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Workshop: **Commodity Frontiers in Latin America**

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Workshop abstract:

This workshop brings together scholars from different disciplines and with diverse regional expertise on the social, economic and political dynamics of commodity production in Latin America.

Over the centuries, the trajectories of old and new commodity frontiers have transformed Latin America's societies and deepened the region's relation to the global economy, giving shape to critical challenges for their national economies and for social and environmental justice. On the other hand, the expansion of commodity frontiers at a global level cannot be understood without bringing Latin America and the Caribbean to the fore. However, in the analysis of global transformations the role of Latin America still tends to be reduced to that of a passive periphery.

This workshop seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive integration of Latin American dynamics in the study of globalizing commodity production without ‘flattening’ the region's internal inequalities. The workshop provides an inter- and transdisciplinary platform to explore ‘Commodity Frontiers’ as a conceptual tool for examining and explaining the inherent ecological contradictions of expanded commodity production in the Latin American context. Coined by geographer Jason W. Moore (2000, 2011), the notion of ‘Commodity Frontiers’ refers to historical and current processes of incorporation of nature, land and labour as new reserves for capitalist expansion. This implies methodological reflections on the potential and limits of this concept as an analytical instrument in theoretical and empirical research.

Guiding questions are: to which processes and geographies do we refer when we speak about ‘Commodity Frontiers’? How can this concept contribute to the study of Latin America? Which methods and analytical tools are relevant to the study of Latin-American commodity frontiers?

References:

Moore, J.W. 2000. "Sugar and the Expansion of the Early Modern World-Economy: Commodity Frontiers, Ecological Transformation, and Industrialization." *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 23(3): 409-433.

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