

Social Effects of Culture: Exploratory Statistical Evidence



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SOCIAL EFFECTS OF CULTURE: EXPLORATORY STATISTICAL EVIDENCE

The arts are an integral part of many Canadians' lives. Culture provides a means to be entertained, celebrate commonalities and differences, express individuality, feel a sense of attachment and experience artistic expression.

Exploratory in nature, this report examines the relationship between four cultural activities (reading books, attending live performances, visiting art galleries and attending movie theatres) and specific social phenomena.

The report defines a cultural participant as anyone who read at least one book, attended at least one live performance, visited at least one art gallery, or saw at least one movie at a theatre in 2005. This is a low threshold of cultural participation. In particular, many activities within these categories do not have explicit social goals. As such, their social impacts may be less than for those artistic activities that have an explicit social goal.¹

In addition, there are many other factors that could play a significant role in the social indicators examined in this report. The focus of this report – preliminary research into the potential linkages between cultural activities and a wide range of social phenomena – precludes a thorough examination of other potential factors in all of the social indicators.

The data is drawn from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey of 2005, an in-depth telephone survey of about 20,000 Canadians 15 years of age or older. Because of a split in the survey design, only half of the respondents were asked questions about their cultural and heritage activities in 2005. A total of 9,851 respondents answered the cultural questions. The other half of the respondents were asked questions about social networking and trust, including some questions that, in theory, would be helpful in examining the social effects of culture. However, because of the survey split, these questions could not be cross-tabulated with the questions about cultural activities. Questions that could be cross-tabulated with the cultural activities include volunteering, donating, neighbourhood connections, sense of belonging, enjoyment of social activities, economic participation and quality of life.

Because of the exploratory nature of this research, no definitive conclusions will be drawn from the data. Rather, areas of potential effects and linkages will be highlighted.²

¹ In *Use or Ornament? Social Impacts of Participation in the Arts*, François Matarasso examines the impacts of cultural activities with a strong participation component, rather than simple attendance or reading. (1997, Gloucestershire: Comedia)

² A chi-squared test was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between each of the cultural variables and the social indicators. In all cases, the tests concluded that there was indeed a relationship between the cultural variables and all of the social variables, although some of the relationships are relatively small.

After a [brief literature review](#), the report is organized into sections by some potential social effects of culture. The following topics were identified based on the literature review and on the questions available in the General Social Survey:

- [Volunteering and Donating](#)
- [Neighbourhood Connections](#)
- [Sense of Belonging](#)
- [Social Activities](#)
- [Labour Force Participation](#)
- [Quality of Life](#)
- [Summary of Key Findings](#)

Potential Social Effects of Culture

A brief literature review was conducted in order to identify the potential social effects of culture. A summary of this literature is provided below, and a [bibliography](#) is provided at the end of the report.

Many studies have outlined potential social effects of culture. However, these studies often have not provided statistics in support of the potential effects.

The United Nations Development Program has stated that “culture provides the social basis that allows for stimulating creativity, innovation, human progress and well-being. In this sense, culture can be seen as a driving force for human development, in respect of economic growth and also as a means of leading a more fulfilling intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual life.”³

More specifically, a report in the *Canadian Journal of Communication* highlights six potential areas of social effects of the arts, culture and heritage:

- “Enhancing understanding and capacity for action;
- Creating and retaining identity;
- Modifying values and preferences for collective choice;
- Building social cohesion;
- Contributing to community development; and
- Fostering a civic participation”⁴

³ *Terms of Reference for Thematic Window on Culture and Development*. (n.d.). Retrieved February 11, 2008, from UNDP- Spain MDG Achievement Fund: <http://www.undp.org/mdgf/culture.shtml>

⁴ Stanley, D. (2006). Introduction: The Social Effects of Culture. *Canadian Journal of Communication* , 7-15.

In Use or Ornament? Social impact of participation in the arts, François Matarasso examines the impacts of cultural activities with a strong participation component, rather than simple attendance or reading. Matarasso grouped the social impacts of participation in the arts into six different themes:

- Personal development;
- Social cohesion;
- Community empowerment and self-determination;
- Local image and identity;
- Imagination and vision; and
- Health and well-being.

Matarasso found that, although “arts projects are no panacea”, participation in the arts had important individual and social benefits.

Social cohesion, social inclusion, social exclusion and social capital are some important concepts related to the social effects of culture. A newsletter on Population Health provides definitions of these key terms:⁵

- "Social cohesion is the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity within Canada, based on a sense of trust, hope and reciprocity among all Canadians."
- "Inclusion is characterized by a society's widely shared social experience and active participation, by a broad equality of opportunities and life chances for individuals and by the achievement of a basic level of well-being for all citizens."
- "Social exclusion is a phenomenon of alienation and distance from society.... Exclusion is the fact of preventing, even temporarily, someone from participating in social relationships and the construction of society."
- "Social capital refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit."

The Population Health newsletter notes that “there is greater consensus about what *threatens* social cohesion (unemployment, poverty, income inequality, social exclusion and exclusion from the information society) than on what *promotes* it”.

A report on Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool indicates that the potential outcomes of social capital include “better health, employment, happiness, civic engagement, trust, social cohesion, etc.”⁶

⁵ The Public Health Agency of Canada. (n.d.). Retrieved February 1, 2008, from Population Health: <http://www.phacaspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/news2001/social.html>. Sources of other definitions are the Policy Research Initiative, Government of Canada, http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=rp_sc_final2, Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, 2001, a translation from J.B. De Foucauld and D. Piveteau's *La société en quête de sens*, Odile Jacob, 1995, and Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*, New York: Simon & Shuster Publishers, 1995.

⁶ Policy Research Initiative. (2005). *Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool*. Ottawa: Government of Canada.

Many academics, writers and cultural policy makers believe that cultural participation is an important form of civic engagement, but it may not *always* foster or strengthen social ties. Another open question concerns the causal or symbiotic nature of the relationship between culture and the quality of life: Do people have a higher quality of life because they participate in the arts, or do those with a higher quality of life tend to participate more in the arts? Or are they mutually reinforcing?

Other references to the categories of social effects examined in this report are provided below.

Volunteering and Donating

Volunteer Canada states that volunteering is “the most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society. It is offering time, energy and skills of one’s own free will.” They also indicate that volunteers are “agents of positive change, creatively responding to challenges and opportunities with courage and determination for the betterment of our communities.”

Donating money or goods is an important way to contribute to community life. For example, donations to organizations that help other citizens in need can improve equality of opportunities, enhance social solidarity and decrease wealth disparities. Donations to health organizations can make standards of health more equal. Donations to cultural organizations can enhance opportunities for social interaction.

Background research for this report found other references to the social effects of volunteering and donating:

- “Strong community bonds can be formed through things like volunteering and donating money to groups and organisations in the community. Such networks may involve people who do not normally associate with one another, and in this way help to form bridging relationships between these community members.”⁷
- Volunteers and volunteer organizations “help build stronger and safer communities. And, they contribute to the cultural richness and diversity”⁸ of the surrounding community.

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Measures of Australia's Progress*, 2004. April 21, 2004. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/bb8db737e2af84b8ca2571780015701e/D5B489F508DA80B7CA256E7D0000264F?open> document (accessed February 25, 2008)

⁸ Government of Ontario. (2007, May 4). *Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration*. Retrieved February 1, 2008, from Volunteerism- Citizenship in Action: <http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/volunteerism/>

Neighbourhood Connections

Many social interactions and relationships take place within neighbourhoods. The connections formed at the neighbourhood level can have an important impact on people's identities and pride. In addition, "people with rich social connections are more likely to have housing, jobs, good health and life satisfaction."⁹

Other references to the social effects of neighbourhood connections follow:

- Local context can "have a profound impact on how social networks operate. Several studies address social capital at the neighbourhood level, where relational practices are deployed in the concrete setting of daily life and social relations play themselves out in a visible manner."¹⁰
- "[Phenomena] such as spatial concentration, neighbourhood stability, and residential homogeneity are important determinants in the functioning and, indeed, creation of certain social networks. Sometimes, residential stability contributes to creating ties, for instance, between neighbours; at other times, residential instability acts as a source of tension in a neighbourhood, leading to the creation of intervention networks."¹¹

Sense of Belonging

In their paper *Social Cohesion and Multilevel Governance*, Kearns and Forrest indicate that "people often feel that they belong to a particular place, and that people are territorial in their behaviour and that this territorial functioning is relevant to group cohesiveness and solidarity."¹²

Background research for this report found other references to the social effects of an individual's sense of belonging:

- Kearns and Forrest indicate that "both place attachment and political engagement are identified as indicators of social cohesion—markers for a vibrant, high-quality-of-life, confident city which authorities can utilise in marketing their places to potential investors and residents."¹³
- Furthermore, "a concern with social cohesion in relation to cities or neighbourhoods focuses discussion particularly on notions of belonging, place attachment and spatial mobility."¹⁴

⁹ Freila, Christa. *Why Strong Neighbourhoods Matter: Implications for Policy and Practice*. Toronto: Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force, 2004.

¹⁰ Sandra Franke, Policy Research Initiative (2005). *Measurement of Social Capital*. Ottawa: Government of Canada.

¹¹ Franke, p 20

¹² Kearns A. and Forrest K., p 1001

¹³ Kearns A. and Forrest K., p 1009

¹⁴ Kearns A. and Forrest K., p 1001

Social Activities

Kearns and Forrest state that “[ties] of friendship may be growing in importance as kinship links become less easy to maintain: it is social networks and support networks of varying kinds which are the essence of social cohesion.”¹⁵ Social activities are a key part of social networking.

Other references to the social effects of participation in social activities follow:

- “Place attachment stems from other attachments and affections. Thus, cultural strategies which provide facilities and activities with high levels of involvement are another route to place attachment and civic pride (which in turn affects attachment) via quality-of-life components.”¹⁶
- “The current orthodoxy in much research and policy is that societal cohesion builds from the bottom up via the social practices and relations within residential neighbourhoods.”¹⁷

Labour Force Participation

Employability and labour force participation can have an impact on an individual, the economy and the overall community. Employability has been defined as “a set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to secure and be successful in their chosen occupation(s) to the benefit of themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.”¹⁸

Background research for this report found other references to the links between culture and employability:

- According to Matarasso, 80% of adult and 77% of child arts participants gained new skills since partaking in arts projects. The respondents believed that their newly acquired skills from participating in arts projects would be helpful in finding work, among other areas.¹⁹
- Communication, social, creativity and thinking skills have been found to be skills developed due to arts participation.²⁰

¹⁵ Kearns A. and Forrest K., p 1000

¹⁶ Kearns A. and Forrest K., p 1009

¹⁷ Kearns A. and Forrest K., p 1010

¹⁸ Yorke, M. *Employability in Higher Education: what it is - what it is not*. England: Learning and Teaching Support Network, 2004.

¹⁹ Matarasso, p 22

²⁰ Matarasso, p 22

- The Conference Board of Canada highlights 56 critical employability skills that are necessary in the workplace, grouped under 11 headings. Arts participation can contribute to many of the 11 categories of employability skills necessary in the workplace:
 - Communicate
 - Manage information
 - Use numbers
 - Think and solve problems
 - Demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours
 - Be responsible
 - Be adaptable
 - Learn continuously
 - Work safely
 - Work with others
 - Participate in projects and tasks²¹
- “Countries with higher employment rates are likely to have higher standards of living, other things being equal.”²²

Quality of Life

University-based researchers have defined the study of quality of life as “an examination of influences upon the goodness and meaning in life, as well as people's happiness and well-being.... The ultimate goal of quality of life study and its subsequent applications is to enable people to live quality lives – lives that are both meaningful and enjoyed.”²³

Background research for this report found other references to the social effects of quality of life:

- People derive “great pleasure from being involved in arts activities,” which can add “greatly to their quality of life.”²⁴
- “Social cohesion in this context implies amongst other things: extending opportunities for income-generating activities; reductions in poverty; reduced disparities in incomes, employment and competitiveness; higher quality of life; and open access to services of general benefit and protection.”²⁵

²¹ Conference Board of Canada. (2000, May). *Employability Skills 2000+*. Retrieved January 29, 2008, from <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/education/>.

²² Government of Canada. (2007, May 4). *Economic Concepts: Employment Rate*. Retrieved February 1, 2008, from <http://www.canadianeconomy.gc.ca/english/economy/employment.html>

²³ University of Toronto. *Quality of Life*. <http://www.utoronto.ca/qol/> (accessed March 12, 2008).

²⁴ Matarasso, p 9

²⁵ Kearns A. and Forrest K., p 999

- Health and personal well-being are important aspects of quality of life. Visual arts can reduce stress levels and reduce the symptoms of depression for some patients. Music has been shown to: lower the blood pressure of pregnant women; reduce the intensity of pain after some surgeries; decrease the perceptions of pain in rheumatoid arthritis sufferers; lessen the requirement for sedatives and analgesics following some surgeries and procedures; and stimulate an unborn child's heartbeat-sign of good health. In addition to helping patients cope with their ailments, arts projects can help the staff at health facilities. A workplace with pieces of art on display can reduce stress and also decrease the rate of turnover of the employees.²⁶
- Arts participation may also have links to longevity: "a study found that, even when key variables such as age, sex, education level, income, long-term disease, smoking and physical exercise were taken into account, attendance at cultural events, reading books or periodicals, making music or singing in a choir appeared to reduce the risks of mortality within the time period of the study."²⁷

²⁶ Arts Council England. (2004). *The Impact of the Arts: Some Research Evidence*. London: Arts Council England.

²⁷ The Arts Council England, p 16

Volunteering and Donating

This section explores the relationship between cultural activities, volunteering and donating. Compared with non-participants, cultural participants tend to have higher volunteer rates, a greater enjoyment of volunteering and higher donation rates.

However, the average time spent volunteering does not differ substantially between readers and non-readers or between performing arts attendees and non-attendees. Art gallery visitors have somewhat higher volunteer hours than non-visitors, while movie goers tend to volunteer fewer hours than non-goers.

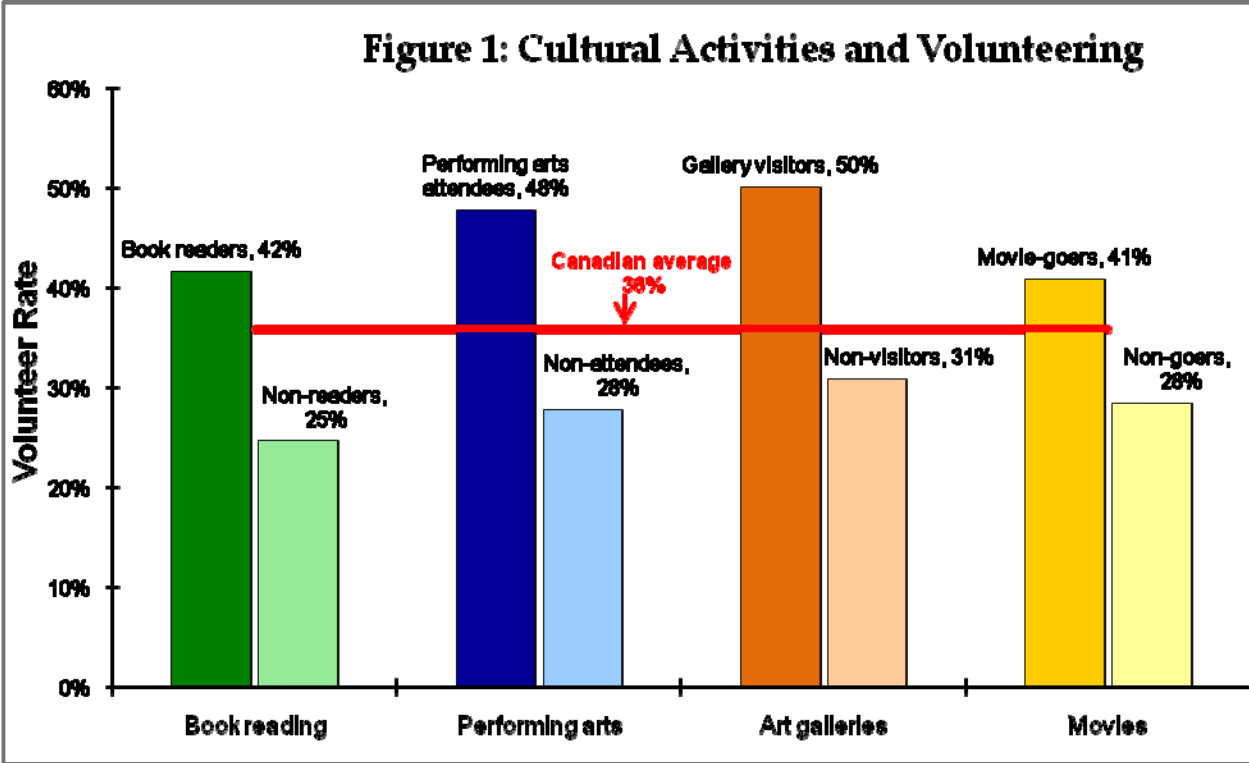
Although far from conclusive, the data in this section suggests that cultural participation may have some impact on volunteer and donation rates. Further research could examine these relationships in more depth.

Volunteer Rates

Approximately one-third of Canadians 15 years of age or older (36%, or 9.3 million people) did unpaid volunteer work for an organization in 2005. The volunteer rates for cultural participants are higher than the Canadian average:

- Book readers: 42%
- Performing arts attendees: 48%
- Art gallery visitors: 50%
- Movie goers: 41%

Figure 1 shows that, for all four cultural activities, the volunteer rate for cultural participants is much higher than for non-participants.



The question was phrased: "During the past 12 months, did you do unpaid volunteer work for any organization?"

Volunteer Enjoyment

Respondents to Statistics Canada’s 2005 General Social Survey were asked to rate their enjoyment of volunteering on a scale of “1” to “5”, where “1” indicates that the respondent dislikes the activity a great deal and “5” indicates that the respondent enjoys the activity a great deal. The results for all Canadians, cultural participants and non-participants are provided in Table 1.

Overall, Canadians who participated in a cultural activity in 2005 tend to enjoy volunteering more than cultural non-participants. For example, the two right-hand columns of Table 1 show that, for three of the four cultural activities (reading, attending performances and visiting art galleries), participants tend to enjoy volunteering more than non-participants.

Table 1: Enjoyment of Volunteering of Canadians in 2005					
	Dislike the activity a great deal	Somewhat dislike the activity	Neutral	Somewhat enjoy the activity	Enjoy the activity a great deal
All Canadians	12%	14%	30%	27%	17%
Readers	9%	12%	31%	30%	17%
Non-readers	18%	19%	29%	20%	15%
Performing arts attendees	9%	14%	31%	29%	17%
Non-attendees	14%	15%	30%	25%	16%
Art gallery visitors	7%	12%	30%	33%	18%
Non-visitors	14%	16%	30%	24%	16%
Movie goers	11%	15%	33%	28%	14%
Non-goers	14%	14%	26%	25%	21%
<p><i>The question was phrased: "How much do you enjoy working as a volunteer in your community?" Responses ranged from "1" to "5", where "1" means that the respondent dislikes the activity a great deal and "5" means that the respondent enjoys it a great deal.</i></p>					

Although the General Social Survey did not ask respondents what type of organization they volunteered for, a previous Hill Strategies report (*Volunteers in Arts and Culture Organizations in Canada in 2004*) examined volunteer hours by type of non-profit organization in 2004, based on Statistics Canada's Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating. Sports and recreation organizations received the most volunteer hours (19% of all volunteer hours), followed by social service organizations (18%), religious organizations (17%) and education and research organizations (12%). Arts and culture organizations ranked sixth out of 11 types of non-profit organizations, with 4.7% of all volunteer hours.²⁸

Volunteer Hours

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the number of volunteers by their hours volunteered. The right hand column of Table 2 shows that about one in four volunteers donated an average of 15 hours or more per month.

Although cultural activities do seem to have a relationship with overall volunteer rates (as shown above in Figure 1), the average time spent volunteering does not differ substantially between readers and non-readers or between performing arts attendees and non-attendees.

²⁸ Hill Strategies Research. (2007). *Volunteers in Arts and Culture Organizations in Canada in 2004*. Hamilton: Hill Strategies Research.

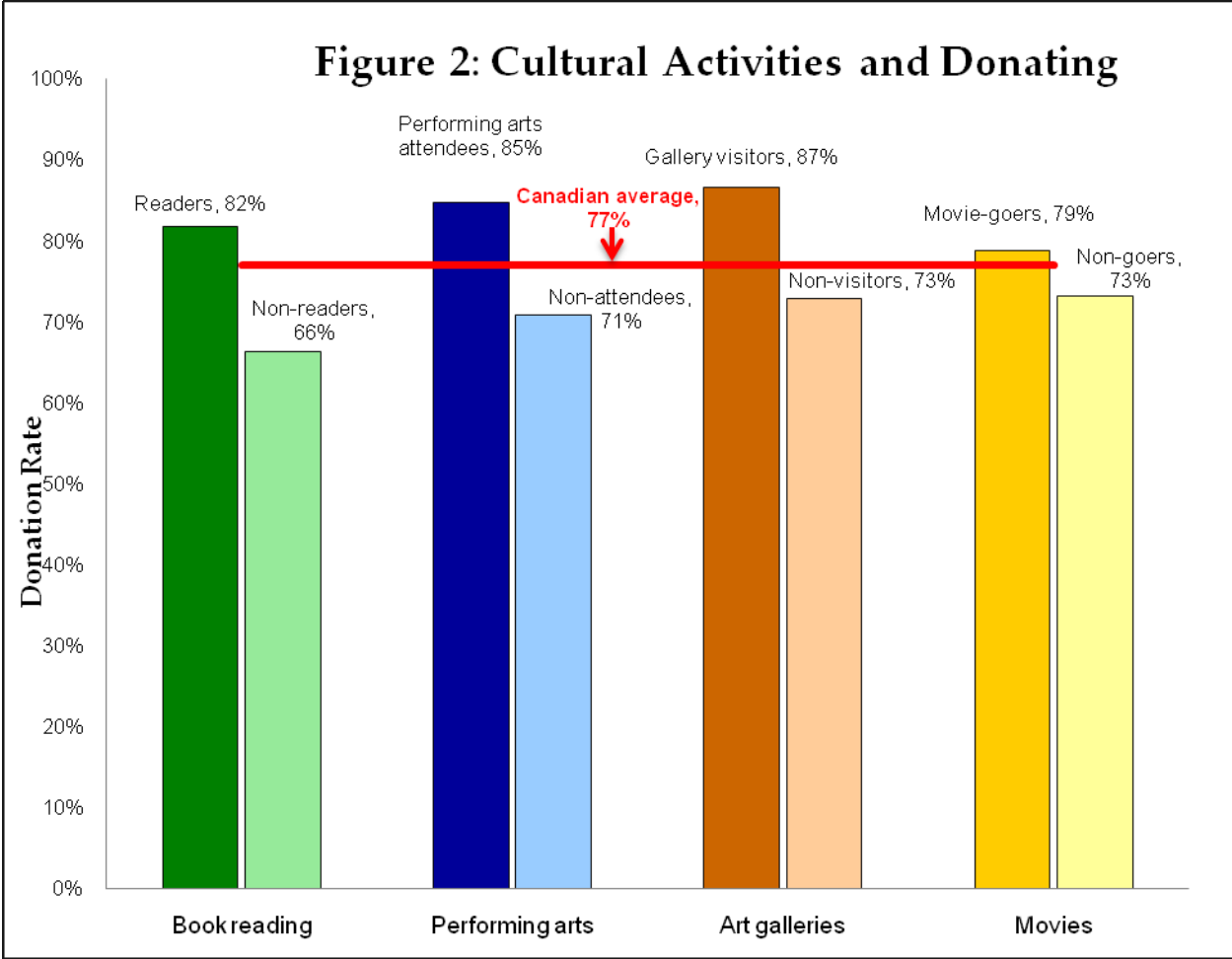
One area where there appears to be a difference between cultural participants and non-participants is art gallery attendance: 27% of volunteers who also visited an art gallery in 2005 volunteered 15 or more hours per month, compared with 23% of volunteers who did not visit an art gallery in 2005. Similarly, 38% of volunteers who also visited an art gallery in 2005 volunteered between 5 and 15 hours per month, compared with 34% of volunteers who did not visit an art gallery in 2005. Movie goers, on the other hand, tend to volunteer fewer hours than non-goers.

Table 2: Volunteer Hours in 2005				
	Less than 1 hour per month	1 to 4 hours per month	5 to 15 hours per month	15 or more hours per month
All Canadian volunteers	9%	31%	36%	25%
Readers	9%	30%	37%	25%
Non-readers	10%	33%	32%	25%
Performing arts attendees	8%	31%	36%	25%
Non-attendees	10%	31%	36%	24%
Art gallery visitors	7%	28%	38%	27%
Non-visitors	10%	32%	34%	23%
Movie goers	10%	32%	35%	23%
Non-goers	8%	27%	37%	28%
<p><i>Volunteers were asked: "On average, about how many hours per month did you volunteer?"</i> <i>The amounts above show the percentage of volunteers, not the percentage of the overall population. For example, the first statistic in the "Readers" row shows that 9% of volunteers who also read a book in 2005 volunteered less than one hour per month.</i></p>				

Donation Rates

Approximately three-quarters of Canadians 15 years of age or older (77%, or 19.9 million people) donated money or goods to an organization in 2005. The donation rates for cultural participants are higher than the Canadian average: 82% for book readers; 85% for performing arts attendees; 87% for art gallery visitors; and 79% for movie goers.

Figure 2 shows that there is a substantial difference in the donation rates between cultural participants and non-participants. The difference, although still substantial, is smallest for movie goers.



The question was phrased: "During the past 12 months, did you donate money or goods to any organization or charity? Do not include membership fees or dues."

The General Social Survey did not ask respondents to identify which organizations they supported through their donations. A recent report from Hill Strategies Research showed that a large proportion of individual donations went to religious organizations (46% of the value of all donations), health organizations (14%) and social service organizations (10%). The arts and culture sector received 2.1% of all individual donations (\$188 million).²⁹

²⁹ Hill Strategies Research. (2006). *Individual Donors to Arts and Culture Organizations in Canada in 2004*. Hamilton: Hill Strategies Research.

Neighbourhood Connections

This section explores the relationship between cultural activities and:

- Knowledge of other people in neighbourhoods
- Helpful neighbourhoods

Although cultural participants have slightly less knowledge of their neighbours than non-participants, they tend to live in neighbourhoods where neighbours are likely to do favours for each other.

For all four cultural activities, slightly fewer cultural participants than non-participants indicated that they know most of the people in their neighbourhood. However, for three of the four cultural activities, a somewhat higher proportion of cultural participants than non-participants indicated that they had done a favour for a neighbour during the past month. Similarly, for all four cultural activities, a slightly higher proportion of cultural participants than non-participants indicated that a neighbour had done a favour for them during the past month.

Knowledge of Other People in Neighbourhoods

Neighbours and neighbourhood life are an important part of Canadians' social connections. As shown in Table 3, very few Canadians (about 6% in all groups) know no one else in their neighbourhood. The largest proportion of Canadians indicated that they know a few people in their neighbourhood (47% of all Canadians). Nineteen percent of Canadians know many people in their neighbourhood, while 28% know most of the people in their neighbourhood.

There are fairly small but consistent differences between cultural participants and non-participants. For all four cultural activities, a slightly higher proportion of cultural participants than non-participants indicated that they know only a few people in their neighbourhood. Consequently, as shown in the furthest right-hand column of Table 3, slightly fewer cultural participants than non-participants indicated that they know most of the people in their neighbourhood.

Table 3: Canadians' Knowledge of their Neighbours

Would you say that you know ...	Nobody else in your neighbourhood	A few of the people in your neighbourhood	Many of the people in your neighbourhood	Most of the people in your neighbourhood
All Canadians	6%	47%	19%	28%
Readers	6%	48%	19%	27%
Non-readers	6%	45%	18%	30%
Performing arts attendees	6%	50%	18%	26%
Non-attendees	6%	46%	19%	29%
Art gallery visitors	5%	51%	19%	25%
Non-visitors	6%	46%	19%	29%
Movie goers	6%	50%	19%	25%
Non-goers	6%	44%	18%	32%

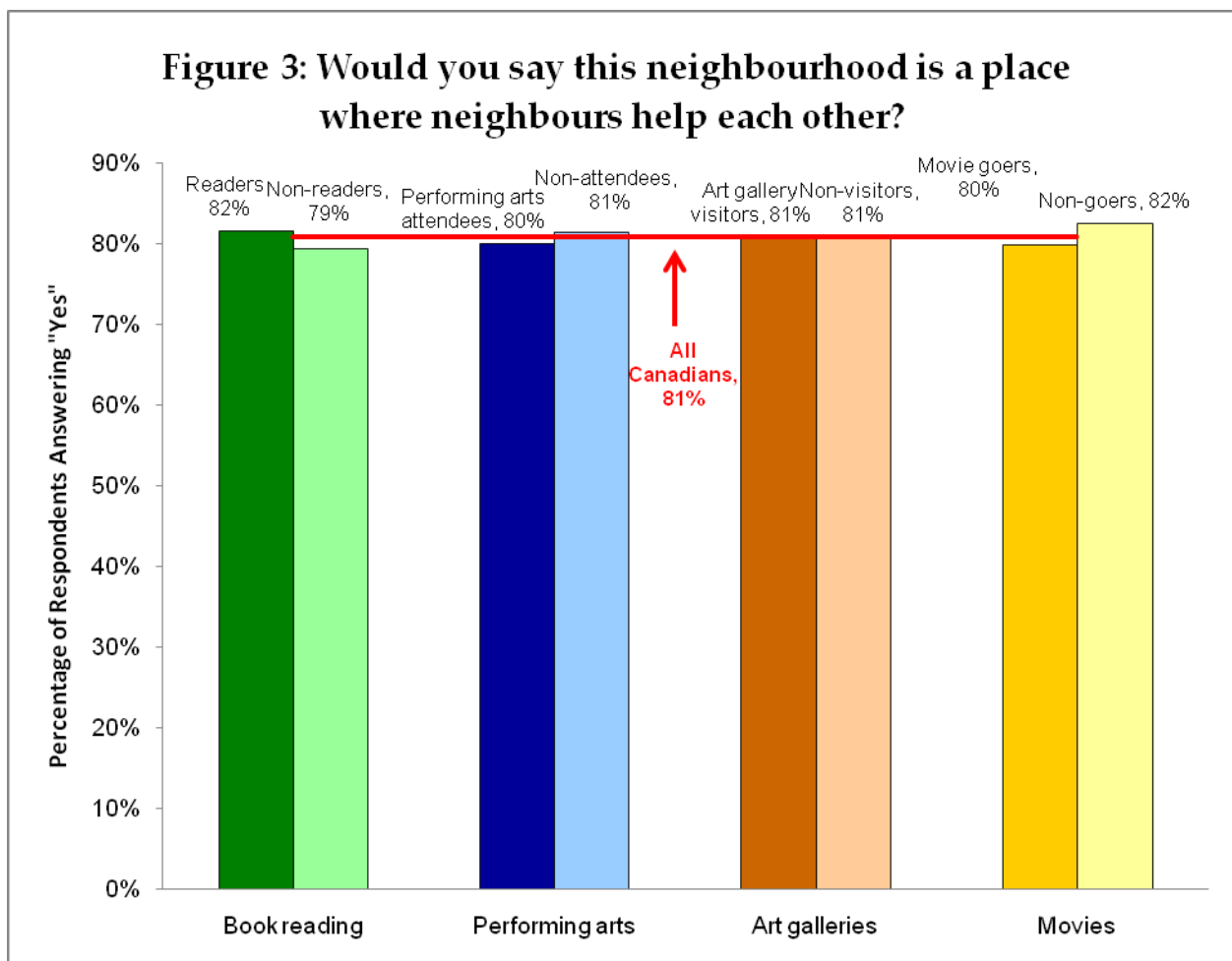
The question was phrased: "Now I would like to ask you a few questions about your more immediate neighbourhood. Would you say that you know: most of the people in your neighbourhood, many of the people in your neighbourhood, a few of the people in your neighbourhood or nobody else in your neighbourhood?"

Helpful Neighbourhoods

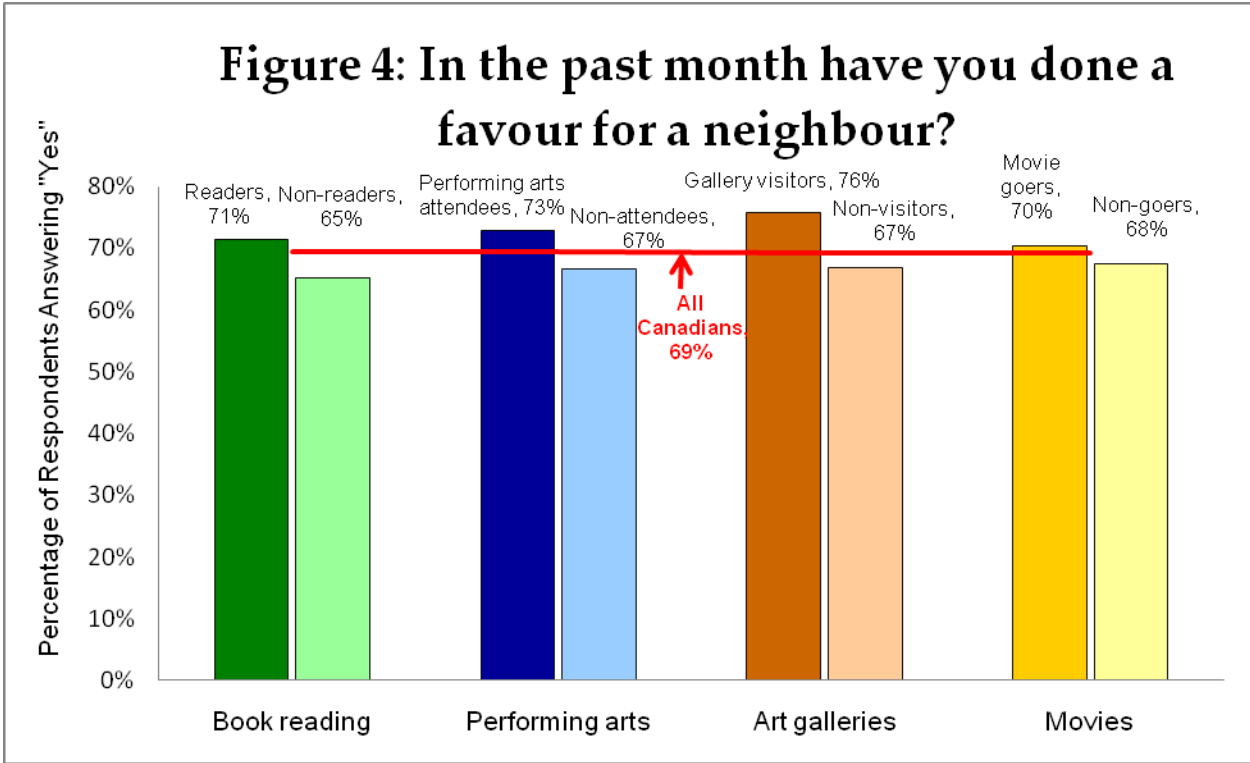
Three questions in Statistics Canada's 2005 General Social Survey examined the helpfulness of neighbours:

- "Would you say this neighbourhood is a place where neighbours help each other?"
- "In the past month, have you done a favour for a neighbour?"
- "In the past month, have any of your neighbours done a favour for you?"

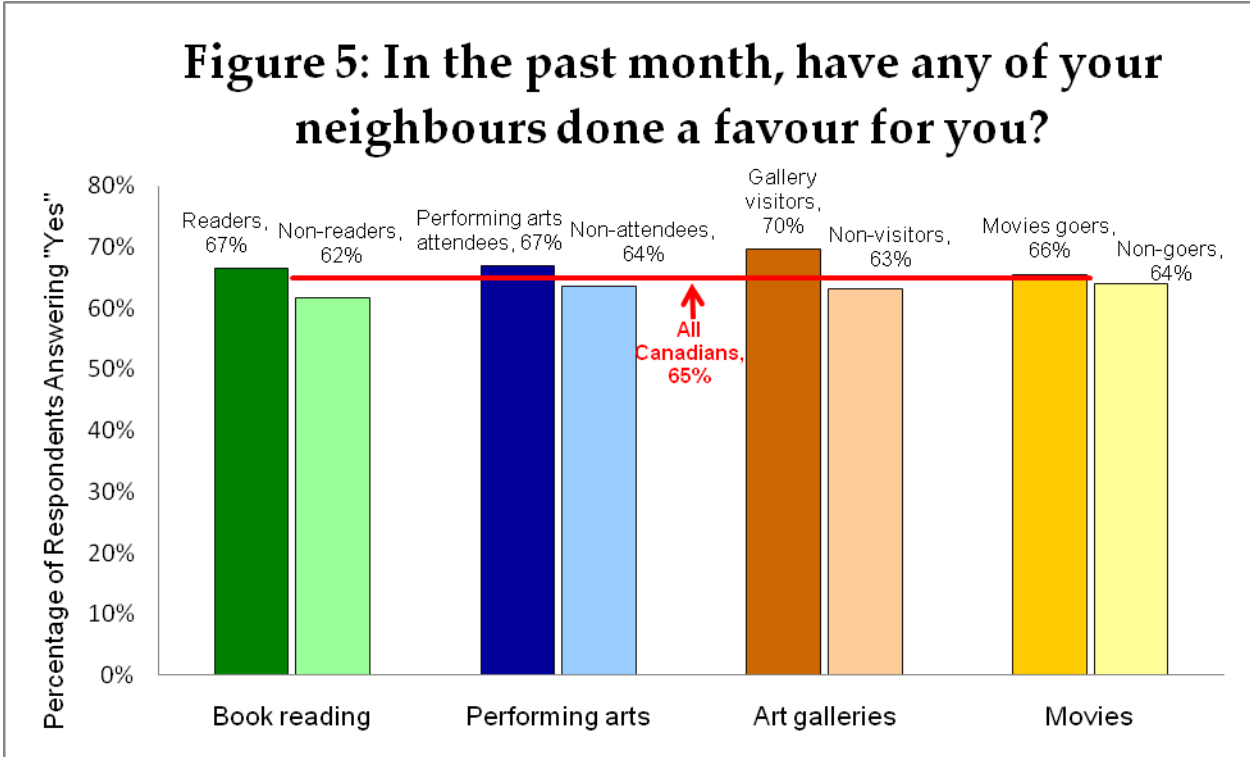
A large majority of Canadians (81%) indicated that their neighbourhood is a place where neighbours help each other. As shown in Figure 3, there is very little difference between the neighbourhoods of cultural participants and non-participants.



In response to a specific question about helping their neighbours, 69% of Canadians indicated that they had done a favour for a neighbour in the past month. As shown in Figure 4, for three of the four cultural activities, a somewhat higher proportion of cultural participants than non-participants indicated that they had done a favour for a neighbour during the past month. There is only a very small difference between movie goers and non-goers.



In response to a question about neighbours helping them, 65% of Canadians indicated that a neighbour had done a favour for them in the past month. As shown in Figure 5, there are mostly small but consistent differences between the responses of cultural participants and non-participants. For all four cultural activities, a slightly higher proportion of cultural participants than non-participants indicated that a neighbour had done a favour for them during the past month. The differences between cultural participants and non-participants are very small for performing arts attendees and movie goers.



Sense of Belonging

This section explores the relationship between cultural activities and Canadians' sense of belonging:

- To their local community
- To their province
- To Canada

The data shows that, while some cultural participants have a stronger sense of belonging to Canada than non-participants, cultural participants and non-participants have a fairly similar sense of belonging to their local community and to their province.

These preliminary findings suggest that the broad forms of cultural participation examined in this report may have some impact on an individual's sense of belonging to Canada but little or no impact on sense of belonging to local communities or to provinces. Further research could examine in greater detail the potential link to the sense of belonging to Canada and the lack of a strong link to communities and provinces.

Local Communities

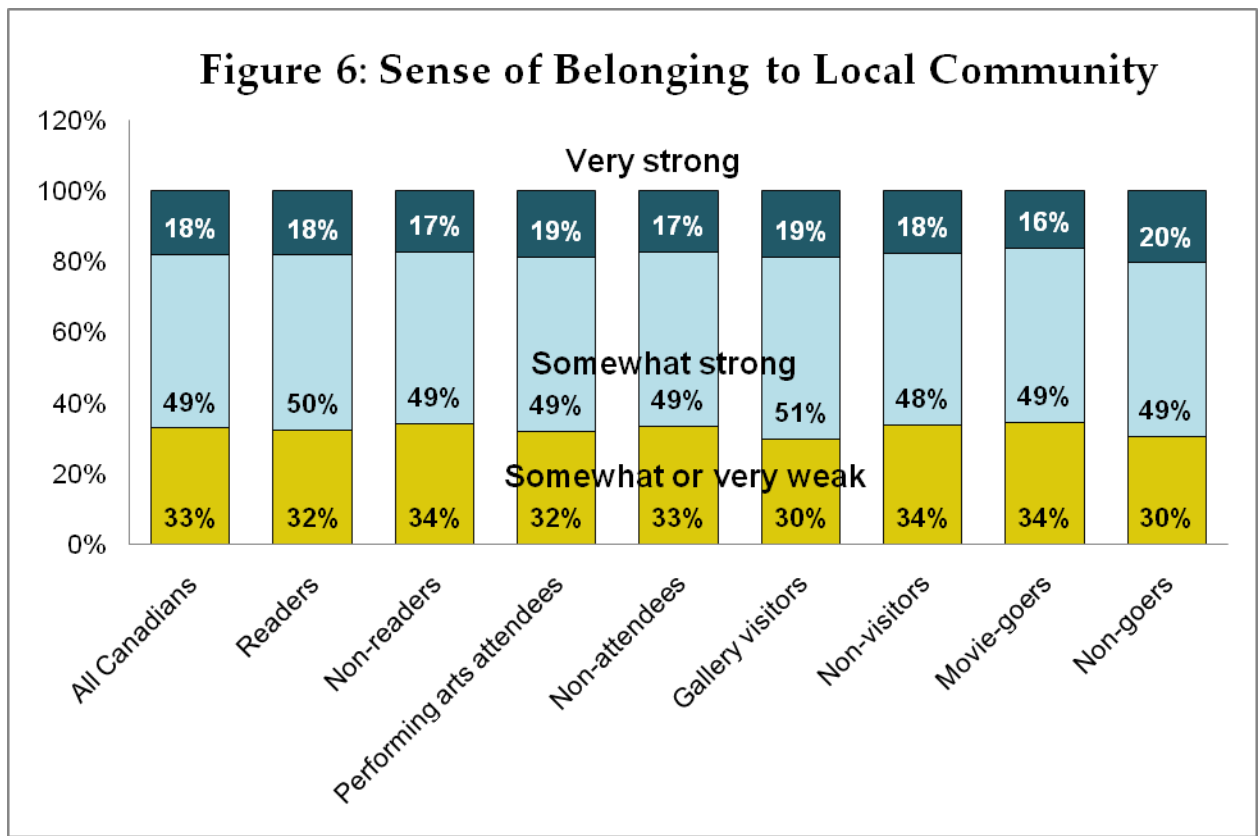
Figure 6 provides the percentages of all Canadians, cultural participants and non-participants who say that their sense of belonging to their local community is "very strong", "somewhat strong" or "somewhat or very weak". On the horizontal axis are the categories of respondents (all Canadians, readers, non-readers, etc.). The vertical axis is a percentage scale. All of the bars are the same height (100%) but are divided into three categories, corresponding to the survey responses: very strong, somewhat strong and somewhat or very weak.³⁰

The furthest left bar shows that 18% of all Canadians have a very strong, 49% have a somewhat strong and 33% have a somewhat or very weak sense of belonging to their local community.

Cultural participants and non-participants have a fairly similar sense of belonging to their local community. The percentage of residents with a very strong sense of belonging to their local community varies only slightly (at most, between 16% and 20% for movie goers and non-goers). The percentage of Canadians with a somewhat strong sense of belonging to their local community varies only slightly (between 48% and 51%). Similarly, the percentage of Canadians with a somewhat or very weak sense of belonging to their local community varies between 30% and 34%.

³⁰ The available responses for this question were: very strong, somewhat strong, somewhat weak, very weak, no opinion, not stated and don't know. The results for the responses no opinion, not stated and don't know were rejected. Upon analyzing the data, it became evident that the percentage of respondents with the response "very weak" was very small. Consequently, the replies "somewhat weak" and "very weak" were grouped together to better analyze the data.

Figure 6: Sense of Belonging to Local Community



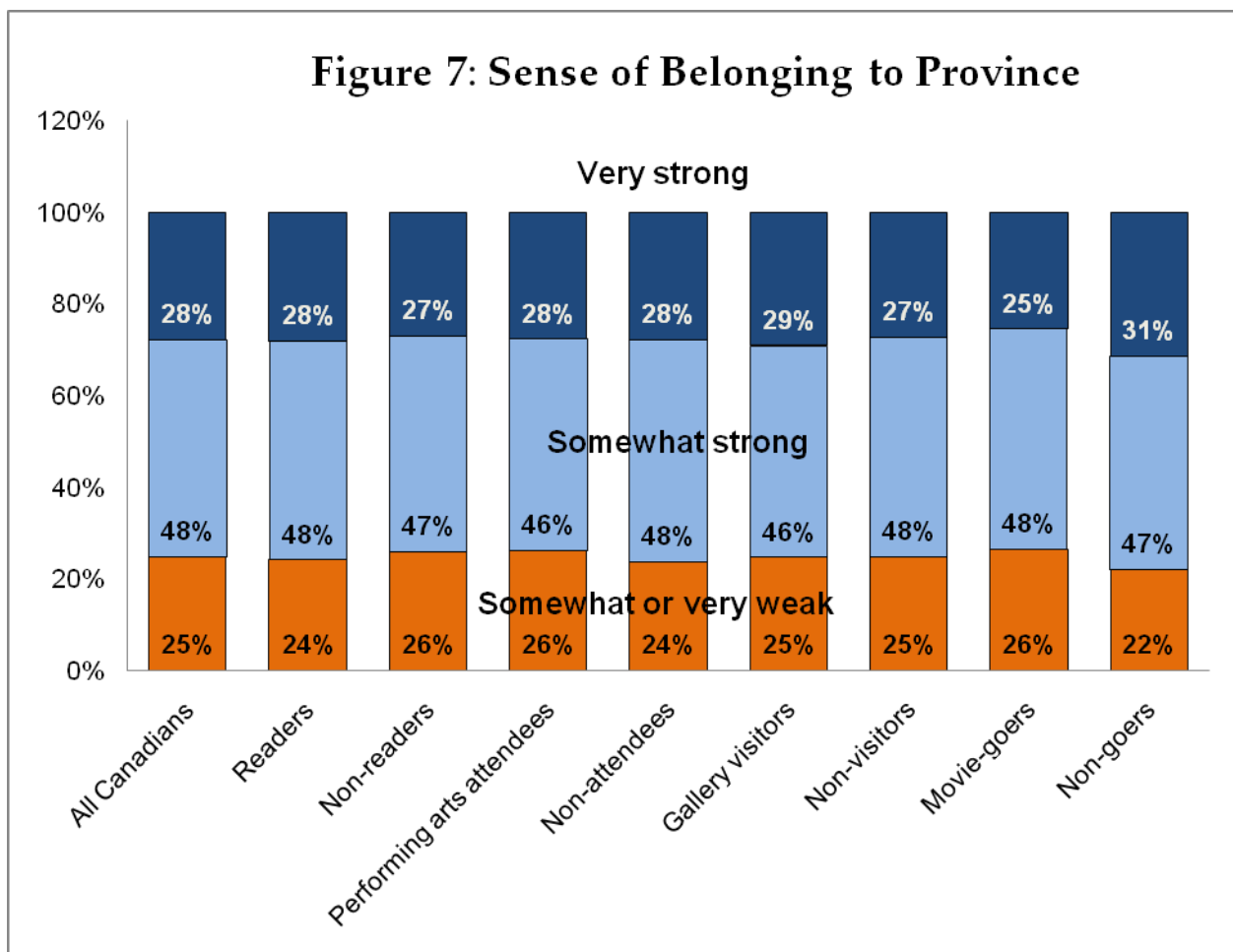
The question was phrased: "How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community? Would you say that it is: very strong, somewhat strong, somewhat weak or very weak?"

A more important factor in the sense of belonging to local communities appears to be the type of community in which the respondent resides. Canadians who live in rural and small towns have the strongest sense of belonging to their local community (24% very strong, 52% somewhat strong, and 24% somewhat or very weak). In contrast, Canadians who live in large urban centres have a lower sense of belonging to their local community (17% very strong, 48% somewhat strong, and 35% somewhat or very weak).

Provinces

Overall, 28% of Canadians have a very strong and 48% a somewhat strong sense of belonging to their province, while 25% of Canadians have a somewhat or very weak sense of belonging to their province.

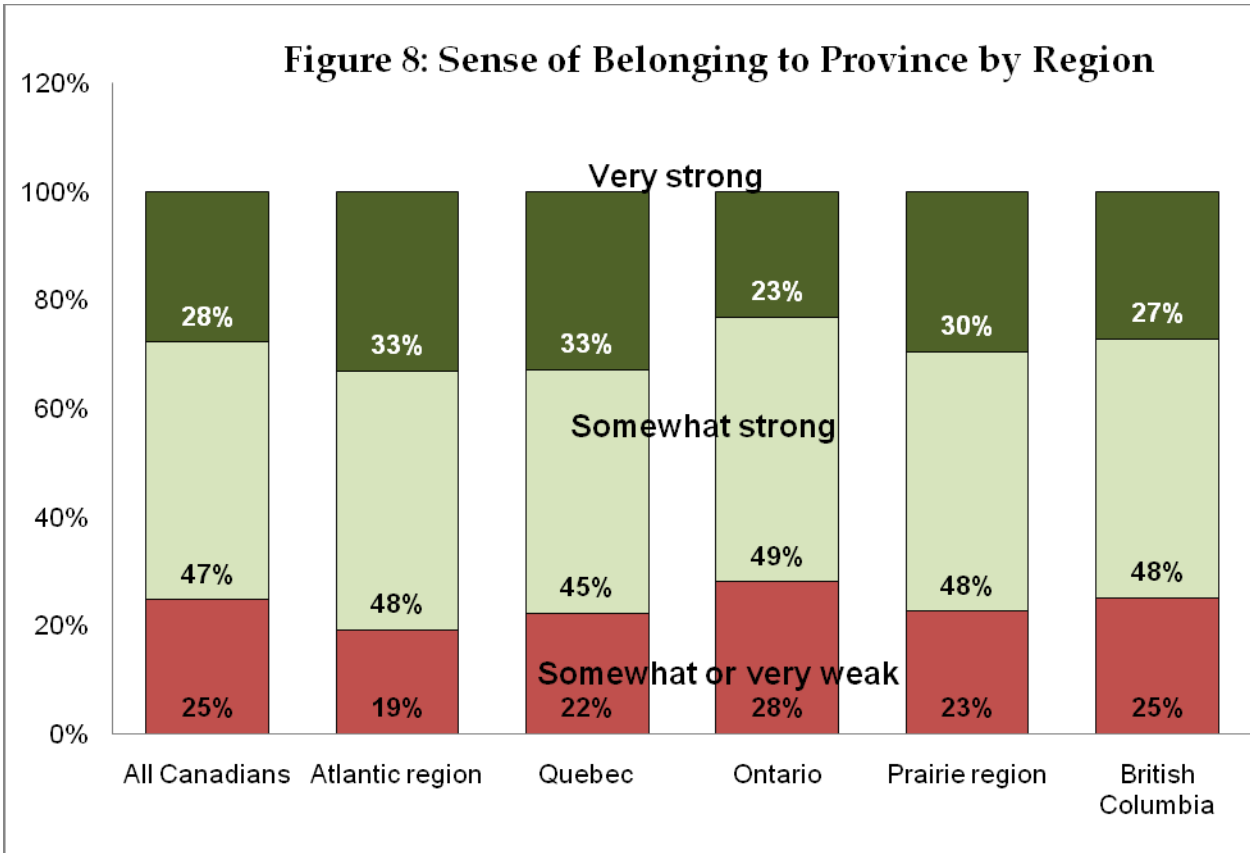
Cultural participants and non-participants have a fairly similar sense of belonging to their province. As shown in Figure 7, for all four cultural activities, participants and non-participants have a sense of belonging to their province that is within three percentage points of the Canadian average in each of the three categories. The largest difference is between movie goers and non-goers.



The question was phrased: “[How would you describe your sense of belonging] to your province? Would you say it is: very strong, somewhat strong, somewhat weak or very weak?”

A more important factor in the sense of belonging to one’s province appears to be the region of residence of the respondent. As shown in Figure 8, residents of the Atlantic, Quebec and Prairie regions appear to have the strongest sense of belonging to their respective provinces:

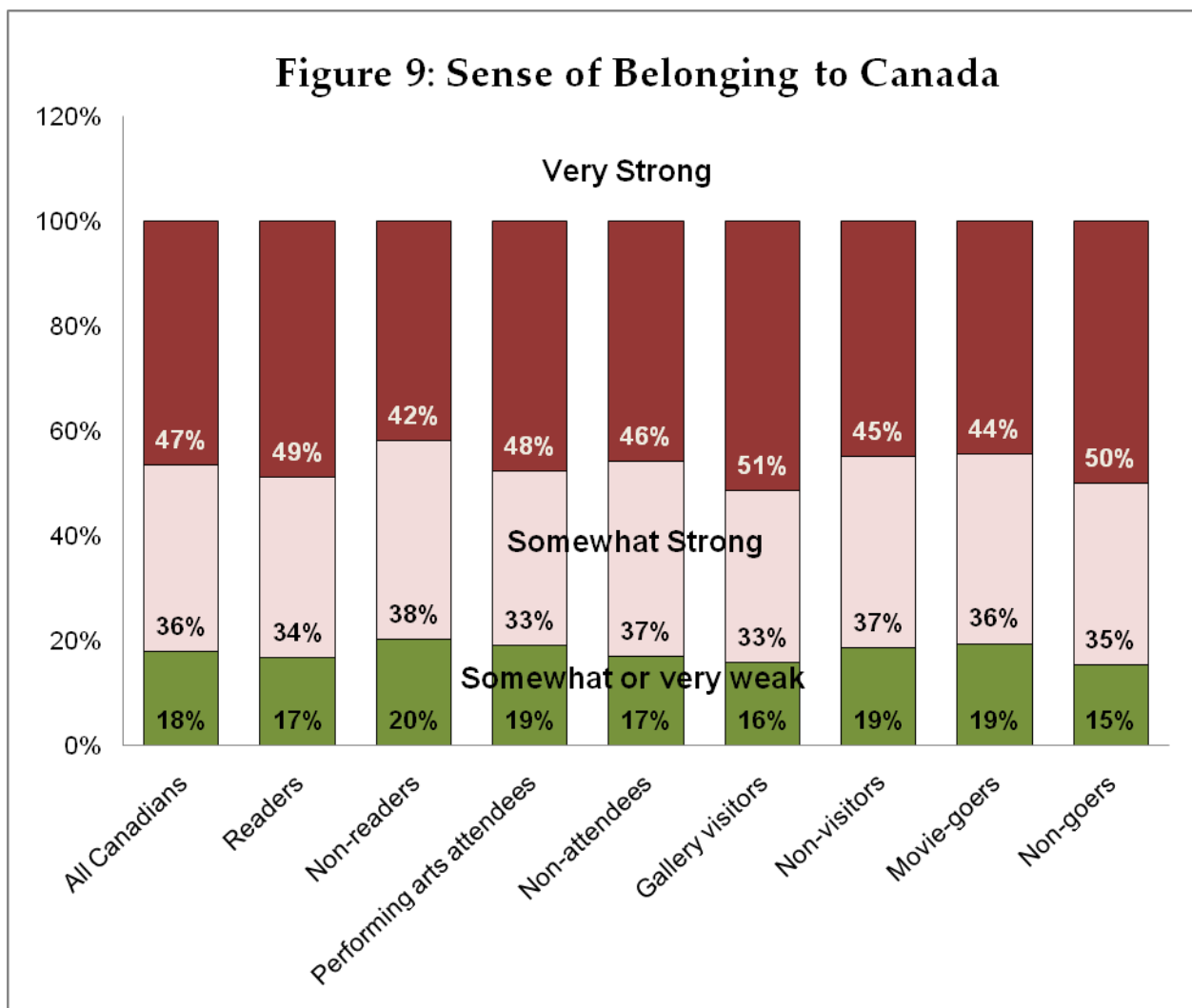
- 33% of Atlantic residents indicated that they have a very strong sense of belonging to their province, and another half (48%) said that they have a somewhat strong sense of belonging. Only 19% of Atlantic residents indicated that they have a somewhat or very weak sense of belonging to their province.
- 33% of Quebec residents indicated that they have a very strong sense of belonging to Quebec, and another 45% said that they have a somewhat strong sense of belonging. Only 22% of Quebec residents indicated that they have a somewhat or very weak sense of belonging to their province.
- 30% of Prairie residents indicated that they have a very strong sense of belonging to their province, and another half (48%) said that they have a somewhat strong sense of belonging. Only 23% of Prairie residents indicated that they have a somewhat or very weak sense of belonging to their province.



Canada

Overall, 47% of Canadians have a very strong and 36% a somewhat strong sense of belonging to Canada, while 18% have a somewhat or very weak sense of belonging to the country.

As shown in Figure 9, there are some differences between cultural participants and non-participants with regard to their sense of belonging to Canada. Forty-nine percent of readers have a very strong sense of belonging to Canada, compared with 42% of non-readers. Similarly, 51% of art gallery visitors have a very strong sense of belonging to Canada, compared with 45% of non-visitors. For the performing arts, there is very little difference between attendees and non-attendees. Movie goers appear to have a somewhat lower sense of belonging to Canada than non-goers.



The question was phrased: “[How would you describe your sense of belonging] to Canada? Would you say it is: very strong, somewhat strong, somewhat weak or very weak?”

Social Activities

This section explores the relationship between cultural activities and:

- Enjoyment of clubs and social organizations
- Enjoyment of social events
- Time with family and friends
- Feeling trapped in a daily routine

For all four cultural activities, cultural participants have a stronger enjoyment of clubs and social organizations than non-participants. Cultural participants also enjoy attending social events more than non-participants.

There are mostly small and inconsistent differences between cultural participants and non-participants with regard to worrying about not spend enough time with family and friends.

For three of the four cultural activities (reading, attending performing arts and visiting art galleries), fewer cultural participants feel trapped in a daily routine than non-participants. The difference is largest between art gallery visitors (30%) and non-visitors (38%). In contrast, slightly more movie goers than non-goers feel trapped in a daily routine.

These preliminary findings suggest that the broad forms of cultural participation examined in this report may have some impact on enjoyment of clubs, social organizations and social events. In addition, reading, attending performing arts and visiting art galleries may have some impact on whether individuals feel trapped in a daily routine. Further research could examine these links in greater detail.

Enjoyment of Clubs and Social Organizations

When asked how much they enjoy participating with clubs and social organizations, 16% of all Canadians indicated that they dislike the activity a great deal, 20% somewhat dislike the activity, 29% are neutral, 22% somewhat enjoy the activity, and 14% enjoy the activity a great deal.

Table 4 shows that, for all four cultural activities, cultural participants have a stronger enjoyment of clubs and social organizations than non-participants. In general, the differences are greatest in the columns labelled “dislike the activity a great deal” and “somewhat enjoy the activity”. For example, 24% of readers somewhat enjoy participating with clubs and social organizations, while 18% of non-readers somewhat enjoy the activity. Only 14% of readers dislike participating with clubs and social organizations a great deal, compared with 20% of non-readers.

Table 4: Enjoyment of Clubs and Social Organizations by Canadians in 2005

	Dislike the activity a great deal	Somewhat dislike the activity	Neutral	Somewhat enjoy the activity	Enjoy the activity a great deal
All Canadians	16%	20%	29%	22%	14%
Readers	14%	19%	30%	24%	14%
Non-readers	20%	22%	26%	18%	13%
Performing arts attendees	12%	19%	28%	25%	15%
Non-attendees	19%	21%	29%	19%	12%
Art gallery visitors	12%	17%	30%	27%	15%
Non-visitors	18%	21%	28%	20%	13%
Movie goers	14%	19%	30%	24%	13%
Non-goers	20%	20%	26%	19%	15%
<p><i>The question was phrased: "How much do you enjoy participating with clubs and social organizations?" Responses ranged from "1" to "5", where "1" means that the respondent dislikes the activity a great deal and "5" means that the respondent enjoys it a great deal.</i></p>					

Enjoyment of Social Events

When asked how much they enjoy attending social events, 8% of all Canadians indicated that they dislike the activity a great deal, 11% somewhat dislike the activity, 25% are neutral, 32% somewhat enjoy the activity, and 23% enjoy the activity a great deal.

Table 5 shows that, for all four cultural activities, cultural participants enjoy attending social events more than non-participants. The results are consistent for all response levels: cultural participants dislike attending social events (both “somewhat” and “a great deal”) less than non-participants and enjoy attending social events (both “somewhat” and “a great deal”) more than non-participants.

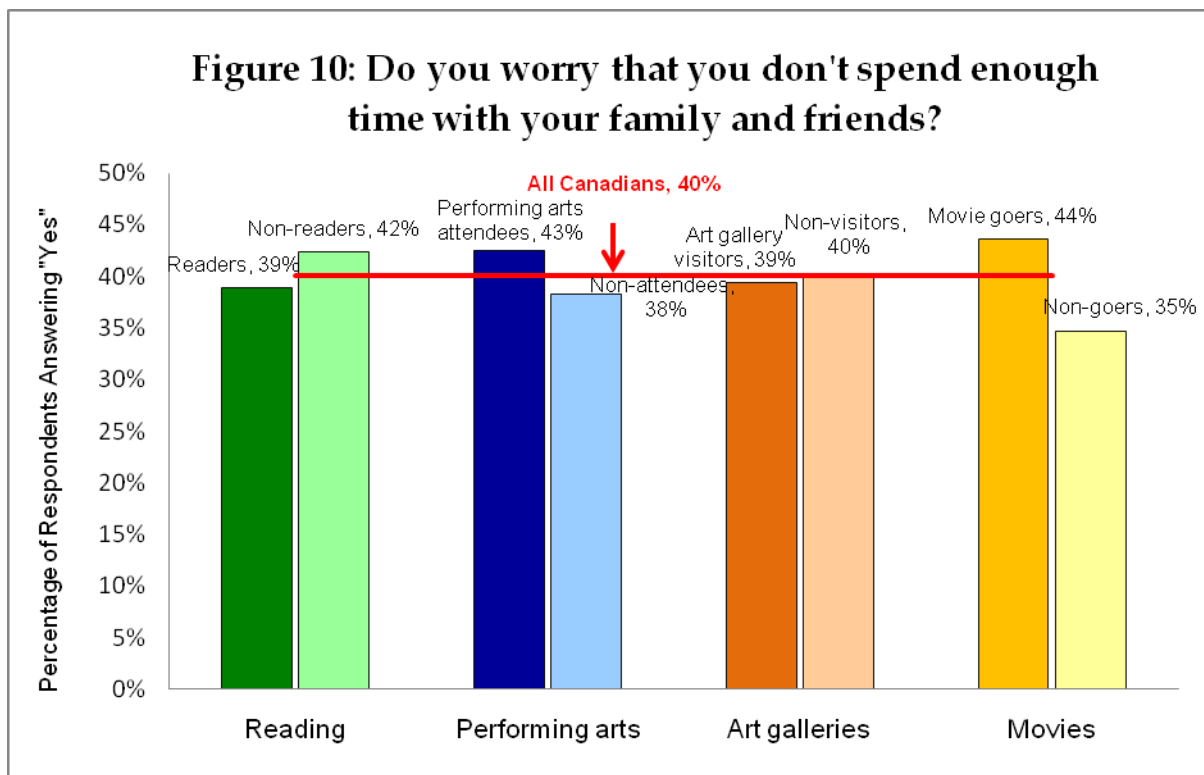
Table 5: Enjoyment of Social Events by Canadians in 2005					
	Dislike the activity a great deal	Somewhat dislike the activity	Neutral	Somewhat enjoy the activity	Enjoy the activity a great deal
All Canadians	8%	11%	25%	32%	23%
Readers	6%	10%	25%	34%	25%
Non-readers	13%	14%	27%	27%	19%
Performing arts attendees	4%	8%	23%	37%	29%
Non-attendees	11%	13%	28%	28%	19%
Art gallery visitors	4%	8%	23%	36%	29%
Non-visitors	10%	12%	27%	30%	21%
Movie goers	6%	9%	25%	35%	26%
Non-goers	12%	15%	27%	26%	20%
<p><i>The question was phrased: “How much do you enjoy attending social events?” Responses ranged from “1” to “5”, where “1” means that the respondent dislikes the activity a great deal and “5” means that the respondent enjoys it a great deal.</i></p>					

Time with Family and Friends

Less than half of Canadians (40%) indicated that they worry that they do not spend enough time with their family and friends.

As shown in Figure 10, there are mostly small and inconsistent differences between cultural participants and non-participants:

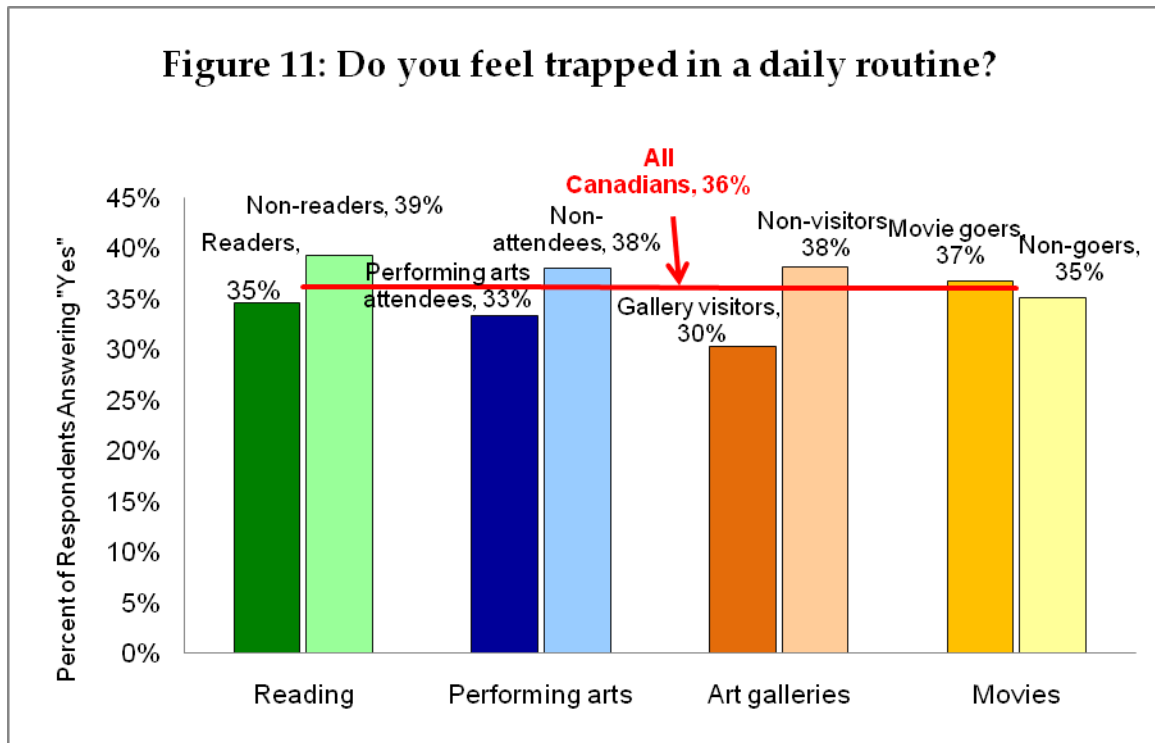
- Slightly fewer readers than non-readers worry that they do not spend enough time with their family and friends.
- More performing arts attendees than non-attendees worry that they do not spend enough time with their family and friends.
- Essentially the same percentage of art gallery visitors and non-visitors worry that they do not spend enough time with their family and friends.
- Substantially more movie goers than non-goers worry that they do not spend enough time with their family and friends.



Daily Routine

Just over one-third of Canadians (36%) indicated that they feel trapped in a daily routine.

As shown in Figure 11, for three of the four cultural activities (reading, attending performing arts and visiting art galleries), fewer cultural participants feel trapped in a daily routine than non-participants. The difference is largest between art gallery visitors (30%) and non-visitors (38%). In contrast, slightly more movie goers than non-goers feel trapped in a daily routine.



Labour Force Participation

This section explores the relationship between cultural activities and:

- The main activity of Canadians
- Workaholism

For three of the four cultural activities, cultural participants have a higher employment rate than non-participants. This tends to reinforce previous research findings that cultural participation is linked to employable skills. However, it is not clear from the preliminary statistics in this report whether cultural participation has an impact on employment rates, or whether employment rates have an impact on cultural participation. Further research could examine this potential relationship in greater detail.

However, the results regarding workaholism are more mixed. Overall, one-quarter of Canadians consider themselves workaholics. Among cultural participants:

- Readers have the lowest rate of workaholism (22% of readers, compared with 31% of non-readers)
- The same percentage of performing arts attendees and non-attendees consider themselves workaholics (25%).
- A slightly lower percentage of art gallery visitors (23%) than non-visitors (26%) consider themselves workaholics.
- A slightly lower percentage of movie goers (24%) than non-goers (27%) consider themselves workaholics.

Main Activity

When asked what their main activity was during the week prior to the survey, 56% of all Canadians indicated that they worked at a paid job or business, followed by 16% who were retired, 10% who attended school, 7% who mainly did household work, 5% who mainly cared for children and 3% who were looking for paid work.

As shown in Table 6, for three of the four cultural activities, cultural participants have a higher employment rate than non-participants:

- Performing arts attendees are much more likely to be employed (61%) than non-attendees (52%).
- Art gallery visitors are slightly more likely to be employed (58%) than non-visitors (55%).
- Movie goers are much more likely to be employed (61%) than non-goers (46%).
- The exception is readers, 54% of whom are employed, compared with 59% of non-readers.

Most other activities have similar rates between cultural participants and non-participants. Some moderate differences:

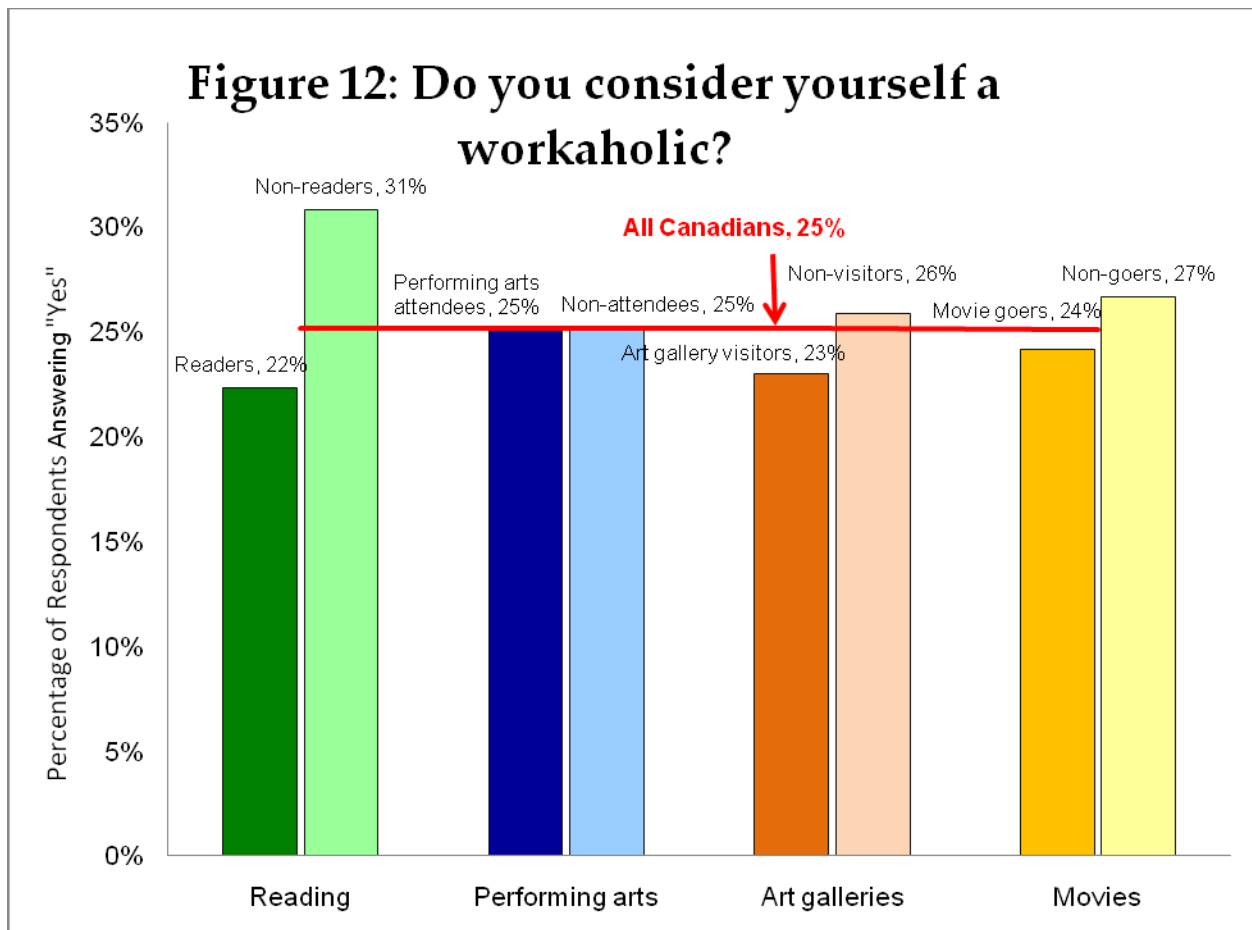
- Readers are more likely to be going to school (11%) than non-readers (6%).
- Performing arts attendees are less likely to be retired (14%) than non-attendees (18%). Performing arts attendees are also less likely to mainly do household work (4%) than non-attendees (9%).
- Art gallery visitors are slightly less likely to mainly do household work (5%) than non-visitors (8%).
- Movie goers are much less likely to be retired (9%) than non-goers (27%). On the other hand, movie goers are much more likely to be going to school (14%) than non-goers (3%).

Table 6: Main Activity of the Respondent							
	Working at a paid job or business	Retired	Going to school	Household work	Caring for children	Looking for paid work	Other
All Canadians	56%	16%	10%	7%	5%	3%	4%
Readers	54%	17%	11%	7%	6%	3%	4%
Non-readers	59%	15%	7%	7%	4%	3%	4%
Performing arts attendees	61%	14%	10%	4%	4%	3%	3%
Non-attendees	52%	18%	9%	9%	6%	3%	4%
Art gallery visitors	58%	16%	11%	5%	4%	3%	3%
Non-visitors	55%	16%	9%	8%	5%	3%	4%
Movie goers	61%	9%	14%	4%	5%	3%	3%
Non-goers	46%	27%	3%	11%	5%	2%	5%
<i>The question was phrased: "Last week, was your main activity working at a paid job or business, looking for paid work, going to school, caring for children, household work, retired or something else?"</i>							

Workaholism

The Compact Oxford English Dictionary defines a workaholic as “a person who compulsively works excessively hard”³¹. Overall, one-quarter of Canadians consider themselves workaholics. Figure 12 shows that, among cultural participants:

- Readers have the lowest rate of workaholism (22% of readers, compared with 31% of non-readers)
- The same percentage of performing arts attendees and non-attendees consider themselves workaholics (25%).
- A slightly lower percentage of art gallery visitors (23%) than non-visitors (26%) consider themselves workaholics.
- A slightly lower percentage of movie goers (24%) than non-goers (27%) consider themselves workaholics.



³¹ Oxford University Press. AskOxford.com. <http://www.askoxford.com> (accessed February 10, 2008).

Quality of Life

This section explores the relationship between cultural activities and:

- Health
- Happiness
- Rating of life as a whole

Cultural participants have better self-assessments of health than non-participants. For all four cultural activities, a higher percentage of cultural participants than non-participants consider themselves to be in excellent or very good health.

Cultural participants and non-participants have similar self-assessments of quality of life. On average, using a scale from one to 10, Canadians rated their life as a whole as 7.72. This rating does not differ substantially between cultural participants and non-participants. For all four cultural activities, the average life as a whole rating of cultural participants is only slightly higher than the rating of non-participants. The average rating for cultural participants ranges from 7.79 (for art gallery visitors) to 7.83 (for performing arts attendees). In contrast, the average rating for non-participants ranges from 7.54 (for non-readers) to 7.70 (for non-gallery visitors).

In addition, most cultural participants have similar self-assessments of happiness as non-participants.

These preliminary findings suggest that the broad forms of cultural participation examined in this report may have some impact on an individual's health but very little impact on an individual's overall happiness or quality of life.

Health

When asked about their health:

- 18% of all Canadians indicated that they are in excellent health;
- 35% indicated that they are in very good health;
- 32% indicated that they are in good health;
- 11% indicated that they are in fair health; and
- Only 3% indicated that they in poor health.

As shown in Table 7, cultural participants have better self-assessments of health than non-participants. For all four cultural activities, a higher percentage of cultural participants than non-participants consider themselves to be in excellent or very good health. As a result, a lower percentage of cultural participants than non-participants consider themselves to be in poor or fair health.

Table 7: Health of Canadians in 2005					
Would you say that your health is ...	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent
All Canadians	3%	11%	32%	35%	18%
Readers	3%	10%	30%	37%	20%
Non-readers	3%	14%	35%	32%	16%
Performing arts attendees	2%	9%	30%	37%	21%
Non-attendees	4%	13%	33%	34%	16%
Art gallery visitors	1%	9%	31%	37%	21%
Non-visitors	3%	12%	33%	35%	17%
Movie goers	1%	9%	31%	38%	21%
Non-goers	5%	16%	34%	30%	15%
<i>The question was phrased: "In general, would you say that your health is excellent, very good, good, fair or poor?"</i>					

Happiness

When asked about their happiness, 43% of all Canadians indicated that they are very happy, and another 52% indicated that they are somewhat happy. In contrast, only 4% indicated that they are somewhat unhappy, and another 1% indicated that they are very unhappy.

As shown in Table 8, most cultural participants have similar self-assessments of happiness as non-participants. Some moderate differences:

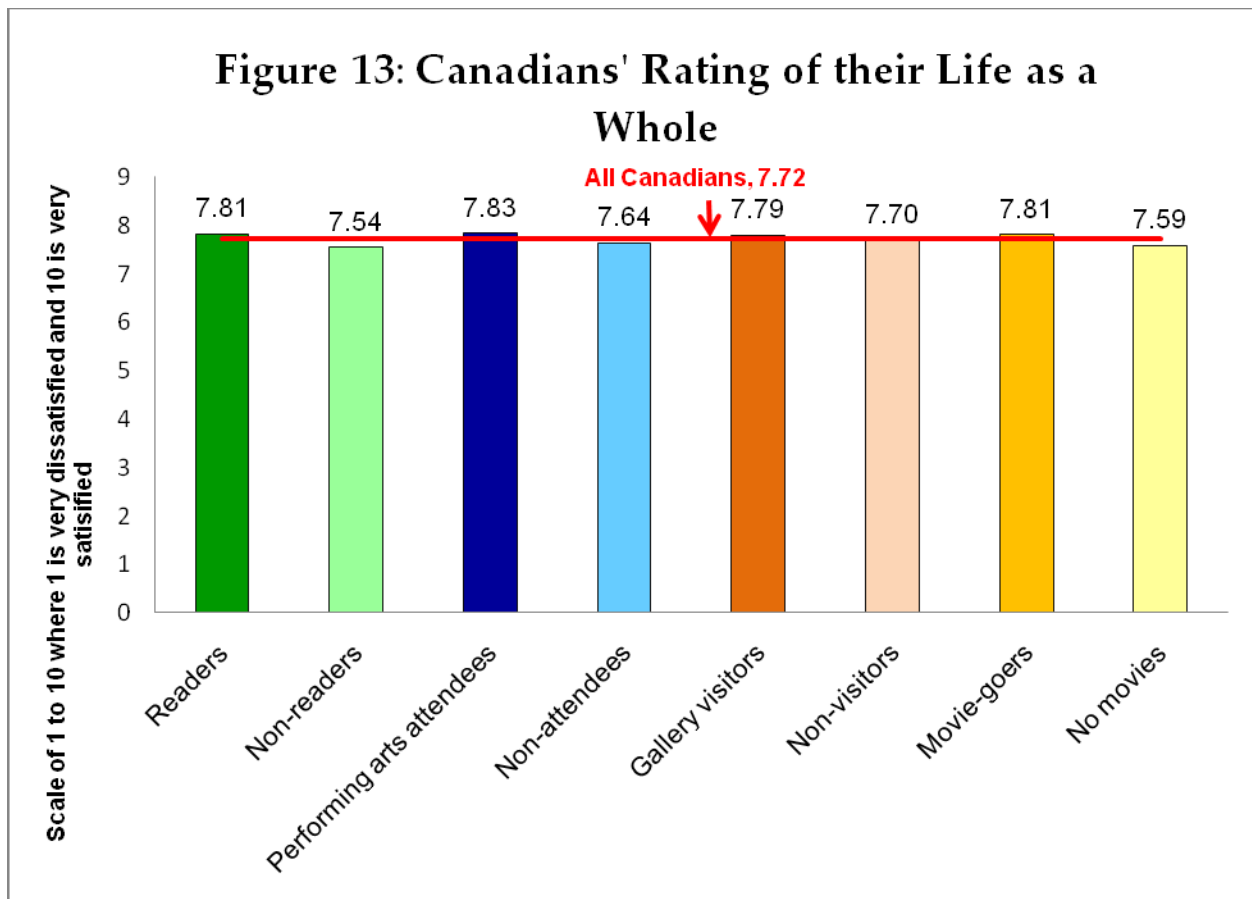
- A higher percentage of readers than non-readers are very happy (45% vs. 39%);
- A higher percentage of performing arts attendees than non-attendees are very happy (46% vs. 41%);
- A slightly higher percentage of movie goers than non-goers are very happy (44% vs. 41%).

In all of these cases, the differences in the “very happy” percentages are compensated for by the “somewhat happy” percentages.

Table 8: Canadians’ Description of their Happiness				
	Very unhappy	Somewhat unhappy	Somewhat happy	Very happy
All Canadians	1%	4%	52%	43%
Readers	1%	4%	51%	45%
Non-readers	1%	5%	55%	39%
Performing arts attendees	1%	4%	50%	46%
Non-attendees	1%	4%	54%	41%
Art gallery visitors	1%	3%	52%	44%
Non-visitors	1%	4%	52%	43%
Movie goers	1%	4%	51%	44%
Non-goers	1%	4%	53%	41%
<i>The question was phrased: “Presently, would you describe yourself as: very happy, somewhat happy, somewhat unhappy or very unhappy?”</i>				

Rating of Life as a Whole

On average, using a scale from one to 10, Canadians rated their life as a whole as 7.72. As illustrated in Figure 13, this rating does not differ substantially between cultural participants and non-participants. For all four cultural activities, the average life as a whole rating of cultural participants is only slightly higher than the rating of non-participants. The average rating for cultural participants ranges from 7.79 (for art gallery visitors) to 7.83 (for performing arts attendees). In contrast, the average rating for non-participants ranges from 7.54 (for non-readers) to 7.70 (for non-gallery visitors).



The question was phrased: "How do you feel about your life as a whole right now?" Respondents were asked to rate their feelings using a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means "Very dissatisfied" and 10 means "Very satisfied".

Summary of Key Findings

The arts are an integral part of many Canadians' lives. Culture provides a means to be entertained, celebrate commonalities and differences, express individuality, feel a sense of attachment and experience artistic expression.

Exploratory in nature, this report examines the relationship between four cultural activities (reading books, attending live performances, visiting art galleries and attending movie theatres) and specific social phenomena:

- Volunteering and Donating
- Neighbourhood Connections
- Sense of Belonging
- Social Activities
- Labour Force Participation
- Quality of Life

Many studies have outlined potential social effects of culture. However, these studies often have not provided statistics in support of the potential effects.

Because there are many other factors that could play a significant role in the social indicators examined in the report, the report does not claim to be definitive. However, some statistics do show a relationship between some cultural activities and positive social engagement:

- Art gallery visitors have a stronger sense of social engagement than non-visitors for many social indicators, including volunteering, donating, doing favours for neighbours, sense of belonging to Canada and not feeling trapped in a daily routine.
- Book readers also have a stronger sense of social engagement than non-readers for many social indicators, including volunteering, donating, doing favours for neighbours, sense of belonging to Canada and not being a workaholic.
- Given a mix of positive and neutral findings regarding performing arts attendees, there is mild evidence of a link between performing arts attendance and positive social engagement. Performing arts attendees do have positive indicators of social engagement for volunteering, donating, doing favours for neighbours, and not feeling trapped in a daily routine.
- Given the mix of positive, neutral and negative findings regarding movie goers, there is very little evidence of a link between movie theatre attendance and positive social engagement.

Methodological notes

The report includes as a cultural participant anyone who read at least one book, attended at least one live performance, visited at least one art gallery, or saw at least one movie at a theatre in 2005. This is a low threshold of cultural participation. The links to social engagement could be stronger for more frequent participants or participants in many different cultural activities.

In addition, many cultural activities do not have explicit social goals. As such, their social impacts may be less than for those cultural activities that have an explicit social goal.

The data is drawn from Statistics Canada's General Social Survey of 2005, an in-depth telephone survey of about 20,000 Canadians 15 years of age or older. Because of a split in the survey design, only half of the respondents were asked questions about their cultural and heritage activities in 2005. A total of 9,851 respondents answered the cultural questions.

Additional details about each cultural activity follow.

Art gallery attendance

For many social indicators, art gallery visitors have a stronger sense of social engagement than non-visitors. In particular:

- The percentage of art gallery visitors volunteering for a non-profit organization (50%) is much higher than the percentage of non-visitors (31%).
- The percentage of art gallery visitors donating money or goods to a non-profit organization (87%) is much higher than the percentage of non-visitors (73%).
- 76% of art gallery visitors (versus 67% of non-visitors) indicated that they had done a favour for a neighbour in the past month.
- 51% of art gallery visitors have a very strong sense of belonging to Canada, compared with 45% of non-visitors.
- Art gallery visitors have a stronger enjoyment of clubs and social organizations than non-participants.
- Fewer art gallery visitors than non-visitors feel trapped in a daily routine (30% of art gallery visitors compared with 38% of non-visitors).
- Art gallery visitors have a better self-assessment of health than non-visitors.

However, for some other indicators, there is very little or no difference between art gallery visitors and non-visitors (e.g., knowledge of neighbours, sense of belonging to one's community or province, overall happiness and rating of life as a whole).

There are no social indicators that point to art gallery visitors having a weaker sense of social engagement than non-visitors.

While there are many other factors that could play a significant role in the social indicators examined in the report, the positive findings regarding art gallery visitors indicate that there

may indeed be a link between art gallery visits and positive social engagement. However, it is not clear from the preliminary statistics in the report whether art gallery attendance has an impact on the social indicators, or whether some of the social indicators may have an impact on art gallery attendance. Further research could examine this potential relationship in greater detail.

Book reading

For many social indicators, book readers have a stronger sense of social engagement than non-readers. In particular:

- The percentage of book readers volunteering for a non-profit organization (42%) is much higher than the percentage of non-readers (25%).
- The percentage of book readers donating money or goods to a non-profit organization (82%) is much higher than the percentage of non-readers (66%).
- 71% of book readers (compared with 65% of non-readers) indicated that they had done a favour for a neighbour in the past month.
- 49% of book readers have a very strong sense of belonging to Canada, compared with 42% of non-readers.
- Book readers have a stronger enjoyment of clubs and social organizations than non-participants.
- Book readers have a lower rate of workaholism than non-readers (22% of book readers compared with 31% of non-readers)

However, for some other indicators, there is very little or no difference between book readers and non-readers (e.g., knowledge of neighbours, sense of belonging to one's community or province, and rating of life as a whole).

While there are many other factors that could play a significant role in the social indicators examined in the report, the positive findings regarding book readers indicate that there may indeed be a link between book reading and positive social engagement. However, it is not clear from the preliminary statistics in the report whether book reading has an impact on the social indicators, or whether some of the social indicators may have an impact on book reading. Further research could examine this potential relationship in greater detail.

Performing arts attendance

For many social indicators, attendees at performing arts events (including theatre, popular music, classical music, dance or opera) have a stronger sense of social engagement than non-attendees. In particular:

- The percentage of performing arts attendees volunteering for a non-profit organization (48%) is much higher than the percentage of non-attendees (28%).
- The percentage of performing arts attendees donating money or goods to a non-profit organization (85%) is much higher than the percentage of non-attendees (71%).

- 73% of performing arts attendees (compared with 67% of non-attendees) indicated that they had done a favour for a neighbour in the past month.
- Performing arts attendees have a stronger enjoyment of clubs and social organizations than non-participants.
- Fewer performing arts attendees than non-attendees feel trapped in a daily routine (33% of performing arts attendees compared with 38% of non-attendees).
- Performing arts attendees have a better self-assessment of health than non-attendees.

However, for many other indicators, there is very little or no difference between performing arts attendees and non-attendees (e.g., knowledge of neighbours, sense of belonging to one's community, to one's province or to Canada, overall happiness and rating of life as a whole).

Given the mix of positive and neutral findings regarding performing arts attendees, there is mild evidence of a link between performing arts attendance and positive social engagement. In addition, it is not clear from the preliminary statistics in the report whether performing arts attendance has an impact on the social indicators, or whether some of the social indicators may have an impact on performing arts attendance. There are many other factors that could play a significant role in the social indicators. Further research could examine these potential relationships in greater detail.

Movie theatre attendance

For a few social indicators, movie goers have a stronger sense of social engagement than non-goers. In particular:

- The percentage of movie goers volunteering for a non-profit organization (41%) is much higher than the percentage of non-goers (28%).
- The percentage of movie goers donating money or goods to a non-profit organization (79%) is higher than the percentage of non-goers (73%).
- Movie goers have a better self-assessment of health than non-goers.

However, for many other indicators, there is very little or no difference between movie goers and non-goers (e.g., doing a favour for a neighbour, sense of belonging to one's community, overall happiness and rating of life as a whole).

For a few other indicators, movie goers have a weaker sense of social engagement than non-goers (e.g., knowledge of neighbours and sense of belonging to one's province or to Canada).

Given the mix of positive, neutral and negative findings regarding movie goers, there is very little evidence of a link between movie theatre attendance and positive social engagement.

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