

ANGUS REID POLITICAL WATCH – DECEMBER 2007

Tories lead, but Canadians clearly not endorsing either of the two dominant parties

Exclusive “Emotional Index” reveals that Stéphane Dion fails to score on the important positive drivers. Stephen Harper attracts a great deal of negative feelings.

[VANCOUVER – Dec. 19, 2007] – A month away from the second anniversary of Stephen Harper’s electoral victory, Canada’s governing Conservative Party can count on the support of a third of Canadian voters, according a poll by Angus Reid Strategies.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 33 per cent of decided voters and leaners say they will cast a ballot for the Tories in the next federal election. The Conservative Party remains below its share of the actual vote in the January 2006 ballot (36.3%) and is nowhere near the level of public backing it enjoyed in March (39%).

The Liberal Party is second with 28 per cent, also lower than its 2006 election total (30.2%). The New Democratic Party (NDP) is third with 17 per cent, followed by the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party, both with 10 per cent.

Harper’s approval rating as Prime Minister stands at 30 per cent, well below the 40 per cent he commanded in March, amidst talk of an early federal election.

The Conservative leader’s momentum score for the month of December is -20 (11% of respondents say their opinion of the prime minister has

KEY FINDINGS

- » **Voting Intention: Con. 33%, Lib. 28%, NDP 17%, BQ 10%, Grn. 10%**
- » **Approval Ratings: Harper 30%, Dion 14%**
- » **Preferred Prime Minister: Harper 33%, Dion 12%, Neither 41%**
- » **Momentum Score: Harper -20, Dion -14**
- » **Environment (26%) is most important issue facing Canada; Health care second (19%).**

More results are at the end of this release.

*From December 13 to 14, 2007, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of **1,025 adult Canadians**. The margin of error for the total sample is **+/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20**. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

improved, while 31% say it has worsened). Only in June—immediately after the G-8 Summit and the Tory government's proposal to implement intensity-based targets as a way to fight global warming—did Harper have a worse showing (-28).

Stéphane Dion has not had a very good year. The approval rating for Canada's opposition leader—12 months after he defeated all of his rivals in the Liberal leadership convention—is 14 per cent, a three-point increase since October, but still lower than the 18 per cent he garnered in March and May. Notably, a majority of Canadians (51%) disapprove of Dion's performance for the first time.

The Grit leader's momentum score for the month of December is -14 (10% of respondents say their opinion of Dion has improved, while 24% say it has worsened). The numbers illustrate some positive progress since October—immediately after the Harper government's Throne Speech—when only four per cent of respondents reported an improvement in their opinion of the Liberal leader.

As has been the case for most of 2007, Canadians are not completely satisfied with either of the two main federal party leaders. A third of respondents (33%) prefer Harper as Prime Minister, while 12 per cent favour Dion. Two-in-five Canadians (41%) pick neither man for the job. Dion has been unable to crack the 20 per cent threshold on the preferred prime minister question, while Harper cannot reach the 41 per cent mark he garnered in March.

When asked what is the most important issue facing Canada today, 26 per cent of respondents mention the environment. At least one-in-four respondents in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada agree with this premise, while residents of Manitoba and Saskatchewan are more concerned with health care. One-in-ten male respondents mentioned the economy, and 15 per cent of Albertans are worried about the situation in Afghanistan.

Angus Reid Emotional Index - Past Prime Ministers

Relying on Robert Plutchik's psychoevolutionary theory of emotion, we polled a representative national sample of 1,000 Canadians (on Dec. 3 and Dec. 4, 2007) and asked respondents to click up to four words that describe their feelings towards three long-serving prime ministers: Pierre Trudeau, Brian Mulroney and Jean Chrétien. The online survey allowed Canadians to look at a portrait of each of these former heads of government, and choose from a list of 16 different emotions.

Pierre Trudeau (1968-1979, 1980-1984): Trudeau clearly "haunts us still." More than half of Liberal voters—and 30 per cent of non-Liberal voters—say the former prime minister elicits Optimism. More than two-in-five Grit supporters mention Acceptance and Wonder, and 28 per cent say Love. More than 10 per cent of respondents on both sides talk about Aggressiveness, and 13 per cent of non-Liberal voters voice Shame—a view no Liberal voters agreed with.

Brian Mulroney (1984-1988): Mulroney draws negative feelings out of Tories and non-Tories alike, with 41 per cent of Conservative voters mentioning Displeasure, as well as 45 per cent of those who would vote for other parties in the next federal election. Disgust (30%), Shame (29%) and Contempt (28%) also

rank highly among Tory supporters, and more than a third of non-Tory voters concur on each of these emotions.

Jean Chrétien (1993-2003): As is the case with Trudeau, party allegiance has a lot to do with Chrétien's numbers. While 42 per cent of Liberal voters mention Acceptance—and 34 per cent say Chrétien elicits optimism—42 per cent of non-Grits voice displeasure, and 31 per cent articulate Disgust. Like Trudeau, more than 10 per cent of respondents on both sides cite aggressiveness. However, Chrétien evokes sadness for 15 per cent of Liberal voters.

Angus Reid Emotional Index - Current Party Leaders

Plutchik's model was also used to poll a representative national sample of 1,000 Canadians (on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1, 2007) in order to garner insight on the feelings voters have towards the country's five main federal parties and their leaders.

The Conservative Party and Stephen Harper: Canadians tend to associate the Tories with Optimism, Anticipation and Acceptance, but Harper lags his party in these key emotions. Displeasure was mentioned by 35 per cent of Canadians for both the party and its leader, and Harper “outranks” the current leader of the opposition in Contempt, Fear and Anger. Among respondents who vote Conservative, Optimism (70%), Acceptance (59%) and Joy (42%) are the top positive emotions associated with Harper, while only three per cent mention fear.

The Liberal Party and Stéphane Dion: Canada's former governing party has a more negative image than its leader, although very few Canadians express Joy and Love towards both. The party does poorly on Displeasure, Disgust, Contempt and Shame, and more than one-in-three Canadians (35%) have not developed any feelings for Dion. Among respondents who vote Liberal, Optimism (46%), Acceptance (39%) and Joy (36%) are the top positive emotions associated with Dion, while almost two-in-five (19%) articulate fear.

The New Democratic Party and Jack Layton: The NDP and its leader have very similar images, with the party attracting slightly more negative emotions than Layton himself. The lowest numbers for both come in the Love category, while roughly 30 per cent of Canadians express Optimism.

The Bloc Québécois and Giles Duceppe: In Quebec, the BQ leader elicits a more positive response than the sovereignist party, particularly in the areas of Optimism, Anticipation and Acceptance. Fear, Anger and Shame are higher for the Bloc than for Duceppe.

The Green Party and Elizabeth May: Optimism, Acceptance and Wonder were the key emotions associated with the Greens, but May is considerably less well known than the party she leads.

To download the full presentation of the **Angus Reid Emotional Index**, please visit:

<http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=view&page=31>

The Angus Reid Political Watch is released monthly by Angus Reid Strategies, and includes the following questions:

- Federal Voting Intention
- Approval Rating and Momentum Score for the Prime Minister
- Approval Rating and Momentum Score for the Opposition Leader
- Preferred Prime Minister
- Top Issue Facing Canada
- Right Track / Wrong Track

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Voting Intention – Tories Hold Five-Point Lead

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	DEC	OCT	AUG	JUL	JUN	MAY	MAR
Conservative	33%	34%	33%	33%	34%	35%	39%
Liberal	28%	29%	29%	28%	27%	28%	22%
New Democratic Party	17%	17%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%
Bloc Québécois	10%	9%	9%	9%	10%	9%	10%
Green	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	9%	11%
Other	2%	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%

Voting Intention – Tories Hold Five-Point Lead

If a federal election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency?

	Latest	Provincial Breakdown					
	DEC	BC	Alta.	Prai.	Ont.	Que.	Atl.
Conservative	33%	27%	69%	42%	36%	19%	27%
Liberal	28%	27%	20%	23%	37%	16%	49%
New Democratic Party	17%	23%	4%	25%	19%	13%	17%
Bloc Québécois	10%	--	--	--	--	38%	--
Green	10%	17%	8%	9%	9%	11%	8%
Other	2%	6%	0%	2%	0%	3%	0%

Stephen Harper's approval rating at 30%

Do you approve or disapprove of Stephen Harper's performance as Prime Minister?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	DEC	OCT	AUG	JUL	JUN	MAY	MAR
Approve	30%	29%	31%	29%	31%	33%	40%
Disapprove	45%	45%	42%	47%	47%	47%	39%
Not sure	25%	27%	27%	23%	23%	20%	21%

Stephen Harper's momentum score at -20

Over the course of the past month, would you say your opinion of Stephen Harper has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	DEC	OCT	AUG	JUL	JUN	MAY	MAR
Improved	11%	13%	12%	11%	9%	20%	25%
Stayed the same	51%	51%	57%	52%	48%	53%	49%
Worsened	31%	23%	25%	28%	37%	32%	22%
Not sure	7%	12%	6%	10%	6%	5%	4%
Momentum Score	-20	-10	-13	-17	-28	-12	+3

Stéphane Dion's approval rating at 14%

Do you approve or disapprove of Stéphane Dion's performance as leader of the opposition?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	DEC	OCT	AUG	JUL	JUN	MAY	MAR
Approve	14%	11%	14%	14%	15%	18%	18%
Disapprove	51%	46%	40%	43%	47%	43%	44%
Not sure	35%	43%	46%	43%	38%	39%	37%

Stéphane Dion's momentum score at -14

Over the course of the past month, would you say your opinion of Stéphane Dion has improved, stayed the same, or worsened?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	DEC	OCT	AUG	JUL	JUN	MAY	MAR
Improved	10%	4%	6%	7%	8%	10%	11%
Stayed the same	53%	46%	60%	53%	55%	50%	47%
Worsened	24%	30%	16%	21%	25%	27%	30%
Not sure	13%	19%	17%	19%	13%	14%	12%
Momentum Score	-14	-26	-10	-14	-17	-17	-19

Preferred Prime Minister – Neither

Which of these two leaders would make the best Prime Minister of Canada?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	DEC	OCT	AUG	JUL	JUN	MAY	MAR
Stephen Harper	33%	31%	32%	33%	33%	31%	41%
Stéphane Dion	12%	9%	12%	14%	17%	17%	17%
Neither	41%	46%	41%	40%	38%	41%	32%
Not sure	14%	14%	15%	13%	12%	11%	11%

Canada on the right track for 38%

Overall, do you think Canada is headed in the right track, or the wrong track?

	Latest	Past surveys					
	DEC	OCT	AUG	JUL	JUN	MAY	MAR
Right track	38%	39%	45%	39%	38%	42%	36%
Wrong track	32%	32%	26%	35%	36%	37%	38%
Not sure	30%	29%	29%	26%	38%	21%	26%

Environment is top issue for 26%

Q. What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Environment	26%	28%	26%	18%	27%	26%	26%	25%	27%
Health Care	19%	12%	13%	25%	19%	17%	32%	14%	23%
Poverty	12%	13%	3%	6%	9%	26%	2%	7%	18%
Economy	8%	11%	5%	2%	11%	7%	2%	10%	6%
Crime	6%	6%	13%	12%	5%	4%	5%	4%	8%
Ethics / Accountability	5%	11%	13%	11%	2%	4%	2%	8%	3%
Tax relief	5%	4%	6%	5%	6%	2%	5%	6%	3%
Education	4%	1%	1%	0%	5%	7%	8%	5%	4%
Afghanistan	3%	5%	15%	5%	2%	1%	1%	5%	1%
Terrorism	3%	2%	1%	7%	4%	0%	3%	5%	0%
Unemployment	3%	1%	0%	1%	3%	3%	10%	2%	3%
Energy / Electricity	2%	1%	3%	0%	3%	0%	1%	3%	1%
National Unity	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Or, some other issue	3%	6%	1%	7%	4%	2%	3%	4%	2%

Angus Reid Strategies is a North American full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995. Located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal, our team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Angus Reid Strategies has been successful in predicting the outcome of this year's provincial elections in:

Quebec: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=37>

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More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

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our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
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