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Coming of age in academia: Canadian International Relations and the "optimistic interregnum" of the 1990s

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Abstract
Taking the view of International Relations (IR) as a socio-intellectual space conditioned by historical circumstances, and drawing on my personal reflections on international politics in the 1990s as a particularly important influence on my own professional and intellectual path in IR, this paper explores the 1990s as an exceptional period that shaped the decline of Canadian Foreign Policy as a field of study in Canadian IR. Bookended by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, at the beginning, and the start of the War on Terror at its finale, the 1990s can be read as an "optimistic interregnum" during which new possibilities arose for an inclusive, global transnationalism and the global governance of important problems. New ideas and new ways of conceptualizing IR through a global lens emerged. For Canadian students of IR in the 1990s, outward-looking globalism, transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, and theoretical eclecticism fit with the hopeful optimism of the times. In contrast, CFP—with its attendant requisite of policy relevance in service of Canadian national priorities—seemed inward-looking, parochial, and on the sidelines of important new intellectual currents and analyses.

Keywords
Canadian Foreign Policy, 1990s, end of the Cold War, transnationalism, global politics

To ask the question why certain International Relations (IR) scholars are attracted to certain research questions and not others, why one identifies as an IR scholar of

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such-and-such but not of an equally probable this-and-that, is to reflect both on the sociology of knowledge and the production and institutionalization of professional identities within an academic discipline. What is the purpose of studying International Relations, or foreign policy? How do we decide what research problems and programs to pursue, how to pursue them, and for what purposes to build knowledge? In some conceptions and for some scholars, International Relations is a policy science in which the deployment of scientific methods can (and/or ought to) usefully serve policy debates based on specialist knowledge. At the same time, IR is an academic discipline with its own systems of professional rewards, boundaries, methods, and gatekeepers—about which constant argument is a constitutive force. Inclusive of these visions, IR may best be understood as "a socio-intellectual space"[1] in which a wide variety of ongoing conversations take place on matters of policy, method, explanation, prediction, normative issues, and critical appraisal. Within this socio-intellectual space, scholars may find themselves aligning in camps based as much on personal taste, temperament, and talent as on the intrinsic importance or value of their inquiries.

Thinking of IR as a socio-intellectual space encourages the recognition, furthermore, that IR scholarship—the prevailing questions, debates, theories, and orientations of a given period—tends to be strongly conditioned by historical circumstances: we, our questions, and our theories are shaped by what is going on in the world around us and where (we think) we stand in relation to these developments. As E.H. Carr pointedly noted about the "utopianism" he identified as prevailing in IR between the last century's two world wars, the intellectual theories and ethical standards of IR "far from being the expression of absolute and a priori principles, are historically conditioned, being both products of circumstances and weapons framed for the furtherance of interests."[2] More recently, in his important piece reflecting on IR scholarship during the second half of the twentieth century, Michael Mastanduno noted that the sociology of knowledge in IR is such that "the nature of the international system has a strong impact on the way that IR scholars conduct their business."[3] The 1970s, for example, was a period of transformation in global economic affairs marked in part by the collapse of Bretton Woods; energy crises; economic development and poverty reduction priorities in newly independent, post-colonial states; the growth of interdependence; and the relative decline of the United States. Concern about these international economic issues led almost directly to the rise to prominence within IR of the new subfield of International Political Economy (IPE).[4] In the meantime, and continuing through the phase of intensified global and nuclear competition between the Soviet Union

1. Peter Wilson, "E.H. Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis*: Appearance and reality in world politics," *Politik: Danish Journal of Political Science* 12, no. 4: 21–25.
2. E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1939), 87.
3. Michael Mastanduno, "Economics and security in statecraft and scholarship," *International Organization at Fifty: Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics* 52, no. 4 (1998): 828–829.
4. Ibid., 837–840.

and the United States in the 1980s, security studies in IR flourished, relatively separately from IPE. A stable bipolar system was expected to continue indefinitely, and funding expanded for studies of nuclear and conventional deterrence, alliance strategy, and the sources of military doctrine.[5] In short, IR scholarship responds to the international environment and the patterns of this response become institutionalized in academic life.

Close to twenty years after Mastanduno's piece, one might well ask what was happening in International Relations in the 1990s that may have shaped the professional direction of Canadian IR scholars now in their mid-career. This question arises especially in the context of the current debate about the demise of Canadian Foreign Policy, which Jean-Chrisophe Boucher, citing Imre Lakatos,[6] has called a "degenerative research program."[7] According to Boucher, based on his analysis of hundreds of peer-reviewed journal articles pertaining to Canadian Foreign Policy published between 2002 and 2012, Canadian Foreign Policy "has not been able to assert itself as a legitimate research program in the midst of other fields of study in political science."[8] Why not? Why is there not a greater pool of younger Canadian IR scholars focusing their scholarly inquiry on Canadian Foreign Policy, so as to contribute to a more robust, more diverse, and more progressive CFP research program? One reason might be related to the impact of the international environment on the direction of IR scholarship in the 1990s and on the generation of IR scholars that came of age in academia during that period. As a Canadian scholar of International Relations—born, raised, educated, and currently employed at a university in Canada and not engaged in scholarship on Canadian Foreign Policy—I look back at the 1990s, the decade during which the bulk of my inculcation as a student of International Relations took place, as having made a particularly important mark on my ideas about International Relations, on the scholarship and research questions I choose to pursue, and on my lack of professional interest in questions directly related to Canada's international behaviour, its determinants, or its consequences.

Bookended by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, at the beginning, and the start of the War on Terror at its finale, the 1990s, it turns out, was its own clearly delineated, exceptional period in International Relations. The 1990s was the twentieth century's second interregnum and, compared with the way IR scholars tend to look back on the first interregnum (1919–1939), it was a particularly hopeful time. It would be simplistic to draw either of the twentieth century's interwar periods with a single stroke of the brush. The first interregnum included both the "Roaring Twenties"—an exciting time of rising prosperity and

5. Ibid., 837–840.
6. Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the methodology of scientific research programmes," in I. Lakatos and A. Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, pp.91–196 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).
7. Jean-Christophe Boucher, "Yearning for a progressive research program in Canadian Foreign Policy," *International Journal* 69, no. 2 (2014): 213.
8. Ibid., 220.

opportunity, new ideas and new freedoms, the ascendancy in popular culture of jazz and sexual liberation, a golden period for sports, and what E.H. Carr referred to in IR as a utopian, progressivist liberal-internationalism—and the rise of fascism, economic and political instability, ethnic violence, rearmament, economic nationalism, and the beggar-thy-neighbour policies that culminated in the outbreak of the most brutal and destructive war in history.

The second interregnum (1991–2001) also included contradictory trends. A time of global transition and uncertainty, the 1990s was a period in which violent conflict, human misery, crises, and fear of the future played a recurring part in world politics. And yet, looking back, the 1990s can be said to have been marked significantly by a nascent hope for transformation, an optimism in which the prospects for a new world order of peace, stability, prosperity, and growing opportunities for social and economic justice seemed more likely to be achieved than at any time in recent memory. From a North American perspective, this was a decade of economic prosperity,[9] spreading democracy,[10] hope for peace in the Middle East,[11] and the advent of the Internet and new communication technologies[12] that revolutionized possibilities for "people power" as a path to global justice. It was a time that cultivated a new transnationalism, a global outlook, and a turn away from old models of International Relations premised on the competitive pursuit of national self-interest by "billiard ball"-like states bounded by a clearly delineated sovereignty.[13] The 1990s crashed to a sudden halt with the terrorist attacks in the United States of 11 September 2001—which so dramatically shaped the direction of world politics for at least the next decade—and were followed by a period of open-ended war, global economic crisis, and looming environmental catastrophe. To a great extent one can look back at that period as having been, for North Americans, a time of hopeful possibility. This was an "optimistic interregnum."

9. Jeffrey Frankel and Peter R. Orszag, "Retrospective on American economic policy in the 1990s." Brookings, https://www.brookings.edu/research/retrospective-on-american-economic-policy-in-the-1990s/ (accessed 25 April 2017).
10. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); Jeffrey Herbst, "Political liberalization in Africa after ten years," *Comparative Politics* 33, no. 3 (2001): 357–375; Sahr John Kpundeh, ed., *Democratization in Africa: African Views, African Voices: Summary of Three Workshops* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1992), http://www.nap.edu/books/0309047978/html/ (accessed 25 April 2017).
11. Mark Heller and Sari Nusseibeh, *No Trumpet, No Drums: A Two-State Settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 1st ed. (New York: Hill and Wang 1991); Francis Sejersted, "The Nobel Peace Prize 1994—presentation speech," *Nobelprize.org*. https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1994/presentation-speech.html (accessed 25 April 2017).
12. Bill Gates, "The Internet tidal wave," https://www.wired.com/2010/05/0526bill-gates-internet-memo/ (accessed 25 April 2017).
13. Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Ethan A. Nadelmann, "Global prohibition regimes: The evolution of norms in international society," *International Organization* 44, no. 4 (1990): 479–526; Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*. Cornell Studies in Political Economy (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); cf. Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. Addison-Wesley Series in Political Science (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979).

Drawing on my personal reflections on international politics in the 1990s as a particularly important influence on my generation's professional and intellectual path in IR in Canada (or, at least, my own), this paper aims to start a conversation about the 1990s as a defined period that has yet to be addressed in the historiography of the discipline. To the point of the current debate on the decline of CFP as a field of study, I offer the suggestion that world politics in the 1990s presented new possibilities for an inclusive, global transnationalism and improved prospects for the global governance of important problems. In response, new ideas and new ways of conceptualizing IR through a global lens emerged. For Canadian students of IR, a fresh outward-looking globalism, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism sat comfortably with the hopeful optimism of the times. In contrast, during this period, CFP—with its attendant requisite of "policy relevance" in service of Canadian national priorities—seemed to me and to my peers at the time to be inward-looking, parochial, and on the sidelines of important new intellectual currents and analyses.

Two important caveats are in order. First, this paper does not pretend to offer a definitive history, either of dominant trends and forces in world politics or of the intellectual contributions, conceptual concerns, and debates prevalent in the academic IR literature. This is, rather, an idiosyncratic personal reflection of someone who was at the time a "taker" rather than a "shaper" of trends and discourses, academic norms and priorities. Second, I recognize that my take on the 1990s is probably influenced by nostalgia. I may be particularly nostalgic for what I recall as a moment of optimism in world politics compared especially with what I see as today's moment of pessimism marked by rising demagoguery; the prospects of cataclysmic climate change; the long-term, destabilizing implications of unresolved global economic crises; looming disasters connected with the complex consequences of migration, inequality, the spread of disease, and other transnational challenges; the coming crisis of antibiotic resistance; and the technological fragility of our electrical grid.[14] In contrast, the 1990s may seem like one of so many mythical golden eras. It is also difficult to distinguish one's nostalgia for a perceived "golden era" from one's nostalgia for the time in one's life when one experienced that era. Is one nostalgic for the way the world was (or was perceived to be) in the 1990s, or nostalgic for the period of youth during which one experienced those times? One becomes wistful for "Youth," that time of career and relationship exploration; prime physical condition; freedom from children, mortgages, or other quotidian responsibilities; and "the feeling of absolute freedom, of living in a world of pure possibilities" and "the enormous value placed upon change, transformation and movement" that are typical of this stage in life.[15] (With apologies to

14. It is possible that an over-consumption of post-apocalyptic fiction colours my take on these times. See, for example, the short story "The Empties" by Jess Row (2014), the novels *Station Eleven* (2014) by Emilie St. John Mandel and *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy (2006), and the recent Craig Zobel film *Z Is for Zachariah* (2015).
15. Kenneth Keniston, *Youth and Dissent: The Rise of a New Opposition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971), quoted in Robin Marantz Henig, "What is it about 20-somethings?" *New York Times*, 18 August 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/22/magazine/22Adulthood-t.html (accessed 25 April 2017).

Gramsci,[16] my take on the 1990s might be coloured by trite ''pessimism of maturity, optimism of youth.'')

Caveats established, the paper proceeds with a narrative of the main events and key points of the optimistic interregnum, followed by a sketch of some important trends in IR scholarship that emerged during this period. The paper concludes with some thoughts on alternative explanations for the demise of CFP, and whether parochialism in the service of a national project deserves a second look.

The decade of the 1990s: Optimistic interregnum

In International Relations, the decade of the 1990s opened with the game-changing collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, which had been the backdrop to most of world politics since the conclusion of the Second World War. The Berlin Wall came down in 1989, free elections replaced communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe, and in 1991 the Soviet empire dissolved into its component republics. Boris Yeltsin became the first (nearly) democratically elected president of Russia. Also in 1991 the first Iraq war, quickly prosecuted in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait by a UN-sanctioned, US-led international ''coalition of the willing,'' illustrated a new post-Cold War commitment to multilateralism and collective security and the promise of a ''new world order'' with the United Nations reclaiming a more prominent role. This was also the dawn of 24-hour news as CNN covered the war live, which Canadian television stations freely broadcast. The immediacy and connection to far-flung events and places, the feeling that the world was truly shrinking into a ''global village,'' and the new possibilities for international cooperation were unprecedented and exciting.

Soon after the Gulf War, UN secretary general Boutros Boutros-Ghali's *An Agenda for Peace* (1992) opened new avenues for meeting threats to collective security based on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peacekeeping and relaunched discussion about UN Security Council reform. The 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio—including more than 100 heads of state and thousands of NGO representatives, unprecedented in size, global participation, and scope of focus—produced Agenda 21 for worldwide sustainable development. The Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed the 1994 Oslo Accords—the start of a legitimate peace process and a new era of stability and optimism for Middle East peace. In Europe, the Maastricht Treaty (1992) created a deeper and more closely integrated European Union. In South Africa, after decades of brutal apartheid, over 17 million black South Africans exercised their democratic right to

16. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited by Q. Hoare and G.N. Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), cited in Stephen Gill, ''Theorizing the interregnum: The double movement and global politics in the 1990s,'' in Björn Hettne, ed., *International Political Economy: Understanding Global Disorder*, 66: 65–99 (Halifax, NS: Fernwood, 1995).

vote for the first time in their lives in that country's first multiracial elections, bringing Nelson Mandela—a global hero—to office in 1994. In 1995, the Beijing Conference on Women took a vital, prominent step in bringing women's equality to the world stage. The Kyoto Protocol of 1997 implemented the objectives of the UN Framework Convention on climate change. Transnational civil society emerged as a force to contend with, helping to bring about an international treaty to ban landmines through the Ottawa Process (1996–1997), as well as to advocate for human rights and for accountability in global economic governance. Democratic transitions, the rise to prominence on the global agenda of human rights and social issues, the conclusion of new international agreements through which to cooperatively address complex global problems, and the emergence of NGOs and transnational activists as forces for political accountability and legitimacy in global politics were all hallmarks of the 1990s. For young students of international politics raised as children during the later years of the Cold War, these were moving and heady developments. In North America, generally, this was a time of economic prosperity, technological innovation, the early days of email and the Internet, the expanding use of cell phones, and cheaper travel—all of which encouraged a sense of transnationalism, a global outlook, and an emerging global cosmopolitanism.

Of course, during this same period unspeakably terrible things were happening. Although the ideological conflict between East and West that had been the source of so much hostility and mistrust had collapsed, North–South tensions escalated. New assertions of nationalism and ethnic, religious, and linguistic strife threatened the cohesion of certain states. Brutal war, siege, starvation, and ethnic cleansing proceeded among and within the states of the former Yugoslavia. Violent intervention fuelled humanitarian crisis in Somalia. Genocide was met with lamentable non-intervention in Rwanda. The 1997 Asian financial crisis wiped out the wealth of millions of people and confirmed the failure of international economic expertise. Europeans worried about a mounting democratic deficit. Others noted the injustice of neoliberal hegemony and the dangers of the "relentless thrust of capitalism on a global scale,"[17] as well as the diffusion of state power and authority[18] and the emergence of "non-traditional" sources of transnational security threat: organized crime, corruption, disease, piracy, illicit trade, ethnic sectarianism, religious extremism, terrorism, complex humanitarian emergencies, and the globalization of conflict.[19] Robert Kaplan warned about the "coming anarchy."[20]

17. Gill, "Theorizing the interregnum," 66.
18. Susan Strange, *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy*. Cambridge Studies in International Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
19. Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).
20. Robert Kaplan, "The coming anarchy," *Atlantic*, February 1994, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/02/the-coming-anarchy/304670/ (accessed 25 April 2017).

Jessica Matthews explained the seismic implications of the era's global "power shift."[21] We worried about post-Soviet "loose nukes."[22]

Yet at the same time, these crises and challenges left open hopeful possibilities. The war in the former Yugoslavia was possibly a "last gasp" for violent ethnonationalism in Europe. The seemingly relentless march of neoliberal globalization was (at least temporarily) halted by the massive civil society protests organized by Lori Wallach and Citizens United at the famous 1999 "Battle of Seattle"—making unprecedented and exciting use of new communications technologies like email to do so—which scuppered the planned, secretive Multilateral Agreement on Investment and promised opportunities within globalization for meaningful social action.[23] Challenges to state sovereignty opened the door for more pluralistic sources of international legitimacy and authority, including the rise to prominence of NGOs and transnational human rights activists who could call states to account and improve compliance with international law. The horrifying genocide in Rwanda—unopposed by the international community during its execution—nevertheless served as the impetus for the creation of an International Criminal Court (ICC). It also brought unprecedented attention to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), whose International Council president, the Canadian doctor James Orbinski, MSF's head of mission in Rwanda during the genocide, received the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the group in 1999.

Today, in 2017, we can look back at many of these developments and opportunities with a sad (or angry) note of disappointment. The Oslo Accords crumbled amid renewed violence and conflict. Russian democracy is a sham. The Kyoto Accord has been a failure. UN Security Council reform is off the table. The European project is on the brink. The ICC faces a crisis of legitimacy. Bitter experience has shown that non-state actors are not always positive forces for international peace and security, fairness, or global justice. Ironically, and notwithstanding their dire warnings of impending doom at the time, none of the "Realists" of the immediate post-Cold War world predicted what *would* be the crisis that ended this optimistic interregnum: the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001. In a moment, it seemed, the focus of international politics shifted completely. Among many changes, the 1990s period gave way to war in Afghanistan, the disastrous US invasion of Iraq, a series of devastating transnational terrorist attacks in Bali (2002 and 2005), Madrid (2004), London (2005), Bombay (2008), and so on, continuing through to the recent attacks in Paris and Nice in 2016, plus ongoing terrorism and violence throughout Iraq and other parts of the Middle East and Africa. In addition, the devastating impacts

21. Jessica Matthews, "Power shift," *Foreign Affairs*, February 1997, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1997-01-01/power-shift (accessed 25 April 2017).
22. Graham T. Allison, *Avoiding Nuclear Anarchy: Containing the Threat of Loose Russian Nuclear Weapons and Fissile Material*. CSIA Studies in International Security, No. 12 (Cambridge: MIT Press).
23. Moisés Naím, "Lori's war. The FPI interview," *Foreign Policy*, September 2001, DOI: 10.2307/1149669.

of the 2008 global financial crisis, the rise of ISIS, the crumbling of Syria into civil war, and the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War are now some of the most prominent dilemmas in International Relations. Looking back from this perspective, the view of the 1990s as an optimistic interregnum comes into sharper relief. At the time, the post-Cold War international environment seemed to offer important new possibilities and a compelling sense of hope for renewed international cooperation, effective global governance, and the better management of crucial global challenges. We did not yet know how poorly it would turn out.

IR scholarship in the 1990s

So what was happening in academic IR in the 1990s? Without providing a thorough excavation of every important contribution and debate, one plausible take on this period is that it was a time during which meta-theoretical and methodological debates were at the fore, new and exciting intellectual currents surfaced, and new directions for inquiry presented themselves to match the new possibilities in world affairs. The epistemological and ontological challenges mounted by post-positivist critiques of the discipline and the so-called "Third Debate"[24] offered not just new analyses of world politics but new ways of analyzing and of conceiving of the subjects of our analyses. The emergence of social constructivism[25] as a challenger to the dominant realist and liberal approaches in American IR and new literature on the power of international norms[26] and on transnational non-state actors[27] seemed to promote possibilities for global transformation in the direction of peace, human rights, international law, and global justice. New literature on legalization and compliance[28] theorized the unprecedented explosion of international legal arrangements aimed at improving international cooperation to support the global governance of complex problems. The expanding field of Security Studies[29] introduced new security "referents" beyond that of the nation-state, and "human security" became a priority in prominent academic and policy debates.[30] Feminist

24. Yosef Lapid, "The Third Debate: On the prospects of international theory in a post-positivist era," *International Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1989): 235–254.
25. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 1st ed. (Cambridge, UK, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*.
26. Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International norm dynamics and political change," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 887–917; Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
27. Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*.
28. Abram Chayes and Antonia Handler Chayes, *The New Sovereignty: Compliance with International Regulatory Agreements* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Judith L. Goldstein, Miles Kahler, Robert O. Keohane, and Anne-Marie Slaughter, eds., *Legalization and World Politics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).
29. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1998).
30. UNDP, "Human development report 1994," United Nations Development Program, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf (accessed 25 April 2017).

theoretical approaches gained traction in IR, offering forceful critiques of traditional IR theory and new directions for more sophisticated, fair, and humane International Relations based on gender equality.[31] The idea of "soft power"[32] offered non-militaristic pathways to international influence. The study of International Relations moved decisively beyond a circumscribed focus on nation-states and their interactions within the state-based international system to consider transnationalism, globalism, and a wide variety of important, internationally relevant non-state actors and non-state-based processes.

Against the backdrop of these fresh intellectual currents in International Relations scholarship, for emerging Canadian IR academics in the 1990s studying Canadian Foreign Policy may have felt like looking inward when one wanted to be looking outward. Keeping tabs on bureaucratic politics and the technical machinery of foreign policy decision-making in Ottawa, whether through studies of diplomatic history or the case-study method of the traditional CFP classroom, seemed relatively parochial. The debates around which CFP for so long seemed to have centred—Canada as a middle power or a principal power—were less relevant. Questions about how Canada could best deploy its capabilities and pursue its core national interests (whether through "niche diplomacy" or G7 governance) seemed less engaging than the intellectual possibilities and problematiques offered by the broad canvas of global-oriented IR studies. Even the Canadian government's own review of foreign policy in 1994 encouraged Canadians to be "more globalist in outlook and action," a recognition that "the well-being of Canadians was bound up with that of the rest of the world"[33]—a world that was itself the target of study in a global-oriented IR, but not often captured in the research program of CFP.

In graduate school at the University of Toronto in the 1990s, we were encouraged to emphasize and privilege system-level theorizing over unit-level or foreign policy analysis; grapple with conceptual and theoretical puzzles rather than policy prescription; and focus on "outward-looking" global and transnational ideas, institutions, and processes, rather than "parochial" questions of Canadian Foreign Policy. The PhD core course in International Relations, dominated by US literature so that candidates at Toronto would be competitively knowledgeable, included very little on foreign policy analysis and no readings at all on Canadian Foreign Policy. The comprehensive exam for the IR subfield included questions on epistemological and methodological positions in the field, international law as a source of world order, and the implications of changing patterns of power in the international system—but nothing on Canadian Foreign Policy. In the 1990s it was certainly possible for a PhD student in International Relations at the University of

31. J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990).
32. Joseph Nye, "Soft power," *Foreign Policy* 80: 153–171.
33. Quoted in Heather A. Smith, "Seeking certainty and finding none: Reflections on the 1994 Canadian Foreign Policy Review," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 3, no. 1 (1995): 117–124.

Toronto to complete the program without any knowledge at all of the literature on Canadian Foreign Policy, the prevailing debates in the field, or the important foreign policy concerns of the government of the day. Given the wealth and breadth of IR scholarship we were asked to master, and the global opportunities suggested by the optimistic interregnum that defined that time, CFP was not sorely missed.

Conclusion

To the extent that CFP is, indeed, a degenerative research program, why has it not been able to assert itself as a legitimate research program in political science? This paper suggests that one reason might be a dearth of International Relations scholars interested in the questions that have tended to dominate CFP. IR scholars who came of age in academia in the 1990s, in particular, may have been especially disinclined to focus their research on the nitty gritty of foreign policy decision-making in Ottawa or the requisites of foreign policy relevance in service to Canadian nationalism and Canadian priorities. The impact of the 1990s—an optimistic interregnum between the end of the Cold War and the start of the "War on Terror"—on the direction of IR scholarship has yet to be fully explored in the historiography of the discipline. For Canadian students of IR in the 1990s, I suggest, one important impact of the optimistic interregnum on their scholarship may have been a turn away from Canadian Foreign Policy as a parochial project in favour of theoretical eclecticism and a global-oriented attention to transnational problems and projects.

Given the relatively small numbers of academic political scientists in Canada to begin with, the fact that CFP has remained a small field prone to degeneration is not altogether surprising. Aside from generational shifts in the socio-intellectual field of IR—in which the prevailing international politics of the day may channel scholars' interests away from CFP—we are a small number, in tightly connected professional communities that do not privilege foreign policy at all. American Foreign Policy, rather than Canadian, is pushed to the forefront because it shapes so many important global trends. Matters of professional incentives and opportunity are also extremely important. What gets published in the highest-ranked journals? Not articles on Canadian Foreign Policy. While taste, temperament, and talent are important drivers in the professional development and orientation of any scholar, so are publication strategies, institutional resources, funding opportunities, program requirements, job opportunities, and material rewards within a globalized academia.

Reflecting on the ways in which IR scholarship responds to the international environment—and recognizing that the patterns of this response become institutionalized in the distribution of resources and opportunities in academic life—reminds us how context-dependent are our judgments about what is important or unimportant to study. It emphasizes for us all the need for heightened reflexivity about these choices. To compare the relative importance of various fields of study is misguided. Modesty with respect to our professional choices, research interests, and intellectual proclivities is warranted. As to whether the current international

environment—in which the outlook does not seem very good—ought to prompt a return to scholarly parochialism in the Canadian national interest, this remains to be seen.

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