

# Voters adrift. Consequences of Electoral Dealignment in Representative Democracies

2-3 December 2016  
Workshop Program

*Canada Research Chair in Electoral Democracy, Université de Montréal*

In many advanced democracies, voters appear to be 'adrift' (Andeweg, 1982). Indeed, linkages between citizens and parties are weakening. As a result, voter turnout rates are decreasing, election results are increasingly unstable and party systems are hugely volatile. Political parties, however, are traditionally considered to be at the very heart of democracy. As a result, the erosion of the bonds between citizens and parties – also referred to as dealignment – constitutes a major challenge the functioning of representative democracies.

Are electorates that are 'adrift' able to select representatives who will act in their best interest? Are parties adjusting how they are organized and what strategies they implement to convince volatile voters? And is responsiveness endangered by the erosion of the linkages between citizens and parties?

The aim of this two-day workshop is address these research questions and to bring together research addressing this important challenge for democracy. During this workshop, studies will be presented that examine the consequences of dealignment for electoral behaviour, for political parties as well as for democratic representation.

This workshop is organized by the *Canada Research Chair in Electoral Democracy* at the University of Montreal and is generously supported by the Centre for the Study of Democratic Citizenship

Not a participant but interested in attending the workshop? You can register (for free) here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/workshop-voters-adrift-tickets-27802660506>

More information: [ruth.dassonneville@umontreal.ca](mailto:ruth.dassonneville@umontreal.ca)



## Workshop schedule

*Friday 2 December*

- 9:00 – 9:30 **Welcome**
- 9:00 – 10:15 **Keynote lecture**  
Marc Hooghe (University of Leuven) – The effects of dealignment on democratic linkage and legitimacy
- 10:15 – 10:45 *Coffee break*
- 10:45 – 12:15 **Paper presentations**
- Fernando Feitosa (Université de Montréal) – What you feel now depends on what felt then? An assessment of the stability of duty to vote across time
  - Paul Marx and Chris Nguyen (University of Southern Denmark) – Linking populism, poverty, and political participation
  - Henry Milner (Université de Montréal) – Dealignment in Sweden?
- 12:15 – 13:15 *Lunch break*
- 13:15 – 14:00 **Keynote lecture**  
Ruth Dassonneville (Université de Montréal) – Dealignment and the vote choice
- 14:00 – 14:30 **Paper presentation**
- Timothy Hellwig (Indiana University) – Choosing challengers: Party system fragmentation, the economy, and retrospective voting
- 14:30 – 15:00 *Coffee break*
- 15:00 – 16:30 **Book project presentation**
- The British Election Studies-team – Ed Fieldhouse, Jane Greene and Jon Mellon (University of Manchester)
- 16:30 – 16:45 *Coffee break*
- 16:45 – 17:30 **Paper presentations**
- Michal Kotnarowski (Polish Academy of Sciences) – On the way to an initial alignment: Institutionalization of political competition in new democracies, the case of Poland (1991-2011)
  - Simon Willocq (Université Libre de Bruxelles) – Why do they take longer to make up their mind? A Comparative study of late deciding voters in Western Democracies
- 19:00 - *Workshop dinner*

*Saturday 3 December*

- 9:00 – 9:45      **Keynote lecture**  
Susan Scarrow (University of Houston) – Parties’ organizational responses to dealignment: Party renewal or Trojan horses?
- 9:45 – 10:15      **Paper presentation**
- Andrea Aldrich (Texas A&M University)– Strategic party choices and electoral list diversity
- 10:15 – 10:45      *Coffee break*
- 10:45 – 12:15      **Paper presentations**
- Ann-Kristin Kölln (University of Leuven) – How dealignment endangers party government: party size and ideological cohesion in Europe
  - Christopher Williams (University of Arkansas at Little Rock) – Repairing bonds: how public identification with political parties influences party position taking
  - Jae-Jae Spoon (University of Pittsburgh) and Heike Kluever (University of Hamburg) – Putting Downs to the test: Is there evidence for voter divergence when parties converge?
- 12:15 – 13:15      *Lunch break*
- 13:15 – 14:00      **Keynote lecture**  
Christopher Wlezien (University of Texas at Austin)– Democratic responsiveness and challenges of dealignment
- 14:00 – 14:30      **Paper presentation**
- David Fortunato (Texas A&M University) and Mariyana Angelova (University of Vienna) – Legislative agenda-setting in coalition government
- 14:30 – 15:00      *Coffee break*
- 15:00 – 16:00      **Paper presentations**
- Patrick Fournier (Université de Montréal), Peter Loewen and Gabriel Arseneault (University of Toronto) – Do happy people vote differently? Life satisfaction and political accountability
  - Christophoros Pavlakis (Hellenic Institute for Political Sciences) – Dying clientelism, dying one-party government in Greece’s volatile party system. How austerity politics and post electoral coalition signals shape the political landscape
- 16:00-17:00      General discussion

## Venue

The workshop takes place at the department of political science, at the University of Montreal. The university is located on the north side of the mountain in the middle of the city, only a short distance away from downtown.

**Department of Political Science**  
Lionel-Groulx Building, room C-2059  
3150 rue Jean-Brillant  
Montréal QC



## About the keynote speakers

**Ruth Dassonneville** is an assistant professor at the department of political science at Université de Montréal (Canada) where she holds the Canada Research Chair in Electoral Democracy. She does research on elections and voting behaviour, with a particular focus on the causes and consequences of electoral dealignment.

**Marc Hooghe** a professor of Political Science at the University of Leuven (Belgium), where he holds an ERC Advanced Grant to investigate the democratic linkage between citizens and the state in Europe.

**Susan Scarrow** is John and Rebecca Moores Professor of Political Science and is the Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Houston (United States). Her teaching and scholarship focus primarily on issues of representation and political participation in parliamentary democracies. She is co-leading a multi-national effort to establish a comparative Political Party Database.

**Christopher Wlezien** is Hogg Professor of Government at the University of Texas at Austin (United States). His primary, ongoing research develops a 'thermostatic' model of public opinion and policy and examines the dynamic interrelationships between preferences for spending and budgetary policy in various domains.