



Ontario Politics in the time of COVID-19

Public Opinion Research
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Ontario Politics in the time of COVID-19

The COVID-19 outbreak has set off a series of changes in the Canadian political landscape. In Ontario, Ford's leadership favourables have dropped again as the PCs remain in a tight race with the Ontario Liberals.

Today, INNOVATIVE is releasing results from our April 2021 Canada This Month survey. This online survey was in field from April 1st to 13th with a weighted sample size of 800 Ontario residents. Detailed methodology is provided in the appendix.

This report covers key results on how Ontarians rate their government's handling of the COVID-19 outbreak, Ontario vote choice, and evaluation of party leaders.

Government Approval

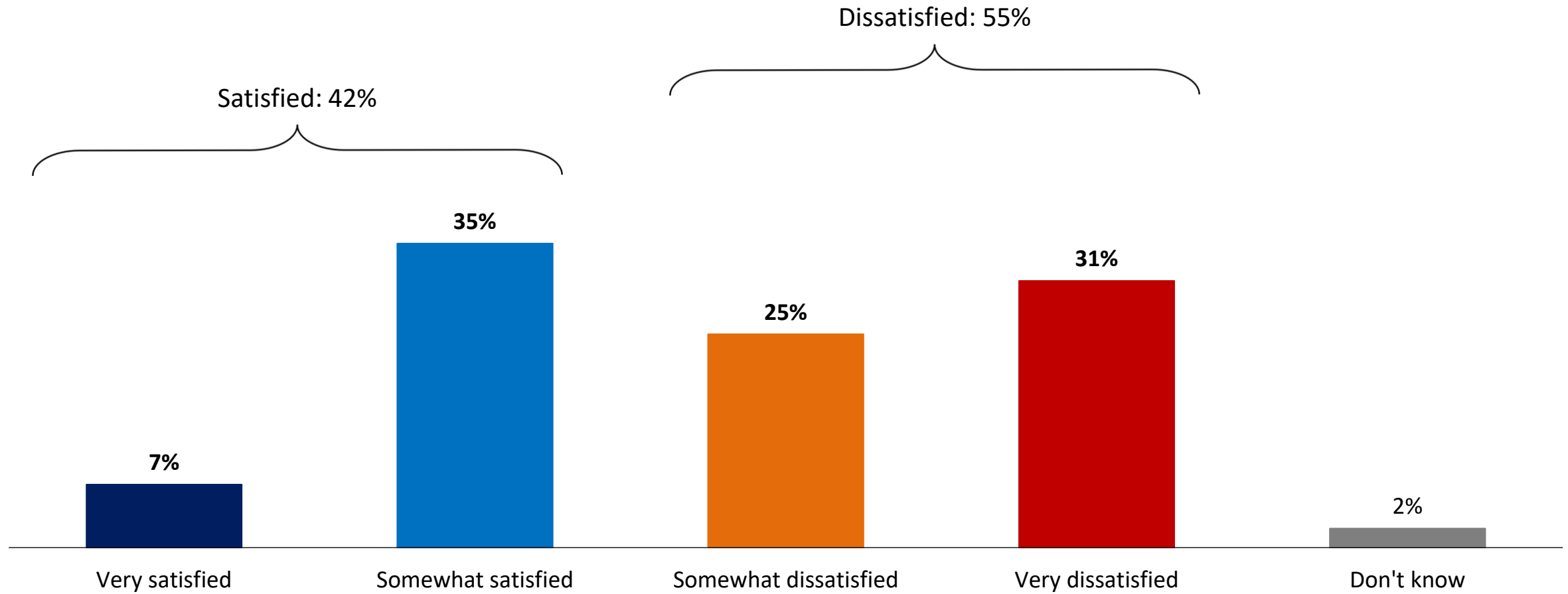
Ontario government satisfaction is down month to month to only 42% while 55% are dissatisfied. On their handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, only 33% approve while 54% now disapprove.

Ontario Government Approval: Over half (55%) say they are dissatisfied with the performance of the provincial gov't in Ontario



Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with the performance of the PROVINCIAL government in Ontario? Would you say you are...?

[asked of all respondents; n=800]

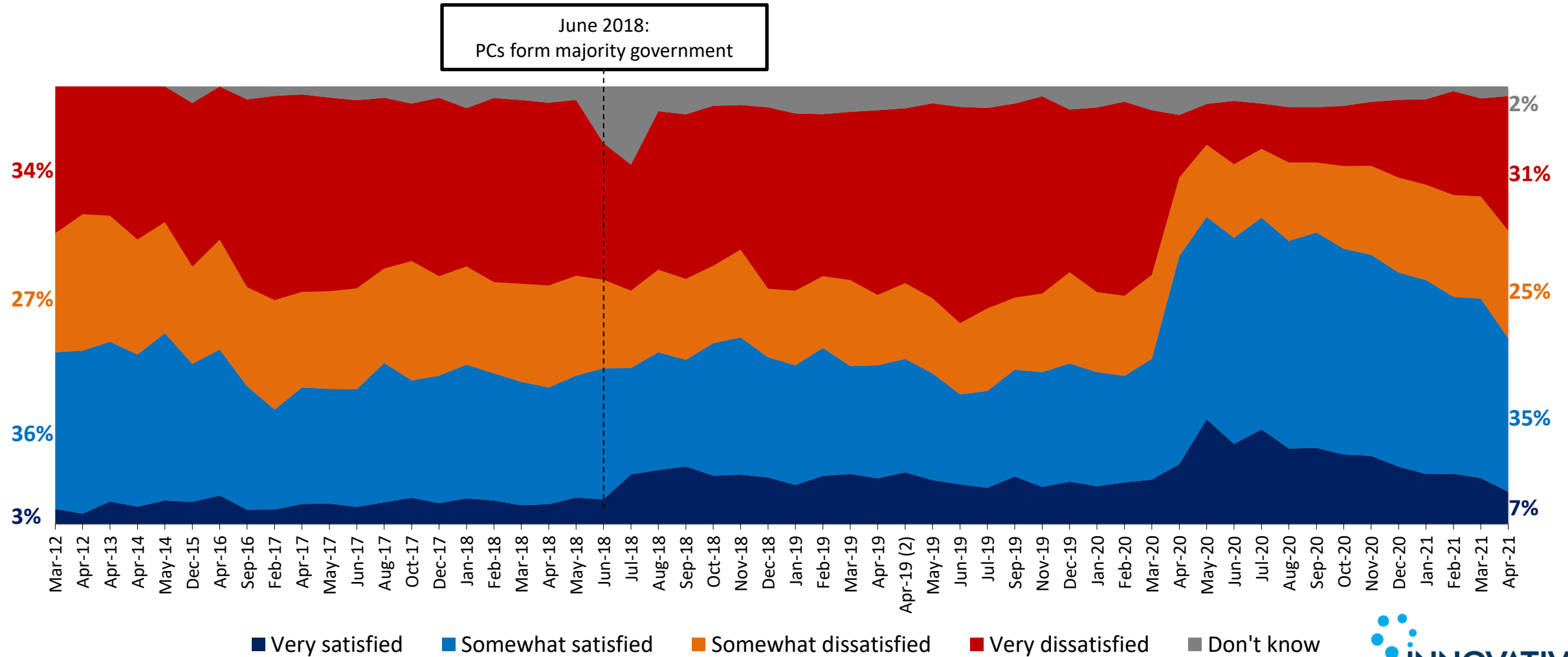


Government Approval Tracking: The share of Ontarians saying they are satisfied with the provincial gov't is down 9 points month-to-month



Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with the performance of the PROVINCIAL government in Ontario? Would you say you are...?

[asked of all respondents; n=800]

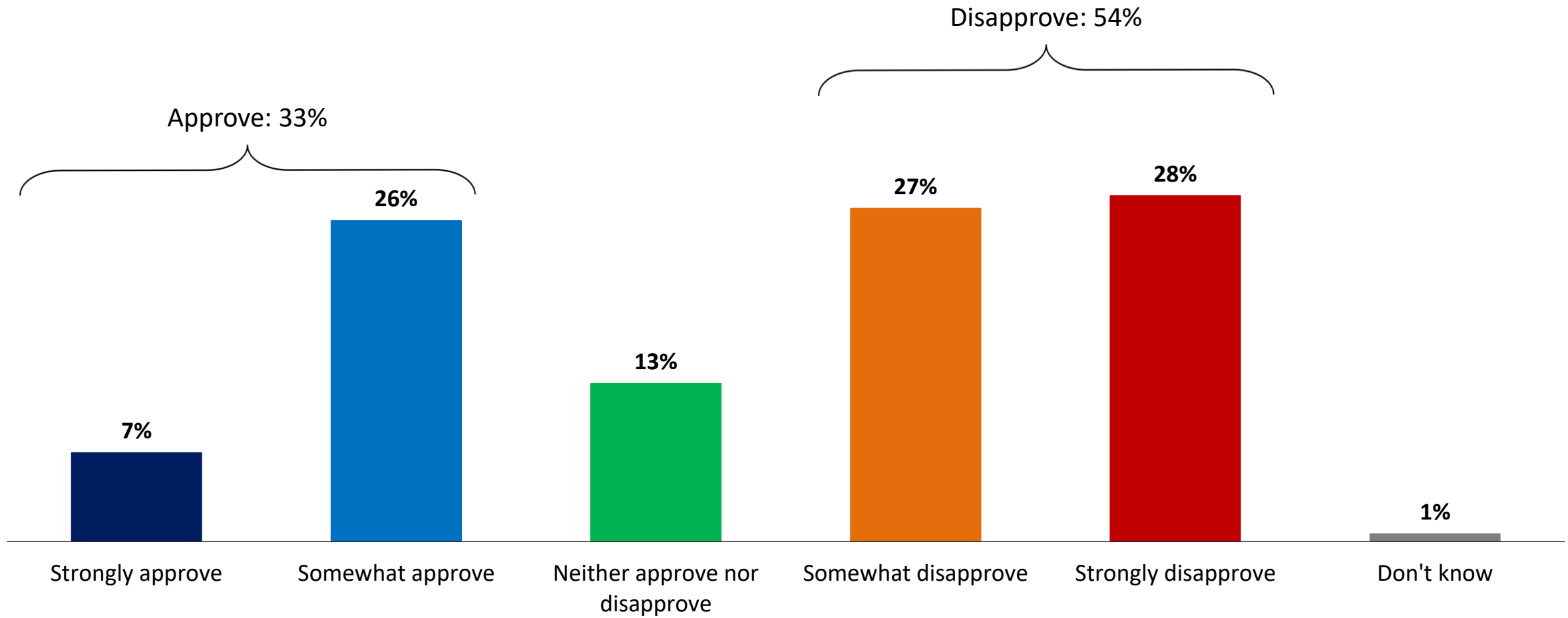


COVID-19 Handling: When it comes to COVID handling specifically, over half (54%) disapprove of the ON provincial gov't



Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Ontario Government has handled the outbreak of COVID-19?

[asked of all respondents; n=800]

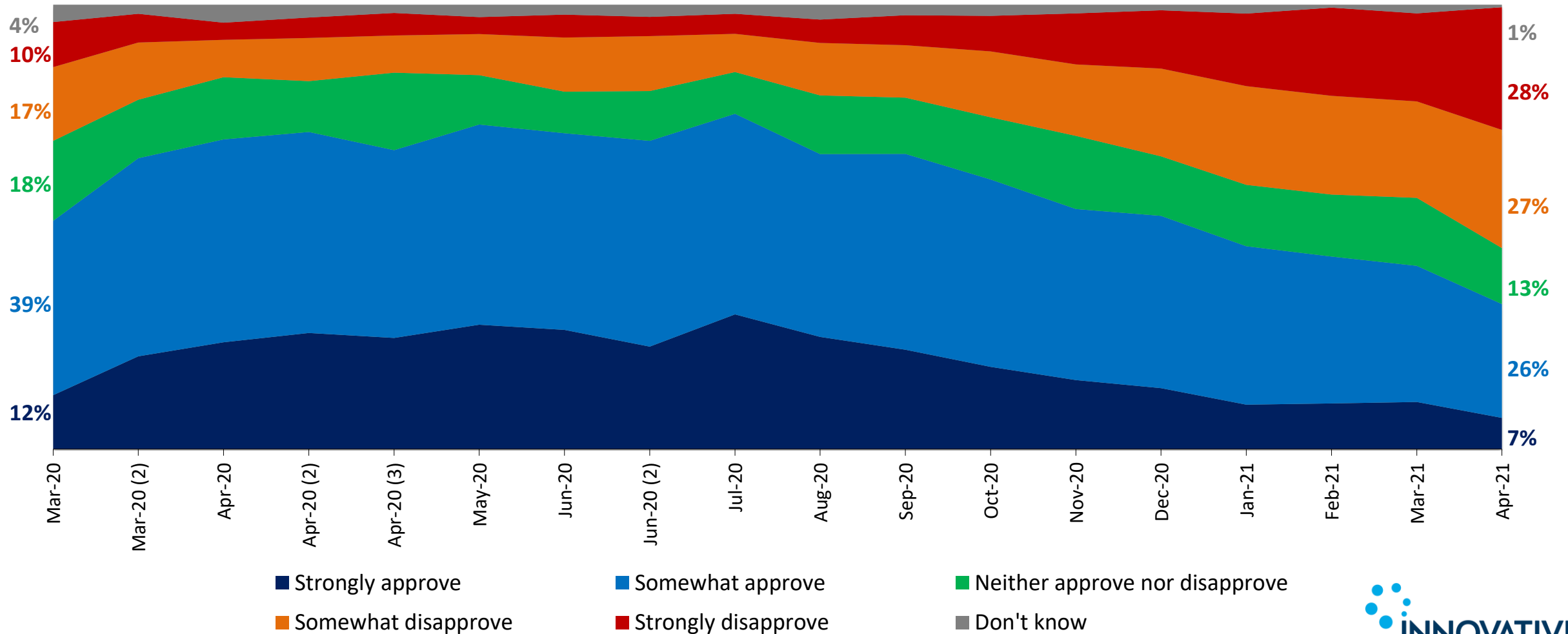


COVID-19 Handling Tracking: Approval of the Ontario gov'ts handling of COVID-19 has been steadily dropping since July 2020



Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Ontario Government has handled the outbreak of COVID-19?

[asked of all respondents; n=800]

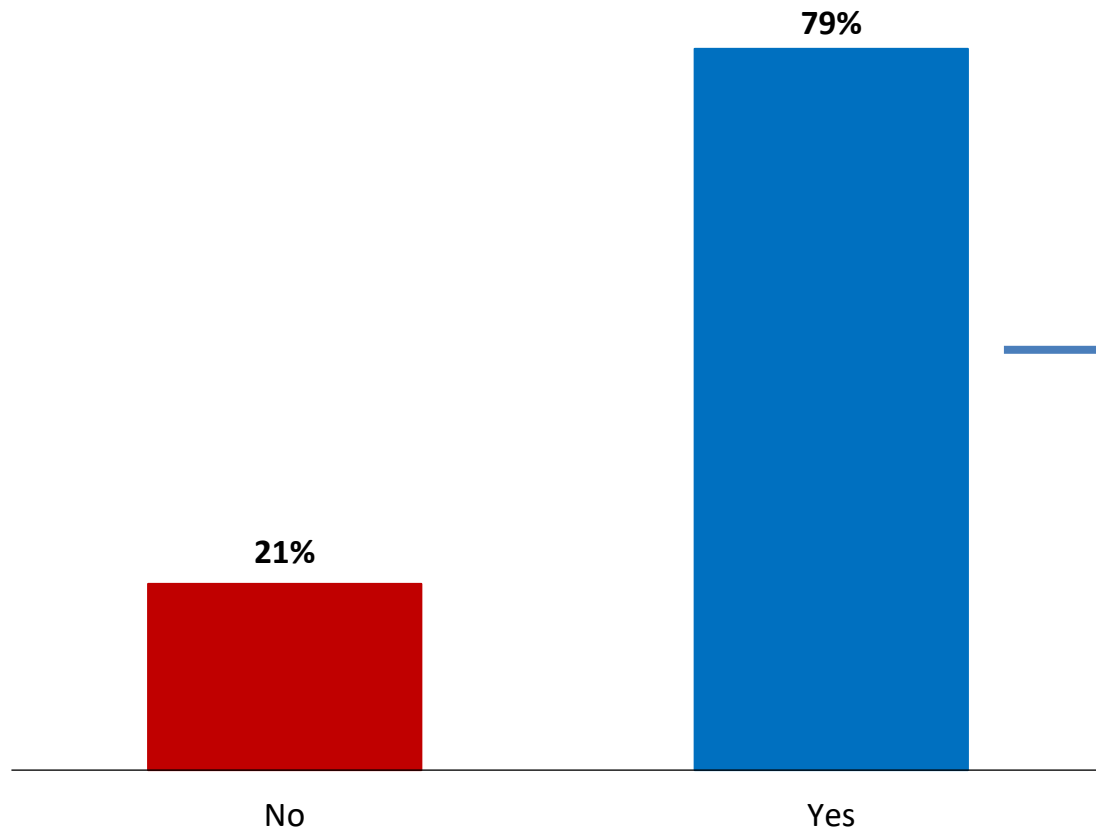


Read, Seen, Heard

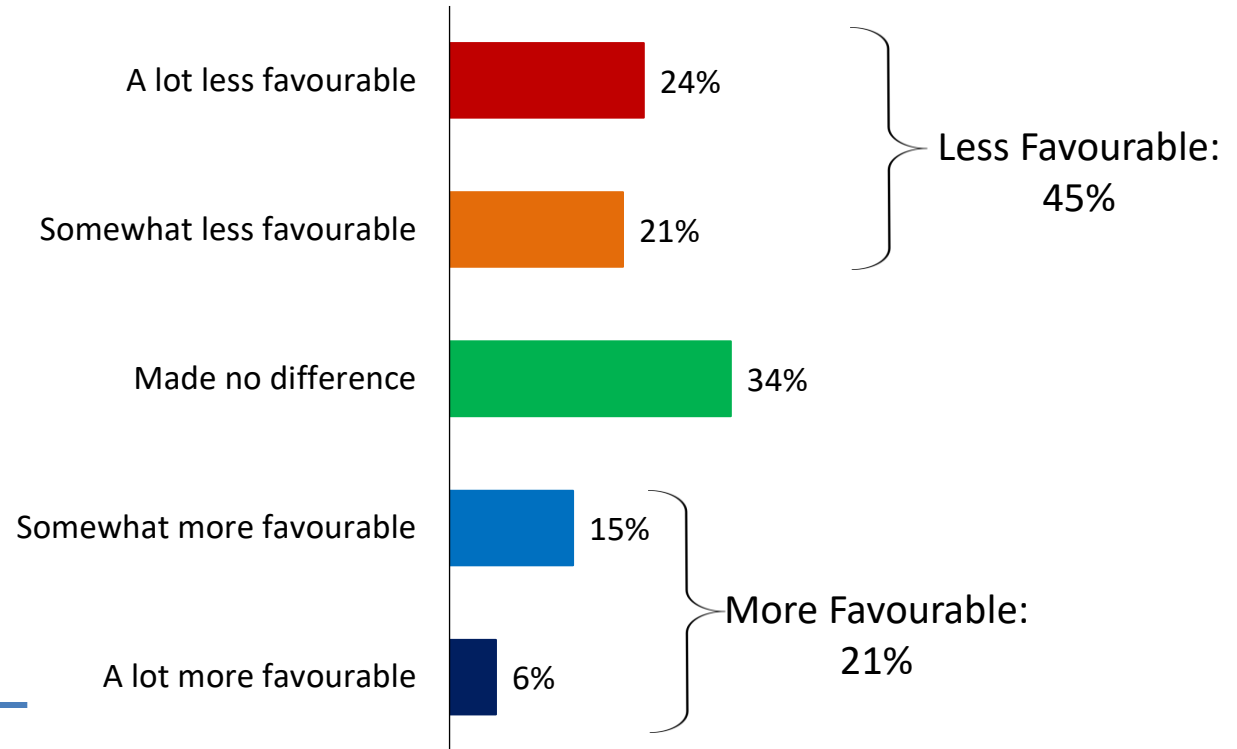
Attention to the Ontario government is at an all time high with 79% saying they have heard something recently. The net impact of what Ontarians have heard is strongly negative.

Ontario Read, Seen, Heard: 4-in-5 (79%) Ontarians have RSH about Ford⁹ and among those who have, half (45%) say it left them less favourable

Q Have you read, seen or heard anything about Doug Ford in the last few days?
[Asked of those who have RSH; n=800]



Q Did what you read, see or hear leave you feeling a lot more favourable, somewhat more favourable, somewhat less favourable or a lot less favourable towards Doug Ford, or did it make no difference?
[Asked of those who have RSH; n=636]

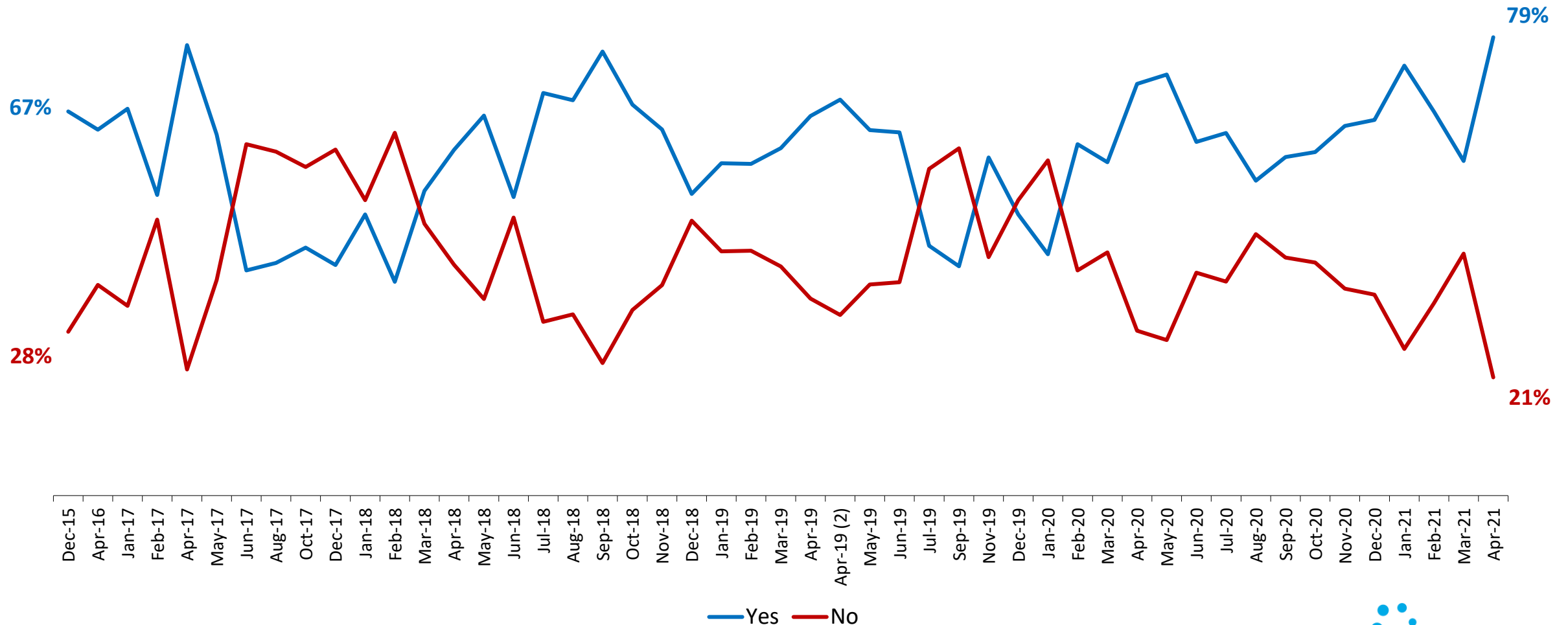


Read, Seen, Heard Tracking: Those saying they have RSH about Ford in the last few days is up from 58% in March to 79% now



Have you read, seen or heard anything about Doug Ford in the last few days?

[asked of all respondents; n=800]

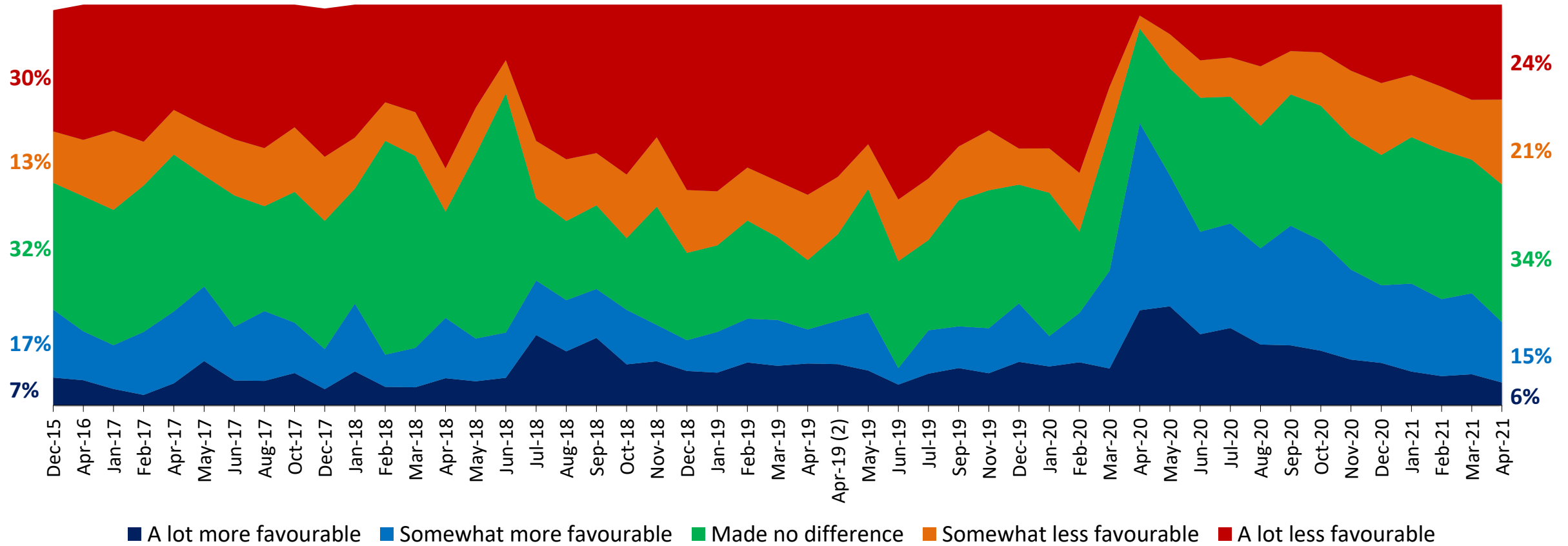


Ontario Read, Seen, Heard, Impact Tracking: The share saying what they RSH left them with a more favourable impression is down 7 points

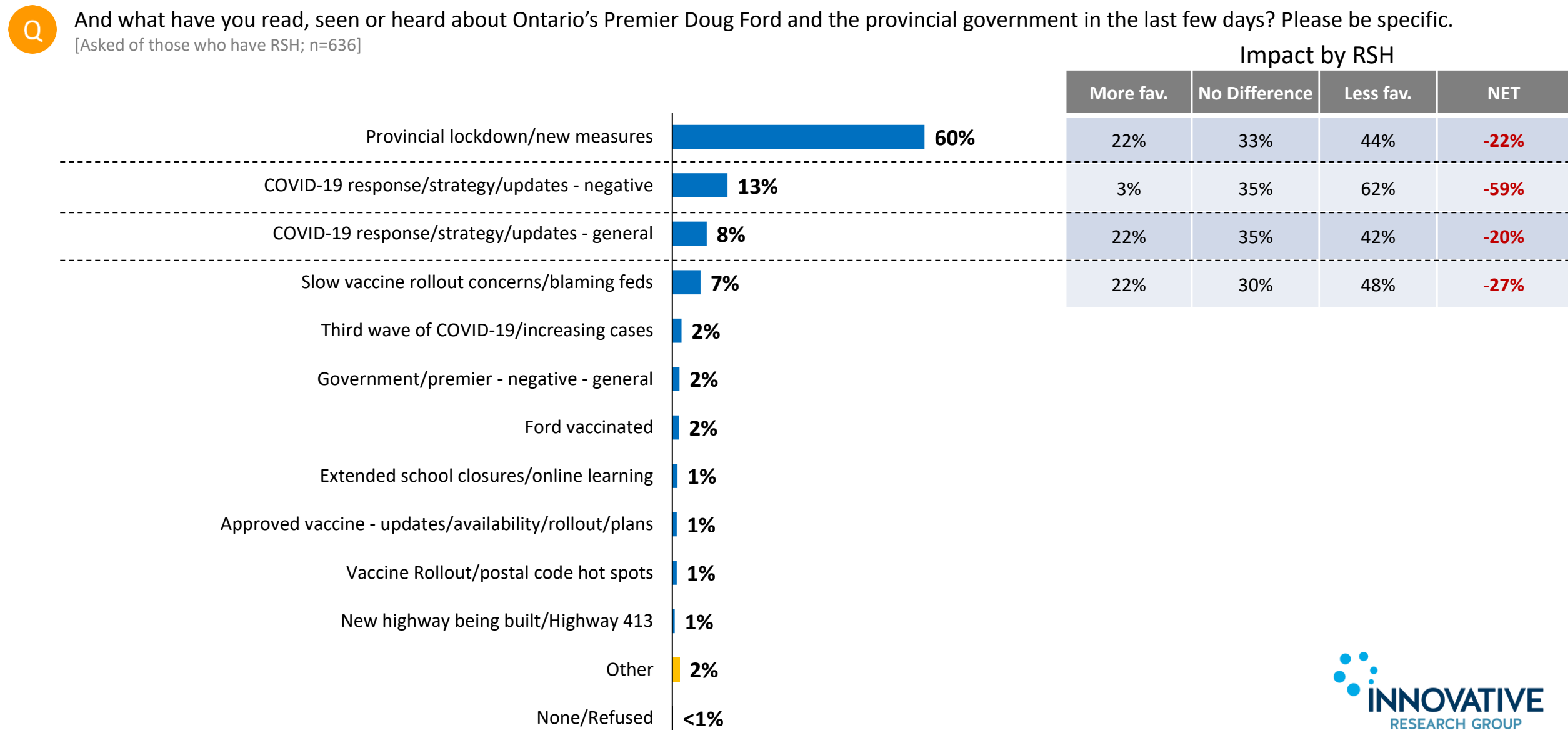


Did what you read, see or hear leave you feeling a lot more favourable, somewhat more favourable, somewhat less favourable or a lot less favourable towards Doug Ford, or did it make no difference?

[asked of those who have RSH; n=636]



3-in-5 (60%) mention the provincial lockdown and new COVID measures followed by negative comments about COVID response



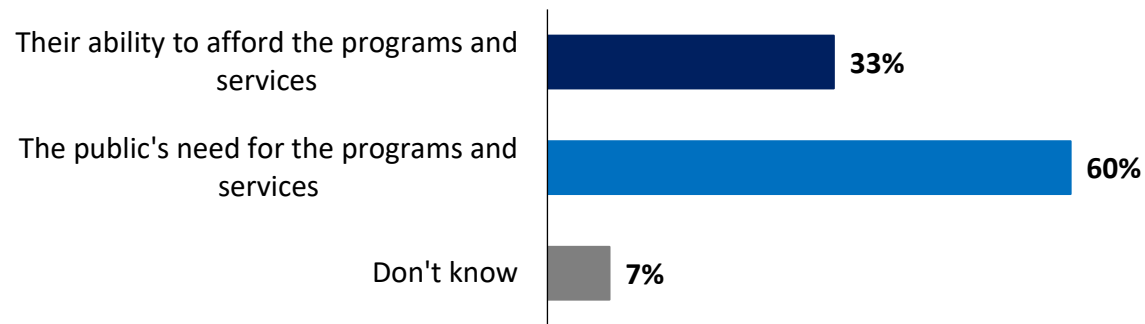
We group individuals into segments based on key political and economic values and attitudes

We use these segments throughout the remainder of the report to analyze vote and leadership results.

Core Political Values: Ontarians are split on whether the government should listen to experts (46%) or common sense (41%)

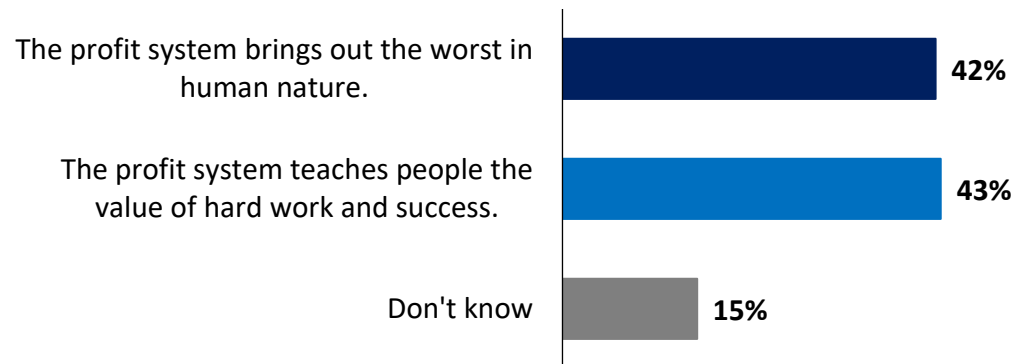
Q Now we would like to ask a few questions about basic values and society...When governments make major decisions concerning spending on programs and services, do you think they should be basing their decisions mainly on...?

[asked of all respondents; n=800]



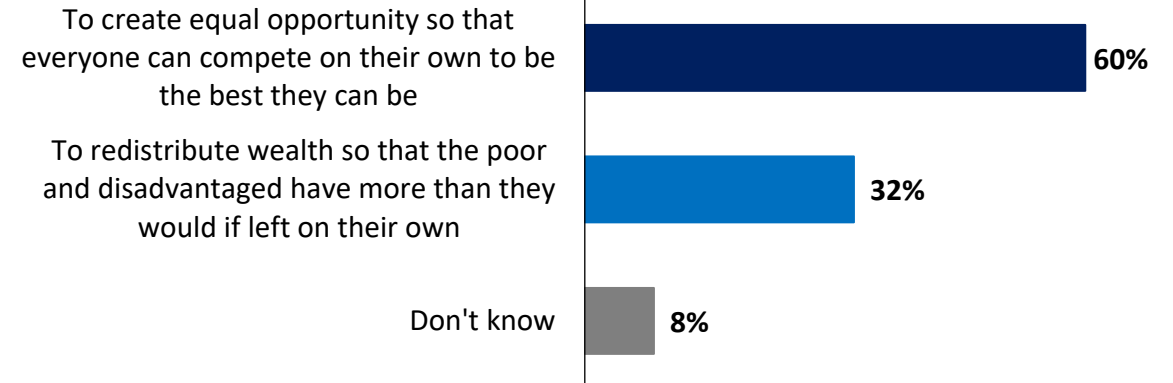
Q Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

[asked of all respondents; n=800]



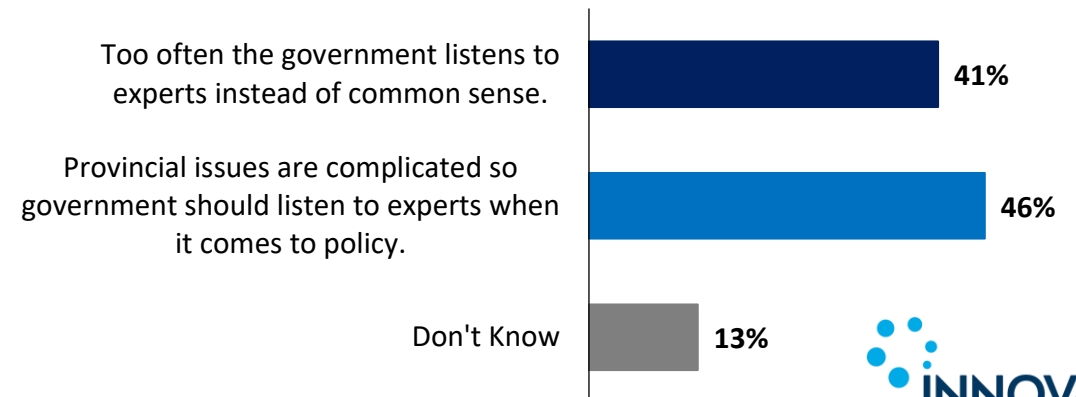
Q Is the main role of government to...?

[asked of all respondents; n=800]



Q When it comes to government decision making, which of the following statements is closest to your view?

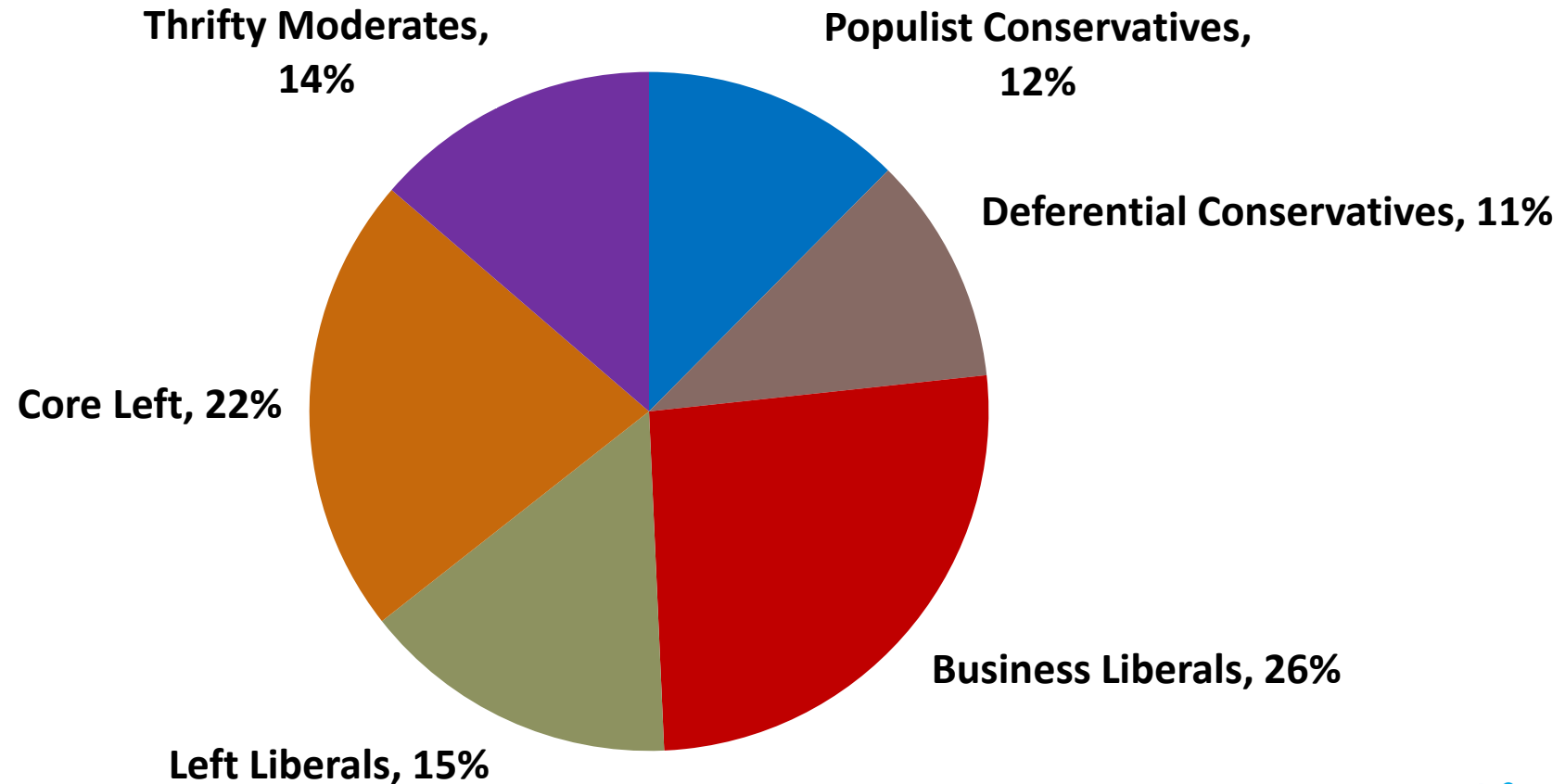
[asked of all respondents; n=800]



Value Clusters: A plurality of Ontarians are either business liberals (26%) or core left (22%)

Clusters are based on 4 basic values: equal opportunity versus redistribution; trust in the profit system; whether spending should be based on ability to afford or public need; and whether government should listen to experts or common sense.

[asked of all respondents; n=800]



Defining Value Clusters: Nearly all Differential and Populist Conservatives say gov't should base decisions on their ability to afford

Core Political Values by Value Clusters

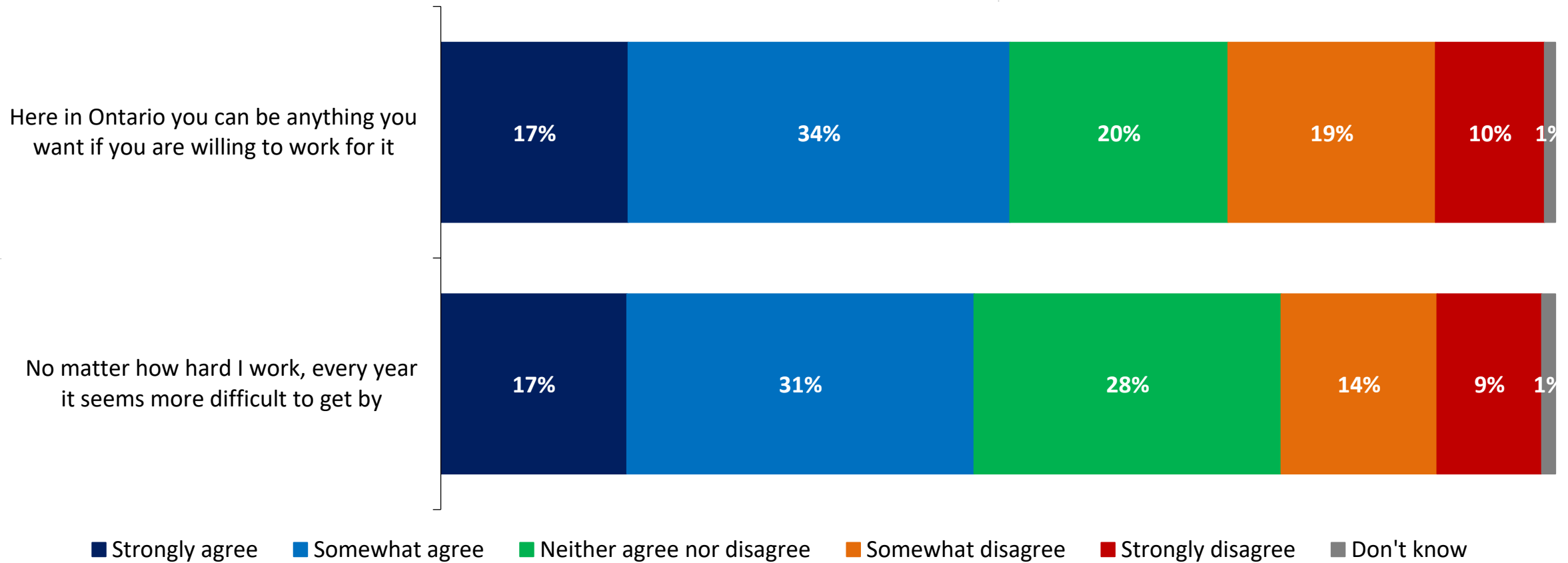
Column %		Populist Conservatives	Deferential Conservatives	Business Liberals	Left Liberals	Core Left	Thrifty Moderates
Governments should base decisions on...	Ability to afford	93%	92%	0%	0%	0%	83%
	Public Need	0%	0%	96%	90%	98%	0%
Is the main role of government to .?	Create equal Opportunity	99%	79%	70%	97%	0%	42%
	Redistribute wealth	0%	15%	19%	0%	93%	38%
When it comes to government decision making...	Rely on common sense	100%	0%	36%	46%	25%	48%
	Listen to experts	0%	89%	55%	36%	62%	26%
The profit system...	Brings out the worst in human nature	0%	0%	0%	80%	90%	76%
	Teaches value of hard work and success	92%	87%	82%	0%	0%	4%

Segmentation Attitudes: A majority of Ontarians (52%) believe that you can be anything you want if you're willing to work for it



Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

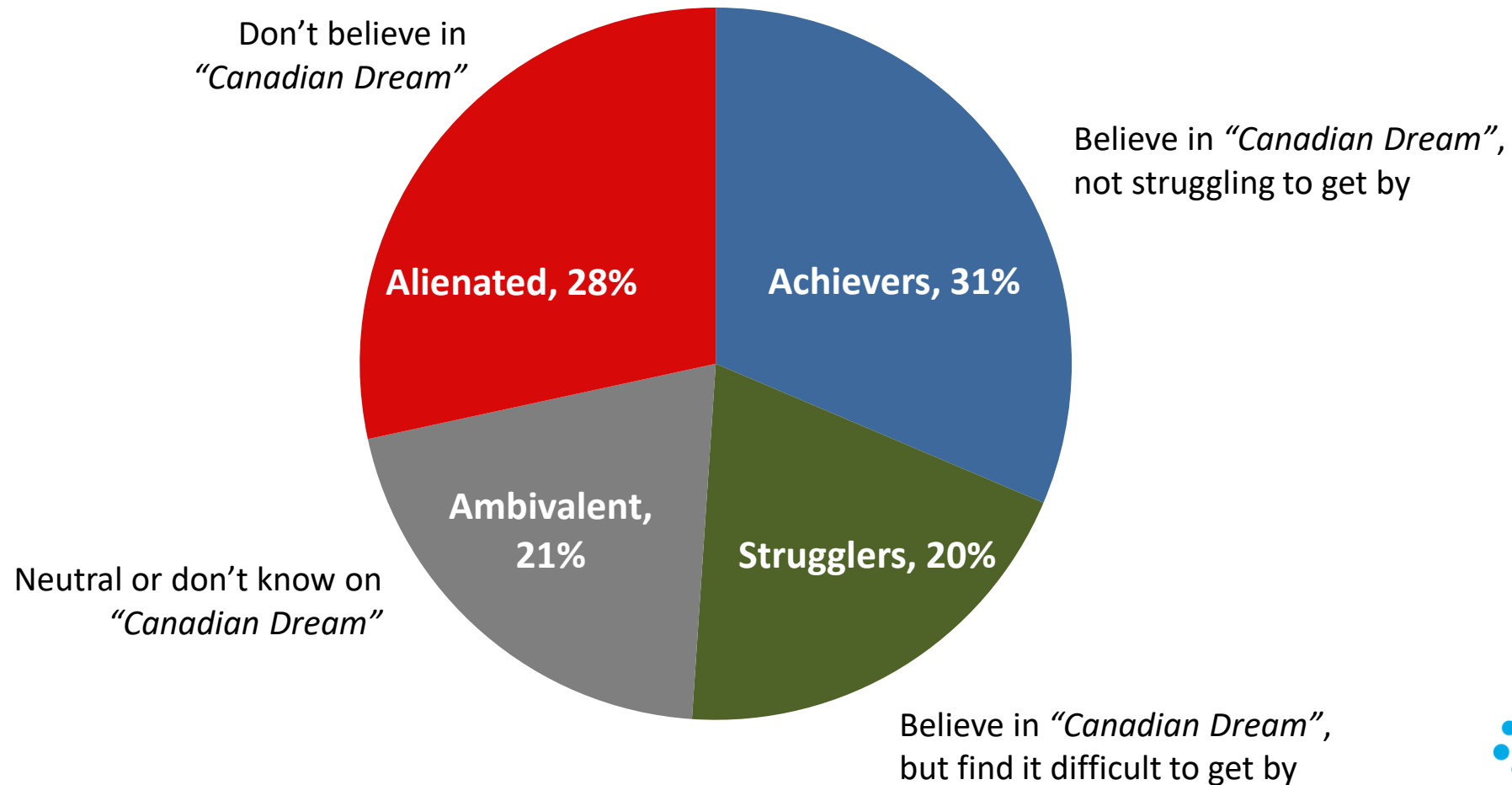
[asked of all respondents; n=800]



Economic Gap Segmentation: A majority of Ontarians are either dream achievers (31%) or alienated (28%)

Gap segmentation: Agree with 'Here in Ontario you can be anything you want if you are willing to work for it' BY Agree with 'No matter how hard I work, every year it seems more difficult to get by'.

[asked of all respondents; n=800]



Leadership

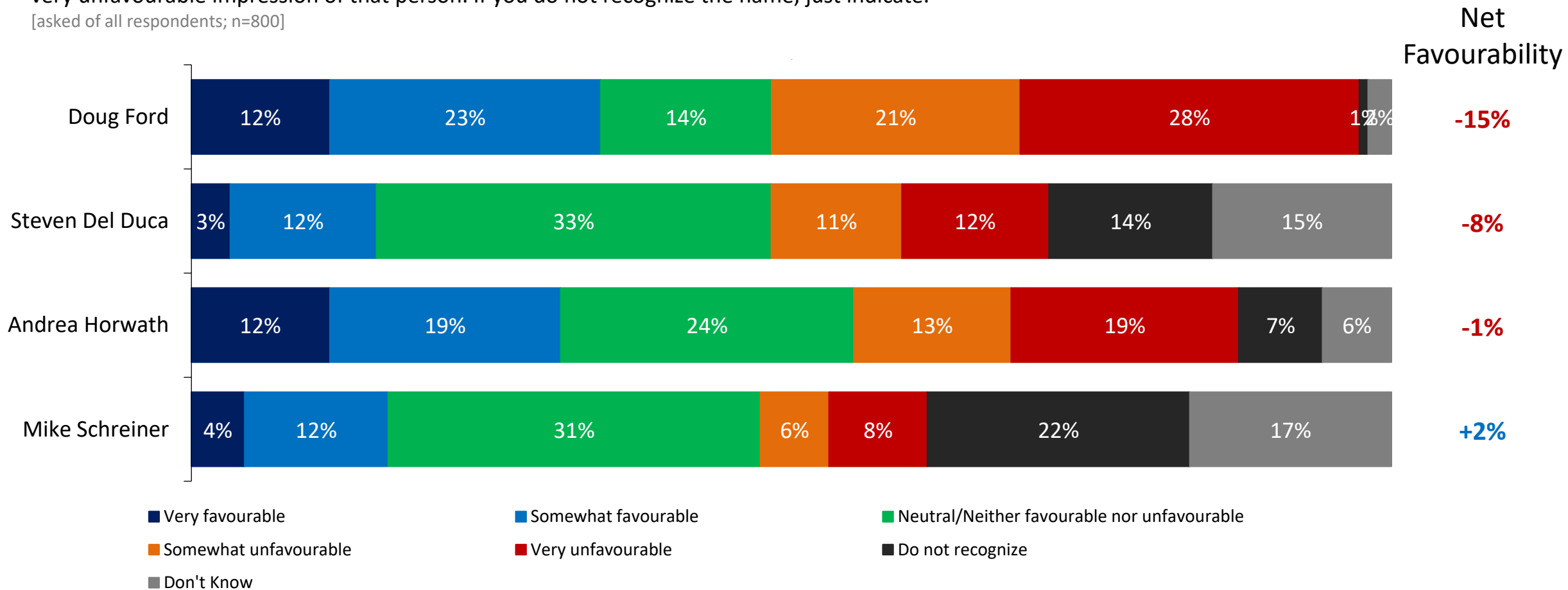
Ford continues to hold a lead on best premier, but this lead has shrunk significantly since March, while his net favourability has dropped from -2% to -15%.

Leader Favourables: Just under half of Ontarians have an unfavourable impression of Doug Ford (49%)²⁰



Below are the names of several individuals who have been mentioned in the news recently. For each one, please indicate whether you have heard of that person and, if so, whether you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, neither favourable or unfavourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of that person. If you do not recognize the name, just indicate.

[asked of all respondents; n=800]

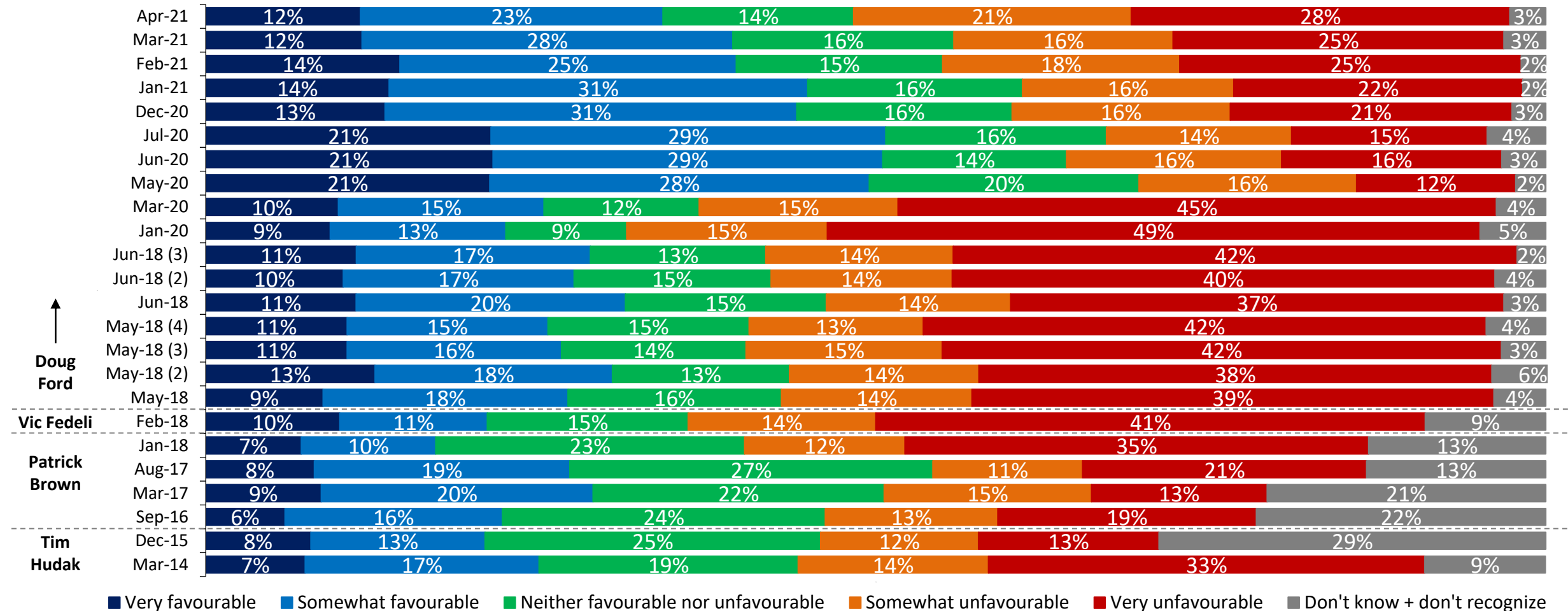


Doug Ford Favourability: Negative impressions of Doug Ford are up since March from 41% to 49%



Below are the names of several individuals who have been mentioned in the news recently. For each one, please indicate whether you have heard of that person and, if so, whether you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, neither favourable or unfavourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of that person. If you do not recognize the name, just indicate.

[asked of all respondents; n=800]

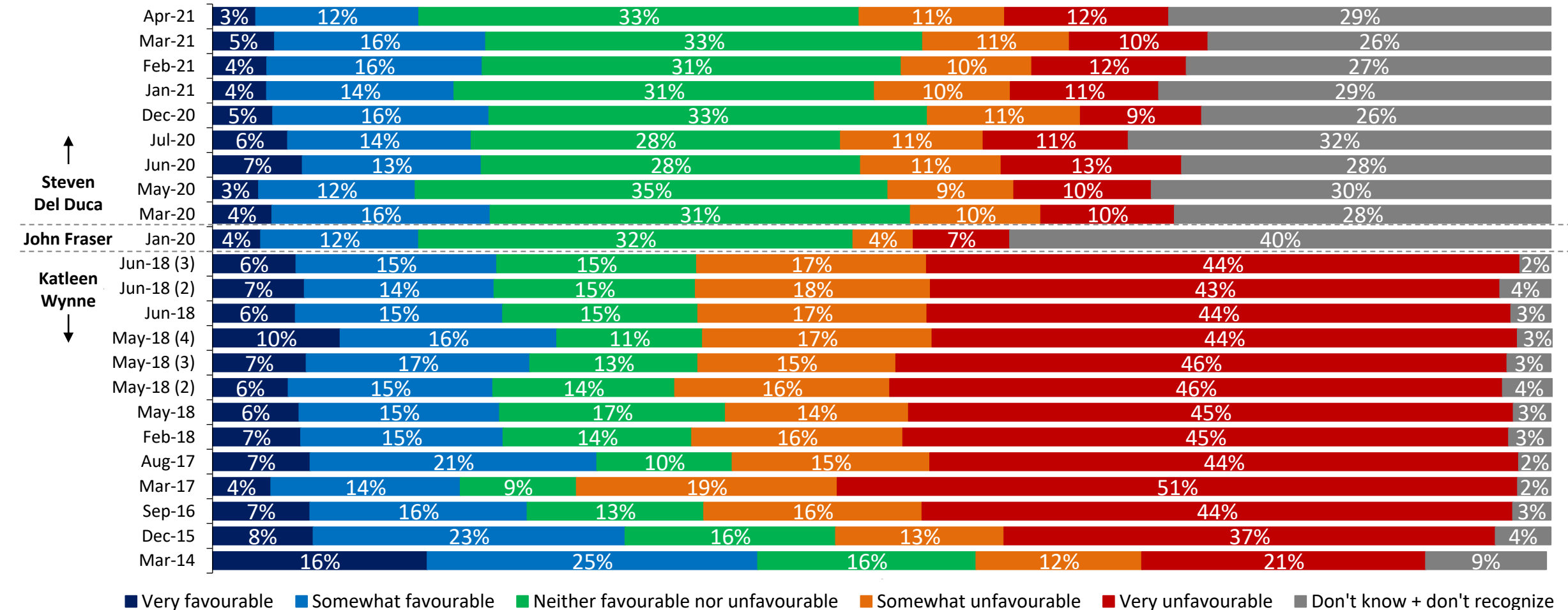


Steven Del Duca Favourability: Del Duca's favourability of down 5 points month-to-month from 20% to 15%



Below are the names of several individuals who have been mentioned in the news recently. For each one, please indicate whether you have heard of that person and, if so, whether you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, neither favourable or unfavourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of that person. If you do not recognize the name, just indicate.

[asked of all respondents; n=800]

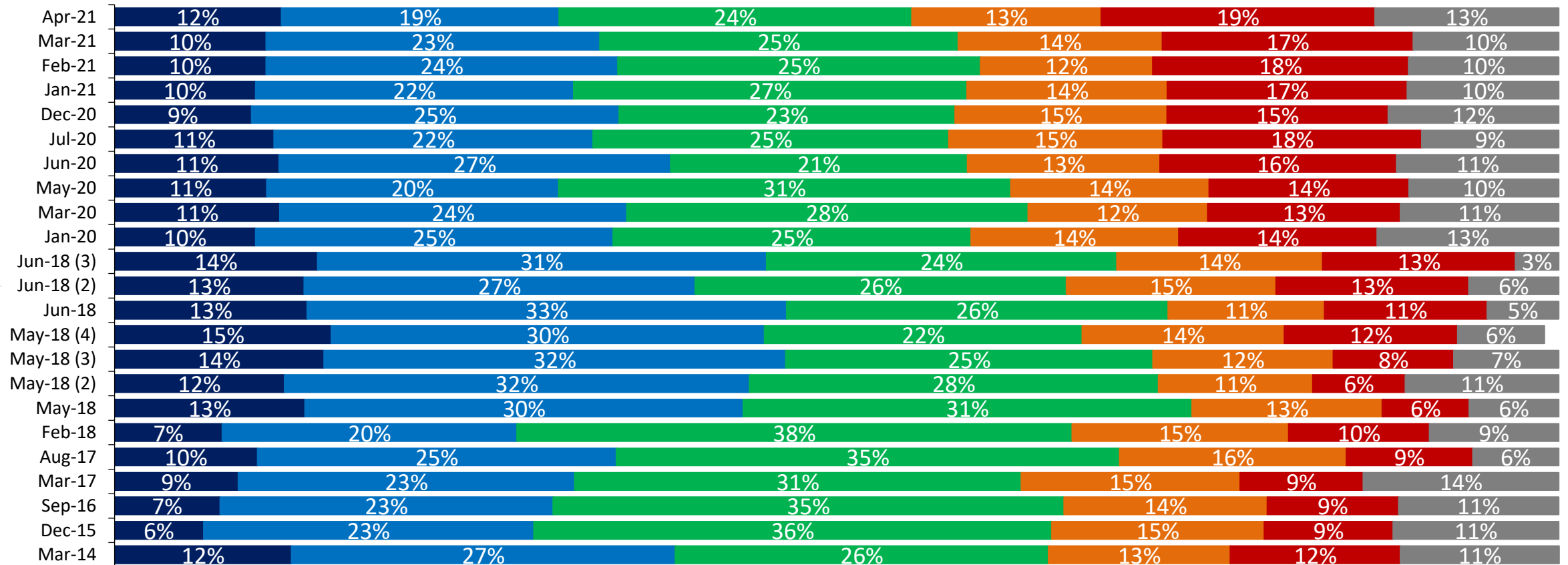


Andrea Horwath Favourability: Favourable impressions of Horwath are down from 33% in March to 31% now



Below are the names of several individuals who have been mentioned in the news recently. For each one, please indicate whether you have heard of that person and, if so, whether you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, neither favourable or unfavourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of that person. If you do not recognize the name, just indicate.

[asked of all respondents; n=800]



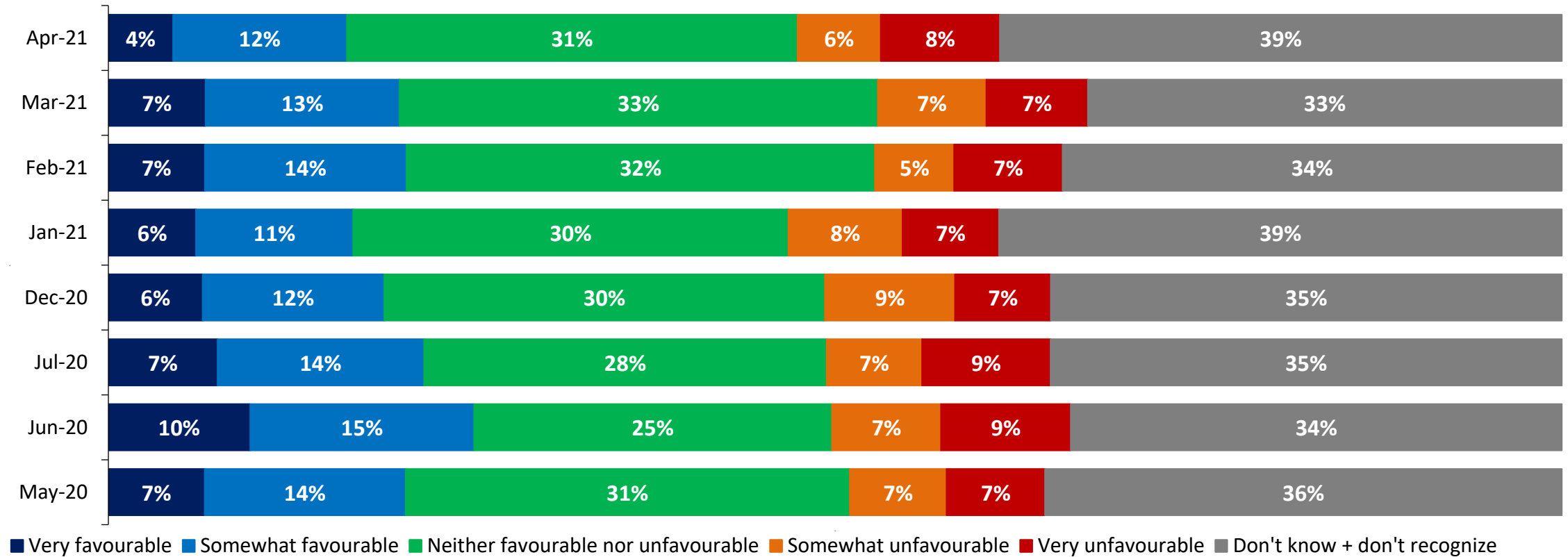
■ Very favourable
 ■ Somewhat favourable
 ■ Neither favourable nor unfavourable
 ■ Somewhat unfavourable
 ■ Very unfavourable
 ■ Don't know + don't recognize

Mike Schreiner Favourability: A plurality (39%) say they don't know or recognize Schreiner



Below are the names of several individuals who have been mentioned in the news recently. For each one, please indicate whether you have heard of that person and, if so, whether you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, neither favourable or unfavourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of that person. If you do not recognize the name, just indicate.

[asked of all respondents; n=800]

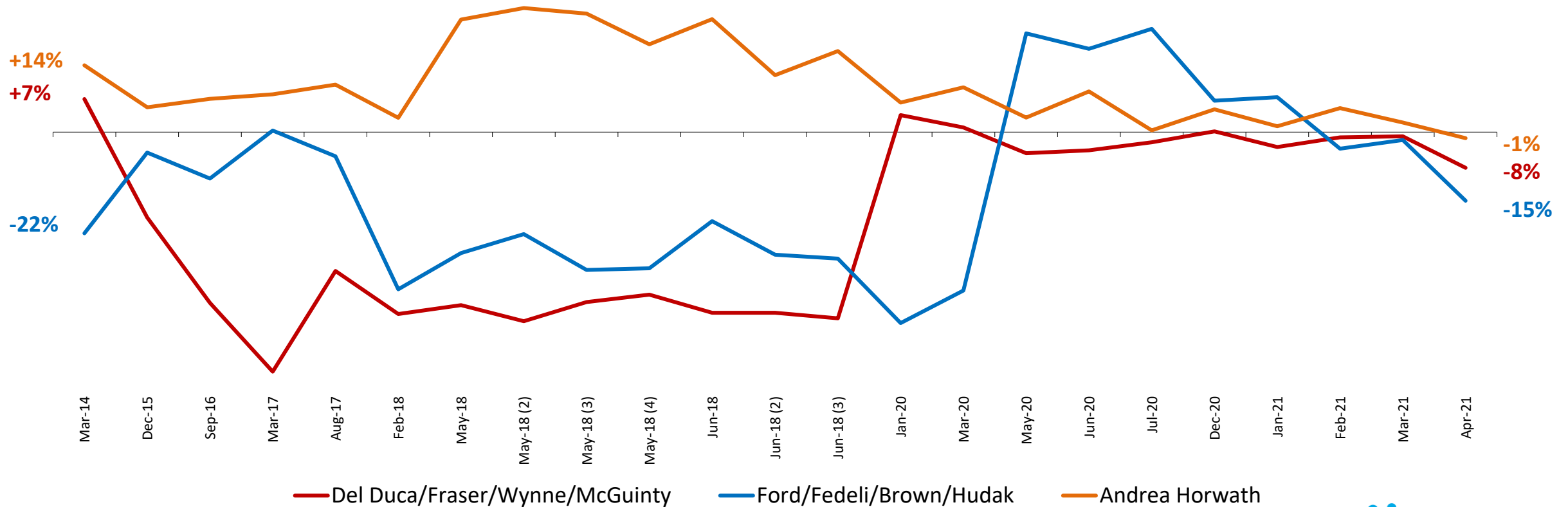


Ontario Party Leader NET Favourables Tracking: Ford continues to slide from a high in July to -15% now

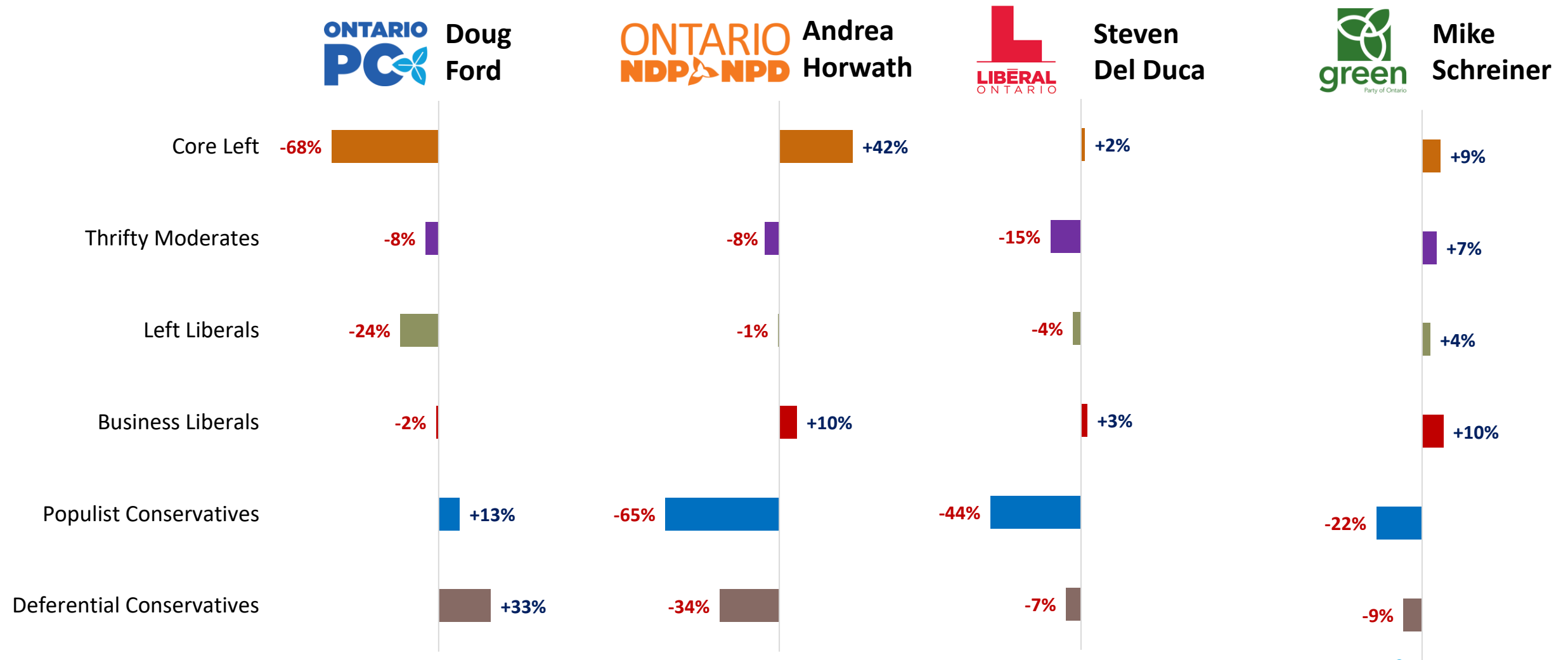
Q

Below are the names of several individuals who have been mentioned in the news recently. For each one, please indicate whether you have heard of that person and, if so, whether you have a very favourable, somewhat favourable, neither favourable or unfavourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable impression of that person. If you do not recognize the name, just indicate.

[asked of all respondents; n=800]



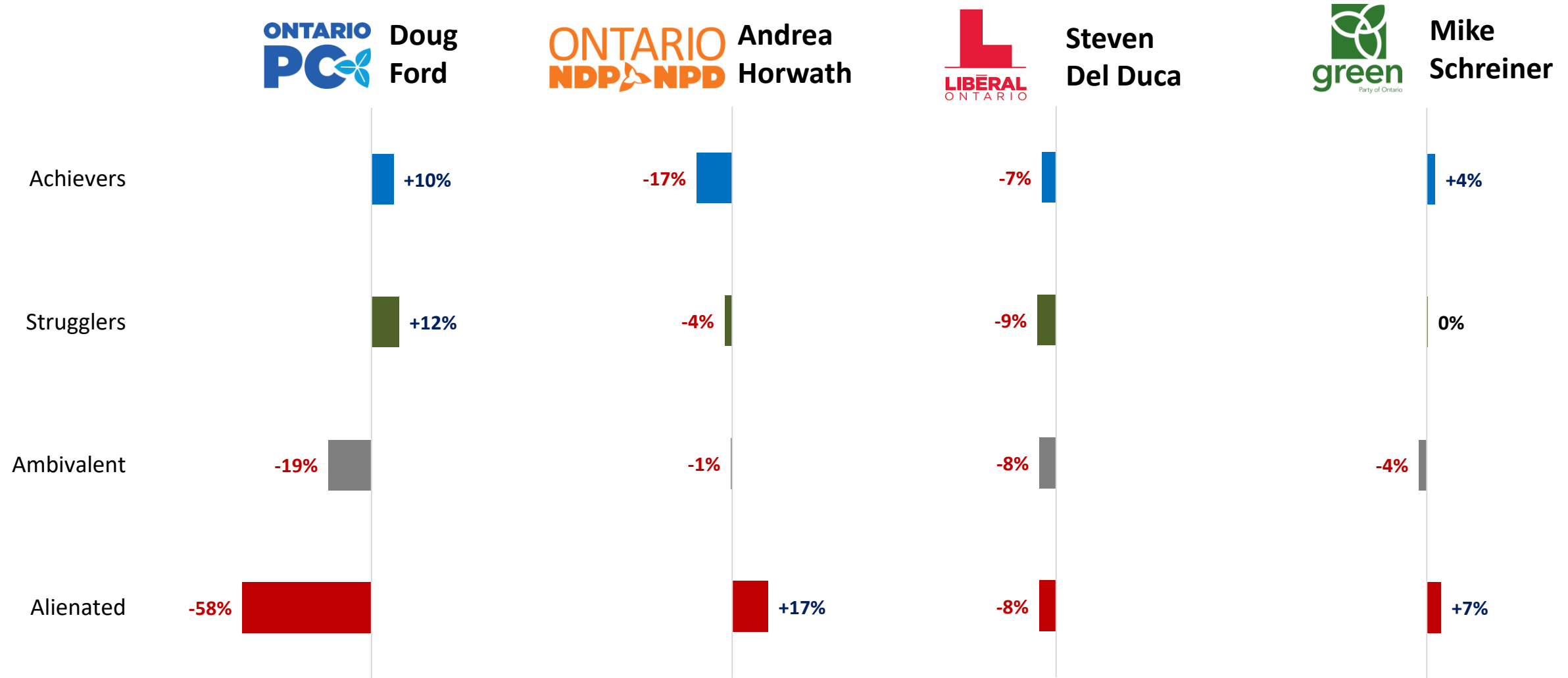
Leader favourability by Value Clusters: Ford is seen more unfavourably than favourably by all groups except for conservatives clusters



NET Favourability by Value Clusters:

Each chart shows the net favourability (% favourable minus % unfavourable) for each leader within INNOVATIVE's 6 value cluster segments.

Leader favourability by Economic Gap: Ford receives positive net scores²⁷ among achievers and strugglers but not ambivalent and alienated

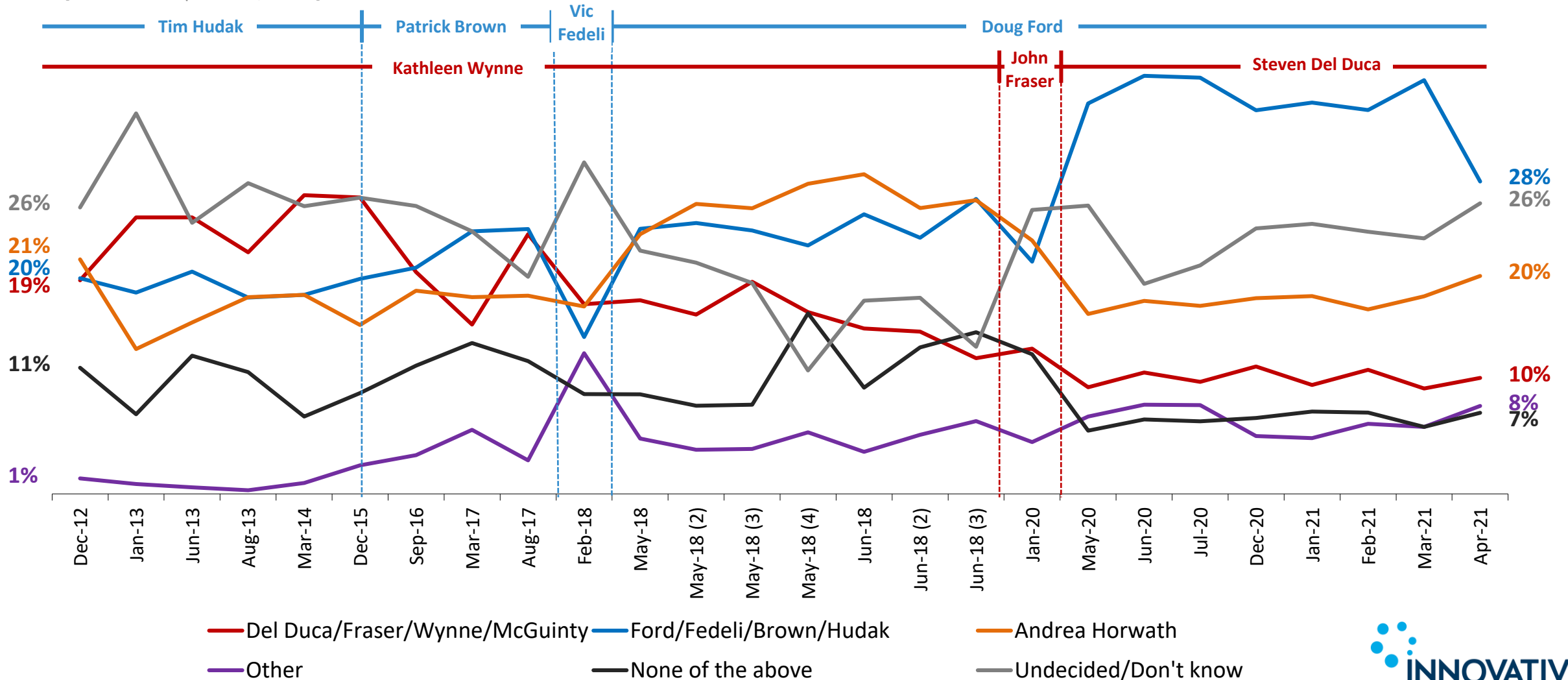


NET Favourability by Economic Gap:

Each chart shows the net favourability (% favourable minus % unfavourable) for each leader within INNOVATIVE's 4 economic gap segments.

Best Premier Tracking: While Ford still has a lead over other party leaders, he is down this month to lowest point since Jan '20

Q Which of the following leaders would make the best Premier of Ontario?
[asked of all respondents; n=800]



The PCs and Liberals are in a tight race in vote share

Innovative reports on vote intention in two ways.

When we ask people who they would vote for if an election were held today, and who they lean towards if they are unsure, we call those results Combined vote. This accounts for the views of everyone in the population including decided voters, undecided voters, and non-voters.

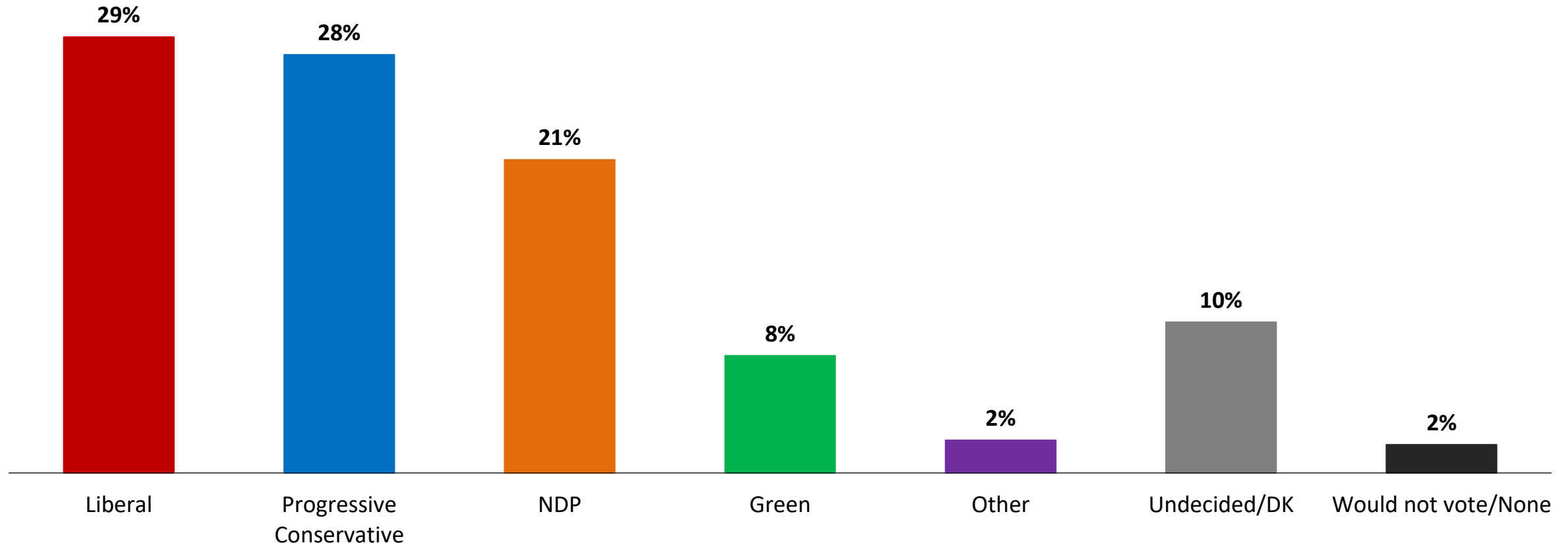
When we look at the results among *only* decided voters, we call that Decided vote. These results most tell us what the election results would be like if the survey results matched the election exactly.

Provincial Combined Vote: The Liberals (29%) and PCs (28%) are neck-in-neck in vote share with the NDP (21%) not too far behind



If a provincial election were held today, which party would you vote for? In that case, which party do you lean toward slightly? **[Vote + Lean]**

[asked of all respondents; n=800]

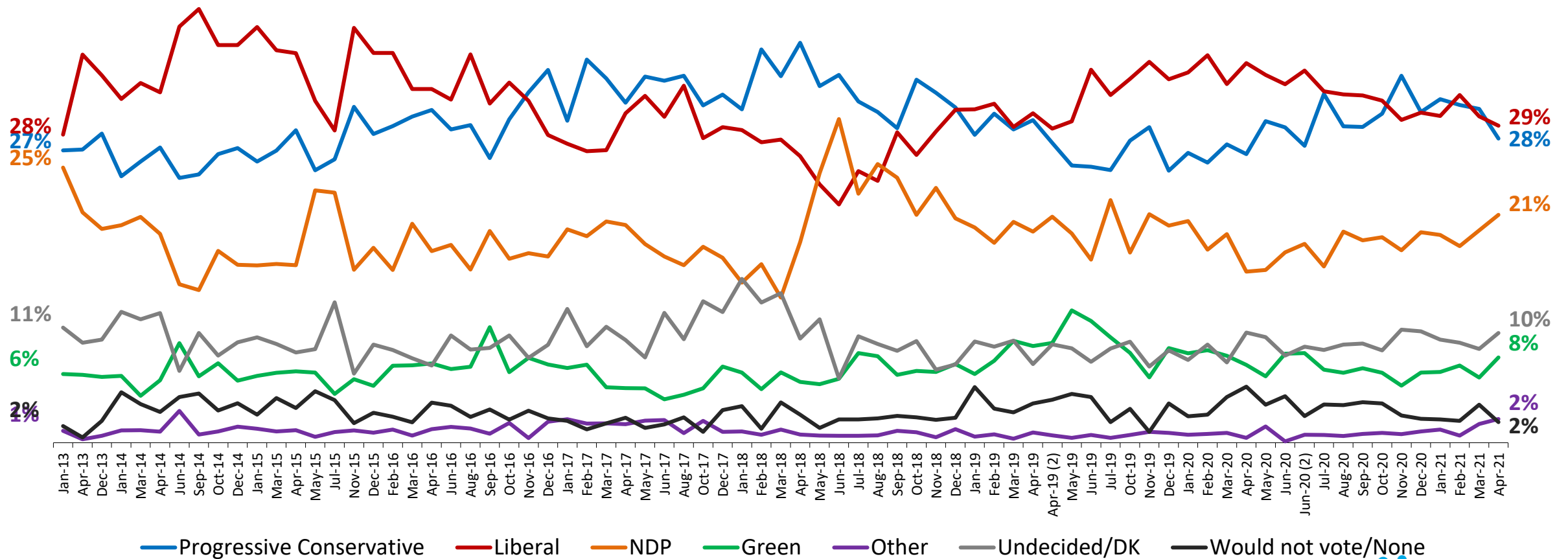


Provincial Vote Tracking: The Liberals and PCs continue to be in a tight vote race with just under one third of the vote for each party



If a provincial election were held today, which party would you vote for? In that case, which party do you lean toward slightly? **[Vote + Lean]**

[asked of all respondents; n=800]

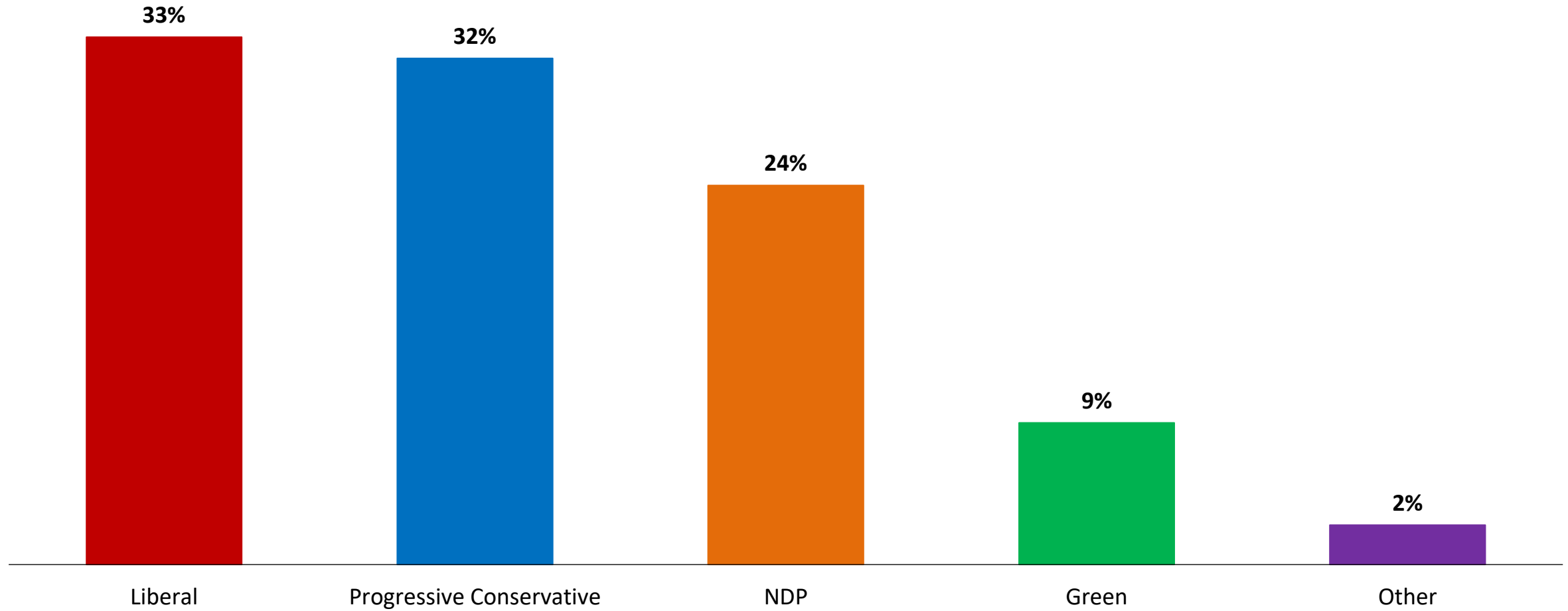


Provincial Decided Vote: 1-in-3 decided voters say they would vote for the Liberals while another third say the PCs



If a provincial election were held today, which party would you vote for? In that case, which party do you lean toward slightly? **[DECIDED]**

[decided voters only; n=704]



If a provincial election were held today, which party would you vote for? In that case, which party do you lean toward slightly? **[DECIDED]**

32%
31%
29%

7%
1%

33%
32%
24%

9%
2%

— Progressive Conservative — Liberal — NDP — Green — Other



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Decided Vote by Region: While the Liberals lead in Toronto, the PCs have a slight lead in the other three regions of Ontario

Decided vote by Region

		Region			
		Toronto	Rest of GTA	South/West	North/East
		(N=148)	(N=179)	(N=189)	(N=189)
Decided Vote	Liberal	44%	36%	27%	28%
	Progressive Conservative	23%	39%	31%	32%
	NDP	23%	17%	26%	29%
	Green	7%	6%	11%	10%
	Other	2%	1%	5%	1%

Decided Vote by Value Cluster: The Liberals have the edge over the PCs among all value clusters except deferential and populist conservatives

Decided Vote	Value Clusters					
	Populist Conservatives	Deferential Conservatives	Business Liberals	Left Liberals	Core Left	Thrifty Moderates
	(N=92)	(N=75)	(N=188)	(N=105)	(N=156)	(N=90)
Liberal	14%	24%	45%	37%	30%	38%
Progressive Conservative	76%	56%	26%	26%	9%	25%
NDP	2%	9%	19%	24%	51%	21%
Green	1%	4%	10%	12%	9%	15%
Other	7%	7%	1%	2%	1%	1%

Note: Current data: April 2021

Decided Vote by Economic Gap: While the PCs lead the vote among dream achievers, the PCs and Liberals are tied up among strugglers

Decided Vote	Economic Gap			
	Achievers	Strugglers	Ambivalent	Alienated
	(N=225)	(N=143)	(N=143)	(N=194)
Liberal	33%	37%	27%	34%
Progressive Conservative	43%	38%	29%	16%
NDP	16%	14%	26%	38%
Green	7%	10%	14%	6%
Other	1%	1%	4%	5%

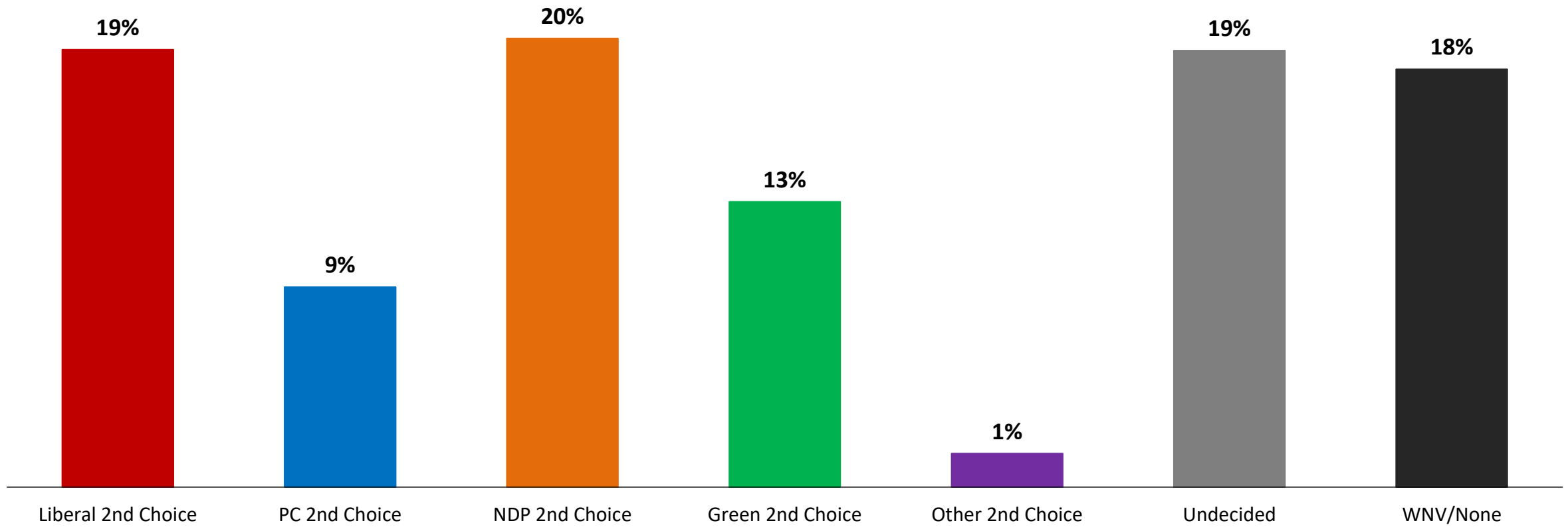
Note: Current data: April 2021

Provincial 2nd Choice: The NDP (20%) and Liberals (19%) are the top 2nd choice parties among decided voters



And which party would be your second choice?

[only decided voters; n=704]



Provincial 2nd Choice: The NDP is the top 2nd choice for Liberal voters and vice versa

And which party would be your second choice? BY [Vote+Lean]

		First Choice			
		Liberal 1st Choice	PC 1st Choice	NDP 1st Choice	Green 1st Choice
		(N=233)	(N=224)	(N=167)	(N=63)
Second Choice	Liberal 2nd Choice		20%	41%	36%
	PC 2nd Choice	14%		12%	5%
	NDP 2nd Choice	42%	11%		25%
	Green 2nd Choice	12%	9%	24%	
	Other 2nd Choice	1%	3%	0%	2%
	Undecided	20%	22%	14%	25%
	WNV/None	11%	35%	9%	7%

Note: 'Other' in Combined Vote not shown due to insufficient sample size.

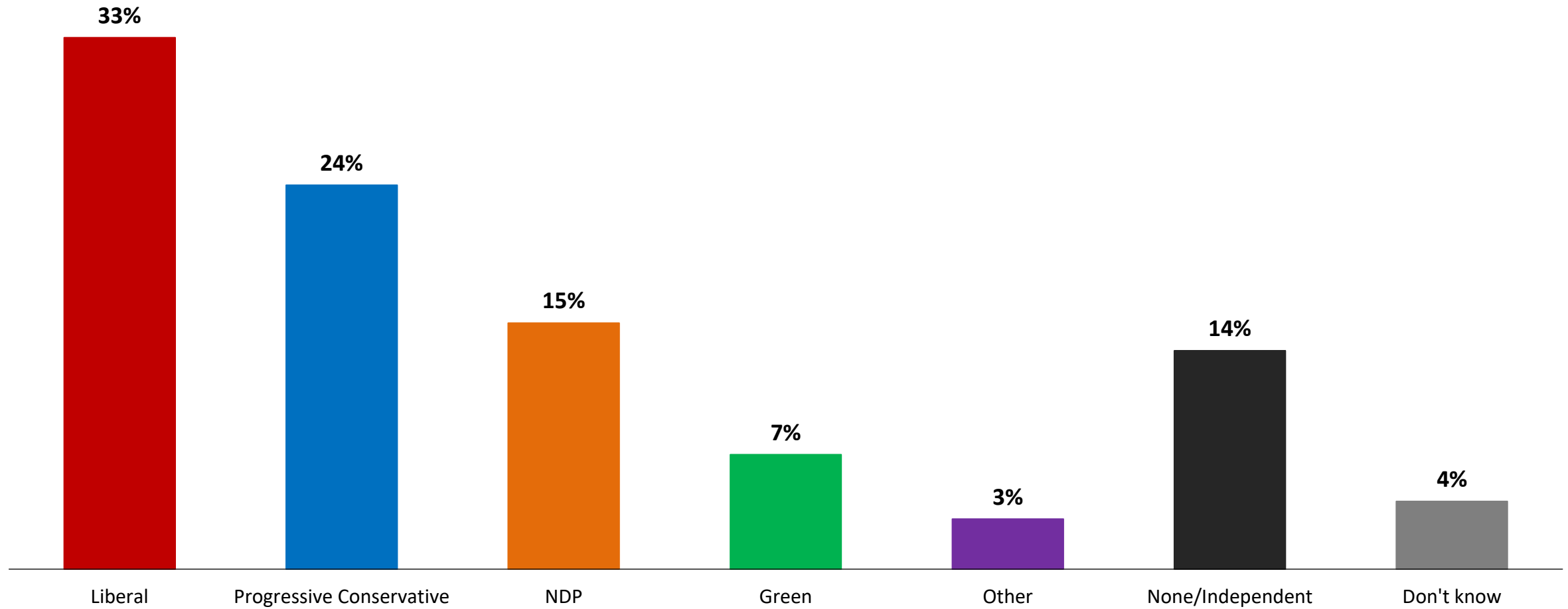
Current data: April 2021

Provincial Party ID: While the Liberals and PCs are tied in vote share, the Liberals lead when it comes to party ID



Thinking about politics in Ontario, generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a...

[asked of all respondents; n=800]

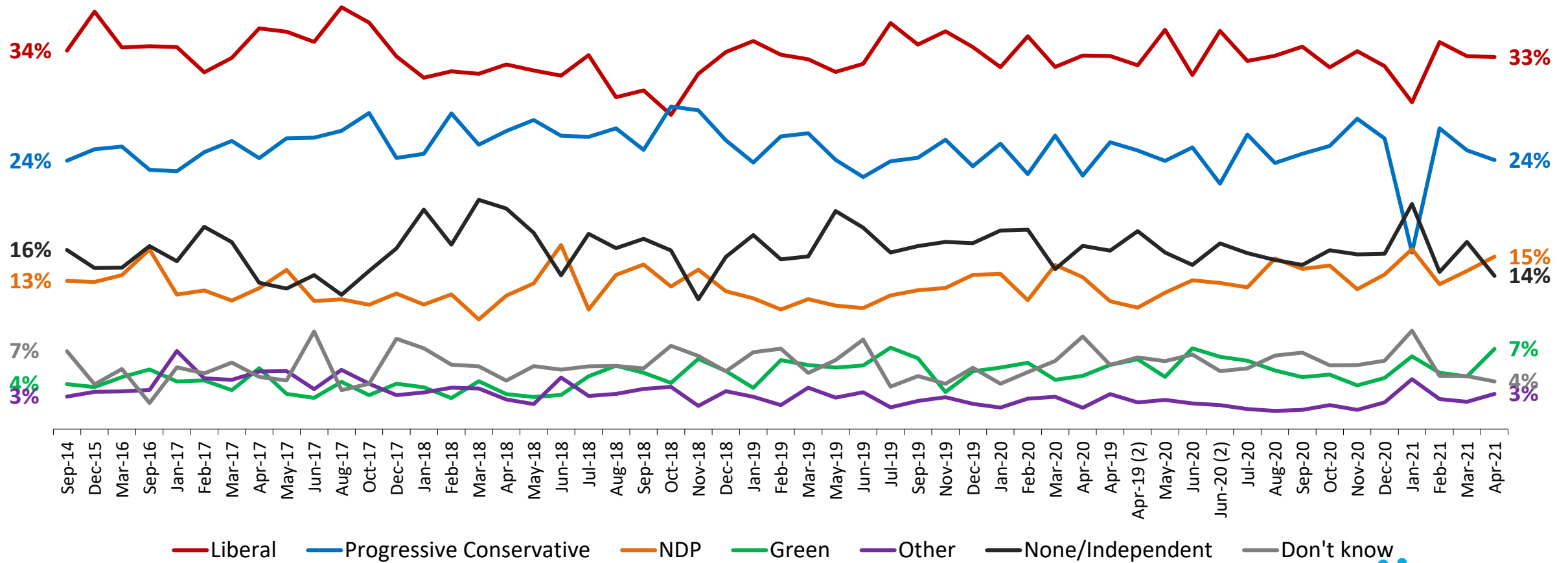


Provincial Party ID Tracking: The Liberals (33%) continue to be the part with the highest party ID



Thinking about politics in Ontario, generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a...

[asked of all respondents; n=800]



Combined Vote by Party ID: NDP partisans are the most loyal with 90% of their vote share going towards their own party

		Provincial Party Identification				
		Liberal	Progressive Conservative	NDP	Green	Unaligned
		(N=264)	(N=191)	(N=122)	(N=57)	(N=142)
Provincial Combined Vote	Liberal	73%	7%	2%	14%	11%
	Progressive Conservative	8%	79%	5%	5%	25%
	NDP	10%	6%	90%	2%	14%
	Green	5%	0%	0%	74%	4%
	Other	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
	Undecided/DK	4%	7%	0%	4%	36%
	Would not vote/None	0%	0%	1%	0%	9%

Methodology



Survey Methodology

These are the results of an online survey conducted between April 1st and April 13th, 2021.

Method: This online survey was conducted using INNOVATIVE's Canada 20/20 national research panel with additional respondents from Dynata, a leading provider of online sample. Each survey is administered to a series of randomly selected samples from the panel and weighted to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual Ontario population according to Census data to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample.

Sample Size: n=989 Ontario residents, 18 years or older. The results are weighted to n=800 based on Census data from Statistics Canada.

Field Dates: April 1st to April 13th, 2021.

Weighting: Results for Ontario are weighted by age, gender, and region to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual population according to Census data; in order to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. Weighted and unweighted frequencies are reported in the table.

Margin of Error: This is a representative sample. However, since the online survey was not a random probability based sample, a margin of error cannot be calculated. Statements about margins of sampling error or population estimates do not apply to most online panels.

Note: Graphs may not always total 100% due to rounding values rather than any error in data. Sums are added before rounding numbers.

	Unweighted (n)	Unweighted (%)	Weighted (n)	Weighted (%)
Men 18-34	95	9.6%	111	13.9%
Men 35-54	167	16.9%	133	16.7%
Men 55+	188	19%	141	17.7%
Women 18-34	118	11.9%	110	13.8%
Women 35-54	183	18.5%	143	17.8%
Women 55+	238	24.1%	161	20.2%
Toronto	302	30.5%	167	20.9%
Rest of GTA	234	23.7%	208	26%
South/West	212	21.4%	206	25.8%
North/East	241	24.4%	219	27.4%

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Building Understanding.

