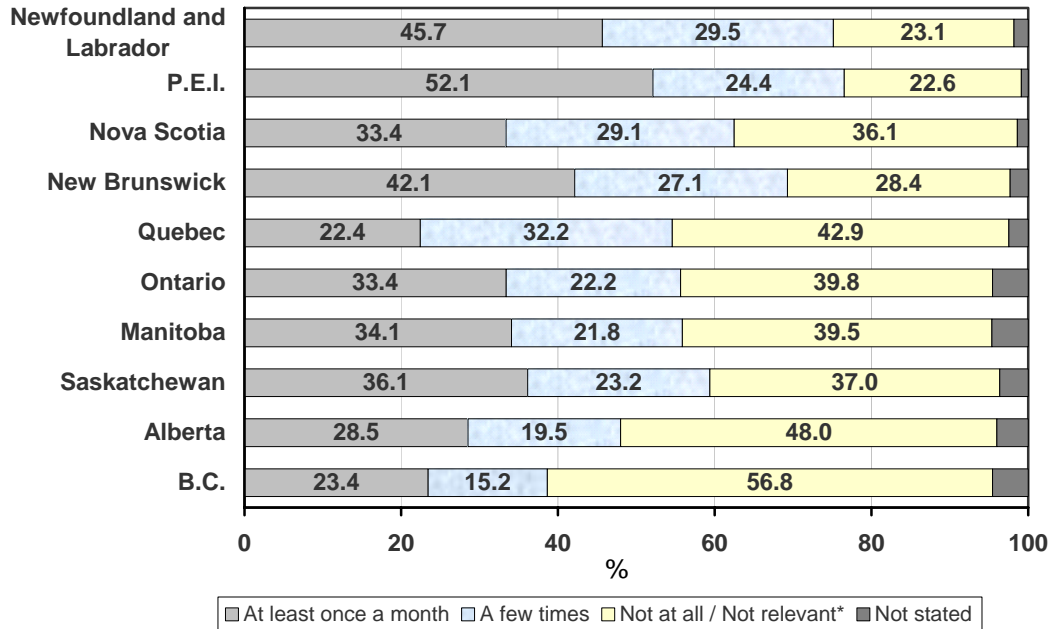


**Chart 19**  
**Percentage of Canadians who engaged in selected political activities over the previous year, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

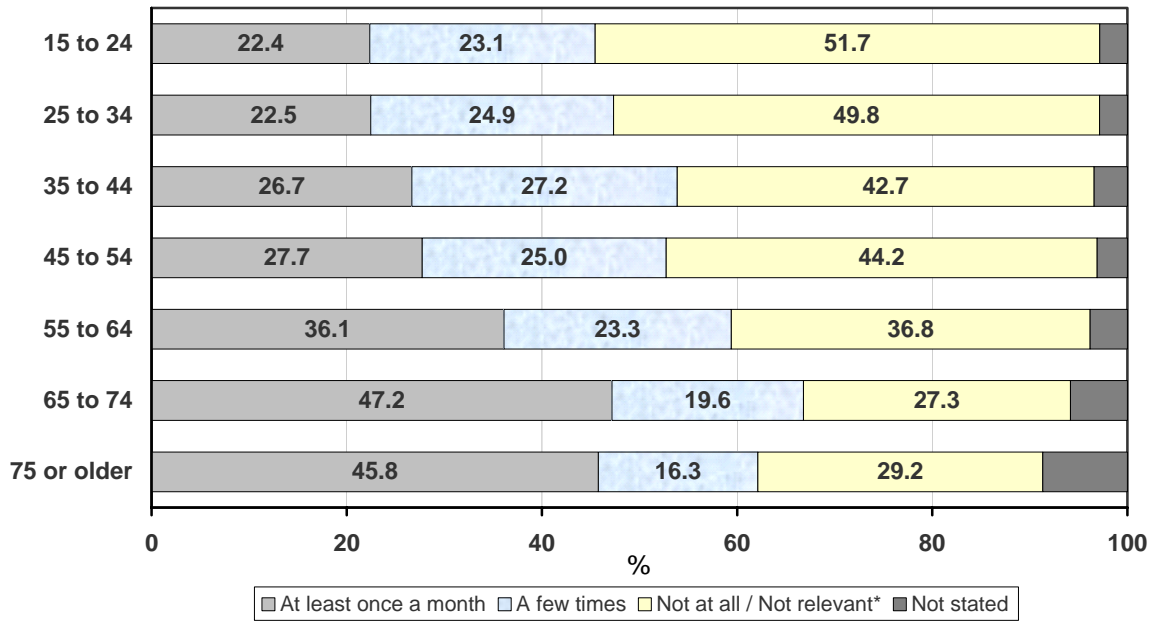
**Chart 20**  
**Frequency of attendance at religious services over the past year, by province, Canada, 2003**



\* Not relevant includes persons who say they are agnostic or atheist or that religious/spiritual values are not at all important to how they live their life.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

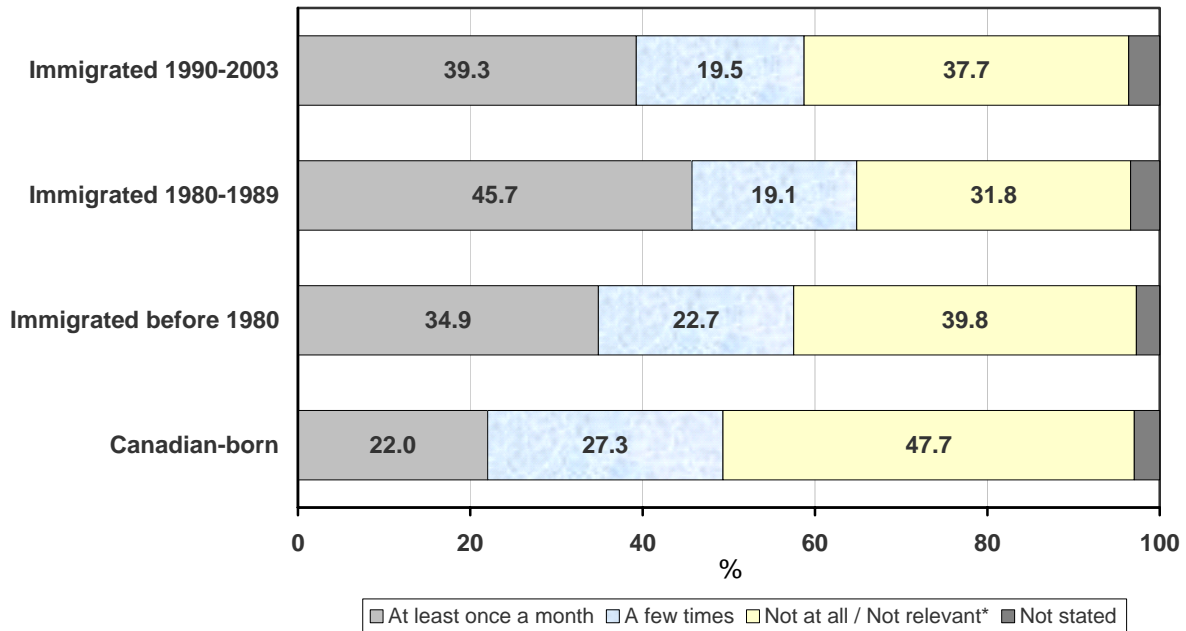
**Chart 21**  
**Frequency of attendance at religious services over the past year, by age group, Canada, 2003**



\* Not relevant includes persons who say they are agnostic or atheist or that religious/spiritual values are not at all important to how they live their life.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

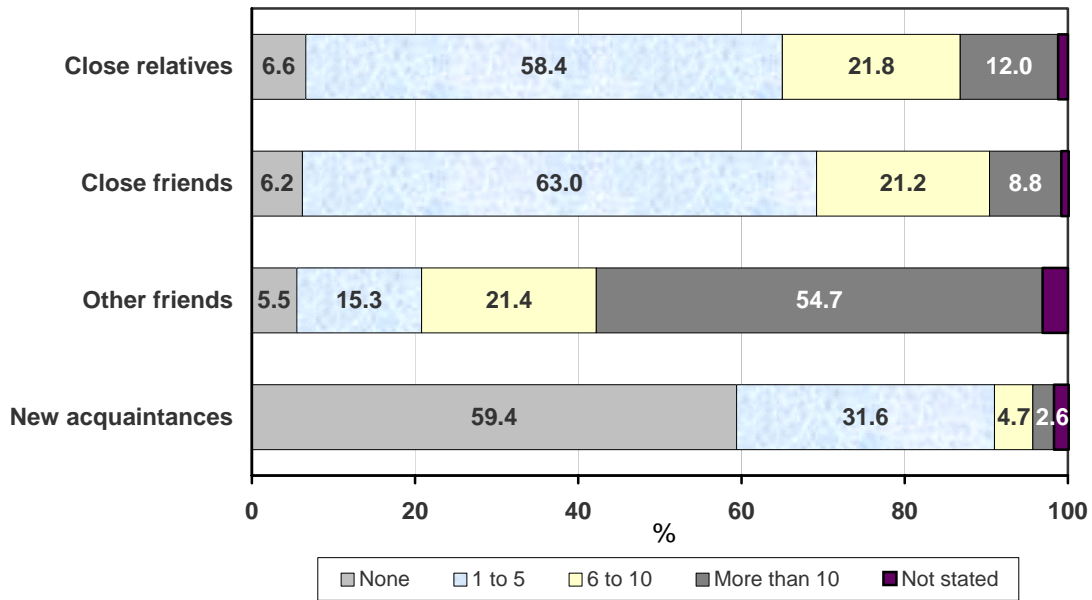
**Chart 22**  
**Frequency of attendance at religious services over the past year among persons aged 25 to 54, by immigration status, Canada, 2003**



\* Not relevant includes persons who say they are agnostic or atheist or that religious/spiritual values are not at all important to how they live their life.

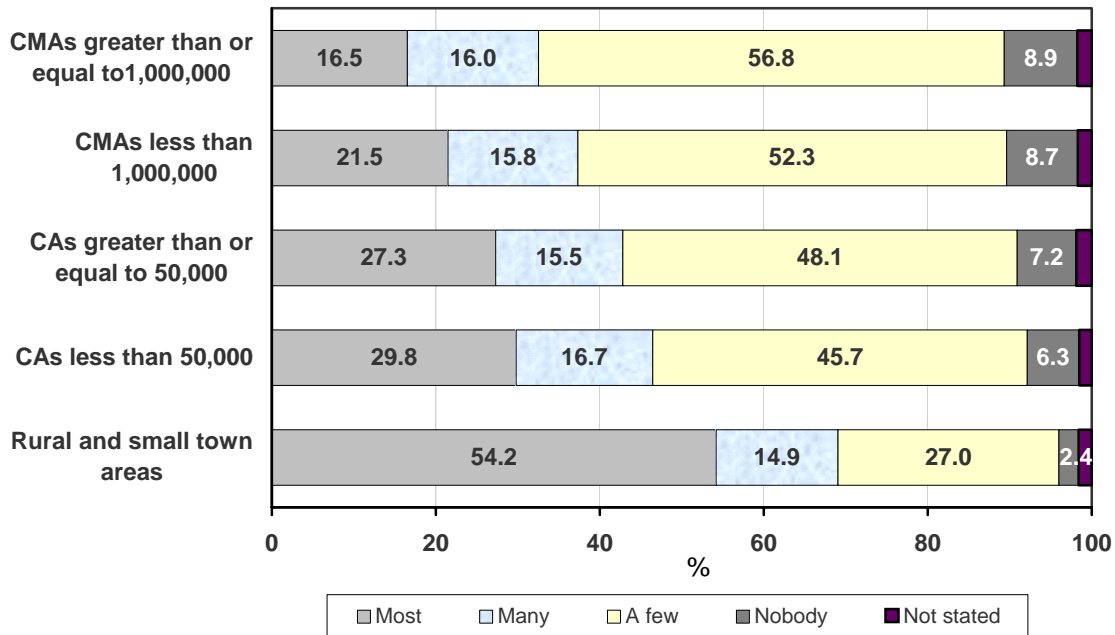
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Chart 23**  
**The number of family, friends and acquaintances in the social networks of Canadians, Canada, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

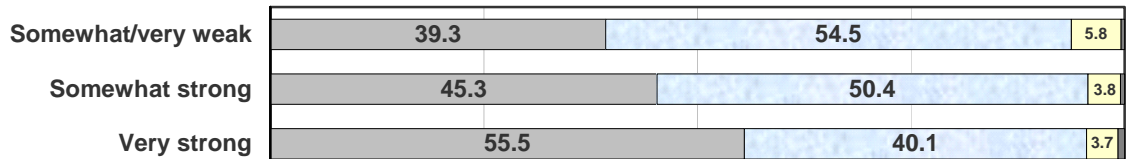
**Chart 24**  
**Percentage of Canadians who know most, many, a few or none of the people in their immediate neighbourhood, by urban size, Canada, 2003**



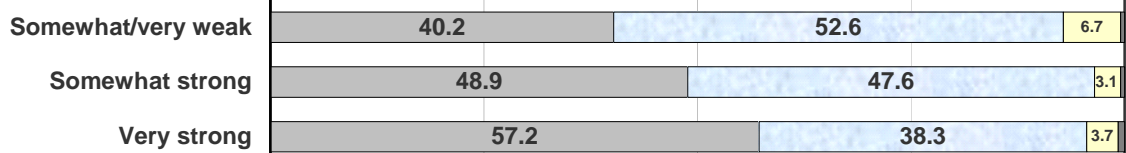
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Chart 25**  
**Level of happiness by sense of belonging, Canada, 2003**

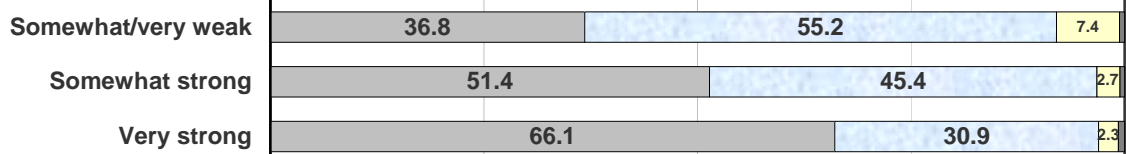
**Belonging to community**



**Belonging to province**



**Belonging to Canada**

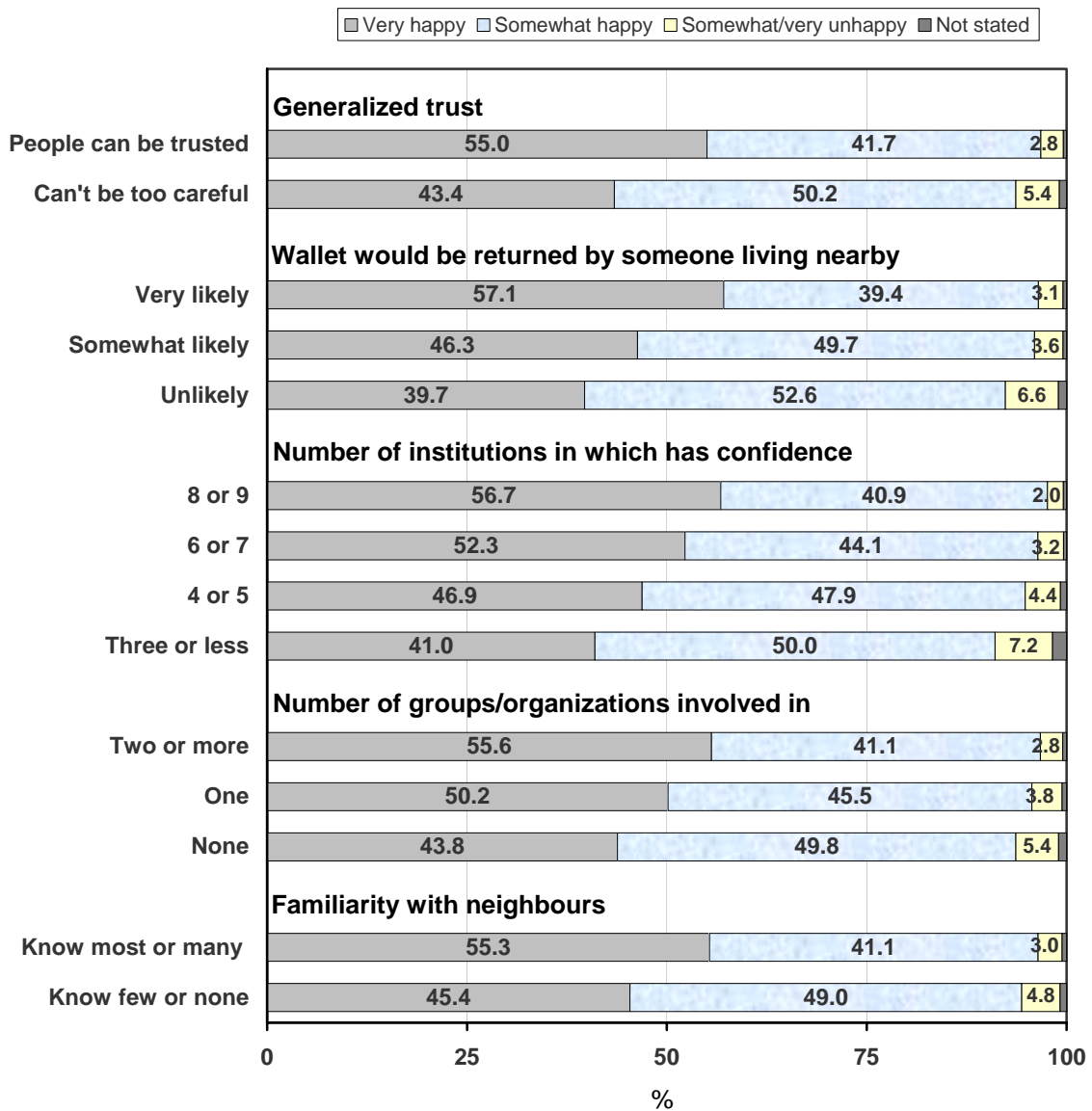


0 25 50 75 100  
%

Very happy Somewhat happy Somewhat/very unhappy Not stated

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

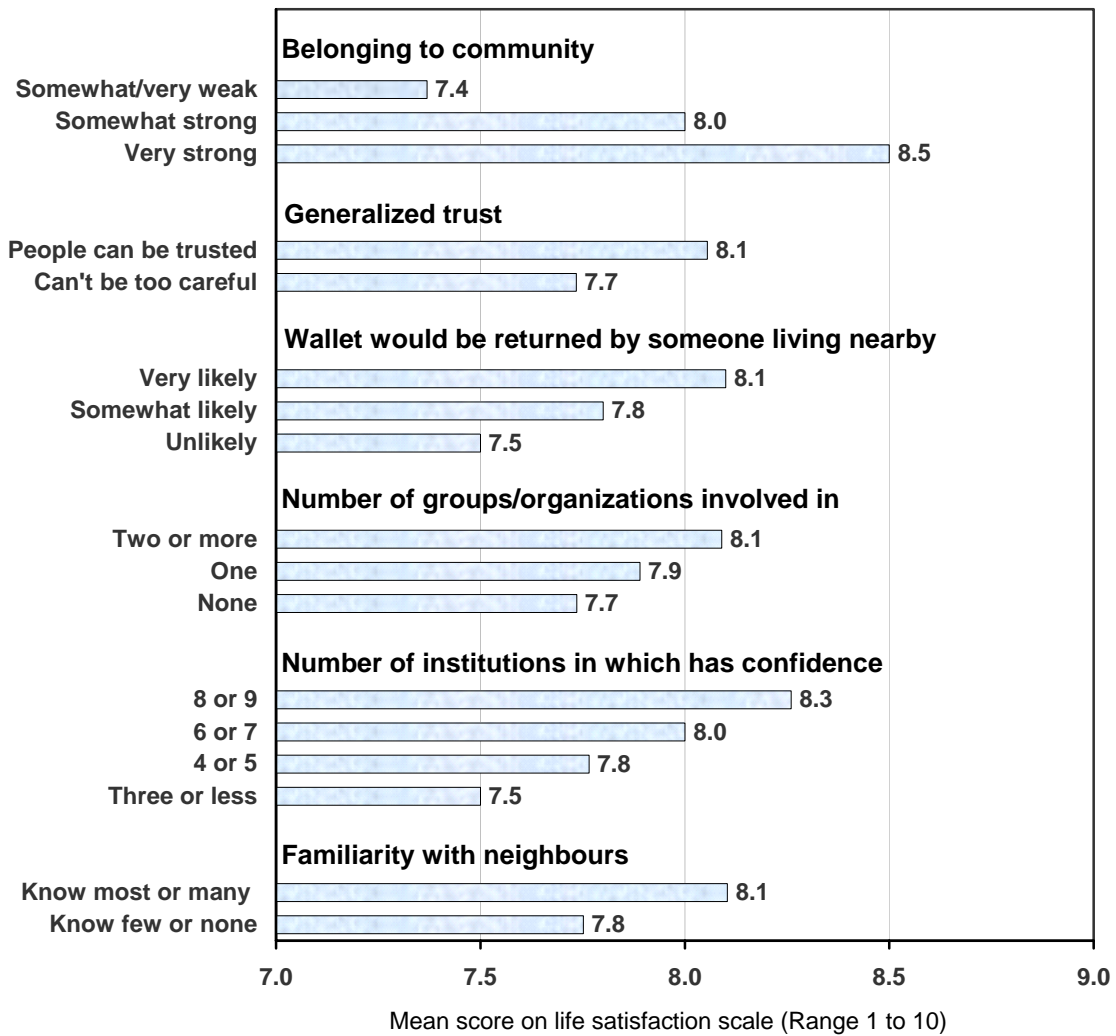
**Chart 26**  
**Level of happiness by selected characteristics, Canada, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.



**Chart 27**  
**Mean scores on life satisfaction scale, by selected characteristics, Canada, 2003**



Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

## **TABLES**

**Table 1**  
**Percentage of Canadians who have 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of confidence in selected public institutions, by province, 2003**

	Police	Health care system	Education system	Welfare system	Federal parliament	Justice system
	%					
Newfoundland and Labrador	84.4	62.8	71.7	37.8	40.3	61.9
P.E.I.	84.1	68.3	75.7	40.4	51.8	63.2
Nova Scotia	83.5	62.7	62.1	33.5	39.8	59.1
New Brunswick	84.4	70.9	66.8	42.3	45.0	65.7
Quebec	86.7	74.2	78.4	64.2	57.8	65.3
Ontario	80.7	68.5	58.2	33.4	40.6	56.9
Manitoba	79.3	62.3	66.3	31.7	38.2	46.2
Saskatchewan	78.7	65.4	74.6	28.7	32.9	51.0
Alberta	80.5	64.1	62.3	33.8	31.6	51.1
British Columbia	79.4	55.8	59.4	31.4	33.7	50.2

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Table 2**  
**Percentage of Canadians aged 25 to 54 who have 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of confidence in selected public institutions, by household income, 2003**

<b>Household income</b>	Police	Health care system	Education system	Welfare system	Federal parliament	Justice system
			%			
Less than \$20,000	78.8	65.2	65.7	46.4	44.6	53.5
\$20,000 to \$39,999	83.2	65.1	70.1	43.8	41.4	57.8
\$40,000 to \$59,999	86.5	66.6	72.2	42.2	44.2	60.6
\$60,000 to \$79,999	87.7	67.6	72.4	40.1	41.9	59.4
\$80,000 or more	89.3	70.4	69.5	38.6	42.9	64.2

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Table 3**  
**General perceptions of trust, by selected characteristics, Canada, 2003**

	People can be trusted	Cannot be too careful in dealing with people	Not stated	Total
	%			
<b>Total</b>	52.8	42.7	4.5	100.0
Men	54.3	41.2	4.5	100.0
Women	51.3	44.1	4.5	100.0
<b>Age Group</b>				
Less than 30	50.4	46.6	3.0	100.0
30 to 49	53.6	42.3	4.1	100.0
50 to 64	56.9	39.0	4.1	100.0
65 or older	48.8	42.4	8.8	100.0
<b>Education</b>				
Less than high school	40.7	54.8	4.5	100.0
High school	53.2	43.8	3.1	100.0
Certificate / diploma	54.5	42.7	2.8	100.0
University degree	66.7	30.4	2.9	100.0
<b>Household Income</b>				
Less than \$20,000	43.3	53.4	3.2	100.0
\$20,000 to \$39,999	48.3	49.8	1.9	100.0
\$40,000 to \$59,999	53.0	45.3	1.6	100.0
\$60,000 to \$79,999	58.9	39.1	2.0 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
\$80,000 or more	66.1	32.5	1.4	100.0
<b>Immigration Status</b>				
Canadian-born	52.8	43.2	4.0	100.0
Immigrated before 1980	56.9	37.1	6.0	100.0
Immigrated 1980-1989	46.2	47.7	6.1	100.0
Immigrated 1990-2003	51.9	42.2	6.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Table 4**

**Percentage of Canadians who say that it is 'very likely' or 'somewhat likely' that a wallet or purse containing \$200 would be returned if found by a complete stranger/someone living close by, by selected characteristics, 2003**

	If found by a complete stranger		If found by someone who lives close by	
	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely	Somewhat likely
	%			
<b>Total</b>	5.0	31.5	42.7	36.1
Men	5.0	31.3	43.6	35.7
Women	5.0	31.7	41.8	36.5
<b>Household Income</b>				
Less than \$20,000	4.9	27.1	33.1	36.6
\$20,000 to \$39,999	5.5	29.0	42.0	36.6
\$40,000 to \$59,999	5.0	32.1	41.9	41.0
\$60,000 to \$79,999	4.6	35.7	46.2	39.1
\$80,000 or more	5.9	41.2	53.1	36.3
<b>City Size</b>				
Rural and small town areas	6.1	34.4	59.3	28.9
CAs less than 50,000	3.9	34.0	44.7	36.2
CAs greater than or equal to 50,000	4.9	34.2	45.3	36.1
CMAs less than 1,000,000	4.9	33.8	42.4	36.3
CMAs greater than or equal to 1,000,000	4.8	27.2	33.5	39.6

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Table 5**  
**Percentage of Canadians who participated in selected political activities in the previous year, by age group, Canada, 2003**

	Searched for information on a political issue	Contacted newspaper or politician	Signed petition	Boycotted / chose product for ethical reason	Attended a public meeting	Participated in a march or demonstration
	%					
<b>Age Group</b>						
15 to 29	33.2	8.4	29.0	20.2	16.3	9.9
30 to 49	25.3	13.7	30.3	23.7	23.2	6.1
50 to 64	24.5	16.0	28.8	20.2	25.2	5.5
65 or older	16.0	11.3	15.7	7.4	19.6	1.5

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Table 6**  
**Percentage of persons aged 25 to 54 who participated in selected political activities, by selected characteristics, Canada, 2003**

	Searched for information on a political issue	Contacted newspaper or politician	Signed Petition	Boycotted / chose product for ethical reason	Attended a public meeting	Participated in a march or demonstration
	%					
<b>Educational attainment</b>						
Less than high school	9.2	4.6	14.5	7.5	13.2	2.4
High school	19.9	11.7	29.7	18.8	19.0	4.4
Certificate or diploma	23.9	13.1	32.0	23.6	23.3	5.4
University degree	42.0	19.3	37.3	36.3	30.5	10.6
<b>Household income</b>						
Less than \$20,000	22.0	11.9	25.4	17.5	17.7	6.1
\$20,000 to \$39,999	20.6	11.0	27.0	18.2	18.4	6.6
\$40,000 to \$59,999	23.4	12.1	30.2	21.6	22.0	6.6
\$60,000 to \$79,999	26.5	13.6	34.0	25.0	23.5	5.2
\$80,000 or more	34.8	17.8	37.4	32.7	29.0	6.8
<b>Immigration Status</b>						
Canadian-born	25.8	13.7	33.3	25.5	24.0	5.9
Immigrated before 1980	28.6	16.3	29.3	23.7	22.2	8.0
Immigrated 1980-1989	26.8	11.6	22.0	17.6	16.6	8.1
Immigrated 1990-2003	22.2	8.6	12.2	10.3	14.6	5.8

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.



**Table 7**  
**Percentage of persons aged 25 to 54 who participated in selected political activities in the past year, by whether or not they voted in most recent federal and provincial elections<sup>1</sup>, Canada, 2003**

	Searched for information on a political issue	Contacted newspaper or politician	Signed Petition	Boycotted / chose product for ethical reason	Attended a public meeting	Participated in a march or demonstration
	%					
Voted in both federal and provincial election	29.5	16.6	36.0	27.6	27.3	7.0
Voted in federal or provincial election	26.4	9.6	29.6	23.8	20.5	6.3
Did not vote in either federal or provincial election	17.7	6.8	18.1	14.9	12.9	4.6

<sup>1</sup> Readers are reminded that the GSS data were collected throughout 2003 and that the phrase "most recent federal and provincial elections" refers to the elections prior to the data collection.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Table 8**  
**Percentage of persons aged 25 to 54 who participated in selected political activities in the past year, by number of institutions in which they have confidence, Canada, 2003**

	Searched for information on a political issue	Contacted newspaper or politician	Signed Petition	Boycotted / chose product for ethical reason	Attended a public meeting	Participated in a march or demonstration
				%		
Three or less	26.4	16.1	32.4	28.5	22.3	7.5
Four or five	27.6	15.8	34.0	27.8	25.2	6.7
Six or seven	28.5	13.7	31.8	23.9	24.3	6.4
Eight or nine	22.5	9.2	26.5	18.0	20.2	5.0

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Table 9**  
**The number of family, friends and acquaintances in the social networks of Canadians,**  
**by age group, Canada, 2003**

Age Group	None	1 to 5	6 to 10	More than 10	Not stated	Total
Number of close relatives						
%						
15 to 29	5.6	57.2	23.3	13.2	0.6 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
30 to 49	6.5	59.1	22.2	11.3	0.9	100.0
50 to 64	7.0	59.9	20.8	11.4	0.9 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
65 or older	7.8	56.7	19.8	12.5	3.2	100.0
Number of close friends						
%						
15 to 29	1.9	60.9	27.3	9.6	0.3 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
30 to 49	5.1	68.2	18.8	7.5	0.4 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
50 to 64	8.2	63.9	18.9	8.1	0.8 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
65 or older	13.6	51.3	20.3	11.8	3.1	100.0
Number of other friends						
%						
15 to 29	2.3	10.7	20.9	64.4	1.6	100.0
30 to 49	4.6	16.4	22.3	54.8	2.0	100.0
50 to 64	6.4	17.6	22.7	50.2	2.9	100.0
65 or older	12.0	17.0	18.1	44.3	8.6	100.0
Number of new acquaintances						
%						
15 to 29	43.0	45.5	6.9	3.7	1.0	100.0
30 to 49	61.3	31.4	4.0	2.2	1.2	100.0
50 to 64	66.1	25.2	4.3	2.3	2.1	100.0
65 or older	72.3	18.3	3.3	2.1	4.1	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Table 10**  
**Percentage of Canadians aged 25 to 54 who used the internet in the previous month to communicate with family and friends, by selected characteristics, 2003**

	With relatives	With friends
	%	
<b>Total</b>	43.8	48.6
Men	39.6	47.1
Women	48.0	50.1
<b>Educational attainment</b>		
Less than high school	17.3	14.8
High school	37.9	41.3
Certificate or diploma	44.2	49.2
University degree	62.3	71.6
<b>Household income</b>		
Less than \$20,000	30.8	36.3
\$20,000 to \$39,999	38.1	39.5
\$40,000 to \$59,999	41.6	44.3
\$60,000 to \$79,999	45.2	52.1
\$80,000 or more	54.6	62.8
<b>Immigration Status</b>		
Canadian-born	42.6	48.1
Immigrated before 1980	43.9	48.3
Immigrated 1980-1989	37.7	42.5
Immigrated 1990-2003	55.9	56.0

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Table 11**  
**The extent to which Canadians know the people in their immediate neighbourhood, by selected characteristics, Canada, 2003**

Length of time individual has lived in the neighbourhood	Most	Many	A few	Nobody else	Not stated	Total
<b>People in CMAs</b>						
Less than 1 year	4.1	5.4	61.5	28.9	F	100.0
1 to 3 years	8.9	10.3	67.0	13.4	F	100.0
3 to 4 years	14.3	13.9	62.6	9.0	F	100.0
5 years or more	25.6	20.5	50.0	3.5	0.5 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
<b>People not in CMAs</b>						
Less than 1 year	13.3	6.5	60.0	20.2	F	100.0
1 to 3 years	23.2	14.5	54.8	7.5	F	100.0
3 to 4 years	36.6	12.2	46.8	4.4 <sup>E</sup>	F	100.0
5 years or more	52.5	17.6	28.2	1.5	F	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Table 12**  
**The extent to which Canadians know the people in their immediate neighbourhood, by selected characteristics, Canada, 2003**

<b>In neighbourhood 5 years or more</b>	Most	Many	A few	Nobody else	Not stated	Total
	%					
<b>People in CMAs</b>						
Single detached home	29.1	21.7	46.5	2.2	0.5 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
Semi-detached, duplex, townhouse, other	22.4	20.8	52.5	4.0 <sup>E</sup>	F	100.0
Apartment	13.3	14.8	62.5	8.7	F	100.0
<b>People not in CMAs</b>						
Single detached home	55.4	17.7	25.8	0.9	F	100.0
Semi-detached, duplex, townhouse, other	40.7	15.9	41.1	2.4	F	100.0
Apartment	27.6	20.2	43.3	8.6 <sup>E</sup>	F	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

## **APPENDIX**

**Appendix Table 1**  
**How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to Canada, by selected characteristics, Canada, 2003**

	How would you describe your sense of belonging to Canada				Total
	Very Strong	Somewhat Strong	Somewhat/ very weak %	Not stated	
<b>Total</b>	51.7	33.5	13.1	1.6	100.0
Men	51.6	33.0	13.9	1.5	100.0
Women	51.8	34.1	12.4	1.8	100.0
<b>Age Group</b>					
Less than 30	41.4	38.9	18.6	1.1	100.0
30 to 49	48.6	36.2	13.8	1.3	100.0
50 to 64	57.6	29.7	11.3	1.5	100.0
65 or older	68.7	23.0	4.9	3.4	100.0
<b>Immigration Status</b>					
Canadian-born	51.2	33.5	14.3	1.0	100.0
Immigrated before 1980	64.6	26.4	6.8	2.3	100.0
Immigrated 1980-1989	50.3	37.3	8.6	3.9 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
Immigrated 1990-2003	42.8	40.8	11.9	4.6	100.0
<b>Province of Residence</b>					
Newfoundland and Labrador	51.5	37.5	10.0	F	100.0
Prince Edward Island	64.8	30.4	4.4 <sup>E</sup>	F	100.0
Nova Scotia	60.8	31.9	6.7	F	100.0
New Brunswick	59.1	32.8	7.6	F	100.0
Quebec	34.8	38.9	25.0	1.2	100.0
Ontario	58.1	30.8	9.4	1.7	100.0
Manitoba	59.0	32.0	6.9	2.1 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
Saskatchewan	59.0	30.4	9.7	F	100.0
Alberta	57.3	31.0	10.4	1.3 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
British Columbia	52.0	34.8	10.3	2.9	100.0
<b>Educational Attainment</b> (Persons Aged 25 to 54)					
Less than high school	48.1	33.8	15.3	2.8 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
High school	48.5	37.1	13.2	1.2	100.0
Certificate or diploma	48.6	37.1	13.6	0.7 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
University degree	49.7	35.9	13.3	1.0 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
<b>Household Income</b> (Persons Aged 25 to 54)					
Less than \$20,000	48.0	36.6	13.5	1.9 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
\$20,000 to \$39,999	46.8	37.1	15.2	0.9 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
\$40,000 to \$59,999	45.8	36.8	16.4	1.0 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
\$60,000 to \$79,999	46.9	38.1	14.4	F	100.0
\$80,000 or more	52.0	36.0	11.7	F	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.



**Appendix Table 2****How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to their province, by selected characteristics, Canada, 2003**

	How would you describe your sense of belonging to your province				Total
	Very Strong	Somewhat Strong	Somewhat/ very weak %	Not stated	
<b>Total</b>	32.3	45.6	19.5	2.6	100.0
Men	33.0	44.9	19.8	2.3	100.0
Women	31.6	46.3	19.2	2.9	100.0
<b>Age Group</b>					
Less than 30	24.1	47.8	26.5	1.6	100.0
30 to 49	28.5	47.9	21.4	2.2	100.0
50 to 64	38.4	43.8	15.3	2.6	100.0
65 or older	47.3	38.6	8.6	5.5	100.0
<b>Immigration Status</b>					
Canadian-born	32.9	45.9	19.2	1.9	100.0
Immigrated before 1980	36.7	40.9	17.5	4.9	100.0
Immigrated 1980-1989	28.3	44.1	23.4	4.2 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
Immigrated 1990-2003	23.1	48.9	22.5	5.5	100.0
<b>Province of Residence</b>					
Newfoundland and Labrador	52.8	37.6	9.1	F	100.0
Prince Edward Island	46.0	43.3	9.7	F	100.0
Nova Scotia	37.7	47.5	13.4	1.4 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
New Brunswick	33.5	48.1	16.7	1.8 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
Quebec	36.8	45.2	16.6	1.3	100.0
Ontario	28.7	45.9	22.0	3.4	100.0
Manitoba	31.2	47.2	18.7	2.9	100.0
Saskatchewan	30.4	47.3	20.2	2.1 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
Alberta	35.3	43.1	19.3	2.4	100.0
British Columbia	28.5	46.9	21.1	3.6	100.0
<b>Educational Attainment</b> (Persons Aged 25 to 54)					
Less than high school	34.6	43.7	18.8	2.9 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
High school	29.5	48.0	20.5	2.0	100.0
Certificate or diploma	29.4	48.3	20.6	1.7	100.0
University degree	24.9	48.3	24.8	2.1	100.0
<b>Household Income</b> (Persons Aged 25 to 54)					
Less than \$20,000	27.7	42.9	25.8	3.5 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
\$20,000 to \$39,999	30.1	46.5	21.3	2.1 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
\$40,000 to \$59,999	29.9	47.7	21.0	1.4 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
\$60,000 to \$79,999	29.6	49.9	19.6	0.9 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
\$80,000 or more	27.1	48.6	23.0	1.3	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

**Appendix Table 3****How Canadians describe their sense of belonging to their local community, by selected characteristics, Canada, 2003**

	How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community				Total
	Very Strong	Somewhat Strong	Somewhat/ very weak %	Not stated	
<b>Total</b>	19.0	49.0	29.9	2.1	100.0
Men	18.6	48.2	31.2	2.0	100.0
Women	19.4	49.7	28.7	2.3	100.0
<b>Age Group</b>					
Less than 30	15.1	49.0	34.9	1.0	100.0
30 to 49	16.8	49.8	31.8	1.6	100.0
50 to 64	21.3	49.2	27.1	2.4	100.0
65 or older	27.9	46.3	20.5	5.2	100.0
<b>Immigration Status</b>					
Canadian-born	19.2	49.2	30.1	1.5	100.0
Immigrated before 1980	22.0	46.1	27.5	4.4	100.0
Immigrated 1980-1989	16.7	47.6	31.7	4.0 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
Immigrated 1990-2003	14.6	50.7	30.6	4.2	100.0
<b>Province of Residence</b>					
Newfoundland and Labrador	32.0	50.2	17.3	F	100.0
Prince Edward Island	24.2	53.6	21.0	F	100.0
Nova Scotia	21.5	53.0	24.8	F	100.0
New Brunswick	23.2	53.0	22.7	1.1 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
Quebec	20.5	48.1	30.3	1.2	100.0
Ontario	17.6	48.8	30.6	3.0	100.0
Manitoba	19.5	48.5	30.3	1.7 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
Saskatchewan	20.0	53.1	25.4	1.5 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
Alberta	17.4	45.7	35.2	1.8	100.0
British Columbia	17.8	50.5	28.8	2.8	100.0
<b>Educational Attainment</b> (Persons Aged 25 to 54)					
Less than high school	19.5	49.6	29.2	1.7 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
High school	16.4	49.2	32.8	1.6	100.0
Certificate or diploma	16.0	50.6	32.2	1.2 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
University degree	16.5	47.9	34.1	1.4	100.0
<b>Household Income</b> (Persons Aged 25 to 54)					
Less than \$20,000	14.3	44.6	38.7	2.4 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
\$20,000 to \$39,999	16.2	49.0	33.7	1.2 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
\$40,000 to \$59,999	16.3	49.1	33.7	0.9 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
\$60,000 to \$79,999	16.3	52.6	29.7	1.4 <sup>E</sup>	100.0
\$80,000 or more	16.7	50.5	32.2	0.6 <sup>E</sup>	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2003.

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