



Canada - Monday May. 10, 2010

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Harper best leader but popularity took a hit: poll



CTV News Video

CTV News Channel: Nik Nanos, Nanos Research
A new poll suggests the federal Conservatives are still the people's choice to run the country, while Prime Minister Stephen Harper's personal popularity has slipped.

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CTV.ca News Staff
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A new poll says 29.5 per cent of Canadians think Stephen Harper is the best federal party leader to be prime minister. That's far ahead of Michael Ignatieff, who came in second at 17.3 per cent.

However, in a separate question, the survey also says a third of voters are unsure which leader -- if any -- is trustworthy or competent.

The Nanos Research survey, conducted for CTV and the *Globe and Mail*, suggests Canadians are largely disappointed with the level of discourse on Parliament Hill.

Photos



Prime Minister Stephen Harper addresses the media after a meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the chancellery in Berlin, Saturday, May 8, 2010. (AP / Markus Schreiber)

When respondents were asked which party leader would make the best prime minister, here are the full results (difference from a February poll in brackets):

- Stephen Harper, Conservative: 29.5 per cent (-1.1)
- Michael Ignatieff, Liberal: 17.3 per cent (+1.2)
- Jack Layton, NDP: 15.6 per cent (-2.5)
- Gilles Duceppe, Bloc Quebecois: 6.3 per cent (+0.5)
- Elizabeth May, Green Party: 5.5 per cent (-1.4)
- Unsure: 14.5 per cent (+5.1)
- None of them: 11.3 per cent (-0.4)

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Pollster Nik Nanos said Harper's numbers have dropped because of a number of recent issues he has had to deal with on Parliament Hill, including the Helena Guergis-Rahim Jaffer problem, the Afghan detainee issue and the G8 maternal health and abortion plan.

"The good news for the prime minister is that he has a comparative advantage over Michael Ignatieff and Jack Layton, it's just that that comparative advantage has diminished in the last quarter," he told CTV News Channel Monday.

Harper had his highest level of support in the Prairies, at 46.5 per cent, and his lowest in the traditional Liberal stronghold of Ontario, at 27 per cent.

Ignatieff, by contrast, had the most supporters in Ontario at 23.5 per cent -- but still lower than Harper. In the Prairies, just 10.9 per cent of respondents thought he would make the best prime minister.

"If you are a Liberal strategist looking at these numbers you are seeing a leader that is trailing his party," Nanos said. "For Michael Ignatieff, his leadership has been characterized by fits and starts, he hasn't seemed to be able to land a strong punch on the prime minister."

The survey also asked Canadians to choose which leader they trusted, was competent, and had a vision for Canada.

None of the leaders managed to gain more than a third of support, but Harper had the highest numbers, with 30.2 per cent saying they trusted him more than any other leader.

However, 32.6 per cent felt were undecided, or felt they couldn't trust any of the leaders.

	Trust	Competence	Vision for Canada
Stephen Harper	23.9 per cent	30.2 per cent	25.1 per cent
Jack Layton	16.8 per cent	11.7 per cent	16.3 per cent
Michael Ignatieff	11.0 per cent	15.1 per cent	14.7 per cent
Elizabeth May	6.8 per cent	2.2 per cent	5.2 per cent
Gilles Duceppe	9.0 per cent	8.2 per cent	3.9 per cent
None / Undecided	32.6 per cent	32.6 per cent	34.6 per cent

The numbers above are from a Nanos national random telephone survey of 1,003 Canadians 18 years of age and older. It was completed between April 30 and May 3, 2010. The statistics of a random sample of 1,003 respondents is accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.



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