

Post-Debate Analysis

*According to Those Who Watched At Least One of the Two Debates
Harper Won (37%)*

*Jack Layton (20%), Stephane Dion (17%), Elizabeth May (13%) and Gilles
Duceppe (5%) Follow*

*But Only One in 10 (13%) of Total Viewers Swayed in Support as Result of
the Debates...*

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But Only One in 10 (13%) of Total Viewers Swayed in Support as Result of the Debates

Toronto, ON –With the French and English language debates concluded, those Canadians who watched at least one of the debates (37%) have had a chance to reflect on not only what they witnessed but also ingest the barrage of commentary from spinmeisters, media and pundits that followed.

A new Ipsos Reid poll, conducted on behalf of CanWest News Service and Global Television, finds that Prime Minister Stephen Harper tops the list with the most votes when the combined debate viewing crowd is asked who they think won.

Four in ten (37%) Canadians indicate they viewed the English-language leaders' debate, while 12% (27% in Quebec) claim to have watched the French-language debate. (A majority (58%) of Canadians say that they didn't watch either of the debates held in both official languages.)

But the survey also found that the impact of the debates on these Canadians has been relatively minimal: among those who did watch the debate, only 13% say that they changed their mind about who to vote for on October 14, 2008.

So what's the net impact having witnessed the debate and then exposed to the follow-up commentary? Of the total Canadian population, it would appear that 5% changed their support.

And the winner is...

Among those who watched at least one of the two debates, four in ten (37%) believe Prime Minister Harper won the debates on the whole, and 20% believe that Jack Layton edged-out the other leaders. Nearly two in ten (17%) believe that Stephane Dion emerged victorious, and 13% think that Elizabeth May had the advantage. Five percent (5%) saw Gilles Duceppe as the winner of the debates, overall. The story is very different between those who watched the English or the French debate:

- Among those who watched the English-language debate, 40% thought Harper won, followed by 21% who felt Jack Layton won. Elizabeth May (15%) of the Green Party edged out the Liberal leader Stephan Dion (13%).
- Among Quebec respondents who watched the French-language debate four in ten (38%) believe that Dion was the winner of the debates, followed by Duceppe (23%), Harper (13%) and Layton (13%). Just 2% believe May performed the best.

Debate Causes Canadians Who Watched the Debate to Re-Evaluate Party Leaders...

Impressions among those who watched a debate improved or stayed the same for all party leaders – except Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

More debate watchers opinions' of **Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper** 'worsened' (36%) than 'improved' (29%), marking a **net decrease of 7 points (-7)**. Despite this, Harper still had the highest proportion of Canadians indicate that he won the debates.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May might not have been seen as the winner, but she enjoyed the greatest improvement in perceptions among debate watchers with nearly two in three 'improved' (64%) compared to just 13% 'worsened'. This represents a **net increase of 51 points (+51)**.

NDP Leader Jack Layton also fared well in the debates as 45% of debate watchers indicate they had an 'improved' opinion of him after watching the debates, compared to 23% who had a 'worsened' opinion. This represents a **net increase of 22 points (+22)**.

Liberal Leader Stephane Dion also had a slight improvement in impressions among those who watched the debates with four in ten (41%) who had 'improved' opinions, and 34% who had 'worsened' opinions, representing a **net increase of seven points (+7)**.

Across Canada impressions of **Bloc Leader Gilles Duceppe** remained largely the same among debate watchers with 29% saying their impressions 'improved' and 28% saying their impressions 'worsened.' In Quebec, opinions of Mr. **Duceppe** improved significantly among debate watchers, with 43% saying their opinions 'improved' as a result of what they saw during the two debates and 17% saying their opinions 'worsened', representing a **net increase of 26 points (+26)**.

Impressions among debate watchers	Improved	No change	Worsened
Stephen Harper and the Conservatives	29%	35%	36%
Stephane Dion and the Liberals	41%	25%	34%
Jack Layton and the NDP	45%	32%	23%
Gilles Duceppe and the Bloc Quebecois	29%	44%	28%
Elizabeth May and the Green Party	64%	23%	13%

The Net Impact of the Debates and Fallout on Vote Support...

Only 13% of those who witnessed a debate say that their vote preference changed as a result of what they saw. Those changing their mind most often say they will vote Liberal (36%). Half say they would vote either for the Greens (26%) or the NDP (26%), while just 13% say they would vote Conservative. Just 4% who watched a debate say they would switch their vote to the Bloc Quebecois.

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The Race

The national horserace numbers are relatively unchanged as a result of the debate. The Conservatives (36%) continue to lead the pack (down 1 point since yesterday), while the Liberals (22%, down 1 point) and the NDP (20%, up 1 point) draw closer to each other. The Green party is enjoying support from among one in ten (10%, unchanged) decided voters, and the Bloc is receiving 10% nationally (unchanged), 42% in Quebec.



- In seat rich **Ontario**, the Tories (39%) are maintaining a sizeable lead over the Liberals (25%) and the NDP (23%), while the Green Party (12%) runs ahead of their national numbers in this province.
- In **Quebec**, the Bloc (42%) has a commanding lead over the Liberals (22%) and the struggling Tories (17%), while the NDP (12%) and Green Party (12%) lag behind.
- In **British Columbia**, the Conservatives will likely pick up additional seats, as they now stand with 40% of the vote, followed by the NDP (26%), Liberals (20%) and the Green Party (14%).
- In **Alberta**, the Conservatives (66%) dominate over the NDP (18%), Greens (9%) and Liberals (7%).
- In **Saskatchewan and Manitoba**, the Conservatives (45%) hold a solid lead over the tied Liberals (25%) and NDP (25%). The Green Party (6%) is well behind.
- In **Atlantic Canada**, a close-race ensues. The Conservatives (32%) and Liberals (31%) are tied in the lead, with the NDP (26%) not far behind. The Green Party (9%) trails.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of CanWest News Service and Global Television. The poll was conducted from October 3 to October 4, 2008. This survey of 1,905 adult Canadians was conducted via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel. The sample was drawn from a pre-recruited panel of over 12,000 voters. Weighting then was employed to balance demographics and to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian adult population according to the latest Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls because they are based on samples drawn from opt-in online panels, not on random samples that mirror the population within a statistical probability ratio. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error,

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including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error. However, an unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire adult population in Canada been polled.

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