



Call for Papers
2024 Annual Conference
October 31-November 1, Utrecht

***Democracy in Action:
Radical Cultures, Protest Movements & Resistance
in the Americas***

The world we inhabit today has been profoundly shaped by generations of mobilizations, movements, and protests for justice and equality. Among the most important have been ones committed to the recognition, protection and wellbeing of *all* members of society, regardless of race, class, religion, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, indigeneity, nationality, caste and social condition.

Overwhelmingly, those mobilizing and protesting were not the majority but a minority whose commitments to justice and equality were considered radical and who had to find creative ways to garner support and resources, to build effective networks and resilient organizations, and to persuade society in the face of entrenched resistance. The Americas have been one of the most dynamic sites for such radical cultures of transformation; within individual countries, across the continent and reaching across the oceans to the east and west.

At the same time, our contemporary context is one of resurgent racism and xenophobia; of genocidal supremacy; and ever more stringent discursive, juridical and physical violence against progressive dissidents, (informal) migrants, racialized communities, precarious workers, religious, sexual and gender minorities. Democratic institutions and norms are under severe pressure from anti-democratic networks, ideologies and laws that punish speech, short-circuit participation, rewrite outcomes and histories, wage war and capture the state for authoritarianism.

In such a context, we need to engage egalitarian and emancipatory histories, cultures, and practices more than ever. In sending out our Call for Papers, our conference asks, most broadly: "How have radical cultures and protest movements in the Americas transformed our democracies in the past and present? And, on this basis, how can we rethink the role of democratic practice, radical culture, and resistance?"

We welcome all those working in American Studies and related fields (Politics & International Relations, History and Art History, Race & Ethnic Studies, Gender & Queer Studies, Cultural & Media Studies, Religion, Anthropology, Sociology, Urban Studies, Peace & Conflict Studies, Human Geography, ...) to come present and discuss these issues. Formats may vary, including not only papers but (multi-)media presentations, roundtables, workshops and poster sessions.

The conference will be primarily in-person, but will include a limited number of hybrid/online panels. We hope to collect a range of approaches to the study and practice of democracy in the Americas from the radical & institutional to the decolonial, Indigenous & anti-racist to the queer & anti-specieist to the Left & anti-authoritarian ... ! Transnational/Comparative/Auto-ethnographic approaches are also welcome. There is a desperate need for re-imagining the new: democratic forms and practices which are beyond the imagination of our current institutions, cultural relations, political dead-ends and violence.

We intend and very much hope that our conference may contribute to such a project!

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Democracy as practice and culture, as identity and community, as ethics, and/or as theology
- Geographies of democracy (democracy in and of the Americas; trans-Atlantic or trans-Pacific democracy; urban democracy; agrarian democracy; empires of democracy ...)
- Democracy under/against/beyond the nation-state
- Species democracy
- Democracy as war by other means
- Embodied democracy (medical, infrastructural, carceral, weaponized ...)
- Pedagogies of democracy
- Arts of democracy
- Anti-democracy
- ...

The purpose of this conference is to bring together scholars from a range of national, institutional, and disciplinary backgrounds. We particularly encourage early career researchers and (post)graduate students, as well as those who do not typically work within the field of American Studies, to apply.

Conference fees are €40 and include an optional NASA membership. Current NASA members, students, and independent scholars can attend the conference for free.

Proposals for papers, panels, roundtables, poster sessions and workshops should be sent by email to the NASA Board (board.nasa@gmail.com) no later than 1 May 2024. Proposals should include a title, 300-word abstract, and a brief biographical statement or CV. Please also indicate if you would need to participate virtually (this can be adjusted later, but is useful in organizing the conference).

Further information about the program and registration will be announced after the selection of papers on 1 June 2024.