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WORKSHOPS ON SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Making Fiscal Policy in Canadian Democracy: What makes good 'cents'?

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Fiscal policy refers to the use of government spending and taxation to support the public policy objectives of the country. Recent literature from authors like Acemoglu and Robinson (Why Nations Fail, 2012) and Ferguson (The Great Degeneration, 2013) highlight the strategic importance of strong governments and institutions for the overall health and sustainability of a nation. The book by Minsky (Stabilizing an Unstable Economy, 1986) which studied the role governments can play in economic stabilization policy came back in vogue after the 2008 financial crisis.

How do we spend taxpayer money in Canada? How has this role evolved? Have we achieved “peace, order and good government”? How do we hold governments to account? Does Canada have a fiscal sustainability problem? Will the role of governments become more or less important in a knowledge economy? Are Canadian leaders focussing on key long term issues?

Required Readings

Neil Ferguson, Great Degeneration, Bloomberg Interview, 2013 (video)

<https://charlirose.com/videos/18050>

Why Nations Fail, Daron Acemoglu, MIT, March 2012 (podcast)

http://www.econtalk.org/archives/_featuring/daron_acemoglu/ or

<http://files.libertyfund.org/econtalk/y2012/Acemoglunations.mp3>

Chapter 18, Financial Procedures, House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Marleau and Montpetit, 2000 edition.

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/marleaumontpetit/DocumentViewer.aspx?DocId=1001&Sec=Ch18&Seq=0&Language=E>

Department of Finance Fiscal Reference Tables <https://www.fin.gc.ca/frt-trf/2016/frt-trf-16-eng.asp>

Walking Hand in Hand: Fiscal Policy and Growth in Advanced Economies, Cottarelli and Jaramillo, May 2012

<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2012/wp12137.pdf>

Federal Budget 2017 (forthcoming)