

highlights distinctive features of the different campaigns.

How are citizen assemblies perceived and received? (Poster)

**Patrick Fournier, Université de Montréal*

André Blais, Université de Montréal; R. Kenneth Carty, University of British Columbia

Henk van der Kolk, University of Twente; Jonathan Rose, Queen's University

[Panel] 4P Poster Session: Electoral Behavior, Participation and Public Opinion

[Section] Electoral Behavior, Participation and Public Opinion

For the first time since Athenian democracy, political authorities allocated decisive policy-making power to the people. Recently in British Columbia, the Netherlands, and Ontario, a group of randomly selected citizens was asked to design the next electoral system. Instead of simply voting, sanctioning or being consulted, they had the chance to develop a new political institution. These three citizen assemblies were organized similarly: each unfolded over an almost year-long process where participants learned about electoral systems, consulted the public, deliberated, debated and decided. The three assemblies came up with three different solutions. However, none has yet resulted in electoral reform. The two Canadian proposals were rejected by the public in referenda, while the Dutch recommendation was submitted to cabinet and mostly ignored. This paper analyzes reactions to the unprecedented and exceptional democratic experiments. It deals with how the assemblies and their proposals were received by political actors (governments, political parties, interest groups, media, and citizens). Empirically, it draws on media content analyses and public opinion surveys. First, a content analysis of the quantity and tone of newspaper coverage was conducted in British Columbia and Ontario throughout the assembly proceedings and the referendum campaign. Second, a rolling cross-sectional survey captured the opinions of a random sample of the population of each province during the campaign. We use this evidence to document the views of both elites and masses toward the assemblies and the electoral systems they proposed, and to explain the failure of all three citizen assemblies to get reform implemented.

How can group-based victim consciousness lead to positive rather than destructive intergroup relations?

**Johanna Vollhardt, University of Massachusetts-Amherst*

[Panel] 2H Groups, Discrimination, and Oppression

[Section] Intergroup Relations

Victim beliefs play an important role in violent intergroup conflicts around the world, and pose a clear risk to peace by inciting revenge and legitimizing harmdoing against other groups (e.g., Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998; Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003). However, very little research to date has examined the important possibility that victim consciousness may in fact diminish rather than fuel cycles of violence (see Staub, 2003, 2005; Vollhardt & Staub, 2008). I propose that this constructive effect can result from an inclusive form of victim consciousness that acknowledges similarities in the experiences of different groups targeted by ethnopolitical violence. Thus, whereas exclusive victim consciousness may predict revenge and hostility toward the perpetrator group and other victim groups, inclusive victim consciousness is expected to increase prosocial attitudes and behavior towards other groups that endured group-based violence. Two studies are presented that provide preliminary evidence for a proposed model of group-based victim consciousness and examine processes as well as facilitating conditions that can contribute to inclusive victim consciousness. In Study 1, the initial development of a measure of individual differences in victim consciousness (among a diverse sample of groups that experienced ethnopolitical violence in the past) is presented, and the variables that affect the personal salience and construal of ingroup victimization are assessed. In a quasi-experimental study among Vietnamese-Americans, Study 2 tests a potential way of achieving a more inclusive construal of ingroup victimization through a focus on perceived similarities with other victimized groups' experiences.

How existential motives influence reactions to threatened liberty (Poster)

**Carlos Alberto Rivera-García, University of Essex*

Philip J. Cozzolino, University of Essex

[Panel] 8P Poster Session: Democracy and Civic Development

[Section] Democracy and Civic Development

A recent model of why individuals adopt certain political ideologies has focused, in part, on the satisfaction of existential motives (Jost et al., 2003). Accordingly, terror management theory (TMT; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986)