

**Québec:
PQ in Fundamental Decline;
Duceppe May Have Been Unable to Save the Provincial Party;
Federalists Politicians, Not Constitutional Reform,
Are Key to Conquest of Separatism**

**BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll
by COMPAS in the *Financial Post*
for Publication May 14, 2007**



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1.0. Introduction

The Quebec provincial elections results show that the Parti Québécois is fundamentally weak and in ultimate decline, according to the COMPAS panel of CEOs and business leaders. There is a hint in the panel's forecasts that the likelihood of Quebec's separation within the next ten years may be less than before the recent provincial election.

It is unclear, say panellists, that the PQ would have fared better under a possible leadership of Bloc head Gilles Duceppe. Duceppe withdrew from the race on Saturday but appeared to be a contender from the moment that the PQ declined to third place in the recent election.

Looking to future solutions to the dilemma of the Quebec separatist movement, panellists believe that the main opportunities for Canada lie in strong, persuasive leadership by Quebec federalist leaders and by non-Quebecers with an ability to communicate to Quebecers. Constitutional reform is seen by few panellists as offering an effective solution.

These are the key findings from the past week's web survey of the COMPAS CEO and business leader panel undertaken for *The Financial Post* under sponsorship of BDO Dunwoody LLP.

2.0. PQ in Decline

By a more than 2:1 margin, the panel of CEOs and business leaders interprets the provincial election setback of the PQ as fundamental and as an indicator of its ultimate decline, as shown in table 2A. The probability of Quebec's secession within the decade now stands at 14% as compared to 15% in March. The difference is not statistically significant but could be a harbinger of continuing decline.



Table 2A: (Q1) As you know, Parti Québécois leader André Boisclair has just resigned as leader following his party's third place showing in the recent Quebec provincial election. On balance, do you feel that the PQ's decline and its leader's resignation signify...

	%
The separatist party's fundamental weakness and ultimate decline	64
A temporary problem from which the separatist party will rebound	29
Don't know or no opinion	7

Table 2B: (Q2) On a 100 point probability scale, what is the likelihood of Quebec separating from Canada in the next 10 years? (Mean estimate)

May, 2007	14
March, 2007	15

3.0. Gilles Duceppe's Hypothetical Impact Unclear

Given the panel's convictions that the PQ is in fundamental difficulty, Gilles Duceppe's withdrawal from the PQ leadership on Saturday may have been a personally astute decision. Had Duceppe remained in the race and won, the panel is uncertain that he would have been able to deliver the results for the separatist movement at the provincial level that he has in federal elections, as shown in table 3.

Table 3: (Q3) There's talk about Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe leaving federal politics to become the next leader of the provincial Parti Québécois. On a 7 point agreement scale where 7 means strongly agree and 1, strongly disagree, how much do you agree with the following opinions...

Gilles Duceppe has proven that he has charisma and leadership skill, and he will almost certainly bring the PQ back to Official Opposition status in the Quebec National Assembly								
Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK



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Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
4.1	5	12	19	21	17	17	1	9
If he becomes PQ leader, Gilles Duceppe will do less well than in the past because his provincial opponents, Jean Charest and Mario Dumont, are far more skilled than were his main federal opponents, Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin								
Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
4.1	7	12	15	22	17	12	4	12

4.0. The Antidote to Separatism—Persuasive Communication by Federalists, Not Constitutional Modification

By far the most effective antidote to separatism is persuasive communication by Quebec federalist leaders and by non-Quebecers with a capacity to reach out and communicate effectively to Quebecers, as shown in table 4. In practice, 86% of the panel believes the best solution is for strong leadership by Quebec federalist politicians. By contrast, only 22% believe that constitutional reform represents the best solution.

Though many believe that the separatist movement can ultimately be vanquished by strong federalist politicians, several panellists doubt that separatism will ever die. Separatism will not die either because the threat of secession is an effective lever for extracting benefits or because of its romantic appeal:

Quebec will never separate. The costs would be too great. The omnipresent threat of separatism continues to bring grossly disproportionate federal dollars to la belle province. The solution lies in stronger provinces and a weaker federal government.

Historically, the threat of separating has garnered Quebec tremendous concessions from the Fed, to the detriment of other more worthy provinces. Should they ever make good on that threat, they would be significantly the greater loser.

Quebec separatists will always be with us. Die hard separatists form about 1/4 to 1/3 of the population of Quebec and their passion for their cause is emotionally tied to how they define themselves and who they are. They are unlikely ever to give up on their romantic dreams of recreating a French speaking nation on the banks of the



St. Lawrence. Thus, they will likely always be with us. However, unless the rest of the country does something really stupid, they are also very unlikely now to convince the majority of Quebecers to abandon the benefits of being Canadian. But, we should not become complacent - we almost lost the country very shortly after the Meech Lake debacle; and it can easily happen again.

Table 4: (Q4) On a 7 point agreement scale where 7 means strongly agree and 1, strongly disagree, how much do you agree with the following opinions about Canada and the Quebec separatist movement...

The best solution lies in strong political leadership by Quebec politicians who believe in Canada								
Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
5.9	34	40	12	9	3	0	1	2
The best solution lies in strong political leadership by politicians from outside Quebec who know how to communicate effectively to Quebecers								
Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
5.0	18	28	19	16	10	4	3	2
There is no solution because Quebec nationalists will often use the threat of separation as a bargaining tool								
Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
4.9	17	30	19	11	7	9	6	1
There is no solution because separatists will always exist								
Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
4.4	11	22	22	15	10	9	10	2
The best solution lies in constitutional reform								
Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
3.2	4	7	11	13	22	25	16	2

5.0. Methodology

The COMPAS web-survey of CEOs and leaders of small, medium, and large corporations was conducted May 9 - 11, 2007. Respondents constitute an essentially hand-picked panel with a higher numerical representation of small and medium-sized firms.

Because of the small population of CEOs and business leaders from which the sample was drawn, the study can be considered more accurate than comparably sized



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general public studies. In studies of the general public, surveys of 141 are deemed accurate to within approximate 8.3 percentage points 19 times out of 20. The principal and co-investigator on this study are Conrad Winn, Ph.D. and Tamara Gottlieb.

