



et Département d'études romanes

## International Conference, November 14th-15h 2019

UFR Lettres et Sciences Humaines, Université de Rouen

*Participatory Democracy versus Financial Capitalism, from Latin America to Europe. Contemporary Society and Culture (Visual Arts and Literature).*

Languages used in the conference: English, French and Spanish.

**Organizing Committee:** Francisco Javier Rabassó, Maître de conférences, HDR; Venko Kanev, Professeur des universités; James Underhill, Professeur des universités ; José Vicente Lozano, Professeur des universités and Dean, Faculty of Humanities.

The purpose of this conference is to analyze from a social and cultural perspective the place of participatory democracy in globalization after the paradigm shift in the world, since the 1980s with the establishment of neoliberalism, changes in Eastern Europe and the new drive towards independence in Latin America. Many changes have happened that questioned the sacro-saint values of Capitalism since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the construction of new, much taller and longer walls on the borders of the US and Mexico, Israel and Palestine, as well as the appearance of the New Left in Latin America since 1998 in Venezuela and other countries like Ecuador, Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Nicaragua and Brazil. In a society called first postindustrial, then postmodern, “post-truth”, globalized, of “democratic authoritarianism” and more repressive, multiplied conflicts of all kinds emerged across the planet. The emergence in the last few years of extreme right and radical neo-liberal governments in many of these

countries, as well as the Brexit in England, the independent movements in some European countries (Spain, Belgium, United States with Puerto Rico), the discrediting of the traditional parties of the right and of the left, and the revolts / insurrection of the “yellow jackets” in France, forces us to question the future of our society and the place of democracy as a right for the citizens across the planet. Representative democracy is becoming obsolete as many citizens demand more active participation in political issues. The last decade starting with the popular movements like Los indignados in Spain or Occupy Wall Street that, together with the World Social Forum from Porto Alegre, Brazil, were highlighting the faults and limits of our parliaments as mentors and guarantors of our political values.

In Latin America international organizations like NAFTA, APEP, Mercosur, CELAC and ALBA proposed different strategies to resolve many of the problems international trade. European countries struggle also with the loss of millions of jobs due to outsourcing and the lack of creative solutions for the emerging unemployed class as well as the impoverished middle class.

The emergence of global financial and corporate powers have diminished the role of cultural diversity, as well as the creation of a world class of consumers, submerged in a brutalizing mass culture and indifferent to the development of local identities and humanist education. This is a perverse consequence of globalization. This international conference will give priority to cultural and social discourses that confront with their polyphonic views a dehumanized and profit oriented environment. The role of artists, intellectuals, organizations and activists through street art, narrative novels and essays, cinema, paintings, poetry and different artistic expressions will be at the center of the exchange of ideas and discussions of its conference as the role of culture becomes a tool of resistance against the alienating powers of digital traditional mass media and new social media of communication (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and so on).

The different subjects we suggest for the conference are, from a systemic Latin American and European perspective: 1. To study in the different mass media, in literature and in visual arts the processes of change and resistance at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with a special interest in the concepts of participatory democracy, 21<sup>st</sup> century socialism, the citizen revolution, etc. in Latin America and in Europe. 2. To study the possible parallelism between Latin America and the consequences of the collapse of the socialist camp in Eastern and Central Europe, the abandonment of the planned economy, the one-party system, the loss of national projects, social justice, the consideration of capital as a supreme value, etc. 3. The role of intellectuals as “spokesmen” of the collective conscience of citizens and the new protest street forms. 4. The place of street art, graffiti, performance art, and other ways of expression denouncing corporate power. 5. The contribution of literature (theatre, novels, short stories and critical essays) as tools developing consciousness and encouraging people to take action. 6. The role of some NGO’s and other organizations inviting citizens to participate in their activities against corporate power. 7. The place of language used by different mass media (TV, press, social networks) in relation to the meanings and uses of terms like “democracy”, “reforms”, “freedom”, “people”, etc. utilized by corporations, politicians, journalists and citizens. 8. The dangers for democracy of targeted advertising led by corporations through different online platforms 9. The possible help of legislators and organizations (like the United Nations) for a responsible global citizenship, by imposing regulation on the practices of corporations and online dominating communication giants. 10. New trends in our sustainable economy envisioned by responsible leaders and corporations questioning traditional economic values (profit oriented and putting on danger our societies and

the Welfare State) as well as aiming at cultural, social and environmental profit. 11. The role of university education opening up new ways of incorporating participatory democracy in the functioning of the organization (governance, student's participation, content and evaluation development and so on). 12. Other issues.

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