

GUERGIS REGISTERING WITH DISAPPROVAL

PARADOXICALLY, LIBERALS DECLINE

[Ottawa – April 22, 2010] - As quickly as it appeared, the Guergis affair appears to be disappearing as a political factor. It's not that Canadians aren't noticing or don't think it's serious. About 40% of Canadians aren't following this issue, but the rest are with at nearly one in five paying close attention. So not as riveting in the rest of the country as it is North of the Queensway in Ottawa, but it certainly is registering with a large number of voters.

Here is where it gets more confusing.

Of the 60% of Canadians who are following the affair, they don't think it's a mere peccadillo. Only about 11% think it's business as usual and a strong plurality of around 45% think it's "serious". Non Conservative supporters and Quebeckers are most likely to see it as serious.

When asked about the fallout, there is also a sense that this has been a serious problem. By a margin of more than 2 to 1, the aware public believe this has had a negative impact on their confidence in the Conservative government. By a slightly larger margin, this affair has worsened public impressions of politicians in general (which were pretty negative to begin with). So voters are noticing, they don't think it's a trivial thing, and they decisively believe it is having a corrosive impact on confidence in the Tory government.

All good news for the opposition in general and the Liberals in particular who have been leading the charge on this issue? Er, no! Paradoxically the Liberals have actually fallen back from last week.

So why might this be the case (despite public belief that this matter is damaging to the Conservatives)? It may well be that the voters are tired of what appears to be a prurient obsession with the personal lives of a couple who are encountering serious difficulties. It may be that the electorate are looking for a more dignified and elevated approach from Parliament (and the media) and less of a poor man's northern TMZ. It may also be a case of one of those well worn aphorisms about shooting messengers or avoiding fleas.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Public attention to the Guergis affair:**
 - ▣ **18% follow it very closely**
 - ▣ **42% follow it somewhat closely**
 - ▣ **40% do not follow this issue**

- **Seriousness of the Guergis affair:**
 - ▣ **45% very serious problem**
 - ▣ **36% somewhat serious problem**
 - ▣ **11% just business as usual**
 - ▣ **9% do not know / no response**

- **Effect of the Guergis affair on confidence in the Conservative government:**
 - ▣ **53% negative**
 - ▣ **24% positive**
 - ▣ **24% neither**

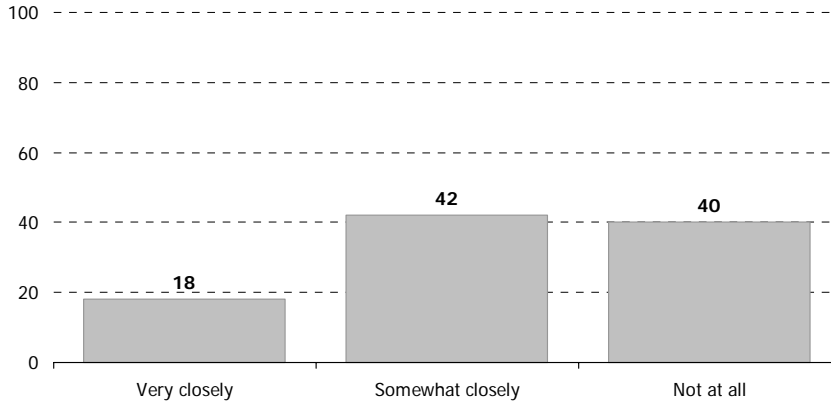
- **Effect of the Guergis affair on confidence in politicians in general:**
 - ▣ **59% negative**
 - ▣ **25% positive**
 - ▣ **17% neither**

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

Top Line Results:

Public attention to the Guergis affair

Q. As you may have heard, Helena Guergis, former minister of state for the status of women, has recently resigned her cabinet position and has been turned over to the RCMP for investigation. How closely have you been following this issue?

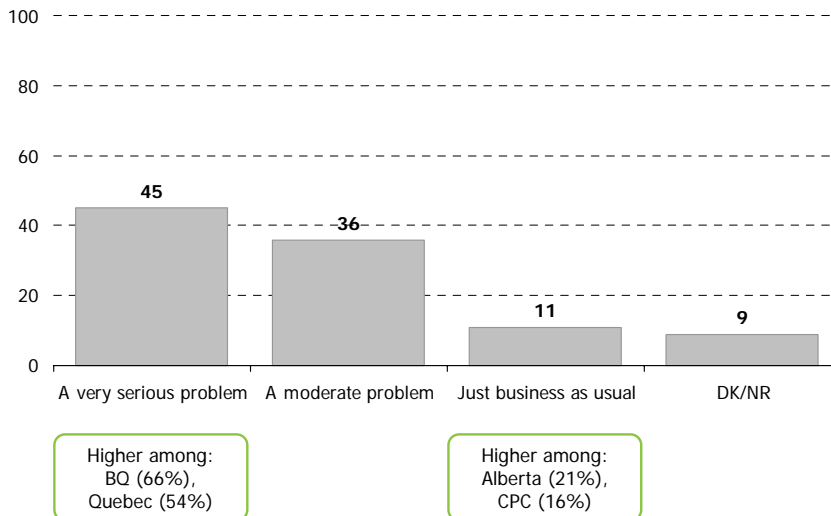


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BASE: Canadians; April 14 – April 20 (n=2084)

Perceived seriousness of the Guergis affair

Q. Overall, thinking about this issue, do you think it is...

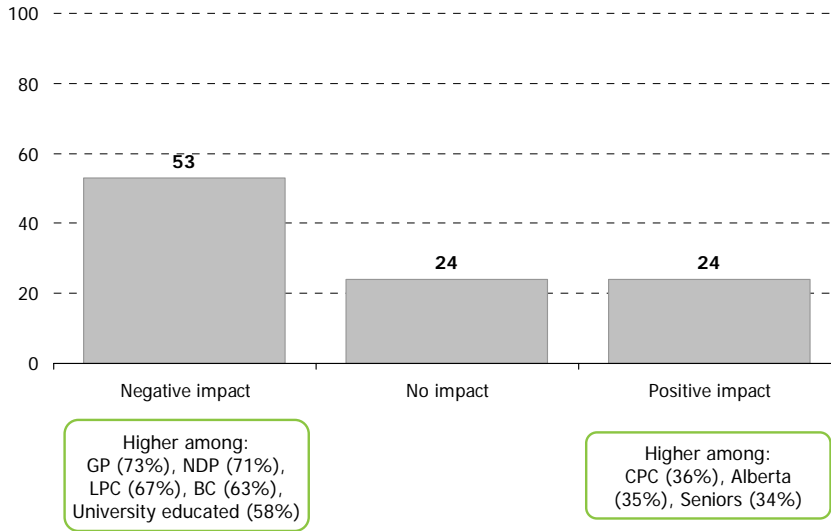


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BASE: Canadians who have been following the Guergis affair; April 14 – April 20 (n=1303)

Effect on confidence in the Conservative government

Q. What kind of impact has this issue had on your overall confidence in the Conservative government?

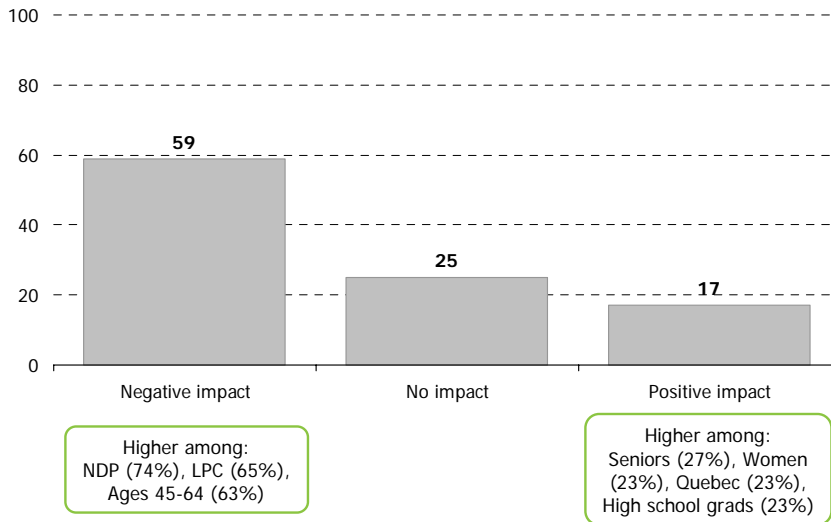


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BASE: Canadians who have been following the Guergis affair; April 14 – April 20 (n=half sample)

Effect on confidence in politicians in general

Q. What kind of impact has this issue had on your overall confidence in politicians in general?



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BASE: Canadians who have been following the Guergis affair; April 14 – April 20 (n=half sample)

Detailed Tables:

Public Attention to the Guergis Affair

Q. As you may have heard, Helena Guergis, former minister of state for the status of women, has recently resigned her cabinet position and has been turned over to the RCMP for investigation. How closely have you been following this issue?

	Very closely	Somewhat closely	Not at all	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	18%	42%	40%	2084	2.2
REGION					
British Columbia	20%	36%	45%	310	5.6
Alberta	20%	37%	43%	221	6.6
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	16%	48%	36%	179	7.3
Ontario	19%	44%	37%	705	3.7
Quebec	15%	44%	41%	488	4.4
Atlantic Canada	16%	43%	41%	181	7.3
GENDER					
Male	21%	43%	36%	1008	3.1
Female	15%	42%	43%	1076	3.0
AGE					
<25	11%	21%	68%	197	7.0
25-44	11%	40%	48%	619	3.9
45-64	23%	46%	31%	831	3.4
65+	26%	53%	21%	437	4.7
EDUCATION					
High school or less	12%	36%	52%	618	3.9
College or CEGEP	19%	44%	37%	685	3.7
University or higher	22%	45%	32%	781	3.5
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	18%	49%	34%	600	4.0
Liberal Party of Canada	29%	41%	30%	480	4.5
NDP	18%	37%	45%	295	5.7
Green Party	11%	41%	48%	224	6.6
Bloc Quebecois	19%	48%	33%	164	7.7
Undecided	14%	25%	61%	46	14.5

Perceived Seriousness of the Guergis Affair

Q. Overall, thinking about this issue, do you think it is...

	A very serious problem	A moderate problem	Just business as usual	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	45%	36%	11%	9%	1303	2.7
REGION						
British Columbia	42%	35%	12%	11%	178	7.4
Alberta	43%	32%	21%	5%	130	8.6
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	40%	40%	12%	8%	119	9.0
Ontario	41%	39%	10%	9%	471	4.5
Quebec	54%	30%	6%	10%	296	5.7
Atlantic Canada	43%	39%	12%	7%	109	9.4
GENDER						
Male	43%	40%	12%	6%	666	3.8
Female	47%	31%	10%	12%	637	3.9
AGE						
<25	49%	28%	9%	14%	61	12.6
25-44	40%	42%	8%	10%	315	5.5
45-64	46%	35%	13%	7%	583	4.1
65+	49%	31%	11%	9%	344	5.3
EDUCATION						
High school or less	47%	30%	11%	11%	310	5.6
College or CEGEP	47%	36%	9%	8%	440	4.7
University or higher	42%	39%	11%	8%	553	4.2
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION						
Conservative Party of Canada	35%	41%	16%	8%	410	4.8
Liberal Party of Canada	48%	34%	8%	9%	346	5.3
NDP	48%	38%	8%	5%	170	7.5
Green Party	48%	41%	9%	2%	120	9.0
Bloc Quebecois	66%	25%	4%	5%	110	9.3
Undecided	50%	21%	14%	16%	20	21.9

Effect of the Guergis Affair on Confidence in the Conservative Government

Q. What kind of impact has this issue had on your overall confidence in the Conservative government? Please use a 7-point scale where 1 is an extremely negative impact, 7 is an extremely positive impact, and the midpoint, 4, is neither.

	Negative effect (1-3)	Neither (4)	Positive effect (5-7)	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	53%	24%	24%	664	3.8
REGION					
British Columbia	63%	18%	19%	83	10.8
Alberta	36%	30%	35%	73	11.5
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	52%	25%	23%	65	12.2
Ontario	52%	22%	25%	233	6.4
Quebec	59%	25%	16%	158	7.8
Atlantic Canada	41%	26%	33%	52	13.6
GENDER					
Male	52%	25%	24%	340	5.3
Female	54%	22%	24%	324	5.4
AGE					
<25	61%	21%	18%	31	17.6
25-44	58%	23%	19%	167	7.6
45-64	52%	26%	22%	282	5.8
65+	44%	22%	34%	184	7.2
EDUCATION					
High school or less	47%	26%	27%	154	7.9
College or CEGEP	54%	20%	26%	218	6.6
University or higher	55%	25%	20%	292	5.7
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	27%	37%	36%	218	6.6
Liberal Party of Canada	67%	15%	18%	178	7.4
NDP	71%	12%	17%	84	10.7
Green Party	73%	14%	13%	53	13.5
Bloc Quebecois	66%	18%	16%	52	13.6
Undecided	70%	17%	12%	12	28.3

Effect of the Guergis Affair on Confidence in Politicians in General

Q. What kind of impact has this issue had on your overall confidence in the politicians in general? Please use a 7-point scale where 1 is an extremely negative impact, 7 is an extremely positive impact, and the midpoint, 4, is neither.

	Negative effect (1-3)	Neither (4)	Positive effect (5-7)	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	59%	25%	17%	639	3.9
REGION					
British Columbia	53%	28%	18%	95	10.1
Alberta	53%	25%	22%	57	13.0
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	56%	34%	9%	54	13.3
Ontario	60%	28%	12%	238	6.4
Quebec	63%	14%	23%	138	8.3
Atlantic Canada	57%	21%	21%	57	13.0
GENDER					
Male	59%	26%	15%	326	5.4
Female	58%	23%	18%	313	5.5
AGE					
<25	65%	15%	20%	30	17.9
25-44	59%	29%	12%	148	8.1
45-64	63%	23%	14%	301	5.7
65+	48%	25%	27%	160	7.8
EDUCATION					
High school or less	53%	24%	23%	156	7.9
College or CEGEP	59%	21%	20%	222	6.6
University or higher	61%	29%	10%	261	6.1
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION					
Conservative Party of Canada	41%	40%	19%	192	7.1
Liberal Party of Canada	66%	19%	15%	168	7.6
NDP	74%	15%	11%	86	10.6
Green Party	65%	12%	23%	67	12.0
Bloc Quebecois	64%	13%	23%	58	12.9
Undecided	56%	37%	7%	8	34.7

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 April 14 – April 20, 2010.¹ In total, a random sample of 2,084 Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-2.2 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.