



CPRN RCRPP

Review of Canadian Quality of Life Survey Data

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**Canadian Policy Research Networks
Background Paper**

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Foreword

While there is much activity on quality of life indicators in Canada, there is no initiative underway of a national scope that seeks input from citizens.

CPRN is seeking to fill that void. It is leading and working with a Steering Committee representing a broad cross-section of organizations interested in developing a set of national indicators to track Canada's progress in quality of life, through a citizen engagement process. Our goal is to create a prototype set of national indicators, which reflects the range of issues that truly matter to citizens. The indicators will also help to create a common language for dialogue across the public, private and voluntary sectors, and thus lead to a more balanced debate on public priorities across social, economic, environmental, and other dimensions.

The inspiration for the project came from a Leaders' Forum convened by the Public Policy Forum in June 1999. This was the third in a series of meetings dedicated to building greater collaboration between the voluntary sector and business, and the voluntary sector and governments. The leaders concluded that they needed a "common language" to gauge the progress of society; CPRN undertook to launch this project, which will be completed early in 2001.

This paper, one of three background papers commissioned to launch the project and shape the design of the research, reports on a search of academic and commercial surveys, undertaken over the last 10 years, in the area of quality of life. The author, Matthew Mendelsohn, looks at four types of questions used in various polling initiatives, which asked citizens how satisfied they were with their "quality of life," with a number of elements of their lives deemed important to "quality of life" (e.g., their personal financial situation) and how the system was performing on a number of elements deemed to be important to "quality of life" (e.g., the health care system). Finally, the author reviewed responses to questions about what elements were important to a good quality of life.

Due to weaknesses in the data, Mendelsohn is not able to describe with great precision Canadians' evolving attitudes toward their quality of life. Having identified those weaknesses, he goes on to set out the criteria for an integrated battery of questions that could be used to measure quality of life on an ongoing basis.

I want to thank Matthew Mendelsohn of Queen's University for his report, as well as members of the Steering Committee who are making an invaluable contribution in shaping this project.

Judith Maxwell
President

Executive Summary

A search of academic and commercial surveys of Canadians was undertaken for four types of questions: 1) how satisfied Canadians were with their “quality of life”; 2) their satisfaction with a number of elements of their lives that we deemed to be important to “quality of life” (e.g., their personal health); 3) their satisfaction with how the system was performing on a number of elements we deemed to be important to “quality of life” (e.g., the health care system); and 4) what things they thought were important to a good quality of life.

The initial goals were to assess the evolution of Canadians’ perceptions of their quality of life over the past decade and identify which elements were most important to Canadians for a good quality of life. These goals proved impossible to meet.

- There is surprisingly little tracking data on Canadians’ quality of life. This is a major shortfall if one is interested in assessing changes in Canadians’ quality of life over time.
- No major attempt to measure Canadians’ assessments of their quality of life has been undertaken since the Quality of Life Survey in 1981.
- Survey questions on quality of life have been subject to frequent changes – sometimes major, sometimes minor – based on the goals of particular studies and changes in the social and economic environment. These changes in question wording affect the responses significantly and make broad conclusions about the evolution of assessments of quality of life very difficult.

This report therefore identifies weaknesses in existing data and the possible approach necessary for the development of a quality of life index. It does not describe with great precision Canadians’ evolving attitudes toward their quality of life, which appears to be impossible from available data.

Canadians’ perceptions of their quality of life do not change dramatically over short periods of time, yet long-time series data are not available. It is therefore crucial to create an index that is replicated every year so that the research community can identify real changes in Canadians’ perception of their quality of life.

The available data do seem to indicate that Canadians are generally satisfied with their quality of life. Perceptions of quality of life seem to be affected negatively by economic recession and by the popularity of the government, with the election of new governments provoking an improved perception of quality of life. Canadians are happiest with their family and personal lives, and least happy with their financial situations. Their jobs, health, and standard of living fall somewhere in between.

The ability to track how Canadians feel about their quality of life is seriously constrained by the available data and we therefore recommend the development of an integrated battery of questions.

- This battery should be developed in consultation with the public opinion research community and the CPRN. This battery should consist of two to three general questions asking Canadians about their quality of life, as well as questions dealing with 1) individuals' satisfaction with various aspects of their own lives (e.g., their incomes); 2) individuals' satisfaction with various aspects of Canada (e.g., the Canadian economy); and 3) individuals' judgements about what things they consider most important for a good quality of life.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Bob Burge and the Public Opinion Archives in the Centre for the Study of Democracy at Queen's University for making the data available. I would also like to thank Lloyd Mills for conducting the data searches for this paper.

Background

A search of academic and commercial surveys of Canadians was undertaken for *four types of questions*: 1) how satisfied Canadians were with their “quality of life”; 2) their satisfaction with a number of elements of their lives that we deemed to be important to “quality of life” (e.g., their personal health); 3) their satisfaction with how the system was performing on a number of elements we deemed to be important to “quality of life” (e.g., the health care system); and 4) what things they thought were important to a good quality of life. Almost all of the publicly available data that we were able to locate fell into the second category.

Cautionary Notes

Small changes in question wording from year to year, and in research design from organization to organization (telephone as opposed to in-home interviews) may produce quite substantial changes in results. Changes in the number of categories (four as opposed to five) or question format (satisfaction on a 10-point scale as opposed to four categories) have also been quite common.

It also appears that many organizations make small changes to questions for experimental purposes or to respond to changing social circumstances. While these changes may respond to the needs of the organization, they make it difficult to track over time how Canadians feel about their quality of life.

We refrain from many conclusions about the evolution of Canadians’ overall quality of life. Because of the changes in question wording and format over time, bold conclusions would be presumptuous. Moreover, some of the publicly available polling data from commercial firms do not make clear how undecided respondents have been coded or report only partial results (e.g., the number of respondents who place themselves at one end of a scale, but do not provide complete breakdowns).

For these reasons, our purpose has been to identify weaknesses in existing data and the possible approach necessary for the development of a quality of life index, rather than to describe with precision Canadians’ evolving attitudes toward their quality of life, which appears to be impossible from available data.

Readers should also be careful to note the scales used when examining the attached figures. Because there is rarely a complete time series available for any one polling question, the scales are widely different from figure to figure; failing to consider this could lead to faulty conclusions about the rapidity of changes in opinion.

Major Conclusions

There is surprisingly little tracking data on Canadians' quality of life. This is a major shortfall if one is interested in assessing changes in Canadians' quality of life over time in a manner uninfluenced by partisan concerns.

No major attempt to measure Canadians' assessments of their quality of life has been undertaken since the Quality of Life Survey in 1981.

The General Social Survey (GSS), conducted by Statistics Canada, is the most comprehensive tracking survey in Canada on social trends. However, most questions are not asked on a yearly basis. Each year the GSS chooses to focus most of its attention on one topic (crime, health, etc.) and while it consistently asks a small number of questions every year, most of its attention is devoted to its yearly theme. This means that one does not have access to a large battery – say 20 to 30 tracking items – on quality of life, but a much smaller number.

Commercial firms have on occasion asked questions related to quality of life, but many of these were not designed for tracking purposes and they, therefore, respond to contemporaneous events or issues, and use wording that is idiosyncratic. For a more official quality of life index, one would want to develop questions that are less idiosyncratic and less influenced by the preoccupations of individual studies.

Canadians' perceptions of their quality of life do not change dramatically over short periods of time. For example, in the detailed breakdown provided to CPRN by Angus Reid, there are no substantively significant changes in public opinion between October 1996 and September 1998. Longer time series comparisons unfortunately are not possible because question wordings have changed. It is, therefore, crucial to create an index that is replicated every year so that the research community can identify real changes in Canadians' perception of their quality of life, which do in fact occur but only over lengthier periods of time.

Canadians generally seem satisfied with their quality of life. Perceptions of quality of life seem to be affected negatively by economic recession and by the popularity of the government, with the election of new governments provoking an improved perception of quality of life.

Canadians are happiest with their family and personal lives, and least happy with their financial situations. Their jobs and health fall somewhere in between.

Type One: Direct Questions Regarding Quality of Life

There have been no questions asked systematically on this issue, so it is problematic to draw conclusions. Nonetheless, Canadians seem generally satisfied with their quality of life over the past two decades (Figures 1 and 4). However, both figures 1 and 4 seem to

indicate that Canadians are not very likely to say they are “very satisfied” or place themselves at the highest end (6 or 7) of a 7-point scale. Canadians’ satisfaction appears to be general but muted.

Comparing the Angus Reid data to earlier Decima data (Figure 3) seems to indicate that fewer Canadians are willing to say that their quality of life has deteriorated, although differences in question wording are significant.

In developing a quality of life index, one could adopt the approach used by Environics and ask Canadians how satisfied they are with their overall quality of life (Figure 1).

One could adopt the format used by Ekos, which asks respondents whether Canadians’ quality of life is improving or deteriorating in comparison to other countries’ quality of life (Figure 2).

Alternatively, Decima asked a question similar to that of Ekos, though they asked it with no reference to a comparison with other countries, and their question asked about the quality of life in the community, while Ekos asked about the quality of life in Canada. Angus Reid has also asked a question systematically over the last several years that asks respondents how satisfied they are with their quality of life.

There are important differences to note between these general overview questions that ask Canadians to assess their quality of life. First, one can ask about respondents’ own quality of life, or about the quality of life in some geographical unit. Second, if one asks about the quality of life in a particular unit, one can choose the community, the city, the province or the country. Third, one can ask about general satisfaction or whether quality of life is improving. Fourth, one can ask any of these questions with or without an explicit comparison to the quality of life in other countries.

Figures 1 to 5 highlight the difficulty of comparing data collected using different questions. In 1998 both Ekos and Angus Reid asked similar questions about whether quality of life was improving. Angus Reid found that only 12 percent felt quality of life was declining, while Ekos found that 34 percent felt that this was the case. There were three important differences in the questions: the time period of comparison, six months versus five years; the concept itself, Canada’s quality of life as opposed to the respondent’s personal quality of life; and whether one was asked to compare quality of life to that of other countries’ or not. Any of these changes could have produced the differences in responses, and there is no way to tell which of them did without further research. Comparing these data one may be tempted to say that Canadians believe *their own* quality of life *has not* declined (Angus Reid), while a substantial minority (34 percent) believe that *Canada’s overall* quality of life *has* declined (Ekos). But such conclusions might be premature because other differences in the questions may have caused the differences in results (the different time period of comparison or the explicit comparison with other countries).

Firm conclusions about evolutions in Canadians' assessments are therefore impossible. Differences between questions and results highlight the importance of question wording and the need to develop a battery of questions that will be asked regularly without interruption. There is of course no one "right" question; the questions asked by all the commercial firms are professional and good measures of Canadians' assessment of their "quality of life." What is called for is a decision to use one battery that seems fair and that will continue to be asked over time.

Type Two: Satisfaction with Various Things Deemed Important to Quality Of Life

Tracking data are available that examine a large number of general categories of questions. Health, employment, finances, personal security, and family and personal life represent the five main bundles of topics that have been addressed consistently regarding Canadians' personal quality of life. In addition, general questions about overall happiness have been asked.

Canadians tend to be most satisfied with their personal lives (marriages and friendships), and also quite satisfied with their communities and neighborhoods, as well as their health and job. They tend to be least satisfied with their personal finances. These general conclusions have not changed much between 1981 (Figure 6) and 1998 (Figure 7). Although the differences are less substantial, these patterns appear too in the World Values Survey, with respondents most satisfied with their home life, followed by their jobs, then their financial situation (Figure 8).

Canadians' satisfaction with their health has remained relatively high. There were statistically significant increases in the percentage of Canadians reporting they were very satisfied with their health in 1989 and 1992 (Figures 9 to 11).

Canadians are also generally satisfied with their employment, although there has been a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of Canadians saying they are "very satisfied" with their job in the last decade (Figure 12).

Canadians were quite dissatisfied with their personal finances during the recession of 1990. However, even as late as 1998, Canadians continued to be more dissatisfied with their personal finances than they were throughout the 1980s (Figure 13). This continues to be an area in which Canadians are more dissatisfied than in other areas. However, the vast majority of Canadians say they are "somewhat satisfied" with their "standard of living" (as opposed to "income") (Figure 14). One saw a similar pattern in Figure 6, with more Canadians satisfied with their standard of living than income or financial situation. Canadians, therefore, do not equate "standard of living" with income or financial situation alone.

Canadians' expectations about their financial future changed dramatically following the federal election of 1993, indicating how a new government can change substantially the

mood of Canadians (Figure 15). One wants to avoid confusing short-term changes in mood with real long-term changes when attempting to measure quality of life.

Figure 15b indicates a small but statistically significant trend toward more satisfaction with one's personal financial situation than 10 years previously. The percentage of Canadians who said that their personal financial situation had improved over the past 10 years has gone up from 34 percent in 1995 to 39 percent in 1999.

Expectations for the future have also improved (Figure 15c). The percentage of Canadians who said they were more pessimistic about the future than they were 10 years ago dropped from 50 percent in 1995 to 40 percent in 1998 and further to 30 percent in 1999. In 1999, for the first time in the time series, the percentage who said they were more optimistic about the future (37 percent) was greater than the percentage who said they were more pessimistic (30 percent). The changes presented in Figure 15c in regards to expectations about "the future" – with "the future" left undefined – are significantly greater than those presented in Figure 15b, which asked about actual changes in financial situation.

There are not good tracking data on job security. There may have been a decline in job security between 1984 and 1991 (Figure 16). This is a question that should be re-asked to identify how the dramatic changes in the structure of the economy over the past decade have affected Canadians' sense of security regarding their employment, a key measure of quality of life.

Canadians have not become more concerned about crime according to the small number of tracking questions we were able to identify (Figures 17 and 18). However, little publicly available tracking data were located. Moreover, Canadians are generally far more likely to say that crime is going up than going down (Figure 17); it is simply that Canadians have been more likely to say this for a long time. Although this does not represent a change, it does suggest a good deal of insecurity regarding crime that could have an important impact on quality of life.

Canadians are generally satisfied with their friends, families, and housing (Figures 19 to 21). Unfortunately, the GSS has not asked a general satisfaction question regarding family since 1990, choosing instead to probe more deeply some of the things that caused satisfaction with family. These deeper questions indicate that a growing number of Canadians (but still a small minority) feel unsatisfied with the balance between their job and family (Figure 22), while a significant percentage feel that their life is stressful, a significant increase since 1985 (Figure 23).

Overall, Canadians are somewhat less likely to have said that they were happy and satisfied with life in 1998 than they were in the 1980s (Figures 24 and 25).

One must underline that a variety of questions tapping various aspects of "quality of life" have been asked on an occasional basis, but they may not have the neutrality necessary for the development of an index. In order to develop an index, one will have to build a

consensus around certain themes and questions. By way of illustration, Figure 26 includes a large number of additional questions that have on occasion been asked regarding topics relevant to quality of life.

Type Three: Satisfaction with Important Programs or Macro-conditions

The questions we have included in Category Two ask Canadians to assess their satisfaction with their own health, education, income, etc. An alternative approach would be to ask Canadians to assess their satisfaction with the health care system, the education system, the state of the economy, etc. Such questions are obviously more *political* and fluctuate more dramatically with changes in government. For this reason we have not included as many in this document.

As well, most of the questions that we were able to identify in this category are the property of private commercial polling firms. One could obtain historical tracking for such things as satisfaction with the health care system, the education system, environmental protection programs, law enforcement, the economy in general, but one would have to contact these companies directly, something that we were unable to do for this report. Environics' Focus Canada Studies, Ekos' Rethinking Government, and Angus Reid's Reports, for example, have such tracking available. However, data collected in the last two to three years are usually guarded quite closely by commercial firms, unless one is a paying client.

Questions that track satisfaction with such things as the state of the economy and health care system have been tracked by commercial polling firms and should eventually be included in a quality of life index.

The Quality of Life Survey data from 1981 present a range of possible items that could be viewed as important to the quality of life of a community, such as the number of parks, the quality of roads, and the quality of the air. Canadians were asked to state how satisfied they were with the quality of each of a number of important services or institutions (Figure 27).

Ekos' data indicate that macro-level satisfaction does not move dramatically over short periods for most programs. However, between 1995 and 1997 there was a significant increase in the number of Canadians who were satisfied with job training programs, and a dramatic decrease in the number of Canadians satisfied with the health care system (Figure 28).

We have also included one tracking question from Environics (satisfaction with the quality of the environment in Canada) (Figure 29). It is questions such as these that could prove useful for the development of a macro-level quality of life index.

Type Four: Questions That Ask “What Is Important to Quality of Life?”

Few questions have been asked on the important empirical question: What is important to Canadians when they think about their quality of life? Social programs, a strong economy, safe streets, and a clean environment are, of course, important. But a range of other issues may emerge from more systematic survey research, such as jobs with low levels of stress or the ability to make decisions on the job, for example.

Canadians are more likely to say that various things contribute to Canada’s overall quality of life than to their own personal quality of life. This is an important distinction to keep in mind when developing a battery of questions (Figure 30).

The non-profit sector and schools are judged to contribute greatly to Canada’s quality of life, while the media are judged the most harshly. Private companies, religious organizations, and the government fall somewhere in between.

Ekos has found that health and education programs are judged to have made a major contribution to Canada’s quality of life, while housing and welfare programs are judged less favorably (Figure 31). In general, Canada’s social programs are judged to have had a major impact on Canada’s quality of life (Figure 32). Ekos has assessed the contribution of various social programs to Canadians’ perceptions of quality of life, but in order to understand what things Canadians *most* value in terms of quality of life, this will require an integrated battery with questions worded in similar ways designed to compare the importance of social programs, a clean environment, a low crime rate, economic growth, secure employment, etc.

One needs to be careful when constructing a battery of questions to measure what Canadians think is important to their quality of life. The battery needs to include both macro and micro measures. Macro measures include such things as a strong economy and a good health care system, while micro measures include such things as a secure job and good health. One needs to continue to focus on both systemic and individual measures in order to construct a reliable index.

In order to construct such an index, one needs to do extensive background research first on what Canadians deem to be essential to quality of life. This could include survey work, but it could also rely extensively on the background research that CPRN has been conducting in various public dialogues.

Recommendation

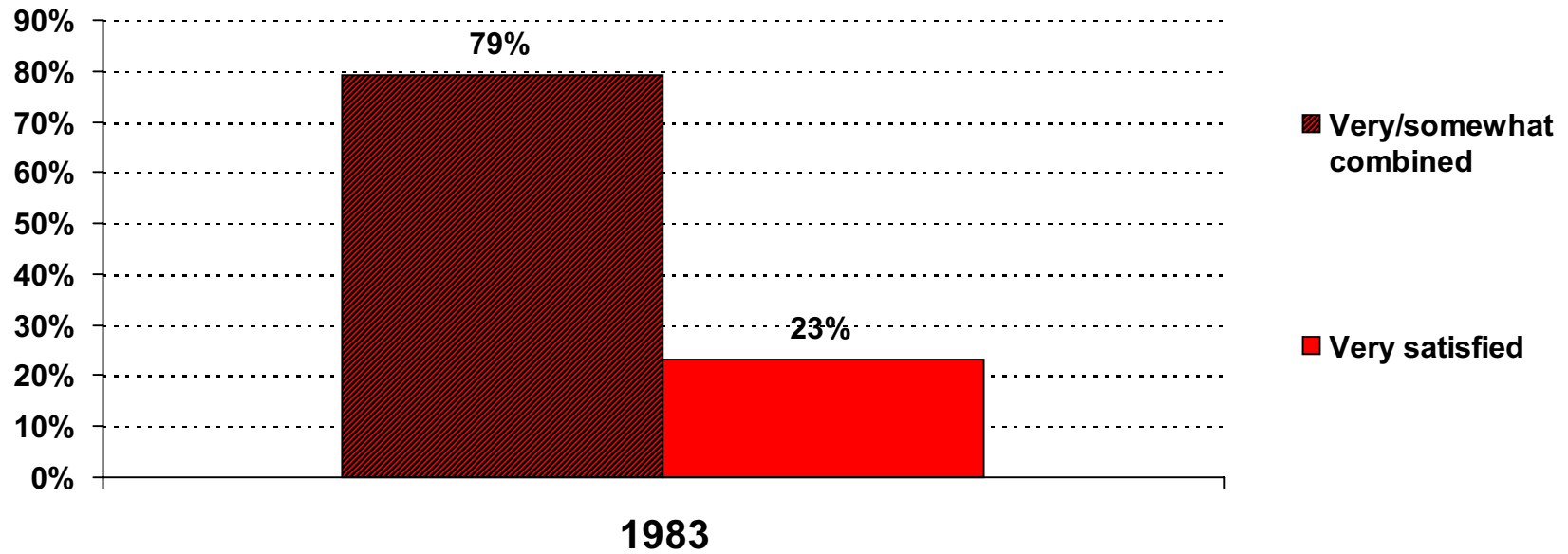
The ability to track how Canadians feel about their quality of life is seriously constrained by the available data. It seems essential to develop and administer a consistent battery of questions on a yearly basis if one is seriously interested in measuring Canadians’ assessments of their quality of life.

An integrated battery of questions should be developed in consultation with the public opinion research community and the CPRN. This battery should consist of two to three general questions asking Canadians about their quality of life (general satisfaction, improving or deteriorating, comparison with other countries, etc.) It should then include three subsequent elements.

First, it should include 10 to 20 items that assess how satisfied Canadians are with a number of aspects important to their quality of life (e.g., health, family, finances, personal safety, etc.). This can be conceived of as a “subjective individual quality of life index.” Second, it should include 10 to 20 items that assess how satisfied Canadians are with a number of programs, features, and institutions in the external social environment deemed to be important to quality of life (e.g., the economy, the health care system, the quality of the environment, etc.). This can be conceived of as a “subjective macro-level quality of life index.” The subjective macro-level quality of life index will inevitably include items that are politically sensitive and one will therefore have to engage in a broad consultation to ensure there is general agreement on the items before proceeding.

Finally, there should also be a battery of questions that ask how important each of the elements in the subjective quality of life indices are to one’s own quality of life. This would ensure that researchers tracking quality of life would be able to identify when some of the items on the indices were becoming more or less salient to Canadians. This third battery could be quite long and one could add items to it from year to year to see if new items are becoming more important to Canadians’ quality of life or existing items on the two indices are becoming less important. This could serve, on occasion, as a basis for altering the items included in the subjective quality of life indices, when necessary.

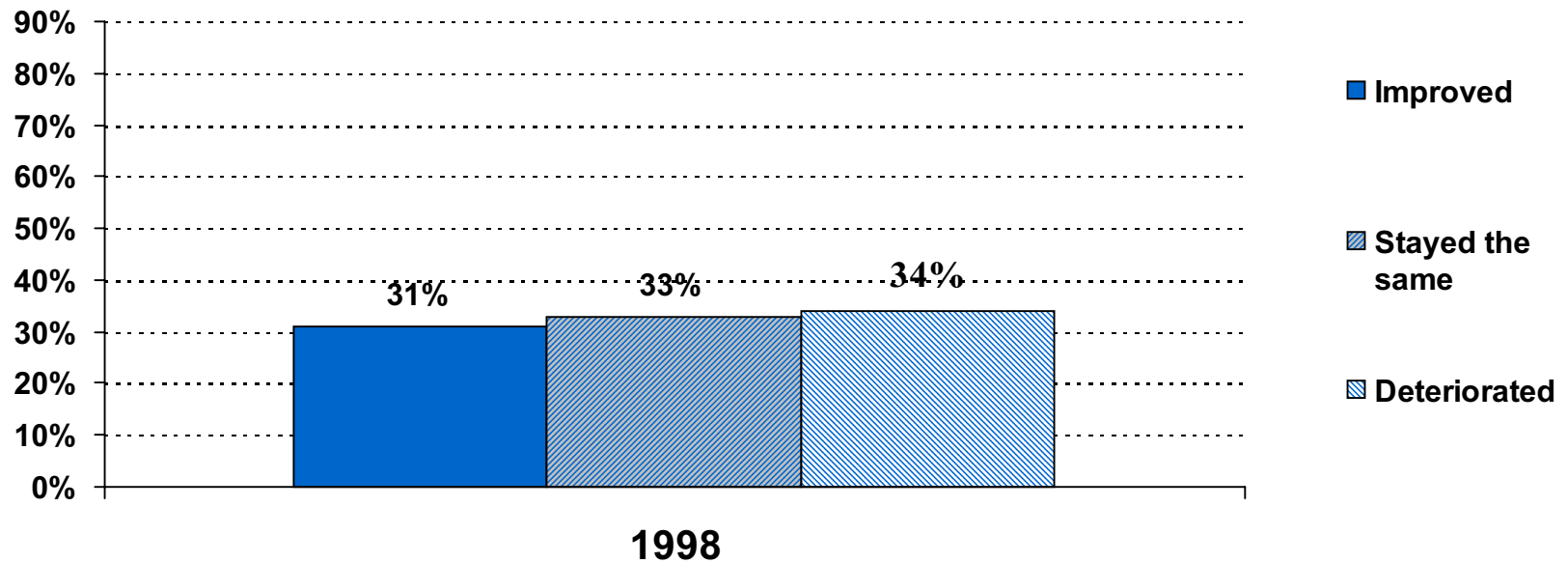
Figure 1: Satisfaction with “Quality of Life”



Question: “Overall, are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the quality of life in (your province)?”

Source: Environics.

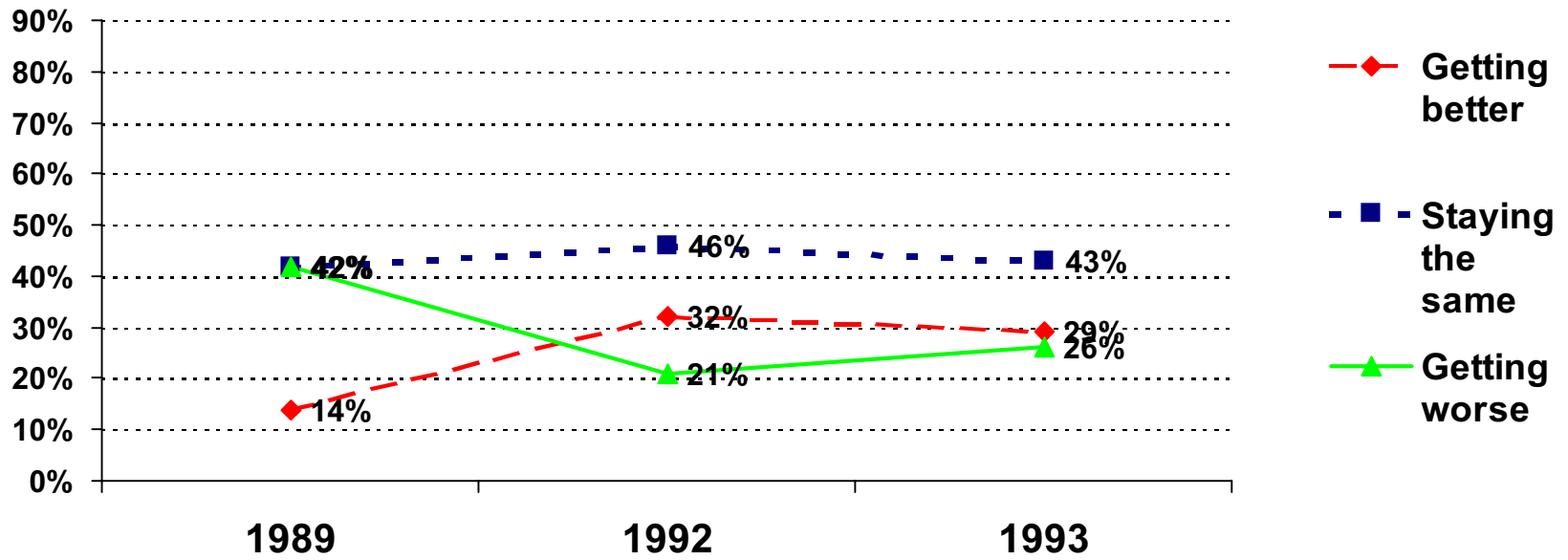
Figure 2: Satisfaction with “Quality of Life”



Question: “Over the past five years, do you think the overall quality of life of Canadians compared to residents of other countries has improved or deteriorated?”

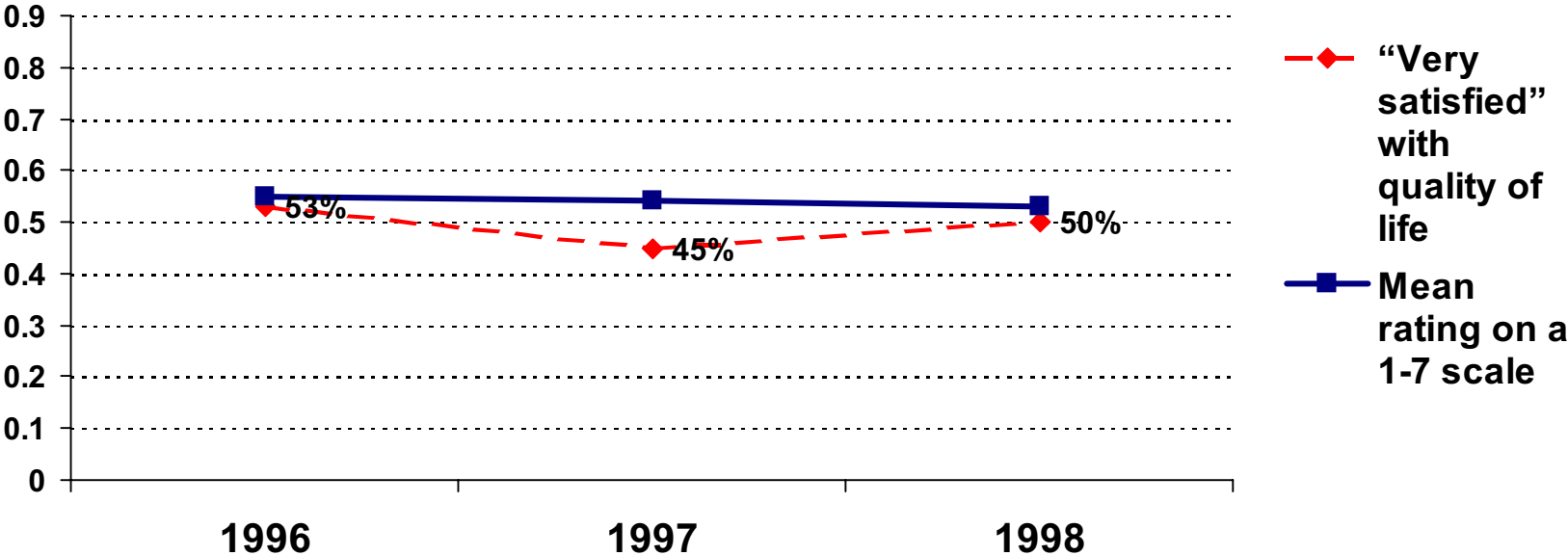
Source: Ekos (1998).

Figure 3: Quality of Life in Community Is...



Source: Decima Research.

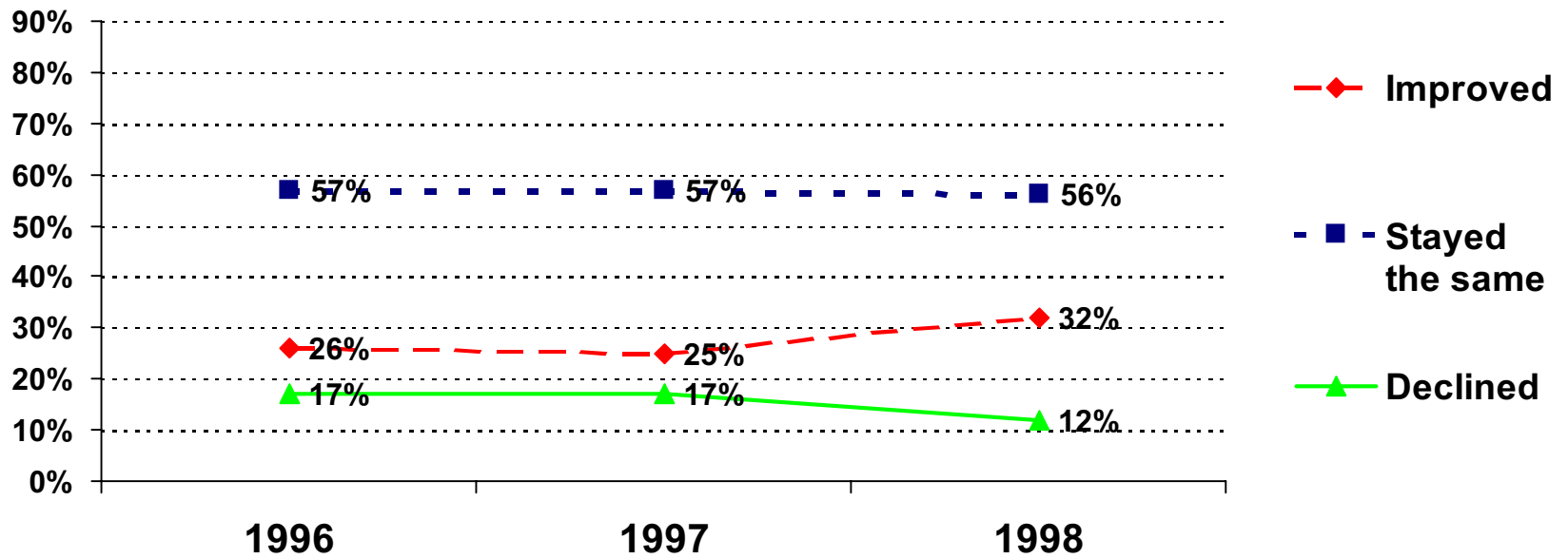
Figure 4: Satisfaction with Individual Quality of Life



Question: “On a scale from ‘1’ to ‘7’ where ‘1’ means you are completely dissatisfied with the overall quality of your life and ‘7’ means you are completely satisfied with the overall quality of your life, how would you rate your satisfaction with your life?”

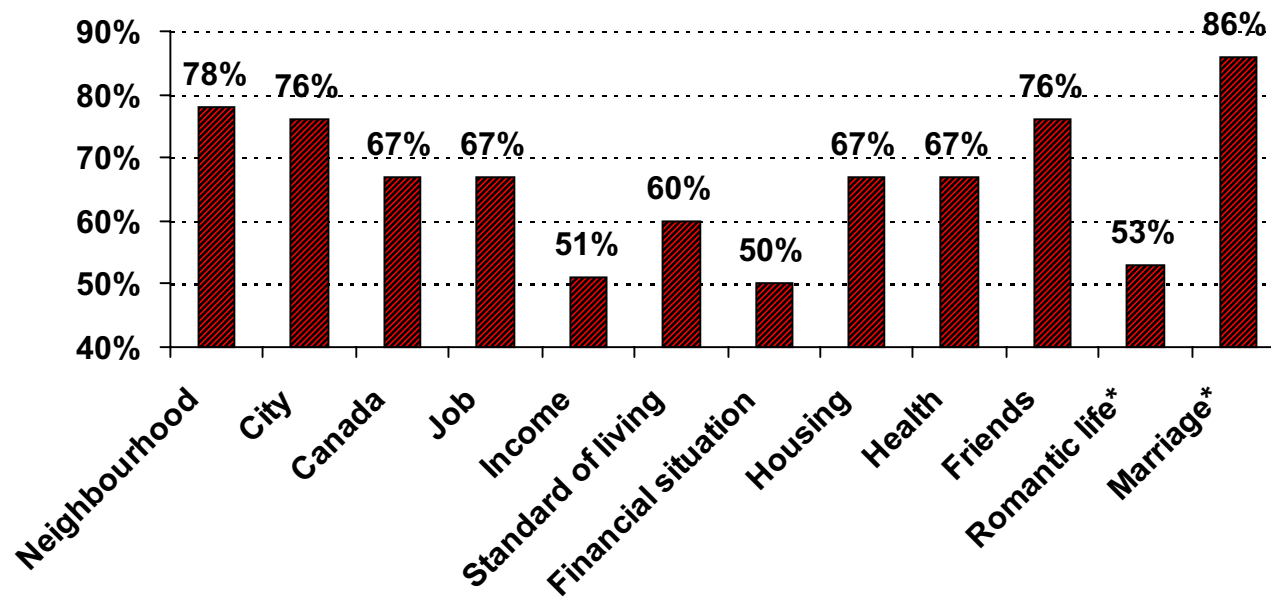
Source: Angus Reid (percentage placing themselves at 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale and mean rating on 7-point scale).

Figure 5: “Over the past six months, your overall quality of life has...”



Source: Angus Reid.

Figure 6: Satisfaction with Various Aspects of Quality of Life in 1981

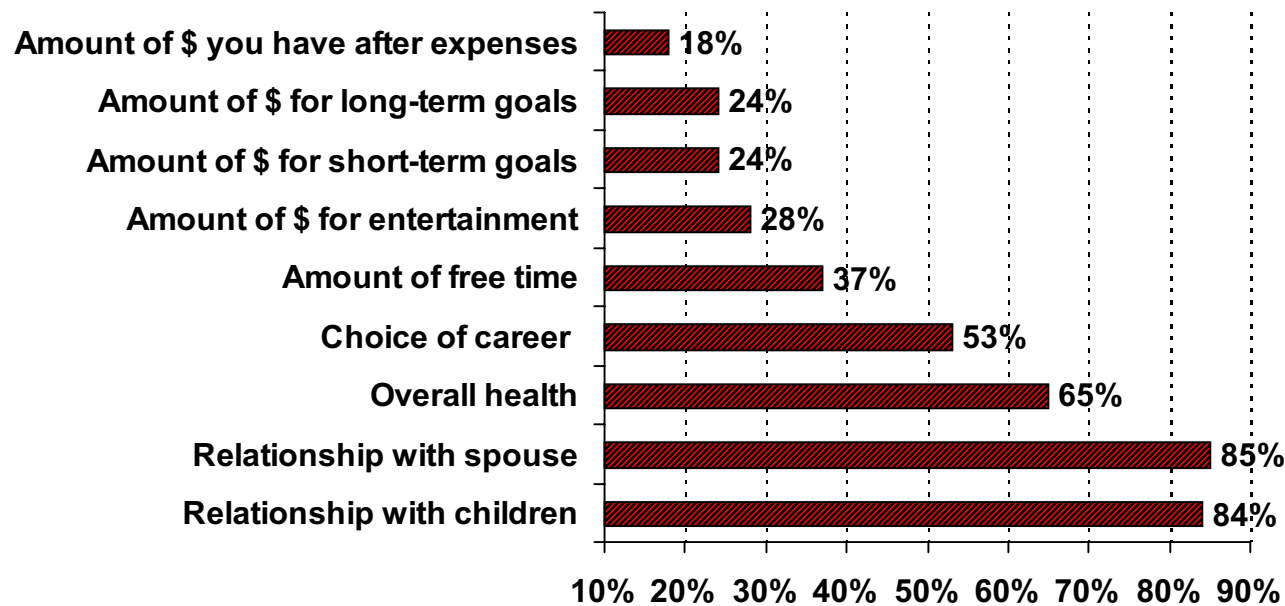


* “Marriage” asked to married respondents; “romantic life” asked to unmarried respondents.

Satisfaction measured on a scale of 1 - 11. Percentages represent number who placed themselves at 8 or above on the satisfaction scale.

Source: Quality of Life Survey.

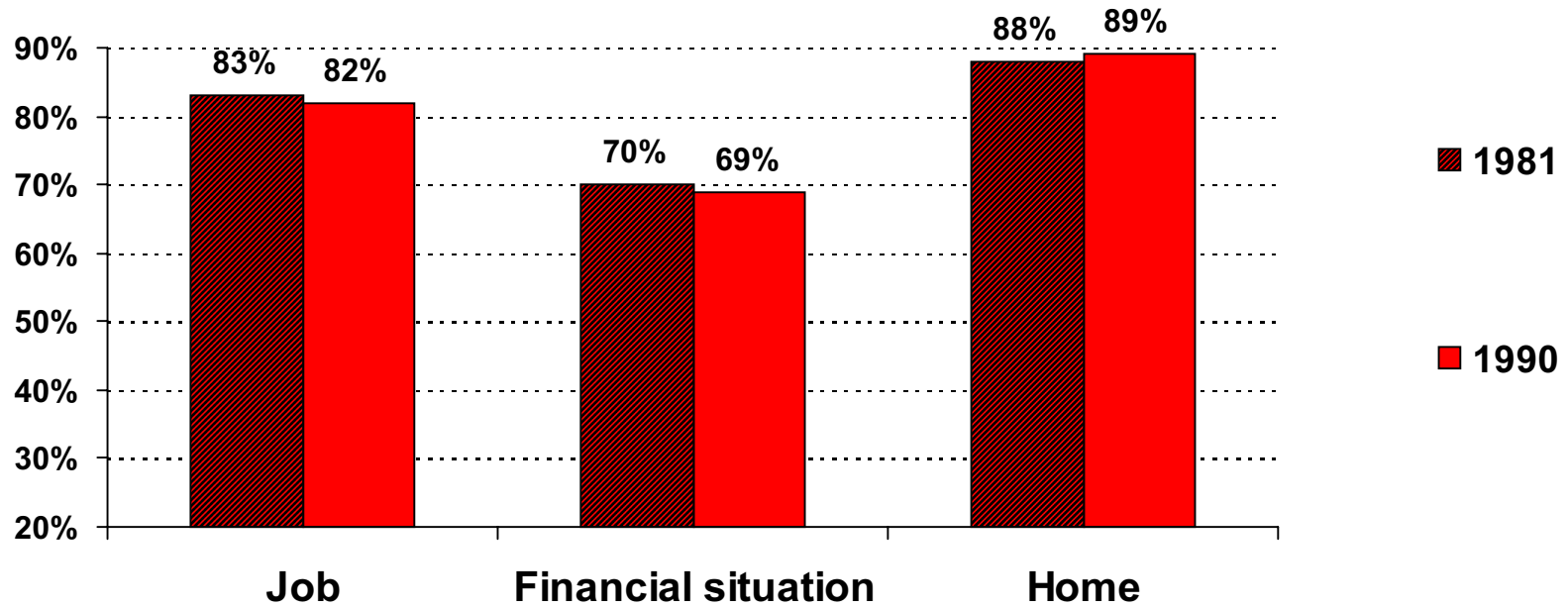
Figure 7: Satisfaction with Various Things Important to Quality of Life (1998)



Question: “Using a scale from ‘1’ to ‘7,’ where ‘1’ means you are completely dissatisfied and ‘7’ means you are completely satisfied, how satisfied are you with each of the following...”

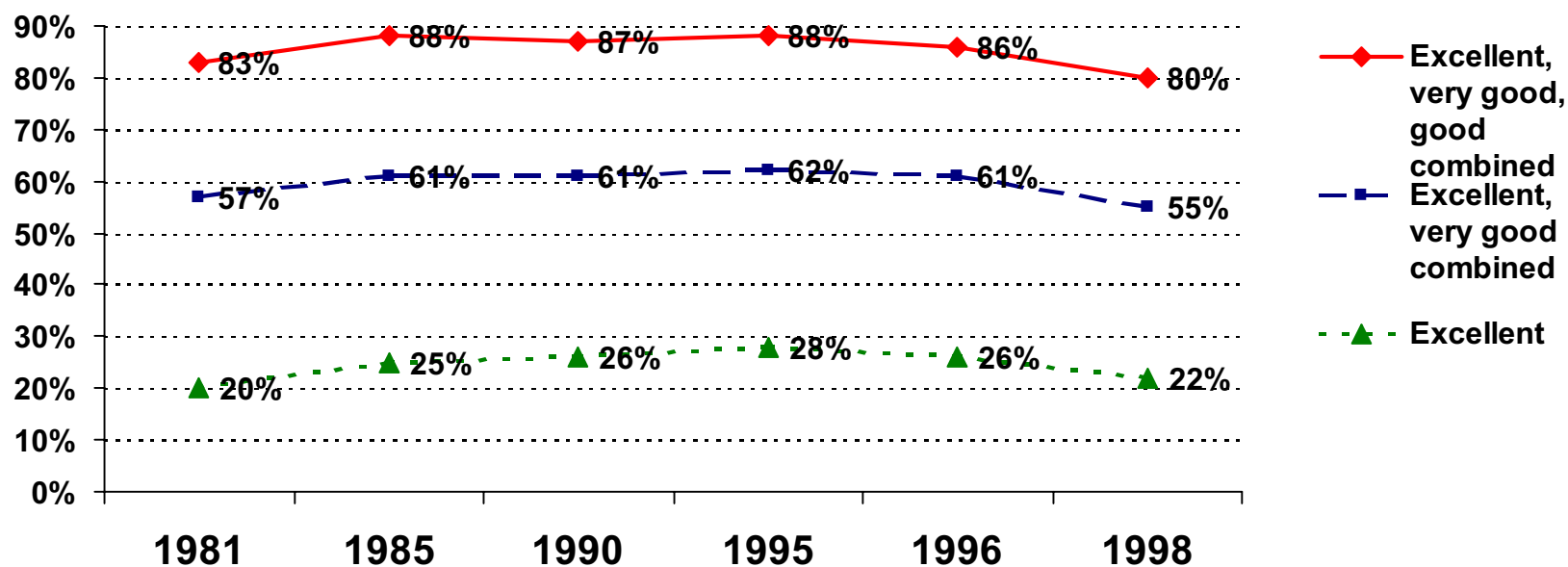
Source: Angus Reid. (Percentages represent the number who placed themselves at 6 or 7).

Figure 8: Satisfaction with...



Source: World Values Survey. Percentage is reported number who placed themselves at 7, 8, 9, or 10 on 10-point scale.

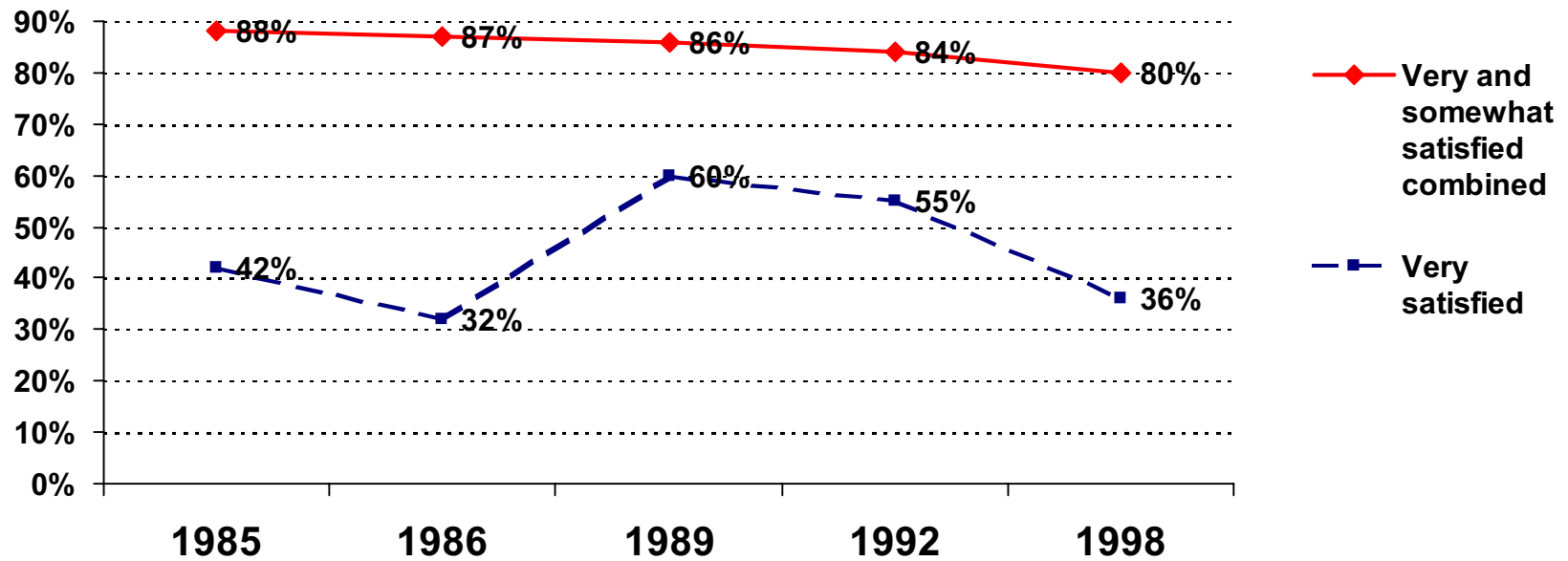
Figure 9: Canadians' State of Health (Self-assessed)



Question: “How would you describe your state of health? Compared to other persons your age age, would you say it was... excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?”

Source: Quality of Life Survey (1981); Health Promotion Survey (1985, 1990); General Social Survey (1986, 1995, 1998). 1985-1996 questions asked about state of health “compared to others your age”; 1981 and 1998 questions asked about state of health only, which could explain slightly lower numbers in these two years (older respondents likely offering less favourable responses to the general than the comparative question). We do NOT report GSS questions (years 1985 and 1990) when they included four rather than five response categories.

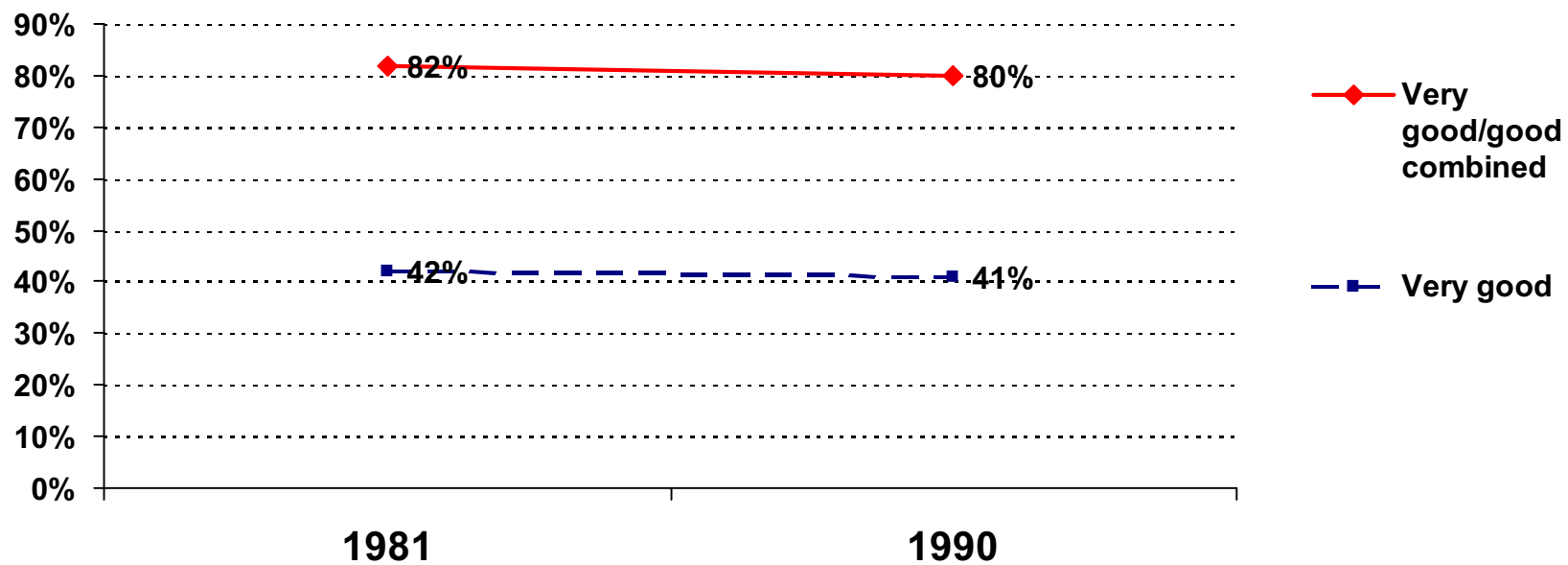
Figure 10: Canadians' Satisfaction with Their Health



Question: “How would you rate your feelings about each of the following... your health? Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied?”

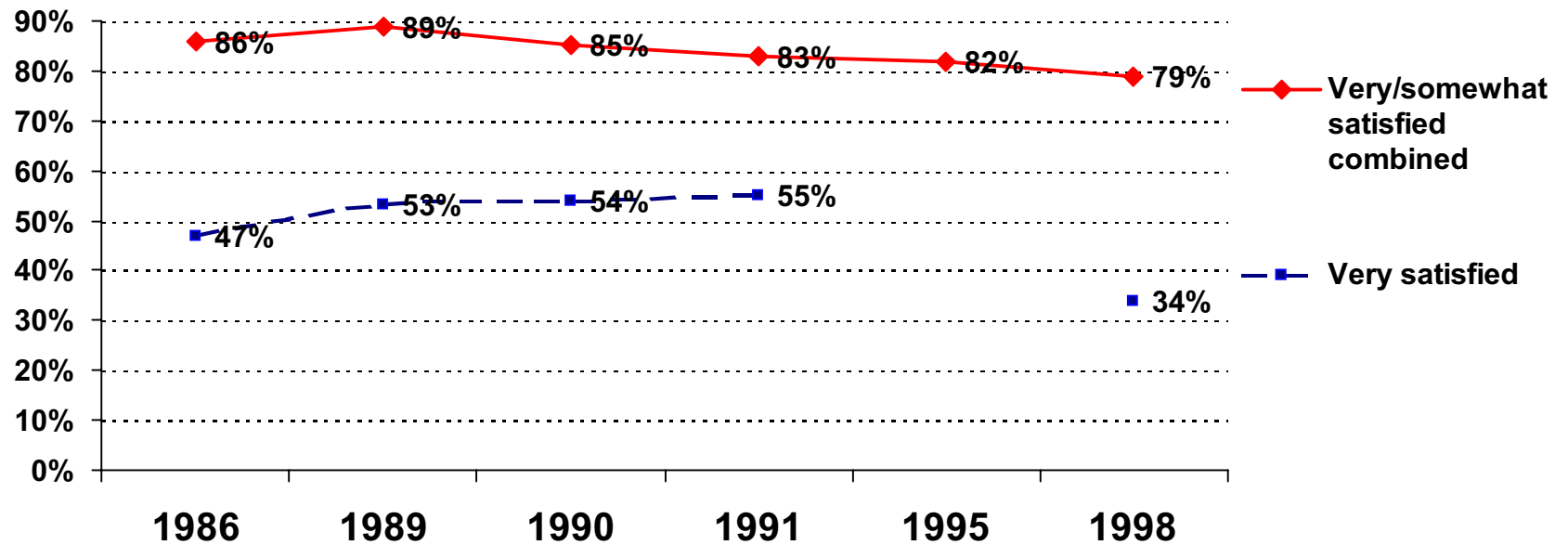
Source: General Social Survey (1985, 1986, 1989, 1992, 1998).

**Figure 11: Canadians' State of Health (Self-assessed)
(World Values Survey)**



Question: "All in all, how would you describe your state of health these days? Would you say it is very good, good, fair, poor, or very poor?"

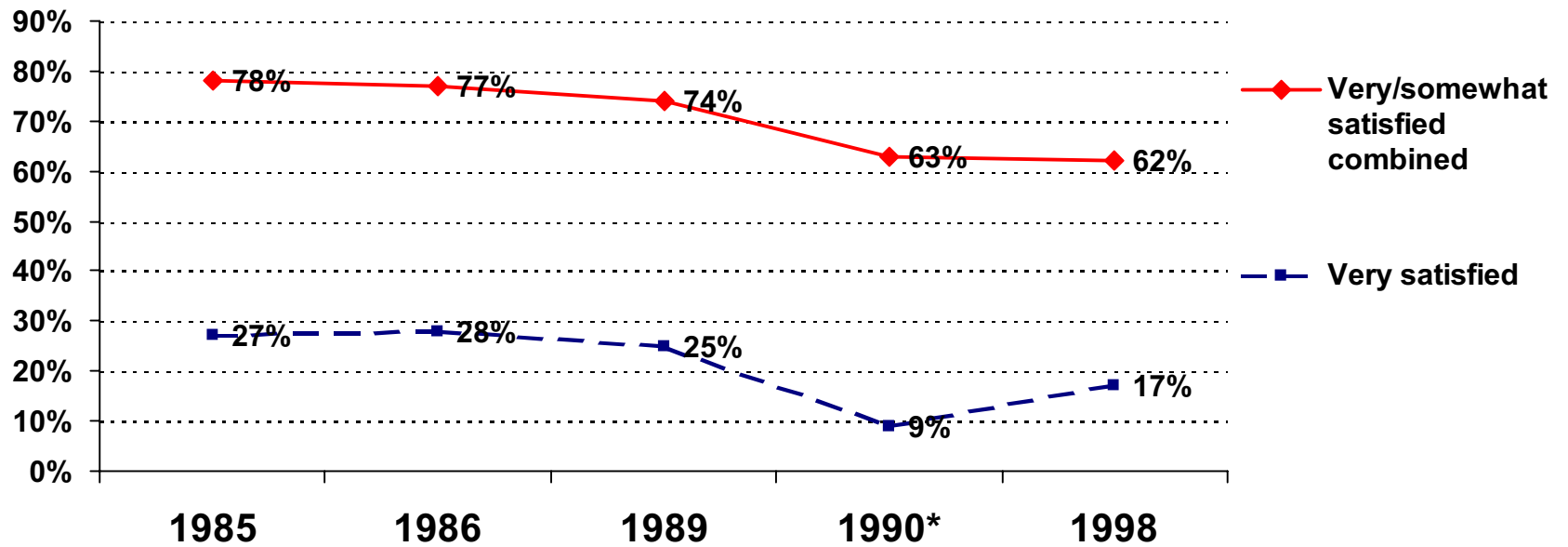
Figure 12: Canadians' Satisfaction with Their Jobs (or "Main Activity")



Question: "How would you rate your feelings about each of the following... your job or main activity? Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied?"

Source: General Social Survey.

Figure 13: Canadians' Satisfaction with Their Finances

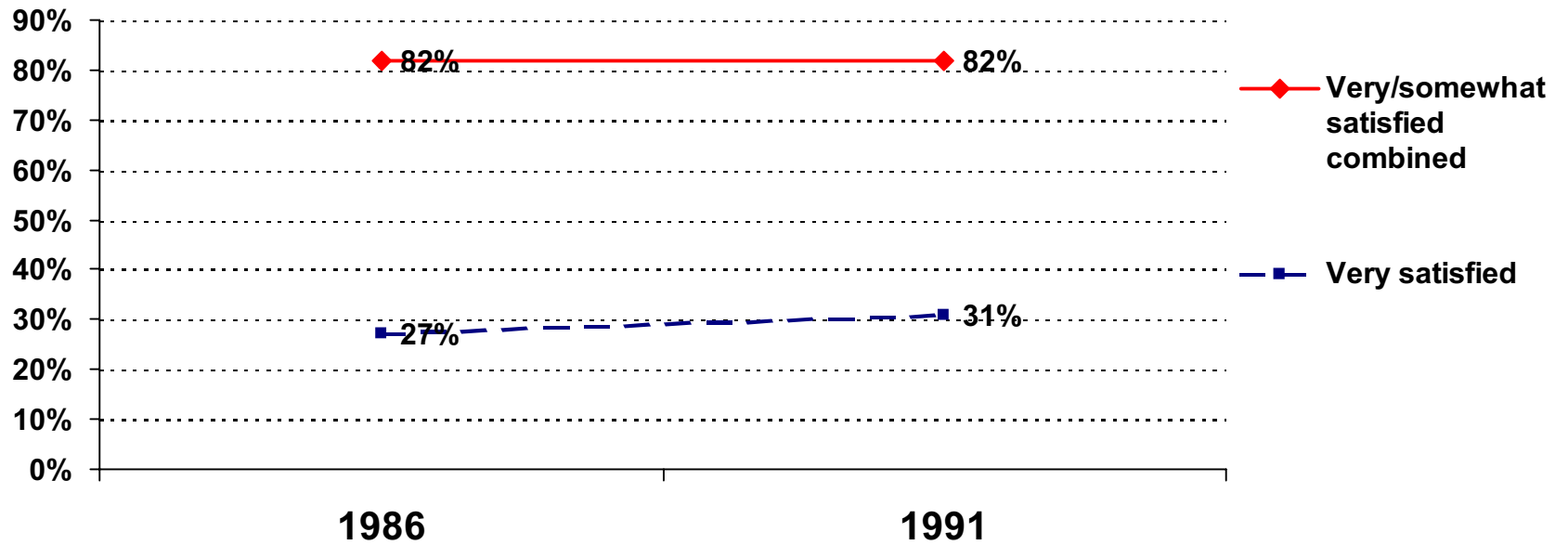


Question: "How would you rate your feelings about each of the following... your finances? Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied?"

* Decima Ressearch.

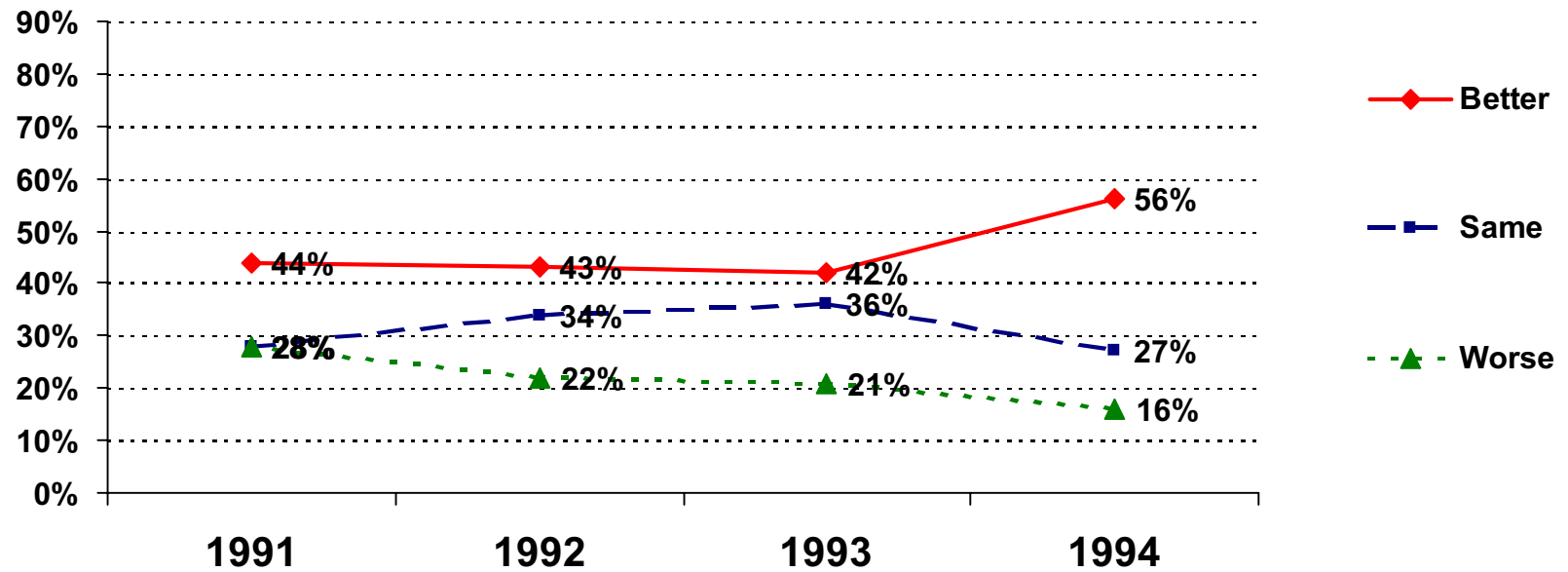
Source: General Social Survey, except 1990.

Figure 14: Canadians' Satisfaction with Standard of Living



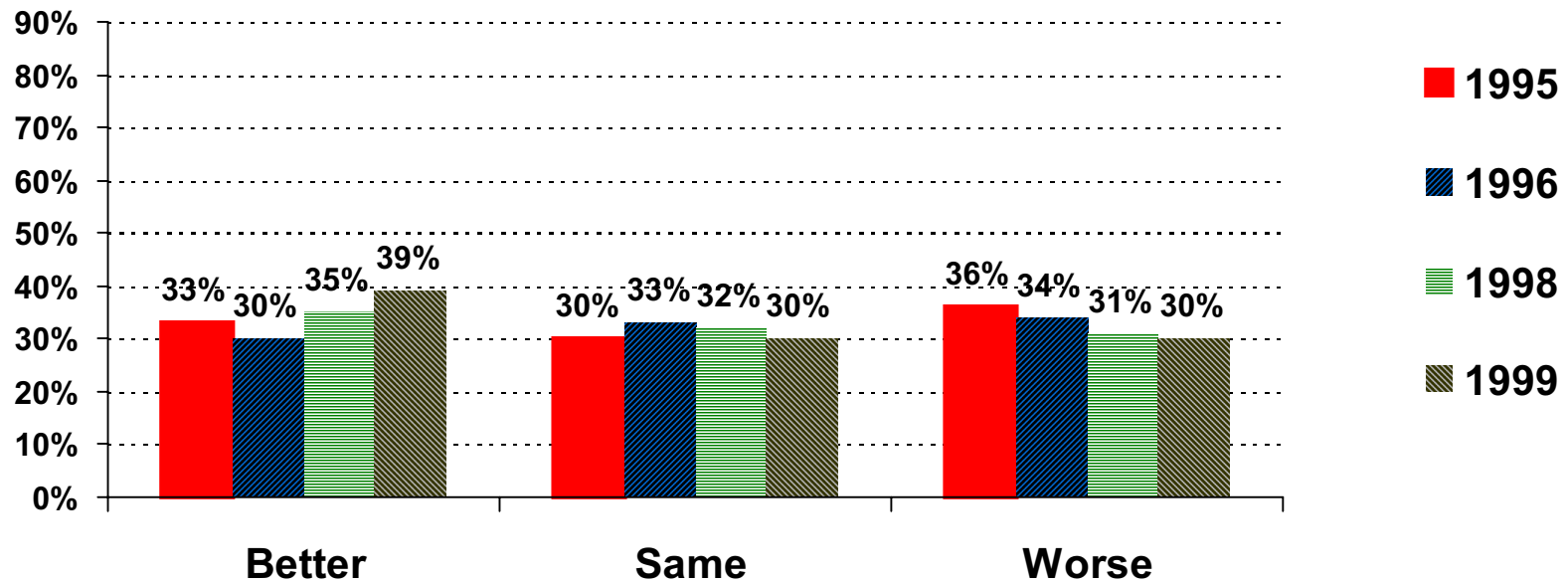
Source: Environics.

Figure 15: Expectations Regarding Financial Situation in Six Months Time



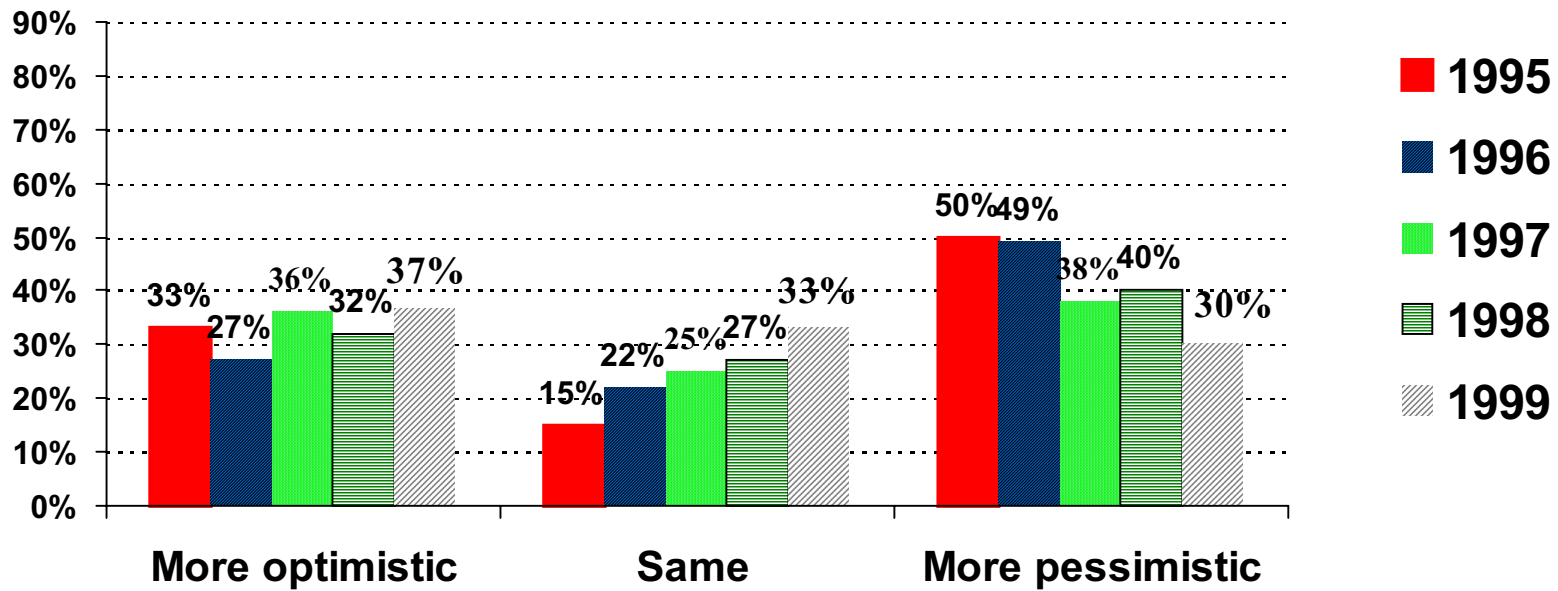
Source: Decima Research.

Figure 15b: “In the last 10 years, would you say your personal financial situation has become...”



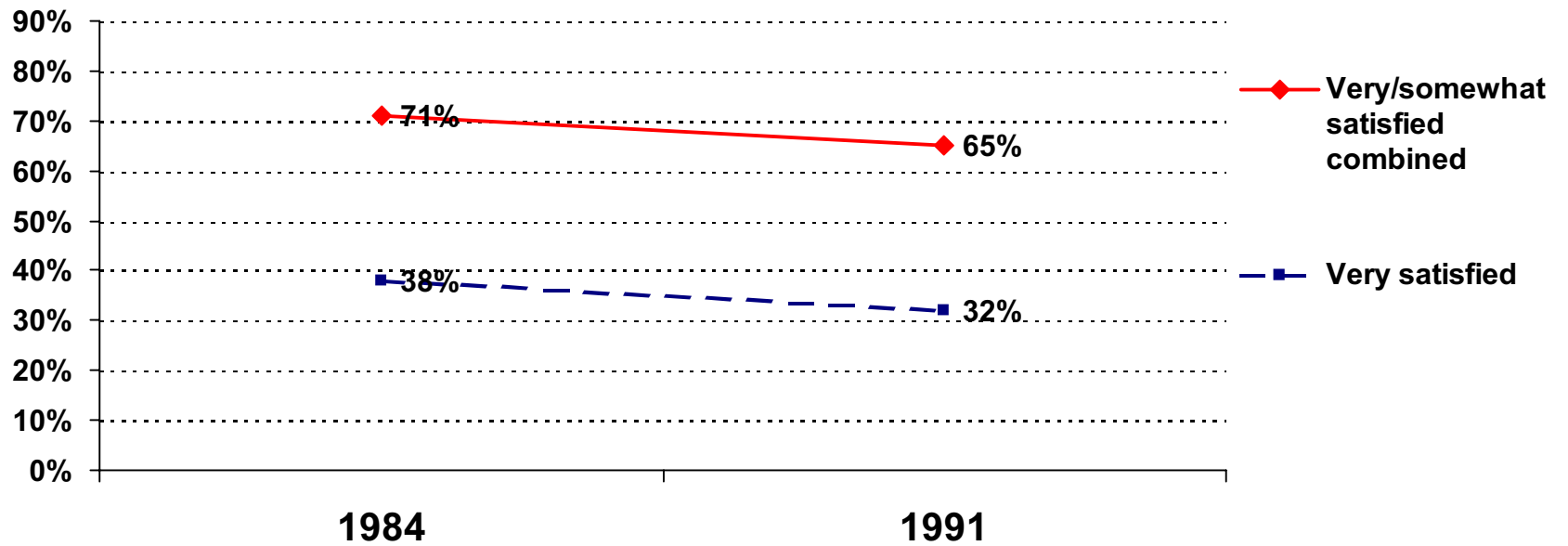
Source: Maclean’s Strategic Counsel, Inc.

Figure 15c: “Are you more or less optimistic about the future than you were a decade ago?”



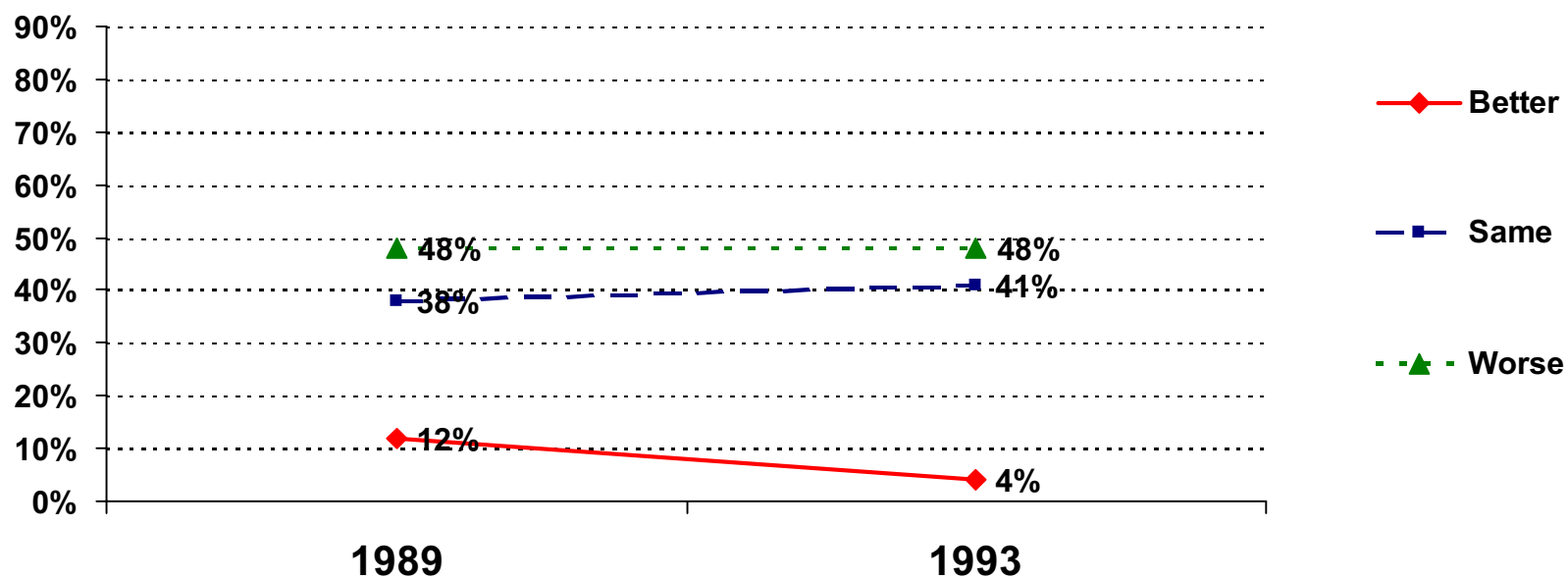
Source: Maclean’s Strategic Counsel, Inc.

Figure 16: Canadians' Satisfaction with Job Security



Source: Environics.

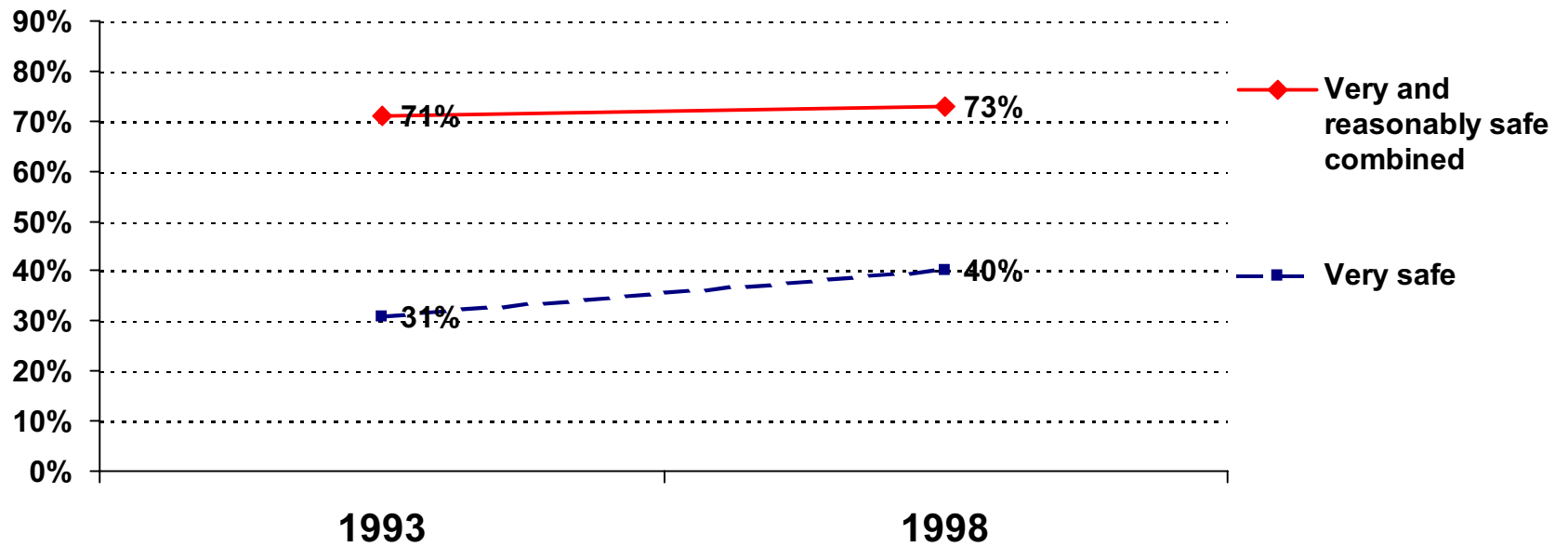
Figure 17: Situation of Violent Crime Is Getting...



Question: “During the last five years, do you think that crime in your neighbourhood has increased, decreased or remained about the same?”

Source: General Social Survey (1993); Decima Research (1989).

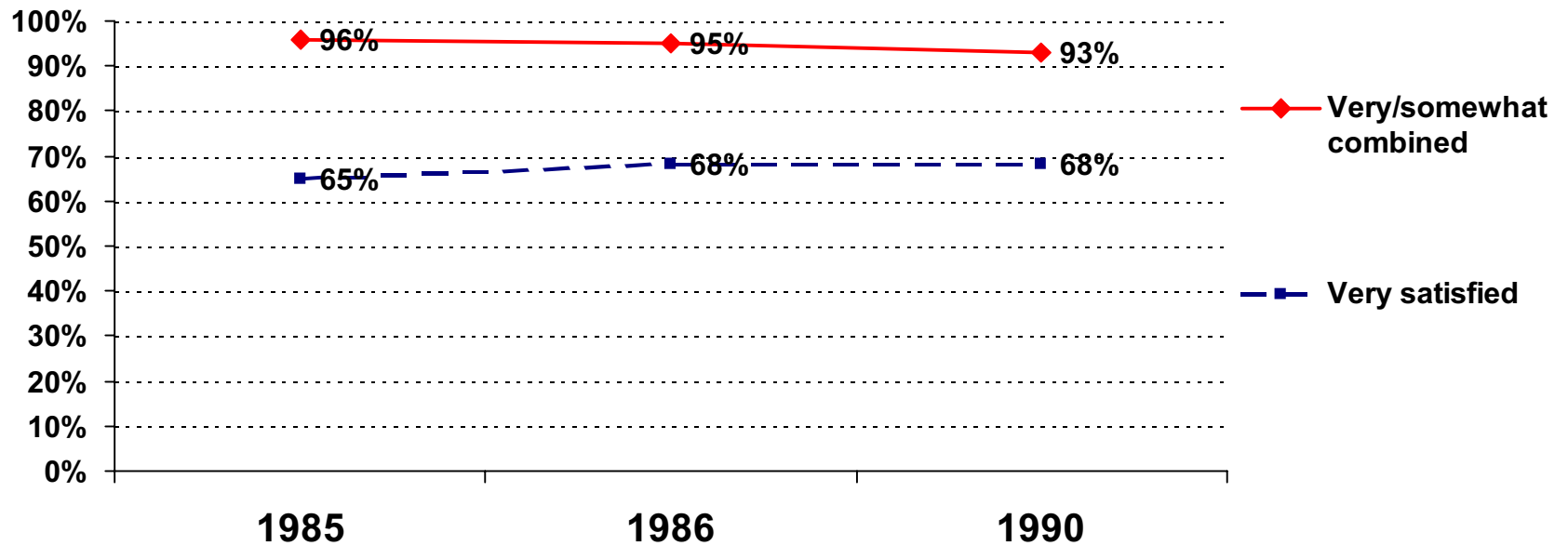
Figure 18: How Safe Walking in Community after Dark?



Question: “How safe do you feel (or would you feel) walking alone in your area after dark?”

Source: General Social Survey.

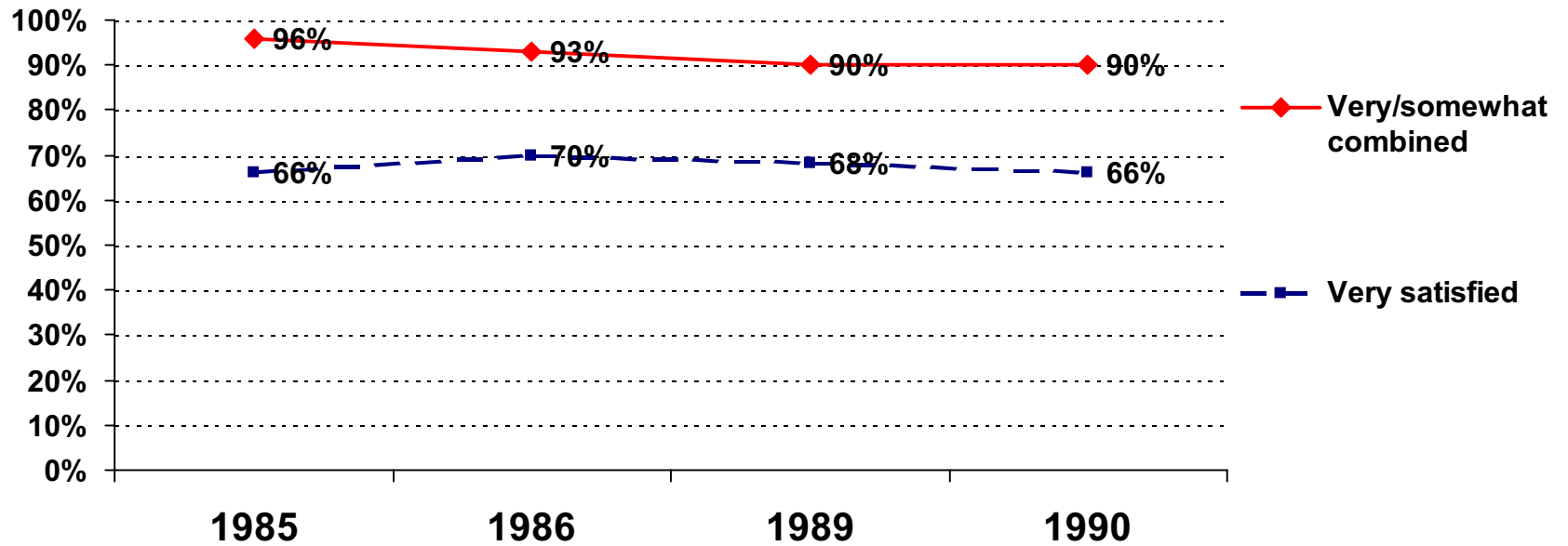
Figure 19: Satisfaction with Friends?



Question: "How would you rate your feelings about each of the following... your friends? Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied?"

Source: General Social Survey.

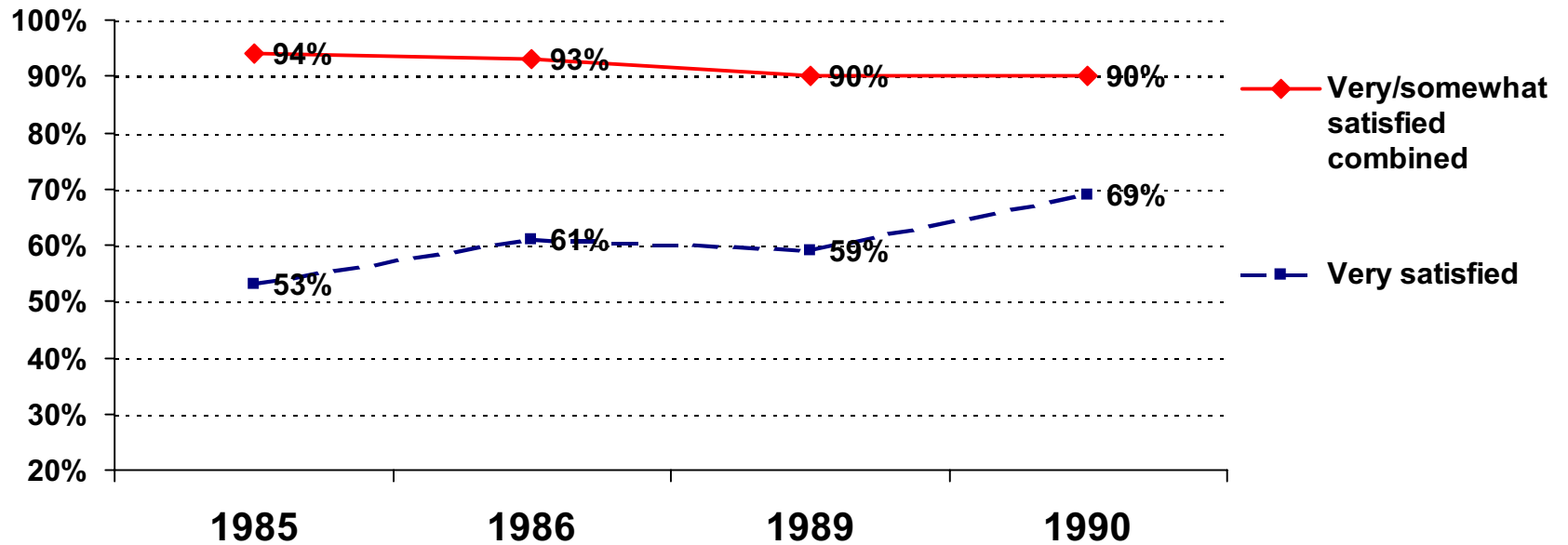
Figure 20: Satisfaction with Family



Question: “How would you rate your feelings about each of the following.... Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied?” (1985 question asked about “family”; later questions asked about satisfaction with spouse, partner, or single status.)

Source: General Social Survey.

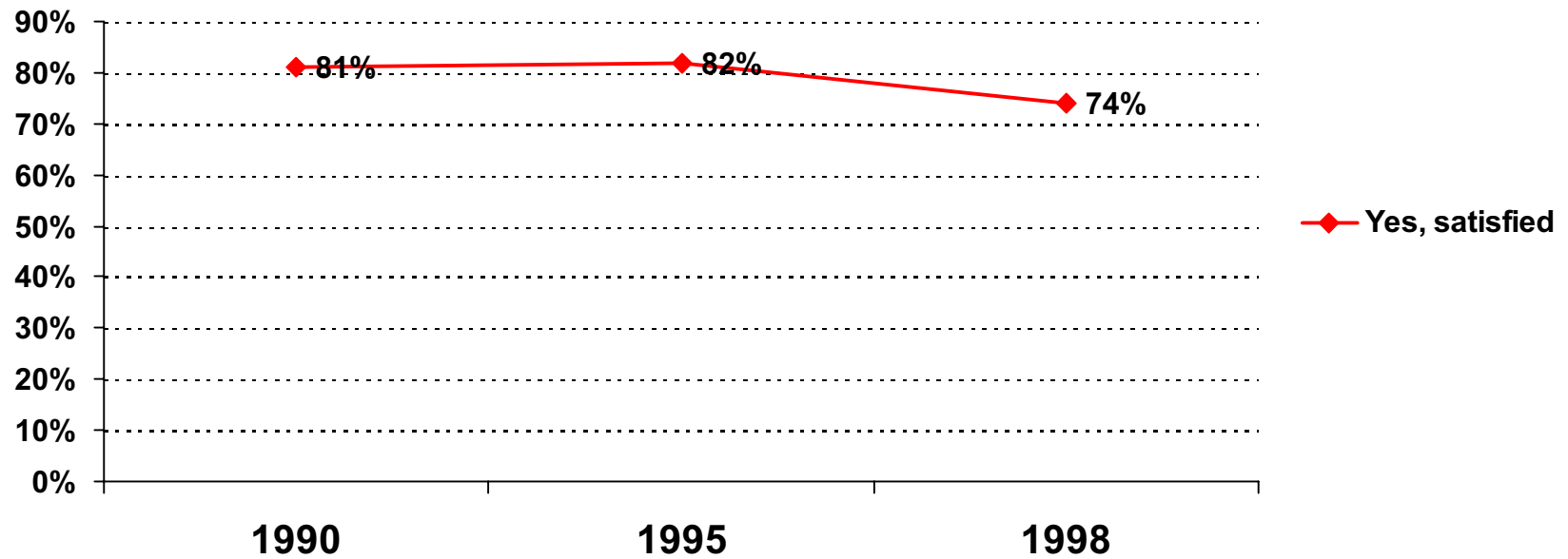
Figure 21: Canadians' Satisfaction with Their Housing



Question: "How would you rate your feelings about each of the following... your housing? Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied?"

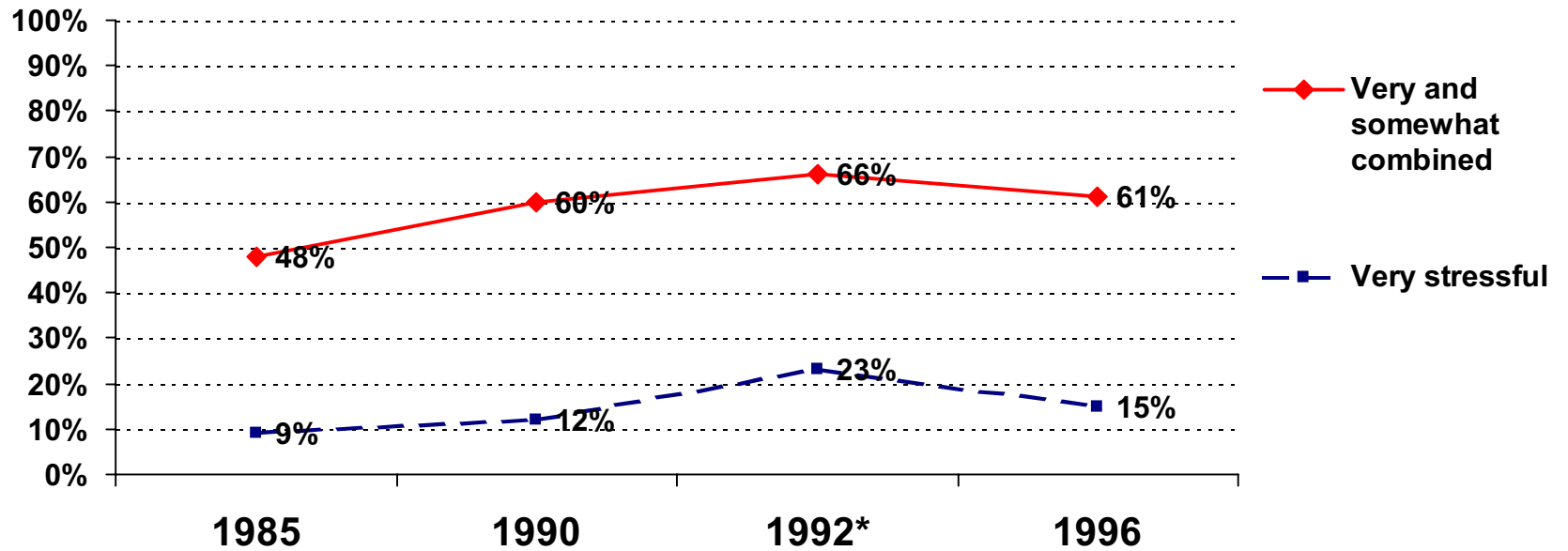
Source: General Social Survey.

Figure 22: Satisfaction with Balance between Job and Family?



Question: "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the balance between your job or main activity and family and home life?"
Source: General Social Survey.

Figure 23: Is Life Stressful?

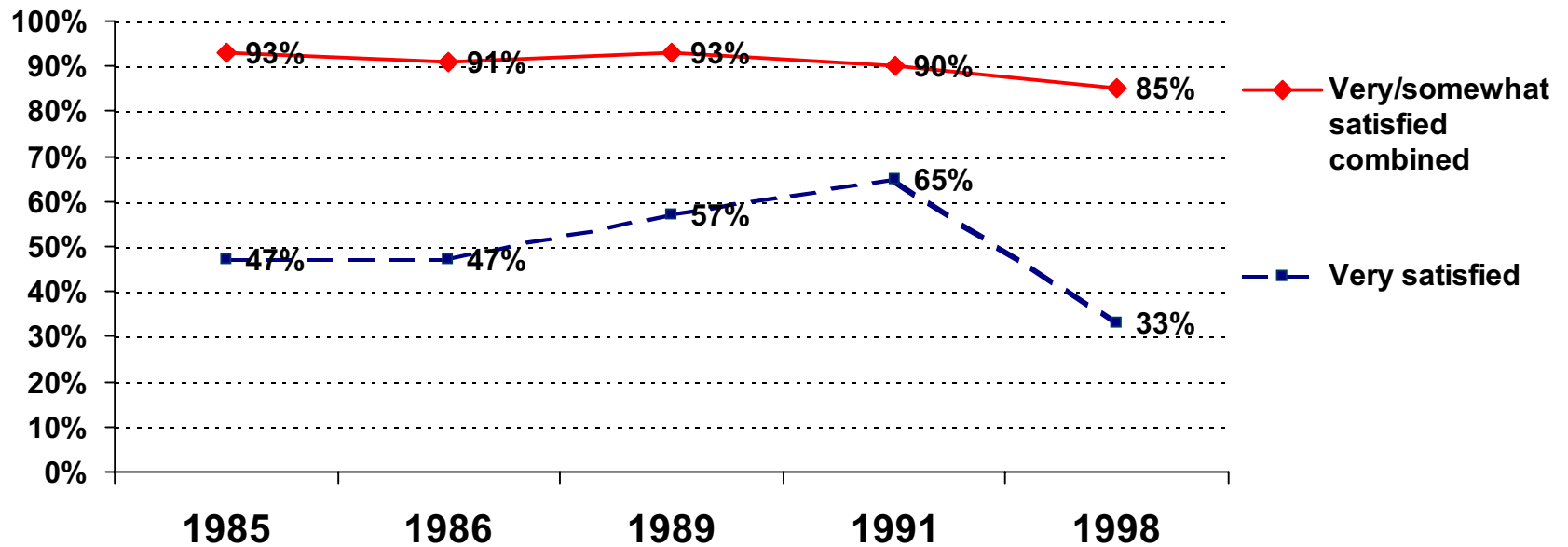


Question: “Would you describe your life as very stressful, somewhat stressful, not very stressful, or not at all stressful?”

* Decima: “how much stress do you have in your life: a great deal, a fair amount, not very much or none at all?”

Source: General Social Survey (1985, 1990, 1996); Decima (1992).

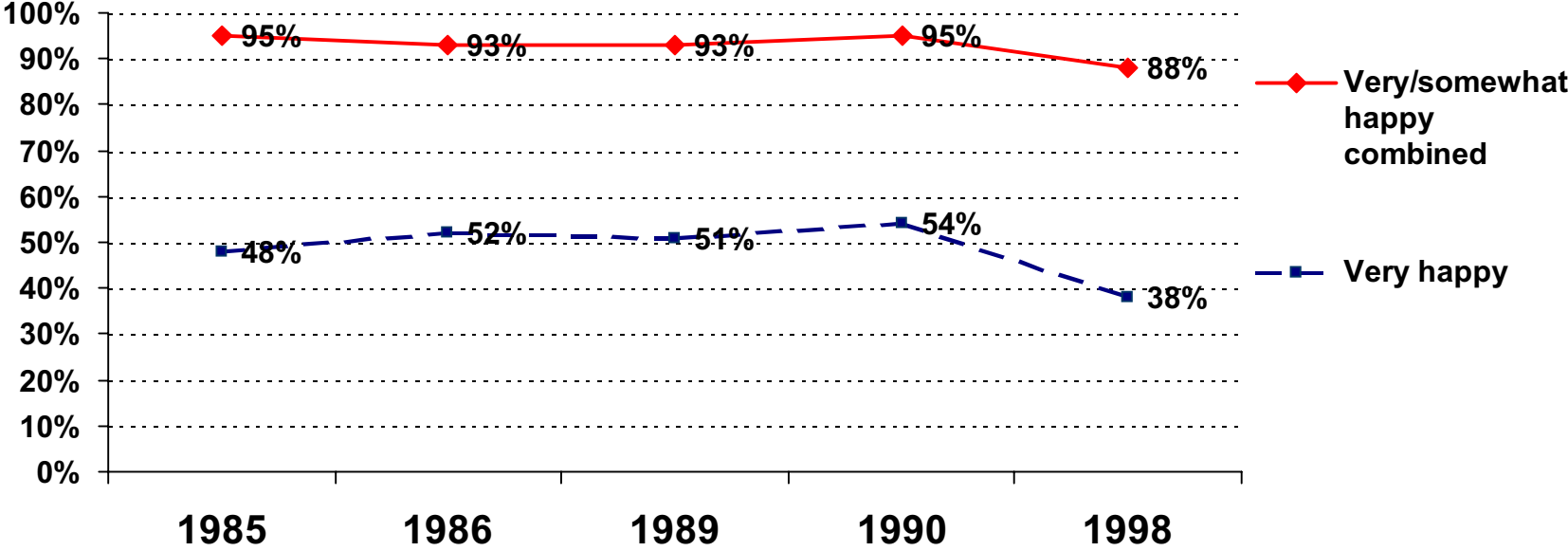
Figure 24: Canadians' Satisfaction with Life as a Whole



Question: "How would you rate your feelings about each of the following... your life as a whole? Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied?"

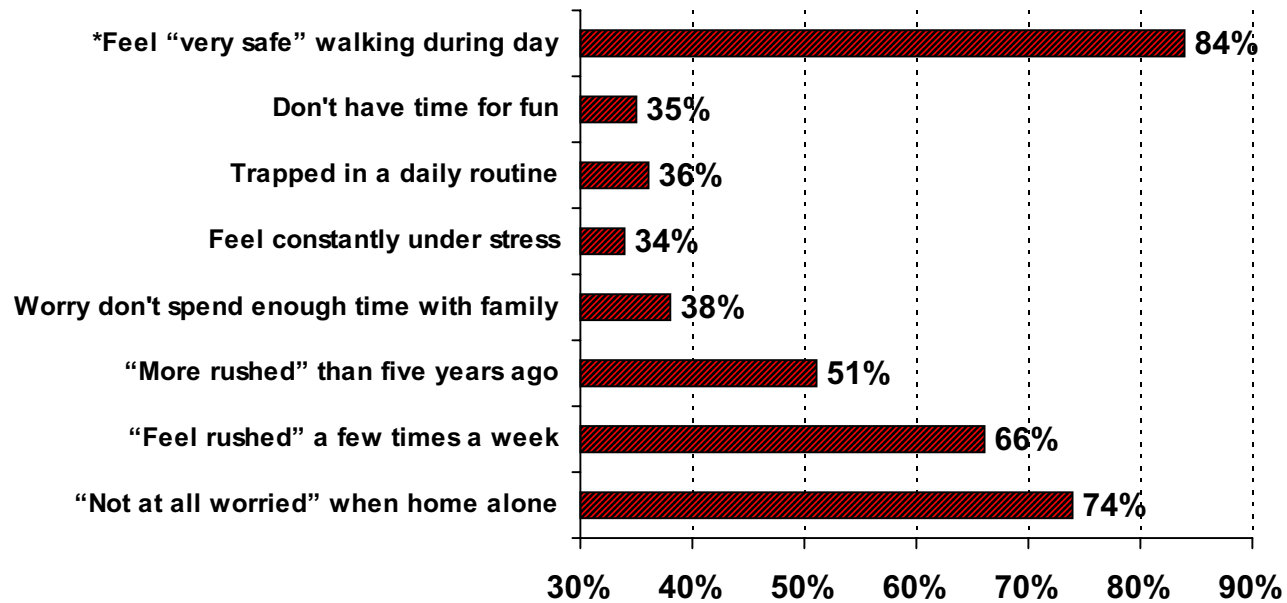
Source: General Social Survey.

Figure 25: Are Canadians Happy?



Question: “Would you describe yourself as very happy, somewhat happy, somewhat unhappy, or very unhappy?”
Source: General Social Survey.

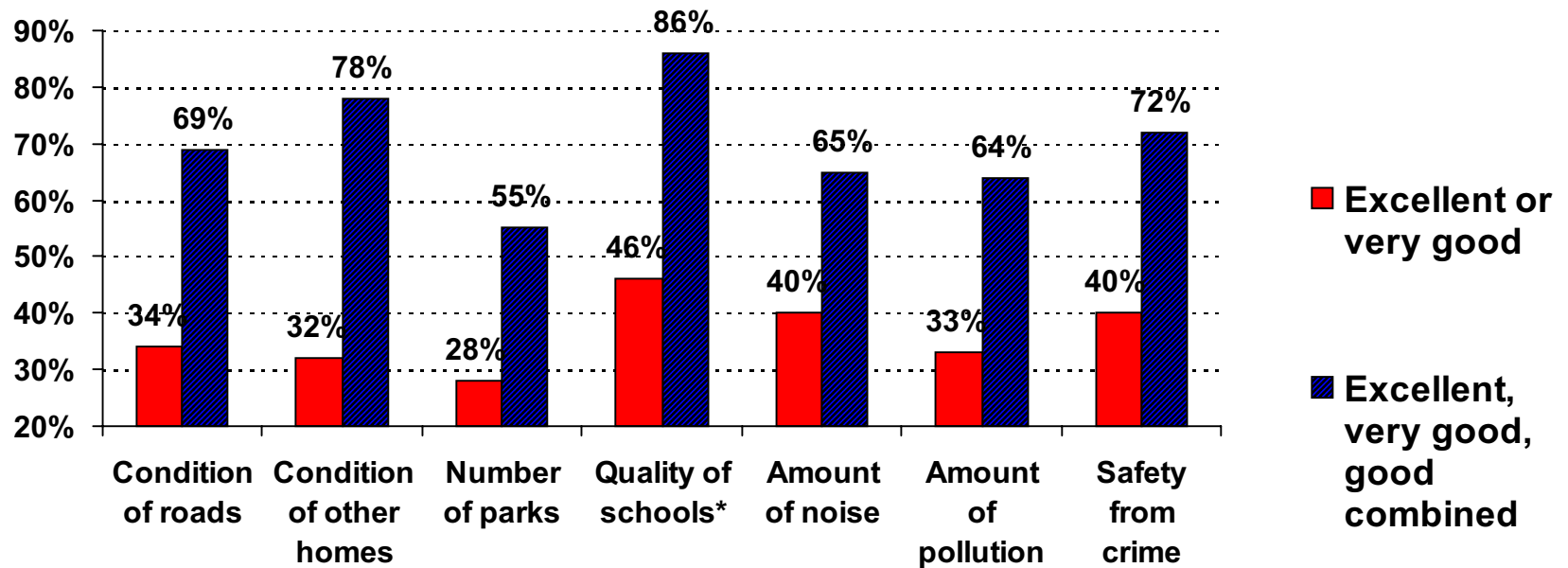
Figure 26: Selected Survey Findings on Quality of Life



* Except 1993.

Source: General Social Survey (1998).

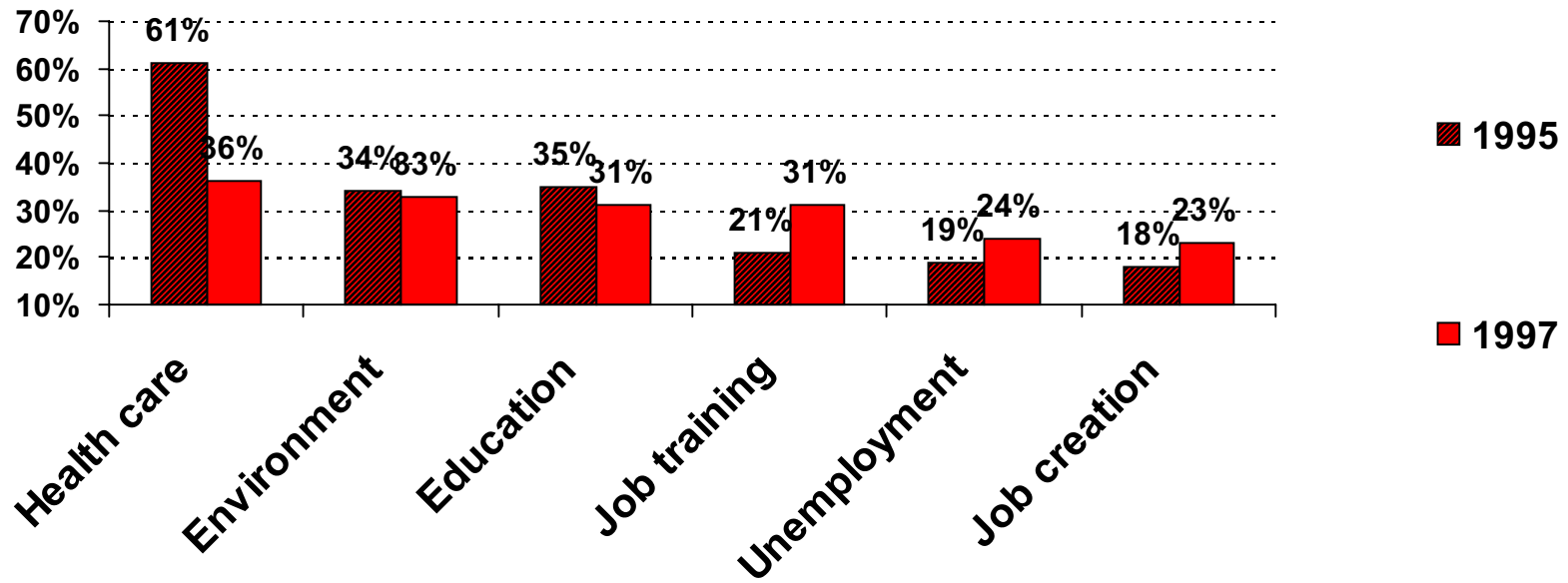
Figure 27: Quality of Life “in your community” in 1981



* Large percentage of respondents were undecided on this question (22%); they were eliminated.

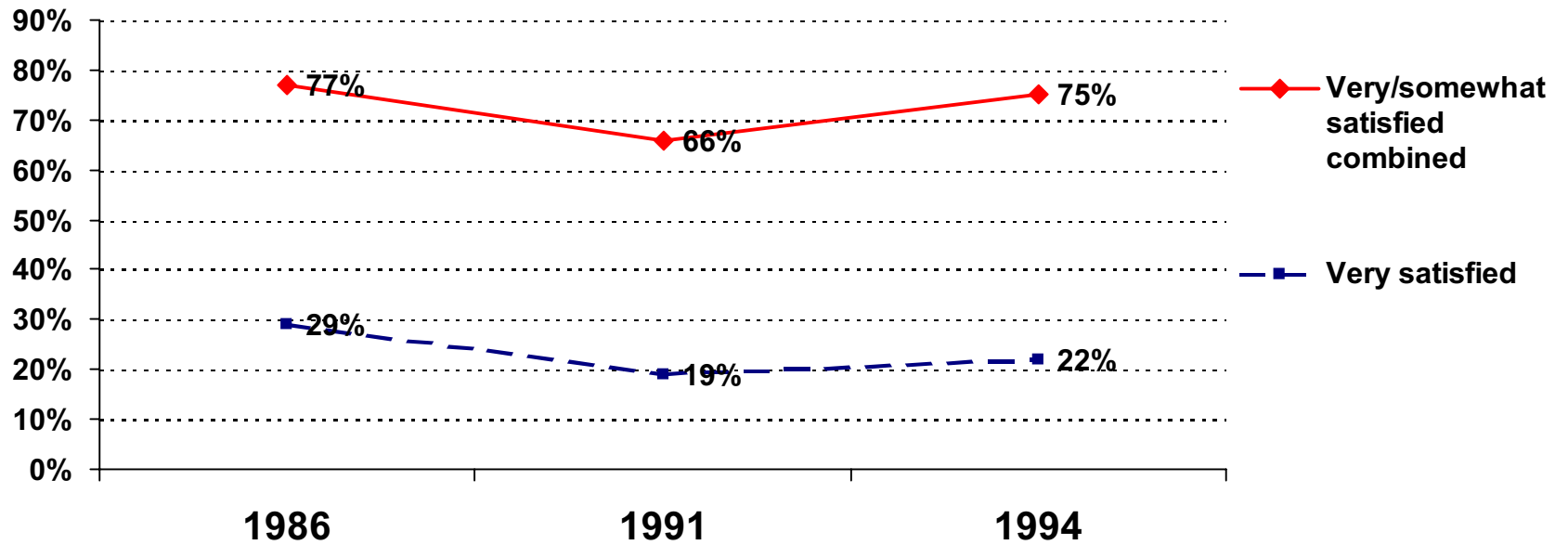
Source: Quality of Life Survey. (Respondents could respond in one of five categories: excellent, very good, good, fair or poor).

Figure 28: Rating the Performance of the System on...



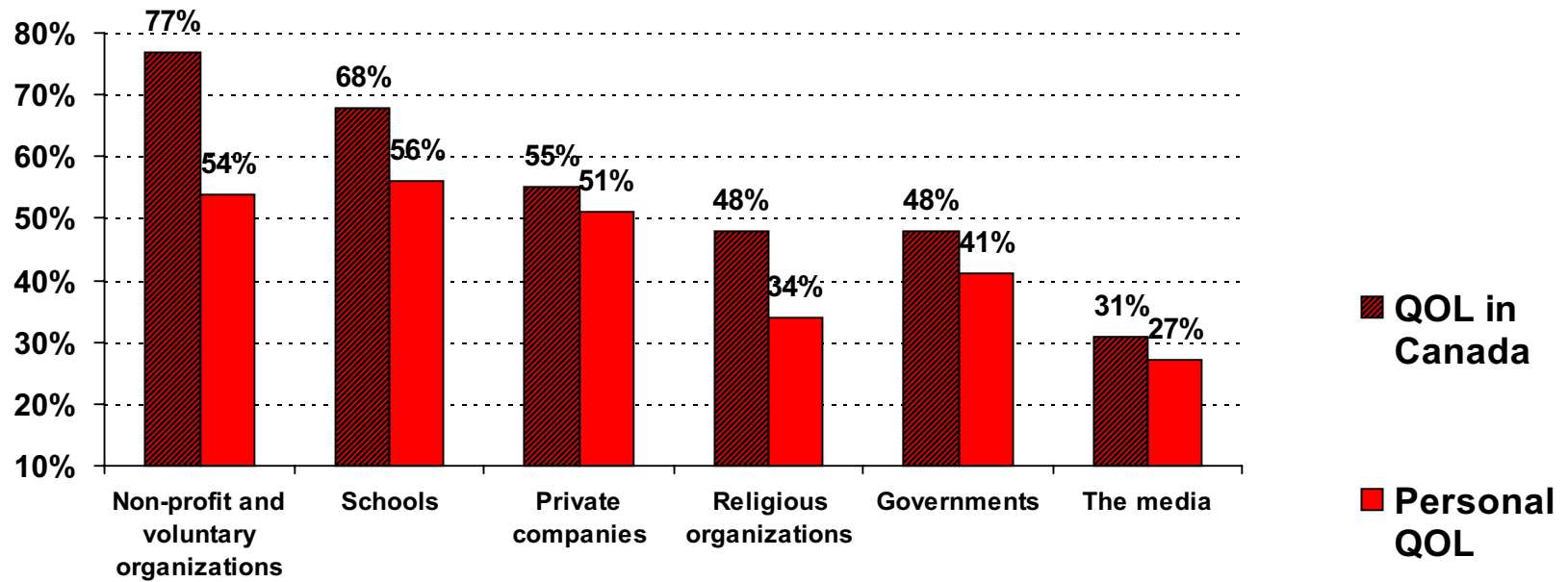
Source: Ekos Research Associates. Percentage is reported number who placed themselves at 5, 6, or 7 on a 7-point scale.

Figure 29: Canadians' Satisfaction with Quality of Environment in Canada



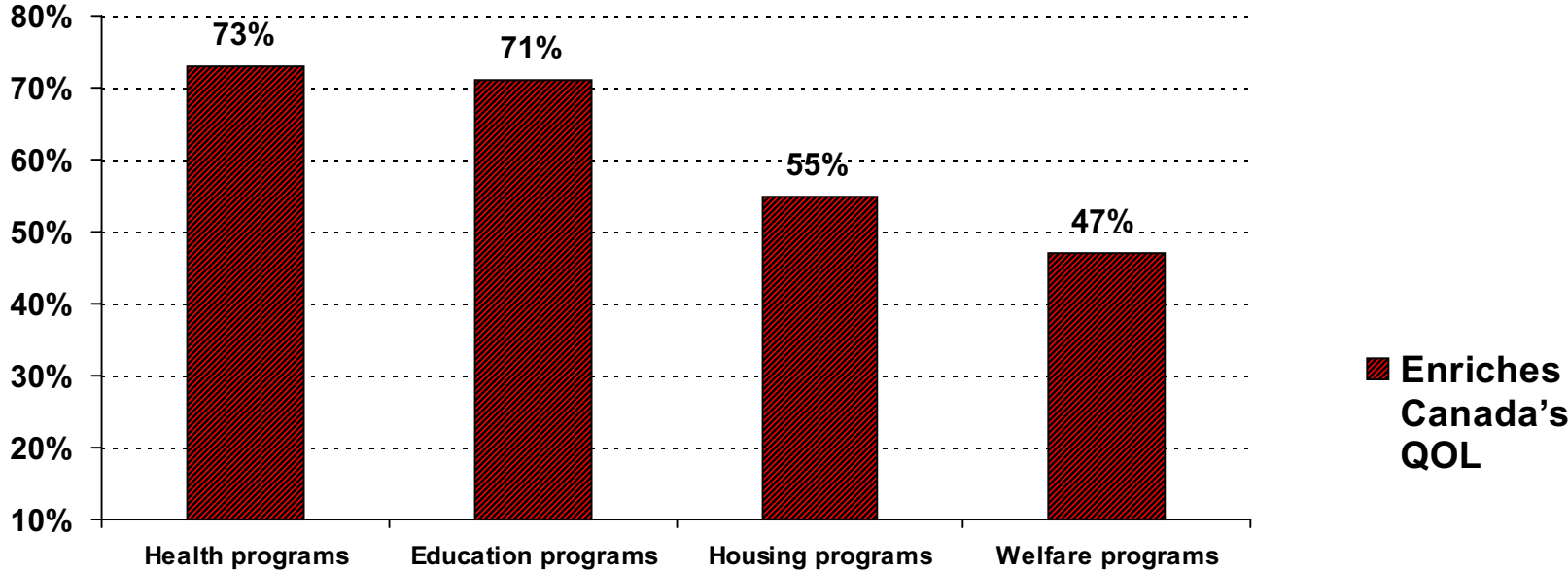
Source: Environics.

Figure 30: Things That Contribute to “Quality of Life”



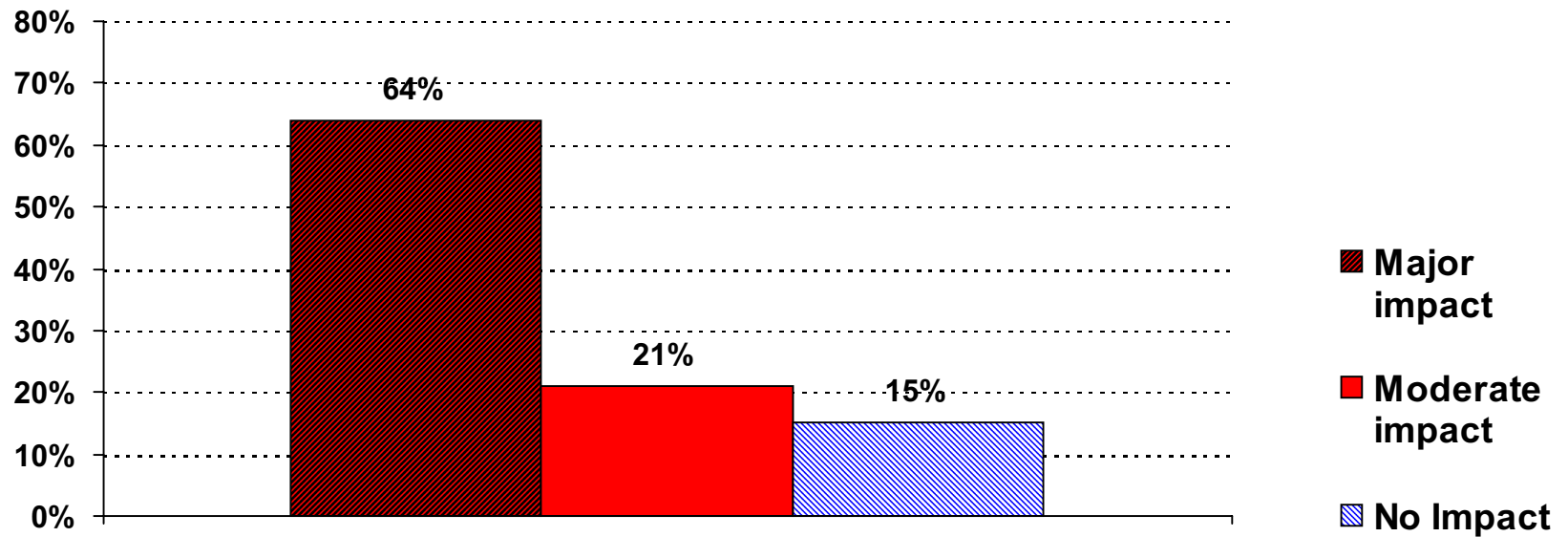
Source: Ekos Research (1998).

**Figure 31: Things That Contribute to
“Quality of Life”**



Source: Ekos Research (1994).

Figure 32: “How much impact do social programs have on overall ‘quality of life’?”



Source: Ekos Research (1998).