

Two-Part Canadian National Election Poll
Part 1: Campaign Dynamics and Issue Ballots

[Part 2: Leaders, Credibility, and Public Policy]



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Contents

Voting and the National Mood	3
Distemper and Distress as a Backdrop to the Election	3
Liberals Headed for Minority as a Result of Jump in Tory Vote	8
Regional Strongholds	10
The Conservative Cultural Core	11
Campaign Issues—Voters Have Put Their Gears More Firmly in Neutral	12
Ballot Issues vs. Issue Ballots	14
Explaining When and How Ballot Issues and Issue Ballots Matter	14
Ballot Issues—Maybe Health, Economy, Taxes, Terror, Scandal, and Quebec, But Not Agriculture, Gays, the West, Time for a Change	16
The Contrasting Importance of Different Issues for Different Voter Segments—in TROC, Time for a Change and Scandal for Tories, Keeping Quebec for Liberals	21
Issue Ballots—For the Liberals, Quebec Separatism, Terror, and the Economy; for the Tories, Scandal, Change, Guns, and Taxes with Gay Marriage as a Sleeper; for the NDP, Health and Education.....	22
Attacking the Liberals and Conservatives—What Works, What Doesn't	31
Liberals Supremely Vulnerable on Adscam, Vulnerable on Other Issues Too	31
Conservatives Virtually Invulnerable to Anti-Christian, Anti-Alberta Attacks.....	35
Explaining Why Voters Don't Vote—Cynicism, Not Late Family Formation.....	38
Conclusion	40



Voting and the National Mood

Distemper and Distress as a Backdrop to the Election

The Liberal party enters the upcoming campaign with the advantage of commanding lead and a popular, credible leader but with the disadvantage of a public that is in a mood of distemper and distress. This is the key mood-related finding from a national survey of approximately 1600 Canadians conducted by COMPAS for the *National Post*, Global, and CanWest daily newspapers May 14-19th.¹

The electorate is not unstable. Tracker polling shows a remarkable stability or even-mindedness of vote intention, as shown in table 1 and figure 1.

Table 1: Federal Election Tracker²

Report Date	Field Dates	N	Lib	Cons		ND P	BQ
				CA	PC		
May 20, 2004	May 15-19	1579	39	31		17	11
May 3, 2004	April 30-May 2	906	39	27		20	12
Feb. 14, 2004	Feb.13	600	44	26		18	9

¹ The core national representative sample was approximately 1000 with sizeable over-samples in B.C. and Alberta for a total of 1579. The nation-wide core can be deemed accurate to within approximately 3 percentage points 19 times out of 20. B.C. and Alberta were significantly over-sampled, making their reliability much higher than they would otherwise be.

² Refusals to vote or answer the question are removed prior to calculation. Others are not included in the table.



Two-Part Canadian National Election Poll for National Post, CanWest Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics

Report Date	Field Dates	N	Lib	Cons		ND P	BQ
				CA	PC		
Jan. 30, 2004	Jan. 26-28	500	49	19 ³		17	11
Oct. 25, 2003	Oct. 21-23	500	50	10	14	14	9
June 30, 2003	June 18-22	1000	45	16	16	14	9
July 22, 2002	July 13-16	907	44	14	15	12	10
June 5, 2002	June 4	618	42	15	17	13	8
May 28, 2002	May 27	407	41	14	15	14	10
April 11, 2002	April 4-9	658	46	12	14	12	12
Dec. 5, 2001	Dec 2-4	445	51	8	15	10	11
Oct. 31, 2001	Oct. 27-30	500	53	8	17	11	9
Sept. 28, 2001	Sept. 26-27	500	56	8	15	8	8
Sept. 21, 2001	Sept. 17-18	500	55	7	15	4	7
Aug. 22, 2001	Aug. 17-20	785	51	11	15	10	7
June 3, 2001	May 27-30	589	53	10	15	8	12
May 11, 2001	May 9-10	500	50	11	11	8	10

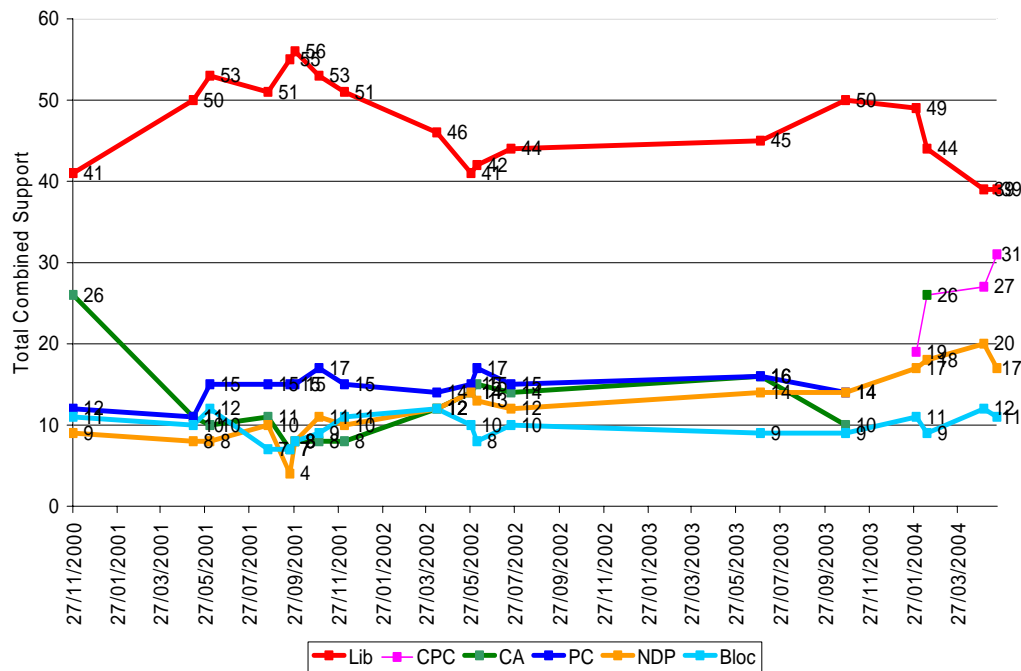
³ Poll conducted before the new Conservative Party selected a new leader. Phrased "The Conservatives led by Stephen Harper."



Two-Part Canadian National Election Poll for National Post, CanWest Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics

Report Date	Field Dates	N	Lib	Cons		NDP	BQ
				CA	PC		
2000 General Election November 27, 2000			41	26	12	9	11

Fig. 1: COMPAS Federal Election Tracker Graph from November 2000 General Election to May 20, 2004



The challenge for the Liberals is not voter instability or volatility but rather a mood of negativity and an inclination to turn against the government over specific issues that have emerged in the news. The first major blow to the Liberals was Adscam, which propelled the re-



emergence of the Bloc Quebecois on their home turf and strengthened cynicism about politicians across the country.

One indicator of the negative mood of the electorate is that a large plurality of Canadians feel that their personal situations are worse off than four years ago. Forty percent say that they are worse off with a high of 48% in B.C. and Alberta and a low of 27% in Quebec, as shown in table 2. This atmosphere of frustration and desolation among a large minority of Canadians when thinking of public life creates a barrier to growth in the Liberal vote, making it especially difficult for the Liberals to rise to majority status in Parliament. This same mood makes the Liberals vulnerable to electoral assault by their competitors.

This mood of negativity helps explain the anti-Liberal feelings in English-Canada, especially among Conservative voters. Outside Quebec, 15% of Conservative voters reporting feeling better off, 69% worse off, and 16% about the same (0 DNK). By contrast, 31% of Liberals outside Quebec feel better off, 17% worse off, and 52% the same (0 DNK). Among New Democrats, the corresponding percentages are 16, 31, and 43 (10% DNK).

Bloc voters stand out from other opposition voters in not being especially negative—30% better off, 32% worse off, and 38% the same (1% DNK).

Table 2: The National Mood –“(Q5) Compared to four years ago, do you feel better off or worse off personally?” [UNPROMPTED SAME OR DNK]

	TOTAL	bc	ab	sk/mb	on	qc	atl
Better off	27	22	31	25	26	25	36
Worse off	40	48	48	47	42	27	46
Same	32	27	18	27	31	46	17
DNK	2	2	3	1	2	1	1

Some of the public’s sense of desolation arises from a feeling of extreme cynicism about public life. Most Canadians feel that it does not matter which party wins election, as discussed below in a section devoted



to explaining the declining turnout in elections. Almost all Canadians feel that the electorate has become profoundly cynical about the integrity and honesty of politicians.

To make matters still worse for the Liberals, the public is not sure whether the election is timely or premature. Respondents were asked to choose between the following two perspectives:

- some people say that an election is a good idea because Paul Martin should seek a mandate from the voters before continuing as Prime Minister
- other people say an election should be postponed until we know who was truly responsible for the sponsorship scandal.

As shown in table 3, almost half the public thinks that the election is premature. Liberal voters are almost as likely as Tory and NDP voters to feel this way.

Table 3: Election Good Idea or Bad Idea—“(Q15) As you may know...[INSERT OPINION] Which opinion is closer to your own?”

	TOTAL	bc	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
Some people say that an election is a good idea because Paul Martin should seek a mandate from the voters before continuing as Prime Minister	47	55	58	53	49	35	44
While other people say an election should be postponed until we know who was truly responsible for the sponsorship scandal	45	41	35	38	46	50	52
DNK/ Refused	8	4	7	8	5	15	4



Liberals Headed for Minority as a Result of Jump in Tory Vote

Even before this past week, the Liberals were challenged by the fact that their national support hovered around 40%. This was problematic for the outgoing government because governing parties almost always lose support over the course of a campaign. Campaigns give voters a reason to listen to opposition parties, whose criticisms are sometimes embraced.

The new reason for the Liberals to worry is that Conservative support has experienced an apparent jump—to 31% from a range that has normally been in the mid-twenties, as shown in table 4.

Table 4: The Vote⁴

	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	39	32	27	35	42	40	50
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	31	40	57	27	39	7	26
The NDP led by Jack Layton	17	26	14	32	18	9	20
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	11	-	-	-	-	43	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	2	3	2	7	2	1	4

⁴ Refusals to vote (1%) or answer the question (15%) are excluded from the calculations. The vote is calculated on the basis of a combination of an initial vote question and a followup about which party the respondent is leaning to if the respondent claims to be undecided. The initial question: "Could you please tell me if you would you vote for [ROTATE] if an election were held today. [ROTATE]"



This jump apparently took place during the past week week, largely after the fieldwork was completed on a national poll for the *Globe and Mail* and CTV. The latter's field work apparently began a week ago Monday and ended Monday. The COMPAS poll for *National Post*, Global, and CanWest daily newspapers began this past Friday and ended on the night of Wednesday, May 19th. The COMPAS poll could take into consideration three phenomena that may have been missed by the other poll for reasons of timing—the Liberals' negative ad campaign, discussion in the Ontario media of the anticipated deficit and higher taxes in the provincial budget, and delayed effects of Adscam.

A previous COMPAS poll for the *National Post* showed that Ontario voters were divided about whether the Ontario government should have a deficit and were inclined to believe that Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty had prevaricated in his election campaign promise not to have a deficit. The cynicism that was intensified by the provincial budget talk could have rebounded against the federal Liberals in Ontario, where the federal Conservatives have experienced a jump in fortunes.

During the same period, the electorate may have been offended by the Liberals' attack ads. The federal Liberal attacks ads may be doing for the federal Conservatives what the Eves' Conservative attack ads did for the McGuinty-led provincial Liberals in Ontario a few months ago. As discussed below, the Conservatives are relatively immune to most of the criticisms that the Liberals might want to direct their way.

In practice, the Liberals are set to lose massively to the Bloc in Quebec, possibly do poorly in Saskatchewan-Manitoba, and be shut out of Alberta. The Liberals are also threatened in B.C., where public misgivings about the provincial Liberals could carry over to their federal cousins. In the electoral heartland of Ontario, the federal Liberals face a new competition from the Conservatives that they have not experienced in many seasons.

The national figures overstate Liberal Parliamentary potential because so much of the Liberal support in Quebec is concentrated (and hence "wasted") among Anglophone and allophones seats. The national figures understate Conservative Parliamentary support because the



Conservatives have virtually no support in Quebec and hence no “wastage” in that important province. The main region where Conservative party support is “wasted” is Alberta, where, at 57%, the Conservatives have far more support than they need to take the province.

Regional Strongholds

The electorate is highly regionalized with the following Parliamentary expectations if indeed an election is called and the campaign has limited impact on voter feelings:

- a Bloc sweep of Quebec with few majority French ridings electing Liberals
- Potential Conservative sweeps in B.C. as well as Alberta
- Serious Liberal strength in Atlantic Canada
- Major increases in Conservative seats in Ontario outside Toronto
- Opportunities for the NDP in Ontario and in Saskatchewan-Manitoba.

In B.C., the best news for the Liberals is that they are highly competitive in Greater Vancouver (36% vs. 38% Conservative and 26% NDP, N=142). They may be leading in Kamloops-Okanagan⁵ and Nanaimo-South Island⁶ but sub-samples are too small for confidence. Meanwhile the Liberals are losing badly in Fraser Valley⁷ and may be in Kootenay-North B.C., where the sub-sample is necessarily small.⁸

⁵ 56% Lib, 35% Cons, 8% NDP after DNKs are excluded; N=56.

⁶ 44% Lib, 33% Con, 15% NDP plus 8% in the other category; N=71.

⁷ 22% Lib, 49% Cons, 27% NDP, 2% other; N=151.

⁸ 17% Lib, 36% Cons, 43% NDP, 4% other; N=80.



In Alberta outside Edmonton, the Liberals face decimation⁹. In Edmonton, the Liberals risk a shutout with 42% intending to vote Conservative, 40% Liberal, 16% NDP, and 3% other.¹⁰

In Ontario, the Liberals remain a powerhouse in the city of Toronto, garnering 2-3 times the support of the Conservatives and at least 50% support. Liberals are also strong in London and the south-west. But the Liberals are vulnerable almost everywhere else, especially among the Harris Tory voters of the 905 ring around Toronto and in the eastern part of the province.

The 9 regional sub-samples in the COMPAS study are too small to justify reporting but their pattern is entirely consistent with what has long been known—the Liberals dominate Toronto and are vulnerable in 905, especially long-distance 905, and in parts of Eastern Ontario.

The Conservative Cultural Core

In English-Canada (i.e. TROC), the Conservative party has the demographic ear-markings of a somewhat successful rightwing party. It is strong among

- ❑ Religious traditionalists, notably Protestants other than members of the United or Anglican Churches—49% vs. 33% for the Liberals and 16% for the NDP
- ❑ Those who marry rather than live common law-- among married, 45% Conservative, 37% Liberal, and 17% NDP; among common law couples, 23% Conservative, 38% Liberal, and 36% NDP¹¹

⁹ Calgary: 52% Cons, 27% Lib, 21% NDP; N=148. Alberta outside Calgary and Edmonton: 70% Cons, 19% Lib, 9% NDP, 3% other; N=240.

¹⁰ N=112, approximate 10 percentage points margin of error 19 times out of 20.

¹¹ Among women under 40 years of age, 37% would vote Conservative vs 43% Liberal and 20% NDP if they are married. If living common law, 49% would vote Liberal, 44% NDP, and 7% Conservative. Among women 40-59 who are married, the proportions



- ❑ Those who have the responsibilities and concerns associated with parenting teen-agers—44% Conservative, 38% Liberal, and 17% NDP;
- ❑ Men—43% Conservative, 37% Liberal, and 18% NDP vs 36% Conservative, 40% Liberal, and 22% NDP among women.

Historically, the Conservatives were the party of Britishers and Ulstermen. In an about-change, the party now has a strong appeal among the first generation born in Canada irrespective of country of origin--43 % for the Conservatives vs. 31% for the Liberals and 22% for the NDP. Among Canadians outside Quebec with several generations in the country, the percentages are 39% for the Conservatives vs. 38% for the Liberals and 20% for the NDP.

Campaign Issues—Voters Have Put Their Gears More Firmly in Neutral

This report began by discussing the mood of negativity among the electorate. Voters seem to have become even more negative and withdrawn from the national contest in the last two weeks. An even larger share of the electorate (28% vs. 23% in fieldwork completed May 2nd) say that their final voting decision will be based on local candidate and local policy considerations.

The increased emphasis on localism can be interpreted as meaning that the electorate is even less engaged in national decision-making and even more skeptical of the national choices presented to them.

are 38% Liberal, 41% Conservative, and 21% NDP; among those common law, the corresponding proportions are 24%, 29%, and 37%.



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Table 5: Volunteered Issues--(Q4) "Thinking of how you're likely to vote, please tell me what factor most affects how you'll probably vote?" [DON'T PROMPT BUT SELECT RESPONSE IF THE CATEGORY FITS OR OTHERWISE WRITE IN THE OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE]

	Total May 2	Total May 19	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
Depends on local candidates and local platforms	23	28	28	32	37	29	25	20
Health	18	16	18	6	14	15	21	21
Leaders or leadership in general, Integrity	13	13	14	16	14	13	11	21
Adscam, Liberal government corruption	5	10	10	14	9	7	15	7
Taxes and economy	14	9	8	6	6	11	7	9
Education in general—Improve or protect public education	3	4	4	1	2	4	4	3
Anti-Liberal	3	4	5	10	2	5	1	2
Pro-Liberal	4	3	1	4	2	3	3	3
Gay, women's and other rights; social issues	5	2	1	1	6	2	1	0
Pro-Tory	1	2	4	3	0	2	0	2
Pro-NDP	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	5
Martin-like	1	2	3	0	5	2	2	3
Dislike	1	2	2	1	0	2	2	2
Environment	2	1	0	0	0	*	2	0
Anti-Tory	1	1	1	0	2	2	0	0
Pro-Bloc, Pro-PQ	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	0



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	Total May 2	Total May 19	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
Foreign policy and defence	3	*	0	1	0	*	0	0
Anti-NDP	1	*	1	0	0	0	0	0
Anti-Bloc, Anti-PQ	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Harper-like	*	*	0	1	0	0	0	0
Dislike	*	*	0	0	2	0	0	3
Layton-like	0	*	0	0	0	1	0	0
Duceppe-like	0	*	0	0	0	0	1	0
[UNPROMPTED] Other	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/Refused	15	16	12	8	11	11	30	19

Ballot Issues vs. Issue Ballots

Explaining When and How Ballot Issues and Issue Ballots Matter

This report measures issues three times. The first time is when respondents volunteer what issues are a factor in their vote.

The remaining two measures involve paired closed-ended questions. Respondents are asked to score the importance of each issue in a series and then to indicate how they would vote if the issue were paramount to them.

Ballot issues, the answer to the first of the paired questions, are the issues that Canadians claim are driving their vote.



Issue ballots are inferred from how respondents answer the second question in the pair. If respondents change dramatically how they intend to vote on the basis of a given issue, we conclude that this is indeed an issue ballot.

Ballot issues and issue ballots are used to check against each other's validity.

Issue ballots are vital to consider because election campaigns are ultimately a war over the issues that ought to drive the choices made by individual voters. In hot wars, the side wins that determines the terrain of battle. In election warfare, the side wins that determines the issues.

Unlike issue ballots, self-proclaimed ballot issues are difficult to interpret. One problem is that voters often pay mere lip-service to an issue. Healthcare is an example. A sizeable minority claim that this is the issue driving their vote. But if healthcare were truly a driver of the vote, there would be differences in the proportions of Liberals, Tories, and New Democrats claiming healthcare to be their key issue. But such differences are paltry. The mean scores for the importance of health and education combined are, respectively, 6.4, 6.3, and 6.6 among Liberal, Conservative, and NDP voters on the 7 point issue importance scales.

Another problem interpreting ballot issues arises from individuals' desires for social respectability. A need for social acceptance may lead respondents in surveys to overstate issues with an altruistic aspect, e.g. healthcare, and understate issues with a strong dose of self-interest, e.g. taxes.

Still another problem interpreting ballot issues arises from the fact that regional ballot issues may be much more important than national ballot issues. For example, agriculture is hardly mentioned by respondents in national surveys but a factor in the west.



Ballot Issues—Maybe Health, Economy, Taxes, Terror, Scandal, and Quebec, But Not Agriculture, Gays, the West, Time for a Change

Respondents often claim that virtually all the issues presented to them are important factors affecting their votes. Respondents make such claims in this poll as well. At the top of their lists are healthcare and education, the economy, the economy, leadership, scandal and waste, and protecting respondents' own province in Confederation, as shown in table 5. At the bottom are keeping Quebec in Canada, time for a change gun registry, and gay marriage. Paradoxically, these apparently bottom ranked issues are the explosive ones, as evidenced by how sharply impacted the vote would be if each one of these were paramount—a topic to be discussed.

Table 5: Ballot Issues—“(Q6) The following are some issues in the election. [RANDOMIZE BY PAIR] Q6A) For example, [ROTATE ISSUE]. How important is this in your voting decision on a 7 point scale where 7 means very important in your decision and 1, the opposite.”

	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	Qc	ATL
Healthcare and education							
Mean	6.3	6.5	6.2	6.5	6.4	6.1	6.5
7	61	70	54	73	59	55	68
6	24	19	29	14	26	24	22
5	9	8	12	11	10	6	5
4	3	1	1	0	2	6	4
3	2	1	4	1	1	3	0
2	1	0	0	0	1	2	0
1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1
DNK	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
The economy							
Mean	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.8	6.2	5.7	5.9
7	47	48	48	44	51	40	47



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	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	Qc	ATL
6	24	22	25	18	28	22	19
5	18	22	18	23	13	22	23
4	5	4	5	8	5	5	7
3	2	2	4	3	2	2	3
2	2	2	1	0	1	4	1
1	1	1	0	3	1	3	1
DNK	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
Taxes							
Mean	5.6	5.5	5.8	5.6	5.8	5.3	5.7
7	41	36	40	44	45	37	47
6	21	18	26	17	22	22	13
5	18	24	18	19	17	14	19
4	8	8	12	5	8	6	11
3	6	8	1	4	4	8	8
2	3	4	3	5	1	5	1
1	3	2	1	4	2	6	1
DNK	1	1	0	1	2	2	0
Leadership							
Mean	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.1	5.9
7	40	42	43	41	45	28	48
6	20	14	14	25	20	21	20
5	21	24	24	18	19	23	15
4	7	9	9	4	7	7	6
3	5	3	3	1	3	10	7
2	3	4	4	3	2	5	0
1	4	1	1	6	2	6	3
DNK	1	2	2	3	1	1	1
Scandal and waste							
Mean	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.4
7	41	43	45	51	39	40	40
6	17	15	17	11	17	20	16
5	16	14	16	15	18	15	24



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	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	Qc	ATL
4	9	8	6	4	13	8	3
3	5	7	2	7	5	4	6
2	4	3	5	8	3	5	6
1	5	7	10	4	3	5	5
DNK	2	3	0	0	2	5	0
Protecting [OWN PROVINCE] in the decision-making process in Ottawa							
Mean	5.5	5.7	5.8	5.6	5.3	5.4	5.7
7	33	40	47	34	28	25	46
6	19	23	18	18	22	14	20
5	18	21	19	22	20	10	16
4	8	5	4	11	12	7	5
3	5	4	5	6	7	4	5
2	3	2	4	1	3	3	0
1	4	3	3	1	4	3	6
DNK	10	1	1	7	3	34	1
Security against terrorism							
Mean	5.2	4.9	5.1	5.1	5.4	5.1	5.1
7	35	31	32	27	38	33	40
6	17	11	13	22	19	18	10
5	18	22	20	23	18	15	17
4	8	9	14	6	7	7	8
3	10	11	12	10	8	10	12
2	7	7	7	7	6	7	7
1	5	8	3	5	4	7	8
DNK	1	2	0	0	1	3	0
Agriculture							
Mean	5.2	5.1	5.4	5.7	5.2	5.1	5.1
7	31	27	36	42	29	33	31
6	17	13	18	19	18	17	13



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	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	Qc	ATL
5	22	25	21	23	25	17	22
4	12	14	13	8	13	11	11
3	7	7	6	3	7	8	10
2	4	4	4	0	3	6	6
1	5	6	3	4	4	7	6
DNK	2	4	0	0	1	2	3
Bringing Western Canada into the decision-making process in Ottawa							
Mean	5.1	5.8	6.0	5.8	5.1	4.3	4.7
7	33	49	58	49	28	19	21
6	16	19	15	17	17	11	15
5	17	15	11	19	19	15	23
4	10	5	4	6	13	12	15
3	7	4	6	4	8	8	5
2	6	3	2	1	5	13	8
1	7	4	3	4	6	13	9
DNK	5	2	2	0	4	9	4
Keeping Quebec in Confederation							
Mean	4.9	4.7	4.4	4.8	5.1	4.9	5.0
7	32	29	20	33	36	32	37
6	15	14	13	15	17	16	12
5	16	21	22	16	13	15	15
4	9	8	9	11	10	7	8
3	7	7	10	4	7	6	8
2	7	4	13	4	6	8	7
1	12	16	12	16	9	12	12
DNK	2	1	2	0	2	4	1
Getting a change after three Liberal governments in a row							



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	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	Qc	ATL
Mean	4.6	4.7	4.9	4.7	4.4	4.6	4.4
7	30	35	41	34	27	26	33
6	12	11	9	7	14	14	7
5	14	15	16	16	12	16	11
4	10	9	8	11	9	11	13
3	7	7	6	7	7	7	11
2	8	7	2	4	10	7	8
1	17	15	18	18	18	15	18
DNK	3	1	1	3	3	4	0
The gun registry							
Mean	3.7	3.5	3.3	3.9	3.7	4.2	3.5
7	20	17	17	25	21	23	16
6	9	7	7	4	10	12	4
5	12	13	12	10	8	14	18
4	8	10	7	11	9	5	12
3	7	7	3	12	7	7	8
2	13	11	17	6	14	12	13
1	27	31	38	28	28	20	28
DNK	4	4	0	5	3	7	3
Gay marriage							
Mean	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.0	3.3	3.3	3.4
7	15	17	17	15	13	15	14
6	7	4	5	4	7	9	9
5	12	13	14	8	13	8	16
4	9	12	9	10	10	7	7
3	9	11	8	6	8	10	9
2	12	10	11	8	13	16	5
1	34	31	37	45	33	33	38
DNK	3	3	0	4	3	3	3



The Contrasting Importance of Different Issues for Different Voter Segments—in TROC, Time for a Change and Scandal for Tories, Keeping Quebec for Liberals

The importance of issues in a campaign is often revealed better by contrasts in the importance attached to an issue by voter segments than by the absolute importance assigned to an issue. In TROC (outside Quebec),

- ❑ Conservative voters attach far more importance to need for a change (mean 5.8 vs. 3.1 among Liberals; 5.1 among NDP voters), scandal and waste (6.1 vs. 4.9 among Liberals; 5.4 among NDPers)
- ❑ Conservatives attach more importance to taxes (6.1, 5.6 Lib, 5.1 NDP) and bringing western Canada into decision-making (5.8, 5.1, 5.1)
- ❑ Liberals attach far more importance to keeping Quebec in Confederation (5.4, 4.5 Cons, 4.7 NDP).

On all other issues including gay marriage as framed in this particular issue question, party segments resemble each other in the importance they attribute to the issue as a driver of their vote.

In Quebec, the main protagonists are the Liberals and Bloc rather than the Conservatives. Liberal and Bloc voters differ on the importance of far more issues in Quebec than do Liberals and Conservatives in TROC:

- ❑ Scandal and waste, considered far more important by Bloc voters (Libs 4.9 vs. 6.1 Bloc)
- ❑ Security against terrorism, considered far less important by Bloc voters (Libs 5.6 vs. 4.8 Bloc)
- ❑ Leadership (Libs 5.6 vs. Bloc 5.0)
- ❑ Agriculture (Libs 5.5 vs. 4.9 Bloc)
- ❑ Bringing western Canadian into decision-making, considered far more important by Liberals (4.9 vs. 3.8 Bloc)



- ❑ Keeping Quebec in Confederation, considered far more important by Liberals (5.5 vs. 4.2 Bloc).

From the patterns of difference in the importance attached to different issues, a reasonable conclusion is that Bloc and Quebec Liberal voters differ more from each other than do Liberal and Conservative voters outside Quebec, presenting Liberals with potentially more difficulty winning over Bloc than English-Canadian Conservative voters.

Issue Ballots—For the Liberals, Quebec Separatism, Terror, and the Economy; for the Tories, Scandal, Change, Guns, and Taxes with Gay Marriage as a Sleeper; for the NDP, Health and Education

Issue ballots are those issues that, if paramount, would dramatically change the balance of support among the parties. As shown in table 6, the threat of Quebec separatism would dramatically change the balance of support among the parties, giving the Liberals a resounding majority. Paradoxically, the Bloc Quebec is the federal Liberals' best friend. The stronger the perceived threat posed by the Bloc and its provincial counterpart, the PQ, the greater the potential issue of separatism, and the greater the electoral prospects of the federal Liberal party. For the Conservatives, the corresponding nuclear issue is scandal and waste.

No issue propels the NDP to the top but the NDP does well when health and education are paramount.

Gay marriage has a paradoxical quality. When the question is posed in general terms, the Conservatives may reap a modest benefit. But the benefit explodes when presented in the form displayed in table 7.



Table 6: Issue Ballots, i.e. Powerful Single-Issue Votes,
In Descending Order from Pro-Liberal to Pro-Conservative Issues
"(Q6B) If this were the only factor in your thinking, for which party would
you vote?" [REPEAT LIST ONLY IF NECESSARY]

	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	Qc	ATL
Keeping Quebec in Confederation							
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	48	48	37	55	54	40	51
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	26	27	54	19	31	9	29
The NDP led by Jack Layton	14	23	9	17	14	8	18
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	10	-	-	-	-	42	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	2	2	0	9	1	2	2
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	2	1	1	3	1	3	4
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	20	21	20	18	20	17	26
Security against terrorism							
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	44	43	22	37	48	45	54
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	31	34	59	37	36	8	26
The NDP led by Jack Layton	15	22	19	20	14	9	21
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	9	-	-	-	-	36	-



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	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	Qc	ATL
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	1	0	6	1	1	0
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	1	0	0	1	1	2	2
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	22	22	20	25	23	22	22
The economy							
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	43	38	28	40	48	43	50
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	31	35	56	26	37	10	26
The NDP led by Jack Layton	17	26	16	29	14	10	22
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	8	-	-	-	-	36	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	1	0	5	1	1	2
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	1	0	1	1	1	2	1
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	20	19	18	23	19	22	23
Leadership							
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	42	35	23	41	47	44	53
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	29	36	56	22	34	9	25
The NDP led by Jack Layton	20	28	22	31	19	11	22
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	9	-	-	-	-	36	-



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Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics*

	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	Qc	ATL
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	1	0	6	*	1	0
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	2	0	1	3	1	3	1
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	19	16	17	23	19	18	20
Protecting [OWN PROVINCE] in the decision-making process in Ottawa							
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	40	32	23	31	47	44	44
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	32	39	63	26	36	7	30
The NDP led by Jack Layton	19	27	15	37	17	10	27
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	9	-	-	-	-	39	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	2	0	6	*	1	0
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	2	1	0	1	1	3	2
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	21	18	12	25	20	27	25
Healthcare and education							
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	38	31	24	32	41	42	44
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	29	33	51	25	35	11	24
The NDP led by Jack Layton	24	35	25	39	24	11	29



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Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics*

	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	Qc	ATL
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	9	-	-	-	-	36	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	1	0	5	1	1	2
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	1	0	1	3	1	2	2
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	19	21	14	19	20	18	23
Agriculture							
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	38	34	21	31	43	42	40
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	30	36	57	30	34	6	37
The NDP led by Jack Layton	21	30	22	33	21	12	21
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	9	-	-	-	-	37	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	2	1	0	6	2	2	2
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	1	0	1	1	1	3	1
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	23	23	16	25	23	24	26
Gay marriage							
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	38	37	25	34	39	44	44
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	31	29	60	30	39	8	26
The NDP led by Jack Layton	21	33	15	30	22	12	30



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Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics*

	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	Qc	ATL
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	9	-	-	-	-	35	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	1	1	6	1	1	0
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	2	0	2	1	3	3	4
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	23	20	17	30	25	20	27
Bringing Western Canada into the decision-making process in Ottawa							
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	38	30	22	39	42	43	43
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	36	45	64	24	42	12	33
The NDP led by Jack Layton	17	24	14	32	15	10	24
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	8	-	-	-	-	35	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	1	0	6	2	1	0
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	2	1	0	1	1	3	2
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	20	16	14	25	22	19	23
Taxes							
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	37	33	26	35	40	40	40



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Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics*

	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	Qc	ATL
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	34	38	56	35	42	11	32
The NDP led by Jack Layton	19	28	19	24	18	11	28
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	9	-	-	-	-	37	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	1	0	6	1	1	0
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	2	0	2	4	1	3	1
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	19	23	13	22	19	18	25
The gun registry							
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	35	29	18	26	37	42	40
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	34	40	62	40	41	9	35
The NDP led by Jack Layton	20	31	19	28	21	10	23
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	9	-	-	-	-	37	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	2	1	0	5	1	3	2
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	2	1	1	3	2	2	2
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	21	22	23	19	22	20	21
Getting a change after three Liberal governments in a row							



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Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics*

	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	Qc	ATL
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	32	24	18	27	35	38	36
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	36	40	60	32	43	12	35
The NDP led by Jack Layton	22	33	22	35	21	11	27
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	9	-	-	-	-	38	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	2	3	0	5	1	1	2
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	2	0	1	1	1	3	2
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	18	18	12	18	20	18	21
Scandal and waste							
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	30	20	18	26	33	34	42
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	37	45	62	31	43	12	34
The NDP led by Jack Layton	22	33	20	38	24	11	23
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	10	-	-	-	-	40	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	2	1	0	5	1	3	2
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	2	1	1	3	2	4	2
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	19	19	11	22	21	17	18



Two-Part Canadian National Election Poll for National Post, CanWest
Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics

*Table 7: Conservatives vs. Other Parties on Gay Marriage
"(Q11) Suppose the Conservatives said that homosexuals should have a right to a civil union but only a man and a woman should be allowed to marry and adopt children, and suppose the other parties said that homosexuals should have a right to marriage and adoption. If you based your vote on this issue, how would you vote?
[OPTIONAL] Would you vote for..."[ROTATE]*

	TOTAL	bc	ab	sk/mb	on	qc	atl
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	32	29	19	24	35	35	36
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	41	43	67	48	47	22	36
The NDP led by Jack Layton	18	28	14	22	18	9	26
[IN QUEBEC] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	7	-	-	-	-	31	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	2	1	1	5	*	3	2
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	3	1	3	5	3	3	1
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	16	15	17	15	14	17	20



Attacking the Liberals and Conservatives—What Works, What Doesn't

Liberals Supremely Vulnerable on Adscam, Vulnerable on Other Issues Too

The Liberals are profoundly vulnerable, as shown in tables 8 and 9. For the Liberals, Adscam is the “mother” of all Achilles’ heels. By immense majorities, Canadians believe the Liberals were corruptly helping their friends, Martin had to have known at the time, his record is not squeaky clean, and Adscam was not a honest mistake made in the course of trying to keep Quebec in Confederation. Finally, Canadians are evenly divided about whether Martin should be blamed given that he was not Prime Minister at the time.

The Liberals are on the strongest ground arguing the Harper would not be more honest. Most Canadians believe that Harper has presented no convincing evidence that he would be different. Unfortunately for the Liberals, arguing that Harper would be just as dishonest is a recipe for ballot spoiling more than it is a recipe for voting Liberal.

Other warning signs for the outgoing Liberals:

- a majority believe that the Liberals have such a record of misspending that it’s time to clean house, as shown in table 9,
- near majorities believe that the Liberals should be ousted because they alienated the Americans needlessly, opened Canada’s doors to terrorists, impose taxes that are too high, and are paralyzed by a feud between Martin and Chretien camps.



Table 8: Assigning Blame for Adscam
“(Q14) Turning now to the Sponsorship scandal, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following opinions. [RANDOMIZE]”

	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
There was much corruption and Liberals helped their friends							
Agree	76	85	84	79	77	64	75
Disagree	16	11	8	15	14	24	18
DNK/ Refused	8	4	8	6	9	13	6
Paul Martin had to have known—he was the top Quebec minister at the time							
Agree	71	69	78	77	69	70	72
Disagree	20	22	14	15	23	20	18
DNK/ Refused	9	9	8	8	8	10	10
Martin does not have a squeaky clean record, and he hasn’t proven that his government will be honest.							
Agree	68	78	76	82	66	58	68
Disagree	23	16	17	11	27	27	27
DNK/ Refused	9	5	7	7	8	16	5
Conservative leader Stephen Harper hasn’t proven that he would be better.							
Agree	61	76	56	64	62	49	67
Disagree	25	16	29	25	28	26	25
DNK/ Refused	14	9	15	11	10	25	8



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Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics*

	TOTAL	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
Jean Chretien was the Prime Minister and Martin shouldn't be blamed							
Agree	41	43	32	40	49	34	41
Disagree	50	50	59	48	46	54	51
DNK/ Refused	9	7	9	12	6	12	8
It was an honest mistake trying to stop Quebec from leaving the country							
Agree	22	17	19	19	22	23	29
Disagree	67	76	72	74	68	61	59
DNK/ Refused	11	7	10	7	10	16	12

*Table 9: Impacts of Anti-Liberal Criticisms
(Q25) Please score each of the following possible criticisms of the Liberals on a 7 point scale where 7 means that the criticism is valid and a good reason to vote against the Liberals and 1, the opposite. [ROTATE] First of all, how would you score the opinion that...*

	Total	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
The Liberals have such a record of misspending and scandal that it's time to clean house							
Mean	5.1	5.3	5.7	5.1	4.9	5.2	4.8
7	38	46	57	33	35	33	40
6	12	8	9	18	14	14	3
5	14	10	8	12	11	21	15
4	12	17	9	10	12	8	16
3	7	7	5	14	7	6	5



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Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics*

	Total	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
2	6	6	4	3	8	4	10
1	8	5	7	7	10	7	11
DNK	3	1	1	4	3	7	0
Liberals are too divided between the Martin and Chretien camps to run a government							
Mean	4.3	4.1	4.4	4.5	4.2	4.7	4.2
7	20	20	19	19	17	25	17
6	10	7	14	10	12	8	4
5	20	14	18	21	19	21	31
4	12	15	12	12	12	11	11
3	12	14	16	12	11	10	12
2	10	13	8	6	11	7	9
1	12	11	10	11	14	9	14
DNK	6	5	4	10	6	9	3
We need to replace the Liberals because taxes are far too high							
Mean	4.1	4.2	4.5	4.2	3.9	4.1	4.0
7	23	27	28	26	21	21	21
6	8	8	9	10	8	7	8
5	14	13	16	11	12	18	19
4	11	10	11	10	12	12	5
3	9	9	11	12	9	8	12
2	12	14	5	12	14	10	16
1	20	18	18	18	22	19	19
DNK	3	2	2	1	2	5	0
The Liberals have let terrorists and extremists sneak into our country							
Mean	3.9	3.8	4.6	3.7	4.0	3.5	3.7



Two-Part Canadian National Election Poll for National Post, CanWest Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics

	Total	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
7	20	19	30	21	23	16	15
6	7	9	8	5	6	6	7
5	14	10	16	14	13	14	19
4	11	9	11	8	14	8	9
3	10	16	9	14	8	12	10
2	12	15	10	8	11	14	13
1	23	20	13	27	23	27	24
DNK	4	3	4	3	3	5	3
The Liberals needlessly offended the Americans, who are our best friends and buy 90% of our exports							
Mean	3.9	4.0	4.2	3.9	4.1	3.5	4.1
7	18	24	23	21	18	12	22
6	11	11	18	10	13	4	9
5	15	6	12	14	15	22	11
4	10	8	5	7	12	10	14
3	9	10	7	14	7	10	9
2	13	16	12	7	12	13	16
1	21	21	22	25	19	25	17
DNK	4	5	2	4	4	4	3

Conservatives Virtually Invulnerable to Anti-Christian, Anti-Alberta Attacks

Under fire themselves, the Liberals may be sorely tempted and may indeed see merit in launching blistering attacks on the Conservatives. We tested several such attacks—that Harper and his entourage are unfit to rule as Christian church-goers, Albertans, low tax advocates, and politicians without experience running a government, as shown in table 10.



None of these attacks elicits majority support. Two of the attacks—the anti-Christian and anti-Alberta attacks—generated strong backlashes, as shown in table 10.

Table 10: Impacts of Anti-Conservative Criticisms
(Q26) Please score each of the following criticisms of the Conservatives on a 7 point scale [OPTIONAL] where 7 means that the criticism is valid and a persuasive reason to vote against the Conservatives and 1, the opposite. [ROTATE]

	TOTAL	bc	ab	sk/mb	on	qc	atl
The Conservatives want low taxes too much							
Mean	3.9	4.0	3.6	3.4	3.9	4.2	3.9
7	13	13	11	12	12	13	17
6	9	9	7	3	12	8	8
5	16	16	11	18	15	17	22
4	14	19	18	8	13	13	7
3	13	12	18	12	16	8	15
2	8	7	10	11	7	8	12
1	17	16	18	29	18	11	18
DNK	10	8	8	7	6	23	1
The Conservatives don't have the experience to run government.							
Mean	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.8	3.8	4.0	3.9
7	13	11	14	18	12	13	14
6	8	10	3	8	10	5	9
5	17	15	18	11	16	23	18
4	14	16	8	14	14	14	15
3	11	14	13	10	12	6	17
2	12	13	14	14	13	7	11
1	19	15	26	22	19	18	15
DNK	7	6	5	4	5	15	1



Two-Part Canadian National Election Poll for National Post, CanWest Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics

	TOTAL	bc	ab	sk/mb	on	qc	atl
Harper and some of his advisors are Christian Church-goers, who shouldn't be running government							
Mean	3.2	3.2	2.5	3.0	3.2	3.6	3.5
7	11	8	9	11	12	11	11
6	5	6	1	1	5	5	6
5	13	15	6	15	11	17	17
4	8	8	8	7	10	5	13
3	10	11	11	10	11	8	10
2	11	15	13	12	9	8	12
1	31	30	44	37	35	22	26
DNK	12	8	9	7	8	24	6
Harper is from Alberta and Albertans shouldn't run the government							
Mean	2.3	2.1	1.7	2.5	2.3	2.7	2.1
7	6	5	3	10	7	7	3
6	3	2	0	3	3	5	2
5	7	6	5	6	7	9	12
4	6	5	6	7	6	5	6
3	6	4	5	7	5	9	7
2	11	13	5	19	12	9	5
1	52	55	71	46	52	39	63
DNK	10	9	5	3	9	18	3



Explaining Why Voters Don't Vote—Cynicism about Politicians, Not Late Family Formation

All the democracies without compulsory voting have been experiencing declining turnout. The extensive U.S. scholarship on the issue has tended to point to life style issues as driving factors, including high levels of geographic mobility. Voters register and cast their ballots less often because they change their state of residence often and become confused about how to follow the state-driven rules for registration.

Some scholars have also pointed to the rise of television-induced cynicism in the 1960's as a factor driving reducing turnout.

The Canadian public takes the side of those scholars attributing low turnout to cynicism rather than life style changes. As shown in table 11 , comparatively few attribute lower turnout to changing patterns and life cycles of marriage and settling down while immense majorities see the public as cynical about the honesty of politicians and whether it makes any difference who forms a government.

Table 11: Explaining Low Turnout-Cynicism
 (Q27) Turning to another topic, there are different opinions about why fewer Canadians are voting than before. Please score each of the following opinions on a 7 point scale where 7 means you agree completely that this helps explain low voting, and 1, the opposite. [ROTATE] First all, how would you rate the idea that...

	TOTAL	bc	ab	sk/mb	on	qc	atl
People are getting very cynical about the honesty of politicians.							
Mean	6.0	6.2	6.1	6.1	6.0	5.6	6.1
7	52	59	54	56	54	44	54
6	19	20	22	19	21	15	20
5	12	6	13	8	12	14	13



*Two-Part Canadian National Election Poll for National Post, CanWest
Metro Dailies, and Global Television, Part 1: Campaign Dynamics*

	TOTAL	bc	ab	sk/mb	on	qc	atl
4	6	7	3	7	6	9	8
3	3	3	5	1	3	3	3
2	2	0	1	3	1	4	0
1	3	2	1	3	3	5	1
DNK	3	4	1	3	1	6	1
People are voting less because it doesn't make much difference who wins							
Mean	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.1	5.0	5.2
7	31	34	36	29	29	30	32
6	16	17	12	17	17	12	19
5	22	21	28	23	22	22	20
4	11	10	7	14	12	9	13
3	7	6	9	1	5	11	3
2	5	5	2	8	4	6	7
1	7	6	3	4	9	5	6
DNK	3	2	4	4	2	4	1
Young people don't vote much because they often don't get married and settle down until they're much older							
Mean	3.6	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.7	4.0
7	13	11	9	15	11	16	17
6	8	6	6	3	10	8	9
5	16	11	19	15	16	13	23
4	13	15	10	10	14	14	10
3	11	7	22	17	10	10	8
2	13	21	12	15	12	9	9
1	24	22	19	23	24	25	22
DNK	4	7	4	3	4	5	3



Conclusion

The Liberals begin the campaign with a strong lead and a well known, highly credible Prime Minister. If there were serious threats to Canada, for example a palpable threat of Quebec secession or violence by Islamist terrorists, the Martin Liberals would almost certainly be re-elected with an overwhelming majority.

In the absence of such threats, the Liberals are confronted by a pervasive mood of cynicism and distress, which, if activated by the Conservatives, could do the incumbents harm.

