Reflexive Pluralism in IR: Canadian Contributions to Worlding the Global South

W.R. Nadège Compaoré
University of Toronto, Canada

Stéphanie Martel
Queen’s University, Canada

AND

J. Andrew Grant
Queen’s University, Canada

Abstract: Observers of the evolution of international relations (IR) theory often point to an American hegemony in the discipline on a global level. However, more recent analyses show that there has been a systematic and increasing Canadianization of IR scholarship in Canada since the 1990s, facilitated by government policies that fostered the hiring of domestic candidates and the creation of Canadian foreign policy research centers. This process has by no means been a cohesive one, yet it reflects a tendency in Canadian IR to make room for a pluralism in ontological as well as epistemological and methodological terms. This opening up of space for diversity is an important yet underappreciated characteristic of Canadian IR’s contribution to the discipline, which has not been seriously examined beyond the study of Canadian foreign policy. This article assesses the impact of Canadian IR scholarship on the development of a “Global IR” through an examination of its contributions to Asia-Pacific and African IR. We argue that despite its heterogeneity, Canadian IR scholarship in both areas is characterized by a common set of elements that, taken together, reflect a distinctly Canadian way of studying and practicing IR in relation to the Global South: pluralism and reflexivism.

Resumen: Los observadores de la evolución de la teoría de las relaciones internacionales (International Relations, IR) con frecuencia señalan una hegemonía estadounidense sobre la disciplina a nivel global. Sin embargo, los análisis más recientes muestran que ha habido una canadización sistemática y creciente de los estudios de las IR en Canadá desde la década de 1990, facilitada gracias a las políticas gubernamentales que fomentaron la contratación de candidatos nacionales y la creación de centros de investigación de políticas exteriores canadienses. Este proceso no ha sido cohesivo de ninguna manera; sin embargo, refleja una tendencia en las IR de Canadá a dar lugar al pluralismo en términos ontológicos, así como epistemológicos y metodológicos. Esta apertura de espacio para permitir la diversidad es una característica importante pero poco valorada de la contribución de las IR canadienses a la disciplina, la cual no se ha analizado seriamente más allá del estudio de la política exterior de Canadá. Este artículo evalúa el impacto de los estudios de las IR canadienses en el desarrollo de una “IR global” a través del análisis de sus contribuciones a las IR de Asia Pacífico y África. Sostenemos que, a pesar de su heterogeneidad, los estudios de las IR canadienses en ambas áreas se caracterizan por un conjunto común de elementos que, sumados, reflejan una manera...
Observers of the evolution of IR theory often point to an American hegemony in the discipline on a global level (Hoffmann 1977; Wæver 1998; Crawford and Jarvis 2000; Tickner and Wæver 2009; Maliniak et al. 2018a). As a result, there has been growing interest in studying, and even actively encouraging, the development of non-American “schools” of IR as a way to pluralize the canon and support the rise of a “Global IR” (Acharya 2014b). A multitude of national and regional strands of scholarship have since emerged, extending far beyond the well-established English School (Wight 1977; Buzan 2001). Elsewhere in the “West,” the French School (Cornut, Battistella, and O’Mahony 2013) and the Italian School (Calcara and Vittori 2019) were also attempts to push IR away from its American-centrism. Emerging discussions about African contributions to IR (Dunn and Shaw 2001; Lemke 2003; Odoom and Andrews 2017) or about the rise of a “Chinese School” and other prospective Asian Schools being developed (Acharya 2017) express similar pluralist and reflexivist intentions, while further contributing to ongoing discussions about ways to de-Westernize the discipline.

In the Canadian context, the latest Teaching, Research and International Policy (TRIP) survey shows that ~60 percent of Canadian IR Faculty agree that “the
discipline of International Relations (IR) is an American dominated discipline (TRIP 2018). This “Americanization” of IR has long been a controversial issue in Canada, with some arguing that it can be traced to the fact that most Canadian IR faculty were in fact, American-trained (Symons 1975). As a result, Canadian IR scholars have embarked on a broader trend of assessing the extent to which Canadian IR exhibits certain characteristics that make it distinct. Such analyses have shown, for instance, that there has been a systematic and increasing “Canadianization” of IR scholarship in Canada since the 1990s, facilitated by federal laws and policies that strongly encouraged the hiring of domestic candidates and fostered the creation of Canadian foreign policy research centers (Nossal 2000; Cox and Nossal 2009; Saideman 2016, 2019). Moreover, federal and provincial funding agencies prioritized “curiosity-driven” research (Nossal 2000) regardless of method, theory, or approach (Saideman 2016). These developments made space for diversity in the topics addressed, meta-theory considerations, and research guided by theoretical reflexivism (de Larrinaga and Salter 2014) that also fostered a more substantive departure of Canadian IR from the landscape of American IR.

Our article takes this “Canadianization” of Canadian IR as the starting point to tackle the broader question of whether IR is “a truly global discipline, or [...] characterized by distinct, national approaches” (Maliniak et al. 2018a, 450). More specifically, we ask: how does Canadian IR fit into the broader project of a Global IR (Acharya 2014b; Maliniak et al. 2018b; Acharya and Buzan 2019) shifting away from the American core of the discipline? To do so, we adopt a different angle from existing work on the specificity of Canadian IR, which we show extends beyond the study of Canadian IR as an object of study to various locales in the so-called Global South. This is a dimension of a Canadian impact on the discipline that has not been concretely examined, and our article seeks to fill that gap. We argue that while there is no single “Canadian School” of IR, there is an impactful and distinct “Canadian-ness” (cf. de Larrinaga and Salter 2014) in Canadian IR scholarship on the Global South, which, despite its important diversity, shares two core characteristics: pluralism and reflexivism. Taken together, in what we refer to as “reflexive pluralism,” these characteristics inform Canadian contributions to the de-Westernization of the IR discipline and highlight a path for other clusters of “Western IR” to do the same.

Indeed, the responsibility for diversifying and decolonizing IR should not be—and in fact, as we show here, has not been—borne by Global South (or BIPOC and/or critical race, decolonial or feminist) scholars alone, many of whom have been engaged in this work long before the current surge of interest. Through its focus on the Canadian “case,” this article aims to outline a way, but certainly not the way, through which West-based scholars, whatever their heritage, can (and in fact, already do) engage constructively in this enterprise through reflexive pluralism and expand on it moving forward.1

1We define “Canadian IR” broadly. Scholars surveyed here hold (or have held) non-visiting, full-time academic positions and/or completed their PhD at a Canadian university.

2Following Odoom and Andrews (2017, fn 7), and while the term is contested, we use “Western IR” to refer to the canon of thought that has developed out of (exclusionary) disciplinary practices of IR in Europe and North America. One anonymous reviewer rightfully pointed out that, because of these practices, the term “Western IR” (and “Canadian IR”) excludes Indigenous perspectives on IR. See also Georgis and Lugosi (2014, 75–77).

3We understand that diversifying and decolonizing IR are distinct objectives and that they do not always work in tandem. However, they are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, are necessarily intertwined.

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To map out the Canadian footprint on the study of Global South IR, we proceed in three steps. First, we retrieve and analyze TRIP 2018 survey data on Canadian IR scholarship with a special focus on the categories that are the closest to our two regional subfields of Global South IR: Asia-Pacific and African IR. Second, we use Google Scholar (GS) to retrieve the most-cited publications in the two subfields as a way to assess the impact of Canadian IR scholarship in relation to other national communities. Third, we conduct a qualitative analysis of Canadian contributions in the two subfields, which we extend beyond the most-cited publications to account for more recent Canadian contributions in these subfields that may not (yet) be widely cited but are nonetheless impactful in different ways or reflective of emerging trends. This third step of the process is also motivated by the recognition that many scholars of color, junior rank, and women continue to be marginalized in citation practices. Thus, an analysis that focuses on wider contributions to the evolution of the field and complements citation metrics is essential.

The remainder of the article is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the extent to which there is something distinctly Canadian about the way Canadian scholars are trained in, conduct research, and “do” IR. Drawing from TRIP survey data and existing literature on Canadian IR, it discusses how “reflexive pluralism” came to characterize Canadian IR and how it manifests in ontological commitments, theoretical and methodological dispositions, as well as specific subfields. Reflexive pluralism begins with an inclination to pay serious attention to the social dimensions of world politics and to problematize the ontological and epistemological aspects of socio-institutional forms of dominant scholarship. From this “thinner” form of reflexivism, akin to how Keohane (1988) used the term to distinguish this scholarship from a “rationalist” camp, scholars are led to engage in a “thicker” critical, learning-based, self-reflection. This “reflexivism” is intrinsically linked to “pluralism” in Canadian IR and beyond, because it compels scholars to seek out diverse voices, actors, sources, approaches, experiences, practices, and the like, as part of their research agendas. The second and third sections empirically anchor our analysis in two regional IR subfields where Canadian scholars make a decisive impact in supporting pluralism and reflexivism in the discipline and the Global IR agenda, namely Asia-Pacific IR (second section) and African IR (third section). This allows us to better situate how the two characteristics (reflexivism and pluralism) unfold in Canadian contributions to Global South IR, and the extent to which they set Canadian IR apart from its “relevant Others” in the Anglo-American core.

Is There a Canadian School of IR?

The structural changes brought about by federal policies have contributed to the development of a distinct Canadian IR scholarship that is deeply pluralist not only ontologically, but in epistemological and methodological terms. Canadian IR remains “marked by a diversity of intellectual approaches, with no approach that comes anywhere close to being hegemonic” (Nossal 2000). This diversity means that the “Canadianization” of IR in Canada has by no means been cohesive, and yet it is also clearly distinct from American IR. Further, although Canadian IR shares

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6According to the TRIP (2018) survey, the Asia-Pacific (Southeast Asia, East Asia, and South Asia in the survey) and Middle East/Africa are the two “regions” Canadian IR scholars study the most outside the West. Our own research programs in Global South IR are situated within these subfields.

7All GS citation data for this article were collected in July 2020 and updated in February 2021. Using similar search terms for both subfields referring to geographic area and object of study of IR, we gathered publications with 100+ citations that met a number of additional criteria (e.g., type of publication; geographical scope; engagement with disciplinary debates) specifying the boundaries of the subfields and to ensure publications were comparable on impact. These results are, however, and despite our best efforts to mitigate their effects, subjected to well-documented limitations of using GS to assess research impact (see Colgan 2016, 492). More details on our methodology, including criteria for text selection and research impact metrics, are available upon request.
a lot with other scholarly communities in what Cox and Nossal (2009) refer to as the “crimson world” in contrast with American IR, it is also distinct, albeit less radically, from British and Australian IR. According to the TRIP (2018) survey, among Canadian scholars who identify with a particular approach, constructivism is the most popular, with about 25 percent of adherents, including those based at the “big 3” universities (McGill University, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Toronto) \(^8\) slightly more than those in not only the United States (20 percent) but also the UK (20 percent) and Australia (23 percent). Canadian IR scholars are also less likely than their counterparts to adopt a rationalist approach to IR (15 percent). The difference is especially sharp with American IR, where 34 percent of Americans embrace rationalist assumptions. At the same time, Canadian IR scholars are also less likely than their British and Australian counterparts to completely reject rationalism, and tend to adopt a hybrid approach in greater numbers. In addition, Canadian IR clearly seizes the middle ground between American and British/Australian IR when it comes to positivism: in contrast with the US (61 percent) on the one hand, and the UK (33 percent) and Australia (31 percent) on the other, 40 percent of Canadian IR scholars identify as positivists.

As with the rest of Western IR, particularly on the Anglo side, Canadian IR’s relationship to what remains an American-dominated discipline is complicated. Indeed, Canada continues to have the highest concentration of American-trained PhDs in the “crimson world,” largely concentrated in its top three universities. Recent analyses also show that doctoral training in Canada, whether in French or English, is still structurally dominated by American IR (Murphy and Wigginton 2020). Yet these characteristics of Canadian IR also tie to its pluralist character. Whereas 56 percent of IR scholars in the “big 3” identify as positivists and 44 percent as non-positivists, most IR scholars in other Canadian universities identify as non-positivists (64 percent) (Saideman 2016). These changes and continuities therefore speak to an eclectic practice of IR in Canada, where the undeniable and continued influence of American IR has increasingly had to contend with what de Larrinaga and Salter (2014) call a Canadian IR “sensibility,” particularly a “critical” sensibility in security studies, which is distinct in its pluralism. This pluralism is not a coherent one, and it is also partial, characterized by its share of disciplinary boundary work and exclusionary practices (Smith 2014; Stoett 2014; Grondin 2014), but it allows the breathing space needed for a variety of approaches and epistemological traditions to coexist and thrive in many Canadian departments. For Wayne Cox (2014), this sensibility is not restricted to security studies either, but is observable more broadly across Canadian IR.

This process of increasing pluralism within Canada’s IR landscape strongly benefited from the space opened up by notable Canadian scholar Robert W. Cox’s (1981) distinction between problem-solving and critical IR, and fostered more reflexivism about the evolution of the field globally and nationally. Cox, along with other prominent critical Canadian IR scholars such as Stephen Gill (York University) and R.B.J. Walker (University of Victoria), contributed to galvanizing debates among Canadian IR scholars in the 1980s and 1990s. These debates influenced Yosef Lapid (1989)’s call for reflexivist theorization in his seminal “Third Debate”—a result of his time in Canada, an outcome that he explicitly acknowledged (noted in Cox and Nossal 2009). Further, as constructivism gradually made its way into the mainstream of IR, as part of the “critical turn,” it attracted a growing number of scholars in Canada, junior and senior alike. The “big tent” approach it represented not only encouraged conceptual innovation, but also allowed scholars from both sides of the epistemological divide to coexist as “kindred spirits” who were critical of the orthodoxy that still dominated the study of world politics and called for greater inclusion of marginalized topics, voices, and regions in IR.

\(^{8}\)Based on international rankings; listed in alphabetical order.
The impact of this “critical turn,” to which Canadian IR scholars made a significant contribution, continues to be felt in Canada and across the IR discipline. As a result, a “critical ethos” is now “firmly entrenched” (Black and Smith 2014) within various subfields of Canadian IR. According to Black and Smith (2014), this is not only because constructivist and/or critical scholarship is generally well represented in Canadian universities, particularly in comparison to the United States, but because Canadian scholars generally recognize constructivist and/or critical scholarship as a legitimate way of doing IR. The “critical turn” in IR opened up the way for the emergence of a Canadian IR scholarship in which pluralism prevails and reflexivism stands on firm ground.

The reflexivist mainstream that characterizes Canadian IR is heterogeneous in nature, but cohesive insofar as it exhibits a shared recognition of the social “constructedness” of IR and a similar desire for enhancing pluralism in the discipline. There is a relatively pacified coexistence of positivist/rationalist and post-positivist/reflexivist IR in Canada, coupled with a linguistic divide (English–French) (Grondin 2014), which means that Canadian IR scholarship cannot be categorized as a “school” per se, as it does not reflect the kind of coherence that this term requires. For instance, despite a tendency of Canadian IR scholars to reject strong versions of positivism and rationalism while also shying away from quantitative methods, the epistemological divide that has continued to traverse the discipline of IR since the peak of the “fourth great debate” remains very much present. Canadian constructivists, such as Jeffrey Checkel, Emanuel Adler, or Vincent Pouliot, are not identified as “critical” scholars unless we use the term as a residual category for scholarship that is not rationalist or positivist. Furthermore, the kind of “middle ground” constructivism advanced by Adler (1997)—similar to agential constructivism (Grant 2018a) and Wendt’s (1999) scientific realism—is compatible with a positivist understanding of social scientific inquiry in a way that critical IR scholarship, including in Canada, treats as part of the “mainstream,” at least on epistemological grounds.

The shift away from the Americanization of IR9 toward pluralism and reflexivism is certainly not unique to Canada. A growing number of scholars across the world have questioned the Western-centric character of the IR discipline and have called for moving beyond its traditional objects of study. Many have highlighted how the founding of the discipline was in itself a problem-solving and Western-centric enterprise, and that the conventional historiography of the discipline fails to take into account the range of key historical developments across the globe (de Carvalho, Leira, and Hobson 2011). For instance, as Barkawi and Laffey (2006) point out, the discipline of IR was only able to conceive the Cold War as an era of “long peace” by excluding conflicts outside the West—such as proxy wars, armed struggles against colonial- or white-minority rule, and other South–South conflicts—from its ontological realm.

As a result of a gradual realization of the Western-centric biases that continue to characterize the discipline, studies that undertake a critical, self-reflexive rethinking of the evolution of the field have since proliferated, and Canadian IR scholars have played a key role in fostering this reflexivism. Many of the most influential Canadian scholars of IR—including Robert W. Cox (1981, 1995), R.B.J. Walker (1993), Stephen Gill (1993), Jennifer Welsh (2011), Michael Williams (2005), Sandra Whitworth (1994), Malinda Smith (2010), Jeffrey Checkel (1998), Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot (2011)—have been at the forefront of this reflexivist challenge against orthodoxy. Canadian scholars (Neufeld 1993; Sjolander and Cox 1994) were among early critics of the dominance of positivism in the discipline.

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9This is not to say that American IR is uniquely positivist, given that US-based scholars (e.g., Neta Crawford, Laura Sjoberg, Ann Tickner, Cynthia Enloe, Michael Shapiro, Richard Ashley, Roxanne Doty, Nicholas Onuf, and Alexander Wendt) have significantly contributed to the development of non-positivist IR. In fact, 40 percent of American scholars also describe their work as “not positivist” (TRIP 2018).
and identified concrete ways to generate post-positivist, reflexivist, and critical research agendas in IR. This reflexivism has also led to the institutionalization of the “sociology of IR” as a subfield (cf. Holden 2014), with strong contributions from Canada through R.B.J. Walker, who became the founding co-editor of the journal *International Political Sociology* (with Didier Bigo) in 2007.

More recently, reflexivism in IR has translated into the multiplication of calls to “decolonize IR” by highlighting issues and factors that had previously been sidelined, but were central to how world politics manifest in the “non-Western” world, in addition to being pervasive in (and reproduced by) the West, such as colonialism, race and racism, imperialism, and dispossession (Mudimbe 1994; Tickner 2003; Grovogui 2006; Gruffyd-Jones 2006). This focus on decolonization also has important implications for our inquiry into Canadian IR, as an instance of reflexivism. In fact, de Larrinaga and Salter (2014) have recently argued that a “concern with the postcolonial” is what distinguishes Canadian security studies from the Paris and Copenhagen Schools. While this reflexivist concern is not equally represented, and the actual integration of Indigenous methodology and theorizing into IR scholarship in Canada (e.g., Beier 2005; Lightfoot 2016; Sarson 2019) remains limited (Smith 2014), this interest is still a notable trait that sets Canadian IR apart from American IR. This trait is reflected in Canadian contributions to the study of world politics in the Global South, particularly in Africa, and to some extent, although more subtly, in the Asia-Pacific, through a focus on the agency of local actors as well as more explicit efforts aimed at decolonizing both discipline and specific area subfields.

As the remainder of the article makes clear, the impact of these broader ontological, epistemological, and methodological trends in Canadian IR scholarship extend to how Canadian IR scholars have approached Global South IR, although they manifest in original ways in each subfield.

### Canadian Contributions to Asia-Pacific IR

Asia-Pacific IR is not a traditionally prominent focus of Canadian IR, with only 10 percent of scholars listing either East, South, or Southeast Asia as their primary region of focus (TRIP 2018). Yet there still has been a sustained and impactful contribution of Canadian scholars to this subfield, especially since the 1990s, which also corresponds to a “constructivist turn” in Asia-Pacific IR as in the broader discipline. Further, the growing strategic importance of the Asia-Pacific is bound to attract more scholarly attention, including within Canadian IR. Indeed, despite the low proportion of Canadian IR scholars working predominantly on the Asia-Pacific, ~30 percent rank it as the second region of “greatest strategic importance” to Canada for the next twenty years, after North America (~34 percent) (TRIP 2018).11

Despite the relative marginality of Asia-Pacific IR in Canada, Canadian scholars working on this region do exhibit certain traits that set them apart from their “relevant Others” in the Anglo-American core. The TRIP (2018) survey again provides a good starting point in assessing this, by showing how Canadian IR compares to other scholarly communities when it comes to the study of the Asia-Pacific. Indeed, Canadian IR scholars working on “Asia/Oceania”—which is the TRIP category closest to our definition of the Asia-Pacific and supports our argument that Canadian IR is generally characterized by a reflexive pluralism—are very much in an “in-between” position when compared to their US, UK, and Australian counterparts. They are more likely than US scholars to identify as constructivist and non-positivist, and to rely on qualitative methods, but less so than UK and Australian scholars. They are also much more likely than their counterparts—as

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10By this we mean acknowledging and critically questioning the role colonialism has played and continues to play in knowledge production in and about IR, and outlining a path out of these colonial legacies.

11The recent hiring of junior Canadian scholars working on Asia-Pacific IR in tenure-track positions in Canada and the United States is likely to contribute to rejuvenation.
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well as Canadian scholars working on other regions—to embrace a mixed approach that makes room for both rationalist and non-rationalist explanatory factors.

A more in-depth survey of key Canadian contributions to Asia-Pacific IR allows us to unpack this position further below, and shows how their pluralist and reflexivist traits come together to support a distinct Canadian imprint on the study of IR in the Asia-Pacific, while appearing in various combinations in individual contributions to this regional subfield. In the remainder of this section, we start by situating the impact of Canadian scholarship among a broader set of most-cited publications in the field to provide measurable indicators of its impact on the subfield. Next, we expand the scope to an additional set of contributions on Asia-Pacific IR by Canadian scholars, discussed in relation to the two characteristics outlined above.

The “Canadian Connection” in Asia-Pacific IR: An Overview of Impact

Our review of impactful publications in Asia-Pacific IR\(^{12}\) shows that three (ranking 1, 5, and 7 in table 1) of the ten most-cited pieces of scholarship on Asia-Pacific IR have been authored by scholars who meet our definition of Canadian IR (Acharya 2014a; Bernard and Ravenhill 1995; Stubbs 2002). Not only are Canadian IR scholars ranking high in this top 10, but all three share a strong interest in the social constructedness of Asia-Pacific IR. This constructivist inclination stands in sharp contrast with (exclusively) American and Australian scholars in this top 10, who tend to be more realist and/or rationalist in orientation, although some are heavily influenced by the English School (Goh 2008) and/or discuss the role of ideas in world politics (Kang 2007).

Table 2 lists the most-cited contributions of Canadian scholars to the study of the Asia-Pacific. While the proportion of Canadian IR scholars among the broader group of seventy scholars with publications that accumulate 100+ citations is similar to Australia, Europe, and the UK, what is striking here, and what the following sections make clear, is the shared commitment of Canadian scholars in unpacking the normative, ideational, and/or social dimensions of Asia-Pacific IR, although this commitment comes in different forms. To be clear, Canadian scholars of Asia-Pacific IR do not have a monopoly on nonmaterial dimensions of regional politics. Well-cited contributions to the field adopting a constructivist lens have been made by non-Canadian IR scholars (e.g., Haacke 2003; Ba 2009). The prevalence of this commitment among the Canadian contingent, however, has no equivalent elsewhere. In what follows, we offer a qualitative examination of Canadian contributions to the study of IR in the Asia-Pacific that includes but extends beyond our 100+ citations ranking of publications, and zooms in on the two characteristics of Canadian scholarship in the study of Global South IR.

A “Canadian Way” in Asia-Pacific IR?

Canadian contributions to Asia-Pacific IR exhibit the two Canadian IR characteristics of pluralism and reflexivism outlined above, which they share with Canadian scholars of African IR (see the third section). Yet these characteristics manifest and combine in discrete ways in the study of Asia. On the one hand, Canadian IR scholarship on the Asia-Pacific is characterized by a significant interest in the social and/or ideational dimension of regional politics, particularly in processes of norm, practice, and/or narrative diffusion and contestation, which also features in their policy work in the region. On the other, this “reflexivism” comes in many shades and is deeply pluralist in character: Canadian IR scholars express this interest via

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\(^{12}\)Using search terms referring to both the object of study of IR and common representations of the “region” (e.g., Asia-Pacific or East/South/Southeast/Northeast Asia), and following criteria spelled out in the Introduction (see fn 6 and fn 7), we have identified a total of seventy publications with 100+ citations in GS for this subfield.
Table 1. Top 10 most-cited publications in Asia-Pacific IR

| Rank | Name                | Affiliation                     | Title                                                                 | Year (1st edition) | Number of citations |
|------|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1    | Acharya, Amitav     | American U. (former: York)      | Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order | 2001               | 2,054               |
| 2    | Shambaugh, David    | George Washington U.             | “China Engages Asia: Reshaping the Regional Order”                     | 2005               | 1,010               |
| 3    | Kang, David         | U. of Southern California        | China Rising: Peace, Power, and Order in East Asia                     | 2007               | 946                 |
| 4    | Samuels, Richard J. | MIT                             | Securing Japan: Tokyo’s Grand Strategy and the Future of East Asia    | 2011               | 787                 |
| 5    | Bernard, Mitchell   | York                            | “Beyond Product Cycles and Flying Geese: Regionalization, Hierarchy, and the Industrialization of East Asia” (w. John Ravenhill) | 1995               | 712                 |
| 5    | Ravenhill, John     | Waterloo                        | “Beyond Product Cycles and Flying Geese: Regionalization, Hierarchy, and the Industrialization of East Asia” (w. Mitchell Bernard) | 1995               | 712                 |
| 6    | Christensen, Thomas | Princeton                      | “China, the US-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia” | 1999               | 696                 |
| 7    | Stubbs, Richard     | McMaster                        | ASEAN Plus Three: Emerging East Asian Regionalism?                     | 2002               | 581                 |
| 8    | Cha, Victor         | Georgetown University           | Alignment Despite Antagonism: The United States–Korea–Japan Security Triangle | 1999               | 549                 |
| 9    | Goh, Evelyn         | ANU                             | “Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia: Analyzing Regional Security Strategies” | 2008               | 540                 |
| 10   | Ganguly, Sumit      | University of Texas             | Conflict Unending: India–Pakistan Tensions Since 1947                 | 2002               | 534                 |

Notes: Canadian IR Scholars are in bold. In tables 1 and 2, the citation counts are from February 2021, and only the author’s most-cited publication that meets our criteria (see fn 7) is listed.

radically different epistemological positions, yet they also have a strong penchant for eclecticism—\(^\text{13}\)—they embrace complexity, tend to be skeptical of accounts that privilege theoretical monism and parsimony over context-sensitive analysis, and often show sustained interest in “seizing the middle ground” (Adler 1997) and other forms of theoretical bridge-building. Individual Canadian scholars of Asia-Pacific IR do not exhibit both characteristics systematically (or to the same extent), but the contributions surveyed here display some combination of these traits, which further substantiates our claim that Canadian Asia-Pacific IR is characterized by a “reflexive pluralism.”

Canadian scholars contribute to shaping Asia-Pacific IR through a broad commitment to the notion that regional politics—like all world politics—are social phenomena. Not all of the contributions surveyed in this section are explicitly or predominantly “constructivist” in orientation, but they all share an interest in the social/ideational dimension of world politics. In this sense, they do share a common reflexivist ontology.

Some scholars emphasize the interplay of material and ideational factors in explaining outcomes, while also stressing factors of the latter kind, thus differentiating

\(^{13}\)For applications of analytical eclecticism, see, for example, the contributors to Sil and Katzenstein (2010).
themselves from more conventional takes on IR (Evans 2014; Paul 2015; Welch 2017). Contributions of this type are not constructivist, but exhibit an underlying interest in reaching across the divide by embedding ideational and/or normative factors into “rationalist” (and positivist) accounts of Asia-Pacific IR.

Yet other Canadian scholars are more firmly situated within constructivist IR and devote a more direct attention to how processes of socialization and norm diffusion, or other meaning-making practices, hold productive power in regional politics. This “broad tent” constructivist scholarship is highly diverse and this diversity is increasing. Canadian IR scholars are well-represented and exercise constructive leadership in both “generations” of constructivist Asia-Pacific IR.

This shared commitment of Canadian IR scholars to unpacking the social dimensions of regional politics comes in thinner and thicker variants, undergirded by a variety of meta-theoretical stances. Canadian IR scholarship on the region thus reflects the wide spectrum of epistemological and methodological positions that today fall within the “reflexivist” camp of the IR discipline.

Even when they do not clearly self-identify as constructivists, Canadian scholars are well represented within a strand of the literature on Asia-Pacific IR that tackles dynamics of norm diffusion (Lizée 2002; Job and Shesterinina 2014), localization
Within this literature, Canadian IR contributions in this subfield have, similarly to African IR scholarship, also given special attention to the agency of regional actors, taking issue with a tendency in constructivist norm research to treat them as passive recipients of “good” norms diffusing from the West to the Rest (Acharya 2004). Most constructivist contributions to Asia-Pacific IR can be described as falling within what is commonly referred to in IR as “mainstream” constructivism, which is a particularly popular position among Canadian scholars (Narine 2002; Peou 2002, 2005; Eaton and Stubbs 2005; Acharya 2004, 2014a; Stubbs 2008). This scholarship has been instrumental in assessing the role of norms in the development of Asia-Pacific regionalism, emphasizing its distinct character from processes of integration in the West.

Further, and following more recent developments within constructivist IR scholarship, a new generation of scholars of the Asia-Pacific is now moving away from norm research and causal accounts of the role of ideational factors to emphasize how discourse and/or practice shape the daily conduct of Asia-Pacific IR. Canadian scholars (Glas 2017; Mustapha 2019; Martel 2020) are well represented among this kind of constructivist scholarship on the Asia-Pacific, although they share this space with others based in the UK, Europe, Australia, or Southeast Asia. At the 2019 ISA-in-Asia conference in Singapore, a panel co-organized by Glas and Martel (2019a) was recognized by a prominent US-based scholar of Asia-Pacific IR at the event as a sign that “Canada is back” in this field. It is worth noting that Canadian (Glas 2017; Mustapha 2019; Martel 2020) and non-Canadian (e.g., Tan 2013; Loh 2018; Davies 2018; Nair 2019; Collins 2019) IR scholars situated in this new wave of constructivist scholarship all draw heavily from the contributions of Canadian scholars who emphasize the role of practices (e.g., Adler and Pouliot 2011; Cornut 2018) or the productive power of language and discourse in IR (e.g., Walker 1993; Der Derian 2009).

As with African IR, and whatever their epistemological stances, Canadian scholars of Asia-Pacific IR tend to embrace complexity over theoretical purity or monocausal explanations for political outcomes. Canadian scholars tend to approach regional politics abductively, evaluating the comparative value of different approaches against empirical reality before making a choice, or even switching from one approach to the other according to which one is the most suitable to the problem at hand. Like Peou (2002), Narine (1998, 2002, 2006) has dabbled in different approaches, concluding that “none of these theories adequately accounts for” how Asia-Pacific regionalism had evolved over time (Narine 1998, 33). This stance is thus deeply pluralist in character. In more positive terms, Canadian IR scholars also engage in the production of “eclectic” accounts that privilege context sensitivity over parsimony. In the case of Peou (2005), this interest in eclecticism is also accompanied by a commitment to seizing the middle ground through a hybridization of realism and constructivism as the best way to account for a complex empirical reality against the pitfalls of a more “radical” constructivist approach. On the “thicker” side of the constructivist spectrum, Glas and Martel (2019a) are also engaged in a theoretically eclectic enterprise, as they bridge insights from the “practice turn” and discourse theory to develop a new conceptualization of Southeast Asian diplomatic culture.

Irrespective of their theoretical inclinations, Canadian scholars of Asia-Pacific IR also tend to be critical of attempts to explain developments in the region or advance prescriptive views by drawing from standards and expectations derived from Western experience. This is prevalent in the way Canadian scholars (e.g., Evans 2014; Welch 2020) look at US–China relations, and how they take issue with how some American realist scholars prophesize their evolution as necessarily conflictual. While these arguments are much-critiqued, the “Thucydides trap” thesis—or some version of it—also acts as a highly influential prism for many analyses, in both the United States and China, of the Trump Administration’s adversarial foreign policy toward China and growing concerns about “wolf warrior” diplomacy. As such, and
following a similar impulse to the “critical turn” despite not being part of “critical IR” per se, these contributions also support the “pluralization” of the subfield and its openness to approaches located beyond the mainstream.

This tendency is also displayed by Canadian scholars in the policy realm of Asia-Pacific IR, as they advance progressive notions of security in their involvement in regional multi-track diplomacy (Job 2003; Capie 2010). Canadian scholars have been at the forefront of a broader effort to mainstream concepts such as “cooperative security” (Dewitt 1994), “human security” (Acharya 2001; Evans 2004; Lizée 2002; Peou 2009) and the “responsibility to protect (R2P)” (Job and Shesterinina 2014). Many of these efforts show sensitivity to the region’s cognitive priors, although they continue to be mostly done in a “problem-driven” way, thus reflecting a kind of “liberal constructivism” that other more critically attuned Canadian scholars working on foreign policy have taken issue with (Black and Smith 2014). While they are certainly not representative of the majority of Canadian scholarship on Asia-Pacific IR, some Canadian scholars (Martel 2017; Mustapha 2019) do develop a more critically oriented perspective on the role of expert (or “Track-2”) diplomacy in the reproduction of a dominant discourse on regional security.

Beyond their participation in policy debates and irrespective of whether they engage in a more “problem-driven” or “critical” type of knowledge production in IR, Canadian scholars tend to share a common interest in mapping out the normative and discursive processes through which a broad variety of security concepts gradually come to form integral components of the regional security lexicon (Mack and Kerr 1995; Job 2003; Capie and Evans 2007; Martel 2017; Martel and Glas 2019; Mustapha 2019) and the effects this has on regional governance.

To be clear, Asia-Pacific IR as a field remains wedded to Western ways of knowing, whatever the positionality of individual scholars. The development of “Asian schools” of IR has received growing attention, but these efforts remain limited and mostly derivative of Western IR (Chen 2011; Acharya 2017). As such, Canadian scholars’ sensitivity to the regional context is bounded in similar ways than the rest of the field, which is still a long way from decolonizing. Yet the recent surge of interest for nonmainstream and interpretative perspectives on IR that put the agency of regional actors at the center of their analysis, supported by Canadian scholars in collaboration with others, is still a promising development in this direction, in addition to more radical efforts currently conducted outside the disciplinary boundaries of IR.

In sum, the pluralist and/or reflexivist inclinations of Canadian scholarship on Asia-Pacific IR come in a variety of forms, but a “Canadian way” of doing Asia-Pacific IR is still identifiable in this subfield. It does not necessarily mean that Canadian scholarship is idiosyncratic or that its individual contributions are wholly different qualitatively than those of other scholars with which they share similar research interests and meta-theoretical commitments. Canadian IR scholars certainly do not have a monopoly on social accounts of Asia-Pacific IR. Yet the prevalence of the two characteristics structuring our broader inquiry among Canadian scholars working on the Asia-Pacific is noteworthy and points to the existence of a strong, diverse, but still relatively coherent reflexivist and pluralist disposition in this scholarship. Canadian scholars have played—and continue to play—a significant role in expanding the space available to think about the social constructedness of Asia-Pacific IR in innovative ways, whether in problem-solving or more critical terms.

### Canadian Contributions to African IR

Following a similar process to the previous section, this section provides our survey of the literature highlighting the reflexivist and pluralist characteristics of Canadian contributions to African IR. We begin with a brief overview of the evolution and impact of Canadian scholarship on African IR. We then investigate
the ontological pluralism of human security in African IR, while centering the agency of African actors in our analyses. Next, we discuss Canadian IR research that speaks to a reflexivist approach to African IR, where attempts at “decolonizing IR” involve reclaiming African intellectual contributions to IR and undertaking a critical self-reflection of “where Africa is in IR” (Dunn and Shaw 2001; Lemke 2003; Brown 2006; Harman and Brown 2013; Odoom and Andrews 2017; Grant 2018a). The section concludes with an examination of pluralist manifestations of Canadian scholarship on African IR by paying particular attention to ontological pluralism, specifically the role of African actors as active—rather than passive—participants.

### Canadian Contributions to African IR: Overview, Evolution, and Impact

A notable number of Canadian IR scholars count Africa as their primary region of interest. When applying TRIP (2018) data to ISA’s regional subfield classifications, 15.3 percent of Canadian IR respondents identified either North Africa/Middle East (8.21 percent) or sub-Saharan Africa (7.09 percent) as their primary region of study. Though a portion of the former would likely self-identify as Middle East specialists if the category was available, Africa is nonetheless the first-ranked non-Western region of focus of Canadian IR scholars. Canadian IR scholars have translated this interest in Africa into refining their approaches to the study of African IR.

Based on our review of most-cited publications in African IR (100+ citations), three of the top ten most-cited publications come from Canadian IR authors (see table 3): Robert H. Jackson (1982) (no. 3), Rita Abrahamsen (2000) (no. 5), and Michael C. Williams (2010) (no. 7). What is most notable is that in this top ten, the main countries represented outside of Canada (3) are the United States (4) and the UK (4). Canada seems to be “in-between” ranking-wise, a position that is also reproduced in substance. In fact, in the TRIP 2018 survey, Canadian IR scholars working on Africa/Middle East are methodologically lodged in between their US, UK, and Australian counterparts when it comes to quantitative and qualitative approaches. For instance, while scholars in the UK and Australia are more decisively qualitative (UK at 90 percent and Australia at 89 percent), Canadian IR scholars who opt for qualitative methods only sit at 78 percent, which is still significantly higher than Americans at 65 percent. Similarly, Canadian IR scholars working on Africa/Middle East are much less likely to identify as positivist than US scholars, but more likely than their UK and Australian counterparts to do so. In the same vein, they are more likely to identify as post-positivists than their US and UK counterparts, but less so than Australians, who are much more hostile to positivism (TRIP 2018).

While no other Canadian scholar made it into our ranking beyond the three listed in table 3, additional Canadian contributions to African IR that have been globally impactful warrant further discussion, given that they received 100+ citations in GS. We list these in table 4 as N/A. Furthermore, beyond highly impactful metrics, Canadian contributions are also apparent in the renewed and sustained efforts by a network of Canadian IR scholars working on Africa to de-Westernize IR by acknowledging and centering the agency of African actors in IR, to which we turn next. This centering of African agency in IR through key reflexive and pluralist lenses corresponds to a reflexive pluralist approach.

### Ontological Pluralism: Human Security and African Agency in IR Theory

Africa represented fertile ground for IR scholars seeking to delve into the conflict and cooperation dynamics of human security. The efforts of Canadian IR scholars working on human security in Africa to expand the scope of what constituted

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14 The sum is eleven because the co-authored article by Jackson (Canadian) and Rosberg (American) is counted twice.

15 This is partly because we excluded edited volumes from our rankings on the basis that impact cannot be as clearly attributed to specific scholars as monographs and journal articles.
Reflexive Pluralism in IR

Table 3. Top 10 most-cited publications in African IR

| Rank | Name                  | Affiliation       | Title                                                                 | Year (1st edition) | Number of citations |
|------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1    | Clapham, Christopher  | Cambridge         | *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* | 1996               | 1,827               |
| 2    | Alden, Chris          | LSE               | *China in Africa*                                                      | 2005               | 1,557               |
| 3    | Jackson, Robert H.    | Boston U. (former: UBC) | “Why Africa’s Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood” (w. Carl G. Rosberg) | 1982               | 1,427               |
| 3    | Rosberg, Carl G.      | Berkeley          | “Why Africa’s Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood” (w. Robert H. Jackson) | 1982               | 1,427               |
| 4    | Klotz, Audie          | Syracuse U.       | *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle against Apartheid*     | 1999               | 1,379               |
| 5    | Abrahamsen, Rita      | U. of Ottawa      | *Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa* | 2000               | 1,125               |
| 6    | Autesserre, Séverine   | Columbia U.       | *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding* | 2010               | 988                 |
| 7    | Williams, Michael C.  | U. of Ottawa      | *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics (w. Rita Abrahamsen)* | 2010               | 623                 |
| 8    | Taylor, Ian           | U. of St. Andrews | “China’s Oil Diplomacy in Africa”                                      | 2006               | 611                 |
| 9    | Harrison, Graham      | Durham U.         | *The World Bank and Africa: The Construction of Governance States*     | 2004               | 562                 |
| 10   | Herbst, Jeffrey       | American Jewish U.| “Responding to State Failure in Africa”                                 | 1997               | 525                 |

Notes: *Canadian IR Scholars are in bold. In tables 3 and 4, the citation counts are from February 2021, and only the author’s most-cited publication is listed. The total number of publications that appeared in our GS search and met our criteria for inclusion as part of the subfield (see fn 6 and fn 7) in this ranking is 32.*

“traditional IR,” and therefore contribute to Global IR, were driven by the pluralist objective of promoting greater ontological diversity. Moreover, engaging in disruptive work that contributes to the ontological diversity of Global IR is affirming for many scholars. These conditions empowered Canadian scholars of African IR in their efforts to underscore that any separation between IR and area studies was artificial and misinformed and that Africa had a great deal to teach IR scholars as part of the growing support for Global IR (Boulden 2013; Odoom and Andrews 2017; Mitchell 2018; contributors to Coleman and Tieku 2018). Though there has been some progress on closing the IR/area studies gap, the greatest contribution of Canadian IR scholars of Africa has been their analyses of African state and non-state agency within global affairs, especially on matters pertaining to the various issue-areas that make up human security.

While the early literature on human security tended to treat African actors as “victims” with little in the way of agency or largely as “weak” actors (Jackson and Rosberg 1982), Timothy Shaw (see table 4) was one of the first Canadian IR scholars to call for greater emphasis on agency, specifically on the innovative
Table 4. Most-cited publications on African IR authored by Canadian IR scholars

| Rank | Name                  | Affiliation                  | Title                                                                 | Year (1st edition) | Number of citations |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 3    | Jackson, Robert H.    | Boston U. (former: UBC)     | “Why Africa’s Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood” (w. Carl G. Rosberg) | 1982               | 1,427               |
| 5    | Abrahamsen, Rita      | U. of Ottawa                 | Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa (w. Rita Abrahamsen) | 2000               | 1,125               |
| 7    | Williams, Michael C.  | U. of Ottawa                 | Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics (w. Rita Abrahamsen) | 2010               | 623                 |
| N/A  | Shaw, Timothy*        | U. of Massachusetts Boston (former: Dalhousie) | Africa’s Challenge to International Relations Theory (w. Kevin C. Dunn) | 2001               | 273                 |
| N/A  | Brown, Stephen**      | U. of Ottawa                 | “Foreign Aid and Democracy Promotion: Lessons from Africa”          | 2005               | 235                 |
| N/A  | Tieku, Thomas**       | King’s College at Western    | Explaining the Clash and Accommodation of Interests of Major Actors in the Creation of the African Union | 2004               | 184                 |
| N/A  | Grant, J. Andrew***   | Queen’s                      | The New Regionalism in Africa (w. Fredrik Söderbaum)               | 2003               | 154                 |
| N/A  | Boulden, Jane***      | Royal Military College of Canada | Dealing with Conflict in Africa: The United Nations and Regional Organisations | 2003               | 112                 |

Notes: Edited volumes by Canadian IR scholars that meet our other criteria for selection and turned up in our GS search are marked “*”. Publications by Canadian IR scholars that did not turn up in our GS search (likely because of limitations pertaining to the tool itself; see fn 7), but meet our criteria for inclusion in the subfield, are marked “**”. Publications that are edited volumes and meet our other criteria, but did not appear in our GS search (see fn 7), are marked “***”.

ways that African actors were influencing global affairs (Shaw 1985). Shaw, who spent the bulk of his academic career at Dalhousie University, has supported the opening of various research centers on Africa, established fertile collaborations with scholars from the Global South (e.g., Cornelissen, Cheru, and Shaw 2012), and made important contributions to African IR and IPE scholarship in Canada. These developments have contributed to the emergence of a Canadian IR scholarship that engages in a regionally centered IR scholarship on Africa.

Indeed, human security norms have influenced the creation and evolution of international regimes and international institutions that either focus predominantly on Africa or are based in Africa and seek to achieve regional objectives. The African Union (AU) is a perfect illustration of such institutions and epitomizes efforts to provide African solutions to Africa’s human security challenges—which are infused with changing norms about sovereignty, North–South relations, human rights, good governance, respect for the rule of law, and so forth. Scholars can thus uncover important theoretical insights on what normative factors drive organizational dynamics and decision-making processes from the study of the AU. For instance, Canadian IR scholars have paid particular attention to the AU’s increasing role in regional peacekeeping missions and have focused on understanding important but
oft-overlooked strategies, motivations, and interests of bureaucrats and how these influence and mediate the actions of member-states in this preeminent human security issue-area (Grant and Tieku 2012; Bouka 2016; Bareebe 2018).

This is not to say that Canadian IR scholars have been uncritical of how human security norms have translated into practice, such as the R2P doctrine across Africa and globally (cf. Thakur 2016; Knight and Egerton 2012). Positivist/rationalist and post-positivist/reflexivist Canadian IR scholars alike have urged caution against oversimplifications and wide generalizations about the prospects for human security norms, and offered critical analyses of global governance initiatives that promote human security in Africa (cf. Smith 2003; MacLean, Black, and Shaw 2006; Charbonneau 2010; Welsh 2011; Akuffo 2012; Grant 2013; Hornsby 2014; Collins 2014; Charbonneau and Sears 2014; Black 2015; Enns, Andrews, and Grant 2020). This eclecticism is also consistent with Canadian IR’s comfort with complexity and discomfort with mono-causal explanations of Africa’s dynamics—a characteristic shared with Canadian scholarship on Asia-Pacific IR.

The eclecticism in Canadian contributions to African IR is manifested in their pluralist conceptualizations of African actors’ agency in IR. An illustration of this pluralist commitment is a recent volume edited by two Canadian IR scholars on African influence in International Security (Coleman and Tieku 2018). The volume highlights four pathways of African influence on international security norms by showing how it: (1) participates in the creation of global norms, (2) contributes to the development and diffusion of African norms, (3) shapes global implementation through creative norms, and (4) participates in the contestation of global norms. This edited volume is an example that supports the claim that there is a distinct Canadian contribution to locating Africa in IR. Indeed, a growing number of Canadian IR scholars have been focused on emphasizing African agency in world politics, for instance in the context of transnational terrorism (Smith 2010), peacekeeping (Tieku 2013), the International Criminal Court (Quinn and Hamilton 2016), theory and practice (Odoom and Andrews 2017), global resource politics (Compaoré 2018a, 2018b), conflict-prone minerals (Grant 2018b, 2020), peacebuilding (Martin de Almagro 2018), and international security norms (Coleman and Tieku 2018).

Reflexivism in African IR: Decolonizing IR through Critical Knowledge Production

In an effort to further recognize Africa as a site for intellectual innovations and contributions to the scholarship of IR, the International Studies Association (ISA) held its first international conference on the African continent in August 2019, in Accra (Ghana). This event demonstrated a growing interest and capacity for furthering African intellectual contributions to IR, with the aim of recognizing intellectual voices from the continent that are often excluded from key fora held in the Global North. A significant number of Canadian IR scholars—such as Amanda Coffie16 and Thomas Tieku—were part of the leadership of this conference and played an instrumental role in shepherding discussions on whether there is an “African School of IR.” While there is still no consensus on this matter, the coming years will likely see publications inspired by these scholarly initiatives. In other words, Canadian IR scholars are not only actively engaged with developing a research agenda aimed at emphasizing African contributions to IR, but in doing so, they are also among the leading intellectual forces that are pluralizing and globalizing the discipline.

One of the main objectives—and indeed contributions—of Canadian IR scholars working on Africa is to highlight the exclusions and silences that contribute to the marginalization of Africa in IR. Of particular interest is an emerging group of Canadian IR scholars of Africa who emphasize African intellectual contributions to

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16 Now faculty at the University of Ghana; PhD holder from Carleton University (Canada).
IR. Odoom and Andrews (2017), for instance, refer to an earlier, notable Canadian contribution to this endeavor, namely Cox’s (1996) essay entitled “Towards a Posthegemonic Conceptualization of World Order: Reflections on the Relevancy of Ibn Khaldun.” In this piece, Cox examines the intellectual impact of African thinker Ibn Khaldun to our understanding of world order, particularly his Islamic perspective on historical change and on the state, which echoes more contemporary efforts to “conceive of a post-Westphalian world” (Cox 1996, 158). Indeed, in locating IR theorizations beyond Western intellectual traditions, particularly within the political ontology of medieval Islam, Cox can be seen as an early proponent of “globalizing IR” and one who did so while taking a reflexive approach to the evolution of the field.

In the Canadian context, this reflexive approach has been marked by scholars of Africa problematizing the politics of knowledge production embedded in IR theorization, particularly the colonial and gendered dimensions of IR, which tend to be silenced in conventional narratives. Thus, as a scholar of international development and IR with a focus on Africa, Jane Parpart was one of the pioneers to question conventional scholarship centered on androcentric narratives. Notably, she advocated for feminist lenses in investigating the state in Africa (Parpart and Staudt 1989). Generations of Canadian IR scholars working on Africa remain at the forefront of these debates. For instance, Bouka (2020) recently examined the erasure of African women in studies of anticolonial movements in Africa, calling for an International Feminist scholarship that is embedded in decolonial approaches. These reflexive calls for decolonization in international studies are accompanied by broader efforts to rethink the processes shaping knowledge production, particularly around fieldwork (Fujii 2010). These efforts also involve critically examining “reflexivity, positionality, and risk in the field” by paying attention to race, gender, and nationality (Bouka 2015), committing to non-extractive fieldwork that gives back to the communities being studied (Andrews and Bawa 2019), and learning from other disciplines and subfields that have been at the forefront of critical approaches to fieldwork (Compaoré 2017). These developments, informed by a reflexive pluralist approach, suggest that future work from Canadian IR scholars of Africa will continue to engage with knowledge production, emphasize the utility of multi-disciplinarity, and promote decolonial approaches.

**Conclusion**

There is a growing recognition today that IR needs to be more “global” and that the responsibility of “fixing” the discipline should not be borne only by those who have suffered most directly from the biases and exclusionary practices stemming from the Western-centrism of the discipline. Canadian scholars—among other scholars of the “crimson world”—working on IR in the Global South are in a unique position to support the de-Westernization of the discipline and have indeed made a significant impact on the subfields under study already. This enterprise comes with its fair amount of tension and limitations. Indeed, it may seem paradoxical to suggest that a West-based IR scholarship can support this enterprise. We believe Canadian IR can contribute, albeit in a limited way, by providing allyship, by making space for alternative voices on IR, and by engaging in constructive forms of métissage. On the one hand, Canadian scholars who hail from the Asia-Pacific or Africa make a distinct mark on the field and their contributions to Global IR should be recognized. On the other hand, Canadian IR scholars who do not have a similar foothold in both “worlds”—i.e., by teaching and practicing IR in the Global North and being “from” the Global South, or vice versa—can still develop productive collaborations and use their positions of privilege in the discipline to lend support to the diffusion of marginalized voices and perspectives arising from their regions of study, give back, and deal more systematically and explicitly with the limits of their own positionality.
This article has argued that, while there may not be enough coherence within Canadian IR to speak of a distinct “school,” there is still something distinctly “Canadian” about the way Canadian scholars “do IR” of the Global South. While there has been a lot of discussion on what makes Canadian IR scholarship distinct, there has not yet been much examination of the way that it has impacted the study of IR beyond the West. This article has demonstrated that the pluralist and reflexivist dispositions of Canadian contributions to Asia-Pacific and African IR, although they come in many forms, have made a distinct and constructive imprint on these two subfields. In so doing, Canadian IR scholars contribute to the Global IR agenda in their own way, by making space for alternative ways of studying IR and further blurring the divide between not only the “West” and the “Rest,” but also IR and area studies.

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