

**June 2004 Federal Debate—
Major Win for Duceppe, Slim Win for Harper,
Loss for Layton**



**COMPAS Inc.
Public Opinion and Customer Research**

Overview

Conservative leader Stephen Harper won the leaders' debates, notably the English language one, and he did so over character rather than issues, according to a nation-wide representative survey of n>600 voters conducted by COMPAS for the National Post, Global TV, and CNS Wednesday, June 16, 2004, 24 hours after the English language debate and 48 hours after the French.

Martin performed well in both debates and Duceppe, especially well in the French debate. Layton earned a little goodwill with respect to credibility on the issues but did poorly as a person "who seems like a Prime Minister."

Most (73%) either saw at least 5 minutes of the debate or were exposed to news reports on the debate, from which they drew their conclusions.

While Harper gained from the debate in terms of goodwill or credibility, the Conservatives and Liberals remain in a statistical dead heat in terms of vote intentions with the Bloc remaining the dominant force in Quebec.

Detailed Findings

Harper Edges Out Martin in Terms of Debate-Induced Goodwill Duceppe Big Winner of French Debate

As shown in table 1, Duceppe was the big winner of the French debate. He earned a far higher favourability quotient (percent who say that they became more favourable to him) than his main competitor, Paul Martin. The Bloc leader's lead over Martin in favourability far exceeds his lead in votes, thus cementing his lead over the Prime Minister in their home province.

Harper leads over Martin, most especially in the English debate. Though smaller than Duceppe's among viewers of the French debate, Harper's lead has significance because his relative performance in the debate exceeds his voter



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performance, where he is tied with Martin. Given the heavy commitment of the Liberals to anti-Harper attack ads, Harper's strong performance in the debates suggests that the Liberal campaign is faltering.

Still another indicator of Harper's momentum is that 73% of Conservative followers of the debate became more favourable to Harper compared to 58% of Liberals becoming more favourable to Martin. Thus, Harper succeeded in both intensifying goodwill in his base as well as among non-Conservatives.

*Table 1: Leaders Favourability After Debate
(Q2) To which of the party leaders did you become more favourable as a result of the debate?
[PROMPT ONLY IF NECESSARY] [ROTATE]*

	All	Eng	Fr	Lib Voter	Cons Voter	NDP Voter	Bloc Voter	Other Voter	Undecided/ DNK/REF
Stephen Harper	26	30	12	8	73	7	7	13	10
Paul Martin	19	21	13	58	2	6	2	13	6
Jack Layton	11	12	5	6	5	47	9	25	2
Gilles Duceppe	10	1	42	2	1	4	74	0	5
[UNPROMPTED] Neutral/ No change	18	20	12	13	15	24	7	13	36
[UNPROMPTED] Anti-Martin/ Anti-Liberal	*	*	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
[UNPROMPTED] Anti-all of them	4	4	2	5	2	0	0	38	6
[UNPROMPTED] Don't Know/ Refused	12	11	13	9	3	13	2	0	35



Layton Falters

The debates were not significant successes for the NDP leader, as evidenced by the following:

- The share of debate followers who became more favourable to Layton is smaller than his vote (11% from table 1 vs. 17% vote intention, reported on page 9);
- As shown in table 1, Layton was the least successful of the leaders in bolstering goodwill among his own core.

Another dilemma for Layton is that very few Canadians, whether or not they followed the debate, feel that he seems Prime Ministerial, as shown in table 2.

*Table 2: Prime Ministerial Ratings
(Q6) [ALL RESPONDENTS] Speaking objectively, who among the party leaders seems most like a Prime Minister?
[OPTIONAL PROMPT]*

	All	Eng	Fr	Lib Voter	Cons Voter	NDP Voter	Bloc Voter	Other Voter	Undecided/DNK/REF
Paul Martin	45	47	37	85	22	27	22	33	41
Stephen Harper	32	35	18	9	71	16	22	25	21
Jack Layton	9	8	11	3	2	40	13	8	3
Gilles Duceppe [Asked in Quebec only, % of all respondents]	4	0	22	1	1	0	33	0	5
[UNPROMPTED] None of them	11	10	13	3	4	16	11	33	29
(Excluded from final percent calculation)									
[UNPROMPTED] Don't Know	15	15	15	7	6	13	6	8	38
[UNPROMPTED] Refused	3	3	4	0	1	0	2	0	13



Why Debate Followers Became More Favourable to a Given Leader—No Special Reasons, Perhaps Knowledge and Sincerity, Not Because Any of the Leaders` Were Inspiring

Debate followers who became more favourable to a given leader were asked why. A powerful common element is that almost no one saw any of the leaders as inspiring, as shown in table 3.

Almost no differences separated the reasons why some debate followers became more favourable to one rather than another leader. Because of small cells and minor differences, the differences are not statistically significant. But it looks as if people who became more favourable to Martin or Duceppe may have been slightly more impressed by their knowledge; Harper and Layton, by their sincerity.

*Table 3: Reason for Change in Favourability
[IF RESPONDENT BECAME MORE FAVOURABLE TO ONE OF
THE CANDIDATES OR PARTIES]
Did you become more favourable to [Martin/Harper/
Layton/Duceppe] mainly because you...
[PROMPTED FORCE CHOICE, ROTATE]*

	%
Stephen Harper	
Felt he was sincere	27
Felt he was reasonable	23
Liked his philosophy	18
Felt he was knowledgeable	15
Felt he was inspiring	5
[UNPROMPTED] Other	4
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/ Refused	8
Paul Martin	
Felt he was sincere	17
Felt he was reasonable	20
Liked his philosophy	19
Felt he was knowledgeable	31
Felt he was inspiring	9



	%
[UNPROMPTED] Other	0
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/ Refused	4
Jack Layton	
Felt he was sincere	32
Felt he was reasonable	13
Liked his philosophy	23
Felt he was knowledgeable	19
Felt he was inspiring	9
[UNPROMPTED] Other	2
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/ Refused	2
Gilles Duceppe	
Felt he was sincere	25
Felt he was reasonable	16
Liked his philosophy	18
Felt he was knowledgeable	32
Felt he was inspiring	2
[UNPROMPTED] Other	0
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know/ Refused	7

Issues—Healthcare Remains Strong, Sponsorship Scandal Jumped, Abortion and Gay Rights Almost Non-Issues

When debate followers were asked which issues in the debate affected their feelings about the leaders and which leaders these feelings favoured, Martin does better based on the issues than he does as a result of the overall impact of the debate. Thus, without mention of issues, Harper has a moderate gain over Martin, but they tie when voters are asked to think only of the issues.

The two striking issues are healthcare, a perennial concern, and the sponsorship scandal, which increased in importance when compared against similar issue questions in past COMPAS polls¹. It is the rise of the sponsorship scandal as an issue that helped Harper.

¹ In COMPAS May 2nd and May 19th election surveys ad scandal was volunteered 5% and 10% respectively to the following question: "Thinking of how you're likely to vote, please tell me what factor most affects how you'll probably vote?" [DON'T PROMPT BUT SELECT]"



While the sponsorship scandal emerged as important, abortion and gay marriage rights did not emerge despite the strong Liberal campaign and advertising efforts and Martin’s efforts in the debates. The failure of these social issues to emerge as frequently mentioned issues represents a challenge for the Liberals.

*Table 4: Debate Issues (In Descending Order of Importance)
 (Q4) As you know, the debate involved such issues as [ROTATE] bilingualism, gay marriage, abortion, healthcare, tax cuts, Kyoto, the sponsorship scandal, waste, and shipping subsidies. Which of these issues most affected your feelings about the leaders?
 [NO FURTHER PROMPTING. ROTATE UNPROMPTED OPTIONS USING THE SAME ORDER AS IN THE QUESTION ITSELF]*

	%
Healthcare	27
The sponsorship scandal/ waste/ Liberal corruption	20
Tax cuts	10
Abortion	7
Gay marriage, homosexual issues	5
Kyoto/ environment	5
Bilingualism/ official languages	1
Shipping subsidies/ Paul Martin’s shipping interests	1
Other (specify)	1
None of these	12
Don’t Know	11

As shown in table 5, when debate followers were asked to identify which leader they favoured on the issues emerging from the debate, Martin and Harper are in a statistical tie with Martin having a nominal, non-significant or trivial lead. This contrasts with the answers to the general question about to which leader debate followers became more favourable, in which case Harper leads Martin. It is as if Harper wins the debate and does so on character, but only ties on the issues.



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*Table 5: Leader Favourability on Issues
(Q5) [IF OTHER THAN DON'T KNOW OR NONE OF THESE]
To whom did the issue make you feel most favourable?
[PROMPT ONLY IF NECESSARY]*

	All	Eng	Fr	Lib Voter	Cons Voter	NDP Voter	Bloc Voter	Other Voter	Undecided/ DNK/REF
Paul Martin	32	33	25	75	9	9	3	17	26
Stephen Harper	29	35	8	8	78	4	11	17	13
Jack Layton	14	16	7	6	1	72	8	33	8
Gilles Duceppe	9	*	40	2	0	2	66	0	5
[ABSOLUTELY UNPROMPTED] Neutral/ No change	6	5	8	3	6	9	5	0	10
[ABSOLUTELY UNPROMPTED] Anti-Martin/ Anti-Liberal	*	*	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
[ABSOLUTELY UNPROMPTED] Anti-Harper/ Anti-Conservative	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
[ABSOLUTELY UNPROMPTED] Anti-all of them	*	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
[UNPROMPTED] Don't Know/ Refused	9	9	11	6	6	2	8	33	33



The Vote—Libs and Cons in Deadheat with Conservative Lead Outside Quebec

The Liberals and the Conservatives are tied, with the Conservatives slightly ahead in English Canada (Conservatives 40% and Liberals 37% among English speaking respondents). There appear to have been some regional movements over the past few weeks. While regional sample sizes are small, so findings are suggestive, it would appear that the Conservatives have increased their support in Alberta (72% vs 57% May 21st) and in the Prairies (46% vs. 27% May 21st). The nominal gain in Conservative support in Alberta appears to have eroded Liberal support (12% vs. 27% May 21st).

Table 6: Vote²

	Total	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
The Liberal Party led by Paul Martin	35	36	12	32	38	36	60
The Conservative Party led by Stephen Harper	34	44	72	46	36	9	20
The NDP led by Jack Layton	17	17	12	22	23	7	18
[QUEBEC ONLY] The Bloc Quebecois led by Gilles Duceppe	11	-	-	-	-	46	-
[UNPROMPTED] Other	3	3	4	0	4	2	3

² The vote is calculated on the basis of a combination of an initial vote question and a follow-up about which party the respondent is leaning to if the respondent claims to be undecided. The initial question: "Could you please tell me if you would you vote for [ROTATE] if an election were held today. [ROTATE]"



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	Total	BC	AB	SK/MB	ON	QC	ATL
[UNPROMPTED] Would not vote*	2	1	3	2	1	3	0
[UNPROMPTED] Don't Know/ Undecided*	20	20	13	21	21	19	24
[UNPROMPTED] Refused*	4	1	3	4	4	3	8

*Percent 'Would not vote,' 'Don't Know/Undecided,' and 'Refused' excluded from final percent calculation

Methodology

A representative sample of n>600 Canadians entitled to vote in the coming election were interviewed by professional interviewers using computer-assisted telephone interviewing technology June 16th, 2004. Samples of this size are deemed accurate to within 4.0 percentage points 19 times out of 20. The principal investigator on this study was Dr. Conrad Winn.

