



WATSON INSTITUTE
BROWN UNIVERSITY



The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies
The Watson Institute / Brown University

Declining Inequality in Latin America: Are the Good Times Over?

April 29-30, 2015

Watson Institute for International Studies

Brown University

111 Thayer Street, Providence, RI

Wednesday, April 29

9:00 – 10:00 am: Welcome and Overview: Setting the Stage

Joukowsky Forum

Chair: Richard Snyder (Brown University)

Ricardo Lagos (Brown University)

Rebeca Grynspan (SEGIB)

Nora Lustig (Tulane University)

10:00 – 10:15 am: Coffee Break

Joukowsky Forum

10:15 am-12:00 pm: Inequality, Mobility, the Middle-Class and the Rich

Joukowsky Forum

Income inequality in Latin America clearly declined in the 2000s. What are the salient aspects in the observed trends? What have been the main drivers of the decline in labor earnings inequality? What role has social policy played? Have the rich become richer even if earnings inequality declined? Has declining income inequality been accompanied by social progress more generally? How has the social map changed? What is the contribution of the Latin American elites to a socially inclusive and politically sustainable social contract?

Chair: Nora Lustig (Tulane University)

Francisco Ferreira (World Bank)

Luis F. López-Calva (World Bank)

Facundo Alvaredo (Paris School of Economics)

Tasha Fairfield (London School of Economics)

Florencia Torche (New York University)

12:00 - 1:00 pm: Lunch

Kim Koo Library

1:00 - 2:30 pm: Inequality and Mobility in More Challenging Times

Joukowsky Forum

What will weaker demand for low-skilled workers and more austere government budgets mean for inequality trends in the future? Given that in most Latin American countries tax revenues as a share of GDP are low when compared with more advanced countries, are there untapped revenue sources that could increase fiscal space without jeopardizing growth?

Chair: Ravi Balakrishnan (IMF)

Marcelo Côrtes Neri (Fundação Getulio Vargas)

Daniel Lederman (World Bank)

Julián Messina (IADB)

Vito Tanzi (Independent Scholar)

2:30 - 2:45 pm: Coffee Break

McKinney Conference Room

2:45 - 4:30 pm: Inequality and Education

McKinney Conference Room

Evidence shows that increased access to education has been an important driver for the decline in earnings inequality. However, educational quality continues to lag and this has been a major cause of discontent in several countries throughout the region. What needs to change in the delivery of education to make the dream of genuine social mobility come true? Are these changes feasible given fiscal and political constraints?

Chair: Joana Silva (World Bank)

Ariel Fiszbein (Inter-American Dialogue)

Celia Lessa Kerstenetzky (Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil)

John Stephens (University of North Carolina)

Sergio Urzúa (University of Maryland)

4:30 - 6:15 pm: Inequality, Social Exclusion and the Welfare State

Kim Koo Library

Does cross-national, subnational, and cross-temporal variation in the robustness of social policy help explain patterns of inequality across Latin America? What kinds of social policies hold the most promise for reducing inequality and poverty in Latin America today? How politically, fiscally, and institutionally feasible are such policies? Are there fruitful comparative lessons for Latin America that can be gleaned from other regions of the world where robust welfare states have fostered more egalitarian societies?

Chair: Linda Cook (Brown University)

George Gray Molina (UNDP)

Juliana Martínez Franzoni (Universidad de Costa Rica)

Carlos Rodríguez (World Bank)

Ana Sojo (CEPAL)

7:00 pm: Dinner, Providence Biltmore Hotel (17th Floor)

Thursday, April 30

9:00 - 9:45 am: Keynote Address: “Political Order, Inequality, Democracy and Redistribution,” Carles Boix (Princeton University)

Joukowsky Forum

9:45 - 10:00 am: Coffee Break

McKinney Conference Room

10:00 am - 12:15 pm: Roundtable: “Governance and the Politics of Inequality”

McKinney Conference Room

Will governments be able to reconcile the goals of social inclusion of the poor with the rising demands of a disappointed group of the new middle class? Are there groups who are not paying their fair share in taxes to build more inclusive societies? What political factors help explain the origins, maintenance, and possibilities for reducing inequality in Latin America? Who are the key “winners” and “losers” of current patterns of inequality, and what resources and capabilities do these groups have to defend their interests through the political system? Are there feasible political reforms that might contribute to the reduction of inequality? What new political challenges for mitigating inequality will arise from the trend toward weaker demand for low-skilled workers and more austere government budgets in the region? What is distinctive about the politics of inequality in Latin America when set in a cross-regional comparative perspective?

Chair: Barbara Stallings (Brown University)

Marcelo Bergman (Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero, Argentina)

Evelyn Huber (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill)

Juan Pablo Luna and Matías López (Universidad Católica, Chile)

Victoria Murillo (Columbia University)

David Samuels (University of Minnesota)

Mitchell Seligson (Vanderbilt University)

Michael Shifter (Inter-American Dialogue)

12:15 - 1:30 pm: Lunch

Kim Koo Library

1:30 - 3:30 pm: Wrapping Up: What do We Know about Inequality in Latin America and How Effectively Do We Communicate about it to the Public?

Joukowsky Forum

Chair: Richard Snyder (Brown University)

Jon Lee Anderson (*The New Yorker*)

María Esperanza Casullo (Universidad de Río Negro, Argentina)

Juan Carlos López (CNN)

Miguel Paz (Nieman Foundation, Berkman Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University)

Eduardo Porter (*The New York Times*)

Alexandra Ulmer (Reuters)