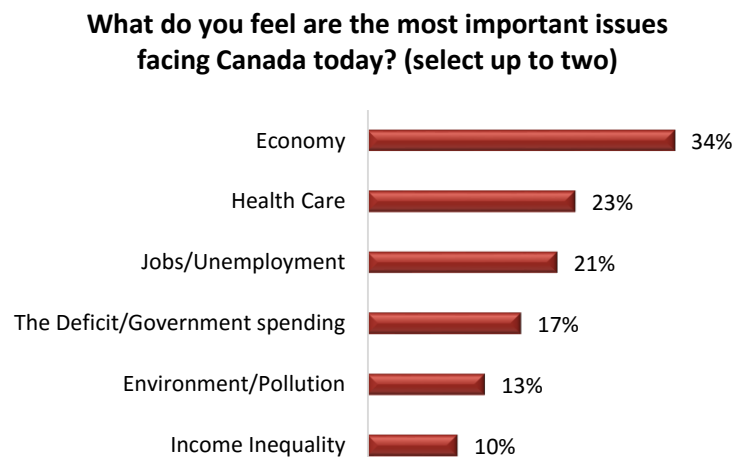


Despite government focus on middle-class relief, Canadians' economic anxiety persists

Alberta and Newfoundland residents continue to be most frustrated by economic issues

May 27, 2016 – While Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's legislative agenda has drawn both praise and prompted debate through the first six months of the Liberal mandate, his party's key campaign promise to improve the economic standing of middle-class Canadians remains largely unresolved, a new poll finds.

The latest Angus Reid Institute (ARI) analysis of quarterly survey results from more than 5,000 Canadian adults finds people in this country professing as much anxiety about the economy as ever, particularly in hard-hit Alberta, where the oil and gas industry's struggles – coupled with the massive wildfire that destroyed large swaths of Fort McMurray this month – have [some economists projecting](#) the provincial economy will stay in recession into 2017.



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute analyzed results of an online survey conducted from May 6 – 13, 2016, among a representative randomized sample of 5,150 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). The survey data were donated by MARU/VCR&C. 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 would carry a margin of error of +/- 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

Key Findings:

- The top issue in the minds of Canadians remains the economy (34% rank it as one of the two most important issues facing the country), with the related issues of jobs/unemployment (21%) and the deficit/government spending (17%) also ranking highly
- Canadians' satisfaction on many policy files – including health care, foreign policy, and federal-provincial relations – has increased over the last several months, but the percentage of

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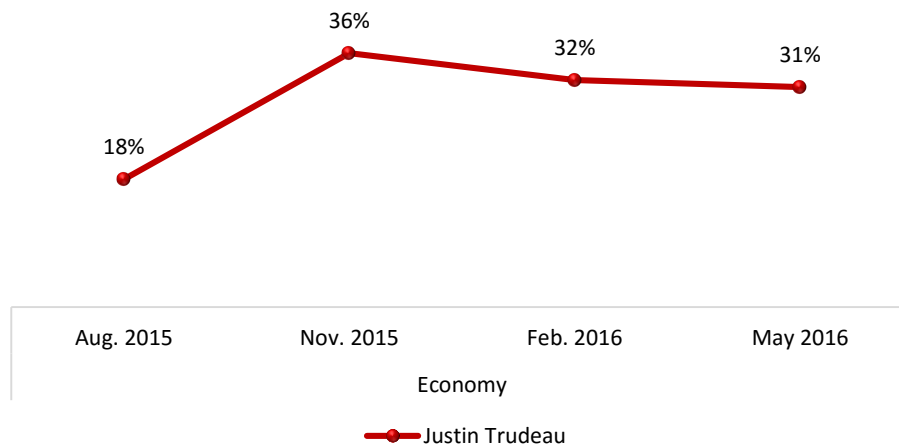
Canadians satisfied with the economy (39%) still lags below the percentage who are dissatisfied (51%)

- Alberta residents continue to be among the most economically frustrated in the country, though they have company in Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans – half in each province (47% in Alberta; 50% in Newfoundland and Labrador) say they are worse off now than they were last year at this time

Economic frustrations linger for many Canadians

In the quarter in which his government tabled a budget [with a nearly \\$30 billion deficit](#) for the coming year, Trudeau continues to be regarded as the best federal leader to handle the economy:

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

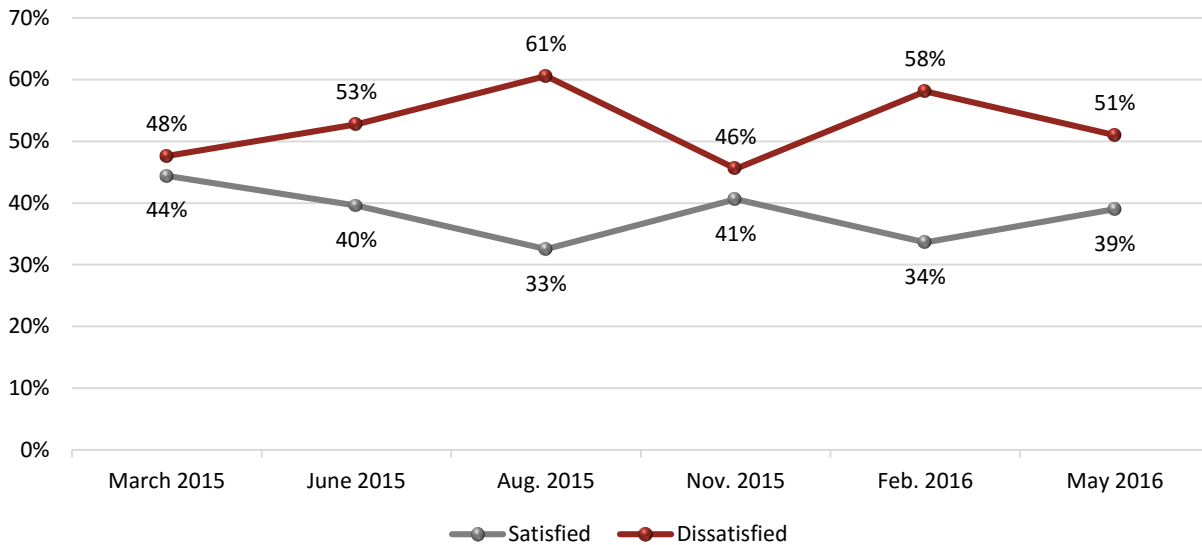


The question of how Canadians perceive their prime minister's performance on the economy is not an idle one. The economic file is routinely at the top of Canadians' list of most important issues facing the country, with one-in-three (34%) choosing it in this most-recent quarterly survey. In Alberta, as will be discussed later in this release, this number rises to nearly half (48%).

Likewise, household economics are a source of concern for many Canadians. Overall inflation [ticked up to 1.7 per cent in April](#), a modest – and expected – increase. That said, fresh vegetable prices were up by 11.7 per cent compared to last April, continuing a trend of rising food prices that has [most Canadians reporting](#) it's getting harder to feed their households in the last year.

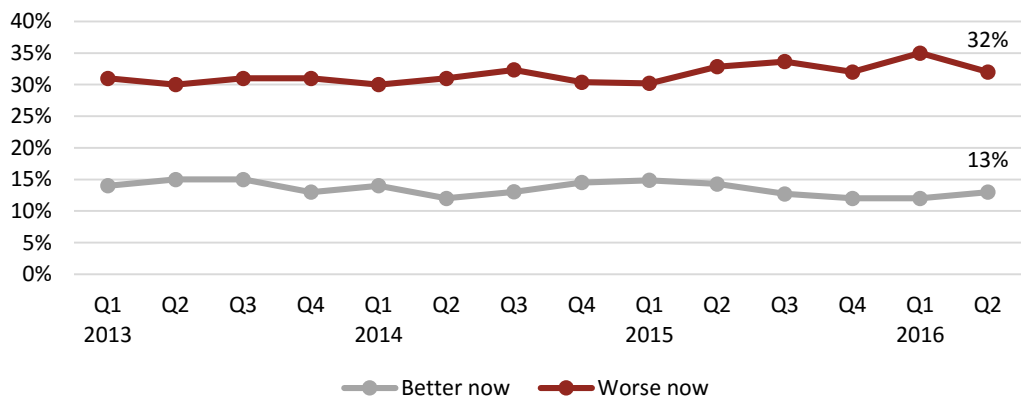
Overall, Canadians are more likely to be dissatisfied (51%) with the economy than satisfied (39%), continuing a trend that has been in place since early 2015:

Satisfaction with the economy over time:



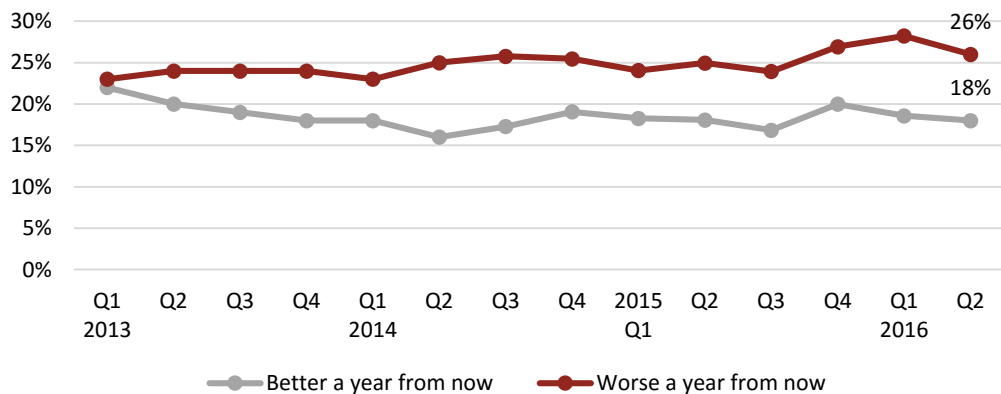
In a similar vein, as has been the case for years, Canadians are more than twice as likely to say their current standard of living has worsened in the last year as to say it has improved (32% versus 13%):

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



Canadians don't appear to be anticipating much improvement in the coming year. One-in-four (26%) say they see their standard of living deteriorating in the next 12 months, compared to 18 per cent who expect it to improve:

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



While there is little indication that Canadians' continued economic concerns have affected their opinions of Trudeau and his government, it should be noted that Canadians with household incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000 – the middle class the Liberals campaigned on strengthening – are more inclined to say their standard of living has worsened (28%) in the last year than to say it has improved (16%). These Canadians are also more likely to anticipate things getting worse in the next 12 months (24%) than to expect them to get better (21%).

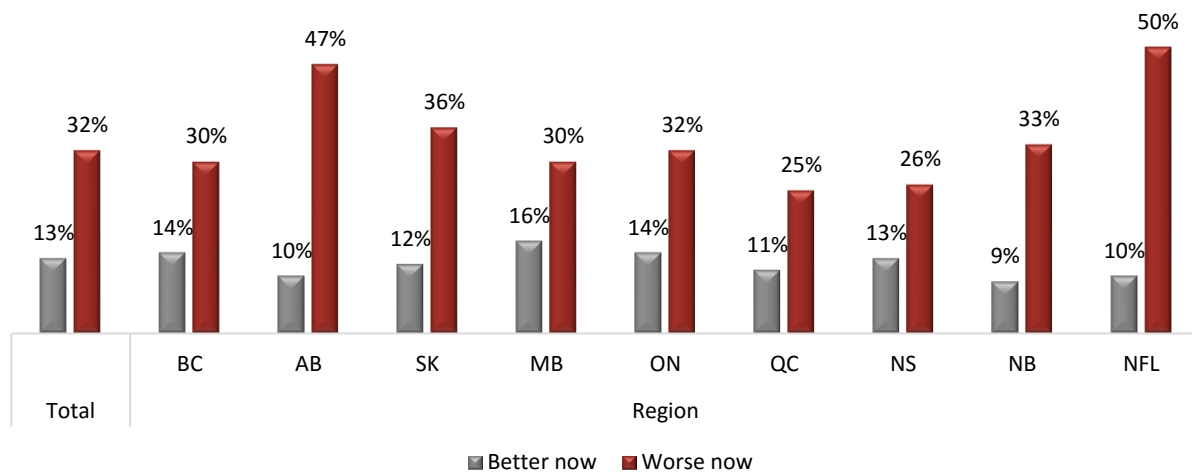
These numbers may paint a marginally rosier picture than the national totals do on these questions, but the picture is still one of considerable economic anxiety for middle-class households.

Alberta and Newfoundland hit hardest, feeling lowest

The turmoil that has engulfed Canada's oil and gas industry can be seen most acutely in Alberta and Newfoundland. A [recently published report](#) suggests another 24,000 jobs are likely to be lost in oil and gas sector in 2016, to add to the roughly 28,000 that were lost in 2015. Wild Rose Country – with its larger population and larger economy – is likely to bear the majority of these layoffs in sheer numbers, but the situation for Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans – with few other provincial industries to turn to – is [arguably just as dire](#).

The economic outlooks in these provinces mirror the job loss trends. When asked whether their standard of living is better or worse than it was a year ago, nearly half of Albertans (47%), and an even greater number of Newfoundlanders (50%) say their personal conditions have worsened. And on the other side of the spectrum, there isn't much to offer – just one-in-ten (10% in each province) say their situation has improved:

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



Many contend that there is [hope for a turnaround](#), as oil prices have risen since the beginning of 2016. But despite the fact that some forecasts say this [trend will continue](#), most residents of these recessed provinces aren't quite ready to jump on side with this positive assessment.

When questioned about their perspective on the coming twelve months, just one-in-six Albertans (17%) and even fewer Newfoundland residents (12%) say things will be better a year from now.

A much larger portion – more than one-third (36%) in Alberta and more than half in Newfoundland (51%) say their standard of living will worsen.

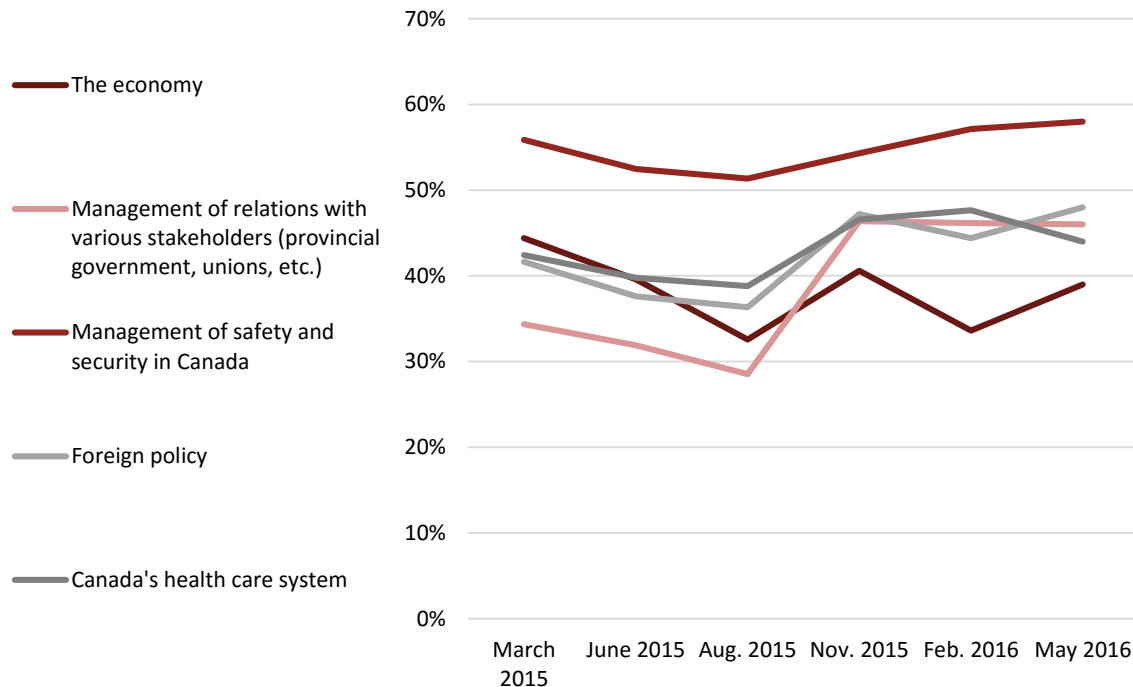
Satisfaction with government on a number of files

In its first six months, the federal Liberal government has taken its share of polarizing policy stances. Many lauded the announcement of [marijuana legalization](#), and [assisted-dying legislation](#). However, Canadians were conflicted over the Liberal government's [refugee resettlement targets](#), and a majority opposed [discontinuing Canada's air strikes against ISIS](#).

Despite this, the government's foreign policy receives more positive than negative marks from Canadians. Nearly one-in-two (48%) say they are satisfied on this file, compared to 32 per cent who say they are dissatisfied.

Herein lies a notable trend over the past several waves of polling ARI has analyzed – Canadians' satisfaction on a number of different fronts has jumped and remained relatively stable since last October's election. This trend holds for security, health care, relationships with intra-Canadian stakeholders, and foreign policy, but notably not for the economy, as seen in the graph that follows:

Overall, would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following in Canada? (total saying "satisfied" shown)



The change in government seems to have done much to increase the satisfaction Canadians feel on a variety of issues. That said, lingering economic worries could create some difficulties for government to contend with going into this summer.

*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, would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following in Canada today? (those saying “satisfied” shown)										
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (5150)	Region								
		BC (600)	AB (600)	SK (994)	MB (674)	ON (802)	PQ (597)	NS (264)	NB (257)	NFL (263)
The economy	39%	44%	26%	37%	39%	38%	44%	39%	31%	52%
Management of public goods (infrastructure, natural resources, tourism, etc.)	48%	48%	39%	47%	45%	47%	54%	53%	44%	59%
Management of relations with various stakeholders (provincial government, unions, etc.)	46%	45%	37%	43%	44%	45%	52%	48%	45%	52%
Management of safety and security in Canada	58%	60%	44%	46%	54%	58%	61%	69%	61%	68%
Public information and assistance programs (seniors, immigrants, consumer protection, new home-buyers)	46%	46%	40%	43%	46%	44%	51%	53%	46%	53%
Foreign Policy	48%	45%	34%	42%	46%	48%	55%	52%	44%	55%
Canada's Education system	49%	43%	49%	51%	51%	48%	52%	55%	47%	60%
Canada's health care system	44%	40%	45%	50%	47%	47%	39%	47%	45%	53%

Overall, would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the economy in Canada?										
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (5150)	Region								
		BC (600)	AB (600)	SK (994)	MB (674)	ON (802)	PQ (597)	NS (264)	NB (257)	NFL (263)
Very satisfied	6%	4%	4%	2%	8%	6%	7%	6%	5%	5%
Moderately satisfied	33%	40%	22%	34%	31%	31%	37%	34%	26%	47%
Moderately dissatisfied	29%	28%	26%	31%	30%	30%	27%	30%	40%	24%
Very dissatisfied	23%	19%	43%	25%	18%	22%	19%	22%	19%	17%
Not sure	10%	9%	6%	8%	13%	11%	10%	9%	10%	7%

Which leader is best suited to dealing with the economy?				
(weighted sample sizes)	Aug. 2015 (6226)	Nov. 2015 (5294)	Feb. 2016 (5867)	May 2016 (5150)
Prime Minister and Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau	18%	36%	32%	31%
Interim Conservative Party leader and official opposition leader Rona Ambrose	28% (Stephen Harper)	21%	21%	22%
New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Thomas Mulcair	24%	12%	12%	10%
Bloc Québécois interim leader Rhéal Fortin	2% (Gilles Duceppe)	1%	2%	1%
Green Party leader Elizabeth May	2%	3%	4%	3%
None of them	7%	6%	8%	8%
Not sure	19%	21%	21%	24%

What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today? (choose up to two)										
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (5150)	Region								
		BC (600)	AB (600)	SK (994)	MB (674)	ON (802)	PQ (597)	NS (264)	NB (257)	NFL (263)
Economy	34%	32%	48%	39%	32%	33%	31%	38%	38%	41%
Health Care	23%	24%	7%	18%	21%	25%	27%	24%	21%	22%
Jobs / Unemployment	21%	18%	24%	15%	14%	23%	16%	29%	34%	26%
The Deficit / Government spending	17%	15%	27%	21%	20%	18%	13%	10%	16%	24%
Environment / Pollution	13%	19%	7%	9%	13%	12%	16%	12%	13%	9%
Income inequality	10%	13%	5%	7%	9%	11%	10%	13%	6%	8%
Taxes	9%	9%	6%	10%	18%	9%	9%	10%	11%	12%
Energy / Natural Resources	8%	8%	16%	8%	5%	7%	6%	5%	7%	7%
Terrorism / Security	8%	5%	6%	11%	5%	8%	10%	6%	3%	3%
First Nations issues / Aboriginal Affairs	7%	5%	4%	11%	11%	8%	7%	6%	2%	2%
Education / Post-secondary training	6%	6%	3%	3%	4%	6%	6%	7%	4%	2%
Ethics / Accountability	4%	6%	5%	4%	4%	5%	2%	4%	5%	2%
Crime / Public safety	3%	5%	1%	5%	8%	3%	2%	3%	1%	3%
The Senate	2%	3%	1%	3%	4%	2%	2%	5%	4%	2%
National Unity (Quebec and Quebec separation)	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Other (specify)	3%	5%	6%	5%	3%	2%	3%	5%	4%	1%

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

(weighted sample sizes)	March 2015 (6278)	June 2015 (6005)	Aug. 2015 (6226)	Nov. 2015 (5294)	Feb. 2016 (5867)	May 2016 (5150)
Very satisfied	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	6%
Moderately satisfied	36%	32%	26%	35%	30%	33%
Moderately dissatisfied	28%	29%	31%	29%	34%	29%
Very dissatisfied	20%	23%	29%	17%	25%	23%
Not sure	8%	8%	7%	14%	8%	10%

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

(weighted sample sizes)	Total (5150)	Household Income		
		<\$50K (1805)	\$50-99K (1600)	\$100K+ (920)
Better now	13%	10%	16%	15%
The same as a year ago	53%	52%	54%	56%
Worse now	32%	35%	28%	29%
Not sure	2%	3%	2%	0%

And a year from now, do you think your standard of living will be better or worse than now?										
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (5150)	Region								
		BC (600)	AB (600)	SK (994)	MB (674)	ON (802)	PQ (597)	NS (264)	NB (257)	NFL (263)
Better a year from now	18%	16%	17%	17%	24%	20%	18%	21%	18%	12%
The same as now	47%	48%	39%	47%	41%	45%	56%	44%	38%	29%
Worse a year from now	26%	28%	36%	29%	25%	26%	20%	21%	31%	51%
Not sure	9%	8%	8%	7%	10%	9%	7%	15%	13%	8%