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A Report To The Globe and Mail and CTV

2008 Federal Election: Battleground
Baseline Report

September 4-6, 2008

Methodology

- ◆ The Strategic Counsel is pleased to present findings from a survey of 1380 Canadians inhabiting the most Critical Battleground Ridings in the country.
- ◆ Forty-five of the most hotly contested ridings from Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia comprise the *Battleground 2008*.
- ◆ Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia were chosen because they possess the highest concentration of ridings where multiple Parties are likely to have the toughest competition.
- ◆ In the Federal Election of 2006 and subsequent By-Elections, these forty-five ridings were home to the tightest races in the most populous Provinces in the Country.
- ◆ The forty-five ridings consist of the 20 tightest races in Ontario, the 15 closest races in Quebec and the 10 tightest races in British Columbia from the 2006 Federal Election and subsequent By-Elections.
- ◆ Results are based on random samples of adults 18 years of age or older in each of the 45 ridings constituting the *Battleground 2008*. Results were weighted by age to be proportionate to the provincial population sampled.
- ◆ Interviews were conducted September 4th to 6th, 2008.

Note: Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding

The Battlegrounds

British Columbia

- ◆ Vancouver Quadra, Vancouver Island North, West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country, Fleetwood-Port Kells, Newton-North Delta, Burnaby-Douglas, Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca, Richmond, Pitt Meadows-Maple Ridge-Mission, North Vancouver.

Ontario

- ◆ Parry Sound-Muskoka, Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, St. Catharines, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, Brant, Thunder Bay-Superior North, Oakville, Thunder Bay-Rainy River, Huron-Bruce, London-Fanshaw, Ottawa-Orléans, Simcoe North, London West, Barrie, Kitchener-Conestoga, Halton, Peterborough, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing, Burlington, Mississauga South.

Quebec

- ◆ Louis-Hébert, Ahuntsic, Beauport-Limoilou, Brossard-La Prairie, Papineau, Charlesbourg—Haut-Saint-Charles, Hull-Aylmer, Honoré-Mercier, Saint-Hyacinthe-Bagot, Pontiac, Jeanne-Le Ber, Laval-Les Îles, Gatineau, Chicoutimi-Le Fjord, Brome-Missisquoi.

Sample Distribution and Margin of Error

	September 4-6, 2008	
	Sample Size	Margin of Error (\pm)
British Columbia battleground ridings	450	4.6%
Ontario battleground ridings	480	4.5%
Quebec battleground ridings	450	4.6%

Highlights

Highlights

- ◆ *Even before the Starting Pistol was Shot, the Conservatives made Significant Gains in these Critical Battlegrounds*
- ◆ *However, the situation remains very fluid – with a large percentage of voters in the battleground regions saying they may change their minds*
- ◆ *Voters are Divided Over Whether to Trust the Tories with a Majority*
- ◆ *The Green Party is taking their slice – showing much stronger than 2006.*

Detailed Findings

Is Canada on the right track?

BC Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	450
	%
On the right track	57
On the wrong track	28
DK/NA/Ref	15

Ontario Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	480
	%
On the right track	53
On the wrong track	31
DK/NA/Ref	17

Quebec Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	450
	%
On the right track	60
On the wrong track	32
DK/NA/Ref	8

Right track/Wrong track National

Canada	Jun 6-9 2005	Nov 24-24 2005	Jul 13-16 2006	Feb 15-18 2007	Aug 9-12 2007	Feb 14-17 2008	Jun 6-9 2008	Aug 25-31 2008
	n=	1000	1500	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
On the right track	49	47	61	55	57	60	48	49
On the wrong track	43	43	28	30	31	28	37	34
DK/NA/Ref	8	10	11	15	12	13	15	17

Q. Right now, do you think that overall the country is on the right track or the wrong track?

Base: All respondents

How the Ridings Vote

BC Battleground Ridings

	n=	2004	2006	2008
				Sept. 4-6
				450
		%	%	%
Conservative candidate		33	35	45
Liberal candidate		35	33	25
NDP candidate		26	27	17
Bloc Quebecois candidate		-	-	-
Green Party candidate		7	5	13

Ontario Battleground Ridings

	n=	2004	2006	2008
				Sept. 4-6
				480
		%	%	%
Conservative candidate		34	37	41
Liberal candidate		45	39	29
NDP candidate		17	19	13
Bloc Quebecois candidate		-	-	-
Green Party candidate		5	5	17

Quebec Battleground Ridings

	n=	2004	2006	2008
				Sept. 4-6
				450
		%	%	%
Conservative candidate		10	23	32
Liberal candidate		39	28	24
NDP candidate		5	8	11
Bloc Quebecois candidate		43	37	28
Green Party candidate		3	4	5

How Canadians would Vote

Canada

	n=	2006	Aug 25-31 2008
			1000
		%	%
Conservative candidate		36	37
Liberal candidate		30	29
NDP candidate		18	17
Bloc Quebecois candidate		11	8
Green Party candidate		5	5

Ontario

	n=	2006	Aug 25-31 2008
			383
		%	%
Conservative candidate		35	41
Liberal candidate		40	35
NDP candidate		20	15
Bloc Quebecois candidate		-	-
Green Party candidate		5	10

Quebec

	n=	2006	Aug 25-31 2008
			243
		%	%
Conservative candidate		25	23
Liberal candidate		21	26
NDP candidate		8	12
Bloc Quebecois candidate		42	34
Green Party candidate		4	5

Q. If the federal election was being held tomorrow, do you think you'd be supporting the (ROTATE LIST) Liberal candidate in your area, Conservative candidate in your area, the NDP candidate in your area, or the Green Party candidate in your area or (QUEBEC ONLY) Bloc Quebecois candidate in your area?

Q. In that case, which party's candidate in your local area would you be leaning towards at this time? Would it be the (ROTATE LIST) Liberal candidate in your area, Conservative candidate in your area, the NDP candidate in your area, Green Party candidate in your area or (QUEBEC ONLY) Bloc Quebecois candidate in your area?

Base: Decided voters

How likely are voters in battleground ridings to switch their vote?

BC Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	317
	%
NET Likely	31
Very Likely	4
Somewhat Likely	27
Not too Likely	28
Not at all Likely	39
NET Not Likely	66
DN/NA/Ref	3

Ontario Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	326
	%
NET Likely	40
Very Likely	3
Somewhat Likely	38
Not too Likely	27
Not at all Likely	31
NET Not Likely	58
DN/NA/Ref	1

Quebec Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	287
	%
NET Likely	29
Very Likely	6
Somewhat Likely	23
Not too Likely	34
Not at all Likely	32
NET Not Likely	66
DN/NA/Ref	5

Q. How likely is it that you might switch your vote to your second choice between now and election day?

Base: Those who have a second choice

Momentum towards the election

BC Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	450
	%
Conservative candidate	43
Liberal candidate	17
NDP candidate	10
Bloc Quebecois candidate	-
Green Party candidate	6
Other/None/Don't know	25

Ontario Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	480
	%
Conservative candidate	42
Liberal candidate	15
NDP candidate	8
Bloc Quebecois candidate	-
Green Party candidate	5
Other/None/Don't know	30

Quebec Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	450
	%
Conservative candidate	53
Liberal candidate	15
NDP candidate	7
Bloc Quebecois candidate	5
Green Party candidate	2
Other/None/Don't know	18

Which Party Canadians think has the most momentum towards a federal election

Canada

	Feb 14-17 2008	Aug 25-31 2008
n=	1000	1000
	%	%
Conservative Party	30	31
Liberal Party	25	23
NDP	6	7
Bloc Quebecois	3	3
Green Party	2	5
None	7	6
Other	1	1
DK/NA/Ref	27	23

Q. From what you can tell, which party, if any, is gaining the most popularity and momentum leading up to a possible federal election?

Base: All respondents

Is it time for change?

BC Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	450
	%
It's time for a change and a new government should be voted in	40
Now would be the wrong time to make a change	51
DK/NA/Ref	9

Ontario Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	480
	%
It's time for a change and a new government should be voted in	43
Now would be the wrong time to make a change	48
DK/NA/Ref	9

Quebec Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	450
	%
It's time for a change and a new government should be voted in	45
Now would be the wrong time to make a change	49
DK/NA/Ref	6

Do Canadians believe it is the right time for a new government?

Canada

	Nov 24-27 2005	Aug 25-31 2008
n=	1000	1000
	%	%
It's time for a change and a new government should be voted in	54	45
Now would be the wrong time to make a change	39	45
DK/NA/Ref	7	10

Q. Some people have been saying it's time for a change and that a new government should be voted in. Other people have said that now would be the wrong time to make a change and we should return the Conservatives to power. Which one of these two views best represents your own?

Base: All respondents

Impressions of Conservative leader Stephen Harper

BC Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	426
	%
NET Favourable	61
Very favourable	23
Somewhat favourable	38
Somewhat unfavourable	17
Very unfavourable	23
NET Unfavourable	40

Ontario Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	447
	%
NET Favourable	62
Very favourable	23
Somewhat favourable	39
Somewhat unfavourable	21
Very unfavourable	17
NET Unfavourable	38

Quebec Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	434
	%
NET Favourable	58
Very favourable	16
Somewhat favourable	42
Somewhat unfavourable	18
Very unfavourable	24
NET Unfavourable	42

What is your overall impression of Stephen Harper?

Canada

	May 2-8 2005	Oct 6-13 2005	Jan 12-15 2006	Jan 11-14 2007	Jan 10-13 2008	Jun 6-9 2008
n=	1000	1000	1500	1000	1000	1000
	%	%	%	%	%	%
NET Favourable	50	42	56	54	58	54
Very favourable	12	9	14	17	15	14
Somewhat favourable	38	33	42	37	43	40
Somewhat unfavourable	30	29	25	24	23	24
Very unfavourable	21	29	19	22	19	22
NET Unfavourable	50	58	44	46	42	46

Q. Thinking of the leaders of the federal parties, would you say your overall impressions of Conservative leader Stephen Harper is very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, or very unfavourable?

Base: Those who have an opinion (Proportions exclude "don't know" responses)

Impressions of Liberal leader Stephane Dion

BC Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	400
	%
NET Favourable	37
Very favourable	2
Somewhat favourable	34
Somewhat unfavourable	36
Very unfavourable	27
NET Unfavourable	63

Ontario Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	435
	%
NET Favourable	37
Very favourable	4
Somewhat favourable	33
Somewhat unfavourable	30
Very unfavourable	33
NET Unfavourable	63

Quebec Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	425
	%
NET Favourable	36
Very favourable	6
Somewhat favourable	30
Somewhat unfavourable	35
Very unfavourable	30
NET Unfavourable	64

What is your overall impression of Stephane Dion?

Canada

	Jan 11-14 2007	Jan 10-13 2008	Jun 6-9 2008
n=	1000	1000	1000
	%	%	%
NET Favourable	59	39	41
Very favourable	12	5	4
Somewhat favourable	47	34	37
Somewhat unfavourable	25	35	35
Very unfavourable	16	24	24
NET Unfavourable	41	61	59

Q. Thinking of the leaders of the federal parties, would you say your overall impressions of Liberal leader Stephane Dion is very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, or very unfavourable?

Base: Those who have an opinion (Proportions exclude "don't know" responses)

Impressions of NDP leader Jack Layton

BC Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	398
	%
NET Favourable	59
Very favourable	15
Somewhat favourable	43
Somewhat unfavourable	27
Very unfavourable	14
NET Unfavourable	41

Ontario Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	425
	%
NET Favourable	58
Very favourable	11
Somewhat favourable	47
Somewhat unfavourable	25
Very unfavourable	17
NET Unfavourable	42

Quebec Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	404
	%
NET Favourable	69
Very favourable	14
Somewhat favourable	55
Somewhat unfavourable	20
Very unfavourable	11
NET Unfavourable	31

What is your overall impression of Jack Layton?

Canada

	May 2-8 2005	Oct 6-13 2005	Jan 12-15 2006	Jan 11-14 2007	Jan 10-13 2008	Jun 6-9 2008
n=	1000	1000	1500	1000	1000	1000
	%	%	%	%	%	%
NET Favourable	63	60	65	59	55	61
Very favourable	12	11	13	10	12	11
Somewhat favourable	51	49	52	49	43	50
Somewhat unfavourable	26	26	24	25	29	24
Very unfavourable	12	14	11	16	16	15
NET Unfavourable	37	40	35	41	45	39

Q. Thinking of the leaders of the federal parties, would you say your overall impressions of NDP leader Jack Layton is very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, or very unfavourable?

Base: Those who have an opinion (Proportions exclude "don't know" responses)

Impressions of Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe

Quebec Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	423
	%
NET Favourable	59
Very favourable	15
Somewhat favourable	44
Somewhat unfavourable	20
Very unfavourable	21
NET Unfavourable	41

What is your overall impression of Gilles Duceppe?

Quebec

	May 2-8 2005	Oct 6-13 2005	Jan 12-15 2006	Jan 11-14 2007	Jan 10-13 2008	Jun 6-9 2008
n=	247	500	370	247	247	243
	%	%	%	%	%	%
NET Favourable	72	68	74	63	62	62
Very favourable	28	23	31	21	14	16
Somewhat favourable	45	45	43	43	48	46
Somewhat unfavourable	18	18	15	19	22	20
Very unfavourable	10	14	11	18	16	18
NET Unfavourable	28	32	26	37	38	38

Q. Thinking of the leaders of the federal parties, would you say your overall impressions of Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe is very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, or very unfavourable?

Base: Those who have an opinion (Proportions exclude "don't know" responses)

Impressions of Green Party leader Elizabeth May

BC Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	315
	%
NET Favourable	57
Very favourable	9
Somewhat favourable	47
Somewhat unfavourable	29
Very unfavourable	15
NET Unfavourable	43

Ontario Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	325
	%
NET Favourable	57
Very favourable	13
Somewhat favourable	45
Somewhat unfavourable	22
Very unfavourable	20
NET Unfavourable	43

Quebec Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	227
	%
NET Favourable	58
Very favourable	5
Somewhat favourable	53
Somewhat unfavourable	23
Very unfavourable	19
NET Unfavourable	42

What is your overall impression of Elizabeth May?

Canada

	May 2-8 2005	Oct 6-13 2005	Jan 12-15 2006
n=	247	500	370
	%	%	%
NET Favourable	58	56	62
Very favourable	12	9	7
Somewhat favourable	46	47	55
Somewhat unfavourable	25	26	22
Very unfavourable	17	18	16
NET Unfavourable	42	44	38

Q. Thinking of the leaders of the federal parties, would you say your overall impressions of Green Party leader Elizabeth May is very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, or very unfavourable?

Base: Those who have an opinion (Proportions exclude "don't know" responses)

Can Stephen Harper be trusted with a majority government?

BC Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	450
	%
Stephen Harper is too right wing and controlling and has too much of a hidden agenda	42
Stephen Harper has shown the kind of competent, decisive leadership that shows that he can be trusted	50
DK/NA/Ref	8

Ontario Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	480
	%
Stephen Harper is too right wing and controlling and has too much of a hidden agenda	45
Stephen Harper has shown the kind of competent, decisive leadership that shows that he can be trusted	45
DK/NA/Ref	9

Quebec Battleground Ridings

	Sept. 4-6
n=	450
	%
Stephen Harper is too right wing and controlling and has too much of a hidden agenda	48
Stephen Harper has shown the kind of competent, decisive leadership that shows that he can be trusted	42
DK/NA/Ref	10

Q. Some people that Stephen is too right wing and controlling and has too much of a hidden agenda to be trusted with a majority government. Other people say that Stephen Harper has shown the kind of competent, decisive leadership that shows that he can be trusted with a majority government. Which view is closer to your own?

Base: All respondents.