

# Reflections on Canada's October 2015 Federal Elections



Mathieu Belanger/Reuters

Canada's most recent federal elections offered uncommon scenarios due to the level of confrontation between the contenders. A large part of these clashes involved attacks by the New Democrats and the Liberals against the Conservative Party and then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who, after a little over nine and a half years in office had made a series of changes both domestically and internationally, changing to a great extent social practices nationwide and Canada's image in the world.

The overwhelming victory of the Liberal Party and its leader Justin Trudeau in the House of Commons creates a series of expectations inside Canada and abroad, particularly because he has a majority. Thanks to this, he is able to make changes without being blocked by the parliamentary opposition, reinforcing the vertical nature of power in Canada, which resides fundamentally in the head of state.

In this section, various specialists review the main challenges facing the new Canadian government domestically and abroad. The authors ask if conservatism has really retreated or if it will adopt new forms of action. They also review how civic commitment and participation are fundamental for understanding Canadian democracy, and they analyze the impact in each province of the increased number of seats in Parliament after the last elections, a change intended to allow better representation for the provinces with higher population density.

The chance to take new positions on delicate matters like global change, migration, or refugees are unequalled opportunities for Trudeau to present a different, more empathetic image to international public opinion. This will make it possible to adopt new styles of cultural diplomacy both inside and outside Canada, and, of course, toward Mexico.

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