English-Speaking Debate Viewers Say Harper (42%) Wins Debate, Layton (25%) Narrowly Bests Ignatieff (23%), Duceppe (2%) Just Registers

Harper's Performance Meets Expectations, Ignatieff Fails to Impress, But Big Winner could be Jack Layton as Majority (55%) Has Improved Impressions of NDP Leader, NDP Primary Beneficiary of Vote-Switchers

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Impressions of NDP Leader, NDP Primary Beneficiary of Vote-Switchers

Toronto, ON – Immediately following the English-language leaders' debate, a flash poll of debate viewers conducted by Ipsos Reid has found that four in ten (42%) English-speaking viewers say Conservative Leader Stephen Harper won the debate, up from the 34% of Canadians who, prior to the debate, thought he would win.

The poll, conducted exclusively for Global National in the half-hour immediately following the debate, shows that Prime Minister Stephen Harper scored significantly higher than his nearest rival, NDP Leader Jack Layton, who also improved on his pre-debate expectations (+12 to 25%). Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff, however, failed to improve upon his expectations with 23% of English-speaking Canadians saying he won the debate, unchanged from pre-debate expectations. Bloc Leader Gilles Duceppe met his expectations, with 2% saying he won the debate (unchanged).

Harper's performance in the debate had a net positive effect on viewers as 36% say their impressions of Stephen Harper improved, compared with 33% whose impressions worsened (net: +3). Michael Ignatieff's performance had no impact on overall impressions as four in ten (40%) say their impressions improved, equal (40%) to the proportion who say their

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impressions of the Liberal leader worsened (net: unchanged). Gilles Duceppe had a rough showing in the eyes of English-speaking Canadians. Just two in ten (18%) say their impressions of the Bloc Quebecois leader improved, compared to nearly half (45%) of viewers whose impressions worsened (net: -27).

The big winner in terms of improving upon expectations was NDP leader Jack Layton. A majority (55%) of viewers say their impressions of him improved, compared to just one in ten (14%) whose impressions worsened (net: + 41). Moreover, one in ten (12%) viewers say that the debate caused them to change their mind about who to vote for, with the primary beneficiary being the NDP party.

Viewers were asked to rate the leaders on various attributes, and the data are compared to pre-poll expectations to gauge the impact that the debate had on Canadians' opinions of the leaders:

- A majority (52%) believe that Stephen Harper **sounds and acts most like a Prime Minister** (up 2 points), while 26% believe Michael Ignatieff sounds most like this (up 1 point). Fewer believe Jack Layton (18%, up 2 points) and Gilles Duceppe (1%, down 1 point) fit the bill, while 4% (down 4 points) don't know.

- In terms of who offers the **best ideas and policies**, 38% believe Stephen Harper is that man (up 1 point), while fewer believe it's Michael Ignatieff (28%, up 2 points), Jack Layton (28%, up 3 points), or Gilles Duceppe (1%, no change). One in twenty (5%) don't know (down 6 points).

- Thinking about who is **most likeable** – that is, the person they'd most like to go out for a beer or coffee with – Jack Layton (55%, up 2 points) has a commanding lead over

his rivals Stephen Harper (24%, down 1 point), Michael Ignatieff (11%, up 1 point), and Gilles Duceppe (6%, unchanged). Three percent (3%, down 3 points) don't know.

- Jack Layton (38%, up 3 points) also wins in the **most visually attractive** category, with Stephen Harper (31%, up 2 points) in second place. Gilles Duceppe (10%, up 2 points) and Michael Ignatieff (9%, unchanged) trail behind in this category.

Following the debate, the economy solidified its role as the most important campaign issue in the minds of many Canadians, with one in three (35%, up 8 points) saying that this is the issue that they most want their local candidates and political leaders to be talking about. Healthcare (18%, up 2 points), ethics and accountability in government (15%, down 1 point), taxes (6%, down 4 points) and jobs (6%, down 3 points) round out the top-five issues. Other issues include the environment (5%, unchanged), education/schools/universities (4%, unchanged), crime/justice (2%, unchanged), and armed forces/military/defence (1%, unchanged), or some other issue (2%, unchanged).

After viewing the debates, many Canadians will be in a better position to assess the leaders and their platforms on some of the key issues of the campaign. Here's who viewers think has the best ideas and policies for dealing with each of the following issues:

- **Economy**: Stephen Harper (50%, +3), Michael Ignatieff (30%, +3), Jack Layton (13%, +2), Gilles Duceppe (1%, unchanged), don't know (7%, - 8).

- **Healthcare:** Jack Layton (40%, +5), Stephen Harper (29%, +5), Michael Ignatieff (22%, +1), Gilles Duceppe (1%, unchanged), don't know (8%, -12).

- **Taxes**: Stephen Harper (46%, +6), Michael Ignatieff (30%, +4), Jack Layton (15%, -1), Gilles Duceppe (0%, unchanged), don't know (8%, -9).

- **Environment**: Jack Layton (40%, +4), Stephen Harper (19%, +2), Michael Ignatieff (13%, unchanged), Gilles Duceppe (1%, unchanged), environment (27%, down 6 points).

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for Global Television prior to and immediately following the English-language leaders' debate on April 12, 2011. The pre-debate survey was conducted among 2,615 English-speaking Canadian adults. The post-debate survey was conducted among 2,365 English-speaking Canadian adults who watched the debate. Respondents were selected via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel. The sample was drawn from a pre-recruited panel of over 6,589 voters. Weighting then was employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the population of English-speaking Canadian adults according to the latest Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, 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 +/- 1.9 percentage points for the pre-debate survey and +/- 2.1 percentage points for the mid-debate survey, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire English-speaking adult population that watched the debate in Canada been polled.

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