



Do Municipal Elections Matter in Canada?

Dr. Sandra Breux

Associate Professor, Centre Urbanisation Culture Société, INRS

May 7, 2019

9:00am – 4:30pm

Summary

Municipal elections are central to ensuring the adequate representation of citizens' interests and the everyday delivery of public services on the ground. Yet, municipal elections seldom get as much attention as federal ones. And so, as the next federal election looms, what better time to discuss these very important local battlegrounds.

In this workshop, we will present the practical and theoretical bases necessary for understanding the municipal electoral scene in both Quebec and the rest of Canada. We will also address the specificity of the municipal level in comparison with other levels of government. This workshop will be hands-on, involving several activities that will require the active collaboration of workshop participants.

Outline

The morning will be devoted to the basic elements of how municipal democracy works in Quebec, namely around the following three main themes:

1. The electoral offer (who can run and how?, who runs in municipal elections, the renewal of the electoral offer);
2. Issues (areas of expertise; less interesting issues?; scale of proximity); and
3. Voter participation (factors likely to influence electoral participation, who gets elected, who votes).

The focus will be on practical rather than theoretical aspects. We will address these themes through specific activities that require each participant to have an internet-connected device.

In the afternoon, participants will take part in workshops around the three themes of information dissemination at the municipal level, women's place in municipal politics, and electronic voting. Based on the morning presentations and data provided by the professor, the participants, organized in teams, will be invited to analyze the data presented and consider possible legislative changes to address the issues identified. Each team will share its thoughts with the whole class to stimulate discussion on the selected theme.

Required Readings*

Crowder-Meyer, M., Kushner Gadarian, S., & Trounstein, J. 2019. "Voting Can Be Hard, Information Helps". *Urban Affairs Review*, Online first, pp. 1-30. <https://journals-sagepub-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/doi/full/10.1177/1078087419831074>

Oliver, J. E., Ha, E. S., & Callen, Z. 2012. "Size, Scope, and Bias: What Differentiates Local Electoral Politics?" In *Local Elections and the Politics of Small Scale Democracy*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, pp. 1-11. <http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EF3B7A>

Trounstein, J. 2009. "All politics is local: The reemergence of the study of city politics". *Perspectives on Politics*, 7(3): 611-618. <http://reserves.concordia.ca/ares/ares.dll/plink?14EF3B7B>

*If you are registered for non-credit and are unable to access these readings, please email us at wssr@concordia.ca



WSSR WORKSHOPS ON SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

●●● DELIBERATING A PUBLIC AGENDA ●●●
●●● FOR FEDERAL ELECTION 2019 ●●●



Additional Resources

- Breux, S., & Couture, J. 2018. *Accountability and Responsiveness: views from the Canadian municipal scene*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Breux, S., Couture, J., & Goodman, N. 2017. "Fewer voter, higher stakes? The applicability of Rational Choice for voter turnout in small Quebec municipalities. *Environment and Planning, C*. 35(6) 990–1009.
- Carroll, S., & Sanbonmatsu, K. 2010. *Entering the Mayor's Office: Women's Decisions to Run for Municipal Office*. Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago.
- Crowder-Meyer, M., Kushner Gadarian, S., & Trounstone, J. 2015. "Electoral institutions, gender stereotypes and women's local representation". *Politics, Groups and Identities*, 3(2): 318-334.
- Cutler, F., & Matthews, J. S. 2005. "The Challenge of Municipal Voting : Vancouver 2002". *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 38(2): 359-382.
- Gavan-Koop, D., & Smith, P. 2008. "Gendering Local Governing: Canadian and Comparative Lessons -The Case of Metropolitan Vancouver". *Canadian Political Science Review*, 2(3): 152-171.
- Goodman, N., Pammett, J. H., & DeBardeleben, J. 2010. "Internet Voting: The Canadian Municipal Experience". *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, Autumn 2010, pp. 13-21.
- Lightbody, J. 2006. *City Politics*. Petersborough: Broadview Press.
- Mévellec, A., & Tremblay, M. 2016. *Genre et professionnalisation de la politique municipale*. Montréal: Presses de l'Université du Québec.
- Moore, A. A., Mc Gregor, M. R., & Stephenson, L. B. 2017. "Paying attention and the incumbency effect: Voting behavior in the 2014 Toronto Municipal Election". *International Political Science Review*, 38(1): 85-98.
- Oliver, J. E. 2000. "City Size and City Involvement in Metropolitan America". *American Political Science Review*, 94: 361-373.
- Rugh, J. S., & Trounstone, J. 2011. "The Provision of Local Public Goods in Diverse Communities: Analyzing Municipal Bond Elections". *The Journal of Politics*, 73: 1038-1050.
- Tavares, A., & Carr, J. 2012. "So close, yet so far away? The effects of city size, density and growth on local civic participation". *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 35(3): 283-302.
- Trounstone, J. 2008. *Political Monopolies in American Cities: The Rise and Fall of Bosses and Reformers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Walks, A. 2004. "Place of residence, party preferences, and political attitudes in Canadian Cities and Suburbs". *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 26(3): 269-295.
- Wood, C. 2002. "Voter Turnout in City Elections". *Urban Affairs Review*, 38(2): 209-231.

Workshops on Social Science Research (WSSR)
1455 de Maisonneuve W. – H1225.30
Montreal, Qc H3G 1M8
Telephone: 514-848-2424 x5473

