

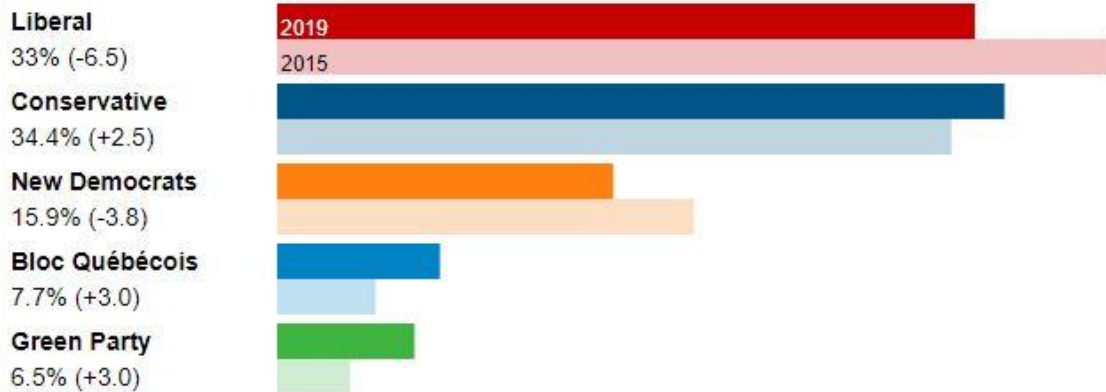


After 41 days of campaigning, Canadians went to the polls last month to vote in their federal election. Four leaders were vying for votes to allow their party to lead Canada - the Green Party (Greens) led by Elizabeth May; the New Democratic Party (NDP) led by Jagmeet Singh; the Conservative Party (Conservatives) led by Andrew Scheer; and the Liberal Party (Liberals) led by current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The Peoples Party of Canada (PPC) had one seat in the previous government held by the leader and founder, Maxime Bernier, but he lost his seat in this election. One Independent will sit in the House, Jody Wilson-Raybould from British Columbia who previously served as a Liberal and as Canada's attorney general under Prime Minister Trudeau. At 62%, voter turnout was slightly less than the 68.5% during the 2015 federal election. For reference, the 2015 voter turnout was the highest since 1993.

The House of Commons sustained changes as a result of the election. Of the 338 ridings, or electoral districts, the Liberals decreased their total Members of Parliament (MPs) from 177 to 157, not an outright majority but still a plurality. The NDP also decreased their MPs from 39 to 24 while the Conservatives increased their MPs from 95 to 121, and Bloc Québécois also increased their number of MPs from 10 to 32. Bloc Québécois is a federal political party devoted to Quebec nationalism, promoting Quebec sovereignty, and whose goal remains Quebec independence. The Greens ended up with 3 MPs, an increase of 2 from the last election in 2015. Historically, Canadians have favored leaders to serve more than one election term with those who served beyond their first term as Prime Ministers governing 127 out of 152 years since confederation.

How vote share changed

2019 VS 2015



Source: Elections Canada

Graphic courtesy of The Guardian

With 157 seats, Liberals fell short of the 170 needed to maintain an outright majority thus the term used to describe the government going forward is a Liberal Minority government. This means that they will need the support of MPs from other parties to pass legislation. Most seats won by the Liberals are based in Ontario, the most populous province of Canada, but the party won no seats in the “Prairie provinces” of Alberta and Saskatchewan where Conservatives swept all seats, except for one retained by the NDP in Alberta.

There has been a decades long divide between Eastern and Western Canada, similar to the political chasm between the large urban areas of the Pacific coast and the more rural areas in the Midwest or Southern regions of the United States. However, the strong sense of alienation felt from the Western provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, the heart of the oil and gas industry, seems to be growing. Both economies have been struggling since the global oil crash approximately five years ago resulting in lower capital investment and



unemployment that is higher than the national average. Leadership of both provinces has been pushing for an oil pipeline expansion to the Pacific coast to export their product to international markets, but there has been significant resistance by environmentalists and some indigenous tribes.

Many experienced political observers initially predicted that in many ridings, progressives (Liberals and NDPs) would split the vote and result in a majority government led by the Conservatives. It could not have been a closer race going into election day.

U.S. President Donald Trump tweeted early the day after the election, “Congratulations to @JustinTrudeau on a wonderful and hard fought [sic.] victory. Canada is well served. I look forward to working with you toward the betterment of both of our countries!”