

**Quebec Election Results Good for Canada,
Harper Rises in Business Panel's Esteem,
Probability of Eventual Secession is 15%**

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by COMPAS in the *Financial Post*
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1.0. Introduction

CEOs think Quebec election results are good for national unity, and perceive the probability of Quebec separation as 15%--low but not negligible.

Panellists' assessments of the contributions of various national and provincial actors, past and present, to national unity are largely unchanged since our last measurement. For example, Chretien and Martin each continue to earn 49-50% scores while Layton remains in the 30's and Charest continues to earn a mean score in the 60 range.

The one change, a major one, is a very big jump in performance score for Harper on the unity file—65% today compared to in the 36% a year and a half ago when he was Opposition leader.

These are the main findings from the weekly CEO and business leader undertaken by COMPAS for the *Financial Post* under sponsorship of BDO Dunwoody LLP.

2.0. Impact on the Economy--Negligible

As shown in tables 2A and B, the economies of Quebec and Canada are not expected to decline after the Quebec election results. They are apt to remain at about the same level or grow marginally.

Table 2A: As you know, Jean Charest's Liberals won 33% of the vote in the Quebec provincial election with Mario Dumont's ADQ in second place with 31% and Andre Boisclair's PQ with 28%. Will Quebec's economy...

	%
Become...	March 2007
A lot worse	1
Somewhat worse	13
Remain about the same	54
Somewhat better	29
A lot better	3
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know or no opinion [excluded from analysis]	0



Table 2B: Will Canada's economy

	%	%
	February 2006 [in general]	March 2007 [as a result of Quebec election]
A lot worse	0	0
Somewhat worse	19	6
Remain about the same	51	63
Somewhat better	27	28
A lot better	3	3
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know or no opinion [excluded from analysis]	0	10

3.0. Likelihood Quebec's Separation and Impact on Canada

Panellists perceive the probability of the separation of Quebec as small (15% over the next ten years) but not negligible. The impact of the provincial election results was to greatly reduce the prospects for Quebec independence—90% say that the likelihood of separation declined, as shown in table 3A. According to one panellist, “hopefully this election will take some of the steam out of the bogus separation issue. Political posturing aside, why would the Province separate and walk away from the ever stronger western Canadian economy?”

Canada's economy is seen as far stronger and less vulnerable in the event of separation than a generation ago, as shown in table 3B.

Table 3A: Did the likelihood of separation...[in percent]?

...go up	10
...go down	90
DNK [excluded from analysis]	4



Table 3B: Compared to a generation ago, is Canada's economy... [in percent]

a lot more vulnerable if Quebec separated	3
more vulnerable	9
about the same	18
less vulnerable, or	51
a lot less vulnerable?	20
DNK [excluded from analysis]	2

4.0. Harper Jumps in Credibility on Quebec File

COMPAS has been tracking the perceived contributions of various federal and provincial figures to national unity, as shown in table 4. By far the biggest change in the last few weeks as been an immense jump in the performance score given by the business panel to Stephen Harper for his treatment of national unity.

Table 4: With respect to National Unity and persuading Quebecers to remain in Canada, what performance score would you give each of the following using a 100 point school report-type scale? [RANDOMIZE]

	MAR 2007		NOV 2005	
	Mean	DNK	Mean	DNK
Prime Minister Stephen Harper	64	1	36 ¹	1
Quebec Premier Jean Charest	63	1	57	2
Governor General Michaëlle Jean	51	4	47	2
Prime Minister Paul Martin when he was Prime Minister	49	1	50 ²	1
Jean Chretien when he was Prime Minister	49	2	50	2
NDP Leader Jack Layton	29	2	33	1
Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty	34	5	36	2

¹ In 2005, Mr. Harper was referred to as Conservative Leader Stephen Harper

² In 2005, Mr. Martin was referred to simply as Prime Minister Paul Martin.



3.0. Methodology

The COMPAS web-survey of CEOs and leaders of small, medium, and large corporations was conducted March 27-30, 2007. Respondents constitute an essentially hand-picked panel with a higher numerical representation of small and medium-sized firms.

Because of the small population of CEOs and business leaders from which the sample was drawn, the study can be considered more accurate than comparably sized general public studies. In studies of the general public, surveys of 120 are deemed accurate to within approximate 9 percentage points 19 times out of 20. The principal and co-investigator on this study are Conrad Winn, Ph.D. and Tamara Gottlieb.

