

International seminar

Decolonizing knowledge production. Perspectives from the Global South

Guadalajara, Jalisco, April 4, 2022

**Biblioteca Pública del Estado de Jalisco Juan José Arreola
(<https://bpej.udg.mx/>)
salon Catalunya (floor 5)**

Rationale

The production of knowledge in the global academic field is still highly unevenly distributed. Western knowledge, which originated in Western Europe and was deepened in the transatlantic exchange with North America, is still considered an often unquestioned reference in many academic disciplines. Thus, this specific, regional form of knowledge production has become universalized. In terms of power politics, this dominance of Western knowledge is also problematic insofar as its dissemination has been closely linked to colonial and imperial projects. This Western-centric bias in knowledge production has not gone unchallenged on the part of the various non-Western systems of knowledge production. Alternative approaches and interpretations have been opposed, but equally, there have been productive appropriations and hybridizations or mestizizations of knowledge. Some of these had the character of détournements, in which appropriated Western knowledge was used to criticize Western hegemony.

However, the question of the predominance of Western knowledge is not purely historical or sociological. The social decision about which knowledge is considered relevant also determines which knowledge carriers and experts are endowed with symbolic power. Given the current multiple crises, it seems increasingly accepted that the production of knowledge must draw on diverse knowledge traditions and systems in order to be able to produce something new. An ecology of knowledge is to be promoted, which also means that a variety of knowledge producers, from diverse epistemological communities, should be included in a knowledge exchange.

Program:

09.30-10.00 Welcome & Introduction

10.00-11.45 Panel 1: Collaborative knowledge production and interdisciplinary, international exchange: The Merian Centres in Context (hybrid mode)

The Maria Sibylla Merian Centres, as an initiative launched by the German Ministry of Education and Research, have been established as spaces of scientific cooperation with the aim to trigger new research questions, approaches, and methods. The interdisciplinary, international research groups study topics of high global relevance from different specialists' perspectives. In this panel representatives of the five current centers present their approach to collaborative knowledge production in their specific local/regional context.

CALAS (Mexico): Sarah Corona Berkin, Olaf Kaltmeier

ICAS:MP (India): Shail Mayaram, Martin Fuchs

MECILA (Brasil): Susanne Klengel, N.N. (digital)

MIASA (Ghana): Charlotte Wrigley-Asante, Susann Baller (digital)

MECAM (Tunisia): Khalid Kchir, Rachid Ouaisa (hybrid)

Coffee break: 11.45-12.15 hrs.

12.15-13.30

Panel 2: Knowledge Production in a globalized world between cooperation & Inequalities (in person only)

Cooperative, horizontal knowledge production in the current circumstances of multidimensional crisis faces monumental challenges. This second panel aims to bring different approaches regarding the decolonization of knowledge production from South Asia, the Maghreb as well Latin America, and the Caribbean into a productive and stimulating dialogue. It aims to articulate and discuss some of the issues raised in the rationale of the seminar, such as science communication, the relationship between academy and (social) movements, decolonization of research, and multiple inequalities.

Impulse:

- Claudia Zapata (CALAS, Scientific Advisory Board, Chile): Descolonización del conocimiento: trayectorias, paradojas y desafíos
- Shail Mayaram (ICAS:MP, India): Beyond Deconiality: Swaraj (Freedom) in the Realm of Ideas: Some Indian Debates
- Martin Grossmann (CALAS, Scientific Advisory Board, Brazil): Contextualizing ubiquitous knowledge

13.30-15.00 Lunch break

15.00-17.00 Panel 3: Continuation of Panel 2 and final discussion on the role of Institutes for Advanced Studies in global knowledge production (in person only)

The third and final panel continues the debate opened up in the second panel, introduced again by short, thoughtful interventions. The panel will end with a reflection on how settings such as Institutes for Advanced Studies can contribute to decolonize global knowledge production.

Impulse:

- Edgardo Lander (CALAS, Scientific Advisory Board, Venezuela): Algunas reflexiones sobre la experiencia del Doctorado en Estudios Culturales Latinoamericanos de la Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar en Quito
- Carmen de la Peza (CALAS, Scientific Advisory Board, Mexico): Retos de la descolonización de la investigación en México
- Christian Büschges (CALAS, Scientific Advisory Board, Germany): El pastor como antropólogo. La teología de liberación y la representación de comunidades rurales en la región andina
- Laila Abu-Er-Rub (ICAS: MP, Germany/India): Decolonizing Fashion Studies: Indian Ethnic Wear vs. Western Wear

Language: English-Spanish: Simultaneous translation will be provided