

The Economy & National Politics?

**Economic concerns are rising.
Political preferences fairly stable.
LPC 45%, CPC 28%, NDP 17%**

By Bruce Anderson & David Coletto

For interviews, or to find out about our services, please contact Bruce Anderson at banderson@abacusdata.ca (613-882-0929) or CEO David Coletto at david@abacusdata.ca (613-232-2806)

A year ago, two thirds of Canadians said the economy was in good shape; one third said it was “poor”. Today, those numbers are reversed, illustrating how significant has been the shift in sentiment. Much of that shift has happened over the last six months.

While this shift has been sizeable, the worry is qualified: the tendency is to describe the decline as a “mild”, rather than a severe recession. Today 28% see the economy as growing, 54% see a mild recession, and 15% say the economic downturn is more severe.

Comparing this result to the numbers we found last August, before the federal election, shows that the movement towards negative sentiment has been about 5 points during that period of time: most of the weakening had happened before people went to the polls.

Economic stress is evident in every region of the country, but is most challenging in Alberta, where 76% say the economy is in poor shape, and Quebec (75%).

Looking deeper into where the shift in economic sentiment has been most acute reveals the largest drops in comfort are found among Albertans (37-point shift since last July), the highest income earners (39-point shift), and Conservative voters (55-point shift).

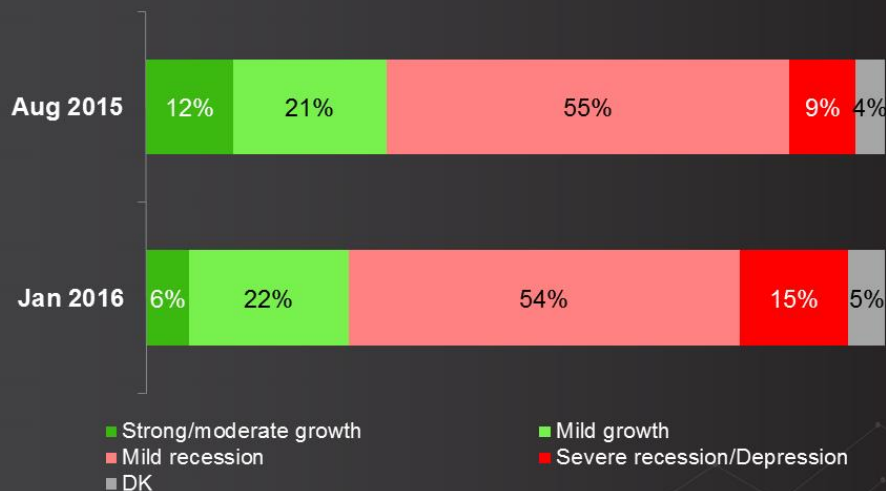
HEALTH OF THE ECONOMY



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How would you rate the current state of the economy in Canada?

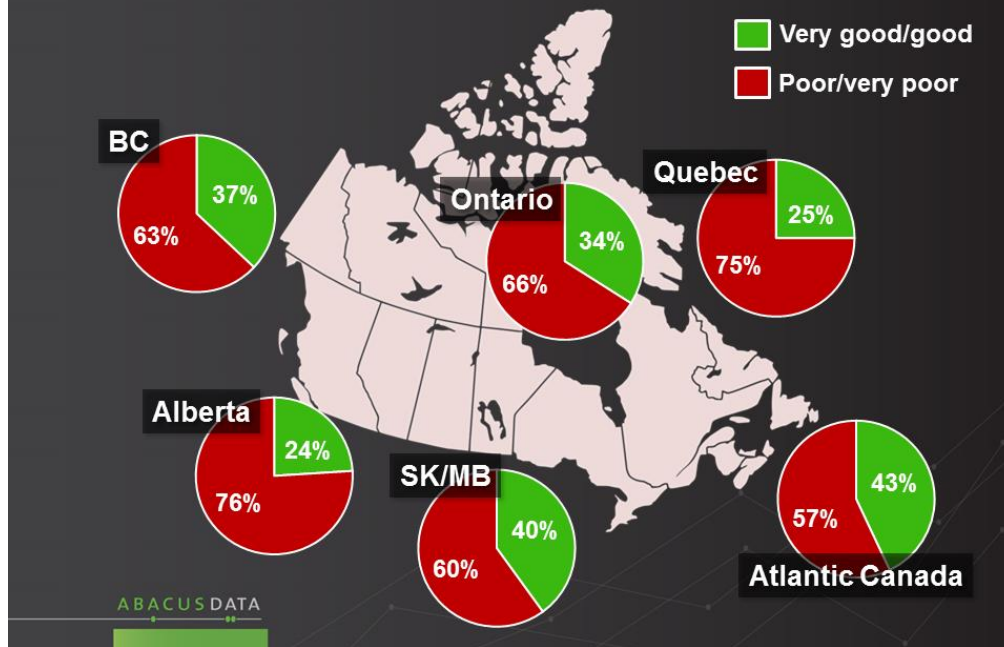
GROWTH OR RECESSION?



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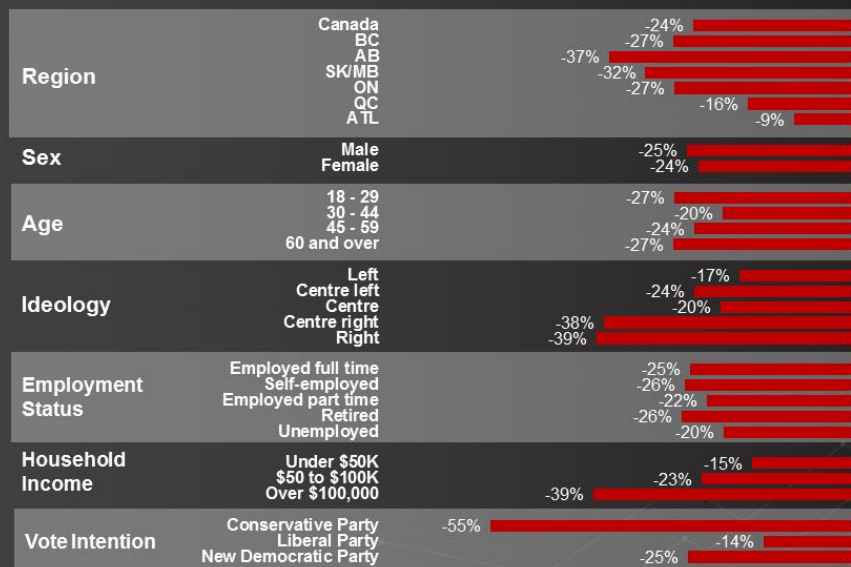
Which of the following best describes how you would describe the state of Canada's economy?

HEALTH OF THE ECONOMY

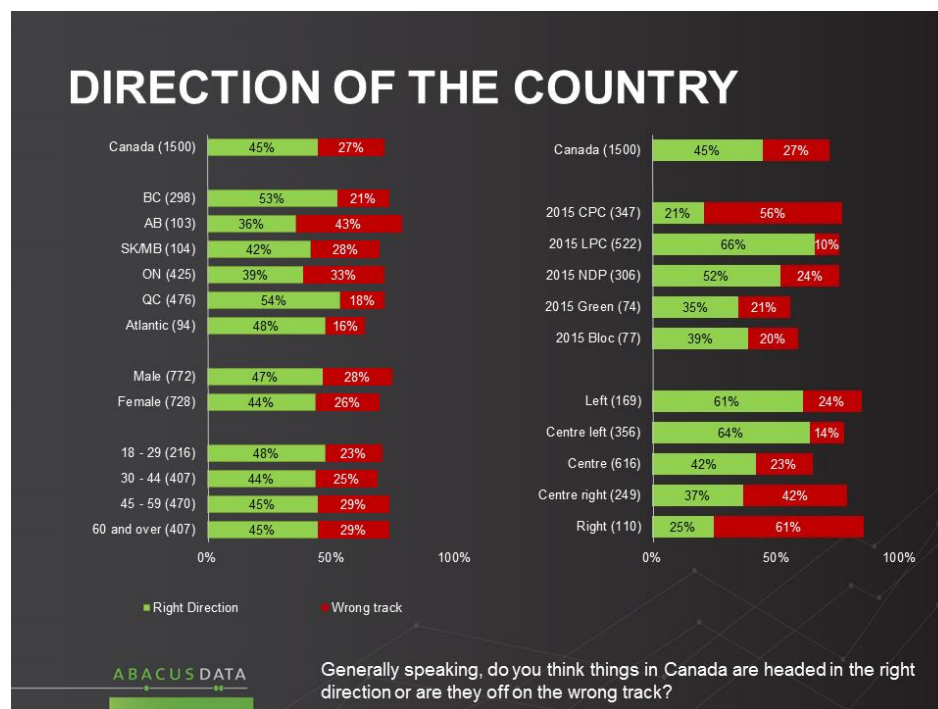
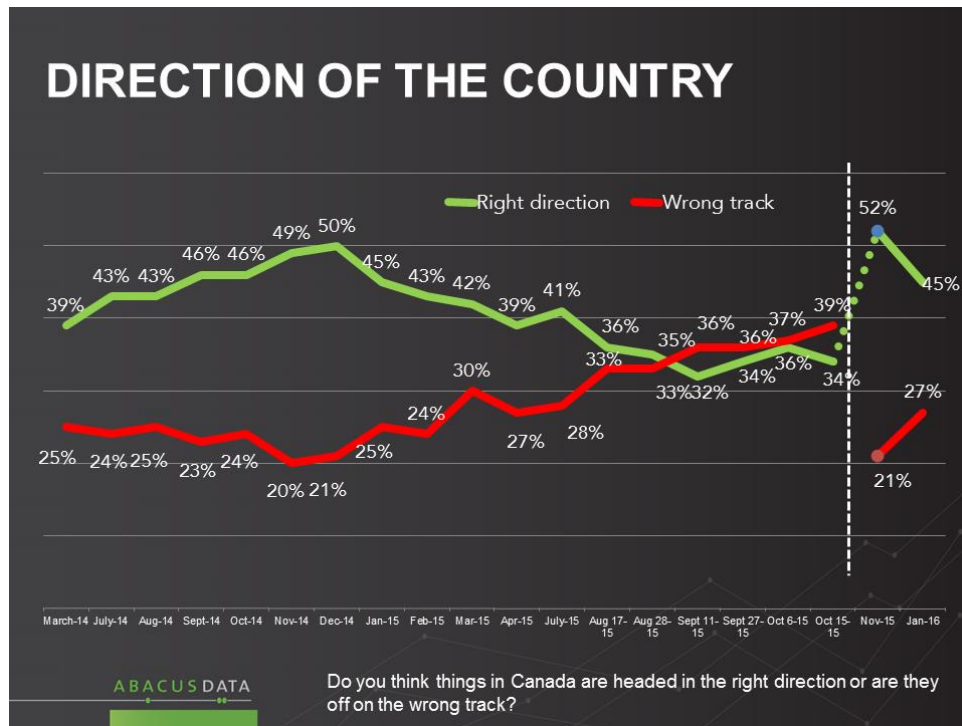


ECONOMIC SENTIMENT SHIFT

Change in "good" from July 2015 to January 2016.

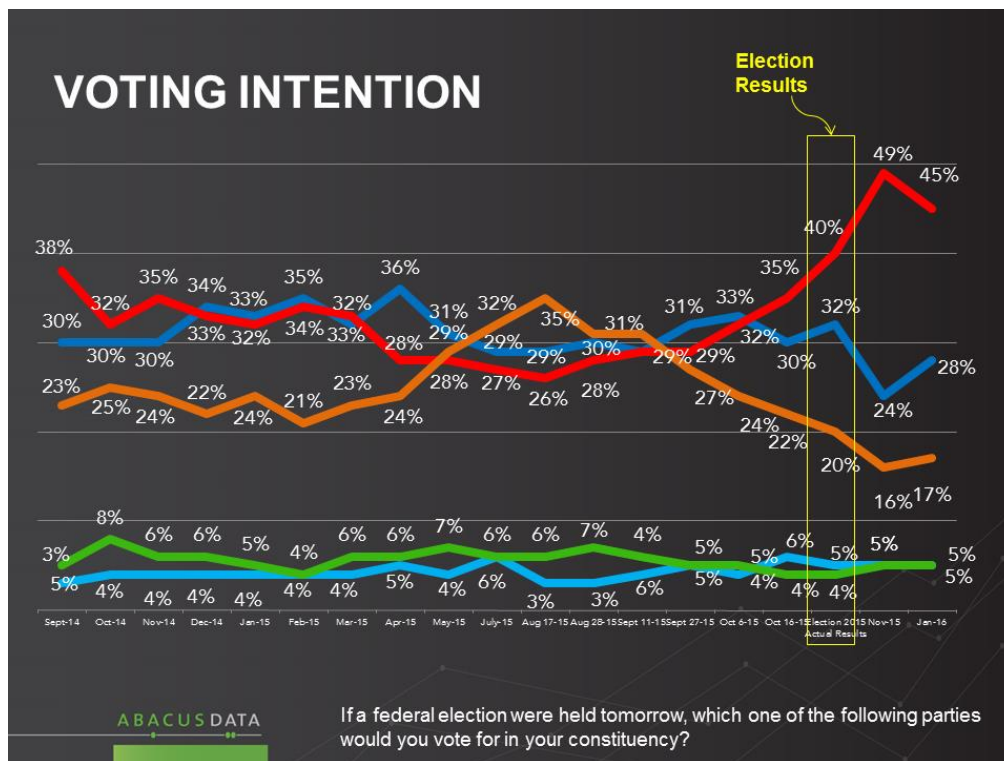


While economic anxieties have been growing, the effect on political attitudes has been limited. Many more people say the country is heading in the right (45%) rather than the wrong direction (27%). Even in Alberta, 36% say right, 43% say wrong direction. "Wrong direction" sentiment is largely concentrated on the further right and supporters of the Conservative Party.

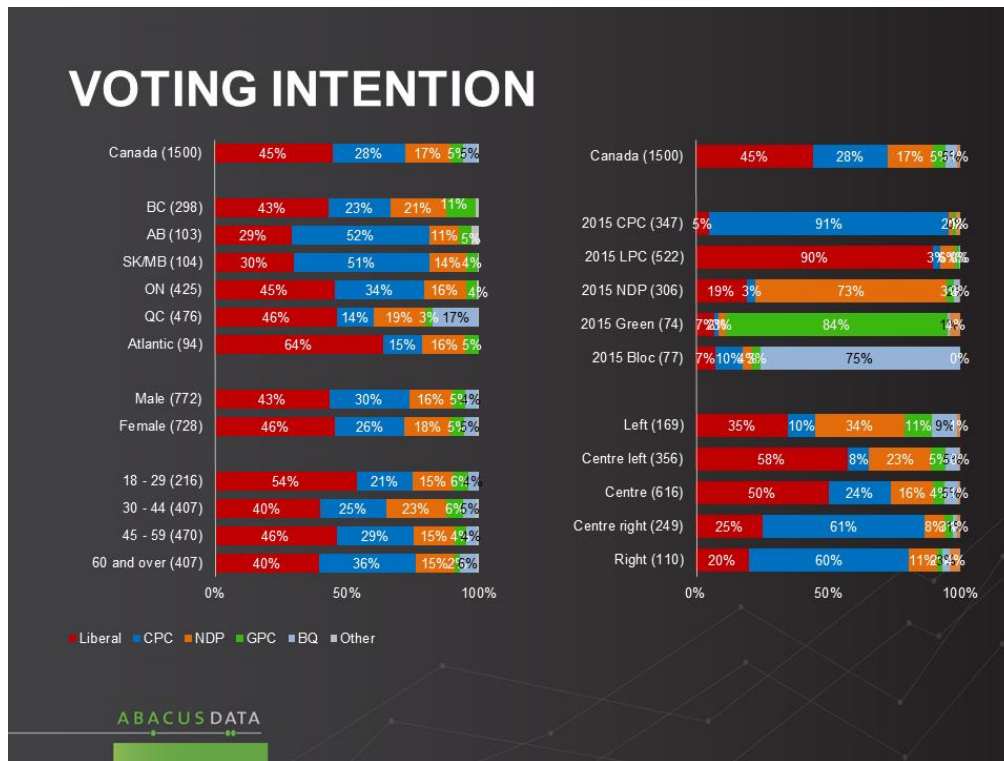


Federal Voting Intentions

When asked how they would vote if an election were tomorrow, the Liberals hold a wide 17-point margin over the Conservatives and a 28-point margin over the New Democrats. These numbers reveal a slight decline from the remarkably high levels measured before the end of 2015, but are above the support the Liberals achieved on Election Day.



The Liberals continue to hold wide leads in BC (by 20), Ontario (by 11), Quebec (by 27), and in Atlantic Canada (by 48). The strength in Liberal support since the election owes much to the fact that only 73% of those who voted NDP in October say they would vote NDP today: 1 in 5 of them would vote Liberal.



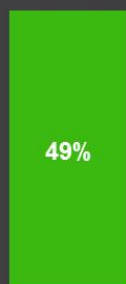
Federal Economic Approach

We asked whether the current state of the economy means that the federal government should do more to stimulate the economy than it had planned on, or stick with the plan it campaigned on. The results show a split in opinion, with 51% saying that the government should do more, and 49% saying it should stick with the plan it campaigned on.

Worth noting is that majorities of CPC (57%) and NDP (58%) supporters say the government should do more than had been planned, while smaller numbers (42%) of LPC supporters feel that way.

Regionally, Ontarians were more likely to think the government should do more than had been planned to stimulate the economy while a majority in every other region feel that the government should stick with the plan it campaigned on.

DO MORE TO STIMULATE?



The government should follow the plan it campaigned on during the last federal election.



The government should do more to stimulate economic growth than it was planning to.

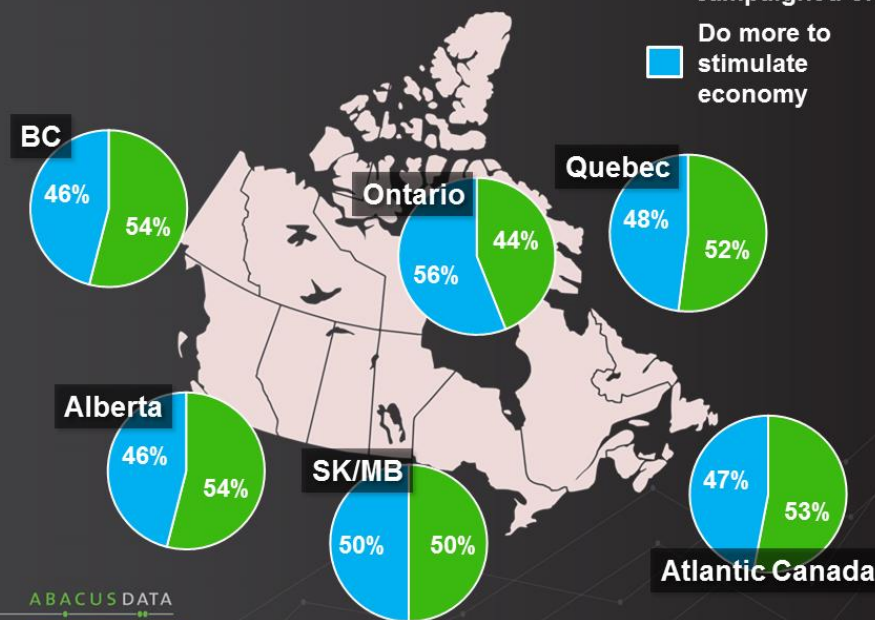
	Follow plan it campaigned on	Do more to stimulate growth
Current LPC supporters	57%	43%
Current CPC supporters	43%	57%
Current NDP supporters	42%	58%
Describe economy as "good/very good"	59%	41%
Describe economy as "poor/very poor"	45%	55%
Left/Centre-left	55%	45%
Centre	46%	54%
Right/Centre-right	51%	49%

When it comes to the approach the federal government should take in how it manages the economy, which of the following comes closest to your view?

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DO MORE TO STIMULATE?

Follow plan it campaigned on.
Do more to stimulate economy



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The Upshot

According to Bruce Anderson: "The economy is no doubt a growing cause of concern for Canadians and will test the level of confidence in this government, as it would for any. So far, the impact on the mood of the country has been muted, except in Alberta where the pain of lower oil prices has been causing extraordinary challenges.

However, at this point, the general tendency is to see the economic downturn as mild rather than severe, and while the government has latitude in public opinion terms to do more to stimulate if it chooses to, these numbers don't suggest that people believe either that the government has contributed to the economic deterioration, or should consider a major deviation from the course it has been on.

In terms of political preferences, the Liberal Party continues to enjoy broad support. Our releases over the next few days will explore how people are reacting to a broad cross section of measures taken by the Trudeau government."

Methodology

Our survey was conducted online with 1,500 Canadians aged 18 and over from January 8 to 12, 2016. A random sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from a large representative panel of over 400,000 Canadians.

The Marketing Research and Intelligence Association policy limits statements about margins of sampling error for most online surveys. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/- 2.6%, 19 times out of 20. The data were weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched Canada's population according to age, gender, educational attainment, and region. Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Abacus Data Inc.

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If a federal election was held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you vote for in your constituency?

Sample size: 1,500

Comparable MoE: $\pm 2.6\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: January 9 to 12, 2016

		CPC	LPC	NDP	GPC	BQ	Other	Undecided	Raw	Weighted
Region	Canada	24%	38%	14%	4%	4%	1%	15%	1500	1453
	BC	20%	37%	18%	10%	0%	1%	14%	298	180
	AB	46%	26%	10%	4%	0%	2%	11%	103	133
	SK/MB	39%	23%	11%	3%	0%	0%	25%	104	96
	ON	27%	37%	13%	3%	0%	1%	19%	425	554
	QC	12%	41%	17%	2%	15%	0%	11%	476	372
	Atlantic	13%	55%	14%	4%	0%	0%	13%	94	118
Gender	Male	27%	38%	14%	4%	4%	1%	12%	772	701
	Female	21%	37%	14%	4%	4%	1%	19%	728	752
Age	18 - 29	19%	47%	13%	5%	3%	0%	12%	216	279
	30 - 44	20%	32%	18%	5%	4%	1%	19%	407	378
	45 - 59	24%	38%	13%	4%	3%	1%	17%	470	444
	60 and over	32%	35%	13%	2%	5%	1%	12%	407	351
Education	HS or less	26%	32%	15%	4%	4%	1%	17%	337	507
	College	24%	36%	14%	4%	4%	1%	16%	583	538
	University	21%	47%	13%	4%	3%	0%	12%	580	408
2015 Vote	LPC	3%	83%	5%	1%	0%	0%	8%	522	534
	CPC	82%	5%	1%	1%	0%	1%	10%	347	368
	NDP	3%	17%	64%	2%	2%	0%	12%	306	242
	GPC	2%	6%	2%	71%	1%	3%	16%	74	46
	BQ	9%	7%	3%	3%	69%	0%	8%	77	67
	Other	12%	18%	0%	5%	4%	21%	40%	28	15
	NET	26%	40%	15%	4%	4%	1%	10%	1354	1272

If a federal election was held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you vote for in your constituency?

Sample size: 1,304

Comparable MoE: $\pm 2.8\%$, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: January 9 to 12, 2016

		LPC	CPC	NDP	GPC	BQ	Other	Raw	Weighted
Region	Canada	45%	28%	17%	5%	5%	1%	1304	1228
	BC	43%	23%	21%	11%	0%	1%	260	154
	AB	29%	52%	11%	5%	0%	3%	92	119
	SK/MB	30%	51%	14%	4%	0%	1%	86	73
	ON	45%	34%	16%	4%	0%	1%	353	451
	QC	46%	14%	19%	3%	17%	0%	432	330
	Atlantic	64%	15%	16%	5%	0%	0%	81	102
Gender	Male	43%	30%	16%	5%	4%	1%	691	618
	Female	46%	26%	18%	5%	5%	1%	613	611
Age	18 - 29	54%	21%	15%	6%	4%	0%	195	245
	30 - 44	40%	25%	23%	6%	5%	1%	346	307
	45 - 59	46%	29%	15%	4%	4%	1%	399	368
	60 and over	40%	36%	15%	2%	6%	1%	364	309
Education	HS or less	38%	32%	18%	5%	5%	1%	281	418
	College	43%	28%	17%	5%	5%	1%	502	451
	University	53%	24%	15%	4%	3%	0%	521	359
2015 Vote	LPC	90%	3%	6%	1%	0%	0%	492	492
	CPC	5%	91%	2%	1%	0%	1%	317	333
	NDP	19%	3%	73%	3%	2%	0%	277	213
	GPC	7%	2%	3%	84%	1%	4%	62	39
	BQ	7%	10%	4%	3%	75%	0%	71	61
	Other	31%	20%	0%	9%	6%	35%	17	9
	NET	44%	29%	17%	4%	5%	1%	1236	1148