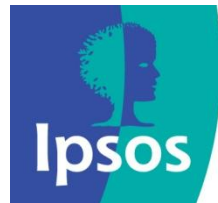


INSIDE THE BC ELECTION:
WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY
*Liberals Win on Economy and Leadership, While Trust and
Change Message Backfires on NDP*



Ipsos Reid

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INSIDE THE BC ELECTION: WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY

Liberals Win on Economy and Leadership, While Trust and Change Message Backfires on NDP

Vancouver, BC – While pollsters, pundits, pontificators, party stalwarts and journalists are wringing their hands wondering how Christy Clark and the BC Liberals managed to capture another mandate from voters, the definitive poll done on Election Day by Ipsos Reid and released today shows just what happened and what motivated people.

In Canada, polls cannot be released on Election Day so it often leaves people guessing at what happened and produces lots of finger pointing. In the United States and other jurisdictions, polls that interview voters are harbingers of the outcome but most importantly help explain why things have turned out the way they have.

For almost a decade, Ipsos Reid has been doing election-day polls for its media partners. We really started doing this in earnest right after the 2004 Federal election campaign when Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin appeared to steal a minority government from Conservative Leader Stephen Harper over the last weekend. Many wondered how something like this could happen and blamed it on the inaccuracy of the polling apparatus. But Ipsos Reid had been polling on the final weekend and caught exactly what happened – approximately 6% of people in Ontario and 4% of people in Québec showed up at the polling booth and voted Liberal largely because the Liberals, in the final days, accused the Harper Conservatives of having a “hidden agenda”.

In the years since that time, Ipsos Reid has pioneered and strengthened election-day polls to help us understand what has transpired during an election timeframe, especially on the day of voting. Working with our various media partners we’ve actually interviewed, in some cases, nearly 40,000 people in a single day across the country and produced accurate outcome results compared to polls which were produced just a few days before, because the electorate was still making up its mind.

In British Columbia, we interviewed 1,400 voters on Election Day and, as you’ll see, the numbers virtually matched the real outcome in terms of voter preference. But it also tells a story as to why this happened right down to the last minute. The reality is that

one in 10 (11%) BC voters decided in the voting booth on election day to mark their ballot for their candidate – and with one of the lowest turnouts in provincial voting ever (52%) it was motivated voters, Liberals, who bested the NDP in the voting booth.

The long and the short of it was that NDP voters did not get out and fulfill their promise to vote for the party of their choice – they stayed home while Liberal voters showed up. As such, a small number of voters were able to influence the greater outcome.

In fact, nearly one-quarter (23%) of voters said they decided who they were going to vote for in the last week of the campaign. So the trend had continued from the week previously and these late deciders chose to vote BC Liberal by a 7 point margin over the NDP (41% BC Lib vs. 34% NDP). The BC Liberals also led by substantial margins among the 12% of voters who decided in the middle of the campaign (58% BC Lib vs. 25% NDP) and the 16% of voters who decided early in the campaign (49% BC Lib vs. 36% NDP). The NDP only had an advantage among the 47% of voters who decided before the campaign actually began (50% NDP vs. 43% BC Lib).

It's clear that the negative-advertising campaign of the Liberals waged against the NDP had a slaughtering effect. If ever there was a case to behold that negative advertising campaigns work, it is here where the Liberals were able to take the NDP lead at the outset of the campaign of 20+ points in some of the polls and put it in the hole. The following show the changes in what happened in the final days of the campaign:

In the exit poll, voters told us which issues (from a battery of 18) were important to them in their vote decision. The top issues influencing vote decisions were as follows:

- Open and honest government (71% rated as 'very important')
- The BC economy (65% rated as 'very important')
- Health care (60% rated as 'very important')
- Trust in a particular leader/party (58% rated as 'very important')
- Government spending (56% rated as 'very important')
- Leadership (56% rated as 'very important')

On this – as key motivators to get out the vote – the BC Liberals won big among voters who rated the economy and government spending as 'very important'.

- **Economy** voters chose the Liberals by a 24-point margin over the NDP (56% BC Lib vs. 32% NDP), which is an improvement from a May 6-8 survey that had the Liberals ahead by 7 points on this issue.
- **Government spending** voters chose the Liberals by a 20-point margin over the NDP (53% BC Lib vs. 33% NDP), which is an improvement from a May 6-8 survey that had the Liberals ahead by only 2 points on this issue.

The BC Liberals also won with voters who rated leadership as ‘very important.’

- **Leadership** voters chose the Liberals by a 9-point margin over the NDP (48% BC Lib vs. 39% NDP). This is a reversal from our pre-election survey when Christy Clark trailed Adrian Dix by 13 points as best premier. It also differs from our May 13 survey that had Adrian Dix ahead by a single point.

On health care, the BC Liberals managed to cut the gap to the NDP.

- **Health care** voters chose the NDP by a 12-point margin over the BC Liberals (49% NDP vs. 37% BC Lib), which is an improvement from a May 6-8 survey that had the Liberals behind by 18 points on this issue.

And trust, pushed as an issue by the NDP throughout the campaign, barely registered as a differentiator between the two parties.

- **Trust** voters chose the NDP by only a 5-point margin over the BC Liberals (45% BC Lib vs. 40% NDP).

On open and honest government, the NDP held on to a lead.

- **Open and honest government** voters chose the NDP by a 10 point margin over the BC Liberals (47% NDP vs. 37% BC Lib), mostly unchanged from a May 6-8 survey where they had a 12 point lead.

With the issues, on balance, being won by the Liberals in the late stages of the campaign compared to what they were at the outset of the campaign, the **desire for change** dwindled as ‘very important’ to only 40% of voters. Stalwarts in the NDP voter camp embraced the change message (76%) by a wide margin over other parties, but because it did not translate amongst other voters the issue of change as a motivator essentially

evaporated. In this case, it's obvious that Liberal voters were more motivated to stop change rather than NDP voters, who, in smaller numbers, wanted change.

Further, the current mood of the province is now much more positive than negative and this translated into votes for the BC Liberals: half of BC voters (51%) felt that BC overall is currently on the right track, as compared to 32% who felt that the province is on the wrong track.

Voters who thought the province is on the right track voted overwhelmingly for the BC Liberals (74% voted BC Lib). Wrong track voters went almost as strongly for the NDP (71% voted NDP), but there just weren't enough wrong track voters for the NDP to win.

The Election Day Survey...

Ipsos Reid surveyed a representative sample of 1,400 actual voters on Election Day. Vote choice among this sample almost exactly matched the actual election result for popular vote.

	Exit Poll (May 14, 9:00pm)	Actual Result (May 15, 9:00am)
BC Liberals	45.4%	44.4%
NDP	40.5%	39.5%
Green Party	7.2%	8.0%
BC Conservatives	3.7%	4.8%
Others	3.2%	3.3%

Comparing the results of our Election Day poll conducted with real voters to our pre-election poll conducted with a representative sample of all British Columbians (voters and non-voters) on May 13, 2013, the Liberals increased support across both genders and all age groups:

By Gender – The BC Liberals improved among both men and women, and almost beat the NDP among women on Election Day.

- Among men, the Liberals improved by a NET 15 points (from a 2 point deficit to the NDP in our pre election poll, to a 13 point advantage in our election poll).

- Among women, the Liberals improved by a NET 11 points (from a 14 point deficit to the NDP in our pre election poll, to a 3 point deficit in our election poll).

By Age - The Liberals improved across all age groups, including turning a deficit into a lead among 35-54 year olds and increasing their lead among the all important 55+ age segment.

- Among 18-34 year olds, the Liberals improved by a NET 12 points (from an 18 point deficit to the NDP in our pre election poll, to a 6 point deficit in our election poll).
- Among 35-54 year olds, the Liberals improved by a NET 14 points (from a 9 point deficit to the NDP in our pre election poll, to a 5 point advantage in our election poll).
- Among 55+ year olds, the Liberals improved by a NET 7 points (from a 2 point advantage to the NDP in our pre election poll, to a 9 point advantage in our election poll).

Conclusion...

The analysis shows that the Liberals had created enough momentum in the final days of the campaign for voters to put them over the top. It also speaks to the campaign run by the NDP and is a lesson clearly for others that campaigns matter, negative advertising can have a huge impact, and motivating voters right down to the wire can have a huge influence.

So let's talk about the polls.

After an event like this - which in Canadian politics has been few and far between - there are lots of people who say that the "polls got it wrong" when in fact it's voters who upset their own applecart based on everything they've seen, read or heard.

But that's not good enough.

Over the last number of years, Ipsos Reid - Canada's largest market research and polling company with over 1000 employees in over \$200 million worth of business in Canada, that is part of Ipsos which is made up of 16,500 employees worldwide earning

\$2.6 billion in market research every year and conducting election polling in countries around the world ranging from Nigeria to the United States and from Italy to Brazil – has been pushing for greater transparency by polling companies and the education of the media and pundits who use polls to try and understand what is happening during an election and otherwise. In this regard, our last poll should have had more attention paid to those who intend to get out and vote as opposed to just those who issued a voter preference. This was a hand-to-hand combat campaign and it deserved close scrutiny to the final ballot – and that’s why we did what we did by doing this special poll but because of the rules we couldn’t release it.

We also want the opportunity to teach others--from clients to pundits to journalists to citizens all-- about polling so we have produced four short videos that total about 17 minutes. If you'd like to view "You have the right to know" please visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLS2CHTim4DpG8oVxhTfUWV5sU5O9ZjNfB>

Next time you are waiting for something or travelling somewhere and have got some spare time, why not watch it on your mobile device or whatever works for you. We hope you stay informed and vigilant.

As always, Ipsos Reid welcomes the scrutiny of the industry, the media and others because it will make us better every day. Rather than claiming how close we were to the actual end result would rather be completely transparent by publishing all of our weighted and unweighted tables as well as a cogent analysis for those who can reflect upon it. At the end of the day it’s not just about numbers it’s about insight. And for us, it’s a privilege every day in a democracy.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll of 1,400 adult British Columbians who voted in the BC election conducted online using Ipsos Reid’s national online household panel on May 14, 2013. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and sex composition reflects that of the actual BC population according to 2011 Census data. In addition, the results have been weighted to reflect statistics from Elections BC on voter turnout by age in the 2009 election. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 3.0 percentage points had all British Columbia adults been surveyed. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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