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C-Dem Researchers Meeting Notes February 1, 2021

Consortium on Electoral Democracy

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**C-DEM RESEARCHER VIRTUAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 1, 2021, 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM EST**

NOTES

PARTICIPANTS

See appended list of participants on pages 12 and 13.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

The link for the PowerPoint presentation is:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ddqx0w9ools7of5/C-Dem%20for%20Researchers%202021.pptx?dl=0>

ANNUAL REPORT

(a) Changes in the C-Dem Network

Academic Network: The current list of co-investigators, collaborators, and advisory council members was presented (see below). Matthew Lebo, Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science, Western University, has joined the Academic Network.

Academic Network

Co-Investigators

Cameron Anderson, Western
David Armstrong, Western
Éric Bélanger, McGill University
Loleen Berdahl, University of Saskatchewan
Amanda Bittner, Memorial University
Ruth Dassonneville, Université de Montréal
Joanna Everitt, UNB – St. John
Royce Koop, University of Manitoba
J. Scott Matthews, Memorial University
Mark Pickup, Simon Fraser University
Maryse Potvin, Université du Québec à Montréal
Jason Roy, Wilfrid Laurier University
Jerald Sabin, Bishop's University
Jared Wesley, University of Alberta

Collaborators

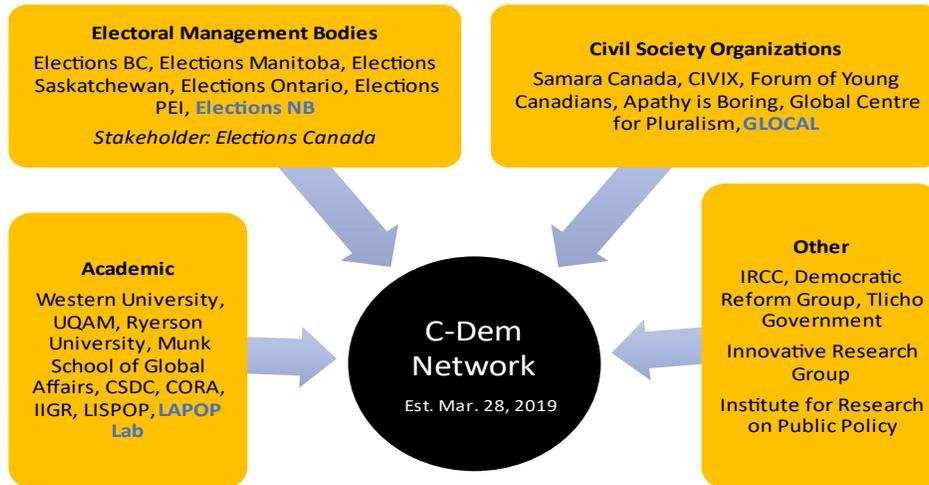
Christopher Alcantara, Western
John Beebe, Ryerson University
Marc-André Bodet, Laval University
Jake Bowers, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
Arnaud Delliç, Université du Québec à Montréal
Victoria Esses, University of Western Ontario
Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant, Queen's University
Tania Gosselin, Université du Québec à Montréal
Valerie-Anne Maheo, Université de Montréal
R. Michael McGregor, Ryerson University
Martin Papillon, Université de Montréal
Dietlind Stolle, McGill University
John Zoe, University of Alberta
Matthew Lebo, University of Western Ontario

Advisory Council

John Aldrich, Duke University
Keith Archer, Retired Chief Electoral Officer, Elections BC
André Blais, Université de Montréal
Patrick Fournier, Université de Montréal
Elisabeth Gidengil, McGill University
Leonie Huddy, Stoney Brook University
Shanto Iyengar, Stanford University
Richard Johnston, University of British Columbia
Stuart Soroka, University of Michigan
Elizabeth Zechmeister, Vanderbilt University

(a) Changes in the C-Dem Network (continued)

C-Dem Partners: The current partners are listed in the chart below. Three new partners joined the C-Dem network in the past year: Elections New Brunswick (www.electionsnb.ca), Glocal Foundation of Canada (www.glocalfoundation.ca), and the Latin American Public Opinion Project Lab (www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop).



(b) Update on Surveys

Since 2019, C-Dem has collected almost 59,000 surveys. The recontacts result in over 85,699 surveys which is 28,500 hours of surveys (at 20 minutes per survey). The surveys conducted in 2020-21 were the Democracy Checkup (DC) survey (conducted annually outside of the federal election) and Provincial/Territorial Election Studies (PTES). Details regarding these surveys are summarized in the chart below.

2020-21 Surveys



(b) Update on Surveys (continued)

The next DC is planned for May 2021. This annual survey will be postponed for six months if a federal election is called in the spring because the DC is conducted outside of election periods. Additional surveys planned during the next six years of the project are outlined in the following chart.

Future Planned Surveys			
	Democracy Checkup (N>8000)	Canadian Election Study	Provincial / Territorial Election Study (PTES) (N~1500)
2021	✓	?	Tłıcho Government, Nova Scotia
2022	✓	?	Ontario, Quebec
2023	✓	?	Manitoba, Alberta, PEI
2024	✓	?	
2025	✓		
2026	✓		

These surveys provide numerous opportunities for members of the C-Dem network to collect data. There are opportunities as well to work with C-Dem to gather survey data on pressing questions.

(c) Update on collaboration with Election Management Body (EMB) partners

(i) Election Administration

Following the practice of previous Canadian Election Study (CES) surveys, C-Dem included questions about election administration in the 2019 CES. C-Dem’s report on those questions was shared with the EMB partners. Elections Ontario (ON) collaborated on refining the EMB module. Further refining was done in collaboration with Elections New Brunswick (NB), Elections British Columbia (BC), and Elections Saskatchewan (SK) during the provincial elections in the fall. The questions in the EMB module include:

- Satisfaction with how EMB runs the election
- Opinions on voting by mail
- Knowledge of voting options
- Awareness of EMB advertising campaigns
- COVID-19 pandemic safety precautions at polling stations
- Satisfaction with voting experience

(ii) Measuring the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

C-Dem developed novel questions to include in the 2019 DC wave 4 survey which was conducted in March 2020, when the pandemic started. The novel questions were also included in the 2020 DC conducted in May 2020. These questions continue to be refined, including through collaboration with C-Dem's EMB partners to incorporate questions in the election administration module about safety, comfort, and voting by mail. Questions were included in the PTES in the fall of 2020 and winter of 2021. Examples of the topics covered are:

- Satisfaction with the government handling of the pandemic
- Provincial performance compared to other provinces
- Vaccine hesitancy
- Individual risk level

(d) C-Dem Staff

The current C-Dem staff members are:

- *Project Manager* – Barbara Oram
- *Postdoctoral Fellows* - Joanie Bouchard (Western University), Laura French Bourgeois (UQAM), and Amber Hye-Yon Lee (Ryerson)
- *Research Assistants* – multiple across institutions

C-Dem is in the process of hiring a *Data Collection Manager*. The major responsibilities include:

- Cleaning up data sets
- Making data public
- Merging data, e.g., merging the provincial election data sets
- Increasing integration of the CES with other surveys conducted by C-Dem

New *postdoctoral fellows* will be hired at UQAM and Western University. The current postdoctoral fellows, Laura French Bourgeois and Joanie Bouchard, complete their two-year terms this year.

C-Dem is open to hosting *Visiting Students* through opportunities such as SSHRC, FQRSC, and Fulbright. Short-term research visits are also possible. C-Dem has a considerable amount of data to support student research projects.

Action: C-Dem researchers were invited to identify potential students to be involved C-Dem related research as well as ways in which C-Dem can support student training. Students recruited by the researchers can be integrated into the network and given early access to data.

(e) C-Dem Activities in 2020 – 2021 to Date

2020 Annual Module Competition, January to March 2020

- Announced January 4, 2021; submission deadline was January 31, 2020
- 12 applications were received from researchers; seven from PhD students
- Chair of the adjudication committee for the researcher stream was Ruth Dassonville; PhD student stream was Allison Harell
- Researcher winner: Eric Merkley (University of Toronto); PhD student winners: Katharina Lawall (London School of Economics Government Department) and Colin Scott (McGill); their modules were included on the 2020 DC

C-Dem Virtual Partner Forum, May 4, 2020

- Nine partners attended
- Partners were updated on C-Dem activities during 2019 - 2020
- Presentations were made by Elections Canada, The Samara Institute, Apathy is Boring/DemocracyXChange, and Elections ON

Early Career Researchers Roundtables, July 15, 29, and August 12, 2020

- Series of three virtual professional development workshops
- Collaboration with the Gender and Politics Lab (MUN, A. Bittner, Director) and the Canadian Opinion Research Archive (CORA, Queen's University, E. Goodyear-Grant, Director); both Directors are C-Dem researchers, CORA is a C-Dem partner

Canadian Vote Summit, September 15 to October 21, 2020

- Six sessions focusing on insights and experiences from the 2019 federal election
- Organized by J. Beebe (Democratic Engagement Exchange) and M. McGregor (both are C-Dem researchers)
- Five additional C-Dem network members participated in the sessions

cesR Workshop, January 15, 2021

- Online workshop with the authors of the new *cesR* package (R. Alexander and P. Hodgetts, University of Toronto) that contains all existing CES surveys
- Sponsored by C-Dem in collaboration with the Laurier Institute for the Study of Public Opinion and Policy (C-Dem Partner)

External Modules

- The *Mosaic Institute* contracted with C-Dem to include a small battery of questions on the 2020 Democracy Checkup in May 2020
- The *Canadian Institute for Advanced Research* purchased survey space on the second wave of the 2020 DC
- *Elections NB* collaborated with C-Dem to include a module on the election study in September 2020
- *Elections BC* contributed to the British Columbia Election study in exchange for bespoke questions in October and November 2020
- C-Dem engaged with *Elections SK* to field some questions on the C-Dem election study that mirrored their own data collection

(f) C-Dem Activities in 2021 - 2022

2021 Annual Module Competition

- Announced January 4, 2021; submission deadline was January 31, 2021
- Eight applications were received; four for each stream (research/PhD student)
- Chair of the adjudication committee for the research stream is Ruth Dassonville; PhD student stream is Jason Roy
- One winner from each stream will be announced at the beginning of March; their modules will be included on the 2021 DC

2021 Annual Researcher Virtual Meeting, February 1

2021 Annual Advisory Council Virtual Meeting, February 20

Closed-Door Virtual Meeting of the Electoral Management Bodies (EMB), March 11

- Planned by Elections ON in collaboration with C-Dem
- Discussion of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on elections
- Chief Electoral Officers of Elections NB, Elections BC, Elections SK, and Elections Newfoundland and Labrador will share their experiences of holding elections during the pandemic
- C-Dem (A. Harell and L. Stephenson) will present a comparative analysis of the four elections based on the responses to a set of core questions included in each provincial election survey
- C-Dem and Elections ON will facilitate an open discussion of the lessons learned from elections held during the pandemic and the impacts on poll workers and electors

Joint Event with the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

- Focus of the event is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on elections around the world; C-Dem will present research from its own recent data collections

C-Dem Annual Virtual Partner Forum, May 10, 2021

CES Data Release II, May 2021

2021 Data Report Series

- In anticipation of the next CES, C-Dem has commissioned three reports.

Measuring mode comparison

- Graduate student at Western University is working on replicating the analyses of Breton et al. (2017) on the 2015 election
- Preliminary results indicate that there is no clear benefit to conducting the CES with a telephone sample in terms of data quality

Measuring gender

- Postdoctoral fellow at the University of Toronto is compiling a report about how to ask respondent about sex, gender, and sexuality

Measuring ethnicity

- Postdoctoral fellow at Ryerson University is working on how to collect data in respondent ethnicity, a challenging aspect of running surveys in Canada

CPSA 2021

C-Dem is submitting proposals for two roundtables and two panels, as described below. The panels showcase the research of C-Dem members as well as the winners of the 2019 and 2020 module competitions.

Roundtables

- *Provincial Elections in Perspective*, a discussion of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on three provincial elections
- *Understanding Barriers to Electoral Participation*, a discussion of factors that keep voters away from the polls and ways to mitigate these barriers

Panels

- *Voters and the 2019 Canadian Federal Election*, papers explore the dynamics of the 2019 Canadian federal election campaign through the lens of party evaluations and social dynamics
- *Social and Political Cleavages in Canada*, papers focus on how various forms of diversity and intergroup attitudes affect social and political life in Canada

C-Dem is also organizing a training session roundtable at the CPSA to promote *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science, 4th edition*, a research methods textbook recently published by two C-Dem co-investigators, Jason Roy and Loleen Berdahl which uses CES examples. Oxford University Press has agreed to make the companion methodological guides (using the CES in SPSS, Stata, and R) publicly available on their website.

Toronto Political Behaviour Workshop (TPBW) 2021

C-Dem is a co-sponsor of the TPBW workshop, organized once again by D. Rubenson and P. Loewen. The event is scheduled for November 2021.

C-Dem Forum and International Conference (Spring/Summer 2022)

With the hope of vaccines and the resumption of travel, C-Dem is tentatively planning a large event in 2022. The event will combine the C-Dem annual forum, partner meeting, and researcher meeting with an academic workshop. The goal is to give all members of the C-Dem network an opportunity to meet, hear about each other's work, and engage in fruitful discussion. As the timing of the event is at the mid-point of the project, the conference will provide an opportunity to take stock of what has been accomplished and make more concrete plans for the project's second half.

PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT CES

(a) Purchase of Survey Modules

A call for expressions of interest in purchasing survey modules on the next CES was made on January 7, 2021, with a deadline of February 15. This practice was mutually beneficial in 2019. It is hoped that the practice can continue, despite the challenges of designing and implementing a survey with a snap election call.

(b) Format

The survey format consists of:

- Core CES questions
- EMB module
- Comparative Study of Electoral Systems module
- Purchased modules
- Modules of the 2021 Module Competition winners

The size of the survey has not been determined. There is a limit to the number of Canadians that will participate. Rumours of a federal election continue. The timing is speculative.

(c) Breakout Questions

The researchers were divided into small groups. Each group was asked to discuss the following questions for 20 minutes:

- Are you using the CES for any projects?
- What should our priorities be for the next election?
- What innovations should we pursue?

(i) Are you using the CES for any projects?

C-Dem researchers reported that they are using the CES data for projects and publications; it was also reported that students are using the CES data; the importance of making the data easily available and user friendly was emphasized.

Actions:

- Researchers who are working on papers using C-Dem data were asked to send C-Dem (admin@c-dem.ca) the abstract and publication detail. C-Dem can assist with publicizing papers and presentations
- Researchers who have used C-Dem data in their courses were asked to send C-Dem the name of the course and how the data were integrated into the course materials

(ii) What should our priorities be for the next election?

The following suggestions were made:

- Add to the CES a *module of questions from the World Value Survey* regarding electoral integrity; Canada is not included in the World Value Survey
- Revise survey questions to *capture the multiple identities of respondents*, including respondents who identify as Indigenous peoples
- Implement effective ways to *capture social media data*
- *Conduct online surveys not phone surveys* because of the limited sample obtained; online surveys have not had difficulty getting respondents who are older in age
- Include *questions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic* which may be the dominant issue
- Include *questions regarding the competence of political leaders, the competence of political parties, and the question: "Is it time for change in the federal government?"*
- Include questions regarding *conspiracy theories*

(iii) What innovations should we pursue?

Jerry Sabin and John Zoe are collaborating on developing a survey to study the voting behaviour of members of the Tłı̨ch̨ community, a constitutionally recognized indigenous electoral body in North West Territories. This project is believed to be the first survey of an Indigenous government election in Canada and may be a model for future studies.

The Tłı̨ch̨ Grand Chief and the governments of four communities will be elected at the same time. This is the fifth election in 16 years. C-Dem is working with Jerry and John and the Tłı̨ch̨ Government (a C-Dem partner) to adapt the C-Dem core survey and develop the Research Ethics protocol. Individuals in the Tłı̨ch̨ community will be employed to conduct CATI surveys, utilizing the qualtrics platform and C-Dem’s in-house programming.

PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL ELECTION STUDY (PTES) LEADS: EXPERIENCES TO DATE

(a) C-Dem Survey Preparation Checklist

C-Dem has developed the **C-Dem Survey Preparation Checklist**, the link is as follows:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/cov8yv9zderj1e3/C-Dem%20Survey%20Preparation%20Checklist.docx?dl=0>

(b) PTES

(i) *Expectations*

- Slack used during fielding for messaging and discussions
- Data will be releases 12 months after each provincial study
- Authorship of data: Provincial lead, Stephenson, Harell

(ii) *RA tasks*

C-Dem has provided funding to each of the PTES Leads to hire research assistants during the provincial election studies. Their task, depending on their skills, include:

- Updating Qualtrics programming
- Establishing quotas from census documents
- Creating reports for website
- Cleaning dataset
- Writing papers!

(iii) *Cross-Provincial Datasets*

By 2023, C-Dem will have data from the elections in 10 provinces and plans to merge these data sets as well as integrate the data sets with the CES data.

Currently, there are C-Dem data sets for Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and New Brunswick. Data will be available from the Newfoundland and Labrador election soon. Core questions are included in the provincial surveys allowing for cross comparisons.

(c) PTES Leads Experiences

Four provincial election studies have been conducted since September 2020 (see chart on page 2). Three of the four PTES Leads reported on their experiences. Loleen Berdahl, PTES Lead for Saskatchewan, was unavailable to report.

Mark Pickup, PTES Lead for British Columbia

- The study ran smoothly with the help of Laura Stephenson and Allison Harell
- Questions from Elections BC were integrated into the study
- Used age and gender quota
- The sample was low of respondents who identified as male and were under 25 years of age; it was difficult to engage members of this cohort
- Simon Fraser University matched the research assistant funding provided by C-Dem
- The return to sample was very high

Scott Matthews, PTES Lead for Newfoundland and Labrador

- The survey is in the field two weeks before the election and going well, so far; time was an issue and the size of the sample is a concern
- It was difficult to identify what was “core” and what was “peripheral” when building the survey

Joanna Everitt, PTES Lead for New Brunswick

- Connecting with the provincial electoral management body is recommended
- The election study went smoothly, no significant issues to report

(d) Survey Companies

- C-Dem and the PTESs worked with *Leger* to conduct the studies in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and Newfoundland and Labrador; *Narrative* conducted the study in New Brunswick
- *Abacus* was an additional company suggested; there may be a company in Manitoba
- A company is not available to do a sample in Prince Edward Island (PEI); alternatives were discussed including mailing postcards to recruit respondents; the goal is to obtain a sample of 1,500
- John Zoe and Jerry Sabin described the data collection method they are using which includes conducting a census of every voter in the Tłı̨chǫ Government election, approximately 2,000 people; there will be a post-election survey done by phone in two languages; they are working through the logistics, balancing access to data versus respecting individual privacy and Indigenous rights

Action:

C-Dem researchers were asked to:

- Identify other sampling companies, particularly for the upcoming election in PEI
- Send C-Dem ideas of how to ‘think outside the box’ re: collecting PEI survey data
- Connect with their provincial EMB, if they have not already done so, to explore ways to mobilize the provincial data sets; there are great opportunities for collaboration

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

(a) Engagement of Students

As stated earlier in the meeting, C-Dem has lots of data to support student research projects. Students can work with other academics while working with the data. C-Dem can provide training opportunities for students as well.

Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science, 4th edition, published by Oxford University Press, is an excellent resource for students who want to use CES data; <https://learninglink.oup.com/access/berdahl4e> (see page 7).

(b) C-Dem Events

The following events, scheduled during the next three years, provide opportunities for engagement of members of the C-Dem network and for knowledge mobilization of C-Dem's work:

- C-Dem Forum and International Conference, spring/summer 2022 (see page 8 for more information)
- 2022 APSA Conference in Montreal
- 2023 International Society of Political Psychology Conference (location TBD)
- 2025 APSA Conference in Vancouver

Another opportunity identified by Holly Garnett is the annual Electoral Integrity Project (EIP) workshop. Holly is the Director of the EIP.

(c) Co-Sponsored Events

Actions:

Researchers were asked to:

- Consider opportunities to increase knowledge mobilization by collaborating with C-Dem
- Display the C-Dem logo when making presentations that reference C-Dem data; the link to the C-Dem logos will be sent to the researcher

(d) Data Use

C-Dem is mandated to make the data publicly available. Several researchers indicated that they are writing papers using C-Dem data.

Action: C-Dem was asked to translate the datasets to French to make the data more accessible to Francophone students.

PARTICIPANTS (in alpha order)

NAME	UNIVERSITY	C-DEM PARTICIPATION
Allison Harell	Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)	Co-Director/Executive Committee (EC)
Amber Hye-Yon Lee	Ryerson University	Postdoctoral Fellow
Arnaud Dellis	UQAM	Academic Collaborator (AC)
Barbara Oram	Western University	Project Manager
Cameron Anderson	Western University	Academic Co-Investigator (ACI) /Provincial Election Lead (PEL) Ontario
Dave Armstrong	Western University	AC
Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant	Queen's University	AC/Canadian Opinion Research Archive representative (C-Dem partner)
Éric Bélanger	McGill University	AC/PEL Québec
Holly Ann Garnett	Royal Military College of Canada	Institute of Intergovernmental Relations representative (C-Dem partner)
Jared Wesley	University of Alberta	AC/PEL Alberta
Jason Roy	Wilfred Laurier University	AC/PEL Nova Scotia
Jerald Sabin	Carleton University	AC/PEL North West Territories
Joanie Bouchard	Western University	Post-Doctoral Fellow
Joanna Everitt	University of New Brunswick	AC/PEL New Brunswick
John Beebe	Ryerson University	AC
Laura French Bourgeois	UQAM	Post-Doctorate Fellow
Laura Stephenson	Western University	Co-Director/EC
Marc André Bodet	Université Laval	AC
Mark Pickup	Simon Fraser University	AC/PEL British Columbia
Matthew Lebo	Western University	AC
Michael McGregor	Ryerson University	AC
Peter Loewen	University of Toronto	EC
Royce Koop	University of Manitoba	AC/PEL Manitoba

PARTICIPANTS (continued)

NAME	UNIVERSITY	C-DEM PARTICIPATION
Scott Matthews	Memorial University	AC/PEL Newfoundland and Labrador
Tania Gosselin	UQAM	AC
Valérie-Anne Maheo	Université de Montréal	AC