


# Local Media Study in Canadian Communities

## Public Policy Forum

January 27, 2025

# Methodology



- The survey was conducted through Ipsos online I-Say panel among Canadian residents aged 18+ within communities with less than 10,000 population and communities with a population between 10 000 to less than 100 000 residents.
- Final sample size: n=1001 (n = 489 under 10K; n = 512 10K-99K)
- Interviews were completed between January 9<sup>th</sup> to January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- Data is weighted according to Statistics Canada census data by gender, age, region, to ensure proportional representation of the sample.
- The accuracy of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the results are considered accurate to within +/- 3.5 percentage points of what the results would have been had every Canadian resident aged 18+ has been polled.
- Statistically significant differences within groups is indicated throughout the report with a green box (  ).

# Executive Summary



In summary, the study demonstrates the perceived importance of local news to community knowledge, connections and democracy in small and mid-sized Canadian communities. Trust remains highest in traditional local media sources. While there is some appetite for increased CBC presence and potential to drive donations, concerns exist about the impact of government involvement in local media.

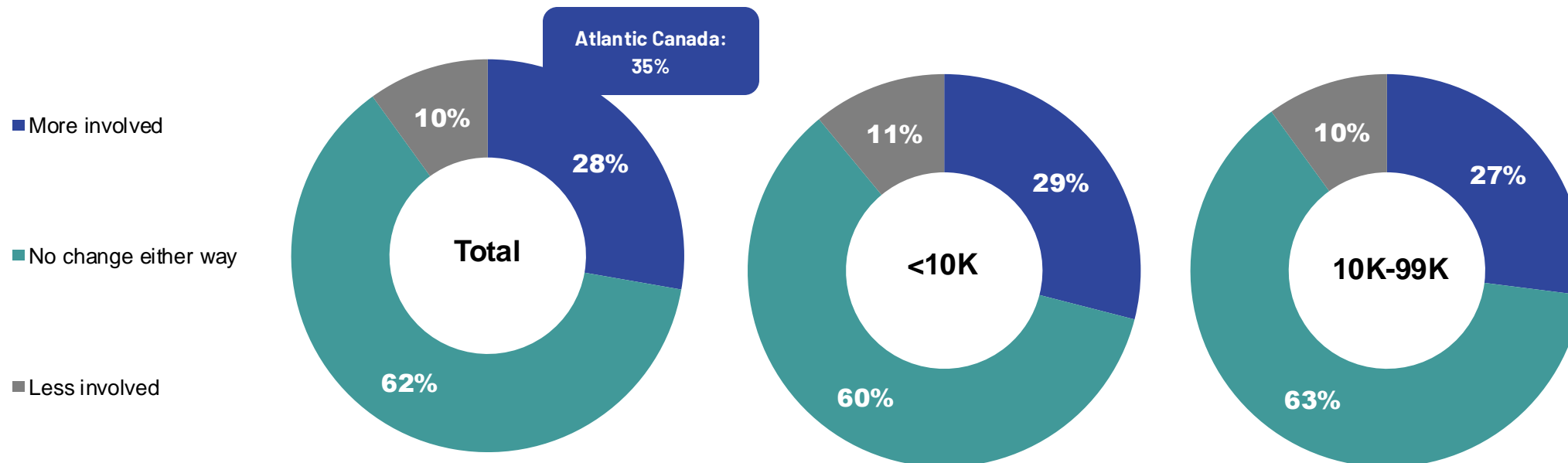
Key findings include:

- 28% of respondents say they have become more involved in their local community in the last 5 years, while 62% report no change.
- Local newspapers (86%) and local radio (86%) are the most trusted sources of news, followed by national newspapers (71%) and local online news sites (71%). Trust is slightly higher in smaller communities under 10,000 population.
- 78% say having a source of local news is important to them. 79% rely on local news sources a great deal or somewhat to know what's happening in their community.
- Police/crime news and community events are rated as the most important types of local news coverage.
- Just 20% believe there is more local news now compared to 5 years ago, while 28% say there is less. Those perceiving less local news feel it negatively impacts knowledge of local government/institutions and community connections.
- 87% agree local news is important to a properly-functioning democracy and 75% believe democracy would be threatened without local news. However, 76% are concerned government financial support of news organizations could introduce bias.
- 57% consume news from the CBC, with the CBC website being the top platform used. 29% would like to see the CBC be more present in their community.
- 40% say they would be likely to donate to a local news organization if a charitable tax receipt was provided, with likelihood higher in larger communities (45%) than smaller ones (34%).

# Key Findings

# Community Involvement

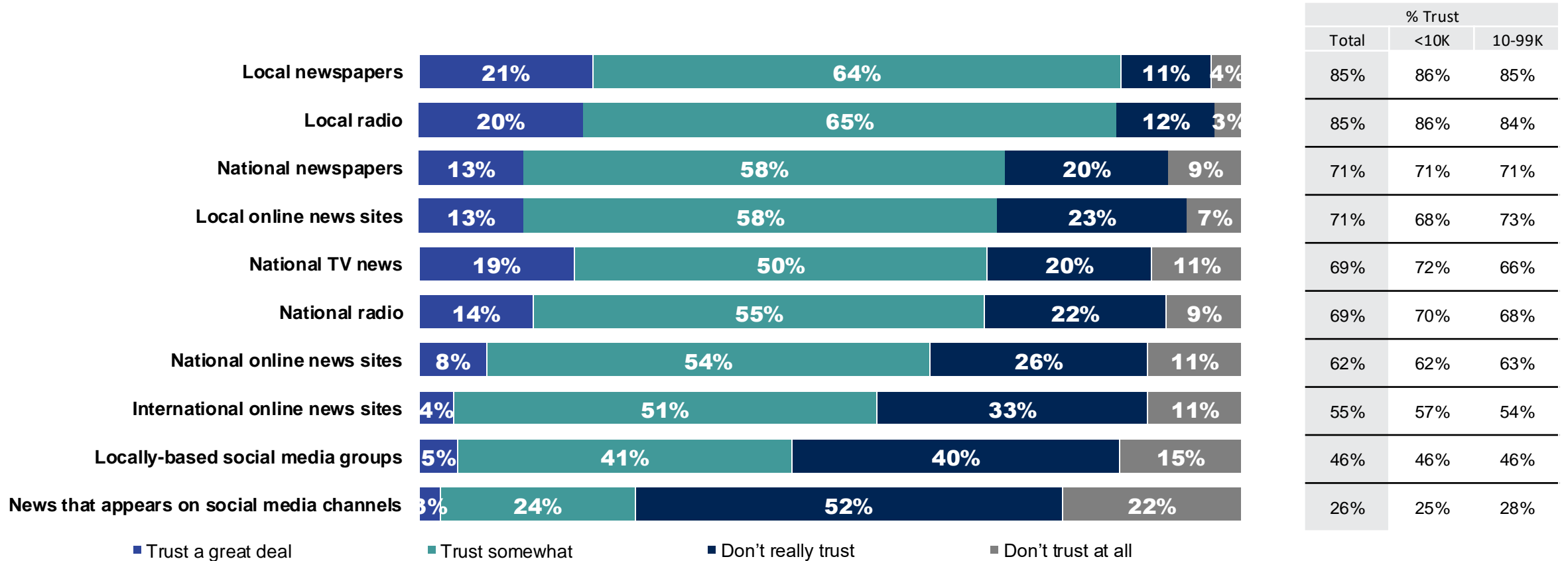
Three in ten Canadians say they have become more involved in their community within the last 5 years (28%) while majority say there was no change in involvement (62%).



Source: Base: All Respondents n=1001  
SM1. In the last 5 years, would you say you have become more involved in your local community, less involved, or no change either way?

# Trust in News Sources

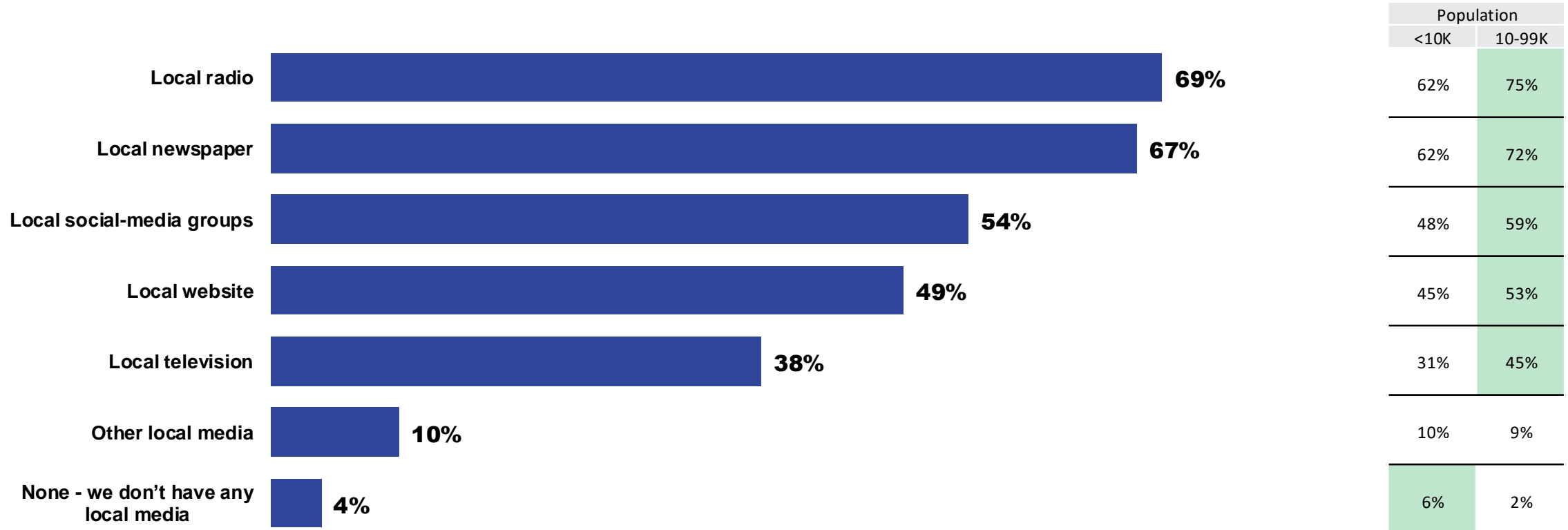
Canadians trust their local newspapers (86%) and their local radio (86%) the most, slightly higher among smaller communities. Seven in ten trust their national newspapers and local online news sites.



Source: Base: All Respondents n=1001  
SM2. To what extent do you trust the following sources of news:

# Available News Source

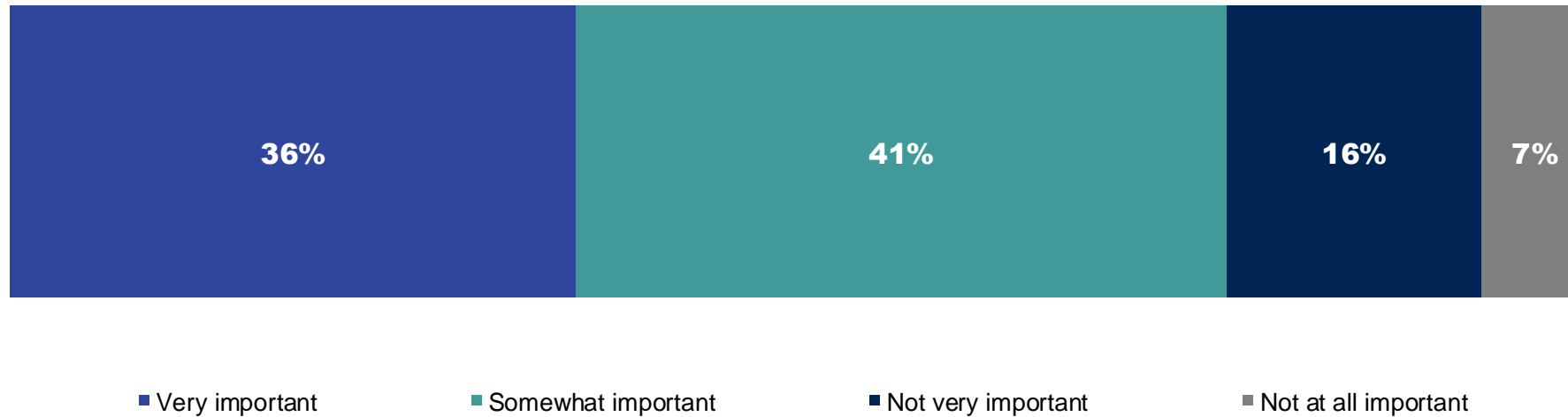
Local news media outlets are more prevalent in larger communities than their smaller counterpart. However, six in ten from smaller communities say they have local radio (62%) or a local newspaper (62%).



Source: Base: All Respondents n=1001  
SM3. Which of the following sources of local news are present in your community?

# Importance of Local News

Majority of Canadians say it is important to them to have a source of local news to them (77%), slightly higher among larger communities (80%) than smaller (75%).



% Important		
Total	<10K	10-99K
<b>78%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>80%</b>

Household Income  
\$100K+: 87%

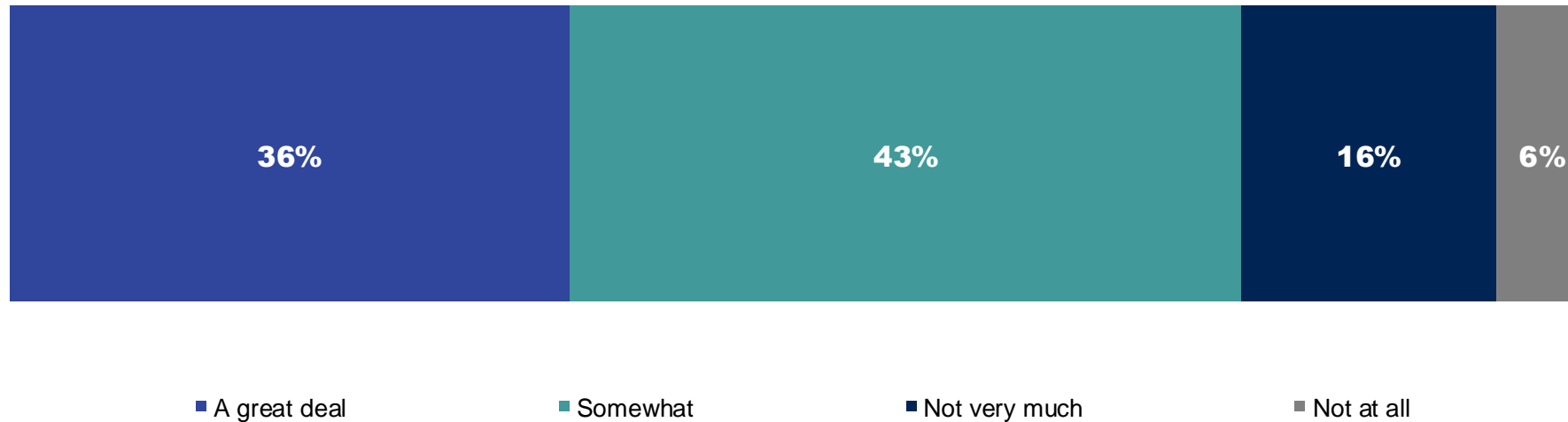
Atlantic Canadians :  
91%

Source: Base: All Respondents n=1001  
SM4. How important is having a source of local news to you?



# Reliance on Local News

Three quarters of Canadians rely on their local news sources to know what's happening in their community (36% a great deal, 43% somewhat).



% Great deal/somewhat		
Total	<10K	10-99K
<b>79%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>78%</b>

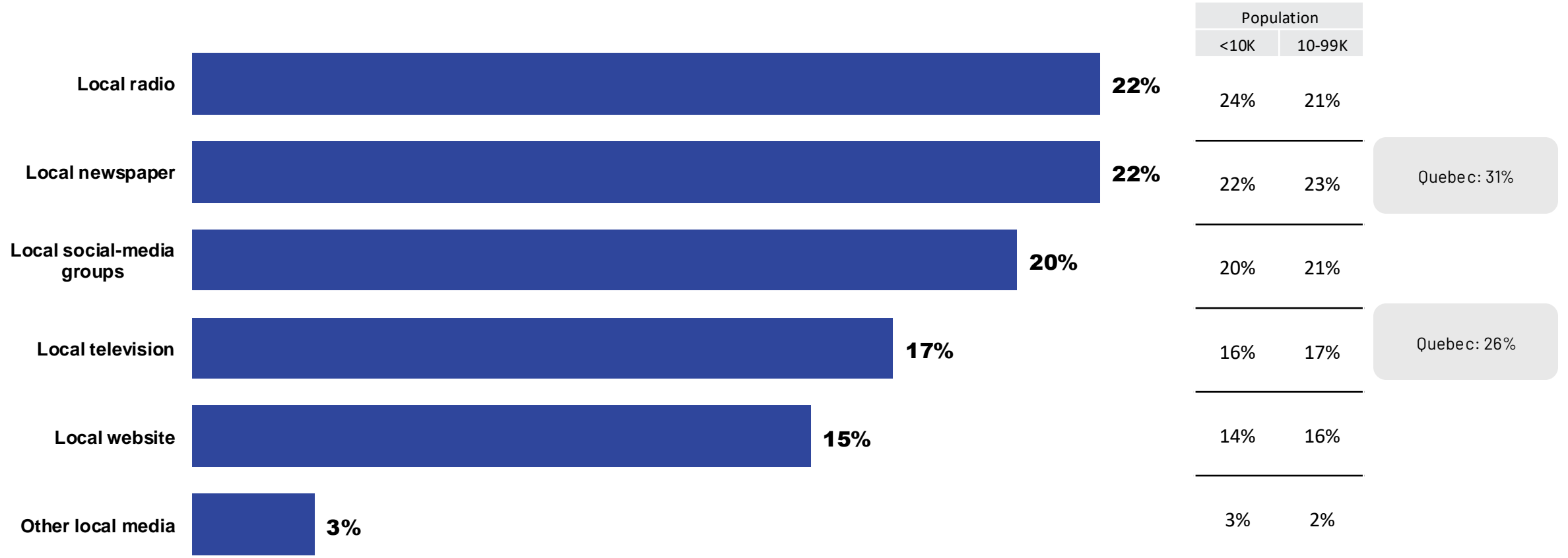
- Household Income \$100K+: 86%
- Quebec: 83%

Source: Base: Has local media n=962  
SM5. How much do you rely on news from local sources to know what's happening in your community?



# Most Relied on News Source

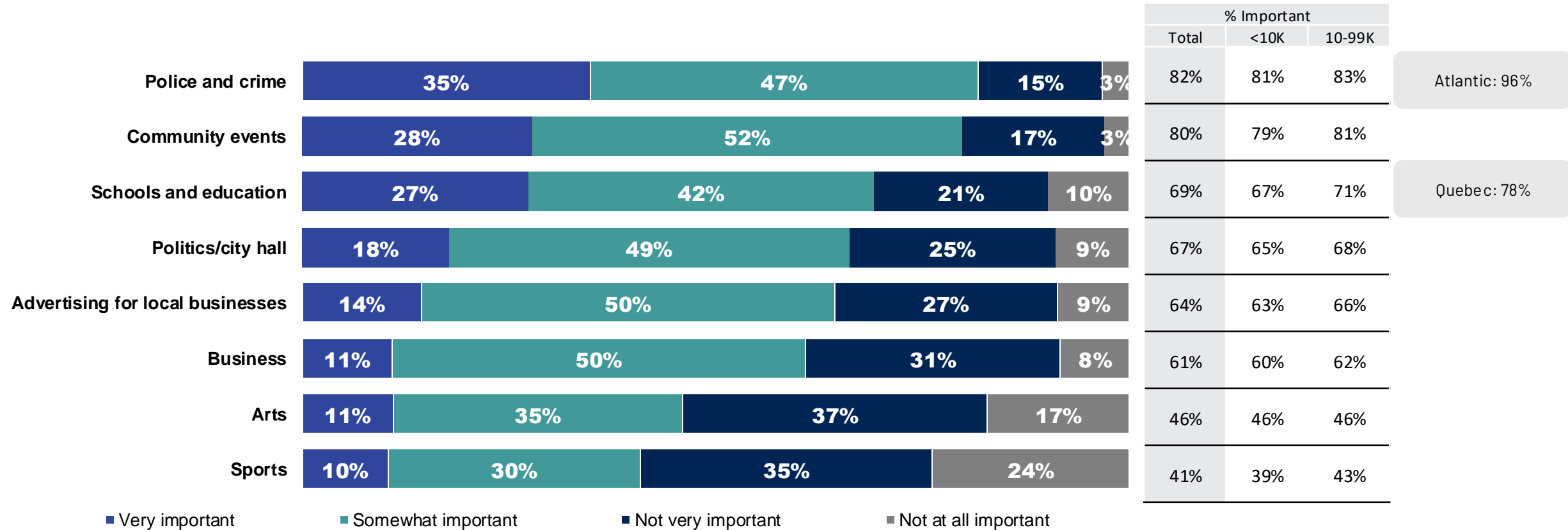
While various media sources are relied on, local radio (22%) and local newspaper (22%) takes a slight edge as the most relied upon source, followed by local social-media groups (20%), local television (17%), and local website (15%). Smaller communities rely slightly more on their local radio than larger communities.



Source: Base: Has local media n=962  
SM6. Which source do you personally rely on the most?

# Importance in Type of News

News regarding police and crime takes the top spot of importance overall (82%), followed by community events (80%). Slightly fewer, but still a majority put emphasis in the importance of news covering schools and education (69%), politics (67%), advertising for local businesses (64%), and general business (60%).

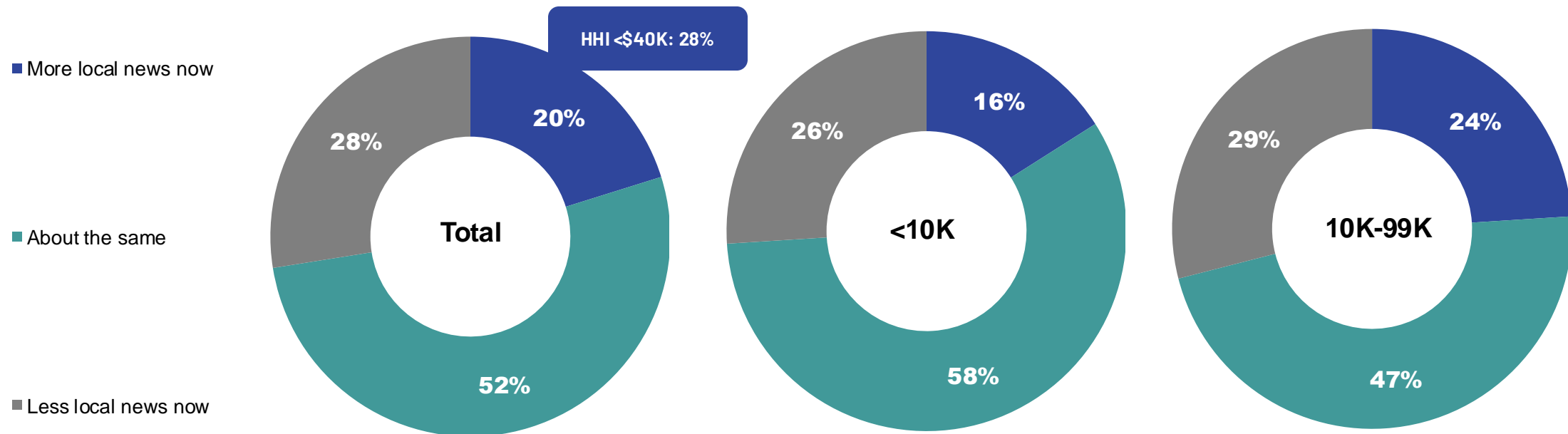


Source: Base: All Respondents n=1001  
SM7. How important are each of the following kinds of local news to you?



# Volume of Local News

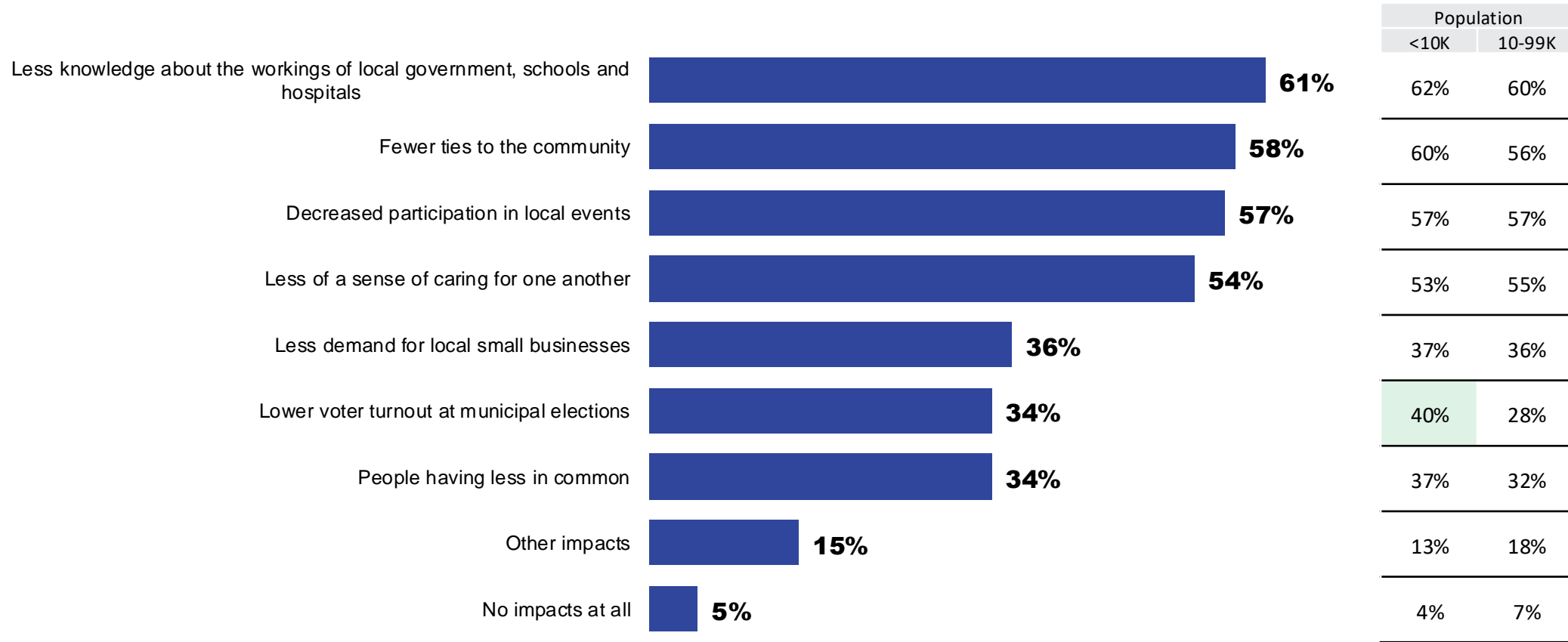
In the past 5 years, one in five Canadians (20%) say there is more local news now, higher among those in larger communities (24%) than smaller (16%). Notably, just over a quarter say there is less local news now (28%).



Source: Base: All Respondents n=1001  
SM8. Compared to 5 years ago, is there now more local news, less local news, or about the same as there was before?

# Impact of Having Less Local News

Majority agree that having less local news reduces knowledge about the workings of local government, schools and hospitals (61%) and minimizes the connection within the community (58%). Smaller communities are significantly more likely to say less local news results in a lower voter turnout at municipal elections (40%).

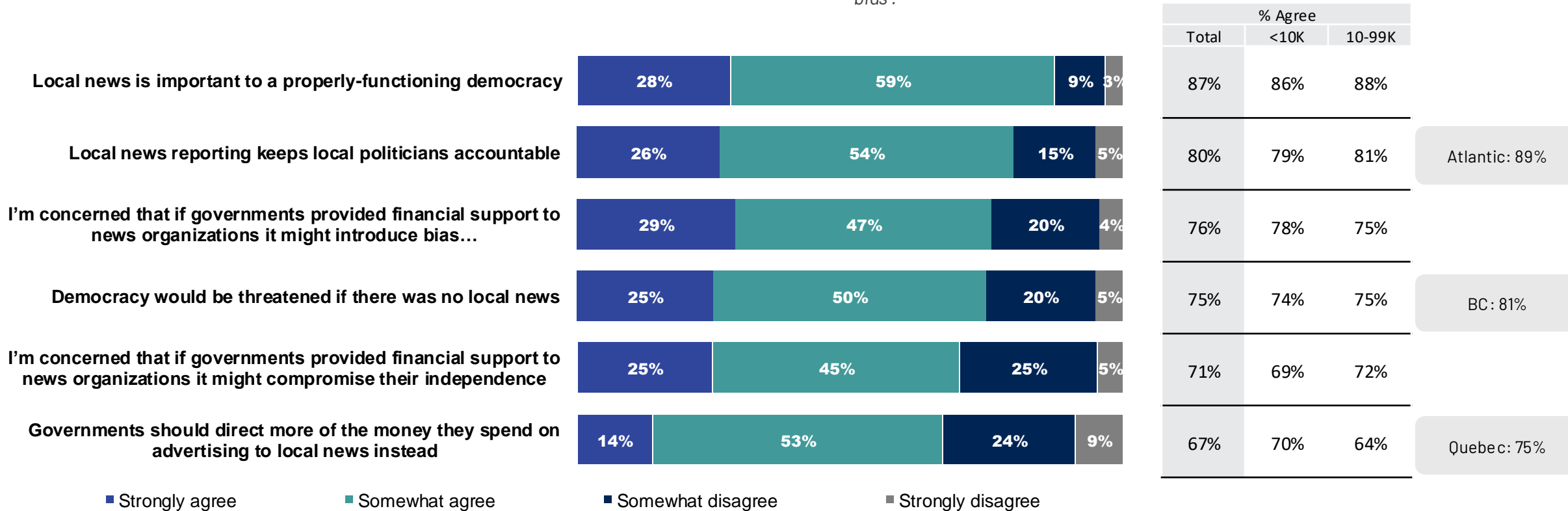


Source: Base: Less local news: n=277  
SM9. What impact do you believe having less local news is having on your community?



# Importance of Local News and Politics

A large majority agree that local news is important to a properly-functioning democracy (87%) and four in five agree local news reporting keeps local politicians accountable. Furthermore, three quarters agree democracy would be threatened if there was no local news (75%). However, another 76% are concerned that if governments provided financial support to news organizations, it might introduce bias.

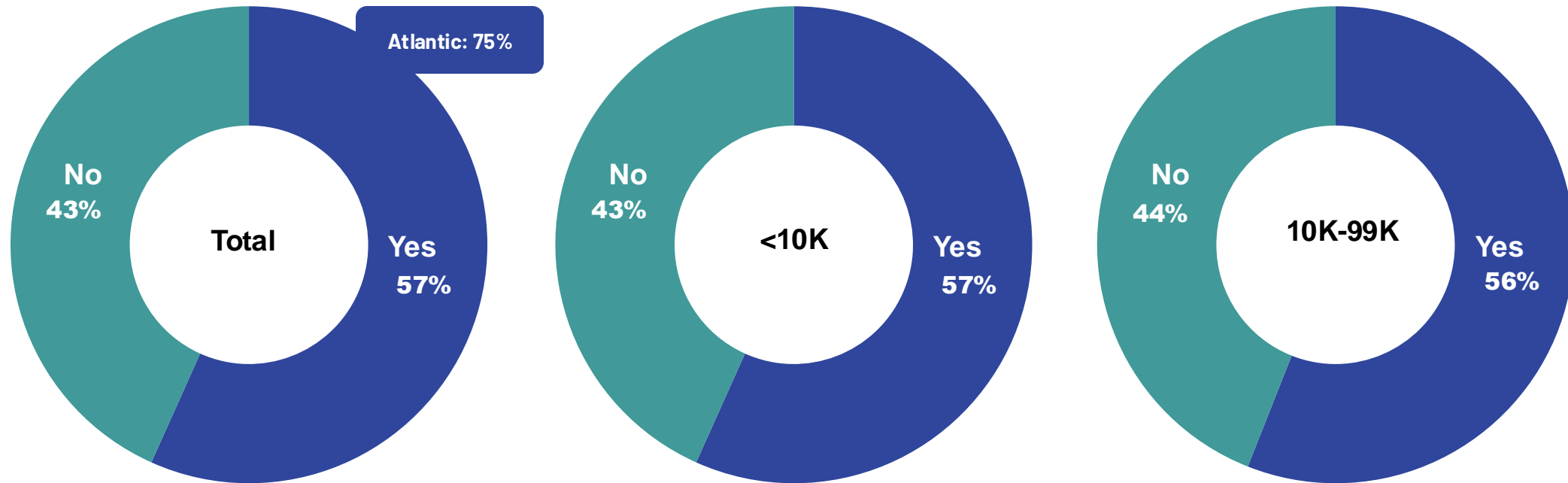


Source: Base: All Respondents n=1001  
SM12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



# CBC Usage

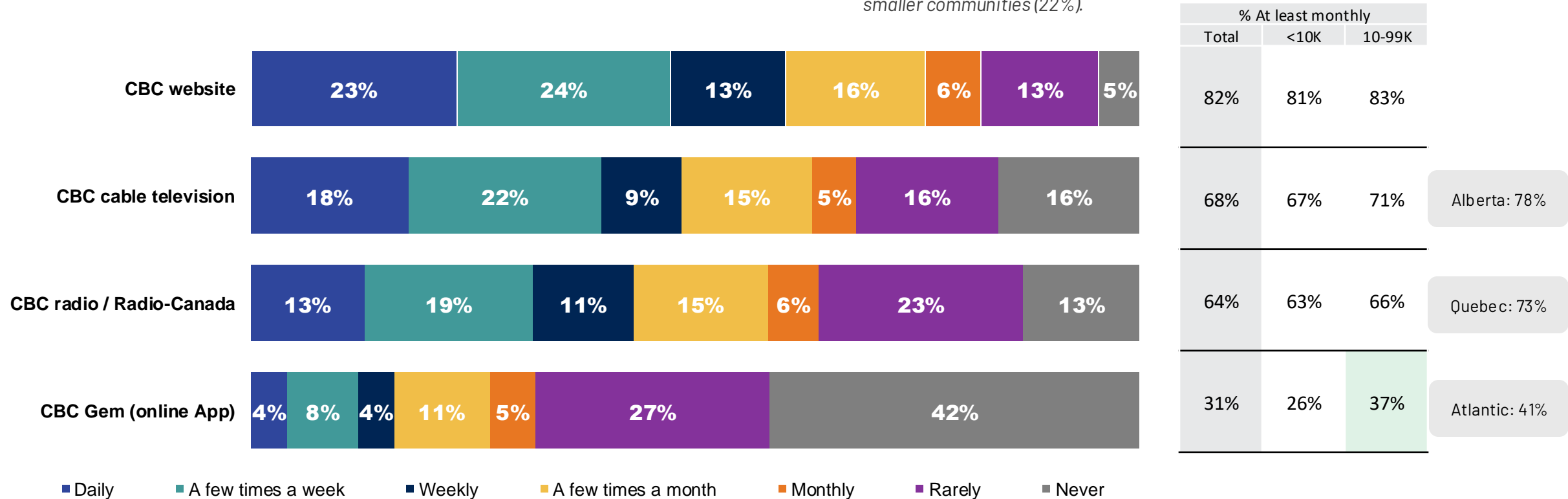
More than half of Canadians say they consume news from the CBC (57%), consistent among smaller and larger communities.



Source: Base: All Respondents n=1001  
SM13. Do you consume news from the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting corporation)?

# Frequency of CBC Usage

Among those who consume news from the CBC, four in five consume news from the CBC through their website (82%) at least monthly, consistent among smaller and larger communities. Slightly fewer watch CBC cable television (68%) or CBC radio (64%). Larger communities (37%) are significantly more likely to use CBC Gem than smaller communities (22%).



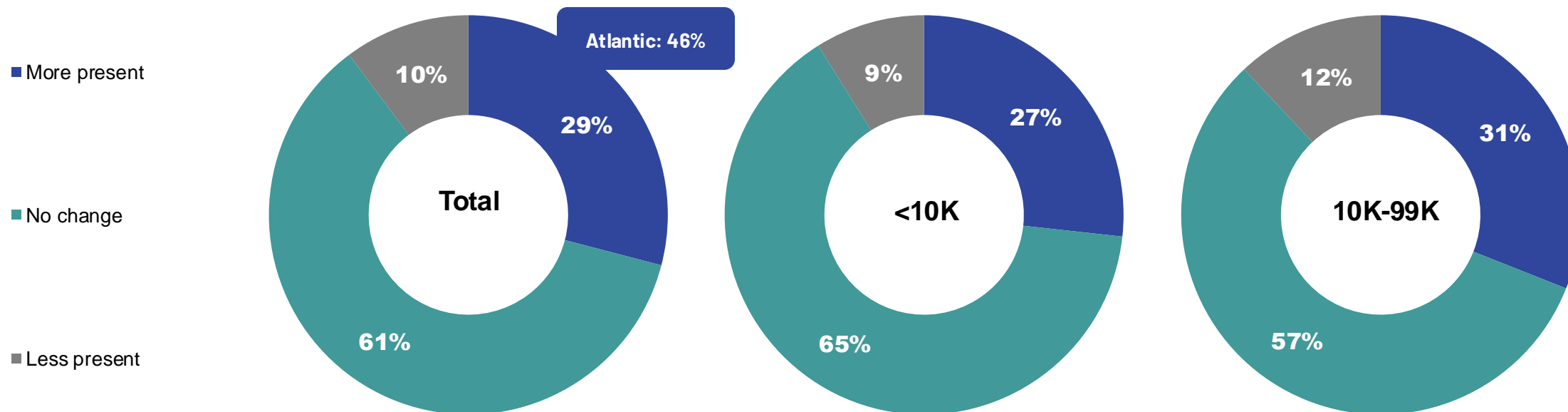
Source: Base: Consumer news from the CBC n=556  
SM14. How often do you consume news from the following CBC news sources?





# Presence of the CBC in Communities

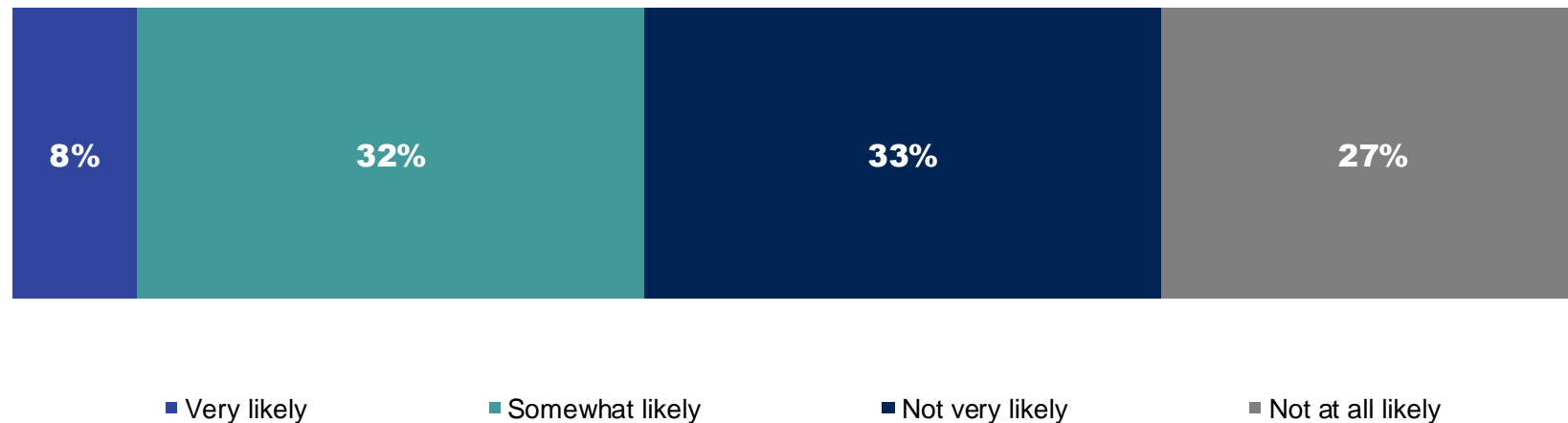
While almost six and ten (61%) Canadians say they do not want any change in the amount of presence from the CBC in their community, three in ten (29%) say they want the CBC to be more present.



Source: Base: All Respondents n=1001  
SM15. Would you like the CBC to be more or less present in your community?

# Potential Donations to Local News

Only four in ten Canadians (40%) say they are very (8%) or somewhat likely (32%) to donate to their local news organization in their community if they could receive a charitable donation tax receipt. However, those in larger communities are significantly more likely to donate (45%) than smaller communities (34%).



	% Likely	
	<10K	10-99K
Total	34%	45%
BC	51%	
HHI \$100K+	51%	

Source: Base: All Respondents n=1001

SM16. How likely would you be to donate to a local news organization in your community if you could receive a charitable donation tax receipt?

# THANK YOU

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