

One Year Out from a Canadian Federal Election, Trudeau's Liberals Have Some Work to Do

Only Three In 10 (29%) Canadians Believe Trudeau Government Deserves Re-election, 68% (including 56% of Liberal voters) Believe Government Has Been Consumed More with Looking Good than Dealing with Key Issues

Vast Majority (78%) Believe Trudeau Liberals are Vulnerable to Losing their Majority, Including Four-in-10 (37%) Liberal Voters

October 19, 2018 – Canadians are a year away from a Federal election, but even so there is a chill in the air for the Trudeau Liberals: if the government wants to maintain power, it's got some work to do in convincing Canadians that it deserves another term. And the message is loud and clear: while half (49%) believe that Prime Minister Trudeau has been an effective leader seven in 10 (68% - including 56% of Liberal voters) believe that he and his government have been consumed more with looking good than dealing with issues. In fact, just four in 10 (39%) of Canadians believe that the Trudeau government is addressing the issues and policies that matter most to them.

And that chill in the air? A vast majority (78%) of Canadians believe that the Trudeau Liberals are vulnerable to losing their majority government in the next election - and that includes four in 10 (37%) of Liberal voters who feel the same way. And in the analysis that follows, a number of insights are gleaned from the data to determine some of the sentiments that are contributing to that vulnerability. And while the election is a year away and anything can happen in a day or a week to change the trajectory, it's Andrew Scheer's Conservatives who would form a majority government today with 39% of the vote versus the Trudeau Liberals at 30%.

Finally, we examined the propensity for potential voter support of Maxime Bernier's new federal political party. Our initial sounding identified 6% of voters "*very likely*" to support his party with another 17% who indicate they are "*somewhat likely*" to do so for a total of 23%. While Mr. Bernier appears to have, not unexpectedly, highest potential core support traction among current Bloc Québécois (10%) and Conservative (9%) voters - with approximately 5% support from voters currently aligned with other political parties.

These are some of the findings of a Toronto Sun/National Post **DART** Insight poll. The survey was conducted on a total split sample of 5,769 (n=2,902/n=2,867 balanced) randomly selected Canadian adults who are members of the National **Maru/Blue** Online panel between September 13-19, 2018. The precision of this **DART** Insight Online poll is measured using a Bayesian Credibility Interval. In this case, a weighted split sample size of 2,902/2,867 is accurate to +/- 2.1% 19 times out of 20, had all Canadian adults been polled. What follows, is an analysis of the findings. The description of the methodology at the end of the analysis has links to download all of the materials used for this survey – including the questions asked and the detailed tables.

Does the Trudeau government deserve to be re-elected or is it time for a change...?

The answer to this particular question has a great track record over the last many years as a harbinger for the potential outcome of the actual election vote percentage. For example, months prior to the recent Ontario election, the “deserve to be re-elected” number for Premier Kathleen Wynne and her Liberal Government sat at 19% and continued at that level right up until election day this past June. When the counting of the ballots was finished, the Liberals ended up with 19%.

With a Federal election just a year away, anything can happen. However, if this question is any indication where the final vote might be at on election night, the Trudeau Liberals have their work cut out for them: just **29%** of Canadians believe that it’s not time for a change in government – the Liberals under Justin Trudeau should be re-elected. This is contrasted with half of Canadians (**50%**) who believe that it is time for a change in government – a different party should replace the Liberals under Justin Trudeau. One in five (**21%**) aren’t sure which choice between the two options works for them at this time.

Those Canadians who believe that ***the Liberals under Justin Trudeau should be re-elected (29%)*** are most likely to be found in Atlantic Canada (**36%**) followed by those in Ontario (**33%**), Québec (**28%**), British Columbia (**27%**), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (**26%**) and Alberta (**19%**) – as well as **35%** who reside in the crucial, seat rich, “905” area code that surrounds Toronto. While 30% of urban voters in 27% of rural voters believe the government deserves to be re-elected, virtually half of urban (**49%**) and rural (**54%**) voters say it’s time for a change in government.

Those Canadians who believe ***it’s time for a change in government and that the Liberals under Justin Trudeau should be replaced by different party (50%)*** are most likely to hail from Alberta (**69%**)

followed by those from Saskatchewan/Manitoba (58%), British Columbia (52%), Ontario (46%), Québec (46%) and Atlantic Canada (43%) – with, ominously, a plurality (42%) of those living in the seat ridge “905” area code that surrounds Toronto.

All of the other demographic and socioeconomic can be found in the data tables that accompany this release. However, there are a few highlights to zero in on: despite the Prime Minister’s constant and demonstrative focus on equality for women, only 28% of that gender (versus 30% for men) believe he and his government deserve to be re-elected. It might not be the kind of equality he and the Liberal party were looking for, but in pretty much an equal split, 47% of women and 53% of men believe that it’s time for a change in government and that a different party should replace the Liberals under Justin Trudeau.

If there’s a broad political constituency that the Federal Liberals should be keeping an eye on for possible support, it’s the 26% of current NDP voters and an equal number (26%) of Green party voters who believe the Trudeau government deserves to be re-elected.

Eight in 10 (78%) believe Trudeau Liberals are vulnerable to losing their majority government in the next election...

A vast majority (78%) of Canadians believe that the Trudeau Liberals are vulnerable to losing their majority government in the next election in 2019. Clearly, for Liberals, the land is not strong. Geographically, those most likely to believe this can be found in Alberta (88%) followed by those from Saskatchewan/Manitoba (81%), Ontario (79%), British Columbia (78%), Atlantic Canada (76%) and Québec (74%). And it’s the same for those who live in the seat rich “905” Toronto area code (77%) and in urban (78%) and rural (82%) Canada.

There are many factors that can contribute to the vulnerability of a government and the survey finds some elements across the country:

- A majority (68%) of Canadians believe that the Trudeau government has been consumed more with looking good than dealing with key issues.

- And while half (49%) believe that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been an effective leader, just four in 10 (39%) of Canadians believe that the Trudeau government is addressing the issues and policies that matter most to them.

And while nine in 10 (87%) current *Liberal voters* indicate that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been an effective leader, a majority (56%) of *Liberal voters* believe that the Trudeau government has been consumed more with looking good than dealing with key issues.

Further, four in 10 (37%) *Liberal voters* believe that the Trudeau Liberals are vulnerable to losing their majority government in the next election in 2019. One in five (19%) of current *Liberal voters* don't believe that the Trudeau government is addressing the issues and policies that matter most to them and one in 10 (13%) don't believe that the Prime Minister has been an effective leader.

If an election were held ...

We're a good year out from the next Federal election – anything can happen between now and then because a week is a lifetime in politics. Also, vote intentions are just one of a myriad of diagnostic indicators to consider when an election is so far off in the distance.

But as of the time of this public opinion sounding, a plurality of Canadians (38%) chose to harbour their vote intentions with Andrew Scheer's Conservative Party compared to Justin Trudeau's Liberals trailing at 30%, Jagmeet Singh's NDP at 17%, Elizabeth May's Green Party at 8%, and the Bloc Québécois at 5% nationally (19% in Québec). Those who are *undecided* clock in at 15%.

Isolating the two major parties and examining the pattern of voters support for each over the last year, there is a consistent pattern that fits this new sounding:

- Q4 2017 – Conservatives 36%, Liberals 32%
- Q1 2018 – Conservatives 40%, Liberals 28%
- Q2 2018 – Conservatives 39%, Liberals 29%
- Q3 2018 – Conservatives 38%, Liberals 30%

Geographically, current voter intentions for each party break-out as follows:

- Conservative Party **38%** – Alberta 68%, Saskatchewan/Manitoba 50%, Ontario 39%, British Columbia 35%, Atlantic Canada 31%, and Québec 25%.
- Liberal Party **30%** – Atlantic Canada 45%, Ontario 33%, Québec 29%, British Columbia/Saskatchewan/Manitoba each at 26%, and Alberta 18%.
- New Democratic Party (NDP) **17%** – British Columbia 22%, Ontario 19%, Québec 18%, Saskatchewan/Manitoba 16%, Atlantic Canada 14%, and Alberta 9%.
- Green Party **8%** – British Columbia 14%, Ontario 8%, Saskatchewan/Manitoba/Québec/Atlantic Canada each with 7%, and Alberta that 3%.
- Other Party Choices – 2%.

And while these provincial numbers matter, there's the one Beltway in the country that every Canadian politico keeps an eye on because it can tilt a government in or out of power – the seat rich “905” area code that encircles Toronto. Currently, those “all” 905 voters are tilting Conservative 38%, Liberal 34%, NDP 19%, Green 8%.

With vote numbers like these, Andrew Scheer's Conservatives would likely unseat Prime Minister Trudeau's Liberals and form a majority government.

Propensity of core vote and growth for Maxime Bernier's new People's Party of Canada...

Just before this public opinion survey was to be undertaken, former Conservative Leadership runner-up and Federal MP Maxime Bernier announced that he was resigning from the Conservative caucus to establish his own national political party. Despite the fact that Mr. Bernier had not yet officially named his new party, there was enough on the public record to describe elements of its potential platform for respondents to consider such as his opposition to Canada's production quotas for dairy, poultry and eggs; the use of retaliatory trade tariffs against the U.S.; current immigration and multiculturalism policies and what he calls “extreme diversity”; federal equalization transfers; “corporate welfare”; and, regional economic agencies that subsidize businesses.

Determining the propensity for a vote is done using two tiers – whether potential voters could consider voting either “*very likely* or *somewhat likely*” for the new party in the 2019 Federal election. The findings indicate that one quarter (23%) of Canadians would at least *consider* Mr. Bernier’s new party – 6% “*very likely*” and 17% “*somewhat likely*”. For the purposes of this study, our analysis focuses in on those who apparently have the greatest propensity to vote for this new party – the *very likely* 6% of Canadians. This could be considered the “opening core vote” for Mr. Bernier’s new party with the remaining 17% being a group that offers growth potential.

To put this in perspective, the 6% *core vote* starting group is equivalent to Elizabeth May’s Green party Federal support at 8%.

The following is an analysis of the 6% core vote for the new party:

- It would appear that Mr. Bernier’s party has traction to draw upon *potential core* voters currently aligned with other parties: Bloc Québécois 10%, Conservative 9%, Green 6%, NDP 5%, and Liberal 5%
- Geographically, Mr. Bernier’s potential *core* support is most likely to be found in Ontario (8%) and Québec (7%) followed by voters in British Columbia (4%), Alberta (4%), Atlantic Canada (4%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba 3%. He also has a strong showing in Ontario’s seat rich area code “905” Beltway (11%) while urban (6%) and rural (5%) voters are more closely aligned with some of the provinces noted previously
- The profile of a potential *core* voter for the newly established party is as follows: men (7%) and women (5%); middle aged (35-54 9%); lower income (less than \$50,000 household income 8%); and for education, there is no discernible difference between any grouping between lower and higher level of education attainment (approximately 6%)

Methodology...

These are some of the findings of a Toronto Sun/National Post DART Insight poll created and analyzed exclusively for Postmedia in full consultation and under the direction of veteran pollster John Wright, CEO of DART Insight, a division of DART Insight and Communications Inc. The data was collected in partnership with Canada’s national survey sample research provider Maru/Blue that curates a vast Online Panel and provides data collection services.

All questions herein were placed carefully on the questionnaire and then randomized to ensure that there was no inter-item contamination.

The survey was conducted on a **total split sample of 5,769** ($n=2,902/n=2,867$ balanced) randomly selected Canadian adults who are members of **Maru/Blue's** Online panel between September 13-19, 2018. Respondents could opt in for either official language. The results have been weighted by education, age, gender, and region to match the population, according to Census data. This is to ensure the sample is representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. All **The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population and individual provinces.**

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Visit <http://www.dartincom.ca/polls/> for the written release and detailed tables. For further information or commentary please contact:

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Public releases of polling results, including detailed tables (weighted/unweighted), questions used and analysis, are provided freely at <http://www.dartincom.ca/polls/>

DART Insight and Communications is a member in good standing with the Marketing Intelligence and Research Association (MIRA) of Canada. Accuracy of any Online polling results are measured using a Bayesian Credibility Interval which is endorsed by MIRA and the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR).

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