

Canada This Month Spending Priorities

Public Opinion Research
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Field Dates: May 12th to May 22nd, 2025

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Study Overview



Building on findings from previous waves, this report tracks May wave 1 and wave 2 data about what Canadians perceive as:

- **Federal government's spending priorities**
- **Fiscal responsibilities**

Key Findings

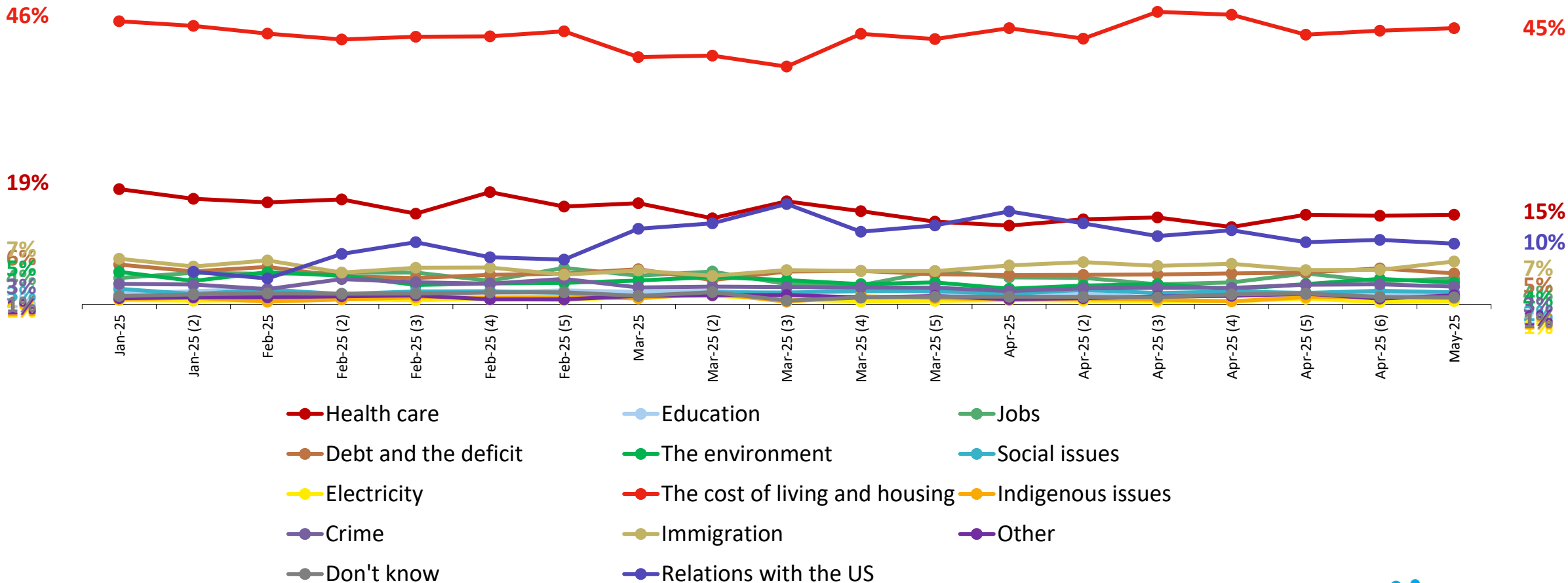
- 1** **Although the recent Throne Speech reflects a shift toward fiscal restraint,** the public remains divided, with 53% viewing the deficit as a necessary investment and 47% framing it as a generational fairness issue. Additionally, those who identify as Conservatives (66% vs 21% Liberals) overwhelmingly blame deficits on poor government management. On the other hand, Liberals (63%), NDP (69%), Bloc (64%) and those that identify as Business Liberals (64%) and Core Left (67%) support investment-oriented deficits.
- 2** **Canadians continue to identify cost of living, housing and healthcare as their most important issues.** When it comes to choosing the federal government's top spending priority, health care takes the spotlight, with housing right behind it. There is a generational divide such that younger Canadians, both men and women (49%), are more likely to prioritize housing compared to older cohorts (M +55 25%, W +55 27%). Older (M +55 75%, W +55 73%) and Conservative Canadians, particularly Populist (72%) and Differential Conservatives (68%), lean heavily toward health care spending.
- 3** **76% of Canadians are at least somewhat concerned with the current federal deficit,** with the lowest concern among NDP voters (55%) and the core left (56%). Deciding between federal spending on housing or addressing the deficit is a polarizing choice, such that older men (50% vs older women 41%) and Populist Conservatives (69%) favour deficit reduction and in contrast, progressive value clusters and younger Canadians prioritize housing.
- 4** **Nationally, 39% of Canadians blame the government for poor deficit management,** but this shoots up to 66% among those who identify as Conservative. Populist Conservatives (64%) and middle-aged men (49% vs middle-aged women 39%) are also more likely to attribute deficits to government mismanagement.
- 5** **Defence spending is not a top priority.** In contrast to fiscal responsibility, it is perceived as less important across all segments, though some segments like older men (47%) and women (46%) and business liberals (42%) see it as more important than younger men (31%) and women (33%), and Differential Conservatives (32%). Most Canadians (56%) support the notion of Canada living up to its commitment as a member of NATO.

Spending Priorities

Most Important Issue Tracking

Top tracking issues remain the cost of living and housing. Health care, and relations with the US fall far behind

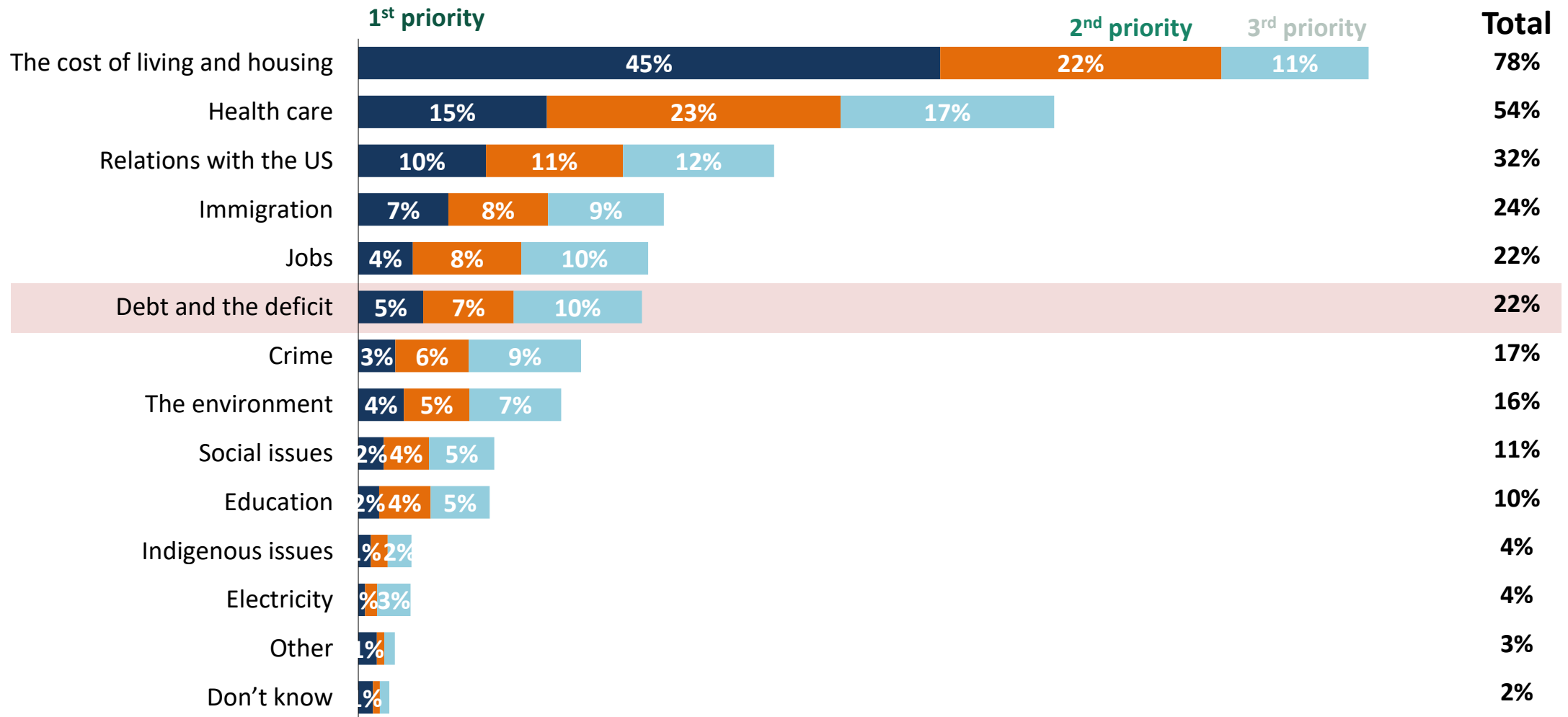
Q Which of the following issues is the most important issue to you?
[asked of all respondents; n=1500]



Top Issues

The cost of living and housing, health care, and relations with the US are the top 3 priority issues

Q Which of the following issues is the most important issue to you?
[asked of all respondents, n=1,500]



NOTE: 'No response' not shown.

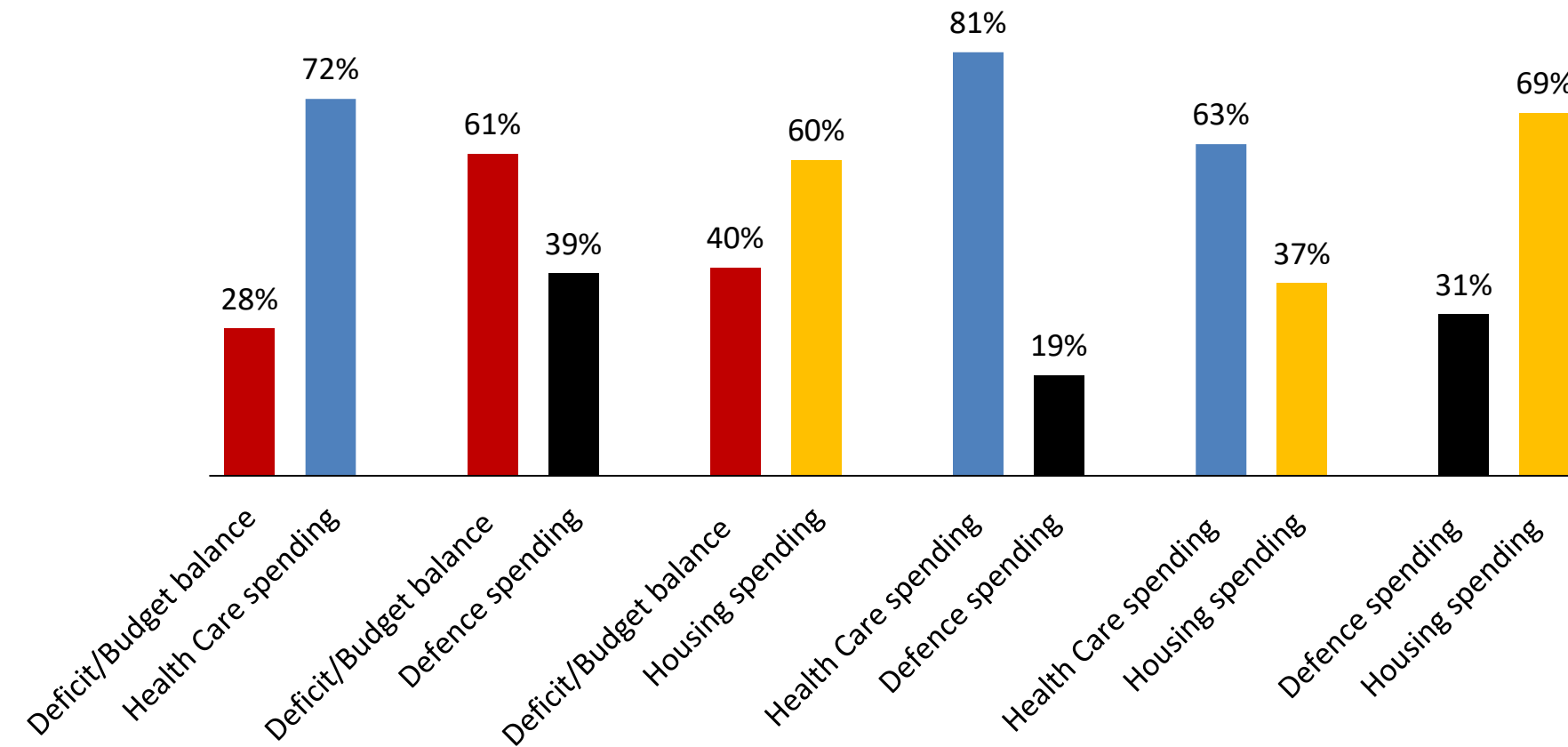
Federal Spending

Spending on health care is perceived as the most important, followed by housing, and deficit/budget balance



Thinking about federal government spending, please choose which of the following is more important in each pairing.

[asked of all respondents; n=1,500]



Spending	# of wins out of total
Health Care	3/3
Housing	2/3
Deficit/Budget Balance	1/3
Defence	0/3

Federal Spending – Health Care vs Housing

Clear divide between young, split between housing and health care spending, and older Canadians who prioritize health care

Segmentation

Health Care spending

Age/Gender

M 18-34	51%
M 35-54	58%
M 55+	75%

W 18-34 51%

W 35-54 63%

W 55+ 73%

Party ID

Conservative	63%
Liberal	69%
NDP	56%
Bloc	63%
Green/Other	52%
Unaligned	61%

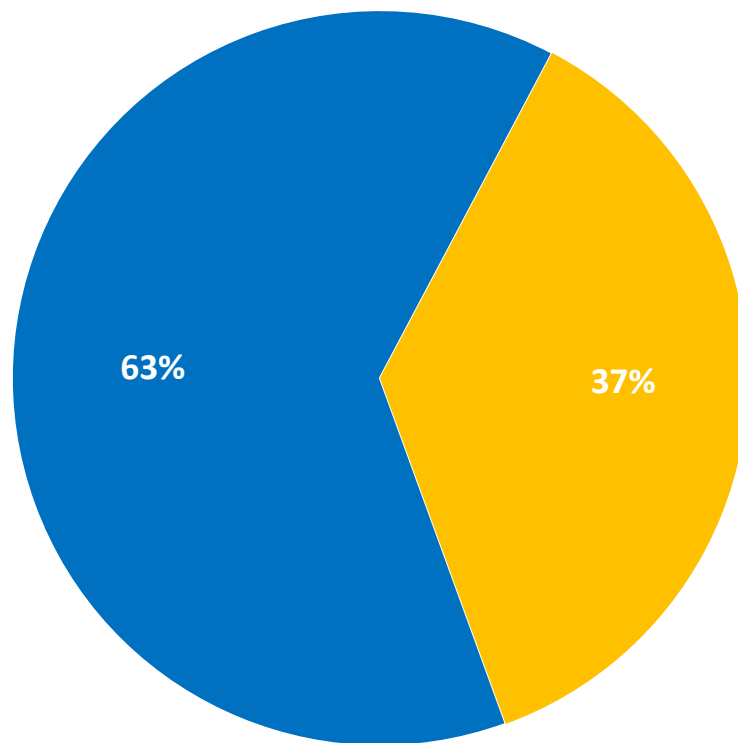
Value Clusters

Populist Conservatives	72%
Deferential Conservatives	68%
Business Liberals	63%
Left Liberals	62%
Core Left	57%
Pay-as-you-go Moderates	61%



Thinking about federal government spending, please choose which of the following is more important in each pairing.

[asked of all respondents; n=1,500]



Health Care spending

Housing spending

Segmentation

Housing Spending

Age/Gender

M 18-34	49%
M 35-54	42%
M 55+	25%

W 18-34 49%

W 35-54 37%

W 55+ 27%

Party ID

Conservative	37%
Liberal	31%
NDP	44%
Bloc	37%
Green/Other	48%
Unaligned	39%

Value Clusters

Populist Conservatives	28%
Deferential Conservatives	32%
Business Liberals	37%
Left Liberals	38%
Core Left	43%
Pay-as-you-go Moderates	39%

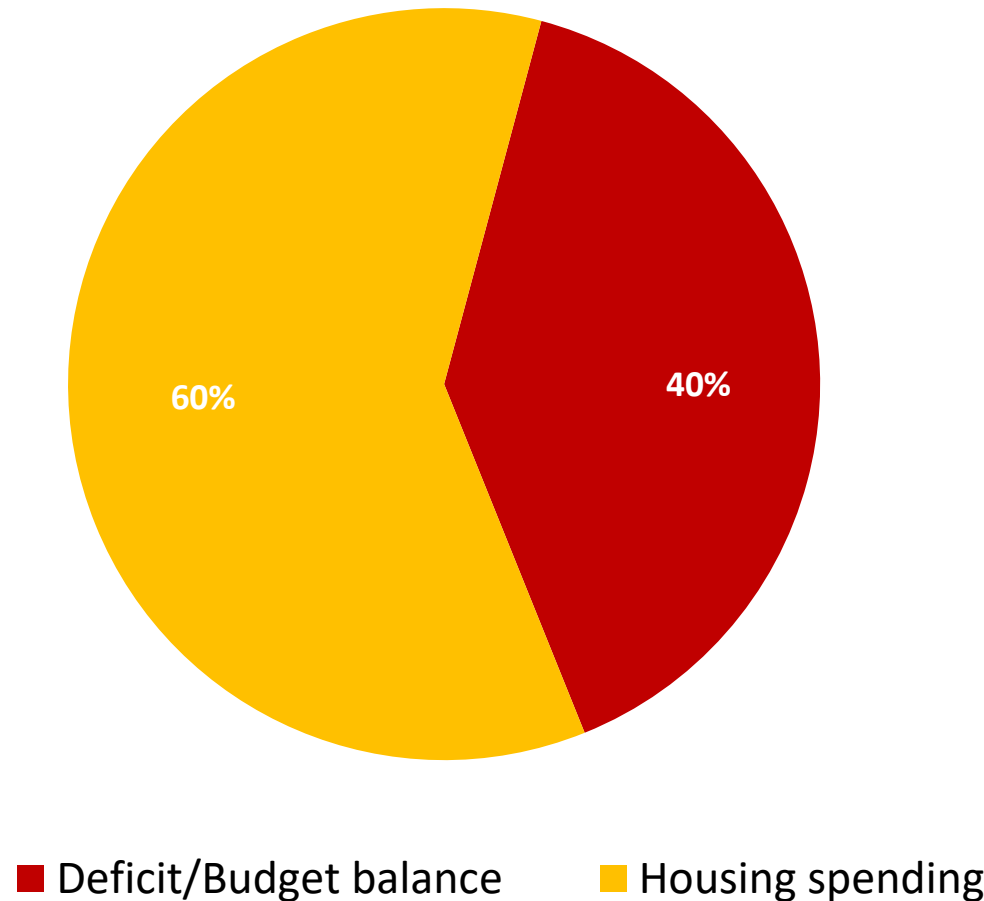
Federal Spending – Deficit/Budget vs Housing

Those with conservative values are more likely to be concerned about fiscal responsibility than housing



Thinking about federal government spending, please choose which of the following is more important in each pairing.

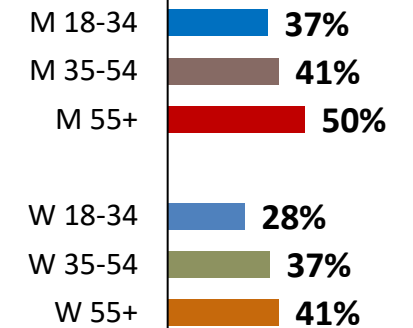
[asked of all respondents; n=1,500]



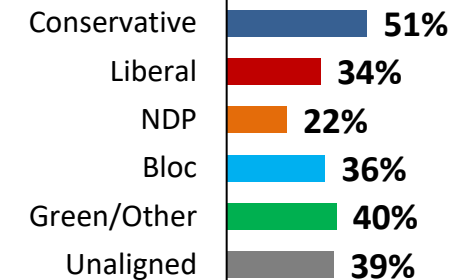
Segmentation

Deficit/Budget balance

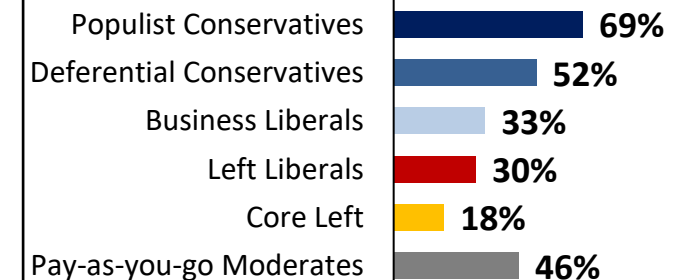
Age/Gender



Party ID



Value Clusters



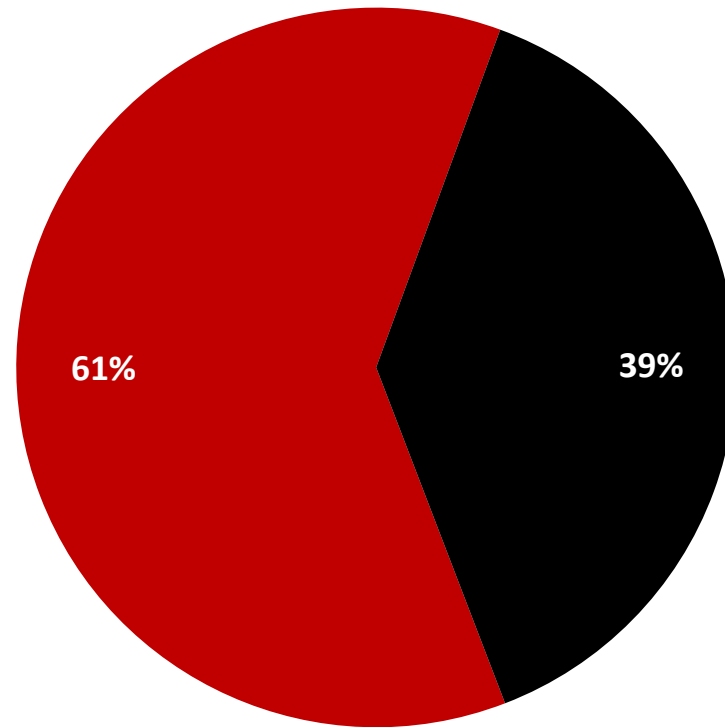
Federal Spending – Deficit/Budget vs Defence Spending

Even though fiscal responsibility is more important than defence spending for 61% of Canadians, for 47% of older men and 46% of older women and 47% of Core Left see it as more important.



Thinking about federal government spending, please choose which of the following is more important in each pairing.

[asked of all respondents; n=1,500]



■ Deficit/Budget balance ■ Defence spending

Segmentation

Defence spending

Age/Gender

M 18-34	31%
M 35-54	33%
M 55+	47%

W 18-34 33%

W 35-54 34%

W 55+ 46%

Party ID

Conservative	35%
Liberal	45%
NDP	41%
Bloc	29%
Green/Other	31%
Unaligned	37%

Value Clusters

Populist Conservatives	27%
Deferential Conservatives	32%
Business Liberals	42%
Left Liberals	43%
Core Left	47%
Pay-as-you-go Moderates	36%

Commitments to NATO

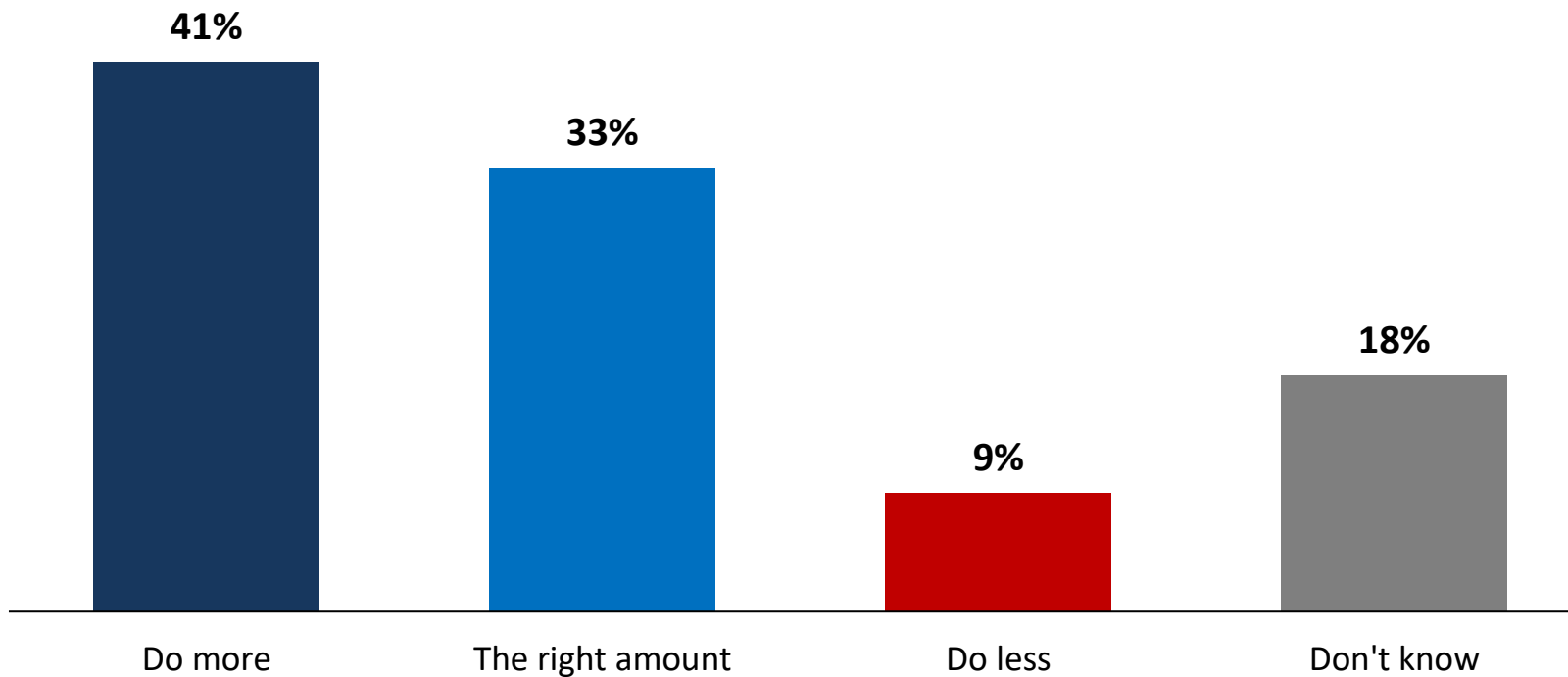
Those with conservative values are more likely to say we need to do more on Canada's commitment to NATO



Please indicate whether you feel Canada needs to do more, do less, or whether Canada is making about the right amount of effort now regarding each of the following issues:

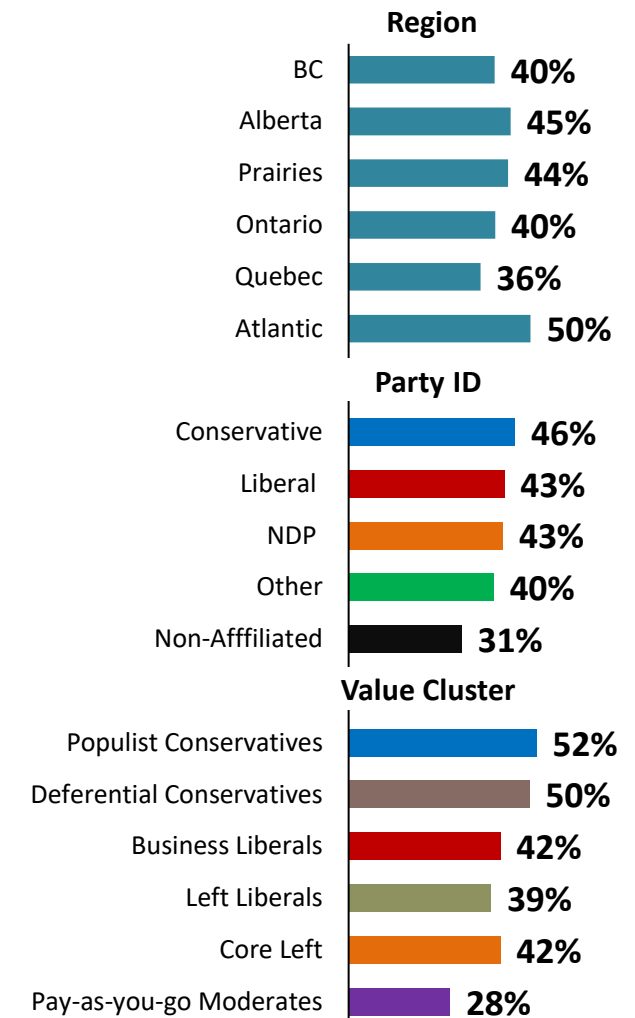
Living up to Canada's commitments as a member of NATO

[asked of all respondents; Nov. '2024 n=1,000]



Segmentation

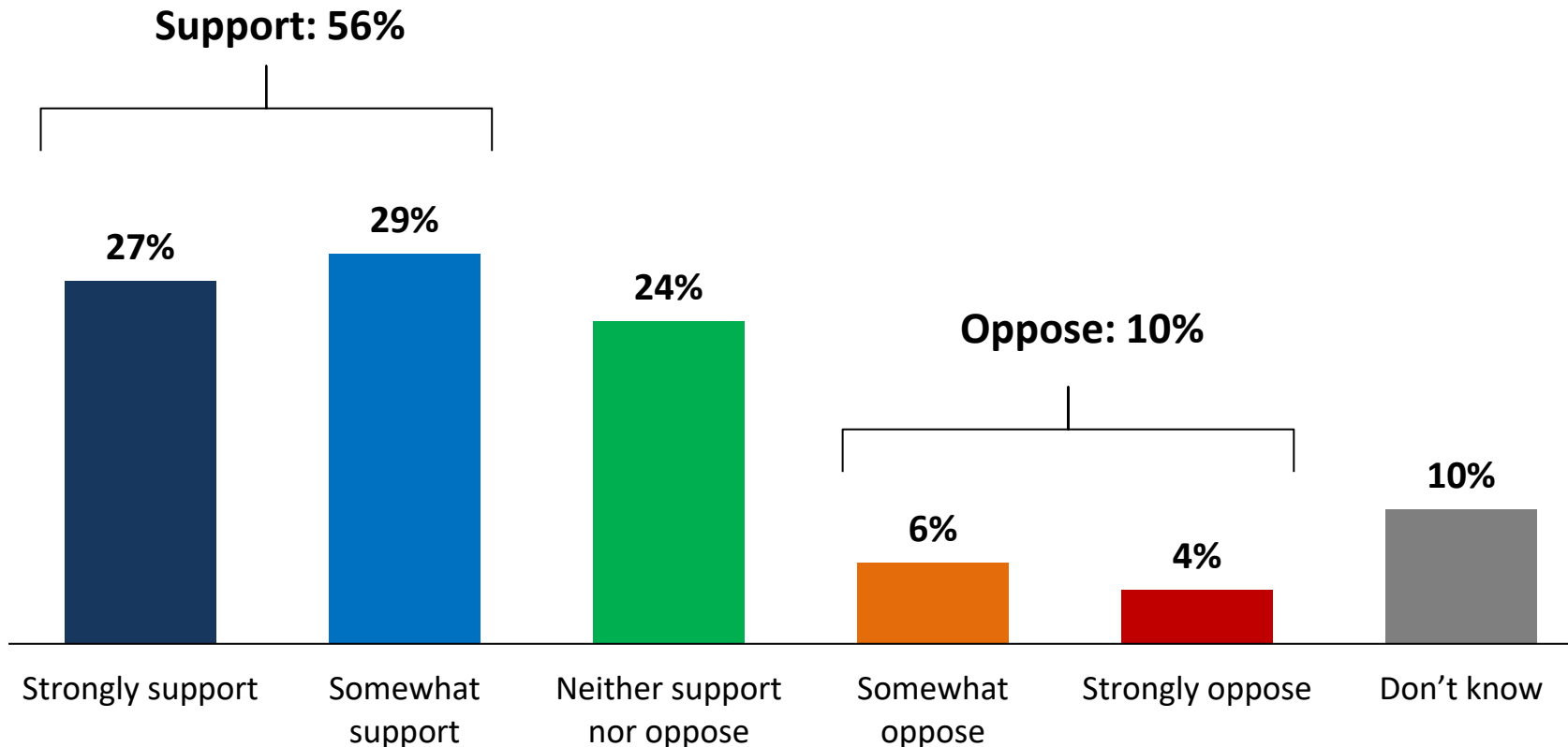
Those who say 'do more'



NATO Commitment

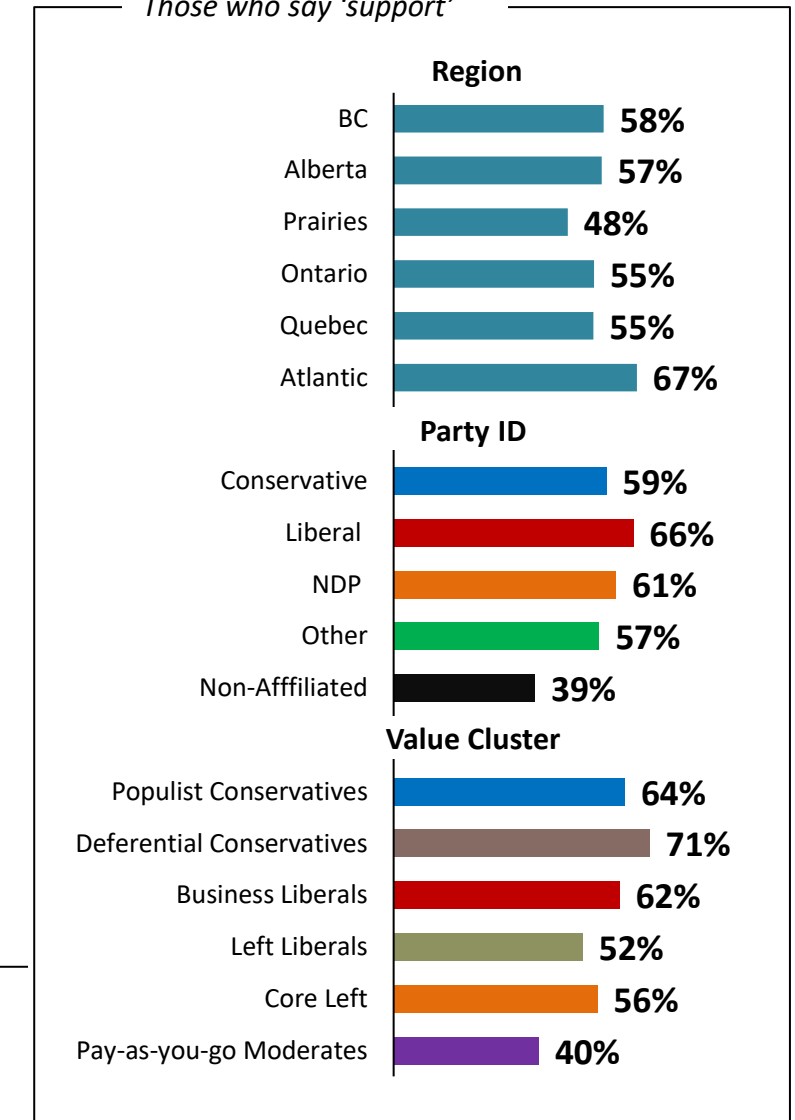
Most Canadians (56%) support the notion of Canada living up to its commitment as a member of NATO

Q For each of these items, please indicate if you support or oppose including those items in a new free trade with the US.:
Doing more to live up to Canada's commitments as a member of NATO
 [asked of all respondents; Nov. '2024 n=1,000]



Segmentation

Those who say 'support'



Deficit

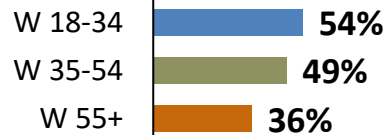
Perspectives on Deficits

Nearly split opinions, as a slight majority (53%) view deficits as forward-looking investment in future generations

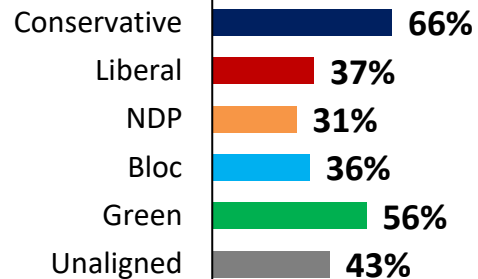
Segmentation

Deficit imposes burden on young

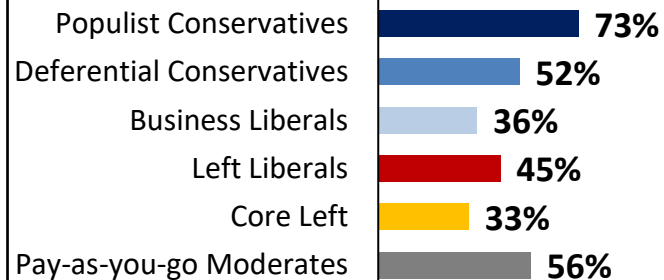
Age/Gender



Party ID

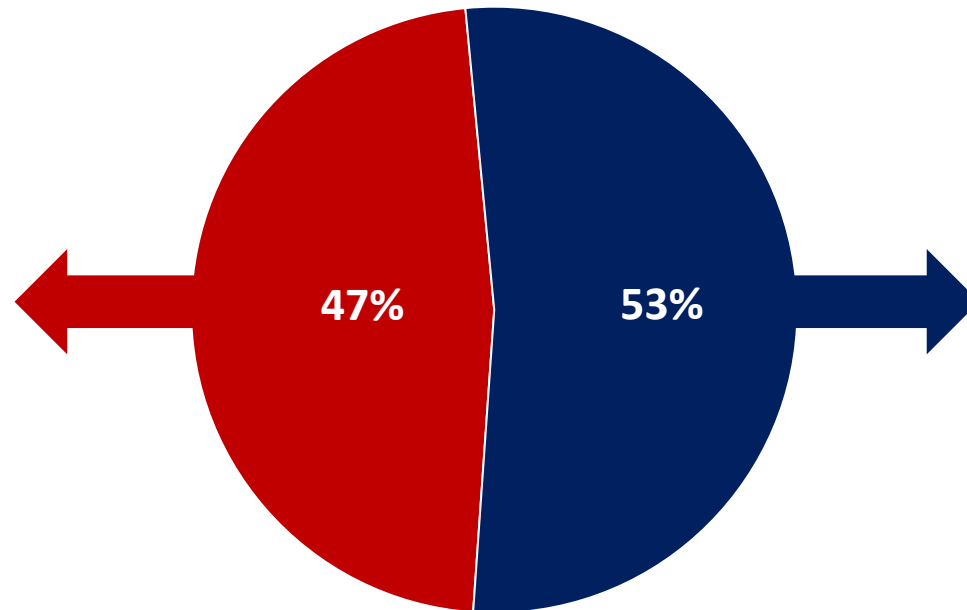


Value Clusters



Which of the following statements comes closer to your view?

[asked of all respondents; n=1,500]

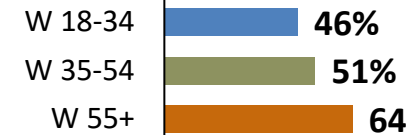


- Continuing to increase Canada's government debt with annual deficits constitutes a generational fairness problem, imposing a burden on the young for the benefit of the elderly
- Deficits can be a useful part of a forward-looking strategy, allowing Canada to invest in infrastructure, education and job creation, creating opportunity for younger generations

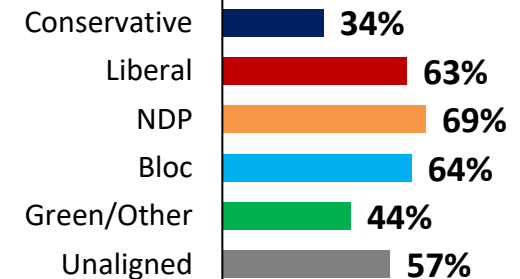
Segmentation

Deficit as an investment in future

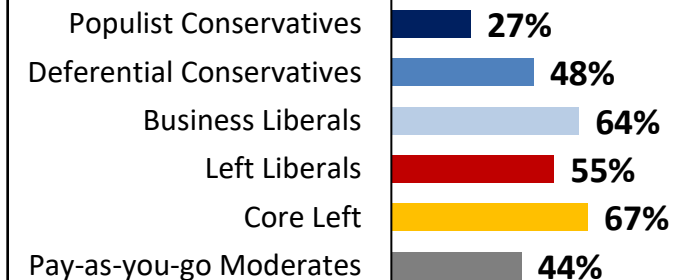
Age/Gender



Party ID



Value Clusters



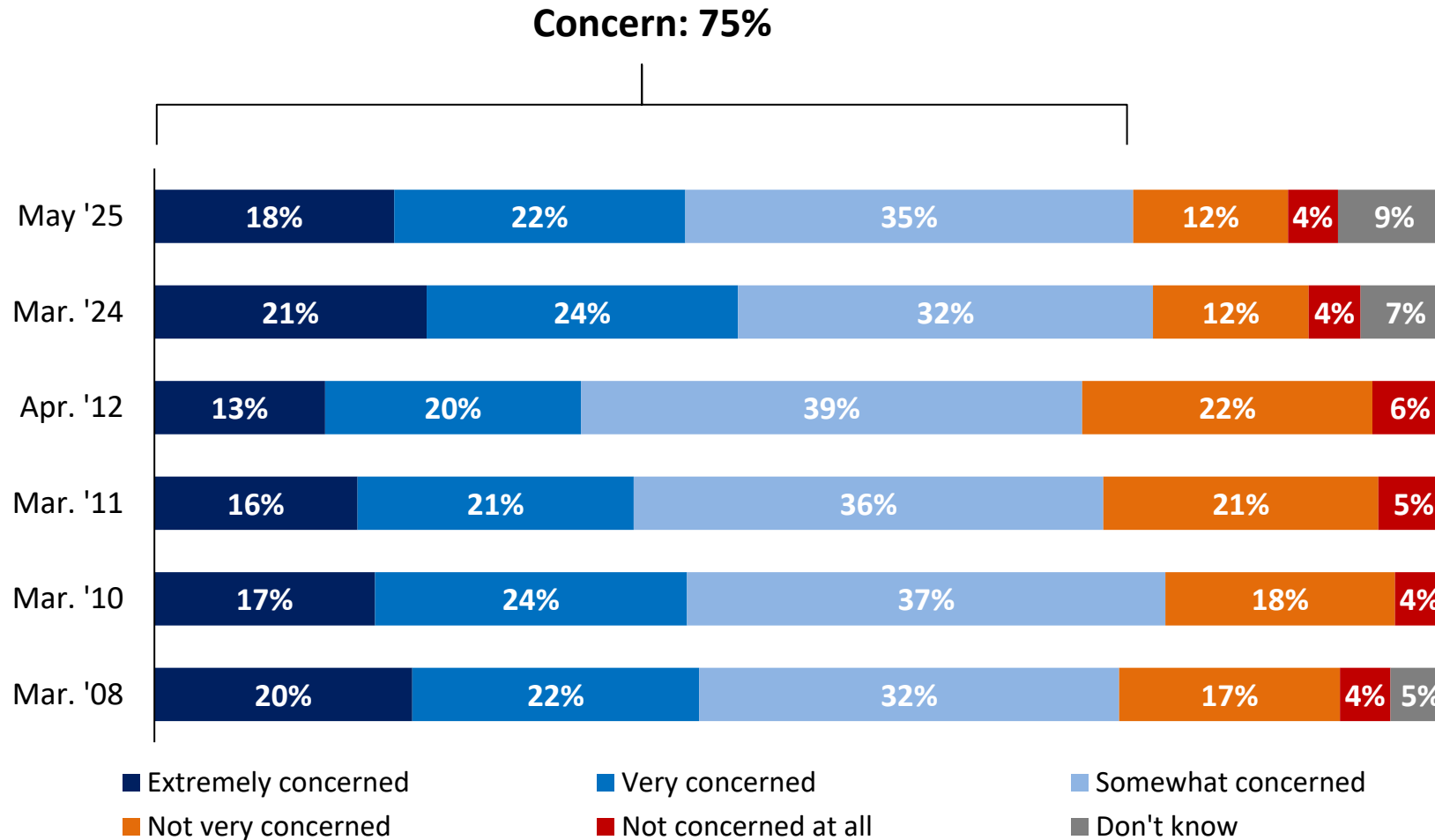
Concerns With Federal Deficit

Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ are at least somewhat concerned, and 40% very concerned about the current deficit



Turning now to the federal government, how concerned are you with the current federal deficit?

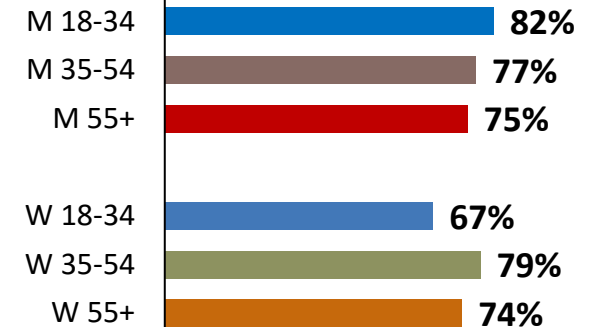
[asked of all respondents; n=1,500]



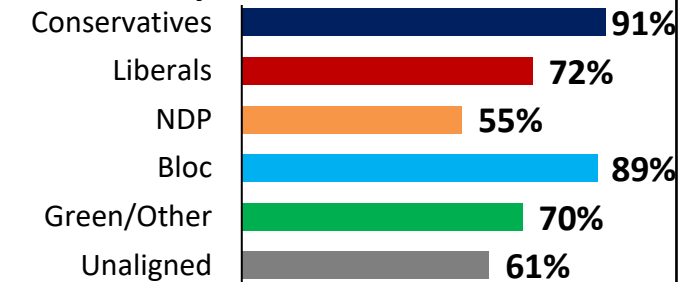
Segmentation

Those saying "Concerned"

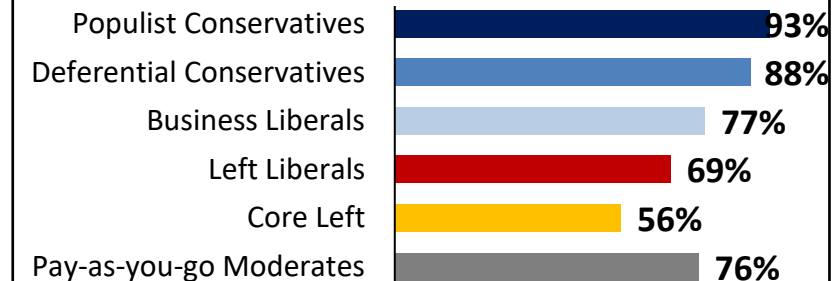
Age/Gender



Party ID



Value Clusters



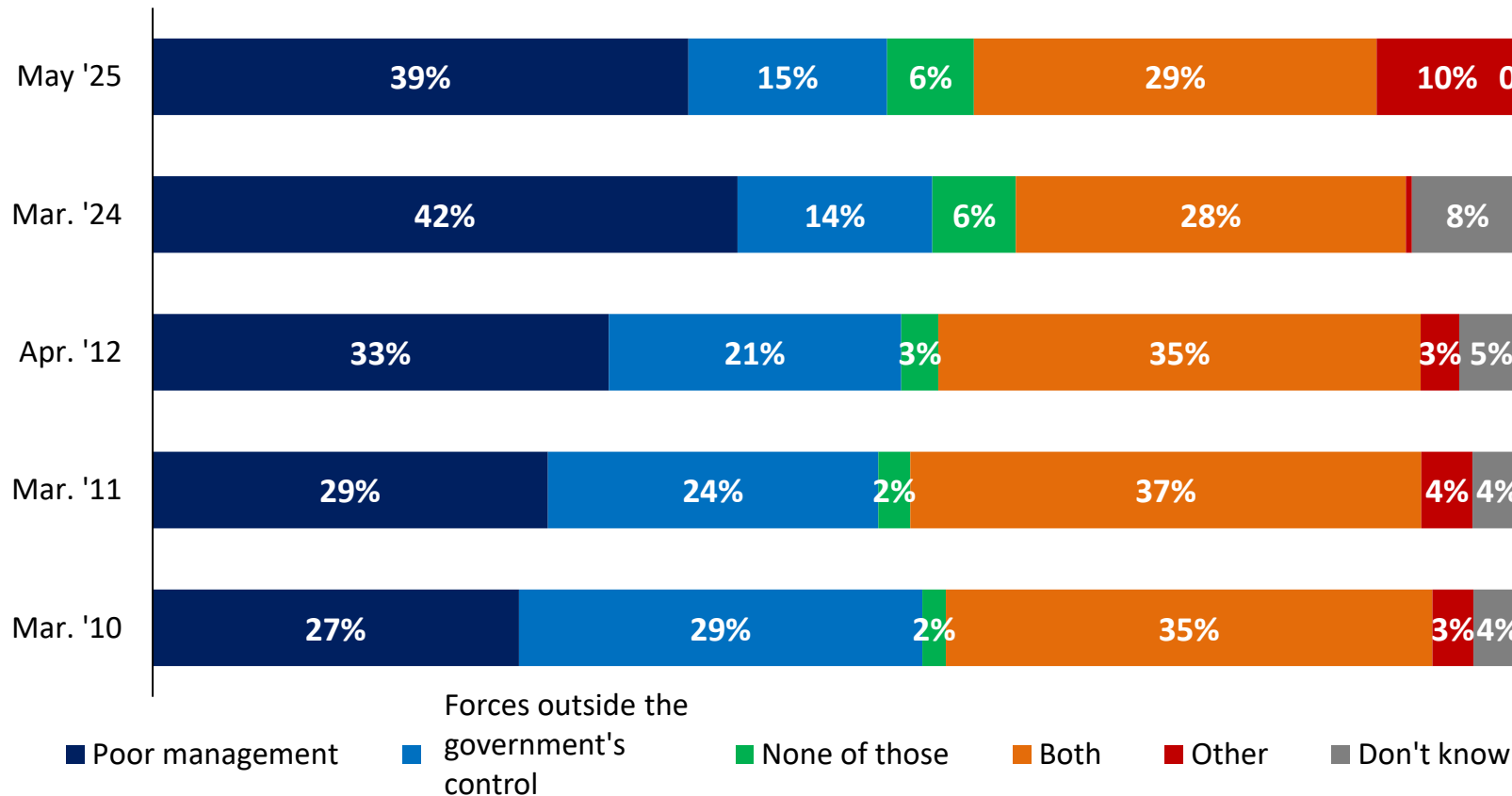
Accountability

39% believe deficits are a result of poor management by government, a firm belief among 66% of conservatives



Do you think the deficit of the federal government is the result of poor management by the government or the result of forces outside the government's control?

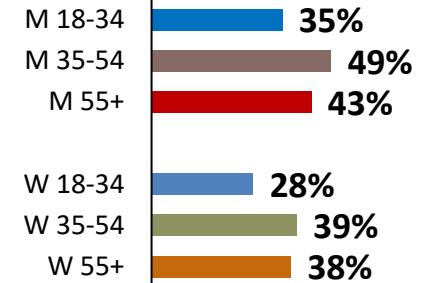
[asked of all respondents; n=1,500]



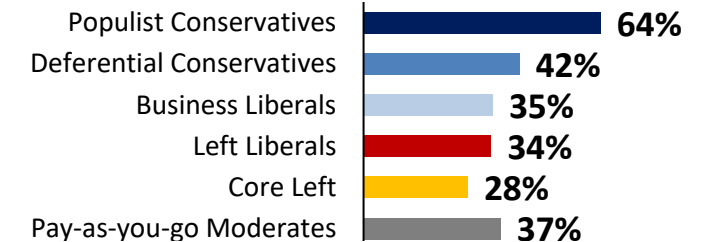
Segmentation

Respondents who say "Poor management"

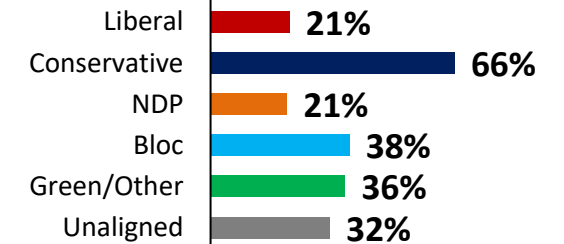
Age/Gender



Value Clusters



Party ID



Methodology

Survey Methodology – May 2025



These are the results of an online survey conducted between May 12th and May 22nd, 2025.

Method: This online survey was conducted and sponsored by Innovative Research Group Inc. using INNOVATIVE's Canada 20/20 national research panel with additional respondents from Lucid, 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 Canadian population according to Census data.

Sample Size: n=2,517 Canadian citizens, 18 years or older. The results are nationally weighted to n=1,500 based on Census data from Statistics Canada.

Field Dates: May 12th to May 22nd, 2025.

Weighting: Results for Canada are weighted by age, gender, region, education, and self-reported federal past vote to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual population according to Census data. 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	252	10.0%	201	13.5%
Men 35-54	365	14.6%	238	16.0%
Men 55+	603	24.0%	292	19.6%
Women 18-34	259	10.3%	194	13.0%
Women 35-54	408	16.3%	247	16.6%
Women 55+	621	24.8%	320	21.4%
British Columbia	321	12.8%	213	14.2%
Alberta	267	10.6%	166	11.1%
Prairies	142	5.6%	96	6.4%
Ontario	1190	47.3%	579	38.6%
Québec	432	17.2%	345	23.0%
Atlantic	165	6.6%	101	6.7%

Survey Methodology – Nov. 2024



These are the results of an online survey conducted between November 22nd to December 3rd, 2024.

Method: This online survey was conducted using INNOVATIVE's Canada 20/20 national research panel with additional respondents from Lucid, a leading provider of online samples. 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 Canadian population according to Census data to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample.

Sample Size: n=2,390 Canadian citizens, 18 years or older. The results are nationally weighted to n=1,000 based on Census data from Statistics Canada.

Field Dates: November 22nd to December 3rd, 2024.

Weighting: Results for Canada are weighted by age, gender, region, education, and self-reported federal past vote 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	255	10.7%	133	13.3%
Men 35-54	364	15.2%	158	15.8%
Men 55+	537	22.5%	195	19.5%
Women 18-34	268	11.2%	131	13.1%
Women 35-54	422	17.7%	166	16.6%
Women 55+	537	22.5%	213	21.3%
BC	442	18.5%	140	14.0%
AB	402	16.8%	112	11.2%
Prairies	111	4.6%	64	6.4%
ON	783	32.8%	386	38.6%
QC	505	21.1%	230	23.0%
Atlantic	147	6.2%	67	6.7%

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