



MB FACT SHEET

Interest in Public Policy

May 2004

The final question asked of Looking West 2004 respondents concerned policy interest. Respondents were asked, "How would you rate your personal interest in public policy issues? High level of interest; moderate level of interest; low level of interest."

Only two in ten (21.4%) Manitoba respondents report a high level of interest, and an equal number (21.6%) report a low level of interest. The majority reports a moderate level of interest. Variations by urban size are modest.

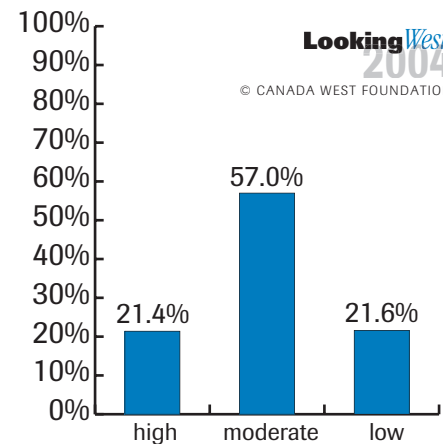
There were numerous demographic differences. The largest gaps are seen in age, income and educational status. Respondents with graduate degrees report the highest level of interest in public policy of all demographic cohorts. The percentage of respondents reporting a high level of interest in public policy generally rises with educational attainment, from a low of 15.6% for those with less than a high school diploma to a high of 51.4% of those with graduate degrees – a difference of over 35 percentage points. Conversely, the percentage of respondents reporting a low level of interest in public policy declines with educational attainment, from a high of 28.1% of those with less than a high school diploma to a low of 13.5% for those with graduate degrees.

Significant differences are also seen with age category, with interest in public policy increasing with age. Over one-third (35.9%) of respondents under the age of thirty report a low level of interest in public policy, while just one in ten (11.5%) respondents aged 50-69 years reports low interest – a gap of almost 25 percentage points.

The differences by income category are also notable; in general, the number of respondents reporting low interest declines as income rises and the number reporting high interest rises as income rises.

Differences can also be found between respondents born in Canada and respondents born outside Canada, with the latter being more likely to state a high level of interest in public policy. Lastly, a gender gap is seen, with men more likely than women to report a high level of interest in public policy, and

Figure 1:
Level of Public Policy Interest -
MB Respondents



How would you rate your personal interest in public policy issues?
High level of interest; moderate level of interest; low level of interest.

women more likely than men to report a low level of interest in public policy. This gap is modest compared to the age, education and income gaps.

Overall, the data demonstrate that older, wealthier and more highly educated individuals report higher levels of interest in public policy, while younger, less wealthy and less educated individuals report lower levels of interest in public policy. There are a number of cohorts in which a greater percentage reports low interest than reports high interest include: income under \$30,000; age under 49 years; respondents with less than a bachelors degree; respondents born in Canada; and women.

Figure 2: Level of Public Policy Interest, MB Respondents

	Low	Moderate	High
Male	17.0%	57.4%	25.5%
Female	25.9%	56.6%	17.6%
<i>Difference between low and high</i>	8.9		7.9
Income under \$30,000	26.5%	55.1%	18.4%
Income \$30,000 – 69,999	19.7%	60.7%	19.7%
Income \$70,000 – 149,999	23.7%	50.0%	26.3%
Income \$150,000 and over	9.1%	54.5%	36.4%
<i>Difference between low and high</i>	17.4		18.0
Age under 30 years	35.9%	51.6%	12.5%
Age 30 – 49 years	25.8%	57.1%	17.2%
Age 50–69 years	11.5%	61.5%	27.0%
Age 70 years and over	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%
<i>Difference between low and high</i>	24.4		25.0
Less than high school education	28.1%	56.3%	15.6%
High school diploma	23.7%	58.8%	17.5%
Some university/college/technical school	22.9%	56.3%	20.8%
Completed college/trade/technical diploma/degree	20.7%	63.2%	16.1%
University bachelor’s degree	17.5%	59.6%	22.8%
Graduate degree	13.5%	35.1%	51.4%
<i>Difference between low and high</i>	14.6		35.8
Born in Canada	21.2%	58.5%	20.3%
Born outside Canada	27.6%	37.9%	34.5%
<i>Difference between low and high</i>	6.4		14.2



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