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**Dissatisfaction with leaders spikes**

Canadians are turning off federal politicians as a result of all the mudslinging on Parliament Hill, pollster Nik Nanos says.

New [research](#) by Mr. Nanos shows a third of voters are undecided or do not think that any of the four federal leaders are trustworthy, competent or have a vision for the future of the country. This dissatisfaction is the highest he has seen in several years – since the Liberal sponsorship scandal.

“Political negativity isn’t really an advantage for any leader,” Mr. Nanos says. “It diminishes the brand for all leaders and the political process.”

The survey found that 29.5 per cent of Canadians think Stephen Harper would make the best prime minister – down by 2.5 per cent from the Nanos poll in early February. This compares to 17.3 per cent for Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff – an increase of 1.2 per cent since February.

The other party leaders rated as follows: 15.6 per cent for the NDP’s Jack Layton, who saw his numbers go down by 2.5 per cent; 6.3 per cent for Bloc Leader Gilles Duceppe; and 5.5 per cent for the Green Party’s Elizabeth May.

Most telling, however, is that 26.8 per cent of Canadians say none of them would make the best prime minister or are unsure – an increase of 5.1 per cent since last February.

Mr. Nanos says that one of the unintended “casualties” of the lack of civil debate among politicians is that voters get turned off and stay away from the ballot box, but also that fewer people want to get involved in public service by running for office.

“Would you be telling your kids to be politicians?” Mr. Nanos asked.

The pollster says this could change if a leader steps forward and asserts a position – even if it’s controversial.

On sincerity, 23.9 per cent of respondents said Mr. Harper was the most trustworthy leader compared to 16.8 per cent for Mr. Layton, 11 per cent for Mr. Ignatieff, 9 per cent for Mr. Duceppe and 6.8 per cent for Ms. May. But 32.6 per cent of Canadians are undecided or wouldn’t choose any of them – up 6.4 points from the February poll.

The survey of 1003 Canadians was conducted between April 30 and May 3. It has a margin of error plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

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