

## The declarative & the demure: Close race gives CPC edge, but do Liberals stand to gain from shy voters?

*Scheer, Trudeau tied on question of who would make Best PM*

**September 19, 2019** – The second week of Canada's 43<sup>rd</sup> general election campaign rolls along with the Conservative and Liberal parties locked in a statistical tie.

The CPC, on the continued strength of its base and new data giving leader Andrew Scheer the lead on key leadership qualities, holds a three-point lead over the incumbents (36 per cent versus 33 per cent). All other parties trail at least 20 points behind.

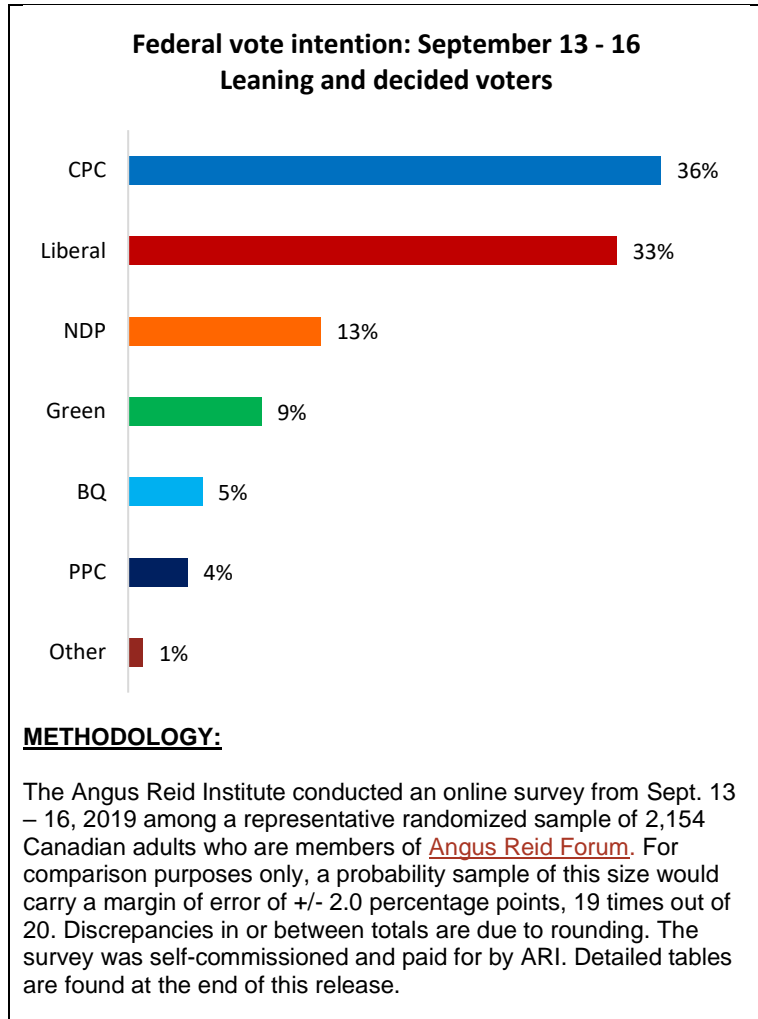
That said, the latest public opinion survey from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute once again delves deep beyond the racehorse numbers to better understand what is happening with a still-volatile electorate fully five weeks before election day.

What the research finds is a hidden, but possibly burgeoning advantage for Justin Trudeau's Liberals, especially among those uncommitted voters who are considering – but have not yet fully committed to – the two leading parties.

Overall, among uncommitted voters considering both the CPC and the Liberals (15% of Canadians), it is Trudeau, that they lean towards on important leadership attributes, and ultimately choose when asked to pick the one party they'll support on election day.

Further analysis of those leadership attributes yields some notable findings. Overall, among uncommitted voters, Trudeau is seen more than Scheer to be a democrat (89% to 78%), to be tolerant (94% to 78%), to be influential (80% to 56) and compassionate (78% to 57%). Scheer, on the other hand, is more likely to be seen as up to the job of Prime Minister (61% to 55%), honest (61% to 47%) and realistic (59% to 49%).

On the question of which of these two leaders would make best Prime Minister, however, Canadians are evenly divided: half say Justin Trudeau (50%). The other half say his main opponent, Andrew Scheer (50%).



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### More Key Findings:

- Overall, 54 per cent of Canadians say that they have a party they will *definitely* support at this point in the campaign. The other half (46%) are currently still considering their options.
- The Liberals hold an advantage among these uncommitted voters. Within this group, 40 per cent say they would vote for the Liberal Party in the coming election, while 23 per cent choose the CPC and 17 per cent choose the NDP.
- Conservative voters are far more likely to say that they feel this election is more important than 2015 and that there is a lot at stake on October 21, compared to supporters of the other parties.

### 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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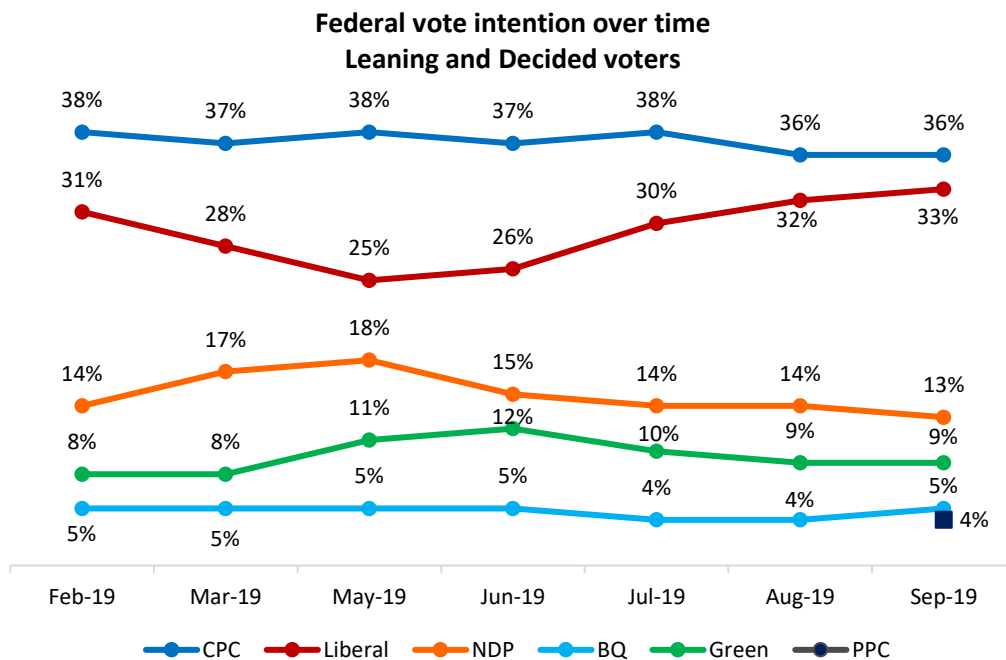
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## Part 1: Vote picture

With the first *official* week of the election campaign in the rear-view, the party standings remain substantively unchanged, with the Conservative and the Liberal parties locked in a statistical tie. Asked how they intend to vote in the coming election, 36 per cent of Canadians say they will support the Conservative Party in their riding, while 33 per cent say they will vote for the Liberals. This represents the closest vote intention between the two parties recorded by the Angus Reid Institute in 2019. The incumbent Liberals have increased the amount of breathing room between themselves and their left-of-centre opponents, as the New Democrats and Greens each hover closer to the one-in-ten mark:



## Regional breakdown

Ontario and British Columbia continue to be amongst the most competitive regions in the country. In Ontario, both the Liberals and Conservatives currently receive support from 35 per cent of residents, with the NDP in third place. Results in Ontario, and particularly the Toronto suburbs, will go a long way to deciding the outcome of the federal election.

In B.C., the Conservative Party holds a significant 10-point advantage but four parties garner at least 15 per cent support. Significant levels of uncommitted voters, which will be analyzed in part two of this report, mean that the vote picture remains fluid in the province:

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Federal vote intention (decided and leaning voters, n=2,037)							
(Unweighted sample sizes)	Total (2,037)	Region					
		BC (268)	AB (205)	SK/MB (257)	ON (712)	QC (422)	ATL (176)
Conservative Party	36%	37%	61%	52%	35%	20%	39%
Liberal Party	33%	27%	25%	23%	35%	37%	33%
New Democratic Party (NDP)	13%	18%	6%	15%	16%	9%	12%
Green Party	9%	15%	4%	6%	8%	8%	11%
Bloc Quebecois (BQ)	5%					22%	
People's Party of Canada	4%	2%	4%	3%	4%	3%	5%

### Do women 35+ hold the key to 24 Sussex?

Parties will be courting voters from all backgrounds across the country over the next month, but perhaps no voters are as valuable currently as women 35 years of age and older.

Not only are women in these age groups close to evenly divided between the CPC and the Liberal Party in their current vote intention, but women of all age groups up to the age of 64 were more likely to vote than their male counterparts in the previous election. If either party is able to swing these age and gender cohorts in their favour, their fortunes on October 21 may look much more promising.

Meanwhile, young men, the least likely voting group, are equally divided, while their male elders lean heavily toward the Conservatives:

Federal vote intention (decided and leaning voters, n=2,170)							
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (2,037)	Men			Women		
		18-34 (304)	35-54 (371)	55+ (400)	18-34 (314)	35-54 (373)	55+ (407)
Conservative Party	36%	31%	45%	48%	16%	35%	37%
Liberal Party	33%	31%	28%	28%	42%	30%	37%
New Democratic Party (NDP)	13%	15%	9%	7%	28%	14%	8%
Green Party	9%	7%	6%	5%	10%	12%	10%
Bloc Quebecois (BQ)	5%	6%	5%	8%	2%	4%	5%
People's Party of Canada	4%	8%	5%	3%	2%	3%	3%

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**Liberals putting daylight between themselves and the NDP/Green Party**

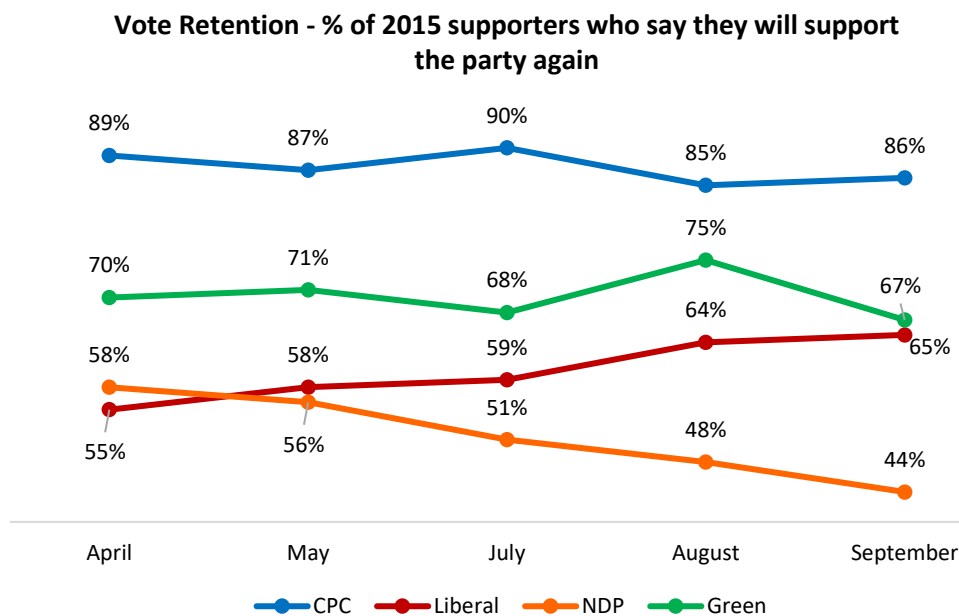
The Liberals and Conservatives have both divergent and similar paths to victory in the election.

First – the divergent.

The CPC must maintain its current base, while also persuading enough new voters to the blue tent in order to break the 40 per cent mark and form a majority government. The first part is easy, the second part, against the backdrop of an uncommitted electorate that skews more left than right, is arguably more difficult – but not impossible.

The Liberals, in turn, have no choice but to win back their 2015 base, much of which scattered in the last two years, especially after the SNC-Lavalin affair. But while coalescing the centre-left may be the best route to electoral success, it won't be enough. This base – younger, urban and with a lower propensity to vote – must actually cast ballots.

The good news for the Liberal Party is that the NDP continues to struggle to draw back its 2015 voters. Just 44 per cent of those who supported Thomas Mulcair's NDP say they plan to support the party again under Jagmeet Singh. Meanwhile, the Liberals retention rate remains around two-thirds (65%):



But for both Trudeau and Scheer, the path to victory runs through vote-rich urban and suburban battlegrounds such as the GTA and Metro Vancouver. As noted earlier, their shared path to victory in these areas means each must win over young, professional families who identify affordability as a main ballot issue. How much does this influential segment of voters feel is on the line in the coming election?

**Related: health care, affordability honesty are top issues for pliable voters**

**CPC voters feel a lot is at stake; less the case for centre-left supporters**

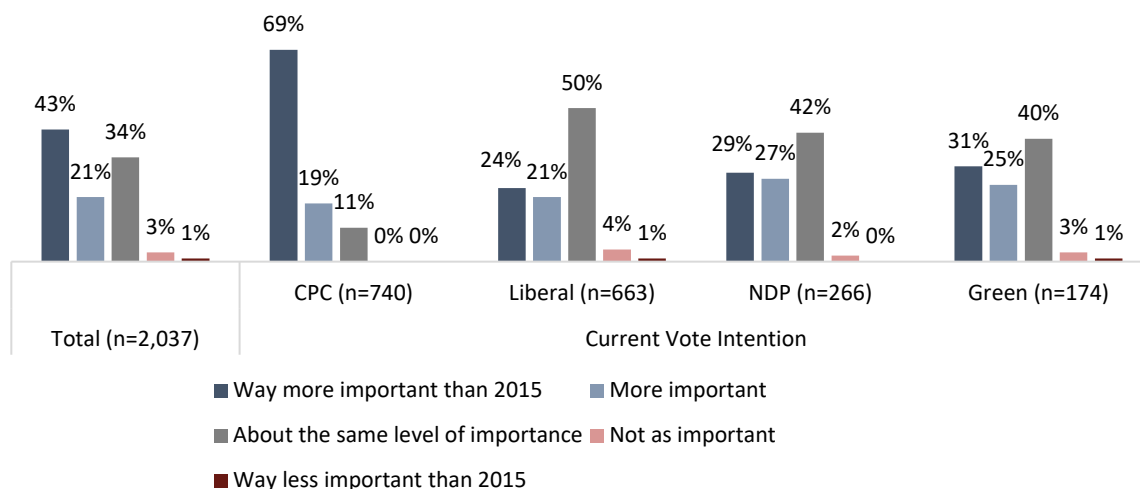
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One of Andrew Scheer’s more significant advantages is that his supporters consider this vote more important for Canada than the one held in 2015. Indeed, seven-in-ten leaning and decided CPC voters (69%) say they feel 2019 is way more important than last time around, more than double the number who hold this opinion within the other parties.

This exemplifies the importance of turnout. If Conservatives are motivated and centre-left voters are not, Scheer’s party will benefit. Importantly, however, very few voters from any party say that very little is at stake. Liberal, NDP and Green voters are most likely to say that this election is equally important as 2015; an election that they likely felt was quite important in its own right:

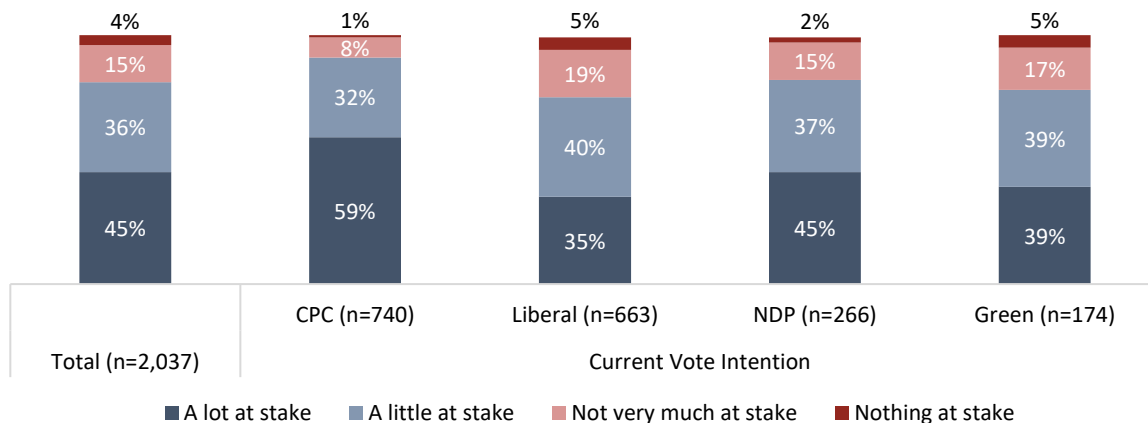
**How important would you say is this forthcoming election is for Canada?  
Compared to the last fed. election 4 years ago, would you say this election is:**



While many do not believe this election is more important than the last one, that is not to say that they feel they have nothing *personally at stake* in the outcome.

In fact, though CPC voters are most likely to say “a lot” is at stake, at least three-quarters of supporters for each party say they feel they have a least some skin in the game this time around:

**And how much is at stake for you personally in this election – will the result have a big impact on your own life?**

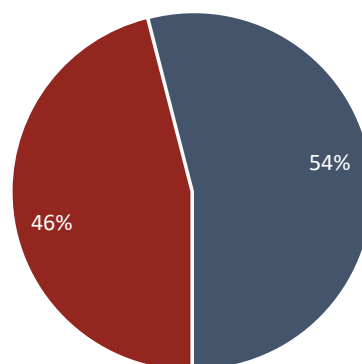


**Part 2: Uncommitted voters – the key to Trudeau’s success?**

While it may seem as though voters’ minds are made up, this is not necessarily the case. Before they were asked how they would vote if election day were upon them, respondents were asked more broadly which parties they are *considering*. Given that the election is more than a month away, are they considering more than one party? How strong is their commitment currently?

Nearly half of Canadians (46%) currently do not have a party they will *definitely* be supporting in October.

**Canadian vote intention picture:  
September 13 - 16, n = 2,154**



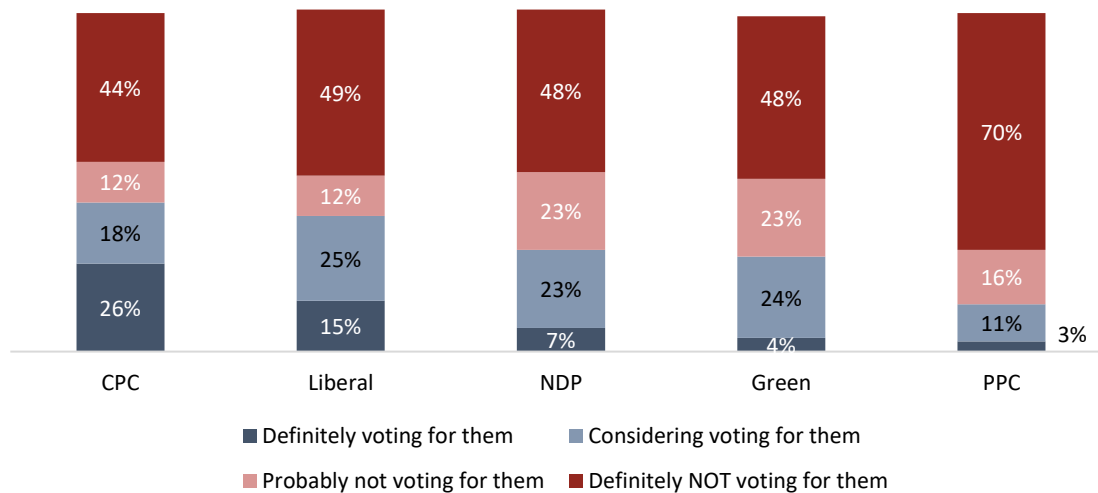
■ Do not have a party they will definitely support  
■ Have a party they will definitely support

**Vote consideration**

Looking at which parties benefit most from the 54 per cent of Canadians who *are* certain, it is apparent that the CPC have the largest base locked in. One-quarter of Canadians (26%) are definitely supporting the party, while another 18 per cent say they are *considering* the party, and 12 per cent have not ruled the CPC out but say they are *probably not* supporting them.

The Liberals, meanwhile, are assured the support of just 15 per cent of Canadians at this point in the campaign but draw interest from another one-in-four (25%). Every party, aside from Maxime Bernier’s People’s Party, is drawing at least some level of interest from half of Canadians, as shown in the graph below:

**How likely are you to consider each of the following?  
All respondents n = 2,154**

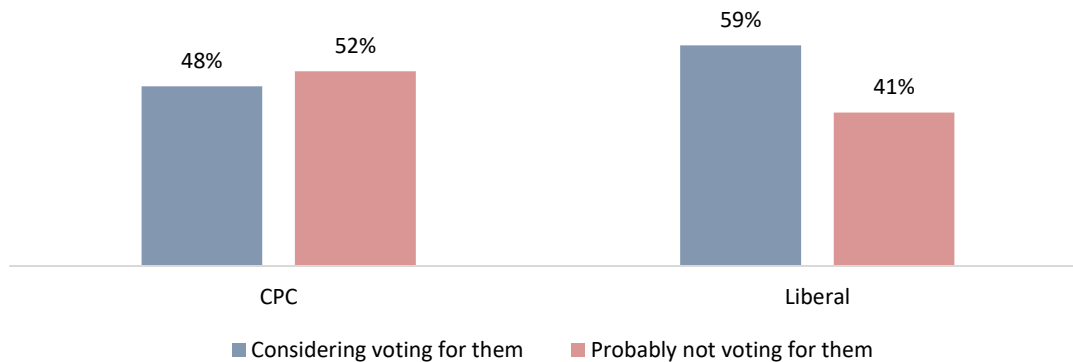


**Considerable group say they are considering both CPC and LPC**

With the Liberals and Conservatives neck and neck, another finding provides considerable intrigue – 15 per cent of Canadians are currently considering both parties. That is, they have not decided that they will definitely commit to either, but they have also not ruled either out entirely.



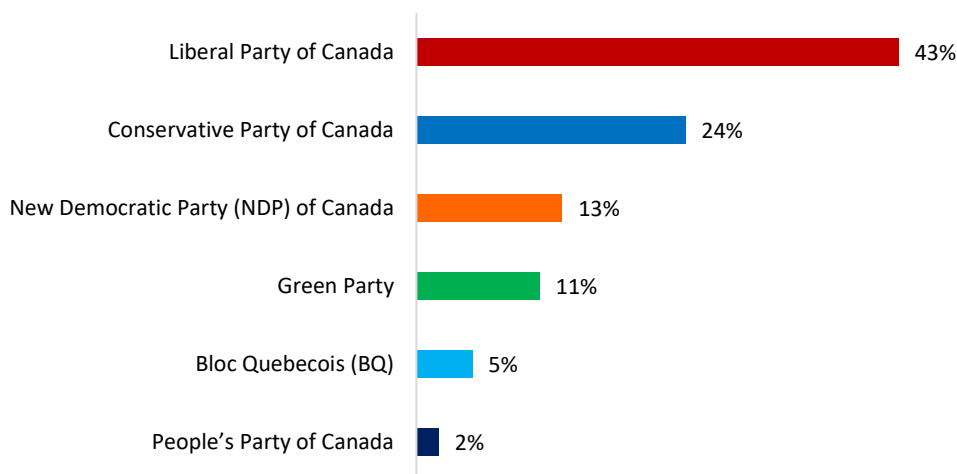
**Among those considering both CPC and Liberals, how likely are they to vote for each party?  
n=318**



**LPC lead significantly in vote intent among uncommitted**

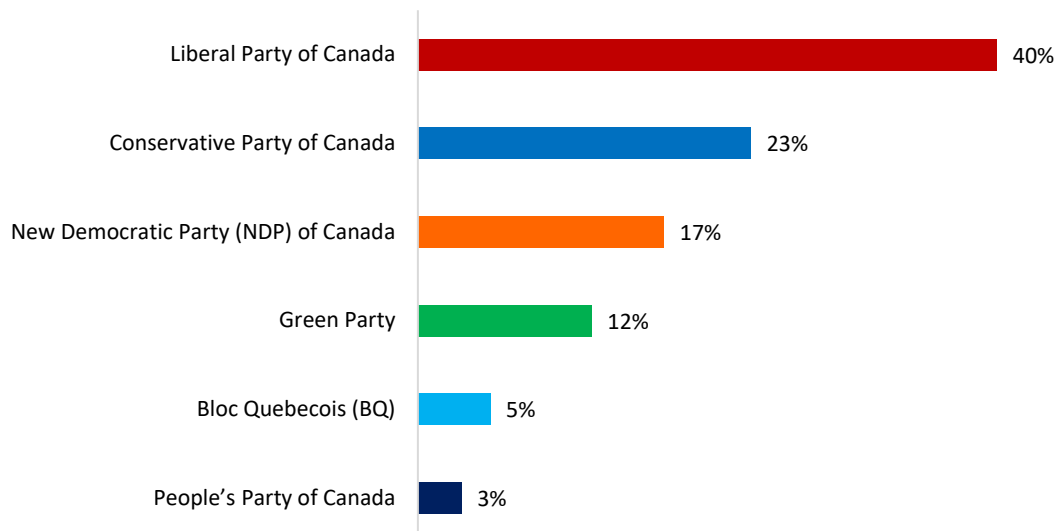
Still, whether at some point during the campaign, or last minute in the ballot booth, voters will have to make a commitment. When uncommitted voters considering both the Liberals and the CPC are asked who they'd commit to on October 21 (or when advance voting begins), it's advantage Liberals. Four-in-ten say they would vote for Trudeau's party (43%) while one-in-four would lock in with the CPC (24%). The rest would opt for another party:

**Vote intention among those currently considering both the Liberal and CPC, n=318**



The same is true of the larger group of uncommitted voters, that aforementioned 46 per cent who have not yet narrowed their vote intent into certainty. Currently the Liberals stand to gain the most from this group when they do lock in their vote:

**Vote intention among uncommitted voters  
n=991**

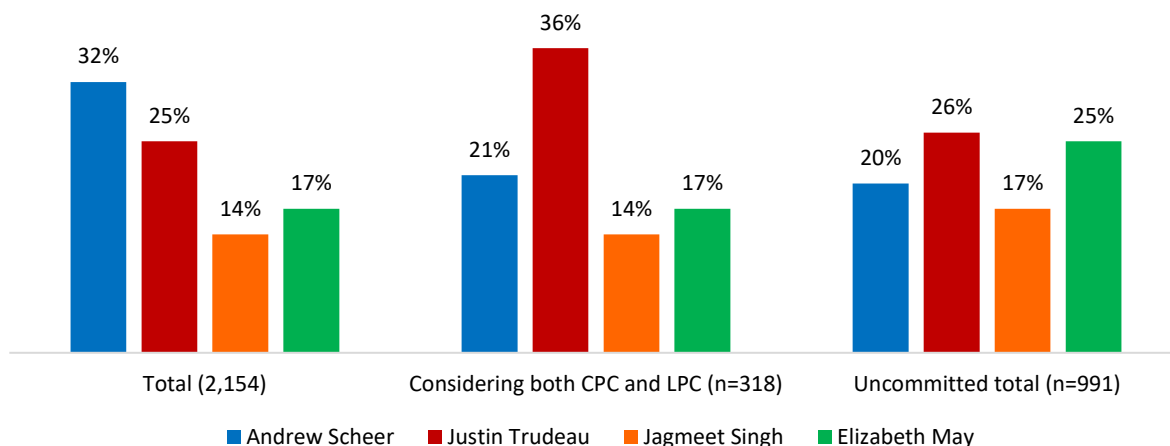


**Head versus heart?**

One of the key elements of Justin Trudeau's success in the 2015 election was on a question the Angus Reid Institute asked late in the campaign about [voters' head versus heart choice](#). Asked which party leader they were most attracted to when it came to their gut feeling, or following their "heart", Trudeau held a considerable advantage over Stephen Harper. Harper, in turn, was tied with Trudeau when it came down to decision making based on intellectual considerations, or a person's "head".

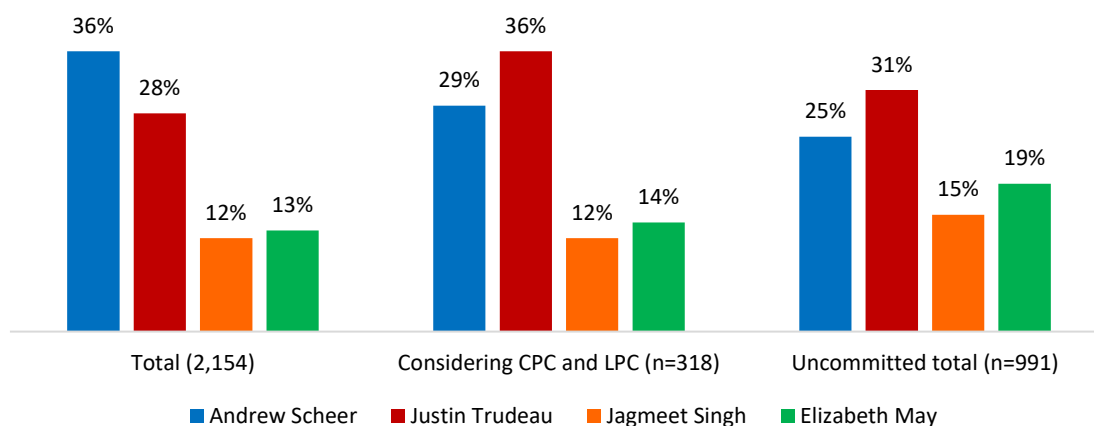
This time around, the tables have turned when it comes to voters' hearts. One-in-three (32%) Canadians say Scheer would be their top pick if they made their decision with this sort of intuition, compared to one-in-four (25%) for Trudeau. That said, among both uncommitted voters and the group of voters considering both the Liberals and Conservatives, Trudeau holds an advantage. Notable here as well is the strong appeal of Elizabeth May with uncommitted voters. Whether they will turn out for her party remains to be seen:

**Suppose in this federal election, you are relying only on your gut or your heart.  
In that case, which of the main party leaders are you most attracted to?**



A similar story unfolds when voters express their intellectual considerations. Asked which leader they find most appealing when it comes to reasoning and intellectual considerations, voting with their “head”, CPC leader Andrew Scheer holds a slight advantage overall. But a focus on uncommitted voters considering the two frontrunners, Trudeau again holds an advantage:

**Suppose in this federal election, you are relying only on your reasoning  
and intellectual considerations. In that case, which of the main party  
leaders are you most attracted to?**



### Part 3: Leader personalities

In order to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of each of the party leaders among their pool of not-totally-committed voters, the Angus Reid Institute offered paired phrases or words to respondents and asked them to choose the one that they felt was most accurate in describing the leader. Note, respondents were only asked to weigh in on a leader if they fit two criteria:

- The respondent did not say they would **definitely** support that person’s party
- The respondent did not say they would **definitely not** support that person’s party

**Head to head among those considering both CPC and LPC?**

So, what about that core group of Canadians who are considering both of the frontrunning parties? Each leader has clear strengths and liabilities in the minds of these key potential voters. For Trudeau, his tolerance, compassion and influence are strong points compared to Scheer, while the CPC leader holds an advantage on the perception that he is up for the job and more strategic. The table below compares responses from this group:

Percentage who describe each leader as... (Among those considering both CPC and LPC, n=318)		
	Scheer	Trudeau
Strategic	60%	50%
Bumbling	40%	50%
Down to earth	54%	42%
Arrogant	46%	58%
Influential	51%	70%
Unimportant	49%	30%
Honest	52%	34%
Liar	48%	66%
Tolerant	65%	92%
Racist	35%	8%
Up to the job	53%	41%
In over their head	47%	59%
Compassionate	44%	68%
Uncaring	56%	32%

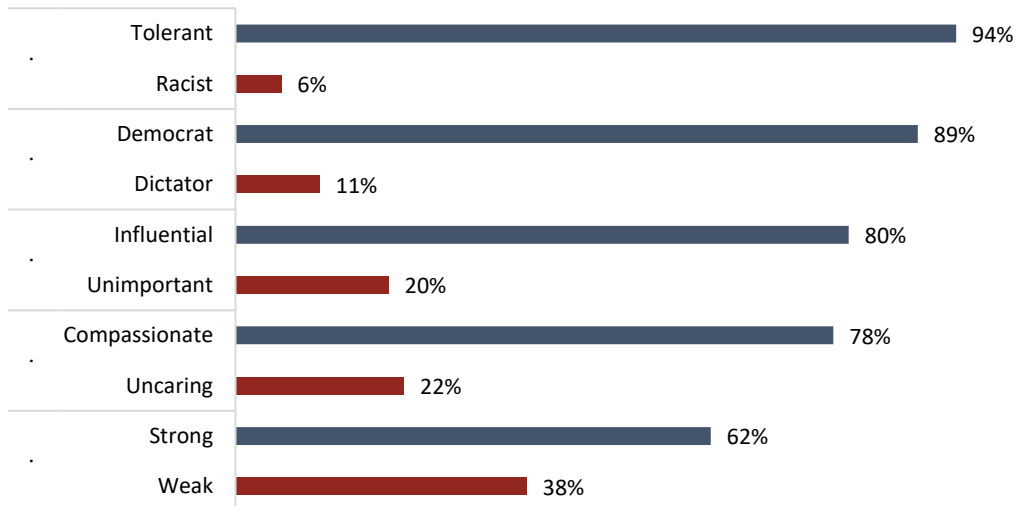
**Trudeau highlights: Tolerant, democrat, influential**

Overall, for Justin Trudeau, there are a number of areas of strength. The Prime Minister is overwhelmingly viewed as “tolerant”, “democratic” and “influential”. At least four-in-five uncommitted voters, those without a definite choice thus far, choose these descriptions of him compared to the opposing negative term. Trudeau is also viewed largely as “compassionate” rather than “uncaring”, and “strong”, rather than “weak”:

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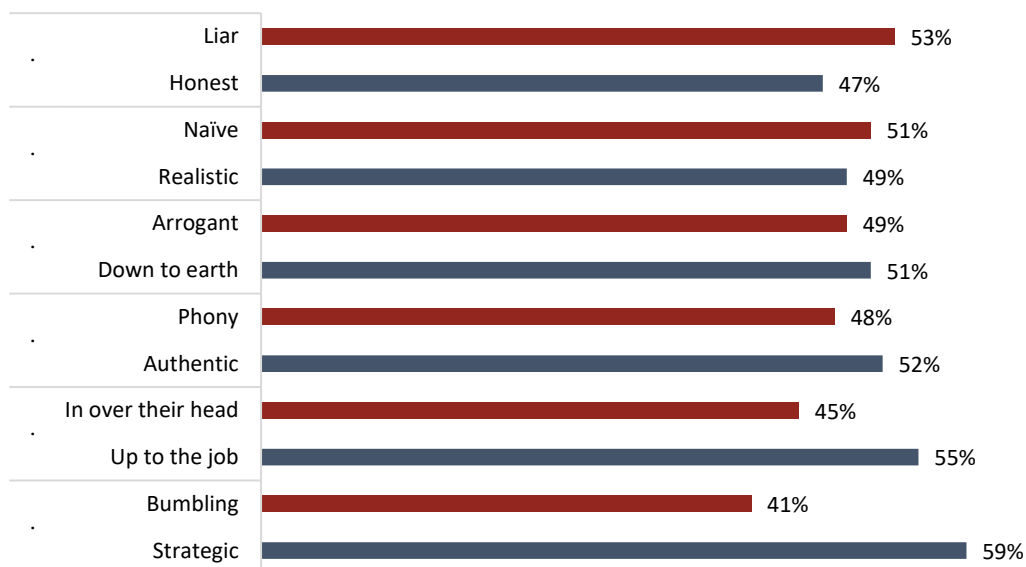
**Would you say Justin Trudeau is (a)...  
Among uncommitted voters (n=786)**



**Trudeau challenges: Liar, naïve, arrogant**

The top critical term for the Prime Minister, perhaps unsurprisingly, due to the SNC-Lavalin affair and the findings of the ethics commissioner that found he had committed a violation, is “liar”. Half of uncommitted voters choose this for Trudeau over the alternative term “honest”. Trudeau is also viewed as “naïve” and “arrogant” by half, compared to the positive options “realistic” and “down to earth”.

**Would you say Justin Trudeau is (a)...  
Among those considering Liberals: n=786**



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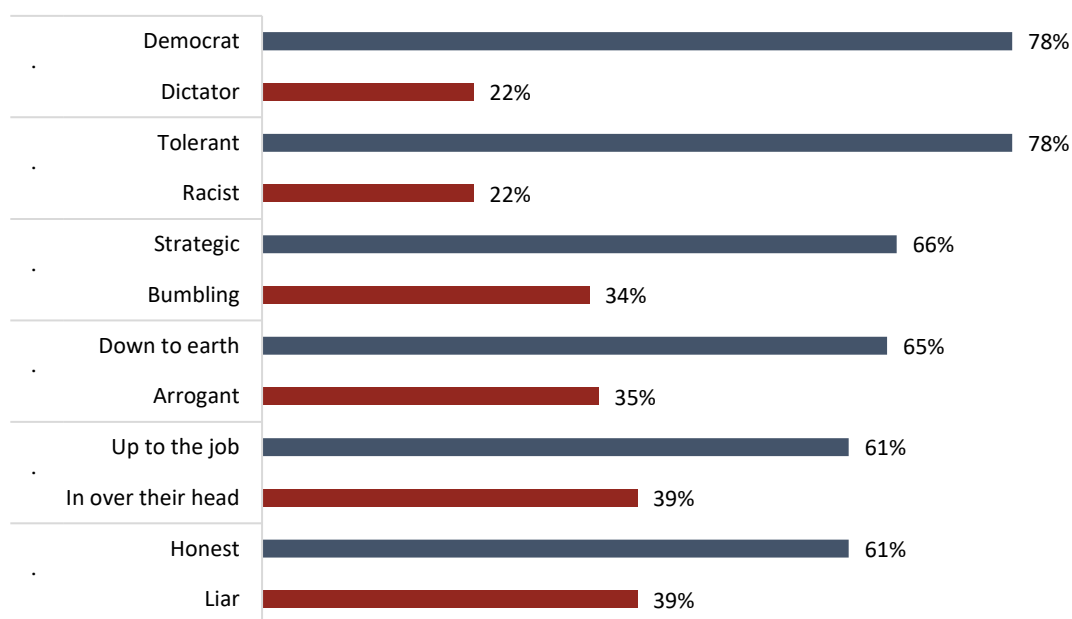
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**Scheer highlights: Tolerant, strategic, down to earth**

For the opposition leader Andrew Scheer, many responses are positive, though none reach the highest levels that Trudeau enjoys among uncommitted voters. Four-in-ten say Scheer is a “democrat” rather than a “dictator” and “tolerant” rather than “racist”.

Scheer’s two other strengths are that he is perceived to be “strategic” and “down to earth”. He surpasses Trudeau on each of these phrases, as well as on honesty:

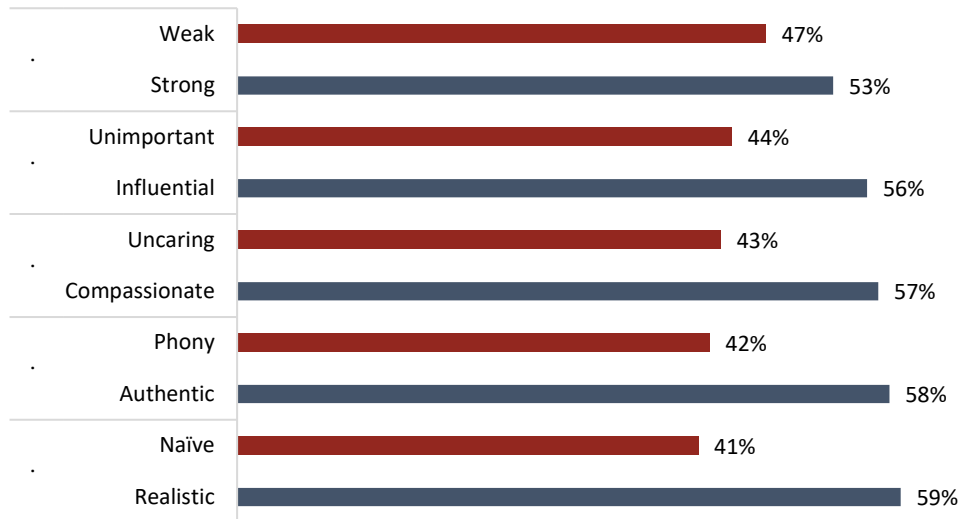
**Would you say Andrew Scheer is (a)...**  
**Among those considering CPC: n=640**



**Scheer challenges: Weak, unimportant, uncaring**

The biggest liability for Scheer among those considering but not committed to his party is the sense that he is “weak”, “unimportant” and “uncaring”. While 62 per cent of uncommitted voters say Trudeau is “strong”, just 53 per cent say this of Scheer:

**Would you say Andrew Scheer is (a)...**  
**Among those considering CPC: n=640**

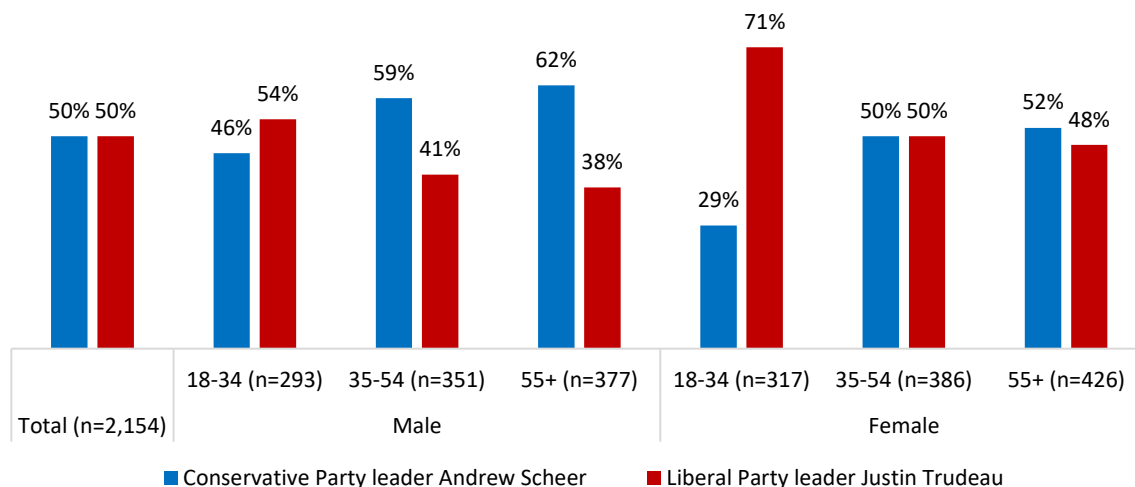


**50/50 split on who would make best Prime Minister**

As to which leader is best suited to lead the country, the race could not be closer. All respondents were asked to choose between the two leaders, leaving aside all other options. In this case, exactly 50 per cent of Canadians choose each.

Men ages 35 and over prefer Scheer, while young women prefer Trudeau. The rest of the country is divided evenly:

**All things considered, which of these two national party leaders would make the best Prime Minister of Canada?**

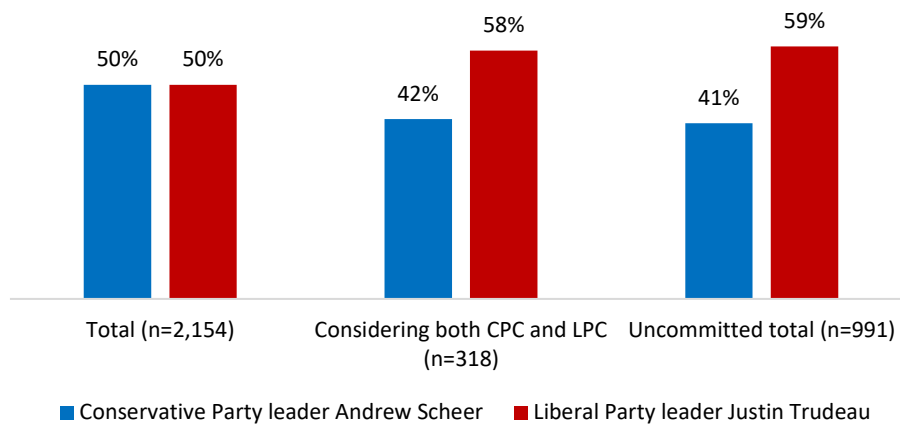


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Uncommitted voters show a preference for Trudeau. Approximately six-in-ten say that he is best choice rather than Scheer, including those who are considering both the Liberals and Conservatives.

**All things considered, which of these two national party leaders would make the best Prime Minister of Canada?**



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

*For results by uncommitted voters and those considering the CPC/LPC, [click here](#).*