



CSA-SCS Student
Concerns Subcommittee

Student Spotlight



Tichana Adam

PhD Candidate, University of Windsor,
Sociology & Criminology Dept.

Her research focuses on the state & politics, racial capitalism, settler colonialism & white supremacist movements. Drawing on decolonial, feminist & critical social theory, Tichana examines how white settler states actively reproduce & legitimize white supremacist movements through institutional/political practices & selective enforcement.

Jen Kostuchuk

PhD student, University of Victoria, Sociology Dept.

Her research focuses on the intersection between climate & labour justice, with a focus on the experiences of skilled trades workers in heat pump & solar panel installation. She investigates how these workers describe their motivations for entering (& staying in) these sectors, & the extent to which green jobs meet their objective material needs. Jen's work reveals a range of social, economic & personal benefits of green work that move beyond environmental concern.



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Tichana Adam

She/Her

PhD Candidate

University of Windsor

Department of Sociology & Criminology

“State-Sanctioned Extremism: Colonial Continuities in the Rise of White Supremacist Movements in Canada”

This doctoral project examines how the Canadian white settler state enables and normalizes white supremacist movements through its institutional/political responses and governance practices. Centering the 2022 Freedom Convoy as a critical case study, the research analyzes how white supremacist movements intersect with settler colonial entitlement, racial capitalism, and nationalist imaginaries of belonging.

Rather than treating white supremacist movements as deviations from liberal democracy, this project argues that they are deeply embedded within the historical and structural foundations of the Canadian state. Through archival research and critical discourse analysis, the study traces how state actors (including political leaders, law enforcement, and media institutions) legitimated the convoy through selective enforcement, racialized narratives of citizenship, and appeals to “freedom” and “national values.”

By situating the Freedom Convoy within longer histories of colonial policing and immigration control, this research exposes how white supremacist movements are sustained not only from below, but also from above through state inaction and ideological alignment. The project contributes to sociological debates on extremism, coloniality, and state power while advancing decolonial approaches to the study of white supremacy in Canada.



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Additional project insights...

One of the most striking findings thus far is how white supremacist movements frequently frame themselves as “anti-state,” while simultaneously relying on the state’s colonial logics and racialized governance. The Freedom Convoy revealed how white grievance politics are normalized through narratives of freedom/citizenship and economic anxiety discourses that closely mirror state ideology.

The most challenging aspect of this research has been navigating the normalization of white supremacist rhetoric within mainstream political discourse. Analyzing official records requires reading state violence not only in overt repression, but also in silence and inaction.

This research has both academic & social impact. Academically, it reframes how sociologists understand extremism by centering the state as an active participant. Socially, it offers tools for recognizing how racialized governance sustains inequality and legitimizes harm. The project raises further questions about resistance, accountability, and how decolonial approaches can reshape future research and public policy.

Engaging research that intersects with applied sociology and community work is essential to me because theory divorced from lived realities risks reproducing the very structures it critiques.

More About Tichana Adam...

In addition to my doctoral research, I am actively involved in community-engaged and applied sociology work. I have worked on projects addressing harm reduction, gender-based violence, migrant labour, and digital capitalism, and I regularly collaborate with community organizations supporting immigrant and racialized women.

An important lesson I have learned from mentors is that critical scholarship must remain accountable, whether to communities, histories, and the political consequences of knowledge production. I believe rigorous theory and community engagement are not separate pursuits, but mutually necessary.

Finally, my work is driven by a commitment to challenging dominant narratives that obscure state violence and racial inequality. My research seeks not only to contribute to sociological theory, but also to support broader conversations about justice and collective resistance.



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Jen Kostuchuk

She/Her

PhD Student

University of Victoria

Department of Sociology

“Even if I won the lottery, I’d still work in solar”: Why green jobs appeal to skilled trades workers who are not passionate environmentalists

Researchers and climate justice activists are urgently calling for the transition of workers out of carbon-intensive (and sometimes dangerous) sectors and into greener ones. Despite the emergence of new green jobs, many workers are reluctant to pursue these career pathways because they do not consider themselves environmentalists or are concerned about experiencing job insecurity in potentially low-paying positions. While existing literature suggests that individuals with strong environmental values are more likely to pursue environmentally sustainable work, less is understood about what would drive people into green jobs when they do not necessarily hold these steadfast principles. Indeed, the experiences and roles of skilled trades workers working with green technologies are often overlooked in climate scholarship.

This study addresses that sociological puzzle through 50 in-depth interviews with workers in the heat pump & solar panel sector. How do these workers describe their motivations for entering (and staying in) these sectors, and to what extent do these green jobs meet their objective material needs? Understanding green job motivation is vital for shaping inclusive recruitment strategies that support a just transition policy framework, one aligned with workers’ lived experiences. Given the global labour shortage of skilled tradespeople, this research challenges conventional assumptions about the workplace culture & highlights the social, economic, and personal benefits of working with green technology.



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Additional project insights...

The motivation for this project stemmed from the ongoing calls for new green jobs, and yet “academics have spent more time forecasting the future of green jobs than measuring the present” (Pettinger 2017:163). This underscores the need for empirical studies that analyze the working conditions & job satisfaction of workers in *existing* green jobs, such as skilled tradespeople who install heat pumps & solar panels.

Engaging in academic research that intersects with applied sociology, activism, and community involvement is essential to me. Taking a meaningful, over bountiful approach in knowledge mobilization is key. Beyond publishing my work for academic purposes, I will co-create, design, and deliver educational resources (such as accessible pamphlets & interactive workshops on what constitutes a good green job) to promote safety on site, work-life balance, and fair compensation. This will be useful for current and future green employers, workers, and student apprentices. I will also engage in public sociology by developing evidence-based policy recommendations that address how emerging green economies can disrupt social inequalities in favour of commitments to gender equity and competitive wages. This research has important implications for green job development and policy, as well as for our understanding of how societies transition not only toward a better ecological future. but also toward transformed workplace cultures in male-dominated trades by challenging longstanding social norms.

More About Jen Kostuchuk...

I have worked on several interdisciplinary projects. Most recently, I joined the University of Victoria’s Institute for Integrated Energy Systems.

In 2024, I received WorkSafeBC’s Research Training Award and in 2023, the Students in Community: Engaging Meaningfully Award.

Beyond academia, I enjoy actively contributing to local organizations dedicated to addressing climate change and advancing labour standards through applied and community-engaged research. I organized with the Worker Solidarity Network as their climate and labour project coordinator. In this role, I conducted community outreach, hosted educational workshops, and launched a campaign calling on the provincial government to establish a maximum temperature policy.

The most valuable lesson I have learned is that scholarship should not happen in isolation. It is essential to not only amplify the voices and stories of community members & workers, but to listen and collaborate alongside them.