Mecila:

Maria Sibylla Merian Centre Conviviality-Inequality in Latin America

Application for the third funding phase April 2026 – March 2029

Future Research Programme

Applicants:

Freie Universität Berlin (FU Berlin), coordinating institution

University of Cologne (UoC)

Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (IAI – SPK)

Universidade de São Paulo (USP)

Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento (CEBRAP)

El Colegio de México (COLMEX)

Instituto de Investigaciones en Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales (IdIHCS/CONICET/UNLP)

Re-visiting the Conviviality-Inequality Nexus

Research topics and questions

The set of topics as well as the conceptual and methodological resources encompassed by the research programme approved in 2019, which builds on the constitutive link between conviviality and inequality, has not lost its relevance and timeliness. On the contrary, both recent societal and political developments and advances in scholarship related to the Centre's research programme have made our research agenda today even more pertinent and pressing. For this reason, in the coming years, we will sharpen our analytical focus in light of more recent empirical and research developments. In the following, we present the two sets of interconnected transformations that merit particular attention in the three-year third phase proposed in this application.

Digital Inequalities

The restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic led to an unprecedented acceleration in the digitalisation of everyday life; this is widely documented in the pertinent literature (e.g., Fassin/Fourcade 2021; Nunes/Malagri 2023). However, current approaches on digitalisation are often descriptive, since, as Travkina (2022: 484) correctly states, these approaches just define digitalisation as a "process of introducing digital technologies" into different realms without addressing the complex transformations involved in digitalising social life. Following Mecila's research programme, we build on an analytical definition of digitalisation that explores, through the lens of conviviality-inequality, the impacts of the unprecedented uses and influences of digital infrastructures. Accordingly, we have shown how digital transformations affect specific convivial configurations, exploring, for instance, how the gender division in care work changed during the pandemic, as digital activities such remote classrooms and working from home rapidly increased (Piovani et al. 2023, Kolb 2024, Rojas Scheffer 2022, Rojas Scheffer et al. 2024). We have also discussed how the virtualisation of politics, the growth of the far right, and political polarisation in Latin America correlate (Birle/Windus 2024, Nobre 2022, Kessler et al. 2023, Costa 2025). However, we have not yet developed a systematic assessment of the impacts on the conviviality-inequality nexus from the acceleration of digitalisation, including the growing use of artificial intelligence by institutions, companies, and individuals in everyday life.

In Mecila's third phase, we intend to research how the changes in patterns of sociability brought about by digitalisation generate new forms of inequality and concentration of power and wealth. Digital inequalities include material and immaterial aspects: infrastructures, practices, the coexistence and intertwining of digital and analogue interactions, as well as the contested legal and symbolic dimensions of the valorisation of knowledges and cultures.

Particularly relevant for the Centre's purposes is understanding the impact of digitalisation on the reinforcement of asymmetries in terms of validating different forms of knowledge. Our preliminary findings indicate that the effects at this level are ambivalent. While digital formats and open access policies inspire new knowledge sovereignty policies, the unequal distribution of digital capacities and resources solidify hierarchies within academia and between academic and non-academic knowledge (Banzato 2019; Ruvituso/Ulloa 2023; Beigel 2024a, 2024b; Dilger et al. 2025; Göbel et. al. 2025). In the framework of our previous research, we also learned that the digital transformation brought new challenges for the convivial configurations in collecting institutions such as libraries, museums, and archives. At the same time, new practices of collaboration are emerging that open up central information infrastructures and include the plurality of knowledge practices and cultural meanings into digital collection management.

We are also interested in analysing the ways in which the digital shift transforms established patterns of representing and proposing various forms of life, as well as imagining futures. Although some progress has been made towards greater democratisation and access to knowledge, the disputes around use, appropriation, classification, property rights, and valorisation show that digital transformations configure new convivial and conflictive spaces, where inequalities and differences are in continuous dispute and negotiation (Chicote/Göbel 2017: Hahn et al. 2021; Müller 2024; García 2023, 2024; Dilger et al. 2025). Processes of recirculation, re-appropriation, and digital restitution of objects and collections are particular concerns of indigenous and Afro-Latin American groups (Dilger et al. 2025, Göbel et al. 2025). They build their own archives, dispute property rights, and enact valorisation of knowledge and cultural heritages (material and immaterial) (Gonzalez Aktories/Masera 2024; Kukutai 2023). In the third phase, we will intensify our research into the linkage between conviviality and increasing use of digital technologies in the context of new ways of circulating and storing knowledges.

Equally relevant is further research into the impact of increasing digitalisation on convivialityinequality in the fields of politics and labour. Building on our previous work and pertinent literature (e.g. Kessler et al. 2023, Nobre 2022, Gerbaudo 2018), we seek a complex understanding of the phenomenon of growing political polarisations and political violence. In the field of digital labour, our previous findings (Marins 2024, Marins et al. 2022) have highlighted the consequences of remote work on workers' subjectivity. Building on this, we will further discuss how digitalisation of labour by generating new forms of social isolation and exploitation (wage-free work, import of labour power without promoting labour migration, etc.) re-configure the nexus conviviality-inequality.

A central field for observing digital inequalities is the growing significance of so-called platform capitalism that is a driving force behind numerous activities — from commercial services, product and food delivery, and retail sales to music and video streaming, domestic work, and

transportation. Among these activities, which offer a glimpse of what the future of work may look like, delivery couriers and drivers using digital applications stand out.

Digital technologies undoubtedly create new job opportunities; however, they also raise questions about the gender, regional and other inequalities they reproduce. These are not just temporary or short-term jobs but rather precarious ones, marked by low income, insecurity, high risk, long working hours, lack of social protection, and limited professional perspectives. In many countries, these workers are migrants who face multiple forms of vulnerability).

A crucial issue is workers' legal status, that is, the distinction between workers who are legally subordinate to platform companies and those who are self-employed and supposedly "independent". This distinction is essential particularly in Latin America because it determines access to social protection. The growing relevance of this issue has sparked vigorous debate among governments, international organizations, academic institutions, and trade unions about different forms to regulate relations between platform companies and their workers. (Alba/Bensusán/Vega 2024)

Articulating the global and the planetary

In recent years, we have seen a quantum leap in the perception of the extent and scale of the climate emergency. Hence, there has been a wide spread of the vocabulary and knowledge relating to climate change both at the level of civil society (e.g. Celikates 2022; Delgado Pugley 2019) and international organisations (e.g. IPCC 2023). A driving force of the new awareness of the climate emergency is the multiple climate tragedies of recent years, such as major fires and floods, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic itself, which many perceived as a harbinger spelling out exactly what it is to have a catastrophe affecting the entire planet (Adloff/Neckel 2021).

The academic literature on climate change, which has been abundant in the natural sciences for decades, has also multiplied exponentially in the humanities and social sciences in recent years. Generally speaking, the work published in the social sciences is concentrated particularly in the fields of political economy and environmental economics as well as political sociology and political ecology. Political economy and environmental economic studies include both visions of sustainable green capitalism (for a critical assessment, see Fox 2023) and more critical approaches which point to carbon economies leading to climate collapse, in addition to economic, social, and environmental inequalities (e.g., Wagner 2024). These critical approaches also locate clearly the blind spots in the energy transition policies adopted so far (Brand/Wissen 2017, Brand 2024; Kaltmeier et al. 2020). According to Lessenich (2020), an "externalisation" of the costs of adaptation has occurred, making other regions of the world (particularly Africa and Latin America) pay the environmental and social price for the Global North and the economic elites in the Global South to maintain their unsustainable consumption patterns. The unequally distributed responsibilities for the climate emergency have even led different authors to reject the concept

Anthropocene for referring to the anthropogenetic transformation of the planet. Instead, these scholars are in favour of concepts such as “Capitalocene” and “Plantationocene”, which may better reflect both the historicity and the social injustices associated with current strategies to mitigate the effects of the climate change (e.g., Haraway 2015; Ulloa 2017).

Political sociology and political ecology have studied how the climate agenda reconfigures existing politics and generates irreconcilable political actors. Those who insist on the need to mitigate climate change will be pitted against those who ridicule “activist catastrophism” or simply deny the validity of scientific evidence of climate change (Mau et al. 2024: 239 ff.).

Another aspect also highlighted in these studies is the different temporality that governs science and climate change itself, on the one hand, and politics and economic profit on the other. While 5 climate change and the scientific models refer to a “deep time” inscribed in geological changes of long duration, political and economic actors follow electoral and investment cycles of a few years (Hanusch/Meisch 2022; Hanusch 2023; Marquardt/Delina 2021; Beckert 2024).

In the humanities, climate change has been largely discussed within the framework of the socalled planetary turn which implies understanding human history in the context of the planet’s geological and natural history. In the words of Chakrabarty (Chakrabarty 2021, Costa et al. 2024), this entails a leap from the global level, in which the trajectory of capitalist globalisation is the reference from which scholars research human societies, to the planetary level, in which humans are one species among others that inhabit the planet. Additionally, the planetary as such is a moral (humanist) category that forces humans to reflect on their responsibility to care for the planet, that is, to preserve life within the framework of inter-species entanglements (Tsing 2005). The planetary turn has led to new discussions within various fields. Within legal anthropology, for instance, differences have emerged among those who maintain that nonhuman beings (animals, plants, biomes) should be bearers of rights (Tamayo-Álvarez 2022) and those who show that modern law is not able to address planetary challenges (Norman 2021). In addition, within literary studies, relevant discussions have emerged opposing the concepts of planetarity and globalism. While planetarity has been seen as an entry point for discussing multiple forms of living together in difference, homogenization assumptions implicit in globalism discussions have been strongly rejected in the context of the world literature (G. Müller 2023).

Based on the distinction between the global and the planetary, we can roughly state that the social sciences have been dealing with the climate emergency mainly within the global level, i.e., through its impacts on reconfiguring human relations and actions worldwide. The humanities, on the other hand, have focussed their observations beyond human societies, either situating humans in planetary history, or discussing interspecies coexistence. A few authors have broken down this new division of labour between the social sciences and the humanities. The anthropologist Tsing (2021, Tsing et al. 2024), for instance, recently brought the global dimension of political and distributive disputes surrounding climate change into discussions about the planetary in the

humanities. Mbembe (2022) and Hanusch et al. (2021), in turn, sought to incorporate the planetary dimension into the discussion of climate change within the social sciences.

Given that Mecila's interdisciplinary research programme simultaneously covers the global and the planetary spheres, we plan to combine the debates on climate change developed with the social sciences and the humanities more systematically. What is more, through its transdisciplinary dialogues, the Centre also covers less visible perspectives of indigenous peoples, quilombolas/palenqueros, peasants and rural women's movements into these debates. These groups have been developing their own technologies to reflect and deal with climate issues, both on a global level through their struggles against extractivist capitalism, and on a planetary level through their non-anthropocentric philosophies (e.g., Kopenawa/Albert 2024 [2013]; Santos 2023; Ulloa 2024).

Studying convivial configurations in the context of tensions and transitions between the global and the planetary entails new conceptual challenges. After all, one of the two poles of the conviviality-inequality nexus, namely inequality, is inextricably linked to the global dimension. Thus, as a moral and political category, inequality is specific to human relations and has no possible use when it comes to discussing the trajectory of life on the planet or interspecies conviviality. Spivak's pioneering insight, that the planet overwrites the global (2003: Chapter 3), serves as a reference for our addressing these tensions. Following this formulation, we postulate that the emergence of the planetary (as a horizon of reference and imagination) does not extinguish the global as a space for political transformation and action guided by human aspirations for justice and equality.

Strategies

The instruments and formats deployed in Mecila's current second phase (2020-2026) to promote international interdisciplinary cooperation have proven to be appropriate for and satisfactory to all parties involved. Yet, our accumulated experience allows us to make a few finer adjustments in order to adapt the instruments to the main objectives of the next phase (2026- 2029) which are further consolidating our Centre and assuring its sustainability after 2029. The strategies guiding the Centre's collaborative work in the third phase are:

Balancing case studies and broader theoretical-conceptual syntheses

Like other centres of advanced studies, Mecila's research activities are mainly based on the individual projects of the Centre's fellows and other Mecila researchers (PIs, AIs, PDIs, etc.). The publications originating from these projects have generated substantive impacts on their respective research areas. In order to further consolidate a field of study on conviviality-inequality in Latin America, it is now essential to develop encompassing syntheses that take the aggregate findings of the different individual research projects and interpret and explore their impact on the

state of the art in the fields they address. In its third funding phase, the Centre's work will place particular emphasis on these synthesis efforts.

Articulating interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity

Mecila has been very successful both in promoting interdisciplinary dialogue in the humanities and social sciences and in encouraging transdisciplinarity, i.e., promoting dialogue with nonacademic experts. So far, the spaces for interdisciplinary work (weekly colloquia, thematic workshops, annual meetings, academic publications, etc.) and the spaces for transdisciplinary collaboration (civil society workshops, institutional workshops, videos and podcasts with activists, artists, etc.) have been occasionally connected and articulated in meetings and encounters designed for this purpose. As these collaborative settings have proved to be extremely productive, in the coming years we will intensify collaboration between the academic and non-academic spheres of knowledge production by integrating them more systematically. We will also intensify collaboration with academic experts beyond the humanities and social sciences as much as possible, because researching the topics primarily addressed in the third phase, such as climate change or digital inequalities, will require cooperation with specialists from other areas of knowledge such as biologists, ecologists, and computer scientists.

Intensifying collaboration between Mecila and other relevant research groups within and outside the Mecila Consortium

In the first and in the current second phase, Mecila has developed different activities in cooperation with scholars and research groups based at its Consortium institutions. These joint activities have included research visits, workshops, and lectures, which were coordinated and, in some cases, co-funded joint projects in collaboration with other research groups. In the coming years, we intend to intensify and institutionalise these successful collaboration formats. The fact that some Mecila PIs are also Principal Investigators of various pertinent joint projects will continue to facilitate these collaborations. For example, PIs at UoC Mecila will continue to be a mainstay of the GSSC during the third phase and the period after 2029. At UoC, Mecila is also planning further collaborations with the Erich Auerbach Institute and the planned "MOST-BRIDGES Thematic Hub for Planetary Wellbeing and Ecological Flourishing". German-Latin American projects already initiated will also be further developed and institutionalized. Particularly relevant at this point are the already-funded joint projects including Mecila PIs and other researchers based at the Consortium institutions as in the case of the DFG Research Unity Collaborations which include researchers from FU Berlin and Afro CEBRAP. Another paradigmatic example for further planned cooperations is the ISAP in Interdisciplinary Brazilian Studies in which Mecila PI Schulze collaborates with different colleagues at USP. In addition to research groups within Mecila consortium institutions, several external research groups and

institutions, including the other four Merian Centres, have proved to be crucial partners in the dissemination and consolidation of Mecila's research. Cooperation with these partners will be followed up and intensified in the third project phase. This is also valid for former fellows: We will continue to include them into our alumni activities as described above.

Preparing for the generational transition of Mecila researchers

Mecila began its work in 2017 on the basis of the solid collaboration and trust that previously existed between Mecila PIs and Consortium institutions. During the first phase (2017-2020) and the current second phase (2020-2026), new PIs and AIs have joined the Centre, gradually occupying positions in the Centre's research and governance spaces (e.g., L. Flamand at COLMEX, B. Tavolari at CEBRAP, G. Müller at UoC, C. Ruvituso at IAI). In the third phase, this generational transition will be completed in order to guarantee the continuity of the Centre after the BMFTR funding ends. At FU Berlin, which will continue to coordinate the Centre, M. Santos Silva will succeed S. Costa as Mecila's project leader while C. Müller (IAI) and J. Piovani (IdICHS) will become members of the Executive Board. T. Amorim, current Mecila's Academic Manager, and T. Heil, current Mecila's PDI, will become Mecila's AI.

Governance

In the third funding phase and in the following years in which Mecila will consolidate itself in a sustainable manner, the Centre will maintain its current governance and decision-making structure that has proven to be fair and efficient. This structure has allowed for equitable 8 participation by the different partners involved, while also fostering transparency and expediency in its decision-making processes. Accordingly, all currently existing bodies and instruments for deliberation and transparency as described in the first part of this application will be maintained. These are: the General Assembly, Executive Board, Advisory Board, Board of Directors, Ethics Committee, and Editorial Board. Since all seven institutions that constitute the Consortium Mecila have their own Ethics Committee, Mecila's Ethics Committee only addresses issues directly connected to Mecila's activities and will only intervene when called upon by a researcher or employee of the Centre or by a third party affected by Mecila's activities. The Ethics Committee deals with both internal conflicts not directly connected to research ethics and issues related to research ethics. While general internal conflicts will be dealt by an ombudsperson, research ethical issues will be dealt by two Principal Investigators. The names for occupying these three positions within the Ethics Committee will be nominated by the Executive Board by March 2026. These names will be announced in Mecila's website and Newslwtter. In case of internal conflicts or research ethical issues, the Ethics Committee will inform in a written report the Executive Board and ask for a decision or further measures, if applied.

Research activities will continue to be articulated around the three existing Research Areas (RA): RA Politics of Conviviality, RA (Hi)Stories of Conviviality, and RA Medialities of Conviviality, each of them coordinated by three PIs based at different Consortium institutions.

The Research Areas coordinate Mecila's activities in the three broad and interdisciplinary research fields inscribed in their names, which are considered central for exploring the conviviality-inequality nexus. Accordingly, they will keep crucial in the third phase for assuring that the planned activities and the third-party funding proposals for granting Mecila's continuity after 2029 take into account those research fields.

In the third phase, we will maintain the existing administrative structure, as this structure has proved to be compact and efficient, only adjusting it to cope with new needs and the reduction in funding. Mecila's Coordination Office in São Paulo, working in close collaboration with the coordination nodes based at the Consortium institutions as well as with the Board of Directors and especially with the two directors present in São Paulo (one linked to a German institution and one linked to either CEBRAP or USP), will continue to be the core of the Centre's administration. The São Paulo Coordination Office will have three staff members (Academic and Editorial Manager; as well as an Administrative, Events and Outreach Assistant, employed on 75 per cent time basis and a Research and Fellows Assistant also employed on 75 per cent time-basis) as well as one student assistant. In the third phase, the three German institutions will have a specific academic staff dedicated to Mecila activities. In case of FU Berlin, the Academic and Publications Assistant (E13, 75 per cent time-basis) will support the Academic and Editorial Manager in the coordination of Mecila's publication programme as well as Mecila's PIs based at FU Berlin. The Academic Assistant (E13, 50 per cent time-basis) at UoC will support Mecila's PIs based at UoC as well as the Postdoctoral Fellows and the coordination of the academic events. At IAI, the Academic Assistant (E13, 50 per cent time-basis) will contributed to the conceptual and practical development of academic events and support Mecila's PIs based at IAI. The participating researchers from the four Latin American institutions will continue to 9 rely on the assistance of administrative staff from their institutions to develop Mecila's activities.

Mecila's physical premises in São Paulo, consisting of comfortable and well-equipped spaces at both USP and CEBRAP, have proven to be convenient and functional and will be maintained in the third phase. Early-career researchers (Postdoctoral Fellows) use USP facilities more intensively (student refectory, libraries, gym halls, gardens, contact with their mentors). They have their workplaces at the main campus. Senior Fellows and the Directors in Presence, however, work more frequently in their individual workspaces at CEBRAP. The weekly colloquia will take place at CEBRAP and once a month at USP.

Collaborative research formats (Work Plan)

The third phase will include the following collaborative formats:

Fellows Programme

The successful fellows programme further developed in the second phase will continue in the third phase, albeit with a new rationale for recruitment and cooperation with the fellows. The central objective of our collaboration with the fellows will transition from expanding our research programme and thematic scope to consolidating and securing the research results obtained so far. Accordingly, fellows in the third phase will build on Mecila's previous findings and contribute to the research avenues as summarized above, providing further visibility and circulation to Mecila's research. Following the standards and procedures adopted so far, the selection will be based on a widely circulated international call for applications and will be guided by internationally recognised criteria of excellence, combined with criteria of representativeness regarding disciplines, regions considering countries but also regional diversity within countries particularly Brazil, gender, and diversity as well as with the evaluation of the expected contribution to further consolidate Mecila's research. The Centre will continue to provide these fellows with an adequate working infrastructure and support from the Centre's staff as well as from CEBRAP and AUCANI staff for their needs (both practical issues such as visa, housing, etc., and research necessities, such as access to libraries and archives, contacts with the local academic community, etc.). For granting a broad dissemination of the calls for applications in different regions of Brazil, Mecila will send the calls to the Brazilian academic associations of each discipline relevant for Mecila's research programme.

We plan to implement the following modalities of fellowships and research stays:

i) Full fellowships for senior researchers: Mecila will select each year in 2027 and 2028 one experienced researcher (Senior Fellow) who holds a full professorship (or similar positions) at their home institutions the possibility of spending up to 6 months at the Centre's hub in São Paulo. The fully granted Senior Fellows will dedicate to one of the thematic fields of the third phase: either "digital inequalities" or "articulating the global and the planetary";

ii) Sabbatical stays for Senior Fellows: In 2027 and 2028, Mecila will offer one experienced researcher (Senior Fellow) who holds a full professorship (or similar positions) at their home 10 institutions the possibility of spending up to 6 months at the Centre's hub in São Paulo. They will dedicate to their own research project linked to the conviviality-inequality nexus. Considering that these researchers are on sabbatical and will continue to receive their salaries from their respective institutions, Mecila will cover travelling costs and pay a housing allowance to compensate for the additional expenses of living in São Paulo;

iii) Full Fellowships for three postdoctoral researchers (Postdoctoral Fellows) who will work at the Centre from October 2026 to March 2028. They will work on their own research proposal concerning the nexus conviviality-inequality and contribute to the development of applications for third-party funds for funding Mecila after March 2029. Accordingly, during their stay at Mecila, these Postdoctoral Fellows will expand their research experience and develop additional research skills associated with the development of a complex joint research proposal under the mentorship of Mecila's PIs based in São Paulo and the directors in presence from Germany.

iv) Reciprocal Fellowships: Continuing the fruitful programme of research visits and reciprocal fellowships in Germany, UoC will use its own funds to offer two fellowships each year for former Mecila fellows and Latin American PIs for stays at UoC of up to 6 weeks;

v) Activist and artistic residencies: Building on the success of the Urban Narratives Fellowships coordinated by UoC in the current project phase, FU Berlin, using its own funds, will finance research residencies of four weeks for up to 2 activists or artists each year, including writers, indigenous leaders, quilombolas, or representatives of other relevant communities. During their stay at Mecila, the residents will develop social, political, and cultural intervention projects in topics closely connected to Mecila's research agenda. The recipients will participate in Mecila's regular colloquium and will develop at least one outreach activity during their residency (public lecture, podcast episode, performance, etc.). Applications will be accepted through an international call for proposals and the selection process for residencies will be based on the quality and thematic adequacy of the project as well as on the professional and/or political trajectory of the applicant and the expected impact and the feasibility of the project.

Weekly colloquia (in presence) and monthly Research Areas (virtual) colloquia

Based on the successful experience of both colloquium modalities in the current second phase, these will continue in the third phase with the same frequency and dynamics. The weekly colloquium programme will include, besides the discussion of the progress of individual research, sessions dedicated to the study of Mecila's research results so far. This will foster the engagement with Mecila's existing contributions and highlight the advances to the state of research in the pertinent field.

Research collaborations of directors in presence and remote directors

Besides their activities so far, including particularly the direction of all academic activities at Mecila's hub in São Paulo, the two directors in presence will intensively collaborate for

supporting Mecila's publications and outreach programme and the continuity of Mecila's activity after March 2029. Accordingly, the directors in presence in dialogue with the remote directors and supported by Mecila's Academic and Editorial Manager will prepare at least one 11 dossier to be submitted to an outstanding journal either interdisciplinary or connected to a single discipline represented at Mecila. Besides this, the Directors in cooperation with the PIs based at CEBRAP and USP, supported by Mecila's Research and Fellows Assistant and the Postdoctoral Fellows, will work on third-party funding applications (FAPESP Thematic Project to be submitted in 2027 and FAPESP Regular Research Grant to be submitted in 2028).

Mecila Annual Meetings and International Workshops

The Annual Meetings in São Paulo will ideally take place in October 2026 and October 2027. In addition to the presentation of individual research by the Centre's investigators, we will also invite pertinent artists, activists, and policy makers to take part in sessions designed to promote transdisciplinary dialogue. The three-day Annual Meetings will have the following structure: Day 1: Opening and presentation of individual research results by Mecila's investigators, including Fellows as well as PIs and AIs; Day 2: Transdisciplinary dialogues with activists, artists, and policy makers; Day 3: Discussion of dossiers and outlines for third-party funding applications, evaluation and outlook, and meetings of the different deliberative bodies. In order to strengthen Mecila's presence and visibility in all Consortium member institutions, two international workshops will take place in La Plata (2027) and Mexico City (2028).

Mecila Research Academy

For fostering the dissemination of Mecila's research findings in different countries and regions of Latin America and internationally, the Centre plans to hold a five-day research academy in 2028, preferably in Brazil's North or Northeast region, where our research findings have not yet reached a wide audience. A total of 5 postdoctoral researchers and 5 advanced doctoral researchers will be selected to participate in the academy following a broadly disseminated call for applications. Besides the excellence and relevance of the individual research proposals, the search process will take into account an adequate balance in terms of regional, gender, and other pertinent intersectional features. The academic programme of the academy includes: lectures by Mecila's researchers and guests, panel discussions on the Academy's topic with representatives of the local civil society, discussion of the research proposals of the participating early-career researchers, and sessions dedicated to career mentoring (i.e., writing training for grant proposals, academic articles, and job applications as well as discussions on research ethics)

São Paulo Mecila Public Lectures

Based on the successful experience of our current public lectures delivered by Mecila Fellows, Directors, Research Visitors, and other invited scholars, and organized in cooperation with the Institute Goethe, among other institutions based in São Paulo, in its third phase Mecila will produce a regular programme of public lectures for both academic and non-academic audiences. We will continue to record these lectures and make them available in our YouTube Channel.

Mecila Chair

For consolidating the successful experience of the Mecila Chair financed during the current project phase with BMBF project funds, the seven Consortium institutions will establish a permanent Mecila Chair for mutual research visits of their scholars. The consortium institutions 12 will use third-party funds (e.g., from DFG, DAAD, AvH, FAPESP, CONACYT, CONICET) and, where appropriate, also their own resources for promoting these stays until and after 2029.

International Museums' Symposium in Germany

For reinforcing the visibility of Mecila's outreach activities in Germany and based on the solid existing collaboration between Mecila and different collections institutions (museums, libraries, archives) in Latin America and Germany, the Centre will promote an outstanding symposium on "The Future of Collections", coordinated by IAI, in Berlin in 2028 on topics relevant to both the established cooperation between German and Latin America collections institutions and Mecila's research programme. The introduction of this activity, which was not foreseen in the Research Programme submitted in March 2025, complies with the Evaluation Panel's (2025, p. 5) recommendation for "strengthening collaboration with museums and other institutions with well-established channels for outreach activities addressing the interested public."

Publications

The publication strategy of the current phase is based on a solid series of peer-reviewed working papers, the individual publications of the Centre's researchers, the series of books published in cooperation with CLACSO, the e-book series in Portuguese launched in 2025, along with jointly edited dossiers and volumes published in outstanding journals and publishing houses. Besides this, Mecila's researchers published, between 2020 and 2024, 27 monographs, 60 edited volumes, 210 articles in journals, and 257 chapters in both interdisciplinary and disciplinary outlets (please refer to Annex 3). This combination of strategies has fully met the objectives of allowing the Centre's research results to be broadly disseminated and to be available – most of them in free and open access in different languages and formats. We will continue to count on this set of publication strategies in the coming years in order to make our research results disseminated among both disciplinary and interdisciplinary audiences. Additionally, as mentioned above, the directors in presence in collaboration with the remote directors will organize each year either an

edited volume or a dossier based on Mecila's existing research findings to be submitted to outstanding journals. These synthesis publications will bring visibility to Mecila's specific contribution to the expansion and consolidation of different disciplinary and interdisciplinary research fields.

Furthermore, for giving more visibility to the Working Papers Series, in the first year of the third phase, we will add to each working paper published in Mecila's website an abstract in English, German, Portuguese, and Spanish. Moreover, the papers will be organized in thematic clusters for facilitating specific searches.

Outreach

The years during the pandemic have helped Mecila to diversify and consolidate its outreach tools and to bring research results to non-academic audiences, both in the countries where the Mecila Consortium institutions are based and also internationally. In the third phase, taking into account the reduction of personal resources, we will discontinue some instruments that have been less effective for reaching broad audiences. They are: the policy briefs, the video-glossary and the video-abstracts. We will continue offering public lectures and roundtables, newsletters, podcasts, videos, blog entries, and social media posts in order to reach non-academic publcis. We also plan to maintain the strong presence of Mecila researchers in mainstreaming electronic and print media in all four countries in which Mecila consortium institutions are represented (Argentina, Brazil, Germany, and Mexico) as well as internationally. In addition, we will seek 13 to further intensify our dialogue with artists, activists and policy makers through greater integration of them into our activities. The above-mentioned Symposium with museums' experts will also contribute to foster Mecila's visibility among academic and non-academic audiences in Germany and Latin America.

Research teaching projects

The second phase of the Centre saw the highly successful implementation of the strategy of anchoring Mecila's topics and issues in the research and teaching activities of the Consortium institutions. This strategy will be intensified in the third phase. To this end, in addition to the teaching research seminars and lecture series coordinated within each institution, we will encourage teaching projects involving various institutions in the consortium. Specifically, we will plan a yearly lecture series on the central theme of each year in a hybrid format and in cooperation between the different Consortium institutions.

Summing up: The set of strategies, formats, and instruments proposed for Mecila's third phase aims to promote a concentration on more specific relevant topics and optimise the use of available resources, both those offered by the funding institution and the contributions of the Consortium institutions - for an overview of the activities in the third phase (work packages) and the timeline

please refer to Annex 4.1 and Annex 4.2. This strategy will enable Mecila to maintain its impact in academia and beyond in the years to come, as well as uphold the reputation and robust public presence it has managed to build in its eight years of existence. In addition, the adjustments to the proposed formats will allow Mecila to consolidate cooperation with other researchers and research groups from its member institutions and other relevant organisations, a conditio sin qua non for its sustainability from 2029 onwards.

Consolidating the Centre and continuing international collaboration

In order to further consolidate itself institutionally and to sustain wide impact on international cooperation and research in the field of conviviality-inequality, also after the end of the third funding phase in 2029, Mecila is relying on three complementary pillars.

The *first pillar* is the contribution of Mecila Consortium institutions. All seven institutions involved will continue to provide the conditions for the Mecila's 21 PIs and 7 AIs (5 AIs are members of other institutions) to continue participating in the Centre's activities. This implies, where appropriate, reducing their institutional teaching and administrative workloads, as well as support for events. These researchers will also continue to offer teaching and advisory activities for early career researchers and thus transmit the research results and perspectives developed by Mecila to future generations of researchers.

In addition, the Consortium institutions will continue to provide broad administrative support to the project. FU Berlin will ensure the continued operation of the Association of FU Berlin in Brazil so that it can manage third-party funds raised by the Centre. Likewise, the FU Berlin Liaison Office in São Paulo will continue to support all Centre activities.

IAI will maintain its information infrastructure at the disposal of the Centre's researchers, including full access to the IAI's library holdings and special collections, free access to the Electronic Reading Room, an international interlibrary loan service, acquisition requests for 14 literature, and digitalisation on demand. The well-established network of libraries within the consortium will continue to be active in a hybrid format.

At UoC, the division for research management of the UoC will continue the support of handling projects emerging in the context of Mecila. CEBRAP and USP will continue to provide the physical and work infrastructure currently available to the Centre, in addition to administrative and logistical support, including support from CEBRAP's administrative staff and the USP's international affairs office AUCANI.

COLMEX and IdIHCS will continue to provide the physical infrastructure for the Centre's activities in Mexico City and La Plata (visits, workshops), as well as promoting events, such as lectures and workshops, with their own resources. The concrete contribution of COLMEX and IdIHCS for developing Mecila's programme includes: active participation in the Executive Board responsible for all strategic decisions (search for fellows, programmes of all events, hiring of

personal, etc.), active participation through the correspondent remote director in the development of the dossiers and outline for research grants, host and co-direction of two Mecila's international workshops, co-coordination of the three Research Areas: COLMEX cocoordinates the RA Medialities of Conviviality, IdIHCS co-coordinates the RA Medialities of Conviviality and the RA Politics of Conviviality.

The *second pillar* will be the acquisition of third-party funding. In order to maintain the Centre and develop its research activities in São Paulo, Mecila will develop an application for a Thematic Project for FAPESP (https://fapesp.br/en/thematic). The proposal will be developed in close collaboration with the Mecila PIs based at USP and CEBRAP particularly those who work at the Research Group Law and Democracy due to their close thematic affinity with Mecila and their considerable experience with this modality of funding. All other Mecila Consortium institutions and PIs will participate in the application as partners, reinforcing the interdisciplinary and international character of the application. In addition to this, a PI based in São Paulo will apply for a Regular Research Grant at FAPESP (https://fapesp.br/apr) for financing costs not covered by the "thematic project" funding line. While thematic Projects run for five years, Regular Research Grants run for three years. Mecila's reputation and cooperation experience, the excellent track record of the researchers involved in acquiring third-party funds, and FAPESP's financial strength and stability indicate a high chance of success for these applications, which would thus providing the Centre with financial sustainability in the medium and long terms. After such funding periods have elapsed, we plan to submit a new Thematic Project proposal incorporating any necessary changes to the research programme.

The items eligible for funding under the Thematic Project grants cover the main costs, instruments, and formats implemented by Mecila, such as: scholarships and fellowships for junior and senior fellows, infrastructure costs and third-party services, travel funds, and support for publications and events. Together with the complementary and more flexible funds offered by the Regular Research Grant and the support of the administrative staff of Mecila Consortium institutions, the funds to be applied will guarantee the full functioning of the Centre. This plan thus guarantees a realistic prospect of Mecila continuing to operate for at least another 10 years after the BMFTR funding ends.

Alongside the thematic project and the regular research grant, other funds available for specific activities (research visits, conferences, research stays, etc.) will be requested by Mecila PIs and 15 AIs in their respective countries. The plausibility of this strategy is reinforced by the letters of support to Mecila provided by FAPESP and DFG (please refer to the Annex 5).

The *third pillar* for institutional consolidation and guaranteeing Mecila's lasting impact on international collaboration is the cooperation networks that have been established and will be expanded. At the local level and in the Consortium institutions' countries, we already have a wide network of partners and collaborations, as described in the first part of this application. Mecila

has also positioned itself internationally as a benchmark for studies in the field of conviviality-inequality and has already built solid networks of collaboration in this field. After the end of the BMBF funding, we will continue to rely on this network to promote joint activities, such as joint academic publications and events, as we have done so far.

Impact beyond academia

On the basis of the formats and practices of collaboration established in the first and second phases, in the third and following phases, Mecila will continue to work as an innovative interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary Centre for knowledge production. The collaboration formats we have developed as described above are designed specifically to ensure cooperation between different disciplines and between academic and non-academic experts. In addition, the publication and outreach tools we have developed allow our research results and activities to reach activists, policy makers, interested citizens, and other relevant groups. Concretely, we plan to continue developing instruments for co-producing knowledge with non-academic experts on an equal footing, and to disseminate our research through formats and languages which are adequate to reach a broad non-academic audience. This includes:

i) Inviting activists, artists, and policy makers to contribute to Mecila's regular activities, including weekly colloquia, annual meetings, workshops, and outreach activities;

ii) FU Berlin funding for artist and activist residences at Mecila's hub in São Paulo;

iii) Continuation of all outreach activities attractive for non-academic publics: public lectures, podcasts, blogs, regular posts in social media, regular contributions to Mecila's video channel;

iv) Encouraging Mecila fellows and researchers to continue disseminating their results widely in print and digital media (op-eds, interviews, etc.) as they have done so far: between 2020-2024 Mecila's Researchers published 222 outreach contributions in print and electronic media, that is, about 44 publications each year (please refer to Annex 3) The social and political relevance of Mecila's research agenda is self-evident. It is difficult even to imagine another moment in recent history when the public and academic agenda have focused so strongly on social inequalities and the challenges of living together in societies which are increasingly culturally diverse, politically divided, and ecologically threatened. By producing innovative research results to the discussion of such burning issues, Mecila is fulfilling its calling as a research Centre of excellence dealing with topics of irrefutable social and political relevance.