

## [Mobilizing Voters in the English-Speaking World : the role of grassroots organizations and civil rights organizations \(1867 - 2017\)](#)

Announcement published by Véronique Molinari on Friday, May 25, 2018

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

September 15, 2018

Location:

France

Subject Fields:

American History / Studies, Australian and New Zealand History / Studies, British History / Studies, Canadian History / Studies, Political History / Studies

Mobilizing Voters in the English-Speaking World : the role of grassroots organizations and civil rights organizations (1867 - 2017)

One-day conference

Date : May 10<sup>th</sup> 2019

Organizing committee : Grégory Benedetti and Véronique Molinari (Université Grenoble Alpes)

This one-day conference is part of a cross-disciplinary project entitled “politics, discourse, and innovation” and aims at exploring the strategies to mobilize voters in the English-speaking world following a bottom-up process that involves citizens, popular movements, and the civil society in general, through grassroots organizations .

Throughout the English-speaking world, the right to vote and the right to exercise this right have often encountered obstacles, often coming from the mainstream dominating culture and aiming – whether consciously or unconsciously – at restricting what now appears as a fundamental right in our contemporary world. This was particularly the case for groups considered as “minorities” – thus defined because of their gender (women in the early 20<sup>th</sup> c.), sexual orientation (the LGBT community... ) or ethnic origin (African Americans, Latinos or Native Americans in the United States, but also Aborigenes in Australia or Maoris in New Zealand).

In this context, if political parties have sometimes striven to attract new voters in order to secure electoral victories and enlarge their base, very often it is

civil rights organizations, as well as popular and grassroots movements that have undertaken the process of mobilizing and re-mobilizing various groups of voters, with a view of integrating them into society. Beyond the simple desire to make voters position themselves in favor of one party or another, these organizations intend to shed light on the right to vote and political participation as a way of helping these minorities get heard. In the past, these strategies may have been synonymous with mobilizing new voters as it was the case with feminist movements in the United States and the United Kingdom, or African Americans in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when organizations like the NAACP, for instance, raised the voting right issue as a symbol of racial progress and integration. The question is still being raised today in the US as racial minorities are often disinterested or marginalized when it comes to political participation. This leads organizations like the National Council for La Raza or Voto Latino, to try to get Hispanics to vote, generating potentially major changes in future elections, whether it be at the local or at the federal level. The movement “Black Lives Matter,” which keeps progressing, endeavors to mobilize according to an intersectional strategy which encompasses other marginalized minorities in a larger activist and political approach. In Australia, a similar challenge exists for the National Congress of Australia’s First Peoples, which seeks to fight political apathy among Aborigine communities. Women's right to vote occasionally draws people's attention on both sides of the Atlantic ocean, from long-established organizations like the League of Women Voters, NOW, or the Fawcett Society, as well as by newly emerging organizations which focus on some special groups given women's age, marital status or ethnic origins.

The English-speaking world offers many examples. In this one-day conference, papers will concentrate on different strategies, theoretical approaches and practices which have been promoted by organizations and movements since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Papers will also focus on the evolution of these strategies, taking into account the role of new technologies and how they help to mobilize, circumventing obstacles or generating a new interest for politics. It will be interesting to analyze how grassroots strategies either reconnect citizens with political parties or give birth to movements that will durably occupy the political landscape.

Submissions will be sent in English before September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to :

[gregory.benedetti@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr](mailto:gregory.benedetti@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr)

Submissions will consist in a 300-word summary and a short bibliography.

Contact Info:

Dr Gregory Benedetti, Lecturer

Université Grenoble Alpes, France

Contact Email:

[gregory.benedetti@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr](mailto:gregory.benedetti@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr)