"A New Saskatchewan?": Political Culture Change in Saskatchewan Party-Era

Saskatchewan

by

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Abstract

Since its founding as a province, Saskatchewan has been depicted by the academic literature as possessing a political culture that was distinctly collectivist, dirigiste, protectionist, and polarized, largely owed to the historical political dominance of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and the New Democratic Party (NDP) in the province. Such narratives have outlived the political fortunes of both the CCF and NDP, and have, until this point, persisted despite the rise of the right-wing Saskatchewan Party. This thesis aims to fill a scholarly gap, through considering the influence of prolonged Saskatchewan Party governance on the province's politics and assessing the current state of Saskatchewan's political culture. Specifically, I ask the following question: what is the dominant political culture strand in Saskatchewan Party-era Saskatchewan? Through a series of online focus group activities involving people from across the province, I assess and substantiate the influence of political culture pillars, such as collectivism, laissez-faire, heartland, and adversarialism, in shaping Saskatchewan's provincial identity and contemporary political culture. This study demonstrates that Saskatchewan's political culture has changed. Specifically, this thesis finds Saskatchewan's contemporary political culture to be 'blended', containing components of both traditional and alternative political culture strands, although displaying a slight preference for the neoliberal and conservative alternative political culture. The findings suggest that the current Saskatchewan political culture has departed from its collectivist and hinterland traditions in favour of individualism and heartland. Meanwhile, the political orientations towards the provincial government's role in the society and the economy (dirigisme or laissez-faire) or the attitudes Saskatchewanians possess towards political actors and the political system (adversarialism or pragmatism) are considerably more varied and lack ideological consistence. Ultimately, this study highlights the influence of political party shifts in serving as

mechanisms and reflections of political culture change and provides an overview of Saskatchewan's contemporary political culture under prolonged Saskatchewan Party governance. A concluding discussion highlights the value and significance of this research and suggests area of future exploration about Saskatchewan provincial politics and political culture.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Lauren Hill. The data of this study received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Finding Common Ground Online", no. 00115960, January 26, 2023. The primary research was funded by grants from the Kule Institute of Advanced Study (KIAS) and the Support for the Advancement of Scholarship (SAS) Fund at the University of Alberta. Research assistance was funded by the University of Alberta Research Experience (UARE) Program.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since its founding as a province in 1905, Saskatchewan has been characterized by its political singularity, possessing a "distinct form of politics differentiating it from other provinces" (McGrane and Berdahl 2015, 95). Indeed, Saskatchewan has developed a national influence and a scholarly interest in its politics that has been "plumbed out of proportion" to its population and historic economic importance (Wesley 2011, 114; see also Smith 2009, 37; Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999).

Such influence and attention are largely attributable to the province's intertwined history with the fortunes of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and its successor, the New Democratic Party (NDP). With the election of the CCF in 1944, Saskatchewan became the sole social democratic stronghold in Canada, with the CCF becoming the dominant and "natural governing" party of the province (Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999, 1; Warnock 2004, 8, 328; Smith 2009, 38; Eisler 2022). Prolonged CCF-NDP governance cemented this reputation through holding power for more than forty years (Praud and McQuarrie 2001, 143; Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999; Leeson 2009, 120; Warnock 2004, 328; McGrane, White, Berdahl, and Atkinson 2013, 1).

Tied to Saskatchewan's penchant for CCF and NDP rule, the province has established a reputation as "politically progressive" and possessing a social democratic political culture – a set of shared political orientations, values, and norms that underpin a given political system (McGrane 2006, 10; 2014; Rasmussen 2001; Wiseman 2007; Wesley 2011; McGrane and Berdahl 2015, 95; Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999, 1). This depiction of Saskatchewan as one favouring collectivism and dirigisme is similarly affirmed within the literature (McGrane 2006; 2014, Rasmussen 2001; Wiseman 2007; Wesley 2011; McGrane and Berdahl 2015).

Though once the cradle of social democracy, Saskatchewan now faces a political identity crisis (Wesley 2011, 1; McGrane et al. 2013, 1; Berdahl, White, McGrane, and Atkinson 2014, 669; McGrane, McIntosh, Farney, Berdahl, Kerr, and Van Der Liden 2020, 176; Eisler 2022). After over fifteen years of Saskatchewan Party political dominance, the potential for future NDP political hegemony and the continuation of the NDP's moniker as the "natural governing party" of the province now lack legitimacy (Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999, 9; Wesley 2011, 3; McGrane et al. 2013, 1; McGrane et al. 2020, 147, 159; Eisler 2022; Rasmussen 2020). With the return of the NDP as a viable political alternative no longer certain, and the domination of the

Saskatchewan Party no longer a mere 'interruption' in provincial politics, it appears that the Saskatchewan Party will maintain its position as the governing party of the province for at least the immediate future (Eisler 2022).

With a political culture so intertwined with the CCF and the NDP, its continued relevance and accuracy demands reconsideration now that the NDP's fortunes have appeared to fade. Saskatchewan's governing party and social, political, and economic environments have all changed – has the province's political culture changed as well?

The scholarly literature on Saskatchewan does not reflect the current state of affairs in the province. Indeed, the scholarly attention paid to Saskatchewan politics is largely dedicated to *traditional* narratives of the province, characterized by CCF and NDP supremacy; meanwhile, literature on Saskatchewan Party-era Saskatchewan is scant. When the literature does discuss the Saskatchewan Party, the party is often relegated to "misnomer" status, whose elections serve only to "interrupt" the expected return of the NDP in the province. Few scholars have allocated significance to the ongoing and "resounding" electoral victories and governance of the Saskatchewan Party; even fewer have cast doubt on the persistence of the social democratic character of Saskatchewan because of it.

This study attempts to bridge the scholarly gap, while also assigning significance to the Saskatchewan Party in the provincial political environment. Rejecting assumptions which have diminished the position of the Saskatchewan Party, this thesis intends to foster greater understanding as to the influence of prolonged Saskatchewan Party governance in Saskatchewan politics, present and future.

Though much literature on Saskatchewan politics has assumed the province to be a "cradle of social democracy," this sentiment is by no means unanimous. This thesis is not alone in contesting the persistence of Saskatchewan's social democratic political culture, considering the work of academics including Smith (2009), Rasmussen (2015), and Eisler (2022), all who have suggested a change in the province's politics and political culture towards conservatism. Though this study's objective is not concentrated on determining Saskatchewan's potentially new dominant *ideological* identity, it does, however, subscribe to the broader conviction that Saskatchewan's political culture has changed.

While recognizing that this study seeks to identify Saskatchewan's political culture as it has existed during Saskatchewan Party rule, the thesis does not assign causality of Saskatchewan's political culture change to the Saskatchewan Party, nor does it argue that political culture change wholly succeeded the election of the Saskatchewan Party. Attempts to establish causal or temporal mechanisms existing between political culture change and Saskatchewan Party electoral dominance is outside of the scope of this study and is in contravention of scholarship that has attributed changes in Saskatchewan political culture to factors and actors temporally preceding the Saskatchewan Party (Rasmussen 2015). This study is also not under the presupposition that a mere change in governing party necessarily constitutes a break or change in a polity's political culture; such runs contrary to Saskatchewan's traditional political culture, which has been present in eras of CCF, Liberal, and NDP rule. Rather, this thesis argues that the prolonged political dominance of the Saskatchewan Party, along with the decline of the New Democratic Party, has facilitated an environment suitable for, or is a manifestation of, political culture change.

Ultimately, this study is motivated by the following two research questions:

1. Is the traditional Saskatchewan political culture still present in Saskatchewan Party-era Saskatchewan? If so, to what degree, and how have the values manifested?
2. If Saskatchewan political culture has changed, what are the new pillars which form a new political culture? To what degree and how have the values manifested?

Of course, this study recognizes that such research questions simplify and may construct a false dichotomy of political culture values that does not exist. This thesis acknowledges that it is both plausible and likely that Saskatchewan's political culture – as it exists currently – contains aspects of both traditional and alternative Saskatchewan political culture. Accordingly, the objective of the thesis instead is to determine if – and to what extent – political culture change has indeed occurred in contemporary Saskatchewan, and if so, how the political culture change has been manifested.

In investigating political culture change, this thesis is grounded in a fundamental assumption that the depictions of Saskatchewan's traditional political culture, as it exists in the literature up to this point, is factually correct. Regardless of the factual accuracy of past academic

literature, the value of this thesis remains the same – to offer an informed overview of Saskatchewan political culture, as it currently exists.

To answer the questions posed above, I conducted 11 online focus groups composed of nearly 60 Saskatchewanians located across the province. Through designed focus group activities and a selected quantitative coding technique, I tested and analyzed for the presence of pillars of traditional and alternative Saskatchewan political culture, as identified through the literature.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis is of five parts. Following the introduction, the second chapter consists of a literature review, divided into five sections. The first section provides an overview of political culture, providing important contextual information on the variable under study. This section also identifies the definition of political culture this thesis subscribes to and its justification for selection. The second discusses Saskatchewan's traditional political culture in the pre-Saskatchewan Party era, identifying the tenets of traditional Saskatchewan political culture. The third section identifies mechanisms of political culture change. The fourth section identifies factors of Saskatchewan political culture change. The literature review concludes by sketching Saskatchewan's alternative political culture from the perspective of academic observers.

The third chapter focuses on the thesis' methodology. Within it, I establish the political culture framework constructed based on the literature review. This framework defines the four (4) pillars of traditional Saskatchewan political culture – collectivism, dirigisme, hinterland, and adversarialism – and contrasts it with the four (4) counterpart themes comprising alternative Saskatchewan political culture – individualism, laissez-faire, heartland, and pragmatism. I then discuss the use of online focus groups, providing justification for the selection of research method. The chapter also discusses the composition and construction of focus groups and provides an overview of the specific activities used within the focus groups. Lastly, the chapter concludes by providing an explanation of the qualitative analysis process, through open, axial, and selective coding processes.

The study's findings are presented in the fourth chapter. The themes of Saskatchewanian identity, Saskatchewanian political influences and identity, and the state of provincial politics are discussed. Within this chapter, I also evaluate Saskatchewan's current political culture, through

considering each of the four political culture value sets individually. I conclude that political culture change – under prolonged Saskatchewan Party rule – has indeed occurred, facilitating the emergence of an alternative political culture that is distinctively pragmatic, individualist, neoliberal, and autonomist in nature.

The concluding fifth chapter provides an overview of the findings, their significance, and identifies opportunities for future research in political culture change, especially within developed polities experiencing significant political or partisan shift.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

<u>Political Culture</u>

Political culture has long existed as a "popular" and an "elusive" concept (Elkins and Simeon 1979, 127; Rosenbaum 1975, 5; Kavanagh 1972, 10; Pye 1973, 73; Formisano 2001, 403; Wiseman 2016, 3). The concept has ancient origins, first conceptualized by the likes of Plato, Aristotle, and Herodotus to provide explanations into the differences existing between societies, cities, and leaders (Wiseman 2007, 13; Wesley 2011, 4; Stewart 2002, 21; Whittington 1983, 132; Kavanagh 1972, 9; Pye 1973, 65; Formisano 2001, 396, 426). Since then, political culture has been attributed to the works of modern political theorists including Machiavelli, Montesquieu, and Tocqueville, and more recently, Pye, Almond, and Verba – the latter who bear much responsibility for the advent of the empirical study of political culture (Wiseman 2007, 13; Wesley 2011, 4; Stewart 2002, 21; Whittington 1983, 132; Kavanagh 1972, 9; Pye 1973, 65; Formisano 2001, 396, 426). Over this time, political culture has become regarded as a "conceptual umbrella," associated with a wide range of topics and applications, from "national character" to "ideology" or "political values" (Wiseman 2007, 13; Wesley 2008, 3; 2011, 4; Rosenbaum 1975, 10; Lane 1992, 362; Pammett and Whittington 1976, 1; Bell and Tepperman 1979, 11; Kavanagh 1972).

Regarded as the 'headmasters' of the now-dominant Civic Culture approach, Almond and Verba defined political culture as the "distribution of individual orientations toward politics among members of a political system," presuming political culture to be an aggregation (or average) of individuals' orientations within the population (1963; Bell and Tepperman 1979, 15, 19; Wesley 2011; Reisinger 1995, 334; Chilton 1988).

Despite the popularity of Almond and Verba's school of thought, the definition of political culture utilized by this thesis deviates from the Civic Culture approach. Due to concerns of the fallacy of composition – an error in reasoning which presumes that what is true of an individual (or some part of the whole) most also be characteristic of the larger community of which the individual belongs (Broyles 1975, 108) – this study instead endorses a *holistic* definition, reflective of political culture's collective and shared qualities (Kavanagh 1972; Wesley 2011). Indeed, political culture is neither simply a sum of individual predispositions, nor does it consider the orientations of individuals in equal objective ways (Wesley 2011; Bell 2004; Chilton 1988). Saskatchewan's political culture consists of orientations that are commonly (but perhaps not universally) held (Wesley 2011, 5). It is also reasonable to assume that the values most likely to

influence a polity are those most widely shared, as they affect the perceptions and behaviour of large masses of individuals (Rosenbaum 1975, 7). Accordingly, this study defines political culture as a set of shared political orientations that underpin a given political system (Wesley 2011, 4; Chilton 1988, 422; Kalu 2018, 28; Kavanagh 1972, 10; Verba 1965; Rosenbaum 1975, 6-7).

Political culture orientations may be unspoken and implicit, existing at both the conscious and subconscious levels (Wesley 2008, 3; 2011, 4; Bell and Tepperman 1979, 5; Stewart 2002, 24; Rosenbaum 1975, 8; Elkins and Simeon 1979, 131). Political culture contains two psychological attitudinal distinctions: 1) orientations towards the political system; and 2) orientations towards the role of the self in the political system (Almond and Verba 1963; Anderson 2010; MacIvor 2006; Pammett and Whittington 1976; Rosenbaum 1975, 4, 6-7; Harell and Deschâtelets 2014, 229). Political culture is also both a screen through which a community views itself and the world around it, and a lens through which outsiders perceive the given polity (Wesley 2008, 4; 2011, 5). Political culture can be further dissected into three orientations: 1) cognitive, covering one's knowledge, beliefs, and information of politics; 2) evaluative, concerning judgements and preferences of politics; and 3) affective, detailing feelings about and towards politics (Almond 1956; 1963; Stewart 2002, 24; MacIvor 2006, 31; Pammett and Whittington 1976, 10; Rosenbaum 1975, 58; Kavanagh 1972, 11; Reisinger 1995, 335). The values which shape a polity's political culture are reflected in all facets of public and political life – through symbols and rituals, institutions, the attitudes and activities of its residents, the behaviours, and products of its political actors, and within the polity's preferred mode of politics (Wesley 2011, 4; Rosenbaum 1975, 8).

The study of political culture rests on several fundamental assumptions. First, political culture is stable, resistant to change, and transmitted over generations (Lockhart 1997, 91; Vitharana and Abeysinghe 2021, 577; Hahn 1991, 394; Wiseman 2007, 13; 2016, 3). Yet, a resistance to change does not equate to an inability to do so, nor does it suggest an absolute absence of instances of such change.

Second, political culture must be activated and made salient to have value and be able to influence attitudes within the polity. Specifically, orientations must be internalized and accepted by an overwhelming majority of people or a group of politically dominant people to be considered part of the polity's political culture (Kamrava 1995, 692; Wesley 2011, 24; Chilton 1988, 422, 429-30; Bell 2004, 320). Noting this, political culture is neither uniform nor objective; a polity's political culture does not aim to encapsulate the views of all individuals within the community,

nor does it give equal consideration to all orientations. Rather, political culture is 'characteristic' of the polity, representing the commonly shared and dominant values underlying the political system (Elkins and Simeon 1979, 127-128; Iovan 2015, 35; Kavanagh 1972, 61; Chilton 1988, 422; Wilson 2000, 266; Bell 2004, 320; Whittington 1983, 132).

Such dominant values are typically in congruence with those of the dominant group. Identification of the dominant group is in part determined by their political weight and the intensity of their orientations, the former of which is in part determined through preferred socio-economic characteristics – including race, education, income, class, and gender (Rosenbaum 1975, 18; Chilton 1988, 422). The same must also hold within discussions concerning new political culture orientations, arrived at through political culture change. Thus, political culture change will only occur if such change affects the dominant values – and by extension, the dominant group – of the polity, or if the identity of the polity's dominant group changes (Bell 2004, 320).

Given the focus of the study – Saskatchewan, a province established through settler colonialism and previously inhabited by Indigenous populations – it is also important to acknowledge assumptions undermining the historical presence of Indigenous peoples. Indeed, most discussions of political culture assume that the polity's culture possesses some degree of primordialism; that the identified culture of the polity is the original, and thus prior to, the polity 'existed' in some unidentified 'tabula rasa' state. While attempts to determine points of political culture origination may be theoretically valid due to concerns of infinite regress, such a belief nonetheless contributes to incomplete understandings of political culture based in preferences favouring western, Eurocentric views and settler-colonialism.

Traditionally, political scientists have assumed that the foundations of a polity's political culture originate – and are thus, measured – from the initial point of nation-building of a polity. In turn, this prioritizes some political cultural identities, granting them certain degrees of authority and legitimacy, while minimizing and dismissing others deemed to have preceded the 'beginning' of political establishment (Wesley and Wong 2022, 62-63, 65). In the case of Saskatchewan, the province's political culture is embedded in the concept of terra nullius, suggesting that Saskatchewan's political culture emerged with the first arrival of white European settlers, thereby delegitimizing the influences and role of Indigenous populations (Wesley and Wong 2022, 62-63, 65). While this study considers and adopts such explanations of political culture establishment as legitimate – due in part, to their prevalence within the political culture literature – the study does

not assume such explanations to be completely accurate or whole. Moreover, discussions of Saskatchewan's *traditional* political culture refer to Saskatchewan political culture as it has existed since Saskatchewan's founding as a province in 1905, drawing no conclusions about the 'originality' of the political culture, nor offering speculations about Saskatchewan's political culture prior to 1905.

In considering political culture, key distinctions between it and other related concepts, namely public opinion and ideology, must be established. Though all concerned with the orientations contained within a polity, the concepts nevertheless possess uniquities that distinguish one from another.

In understanding the differences existing between political culture and public opinion, Wiseman (2007; 2016) has suggested that political culture is analogous to a polity's climate, while public opinion is best conceptualized as the polity's weather. Though both capture popular political values, public opinion is uniquely volatile, addressing orientations towards specific and contemporary political issues, actors, and events, while political culture is a set of fundamental orientations towards the polity's political system (Rosenbaum 1975, 119-120; Wesley 2011, 6; Stewart 2002, 26).

Though conceptual overlap between ideology and political culture exists – for example, Saskatchewan's traditional political culture is often considered to be socially democratic – the two terms are nevertheless different. For one, political culture engages in a wider application of study, concerned with a set of often implicit – but not necessarily cohesive or programmatic – fundamental political orientations; to this end, a set of political culture values may lack a degree of coherence required to comprise a political ideology. Ideology, meanwhile, is narrower and more distinct, referring to a specific, systematic, and often explicit political doctrine, such as conservatism, liberalism, or socialism (Almond 1956, 397; Wesley 2011, 4; MacIvor 2006, 34; Bell and Tepperman 1979, 11; Formisano 2001, 396; McClosky 1964, 362). Ideology is also broader and more generalized than political culture; while ideologies may be defined and considered in the abstract, political culture cannot be solely explored on an isolated theoretical plane, as it concerns real and specific communities (Wesley 2011, 4). Members of a community may also share a political culture but not a political ideology, such as through variance within the interpretations and applications of political culture values and orientations (Wesley 2011, 46). While individual political culture values may be ideologically driven, political culture as a concept,

however, is not. Political culture is also more fluid and flexible than what is possible of ideology; to this end, a polity's political culture may be 'blended' or otherwise constructed to include individual values and orientations seemingly incongruous with one another – such as a penchant for a strong social welfare state while simultaneously supporting initiatives that reduce the size of government. Such is not realizable of ideology, which requires adherence to a set of coherent and consistent values.

Moreover, a singular political culture may comprise numerous ideologies, such as the Canadian national political culture, which contains aspects of conservatism, liberalism, and socialism (Bell 2004, 321; McGrane 2014, 34; Horowitz 1966; Wesley 2011, 5). It is the same reasons, along with others, that differentiate political culture from a group of ideologies or a meta-ideology.

Important in both distinguishing political culture as a concept, and for the purposes of this study, political culture – unlike the concepts of public opinion and ideology – is a distinctly group phenomenon and the property of a collective, reflected through shared experiences (Wiseman 2007). While individuals may hold values and orientations, they alone cannot constitute a culture (Stewart 2002, 26; Bell 2004, 324; Lane 1992, 380; Elkins and Simeon 1979, 129; Wiseman 2007). In this same regard, though individuals may hold values, orientations, and norms which correspond to the broader community's political culture of which the individual belongs, they are nonetheless not analogous; though the personal beliefs of an individual may *affirm* the presence of a political culture, the individual's values nevertheless do not *represent* the political culture; such representation is only attainable if the political culture is observable (shared) amongst the collective comprising the political community.

There are several approaches to the study of political culture, including surveying values, probing history, analyzing institutional frameworks, and through vehicles of socialization (Wiseman 2007; McGrane 2014, 34; Pammett and Whittington 1976). It is the former approach – surveying values – that this research utilizes. This study will identify Saskatchewan's political culture through a series of focus activities intended to directly ask Saskatchewanians about their fundamental political beliefs. Though this study does not argue that its subscribed method of political culture measurement is superior to others, it does argue that discerning political culture values through methods of social interaction is methodologically valid and sound. Through interactions with individuals socialized by and operating within Saskatchewanian society, and

10

through the identification of 'quintessential' Saskatchewan political orientations, this approach holds that the attitudes espoused are reflective of dominant orientations within Saskatchewan political culture.

Given the nature of the present work, this study assumes a deductive – or top-down – approach. While recognizing the existence of Saskatchewan sub-cultures, such as those existing between north and south, Indigenous peoples and settlers, and between rural and urban dwellers, and noting Saskatchewan's presence within broader cultures on regional, national, and continental lines (Henderson 2004), this paper nevertheless argues for the existence of a culture existing within and across Saskatchewan's provincial expanse. Moreover, this study also acknowledges that not all Saskatchewanians may feel included or represented in the province's political culture. Nonetheless, the very existence of a counter- or subculture assumes the existence of a dominant culture.

In adopting this approach, this work responds to the ongoing academic debate concerning regional versus provincial political cultures, subscribing to the latter (Wesley 2011; Wiseman 2007; Henderson 2004; Anderson 2010; McGrane and Berdahl 2013). Beyond the fact that provinces exist as independent political systems, we can also consider provincial jurisdiction to justify the study's approach (Bell and Tepperman 1979, 188). Indeed, Canadian provinces have 'more or less' exclusive jurisdiction of government policy that significantly influences economic, social, and political outcomes and opportunities of individuals operating within the polity – including education, healthcare, welfare, and labour and political laws (Wilson 1974, 440-441). These areas of provincial jurisdiction are not only important in shaping a polity's political culture but are also organized exclusively along provincial lines. Accordingly, provinces existing within a same single region can still differ dramatically in their jurisdictional choices and produce dramatically different political culture outcomes.

Therefore, this paper rests on the assumption that Saskatchewan possesses a distinct political culture unique to the province. Though similarities may exist between its political culture and other provinces that are part of the 'western' or 'Prairie' region, key political culture value distinctions exist which separate Saskatchewan's political culture from neighbouring provinces, such as Alberta's political culture, shrouded in traditionalism and conservatism, or Manitoba's political culture, with an affinity for modesty (Wesley 2011; Wiseman 2007).

<u>Traditional Saskatchewan Political Culture</u>

Most scholarly research on Saskatchewan's political history and environment has touted the province's uniqueness, due in part to its unique conglomeration of historical, economic, and social developments, which have distinguished the province in Canada and amongst its western Canadian neighbours. The province's traditional political culture is no different, constructed of four distinct, yet mutually supportive pillars – collectivism, dirigisme, heartland, and adversarialism.

Pillar 1: Collectivism

Developed out of political, economic, and social insecurity – in part attributable to the Great Depression, geographical isolation, and political alienation – collectivism is a defining characteristic of Saskatchewan's traditional political culture (Rasmussen 2015, 137; Fairbairn 2009, 152; Archer 1980, 20; Eisler 2022; Friesen 1999). Grounded in an ethos of cooperation and community, collectivism stresses the importance of collaboration in achieving the objectives of the whole, above the needs of the individual (Dyck 1996, 441; Leeson 2001; Wesley 2011; Eisler 2022; Friesen 1999).

Political orientations reflect a spirit of communitarianism, the supremacy of the collective, and the practice of cooperation (Wesley 2011; Eisler 2022; Friesen 1999). Fundamentally, Saskatchewanians have promoted the value of collective action in ensuring collective well-being, such as through the tradition of the cooperative movement (McGrane 2014, 218; Fairbairn 2009, 149-150; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 211; Sinclair 1992, 220; Eisler 2022; Friesen 1999). Driven by dissatisfaction with existing organizations, economic necessity, and a democratic demand to "take back control," Saskatchewan's cooperative movement was diverse and expansive, including agriculture, financial credit unions, consumer cooperatives, medical clinics, childcare, and housing (Fairbairn 2009, 149-150; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 211; Gibbins 1980, 32; McGrane 2014, 46-48; Sinclair 1992, 220; Eisler 2022).

Collectivism also includes a concern for the common good and well-being of the greater Saskatchewan populace, along with a penchant for social and economic equality (Atkinson et al. 2012b; Friesen 1999). Such was embodied within collectivist measures including social welfare, socialized medicine, labour organization, and taxation – all of which the CCF-NDP pursued, both in platform and in governance (McGrane and Berdahl 2015, 99-100; McGrane 2014, 52; 2005, 213; 2014, 52; Wesley 2011, 212; Atkinson et al. 2012b, 2; Eisler 2022).

Saskatchewanians have also been defined by their proclivity for unity. The province has often been considered as comprising one common Saskatchewan community – brought together by shared objectives and irrespective of differences in socio-economic background, seen within the informal alliances between the working class and the agricultural sector (Dunn and Laycock 1992, 211).

Yet, this affinity for unity may encourage social conformity and 'bonding social capital,' constructing "inward looking" social networks that "reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups" (Halpern 2004, 19; see also Putnam 2000). Indeed, the strengthening of insular ties may produce or exacerbate cleavages within and between communities through the development of in- and out-groups, with bonded social networks developing collective identities based on exclusivity (Paxton 2002; Alcorta, Smits, Swedlund, and de Jong 2020). In turn, bonded social networks may facilitate exclusion, antagonism, and intolerance towards group 'outsiders' – breeding attitudes imbuing nationalism, colonialism, white supremacy, and marginalization, for example. (Paxton 2002; Alcorta et al. 2020; Baycan and Öner 2022). Strong bonding can also create excessive social pressure for conformity, thus increasing social control, undermining personal freedoms and expression, and reducing individual thought (Alcorta et al. 2020; Baycan and Öner 2022). Noting this, although 'unity' may provide utility in achieving shared objectives, it may nonetheless reinforce exclusionary attitudes towards outsiders of the Saskatchewan community – whether political opponents, or marginalized populations, including Indigenous peoples.

The collectivist character of the province's political culture has often been reflected through populism – an ideology or political approach that "considers society to be ultimately separated into two antagonistic groups, 'the people' versus 'the elites'" (Mudde 2004, 543; see also Laycock 1990; 2023, 31). Populism is also characterized by anti-elitist and anti-pluralist traditions, presenting images of a "homogenous" public diametrically opposed to the 'elites' – often central Canadian political and economic agents and Saskatchewan's 'establishment' political parties (Laycock 1990; Mudde 2004). In Saskatchewan, populism has traditionally manifested in farmers' movements and civil organization – including the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association and the Saskatchewan Farmers Union (Laycock 1990). Despite its benign appearance within traditional mainstream Saskatchewan politics, the practice of populism, due to its anti-pluralist bent, presents a potential for malignant consequences. Indeed, in its claims of representing

'the people,' populism serves as a vehicle of exclusion, in which individuals who do not share the same beliefs of, or look like 'the people,' (often white men), are deemed 'outsiders' "unworthy of [political] representation" (Mudde 2004; Wesley and Wong 2022). Obviously, such exclusionary undertones engender detrimental implications for Saskatchewanians existing outside of the 'white male farmer' ideal, such as Indigenous peoples, women, and racialized populations.

The populist outlook was similarly emulated by the CCF-NDP's political organization (Eisler 2022). Positioned as a "grassroots" political party, the CCF-NDP's electoral organization was cross-sectional, reaching into "every community in the province" (Smith 2009, 44; Leeson 2001, 8-9). The CCF-NDP reaffirmed the populist spirit in elections and governance through their appeal to 'the people,' affirming the political supremacy of the common people through the democratization of social, political, and economic institutions (Warnock 2004, 239, 252; Dyck 1996, 442; Laycock 1990, 142-145; Sinclair 1992, 199-200; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 208; Wesley 2011, 216; Brooks 2004, 63; McGrane 2014, 77, 82; Gibbins and Arrison 1995, 66; Eisler 2022).

Pillar 2: Dirigisme

The second pillar of traditional Saskatchewan political culture, dirigisme, concerns the role and responsibilities of the provincial government (the state) in Saskatchewanian society and economy. Based in a belief in the responsibility and capacity of the government in directing Saskatchewan's economy and society, dirigisme promotes large government, public enterprise, and government intervention in social and economic affairs (Wesley 2011; McGrane 2014, 218; Eisler 2022).

Like collectivism, dirigisme emerged from political and economic vulnerability and necessity (Dunn and Laycock 1992, 209, 237; Wesley 2011, 21; McGrane 2014, 218). Yet, unlike collectivism, dirigisme did not emerge in instances when individual action was insufficient; rather, it emerged in situations in which civil organization was inadequate or when the free market did not work in Saskatchewan's favour (Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990). As a result, Saskatchewanians have adopted a positive stance towards government, viewing it as an important benevolent actor in social and economic life (Dyck 1996, 439-440; Wesley 2011).

The nature of Saskatchewan's economy – due to its wheat staple character and its economic subjugation and exploitation by central Canadian political and economic forces – historically demanded government intervention to stimulate the province's economic development (Pitsula

and Rasmussen 1990, 19; McGrane 2014, 218; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 209). Saskatchewanians have historically advocated for a large role of the government in the direction and planning of the economy, in part through public ownership of utilities and natural resources through Crown corporations (Rasmussen 2015, 139; McGrane 2008, 66; 2014, 77, 218-219; Smith 2009, 51; Pitsula 2009, 108-111; Fairbairn 2009, 149; Lipset 1971, 29; Warnock 2004, 329; Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999, 2, 20; Praud and McQuarrie 2001, 144; Eisler 2006, 95; 2022). Saskatchewanians have also opposed privatization measures, in both the economic and social spheres (McGrane and Berdahl 2015, 99; McGrane 2005, 213; Wiseman 1992, 284).

Saskatchewanians have displayed a similar affinity for dirigisme in addressing localized and "urban" sources of economic vulnerability and exploitation, through labour union organization (McGrane 2014, 52; Eisler 2022). As a result, Saskatchewanians have favoured government-led solutions in workers' protection, reflected in the policies of the CCF-NDP – including through the creation of a Department of Labour and 'progressive 'trade union legislation (McGrane 2014, 52; Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999, 20). Demands for economic protection have also extended to government regulation, legal instruments perceived as protecting Saskatchewanians from economic exploitation and to establish an equal, uniform, and fair economic playing field.

Saskatchewanians have justified such demands for government intervention based on responsibility, believing the provincial government to have a moral obligation to protect and promote the welfare of the population (Dunn and Laycock 1992, 237; Wesley 2011, 21; Pitsula 2009, 108-109; Eisler 2022). Accordingly, Saskatchewanians believed that the provincial government should guarantee a "minimum standard of living for all," including through the development of the welfare state (Wesley 2011, 16; McGrane and Berdahl 2015, 99; Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 10; Eisler 2006, 95; 2022; McGrane 2014, 52, 77). Also relevant is Saskatchewanians' affinity for free publicly owned and administered medicare – now a hallmark program of the province (Smith 2009, 38, 51; McGrane 2005, 213; 2008, 66; 2014, 52, 218; Eisler 2006, 95; 2022; Wiseman 1992, 284).

Though perhaps not obvious, penchants for government responsibility and leadership within the province's economy and society bear considerable settler-colonial undertones and implications. In designating the provincial government as the preferred – and thus, socially accepted – actor in leading Saskatchewan's economy and society, such actions delegitimize, if not outright reject, the participation and initiatives of Indigenous populations within such domains.

Moreover, the very authority provided to the provincial government in the exploitation of Saskatchewanian lands and natural resources for the benefit of the province, and the command of the Saskatchewan populace in fulfilling such objectives (through employment), neglects the knowledge, ownership, and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples in the province (Wesley and Wong 2022, 63).

Pillar 3: Hinterland

The third pillar of traditional Saskatchewan political culture, hinterland, concerns the province's status and position in Confederation and provincial-federal relations. Both a political value and a political doctrine, hinterland advocates for amicable relations between Saskatchewan and external (federal) actors, in an aspiration to integrate and secure Saskatchewan's position and survival in Canada.

Unlike other pillar pairings, the motivations and influences underlying *both* adversarialism and its alternative counterpart pragmatism are largely the same, both arising from sentiments of perceived economic and political alienation and exploitation and governed by a deep-rooted sense of western alienation . Instead, what differs is how each pillar *responds* and *interacts* with such shared stimuli; while hinterland has approached such stimuli based in a position of victimhood and cooperation, heartland's approach is grounded in a desire to protect and achieve autonomy.

Attributable in part to Saskatchewan's unfavourable political and economic conditions, hinterland, like heartland, arose from sentiments of perceived economic and political alienation and exploitation by central metropolitan Canada (Wesley 2011; Smith 2010, 8; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 208; McGrane 2005, 207; 2014, 75; Eisler 2006, 57, 89; 2020; 2022; Gibbins 1980, 168-173; Morton 1992, 13, 15; Berdahl 2010, 1; Bell and Tepperman 1979, 187; Warnock 2004, 105; Elton and Gibbins 1992, 262; Rea 1969, 46; Lipset 1971, 58; Dyck 1996, 441; Elton 1984, 47). Importantly, such portrayals of Saskatchewan as an undeveloped, barren frontier land also upheld settler-colonial narratives, erasing the place, roles, and legacies of Indigenous peoples within the province.

Subservient to the interests of central Canada, Saskatchewan's political culture – whether traditional or alternative – has also been defined by the province's sympathy for western alienation, grounded in resentment towards the federal government (Eisler 2006; 2020; 2022; Elton and Gibbins 1992, 263; McGrane 2005, 206-207; 2014, 86; Wesley 2011; Berdahl 2010, 1, 3; Brooks

2004, 61; Gibbins and Berdahl 2003, 4; Gibbins and Arrison 1995, 20; Warnock 2004, 99; Elton 1984, 47; Dyck 1991, 431; Morton 1992, 15; Bell and Tepperman 1979, 186).

Yet, historically at least, the expression of such grievances was constrained by Saskatchewan's status as a 'have-not' province, its political and economic vulnerability, and the breadth of federal jurisdiction, all of which have perpetuated dependency on the Canadian federal government in the realization and advancement of provincial objectives and development (Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999; Barr 1984, 84; Warnock 2004, 6, 103, 105; Davies 1971, 12; Smith 1976, 47; Gibbins 1980, 31, 174; Eisler 2006, 57-58; Wiseman 1992, 285; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 209). Given this, confrontation or antagonism towards the federal government has often been ill-advised, with the province instead (often) compelled to engage in courteous (if not amicable) collaboration with federal actors to ensure Saskatchewan's position and survival in Canada (Dunn and Laycock 1992; Wesley 2011).

Understanding this, hinterland is best understood as a system oscillating between moderate 'critiques' of the federal government (as to benefit from the wealth and power of the federal government and to influence national policies), and in more rare cases, antagonism (McGrane 2005; Wesley 2011, 21; Smith 2009, 49). Importantly, antagonism towards the federal government is not exclusive to heartland; however, the tenor of antagonism inherent to hinterland, and the respective demands made by Saskatchewanians and the provincial government, are considerably more moderate, due to Saskatchewan's precarious position within Confederation.

Moreover, despite such fluctuations, Saskatchewanian demands for federal respect of provincial jurisdiction and the elevation of province's position and recognition in Canada have remained persistent (Dyck 1993, 180; McGrane 2005, 207-208; Wiseman 1992, 285; Gibbins 1980, 180; Gagan 1969, 2; Smith 1969, 39). Though Saskatchewanians have sought alternatives to evade control by central Canadian entities, responses have remained relatively cautious and methodical compared to those in Alberta, with solutions remaining within the existing framework of a united Canadian federation (Melnyk 1992, 106; Dyck 1996, 441; Rasmussen 2001, 244; McGrane 2005, 211; 2014, 46-48; Wesley, Berdahl, and Samson 2021).

Like dirigisme, hinterland has also promoted the role of the provincial state. Yet, unlike dirigisme, such rationale does not lie in a belief of the government's 'moral' responsibility, but rather, a belief that the government must protect and promote Saskatchewan's interests in times and circumstances when the federal government would or has not (Rasmussen 2001, 244).

The inclusion of western alienation within traditional Saskatchewan political culture is disputed by academics. While many consider Saskatchewan's history of vulnerability and exploitation by external forces as evidence of its presence (Eisler 2006; 2020; 2022; Dunn and Laycock 1992), others, such as Wesley (2011), suggest that the province's ethos has lacked the "same sense of sectarianism" found elsewhere in western Canada. Some have also suggested Saskatchewan's 'willingness' to engage with the federal government and the benefits Saskatchewan has received from its 'exploitation' of Canadian federalism indicates that western alienation in the province is dormant, or at the very least, has lost its saliency (Wesley 2011, 21). Yet, this study's position of western alienation as a component of hinterland, and thus Saskatchewan traditional political culture – argues that while western alienation has remained a dominant prevailing force in the province's traditional political culture; what has changed throughout Saskatchewanian history is instead *how* western alienation has been expressed and activated.

Pillar 4: Adversarialism

Known by many names – such as the politics of "hope and fear" or division – adversarialism has facilitated ideological and partisan cleavages in the province, promoting the division of political attitudes and parties within a highly politicized environment (Warnock 2004; Wesley 2011; Dunn and Laycock 1992; Leeson 2001; Wiseman 1992, 284; Rasmussen 2020, 3).

Unlike collectivism and dirigisme, adversarialism – and its alternative counterpart, pragmatism – cannot, and should not be understood as political values. Instead, they are both political culture *norms*, serving to govern, regulate, and set the boundaries of the acceptability of behaviour and participation of actors within the province's political environment. Unlike the other aforementioned political culture pillars, adversarialism and pragmatism do not promote values or support issues that are explicitly ideological. Rather, both adversarialism and pragmatism favour the abstract, shaping instead *how* Saskatchewanians view parties and issues, and not *which* ones they identify with and prefer.

At an individual level, adversarialism has defined Saskatchewan's politics as active and intense, facilitating the development of hyper-partisan, "all-consuming" political environments (Wesley 2011, 20; Eager 1980, 65). Accordingly, ideological and partisan identities have been an

important facet of – if not integral to – individual Saskatchewanian identity and provincial belonging. The coalescence of ideological and partisan identities has fostered an ethos of "factionalism" across the province, establishing enemy camps "united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of others" (Madison 1787; Rasmussen 2020, 3). Consequently, adversarialism has fostered a spirit of animosity and the construction of 'in' and 'out' groups; the latter of which are Saskatchewanians affiliated with the dominant opposing party, perceived by the 'in' group as unlikeable, distrusting, and posing "moral danger" to Saskatchewan's well-being. Given this, relationships and interactions between Saskatchewanians of differing partisan or ideological identities have been considered to be combative and adversarial.

Adversarialism has also dictated the role of politics in greater Saskatchewan society, facilitating the development of a provincial environment regulated by politicization. Literature has consistently reaffirmed the relevance of partisan politics in all facets of Saskatchewan society, whether political, social, or economic (Haverstock 2001, 204). Dominating collective settings in civil society, adversarialism has facilitated a corresponding penchant for politicization and partisanship within the preferences of individual Saskatchewanians (Haverstock 2001, 204). Indeed, Saskatchewan has been depicted as bearing a political environment in which nearly every issue is politicized and impregnated by partisan politics (Courtney and Smith 1972, 317; Wesley 2011, 20).

Adversarialism has characterized the electoral environment in the province as competitive and divisive. Featuring starkly defined ideological lines separating the political left and right, the political environment has been depicted as an epic "struggle" between socialism or social democracy and liberalism or "unfettered capitalism," (Rasmussen 2015, 145; Wesley 2011, 20; Leeson 2009, 121; Smith 2009, 44; Wiseman 2015, 8; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 219; Warnock 2004, 26; Courtney and Smith 1972, 314; Andrews 1982, 58; Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999, 22; Wishlow 2001, 176; Blake 2009, 165). Saskatchewan political agents have similarly tapped into the "politics of hope and fear," positioning themselves as "defenders" of Saskatchewan values against Saskatchewan's "menaces" – their political opponents (O'Fee 2009, 192; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 220; Eisler 2006, 171, 175; Wesley 2011, 13).

Despite periodic changes in the province's dominant party, the division between parties has persisted – if not, worsened – over time, producing a bipolar party system (Leeson 2009, 121-

122; Wishlow 2001, 170, 176; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 219, 225; Blake 2009, 165; Eisler 2006, 171, 175). Accordingly, both dominant parties exist in dynamic tensions with one another, with the gains of one being directly attributable to the losses of the other (Smith 2009, 44; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 219). Much of Saskatchewan's political party support is similarly regulated by polarization, where party support is rigidly ideologically divided, though flexible in party loyalties.

While left-wing Saskatchewanians have remained committed to the CCF and NDP, right-wing voters have been more flexible in their support, motivated by an ideological predisposition to shift loyalties to coalesce with the party most likely to defeat the left – whether that party be the Liberals, the Progressive Conservatives, or most recently, the Saskatchewan Party (Leeson 2009, 121; Rasmussen 2001, 259; Eisler 2022, 120).

<center>Political Culture Change</center>

With a reputation as stable, resistant to change, and established over generations, it is perhaps unsurprising that while much has been written on how a polity's political culture has persisted, comparatively little has been written on instances of change (Lockhart 1997, 91; Hahn 1991, 394; Wiseman 2007, 13). While such assumptions may be theoretically valid, a resistance to change should not be equated with an inability to change. Such theoretical foundations are also not universally assumed, with political cultural theorists such as Wildavsky (1985) arguing that 'in a world of nearly constant motion,' it is political stability, rather than political change, that necessitates explanation (Lockhart 1997, 91). Despite such, the assumptions embedded within the study of political culture have led to the expectation and normalcy of political cultural continuity, making accounts of change difficult to construct (Eckstein 1988). Despite such theoretical difficulties and an apparent historical normative academic unwillingness to engage with the topic, this study is nonetheless grounded in a belief that political culture change is possible, and articulates the modes in how and why such change occurs.

A review of the literature has confirmed that political culture change is a theoretical concept – and phenomenon – that is not uniformly accepted as true and real by political culture academics; the scholarship is similarly divided on how and why political culture change occurs (assuming that political culture is capable of changing). Despite a preference for political culture change in times of significant political transformation – such as the reunification of East and West Germany in the 1990s, or the third of wave of democratization occurring in the late twentieth century – the

literature overall has nevertheless continued to affirm that political culture change is not exclusive to only developing polities or those that have experienced significant political trauma. Though this is appreciable, it nonetheless demonstrates how nuanced causes of political culture change are, with different polities possessing different conditions whose political culture change requires different catalysts. The following section proceeds with an exploration of the explanations offered in explaining political culture change. The objective of this section is intended to be exploratory, providing a comprehensive survey of the explanations offered, and not merely a presentation of explanations deemed applicable to Saskatchewan. Accordingly, it is likely that the considered explanations will differ in their suitability of explaining (potential) Saskatchewan political culture change; while some may be of value, other explanations may be considerably less so.

Transformative Events

Within the literature, transformative events are routinely cited as catalysts of political culture change (Verba 1965; Rosenbaum 1975); existing as directionally positive or negative, and exogenous or endogenous, events either serve to positively entrench a form of political culture through the adoption of compatible cultural tenets, or through negatively rejecting the political status quo in favour of a different political culture.

Concerning the former, Lipset's formative events thesis is perhaps the most notable; while traditionally used to explain political culture emergence, formative events may also articulate political culture change through delineating the emergence of a replacement political culture. Though Lipset's thesis is not consistently referenced as such within the literature – often taking other forms as "punctuated equilibrium" or "branching points" (Pierson 2000; Baumgartner, Jones, and Mortensen 2018) – the notion of affirmatively positive events as catalysts for political culture change is common. The most frequently cited examples of 'directionally positive' events within the literature have concentrated on the trends of globalization, the widespread adoption of capitalism, and state economic development, which have brought about political culture changes favouring (neo)liberal preferences (Hunter 1987, 93- 95).

Events can also operate as a directionally negative force, through rejecting the political status quo (Kavanagh 1972, 37; Werlin 1990, 251; Wiseman 2013; Wesley 2011; Beatty, Berdahl, and Poelzer 2012; Rosenbaum 1975). To produce political culture change, such events must be "cataclysmic," affecting great masses of people "directly, profoundly, and tangibly" (Rosenbaum

1975, 17). Such examples have included war (whether defeat, victory, its conclusion, or its moral cost), revolution, financial crises, electoral defeat, civil disobedience, occupation, changes in international status, and regime change, all of which may test, strain, and reorient a polity's political culture (Girvin 1993, 380; Yee 1999; Kavanagh 1972, 37; Werlin 1990, 251; Pye 1965, 20; Wildavsky 1985, 97; Dalton 2014; Beatty, Berdahl, and Poelzer 2012; Bell 2004, 337; Rosenbaum 1975). Yet, it remains unclear how some events are politically determinant in the redevelopment of a polity's political culture, while others are seemingly not.

Institutionalization and Socialization

Traditionally considered mechanisms promoting political culture persistence and stability, the processes of institutionalization and socialization may also be useful in approaching political culture change.

Institutionalization is the process of value transmission through vehicles including public policy, laws, programs, governing documents, and other structures of the state or government (Wesley 2011, 46). These vehicles may transmit a select set of political values, altering the orientations of community members in ways conducive to the polity's new political culture (46). While it has traditionally been assumed that the values transmitted through institutionalization are pre-existing (lending itself to political culture persistence), institutionalization can nonetheless introduce and embed new political culture values, if the alternative values, orientations, and norms are clearly identified by the state and if they are actively and consistently transmitted.

Indeed, the role of institutionalization in perpetuating political culture change is repeatedly advocated within the literature. Kavanagh (1972) and Rosenbaum (1975) regard institutionalization as a vehicle of preserving state security and stability in face of political culture change. Accordingly, it is suggested that if culture change is to occur efficiently (as to mitigate political instability), it must be directed by the state (Kavanagh 1972; Rosenbaum 1975). Consider the Federal Republic of Germany; despite the country's loss in World War II, authoritarian sentiments remained prevalent in the populace. Accordingly, the government consciously reshaped political processes, institutions, policy, and education systems to affirm values conducive to a democratic political culture – which would later subsequently emerge (Verba 1965, 161; Dalton 2014). Others have considered India, whose government-directed institutionalization measures assisted in establishing a political culture that favoured government intervention and regulation

(Weiner 1965, 202); or the success of the third wave of democratization across central and eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia, facilitated by introduction of democratic institutions in environments lacking pre-existing democratic political cultures (Vitharana and Abeysinghe 2021; Dalton 1996).

Socialization, meanwhile, is a process of internalizing social norms and values through the learning of social roles and identities within the social assimilation process (Iovan 2015, 41). Socialization occurs through different individual- and group-level agents, including through families, peers, schools, religion, political parties, and mass media (Wesley 2011; Iovan 2015; Pye 1965; Kalu 2018; Kavanagh 1972; Hunter 1987; Pammett and Whittington 1976). For political culture change to occur, however, socialization vehicles must influence *groups* of individuals in similar ways. Moreover, the values, norms, and orientations transmitted through socialization must be coordinated, consistent, and shared.

The temporal significance of the years deemed most crucial in socialization processes has not yet been determined. Though some academics place emphasis on earlier (childhood) years which subsequently constrain later learning (lending itself to political culture persistence), others have posited that socialization occurs throughout individuals' lives (Pateman 1971, 296-297; Eckstein 1988, 791-793; Werlin 1990, 249; Wesley 2011, 39-44; Lockhart 1997, 91; Rogowski 1974; Lockhart 1997, 92; Kavanagh 1972, 45). Meanwhile, others have even argued for the primacy of adult socialization in shaping political culture (Pye 1965, 10, 18; Pateman 1971, 301; Iovan 2015, 44). Both latter approaches present opportunities within the (re)socialization process for individuals to learn and adopt new political cultural values and are subjected to less knowledge resistance constraints than initially assumed.

Alternatively, others have rejected the temporal approach of socialization entirely, instead opting for a Marxist approach in which socialization occurs through the transmission of values of the 'dominant' class to the 'subordinate' social group (Iovan 2015, 43). Accordingly, if internal social dynamics within the polity shift – such as if the political culture of the dominant class shifts, or if the dominant class group is replaced by a new group that assumes different values and orientations – the vehicles of socialization may change as well.

The literature has also recognized the changing roles of schooling and the increase in education as vehicle of socializations capable of perpetuating political culture change (Kim 1998, 108). Such literature rests on the assumption that education improves knowledge and interest in the structures, functions, and performance of the political system (Yee 1999, 194). Accordingly,

the results of the global advents of education and schooling reflect as such, developing populaces that are increasingly politically aware and efficacious, supportive of competitive elections and multi-party states, and demanding of representation (Yee 1999, 191-194; Hahn 1991, 418; Kavanagh 1972, 41; Pye and Verba 1965). Resultantly, the literature has argued that the advent of education has spurred the development of (and thus, change towards) participatory and democratic political cultures in various polities, including Russia and Macau (Yee 1999; Hahn 1991).

Economics

Others have considered economic factors as explanations for political culture change – through a version of 'staples thesis' and through trends of economic development and growth.

Staples thesis, in brief, suggests that character of a polity's political culture can be attributed to the nature of its dominant economic staple – or export – commodity. In the Saskatchewan context, the province's traditional collectivist and dirigiste political culture can be ascribed to the predominance of wheat – a staple characterized by economic insecurity – in large part due to unpredictable climatic and economic forces which dictate the commodity's performance (Wesley 2011, 27).

Moreover, the staples thesis is widely recognized to lend itself to political culture persistence; the continuation of a community's political culture is not necessarily dependent on the community's continued reliance of its economic staple. The thesis' tendency for political culture persistence, however, does not eliminate the potential occurrence of political culture change.

Indeed, if a polity no longer identifies with its economic staple, the political culture may change to better reflect the polity's character. It is also possible that change in the character and nature of the staple would be sufficient in directing political culture change, due to an apparent incompatibility between staple character and polity values. Most drastically, political culture change may also occur if the staple changes, whether it is wholly abandoned, or replaced by a new, equally 'all-consuming' political culture-defining staple product (2007).

Other scholars have regarded economic growth and development as a suitable catalyst for political culture change, especially concerning polities rebuilding from economic trauma or those with developing economies. Though recognizing that economic development and growth does not inherently equate to pro-capitalist values, case studies considered have developed cultures appreciative of capitalism (Lapalombara 1965, 323; Campbell and Conradt 2015, 225; Almond

2000, 15; Hahn 1991, 396; Beatty, Berdahl, and Poelzer 2012). Economic growth and development may also work in a negatively affirming way. By contrasting the strong economic performance of the current regime to the (presumably) weaker performance of its political predecessor, such factors may encourage the rejection of the previous system and its political culture, while embracing the values conducive to the new economic (and thus, political) system (Dalton 2014).

Postmaterialism

We can also consider Inglehart's postmaterialism thesis, a theory now widely used in the explanation of political culture change in 'modern' and developed societies (Dalton 1996, 7; Bell 2004, 338). Due to "historically unprecedented" economic prosperity and the absence of war in the post-World War II societies of western countries, Inglehart argued that the relative scarcity of valued goals shifted. In turn, younger generations have placed less emphasis on economic and physical security than preceding generations (Inglehart 1988, 1224; Da Silva, Clark, and Viera 2015, 5; Dalton 1996, 7; Bell 2004, 338).

Accordingly, Inglehart and others have documented gradual but pervasive shifts in the values of western publics, with polities rejecting predominantly 'materialist' values – including economic well-being, social security, law and order, religion, and defence (Inglehart 1988; Da Silva et al. 2015, 5; Dalton 1996, 7; 2014; Bell 2004, 338). In turn, these values have been replaced by ones reflective of postmodern orientations – such as freedom of speech, self-expression, autonomy, gender equality, and environmentalism. As generational replacement occurs, Inglehart argues that such values will become further entrenched to the critical point of 'value dominance.'

Beyond direct value alteration, postmaterialism is also suggested to explain the advent of new citizen movements, political parties, and non-traditional modes of political participation favouring direct democracy (Dalton 1996, 7-8). As a result, postmaterialism is thought to reconfigure a polity's political environment, redefining what political action is and looks like – concepts fundamentally rooted in political culture.

Importantly however, the explanation of change brought by postmaterialism is highly selective, only applicable to developed (western) societies.

Internal Change Dynamics

Other explanations offered can be broadly understood as internal changes within a polity's population. Indeed, political culture change may arise through changes within 'social mobilization' processes, including immigration, expansion of the franchise, voter turnout and electoral representation, urbanization, and generational dynamics (Bell 2004, 337).

Previously referenced in discussions of political culture emergence, Wiseman's 'waves of immigration' thesis may also explain political culture change (2013; Eisler 2022). Unlike other theses utilized to explain political culture emergence, Wiseman's thesis is not exclusively historical; through references of recent immigration waves (such as the waves from Asia, Southern Europe, the Caribbean, and Latin America), Wiseman suggests that 'contemporary' immigration waves are also capable of altering political cultural landscapes. Yet, he notes that political culture change resulting from consequent immigration movements is highly constrained, due to the persistence of the political culture values preceding such waves. Accordingly, while recognizing that recent immigration waves may influence (change) political culture, their ideological and political impact are relatively weak; while influence is possible, total political culture replacement is not (2007).

Some have also considered the expansion of the voting franchise in spurring political culture change, through the creation of an enlarged voting public (Ward 1965; Vitharana and Abeysinghe 2021; Kavanagh 1972, 41; Pye and Verba 1965). 'New' voters may hold values and participate in ways contrasting from the political status quo; as a polity's franchise is unlikely to shrink, it is believed that the presence and prolonged participation of 'new' social groups may proliferate into political culture change (Ward 1965, 50). Importantly, such opportunities for change however remain largely constrained to developing or newly democratic polities bearing franchises with considerable opportunities for growth.

Others regard voter turnout and electoral representation as catalysts for political culture change (Moises 1993). Indeed, even in polities whose franchise eligibility has not changed, increases in voter turnout may be politically determinant in causing political culture change – namely, if voters have been historically excluded from the polity's political life, or if the values individuals hold are different than those of the dominant group. Though recognizing that political culture change may not occur from one election alone, it may occur if conducted over several elections whose results constitute a break in the political status quo, such as a change in the

governing party. It is important to recognize, however, that political culture change is not driven by the mere act of elections or their respective results; instead, the results of the election – such as a change in governing party – may serve as a manifestation of political culture change or facilitate an environment conducive to political culture change. Moreover, turnout does not need to increase (or decrease) to alter the political culture; the character of the political culture may simply change to reflect the presence of a significant group of voters with differing values that challenge the hegemony of the traditionally politically determinant group (583).

Academics have also suggested that political culture may change through trends of urbanization (Lapalombara 1965, 324). Beyond potentially altering the composition of politically determinant electoral districts (and thus, ones reflected in the polity's political culture), urbanization has also had secondary effects – through increases in literacy rates and mass media consumption – vehicles of socialization that may disrupt or challenge pre-existing (potentially differing) political values (325; MacIvor 2006, 56). Urbanization has also promoted the adoption of new ideas and 'modern' values, increased political knowledge and participation, and has encouraged political participation in ways often dissimilar to the political culture status quo (Kim 1998, 107; Ward 1965).

Though generational changes have been consistently cited in explaining political culture change, academics are divided as to how generational dynamics affect political culture. Explanations fall into one of two camps – internal psychological factors or external social factors. On the former, some academics have opined that newer generations are more educated and more critical of government performance than older generations (Yee 1999, 191). Younger generations are similarly thought to challenge traditional concepts of obedience, obligation, and authority, influencing changes in relationships between the populace and the state (Wilson 2000, 261; Yee 1999, 192). Others consider family structures, which have become more egalitarian, representative, and democratic, providing greater opportunities for women and youth to exert influence in political education and involvement processes (Yee, 1999, 195-196; Verba 1965, 155-156; Beatty, Berdahl, and Poelzer 2012). Alternatively, others have considered external factors that have occurred concurrently with the advent of new generations – including the technological revolution, the advancement of mass communication, and the establishment of television as a source of political information – all which have contributed to increasing political knowledge,

interest, and participation (Nevitte 1996; Kim 1998, 108; Almond 2000, 16; Beatty, Berdahl, and Poelzer 2012).

Subcultures

Alternatively, it is also plausible to suggest that what is perceived as a comprehensive political culture shift is actually the development or presence of a political subculture. As established by Kavanagh (1972), political subcultures may break down 'large generalizations' towards the polity's complete political culture, allowing for nuance of the dominant political culture 'strand.' Such subcultures may be framed around the presence of 'politically determinant' cleavages, such as those of region, religion, social class, language, generation, and occupation (Beatty, Berdahl, and Poelzer 2012). While subcultures are not consistently referred to as such, it is non-contentious to suggest that political cultures exist in plenty and are subject to overlap – such as at the local, sub-national/regional, and national levels. Simply, a singular polity can operate as both a subculture, as well as a wholly independent culture dependent on the scope of political cultural analysis.

Given this, it is plausible to suggest that the emergence or visibility of a subculture fosters the perception of political cultural change, even if the dominant political culture remains present and unchanged. This is especially relevant in situations in which the predominant political culture is unable to cooperatively co-exist or completely absorb the orientations of the respective subculture, contributing to political culture fragmentation and the establishment and recognition of a counterculture (Kavanagh 1972). Accordingly, real observed political culture change is not necessary to explain political cultural transformation; rather, only the emergence of a subculture capable of challenging the dominance and legitimacy of the predominant 'traditional' political culture is sufficient to suggest political culture divergence.

Oscillation

Analogously, political culture 'change' may occur through the mechanism of political culture oscillation, as a result of multiple political cultures competing for dominance. While the political culture of a given polity is typically framed around one singular set of values, there exist unique circumstances in which a given political system may foster two or more unique contrasting political cultures. While multiple political cultures may exist within a given polity at the same

level and time, not all will possess the same degree of legitimacy and authority. In fact, it is assumed that, excluding the existence of sub and supra-cultures, only one culture may 'prevail' at a given time in a polity. Accordingly, the literature assumes that each culture shares values with its rival culture(s), providing a basis in which political cultural change can occur despite such rivalries (Lockhart 1997, 97). While this theory is perhaps reflective of the political behaviour of polities such as the United States, the theory fails to explain the effect of such political cultural competition and oscillation on the non-dominant culture; no explanation is given to explain why the alternative political culture continues to persist to any extent.

Assimilation

Political culture change may also be explained through processes of (political) cultural assimilation; though traditionally used to explain possible results of cultural interaction, the application of cultural assimilation may be broadened to include the processes underlying the acculturation of norms, values, and practices comprising *political* culture as well. In this regard, a community's political culture may not change so much as it is instead absorbed and assimilated by a larger (majority) or dominant culture, with the absorbed political culture resembling the host's culture through assuming the same values and beliefs (Rumbaut 2015, 82, 84; Bunle 1950, 6). In turn, the tenets of the 'original' political culture will diminish – if not be eliminated – within the political community (Rumbaut 2015, 82). The dominance of the 'host' culture is determined through several factors, such as superiority in age, resources, population size, and political power. Complete absorption of the political culture is not necessary for assimilation to occur; indeed, facets of the polity's 'original' political culture may continue to exist as long as they do not "endanger the integrity or survival" of the receiving (host) political culture, or create tensions or value conflict unable to be contained or reconciled with the host culture (O'Flannery 1961, 198).

For the political culture assimilation to occur however, it must demonstrate some degree of fluidity or lack resistant and strong political foundations. However, the polity's political culture – or those existing within the polity – does not need to convey a will for change for political cultural assimilation to occur; indeed, assimilation may occur through voluntary or forced means (Teske and Nelson 1971, 355). Moreover, political culture assimilation does not occur nor affect populations uniformly (O'Flannery 1961, 198). The assimilation of political culture values may

also occur more efficiently and effectively through individuals less acculturated within the polity's existing political culture, including immigrants and children (Rumbaut 2015, 84; Bunle 1950, 7).

Within the context of this study, it is possible to suggest that Saskatchewan's political culture has assimilated and been absorbed by the dominant Albertan political culture. Such is plausible, given Alberta's superior population size, resources, power, and influence towards and within both Saskatchewan and western Canada, respectively. Indeed, such could explain the striking similarities existing between Saskatchewan's alternative and Alberta's traditional political cultures (Wesley n.d.).

Agents of Saskatchewan Political Culture Change

Agents of Saskatchewan political culture change, as offered within the literature, can be assigned to one of two classifications: 1) economic and 2) social and demographic factors of change.

Economic Factors

Within the economic realm, the decline of Saskatchewan's agriculture-based economy is frequently cited as contributing to Saskatchewan's political culture change (Rasmussen 2015, 137; Smith 2009, 50; Gibbins 1980, 77; 1984, 38; 1992, 219; Friesen 1984, 1; Melnyk 1992, 5). Once central to Saskatchewan economic development, representing more than three-quarters of the provincial economy, agriculture now represents less than ten percent of Saskatchewan's economy and is no longer central to its politics (Smith 2009, 51; McGrane 2014, 76; Conway 2006, 81; Smith and Courtney 1972, 307; Gibbins 1980, 30; Lipset 1971, 44; Wiseman 2015, 20-21; Melnyk 1992, 5). This decline has also facilitated a corresponding drop in the size of the agricultural labour force; no longer is there a common set of economic interests and grievances capable of uniting and mobilizing a high volume of labourers within the province (Gibbins 1980, 91). Accordingly, the political orientations and products fostered by the agrarian-dominant economy, emerging both out of necessity and by choice – including government intervention, resource pooling, cooperative and public enterprise – have lost relevance and necessity, and are no longer determinant in shaping Saskatchewan's political culture.

Others have considered the shifting nature of agricultural enterprise (Gibbins 1980, 77, 79; 1984, 38). Resulting from land consolidation and mechanization in the post-World War II era, the

centrality and importance of the 'small family farm' actors were rejected and replaced by larger agricultural enterprise (Gibbins 1980, 79; 1984, 38; 1992, 219; Conway 2006, 179; Rasmussen 2011, 254; 2015, 137; Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999, 22; Leeson 2001, 4; 2009, 123, 126-127; Archer 1980, 270; Norrie 1984, 63; Warnock 2004, 101, 141; Eisler 2006, 147-149, 213; 2022).

While mechanization was intended to improve agricultural efficiency, the shift towards new agricultural technologies also fostered a corresponding growth in farm size (Gibbins 1980, 79; Eisler 2006, 147-149, 213; 2022; Leeson 2001, 4; Lipset 1971, 50; Archer 1980, 270). Growth was not only feasible, but necessary, as small-scale farming operations were unable to bear the often-tremendous costs associated with new agricultural equipment (Gibbins 1980, 79; 1992, 219; Eisler 2006, 147-149). Recognizing small farmers' historical embrace of the CCF, the decline of such actors contributed to the decline of the CCF-NDP's electoral base and the rejection of corresponding political culture orientations (Leeson 2009, 124; Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 24).

In their place emerged fewer but larger and more concentrated farms, producing sharp increases in the capital value of Saskatchewan farms (Gibbins 1980, 79; 1984, 38; 1992, 219; Warnock 2004, 101, 141; Rasmussen 2011, 254; 2015, 137; Conway 2006, 179; Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999, 22; Leeson 2001, 4; 2009, 123; Archer 1980, 270; Norrie 1984, 63; Eisler 2006, 147-149, 213; Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 24). Possessing valuable agricultural land and operating "million-dollar" businesses, the orientations of farmers shifted to reflect such conditions (Rasmussen 2011, 254; 2015, 137; Conway 2006, 179; Warnock 2004, 143; Sinclair 1992, 220). To those managing large-scale farms, farming was no longer a 'way of life' but a business operation (Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999, 81; Gibbins 1980, 80; 1992, 219-220; Wiseman 2015, 20-21; Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 24; Warnock 2004, 143; Sinclair 1992, 220; Eisler 2022). Large farmers also tended to possess more orthodox economic views (Leeson 2001, 7; 2009, 124; Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999, 22; Rasmussen 2011, 254; Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 24; Warnock 2004, 143). Those farmers also tended to act like businessmen, preferring alliances with the business community than with small rural producers, destroying the farmer and farmer-labour alliances once characteristic of Saskatchewan's political culture (Leeson 2001, 7; 2009, 124; Brown, Roberts, and Warnock 1999, 22; Rasmussen 2011, 254; Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 24). In turn, the change in nature of agricultural enterprise established and promoted a new

political culture grounded in individualism, self-reliance, private enterprise, and laissez-faire economics (Warnock 2004, 143; Sinclair 1992, 220).

Others have opted for a 'softer' approach, attributing the shift in Saskatchewan's political culture to agricultural diversification (Conway 2006, 166, 200; Warnock 2004, 101, 142; Archer 1980, 250; Dyck 1991, 424; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 212; Gibbins 1980, 81; 1992, 221). Grounded in an enthusiasm for agricultural curiosity, farmers became increasingly willing to consider alternative crops and various animal products, resulting in a diminished reliance and pre-eminence of wheat in Saskatchewan's economy (Archer 1980, 250; Dyck 1991, 424; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 212; Gibbins 1992, 221; Warnock 2004, 101). Though subject to much of the same volatile and cyclical conditions of wheat, the effects were dampened when distributed among several agricultural products (Gibbins 1980, 81). Diversity also established some degree of economic insulation; while lacklustre economic performance of one product was possible (and probable), the underperformance of all or most agricultural products at a given time was not (Gibbins 1980, 81). Consequently, many aspects of Saskatchewan's political culture, once made necessary by economic insecurity (attributable to wheat dependency), became irrelevant (Sinclair 1992, 220). Diversification also cast doubt on the continued necessity of political and economic structures tied to Saskatchewan's political culture; while the number of crops expanded, the number of farms cultivating each crop contracted. Thus, a political culture grounded in collectivism, and one that practiced collaboration and pooling, became no longer necessary.

Diversification also produced divisions in the farming class (Conway 2006, 179). Once united by common interests tied to the grain economy, diversification initiated a divergence in farmers' objectives and concerns (Conway 2006, 179; Gibbins 1980, 81). Divergence also originated from differences in the natures of various agricultural products, with some products – such as ranching and livestock – enjoying greater economic security than agricultural crops (Sinclair 1992, 207). The development of special interests was reflected within the emergence of new farm organizations and interest groups, demonstrating the contrasting needs of different commodity groups (Conway 2006, 179; Gibbins 1980, 81). Divided and lacking consensus, diversification removed conditions favourable to solidarity and shared objectives, and with this, undermined the survival of tenets and products of Saskatchewan's political culture which demanded it.

Departing from discussions of agriculture, others have suggested that the advent of new natural resource economies is responsible for catalyzing political culture shift (Wesley 2011, 26; Leeson 2009, 127; Archer 1980, 344; Norrie 1984, 63; Dyck 1991, 424-425; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 212; Melnyk 1992, 5-6; Warnock 2004, 143; Eisler 2006, 137). No longer solely dependent on agricultural products, the base of the Saskatchewan economy grew to include oil and natural gas, potash, uranium, and coal (Gibbins 1984, 38, 40; Rasmussen 2015, 138; Conway 178-179, 206-207; Dyck 1991, 424-425; Dunn and Laycock 1992, 212; Melnyk 1992, 6; Eisler 2006, 137, 169; 2022; Norrie 1984, 63). Though similar to agriculture in that Saskatchewan's economy has remained grounded in resource dependency and oriented towards exportation, many have postulated that the collectivist and dirigiste political culture attributed to the agriculture-dominant economy is now absent (Rasmussen 2015, 138; Conway 2006, 178-179, 185; Warnock 2004, 101).

The advent of new natural resources has also produced changes in economic structure and orientations (Leeson 2009, 127; Richards and Pratt 1979, 197). For one, the dominance of large-scale provincial, national, and multinational companies demanded the development of an employment structure contrary to the traditional 'small family farm' economic model, with the province becoming no longer dependent on collectivist and dirigiste traditions to preserve economic security. Like the changing character of the agricultural economy, the development of new economic sectors also produced an entrepreneurship mentality. Moreover, much of the development of the new natural resources was conducted through private enterprise, fostering an appreciation for private economic intervention and small government (Leeson 2009; Richards and Pratt 1979; Rasmussen 2015, 139-140). The diversification of non-agricultural resources, like the diversification of agriculture, also reduced the province's (over)dependence on grain, albeit for different reasons. Though subject to similar cyclical variations, the boom-and-bust cycles of natural resources do not usually coincide with wheat's cyclical variations, producing greater economic security than wheat or other agricultural products could (Archer 1980, 344; Eisler 2006, 178). Resultantly, the values and structures stemming from insecurity, such as collectivism, dirigisme, and cooperation were no longer necessary.

Changing economic conditions also facilitated a greater change in Saskatchewan's economic status, and by extension, Saskatchewan's provincial identity and standing (Gibbins 1984, 38; Rasmussen 2015, 137). Through changes in the structure of and demand for agriculture and natural resources, Saskatchewan experienced unparalleled economic prosperity, producing a

corresponding shift in its economic status (Leeson 2001, 5; 2009, 130; Gibbins 1984; Richards and Pratt 1979; Blake 2009, 178; Dyck 2016, 72-73; Rasmussen 2015, 139). In turn, the province's new-found economic fortunes shifted Saskatchewan's identity from an economic 'have-not' to a 'have' province (vis-a-vis equalization) – directly coinciding with the rise of the Saskatchewan Party (Rasmussen 2015, 138-139; 2020, 4; Gibbins 1984, 38; Richards and Pratt 1979, 197; Leeson 2001, 5; Dyck 2016, 72-73; Blake 2009, 168). In turn, Saskatchewan's relationship with the federal government changed to one of less dependence on the federal government; gripped by a new sense of economic independence – and by extension, provincial boosterism, exceptionalism, and provincial autonomy (Rasmussen 2015, 139-140; Dyck 2016, 72).

Social Factors

Meanwhile, others attribute changes in Saskatchewan's traditional political culture to various social and demographic factors. Noting the traditional dominance of small farmers within Saskatchewan electoral politics and their influence in shaping and preserving the province's traditional political culture, it is perhaps unsurprising that changes in Saskatchewan's political culture are believed to have followed the province's changing demographics and population trends (Rasmussen 2015, 137).

One explanation frequently cited is the decline of the farming and rural populations in the province (Gibbins 1980; 1984, 38; 1992, 216-217; Archer 1980, 270; Friesen 1984, 1; Norrie 1984, 63; Melnyk 1992, 5; Warnock 2004, 101, 141; Eisler 2006, 148; 2022). Peaking at 68 percent of Saskatchewan's total population in 1931, rural Saskatchewanians have since increasingly flocked to the province's cities, due to urbanization and mechanization (Tank 2020; Eisler 2022). The advent of mechanization resulted in the decrease in value of the agricultural workforce; once paramount to the success of the industry, the adoption of new agricultural technologies made much of the agricultural labour force redundant (Lipset 1971, 50). Lacking employment opportunities in rural communities, much of Saskatchewan's rural population was forced to look elsewhere for work, within the province's urban centres.

Beyond an absolute decline in population, the decrease also brought about the loss of traditional rural prairie social structure and life, including the abandonment of rail lines, closures of grain elevators, schools, and hospitals, and the reduction of public services – offerings often directly associated with the CCF-NDP (Conway 2006, 179; Warnock 2004, 141; Eisler 2022). The

erosion of such structures compelled rural Saskatchewanians to seek and accept alternatives and the new 'status quo' – one which was increasingly individualist and neoliberal, through self-reliance and private enterprise. Rural population decline also diminished the importance of agriculture and rural voters, in part through electoral redistribution (Norrie 1984, 63; Gibbins 1980, 87; Rasmussen 2015, 37). No longer contingent on the interests of agriculture, Saskatchewan's political culture reflected such, exploring and adopting new orientations independent of the agricultural economy.

Alternatively, rural depopulation can instead be tied to the emergence of a new, contrasting counter political culture, co-existing with the original culture. Indeed, it is largely unsurprising that the erosion of traditional rural life produced senses of rural discontent and abandonment (Blake 2009, 167). Partly tied to such frustration and anger, the Saskatchewan Party – and its political ethos – presented a viable alternative for rural populations seeking political representation (Blake 2009, 167, 169; Eisler 2022, 189). It can be argued that the continued support of the Saskatchewan Party (including by rural populations), both in elections and in government, eventually established a comprehensive set of political orientations comprising a new, alternative political culture – both initially curated by Saskatchewan's rural population and reinforced through extended Saskatchewan Party rule.

Other academics have not focused on the absolute movement of the province's rural population, instead considering population replacement. Through farm consolidation and the decline of the traditional family farm structure, much of the 'old stock' CCF generation became redundant, moving instead to urban centres. In their place emerged young, 'new stock' farmers – often their children and grandchildren – unfamiliar with the farming experiences of the Great Depression, and thus, not inculcated with collectivist and dirigiste traditions (Leeson 2001, 7; Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 25; Eisler 2022, 237). The structures originating from such orientations – including the Wheat Pool and the cooperative movement – then became largely irrelevant to the new farming generation, contributing to the retrenchment of collectivist and state-led programs and measures (Leeson 2001, 7; Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 25). Instead, the new farming class possessed economically conservative orientations favouring private enterprise and neoliberalism (Leeson 2001, 7; Blake 2009, 167; Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 25). The new generation of farmers also viewed themselves as participants in agribusiness, rather than as a part of a greater farming community once characteristic of traditional rural Saskatchewan society.

Moreover, unlike their CCF-NDP predecessors, these 'new-stock' farmers also did not align themselves with urban economic interests nor the urban labour movement, dismantling alliances – and by extension, collectivist and dirigiste political traditions – once integral to the prolonged success of the CCF-NDP (Blake 2009, 167; Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 25). Such shifts in political orientations are especially critical when considering the province's electoral district distribution favouring the over-representation of rural constituencies (Dunn and Laycock 1992, 220). In turn, the attitudes of the new farming generation became politically dominant, contributing to the erosion of political values antithetical to those of the newly preferred individualist and laissez-faire approaches (Dunn and Laycock 1992, 220).

Importantly, the move towards urbanization in post-World War II era Saskatchewan also brought about the growth of cities and towns (Conway 2006, 179; Rasmussen 2015, 137; Leeson 2009, 126-127; Smith 2009, 51; Gibbins 1980, 68; Archer 1980, 270; Friesen 1984, 1, 2; Gibbins 1984, 38; Smith and Courtney 1972, 308; Melnyk 1992, 5; Gibbins 1992, 216-217; Barr 1992, 252; Warnock 2004, 141; Leeson 2001, 4; Lipset 1971, 50; Eisler 2022). No longer exposed to the "full impact of the prairie environment," the new urban Saskatchewan populace was largely unsympathetic and indifferent towards traditional grievances, political culture orientations, and institutions cultivated in such agrarian environments (Gibbins 1992, 218; 1980, 70; McGrane 2005, 219). Accordingly, this brought about the addition of new provincial political constituencies within Saskatchewan's urban areas, weaking (though not eliminating) the historical trend of rural political over-representation (Rasmussen 2020, 4; Briere 2020, 30). Such trends also provided a different set of political values – reflective of urban interests – opportunities for mobilization and popular adoption. Moreover, although much of the old, traditional CCF-NDP generation moved to the province's cities and towns, they were nonetheless numerical and political minorities in the province's urban centres, possessing attitudes unable to be preserved in Saskatchewan's shifting political culture.

Whether a shift in Saskatchewan's traditional political culture is attributable to one factor or to many, it is nonetheless clear that Saskatchewan's political, social, and economic environments developed in ways that made political culture change not only possible, but perhaps, probable.

Alternative Saskatchewan Political Culture

Through a critical review of the literature, four pillars – dichotomous to those comprising Saskatchewan's traditional political culture – have emerged to constitute Saskatchewan's new, alternative political culture.

Pillar 1: Individualism

Departing from its predecessor, collectivism, individualism is grounded in the supremacy of the rights, autonomy, and responsibility of the individual. Fundamentally, self-reliance and individual freedom has become paramount in the Saskatchewanian political environment (Eisler 2022).

Brought about by economic and social conditions which have eroded sentiments of community and cooperation, political orientations in Saskatchewan now stress the primacy of individual initiative in achieving and maintaining individual success and prosperity (Gibbins 1980, 81; Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 2). Correspondingly, Saskatchewanians favour a reduction in the size and responsibilities of the provincial government (Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 201). This also extends to the provincial welfare state, believed to be detrimental to independence and self-reliance (Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 2). In line with libertarian values, individualism also shapes Saskatchewanians' perceptions towards the provincial government and the provincial community. Once built on trust and geniality, Saskatchewanians are now more suspicious and less trusting of government and collective action.

The autonomy and authority of the individual is also reflected in the primacy and defence of property rights within the province. Similarly grounded in settler-colonial traditions, the notion of private property is in direct contravention to treaties and Indigenous traditions, thereby dismissing the role and presence of Indigenous peoples on 'Saskatchewan' lands (Wesley and Wong 2022, 70-71). Such attitudes were evident during the 2018 trial of the killing of Colten Boushie, a Cree man who was shot on the property of a rural Saskatchewan farm by its owner, Gerald Stanley. Indeed, much of Stanley's defence rested on an appeal to 'protecting' private property, ultimately arguing that Boushie was 'trespassing' on private land (Wesley and Wong 2022, 72; Starblanket and Hunt 2018). Such reasoning legitimized Stanley's claims of land ownership, while rejecting the authority and rights of Indigenous populations towards and on traditional Indigenous lands.

Of course, individualism is also reinforced through the actions of Saskatchewan government agents. Though visible in the ethos and practices of the Saskatchewan Party, individualism can be traced earlier to the Progressive Conservatives, especially under the premiership of Grant Devine. During the Devine era, the Progressive Conservative government made numerous strides in affirming the primacy of the individual, believing government to be an "oppressive burden" (Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 6, 201). Accordingly, the government brought about the decline and breakdown of numerous social services and programs, and a reduction in the size and responsibilities of the provincial government (Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990). The Devine premiership also implemented "workfare," a method of welfare reform that shifted the objective of welfare programming to move employable recipients into the workforce, promoting self-sufficiency while reducing the number of individuals reliant on government support (Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 201, 213).

The Saskatchewan Party has reaffirmed such practices, in both principle and in governance. Fundamentally, the Party possesses an affinity for smaller and less intrusive government, self-sufficiency, and individual freedoms (Saskatchewan Party n.d.). During provincial elections, the Party has campaigned on similar positions, focused on limiting or reducing the size of the provincial government and continuing economic-centred welfare reform (Saskatchewan Party 2007; 2011; 2016; 2020).

Pillar 2: Laissez-Faire

Laissez-faire, the second pillar of alternative Saskatchewan political culture, concerns the composition and conditions of Saskatchewan economy and society. Reflecting its namesake, laissez-faire rests on an affinity for an economy and society dominated by private actors and interests, in turn rejecting all domains of government intervention – whether through ownership, leadership, or regulation.

Political culture values have shifted to reflect such transformation in the permissibility of actors and activities in Saskatchewan's social and economic environments. Accordingly, the political environment has become more economy-centric; the conditions, nature, and welfare of the Saskatchewan economy has become increasingly important to Saskatchewanians, and by extension, more integral to the province's political culture. Correspondingly, Saskatchewanian attitudes have similarly transformed, becoming more appreciative of private enterprise,

38

entrepreneurship, and laissez-faire economics. Saskatchewanians' perceptions of the government have also changed; no longer perceiving the government as an agent 'protecting' the interests of Saskatchewanians, government regulation and intervention are now regarded as hampering economic growth. Similarly, Saskatchewanians have also become doubtful of the *capacity* of the government in directing or participating in Saskatchewan's economic and social spheres, fostering support for welfare state retrenchment and privatization (Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 2).

Institutionally, laissez-faire orientations can be traced to movements preceding the Saskatchewan Party, in Grant Devine's Progressive Conservative governments. During the Devine era, the provincial government made advancements towards private enterprise, in large part through privatization measures and the large-scale sale of Crown corporations (Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 2, 6; 201; Warnock 2004, 26-27; Eisler 2022). Premier Devine's government also facilitated welfare retrenchment through the establishment of workfare, reducing the degree of government intervention in social affairs (Pitsula and Rasmussen 1990, 210, 213).

Of course, laissez-faire values have also been advanced by the Saskatchewan Party. Central to the party's foundations is a preference for economic growth and job creation through private sector intervention, and a belief that the government should play a *supporting* role in facilitating an environment conducive to private enterprise intervention (Saskatchewan Party 2007; 2011; 2016; 2020; n.d.). This same principle has guided the party's platform promises in recent elections, through promises to grow private enterprise through government deregulation, divesting and restricting the growth of Crown corporations, encouraging private sector investment and job creation, privatization, and the establishment of "favourable" labour laws (Saskatchewan Party 2007; 2011; 2016; 2020). Though the party committed to preserving Saskatchewan's public healthcare system, the party has nevertheless introduced select private healthcare services in the name of medical 'choice' – a term often invoked in the defence of capitalism and laissez-faire economics (Mackinnon 2021; Saskatchewan Party 2016; Government of Saskatchewan 2016). Saskatchewan Party governments have also made strides towards economic privatization, including through the recent move towards the privatization of liquor retailing, grounded in the Party's promotion of 'choice' and 'competition' (Government of Saskatchewan 2015; 2022c; Bamford 2022; Saskatchewan Party 2007; 2011; 2016; 2020).

Pillar 3: Heartland

The third pillar, heartland, concerns Saskatchewan provincial identity, national standing, and the relationships between Saskatchewan and the federal government. Heartland is both a political doctrine and a political culture value, grounded in the notion of Saskatchewan exceptionalism and provincial defence, especially as it concerns provincial interests and Saskatchewan's position within Canada.

As Saskatchewan's status and position in Canada have shifted, Saskatchewan's political cultural values have as well. Attributed to economic catalysts of Saskatchewan political culture change – namely, Saskatchewan's transition to an economic 'have' province – Saskatchewanians are now believed to possess penchants for Saskatchewan exceptionalism, and boosterism. Resultantly, the province's political culture has become increasingly assertive, grounded in an object to obtain Saskatchewan's 'fair share' from the Canadian federation and federal government (Conway 2006, 2; Gibbins 1984, 38; Eisler 2022).

The relationship between the Saskatchewan populace and provincial government has also changed, with the latter now considered responsible for the defence and championing of Saskatchewan interests against external threats (Gibbins 1984, 41). This has also fuelled a corresponding development in western alienation sentiment in the greater Saskatchewan populace; though western alienation is by no means novel (evident throughout Saskatchewan political history and a part of hinterland), the variety of western alienation a part of heartland is unique – possessing a distinctive defensive, confrontational, and at points, combative nature (Gibbins 1984, 41; Conway 2006, 2).

Importantly, heartland, as a political culture value, is grounded in moderation and realism. Such is evident in its rejection of western separation, which has failed to resonate with much of the Saskatchewan public (Wesley, Berdahl, and Samson 2021). Rather, alternative Saskatchewan political culture is based on an affinity for increased autonomy and expansion of Saskatchewan provincial jurisdiction, based on an historical conviction of provincial disenfranchisement and a belief that Saskatchewan interests are not adequately looked after by the federal government. Heartland also distinguishes itself from its contemporary Albertan political culture counterpart, with Saskatchewanians possessing a more positive outlook towards their province's future place in Confederation (Wesley, Berdahl, and Samson 2021).

Like other pillars, heartland is not unique to the Saskatchewan Party. It can also be attributed to governments preceding it, including the Liberal governments of Jimmy Gardiner and Ross Thatcher (Archer 1980, 234, 326), though perhaps it is most easily obviously traced to Saskatchewan Party premiers Brad Wall and Scott Moe. Since the Saskatchewan Party's founding, it has reaffirmed its commitment to defending and demanding "the constant improvement of Saskatchewan's economic and social conditions" (Saskatchewan Party n.d.).

In governance, heartland values are evident within the Saskatchewan Party's reactions towards the federal carbon tax and contested jurisdiction of Saskatchewan's natural resources, with the Saskatchewan Party repeatedly adopting combative and confrontational positions in addressing such (Olive 2019; Blakley and Ellis 2021; Rabson 2021). Such is specifically evident in the recent publication of the government's 'White Paper' and the *Saskatchewan First Act* – the latter of which has drawn comparisons to the *Alberta Sovereignty Act*, suggesting a convergence of Alberta and Saskatchewan political values. Like their Albertan counterpart, both documents sought to capture and act on Saskatchewan discontent arising from perceived mistreatment by the federal government (Government of Saskatchewan 2022a; 2022b). Through demands for Saskatchewan to be recognized as a "nation within a nation" and expressing a resolve to achieve equality within Confederation, the party has expressed claims for autonomy and an expansion of provincial jurisdiction, and issues a demand for respect for Saskatchewan and its interests (Government of Saskatchewan 2022a; 2022b; 2; Mandes 2021).

Pillar 4: Pragmatism

Initially grounded in Eager's work on Saskatchewan politics (1980) and receiving increased academic acceptance resulting from successive Saskatchewan Party electoral victories, the last pillar, pragmatism, defines Saskatchewan political operations as grounded in practicality and realism (Rasmussen 2015, 139; Rayner and Beaudry-Mellor 2009; McGrane et al. 2013; Wishlow 2001, 169). Accordingly, pragmatism considers political actors and products to reflect real-life conditions and preferences. Resultantly, political action is highly flexible and in agreement with changing demands and priorities (Leeson 2009; Blake 2009, 166).

In considering this pillar, it is important to acknowledge the definition and connotation this thesis attaches to pragmatism, as to differentiate it from other, more common operationalizations of the word. The use of the term pragmatism, in this study, is intended to denote sentiments of

reasonability, sensibility, and moderation, departing from the boldness and radicality believed to characterize Saskatchewan's traditional political culture. Perhaps more importantly, this thesis does not suggest that the values or political products corresponding to Saskatchewan's traditional political culture were 'impractical' and 'unrealistic' in a literal sense; to argue such would reject the very occurrences and presences of identity-defining Saskatchewan political values and traditions – such as collectivism and socialized healthcare. Instead, this thesis acknowledges such values and products for their brazenness, while also suggesting that the values and products that have followed are, comparatively, more limited and conservative.

Indeed, Saskatchewanian political orientations reflect such shifts. Saskatchewanians are now less likely to assume rigid, enduring partisan identities or obedience; disregard for party (and by extension, vote) loyalty is more common, with political opinions now formatively cast through consideration of real-life conditions and preferences (Eager 1980, 45; McGrane et al. 2020; Leeson 2009, 125). While durable partisans remain, they are less common. Moreover, when partisan affiliations are assumed, they are now less personalized and less integral to one's identity. Analogously, factionalist sympathies and the construction of 'in-' and 'out-groups' based on ideological and political preferences have also eroded; Saskatchewanians are now more willing to engage with individuals and ideas of divergent political identities with less adversarialism (Leeson 2001, 11). Reduced polarization has also fostered increased 'consensus' in political opinion; with the increased influence of urban voters in electoral politics, specific preferences and issues have become more commonly shared (Rasmussen 2015, 141; Warnock 2004, 27; Eisler 2020). As a result, fundamental ideological divisions within the Saskatchewan population have eroded, instead amalgamating at the political centre, which has shifted to the right (Leeson 2009, 122; Wishlow 2001, 179, 197; Rasmussen 2020, 3).

Provincial political actors have reflected such political culture change through institutionalization. For one, pragmatism has demanded the decline of ideology in Saskatchewan politics (Eisler 2022). Though ideological identities remain present in party nomenclature, the practices of the parties – in governance and platforms – have rejected rigid ideological adherence and radicalism in favour of left-right political fluctuation and moderation (Leeson 2001, 9, 11; Leeson 2009, 125; Wishlow 2001, 169, 176-178, 186, 197; Warnock 2004, 27; Eisler 2022). With both dominant parties – the Saskatchewan Party and the New Democratic Party – attempting to attract as many voters and interests as possible, the political environment has adopted a 'brokerage'

model of politics; the parties have converged, concurrently existing at the political centre (Leeson 2001, 9; 2009, 122, 126, 129, 137; McGrane et al. 2013; McGrane et al. 2020; Blake 2009, 166, 179; Wishlow 2001, 169, 178, 180, 186, 197; Warnock 2004, 27; Rasmussen 2020, 3-4). Brokerage politics have also facilitated the development of an increasingly representative government and one cognizant of (and politically dependent on) voter preferences (McGrane et al. 2013; McGrane et al. 2020; Rasmussen 2015, 141; Rayner and Beaudry-Mellor 2009; Wishlow 2001, 175, 186, 188). The greater Saskatchewanian environment – whether economic, political, or social – is also less politicized; politics are no longer as central or relevant to Saskatchewan life as they once were.

The practices of the Saskatchewan Party also embody such pragmatism. Following the party's defeat in 2003, the party (re-)established itself as a centrist party, becoming less ideological (Leeson 2009, 126; McGrane et al. 2013, 2; McGrane et al. 2020; Beland 2011; Blake 2009, 168, 174-176, 183; O'Fee 2009, 193). The party has also often positioned campaign promises and government policies as moderate and reasonable, grounded in pragmatism and based on what was necessary to win or stay in power (Leeson 2009, 126; McGrane et al. 2013, 2; Beland 2011; McGrane et al. 2020; Blake 2009). Such is evident in the party's cautious and methodical (if not limited) approaches towards the privatization of Crown corporations and healthcare, and the party's tendency to renounce overt socially conservative positions (McGrane et al. 2013, 2; McGrane et al. 2020, 149-150; Blake 2009, 172; O'Fee 2009, 193; McGrane 2008, 65-66; Wishlow 2001, 191; Rasmussen 2020, 3).

Chapter 3: Methodology

<u>Thesis Framework</u>

This section contains a framework of the pre-established pillars of traditional and alternative Saskatchewan political culture, as established within the literature review.

Table 1: Political Culture Framework

Pillar	Traditional	Alternative
1	**Collectivism** *A belief in the importance of cooperation in achieving the needs and goals of the whole community above those of each individual.*	**Individualism** *An affinity for the supremacy of the liberty, rights, autonomy, and responsibility of the individual.*
	Related concepts: union organization; social democratic populism; egalitarianism; one-class state; communitarianism.	Related concepts: self-reliance, independence, individual freedom, small government; libertarianism.
2	**Dirigisme** *A belief in the responsibility and capacity of the state in directing the economy and society.*	**Laissez-Faire** *A penchant for an economy and society dominated by private actors and free of government intervention.*
	Related concepts: strong state, public enterprise, social welfare, government intervention.	Related concepts: entrepreneurship; capitalism; free markets; neoliberalism; welfare state retrenchment; privatization.
3	*Hinterland* *A spirit mandating collaboration as to integrate and ensure Saskatchewan's place and survival within the Canadian federation.*	**Heartland** *A Saskatchewan-first mentality rooted in a belief of Saskatchewan exceptionalism, breeding a strong defence of Saskatchewan interests and control against external actors.*
	Related concepts: western alienation, 'have-not' province, intergovernmental collaboration; periphery; subordination.	Related concepts: western alienation, 'have' province, autonomy, provincial boosterism; fair share.
4	**Adversarialism** *A dynamic that promotes a division of political attitudes and parties within a highly politicized environment.*	**Pragmatism** *A spirit in which political action is based in practicality and real-life conditions and preferences.*
	Related concepts: ideology; hyper-partisanship; political identities; factionalism; affective polarization; conflict.	Related concepts: decline of ideology; centrism; brokerage politics; majoritarianism.

<center>Focus Groups</center>

As described by Wiseman (2007) (among others), there exist predominant methods in conducting political culture research – studying values, probing history, examining constitutions and institutions, and through political socialization. For the purposes of this study, I utilized the first, asking Saskatchewanians about fundamental political beliefs and values using focus groups.

Focus groups are semi-structured forms of interaction between a group of people discussing a specific topic of interest to the researcher (Dawson, Manderson, and Tallo 1993, 7; Powell and Single 1996, 499; Morgan 1997; Alkaabi 2017, 133; Morgan 1996; Sagoe 2012, 1; Wilkinson 1998, 182; Gibbs 1997, 2; Delli Carpini and Williams 1994; Hollander 2004, 606; Cyr 2019, 2). Facilitators preside over focus groups, introducing topics for discussion and assist the group in conducting lively and 'natural' interactive discussion amongst participants (Dawson, Manderson, and Tallo 1993, 7; Powell and Single 1996, 499; Morgan 1997; Cyr 2015, 3). Focus group participants (typically between 4 to 12 individuals per meeting), are selected on the basis of backgrounds, experiences, or characteristics (whether similar or differing), who are deemed well-suited to discuss a given topic (Dawson, Manderson, and Tallo 1993, 8; Morgan 1998; Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, and Mukherjee 2018, 23; Krueger and Casey 2000; Sagoe 2012, 1).

Focus groups offer insight into how groups think about a given topic, exploring the range of beliefs and highlighting inconsistencies and variation that exist (Dawson, Manderson, and Tallo 1993, 7; Powell and Single 1996, 499). Moreover, the unique interactive effect of focus groups offers insights on the extent of consensus and diversity surrounding the given topic (Morgan 1996, 139; Cyr 2015, 4; 2019, 14).

Compared to individual interviews, focus groups are more cost- and time-efficient. Focus groups are also relatively less structured, produce data that are seldom produced and less accessible through individual interviews, and are believed to be "generally better for studying perceptions and attitudes," the backbones of political culture research (Connaway and Powell 2010, 17; Alkaabi 2017, 133, 136; Sagoe 2012, 2; Gibbs 1997, 2). As opposed to interviews, focus group discussions primarily take place between participants; this creates an environment that is often more casual, and whose method of discourse is more reflective of 'natural' and externally valid modes of social conversation (Wilkinson 1998, 188; Hollander 2004, 607).

Focus groups were selected as the mode of data collection due to its interactive qualities and strengths in measuring socially constructed phenomena (including political culture); group

<center>45</center>

interactions can generate collective responses and sense-making on a particular issue, and review how social processes unfold, how the topic is perceived, and how opinions are expressed, understood, and evolve (Cyr 2015, 18; 2019, 9, 12; Sagoe 2012, 2, 6; Wilkinson 1998, 187, 193; Delli Carpini and Williams 1994). Focus groups also replicate social processes and simulate group dynamics that occur in real life (Cyr 2019, 9). This is especially suitable for research on political culture, whose values are socially constructed and comprise a collective phenomenon (Wesley 2011; Wiseman 2007). Focus groups were also selected due to the method's flexibility; as opposed to a pre-set group of questions or multiple-choice options, the range and variety of political values able to be measured is far higher and subject to less constraint. This is especially valuable for political culture research, which findings, when based on quantitative surveys, have typically focused on a narrow set of values concerning ideology, political efficacy, participation, and trust (Anderson 2010, 448; Simeon and Elkins 1980, 33).

Yet, the use of focus groups bears notable drawbacks. Perhaps most importantly, focus groups possess weak external validity, as groups cannot be representative samples of a given population (Archer and Berdahl 2011, 239). Thus, the initial findings and data from this exploratory thesis begs for additional data validation and confirmation efforts. Accordingly, the findings from the focus groups may serve useful in future investigations and may be used and tested in conjunction with other, more representative data collection methods to produce a greater and more fulsome body of knowledge concerning Saskatchewan's political culture.

Focus groups are also susceptible to producing discussions based on what participants perceive as socially 'acceptable' or 'desired,' rather than what is actually believed (Dawson, Manderson, and Tallo 1993, 11; Hollander 2004, 610). Participants are likely to consider the presence of others before intervening, suggesting that what is said is subjected to the same social pressures that affect individual behaviour in the real, outside world (Cyr 2019, 8). Such is not a disadvantage when studying political culture, as it is the values deemed 'socially acceptable' that comprise a polity's political culture. Moreover, individual Saskatchewanians do not have to actually personally subscribe or believe in such tenets for such values to be considered 'valid' and 'true' tenets of the culture; simply the fact that individuals believe such values to be true of a greater political community is adequate.

Online Focus Groups

With the advent of the Internet as a mode of social interaction and as a research medium, online focus groups have received increasing amounts of attention. This is particularly true since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Capitalizing on the increasing societal use of the internet, this study employed online focus groups in its investigation of Saskatchewan political culture change. As many Saskatchewanians interact with one another online, it is useful to replicate this sort of environment when studying the province's politics.

In comparison to in-person focus groups, online focus groups are relatively inexpensive. Unlike the high costs associated with in-person focus groups, due to travel, accommodations, venues, food and beverage, online focus groups bear only costs affiliated with participant honorariums and video conferencing software (Abrams and Gaiser 2016; Rezabek 2000; Schneider, Kerwin, Frechtling, and Vivari 2002, 32; Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 49; Reid and Reid 2005, 132; Oringderff 2004). Online focus groups also provide greater and easier access to a broad range of potential participants from wider geographic areas (Abrams and Gaiser 2016; Schneider et al. 2002, 32; Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 49; Boydell, Fergie, McDaid, and Hilton 2014; Moore, McKee, and McLoughlin 2015; Oringderff 2004). In this study, the use of online focus groups allowed individuals from across Saskatchewan to participate in focus group proceedings, providing for greater diversity in opinion and participant demographics (Abrams and Gaiser 2016; Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 48).

However, internet access and technological proficiency are not guaranteed nor universal. Accordingly, focus group participants will only be individuals possessing strong internet access and technological knowledge, potentially reducing opportunities for individuals of low socioeconomic backgrounds and rural population (although recognizing that such issues are decreasing in prevalence) (Abrams and Gaiser 2016; Rezabek 2000; Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 51-55; Kenny 2004, 419; Tuttas 2015, 132; Oringderff 2004). Such concerns can be mitigated to an extent: potential focus group participants – whether in-person or online – require internet access to register to participate and communicate with focus group organizers preceding the focus group. The necessary shift towards online communication demanded by the COVID-19 pandemic has also increased technological literacy across all age groups. Likewise, the software selected for hosting this study's focus groups, Zoom, was highly utilized during the COVID-19 pandemic, presenting low (or non-existent) learning curves to participants.

Though considering such limitations, this thesis is of the opinion that the use of online focus groups ultimately expands (and not contracts) the potential participant pool to include individuals who would otherwise be ineligible or unable to participate in in-person focus groups, such as those from rural or remote communities, young, disabled, or introverted individuals, marginalized populations, participants unable to travel, or those with caregiving responsibilities (Abrams and Gaiser 2016; Rezabek 2000; Stancanelli 2010, 764; Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 49, 52; Boydell et al. 2014; Moore, McKee, and McLoughlin 2015). Moreover, focus groups – whether in-person or online – are also necessarily unrepresentative samples of the greater population.

The study acknowledges that technical difficulties remain realistic potential issues, and ones largely unique to the online setting. In attempts to mitigate such issues, five minutes of additional time was set aside before the beginning of each focus group, dedicated to help participants "assimilate" to the Zoom interface and video-based discussion setting and assist in troubleshooting (Abrams and Gaiser 2016). This also increased the likelihood of beginning and ending the focus group on time (Tuttas 2015, 126). Moreover, the facilitator also encouraged participants to test their Zoom software and equipment prior to the focus group.

Online focus groups are also more time- and energy-efficient than in-person counterparts. Online focus groups eliminate travel time for both the facilitator and participants, potentially providing additional incentive for participants to attend (Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 55). Time associated with equipment and room set-up is also reduced, due to the lack of a physical space and the capabilities of the Zoom interface (Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 55). Online focus groups may also be more appealing to participants, due to their convenience, safety, and comfort for participants (Oringderff 2004). Unlike in-person focus groups, online focus groups require less preparation for participants, as travel is not needed to take part (Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 50; Reid and Reid 2005, 132; Boydell et al. 2014). Moreover, many individuals will be able to participate in online focus groups at their place of residence, promoting the participant's comfort, potentially improving the quality and quantity of participation (Rezabek 2000; Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 54; Boydell et al. 2014). Through reduced opportunities for displaying or observing others' body language, online focus groups reduce the presence of social cues or social anxiety. In turn, participants may be willing to reveal more information or participate more frequently than in-person equivalents (Stewart and Williams 2005, 399, 405)

Other researchers have raised concerns about the approach's character, noting that communicating in a virtual environment may be less natural to participants, which may change the "dynamics of communication" and impact the level of engagement and quality of insights offered (Abrams and Gaiser 2016; Rezabek 2000). This, however, was seen as negligible; the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent move to online communication has increased the comfort and familiarity in participating in online meetings. Moreover, other research has found that there is no data quantity or quality loss attributed to online focus groups when compared to in-person equivalents, in part attributed to the immediacy of the communication and maintained visual communication (Abrams and Gaiser 2016; Stancanelli 2010, 764; Boydell et al. 2014). Participation levels in online focus groups also tend to be more uniform and equal than in-person focus groups (Schneider et al. 2002, 31). Virtual focus groups are also subject to the 'online disinhibition effect,' a phenomenon in which participants may "loosen up, feel less restrained, and express themselves more openly" than they otherwise would in real-life face-to-face settings (Suler 2004, 321). In turn, individuals may participate and express themselves more frequently and in more 'candid' ways, potentially producing greater amounts of data. Yet, compared to in-person focus groups, research has found that discussion in online focus groups did not flow as well, though other research has suggested that online platforms are comparatively more informal, encouraging richer participation (Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 50, 54). Given this, the facilitator has heightened responsibilities in online focus groups (Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 53; Oringderff 2004).

Much of the conditions and nature of in-person focus groups are mimicked or replicated in online focus groups. In comparing both mediums, research has found that participants contribute and demonstrate interest at similar levels. Moreover, online focus groups – like in-person equivalents – fosters immediate "top-of-mind" responses, mimicking participants' natural thought processes (Abrams and Gaiser 2016; Stancanelli 2010, 764; Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 50).

Though participant attrition (drop-out) is characteristic of both in-person and online focus groups, the drop-rate of online focus group participants is contested, with some research finding drop-outs to be higher, while others suggest attrition for online mediums to be equivalent or lower for, as online focus groups are often seen as more convenient to participants (Schneider et al. 2002, 32; Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 53; Tuttas 2015, 129; Moore, McKee, and McLoughlin 2015). It is expected however, that participant incentives will mitigate attrition to some degree (Boydell

et al. 2014). The study also engaged in participant over-recruitment to compensate for such potential issues (Stewart and Shamdasani 2017, 55; Tuttas 2015, 129).

<p style="text-align:center">Data Collection</p>

To collect the data, I carried out 11 online focus groups across Saskatchewan. The number of focus groups was intended to capture the orientations and values of many Saskatchewanians of diverse backgrounds and experiences, while also ensuring that discussion would not simply be replicated or repeated by subsequent focus groups (Powell and Single 1996, 501; Morgan 1996, 144). Online focus groups were selected due to their ability to facilitate participation more easily from individuals located across the province and reduce 'groupthink' based on shared location.

Prior to commencing the focus group process, the investigation received ethics approval by the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Board. It was funded through grants provided to the broader Common Ground Initiative (Jared Wesley, Principal Investigator) via the University of Alberta Faculty of Arts, the University of Alberta Research Experience (UARE) program, and the Kule Institute for Advanced Study (KIAS).

Recruitment was conducted through paid and unpaid advertisements across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Beyond paid advertisements displayed on Facebook and Instagram, I also posted unpaid advertisements on the Common Ground organizational Twitter and Facebook accounts, my personal social media accounts, and through Kijiji. Recognizing differing age demographics between Instagram and Facebook users, hosting ads on both Meta platforms ensured greater age diversity of potential participants. Although concerns existed about the (over)saturation of younger age groups, this issue did not materialize, with a high volume of older-aged registrants originating from social media recruitment. Recruitment was also conducted through word of mouth, encouraging participants to share the focus group registration information with others they believed "might be interested."

Advertisements contained details about the project, a graphic, and a link directing visitors to a Google Form. The form requested the following information: first and last name, email address, age, racial/ethnicity, political identity, political spectrum placement, gender identity, a description of the type of community they lived in, the region they lived in, age, and how long they had lived in Saskatchewan. Individuals were also asked to input their standard availability in a given week for each predetermined focus group time block. Due to Meta's Advertising

<p style="text-align:center">50</p>

Community Standards, questions concerning ethnicity, political identity, and political spectrum placement were unable to be included in the initial form. Instead, such questions were included in a subsequent Google Form, sent to individuals who completed the first form. Though this resulted in a loss of some participants, there existed no alternative. This was not an issue in other mediums of recruitment, in which only one form was required.

Only individuals who completed all required forms were eligible to participate. After an adequate number of responses were collected, I formed prospective focus groups for each session, each populated by 4 to 8 individuals. Recognizing the potential for no-shows or participant scheduling constraints, I over-recruited by 10 to 25 percent, as suggested within the literature (Nyumba et al. 2018, 23; Rabiee 2004).

Selection of participants was based on geographic, demographic, and political diversity. All focus groups included individuals from different geographic regions of the province and locales. To increase participant diversity, all focus groups included representation from multiple urban locations (most often Saskatoon and Regina), and when possible, several rural or suburban locations. In each focus group, multiple age groups, ethnic and racial identities, and genders were represented in participation. I also strived to ensure equal (or near equal) participation of male- and female-identifying participants (with non-binary participants included when possible), representation of multiple age groups and ethnicities, as well as political diversity (primarily ensuring that progressive and conservative individuals and left- and right-wing perspectives were represented). Participants were selected in such ways to be representative of the larger group, Saskatchewan (Delli Carpini and Williams 1994). All participants were also Saskatchewan residents.

The size of each focus group was determined on the basis of ensuring diversity in information and interventions offered, while also establishing an environment that ensured everyone was both able and comfortable to participate (Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech, and Zoran 2009, 3; Gibbs 1997, 4; Delli Carpini and Williams 1994). All focus groups were 90 minutes in length and occurred on weekday evenings. The selection of days and times was based on average participant availability, as recognizing that for most, their workdays had concluded at the times of the focus group.

Concerning costs, each participant was provided a $50 e-gift card after the conclusion of the focus group. This number was modelled on the practices of the Common Ground initiative

(commongroundpolitics.ca). Research assistance was provided by Stella Gomes (a UARE intern). Due to the online medium, no other costs were incurred.

Data Review and Analysis

After the focus groups concluded, the focus group audio recordings were transcribed in their entirety using Rev.com, a computer-assisted transcription software. These transcriptions were subsequently reviewed by the researcher to review and provide corrections when necessary. Transcription has been found to facilitate data analysis, through providing a visualization of the data, as well as producing analysis that is more rigorous and reliable (Cyr 2019, 86, 87).

After the transcription process had concluded, all data was imported into MaxQDA to initiate the coding process. The data was then coded based on a coding process subscribed to by the broader social science community, consisting of three steps - open coding (theming), axial coding (tagging), and selective coding (intra-coder testing), meant to convey the general themes and trends that emerged within and across focus groups (Wesley 2021; Morgan 1997; Cyr 2019; Onwuegbuzie et al. 2009; Delli Carpini and Williams 1994).

The first stage – open coding – was conducted through a deductive coding framework, based on a pre-existing framework of themes developed during the literature review (Table 1). In this stage, I reviewed the transcriptions, identifying initially relevant areas of data that conformed to one or more relevant themes and assigning the first sets of codes. This process was repeated as necessary. I then engaged in axial coding (tagging), reviewing the data, and categorizing and labelling specific sections of text belonging under the broad themes identified in the open coding process. I also identified and produced sub-categories under each relevant theme. The third stage of qualitative analysis consisted of selective coding, in which I reviewed the data for the final time, examining the data for additional and discrepant evidence. During this step, I verified that coded data was attributed to the correct themes, and added, modified, and deleted tags as necessary. After the coding process was completed, I created a hierarchical code frame, mapping all codes observed within the data (Appendix 4). In analyzing the data, I considered numerous verbal factors, including identifying and defining specific words and phrases used and the frequency of topics, words, and phrases referenced (Cyr 2019, 93).

Description of Focus Group Activities

The content of the focus groups was standardized, with each focus group featuring the same set of questions and the same four activities. This enabled a high level of comparability to be achieved between groups, more easily identifying areas of similarity and contrast between them and increased data reliability and the quantity of data available for analysis (Morgan 1996, 142-3).

All activities were designed to measure one or more of the pillars of both traditional and alternative Saskatchewan political culture, and were piloted and tested with University of Saskatchewan and University of Regina students and faculty in January 2023. Any required changes or adjustments were made accordingly. Activity 1, "Draw Me a Saskatchewanian," was also tested through an artificial intelligence artwork generator, DALL-E.

Throughout my time with the Common Ground initiative, I received training in moderation and activity techniques prior to the focus groups. I also served as the focus group facilitator for all focus groups.

Focus group activities were selected and adapted based on those employed by the Common Ground research team and their catalogue of focus group activities. Refer to Appendix 1 for more detailed descriptions of focus group activities and the activity materials.

Table 2: Focus group activity, by political culture pillar

Activity	Pillar*			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. **Draw me a Saskatchewanian**	X	X	X	X
2. **Build a Platform**	X	X	X	(x)
3. **Cartoon and Slogan Reaction**	X	X	X	(x)
4. **Guided Story-Telling**				X

X = major focus; (x) = minor focus

*See Table 1

Activity 1: Draw Me a Saskatchewanian

In the first activity, each participant was instructed to "Draw Me a Saskatchewanian." This technique was adapted from the Common Ground approach, which uses stereotypical personification as a means of identifying shared political values. In the exercise, who is (and isn't) drawn facilitates understanding in who participants believe to be the typical, quintessential – and by extension, most influential – members of Saskatchewan society, and thus, those whose orientations likely constitute the province's political culture. Through personas, participants defined the contours of political acceptability in the province. By asking participants how the quintessential Saskatchewanian feels about or reacts to political stimuli, participants highlighted the boundaries of acceptable and desirable expression, thought, and behaviour in Saskatchewan society. Indeed, Saskatchewanians' beliefs about what is preferable or possible is shaped by what they believe that the quintessential Saskatchewanian would support.

Throughout the drawing process, I introduced additional prompts to encourage stronger personification and added detail to the Quintessential Saskatchewanian (QS). After all participants completed their character, they shared their characters' backstories with the rest of their focus group. The groups were later required to arrive at a consensus on one drawn character that they believed best encapsulated the QS, and whose character would be used in subsequent activities. Once their QS was identified, the focus group was led through a series of questions concerning the power of their chosen character in provincial political life and the accuracy of the depiction of the Quintessential Saskatchewanian in shaping Saskatchewan identity. After the opening activity, participants were asked to set their personal political beliefs and partisan identities aside; instead, the facilitator asked participants to "step into the shoes" of the QS, with the goal of having them perceive Saskatchewan politics through the eyes of the Quintessential Saskatchewanian.

Activity 2: Build a Platform

For the second activity, participants were divided into breakout rooms of two (2) to four (4) participants. Each sub-group was asked to construct a political party platform consisting of four (4) to five (5) political platform promises for a provincial political party that the quintessential Saskatchewanian would support. Platform promises, which I screened and selected ahead of time, were real and contrived party platform promises originating from past Saskatchewan Party, Progressive Conservative Party, New Democratic Party and Co-operative Commonwealth

Federation electoral platforms. The selected promises were intended to measure both traditional and alternative tenets of Saskatchewan's political culture. Discussions of the quintessential Saskatchewanian's preferred political party were policy-driven; moreover, for the purposes of simplicity, discussions were based in an assumption that the quintessential Saskatchewanian would presumably also *vote* for the respective provincial political party identified. Accordingly, the consideration of social identifies influencing political behaviour – and by extension, their electoral support – was immaterial to the scope of the study.

After the platform-building process, groups selected a representative to present the platform to the larger group. All groups presented their platforms and explained why each promise was chosen. I then led the focus group through a discussion, asking participants to identify the quintessential Saskatchewanian's chosen political party and political spectrum identity, their (the QS's) rudimentary political orientations, and how the QS perceives opposing parties and values.

Activity 3: Cartoon and Slogan Reaction

Within the third activity, focus group participants reacted and responded to different political cartoons and slogans, presented through bumper stickers, through the perspective of the quintessential Saskatchewanian. This technique was pioneered by the Common Ground team. Visual stimuli were provided through facilitator screen-sharing. This activity was intended to determine how the quintessential Saskatchewanian feels about different political issues, such as whether they find cartoon depictions to be funny or accurate, bumper stickers relevant to Saskatchewan political life, and how the QS would react to the political stimuli.

Activity 4: Guided Story-Telling

In the fourth activity, I led participants through a facilitator-led story involving the quintessential Saskatchewanian. The focus group was led through a series of hypothetical storylines involving the QS; questions were integrated and raised throughout to further the story and to address probing questions concerning Saskatchewan's political culture. During the stories, the facilitator asked participants to indicate how or what they believed the QS would react, do, or act.

Chapter 4: Findings

To assess the state and composition of Saskatchewan's alternative political culture in an era of prolonged Saskatchewan Party governance, I conducted 11 virtual focus groups in Saskatchewan in February 2023. The focus groups involved nearly 60 participants of differing backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences (refer to Appendix 2 for the full breakdown of participant demographics profiles). For a detailed code frame, refer to Appendix 4.

In the descriptions that follow, words and phrases included in quotation marks are taken verbatim from focus group transcripts. Other analyses are paraphrased based on the group discussions.

Who is a Saskatchewanian?

In the beginning of each focus group, participants were asked to "Draw a Saskatchewanian" and to describe that persona's backstory to the group. In engaging with stereotypes and qualities deemed 'characteristic', this activity identified who participants believed to be the most 'representative' and 'quintessential' Saskatchewanian. Given this, the level of consensus shared among participants and focus groups is perhaps unsurprising. Regardless of their own backgrounds, political predispositions, or identities, the majority of participants drew similar characters, suggesting that there is some degree of consensus about what it means to "look" or "be" Saskatchewanian. For a detailed breakdown of the demographic profiles of participant drawings, refer to Appendix 3.

Broadly, according to focus group participants, the quintessential Saskatchewanian was a man working in the agricultural sector. To quote one participant when probed about the identity of the quintessential Saskatchewanian, "It's the farmer. The white male farmer is the person that is conjured in people's minds." Indeed, it can be inferred that the quintessential Saskatchewanian is white; this can be attributed to the demographics of the province, in which the majority of its population is white, and other factors – such as access to capital and resources, the legacies of land grant and ownership policies which historically favoured white, European settlers, and the model of the family farm – all which have disproportionately affected non-white Saskatchewanians and thus, have limited their participation within the province's agricultural sector.

In considering individual characteristics and demographics, over two-thirds of participants (68 percent) drew a man, while 28 percent drew a woman. Every one of the women depicted were

drawn by female participants. Only two drawings featured non-binary Saskatchewanians (4 percent).

Over half (64 percent) of participants attached an age to their character. Surprisingly, of this 64 percent, most participants who assigned their characters ages drew Saskatchewanians in their 20s (27 percent). This was closely followed by characters in their 40s (24 percent). Only 4 participants (12 percent) drew characters in their 30s. Characters in their 50s, 60s, and 70s, followed with two to three drawings each (6 to 9 percent each). Surprisingly, four participants drew children; these drawings were later identified as the participants' children.

The character's racial or ethnic identities were often left unidentified, with only six participants explicitly assigning a racial or ethnic background. Of the six drawings included, only one was explicitly identified as white or Caucasian. Though unspoken, through considering the characters' often English or biblical names, their often-rural geographical locations, and their likely employment within the agricultural sector, it is reasonable to infer that the percentage of white characters is, in reality, much higher. Participants were somewhat more willing to disclose if their Saskatchewanians were Indigenous or a person of colour, with two and three drawings, respectively.

Over half of all participants drew a married person (58 percent), while 23 percent of drawings were explicitly single. Most Saskatchewanians drawn also had children (56 percent).

Concerning occupation, nearly half (46 percent) of all the characters drawn were directly employed as a farmer or in the agricultural sector, with the majority of the characters being male. Other popular occupation identifications included trades (16 percent), students (10 percent), professional and corporate careers – such as accountants and engineers (10 percent) – and those employed in the oil and gas sector (8 percent). By contrast, few drawings featured a Saskatchewanian working as a public servant, whether in government or in education. Perhaps most surprisingly, only two drawings depicted a Saskatchewanian employed within the mining sector or identified as a businessperson or entrepreneur. The selection as a farmer as the quintessential Saskatchewanian is especially fascinating when considering contrary participant interventions, in which participants believed the quintessential Saskatchewanian to "feel forgotten" or "neglected" *because* of their farming occupation.

Participants were divided on where the typical Saskatchewanian lived; nearly half of participants (48 percent) drew Saskatchewanians based in urban centres. Of the 26 drawings

portraying urban-dwellers, many explicitly identified their characters as living in Saskatoon (8 drawings) or Regina (4 drawings). Over a third of total drawings (37 percent) were meanwhile located in rural Saskatchewan. Such findings are promising in their reflection of reality, with nearly two-thirds of Saskatchewanians living in census metropolitan areas (Government of Saskatchewan 2023).

Despite the minority of characters being located in rural Saskatchewan, one participant (who drew an urban Saskatchewanian), noted that they "all have some sort of a tie to rural Saskatchewan. Even if you grew up in Saskatoon, you still think you're a part of a rural community…" Such remarks suggest that 'rural Saskatchewan' is not only a location, but a state of mind, a collective memory, or an *imagined community* (Anderson 1983). In considering such tensions, two participants drew two characters each – depicting both a rural and an urban Saskatchewanian. The remaining 15 percent of drawings were not clearly identified as being located in urban or rural Saskatchewan.

In this regard, dissension grants some degree of credibility in the possible existence of a pronounced urban political subculture, or the emergence of a competing complete political culture in itself. Moreover, only one character was explicitly identified as living in northern Saskatchewan, possibly alluding to a non-representation of northern Saskatchewanians (and the region's predominantly Indigenous population) in Saskatchewan's political culture.

Though nearly half of all characters drawn by participants were based in urban Saskatchewan, far fewer of the quintessential Saskatchewanians were. Of the eleven characters chosen by the various groups as quintessential, only two (18 percent) lived in a city, with the remaining nine (82 percent) living in rural Saskatchewan. For a detailed breakdown regarding the demographic profiles of the quintessential Saskatchewanians, refer to Appendix 3.

Several of the characters drawn by all participants were highly educated, with nearly 16 percent of the personas identified as possessing or pursuing a university degree. Characters with university-level educations tended to skew younger and were described as women, commensurate with the demographic trends of post-secondary education in Saskatchewan.

Financially, all (100 percent) quintessential Saskatchewanians were financially secure, often being described through vague terms such as "well-off" or "comfortable."

Concerning greater background, six participants (11 percent) explicitly identified their characters as having been born and raised Saskatchewanian. This only slightly outnumbers the five

individuals (9 percent) who indicated their characters were newcomers, arriving in the province through immigration. All these characters were also new to Canada, immigrating to Canada for educational and employment opportunities.

Unsurprisingly, mentions of the Saskatchewan Roughriders – the province's Canadian Football League team and only major-league sports franchise – were frequent; nearly a third of all characters (30 percent) identified as fans, with characters wearing "Roughrider green" or Roughrider jerseys, situated at Mosaic Stadium, or described as cheering for the Riders with their families or with a "Pil" (Pilsner) at a local bar.

In sharing their drawings, several participants (17 percent) noted that they based their characters on themselves; an additional nine percent identified their characters as someone they personally knew – as a son, an uncle, or a son-in-law. This suggests a connection between the participant's personal and collective identities, a promising and optimistic finding regarding the state of community and representation in Saskatchewan.

Significantly, the participants' drawings were highly saturated with mentions of and references to farming and agriculture; nearly half of all drawings (46 percent) referred to Saskatchewan's farming or agriculture communities – including through drawings of farms, wheat sheafs, grain elevators, pitchforks, silos, hay bales, tractors, cowboy hats, and the use of the Wheat Pool logo. Such findings were similarly replicated in the backstories of participants' characters and in the broader discussions of the focus group.

Participants also attested to the importance of farming and agriculture to Saskatchewanians, beyond those directly employed in the sector; in character backstories, numerous participants referenced their character's background in or connection to Saskatchewan's farming and agriculture sector, with several characters growing up on a farm or having family members who currently or previously owned a farm or worked in agriculture, more generally. This recurrent connection to farming and agriculture is not surprising as according to one participant, "when you talk about Saskatchewan, the first thing people think about is agriculture." Others echoed this sentiment, noting that while "primary agriculture… isn't huge and not the biggest part of [Saskatchewan's] GDP, agriculture is what we're known for." Several other participants observed that the characters' ties to agriculture reflected reality, conjecturing that "the majority of us [here] come from farming backgrounds."

Characters who worked directly in agriculture were likely to work on a small, independent family farm, despite actual trends pointing to the decline of family farm structures. Yet at the same time, these characters were overwhelmingly described and identified by participants as conservative or Saskatchewan Party supporters; in reality, the historical "partnership" between small family farmers and the CCF-NDP (and the supporting political culture) is well documented. Such contrasting findings suggest an apparent disconnect in the Saskatchewan collective's memory of the province's farming and agricultural sector and the participants within it. Others, meanwhile, noted that the characters' farms had been in their families "for generations," with their farm "passed down" to them. Given this, it is perhaps unsurprising that the very same characters were described as right-wing conservatives; as noted prior, 'new' subsequent farming generations adopted more fiscally conservative, independent, and neoliberal political orientations.

The backstories of the drawn characters provided by participants similarly attested to the tradition and enduring persistence of farming and agriculture in Saskatchewan life. Participants also noted that their characters' identities were "very much shaped" by their employment in or connection to farming and agriculture, attesting to the importance of the sector in what it means to *be* a Saskatchewanian, even in contemporary times. Such findings arose despite the contradictory influence of wheat in Saskatchewan; several participants were conscious of the apparent discrepancy in the attributed continued importance of agriculture to Saskatchewanian identity, remarking that "fewer than 10 percent of Saskatchewan's [labour force] are farmers." Noting this, the findings overwhelmingly suggest that the influence of wheat and agriculture towards Saskatchewan's political culture – whether traditional or alternative – has persisted, even despite changes in the provincial economy's character, conditions, and its associated labour force.

The concept of tradition and traditional identities was also frequently mentioned in discussions; in introducing their drawings, several participants used descriptors such as "traditional" and "old school." Unsurprisingly, drawings of farmers were most likely to be identified as such. Intriguingly, as will be discussed further, characters identified by their participants as 'traditional' were more likely to resonate with political culture pillars a part of Saskatchewan's *alternative* political culture.

During the initial activity, participants were asked to name the Saskatchewanian they drew. Figure 1 illustrates the names assigned to the character, with larger names representing more

frequent mentions. The most popular names were Joe (9 percent), Bob (7 percent), and Jane (5 percent). Over 10 percent of names referred to the character's occupation as a farmer (such as Farmer Joe or Jane the Farmer), suggesting that one's occupation as a farmer or involvement in the agricultural sector was integral, or at the very least, closely linked to one's greater identity.

Figure 1: Names of drawn Saskatchewanians by popularity

After completing their drawings, participants introduced the Saskatchewanians they drew, offering often complex and detailed backstories. There was considerable overlap in these backstories – including in name, location, and occupation – and most participants tied their character's identity and backstories to their own personal experiences or the networks and communities of individuals they knew. The following is a composite description based on these discussions:

> *Farmer Joe is a man in his early- to mid-40s, located in rural Saskatchewan. Born and raised in Saskatchewan, he toils on a second-generation farm, passed onto him by his parents. He is happily married with several children. When he's not farming, Joe goes to the local bar and drinks some Pilsner with his buddies, cheers for the Roughriders, and spends time outdoors.*

After sharing their drawings and backstories with the rest of the group, participants were asked to come to a consensus on which of the characters represented the "quintessential" or

"typical" Saskatchewanian. While some groups easily arrived at agreement, others grappled with designating one character as "representative" of the greater Saskatchewan population. Some groups specifically expressed difficulty in being tasked by "splitting" the identity of the Saskatchewan population, often based on the rural-urban divide.

Most groups concluded that the "quintessential Saskatchewanian" was not "average," "typical," or a "representative" Saskatchewanian, but one that most "people would think of," despite changes in and increased diversity of Saskatchewan's population. The quintessential Saskatchewanian was also selected despite contrasting real-life population demographics and backgrounds, with one participant noting that the selection was "not actually what this province looks like." Others simply arrived at their conclusion based on the character's proximity to the agricultural sector, or the character's background in *both* urban and rural Saskatchewan. Largely, the Saskatchewanian chosen was often more a caricature than a real person, with participants often attempting to select a character with the most "diverse" and "representative" background possible. In selecting the "stereotypical" Saskatchewanian, participants acknowledged that this perception of the typical Saskatchewanian is "very difficult to change," attesting to the persistence of political culture.

Individuals who drew the designated 'quintessential Saskatchewanian' were also asked to provide up to three words they believed that the quintessential Saskatchewanian would describe themselves as. Figure 2 illustrates the descriptor words assigned to the character, with larger words representing more frequent mentions. Most words were only used once, apart from hard-working with seven mentions (64 percent), and proud and reasonable with two mentions each. The recurrent mention of 'hard-working' both affirms the importance of the character's occupational performance and business to their identity, and resembles Saskatchewan rugged individualist messaging, which has affirmed the importance of and pride in hard work and self-reliance. The twice-mentioned 'reasonable' may also allude to Saskatchewan's alternative political culture tenet, pragmatism, which considers Saskatchewanians to possess a 'practical' and reasonable political mentality. Other words included references to simplicity (18 percent), through references to 'down-to-earth' and 'simple.' Some participants (18 percent) also suggested the quintessential Saskatchewanian identifies with Saskatchewan heritage and tradition – through traditional and

'country', the latter of which refers to rural Saskatchewanian identity. Another participant explicitly identified the quintessential Saskatchewanian as 'independent' – an explicit reference to the alternative political culture value individualism, which stresses individual initiative and self-reliance. Contrarily, other groups referenced the quintessential Saskatchewanian's penchant for community, identifying the character as "caring" and "reliable" – directly referencing the traditional political culture value, collectivism.

Although many names were identified, for the purposes of the study, the quintessential Saskatchewanian will henceforth be referred to as "Joe."

Figure 2: Descriptor words of Quintessential Saskatchewanians by popularity

Political Influence and Identities

After arriving at a chosen Saskatchewanian, participants were asked how much 'power' Joe (the quintessential Saskatchewanian) has in politics, to determine how much Saskatchewan's political and partisan environments – including its political culture – reflects the quintessential Saskatchewanian's orientations.

Focus groups were divided over how much political influence Joe possessed. Some participants felt that Joe possessed considerable political clout, often citing the *perceived* importance that farming and rural Saskatchewanians have in influencing and upholding the Saskatchewan Party government. Despite this, many participants believed that Joe was *unable* to recognize the political weight and privileges he held as a "straight white older" man. Others thought he was unaware of how much power he has.

Still, other participants thought that Joe is less able to influence Saskatchewan's political system than Joe believes, due to his rural location and the distribution of political representation

in the province. Others suggested that Joe's political clout was limited, only exercisable "among his friends" and on "coffee row." Several other participants also suggested that Joe's power was 'diluted;' in theory, participants believed Joe possessed political power, yet due to party-voter disconnect, believed that the dominant political party did not, in practice, govern in ways fully representative or reflective of Joe's political clout. Such an observation is important within this study, acknowledging that while the Saskatchewan Party's prolonged time in government may *suggest* the emergence of a new, alternative political culture, it alone is not sufficient.

In considering Joe's employment sector (agriculture), participants believed him to be massively influential in provincial politics, noting that the current Saskatchewan Party government has acted and governed in ways to not "piss off the farmers," or otherwise risk not "getting back into power." Yet, others believed that Joe – as an individual working in the agriculture sector – was experiencing status loss, citing that the "actual power in politics in this province is with oil and gas and big corporations."

In accordance with the literature, participants generally agreed that Joe was most influential at the provincial level, and least at the federal level – attesting to Saskatchewan's traditional and *alternative* predispositions for western alienation sentiments. Specifically, one participant suggested that the quintessential Saskatchewanian's position in Canada as a Saskatchewanian was analogous to the Saskatchewanian's support of the Toronto Maple Leafs, as the quintessential Saskatchewanian is "used to teams that never win."

Beyond lacking influence at the national and federal levels, participants also suggested that the quintessential Saskatchewanian feels misunderstood, both politically and otherwise. Specifically, they noted that the quintessential Saskatchewanian has issues with their perceptions, believing that the federal government and the Canadian population views themselves – and the greater Saskatchewan populace – as "hicks" and "rednecks," unsophisticated, simple, and "close-minded" in their political orientations.

Participants were equally cognizant of who was *absent* or *excluded* in the models of the quintessential Saskatchewanian – and by extension, in the province's political culture. Several participants observed that if the quintessential Saskatchewanian was Indigenous, they would lack power, and noted that the character would not feel represented in the Saskatchewan Party government or any other provincial political party, for that matter. Moreover, participants also observed the lack of discussion concerning the role of Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan,

suggesting that Indigenous perspectives and issues concerning Indigenous peoples fail to make it into the mainstream of contemporary Saskatchewan provincial politics.

Participants were later asked to identify the quintessential Saskatchewanian politically. As part of this, participants placed the quintessential Saskatchewan on the traditional left-right political spectrum – where 1 represents far left, 4 centre, and 7 representing far right. All but one group (88 percent) placed the quintessential Saskatchewanian on the political right, with half of the groups (50 percent) assigning the Saskatchewanian a position of 5.5. Intriguingly, only one group disagreed, suggesting that the quintessential Saskatchewan was in the "middle," assigning them a 4. Such a result lends some degree of credibility to literature on alternative Saskatchewan provincial political culture, which has posited that Saskatchewanians have abandoned rigid left-right ideological adherence, moving instead to the political centre.

Building upon this, participants were also asked to determine which provincial political party the quintessential Saskatchewanian would identify with and vote for. Participants remarked that the quintessential Saskatchewanian feels "represented" and "empowered" by the Saskatchewan Party government, with all but one group identifying the quintessential Saskatchewanian as a Saskatchewan Party supporter (91 percent) or as a conservative (55 percent). Meanwhile, one lone quintessential Saskatchewanian was described as a "closeted NDP." The primacy of secrecy regarding the character's expression of her political identity suggests that being an NDP is unacceptable in Saskatchewan political culture.

Recognizing that many of the quintessential Saskatchewanians identified as rural-dwelling or working in agriculture, such findings largely reject the literature, which has traditionally considered farmers and rural populations to serve as significant blocs of support for the CCF-NDP. Yet, such findings also lend credibility to the theory of rural population displacement; it is plausible that these farming or rural-dwelling Saskatchewanians represented the (relatively) new, younger generation of farmers who replaced the old-stock farming generation that possessed an appreciation for the CCF-NDP. It is also conceivable that these characters constitute the class of rural Saskatchewanians experiencing feelings of discontent and abandonment resulting from the erosion of rural society. The Saskatchewan Party may represent a guardian against that further decline, whereas the NDP may be viewed as a harbinger of it..

Intriguingly, some participants also offered explanations as to *why* the quintessential Saskatchewanian identified with the party or political ideology they did. Some noted that the

quintessential Saskatchewanian identified as conservative because it was "the way it's always been"; understanding that the majority of Saskatchewan farmers traditionally aligned with the left-wing CCF and NDP, such sentiments suggest the existence of a false sense of social consciousness in the province's political environment. Meanwhile, others attributed the quintessential Saskatchewanian's support of right-wing parties to generational and family dynamics, noting that the quintessential Saskatchewanian is attached to a "tradition" of voting for and supporting the same parties and movements their parents and families have.

In assigning political identifications, participants also remarked on the conditions and factors contributing to their designations. Several participants spoke about the apparent decline of the CCF-NDP, noting that their participants were observing and being subject to a shift of "moving further and further to the right," to the result of "losing faith in the NDP."

Though the near entirety of the quintessential Saskatchewanians were positioned as voters of the Saskatchewan Party, participants – and their characters – remained conscious of the continued influence and 'remnants' of the CCF-NDP. Several participants acknowledged that Saskatchewan is the "home of the CCF," suggesting the longevity of the CCF in Saskatchewan's political memory and environment.

State of Saskatchewan Politics

Concerning the political environment and topical to this study's focus, participants – and by extension, their characters – were also cognizant of changes occurring within the political system. Indeed, participants noted that "[political] attitudes and orientations have shifted" to be more in line with contemporary Saskatchewan political values, with the populace going from "left- to right-leaning."

Participants also discussed the social shifts altering the provincial political system and the role of agents within it. As part of this, participants remarked on the trend of agrarian and rural decline in Saskatchewan. Specifically, participants drew attention to the changing practices of provincial political parties, noting that parties are now less focused on "supporting farmers and supporting families that have been on farms for generations," believing that the agrarian voting bloc has diminished in power. Some participants attributed this to the changing nature of farming, including the move to corporate farming, which has reduced the number of individuals involved in the province's agriculture sector. Noting such decline, some participants remarked that if the

quintessential Saskatchewanian isn't a "dying breed, he may be an endangered breed," suggesting that rural Saskatchewanians may not be representing the province in the future.

Participants also remarked on the apparent growing rural-urban divide in Saskatchewan. In sharing their characters' backstories, several participants drew attention to their characters' changing locations, often moving from rural Saskatchewan to a city: in turn, the characters' experienced a corresponding political shift, from one political party to another. Participants also acknowledged that had their focus group drawn urban Saskatchewanians, the chosen character would likely not be a Saskatchewan Party supporter. Though this is important, the very fact that participants did not choose urban Saskatchewanians is perhaps more important in determining *who* is politically determinant and reflected in the province's alternative political culture. Despite this, overall, such observations lend credibility to the potential emergence of a competing, counter urban political culture in the Saskatchewan political landscape, or at the very least, a growing subculture.

What is Saskatchewan's current political culture?

After each focus group arrived at a "quintessential Saskatchewanian" I asked participants to share how Joe would feel, perceive, or react to various political conditions and stimuli. Through discussing the politics of Joe – representing the 'politically dominant' sect in the Saskatchewan public – I also uncovered what is (and isn't) included in Saskatchewan's political culture. As determined, Joe's political outlook is best conceptualized as a 'blend' containing aspects and pillars of both the traditional and alternative political culture.

As described through discussion, Joe is conservative, notably in his penchants for individualism and laissez-faire attitudes. Specifically, participants posited Joe as 'politically self-centred,' holding political orientations and preferring policy options that favour independence and ones directly relevant to his individual well-being and personal "day-to-day" circumstances. One participant described Joe as an "'it's all about me' kind of a person," while another said that Joe is "all about [his] personal success and what's in it for him." Joe is also driven by egotropic (pocketbook) economic considerations and holds preferences shaped by a greater "do-it-yourself" attitude. At the same time, Joe's political orientations and actions are constrained by (collectivist and dirigiste) tradition, practicality, and a penchant for community; given this, Joe operates in a provincial political environment of flux, characterized by necessities of political flexibility and

compromise. For further details on Joe's political preferences, see Figure 3, which illustrates Joe's preferred and prioritized policy options – as obtained through the 'Build a Platform' focus group activity.

Figure 3: Platform promise options by frequency

SOURCE: Constructed political party platforms (N = 18).

Note: Participants selected up to seven (7) campaign promises to construct a political party platform the Quintessential Saskatchewanian would vote for. Frequency refers to the number of times the specific promise was included in a constructed political party platform.

In political involvement, participants believe Joe's participation is limited, engaging primarily through discussions with his "buddies on 'coffee row'" or on Election Day at the voting station. When he does participate, however, it is in support of his preferred party, the Saskatchewan Party. Joe also practices modesty in his expressions of political opinion, with some suggesting that Joe "keep [their opinions] to themselves." While Joe is rigid and loyal in his partisan identification and support, and though he operates with an enduring sense of animosity towards the NDP, this adversarial disposition is generally not reflected in their relationships with individual Saskatchewanians.

The next section of the chapter considers each political culture tenet set individually, to determine each value's presence (or absence) in Saskatchewan's current political culture.

<u>Collectivism | Individualism</u>

According to our participants, Joe is an individualist in a collectivist world – or rather, within Saskatchewan's political, economic, and social environments. Specifically, participants remarked that Joe possesses an 'individual first' mentality – or as some participants termed it – "Joe first" – further reflected in Joe's politically "self-centred" behaviour. Joe's perceptions of, and orientations towards, politics are largely determined by whether they directly affect Joe's personal success and wellbeing, determined by questioning "what's in it for him?" Participants also overwhelmingly framed Joe as independent with a belief in self-reliance, who holds political orientations and supports policy options that defend such values.

Noting his "all about himself" mindset, Joe's disapproval for social programming and his belief in small government is unsurprising. As previously mentioned, Joe is immensely focused on maintaining his economic and social standing; in turn, Joe considers social welfare supports as threats to his economic privilege, perceiving the delivery of such programs as simply "giving away all of the money." Joe's perception of welfare recipients is no better, believing individuals receiving "handouts" or "free rides" as lazy and "undeserving."

As stated previously, Joe is a "hard-working" and independent Saskatchewan man. Thus, to Joe, the very concept of welfare programming, and those who benefit from it, are in direct contradiction of such principles. Joe's experience as a farmer has also caused Joe to believe the objective of welfare programming is misguided; Joe believes it is "unfair" to be paying for welfare for others when "they" (whether current welfare recipients or the provincial government) should be taking care of people like him – sometimes struggling farmers who provide for Saskatchewanians and "serve as the backbone of the province's economy." In line with his penchant for self-reliance, Joe, as a small independent farmer, has "busted his ass" to get where he is and takes care of himself all on his own; he thinks others should do the same, instead of "grumbling around" and "gathering cheques" from other people's work.

Instead, Joe believes that the welfare system should be reformed (such as through the adoption of 'workfare' policies) to move recipients from welfare to work, altogether reducing government dependency in favour of self-reliance and allowing recipients to "have ownership of their own futures." Beyond a belief in hard work, participants also suggested Joe's support for such reform lies in his position as a rural Saskatchewan man. With the majority of welfare recipients residing in urban centres, and Joe's attitudes largely determined by how policies (do or

do not) impact him, Joe as a rural man, neither sees nor receives any benefits from welfare programming.

Joe's preferences for independence are also reflected in his attitudes towards the roles and responsibilities of the provincial government, ultimately believing it to be "too big." Attributable in part to Joe's position as a farmer, and hence, a businessperson, and the greater culture of the farm economy, participants believe that Joe is "used to dealing and handling things on his own." Expectedly, Joe believes that the government "gets in the way of his interests" and perceives the government as "meddling" in his personal affairs; ultimately, Joe is wholly uninterested in the provincial government "telling him what to do." Moreover, Joe believes that in its current state (and size), the government is "wholly ineffective." Instead, Joe believes the size of government should be reduced, as evident by its frequent mention (11 features) in constructed political party platforms. Several participants acknowledged how "expected" Joe's attitudes were, remarking that such attitudes are "boilerplate" for right-wing parties and actors, of which Joe is included. Other participants raised other, non-ideological explanations towards understanding Joe's preference for small government. Some suggested that Joe's perceived 'concern' for the size of government is facade; what Joe is instead focused on is government spending, believing that his "tax dollars are paying for too many cushy and unnecessary jobs." Thus, to Joe, reducing the size of the government serves as a personal "cost-saving measure." Regardless of Joe's actual motivations, Joe nonetheless perceives the reduction in the size of government as a vehicle to achieve them.

Contrary to Saskatchewanians' historical popular support for unions (Atkinson, Berdahl, McGrane, and White 2012), and despite Saskatchewan's and the CCF-NDP's background in, and partnerships with, labour organization, Joe neither supports nor is concerned with unions or labour organization. Such is evident in the 'Build a Platform' exercise, with only two (2) platforms included the "pro-business" (anti-union) platform promise, while a mere one (1) platform included the pro-union counterpart; all which suggest that policy issues concerning unions and labour organization exist outside of the political mainstream and lack relevance for many. To justify such orientations, participants cited Joe's individualistic and pragmatic mentality, suggesting that Joe "isn't thinking about labour laws much" as he, a farmer, lacks personal experiences or connections to labour organization. Other participants suggested that Joe's disregard and antipathy for labour organization is rooted in other individualist, anti-government sentiments; participants suggested

70

that Joe perceived unions as a part of government, in turn extending Joe's assessment of government to apply to labour unions as well.

Unlike the dominant contemporary conservative strain of political culture in Alberta, discussions of individual rights and freedoms were wholly absent in focus group discussions, and thus presumably, in alternative Saskatchewan political culture discourse as well.

Expectedly, discussions of cooperation and the cooperative movement were sparse. While there were features and mentions of cooperatives, grain elevators, and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool in several character drawings and descriptions, they were only featured in the backstory of one chosen quintessential Saskatchewanian, who worked directly for the grain elevator. Though cooperatives continue to exist in the province (see Federated Co-operatives Limited, and the many credit unions, for example) and while such structures and programs live on in the Saskatchewan collective's memory, they do not meaningfully do so in Saskatchewan's alternative political culture. This was further proven in the 'Build a Platform' activity, in which only one group (out of 18) believed Joe would both support a political party whose platform included support for future development of cooperatives.

Although Joe overall does not support formal collectivist measures or in Saskatchewan's economy or society, participants nevertheless believe Joe to be a community-minded person. To participants, Joe subscribes to a "neighbours help neighbours" philosophy, who is always willing to "lend a hand" and would "give you the shirt off his back if he thought that you needed it." For Joe, this sense of community also extends to involvement in local affairs and initiatives, with Joe being a "part of the community in whichever way that he can be." Participants believed Joe is involved in a myriad of ways, including community functions, volunteering, or through political organization, such as with the Rural Municipality or a farmer's association. This apparent incompatibility between Joe's personal views towards members of the Saskatchewan community and his formal political orientations towards Saskatchewan's economy and society makes it challenging to understand Joe, yet provides insights and makes a distinction as to how such core values – such as community – has endured in Saskatchewan life, though not in its political culture. This incompatibility is also recognized by participants, who acknowledged that "despite political differences, *individual* people are very willing to help out others" making a distinction between proper collectivism and individual-led, yet community-minded activities.

<u>Dirigisme | Laissez-Faire</u>

To participants, Joe's orientations towards the role and responsibilities of the provincial government in Saskatchewan's social and economic environments are at best, varied, and at worst, illogical. Though Joe's orientations reveal 'glimpses' of left- and right-wing political influences, Joe's political beliefs are defined by his inability and refusal to position himself within the confines of one ideological camp. Indeed, although Joe believes that the provincial government is important and that there is a place for it in Saskatchewan's society and economy, he also believes that this space is subject to limitations.

In line with laissez-faire values, Joe's orientations towards the provincial government are largely shaped by economic considerations. In casting his political values, Joe is highly economic-centric and views himself as an "economic man." In an homage to pragmatism, Joe picks and chooses orientations (and political parties) that he believes advances his personal and the province's real-life economic conditions and believes the current state of the economy is an important factor in casting his political opinion (and vote).

Economically, Joe largely believes in the supremacy of private enterprise, with private actors serving as the primary forces in leading Saskatchewan's economy. Simply, Joe does not believe the government should be responsible for leading the province's economy. This is not surprising given that Joe likely owns and operates his own business. To Joe, private sector intervention creates "unparalleled" levels of opportunity, "abundance," and potential for wealth. Of course, Joe also regards such preference for private intervention pragmatically, viewing private enterprise as more profitable and requiring less tax dollars. Joe's affinity for private economic intervention is also grounded in independence and self-reliance; through his time living in rural Saskatchewan, Joe has achieved his economic objectives autonomously. Accordingly, Joe "does not see the need" for government intervention in the economy.

However, this does not mean that Joe believes that the government should be excluded from participating in Saskatchewan's economy. Although relegated to a diminished role, Joe believes it is the responsibility of the government to "make Saskatchewan an attractive place for private investment," believing that the government should serve in a "supportive" capacity. Joe also believes that such support is paramount to his individual economic well-being; through advances which work to make the agricultural economy more receptive to private enterprise, Joe's personal financial standing is subsequently improved as well. Beyond this, Joe, however, does

demonstrate some flexibility in his beliefs towards government intervention, but only if it directly impacts him. Though Joe is generally against large-scale government intervention within the economy, he is willing to renege on such attitudes if it benefits him economically. To this end, several participants commented that Joe would support government intervention that would allow Joe to save money – such as normalizing fuel costs – or earn a profit – such as through grain marketing and selling.

Partly attributable to his pro-small government attitudes, Joe firmly believes that the "less [government] interference, the better." To Joe, the provincial government "gets in the way of his interests" and inappropriately "meddles" in his personal and economic affairs, such as through regulation and taxation. His political preferences are also determined in consideration of profits and "if it will save the taxpayer money." Unsurprisingly, much of Joe's underlying rationale towards his adoption of laissez-faire attitudes, more generally, can also be attributed to such logic, believing the dirigiste alternatives to be far too "costly."

To this same end, Joe is also vehemently in favour of deregulation (featured in 13 out of 18 platforms). He does not understand why "things need to be controlled or dictated by the government," believing regulation to be an example of governmental overreach. Joe also struggles to see the value or importance in such initiatives, believing regulation to be nothing more than "frustrating red tape." Such attitudes are partly shaped by pragmatic ideals, believing that the operations of and his interactions with the government could be "streamlined" to become more efficient through deregulation. Moreover, and as mentioned prior, Joe largely perceives Saskatchewan politics through an "economic lens," in which the state of his personal and Saskatchewanian economies are highly important. Accordingly, Joe views deregulation as an instrument to stimulate the (private) business environment in Saskatchewan and make it more competitive. Several participants also suggested that Joe's support for deregulation and small government is due to his penchant for individualism and independence; Joe is governed by a demand for "control," wanting to do "what he wants and when he wants to" and "make things happen by [himself]," and not be "bogged down" and controlled by government paperwork and bureaucracy.

Though Joe's disfavour towards welfare programming on individualist grounds is well-known, discussions of outright welfare state retrenchment were significantly less frequent. Though this could be taken to suggest that Joe is in favour of maintaining Saskatchewan's welfare state, it

is more likely that the lack of attention can be attributed to pragmatism, reflecting Joe's real-life, changing political priorities (of which welfare programming is not included). Recognizing this lack of prioritization granted to discussions of welfare programming, this policy option is not a suitable gauge for determining Saskatchewan's current dominant political culture strain.

Meanwhile, the fact that Joe *should* logically support the privatization of Crown corporations and the creation of a two-tier (public-private) healthcare system, given his small government mentality and penchant for reduced taxpayer spending, was not lost on participants; yet to them, Joe was an "irrational" actor, wholly unaware of the apparent inconsistencies between his political beliefs.

Indeed, discussions prove the contrary, with Joe believed to overwhelmingly support the preservation, and at point, the strengthening of Saskatchewan's public healthcare. The imagined political party platforms affirmed this, in which participants overwhelmingly believed (83 percent of platforms) Joe supported the maintenance of Saskatchewan's public healthcare. In explaining such discrepancies, many participants cited the primacy of healthcare to the province's history, suggesting that public healthcare was a "hallmark" and a "Saskatchewan tradition." Joe is not only cognizant of Saskatchewan's namesake as the "birthplace of medicare," but proud of it, believing it to be integral to who he is as a Saskatchewanian; accordingly, his political orientations reflect such aspirations to preserve its legacy. Others attribute his attitudes to an ethos of *pragmatism*, believing that public healthcare "costs less" than private equivalents. Also grounded in practicality, others suggested Joe's age to be a contributing factor; as an older, "aging" man, Joe is believed to likely use and rely on healthcare services more heavily than his younger (non-quintessential) Saskatchewanian counterparts. Meanwhile, others tied Joe's support to his penchant for community, suggesting that public healthcare is an expression of Joe's care for others. Joe's political orientations towards healthcare are also said to reflect those of the Saskatchewan populace, with several participants remarking the maintained popularity of public healthcare in the province, even amongst "hardline conservatives." Although some participants believed Joe to support private healthcare alternatives – such as the development of a two-tier system – due to his individualist and self-centred political inclinations – such comments were generally far and few in between, reflected in only three out of 18 imagined political party platforms (17 percent). More often, in instances in which participants suggested that Joe possessed a penchant for private healthcare, these preferences were expressed in *pragmatic*, moderate, and limited ways, such as

through selective private healthcare service offerings – much akin to the Saskatchewan Party's real-life practices.

Like public healthcare, Joe also thinks that the provincial government should be responsible for providing rudimentary services and utilities, largely through the vehicle of Crown corporations – even despite his otherwise pro-small government spirit. Though Joe supports private enterprise and intervention, he is nonetheless against privatization measures that seek to erode such public entities. Importantly, Joe's support for government intervention within the economy is not only scarce, but largely exists *exclusively* within the realm of Crown corporations. Participants also acknowledged a distinction in Joe's support for such institutions; while in strong favour of keeping Crown corporations that provide "essential" services public – including telecommunications, water, and power – Joe is more open to supporting privatization measures in non-essential economic sectors, such as natural resources and liquor, echoing recent moves made under the Moe Saskatchewan Party government. Pragmatically, some attributed Joe's support for Crown corporations to his rural residency and the absence of economic competition in rural Saskatchewan; in turn, Joe regards Crown corporations as a *necessary* vehicle to access services and utilities he would struggle to receive otherwise. Yet, some participants again suggest Joe's preference for Crown corporations stems from his penchant for community, due to the very nature of Crown corporations as publicly (community-) funded entities.

Like public healthcare, the position of and perceptions towards Crown corporations in Saskatchewan similarly appears to largely transcend the traditional left-right political spectrum; indeed, several participants remarked that Crown corporations continue "enjoy overwhelming popular support" in the province, even amongst conservatives and those who "tend to be very anti-big government." Crown corporations are also similarly regarded as a Saskatchewan "tradition." Resultantly, Joe wants to keep things "the way they always have been," perceiving privatization as a vehicle eroding traditional Saskatchewan life.

Hinterland | Heartland

According to participants, Joe is confused, if not downright conflicted about Saskatchewan's standing in the Canadian federation and how (and when) he believes the Saskatchewan government should interact with the Canadian federal government and eastern Canada. Though Joe is proud of his Saskatchewan identity, he also identifies as a Canadian, but is

unsure what these (sometimes) duelling identities means for him and his province. Such findings reaffirm 2021 Viewpoint survey data, with 85 and 86 percent of Saskatchewanians feeling attached to Saskatchewan and Canada, respectively (Wesley, Berdahl, and Samson 2021). Joe is also governed by a deep-rooted desire to see Saskatchewan thrive and gain the recognition it "deserves," though as a distinct, but equal *part* of a greater Canada.

Despite immense political, economic, and social change occurring within Saskatchewan and across Canada, Joe believes that western alienation has remained a permanent and central fixture of the province's story and what it means to be a Saskatchewanian and will continue to be evermore. To this end, Joe feels ignored, if not forgotten – by both the federal government and the rest of Canada, under- or even unrepresented in national discussions and the national political, economic, and social landscapes. In turn, Joe perceives the federal government, along with other national actors, as "outsiders" who are "out of touch" and "disconnected" with Saskatchewan. Accordingly, Joe is doubtful and distrustful of external actors in their regard and intentions towards Saskatchewan, perceiving their actions as disingenuous and lacking substance. He similarly believes that the federal government continues to exploit Saskatchewan, with little gain for the province.

While western alienation has remained a dominant force in Joe's life and in Saskatchewan's politics and society more generally, its character has changed. Indeed, the subjects of Joe's (and Saskatchewan's) antagonism have evolved to become more selective. Though participants recognized that Joe continues to be fuelled by a distaste for Quebec and "the French," participants also made the distinction that Joe does not believe them (nor central or Eastern Canada) to be the sources of his (and Saskatchewan's) western discontent. Instead, Joe assigns responsibility to the federal government and the federal Liberal Party (when they serve as the governing party). Indeed, the more things change, the more things stay the same, with the disdain for eastern Canadian Liberals transmitted over generations; the way that Joe's father regarded Pierre Elliott Trudeau is the same way Joe considers Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the federal Liberal government. Like his father, Joe views (Justin) Trudeau with suspicion and believes his "support" of the West to be performative and dishonest. Participants, however, challenged the merits of Joe's disdain for Trudeau, noting that many of "these people don't actually know why they dislike him," but that such perceptions were implanted by their families and communities.

Though Joe wants to see Saskatchewan succeed, he nonetheless believes it should occur within a greater and united Canadian environment. Given this, Joe's actions and political orientations reflect a "spirit of Confederation." Accordingly, and unlike some of his Albertan neighbours, Saskatchewan or western separatism (often coined as #Wexit) does not resonate with Joe, who believes it to be short-sighted, if not illogical. Moreover, western separatism goes against Joe's sense of community. While Joe is "pro-Saskatchewan," he also recognizes that "extremism is not the answer." Simply put, Joe believes that Saskatchewan *needs* Canada. Yet, participants noted that this 'need' was not characterized by a sense of dependency or reliance on Canada or other provinces, but instead, in a belief that Saskatchewan is stronger, together. Joe also views the converse statement – that Canada *needs* Saskatchewan – to be true as well. Beyond references to Saskatchewan recognition, Joe is a "team player" who believes that Canada is a sum of all its parts, requiring and depending on the strength of each of its component pieces, the provinces.

Yet at the same time, Joe is also sympathetic to "Saskatchewan First" sentiments. Though several participants expressed concern about the potential "supremacist" or "nationalist" implications of "Saskatchewan First," participants believed Joe's support of such messages were generally well-intentioned. Indeed, participants explicitly noted that Joe was not selfish, close-minded, nor does he consider himself to be superior, and does not subscribe to applications of "Saskatchewan First" that promote such. To some, "Saskatchewan First" is in alignment with Joe's community-minded spirit and the importance of "place" to him, perceiving the messaging as a vehicle to ensure that his community's (Saskatchewan) interests and well-being are being "looked after." Others believe "Saskatchewan First" is an homage to Joe's pride in his province, believing that Joe is "proud of where he comes from and is proud of what Saskatchewan is." Joe also wants to correct Saskatchewan's historical "disadvantaged" and "unappreciated" narrative and considers "Saskatchewan First" as an opportunity to bring the province "up to par" and defend the province.

Joe is also confident of Saskatchewan's standing, optimistic for its future, and proud of its past achievements and development. Joe revels in Saskatchewan's status as a "have province," believing its once "have-not" reputation to be extinct. In doing so, Joe also rejects the once commonly-shared presumption that Saskatchewan is dependent on the federal government. Indeed, Joe believes Saskatchewan's strength comes not from support from elsewhere in the country, but from itself. While participants noted that while Joe may believe that "a strong Saskatchewan needs a strong Canada," they stressed that such need was not based on reliance.

Instead, Joe believes that Saskatchewan needs a strong Canada to simply be *supportive of* the prairie provinces, not provide *support to* them. Moreover, despite Saskatchewan's change in provincial status, Joe believes external perceptions towards the province have nonetheless remained the same. Despite its size, Joe also knows that Saskatchewan is "important and of value," whose contributions matter. Given this, Joe feels it paramount that Saskatchewan be recognized for its contributions to Canadian society, economy, and politics. To this end, Joe is vehement in his support of the notion that "a strong Canada needs a strong Saskatchewan," believing it to attest to Saskatchewan's "worth" as a province and as a part of Canada.

While demands for Saskatchewan or western separation do not resonate with Joe, calls for increased Saskatchewan autonomy against federal intrusion do. In constructing imagined political party platforms, participants overwhelmingly believed that Joe supports legislation that "defends Saskatchewan provincial autonomy against federal intrusion" – ultimately reflected in 13 of 18 platforms (72 percent). For some, Joe's support for such measures is rooted in a belief that the "federal government is intruding too much in Saskatchewan's affairs" and that federal overreach is simply a "bad thing." Other participants believed that demands for increased autonomy are rooted in Joe's individualistic character, who wants to be "left alone," be independent, and "not told what to do." Joe also wishes to correct the narrative and external perception that Saskatchewan is reliant on the federal government and believes Saskatchewan "could be more independent than it currently is." He also believes that he, and other Saskatchewanians, know what is better for the province than the federal government does. Joe also believes that the federal government has caused or has otherwise contributed to a significant portion of Saskatchewan's difficulties; in this regard, he considers provincial autonomy as a method as to which to solve and improve them.

Joe also believes that he has a role to play in defending Saskatchewan and the province's interests, and views enhancing provincial autonomy as the most viable vehicle in which to do so. To Joe, Saskatchewan is the "little guy" who someone is "always wanting to bully," and believes it pertinent that Saskatchewan becomes better protected from such threats. Joe is especially defensive of Saskatchewan's land and natural resources, which he considers vital. Accordingly, Joe regards measures increasing provincial autonomy as a means to protect and advance key Saskatchewan economic industries. Similarly, others believe that Joe views increases to Saskatchewan's autonomy as a reactionary policy in response to Saskatchewan's continued underrepresentation in federal affairs; to Joe, increased autonomy would grant the provincial

government more authority and legitimacy, who would therefore be able to better defend and protect "what he believes the federal government might try to step on."

Ultimately, Joe's actions are grounded in aspirations for the province to achieve equality and receive its "fair share" in the 'sun of the Canadian federation.' Such demands are based on a conviction that Saskatchewan gives more than they receive, often with little recognition or acknowledgement. Such aspirations possess a considerable emotional basis: Joe is angry that he, and other members of the province, work hard while other parts of Canada reap the benefits, to little benefit for Saskatchewan. Accordingly, Joe firmly believes that a "strong Canada needs a strong Saskatchewan," believing Saskatchewan to be a core and indispensable component of *making* a strong Canada, and who "helps support the rest of the country."

Regarding provincial-federal relations, Joe is conflicted about *how* Saskatchewan should interact with the federal government. At points, Joe favours cooperation and "finding common ground" between parties, believing that the outcomes "would be better for everyone involved." At other times, however, participants suggested that Joe's attitudes match those of current Saskatchewan Party conduct, opting for aggression and antagonism towards federal and eastern Canadian actors. Though participants did not explicitly identify the conditions in which Joe favoured hostility over amicable cooperation, the situations that participants considered which attested to the former generally concerned natural resources. Specifically, it seems as though Joe is less receptive to compromise or partnership with the federal government if it concerns Saskatchewan land and resources, with participants citing the recent incident of federal 'trespassing' on private Saskatchewan land and the federally-imposed carbon tax as examples. Participants suggested that Joe's willful sense of hostility possesses an emotional basis, suggesting that Joe feels "hard done by the federal government." Unsurprisingly, Joe also thinks this hostility and blaming of Ottawa and the federal government is justified, and supports others, like Scott Moe, that do the same. Accordingly, Joe rejects claims that the Saskatchewan Party government merely uses "Ottawa" as a scapegoat to redirect blame for Saskatchewan's shortcomings. Participants also suggested a trend positing that provincial actions have grown more combative and confrontational over time, noting that Joe believes the current climate of the federal-political relationship to be as "fractured as it's ever been." Though participants recalled past examples and eras of political compromise and collaboration, they were nonetheless insistent that such examples were wholly foreign in Joe's contemporary Saskatchewan.

Adversarialism | Pragmatism

In contrast to other political culture value sets, the relationship between adversarialism and pragmatism in the Saskatchewan political environment is 'contested.' Neither adversarialism nor pragmatism appear to possess an authoritative claim to political culture predominance. Indeed, the province's political environment – and by extension, Joe's political orientations – reflect as such, often manifesting into a series of 'disjointed,' if not antithetical, political attitudes that struggle to be 'pieced together' and meaningfully understood and applied. Accordingly, Joe struggles to rectify his duelling political attitudes, fostering inconsistencies in how Joe perceives political stimuli, acts, and interacts with other Saskatchewanians in the provincial political environment.

To participants, the Saskatchewan in which Joe lives is, at points, highly politicized, polarized, and reactionary, often organized on partisan and political lines. Joe knows this first-hand; as a rural dweller, he believes that the divisions between him and his urban counterparts have become especially prominent in recent years.

In discussions of Saskatchewan's political environment, it appears that – if assuming the findings of past relevant literature to be both valid and true – focus group participants possessed a sense of false social consciousness, whose interventions ran contrary to the literature on traditional Saskatchewan political culture. Indeed, participants remarked that the "old days" featured high volumes of collegiality and compromise, and that adversarialism is a relatively recent phenomenon. While such observations do not call into question the validity of this study's findings, it does nevertheless lend credibility to the presence of "false memories" and the potential importance they pose to political culture research.

Joe also operates in a political environment in which parties and politicians are rigid in their ideological and partisan placements. To participants, Saskatchewan's provincial parties demonstrate an unwillingness to cooperate with those with contrasting identities, making pragmatic, majoritarian solutions in Saskatchewan politics difficult, if not rare, to achieve. Similarly, participants claimed that adversarialism is also reflected in the composition and behaviour of Saskatchewan's political parties, which participants perceived to exist at opposite sides of the left-right political spectrum. While such findings challenge those of recent Saskatchewan political culture literature (which has observed a trend towards brokerage politics), it remains plausible that Joe's (and the participants') perceptions of the political parties is biased, flawed, or incomplete, and does not reflect potentially objectively true and valid observations of

brokerage politics and political centrism. This logic is further supported by several participants, who remarked that the "Sask Party and the NDP have very similar platforms."

Despite operating within a polarized environment, Joe nonetheless does not conform to such attitudes. Instead, Joe is interested in and hopes for more "dialogue and agreement between the two political extremes." Given this, participants believed that Joe would not agree with political materials that promote further divisions or adversarialism – such as bumper stickers or attack ads – even when such materials support his political beliefs. Instead, Joe prefers a practical approach, and would prefer if parties "actually spoke about what they would do to make Saskatchewan better." Similarly, participants also posited that Joe is a centrist, identifying as centre or just right-of-centre on the left-right political spectrum. As a result, Joe "struggles" to feel represented or included in Saskatchewan's political landscape, which Joe believes to be "too extreme." Expectedly, Joe finds identifying with a political party difficult, as he does not perceive the NDP or the Saskatchewan Party as existing close to the political centre.

Despite his centrist political positioning, participants overwhelmingly believed that Joe is a Saskatchewan Party supporter. Specifically, some participants suggested that Joe perceived the "NDP as too liberal for him," while viewing the (far right) Buffalo Party as "too radical for him." Others simply believe his partisan choice to be attributable to pragmatism, believing that Joe "likes to be a part of the winning team" that is most likely to form (and re-form) government. Participants also attributed his identity to his upbringing and the influence of his [conservative] family in influencing his partisan identification, suggesting that 'once a Sask Party supporter, always a Sask Party supporter.' Such statements also attested to the nature of Joe's partisan identity, suggesting that partisanship in Saskatchewan is durable and loyal.

Though his partisan identity is not necessarily an integral component of Joe's personal identity, the performance and success of his preferred party, the Saskatchewan Party, is still important to him. Yet, this partisanship has limits; all focus group participants agreed that Joe is not involved nor interested in party politics, such as volunteering with or campaigning for the Saskatchewan Party. Equally important to understand, though Joe may be bothered by complaints or insults lodged towards the Saskatchewan Party or Premier Scott Moe, he nonetheless does not perceive them as an attack against himself personally. Though he feels a sense of party detachment in this capacity, Joe is still unlikely to find jokes (such as political cartoons) at the Saskatchewan

Party's or Scott Moe's expense humorous, suggesting that his party detachment has limits and is situational.

Despite his lack of interest in party politics, Joe is highly political, involved in grassroots and local, community-based political organization, is a regular voter, and is politically knowledgeable and opinionated. Though he may *be* political, he nonetheless does not think of himself *as* political. To this end, although Joe may be highly political, he is not always receptive to sharing his political beliefs with others – whether verbally or through the endorsement of political materials – as he doesn't think he "needs to share how he votes with others." Indeed, in instances in which Joe overhears, or is otherwise at the "receiving end" of an insult or complaint against the Saskatchewan Party or Premier Scott Moe, most participants thought that although Joe may be bothered and "defensive," Joe nonetheless would remain quiet, if not silent. When Joe chooses to address such criticism, he only does so within his group of like-minded friends on "coffee row" or with his wife. There also exists evidence attesting to ideological decline; indeed, participants claimed that his emotional reaction to such criticisms would be limited, as Joe also believes that "everyone has a right to an opinion." Participants also believe that Joe "used to be more interested in politics" than he is now, lending credibility to a developing trend of depoliticization.

Though Joe is politically engaged and seeks opportunities to expand his political knowledge, his motivation in which he does so is not wholly grounded in a 'pure' spirit of political interest, but rather, to further his own personal political agenda. Accordingly, when (and if) Joe consumes political media – such as the provincial leaders' debate, official party materials, or *Star Phoenix* articles – it is to reaffirm his political beliefs and be able to better defend the Saskatchewan Party against critics. In instances in which Joe chooses not to consume political media, it is because Joe "doesn't see the point in it," with participants suggesting that "nothing will change his [partisan] identity or his opinion."

Despite Joe's perception of himself as a centrist who feels "hopeless" in the polarized Saskatchewan political environment, Joe nonetheless demonstrates a significant penchant for adversarialism, especially towards the New Democratic Party and the party's voters. While Joe may be unwilling to endorse outwardly adversarial *materials*, Joe's mindset nevertheless reflects such adversarial tendencies. Through the construction of in- and out-groups, Joe believes that NDP voters are not 'real' or 'loyal' Saskatchewanians. Moreover, Joe believes that the NDP poses a

moral danger to Saskatchewan and believes them "incompetent to lead and incapable of governing." More likely to perceive elections as a 'war against enemies' than as a 'debate between friends,' Joe perceives the hypothetical potential of a future NDP government with alarm and anger and would feel "ostracized" and "left out of the [Saskatchewan] community" because of it. Joe demonstrates a similar regard for the NDP and the party's supporters more generally, through the use of strong, often emotionally laden language, considering them to be "dumb," "elites," and "fucking socialists" or "communists" who have been "drinking the Kool-Aid." Despite such strong emotional reactions, participants also consider Joe to be pragmatic; though Joe would be upset or disgruntled at an NDP electoral victory, he would not "catastrophize" the situation to be more than it is and would eventually "get over it and move on," suggesting that the influence of ideology on Joe's interactions and existence Saskatchewan's political environment is limited.

Despite this, Joe remains adamant that his antipathy for the NDP and his partisanship possess limits. Indeed, participants believed that Joe would be willing (though not likely) to have NDP-voting friends and acquaintances, as Joe is an individual willing to forego ideology to "respect the opinions of others." Moreover, Joe would also be unlikely to end a friendship over duelling political identities, with participants claiming that their partisan identification would "not affect" how Joe perceived or treated them. Also importantly, participants were fervent in asserting that Joe does not wish any NDP supporter ill-will or come to any harm. Though Joe may be open to friendships with NDP supporters, participants affirmed that such relations would have no influence on Joe's political opinions and identity, once again attesting to Joe's character as a durable Saskatchewan Party partisan. Intriguingly, participants suggested that Joe, and other Saskatchewan Party voters are more tolerant and receptive to initiating or maintaining friendships of opposing political stripes than NDP supporters would be, suggesting that partisanship affects Saskatchewan's political parties differently.

In discussions of the future of Saskatchewan politics and provincial elections, participants believe that Joe is conflicted. As expected by his identity as a Saskatchewan Party supporter and voter, participants believe that Joe hopes for a "continuation of the status quo" – continued Saskatchewan Party political dominance in the provincial government. At election time, Joe generally wants to see a strong Saskatchewan Party majority, citing the NDP's "horrible reputation" and a belief that the "weaker the [NDP] opposition, the better." Beyond a belief that "the more people lifting up his values, the better," Joe's rationale for such electoral outcomes is

also grounded in pragmatism. Indeed, Joe perceives 'majority government status' as a necessary condition for a strong, stable, and decisive government, while also making legislative proceedings (and thus, government operations) more efficient and timely. Yet, at the same time, Joe believes that competition is important; to this end, Joe also "secretly" hopes that the NDP maintains a sizable opposition status, believing that "democracy is only as healthy as its opposition," suggesting that his partisan identification as a Saskatchewan Party has bounds. Similarly, such rationale is also grounded in practicality, perceiving competition to be an important component in avoiding corruption, ensuring accountability, and maintaining a system of "checks and balances" in government proceedings. Joe also believes the presence of a strong NDP opposition is beneficial to promoting collaboration and consensus in policy-making and governance. Some participants suggest his desire for cooperation and compromise is an homage to his community spirit, as that's what Joe is "familiar with" and how he "grew up." Yet, Joe's hope for cross-party collaboration nevertheless possesses clear limits, due to Joe's greater aversion for minority governments. Indeed, Joe believes minority governments to be "watered down," ineffective, and inefficient, only serving to heighten inter-party conflict.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

<u>Summary of Findings</u>

      This investigation analyzed the political culture of Saskatchewan Party-era Saskatchewan and if, how, and to what extent the political culture of the province has changed under prolonged Saskatchewan Party rule. Despite the advent of the study of political culture in contemporary political science research, the study of political culture *change* remains largely neglected and rejected, due to fundamental 'incompatibilities' with the theoretical assumptions embedded in political culture research. Equally important, although the CCF-NDP has not governed Saskatchewan since 2007, much of the academic literature on Saskatchewan politics (and thus, political culture) does not reflect as such, producing narratives and insights that are out-of-date and woefully incomplete. Fundamentally grounded in an objection to the academic assumption of political culture persistence, this thesis sought to bridge the scholarly gap while producing a contemporary narrative reflective of the influence of prolonged Saskatchewan Party governance in Saskatchewan politics, present and future.

      The study found that the real, observable political culture of contemporary Saskatchewan is complex. Despite the theoretical preference (and assumption) for political culture persistence, this thesis' findings suggest that political culture change *has* occurred in Saskatchewan. Importantly, however, the political culture in Saskatchewan has *not* undergone a complete shift, validating much of the scholarship's preference for and assumption of political culture persistence. Indeed, the province's political culture does not wholly correspond with one individual political culture, whether traditional or alternative. Instead, Saskatchewan's contemporary political culture, as observed during the era of prolonged Saskatchewan Party governance, can be best understood as a *blended* political culture containing components of both traditional and alternative political culture strands. Although blended, the findings nevertheless suggest a slight preference to the alternative political culture, containing significant traits of neoliberalism and conservatism.

      Similarly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the political culture of contemporary Saskatchewan is neither wholly traditional, nor wholly alternative. While one value option found greater support or be more prevalent than its counterpart (whether traditional or alternative), the real, observable political culture strand of contemporary Saskatchewan contains aspects of both collectivism and individualism, dirigisme and laissez-faire, hinterland and heartland, and adversarialism and pragmatism. Though the political culture strands themselves may be dichotomous, they are

nonetheless, not incompatible. Indeed, the presence of each pillar may be best understood as "situation-dependent," in which Joe deploys elements of each strand when it suits him and his current conditions best. Likewise, Joe has proved himself to be ideologically inconsistent and politically irrational. To this end, Joe's political decision-making processes accurately reflects the political judgement of those he symbolizes and represents; such is evident in the ideological incoherence of Canadians' preference for lower taxes, while at the same time, supporting "government investment in health, education, and jobs" (Graves 2013, 85-86). Moreover, the political culture values have proven themselves to not be mutually exclusive; the existence of one pillar does not prohibit the potential presence of another; such is the case regardless of whether the tenets are directly dichotomous (such as collectivism and individualism), or simply a part of opposite political culture strands more generally (such as dirigisme and pragmatism). This is to say, that qualities and values of collectivism and individualism may both be present in contemporary Saskatchewan political culture, as can the values of dirigisme (traditional) and pragmatism (alternative), and so on and so forth. However, the findings did suggest that the existence of one value did dictate or otherwise alter the degree of the corresponding other value's presence, to some extent.

Considering each pillar separately, the findings suggest the current Saskatchewan political culture has departed from its collectivist tradition, moving instead towards individualism. Specifically, the political culture has rejected cooperative efforts and community-centred programming in favour of the primacy of the individual and self-reliance. The findings suggest that the political culture has increasingly adopted orientations and outlooks favouring small government (both in size and scope), welfare reform, while lacking support for the cooperative movement and labour organization, for example. Nonetheless, notions of 'community' persist and exist alongside other, seemingly antithetical orientations in Saskatchewan's current political culture, making the political culture nuanced and challenging to understand.

Saskatchewan's political culture – in its consideration of the roles and responsibilities of the provincial government in society and the economy – is, in comparison, significantly more ideologically inconsistent, displaying characteristics of both dirigisme and laissez-faire. While elements of Saskatchewan's traditional political culture narrative have proved itself resistant to change, their long-lasting character is nonetheless not representative of the whole. Indeed,

Saskatchewan's political culture was found to be increasingly shaped by economic considerations, reflected in the shift towards the primacy of private enterprise, a diminished role of the government in the provincial economy, and deregulation, all suggesting a political culture shift towards neoliberalism. Yet, when it concerns tradition, it appears Saskatchewan's political culture is largely resistant to change. This is evident within the continued importance (and preservation) of Crown corporations and socialized healthcare in the Saskatchewan ethos.

Though Saskatchewan's contemporary political culture contains facets of both hinterland and heartland, it appears that, overall, heartland has emerged as dominant. Though western alienation has, unsurprisingly, remained a driving force in Saskatchewan's political culture, the ways in which it is activated is distinctly heartland in character. To this point, Saskatchewan's contemporary political culture exhibits a demand for increased provincial autonomy and a staunch, aggressive defence of Saskatchewan's well-being, as opposed to intergovernmental collaboration and federal government dependency.

Lastly, Saskatchewan's political culture contains facets of, and is firmly divided between, adversarialism and pragmatism. Accordingly, Saskatchewan's contemporary political culture is found to be a set of disjointed and often contrary political orientations, largely dependent on specific, individual conditions and stimuli. While Saskatchewan's political environment and party system continue to exhibit significant degrees of polarization, politicization, and partisanship, such orientations are not reflected to the same extent within the political culture. Though adversarialism appears to persist to some extent – such as through the continued dominance of polarization and partisanship – Saskatchewan's political culture nonetheless also exhibits qualities of pragmatism – including through references of centrism, depoliticization, flexibility, and practicality. Intriguingly, pragmatism was also found to be a significant contributing influence in the formation of other political culture tenets, with aspects of their characters attributable to changing real-life conditions; such attests to pragmatism's far-reaching nature in Saskatchewan's political culture, more generally.

Future Research

While political party research continues to be an important and prominent subject within the field of political science academia, this thesis has highlighted the importance of studying political party shifts as a mechanism and reflection of political culture change. Specifically,

(dominant) political parties provide a window into the popular values and orientations of the polity's constituents.

This analysis provided an overview of Saskatchewan's political culture over the study period and existing under prolonged Saskatchewan Party governance. Of course, although it is theoretically difficult (if not impossible) to attribute causality of Saskatchewan's political culture change to the Saskatchewan Party, determining and understanding the active *role* of the Saskatchewan Party in perpetuating and affirming the province's political culture is of scholarly value. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to investigate the methods of political culture transmission and persistence – especially institutionalization – to understand *if* and *how* the Saskatchewan Party may have propagated and sustained such political culture beliefs, through policies, governing documents, election platforms, and other political materials, or at the very least, how the Party may have facilitated an environment conducive to Saskatchewan's political culture change.

Overall, the present study contributes to our understanding of Saskatchewan politics, as it is one of the first times Saskatchewan's political culture, in the era of prolonged Saskatchewan Party governance, has been studied. In doing so, it provides a model for analyzing other polities that have recently undergone prolonged significant partisan – and by extent political – shifts, both on the sub-national (provincial) and national (federal) levels, employing the same or unique research questions. The study's analysis may prove especially fruitful in considering polities once led by left-wing (socialist) parties and movements but are now governed by right-wing (conservative) counterparts – such as some of the formerly communist eastern and central European states. Ultimately, researchers are encouraged to apply a similar methodology employed in this investigation in considering other political locales.

The present study also builds on the small but growing field of research on political culture change, and therefore, challenges the theoretical assumption of 'persistence' in political culture research. Yet, as mentioned prior within the investigation, political culture change is often (though not always) assumed to affect developing polities or those that have experienced significant political or economic trauma – communities understood as possessing weak or otherwise absent political systems and pre-existing political traditions. As established within this study, political culture change in developed polities is possible, and goes beyond the mechanisms of political culture change as described in the literature. Noting this, researchers are encouraged to further

investigate mechanisms of political culture change more generally, and occurrences of political culture change in other *developed* polities with pre-existing political systems and traditions.

Most obviously, given the theoretical limitations imposed by the study's methodological framework (through the usage of focus groups), the findings from this study would benefit from additional data validation processes. Given this, researchers are encouraged to apply similar methodologies for the purposes of replication or engage in other modes of political culture measurement (such as through quantitative surveys or political archives) to supplement and support such findings. This study also acknowledges that individuals of diverse backgrounds and identities did not participate in the focus groups in equal amounts; accordingly, future research can address this through replication, more heavily sampling racialized, rural, and male populations.

This study is similarly limited in its temporal applicability, existing merely to capture Saskatchewan's political culture as it exists currently within a 'snapshot in time.' Yet, as established by the literature, political cultures exist over longer periods of time. Replication of this research within Saskatchewan is thus necessary, to not only corroborate the inclusion of such values within the province's political culture going forward, but to also distinguish the values from ones more transient and volatile encapsulated within Saskatchewan popular opinion.

Though the novel use of online focus groups provided clear measurable value to the investigation, its utility was nonetheless constrained by notable methodological limitations. As mentioned previously, the use of the online medium limited the participant pool to those possessing strong internet access and high technological literacy, potentially reducing participation opportunities for rural or remote populations, older generations, or those of low socioeconomic backgrounds. During the recruitment process, other individuals also opted out of participating after realizing the virtual nature of the focus group, whether due to COVID-19-induced 'Zoom' fatigue, a disinterest in online meetings, or other factors. Online focus groups may have also changed the "dynamics of communication" of participants, influencing the level of participant engagement, the quality of insights offered, and the flow of discussions. Similarly, participants may have experienced "online disinhibition," and thus, be less influenced by the boundaries of social acceptability. In turn, the candor of the focus group discussions may have prompted individuals to share their personal unfiltered beliefs, as opposed to socially accepted political culture values. Accordingly, this study should be replicated through in-person focus groups to participants who

may have been otherwise unable or unwilling to participate in online counterparts, shift the dynamics of communication, and otherwise validate the findings of this study.

An additional evident gap in the study's research is the minimization (if not exclusion) of Indigenous perspectives, in part due to the research's study period, post-1905, but specifically post-1929 Saskatchewan. Given this, researchers are encouraged to conduct similar research of 'Saskatchewan's' political culture in the pre-1905 era to elevate the representation of and assign significance to Indigenous populations, both in the province's political environment and in the academic literature. Such research would also provide insight into *how* the 'original' political culture influenced the emergence and formation of subsequent provincial political cultures. Although outside of the scope of this present study, researchers are similarly encouraged to facilitate the greater development of scholarship on Indigenous political subcultures in contemporary Saskatchewan, building on the work of Beatty, Berdahl, and Poelzer (2012).

Similarly, much of the research on Saskatchewan political culture (including this study) begins with the emergence of the CCF and the collectivist and dirigiste ethos of the Great Depression and onwards. Noting the temporal gap between Saskatchewan's entry into Confederation and the Great Depression, future research should consider the province's political culture between 1905 to 1929, in evaluating both its composition and *how* it facilitated the post-1929 'dominant' political culture that followed it.

The analysis of Saskatchewan's current political culture also revealed the potential existence of two competing subcultures, organized on rural and urban lines, to extents not documented within previous existing Saskatchewan political culture research. Though mentions were limited (due in part to the scope of the study and methodology), such findings nevertheless suggest the development of a cleavage within rural and urban Saskatchewan's political culture. Future research should seek to confirm such potentiality, including through investigating the subcultures' source and factors of origination, their compositions, and most importantly, assess whether it continues to be theoretically appropriate to classify Saskatchewan as possessing *one* dominant political culture.

Concluding Thoughts

Political cultures construct the nature and character of political communities. Reflected within the polity's political, economic, and social environments, the community's political

orientations may help explain occurrences of past and present events, the presence of accepted political actors, the (re)construction of political systems, and the polity's collective and shared identity. Yet, in order to be value in understanding political communities, the narratives of political culture must be accurate, up-to-date, and reflective of reality, especially in occurrences of significant political and partisan transformation.

This study operated in alignment with such objectives, through assessing the state and character of Saskatchewan's political culture at a critical juncture in Saskatchewan's political system – prolonged right-wing Saskatchewan Party political dominance and the end of CCF-NDP hegemony in the province. Despite a theoretical preference for political culture persistence, a traditional political culture closely intertwined with CCF-NDP governance, and in spite of Saskatchewan's long-established reputation as a "cradle of social democracy," this study found that Saskatchewan's political culture – following successive Saskatchewan Party governments – has indeed changed. In this regard, this investigation has found the Saskatchewan Party to be not a mere 'interruption' in Saskatchewan's political and party systems, but instead, a commanding force in contemporary provincial politics.

Accordingly, this thesis provides a methodological and theoretical framework for future inquiries into political culture change in both developed and developing polities. Moreover, as this study demonstrates, the role of shifting political and partisan environments – such as changes in governing party – is an important element to consider when studying political culture, and in assessing their influence within a community's greater political, economic, and social environments.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Description of Focus Group Activities

Activity 1: Draw Me a Saskatchewanian

Activity Summary

- Individually, participants draw the quintessential Saskatchewanian (QS). As a group, they come to consensus on which of the drawings best captures the quintessential Saskatchewanian.
- **Pillars:** In telling the backstories of their drawn characters, participants may touch on all four pillars.
- **Length:** The activity lasts 15 to 20 minutes in total: 5 to 10 minutes for drawing, 5 minutes for sharing backstories, 5 minutes for determination of quintessential Saskatchewanian and discussion of their place in Saskatchewan politics.
- **Objective:** to determine the characteristics of the quintessential Saskatchewanian in the eyes of the group of participants; to establish a character (QS, using the name of the character) through whose eyes participants will view politics in the remaining activities in the focus group session.
- **Theoretical Framework:** Personification allows participants to express their views about political culture through the eyes of who they consider to be the quintessential, and among the most powerful, Saskatchewanians in society, and whose orientations are expected to constitute Saskatchewan's political culture.

Supplies Required

1. White paper (one sheet per participant)
2. Black Sharpie marker or pen (one per participant)

Preparation Prior to Activity

- Participants will need to ensure they have the required supplies prior to the start of the focus group.

During Activity

- After a brief introduction emphasizing the fact that not everyone is a great artist, participants are instructed to "Draw me a Saskatchewanian." Prompts include: that Saskatchewanian could be wearing something, doing something, holding something, standing next to something, etc.

- Participants are then asked to record the name of their character next to their drawing.

- Once all participants have drawn a character, each is asked to share the backstory of the person they drew. During this, participants will hold up their drawings to their computer screens to allow other participants to see. The research assistant will also take screenshots of the participants' drawings at this time. Discussion prompts include: what is their age, occupation, family status, location and domicile, race, hobbies, etc.

- Once all participants have shared their characters, the group must come to a consensus on one particular character who represents the "quintessential Saskatchewanian" (QS).

- The facilitator asks the group about the relative power of that quintessential Saskatchewanian (e.g., "how much influence do you think the QS has?", "how much influence does the QS think they have?", "to what extent do politics in Saskatchewan revolve around the QS?"). The facilitator also asks how the QS would describe themselves and if they are politically activated.

- During this discussion, the facilitator probes for discrepant evidence.

- The facilitator then asks the group whether the QS captures the image most Saskatchewanians have of themselves, and the image most other Canadians have of Saskatchewanians. Participants will discuss.

Following the Activity

- Participants email a picture/scanned image of their drawing to the facilitator.
- Upload the picture into the designated Thesis Research folder.

Activity 2: Build a Platform

Activity Summary

- Using pre-selected platform promises, participants will create a platform for a provincial political party that the quintessential Saskatchewanian (QS) would support and vote for.

- **Pillars:** With the available platform promises touching on all four pillars, platforms may include up to all four pillars.

- **Length:** The activity takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes, half of which is spent in small groups, and the other half in plenary.

- **Objective:** Based on Wesley's work in *Code Politics* in measuring prairie political culture within provincial party platforms and documents, this activity is designed to understand the role of political culture in political vehicles (such as platforms).

- **Theoretical Framework:** Political culture is transmitted, maintained, and translated through and by political agents, including political leaders and government documents (Wesley 2011; McGrane 2014).

Supplies Needed

- One (1) pre-made virtual Miro board containing two (2) sets of platform promise packages.

Preparation Prior to Activity

- Organize the set of platform promises in order.

During Activity

- Participants will be divided into two groups of two to four (2-4), depending on focus group attendance. Each group will be split into a Zoom breakout room moderated by the focus group facilitator or a research assistant.

- The facilitator will read the following prompt:
  - *Imagine that Saskatchewan has recently announced plans to hold a provincial general election. As part of the campaigning process, you have been tasked by a political party to create a party platform that [QS] would vote for. Please pick up to five promises to include in the party's platform.*

110

- The facilitator/research assistant will screen share the list of platform promises.
- Using the pre-selected political platform promises provided to them, each group will create a political party. The facilitator/research assistant will move platform promises to be included in the platform, under the direction of the participants.
- Participants can discuss amongst each other in their respective groups to determine what to include.
- After the participants have finished selecting the platform promises, the breakout rooms will be closed, and all participants will return to plenary.
- After the return to plenary, each group will select a representative to present their chosen platform, providing justification for why each platform promise was chosen.
- After each presentation, the facilitator probes for discrepant evidence between platforms.
- After the end of both presentations, the facilitator asks a series of follow-up questions focused on the QS's political and partisan identities, and how the QS perceives and interacts with Saskatchewanians of differing political beliefs and identities.

Following the Activity
- Take screenshots of each platform.
- Reset platforms to initial starting locations.
- Upload the pictures into the designated Thesis Research folder.

Link to Printable Platform Promises

https://docs.google.com/document/d/13WklJMaXDCxyNK3S97lCAkgFgwaJhdUfWWfgOHJbnLk/edit?usp=sharing

<div align="center">

Activity 3: Cartoon and Slogan Reaction

</div>

Activity Summary
- Participants react to different political cartoons and slogans (presented through bumper stickers) through the eyes of the quintessential Saskatchewanian (QS).
- **Pillars:** Depending on the cartoons and slogans selected, this activity can test any or all of the four pillars.
- **Length:** This activity takes 15 minutes.

- **Objective:** The objective of this activity is to determine how the QS feels about different political issues, such as whether they find cartoon depictions of them funny and/or accurate, or bumper stickers relevant to Saskatchewan politics.
- **Theoretical Framework:** 1) Humour relies upon common perceptions, yet often pushes the boundaries of social acceptability. By testing what the QS finds funny, we can determine the boundaries of the political culture. 2) Bumper stickers are highly visible forms of political advertising used to convey political positions of the vehicle's occupants. By testing the reception of slogans that reference pillars of Saskatchewan political culture, we can determine the relevance and attitudes towards various aspects of Saskatchewan political culture in highly visible acts a part of daily life.

Supplies Needed
- PowerPoint deck

Preparation Required Prior to Activity
- Slogans will need to be created into digital bumper sticker graphics, using digital graphic design software.
- Specific deck will need to be made based on images selected from master deck.

Preparation on Day of Activity
During Activity
- Participants will be shown a sequence of political cartoons and bumper stickers.
- After each one is shown, the facilitator asks participants to indicate whether they feel the QS would find the bumper sticker or cartoon accurate and relevant, and (in case of cartoon), whether they would find the cartoon funny.
- After the show of hands is completed, the facilitator asks individual participants to indicate why they responded in that fashion.
- During this discussion, the facilitator probes for discrepant evidence, e.g., calling on participants who answered most differently from the rest of the group and asking whether other participants are influenced by their reasoning.

Variations

- Different sets of cartoons and slogans can be presented.

Link to PowerPoint deck

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1eyxKK6ZswLncA_NdWgbWIhE4FQdqqvPRG2kfDW
WK_rk/edit?usp=sharing

Activity 4: Guided Story-Telling

Activity Summary

- As a group, the focus group facilitator will lead focus group participants through a self-guided, 'choose your own adventure' type story involving the quintessential Saskatchewanian (QS).
- **Pillars:** Through answering the specific questions integrated through the story, participants will touch on Pillar 1.
- **Length:** The activity lasts 15 to 20 minutes in total; approximately half should be spent by story-telling and collecting answers from participants, while the remaining time should be discussing participant answers and identifying discrepant answers.
- **Theoretical Framework:** Storytelling allows focus group participants to 'step into the shoes' of the quintessential Saskatchewanian in a natural and engaging way, and construct the experience of the QS. In doing so, story-telling encourages self- and peer-examination and reflection of Saskatchewan politics, and makes meaning from the experience in their own words, language, and possibly experiences.

Preparation Required During Activity

- Facilitator will lead focus group participants through a hypothetical situation, raising questions to participants intended to further the story.
- After each question is raised, the facilitator asks participants how they believe the QS would react/do/act.
- The facilitator will ask individual participants to indicate why they responded in that fashion.

- During this discussion, the facilitator probes for discrepant evidence, e.g., calling on participants who answered most differently from the rest of the group.

Link to Story with Prompts

https://docs.google.com/document/d/18gfzTGb3e7eAlvYyE6aBrb7gXiN7Xe2ExXYEBzas5I8/e dit?usp=sharing

Appendix 2: Participant Breakdown

Community

- 11%
- 3%
- 11%
- 75%

Legend:
- ■ I live in a city
- ■ I live in a rural area
- ■ I live in a suburb
- ■ I live in a town

Region

- 33%
- 37%
- 10%
- 11%
- 9%

Legend:
- ■ Regina area
- ■ Southern Saskatchewan
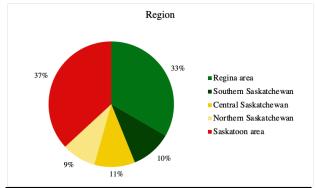- ■ Central Saskatchewan
- ■ Northern Saskatchewan
- ■ Saskatoon area

Age

- 16%
- 31%
- 30%
- 21%
- 2%

Legend:
- ■ 18 to 34 years old
- ■ 35 to 49 years old
- ■ 36 to 49 years old
- ■ 50 to 65 years old
- ■ Over 65 years old

Time lived in Saskatchewan

- 7%
- 10%
- 53%
- 30%

Legend:
- ■ All my life
- ■ Most of my life
- ■ Part of my life
- ■ I'm a newcomer

Racial/Ethnic Identity

- 11%
- 7%
- 82%

Legend:
- ■ White or Caucasian
- ■ Not white or Caucasian
- ■ Mixed background

Political Label

- 2%
- 3%
- 10%
- 53%
- 32%

Legend:
- ■ Progressive
- ■ Moderate
- ■ Conservative
- ■ Independent
- ■ Not political

Ideological (left-right) self placement

- 5%
- 5%
- 2% 2%
- 33%
- 20%
- 33%

Legend:
- ■ 1
- ■ 2
- ■ 3
- ■ 4
- ■ 5
- ■ 6
- ■ 7

Appendix 3: Demographic profiles of participant drawings

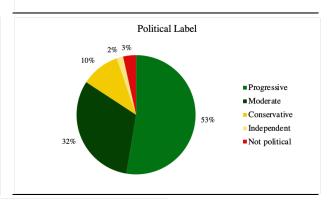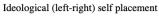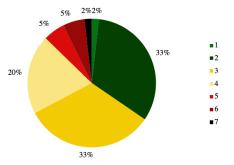|	All drawings (N = 54) (percentage)	Selected Quintessential Saskatchewanian drawings (N = 11) (percentage)
Gender		
Male	72%	91%
Female	24%	9%
Non-binary	4%	0%
Age		
Under 20	7%	0%
20s	17%	9%
30s	7%	9%
40s	15%	9%
50s	6%	9%
60s	4%	9%
70s	6%	9%
Not identified	36%	46%
Ethnicity/race		
White or Caucasian	2%	9%
Indigenous	4%	0%
Not white	6%	0%
Not identified	88%	91%
Marital status		
Married	58%	91%
Single	23%	0%
Not identified	19%	9%
Family status		
Has child(ren)	56%	82%
Not identified/no children	44%	18%
Occupation/employment sector		
Agriculture	46%	82%
Trades & services	17%	9%
Professional/corporate	9%	0%
Student	9%	0%
Public servant (government/education)	7%	0%

Mining/oil & gas	7%	0%
Business	2%	0%
Arts	4%	0%
Retired	2%	0%
Not identified	5%	9%
Location		
Urban	48%	18%
Rural	37%	82%
Not identified	15%	0%

Appendix 4: Code Frame

Meta-theme	Theme	Code
State of Saskatchewan Politics	Urban/rural divide	
	Agrarian decline	
Political Identity & Influence	Parties	Saskatchewan Party
		NDP Party
	Perceptions	
	Provincial politics	
	Representation	Disconnect
		Exclusion
	Causes	Shifts
		Generational & familial dynamics
	Partisan identities	CCF/NDP
		Saskatchewan Party
	Ideological identities	Left-wing
		Right-wing
		Centre
Saskatchewanian Identity	Education	University
	Name	
	Descriptors	
	Background	Native
		Not native
	Financial Status	
	Looks like them	
	Occupation	Farming

		Arts
		Retired
		Public servant (education/government)
		Trades & services
		Business
		Student
		Professional/corporate
		Mining/oil & gas
	Gender	Male
		Female
		Non-binary
	Age	Under 20
		20s
		30s
		40s
		50s
		60s
		70s
	Race/ethnicity	White
		Not white
		Indigenous
	Location	Southern
		Northern
		Rural
		Urban

	Family	Single
		Married
		Has child(ren)
	Roughriders	
	Agriculture/farming	
Collectivism	Labour unions	
	Cooperation	Cooperative movement
		Wheat Pool
		Grain elevators
	Community	Involvement
		Political organization
		Volunteering
Individualism	Self-centred	
	Independence	
	Labour unions	
	Small government	
	Self-reliance	
	Welfare state	
Dirigisme	Government intervention	Public enterprise
		Crown corporations
	Healthcare	
Laissez-Faire	Taxation	
	Less interference	
	Healthcare	
	Welfare	

	Deregulation	
	Economy	Competition
		Privatization
		Private enterprise
Hinterland	Confederation	
	Recognition	
	'Have not' province	
	Collaboration	
	Western alienation	
Heartland	Combative/antagonism	
	Saskatchewan First	Positive
		Negative
	Federal intrusion	
	Defence	
	Fair share/equality	
	Autonomy	
	Western alienation	
Adversarialism	Polarization	
	Politicization	Politicization
		Education & interest
		Not openly political
	Participation	Grassroots/local organization
		Voting
	Adversarialism	
	Partisanship	

Pragmatism	Depoliticization
	Respect
	Competition
	Collaboration
	Practicality
	Majoritarianism
	Ideological decline
	Centrism