

**Dead Heat:  
Liberals and Conservatives Statistically Tied**



**COMPAS Inc.  
Public Opinion and Customer Research  
June 24, 2004**

## **1.0 Liberals and Conservatives in Statistical Tie**

### **1.1 Vote Intentions and Likely Ballots**

The Liberals led by incumbent Prime Minister Paul Martin and the newly formed Conservatives led by former Alliance leader Stephen Harper are in a statistical tie at the end of a grueling campaign. The Liberals are nominally one percentage point ahead of the Conservatives in the preferences or expressed vote intentions of adult Canadians, as shown in table 1, with 34% and 33% support respectively. The NDP earns 15% support, the Bloc 13 %, and the Greens, 4%, as shown in table 1.

COMPAS also provides likely votes cast for each of the parties. “Likely votes cast” differs from vote intentions insofar as “like votes cast” takes into consideration well established evidence that older voters have a higher probability of actually casting ballots than younger voters.<sup>1</sup>

The net effect of the higher turnout among older voters favours the larger parties over the smaller ones. The NDP and Greens each lose one percentage point. The Bloc, which also depends disproportionately on a younger vote, loses less than 0.5 percentage points. The Liberals and Conservatives each gain one percentage point.

In practice, COMPAS predicts that these vote intentions will likely hold firm until Monday with the main exception of a possible abatement in Bloc votes and a slight rise in Liberal support within the province of Quebec. The PQ leader’s recent declaration that Bloc success would speed up the holding of another referendum on sovereignty could well make some federalist Bloc voters rethink their ballot intentions.

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<sup>1</sup> COMPAS used an Elections Canada study for estimated turnout. See section 1.2 for details on how adjusted intentions are calculated.



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The pattern of vote intentions is very highly regionalized, as evidenced in table 2. The Liberals appear to dominate Atlantic Canada<sup>2</sup> while the Bloc dominates Quebec. The Liberals have re-established their lead in Ontario while the Conservatives have solidified their lead across the West.

*Table 1: Vote Intentions, Both Unadjusted for Turnout and Adjusted, DNKs Excluded*  
*"Could you please tell me if you would you vote for [ROTATE] if an election were held today ROTATE"*

	STATED VOTE INTENTION	VOTE INTENTION, ADJUSTED FOR TURNOUT
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	34	35
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	33	34
The NDP led by Jack Layton	15	14
[IN QUEBEC] the Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	13	13
[UNPROMPTED] Green party	4	3
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	1
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)*	2	2
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)**	23	24

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<sup>2</sup> Although the Atlantic sub-sample is small, the pattern of Liberal pre-eminence in the region reappeared in all National Post/Global/CNS/COMPAS polls during the campaign.



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Table 1 is the only table in this report that uses vote intentions adjusted for expected turnout. All other tables use expressed vote intentions unless specifically stated otherwise. For example, table 2 on the regional vote and table 3 on vote trackers use unadjusted vote intentions.

*Table 2: Federal Vote (Unadjusted by Expected Turnout) by Region*

	ALL	ATL	QC	ON	SK/MB	AB	BC
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	34	47	25	43	31	24	29
The Conservative party led by Stephen Harper	33	31	12	34	45	61	36
The NDP led by Jack Layton	15	22	5	17	18	7	29
[IN QUEBEC] the Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	13	NA	58 <sup>3</sup>	NA	NA	NA	NA
[UNPROMPTED] Green party	4	0	0	5	2	8	5
[UNPROMPTED] Other	1	0	1	1	3	0	1
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote (excl. from calc.)	2	5	3	1	2	0	2
[UNPROMPTED] DNK/ Undecided/ Refused (excl. from calc.)	23	35	25	21	30	14	23

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<sup>3</sup> The Bloc vote within Quebec drops 1-2% points when adjustments are made for expected turnout.



## **1.2 Methodological Note on Calculation of Stated Vote Intentions vs. Intentions Adjusted for Expected Turnout**

The survey is based on a national representative survey of 800 voters June 22-23, 2004. The conventional margin of error for samples of this size is 3.5 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

By their nature, random samples reflect imperfectly the demographic composition of the population from which they are drawn. To remove such imperfections, the original n= was re-weighted to match Statistics Canada data on the regional, age, and gender composition of Canada's voting age population. In practice, the weighting was mild because the original sample was a very accurate reflection of Canada's demographic profile.

Even a carefully weighted sample nonetheless suffers from the limitation that the propensity to go to polling stations on election day is not uniform across demographic groups. Age is by far the biggest factor affecting whether people actually vote. In order to reflect the impact of age on actual balloting, we further weighted the sample to take into consideration the different cohort bases of the parties, using Elections Canada data on the turnout of different cohorts.<sup>4</sup>

The differences between stated intentions and likely ballots are not large. As noted above, the Liberals and Conservatives will do better if older voters continue to turn out more than younger voters while the NDP, Greens, and Bloc will each lose marginally.

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<sup>4</sup> COMPAS used the raw Elections Canada data on the reported turnout rates of different cohorts rather than Elections Canada's algebraic transformation of these rates. Using Elections Canada's algebraic transformation instead of its raw data would have magnified the changes in predicted vote, forecasting lower NDP and Green votes than the predictions in the adjust-for-turnout column of table 1, above.



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*Table 3: Federal Election Tracker*

Report Date	Field Dates	N	Lib	Cons		NDP	BQ
				CA	PC		
June 24, 2004	June 22-23, 2004	810	34	33		15	13
June 17, 2004	June 16	600	35	34		17	11
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
Jan. 30, 2004	Jan. 26-28	500	49	19 <sup>5</sup>		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

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<sup>5</sup> Poll conducted before the new Conservative Party selected a new leader. Phrased "The Conservatives led by Stephen Harper."



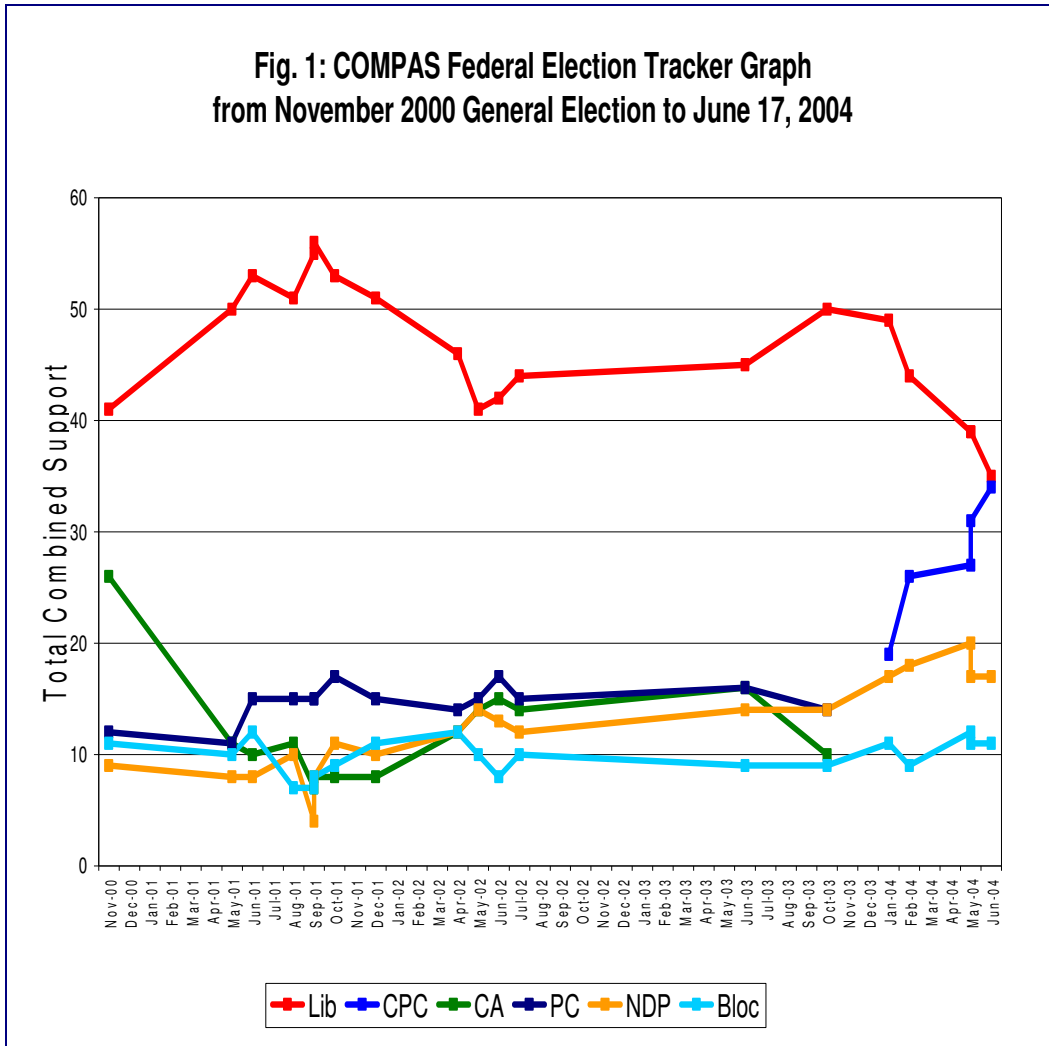
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Report Date	Field Dates	N	Lib	Cons		NDP	BQ
				CA	PC		
Oct. 31, 2001	Oct. 27-30	500	53	8	17	11	9
Sept. 28, 2001	Sept. 26-27	500	56	8	15	8	8
Sept. 21, 2001	Sept. 17-18	500	55	7	15	4	7
Aug. 22, 2001	Aug. 17-20	785	51	11	15	10	7
June 3, 2001	May 27-30	589	53	10	15	8	12
May 11, 2001	May 9-10	500	50	11	11	8	10
2000 General Election November 27, 2000			41	26	12	9	11



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## **2.0 The Campaign Has Been About Trust— Not a Referendum on Issues**

No single issue has been foremost on voters' minds at any point during the campaign. Though healthcare has been more important than other issues, it emerges as foremost in importance among only one in seven voters, as shown in table 4. Furthermore, it has not been a polarizing issue. Many Conservative voters identified healthcare as their reason for voting Conservative despite Liberal campaign efforts to use it as a wedge for partisan advantage.

Voters have a plethora of issues that they offer as guiding their voting decisions. The large "miscellaneous party policies" category includes many references to the gun registry among Conservatives and many references to opposition to Canada among Bloc voters. Small numbers of respondents have made references to union rights, the desirability of multiculturalism, and unspecified references to party platforms.

The Liberal campaign to highlight abortion rights and attacks on the Conservatives over homosexual marriage rights struck few chords. Few voters mentioned these social issues. Furthermore, some of those mentioning social issues as the factor driving their vote intend to cast a ballot for the Conservatives.

The Liberal campaign's lack of success in using social issues for partisan advantage ought to have led to a Liberal free fall given voters' concern over Liberal misspending and Adscam. The Liberals did not experience free fall because voters' lack of trust in Liberals over ethics has been balanced in part by voters' inadequate confidence in the Conservatives.

The large poll conducted in late May for the Post/Global/CNS showed that Canadians then saw Martin as more competent than Harper but competence was not to be voters' criterion for choice.<sup>6</sup> Which leader they

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<sup>6</sup> Statistically, trust in leaders was the best predictor of the vote in that poll, not perceived competence nor even respondents' sense of who would be the "best" Prime Minister.



trust most was the prime determinant of their vote, and little has changed over the course of the campaign.

With respect to the potential Parliamentary landscape after Monday, respondents were asked which of four possible outcomes involving majority-minority and Liberal/Conservative governments would be best for the country and for respondents' themselves, as shown in tables 5 and 6. At least a third of Canadians have no opinion or volunteer that they do not understand the difference between majority and minority governments.

Among the remainder, there is an approximately even split with respect to the desirability of Liberal majority, Liberal minority, and Conservative majority governments. But few Canadians feel that a Conservative minority would be desirable. Voters have a vague sense that the Conservatives would have difficulty finding Parliamentary partners to sustain their minority rule.

In keeping with the pervasive evidence of uncertainty among voters, respondents fall short of being entirely partisan in their opinions about which Parliamentary outcome would be best for the country (or themselves):

- 76% of Quebec Liberals believe that a majority Liberal government would be best for the country
- 63% of TROC Liberals believe that a Liberal majority would be best for the country, 25% a Liberal minority, 4% a Conservative majority, 1% a Conservative minority;
- 62% of TROC Conservatives believe that a Conservative majority would be best for the country, 14% a Conservative minority, 7% a Liberal minority, 1% a Liberal majority;
- among NDP voters in TROC, 41% favour a Liberal minority as best for the country, 18% a Liberal majority, 13% a Conservative minority, and 8% a Conservative majority;
- Green voters tend to think like NDP voters in TROC.



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*Table 4: Volunteered Issues--  
"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]*

	June 24	May 19	May 2	ATL	QC	ON	SK/MB	AB	BC
Taxes and economy	7	9	14	10	4	9	5	2	8
Health	16	16	18	20	13	17	24	8	18
Education in general- Improve or Protect Public Education	3	4	3	5	1	4	4	5	0
Environment	2	1	2	0	1	1	1	8	3
Gay, women's and other rights; social issues	3	2	5	2	1	4	3	9	2
Adscam, Liberal Government corruption	6	10	5	5	3	6	5	13	5
Foreign policy and defense	1	*	3	0	1	*	0	1	0
Pro-Liberal	4	3	4	1	2	6	6	1	4
Anti-Liberal	4	4	3	2	1	5	3	7	6
Pro-Tory	3	2	1	1	2	3	0	8	2
Anti-Tory	1	1	1	0	1	1	3	3	1
Pro-NDP	3	2	1	2	0	3	0	1	9
Anti-NDP	0	*	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pro-Bloc, Pro- PQ	4	1	1	0	15	0	0	0	0



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	June 24	May 19	May 2	ATL	QC	ON	SK/MB	AB	BC
Anti-Bloc, Anti-PQ	1	-	*	0	2	0	0	0	0
Leaders or leadership in general, integrity	11	13	13	8	10	12	13	11	8
Martin - like	2	2	1	4	1	2	0	2	2
Martin - Dislike	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
Harper - like	1	*	*	2	1	*	2	4	1
Harper - dislike	1	*	*	5	0	*	0	0	2
Layton -dislike	*	*	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Duceppe - like	*	*	0	0	*	0	0	0	0
Depends on local candidate	3	28	23	3	2	3	5	4	4
Miscellaneous party policies	9	-	-	12	9	9	8	5	9
Other	*	-	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
DNK	19	16	15	17	31	15	17	9	17



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*Table 5: Best Result for Family*  
*“Will you or your family be best off if the election result is a...”*  
*[ROTATE PAIRS]*

	TOTAL	ATL	QC	ON	SK/MB	AB	BC
Liberal majority	21	26	24	22	11	18	17
Liberal minority	17	8	11	19	30	11	25
Conservative majority	19	22	14	18	16	44	13
Conservative minority	7	3	3	8	7	8	10
[DON'T PROMPT] Don't know what majority or minority mean	6	12	4	7	6	4	4
[DON'T PROMPT] Not sure, don't know on the substance of the question	24	25	34	21	24	12	22
Refused	7	5	11	5	7	4	9



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*Table 6: Best Result for Country*  
*“Our country will be best off if the election result is a...”*  
*[ROTATE PAIRS]*

	TOTAL	ATL	QC	ON	SK/MB	AB	BC
Liberal majority	23	29	24	27	13	18	19
Liberal minority	18	12	15	19	28	11	24
Conservative majority	20	29	13	18	22	46	16
Conservative minority	8	3	6	10	5	8	9
[DON'T PROMPT] Don't know what majority or minority mean	5	5	4	5	8	4	4
[DON'T PROMPT] Not sure, don't know on the substance of the question	21	17	30	18	18	8	24
Refused	6	5	9	4	6	5	5

