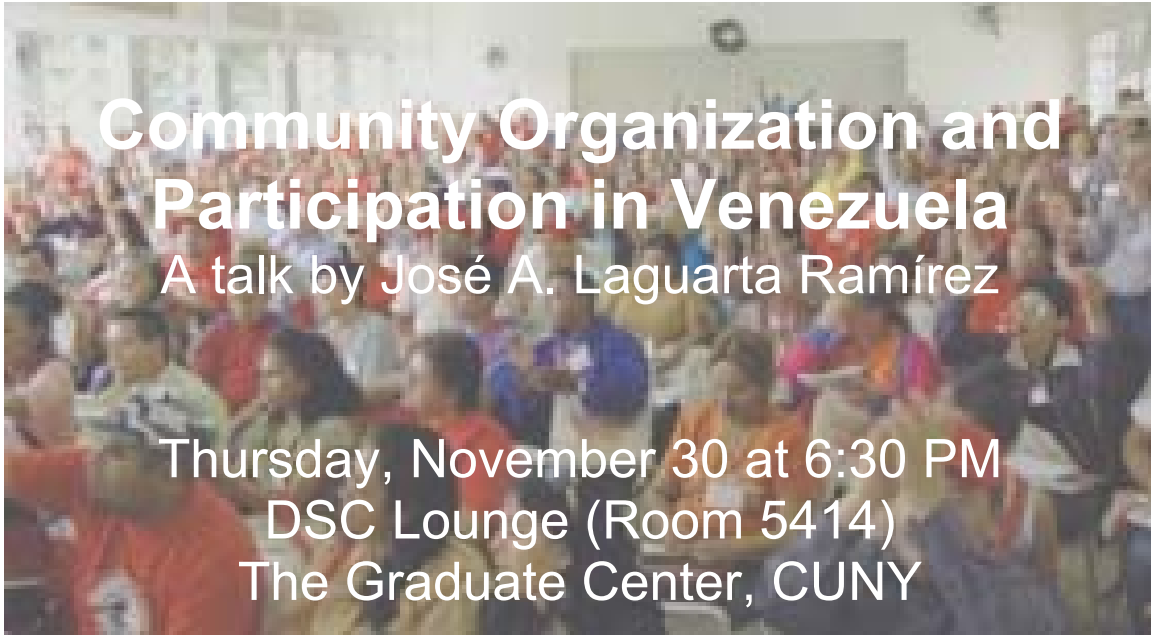




# The Howard Samuels Center

ADVANCING DEMOCRACY IN  
COMMUNITIES

AELLA and HSC present:



Since the election of President Hugo Chávez in 1998, the government of Venezuela has proclaimed a revolution based on the principles of “participative democracy” and “socialism of the twenty-first century,” a project that has resonated with the country’s long-neglected poor majority. Opponents, however, charge the government with squandering the country’s oil wealth to prop itself up, becoming increasingly authoritarian in the process. What exactly is participative democracy? What are its limits and limitations? Can it coexist with representative institutions? How will the “socialism of the twenty-first century” be different from the socialisms of the previous century?

José A. Laguarda Ramírez is a fourth-year student in the Ph.D. Program in Political Science at the CUNY Graduate Center, a Research Assistant at the Samuels Center, and former Co-chair of AELLA. He recently spent two weeks in the *barrios* of Caracas, where he interviewed residents and activists about their experiences in community organizing during the last eight years.