

Federal Politics: Two-in-three Canadians approve of PM Justin Trudeau

Canadian satisfaction with government rising, though confidence in the economy lags

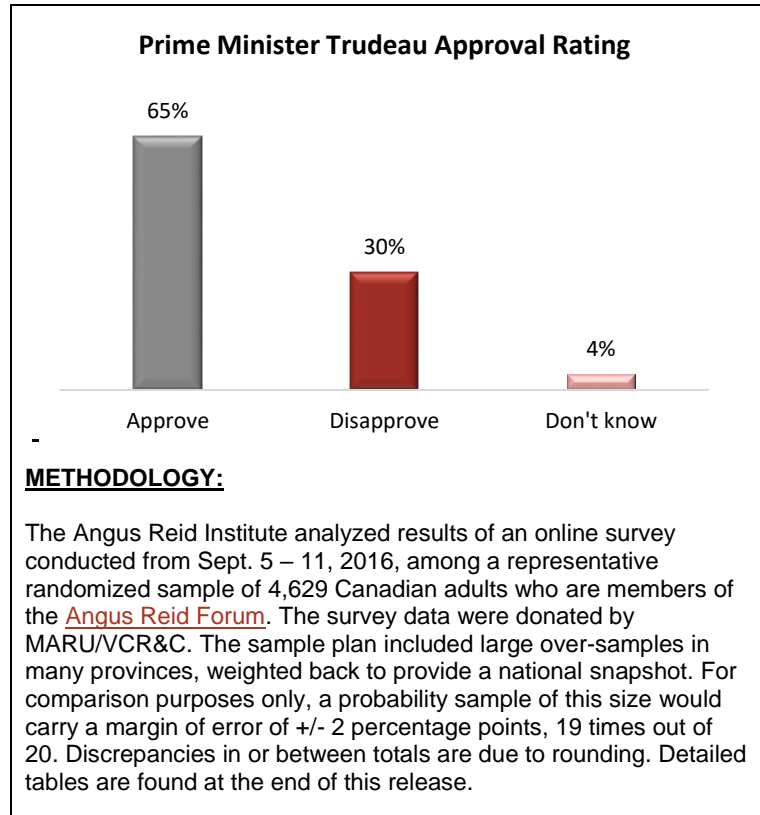
September 15, 2016 – As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau rounds the bases on the first anniversary of the election that gave him and his Liberal caucus a majority mandate, public opinion data analyzed by the Angus Reid Institute finds his approval at a new high, with nearly two-in-three Canadians saying they approve of Trudeau's performance.

The positive numbers for the PM are accompanied by a small but notable lessening of economic anxieties that continue to plague the country, with a growing number of Canadians more likely to say their standard of living has improved over the last 12 months than at any point in the last four years. These majority approval numbers for Trudeau are accompanied by a small but notable lessening of economic anxieties, with a growing number of Canadians more likely to say their standard of living has improved over the last 12 months than at any point in the last four years.

That said, they're still twice as likely to say their standard of living has *worsened* in the last year as to say it has improved, and significant regional differences exist, particularly in parts of the country dependent on the oil and energy economies.

Key Findings:

- Justin Trudeau's approval rating is the highest it has been in this survey since he took office last November, rising to 65 per cent, more than double the number who disapprove (30%)
- Canadians report increasing satisfaction with a number of aspects of life in their country today, including their health care system, relations between the federal and provincial governments, and foreign policy



- The economy is still the top issue for Canadians, and on this front the outlook remains gloomy, especially in Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador, where flagging oil and gas sectors dominate the provincial economies

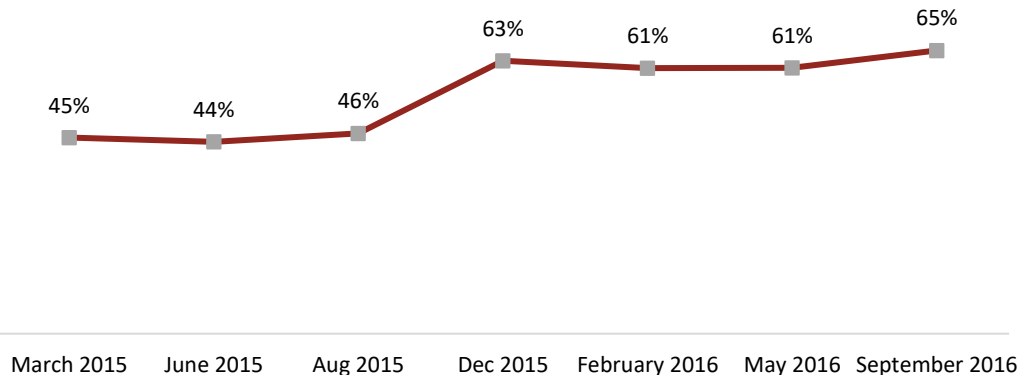
Two-in-three approve of Trudeau

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau spent his summer nabbing human interest headlines at home and abroad. He became [the first sitting PM to march in pride parades](#) in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, he set social media abuzz when [photographed shirtless](#) on vacation in Tofino, and [embraced Gord Downie](#) backstage before the Tragically Hip's final show.

This was followed by an equally high-profile state visit to China at the beginning of September, where he was bestowed with the nickname "[Little Potato](#)", which is, according to media reports, a term of endearment, and a name his father had received (minus the "Little") in previous visits.

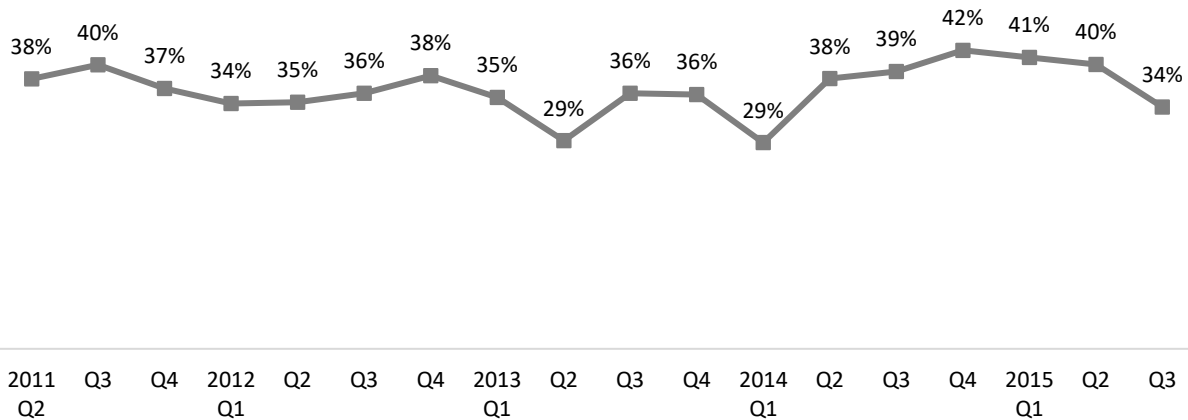
While [critics have questioned](#) whether that trip achieved any substantial economic or diplomatic success, the summer months appear to have left a favourable view of Trudeau. As previously mentioned, some two-thirds (65%) approve of him, more than twice as many as those who disagree (30%).

Justin Trudeau approval rating over time:



For comparison, Trudeau's predecessor Stephen Harper never enjoyed the approval of more than two-fifths of Canadians at any point in his majority mandate. His peak approval rating – 42 per cent – came in December 2014:

Stephen Harper approval rating during majority government:



The Opposition:

Rona Ambrose and the CPC:

The return of MPs for the fall sitting of the House of Commons may be something of a dispiriting time for the leaders of the Conservative Party of Canada and the New Democrats.

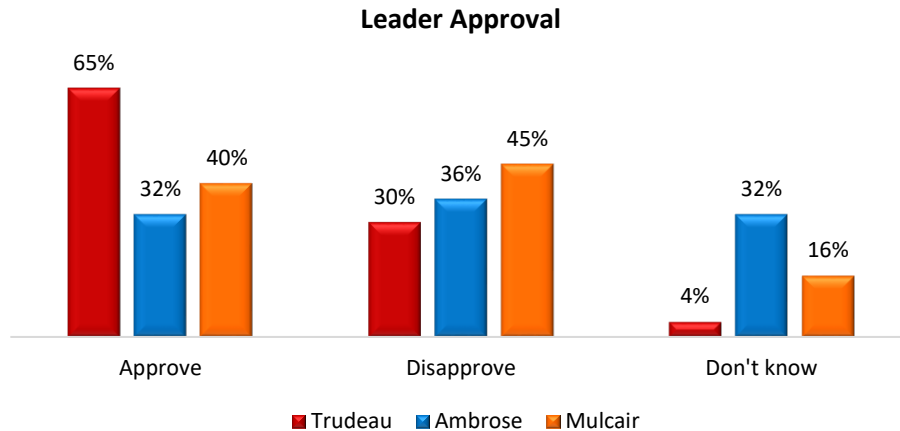
CPC interim leader Rona Ambrose earns the approval of about one-in-three Canadians (32%) – fewer than half of those who approve of Trudeau. They are mostly in Alberta (52%) and mostly are those who voted for the party in October 2015 (67% among CPC voters).

But unless Ambrose herself decides to enter the race for permanent leader - something she has [maintained she will not do](#) – her own approval ratings are less relevant than sometimes [fractious debate](#) between declared candidates over issues such as a so-called [“values test”](#) for immigrants, the [elimination of the supply-management system](#) or the monitoring of Canadian charities for [terror-related activities](#).

Thomas Mulcair and the NDP:

Then there's Tom Mulcair: booted from his own party's leadership position in the spring at a convention in Edmonton, he vows he'll stay on as leader through next year despite calls for his departure from [inside](#) and [outside](#) the NDP caucus – casting himself as a [“steady hand at the tiller”](#) while the party waits for its first official leadership candidate to come forward.

Against this backdrop – two-in-five (40%) Canadians approve of his job performance – slightly fewer than who disapprove (45%).



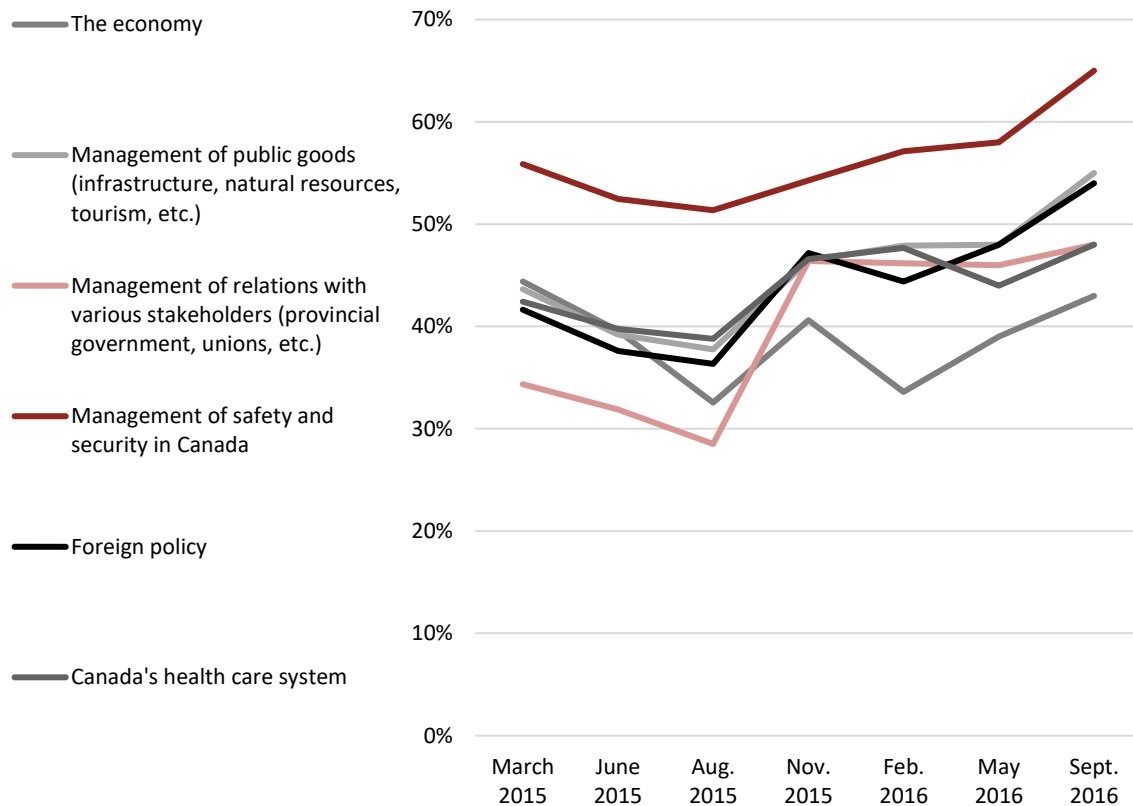
Satisfaction with government improving

The Prime Minister's high levels of approval are reflective of another trend – a growing satisfaction with many areas of governance since the 2015 election. Indeed, on stakeholder relations and dealing with the provincial governments, a 17 point post-election jump has been sustained over the past year, while management of safety and security has risen steadily in each quarter since October.

On security, this rise in satisfaction comes despite unpopular decisions [to pull CF-18's](#) from ISIS bombing missions and to stand by the previous governments [Saudi Arms deal](#), as well as a public opinion split over the governments [refugee resettlement plans](#). The government has also begun a national security review of the controversial anti terror law, Bill C-51, which [many saw](#) as an overreach of policing and surveillance powers.

The government has also reached majority support for its foreign policy (54% satisfied). Trudeau's message of multilateralism has garnered attention worldwide, and appears to also be resonating with most Canadians. These upward trends are seen in the graph below:

**Overall, would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following in Canada?
Satisfied shown:**

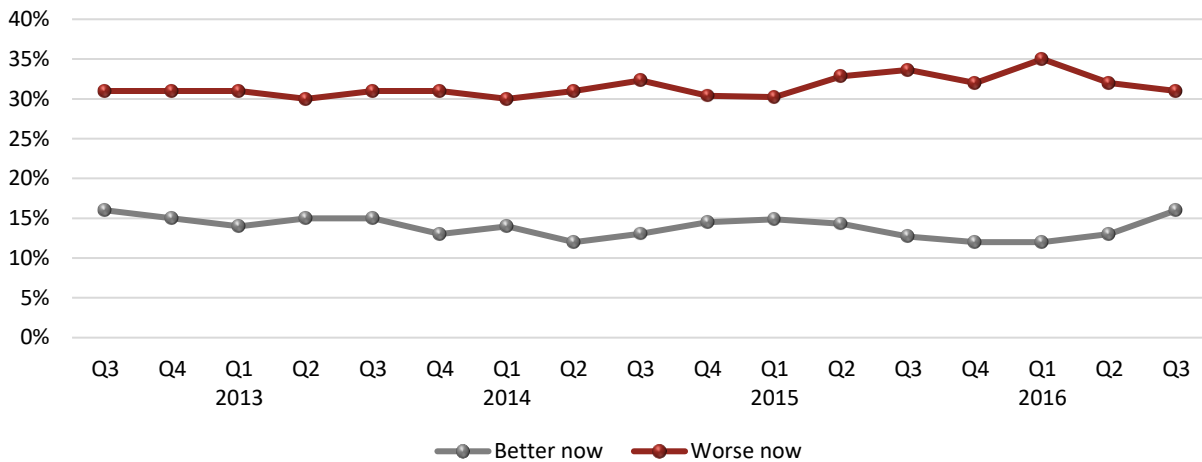


Economic anxiety and household debt

While Canadian satisfaction with many elements of the federal government is improving, the same can also be said of the economy, but in a more limited way: it still ranks lowest compared to other files.

The ratio of Canadians saying their standard of living is worse off now than it was a year ago (31%) over those saying their situation has improved (16%) continues to hold at approximately two-to-one.

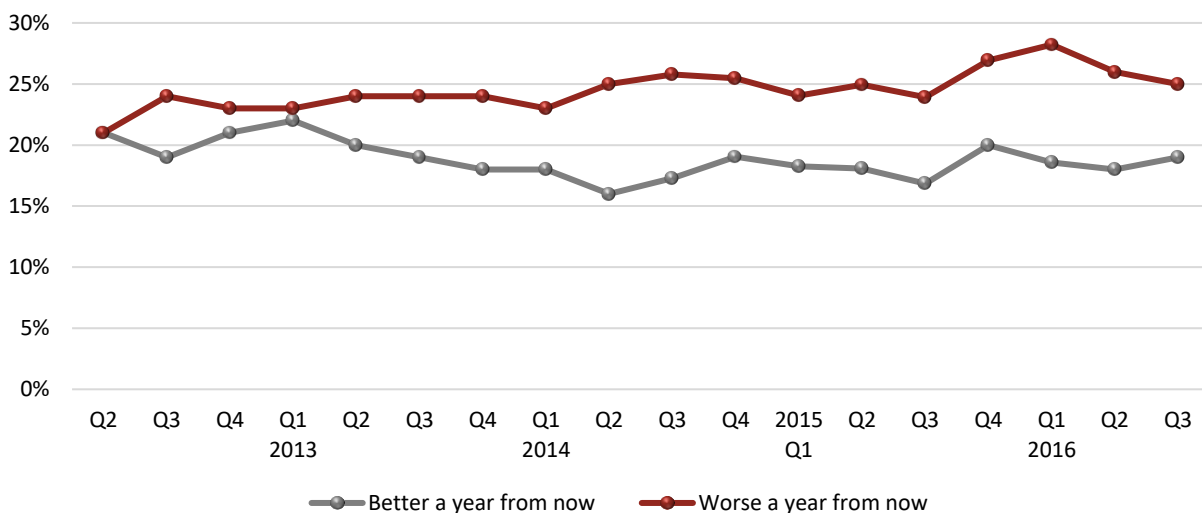
All things considered, do you think your current standard of living is better or worse now than it was a year ago?



Many Canadians may say that they are stuck in an economic rut, and this would mirror the situation of the country as a whole. Household debt levels, which reached record highs in 2015 at 165.4%, have been reported at near identical rates for 2016 (165.3%).

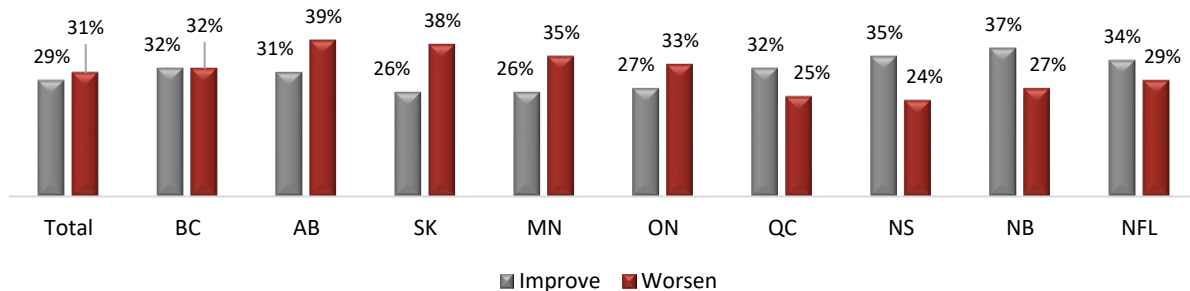
Against this backdrop, and in a reality where job growth has been hard to come by for many, one-quarter of Canadians expect a drop in their standard of living over the next year, though it is worth noting that this percentage has declined slightly for a second consecutive quarter.

And a year from now, do you think your standard of living will be better or worse than now?



And while nationally overall satisfaction with the Canadian economy *today* appears to be on the rise, there *is* apprehension about how it will perform in the year ahead, depending on where respondents live:

Over the next twelve months, do you think the Canadian economy will improve, remain the same, or worsen?



*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

Overall do you approve or disapprove of the following:			
(weighted sample sizes)	Prime Minister and Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau	Opposition Leader and Interim Leader of the Conservative Party Rona Ambrose	New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Thomas Mulcair
Approve strongly	24%	8%	6%
Approve somewhat	41%	24%	33%
Disapprove somewhat	14%	17%	23%
Disapprove strongly	16%	19%	21%
Don't know	4%	32%	16%

Trudeau Approval by Quarter							
(weighted sample sizes)	March 2015 (6278)	June 2015 (6005)	Aug. 2015 (6226)	Nov. 2015 (5294)	Feb. 2016 (5867)	May 2016 (5150)	Sept. 2016 (4,629)
Prime Minister and Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau	45%	44%	46%	63%	62%	61%	65%

All things considered, do you think your current standard of living is better or worse now than it was a year ago?

(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (4629)	Region								
		BC (579)	AB (461)	SK (911)	MB (676)	ON (664)	PQ (498)	NS (269)	NB (258)	NFL (217)
Better a year from now	16%	16%	12%	11%	16%	17%	16%	16%	13%	15%
The same as now	52%	52%	41%	51%	56%	50%	60%	61%	48%	40%
Worse a year from now	31%	31%	46%	36%	26%	32%	21%	23%	37%	42%
Not sure	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	3%	*%	1%	2%

And a year from now, do you think your standard of living will be better or worse than now?

(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (4629)	Region								
		BC (579)	AB (461)	SK (911)	MB (676)	ON (664)	PQ (498)	NS (269)	NB (258)	NFL (217)
Better a year from now	19%	17%	14%	18%	22%	20%	20%	19%	21%	21%
The same as now	48%	48%	46%	47%	46%	45%	56%	54%	39%	32%
Worse a year from now	25%	26%	31%	29%	22%	28%	17%	21%	31%	38%
Not sure	8%	8%	9%	6%	10%	7%	7%	7%	10%	9%

Over the next twelve months, do you think the Canadian economy will improve, remain the same, or worsen?

(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (4629)	Region								
		BC (579)	AB (461)	SK (911)	MB (676)	ON (664)	PQ (498)	NS (269)	NB (258)	NFL (217)
Significantly improve	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	1%	4%
Moderately improve	27%	29%	28%	24%	24%	25%	29%	32%	36%	30%
Remain the same	39%	36%	30%	35%	40%	40%	43%	42%	36%	37%
Moderately worsen	24%	24%	25%	22%	24%	27%	20%	18%	18%	24%
Significantly worsen	7%	8%	14%	16%	11%	6%	5%	6%	9%	5%

Overall, would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the economy in Canada?

(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (4629)	Region								
		BC (579)	AB (461)	SK (911)	MB (676)	ON (664)	PQ (498)	NS (269)	NB (258)	NFL (217)
Very satisfied	5%	4%	4%	5%	6%	4%	9%	7%	3%	8%
Moderately satisfied	38%	44%	22%	29%	35%	36%	46%	43%	34%	46%
Moderately dissatisfied	31%	28%	31%	33%	26%	35%	27%	24%	35%	26%
Very dissatisfied	19%	16%	39%	28%	23%	18%	13%	16%	19%	16%
Not sure	7%	8%	4%	4%	11%	7%	6%	10%	9%	4%

Overall, would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following in Canada today? (those saying "satisfied" shown)										
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (4629)	Region								
		BC (579)	AB (461)	SK (911)	MB (676)	ON (664)	PQ (498)	NS (269)	NB (258)	NFL (217)
The economy	43%	48%	25%	34%	40%	39%	54%	50%	37%	53%
Management of public goods (infrastructure, natural resources, tourism, etc.)	55%	55%	44%	45%	52%	57%	58%	54%	52%	62%
Management of relations with various stakeholders (provincial government, unions, etc.)	48%	49%	36%	42%	47%	47%	56%	47%	45%	60%
Management of safety and security in Canada	65%	64%	51%	46%	58%	69%	67%	66%	66%	71%
Public information and assistance programs (seniors, immigrants, consumer protection, new home-buyers)	50%	47%	40%	42%	49%	53%	52%	51%	47%	57%
Foreign Policy	54%	54%	40%	41%	49%	55%	59%	53%	46%	62%
Canada's Education system	55%	54%	54%	55%	55%	55%	56%	52%	57%	66%
Canada's health care system	48%	43%	52%	51%	44%	49%	45%	53%	51%	55%