



CSA-SCS Student
Concerns Subcommittee

Student Spotlight



Tichana Adam

She/Her

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“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.