



December 9, 2006

EKOS ANALYSIS

Post-Election Bounce Reinforces Rising Liberal Fortunes

| National Federal Voting Intentions | |
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| (Overall sample n = 1,022; decided voters n=907) | |
| The Liberal Party of Canada | 40.1 |
| The Conservative Party of Canada | 33.5 |
| The New Democratic Party | 10.2 |
| The Bloc Québécois | 8.6 |
| The Green Party of Canada | 7.6 |

Overall, the poll presents troubling news for the Conservatives in this poll. While public satisfaction with national direction has remained fairly robust, there has been a strong and steady rise in the incidence of those who think the government of Canada is moving in the wrong direction. Most of this is a conversion from uncertainty (which might have been considered tentative receptivity on the part of Canadians) to negativity. This has been particularly pronounced outside of Alberta and the Prairies.

The environmental issue has risen from an important to crucial public concern over the past year (which may also explain why Conservative support in Quebec has nearly halved while the LPC has nearly doubled). Coupled with Afghanistan and the apparent failure of the recognition motion to improve their faltering Quebec prospects, the Conservatives look to be in trouble in Quebec with little obvious prospect to reverse their eroding fortunes.

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Meanwhile, Liberal fortunes have also been boosted by a successful convention which consolidated and reinforced a pre-existing pattern of rising Liberal support. The diminished effect of ethical issues has buoyed Liberal prospects. It is premature to assess how durable these shifts are and Stephen Harper continues to be seen as performing well in his role as Prime Minister. The coming months should be an extremely interesting period.

Other points worth noting:

- All of the trend lines suggest that the rise in Liberal fortunes is not merely a blip, but rather a steady rise. However, given the volatility in the electorate and the positive and possibly ephemeral impacts of the Liberal convention, we are not suggesting that the Liberals are about to secure a majority prize.
- Interestingly, the Liberals are not picking up support mostly at the expense of the Conservatives. The Conservatives, however, have been forced back into their traditional core constituency (i.e. males, seniors, non-BC Westerners). Notably the Liberals have regained ground with affluent Canadians and boomers.
- While premature to confirm, the NDP could be in deep trouble, with an upwardly mobile Green Party attracting much of their constituency (i.e. young Canadians), while being squeezed from the centre-left.
- It would appear that it is neither Liberal acuity nor Conservative missteps which are the key drivers of these shifts. Rather the dissipating effects (if not fatigue with) the ethics/sponsorship issues has receded to reveal landscape which is less favourable to the Conservatives (i.e. social programs, the environment, etc). Regime fatigue and ethical concerns are less important factors today than in the last election.
- The lacuna of resonant Conservative policy on the environment is a real driver, and the difficulties around Afghanistan and foreign policy (which are also much more important today) are reinforcing these shifts.
- In Harper's favour is his clear "Prime Ministerial" bearing advantage, a strong economy and fiscal prudence. Mr. Harper has been judged quite well by the public in his role as Prime Minister.
- National unity has been banished from the recent national dialogue but there are reasons to be concerned given the depths of differences in views out there. Rising salience to unity actually works for Liberal fortunes in English Canada and in Quebec.

METHODOLOGY

The EKOS survey sampled 1,022 Canadians between December 5 and December 6, 2006. A sample of this size produces a statistical margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as regions).

All the data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, gender and age composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.