



## **No Major Changes in Horserace Parties Look for Game Changers**

### **Introduction**

April 18, 2011 – Today, Maclean’s released results from the third wave of the 2011 Maclean’s Election Survey. The online survey was conducted among current members of INNOVATIVE’s Canada 20/20 panel between April 13<sup>th</sup> after the end of the debate, and April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The weighted total sample included 1897 responses eligible for inclusion in our analysis including 438 in Quebec.

### **Debates Fail To Provide a Turning Point**

Our debate numbers showed that Harper and Duceppe rallied their bases. With the exception of Harper among uncommitted Quebec voters, Jack Layton was the only leader to impress voters outside his base. Ignatieff was undercut by Layton among Liberals and failed to impress non-Liberals. However, the debates do not appear to be a defining event in the campaign. For more details, see our April 15<sup>th</sup> release.

### **Horserace Numbers Flat**

So far the 2011 election campaign has been a lot of sound and fury with little impact on the actual horserace numbers. The Tories lead, or are tied for the lead, everywhere but in Quebec where the Bloc continues to enjoy a dominant position among French Quebecers.

### **Leadership Numbers Also Show Little Change**

Perceptions of which leader would be the best Prime Minister are also flat. There is little change in Harper’s image – he has been bouncing around a bit on his negatives in Quebec but he is basically back where he started from. Ignatieff is also somewhat volatile in Quebec but with no clear trend, and Duceppe is showing no significant shifts at this point. Layton is seeing some improvement in ROC but is losing intensity in his favourables in Quebec – perhaps partisans of other parties are dampening their enthusiasm for him as they rally to their ‘brand’.

### **No One Has the 'Big Mo'**

When we look at campaign impact, more than 7 in 10 panelists say they have heard something from all four major parties in Quebec and all of the three major parties outside Quebec. However, there is no major shift in campaign impact this week for either the Liberals or the Conservatives. The NDP are picking up steam in the rest of Canada, but while the increase is outside the margin of error, it is not a major shift. The biggest shift is towards the Bloc which has become more polarizing as the party experiences significant increases both among those who like what they are hearing and those who dislike it.

### **Potential Wedge Issues**

With the debates over, the parties continue to look for issues that will give them an edge.

### **The Auditor General's Report**

At least 3 in 4 panelists in both Quebec and the rest of Canada report that they heard about the Auditor General's report into questionable spending in the G8 and G20 Summits. Across the country half of those who heard anything report it made them less likely to vote Conservative. Conservatives were unmoved by the report but not only did it reaffirm the negative views of opposition party supporters, it also had a negative impact among undecided voters.

### **Dealing with the Parti Quebecois**

The Parti Quebecois convention this weekend and the resounding vote of confidence given its leader, Pauline Marois, highlights the possibility that Jean Charest may be running out of political lives and the next Prime Minister may have to deal with a resurgent sovereignist movement.

When we ask panelists which party is best, we see a split decision between all four parties in Quebec, but outside of Quebec the Conservatives and Liberals lead with the NDP far behind.

This suggests that unity may be a uniquely effective tool for the Liberals to solidify support among NDP Liberal switchers. However, while the issue does not work for the NDP outside of Quebec, in Quebec the NDP are the choice of 23% of the Bloc voters on this issue.

For further information contact Innovative's Managing Director Greg Lyle at 416-642-6340 or [info@innovativeresearch.ca](mailto:info@innovativeresearch.ca).