

## FEDERAL RACE TRANSFORMS INTO THREE-WAY TIE

EPHEMERAL OR REAL?

[Ottawa – May 14, 2015] In a striking new development, the federal horserace has morphed into a virtual three-way tie with just three points separating, the Conservatives, the NDP, and the Liberals. Interestingly, we saw similar results about two years ago, when all three parties were within five points of each other.

The NDP has jumped five percentage points over the last week and the story here appears to be one of NDP success, rather than a decline in Conservative or Liberal fortunes (who are both just slightly down from their rolling average over the past few weeks).

There are clear echoes of the shocking Alberta result, but it would be a mistake to see the NDP ascension as merely a bounce from Alberta. Indeed, there has been a clear pattern of an NDP rise over the last four months (from 18 points in early February to 29 points today). There are some important sources of this rise.

There are two prevailing trends that are driving NDP fortunes. The first is a dramatic capture of the university-educated vote, which was critical to the Alberta NDP's historic victory last week.<sup>1</sup> Whether this is a 'strategic' response of the promiscuous progressive segment of the electorate (who are more focused on how best to depose Stephen Harper than any particular party choice) or just rising antipathy to the perceived anti-intellectualism of the current government is unclear. The second factor is a decisive lead in what was a log-jammed Quebec race. The NDP is also newly competitive in Ontario which is now a three-way race.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- **Federal vote intention:**
  - **30.0% Conservative Party**
  - **29.1% NDP**
  - **27.0% Liberal Party**
  - **8.0% Green Party**
  - **4.1% Bloc Québécois**
  - **1.8% Other**
- **Direction of country:**
  - **41% Right direction**
  - **52% Wrong direction**
  - **7% DK/NR**
- **Direction of government:**
  - **35% Right direction**
  - **58% Wrong direction**
  - **7% DK/NR**
- **Approval rating – Harper:**
  - **32% Approve**
  - **61% Disapprove**
  - **7% DK/NR**
- **Approval rating – Mulcair:**
  - **50% Approve**
  - **37% Disapprove**
  - **14% DK/NR**
- **Approval rating – Trudeau:**
  - **47% Approve**
  - **41% Disapprove**
  - **12% DK/NR**

*Please note that the methodology is provided at the end of this document.*

 [twitter.com/EKOS Research](https://twitter.com/EKOS_Research)

 [facebook.com/EKOS Research](https://facebook.com/EKOS_Research)

<sup>1</sup> EKOS Research Associates, "Orange Chinook!", April 30, 2015. Available online at: <http://goo.gl/nzkuwJ>

## Federal vote intention

Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

### National Results



### 2011 Election Results



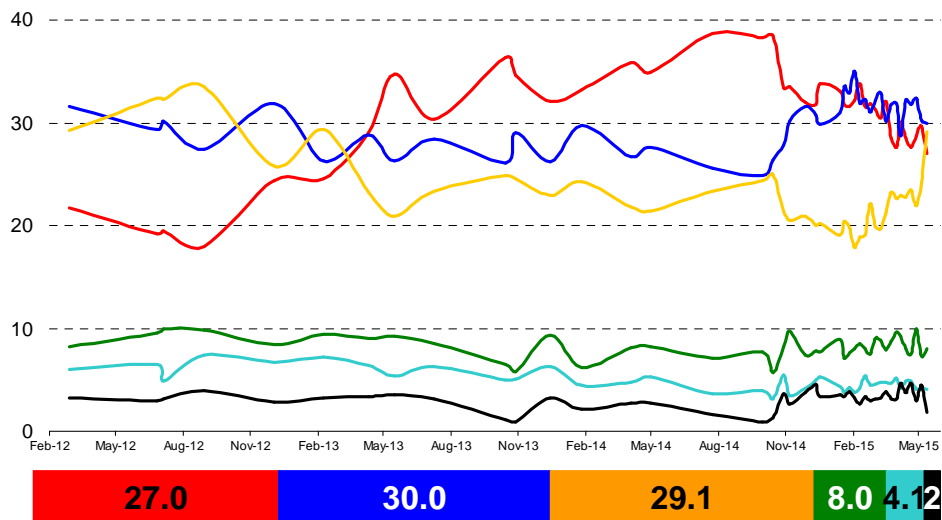
Note: The data on federal vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only.

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BASE: Canadians; May 6-12, 2015 (n=2,177), MOE +/- 2.1%, 19 times out of 20

## Federal vote intention

Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

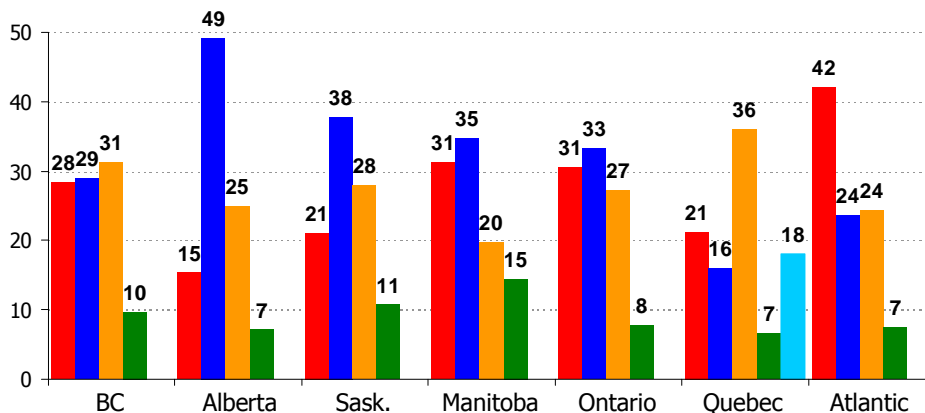


Note: The data on federal vote intention are based on decided and leaning voters only.  
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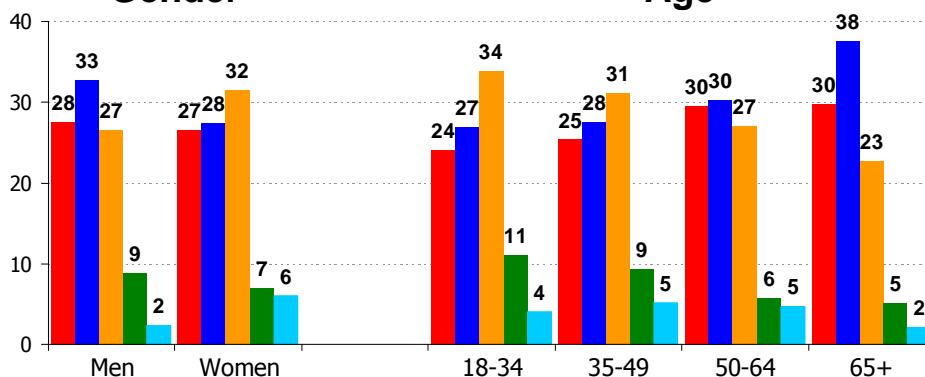
BASE: Canadians; May 6-12, 2015 (n=2,177), MOE +/- 2.1%, 19 times out of 20

## Vote intention by key demographics

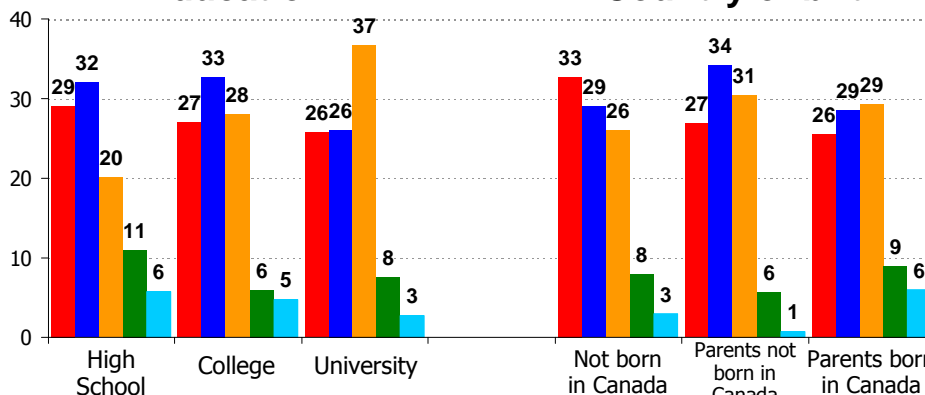
Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?



### Gender



### Education



■ Liberal 
 ■ Conservative 
 ■ NDP 
 ■ Green 
 ■ BLOC 
 ■ Other

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BASE: Canadians; May 6-12, 2015 (n=2,177), MOE +/- 2.1%, 19 times out of 20

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## Harper's approval rating drops sharply, federal direction also down

Stephen Harper's already last-place approval rating is down sharply, as is the directional approval of the federal government, which has reached a new low for this year. Given these two findings, one could argue that Mr. Harper may be poised for decline. Mr. Harper now finds himself in a cluttered three-way tie, stuck ten points below his majority achievement in 2011. Moreover, this challenging position exists in spite of the fact that Mr. Harper and the Conservatives have clearly owned the airwaves and the podium.

Whatever problems the Liberals are having, they do not appear to emanate from voter response to their leader. Justin Trudeau's approval numbers remain high and are comparable to those of Mulcair, suggesting that the Liberal Party's stagnation is also due to other factors. In fact, Mr. Trudeau has seen a modest rise in his approval rating over the past few polls.

Finally, we see that Thomas Mulcair's approval is actually *down* from last month (albeit insignificantly). This suggests the NDP rise is linked to factors beyond the luster of the party's leader. It may be interesting whether Mr. Mulcair receives more critical scrutiny now that he is part of this new three-way tie.

The critical question now is whether these shifts represent a new normal or whether they are an ephemeral bounce produced by the Alberta election. We believe that the public are indeed becoming engaged and that they are now in motion. Any forecast of where things are going at this stage would be foolish conjecture. Race on!

## Job approval ratings

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the following individuals are handling their jobs?

**Thomas Mulcair**  
Leader of the Official Opposition / NDP



n=724, MOE +/- 3.6%, 19 times out of 20

**Justin Trudeau**  
Leader of the Liberal Party



n=702, MOE +/- 3.7%, 19 times out of 20

**Stephen Harper**  
Prime Minister / Leader of the Conservative Party



n=751, MOE +/- 3.6%, 19 times out of 20

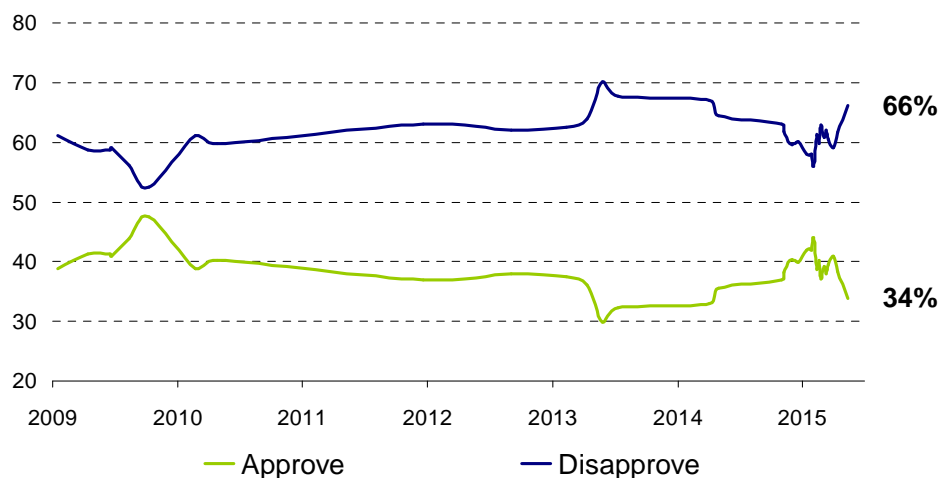
□ DK/NR    ■ Disapprove    ■ Approve

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BASE: Canadians (third-sample each); May 6-12, 2015

## Approval rating – Stephen Harper

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada and leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, is handling his job?



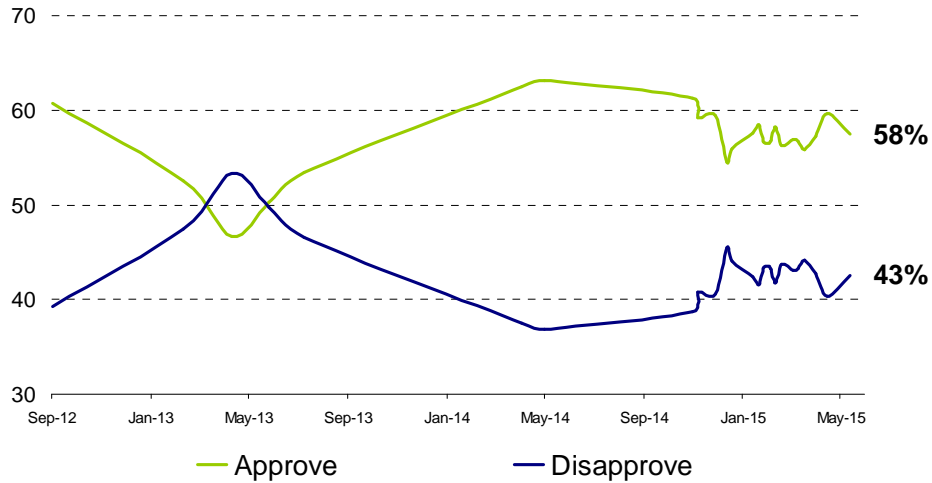
Note: Figures adjusted to exclude those who did not provide valid responses

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BASE: Canadians (third-sample); May 6-12, 2015 (n=751), MOE +/- 3.6%, 19 times out of 20

## Approval rating – Thomas Mulcair

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Thomas Mulcair, leader of the Official Opposition and Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada is handling his job?

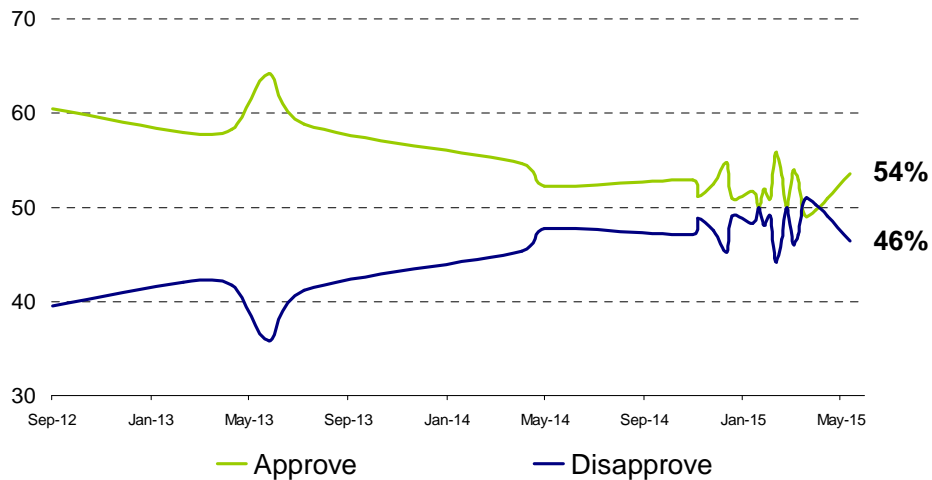


Note: Figures adjusted to exclude those who did not provide valid responses  
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BASE: Canadians (third-sample); May 6-12, 2015 (n=724), MOE +/- 3.6%, 19 times out of 20

## Approval rating – Justin Trudeau

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Justin Trudeau, Member of Parliament and leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, is handling his job?

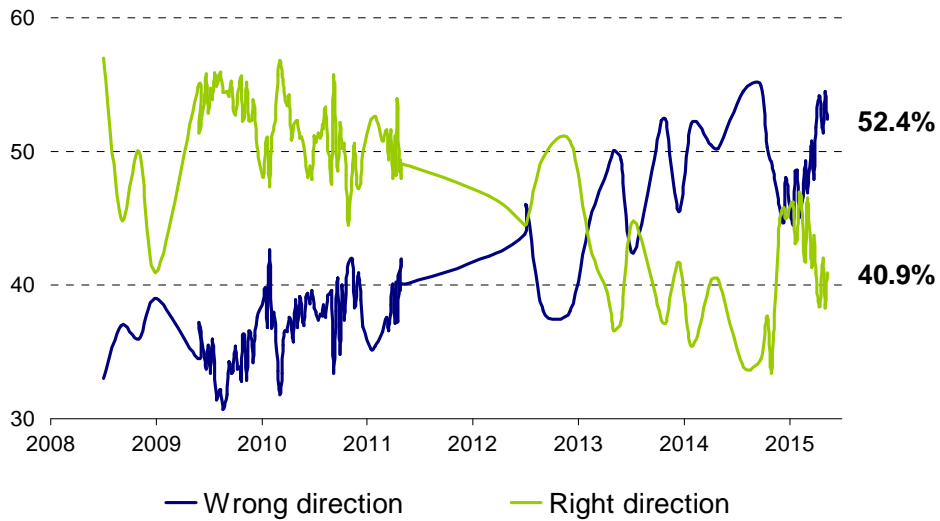


Note: Figures adjusted to exclude those who did not provide valid responses  
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BASE: Canadians (third-sample); May 6-12, 2015 (n=702), MOE +/- 3.7%, 19 times out of 20

## Direction of country

Q. All things considered, would you say the country is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?

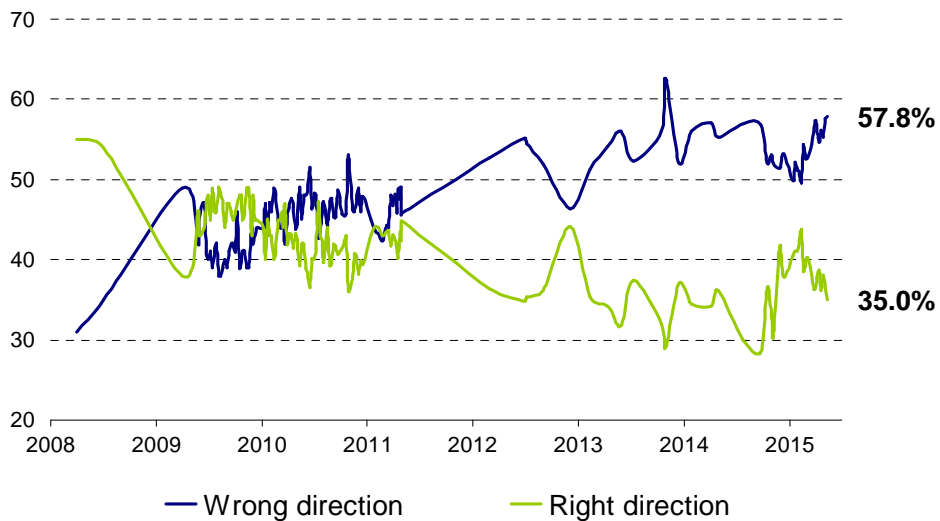


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BASE: Canadians (half-sample); May 6-12, 2015 (n=1,051), MOE +/- 3.0%, 19 times out of 20

## Direction of government

Q. All things considered, would you say the Government of Canada is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?



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BASE: Canadians (half-sample); May 6-12, 2015 (n=1,126), MOE +/- 2.9%, 19 times out of 20

## Detailed tables:

<b>National Federal Vote Intention (decided and leaning voters only)</b>								
<i>Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for? [If undecided] Even if you do not have a firm idea, are you leaning towards a party? [If yes] As it stands, towards which party are you leaning?</i>								
	Liberal Party	Conser- vative Party	NDP	Green Party	Bloc Québécois	Other	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>27.0%</b>	<b>30.0%</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>1816</b>	<b>2.3</b>
REGION								
British Columbia	28.3%	29.0%	31.3%	9.7%	–	1.7%	285	5.8
Alberta	15.4%	49.1%	24.9%	7.2%	–	3.4%	202	6.9
Saskatchewan	21.1%	37.8%	27.9%	10.7%	–	2.5%	69	11.8
Manitoba	31.2%	34.6%	19.8%	14.5%	–	0.0%	74	11.4
Ontario	30.5%	33.2%	27.2%	7.8%	–	1.3%	634	3.9
Quebec	21.2%	16.1%	36.1%	6.6%	18.1%	1.8%	336	5.4
Atlantic Canada	42.1%	23.7%	24.4%	7.4%	–	2.4%	214	6.7
GENDER								
Male	27.6%	32.7%	26.6%	8.9%	2.4%	1.8%	837	3.4
Female	26.6%	27.5%	31.5%	7.0%	6.0%	1.5%	964	3.2
AGE								
<35	24.1%	26.9%	33.8%	11.1%	4.1%	0.0%	122	8.9
35-49	25.3%	27.6%	31.1%	9.3%	5.2%	1.5%	295	5.7
50-64	29.5%	30.3%	27.1%	5.7%	4.7%	2.6%	611	4.0
65+	29.8%	37.6%	22.8%	5.2%	2.1%	2.4%	766	3.5
EDUCATION								
High school or less	29.1%	32.0%	20.1%	11.0%	5.7%	2.3%	505	4.4
College or CEGEP	27.0%	32.7%	28.0%	6.0%	4.8%	1.6%	577	4.1
University or higher	25.8%	26.1%	36.8%	7.6%	2.7%	1.0%	712	3.7
COUNTRY OF BIRTH								
Not born in Canada	32.7%	29.0%	26.0%	8.0%	3.0%	1.3%	297	5.7
Parents not born in Canada	26.9%	34.2%	30.5%	5.6%	0.8%	2.0%	462	4.6
Both parents born in Canada	25.5%	28.5%	29.4%	9.0%	6.0%	1.6%	1043	3.0



### **Approval Rating – Stephen Harper**

*Q. [Half-sample only] Do you approve or disapprove of the way Stephen Harper, Prime Minister and leader of Conservative Party of Canada is handling his job?*

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know / No response	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>31.5%</b>	<b>61.4%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>3.6</b>
<b>REGION</b>					
British Columbia	22.4%	67.0%	10.6%	124	8.8
Alberta	42.5%	54.6%	2.8%	78	11.1
Saskatchewan	30.8%	56.6%	12.5%	35	16.6
Manitoba	29.7%	66.6%	3.7%	35	16.6
Ontario	34.8%	58.0%	7.3%	253	6.2
Quebec	26.4%	68.2%	5.3%	146	8.1
Atlantic Canada	34.5%	52.6%	12.9%	78	11.1
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	35.5%	61.2%	3.3%	321	5.5
Female	30.2%	67.3%	2.4%	388	5.0
<b>AGE</b>					
<35	27.5%	70.0%	2.5%	65	12.2
35-49	35.0%	62.3%	2.7%	122	8.9
50-64	33.0%	65.2%	1.9%	228	6.5
65+	40.7%	54.0%	5.3%	290	5.8
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
High school or less	39.4%	57.6%	3.0%	204	6.9
College or CEGEP	36.4%	59.9%	3.7%	222	6.6
University or higher	25.8%	71.8%	2.5%	283	5.8
<b>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</b>					
Not born in Canada	47.7%	47.5%	4.8%	123	8.8
Parents not born in Canada	37.7%	60.8%	1.6%	174	7.4
Both parents born in Canada	25.9%	71.4%	2.7%	410	4.8
<b>CURRENT VOTE INTENTION</b>					
Liberal Party	20.8%	78.4%	0.8%	174	7.4
Conservative Party	83.5%	14.3%	2.2%	181	7.3
NDP	10.5%	89.2%	0.4%	176	7.4
Green Party	9.7%	89.3%	1.0%	53	13.5
Bloc Québécois	5.8%	83.6%	10.6%	30	17.9

### **Approval Rating – Thomas Mulcair**

*Q. [Half-sample only] Do you approve or disapprove of the way Thomas Mulcair, leader of the Official Opposition and Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada is handling his job?*

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know / No response	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>49.6%</b>	<b>36.7%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>3.6</b>
<b>REGION</b>					
British Columbia	60.2%	33.7%	6.1%	112	9.3
Alberta	30.8%	48.7%	20.4%	79	11.0
Saskatchewan	45.0%	30.7%	24.3%	27	18.9
Manitoba	51.3%	38.5%	10.1%	23	20.4
Ontario	51.2%	36.6%	12.3%	251	6.2
Quebec	52.5%	28.6%	18.9%	125	8.8
Atlantic Canada	43.8%	50.5%	5.8%	104	9.6
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	53.2%	38.6%	8.1%	330	5.4
Female	48.8%	36.8%	14.4%	373	5.1
<b>AGE</b>					
<35	42.5%	34.1%	23.4%	50	13.9
35-49	46.8%	42.8%	10.4%	110	9.3
50-64	60.3%	32.4%	7.4%	249	6.2
65+	54.3%	42.2%	3.4%	290	5.8
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
High school or less	33.2%	53.8%	13.0%	204	6.9
College or CEGEP	53.5%	34.2%	12.3%	215	6.7
University or higher	63.9%	27.4%	8.6%	275	5.9
<b>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</b>					
Not born in Canada	48.9%	35.3%	15.8%	120	9.0
Parents not born in Canada	55.4%	38.7%	5.9%	183	7.2
Both parents born in Canada	50.0%	37.7%	12.3%	401	4.9
<b>CURRENT VOTE INTENTION</b>					
Liberal Party	43.1%	45.4%	11.5%	185	7.2
Conservative Party	39.5%	52.3%	8.1%	206	6.8
NDP	88.7%	10.3%	1.1%	157	7.8
Green Party	60.4%	29.2%	10.4%	37	16.1
Bloc Québécois	44.4%	38.2%	17.4%	17	23.8

### **Approval Rating – Justin Trudeau**

*Q. [Half-sample only] Do you approve or disapprove of the way Justin Trudeau, leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, is handling his job?*

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know / No response	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>47.3%</b>	<b>41.0%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>3.7</b>
<b>REGION</b>					
British Columbia	53.3%	31.2%	15.5%	108	9.4
Alberta	34.0%	43.7%	22.3%	88	10.5
Saskatchewan	57.5%	32.5%	10.0%	28	18.5
Manitoba	46.9%	49.6%	3.6%	30	17.9
Ontario	45.8%	42.8%	11.4%	239	6.3
Quebec	47.4%	47.0%	5.6%	126	8.7
Atlantic Canada	57.8%	30.5%	11.8%	82	10.8
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	52.7%	41.5%	5.8%	292	5.7
Female	46.3%	44.7%	9.0%	375	5.1
<b>AGE</b>					
<35	49.8%	39.1%	11.1%	43	14.9
35-49	51.1%	42.3%	6.6%	111	9.3
50-64	53.5%	39.6%	6.9%	219	6.6
65+	42.3%	52.1%	5.6%	293	5.7
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
High school or less	49.6%	42.4%	8.0%	199	7.0
College or CEGEP	46.2%	49.4%	4.4%	219	6.6
University or higher	54.3%	37.5%	8.1%	245	6.3
<b>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</b>					
Not born in Canada	51.7%	34.6%	13.7%	104	9.6
Parents not born in Canada	51.4%	41.2%	7.4%	167	7.6
Both parents born in Canada	47.9%	46.3%	5.8%	396	4.9
<b>CURRENT VOTE INTENTION</b>					
Liberal Party	83.4%	13.9%	2.8%	159	7.8
Conservative Party	23.6%	73.8%	2.6%	200	6.9
NDP	52.1%	39.6%	8.3%	155	7.9
Green Party	58.7%	29.7%	11.6%	29	18.2
Bloc Québécois	57.3%	42.7%	0.0%	14	26.2

### **Direction of Country**

*Q. [Half-sample only] All things considered, would you say the country is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?*

	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>40.9%</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>1051</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>REGION</b>					
British Columbia	41.2%	48.6%	10.2%	175	7.4
Alberta	54.9%	35.4%	9.7%	116	9.1
Saskatchewan	49.1%	39.5%	11.5%	49	14.0
Manitoba	47.4%	39.6%	12.9%	43	14.9
Ontario	37.9%	55.9%	6.3%	364	5.1
Quebec	40.7%	56.8%	2.5%	191	7.1
Atlantic Canada	29.0%	68.5%	2.6%	110	9.3
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	44.1%	51.9%	4.0%	479	4.5
Female	41.3%	56.8%	1.9%	521	4.3
<b>AGE</b>					
<35	37.8%	58.1%	4.0%	75	11.3
35-49	38.1%	59.3%	2.5%	170	7.5
50-64	46.3%	50.6%	3.2%	341	5.3
65+	50.8%	46.0%	3.3%	414	4.8
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
High school or less	44.0%	52.7%	3.3%	279	5.9
College or CEGEP	45.6%	49.9%	4.5%	333	5.4
University or higher	38.4%	59.4%	2.2%	387	5.0
<b>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</b>					
Not born in Canada	50.8%	46.5%	2.7%	173	7.5
Parents not born in Canada	47.0%	49.5%	3.5%	221	6.6
Both parents born in Canada	38.5%	57.9%	3.6%	610	4.0
<b>CURRENT VOTE INTENTION</b>					
Liberal Party	34.9%	61.4%	3.7%	242	6.3
Conservative Party	75.7%	22.4%	1.9%	280	5.9
NDP	25.4%	73.6%	1.0%	246	6.3
Green Party	26.5%	70.4%	3.1%	60	12.7
Bloc Québécois	32.0%	68.0%	0.0%	30	17.9

## **Direction of Government**

*Q. [Half-sample only] All things considered, would you say the Government of Canada is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?*

	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
<b>NATIONALLY</b>	<b>35.0%</b>	<b>57.8%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>1126</b>	<b>2.9</b>
<b>REGION</b>					
British Columbia	41.2%	50.2%	8.6%	169	7.5
Alberta	48.6%	39.6%	11.8%	129	8.6
Saskatchewan	21.1%	71.6%	7.3%	41	15.3
Manitoba	43.5%	54.7%	1.9%	45	14.6
Ontario	34.1%	60.2%	5.6%	379	5.0
Quebec	30.7%	64.0%	5.2%	206	6.8
Atlantic Canada	24.1%	62.8%	13.1%	154	7.9
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	43.2%	51.6%	5.2%	464	4.6
Female	30.6%	66.1%	3.3%	615	4.0
<b>AGE</b>					
<35	33.2%	62.2%	4.6%	83	10.8
35-49	34.3%	61.2%	4.5%	173	7.5
50-64	35.2%	61.1%	3.7%	355	5.2
65+	46.4%	50.3%	3.3%	459	4.6
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
High school or less	43.8%	52.0%	4.2%	328	5.4
College or CEGEP	38.8%	57.0%	4.3%	323	5.5
University or higher	29.1%	68.2%	2.6%	416	4.8
<b>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</b>					
Not born in Canada	46.9%	45.3%	7.9%	174	7.4
Parents not born in Canada	41.8%	56.0%	2.2%	303	5.6
Both parents born in Canada	30.4%	66.1%	3.5%	597	4.0
<b>CURRENT VOTE INTENTION</b>					
Liberal Party	24.3%	75.2%	0.5%	276	5.9
Conservative Party	85.3%	12.6%	2.1%	307	5.6
NDP	12.4%	86.4%	1.2%	242	6.3
Green Party	21.8%	76.4%	1.8%	59	12.8
Bloc Québécois	3.7%	86.1%	10.2%	31	17.6

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## Methodology:

This study was conducted using High Definition Interactive Voice Response (HD-IVR™) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator. In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual landline/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households.

The field dates for this survey are May 6-12, 2015. In total, a random sample of 2,177 Canadian adults aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-2.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted by **age, gender, region, and educational attainment** to ensure the sample's composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.