

# Analysis of the 2019 Canadian Federal Election

## The Electoral System Matters

(2019年カナダ連邦選挙の分析  
選挙制度の意味)

Nobuaki Suyama\*

**SUMMARY IN JAPANESE:** 2019年にカナダで連邦選挙が行なわれ、ジャスティン・トリュドー首相が率いるカナダ自由党は、単独過半数には及ばなかったが、第1党となり引き続いて政権をとることとなった。カナダの選挙制度はイギリス同様に単純小選挙区制なので、選挙で勝利する政党は、得票率をかなり上回る議席率を得られる。その選挙制度は安定政権を生みやすい反面、過半数の選挙民によって支持されていない当選者を出す選挙区の方が普通で、多くの死票を生む欠陥を包有している。それどころか、今回の選挙のように、合計得票数で、選挙に敗れた第1野党の方が選挙に勝った政党に優っているという結果が生じ得る。さらに、カナダのように面積が広大で多様性に富む国では、それぞれの政党の獲得議席が地理的に分極化する弊害が露わになっている。本来の地域政党だけでなく、国民統合の役割を担うべき全国政党の議員が国全体に万遍なく行き渡らずに、特定の州に偏るからである。もしカナダ下院が違った選挙制度（ドイツ下院式、オーストラリア下院式）を採用すれば、そうした不足分が部分的にも補われることがシミュレーションで示される。ドイツ下院で使用される小選挙区比例代表併用制では、各政党はどの州においてもおおむね得票率とほぼ同じだけの議席率を得られるため政党への支持が議席に反映されない事態を防げるし、多数決を一義的な原則としない制度はそれぞれの議員

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\* 陶山 宣明 An independent scholar.

が小選挙区で過半数の選挙民によって支持されていなくても  
由々しき問題としない。オーストラリア下院で使用される優  
先順位付連記投票制では、投票者が付けた優先順位に基づい  
て票が割り振られていき、当選議員は全て最終的にそれぞれ  
の小選挙区で過半数の選挙民の支持を受けている。

## Introduction

The Liberal Party of Canada led by Justin Trudeau won the federal election of Oct. 21st, 2019 to secure back-to-back victories—following the previous election of Oct. 19th, 2015.<sup>1</sup> However, it lost its 14-seat majority to be reduced to a minority government after four years’ increasingly lacklustre performance. In 2015, the Liberals had won 85 more seats than the official opposition party, the Conservatives. The gap was narrowed down to 36 seats. Despite their electoral victory, the Liberals’ seats were very unevenly distributed across the country. They had no elected Member of Parliament (MP) from Alberta, which is one of the four big provinces.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, as many as 89.2% of their seats were concentrated in Ontario, Quebec, and the four Atlantic provinces.

Justin Trudeau, the eldest son of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau (Trudeau Sr.), entered Parliament by winning a seat in the electorate of Papineau in the 2008 federal election and was elected Liberal Party leader through an eight-day-long leadership election<sup>3</sup> on April 14th, 2013, beating the other candidates by a wide margin.<sup>4</sup> Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper had been at the apex of power since 2006, had sent three Liberal leaders—Paul Martin, Stéphane Dion, and Michael Ignatieff—packing before squaring off against a young and fresh Trudeau. Trudeau’s catchy slogan in the 2015 federal election was “Just in time,”—a resonance with his first name.<sup>5</sup> The rejuvenated “Grits” symbolized by Trudeau dealt a decisive blow to the Tories with an irksome Harper at the helm.<sup>6</sup>

Trudeau beamed with joy and expressed great hopes when his administration set out on its maiden voyage in 2015. He appointed the same number of women (15) as men as ministers in his inaugural cabinet, which included aboriginals, the disabled, and immigrants. Every province and one territory (Nunavut) were represented in his cabinet in accordance with the

Canadian convention that the cabinet have at least one minister from every province. Four years later, Trudeau's Liberals fared much worse across Canada, and the cabinet of 2019 contained no minister from Alberta or Saskatchewan because no Liberal candidates won seats in these provinces.<sup>7</sup>

This article aims to analyze the result of the 2019 federal election with a focus on the question of regional balance. Tentatively, it is hypothesized that the current electoral system exaggerates the political parties' regional imbalance. Even though the Liberals are less popular in the Western provinces, Liberal votes are disproportionately muffled in their translation into seats. The Bloc Québécois (BQ) runs candidates only in Quebec. As a result, its regionally concentrated votes produce a greater number of MPs for the BQ than for the New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Green Party (Greens) because these parties do not have any regional base in particular.

Alan Cairns opened a debate on the regional unevenness of parliamentary seats in the very first issue of *Canadian Journal of Political Science* in 1968.<sup>8</sup> It was in the 1970s that the electoral system's defect became apparent due to the rise of the independence movement in Quebec and the heightened sense of alienation in the Western provinces.<sup>9</sup> Henry Milner led a group of experts to seriously reflect on the question of reforming Canada's national electoral system by comparing it with the cases of other countries and the Canadian provinces.<sup>10</sup>

This article will be useful for understanding the differences among plurality, proportional, and majoritarian electoral systems. These are the three broad categories of electoral systems with some different variations from country to country.<sup>11</sup> Canada's current system is one of plurality. However, over the last several decades, there have been debates on the pros and cons of keeping it and on a possible shift to other types. It is hoped that this analysis of the most recent federal election will illuminate key issues and suggest constructive ideas.

## **The First-Past-the-Post Electoral System and Its Alternatives**

Canadian voters have lived with a first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system ever since the beginning of the federation in 1867. The Canadian Fathers of Confederation imitated the British electoral system for the House

of Commons in the design of national institutions whereas the Senate is a house whose members are appointed by the prime minister. In this electoral system, each voter casts one vote for a candidate of her or his choice in a geographically demarcated area.<sup>12</sup> The candidate simply receiving a larger number of votes than anyone else in each constituency wins the seat. S/he does not need to be supported by the majority of voters in the area that s/he is to represent. The rationale behind this is that s/he is judged to be better fit than anyone else that has run in the same race to represent people in the district.

The whole country is divided into a plural number of constituencies in the manner that means each contains roughly the same number of people to equalize the value of a vote.<sup>13</sup> In the parliamentary system, the main political parties battle to win the majority of seats to gain office while smaller parties have the more moderate goals of electing as many MPs as possible to increase their clout in Parliament and to have their voices heard more by the government.

The party which usually gains the most advantage in this system is the winning party because it tends to bloat the number of its seats. The party forming a government more often than not wins the majority seats even though it rarely receives the majority of votes. The parties most frustrated by the single-member, plurality electoral system are small nation-wide parties whose votes are thinly spread across the country.

The greatest shortcoming of the FPTP system is that a very high percentage of votes are wasted. Given that only a very limited number of candidates are elected with more than half of the votes in each district, usually more than half of the votes cast are wasted. It can be argued conversely that, even though voters do not necessarily get the MP whom they want, they could end up with the party they want in government. Even in this regard, few victorious parties coming to power are elected with more than half of the total votes. In a strict sense, majority government is a seemingly real but fictitious majority government.

The FTPT system stands in contrast to the proportional representation (PR) system. The PR system aims to translate the voting percentage won by each party faithfully into the distribution of their seats in the elected body. Naturally, it requires the use of large multi-member electoral districts or a pool of seats set aside to adjust the number to achieve proportionality. The

emergence of the PR system is based on the recognition that the legislature is controlled by parties. In this system, every vote counts towards the final outcome of elections in the choice of parties.

The PR system has mainly three different subversions. The crudest PR system is party-list PR, in which each party submits a list of candidates beforehand and voters pick a particular party list as a whole. The number of votes each party receives determines how many legislative seats each party is entitled to. Lists can be closed or open. In closed lists, voters have no say in which candidate is their favourite. Thus, the candidates on each party's list get elected in a predetermined order. Open lists allow voters to choose a particular candidate of their preference. The more individual votes the candidates enjoy, the more quickly they win seats before the others on the same party list. Most European continental countries have various versions of the PR-list system in use.

Secondly, the single transferable vote (STV) system uses multiple-member districts only. Voters cast only one vote but have to give numbers to all individual candidates according to their preferences. Independent candidates with no party affiliations can win a seat. During the count, candidates are elected because they reach a precalculated quota or eliminated because they are in last place. Their surplus or discarded votes are transferred to other candidates according to the expressed order of preference. STV has a couple of merits in enabling voters to vote across party lines if they wish and in choosing their favourite candidate without fear of their votes' being wasted because they are transferred to the candidate of their second preference. The Australian Senate,<sup>14</sup> Ireland, Malta, and Northern Ireland have STV in use. English-speaking countries seem to be in favour of STV, compared to the PR-list in mode on the European continent.

Thirdly, in the mixed member proportional representation (MMP), local non-proportional plurality/majoritarian elections are combined with a compensatory regional or national party list to have the elected body accurately reflecting the party support. Voters have two votes: one for their favourite candidate in their single-member district and the other for a party list. The single-member district elects a legislator by plurality. S/he gains the seat even though her or his support is short of the majority line in the constituency. An independent candidate is able to grab a constituency seat. On the other hand, the party votes determine the overall composition of seats

allocated to each party in the final count. The members whose names are placed on party lists are assigned seats to adjust the total seat number of each party. Germany, New Zealand, and Scotland are major countries that have been using MMP.<sup>15</sup>

Another alternative to the FPTP system is preferential voting. This is not any variant of PR, but it is a single-member, majority system by preferencing candidates. Unlike PR, preferential voting tends to elect a majority-backed government. In comparison with FPTP, the majority government elected with the preferential voting system is more just because the majority of voters have a hand in electing their Members of Parliament. Like PR, every vote counts in electing MPs and the government.

Voters pick not only one favourite candidate but rank in order all the candidates whose names are on the ballot paper. If any candidate receives more than half of first preference votes in a district, s/he immediately wins a seat. If it does not happen, the candidate who receives the least first-preference votes is excluded from any further counting, but her or his votes' second preferences are distributed to the remaining candidates. If no candidate has yet secured an absolute majority, again the candidate with fewest votes is eliminated. If a second or subsequent preference is expressed for a candidate who has already been dumped, the voter's third or subsequent preferences count. The process continues until any one of the candidates crosses the majority line.

## **The Result**

In 2019, as in 2015, the Liberals needed 170 seats to maintain a majority government, but it fell short with 157 seats. Table 1 shows each party's seat distribution across the country. Nearly half of the Liberal seats were won in Ontario, where their number decreased only by one. In 2015, the Liberals had monopolized the seats in the Atlantic provinces and the three territories. This time, they lost four seats to the Conservatives, two to the NDP, and one to the Greens in a zone they had previously swept. The first Green MP was elected outside British Columbia (BC).<sup>16</sup> As mentioned earlier, the Liberals were wiped out from the two Prairie Provinces: Alberta and Saskatchewan. Even though they had MPs elected in BC and Manitoba, they fared worse than the

Conservatives.

The Conservatives did not win as many seats as predicted in opinion polls. As in Table 2, however, they did win more of the popular votes than

**Table 1 Distribution of seats, by party and by province/territory**

Parties	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	YT	NT	NU	Total
Liberal	11	0	0	4	79	35	6	10	4	6	1	1	0	157
Conservative	17	33	14	7	36	10	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	121
NDP	11	1	0	3	6	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	24
BQ	-	-	-	-	-	32	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32
Green	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
People's	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
Others	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	1
Total	42	34	14	14	121	78	10	11	4	7	1	1	1	338

BC = British Columbia, AB = Alberta, SK = Saskatchewan, MB = Manitoba, ON = Ontario, QC = Quebec, NB = New Brunswick, NS = Nova Scotia, PEI = Prince Edward Island, NL = Newfoundland and Labrador, YT = Yukon, NT = Northwest Territories, NU = Nunavut

**Table 2 Distribution of popular votes, by party and by province/territory (%)**

Parties	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	YT	NT	NU	Total
Liberal	26.2	13.8	11.7	26.5	41.6	34.3	37.5	41.4	43.7	44.9	33.5	39.7	30.9	33.1
Cons.	34.0	69.0	64.0	45.2	33.1	16.0	32.8	25.7	27.3	27.9	32.7	25.5	26.1	34.3
NDP	24.4	11.6	19.6	20.8	16.8	10.8	9.4	18.9	7.6	23.7	22.0	22.3	40.8	16.0
BQ	-	-	-	-	-	32.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.6
Green	12.5	2.9	2.6	5.1	6.2	4.5	17.2	11.0	20.9	3.1	10.5	10.6	2.2	6.5
People's	1.7	2.2	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.5	2.0	1.2	-	0.1	1.4	1.8	-	1.6
Others	1.3	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.5	1.1	1.8	0.5	0.2	-	-	-	0.8

the Liberals in total. This rather unusual outcome has happened twice in Canadian history. In 1957, the Liberals led by Louis St. Laurent lost to the Progressive Conservative Party (PC) led by John Diefenbaker in the number of seats despite winning a greater proportion of the popular votes. And in 1979, the PC led by Joe Clark defeated the Liberals led by Trudeau Sr. although the votes they captured were fewer than the votes for the Liberals. In the 2019 election, the Liberals set a new record in winning an election with the lowest percentage of the popular votes ever (33.1%).

The Tories took all the 14 seats in Saskatchewan. They won all the seats but for the district of Edmonton-Strathcona<sup>17</sup> in Alberta. They regained the seats they had lost to the Liberals in the previous election. They increased the number of their seats in the West by 17. However, in Ontario, where more seats were up for grabs than in the Western provinces combined, they managed to increase the number of seats only by three, gaining two from the Liberals and one from the NDP. They could have fared better in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but in the FTPT system they gained only three seats at the expense of the Liberals even though they were neck-to-neck with them in the popular votes in New Brunswick. They nearly won three ridings, in two of which they lost to the Liberals and one of which they lost to the Greens. They won only one seat in Nova Scotia but they were close to winning three more.

The NDP is Canada's third national party which has typically been victimized by the electoral system regularly. Only once in 2011, when it attained official opposition party status, has the percentage of their seats been greater than the percentage of their popular votes. This time, as usual, they received 16% of the national popular votes but ended up only with 7% of the seats. They lost the largest number of seats (15) in Quebec. Quebec is not a traditional stronghold of the NDP. When Jack Layton<sup>18</sup> was their leader, the NDP won 78.7% of the seats in Quebec in 2011. Before he led the NDP, Quebec had been barren ground. The NDP surge, depriving the BQ of official party status,<sup>19</sup> culminated with Layton in 2011 but did not wane rapidly with Tom Mulcair<sup>20</sup> four years later. In 2019, however, the BQ resurged on their home turf by winning 32 seats in Quebec and regained its official party status.<sup>21</sup>

The Greens have also been suffering from the tyranny of the FPTP system since their foundation in 1983. Elizabeth May, their leader, was the



very first MP, winning a seat in the 2011 election in BC and retaining it in the following elections. This election added two more Green seats: one on Vancouver Island and the other in New Brunswick. Two of the three Green MPs are female. In the district of Victoria, the number of Green votes has been almost equal to that of NDP votes in a couple of elections, presaging a possible Green breakthrough in 2023.<sup>22</sup>

The decline in support for the Trudeau government was due to three main incidents. The policies that marked its optimistic launch<sup>23</sup> were no longer attuned to the psyche of the Canadian voters by early 2019. Most important of all, Trudeau was alleged to have unfairly attempted to influence Attorney-General Jody Wilson-Raybould in the prosecution of SNC-Lavalin Group Inc. in a bribery case.<sup>24</sup> This is a Canadian construction company based in Montreal, employing a large number of people in Canada, particularly in Montreal, and abroad. Trudeau seems to have been eager to defend this company in order to save many jobs in Quebec. Afterwards Wilson-Raybould resigned from the Trudeau cabinet, publicly denouncing Trudeau for his action.<sup>25</sup> This had an even greater effect because she was a Native woman.

Secondly, a month before the election, an old picture of a young Trudeau wearing brown-face make-up in his schooldays came out in the media. Even intended as an innocuous joke, it was considered to be blatant racist behaviour, despite Trudeau's eagerness to present his government as free from any bias, be it racial or sexual.

Finally, Trudeau went ahead with a megaproject to expand a pipeline from oil production sites in Alberta through BC to the coast for exports, while being regarded as a champion in the fight against climate change and a protector of indigenous rights. His duplicity disappointed environmentalists, First Nations, and even his enthusiastic supporters.

In creating his cabinet, Trudeau appointed Chrystia Freeland Deputy Prime Minister after a 13-year hiatus of the position.<sup>26</sup> Freeland started her ministerial career in 2015 as Minister of International Trade and was then promoted to Minister of Foreign Affairs two years later in a cabinet reshuffle. As Trudeau is a male francophone Montrealer, it is a good balance to have her as a deputy with her "melting pot" upbringing in the West and her riding in the centre of Toronto.<sup>27</sup> She was given even a finance portfolio, becoming the first female Minister of Finance in Canadian history.

## **Simulation I—Proportional Representation**

What many perceive as a panacea for the FPTP system seemed to be the PR system, which is in use in many countries in various areas, as discussed earlier. Trudeau said before the 2015 election that this would be the last election to be held under the FPTP system.<sup>28</sup> As the Liberals, the NDP, the BQ, and the Greens were all in favour of electoral reform, it was very likely that by 2019 a different voting system would be in place.<sup>29</sup> A special committee on electoral reform was set up with representatives from all three parties with official party status. An MP of the BQ and the Leader of the Greens, May, also sat as non-voting members. A year later, it came out to recommend PR as the best alternative and suggested having a national referendum on the issue.

Due to conflicting reactions from key persons to the committee report, Trudeau finally shied away from the idea of electoral reform.<sup>30</sup> The BQ was lukewarm about the change from the beginning, which is an understandable position because it can gain more seats in Quebec under the FPTP than its alternatives. The New Democrats and the Greens were unreservedly for PR. In the long run, Trudeau did not see it in Canada's best interest to conduct a national referendum on such a sweeping change in a short period of campaigning, especially after British voters' clear decision to stick to FPTP in their referendum.<sup>31</sup> He left it off the agenda for the time being and went ahead with the 2019 election under the FPTP system.

Even though a PR system was not adopted for the 2019 election, it is an interesting experiment to compare the result that would have occurred with PR in 2019 with the real outcome with FPTP. As introduced earlier, MMP is fundamentally PR because the overall composition of a legislative house is determined by votes cast for parties. Given that Germany is a federal polity with MMP, the voting system used for the German Lower House<sup>32</sup> is used to simulate what result Canadian voters would have had if Canada had adopted MMP.

As stated earlier, voters simultaneously cast two votes, one for a candidate in their single-member district and the other for a party on one ballot paper. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes unconditionally wins a district seat. S/he belongs to a particular party or is an independent. After all the party votes are counted, the parties receiving less than five

percent of the total votes are eliminated from any further calculation. It is a so-called five-percent electoral threshold. Or they can elect three constituency members to be eligible for the seat allotment with PR. The Saite-Laguë/Schepers procedure is a formula to distribute all the house seats to different parties on the basis of party votes in each state. Each party submits its list of candidates all numbered beforehand. This calculation does not efface constituency seats won by party-candidates, nor independently running candidates. If a party wins more constituencies than the number of seats it is entitled to in the party votes, overhang seats arise. Extra seats are added to the initially planned seat number.

**Table 3 Simulated result with the PR system of the German *Bundestag***

Parties	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	YT	NT	NU	Total
Liberal	22	9	3	8	101	54	8	10	4	7	1	1	1	229
Conservative	29	47	18	13	81	25	7	6	2	4	1	1	0	234
NDP	21	8	5	6	41	17	2	4	1	3	0	0	1	109
BQ	-	-	-	-	-	51	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	51
Green	11	2	1	1	15	7	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	45
People's	1	2	1	0	4	2	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	10
Others	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	1
Total	85	68	28	28	242	156	20	23	9	14	2	2	2	679

BC = British Columbia, AB = Alberta, SK = Saskatchewan, MB = Manitoba, ON = Ontario, QC = Quebec, NB = New Brunswick, NS = Nova Scotia, PEI = Prince Edward Island, NL = Newfoundland and Labrador, YT = Yukon, NT = Northwest Territories, NU = Nunavut

Table 3 shows a hypothetical election result with the German MMP.<sup>33</sup> For argument's sake, a Canadian House of Commons is doubled in size. One Independent seat in BC, one overhang seat in NS, and one overhang in PEI would increase the number of Parliamentary seats by 3. To win the majority of seats, a party would need 340 seats. Receiving the largest number of popular votes, the Conservatives would have more seats than the Liberals overall. Even with the support of the People's Party of Canada (PPC),<sup>34</sup> the Conservatives could not form a centre-right government *vis-à-vis* the parties left of



To simulate what the Canadian Parliament would look like if it had used an Australian voting system, we need to make several assumptions in view of the overall inclinations of parties, shown in Figure 1. Not all voters necessarily vote for parties and their candidates along ideological lines. Some decide to vote for candidates in their district apart from what their parties stand for: for example, their personal charms and trustworthiness may weigh more in this decision. However, given that individual candidates cannot deviate much from their political parties' stance, it is parties' inclination regarding state policies that are most significant in the large framework.

**Table 4 Simulated result with the PV system of the Australian Lower House**

Parties	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	YT	NT	NU	Total
Liberal	17	1	0	6	93	34	6	11	4	6	1	1	0	180
Conservative	10	32	14	5	20	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	93
NDP	12	1	0	3	8	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	28
BQ	-	-	-	-	-	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	33
Green	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
People's	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	-	0
Others	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	1
Total	42	34	14	14	121	78	10	11	4	7	1	1	1	338

BC = British Columbia, AB = Alberta, SK = Saskatchewan, MB = Manitoba, ON = Ontario, QC = Quebec, NB = New Brunswick, NS = Nova Scotia, PEI = Prince Edward Island, NL = Newfoundland and Labrador, YT = Yukon, NT = Northwest Territories, NU = Nunavut

All the votes for the Greens go to the NDP as their second preference, then to the Liberals. Half of the NDP votes go to the Greens and 45 percent to the Liberals while the remaining five percent go to the Conservatives. Between the Liberals and the Conservatives, 90 percent of the NDP votes go to the former. The Liberal votes are distributed equally among the NDP, the Greens, and the Conservatives. 30 percent of the Conservative votes go to the PPC, then to the Liberals, while 30 percent go to the Liberals and the

remaining 40 percent are equally distributed between the Greens and the NDP. If no PPC candidate exists anymore, 60 percent of the Conservative votes go to the Liberals. 80 percent of the PPC votes go to the Conservatives while the remainder go to the Liberals. The Liberal votes are distributed equally among the NDP, the Greens, and the Conservatives. The BQ makes Quebec a unique case on these assumptions. The BQ does not preference any party in particular although it is left-leaning. The BQ votes are divided equally between any two main centre-left parties or, with the Greens, three centre-left parties. On the other hand, the other parties treat the BQ on the same footing as the other centre-left parties because the BQ is not a separatist party. All the Green votes go to the Liberals in Quebec as well. The votes for independent candidates are apportioned to different parties in accordance with the independent candidates' expressed political views.

As shown in Table 4, the Liberals would go way above the majority line. Trudeau would be Prime Minister with no need to form a coalition with any party on the left or to negotiate with any other party regarding support on confidence votes and money-supply bills. A rising star Freeland would be still his lieutenant. The Conservatives would lose most with the preferential voting system, given that it is the only competitive centre-right party. Many preferences accrue to the Liberals because it is centre-left with the NDP and the Greens siding with them in the two-party preferred vote between the Tories and the Liberals. Preferences given to the Liberals by the NDP are the most striking in Ontario, followed by BC. In the FPTP system, the Liberals and the NDP split the votes on the left. In the preferential voting system, they would not let the Conservatives exploit the rift. The NDP would be able to increase the number of their seats.

## **Conclusion**

Trudeau's Liberals won the federal election in 2019, but his caucus does not have MPs from every province. They won almost half of their seats in Ontario and added many more seats in the provinces east of Ontario to remain in power. They could not win any seats in Alberta or Saskatchewan. Trudeau himself is a Quebecer whose constituency is in Montreal. An entire nation is not behind this government. Westerners perceive the federal government as a

government for the Eastern Canadians.

In contrast, the Conservative leader, Andrew Scheer hailed from Regina, Saskatchewan. Although he was born and raised in Ottawa, he moved to the West with his spouse, a native of Regina. He is comfortably ensconced in Regina and splits his time between Regina and Ottawa as Official Opposition Leader. He speaks French well because a major party leader, a potential future prime minister, is required to be fully bilingual. He is, however, not as perfectly bilingual as Trudeau. But it was not a fatal liability because he would be able to improve his French as Prime Minister as Joe Clark did.

Across the floor in Parliament, the government side is predominantly Eastern while the official opposition MPs are very Western. The Tory caucus has only 10 Quebecers and five Maritimers. More of their MPs are from the Western provinces than from Ontario. This regional imbalance was exaggerated by the FPTP system. Laura B. Stephenson and others write that “neither parties nor the media are dividing the Canadian public along regional lines to the extent some might suggest.”<sup>35</sup> There are fertile grounds to develop politics on a pan-Canadian basis.

If Canada had used the German MMP, the balance of Canadian MPs would be more evenly spread out across the country. Minor parties would be able to increase vastly the size of their caucuses. The Greens would have official party status with a political punch to exert more influence on the government, which seems to have been indifferent to environmental issues or to pay it mere lip service in recent years. Trudeau would need to bring the Greens into his cabinet in the first place to form government. If Canada had used the Australian preferential voting, the Liberals would gain most and increase the number of their MPs to form a majority government easily. However, as evinced in Table 4, unlike PR, this voting method is not likely to solve the question of regional imbalance. The German MMP system has an obvious edge over the Australian preferential voting in this regard.

Finally, some argue that the Conservatives led by Scheer failed to win an election they could have won.<sup>36</sup> But if they had beaten Trudeau Liberals by amassing more seats in Ontario, it would have been another regionally unbalanced Tory government, whose past example is the Clark government of 1979 in which the Prime Minister and many cabinet ministers come from the West. MMP is suggested as a good panacea to alleviate the imbalance among the regions.

## Notes

1. It is not mere coincidence that these two elections were both held on the third Monday of October. The election dates are predetermined at the federal level as well as in most provinces. The next federal election is presumed to take place on Oct. 16th, 2023. See Kentaro Okada, “Kanada no kaisanken: renpousei to rikkenkunhusei no hazama de” (Fixed Election Dates in Canada), *Seikatsu Keizai Seisaku*, no. 280 (May 2020): 16-20.
2. Ontario, Quebec, BC, and Alberta are considered big provinces because of their greater population size. They came to make a foursome in the 1970s due to the increased significance of the Pacific and the oil boom.
3. This was the first leadership election held online and by phone. Between 1919 and 2009, leadership conventions were always held somewhere in Canada with all the candidates and voters physically gathering together. Jean Chrétien became the first Liberal leader anointed outside Ottawa because the convention was held in Calgary in 1990. The date of June 23rd (Sat.) was deliberately chosen in timeliness for an upcoming Calgary Stampede. Incidentally, traditionally more decentralized Tories elected Richard Bennett in Winnipeg as early as 1927. To be elected, the leader needs to have more than half of the votes. Before 2013, balloting continued until one candidate won a majority of votes. In 2013, to streamline the process, registered party members and supporters expressed their preferences when they voted. To make all the electoral districts weigh equally in the leadership election, 100 points are allocated to each district. These 100 points are divided among the candidates in accordance with the first preference votes they get. Then, all the points are aggregated for a national count. Given that there were 308 districts in 2013, to get the support of the majority meant winning 15,401 points. If no candidates had obtained enough points in the first preference votes, the second preference votes of the candidate with the fewest points eliminated would have been distributed among the remaining candidates. This would have continued until someone got 15,401 points. However, Trudeau was elected handily with 24,668 points in the count of the first preference votes. Preferential voting is in use in the Liberal Party leadership election.
4. In the first ballot, Trudeau captured as many as 78.8% of the votes cast. This is quite a contrast with his late father. It took him as many as four ballots to go above the majority line in 1968.
5. See Nobuaki Suyama, “Analysis of the 2015 Canadian Federal Election,” *Journal of Teikyo Heisei University* 27, no. 2 (March 2016): 67-77.
6. At 43, Trudeau became the second youngest Prime Minister in Canadian history after Joe Clark, who was 39 years old in 1979.
7. Trudeau could have chosen Senator from Alberta or Saskatchewan to follow the Canadian tradition faithfully. In the 1980 election, polarization was even more extreme. With no Liberal MPs elected west of Winnipeg, Trudeau Sr. appointed Horace Bud Olson, Senator for Alberta, as Minister of Economic and Regional Development, to have a minister from Alberta in his cabinet. Appointing Senators as cabinet ministers is constitutionally acceptable in Canada. However, Trudeau Sr. did without ministers from Saskatchewan or BC. Olson was earlier an MP for Medicine Hat and served Trudeau Sr. in his first administration as Minister of Agriculture from 1968 to 1972. Given his political weight in the party and the need to appease Albertans in an upcoming National Energy Program, which was to be very unpopular in Alberta, it was imperative that Trudeau Sr. appoint at least one minister from an oil-producing province.



- After resigning from the Senate, Olson was appointed Lieutenant-Governor for Alberta by Prime Minister Chrétien in 1996 due to his valuable contribution to the Liberal Party over many years.
8. See Alan C. Cairns, "The Electoral System and the Party System in Canada, 1921-1965," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 1, no. 1 (1968): 55-80. In the Japanese literature, see Kentaro Kogure, "Kanada ni okeru senkyo seido kaikaku no kokoromi—chiikishugi no kenzaika to senkyo seido no mondai" (Electoral Reform in Canada: Regionalism and Electoral System), *Kanada Kenkyu Nempo (The Annual Review of Canadian Studies)* 20 (2000): 36-49.
  9. William P. Irvine, *Does Canada Need a New Electoral System?* (Kinston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1979).
  10. See Henry Milner, ed., *Steps Toward Making Every Vote Count: Electoral System Reform in Canada and Its Provinces* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2004).
  11. Japan's current system for the Lower House mixes FPTP with PR. It is parallel voting in that the two parts exist independently of each other. It is also called mixed member majoritarian (MMM) by some political scientists. MMM is distinct from MMP, mixed member proportional representation. See Nobuaki Suyama, "Senkyo seido to seitou seido no ichi kousatsu: Nyuujiirando to Nihon no hikaku kara" (A Reflection on the Relationship between the Electoral System and the Party System: A Comparison between New Zealand and Japan), *New Zealand Note*, no. 11 (February 2010): 1-11.
  12. The FPTP system can have multiple-member divisions like the one used formerly for the Japanese House of Representatives. Yasuhiro Nakasone could not win a seat by winning the largest number of votes in his prime ministerial days but got elected in second place behind Takeo Fukuda, a former prime minister of greater seniority.
  13. The Canadian Fathers of Confederation made an exception to Prince Edward Island. Regardless of demographic changes, this tiny island province is permanently guaranteed to keep their allotted four seats in the 1867 Constitution.
  14. For the Australian Senate, see Colin A. Hughes, "STV in Australia," in Shaun Bowler and Bernard Grofman, eds., *Elections in Australia, Ireland, and Malta under the Single Transferable Vote: Reflections on an Embedded Institution* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 155-77.
  15. See, for example, Nobuaki Suyama, "A Comparison of the Electoral Systems in New Zealand and Scotland," *The Journal of New Zealand Studies in Japan*, no. 20 (December 2013): 32-43; and Nobuaki Suyama, "Mixed-Member Proportional Representation and the Ensuing Politics of Coalition-Making: Germany and New Zealand," *The Journal of The Japan Society for New Zealand Studies* 21 (June 21, 2014): 27-39.
  16. It is in the district of Fredericton, a provincial capital of New Brunswick. It was rather an upset victory. The Conservative candidate was predicted to snatch a seat from the incumbent Liberal MP. However, David Coon (Green) has been a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) of New Brunswick, representing the district of Fredericton South. Given that three Green MLAs are serving in New Brunswick, the same number as BC, it was not surprising that New Brunswick elected the first Green MP after BC.
  17. It is an area where progressive, young people team. The provincial district covering more or less the same area was first won by the NDP in 1986. The NDP won the federal district for the first time in 2008. It is a safe seat for the NDP.
  18. Fluent in French, he was originally an Anglophone Montrealer with a B.A. from McGill University. He

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moved to Toronto to pursue his Ph.D. in political science at York University. He continued to live in Ontario and had his constituency in Toronto. Although he grew up in a conservative family in Quebec, with his father, Brian Mulroney's PC federal cabinet minister, and his grandfather, Maurice Duplessis' Union Nationale provincial cabinet minister, he himself grew to form a more egalitarian view of society under the influence of his mentor Charles Taylor to move ideologically to the NDP. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2010. After having had such a successful campaign in the 2011 election, he passed away only three months later.

19. A party which has at least 12 elected members in the House of Commons is given official party status. This status is not just nominal but substantial in entitling a party to question the government during Question Period and in offering a research budget.
20. He is an Anglophone Quebecer, living in Montreal. He is a lawyer with a law degree from McGill University. He had ample experience in provincial politics before moving up to federal politics. He even served in the Jean Charest Liberal government as Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, which is an important portfolio in the current times. The fact that he was a provincial Liberal minister does not make him a renegade by taking a federal NDP leader's post because the Canadian party system is confederal.
21. The NDP leader is Jagmeet Singh, born in the Toronto area with Sikh immigrant parents from the Indian state of Punjab. When he was elected federal NDP leader, in 2017, he did not have a seat in the Canadian Parliament. He was a member of the Ontario Provincial Parliament and a deputy party leader. He entered the House of Commons by winning a by-election in a district of Burnaby-South, BC. He followed the Canadian convention for a newly elected leader with no House seat to enter Parliament by winning a by-election in a safe seat. Six months after Chrétien was elected Liberal leader in 1990 with no House seat, he won a safe seat in New Brunswick to move back into the House but he did not really move there. In 1993, he won back his original district of Saint Maurice, Quebec. Singh now resides with his spouse in Burnaby, BC, by keeping his Parliamentary seat there. He is the very first visible minority leader of a major political party on a permanent basis.
22. In the BC provincial legislative assembly, the first Green seat was won in this geographical area.
23. It legalized marijuana, expanded an immigrant intake program especially with a view to refugees, increased public spending on social welfare, and accommodated indigenous peoples.
24. Satoko Norimatsu succinctly explains the situation leading to the election. See Satoko Norimatsu, "Senkyo de kukyo no Torudō-seiken," (The Trudeau Government in Turmoil, towards the Election) *Shūkan Kinyōbi*, no. 1261 (December 13, 2019): 40-41.
25. She ran as Independent in the 2019 election and kept her seat in Vancouver by beating a Liberal candidate handsomely.
26. Harper did not appoint any Deputy Prime Minister during his Tory reign. Trudeau also did not appoint one in his first government in 2015. The last Deputy Prime Minister that served in Paul Martin's Liberal government was Anne McLellan, a University of Alberta law professor. Incidentally, Trudeau hired her as an advisor in the Prime Minister's Office in 2019, especially because of the Liberal electoral drought in Alberta and Saskatchewan. See Nobuaki Suyama, "Deputy Prime Ministers in Commonwealth Countries: Comparison of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom," *Journal of Teikyo Heisei University* 30 (March 2019): 167-76.

27. She went to Harvard University for her B.A. and moved to Oxford University for her graduate study on a Rhodes Scholarship. If she becomes Prime Minister, she will be the second Canadian Prime Minister to have won a Rhodes Scholarship after John Turner.
28. Trudeau himself had preferential voting rank-ordering candidates in mind as an ideal alternative to FPTP.
29. The item of electoral reform was included in the “Speech from the Throne: Making Real Change Happen” by Governor-General David Johnson in the Senate on Dec. 3rd, 2015. Given that the Governor-General plays a nominally ceremonial role, this speech was prepared by the Trudeau government.
30. See Donald J. Savoie, *Democracy in Canada: The Disintegration of Our Institutions* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2019), 332-33, 353-54.
31. The change to the alternative vote system *à la* Australia was flatly rejected in a referendum initiated by the Liberal Democrats in 2011.
32. See Ferdinand Otto, “Bundestagswahl: Wie das deutsche Wahlrecht reformiert werden kann,” (Election to the *Bundestag*: How the German Franchise can Be Reformed) *Die Zeit* (September 18, 2017), <https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2017-09/bundestagswahl-wahlrecht-5-prozent-huerde-ueberhangmandate> (accessed June 30, 2020).
33. Canadian voters did not really choose their favourite party in the election. Let me assume that they chose parties of the candidates they did vote for.
34. Maxime Bernier, MP from Quebec, founded the People’s Party of Canada in 2018, when he resigned from the Conservatives. It is a party depicted as being right-wing. Bernier lost to Scheer in the 2017 Tory leadership election to succeed to Harper as a new leader. Bernier stated on his departure that he could not stand the party’s corruption and its inclination to bend the principle of conservatism. In 2019, the PPC ran candidates in as many as 315 constituencies but could not elect any. Bernier himself lost his seat.
35. Laura B. Stephenson et al., *Provincial Battles, National Prize?: Elections in a Federal State* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2019), 174.
36. Enzo DiMatteo, “Canada Election 2019: Andrew Scheer snatches defeat from the jaw of victory,” *NOW Magazine* (October 22, 2019), <https://nowtoronto.com/news/canada-election-2019-justin-trudeau-andrew-scheer-jagmeet-singh> (accessed June 30, 2020); Nicolas Bourcier et Agnès Chapsal, “Au Canada, la victoire étriquée de Justin Trudeau,” *Le Monde*, SELECTION HEBDOMADAIRE, le 26 octobre 2019. A couple of months later, Scheer announced his resignation as leader of the Conservative Party to take responsibility for his failure to win the election even though his party won more of the popular votes than the Liberals and increased their number of seats. In August 2020, Erin O’Toole was elected new leader of the party. He was born in Quebec and raised in Ontario, and has a law degree from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia.