

An Outsider's Perspective:

Prospects for the Green Party of the Future

By FRANK GRAVES

Presentation to the Green Party of Canada

August 6, 2016





1) Broad Shifts in Canadian (and Western) society

2) Dominant Issues for Canadians

3) Review of the Political Landscape

4) Profile of Green Party supporters

5) Post-Mortem of Election 42

6) Electoral Reform and Implications
for the Green Party

7) Conclusions

End of Progress? (i)

- » In 2005, we first noted that progress was not unfolding as it had in the last half of the 20th century
 - Since then, this problem has gotten worse, not better



- » Economy has morphed and middle class bargain broken
- » Economic outlook is very bleak, darker for the future

End of Progress? (ii)

- » Younger generations are much more likely to be falling backward and see an even steeper decline in future
- » Downward intergenerational mobility has trebled from seniors to under 45
- » The dominant priority for the public is to create a longer term blueprint to restore middle class progress

A Troubling Syllogism?

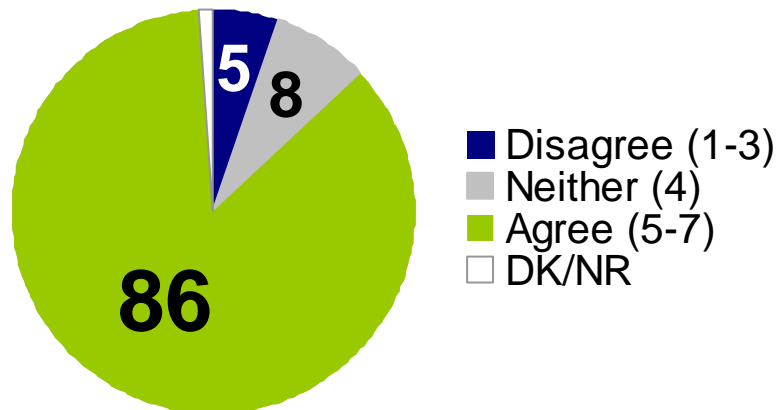
Proposition 1: **IF** a healthy society and a strong economy require a growing, optimistic middle class

Proposition 2: **AND IF** the middle class is *neither* growing nor optimistic

Implication: **THEN** societal health and economic progress will be in peril if these negative conditions persist

Q. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement:

“A growing and optimistic middle class is an essential component of societal progress”



Q. Overall, which of the following choices do you believe best describes Canada's middle class?



BASE (left): December 7-10, 2015 (n=1,811), MOE +/- 2.3%, 19 times out of 20

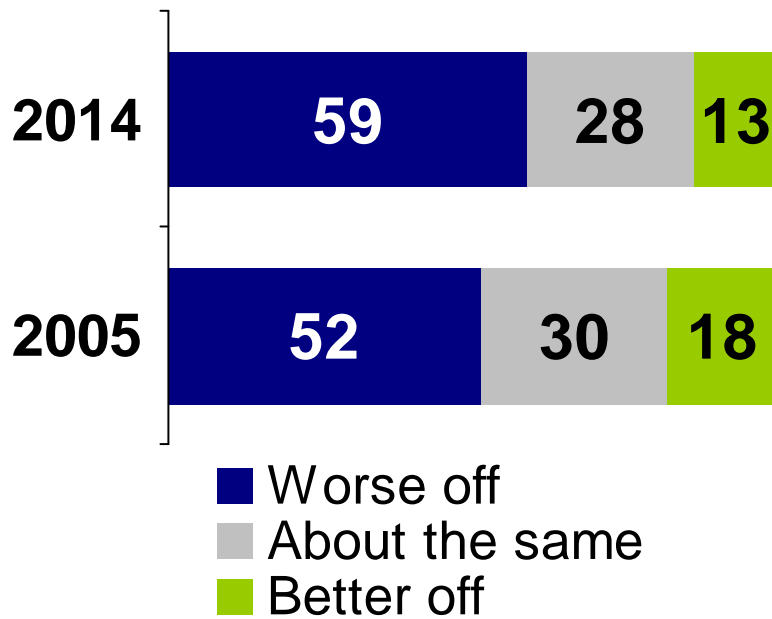
BASE (right): Canadians; July 16-23, 2014 (n=2,620), MOE +/- 1.9%, 19 times out of 20

Generational Outlook & Social Class

- » Fears are highest when turned to the future
- » The grey outlook on the present turns almost black as the public ponder the fate of future generations
- » It appears that we have at least temporarily reached the end of progress, the defining achievement of liberal capitalism

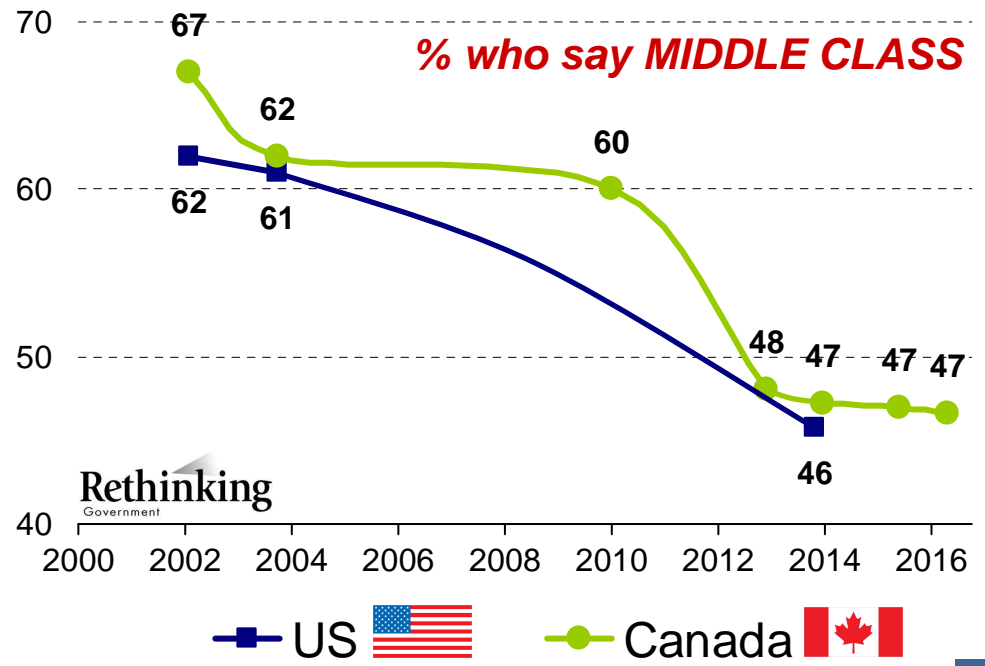
Generational Outlook

“Thinking about your overall quality of life do you think the next generation will be better off, worse off, or about the same as you are 25 years from now?”



Self-Rated Social Class

“Would you describe you and your household as poor, working class, middle class, or upper class?”



BASE (left): Canadians; September 21-25, 2014 (n=774), MOE +/- 3.5%, 19 times out of 20

BASE (right): Canadians; April 14-15, 2016, n=611, MOE +/- 4.0%, 19 times out of 20

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Why Has Middle Class Progress Stalled?

- » Incentive systems are broken; rising inequality
- » Public sphere and taxation in decline
- » The corrosive economic impacts of the post-9/11 security ethic
- » Closing of the Canadian mind?
- » Innovation not generating the advances of past innovations



Consequences of Inequality

Q. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

“If the current patterns of stagnation among all except those at the very top continue, I would not be surprised to see the emergence of violent class conflicts”

National



BASE: Canadians; July 8-14, 2016, n=1,003, MOE +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20

Green Party supporters



BASE: Canadians; July 8-14, 2016, n=57, MOE +/- 13.0%, 19 times out of 20

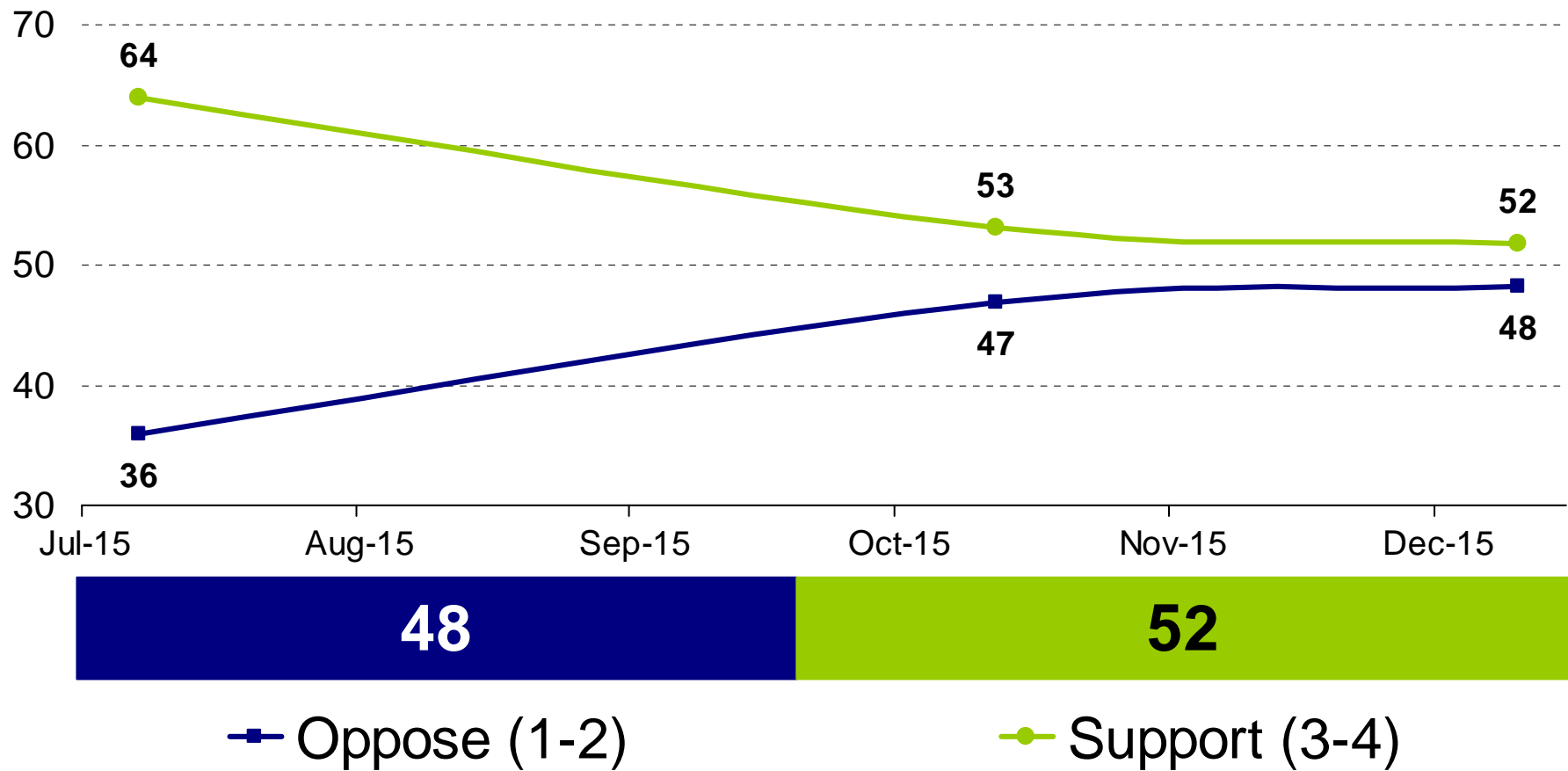
DK/NR Disagree (1-3) Neither (4) Agree (5-7)

Closing of the Canadian mind?

- » At the turn of the 20th century, we saw unbridled enthusiasm for trade and globalization
- » Since then, however, a variety of issues has led to more guarded views on globalization and trade:
 - Economic stagnation and anxiety
 - Geopolitical tensions and security concerns
- » We are seeing growing parochialism that was not the case at turn of century
- » Hardening attitudes to immigration and the presence of visible minorities support thesis that we are closing – not opening – as a society
- » Data on values shows tolerance and multiculturalism very low

Tracking Support for TPP*

Q. The Trans-Pacific Partnership is a free trade deal being negotiated between 12 countries, including Canada, the US, and Japan and several other Asian nations. The proposed agreement aims to eliminate barriers to trade between these countries. From what you have seen, read, or heard, to what extent do you support or oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership?

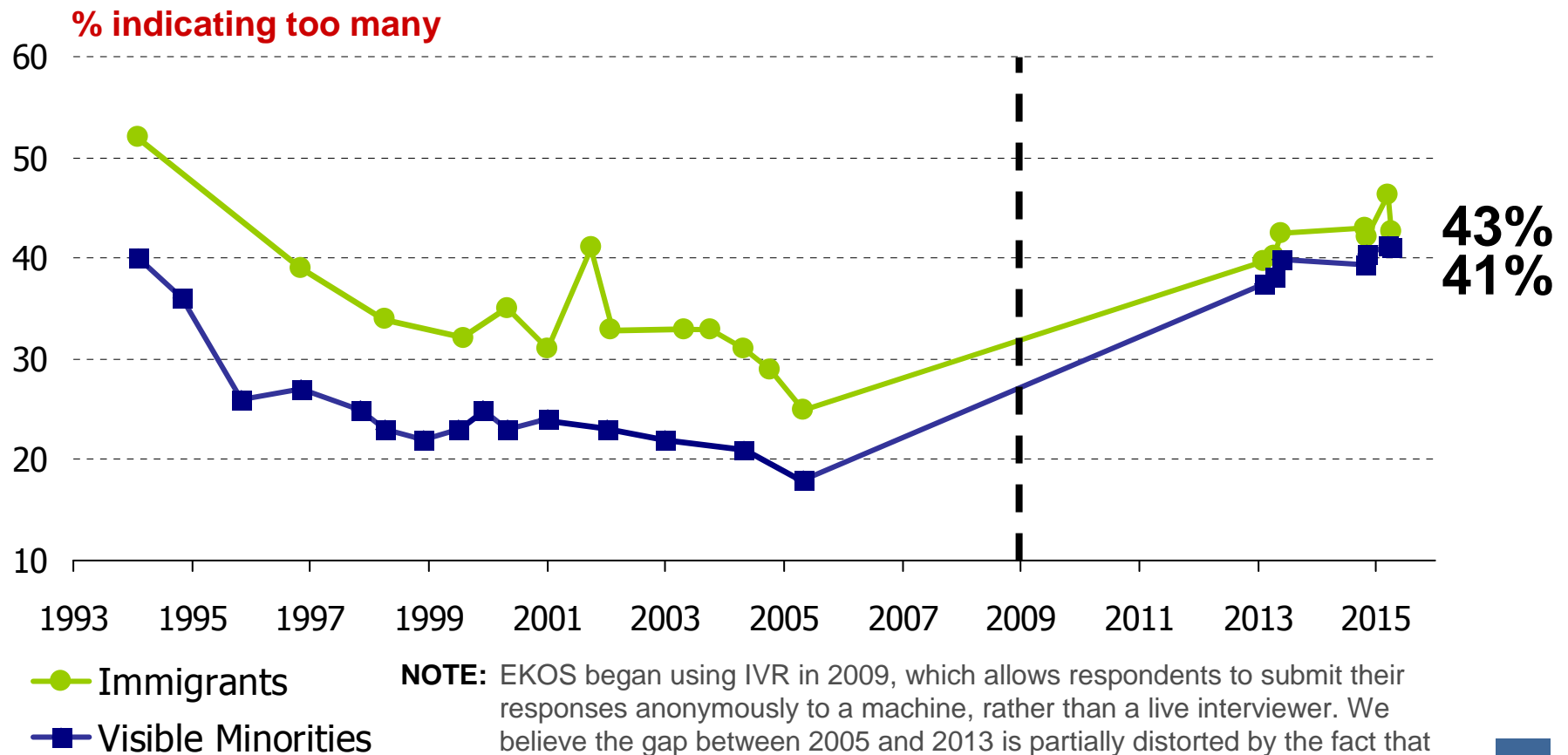


*Figures adjusted to exclude those who skipped the question.

Attitudes to Immigration/Minorities

Q. In your opinion do you feel that there are too few, too many or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada?

Q. Forgetting about the overall number of immigrants coming to Canada, OF THOSE WHO COME would you say there are too few, too many or the right amount who are MEMBERS OF VISIBLE MINORITIES?



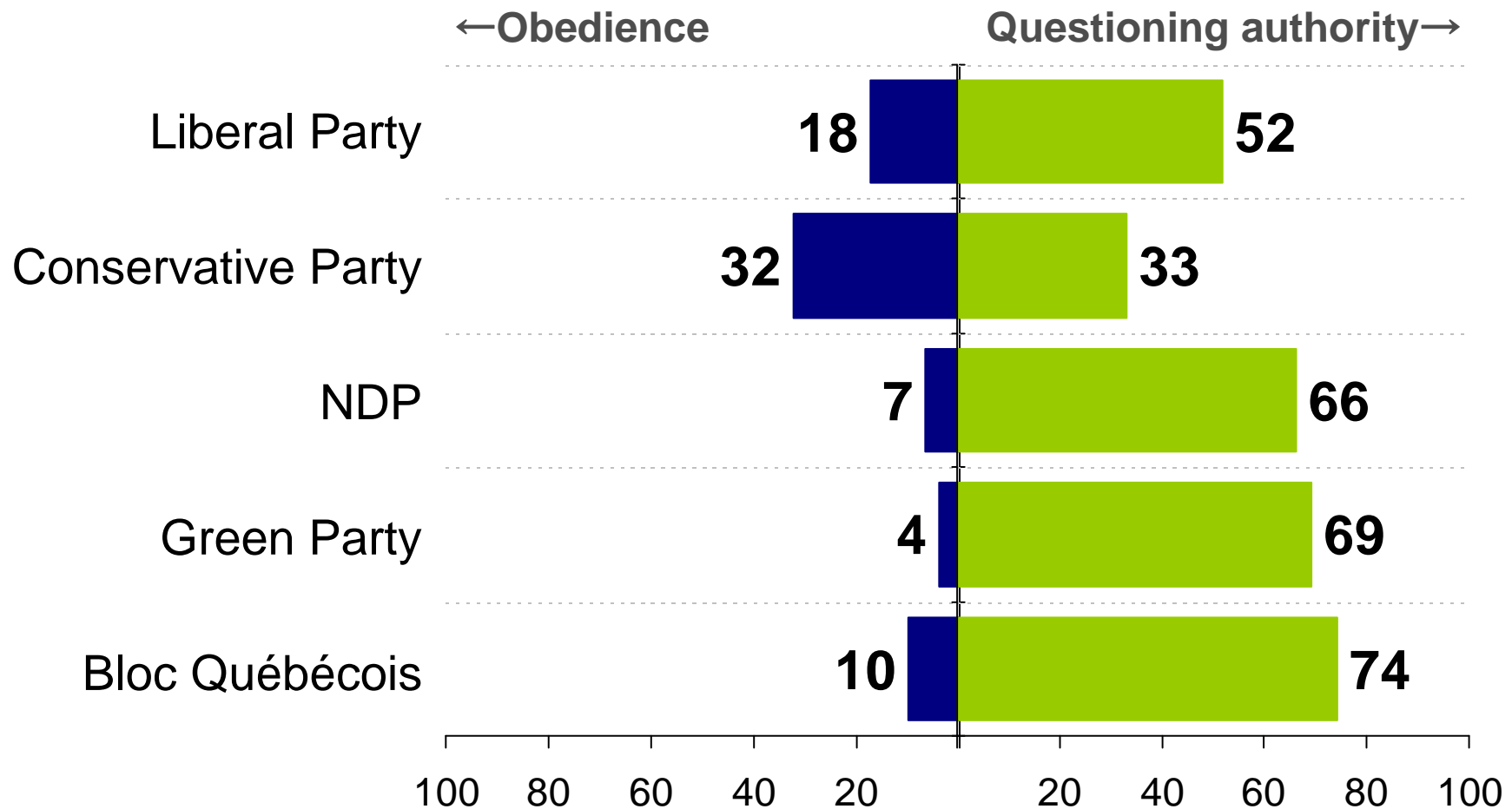
Shift to Authoritarianism?

- » We created a simple ordered versus open scale based loosely on similar work conducted in the United Kingdom and the United States
- » Canadians are far more open than closed on most tests such as order vs. openness, reason vs. morality, and questioning authority vs. obedience
- » Other tests such as respect for authority vs. freedom and good behaviour vs. creativity produce more divided responses
- » Partisanship is the critical fault line in this orientation
 - Conservatives are dominantly 'ordered'
 - The NDP, Bloc, and Green Party are all highly 'open'
 - Green Party supporters are particularly likely to favour questioning authority over obedience

Questioning Authority vs. Obedience

Q. For you personally, which of the following qualities do you believe is more important?

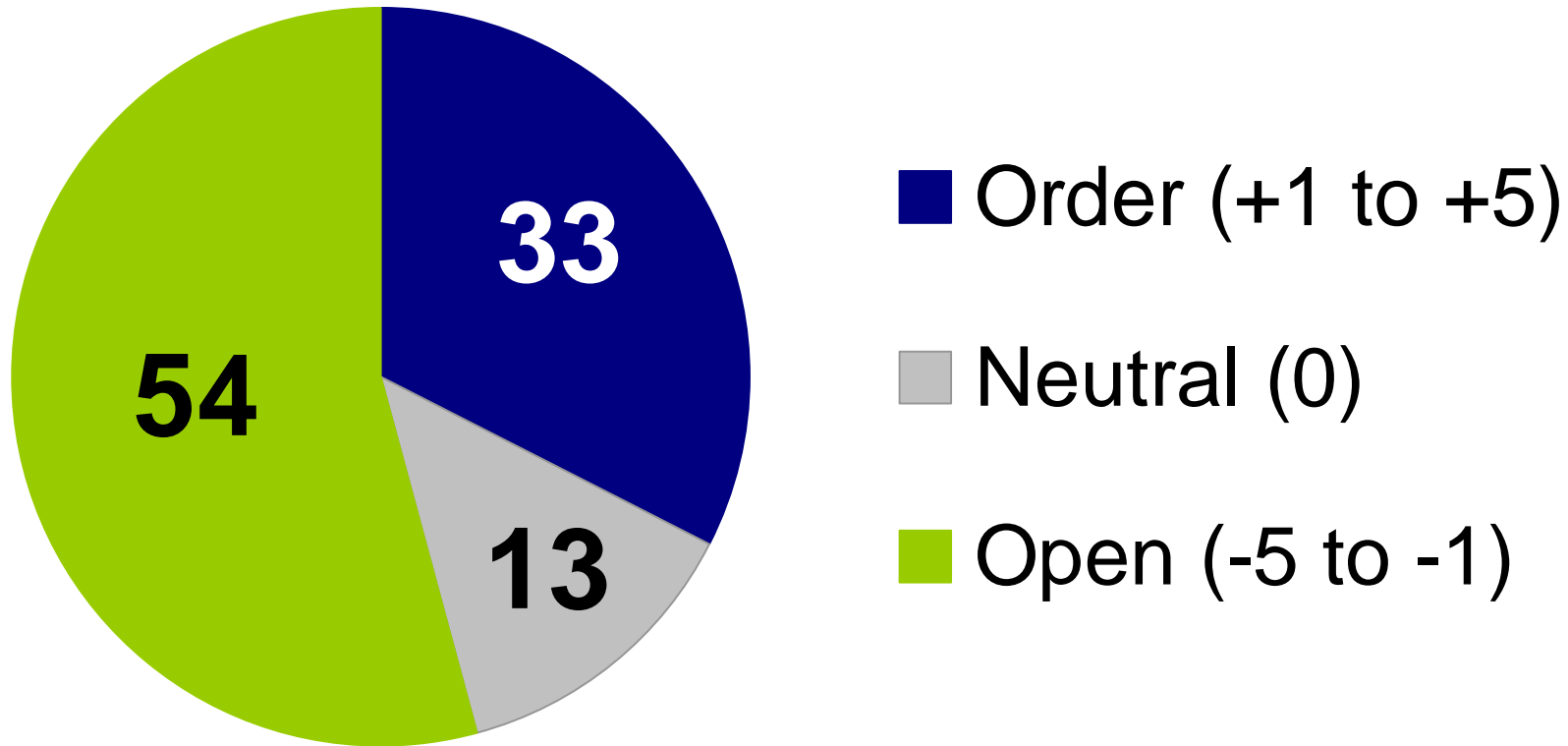
Obedience or questioning authority?



BASE: Canadians; July 8-14, 2016, n=1,003, MOE +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20

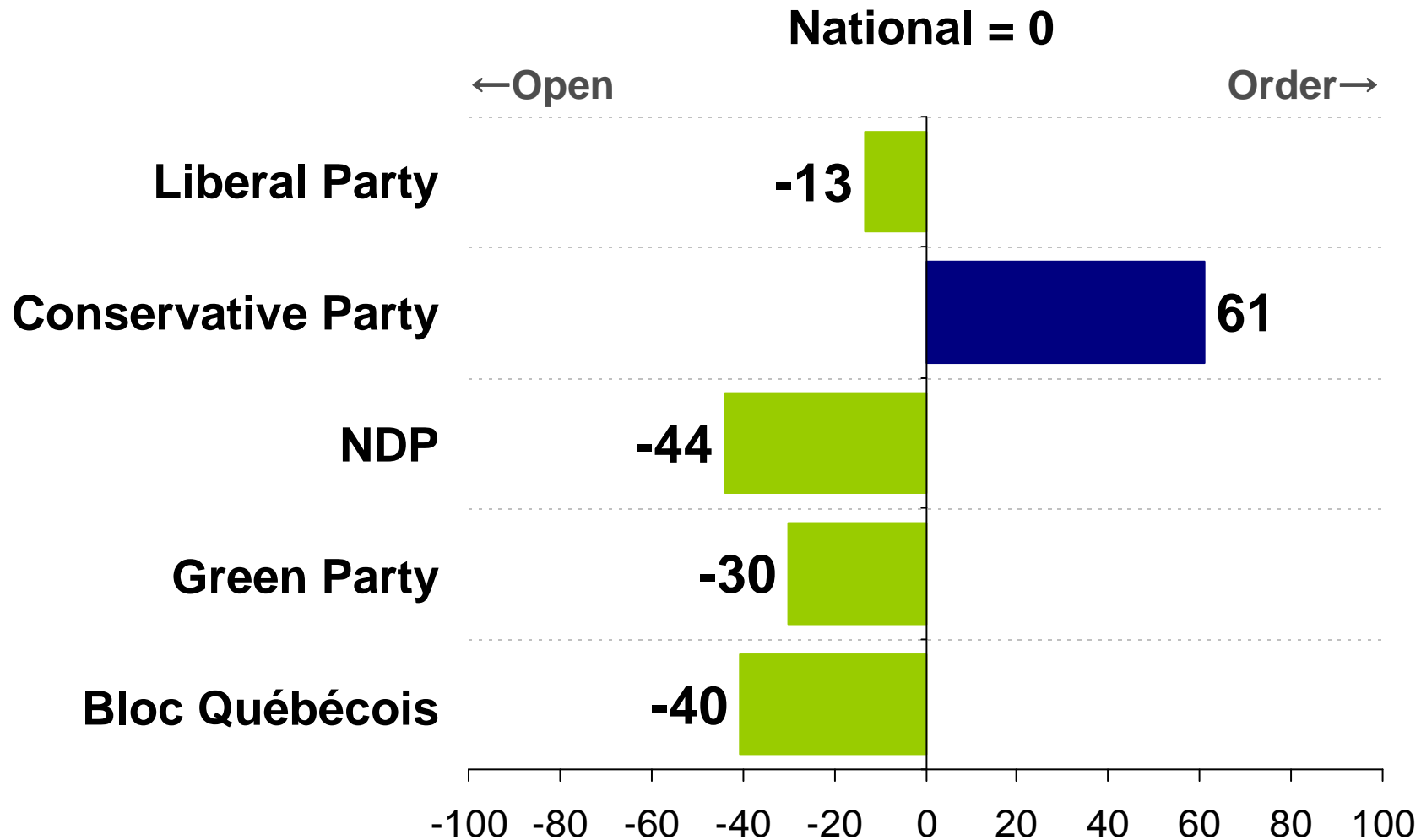
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Ordered versus Open Orientation



Note: Scale based on five forced choice questions with two options each. Respondents receive a score of -1 every time an “open” option is selected, +1 every time an “order” option is selected, and 0 every time neither is selected. Scores range from -5 (extreme open) to +5 (extreme order).

Orientation by Party Support



Note: Scale based on five forced choice questions with two options each. Respondents receive a score of -1 every time an “open” option is selected, +1 every time an “order” option is selected, and 0 every time neither is selected. Scores are then normalized so that the mean score is 0.



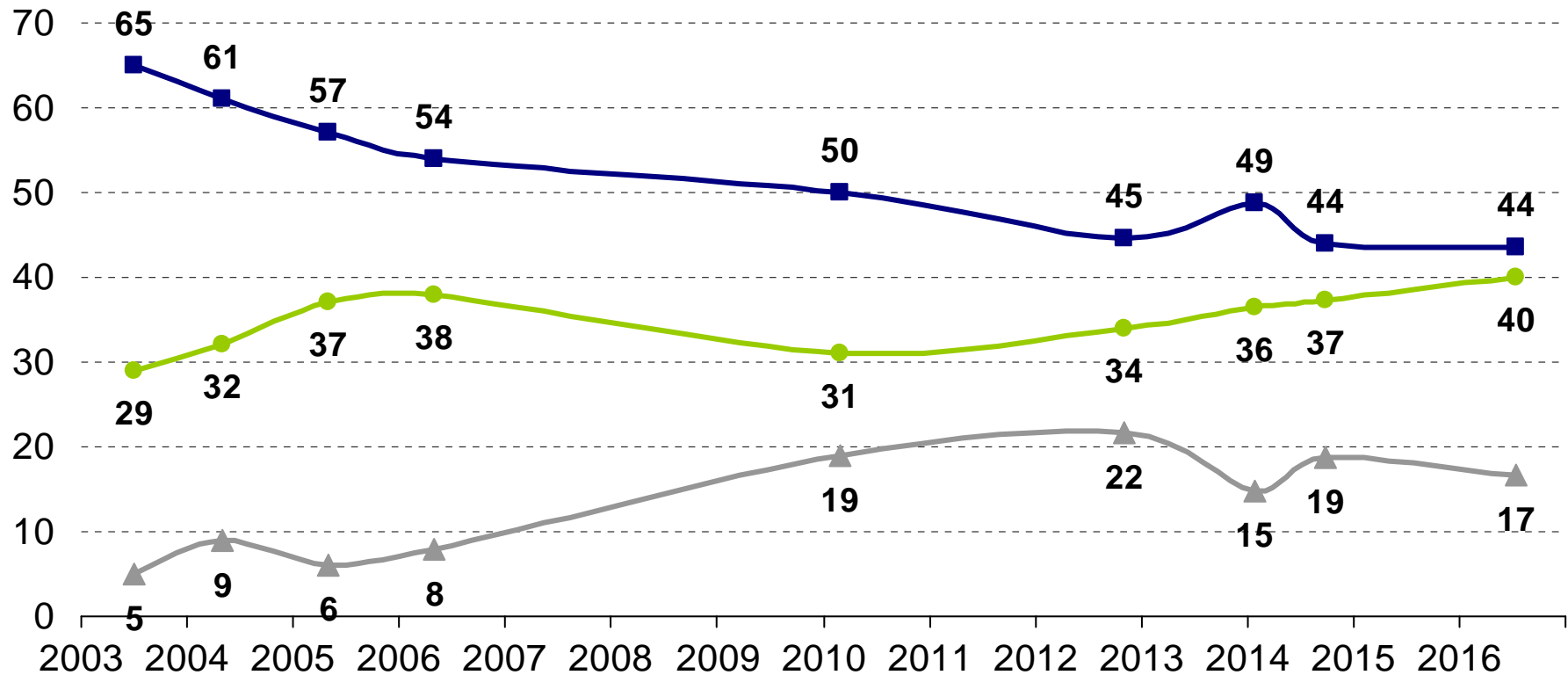
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- 2) **Dominant Issues for Canadians**
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Role of Government & Public Institutions

- » Governments and taxation in decline as economy stagnates and inequality accelerates
 - Legitimacy crisis?
- » Declining support for trickle-down economics and neo-Liberal economic model government has been espousing since 1980s/1990s
- » Right now, the public are onside with an activist government that will renew the public sphere and create shared economic progress
- » Infrastructure investments extremely popular with the public
 - Green/post-carbon infrastructure as an infrastructure strategy

Preferred Size of Government

Q. Generally speaking, which of the following would you say that you favour: 1) a larger government with higher taxes and more services; or 2) a smaller government with lower taxes and fewer services?

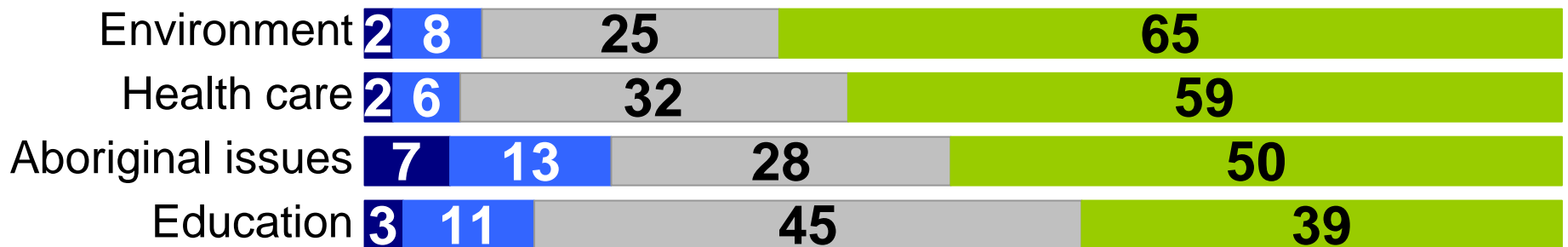


▲ DK/NR ■ Smaller government ● Larger government

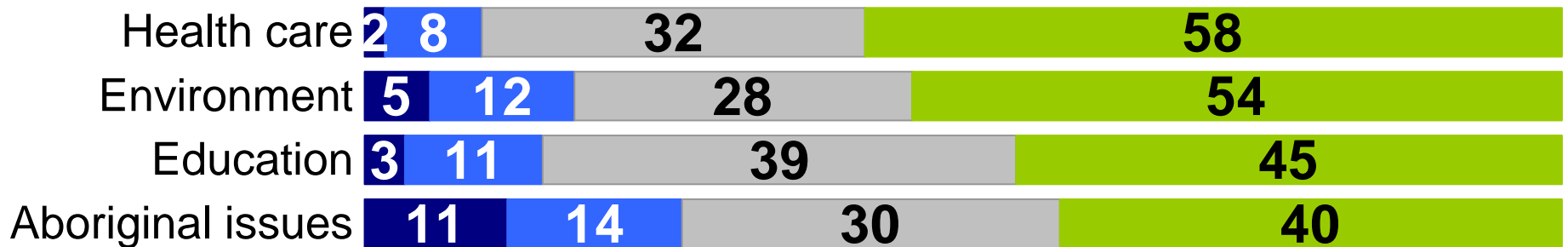
Preferred Level of Government Involvement

Q. Overall, in each of the following areas, what would you like to see the federal/provincial government do in the future? Would you like to see it increase its involvement, maintain its involvement, reduce its involvement, or eliminate its involvement altogether?

Federal government



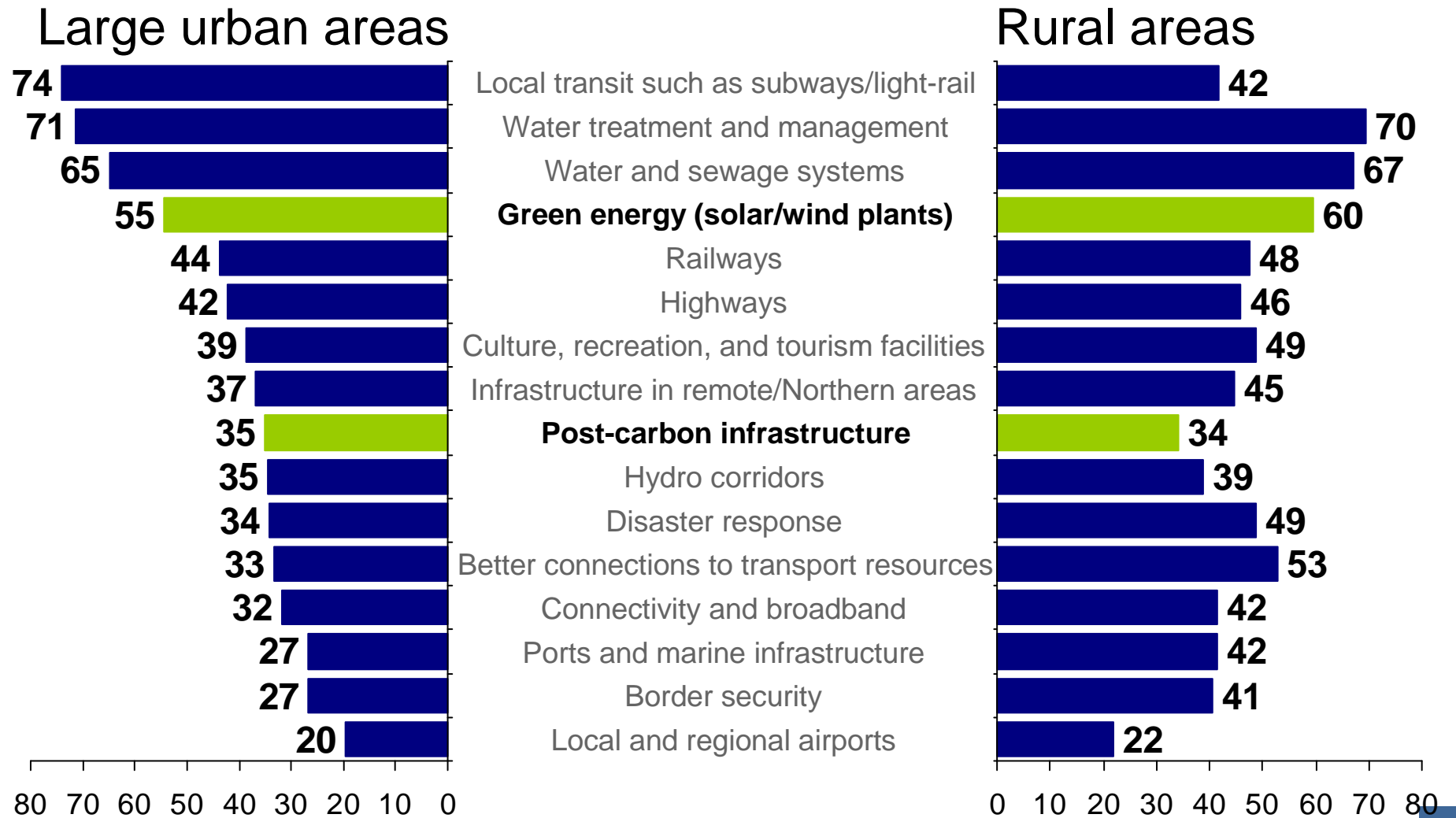
Provincial government



Eliminate its involvement altogether
 Reduce its involvement
 Maintain its current involvement
 Increase its involvement

Top Infrastructure Priority

Q. In your opinion, which of the following two infrastructure areas should be a greater priority for the Government of Canada?*



*Presented in series of paired choices. Figures represent how often each item was selected over the other items tested.

BASE: Canadians; January 11-18, 2016, n=2,598, MOE +/- 1.9%, 19 times out of 20

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Impact of Climate Change Conferences

Paris Summit (2015)

Q. [IF AWARE OF PARIS SUMMIT] How do you think the outcome of the Paris Conference will be judged in the future?



BASE: Those aware of conference (online only): December 7-10, 2015, n=1,718, MOE +/- 2.3%, 19 times out of 20

Copenhagen Summit (2010)

Q. [IF AWARE OF COPENHAGEN SUMMIT] How do you think the outcome of the Copenhagen Conference will be judged in the future?



BASE: Those aware of conference (online only): January 11-13, 2010, n=936, MOE +/- 3.2%, 19 times out of 20

- As a dismal failure
- As having no real impact
- As a modest step forward
- As a major success
- DK/NR



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Review of the Political Landscape (i)

- » The Liberal Party continues to soar nearly 10 months after the election
 - The NDP, meanwhile, has gone from clear frontrunner to running the risk of losing official party status in 2019
 - The Conservative Party is locked in where they were a year ago

- » Green Party support, meanwhile, has stalled below the critical credibility floor (10 per cent)

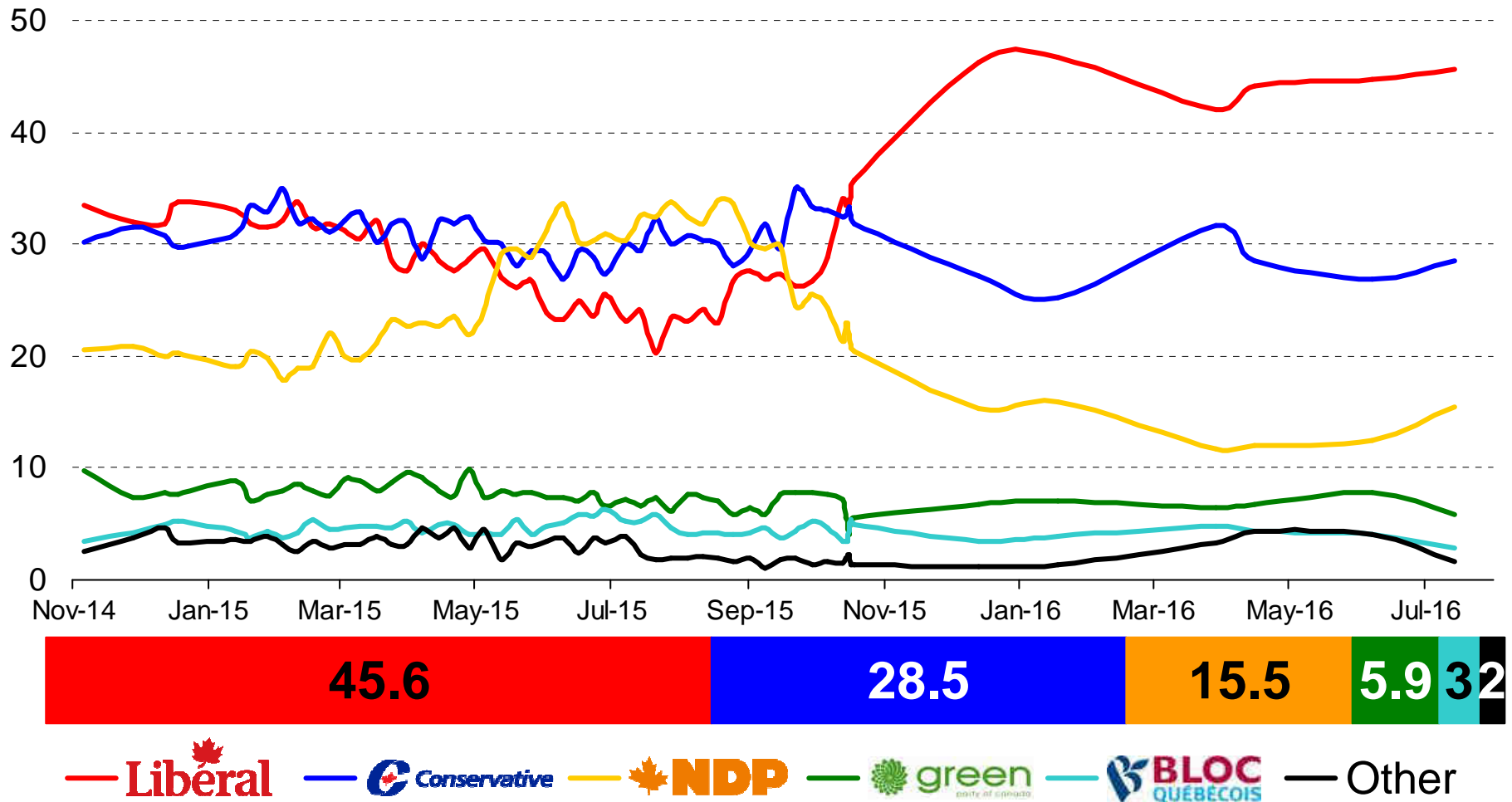
- » Nevertheless, Elizabeth May has very positive approval ratings
 - She does well in all regions of the country and she is particularly popular with university graduates.
 - Her approval transcends party lines – she receives high marks from progressive parties and she even does well with Conservative supporters

Review of the Political Landscape (ii)

- » The Green Party is solid on second choice
- » The Green Party is seen as having (by far) the most credible platform when it comes to environmental issues
- » While the Green Party scores extremely well on environmental issues, it does not do well on other issues
 - Even the party's supporters seem to have doubts about its economic platform
- » Concentration of support in British Columbia provides options

Tracking Federal Vote Intention

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



Note: These figures are based on decided and leaning voters only; 9.8% of respondents say they are undecided, are ineligible to vote, or skipped the question.

BASE: Canadians; July 8-14, 2016, n=1,003, MOE +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20

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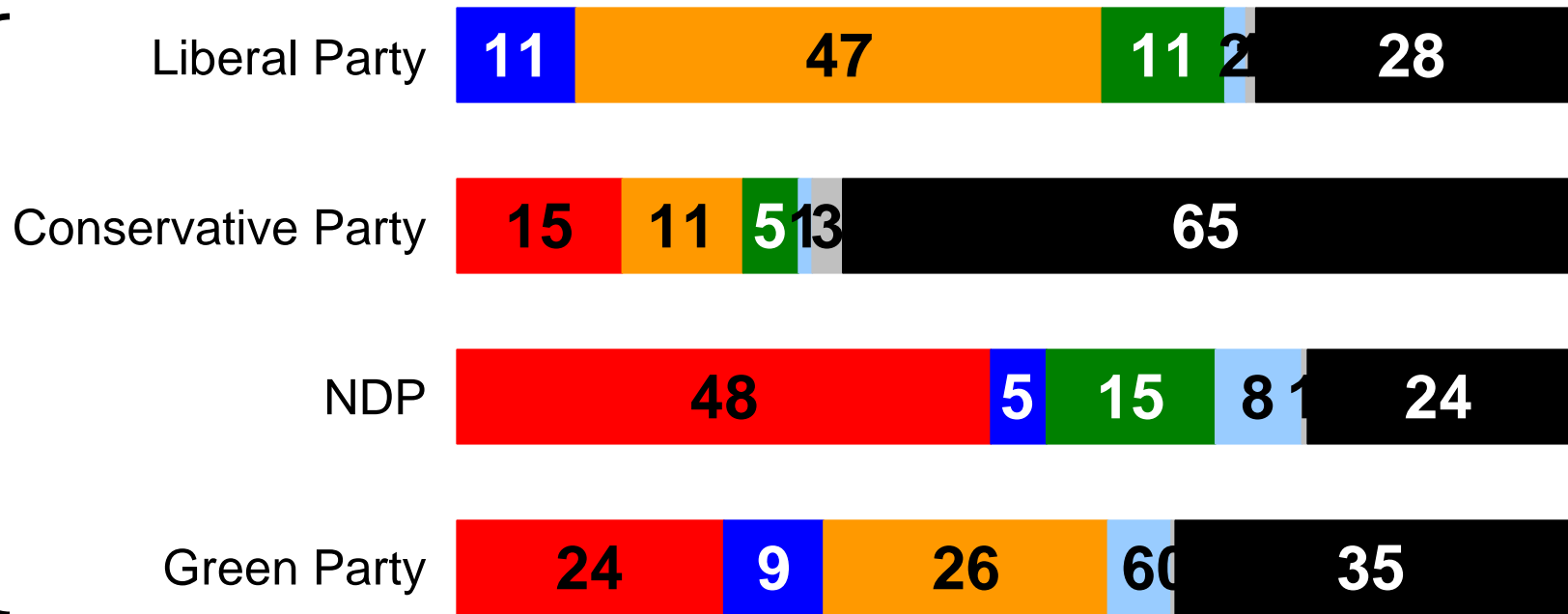
Second Choice

Q. What party would be your second choice?

Overall

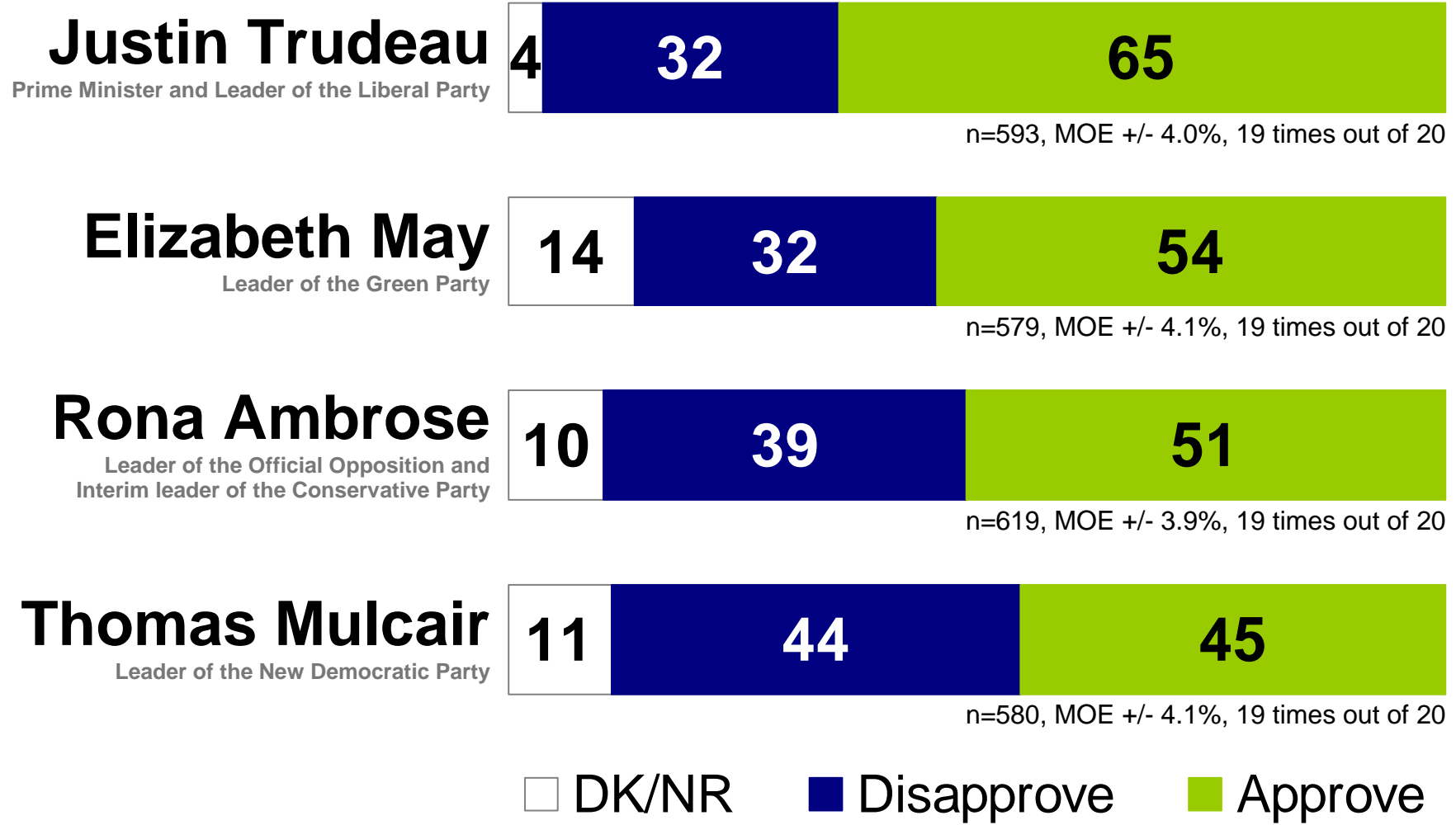


First Choice



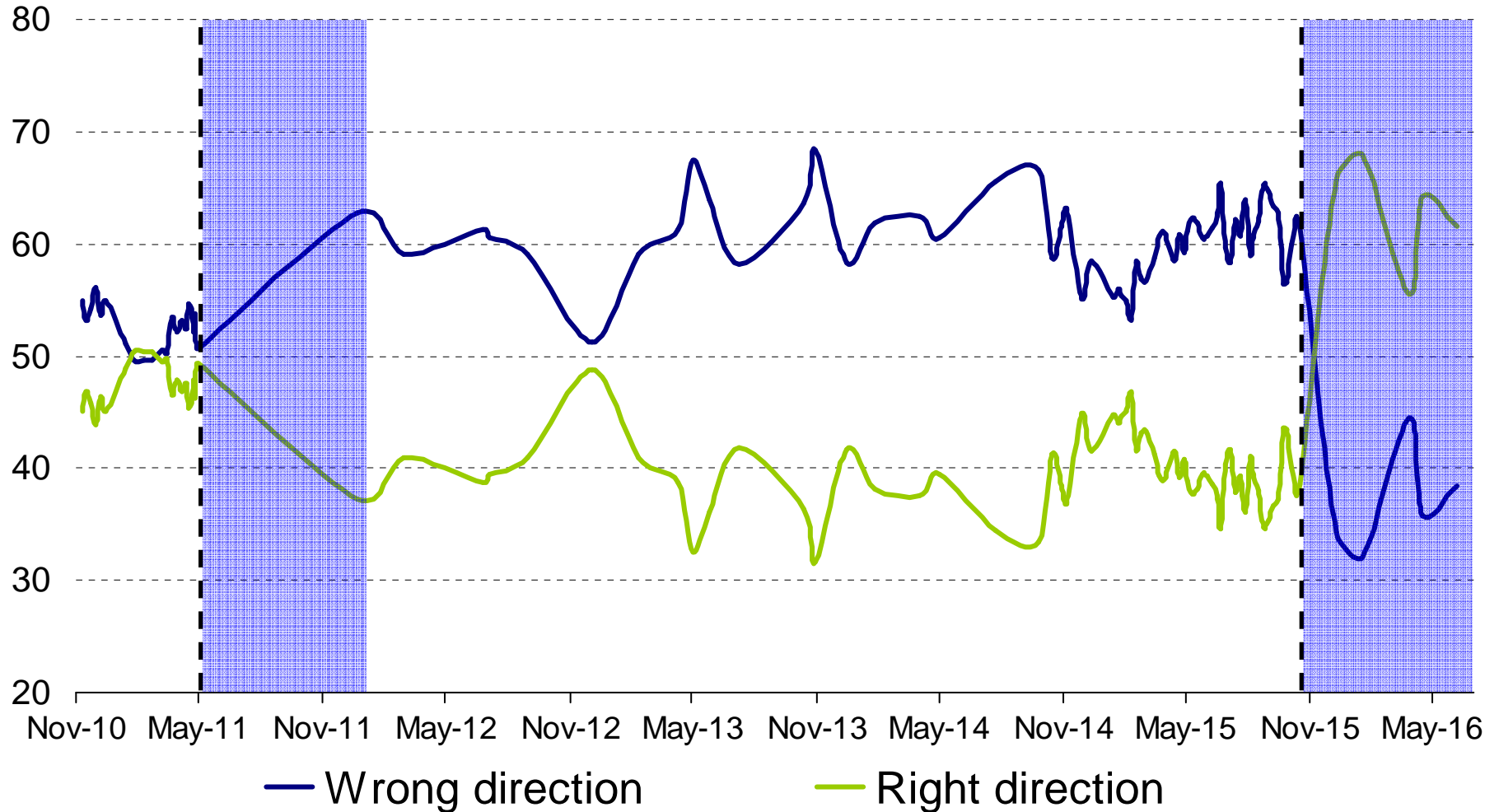
Approval Ratings

Q. Do you approve or disapprove of the way <*> is handling her/his job?



Direction of Government

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



*Figures adjusted to exclude those who skipped the question.

BASE: Canadians (half-sample); June 3-7, 2016 (n=1,223), MOE +/- 2.8%, 19 times out of 20

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Profile of Green Party Supporters (i)

- » Compared to other constituencies, Green Party supporters are:
 - Younger, more cosmopolitan
 - More 'open', more likely to question authority
 - More economically vulnerable
 - Far more pessimistic about their economic prospects
 - More civically engaged
 - More likely to be pro-labour
- » Supporters are generally more likely to favour a larger, more active government
- » Taking action on climate change and the environment appears to be the underlying mission uniting Green Party voters

Profile of Green Party Supporters (ii)

- » Supporters are more likely to identify as ‘citizens of the world’ and see diversity and tolerance as important Canadian values
 - They are also more supportive of increased immigration, which is a relatively new development
- » In addition, about one in ten voters would choose the Green Party as their second choice
 - These voters are mainly supporters of the Liberal Party (39%) and the NDP (35%)
 - Compared to current Green Party voters, they tend to be older and somewhat better educated
 - They fall within the pool of potential voters that we have called the ‘promiscuous progressives’

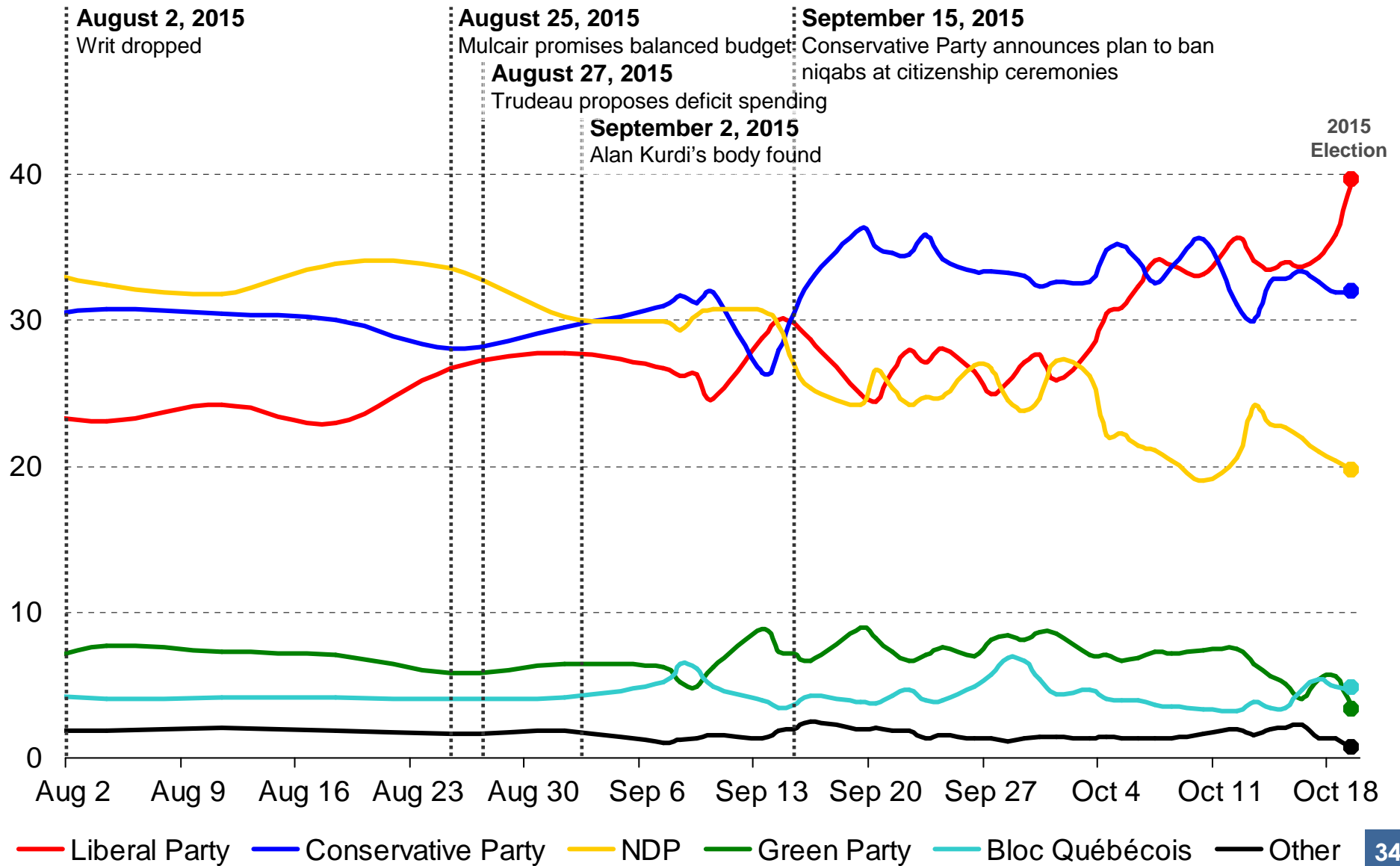


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Coming to Public Judgement

- » At the outset of the 42nd election campaign, NDP in 1st, Conservatives 2nd, Liberals 3rd
- » Two critical events altered the course of the election:
 1. Mulcair committed to balanced budget, Trudeau took vividly different position
 2. The image of the drowned Syrian child ignited a broader contest about values; temporary boost to Harper, but advantage shifted as Canadians reflected on which values should define Canada in the future
- » An important election about the economy morphed into an historical election about values

Coming to Public Judgement



Post-Mortem of Election 42 (i)

- » The Green Party was caught in the vortex of a late movement to the Liberals
 - The NDP were also victims (the Conservatives were as well, to a lesser extent)
- » The Green Party defections were more pronounced in the final two weeks of the campaign and the dominant movement (~50%) was to the Liberal Party
- » Big driver was 'replace Harper with a progressive government'
 - The main barrier to further Green progress is a collision between supporting the Greens and ensuring a progressive government

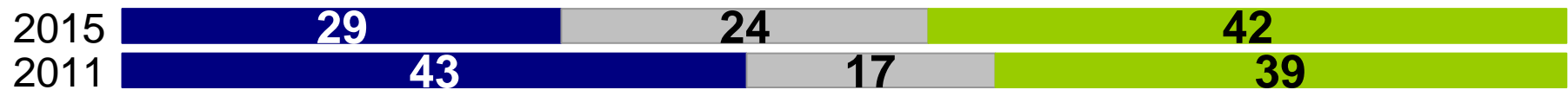
Post-Mortem of Election 42 (ii)

- » The perceived risks of not having Harper go were too high so there was major 'strategic voting' in final stages
- » Absence of commitment to a coalition took this off the table and made Liberals the best bet
- » As in Alberta (but with a different party), there was a traffic-light convergence of red, orange, and green voters
- » It is not clear that the Green Party could have done anything to affect the final strategic convergence of the progressive vote
- » It is important to recognize that although Green Party supporters may be disappointed about their seat performance, they are much happier with this election than 2011

Satisfaction with 2015 Election Results

Q. Overall, how satisfied are you with the results of this election?

National



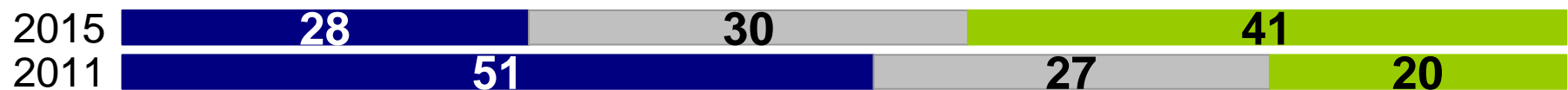
Liberal Party



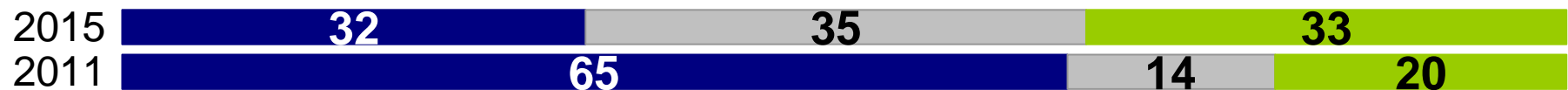
Conservative Party



NDP



Green Party



■ Dissatisfied (1-2)
 ■ Neither (3)
 ■ Satisfied (4-5)



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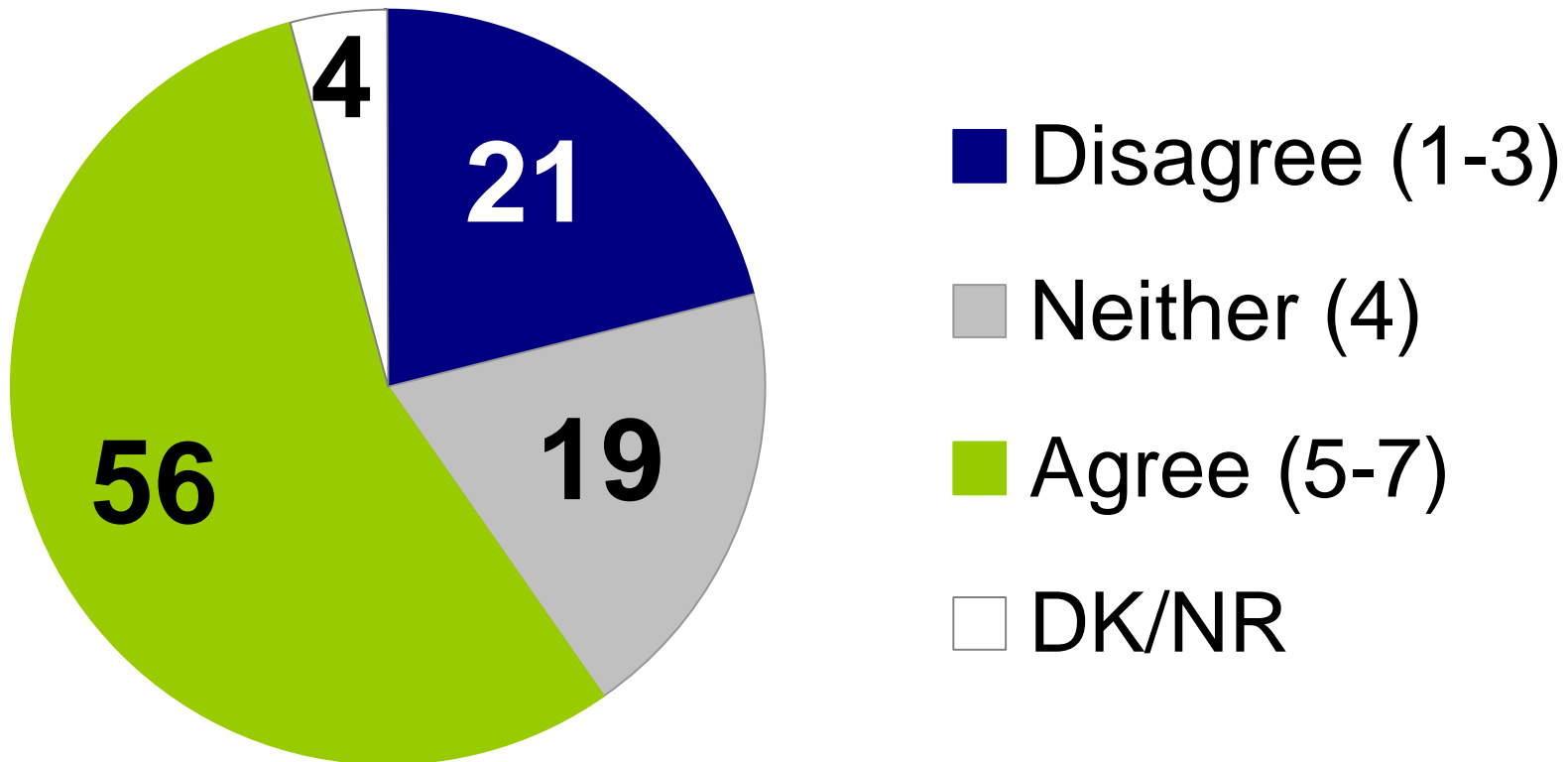
Electoral Reform

- » Many voters hesitant to vote Green because:
 - Concerns about splitting the progressive vote
 - No point, as they will see no real representation in Parliament
- » Electoral reform is a key requirement for moving forward
- » Most Canadians believe Canada's existing first-past-the-post system is inherently unfair
 - Mildly more impressed with Preferential Ballot, Proportional Representation seen as best alternative
- » Under Proportional Representation, the Green Party would likely maintain their 10 per cent of the vote (yielding at least 30 seats)
- » If commitment to ending first-past-the-post occurs, this will dramatically enhance Green Party's prospects in 2019

Perceived Fairness of First-Past-the-Post

Q. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement:

It is unfair that a party can hold a majority of the seats in the House of Commons with less than 40% of the vote



Preferred Form of Electoral Reform

Q. Please rank these three systems from best to worst in terms of how beneficial you think they would be for Canada.

Some form of proportional representation



Canada's existing first-past the post-system



A preferential voting system



- Best option for Canada
- Second-best option for Canada
- Worst option for Canada
- DK/NR

Need for Referendum on Electoral Reform

Q. Some people say that any change to the electoral system is so fundamental that it would require a national referendum. Others say that a rigorous program of public engagement and Parliamentary review should be sufficient. Which statement is closer to your point of view?

June 2016



BASE: Canadians (half-sample); June 3-7, 2016, n=1,158, MOE +/- 2.9%, 19 times out of 20

April 2016



BASE: Canadians; April 14-15, 2016, n=1,176, MOE +/- 2.9%, 19 times out of 20

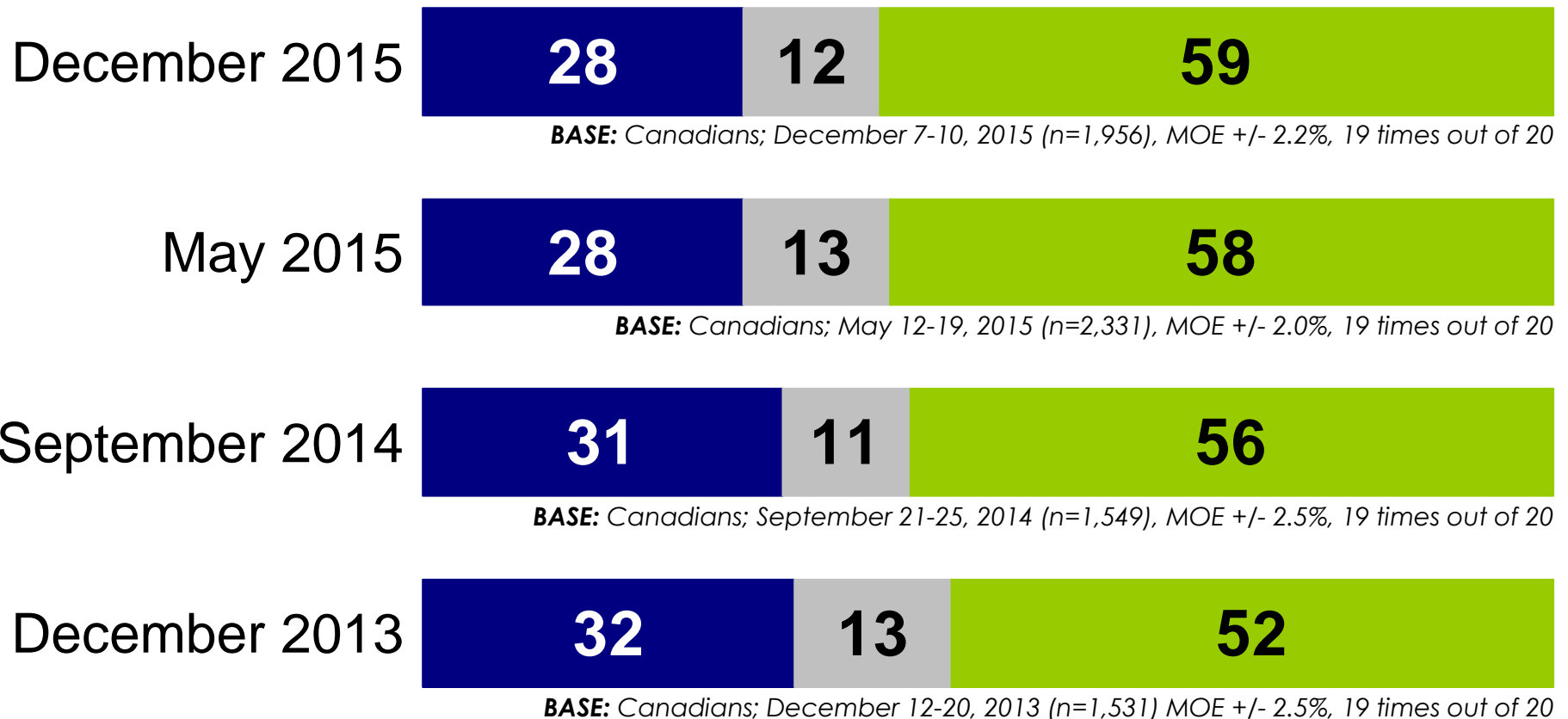
DK/NR

A national referendum is necessary

A national referendum is not necessary

Support for Compulsory Voting

Q. A number of countries such as Australia and Brazil have implemented compulsory voting, where citizens are required to vote in elections. Would you oppose or support introducing compulsory voting in Canada?



■ Oppose (1-3)

■ Neither (4)

■ Support (5-7)

Popularity of Online Voting

Q. *If Elections Canada offered a safe way of voting online - that is, on the internet – how likely is it that you would vote online in the next federal election?*

December 2015



BASE: Canadians; December 7-10, 2015 (n=1,811), MOE +/- 2.3%, 19 times out of 20

December 2009



BASE: Canadians; December 9-15, 2015 (n=3,300), MOE +/- 1.7%, 19 times out of 20

□ DK/NR/NA ■ Not at all likely ■ Not very likely ■ Somewhat likely ■ Very likely



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Conclusions (i)

- » Two profoundly different futures for Green Party:
 - Status quo (tough slog)
 - Electoral reform, namely proportional representation (brilliant opportunities)
- » The move to proportional representation would solve the biggest barrier to Green Party success
 - Vastly greater influence and political clout
- » The public have shown a strong receptivity to a traffic-light coalition of orange, red, and green

Conclusions (ii)

- » The party's strengths are:
 - A popular leader
 - A core issue which is of tremendous (and growing) salience
 - Broad underlying discontent with the 'mainstream' parties (temporarily on hold?)

- » Their main weaknesses are:
 - The problem of vote 'wasting' or vote splitting and the recognition of pretty feeble real power in current parliamentary order
 - Due to resource constraints and other factors, a tough time penetrating the noise floor in the increasingly sophisticated permanent campaign
 - The perception of the party as a 'one-trick pony'

Options for the Future: Scenario A – Status Quo

- » Develop a simplified, emotionally resonant values narrative around the environment and a broader theme of open cosmopolitanism (repeat, repeat, repeat)
- » Build bridges to the labour movement, as this reflects favourable attitudes among current constituencies and this is a powerful voting block
- » Focus on a short list of winnable ridings (BC is a strong region for the Greens, but Quebec could also be quite interesting)
- » Need a narrative to give attention to restarting middle class progress
- » Target NDP supporters and attempt to position as the new alternative progressive party (the NDP have plummeted from potential government to what might be a rump party)
 - Also attractive options within the Liberal ranks
- » There is an older, more affluent progressive vote that is considering Green, but they are currently committed to other parties

Options for the Future: Scenario B – Proportional Representation

- » Repeat all of the above
- » Underline the dramatically better power and influence Green voting would have in such a Parliament
- » Support other types of democratic reform, notably compulsory voting and an online ballot
- » Identify the issues and values niche within the progressive spectrum that they would champion



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