

POLITICS AS USUAL: Strategic Voting? Pfft.

By Alison Collins-Mrakas

The election is over and we have a new party and new PM in place.

Not entirely unexpected.

The idea we would have a Harper majority again was highly unlikely. The best I would have thought would be a slim minority for either the Liberals or the Conservatives. What was unexpected ? to me, at least ? was the fact that it turned out to be a Liberal majority, or a ?red surge?, ?red wave? or whatever ?red? fast moving water metaphor the media folks can come up with.

Pollsters were calling for a tight three way tie. I guess they got that wrong too.

But let's have a look at that majority: the Liberals won 184 seats. The Conservatives 99, NDP 44, Bloc 10 and Green 1, but to ?win? those seats the Liberals garnered just 39.5% of the popular vote while the Conservatives collected 31.9 % of the popular vote.

So, with a paltry 7.6% more in votes, the Liberals ?won? almost double the seats of the Conservatives. It doesn't sound like a tidal wave of support in my humble opinion.

I am not picking on the Liberals. The same comments apply to the Tory majority in 2011.

Let's compare the two elections.

In 2011, the Conservatives formed a majority despite the fact that fully 60 percent of votes cast did not go to them. In 2015? The Liberals will form a majority government despite the fact that fully 60 per cent of votes cast did not go to them.

In other words: same results, just the colour of the flags have changed. It's hardly a ringing endorsement of either governing party.

Last week I made mention of the advocacy group, ?Just the facts Canada? and their extraordinary push for Canadians to vote strategically ? to get rid of Harper. They opined that ?...70 percent of Canadians do not want to be governed by Conservatives.?

Well, actually it was 60 percent but, heck, let's not quibble over facts shall we?

So, based on their reasoning, in 2015 60.5% of Canadians do not want to be governed by the Liberals. In other words, we are pretty much in the same boat as we were before the election; the same amount of people do not want to be governed by the party that has ?won? the majority but we now have a different captain, so I guess that's all that matters.

I did a quick sampling of the list of ridings that the Just the Facts Canada folks were saying were crucial in preventing a Harper win.

Yep, the new riding of Aurora-Oak Ridges -Richmond Hill went to the Liberals, the same with Vaughan-Woodbridge, and King-Vaughan. The margins of victory were not landslide-like, but they weren't tight either.

Does this mean that strategic voting worked? No, I don't think so. The outcome was a result of a number of factors. What this does mean is that we have an electoral system that results in repeated governments that are not truly representative?

I have advocated for this before, and I will do so again: we need electoral reform. The first-past-the-post elections are not fair or representative. Mr. Trudeau has promised change. Let's hope this is one campaign promise fulfilled.

Until next week, stay informed, stay involved because this is ? after all ? Our Town.