

## **The Middle East in Canadian foreign policy and national identity formation** Published in *International Journal* 76, no. 3 (2021)

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While often overlooked, the Middle East has been a pivotal geographical and discursive space in Canadian foreign policy and national identity formation. The region was the birthplace of Canada's liberal internationalist foreign policy identity, Pearsonianism, and the national myths associated with it. The Middle East also appears to be where Pearsonianism was later superseded by a more realist foreign policy approach, centred on key bilateral relationships with Western countries and a shared sense of Western civilisation. For reasons tied to identity formation and how Canadians perceive their place in the world, the Middle East is therefore a deeply contested space in the domestic arena and a site of deep divisions today. With the support of three contemporary case studies—Israel and Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Iran—this paper explores how Canada's ties to the Middle East have shaped and continue to shape Canada's foreign policy, national identity, and place in the world.

### *More information*

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