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## **Call for contributions**

### **International Closing Conference of the Knowledge Laboratory "Confronting inequalities in Latin America: perspectives on wealth and power"**

**CALAS headquarters in Guadalajara, Mexico  
May 11-13, 2022**

Latin America is characterized by high social inequality. This inequality is not only expressed in a pronounced asymmetry in the distribution, access, and consumption of material resources, but it is profoundly more complex due to its multi-dimensionality and its inter-sectionality. These social inequalities regularly create conflicts that often lead to deep political, social, and ecological crises.

The social sciences and humanities have to their credit rigorous theoretical and methodological tools with which they deepen on the different dimensions and criteria of these inequalities. While in recent years the study of poverty has been favored as one of the faces of said inequality, the Maria Sibylla Merian Center for Advanced Latin American Studies (CALAS), within the framework of its Knowledge Laboratory Confronting inequalities in America Latina: Perspectives on Wealth and Power, focuses on wealth and its main actors. With CALAS, international scholars investigate the mechanisms that ensure accumulation and wealth, and the relationships and structural arrangements that perpetuate it. For this, three lines of research have been established that address different aspects of these phenomena, which are the basis of the International Congress that concludes this Laboratory.

#### **Axis I: Regulation and deregulation of wealth:**

This research axis first examines the historical development of wealth regulation in the region. From an economic-historical and historical-sociological perspective, Axis 1 researchers trace the role of the state, the fiscal, tax, regulatory, and redistributive institutions of wealth, and the constellations of actors in the 20th-century political field. This context is approached in relation to the republican experiences during the rise of the world market, the scope of the state reform during the Great Depression in the face of the question of wealth, to arrive at the analysis of the present of neoliberalism and the different political responses- states that are formed on the continent in the face of concentration. A second approach refers to the processes of “deregulation” or “re-regulation” that today are favorable to the concentration of



wealth and analyzes the role of the elites in this process. This research has examined the processes of regulation, deregulation, and re-regulation at different political levels, each of which emphasizes the role of specific social power relations. Furthermore, the emphasis here is on the cognitive, discursive, and social mechanisms of representation and symbolism of elites.

### **Axis II: Study of wealth and elites.**

Axis II of the laboratory contributes to the study and reflection on wealth and its main actors. Even though, there are numerous studies on related issues, such as corporate and power networks, state capture, analysis of the regressive nature of tax systems in the region; it is necessary to nurture a corpus of studies on wealth that provide elements that allow testing regional interpretations of greater scope - and depth - on the problem of wealth and power, as well as its impact on Latin American societies. In this context, the second axis has focused on two dimensions of the phenomenon: the constitution and measurement of wealth and the reproduction and representation of wealth and economic elites. The first component focuses on wealth mapping; This implies studying its development, its sources, its measurement, and the constellations of powers and actors linked to the phenomenon. The second component emphasizes the dynamics, structures, institutions, and practices that allow the reproduction of wealth and economic elites; paying attention to the economic strategies, the sociocultural and habitual processes, as well as the main political strategies of these actors.

### **Axis III: Wealth, power, and nature.**

The historical view of wealth in Latin America shows the importance of the use and extraction of natural resources in the configuration of wealth, power relations, inequalities, and many other social ties. For this reason, the third axis specifically observes those processes of constitution of wealth and power linked to the use, extraction, and exploitation of raw materials and other natural resources. It includes an analysis of the construction of categories and socio-territorial hierarchies, processes of social stratification, as well as approaches to the ethnic question from centers of global and national power in spaces configured for the purpose of extractivism in the continent. This approach is relevant since it is considered that the extraction of raw materials and the rentier model have configured certain economic and political structures typical of the region, which require further exploration since they have played a significant role in the way in which they have been developed inequalities and power relations in the region and imposes limits to move towards more just societies.



The international congress that concludes the laboratory proposes to take up the individual themes of these three axes of research and put them in debate under an integral prism around their significance for contemporary social knowledge within the framework of an epistemological review of the social sciences before the imminent historical changes that the region is going through today. Its contribution to the analysis of strategies to combat inequality, the political reflection of democratic options in the continent, and a renewed approach to addressing the question of cultural change that integrates issues of diversity, but also of social inequality, is central. It is not only necessary to systematize the results, but also to place them in a broader context.

In this thematic context, the aim is to analyze the role of social inequality and of elites for possible political proposals and to investigate the connections between inequality and nature. These analytical nuclei are combined with two general objectives: first, it is about bringing together the experiences of Latin America together with those of other regions of the world; and second, CALAS systematically combines theories and methodologies from the social sciences and the humanities to arrive at a deep, experienced transdisciplinary cooperation between the two.

We invite experts from various academic disciplines to discuss these issues and approaches and answer the following questions:

A) What processes of reproduction of inequality, wealth, and elites are characteristic of Latin America? What are the specific characteristics of Latin American societies in this regard? How are the socio-economic, institutional, and cultural configurations in Latin America articulated -in a joint strategy to favor the concentration of wealth and produce inequality? To what extent does this experience coincide/connect with evolution in other parts of the world? How are these reproductions and experiences represented in journalistic discourses and social media, in literature, and in art? What patterns, traditions, and archetypes do the speakers and speakers use?

B) What experiences of state conflict and configuration can be highlighted as relevant for the regulation of wealth? What type of regulatory and tax programs were deployed? How can the political power of economic elites be regulated? What mechanisms and institutions guarantee more egalitarian societies in the long term? What impact parameters of regulatory / tax policies can we highlight as learning? What actors dominate the discourses and what techniques do they use to achieve this discursive sovereignty? What protest cultures exist and in what media are they manifested? How can we evaluate its impact on regulatory processes?



C) What is the relationship between social inequalities and nature? Where and how do economic, political, and social processes interact with the ecosystems of Latin America? How can the political and economic systems of Latin America be designed more efficiently in terms of resources? What concepts of nature, humanity, and society are invoked as general frameworks? On what traditions are ecological discourses based, what development do they experience, and what antagonistic discourses do they provoke?

### **Bases of the call**

- The call is aimed at applicants from the Social Sciences, Economics, History, Humanities, Arts and Literature who can contribute to the themes exposed both in empirical, theoretical, and methodological terms.
- Application: Fill the [application format](#) with title and summary (300-400 words) of the proposal and a brief academic record with an indication of the professional trajectory and relevant publications. Languages: Spanish, English.
- Deadline for submitting proposals: **October 31, 2021**
- An academic committee will select the works under the criteria of excellence. Applicants will be notified before November 30, 2021, about the opinion of their work.
- If selected, CALAS has funds to finance travel expenses and pay for accommodation during the days of the congress in Guadalajara.
- The congress will take place from May 11-13, 2022, in Guadalajara, Mexico.

### **Further information:**

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