

Coffee dialogues
Hosted by Keith Poore
Vancouver BC

1- A coffee dialogue was held at Keith Poore's residence in Vancouver, BC, on September 8th, 2016.

There were 4 people in attendance including the host.

We had an electoral and democratic reform dialogue. We discussed mandatory voting, voting systems, age of voting and online/electronic voting.

From the discussion of mandatory voting, there was no consensus on whether voting or attendance to the polling station should be mandatory. The group recognized that this is a way to increase voter turnout and that either penalizing or incentivising (or both) could be a better way to increase voter turnout.

During the voting system discussion, there was a consensus that we should have a proportional system, to ensure that every vote counts. There was no consensus on voting system. One person was in favour of List PR, one person was in favour of STV, one person was in favour of a hybrid model for urban and rural areas, and one person could not make up their mind on a particular system.

From the discussion on age of voting, there was a majority of support to lower the voting age. The idea of engaging citizens at a younger age to instill the practice of voting seemed to be beneficial to increasing voter turnout in the long term.

Lastly, the group was mixed on online/electronic voting. It was recognized that there can be bugs and flaws with electronic voting, an example was drawn from the election in the United States of America and uncertainty of security of such an implementation. Security was an issue for online voting as well. The group did recognize that online voting would help with accessibility for voters that may be currently disenfranchised.

2- Hosted on September 21st, 2016

A coffee dialogue was held at the residence of Keith Poore on September 21st, 2016. Nine people were in attendance including the host. The facilitator/host/submitter refrained from adding his personal opinions. He will add his comments in a brief.

We had an electoral and democratic reform dialogue. We discussed voting systems, mandatory voting, age of voting and online/electronic voting.

From our discussion on voting systems, 2 participants said they didn't really understand how we vote in our current system and didn't understand why the process was going on. Using the

Library of Parliament material on voting systems, we discussed majoritarian systems, and proportional systems. No consensus was reached on which kind of system would work best, though all individuals said they wanted a PR system. Two were in favour of open list PR, five in favour of MMP and one was not sure which system they preferred. Further we discussed whether a referendum was necessary to get the broad approval of Canadians. One remark was that this was a complex issue and educating the public would not be feasible enough to ensure that everyone that voted in the referendum knew what they were voting for or against. One person was in favour of a referendum, six were against and one had abstained.

We discussed different facets of mandatory voting, such as disciplinary or encouraging ways to get people to polling stations. We further discussed whether we need to have everyone going to the polls, whether it is a necessity or if this shows where parties lack in outreach. A comment was made whether indigenous individuals should be forced to vote in a system they are purposely disengaged. Overall, one person was in favour of mandatory voting, seven participants were not.

We discussed that if we were to lower the voting age, school curriculum would be updated to encourage and explain the voting system and why it is important to vote. It was generally believed that lowering the voting age would do a lot of good in terms of ensuring young voters are engaged. Seven participants were in favour of lowering the voting age to 16, one participant was not.

There was a big discussion on online and electronic voting. These concepts were separated by voting online vs voting at a polling station using electronic means. In both discussions, security was brought up. During the online voting discussion, under the theoretical pretense that security was provided, participants were still generally not comfortable with the idea. They did mention that inaccessible regions might see some increase in voter turnout, but generally these inaccessible regions are also inaccessible to internet as well. Two were in favour of online voting, four were not in favour and two had abstained. Participants also had a favourable opinion of having a paper ballot over using electronic means of voting. The idea of walking to the poll station and using an electronic recording device over a paper ballot didn't seem to improve the lives of the voter. One participant was in favour of electronic voting, six were not in favour and one had abstained.

3- Hosted at Stephanie Ali's residence, September 25th, 2016, facilitated by Keith Poore

A coffee dialogue was held at Stephanie Ali's residence in Surrey, BC, on September 25th, 2016. There were 3 people in attendance including the host. All participants were between 26 and 28 years of age. The facilitator/submitter refrained from adding his personal opinions. He will add his comments in a brief.

We discussed mandatory voting, voting systems, age of voting and online/electronic voting.

From the discussion of mandatory voting, there was consensus that voting should not be mandatory. It was expressed that not everyone wants to participate and that not everyone should, if they do not want to be informed.

A presentation was made with material from the Library of Parliament on different voting systems. A comment was made that we should have the right to rank the candidates from first, second, third, etc. so that voters get what they want. It was also stated that proportional representation best reflected the views of the voter.

Lowering the voting age to 16 was not favoured too well. One of the participants is a high school teacher and a comment was made that there is a clear divide at which students are perceived to be more mature. At the end of the discussion, lowering the voting age was favoured for at least 17 years of age, and maybe further to age 16.

Lastly, the group was in favour of online/electronic voting. The distinction was made that electronic voting would require you to go to the polling station to vote using electronic means. Online voting means you can vote online, where ever there is an internet connection. Both of these suggestions were favoured. A comment was made that this would give more flexibility and accessibility to those that do not have the time to get to the polling station or do not want to wait in line. This would make receiving voting results quicker.