



Solidarities. Networks – Convivialities – Confrontations

44th Annual Conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries (GKS)

March 3-5, 2023, in Grainau, Germany

With the theme "**Solidarités. Réseaux – Convivialités – Confrontations**", the annual conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries (GKS) will be devoted to the forms and practices of solidarity in Canada and Quebec. It will examine not only the networks and forms of cohabitation that result from them, but also the inherent potential for conflict. The chosen perspective is interdisciplinary, from the angle of Francophone and Anglophone cultural, literary, and linguistic studies, historical sciences, political sciences and sociology, geography and economics, anthropology, and Indigenous studies, as well as women's and gender studies.

Since the 1980s, following the acceleration of globalization and the establishment of the (neo)liberal paradigm, the question of solidarity no longer seemed to have a place on the political and social scene. However, in societies marked by interculturality and diversity, such as those of Canada and Quebec, this question has remained very relevant in the practices of cohabitation of different groups. It also arises in international solidarity networks, for example in the context of anti-/alter-globalization, ecological, LGBTQIA+, or anti-racist movements. Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis has also led to the emergence or updating in Canada and Quebec of discourses on intergenerational and interprofessional forms of solidarity and on solidarity mobilizations. However, the crisis has also shown their limits and the potential conflicts between the different social discourses related to them. Therefore, the theme of solidarities regarding the networks, confrontations, and forms of conviviality that it implies will be explored along three axes: solidarity and society, solidarity and space, and solidarity and artistic and cultural expressions.

Solidarity and society

This axis explores the political, social, economic, and historical dimensions of solidarity. At the societal level, solidarity can be seen primarily as a political concept aimed at organizing living together, but also as an ideological and controversial discourse; for example, when the originally left-leaning term "national solidarity" is mobilized within the context of identity politics. In Canada, the concept of "national solidarity community" is particularly complex and often conflicting. In addition to Canada, Quebec has also considered itself a "nation" since the 19th century, and alongside it, the various First Nations have emerged in recent decades as new political actors with growing political claims.

From a political and historical perspective, the theme of solidarity continues to raise the question of the international role of Canada and Quebec, as well as the conceptions and objectives associated with it. Thus, the official image of Canada as a key soft power actor is opposed by critical voices, especially within Canadian society.

Thus, the following themes could be addressed, among others:

- The role of Canada and Quebec in international networks
- Discourses on international solidarity and their questioning

- Forms of solidarity communities and the identity constructions linked to them
- Practices of conviviality and solidarity as well as potential conflicts within and between different types of communities, e.g. migrants, women, First Nations, queer solidarities, disabled people
- Forms of solidarity within and with First Nations
- Protest movements and their national and international networking
- Interactions or confrontations between social partners
- The role of moments of crisis (e.g. Covid19) in the development of solidarities or confrontations (e.g. the truckers' demonstrations in Ottawa in January/February 2022)
- Corporate social responsibility and sustainability in business contexts
- Alternative models, life projects and practices of solidarity, for example in the sharing economy or in forms of urban and rural solidarities

Solidarity and space

Solidarities – and conflicts – take place and shape in a variety of spatial settings, and space is a factor in configuring either in specific forms. Urban settings in particular provide ample examples of special communities forming, of conflicts emerging, of needs and demands for solidarity being clearly voiced. Where poverty and exclusion, ethnic or racial discrimination become starkly visible, a variety of state as well as private actors and institutions become active, communities as well as intra- and inter-communal solidarities may emerge and evolve. In other spatial settings of dispersal and diaspora, different forms and processes of solidarity will get established – or not.

The following topics could thus be developed, also from a historical perspective:

- Forms of conflict and solidarity in Canadian cities
- Ethnic/linguistic/religious minorities in different spatial settings in Canada: forms of organization, identity-building, solidarities
- Solidarity with the world beyond Canada
- The impact of local / regional environments and settings on forms of solidarity, cooperation and cohabitation within and between different communities (e.g. the Arctic / Grand North, the Prairies, the coasts...)
- Conviviality and convivialism, but also confrontations and tensions between humans and nature as well as human and non-human life forms

Solidarity and language/literature/media

Language, literature, and other media are important for the representation of different forms of solidarity. These range from the representation of national and regional conceptions of identity, to the representation of protest and resistance movements, to the fictionalization of transnational cultural spaces such as *francophonie* and *americanité*.

Possible contributions in this framework include, among others:

- Literary and media representations (traditional and social media) of (practices of) solidarity and its/their negotiation
- Historical and current representations of regional and cultural-linguistic forms of solidarity, for example in the context of the "Acadian Reunion" or militant First Nations protest movements since the 1980s
- The literature of care, which raises the question of responsibility towards the Other and intergenerational solidarity

- The linguistic situation in Canada from a perspective of confrontation and/or solidarity: English or French as a lingua franca and the related forms of inclusion and exclusion/vehicularity/vernacularity of the languages of migration
- Networks of solidarity between different linguistic communities and their literatures

Contact and Abstract Submission

Paper proposals/**abstracts of max. 500 words** can be submitted in French or English and should outline:

- methodology and theoretical approaches chosen
- content/body of research
- which of the three main axes outlined above the paper speaks to (if any)

In addition, some short biographical information (max. 250 words) should be provided, specifying current institutional affiliation and position as well as research background with regard to the conference topic and/or three main axes.

Abstracts should be submitted no later than **May 15, 2022** to the GKS office: gks@kanada-studien.de