

Public Consultations on Canada's Democratic Institutions and Practices

Appendix II: Qualitative Component



**COMPAS Inc.
Public Opinion and Customer Research
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Appendix IIA: A Visualization of Forum Topics: COMPAS for Forums

Political Parties
Roles in educating public about democratic institutions, developing new policies, explaining how parties differ

Role of Citizens
How governments should consult citizens, and the role of voluntary organizations

Electoral Systems
Our Plurality system vs. PR vs. Preferential Ballot

Senate
Protecting regions or minorities, protecting public against abuse of power, chamber of sober second

What's missing?

Commons
Party loyalty vs. independence of MPs, different responsibilities of MPs, kinds of information public



Appendix IIB: A Note on Method

COMPAS undertook random recruitment of adults across each province and the territories. In recruitment for the first half of forums, we used a dual approach—the conventional method in qualitative research of random recruitment from databases of adults known to be interested in participating in qualitative research events and the less used method of random telephone-based recruitment to households across each province or the territories. In recruitment for the remaining five provincial forums, we no longer used data bases and did recruitment through random household dialing exclusively. Recruitment to the youth forum involved a combination of random household recruiting and arms length referrals (e.g. no family links) from participants in the previous forums.

To ensure adequate representation of segments often under-represented in such events, we used viral or network-based recruiting to stimulate interest among such segments. We contacted band offices and First Nations/Métis/Inuit associations to encourage the presence of individuals from these communities. In practice, forums held in the territories and in the provinces with high First Nations/Métis/Inuit populations did indeed elicit the participation of individuals from these communities. The main impact of our contacting band and association offices was to make it easier to recruit through random dialing of households. Respondents who could confirm the legitimacy of the invitation were more apt to accept the invitation to attend.

Participants were offered an honourarium of \$ 150 plus reimbursement of travel costs, where necessary, according to the amounts permitted by Treasury Board guidelines. Participants requesting travel expense reimbursements were required to mail these requests to the COMPAS office, which most did within a few weeks of an event.

All events took place between mid-March and late April. They were held at a well located hotel in a given province (or Yellowknife in the case of the Territories) and extended across an elapsed time of approximately 24 hours beginning just before supper of day 1 and extending to just before supper on day 2. All events took place on the weekend, beginning before supper Friday or Saturday.



The workbook displayed in Appendix III was the core document for each forum. An overview of administrative details and the main issues was provided orally over supper on day 1. The first main topic, how citizens are involved in society and the democratic process and how governments consult, was explored that evening. The remaining topics were explored over the course of day 2: House of Commons, Senate, political parties, and electoral systems.

The structure of deliberation for each topic was essentially the same: an overview by the moderator, often assisted by a video presentation by an expert in the field, followed by a brief question and answer period. The assembly then subdivided into breakout or subgroups for in depth discussion under the leadership of a professional facilitator. After extensive discussion, the breakout groups re-assembled together with rapporteurs from each reporting to the entire assembly how his or her breakout group had thought about the subject matter. Discussion followed with attempts to reach a common understanding or perspective when this seemed natural or appropriate to do depending upon the views of the participants at the particular forum. The video presentations were by Gordon Gibson and Guy Laforest on the House of Commons and Senate, André Blais on electoral systems, and Paul Howe on political parties.

