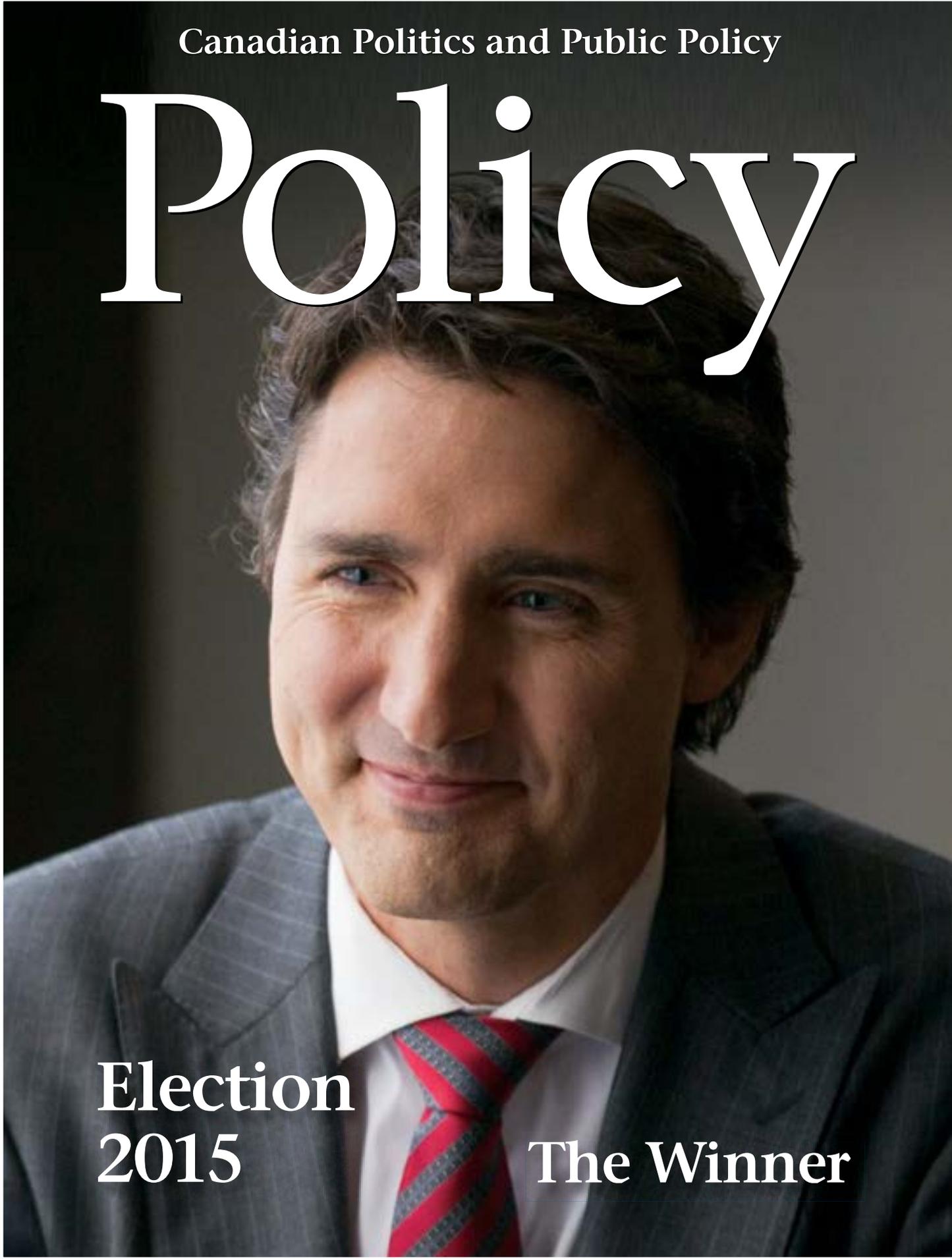


Canadian Politics and Public Policy

# Policy

A close-up portrait of Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada, wearing a grey pinstriped suit jacket, a white shirt, and a red and grey striped tie. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a subtle smile.

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# Policy

## Canadian Politics and Public Policy

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## Policy

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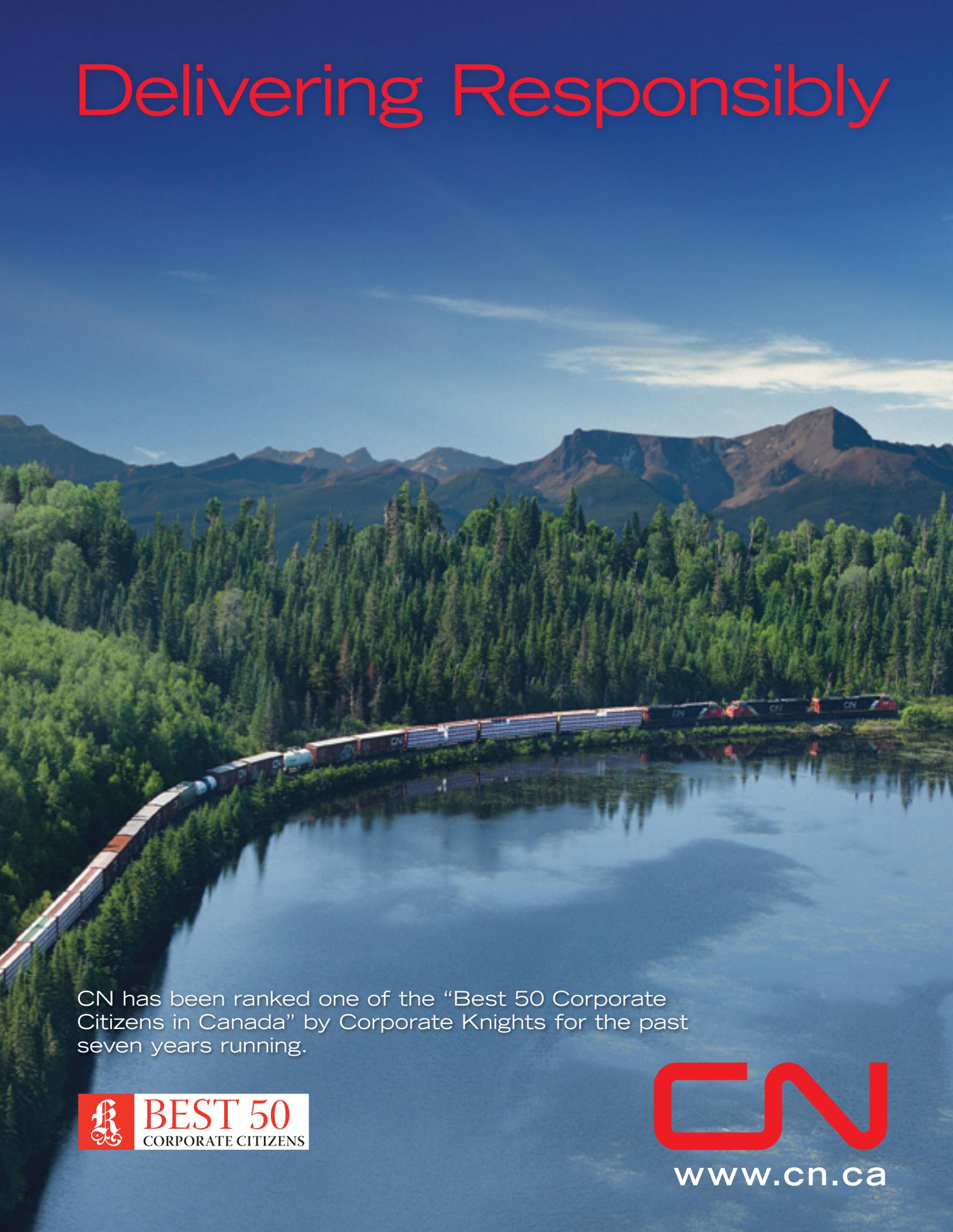
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Cover photo by Adam Scotti

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From the Editor / L. Ian MacDonald

## Election 2015

Welcome to our special issue on Election 2015, a campaign that took many twists and turns over 78 days before the voters elected a surprise Liberal majority on October 19. They did so because Justin Trudeau and the Liberals ran by far the best campaign, at both the strategic and retail levels.

The Liberals clearly won the ballot question of change, and offered a key differentiator, pledging stimulative deficits while the NDP echoed the Conservative platform of balanced budgets. The Liberals outflanked the NDP with progressive voters on the left, notably in Ontario, as Kathleen Wynne and the provincial Liberals did in 2014.

The campaign also featured a record five leaders' debates and Trudeau more than held his own in all of them, proving he belonged on the big stage. He took his momentum from the debates out onto the hustings, attracting growing crowds along the way. His retail game was easily the best of the three main leaders, while NDP Leader Tom Mulcair never really found his voice. And in Quebec, though Trudeau and Mulcair held similar moderate views on the niqab issue, only the NDP paid a political price for it, plunging 20 points in the polls in only three weeks. The NDP campaign went from Orange Crush to Orange Crash.

How the Liberals and NDP traded places, from third to first and first to third, is a story for the history books. In this issue, we offer a first draft of that history. Our team on this story is, quite simply, as experienced and authoritative as any in the business.

To begin, Susan Delacourt takes us behind the scenes of the Liberal campaign and tells us how Trudeau and his team did it. No one knows the Liberal Party, or the Trudeau entourage, better than this noted political author and columnist.

Geoff Norquay looks at the ballot ques-

tion in 2015, and writes that change trumped continuity, with Trudeau coming to personify change while Mulcair lost this debate decisively in the closing weeks of the campaign. Robin Sears writes of lessons learned for the NDP and the Conservatives, and the identity politics that hurt the NDP but came back to haunt the Conservatives in the end. David McLaughlin writes that stuff happens in elections, especially 78-day campaigns. And Marty Goldfarb, the dean of Canadian pollsters who worked for Trudeau's father, tells us how and why voters found their way back to the Liberal brand.

We also have five regional profiles—Charles McMillan on the Atlantic, Antonia Maioni on Quebec, Tom Axworthy and Rana Shamoon on Ontario, Dale Eisler on the Prairies and Greg Lyle on B.C.

Contributing Writer Kevin Lynch writes about the challenges of government transitions, something he knows a lot about as a former Clerk of the Privy Council and head of the Public Service. He writes that it's time for a governance re-boot, with an emphasis on risk management rather than risk avoidance. David Mitchell, former president of the Public Policy Forum, shares his thoughts on governance in a campaign period.

Then there was the social media effect. Catherine Cano writes that mainstream news organizations such as her own Radio-Canada have met the challenge of new media and are growing audience. Facebook's Kevin Chan argues that social media are the new platform for public engagement, while Andrew MacDougall observes that this is the new normal, and parties need to deal with it.

One of the new elements in this election was the millennial vote, and the coming of age of the cohort born in the 1900s. Our social media editor, Grace MacDonald, offers her take on how millennials voted and why.

And finally we are delighted to welcome Don Newman to our roster of writers. In his first column, Don looks at the pathway to power taken by Pierre Trudeau in the last century, and Justin Trudeau today. He concludes that the son had the more challenging path than the father, and may be the tougher and more resilient Trudeau for having earned his way to the top.

A special note of thanks to our remarkably talented writers and to the *Policy* production team for pulling most of this special issue together in only a week. Our peerless Associate Editor, Lisa Van Dusen, handles take-out length articles at wire service speed. And our graphic designer, Monica Thomas, has created another beautiful-looking edition, the largest in our three-year history. As it happens, the cover subject in this issue is the same as in our inaugural issue at the time of his election to the Liberal leadership in early 2013. Since then, *Policy* has become a must-read for Canada's political and public policy community. Thanks as well to Trudeau's photographer, Adam Scotti, for providing many of the action shots in this issue, as well as the cover image.

In our *Canada and the World* section, Jeremy Kinsman considers the existential moment in the European Union over the refugee crisis, which has seen millions of displaced and dispossessed persons migrate to Europe from the Middle East and Africa. Finally, two Canadian CEOs offer their thoughts on business issues connected to public policy. Sergio Marchi of the Canadian Electricity Association writes of the imperative of renewing the grid, an investment estimated at \$350 billion to 2030. And Claude Mongeau of CN reflects on a corporate journey from Crown Corporation to profitable private railway, and considers some of the challenges that lie ahead for a regulated industry. **P**

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Senior Adviser Gerald Butts and Campaign Co-Chair Katie Telford aboard the campaign plane with Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau. Both played a major role in Trudeau's winning campaign. Adam Scotti photo

# How the Liberals Did It: Building a Surprise Majority

Susan Delacourt

*A frequent refrain after upset electoral victories is that the winner was “underestimated”. In Justin Trudeau’s case, the word hangs like a banner over his famously well-coiffed and, apparently, politically ingenious head. Veteran columnist and author Susan Delacourt explains how the team Trudeau led adeptly built a historic win on October 19 from the ground up, heedless of short-term distractions and undeniably aided by the low expectations of their opponents.*

The heavy wooden front doors of the Langevin Building, shut down for construction throughout Canada’s 42nd election, were finally reopened on October 20, the day after Canadians voted for a massive change in government.

The next day, Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau breezed through those doors on his way to have a chat with Stephen Harper, the man he was replacing as prime minister.

Their conversation was reportedly cordial and helpful. This, however, was a departure for Harper and many others, who have spent the past few years failing to see Trudeau on the doorstep of power. Trudeau may well have taken Harper's job because he was so often underestimated—and no one can say they weren't warned.

"I was an opponent of his dad who was a tough, able guy. The apple, I'm sure, doesn't fall too far from the tree. There's a lot of steel in this," former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney said in an interview with CTV's *Power Play* in the fall of 2012, before Trudeau had even become Liberal leader.

"People should not underestimate him in any way. I think they'll turn out to be disappointed if they do. He's got a lot of the requirements for leadership and who knows if it catches on? If he can do it, it will be a big success story."

We are all familiar by now with the metaphor of the boxing match between Trudeau and Patrick Brazeau in 2012, and how the "lightweight" Liberal was underestimated as a serious fighter. What's remarkable is the way in which the metaphor sunk into the Canadian political class, but never the lessons of it.

New Prime Minister Justin Trudeau didn't sneak through the back door to power. There were many warnings that he had big plans for himself and his party, which all fell into place quite nicely for them on October 19, with a solid, Liberal-red majority governing Canada for the next four years. Now, in the immediate aftermath of the victory, it's worth looking back to see where his opponents might have seen this coming, if they had been watching for the right things.

**D**uring his leadership campaign in late 2012 and early 2013, Trudeau's team was criticized for its "no-policy policy." Trudeau, however, made no apolo-

**“ Political process stories are not big-headline makers. But Trudeau and his team were serious about rebuilding the organization from the ground up, from the moment he entered the leadership campaign. ”**

gies for putting organization over policy pronouncements. "My emphasis right now...is on organization," Trudeau told a crowd at Western University in February 2013. "It is on building the capacity to be relevant in every single riding across the country, folding people back, not just into the Liberal party, but actually into the political process."

**“ Katie Telford, the extremely capable person who served as Trudeau's campaign co-chair, talks often about her fondness for numbers. She insists that staff show up for meetings with a number—preferably a number that shows progress for the Liberals, whether it's the amount of doors knocked or volunteers recruited. ”**

Political process stories are not big-headline makers. But Trudeau and his team were serious about rebuilding the organization from the ground up, from the moment he entered the leadership campaign. While the leader plunged into the crowds who came out to see him, his people were collecting names and contact information to feed into the Liberal database. Largely under the oversight of Trudeau's old friend, Tom Pitfield, the Liberals got very serious about digital organization and the science of building a modern campaign. As the crowds

around Trudeau grew, so too did the database—a perfect marriage between celebrity and cold, hard calculation.

Katie Telford, the extremely capable person who served as Trudeau's campaign co-chair, talks often about her fondness for numbers. She insists that staff show up for meetings with a number—preferably a number that shows progress for the Liberals, whether it's the amount of doors knocked or volunteers recruited.

All of this was the detail work that Liberals were talking about in their famous "hope and hard work" slogan. But it was more than a platitude. Back in the summer, when it looked like the party was tumbling in the opinion polls, Telford and Trudeau's chief adviser, Gerald Butts, remained confident that the New Democrats' high poll numbers were merely up in the air, and not matched with the strength the Liberals had built on the ground. In September, Telford and Butts were quietly assuring people that in the party's close tracking of 200-plus ridings, "the underlying numbers are moving in the right direction."

By then, they were boasting that Liberals had knocked on five million doors—real, on-the-ground contact. Rather than panic, they stayed serene. It turns out Telford and Butts were correct; once again, and it was a mistake to underestimate all the organizational spade work that Liberals had done on the ground.

**L**iberals were also called delusional, repeatedly, in their aspirations for a majority. No party had ever pulled off a come-

back from third to first. Yet the Trudeau team had their eyes on that prize for more than a year before the Oct. 19 vote.

At a summer caucus meeting in Edmonton in 2014, people laughed when Trudeau and his advisers produced a strategy called the “path through 170”—a detailed plan to build a majority victory in all regions of the country, including Alberta. Critics scoffed that the Liberals would have trouble winning any seats west of the Ontario-Manitoba border. When the results were finally in on Oct. 19, 2015, Liberals held 30 seats in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Yukon.

As for a big bulk of those 154 seats east of Manitoba, Conservatives were also sure that Trudeau was making a big strategic mistake by relying on so much help from Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne. Not only was Trudeau borrowing some of her staff for the campaign, but he was also following the blueprint that delivered her surprise victory in 2014—campaigning to the left of the New Democrats.

It was no accident that David Herle, architect of that Wynne victory, was also a key adviser in Trudeau’s camp. And sure enough, much of the narrative of the federal campaign was an echo of the story in Ontario—the Conservatives pushed to the hard right, NDP to the mushy, confusing middle. Harper’s decision to campaign with the Ford brothers in the final week, and Thomas Mulcair’s over-cautious avoidance of deficits in his platform put the Liberals’ rivals exactly where the Trudeau team wanted them.

It’s worth a look at this quote from Herle in a 2014 post-election analysis of Wynne’s campaign victory: “You can design a strategy... but you can never really hope your opponents will play their parts as well as they did,” Herle told *The Globe and Mail*. “We spent a lot of time thinking about how to suck these people into

this trap. We didn’t expect them to walk into it.”

The same could well be said in the aftermath of the 2015 victory for the Trudeau Liberals. Had the Conservatives or New Democrats looked more closely at the lessons from Ontario, they might have seen how it made sense for Trudeau and Wynne to appear as allies in the election. Wynne, like Trudeau, was underestimated too. And the repeat of the Ontario strategy worked again.

**“ Had the Conservatives or New Democrats looked more closely at the lessons from Ontario, they might have seen how it made sense for Trudeau and Wynne to appear as allies in the election. Wynne, like Trudeau, was underestimated too. And the repeat of the Ontario strategy worked again. ”**

**A**ny examination of the Liberal election victory has to take notice of the advertising war. Many smart people were predicting that Trudeau would be done in by the Conservatives’ “Just Not Ready” ads, especially as the campaign began and the phrase began emerging robotically from voters’ lips. Once again, it looked like another Liberal leader had been felled by the Conservatives’ advertising colossus.

But a funny thing happened along the election trail. First, the Liberals took the risk of repeating the allegation in a rebuttal ad, featuring Trudeau saying, “I’m ready.” The extra-long election campaign not only gave Trudeau a chance to learn and improve his game, notably on the TV debates; it also made voters more

weary of the negative ads.

By the time the end of the election loomed in mid-October, Trudeau and his team staged a massive rally in Brampton, with more than 7,000 people crowded into a stadium, to hear a powerful “better is always possible” speech from the Liberal leader.

That was the moment in which the Liberals truly captured that precious electoral commodity of momentum, with vivid visuals. Clips from the rally were quickly turned into an ad, which had the feel of the famous Molson “I Am Canadian” ad of the 1990s, or, going farther back, Ronald Reagan’s “Morning in America” ad. Liberals had nailed the hard-work part of their slogan by this point in the campaign—this was the picture of hope.

Still, despite the scent of victory around the Liberals on Election Day, pre-vote polls were being cautious. A majority seemed a slight possibility—which quickly turned into a definite probability as the polls closed and early results started to pour in from Quebec, Ontario and the Prairies.

In the end, it was probably fitting that the majority took so many people by surprise the night of October 19. Trudeau had been underestimated—again. And as Mulroneo long-ago predicted, it was a “big success story.” **P**

*Susan Delacourt, author of the bestselling Shopping For Votes, writes a column for the Toronto Star and iPolitics. She also teaches a graduate course in journalism at Carleton University. [sdelacourt@bell.net](mailto:sdelacourt@bell.net)*

# Ballot Question 2015: Change Trumps Stability

Geoff Norquay

*One of the many political clichés that's a cliché for a reason is that campaigns matter. What we learned from the 2015 federal election campaign is that—ironically for the man who called it—long campaigns matter even more. This one was so revelatory of all the principals that, by Election Day, a result that was stunning on paper also had a sense of preordainment based entirely on what had unfolded in the previous 11 weeks. Longtime Tory strategist Geoff Norquay bestows praise and lays blame on the professionals responsible.*

Creating the ballot question is the most important task of the party leader in a national election. The ballot question is each party leader's key differentiator from the others—the strategic phrase that summarizes the “big issue” of the election and frames the choice to be made by voters.

With a steady 70 per cent of Canadians wanting a different government, the ballot question in election 2015 was always going to be about change. The Conservatives had a defensive take on the question; essentially, “Stick with the experienced hand you can trust on the economy and national security, warts and all, because the alternatives are unproven, scary and expensive.” Quite a mouthful! The Liberals and the NDP took a much simpler approach: “Time for a change; I can do it—pick me.”

For the two opposition parties, of course, they were engaged in a zero-sum game—victory required each to best the other to become the agent of change. This proved to be the decisive dynamic of the campaign.

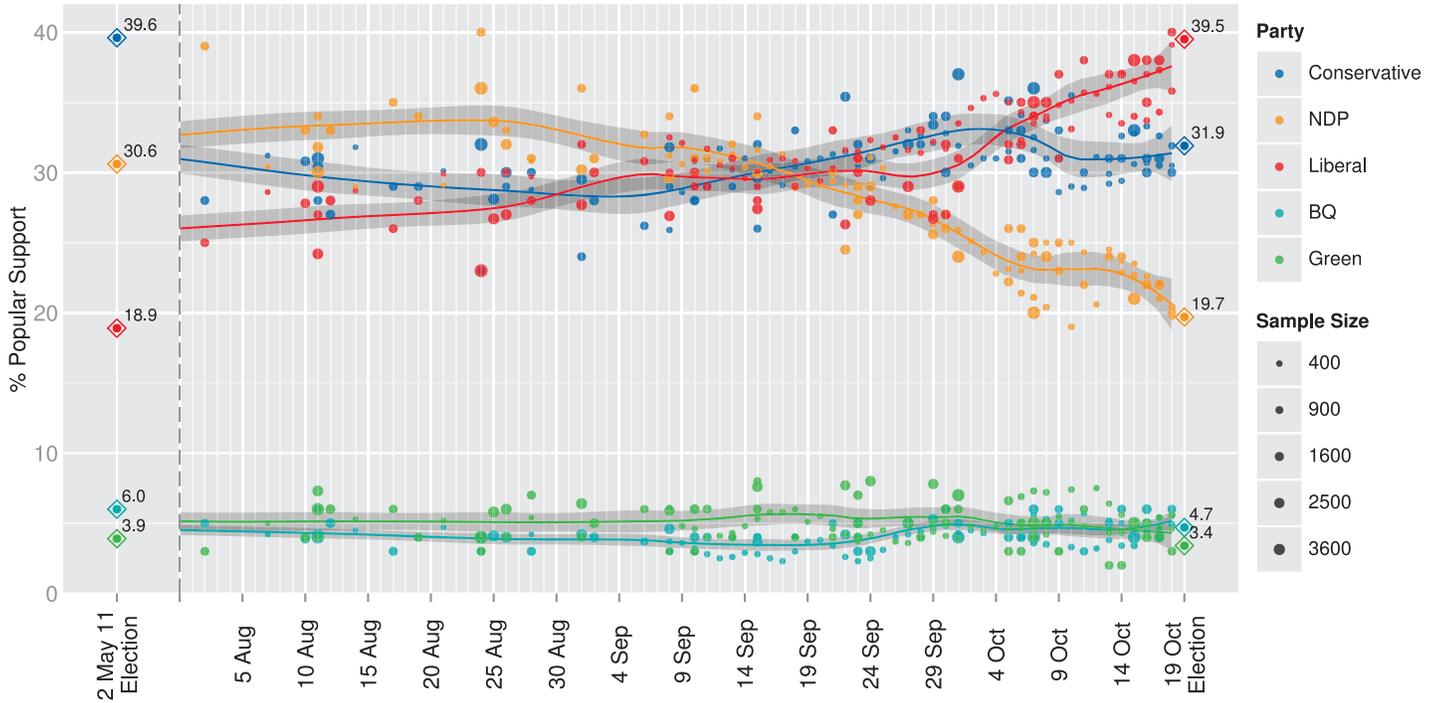
“For the two opposition parties, of course, they were engaged in a zero-sum game—victory required each to best the other to become the agent of change. This proved to be the decisive dynamic of the campaign.”

The arc of election 2015 is easy enough to describe. In the first phase, from the start of the campaign to the Labour Day weekend, Tom Mulcair and the NDP looked like a good bet to win. In the second month, the three parties were in a dead heat within two to three percentage points of each other and the “lead” changing every other day. And then in the final three weeks, Justin Trudeau and the Liberals claimed the mantle of change and first slowly, then very quickly, pulled away with a smashing and impressive victory.

As the one party that had never formed a national government, the NDP decided they needed to lower the risk voters faced in choosing them, so they joined the Conservatives in making balanced budgets the touchstone of their economic plan and a key part of their ballot question. This positioning created a “progressive vacuum” among voters who believed in an activist role for government. It opened the door for the Liberals to jump over the NDP and move to the left, to abandon the economic orthodoxy of balanced budgets in favour of stimulative deficits to kick-start the economy.

“When the NDP began talking about the need for balanced budgets, they removed a key differentiator in relation to the Liberals, and when they piled costly promise on costly promise, the internal logic of their platform began to unravel. The NDP's campaign was joyless, devoid of hope and inspiration, and as absent of vision as the Conservatives'.”

The initial positioning of the NDP sought to soften the image of its leader, and it proved to be a difficult start to the campaign. In both their TV ads and in his initial August debate performance, it was



Galnewinhaw Wikipedia Image

clear that his handlers had told Mulcair to keep “Angry Tom” in check and to smile more. Unfortunately, his campaign launch was stiff and uninspiring, and unlike even Stephen Harper’s launch, he declined to take questions while Trudeau took them until they stopped coming.

The problem was that Mulcair’s makeover misplaced both his passion and conviction. His smile looked far from natural, some thought “Happy Tom” was even “creepy.” When the NDP began talking about the need for balanced budgets, they removed a key differentiator in relation to the Liberals, and when they piled costly promise on costly promise, the internal logic of their platform began to unravel. The NDP’s campaign was joyless, devoid of hope and inspiration, and as absent of vision as the Conservatives’.

Clearly the emergence of the niqab as a campaign issue was the most decisive and damaging development for the NDP, and, for them, created a perfect storm. As the Conservatives ramped up the rhetoric, Mulcair responded with a principled and mod-

erate position that was clearly offside with the vast majority of Quebecers, not to mention a significant portion of Canadians elsewhere.

**“ The damage to the NDP’s Quebec base simply wasn’t going to make it, and the momentum shifted to Trudeau as the obvious champion of change. Then the echo effect took over, and Ontario’s growing Liberal intentions in turn reinforced the NDP collapse in Quebec. ”**

As a result, the party’s support in its Quebec stronghold quickly began to shatter, opening the door to seat gains there by the Liberals, Conservatives and the Bloc. At the same time, the damage to the NDP’s Quebec base told Ontarians that Mulcair

simply wasn’t going to make it, and the momentum shifted to Trudeau as the obvious champion of change. Then the echo effect took over, and Ontario’s growing Liberal intentions in turn reinforced the NDP collapse in Quebec.

**F**or Stephen Harper and the Conservatives, election 2015 was always going to be a big challenge. Any three-term prime minister seeking a fourth mandate is asking for a lot; no PM since Wilfrid Laurier in 1908 had pulled off that feat. When that government is led by a prime minister with a persona that is polarizing, partisan and seen by many as just plain mean, the odds become very difficult indeed.

The roots of the Conservative demise were put in place long before the dropping of the writ. The war with the national media, the constant playing to the Conservative “base,” the abolition of the long-form census, the removal of health care benefits from failed refugee claimants, the denigration of caucus by the “kids in short pants,” the insults to the chief justice of the Supreme

Court, the Duffy fiasco, the muzzling and bullying of federal scientists, the unrestrained partisanship, the Robo-calls, and a remote and surly prime minister who refused on principle to communicate with the public except on his own terms—to name just a few—had all combined to reduce the possible Conservative vote to well under 40 per cent.

Despite all that, the Conservatives did actually begin the campaign with a shot at victory. It was by no means clear that Trudeau would perform as well as he ultimately did. As the campaign started, the Conservatives as well as many in the media expected that the Liberal leader might damage himself by off-hand comments or gaffes—as had happened so many times before.

**“ Harper had always had a strange aversion to speaking in visionary terms about anything, so his platform was static, defensive and uninspiring. Harper was focusing on the achievable, while Trudeau was focusing on the possible. ”**

The Conservatives might also have scored better with a more visionary approach on several fronts. The economic and foreign trade successes of the last nine years were significant, but where was the bridge to the future? The PM could have invoked the need for a well-trained labour force for success in the global knowledge economy, the importance and value of immigration to the diversity of our citizenship and the promise of innovation to lead to future competitiveness and prosperity. But this was not to be; Harper had always had a strange aversion to speaking in visionary terms about anything, so his

platform was static, defensive and uninspiring. Harper was focusing on the achievable, while Trudeau was focusing on the possible.

With their room for growth so limited, the Conservatives really had only one faint hope of keeping government—that neither of the two opposition parties would run away with the change vote, and that the resulting stalemate would enable the Tories to sneak up the middle and eke out a victory on the riding-by-riding splits. But then, they completely departed from their ballot question and blew themselves up.

**W**hen they deployed the niqab wedge, the Conservatives' strategic objective was limited—to knock the two opposition parties back by about 5 per cent. But in response to the wedge, the NDP began to slide in Quebec, and then kept sliding, and the Conservatives suddenly realized to their horror that they had been far too successful. And when they doubled down by announcing the Barbaric Cultural Practices snitch line, and began musing about banning the niqab in the federal public service, (yet another cure for which there was no known disease) the Conservatives' wedge circled back with a vengeance to put the final nail in their coffin.

The final few days of the campaign were painful to watch: a prime minister who had run a one-man campaign with no evidence of a team, plaintively pleading that the election was “not about me,” when just about every Canadian voter had long since decided that's **exactly** what it was about. And the final weekend's Doug and Rob Ford rally in Toronto—demeaning, desperate, execrable, and hugely damaging, driving several hundred thousand potential votes away. Well done, campaign team: *coup de grace*...on yourselves.

When election campaigns fail, it is usually because the team in charge—in this case, the campaign manager

and her key acolytes—have gone back one time too many to the formula that brought them to success many years before. Sadly for the Conservatives, the same clique who reduced the party's potential support to just above a third of Canadians were the true architects of this defeat.

**“ When they doubled down by announcing the Barbaric Cultural Practices snitch line, and began musing about banning the niqab in the federal public service, (yet another cure for which there was no known disease) the Conservatives' wedge circled back with a vengeance to put the final nail in their coffin. ”**

Theirs was a suspicious Canada and a Canada without dreams; they always preferred short-term tactics over a long-term vision. They never understood governing, so they saw no use for government. They ran a closed circle, they humiliated staff, they berated candidates, they pushed every reasonable argument far beyond its logical limit, they shut out others with a different view, and they crafted a campaign based much more on anger and fear than hope. And they weren't even competent enough to prevent guys peeing in cups from becoming candidates.

Within the Conservative Party, great will be the celebration at their well-deserved and permanent riddance.

In May of 2015, Justin Trudeau's Liberals were in third place in the national polls and his party was becoming restive. Other than the legalization of marijuana, they had for the most part kept the entire platform under wraps. But growing concerns about the lack

of policy proposals on the record finally pushed the Liberal brain-trust into beginning to lift the veil.

Trudeau promised to create a new and higher tax bracket for those earning more than \$200,000 per year, committed to an alternate structure for child benefit payments, promised to close a number of tax loopholes, and released his policy packages on open government and the environment.

As a result, the concerns about policy receded, and the rest of the platform was comprehensive and well-received. Stealing a page from the Conservatives' 2006 election playbook, the Liberals used it to define both themselves and their leader substantively, and to put to rest any doubts about their readiness to govern.

**A**s the election began in early August, there was huge pressure on Trudeau to perform, and even among his supporters there were serious doubts that he could or would. The highly-effective Conservative attack ad—the famous job interview (“Nice hair, though”)—was beginning to register with Canadians. With expectations for Trudeau shaky at best, the first leaders’ debate on August 6 loomed as a big test.

Prior to the debate, Conservative spokesperson Kory Teneycke tastefully observed, “I think that if he comes on stage with his pants on, he will probably exceed expectations.” Well, the pants were not only firmly on, but in that debate, Trudeau also showed for the first time he had come to play with the big boys.

When Tom Mulcair repeatedly pressed him to declare his winning number for a Quebec referendum, Trudeau answered with confidence, “I’ll give you a number. Nine. My number is nine. Nine Supreme Court justices said one vote is not enough to break up this country.” In an important sense, that simple, smart retort was the author of much that followed. Trudeau didn’t necessarily win the debate, but he started clos-

“*In the final analysis, the “royal jelly” of the campaign was provided by Trudeau himself. Despite the odd gaffe—his strange comments on small business owners being in business to scam the system—he proved himself to be a natural and highly effective retail politician over the 78 days of the campaign. He grew in stature as a leader and as a communicator who obviously loved what he was doing.*”

ing the expectations gap, and built on that strong beginning throughout the campaign.

As noted earlier, Trudeau’s repositioning of the Liberals in favour of deficits dedicated to spending on infrastructure and helping the middle class was pivotal in outflanking both the NDP and the Conservatives. A generation before, Paul Martin had bludgeoned Canadians into accepting that unrestrained deficits and debt were toxic to their future.

Now, Trudeau gambled that many voters had tired of austerity and micro-targeted tax breaks for favoured groups—and they were ready for the federal government to take on big nation-building projects for the benefit of all Canadians.

The attractiveness of this position to voters was not immediately appreciated; many observers thought it was at best a high-risk gambit, at worst, foolhardy in the extreme, but with the NDP now hugging Harper’s balanced budget mantra, it became a critical point of demarcation—and departure—for the Liberals. It also became the Liberals’ defining “take” on the position.

The Liberals got one other very important thing right. Beginning under interim leader Bob Rae, and continuing under campaign co-chair Katie Telford, they shook off the cobwebs and dragged their party apparatus and campaign infrastructure into the 21st century. They developed and matched the data analytics and volunteer mobilization programs the other two parties had long since

pioneered. Their new media/online presence in the 2015 campaign was state-of-the-art.

In the final analysis, the “royal jelly” of the campaign was provided by Trudeau himself. Despite the odd gaffe—his strange comments on small business owners being in business to scam the system—he proved himself to be a natural and highly effective retail politician over the 78 days of the campaign. He grew in stature as a leader and as a communicator who obviously loved what he was doing. Clearly at ease with both individuals and large crowds, he fed off their energy and got even better, contrasting much better against the “two old stodgy guys” leading the other two parties. Most importantly, Trudeau decisively bested Mulcair on the strategic voting for change question and he won the election over Harper by convincing Canadians that they indeed wanted to try “sunny ways” for a change.

In the final analysis, the Liberal victory was all about having a flawless plan, both the time and the leader to implement it, and presenting the right answer to the ballot question. Change trumped stability. The special alchemy of a youthful and vigorous leader came together with a substantive and winning narrative to put another Trudeau in 24 Sussex. **P**

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Adam Scotti photo

# From Orange Crush to Orange Crash: The Front-Runner Campaign That Wasn't

L. Ian MacDonald

*As many of our readers know, the only thing more painful in politics than losing an election is losing an election that started out as yours to lose. When the federal election was called in August, NDP Leader Tom Mulcair was leading in the polls and seemed to be occupying the electoral sweet spot between disenchantment with Conservative Leader Stephen Harper and doubts about Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau's inexperience. Then, the campaign happened.*

**O**n the Sunday after the election call, and three days after the first leaders' debate, NDP senior campaign adviser Brad Lavigne met a friend for brunch at the Café Métropolitain, a favoured hangout of Ottawa's political set.

Sitting in a corner booth by the bar, he stirred his coffee and considered the NDP's front-running status in the polls, which then had the party in the low 30s. The NDP's internal numbers showed the same thing.

“We’ve never been here before,” he said.

Which kind of turned out to be the problem.

Not only had the NDP never been there before, they hadn’t expected to be in first place at the outset of the campaign. Nor, as it turned out, did they have a narrative for a 78-day marathon rather than a normal 37-day campaign.

From a nadir of 20 per cent in the polls last fall, the NDP had hoped to grow to the high 20s by the beginning of summer.

Their fortunes began to take a turn for the better over the winter after Tom Mulcair shook up the Office of the Leader of the Opposition, bringing in Alain Gaul, who had been with him in the environment minister’s office in Quebec City, to be chief of staff in the OLO. In no time, what had been a dysfunctional OLO became one where decisions were made and things got done.

Mulcair then reached out to two key members of Jack Layton’s political entourage to run the NDP campaign. Layton’s former chief of staff, Anne McGrath, was brought back as campaign director. And Lavigne, who had been Layton’s principal secretary at OLO and previously campaign director in the 2011 Orange Wave election, left his consulting gig at H&K Strategies to become senior adviser in the campaign. Mulcair’s announcement of his return, at a Wednesday morning caucus in January, prompted a spontaneous ovation.

By the time of the Broadbent Institute’s annual Progress Summit at the end of March, the NDP was on the move. Over drinks at the bar of Ottawa’s Delta Centre Hotel, Lavigne and McGrath were very forthcoming about the priorities for the coming campaign.

“The first objective,” Lavigne said, “is to hold on to what we’ve got.”

In other words, to finish no worse

**“By the beginning of May, the NDP had already grown to the high 20s, with the Liberals having plunged from first to third place since last October. The Liberals’ sharp decline in the polls could be measured from the moment of Justin Trudeau’s memorable gaffe that Stephen Harper wanted to “whip out our CF-18s” and show everyone how big they are.”**

than second in the election, and to hold on to both the OLO and Stornoway. In an expected minority House, this would leave Mulcair and the NDP in the driver’s seat in any talks with the Liberals about a working arrangement to defeat a Conservative plurality.

By the beginning of May, the NDP had already grown to the high 20s, with the Liberals having plunged from first to third place since last October. The Liberals’ sharp decline in the polls could be measured from the moment of Justin Trudeau’s memorable gaffe that Stephen Harper wanted to “whip out our CF-18s” and show everyone how big they are.

**I**t was a smart-ass remark about a serious issue—the mission against ISIS in Iraq, later expanded to Syria. The Liberals waffled on both, saying they supported the troops but opposed the mission. In the first parliamentary debate—on the six-month deployment of CF-18s and the presence of 60 elite Joint Task Force “trainers” of Kurdish insurgents in northern Iraq—Trudeau failed to speak in the House. By the time of the second House debate, on expanding the Kuwait-based air mission to Syria and extending it by a year, the Liberals were jammed between Conservative support and NDP opposition.

Then, in the wake of the shooting of two soldiers on Canadian soil last October 20 and 22, the Liberals voted in favour of the Conservative security legislation, Bill C-51, to the great annoyance of progressive voters, who migrated to the NDP. It was

one of Mulcair’s finest moments as NDP leader.

**A**nd then came the Notley effect. After the surprise election of Rachel Notley and the NDP in Alberta on May 6, the federal NDP had a five-point bump in the polls. The conversation went like this: if the NDP can win in Alberta, they can win anywhere, even Ottawa.

But this proved to be an illusion. Within weeks of the writ on August 2, the Notley effect dissipated and then disappeared, leaving the NDP back in the high 20s, where they had started.

**“From the beginning, the NDP ran a front-runner campaign, when they were never really in front. The NDP’s strategy of caution was apparent from Day One. Mulcair made his opening statement at the Museum of History in Gatineau, with Parliament Hill as a gorgeous backdrop. Then he walked away from the podium without taking any questions.”**

From the beginning, the NDP ran a front-runner campaign, when they were never really in front. The NDP’s strategy of caution was apparent from Day One. Mulcair made his opening



NDP Leader Tom Mulcair never really found his voice or created a comfort level with voters, who knew Angry Tom, but found Happy Tom inauthentic. NDP Facebook photo.

statement at the Museum of History in Gatineau, with Parliament Hill as a gorgeous backdrop. Then he walked away from the podium without taking any questions, and he looked uncomfortable in doing so. The decision to take no questions was simply an attempt to control the message by staying on it. While Mulcair took no questions, even Stephen Harper was taking five of them in front of Rideau Hall. Later, in Vancouver, Trudeau took as many questions as reporters wanted to ask. Mulcair then took the next day off.

And in the first leaders' debate hosted by *Maclean's*, Angry Tom was replaced by Happy Tom, a weird-looking guy with a smile pasted on his face, even as he was pointing an accusatory finger at his opponents. He looked inauthentic. Even as Trudeau was finding his feet in the first debate as well as four subsequent ones, Mulcair never found his voice.

And then Mulcair pledged to present balanced budgets, while Trudeau outflanked him on the left by promising three years of deficits, including \$10 billion in each of the first two years of a Liberal government, before returning to balance in 2019.

This was Mulcair's decision to present himself as a fiscal moderate. Or as one adviser put it privately at the time: "We're the NDP, we have to balance the budget."

He was referring to bad memories of NDP deficits in Ontario under Bob Rae, in British Columbia under Mike Harcourt, and even the \$6 billion structural deficit Notley inherited from the ousted Progressive Conservatives in Alberta.

**T**hen came the niqab debate.

After the Federal Court of Appeal ruled that a Muslim woman could wear a niqab during a citizenship ceremony, the Conservatives immediately said they would appeal, and overnight the identity issue hijacked the campaign in Quebec.

For Mulcair, the niqab was a disaster in Quebec, while Trudeau turned it to his advantage in the rest of Canada.

In Montreal on September 23, Mulcair delivered a carefully calibrated speech in which he noted that a veiled woman must reveal herself in private to citizenship officials, and is

thus entitled to wear the niqab at a citizenship ceremony.

The NDP numbers then tanked in Quebec outside Montreal. The niqab issue figured prominently in the two French-language leadership debates on September 24 on Radio-Canada and October 2 on TVA.

The NDP had gone into the campaign in first place, polling in the low 30s, with the Liberals mired in third place in the mid-20s. The story of how they traded places is one for the history books.

**F**irst of all, the 78-day campaign played to Trudeau's acknowledged strength—his retail game. He was very good in crowds, endlessly posing for selfies that ended up on Facebook and Twitter. The buzz wasn't just in the room, it was also on social media. It wasn't just his stamina that carried through the marathon campaign; by the end of it, he came to personify generational change.

For the Liberals, Trudeau's deficit position was the differentiator from the NDP on change. In the process, he outflanked the NDP on the left, while Mulcair was positioning a socialist party to the right on the fiscal framework. This was right out of the Kathleen Wynne playbook from the 2014 Ontario election, and it was no accident—the campaign was run by the same people.

Trudeau also inoculated himself on the deficit question simply by saying he would run one. Progressive voters—who had left the Liberals for the NDP over issues such as Trudeau's support of the Conservative security legislation, Bill C-51—returned to the Liberal fold. The size didn't matter. A deficit is a deficit. Period.

For his part, Stephen Harper overplayed his hand on the niqab, especially in English-speaking Canada, where voters recoiled at his musing about banning the niqab in the public service. The Conservative overkill included an announcement by two ministers, Chris Alexander and Kel-

lie Leitch, of a snitch line to report “barbaric cultural practices.” It was the precise moment when Red Tories gave up on this Conservative Party and crossed to the Liberals.

Coming in the 10th and penultimate week of the campaign, it seemed like a kind of tipping point against the Conservatives. By then, a campaign that had been to be about the economy, had been transformed into one about values. The economy was the Conservatives’ signature issue, and the announcement of the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade agreement on October 5 should have played to their strength. But while it was Harper’s best and most prime ministerial moment of the campaign, on what the first George Bush famously called “the vision thing”, it proved to be a one-day story rather than a game changer.

**T**hen came the four-day advance poll over Thanksgiving. Some 3.6 million Cana-

dians voted over the long weekend, many of them as couples and families, having talked turkey around the family dinner table. The advance poll turned out to be nearly 20 per cent of the vote. The final turnout of 17.5 million was 68.4 per cent of eligible voters, up from 61 per cent in 2011 and 58 per cent in 2008. It was the highest turnout since 1993.

And it was Quebec, unexpectedly, that joined Ontario to hand Trudeau his surprise majority. No one saw that coming.

In two years, he has taken the Liberals from third place to government, a remarkable achievement.

Polling in the mid-20s in Quebec as late as the final weekend, the Liberals won 35 per cent of the vote and 40 seats on election day, where most seat projections gave them no more than 20 seats. The NDP meanwhile, was reduced to 25 per cent in Quebec

and only 16 seats. The Conservatives won only 17 per cent, but it was an efficient vote, delivering 12 seats in the 418 Quebec City region, while the Bloc Québécois won 19 per cent and 10 seats.

Call it the mirror effect. Quebecers looked across the Ottawa River, saw what was happening in Ontario, and joined them in electing a Liberal majority.

With 184 seats in the new 338-seat House, Trudeau didn’t just win government, he made history. **P**

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# Stuff Happens: From Duffy to the Refugee Crisis, from the Niqab to the Snitch Line

David McLaughlin

*Even the most jaded political observer couldn't argue that this campaign wasn't about something. Yes, it was about change, but events that unfolded during the campaign served to reinforce why it was about change. Breaking news that had nothing to do with the government's ballot question began to lead the daily agenda from the Mike Duffy trial onward, and none of it reflected well on Stephen Harper.*

The 2015 election campaign will be noted not just for its result—an historic Liberal party turnaround—but its length. The longest campaign since the 19th century was pretzel-like in its twists and turns. From first to third went the NDP, from third to first went the Liberals, while the Conservatives found themselves first, second, or third at various times in the 78-day writ period.

For parties, election campaigns are battles not just for ballots in the voting box; they are battles for the ballot question itself. The party that sets the ballot question—what most voters are voting on—wins. Any election is a challenge to do so, but 2015 posed particular challenges due to its very length and unpredictability. Framing and retaining the ballot question became significantly more difficult as a host of other issues emerged and dominated the campaign coverage.

Did these issues move votes or did they just make noise?

The ballot question framing was visibly on offer on August 2nd, the day the election was called. Prime Minis-

ter Stephen Harper said the election was about “staying the course” with “proven leadership” on the economy and security. NDP Leader Tom Mulcair presented a “safe change” mantra of more spending with fiscal discipline. Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau mounted his “real change” charge, targeting the middle class, running not just against the Conservatives but the NDP.

The strategic assumptions behind each pitch were obvious and sensible. Mr. Harper, running second, had to keep change from dominating the election discourse, so he would run on his record. Mulcair, running first, sought to consolidate his front-runner position by presenting a safe, un-edgy personality and platform to ward off charges that he and his party were risky or reckless. Trudeau, in third, had to supplant the NDP as the agent of change if his party were to position themselves successfully as the best or only alternative to the Harper Conservatives.

Strategy set, messaging ready, the three leaders and parties made ready to convince Canadians. What could go wrong?

“Events, dear boy, events,” former British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan famously said on what he feared most in politics. His spirit must have haunted this Canadian election. Three outside events—the Duffy trial, the Syrian refugee crisis, and the Niqab debate—came to dominate media coverage of the campaign. They threw off-stride two campaigns—the Conservatives and the NDP—and accrued advantage to only one—the Liberals.

**“ Three outside events—the Duffy trial, the Syrian refugee crisis, and the Niqab debate—came to dominate media coverage of the campaign. They threw off-stride two campaigns—the Conservatives and the NDP—and accrued advantage to only one—the Liberals. ”**

The timing could not have been worse, to have an election in the midst of the political corruption trial of suspended Conservative Senator Mike Duffy. Actually, it must have been seen as worse to have the election after the mid-August trial dates since a shorter election call would have put the trial before the writ, not after. Instead, Harper found himself in the midst of two weeks of front-page stories headlined by testimony of his former chief of staff, Nigel Wright and former legal advisor, Benjamin Perrin.

Despite some exculpatory testimony from Wright that the prime minister never actually said the words “good to go” on providing a \$90,000 payment to keep Duffy whole on Senate residency expenses he improperly claimed, the legal trial rapidly became a political trial for the Conservatives. Each day, Harper was forced to answer media questions on the latest testimony, questions he could have avoided if not on the campaign trail. With no evidence of direct involvement in the matter, Harper dodged that bullet but soon took a ricochet from new testimony entangling his current chief of staff, Ray Novak, who was stated to have been aware of Wright’s personal cheque to Duffy. This was in direct contradiction to Harper’s contention that no one else in his office knew or was involved in the affair. Novak soon disappeared from the leader’s tour and was sent back to campaign headquarters.

“ Each day, Harper was forced to answer media questions on the latest testimony, questions he could have avoided if not on the campaign trail. ”

This was a gift to the opposition. It put the party’s ethics and Harper’s governing style back on top of voters’ minds for a time. Although it was summer and a long ways away from voting day, it made a negative impression on Canadians. He may have avoided legal jeopardy with Wright’s testimony, but Harper was now enmeshed in some political jeopardy.

If a picture is worth a thousand words, the image of a drowned Syrian toddler in the Mediterranean surf spawned millions. It also sparked a vigorous debate amongst Canadians between heart and head. Should we open our doors immedi-

ately to more Syrian refugees fleeing war and barbarity on humanitarian grounds or keep our measured intake process to both ensure security against terrorist infiltration while reminding others to do more on their part?

Canadians mostly wanted both done, at the same time. But two interviews—one by the immigration minister, Chris Alexander, seeking to blame the media for the crisis and Canada’s response and the other by an NDP MP who supposedly handled the Syrian family’s immigration file—galvanized a serious policy issue into an explosive political one.

Alexander’s hapless intervention fuelled the political crisis without adequately explaining either what the Conservative government had been doing or whether it planned to do more. Bad enough, but once a Canadian “connection” to the unfortunate family was identified via the NDP giving the mistaken impression that the government had turned away this same family (it had not), the Conservatives were pummelled as heartless.

It turned out that the government was not far off considered public opinion on its response. But its inability to articulate a “heart and head” message that conveyed compassion with comprehension of what was at stake, hobbled them once more. A Nanos Research tracking poll showed Conservative support dipping in the immediate aftermath of events before climbing back up as it solidified its messaging.

In an election about the economy, security, and change, how did values come to the fore? A court case and an inflammatory party ad made the difference.

The Harper government took a position in 2011 stating that a woman wearing a niqab face veil could not take the oath of citizenship. She must show her face first. Challenging that position under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms was Zunera Hishaq, winning in court in March, 2015. Her case then exploded on the election

scene when the federal Court of Appeal overturned the federal government mid-campaign.

At the same time, a volatile Bloc Québécois animated TV ad aimed at the NDP showed a blob of oil from a controversial pipeline morphing into a niqab-wearing woman. Quebec commentators and the country as a whole went into a frenzy.

Mulcair was caught in the squeeze. Defending the right of a woman to wear what she wanted, his party began to drop in support first in Quebec, then in the rest of the country. Losing votes in Quebec meant the NDP would drop in contention elsewhere. It was inevitable that it would then have to cede the mantle of change to the Liberals, which in time it did. By the third week of September, the NDP had trended into a close but clear third place according to Nanos Research. It never recovered. On or about September 24, it began its drop from about 30 to 20 per cent on Election Day.

For the Conservatives, the niqab controversy brought them back into contention in Quebec, improving their seat count from five to 12. But it created a backlash and alienation in other parts of the country that took them off their economic message. Two subsequent statements about banning the niqab in the public service and setting up a “barbaric practices tip line” made the Conservatives seem mean and Islamophobic.

Elections are unpredictable things. Stuff happens, as we saw in this one, especially over a 78-day campaign. **P**

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The Big Three: Stephen Harper, Justin Trudeau and Tom Mulcair at the debate on the economy in Calgary on September 17. Trudeau's position on running a stimulative deficit played well with "change voters." Adam Scotti Photo

## Lessons From the Big Armchair: Go Clean or Stay Home

Robin V. Sears

*The strategies and tactics of the 2015 federal election campaign will be sifted through for years to come by political professionals seeking to replicate the alchemy of Justin Trudeau's victory and avoid the unforced errors of his rivals' losses. Former NDP strategist and seasoned political observer Robin Sears dissects a campaign that was a disaster for his party but a victory for his country.*

“Short memories are all that keep most politicians” careers afloat, snorts a cynical Canadian political journalist. Sadly, those same short memories bedevil campaign teams who regularly repeat the same dumb strategies that failed the first time out, or they repeat their previous strategies a second time thinking they will payoff twice.

Perhaps short memories can also be blamed for the many times that cam-

paigners breach granite-hard principles of military and political strategy. Ones like: Never underestimate an opponent. And don't magnify the offence by bragging publicly about what an idiot you think he is. As both New Democrats and Conservatives learned to their cost, it allowed Justin Trudeau to vault from "unready lightweight" to prime minister.

New Democrats always fear being seen as incapable of "managing the peanut stand" in the eyes of skeptical centrist, fiscally cautious voters. So they, too, failed to understand that repeating Jack Layton's pledge of a balanced budget only gave permission to the Liberals to sound more progressive by promising to plunge Canada into deficit.

The nonsense propagated by the usually economically illiterate political pundit class that conflates debt and progressive politics is always irritating. But it is an almost universal shorthand that New Democrats should have had a better pushback for.

Tommy Douglas and Allan Blakeney would spin in their graves at the stupidity of promising to sell your government into servitude to the bond market to fund ongoing programs. Like fiscally responsible social democrats everywhere, they would argue, "Find the sustainable revenue to fund your ongoing programs or don't launch them..." Setting the GST back to pre-Harper levels would have funded everything that the Liberals have promised to borrow billions to fund.

Mackenzie King and Keith Davey were no doubt beaming from above as the Trudeau team rolled out this latest version of campaigning from the left and governing from the right so successfully. Shame on the Orange team for letting them set and spring the obvious trap.

**A**fter all, Liberal strategists David Herle and Gerry Butts had played the same game many times in Ontario campaigns past, including 2014. Economists may be horrified that a party could win successive majorities while dragging

**“Mackenzie King and Keith Davey were no doubt beaming from above as the Trudeau team rolled out this latest version of campaigning from the left and governing from the right so successfully. Shame on the Orange team for letting them set and spring the obvious trap.”**

Ontario down to Bob Rae levels of debt and deficit spending. Ontario is now the most indebted sub-national jurisdiction in the developed world: \$300 billion in debt, adding billions in new borrowing annually, and now sending \$1 billion a month in interest payments to their bondmasters—Ontario's third largest expenditure after health and education. New Democrats should have had a more devastating attack on such fiscal foolishness.

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Many Canadians will have concluded that there were two winners and two losers on October 19. Canada is perhaps the biggest winner, having chosen a strong majority progressive government with the support of a large plurality of Canadians. The revived Liberal Party is also clearly a big winner. The losers are obviously the Harper team and the NDP.

However, at this juncture it would seem the Conservatives loss is far more serious, and will likely have very long term reverberations. As *National Post* columnist Andrew Coyne eloquently put it:

“The post-mortems in the press are full of the inevitable anonymous finger pointing about divisions within the campaign team ... It isn't about that... The damage that has been done is far greater than this defeat. It isn't just the Conservatives who have lost favour with the public: it's conservatism.

“It has been so long since Conservatives put forward any bold or radical policy ideas...the public may be forgiven for concluding either that they don't exist, or that they are so far beyond the pale as not to be worth considering.

“Conservatives need to rediscover what it is they stand for... they need to sever themselves from the bullying, sneering culture of the Harperites...It should not be exclusively a liberal or left-wing idea that opponents are to be treated with respect, not insults; that learning and science are to be valued, not derided; that politics should bring people together rather than divide them...A politics of substantive differences, civilly expressed.

“If I'm not mistaken, that is the formula that just elected Justin Trudeau.”

**T**here are the many lessons to be learned from the attempt to introduce the politics of culture, religion and ethnicity into Canadian politics for the first time since

the 1950s. The Harper team had flirted with these toxic messages in 2011, making insinuations about the values that Canadians expected immigrants to share. But in this election, for reasons that they came to regret, they decided to double down, and to challenge both Tom Mulcair and Trudeau on the niqab issue.

**“ That politics should bring people together rather than divide them...A politics of substantive differences, civilly expressed. ”**

The gravity of this lapse in judgement is hard to exaggerate. It is a very long time since Canadians have been exposed to the politics of cultural or religious division. The Liberal Party campaigned against the CCF in BC using vicious anti-Chinese advertising in the 1930s. There was an occasional whiff of anti-Semitism in the Duplessis era in Quebec in the 1940s and 50s. But it is only in 2015 that an American Republican-style ‘southern strategy’—the Nixon era effort to whip up anti-black sentiment among working class white voters—has ever been attempted in modern politics in Canada.

Conservative spokesman Kory Teneycke vehemently denied any role was played in their campaign by the egregious Australian race politics practitioner, Lynton Crosby. Key Tory war room veterans, however, trained under Crosby in the 2007 and 2010 campaigns in Australia. They were insiders as Crosby’s client, Australian conservative Prime Minister John Howard, successfully used ‘refugee boat people’ as a campaign wedge. Some were also involved in Boris Johnson’s campaigns in London, which Crosby led, where “English values” was the dog-whistle used by the UK Conservative candidate for mayor.

So it is a moot point whether Crosby



The identity politics of the niqab hurt the NDP and helped the Conservatives in Quebec, but then the snitch line on “Barbaric Cultural Practices” proved a bridge too far for the Conservatives in the rest of Canada. Flickr photo.

was pulling levers in their war room in 2015. The Tory war machine is steeped in experience of the Crosby use of race, religion, and ethnicity as political attack weapons. Their use of the niqab bears all the hallmarks of the Crosby approach to the use of ethnicity as a political wedge.

Seeing the devastating impact that the niqab issue was having on especially the New Democrats in Quebec, Conservative ministers Chris Alexander and Kellie Leitch raised the temperature further by announcing the launch of the “Barbaric Cultural Practices” tipline, claimed to be for the use of brutalized Muslim women to report their abuse. Now, apart from the absurdity of suggesting that there is an inadequacy in existing channels for any abused woman to report attacks, the snitch line message was insulting to the Muslim community as a whole.

To place the offence in appropriate context, imagine if a Canadian minister of the Crown had made a similar announcement about Orthodox Jewish women, or Buddhist novitiate priests. It is reassuring that Canadians rejected the toxic bait, but

sad that the immediate reaction was quite muted.

Neither the Liberal nor the NDP leader was successful in counter-attacking on the issue, however, on a level that placed responsibility where it should logically have rested, with Stephen Harper.

The Liberal Party ran a professional and optimistic campaign. They took the risk of allowing their leader to be seen in unscripted and freeform settings. They won the support of the media, in part, by an open and accessible style, permitting long and free-flowing press conferences. Performing without a safety net, Trudeau gained confidence steadily during the campaign.

The lesson for future campaign strategists is clear: provide a new leader with a strong team of advisers and counsel and then give them a chance to fail, because that’s the best way to build their confidence and the respect of a target audience.

**T**he Conservative campaign was a disaster on too many levels to itemize, but there is perhaps

one over-arching lesson from their strategic failure. When any institution decides to promote a long-time number two to the senior leadership, there needs to be both supervision and a Plan B. As the corporate world has seen many times, number twos are often at the top of their growth potential, and crash as the new boss. The late Sen. Doug Finley was always the final decision maker in the Harper era on campaign strategy. Even as ill as he was in 2011, his “wise elder” function was an important check against dumb ideas and deviations from strategic discipline.

His replacement by a feuding set of lieutenants, nominally under the direction of Jenni Bryne, turned out to have been a major error. Campaign staff, candidates and eventually even the media, became aware of the tensions, and later open warfare, among Byrne, Guy Giorno, Ray Novak, and Teneycke. But internal knife-fights are hardly unknown in campaign management politics, and some campaigns manage to deliver success in spite of them. This one failed so spectacularly for an entirely different reason.

A seasoned Tory campaign strategist, and long time rugby fan, observed at the very launch of the foolishly stretched campaign period, that he was concerned that his colleagues had fallen into a very bad strategic trap: fighting the last war. The temptation to re-run what worked before is, of course, very human and may seem almost prudent and sound: “Why change something that isn’t broken?!”

But as this old Tory pointed out, in championship level play, in politics or in rugby, it is always wrong to repeat yourself. Your opponents know your old playbook, and they will have developed counters to each favorite campaign gambit. He cited the superlative achievements of the New Zealand All-Blacks, that tiny country’s international rugby superstars, victorious year after year.

Their approach to staying on top—magnificently analyzed in James

Kerr’s Legacy—begins with one unshakeable principle: never repeat last year’s strategy.

The team rigorously analyzes their own performance and their peers’ observed strengths and weaknesses, from the previous year’s games in the off-season. Then they start to build a new strategy, from scratch, each time. It’s hard to throw out old favorites, but that discipline has kept them at the top of their sport for longer than any other team in any other sport.

**“ The lesson for future campaign strategists is clear: provide a new leader with a strong team of advisers and counsel and then give them a chance to fail, because that’s the best way to build their confidence and the respect of a target audience. ”**

**T**he Tory campaign team would have benefited from studying the All-Blacks approach to ensuring victory after victory. Instead, the Conservatives ran a dull and gimmicky campaign, one that might have survived a normal 37-day election. But in the end, in a campaign more than twice as long, they were reduced to game show stunts and rallies with allies as dubious as the Ford brothers.

The NDP needs to use the next four years building a campaign infrastructure up to the task of running a real national campaign. The 2015 model was not. The classic failing campaign weaknesses were all clearly visible: constipated feedback and message delivery loops, weak and sometimes inappropriate resource allocation, strategic paralysis and departmental silos, and finally, creative and speech messaging out of sync with emerging campaign challenges. For future ref-

erence, they also need to get better at anticipating the attacks they will face, and developing strong counters to them, as well as developing platform planks attractive to key audiences—well in advance of writ day.

The Liberals need to ensure that the thousands of new volunteers and campaign lessons are successfully turned into a deeper, broader and more well-trained national party apparatus. Their success in Ontario, for example, would simply not have happened without the support of the provincial party’s superb campaign apparatus. They also need to get better at integrating ground organization technologies with the centre. But then none of the parties do that as well as the best US campaigns did four years ago—and the Americans are far more advanced today.

The overarching campaign lesson for the Conservatives is the need for a bigger tent. Now shut out of either seats or organization—with the exception of an enclave around Quebec City—from the Ottawa River to the Atlantic Ocean, and weak everywhere in urban Canada, the Conservatives geographic base has shrunk badly. They won a plurality of support only among high-school educated, low income, white male rural and small town voters; not a demographic base with a future.

A new Conservative government will have to emerge from a hard-right Alberta-based foundation and angry old white guys. Needless to say the next leader should also come with an authentic smile.

This campaign has one over-arching lesson for which every Canadian should be saying a small prayer of thanks, however.

There is still no path to victory employing the politics of division and hate in Canada. **P**

*Contributing Writer Robin V. Sears, a principal of Earncliffe Strategy Group, is a former national director of the NDP during the Broadbent years. robin@earncliffe.ca*



# Transition 2015: Perfecting the ‘How?’ of Governing

Kevin Lynch

The Langevin Block across from Parliament Hill, seat of power in Canada, where transitions of government are managed by the Privy Council Office.  
*Policy photo*

*Government transitions are times of renewal, not just in who governs us and their priorities for policy, but also in how they choose to govern. A new mandate also provides the occasion for a fresh look at how well our system of governance is working, where it is falling short, and to make adjustments as required. It is time for a governance reboot.*

After a long election campaign, Canadians have decided on the make-up of the new Parliament and who will govern us. How they should govern us is an issue much less discussed, yet equally vital to our long-term future.

Transitions are times for renewal, not only in political terms, but in how we look at the world around us and the future ahead of us. The public service provides the new government of the day with “transition books” that deal with all aspects of governing—a huge and valuable nonpartisan exercise. These substance of the transition briefings typically ranges from the machinery of government itself to short-term

issues that must be dealt with; from the implementation of the new government’s policy platform to longer-term policy issues; from federal-provincial relations to relations with our global neighbours; from security and defence issues to foreign policy challenges and opportunities.

The transition process also provides an invaluable window on how well our system of governance and its core institutions—Parliament and its committees, Cabinet and its ministers, the Prime Minister’s Office and its span of control, the public service—are functioning today.

Democratic governance is about more than the ability to hold free and fair elections. It requires strong institu-

tions. It demands respect for the rule of law and those who oversee it. It needs a system of checks and balances, set by either constitution, convention or both. It requires a professional and effective public service. It listens to the diverse and articulate voices of an independent media. And it is anchored by an informed and involved citizenry.

To be sure, the context for governing in Canada and elsewhere is shifting. The “new normal” is a world of pervasive globalization, relentless competition, hyper-connectivity, perpetual innovation, aging demographics and rising volatility and risk. The role for government is certainly not lessened by this shifting context, indeed quite the opposite, although the nature of government’s role needs to evolve to reflect these new realities.

How well it is evolving to fulfill its role is the focus of a recent report by the Public Policy Forum’s Panel on Governance. The panel believes our system of governance, which is core to how we shape our collective values and goals as a nation, is in urgent need of a reboot.

This renewal, in the panel’s view, does not require constitutional amendments or protracted federal-provincial negotiations, but it does require change. The report focused on the need for change in how Parliament and its committees work: in how balance is re-established between centralization in the PMO and delegation to ministers and departments; in how the public service interacts with the government, Parliament and the public; and, in how the responsibilities and accountabilities of political staff are clarified. It emphasizes that good governance is not an end in itself, but a means towards achieving a robust democracy for the benefit of all Canadians.

The public service of Canada plays a core role in our Westminster system of governance. It is nonpartisan, serving governments past, present and future; it is permanent, providing a longer term policy and operational perspective; it is merit based, attracting competent professionals who

“Transition briefings typically ranges from the machinery of government itself to short-term issues that must be dealt with; from the implementation of the new government’s policy platform to longer-term policy issues.”

want to make a difference for their country. And, as the panel report sets out, it faces challenges today.

The report puts forward a number of recommendations designed, essentially, to let the Public Service of Canada fulfil its intended role. Hopefully, these proposals will enjoy broad-based political and public support and be acted upon with alacrity while, at the same time, the public service itself will move forward with renewal.

My intent here is to reflect on the “new global normal” and the operational opportunities and obstacles it presents for Westminster public services everywhere, and in so doing, consider five areas where the greatest scope for innovation and change may lie.

First, in a world that is exceedingly complex and interconnected, deep and broad policy capacity is a basic necessity of effective government. Policy obeys the basic law of supply and demand—without both the supply of high quality policy analysis and options by the public service and the demand for evidence-based policy advice and options by the government, the market for public service policy capacity simply does not function.

Policy advice by the public service should not be a monopoly—there are many sources of advice available to government. What it should be is value-added to other sources of advice in terms of its impartiality, timeliness, analytic quality, broad global perspective and long-term focus.

Public service policy advice should eschew short-termism, which is such a challenge in so many aspects of business, politics and journalism today. Fearless policy advice must be based on extensive information and detailed analysis—multiplied anecdote

is not knowledge. The capacity of public sector policy analysis to better utilize big data, big analytics and big computing power offers enormous potential for new insights in the many realms of government. Moreover, public service policy thinking should be more collaborative in its structure, both within government and outside, tapping the public and its vast “internet of ideas.”

As a country, we have to be bolder in our policy thinking if we are to thrive in this new global normal, and the public service should be able to contribute to these discussions. Whether it is how to re-invigorate our long-term growth potential, how to get productivity growth going again, or how best to make a trade and investment pivot to the emerging economic powerhouses in Asia led by China, we need diverse longer term policy views and analysis in the public domain, and spirited public discourse.

Second, in a world experiencing a sharp spike in volatility and risk, risk management—not risk aversion—is the smart response by government. Risks today are more systemic, more global, more interconnected and more unpredictable in their diffusion than ever before. These characteristics are clear in the World Economic Forum’s 2015 ranking of the top 10 global risks which include: interstate conflicts; high and sustained unemployment, particularly for youth; failure of climate change adaptation; water crises; cyber attacks; asset bubbles; terrorist attacks; social instability; food crises; and, fiscal crises.

For any institution in a period of change and churn, whether a private sector firm or a government, risk-aversion paradoxically amplifies risk rather than minimizing it. It is too often an approach to minimize short-

term inconvenience while maximizing long term pain.

**“As a country, we have to be bolder in our policy thinking if we are to thrive in this new global normal, and the public service should be able to contribute to these discussions.”**

Effective risk management is a key differentiator for long-term success in a changing world—whether you are confronting technology risk, geopolitical risk, economic forecast risk, security risk, social license risk or policy risk. Risk management is a strategy for long-term gain while accepting that risk and return are correlated and, since risks cannot be avoided, they should be analytically managed. Part of this entails reducing ever-expanding compliance regimes and their web of rules, and substituting risk management tools such as scenario analysis, stress testing and resiliency planning into government programs, services and operations.

Good in concept, but challenging in practice, and particularly so in government, where the negative consequences of realized risks too often outweigh the positive reactions to realized returns. A quandary to be sure, but risk management lies at the heart of innovation, and innovation is central to making government more productive, more connected, and more relevant—so everyone wins if a better balance can be achieved.

**T**hird, in a world where technological innovation is increasing exponentially, government should be at the leading—not the trailing—edge of innovation adaptation. In the financial world, as a comparator, “FinTech” has captured the imagination of the press and consumers, and the attention of investors, incumbents and regulators. From crowd-sourcing to peer-to-peer

lending to mobile payments to robo-advisors to crypto currencies, financial innovation has the potential to improve the efficient allocation of capital to support growth, to reduce frictions and costs in the facilitation of payments, to transform the collection and analysis of data for decision making, and to broaden the accessibility of financial services.

The FinTech companies driving this financial innovation, usually innovative start ups, are targeting financial intermediation functions for innovation, not challenging the institutions themselves. Their tools of the FinTech trade are new platform technologies, huge scalability, big data, cloud computing, and customer-centric business models.

Which raises the obvious question: Why not “GovTech”? Many of the core functions of government should be equally amenable to such innovations, and in so doing reduce public sector costs, increase government productivity and enhance the public’s experience of dealing with government.

There has been some such experimentation in the healthcare and education fields, but no one would describe Canada today as a leader in this field. There is likely even more scope in the back-office functions of government such as tax administration, transfer and pension administration, program delivery and information delivery. An added benefit of being a leader in GovTech is that the pioneer companies developing these innovative technologies and services will have enormous export potential to market these products to governments in other countries.

**F**ourth, in a world in which the revolution in communications technologies is totally transforming how people interact, government communications should join the revolution. This is about attitude and approach, not just technology.

Social media is disruptive—multiple voices, many platforms, competing narratives, hugely decentralized, totally interactive, very dynamic. All this is challenging for governments for a variety of reasons, but also rewarding.

The reality, however, is that the public has already made the switch, particularly the younger generation, and the relevance of government communications is a real and present issue. The upsides of more open communications utilizing social media are clear: an opportunity to engage Canadians on issues in real time, to listen and interact as well as broadcast, to create new virtual networks, to give voice to government science. The downsides are loss in central control of communications and lack of a single message. The choice seems obvious.

**F**ifth, in a world of rapidly shifting career options, we need to make working for government as exciting as working at, say, Google or Facebook, and as meaningful as joining a social enterprise such as WorldVision or the United Way. Challenging, to be sure, but also doable; provided we update the brand promise.

The renewed brand must be about the potential of public service work to make a real societal difference, and this requires public service managers to delegate responsibility and encourage innovation. It is about the public validation of the role and work of public servants by the government and the public at large. And it is about active, not passive, recruitment of the next generation of Canadian leaders to give a public service career consideration, not for the pension but because the country needs their talents.

Simply put, a nonpartisan and empowered public service, one that is attractive to Canada’s best, brightest and most entrepreneurial talents, one where excellence is the benchmark and one in which risks are to be managed, not avoided, in the pursuit of innovation, is one that can contribute enormously to Canada’s long-term success as a robust democracy, strong economy and vibrant society. **P**

*Contributing Writer Kevin Lynch, Vice Chair of BMO Financial Group, is a former Clerk of the Privy Council, and former deputy minister of Finance.*

# Restoring Trust in Public Institutions

David Mitchell

*Of all the elements of Stephen Harper's leadership style that will define his legacy, his relationship to and deployment of power are what have changed the way Ottawa works. In the past nine years, power has been amassed and centralized in the Prime Minister's Office, marginalizing both cabinet ministers and the public servants who advise them. Not only has Justin Trudeau promised to change that; he says his father started it.*

It was one of the more remarkable moments in a long campaign. A poised Justin Trudeau was being interviewed by CBC's Peter Mansbridge. When asked about criticisms he and others had levelled at the Conservative government for its lack of openness and transparency, he responded with an observation that clearly caught Mansbridge off guard. Acknowledging the trend in recent years towards more control from the Prime Minister's Office, Trudeau noted, "Actually it can be traced as far back as my father, who kicked it off in the first place..."

A surprised Mansbridge was obviously expecting a partisan attack on Stephen Harper, not a critique of Pierre Elliot Trudeau, the Liberal leader's own father. But the younger Trudeau seemed to relish the moment, adding:

"...I actually quite like the symmetry of me being the one who'd end that. My father had a particular way of doing things; I have a different way, and his was suited to his time and mine is suited to my time. I believe that we need to trust Canadians. I believe that it's not just about restoring Canadians' trust in government by demonstrating trust towards them, I think we get better public policy when it's done openly and transparently..."

In addition to providing an unex-

pected rebuke of his father's approach to politics and governing, the interview also suggested what Justin Trudeau viewed as a key challenge for Canadian democracy: restoring trust in public institutions.

**“ The key will be whether our new prime minister can buck the seemingly irreversible trend of centralization of authority, which, as he acknowledged, his father began almost half a century ago. ”**

How to achieve this, and whether it's actually possible, now become critically important questions for the new government in Ottawa. Expectations are high—and so are the hurdles ahead. Nevertheless, the Liberal Party's election platform and Trudeau's public statements provide clues to how these governance challenges might be approached.

To be sure, the new government was elected with an array of promises focused on new policies and reforms.



On the subject of governance, these include: electoral reform; a commitment to evidence-based policy; establishing a chief science officer; more free votes in the House of Commons; not resorting to omnibus bills designed to prevent parliament from doing its job; engaging young Canadians; espousing more openness and transparency; and that old chestnut, Senate reform.

**W**hile the list of specific—and some not-so-specific—promises is broad and impressive, perhaps as important is the tone and anticipated management style of the new administration. And here the contrast with the previous government appears to be quite dramatic. Prime Minister Trudeau has promised a more open, accessible and collegial approach to governance. Will he be able to deliver and sustain this?

The key will be whether our new prime minister can buck the seemingly irreversible trend of centralization of authority, which, as he acknowledged, his father began almost half a century ago. This is not unique to Canada; in fact, it's evident in most western democracies. Globalization, technology and social media have increased the ambitions of governments trying to respond quickly and decisively to emerging issues. Generally, this has resulted in much more centralized control.

In Canada, while this tendency has been reinforced decade upon decade, it's widely agreed that political power in Ottawa has become increasingly concentrated in recent years. And although Justin Trudeau mused about the controlling instincts of his father, his more immediate reference point is obviously the government of his predecessor, Stephen Harper, broadly known for taking the centralization of authority to unprecedented levels.

When a powerful PMO appropriates all strategy, management and decision-making unto itself, there is an inevitable cost. When a prime minister and his political staff attempt to control and run not only the PMO but also cabinet, Parliament and the

**“ Although Justin Trudeau mused about the controlling instincts of his father, his more immediate reference point is obviously the government of his predecessor, Stephen Harper, broadly known for taking the centralization of authority to unprecedented levels. ”**

public service, there are consequences—many of them unintended. And when important public institutions such as these are consistently undermined, our system of governance suffers a loss of confidence and public trust. This can't be easily reversed.

**O**n election night, Justin Trudeau invoked the spirit of another Canadian prime minister from a century ago, Wilfred Laurier. He referred to his “sunny ways”—one of Laurier's political trademarks. Today, Prime Minister Trudeau's own optimism and positive attitude should not be underestimated in setting a new and different approach in our capital. However, there are three specific areas that require his administration's focused attention in order to re-energize the Westminster model of governance in Canada.

**1. Restore cabinet government.** The prime minister has already signalled that he is unafraid to surround himself with smart, competent women and men. Clearly, his intention is to provide a more collegial style of leadership, delegating responsibility and accountability to his ministers. But will cabinet actually meet on a regular basis and act as a decision-making body? This would certainly be at odds with recent practice. Indeed, the description of cabinet as a mere focus group for the PM has often seemed apt.

Justin Trudeau's determination to keep his cabinet small and gender-balanced represents a clear path towards the “real change” of his election manifesto. Will he be able to sustain these changes? And will we see an actual return to cabinet government, with ministers providing a counterbalance to unrestricted prime ministerial authority?

Here's an indicator that we might look for: will ministers appoint their own political advisers? Under the Conservative government all political staff were appointed by and reported to the PMO.

**“ Trudeau's determination to keep his cabinet small and gender-balanced represents a clear path towards the “real change” of his election manifesto. Will he be able to sustain these changes? And will we see an actual return to cabinet government, with ministers providing a counterbalance to unrestricted prime ministerial authority? ”**

**2. Empower parliamentary committees.** Parliament has suffered greatly in recent years, with the combination of expense scandals in the Senate and the atmosphere of a permanent election campaign in the House of Commons. Reforming question period and allowing for more free votes, as promised by the Liberals, would be positive steps. However, the change that holds the greatest potential to improve the relevance of this flagging institution would be providing greater independence and authority to parliamentary committees.

To be fair, the Liberal election platform addresses this issue by proposing that committee chairs be elected

by a secret ballot of all MPs, the same way the Speaker is now elected. This would allow less interference and direction from PMO. However, we should go much further.

Committee chairs and members should be elected for the four-year life of a parliament, providing better and more independent scrutiny of the executive branch of government. And committees should be provided with more resources in order to reach out effectively to Canadians, engaging them not only on the issues of the day, but also on issues of medium to long-term policies.

An indicator of success: the position of committee chair will be almost as coveted as a cabinet post (often the case in the United Kingdom).

**3. Rethink the public service.** Canada has long been respected for the professionalism of its permanent, non-partisan public service. However, during recent years its reputation has been diminished. The relationship between public servants and political staff has often been unclear and sometimes un-

comfortable. Public servants have also been blamed when things go wrong, even when the directions being followed clearly emanated from political levels.

The public service is an important institution providing a comparative advantage for our country. No government can long afford a demoralized or demotivated bureaucracy. However, some clarity and commitment to its essential role is required, especially with respect to delivery of services and policy development. Ideally, this would come directly from the prime minister and be codified in the form of a charter or by legislation.

The public service should become recognized not only as the largest employer in Canada but as the employer of choice for a new generation of emerging leaders.

The new government led by Prime Minister Trudeau has already established some ambitious goals and new policy directions. The success of any government can be judged by how well its priorities are aligned with the desires of citizens and the tenor of the

times. Usually, it's only in retrospect, years afterward, that we can take stock and gain such a perspective. Critics, supporters and historians will therefore need to bide their time if they wish to accurately assess the successes and failures of the Conservative government led by Stephen Harper.

As for the new Liberal administration in Ottawa, still enjoying the honeymoon euphoria of victory and marching now with confidence into its first 100 days in office, the joys of success and inevitable failures both lie ahead. But it's interesting to speculate on how the political style and managerial approach of Justin Trudeau might one day be judged. If he achieves even a modicum of success in restoring trust in important institutions of governance such as cabinet, parliament and the public service, he will have defied the dominant centralizing tendencies that started in Canada with his father. **P**

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Justin Trudeau canoeing on the Bow River in Calgary on the morning of the second leaders' debate. Adam Scotti photo.

# Liberal Values Are Canadian Values

Martin Goldfarb

*This wasn't just a "throw the bums out" election. As the dean of Canadian pollsters who made his reputation taking the pulse of Canadians for Justin Trudeau's father, Marty Goldfarb knows a lot about Canadian values. For nearly a decade, Stephen Harper made our national conversation about boutique tax breaks, systematically violating the Charter of Rights and, finally, snitching on your neighbour. Justin Trudeau promised a return to the traditional Canadian values of economic equality, inclusivity and optimism.*

Justin Trudeau was elected with traditional Liberal values driving his choices and the historical Liberal coalition of voters and regions of the country rallying to his message.

Historically, Liberals won elections when Quebec and Ontario were on the same page. Liberals won elections when they won at least half the seats in Atlantic Canada and Quebec and two-thirds of the seats in Ontario. When this happens, they form the national government. Nothing is new about this. And, it is exactly what happened in 2015. The traditional Liberal coalition came together again, attracted by Liberal values.

In the 2011 election, many in Quebec voted for the NDP as a protest against Stephen Harper while deserting the Bloc Québécois, but they were never truly NDPers. In 2015, Quebecers realized that voting for the NDP left them out of the decision-making in Ottawa, and Quebec wanted to be part of national decision-making—not relegated to the fringe. When people in Quebec realized—halfway through the election—that the NDP was not gaining strength in English Canada, they began to swing away and switch, especially in urban areas, to the Liberals.

This is the real reason that NDP support collapsed in Quebec. Their support of a woman's right to wear a niqab is a red herring. After all, Tom Mulcair and Justin Trudeau took the same stance on this issue.

Quebecers wanted both a change of government, as well as to be part of the new government. When Quebec and Ontario come together they form an axis that controls who gets elected to form the federal government. This is the nexus of the Liberal federal strength in Canada and one that Brian Mulroney used as a model for his victories. For a time, under Mulroney, a fluently bilingual Quebecer himself, Quebecers connected with the Progressive Conservatives. Mulroney also won a large portion of Ontario as a Progressive Conservative. However, Progressive Conservatives are not the Harper Conservatives. Their values are not that different than historic Liberal values.

Quebec today has a Liberal mayor in Montreal and a Liberal provincial government, which has reached out to the Liberal government in Ontario. These two provincial Liberal governments have similar values that drive the choices they make.

Canadians' collective values have not changed. The Liberal brand continues to resonate with Canadians. The public may have been uncomfortable with Michael Ignatieff and Stéphane Dion but they never completely gave up

**“ Liberals won elections when they won at least half the seats in Atlantic Canada and Quebec and two-thirds of the seats in Ontario. When this happens, they form the national government. Nothing is new about this. And, it is exactly what happened in 2015. The traditional Liberal coalition came together again, attracted by Liberal values. ”**

on the Liberal Party. The Liberal brand never died. It was an embarrassment for a short period of time under these leaders but Liberal roots and Liberal values endured. The party never changed its colours, its symbols or its name. The historical connection of Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party to the past is clear.

Justin Trudeau reintroduced Canadians to those values: trust, tolerance, transparency, peace, justice, prosperity, opportunity, fiscal responsibility, social justice and economic nationalism. These are historical. It is these values that drove the decisions that Trudeau made during the campaign, for instance:

- Announcing that Canada would accept 25,000 Syrian refugees
- Stating that wearing the niqab is a women's right
- Supporting funding of the CBC
- Helping students finance their education
- Announcing that CPP would start again at 65, not 67
- Doubling infrastructure spending
- Committing to build more navy ships in Canada

These are decisions driven by Liberal values—values that drove Pierre Elliott Trudeau's decision making, that drove Paul Martin's decision making and drove Jean Chrétien's decision making. They appeal to traditional Liberal voters, the young, those over 65 and new Canadians. Whether you look at the results of the election by gender, by income, or by ethnicity in Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic

Canada, all of these people were united in voting Liberal.

Above all, these values are exemplified in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Canadians love the Charter, despite Harper's concerted efforts over the past 10 years to diminish the Charter both in the courts and as an element of our national narrative.

Canadians were uncomfortable with these Harper policies:

- being a snitch society;
- discriminating against any one group;
- excessive interest in security—especially at the expense of personal freedom;
- attacking the Supreme Court and the Charter.

Canadians experimented with the Harper Conservatives for 10 years and then decided they could not live with those values. This is not about the natural fatigue with a government after 10 years. Canadians decided Harper Conservative values do not reflect what they think of as the Canadian way. On October 19, Canadians rejected: building more prisons; thinking there is a terrorist on every corner; expanding the security state; rejecting science as a decision-making tool and muzzling government research professionals; expanding CSIS; and taking citizenship away from dual citizens who have committed certain crimes.

Liberals see a benefit to government. Liberals do not see government as the enemy of the people. Liberals see

government as a force for the good of the collective. Liberals spend for the good of society. Harper's end goal was to reduce government with a fundamental belief that expenditures are evil. Harper tried to shift Canadian values and he failed.

This election attracted 68 per cent of the population to vote, up from 61 per cent in 2011, and 58 per cent in 2008—a return to levels not seen in more than 20 years. Because this was an election about values rather than specific policies, more Canadians came out to vote again.

“ *Liberals see a benefit to government. Liberals do not see government as the enemy of the people. Liberals see government as a force for the good of the collective. Liberals spend for the good of society.* ”

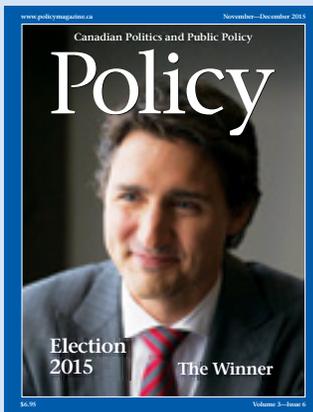
A brand is a promise you make consistently over time. Liberal values drive the Liberal brand promise and

this promise under Justin Trudeau is *Better is Always Possible*. This exemplifies the Canadian dream.

What Harper did not display was the ethic of responsible citizenship and that is what the Liberal brand has stood for in the past and continues to stand for today. Conservatives will need to rethink their values. **P**

*Martin Goldfarb, the dean of Canadian pollsters, was the Liberal Party's pollster during the Pierre Trudeau years. He is Chairman of Goldfarb Marketing. mgoldfarb@goldfarbmarketing.com*

ELECTION  
2015



## A Policy/iPolitics Working Lunch

The Rideau Club  
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Wednesday, November 18, 2015  
12 – 2 PM

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**Susan Delacourt**, Author of the bestselling *Shopping For Votes* and columnist for the *Toronto Star* and *iPolitics*

**Don Newman**, Chairman Canada 2020 and columnist for *Policy*

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St. John's in Newfoundland, where the Liberals' clean sweep of Atlantic Canada's 32 seats began on October 19. Istock photo

# The Atlantic: Anatomy of a Clean Sweep

Charles J. McMillan

*Justin Trudeau won Atlantic Canada not with money or tactics but with the classic investments of time and attention. As his longtime friend and adviser, Charles McMillan, points out, Brian Mulroney thought Atlantic Canada was important enough to win that when he ran, as newly chosen leader, for a seat in the House, he ran in Central Nova. That riding, along with every other Tory sure thing in the region, went to the Liberals this time. The blame for that, writes McMillan, goes to Stephen Harper.*

Change vs. Stay the Course, Inexperience vs. Tested Leadership—these were the slogans framing the narrative of Canada's 15th election since Pierre Trudeau came to power in 1968. While the surprising majority government achieved by Justin Trudeau may confound the war rooms of the NDP and Conservatives, the seeds of his victory were planted in Atlantic Canada, as the new leader started the arduous process of rebuilding his party, from the ground up. Unlike in the other regions of Canada, the outcome was never in doubt—the Nanos nightly tracking polls, after all, showed the Liberals ranged from 45-

55 per cent—so the only question was the seat count. All four provincial governments quietly lent their support, three were Liberal and the fourth had former Premier Danny Williams, extending hell and fury towards Stephen Harper.

Harper sowed the seeds of his own destruction in Atlantic Canada, not simply because of his early and dismissive comments about the region's "culture of dependency," but because of ministers who did little to build a forward-looking organization with compelling candidates, a strategy to win incumbent seats from the Liberals, and a capacity to listen to voters, premiers, and business stakeholders. Indeed, when asked to speak at the well-attended funeral in Truro, of former Nova Scotia Senator Fred Dickson, a Conservative partisan with friends in all parties across the region, Harper not only said publicly that Fred wasn't his friend but added, "I have no friends." In Atlantic Canada, where communities are close and friendships are lifelong, it was a telling comment.

For Harper, the headwinds in Atlantic Canada were brutal. Local and national polling showed Conservative support in the low 20s for the past three years, and in a region where incumbency is a decided advantage, the 13 Tory seats were all in play, including the three in Nova Scotia, where Conservative members, including Peter MacKay in Central Nova, decided not to reoffer. Further, party insiders knew from recent provincial elections—three won by the Liberals—that Trudeau had a chance in all 32 seats but 26-27 were very likely. The NDP hoped to gain three and Harper hoped to hold at least three Cabinet members—Gail Shea in Cardigan, Keith Ashfield in Fredericton, and Bernard Valcourt in Edmunston.

**B**ut other factors added to the headwinds. Changes to the Employment Insurance Act made it more difficult for seasonal workers to receive benefits. In no province was there a leading Con-

**“ Indeed, Harper made a fatal decision to employ a William Gladstone metaphor of balanced budget and low taxes in the areas of Conservative support, like suburban and rural Canada, where the economy is soft and unemployment is high, particularly for young people. ”**

servative who championed the region, and no strategy to take the 10 seats that Harper first won and build a regional base of 18-20. Few of his patronage appointments or Senate choices added to Conservative support, and some (such as Mike Duffy) were deep distractions. As incumbents like Gerald Keddy or MacKay decided to step aside, there was no desire to attract new stars.

Even worse, Harper and his war room catastrophically underestimated Justin Trudeau and the Liberal team. His campaign spokesman, Kory Teneycke, telling the media before the first debate, "if (Trudeau) comes on stage with his pants on, he will probably exceed expectations," typified both Conservative hubris and the lack of discipline from the top. Indeed, Harper made a fatal decision to employ a William Gladstone metaphor of balanced budget and low taxes in the areas of Conservative support, like suburban and rural Canada, where the economy is soft and unemployment is high, particularly for young people. Paradoxically, in the areas of Harper weakness, urban and multicultural cities, the economy is strong, mainly due to low interest rates and residential construction.

By contrast, well before the election was called, Trudeau toured the region regularly, taking his family on holidays to Atlantic Canada, and at one farm picnic in 2014 at Lawrence MacAulay's Cardigan, PEI riding, a packed crowd of 5,000 people showed up. Trudeau, reflecting on previous leaders of various parties, started the rebuilding process at the riding level, attracting well-known local candidates, many not overly partisan. Luck, that glorious feature

of winning campaigns, helped but was not decisive: the Duffy trial and court revelations filling the airwaves since August, deeply motivated the ABH supporters. Candidates like former Tory MLA Peter Penashue running in Labrador exposed the weakness of the Harper slate.

During September, Harper evangelists with next to zero resonance in Atlantic Canada, such as Jason Kenny, Pierre Poilievre, and Chris Alexander, defended Harper's approach to defence issues, refugees from Syria, and Trudeau's deficit spending on infrastructure in a region where good infrastructure ties the region together. Their lame pronouncements, tied to cracks in the vaunted Conservative war room, attracted local media attention, and the barring veterans of groups from a Harper rally in Fredericton inflamed voter's distrust of peevish, central control. That paranoia reinforced in the public mind the Conservatives' rejection of Ches Crosbie (son of John Crosbie, who had worked tirelessly behind the scenes to get Danny Williams and Stephen Harper on speaking terms) as a candidate. The last two weeks in Atlantic Canada prophesied the possible results nationally.

**T**he campaign strategists for each party ended up with totally different tactics. Mulcair toured the region sparingly, hoping to save the lone NDP seat in Halifax and that three-way splits might win a few seats elsewhere. Harper visited early, and then late in the campaign, defensively visiting ridings held by Conservatives, including—in the last days—Fredericton, only to have the Conservative candidate lose his seat.

By contrast, as Liberal support climbed daily, if only incrementally in Quebec, the Liberal team put the chartered jet into high gear, visiting Tory and NDP incumbent ridings, with volunteers organizing huge rallies and Trudeau drumming home his ballot question: real change. The bandwagon effect shrewdly played off media reaction to a man in motion asking for support from dejected and rejected Conservatives. That and the Liberal advertising blitz, timed perfectly for maximum impact, turned the election into a two-way race. By election day, the decision was easy: Harper or Trudeau.

In Atlantic Canada, many Conservative candidates came third; Conservative ministers like Bernard Valcourt and Gail Shea. Most embarrassingly, Peter MacKay's riding, a Tory stronghold his father, Elmer, first won in 1971, and where Brian Mulroney ran in 1983 when he first became leader, voted Liberal. The neighbouring seat, once held by Robert Coates, was won by Bill Casey, the ex-Conservative who was expelled from Harper's cau-

cus, despite repeated visits by the Prime Minister in support of incumbent Scott Armstrong.

The 32-seat sweep, plus the Gaspé riding representing Magdalen Islands (originally part of the Catholic Diocese of Charlottetown), once represented provincially by René Lévesque (who was born in Campbellton, NB) paralleled the huge gains across the country. Trudeau's victory was now in the history books, coming from third to first, winning so many new seats in all provinces, rebuilding Liberal fortunes in their base, French Canada, and attracting immense support in urban Canada. Unlike his father in 1968, he surrounds himself with political pros, and like Brian Mulroney in 1984, or Jean Chrétien in 1993, he is unlikely to turn the political side of the party into the PMO.

The new PM controls unequivocally the political centre of Canadian politics, in all regions, and will learn from other prime ministers how to manage his caucus. Further, unlike his father, who lacked a strong caucus in West-

ern Canada, he will not introduce policies like the National Energy Program that hurt a region and a province so dramatically. The Atlantic Caucus has an unprecedented opportunity to introduce bold initiatives to reduce or eliminate their have-not status, such as building on traditional strengths but becoming an exporting superstar in energy, agriculture, education, and food products.

Timing, as Bobby Kennedy noted, is everything in politics. Justin Trudeau, a student of politics, timed his support perfectly, and has a clear mandate for change. To the world, the new PM said that Canada is back. To Ottawa, he might have added: magnanimity is in play. To the pros in the Tory and NDP campaign war rooms, it is now time to get a new education. **P**

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Montreal and Quebec produced the surprise Liberal majority on election night, 35 per cent of the vote and 40 seats—the first time a majority of Quebec seats went Liberal since 1980. Shutterstock photo.

# Quebec: Coming to Terms With Federalist Parties

Antonia Maioni

*Justin Trudeau's vague rouge in Quebec may have defied most prognosticators but, in a province that loves both waves and winners, was not entirely shocking. McGill political science professor and respected Quebec commentator Antonia Maioni breaks down the variables that produced the outcome.*

If we've learned anything about Quebec voters in federal elections, it's that partisan choice is far from predictable. Over the course of the past four decades, we've seen Quebec voters throw their support—often en masse—to the Progressive Conservatives, Bloc Québécois and the New Democratic Party, in each case searching for the party that could best represent Quebec interests and give voice to Quebecers' concerns in Ottawa. In the 2015 election, that sentiment was transposed into an irresistible push for change—a change that, apart from the small, solid base of support for the Conservative party from *les bleus* in the Quebec City area, meant

replacing the Harper government with another party.

And in this respect, Quebec voters became an important part of the general Canadian momentum against the Conservative Party and toward the Liberal party in the 2015 election. It was an historic outcome in many ways. For the first time since the Progressive Conservative era under Brian Mulroney, a majority of Quebecers voted for the party that formed the government in Ottawa. For the first time since 1980, the Liberal Party won a majority of seats in Quebec. Moreover, the result (35 per cent of the vote and 40 seats) was also a leap of gigantic proportions from the meagre results of the 2011 election, when the Liberals were reduced to seven seats and the NDP swept 59 seats across the province.

But the partisan choice of Quebecers was not *inevitable*. And this may be the most important caveat as we analyze the results of the 2015 vote in Quebec. The considerable efforts the Conservative Party expended in courting the *bleu* vote, the possibility of a comeback that Gilles Duceppe and the Bloc tried to create, and the efforts of the NDP to build from its Quebec sweep in 2011, all speak to the sense of an electorate divided and up for grabs, rather than an inevitable return to the Liberals or another bout of Trudeaumania.

The party did not have much momentum in Quebec until the summer months, opinion polls were relatively inconclusive until late in the campaign, and seat projections were showing close three- and four-way splits in many ridings.

In that sense, the results in Quebec point to two possible interpretations. The first is that Quebecers have, on the whole and including francophone voters, come to terms with “federalist” parties. The choice of the NDP in 2011 bears this out: Quebec voters discovered a “new” party—unknown and untested here—they felt comfortable with, due in no small part to the charisma of its then-leader, Jack Layton, but also its posi-

“Even though the Liberal Party held essentially the same position, that rights could not be disallowed on the basis of religious garb, it was the discovery that the NDP was not different after all that weakened its appeal as a fresh alternative.”

tion on the “national question” for francophone Quebecers in particular. The choice in 2015 went beyond this to ask Quebecers to take a more fulsome place in Canada itself; in other words, to be part of the choice of a new government itself. It was the hope that Quebec would be the base from which the NDP could launch a credible attempt at forming a government that had propelled the party to choose Tom Mulcair as its leader.

In this sense, the ballot box question for Quebec voters in 2015 was twofold: they seemed prepared to support the NDP so long as it seemed to reflect Quebecers’ values and aspirations *and* so long as it seemed the viable alternative to change the government in Ottawa. As the campaign unfolded, however, both of these things became less certain. The controversy over the niqab exposed the inherent incompatibility of its message in Quebec and in the rest of Canada. The NDP’s support in Quebec had rested on a vague perception that the party was in tune with Quebec values, but the debate on reasonable accommodation was far from resolved. Even though the Liberal Party held essentially the same position, that rights could not be disallowed on the basis of religious garb, it was the discovery that the NDP was not different after all that weakened its appeal as a fresh alternative. As for aspirations, the Quebec voters the NDP courted were not as generally allergic to deficits as the NDP thought Ontarians would be. The message of balanced budgets at all costs fell on deaf ears, opening the possibility toward a Liberal message of stimulus spending that sounded better than economic austerity.

It was when the NDP began to falter as a viable alternative to Stephen Harper and the Conservative govern-

ment that the lack of depth of its roots in the province began to move voter sentiment for change toward the Liberals. Since the NDP had made its Quebec support the basis for its pitch to viability among Canadian voters, the softening in its support meant renewed doubt about its overall chances to be an effective alternative to the Conservatives. As the campaign morphed into a referendum on the Harper government, the ricochet effect of those doubts in Quebec pushed many voters, including the disaffected Liberals returning to the fold and francophones who perhaps would not have voted Liberal otherwise, to make the switch.

The second interpretation is that, despite the majority of seats and plurality of votes, Quebec is not yet the Promised Land for the Liberal Party. In other words, the return to this federalist party in the 2015 election does not mean that Quebecers have become re-born as believers in the Liberal Party’s federalist cause. Economic, regional, and political landscapes in Quebec remain divided. Quebecers still represent diverse ideological, cultural, and linguistic sensibilities, within the province and with respect to the rest of Canada. What remains to be seen is how the new Liberal government will integrate Quebec voices, how it will deal with Ottawa-Quebec relations and how it will face the enduring kinds of incompatibility between Quebecers’ and Canadians’ interests that have destabilized federalist parties for so many decades. **P**

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The downtown 416 Toronto skyline seen from suburban 905-land. 905 gave the Conservatives a sweep in 2011. In 2015 it swept them out. Istock photo

# So Much for the Big Shift: How Ontario Went Liberal

Thomas S. Axworthy and Rana Shamoon

*When Stephen Harper was propelled to a majority government in 2011 in part thanks to a sweep of Ontario ridings around Toronto, some concluded that his victory represented a fundamental shift in Canadian electoral patterns. Justin Trudeau, the Liberal Party and Ontario voters proved that theory wrong on Oct. 19. Tom Axworthy and Rana Shamoon analyze the results of the 2015 campaign in the country's most populous province, and what they could mean for Trudeau in four years.*

In Canadian Federal Elections, all roads to power in Ottawa run through Ontario: It is the indispensable province. In the 2015 election, after redistribution, Ontario gained 15 new seats for a total of 121 seats compared to 78 seats in Quebec, 62 seats in the Prairies, 42 seats in British Columbia, and 32 seats in Atlantic Canada. In 2015, the Liberal Party of Justin Trudeau won 80 Ontario seats, compared to 11 in 2011; the Conservative Party won 33, down from 73 in 2011; and the NDP won 8 seats, down from 22 in 2011.

The 80 Ontario Liberal seats form more than 43 per cent of the total Liberal caucus. The Liberal success in Ontario is the fundamental bedrock in explaining how the country's "natural governing party" returned to govern.

Number of seats by party in Ontario		
	2011	2015
Conservative	73	33
Liberal	11	80
NDP	22	8
Total seats	106	121

Percentage votes by party in Ontario		
	2011	2015
Conservative	44.4%	35.0%
Liberal	25.3%	44.8%
NDP	25.6%	16.6%
Total Voter Turnout	61.5%	68.5%

So what happened? What are the big Ontario takeaways from 2015? Elections are won by bringing out your core vote, attracting new voters to your camp, depressing your opponent's core vote so that they will at least stay home, and attracting vote switches. The Liberal campaign succeeded on these fronts in Ontario in 2015. Turnout was the first key change: 68.3 per cent voting in Ontario compared to 61.5 per cent in 2011. The Trudeau campaign theme of generational change was predicated on the assumption that new voters could be enticed to the polls. And the increase of voters in Ontario proved detrimental to the Harper Conservatives, who had a dedicated pool of support but without much growth potential. In 2011, the Liberal base—disenchanted by then-leader Michael Ignatieff—stayed home: The raw number of Liberal voters fell from 1,743,241 in 2008, to only 1,400,302 in 2011. But in 2015, the raw Liberal vote jumped to 2,923,791, a 1.5 million increase. In Ottawa and Toronto, for example, the Liberal vote was over 50 per cent compared to a third for the Conservatives and 13 per cent for the NDP. The Liberal campaign was textbook—the base turned out, the opponent's base support fell, and new voters added enough weight to win an eightfold increase in seats.

“So what happened? What are the big Ontario takeaways from 2015? Elections are won by bringing out your core vote, attracting new voters to your camp, depressing your opponent's core vote so that they will at least stay home, and attracting vote switches. The Liberal campaign succeeded on these fronts in Ontario in 2015.”

Number of votes by party in Ontario		
	2011	2015
Conservative	2,457,463	2,287,179
Liberal	1,400,302	2,923,791
NDP	1,417,435	1,084,555
Total Voter Turnout	5,531,478	6,532,714

This was most evident in the Greater Toronto Area: the GTA received 11 of the 15 new Ontario seats awarded in the redistribution. At 55 seats, this is more seats than eight of the provinces. The GTA is two distinct political realms, labelled by area code: the 416 is Toronto proper while the 905 suburban belt includes the municipalities that surround it. The party that wins the 905 wins government. In 2011, the Conservatives won 21 of 22 seats in the 905 and nine of 23 in the 416. But in 2015, in the larger GTA pool after redistribution, the Liberals won all of the seats in the 416 and 24 of 29 seats in the 905. Symbolic of this shift, heroine of the 905, legendary Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion, not only endorsed the Liberals but she starred in campaign ads. Southern Ontario stayed largely Conservative but the 905 turned red and that was the difference. “Are you ready for change, my friends?” asked Trudeau at an October rally of 7,000 supporters in Brampton. They were ready.

The Conservatives were defeated in Ontario but not routed. The Conservatives' raw vote fell from 2,457,463 in 2011 to 2,287,179 in 2015, a notable decline in a larger voter pool to be sure, but not a calamitous one. The Conservatives still have 35 per cent of the vote in Ontario (compared to

the Liberals 45 per cent). The Conservative message of low taxes, less government and a more bellicose foreign policy resonated with millions of voters. But there was widespread repudiation of the mores and tactics of the Harper PMO, with even dedicated conservative-leaning Canadians like Conrad Black and Andrew Coyne publicly leaving the Conservative camp. Leaders have a shelf life and Harper was overripe.

The one truly catastrophic result was for the NDP, led by Tom Mulcair. The NDP vote in Ontario fell from 1,417,435 in 2011 to 1,084,555 in 2015—roughly 30 per cent of their 2011 support in Ontario either stayed home or voted for another party. In 2015 in Ontario, the NDP had only 16.6 per cent of the vote and eight seats compared to 25.6 per cent of the vote and 22 seats in 2011.

After the debacle of the 2011 Liberal campaign, both the Conservatives and NDP were gleeful. The “strange death of Liberal Canada” was largely forecast by partisans in both camps, as the Conservatives hoped to create a permanent Conservative majority coalition, and the NDP planned to vault from opposition to government by replacing the Liberal Party as the moderate progressive hope. The astounding 2011 election result saw the NDP rise from third to second with 103 seats, and the Conservatives seemingly firmly ensconced with a majority of 166. In 2011, with an unpopular Liberal leader and a galvanizing Jack Layton at the helm of the NDP, the country, especially Ontario and Quebec, bled blue and orange. But it turned out to be a blip, not a critical re-alignment election. As Brian Mulroney once observed, the Liberal Party is a tough old bird, not easily

disposed of. And so it proved in 2015.

The 2015 election was a referendum on Stephen Harper—a referendum the Conservatives lost. But with 70 per cent of voters desiring change, it was much less clear who would be the beneficiary of the “time for a change” sentiment. Trudeau was aided by the mistakes of his opponents, especially those of Thomas Mulcair. Orange is not the new red: Mulcair ran a campaign as a sitting prime minister before he had ever been elected to the post. Keith Davey, the famous Liberal rainmaker, used to say that Liberals had to campaign from the left and govern on the right. Mulcair changed the formula to campaign from the right and be left behind. The NDP running on a platform of a balanced budget gave an opening on the progressive side of the ledger that Justin Trudeau happily capitalized upon. Federally, this was a repeat of what had happened in Ontario in the provincial election of 2014—Andrea Horwath ignored the progressive base in her own party and the province, and Kathleen Wynne and the Ontario Liberals were allowed to outflank the NDP. The strategists of the 2015 Liberal campaign were close observers of Wynne’s success and were no doubt delighted that the NDP proved once again that those who forget history are condemned to repeat it. The NDP’s travails at least provoked one of the truly funny comments by CBC *At Issue* pundit Bruce Anderson assessing the shift of the NDP to the right. Anderson said wryly that it was hard to imagine the union core of the NDP massing in protest to the cry “What do we want? A balanced budget! When do we want it? Now!”

In the aftermath of the 2015 campaign, Liberals are triumphant. But there is danger in hubris, a condition which some believe is engrained in the Liberal Party’s DNA. Charles de Gaulle, no mean strategist himself, once reflected that the seeds of eventual defeat are usually sown in the immediate aftermath of one’s greatest victory. So in assessing the successful 2015 Liberal campaign in Ontario and Canada, what dangers lurk in a too-optimistic view that happy days are

here again as the former natural governing party returns to government? This question was asked to a day-after panel organized by the Toronto Board of Trade featuring noted strategists from each of the major parties: Jaime Watt, John Duffy and Robin McLachlan. This impressive trio noted three definite mistakes or misreadings of the 2015 campaign that Trudeau will have to avoid. The first is that, while acknowledging the skill of the Liberal campaign, the Liberals greatly benefited from the errors of their opponents, most notably the strategic blunder of the NDP’s small-c conservative stance, and the Conservatives’ fixation on the niqab issue, and jumping the shark with a brazen announcement about a hotline for “barbaric cultural practices.” The Liberals cannot count on such electoral gifts from the gods in future campaigns.

“As the NDP began to fall, the anybody-but-Harper vote across the country, but especially in Ontario, coalesced around Trudeau. Historically, the reason why the Liberal Party has been so successful is because of its Quebec base. As a Quebecer, Justin Trudeau has a chance to restore that base.”

Second, the Liberal campaign took over a portion of the progressive base of the NDP, and Justin Trudeau will be hard pressed to keep it. The promise of the Liberal electoral platform on health, tax cuts, infrastructure, First Nations, and so on, will be difficult to achieve given the state of the Canadian economy. This will require great skills at balancing multiple demands as expectations are high and Trudeau must avoid the fate of promising much but delivering little. The Liberals gathered behind their sails the overwhelming time-for-a-change sentiment, but it will be very easy to get blown off course.

Last, the Liberals swept Ontario but they did very well in Quebec, too, winning 40 seats and 35 per cent of the vote, their best showing since 1980 under Pierre Trudeau. The Quebec regional campaign also had an impact in Ontario: as the NDP began to crash in Quebec because of the niqab issue and the return of the Bloc Québécois, the air began to slowly seep from the balloon of Tom Mulcair. As the NDP began to fall, the anybody-but-Harper vote across the country, but especially in Ontario, coalesced around Trudeau. Historically, the reason why the Liberal Party has been so successful is because of its Quebec base. As a Quebecer, Justin Trudeau has a chance to restore that base. But responding to Quebec’s aspirations while keeping the rest of the country on side (or at least not opposed) requires tremendous judgment and a lot of luck. Quebec is the weathervane of Canadian politics—swinging wildly from the Bloc, to the NDP, and now the Liberals. With a prime minister from Quebec, issues of bi-national, bicultural coexistence, often on the back-burner in recent years, may re-enter the national conversation in a way that moves beyond the Constitutional battles of the past.

Since the early 1960s, when Lester Pearson and Walter Gordon made Ontario—and especially Toronto—the heart of the modern Liberal Party, the campaign truism has been “As Ontario goes, so goes the Liberal Party”. In 2015, Ontario returned to its Liberal roots. Yet, this attachment was lukewarm at the beginning of the campaign, only gradually coalescing around the Liberals as the best vehicle to remove Stephen Harper. In 2019, Justin Trudeau will face the challenge of winning Ontario on his own record, not as a reaction to the defects of an opponent. **P**

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Rachel Notley's victory in the Alberta election in May unleashed powerful forces of change, though ultimately not the ones the NDP benefited from at the outset of the campaign. Flickr photo

## The Prairies: Notley Victory Unleashed Forces of Change

Dale Eisler

*The balance of partisan leadership among Canadian provinces and between their capitals and Ottawa has a cause-and-effect life of its own, like a political Calder mobile. That perpetual dance of probabilities was disrupted in May when Rachel Notley dispatched Alberta's hegemonic Conservative Party after more than 40 years of rule. It presaged the national mood for change that drove a campaign in which premiers were major players.*

It was the first clear signal that a powerful mood for change was stirring in Canada. On May 5, when the Alberta's NDP's Rachel Notley swept to power with a majority government, toppling more than four decades of rule by the Progressive Conservatives, Canadian politics seemed to have become unhinged.

With the countdown on to a federal election, it immediately breathed life into the hopes of Tom Mulcair and the

federal New Democrats. If the mighty PCs could be thrown from office in Alberta by the NDP in the very homeland of today's federal Conservative party, anything was possible. And, for a time, it seemed true. For much of the 11-week federal campaign, the NDP gathered strength and were leading many of the polls.

Ultimately though, it was Justin Trudeau and the Liberals who reaped the rewards of the shock waves out of Alberta. It was the Trudeau Liberals who positioned themselves as the agents of change in an election that was a referendum on the status quo. So rather than serve as a validation federally for the NDP, Alberta merely signalled to the rest of Canada that dramatic change was indeed possible. And we saw the results with the Trudeau Liberals' stunning majority victory on October 19, one that left the NDP crushed and the Conservatives facing years in opposition and the search for a new leader to replace Stephen Harper.

As people sift through the entrails of the campaign and its results, the impact of provincial politics on the outcome cannot be discounted. The clearest and most compelling evidence came from Ontario, where Premier Kathleen Wynne played a central role in the Liberal campaign and the party's stunning resurgence in that vote-rich province, which was key to a Liberal majority. An avowed and very public supporter of Trudeau, Premier Wynne made it perfectly clear whom she wanted as prime minister, campaigning with Trudeau and advocating for his policies. She was repaying the support she received from Trudeau during her own 2014 provincial election campaign.

**T**he flash point in Wynne's clash with Harper was his refusal to work with the Ontario government's plan for a provincial pension scheme. He called it just another tax on hard-working people. In response, Wynne said rather curtly: "Only the truly shortsighted could look at a pension con-

**“ It was Justin Trudeau and the Liberals who reaped the rewards of the shock waves out of Alberta. It was the Trudeau Liberals who positioned themselves as the agents of change in an election that was a referendum on the status quo. ”**

tribution and describe it as a tax.”

But if the mood for change was given a shot of adrenalin by the Alberta election, in the final analysis the Prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba played a less pivotal role in the Liberal breakthrough nationally. In fact, the Liberal tide that was rolling west out of Ontario lost a great deal of momentum when it hit rural Manitoba, almost stalled completely in Saskatchewan and revived slightly in Alberta, a Liberal wasteland since the days of Pierre Trudeau's National Energy Program.

**“ The most encouraging results for the Liberals came in Winnipeg, where the party won seven seats, six of them new. In Saskatchewan, the Liberal surge ran into a Conservative bulwark, with only Ralph Goodale maintaining and even strengthening his decades-long hold on Regina Wascana. ”**

The most encouraging results for the Liberals came in Winnipeg, where the party won seven seats, six of them new. In Saskatchewan, the Liberal surge ran into a Conservative bulwark, with only Ralph Goodale maintaining and even strengthening his decades-long hold on Regina Wascana. Other than three NDP

wins, two by very narrow margins, the rest of the province's 10 ridings remained a Conservative fortress.

In Alberta, where change no longer seemed radical, the Liberals managed a breakthrough in Calgary, winning two seats, and two in Edmonton. The NDP managed only to retain its lone Edmonton riding. The rest of Alberta remained staunchly Conservative, oblivious to the national trend.

So what explains the unique results in the Prairies? Among the key factors was the impact of provincial and even municipal politics on the federal vote. Although none of the three premiers injected themselves into the partisan debate like Wynne, each were factors based on their unique circumstances.

It is no secret that Manitoba NDP Premier Greg Selinger is facing an uphill struggle as he heads to a provincial election next year. The NDP has been in power for 16 years in Manitoba and the mood for change seems evident. A year ago, Selinger faced a rebellion of five members of his own cabinet who believed he was past his best-before date, reflected in an approval rating earlier this year of 23 per cent, the lowest among all premiers.

Not surprisingly, Selinger kept a low profile in the federal NDP campaign. But ultimately, the Liberal momentum and the provincial hangover took its toll on the NDP. The agent of change in Manitoba, where the provincial NDP is viewed as a long-in-the-tooth political establishment, became the federal Liberals. The most telling evidence came in Winnipeg Centre, a traditional NDP stronghold, where NDP incumbent

Pat Martin was crushed by more than 9,000 votes by the Liberals Robert-Falcon Ouellette.

**T**he provincial dynamic in Saskatchewan differed dramatically. In a province where conservative-minded Premier Brad Wall has held the highest approval rating among premiers for several years, the westward Liberal momentum stalled. While the party was able to increase its popular vote to a respectable 24 per cent across the province, it was enough to produce only Goodale's re-election in Regina with more than 55 per cent of the vote.

For his part, Wall played a cautious, but not insignificant role in the federal campaign. He made three interventions, first to call for a change to the equalization formula. His argument is that provinces producing hydro power receive higher equalization payments because the national formula does not account for revenue from hydro-power generation, as it does from non-renewable resources such as oil and gas. Wall's effort got little traction in the federal campaign, but is a message that plays well to his provincial audience.

Premier Wall also sent letters asking the three federal leaders to state their positions on pipeline projects, genetically modified crops and equalization. Their responses were non-committal, which Wall called "disappointing."

"They all say the same thing, unfortunately, which is basically kind of a punt back to the provinces," Wall said. "I can kind of understand that, except the challenge there is that if we don't have federal leadership on equalization, we're never going to see reform. It won't come at the provincial level because the views are so disparate; the interests are so different at the provincial table."

Finally, Wall expressed his support for the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement signed in the midst of the campaign. He argued the TPP would bring significant benefits to a commodity-exporting province

like Saskatchewan, and ultimately led to him endorsing the federal Conservatives as the best economic choice for the province.

Some believe the nod to the Conservatives was a strategic move by Wall, who is being touted by many as a possible successor to Harper. It is an idea with roots stretching back almost two years when Wall, along with Jason Kenney and Jim Prentice—prior to his ill-fated venture into Alberta politics—was among the keynote speakers at the annual Manning Centre for Democracy Conference in Ottawa. The event, which brings together key Conservatives from across Canada, is considered a must-attend event for anyone with serious ambitions. Wall's appearance was seen as a first step in testing the federal Conservative leadership waters with other potential aspirants.

But Wall, who some suggest has been quietly studying French, denies any such interest. He faces a provincial election next April and when asked the day after the October 19 election if he "absolutely rules out the possibility" of seeking the Conservative leadership, he answered: "correct." Clearly, timing of the provincial election would make a move by Wall into federal politics extremely difficult.

In Alberta, the biggest influence on the modest but still significant Liberal breakthrough in Calgary and Edmonton rests not in provincial, but municipal politics. As Alberta's economy struggles through the wrenching effects of low oil prices, the Notley government can take little comfort in the federal results where the NDP popular vote came in at a miserable 11.6 per cent, far behind the Conservatives at almost 60 per cent, and significantly lagging the Liberals at 25 per cent. There is scant evidence the provincial NDP surge of last May created any positive effects federally for the party and, judging by the federal result, the Conservative vote has again solidified in large swaths of the province since the provincial results of last May.

A bigger factor in the Liberal urban

rebirth in Alberta was popular Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi, the son of immigrants, who thrust himself into the midst of both the refugee and niqab debates. Accusing the federal Conservatives of running a campaign of fear, Nenshi said he was not a fan of the niqab, but also believed the government of Canada should not be telling people what to wear. It was an intervention that led to a very public war of words with Jason Kenney. Moreover, Nenshi's withering criticism of Canada's response to the flood of Syrian refugees also clearly struck a chord with many Alberta voters. Not surprisingly, both Trudeau and Mulcair made sure during campaign visits to Calgary that they were seen with Nenshi.

**“ In the end, the lesson is a familiar one. There is no more powerful force in politics than the mood for a change in government. Once it takes root, it becomes self-fulfilling and finds energy in the idea itself. ”**

So, in the end, the lesson is a familiar one. There is no more powerful force in politics than the mood for a change in government. Once it takes root, it becomes self-fulfilling and finds energy in the idea itself. All that's left to decide is who can tap it electorally. We got that answer emphatically on October 19. **P**

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The Vancouver skyline. The Liberals won 17 seats in BC, up from only two in 2011, while the Conservatives were reduced from 21 to only 10. Istock photo

# The B.C. Battleground that Wasn't: The View From the Wet Coast

Greg Lyle

*In the final days of the federal election campaign, more than a few analysts were predicting that British Columbia could prove to be the 905 of 2015—the crucial piece of the electoral map that would put the Conservatives over the top. In the end, the landslide that swept the rest of the country didn't stop at the B.C. border. In fact, the election was called for Justin Trudeau's Liberals before the polls even closed on the country's Pacific coast. As pollster Greg Lyle writes, it wasn't just about fuzzy math.*

Once again, the promised election night spotlight was snatched away from British Columbia voters. Despite Elections Canada changes to more closely synchronize voting hours across the country, the networks had already called the election for the Liberals before the votes in B.C. had been counted.

We can be like that in B.C., a chip on our shoulders; an easy willingness to take offence. And over the past four years, we have taken a great deal of offence to Stephen Harper.

The basic story of the BC election is actually quite similar to that of Canada as a whole.

Much of the anger against the federal government in BC was driven by style. Voters were alienated by a top-down command and control process that gagged most federal government officials as well as, it appeared, local Conservative MPs. Voters from the party's Reform Party wing who were mobilized by concerns over a similar approach from the Mulroney and Chrétien governments were particularly offended.

There were growing concerns over ethical scandals: the Robocall issue from 2011 and perceptions that the Conservatives would stoop to anything to win, the conviction and imprisonment of Dean Del Mastro for breaking election spending rules and the Duffy trial.

But B.C. has usually been more kind than the rest of Canada to Stephen Harper. In 2004, 2008 and 2011, the Harper Conservatives did considerably better in B.C. than on average in Canada. In 2011, B.C. treated Stephen Harper and the Conservatives particularly well, delivering just over 45 per cent of its votes and 21 of 36 seats. If the only problems in B.C. had been the same as elsewhere, BC should have delivered more votes and more seats than it just did. There had to be something more than the issues that were bedeviling the government everywhere else in the country. And there was. But to find the explanation we have to look back beyond this election, all the way back to the cabinet that was appointed right after the 2011 campaign.

**I**n May 2011, newly elected Toronto MP Joe Oliver was sworn in as Canada's Minister of Natural Resources. He came from an illustrious career in the investment sector but with no previous elected experience. At the top of his priority list was the Northern Gateway pipeline running from Edmonton through Northern BC to Kitimat on the North Coast.

British Columbians have obvious concerns about pipelines. They understand B.C.'s role as Canada's gateway to the Pacific Rim, but they want to ensure that any dangerous cargo shipped through their province is handled with the utmost care. They

**“ By July 2012, the damage was done. The government had failed a character test. BC had backed Stephen Harper in election after election only to feel he had turned his back on them when they needed him to listen. ”**

want to see high standards to minimize the impacts of construction and operation and they want to know there are plans and resources in place to deal with accidents and natural disasters. They look to their governments to protect these interests so that if a pipeline is approved, it meets the highest possible standards and that governments remain vigilant in monitoring their ongoing operations. They want a government that acts as an honest broker.

New to politics and keen to impress, Oliver was far from balanced in his early comments. “Gateway, in our opinion, is in the national interest”, he said within weeks of being sworn in. And with that statement the government pulled off its referee's jersey and jumped on the field. The rhetoric escalated as 2012 began. This was not Oliver freelancing. The Prime Minister himself called environmentalists “radicals” who wanted to “hijack our regulatory system to achieve their radical ideological agenda”. British Columbians who simply had reasonable questions and fears felt the government had stopped listening and was determined to have its way, regardless of the consequences to B.C.

These fears quickly came to a head in Vancouver when the Conservatives closed the Kitsilano Coast Guard base. The 2012 budget was a key moment in the government's efforts to eliminate the deficit. Already in power for six years, the Conservatives had no easy cuts available to meet their target of \$14 billion in spending reductions by 2015. As every branch of government looked for ways to make do with less, the Coast Guard developed a plan to manage its search and rescue function without the Kitsilano base.

Federal government unions searching for ways to oppose the cuts quickly

identified the base closure as a soft spot for government and mounted a public campaign to oppose the closure. They quickly tied the base closure to the larger issue of marine safety raised by Northern Gateway, questioning the government's motives. Their call was quickly picked up by politicians such as Mayor Gregor Robertson and Premier Christy Clark. Even talk radio jumped on the issue, particularly CKNW morning host and BC media icon Bill Good. The government felt it could not afford to back down, that if they gave in on this decision the unions would roll them back one cut at a time, putting in jeopardy the plan to balance the budget. But the federal communications response was weak at best and the government bled on the issue for months.

**B**y July 2012, the damage was done. The government had failed a character test. BC had backed Stephen Harper in election after election only to feel he had turned his back on them when they needed him to listen. With few exceptions, month after month, the polls showed the Conservatives had lost their B.C. electoral advantage and the new normal for the Conservative vote in B.C. was the national average.

So it was no surprise at the start of the election that the Conservatives were in trouble in BC. Redistribution had been helpful to the Tories. The province gained six new seats and analysts expected the Tories to win five of them, based on the last elections results. But the loss of the B.C. Conservative advantage and the general negative trend meant the Conservatives would struggle to hold on to what they had.

The NDP started the election as the best bet to gain from Conservative weakness. B.C. has not always been

kind to New Democrats. During the 90s, weighed down by an unpopular NDP provincial government and fighting against a populist Reform party, the NDP won only two or three seats per election. But as the Reform transformed into the Conservative party and memories of the provincial government faded, the NDP under Jack Layton were able to build up a core of eight to 10 seats based on Vancouver Island and East Vancouver. They also started to see some success in the Interior and in Vancouver suburbs such as North Surrey and the Tri-City area. Thomas Mulcair added to these advantages as the campaign began. B.C. voters saw him as Harper's equal on competence while leading on compassion and positive change.

Liberal prospects in B.C. seemed dim. The Liberals had won just two seats in 2011. Their best election in the past 20 years was in 2006, when they won nine seats. More typical were the six seats they won in 2008. Bullish Liberals eyed a new open seat in Vancouver and one or two relatively close suburban Vancouver seats as possible wins.

The Liberal managers delayed their initial response to the dropping of the writs in order to give Justin Trudeau time to fly to Vancouver for his campaign launch. He also made a dedicated B.C. campaign ad during his third campaign visit on September 10 and 11. However, if you judge an area's priority by the amount of time the leader spends there, it was clear the Liberal war room was not betting heavily on B.C. as Trudeau visited a total of just five times in the 11-week campaign.

Once the campaign began, the developments in B.C. mirrored those of the rest of the country. For much of August, the Liberals shored up their leadership weaknesses. Once they dropped their deficit bomb late in August, they began to pull in centre-left voters who were uninspired with the NDP promise of "some change, some day" and rallied to the Liberal message of "real change now". As it became clear that the Liberals were moving ahead of the NDP, bandwagon and strategic voters joined their more ideologically driven neighbours in leaving the

NDP and moving to the Liberals.

Despite the final Liberal surge, the Greens and the NDP held their own on election night. Green leader Elizabeth May retained her seat on Vancouver Island, although she was unable to expand her beach head. This despite several promising Island races including Victoria, where the Liberals dropped out of the race leaving the Greens in a head-to-head race with NDP star Murray Rankin.

**“ For much of August, the Liberals shored up their leadership weaknesses. Once they dropped their deficit bomb late in August, they began to pull in centre-left voters who were uninspired with the NDP promise of “some change, some day” and rallied to the Liberal message of “real change now”. ”**

The NDP lost votes but gained seats. They dropped six points in their vote share but ended up with three more seats. The NDP benefited from their relatively high initial starting point from the last election and the fact that, while they may not have gained votes compared to 2011, they didn't lose any either. Not only did they sweep all the Island seats with the exception of Green Leader Elizabeth May's, as well as holding on to their East Vancouver redoubts, they won several Tri-City and Southern Interior seats. The NDP gained from the Tories on the Island and in Interior swing seats as the Conservatives did lose votes on an absolute basis.

**T**he big drama in B.C. came from the showdown between the Liberals and the Conservatives. Tories experienced the largest drop in their share of vote in the country—down a third from 46 per cent to 30 per cent. In our first-past-the-post system, that resulted in the

loss of two thirds of their seats, a drop from 29 seats using the 2011 votes on 2015 boundaries down to 10. Some losses were shocking. The Tories lost all three seats in the prosperous North Shore suburbs of Vancouver. In Cloverdale-Langley, a 17,000 vote advantage over the Liberals in 2011 votes turned into a 5,000-vote loss to the Liberals in 2015. In Kelowna-Lake Country, a 23,000 win over the Liberals in 2011 turned into a 4,000 vote defeat in this election.

The Liberals ended up winning all but two seats in the City of Vancouver and a strong majority of seats in the rest of Greater Vancouver's suburbs. Even more shocking is how close they came to winning even more seats. They were about 500 votes away from winning Burnaby South from the NDP and Richmond Centre from the Conservatives. They were 1,500 votes away from winning the Central Okanagan seat and from defeating a Conservative star, former Surrey mayor Dianne Watts, in South Surrey-White Rock, both bedrock Conservative seats.

With a few notable exceptions, the Tories did not lose because their vote went down dramatically. On average, the Conservative vote only dropped by 2,500 votes a seat in the Lower Mainland and the Interior. The Liberals won by mobilizing new voters. B.C.'s turnout surged from an average of 60 per cent in 2011 to 70 per cent this year. These new voters gave the Liberals an average increase of 14,000 votes in those regions.

At the end of the day, the Liberals won 17 B.C. seats, up from only two in 2011. The NDP actually increased its seats from 12 to 14, while the Conservatives were reduced from 21 to only 10.

So long as the Liberals can keep those new voters voting, the Liberals have a strong base to work with. The challenge for the Liberals will be to maintain that enthusiasm through four years of the day-to-day reality of government. **P**

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Radio-Canada news anchor Céline Galipeau on the set of Le Téléjournal. Catherine Cano writes the network's news audiences have actually been growing, despite incursions by new media. Radio-Canada photo

## Campaign Coverage: Have the Media Reinvented Themselves?

Catherine Cano

*This election campaign was not only the longest in modern Canadian history, it was arguably the one with the fewest journalists held captive on leaders' tours since the days before campaign trains. Nowhere was the revolution in election campaign coverage more apparent than in the convergence between traditional and social media organizations—a development veteran news executive Catherine Cano says provided audiences with unprecedented coverage.*

**B**ack in late July, during a discussion on election planning, I received a strong hint from a Conservative source that I should take my vacation sooner rather than later. What? I was about to leave on a long-planned week with my family. I went quickly from disbelief to dismay—I was going to be in real trouble.

No one, including me, wanted to believe this campaign would start in mid-summer. Suddenly, we—the

media, were scrambling, figuring out how to cover an eleven-week campaign on a five-week budget.

Some of us were already planning to do things differently this time. We wanted to cover the issues that matter to Canadians rather than the horse race. We wanted to provide better analysis and understanding of the offer. We wanted to reach out to a broader audience, and hear what they had to say.

For many years, the media have assigned reporters to follow the leaders—on buses and planes, wherever they chose to go—at a mounting cost. Not this time—a major departure from past practice. Early on, and mostly by choice, most media outlets decided to join the leaders' tours only for a few weeks of the campaign. Some of them did not at all. This time, we challenged ourselves to break free from the staged, highly controlled, low-risk events organized for the leaders of the three parties aspiring to power. These events were still very much about control and avoiding surprises, ensuring that spontaneous moments would be rare.

The media focus on issues that emerged on and off the trail made sure the parties and leaders were accountable. There was no concerted effort but most media decided to spend more time in the field, closer to people, and to capture what mattered and resonated most for them. Engaging with Canadians had to become our priority in reality and virtually.

“Who would like a selfie with me—I’ve got a few minutes?” asked Justin Trudeau, appearing spontaneous. But this was not just a question out of the blue. At each campaign stop, the Liberal leader asked to schedule time for selfies with people. He would handle the phone and press the button himself. He had mastered the technique perfectly, never missing a great shot.

This may sound like a cute and unimportant anecdote, but it was actually pretty savvy. Hundreds of those photos and videos have been posted on

**“ This time, we challenged ourselves to break free from the staged, highly controlled, low-risk events organized for the leaders of the three parties aspiring to power. These events were still very much about control and avoiding surprises, ensuring that spontaneous moments would be rare. ”**

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vine and other social networks, spreading virally. This was evidence of a campaign that understood the power of social media, the strategic importance of engaging with voters, and how to use it.

**“ As social media has changed the way political parties reach out, it has also changed the way of covering the news. For most media organizations, it was time to understand the opportunity to cover election campaigns differently. ”**

As social media has changed the way political parties reach out, it has also changed the way of covering the news. For most media organizations, it was time to understand the opportunity to cover election campaigns differently.

This historically long campaign would be even more challenging. Would Canadians care in the summer? How would we reach them and where? How could we stay relevant in an era of information overload? How can traditional news organizations stay in the game in this increasingly digital world where politicians can speak directly to people?

The answer to the first question came quickly and powerfully. At first, Canadians did not pay much attention. But then came the biggest story with the most influence on the Canadian

campaign. Few media organizations had people on the ground before the famous picture of baby Alan lying on the beach. But the whole world was aware of the migrant crisis—and so were we. Through hundreds of witnesses and migrants themselves, we had access to photos and videos of courage and despair. If there is one story that consolidated the power of social media this year, this is the one.

**T**he migrants' story had a huge impact, as it created a state of virtual panic here in Canada. It demonstrated a major divide among parties and forced a questioning of Canadian values. The debate moved from opening our doors to more people from Syria and Iraq, to the issue of security and the right to wear the niqab at citizenship ceremonies. The online conversation became unstoppable, and the information exchange became an avalanche—almost out of control, and potentially dangerous.

The volumes reached the point where traditional news organizations could not keep up; so much information needed to be filtered and validated.

More and more, we discount what many call the traditional or mainstream media. There are reasons for this. More people than ever—not just young people—get their news from Facebook and Twitter, which are becoming increasingly intergenerational. There were 23 million conversations related to the election this time. Political platforms have been announced on Facebook and leaders take questions directly from Canadians via social media, giving these platforms instant credibility. There is no doubt that Facebook has

become the must-read platform as the engagement reaches an unprecedented level.

**“ More and more, we discount what many call the traditional or mainstream media. There are reasons for this. More people than ever—not just young people—get their news from Facebook and Twitter, which are becoming increasingly inter-generational. ”**

This is part of the story. Admittedly, social media took the lead in the Canadian campaign. But there is also no doubt that the so-called “traditional media” have redefined themselves and moved to include all forms of digital media in their coverage. The approach was three-pronged.

First and foremost, while so much information has been initiated and shared on social media, it was imperative both to report the facts and to provide solid analysis and explanations of the key issues. Second, we had to ensure that our content was accessible on all platforms and adapted to each specific audience; thirdly, we had to create a space to engage directly with Canadians where they are.

This election brought fact-checking to the fore—certainly the most popular feature with all audiences, no matter where they were getting their news. Radio-Canada first introduced a segment called “reality check” in the 2004 federal campaign. It was a huge hit, and still is. Today, most news organizations have one form or another of reality check, such as the Canadian Press’s “Baloney Metre”. In fact, it is so effective that the parties have started their own, competing directly with the media. For example, during the debates, political parties

were checking their opponents’ statements in real time, ready to post a counterattack. Elizabeth May had videotaped comments to be pushed on Twitter—a strategy that reached thousands of people and ensured that the Green Party was not left out.

The biggest challenge for news organizations is that news consumers are not all moving towards digital platforms—at least, not yet. In fact, they use many platforms at different times during the day. Television and radio, for instance, still attract a large audience. At Radio-Canada, we have not only maintained our market share, we have increased it. To stay relevant to that audience, our newscast has become a hybrid, providing the major news stories with more depth and context. During the day, people want to know what happened; in the evening, they want to know why it happened. To that end, we presented five special editions of the *Téléjournal* with Céline Galipeau on the state of Canada. The first 10 minutes were the top news stories and the next 25 a more in-depth look at one issue. It paid off.

**“ There is no doubt that news organizations understand the power of social media like Facebook, search engines like Google and video-sharing websites like YouTube. Most media pushed their breaking news and original content on-line and onto social media during the campaign. ”**

There is no doubt that news organizations understand the power of social media like Facebook, search engines like Google and video-sharing websites like YouTube. Most media pushed their breaking news and original content on-line and onto social

media during the campaign. We also saw more data journalism providing audiences with interactive tools.

In turn, the digital leaders are highly interested in news media content and this election saw new partnerships. Radio-Canada and CTV had an agreement with Facebook, looking at quantitative data and seeing trends across the country. CBC News joined Google to create a page where users can pin themselves on a map and tell others why voting is important to them and challenge friends to “pledge to vote”. In an effort to hear the voices of the two million new young voters, Radio-Canada invited them to talk about the issues important to them and ask the candidates questions in a 15-second video on Instagram.

CBC and Radio-Canada innovated in more ways than one. Vote Compass was a very popular on-line tool used by more than 1.5 million Canadians to compare their views to the positions of Canada’s major parties on the issues. But the biggest digital success came with *Elect R* and *Résultats 2015*, which was the one-stop destination for Radio-Canada and CBC News election night coverage. The goal was to let Canadians customize their own election night with favourite ridings and candidates to follow, watching or listening to live TV and radio broadcasts, getting photos, stories and breaking news as well as all the results—a one-of-a-kind experience.

There is no doubt that this election campaign has seen a change in the way media create and distribute their content. So yes, the media are re-inventing themselves and no, not as quickly as they should. But it is important to remember that while most news organizations have fewer resources, they are producing more content than ever to meet the needs of multiple audiences across multiple platforms. **P**

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# Facebook and the Federal Election: A New Platform for Civic Engagement

Kevin Chan

*With digital technologies and platforms, Canadian voters now have a new and important way to discuss issues and to engage directly with each other and their leaders. Facebook, with over 20 million Canadian users, is a platform like no other. Recognizing this potential, Facebook Canada sought to play a helpful civic engagement role in the 2015 Federal Election.*

Canadian voters have traditionally had numerous options with which to engage in meaningful ways during election campaigns, both with each other and with candidates vying for public office—town halls, public rallies, door knocking. These activities offer opportunities for direct and often face-to-face engagement, a unique quality of the democratic process.

With digital technologies and platforms, Canadian voters now have new and important ways online to discuss issues and to engage directly with each other and their leaders.

With over 20 million unique Canadians on our service, Facebook Canada sought to play a helpful civic engagement role in the 2015 federal election. We approached this challenge in a few ways:

1. We helped connect Canadians with their candidates and party leaders—a natural extension of our mission to make the world more open and connected;

2. We helped show how Canadians are engaging and talking about the election by offering insights gleaned from Facebook conversation data; and
3. We encouraged Canadians to get out and vote.

Facebook breaks down the barriers between Canadians and their political leaders. Well before the official campaign period started, and throughout the writ period, we worked with the parties to develop organic and paid engagement strategies. We witnessed a number of innovative examples and best practices from the election that are worth highlighting.

Over the course of the campaign, all three main party leaders participated in live Q&A sessions on Facebook, enjoying an authentic dialogue with Canadians. NDP Leader Tom Mulcair was the first to hold a Facebook Q&A, and used the platform to engage directly with voters on a wide variety of poli-

cy issues, from the small business tax rate to government surveillance. Conservative Party Leader Stephen Harper conducted a live Q&A on Facebook the day the Trans-Pacific Partnership was announced, dedicating the entire session to getting his party's position out on that important issue.

Facebook also provides party leaders with an opportunity to be more lighthearted with Canadians, and reveal aspects of their personality that are harder to get across in a traditional campaign event. Justin Trudeau was the first political leader globally to take the Facebook 60-second Challenge, answering rapid-fire questions designed to help Canadians get to know him better. For example, we learned the last movie he saw was Frozen (for the 19th time because he has kids) and that he'd choose poutine over a BeaverTail as his favourite food.

Another trend we saw this election was the use of Facebook to make exclusive policy and political announcements. Leaders turned to Facebook because it allowed them to drive engagement, shore up support, and reach far more people than a typical press conference. For example, Harper announced a commitment to renew funding for Brain Canada exclusively on Facebook. Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi used our platform to speak to a national audience on the importance of municipal infrastructure as a federal campaign issue.

Working with the Mayor's Office and the University of Ottawa's iVote—Je Vote, Facebook supported Nenshi in a live Facebook address to Canadians across the country.

“ *Trudeau unveiled the full Liberal campaign platform live on Facebook. This was an innovative way for Trudeau to connect directly with his Facebook supporters.* ”

Perhaps most notably of all, Trudeau unveiled the full Liberal campaign platform live on Facebook. This was an innovative way for Trudeau to connect directly with his over 450,000 Facebook supporters. He asked them to send him questions directly while

“ *From June 1 to October 19, more than 7 million people had more than 50 million interactions about the Canadian Election on Facebook.* ”

they watched the livestream, and then spent another half an hour afterwards answering them live in a town hall.

Canadians go to Facebook to talk about the things that matter to them, and this election was no exception. From June 1 to October 19, there were 7 million people and 50 million interactions about the Canadian Election on Facebook. These spontaneous conversations between real people clearly demonstrate that Canadians very much cared about this election.

To provide insights into this phenomenon, we worked with Facebook's data science team to better understand, in

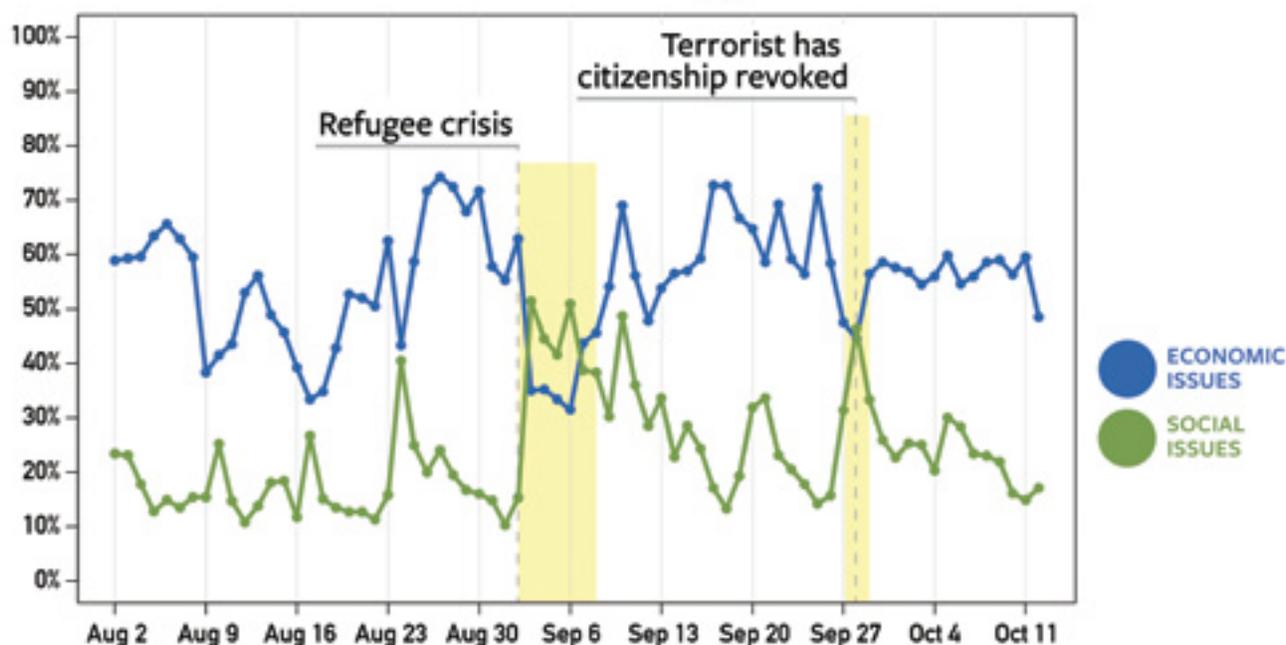
an anonymized and aggregated way, what leaders, parties and issues Canadians were talking about, and how these changed over the course of the campaign. Partnerships with CTV News and Radio-Canada helped us tell some of these stories.

For example, we found that Harper dominated the conversation on Facebook throughout the campaign until Election Day, which is not unusual for an incumbent prime minister nearing 10 years in office. It is interesting to note though that on Election Day, an hour before the polls closed in the province of Quebec, Trudeau leaptfrogged ahead of Harper as the most talked about leader in the province.

f Election Canada

Facebook time series

## Conversations: the Refugee Crisis





Mulcair had dipped to fourth place behind Duceppe. Based on the results of the election in Quebec, Facebook conversation may very well have been an early indicator of things to come. In terms of the most discussed political issues on Facebook, it is perhaps not surprising that the economy was top-of-mind throughout most of the campaign. However at the height of the refugee crisis at the end of August, social issues did over-take the economy as the most talked about campaign subject, and did so again when the government revoked the citizenship of the Toronto terrorist (see time series chart on the previous page).

Facebook also partnered with the *Maclean's/CityTV Leader's Debate*, the Munk Debate on Foreign Policy, Radio-Canada's debate, and TVA's *Face à Face*. We livestreamed the Maclean's and Munk debates on Facebook, ensuring accessibility to everyone with an Internet connection, and for each debate, pulled data insights on the most talked-about moments, leaders,

and issues. Interestingly, Trudeau, who trailed Harper in terms of volume of conversation on Facebook throughout the campaign, consistently rose to become the most talked about leader during the debates.

With over 20 million Canadians on Facebook, we felt strongly that we should help to get out the vote. Voting is a deeply personal act, but it can also be incredibly social. Our belief that Canadians would be more likely to vote if they saw that their family and friends on Facebook were also voting led us to partner with Elections Canada on two important initiatives during the campaign.

First, for the International Day of Democracy on September 15, we worked with Elections Canada to send a story to all voting-age Canadians in their News Feeds promoting online voter registration (image above) The millions who saw this story had the option of sharing it with their family and friends, or clicking through to Elections Canada's online voter reg-

istration tool. On Election Day, we partnered again with Elections Canada to place a prominent "I'm A Voter" megaphone at the top of voting-age Canadians' News Feeds, reminding them of their civic responsibility to vote and giving them the opportunity to share that they did. By our own calculations, the Megaphone reached 12.4M Canadians on Election Day, resulting in 814K shares.

Additionally, we partnered with comedian Rick Mercer in support of his "I Will Vote" profile picture filter. Inspired by Facebook's own "Pride Filter", which went viral after the US Supreme Court ruled in favour of same-sex marriage earlier this year, the initiative allowed Canadians to filter their Facebook profile picture with a public pledge to vote. Mercer's theory was that "voting is contagious", and by urging Canadians to filter their profile pics, we hoped it would spread the importance of voting across people's social networks.

While Facebook provided the online platform and the digital tools, it was ultimately the millions of Canadians, and their political parties, candidates and leaders, who made use of them and pioneered new kinds of political interactions and dialogue. **P**

*Kevin Chan is Head of Public Policy, Canada for Facebook Inc. In this capacity he leads the company's public policy efforts in Canada, facilitating an ongoing dialogue with policy-makers about Facebook's products and services, and engaging on a broad range of issues that impact the Internet sector.*



Justin Trudeau in another selfie moment that drove his coverage on social media. Andrew MacDougall writes: “Meet the new normal.” Adam Scotti photo.

## How Social Was it? The Team that Won the Web War Won the Campaign

Andrew MacDougall

*Every campaign since Barack Obama’s 2008 successful run for the United States presidency has been described as the first truly social media campaign. In Canada’s 2015 federal election campaign, the playing field had changed. Justin Trudeau lived through the race on social media the same way many of the people under 40 who voted for him live—naturally. His older, more conventional rivals were out-selfied, out-tweeted and outrun.*

**I**n the week following this fall’s federal election the leaders’ Twitter accounts fell silent. Instagram feeds remained stuck on October 19, the political Hiroshima of voting day. Facebook pages went without updates. Well, all but one leader’s, of course. On October 20, Justin Trudeau’s digital channels pushed out the images and messages of a leader busy at work in his new role as Prime Minister-designate of Canada.

What role did social media play in the 42nd federal election? Did the bouquets and brickbats traded over Twitter help push Trudeau over the top? Were local campaigns able to use social media to get out their vote? Or were they largely a distraction, a forum for tripping up candidates and drumming them off the campaign stage?

Much—perhaps too much—has been written about social media and its ability to influence political outcomes. President Barack Obama is frequently held up as the poster boy for digital change; his rise from outsider to Commander-in-Chief is often attributed to his ability to connect with younger generations through these new communications platforms.

**“ Seven million Facebook users contributed to over 50 million interactions about the election, including posts, likes, comments and shares. There were over 3.2 million tweets tagged with the #elxn42 hashtag on Twitter, five times more than the last go around. ”**

But are these channels the key to reaching young voters who are disenchanted and disengaged with politics? Or are they only as strong as the source material behind them? If the leader and the message aren't compelling or engaging, can they be dressed up that way online?

While digital channels were in existence during the last federal election in 2011, this was to be the first Canadian campaign where they were to play a significant, if not central, role. With fewer of us watching so-called “linear” television, the digital playground was to be a significant front

**“ While digital channels were in existence during the last federal election in 2011, this was to be the first Canadian campaign where they were to play a significant, if not central, role. ”**

in the advertising war. Did it play out that way?

Upon first glance, the numbers certainly sound impressive. For example, seven million Facebook users contributed to over 50 million interactions about the election, including posts, likes, comments and shares. There were over 3.2 million tweets tagged with the #elxn42 hashtag on Twitter, five times more than the last go around. New channels like Instagram were populated with photos of the leaders and their campaigns on a daily basis. Parties plonked their ads online.

But did any of it *matter*?

While it's too early yet to fully quantify the impact that digital and social media had on this campaign, early returns show that Trudeau and his team did a better job of bringing their preferred ballot question of “change” to the electorate via digital platforms.

And of course, there were also digital attacks; indeed, the most significant effects had nothing to do with the use of social media during the campaign, they were about what candidates said there before they started campaigning.

**E**very campaign features the removal of a candidate or two for boneheaded-ness. But the bloody digital parade from the 42nd campaign was *sans pareil*. Meet the new normal; the urge to commit our every thought and emotion to the digital ether isn't going to go away. The next generation of candidates will have lived their lives in public long before they get into public life. And that, as we've now witnessed, has consequences.

First, the Conservatives turfed a Montreal candidate for promoting

the NDP on Facebook (whoops). The NDP then punted a Nova Scotia candidate for her own Facebook misdeeds, wherein she suggested that Israel engaged in “ethnic cleansing”. Next, up it was the Liberals, who lost a Calgary-area candidate over a series of controversial tweets drafted when she was a teenager (she's now 21). Not to be outdone, Conservative Gilles Guibord was sent overboard for making sexist remarks in the comments section of a newspaper's website. And in perhaps the campaign's most memorable social media snafu, the NDP's Alex Johnstone made rude comments under a picture of Auschwitz in 2008 and then confessed to a reporter in 2015 that she didn't know what Auschwitz was.

**“ Meet the new normal; the urge to commit our every thought and emotion to the digital ether isn't going to go away. The next generation of candidates will have lived their lives in public long before they get into public life. And that, as we've now witnessed, has consequences. ”**

Of course, digital and social channels didn't make candidates do and say stupid things; they've always done and said stupid things. All these platforms have done is preserve them is aspic so they can be unearthed by political research teams at the opportune moment. Social media doesn't kill candidates, stupid candidates kill candidates.

Gaffes aside, digital and social platforms did play a more positive role in framing the leaders in their bids to be prime minister. For Harper, the chosen message was “proven leadership” and for the two opposition leaders the digital pitch was for “change”.

It was the latter that proved the more powerful online. And it was the Liberals that deployed it more effectively. In many ways, it was an open door on which to push; research demonstrates that people prefer to share positive material on their social channels. By way of contrast, only the committed partisan is ready to sling mud in the service of their preferred party on public channels. Trudeau’s pledges of optimism and “hope and hard work” were therefore better suited to mass distribution on social media than Harper’s dire warnings of economic chaos, or Tom Mulcair’s more measured appeal for a responsible and serious NDP government.

**“The Liberals’ advertising generated more views online than either of their main opponents, across all platforms. They also (largely) stuck to a sunnier tone, in keeping with Trudeau’s main themes of positivity and change.”**

The medium is also better suited to Trudeau’s personality. A strong retail politician, Trudeau clearly relishes the crowds and encouraged lots of personal contact. This also translated into lots of selfies for both his, and his admirers’, social channels. It contributed to a digitally palpable sense of momentum, especially in the campaign’s final weeks; almost every Trudeau post, tweet,

and picture in the run-up to e-day referenced crowds of people touting “change”.

In contrast, Stephen Harper’s digital efforts were rote, business-like, and devoid of emotion—much like the caricature of the man himself. They attempted to generate engagement and issue support but rarely succeeded at reaching beyond his core supporters. Meanwhile, Mulcair’s annoying habit of posting messages in the third person on his Twitter feed matched his campaign’s overall discomfort at playing the role of “centrist” New Democrats. The whole point of these channels is authenticity and it came through that both Harper and Mulcair weren’t digital natives.

Of course, Harper and Mulcair are political *natives*, and it was in the raw politics that their advantage over Trudeau was supposed to lie. Both the Conservative and NDP presumed that Trudeau would mispeak his way into a gaffe worthy of rebroadcasting through advertising.

Unfortunately for them, not only did Trudeau avoid any serious errors, his (federally) novice campaign team also came up with the more effective advertising and then deployed it more effectively online.

The proof is in the pudding: the Liberals’ advertising generated more views online than either of their main opponents, across all platforms. They also (largely) stuck to a sunnier tone, in keeping with Trudeau’s main themes of positivity and change.

First, the Liberals took the Conservatives’ main attack head on, with Trudeau repeating the Tory negative and declaring himself “ready” to govern. And then, in the ad of the campaign, he enlisted 94-year old former Mississauga mayor Hazel McCullion to rebut Harper’s assertions that Trudeau would cut benefits for seniors. It was an original and compelling way to derail a Harper attack—and it quickly generated

250,000 views online in the final week of the campaign.

The Liberals also made the most effective use of their owned channels to encourage people to “go knock doors” and vote. Without these types of calls to action, social posts are no more valuable than hot air.

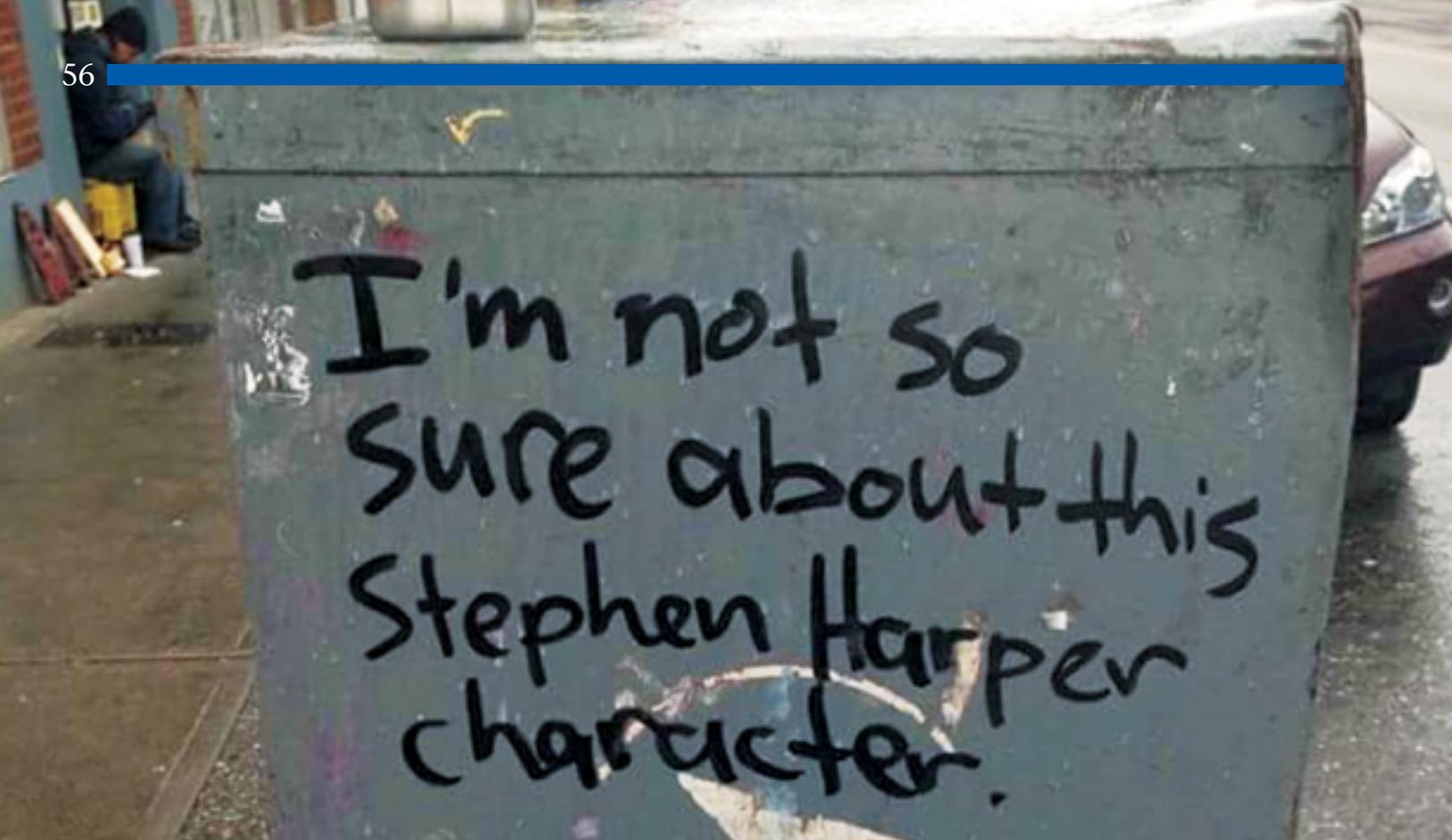
In the end, it was fatigue with Harper and his political style that propelled the desire for change. Canadians had two options for that change; as long as Mr. Harper was able to keep Justin Trudeau and Tom Mulcair competitive with each other, he had a chance for political survival.

By performing ably on the stump and in debates, and by driving his ballot question of change both on and offline, Trudeau was able to overtake the NDP and become Canada’s 23rd prime minister.

**“While it is tempting to credit digital and social media with the Trudeau victory, in the end they were only reflections of a candidate that was better-prepared, determined to be positive, and comfortable in his own skin.”**

And while it is tempting to credit digital and social media with the Trudeau victory, in the end they were only reflections of a candidate that was better-prepared, determined to be positive, and comfortable in his own skin. After nearly ten years of the cool calculations of Harper, Canadians were ready to step into the sun. **P**

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I'm not so  
sure about this  
Stephen Harper  
character.

Stephen Harper kept saying the election was “not about me.” Millennial voters were not so sure. Tumbler image

## Death by a Million Clicks: How the Tories Failed to Win Millennials

Grace MacDonald

*In this election campaign, public perceptions of leaders, especially among millennials, were shaped and shifted more than ever on social media. Youth turnout at the polls, especially in advance voting, was unprecedented. The combination of social media impact and millennial voter engagement was likely a key factor in the outcome. Montreal millennial Grace MacDonald looks at the campaign for her target demographic.*

**A**n awful lot can happen in two months. That kind of time span could be a decent chunk of a sports season or a solid childhood summer vacation. This year's election campaign took even longer, clocking in at a record 78 days; long enough for an entire battalion of young Canadians to reach voting age.

Surprisingly, one subset of the population that didn't lose steam was the youth vote (as none of us call ourselves), a group often dismissed as being unreachable due to its apathy. But apathy is the one thing that

we didn't see this year—at least not from millennials. From the Montreal protests of Printemps '15 to the highest youth turnout in recent memory, young Canadians have shown that they have plenty to say about policy. Many have chalked this up to the success of Barack Obama's 2008 campaign, which was the most successful so far in harnessing the youth demographic, and which triumphed partly because of it.

Everyone loves an underdog story. The Green Party's exclusion from campaign events such as the major debates might have earned them sympathy regardless, but Elizabeth May managed to turn it into an opportunity to sass her way into the spotlight with a parallel performance on Twitter that made her a star with young voters on social media. But it takes more than sass to win votes, and the Greens held on to May's single seat based on her policy and personality; but also made no gains.

While the NDP tried energetically to overcome the burden of the much beloved Jack Layton's popularity and relatability, Mulcair never quite connected on social media, and his efforts to do so registered among young voters—and possibly the wider electorate—as inauthenticity. While door-knocking with a group of nearly a dozen Liberal volunteers in Montreal, we crossed paths with a posse of NPD knockers only two strong.

This played out on Election Day when the former Orange Wave votes jumped ship, with moderates across the country shifting to red, and even the moderate right shifting over. The gains for the Bloc took some of us by surprise, but perhaps they shouldn't have. Nine years is an awfully long time, and even Bloc voters whose ideals align with Stephen Harper's have gotten sick of him, but they were hardly about to give more power to the Liberals; no matter how frustrated they were with the Tories.

Having burned through a great deal of their goodwill, it probably would have ben-

“No matter how many times Harper claimed that this election was not about him, the photomanipulations and humour posts certainly were: and once millennials started to edit phallic objects into his press photographs, his fate was most likely sealed.”

efitted the Tories with young voters to enter the race with a fraction more humility and self-awareness transmitted on social media. There's been an unusual amount of discussion regarding social media in this election, and it began before the campaign was launched, which should have given both the NDP and the Conservatives to plan social media strategies that were more than just an extension of their press releases.

Social media is typically deeply Americentric in both its news and the lens through which that information is ingested. And while most of it was the expected intelligent (or otherwise) discourse, there was also a surprising burst of memes and macros, most of them mocking Harper himself. No matter how many times he claimed that this election was not about him, the photomanipulations and humour posts certainly were: and once millennials started to edit cartoon sex toys into his wire photos, his fate was most likely sealed.

And right before the election itself, Harper affiliated himself with a known racist, sexist addict; and it turned out that what the public knew about Rob Ford at the time was only the tip of the iceberg. Almost immediately after Harper aligned himself with the Toronto sideshow of the Ford brothers, excerpts were leaked from *Uncontrollable*, the insider's story of Ford's spiral into abusing not only hard drugs, but the people around him. To anyone with a newsfeed and a memory span longer than a week, the damage was done.

A lot of these gaffes can be traced to the same source, which is that the Conservatives have been the slowest to adapt. They're used to operating in a world

where it was difficult, but still possible, to control the flow of information and therefore opinion. Information is the currency of this political age, and it flows faster than ever before in human history: secrets are now an endangered species.

Mulcair was eclipsed by Trudeau on social media, but the mainstream news made up for it in defining him for politically engaged millennials: In attempting to be more appealing, the NDP leader watered himself down to the point of watering down his party's positions.

Funnily enough, Trudeau's online presence truly exploded after the win: when the rest of the world discovered that our new leader is conventionally attractive. Apparently, this is such a rare quality in a politician that global citizens had no idea how to react, other than loudly expressing their lust on Twitter. Ironically, the same young demographic that may be called shallow by opponents for helping him win a majority has been largely unimpressed by this. Personal and political blogs have decried this reaction for glossing over Trudeau's flaws; reminding us that while he might be preferable to the alternatives, that doesn't mean he's perfect.

But he is a welcome change, and one that was a long time coming. From the campaign length to the voter turnout, this year's election broke records; we can only hope that *one* of those sets a new precedent. Because if campaigns keep getting longer, the debate schedule will start looking like a hockey season. **P**

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Column / Don Newman

## Why Justin May Be the Tougher Trudeau

Sons of famous men often have trouble living up to their fathers' accomplishments and reputations. Even if they have what, for most people, would be a perfectly good career, it usually falls short of their father's accomplishments and because of that they are judged to be failures. Even the success they do have is often attributed to their more famous and successful progenitor.

Until the evening of October 19, Justin Trudeau was in danger of falling into that classification. His father, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, was a dominant figure in the second half of the 20th Century as Canada's prime minister—patriating the Constitution, authoring the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, staring down separatist terrorism in October of 1970 and winning the 1980 Quebec referendum. True, all of those actions often generated as much contempt as admiration, but there is no doubt that Trudeau the elder was a larger-than-life figure whose legacy his eldest son Justin inherited when he gave the eulogy at his father's funeral in 2000.

He also threw caution to the wind when, in 2008, he adopted his father's calling and became a politician. Following directly in his father's footsteps invited inevitable comparison, but so far, it is the son who is out-achieving the father.

When people think of Pierre Trudeau they think of his entire political career, and measure Justin against that. What is fair is to consider where Justin is in his own career, and then compare that against where his father was at the same stage in his.

Pierre Trudeau was recruited by the Liberals in 1965 as one of the three Quebec "wise men" to run for the party in the general election that year. Parachuted into the safe, largely anglophone riding of Mount Royal, Trudeau cruised to victory, immediately became one of Prime Minister Lester Pearson's parliamentary secretaries and then was promoted to justice minister. When Pearson stepped down in early 1968, he personally encouraged Trudeau to run to succeed him as Liberal leader. Trudeau automatically became Prime Minister, setting off Trudeaumania and propelling the Liberals to a majority government after two minorities under Pearson. A more gilded pathway to the top smoothed by others is hard to imagine. When he won his majority in June 1968, he was three months shy of his 49th birthday.

Compare that with the younger Trudeau. In 2008 he won a contested nomination in the gritty, franco-phone riding of Papineau in the heart of Montreal, then took on and defeated a previously popular sitting Bloc Québécois MP and won after a tough fight. He entered Parliament and went directly to the backbench on the Opposition side. No one was seeking to smooth his way. Senior Liberals, some with ambitions of their own, were not prepared to risk comparison with a Trudeau, albeit one many were privately dismissing as a lightweight.

After the Liberal debacle of the 2011 election, the party was reduced to a rump of 34 seats, the New Democrats were now the official opposition and many were openly judging the electoral wounds fatal. Liberals and almost everyone in the other political par-

ties still believed that Justin Trudeau was a lightweight and that if he did run for the leadership it would be at a later date. But Trudeau, his friends Gerry Butts, Tom Pitfield, Dominique Leblanc and others realized that if he did not run in 2013, there might not be a party left to lead after another election. As it turned out, this was Trudeau's time.

The historically long 2015 campaign was meant to expose Trudeau as "just not ready," as the Conservative attack ads said. So were a series of debates that Harper contrived and NDP leader Tom Mulcair agreed to. But as the campaign and the debates progressed Trudeau progressed along with them, gaining in confidence and gaining in the polls. By election night, the Liberals and their leader were in full command. Justin Trudeau had taken the Liberals from third place to a majority government of 184 MPs. He was one and a half months short of his forty-fourth birthday—five years younger than his father when he became prime minister—and had conquered a much tougher path.

During one of the debates, after a particularly egregious slur against his father by Mulcair, Trudeau put him in his place with the reply: "I am proud to be the son of Pierre Elliott Trudeau and the values he stood for."

On the night of October 19, you could only imagine the feelings of pride were being reciprocated. **P**

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In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia a father carries his daughter to Gevgelija train station where they will register with the authorities before proceeding north towards Serbia. Like many others here, this family is from Syria. Flickr photo: Stephen Ryan/ IFRC

## Crisis and the European Union, Part Two: The Refugees

Jeremy Kinsman

*The European Union was born as the dream of pragmatic visionaries as a response to and bulwark against the manifest horror of organized evil. Its strengths were evident for decades before two successive calamities—the 2008 financial meltdown and the 2015 refugee crisis—exposed its vulnerabilities. While both have tested the EU’s structural and philosophical soundness, veteran Canadian diplomat Jeremy Kinsman warns never to bet against Brussels.*

**T**he greatest migration crisis since the Second World War is testing the European Union’s resiliency, some say its survivability. The problem is here to stay, as the Syrian war has no end in sight.

Chancellor Angela Merkel insists Germany can settle a million arrivals this year. But Germany’s EU partners, reflecting a surge in nativist public push-back, are cautious.

The 21st century has been rough on the historic European project. The “Europe, whole and free” that emerged

in 1989 is fractious, stumbling, and in Ukraine, violent. Retiring US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey recently told Politico that “As recently as four years ago, white papers and plans within the (NATO) alliance began with some version of the following sentence, ‘Europe is experiencing an age of prosperity and peace unlike any in its history.’ My challenge to my NATO colleagues now is, ‘If you can still write that sentence with candour and a straight face, please give me a call. Because I just don’t see it that way.”

Publics push back against the voluntarily pooling of sovereignty symbolized by the marquee achievements of a common currency, and a border-free common travel space under the Schengen Accord. Euro-skeptics doubted the EU would survive the evidence of dysfunction exposed by the financial crash and economic slump in 2008 that ultimately prompted the Greek insolvency crisis.

**B**oth crises, financial and refugee, challenge the principle of solidarity that has been the *leitmotif* of the European project since its beginnings in the rubble of the Second World War.

But a longer positive view sees such crises as normal for the never-ending EU work-in-progress that adapts the unprecedented political project from crisis to crisis. It emerges strengthened from each, institutions and dynamics adjusted to ever-changing political complexities of a 28-member union of half a billion disparate inhabitants.

For international media, the Greek debt crisis was a perfect storm of destructive collision on financial, behavioral, political, and even cultural levels that exposed fatal flaws in EU governance. Today, that crisis has subsided. The Greek economy has challenges but Spain, Portugal, and Italy have stabilized. Structural design in the management of the European monetary zone has been improved. The dialectical debate be-

“ *Publics push back against the voluntarily pooling of sovereignty symbolized by the marquee achievements of a common currency, and a border-free common travel space under the Schengen Accord.* ”

tween austerity and Keynesian stimulus goes on, but not as a fatalistic discussion of the EU’s survival.

The new crisis over refugees seems more catastrophic because it cuts to pre-existing existential issues of identity and community. While it combines the same conflict—pitting national political sovereignty against deference to solidarity and common rules—it is considerably more combustible politically because it is a crisis about people rather than about process.

The staggering number of displaced people in the world—60 million—is the greatest since the end of the Second World War.

Stalin and Hitler uprooted and forcibly relocated 30 million people between 1939 and 1943. At war’s end in 1945, the process was reversed: seven million Germans fled from the Red Army; three million were expelled from the Czech Sudetenland, millions more from Poland, ex-Yugoslavia, Romania and Hungary. Other ethnic groups shifted; Romanians, Hungarians, Poles, Ukrainians changed places. Historically pluralist nation-states became ethnically homogeneous.

Yet, Germany acquired a massive vocation for refugee settlement. The German Constitution (the Grundgesetz) stipulates refugee acceptance, an obligation taken up by all European democracies in 1951 for asylum-seekers from Europe itself, and extended to refugees from elsewhere in 1962. (Turkey declined to do so).

**B**ut re-integrating ethnic Germans as the collateral outcome of a Germany-launched European war is a vastly less daunt-

ing challenge than integrating people of other cultures and religions from distant wars and continents and distributing them to countries that see historic social achievements challenged by what they regard as backward and alien beliefs.

While German opinion has cooled under the flood of arrivals, initial polling this summer showed 96 per cent of Germans welcomed refugees in principle, while 71 per cent of Czechs opposed them.

“ *But in more immigration-experienced states such as Holland and Denmark, people recoil at the notion that hard-won achievements such as gender equality and the separation of religion from public life can be jarred by newcomers who shroud women in black and hold for Sharia law.* ”

Czech anxiety at being “overrun” seems misplaced as Muslims represent only 0.1 per cent of the population. But in more immigration-experienced states such as Holland and Denmark, people recoil at the notion that hard-won achievements such as gender equality and the separation of religion from public life can be jarred by newcomers who shroud women in black and hold for Sharia law.

The rise of nativist, populist political parties predates this year’s refugee

wave but immigration now tops voters' concerns for the first time in 42 years of Eurobarometer polling.

Identity-based parties such as Marine Le Pen's Front National, the Belgian Vlams Blok, the Pim Fortuyn list in Holland, the Danish Peoples' Party, the True Finns, Austria's Freedom Party, or UKIP claim two central grievances: domination by a bureaucratic top-down Brussels machine and being over-run by "others."

In reality, their political fuel is fear of change. Immigration is a surrogate. Many believe the EU expanded too far and fast. Economic downturn ushered in corrective austerity that has cut into publicly financed pension programs. New issues of religious clothing and separate cultural facilities rattled old cultural certainties. Jihadist terrorism added to the anxious mix.

Attachment to the EU of countries that joined from the former Warsaw Pact is fraying. The Europe they longed to re-join imposed a process of diligent examination of their credentials for membership they found humiliating and is now mandating internal imperatives of unfamiliar pluralism. Authoritarian Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban warns "Europe's Christian identity is under threat." Promoting "illiberalism" over democratic liberalism, he challenges the inherent democratic vocation of the EU enlargement process.

Immigrant integration in EU countries has generally not gone well. Newcomers are not "immigrants" in the meaning Canadians give to applicants from outside. We recruit potential new Canadians via a dual contract—they accept our society's terms (the Charter of Rights) and we judge their ability to integrate economically and linguistically. Canada's annual take of about 25,000 refugees a year acclimatize within a larger pool of 250,000 committed, qualified, or family-based selected entrants in a process that aims at integration. Newcomers are sourced from a dozen states and religions.



French President François Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel have been the progressive leaders of the EU during the refugee crisis. Flickr photo

EU countries largely stopped recruitment immigration decades ago. Their unsought "immigrants" today are refugees with no prior dual contract, usually concentrated in two or three nationalities per destination. They band together in ghettos and can dominate school districts, inhibiting assimilation.

**“ Canada’s annual take of about 25,000 refugees a year acclimatize within a larger pool of 250,000 committed, qualified, or family-based selected entrants in a process that aims at integration. Newcomers are sourced from a dozen states and religions. ”**

Host governments have been slow to promote public visibility of different faces, whether minority police on the beat, or news anchors on TV. Alienation has been generations in the making. French kids from the “Alge-

rian” high-rise ghettos beyond the Paris *peripherique* are French kids, but don't feel it.

Is the surge of people into the EU avoidable?

Refugees and economic migrants pour into Europe from war zones and from Africa because of the magnetic attraction of the EU economy, the generosity of its provisions, and because they can reach it. International efforts to smash the smugglers' networks are stymied by the anarchy reigning in Libya and by ambivalence over the effectiveness and cost of robust protection of Europe's coasts. The principle of processing refugees at perimeter points of entry has failed in practice in part because of inadequate support for Italy and Greece from EU partners.

For about \$2,500 each, refugees undertake voyages of terrible hardship and danger, breaching an EU front-line too extensive to control effectively, across the Mediterranean to Italy from Libya in perilous vessels (4,000 have died this summer), or over land to the Turkish coast to Greece, and through Macedonia to central Europe. Once they reach the EU, their claims to asylum from life-threatening danger at home are

weighed by EU member state authorities. Increasingly, economic migrants are denied entry, starting with Balkan countries that accounted for 40 per cent of asylum applications that are now designated “safe” and ineligible.

Syrian refugees drawn from six million displaced Syrians mostly residing in refugee camps in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon now account for 40 per cent of asylum seekers and over 80 per cent are accepted.

The process of validation (others now pretend to be Syrian) and the separation of refugees from economic migrants has been expedited and simplified, but still takes months and months. The young male migrants are tenacious and, to Europeans, curiously entitled in belief that their quest for lives in the EU represents a human right.

This international crisis should not be for Europeans alone to manage, but North Americans and others are hanging back, leaving the EU exposed practically and politically. Success will depend on political leaders’ ability to sustain public confidence in the capacity to process and absorb asylum-seekers, while closing the borders to straightforward economic migrants, knowing that a longer-term process of settlement immigration will still be needed to address the EU’s underlying demographic deficit.

The emergence of Germany as uncontested European leader is the decisive new development. A Merkel-led working circle including François Hollande and Prime Minister Manuel Valls in France, Matteo Renzi in Italy, EU Council President Donald Tusk of Poland and Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker drives policy response and program construction. Cautious buy-in from most of the rest of the EU recognizes the EU obligation to admit refugees if not to impose national quotas.

But are elected leaders up to taking on populist adversaries at home? As in Canada, where the Harper gov-



A Syrian refugee from Deir Ezzor, holding his son and daughter, breaks out in tears of joy after arriving via a flimsy inflatable boat crammed with about 15 men, women and children on the shore of the island of Kos in Greece. Daniel Etter/The New York Times Flickr photo

ernment’s divisive attempts to pander to bias against “the other” have created a counter-storm, constructive optimism can ring truer with people than radiating the fear of a worse future ahead.

**“ Syrian refugees drawn from six million displaced Syrians mostly residing in refugee camps in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon now account for 40 per cent of asylum seekers and over 80 per cent are accepted. ”**

Constructive optimism has always been the point of the European project, borne from a calamitous past that now is beyond most living memories. It has succeeded, crisis by crisis, in shoring up and fine-tuning the voluntary pooling of interdependent national sovereignties that

is the political reality for Europeans.

Of course, major disputes and hurdles always loom, including the threat that the historically ambivalent UK will withdraw altogether.

But the project has nourished, over time, shared reflexes of a contested but ultimately consensual political culture that is the everyday reality of governance in Europe. That there is no common identity among the EU’s historic nationalities is no weakness as long as there is a commonality of view that at the end of the day EU members are in this together. Don’t bet on them to fail this ultimate test. **P**

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The skyline of downtown Toronto. When the lights went out in a cold snap last Christmas, it brought the importance of electricity home to Torontonians. Policy photo

# Electricity: Canada's Physical Heartbeat

Sergio Marchi

*Canada will need to invest \$350 billion by 2030 to renew the country's electricity system that is so vital to the country's prosperity and very way of life. Canada's reputation as a clean electricity country is one of the best in the world. Fully 80 per cent of the Canadian grid is non-greenhouse gas emitting, compared to only 31 per cent in the US. Renewing the Canadian system, writes the President of the Canadian Electricity Association, is a nation-building challenge.*

Electricity has been called “the great enabler” of modern society. It is central to our lives and our country. In a word, *indispensable*.

The question, however, is how do we ensure its sustainability and reliability for generations to come? In addressing this concern, let me touch on five inter-related factors;

First, Canada's electricity grid is at an inflection point today.

The decisions we make—or fail to make—will have repercussions for

many years. And that's because many of Canada's electricity assets are reaching the end of their lifecycle, which can range from 30 years for a utility pole, to as much as a century for a power plant. Quite simply, much of the system built a generation ago, now needs to be replaced or refurbished.

As a result, we'll need to make significant investments just to maintain the reliability we enjoy today. Moreover, the lead times are measured in decades. We therefore don't have the luxury of waiting, if we're going to build the electricity system Canadians want and need.

**“ The Conference Board of Canada estimates that from 2010 until 2030, we'll need to invest some \$350 billion in our electricity system to meet the demands of a growing population and new technologies. ”**

The Conference Board of Canada estimates that from 2010 until 2030, we'll need to invest some \$350 billion in our electricity system to meet the demands of a growing population and new technologies.

That's a lot of money. And a major rebuild. But Canada is not alone in confronting this challenge. Europe, for example, will need to invest more than \$2 trillion, between now and 2035, and the United States, \$2 trillion by 2030.

Second, no one likes paying more for their electricity. Homeowners don't like it and neither do businesses. And when you potentially have unhappy consumers, you have a perfect storm for political inaction, and short term thinking.

I'm a former elected official. I get that. But I'm also a realist. So let's look at it from a different perspective. What

**“ Many of Canada's electricity assets are reaching the end of their lifecycle, which can range from 30 years for a utility pole, to as much as a century for a power plant. Quite simply, much of the system built a generation ago, now needs to be replaced or refurbished. ”**

if we *don't* make these investments? What if we just kick the can further down the road?

The consequences of that choice are quite clear and significant. There will be less than reliable electricity; a loss in quality of life; foregone economic opportunities; and a less competitive economy. All because of the potential for more disruptions caused by increased brownouts or blackouts.

Think about the 2013 ice storm in Toronto and what it was like for thousands of people trying to cook their Christmas turkeys on the barbecue—or seniors trapped in homes without heat.

Ask them about the importance of electricity. About taking it for granted. Then, project those images ahead 10, 20 years, if we don't upgrade our system. Not a very pleasant thought.

**F**ailing to invest now will bring other—and greater—costs down the road.

Third, rather than only looking at the *costs* of electricity—which is a significant variable—we must also consider its *value* to Canadians. We need to consider both, and when we do, I would argue it's a very compelling value proposition.

According to Statistics Canada, electricity costs amount to about \$3.59 per day for most Canadians—which is under 2 per cent of all household spending. A very modest cost for something that is absolutely critical to our modern lives. How does this cost stack up internationally? The International Energy Agency submits that Canadian residential prices are lower than those in Japan, the U.K., and the U.S.

Governments and regulators have the justifiable role of protecting the consumer. As well, Canadians have certain priorities for—and expectations of—their utility companies. They want them to listen to their needs as customers and run their operations efficiently.

I have no difficulties with this whatsoever.

However, protecting the consumer is not only about procuring the cheapest-priced equipment and systems. If that is the sole driver, then the future dependability of our electricity will be jeopardized. Instead, we must *also* protect the consumer from a reliability standpoint, and that means building well and smart.

Fourth, the design of an electricity and energy strategy, cannot be divorced from environmental considerations and obligations. Energy and the environment must be one seamless policy framework.

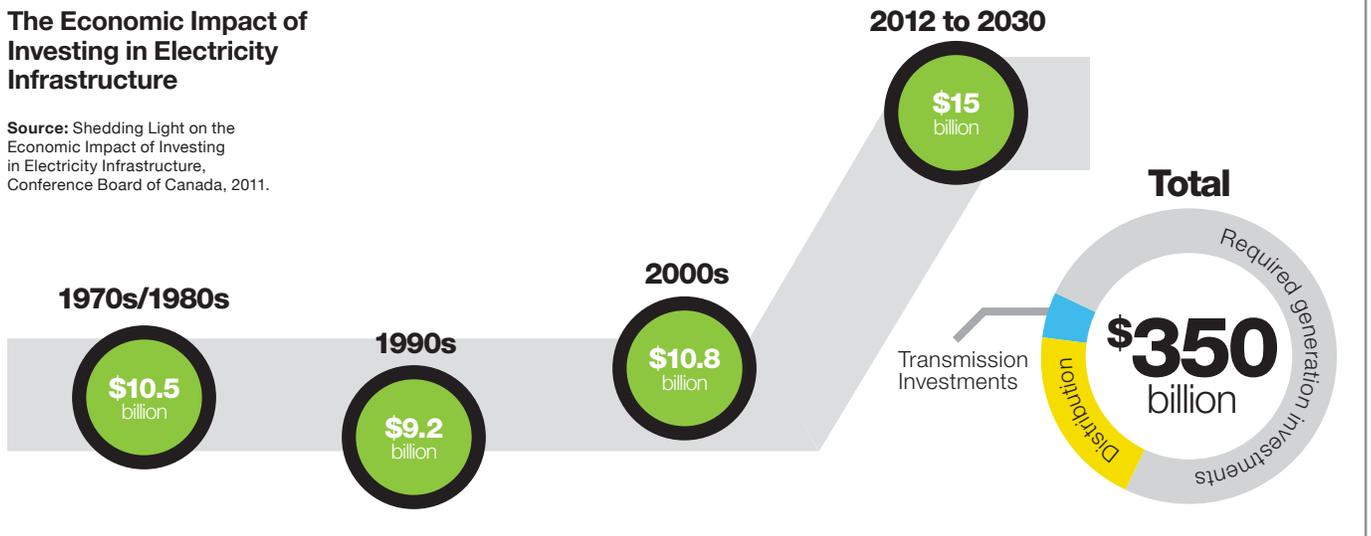
**W**hen it comes to the environment, CEA is proud of its accomplishments. Indeed, Canada's electricity industry is one of the cleanest in the world. Nationally, more than 80 per cent of our electricity is non-greenhouse gas emitting. By comparison, the International Energy Agency reports that the corresponding figure in Germany is 41 percent; the US 31 percent; and Japan, 15 percent.

We are also well positioned to decarbonize other sectors of the economy, such as transportation, which accounts for nearly one quarter of our carbon footprint.

Naturally, other challenges, such as the continuing impacts of cli-

## The Economic Impact of Investing in Electricity Infrastructure

Source: Shedding Light on the Economic Impact of Investing in Electricity Infrastructure, Conference Board of Canada, 2011.



mate change, including more severe weather events, continue to test us. According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, the December 2013 ice storm in Toronto resulted in \$200 million in insured losses and pushed that year's severe weather-related insured losses to over \$3 billion—the highest in Canadian history. Consequently, our electricity system has to be more robust and resilient to better respond to weather events.

“Canada’s electricity industry is one of the cleanest in the world. Nationally, more than 80 percent of our electricity is non-greenhouse gas emitting. By comparison, the International Energy Agency reports that the corresponding figure in Germany is 41 percent; the US 31 percent; and Japan, 15 percent.”

On the eve of the UN Climate Change meeting in Paris, our provincial and federal governments must find common ground. Industry needs policy coherence and certainty, and one that is economically responsible. And Ca-

nadians want their leaders to join other nations in constructively tackling the threat this global challenge poses.

Finding this common ground is a natural segue to the final factor—political and policy leadership.

It is said that all politics is local, and the marathon federal election we just went through played largely to script. I say *unfortunately*, because elections should also be an opportunity to debate big issues; to define national ambitions; and to shape long-term horizons.

One of those *big* issues that Canada’s new Liberal majority government must urgently tackle is the development of a Canadian energy strategy.

Canada is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, accounting for about 20 per cent of our GDP, and supporting almost two million jobs. Yet, we are not leveraging those assets for maximum economic benefit.

Someone once said that natural resources is Canada’s “family business”, which is an interesting way to frame it. But a family business *without* a business plan is not smart, and very risky!

Demand for energy, especially from emerging nations, will continue to surge. But the global competition to supply those countries will be fierce, and Canada cannot afford to bring

anything less than its “A” game.

It is therefore essential for PM Trudeau to harness our energy assets for the benefit of all Canadians. This will require an era of closer federal-provincial cooperation.

He should be willing, as promised in his campaign, to use the First Ministers’ Conferences as a platform to facilitate the development and implementation of a national energy strategy, so as to complete the work the premiers have so ably begun through the Council of the Federation. From an energy policy perspective, our country cannot afford discord between our two senior levels of government.

In this process, the federal government must develop an engaging relationship with the private sector, and forge a genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities. Both must be built on mutual trust.

As well, electricity cannot be treated as a second class energy ‘cousin’. It needs and deserves equal billing. As important as the oil and gas sector is, our national economy cannot function effectively without reliable electricity. Governments must therefore approach electricity policy-making in a comprehensive and strategic fashion.

Furthermore, while electricity is provincially wired constitutionally, the federal government plays a sub-

stantial role. Besides its financial and political muscle, over 30 federal departments and agencies—34 to be exact—have a direct impact on electricity policy. This is no small undertaking. On the contrary, it is a mandate responsibility that requires policy coherence and political leadership at the senior echelons of the federal government.

In closing, electricity is the physical heartbeat of Canadian society.

**E**lectricity is indispensable to our way of life, contributes to a low-carbon future, and is delivered through a vast, sophisticated national grid, for a relatively low cost. I think that's real value, and something worth investing in.

But there's one final reason we should make these investments—and that's our obligation to the future. We need to leave our children and grandchildren a system *at least* as good as the one our parents built.

Throughout our country's history, Canada has undertaken major infra-

“ *On the eve of the UN Climate Change meeting in Paris, our provincial and federal governments must find common ground. Industry needs policy coherence and certainty, and one that is economically responsible. And Canadians want their leaders to join other nations in constructively tackling the threat this global challenge poses.* ”

structure projects. Think of the great railways of the 19th century, or the Trans-Canada Highway, St. Lawrence Seaway and CBC in the 20th century. We have understood the importance of investing today for a better tomorrow, of adopting a pan-Canadian vision.

And each time we did, it was transformative—uniting our country, facilitating the movement of people, goods, and services, and laying the foundation for future economic prosperity.

It's called nation building.

Today, we are again at one of those transformative moments. A time

to build something important and enduring.

I believe the responsibility and benefits are clear. And I believe the time is now.

Let's invest today, for sustainable, reliable electrical power tomorrow. **P**

*Sergio Marchi is President and CEO of the Canadian Electricity Association. He is a former MP and served as minister of Citizenship and Immigration, International Trade, and the Environment. He later served as a Canada's ambassador to the World Trade Organization and UN Agencies in Geneva. [marchi@electricity.ca](mailto:marchi@electricity.ca)*

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CN Photo

# Building on Strong Foundations as a Backbone of the Economy

Claude Mongeau

*From a drain on federal coffers for decades as a crown corporation, CN has become the most profitable railway in North America as a private company. On the 20th anniversary of its initial public offering (IPO) under Paul Tellier, CN CEO Claude Mongeau reflects on a historic journey, and on challenges that lie ahead for a regulated industry.*

Prior to Confederation, railways were built as public works projects pushed by leaders of vision looking to open up a new economy in a vast unreached landscape. While building railways over such large, often unforgiving terrain, was difficult, running them efficiently and profitably would prove even more challenging.

CN can trace its pedigree back to Canada's first public railway, the Champlain

and St. Lawrence Railroad, which ran its first steam locomotive-pulled train between Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu and La Prairie near Montreal in 1836. More than 80 years later, the government of Canada amalgamated, under its control, several financially-strapped, privately-owned railroads to create Canadian National Railways. On June 6, 1919, CN initially formed what Montreal historian Donald MacKay coined “a mosaic of mismatched parts.”

For much of its history as a Crown Corporation, constrained by government ownership, CN was often a drain on federal coffers. By the 1970s, the federal government and CN’s management began taking steps to put CN on a path, albeit a slow one, to commercial viability. The change started to accelerate in the 1980s as the government grew increasingly eager to reduce the chronic and massive deficits that were choking the country. During this period, CN divested non-core assets such as CN’s hotel and telecommunications businesses, following the separation of passenger services in 1979 that created Via Rail Canada. This allowed management to focus exclusively on freight transportation and to prepare for privatization which would come later.

**O**n the eve of privatization, CN had a lot going for it: quality assets, strong railroading practices, a diverse business mix, the capacity to grow, and a solid plan to cut costs and turn the railway around. But to unleash CN’s full potential, more change was required, and that change came with its initial public offering (IPO) in November 1995, a short 20 years ago.

Privatization enabled CN to demonstrate that good assets are often more valuable in the hands of the private sector. The company focused on the creation of value and on optimizing the use of the company’s resources to serve customers across a wide range of different markets. Employees began to think like owners as they became owners of the stock. And share-

**“By the 1970s, the federal government and CN’s management began taking steps to put CN on a path, albeit a slow one, to commercial viability. The change started to accelerate in the 1980s as the government grew increasingly eager to reduce the chronic and massive deficits that were choking the country.”**

holders began to value the company during what would become a long period of support, helping CN in the process to finance its capital requirements and the deployment of its strategic agenda.

CN’s successful transformation and progress over the last 20 years needed more than the momentum provided by privatization. To begin with, it required a regulatory environment that encourages investment and innovation, and market-based decisions overall. That environment really started to emerge in Canada in 1987, when the National Transportation Act recognized the right of railways to enter into confidential contracts with customers, eliminating any minimum or maximum rates set by regulation, while instituting final offer arbitration to protect shippers. This progressive mindset of deregulation continued in 1993, when the National Transportation Act Review Commission recognized that the withdrawal of government from direct management of transportation was good policy, and in 1996, when the Canadian Transportation Act introduced greater latitude for railways to rationalize their infrastructure.

CN’s journey was enriched with a compelling vision of what the railway had to become. Soon after he joined as CEO in 1992, former Clerk of the Privy Council Paul Tellier saw privatization as a step towards making CN the best railway in North America. Shortly after the 1995 IPO, the railway began a string of strategic acquisitions aimed at increasing our penetration of the North American market and our ability to offer seamless service to our customers. The first,

in 1998, was the purchase of the Illinois Central Railroad, a move that expanded CN’s US network beyond the Midwest and to the Gulf of Mexico. Subsequent acquisitions of the Wisconsin Central and regional railroads in Minnesota directly linked Western Canada to US markets in the American Midwest and South. Acquiring the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern allowed CN—for the first time—to link its five rail lines entering Chicago into one seamless system, enabling us to by-pass the infamously congested rail corridors of the Windy City. CN also made significant investments in its Canadian franchise, when it acquired BC Rail in 2004 and some short lines in Alberta in 2006 and 2007.

CN’s momentum has ultimately been maintained with the evolution of its strategic agenda: from an operational focus to one based on Operational and Service Excellence in day-to-day execution, and from a railway to a supply chain mindset in the way we interact with customers and partners. The shift is part of CN’s thrust to become more customer-centric. It involves a strong dose of innovation, such as the implementation of first mile/last mile initiatives that have allowed the company to go beyond hub-to-hub speed and reliability and address the need for more consistent car order fulfillment. It also involves substantial investments, starting with an unwavering commitment to safety. Totalling close to \$19 billion or 20 per cent of revenues during the last 10 years alone, CN’s capital investments support the pursuit of efficient, safe and quality service, on the railroad and in our interaction with other supply chain partners.

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Halifax harbour. CN photo

The shift to becoming a supply chain enabler is a key to CN’s continuing success. While playing a central role across multiple supply chains, the railway is only one player amongst many, and this calls for an end-to-end perspective which CN has been actively pursuing. CN has taken the lead in developing innovative supply chain agreements with key players in intermodal and other businesses, including Canada’s major gateways. CN has promoted the use of service and operating metrics that can be shared with others, on a commercial basis, to drive action on the ground and continuous improvement in terms of efficiency and reliability end-to-end.

Today, CN is a true backbone of the economy, fostering economic prosperity in the North American markets it serves. CN’s network of 20,000 route-miles of track spanning Canada and Mid-America uniquely links the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico coasts. CN’s extensive network and efficient connections to the continent’s other major railroads provide customers access to all three NAFTA nations. CN trains and 25,000 people move more than \$250 billion worth of goods annually, carrying over 300 million tons of cargo. The railway serves exporters, importers, retailers, farmers and manufacturers alike.

CN has achieved and maintained this successful transformation with the conviction that excellent service and operational efficiency can

improve simultaneously, and that supply chains have to be nurtured. I have often said becoming the best in class doesn’t mean the job is done. Staying on top can often be a bigger challenge. To stay there and play our role fully requires a commitment to flawless execution and continued innovation. But it also requires sound government policy.

One of the many things I have learned from my two decades of railroading is that a commercial framework and a stable regulatory environment are an essential foundation for an effective, well-functioning transportation marketplace. Sound regulation is a force for good in our society; it makes our communities stronger and safer. It supports the growth of trade and the economy. Burdensome regulation threatens to increase costs, stifle innovation and discourage investments that are critical to building the efficient, safe and resilient supply chains of the future. Yet this seems to be the direction that was taken in 2013 and 2014 with the introduction of Bills C-52 and C-30, which have reversed the trend of deregulation of the prior 30 years.

As policymakers review the *Canada Transportation Act*, I respectfully submit they should be guided by the following principles:

1. for Canada to achieve economic

growth and prosperity over the next 20 years, it needs a globally competitive transportation system;

2. competition and market forces should be the prime agents in providing viable and effective transportation services;
3. regulation and government intervention must only be used as a last recourse if and only if markets do not work; and
4. sound regulation and policy can only be based on well-documented facts and an end-to-end understanding of the supply chain.

CN will continue to work with government and other stakeholders to encourage the existence of a sound regulatory environment that encourages investment and drives innovation. As CN embarks on its next 20 years, it is not resting on its laurels. The railway will continue to innovate, improve safety, and drive better customer service, working tirelessly to build a new economy just as those visionary leaders did when that first steam locomotive rumbled across Quebec 150 years ago. As CN marks the 20-year milestone of its IPO, and as it prepares to celebrate its centenary in 2019, the journey continues as it builds for the future. **P**

*Claude Mongeau is President and CEO of CN.*



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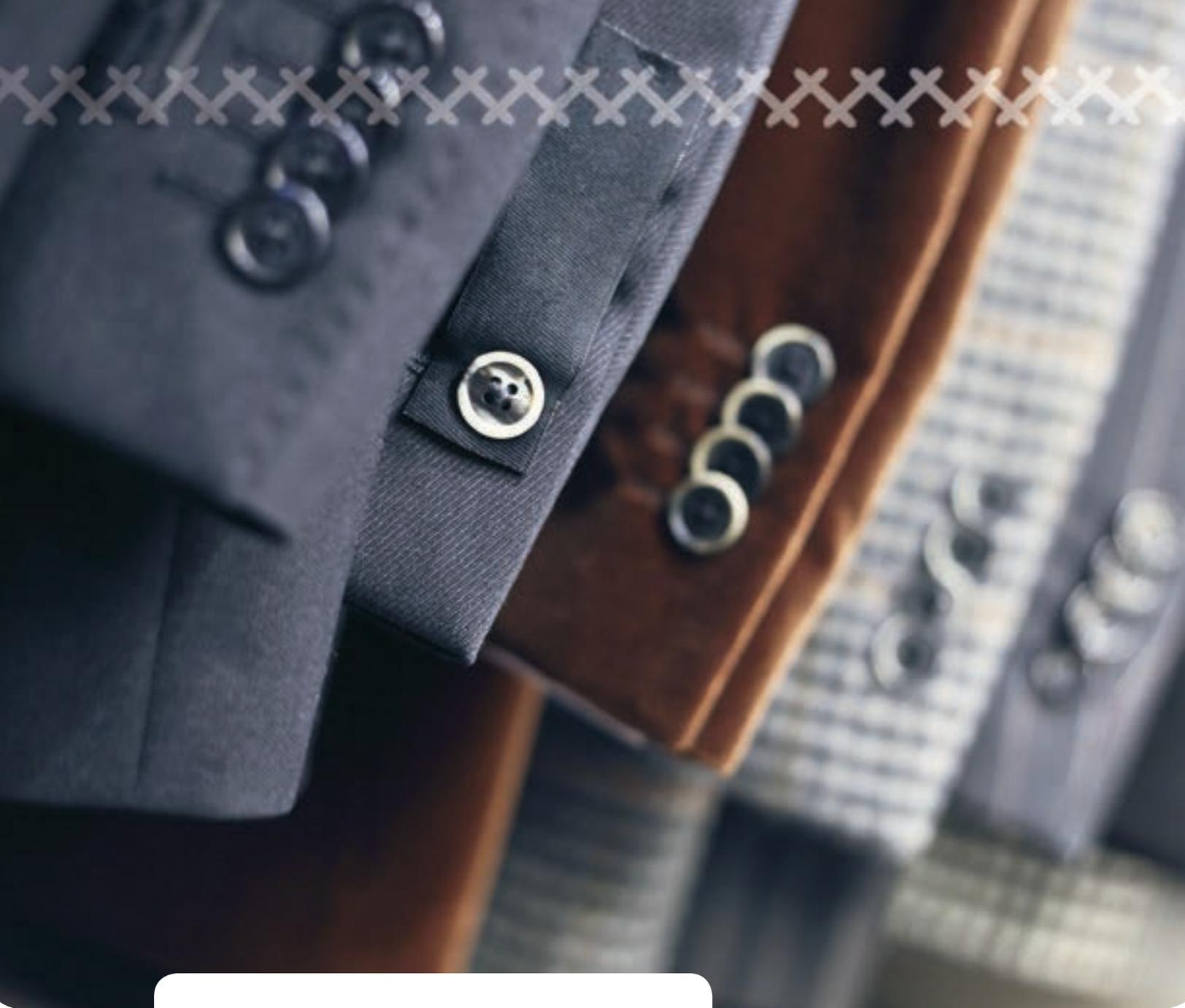
Liaison	Nombre de départs par jour	Distance	Temps productif en train	Temps non productif en voiture*	Coût du voyage en voiture**	Coût du voyage en train (à partir de seulement)	Économies pour le contribuable (voyage en train)***
Ottawa ↔ Toronto	Jusqu'à 16	450 km	4 h 01 min	4 h 34 min	467 \$	44 \$ <sup>1</sup>	423 \$
Ottawa ↔ Montréal	Jusqu'à 12	198 km	1 h 47 min	2 h 27 min	227 \$	33 \$ <sup>1</sup>	194 \$
Ottawa ↔ Québec	2	482 km	5 h 23 min	4 h 39 min	488 \$	49 \$ <sup>1</sup>	439 \$
Toronto ↔ Montréal	Jusqu'à 17	541 km	4 h 34 min	5 h 30 min	562 \$	44 \$ <sup>1</sup>	518 \$

**<sup>1</sup> Les employés du gouvernement du Canada profitent d'un rabais de 10 % sur les meilleurs tarifs pour tous les trains et classes de VIA Rail Canada. Valable si vous voyagez par affaires ou pour le plaisir. Des conditions s'appliquent. Pour plus de renseignements, communiquez avec les services de TPSGC.**

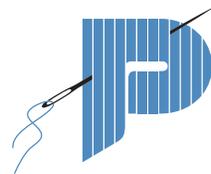
\* 30 minutes ont été ajoutées à la durée totale du voyage en voiture afin d'inclure les retards dus au trafic et au mauvais temps.

\*\* Le coût du voyage en voiture est calculé selon la formule suivante : coût en \$ du voyage en voiture (Taux de 0,55 \$/km établi par le Conseil du trésor pour l'Ontario pour une voiture conduite par un employé du gouvernement X distance parcourue) + (taux horaire moyen d'un employé gouvernemental de 48 \$/h selon un salaire de 100 000 \$ par année, y compris les avantages sociaux X durée du voyage) = coût total en \$ pour le contribuable.

\*\*\* L'économie pour le contribuable associée aux voyages en train est calculée selon la formule suivante : Coût du voyage en voiture – coût du voyage en train = économies pour le contribuable.



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