

DATA DIVE WITH NIK NANOS

WILL THE LIBERALS' STUMBLES RESULT IN AN ORANGE CRUSH FOR THE NDP?

Jagmeet Singh needs everything to go wrong for his opponents and everything to go right for him

OPINION

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Will there be another political orange crush? Federal NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh sure hopes so.

In 2011, the New Democratic Party of Canada, led by Jack Layton, became the Official Opposition in the House of Commons in a stunning orange surge. The historic win coincided with a Conservative victory and a Liberal collapse.

Last week, when he pulled the plug on the Liberal-NDP parliamentary arrangement, Mr. Singh mapped out his vision for the next federal election as a showdown between the Conservatives and the New Democrats. It's possible, but there are a few hurdles in the way.

First and foremost is the NDP's former parliamentary partner. Before a Conservative-NDP showdown materializes, the New Democrats have to deal with the Liberals. A look at the latest Nanos weekly tracking suggests that the Conservatives have a commanding lead over the Liberals and even a bigger advantage over the NDP. Almost twice as many Canadians prefer the Conservatives over the New Democrats.

Ending the Liberal-NDP arrangement accelerates a possible election and shortens the runway for the Liberals to change leaders. This two-for-one strategy for the NDP ensures that there is some distance between the partnership and the vote. One can't be parliamentary partners one day and election enemies the next and expect to have credibility with voters. The timing also suggests that the New Democrats would prefer to face Justin Trudeau rather than a potential new leader. In that respect, the NDP and the Conservatives likely agree on who they would like to face in a federal election: Justin Trudeau.

Even with Liberal fatigue, Mr. Trudeau should not be underestimated as a campaigner. With a polling trend that has favoured the Conservatives for more than a year, Mr. Trudeau's best hope is to campaign well and pray Pierre Poilievre makes a major blunder. For the NDP to

surpass the Liberals, Mr. Singh has to first look like a different and more credible alternative to the Conservatives than the Liberals.

The second big hurdle is the Liberal-NDP confidence-and-supply agreement itself. Even though Mr. Singh has touted

what he has delivered to Canadians, such as dental and some pharmacare, the reality is that there has been no political dividend for the NDP. Over the course of the parliamentary arrangement, support for the NDP and impressions of Mr. Singh have been consistent with no

material gains. Any political payoff for those measures is shared by the Liberals and the NDP.

Considering that both progressive parties seriously trail the Conservatives, running an election on what their partnership delivered is not a winning

strategy. Voters take whatever is given by politicians, whether it be extra child-care support, dental care or pharmacare, but votes do not automatically follow.

Running a platform-heavy campaign in a change election is a recipe for defeat. It's like the unpopular kid in school thinking if they give one reason to be liked, people will miraculously change their views. The kicker for the New Democrats is that they tied their political fortunes to a Liberal Party that has been in power for almost a decade, led by a leader who is currently very unpopular.

There are only so many options for voters. The most likely view is that the Liberals have been in power for too long and the Conservatives are the agents of change. Some voters may feel that even though the Liberals are a tired government, the Conservatives may be risky change. Mr. Singh must hope that enough voters feel Mr. Poilievre is risky, Mr. Trudeau is tired and that a strong NDP showing will be good for parliament and for Canadians.

For Mr. Poilievre to win, he needs to simply not make a mistake and ride a blue wave to victory. Mr. Trudeau needs to campaign effectively and for Mr. Poilievre to make a big blunder. Mr. Singh needs both Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Poilievre to stumble. In effect, for a Conservative-NDP showdown to materialize, Mr. Singh needs everything to go wrong for his opponents and everything to go right for him. It's possible, but it's less likely than the first two scenarios.

There is some good news for all the federal party leaders: They are competing against each other and not against perfection. This particular view served former Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper quite well. An important part of his electoral success was grounded in the idea that you did not need to be popular to win; you only needed to be comparatively better than your opponents.

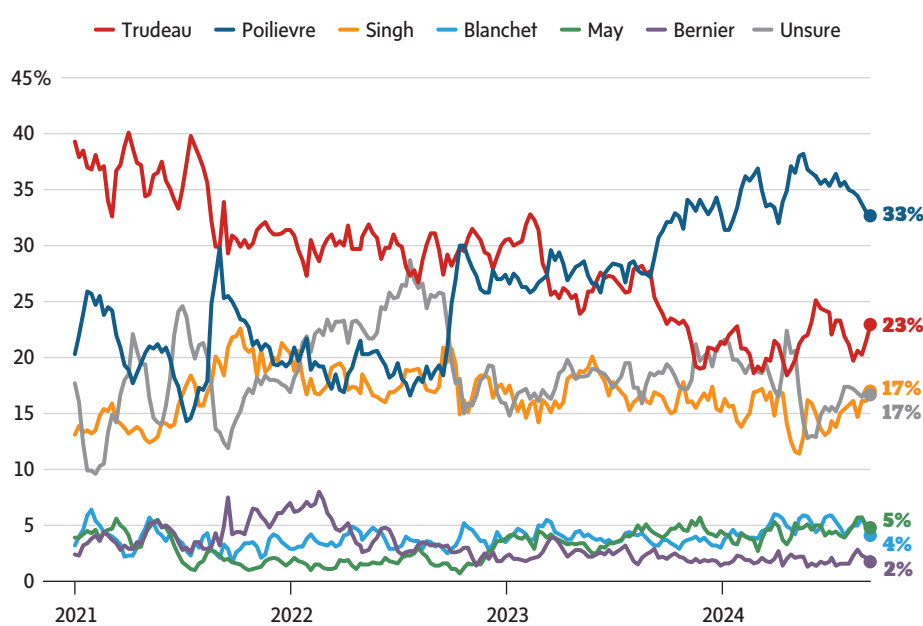
Voters in democracies are always faced with a series of imperfect choices, with some of those imperfections being more repugnant than others. In this world, for Jagmeet Singh to realize his objective of a showdown with Pierre Poilievre, he only needs to not be Justin Trudeau – and to be a little better than him on the campaign trail.

If that happens, Mr. Singh's wish for another orange crush could come true.

Follow the leaders

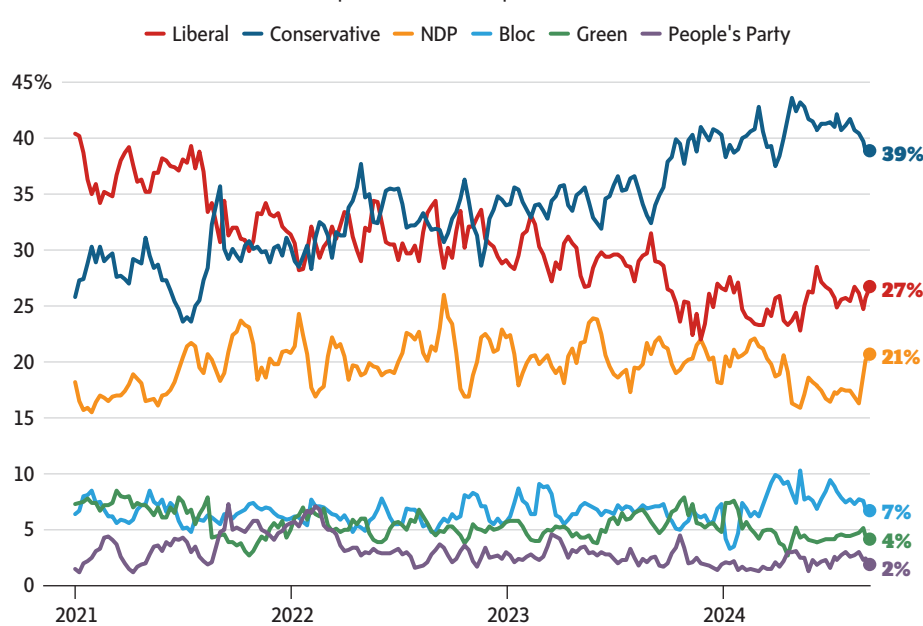
PREFERRED PRIME MINISTER, WEEKLY TRACKING

Of the current federal political party leaders, could you please rank your top two current local preferences for prime minister?



BALLOT, WEEKLY TRACKING

For those parties you would consider voting for federally, could you please rank your top two current local preferences?



Note: Percentages reflect respondents' first-rank choices and may not add to 100 because of rounding.

MURAT YÜKSELİR / THE GLOBE AND MAIL, SOURCE: NANOS RESEARCH

Warnings about the pressures of parenting shouldn't be ignored

JESSICA WEISZ

OPINION

Founder of Rule Breaker, a platform supporting working parents. She is a writer and speaker and hosts gatherings.

The most recent U.S. surgeon-general advisory is a groundbreaking warning on the poor mental health and well-being of parents – a move as significant as past warnings on smoking or social media use. Yet, this critical announcement has largely gone unreported in Canada. This is a warning that we can't afford to ignore. The crisis of parental well-being isn't confined by borders, and Canada's seemingly progressive policies don't make us immune to the challenges faced by parents south of the border.

The advisory's findings are alarming. They reveal that 41 per cent of parents say most days they're too stressed to function and 48 per cent find their stress completely overwhelming. Nearly three-quarters of parents report feeling consumed by worries regarding money, compared with 39 per cent of other adults.

While comprehensive data in Canada are lacking, there are many indicators that we are experiencing the same crisis.

Canadian parents are not thriving. A 2024 landmark study by the Canadian Centre for Care-

giving Excellence found that nearly half of caregivers feel tired, worried or anxious because of their responsibilities. Parents report increasing difficulty finding child care, with many stuck on waiting lists. A recent Ipsos report states that 54 per cent of parents are concerned about feeding their family and nearly three in four parents fear they couldn't absorb an unexpected cost of \$1,000 or more.

This isn't just about feeling frazzled; it's a public-health emergency that demands immediate attention in Canada, as well as in the U.S.

Our universal health care, extended parental leave and burgeoning \$10-a-day child-care program may seem like shields from such issues. However, these solutions – while steps in the right direction – are insufficient bandages on a gaping wound.

The root cause transcends policy failures. It's a cultural issue that runs deep through our country's veins: the systemic undervaluation of caregiving. Unpaid household labour doesn't factor into GDP calculations. Corporate bottom lines are not directly impacted by whether employees are rested and patient parents at day's end. As individuals, we often prioritize paid labour over caregiving, powering through the 50th work e-mail while viewing the fifth load of laundry as pure drudgery.

At work, long hours and weekends are a must to get ahead. At home, we're expected to be perfect parents, juggling extracurriculars and homemade everything – without ever losing our temper. We also feel pressured to maintain peak personal fitness and an ideal partnership, complete with weekly date nights.

Caregiving struggles don't directly impact financial outcomes. So making real changes to support parents is a hard sell.

U.S. Surgeon-General Vivek Murthy emphasizes this point, stating: "It's time to value and respect time spent parenting on par with time spent working at a paying job, recognizing the critical importance to society of raising children." This call for a cultural shift is the primary recommendation in the report and one that Canadians must heed as well.

Our culture is shaped by "rules" – norms and constructs we've collectively adopted. Just like we all know not to microwave fish at the office, we have bombarded parents with unspoken rules and unrealistic expectations.

At work, long hours and weekends are a must to get ahead. At home, we're expected to be perfect parents, juggling extracurriculars and homemade everything – without ever losing our temper. We also feel pressured to maintain peak personal fitness and an ideal partnership, complete with weekly date nights.

While working with thousands of parents, I've seen firsthand how questioning these norms can lead to transformative change. It's about intentionally examining the expectations we've internalized and asking: Do these truly serve me and my family?

Imagine deciding that it's okay to leave work at 4:30 p.m. for daycare pickup, even if it means your career progression slows for now. Picture choosing to skip the provincial gymnastics circuit, acknowledging your child likely won't be an Olympian – and that's perfectly fine. Envision defining your own measures of success, both at work and in parenting, rather than adhering to society's one-size-fits-all model. These individual choices, these personal "rule breaks," are how we begin to reshape our lives and, ultimately, our culture.

Waiting for systemic overhaul is not a luxury most families can afford. We'll know our world has been redesigned for working parents when we see Fortune 500 chief executives home making dinner for their families each night. Since that is not likely to happen any time soon, each of us can begin today by redefining success on our own terms, prioritizing what truly matters in our families and communities. By doing so, we not only improve our own well-being, but also pave the way for broader societal change.

The U.S. Surgeon-General's warning is a wake-up call that transcends borders. Canadians should heed this advisory and create a culture where parents don't just survive, but thrive. Our children's future – and indeed, the future of our society – depends on it.