



The Media and Democracy: Concerning election campaigns

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October 25

9:00am – 4:30pm

Summary

It is often stated that journalism is a key component to maintaining a healthy democracy. That, in order to properly inform the citizenry and to hold our democratic institutions and representatives to account, our system requires transparency as well as individuals that are willing to dig deep to find the truth.

But do journalists today have the tools necessary to fulfill this important role? Does privatized media have room for in-depth reporting? Is there enough freedom in the press to ask the most difficult yet important questions? Is there strong enough will to cover important policies and issues that *should* be on the agenda in the lead-up to an election? And, do citizens even care to watch, listen to, or read the news when it is being reported?

Outline

Session 1: What is the ideal role of Canadian media in democracy? Do journalists have the right tools to report the truth?

Session 2: Media under attack: As an institution at the forefront of free speech, are we doing all we can to protect speech, even the speech we don't like? Or are we conspiring, wittingly or not, to undermine one of the great tenets of democracy, free expression?

Session 3: It all comes down to this: Who's asking the questions? As an experienced interviewer, most recently focused on Canadian and American politics. Ms. MacNeil will talk about how it works at the micro level. What guides our choices in terms of story, including the choice of topics, and the framing of questions? What is the goal of an interviewer? We do fact checks. Do we do enough bias checks? Are we "tough" enough? Too "soft"...or too worried about our own image?

Required readings/viewing:

Canada. Parliament. Senate. Special Committee on Mass Media. 1970. *The Uncertain Mirror: Report of the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media*. Ottawa: Information Canada pp. 1-13 & 252-255

<http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EF4699> or access report summary and conclusions here:

<http://publications.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/BP/prb9935-e.htm>

MacNeil, Carole. 2017. "Andrew Scheer shuns Rebel Media" interview on CBC News, August 19,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCSfe5OKbIU&feature=youtu.be>

Public Policy Forum. 2017. *The Shattered Mirror, News, Democracy and Trust in the Digital Age*. January. pp. 38-45.

<https://shatteredmirror.ca/wp-content/uploads/theShatteredMirror.pdf>

Taras, David. 2001. "Media, Citizens, and Democracy", in *Power and Betrayal in the Canadian Media*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 29-60 <http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EF21C9>

Recommended reading:

Taras, David. 2001. *Power and Betrayal in the Canadian Media*. Peterborough: Broadview Press, Ltd.

