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INTERNATIONAL CANADIAN STUDIES ON THE MOVE: TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

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INTERNATIONAL CANADIAN STUDIES ON THE MOVE: TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

BY MARCEL MARTEL AND JEAN MICHEL MONTSION

Marcel Martel is a professor of Canadian history and holds the Avie Bennett Historica Canada Chair in Canadian History at York University. Jean Michel Montsion is a professor in the Department of Global and Social Studies at Glendon College, and director of the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies (2021–2026).

In June 2024, the International Canadian Studies Summit was held at York University. Organized by the International Council for Canadian Studies, the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, and the Avie Bennett Historica Canada Chair in Canadian History at York University, the Summit was an opportunity for domestic and international Canadianists to discuss the state of the study of Canada from abroad, a decade after the federal government ended the Understanding Canada program, its flagship cultural diplomacy mechanism anchored in academic networks. Held online and offered as a summer school, the Summit convened emerging scholars and graduate students on the various facets of the critical study of Canada, to support a new generation of Canadianists in gaining academic experiences despite the lack of state-funded opportunities.

The Summit was held with the support of many other institutions, including the Canadian Studies Network, the Centre for Canadian Studies at Brock University, the Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies at Trent University, the Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada, and the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada. It was financially supported by the Avie Bennett Historica Canada Chair in Canadian History, the International Council for Canadian Studies, the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) through a Partnership Development Grant entitled *(Re)Searching for Canadian Studies*, known as the CanSearch project.

This special issue of *Canada Watch* gathers key observations and insights from the Summit, reflections from attendees and speakers, and testimonies on the ongoing challenges, initiatives, and research conducted in support of international Canadian Studies. In the first section, the contributors provide an overview of the current state of discussions within and outside government on support for international Canadian Studies. Remarks from the Honourable Yuen Pau Woo and Nik Nanos give a good sense of the improbable path ahead for reinstating the Understanding Canada program, and offer some lenses through which the field of international Canadian Studies is perceived. These observations and insights are followed by reports by Prof. Jean Michel Montsion and Dominik Formanowicz on the state of Canadian Studies, and by Prof. Kerstin Knopf on its contribution to Canada through the notion of knowledge democracy.

The second section offers a variety of perspectives on the Summit. It opens with Prof. Montsion's compilation of insights from working groups reflecting on the views of Summit speakers. The section continues with the observations of Prof. Jane Koustas, the president of the International Council for Canadian Studies, and the perspective of Prof. Christophe Premat, a Summit attendee and director of a research centre on Canada in Sweden. The section ends with the insights of Prof. Élisabeth Abergel, who held a teaching session during the Summit's summer school.

In the third section, authors comment on their own experiences in conducting research or teaching about Canada from abroad or with Canadian partners. They document both their challenges and their successful collaborations, which may be key to creating a path forward in supporting international Canadian Studies. Prof. Anna Branach-Kallas helps us understand the role that Canadian institutions and academic culture can play in parallel or in collaboration with organizations abroad; Prof. Christoph Vatter presents the historical context and contemporary challenges and opportunities for the study of Canada in German-speaking countries; and Prof. Norie Yazu shares the experiences of facilitating the study of Canada from Japan through award-winning pedagogical initiatives. Finally, Lucy Luccisano, Bina Mehta, and Prof. Kevin Spooner offer concrete recommendations, based on their experiences in facilitating American–Canadian initiatives, on planning for such collaborations.

In the fourth and final section, members of the CanSearch project present their reflections on key insights drawn from the surveys and interviews conducted by the team. Prof. Carolyn Podruchny shares the difficulties and possibilities of teaching about Indigenous histories in the North American context, specifically in Canada, and Prof. Tameka Samuels-Jones resituates the study of Canada through the actions of Canadian corporations abroad—in this case, in bauxite mining in Jamaica. These commentaries are followed by the reflections of Prof. Paul Morris on the importance of multiculturalism as a key theme of interest in the field of international Canadian Studies and as a scholarly connector to ongoing discussions and critiques of the concept in Canada and abroad. Finally, Profs. Eve Haque and Marcel Martel discuss languages in the study of Canada, not necessarily as a theme of direct interest but one through which other Canadian realities and processes are examined, such as multiculturalism and racialization.

We hope that this issue of *Canada Watch* offers readers in Canada and abroad a good sense of the dynamic field of international Canadian Studies, and of its importance to Canada, both as a form of knowledge democracy and as a cultural diplomacy tool. We thank all participants in the 2024 International Canadian Studies Summit and we hope to witness an increasing number of collaborations and initiatives in support of the field in the coming years. ■

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Montsion, J. M., & Formanowicz, D. (2023). *(Re)searching for Canadian Studies* (CanSearch) [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Partnership Development Grant No. 890-2021-0076]. <https://www.yorku.ca/research/robarts/cansearch/>

2024 International Canadian Studies Summit: Opening remarks*

BY THE HONOURABLE YUEN PAU WOO

Appointed to the Senate of Canada in November 2016, the Honourable Yuen Pau Woo sits as an independent representing British Columbia. He served as facilitator of the Independent Senators Group from 2017 to 2021.

It is my pleasure to deliver opening remarks to the 2024 International Canadian Studies Summit. I want to thank Professors Jean Michel Montsion and Daniel Béland for inviting me. I am pleased for this opportunity to reconnect with scholars I have had the pleasure to interact with over the years.

That includes Dr. Montsion, whom I met many years ago at the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. The fact that our path to this conference on international Canadian Studies ran through our time together at a think tank on Canada's relations with Asia says something about the nature of Canadian Studies. It is that the value of Canadian Studies and an appreciation for the value of Canadianists such as all of you are more often recognized outside of Canada than within our borders. But it also says something about the problem facing Canadian Studies in general, which is that if it is more valued outside of Canada than within Canada, how do we muster domestic support for the expansion of Canadian Studies programs worldwide?

This is a question that I imagine many of you will be discussing in the sessions to follow. It is also a question that was posed by the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Development at hearings held in the spring of 2023 on the broader topic of cultural diplomacy. Nik Nanos and Dr. Béland, from whom you will hear shortly, testified at those hearings, as did other Canadian Studies program directors from around the world.

Senators heard loud and clear the plea from your colleagues that there was a need to reinvigorate Canadian Studies along the lines of the Understanding Canada program which was terminated in 2012. Indeed, our 2019 Senate Standing Committee report entitled *Cultural Diplomacy at the Front Stage of Canada's Foreign Policy* specifically called for "Global Affairs Canada [to] support the creation of a modernized Canadian Studies program that would contribute to knowledge about Canada in the world."

In summary, the Global Affairs Canada (GAC) response to that call is as follows:

1. *Canadian diplomats are doing the work of enhancing knowledge and understanding of Canada abroad;*
2. *The Government is supporting Canadian educational institutions in welcoming students from abroad, forging educational partnerships with foreign institutions, and promoting outbound mobility of Canadian students;*
3. *International alumni of Canadian institutions serve as bridges between Canada and their home country and they contribute to a legacy of goodwill and cooperation.*

In short, the promotion of Canadian Studies as such is not a priority for GAC.

Canadian Heritage, for its part, has said that it is willing to support GAC in “exploring options for the delivery of a Canadian Studies program oriented around Canada’s international priorities and designed for impact.”

The idea that a Canadian Studies program should be oriented around “Canada’s international priorities” makes me uneasy, but this is where an audience such as this one can help shape a definition of “Canada’s international priorities” that is faithful to the complexity of Canada’s history, economy, and society, rather than one that comes out of the Foreign Minister’s mandate letter.

The fate of Canadian Studies abroad is tied to the broader question of Canada’s presence in the world. I am not referring narrowly to our diplomatic presence by way of embassies, consulates, and trade offices. There is a separate policy discussion underway about the need to invest in and modernize our foreign service for the 21st century, including our physical footprint around the world. That discussion is contained in a different Senate Foreign Affairs Committee report, entitled *More than a Vocation: Canada’s Need for a 21st Century Foreign Service*.

The way in which we think about Canada’s place in the world must be more than the sum of our positions on major foreign policy issues or the footprint of our diplomatic representation abroad. After all, when you think about grandiose official pronouncements of recent governments—for example, “Canada as an energy superpower” under Stephen Harper or “Canada is back” à la Justin Trudeau—the track record is not very impressive.

We don’t do enough to actively promote and celebrate Canada’s businesses, NGOs, educational institutions, and cultural groups that are doing important things across the world, and above all Canadian citizens who live abroad. This kind of recognition, however, seems to be a difficult thing for resident Canadians to do. We seem to be either shy about talking about non-official Canadian presence around the world, or even dismissive or resentful about some aspects of that reality.

For example, the stock of outbound direct investment by Canadian companies has for many years been larger than that of inbound investment. Rather than celebrating the prowess of Canadian overseas investment and the benefits of such for the Canadian economy, the common refrain—including on Parliament Hill—is, “Why aren’t those companies investing in Canada instead?” You may be aware that there is a movement afoot to direct our public pension funds to put more of their money in Canada, out of proportion to the size of our economy. Parliament recently passed a bill to tighten national security rules around inbound investment, with little consideration given to what it might mean for the outbound investments of Canadian companies.

Perhaps the least appreciated aspect of Canada’s presence in the world is our overseas citizens. Late last year, I commissioned from the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada a report on the state of knowledge about Canadians abroad, with a focus on policy issues arising from this overseas population. Nearly 20 years earlier, the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada was the research pioneer on this topic, producing the first-ever estimates of Canadians abroad and elucidating some of the policy issues around our overseas population. The purpose of my commission was to get an update on the state of knowledge about Canadians abroad.

The report was written by Dr. Lucia Kovacikova and released in April of this year. Among the major findings and recommendations are the following:

- There are over 4 million Canadians residing abroad, accounting for over 11 percent of the national population. Statistics Canada in fact believes that the number could be as high as 5.3 million. That number is larger than the populations of most Canadian provinces. Indeed, I have taken to calling our overseas citizens “the Province of Canada in the world.”
- We know relatively little about the Canadian diaspora, their experiences abroad, and how current federal and provincial policies affect them. Policy areas that have an impact on the diaspora’s experience include consular services, health care, taxation, voting rights, and economic and cultural policies, among others. These important areas of public policy are the responsibility of various de-

partments and agencies at different levels of government. Hence, working with and supporting the diaspora requires an across-governmental approach.

- Members of the diaspora have the right to vote in national elections and often pay Canadian taxes while residing abroad. They are also unofficial representatives of Canada within their local communities and establish their own professional and personal networks that can aid in Canada's economic development; promote knowledge-sharing, research, and innovation; and help build cultural ties between Canada and other countries.
- In short, the diaspora is an active international community and an untapped resource for Canada in the increasingly globalized world.
- The Government of Canada does not have an official strategy for cultivating the diaspora. This contrasts sharply with diaspora engagement policies of other countries, where citizens residing abroad are being actively incorporated into areas like skill sharing, economic development, cultural exchanges, and foreign policy.

To the extent that resident Canadians know about their overseas compatriots, attitudes toward the diaspora range from ambivalence to resentment. Of course, we celebrate the Canadian entertainment, business, and athletic superstars who live in Miami, Los Angeles, London, and Paris. Beyond the handful of brand names that the average Canadian can recognize among celebrity citizens living abroad, however, there is a persistent belief that the general population of Canadians living overseas are self-interested individuals with little to offer the motherland, even to the extent of being seen as disloyal and a burden on the Canadian taxpayer.

This sentiment is expressed most prominently when there is a need to evacuate Canadian citizens from places where there is severe civil strife. This usually applies to non-Caucasian Canadians, some of whom are naturalized citizens who chose to go back to their native countries or to third countries for family or professional reasons. The evacuation of Ukrainian Canadians and more generally the warm reception given to Ukrainian refugees has changed the tone of public sentiment on this issue—in a way that is telling.

We are not yet at the stage where a mass exodus from Hong Kong may take place (I hope not), but how will the Canadian public respond to a desire for as many as 300,000 Hong Kongers with Canadian passports to return to this country en masse? I still remember when Hong Kong immigrants who returned to Asia after they got their Canadian status were labelled by politicians and the media as “foreigners with Canadian passports” or “immigrants of convenience.” It is little wonder that there is a general sense of antipathy toward our Canadian diaspora.

The very term “Canadian diaspora” is an example of why so many resident Canadians have a limited understanding of our presence in the world. When politicians, journalists, and scholars talk about the Canadian diaspora, they are almost always referring to minority racialized communities *in* Canada who maintain ties with their native countries. They are not referring to our citizens abroad. Hence the Indian diaspora in Canada, the African diaspora in Canada, the Chinese diaspora in Canada, and so on.

What does it say about our self-image that the term “diaspora” is used to refer to minority Canadians living in Canada, rather than Canadian citizens living outside of the country?

I think it has to do with how Canadians see themselves in relation to the world. There is a sense among many of us that we won the lottery by being born in this country or by having been selected as an immigrant to Canada. Unfortunately, it often comes with the rider that, having won the lottery, why would anyone choose to give it up by going abroad? I have heard many times the view that there is something ignoble about moving to another country after immigrating to Canada, even if it is for perfectly sensible professional or family reasons.

Our national psyche is built on the powerful idea of Canada being a country of immigrants, but it takes a turn into parochialism when we cannot appreciate the value of also being a country of emigrants. We tend to see immigration as a one-way ticket, with Canada as the final stop.

There is a paradox here, which has to do with the difficulty that many immigrants face in getting jobs that are commensurate with their skills and experience. Is it any surprise that immigrants who come from dynamic economies and cannot find suitable work in Canada should choose to go back to those places to pursue professional opportunities? You may be aware of a recent study showing that accession rates of immigrants to take up Canadian citizenship are declining, as well as media stories about recent immigrants who choose to leave Canada because of the difficulty in finding suitable housing, jobs, etc. This is feeding into the broader partisan debate about how Canada is “broken” as well as support for immigration in general, which has fallen to about 50 percent.

There are good reasons to be concerned about lower rates of citizenship accession and even better reasons to help new immigrants settle successfully into their adopted country. But if they choose to leave Canada to return to their native countries or to go to third countries for personal or professional reasons, wouldn't we be better off embracing them as part of a global asset for the country, rather than writing them off as having Canadian “passports of convenience”? The reality of attachment to Canada is that it works both ways. A Canada that is not interested in attaching to its overseas citizens will only foster a pool of overseas citizens who are not interested in attaching to Canada.

Changing a mindset on Canadians abroad will take time, and it must start with deliberate public policy. I have long argued for an agency within the federal government that is dedicated to increasing the attachment of overseas Canadians to Canada, and which has the power to coordinate activities across different departments that touch on issues of attachment. There are many issues to consider, including data collection, residency qualifications, taxation, social security, and dual citizenship. For provincial governments, there are additional questions to do with health insurance, property tax, and housing.

Dr. Kovacikova's report reinforces this point. The central insight from her research and previous work by Dr. Don DeVoretz and Kenny Zhang is that Canadians abroad are not contingent liabilities on our national balance sheet but are a hidden asset for the country. The extent to which this asset can be unhidden depends on whether Canadians embrace their overseas compatriots in the way we embrace newcomers to the country. It also depends on whether there are government policies that explicitly focus on connecting with Canadians abroad and encouraging them to participate in Canadian affairs.

Not unlike the evolution in thinking about the meaning of Canada that came with the gradual awareness of the vastness of this country in the 19th century, recognition of Canadians abroad represents a new frontier in our thinking about the future of the country. As much as we are proud to be a country of immigrants, we should be equally proud of Canadians who venture abroad. They are, as I have coined, citizens of *the Province of Canada in the World*.

My closing point is that Canadians abroad can be an important ally in the promotion of Canadian Studies. As with all of you who are in the trenches teaching Canadian Studies across the world, overseas Canadians help craft a Canadian identity that is tailored to the contexts and cultures where they live. I hope you will embrace them in your own efforts to revive and strengthen the ever-important work of telling Canadian stories here and everywhere. I wish you a stimulating and productive conference and look forward to your questions. ■

NOTE

* Print remarks as delivered.

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The outlook for a restoration of Canadian government funding for international Canadian Studies*

BY NIK NANOS

Nik Nanos, CM, is the founder and CEO of Nanos Research and the co-founder of the Advancing Canada Coalition.

It has been more than a decade since the Government of Canada terminated support for international Canadian Studies. We have all witnessed the decline in Canada-related activity among scholars and students around the world that this decision has caused. And we all appreciate how Canada's profile in the international community, so critically important for the country's soft-power diplomatic capacity, has diminished in the wake of this unfortunate decision.

I believe that Canada's stature and interests on the global stage are best served when the country, its culture, history, economy, and society are understood and appreciated by citizens and decision-makers around the world. In 2018, together with John Graham, a former Canadian diplomat who was one of the designers of the original Understanding Canada program that funded the activities of Canadianists in other countries, I helped found the Advancing Canada Coalition with the aim of advocating for a restoration of such funding (advancingcanada.org). We have attracted an impressive array of supporters from all walks of Canadian life to help us in this mission.

UPDATE ON ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Today I'd like to give you a brief update on our activities, briefly review our prospects at this time, and suggest some potential next steps in our efforts. After four years of strategic dialogue at the very top echelons of the Trudeau government as volunteers, I regret to say that we have not yet achieved our objective. We have been close to breaking through on a couple of occasions, but in each case some crisis or extenuating circumstance bumped us off the government's list of priorities. In particular, COVID, and the stress that the pandemic placed on our country's budget, made the adoption of new spending programs, even ones as modest and cost-effective as ours, extremely difficult.

Along with our targeted efforts, we have also participated in several initiatives that are of a more public nature. Our testimony before the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade in its investigations into Canada's cultural diplomacy, as outlined in its report entitled *Cultural Diplomacy at the Front Stage of Canada's Foreign Policy*, was in part responsible for one of the committee's eight recommendations that encouraged Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to "support the creation of a modernized Canadian Studies program that would contribute to knowledge about Canada in the world."

A MODEST PROPOSAL

Looking forward, the general political and budgetary climate for our cause is not particularly encouraging. Nonetheless, the Advancing Canada Coalition intends to continue to push for restored funding for international Canadian Studies.

As a suggestion, the International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS) and its member associations might consider developing and advancing projects that fall within three geographic areas where GAC has established priority initiatives. These priorities already have in place budget lines that might be tapped by Canadian Studies proposals. Proposals from the international Canadian Studies community that have the potential to support and advance Canada's interests arguably have a greater chance of securing funding than ones unrelated to the country's foreign policy. Three of these stand out as particularly promising: North America, where the recent election of Donald Trump will ensure that trade issues will loom large in Canada's future; the European Union, where the Canada–European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is still in the process of gaining ratification in the member states; and Asia, where Canada has been a founding member of the Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

Though the short-term outlook may not be particularly promising, the Advancing Canada Coalition will continue to look for ways to advance the cause of restoring funding for Canadianists around the world. We remain confident that the tremendous value that is added to Canada's soft-power diplomatic capacity by the growth in knowledge and awareness of Canada, resulting from the activities of scholars, cultural producers, and students around the world, will once again be recognized by decision-makers in Ottawa. ■

NOTE

- * As summarized by session moderator Prof. Munroe Eagles, former president of the International Council for Canadian Studies and member of the Advancing Canada Coalition.

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International Canadian Studies post-2012: Assessing the field's current realities and needs

BY JEAN MICHEL MONTSION AND DOMINIK FORMANOWICZ

Jean Michel Montsion is a professor in the Department of Global and Social Studies at Glendon College, director of the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies at York University (2021–2026), and principal investigator of *(Re)Searching for Canadian Studies*. Dominik Formanowicz is a doctoral candidate in the graduate program of the Department of Geography at York University, and the lead project manager of *(Re)Searching for Canadian Studies*.

With the support of a Partnership Development Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), we conducted a study in the fall of 2023 to assess the current state of international Canadian Studies. This project, entitled *(Re)Searching for Canadian Studies*, is especially important given the cancellation by the federal government of the Understanding Canada program in 2012, a program that was critical to many international Canadianists for the continuation of their work. We conducted a survey of international Canadianists, and we interviewed key persons supporting the work of international Canadianists, notably past and current executive members of national and regional associations of Canadian Studies abroad. The insights gained from our project provide a sense of the current state of the study of Canada from outside of the country, how international Canadianists have conducted their work since 2012, and what they require in terms of support.

THE STATE OF THE FIELD

The current field of international Canadian Studies is mostly composed of scholars in the arts, humanities, languages, and social sciences, all fields that have traditionally been associated with Canadian Studies. Notably, a strong concentration of international Canadianists is found in Europe, the continent with the majority of local associations of Canadian Studies. By our calculations, approximately 3,000 international Canadianists are affiliated with the network of the International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS). It is no surprise that colleagues who identify as international Canadianists have varied trajectories, some having studied in Canada or having family links to the country. What is distinctive in their profile is the comparative or transnational nature of their scholarship, in which the study of Canada is only part of their expertise.

There are key themes of interest in their teaching and research about Canada. Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples seems to be the most significant theme, but other themes are strongly represented, notably multiculturalism and the environment. In many cases, our survey revealed that the themes identified as "most popular" with students are often the ones considered "harder to teach" and the ones for which "scholarship has changed significantly over the last 10 years." This is a good indicator of the vitality of international Canadian Studies as our international Canadianists have continued to actively teach and research about Canada despite the cancellation of the Understanding Canada program in 2012.

ADAPTATIONS SINCE 2012

Our survey results reveal that since the cancellation of the Understanding Canada program, the vast majority of international Canadianists have not been able to obtain alternative sources of funding from the Canadian government for their academic endeavours. While established scholars were able to replace this funding by turning to other sources such as the research-granting agencies in their countries, emerging scholars and graduate students were the most affected. One significant result of the cancellation of the program was the ending of student bursaries and faculty enrichment opportunities (for research or curricular development), which has greatly limited the ability to recruit and train the next generation of Canadianists abroad.

Moreover, the cancellation of the Understanding Canada program has had significant negative impacts on local associations of Canadian Studies, the main support infrastructure of international Canadian Studies. While most associations survived, there are increasing differences between those with means and those that depended on the program to plan their operations. Many associations have restructured along a membership fee budget model, reduced their operations to a minimum, and suffered a decline in their relationship with the local diplomatic corps—which also has an impact on any type of bottom-up cultural diplomacy involving Canada.

Our study reveals how international Canadianists considered the Understanding Canada program to be a form of cultural diplomacy, and how cancellation of the program is understood as a move away from cultural diplomacy, leading many scholars and students abroad to disengage with the study of Canada. Interestingly, since 2012, the Government of Québec has continued to support international Québec Studies, which has led to the field gaining relatively disproportionate importance in international Canadian Studies, notably as a result of the additional opportunities that such funding has brought to the field.

MOVING FORWARD

International Canadianists continue to study Canada, despite the end of the Understanding Canada program. They are adapting to new Canadian themes of interest in a context in which their endeavours are increasingly framed as part of North American Studies or through connected themes like Arctic Studies or Indigenous Studies. With a strong emphasis on comparative and transnational perspectives, international Canadianists recognize the importance of transcending a conventional, Cold War-inspired area studies approach to the study of Canada, to the benefit of one determined around key issues.

What international Canadianists need most are online tools and open-access sources for teaching and research purposes, including databases, journal subscriptions, and documentaries, as well as digital, audio, and visual archives. They require an online platform to access materials, and a variety of resources that can reach a broader audience, including primary and secondary school students, especially for the themes that are becoming popular but that remain difficult to teach or research unproblematically from a distance. In addition, compilations of already existing research opportunities and contacts in Canada for both teaching and research purposes, including a list of visiting fellowships and a database of experts available for research collaborations and online lectures, would support their work while also providing networking opportunities.

Another priority is to enable students and faculty to come to Canada for teaching and research purposes. This is notably the case for international Canadianists who study topics for which there is a lack of expertise abroad. Similarly, travel for curriculum development and undergraduate education is identified as key to establishing a sustained interest in the study of Canada. Finally, local associations of Canadian Studies would benefit from programming that goes beyond one's country or region—here, the role of a consortium like the ICCS is worth mentioning—as well as some small annual funding (in the range of \$2,000 to \$5,000) to help organize academic events locally. Many noted that

this funding should be used to reconnect and host joint initiatives with the local Canadian diplomatic corps.

At a time of geopolitical uncertainty, (re)building Canada's cultural diplomacy abroad is essential. The field of international Canadian Studies provides the country with a social infrastructure that can support the promotion of Canada and with a Canadian approach to solving issues abroad. Despite the termination of federal funding to the field in 2012, the concrete steps specified throughout this special issue can be taken to reinvigorate the scholarship and activities of international Canadianists. ■

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Knowledge democracy and international Canadian Studies

BY KERSTIN KNOPF

Kerstin Knopf is a full professor of North American and post-colonial literary and cultural studies at Bremen University, Germany, and a past president of the International Council for Canadian Studies.

Knowledge and understanding are the best diplomats for any nation, people, or group. What we know or learn about a nation, people, or group helps us understand their perspective, world views, and interests. Building knowledge to enable understanding, constructive critique, and the creation of meaningful relationships is the mainstay of any educational institution. Knowledge itself helps build bridges and create relations across oceans, geopolitical and cultural borders, and cultural, racial, social, and linguistic differences. Hence, knowledge building has been seen at the forefront of international political diplomacy, supported by diplomacy via cultural institutions, arts, literature, and sports. International book fairs and soccer championships are good examples of such diplomacy. For a long time, Canada invested in international Canadian Studies through government programs. The last of these, Understanding Canada, was discontinued by the Stephen Harper government in 2012, resulting in a decreasing number of Canadian Studies programs and courses taught at non-Canadian universities, less student and faculty exchange, and less specific research on Canada. From a European perspective, the space for the study of Canada is slowly being taken over by research and study interest in the United States and the United Kingdom, which were always the mainstays of anglophone studies, but increasingly so in Australia, New Zealand, India, Nigeria, and South Africa.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AND IN CANADA

The International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS), Canadian Studies centres across Canada and the world, including the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, and many other actors in education and knowledge diplomacy understand the importance of building knowledge about and in Canada. Together with partners throughout Canada and the ICCS, the CanSearch team at the Robarts Centre conducted an international survey on the importance and impact of the study of Canada globally. International Canadian Studies scholars noted a general decrease in the research on and teaching about Canada. They also noted an increasing need for online information and sources for teaching “including databases, journal subscriptions, and documentaries, as well as digital, audio, and visual archives” (Montsion & Formanowicz, 2025).

Despite this general decrease, current research and teaching topics are wide-ranging, including Indigenous peoples and nations; immigration, settlement, and transnationalism; the environment, climate emergency, and green transition; and multiculturalism, diversity, race, and racism. The CanSearch project notes that the conventional features of Canadian society are generally popular themes in the field. These themes provide insight to address similar issues in other contexts, as is the case with Canada’s relationship with Indigenous peoples (and matters of reconciliation), Black Canadian Studies, French and English Canada, Canada’s North, and immigration, multiculturalism, and the management of diversity, as well as progressive politics (including feminisms and LGBTQ+ rights). This diversity of research interests within the Canadian Studies community speaks to the importance that the community assigns to diversity in general, and to cultural diversity in Canada in particular.

Yet, cultural diversity demands ontological and epistemological diversity, as well as a recognition of the wide range of ways of life and experiences within Canada. It also requires recognition of non-Western knowledges, which continue to be marginalized in educational institutions, as well as recognition of knowledge holders outside of academia.

THE NOTION OF KNOWLEDGE DEMOCRACY

Engaging the notion of knowledge democracy, one needs to take into account epistemological diversity and the wide range of epistemological backgrounds and perspectives within Canada. Discussing the loss of knowledges resulting from the domination of Western knowledge in educational institutions worldwide, both historically and now, Budd Hall and Rajesh Tandon (2015) write: “Knowledge democracy refers to an interrelationship of phenomena. First, it acknowledges the importance of the existence of multiple epistemologies or ways of knowing such as organic, spiritual and land-based systems, frameworks arising from our social movements, and the knowledge of the marginalized or excluded everywhere, or what is sometimes referred to as subaltern knowledge. Secondly, it affirms that knowledge is both created and represented in multiple forms including text, image, numbers, story, music, drama, poetry, ceremony, meditation and more. Third, and fundamental to our thinking about knowledge democracy is understanding that knowledge is a powerful tool for taking action to deepen democracy and to struggle for a fairer and healthier world. Knowledge democracy is about intentionally linking values of democracy and action to the process of using knowledge.”

TO DEMOCRATIZE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CANADA

With respect to Canadian Studies, this notion of knowledge democracy means becoming more inclusive of non-Western knowledges and knowledge practices, such as the Mi'kmaw education concepts outlined by Marie Battiste (2013), which support diverse education methods and content, or the Nuuchahnulth concept of *Tsawalk* that Richard Atleo (Umeek) (2004, 2011) suggests helps in fighting climate crises. It means critically revising education methods and introducing land-based and environment-oriented education outside of the university. Projects like the Dechinta Bush University may serve as a model here. As well, knowledge democracy means that the producers of knowledge must include knowledge holders beyond the university, such as hunters, elders, artists and writers, civic scientists, activists, and speakers of non-Western languages. It must also include forms of knowledge containers other than books, archives, documentary films, etc., containers such as stories, performance, and images. It also means recognizing that much knowledge on Canada is contributed by scholars outside the nation, revealed by the CanSearch project and in the many international nominations for the ICCS book awards. Democratic values are supported through shared awareness and understanding—as well as knowledge diplomacy—as strong democracies are based on diverse, educated, informed, and open-minded citizens. The study of Canada characterized by epistemic diversity and inclusion can serve as a model for knowledge building that stands up to right-wing and authoritarian tendencies globally and faces the multiple challenges of our globalized world. ■

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SECTION II: SUMMIT PERSPECTIVES

2024 International Canadian Studies Summit: A view from the field and from Canadianists

BY JEAN MICHEL MONTSION

Jean Michel Montsion is a professor in the Department of Global and Social Studies at Glendon College and director of the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies at York University (2021–2026).

Inspired by the opening remarks from Senator Yuen Pau Woo and the proposal of Nik Nanos, approximately 40 Canadianists, most from North America and Europe, met on June 11–12, 2024 to discuss the state of international Canadian Studies and to identify the resources and strategies needed to support the field. Online discussions, in English and French, were facilitated by Dr. Jane Koustas, president of the International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS); Dr. Dan Malleck, director of the Centre for Canadian Studies at Brock University; Dr. Paul Morris, director of the Master in Canadian and Intercultural Studies at the Université de Saint-Boniface; Dr. Chantal Richard, president of the Canadian Studies Network; and Dr. Kevin Spooner, director of the Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY

The success of the federal government's Understanding Canada program, and confusion over why the program was cancelled in 2012, were shared starting points for many participants. Many expressed an interest in understanding the reasons why the federal government ended the program, and argued for the importance of a new approach to convincing government stakeholders to support international Canadian Studies in the future. Participants agreed that financial support from the federal government would not likely be as central as it was in the past. They suggested a multi-pronged approach to financial support and advocacy, which should include funding from different governments, philanthropy, and academic projects.

The proposal by Nik Nanos was lauded as a great way to reopen the dialogue with the federal government, even if the focus on Canadian trade with three regions (Asia, Europe, and North America) would only be a starting point for a broader approach to supporting international Canadian Studies. Regions like the Arctic and Africa would need to be added to the initial framework, as would an exhaustive student training and exchange strategy. Moreover, it would be essential to match the current expertise in the field of international Canadian Studies, mostly grounded in the humanities, with trade interests.

More broadly, this proposal sparked discussions on the need to reframe support of international Canadian Studies through a more generic support for the study of Canada. By focusing on interdisciplinary themes and topics of interest, such support could relate to both government priorities and the need for students and emerging scholars to develop the skills and expertise that are essential to their careers.

NEEDS AND CONCERNS

In this context, bottom-up initiatives offered the most promise for thinking through current supports of international Canadian Studies. Initiatives that do not require large sums of funding include better information-sharing practices, online events and initiatives, and proactive recruitment of colleagues into the network, notably colleagues who do not consider themselves Canadianists. Such initiatives seem crucial, given concerns raised by many international Canadianists of a coming wave of retirements in the field, the lack of succession within specific countries, and the merging of Canadian Studies with larger institutional units such as North American Studies.

Participants argued that ongoing initiatives and annual events should be better promoted as unique opportunities. Focusing on the promotion and visibility of current programming would help highlight the unique contributions of international Canadianists to the study of Canada, including the translation of key texts into languages other than English and French. As an interdisciplinary network, international Canadian Studies has a unique responsibility to support the visibility of connected fields abroad, such as Indigenous Studies and Arctic Studies, and it could do so by fostering collaborations and providing access to pedagogical materials well beyond the traditional canon of Canadian Studies.

Fostering partnerships between domestic and international Canadianists can involve conventional academic research means such as partnering in applying for Tri-Council funding,¹ for which international Canadianists are not eligible without a principal investigator from Canada. Moreover, promoting student exchanges and academic opportunities in Canada for international Canadianists as career-relevant opportunities can help train the next generation of international Canadianists.

STRATEGIES AND SUGGESTIONS

Many successful strategies and initiatives currently supporting the field exist, notably through regional or identity-based fields, such as Acadian Studies, Arctic Studies, Black Canadian Studies, and British Columbia Studies. Government support could be channelled through such fields, such as the current Government of Québec program in support of international Québec Studies. Aside from conventional academic endeavours, local associations of Canadian Studies and Canadian Studies centres abroad could play a unique role. They should be promoted as entry points to the study of Canada in various national contexts through which Canada's experiences can be shared with foreign bureaucracies, private sector actors, and the Canadian diplomatic corps.

A key suggestion from participants is to broaden the existing networks by reaching out to colleagues who study Canada from a variety of disciplines and fields. For the ICCS and local associations of Canadian Studies, this also means working with diasporic organizations, Canadians living abroad, and temporary migrants to or from Canada (such as student migrants). This will require the development and maintenance of good relationships with like-minded public figures, including senators and philanthropists.

Crucial for the continuity of the field, student training and mentoring strategies as well as sustained advocacy for student exchange programs to Canada are priorities. For instance, any support for developing and strengthening Canadian course content, so that it is accessible for use in various courses abroad, would be very helpful. This is in line with requests for a variety of online resources to support the field, including a database of experts and potential research collaborators, list of opportunities in Canada, and so forth.

CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC DIPLOMACY

Promoting the study of Canada abroad is a form of cultural and scientific diplomacy that can be very helpful to government, private, and academic sectors. While there are many examples that Canada could emulate, including the Erasmus+ program and the Fulbright program, many participants indicated that the Canadian government seems to misunderstand the benefits of such types of diplomacy.

Through the promotion of the study of Canada as a form of cultural diplomacy, as was previously suggested in a 2019 Senate report entitled *Cultural Diplomacy at the Front Stage of Canada's Foreign Policy*, a broader public engagement strategy could be imagined, one that builds on an already existing network of international Canadian Studies and expands to many non-academic supporters of Canada in other countries, including Canadians living abroad and diasporic communities. ■

NOTE

1. The Tri-Council consists of three federal research agencies: the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

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The Summit and beyond

BY JANE KOUSTAS

Jane Koustas is professor emerita in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at Brock University and president of the International Council for Canadian Studies.

The 2024 International Canadian Studies Summit provided a unique, timely, and extraordinary opportunity for Canadianists from an impressive range of disciplines and geopolitical and linguistic backgrounds to reflect on the past, present, and future of the study of Canada and to discuss strategies for the promotion, dissemination, and revitalization of Canadian Studies on the national and international scenes. In addition to generating both questions and ideas, the Summit created a community of engaged students, academics, and government and private sector stakeholders. For the International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS), which experienced the 2012 cancellation of the Understanding Canada program ordered by John Baird, Stephen Harper's minister of foreign affairs, as a near-fatal blow to its programming and a direct attack on its *raison d'être*, the perspectives and input contributed by the experts and practitioners at the Summit provided valuable insight and guidance; the ICCS, its membership, and centres and programs dedicated to the study of Canada need to refocus, reach out, and become more proactive.

SHARPEN THE FOCUS

If you can't handle a heavier hammer, find a sharper nail.

Following the elimination of Understanding Canada, the ICCS, as well as national and international associations for Canadian Studies, focused initially on reinstating the program. In theory, this should have been an easy sell. Studies have demonstrated that investments in Canadian Studies yield a return of \$36 for every dollar spent—and this number does not consider less tangible gains such as academic exchange, the enhancement of the image of Canada, and valuable student engagement. However, all attempts to use these arguments to sway government officials, particularly those in the Department of Global Affairs, were met with outright dismissal. The total cancellation of Understanding Canada was an overt rejection; the budget line had disappeared, suggesting that it was not worth saving in any form. Moreover, government agencies, and Global Affairs Canada in particular, demonstrated an anti-academic bias.

As attendees at the Summit observed, arguing for the reinstatement of Understanding Canada, however heavy the hammer used, proved to be a non-starter and would continue to be so. Similarly, emphasizing the role and potential of Canadian Studies to build capacity in cultural or soft diplomacy and to contribute to the enhancement of Canada's image abroad did not gain any traction. Both somewhat outdated and possibly suspiciously elitist, these sales pitches relied too heavily on past success and, furthermore, suggested that Canada's image needed work due to possible neglect by those responsible for building it.

The Summit brought to the fore the need to develop a forward-looking strategy with a political angle in order to coax the government back to the table and to render the study of Canada, and the ICCS, more relevant and of greater interest to other parties, including philanthropic organizations and, of course, universities. One such approach could be to demonstrate the potential and capacity of Canadianists to promote and showcase Canadian excellence in research and teaching, not only in Canadian Studies but also in fields somewhat outside the traditional ken, such as economics, business, trade, and commerce. Emphasis must be put on our ability to facilitate networking between academ-

ic, government, and private sectors. A strategic plan should highlight proven Canadian excellence in research, teaching, student engagement, and the production and dissemination of culture. It must also underline the frequency with which Canada is used as a model or means of comparison in fields ranging from environmental and health policy to language legislation. For example, the outstanding work done by Canadianists to better understand and further explore the complexities of Indigenous peoples places them at the forefront of this internationally relevant and multi-faceted area of research. And Canadian excellence should be showcased in many more fields, including the management of the environment, the importance of the Arctic, peacekeeping, presence on the international stage, human rights, health care, and education.

DEMONSTRATE THE CURRENT RELEVANCE AND VALUE OF THE STUDY OF CANADA

What have you done for me lately?

Past attempts to secure support focused on the return on investment and goodwill generated by previous funding. Strategic planning must now showcase instead how the study of Canada can advance the objectives of the Canadian government as well as those of universities, philanthropic agencies, and other potential partners. With a network of 29 associations in more than 30 countries, the ICCS boasts approximately 3,000 members; it is vital to demonstrate how they can serve the goals of these funding parties.

Nik Nanos suggested that Canadianists should demonstrate their capacity to contribute to ongoing projects and discussions. For example, a strategic plan could showcase expertise in the following areas:

- the prospects for improved relations after renegotiation of the Canada–US–Mexico Agreement (CUSMA);
- the role and impact of the Canada–European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA); and
- the role and impact of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Engagement in these areas would strengthen ties among academics and between the academy and other stakeholders, including Canadian embassies, officials directly involved with the above-mentioned programs, and private sector representatives.

Previous discussions with the government were coloured by an anti-academic bias indicating that advocacy for the study of Canada needs to demonstrate commitment to student engagement and experiential learning as well as professionalization in the field; activities cannot be confined to the purely academic sector. Proposals must highlight career opportunities and associations' engagement with stakeholders beyond the academy. Strategic planning must stress Canadian excellence across a wide range of fields, including trade and commerce, and emphasize Canadianists' capacity and commitment to deliver in these areas.

Associations, and the ICCS in particular, need to build a repository of opportunities, expert databases, potential collaborators, guest speakers, and other online resources to reach a broader audience and to demonstrate their value and relevance. Mentoring and online sessions should be a priority. Websites can then be used for publicity showcasing what we are doing *now* to promote the study of Canada.

While the term “Canadian Studies” is widely used, in some sectors it implies a particular university program, department, or centre, thus suggesting that support is aimed at an academic unit. The term “the study of Canada” circumvents this ambiguity, and it would be difficult for potential funders, especially the government, to claim disinterest in the study of Canada. For this reason as well, courses must highlight interdisciplinarity and present Canadian content in meaningful ways. Faculty members from across and outside academia can bring Canadian excellence to the classroom from different

perspectives and backgrounds and bolster the value of Canadian content on the national and international scene. Such collaboration also demonstrates faculty members' commitment to interdisciplinarity and to internationalization, as well as the wide reach of those engaged in the study of Canada at their own institution.

REACH FURTHER

It is not what you know, but who you know.

Both guest lecturers, Senator Woo in particular, emphasized that members and associations must reach beyond the traditional catchment area to secure funding and support. In addition to actively approaching embassies, consulates, and other conventional targets, associations must develop ties with the private sector, philanthropic organizations, and, on the international scene, the Canadian diaspora. Like-minded diplomats and government officials, like Senator Woo, should be approached directly, not simply with a request for funding, but with proposals that highlight how Canadianists can contribute to existing goals and projects.

Expat communities typically represent a wide range of interests, expertise, and connections—for example, to the business sector. While associations need not downplay their academic focus, it is essential to develop programming and approaches that appeal to, and reach beyond, the traditional audience. Extending invitations to talks, exhibits, guest lectures, and other events can increase awareness. Also, businesses could be incited to support bursaries, internships, scholarships, and other activities if presented with a convincing proposal based on a strategic plan.

In sum, the 2024 International Canadian Studies Summit brought to the fore the need for Canadianists on the national and international scene to improve the present and to build the future with a focus on long- and short-term goals, concrete objectives, specific funding requests, and a proactive approach aimed at a diverse audience that showcases Canadian excellence widely and broadly; we need a sharper nail, a more boastful pitch, and more Canada watchers. ■

Thinking outside the Canadian box at the International Summit

BY CHRISTOPHE PREMAT

Christophe Premat is an associate professor in the Department of Romance Studies and Classics and director of the Centre for Canadian Studies at Stockholm University, Sweden.

The International Canadian Studies Summit, held online June 10–14, 2024, offered a valuable opportunity for brainstorming to rekindle motivation, connect with professionals and academics in the field, and prepare for shared challenges. For scholars outside Canada, the Summit served as a fundamental ritual, reinforcing the interdisciplinary coherence of Canadian Studies. As Jane Koustas reminded us during one of the seminars, Canadian Studies is distinct from simply studying Canada. Although “interdisciplinary coherence” may seem paradoxical, it aptly reflects the challenges of Canadian Studies. Beyond projecting Canadian identity and values on a global stage, the field demands a nuanced understanding of colonial realities in all their complexities.

What does it mean to occupy land, to welcome new populations, to balance economic and environmental priorities, or to view international relations through the lens of Canadian history? For researchers, these questions require not value judgments but the creation of original methodologies to analyze them. For the Centre for Canadian Studies at Stockholm University, the Summit was particularly enriching thanks to its varied format, alternating between lectures and interactive sessions on major themes (Indigenous studies, international relations, political science, etc.). In this article, I wish to revisit the ideas discussed during the sessions I attended and to extend my gratitude to the organizers of this remarkable initiative, which brings purpose to the daily work of academics dedicated to the advancement of Canadian Studies.

CANADIAN STUDIES AS A PASSAGE

Canadian Studies are, above all, a *passage* in the metaphorical sense that Michel Serres meant when he referred to the Northwest Passage: “I am searching for the passage between exact science and the humanities. Or, with a different language, or with some degree of control, between us and the world. The path is not as straightforward as the classification of knowledge might suggest. I believe it to be as challenging as the famous Northwest Passage” (Serres, 2019, p. 12, our translation).

This metaphor of the passage seems to perfectly capture the spirit of the presentation by Jean Michel Montsion and Dominik Formanowicz on the state of Canadian Studies from an international perspective. It echoed the presentation of the Canadian Studies Network by Chantal Richard, which offered a range of activities, events, and calls for papers related to Canadian Studies. By comparing institutional structures and key players (networks, stakeholders, associations), one can observe a highly diverse landscape with numerous branches—that is, strong academic support around Canadian Studies.

This aligns with the observation made by Colin Coates a few years ago about Canadian Studies evolving dynamically in opposition to the state, which may appear paradoxical (Coates, 2018, p. 162). The lack of institutional support from the Canadian government since 2012 has highlighted the importance of these networks that illustrate the real dynamics of intellectual exchanges. “While the similarities between Anglophone Canada and the United States may have served to lessen the exoticization of the country in comparison to other parts of the globe, critics have often assumed that the Ca-

nadian studies project fixates on the search for over-arching national identities at the expense of rigorous analysis” (Coates, 2018, p. 155).

Far from establishing a specific national identity, it seems to me, in light of the seminars at this summit in which I participated, that Canadian Studies are characterized above all by this search for passage—a passage between exact sciences and natural sciences, a reflection on the interfaces of a globalized world, and on new trade and communication routes between countries (Premat, 2022). There is a need to use these meetings to relocate the gateways (Montsion, 2009, p. 641) and explore the passages.

DECOLONIZING THE “STUDIES” THROUGH THE LENS OF DIASPORAS AND INDIGENOUS STUDIES

One of the possible passages enabled by Canadian Studies is the opportunity to explore the cultural power of diasporas. Indeed, Korina Jocson and Marissa Largo’s presentation on Filipino stories, the *kuwentos*, demonstrated how pedagogical approaches can support intercultural discovery within the classroom. In this regard, we have much to learn from each other, and diasporic tales reveal that navigating Northwest Passages requires listening, empathy, and collaboration. The second passage pertains to Indigenous Studies, which have taken a central place within Canadian Studies. The seminar on the Inuit film *Tia and Piujuk* (Tulugarjuk, 2018) illustrated the need to decentralize interests and objects of knowledge. Ultimately, decolonization is not merely a militant stance; it is achieved by broadening the epistemological landscape. The third passage was somewhat more discreet, emerging in the seminar on interactions between Canada and the Global South. This involves the perceptions of Canadian Studies in other regions, such as the Scandinavian and Nordic countries (Bédard-Goulet & Premat, 2023).

These passages include historical connections and, at times, geographic similarities. This perspective seems to me to align with an archipelago of relationships outside of any institutional ties between the Canadian state and other states. In my view, this philosophy of relations, as Glissant (1997) understands it, should be further cultivated in future conferences and gatherings on Canadian Studies.

The Summit was a unique opportunity to bring together two different audiences: those I would call Canadian Studies professionals (namely, professors, researchers, and students whose professional activities are directly linked to Canadian Studies) and a non-specialist audience encountering Canadian Studies without it being a direct professional interest. For us, these seminars provided an opportunity to discover new networks and, above all, to continually rethink the profile of Canadian Studies, which ultimately extends far beyond questions of nation branding and cultural diplomacy. The Centre for Canadian Studies at Stockholm University¹ is currently cooperating with the Swedish Institute for North American Studies at Uppsala University² and the Nordic Institute of Latin American Studies at Stockholm University³ to explore a Nordic approach to Pan-American studies. Can Canadian Studies dissolve into these regional studies, or do they, on the contrary, retain their specificity by enriching perspectives on the North American continent (Premat, 2024)? ■

NOTES

1. <https://www.su.se/centre-for-canadian-studies/>
2. <https://www.uu.se/institution/engelska/forskning/svenska-institutet-for-nordamerikastudier-sinas>
3. <https://www.su.se/nordic-institute-of-latin-american-studies/>

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Reflecting on a panel on Indigenous rights, environmental injustice, and the role of activism

BY ÉLISABETH ABERGEL

Élisabeth Abergel is an associate professor in the Department of Sociology and at the Institut des sciences de l'environnement (ISE) at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM).

The intersection of Indigenous rights, environmental activism, and the complex political landscape of Canada has been brought into stark relief by the controversy surrounding the Coastal GasLink pipeline project. The pipeline, set to traverse the traditional lands of the Wet'suwet'en people in British Columbia, has sparked significant resistance from Indigenous communities, environmental activists, and settler-colonial critics alike. As an academic deeply embedded in the study of environmental justice, political ecology, and the sociopolitical dynamics that shape the environmental crisis, I find this case to be a poignant reflection of the broader challenges facing contemporary Indigenous activism and the ongoing struggles for land and resource sovereignty, and as a continuation and deepening of colonial dynamics pitting evermore destructive extractivist logics against Native survival and its rootedness in the land. As a non-Indigenous person, I feel a strong responsibility to share information about environmental injustices in a way that directly addresses how settlers, including myself, have benefited—and continue to benefit—from the challenges and hardships faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada.

LEADING A SUMMER SCHOOL SESSION DURING THE SUMMIT

Recently, I had the opportunity to present a panel on the Wet'suwet'en resistance to the Coastal GasLink pipeline to a group of Canadian Studies students during the 2024 International Canadian Studies Summit. This was a particularly rewarding experience, as it allowed me to engage with students who, while perhaps unfamiliar with the depths of these issues, were keenly interested in understanding the intersections of environmental justice, Indigenous sovereignty, and settler-colonial power. What became evident during the panel discussion was the growing concern among Canadian Studies scholars—from several European countries as well as from Nigeria—about the systemic injustices faced by Indigenous communities, as well as a desire to critically examine the Canadian government's approach to these matters.

The experience was a testament to the importance of teaching and discussing these issues within academic contexts, particularly in light of Canada's ongoing reckoning with its colonial past. The students, many of whom had not fully engaged with these topics before, demonstrated a clear understanding that the struggles of the Wet'suwet'en were not isolated, but part of a larger historical and contemporary context of Indigenous resistance to settler colonialism. As they voiced their concerns about the marginalization of Indigenous voices in the decision-making processes surrounding resource extraction, I was struck by the way they completely identified the issues of environmental justice and Indigenous rights in their own countries.

CONTEXTUALIZING INDIGENOUS POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

One student remarked about the plight of the Sámi people in her region while others equated environmental destruction with the complete “historical erasure” of Indigenous peoples in their land as an ongoing process. Many students were acutely aware that the environmental degradation associated with resource extraction projects like Coastal GasLink is disproportionately borne by Indigenous communities, who are often excluded from decision-making processes. This reflects a broader critique of environmental governance in Canada, where the interests of industry and the state frequently take precedence over the rights and well-being of Indigenous peoples and their right to self-determination.

At the heart of the Wet’suwet’en resistance to the Coastal GasLink pipeline is a broader struggle for environmental justice. For the Wet’suwet’en people, the land is not just a resource to be exploited; it is a living, breathing entity that sustains their cultural, spiritual, and physical well-being. Their opposition to the pipeline reflects a deeply held belief that the environment is a part of their identity, and its destruction by industrial projects like Coastal GasLink is not only an environmental issue but also a cultural and existential one.

What struck me during the panel discussion with the students was the recognition that environmental justice cannot be achieved without addressing the fundamental issues of Indigenous sovereignty as an integral piece of Canadian Studies scholarship.

The realization that Indigenous environmental justice is not just about the land itself but about the ongoing assertion of control over Indigenous peoples’ governance, knowledge systems, and cultural practices was brought into stark relief. This issue, I believe, highlighted a broader theme regarding the support for Indigenous political struggles extending beyond Canada’s borders.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

This kind of student engagement and sharing of international experiences reinforces my own thinking about the role of academia in facilitating critical discussions about the intersection of settler-colonial power, environmental degradation, and the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. It also underscores the necessity of providing students with the tools to question dominant narratives around development, progress, and the commodification of natural resources. Through these discussions, we begin to see how Indigenous resistance is not only about protecting land but also about challenging the deeply embedded structures of colonial power that continue to shape and define contemporary Canadian society.

Reflecting on the positive panel experience, I am reminded of the importance of academic spaces in fostering critical dialogue on these issues. Canadian Studies students are uniquely positioned to interrogate the complexities of Indigenous-settler relations. They are keenly interested in learning about Indigenous issues. The Wet’suwet’en resistance to the Coastal GasLink pipeline is not just about one project; it is a microcosm of the broader struggles faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada and globally. It is a struggle against the environmental and cultural devastation wrought by colonial systems of power, and it is a struggle for a future in which Indigenous peoples can govern their lands, protect their cultures, and contribute to a just and sustainable world for all. In the words of a Wet’suwet’en woman activist: “We are the land and the land is us.”

However, there remains much work to be done in terms of integrating meaningful Indigenous perspectives into the mainstream academic curriculum even for Canadian students and ensuring that these voices are not marginalized in discussions about environmental governance and social justice. The enthusiastic engagement from students studying Canada from abroad was heartening, yet it also underscored the challenge of translating the complexities of Indigenous political struggles into a rather short case study discussion. ■

Canadian Studies in parallel: Challenges and hopes for academic exchange and cooperation

BY ANNA BRANACH-KALLAS

Anna Branach-Kallas is a professor in the Department of Anglophone Literature, Culture and Comparative Studies at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland. She is also the incoming president of the International Council for Canadian Studies.

My research in Canadian Studies began in 1996 when, as a recent graduate of English and French departments, I was strongly encouraged to become interested in Canada. Several centres for Canadian Studies were opened in Central Europe at that time, including at my own university. In the last 28 years, I have attended over 30 conferences in Canadian Studies, mostly in Europe, some in Canada. I completed five fellowships at the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia and have a good network of contacts in the Canadianist community. My reflections on the current crisis of Canadian Studies, and my hopes for new opportunities, are therefore based on almost three decades of academic activity; however, they are necessarily limited to a European perspective.

CHALLENGES FOR INTERNATIONAL CANADIANISTS

Since the Understanding Canada program was discontinued more than a decade ago, many Canadianists have complained of a “crisis” in Canadian Studies. If it is true that the lack of financial support from the Canadian government renders research on Canada much more difficult, it is not the only reason for the problems encountered by the global Canadianist community. A serious challenge comes from the Canadian academic culture as well. The last 10 years saw the development of a radically critical, revisionist approach in Canada itself, mostly noticeable in the academic study of Canadian literature, which unsettled many Canadianists abroad. This is not to deny the traditions of colonialism, racism, and economic privilege, which have undoubtedly dominated Canadian history and culture. As a post-colonial scholar, I am convinced that new conceptual paradigms are much needed, and Canada calls for a decolonizing transformation. However, it must be noted that, in the wake of these debates, many Canadianists in Europe felt that they were not entitled to study Canada any longer and as a result shifted their attention to other fields of study. In this tense context, it is difficult to encourage emerging scholars abroad to study Canadian culture when certain research subjects are deemed less correct and desirable than others. They often feel surprised by the condescending approach to their work when they travel to Canada, especially if they come from countries with limited traditions of colonialism.

What Canadian academics do not realize is how difficult it is to do Canadian Studies outside Canada. Access to many resources published in Canada is limited in privileged Western Europe, not to mention its central and eastern regions, and other parts of the world. However, when we travel to Canada for a short time, Canadian universities do not grant us immediate access to their electronic databases either. While European universities are eager to offer a visiting professor or an honorary

guest status to their visitors from abroad, the process is much more formalized in Canada. This is also connected with the different expectations toward European and Canadian academics. At most European universities, international cooperation is currently a priority, and we all make huge efforts to create international clusters and research groups. This does not seem to be the case in Canada. I am not judging which system is better; it is important, however, to highlight these differences. They have a huge impact on publishing expectations as well. European academics are obliged to publish internationally, particularly in high-quality journals indexed in Scopus,¹ the number of which is limited in Canada. Accordingly, they disseminate the results of their research on Canadian topics in prestigious American, British, and other European journals. Consequently, we can speak of two parallel research microcosms in Canadian Studies.

ONGOING INITIATIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES

However, there are some new opportunities as well. While many national associations for Canadian Studies have disappeared or limited their activity in the last decade, some have continued to thrive. With the help of local Canadian embassies, they have struggled to integrate the Canadianist community, inviting scholars from abroad to their conferences. The most famous examples are the Grainau conferences of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries (GKS), which have provided a wonderful opportunity for academic and social contacts, but such efforts have been made by associations with much more limited resources, too. Furthermore, some international research groups devoted to the study of Canada have been created to encourage international exchange. For instance, I myself have been invited to become a member of TransCanadian Networks, directed by Professor Eva Darias-Beautell from the University of La Laguna in Spain. The objective of this group is to strengthen the international dimension of research and thus develop more multidisciplinary academic approaches. All of the Spanish and international collaborators have published innovative research on Canadian topics, responding to recent developments in Canadian culture and applying, as well as contributing to, novel theoretical paradigms. TransCanadian Networks regularly organizes webinars in Canadian Studies, which involve emerging scholars as well. Our cooperation has been most inspiring and fruitful, and we plan to apply for research grants together, given that the new openings in Horizon Europe offer entirely new opportunities for international research clusters. Such networks of cooperation are very promising for the future of Canadian Studies and provide stimulating venues for dialogue and academic exchange.

The International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS) has also gained more visibility in the recent years due to the sustained efforts of past and current presidents, Professor Munroe Eagles, Professor Kerstin Knopf, and Professor Jane Koustas. It continues to offer awards and scholarships, thus integrating the global Canadian community, and reaching new academic partners. The 2024 International Canadian Studies Summit organized by the York University Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, in cooperation with the ICCS, has garnered much interest from the Canadianist community all over the world. A summer school for graduate students was organized together with public events, centred around key issues in Canadian culture and scholarship. Such initiatives are much needed to encourage young people to pursue their research on Canada and to overcome the isolation that many Canadianists have complained about, effecting a rapprochement between the parallel worlds of Canadian and international researchers in Canadian Studies. The ICCS has committed itself to encourage such developments and is offering a mentoring program in Canadian Studies this academic year, hoping that the seminar series will open new perspectives to a new generation of Canadianists and will invigorate international Canadian Studies. ■

NOTE

1. Scopus (<https://www.elsevier.com/products/scopus>) is a leading abstract and citation database. Depending on the level of citations, journals are divided into four quartiles. Journals listed in the

top quartile (Q1) are regarded as the most authoritative in the field. Research published in these journals is assumed to be of the highest quality and to have a considerable impact on the academic community.

A view on the study of Canada from German-speaking countries: Toward a reinvigorated network of Canadian Studies

BY CHRISTOPH VATTER

Christoph Vatter is a professor of intercultural communication, cultural theory, and communication research at Friedrich Schiller University Jena and president of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries.

The 2024 International Canadian Studies Summit invited scholars to meet at the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies at York University in Toronto in order to stimulate discussions and reflections for the academic field of Canadian Studies and to bring together perspectives from within Canada and abroad. A summit is not only an occasion to look at past achievements, it serves also as a think tank to discuss the current state of the field and to develop new visions for the further evolution of Canadian Studies. In the following, I would like to explore this from the perspective of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries (GKS), a regional association for Canadian Studies in Europe with over 400 members. Starting with a review of the development of Canadian Studies in German-speaking countries in an international context, I would like to identify current challenges for the field and discuss future potentials and perspectives for the international network of Canadian Studies.

LOOKING BACK

Established in 1980, the GKS has been a member of the International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS) from the very beginning. International networking has always been a central concern for us, initially in order to establish a common Canadian Studies network in the German-speaking countries of (West) Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. However, looking to the East already played an important role in the 1980s. Whereas the main focus of the association was initially on the integration of academics from the GDR, after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1990, its scope expanded to Eastern and Central Europe. As a result, Grainau, the location where our annual conference was held from 1982 to 2024, became a hub for European Canadian Studies. Close ties still exist today, especially with the Central European Association for Canadian Studies (CEACS) and the Nordic Association for Canadian Studies (NACS)—and of course with numerous Canadian researchers and institutions.

According to the membership figures, interest in Canada was at its greatest in the 1990s: the GKS grew from 68 members in 1980 to 714 members in 1997.¹ This rise of Canadian Studies may have been linked initially not only to the fascination with a “different America,” but also to discipline-specific developments such as the growing interest in Francophonie in Romance studies. The international network of Canadian Studies made it possible to deal with highly relevant, urgent issues such as migration, multiculturalism, diversity, and the exploitation of natural resources, many of which are still crucial “future themes” today, in an interdisciplinary framework using Canada as an example.

Important incentives also came from cooperation with Canadian institutions. As part of cultural diplomacy, Canadian missions abroad provided significant support for the development of international Canadian Studies. Numerous researchers participated in Canadian government scholarship programs, gaining authentic insights on-site, expanding their expertise as Canadianists, and passing this on to their students. By the early 2000s, over 300 scholarships for research stays in Canada had been awarded to GKS members, who thereby built extensive networks with Canadian scientists. This successful interplay of academic interest and sustainable international networking is also reflected in a lively publication and research atmosphere—from the *Journal of Canadian Studies* (*Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien*, since 1981) and the GKS book series (since 1991) to an annual conference for early career researchers held since 2004.

Since the mid-2000s, however, there has been a certain decline in Canadian Studies, which can be explained by both external and internal factors. The external factors include, above all, changes in the funding landscape in Canada, especially the discontinuation of the Understanding Canada program by the Conservative government of Stephen Harper. This made it more difficult for many scholars to maintain the close and regular contact with the culture being studied that is so essential in area studies. Above all, however, emerging Canadianists lacked opportunities to build up Canadian expertise and field experience through research stays. Internal, structural, and institutional factors also weakened Canadian Studies in German-speaking countries and in Europe. With the so-called Bologna Process, which replaced the previous national diplomas with BA and MA programs by 2010, it was hardly possible to anchor Canadian Studies in the university curricula in a sustainable and visible way.

CURRENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

It is not an easy time for area studies in the current university landscape in German-speaking countries and beyond. In the current academic structure, it is difficult for young academics to establish themselves in the academic system with a focus on Canadian Studies in the long term. Whether in the social sciences or in literary, cultural and linguistic studies, it is rare to make a career with a focus on Canada alone. Particularly in disciplines such as geography, history, or political science, we observe that many young scholars are increasingly focusing on Canada in the form of case studies and then turning their attention to other areas. For committed Canadianists, this results in a need to justify the study of Canada, a need that does not exist in Canada itself. However, if we take area studies and its knowledge value seriously, it is imperative that we maintain its interdisciplinary breadth.

The promotion of early career researchers is particularly important in this context. In recent years, GKS members have regularly organized study trips and summer schools that have enabled students to gain first-hand experience in Canada and with Canadian Studies. Just like semesters abroad in Canada, this can be the initial spark for a commitment to Canadian Studies. One of the few positive side effects of the COVID-19 pandemic was a strong internationalization, especially at the GKS Young Researchers' Forum, so that an active peer network facilitates entry into Canadian Studies.

The past few years have impressively demonstrated how large research networks such as the German–Canadian transatlantic doctoral school IRTG Diversity: Mediating Difference in Transcultural Spaces (co-funded by SSHRC and DFG 2013–2023) have not only given a significant boost and creative impetus to the researchers and universities directly involved, but also to GKS and Canadian Studies as a whole. It is to be hoped that the existing international funding opportunities, especially in the European–Canadian context, will lead to further initiatives of this kind.

PROPOSING A PATH FORWARD

From this perspective, three factors in particular appear decisive for the productive further development of Canadian Studies:

1. We should first and foremost excel with outstanding research. The great attention that Canada is receiving in connection with Donald Trump's re-election also underlines the international relevance of Canadian Studies, whose traditional key topics such as dealing with diversity, the environment, and sustainability are still considered to be topics of the future.
2. This can only be achieved through international networking as in the ICCS and with the support of political actors, particularly through programs for international mobility and scientific networking.
3. It is at the core of Canadian Studies to also think about the forms and perspectives of area studies. Together with Canadian colleagues, GKS members asked, for example, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the GKS, about the model character of Canadian Studies for "transcultural societal studies" (Hoerder, 2004) and the potential of "beyond area studies" (Lüsebrink & McFalls, 2006).

The International Canadian Studies Summit and the reflection on our field, through the SSHRC project *(Re)Searching for Canadian Studies*, based at the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, are important steps toward making Canadian Studies fit for the coming years. Together with the ICCS initiatives for international networking and the promotion of young researchers, the results will contribute to further advancing the international dialogue on Canada and Canadian Studies. As the GKS, we are pleased to contribute to this. ■

NOTE

1. In 2024, GKS had 434 members. The peak of Canadian Studies in the late 1990s is not only limited to Germany, but can also be observed in other countries, including the United Kingdom (Coates, 2024).

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Japan–Canada collaborative education programs

BY NORIE YAZU

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Many collaborative education programs exist between Japan and Canada. All help foster closer relationships between the two countries, and notably the study of Canada in Japan. For instance, the Cross-Cultural College (CCC), which was established in 2011 at Kwansei Gakuin University (KGU), located in Hyogo prefecture (close to Osaka), Japan, is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. This is a collaborative education project jointly run by Mount Allison University, Queen's University, Western University, University of Toronto, and KGU. As of 2024, 740 KGU students and 567 students from Canada have participated in the CCC program. The program, conducted entirely in English, features two courses of problem-solving activities related to business and two courses for students to participate in internships. Through these courses, students improve their understanding of global business, cross-cultural competency, analytical skills, and international team building.

THE GLOBAL CAREER SEMINAR IN JAPAN

The Global Career Seminar in Japan (GCSJ)¹ is held during the first week of August at KGU. Students are taught modern business tactics and are then given business assignments by participating companies/organizations. Working groups of six students from KGU and the four Canadian universities produce a business plan. The course is divided into two parts: the online period (remote) and the on-site period (in Japan). The online period, from June to July, consists of several short video lectures and assignments about business analysis, an icebreaker session that allows the students to get to know each other, and Q&A sessions with the companies/organizations. The on-site period takes place in August at KGU. Flying to Japan, the students from the Canadian universities meet the KGU students. On the first day in Japan, the students attend lectures and learn about team conflict management and cross-cultural communication. The teams are given several days to brush up their business plans and prepare for their final presentations. During the tutorials, the students make preliminary presentations and meet with the representatives of the companies/organizations to get their advice. The final presentations are conducted competition-style, with all teams presenting their business plans to the representatives of the companies/organizations. The participating companies/organizations in 2024 were Manulife, Ricoh, the Embassy of Canada to Japan, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Garuda Indonesia, and others.



Global Career Seminar in Japan (GCSJ), August 2024, Kwansei Gakuin University (KGU)

THE GLOBAL INTERNSHIP IN JAPAN PROGRAM

The Global Internship in Japan (GIJ)² is held for two weeks after the GCSJ. Most of the GCSJ students stay to participate in the GIJ. This internship program combines online and on-site course work about business analysis and cross-cultural communication. It provides paired KGU and Canadian university students with an opportunity to experience and analyze practical issues in Japanese business settings. The course is grounded in a problem-based learning (PBL) approach, in which the students tackle actual business assignments given by their internship companies. The online period in June and July consists of short video lectures along with assignments including topics such as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis and modern market research methods, an icebreaker session, and Q&A sessions with the companies to which they are assigned.

The on-site period takes place at the end of August. Prior to their internship, students attend lectures and participate in workshops and tutorials at the KGU campus. Here, they acquire basic knowledge about internships, business analysis, Japanese business manners, and cross-cultural understanding, and they study their assigned companies. This prepares the students for the start of their internship. On the last day of their 10-day internship, the students present their solution for the assignments given by the supervisors of their companies and receive feedback from them. After their internship, the students return to KGU to give a final presentation about what they learned at their companies and to share their experiences with other students. The participating companies/organizations in 2024 were Elecom, All Nippon Airways (ANA), Kameda Seika, Yamaha, and others.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PROGRAMS

Two additional programs are held at the University of Toronto. The Global Career Seminar in Canada (GCSC), held in February during reading week for Ontario universities, is the Canadian version of the GCSJ. The KGU students fly to Toronto to work with the Canadian students. Some of the participating companies/organizations in 2024 were Toyota Canada, Kubota Canada, Air Canada, and Ontario Tourism Educational Corporation.

The Field Study in Canadian Business (FSCB) is an internship program that is the Canadian version of the GIJ. The program is only for the KGU students as it takes place for two weeks at the beginning of February when the Canadian students are in school. The participating companies/organizations in 2024 were Yamaha Canada, Japan Foundation, Nikkei Voice, Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Toronto, and others.

AWARD-WINNING PROGRAM

During the CCC programs, KGU and Canadian students are required to stay at the same hostel or hotel and have meals together. They work closely and spend private time together throughout the programs. Thus, the students are immersed in a cross-cultural environment and learn about each other's culture. Such efforts have been recognized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). In April 2024, the GIJ program won the MEXT Award in the 7th National Career Design Program Competition, being recognized as the most impactful and innovative program for the students' career learning and development. From over 1,000 applications, GIJ won the most valuable award.³ To my knowledge, this is the first time the Japanese government has awarded a Canada-related educational program. As a Canadianist of Japan, I am honoured to share this news with the Canadianists of Canada. ■

NOTES

1. Global Career Seminar in Japan (GCSJ) 2023 digest
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItfgwOcC_Zg&list=PLpANqLjIHajiv7YZB1JPIZ-pI6qWIrQmx&index=2
2. Global Internship in Japan (GCSJ) 2024 digest <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhJOdKS-5y0&list=PLpANqLjIHajiv7YZB1JPIZ-pI6qWIrQmx&index=1>
3. See https://mcs.mynavi.jp/university-case/2024/08/isaward7_kwansei_u/ and https://www.asahi.com/thinkcampus/pr_kwansei_3/

Building bridges: Canadian Studies across borders

BY LUCY LUCCISANO, BINA MEHTA, AND KEVIN SPOONER

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If all goes according to plan, by the fall of 2025 the Windsor–Detroit borderlands will be linked by a new international crossing: the Gordie Howe International Bridge. The 2.5 km long bridge will be built at an estimated cost of \$6.4 billion and will feature a multi-use path specially designed for pedestrians and cyclists.¹ With more than \$325 million in trade crossing the Windsor–Detroit border every day (nearly a third of all Canada–US trade),² the economic imperative to move goods and people as efficiently as possible is obvious. Even in a trade war between Canada and the United States, time is still money when it comes to the movement of goods and people, and the new bridge’s practical benefits for improving and strengthening capacities in Canadian–American supply chains remain clear.

Beyond such benefits, the Gordie Howe bridge also can be seen as a catalyst in Canadian–American relations, a platform for cross-border innovation. Its symbolic value for continental neighbours was certainly recognized by many who attended the 2024 CN Forum, “Beyond the Gordie Howe Bridge: Reimagining Trade and Commerce for a New Age,” hosted by Dr. Rebecca Malouin and the Canadian Studies Center at Michigan State University (MSU). Canadian and American officials and diplomats, academics, and representatives of business and non-governmental organizations came together at MSU to consider the bridge’s wider significance.³ In his keynote address, Michigan Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist II spoke glowingly of the Detroit–Windsor relationship, recognizing the potential of this borderland region as a logistics and technology hub. Beyond the obvious economic and trade benefits, the subject of cross-border collaborations in education was also raised at the forum. In what ways might the Gordie Howe bridge point to the potential for increased learning and cultural connections between Canadian and American institutions, at all levels of education?

BUILDING NORTH AMERICAN PARTNERSHIPS

For two decades, the North American Studies Program at Wilfrid Laurier University has worked to establish relationships with universities in the United States and Mexico. In the United States, Laurier has partnered on projects with the University of Vermont, Bowling Green University, Syracuse University, Georgia Southern University, and MSU. Many of these connections were originally forged with government funding. In the early 2000s, North American Mobility in Higher Education funding provided sizable grants (typically \$150,000, with matching funds from the US and Mexican governments) to establish consortia of university partners, covering student and faculty exchange costs over several years. The Laurier partnership with Georgia Southern, established in 2005 on one such grant, continues today.

More recently, a Federal Assistance Award from the US State Department was used to create the MSU–Laurier partnership. Building on short visits by staff, students, and faculty (full-time and contract) to the university campuses last academic year, in the fall of 2024 Laurier and MSU signed a

memorandum of understanding to foster further academic partnerships.⁴ The Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada and the Canadian Studies Program at MSU have taken the lead, at our respective universities, to promote and encourage opportunities for Canadian–American collaboration on our campuses, including the exchange of students and future scholars.

LESSONS LEARNED

From these various partnerships over the years, several useful lessons have been learned.

First, seed funding, sometimes generous but relatively small amounts too, can yield impressive results. Accessing existing government, non-government, or institutional funding to spark cross-border relationships can produce long-term cooperation and benefits. Networking within and beyond universities to identify such funding opportunities, as we did through the US Consulate in Toronto to foster the Laurier–MSU connection, is a good first step.

Second, successful cross-border partnerships between institutes of higher learning require academic champions. This is where Canadian Studies centres are perfectly situated to take a leading role within our universities to engage with new partners in North America and beyond. As centres of expertise about Canada, who else is better suited within universities to offer knowledge mobilization of Canadian research abroad and to support the study of Canada internationally?

Third, the development of new partnerships works best when the administrative and academic silos in universities are breached. At Laurier, when North American Studies and the Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada worked closely with staff from Laurier International, Student Affairs, Indigenous Initiatives, and senior administration, it was much easier to get projects and partnerships off the ground. This proved especially true when working with American universities where there was a comparable campus culture of cooperation. Conversely, partnerships with others where such a collaborative intra-university culture did not exist typically faltered. The lesson: Be thoughtful and deliberate when identifying potential partner institutions.

UNDERSTANDING CANADA IN THE NEAR FUTURE

The Conservative government's 2012 decision to cancel the Understanding Canada program was a tremendous and seriously short-sighted blow to Canadian cultural diplomacy. A relatively small amount of money helped to ensure that there were vibrant communities of scholars engaged in the study of Canada across North America and around the globe. The program literally informed the world about Canada. Now, particularly with respect to our relationship with the United States, if Americans fail to understand the significance of Canada to their own economy or the social and political convergences and divergences that shape relations with their northern neighbour, this is largely Canada's fault. Successive federal governments have abandoned their responsibility to explain Canada through cultural diplomacy. Confronted by an erratic Trump administration intent on undermining Canadian sovereignty through tariffs, economic coercion, and misinformation, the need to educate American legislators and the wider public about Canada and its significance as a continental partner could not be more obvious. American ignorance and indifference have angered Canadians and led to a remarkable degree of national unity, but we are partly to blame for this state of affairs.

Put another way, the proverbial chickens have come home to roost. Ideally, Ottawa would recognize the errors of its ways and restore or even enhance Understanding Canada. Yet, we're reminded of scholar Greg Anderson's suggestion to observe the "many connections and processes taking place across borders every day" and to appreciate the roles played in the incremental integration of North America by "bureaucratic, sub-state, and non-state levels" (2012, p. 450).

As non-state actors, it may well fall to the centres of Canadian Studies across this country to take the lead in developing concrete action plans, with our partner centres and Canadianists in other countries, especially in the United States, to create new relationships and understanding from the

ground up. With the greatest respect for Gordie Howe, an entirely different sort of bridge building is what is now needed most. ■

NOTES

1. <https://www.gordiehoweinternationalbridge.com/en/by-the-numbers>
2. <https://www.citywindsor.ca/business/economic-development/location-and-logistics>
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Finding balance in teaching Indigenous Studies and settler colonialism: One historian's journey

BY CAROLYN PODRUCHNY

Carolyn Podruchny is a university professor of history and acting director of the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies at York University.

Teaching Indigenous histories has always been a journey for me. I am a non-Indigenous White settler-scholar who teaches Indigenous histories to primarily non-Indigenous students in a large, urban, multicultural university. I occupy a place of discomfort. I was drawn to this place of discomfort because I grew up in a small prairie town, where Indigenous and settler inhabitants grew up together, went to school and church together, worked together, and lived beside one another. Racism, cooperation, and compassion existed side by side. I wanted to understand the deep history of my town.

My personal story on the land began at the turn of the 20th century when the Canadian government sponsored my Ukrainian great-grandparents to come to Manitoba to farm the land. I wanted to go deeper, to find out who occupied the land since time immemorial, and I was drawn to the histories of Métis, Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), and Nehinaw (Cree). Over time, I got my PhD and found a job in the History Department at York University. I carved my academic life as an ally, researching the histories of colonial encounters in the fur trade and building courses about early Canada, which were necessarily dominated by Indigenous stories. I want to share some illustrative stories of my journey in finding ways to best teach Indigenous histories.

TEACHING SAQIYUQ

Early in my career, I taught a fourth-year seminar on “Cultures and Colonialism.” I assigned the book *Saqiyuq: Stories from the Lives of Three Inuit Women* (Wachowich, 2001) to highlight Indigenous women's voices, to show the value of oral histories and oral traditions, and to introduce students to a landscape foreign to Toronto—that is, the Arctic. The book is divided into three autobiographies of women from one family representing three generations. “Saqiyuq” is the Inuit name for a strong wind that suddenly shifts direction, and the book depicts the dramatic changes of life in the Arctic during the 20th century.

The grandmother, Apphia Awa, born in 1931, experienced the traditional life on the land, while Rhoda Katsak, Apphia's daughter, was part of the transitional generation sent to government schools. In contrast, Sandra Katsak, Rhoda's daughter, grew up in Pond Inlet (on the north shore of Baffin Island) and negotiated video games, coffee shops, alcohol, and drugs. The life stories of this grandmother, daughter, and granddaughter show the contrast three successive generations experienced in childhood, adolescence, marriage, birthing, and child rearing. During the last years of Apphia's life, Rhoda and Sandra began reconnecting to traditional culture and learning the art of making skin clothing. Through the storytelling in the book, all three women explore the transformations that have

taken place in Inuit lives and chart the struggle of the Inuit to reclaim and integrate traditional practices into their lives.

I divided the class into three groups, and each read a section, which they taught to the rest of the class. I was shocked by the results. Those who read the grandmother's section loved the book and found her stories encouraging and uplifting. Those who read the mother's section were neutral about the book and slightly depressed about government efforts at colonization. Those who read the daughter's section were devastated by the stories and could not contain their grief at her life's trajectory. They cried in class. In retrospect, I should not have been shocked. The three dramatically different reactions of the students underscored the changes in Inuit lives and showed me that it is necessary to find balance in teaching about Indigenous topics. In this case, the balance of the three generations was integral to the successful transmission of the message of the book. Although the last third of the book focuses on the trauma of the granddaughter's generation, who were fighting a suicide epidemic (directly related to the loss of cultural traditions due to colonial policies), the authors meant to convey the resilience of all generations in fighting increasingly sophisticated, insidious, and vicious forms of colonialism.

DEVELOPING COURSES THAT CENTRE INDIGENOUS HISTORIES

In a more recent example of my efforts to teach Indigenous histories, I developed a course on ancient North America from time immemorial or the end of the last ice age to roughly 1500 CE. I was frustrated that all Indigenous and national histories seemed to start with the arrival of Europeans to colonize Indigenous places and peoples. To understand the context of colonization properly, one needs to have a full appreciation of the millennia of Indigenous presence on the lands that came to be known as Canada, the United States, and Mexico. North America is often considered a young continent with a brief history. Yet, over thousands of years, Indigenous peoples have developed rich civilizations with sophisticated technologies, including large earthen works on par with Egyptian pyramids; cities that matched in numbers and architectural wonders those of ancient Rome and Greece; the domestication of plants and animals; extensive irrigation and road systems; and histories of exploration, empire, art, and technology.

The course starts with the ethics of studying the history of colonized peoples. It turns to a discussion of the controversies surrounding the peopling of the Americas, including the theories of the Bering Land Bridge, coastal travel, oceanic crossings, and Indigenous oral traditions of independent origin. It next examines the emergence of hunters, gatherers, and fishers across the continent, the megafaunal mass extinctions, and the curiosity of the Clovis Point explosion. The course traces the emergence of corn as a consistent food source and the growth of corn-based civilizations, including the Olmecs, Zapotecs, Mayans, Toltecs, and Aztecs in Mesoamerica; the Hohokam, Mogollons, and Ancient Pueblos (Anasazis) in the US southwest; and the rise of Hopewellian and Mississippi Mound Builders in central North America. It focuses primarily on change over time, human migrations, economic expansions, and cultural developments.

Significant themes include comparing the use of oral history and archaeological evidence, trade connections among civilizations on the continent, the spread of agriculture, massive engineering projects, artistic explosions, the splendour of cities, and the technical and social sophistication needed to live in harsh environments. The course explores various methods and sources for studying ancient history, including archaeology, art, oral history, landscapes, experiential evidence, and documents. The course engages with Indigenous-centred perspectives that challenge conventional colonizing methodologies.

When I first proposed this course, my department rejected it. They thought that it fell within the purview of anthropology. They thought students would be confused because our "ancient" courses were centred on the Mediterranean and used written sources. They wondered how I could master such a vast amount of material falling outside the disciplinary canon of history. But they took a chance on me, and the course has succeeded. Students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have loved it. But I am haunted by the feeling that I am ignoring the Indigenous realities today by deleting the study of colonialism. How can this course possibly resonate with Indigenous peoples today? In the final assignment, I

asked students to show how one element of the course connects with Indigenous communities today. I am constantly surprised and delighted by their findings, which draw direct lines from ancient Indigenous peoples to present communities.

TEACHING INDIGENOUS HISTORIES AND SETTLER COLONIALISM

In the CanSearch project, Jean Michel Montsion and Dominik Formanowicz surveyed and interviewed scholars from outside Canada regarding their teaching and research about Canada. The survey results show that people want to know more about Indigenous Studies in Canada, but they feel ill-equipped to teach it and that the field is changing fast. At the same time, participants were not particularly interested in settler colonialism. Once again, I found myself surprised. I always thought these two subjects were different sides of the same coin. Certainly, Indigenous Studies and Settler Colonial Studies are distinct areas of scholarship, but they share many linkages. Some speculate that Indigenous peoples as a category would not exist without the existence of colonialism (Merlan, 2009).

Settler colonialism is a system that perpetuates the destruction and elimination of Indigenous peoples. Outsiders come to the land inhabited by other peoples (who are later called Indigenous) and claim it as their own in perpetuity. It is not just a vicious act of the past; it exists as long as settlers are living on appropriated land, as in Canada (Hurwitz & Bourque, 2014). Settlers dominate the land based on their doctrine of discovery, and they reduce Indigenous peoples' rights to the land from sovereignty to occupancy. The violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their land and livelihoods is maintained across generations of settlers (Wolfe, 2013). One cannot tell stories of Indigenous peoples without explaining how they came to be Indigenous through the process of colonialism.

I worry that teaching Indigenous histories from this perspective overemphasizes the importance of colonialism and denies Indigenous peoples' histories outside of the process of their dispossession. At the same time, I do not want to silence the past, whitewash history, and focus only on nice things. I think that in the case of Indigenous histories, we need to find the balance between conveying the horrors of settler colonialism and Indigenous dispossession and articulating the triumphs of Indigenous resistance, resilience, and continuity. I am still on this journey of discomfort. ■

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Red gold unearthed: Bauxite mining in Jamaica as ecocide and a new lens for the study of Canada

BY TAMEKA SAMUELS-JONES

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Jamaica's global profile often highlights tourism, reggae music, and world-renowned coffee from the Blue Mountains. Less discussed, however, is the island's longstanding reliance on bauxite, the mineral ore from which aluminum is produced, and how its extraction over several decades has entailed significant environmental and social disruption. Bauxite mining in Jamaica dates to the mid-20th century, when colonial legacies dovetailed with new forms of North American—particularly Canadian—and later multinational corporate involvement (Bobb, 2014). By the 1950s, Jamaica had become a world leader in bauxite exports, despite major ecological and social sacrifices (Campbell, 1987). The Jamaican case underscores the urgent need to address accountability gaps that enable Canadian multinational corporations to perpetuate environmental harm with impunity, while also providing a new way of defining what objects of study fit the field of Canadian Studies, especially in transnational research.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND COLONIAL LEGACIES

Jamaica's modern economic trajectory is inseparable from the legacies of British colonial rule, wherein plantations of sugar and other cash crops dominated land usage. With independence in 1962, Jamaican policy-makers sought new avenues for export-led growth, including minerals. Bauxite, recognized by international aluminum conglomerates for its high quality and proximity to North American industrial centres, quickly became a cornerstone of the new Jamaican economy (Campbell, 1987). In the 1940s, companies such as Aluminum Company of Canada (Alcan), Reynolds Metals, and Kaiser Aluminum established a foothold, lured by Jamaica's favourable geology, pliable land-acquisition laws, and relative closeness to US and Canadian refineries (Girvan, 1971). By 1957, the island stood as the world's leading exporter of bauxite, fuelling national hopes that mineral wealth would foster structural transformation, stable employment, and modernization. Despite early optimism, the subsequent decades revealed that Jamaica's bauxite-dominated growth model was deeply inequitable and financially precarious. Owing to global economic shocks and the island's mounting debt, successive Jamaican governments in the 1970s and 1980s embraced structural adjustment programs designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (Bernal, 1984). These policies included reduced public spending, privatization, and liberalization of the mining sector, effectively incentivizing multinational corporations—including those headquartered in Canada—to expand extraction projects further.

Among foreign investors, Canadian companies—most notably Alcan—were decisive in shaping Jamaica's bauxite industry during its formative decades. Alcan spearheaded crucial early mining initiatives, capitalizing on Jamaica's high-quality bauxite and proximity to Canadian smelters and refin-

ing facilities (Girvan, 1971). By establishing extensive transport, processing, and export infrastructures, Canadian corporations acquired significant influence in Jamaican mining regions, and over the years the consolidation of Canadian mining interests in Jamaica paralleled Canada's broader expansion into the Latin American and Caribbean extractive sectors (Clark, 2003). The Jamaican government's reliance on foreign direct investment to drive GDP growth—and the recurring cycle of debt—further reinforced Canadian firms' negotiating leverage. Thus, by the late 20th century, Canadian corporate involvement in Jamaican mining was firmly rooted. It left a defining imprint on the island's political economy, as well as on its landscapes and communities, who bore the brunt of open-pit extraction and related displacements.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS

The term “ecocide” is used to describe severe and widespread, or long-term, ecological damage that undermines the peaceful enjoyment of inhabitants or entire ecosystems (Stop Ecocide Foundation, 2021). Although not yet codified into international criminal law, there is work afoot to include ecocide as a crime analogous to genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The Stop Ecocide Foundation's Independent Expert Panel (2021) proposes that acts leading to extensive or lasting destruction of ecosystems, committed with knowledge of the likelihood of harm, be subject to international criminal jurisdiction. Unlike conventional “white-collar” or “environmental” crimes, ecocide focuses on harm of exceptional magnitude, emphasizing both objective measures of ecosystem disruption and subjective factors such as corporate knowledge, foreseeability, and reckless disregard. The framework inherently integrates ecological ethics, human rights, and global governance norms, offering a new vantage for analyzing how transnational corporations sometimes commit environmental harm that is functionally irreparable.

This is particularly relevant because the environmental toll of bauxite mining in Jamaica is extensive. Canadian and other countries' mining operations on the island have led to deforestation, destruction of agricultural land, and significant air and water pollution. Particulate matter, including PM10 and PM2.5, emitted by bauxite refineries, contributes to respiratory illnesses, including asthma and sinusitis, in communities near mining sites (Campbell & Beckford, 2009). Additionally, mining leaves behind degraded landscapes—pits, wastelands, and scarred ecosystems—that disrupt local livelihoods and biodiversity. Remediation efforts, such as covering pits with topsoil, often fail to restore land viability, leaving communities with unusable farmlands and greater vulnerability to natural disasters (Jamaica Environment Trust, 2015). Socially, mining has displaced rural and Indigenous populations, such as the Maroons, erasing cultural and historical ties to their ancestral lands (Lashley & Warner, 2015). Communities report inadequate compensation, health risks, and an overall decline in quality of life. The state's complicity, marked by weak environmental regulations and alignment with corporate interests, exacerbates these harms (Jamaica Environment Trust, 2015).

LEGAL AND ETHICAL GAPS

Despite these glaring issues, the regulation of environmental harm in Jamaica highlights systemic flaws. Environmental laws in general often prioritize corporate activity over ecological preservation. White (2013) argues that environmental offences are frequently undervalued in legal frameworks and treated as “white-collar crimes” rather than serious violations. This leniency reflects a broader tendency to compartmentalize environmental risks, allowing harmful practices to persist under regulatory limits. The Jamaican government's failure to monitor public health impacts and its reliance on mining company-affiliated medical professionals underscores this lack of accountability.

However, Jamaica is not unique in grappling with destructive mining. Across Latin America, Canadian and other transnational corporations have frequently been implicated in environmental and social harms (Clark, 2003; Birn et al., 2018). In Peru's Tambogrande conflict, residents voted overwhelmingly to reject a Canadian mining company's gold and copper project, highlighting community-

led forms of resistance (Caxaj et al., 2014). Although the Peruvian government initially disregarded the referendum, it underscored how local movements can challenge extractive frontiers. Colombia provides another parallel, where large-scale Canadian coal and gold mining dispossess Afro-Colombian and Indigenous groups. The government's priority to attract foreign capital for resource extraction has collided with rural populations' ancestral land tenure, echoing Jamaican experiences of marginalized communities facing forced relocation (Veltmeyer, 2013).

In addition to environmental harm, Canadian mining companies operating worldwide have been the subject of ongoing controversies around human rights (Bernaz, 2017). Numerous reports detail how communities from Guatemala to Tanzania have faced forced displacements, water contamination, and, in certain instances, violent repression linked to protests against large-scale mining projects (Deneault & Sacher, 2012). Civil society organizations have documented allegations of security forces hired by Canadian firms intimidating local activists, contributing to broader concerns about corporate complicity in rights violations. Such abuses are not purely accidental by-products of extraction; they often reflect systemic imbalances of power and a corporate strategy of cost minimization that disregards local well-being. Lawsuits in Canadian courts—initiated by foreign plaintiffs—have become a test case for whether Canada can hold its own companies accountable for abuses committed abroad. Although incremental legal precedents have emerged, activists argue that the broader regulatory environment still favours corporate interests and leaves many affected communities with limited recourse (Birn et al., 2018).

ADVOCATING FOR ECOCIDE CRIMINALIZATION

Successive Canadian governments have officially stated that they encourage responsible business conduct among Canadian extractive companies operating abroad. Mechanisms such as the Office of the Extractive Sector Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Counsellor were introduced to address grievances, though critics contend that these offices lack strong enforcement powers (Birn et al., 2018). Voluntary CSR frameworks remain the dominant policy tool, but environmental advocacy groups argue that such voluntary measures do little to deter repeated offences or systemic abuses. Jamaica has also failed to address the environmental harm; when Canadian mining companies have faced public criticism for environmental damage in Jamaica, official government statements often emphasize both the value of foreign direct investment for developing countries and the need to “balance” economic gains with ethical considerations (Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean and MiningWatch Canada, 2002). Binding obligations or punitive measures for corporate actors—particularly those engaged in resource extraction—have been slow to materialize. This perceived gap leaves Jamaican communities vulnerable when harmful mining practices persist without sufficient checks on corporate power.

The international criminalization of environmental harm as ecocide, prosecutable by the International Criminal Court (ICC) under the Rome Statute, would hold multinational corporations accountable for such harms, addressing gaps in domestic enforcement and creating deterrents for future violations. Fortunately, these policies and legislation are currently being prepared by the ICC (ICC, 2024). Lessons from existing frameworks, such as the Basel Convention and INTERPOL's environmental crime initiatives, also provide clear pathways for implementing international sanctions and enhancing transnational cooperation until ecocide is prosecutable.

TRANSNATIONAL RESEARCH ON CANADA

Bauxite mining in Jamaica epitomizes the devastating consequences of extractive industries on vulnerable ecosystems and communities, in which Canada—by way of its mining companies—has an undisputable role and responsibility. Rethinking Jamaica's bauxite sector through the lens of ecocide sharpens our awareness of the gravity and irreversibility of the damage wrought by large-scale extraction. Canadian companies, among other multinational interests, have profited substantially from Jamaica's rich bauxite reserves, frequently under conditions that externalize environmental and so-

cial costs. While these corporations have benefited from logistical advantages, tax concessions, and labour arrangements tilted in their favour, local communities have borne disproportionate harm, including displacement from ancestral lands, contaminated water sources, and long-term health risks. Such power imbalances highlight how corporate strategies in Jamaica can mirror those in other Global South contexts, where Canadian firms in particular have faced allegations of human rights violations, inadequate environmental oversight, and complicity in suppressing local dissent. As global conversations on climate justice and sustainability intensify, the Jamaican experience offers a stark reminder of the need for robust, enforceable mechanisms to protect the world's most at-risk communities and ecosystems from predatory exploitation. It also speaks of the ways in which the study of Canada must evolve through comparative and transnational frameworks to recognize the global role of Canadian stakeholders around the world. ■

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Assessing the future of multiculturalism

BY PAUL D. MORRIS

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For Mark Twain, dispelling the rumours of his demise was relatively simple; in the case of multiculturalism, the matter is somewhat more complex. That multiculturalism is suffering an ongoing crisis of legitimation seems incontestable. Depending upon the specifics of national context and historical time period, examples abound of the supposed failings of, and pessimistic prognoses regarding, multiculturalism—from Angela Merkel’s 2010 pronouncement that *Multikulti ist tot* (“multiculturalism is dead”) to a string of recent electoral victories for parties and politicians that place the putative goals of multiculturalism in conflict with the majoritarian cultures of nation-states. The contestation is not limited to the right wing of the political spectrum. While rarely supported by broad-based electoral majorities, left-wing and progressive critics of multiculturalism have succeeded in advancing concepts and movements—separatism, decolonization, diversity, anti-racism, Indigenization, etc.—that offer alternative approaches to cultural recognition that are frequently valued precisely because they are not state-led. As an example: in Canada, a recent Environics Institute poll indicated that 58 percent of Canadians believe that Canada currently accepts too many immigrants (Neuman, 2024). Although this is not a direct critique of multiculturalism, it suggests a softening of one of the key achievements of multiculturalism—the positive perception of immigrants.

Despite these and many other indicators suggesting that we are “beyond” multiculturalism (Alibhai-Brown, 2004) or that multiculturalism is in “retreat” (Joppke, 2004) or in “crisis” (Chin, 2017), there are reasons to believe that, as with Twain, the rumours of multiculturalism’s death remain an exaggeration.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MULTICULTURALISM FOR INTERNATIONAL CANADIAN STUDIES

One indication of the abiding interest in multiculturalism in Canada emerges from recent research conducted by Jean Michel Montsion and Dominik Formanowicz in the context of *(Re)Searching for Canadian Studies*, or CanSearch, a SSHRC-funded project that seeks to document how the field of Canadian Studies has evolved internationally since 2012. Based on surveys of international scholars of the discipline, Montsion, Formanowicz, and their team of national and international Canadianists have gathered a range of information regarding the practice of Canadian Studies abroad. Among the findings to emerge from the study is the relatively high ranking of multiculturalism as a topic of both research and instruction. Among both English- and French-language Canadianists, multiculturalism ranks third along with other such topics as Indigenous peoples, arts and literature, and the environment. While it is still too early in the project to clarify the precise nature of the interest in, or approach to, Canadian multiculturalism, the prominent ranking of the topic among international scholars of Canada invites speculation.

THE POLYSEMANTIC CHARACTER OF MULTICULTURALISM

For all its putative failings as a policy within distinct national contexts, multiculturalism retains its validity as a coherent—if sometimes inadequate—response to one of the defining issues of social life across the globe: how to assure equal access to the liberal rights of citizenship in national polities that are increasingly pluricultural. It seems likely that the continued viability of multiculturalism will rest in its capacity to respond to this issue. But before we can adjudicate the likely success or sustainability of multiculturalism in addressing this issue of citizenship rights within particular national contexts, it is perhaps useful to re-evaluate the multiple uses of a term that Rita Chin (2017) has described as “slippery” (p. 8). Part of the “slipperiness” of multiculturalism is undoubtedly due to its polysemantic character. Multiculturalism seems to share terrain in three overlapping domains: first, in reference to the sociological reality of most of the globe’s nation-states as pluricultural polities composed of majoritarian national cultures, substate national minorities, and immigrants and migrants; second, as a field of inquiry dedicated to the study of the multiple social and political implications of pluricultural polities; and third, as particular policies—not always explicitly identified as multicultural—enacted by governments (for example, the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* of 1988) to address the social, political, and cultural ramifications of diversity.

Each of these domains is worthy of attention when the future of multiculturalism is considered. Regarding the first domain, for a multitude of reasons ranging from economic transnationalism to the demographic disruptions occasioned by geopolitical conflict, even those nation-states that may once have been relatively homogeneous are certain to experience increasing diversity as a result of escalating mobility. Concerning the second domain, interest in multiculturalism as a field of inquiry is unlikely to wane given the increasing pressures posed by augmenting rates of social diversity and the need to conceptualize adequate theoretical and policy responses. Finally, with regard to the third domain, most governments—especially those that identify as liberal democracies—will be compelled to develop policies that address the issue of assuring appropriate political rights for all members of the national polity.

MULTICULTURALISM AND ADAPTATIONS

Whether appropriate political rights are assured for all through policies of multiculturalism or other related policy responses (such as interculturalism), the multiculturalist model will retain value in terms either of emulation or of modification and improvement according to the particularities of differing national contexts. Of course, depending upon the contingencies of differing socio-political contexts, the relevance of these three dimensions of multiculturalism will be felt differently. For instance, in the case of Canada, Will Kymlicka (2010) has pointed out that despite a felt desire to re-evaluate and perhaps recalibrate multiculturalist understandings of the citizenship rights and responsibilities of immigrants, the country is not significantly altering its multiculturalist positions with regard to the two other broad categories of Canadian social diversity—Indigenous peoples and substate national minorities (pp. 136–137).

From this perspective, the interest in Canadian multiculturalism evinced by the international scholars of Canadian Studies surveyed by Montsion, Formanowicz, and their research team is neither surprising nor likely to abate. In all three of the domains discussed above, Canada has a wealth of experience that will continue to provoke inquiry. Likewise, the socio-cultural reality of diversifying polities—as in Canada—will continue to demand a policy response that addresses the political and societal issues (still incompletely) responded to by multiculturalism. ■

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Does anyone in the world care about Canadian language issues?

BY EVE HAQUE AND MARCEL MARTEL

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In 2023, the Robarts Centre undertook a major study of the state of Canadian Studies and of Canadian Studies centres around the world. Researchers as well as executives of local associations of Canadian Studies abroad, including centres and networks, were invited to share their thoughts on the challenges of researching and teaching about Canada in their part of the world. One of the study's findings was that the country's linguistic question—the relationship between French and English, and the efforts and strategies to promote French as a common language in Québec and among francophone minority communities—left many people indifferent. Federal and official bilingualism as well as language planning policies were not a topic of study or a major theme in courses on Canada; neither were official languages and frameworks of provinces and territories. Should we conclude that students and researchers outside Canada are blasé about bilingualism in Canada's official languages?

AT FIRST GLANCE: EXPLAINING THE ABSENCE OF INTEREST

How can such a situation be explained? A first explanation would be the absence of the language issue in the public sphere. After all, there has not been a major crisis in recent years. Canadian attention has been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic and social and state responses, notably from public health officials. As for the language issue in Canada, the last major crisis occurred in November 2018. In Ontario's fall 2018 economic statement, delivered on November 15, the Ford government announced that the Université de l'Ontario français would disappear. Franco-Ontarians reacted strongly on November 16 and the following days. Their mobilization forced the Ontario government to reverse its decision, and the Université de l'Ontario français welcomed its first cohort of undergraduate students in September 2021.

Consequently, the lack of interest in the language issue shows that research projects and course content are influenced by current issues in Canada. This puts an end to those claims that courses in social sciences and humanities are inadequate because they ignore current issues. If studies similar to the one undertaken by the CanSearch team had been done in the recent past, it is quite possible that we would find that course topics and research projects supported by Canadian Studies centres reflected the current events of the day.

But is this a satisfactory explanation? Are there other possibilities? There is an underlying trend in Canada. So, it is not surprising that research centres and courses on Canada at universities outside Canada reflect this trend: there is a strong desire to know about, to study, and to debate Indigenous issues. The 2023 study by the CanSearch team demonstrates that there is a desire to understand the Canadian colonial project and the genocidal policy that justified the establishment of residential schools, the reserve system, and the *Indian Act* of 1876. Regardless of the language in which knowledge is created and disseminated, Canadian Studies outside the country show a marked interest in Indigenous peoples. What is more, those professors and researchers who work on Canadian

topics and teach about Canada at their respective universities outside Canada attest to the difficulties of teaching these subjects, owing to their emotional charge.

DIGGING DEEPER: FINDING THE RELEVANCE OF LANGUAGES IN THE STUDY OF CANADA

If interest in official languages and official language bilingualism seemed to be low in the survey, the CanSearch study did note a high interest in issues of multiculturalism, diversity, race, immigration, and newcomer settlement even though many found these topics to be challenging to teach. Although at first glance these issues seem to be non-linguistic, they are in fact—as is the case with Indigenous issues—very closely tied to issues of language; specifically, non-official language communities. Canada has experienced continued growth in racial diversity through immigration over the past several decades, which is in effect a growth in non-official language communities. According to the 2021 census, more than one in four people in Canada—26.5 percent—were from racialized communities compared to 13.4 percent in 2001 (Hou et al., 2023).

This growth in racialized communities is driven by immigration and reflected in the increase of non-official language speakers in Canada. The 2021 census determined that 4.6 million Canadians, or 12.7 percent of the population, speak a language other than English or French at home. This is a significant increase from 1991, when this proportion was 7.7 percent. The increase is a function of the growth in immigration levels over the past several decades. More notably, in 2021, 9 million people in Canada had a mother tongue other than English and French, which is the highest level recorded since this question on mother tongue was first asked in the 1901 census.

This brings us back to our opening question: Does anyone care about Canadian language issues? It would seem that there actually is a great interest in topics that are fundamentally linked to linguistic issues in Canada that go beyond just official languages. Indigenous communities have long identified language as a link to land and noted the importance of linguistic revitalization as a fundamental element of resurgence against the cultural genocide of settler-colonial dispossession, residential schooling, and the reserve systems. Furthermore, multiculturalism and immigration are fundamentally issues about linguistic diversity and exist in relation to both official and non-official language groups—in fact, often they overlap. Thus, we can understand the international interest in Indigeneity, multiculturalism, immigration, and racial diversity in Canada as an interest in language issues in Canada, even if it is incumbent on us to make those links explicit on the international stage. The CanSearch study, which identifies international Canadianists' desire for access to online tools, lectures, and related resources for teaching, learning, and research, provides us with a unique opportunity to outline how many of the identified interests in this survey are in fact also language issues. In short, it seems that the world does indeed care about Canadian language issues. ■

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