



Across the Aisle: Opposition in Canadian Politics

David E. Smith

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How do parties with official opposition status influence Canadian politics? *Across the Aisle* is an innovative examination of the theory and practice of opposition in Canada, both in Parliament and in provincial legislatures. Extending from the pre-Confederation era to the present day, it focuses on whether Canada has developed a coherent tradition of parliamentary opposition.

David E. Smith argues that Canada has in fact failed to develop such a tradition. He investigates several possible reasons for this failure, including the long dominance of the Liberal party, which arrested the tradition of viewing the opposition as an alternative government; periods of minority government induced by the proliferation of parties; the role of the news media, which have largely displaced Parliament as a forum for commentary on government policy; and, finally, the increasing popularity of calls for direct action in politics.

Readers of *Across the Aisle* will gain a renewed understanding of official opposition that goes beyond Stornoway and shadow cabinets, illuminating both the historical evolution and recent developments of opposition politics in Canada.

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