



21st Conference of the Emerging Scholars Forum of the

Association for Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries (GKS)

## **Territory, Tension, and Taboo: Canada in Crisis**

University of Bremen, 10-11 October 2024

Territory as a historical, legal, geographical, or cultural concept has become an essential interdisciplinary nexus within the field of Canadian Studies. Depending on the context, territory has been described as vast, empty, conquered, annexed, unexplored, constructed, claimed, or imagined, among many other adjectives. This conference aims to explore different aspects of territory through the prism of tension and taboo. This includes territorial tensions which have erupted into public conflicts that dominate(d) popular Canadian discourse (e.g. Oka Crisis, 2022 Freedom Convoy, etc.), or territorial confrontations treated as taboo, concealed, or otherwise obscured by Canada's international reputation as a welcoming and multicultural nation (e.g. Chinese head tax, history of slavery in Canada, etc.). The conference will feature thematic panels for more advanced projects as well as an open forum for ongoing research projects. We therefore welcome emerging scholars at all levels to share their work on the multifaceted territorial crises occurring within and between many overlapping and contested territories that make up the place now known as Canada.

The land within Canada's current geo-political borders harbors the traces of numerous conflicts. Geographical borders were (re)drawn following treaty agreements and the passage of the Indian Act, which established reserves and further displaced and excluded First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations from their ancestral homelands. Numerous Indigenous communities spanning from the Atlantic to the Arctic to the Pacific continue to resist and resurge against the Canadian nation state. Legacies of violent west-/northward colonial expansion, racist immigration policies, and pervading white supremacy contradict Canada's reputed tolerance and multiculturalism. Many historical and ongoing injustices remain obscured and tabooed within mainstream Euro-Canadian society. As a potential point of inquiry, prospective participants might engage with all possible intersections of race, gender, class, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, and beyond as they investigate how the territories that make up Canada have been and continue to be geographically, ecologically, politically, legally, or culturally contested, (re)imagined, and (re)defined.

As Canada's chosen motto "the true North strong and free" illustrates, territory is a foundational component of Canadian national identity imbricated with settler colonialism and capitalism. Indeed, Euro-Canadian territorial expansion was facilitated in great part by the extraction and exportation of the north's natural resources which continues to this day. Historically entwined with these power structures, global warming exacerbates socio-ecological inequities in Canada, while simultaneously threatening the nation state's northern identity. The "true North" is just one of many territorial imaginaries which serve as fields of Canadian identity negotiation. Other constructed configurations of territory in Canada (e.g. urban-suburban-rural-reserve, civilization-wilderness, Quebec-Rest of Canada (RoC) etc.) are spaces in which crises are

addressed and/or concealed. Focusing on these different contexts, participants might discuss how injustices and inequities are rendered taboo or otherwise ignored in popular mainstream cultural and political discourses given their potential to destabilize the physical and ideological territories of the Canadian nation state.

We are interested in all of territory's possible articulations and invite BA, MA, and doctoral students to submit proposals from all disciplines related to Canadian Studies (e.g., Francophone and Anglophone linguistic, literary and cultural studies; Indigenous studies; history; political science; sociology; geography; economics; queer studies; gender studies; diversity studies; environmental studies, etc.).

Suggested topics include but are not limited to :

- Territory in literary and cultural productions
- Land claims and territorial disputes from diachronic or synchronic perspectives
- First Nations, Métis, and Inuit sovereignties and jurisdictions
- Provincial sovereignties and jurisdictions
- Canada-First Nation borders
- Canada-US, Canada-Denmark/Greenland, Canada-France borders; provincial borders
- The Anthropocene; impacts of the climate crisis on territories
- Queer/LGBTQIA+ rights across Canada and individual provinces
- Forms of nationalism in Canada: Indigenous nationalisms; Canadian (white) nationalism; Quebec nationalism
- Canada's language policies and linguistic borders
- History of slavery in Canada and its aftermath(s)
- Migration (forced or voluntary) within/to/from Canada

The conference will take place **in person** at the University of Bremen in Germany. Please submit abstracts of max. 300 words and a short bio note of max. 150 words to the following e-mail address: [esfconference2024@gmail.com](mailto:esfconference2024@gmail.com). Submissions must be received by April, 30th 2024 and may be in English or French. Confirmations of acceptance will be sent out by May, 31st 2024.

Please note that we will also offer an **open forum** for the discussion of ongoing research projects related to the conference theme. 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. Participants who are willing to take part in the open forum can either send a 300 word abstract (15-20 minutes) for more advanced projects, or a 250 word abstract (7-12 minutes) for newly started projects.

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, please do not hesitate to contact us at [esfconference2024@gmail.com](mailto:esfconference2024@gmail.com).