

WHITHER THE BOOMERS: FROM WOODSTOCK TO OIL STOCKS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH CBC NEWS NETWORK'S POWER AND POLITICS, EKOS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES IS CONDUCTING SURVEYS USING QUESTIONS AND TOPICS SUBMITTED BY VIEWERS. EKOS PRESIDENT, FRANK GRAVES LOOKS AT THE RESULTS OF THIS WEEK'S SURVEY.

[Ottawa – December 3, 2009] – Despite announcements that the recession is over, we see an unusual pattern among the public where management of the economy continues to be the dominant election issue (named by 31%), followed by social issues (27%). While the environment and climate change continue to be important issues for Canadians (tied with fiscal issues at 18%), they have yet to reclaim the salience they achieved before the recession. However, with economic confidence rising and the environment taking centre stage at the Copenhagen conference in a few weeks time, it is very likely that these issues will once again move to the forefront of the public psyche within the coming year.

On the issue of how the Conservatives are handling the environment file, there is both good news and areas of concern for the government in this week's poll.

Notwithstanding the general hand-wringing and Greek chorus about the corrosive impacts of Canada's current environmental strategy on our international reputation, there is little evidence to suggest that this is a major concern to most Canadians. While there is a slight lean to seeing it as having a damaging impact (40%), it is pretty modest at this stage, and almost as many say it has no impact on our reputation abroad (37%).

It is noteworthy that there is very strong correlation between sense that our reputation has been damaged and concern with national direction. This may be the single area where the Conservatives are most offside with the public sense of national direction. Unsurprisingly, non-CPC voters are more likely to be embarrassed about Canada's environmental record (at least 1 in 2 current LPC, NDP, and BQ supporters say this has had a "negative effect").

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Most important election issue:**
 - ▣ **31% economic issues**
 - ▣ **27% social issues**
 - ▣ **18% climate change and the environment**
 - ▣ **18% fiscal issues**

- **Effect of Canada's environmental record on its reputation abroad:**
 - ▣ **40% negative effect**
 - ▣ **37% no effect**
 - ▣ **23% positive effect**

- **Importance of environmental record on voting decision:**
 - ▣ **32% very important**
 - ▣ **39% somewhat important**
 - ▣ **18% not very important**
 - ▣ **12% not at all important**

- **Effect of the Conservative Party's environment record:**
 - ▣ **22% more likely to vote CPC**
 - ▣ **34% less likely to vote CPC**
 - ▣ **44% no effect**

Please note that the methodology is provided at the end of this document.

What is surprising – and this is evident on other indicators as well – is that concern about Canada’s environmental record is heightened among older Canadians (who tend to be more fluent on these issues). This may become a problem for the Conservatives, as this is a key constituency for them – especially as Canadians tell us that the environment and climate change are going to be important ballot booth issues (39% “somewhat important” and 32% “very important”).

There is a glaring gap between the CPC supporters and all others on the question of how important the environment will be in their next visit to the ballot booth. Only 18% of CPC supporters think it will be “very important”. Amongst all other party supporters that number is around 40%. The importance placed on this issue is highest in British Columbia, Quebec and Atlantic Canada. It is also a much greater concern in urban Canada and amongst the most educated (the only sizable constituency where the LPC now leads).

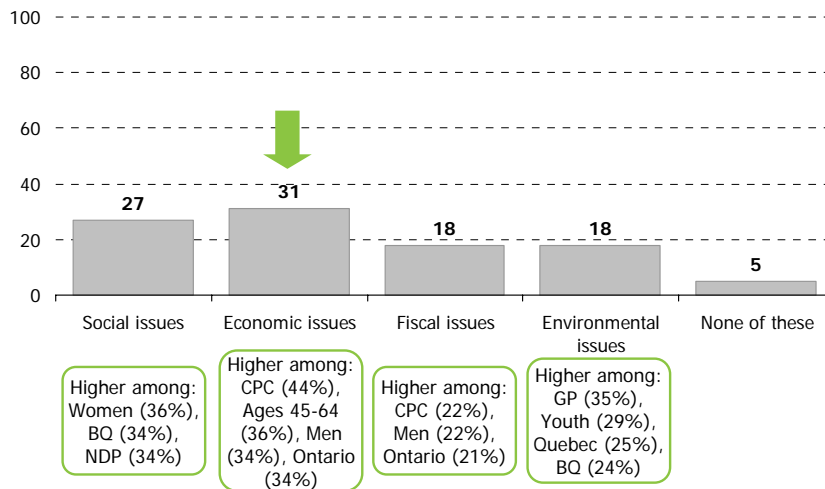
The final question examining the impact of the Conservative government’s record on the environment on vote intention points to the crucial nature of this issue on CPC aspirations for a majority. While a modest plurality (44%) say that the Conservative’s record on the environment will not change their likelihood of voting for them in the next election, those that say it will have an impact lean towards saying they will be *less* (34%) rather than *more* (22%) inclined to vote Conservative.

While these results clearly suggest that the Conservatives are unlikely to win many voters with their record in this area, it also raises concerns about their potential to lose support among segments of the public who would otherwise potentially be disposed to vote for them (i.e., even amongst current CPC supporters, close to 1 in 5 says they would be *less* likely to vote CPC because of their record on the environment). This is a particularly important concern with the senior vote – currently a key to Tory success – where 38% are “less likely” to vote Conservative. Interestingly, the ubiquitous boomer segment seems to have eschewed the “whole earth” roots of their youth, and is least likely to see this as a ballot booth issue (48% say it would have “no effect” on their vote intentions).

Top Line Results:

Most important election issues

Q. Which of the following do you think should be the most important issue for the next federal election: 1) social issues like health and education, 2) issues related to the economy like economic growth and employment, 3) fiscal issues like taxes and debt, 4) climate change and the environment, or 5) none of these?

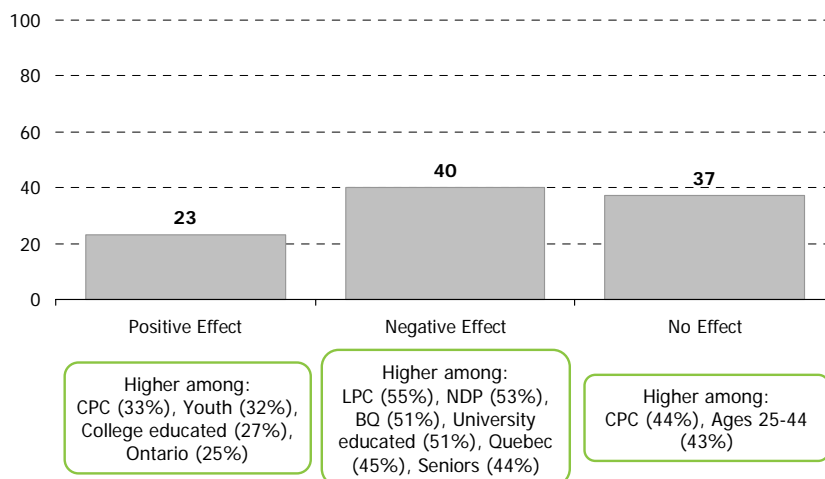


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BASE: Canadians; Nov. 25-Dec 1 (n=2412)

Effect of Canada's environmental record on its reputation

Q. Do you believe that the Government of Canada's current record on the environment has had a positive effect, a negative effect, or no effect on Canada's international reputation?

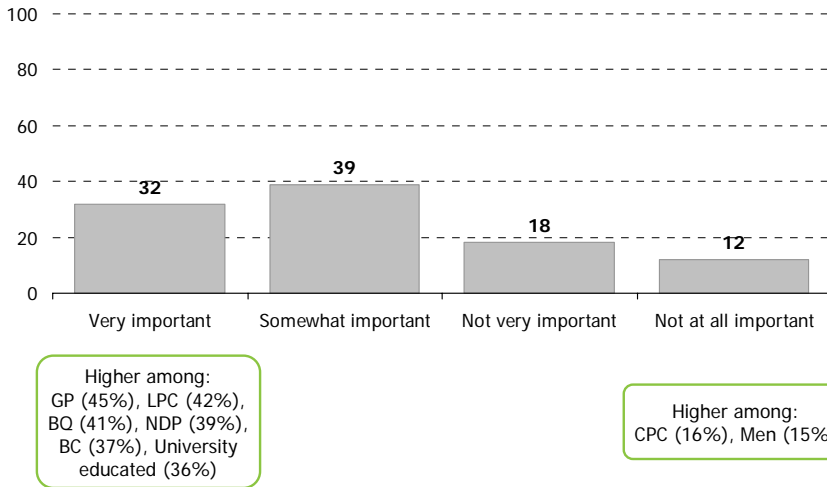


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BASE: Canadians; Nov. 25-Dec 1 (n=2402)

Importance of Canada's environmental record on voting decision

Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, how important would the Government of Canada's record on the environment be on your voting decision?

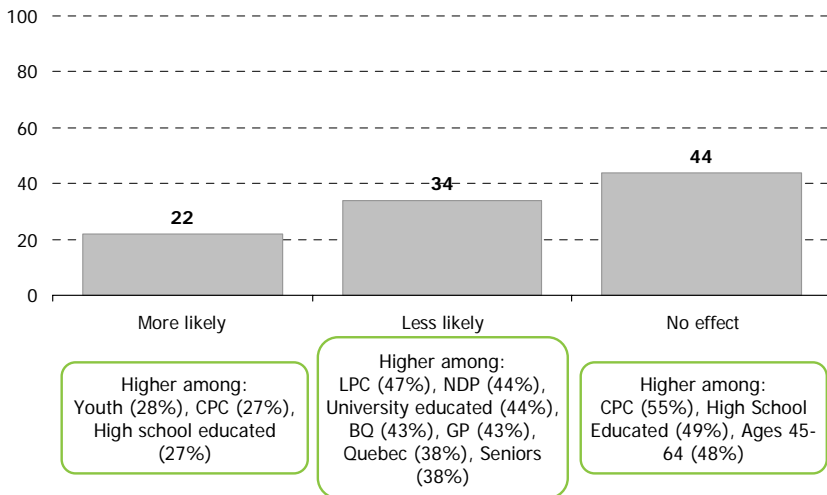


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BASE: Canadians; Nov. 25-Dec 1 (n=2402)

Effect of Conservatives' environmental record on vote intention

Q. Given the Conservative Party of Canada's record on the environment, would you be more or less likely to vote for them in the next federal election, or would it have no effect on your voting intention?



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BASE: Canadians; Nov. 25-Dec 1 (n=2412)

Detailed Tables:

Election Issues							
<i>Q. Which of the following do you think should be the most important issue for the next federal election: 1) social issues like health and education, 2) issues related to the economy like economic growth and employment, 3) fiscal issues like taxes and debt, 4) climate change and the environment, or 5) none of these?</i>							
	Social issues	Economic issues	Fiscal issues	Climate change	None of these	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	27%	31%	18%	18%	5%	2412	2.0
REGION							
British Columbia	27%	29%	18%	22%	4%	354	5.2
Alberta	32%	36%	16%	10%	6%	245	6.3
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	31%	36%	14%	15%	4%	123	8.8
Ontario	23%	34%	21%	15%	6%	860	3.3
Quebec	31%	26%	14%	25%	4%	628	3.9
Atlantic Canada	29%	29%	18%	19%	5%	202	6.9
GENDER							
Male	18%	34%	22%	19%	6%	1157	2.9
Female	36%	29%	14%	18%	4%	1255	2.8
AGE							
<25	24%	28%	12%	29%	7%	212	6.7
25-44	30%	27%	19%	18%	5%	718	3.7
45-64	26%	36%	19%	16%	4%	989	3.1
65+	28%	33%	17%	17%	6%	493	4.4
EDUCATION							
High school or less	26%	34%	17%	16%	7%	694	3.7
College or CEGEP	30%	33%	17%	16%	5%	808	3.5
University or higher	26%	28%	20%	23%	4%	910	3.3
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION							
Conservative Party of Canada	21%	44%	22%	10%	4%	751	3.6
Liberal Party of Canada	30%	23%	20%	23%	4%	551	4.2
NDP	34%	26%	13%	21%	6%	349	5.3
Green Party	26%	21%	12%	35%	6%	204	6.9
Bloc Quebecois	34%	27%	12%	24%	3%	208	6.8
Undecided	29%	32%	19%	13%	7%	296	5.7

Effect of Canada's environmental record on its reputation

Q. Do you believe that the Government of Canada's current record on the environment has had a positive effect, a negative effect, or no effect on Canada's international reputation?

	Positive effect	Negative effect	No effect	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	23%	40%	37%	2402	2.0
REGION					
British Columbia	22%	43%	35%	351	5.2
Alberta	23%	35%	42%	244	6.3
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	26%	32%	42%	123	8.8
Ontario	25%	39%	36%	858	3.4
Quebec	18%	45%	37%	625	3.9
Atlantic Canada	25%	36%	39%	201	6.9
GENDER					
Male	23%	41%	36%	1155	2.9
Female	23%	38%	39%	1247	2.8
AGE					
<25	32%	35%	33%	206	6.8
25-44	20%	38%	43%	717	3.7
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NDP	20%	53%	28%	349	5.3
Green Party	18%	45%	38%	203	6.9
Bloc Quebecois	14%	51%	35%	208	6.8
Undecided	22%	30%	49%	294	5.7

Importance of Canada's Environmental Record on Voting Decision

Q. If a federal election were held tomorrow, how important would the Government of Canada's record on the environment be on your voting decision?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not Very important	Not at all important	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	32%	39%	18%	12%	2402	2.0
REGION						
British Columbia	37%	35%	18%	11%	351	5.2
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Bloc Quebecois	41%	35%	13%	11%	208	6.8
Undecided	23%	40%	22%	16%	294	5.7

Effect of Conservatives' Environmental Record on Vote Intention

Q. Given the Conservative Party of Canada's record on the environment, would you be more or less likely to vote for them in the next federal election, or would it have no effect on your voting intention?

	More likely	Less likely	No effect	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	22%	34%	44%	2412	2.0
REGION					
British Columbia	24%	35%	41%	354	5.2
Alberta	27%	27%	46%	245	6.3
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	27%	25%	48%	123	8.8
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Green Party	25%	43%	32%	204	6.9
Bloc Quebecois	17%	43%	40%	208	6.8
Undecided	16%	25%	59%	296	5.7

METHODOLOGY:

EKOS' weekly tracking polls are conducted using Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator.

In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual land-line/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with both a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households. This dual frame yields a near perfect unweighted distribution on age group and gender, something almost never seen with traditional landline RDD sample or interviewer-administered surveys.

The field dates for this survey are November 25 – December 1, 2009.¹ In total, a random sample of 2,412 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-2.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.

¹ Please note that these dates are not inclusive of the weekends, as we do not survey on Saturday or Sunday.