

# Unfit to lead

## Trudeau announces he plans to resign



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### OPINION

*In a subdued press conference on Monday morning, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that he plans to step down from his role. The date he would actually leave office was not specified, but it would be before the next election, which is set to take place in the coming months. The announcement comes in the midst of dismal polling for Trudeau's Liberal Party, with recent numbers putting the party's support at a mere 16 percent, the lowest it's been in over ten years.*

*While calls for his resignation have been mounting for months now, the pressure ticked up considerably when Chrystia Freeland — Trudeau's Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister — unexpectedly resigned from the Cabinet back in December.*

*"It has become obvious to me with the internal battles that I cannot be the one to carry the Liberal standard into the next election," Trudeau said. "...Removing me from the equation as the leader who will fight the next election for the Liberal Party should also decrease the level of polarization we're seeing right now in the House and in Canadian politics."*

*For many, this decision is long overdue. Whether it's the "costly political gimmicks" Freeland complained about in her resignation letter, the numerous scandals, or simply the economic slump Canada finds itself in, almost everyone is ready to begin a new chapter in Canadian politics. But before we leave the past behind completely, we should take a moment to reflect on Trudeau's nearly 10 years in office and the lessons we can learn from it.*

From the very beginning, both Trudeau's competence and his character have been called into question. He sailed into power with a thin CV, but a cool haircut and a well-known surname (his father was Pierre Trudeau, Canadian PM from 1968 to 1979, and again from 1980 to 1984).

When asked why he selected a gender-balanced Cabinet in his first term — with 15 of 31 posts held by women — he famously answered, "Because it's 2015." That may have played well with his progressive base, but it was a flimsy case for his personnel choices. Many other cabinet and

policy decisions have likewise raised eyebrows regarding his aptitude.

Trudeau's character flaws have been even more apparent. "Trudeau clearly has narcissistic personality characteristics," said Jordan Peterson in a recent podcast episode, echoing criticisms he has been making for years. "[He] runs the country, what, as a testament to his own grandeur, it's something like that...The Trudeau government has skated through at least half a dozen scandals that under normal circumstances would have provoked an honorable government

to resign." Whether it was appearing in blackface at parties, or accepting gifts from a foreign magnate, his judgement seemed poor, to say the least.

In addition to the scandals, Trudeau and his wife Sophie separated in August 2023, after 18 years of marriage. This isn't to say that was entirely his fault, of course, but it does tarnish his "family man" image in the public eye.

Why worst get on top  
All of this is reminiscent of F. A. Hayek's chapter in *The Road to*



Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau meets with Aga Khan IV on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on May 17, 2016. Trudeau confessed that he received an overnight bag from the billionaire Ismaili leader during his vacation on his private island in the Bahamas.  
● SEAN KILPATRICK/CANADIAN PRESS

*Serfdom* titled "Why the Worst Get on Top." In the chapter, Hayek explains that positions of power in totalitarian regimes tend to attract the worst kinds of people because of the very nature of the system. Others have pointed out that a similar problem exists with non-totalitarian governments as well. As Trudeau's tenure illustrates, the kind of people who tend to gain power are precisely those who shouldn't have it.

"...[I]t is a well-known fact that those people who most want to rule people are, ipso facto, those least suited to do it,"

writes Douglas Adams. "...anyone who is capable of getting themselves made President should on no account be allowed to do the job."

Or as Frank Herbert put it, "All governments suffer a recurring problem: Power attracts pathological personalities. It is not that power corrupts but that it is magnetic to the corruptible." The propensity of people like Trudeau to acquire and maintain positions of power underscores the importance of limiting government power in every possible way. And this goes far beyond "checks and balances." This

means asking serious questions — at a constitutional level — about how much authority the government should have to tax us and interfere with our lives and businesses.

Imagine a world where the government had so little power that no one even particularly cared who the Prime Minister was. Maybe, instead of putting our hopes in a new ruler, that would be a better path for Canadians to pursue.

*The article first appeared on the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE).*

# Justin Trudeau was his own worst enemy



By Stephen Marche  
Author

### OPINION

*In the sunny beginnings of Justin Trudeau's time in power, a journalist asked him why his cabinet was 50 percent female. Mr. Trudeau gave a now well-known response: "Because it's 2015." If you want to know why on Monday he announced his plan to resign as prime minister, the answer is just as simple: Because it's 2025. Mr. Trudeau's political career has followed the arc of global progressive politics over the past decade, reflecting its transformation from a pose of optimistic cool to its present state of despair. At the beginning of his time in office, New York magazine depicted Mr. Trudeau as a cutout paper doll with costumes, which seemed about right. Now he's increasingly the butt of jokes from the manosphere.*

In 2015, Mr. Trudeau was at the forefront of a new kind of politics, both in terms of how he came to power and how he chose to use it. He harnessed the emerging force of social media with his easygoing celebrity to win his first election. Once in office, he stressed the gender and ethnicity of the people he put in important positions as much as what they planned to do with the power they possessed. Now, identity politics have helped bring about his downfall, and social media networks have soured on him.

Mr. Trudeau stayed who he was. The times changed around him. The worst you can say about him, and I have, is that he could not face the realities of a newly polarized world. But that inability has roots in what brought him to office in the first place.

"There is no core identity, no mainstream in Canada," he told *The New York Times Magazine* in 2015. "There are shared values — openness, respect, compassion, willingness to work hard, to be there for each other, to search for equality and justice. Those qualities are what make us the first post-national state."

This vision, when he articulated it, seemed powerfully contemporary, steering Canada in the same direction as an opening, borderless world of expanding cross-cultural and economic exchange. He did not ask himself — few did — what a "post-national state" would look like, or if it would work.

The term itself sounds glamor-

ous, a way of existing politically without the various insanities of nationalism. In practice, however, it is unclear how a post-national state could survive. Mr. Trudeau's tenure has seen patriotism decline significantly. Only 34 percent of people in the country today say they are "very proud" to be Canadian, down from 52 percent in 2016. The failure of Mr. Trudeau's inclusive vision is more than a culture war question. Canada's economic superpower has always been its widespread, cross-party support for well-regulated immigration, which has been

vital to replenishing the country's small, aging population with skilled workers. His government's policy since Covid of bringing in half a million immigrants a year, without any firm plan on how to manage their impact on housing and infrastructure, has been a disaster; his faith in immigration as a positive force may have been too naïve to allow him to inquire about its limits. The result has been that the number of Canadians who believe there is too much immigration has increased by more than 30 percentage points in the past two years alone.

At times, Mr. Trudeau seems to embody virtue signaling without effective policymaking, the worst feature of progressive politics as they have devolved over the past decade. During his time in office, land acknowledgments became common practice across Canada, while Indigenous life expectancy rates plummeted. I might add that virtue signaling is now, and has always been, a Canadian affliction, not just Mr. Trudeau's. What Canadians have come to hate about Mr. Trudeau they have come to hate in themselves, which explains, at least in part, the intensity of the hatred.

Canadians have a tendency to turn on their prime ministers every 10 years or so. The Harper government fell brutally in 2015, the Liberal government under Paul Martin with similar harshness in 2006. Before that, Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government lost all but two seats in the 1993 election. Mr. Trudeau's departure is traditional: The way Canadians thank their leaders for their service is by kicking them out the door with the pointiest boots they can find.

Mr. Trudeau is, in a sense, a tragic figure — what made him

great is destroying him. At his best, he was capable of using his photogenic charm to serve the implementation of serious and important policies.

In the first half of his time in office, the Trudeau government cut child poverty in half; legalized marijuana and medical assistance for dying; and made important investments in child care. The second half was defined by crises: negotiating with the increasingly chaotic first Trump administration, Covid, and inflation. By any reasonable assessment, Mr. Trudeau's government handled all three as well as could be expected. Leaders in power during the aftermath of Covid have been rejected around the globe. That rejection makes sense, but that doesn't mean that it's sensible.

Mr. Trudeau will be a lame-duck prime minister until his party chooses a new head. (He also announced on Monday that he would resign as the leader of his Liberal Party.) The year 2025 does not seem, at least so far, to be a year devoted to nuance and sympathetic understanding of events in context. Nonetheless, two things can be true at the same time. Mr. Trudeau's politics of representation have imploded in a fit of the best intentions, and yet he leaves behind a legacy that has shaped Canada for the better. Canadians might someday be able to recognize that duality. But it may take until 2035.

*The article first appeared on The New York Times.*



Canadian Gov. Gen. David Johnston (sitting 2nd-R) joins Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his gender-balanced cabinet for a photo at Rideau Hall, in Ottawa, Canada, on November 4, 2015.  
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