

# CHAREST DOMINATES LEADERSHIP, LIBERAL BRAND STRONGEST

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Jean Charest's Liberals are close to majority territory in the Quebec election, leading the Parti Québécois by 44 to 36 percent, with Action Démocratique du Québec trailing badly at 12 percent, in a Nanos Research poll for *Policy Options* magazine.

Québec Solidaire and the Green Party each received 4 percent in the poll of 505 Quebecers, conducted by telephone between November 14 and 18, with a margin of error of plus or minus 4.4 percent.

Leaving aside the horse race, Charest dominates a series of questions on leadership, and the Liberals have a clear advantage on the best party brand. Charest's leadership attributes have improved substantially since a Nanos poll conducted in the middle of the last campaign in March 2007, while Mario Dumont's leadership numbers and the ADQ brand have gone south.

"The underlying indicators on leadership and party brand show the fundamentals for the Liberals look very good," says pollster Nik Nanos. "While the election isn't over, the Liberal fundamentals are very strong."

In comparative research with identical leadership questions in the last campaign, "Charest has substantially strengthened his position," says Nanos, "he enjoys an advantage on all major leadership measures." PQ leader Pauline Marois receives "good but lower ratings than

Charest." Dumont's leadership numbers have tanked.

"There has been a significant erosion in the positive perceptions of Mario Dumont and the ADQ since the last election," says Nanos.

Charest has a positive perception among 47 percent of voters, with a negative perception among 22 percent. Marois enjoys a positive perception of 43 percent, with a negative perception of 27 percent. Dumont has a positive perception of 28 percent, but a negative perception of 34 percent.

On the question of "which leader has the best vision for Quebec," Charest leads at 34 percent, to 25 percent for Marois, and 15 percent for Dumont. On the question "which leader is the most competent," Charest dominates at 48 percent, to 25 percent for Marois and 8 percent for Dumont. On the question of which leader is most trusted, Charest leads at 36 percent, to 25 percent for Marois and 15 percent for Dumont.

On the question of which leader "has the character to be premier of Quebec," Charest dominates at 48 percent, to 24 percent for Marois and 12 percent for Dumont. On the question of "which leader has the brightest political future," Charest leads at 45 percent, to 23 percent for Marois and 13 percent for Dumont. Only on one leadership question, "which leader has views most like your own" is Dumont close to being competitive, at 17 per-

cent, trailing Charest at 32 percent and Marois at 27 percent.

On all six leadership questions, the voters' perception of Charest has improved significantly, while Dumont's leadership scores have deteriorated across the board since the March 2007 campaign. Marois shows improvement in every leadership question over the scores of André Boisclair, the PQ's leader in the 2007 campaign.

On the party brand perceptions, the Liberals dominated all four questions. On the question of which party "has the strongest team of candidates," the Liberals lead at 56 percent, followed by the PQ at 23 percent, and the ADQ at a feeble 3 percent. On the question of "which party is best at ensuring that Quebec receives its fair share within Canada," the Liberals are at 48 percent, the PQ at 33 percent and the ADQ at 5 percent. The Liberals substantially lead the PQ even on this question of which party best defends Quebec's interests in Ottawa. As to "which party has the strongest policy platform," the Liberals lead at 45 percent, to the PQ's 24 percent, with the ADQ at 5 percent. And on the question of "which party has the brightest future," the Liberals are at 48 percent, the PQ at 24 percent, and the ADQ at 10 percent. This is the only one of four questions on party brand in which the ADQ breaks out of single digits.