

Did Anti-Freedom Acts in Downtown Ottawa Cause the Wheels to Totally Fall off the So-called 'Freedom' Convoy?

Dr. Barry Wellar, C.M.

Professor Emeritus, University of Ottawa

President, Information Research Board

<http://wellar.ca/informationresearch/>

Ottawa, Ontario
February 22, 2022

1. Introduction

This study examines the question,

“Is there reason to believe that a call to freedom was a ruse to stage a blockade and occupation which is a fraud to its core?”

The so-called freedom convoy is entering its fourth week, and the fundamentals can get blurred as forces overtake forces, and events overtake events when new players and new storylines become involved. For purposes of context and research design, four fundamentals are stated at the outset and serve to ground this investigation for present and future comparative analyses with other studies in Canada and abroad.

First, as noted in countless references to ‘freedom’ in broadcast media reports and social media comments, freedom to reject a federal COVID-19 mandate requiring cross-border truckers to be vaccinated is the only publicly expressed reason for organizing and orchestrating the truck-based blockade which is the centerpiece of the occupation and demonstrations in downtown Ottawa. (Endnote 1)

Second, the only expressed reason for organizing the occupation in the name of freedom is to pressure the Government of Canada to rescind the vaccination mandate affecting cross-border truckers. (Endnote 2)

The primary bottom line, then, is that the expressed ‘beef’ about COVID-19 was only with the Government of Canada, and the focus of the ‘beef’ was only on overturning one and only one Government of Canada mandate which was deemed to negatively affect the freedom of cross-border truckers by requiring them to be vaccinated. (Endnote 3)

Third, one of Canada’s most significant pieces of federal legislation dealing with civil liberties is used countless times to emphasize that the focus of the convoy, blockade, occupation, and demonstrations was on achieving freedom for cross-border truckers to not require being vaccinated.

That is, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been invoked in thousands of broadcast media and social media statements to justify and validate opposition to the federal government’s vaccination mandate regarding cross-border truckers.

(<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-12.html>)

And fourth, on February 12, some 15 days after the truck-based occupation began, a resident of the market area of downtown Ottawa was engaged in an interview which was interrupted on multiple occasions by chants of “Freedom! Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!”, and a sign labelled Freedom Convoy 2022 was repeatedly placed between him and the camera used to record the interview.

In a blockade, occupation, and demonstrations affair there are many one-word chants, two-word chants, and chants consisting of brief phrases, but what is critical to this study and report is an incident involving an interview in which the chant word of choice that drowns out sections of the interview is “Freedom!”. (Endnote 4)

In sum, Freedom! Freedom! Freedom! is the mantra for the convoy, blockade, occupation, and demonstrations, much like Location! Location! Location! is the mantra for selling real estate.

To return to the study question,

“Is there reason to believe that a call to freedom was a ruse to stage a blockade and occupation which is a fraud to its core?”

from a tactical perspective the emphasis on freedom is well placed as a basis for imploring Canadians to participate in a legitimate demonstration.

That is, ‘freedom’ is a hot-button term in Canada. And, flying or waving the Canadian flag is also a compelling tactic when it comes to winning ‘True North’ hearts and minds, regardless of sincerity. Politicians across Canada go this route as a matter of course at every opportunity.

In brief, freedom -- which refers to the liberty, right or power of everyone to think, speak, or act as each individual wishes without hindrance or restraint -- is a cornerstone of a free and democratic society such as Canada.

Further, freedom is an integral component of each of the pillars of Canada’s motto, “peace, order, and good government”.

(<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/peace-order-and-good-government>)

Consequently, the importance of freedom to the mental, emotional, social, and physical well-being of

- 38,000,000 Canadians,
- 1,000,000 residents of Ottawa,
- 315,000 (approx.) truck drivers,
- 3,000 (approx.) cross-border truck drivers who choose not to be vaccinated, and
- 200 (approx.) big rig/long-haul truck drivers engaged in the blockade, occupation, and demonstrations

in downtown Ottawa cannot be over-stated. (Endnote 5)

Which brings us to the matter of practice of freedom associated with the principle of freedom.

In brief, freedom in principle is just a word until it is put into practice, which brings us to the case of the truckers and supporters involved in the blockade, occupation, and demonstrations in downtown Ottawa. (Endnote 6)

On the one hand, if those participating in the occupation show all due regard for the freedom of others to embrace COVID-19 mandates and measures, with emphasis on residents of Ottawa who have the blockade, occupation, and demonstrations in their midst, then so far so good when it comes to ensuring that the principle of freedom is put into the practice of freedom by everyone for everyone.

On the other hand, however, if those participating in the occupation compromise the freedom of others to take a different path from them and embrace mandates and measures regarding COVID-19, including those of the federal government, then the door is open to suggest that the call to freedom which launched this affair was and is a ruse. (Endnote 7)

Section 2 explores using the catchphrase 'My body, my choice' to investigate whether those participating in the occupation are doing so in pursuit of freedom for all persons when it comes to decisions about embracing or opposing COVID-19 mandates and measures. (Endnote 8)

2. 'My Body, My Choice' as a Test for Ascertaining Whether the Wheels Fell off the Freedom Convoy and Turned it into the Fraud Convoy

From the outset of published materials regarding what has turned into Ottawa's blockade, occupation, and demonstrations affair, there was widespread speculation that the so-called 'freedom' convoy was a fraud. (Endnote 9)

Instead, it was suggested, the real purpose of the convoy pitch was to induce truckers to be the blunt edge of a right-wing extremist operation that was putatively seeking to challenge COVID-19 decisions of the Liberal federal government led by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. (Endnote 10)

That objective of itself is not a matter of immediate concern, because civic participation in shaping government decisions is part-and-parcel of Canada's core values as a free and democratic society, and a country which is globally known for its motto of 'peace, order, and good government'.

Moreover, there is nothing new or different about a political movement using truckers, members of First Nations, loggers, bankers, religious leaders, celebrities, teachers, miners, farmers, accountants, nurses, teachers, environmentalists, soccer moms, sports figures, scientists, industrialists, baristas, ballerinas, and so on to advocate on its behalf.

Where the wheels could fall off this so-called freedom convoy, however, is when opposition to a government mandate about anything, including COVID-19, is directed at private citizens and property owned by private citizens. (Endnote 11)

This matter was previously addressed in section 1 which summarizes what might be termed the rules of engagement that were set out by organizers for all to see well before any trucks or demonstrators arrived in Ottawa:

The bottom line, then, is that 'the beef' about COVID-19 was only with the Government of Canada, and the focus of 'the beef' was only on overturning the Government of Canada mandate which was deemed to negatively affect the freedom of cross-border truckers by requiring them to be vaccinated.

A so-called Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the 'beef' was published by the organizing group, presumably as a guiding document that was referred to in some reports as a 'manifesto'. Because of the legal implications associated with lawsuits against organizers and participants, links to the MOU are included only for indicative purposes.

<https://www.hilltimes.com/2022/02/02/the-mou-says-everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-truckers-protest/341596>; <https://kesq.com/news/2022/02/12/who-is-who-a-guide-to-the-major-players-in-the-trucker-convoy-protest/>;

<https://www.sasktoday.ca/central/agriculture/apas-rep-resigns-over-convoy-comments-5029075>; <https://theparadise.ng/washington-post-mocks-massive-canadian-trucker-convoy-protesting-vaccine-mandates-labels-trucks-fascism/>.

As has been noted in thousands of broadcast media stories, and millions of social media comments, 'My body, my choice' is likely the most popular catchphrase used to justify anti-mandate and anti-measure COVID-19 positions.

And it is precisely the popularity of that catchphrase which makes it a substantive reason to use it to test the regard for freedom that is practiced towards other citizens by those calling for their personal freedom through the 'My body, my choice' catchphrase.

That is, in the first instance, and as expected by reasonable people, the catchphrase is directed at entities which have a legal, medical, institutional, political, or other competency or authority to implement COVID-19 mandates and measures.

In this case there is only one entity to which the catchphrase is logically and reasonably directed in terms of achieving action, and that is the Government of Canada, and anyone else or anything else is a product of crooked thinking. (Endnote 12)

However, the catchphrase has another dimension, and that dimension involves every individual whose personal freedom is negatively impacted by those leading, participating in, or supporting the blockade, occupation, or demonstrations in downtown Ottawa. These individuals expressed 'My body, my choice' countless times as the convoy formed and began to move this way, and it has become a standing declaration to underscore the freedom dimension of events in Ottawa.

It logically follows, therefore, that those in the COVID-19 anti-mandate and anti-measure camp who live by the phrase 'My body, my choice' would respect the flip side of their contention. Specifically, those who do not agree with them are also entitled to have the freedom to live by the phrase, "My body, my choice" should they choose to embrace COVID-19 mandates and measures.

Again, and as previously discussed, everyone in a free and democratic such as Canada is entitled to freedom, so nobody has proprietary ownership of the catchphrases, 'My body, my choice', or its elaboration, "This is my body, and it is up to me to decide what I choose to have done to my body regarding anything COVID-related."

To recap, freedom is construed to mean that what a person chooses to do regarding COVID-19 is her or his decision to make, and any interference with making that decision denies that person the freedom to which individuals are entitled in Canada, as per the charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Criminal Code of Canada for that matter. (Endnote 13)

And that being the case, one more research issue and research question follows.

Namely, if those who claim "My body, my choice" is the essence of freedom, then any acts by them to challenge or deny that claim by those who wish to follow a different path regarding COVID mandates and measures are of course hypocritical. But there is a more problematic aspect.

That is, denying others the freedom to also claim 'My body, my choice' is a form of tyranny, which is the essence of anti-democratic, authoritarian societies wherein freedom of individuals may be denied by the state.

And that takes us back to the stated objectives of the convoy which dealt only with federal COVID mandates and not with tyrannizing ordinary citizens.

As has been suggested in many broadcast and social media reports and comments, if supporters engage in tyrannical acts, then it is highly likely that they are doing so on instructions from leaders.

In the case of Ottawa, the question therefore arises:

Did persons purportedly protesting federal COVID-19 mandates and measures involving cross-border truckers expand the domain of rejection beyond the federal government to other governments, institutions, businesses, and other corporate entities and, more importantly to this study, did they engage in acts to challenge and deny other citizens the 'My body, my choice' option, which is the freedom to adopt COVID-19 mandates and measures which these citizens perceived to be in their interest?

If those kinds of repressive and perhaps criminal acts occurred, then it is appropriate to ask if they are of sufficient significance and number to provide conclusive evidence that the so-called 'freedom' convoy has nothing to do with freedom, and is a fraud?

In section 3 an indicative list of acts committed by truckers and others engaged in the Ottawa, Ontario component of the 'freedom' convoy beginning on or about January 28, 2022, is presented. It cannot be over-emphasized that this list is intended to be indicative rather than comprehensive.

Finally, it is appropriate to lead into section 3 by recalling the relationship between leaders and followers, namely that leaders send messages and supporters act on what they believe the leaders want them to do. In the case of this blockade, occupation, and demonstrations, the acts began on the first day, and continued for the duration based on what the leaders had communicated to supporters. (Endnote 14)

To my knowledge no leader issued a cease-and-desist order, even though reports about the acts featured prominently in broadcast media and social media reports and were obvious to anyone who walked in the so-called red zone as well as in surrounding neighbourhoods.

3. Acts Committed by Truckers and Others to Challenge and Deny the 'My body, My choice' Option to Citizens Who Do Not Agree with the Truckers and Supporters

There is an adage that "Actions speak louder than words" when it comes to understanding the consequences of choices, and that adage is very pertinent when it comes to assessing the truth of a cause.

In this case words are about convening a convoy of trucks as a means to achieve several objectives, and actions based on the words include occupying a number of blocks in downtown Ottawa with convoy trucks, other trucks, tents, shelters, etc., and then conducting demonstrations involving the trucks, their operators, and the supporters of the occupation.

As such, it is precisely the actions undertaken in the name of freedom rather than words which define whether the freedom of others was compromised by the occupation and demonstrations.

And that is why the focus of this study is on acts committed during the convoy, blockade, occupation, and demonstrations rather than anything leaders or participants declare should, could, or might happen.

Or, to re-phrase, in the case of actions we are dealing with observable, countable aspects of reality which can be documented, and are required to determine if repressive and perhaps criminal acts occurred and are of sufficient significance and number to provide conclusive evidence that the so-called 'freedom' convoy has nothing to do with freedom and is a fraud.

A preliminary and indicative list of acts is presented in Table 1 to illustrate the kinds of actions by blockade, occupation, and demonstration participants that compromised the freedom of downtown residents and visitors not involved in the protest.

I am aware that several City of Ottawa councillors are compiling lists of acts by supporters of the blockade, occupation, and demonstrations which compromised the freedom of ward residents to think, speak, and act as they wished, and especially when wearing COVID masks.

The mayor as well as city staff may also have lists.

No doubt these lists will make significant contributions to a master list which paints a more comprehensive story of the extent to which acts by pro-convoy supporters challenged the freedom of those who favour COVID-19 mandates and measures, with emphasis on physical challenges to their freedom to wear masks, vaccinate, and social distance.

As time and resources permit, additional acts which come to my attention will be added to Table 1.

However, it appears fair to say that a significant number of repressive and perhaps criminal acts by convoy supporters have been perpetrated against those who do not share their views and wish to choose a different path.

Table 1. Preliminary Inventory of Acts Committed by Persons Supporting the Truck Convoy Blockade, Occupation, and Demonstrations which Directly and Indirectly Affected the Actual and Perceived Freedom of Ottawa Residents to Think, Speak, and Act as They Wished Without Hindrance or Limitation, Including Freedom from Fear of Harm

Assaulted women on sidewalks for wearing masks

Assaulted seniors on sidewalks for wearing masks

Assaulted a disabled person for parking in a handicapped zone

Ate meals intended for Ottawa's street people

Blew truck air horns during the day in residential neighbourhoods

Blew truck air horns late into the night in residential neighbourhoods

Blew air horns close to hospitals

Blew air horns close to shelters for abused women and their children

Blew air horns close to shelters for the homeless

Blocked access to streets

Blocked access to alleys

Blocked access to private parking garages

Blocked access to public parking garages

Blocked access to private driveways

Blocked exits from private driveways

Blocked sidewalks

Blocked media interviews with non-protest citizens

Bullied nurses about masks

Bullied servers in bars about masks

Bullied servers in restaurants about masks

Bullied journalists conducting interviews

Bullied journalists communicating stories

Table 1 cont'd. Preliminary Inventory of Acts Committed by Persons Supporting the Truck Convoy Blockade, Occupation, and Demonstrations which Directly and Indirectly Affected the Actual and Perceived Freedom of Ottawa Residents to Think, Speak, and Act as They Wished Without Hindrance or Limitation, Including Freedom from Fear of Harm

Bullied area residents being interviewed

Bullied vehicle drivers about right-of-way

Bullied police by spitting on them during de-occupation process

Called out homophobic slurs

Called out perceived members of the LGBTQ community

Caused city hall to close due to fear of violence

Caused city business to be delayed due to closure of city hall

Caused the rink at city hall to close due to fear of violence

Caused Ottawa Public Library to close due to fear of violence

Caused retail stores to close due to fear of violence

Caused food stores to close due to threats

Caused loss of food store inventory by threats to harm customers

Caused restaurants to close due to fear of violence

Caused bars to close due to fear of violence

Caused area's largest shopping center (Rideau Center) to close

Caused police officers to be re-deployed from other neighbourhoods to protect downtown neighbourhoods

Caused transit route changes affecting thousands of commuters

Caused broadcast media journalists to stop reporting

Chased perceived LGBTQ residents

Denied citizens the right to access government buildings

Denied non-protesters the freedom to speak in peace with the media

Table 1 cont'd. Preliminary Inventory of Acts Committed by Persons Supporting the Truck Convoy Blockade, Occupation, and Demonstrations which Directly and Indirectly Affected the Actual and Perceived Freedom of Ottawa Residents to Think, Speak, and Act as They Wished Without Hindrance or Limitation, Including Freedom from Fear of Harm

Denied freedom to walk in peace to those wearing a COVID protection mask while going to and from shelters

Denied freedom to walk in peace to those wearing a COVID protection mask while going to and from work

Denied freedom to walk in peace to those wearing a COVID protection mask while going to and from school

Denied freedom to walk in peace to those wearing a COVID protection mask while going to and from stores

Denied freedom to walk in peace to those wearing a COVID protection mask while going to and from restaurants

Denied freedom to walk in peace to those wearing a COVID protection mask while going to and from transit stations

Denied freedom to walk in peace to those wearing a COVID protection mask while out for recreation

Denied bar employees the right to work

Denied retail store employees the right to work

Denied food store operators the right to open

Denied restaurant employees the right to work

Denied residents the right to sleep

Denied residents the right to shop

Fireworks set off late at night in residential neighbourhoods to prevent sleep

Frightened female university students to not go out

Frightened restaurant staff

Frightened bar staff

Table 1 cont'd. Preliminary Inventory of Acts Committed by Persons Supporting the Truck Convoy Blockade, Occupation, and Demonstrations which Directly and Indirectly Affected the Actual and Perceived Freedom of Ottawa Residents to Think, Speak, and Act as They Wished Without Hindrance or Limitation, Including Freedom from Fear of Harm

Frightened homeless people eating at Shepherds of Good Hope

Hassled and harangued journalists

Hassled harangued, and intimidated nurses wearing masks going to work

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated nurses wearing masks returning home from work

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated paramedics for wearing masks

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated students wearing masks

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated parents with children for wearing masks

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated restaurant staff wearing masks

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated retail store staff wearing masks

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated people of colour for wearing masks

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated people perceived to be gay for wearing masks

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated shoppers in malls for wearing masks

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated staff at Shepherds of Good Hope kitchen for wearing masks

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated persons eating at Shepherds of Good Hope kitchen

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated security staff at Shepherds of Good Hope kitchen

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated civil servants wearing masks entering buildings

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated civil servants wearing masks exiting buildings

Hassled, harangued, and intimidated hotel guests wearing masks

Interfered with broadcast media interviews

Interfered with broadcast media reports

Table 1 cont'd. Preliminary Inventory of Acts Committed by Persons Supporting the Truck Convoy Blockade, Occupation, and Demonstrations which Directly and Indirectly Affected the Actual and Perceived Freedom of Ottawa Residents to Think, Speak, and Act as They Wished Without Hindrance or Limitation, Including Freedom from Fear of Harm

Interfered with paramedics for wearing masks while helping an assault victim

Intimidated persons with intellectual disabilities

Jerry cans publicly displayed to convey threat of violence

Occupied on-street parking spaces for days on end, thereby denying them to area residents, office workers, and shoppers

Played music at full volume for hours on end after air horn injunction

Polluted residential neighbourhoods with streams of fumes from diesel engines for hours on end, day, and night

Posted a video of a protester's sidewalk interview with inebriated Senator David MacDonald for which the Senator has apologized multiple times, apparently for allowing himself to be interviewed while in an inebriated state and, possibly, for bringing disgrace upon the Conservative caucus of the Senate of Canada and embarrassing the good people of Nova Scotia for whom he is a Senate representative

Prevented fire truck access to private residences

Prevented fire truck access to apartment buildings

Prevented fire truck access to condominiums

Prevented fire truck access to stores

Prevented fire truck access to schools

Prevented fire truck access to shelters

Pulled face masks off seniors

Pulled face masks off females

Pulled face masks off students

Revved truck engines hour-after-hour next to residential buildings

Revved truck engines hour-after-hour next to shelters

Table 1 cont'd. Preliminary Inventory of Acts Committed by Persons Supporting the Truck Convoy Blockade, Occupation, and Demonstrations which Directly and Indirectly Affected the Actual and Perceived Freedom of Ottawa Residents to Think, Speak, and Act as They Wished Without Hindrance or Limitation, Including Freedom from Fear of Harm

Revved truck engines hour-after-hour in residential neighbourhoods

Shouted down media interviews with non-convoy persons

Spat on journalists

Stopped light rail transit service

Stopped bus transit service

Threatened tow-truck operators

Threatened store owners for enforcing public health rules

Threatened store staff for enforcing public health rules

Threatened restaurant owners for enforcing public health rules

Threatened restaurant staff for enforcing public health rules

Threatened bar owners for enforcing public health rules

Threatened bar staff for enforcing public health rules

Threatened citizens who opposed the demonstrations

Threatened people of colour

Threatened perceived gay people

Urinated on the National War Memorial

Urinated on doors of residential houses

Urinated on parked cars in residential neighbourhoods

Urinated on store front windows

Used handcuffs to lock apartment doors

Used padlocks to lock apartment doors

Used megaphones to intimidate seniors on sidewalks

Table 1 cont'd. Preliminary Inventory of Acts Committed by Persons Supporting the Truck Convoy Blockade, Occupation, and Demonstrations which Directly and Indirectly Affected the Actual and Perceived Freedom of Ottawa Residents to Think, Speak, and Act as They Wished Without Hindrance or Limitation, Including Freedom from Fear of Harm

Used megaphones to intimidate women on sidewalks

Used megaphones to prevent interviews of non-protesters

Used megaphones to interfere with police instructions to protesters

Yelled from pick-up trucks at men wearing masks, and quickly 'took off' when these men headed for the trucks

=====

In addition to acts that directly and indirectly affected the actual and perceived freedom of Ottawa residents to think, speak, and act as they wish without hindrance or limitation, including freedom from fear of physical harm, numerous acts of vandalism were also committed as part of demonstrations. (Endnote 15)

These acts contribute to the disruptive and disturbing atmosphere experienced by residents of downtown Ottawa during the occupation and demonstrations which now exceed three weeks.

Because these acts are part-and-parcel of the demonstrations, a selection of them are recorded in Table 2, and in Figure 1.

Table 2. Acts by Protesters Which Could Bear on Non-Protesters' Sense of Freedom to Engage in Normal Day-to-day Activities

Attempted to set fire to an apartment building

Blocked emergency vehicles

Blocked fire trucks after calling in false alarms

Blocked paramedic vehicles

Blocked police from clearing intersections of protesters

Blocked police from clearing streets of protesters

Broke store windows

Broke restaurant windows

Table 2 cont'd. Acts by Protesters Which Could Bear on Non-Protesters' Sense of Freedom to Engage in Normal Day-to-day Activities

Broke bar windows

Broke vehicle windows

Brought children to an occupation site with known potential for violence

Brought children to demonstrations

Brought containers of fuel to occupation site

Called in false alarms to fire stations

Called in false alarms to police stations

Called in false alarms to 911

Caused increased presence of officers and vehicles for violent crime policing

Caused increased presence of officers and vehicles for traffic enforcement

Caused increased presence of officers and vehicles for demonstration and occupation surveillance and intelligence gathering

Cut power to hotel elevators

Cut power to hotel floors

Cut power to stores

Cut power to shopping center walkways

Defaced private and public property with inflammatory symbols (Figure 1)

Defaced private and public property with racial graffiti

Defaced private and public property with vulgar graffiti

Defecated on Canada's National War Memorial

Defecated in residential yards.

Defecated on residential porches.

Defecated on parliamentary building steps.

Table 2 cont'd. Acts by Protesters Which Could Bear on Non-Protesters' Sense of Freedom to Engage in Normal Day-to-day Activities

Defecated on sidewalks

Defecated on sidewalks and then tracked feces into stores

Defecated on parked cars in residential neighbourhoods

Desecrated Canada's flag

Desecrated Canada's War Memorial

Desecrated Memorial to Terry Fox

Desecrated Memorial to the Unknown Soldier

Displayed jerry cans with unknown contents

Forced closure of youth drop-in centre

Insulted the Office of the Governor-General of Canada

Insulted the Office of the Prime Minister

Left boxes of excrement on sidewalks

Left boxes of excrement on low walls

Left boxes of excrement in bus shelters

Left buckets of excrement on steps of residential buildings

Left buckets of excrement in stairwells

Left 'suspicious' packages in LRT stations

Left 'suspicious' packages in bus shelters

Left 'suspicious' packages on steps of apartment buildings

Left 'suspicious' packages on snow piles

Left 'suspicious' packages on newspaper boxes

Left 'suspicious' packages in entrances to stores

Table 2 cont'd. Acts by Protesters Which Could Bear on Non-Protesters' Sense of Freedom to Engage in Normal Day-to-day Activities

Mocked those who gave their lives to fight wars in the name of freedom for Canada

Mocked paramedics for wearing masks while helping an assault victim

Mocked the Orange Shirt dedication to Indigenous children

Mocked the Canadian Constitution

Mocked the statue of Terry Fox

Prevented snow removal on streets

Prevented snow removal on sidewalks

Prevented proper winter maintenance of sidewalks

Put extremist flags in church properties

Public intoxication and threatening language to non-protesters

Public intoxication and vomiting in storefront entrances, on sidewalks, and on vehicles of area residents

Refused to wear masks in elevators

Refused to wear masks in stairwells

Refused to vacate occupation zone

Removed anti-occupation signs from private yards

Removed protective fencing around the War Memorial

Ridiculed Canadians who hold special the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Ridiculed Canadians who hold special the National War Memorial

Threw jugs of urine into alleys

Threw jugs of urine onto store fronts

Threw jugs of urine into residential yards

There is a long history of using symbols to add emphasis to acts, some of which are along the harmless and jocular lines of “Kilroy was here” to mark territory, much like dogs do when urinating on whatever.

However, based on numerous viewings of events in downtown Ottawa, and other locales, it appears fair to say that in most cases the symbols associated with the truck convoy are those used by political, religious, racial, white supremacist, and other extremists of the right (e.g., Fascists, Nazis) who are anti-freedom, anti-democracy, anti-civil liberties, anti-peace, anti-order, and anti-good government. (Endnote 16)

Repeated as well as new acts of ‘vandalism’ seemed to surface every day.

However, those in Table 2 along with the symbols in Figure 1 are sufficient to establish that for many people their real and perceived sense of freedom to think, speak, and act tend to be severely compromised when confronted by these symbols of hatred, racism, white supremacy, bullying and intolerance that were aggressively flaunted day after day for 23 days in downtown Ottawa, and shown repeatedly in broadcast media and social media productions. (Endnote 17)

Figure 1. Symbols Used by Participants in the So-called ‘Freedom’ Convoy to Express Their Thoughts, Words, and Actions in Opposition to the Federal COVID-19 Mandate Regarding Cross-border Truckers



Figure 1 cont'd. Symbols Used by Participants in the So-called 'Freedom' Convoy to Express Their Thoughts, Words, and Actions in Opposition to the Federal COVID-19 Mandate Regarding Cross-border Truckers

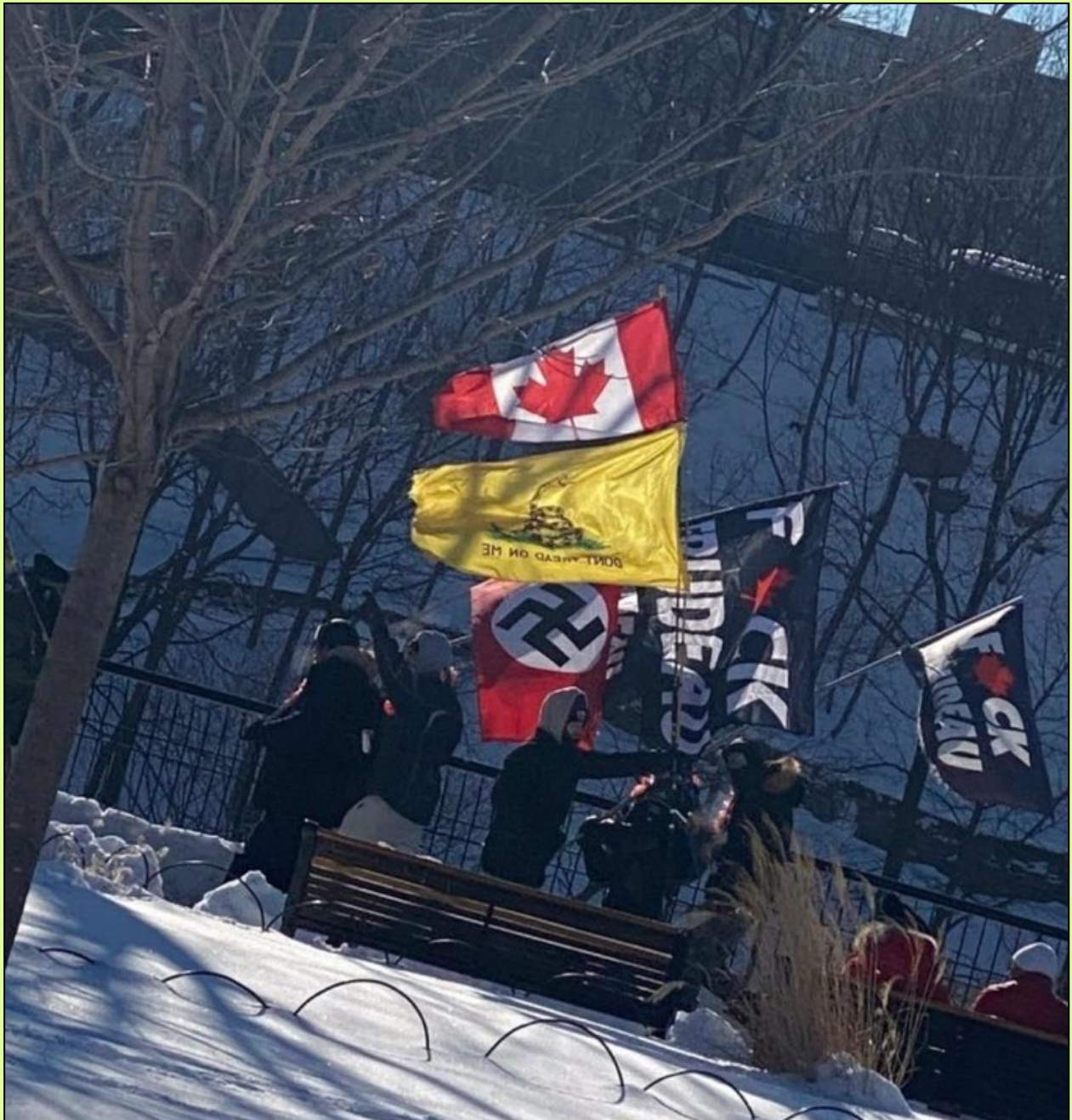


Figure 1 cont'd. Symbols Used by Participants in the So-called 'Freedom' Convoy to Express Their Thoughts, Words, and Actions in Opposition to the Federal COVID-19 Mandate Regarding Cross-border Truckers



Figure 1 cont'd. Symbols Used by Participants in the So-called 'Freedom' Convoy to Express Their Thoughts, Words, and Actions in Opposition to the Federal COVID-19 Mandate Regarding Cross-border Truckers



Further, if there is a sense that Ottawa Police Service cannot be counted upon to ensure that the kinds of acts identified in Table 2 are not precursors to the acts identified in Table 1, then there is no surprise in reports that many citizens of Ottawa and especially residents of downtown neighbourhoods are fearful of staying in their homes much less going outside into the midst of protestors.

Finally, words often do not suffice to express trauma-related emotions such as fear, anxiety, irritation, nervousness, and concern which can endure long after events occur.

As a result, a selection of broadcast media and social media links are included in Table 3. They may assist those who wish to go beyond words on paper to spoken words and images to better understand the nature and effects of the acts perpetrated upon residents of Ottawa by participants in the convoy processions, blockade, occupation, and demonstrations.

Table 3. Links to Broadcast Media and Social Media Stories about Downtown Ottawa Residents' and Visitors' Loss of Rights and Freedoms Due to Acts by Convoy Participants and Supporters

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/mcleod-street-condo-residents-rattled-after-men-seen-attempting-to-handcuff-lobby-doors>

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10165928937025363&id=887125362

https://ottawa.citynews.ca/local-news/police-lay-hundreds-of-charges-in-ottawa-blockades-as-city-begins-clean-up-process-5085992?utm_source=Email&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Email

https://ottawa.citynews.ca/local-news/journalism-experts-say-threats-to-press-during-protests-a-wake-up-call-5085849?utm_source=Email_Share&utm_medium=Email_Share&utm_campaign=Email_Share

https://ottawa.citynews.ca/local-news/children-ottawa-protest-increased-risk-trauma-5084666?utm_source=Email&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Email

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/downtown-residents-businesses-hope-police-action-helps-restore-normalcy>

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/you-cant-be-well-without-feeling-secure-the-cost-of-occupation-on-mental-health>

Table 3 cont'd. Links to Broadcast Media and Social Media Stories about Downtown Ottawa Residents' and Visitors' Loss of Rights and Freedoms Due to Acts by Convoy Participants and Supporters

https://www.readthemaple.com/people-disabilities-unique-dangers-convoy-occupation/?link_id=6&can_id=45ae756913eca1018a0de0d6cc36325a&source=email-convoy-occupations-threat-to-disabled-people&email_referrer=email_1447510&email_subject=-convoy-occupations-threat-to-disabled-people

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/horn-honking-court-injunction-extended-60-days>

https://ottawa.citynews.ca/local-news/downtown-residents-still-fearful-of-leaving-homes-due-to-ongoing-intimidation-from-convoy-members-5062806?utm_source=Email_Share&utm_medium=Email_Share&utm_campaign=Email_Share

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/mcleod-street-condo-residents-rattled-after-men-seen-attempting-to-handcuff-lobby-doors>

<https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/residents-in-ottawa-s-centretown-neighbourhood-describe-relief-as-trucker-occupation-ends-1.5790279>

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/trucker-convoy-counter-protesters-demand-action-from-police>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-G86OL0YyHw>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/downtown-residents-flee-home-protest-fears-1.6341652>

<https://www.nationalnewswatch.com/2022/02/08/fearful-downtown-ottawa-residents-flee-their-homes-as-protest-continues/>

<https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=2388008>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/truck-convoy-downtown-ottawa-residents-mental-health-1.6333674>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mosque-shooting-vigil-cancelled-convoy-protest-1.6332479>

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/threats-to-press-during-convoy-protests-a-wake-up-call-experts-say-1.5789466>

Table 3 cont'd. Links to Broadcast Media and Social Media Stories about Downtown Ottawa Residents' and Visitors' Loss of Rights and Freedoms Due to Acts by Convoy Participants and Supporters

<https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/senator-apologizes-for-mangled-remarks-about-ottawa-residents-frustrated-by-convoy-protest-1.5790090>

<https://desdemonadespair.net/2022/02/fearful-ottawa-residents-flee-downtown-as-anti-vaccine-mandate-occupation-drags-on-residents-fed-up-with-noise-racist-harassment-and-threats-of-violence-police-hate-crimes-hotlin.html>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/4/ottawa-residents-decry-anti-vaccine-trucker-occupation>

https://www.reddit.com/r/ontario/comments/snnbyh/fearful_downtown_ottawa_residents_flee_their/

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/ottawa-fears-vaccine-protest-has-morphed-into-an-occupation-11643986803>

https://ottawa.citynews.ca/local-news/it-wasnt-just-an-innocent-protest-downtown-residents-detail-brutal-three-weeks-of-truck-convoy-occupation-5086286?utm_source=Email&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Email

Section 4 presents a brief analysis of acts itemized in Table 1 and Table 2, and the media stories in Table 3 in terms of whether they are consistent with 'My body, my choice' arguments used to justify opposition by occupation truckers and supporters to vaccine mandates. (Endnote 18)

4. Analysis of Acts by Blockade, Occupation, and Demonstration Participants: Are They Consistent with 'My Body, My Choice' Arguments Used to Justify Opposition to the Federal Vaccine Mandate for Cross-Border Truckers?

The overall bottom line regarding the acts is that most of them represent actions by mandate protestors which on their face are self-contradictory.

That is, they deny other citizens the right to the same freedom to think, say, and do what they wish regarding COVID-19 vaccine mandates and measures, including the federal mandate that cross-border truckers must be vaccinated.

Moreover, many of the acts identified in Table I are undertaken by protesters for the explicit purpose of imposing limitations and hindrances on other citizens so that their

freedom to choose the measures they deem best for their minds and bodies are challenged and denied by anti-mandate protesters.

What we have in Table 1 then, are acts by protesters which have nothing whatsoever to do with addressing the federal vaccine mandate for cross-border truckers.

Instead, the acts in Table 1 represent a body of observed, undeniable evidence that individuals participating in the blockade, occupation, and demonstrations are challenging and denying other individuals their right and freedom to make personal choices regarding COVID-19 mandates and measures.

Further, many of the acts do not necessarily and specifically refer to COVID matters in any way, shape, or form, and could be acts of racism, criminality, bullying, chauvinism, sexism, homophobia, reprisal, religious discrimination, etc., all of which limit and hinder real and perceived personal freedom.

The bottom line, therefore, is that while impassioned use was made of 'My body, my choice' as a freedom chant during the talking phase of the COVID truck convoy, blockade, occupation, and demonstrations in Ottawa, actions spoke louder than words 'When the rubber hit the road' regarding anti-freedom acts on Ottawa streets, in downtown Ottawa, and in nearby Ottawa neighbourhoods.

That is, on dozens to hundreds to thousands of occasions daily for than 22 days, protesters denied the 'My body, my choice' option to many Ottawa residents and visitors in dozens of ways as illustrated by Table 1.

And, further in that vein, Table 2 identifies numerous acts by anti-mandate participants which have been cited as having a negative impact on Ottawa residents affected by the truck convoy blockade, occupation, and demonstrations.

As indicated above, many of the acts of 'vandalism' include a fear factor, and that fear factor has been cited as limiting and hindering what non-protesters believe it is safe to say and safe to do while in the midst of protesters who have shown themselves to be aggressive, bullying, intemperate, rude, threatening, and loutish.

Clearly, the acts cited in Table 1 and Table 2 establish beyond any doubt that 'My body, my choice' was a chant that extended no further than those on the anti-mandate protest side, which by implication means that it applies to their freedom to choose and no one else's.

The finding based on the actions of those engaged in the protest, therefore, is that their acts are not consistent with 'My body, my choice' arguments used to justify opposition to vaccine mandates. Indeed, the acts contradict the 'My body, my choice' chant to the point that they make a mockery of the chant and the chanters

Or, to re-phrase, there is a complete, 180-degree contradiction between what was said about 'My body, my choice' to launch the so-called freedom convoy, and what was done by convoy participants in the blockade, occupation, and demonstrations.

5. Conclusion: Yes, Anti-Freedom Acts in Downtown Ottawa Did Cause the Wheels to Totally Fall off the So-called 'Freedom' Convoy and Turn It into a Fraud Convoy

For centuries there have been freedom marches and demonstrations in Canada and other countries, and millions of lives have been lost in the name of 'freedom'.

As a result, if evidence reveals that a so-called 'freedom' convoy treats the principles and practices which define freedom to have been used with disdain, disrespect, and contempt, then it appears fair and reasonable to conclude that the wheels did fall off the so-called 'freedom' convoy, and that it is an indisputable fraud.

In this report the integrity of the convoy, blockade, occupation, and demonstrations is examined and evaluated based on the actions of participants, and not on verbiage contained in a Memorandum of Understanding or *ad hoc* media session which can be walked back for any reason or no reason. The idiom which serves this investigation especially well since it cannot be readily denied is

'Actions speak louder than words.'

Five overview statements are deemed sufficient to demonstrate that anti-freedom acts in downtown Ottawa **DID** cause the wheels to totally fall off the so-called 'freedom' convoy and reveal it to be a Fraud Convoy.

First, the acts by protesters engaged in the blockade, occupation, and demonstrations have nothing to do with any individual being free to reject a federal COVID-19 mandate requiring cross-border truckers to be vaccinated. Because these acts which are based on messages from convoy organizers have nothing to do with the only publicly expressed reason for organizing and orchestrating the truck-based blockade, occupation, and demonstrations, and have nothing to do with freedom, the so-called 'freedom' convoy is aptly described as a fraud.

Second, the acts by protesters engaged in the blockade, occupation, and demonstrations have nothing to do with freedom to reject a federal COVID-19 mandate requiring cross-border truckers to be vaccinated. Because these acts have nothing to do with the only expressed reason for organizing the occupation in the name of freedom to pressure the Government of Canada to rescind the vaccination mandate affecting cross-border truckers, the so-called 'freedom' convoy is aptly described as a fraud.

Third, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been invoked in thousands of broadcast media and social media statements to justify and validate opposition to the federal government's vaccination mandate regarding cross-border truckers.

However, dozens of some kinds of acts up to thousands of other kinds of acts on a daily basis by participants in the blockade, occupation, and demonstrations limit or hinder residents of the City of Ottawa when it comes to experiencing the rights and freedoms to which all Canadians are entitled.

Descriptors which account for the disconnect between 'My body, my choice' and the observed blockade acts include racism, discrimination, reprisal, religious intolerance, homophobia, fanaticism, zealotry, thuggery, and bigotry, and expose the so-called 'freedom' convoy as a fraud.

Fourth, the clarion call of 'My body, my choice' was chanted thousands of times by convoy leaders and supporters during the convoy, the blockade, the occupation, and the demonstrations in downtown Ottawa. Moreover, it was used countless times by convoy leaders and supporters in broadcast and social media productions.

However, 'My body, my choice' was denied numerous times daily for more than 21 days to people wearing masks who agree with COVID mandates and measures.

Those who chose to wear masks, as well as those who spoke and acted in favour of COVID-19 mandates and masks, were assaulted, chased, followed, harangued, harassed, intimidated, mobbed, stalked, and threatened.

These acts against residents and visitors to downtown are the antithesis of freedom and expose the so-called 'freedom' convoy as fraud.

Fifth, on the one hand convoy, blockade, occupation, and demonstration participants wrapped themselves the Canadian flag, wore toques with a maple leaf design, festooned their vehicles and shelters with the Canadian flag, and sang "O! Canada! on numerous occasions, and especially when they were being re-located during what may be the new international standard for restrained de-occupation of an illegal protest zone.

On the other hand, however, for up to 24 hours per day over more than 20 days participants in the blockade and demonstrations carried out anti-freedom and anti-social acts against fellow citizens because these citizens chose to take their own path regarding COVID-19 mandates and measures.

Table 1 and Table 2 contain indicative lists of anti-freedom and anti-social acts carried out to challenge and deny other citizens the freedom and right to make their own decisions about COVID mandates and measures.

These acts against downtown Ottawa residents and visitors are the antithesis of freedom and expose the so-called 'freedom' convoy as fraud. (Endnote 19)

We close the circle by responding to the study's two core questions.

First,

“Is there reason to believe that a call to freedom was a ruse to stage a blockade and occupation which is a fraud to its core?”

The disconnect between the purported reasons for the truck convoy initiative and what happened on the ground in Ottawa is completely counter to any notion of freedom found in numerous searches of democratic society literature.

As a result, the unequivocal answer is **YES**, that is, using a call to freedom to 'pump up' the convoy idea was a ruse to stage a blockade and occupation escapade which is a fraud to its core.

Second,

“Did Anti-Freedom Acts in Downtown Ottawa Cause the Wheels to Totally Fall off the So-called 'Freedom' Convoy?”

The convoy self-destructed because none of its objectives were met, it made little or no headway in persuading Canadians that this was an idea to which they should 'hitch their wagons' (or trucks in this case), the entire escapade was fraught with re-dos, do-overs, and re-writes in search of a message that might have some traction. And, perhaps, it was done in part as an exit tactic to try to avoid jail time and financial consequences.

Further, no one in the leadership had any *gravitas* when it came to enunciating anything the least bit substantive. Hence, the downtown Ottawa occupation was a failure.

However, it was 'on the ground' that the wheels fell off the convoy when it came to any notion that it was driven by freedom.

For more than 21 days, often 24 hours per day, convoy participants demonstrated that they had no interest in freedom, that theirs was a right-wing extremist mission, and that the convoy was a fraud from the get-go to the de-occupation phase, and now on to the criminal and civil court cases.

As for any missing wheels, they may be in Ottawa impoundment lots.

In summary, the convergence of evidence leads to the conclusion that when protesters engage in acts that disgrace the Canadian flag, the Canadian Constitution, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian motto of 'Peace, Order, and

Good Government', as well as Canada's standing in the world as a free and democratic society, then regardless of any high-sounding objective behind the convoy initiative, acts on the ground tell the unvarnished truth.

That is, the truck convoy, blockade, occupation, and demonstrations were part of a clumsy ruse to pursue a right-wing extremist agenda of de-stabilizing Canada's federal government. And, as collateral damage arising from that failed escapade, considerable harm may have been done to the concept of 'My body, my choice'.

Endnotes

1. It is emphasized that I am referring to the initial and early stages when the pitch was made that all this was being done for truckers and only truckers. The pitch was seemingly designed to recruit truckers to the cause. As time went on numerous additional pitches were also made, but they came from a variety of sources in what seemed to be a rolling do-over exercise, but there is no way of knowing which ones have any standing. One website put up by organizers was quickly taken down, but any combination of keywords such as Canada, freedom convoy, truckers, and truck convoy should lead to accounts of the early days.
2. Only federal mandates were mentioned in the initial declarations. Provincial governments were added as part of the do-over process. However, many participants in the federal protests taking place in Ottawa have issues with provincial mandates, and are therefore in the wrong town, by hundreds and even thousands of kilometres.
3. In view of reports containing hugely wrong numbers about the truck count, such as 50,000 trucks reported to be in Ottawa by Fox News in the U.S. the total number of cross-border truckers from across in Canada is less than 50,000, and more than 45,000 of them have been vaccinated. The bottom line is that less than 5,000 truckers, or less than two per cent (2%) of the more than 300,000 truckers in Canada are opposing the vaccination mandate, and less than 200 big rigs are involved in the Ottawa convoy group.
4. There are thousands of such incidents which confirm the Freedom! emphasis; this is one of them which leaves little to the imagination as to how some demonstrators claim Freedom! for themselves while denying it to others. The link to the interview is https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/ottawa-man-confronts-downtown-bullies-and-goons-1.5778099?fbclid=IwAR2cgfTyRmr8d8_oY9Jmr6qJljC4ri65AJhzMu0FEGTNgOrMcMTu-7Lx7o
5. For an illustration of trucks pertinent to the cross-border trucking industry see <https://convoytraitors.ca/>. Pick-up trucks may be seen on-site, but they and their drivers have little or nothing to do with cross-border trucking much less long-haul trucking. At

best they are occupation area hole pluggers and demonstration agitators. They carry no weight in this study.

6. The lyric “Freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose” might come to mind but, on the evidence, it appears that nothing ever surfaced to establish that the convoy, blockade, occupation, and demonstrations had anything to do with freedom of any kind beyond serving as a simplistic chant. I note in this regard that many social media comments refer to ‘freedoms’, but there is a mindlessness to the comments because numerous searches have failed to yield even one substantive comment which is pertinent to explaining how these ‘freedoms’ have anything to do with the launch of the truck convoy.

7. I use the word ruse to represent pretext and guile, because they are mild synonyms for much harsher terms such as scam, hoax, phony, ploy, treachery, fakery, and fraud that have appeared in the media. In addition, however, while some truckers may have been duped into participating and others may have been willing participants in a convoy for the perceived romance of the matter, the primary people of interest are the organizers since they are the people most likely to face civil and criminal actions. The term ‘ruse’ serves that purpose.

8. The catchphrase ‘My body my right’ is also used, and they both seem to be a variation on a common theme, namely, ‘Only I can decide what I want to do with myself.’

9. Canada along with most countries has been in COVID-19 mode for more than two years, and has experienced its share of people complaining that they are tired of lockdowns, masks, vaccinations, line-ups, ICUs, etc. However, leaders of the truck convoy effort were seen to come with a lot of ‘baggage’ including right-wing extremism, white supremacy, failed political ambitions, religious zealotry, as well as ties to Trump groups in the U.S. As a result, the convoy was referred to in broadcast and social media reports and comments by such pejorative terms as fraud, scam, sham, farce, and ruse.

10. Many have suggested that right-wing extremists in Canada and the U.S. are using the convoy as a dry run for possible tactics to use to influence Canadian and U.S. elections in the direction of anti-democratic, right-wing extremists. Such collaboration could explain some of the funds sent from the U.S. for what could be a Canadian pre-test of the convoy tactic.

11. The term ‘opposition’ is used here. As shown in Table 1, section 3, opposition is a general term to describe the acts perpetrated by blockade, occupation and demonstration supporters on Ottawa citizens, including seniors, families, families with children, people with disabilities, females, university students, people of colour, members of the LGBTQ community, business owners, retail employees, restaurant

employees, and security personnel on an hourly basis for more than 22 days as of the date (February 19) of this draft.

12. The narrative of the blockade, occupation, and demonstrations has changed many times over the past several months, and many individuals have spoken about the objectives and status of the blockade, occupation, and demonstrations, thereby creating a massive number of mixed messages including a lot of excuses as things 'go south'. However, the focus of this study and report is on the MOU and other initial messages which led to the convoy, blockade, occupation, and demonstrations, with emphasis on anti-freedom actions by members of the so-called 'freedom' convoy. However, and the efforts of 'cheerleaders' on social media notwithstanding, we know and have documented the origins of the so-called 'freedom' convoy, so attempts to change messages midstream simply compounds the likelihood of confirming the fraud factor currently being examined.

13. Mention of both the Charter and the Criminal Code of Canada is pertinent here because of the frequent mention in broadcast and social media of civil and criminal actions that could be undertaken against convoy organizers and participants.

14. As reported in multiple broadcast and social items, leaders had communicated instructions to supporters about what to do if the leaders were arrested, and/or if the Ottawa occupation is ended by a police intervention. One set of instructions was for available truck operators to reconvene at locations outside Ottawa.

15. The term vandalism is used here, but other terms may be more appropriate for civil and criminal action purposes.

16. Figure 1 includes some of the graphic symbols and word symbols depicted on flags, placards, signs, clothing, tents, RVs, house trailers, truck trailers, and truck cabs of the occupiers and participants, and are also painted on residential properties, business properties, and memorials. Vulgarities taped on trucks, trailers, tents, etc., or on toques or jackets worn by children, for example, are not intentionally included. However, I apologize if I missed any. A site visit to acquire original close-ups was not conducted for COVID-related concerns.

17. It is emphasized that many of the acts occurred in confined spaces such as between trucks, and between trucks and buildings, or among mobs of protesters, so there is an element of entrapment to these acts.

18. The focus of this report is on cross-border truckers engaged in the occupation who oppose the federal vaccine mandate and who use the 'My body, my choice' argument to justify the blockade, occupation, and demonstrations in Ottawa to buttress their anti-covid federal mandate argument. Acts that have little or nothing to do with 'My body, my

choice' mean that the acts have nothing to do with freedom to object to a federal COVID mandate.

19. Arguments arise as to whether flag displays, singing O Canada!, yelling Freedom! etc., mark blockade, occupation, and demonstration participants as patriots or hypocrites. However, our focus is on what participants did through their acts to hinder or limit the rights and freedoms of those wearing masks, distancing, supporting COVID mandates and measures, or otherwise not supporting the blockade, occupation, or demonstrations.

Author Background Note

Career details are available at <http://wellar.ca/informationresearch/>, including a C.V. dated several years ago at the closing of Wellar Consulting Inc. as a corporate entity.

One C.V. entry especially pertinent to this study and report is service as a Member, Panel on Safety and Security, Interdependent Infrastructures, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Government of Canada.