



Call for Proposals

Reimagining Canada in North America

48th Annual Conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries

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At the 2026 World Economic Forum at Davos, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney noted that shifting global dynamics demanded reconsidering Canada's position in North America and the world. In a speech that was hailed as bold and strong, Carney reminded his global audience that "nostalgia is not a strategy" because "the old order is not coming back."¹ The speech laid out a way for the country and other middle powers to act together and "build[] what we claim to believe in," thus projecting a form of reimagining based on shared values such as solidarity, strength, and integrity.

While Carney's address must be seen, first, in light of the recent heightened tensions with the United States, whose imperial threats of annexation have provoked strong national responses from Canadians, it is, second, also a response to a wider global context of rising authoritarianism and populism that have challenged established understandings of order and solidarity (as also discussed in [this article](#) on Quebec nationalism in the latest edition of the *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien*). Coming at the heels of Justin Trudeau's 2015 description of Canada as the "first post-national state," Carney's call turns a new page in the book of Canada's ongoing quest for a national identity.

Our call for papers invites a reimagining—an effort to reconsider, grasp, and understand anew what Canada's position within shifting global dynamics might be. Yet this imperative to reimagine is not without precedent; it is deeply rooted in the layered and contested histories that constitute what is called Canada. Any such reimagining must therefore critically reassess the national narrative, confronting the foundational and ongoing role of settler colonialism and maple-washing while centering the presence of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island—their sovereignties, knowledge systems, and cultural revitalization. At the same time, it must remain attentive to other intertwined histories, slavery and struggles for liberation, anxieties over annexation, territorial transformations, and the evolving dynamics of immigration and multiculturalism. It also comprises a renewed engagement with long-standing internal debates, including the specific role of Quebec, which shares with English-speaking Canada concerns about authoritarian tendencies and economic instability, but maintains an ambivalent relationship with Canadian federalism. Reimagining also includes the functioning of federalism, not least in view of separatism in Alberta, social inequalities, and the balance between different levels of government. It calls for careful reconsideration of domestic priorities, institutions, and democratic practices, followed by an effort to reimagine how they might be adapted to new political and social challenges. In this sense, the U.S.-American crisis acts as a mirror exposing Canada's internal vulnerabilities. Canada is forced to reassess the foundations of its political and social order, not only in relation to its external environment, but also within its own domestic framework.

¹ <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2026/01/davos-2026-special-address-by-mark-carney-prime-minister-of-canada/>. Accessed 19 April 2026.

Reimagining Canada has always involved economic, political, geographical, social, environmental and cultural processes of change, both in the ways Canada sees itself and in how others see Canada. Therefore, we invite contributions on this topic in the full range of disciplines represented in our Association for Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries. Papers could address but are not limited to any of the following topics:

(1) International relations and geopolitics (issues related to Canada's place in the world, its alliances, and global dynamics):

- How can Canada forge alliances within North America, including the Caribbean and Mexico and beyond, on political and economic levels? How has Canada forged such alliances in the past and to what effect?
- To what extent can Canada's special links with the United Kingdom be employed in the light of a shifting global order?
- What could a coalition of the middle powers look like?
- How can a look at the history of US-Canadian relations help to understand the current developments? How do we look back at the theory of these relations, and what does it tell us today (e.g., Morrison 2003, Siemerling et al. 2010, Vosters 2019)
- How does Canada figure as the "New" Underground Railroad from the United States, and to what effect?
- How have Canada and the world experienced expressions of neo-colonialism? And which strategies did and do they evoke—politically, culturally, or otherwise—to counter this trend?

(2) Internal dynamics, governance, and political debates (issues related to domestic policy, institutions, and federal tensions):

- How does Québec reaffirm itself between solidarity and a renewed drive for sovereignty?
- Which role do right-wing and left-wing politics and ideas play in future strategies adopted by the Canadian government?
- How are gender and gender roles affected in Canada by a general rise of right-wing politics and anti-genderism?
- How is current Canadian politics being represented in foreign media (print, television, and social media)?
- Which impact might the move of scholars from the United States have on Canadian education, Canadian universities, Canadian academia?

(3) History, Memory, and Identity (questions concerning historical trajectories, collective identities, and interpretive frameworks):

- How can Canada's diversity and the historical development of this diversity contribute to a reimagining of the nation?
- How can Reinhart Koselleck's concept of "the future of the past" be mobilized to interrogate the evolving relationship between historical experience and horizons of expectation in Quebec amid contemporary transformations?
- What has been the place and role of the First Nations in the changing dynamics?
- How can we make sense of national identity in Canada from diachronic and synchronic viewpoints? And what events, processes, moments have influenced and shaped it? Where and how is Canadian national identity negotiated and challenged?
- How can European idealized perceptions of a liberal Canadian trans-culturalism be re-negotiated without questioning the visionary/innovative power of the concept?

(4) Cultures, literatures, media, and social imaginaries (topics exploring representations, narratives, and cultural forms):

- Which role(s) do social media play in reimagining Canada?
- Which role have literature and other (audio)visual media as products of the imagination played in developing strategies for reimagination?
- How do Canadian writers, both past and present, look at their southern neighbor? What alliances, what visions, what strategies of resistance have writers explored?
- Do literature, film, and art provide frameworks for reflecting on and engaging with current political and societal dynamics in North America?

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 sub-themes specified 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
- research background with regard to the conference topic and/or sub-themes.

Abstracts should be submitted no later than **May 31, 2026**, to gks@kanada-studien.de.