

# Post French-Language Debate Flash Poll Reveals Duceppe Takes the Night, Harper Stumbles *Layton and Ignatieff Build Momentum*

Public Release Date: Thursday, April 14, 2011, 12:00 am EDT



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## Post French-Language Debate Flash Poll Reveals

### Duceppe Takes the Night, Harper Stumbles

#### *Layton and Ignatieff Build Momentum*

**Toronto, ON** – Immediately following the French-language leaders' debate, a flash poll of Francophone debate viewers conducted by Ipsos Reid has found that Gilles Duceppe takes the night, while Stephen Harper stumbles.

The poll of 637 Francophones (92% of which live in Quebec, 8% live in the rest of Canada), conducted exclusively for Global National in the half-hour immediately following the debate, shows that Gilles Duceppe has been named the winner of the debate by 42% of Francophone viewers, exceeding his pre-debate expectations by 11 points. Conversely, after a solid performance in the English-language debate, Stephen Harper stumbles and performs considerably under expectations with only 12% indicating that he won the debate (down 7 points). Both Michael Ignatieff (22%, up 7 points) and Jack Layton (19%, up 3 points) had solid showings, improving on Francophones pre-debate expectations.

Harper's performance in the debate had a net negative effect on viewers as just 11% say their impressions of Stephen Harper improved, compared with 47% whose impressions worsened (net: -36). Contrast that with Jack Layton's and Michael Ignatieff's performances: a majority (52%) had improved impressions of the NDP leader as a result of watching the debate, compared to just 10% whose impressions worsened (net: +42). Similarly, a majority (52%) of Francophone viewers say their impressions of Michael Ignatieff improved, while just one quarter (24%) say they worsened (net: +28).

Gilles Duceppe, who ostensibly has home-field advantage for the French-language debate, also had a positive impact on viewers as four in ten (40%) say that their impressions of him improved, while just two in ten (20%) say their impressions worsened (net: 20).

The French-language debate appeared to have a greater impact, overall, on Francophone viewers than the English-language debate had on its viewers. Two in ten (17%) Francophones say they changed their mind about who to vote for on May 2<sup>nd</sup> as a result of tonight's debate (compared to just 12% of English-language debate viewers who said so), with the primary beneficiaries of the vote-switching being the Liberal and NDP parties.

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 plurality believes that Michael Ignatieff (30%, +6) **sounds and acts most like a Prime Minister**, basically tied with Stephen Harper (29% -5). Jack Layton (19%, unchanged) and Gilles Duceppe (17%, +3) are well back, while 5% (-4) don't know.
- Francophones continue to believe that Jack Layton (34%, -1) has the **best ideas and policies**, with Michael Ignatieff (27%, +3), Gilles Duceppe (21%, +3) and Stephen Harper (13%, -1) trailing in this category. Just 5% (-4) don't know.
- Jack Layton (69%, -5) is hands down picked as the leader that is **most likeable**, while Gilles Duceppe (13%, unchanged), Michael Ignatieff (11%, +6) and Stephen Harper (6%, +1) aren't even in the running. Just 1% (-2) doesn't know who is the most likeable.

- Jack Layton is also picked by a plurality (38%, unchanged) as being the leader who is **most visually attractive**, followed by Gilles Duceppe (22%, +4), Michael Ignatieff (13%, unchanged) and Stephen Harper (12%, -2).

Following the debate, the economy solidified its role as the most important campaign issue in the minds of many Canadians, with three in ten (27%, up 5 points) saying that this is the issue that they most want their local candidates and political leaders to be talking about. Healthcare (15%, down 2 points), ethics and accountability in government (15%, down 1 point), taxes (11%, down 1 point) and jobs (7%, up 1 point) round out the top-five issues. Other issues include the environment (7%, unchanged), education/schools/universities (6%, down 1 point), armed forces/military/defence (2%, up 1 point), and crime/justice (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:** Michael Ignatieff (30%, +5), Stephen Harper (26%, -1), Jack Layton (20%, +2), Gilles Duceppe (16%, +2), don't know (9%, -7).
- **Healthcare:** Jack Layton (33%, unchanged), Michael Ignatieff (27%, +4), Gilles Duceppe (21%, +3), Stephen Harper (9%, +1), don't know (10%, -7).
- **Taxes:** Michael Ignatieff (28%, +1), Stephen Harper (25%, +5), Jack Layton (24%, unchanged), Gilles Duceppe (15%, +2), don't know (8%, -8).
- **Environment:** Jack Layton (50%, +3), Gilles Duceppe (19%, +4), Michael Ignatieff (12%, -3), Stephen Harper (4%, -1), don't know (15%, -3).



*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for Global Television prior to and immediately following the French-language leaders' debate on April 13, 2011. The pre-debate survey was conducted among 919 French-speaking Canadian adults. The post-debate survey was conducted among 637 French-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 1,773 voters. Weighting then was employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the population of 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 +/- 3.3 percentage points for the pre-debate survey and +/- 3.9 percentage points for the post-debate survey, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire French-speaking adult population that watched the debate in Canada been polled.*

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