

Federal Politics: CPC lead holds, but as Liberals begin to climb, will their task be simple, or Sisyphean?

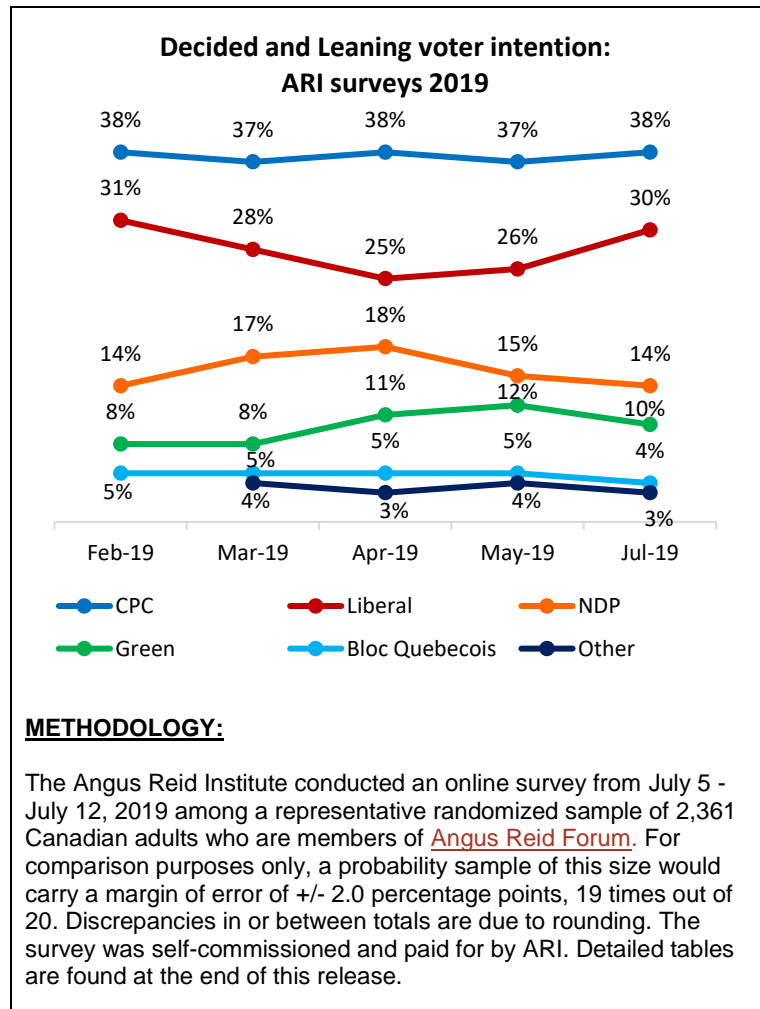
Four-in-ten Canadians, and six-in-ten CPC supporters, are absolutely certain of their vote in October

July 16, 2019 – While the Conservative Party of Canada maintains a comfortable eight-point lead over the governing Liberals, all eyes are on the latter party to see if its slow increase in voter intention over the last three months will maintain momentum or run out of steam.

The latest public opinion survey from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute comes as time has distanced the Liberals from the SNC-Lavalin scandal that shook the Canadian political landscape in February and March, allowing the governing party to retake a lead in Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

The performance of Justin Trudeau's party also appears to be improving in British Columbia, though the Conservatives maintain a 12-point advantage in that province.

While CPC leader Andrew Scheer will doubtless be reminding Canadians of the SNC ordeal over the coming months, both of the frontrunning parties have shifted much of their focus to environmental issues, namely the federal carbon tax and pipeline development.



The battle for environmental program supremacy comes as the environment and climate change are chosen as a top issue by one-third of Canadians (33%), well ahead of health care (22%). Further, at least half of those who intend to support the Liberals (50%), NDP (49%) or Green Party (65%), say this is one of the two most important issues facing the country today.

More Key Findings:

- Ontario remains a key battleground, with the CPC and Liberals statistically tied. 36 per cent of residents say they would support the CPC if the election were held today, while 34 per cent choose the Liberals. The NDP is chosen by nearly one-in-five (17%)

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- Six-in-ten who intend to vote Conservative (63%) say they are absolutely certain they will support the party and not change their mind, nearly double the number of Liberal supporters who say this (33%)
- One-in-three Canadians (32%) approve of Justin Trudeau's performance as Prime Minister, while 61 per cent disapprove. Other federal leaders continue to be viewed less than favourably as well. Conservative leader Andrew Scheer is viewed favourably by 39 per cent and unfavourably by half (51%)

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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Vote Intention

Just three months separate Canadians from their next federal election, and the main parties are releasing more [information](#) about their platforms, and launching more [attacks](#) against one another. Against, this backdrop, the vote intention landscape appears to be tightening up.

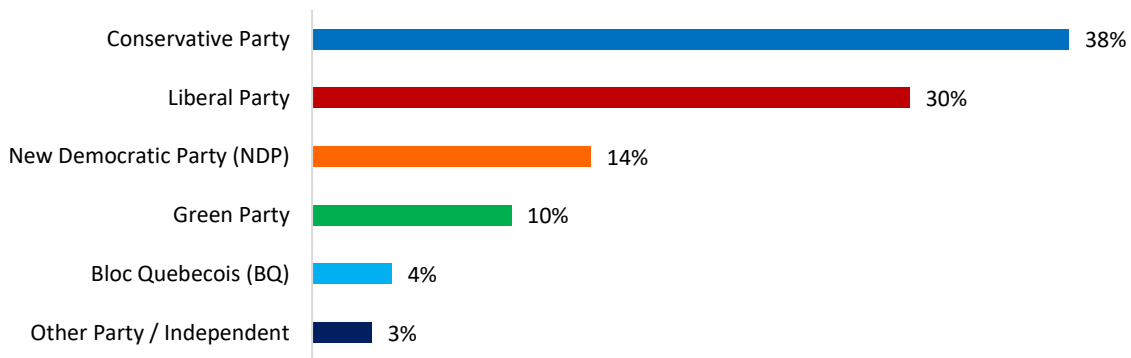
Just under four-in-ten Canadians (38%) say they would support their riding's CPC candidate, compared to 30 per cent who say this of the Liberals. Meanwhile, the NDP garners 14 per cent of the intended vote, followed by the Green Party at 10 per cent.

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If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party's candidate would you yourself be most likely to support?

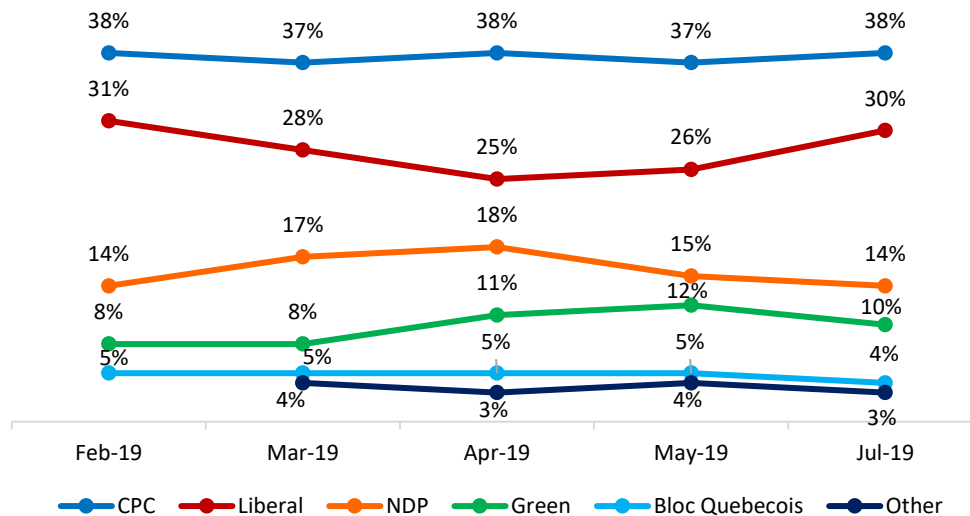
(Asked between July 5-12, 2019, decided and leaning voters, n =2,170)



These numbers reveal a number of notable trends. First, the Conservative base has remained solid, but the party has failed to increase its support over the past six months. The Liberal vote, however, has seen much more variance. The party slipped six points between February and April, but now appears to be emerging from its low point.

The NDP continues to have difficulty capitalizing on Liberal struggles and generates the same vote intention now that it did in February. Meantime, the Green Party remains in double-digits for the fourth consecutive wave of polling, well ahead of their best popular vote showing in 2008.

**Decided and Leaning voter intention:
ARI surveys 2019**



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The regional picture

At the end of May, when the Angus Reid Institute last canvassed Canadians about their vote intentions, every region of the country was leaning – at least slightly – toward the Conservative Party. Now, with the race having tightened nationally, the Liberals have regained an advantage in two of their traditional strongholds – Quebec (+5) and Atlantic Canada (+7).

Andrew Scheer’s Conservatives continue to dominate in the Prairies, and hold a substantial lead in B.C. Ontario, meanwhile, is neck and neck, as seen in the table below:

Federal vote intention (decided and leaning voters, n=2,170)							
(Unweighted sample sizes)	Total (2,170)	Region					
		BC (304)	AB (264)	SK/MB (136)	ON (832)	QC (496)	ATL (143)
Conservative Party	38%	36%	63%	50%	36%	27%	32%
Liberal Party	30%	24%	20%	22%	34%	32%	39%
New Democratic Party (NDP)	14%	19%	11%	10%	17%	12%	11%
Green Party	10%	18%	3%	16%	9%	9%	15%
Bloc Quebecois (BQ)	4%	-	-	-	-	18%	-
Other Party/Independent	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	3%

Age, gender and education

The strength of the Conservative Party continues to lie in its appeal to male voters. The CPC holds an advantage in vote intention among all three male age groups, ranging from five points with 18 to 34 year-olds, to 22 points among those over 55.

While women over 55 join their male counterparts in supporting the CPC above any other party, women under that age are much more likely to support the NDP or Green Party. One-in-three women among each age group say they would support the Liberals if an election were held tomorrow:

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Federal vote intention (decided and leaning voters, n=2,170)							
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (2,170)	Men			Women		
		18-34 (304)	35-54 (371)	55+ (400)	18-34 (314)	35-54 (373)	55+ (407)
Conservative Party	38%	33%	42%	51%	22%	33%	40%
Liberal Party	30%	28%	23%	29%	34%	33%	34%
New Democratic Party (NDP)	14%	17%	13%	6%	26%	19%	9%
Green Party	10%	11%	13%	8%	15%	8%	9%
Bloc Quebecois (BQ)	4%	4%	4%	5%	2%	4%	5%
Other/Independent	3%	7%	6%	1%	1%	3%	2%

Education is also significant in this discussion, but perhaps not as much as some may think. An Ottawa professor courted controversy earlier in July after tweeting that the Conservatives were the party of the uneducated.

While the Liberals do hold an advantage among Canadians with a university education, the gap is just eight points over the number of equally educated Canadians who say they will support the CPC. Each party garners support from Canadians across all levels of education:

Federal vote intention (including leaners, decided voters only, n=2,170)				
(Unweighted sample sizes)	Total (2,170)	Education		
		High school or less (n=753)	College/tech school (n=678)	University+ (n=738)
Conservative Party	38%	43%	42%	29%
Liberal Party	30%	26%	27%	37%
New Democratic Party (NDP)	14%	13%	13%	18%
Green Party	10%	10%	11%	10%
Bloc Quebecois (BQ)	4%	4%	4%	4%
Other/Independent	3%	3%	4%	3%

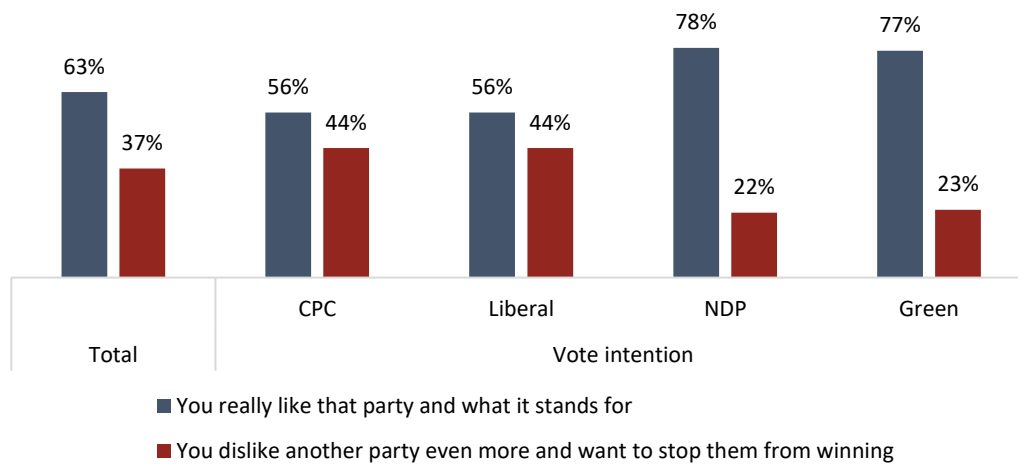
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Four-in-ten voting primarily against a party rather than for one

Heading into a campaign that many [expect to be ugly in tone](#), it is worth noting just how many Canadians are already voting in protest of one party rather than in support of the other they may truly like. Almost four-in-ten voters overall (37%) and more than four-in-ten Conservative and Liberal supporters (44% of each) say they plan to vote for their party primarily because they dislike another party and want to stop it from forming government.

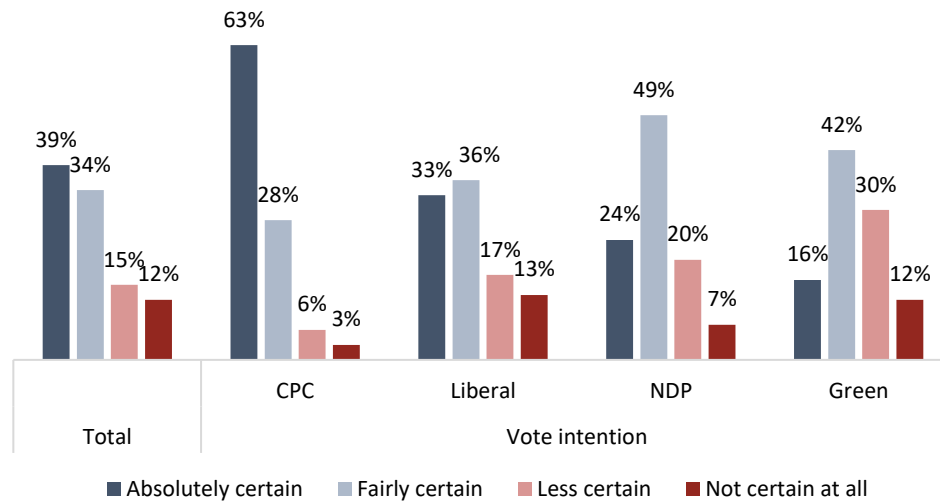
**Would you say you support that party mostly because...
(Among those who chose a major party, n=2,002)**



How many are 'absolutely certain' about their vote already?

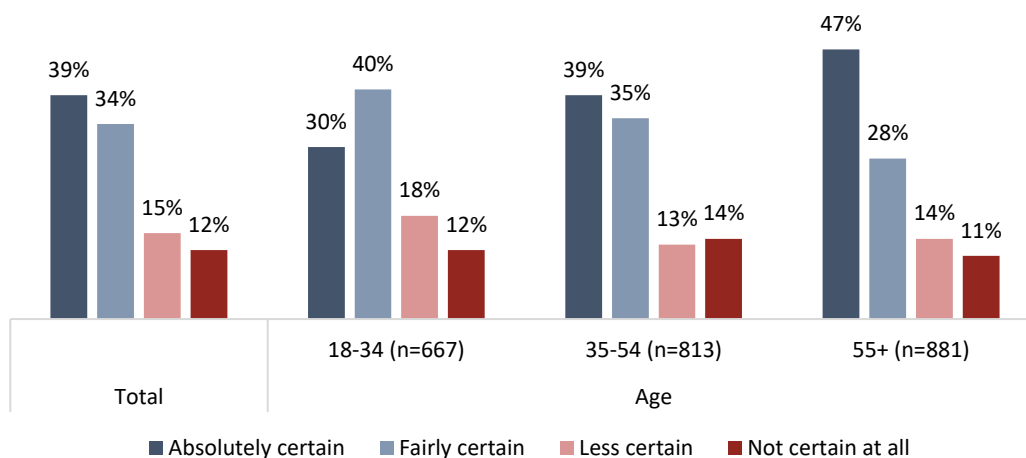
The CPC has locked in much of its base, with six-in-ten of those who currently support the party (63%) saying they are absolutely certain they will do so in October. The rest is more fluid, to say the least. Only one-third of current Liberal leaners say their vote is all but written in stone, while just one-quarter of New Democrats and 16 per cent of Greens say the same:

**Certainty of vote by party
(All Respondents, n=2,361)**



Looking at the vote certainty picture by age, one can see just how much uncertainty, or perhaps for the federal parties – promise – still remains. Older voters are most certain, likely overlapping with those decided Conservatives, yet still only half (47%) are locked in.

**Certainty of vote by age
(All respondents, n=2,361)**



Party Leader Dynamics

One-in-three approve of Trudeau

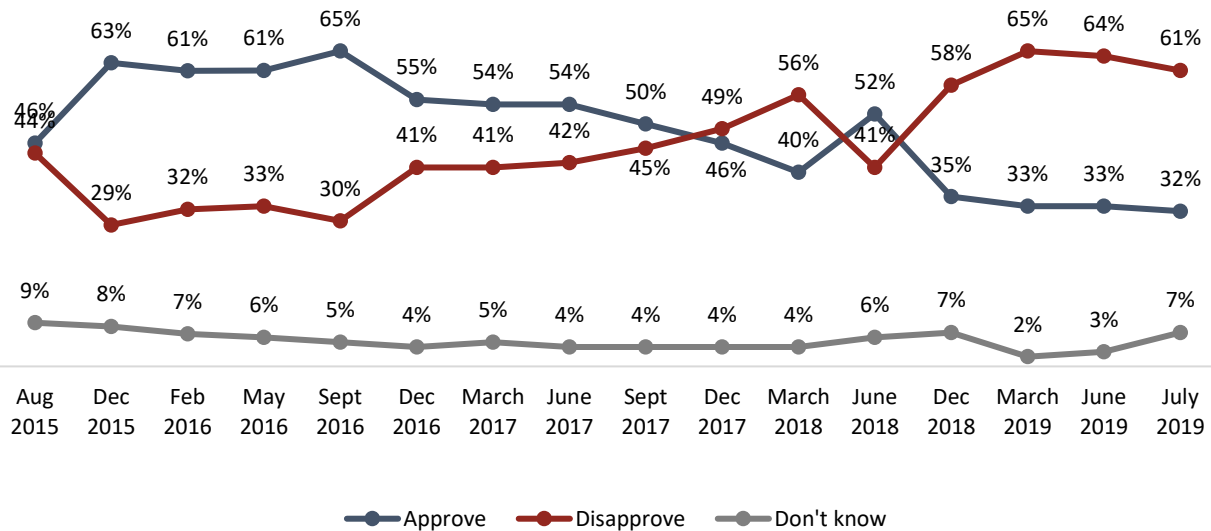
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the approval of the TransMountain pipeline expansion project on June 18. More than half of Canadians (56%) told the Angus Reid Institute that [this was the right](#)

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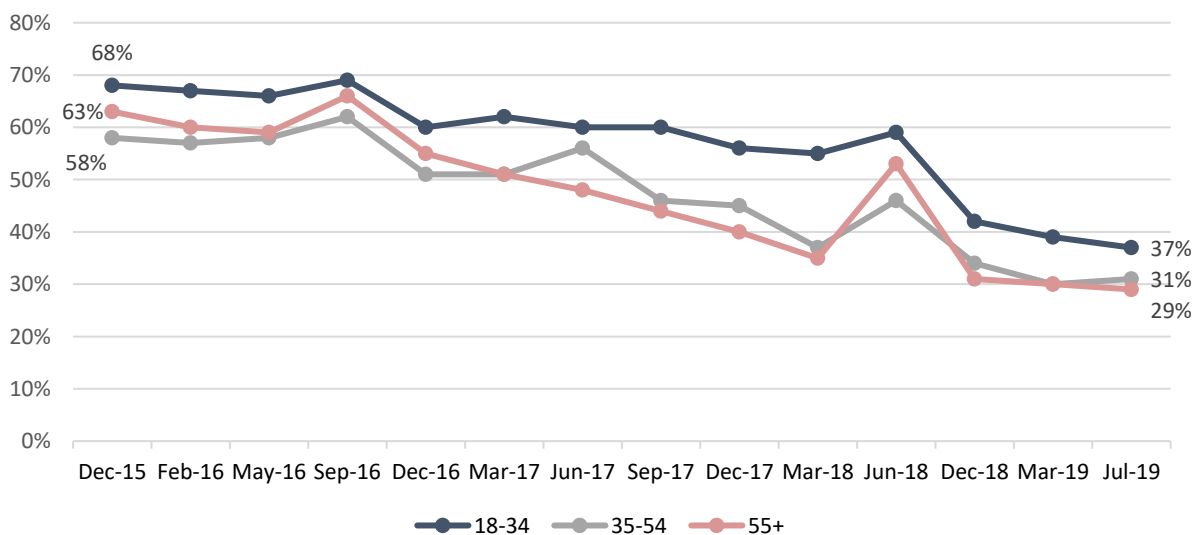
decision, more than twice as many who said it was the wrong one (24%). While a majority agreed with this key decision, Trudeau's approval rating continues to stall at about one-in-three. Notably, however, some have moved from disapproval, to "don't know":

Do you approve or disapprove of Justin Trudeau?



That said, an overall decline in approval since 2015 has been steady across each age group. Trudeau's approval now sits at approximately half of what it was when he began his first term:

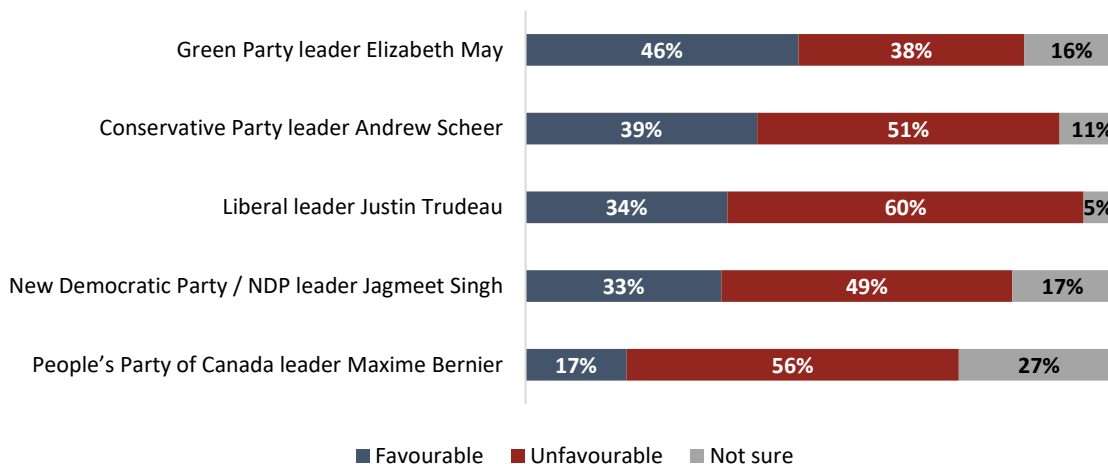
Approval of Trudeau by age:



Leader Favourability

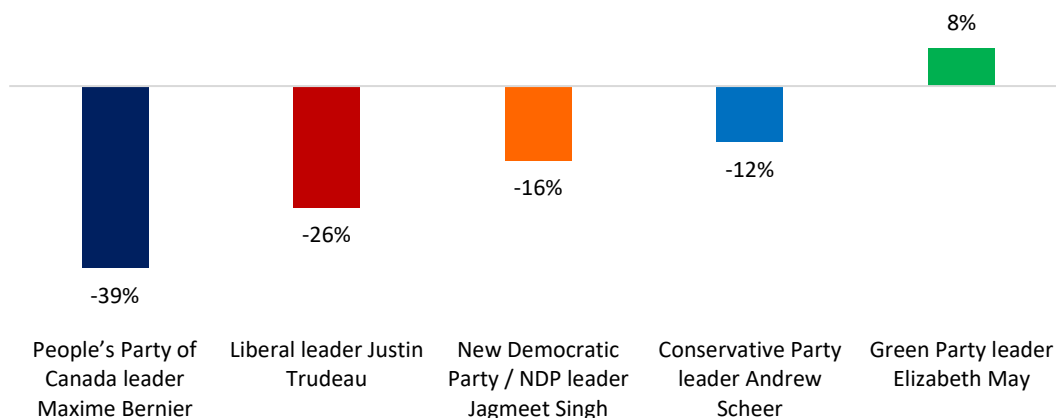
The opposition leaders will be key to their parties’ fortunes over the next three months. Green Party leader Elizabeth May is viewed favourably by 46 per cent of Canadians, highest among her peers. Four-in-ten Canadians view Andrew Scheer favourably, while one-in-three say the same of the NDP’s Jagmeet Singh. Maxime Bernier of the People’s Party of Canada is viewed favourably by just 17 per cent:

**Overall impression of federal party leaders
(All respondents, n=2,361)**



Net favourability – the proportion of Canadians responding “favourable” minus those saying “unfavourable” – shows May with the only positive score.

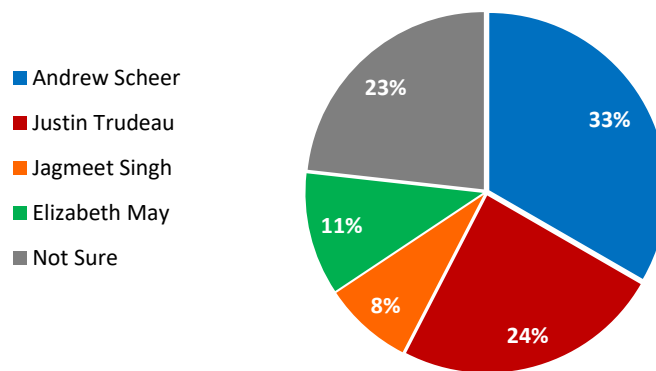
**Net favourability, favourable minus unfavourable
All respondents (n=2,361)**



Scheer seen as best PM by one-in-three, Trudeau by one-in-four

As leaders present themselves as the best Prime Minister over the next three month, Andrew Scheer appears to have a head start. One-in-three Canadians (33%) say that he is the best choice at this point, a nine-point advantage over Justin Trudeau (24%). That being said, a significant number of Canadians (23%) remain unsure:

Which of these leaders would make the best Prime Minister of Canada? (All Respondents, n=2361)



Top Issues

Provincial comparison

In every region of the country except Alberta, respondents rate the environment and climate change as the top issue facing Canada today. In B.C. and Quebec, in particular, the proportion of residents rating it as a top-two issue rises to four-in-ten. Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces also tend to ascribe high importance to healthcare.

Albertans most frequently mention the economy and energy/natural resources as top political priorities. Notably, in British Columbia housing affordability is chosen by three-in-ten (28%), making it residents' second highest priority overall. One-in-five Ontarians (20%) are also concerned about that issue.

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Please select the top two issues facing Canada that you care about the most (All respondents, items chosen by more than 10 per cent shown) (Top two issues for each region highlighted)							
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (2361)	Region					
		BC (333)	AB (279)	SK/MB (151)	ON (883)	QC (556)	ATL (159)
Environment / Climate Change	33%	37%	19%	28%	33%	40%	34%
Health Care	22%	16%	13%	16%	22%	29%	29%
The Deficit/Government Spending	17%	15%	19%	20%	17%	13%	19%
Income Inequality/Poverty	16%	19%	11%	10%	17%	17%	13%
Housing Affordability	15%	28%	8%	9%	20%	8%	5%
Economy	14%	14%	24%	19%	11%	12%	9%
Immigration	13%	9%	9%	12%	13%	21%	8%
Taxes	10%	12%	12%	13%	9%	7%	19%
Energy/Natural Resources	10%	14%	25%	11%	6%	6%	9%

How each party handles climate, environment appears important

As in last month's [federal issues poll](#), Liberal, NDP, Green *and* Bloc supporters are united in rating the environment/climate change, by a wide margin, as the top issue facing Canada today. In fact, those supporting each of these federal parties largely share a common list of priorities, including healthcare and income inequality/poverty.

Those considering the Conservatives, on the other hand, tend to emphasize a completely different set of issues; principally the deficit/government spending, immigration and the economy, but also taxes and energy/natural resources. With the sole exception of immigration, also rated as a top issue by 26 per cent of potential BQ voters in Quebec, none of these issues registers highly on the list of other party supporters' priorities.

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Please select the top two issues facing Canada that you care about the most (All respondents, items chosen by more than 10 per cent shown)						
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (2361)	Vote intention				
		CPC (819)	Liberal (654)	NDP (312)	Green (226)	Bloc (88*)
Environment / Climate Change	33%	8%	50%	49%	65%	42%
Health Care	22%	15%	30%	22%	15%	29%
The Deficit/Government Spending	17%	32%	5%	5%	7%	7%
Income Inequality/Poverty	16%	5%	20%	31%	24%	20%
Housing Affordability	15%	9%	18%	28%	18%	4%
Economy	14%	21%	13%	6%	4%	5%
Immigration	13%	22%	6%	7%	6%	26%
Taxes	10%	18%	5%	4%	5%	6%
Energy/Natural Resources	10%	15%	6%	4%	8%	7%

**Small sample size*

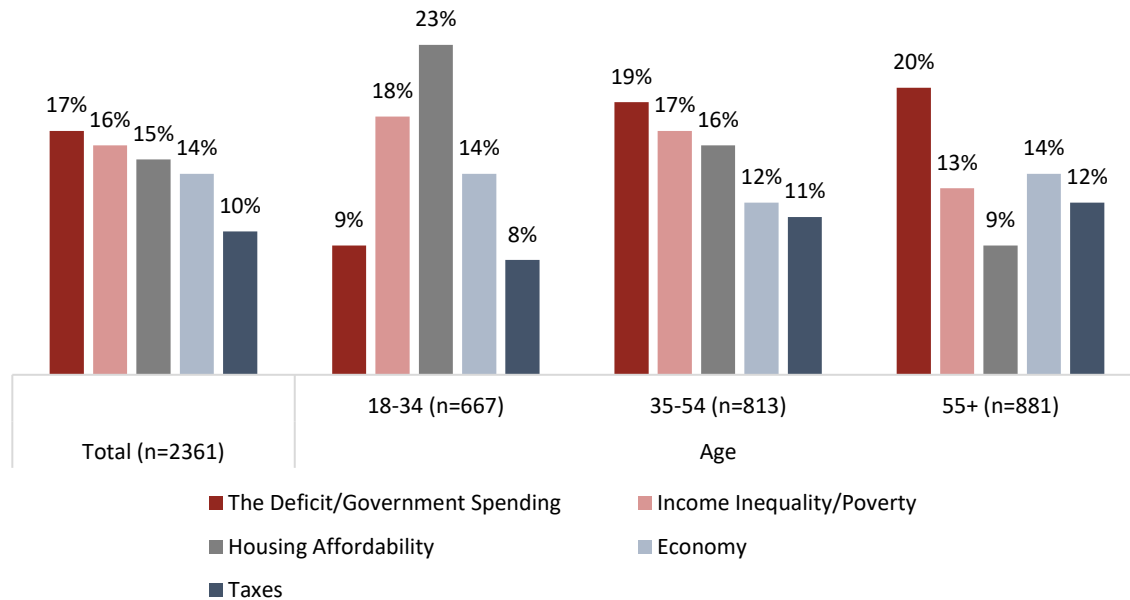
Economic priorities important, but diverse

While the economy, in a general sense, may not figure highly in the overall list of concerns, specific economic issues loom large. For younger Canadians, housing affordability is at the forefront. One-quarter of 18-34-year-olds choose this as a top issue. For those 35+, the top economic issue is the deficit and government spending.

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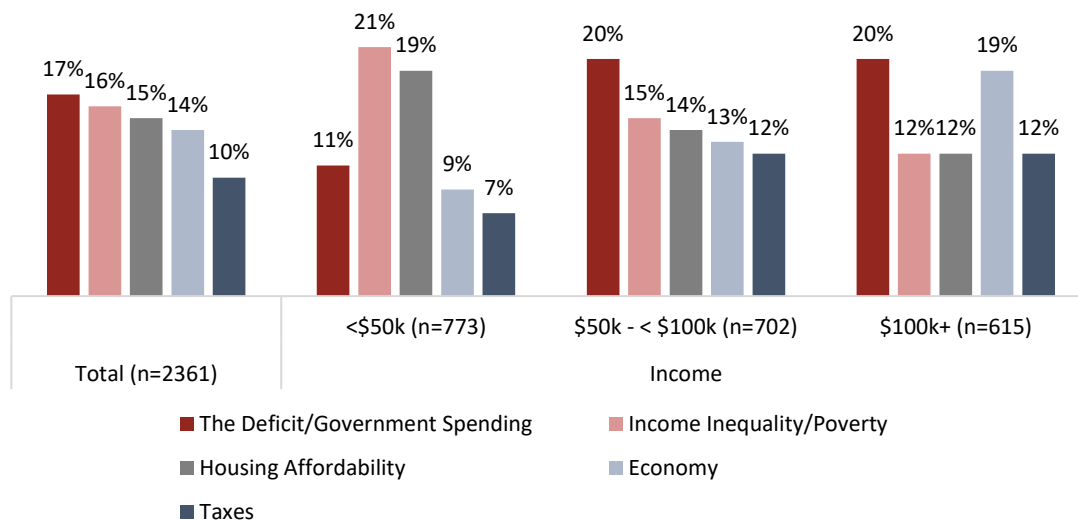
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**Percentage of Respondents naming each economic issue
as among the top two facing Canada
(All Respondents)**



Differences are also seen in how household income drives economic priorities. Those making less than \$50,000 annually are more likely than those in the highest income group (\$100,000 or more) to mention income inequality and housing affordability as a top concern:

**Percentage of Respondents naming each economic issue
as among the top two facing Canada
(All Respondents)**



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