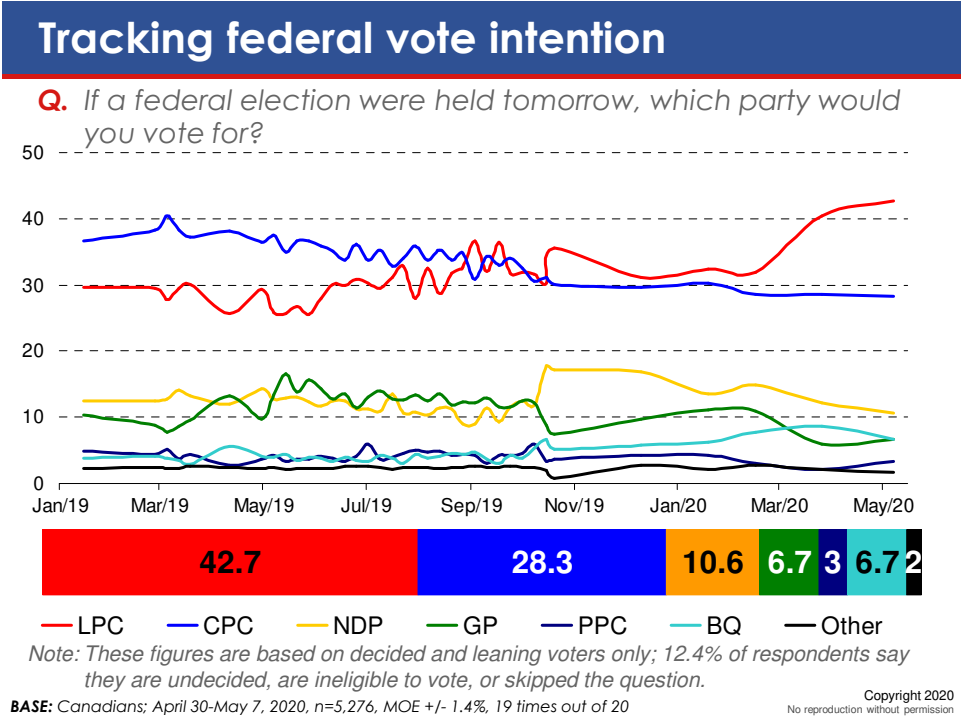


# A FUTURE HISTORY OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS

PUBLIC OUTLOOK ON POSSIBLE CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

[Ottawa – May 12, 2020] As Canadians continue to work their way through the COVID-19 pandemic, we would like to take the opportunity to present an update of how the public see this crisis evolving. We begin with an update on the federal political landscape, which provides an important means for understanding how views on the pandemic are linked to partisanship and other factors. However, our main purpose is to understand how this crisis is playing out in the public’s mind and how they see the future of Canada and the world unfolding.

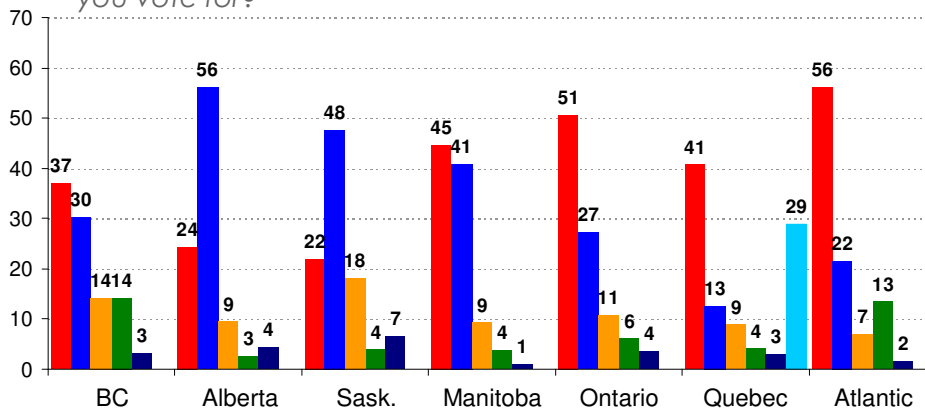
The political landscape has shifted in important ways. The Liberals are in commanding 14-point lead over the second-place Conservatives, which would produce a massive majority in the unlikely event of an election in the near future. Many of the key demographic and regional fractures that gripped the country in January are much smaller, although the Conservatives have held on to their leads in Alberta and Saskatchewan, the only places where they lead. The Liberals have massive leads in Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic. An exception to the diminution of demographic partisan gaps is gender; the Liberals have an astonishing 50-to-21 per cent lead over the Conservatives with women, while the parties are in a dead heat with men.



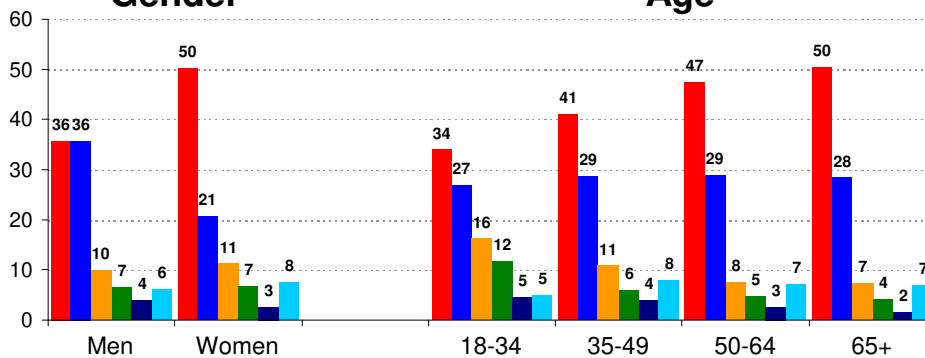
National and federal direction remains remarkably high but have softened somewhat over the past few weeks. The softening is largely due to steeper declines in approval among men and residents of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

## Vote intention by region/demographics

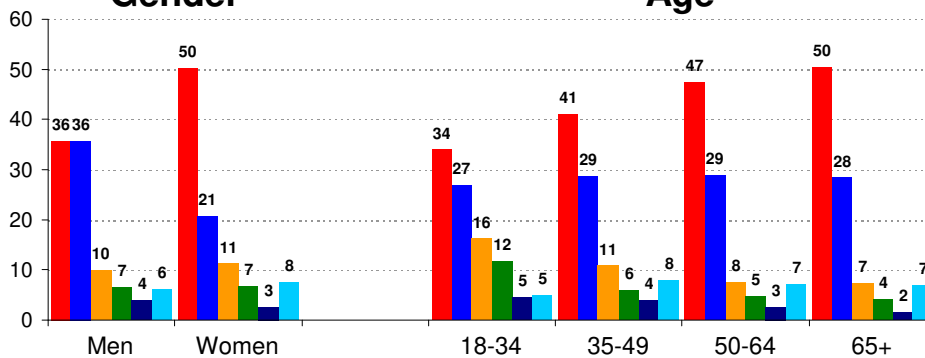
Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?



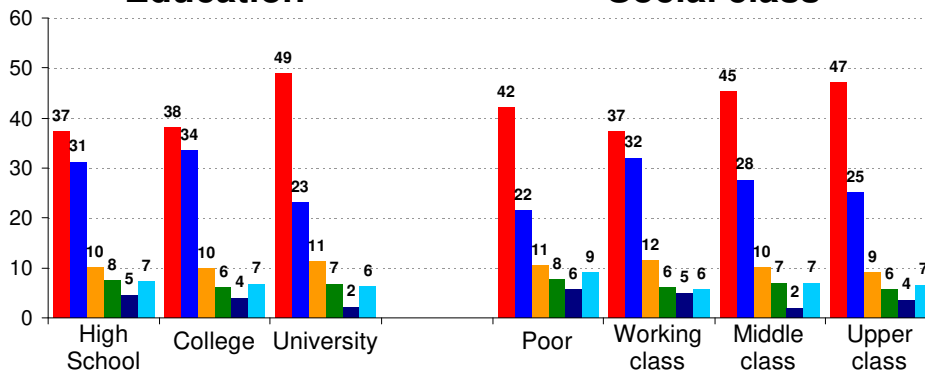
### Gender



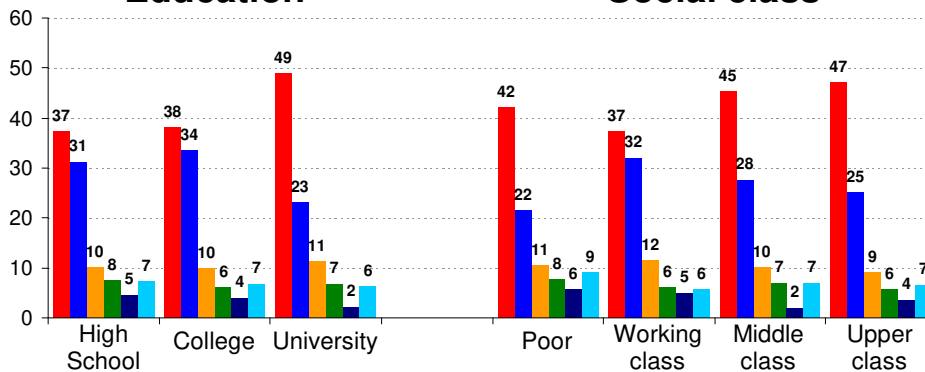
### Age



### Education



### Social class



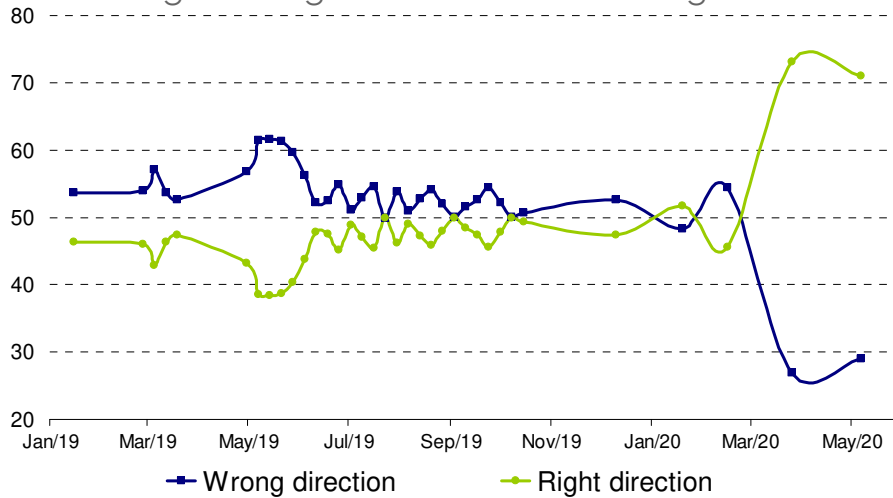
BASE: Canadians; April 30-May 7, 2020, n=5,276, MOE +/- 1.4%, 19 times out of 20

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## Direction of country

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



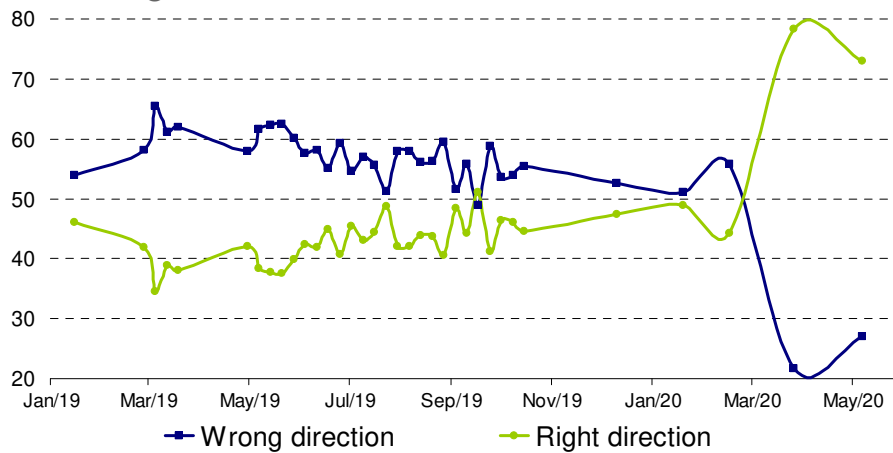
Note: Figures adjusted to exclude those who skipped the question.

BASE: Canadians (half-sample); April 30-May 7, 2020, n=2,618, MOE +/- 1.9%, 19 times out of 20

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## Direction of government

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



Note: Figures adjusted to exclude those who skipped the question.

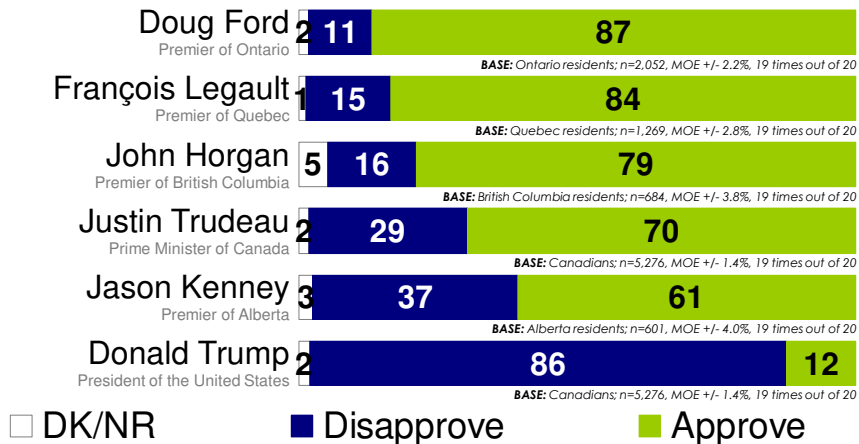
BASE: Canadians (half-sample); April 30-May 7, 2020, n=2,658, MOE +/- 1.9%, 19 times out of 20

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Approval numbers for federal and provincial leaders remain very high. This reflects broad satisfaction with the performance of governments in general and federalism in particular during this crisis. Ford’s numbers are up and Legault’s are down somewhat. A miniscule 12 per cent of Canadians approve of Donald Trump’s handling of the crisis, but those numbers are considerably higher among Conservative and People’s Party supporters.

## Approval of leaders’ handling of COVID-19 crisis

**Q.** *There has been a lot of talk lately about the outbreak of the new coronavirus disease, COVID-19. Do you approve or disapprove of how each of the following leaders has responded to this crisis?*



Field Dates: April 30-May 7, 2020

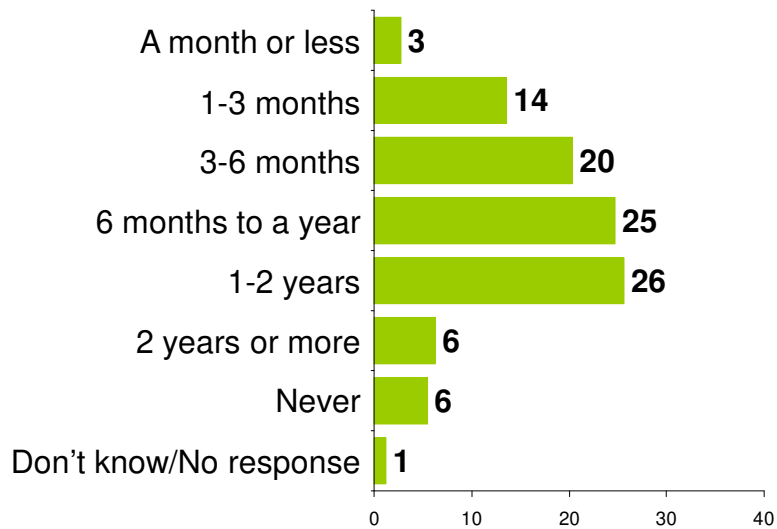
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Before we get to the post-COVID-19 world, we have to negotiate safe passage through a treacherous, uncertain, pre-vaccine world. The poll asked Canadians a number of hypothetical questions about the future. The results help shed light on some of the challenges and opportunities that are emerging in public outlook.

The horizon for the end of this crisis is receding further into the future. As time goes on, the fragile consensus to act safely dissipates. This is a critical challenge.

## Anticipated duration of COVID-19 crisis

**Q.** How long do you expect it will take until things to return to normal?



**BASE:** Canadians; May 1-7, 2020, n=5,049, MOE +/- 1.4%, 19 times out of 20

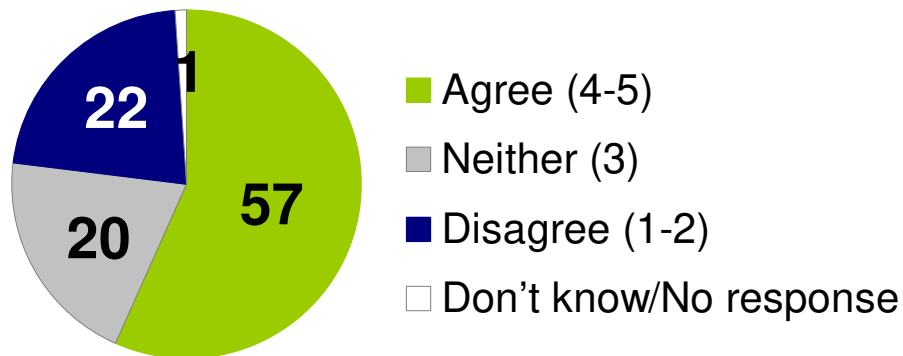
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Most experts are of the view that this crisis will not truly end until a vaccine is discovered and ready for delivery, though it is not clear that mandatory vaccination would be necessary as a very large voluntary fraction of population might be adequate. It is, however, important to note the significant and somewhat surprising levels of opposition given the critical importance of a vaccine to full recovery and that the public will to continue current social distance starts unravelling as time goes on. Opposition is centred in Alberta and Saskatchewan and men, the less educated and Conservative supporters. This pattern is evident much of the research we have been conducting lately.

## Support for compulsory vaccination

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

**Once a COVID-19 vaccine becomes available, it should be mandatory for all Canadians**



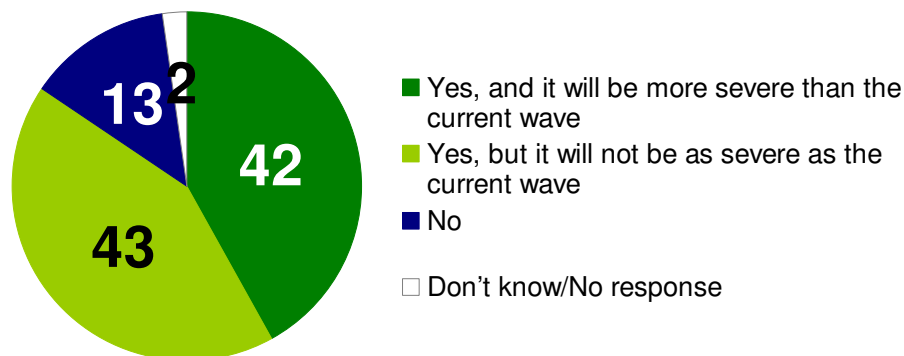
**BASE:** Canadians; April 30-May 7, 2020, n=5,276, MOE +/- 1.4%, 19 times out of 20

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In stark recognition of what seems to be the expert consensus, 85 per cent of Canadians expect a second wave in the fall and this splits Canadians into two equally sized groups; those who think this second wave will be milder versus those who say worse. As in many other indicators, we see a strong pattern here. Those who have higher risk perceptions are much more likely to be exhibiting safe behaviour and to accept futures measures such as vaccine. Those who discount the risk are much less compliant and accepting of future measures. They follow familiar patters noted earlier (men, the less educated, and Conservative supporters are all more likely to discount the possibility of a second wave). From related research, we see this fault line as the critical divide shaping the debate about the future.

## Views on potential second wave

**Q.** *As you may know, many health experts believe the spread of COVID-19 is slowing in Canada. Do you believe Canada will be hit by a second wave of the virus in the fall?*



**BASE:** Canadians; April 30-May 7, 2020, n=5,276, MOE +/- 1.4%, 19 times out of 20

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In searching for some positives in the short-term ruins of the pandemic, we are seeing some signs that this might be a segue to a better future which may not have been attainable without this tremendous shock to societies. This is not clear yet but bears careful attention in the coming months. It may provide greater hope and it may be a debate that needs to be enjoined sooner rather than later. The fault lines noted earlier also permeate to the heart of the contest for the future, which most think will be vividly different than the pre-COVID-19 status-quo.

There is receptivity, with important divisions, to the idea that the crisis has laid bare certain features which more hidden before the crisis struck. A plurality believe it has revealed some ugly truths about the values we placed on the lives of the elderly and vulnerable. Many also believe that it has revealed some of the previously hidden injuries of social class. There are also a sizable majority who think this crisis has signalled the future importance of environment and climate change over carbon energy. In each of these cases, there is a significant minority (between 20

and 25 per cent) who dismiss these revelations. The same educational, regional, gender, and partisan divides noted earlier are strongly linked to these issues.

## Issues revealed by COVID-19

**Q.** *To what extent do you believe the following problems have been revealed by the COVID-19 crisis?*

The value we place on the lives of elderly and disabled Canadians



Social class inequality



The relative importance of the environment and climate change over carbon energy



DK/NR  Low extent (1-2)  Moderate extent (3)  High extent (4-5)

**BASE:** Canadians; April 30-May 7, 2020, n=5,276, MOE +/- 1.4%, 19 times out of 20

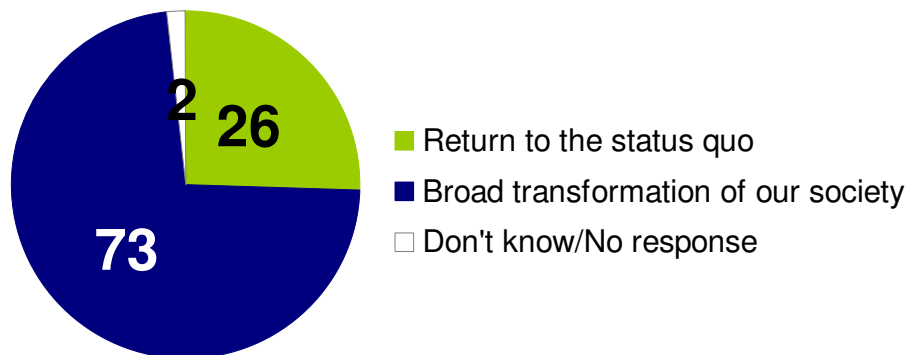
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This sets the stage for the really big question of whether we are going to see a major transformation or a return to the status quo and, if a transformation, in what direction. Most of us think that we are on the cusp of a broad transformation. Out of all this sadness, economic grief, and death, can we imagine the possibility that this will allow us to do some of the profound changes that otherwise would have been impossible?



## Outlook on post-COVID-19 world

**Q.** When the COVID-19 crisis ends, do you expect Canadian society to return to the status quo or do you expect a broad transformation of our society?

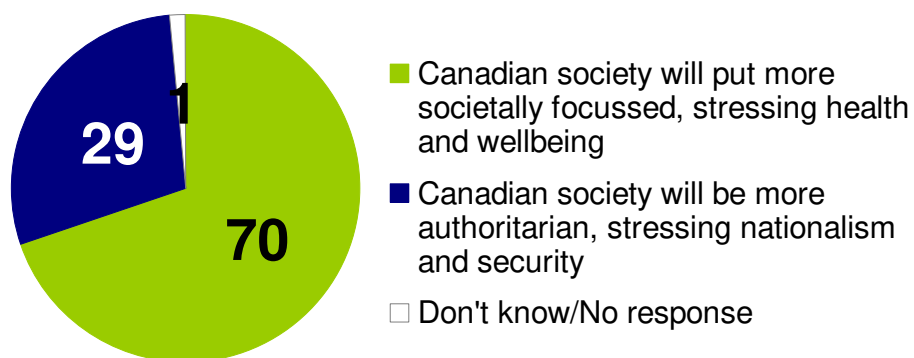


**BASE:** Canadians; April 30-May 7, 2020, n=5,276, MOE +/- 1.4%, 19 times out of 20

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## Type of societal changes expected

**Q.** [IF BROAD TRANSFORMATION] Which of the following best describes how you think Canadian society will change as a result of this crisis?



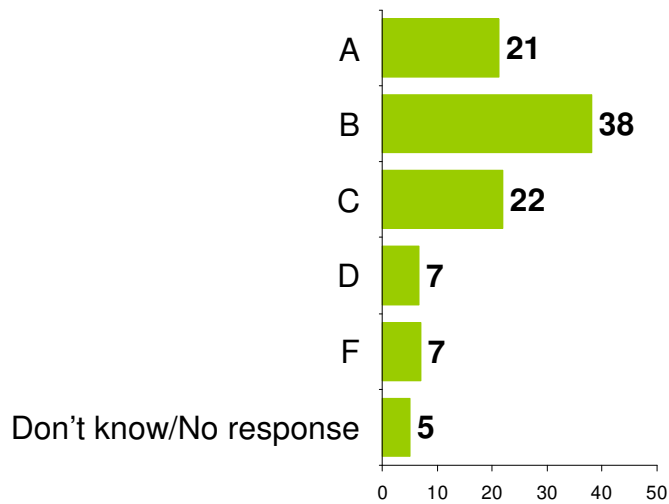
**BASE:** Those who say transformation; April 30-May 7, 2020, n=3,994, MOE +/- 1.3%, 19 times out of 20

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We end on a note about how we collectively think we will grade our national response when we look back two years from now. The modal answer is a B; good, but not excellent.

## Grading of Canada's COVID-19 response

**Q.** How do you think Canadians will grade Canada's overall response to COVID-19 two years from now?



**BASE:** Canadians; April 30-May 7, 2020, n=5,276, MOE +/- 1.4%, 19 times out of 20

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## Methodology:

This survey 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 April 30-May 7, 2020. In total, a random sample of 5,276 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/- 1.4 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, and region** to ensure the sample's composition reflects that of the actual population of Ontario according to Census data.