

Election 43: Ahead of September writ drop, Liberals claw back into close race with Conservatives

SNC-Lavalin ethics violation has not hampered Liberal enthusiasm, party continues summer rise

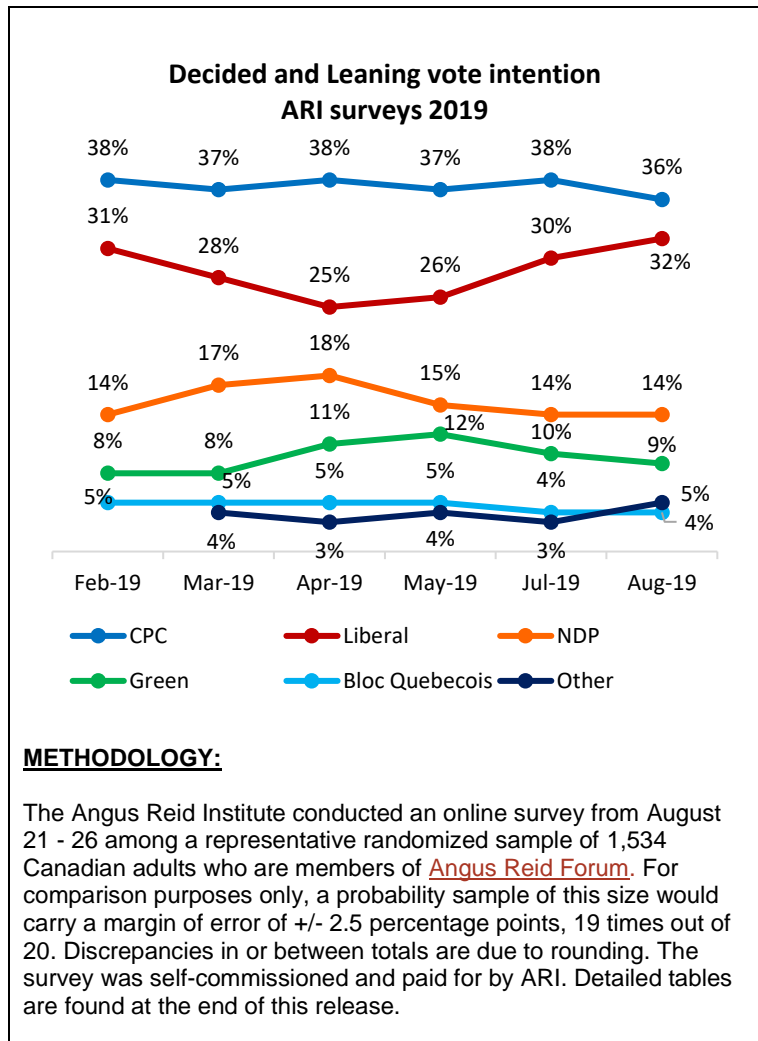
August 29, 2019 – The latest public opinion survey from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds the ethics commissioner's mid-August ruling that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committed an ethics violation in his handling of the SNC-Lavalin affair has done little to impede the Liberal Party's slow climb back into the good graces of voters.

Casting ahead to an expected October vote, 36 per cent of Canadians say they would support the Conservative Party candidate in their riding. Meanwhile, the Liberals garner 32 per cent support – their highest level in the Angus Reid Institute's 2019 polling.

For the Conservatives, a competitive race in Ontario is a cause for optimism. The party lost Canada's largest province by 10 points in 2015, but now sits in a statistical tie with the Liberals (36% CPC, 35% Liberal).

The Liberals, meanwhile, appear – at least for now – to have emerged from the dark tunnel that was the SNC-Lavalin scandal, with strong support in Quebec, where voters express a preference for the Liberals over the CPC by close to a two-to-one margin (38% Liberal, 20% CPC). Significantly, the party also appears to be adding more distance between itself and its left of centre competitors, the NDP and Green Party.

That said, while the incumbent party looks to pull even with the opposition CPC, the Prime Minister himself continues to struggle in his attempt to regain the personal appeal he once held. Just 31 per cent of Canadians say they have a favourable opinion of the Prime Minister, compared to 38 per cent for Conservative leader Andrew Scheer (38%). While Green Party leader Elizabeth May remains the most personally popular federal leader (42%), her own favourability has declined considerably compared to early-summer polling.



CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Associate: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

More Key Findings:

- More than one-third of those who supported the Liberals in 2015 (36%) say they plan to support another party at this point. 13 per cent lean toward the Conservatives and 12 per cent toward the NDP, while the rest have scattered to another party
- Regionally, the CPC holds significant leads in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Ontario, British Columbia and Atlantic Canada remain close, and the Liberals lead by a considerable margin in Quebec
- Elizabeth May is the most popular federal leader. However, an equal number of Canadians have a favourable (42%) and unfavourable (42%) opinion of her. This represents a decrease in net favourability (favourable minus unfavourable), as May was a +8 in July and a +15 in June
- Every other federal leader has a negative net favourability rating (favourable minus unfavourable); Scheer -14, Singh -19, Trudeau -32, Bernier -43.

About ARI

*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.*

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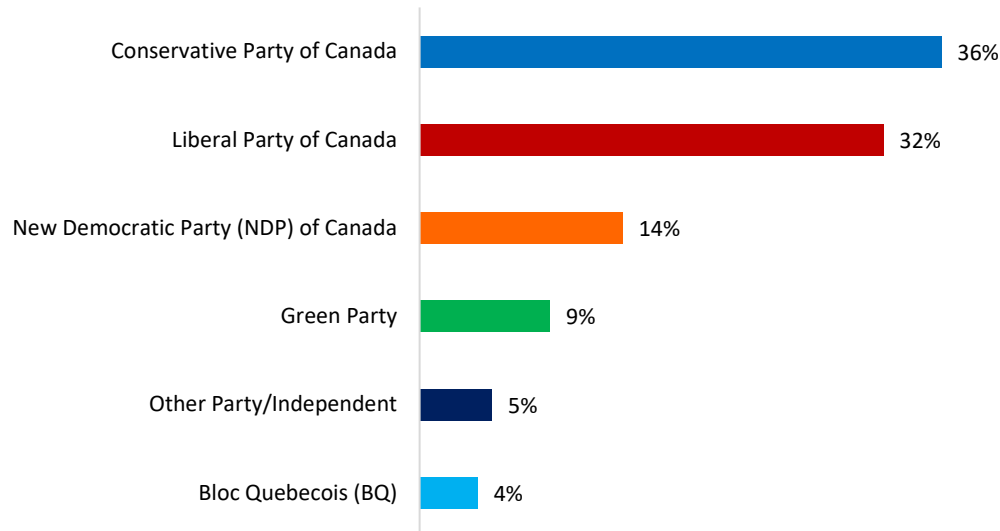
Despite the resurrection of ghosts of SNC-Lavalin, the Liberal Party continues to see its support increase ahead of the election. When the scandal first broke in February, the fallout led to a considerable – and lasting – slide for the party. This opened up a significant lead for the Conservatives, but the party led by Andrew Scheer was never able to increase its vote share.

Asked how they would vote in their riding once election day comes, 36 per cent of Canadians say they would support the Conservative Party, their smallest advantage over the Liberals thus far in 2019:

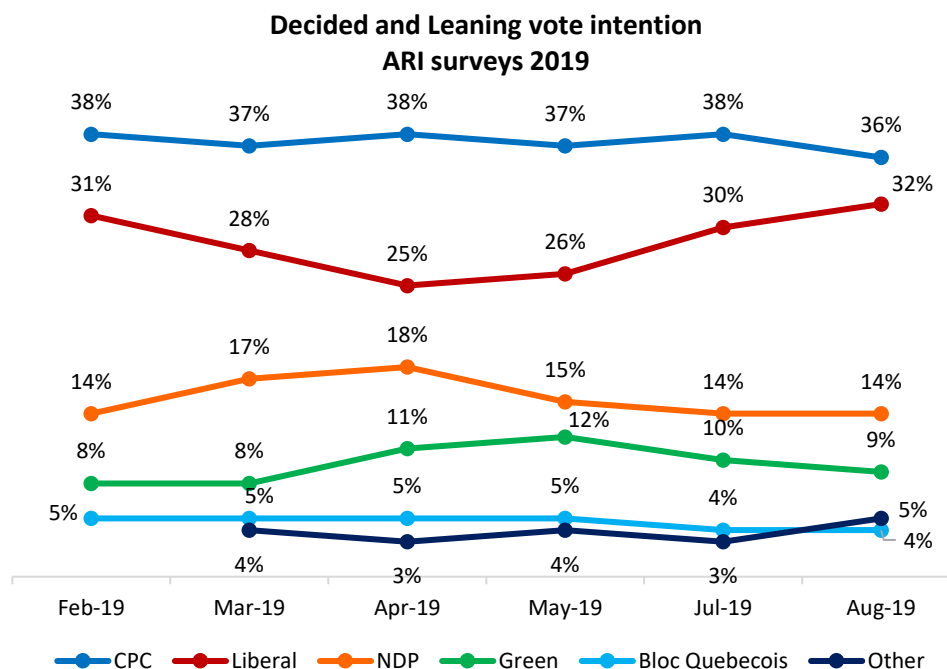
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Decided and leaning voters, n = 1,404



As mentioned, the SNC-Lavalin affair appeared to hinder Liberal support after February, as the party dropped to a 13-point deficit behind the opposition CPC in April. However, the party has been climbing back, and to this point, appears to have avoided significant injury after the mid-August ruling by the ethics commissioner. The Liberal gain may be at the expense of the NDP and Green Party, as each has fallen since the spring:



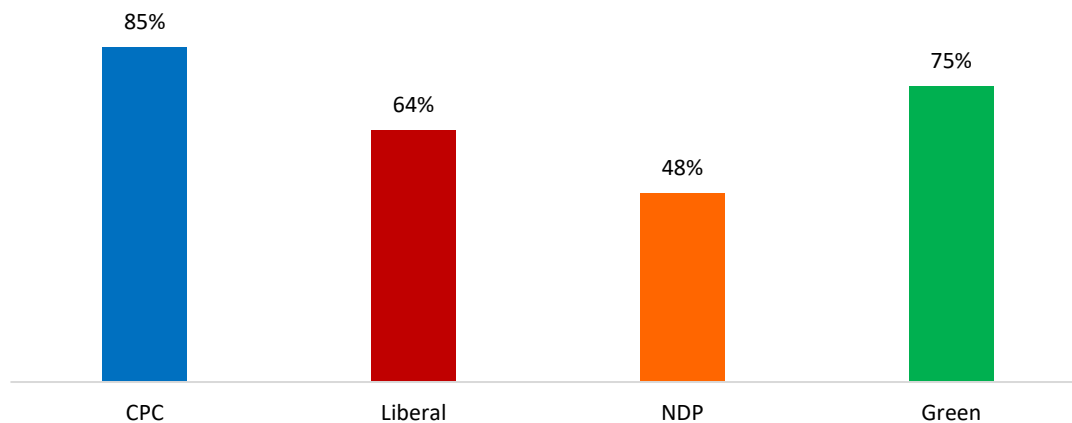
Vote retention

While the CPC has not succeeded in winning over vast amounts of new supporters, it has evidently retained most of its 2015 base. More than four-in-five of those who supported the CPC in the past election are returning (85%). For the Liberal Party, this number is considerably lower, closer to two-thirds (64%).

Jagmeet Singh and the NDP are performing worst on this measure. Half of those who voted for the party led by Tom Mulcair in 2015 have chosen to support another party or remain undecided.

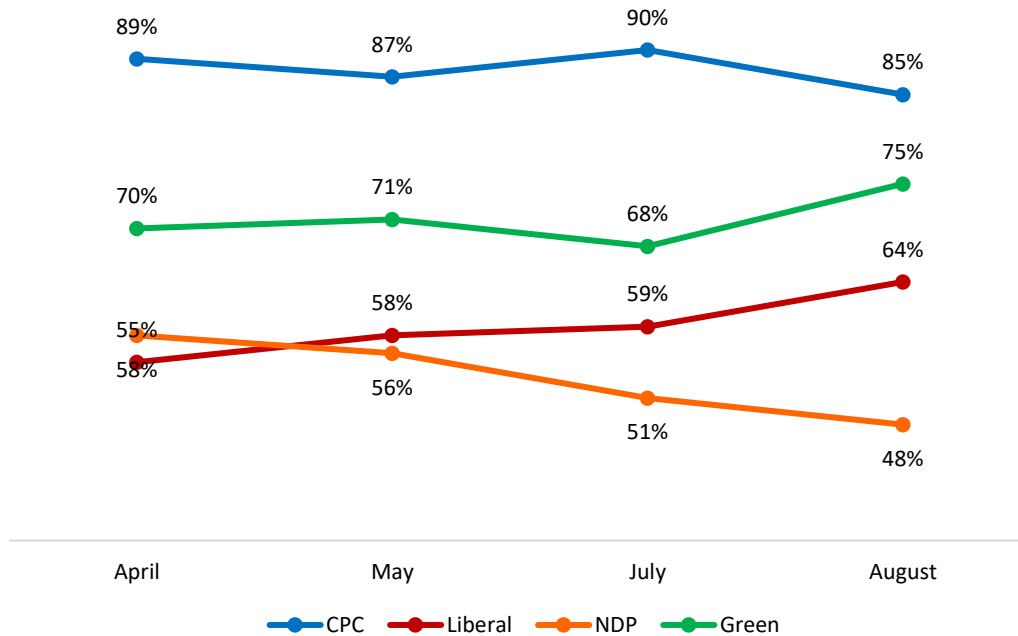
Related: Top Issues for Canadians, which parties they're considering

Retention rate - voted for party in 2015, intend to vote for them again



Vote retention has been consistent for both the CPC and the Green Party, while the Liberals have seen a slight increase and the NDP a slight decrease over the past six months.

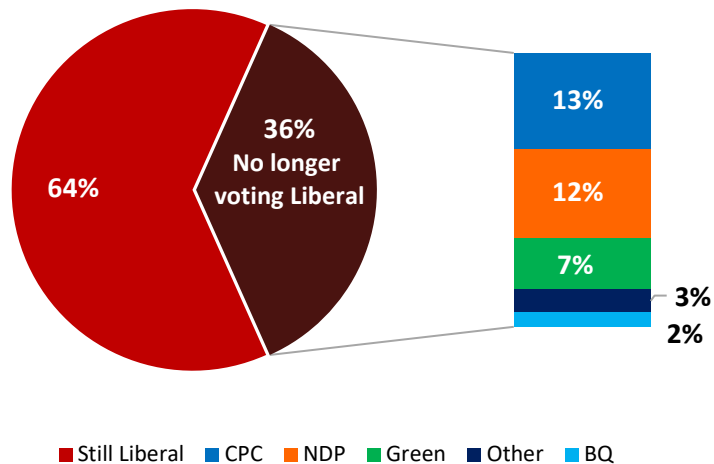
Vote retention 2019



Where have 2015 Liberals gone?

It would appear then that the Liberal Party has the strenuous task of wooing back their departed voters over the next several weeks. Among the 36 per cent of 2015 Liberals who currently do not plan to support the party again, most say they will either support the CPC or the NDP, with some diverting to the Green Party:

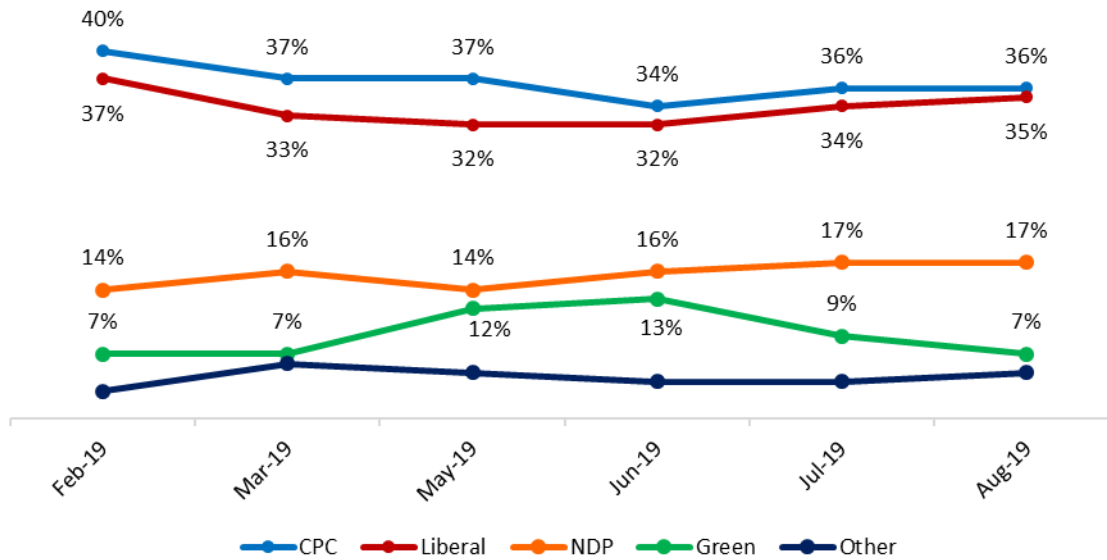
**Current vote intention among 2015 Liberal voters
n=518
(Total may not add up to 100 due to rounding)**



Current regional contests

The largest province in the country continues to be one of the most important battlegrounds ahead of October. Ontario, with more than one-third of the seats in Parliament, has seen its voters divided close to evenly between the Liberals and Conservatives for the entire year. The CPC has yet to trail in the Angus Reid Institute’s tracking but has never led by more than five points. Currently, 36 per cent of Ontarians say they plan to support the CPC in October, while a nearly identical 35 per cent say they will support the Liberals.

Ontario: Federal vote intention over time, decided voters including leaners



The Conservative Party continues to hold a significant advantage in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, with little change in each region over the last several waves of data.

Meanwhile, both B.C. and Atlantic Canada are hotly contested ground. In each region four parties currently garner at least 15 per cent of the vote, and in each, the Liberals and Conservatives are in a close race. Notably in both regions, the Greens have overtaken the NDP for third place.

The Liberal Party generates its highest level of support in Justin Trudeau’s home province of Quebec. Close to four-in-ten residents of that province say they will support his party (38%), double that of the CPC (20%) and the Bloc Quebecois (17%).

Vote Intention by Region							
Highlights for strong support levels							
	Total (1,404)	Region					
		BC (189)	AB (152)	SK/MB (190)	ON (446)	QC (313)	ATL (114)
Conservative Party	36%	35%	61%	56%	36%	20%	34%
Liberal Party	32%	29%	20%	19%	35%	38%	31%
New Democratic Party	14%	15%	9%	15%	17%	11%	15%
Green Party	9%	19%	3%	8%	7%	9%	17%
Bloc Quebecois	4%	-	-	-	-	17%	-
Other Party/Independent	5%	2%	7%	2%	5%	5%	4%

Age and gender

The Conservative Party continues to receive significant support from men over the age of 35. Half of those between the ages of 35 and 54 (49%) and 55 or older (53%) say they will support the party. Women in those two age groups are much more likely to support the Liberal Party.

Young women, who express the least certainty about which party they will support on election day, show considerable support for each of the four major parties. Meanwhile, young men are divided close to evenly between the CPC (32%), Liberals (24%) and NDP (21%).

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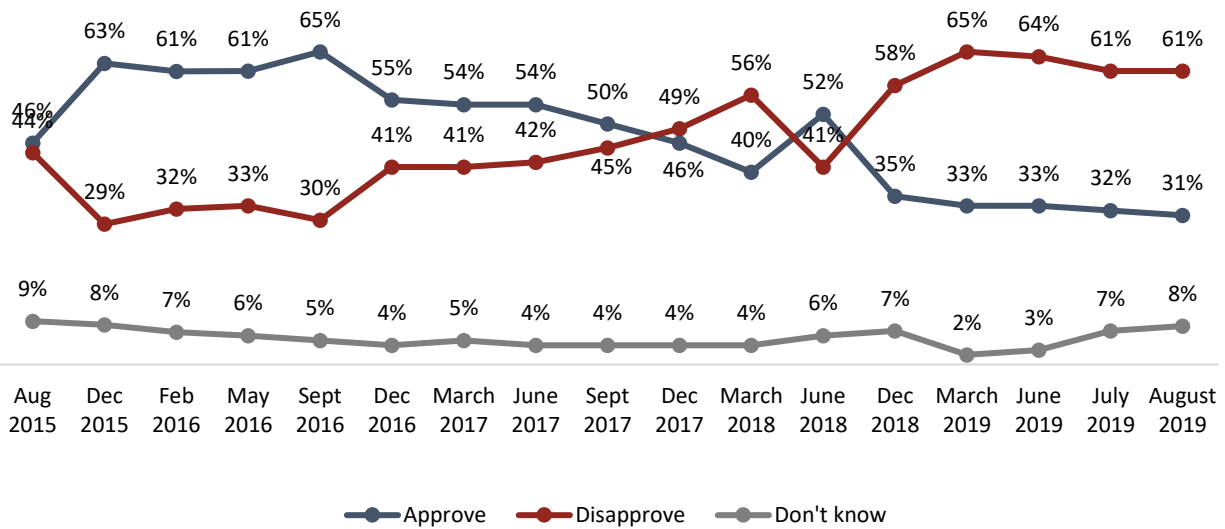
Vote Intention by Age and Gender Highlights for strong support levels							
	Total (1,404)	Male			Female		
		18-34 (190)	35-54 (246)	55+ (262)	18-34 (186)	35-54 (239)	55+ (281)
Conservative Party	36%	32%	49%	53%	18%	27%	33%
Liberal Party	32%	24%	25%	25%	33%	38%	44%
New Democratic Party	14%	21%	9%	5%	27%	18%	9%
Green Party	9%	6%	9%	7%	17%	9%	9%
Bloc Quebecois	4%	5%	2%	6%	3%	3%	4%
Other Party/Independent	5%	12%	5%	4%	2%	5%	1%

Trudeau's personal brand still floundering

Interestingly, while the Liberal Party has seen its fortunes improve significantly since its lowest point in April, the same cannot be said for the party's leader.

Six-in-ten Canadians continue to disapprove of Justin Trudeau's performance, twice the number who approve of him. Trudeau's approval rating is essentially unchanged in 2019, as seen in the following graph:

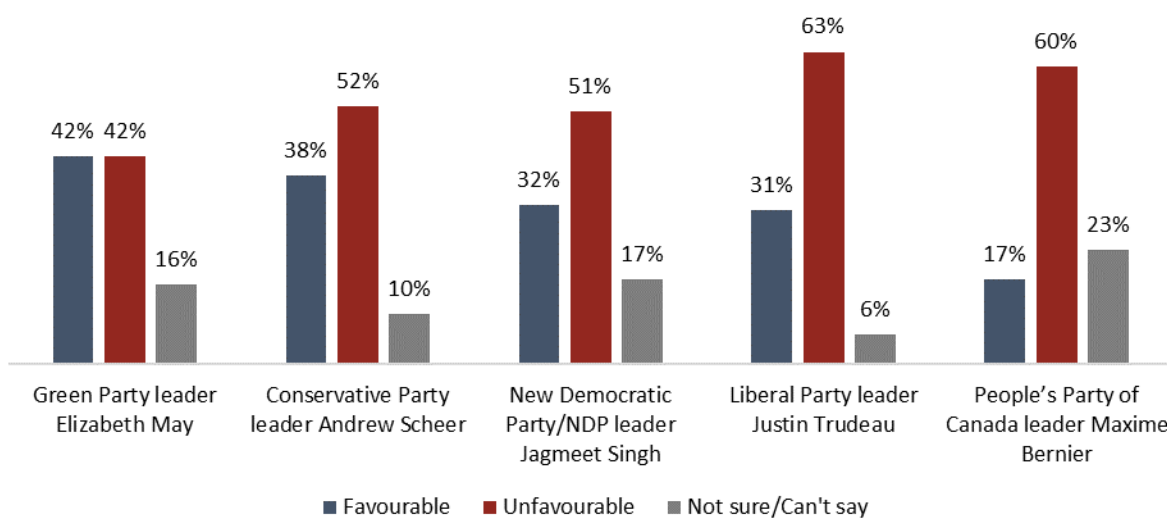
Do you approve or disapprove of Justin Trudeau?



Opposition Leaders still looking for traction

The good news for Trudeau and the Liberals is that other federal party leaders aren't exactly resonating with Canadians:

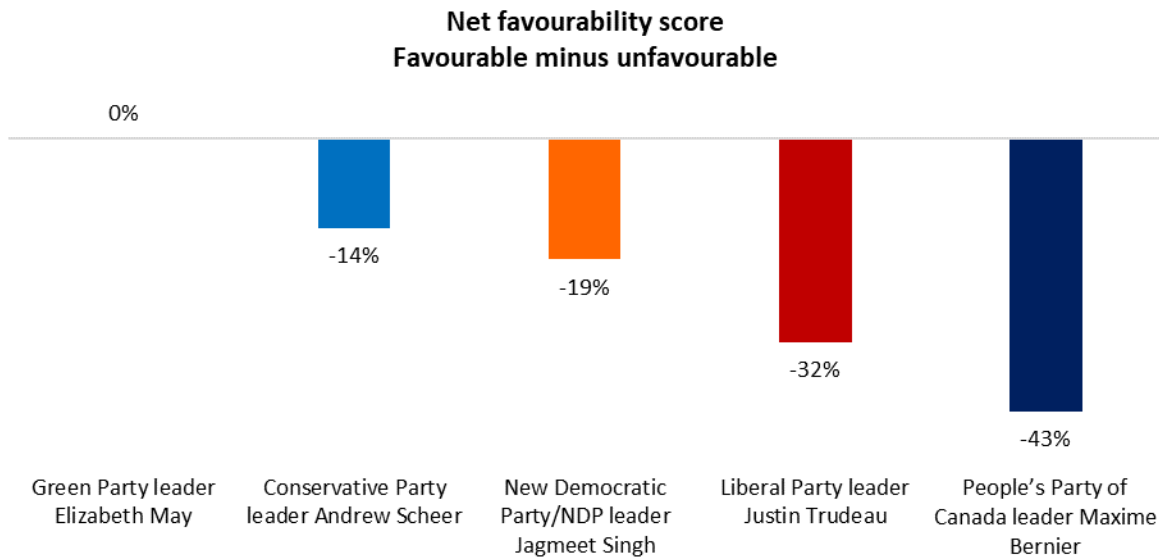
Favourable or unfavourable?



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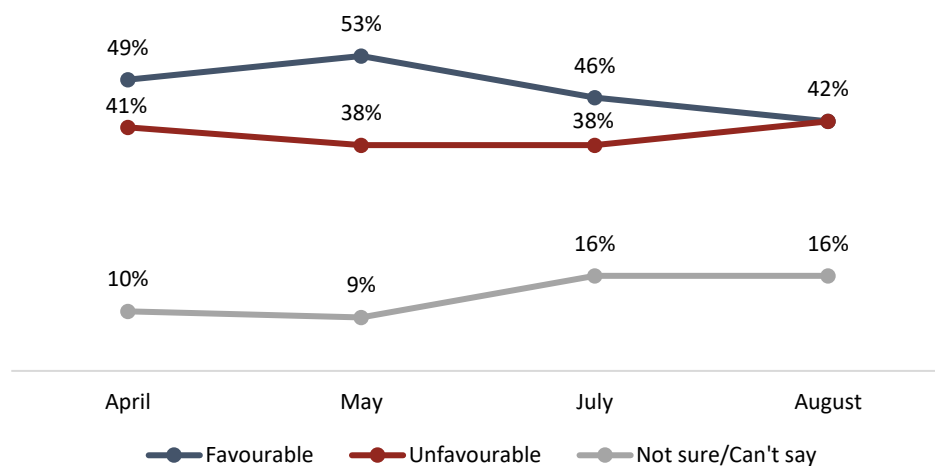
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Looking at this with a net rating score for each leader, (that is, subtracting unfavourable from unfavourable), none have a positive score. Elizabeth May garners equal numbers of favourable and unfavourable, while all other leaders score at least a negative 14.



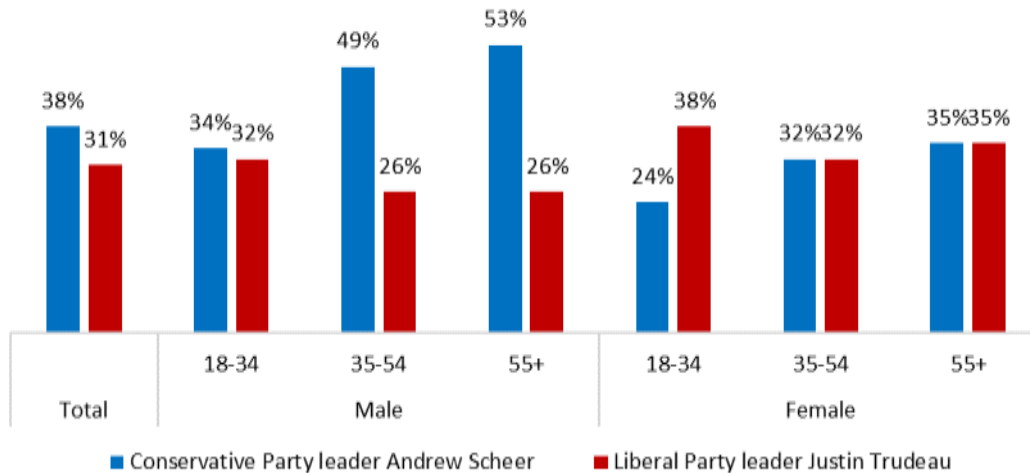
Elizabeth May's place at the top of the leader list, while encouraging for Green Party supporters, is perhaps worrying when compared with previous results. It appears that as the party has taken more of a [place in the public conversation](#), Canadians have become more divided, or at least uncertain, about her:

Favourable vs Unfavourable - Green Party leader Elizabeth May



Gender tells a significant story about feelings towards the two frontrunners emerging in this contest. Among men over the age of 35, half have a favourable opinion of Scheer, approximately double the number who say the same of Trudeau. Meanwhile, Trudeau performs best with women between the ages of 18 and 34:

Favourability by age and gender



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, click [here](#).