

# THE ARTS ECOLOGY OF SASKATCHEWAN

## Demographics



Saskatchewan  
Arts Alliance

prepared by

*Ariana Malthaner. PhD*

2023/2024

# THE ARTS ECOLOGY OF SASKATCHEWAN

## Demographics

In 2014, the Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research, a research partnership formed in 2012 by the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, the Saskatchewan Arts Board (SK Arts,) SaskCulture and the University of Regina, conducted two major surveys with a view to broadening their understanding of the arts ecology of Saskatchewan.

These surveys, and accompanying reports, have been foundational research into the arts ecology of Saskatchewan, and contain data on which the SAA has consistently relied, and referenced in their advocacy efforts, and therefore felt that it was crucially important to conduct a follow-up survey to examine the ways in which the arts ecology of Saskatchewan had changed in the past ten years.

In order to best facilitate comparison, the SAA maintained the original survey as closely as we were able: questions accounting for the effects of COVID-19, as well as some minor edits to language were made in order to elicit the best results, and to facilitate ease of understanding.

The SAA circulated two versions of the survey for artists: one version of the artist survey was strictly limited to those who are members of the artist registry hosted and curated by the SAA, while the other was promoted more broadly, via email and social media communications, to anyone who identifies as an artist.

The SAA has decided to generate a number of smaller, 'breakout' reports from the report as a whole, to best showcase all of the findings. This particular report focuses on the demographics of the artists surveyed.

The survey had a number of interesting key findings. The first was that the artists responding to the survey identified as women, transgender and non-binary at higher rates than is observed in the general population. This aligns with the wider trend of artists being more likely to be women. The vast majority of participants (91.2%) identified as being Canadian, 9.4% of respondents identified as Indigenous and 35% of respondents identified as a member of an equity seeking group.

One of the major findings of the survey was that the artists surveyed were much more highly educated than the general population: 95% indicated that they had continued on to post-secondary education, with 86% indicating that they had received an educational qualification from a third-level institution.

## Survey Results

The survey asked for basic demographic data from respondents: gender, age, ethnicity, as well as whether or not they were born or had moved to Saskatchewan.

The majority of respondents identified as female: in the previous survey, 60% had identified as female whereas in the 2023 survey, 65% identified as female. 29% identified as male, a decrease from the 40% that identified as male in the previous survey.

The survey shows a higher proportion of female respondents than there are women in the general population: according to Statistics Canada's[1] populations estimates for 2023, approximately 50.4% of the overall population were male, showing a much more even divide than represented here.

The 2014 SPAR had a category for 'Other,' in which 0.3% had identified, but the updated survey included more options for participants in order to be more inclusive: respondents were given the additional options of non-binary/gender non-conforming; Two Spirit; Transman; Transwoman; as well as an open response in which they could self-identify. 6% of respondents identified as non-binary/gender non-conforming while 0.3% identified as transmen.

The higher proportion of female respondents can either be viewed as evidence that a higher proportion of artists in Saskatchewan are women, or an indication that more women were reached by the survey. Hill Strategies[2] requested custom census data from the 2021 census regarding professional artists, which shows a similar trend: 65% of professional artists in Saskatchewan are women (including some transgender and non-binary people,) as noted by Hill Strategies, the highest percentage in Canada.

While this data is exclusively focused on artists who dedicate more working hours to their art than any other profession, and is therefore not entirely analogous to the artists represented by this survey, it is reasonable to conclude that the higher percentage of female respondents is reflective of a wider trend of more female artists in the province.

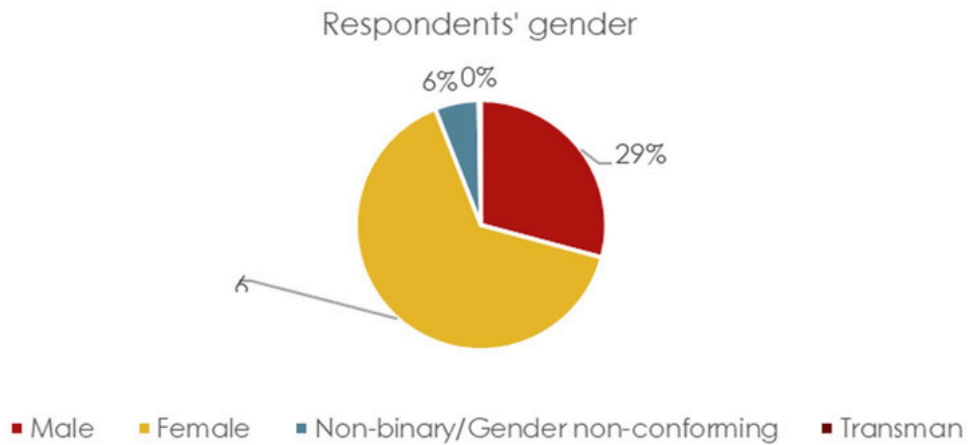
The 2021 census was the first to record information on transgender and non-binary people.[3] According to this data, Saskatchewan had the second lowest proportion of transgender and non-binary people, representing only 0.16% and 0.12% of the population respectively. The custom census data requested by Hill Strategies only provided numbers for the prairies as a collective (1.4% for both transgender and non-binary combined.) In that regard, the survey shows a higher proportion of transgender and non-binary respondents than are represented in the general population.

[1] Statistics Canada. [Table 17-10-0005-01 Population estimates on July 1, by age and gender](#)

[2] Hill, Kelly. 2023. [Artists in Saskatchewan in 2021](https://statsinsights.hillstrategies.com/p/artists-in-saskatchewan-in-2021?utm_source=%2Fsearch%2Fsaskatchewan&utm_medium=reader2).  
[https://statsinsights.hillstrategies.com/p/artists-in-saskatchewan-in-2021?utm\\_source=%2Fsearch%2Fsaskatchewan&utm\\_medium=reader2](https://statsinsights.hillstrategies.com/p/artists-in-saskatchewan-in-2021?utm_source=%2Fsearch%2Fsaskatchewan&utm_medium=reader2)

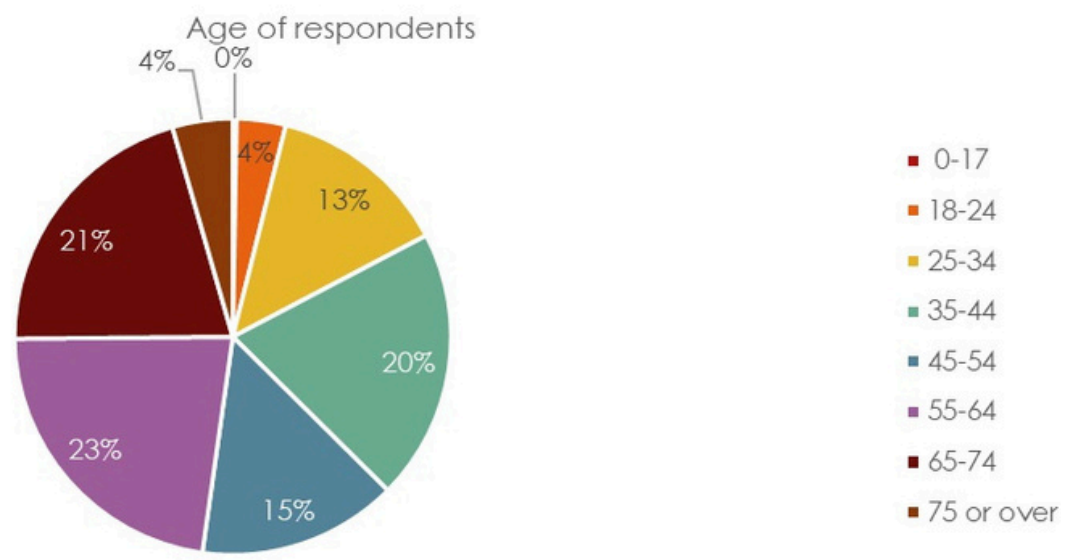
[3] The Daily: [Canada is the first country to provide census data on transgender and non-binary people](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220427/dq220427b-eng.htm).  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220427/dq220427b-eng.htm>

Figure 1 Respondents' Gender



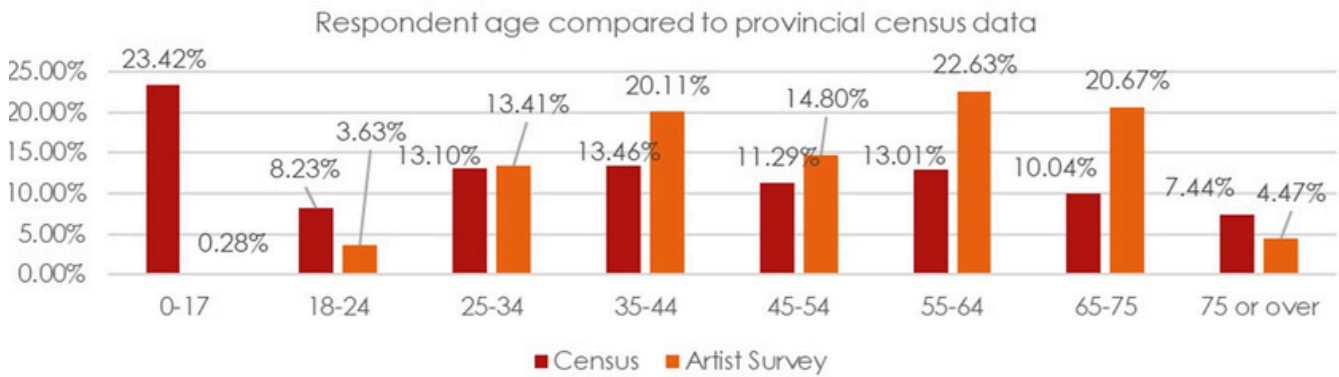
In the 2014 SPAR survey, the largest age group represented was the 55-64 range with 31.6% of respondents in that range, with 45-54 (19.4%) as the second largest age group. Although the 55-64 age range was the largest age group in this survey (22.6%), there was a fairly even spread of respondents: 20.7% is 65-74; 20.1% is 35-44; 14.8% is 45-54; 13.4% is 25-34. The majority of respondents (92%) are between the ages of 25-75, with the 4.5% 75 and over, 3.6% 18-24 and 0.3% under 18.

Figure 2 Age of respondents



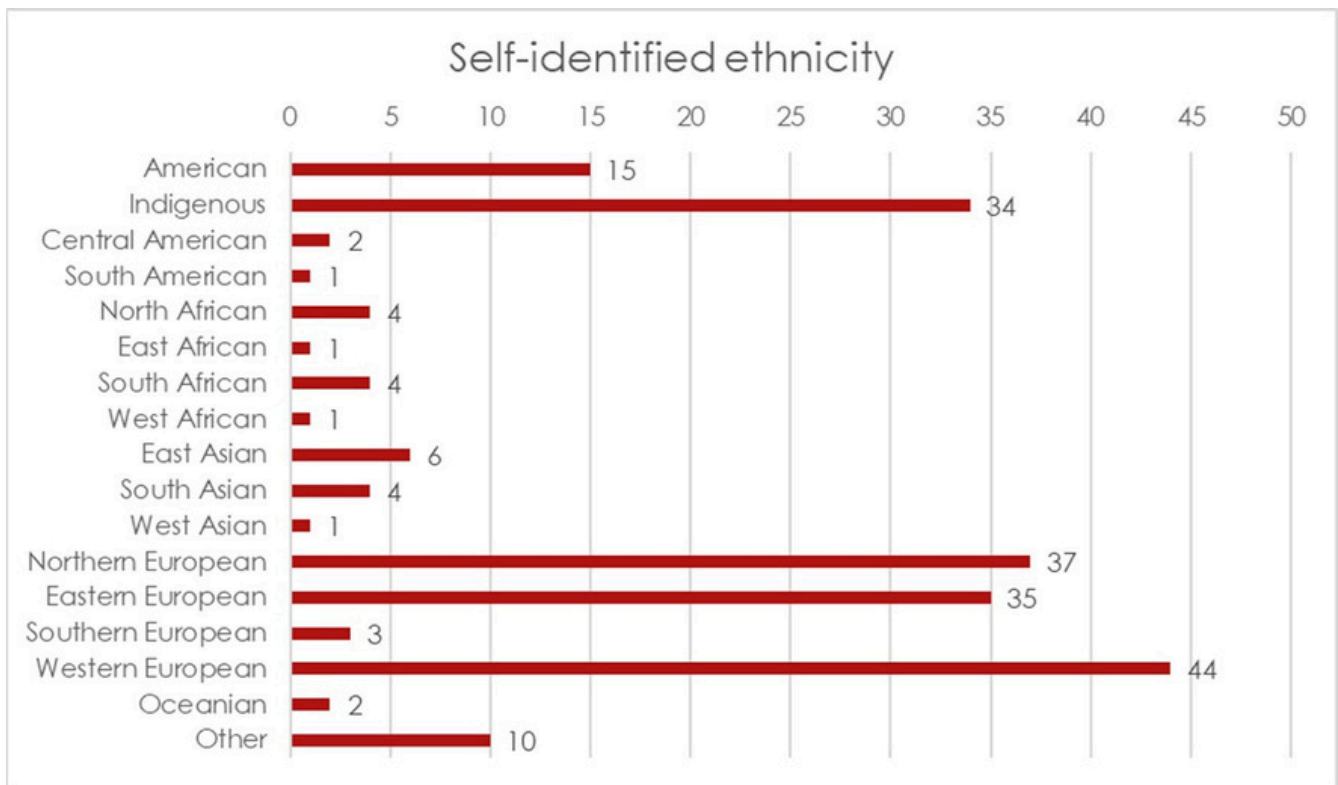
When compared to census data, the biggest disparity is, obviously, in the under 18 age range. The other age categories, therefore, represent a high percentage of the survey respondents than are represented in the general population. Even so, the proportion of respondents over 55 is higher than in the general population.

Figure 3 Respondent age compared to provincial census data



Respondents were asked to self-identify their ethnicity, and respondents were able to select multiple identifiers. The vast majority of respondents (91.2%) identified as Canadian. The next largest groups of respondents were Western European (12.2%), Eastern European (9.7%), Northern European (10.25%), Indigenous (9.4%), and American (4.2%).

Figure 4 Self-identified ethnicity



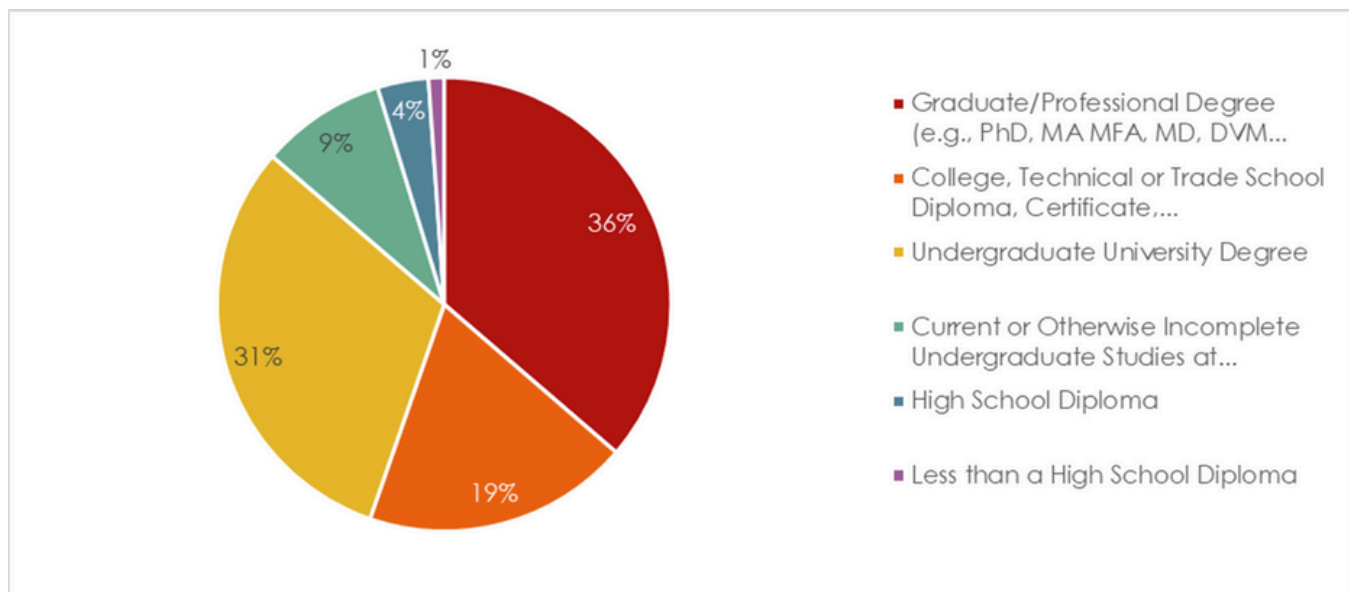
The previous SPAR report used different categories for identifying ethnicity: while 8.9% of respondents identified as 'Aboriginal (First Nations, North American Indian, Metis or Inuit),' the remaining respondents identified either as British, Canadian, East Indian, French, German, Irish, Polish or Ukrainian.



86.3% respondents indicated that they have some form of third-level qualification; 36.4% have a graduate degree: 31% of respondents indicated that they have a university degree and 19% indicated that have a qualification from a college, technical or trade school. These numbers are comparable to the 2014 study in which 33% indicated they had a graduate degree, 38% held an undergraduate degree and 15% indicated they held a college-level qualification.

In addition to those who indicated they have some form of higher education, 8.9% indicated that they had incomplete undergraduate studies, 3.6% held a high school diploma and only 1.1% held less than a high school diploma.

Figure 5 Artist level of education



This is a stark contrast to the 2021 census data on education for Saskatchewan. According to the census, 18.1% of the population holds no educational credential; and 32.2% of Saskatchewan residents have completed high school as their highest level of education. Only 49.7% of the population holds a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree, with only 14.7% holding an undergraduate degree with 5.8% having completed a degree above the bachelor level.

The educational level of survey respondents therefore skews quite high when compared to the general population, but also in comparison to the professional artist data collected by Hill Strategies, which indicates 38% of professional artists in Saskatchewan hold a bachelor's degree or higher – compared to the 67% of survey respondents.

[5] Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0429-01 Highest level of education by census year, visible minority and generation status: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations Hill. 2023. Artists in Saskatchewan 2021.

35% of respondents identified as a member of an equity-seeking group, and of that 35%, 18% identified as LGBTQIA2S+, 17% as a person with a disability, 10% as Indigenous and 3.8% as a member of a racialized group.

Figure 6 Self-identified equity seeking group members

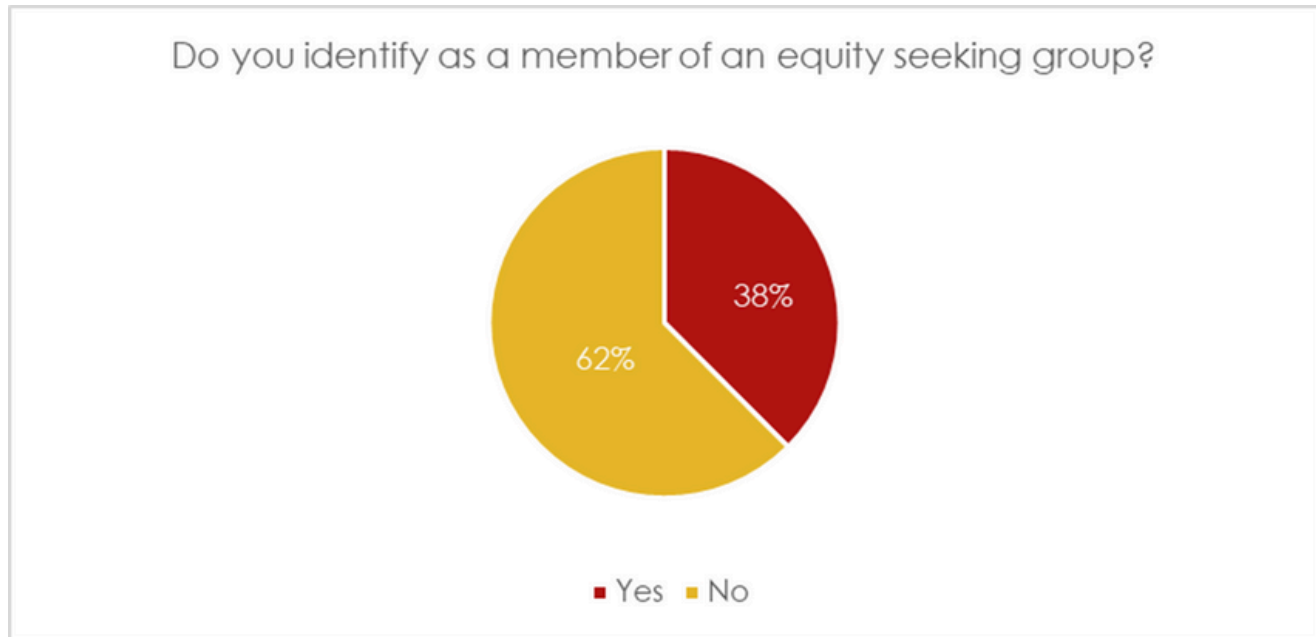
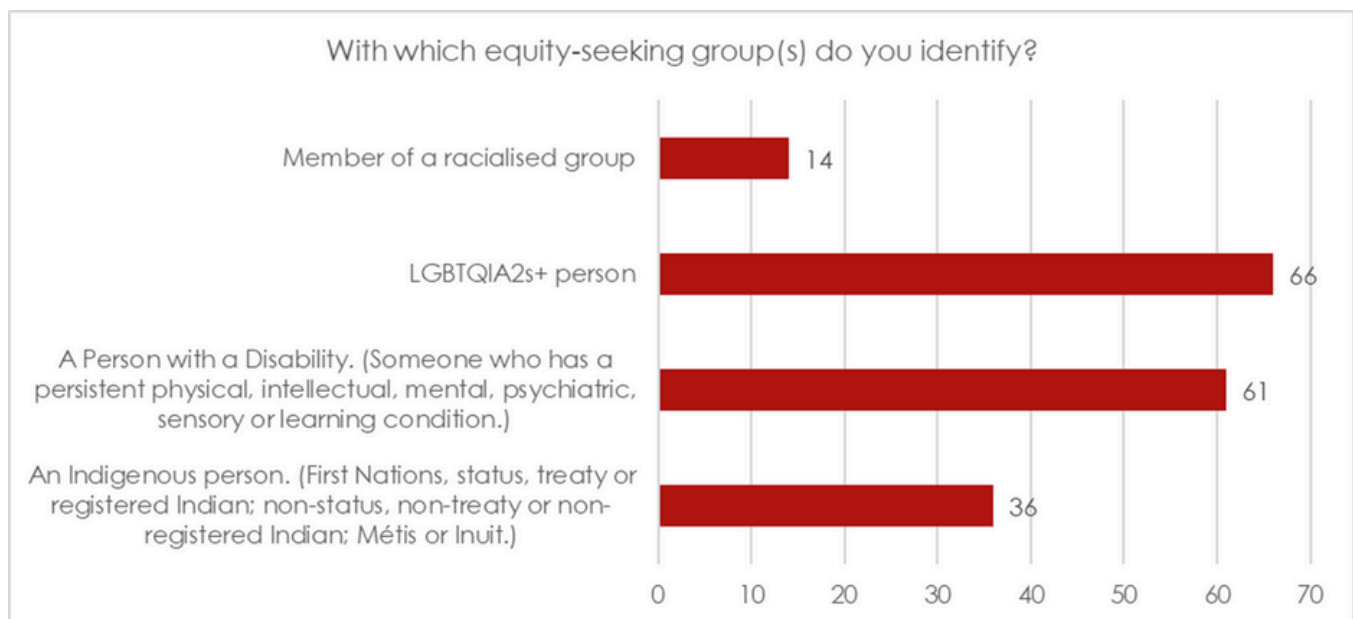


Figure 7 Distribution of equity seeking group members



89% of respondents indicated that they were born in Canada, with 3% born in America and 7% born elsewhere: Bangladesh, Bosnia, Cuba, England, France, Iran, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the Republic of South Africa. According to the 2021 census, 12.5% of Saskatchewan residents were immigrants, thus immigrants were slightly underrepresented

in the survey respondents when compared to their presence in the overall population. This is a broader range of birthplaces than found in the 2014 study: only Canada, America, the United Kingdom, Germany and India were identified last time.

The survey then asked respondents who were not born in Canada to indicate when they had moved to Canada, as well as asking those who were not born in Saskatchewan to identify when they had moved to Saskatchewan. The highest percentage of immigrants came to Canada in the 2010s, with the 2000s and the 1980s tying for second place, and the highest percentage of people moved to Saskatchewan in the 2000s, though the 1980s were a close second, followed by the 2010s as well.

Figure 8 What decade in which respondents immigrated to Canada

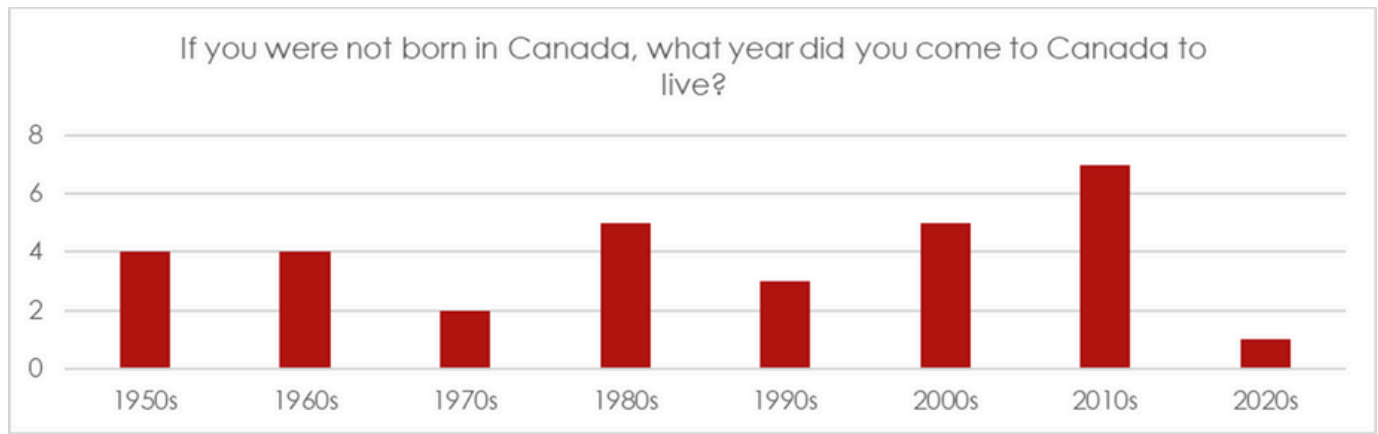
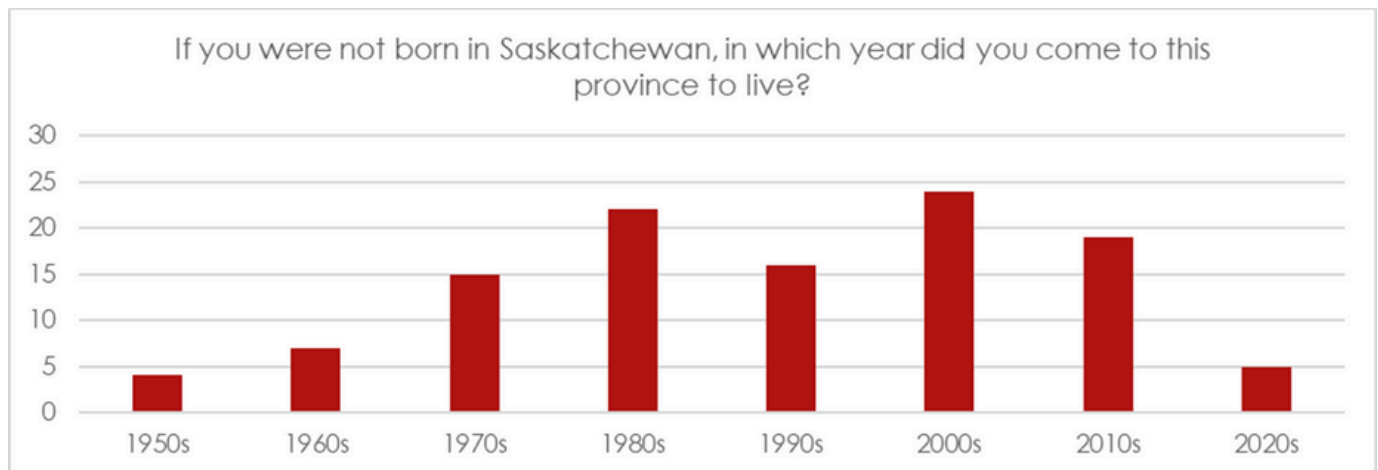


Figure 9 Decades in which respondents moved to Saskatchewan



The survey then asked artists about the type of community in which they live. The majority (66%) of respondents live in a large population centre of 100,000 people or

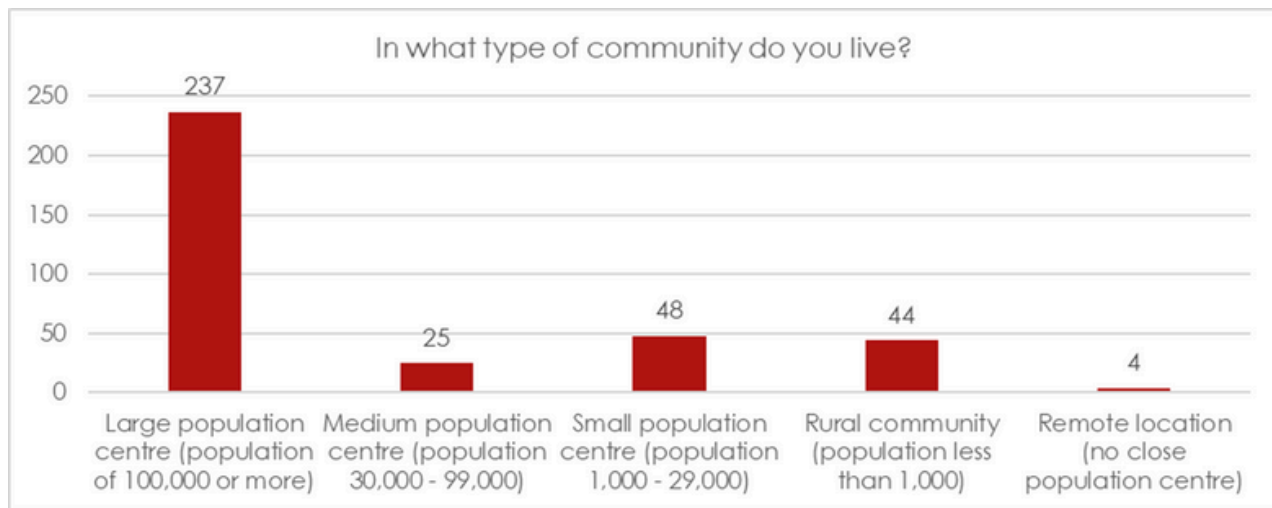
The classifications for this question were inspired by the definition of population centres, as per Statistics Canada's Dictionary, Census of Population 2021. However, the Statistics Canada definition does not include a classification for anything smaller a 'small population centre' with a population of less than 1,000; any area with less than 1,000 people is considered rural, per the Dictionary. While this undoubtedly works nationally, in the Saskatchewan context, it was deemed more appropriate to include categories for both a rural community, with a population of less than 1,000, and remote areas, with no close population centre.





more (namely, Regina or Saskatoon); 13% indicated they live in a small population centre of 1,000 – 29,000; 12% live in a rural community of 1,000 people or less; 7% live in a medium population centre with 30,000 – 99,000 (Prince Albert or Moose Jaw); and 1% live in a remote location with no close population centre.

Figure 10 Distribution of respondents within community types



According to the 2021 Census, 66% of Saskatchewan residents lived in census metropolitan areas – defined as population centres with 100,000 people or more, which maps exactly to the results of this survey.