



# MANITOBANS' ATTITUDES ON INDIGENOUS LAND PROTESTS

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**PROBE** RESEARCH INC.

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## KEY FINDINGS

- Although the blockades of major transportation links, including roads and rail lines, feels like an ancient memory in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, a new Probe Research survey conducted for the *Winnipeg Free Press* finds Manitobans hold sharply polarized views on this complex issue.
- More than one-half of Manitobans (57%) agree police should be empowered to use any amount of legal force necessary to remove blockades. Further to this, four-in-ten (42%) feel it is acceptable for members of the public to step in and remove blockades if they see them taking shape.
- Rural Manitobans, men and those with lower levels of formal education are more likely to be in favour of strong police and even citizen action when it comes to dealing with blockades. There is also a sharp partisan split - provincial Progressive Conservative (PC) supporters are twice as likely as New Democrats and Liberals to be in favour of having blockades removed.
- At the same time, though, slightly more than one-half of Manitobans (55%) feel the nationwide demonstrations against the construction of a natural gas pipeline through the traditional territory of the Wut'suwet'en Nation in B.C. have made them more aware of First Nations' concerns regarding resource development on their traditional lands. This sentiment is more likely to be shared among women (particularly those aged 18-34) and Winnipeg residents.

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## KEY FINDINGS (cont'd)

- In general, nearly all Manitobans (87%) accept that it is legitimate to protest outside the provincial legislature. Only four-in-ten (40%) say it is acceptable to blockade a road or rail line for more a few hours to make a point, with this figure dropping to one-quarter (26%) if this blockade lasts indefinitely.
  - Three-in-ten, meanwhile, believe it is acceptable to picket outside a politician's home (which happened to B.C. Premier John Horgan during the Wet'suwet'en crisis) and only one-in-ten believe it is acceptable to spray paint a message on a public building or object (which happened recently at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the memorial to fallen RCMP officers in Winnipeg).
- Two-thirds of Manitobans (68%), meanwhile, are very or somewhat concerned that blockades similar to those in B.C. and Ontario will appear in Manitoba. This concern is higher among older residents and PC supporters.
- More than six-in-ten Manitobans (63%) would support the provincial government introducing an "anti-blockade" bill similar to one recently introduced in Alberta that would fine those who interfere with "critical infrastructure" such as highways, railways, pipelines and utilities. Support for this bill is highest among the same demographic groups who believe that police should use force to end blockades: rural Manitobans, older citizens, men and PC supporters.

# ABOUT THE PROBE RESEARCH OMNIBUS

For more than two decades, Probe Research Inc. has undertaken quarterly omnibus surveys of random and representative samples of Manitoba adults. These scientific telephone surveys have provided strategic and proprietary insights to hundreds of public, private and not-for-profit clients on a range of social, cultural and public policy topics. The Probe Research Omnibus Survey is the province's largest and most trusted general population survey.

## SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey instrument was designed by Probe Research in consultation with the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

## METHODOLOGY

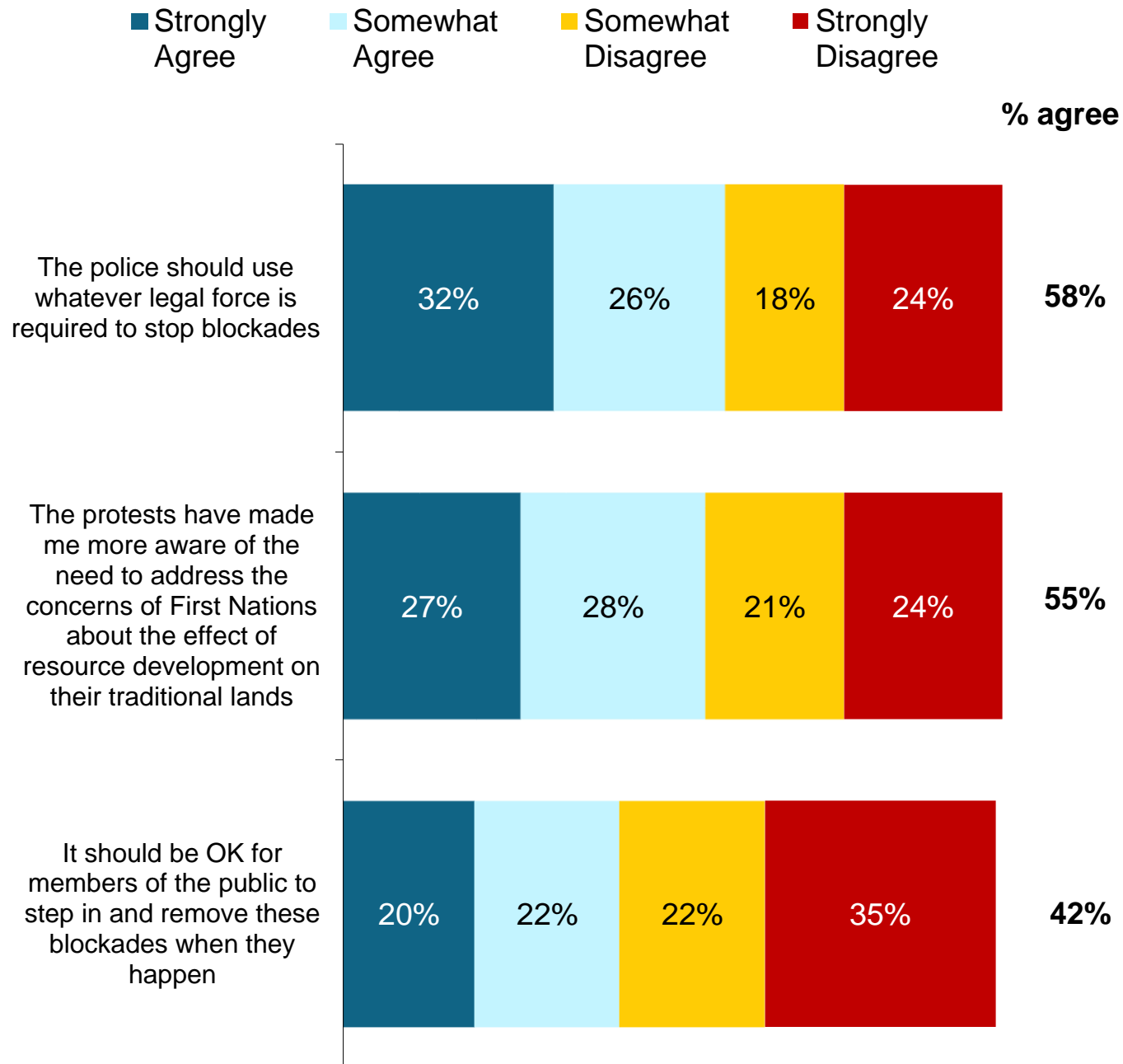
- Between March 10 and 24, 2020, Probe Research surveyed a random and representative sampling of 1,000 adults residing in Manitoba.
- With a sample of 1,000, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points of what they would have been if the entire adult population of Manitoba had been surveyed. The margin of error is higher within each of the survey's population sub-groups.
- Modified random digit dialing, including both landline and wireless numbers, ensured all Manitoba adults had an equal opportunity to participate in this Probe Research survey. A CATI-to-web approach was employed whereby a live-voice operator randomly recruited respondents by telephone, inviting them to complete the survey via a secure online questionnaire. In addition, 265 randomly recruited Probe Research panel members were included in this general population adult sampling.
- Minor statistical weighting has been applied to this sample to ensure that age and gender characteristics properly reflect known attributes of the province's population. All data analysis was performed using SPSS statistical analysis software.

# FOUR-IN-TEN SAY IT IS ACCEPTABLE FOR CITIZENS TO REMOVE BLOCKADES

WFP2. "Recently, there have been protests throughout Canada - including blockades of roads and bridges, rail lines, ports and government buildings - to protest the construction of a natural gas pipeline through the traditional lands of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation in northwestern B.C. Although 20 elected First Nations band councils in the area support this project, nearly all the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs oppose it. The protests were in support of the hereditary chiefs' position, with blockades lasting anywhere from a couple of hours to several days.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about this issue."

Base: All respondents (N=1,000)

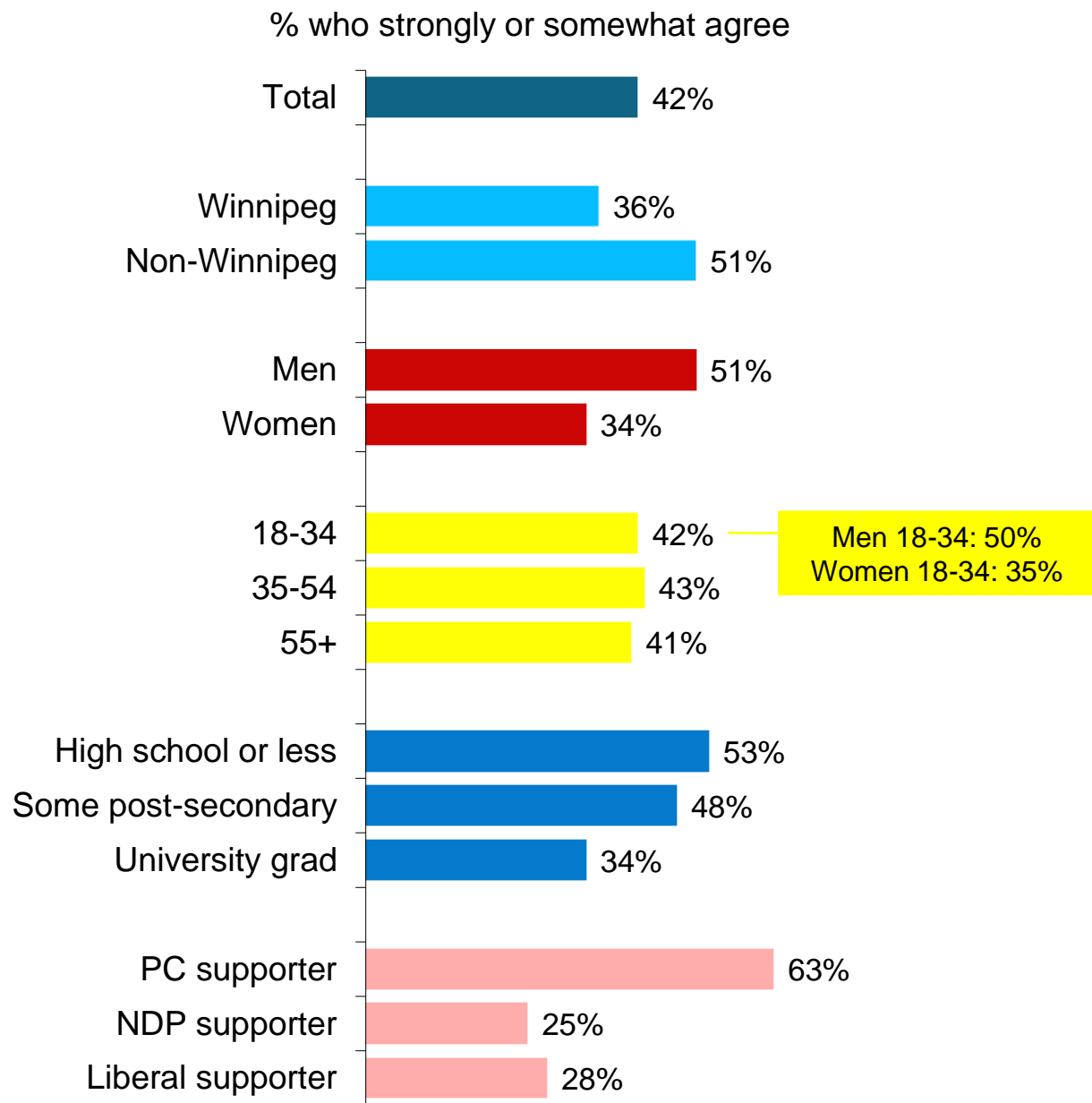


# RURAL MANITOBBANS, MEN AND PC SUPPORTERS MORE LIKELY TO SUPPORT CITIZENS REMOVING BLOCKADES

## VIEWS AMONG SUB-GROUPS

WFP2c. "Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about this issue: It should be OK for members of the public to step in and remove these blockades when they happen."

Base: All respondents (N=1,000)



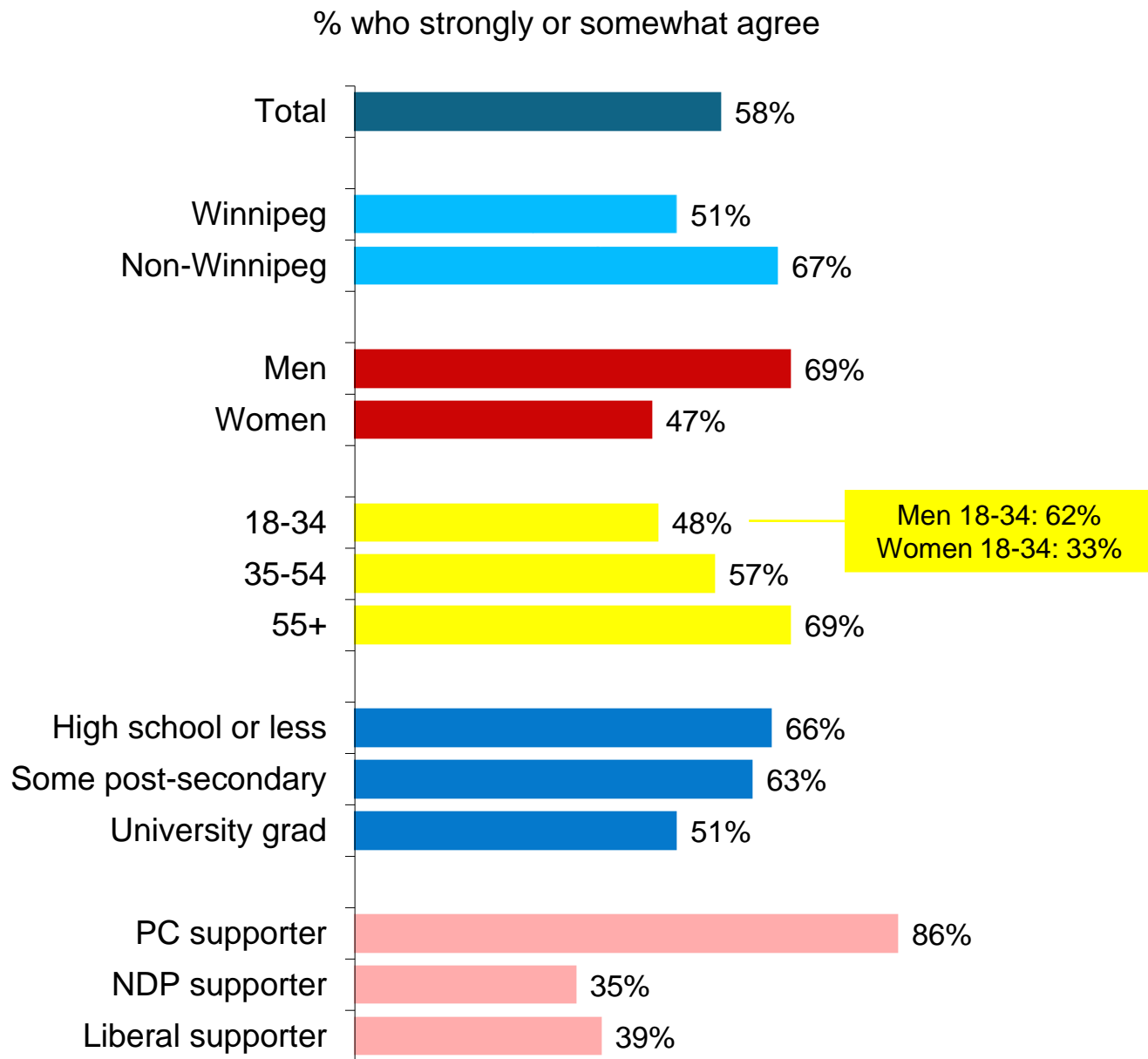
A similar proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Manitobans (41% each) support allowing citizens to remove blockades.

# MEN, OLDER ADULTS, PC SUPPORTERS MORE LIKELY TO SUPPORT USING FORCE TO REMOVE BLOCKADES

## VIEWS AMONG SUB-GROUPS

WFP2b. "Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about this issue: The police should use whatever legal force is required to stop blockades."

Base: All respondents (N=1,000)



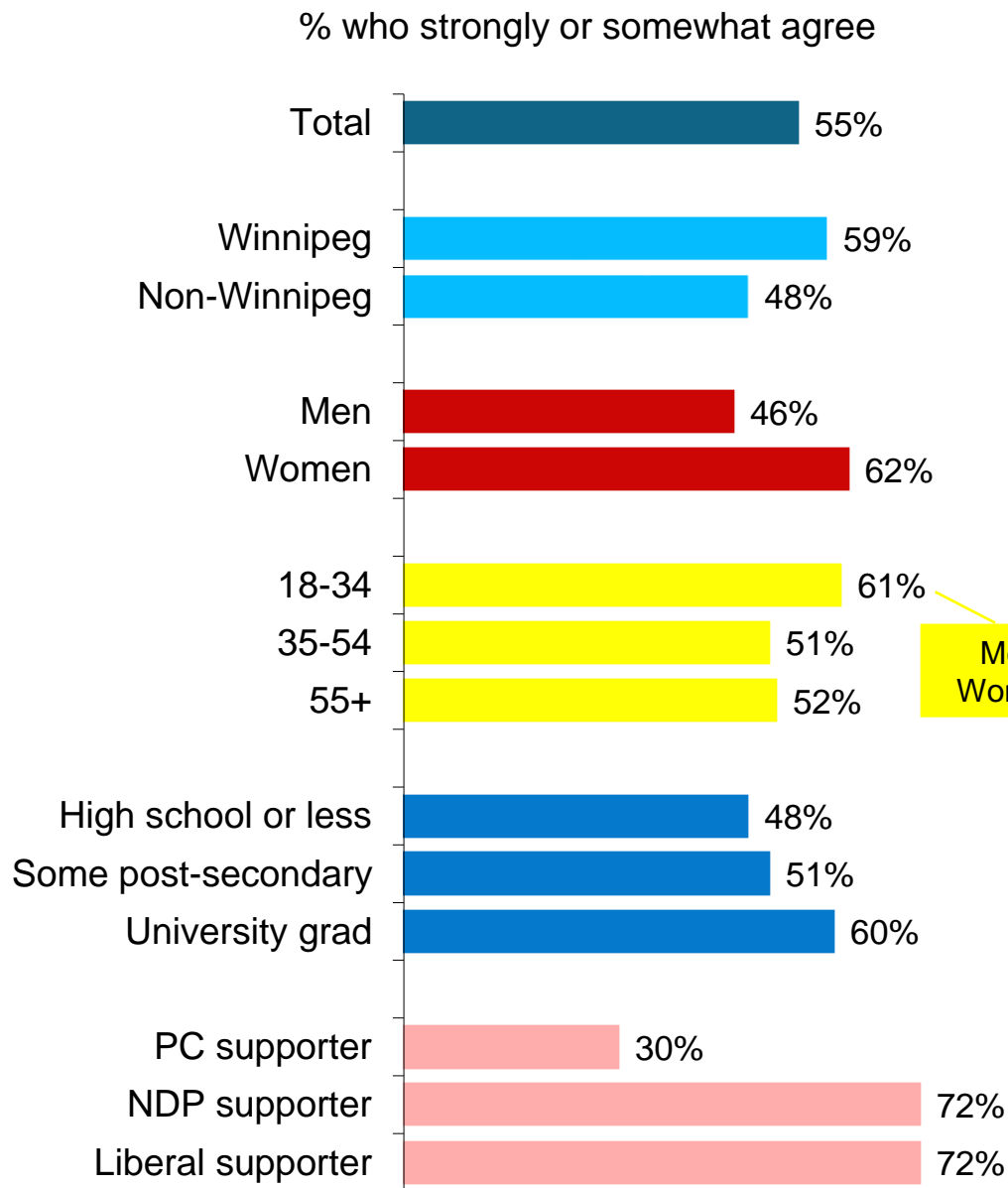
There is no statistical difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Manitobans on this question (55% and 57% respectively).

# WOMEN, WINNIPEG RESIDENTS MORE LIKELY TO SAY PROTESTS HAVE RAISED AWARENESS OF INDIGENOUS CONCERNS

## VIEWS AMONG SUB- GROUPS

WFP2a. "Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about this issue: The protests have made me more aware of the need to address the concerns of First Nations about the effect of resource development on their traditional lands."

Base: All respondents (N=1,000)



There is no statistical difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Manitobans on this question (52% and 56% respectively).

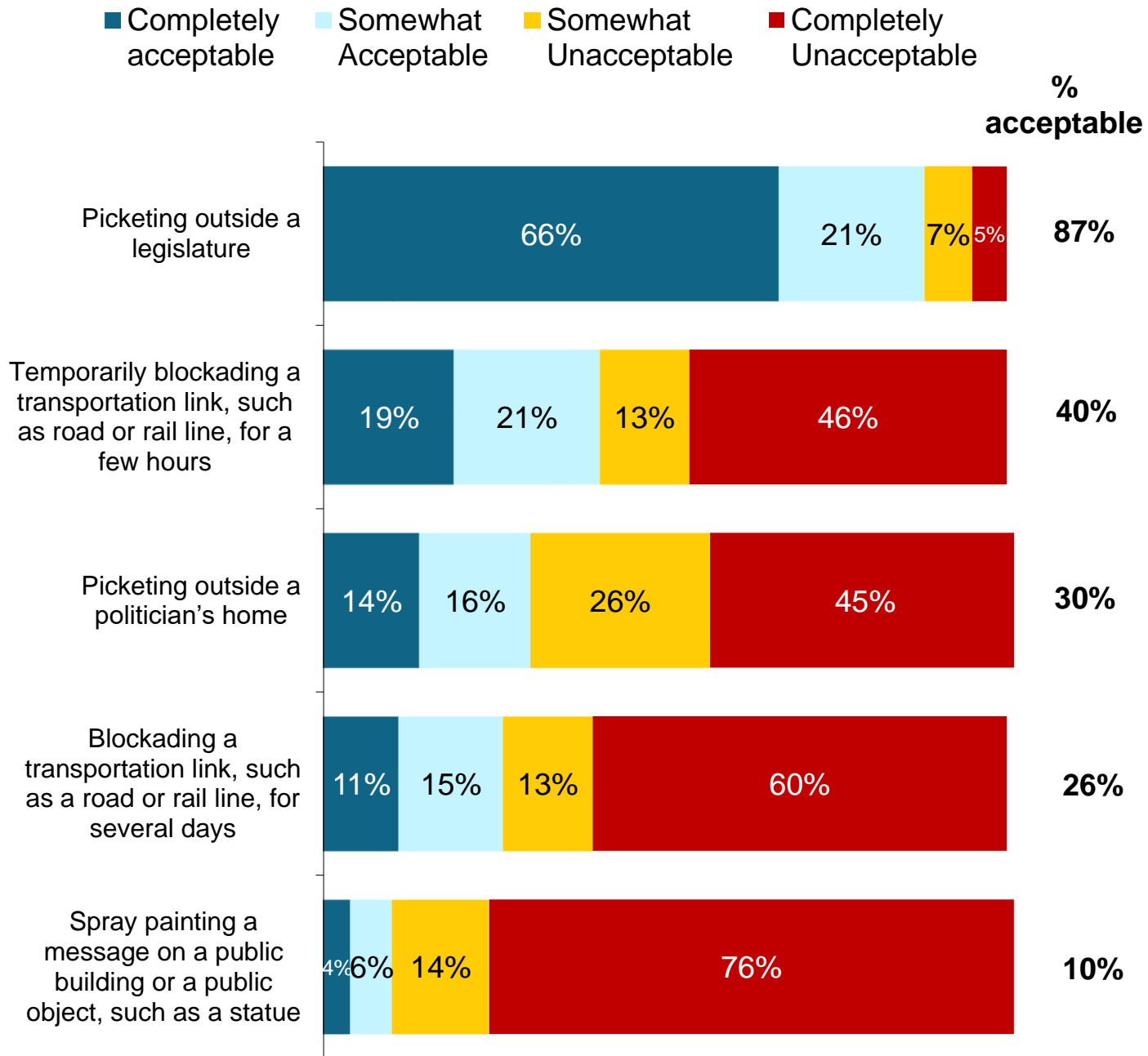


# MORE THAN ONE-HALF OF MANITOBANS SAY BLOCKING ROADS, RAIL LINES IS UNACCEPTABLE

## ACCEPTANCE OF FORMS OF PROTEST

WFP1. "How acceptable to you personally are the following acts of public protest?"

Base: All respondents (N=1,000)



# WOMEN, YOUNGER ADULTS AND WINNIPEGGERS MORE LIKELY TO VIEW BLOCKADES AS LEGITIMATE

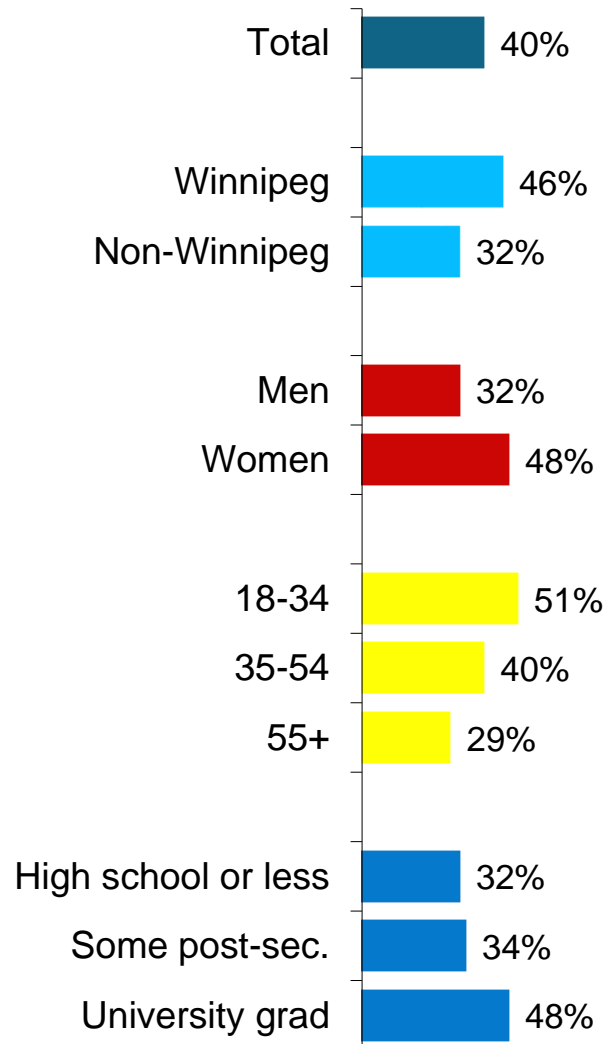
## VIEWS ON FORMS OF PROTEST AMONG SUB-GROUPS

WFP1. "How acceptable to you personally are the following acts of public protest?"

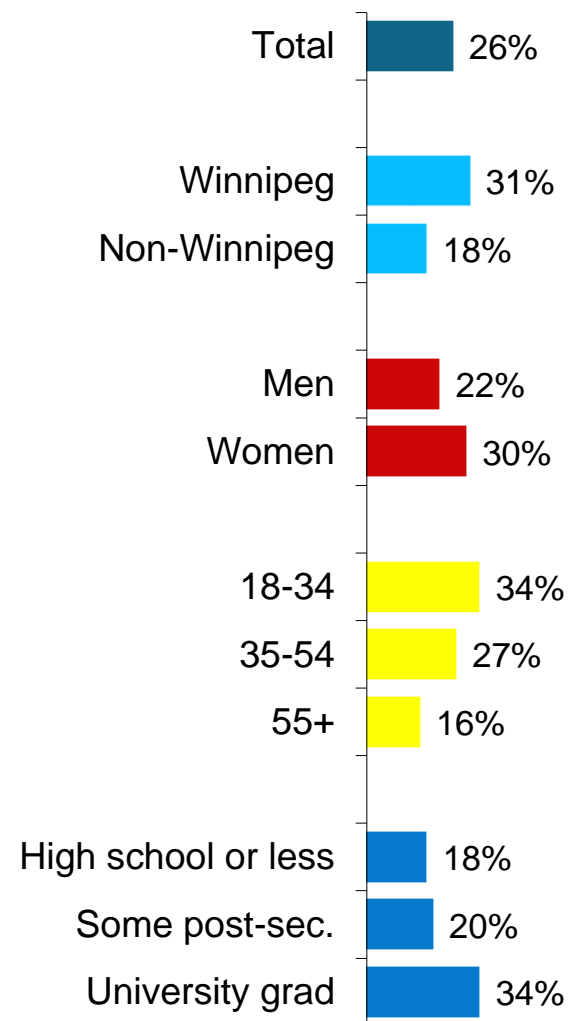
Base: All respondents (N=1,000)

% who say this is completely or somewhat acceptable

### Blockading a road/rail line for a few hours



### Blockading a road/rail line for several days



There are no statistically significant variations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Manitobans on this issue.

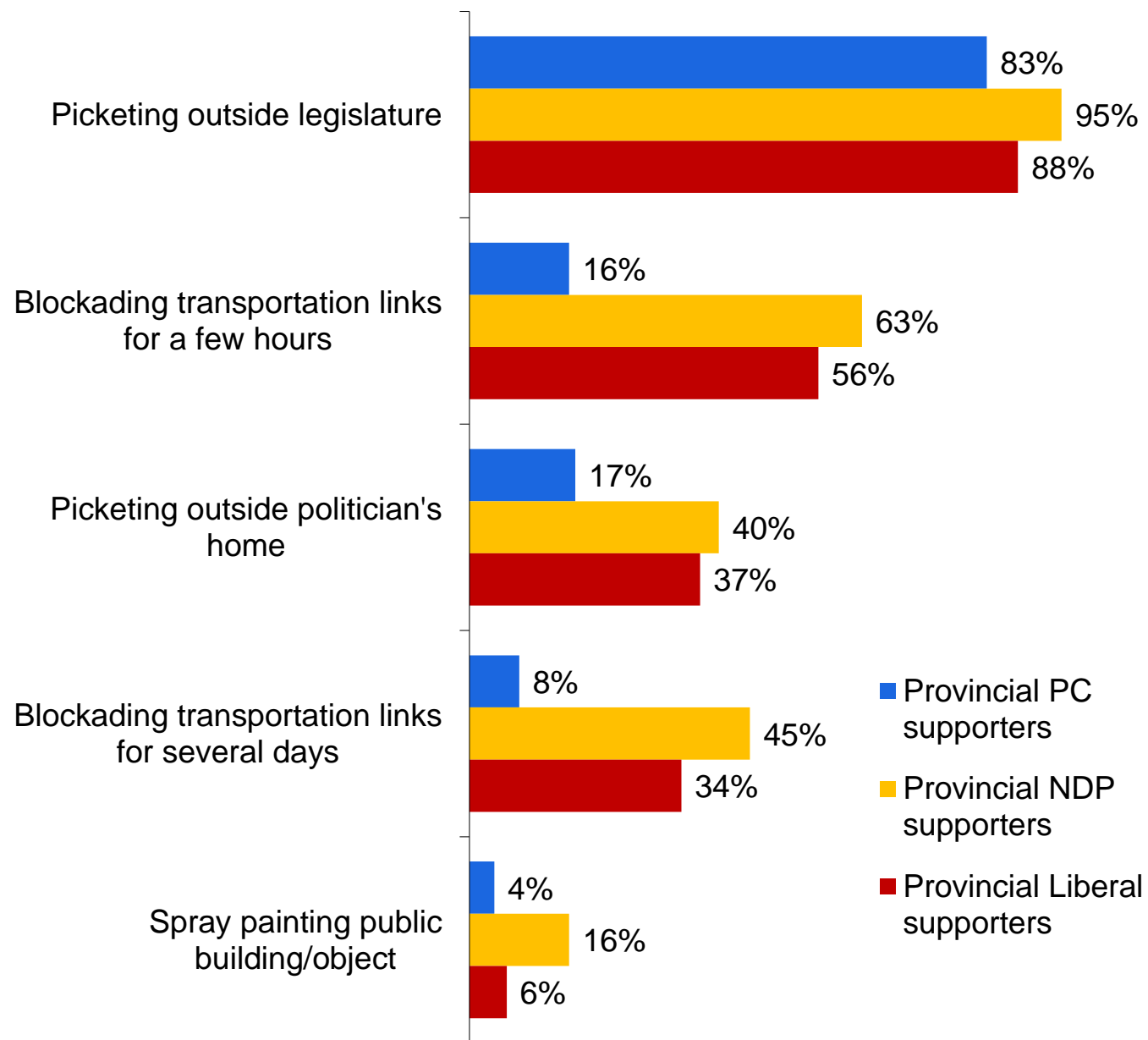
# PROVINCIAL NDP, LIBERAL SUPPORTERS ARE MORE TOLERANT OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF DISSENT

## VIEWS ON FORMS OF PROTEST, BY PARTY PREFERENCE

WFP1. "How acceptable to you personally are the following acts of public protest?"

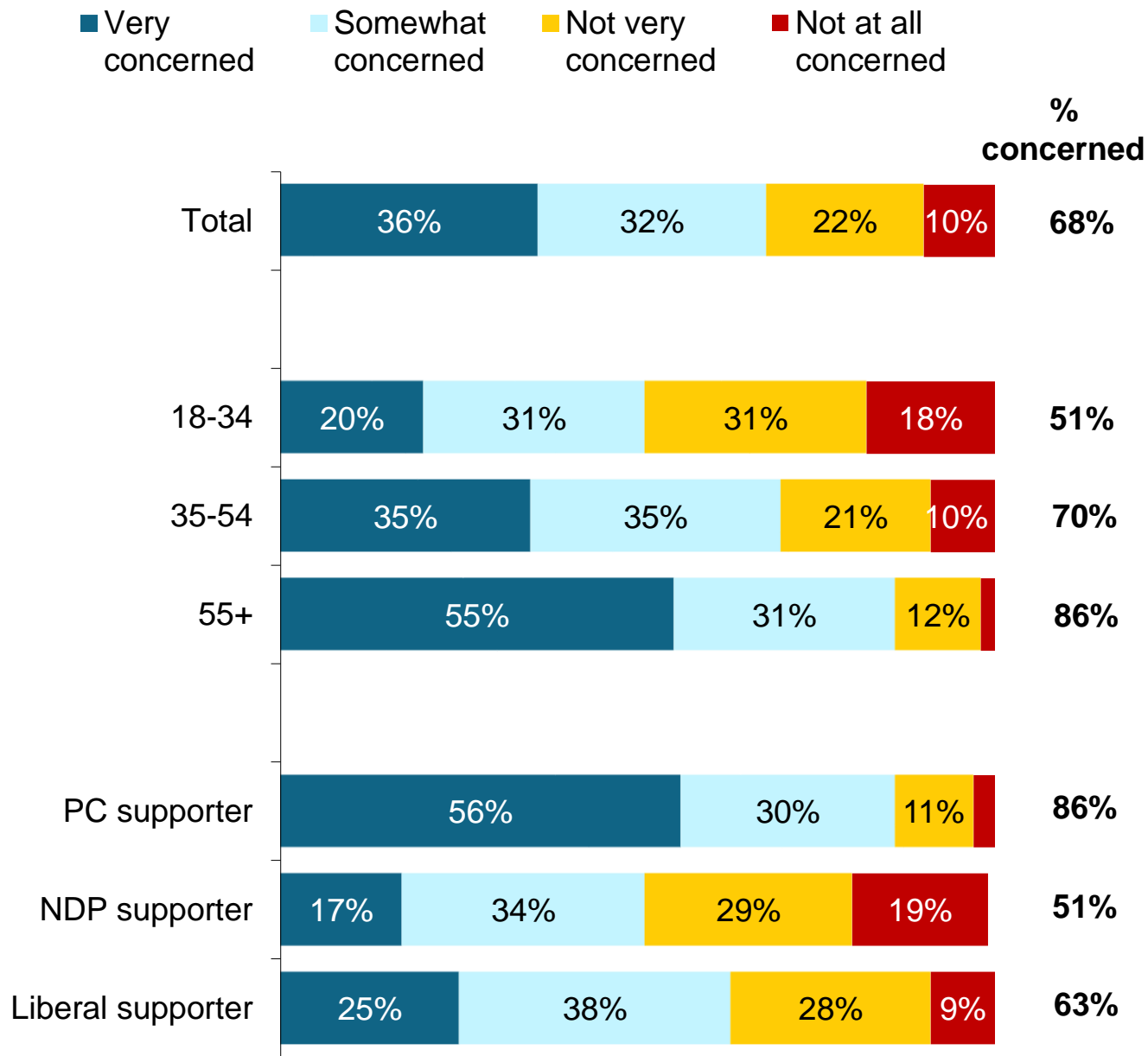
Base: All respondents (N=1,000)

% who say this is completely or somewhat acceptable



# TWO-THIRDS ARE CONCERNED ROADS, RAIL LINES IN MANITOBA WILL BE BLOCKED

WFP3. "How concerned, if at all, are you personally about roads and rail lines in Manitoba being blockaded for several days at a time by people protesting about this issue?"



Base: All respondents (N=1,000)

There are no statistically significant variations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Manitobans on this issue.

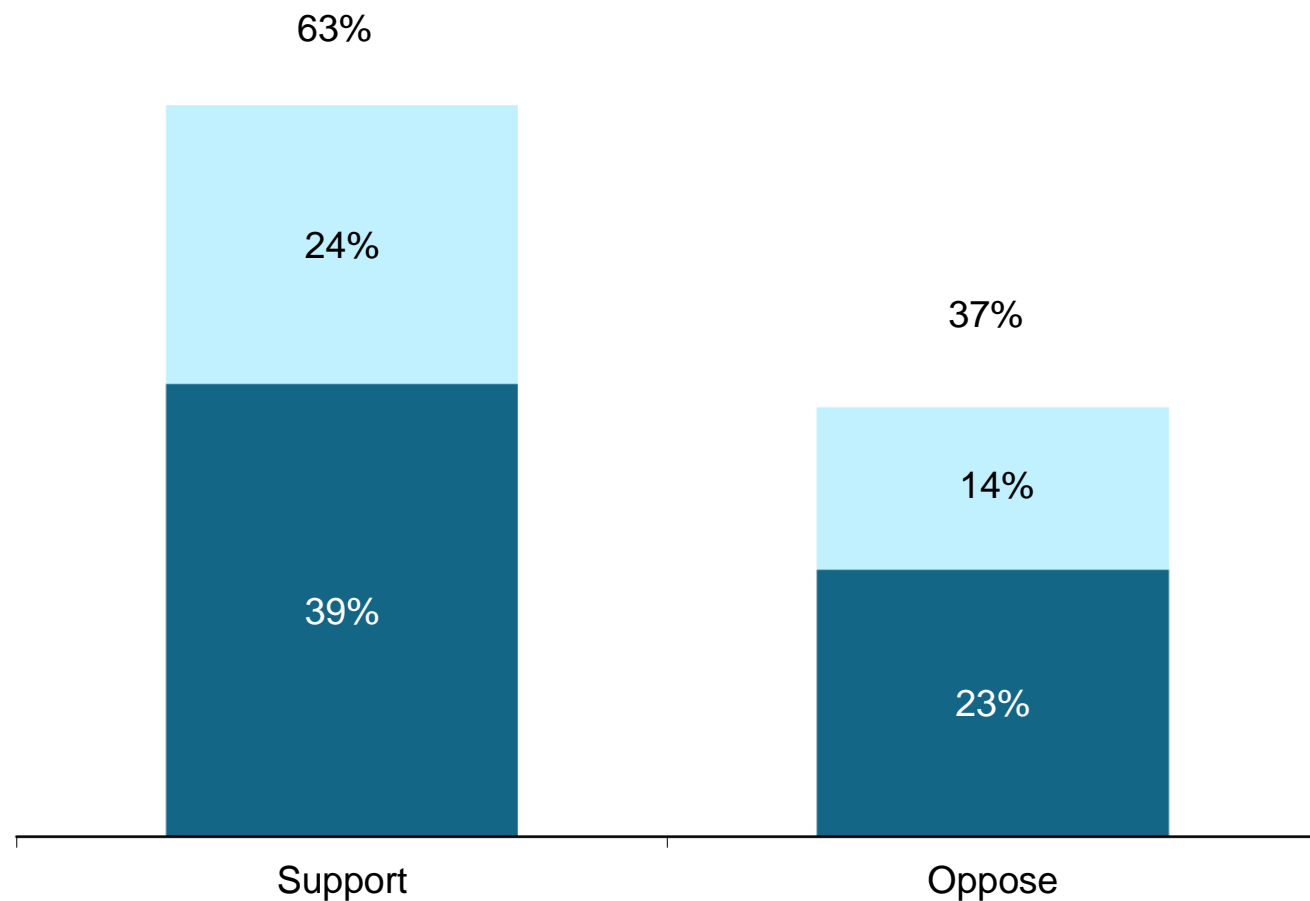
# SIX-IN-TEN SUPPORT A PROVINCIAL ANTI-BLOCKADE BILL

WFP4. “The Alberta legislature has introduced a bill that would increase the penalties for people who interfere with “critical infrastructure”, including highways, railways, pipelines and utilities. Under Bill 1, individuals could be fined up to \$10,000 for a first offence and \$25,000 for subsequent offences, as well as potentially go to jail for up to six months.

Do you support or oppose the Manitoba government introducing a similar bill here?”

Base: All respondents (N=1,000)

■ Strongly   ■ Somewhat



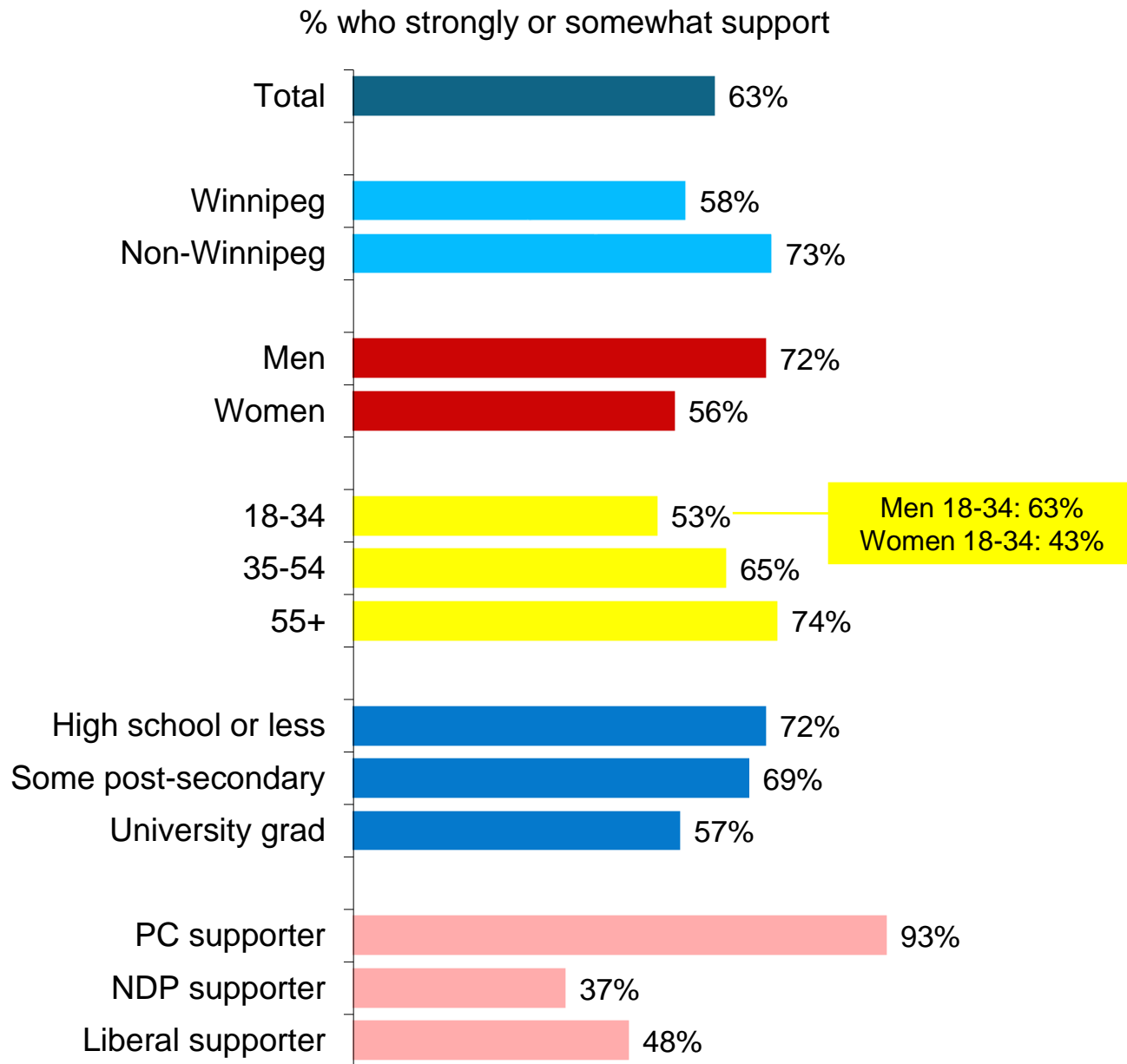
# MORE THAN NINE-IN-TEN PC SUPPORTERS BACK AN ANTI-BLOCKADE BILL

## VIEWS AMONG SUB-GROUPS

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Do you support or oppose the Manitoba government introducing a similar bill here?”

Base: All respondents (N=1,000)



There are no statistically significant variations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Manitobans on this issue.