

## Trudeau maintains majority approval, but new Conservative leader helps shrink vote intention gap

*Andrew Scheer seen as best leader on the economy; anxiety over deficit has doubled since election*

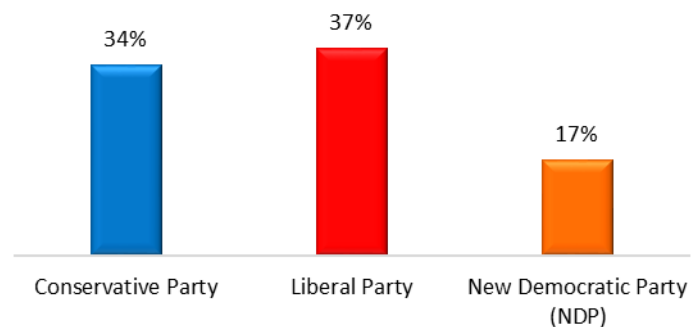
**June 15, 2017** – A year and a half into his mandate, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau continues to hold the approval of more than half of Canadians, but a new leader on the national scene is already being viewed as better suited to deal with the economic issues that are top of mind for this nation.

A new Angus Reid Institute analysis of quarterly public opinion polling data from more than 5,400 Canadian adults finds that as the summer recess approaches in Ottawa, Trudeau is still widely seen as best Prime Minister. That said, more Canadians are also inclined to say that it may be time for a change on Parliament Hill than they have been since Trudeau took office.

### Key Findings:

- Trudeau's approval stands at 54 per cent, a level essentially unchanged since December 2016
- Although new Conservative Party leader Andrew Scheer is unknown to nearly two-in-five Canadians (37%), he is seen as best leader to handle economic issues
- Were an election to be held today, vote intention indicates a strong narrowing of the gap between those who would choose the Conservative and Liberal parties in the last 18 months

**If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?**



### METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute analyzed the results of an online survey conducted from June 5 – 12, 2017, among a representative randomized sample of 5,406 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). The survey data were donated by MARU/Matchbox. The sample plan included large over-samples in many provinces, weighted back to provide a national snapshot. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size with this sample plan would carry a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

### Index:

- Part 1 – Scheer's Economic Advantage
- Part 2 – Canada's Economic Mood
- Part 3 – Trudeau still seen as best PM

### CONTACT:

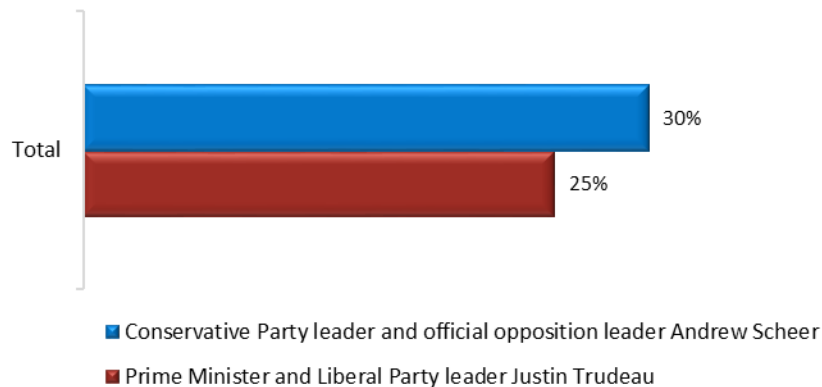
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## Part 1:

### **Scheer leads on most important issue to Canadians**

He may have obtained his victory as Conservative leader by a [razor thin margin](#), but less than a month into his tenure, Andrew Scheer's Conservative bona fides are enabling him to claim the high ground on the major issue preoccupying this country – the economy. While the new opposition leader has gains to make in terms of recognizability and awareness among Canadians, he is also seen as most able on economic issues. Three-in-ten Canadians say Scheer is best suited to deal with the economy, five points higher than the number of those choosing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

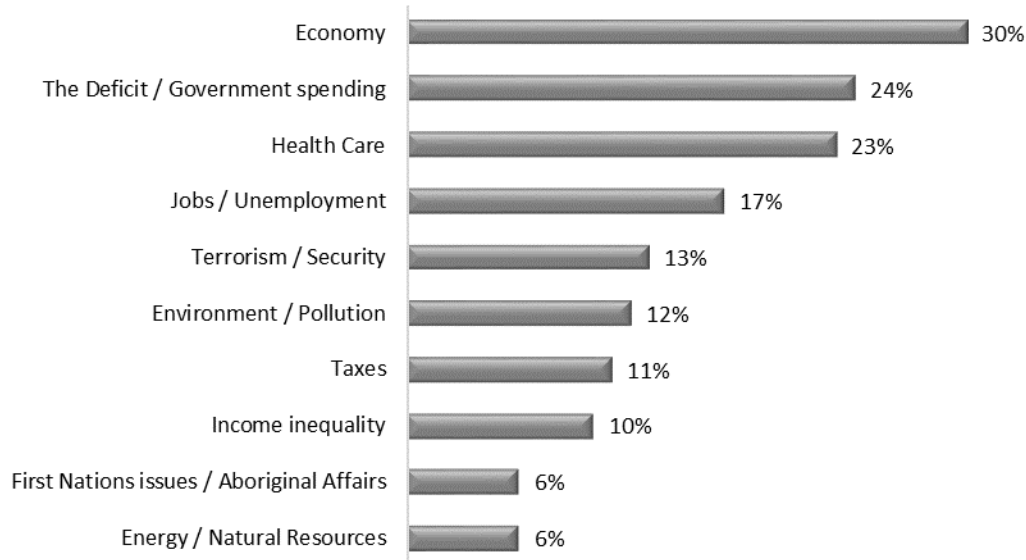
#### **Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with each of the following issues? 'The economy'**



This confidence in Scheer – despite his relative unknown status among the electorate – and despite Trudeau's continued high approval – is critical. When asked to choose their top two issues facing Canada today, the economy is chosen as the top issue, while other economy-related topics – the deficit, unemployment and taxes – all feature prominently on the list of concern.

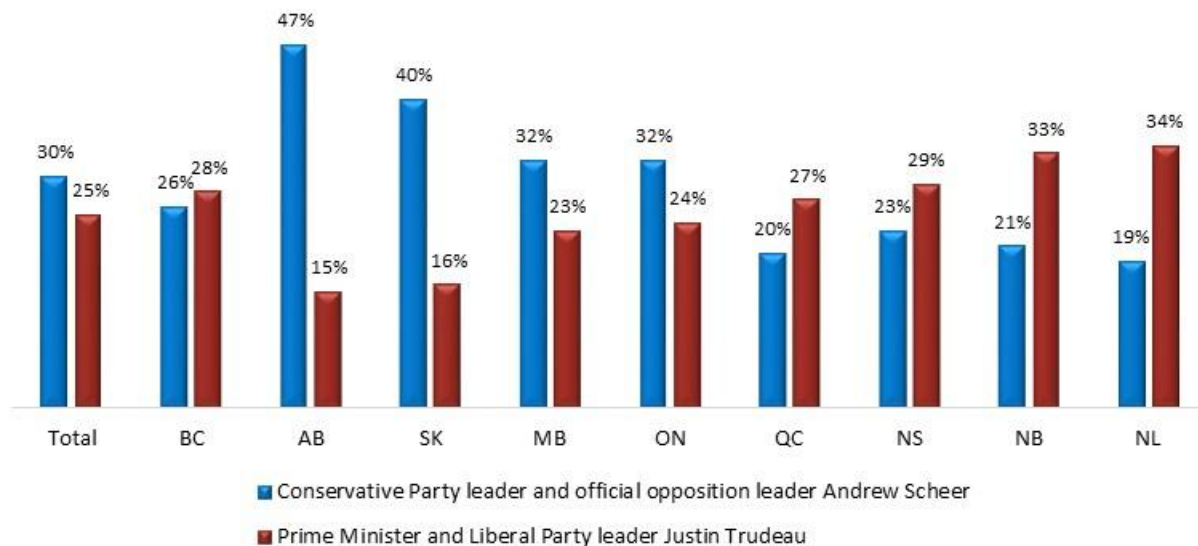
Overall, some three-quarters of Canadians put economic issues at the top of their list, as seen in the graph below:

**What do you feel are the most important issues facing Canada today?  
(Choose up to two)  
Responses receiving more than 5% shown**



Indeed, much of this sentiment comes from the Conservative-inclined prairie provinces, but a plurality from Ontario also prefer Scheer on the issue, while British Columbians are almost evenly divided:

**Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with each of the following issues?**



\*Due to small sample size, PEI is not included

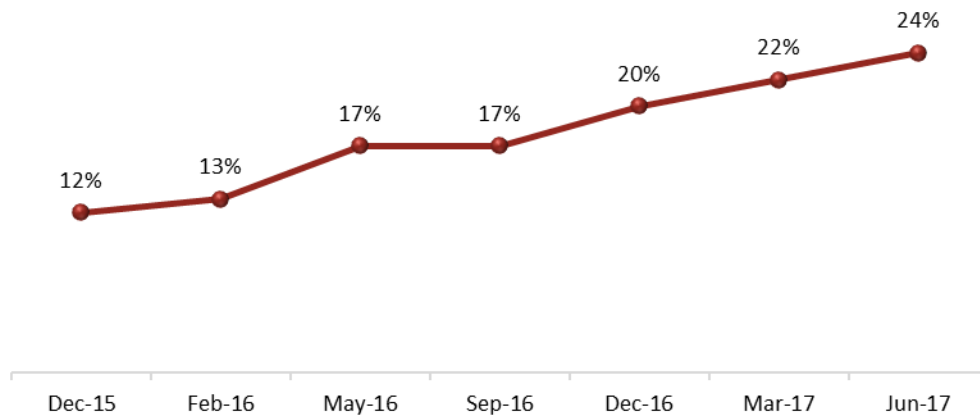
## Deficit concerns continue to resonate

In 2015, when Trudeau ran on a promise to run a budget deficit of up to \$10 billion for each of its first three years, Canadians were split on the idea.

Now, a recent study suggests that the government is close to the highest single year of per-capita spending in the country's history and is projected to run a deficit of roughly three times that planned amount for 2017/18.

This has created an environment where the number of Canadians choosing "the deficit" as one of the most important issues facing the country is steadily rising, inching up again, this time to one-in-four, and doubling since the election.

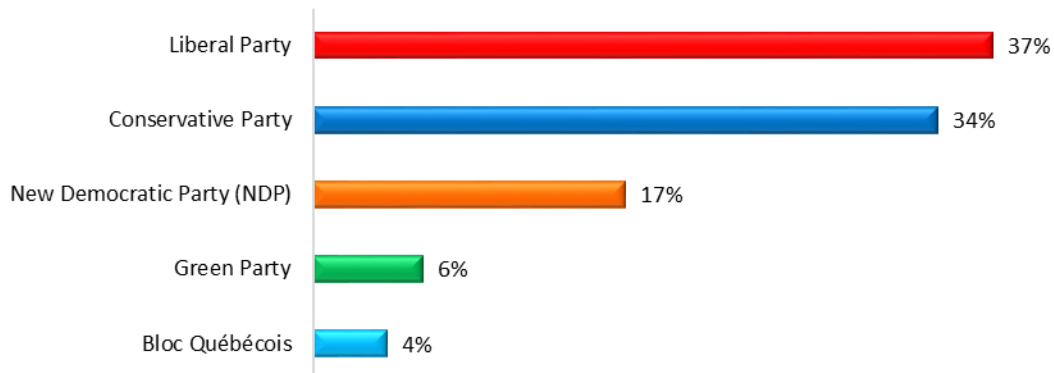
**Percentage saying 'the deficit/government spending' is one of the most important issues facing Canada today:**



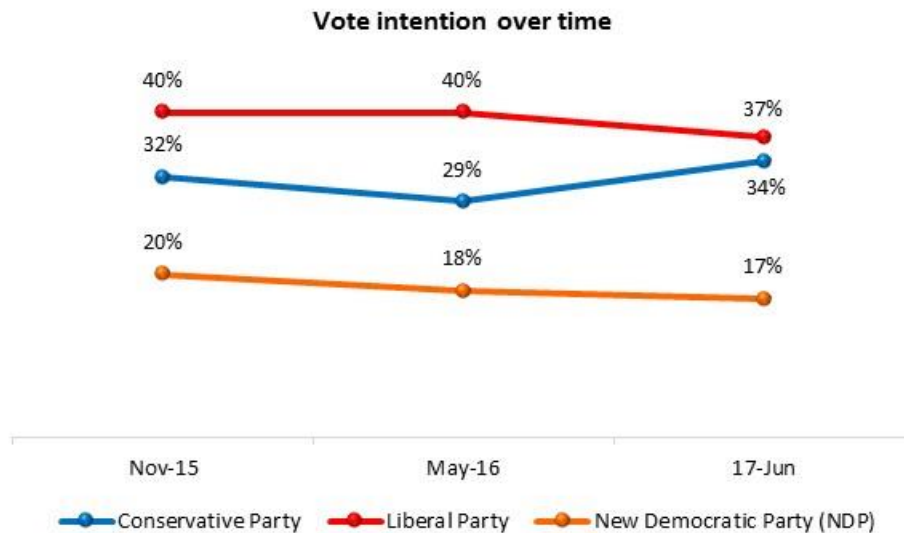
## Vote intention narrows year over year:

What emerges is an apparent narrowing of the vote intention gap help by the Liberal Party since the 2015 election. Asked to consider which party they would support if an election were held tomorrow, the Liberals hold only a three-point advantage over the Conservatives, 37 per cent to 34 per cent.

**If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?**

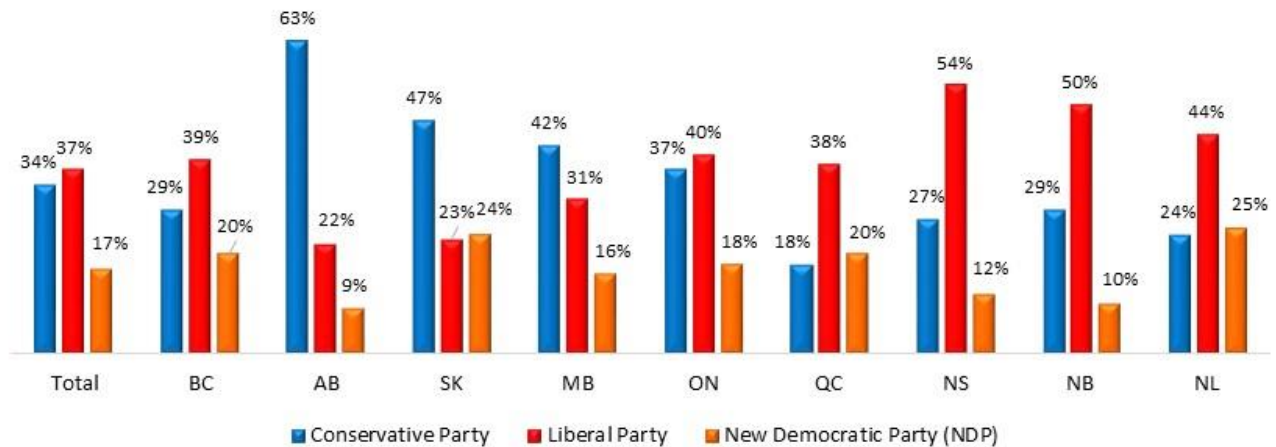


In the months following the October 2015 election, support waned for the CPC, dropping to 29 per cent last May. A year later with their leadership race settled, a five-point jump has them within three points of the Liberal party:



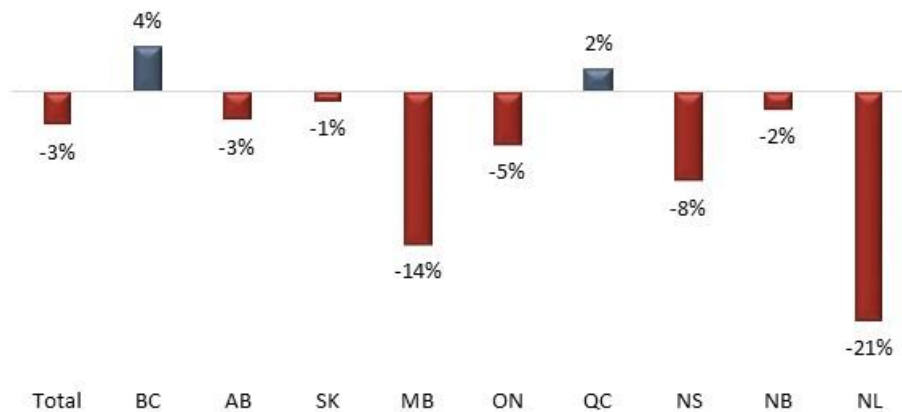
As it stands today, the bulk of Conservative Party support resides in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The CPC has inched closer to parity in Ontario since the election, possibly attributable to the leadership being settled, and well-chronicled fatigue with the [provincial Liberal government in that province](#):

**If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?**



To depict how vote intention has changed regionally, the Angus Reid Institute has created a momentum score for the Liberal Party, since the 2015 election. This score takes the most recent vote intention results and subtracts them from the official results of that election, as shown below:

### Change in Liberal Vote Intention since 2015 election

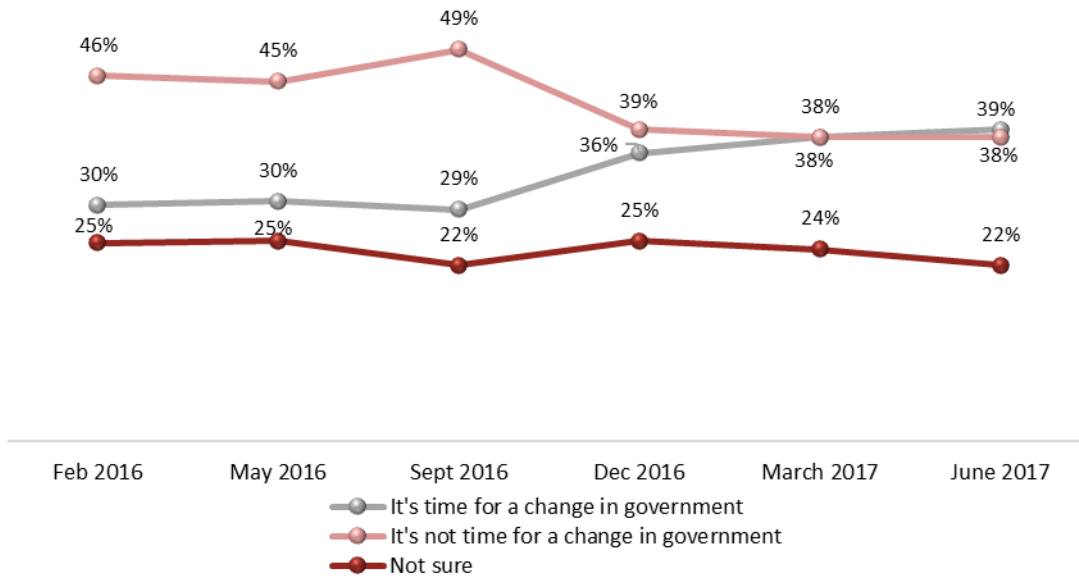


So, is it time for a change in government? While the opportunity to cast a vote is still more than two years away, it is worth noting how the percentage of Canadians voicing this sentiment has changed over time.

Since February 2016, the number of Canadians saying they felt it was time for a change hovered at three-in-ten. This quarter that number sits at four-in-ten (39%) and for the first time has eclipsed, though ever

so slightly, the number of Canadians who say the opposite – that it is not time for a change and that the Liberal Party should be re-elected:

### Which of the following two statements best reflects how you feel today?



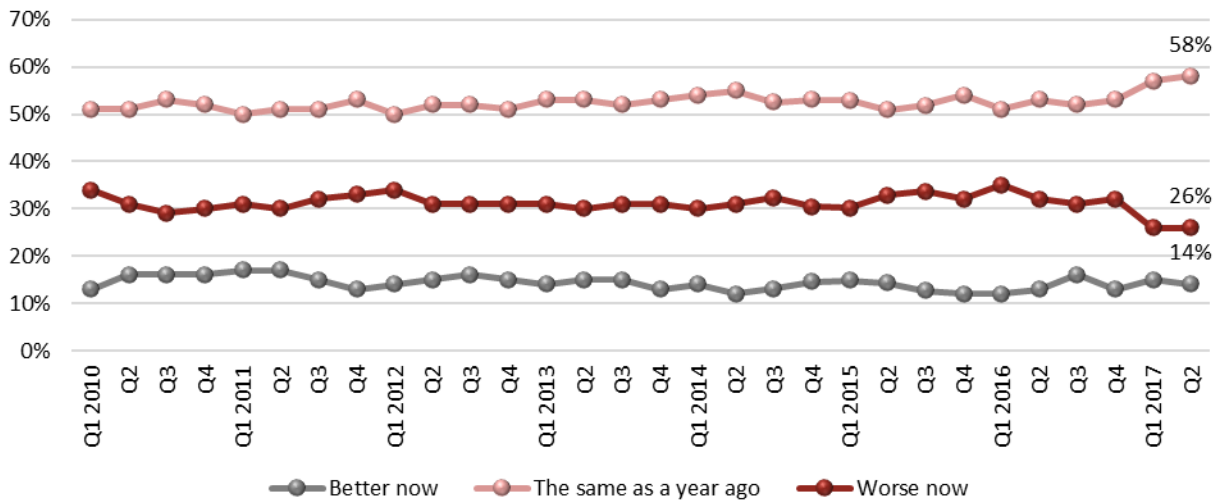
## **Part 2:**

### **The Economic picture in Canada: More positive but still negative**

Despite a more competitive political environment driven by perceptions of economic competence among Canada's main party leaders, there are also encouraging trends emerging for the Trudeau Liberals.

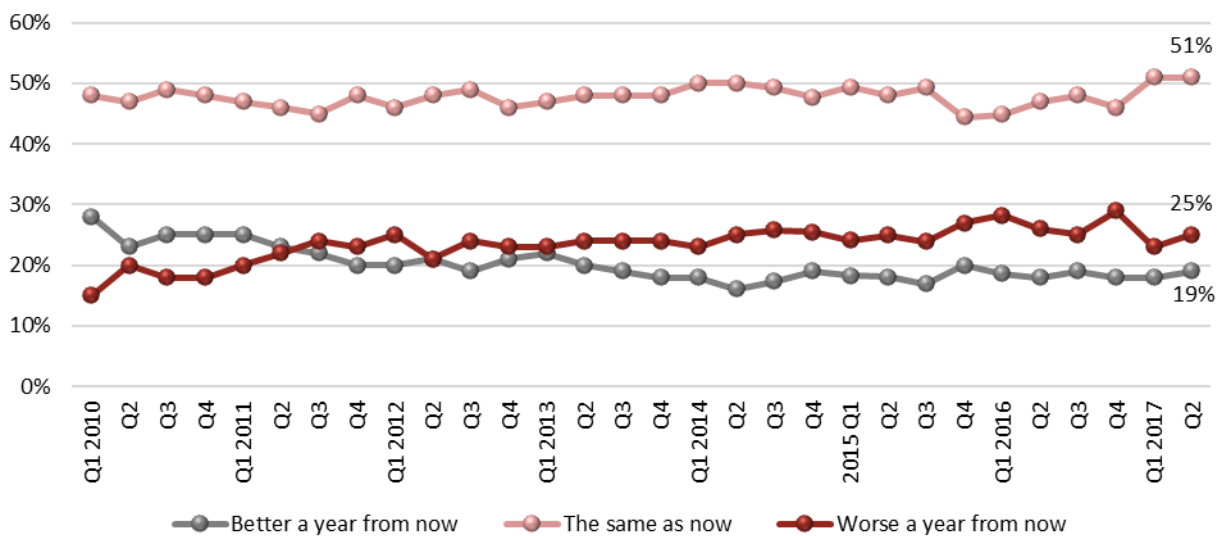
The number of Canadians saying their standard of living is worse off now than it was a year ago holds at the lowest level recorded since 2010 – though it remains at about one-in-four:

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



Looking ahead, Canadians are slightly more positive. One-in-five say that they expect their situation to improve over the next year:

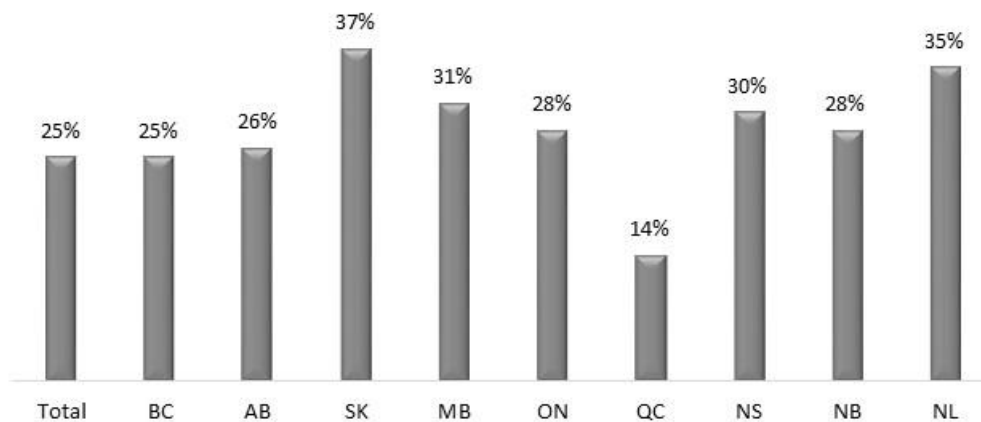
### And a year from now, do you think your standard of living will be better or worse than now?





Regionally, the most negative sentiment comes from Saskatchewan, where budget-balancing efforts have led the government to [cut spending and raise taxes](#) by \$900 million. Here, 37 per cent of residents say they will be worse off by June 2018. Newfoundland and Labrador, the province with the [highest unemployment rate](#) in the country, also voices significant pessimism (35%).

**Percentage of Canadians saying their standard of living will be worse a year from now**

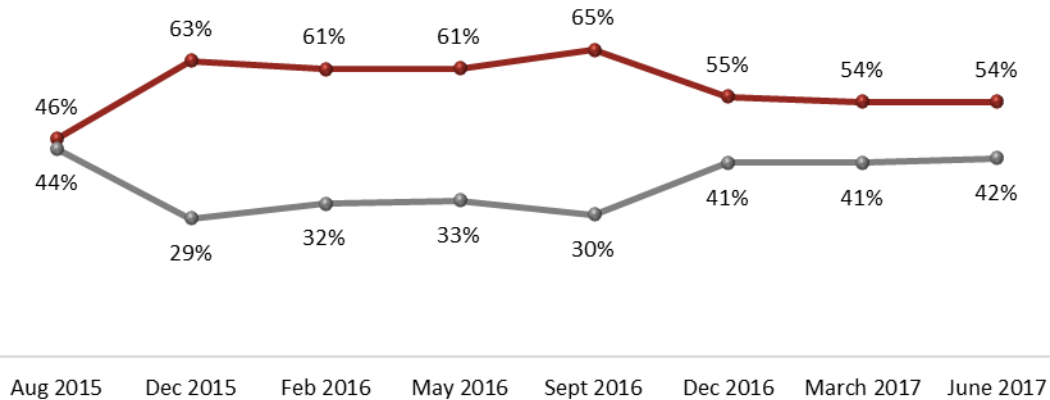


### **Part 3:**

#### **Trudeau's approval continues to hold above 50%:**

For the time being, the overall political picture remains relatively rosy for Trudeau. Despite a notable 10-point drop in approval late in 2016, opinions of the Prime Minister's job performance have stabilized and have held - virtually unchanged - at the 54 per cent mark for nine months:

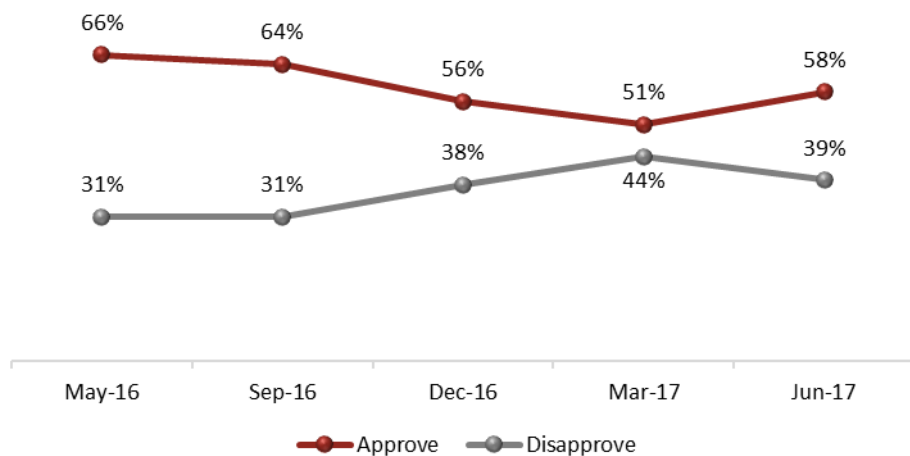
## Do you approve or disapprove of Justin Trudeau?



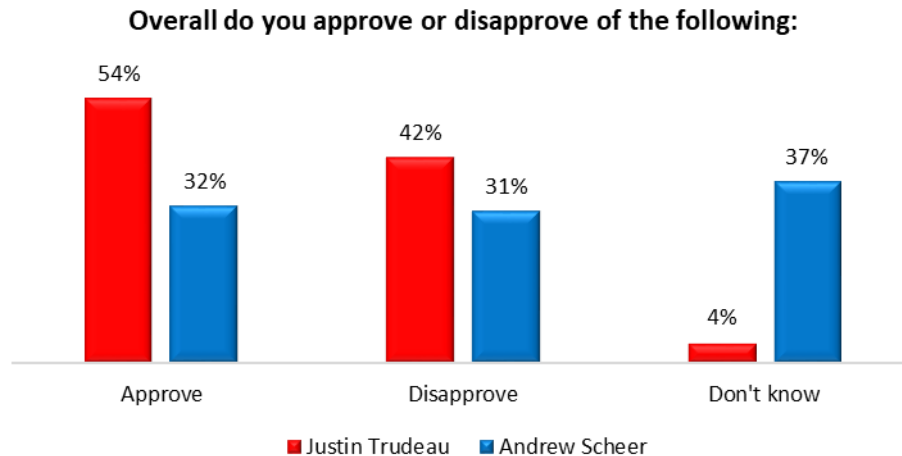
Notably, the Prime Minister has regained some lost support in British Columbia after the government's decision to approve the twinning of the Kinder Morgan TransMountain pipeline. The decision arguably outraged environmentally-minded voters on the west coast who had backed Trudeau in 2015.

But the shift in conversation around the fate of the pipeline back to the provincial level - with Alberta Premier Rachel Notley and BC's provincial leaders sparring over the future of the project – could mean that for the time being – Trudeau is once again out of the line of fire. In BC, he jumps 7 points this quarter to 58 per cent:

## Justin Trudeau approval in British Columbia



As noted, the advantage that Trudeau maintains over Scheer may be attributable to the relative anonymity of his Conservative counterpart on the national political scene. Asked to weigh in on the new Conservative leader, 37 per cent of respondents say they simply don't know enough about him yet. The remaining groups are split close to evenly between approval (32%) and disapproval (31%):



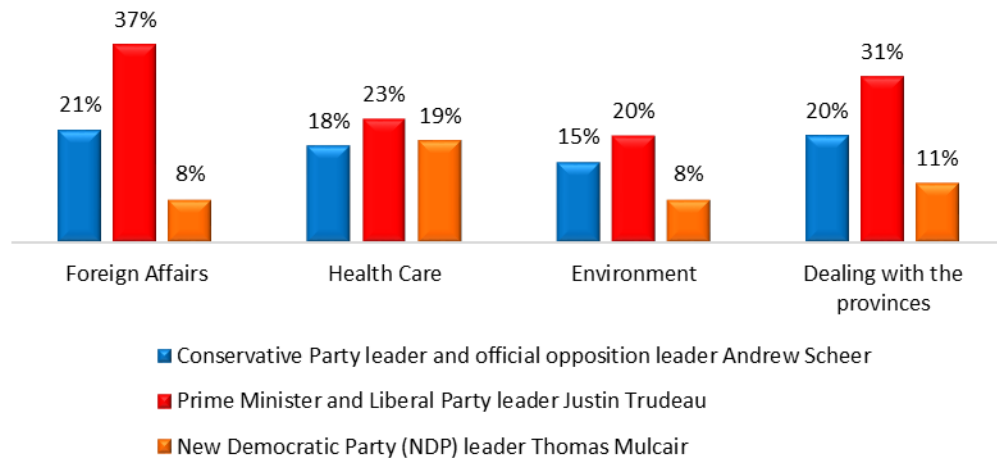
And while Scheer has an early perceived advantage on his ability to handle the economy, when it comes to other key files, the Primer Minister is still favoured.

The issue with which Canadians have the most confidence in Trudeau is foreign affairs. The government has made its commitment to international relations a cornerstone of its governance. Trudeau's recent affirmation of support for the Paris Climate Accord, a commitment Canadians overwhelmingly would like to see the government continue after the withdrawal of the United States, and a promised 70 per cent boost in military spending are perhaps the best examples of this.

**[Related: Even with US pulling out of Paris, most want Canada to maintain climate commitments](#)**

On health care, another top priority for Canadians, Trudeau leads – albeit not by much. He is also strongest on handling the environment, and on maintaining good relations with the provinces. The latter may be critical should unfolding events in BC result in the cancellation of major resource projects, or should the Quebec premier's recent musings re-opening the constitutional debate gain traction:

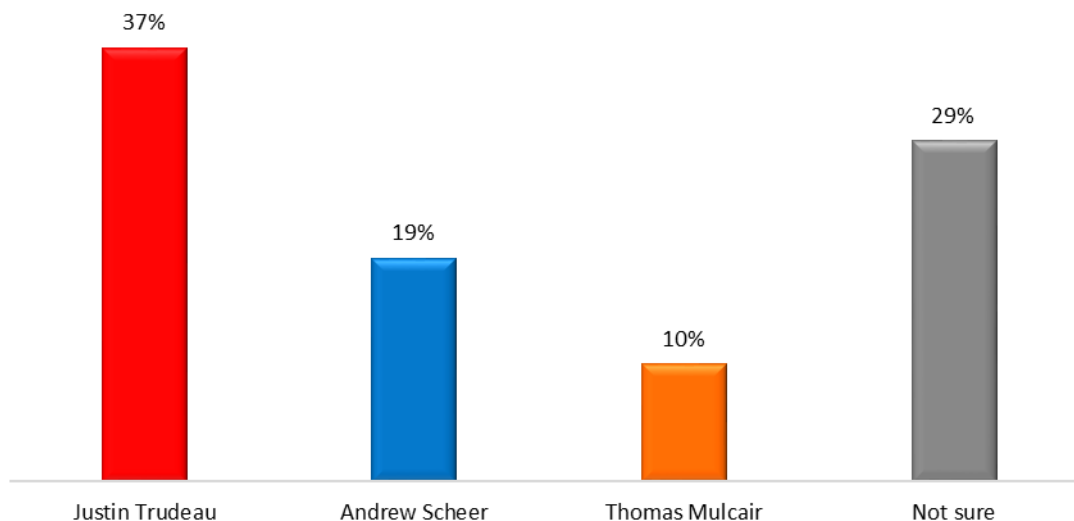
### Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with each of the following issues?



### Trudeau still clear choice for 'Best Prime Minister'

And as the federal political landscape undergoes a reconstruction this year – New Democratic Party members pick *their* new leader in October - Trudeau is still the clear choice of Canadians on the question of who would make the best PM:

### Which of these leaders would make the best Prime Minister of Canada?



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 foundation 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.

**Summary Tables Follow**

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?										
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (4680)	Region								
		BC (528)	AB (524)	SK (959)	MB (687)	ON (691)	QC (495)	NS (252)	NB (248)	NL (252)
Conservative Party	34%	29%	63%	47%	42%	37%	18%	27%	29%	24%
Liberal Party	37%	39%	22%	23%	31%	40%	38%	54%	50%	44%
New Democratic Party	17%	20%	9%	24%	16%	18%	20%	12%	10%	25%
Bloc Québécois	4%						17%			
Green Party	6%	12%	5%	6%	10%	5%	6%	6%	9%	3%
Other party	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	3%

Overall do you approve or disapprove of the following:			
(weighted sample sizes)	Prime Minister and Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau	Opposition Leader and Leader of the Conservative Andrew Scheer	New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Thomas Mulcair
Approve strongly	18%	10%	8%
Approve somewhat	37%	22%	33%
Disapprove somewhat	17%	15%	24%
Disapprove strongly	24%	16%	18%
Don't know	4%	37%	18%

Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with each of the following issues?										
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (5406)	Region								
		BC (600)	AB (599)	SK (1053)	MB (773)	ON (803)	QC (603)	NS (294)	NB (289)	NL (295)
		Economy								
Andrew Scheer	30%	26%	47%	40%	32%	32%	20%	23%	21%	19%
Justin Trudeau	25%	28%	15%	16%	23%	24%	27%	29%	33%	34%
Thomas Mulcair	11%	12%	5%	14%	8%	10%	15%	6%	6%	13%
		Health Care								
Andrew Scheer	18%	16%	37%	35%	24%	19%	7%	15%	18%	10%
Justin Trudeau	23%	22%	15%	17%	20%	24%	25%	30%	33%	32%
Thomas Mulcair	19%	25%	10%	21%	18%	18%	23%	13%	8%	24%
		Foreign Affairs								
Andrew Scheer	21%	19%	39%	33%	26%	22%	11%	12%	16%	13%
Justin Trudeau	37%	39%	23%	27%	35%	37%	42%	46%	40%	47%
Thomas Mulcair	8%	7%	3%	9%	6%	8%	11%	4%	5%	8%

Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with each of the following issues?										
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (5406)	Region								
		BC (600)	AB (599)	SK (1053)	MB (773)	ON (803)	QC (603)	NS (294)	NB (289)	NL (295)
		Environment								
Andrew Scheer	15%	10%	31%	28%	20%	16%	7%	9%	9%	9%
Justin Trudeau	20%	17%	12%	17%	18%	20%	25%	25%	25%	34%
Thomas Mulcair	8%	9%	5%	11%	5%	5%	13%	7%	7%	14%
		Dealing with the provinces								
Andrew Scheer	20%	17%	42%	38%	26%	21%	10%	15%	15%	11%
Justin Trudeau	31%	33%	17%	17%	26%	34%	31%	33%	40%	42%
Thomas Mulcair	11%	10%	5%	14%	10%	9%	19%	6%	4%	16%

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 (5406)	Region								
		BC (600)	AB (599)	SK (1053)	MB (773)	ON (803)	QC (603)	NS (294)	NB (289)	NL (295)
Better now	14%	15%	11%	13%	16%	17%	13%	15%	10%	12%
The same as a year ago	58%	56%	46%	45%	52%	56%	69%	57%	55%	53%
Worse now	26%	27%	41%	41%	31%	26%	16%	27%	33%	34%
Not sure	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	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 (5406)	Region								
		BC (600)	AB (599)	SK (1053)	MB (773)	ON (803)	QC (603)	NS (294)	NB (289)	NL (295)
Better a year from now	19%	19%	17%	14%	16%	20%	19%	20%	18%	15%
The same as now	51%	50%	50%	43%	49%	46%	61%	45%	48%	45%
Worse a year from now	25%	25%	26%	37%	31%	28%	14%	30%	28%	35%
Not sure	6%	7%	7%	6%	5%	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%

## Which of the following two statements best reflects how you feel today?

(weighted sample sizes)	June 2017 (5,406)	March 2017 (5,404)	December 2016 (5,128)	September 2016 (4,629)	May 2016 (5,150)	February 2016 (5,867)
It is time for a change in government, the Liberals under Justin Trudeau should be replaced by a different party	39%	38%	36%	29%	30%	30%
It is not time for a change in government, the Liberals under Justin Trudeau should be re-elected	38%	38%	39%	49%	45%	46%
Not sure	22%	24%	25%	22%	25%	25%