



20th Annual Conference of the Emerging Scholars Forum of the
Association for Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries



CONTESTED CANADA: Navigating Past, Present and Future Sovereignties

John F. Kennedy Institute, Freie Universität Berlin

June 29-30, 2023

Questions of sovereignty are at the core of the study of Canada. From Indigenous nations and their quest for the recognition of treaty rights, to Quebec nationalism, to the Prairie Provinces' current rejection of Canadian federalism, the concept of sovereignty, or perhaps *sovereignties*, continues to dominate the Canadian political and cultural landscape.

Indigenous sovereignties are continually questioned and violently contested through the ongoing appropriation of Indigenous land, environmental destruction, and the imposition of Eurocentric forms of government on Indigenous nations, while outlawing traditional leadership structures. On a more individual scale, Indigenous people are disproportionately imprisoned, and Indigenous parents are more likely to be deprived of access to their children. For many Indigenous communities, clean drinking water, nutritious and/or traditional food, or sufficient access to health care are not available, a problem which is especially present in the (sub)arctic.

For their part, settlers have always been preoccupied with questions of sovereignty, from the Royal Proclamation that allowed for the dispossession of Native land to the Canadian nationalist movements which sought independence from imperial influences, as well as the Quebec referenda on sovereignty. However, the topic has recently risen to the fore of national politics again, in particular through legislation passed by Alberta and Saskatchewan which threaten the Canadian federation as a whole. Other recent developments such as the death of Queen Elizabeth II have led many to further question the future of the Canadian state in its current form. Furthermore, the so-called "Freedom Convoy," with its opposition to vaccination mandates, the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as debates over medical assistance in dying (MAID) legislation raised questions of bodily sovereignty and personal autonomy.

For all the reasons mentioned above, sovereignty, in its various shapes and forms, appears a promising venue for the discussion of many aspects surrounding what is currently known as Canada. Therefore, we are interested in sovereignties in the broadest sense of the word and are inviting submissions (BA, MA, PhD level) from all the different disciplines involved in the field of Canadian studies (e.g. Francophone and Anglophone language, literature, culture; history; political science; sociology; geography; economics; Indigenous studies; and women's and gender studies).



Suggested topics include but are not limited to:

- **Alternatives to the current Canadian state**
 - Alberta sovereignty- and Saskatchewan First Acts
 - Severing ties with the monarchy following the Queen's death
 - Post/anti-colonial futures
 - Quebecois sovereignty
- **Protest Movements**
 - Black Lives Matter
 - Worker's rights and unions
 - Trucker protests and the Freedom Convoy
 - Solidarity between different communities
- **Bodily Sovereignty**
 - Assisted suicide legislation in Canada
 - Access to abortion and protection of reproductive rights
 - Vaccination mandates and masking laws
 - The freedom to wear religious symbols
- **Environmental Sovereignty**
 - Indigenous land defenders
 - Resource extraction such as tar sands, pipelines etc.
 - Access to (traditional) food resources and food sovereignty
 - Non-human sovereignties
- **Representations of Sovereignty in Literature**
 - Indigenous imaginative production
 - Black liberation literature
 - Canadian regionalism and sovereignty
- **Historical Perspectives on Sovereignty**
 - Indigenous rights
 - Treaty making
 - Imperial Canada
 - The politics of bi-lingualism
- **Canada and the Global Order**
 - The war in Ukraine
 - The crisis of neoliberalism
 - COVID-19 and supply chain sovereignty



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Please submit abstracts of max. 300 words and a short bio note of max. 150 words [here](#). Submissions need to be received by **March 31** and may be in English, French or German. Confirmations of acceptance will be sent out by April 15.

Please note that we will also offer an **open forum** for the discussion of ongoing research projects. These projects do not necessarily need to engage with the conference theme – we are open to any project in the realm of Canadian studies. We especially encourage students at the BA level to submit their projects as we intend for this to be an open and non-competitive space.

We are committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment for everyone. Please let us know in advance if you have any accessibility requirements, and we will try to accommodate them as best we can. In case you have any questions, you can contact us at contestedcanada2023@gmail.com.

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