

Scheer's delight? If an election were held tomorrow, CPC could have a shot at majority government

Majority of Canadians disapprove of Justin Trudeau for the first time since he became Prime Minister

March 19, 2018 – The passage of time appears to have done nothing to soothe Canadian voters irritated with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau since his [highly criticized](#) passage to India last month.

This, combined with a simmering unease among the electorate over the federal government's deficit spending has, for the first time, driven Trudeau's disapproval rating north of 50 per cent.

All of this adds up to a ten-point gap between the Liberal and Conservative parties in vote intention. The latest polling analysis from the Angus Reid Institute shows that if an election were held tomorrow, the CPC – led by Andrew Scheer, would be in range to form a majority government.

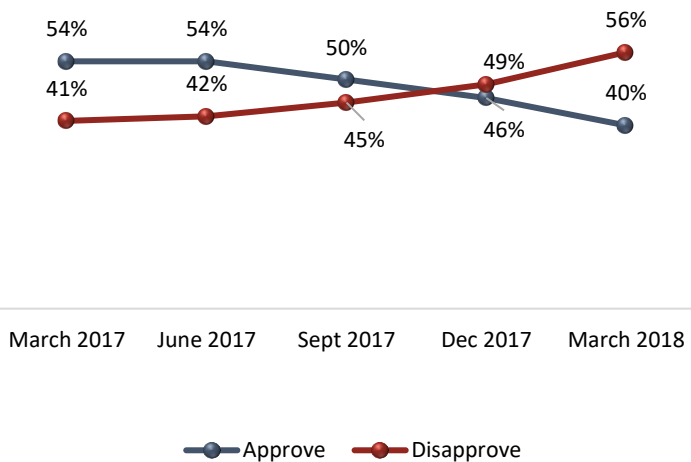
The bleed away from the Trudeau Liberals includes not just vote intention, but perception of leadership. On a number of key metrics, including those that have traditionally been strengths for the Prime Minister, Scheer is seen as a better bet.

But with 18 months before an expected election, key areas of Liberal support remain solid. Millennials, many of whom turned out to the ballot box for the first time in 2015 principally because of Justin Trudeau, have not changed their minds about the leader – a majority (55%) still approve of him. And the party remains either in the lead or competitive in vote-rich urban centres, where a red surge pushed the Liberals to a 2015 majority.

More Key Findings:

- If an election were held tomorrow, four-in-ten Canadians (40%) say they would vote for a CPC candidate in their riding. This represents a double-digit gap over those who say the same of the governing Liberal party (30%). Another 19 per cent of Canadians say they would support the federal New Democratic Party

Do you approve or disapprove of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute analyzed the results of an online survey conducted from March 6 – 15, 2018, among a representative, randomized sample of 5,423 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. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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- For the fourth consecutive quarter the number of Canadians saying it is ‘time for a change in government’ has risen. The percentage of respondents holding that view is now up to 51 per cent
- Conservative party leader Andrew Scheer is seen as the leader best suited to steward the economy. This, as government spending and the deficit have emerged as the top issues of importance in the country
- While Justin Trudeau still holds an advantage over his counterpart Scheer on the question of who would make the best Prime Minister (26% to 22%), when Canadians are asked which party is best to form government his Liberals trail the CPC by 9 points (31% to 40%)
- Ontario continues to be a driver of vote intention shifts in favour of the CPC. That party now holds a 12-point advantage in the region, thanks to a seven-point shift in their favour this quarter.

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Part 1 – The leaders

Most disapprove of Trudeau

The first three months of 2018 have arguably not gone as Justin Trudeau would have liked. The PM began the year facing lingering questions about the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner’s finding that he broke [multiple federal ethics rules](#) when he vacationed on a private island owned by the Aga Khan in 2015.

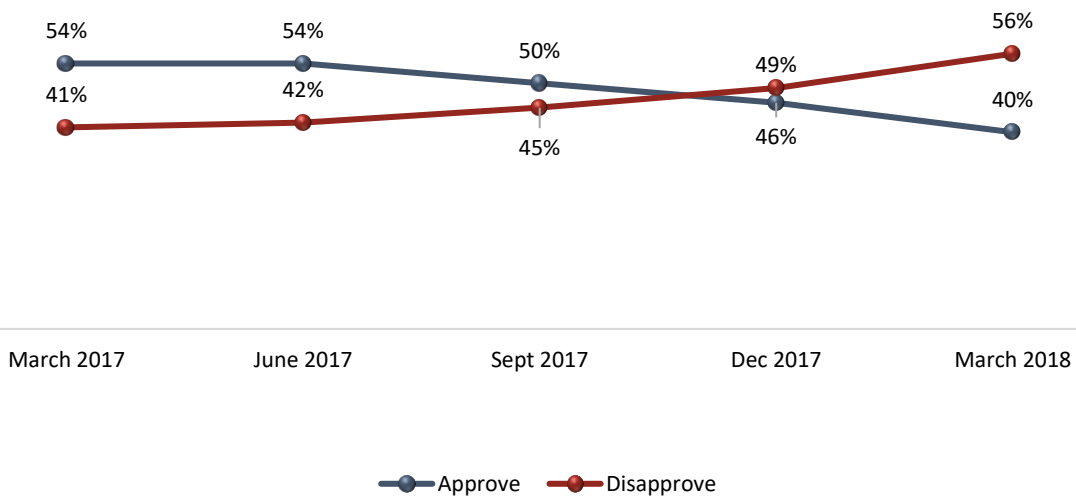
The quarter got worse for Trudeau when he and his family embarked on a scandal-plagued trip to India at the end of February.

The Prime Minister’s approval rating has subsequently continued to decline in 2018. This quarter marks the first time since his victory in the 2015 election that a majority of Canadians (56%) disapprove of Trudeau’s performance as Prime Minister.

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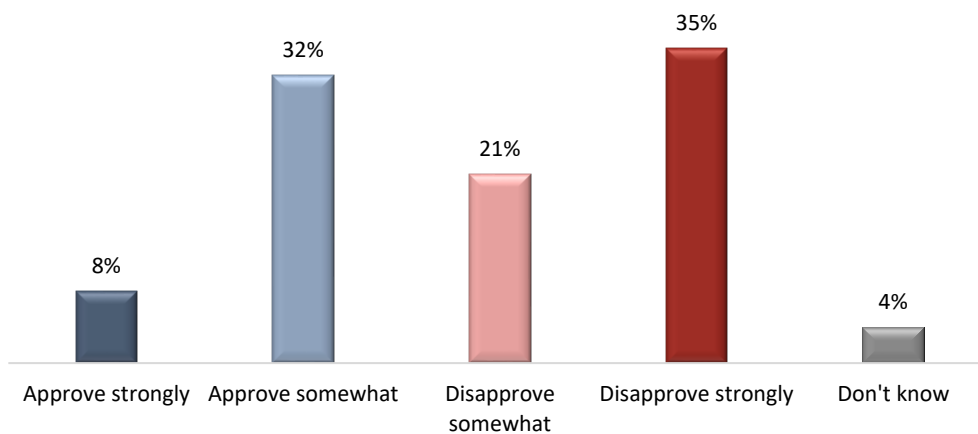
Do you approve or disapprove of Justin Trudeau?



For a longer view of the Prime Minister's approval rating, please visit our [Trudeau Tracker](#).

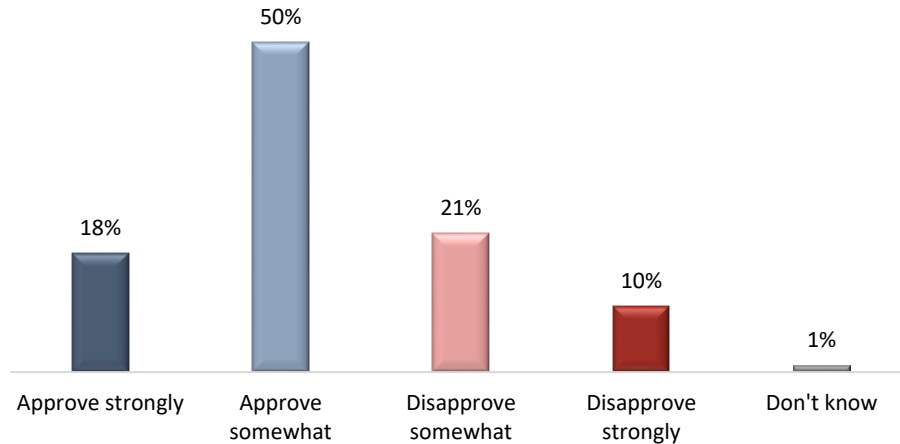
Perhaps particularly troubling for Trudeau is the ratio of strong opinions of his performance. Canadians strongly disapprove of him by a ratio of four-to-one over those who strongly approve:

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of Justin Trudeau?



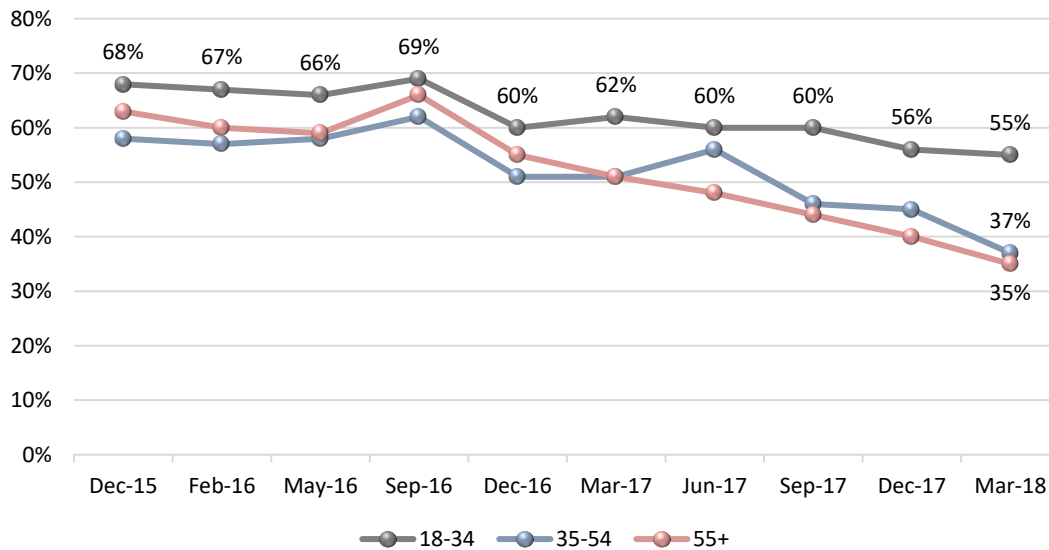
The PM's ongoing slide in popularity is attributable, in part, to his own base. While two-in-three of those who voted for Trudeau's Liberals in 2015 still rate his performance favourably, nearly one-in-three (31%) now say they disapprove of the man they helped take the reigns of government:

Trudeau approval among 2015 Liberal voters



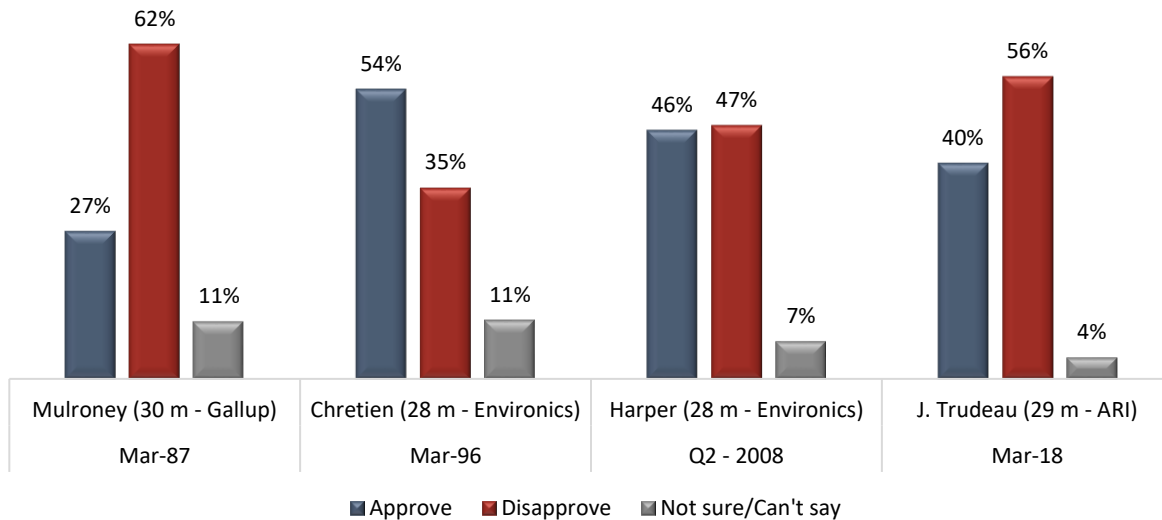
One group that hasn't abandoned the Prime Minister: younger Canadians who arguably make up his [bread and butter demographic](#). While approval from those over 35 has dropped to below four-in-ten, a majority (54%) of those between the ages of 18 and 34 still say they approve of Trudeau.

Approval of Trudeau by age



The upshot? With one notable exception, Trudeau's approval is worse at the 2.5-year mark than many of the prime ministers who preceded him. A dig into the archives reveals that while his current net rating of -16 is superior to that of Brian Mulroney (-35) as many months into the job, others including Stephen Harper, were in a more favourable position with the public at the same period in their tenures:

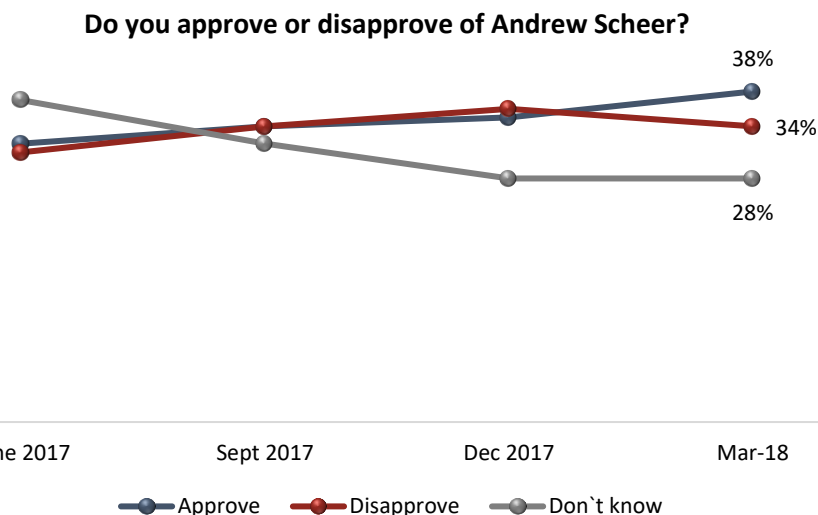
Prime Minister Approval at 28 to 31 months into term



Scheer seen as better on economy and other issues

As Canadians sour on Trudeau, their opinion of Conservative leader Andrew Scheer has begun to improve.

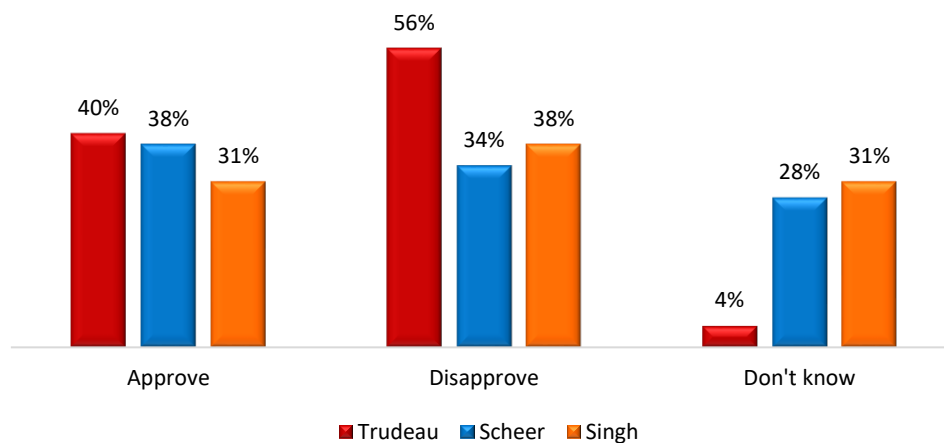
Though the number of Canadians who have yet to form an opinion of Scheer continues to be substantial (28%), the percentage who approve of the opposition leader has risen since last quarter, while the percentage who disapprove of him has declined:



Scheer remains slightly less popular than Trudeau in terms of raw approval, but his net approval (the percentage who approve of him minus the percentage who disapprove) is +4, while Trudeau's is -16. With

NDP leader Jagmeet Singh’s net approval score at -7, of the leaders of the three major parties, Scheer is the only one with higher approval than disapproval, as seen in the following graph:

Do you approve or disapprove of:

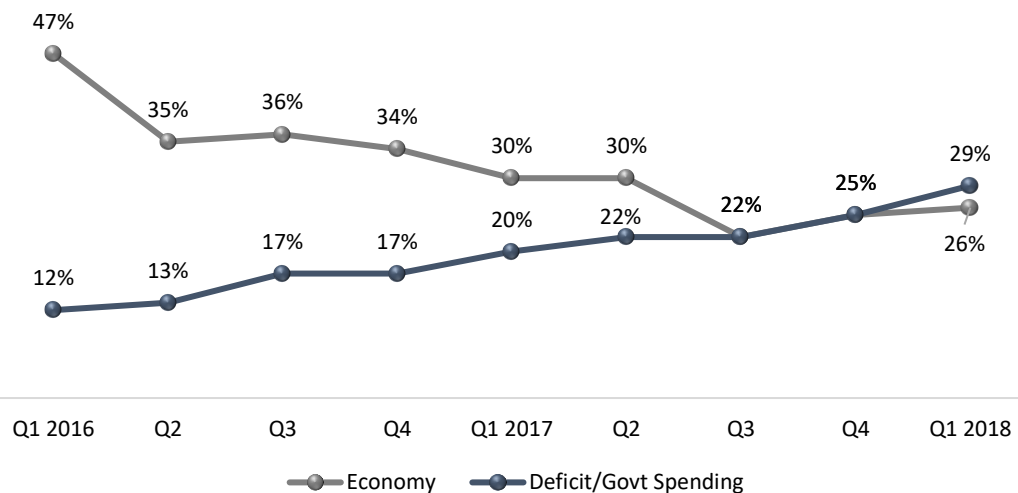


Asked to name the one or two most important issues facing the country today, roughly one-in-four Canadians (26%) choose “the economy.”

A slightly larger number (29%) choose “the deficit/government spending,” making such concerns the most-mentioned issue in Canada today. This, in a quarter that saw the release of a federal budget with an \$18.1 billion deficit, and no date projected for when it will return to balance.

Concern about deficits has risen steadily throughout Trudeau’s term, as seen in the following graph:

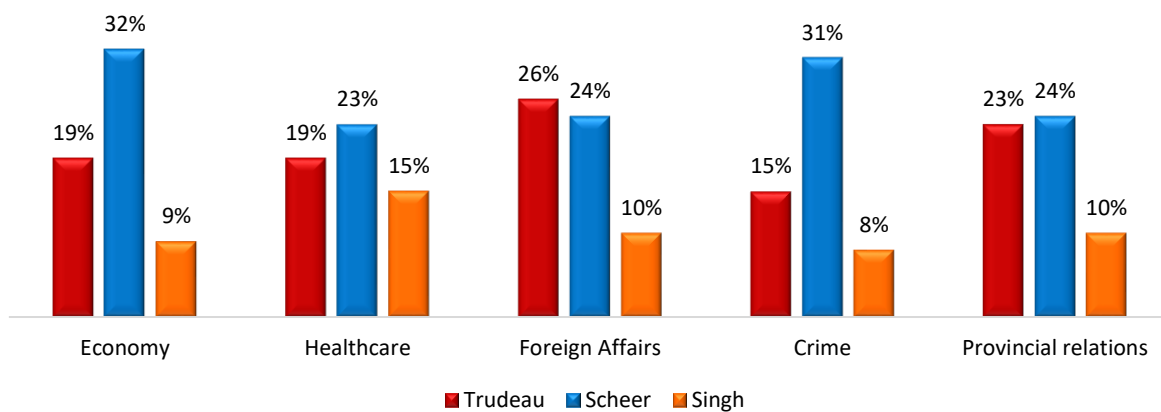
**What do you feel are the most important issues facing Canada today?
(Choose up to 2)**



The higher percentage of Canadians naming deficits as a top issue facing the country today is driven in part by past Conservative voters. Some 45 per cent of those who voted for Stephen Harper’s party in 2015 say deficits are a top concern, compared to 21 per cent of past Liberals and 23 per cent of past New Democrats.

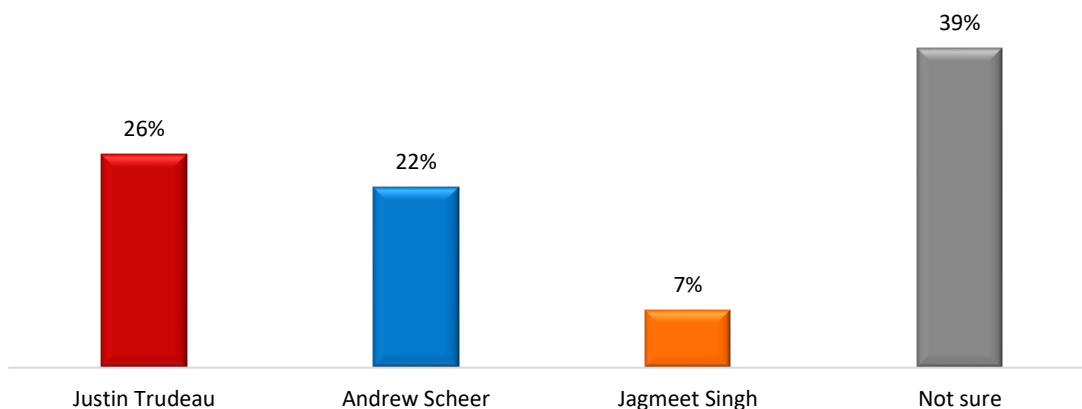
Given this, it’s perhaps not surprising that Scheer is the federal leader Canadians are most likely to describe as “best suited” to deal with the economy. The CPC leader bests Trudeau on health care, crime and dealing with the provinces as well, while the Prime Minister holds a narrow advantage on the foreign affairs file. This is significant, given that until recently, Trudeau’s performance on the foreign affairs file represented one of his greatest strengths:

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



Scheer’s lead on issues doesn’t necessarily make him Canadians’ choice for Prime-Minister-in-waiting, however. Asked which of the leaders would make the best PM, Scheer trails Trudeau by four percentage points:

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



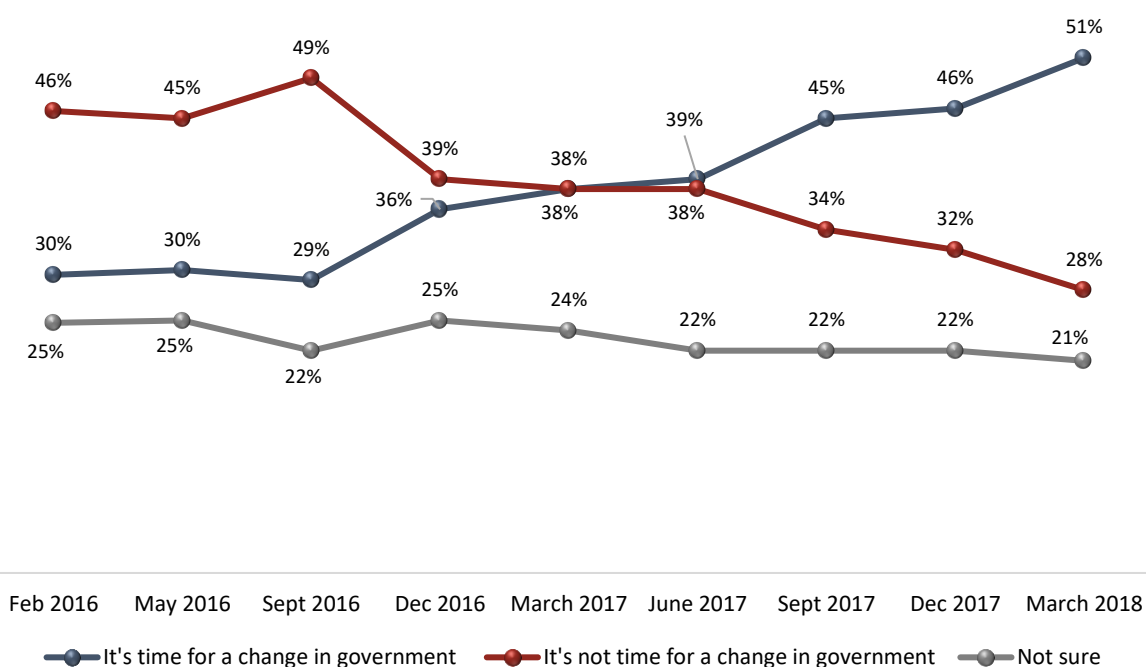
Notably, roughly four-in-ten Canadians (39%) say they are unsure who would make the best Prime Minister. This suggests that – though dissatisfaction with Trudeau and the Liberals has created an opening for Scheer and the Conservatives – the opposition leader still has some work to do to convince Canadians he is the right man to head their federal government.

Part 2 – The parties

Most say it's time for a change in government

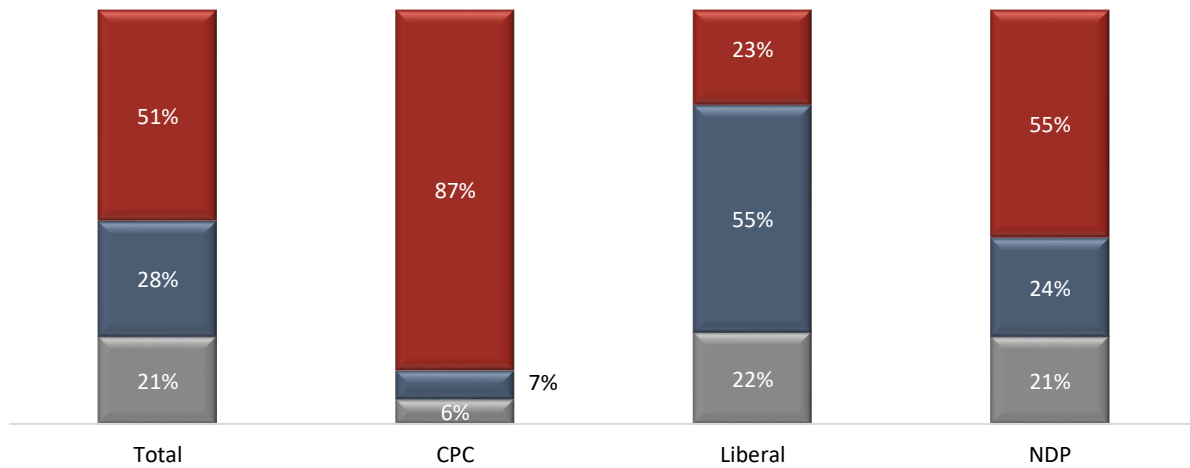
Half of all Canadians (51%) now say “it is time for a change in government – the Liberals under Justin Trudeau should be replaced by another party.” This is an all-time high since Trudeau’s party came to power in Ottawa:

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



This sentiment is – perhaps predictably – strongest among those who voted for the Conservative Party in 2015. That said, a significant number of those who voted for the governing Liberals – more than one-in-five (23%) – say it’s time for a change. Indeed, only a small majority (55%) of past Liberal voters are confident that it’s not time for a change in government. The rest are either hoping for change or unsure:

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



- It is time for a change in government, the Liberals under Justin Trudeau should be replaced by a different party
- It is not time for a change in government, the Liberals under Justin Trudeau should be re-elected
- Not sure

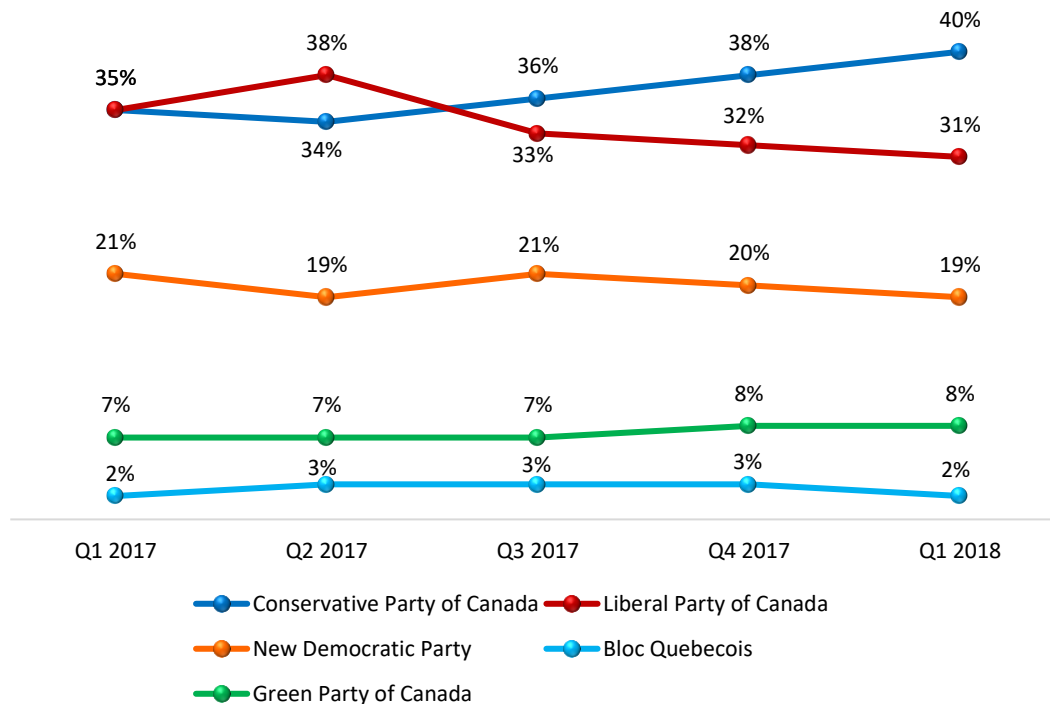
Tories seen as best party to lead

As mentioned in part one of this report, CPC leader Andrew Scheer and NDP leader Jagmeet Singh – each less than a year into his tenure – remain largely unknown to many Canadians. This, coupled with the continuing drop in Trudeau’s approval rating, creates a national environment in which no party leader is necessarily capturing the hearts and minds of Canadians.

So, what about the parties themselves? Asked to set aside leadership and consider only which party is best suited to form government, Canadians opt for the opposition Conservatives, rather than the governing Liberals.

As seen in the graph that follows, the preference for a Conservative government continues a recent trend, which has moved in that party’s favour over the past several quarters:

Regardless of your individual choice for best Prime Minister - tell us which you think is the best party to form the government:



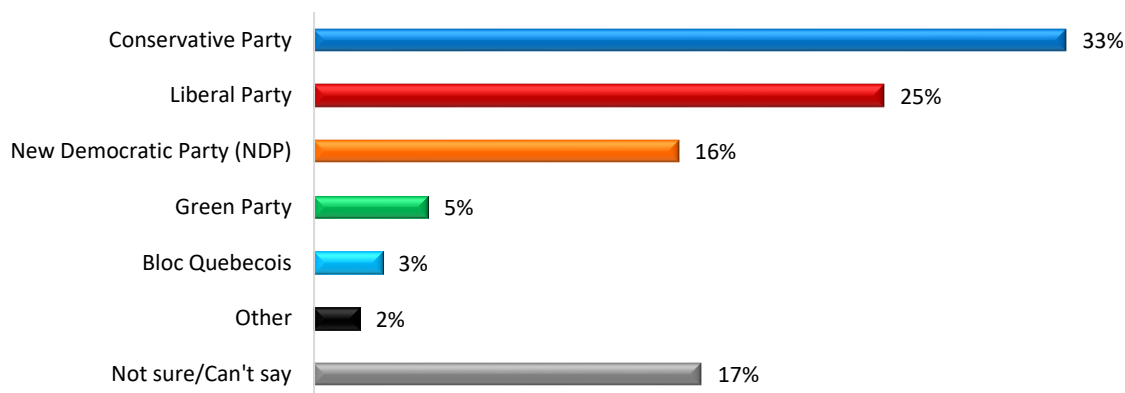
Part 3 – Vote intention

CPC leads as Liberal base softens

All of this – the drop in the Prime Minister’s approval rating, the improvement in Andrew Scheer’s, the desire for a change in government and the preference for a CPC-led one – adds up to a vote intention landscape that favours the Conservatives.

If an election were held tomorrow, some 33 per cent of respondents would cast their ballots for the CPC, compared to 25 per cent who would back Trudeau and the Liberals. One-in-six (16%) would support the NDP, and a similar number are undecided, as seen in the graph that follows.

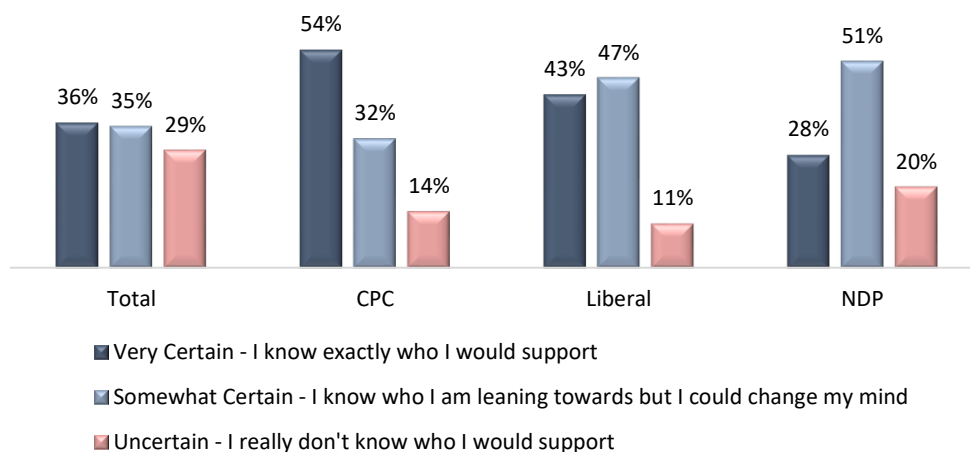
**If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?
(Raw vote)**



Of course, an election is not being held tomorrow, so these numbers could perhaps be seen as obscuring the broader picture. Most of the electorate, for example, is not “locked-in” with its choices. Significant numbers of Canadians say they are only somewhat certain who they would vote for (35%), or really don’t know which party they would support (29%).

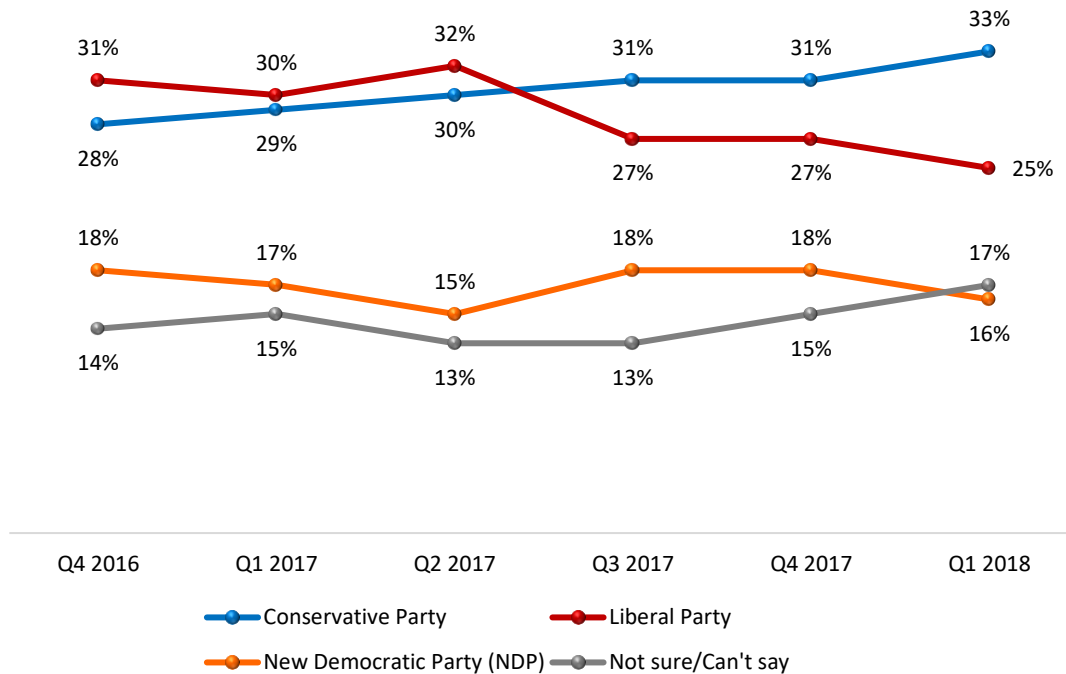
Crucially, these less-certain groups are more well-represented among those who say they’re considering voting for left-of-centre parties. More than half of those who intend to vote for the Conservatives (54%) say they are “very certain” of their choice, while significantly smaller numbers of Liberal and NDP supporters express this level of conviction:

If a federal election were held tomorrow, how certain are you about which party's candidate you would support?



Likewise, one-in-six respondents to this survey identify themselves as undecided voters. This proportion of the electorate has grown somewhat over the last several quarters, as gross vote totals have shifted from a slight Liberal advantage to a slight Conservative one:

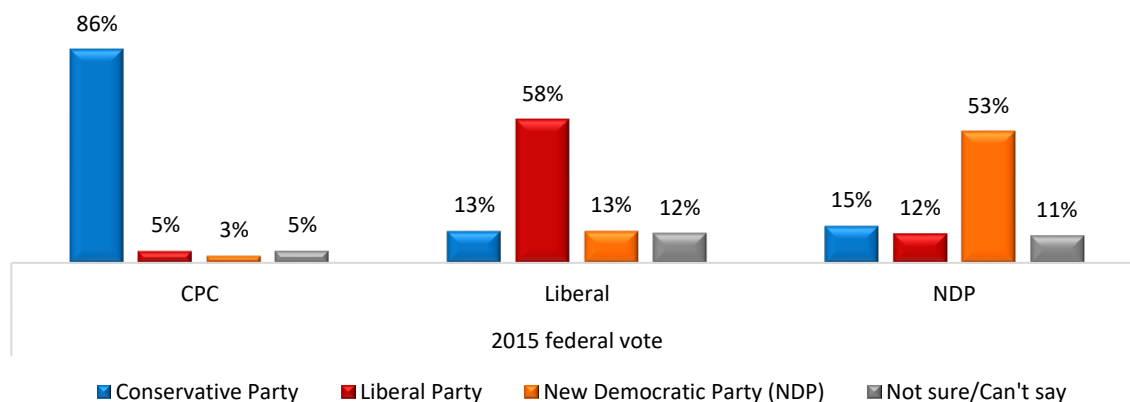
Raw vote intention over time:



One of the key dynamics underlying the shifts shown in the preceding graph is the softening of the Liberal party's 2015 base.

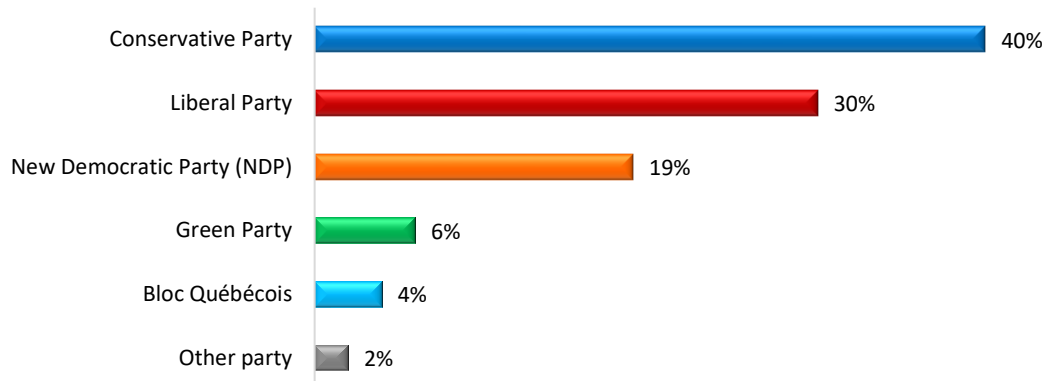
While the Conservatives retain fully 86 per cent of those who voted for them in 2015, the Liberals retain fewer than six-in-ten (58%). Roughly equal numbers of these lapsed Liberal voters now say they intend to vote for one of the other two parties, or are undecided:

Voter retention comparison, 2015 vote by current vote intention
If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?



Including decided and leaning voters and excluding those who are undecided, the net vote intention picture works out to a 10-point national lead for the Conservatives (40%) over the Liberals (30%):

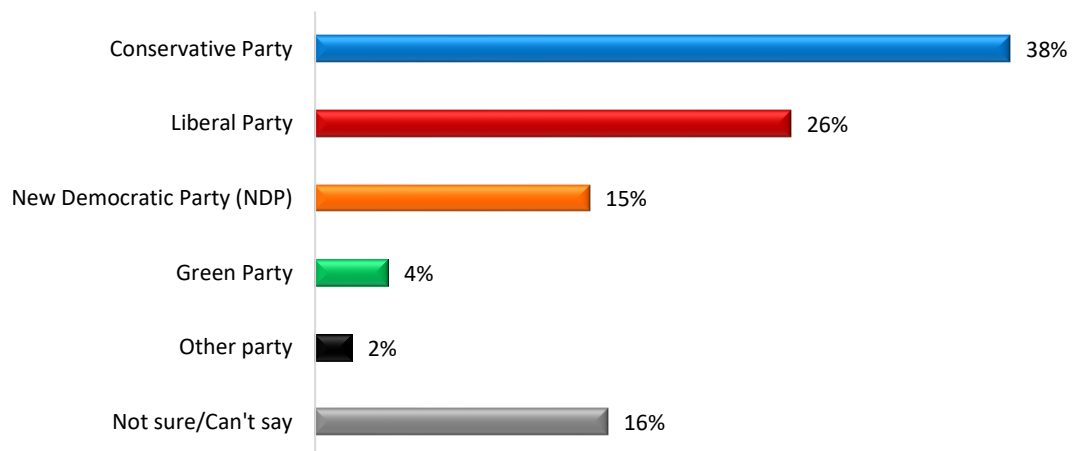
**If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?
(Decided and leaning voters)**



Tight races among millennials and urban voters

Regionally, the CPC benefits from a widening gap between itself and the Liberals in Canada's most populous province. The Conservatives lead in raw vote intention in Ontario by 12 percentage points – 38 to 26, with one-in-six undecided and a similar number preferring the NDP.

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



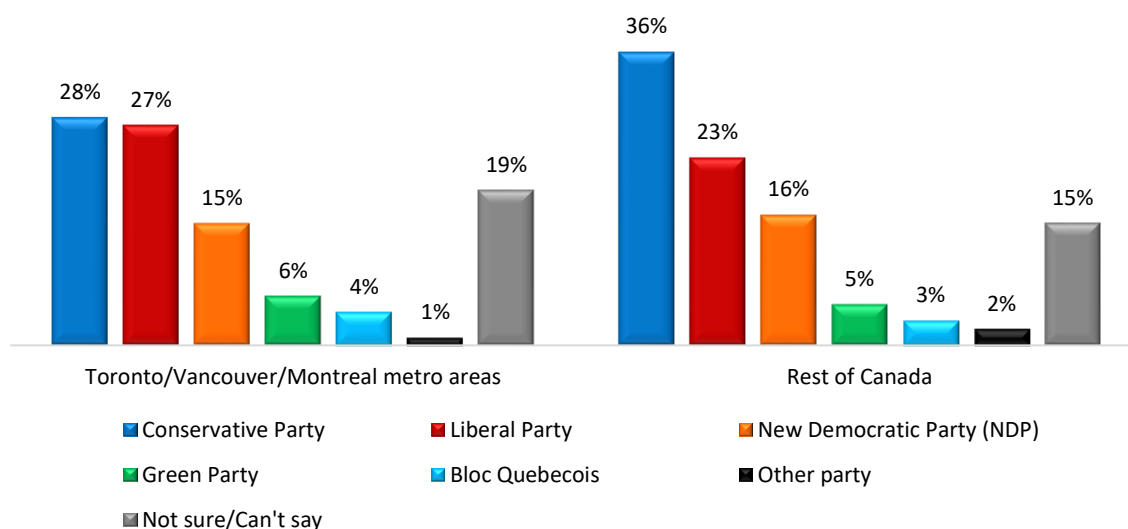
For comparison, last quarter, the Conservatives led the Liberals in raw support by 5 points in Ontario, 35 per cent to 30.

Elsewhere, the CPC lead is strongest in Alberta, where 59 per cent plan to vote for the party, and Saskatchewan (49%). The Tories lead in every province west of Quebec, though their lead in British Columbia is just one point (29% versus 28% for the Liberals). The Liberals remain in the lead in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces (see summary tables at the end of this report).

Provincial vote intention numbers don't tell the whole regional story, however. Much of the Liberals' strength in 2015 came from their appeal in urban centres – particularly the country's three largest metro areas (Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver).

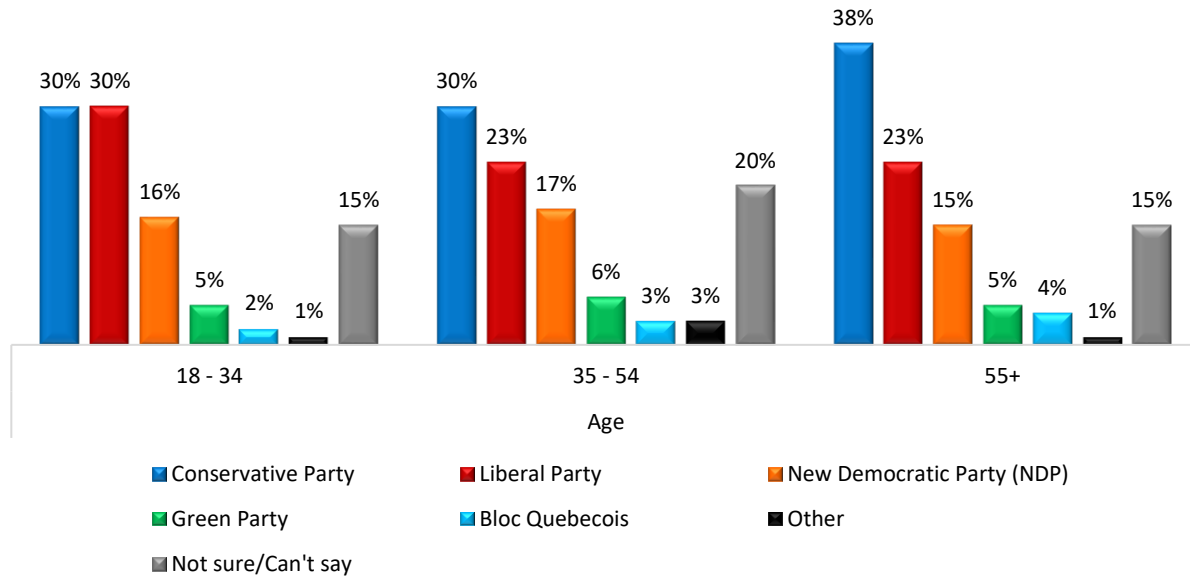
The aggregate vote intention picture across these three cities shows a competitive race. One-in-five (19%) are undecided, and the Conservatives are slightly ahead of the Liberals among decided and leaning voters – mostly on the back of a strong performance in the Greater Toronto Area. The Liberals' competitiveness, meanwhile, comes from their leads in Montreal and Metro Vancouver. All three metro regions were [strongholds for the party in 2015](#).

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



The race is similarly competitive among younger respondents, while those ages 35 and older are less keen to support the Liberals, as seen in the graph that follows:

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



*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? (including leaners)										
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (5423)	Region								
		BC (604)	AB (605)	SK (1019)	MB (800)	ON (805)	QC (600)	NS (300)	NB (301)	NFL (293)
Conservative Party	33%	29%	59%	49%	37%	38%	18%	29%	28%	19%
Liberal Party	25%	28%	16%	16%	29%	26%	21%	32%	36%	43%
New Democratic Party (NDP)	16%	19%	9%	22%	14%	15%	18%	17%	10%	17%
Bloc Quebecois	3%	-	-	-	-	-	12%	-	-	-
Green Party	5%	9%	2%	2%	6%	4%	6%	3%	7%	2%
Other party	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%	2%	0%	2%	1%
Not sure/Can't say	17%	14%	13%	10%	13%	16%	22%	19%	18%	18%

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency? (including leaners, excluding not sure)										
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (5423)	Region								
		BC (604)	AB (605)	SK (1019)	MB (800)	ON (805)	QC (600)	NS (300)	NB (301)	NFL (293)
Conservative Party	40%	33%	67%	54%	43%	45%	23%	35%	34%	23%
Liberal Party	30%	32%	19%	18%	33%	31%	27%	40%	44%	52%
New Democratic Party (NDP)	19%	22%	10%	25%	16%	18%	23%	21%	12%	21%
Bloc Quebecois	4%	-	-	-	-	-	16%	-	-	-
Green Party	6%	11%	2%	3%	7%	5%	8%	4%	8%	3%
Other party	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%	3%	0%	2%	1%

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Which of the following two statements best reflects how you feel today?				
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (5423)	2015 federal vote		
		CPC (1428)	Liberal (1767)	NDP (883)
It is time for a change in government, the Liberals under Justin Trudeau should be replaced by a different party	51%	87%	23%	55%
It is not time for a change in government, the Liberals under Justin Trudeau should be re-elected	28%	7%	55%	24%
Not sure	21%	6%	22%	21%

Do you approve or disapprove of each of the following?			
	Leader		
	Andrew Scheer	Justin Trudeau	Jagmeet Singh
Approve	38%	40%	31%
Disapprove	34%	56%	38%
Don't know	28%	4%	31%

Which of these leaders is best suited to deal with each of the following issues?					
	Issue				
	Economy	Health care	Foreign affairs	Crime	Dealing with provinces
Andrew Scheer	32%	23%	24%	31%	24%
Justin Trudeau	19%	19%	26%	15%	23%
Jagmeet Singh	9%	15%	10%	8%	10%
Martine Ouellet	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Elizabeth May	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%
None of them	10%	11%	11%	13%	11%
Not sure	26%	27%	26%	31%	27%

If a federal election were held tomorrow, how certain are you about which party's candidate you would support?				
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (5423)	Vote intention		
		CPC (1803)	Liberal (1335)	NDP (854)
Very certain – I know exactly who I would support	36%	54%	43%	28%
Somewhat certain – I know who I am leaning towards, but I could change my mind	35%	32%	47%	51%
Uncertain – I really don't know who I would support	29%	14%	11%	20%

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of Justin Trudeau?				
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (5423)	2015 federal vote		
		CPC (1428)	Liberal (1767)	NDP (883)
Approve strongly	8%	1%	18%	6%
Approve somewhat	32%	11%	50%	35%
Disapprove somewhat	21%	16%	21%	28%
Disapprove strongly	35%	71%	10%	29%
Don't know	4%	1%	1%	2%

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of Justin Trudeau?				
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (5423)	Age		
		18-34 (1136)	35-54 (2001)	55+ (2286)
Approve strongly	8%	11%	7%	8%
Approve somewhat	32%	45%	30%	28%
Disapprove somewhat	21%	18%	23%	20%
Disapprove strongly	35%	20%	35%	43%
Don't know	4%	7%	5%	1%

What do you feel are the most important issues facing Canada today? (choose up to 2; those receiving at least 10 per cent shown)				
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (5423)	2015 federal vote		
		CPC (1428)	Liberal (1767)	NDP (883)
The deficit/Government spending	29%	45%	21%	23%
Economy	26%	32%	27%	23%
Health care	24%	16%	29%	26%
Taxes	15%	20%	14%	10%
Jobs/Unemployment	13%	9%	13%	13%
Environment/Pollution	12%	4%	14%	18%
Income inequality	10%	4%	12%	17%

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following in Canada today? (Economy)				
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (5423)	2015 federal vote		
		CPC (1428)	Liberal (1767)	NDP (883)
Very satisfied	4%	2%	7%	5%
Moderately satisfied	30%	14%	47%	36%
Moderately dissatisfied	30%	32%	26%	34%
Very dissatisfied	27%	49%	13%	19%
Not sure	8%	3%	7%	5%

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

(weighted sample sizes)	Total (5423)	2015 federal vote		
		CPC (1428)	Liberal (1767)	NDP (883)
Conservative Party	33%	86%	13%	15%
Liberal Party	25%	5%	58%	12%
New Democratic Party (NDP)	16%	3%	13%	53%
Bloc Quebecois	3%	0%	1%	1%
Green Party	5%	1%	3%	6%
Other party	2%	1%	0%	1%
Not sure/Can't say	17%	5%	12%	11%

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

(weighted sample sizes)	Total (5423)	Age		
		18-34 (1136)	35-54 (2001)	55+ (2286)
Conservative Party	33%	30%	30%	38%
Liberal Party	25%	30%	23%	23%
New Democratic Party (NDP)	16%	16%	17%	15%
Bloc Quebecois	3%	2%	3%	4%
Green Party	5%	5%	6%	5%
Other party	2%	1%	3%	1%
Not sure/Can't say	17%	15%	20%	15%

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

(weighted sample sizes)	Total (5423)	Region	
		Toronto/Montreal/Vancouver (1871)	Rest of Canada (3552)
Conservative Party	33%	28%	36%
Liberal Party	25%	27%	23%
New Democratic Party (NDP)	16%	15%	16%
Bloc Quebecois	3%	4%	3%
Green Party	5%	6%	5%
Other party	2%	1%	2%
Not sure/Can't say	17%	19%	15%

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