



Knowledge Laboratory:

A region on the move: Accelerated human mobilities and multiple circulations in Latin America and the Caribbean

Call for up to 5 research grants

In the framework of the Knowledge Laboratory “A region on the move: Accelerated human mobilities and multiple circulations in Latin America and the Caribbean”, the Center for Advanced Latin American Studies (CALAS) opens the call for up to 5 research fellowships of three to five months duration, to be held between January and July 2026, located in one of the four CALAS regional offices in Latin America, namely Guadalajara (Mexico), San José (Costa Rica), Quito (Ecuador) or Buenos Aires (Argentina).

Objective of the Laboratory

Accelerations permeates all areas of social life. Various forms of acceleration can be experienced in everyday life and can cause multiple forms of alienation as well as diverse responses to civilizational crises. Human mobility, in pandemic and post-pandemic contexts, appears as one of the characteristics of the dynamics of acceleration of modern social processes, but circulations are multiple, hence we approach this from a relational approach that links the mobility of people with the circulation of goods, materials, ideas, knowledge conceived as an unequal exchange between people, places, groups, cultures in interaction with non-human elements. This process is fundamental for social, cultural and scientific development, as it allows the diffusion of new perspectives, the creation of shared knowledge and mutual enrichment. But these rearticulations occur in (inter)contexts and can be understood as intercultural processes linked to prevailing ideologies, exclusionary styles of economic growth, legitimization of inequalities, transformations in transnational citizenship, as well as expectations of possible futures. The Laboratory of Knowledge focuses on the study of multiple circulations of living, material and immaterial elements that contribute to the change of ways of thinking, creating and configuring inclusive forms of coexistence. The phenomenon of mobility is relational and intersectional and transcends nation-states, making it transnational and implying the construction of a global and flexible citizenship. It can also lead to the reproduction of historical patterns of exploitation through mechanisms such as the labor market and its segmentation or duality, through informality or the plundering of nature. The objective of the Laboratory is to propose possible horizons that provide inclusive responses to the demands that the transformations imply.

So far, the vast majority of studies on migratory movements have focused on repressive policies and as migrants as victims. This issue, in the current context of violence against migrants in the United States, will be fundamental to understand whether the model will be projected globally as well as to identify alternative proposals for the mobility of people and ideas based on respect for the human rights of migrants. In addition, it is necessary to consider the migration of elites and the generation of new spaces “from above”, which also promote the circulation of ideas, centered on actors such as “digital nomads” and their impact on gentrification processes.

Migrations are also cultural, since with the various migratory movements, cultures undergo processes of displacement and transformation. Space can no longer be seen as a mere stage on which migrations and circulations take place, but we must pay attention to the transmutations to which the various mobilizations subject it at the level of its political, social and cultural perceptions. According to the spatial turn, space is not only the background in which phenomena are rooted and in which actions take place. To a large extent, space is shaped by socio-cultural conditions, and also contributes substantially to the production of culture and society. The Laboratory focuses primarily on the contemporary history and present of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the spatial reconceptualizations can be approached from diverse signifying practices, including art, literature, film and television, or social networking services in the space of intermediality; moreover, the circulation of knowledge is also linked to science and technology.

Research axes

Based on these approaches, the knowledge laboratory will address four transversal research axes:

1. Human mobility, circulation of ideas and new signifying practices — transnational cultures and global political cultures.

Today, every culture should be conceived as transnational “with all the implications of transnationalism, including cultural mobility, as well as cultural imperialism and colonial legacies”. Political cultures also circulate, so the Laboratory intends to advance in the analysis and understanding of values, beliefs, ideas, thoughts, emotions, attitudes and behaviors in relation to the dynamics of politics, political power and the expansion of citizenship through intermediality. What are the dominant narratives on the processes of (de)globalization and the mobilization of people? How have transnational cultures been strengthened and how have forms of coexistence based on flexible citizenships been eroded? What are the ideas and imaginaries that circulate, from above and from below, regarding mobility and the circulation of ideas? What institutions, formal and informal, public and private policies articulate transnational cultures and their contradictions? What objects and symbols in circulation articulate subjectivities about transnational cultures?

2. Space in movement: mobility and reconfiguration of space as well as the creation of new spaces.

The Laboratory aims to study the effects of the mobilization of people and objects on space and its perceptions. As mobility expands and multiplies the relationships between places and positions, spatial conformation and representation are altered. At issue are both the physical transformations of space and its cognitive reconceptualizations. Spaces of movement and acceleration are considered as well as empty spatialities in which stagnation and deceleration prevail. It is interesting to value spatiality as a social and historical construction in its three dimensions: as physical space, as lived space and as imagined space. This vision allows us to approach how spaces are constructed from the new institutionalism in multi-scale terms. What is the relationship between imaginaries and the symbolic construction of new transnational spaces? How are conceptual spaces articulated in the definition of lived spaces? What are the processual dynamics generated by the mobility of people and ideas in terms of these new physical, social, cultural, lived and conceptual spatialities?

3. New forms of (dis)integration, (dis)equality and social cohesion in the processes of accelerated mobility and multiple circulation.

Social disintegration—related in multiple ways to the processes of mobility and circulation—refers to the collapse of the structures, values, norms and social relations that are at the basis of societies and which implies an increase in conflict, instability and the erosion of shared values. However, it also generates new values and new forms of cohesion—products of the processes of mobility and circulation—that can be oriented towards the consolidation of historical inequalities and new inequalities. In this context, how can we generate new scenarios for the economic and social ascent of the lower and middle classes in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to resume paths of equality? How can the Latin Caribbean region convert the acceleration of human and digital mobility into a vector of upward social integration through mechanisms of transnational redistribution and new cooperative forms of work?

4. Mobility and accelerations in the labor sphere and the new social question.

The emergence of platform capitalism, a “new form of digital economic circulation” has boosted the circulation of ideas, knowledge, forms of work and rights to the use of goods and services in increasingly interconnected markets. In this context, the relations between capital and labor are transformed and the “separation between work and private life is erased”. The new globalized pattern of exchange of goods and services, with the impact of the gig economy, poses new challenges for the economy, politics and society. In this context, which has been consolidated in the post-pandemic period, how does the acceleration imposed by capitalism impact on the trajectories of labor and social mobility in Latin America and the Caribbean, and what policies could reverse the precariousness of independent work to restore expectations of social ascent? How could the hopes and upward social mobility generated by formal work in Latin America and the Caribbean be recovered?

Conditions of the scholarship

The call is aimed at outstanding academics with university training in the humanities or social sciences. The minimum academic degree required is a doctorate; in addition, the trajectory and scientific reputation, relevant publications on the proposed topic, experience in the research topic and the quality of the project presented will be evaluated.

CALAS is committed to inclusiveness and the goal of gender parity. It expressly welcomes applications from severely disabled and handicapped persons, duly qualified. The CALAS fellowship program aims for gender parity and promotes affirmative action policies.

Fellows are expected to reside for the duration of the fellowship at one of the four CALAS regional sites and participate in CALAS activities and events organized within the framework of the Knowledge Laboratory. They will have the opportunity to make use of the resources of CALAS and the respective host institutions; the University of Guadalajara, the University of Costa Rica, FLACSO Ecuador and the National University of San Martin, including office space, access to libraries and research facilities.

The scholarship is endowed with a competitive financial award. In the event that the applicant occupies a permanent position, the scholarship can be used to (partially) finance a temporary replacement. In addition, travel costs are covered.

CALAS expects from the fellows the publication of research results to be agreed with the coordinating committee of the Knowledge Laboratory. At the end of the fellowship, fellows are also expected to inform about their activities in a report.

Application

You must complete the [online application form](#) and add the following documents in PDF format in Spanish or English language:

- Motivation letter explaining how the project relates to the Laboratory's research program, what your expectations are, and where you are applying to stay.
- Presentation of an innovative research project with justification of the contribution to the Laboratory, including timeline and work plan, with a maximum of 10 bibliographic sources (max. 5 pages/2,000 words).
- Two-page curriculum vitae with list of relevant publications.
- Copy of doctoral degree.

Important dates:

Closing date: August 30, 2025.

Decision date: October 31, 2025.

Start of the scholarship: between January and March 2026.

Due to the number of applications, rejections cannot be justified.

Scientific direction of the Laboratory:

Dr. Ronny J. Viales Hurtado, University of Costa Rica.

Dr. Werner Mackenbach, University of Costa Rica

Dr. Christine Hatzky, University of Hannover, Germany

Dr. Javier Lastra-Bravo, University of Hannover, Germany

Dr. Joachim Michael, University of Bielefeld, Germany

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