Preparing for Election 2019: Key priorities for fairness and representative engagement?

Jean-Pierre Kingsley
Former Chief Electoral Officer of Canada
October 11, 2019
9:00am – 4:30pm

Summary

As Chief Electoral Officer of Canada for nearly 20 years, Jean-Pierre Kingsley has accumulated a wealth of experience and accomplished a great deal. Drawing on this experience, Mr. Kingsley will take participants through an exploration of the state of Canada's electoral system, propositions for change to that system, and ways in which our democracy is impacted negatively by inaccurate information.

   More specifically, Mr. Kingsley will use a hands-on approach to engage participants and discuss what Canada's key priorities should be moving into 2019 and how electoral changes can impact fairness and representation in our democracy. He will explore the Liberal party's 2015 campaign promises with regard to the electoral system as well as the important impact that false news, originating both at home and abroad, can have on Canadian politics and Canadian electoral campaigns.

   If you think that Canadian democracy and elections require some adjusting or that our system is in danger of corruption by outside forces, you won't want to miss this workshop.

Outline

Democracy and Canadian Elections
- A brief history of democracy
- Its multiple objectives
- Its essential components, including the Canada Elections Act
- The democratic deficit in Canada: getting better or worse?
- Proposals for change

Preparing for Election 2019
- What does fairness and representative engagement look like?
- Are changes possible?
- What are the future challenges?

Note: There will be class discussion throughout this workshop (please come prepared for this discussion by completing the assigned readings)

Required Readings*

Boutilier, Alex (2017) "Canada's spies examining 'vulnerabilities' in election system". *The Star*. https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/05/12/canadas-spies-examining-vulnerabilities-in-election-system.html

Bowden, James (2016) "Time has already run out on electoral reform" in *Inside Policy – The Magazine of The Macdonald-Laurier Institute,* pp. 27-29. https://www.macdonaldlaurier.ca/time-has-already-run-out-on-electoral-reform-james-bowden-in-inside-policy/

Gatehouse, Jonathon (2017) "New questions about Canadian influence on Brexit vote". *CBC News.* http://www.cbc.ca/news/thenational/the-national-today-star-wars-jedi-brexit-sexual-assault-1.4450124

Lee, Dave (2019) "Key fact-checkers stop working with Facebook". *BBC News,* February 2, https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-47098021

Wherry, Aaron (2017) "Facebook launches 'election integrity initiative' to fight hacking and fake news". *CBC News.* http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/facebook-election-hacking-fake-news-1.4362002

Additional Resources

From the website of the Minister of Democratic Institutions:

- Backgrounder - safeguarding Elections: https://www.canada.ca/en/democratic-institutions/news/2019/01/safeguarding-elections.html
- Infographic - Critical Election Incident Public Protocol: https://www.canada.ca/en/democratic-institutions/services/protecting-democracy/public-protocol.html
- Backgrounder - Social Media Companies: https://www.canada.ca/en/democratic-institutions/news/2019/01/encouraging-social-media-platforms-to-act.html

Other Resources:

BBC (2017) "Russia a 'risk' to undersea cables, defence chief warns". *BBC News.* http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-42362500

Mazereeuw, Peter (2018) "Facebook makes it easy to run illegal and 'Astroturf' ads, say Canadian digital political strategists". *Hill Times,* April 2. https://www.hilltimes.com/2018/04/02/facebook-makes-illegal-astroturf-ads-easy-say-digital-strategists/139117

Report on Bills 2018-19 Bills before parliament "that may have an impact on Elections Canada's affairs": http://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/artsci/polisci/wssr/docs/winter2018/2018-2019%20Departmental%20Plan.pdf

- C-33 - An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts
- C-50 - An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (political financing)

Other Important Bills:

- Bill C-213, Bill C-279, Bill C-295, Bill C-297, Bill C-298, Bill C-327, Bill C-340, Bill C-364, Bill C-212, Bill S-239, and Bill C-377

*If you are registered for non-credit and are unable to locate the readings, please contact us at wssr@concordia.ca