



Call for Papers

Elites and Class - Interrogating the Rich and Powerful in Latin America and Beyond

YOUNG SCHOLARS WORKSHOP

25th – 26th May 2023,

Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos (CELA)
University of Kassel,
www.uni-kassel.de/forschung/cela/

Class and elite are central concepts in the social sciences and have a long history of academic reflection and critique. These concepts specify the structure of 'modern' societies and are explicitly linked with power relations. Today, the configuration of social inequalities continue to be changing in different world regions, and new challenges have emerged (e.g., climate change, migration movements, and interstate conflicts). Nevertheless, the role of classes and elites remains pivotal. While this is the reality for countries in the global north and south alike, societies in the southern hemisphere are often characterized by higher social inequality, a greater concentration of power, and limited access to state institutions and services. Latin America is a showcase in this regard and a region where enormous wealth, poverty, and traditional elite rule overlap.

This workshop will be an open space to explore how economic and political power is organized in Latin America and other regions, focusing on the challenges mentioned above. The two-day workshop seeks to discuss established theoretical approaches (like Marxist class analysis, democratic elitism, and Bourdieusian frameworks) in light of recent empirical findings. It will address questions such as: How can we define class and elite? How do these concepts relate to economic, political, social, and cultural conditions in given societies? Which techniques and methods exist to analyze the elite and class effectively? Participants are invited to discuss the methodologies they use to research elites and classes (e.g., network and biographical analysis, interviews, or ethnographic methods) and present their research findings.

The workshop is intended as a space for young scholars from across the social sciences and related disciplines to discuss the questions above and to present their (dissertation) projects. While the regional focus is on Latin America, researchers investigating matters in other world regions are welcome to join as well. The workshop will take place in Kassel; it is hosted and funded by the Center for Latin American Studies, the Graduate Centre of the Social Sciences (KIGG), and supported by the Elite Studies Working Group. It will focus on three topical areas that will address different aspects of class and elites in Latin America and beyond:

1.) methodological aspects of studying elites and class

Critique of categories like elite and class in the social sciences; case designs; methods for researching classes and elites; critical reflections on research designs; challenges for interviews and ethnographic methods.

2) class and social structure

Social structure analysis in specific countries; historical shifts; representations of poverty and wealth, interferences of race, class, and gender; political economy analysis, development models, and integration into the world market.

3) elites and power

Political culture and political systems in the global south, political and economic elites, reproduction of elites, elite change, public and political discourse, the influence of elites, and the relationship between elites and state.

Doctoral and post-doc researchers with projects dedicated to these and similar topics who would like to discuss their work are encouraged to apply. Contributions to travel and accommodation costs are available. The language of the workshop will be German and English.

Those interested in participating in the workshop should send an abstract (300 words) of their research work (e.g., dissertation chapters, preliminary papers/drafts) to j.ickler@uni-kassel.de by **March 6, 2023**.

If you have questions regarding the workshop organization or other inquiries, please reach out to the organizer, Jan Ickler (j.ickler@uni-kassel.de).

Organizer: Jan Ickler

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