
DO VOTERS THINK ELIZABETH MAY SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE DEBATE?

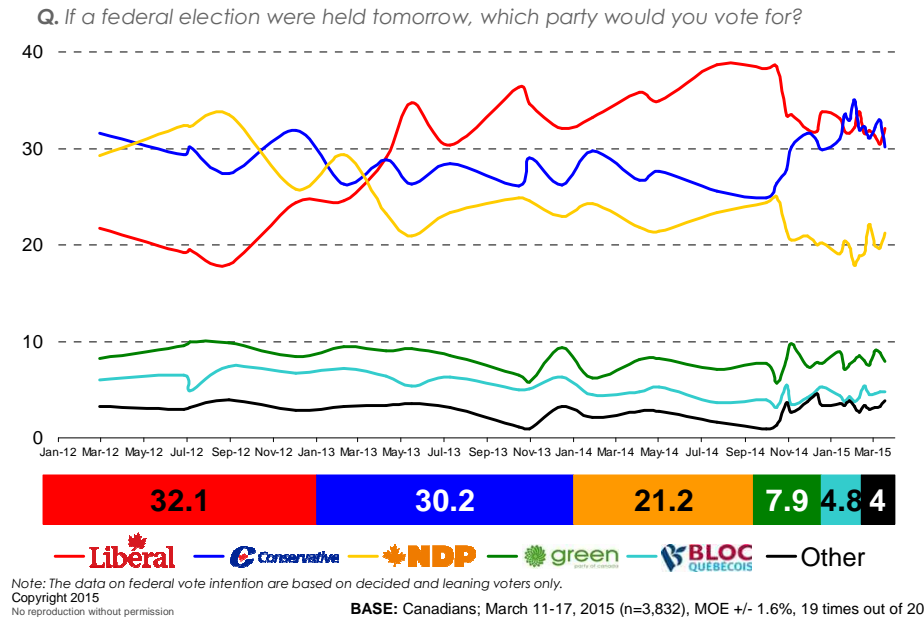
[Ottawa – March 27, 2015] There are all sorts of procedural and strategic questions regarding who should participate in the leaders’ debates in the upcoming federal election campaign. The debates are by far the most watched spectacle of a campaign and the risks and opportunities are very high for the parties.

In this article, we address the issue of whether or not members of the public think that Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party, (and Mario Beaulieu, leader of the Bloc Québécois) should be allowed to participate. Ms. May was allowed into the 2008 debate when her party held a single seat in Parliament, but was barred from participating in the 2011 debate. This time, her party controls two seats, but she is tied with the Bloc Québécois and the newly-formed Forces et Démocratie and the network consortium that makes the final decision may not wish to “clutter” the debate room. Furthermore, the consortium has no clearly-defined rules as to who participates, so this issue is still very much up in the air. Here we will look at what the public thinks and offer up some other data on her status with voters in terms of approval and vote intention.

Although we would not presume to advise the powers that be on this question, the public’s view is pretty clear. We would like to be clear that we are making no judgements as to whether Ms. May *should* be included in the debates. Instead, we are simply tackling this issue from the standpoint of public opinion.

First off, let’s consider the size of her constituency at this time. Unlike 2011, where the Green Party faded from its 2008 performance of capturing 6.8% of the vote, the Green Party has done quite well in our recent polling of vote intention. The party consistently receives the support of eight to ten per cent of Canadians.

Tracking federal vote intention



An important caveat is in order here: Green Party support has traditionally been overstated in public opinion polls. This is largely because so much of their support (two-fifths, in fact) comes voters under the age of 35, a group that has routinely failed to actually show up to the ballot booth on Election Day. However, even assuming that Green Party support is overstated, projecting the results onto an eligible voter population of approximately 24 million translates to more than a million votes. Furthermore, the Green vote says it is more certain to vote than in the past.

Elizabeth May enjoys solid approval rating

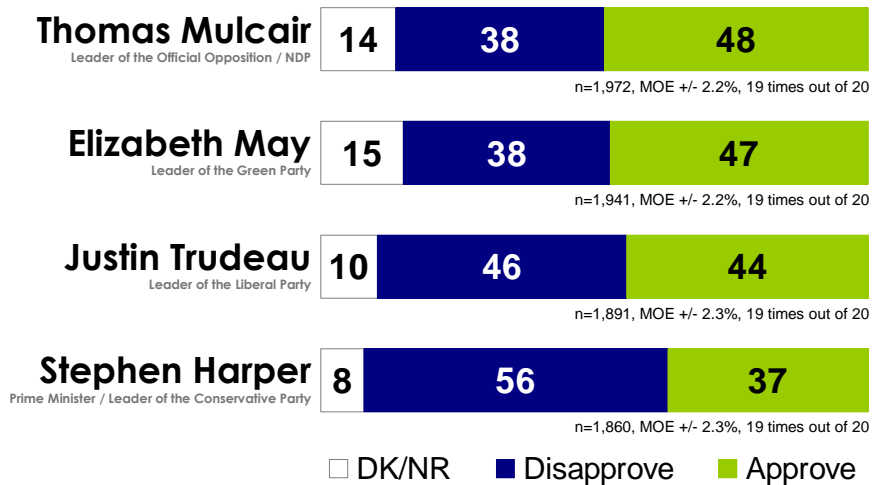
The next factor to consider is Ms. May's approval rating. At 47 points, Ms. May is statistically tied with Thomas Mulcair for the title of Canada's most respected leader. Regionally, she is well-liked in British Columbia, Ontario, and Atlantic Canada, although her standing in Quebec leaves something to be desired. Nevertheless, her Quebec-only approval ratings eclipse that of the Bloc Québécois leader, who is widely met with disapproval, among those who have even heard of him at all.¹ She is well-respected within the Liberal and NDP constituencies, although Conservative and Bloc Québécois supporters hold a somewhat more disparaging view.

¹ EKOS Research Associates, "One Year Out: A New Normal with Considerable Room for Further Change", October 19, 2014. Available online at: <http://goo.gl/qSP1NG>

Our tracking reveals that for better or for worse, Elizabeth May is slowly becoming a household name. In 2009, one-third of Canadians did not feel able to express an opinion about Ms. May one way or another. Today, just 15 per cent are uncertain and her approval and disapproval ratings have both grown by similar margins.

Job approval ratings

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

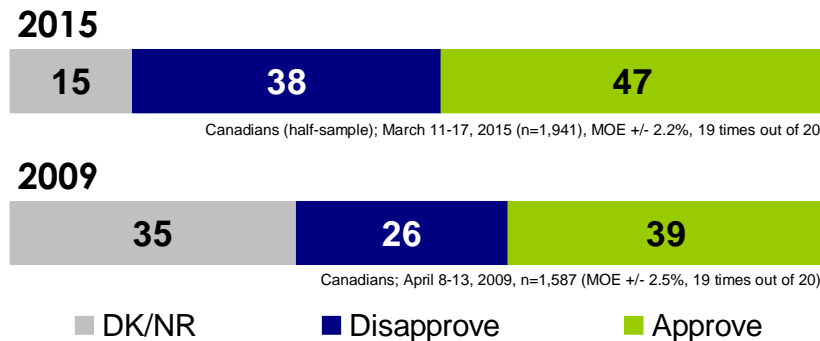


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BASE: Canadians (half-sample each); March 11-17, 2015

Job approval ratings: Elizabeth May

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



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Broad support for including Elizabeth May in the debates

Finally, we recently asked Canadians whether they believe that the Elizabeth May should be allowed to participate in the leaders' debate in the next federal election. By a margin of nearly three-to-one, (68 per cent to 24 per cent), Canadians feel she should be allowed in. What is perhaps most striking is that this view is shared by Canadians of every political stripe, with majorities of each party's supporters backing May's admission to the debate.

Support for including May/Beaulieu in the debate

Q. Recognizing that the GREEN PARTY OF CANADA / BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS currently has two seats in the House of Commons, do you believe that the party's leader, ELIZABETH MAY / MARIO BEAULIEU, should be allowed to participate in the leaders' debate in the next federal election?

Elizabeth May



n=1,914, MOE +/- 2.2%, 19 times out of 20

Mario Beaulieu



n=1,918, MOE +/- 2.2%, 19 times out of 20

DK/NR No Yes

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BASE: Canadians (half-sample each); March 11-17, 2015

These results contrast sharply with the Bloc Québécois which, despite holding the same number seats as the Green Party, would not be anywhere near as missed if their leader were barred from attending. Indeed, a plurality of respondents – 48 per cent – say Mario Beaulieu should not be allowed to attend.

Concluding remarks

As we stressed at the beginning of this article, we make no attempt to judge the merits of allowing Elizabeth May to participate in the Leaders' debate. However, the public says she should be allowed in and she carries strong support and she is seen as a strong leader. From a public



opinion perspective, it is extremely clear that voters want Elizabeth May to have a seat at the table in the upcoming debates.

Detailed Tables:

Approval Rating – Stephen Harper					
<i>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?</i>					
	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know / No response	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	36.5%	55.6%	7.8%	1860	2.3
REGION					
British Columbia	34.4%	57.6%	8.0%	273	5.9
Alberta	50.9%	38.7%	10.4%	219	6.6
Saskatchewan	38.2%	49.1%	12.7%	69	11.8
Manitoba	41.8%	49.8%	8.4%	71	11.6
Ontario	39.3%	53.4%	7.3%	692	3.7
Quebec	29.5%	64.7%	5.8%	331	5.4
Atlantic Canada	25.0%	63.9%	11.2%	202	6.9
GENDER					
Male	42.7%	54.8%	2.5%	871	3.3
Female	33.8%	60.9%	5.3%	887	3.3
AGE					
<35	35.3%	60.3%	4.3%	183	7.2
35-49	39.9%	56.2%	3.8%	340	5.3
50-64	34.7%	60.8%	4.5%	619	3.9
65+	46.9%	51.0%	2.1%	619	3.9
EDUCATION					
High school or less	44.5%	52.7%	2.8%	490	4.4
College or CEGEP	40.1%	56.7%	3.2%	584	4.1
University or higher	32.0%	63.3%	4.7%	676	3.8
COUNTRY OF BIRTH					
Not born in Canada	47.1%	49.0%	3.8%	270	6.0
Parents not born in Canada	37.4%	57.4%	5.2%	489	4.4
Both parents born in Canada	36.1%	60.7%	3.2%	1004	3.1
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Liberal Party	19.5%	77.5%	3.1%	471	4.5
Conservative Party	89.3%	10.0%	0.7%	543	4.2
NDP	13.8%	83.9%	2.3%	315	5.5
Green Party	20.4%	78.9%	0.8%	102	9.7
Bloc Québécois	12.7%	86.0%	1.2%	57	13.0

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 (+/-)
NATIONALLY	48.2%	38.2%	13.6%	1972	2.2
REGION					
British Columbia	47.5%	33.7%	18.8%	323	5.5
Alberta	49.3%	37.7%	13.0%	222	6.6
Saskatchewan	37.2%	45.0%	17.8%	67	12.0
Manitoba	44.7%	41.5%	13.8%	84	10.7
Ontario	49.0%	38.4%	12.5%	722	3.7
Quebec	50.3%	38.9%	10.8%	316	5.5
Atlantic Canada	44.4%	38.9%	16.7%	226	6.5
GENDER					
Male	50.7%	41.8%	7.5%	879	3.3
Female	51.3%	38.7%	10.0%	976	3.1
AGE					
<35	50.8%	35.3%	13.9%	163	7.7
35-49	52.5%	38.8%	8.7%	350	5.2
50-64	49.3%	43.9%	6.8%	619	3.9
65+	50.6%	44.0%	5.4%	723	3.6
EDUCATION					
High school or less	42.7%	51.5%	5.9%	519	4.3
College or CEGEP	48.3%	41.5%	10.2%	625	3.9
University or higher	59.8%	30.4%	9.9%	706	3.7
COUNTRY OF BIRTH					
Not born in Canada	49.3%	42.5%	8.2%	308	5.6
Parents not born in Canada	51.6%	40.4%	8.0%	531	4.3
Both parents born in Canada	50.9%	39.7%	9.4%	1019	3.1
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Liberal Party	57.8%	37.3%	4.9%	588	4.0
Conservative Party	30.3%	62.1%	7.5%	546	4.2
NDP	85.7%	9.8%	4.5%	322	5.5
Green Party	47.7%	34.0%	18.2%	101	9.8
Bloc Québécois	40.9%	50.0%	9.2%	49	14.0

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 (+/-)
NATIONALLY	44.1%	45.6%	10.3%	1891	2.3
REGION					
British Columbia	41.6%	43.4%	15.0%	307	5.6
Alberta	40.7%	49.1%	10.1%	220	6.6
Saskatchewan	32.8%	49.5%	17.6%	60	12.7
Manitoba	52.3%	34.4%	13.3%	87	10.5
Ontario	48.0%	43.1%	8.9%	693	3.7
Quebec	38.8%	54.2%	7.1%	303	5.6
Atlantic Canada	51.1%	35.6%	13.4%	212	6.7
GENDER					
Male	44.7%	51.4%	3.9%	861	3.3
Female	47.9%	44.7%	7.3%	917	3.2
AGE					
<35	47.2%	44.3%	8.6%	173	7.5
35-49	48.7%	45.8%	5.5%	345	5.3
50-64	46.1%	49.7%	4.2%	596	4.0
65+	42.5%	53.3%	4.2%	662	3.8
EDUCATION					
High school or less	44.7%	50.9%	4.4%	527	4.3
College or CEGEP	45.5%	50.6%	3.9%	579	4.1
University or higher	49.8%	42.2%	8.0%	660	3.8
COUNTRY OF BIRTH					
Not born in Canada	52.0%	42.2%	5.8%	294	5.7
Parents not born in Canada	47.2%	44.7%	8.1%	509	4.3
Both parents born in Canada	44.5%	50.6%	4.9%	979	3.1
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Liberal Party	83.1%	13.7%	3.2%	519	4.3
Conservative Party	18.4%	77.5%	4.1%	525	4.3
NDP	44.8%	51.4%	3.8%	337	5.3
Green Party	46.4%	46.7%	6.9%	98	9.9
Bloc Québécois	28.8%	60.2%	10.9%	54	13.3

Approval Rating – Elizabeth May

Q. [Half-sample only] Do you approve or disapprove of the way Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party of Canada, is handling her job?

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know / No response	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	47.2%	37.9%	15.0%	1941	2.2
REGION					
British Columbia	57.1%	25.4%	17.5%	289	5.8
Alberta	39.4%	42.2%	18.4%	221	6.6
Saskatchewan	37.7%	42.4%	19.9%	76	11.2
Manitoba	57.6%	28.6%	13.8%	68	11.9
Ontario	50.4%	35.4%	14.1%	721	3.7
Quebec	38.6%	48.3%	13.1%	344	5.3
Atlantic Canada	51.8%	33.7%	14.5%	216	6.7
GENDER					
Male	49.9%	42.3%	7.8%	889	3.3
Female	49.0%	37.5%	13.6%	946	3.2
AGE					
<35	47.9%	38.5%	13.6%	173	7.5
35-49	51.6%	38.2%	10.2%	345	5.3
50-64	47.3%	41.7%	11.0%	642	3.9
65+	51.8%	40.5%	7.7%	680	3.8
EDUCATION					
High school or less	42.6%	49.7%	7.7%	482	4.5
College or CEGEP	47.1%	40.9%	12.0%	630	3.9
University or higher	56.1%	31.9%	12.0%	722	3.7
COUNTRY OF BIRTH					
Not born in Canada	50.0%	42.1%	7.9%	284	5.8
Parents not born in Canada	49.7%	37.1%	13.1%	511	4.3
Both parents born in Canada	49.2%	40.3%	10.5%	1044	3.0
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Liberal Party	58.3%	33.2%	8.5%	540	4.2
Conservative Party	38.8%	53.1%	8.2%	564	4.1
NDP	62.0%	26.9%	11.1%	300	5.7
Green Party	68.4%	27.4%	4.2%	105	9.6
Bloc Québécois	31.5%	65.3%	3.2%	52	13.6

Support for Including Elizabeth May in the Leaders' Debate

Q. [Half-sample only] Recognizing that the Green Party of Canada currently has two seats in the House of Commons, do you believe that the party's leader, Elizabeth May, should be allowed to participate in the leaders' debate in the next federal election?

	Yes	No	Don't know / No response	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	68.3%	24.1%	7.6%	1914	2.2
REGION					
British Columbia	72.2%	16.5%	11.3%	304	5.6
Alberta	63.6%	30.8%	5.5%	221	6.6
Saskatchewan	59.6%	19.4%	21.0%	64	12.3
Manitoba	61.2%	28.4%	10.4%	68	11.9
Ontario	69.2%	24.3%	6.5%	719	3.7
Quebec	67.6%	27.5%	4.9%	313	5.5
Atlantic Canada	71.0%	17.4%	11.7%	217	6.7
GENDER					
Male	68.4%	28.5%	3.2%	854	3.4
Female	74.3%	22.2%	3.6%	956	3.2
AGE					
<35	74.6%	20.1%	5.3%	171	7.5
35-49	72.0%	24.9%	3.1%	352	5.2
50-64	71.0%	25.6%	3.4%	637	3.9
65+	66.3%	31.5%	2.1%	648	3.9
EDUCATION					
High school or less	65.4%	30.0%	4.6%	515	4.3
College or CEGEP	72.7%	24.2%	3.1%	606	4.0
University or higher	75.5%	21.5%	3.0%	687	3.7
COUNTRY OF BIRTH					
Not born in Canada	69.0%	27.2%	3.8%	289	5.8
Parents not born in Canada	70.5%	24.2%	5.4%	512	4.3
Both parents born in Canada	72.4%	25.1%	2.5%	1013	3.1
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Liberal Party	78.3%	19.9%	1.8%	541	4.2
Conservative Party	54.2%	44.0%	1.8%	543	4.2
NDP	85.5%	13.1%	1.4%	316	5.5
Green Party	89.5%	7.0%	3.5%	115	9.1
Bloc Québécois	66.0%	25.9%	8.2%	47	14.3

Support for Including Mario Beaulieu in the Leaders' Debate

Q. [Half-sample only] Recognizing that the Bloc Québécois currently has two seats in the House of Commons, do you believe that the party's leader, Mario Beaulieu, should be allowed to participate in the leaders' debate in the next federal election?

	Yes	No	Don't know / No response	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	42.1%	47.8%	10.1%	1918	2.2
REGION					
British Columbia	32.0%	52.6%	15.3%	292	5.7
Alberta	34.6%	51.2%	14.2%	220	6.6
Saskatchewan	29.7%	58.1%	12.2%	72	11.6
Manitoba	35.5%	58.0%	6.5%	87	10.5
Ontario	40.2%	50.2%	9.6%	695	3.7
Quebec	59.9%	35.1%	5.0%	334	5.4
Atlantic Canada	37.0%	49.0%	14.0%	211	6.8
GENDER					
Male	40.0%	57.0%	3.0%	896	3.3
Female	48.7%	43.6%	7.7%	907	3.3
AGE					
<35	46.3%	46.0%	7.6%	175	7.4
35-49	44.4%	50.6%	4.9%	338	5.3
50-64	44.5%	51.0%	4.5%	601	4.0
65+	41.7%	54.7%	3.6%	694	3.7
EDUCATION					
High school or less	40.6%	55.3%	4.1%	494	4.4
College or CEGEP	43.0%	51.3%	5.7%	603	4.0
University or higher	49.0%	45.4%	5.6%	695	3.7
COUNTRY OF BIRTH					
Not born in Canada	47.5%	46.8%	5.7%	289	5.8
Parents not born in Canada	41.2%	51.6%	7.2%	508	4.4
Both parents born in Canada	45.4%	50.4%	4.2%	1010	3.1
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Liberal Party	42.0%	53.9%	4.0%	518	4.3
Conservative Party	30.0%	65.7%	4.3%	546	4.2
NDP	56.5%	40.3%	3.2%	321	5.5
Green Party	62.1%	32.5%	5.4%	88	10.5
Bloc Québécois	95.1%	3.6%	1.2%	59	12.8

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 March 11-17, 2015. In total, a random sample of 3,832 Canadian adults aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-1.6 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.