

Leadership Matters:

The Numbers behind the Apparent Party Strategies

No single issue dominates the landscape yet:

Environment [28%], Healthcare [28%] and Economy [26%]

Cluster

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Ipsos Reid

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No single issue dominates the landscape yet:

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Toronto, ON -While Prime Minister Stephen Harper is chosen by most Canadians as the leader who has the attributes and ability to take charge of major issues facing the country, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for CanWest News Service and Global Television finds only three qualities out of 14 tested emerge to form some measure of consensus in the country to his advantage over all of his political opponents:

1. Someone who is best to manage during tough economic times [50%]
2. Someone who has what it takes to lead Canada [47%]
3. Someone who has a vision of Canada that you can support [43%]

This is not to say that Prime Minister doesn't "top out" on almost all of the other elements put to the test and when compared to his major political opponents -- Stephane Dion, Jack Layton and Gilles Duceppe. But what the poll does reveal is a deep regional schism between Eastern [those provinces east of Manitoba] and Western [those provinces west of Ontario] voters.

What the poll's findings suggest is that many of the Prime Minister's greatest attributes, qualities and leadership that are embraced in the Western regions are rejected in the Eastern

regions -- and it's in the Eastern regions of Ontario, Québec and the Atlantic provinces where the Conservatives need to hold or pick up seats in order to build a stronger mandate.

As such, a potential message strategy emerges for the Conservative campaign:

1. Portray the Prime Minister as the leader who is best able to manage during tough economic times, has what it takes to lead Canada and someone who has a vision of Canada that can be supported, as the spine of the campaign;
2. Attack Stephan Dion's carbon tax initiatives with vigour in Eastern Canada to trump concerns about any Conservative "hidden agenda" and his own personality negatives, while echoing to Western voters what polling suggests is already accepted: that Mr. Dion and crew have their own "hidden agenda" [Alberta 65%, Saskatchewan/Manitoba 45%, British Columbia 44%] and that the carbon tax will likely wreak havoc on the economy.
3. In this regard, as recently reported, the number of Canadians willing to support a carbon tax has dropped to 40% with a majority (54%, unchanged) rejecting the premise and 6% undecided. But in seat rich Ontario, where the prime battleground is likely to be, there has been some traction: perhaps as a result of the advertising bombardment by the Conservatives, 43% now indicate that they are considering this tactic of voting with the Conservatives to block the plan (up eight points since early July).
4. And on the issue of the environment overall, it would appear that while Western Canadians, the full majorities, would choose Stephen Harper's Conservatives "to get things done" when it comes to doing something about the environment compared with Québec and Atlantic Canada are very much the opposite, Ontario voters are split

on the premise -- 49% Harper Conservatives versus 51% Dion Liberals -- which provides an opportunity for the Conservatives to hammer home the message blanketing the airwaves in that province that the carbon tax initiative is not the way to go. Further still, as if to add insult to injury, when Ontario voters are asked which leader they believe is sincerely committed to dealing with global warming its NDP leader Jack Layton [44%] who leads over Liberal leader Stephane Dion [33%], followed by the Conservatives [23%].

What the numbers suggest for Mr. Dion and his campaign is to run more of a "personality" attack on Mr. Harper and the Conservatives -- exploiting the negatives -- primarily in Eastern Canada, and specifically in Ontario, in order to block voters who might be caught up in a choice to make over the carbon tax initiative.

To wit:

1. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has a "hidden agenda" [Ontario 50%, Atlantic Canada 43% and Québec 38%]
2. Prime Minister Stephen Harper "will say anything to get elected" [Ontario 44%, Atlantic Canada 42%, Québec 31% (and British Columbia 41%)]
3. Prime Minister Stephen Harper is "conceited and full of himself" [(read "arrogant", "out of touch", "a bully") in Ontario (48%), Atlantic Canada (48%), Québec (32%) (and British Columbia 43%)]
4. Prime Minister Stephen Harper does not "have values that are close" to their own [only 35% in Ontario, 30% in Atlantic Canada and 28% Québec believe that he does]

5. Prime Minister Stephen Harper is someone who does not know when to compromise for the greater good [only 36% in Ontario, 34% in Atlantic Canada] and 30% believe that the Prime Minister is someone who does know when to compromise for the greater good.

As for NDP leader Jack Layton and his party, there is clearly a chance to be a spoiler to both the Conservatives and Liberals in certain areas of the country. Mr. Layton can certainly take a page out of the messages that are best for the Liberals noted above, and the attack messages against Mr. Dion... but he can also take advantage of the following as he is viewed as:

1. Someone who is sincerely committed to dealing with global warming: 38% [Atlantic 36%, Ontario 44%, British Columbia 45%]
2. Someone who is open to the ideas of others: 36% [Atlantic Canada 47%, Ontario 40%, British Columbia 40%, Québec 32%]
3. Someone who can best deal with high gas prices: 35% [Atlantic Canada 47%, Ontario 40%, British Columbia 38%]
4. Someone who will fight for what they believe is right even if most people disagree with them: 32% [Atlantic Canada 41%, Ontario 37%]
5. Someone who has values that are close to [my] own: 31% [Columbia 43%, Atlantic Canada 39%, Ontario 36%]
6. Someone who knows when to compromise for the greater good: 30% [Atlantic Canada 39%, British Columbia 38%, Ontario 36%]
7. Someone who will get things done: 26% [Atlantic Canada 44%, Ontario 32%]

The fight for votes in the province of Québec adds another political party and leader to the fray -- Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe – who can also use many of the messages that are best for the Liberals to attack the Prime Minister and some of the attack messages against Mr. Dion... but he can also take advantage of the following as he is viewed in Québec as:

1. Someone who has values that are close to [my] own: 35%
2. someone who will fight for what they believe is right even if most people disagree with them: 32%
3. someone who knows when to compromise for the greater good: 29%
4. someone who will get things done: 28%
5. someone who can best deal with high gas prices: 27%
6. someone who is open to the ideas of others : 25%

The elements tested among the leaders:*

1. Someone you can trust...

- Stephen Harper 38%
- Jack Layton 32%
- Stephane Dion 22%

In Québec...

- Gilles Duceppe 32%

- Stephen Harper 26%
- Jack Layton 25%
- Stephane Dion 18%

2. Someone who is best to manage through tough economic times...

- **Stephen Harper 50%**
- Jack Layton 23%
- Stephane Dion 22%

In Québec...

- 1 Stephen Harper 43%**
- 2 Stephane Dion 20%
- Gilles Duceppe 20%
- Jack Layton 17%

3. Someone who can best deal with high gas prices...

- **Stephen Harper 40%**
- Jack Layton 35%
- Stephane Dion 19%

In Québec...

- **Stephen Harper 29%**
- Gilles Duceppe 27%

- Jack Layton 26%
- Stephane Dion 18%

4. Someone who will say anything to get elected...

- **Stephane Dion 38%**
- Stephen Harper 37%
- Jack Layton 19%

In Québec...

- **Stephane Dion 34%**
- Stephen Harper 31%
- Gilles Duceppe 23%
- Jack Layton 12%

5. Someone who is conceited and full of themselves...

- **Stephen Harper 40%**
- Stephane Dion 33%
- Jack Layton 21%

In Québec...

- **Stephen Harper 32%**
- Stephane Dion 30%
- Gilles Duceppe 25%

- Jack Layton 12%

6. Someone who knows when to compromise for the greater good...

- **Stephen Harper 40%**
- Jack Layton 30%
- Stephane Dion 23%

In Québec...

- **Stephen Harper 30%**
- Gilles Duceppe 29%
- Jack Layton 21%
- Stephane Dion 20%

7. Someone who will fight for what they believe is right even if most people disagree with them...

- **Stephen Harper 39%**
- Jack Layton 32%
- Stephane Dion 22%

In Québec...

- **Gilles Duceppe 32%**
- Stephen Harper 26%

- Stéphane Dion 22%
- Jack Layton 20%

8. Someone who is open to the ideas of others...

- **Jack Layton 36%**
- Stephen Harper 34%
- Stéphane Dion 24%

In Québec...

- **Jack Layton 32%**
- Gilles Duceppe 25%
- Stephen Harper 25%
- Stéphane Dion 18%

9. Someone who has a hidden agenda...

- **Stephen Harper 41%**
- Stéphane Dion 37%
- Jack Layton 16%

In Québec...

- **Stephen Harper 38%**
- Stéphane Dion 26%
- Gilles Duceppe 24%

- Jack Layton 12%

10. Someone who is sincerely committed to dealing with global warming...

- **Jack Layton 38%**
- Stephen Harper 27%
- Stephane Dion 30%

In Québec...

- **Stephane Dion 33%**
- Gilles Duceppe 21%
- Jack Layton 30%
- Stephen Harper 16%

11. Someone who has values that are closest to your own...

- **Stephen Harper 38%**
- Jack Layton 31 %
- Stephane Dion 22%

In Québec...

- **Gilles Duceppe 35%**
- Stephen Harper 28%
- Jack Layton 23%

- Stephane Dion 14%

12. Someone who has a vision of Canada that you can support...

- **Stephen Harper 43%**
- Jack Layton 27%
- Stephane Dion 25%

In Québec...

- **Stephen Harper 38%**
- Jack Layton 23%
- Stephane Dion 20%
- Gilles Duceppe 19%

13. Someone who has what it takes to lead Canada...

- **Stephen Harper 47%**
- Jack Layton 27%
- Stephane Dion 21%

In Québec...

- **Stephen Harper 44%**
- Jack Layton 25%
- Gilles Duceppe 17%
- Stephane Dion 15%

14. Someone who will get things done...

- **Stephen Harper 48%**
- Jack Layton 26%
- Stephane Dion 19%

In Québec...

- **Gilles Duceppe 28%**
- Stephen Harper 39%
- Stephane Dion 18%
- Jack Layton 15%

The key issues that Canadians feel should receive the greatest attention from Canada's leaders...

At this stage in the campaign, there is no dominant issue that has emerged among the Canadian public. The issues that voters believe the leaders should be dealing with are:

Environment: 28%

Healthcare: 28%

Economy: 26%



Armed forces/military/Defense 9%

Education/schools/universities: 7%

Terrorism: 6%

Poverty: 5%

Crime/justice: 4%

Jobs/unemployment: 4%

Taxes 3%

Immigration/refugees: 3%

Government politics/political leadership: 3%

Seniors/aging population: 1%

Agriculture/farming: 1%

Moral issues [abortion, drugs, gambling, pornography, religion, euthanasia] : 1%

Aboriginal/native issues: 1%

Deficit/debt/government spending: 1%

Highways/roads/infrastructure: 1%

Trade/free trade/net/global trade: 1%

Business issues/Canadian dollar/stock market: 1%

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Social services [pensions, day care, housing]: 1%

These are the findings of two Ipsos Reid poll's conducted on behalf of CanWest News Service and Global Television. For the first survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1003 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone from August 26 to August 28, 2008. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population of Canada been polled. These data were weighted to ensure that the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.

**For the second survey, an online survey of 1005 Canadian adults was conducted via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel August 26 to August 28, 2008. The results are based on a sample where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data. Quota samples with weighting from the Ipsos online panel provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. An unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population.*

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