



PRESS RELEASE

The Political Space for Michael Ignatieff to act on climate change

Based on our Environmental Choices¹ public opinion data, this article describes the 'political space' that Canadian politicians have to act on specific types of climate change policy. This document is part of a series - we are also releasing equivalent discussions for the UK and the USA.

Montreal & London, December 9, 2009

UPDATED

Structural Tensions

The climate change meeting at Copenhagen (COP15) is providing an extra incentive for political parties to clarify where they stand on climate change, and what policies they support. In this article we consider the policy choices facing one particular politician – Michael Ignatieff, who has been effective leader of the Canadian Liberal party since December 10, 2008, and is Leader of the Official Opposition. On November 26, 2009, Michael Ignatieff made a speech² critical of the Canadian government's approach to climate change and announced a wide range of approaches (particularly using clean energy standards, supporting clean energy investments, support of cap-and-trade) with emissions targets set against 1990 levels.

Yet, where does Canadian public opinion stand towards policies used to tackle climate change?

Before discussing this question, a brief description of the political and economic structural tensions affecting Canada's climate change position³ is relevant. Political power is principally wielded at both the national (federal) level, and the provincial level. At the federal level, Canada is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent from the 2006 level by 2020. It is likely to use a cap-and-trade system as a key way of achieving this goal, but is waiting for the US to have legislation in place before specifying a similar Canadian version. The minority-led Conservative Canadian government (with its political support base from Alberta) is potentially vulnerable to a no-confidence vote by a collaboration of the three main opposition parties. This puts all parties in a permanent state of semi-preparedness for an election (there have been 3 federal elections in the last 5 years). In parallel, all the provinces have also set greenhouse gas targets and policies, using different targets, base years and dates for revisions. This implies that Canada has two effective targets – a) the federal target, or b) the net of all provincial targets⁴ – and federal-provincial level tensions are emerging as people compare these two targets⁵.

Crucially, Canada is a major energy exporter, so 'energy security' and 'climate policy' are not aligned as they are in the USA and (in particular) the UK. The main issue is the large, and growing, emissions from the development of the tar sands, centred on Alberta – and this contrasts with Quebec's low-emission hydro electricity (both Alberta's oil and Quebec's clean-electricity are increasingly geared for export to the USA). There is tension between Alberta and Quebec (and other provinces) in the greenhouse gas targets they set.

¹ For Interim Highlights of this study, visit http://www.haddock-research.com/EC2008_interim_highlights

² Speech to Laval University, November 26, 2009, Michael Ignatieff, http://www.liberal.ca/en/michael-ignatieff/speeches/16978_speech-at-laval-university

³ A thorough review of Canada's climate change position can be found 'Backgrounder on UN ClimateNegotiations in Copenhagen, Denmark', November 30, 2009, <http://www.pembina.org/pub/1935>

⁴ It would interesting to calculate and compare the difference in these two targets.

⁵ 'Federal-provincial fight to air at climate summit', Globe and Mail, December 4, 2009 - <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/federal-provincial-fight-to-air-at-climate-summit/article1388082/>

Haddock Research and Branding, Inc

5764 Monkland Ave., Suite 13, Montreal (QC) Canada H4A 1E9

+1 514 835 3013

info@haddock-research.com

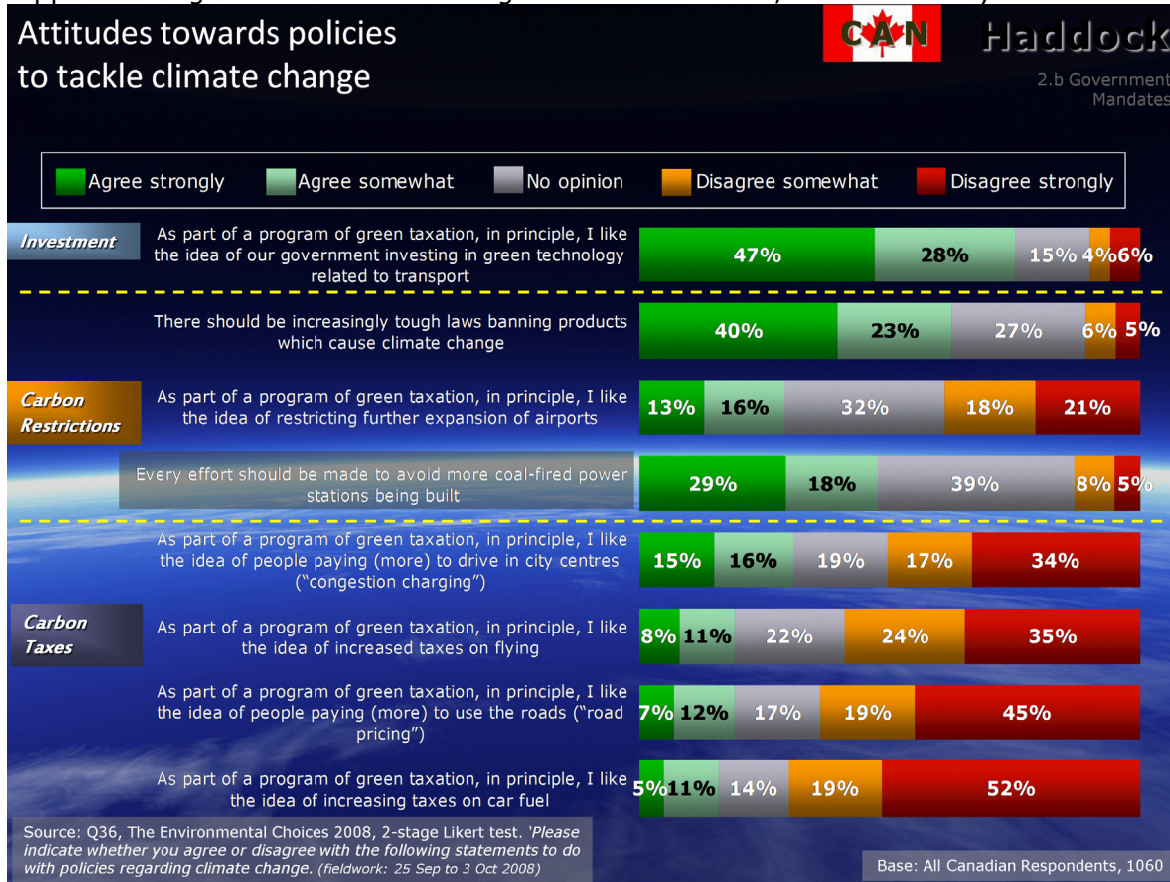


In managing how provinces work towards agreement on these emissions targets, a) it should be expected, as a first step, that political bodies *would* represent their key economic interests, and, b) emissions targets should be adjusted for 'energy off-shoring'⁶.

There is considerable pressure for Canada to do more to tackle climate change. To a certain extent, international pressure can be resisted by appealing to 'the national interest'⁷. Domestic pressure has come from a report, released on October 29, 2009, outlining scenarios for lower emissions in Canada by 2020⁸; and on December 3, 2009, 500 Canadian scientists petitioned parliament writing 'climate change is happening faster than predicted and Canada is not doing nearly enough'⁹.

Overall attitudes to climate change policies

Below, the overall picture from our Environmental Choices study is that (like the English and Americans) Canadians are supportive of policies which 'invest in green technology', provide mixed support for regulation which limits high-carbon industries, and are mostly resistant to 'carbon taxes'.



⁶ For a discussion of 'energy off-shoring' comparing Texas with California, see 'The End of Energy Obesity' (2009), Peter Tertzakian, p.240-247
⁷ For example, 'Harper takes heat', November 28, 2009, Norman Spector, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/blogs/spector-vision/harper-takes-heat/article1381405/>
⁸ Climate Leadership, Economic Prosperity, October 29, 2009, <http://climate.pembina.org/pub/1909>
⁹ Canada's scientists have spoken, December 3, 2009, http://www.wwf.ca/conservation/global_warming/copenhagen/december2009/take_action/scientists_voice.cfm



Six degrees of support for climate change policies

Using cluster analysis on attitudes towards these 8 climate change policies (see chart on previous page) amongst the full international sample, we can identify six groups with distinctly different sets of attitudes towards government policy. These groups can be considered to be on a spectrum of support for government 'green' policies. Below is a description of these groups, leading with the most supportive, and ending with the least supportive.

	All Canada respondents n=1060	Liberal Party supporters n=131
1. Supporters	14.2%	16.8%
2. Regulators	20.7%	21.4%
3. Investors	25.7%	28.2%
4. Undecided	19.7%	22.9%
5. Not my problem	9.6%	6.1%
6. Opposers	10.2%	4.6%

1. SUPPORTERS (14%)

Supporters of all climate change policies

The most 'green' group, representing 14% of all Canadians, is generally supportive of all policy types – investment, regulation and carbon taxes. They are mainly *Climate Citizens*¹⁰ (10% of total sample), with some *Mild Greens* (3%) and a very limited number of *Sceptics/Uninvolved* (1%).

2. REGULATORS (21%) - Supporters of strong regulation and green investment; against car taxes

The second most 'green' group; 21% of Canadians believe that green policy should focus on strong regulation supported by green investment - but are resistant to higher car fuel taxes, and road pricing. This group are mainly *Climate Citizens* (12%) and *Mild Greens* (7%), but there are a few *Sceptics/Uninvolved* (2%).

3. INVESTORS (26%) - Supporters of green investment; strongly against car taxes or air taxes

'Investors' are the third most 'green' group, and the largest, representing 26% of Canadians. They believe that green policy should focus on green investment – and are particularly strongly resistant to extra car taxes and flying taxes. They are either *Climate Citizens* (11%) or *Mild Greens* (10%) with a smaller number of *Sceptics/Uninvolved* (5%).

4. UNDECIDED (20%) - Mostly undecided; mildly pro-investment and mildly anti-car taxes

This fourth most 'green' group is currently not engaged with any of the different policy options tested. Without a reason to believe, in reality, people in this group are perhaps likely to resist regulation and carbon taxes. They are fairly evenly split between *Climate Citizens* (7%), *Mild Greens* (7%), and *Sceptics/Uninvolved* (6%).

5. NOT MY PROBLEM (10%) - Anti car taxes; ambivalent of investment; some support for regulation

This fifth most 'green' group disagrees with car taxes, and is ambivalent about green investment. There is some agreement that airports should be restricted and coal stations should not be built; perhaps because they see climate change as really a 'business problem'. They are *Sceptics/Uninvolved* (4%), *Mild Greens* (4%) and *Climate Citizens* (2%).

6. OPPOSERS (10%) - Disagreement with all climate change policies

The least 'green' group disagrees with all policy options – and they unanimously strongly resist the idea of road pricing! They are *Sceptics/Uninvolved* (6%), *Mild Greens* (2%) and *Climate Citizens* (1%).

¹⁰ A segmentation, developed within the Environmental Choices 2008 study, has classified people into 3 types according to their attitudes towards climate change – from *Climate Citizens* (who are most engaged with climate change), to *Mild Greens* (who are moderately engaged) to *Sceptics & Uninvolved* (who are least engaged). For more information, visit www.haddock-research.com/segmentation



How Michael Ignatieff could make 'green' popular

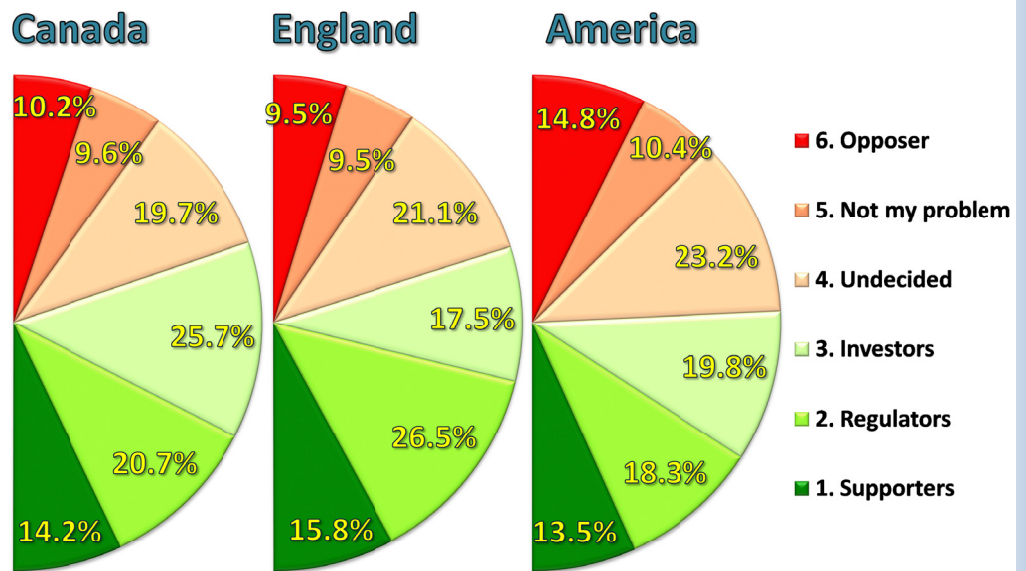
This market research analysis suggests that a focus on carbon tax (as the Conservatives successfully framed the Liberal's 2008 'Green Shift' plan) is a head-on assault on public opinion. This was acknowledged by a speech Michael Ignatieff made on February 27, 2009, saying "You've got to work with the grain of Canadians, not against them".¹¹

International cap-and-trade arrangements seem likely to be a more popular way of introducing a tax on carbon, and the Conservatives are already proposing this approach. The advantage that Michael Ignatieff has is that the Liberal supporter base is more likely to believe in the importance of addressing climate change, and more committed to supporting such policies. Michael Ignatieff can also put together an integrated set of policies to invest in low-carbon technologies and to regulate high-carbon technologies

(such as car fuel standards). Only very few Liberal supporters are 'Opposers' or think it is 'Not my problem'. In contrast, a higher proportion of Conservative party supporters can be classified as being in one of these two groups, which may limit the Conservative party's room for action on climate change.

The 'Investors' are a particularly large group in Canada, and careful policy creation, citizen engagement and communications is needed to convince these people that the Liberals have a credible climate change plan.

Proportion of adults in each of the 6 'climate change policy segments'



Source: Q36, The Environmental Choices 2008, (fieldwork: 25 Sep to 3 Oct 2008)

Base: All Canadian respondents, 1060
 Base: All English respondents, 1050
 Base: All US respondents, 1046

'Four broad regulations (to tackle climate change) are indispensable: improving energy efficiency standards, providing incentives for emerging technologies, linking agriculture and forestry practices to carbon capture, and pricing carbon. The hardest measure for politicians is pricing carbon, because it is so politically tricky. Without establishing a price that rises over time, inducing people to switch fuels and products and change lifestyles, no successful attack on greenhouse gases is possible. In Canada, most politicians initially shuddered at the politics of carbon pricing. The Liberals under Stéphan Dion put forward a carbon tax as a way of pricing carbon, and were destroyed by the Conservatives' attack machine in the last election (October 2008).'

~ Jeffery Simpson, Dec 4, 2009¹²

¹¹ Dion's carbon tax plan was a vote loser, Ignatieff says, February 28, 2009, <http://www.thestar.com/News/Canada/article/594543>

¹² 'Politically tricky: Holding the temperature rise to two degrees', Globe & Mail, Jeffery Simpson, December 4, 2009 <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/politically-tricky-holding-the-temperature-rise-to-two-degrees/article1387822/>



About Haddock Research & Branding, Inc.

Haddock Research & Branding Inc. is a full-service market research agency focusing on climate change and the low-carbon economy. Making use of the latest advances in survey design, Haddock advises businesses on how best to develop profitable low-carbon opportunities; and provides governments with the vital information they need to mobilize people to take action on climate change. For further information, visit our website - www.haddock-research.com

For enquiries, please contact either of the founding directors of Haddock Research and Branding - Peter Winters peter.winters@haddock-research.com or James Ambler james.ambler@haddock-research.com . The Environmental Choices™ survey is entirely self-funded. Full international reports, free summaries and associated commentaries are available to download from our website. Additionally, national level reports, additional analysis or data mining are available on request.¹³

Information from this press release comes from section report 2b. 'Government Mandates for action on climate change'. More detailed analysis may be found within this report. *Any comments in this press release are solely the responsibility of Haddock Research, Inc.*

¹³ www.haddock-research.com A quick registration is required to download the free summaries. More detailed results are available in the published reports section.