

Theme  
of the year  
2023

## Medialidades | Medialities

Asymmetries of knowledge, along with divergent knowledge practices and representations, frame negotiations of interclass, intercultural, interethnic, and inter-gender relations. They also shape disputes over relevant social issues such as symbolic belonging, political participation, resource distribution, and access to power. In Mecila's research agenda, Medialities refers to the heterogeneous, often conflictual ways individuals and social groups represent, symbolise, and communicate in convivial interactions, grounded in diverse, often unequal ways and practices of knowing. Thus, the knowledge dimension and the ways and means of mediation are key to understanding the nexus between conviviality, difference, and inequality, which is at the core of Mecila's research agenda.

In 2023, Mecila will pay particular attention to these processes of production, circulation, and appropriation of knowledge, imaginaries, and representations through the lens of inequality and difference. The annual focus theme for that year will be medialidades | medialities.

In our understanding of medialities, we address at least three interconnected dimensions: the analysis of representations and differences in dispute, the varieties of media genres and properties (including material as well as immaterial), and the tension between "inclusion" and "exclusion".

We invite contributions addressing the following topics in particular:

**Medialities and Digital Transformation.** The **digital turn** is transforming and reshaping knowledge production, circulation and appropriation in new and unprecedented ways. What are the outcomes of the digital transformation? Is it able to reduce persistent knowledge inequalities, or does it create new ones? The increasing use of **social media** can have quite divergent effects on conviviality in Latin America. What are the differences between the use of social media by different social and ethnic groups? What effects do social media have on conviviality? How does social media reshape intimacy and friendship as well as living together in families, in (digital) neighborhoods, in migrant and diasporic communities?

We are also equally interested in proposals that explore the **politics of medialities** understood as the complex relations involved in the political intermediation and mediatization of interests, values and ideologies. Even if controlled globally by a small number of companies, the Internet has completely changed the rationale of political struggles and the dynamics of the public sphere - for better and for worse. On the one hand, social movements and political activists have gained new spaces for their expression and articulation. On the other, right-wing and far right-wing groups have transformed digital communication into a powerful multiplier of a politics of hate, post-truths, and social polarization. We are interested in learning more about these dynamics and their general impact on the relation between conviviality and inequality in Latin America and other world regions.

**Knowledge practices** such as **writing, drawing, photographing, performing, collecting, and exhibiting** offer clues to the study of how notions of conviviality – such as utopias or mythical pasts – become manifest in objects that are produced, negotiated, and circulated in unequal convivial configurations. Through these lenses, Mecila invites scholars to analyse **medialities within “Latin American archives”** in a broad sense (museums, libraries, formal and informal collections situated in the North and the South) where difference and inequalities in meanings, practices, and human-object relations are negotiated.

We will confront questions posed by the interdependent inequalities that have contributed to shaping dynamics of **marginalisation and exclusion of voices** from Latin America, especially indigenous, afro-descendant, female, and socioeconomically disadvantaged. Medialities of conviviality in **law** are not limited to explicit rules and knowledge but extend to implicit social rules and tacit knowledges. Mecila invites analyses of customs, local legal rules, learned and vernacularized knowledge in different locations and medias, as well as judicial and extrajudicially binding decisions. Since the conquest and colonisation, **knowledge about non-human agents** such as animals and plants has been an integral part of knowledge production and the global commodity exchange circuits. These dynamics have led indigenous peoples to position their knowledge, practices, and ways of life, making their relationships with non-humans (plants, animals, land, water, among others) visible. They constitute networks of relationships that allow for the coexistence of different forms of life. Mecila seeks to examine medialities that rethink the non- and more-than-human, making room for other perspectives.