

**European Research Council
ERC Advanced Grant 2010**

**Strange Mirrors, Unsuspected Lessons:
Leading Europe to a new way of sharing
the world experiences**

ALICE

Project Summary:

Europe sits uncomfortably on the idea that there are no political and cultural alternatives credible enough to respond to the current uneasiness or *malaise* caused by both a world that is more and more non-European and a Europe that increasingly questions what is European about itself. This project will develop a new, grounded theoretical paradigm for contemporary Europe based on two key ideas: the understanding of the world by far exceeds the European understanding of the world; social, political and institutional transformation in Europe may benefit from innovations taking place in regions and countries with which Europe is increasingly interdependent. I will pursue this objective focusing on four main topics: democratizing democracy, intercultural constitutionalism, the other economy, human rights (right to health in particular). The four topics are interconnected and conceived of as crucial dimensions of a social transformation.

My accumulated knowledge will help Europe to face its challenges successfully; in a sense, such challenges are uniquely European; but, in one way or another, they are being experienced in different corners of the world. The novelty resides in bringing new ideas and experiences into the European conversation, show their relevance to our current uncertainties and aspirations and thereby contribute to provide the latter with new intellectual and political resources. My aim is to prove the usefulness and relevance of non-European conceptions and experiences to un-think conventional knowledge by means of two epistemological devices I have developed in my work the ecology of knowledges and intercultural translation. By resorting to them I will show that there are alternatives but that they cannot be made credible and powerful if we go on relying on the modes of theoretical and political thinking that have dominated so far. In other words, the claim put forward by and worked through this project is that in Europe we don't need alternatives but rather an alternative thinking of alternatives.