

deconstruct the dominant concepts of the discourse surrounding Canadian foreign policy as articulated by key government officials and agencies (these central concepts include middle power internationalism, soft power, governance, globalization, human security, human rights, justice, peacebuilding, partnership, humane foreign policy, democratization, and multilateralism). This deconstruction problematizes the notion of who defines policy, and the statements from government are construed as a starting, but not necessarily an end, point.

This deconstruction of discourse is, however, but an initial step. The second goal of the roundtable was to consider the practices of foreign policies, that is, to ask how the discourse becomes/creates/ignores/silences/limits particular policy practices and ways of thinking and doing. Gendered discourses are strengthened and reified through gendered practices, while at the same time, legitimating such practices. Finally, the deconstruction of gendered discourses and the foreign policy practices they construct should point to ideas of what a “reconstructed” foreign policy would look like.

The papers presented at the roundtable are outlined below. They will form the basis for an edited collection that is currently under consideration by Oxford University Press.

The round table examined the discourses and practices surrounding Canadian foreign policy as defined around the four themes outlined below. These themes have become central in the articulation of Canada’s foreign policy and in the practices engendered by its application into the 21st century. An additional chapter which focuses on the ethical and pedagogical implications of this analysis will be added to the collection.

Section One: Discourses and practices related to human security

“Myths of Canada’s Human Security Pursuits: Tales of Tool Boxes, Toy Chests and Tickle Trunks”

Ann Denholm Crosby (York University)

This paper advances the argument that the Canadian government’s human security agenda directly contradicts the primacy of the government’s economic interests, since pursuing the conditions that would work *against* processes of “economic privation” and *for* the ability of peoples to “take charge of their own destinies” (both elements are pillars of the human security agenda) is at odds with pursuing trade and investment initiatives designed to promote the prosperity of Canadians. This contradiction exists given that the global economy as currently constructed thrives on relative ‘privation’ and necessarily situates the destinies of peoples within that system. The management of this contradiction is the subject of this paper, and the argument outlined suggests that although the human security agenda reflects a change in focus in the Department of Foreign Affairs’ foreign policy agenda, it does not represent a significant change in content, and rather serves as a “conditioning framework” for business as usual.

Although there is an ideological component to this conditioning process, the main framework is constructed from the debates that are presently exercising politicians and bureaucrats from both the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAIT) and the Department of National Defence (DND), as well as a range of interested observers and academics, about the roles of human, as opposed to state-centric, security practices. These debates are essentially about means rather than ends and can be reduced to whether the Canadian state, in its pursuit of prosperity and employment,