
Become a strategist by voting strategically

Max Haroon Oct 18, 2015

Those of you who know me that I indulge in writing about health, the Internet, and soul but have never ventured into politics. But writing about elections is not really politics, it is more about community building and as a social entrepreneur, I do not think I am stepping out of my skin.

All three parties are running a three-way race. If you go by recent polls we will not get a majority government, we may even get a hung parliament.

People vote either on the total loyalty to the party or where the party stands on various issues.

They are multitudes of issues, but they can be categorised as:

- Party line as in the DNA of the party.
- Position of the party as of today, not a conventional party position.
- Diversion or just for political gain.

You can see the political play when Steven Harper makes a big fuss about issues like niqab, security threats, and Syrian refugees. He is also doing it to divert the attention of voters away from his performance in Canada and abroad.

Canada at the moment is at the bottom of the totem pole for the conservative government position for climate change, security, the UN, impartiality on the middle-east, refugees, indigenous people, women, Muslims, freedom of speech and peacemaking.

The entire electorate can be divided into two camps - one is conservative and other progressive voters (encompassing Liberals, NDP, and Green party).

As per current poles: Voters are favouring Conservative 30%, and Progressive 70%.

Unfortunately, the progressive votes are divided up among liberals, NDP, Green and others in that order. That may mean - conservative minority or liberal minority government.

Here is my Seven-step strategy if you wish to vote strategically:

1. Make a list of issues. You can do it from issues debated and outlined by various parties.
2. You will find you will favour some issues and others not. The strategy is to put a weight (from 1 to 10) on issues in order of their importance to you, your community and the country. This will provide you with your own priority list of issues.
3. Then see each party's position on that issue. Differentiate if the position is political or strategic.
4. Do some research and see the data on the performance of various parties in your ward over the last few elections, Go to <http://www.votetogether.ca>
5. Understand the political election game. Here are links to two excellent, award-winning journalists for you to review:
 - Haroon Siddiqui (no relation to me) has many essays on Election e.g.: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2015/10/08/king-stephen-has-changed-canada-for-the-worse->

siddiqui.html

- Bob Hepburn, has many weekly pieces in the Toronto Star, see this one:
<http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2015/10/04/why-stephen-harper-has-no-fear-of-strategic-voting-hepburn.html>
6. In order to avoid vote splitting (which will make the conservative win). One strategy will be to favour, one of the candidate, who has most chance of winning in your riding.
 Go to <http://www.votetogether.ca/riding/list/> to review past results and the trend in your riding.

The above website also lists some important issues and position of the various candidates on these issues.

- 7. Promote strategic voting to your friends and colleagues.

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Because of how our system works, there are many electoral districts where some candidates have no realistic chance of winning. Even worse, in many instances, vote splitting could occur that would allow one candidate to win despite there being a large majority of voters who favoured other candidates.

Situations also occur, in which some voters would rather vote against one candidate rather than for another one. For instance, a recent poll by Léger found that as much as 31 per cent of voters were voting against a candidate. Specifically for this election, there are many voters who simply want to vote against Stephen Harper and the Conservatives (the so-called ABC movement).

For all these reasons (and more), some people consider voting strategically. This means not voting for their top choice but for another candidate they consider more likely to win.

The Huffington Post Canada

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I would love to get your comments.

You can download this article at
<http://tinyurl.com/votingstrategy>

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