

# GEOPOLITICS AND THE GOVERNANCE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: THE EVOLVING ROLE OF IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA (IRCC) IN CANADIAN POLICY

EMMA HARDEN-WOLFSON  
MCGILL UNIVERSITY

YVONNE ZHANG  
MCGILL UNIVERSITY

## Abstract

This study investigates how Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)'s approach toward international students is evolving in light of shifting geopolitics, using the critically oriented What's the Problem Represented to Be? approach. Analyzing IRCC announcements from 2022 to 2025 relating to Canada's global commitments revealed three themes: addressing humanitarian crises, promoting Canadian values, and mobilizing international talent. While IRCC has fulfilled its mandate for immigration, settlement, and meeting Canada's humanitarian commitments, it has also emerged as a powerful actor in education policy. At the same time, it is actively contributing to foreign policy. However, this is unfolding in ways that are inconsistent and that perpetuate inequalities. This requires equitable and non-oppressive approaches for Canada to enrich higher education and fulfill its global commitments. The study offers insights into the changing nature of Canadian policy making in the mid-2020s, particularly in relation to the new nexus of immigration, education, and foreign policy.

**Keywords:** geopolitics; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC); international students; What's the Problem Represented to Be? Approach; Canadian higher education, immigration, and foreign policy

## Résumé

Les politiques du ministère d'Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada (IRCC) à l'égard des étudiants étrangers ont évolué en raison d'un contexte géopolitique mondial plus complexe, imprévisible et polarisant. Au cours de cette période, l'IRCC s'est imposé comme un acteur puissant dans la politique éducative canadienne grâce à son contrôle et à sa réglementation accrue sur la

gouvernance de l'immigration et la rétention des étudiants étrangers. L'analyse des annonces de l'IRCC de 2022 à 2025 à l'aide de l'approche « What's the problem represented to be » (WPR) a révélé comment la géopolitique se manifeste dans l'éducation internationale canadienne à travers la politique d'immigration, inspirée des valeurs préexistantes de la politique étrangère canadienne. Cependant, les déclarations de l'IRCC créent des incohérences et perpétuent les inégalités dans la gouvernance des étudiants étrangers au Canada. En reliant de manière innovante les connaissances issues de la politique étrangère à l'enseignement supérieur grâce à une approche critique, cette étude nous permet de mieux comprendre la gouvernance de l'enseignement supérieur au Canada dans le contexte émergent et plus complexe de l'immigration, de la politique étrangère et de la politique éducative.

**Mots clés :** géopolitiques, politique de l'enseignement supérieur canadienne, politique étrangère canadienne, ministère d'Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada (IRCC), étudiants internationaux, approche What's the problem represented to be (WPR)

## INTRODUCTION

The period leading up to and following the federal decision by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to impose an unprecedented cap on international student enrolments in 2024 (IRCC, 2024b) has been marked by major shifts in the policy landscape for international education and also a global context of intensifying geopolitical change. New wars and conflicts have layered upon ongoing democratic backsliding and political/social turmoil with immediate consequences for higher education in Canada (Friesen, 2023; Moscovitz & Sabzalieva, 2023). In this context, IRCC is becoming increasingly implicated in education policy, despite its primary charge being to lead immigration governance in Canada, sharing responsibilities with the provinces and territories (IRCC, 2022e). Policies put forward by IRCC on the recruitment and post-study retention of international students have become more interlinked since the enactment of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act of 2002 and the subsequent development of the International Student Program (ISP; Harden-Wolfson et al., 2025; McCartney, 2021; Trilokekar & Jones, 2020). Since 2022, IRCC's role in higher education policy has become more marked given the growing ten-

dency to use regulation to manage and adjust the ISP and accounting for the continued dependence of Canadian higher education institutions (HEIs) on international students even after the enrolment cap (Harden-Wolfson et al., 2025).

The mandate of IRCC also extends to maintaining “Canada’s humanitarian tradition” (IRCC, 2024f, section 3) and, as such, it is responsible for the country’s immigration-related responses to global crises. This links to its normative vision for a “stronger Canada,” which is interpreted as

a safe and secure country with a shared bond of citizenship and values; a country that continues to support our humanitarian tradition and draws the best from the world to help build a nation that is economically, socially and culturally prosperous. (IRCC, 2024f, section 4)

This directly connects to international student-related immigration policy, such as in the treatment of Ukrainians fleeing Russian invasion as international students rather than refugees (Matsumoto & Viczko, 2023). Global geopolitics also influence IRCC's imperatives and practices (Joshi & Ziguas, 2024; Trilokekar et al., 2020). For example, IRCC requirements for

security screening have caused extensive study permit application delays for many Chinese international students in STEM (Mahler, 2025), mirroring the national security rhetoric that has grown alongside perceived threats from China (Trilokekar, 2022; Wang & Zha, 2025). The relationship with geopolitics has been recognized by IRCC, with the previous Minister noting that “as global conditions change...so should our policies” (IRCC, 2024c, section 2).

The confluence of the increasingly restrictive federal approach and ongoing geopolitical instability is having a direct impact on the governance of higher education in Canada, as we found in our previous research on 2022–2024 changes in policies and approaches toward international students across seven policy sources (Harden-Wolfson et al., 2025). In that study, we also identified that this impact is unfolding in inequitable ways; for instance, by IRCC appearing to blame international students for creating the issues that subsequently would be remedied—at least from the federal perspective—by greater regulation. This discovery drove the current research, which investigates how IRCC’s policies toward international students are evolving in light of geopolitical change and considers the implications of these actions for higher education governance in Canada. Following our previous research, this article also uses the What’s the Problem Represented to Be? (WPR) conceptual approach (Bacchi, 2009; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016) because it critically highlights issues of relational power and inequality. In turn, this informs our research question: How does IRCC represent the “problem” of responding to geopolitical shifts through its policies toward international students?

The article is organized as follows. The following section situates the study within the broader context of Canadian foreign policy during a period of geopolitical turbulence. Conceptually, we use the WPR approach to analyze 24 out of a total of 65 IRCC announcements over a three-year period between January 1, 2022, and July 31, 2025, to capture the period leading up to and following the January 2024 introduction of caps on international student admissions. The selected subset of announce-

ments—statements of policy or policy intent—relate to how IRCC governs international student policy to fulfill Canada’s perceived obligations to the world. The findings are presented in three thematic sections: addressing humanitarian crises, promoting Canadian values, and mobilizing international talent. We contend that IRCC has emerged as a powerful actor in Canadian higher education policy through its increasing control and regulation over the governance of immigration and retention of international students. However, whereas public facing announcements are ostensibly technical and neutral, IRCC’s statements about different geopolitical issues are producing inconsistency and perpetuating inequalities in the governance of international students in Canada. By innovatively connecting insights from foreign policy with higher education through a critically oriented approach, this study advances our understanding of the governance of higher education in Canada in light of this emerging, more complex nexus of immigration, foreign, and education policy.

## **CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN A SHIFTING GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT**

Since the pandemic, global geopolitics have become more complex, unpredictable and polarized, creating a very different environment even from the immediately preceding period (Morrison, 2024; Muthukumar, 2025). In the past, Canadian foreign policy was not particularly distinguishable (Buck, 2024; Kemp, 2023), informed by the country’s “self-identification as a middle power” (Muthukumar, 2025, p. 3). Canadian values in foreign policy revolve around “resilient democracy” (Buck, 2024, p. 448), linking to an outlook of “peacekeeping nostalgia, quiet diplomacy, routine multilateralism” (Duc, 2025, para. 6) that is mostly ad hoc and reactive (Kemp, 2023). Foreign policy is dominated by the outsized role played by Canada’s relationship with the United States (Morrison, 2024). Recent regional strategies on the Indo-Pacific, the Arctic, and Africa are seen as helpful but lacking inno-

vation and not backed up by resources (Hillmer, 2025). The launch of the first Indo-Pacific Strategy in 2022 “signaled a targeted focus on the region at the fulcrum of contemporary geopolitical realities” (Hazarika & Hussain, 2024, pp. 3–4) and was partly a response to the growing threat of China as an “increasingly disruptive global power” (Global Affairs Canada, 2022, p. 7).

Despite there having been no official strategic review of foreign policy since 2005 (Kemp, 2023), geopolitical shifts have forced foreign affairs onto the agenda. In light of the importance of the United States to Canada, this sense has only heightened since the 2024 re-election of Trump in the United States and the ensuing instability and growing insularity (Hillmer, 2025). Furthermore, writing shortly before that election, Canada’s Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs identified other future concerns including the increasing assertiveness of China and ongoing threat of Russia as key geopolitical players along with transnational, multidimensional challenges such as climate change and artificial intelligence (Morrison, 2024). The government’s response of “pragmatic diplomacy” (Morrison, 2024, p. 442), an ethos echoed in Prime Minister Mark Carney’s technocratic approach (Duc, 2025), continues a tradition of selectively blending alignment with allies with principled stances (Muthukumar, 2025). This has been seen in Canada’s inconsistent responses toward Israel over time (Muthukumar, 2025) and recent efforts to reset relations with China and India (Hawkins & Cecco, 2026; Prime Minister of Canada, 2026). The commitment to democratic values and pragmatism are seen in the IRCC announcements reviewed for this study.

As Moscovitz and Sabzalieva (2023) have established, these geopolitical currents also directly impact—and are also influenced by—higher education. For example, “escalating geopolitical tensions between China and the West” (Wang & Zha, 2025, p. 2) have had a direct impact on China–Canada research collaboration, with joint publication numbers significantly declining since 2021 following the introduction of new Canadian guidelines on research security. Student mobility rates from China to Canada have also dropped, albeit less dramati-

cally (IRCC, 2025a). However, other research demonstrates the complexity of the issues as some students from China are in fact turning toward Canada—but only because of changes to U.S. foreign policy that now paint Canada as having “more friendly study and work visa policies for international students” (Mok et al., 2024, p. 10). In turn, Canada–U.S. academic relations are affected by a new “period of unprecedented tension from early 2025” (Wang & Zha, 2025, p. 18), with some Canadian universities responding to Trump’s re-election by creating new academic positions and student scholarships for Americans (Stecula, 2025).

Higher education is also caught up in current conflicts, albeit in unequal ways. Following Russia’s war on Ukraine since 2022, Canadian universities have actively supported government efforts, offering wide ranging support from scholarships, counselling, events on Ukraine, and institutional support for Ukrainian HEIs (Tamtik & Felder, 2024). This has been facilitated by the opening of a special fast-track visa route, the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET; Hyndman, 2024; Matsumoto & Viczko, 2023). Contrast this with the scholasticide<sup>1</sup> still unfolding in Gaza as a result of Israel’s genocidal actions since 2023, where higher educational responses have been primarily led by students (Ibrahim & Heleta, 2025) and where pro-Palestinian activism in Canada has been met with “brutal crackdowns from university administration, federal officials, and police forces” (Saugeron, 2025, p. 70). It is within this context of numerous complicated and uneven global issues with local resonance that our study is set.

---

1 “The destruction of the education sector, including the systematic destruction of all higher education institutions in the [Gaza] Strip” (Ibrahim & Heleta, 2025, p. 40).

## CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

To operationalize our conceptual focus on IRCC actions within the broader context of the changing geopolitical environment and the impact this is having on higher education in Canada, we applied the What's the Problem Represented to Be? (WPR) approach (Bacchi, 2009; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). Three key features of WPR stand out for their applicability to this study. First, its framing reminds us that policies are not necessarily solutions to "problems"; rather, it emphasizes the "problems" produced by government practices (in this study, announcements by IRCC) and therefore the discursive and socially constructed nature of policy (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016; Riemann, 2023). Second, the WPR approach highlights the importance of context. As we found in our earlier study, policy changes toward international students in Canada have not appeared out of nowhere, with WPR facilitating the process of identifying and contextualizing the development of "problems" (Harden-Wolfson et al., 2025). Third, WPR helps reveal the power differentials and inequalities that are produced by constituting "problems" in certain ways (Matsumoto & Viczko, 2023; Riemann, 2023). Our research builds on the two other studies (in addition to ours) using WPR in the Canadian international education context that examined how Ontario universities responded to federal announcements on Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine (Viczko & Matsumoto, 2022) and the differential treatment of Ukrainian international students in Canadian higher education (Matsumoto & Viczko, 2023). In the Canadian higher education context, WPR has also been used to examine unproblematized assumptions in university codes of conduct (Arney, 2025) and to demonstrate a shift from public to private positioning of higher education in Albertan policy (Younes, 2025).

The WPR framework has six questions and a seventh call to action to apply the questions, noting that not all questions may be applicable in all scenarios (Bacchi, 2009; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). The six questions are:

Question 1: What's the problem...represented to be in a specific policy or policies? Question 2: What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the "problem" (problem representation)? Question 3: How has this representation of the "problem" come about? Question 4: What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be conceptualized differently? Question 5: What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the "problem"? Question 6: How and where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been and/or how can it be disrupted and replaced? (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 20)

It is important to note that while WPR is discursive, it goes beyond language or linguistic structure (in contrast to, for example, critical discourse analysis) to examine discourses as knowledges in the Foucauldian sense by focusing on the "sayable"—what can be spoken about and who can speak it (Bacchi, 2023; Wagner, 2025).

## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYTICAL METHODS

Policy announcements published through the IRCC newsroom are the primary data sources in this study. These include news releases, speeches, media advisories, backgrounders, and official statements. Since 2022, IRCC has introduced policies that demonstrate a transition to the "post-pandemic" era, such as offering both temporary Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) extensions and exemptions from the working-hour cap for international students (IRCC, 2022f). These changes were occurring during a period of intense geopolitical change, as indicated in the previous section, with direct implications for Canada. This led to our choice to study the period from January 1, 2022, to

July 31, 2025, to capture a dynamic period in Canadian immigration and education policy as well as geopolitically. As there is no keyword search function in IRCC's newsroom, we manually reviewed all announcements published by IRCC within the specified time parameter. We searched the text of each announcement for the phrases "international student[s]" or "international education" or "study permit" and from these announcements, excluded any where there was no explicit connection to international students. This produced a total of 65 announcements, which we deductively analyzed and categorized into the nine categories devised in our previous study: economic strategy, ethical practices, financing, *Francization*, global commitments, immigration, recruitment, retention, and student well-being. These categories were developed through a three-round iterative coding process that identified the focus and intentions from the policy announcements (Harden-Wolfson et al., 2025).

For this study, we focused on 24 of the 65 announcements, which comprise the full dataset in the global commitments category. This category covers the ways that IRCC uses the ISP to fulfill Canada's perceived obligations to the world. In the first phase of data analysis, we conducted an iterative inductive analysis to thematically understand the issues that appeared in the global commitment category. We reviewed and labelled the specific events from each IRCC announcement (e.g., the launch of the Indo-Pacific Strategy), categorizing them into broader themes that captured their features and IRCC's actions (e.g., humanitarian aid). Following the initial coding process, we refined these themes to articulate the specific goals and responsibilities suggested in these IRCC announcements. Three themes emerged from this inductive analysis process. The first theme, addressing humanitarian crises, illustrates how IRCC uses study permits to fulfill its mandate, and the discrepancies between this humanitarian approach and the ISP. It covered events in Ukraine, Palestine, Haiti, Sudan, Syria, and Türkiye. The second theme, promoting Canadian values, reveals how ideas around liberal democracy and the country's peacekeeping leg-

acy inform how IRCC utilizes immigration and retention to intervene in human rights violations and advocate for democracy. Announcements discussed the situation in Iran and Hong Kong. The third theme, mobilizing talent, presents international student recruitment as having a common end goal of contributing to Canada's economic development to be achieved through different means. It featured announcements relating to the Indo-Pacific region and the United States. Following the inductive analysis, we applied the WPR framework to examine how these problems have been represented and to problematize the current IRCC policy toward international students. Using the WPR framework, we analyzed the announcements both individually under each theme and holistically within the theme, documenting the answers to relevant questions. In the following three sections, we refer to the relevant question in brackets (e.g., Q1) to signal the WPR analysis. Selected quotes from the announcements are provided to illustrate the WPR framing.

## ADDRESSING HUMANITARIAN CRISES

Between January 2022 and July 2025, IRCC published 15 announcements in response to humanitarian crises relating to IS, including the war on Ukraine, genocide in Palestine's Gaza Strip, natural disasters in Türkiye and Syria, civil war in Sudan, gang violence in Haiti, and war crimes in Lebanon. In the announcements, IRCC frames Canada as a "safe haven" or "safe place" (IRCC, 2024a, para. 3, 2024h, para. 5) for individuals from crisis regions seeking temporary settlement (Q1). This "safe haven" is not simply framed in terms of physical safety. For example, Canada "want[s] every Ukrainian to find peace, stability, and community in Canada" (IRCC, 2022b, Quotes section) or aims to "keep families together and give Haitian nationals in Canada a safe place to study, work and stay" (IRCC, 2024d, para. 4). By obtaining a study permit, individuals gain permission to access this "safe haven." Temporary measures put in place by IRCC include a waiver of the initial or extended

study permit application fee. However, access is not distributed equally to all sites where humanitarian needs are identified. Those coming from Ukraine could obtain the required temporary residence status permitting them to enter Canada (study permits are only issued upon arrival) thanks to the dedicated CUAET route announced on March 17, 2022, less than a month after the onset of war (IRCC, 2022b). A specific temporary residence visa option for those from Lebanon and Palestine was also opened but included the restriction that applicants had to have a pre-existing family tie in Canada. This already-constrained route for Palestinians was closed off completely in March 2025 owing to the cap on the number of applications (5,000) being reached (IRCC, 2025d). On the contrary, the CUAET program has not been capped and, as of 2025, had accepted around 300,000 individuals (IRCC, 2022b, 2025c).

The requirement for temporary residency is illustrative of the more complicated policy environment for international students coming from certain locations, such as the family tie route for students from Gaza (IRCC, 2024a). Alongside the fee exemption policy on study permit extensions, these humanitarian imperatives work in favour of international students who have already experienced the immigration process or have a pre-existing support system in Canada. For example, students from Gaza must “have Canadian citizen or permanent resident family members in Canada willing to support them” (IRCC, 2024a, para. 3) to access the specific immigration pathway. The use of study permits acts as a supplementary tool for IRCC to fulfill the federal government’s humanitarian commitment, rather than relying solely on refugee immigration policy and humanitarian programs (Q2). The bureaucracy of the immigration screening and process remains unproblematic, including the lack of transparency around case processing (Q4). For example, in most announcements, IRCC emphasized that humanitarian applications would be prioritized (e.g., IRCC, 2023c),

but long or unclear processing times<sup>2</sup> seem to contradict this promise. The examples of Gaza and Sudan further demonstrate the inconsistency of processing times, as IRCC stated the impacted countries’ situations continue “to be difficult and dangerous, which has an impact on our ability to process new applications at the current time” (IRCC, 2023e, para. 4, 2023k, 2024a). There is also no allowance for international students applying from crisis-hit areas, who may experience difficulty accessing Canada’s immigration services due to the digitalized application system (Q4; IRCC, 2022a). In addition, the impact of multiple policy changes in the ISP in 2024, including new financial requirements and enrolment caps (IRCC, 2024b), remains unaddressed in humanitarian announcements from 2024 to 2025 (Q4).

There is a quantitative difference in the number and timing of announcements by setting, which reinforces the unequal effects of the different approaches taken by IRCC (Q5). For international students from Ukraine, IRCC first released the CUAET program initiatives on March 17, 2022, and followed up with five additional announcements between 2022 and 2025. These announcements included changes in the CUAET program and updated humanitarian policy initiatives with detailed instructions for impacted international students, including settlement services and financial assistance. In contrast, in the case of Palestine, the first international student-related response was not published until December 21, 2023, almost three months after the start of conflict. Furthermore, the first announcement on Palestine highlights how “Canada remains deeply concerned about

---

2 Per IRCC (2026), as of February 2026, the study permit processing time for different crisis regions is: Haiti (6 weeks), Gaza (no available data), Lebanon (no available data), Sudan (no available data), Syria (no available data), Türkiye (7 weeks), Ukraine (no available data). Security screenings that are a compulsory part of the application process are unavailable in some places (e.g., Gaza) and in others are outsourced, rendering IRCC unable to provide average processing times (Guly, 2025).

the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas and the scale of humanitarian crisis in Gaza” (IRCC, 2023k, para. 1). It goes on to offer support for “family members of Canadians and permanent residents from the region, as well as Israelis and Palestinians already in Canada who feel unsafe returning to the region at this time” (IRCC, 2023k, Section 2). Including both Israel and Palestine in the same announcement starkly contrasts to the geopolitical situation in Ukraine, where IRCC condemns only Russia for continuing “its illegal and unjustifiable invasion” (IRCC, 2023d, para. 1) of the country. Contrasting the treatment of international students from Ukraine and Palestine in this way highlights the differential reproduction and disruption of the “problem” across geopolitical spaces (Q6).

Further, the specific immigration pathway for prospective Palestinian students from Gaza was only announced in January 2024 (IRCC, 2024a). For international students from Sudan, IRCC published three announcements since 2023 relating to students already in Canada. While IRCC added a family reunion program, this is not explicitly connected to international students (IRCC, 2023l). In the cases of Haiti, Lebanon, Syria, and Türkiye, IRCC only released a single announcement relating to international students already in Canada without any follow-up announcements, unlike the cases of other student groups in the announcements (IRCC, 2023c, 2024d, 2024h).

## **PROMOTING CANADIAN VALUES**

Promoting Canadian values related to democracy and human rights is the second theme in IRCC announcements relating to international students. As with the contrasting efforts found in IRCC’s responses to humanitarian crises, this theme also highlights different approaches to the “problem” in Iran and Hong Kong. Since the 2022 human rights movement, many residents in Iran have experienced violence and political suppression by the Iranian government (Ruf, 2024) (Q3). In an announcement, IRCC explicitly states that Iranian authorities’ actions are “gross and systematic human rights violations...during its brutal crackdown on protestors” (IRCC, 2023b, para. 1) that have impacted

Iranians’ safety, including Iranian international students currently in Canada (Q1). To address these issues, providing temporary status extension and an application fee waiver is seen as sufficient to support Iranian international students in Canada (Q2). However, there is silence over long-term human rights protection to Iranian international students, suggesting that IRCC’s promotion of human rights through the ISP was only a temporary measure (Q4). For example, although IRCC stated that it is continuing to explore other program changes for protecting Iranians, including refugee pathways (IRCC, 2023b), there were no further follow-up announcements regarding Iranian international students published after March 2023.

Political tensions between Hong Kong residents and Chinese authorities have continued to evolve and escalate since 2014, including pro-democracy movements and protests against Chinese government policies (Amnesty International, 2019; Cheung & Hughes, 2020; Q3). Subsequently, IRCC announced policy changes to expand eligibility for an existing open work permit program to include Hong Kong residents who studied at a Canadian HEI within the past 10 years, and the terms “democracy” and “freedom” appear repeatedly in the announcement (IRCC, 2023a). For example, the policy change is designed to support individuals “who share Canada’s values of freedom and democracy” to transition to permanent residency in Canada (IRCC, 2023a, Quotes section). Establishing and adjusting this immigration pathway can demonstrate Canada’s “steadfast [stance]...in its commitment to supporting the rights and freedoms of individuals around the globe” (IRCC, 2023a, Quotes section; Q2). These hint at the political environment in Hong Kong and the weakening of democracy under the Communist Party of China’s governance. However, the “problem” is officially represented as Canada’s labour market needs and Hong Kong IS are identified as a desirable group for Canada (Q1). The announcement pledges that Canada will “continue to stand by Hong Kong residents and support the freedom and democracy that are cherished by many” (IRCC, 2023a, para. 1), suggesting a link to the shared colonial Commonwealth legacy of both countries (Q2).

Contrasting IRCC's statements relating to Iran and Hong Kong demonstrates differentiated strategies at play. The immigration policy updates for Iranian IS align with the federal government's existing sanctions against Iranian authorities in 2022 and express a clearer and more punitive approach (IRCC, 2023b; Q3). As "Canada will not stand idly by in the face of these aggressions as the Iranian regime continues its ongoing human rights violations" (IRCC, 2023b, Quick Facts section), the international student policy change also acts as a part of foreign policy responses. Conversely, the Hong Kong policy announcement shows a cautious attitude in handling foreign relations with China, containing no explicit criticisms of the Chinese government's actions in Hong Kong (Q6). These different problem representations create further inequity in the ISP and international student immigration (Q4). For example, IRCC sets international education experience as a prerequisite for post-graduation immigration for Hong Kong international students/residents, while only supporting Iranian international students already located in Canada. These approaches imply that students' financial ability or human capital is a requirement to access values-based protections from the Canadian government. Additionally, support for international students to flee political risk is not tackled in the IRCC policy changes (Q4).

## **MOBILIZING INTERNATIONAL TALENT**

The third theme of mobilizing international talent again highlights discrepancies in IRCC's approach to international students, illustrated by comparing statements following the release of the Indo-Pacific Strategy in November 2022 with the June 2023 Tech Talent Strategy targeted at international students in the United States. The statement released by IRCC on the Indo-Pacific Strategy seeks to build international relations that also benefit immigration system growth in Canada (Q1). The statement recognizes "the significant and profound role the Indo-Pacific region will play in our [Canada's]

future" and "demonstrate[s] Canada's commitment to long-term prosperity for both regions" (IRCC, 2022g, para. 5). Sustainable economic growth in Canada is seen to require greater volume and diversity of international student mobility from the Indo-Pacific region (Q1). Labour market and economic issues in Canada are emphasized, with plans to use federal funding to tailor the ISP to increase international student recruitment, including developing additional immigration services for targeted regions (South and Southeast Asia; IRCC, 2022g). Conversely, there is no specific strategy targeted at potential international students from China, despite the announcement mentioning that a large population of this group studies in Canada. The initiative was justified by through the emphasis on the Indo-Pacific region's economic power as "the fastest growing economic region in the world" (IRCC, 2022g, para. 2) and its long history of "people to people connections" with Canada (IRCC, 2022g, para. 1).

IRCC's connection to the Indo-Pacific Strategy extends to providing international students "access to permanent residence and job opportunities that could lead to staying in Canada" in order to "promote greater diversity" for Canadian immigration (IRCC, 2022g, para. 4). These representations can be seen as an extension of the last federal International Education Strategy (2019–2024), which highlighted the importance of partnerships with Asian countries and set targets to recruit international students beyond China and India (Global Affairs Canada, 2019; Q3). For IRCC, international student immigration prioritizes Canadian needs over partnership countries' interests and relationship-building with other countries (Q2). For example, IRCC believes their initiatives can "attract students, who frequently become the highly skilled workers Canada needs" (IRCC, 2022g, para. 4). This suggests that international students continue to be framed through an extractive lens, normalizing the use of students' nationality in conjunction with ethnicity and race in screening students' immigration applications (Q4). There have been no additional statements from IRCC relating to international students and the Indo-Pacific Strategy, despite the 2024 enrolment cap hav-

ing a significant negative impact on international students from India and an uptick in anti-South Asian racism (Kukreja, 2024; Tagoe, 2024).

On the other side of the Indo-Pacific region, IRCC has also adjusted guidelines for international student immigration from the United States. The June 2023 introduction of a Tech Talent Strategy aims to resolve perceived problems in Canada's tech industry and boost the country's global reputation, "embracing Canada's emerging role as a leader in global tech talent recruitment and attraction" (IRCC, 2023g, para. 1; Q1). Through this strategy, IRCC developed a new stream for H-1B specialty occupation visa (an American work visa) holders from the United States to work in Canada and come with their immediate family members (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, n.d.). These individuals could be from multiple countries around the world and may have studied anywhere. Although this program primarily targets workers, the international student connection comes from the rule that makes spouses and dependents eligible to apply for a study permit (IRCC, 2023g). In this case, the ISP is used to provide an additional incentive for IRCC to meet its recruitment targets (Q2).

Given that those individuals who hold "a U.S. bachelor's or higher degree required by the specialty occupation from an accredited college or university" (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, n.d., Eligibility Criteria section) are eligible to apply for a H-1B visa, it suggests IRCC is strategically targeting people with North American study experience who would presumably adapt smoothly into the Canadian economy (Q2). With the United States's long and complicated immigration process for international workers, including a lottery system for obtaining a work visa (American Immigration Council, 2024), the Tech Talent Strategy also implies that Canada is a better destination for these international workers due to simpler and more comprehensive immigration services for applicants and their family members (Q5). The Tech Talent immigration stream is not only a target for short-term industrial development outcomes but also aims at potential long-term immigration through future permanent residency in Canada

(Q5). In this case, IRCC views the U.S. technology industry as a benchmark and competitor, as recruiting international talent from the United States can "help businesses in Canada thrive in a competitive landscape" (IRCC, 2023h, para. 2; Q5).

While both strategies aim to assure Canada's domestic economic development, the announcements reveal the complex dynamic and relationships between Canada and its partners. The United States has traditionally been Canada's most important partner, and the two nations hold a strategic partnership in pursuing shared interests. However, the Tech Talent Strategy shifts from partnership toward competition, with Canada aiming to recruit people away from the United States. In contrast, the international student immigration initiatives in the Indo-Pacific Strategy highlight Canada's goals in building soft power and influence in Asia, playing on a diversity narrative.

## DISCUSSION

Having identified three themes in IRCC announcements, the WPR approach was used to demonstrate how geopolitics is manifesting in Canadian international education through immigration policy, informed by pre-existing Canadian foreign policy values that centre democracy and pragmatism. The WPR approach was particularly suitable for this critical analysis because it shows how immigration-related pronouncements by the government, far from being neutral, are a means of constituting (subjective) reality, "shaping what can be known, who is heard, and how truth is institutionalized" (Wagner, 2025, p. 2). In turn, this conveyed how, while the interests of international students from various countries are ostensibly foregrounded in the announcements, the primary beneficiary is the Canadian economy. This reality was further shaped by inequalities in the differential treatment of international students based on where they are located and the extent to which the issue that produced the policy announcement from IRCC aligns with Canada's interests in the world.

The first theme, addressing humanitarian crises, constructed the "problem" as the unsafe

living conditions/environment in areas affected by humanitarian crises between 2022 and 2025, which also impacted international students from these regions. To address the “problem”, IRCC responded by easing financial costs and alleviating certain bureaucratic processes, such as waiving application fees for study permits. Canada is presented as a safe environment for short-term settlement for international students wishing to avoid dangerous living conditions at home. In the first theme, we saw differences in the number of announcements and approach by country. These divergent responses stem from different attitudes to the perceived risks for Canadian national security, underpinned by systemic inequities (Hyndman, 2024; Sauteron, 2025). In the case of Ukraine, for example, the population fleeing the country was “less racialized and unencumbered by securitization considerations” (Hyndman, 2024, p. 96) that beset those coming from ‘dangerous’ places, who may be considered to be security threats to Canada. The securitization agenda generates further inequalities, as in the case of Gazan students recruited by Canadian HEIs who are unable to complete the security clearance required in the study permit application process. This is because IRCC has no presence in Gaza, about which an IRCC spokesperson has stated, “ensuring the safety of Canadians remains our priority” (Guly, 2025, section 3).

The second theme, promoting Canadian values, compared announcements made by IRCC in relation to democracy and human rights. Here, the “problem” is represented as human rights violations, including the suppression of democratic practices and political tensions within the country. However, this problem is presented differently for those from Iran compared to those from Hong Kong. In relation to Iran, IRCC framed Canada as a short-term safe haven for Iranian international students. In contrast, for Hong Kong, IRCC discerned a way to accept skilled workers into Canada’s labour market and to show solidarity with Hong Kongers. Inconsistencies and inequalities also marked the second theme. For example, the announcement addressing the situation in Hong Kong makes no mention of the Chinese government. This

aligns with previous claims that tensions in Canada–China relations are reflected in international higher education (Wang & Zha, 2025). There are also inequalities between countries. Whereas the approach to Iran was more explicit in critiquing the regime, a softer stance was seen in the case of Hong Kong, where the longer-term relationship with Canada was also emphasized. Alongside these stances, IRCC offered short-term measures for Iranian international students but provided a pathway to longer-term immigration for Hong Kongers, highlighting the inequalities stemming from differential international relations.

The third theme, mobilizing international talent, showed the economic imperative at work in the Indo-Pacific Strategy and the Tech Talent Strategy. In these policy announcements, two “problems” are represented. The first is developing and maintaining strategic partnerships with countries in the Indo-Pacific region, recognizing that it has been a major source of international students for Canada. The strategy calls for diversification from the region—perhaps an unwritten acknowledgement of growing racism toward students from South Asia—and certainly in recognition of their economic contributions while in Canada. The second problem is purely economic, centring competitiveness in the development of technology industries. This can be addressed by attracting and mobilizing talent in North America, including international students who have studied and worked in the United States. The emphasis on diversification and the economic contributions of students coming from the Indo-Pacific region contrasts with the appreciation of the skills and experiences of those coming with a U.S. education. This reinforces the global hierarchies that others have identified, for example in Canada’s attitude toward India, which is “not commensurate to the latter’s evolution, especially in recent years, into a major player in world politics and in the global economy” (Hazarika & Hussain, 2024, p. 10).

## CONCLUSION

This study examined how IRCC as a policy actor operated during a period of immense global upheaval. It revealed the evolving role of IRCC in Canada's international student policy landscape, demonstrating how IRCC has fulfilled its mandate for immigration, settlement, and meeting Canada's humanitarian commitments while highlighting emerging intersections with education and foreign policy. As an education policy actor, IRCC is shaping who gets access to higher education in Canada and under which conditions, using the ISP to filter, discipline, and select desirable immigrants. In turn, this constrains the scope of action for provinces and territories' constitutional control over education policy and has implications for the shared management of immigration. This also puts into question the migration governance role that has been ascribed to HEIs (Brunner et al., 2025). At the same time, IRCC's use of the ISP to address geopolitical challenges also shows its active contribution to Canadian foreign policy, which, as indicated above, matches the reactive and inconsistent nature symptomatic of Canadian foreign affairs (Duc, 2025; Morrison, 2024; Muthukumar, 2025). This has complicated the pre-existing link between education and immigration that has been predicated on a primarily economic rationale by demonstrating the need to additionally account for foreign policy responses to geopolitical changes. This is particularly relevant as geopolitical contexts continue to rapidly shift, even in the short period between data collection for this study and its publication date.

Taken together, this study offers insights into the changing nature of Canadian policy making in the mid-2020s, particularly in relation to the imbrication of education, foreign, and immigration policy. It also advances our understanding of the impact of shifting federal government priorities on higher education governance. Higher education in Canada "operates within a settler colonial, neoliberal, and securitized framework" (Saugeron, 2025, p. 70), a framework that our article has shown to be reflective of IRCC's approach to the ISP. Studying the inconsistencies and inequalities in IRCC policies and regula-

tions demonstrates the need to "think otherwise and construct a new critical consciousness about the moment we live in by forming a new understanding of the geopolitics of knowledge that maintain coloniality but also lead to resistance in many spaces" (Ibrahim & Heleta, 2025, p. 56). It has been said that "the time is right for a serious debate about Canada's place in an increasingly chaotic and dangerous world" (Hillmer, 2025, para. 27). Our article contributes to this much-needed debate with a call to think critically and find more equitable and non-oppressive ways for Canada to enrich higher education and fulfill its global commitments.

## REFERENCES

References marked with an asterisk indicate the 24 IRCC announcements that comprise the dataset for this study.

- American Immigration Council. (2024, June 24). *How the United States immigration system works*. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/how-united-states-immigration-system-works-fact-sheet/>
- Amnesty International. (2019, September 24). *Hong Kong's protests explained*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/09/hong-kong-protests-explained/>
- Arney, N. D. (2025). What is prohibited? Non-academic conduct policies in Canadian universities. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 55(3), 52–69. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v55i3.190475>
- Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing policy*. Pearson Higher Education.
- Bacchi, C. (2023, March 30). *Applying WPR to concepts: "Analysis of discourses", not "discourse analysis."* Carol Bacchi. <https://carolbacchi.com/2023/03/30/applying-wpr-to-concepts-analysis-of-discourses-not-discourse-analysis/>
- Bacchi, C., & Goodwin, S. (2016). *Poststructural policy analysis: A guide to practice*. Palgrave Pivot.

- Brunner, L., Trilokekar, R. D., Morris-Lange, S., Liu, H., Laufer, M., El Masri, A., & Joshi, A. (2025). Magnets, gatekeepers, surveillants, and refiners: The emergence of higher education institutions as migration governance actors in Australia, Canada, and Germany, 1990 to 2019. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 129, 102490. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2024.102490>
- Buck, K. (2024). Crafting a new Canadian foreign policy: Strategic sovereignty for a “leaderless world.” *International Journal*, 79(3), 444–449. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207020241276105>
- Cheung, H., & Hughes, R. (2020, May 21). *Why are there protests in Hong Kong? All the context you need*. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-48607723>
- Duc, K. V. (2025, May 15). *In search of the Carney doctrine: Canada's foreign policy in a post-American world*. Open Canada. <https://opencanada.org/in-search-of-the-carney-doctrine-canadas-foreign-policy-in-a-post-american-world/>
- Friesen, J. (2023, September 20). Tensions with India raise concerns fewer international students will choose to study in Canada. *The Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-tensions-with-india-raise-concerns-fewer-international-students-will/>
- Global Affairs Canada. (2019). *Canada's International Education Strategy (2019-2024)*. <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/strategy-2019-2024-strategie.aspx?lang=eng>
- Global Affairs Canada. (2022, November 24). *Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy*. <https://www.international.gc.ca/transparence-transparence/indo-pacific-indo-pacifique/index.aspx?lang=eng>
- Guly, C. (2025, July 30). Gazan students stuck in limbo. *University Affairs*. <https://universityaffairs.ca/news/gazan-students-stuck-in-limbo/>
- Harden-Wolfson, E., Hutcheson, S., & Zhang, Y. (2025). Representing the problem of (un)ethical practices in Canada's post-pandemic international student policy landscape. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 55(2), 114–131. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v55i2.190701>
- Hawkins, A., & Cecco, L. (2026, January 17). Mark Carney in China positions Canada for ‘the world as it is, not as we wish it.’ *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jan/17/mark-carney-in-china-positions-canada-for-the-world-as-it-is-not-as-we-wish-it>
- Hazarika, O. B., & Hussain, A. A. (2024). Canada, India, and their Indo-Pacific visions: Prospects for cooperation. *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, 31(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2024.2419839>
- Hillmer, V. R. N. (2025). *It's time for Canada to have a foreign policy*. Policy Options. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/2025/04/foreign-policy/>
- Hyndman, J. (2024). The Russian invasion of Ukraine and humanitarian nationalism in Canada. *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, 30(1), 93–113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2023.2219786>
- Ibrahim, H. B., & Heleta, S. (2025). Scholasticide in Gaza and Palestine as a portal: A duoethnography on silence, silencing and the struggle for a better world. *Journal of Global Higher Education*, 1(1), 39–68. <https://doi.org/10.25774/jghe.v1i1.4>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2022a, January 31). *Speaking notes for the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship: Announcement on improving and modernizing the immigration system*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/02/speaking-notes-for-the-honourable-sean-fraser-minister-of-immigration-refugees-and-citizenship-announcement-on-improving-and-modernizing-the-immigr.html>

- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2022b, March 17). *Canada launches new temporary residence pathway to welcome those fleeing the war in Ukraine*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/03/canada-launches-new-temporary-residence-pathway-to-welcome-those-fleeing-the-war-in-ukraine.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2022c, March 17). *Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/03/canada-ukraine-authorization-for-emergency-travel.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2022d, April 13). *Speaking notes for the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship: Updates on how displaced Ukrainians arriving in Canada will be supported after their arrival*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/05/speaking-notes-honourable-sean-fraser-minister-immigration-refugees-citizenship-updates-displaced-ukrainians-arriving-canada-supported-after-their-arrival.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2022e, June 28). *Federal-Provincial/Territorial Agreements*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/agreements/federal-provincial-territorial.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2022f, October 7). *International students to help address Canada's labour shortage*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/10/international-students-to-help-address-canadas-labour-shortage.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2022g, November 30). *Shaping the future of immigration through Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2022/11/shaping-the-future-of-immigration-through-canadas-indo-pacific-strategy.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2023a, February 6). *Canada extends and expands open work permit program for Hong Kong residents*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/02/canada-extends-and-expands-open-work-permit-program-for-hong-kong-residents.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2023b, February 23). *Canada announces support for Iranian temporary residents*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/02/canada-announces-support-for-iranian-temporary-residents.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2023c, March 18). *Canada announces support for Turkish and Syrian temporary residents*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/03/canada-announces-support-for-turkish-and-syrian-temporary-residents.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2023d, March 22). *Canada extends support for those fleeing Russia's illegal and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/03/canada-extends-support-for-those-fleeing-russias-illegal-and-unjustifiable-invasion-of-ukraine.html>

- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2023e, April 24). *Canada to provide support to Sudanese nationals*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/04/canada-to-provide-support-to-sudanese-nationals.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2023f, April 29). *Sudanese nationals can extend their stay in Canada*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/12/canada-to-launch-humanitarian-pathway-for-people-affected-by-the-conflict-in-sudan.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2023g, June 27). *Canada's Tech Talent Strategy*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/06/canadas-tech-talent-strategy.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2023h, June 27). *Minister Fraser launches Canada's first-ever Tech Talent Strategy at Collision 2023*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/06/minister-fraser-launches-canadas-first-ever-tech-talent-strategy-at-collision-2023.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2023i, July 15). *Canada launches pathway to reunite families and support Ukrainians*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/07/canada-launches-pathway-to-reunite-families-and-support-ukrainians.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2023j, October 31). *Transforming our immigration system to build a stronger Canada*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/10/transforming-our-immigration-system-to-build-a-stronger-canada.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2023k, December 21). *Immigration measures to help people affected by the Israel–Hamas conflict*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/12/immigration-measures-to-help-people-affected-by-the-israelhamas-conflict.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2023l, December 28). *Canada to launch humanitarian pathway for people affected by the conflict in Sudan*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/12/canada-to-launch-humanitarian-pathway-for-people-affected-by-the-conflict-in-sudan.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024a, January 9). *Temporary resident pathway opens for Palestinian extended family in Gaza*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/01/temporary-resident-pathway-opens-for-palestinian-extended-family-in-gaza.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024b, January 22). *Making Canada's International Student Program sustainable*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/01/making-canadas-international-student-program-sustainable.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024c, March 21). *Speaking notes for the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship: Announcement related to temporary residents*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/03/speaking-notes-for-the-honourable-marc-miller-minister-of-immigration-refugees-and-citizenship-announcement-related-to-temporary-residents.html>

- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024d, May 23). *Temporary measures to support family members affected by the crisis in Haiti*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/05/temporary-measures-to-support-family-members-affected-by-the-crisis-in-haiti.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024e, June 21). *Canada improves fairness for applicants by ending post-graduation work permit “flagpoling.”* Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/06/canada-improves-fairness-for-applicants-by-ending-post-graduation-work-permit-flagpoling.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024f, October 3). *Mandate—Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024g, October 16). *Financial assistance for Gazans arriving in Canada*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/10/financial-assistance-for-gazans-arriving-in-canada.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2024h, October 30). *Temporary measures to support people affected by the crisis in Lebanon*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2024/10/temporary-measures-to-support-people-affected-by-the-crisis-in-lebanon.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2025a). *Temporary residents: Study permit holders – Monthly IRCC updates - Canada - Study permit holders by country of citizenship and year in which permit(s) became effective*. Government of Canada. <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/90115b00-f9b8-49e8-afa3-b4cff8facaae/resource/b505b9bc-d375-4525-af39-afdf25639acf>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2025b, January 15). *Measures to strengthen border security and Canada’s immigration system*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2025/01/measures-to-strengthen-border-security-and-canadas-immigration-system.html>
- \*Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2025c, February 27). *Canada extends some temporary measures for Ukrainians*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2025/02/canada-extends-some-temporary-measures-for-ukrainians.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2025d, October 24). *Crisis in Gaza: Special measures for extended family members in Gaza*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/israel-west-bank-gaza-2023/gaza-tr-measures.html>
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. (2026). *Check processing times at IRCC*. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/check-processing-times.html>

- Joshi, A., & Ziguas, C. J. (2024). International higher education and post-study work rights in Australia, Germany and Canada: Strengths and vulnerabilities. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 28(1), 52–67. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10283153231172016>
- Kemp, W. (2023). *Canada has lost its purpose in foreign relations. It's time for a review.* Policy Options. <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/2023/09/canada-is-lost-in-foreign-relations/>
- Kukreja, R. (2024, November 6). *Anti-immigrant politics is fueling hate toward South Asian people in Canada.* The Conversation. <https://doi.org/10.64628/AAM.9gkyvukvj>
- Mahler, C. (2025, September 3). *Chinese students take Ottawa to court over study permit delays.* CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/chinese-students-permit-delays-ircc-court-1.7623307>
- Matsumoto, R., & Viczko, M. (2023). Categorizations of crisis: Access to higher education in Canada as international students and forcibly displaced people. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 42(5), 1119–1132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2023.2216641>
- McCartney, D. (2021). “A question of self-interest”: A brief history of 50 years of international student policy in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 51(3), 33–50. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.vi0.189179>
- Mok, K. H., Shen, W., & Gu, F. (2024). The impact of geopolitics on international student mobility: The Chinese students’ perspective. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 78(4), e12509. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12509>
- Morrison, D. (2024). Canada’s foreign policy in an era of turbulence. *International Journal*, 79(3), 440–443. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207020241276102>
- Moscovitz, H., & Sabzalieva, E. (2023). Conceptualising the new geopolitics of higher education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 21(2), 149–165. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2023.2166465>
- Muthukumar, J. (2025). A balancing act: Canada’s multilateral engagement in the Israel–Palestine conflict. *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, 31(2), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2025.2545256>
- Prime Minister of Canada. (2026, February 3). *Prime Minister Carney secures ambitious new partnership with India focused on energy, talent, and technology.* Government of Canada. <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2026/03/02/prime-minister-carney-secures-ambitious-new-partnership-india-focused>
- Riemann, M. (2023). Studying problematizations: The value of Carol Bacchi’s ‘What’s the Problem Represented to Be?’ (WPR) methodology for IR. *Alternatives*, 48(2), 151–169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03043754231155763>
- Ruf, C. (2024, September 11). *Iran: Two years after ‘Woman Life Freedom’ uprising, impunity for crimes reigns supreme.* Amnesty International Canada. <https://amnesty.ca/human-rights-news/iran-two-years-after-woman-life-freedom-uprising/>
- Saugeron, A. W. (2025). *Repression of pro-Palestinian student movements in Canadian universities: Ideological and institutional challenges to free expression post-October 7th, 2023* [Master’s thesis, Uppsala University]. <https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-562531>
- Stecula, D. (2025, May 22). American recruitment in the Canadian academy: The case in favour. *University Affairs*. <https://universityaffairs.ca/opinion/american-recruitment-in-the-canadian-academy-the-case-in-favour/>

- Tagoe, Y. (2024, September 10). *International student applications in Canada drop by more than government cap*. Canada Immigration and Visa Information. <https://immigration.ca/international-student-applications-in-canada-drop-by-more-than-government-cap/>
- Tamtik, M., & Felder, A. J. (2024). How geopolitics shapes higher education internationalization: Institutional responses to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*, 16(3), 163–177. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v16i3.6712>
- Trilokekar, R. D. (2022). *International education in a world of new geopolitics: A comparative study of US and Canada*. Berkeley Center for Studies in Higher Education. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/10k0h50x>
- Trilokekar, R. D., & Jones, G. (2020). Federalism and internationalization. In M. Tamtik, R. D. Trilokekar, & G. A. Jones (Eds.), *International education as public policy in Canada* (pp. 29–49). McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Trilokekar, R. D., Masri, A. E., & Masry, H. E. (2020). Power, politics, and education: Canadian universities and international education in an era of new geopolitics. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 50(3), 79–95. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.vi0.188777>
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (n.d.). *H-1B specialty occupations*. Retrieved July 18, 2025, from <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/h-1b-specialty-occupations>
- Viczko, M., & Matsumoto, R. (2022). Problematizing access to higher education for refugee and globally displaced students: What's the Problem Represented to Be in Canadian university responses to Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian Crises? *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education*, 17(1), 40–56. <https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29504>
- Wagner, A. (2025). Law as discourse, law as power: A Foucauldian analysis of legal semiotics and subjectivation. In A. Wagner (Ed.), *International handbook of legal language and communication: From text to semiotics* (pp. 1–18). Springer. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-87993-7\\_275-1](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-87993-7_275-1)
- Wang, Y. X., & Zha, Q. (2025). Geopolitical tensions: Impact on and trajectory of Canada-China joint research publications. *Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-025-01530-z>
- Younes, M. (2025). Agents of change: A critical analysis of governing actors in Alberta's 2030 Higher Education Reform Plan. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, (206), 18–33. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1118732ar>