



**PATHWAYS TO
PROSPERITY**
Promoting Welcoming Communities in Canada



**VOIES VERS LA
PROSPÉRITÉ**
Promouvoir des communautés accueillantes au Canada

Outside the Metropolis: Attitudes toward Immigrants and Immigration in Smaller Canadian Communities

Victoria Esses & Alina Sutter, Western University;

Antoine Bilodeau, Concordia University; Danielle Gaucher, University of Manitoba;

Leah Hamilton, Mount Royal University; Aurelie Lacassagne, Université Saint-Paul;

Keith Neuman, Environics Institute; Paolo Palma, Western University

Context

- Public opinion surveys examining attitudes towards immigrants and immigration often rely on national samples (e.g., Environics Institute, 2022), which predominantly represent larger cities
- There is limited knowledge on attitudes towards immigrants and immigration in smaller communities in Canada
- Regionalization programs aim to promote immigration to smaller communities (e.g., Atlantic Immigration Program, Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot)
- Positive attitudes toward immigrants and immigration are a crucial determinant of the success of these programs

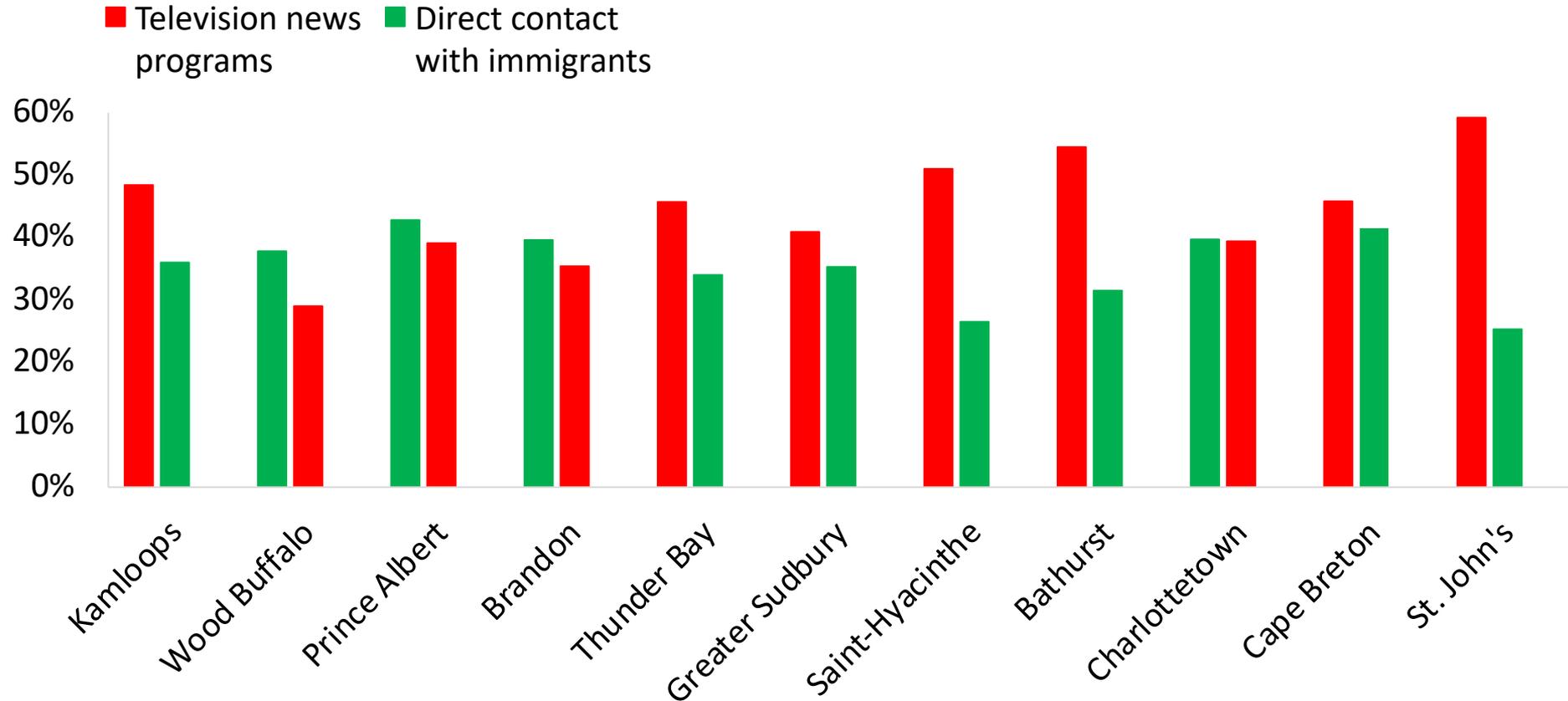
Method

- Field Dates: June 10 - August 28, 2022
- Representative samples (age, gender) of approximately 400 respondents in each of 11 communities

Community	Size	Immigrants	Community	Size	Immigrants
Kamloops, BC	114,142	10%	Saint-Hyacinthe, QC	59,980	7%
Wood Buffalo, AB	73,837	21%	Bathurst, NB	31,387	2%
Prince Albert, SK	45,718	9%	Cape Breton, NS	98,318	2%
Brandon, MB	54,268	17%	Charlottetown, PEI	78,858	11%
Greater Sudbury, ON	170,605	6%	St. John's, NL	212,579	5%
Thunder Bay, ON	123,258	8%			

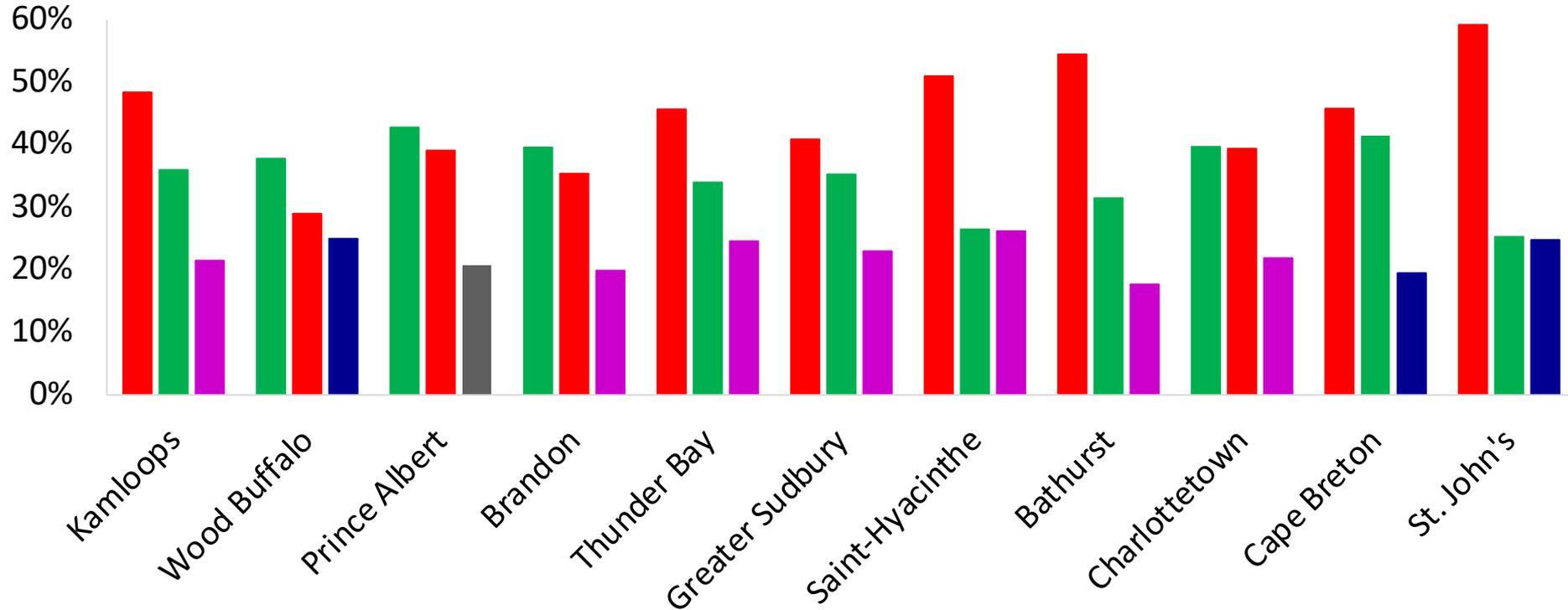
Source: Census 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2022)

Sources of Information on Immigrants and Immigration to Canada



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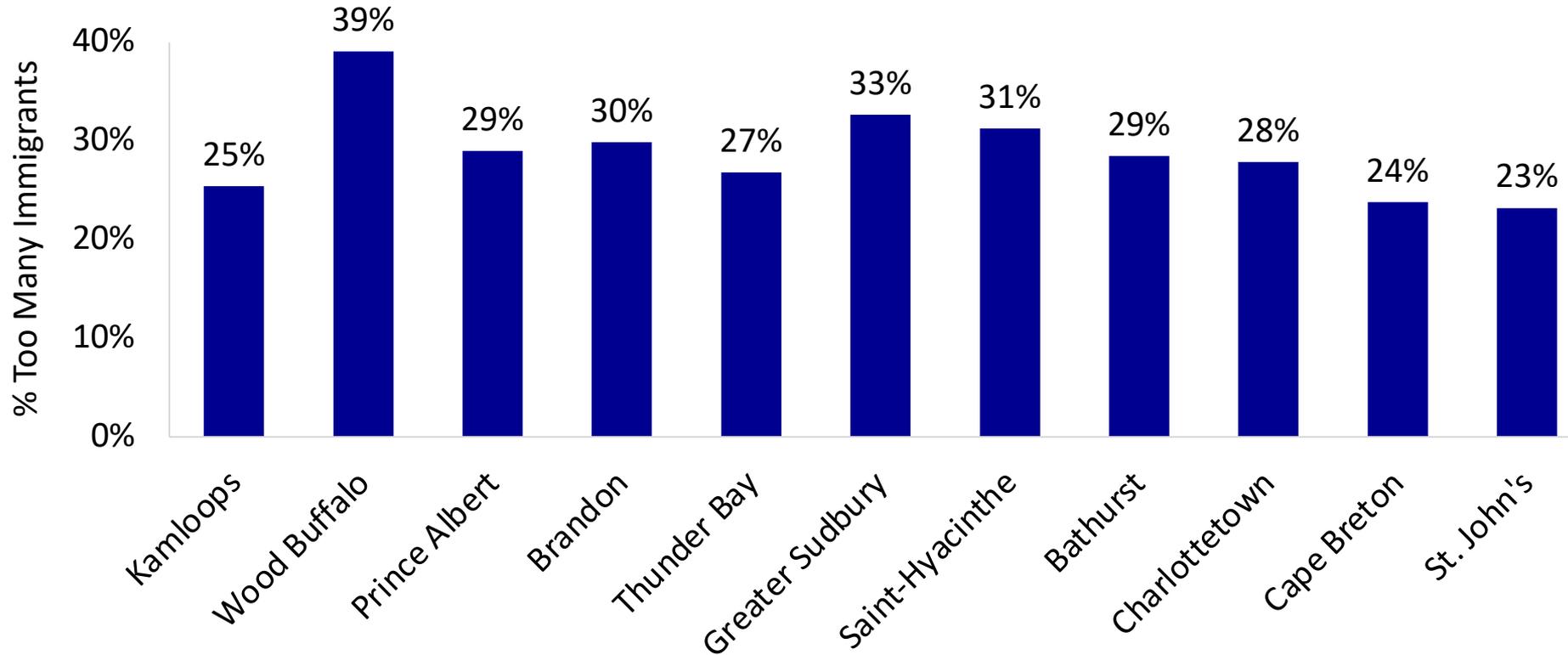
■ Television news programs ■ Direct contact with immigrants ■ Traditional print news (online or offline) ■ Social media ■ Family and friends



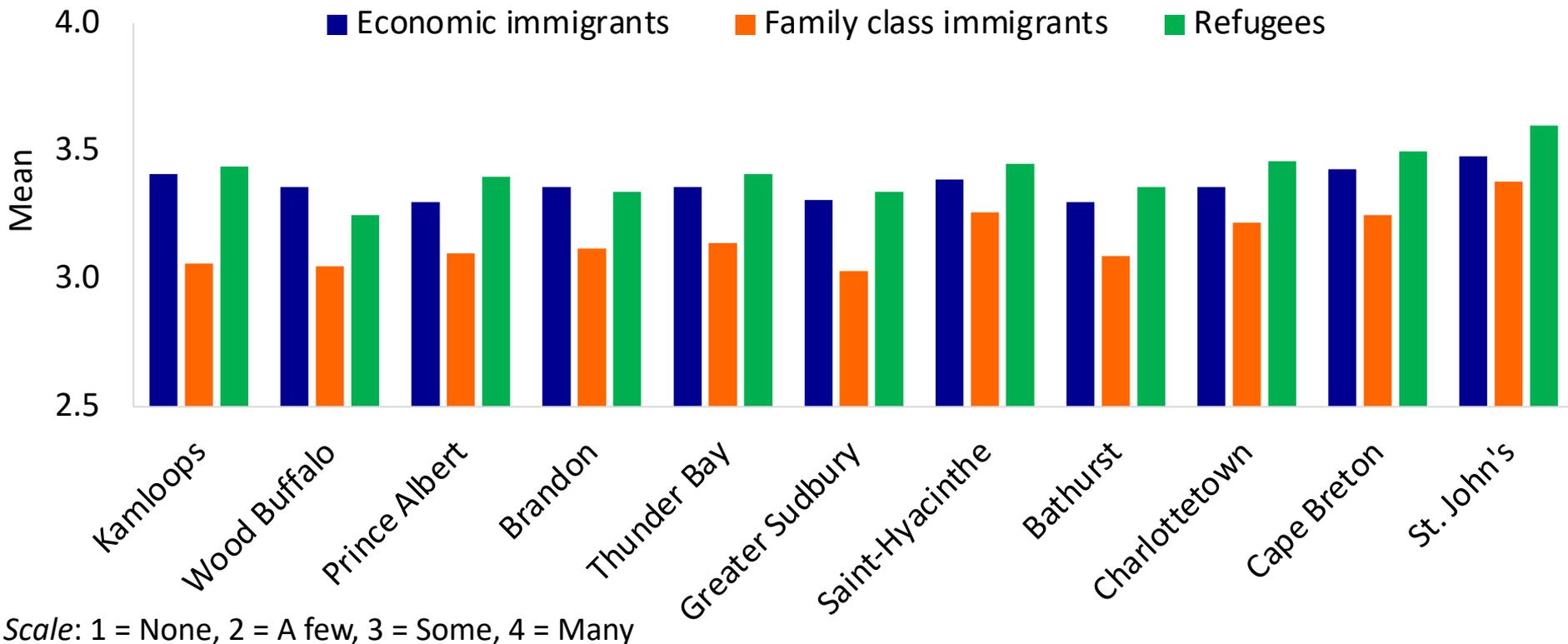
Attitudes toward Immigrants and Immigration to Canada



In your opinion, do you feel that there are too many, too few, or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada?

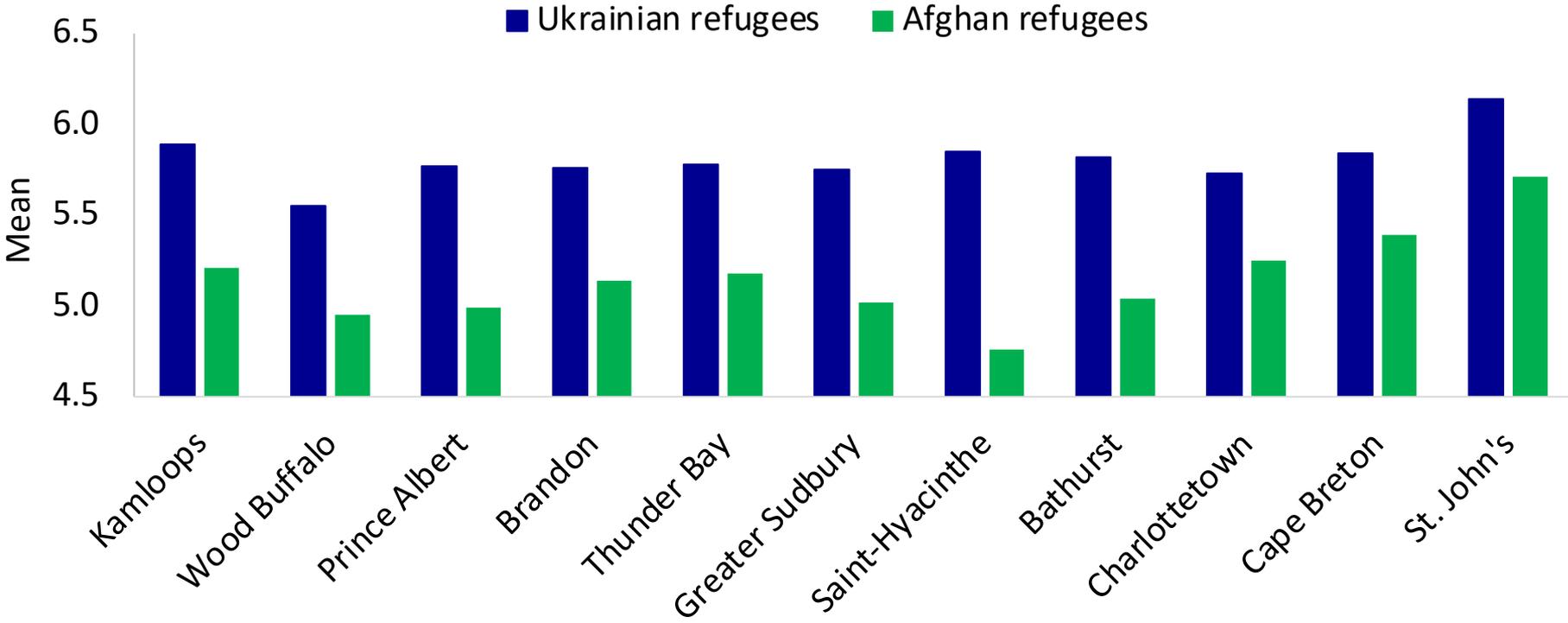


For each group, please indicate whether you think we should allow none, a few, some, or many to come and live here.



Scale: 1 = None, 2 = A few, 3 = Some, 4 = Many

Attitudes toward Ukrainian versus Afghan Refugees

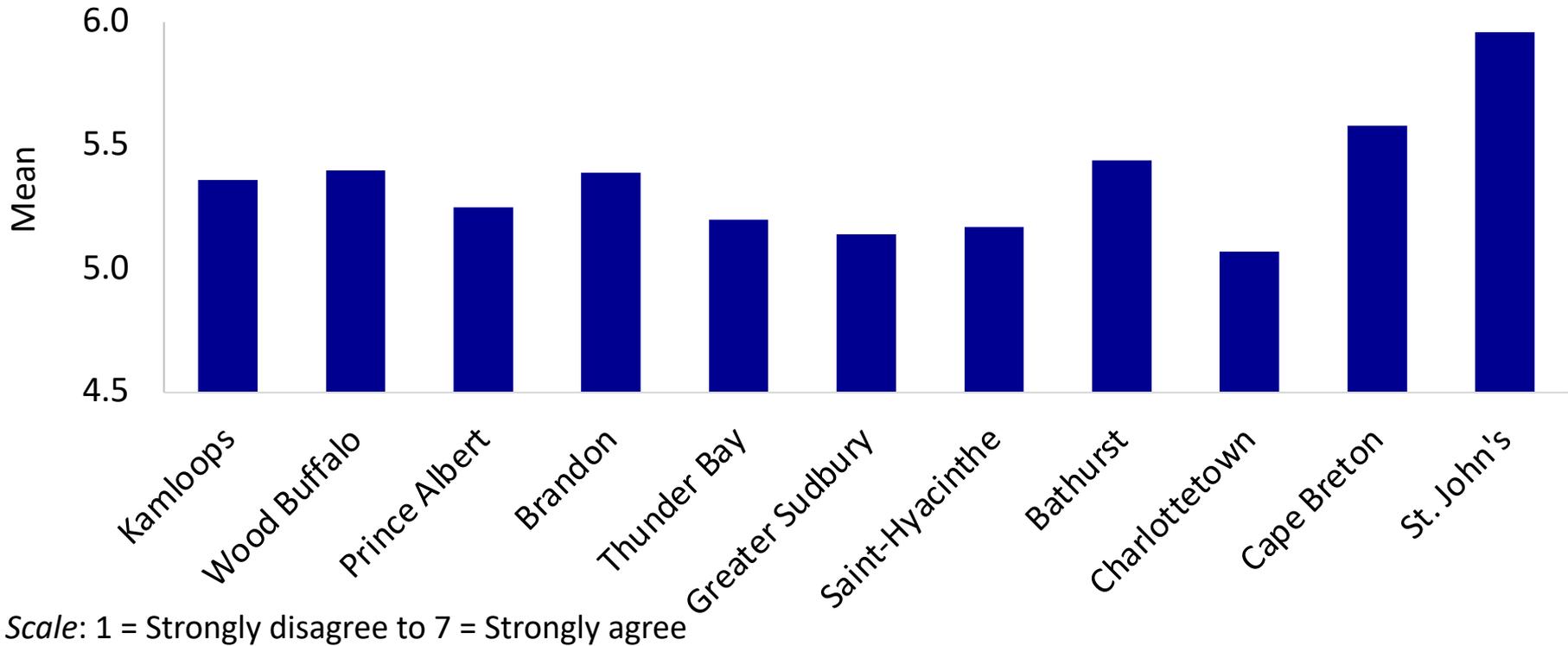


Scale: 1 = Not at all favourable to 7 = Extremely favourable

Attitudes toward Immigrants and Immigration in Local Community

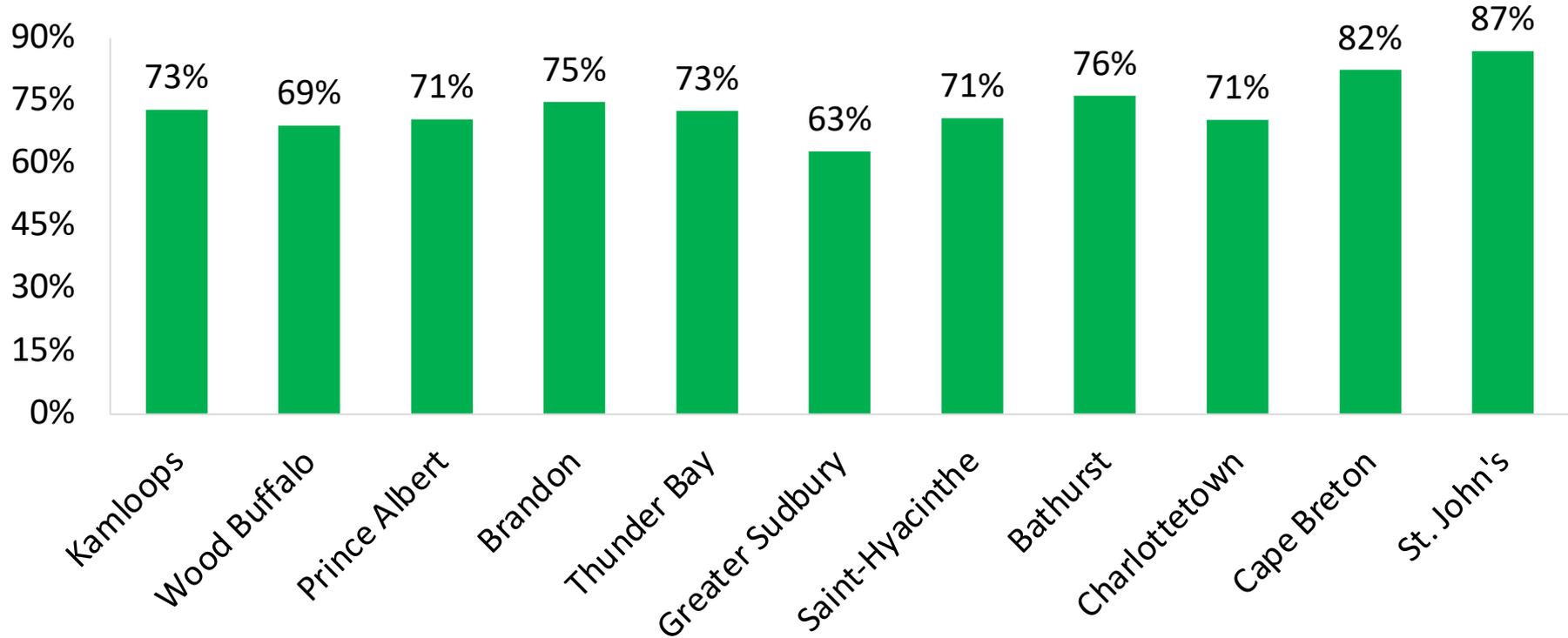


Do you agree or disagree that immigration to [name of community] should be encouraged?



Do you think immigrants in [name of community] are having a positive or negative impact on your community?

■ Positive Impact



Positive Impact of Immigrants on Local Community

Multiculturalism / Diversity of perspectives

- e.g., “As a relatively insulated community, introducing multiculturalism to the community provides more information and understanding of the whole world.”

Filling labour shortages

- e.g., “There is a huge labour shortage, in all areas of employment, especially in health care. I wish there a way to fast track Doctors and Nurses to qualify them for work in Canada.”

Positive impact on the economy

- e.g., “More wage earners and home owners. Bigger tax base.”

Positive Impact of Immigrants on Local Community

Positive characteristics of immigrants

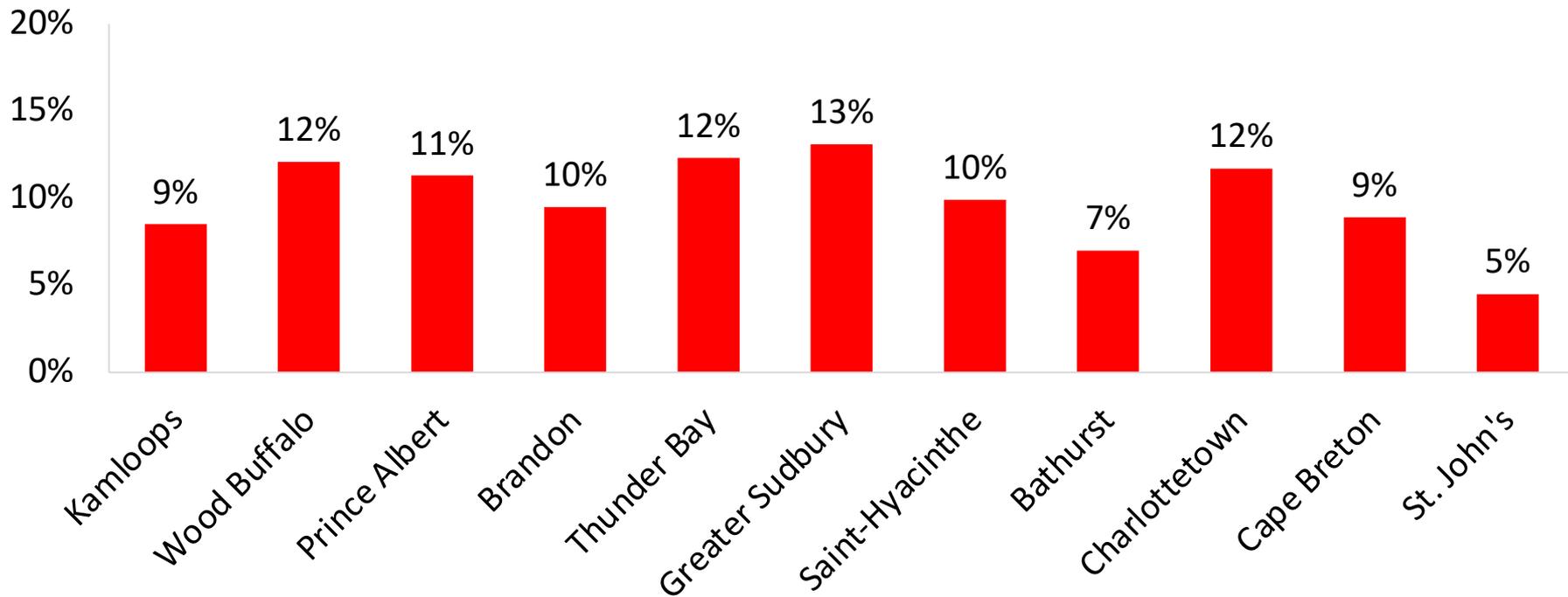
- e.g., “I see many smart and hardworking people who want to give back to the community. They are going to higher education to be doctors, and social workers, to generally give back to Canada.”

Diversity in arts and culture

- e.g., “The cultural diversity of our community has increased. Restaurant and social variety of our region has increased. The arts have been revitalized.”

Do you think immigrants in [name of community] are having a positive or negative impact on your community?

■ Negative Impact



Negative Impact of Immigrants on Local Community

Negative impact on the labour market

- e.g., “They are taking away jobs from people who have been born and raised here and cannot find a job because there are so few available.”

Failure to adopt and respect the Canadian lifestyle / Erosion of Canadian values and morals

- e.g., “Weakening of Canadian and Christian values in the school systems, weakening of mainstream culture, forced indoctrination of ‘others’ values, beliefs, religions, language”

Negative Impact of Immigrants on Local Community

Contribution to housing crisis

- e.g., “There seems to be an influx of immigration here for the past few years and we are having a housing crisis plus our economy is bad. They rent and wreck the places they are in. Serious garbage issues.”

Reaping government benefits

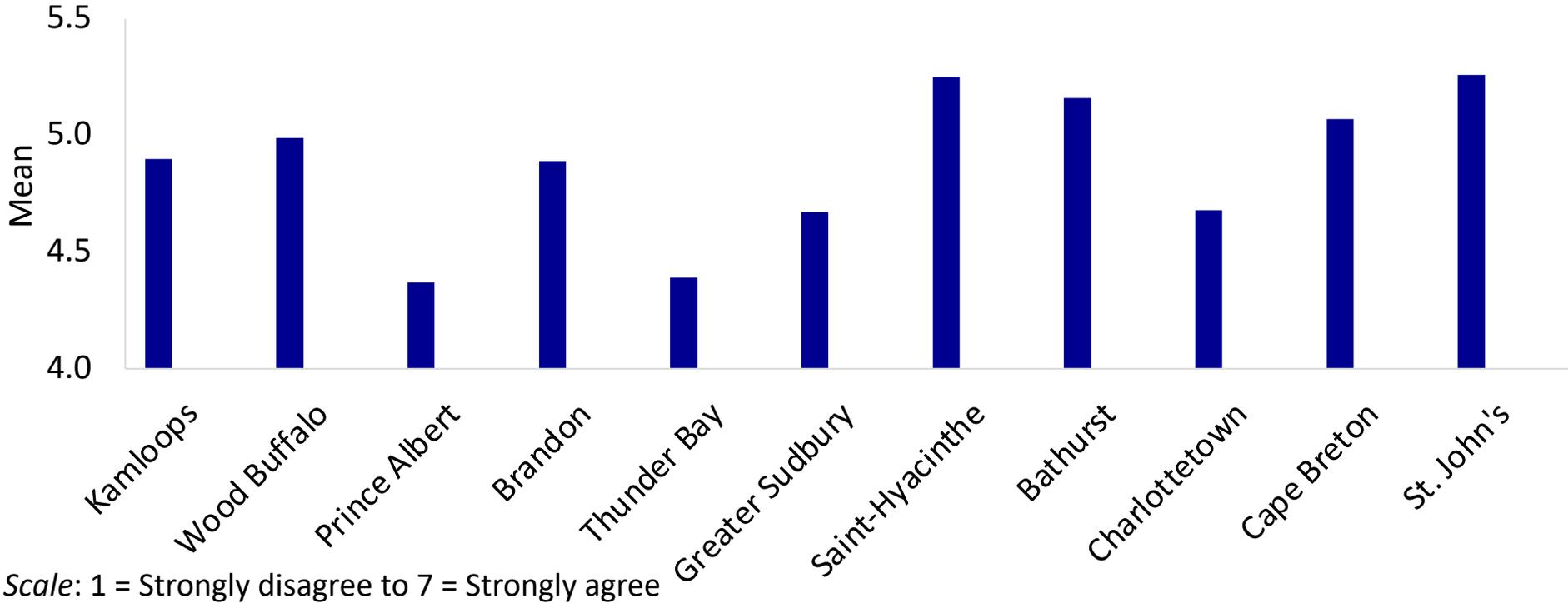
- e.g., “They have more benefits and programs in our community than our own children and families.”

Increase in crime

- e.g., “It appears that drug related crime has increased dramatically and more times than not the ones charged have a new Canadian name attached to it.”

People in [name of community] are welcoming of...

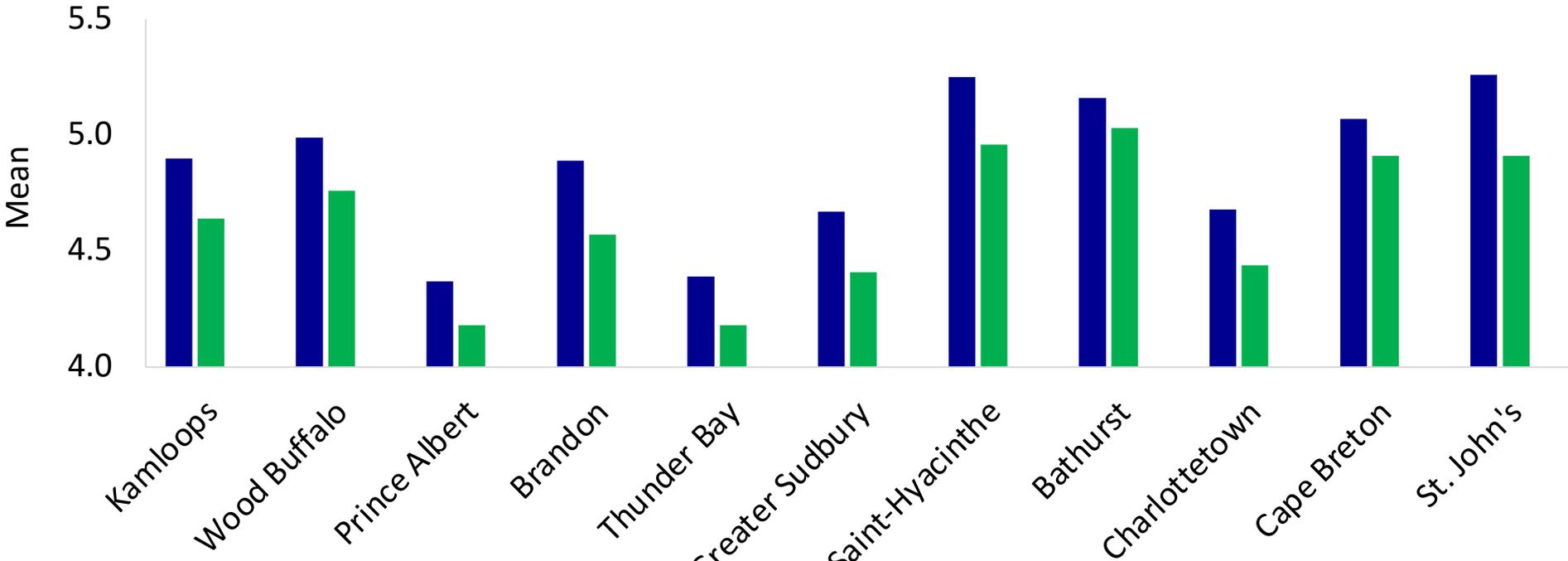
■ Immigrants



Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree

People in [name of community] are welcoming of...

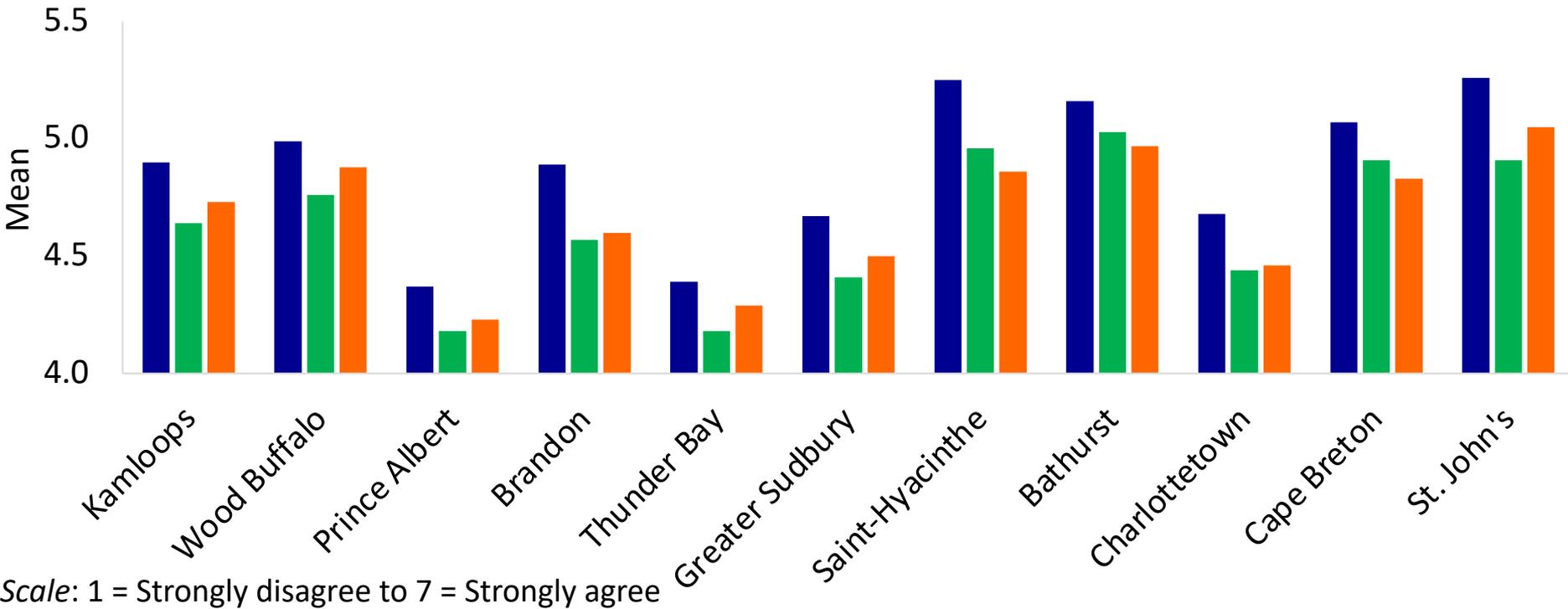
■ Immigrants ■ Immigrants who are not White



Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree

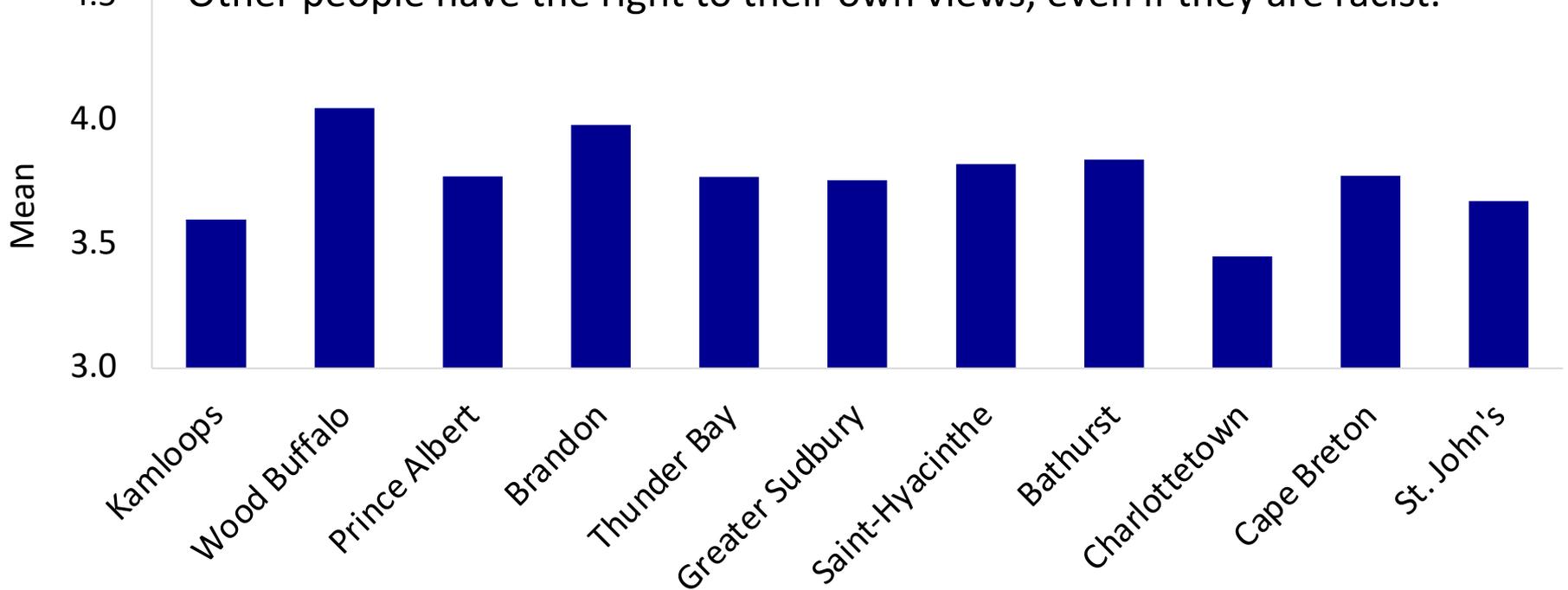
People in [name of community] are welcoming of...

■ Immigrants ■ Immigrants who are not White ■ Immigrants who are not Christian



Tolerance of Racism

“Someone can be a good person, even if they have some racist views.”
“Other people have the right to their own views, even if they are racist.”



Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree

Noteworthy Findings and Implications

Sources of information on immigrants and immigration to Canada

- Demonstrates the importance of news media, especially television news, in shaping attitudes in smaller communities

Attitudes toward immigrants and immigration to Canada

- Attitudes are quite favourable but a sizeable proportion of residents think there are too many immigrants coming to Canada
- People in these communities are particularly supportive of allowing economic immigrants and refugees to come to Canada
- There are some differences in attitudes toward particular refugee groups, with Ukrainian refugees consistently viewed more favourably than Afghan refugees – possible effect of media coverage? – possible effect of racism?

Noteworthy Findings and Implications

Attitudes toward immigrants and immigration in local community

- Relatively high level of agreement that immigration to the local community should be encouraged and most people see immigrants as having a positive impact on their community (e.g., filling labour shortages, multiculturalism)
- However, some people view the impact of immigrants as negative and mention, for example, the weakening of Canadian values, crime, housing crisis
- Most people in these communities see their communities as welcoming of immigrants in general, but as less welcoming of racialized immigrants and of immigrants who are not Christian – a fault line in the positive welcome?
- Some tolerance of racism in these communities means that norms against racism may not be particularly strong