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### **Emotional Citizenship? Participative Emotionality in the New Media**

Popular culture has started to replace civic and political issues. Far more passions are generated nowadays by “Music idol” than national elections. Against the weberian notion of modernity as an iron cage of rationality, Eva Illouz argued that the intensifying and staging of emotions is an essential aspect of capitalism. In such a perspective the present outburst of passions seems to be a logical development of tendencies having already started with romanticism: constructing, positioning, controlling the individual not only through the rational, but also and ever more so through the irrational aspects of his/her nature.

Due to technological developments, ideological change, as well as the general marketization of social life, emotions circulate nowadays globally, producing the effect of some global popular (to paraphrase Gramsci). In order to understand its hegemony, as well as the forms of resistance, the new media constellation should be analyzed. On one side, there is the phenomenon of global franchising by market oriented media competing to capture audiences with short term products of ever higher intensity. On the other, new quickly growing communication platforms “privatize” a second time the message, fragment it, amplify it through rapid circulation, producing waves of emotions that emerge as quickly as they disappear.

The passions that are thus generated seem to acquire an increasing role in civic and political matters. Interactivity - implying an impulsive reaction to emotional images - has become a new categorical imperative: no one is willing to listen or watch without being able to rate, insult the speaker in a forum, cut, paste, re-send, distort, parody the message. The old political and civic engagement, based on fidelity, discipline, self-limitation and ideologies are gradually replaced by issues speaking directly to emotions. Reality shows have become sites where social questions are voiced, politicians speak directly to the senses uploading personal facts on their profiles, social solidarity is triggered by images and expressed in SMS-gifts.

Are we entering into a world of consumers concerned uniquely by amusement, or can we speak of the emergence of some new form of emotional citizenship?

Here are some topics that may be dealt with in the panel:

- The private experienced as public. Civic mobilizations around Eurovision, beauty contests, human drama issues, etc. Socialization of private spaces (after the privatization of public ones)
- Recycling high culture nationalism into the popular nationalism of global franchising.
- Emotional networking. Indignation, ridicule, pity, etc., magnified by the new communication platforms.
- Aestheticizing of moral causes. The image singling out the death of one from the statistic of the million.
- Political uses of the passions generated in the domain of popular culture. The politician as private person in reality shows, on facebook, on you-tube.
- Resistance through passions on the virtual agora?