

Interview with Berthold Molden, General Secretary of the 54 ICA

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*- How do you define the topic of the congress „Building Dialogues in the Americas“?
What does it mean?*

Molden: The topic of the congress „Building Dialogues in the Americas“ refers both to the different regions within the Americas, North America, South America, the Caribbean, Central America, the different language communities which are not the same. As we know Mexico is part of the geographical North, but is also part of Latin America. And then, of course, there is a French speaking community, so there is a Latin American community in Canada, so there is a regional variety within the Americas and in these regions there are different research communities, different research traditions, linguistically defined, epistemically defined, different traditions of research, questions of perspective, different theoretical backgrounds etc. One of our aims is to contribute to dialogues, interactions, and international transfers between these regions. On the other hand, there are very different epistemic communities, theoretical communities, beyond these two geographical regions. Of course, Americanist research is not reduced nor limited to the Americas as such, there is an Americanist research in Europe, for example, and in the rest of the world, but particularly important for Europe. The International Congress of Americanists was, for the first time, convened in France in the 19th Century and ever since, it has been convening every two years in South America, North America or Europe. So the European community of Americanist researchers is also very important and brings in a different perspective, if you want, a perspective of the former colonial metropolis on both north and south American. Of course now we live in postcolonial times, there is a lot of reflection about these post colonialism, but there is a difference in this European research on the Americas perspective. So, what do we want to do? We want to build bridges, we want to construct, help constructing dialogues between these both geographical regions and the different disciplines researching on the

Americas. The International Congress of the Americas is mainly social and human sciences congress, but even so, there are a lot of different disciplines. We have 15 disciplinary areas defined in the congress among them, postcolonial studies, cultural studies, gender studies, history, political science, inside the political science, different perspectives of political sciences, so there is a lot of disciplines. But there are of course interlapping areas between these disciplines. We want to contribute to these interdisciplinary dialogues between these different communities. Of course this is not to say, that these dialogues have not being existing for very long time, that is not that we have come into a total "tabula rasa" kind of situation and construct the first bridges, of course there is a lot of dialogue going on, what we want to do is to foster these dialogues, to help, to intensify those dialogues both between disciplines and between geographical regions.

- How do you expect these dialogues to go beyond the congress?

Molden: We don't intervene in an empty field; there is a lot of dialogue going on already so even without us, without this congress, these dialogues would continue. I think that our contribution could consist in intensifying interdisciplinary research communities. We hope that within the congress people who have not yet been collaborating, that new research questions might pop up, and new research groups might be forming in the 54 ICA in Vienna. The International Congress of Americanists is very well known and famous within the research community for this quality of building platforms for international dialogues between researchers. We want to put our effort and our emphasis within the congress to intensify this. We will also have certain influence here in the selection of the next location of the ICA which we don't know where it might be. We will definitely try to influence, or inspire, transdisciplinary and transregional research. Whether or not it will work, we will be able to answer after the congress.