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One in Eight (13%) Canadians is Completely Undecided on How to Vote

Analysis Explores Who They Are, How They Feel, and What's Important to Them

Toronto, ON, September 9, 2021 — Over the course of the election campaign, Ipsos polling has revealed that one in eight (13%) Canadians is completely undecided on how they will vote in this federal election. A closer examination of this key group of voters reveals who they are, how they feel and what is important to them when considering how to cast their ballot.

Who Are They?

The following reflects the demographic composition of undecided voters:

- Two in three (67%) are women; one in three (33%) are men.
- Four in ten (36%) are between the ages of 35 and 54 years; 30% are between the ages of 18 and 34 years; One in three (34%) are aged 55+ years.
- One in four (26%) have children in the household; three quarters (74%) do not.

Undecided voters often end up being non-voters come election day. In a low turnout election, these voters could be among the hardest to motivate. Even in high-turnout elections, over 30% of eligible voters decided not to vote. If the debates don't help to convince these voters one way or the other, it's likely that many of them will simply not vote.

How Do They Feel about Justin Trudeau?

As a whole, this group is slightly less complimentary towards the Prime Minister than the general population:

- Fewer than half (44%) approve of the performance of the Liberal government under Justin Trudeau (vs. 47% national average).
- 35% believe that the Trudeau government has done a good job and deserves re-election (v. 39% national average).
- Two in three (64%) say it is time for another federal party to take over (v. 61% national average).
- Four in ten (42%) say the country is headed in the right direction (48% national average), while 57% say the country is on the wrong track (v. 50% national average).
- Four in ten (44%) approve of the federal government's management of the Canadian economy (v. 53% national average).

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Despite being less than enthusiastic about the prime minister's performance, they do not see a strong alternative:

- Four in ten (41%) believe that Justin Trudeau would make the best prime minister of Canada (v. 37% national average), while fewer say the same about Jagmeet Singh (26% of undecideds v. 26% national average) or Erin O'Toole (18% of undecideds v. 27% national average).

They are significantly less likely than the general population to believe that Justin Trudeau is best described as the leader who will protect the interests of cultural, religious and other minorities (17% v. 27% national average), as someone who is best to manage during tough economic times (21% v. 30% national average), as someone whose values best represent their own (17% v. 25% national average) as someone who has the best temperament and maturity to be Prime Minister (22% v. 31% national average), and as someone who gives them hope for the future (17% v. 25% national average).

What Issues are Most Important?

While healthcare (34%) and the pandemic (33%) are the two most-important issues for undecided voters in this election campaign, third on their list is affordability and the cost of living (30%), significantly higher than the 23% of the general population who cite this issue as being among their top priorities. Rounding out the top-five issues are climate change (21%) and affordability and availability of housing (21%), which once again over-indexes among this group compared to the general population (14%).

One of the main points of differentiation between the average Canadian and undecided voters is that the vast majority (78%) of undecided voters don't know which party has the best plan or the country's post-COVID future, believing they're all the same. By comparison, just three in ten (30%) Canadians overall say they're unsure of which party has the best plan for a post-COVID future.

How Do They Feel about This Election?

Undecided voters are more likely to feel apathetic towards the election than Canadians who have already made up their mind, suggesting that they might be less engaged in the campaign and therefore less likely to vote as a result.

- Nearly half (47%) agree that they don't really like any of the parties in this election (v. 35% national average).
- One half (50%) believe we shouldn't be having an election during the pandemic (v. 57% national average).
- Only 45% feel safe going to a polling station to cast their ballot in person (vs. 67% national average).



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These data suggest that undecided voters might be difficult to motivate on election day to get out and cast their ballot (or in an advance poll or mail-in ballot). If the leaders can woo these voters with their campaign promises, getting them to actually show up and cast their ballot may be a different challenge altogether.

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About the Study

These are some of the findings of Ipsos polling conducted between August 13 and September 6, 2021 on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of n = 6,502 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed. A sample of n = 6,002 was interviewed online, via the Ipsos I-Say panel and non-panel sources, and respondents earn a nominal incentive for their participation. A sample of n = 500 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed by live-interview telephone interviewers by landline and cellphone, using random-digit dialing. Quotas and weighting were employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. From this sample, n = 774 respondents said they were undecided, and these respondents are the focus of this factum.

The precision of Ipsos polls which include non-probability sampling is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 4.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all undecided Canadians been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error. Ipsos abides by the disclosure standards established by the CRIC, found here: <https://canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca/standards/>

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<https://ipsosintelligence.ca/canadiancontext/>

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