

**TOO CLOSE? TOO FAR?  
JUST RIGHT?  
FALSE DICHOTOMIES  
AND CANADA –  
US POLICY MAKING**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Are Canada and the United States getting closer, or farther apart? Are Washington and Ottawa policies converging or diverging? Over the past half-century such dichotomies arose repeatedly in Canadian commentary on cross-border relations. This dichotomy has had pejorative connotations when expressed by liberal intellectuals and politicians. Getting close is bad; farther away is good. On the other hand, get too far away and the national interest will suffer. Largely mute clusters of Canadian opinion lie between these extremes, although in recent years pollsters have tapped them with greater frequency. But how close is too close? How far away is too far away? Do we have an accurate “close-ometer?” Where do we draw the line between cordiality and chumminess, agreement and obsequiousness, aloofness and hostility? Such views reveal more about the observer than the observed. Moreover, those

\*A list of acronyms used in this article is provided on page 30.



who insist on distinctions and divergences rarely analyze how much Canadians and Americans share in their national identities, as World Values surveys have disclosed. Those who insist on economic independence (with a hint of autarky) denounce those who promote the benefits of integration. Analytical judgment, not rhetorical assertions, and a sense of the perils of false dichotomies are required for Ottawa to navigate Canada's complex and ever-shifting place in upper North American affairs. Too close or too far? It depends upon what we are talking about and when. Given Canada's complexity, geographic location and vital interests, diverging opinions are to be expected. That aside, Americans and Canadians are upper North Americans by history, outlook, and interests, as well as temperament.<sup>1</sup>

Ottawa-Washington policy analysis and development rest upon four coequal constants that shape upper North American affairs. First, geography is central. Furthermore, whether in colonial or global eras, landforms, climate, and the distribution of natural resources have defined the mechanics of the relationship. Images of Canada as a northern nation have romantic, evocative, for some mythic connotations. But they divert attention from the inescapable upper North American interaction when over 80 percent of Canada's population has always lived within 100 miles of the U.S. border.

Second, proximity, a corollary of geography, has cultural, social, and economic connotations. When continental time zones

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emerged in the late nineteenth century, proximity and regional cross-border interlinkages meant that Canada's provinces aligned with U.S. divisions (except for standard time-only Saskatchewan). Washington recently shifted changeover dates from Standard to Daylight time and back again. Proximity and the intimacy of the interlinkages led all provinces but Saskatchewan to follow suit.

Third, asymmetry has always characterized the cross-border relationship. By any meaningful quantitative ratio – population size, economic output, opportunities, power, and international influence – the United States has far and away outweighed Canada. Asymmetry also cleaves in other ways. Take attention, for example. Canadians often lament how little attention Washington pays to them. Meanwhile, Washington copes with crises. High U.S. officials spare little time for Canada because mostly minor problems arise in the relationship. Canadians, however, are endlessly aware of, and pass judgment on, the United States, its culture, society, woes and triumphs.

Fourth, the border, the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel of latitude, is the metaphorical international boundary between the two sovereign nations. The border is also a psychological and emotional divider, and a shared zone of interaction. Time and circumstance determined how the two governments defined and managed that border. The events of 9/11 led Washington to transform it into a defensive line that overturned Ottawa's inherited assumptions captured on the Peace Arch at the West Coast Blaine crossing: "Children of a Common Mother; may these gates never be closed."<sup>2</sup> September 11 also generated a conflict between security and access that threatened upper North American economic prosperity and overturned the lives of millions of people in communities strewn along and even athwart the border. U.S. and Canadian reporters who toured the border soon after 9/11 betrayed different national perspectives. The American saw a national frontier to be secured. The Canadian lamented the loss of freedom of access. Both over-generalized. Children of a common mother or not, the gates appeared to be swinging shut, more so because the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative's implementation meant classifying Canadians as the foreigners they were in U.S. law.<sup>3</sup> September 11 forced Ottawa to adapt to Washington's border policies, but cultural, social, and economic perceptions remained the same. Canadian commentators, politicians, and policy makers also injected fresh life into such false dichotomies as being cozy or aloof, convergent or



divergent. Such observations depended not only upon what was under discussion and when, but also who spoke and what was at stake. Such dichotomies seem straightforward, but they mask enormous complexity in the dispersed ways upper North American affairs have unfolded. Once the false dichotomies are clear, however, policy makers should be able to relegate them to a rhetorical holding pen. Then they can focus on pragmatic management of the relationship to serve interests rather than the preferences and prejudices of ideologues.

## I. CULTURAL CONVERGENCES

Nationalists wield false dichotomies to assert divergence and insist on Canadian distinctiveness. They wear ideology on their sleeves, but often seem insecure, as though any admission of similarities or shared values accepts homogenized upper North American culture and U.S. domination. Scholars offer a more useful insight when they note that globalization has made societies more alike in diversity, not components of a homogeneous mass.<sup>4</sup> In upper North America, cultural values and norms have derived from a shared Western European heritage, with English as a common working language. Over time, upper North Americans built societies on a base of shared Anglo-Saxon values such as individualism, freedom of speech and the press, family and community orientation, and religious pluralism with streaks of self-reliance, optimism, and idealism. Individualism, libertarianism, democracy, a universal franchise, and governments held responsible by electorates characterized both countries. Successive waves of immigrants brought folk cultures into permissive, albeit not always tolerant, multicultural arenas. Local, regional, and national economies intermingled as they developed.

As the two political systems matured, they became more distinct. The national economic systems betrayed variations on themes rather than sharp differences. Canadians have judged Americans overly patriotic, unabashed flag-wavers at annual July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations and picnics. Yet they have adopted similar behavior on July 1<sup>st</sup> Canada Days. The World Values Survey found that through the 1990s Canadians and Americans, along with Mexicans and Irish, moved into a statistical quadrant centered on tradition and self-expression. Such reports challenge Michael Adams' popular assertions of increasingly distinctive Canadian and U.S. cultural traits as



well as Philip Resnick's argument that Canadians are more European than American in their traits and values.<sup>5</sup> It is more useful to see Canadians and Americans as cultural upper North Americans than as mutually exclusive peoples.

In cultural terms, Upper North American tastes sort out into high, middle, and popular cultural levels. Individuals may combine these levels. Increasing literacy in the early Twentieth Century created a mass markets for newspapers, magazines, and books, but asymmetry meant Canada had a smaller market. Anglo-Canadian elitism also led Toronto and Montreal publishers to discount native-born writers such as Lucy Maude Montgomery and Bliss Carman who developed domestic themes in their stories and poems. Most Canadian writers could neither publish nor make a living in their own country. So they moved to U.S. publishing centers, New York and Chicago. There they formed expatriate communities, but they never lost their Canadian sensibilities.<sup>6</sup> As a result an upper North American literary world emerged where readers chose material according to interest and taste, not national origin. Dwindling Anglo-oriented elites were blind to this development and so failed to grasp how Canadians progressively became upper North Americans. As late as the 1949-51 Massey Commission on the arts and culture in Canada, Anglo-elites and intellectuals wanted to build a British-Canadian culture. But popular tastes had become upper North American. Moreover, books and articles had become both commodities and forms of mass entertainment.<sup>7</sup> Cultural nationalists insisted, however, that widespread domestic preference for U.S. music, magazines, movies, and other forms of entertainment equalled Americanization.

Policies based on such false dichotomies led Canada's federal officials into both pitfalls and pratfalls. The first occurred in the 1920s when British Canadian intellectuals and publishers recoiled at the U.S. periodicals on domestic stands. Without protective legislation the embryonic Anglo-Canadian culture was doomed. So Anglo-elites rejected realism in modern writing, ignored the shared upper North American culture, and overlooked the inability of domestic publishers to satisfy domestic tastes. Policy discussions revolved around protective subsidies for a favored few publishers, focusing on production, not consumption. Through World War II the British link withered. When publishing revived after 1945 Canadians once again bought U.S. magazines and books. Ottawa later regulated *Time* and



*Reader's Digest* editions, but their powerful New York publishers lobbied Washington, which threatened retaliation, and Ottawa granted exemptions.<sup>8</sup> So U.S. magazines remained on Canadian newsstands and coffee tables, evidence of upper North America's mass entertainment and information system. Ottawa had camouflaged special interest protection as cultural preservation, but accepted a false dichotomy built on zero-sum moral assumptions. This issue slumbered fitfully, stirred in the 1970s, and burst into full public glare from 1997 to 2000. By then NAFTA and WTO regulations applied and Ottawa fought a bruising battle with Washington over magazine subsidies. The declared cause was cultural preservation, but the hidden agenda was advertising revenues and paid circulation. Politicians intoned a shopworn mantra that bared the ideological false dichotomy beneath their stated positions. They saved face but lost the contest.<sup>9</sup>

Other mass entertainment genres followed similar upper North American patterns. Vaudeville, for example, grew from communications technology and bureaucratic management. U.S. entrepreneurs used the telegraph and telephone to book and send performers over railroads to U.S. and Canadian towns and cities in borderland regions. Singers, dancers, musicians, and comedy routines spoke a common language to polyglot upper North Americans, and a free market of taste based on shared cultural values and ideas emerged that characterized succeeding generations of mass entertainment. Talent, not national origin, mattered.<sup>10</sup> Audiences (consumers) decided what to patronize and formed a *de facto* mass market for entertainment as acts were endlessly repeated from town to town. Anglo-Canadian nationalists and Quebec Church and civic leaders recoiled at these secular U.S. horrors, especially Hollywood movies, which dominated upper North American screens by the 1920s. World War I had destroyed the British film industry, but it revived. Canada's British Board of Trade president Philip Cunliffe-Lister and leaders of such patriotic organizations as the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire lobbied for quotas to ensure that Canadians absorbed proper British values. Meanwhile, audiences knew their own tastes, as box office receipts showed. Local politics defeated all provincial efforts to impose such quotas. In the early 1930s, John Grierson advised Ottawa to let Hollywood produce entertainment. Canada should develop documentaries. The National Film Board did just that. It trained directors, animators, and technicians, many



of whom have used their skills and experience to work in Hollywood and the upper North American movie business.<sup>11</sup>

Commercial radio fit into this pattern. Proximity, asymmetry, and a technical lead facilitated U.S. domination of upper North American airwaves through the 1920s. The U.S. Department of Commerce listed 101 frequencies in 1924. Canada had six, 90 a year later, but all were weaker than the hundreds, then thousands, of U.S. stations Canadians heard. Technical improvements and mass audiences drew entertainers from stage to radio and movies. By 1929 Canadian stations bought 80 percent of their broadcasts from the United States, ignoring Anglophile fears about the erosion of British values. At the same time, Ottawa's regulatory domination ensured financial support (if not audiences) for the CBC. Box office receipts showed Canadians had little interest in their "own" films. The same scenario played out for television in the 1950s. Shared upper North American values, and ideas about what was funny or tragic, suspenseful or scary, rarely made ordinary Canadians wonder if they were getting too close to U.S. norms. Ironically, U.S. cultural critics agreed intellectually about the moral vacuity of Hollywood entertainment, but they also missed how shared tastes had created the upper North American entertainment market.<sup>12</sup>

When commercial television appeared, Ottawa denied private broadcasting until the CBC could develop a national network, and blanched at the cost. Meanwhile, proximity thwarted the policy makers from the start because most Canadians lived within range of U.S. broadcasters with powerful transmitters, and plucked U.S. programs out of the air at will. Asymmetry and established upper North American tastes in mass entertainment compromised Ottawa's efforts to ensure that Canadians got Canadian content (CANCON) on their screens. Once again, this produced not cultural but industrial protection, although well-produced CANCON could draw mass audiences. For example, between 1960 and 2000 CANCON movie exports rose 61 percent, 94 percent of which went to the United States. This included a seven-year series based on Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* stories.<sup>13</sup> Domestic publishers, movie-makers, and radio and TV producers and performers accepted Ottawa's cultural protection money while nationalist lobbies relied on false dichotomies to demand legislation that would ensure cultural divergence. But Canadian audiences remained content within the upper North American mass entertainment universe.



## II. SOCIAL INTERMINGLING

Demographic mixing in upper North American history confounds any serious attempt to assert national social compartments. Often, efforts in that direction relied upon assertions of superiority that drew Ottawa policy makers to rely on false dichotomies. To begin with, shared cultural themes and historical development meant that political boundaries had little impact on social development in upper North America.<sup>14</sup> Further, many historical and contemporary social themes and issues became transnational. Also, immigrants to upper North America settled into farms, towns, and cities where they became part of democratic communities. English common law principles established individual, family, community, property, and corporate rights over time, although not in Lower Canada or former Spanish territories until relatively recently. A shared sense of personal optimism and rights to freedom from government restrictions shaped social outlooks and actions. Dominantly Christian, these societies experienced revival periods where new sects calved from old and formed breakaway communities. In Canada, Anglo-French and Protestant-Roman Catholic antagonisms existed, but the open border offered a safety valve which was evident following the 1837 rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada when Franco-North America emerged.

In modern times waves of European and then Asian immigrants arrived. While they often clustered in urban ghettos or the outskirts of small towns, they evolved into multicultural communities. Meanwhile, inherited racial and sectarian attitudes sustained prejudices. Protestants distrusted Roman Catholics, and both disliked Jews, so Canada and the United States shared streams of anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism. Black Africans, seen as inferior peoples, came to North America mostly as slaves. Parliament abolished slavery in the empire in 1833, as did Washington in the Civil War of 1861-1865. At the same time, persistent racism, toxic, violent, and brutal in the United States, and less so but still clear to the Blacks in Canada, betrayed the transnational character of racial prejudice in upper North America.<sup>15</sup> Women's rights has been a transnational social movement.<sup>16</sup> Its first wave achieved suffrage in both countries early in the Twentieth Century. Much later, women gained full civil and legal equality in the second wave. Still, abortion rights remain controversial in both countries, as 2006 U.S. ballot initiatives revealed. Both national societies evolved through similar patterns at



comparable times, while social streams interwove and developments in one country informed and shaped events in the other.

Clusters and streams of global peoples migrated to upper North America from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. They farmed and built communities and commercial centers interlinked by transportation networks. New immigrants formed ethnic enclaves in first and second generations, but over time they mixed with established peoples. Language and ethnicity distinguished French, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians on North America's west coast littoral. The Japanese fell into a double jeopardy. Learning English did little for assimilation. But without their native language they ceased to be Japanese insofar as their countrymen were concerned, as many discovered when they attempted to repatriate after 1945. Once marked, the Canada-U.S. border was a jurisdictional line that, until U.S. legislation applied to Canada in 1931, had little impact on social migrations in Upper North America. British and French Canadians headed south to find land, work, and other opportunities, or just a better climate. After the 1837 rebellion, thousands of French fled the seigneurial system and efforts at linguistic assimilation to take up land and jobs in the northeastern United States. Most never returned, but a Franco North America emerged with a loose cohesion through the Catholic Church and Saint Jean Baptiste societies. The idea of Canadians and Americans getting closer together or farther apart through this historical social evolution has no meaning. The two societies became similarly diverse. Moreover, catch phrases such as "melting pot" or "mosaic" obscured how both peoples became similarly multicultural—and U.S. scholars abandoned the "melting pot" in the 1960s anyway. In 1968, Ottawa submerged its linguistic duality into an official multicultural mosaic, but the Multicultural and Citizenship Act did not appear until 1982.<sup>17</sup>

This upper North American social mingling also unfolded in regional patterns. Rural, village, and maritime societies littered the north Atlantic littoral. The Great Lakes Basin saw farms, towns, and industrialization where workers intermingled continuously around and across the official border. Cattle ranching joined grain growing on the Great Plains in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century to produce yet another upper North American regional social and economic system. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Pacific Northwest societies geared to fishing and lumbering emerged.<sup>18</sup> Nativist patterns also proved upper North American, not national. Prejudice and bigotry against east and south



Asian peoples spawned periodic riots, and segregation in Chinatowns or on the run-down margins of communities along the West Coast littoral from British Columbia to lower California. The 1920s Ku Klux Klan revival spilled into Prairie Provinces from mid-western states and formed regional, albeit not national, patterns. U.S. immigration acts of 1921 and 1924 applied quotas to Canadians after 1931, but social intermingling continued for families, skilled workers, and travelers because the automobile created patterns of repeated mass tourism after 1945.<sup>19</sup> New demographic elements reshaped this upper North American social system in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Few Hispanics moved as far as Canada, but new Asian immigrants arrived in West Coast cities from Vancouver to San Diego. Middle Eastern peoples settled in northeastern cities. The global rise of radical Islam challenged, even confounded shared multicultural ideas about civil society, especially after the events of 9/11. Both Washington and Ottawa revisited their immigration policies while security and intelligence services, courts, and civil liberties groups shared the same problems and dilemmas.

Many modern social themes displayed upper North American transnational trajectories. In Canada, social and political acceptance of same-sex marriage, proposals to liberalize marijuana for medicinal use, and firearms control prompted some U.S. observers to conclude that the two societies were diverging.<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that both contained radical, liberal, conservative, and reactionary blocks of opinion on such issues. Shared cultural, social, and jurisprudential foundations and structures generated closely comparable debates over such issues, despite variations in legislative outcome. The evolution of national social systems suggested a divergence, but prior to the 1930s neither federal government assumed legislative responsibility in these areas. The Great Depression ravaged both societies in deep and thorough ways. It became clear that only federal governments could command the resources to cope with unemployment and other social problems. Washington acted first in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal legislation. Ottawa followed with Prime Minister R.B. Bennett's imitative "Little New Deal." In each country federal legislation accommodated state and provincial jurisdictions. Health care systems emerged and evolved while politicians balanced needs, ideologies, and tax revenues in their policies. Congress focused on disadvantaged groups such the young and elderly, for example, while Parliament created broad policies and funded



provinces to manage new social programs. In recent decades Canadian commentators and politicians have asserted a moral superiority over the United States in health care, often for rhetorical or domestic partisan purposes. But such rhetoric often obscured how both systems interwove free-market and state-centered themes.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, increasing numbers of Canadians paid for medical treatment in the United States by the 1990s. U.S. clinics even opened consultation offices in Canadian cities. By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, costs, overcrowding, shopworn facilities, and delays in Canada combined with proximity to sketch the emerging contours of regional systems.<sup>22</sup>

Upper North American patterns appear in other controversial social issues. On the question of gay rights, for example, the Boy Scouts of America and Baden-Powell Scouts Association in Canada both banned gay leaders. The Boy Scouts of Canada did not. Controversy over marriage as a religious sacrament, and sectarian opposition to gay marriage in both countries, eclipsed the fact that gay civil unions were accepted in many upper North American jurisdictions. Opinion in Canada's "Bible Belt" south of Calgary and in B.C.'s Fraser River Valley echoed conservative American views. Gays pursued civil and legal rights in both countries, but philosophical and constitutional distinctions stood out. Gays invoked individual rights guaranteed in state and federal constitutions, whereas in Canada they cited social equality under the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Similar patterns of tolerance and opposition wove among states and provinces in upper North America. U.S. polls revealed that in these respects the broad mass of Americans saw Canada and its provinces as they might a next-door state, content that local attitudes and politics should shape local laws.<sup>23</sup> In policy terms, legislators in such instances determined what was "just right" for their own circumstances. Such upper North American social patterns encompassed many themes. Clear distinctions and trends were evident, but divergences between Western European societies and the United States and Canada were greater than the differences between the two countries in upper North America. As in so many other ways, how Canadians and Americans viewed social issues and conditions depended upon what, when, and where we are talking about.<sup>24</sup>



### III. ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Canadian philosopher George Grant lamented in 1965 that proximity to the United States had Americanized his country. Many on the ideological left of Canada's political spectrum agreed. Too close meant too bad for Canada. Business interests as well as conservative and mid-spectrum commentators and politicians rejected such ideological arguments. A protracted public policy debate over economic (and other) relations with the United States developed and dominated Ottawa policy discussions for two decades. After Brian Mulroney won the 1988 election, his FTA became the guiding force in upper North American economic affairs.<sup>25</sup> Chicken Little critics were proven wrong when the skies did not fall in on Canada. The influence of the ideological left on national policy faded. Over time a series of studies and reports from national and private agencies demonstrated that FTA had been a major benefit for Canada. Ottawa managed an increasingly free-market economic system integrated with the United States that rested on a broad upper North American consensus. The already complex economic integration became more so, and to the profit and broad satisfaction of millions.

The FTA was a capstone on trends long underway. Canada's leading economic indicators were shifting from transatlantic to upper North American patterns even before World War I. Washington policy makers, while focused upon national U.S. expansion and overseas markets, viewed Canada as part of the North American sphere and as an adjunct of the U.S. economy. Washington's attempt to conclude reciprocity with Wilfrid Laurier's Liberal government in 1911 failed for political reasons, but the two world wars and the Great Depression still transformed Canada into a North American nation interdependent with the United States. A 1935 trade agreement reduced tariffs. After 1945 Congress agreed to fold Canada into the Marshall Plan to sustain an important export market for U.S. producers. A ruined Britain turned toward Europe, so Canada by default as much as design focused on a continental economic system. Concerning Ottawa-Washington trade, FTA folded into NAFTA in 1994. By the early 21<sup>st</sup> century over \$1 billion in trade and services moved every day within the upper North American economic system and constituted 85/25 percent of Canada's exports/imports. Thirty-four percent of this trade was within transnational firms. Per capita, Canadians contributed more of the hundreds of billions of dollars in mutual transborder investment than Americans did. All of Canada



did more business with the states of Michigan, New York, and California than with Japan, Great Britain, and France. This traffic moved in several geographic regions and product streams: automotive (Ontario-Michigan), energy (Alberta), machinery (Ontario/Quebec), forest products (four borderland regions), commercial services (diffuse), agriculture (diffuse), and fish products (coastal regions).<sup>26</sup> Upper North American economic integration tied all provinces and states into a complex web of interdependence. Had Canada become too close to the United States? For those on the ideological and political left, Canada had effectively become the 51<sup>st</sup> state. For most, however, close or far was neither the question nor led to a policy choice. “Just right” in this context meant that Ottawa’s policies had to serve the collective national interest, not narrow ideological preferences.

This upper North American economic integration had evolved through accumulating agrarian, commercial, mechanical, electrical, chemical, bureaucratic, and technological phases of the industrial revolution in a context that favored free market policies. Geography, proximity, and asymmetry encouraged water, rail, later road, air transport, and electronic communications systems as the arteries of economic integration. Canada’s source of funds and credit had shifted from London to Chicago and New York by the 1870s. A decade later, people, commodities and manufactured goods circulated in this upper North American system. John A. Macdonald’s “National Policy” had enticed U.S. branch-plant factories into Canada. The Singer Sewing Machine Company manufactured 700,000 units a year as early as 1871. Branch plants, clustered in southern Ontario and Montreal, developed the central provinces as Canada’s economic core with hinterlands east and west as well as in the United States. Macdonald’s nation-building policies developed in an upper North American context.

Meanwhile, the entirely new mass consumer market proved central to upper North American economic evolution. In both countries, merchandise entrepreneurs such as John Wanamaker in Philadelphia, Aaron Montgomery Ward in Chicago, and Timothy Eaton in Toronto marketed a diversity of goods to expanding consumer markets from their urban department stores, and to small towns and rural areas through mail order catalogue marketing. High employment and general prosperity in upper North America allowed increasing numbers of people to afford the ever-growing variety of



wares. Thousands of U.S. inventions and innovations spread through upper North American markets. Kodak box cameras became as familiar to Canadians as to Americans. So did Underwood typewriters and RCA Victor phonographs and radios. Moreover, Canadians as well as Americans saw these products and thousands of others in newspaper and magazine (later radio and TV) advertisements.<sup>27</sup>

Regional patterns developed. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century U.S. investors built forest industries in Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia. U.S. markets absorbed Canadian commodities from the Prairie provinces. Nova Scotia fishing linked into upper New England markets and sources of labor and supply. These interdependences deepened through the two world wars as the flow of cash and credit, investment, commodities, manufactured goods, and labor and expertise confirmed Canada's upper North American focus. In 1886, Canada's imports from U.S. and British sources were balanced. By 1906, 60 percent came from the United States and 24 percent from Britain. Two decades later the ratio was 66 to 17 percent. By 1946, it was 73 to 10 percent. By 1982 it had reached 70 to 3 percent, where it held steady. Commodity exports to Britain in 1918 only slightly exceeded in value those heading to U.S. markets. From the 1920s on, most of those exports headed south. In the 1920s, urban Canadians became part of an upper North American middle-class consumer system. Periodic Ottawa-Washington negotiations to facilitate trade became a central theme in political life. The single most significant upper North American industry emerged when Henry Ford developed the mass manufacturing and marketing of automobiles in Michigan. He and other U.S. automakers set up branch plants across the Detroit River. They both attracted and absorbed early Canadian entrepreneurs. General Motors Canada sold 9,915 cars in 1916, 22,000 by 1920, and 75,000 in 1928. The first paved roads in Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia headed south to link up with U.S. highways. Support industries, such as for tires and parts, clustered around assembly plants in eastern Michigan and western Ontario. In the 1920s Americans and Canadians were first and second in registered car ownership worldwide. Electrical generation plants at Niagara Falls early in the twentieth century served nearby consumers in both countries. The Saguenay River's giant Shipshaw project after 1938 sent power into large parts of the U.S. Northeast, and the 1964 Columbia River Treaty established British Columbia as a principal electrical center for the Pacific Northwest. U.S. markets



made Quebec's Churchill Falls development feasible.<sup>28</sup>

The automobile integrated upper North Americans both economically and socially. During the U.S. Prohibition era, trucks carried illegal alcohol south over back roads while cars took thousands of Americans north to drink in Canadian bars and taverns. Mass owned automobiles also encouraged upper North American suburbanization after 1945. This created shared modes and manners of living just as the advertising of goods over radio and television created a largely common variety of supplies and shared markets for upper North American producers and consumers. Owners and union leaders in the interlinked auto industry supported the politicians who negotiated the 1965 Auto Pact. From then on Canadians and Americans made automobiles together and sold them to one another as well as into foreign markets.<sup>29</sup> Despite hopes that Grant and other Canadian nationalists placed on Walter Gordon's 1960s Royal Commission that called for an independent national economy, Gordon's position as Lester Pearson's finance minister crumbled under the weight of already deep and accelerating Upper North American interdependence combined with the political realities of the Cold War decade.<sup>30</sup>

Too close or too far? Historical change had rendered that question meaningless, and Ottawa proved at best a grudging participant throughout the process. In political terms, after the experience of the 1911 Reciprocity election that sparked a spasm of furious anti-Americanism, Washington usually left it to Ottawa to take the initiative. Franklin D. Roosevelt's Hyde Park Declaration incorporated many of the Mackenzie King government's proposals. World War II cemented upper North American economic and commercial integration, in part because it was the only advanced system left intact. Moreover, any attempt to answer false dichotomy questions depends on what we are talking about and when. If auto and clothing manufacture became components in large bi-national industries, steel production remained nationally focused. Forest industries competed in national, North American, and international markets. And although officials and analysts talked about trade, little that circulated in the proliferating transnational economic arteries involved an exchange of any kind. Washington and Ottawa kept accounts, toted up surpluses and deficits at year's end, and moved on. Private enterprise provided the wealth and employment and retained the initiative. Ottawa and Washington proved less masters than manag-



ers of upper North America's free-market system as industries and organizations pressed to expand and deepen their interests. Free market forces determined the outcome, whatever duties Ottawa and Washington collected.<sup>31</sup>

Upper North American economic integration developed continental methods and merchandising and consumption patterns. Malls and plazas with individual stores and other facilities appeared in Baltimore as early as 1896, Lake Forest (Illinois) in 1916, and Kansas City in 1922. By 1946 eight shopping malls existed in the United States. Canada had none. By the 1950s retail and service stores clustered in plazas and malls in suburbs and proliferated on urban outskirts served by roadways in both countries. They served increasingly dispersed mass consumers, all mobile thanks to personal automobiles. By 1975 stores in over 300 Canadian malls had tripled to over 18,000. Fully 247 malls had over sixteen stores each, and 101 malls had over thirty. By 2006 upper North America had 500,000 malls in a continental network of mass consumerism furthered by Internet commerce. A corporate Darwinism unfolded as successful stores, chains, and websites absorbed those that failed. Venerable Canadian merchandisers such as Eaton's and the Hudson's Bay Company faltered. They sold out to U.S. buyers. Specialty chain stores operated widely in both countries.<sup>32</sup> Upper North American merchandising was alike in its transnational diversity. Air-conditioned malls, locales aside, had become mostly interchangeable by 2006. Marketing to mass consumers constituted a major part of the integrated economies as well as a form of entertainment, even a way of life. Too close? Too far? Just right? These were meaningless and irrelevant questions because throughout, producers, merchandisers, managers, and consumers had developed their own consensus about what was just right.

Upper North American fiscal affairs integrated more slowly than other elements of the economic system, and under closer government control, but from the same forces. Francis Hincks, Canada's inspector general and later prime minister (1848-1854), established a decimal currency to assist Canadian entrepreneurs, merchants, and service providers in borderland regions who dealt so much with Americans. In 1858 the dollar became Canada's official currency. All British North American provinces followed suit and sterling currency repatriated to London. After Confederation in 1867, the federal government as well as businessmen raised investment and operating



capital from both London and northern U.S. banks, but in a ratio of 85/13 percent. By the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century London's policies and transatlantic changes weaned Canada fiscally from Britain. Through the depression years of the 1930s British investment in Canada declined and U.S. investment rose. The two dollars remained at near par throughout. When World War II began many Canadians moved their savings into U.S. banks because those in Canada had proven unstable through World War I. Moreover, with Britain near bankruptcy only the United States offered the markets, credits, and finances to prop up Ottawa's shaky fiscal condition.

This understanding and U.S. reliance on Canada's markets, asymmetry notwithstanding because Europe was prostrate, led President Harry Truman's administration to persuade Congress that the national interest would benefit if Marshall Plan dollars could be spent in Canada. By 1957, U.S. sources supplied 57 and 85 percent of Canada's total and direct investment. Britain had vanished from Ottawa's charts and upper North American fiscal interlinkages wove among the integrating commercial, manufacturing, and service sectors. When in the later 1960s Washington shifted credit policies to foreign governments to lower balance of payments deficits, Ottawa faced a crisis. Pierre Trudeau traveled to Washington and discovered that Richard Nixon's administration treated Canada as just another trading partner. A shared sense of interests from their mutual upper North American integration resolved the problem. Canada escaped the "Nixon shock," as this episode became known in Japan, which had been Nixon's real target. In fiscal terms U.S. policy makers rarely saw Canada as a foreign country, a compliment in their minds, and no signal of imperial designs.<sup>33</sup>

Pierre Trudeau's Liberal government fell prey to the "too close" side of the false dichotomy that economic nationalists of the 1960s and 1970s insisted had to drive Ottawa's future relations with Washington. Mitchell Sharp, Trudeau's external affairs minister, talked about a "Third Option" to offset, and counter, economic integration with the United States. Global realities for Canada meant that no such choice existed in a world that sorted into regional trading blocs, even though it remained a Shangri-La for those who fretted over North American integration. Trudeau nonetheless pursued a nationalist policy *vis-à-vis* the United States. He attempted to nationalize energy production and deflect U.S. investment. Proximity, asymmetry, provincial politics, upper North American integration, and un-



lucky circumstances such as a plunge in world oil prices dashed Trudeau's hopes and Ottawa's fiscal condition simultaneously. Canadian business interests threw their weight behind the Conservatives and helped put Brian Mulroney in power. Mulroney grasped the realities of geography, proximity, asymmetry, and economic interdependence. He negotiated FTA in 1987, won the 1988 election on it, and belied apocalyptic forecasts that the border would disappear. FTA proved to be more about managing than creating economic integration, as did its NAFTA successor. Despite Liberal Jean Chrétien's denunciation of NAFTA and open worry about being too close to the United States, as prime minister in 1993 he signed the agreement and allayed President Bill Clinton's fears that anti-American electoral rhetoric would dominate Ottawa policy.

In the United States some Americans feared job losses to Mexico, which drove maverick Ross Perot's quixotic campaign for president in the election Clinton won.<sup>34</sup> Political realities and insight rescued Chrétien from the peril of a policy based on false dichotomies. Again, ask how close too close was and the answer remains. It depends upon what we are talking about, when, and who. The free market system and its myriad stakeholders from all social and economic sectors sustained upper North American economic integration by 1994. Results often failed to meet the extravagant expectations of NAFTA promoters. But like the cars Henry Ford built, FTA and NAFTA worked as well as they needed to, and usually somewhat better. All the while, polls revealed that Canadians had acquired a strong sense of national identity and were largely unconcerned about a shared mass culture or integrated economies.

FTA and NAFTA also liberated fiscal actors to plunge into upper North American integration and get as close as they could to U.S. financial partners and markets in the 1990s. *Per capita* far more Canadian dollars went south than the reverse, even though U.S. investments, loans, and deposits to Canada rose by 42, 132, and 157 percent respectively down to 1996. The "Dot Com" boom of the 1990s linked with information technology accelerated fiscal integration, in part because stock market expansion drew in millions of new investors. NASDAQ opened a Montreal office, but investors had to meet U.S. standards and conditions. At the same time, many Canadian entrepreneurs mounted initial offerings on the New York Stock Exchange. Canadian companies also spent 28 percent more than U.S. firms in cross-border acquisitions. New York's American Express



established the Amex Bank of Canada. Other U.S. banks arrived and marketed credit cards, loans, and investment services.

When Congress changed U.S. banking laws, and Ottawa rejected Canadian bank requests to merge, a flurry of upper North American banking integration ensued. The Bank of Montreal bought the Harris Bank in Chicago in 1984 and other holdings and partners from Florida to Arizona. By 2000 over half the company's income came from its U.S. holdings. The Royal Bank of Canada followed a similar program. By 2006 18 percent of its employees were in the United States. Canadian and U.S. financial and banking overlapped throughout upper North America.<sup>35</sup> Ebbs and floods in stock market fortune, triumphs and troubles in profits, all flowed from the vagaries of the free market system. By 2006, banking and other financial services in both countries served upper North Americans within the complex of national, state, and provincial jurisdictions. Public conversations illustrated how integrated the fiscal systems had become in peoples' minds as well as reality. Moreover, asymmetry aside, the respective currencies and interest rates had become interdependent.<sup>36</sup>

Free market actors had pursued and created upper North American economic integration and interdependence. Private interests and the broad mass of the public in both countries supported this development because of the prosperity and opportunities it brought them. At the same time, polls suggested that people in each NAFTA country thought the other countries benefited more than their own, a logical impossibility.<sup>37</sup> More importantly, the broad mass of the citizenry saw itself as Canadian or U.S. nationals, but in economic terms as upper North Americans. Were they too close or far apart, too aloof or cozy for comfort, or just right for the times and their interests? Fears that economic integration in an asymmetrical relationship put Canadians on a slippery slope that would demolish the border on the way down and make Canada upper North America's fifty-first state rested on a false dichotomy that had never served Ottawa policy makers well in the past, and could not do so in the future. "Just right" in economic terms was what served broad as well as narrow interests of upper North Americans.

#### **IV. POLITICAL INTERLINKAGES**

The perils of false dichotomies are greatest for the political management of U.S.-Canadian affairs, especially in the president-



prime minister relationship. Getting matters just right takes a clear-eyed understanding of upper North American affairs, a pragmatic attitude, and careful separation of partisan politics from the issues at hand. This is because close or far and cozy or cool are code phrases for domestic ideological and partisan differences over how Ottawa should deal with Washington. Furthermore, personalities and party labels (not to mention the next electoral contest) get in the way of a careful analysis of interests and negotiating outcomes. The game theory analogy of the prisoners' dilemma is more appropriate than zero-sum. Examples of these code terms at work are when Ottawa insists on multilateralism over U.S. unilateralism, which is rarely as unilateral as Canadian critics protest. Claims that the United States takes Canada for granted ignores that the reverse can also be true. Finally, use of false dichotomies signals a Canadian public tendency to identify with Democrats and disdain Republicans, usually in connection with the president of the moment. When wielded in headlines or debate, the dichotomies also reflect less particular issues or trends than domestic anxieties about Canada's international stature or policies.

Ottawa and Washington saw each other as generally trusty allies through World War II and most of the time during the Cold War. When the Soviet Union disintegrated, however, a less clear global context emerged, while a series of actions by non-state actors, often in failed states, coagulated and metastasized after 9/11 into the "War on Terror." The realities and implications of this conflict unnerved Canadian analysts, policy makers, ideologues, and public opinion leaders, especially in Quebec. Canadian politicians and commentators quaked at Washington's intentions and inclination to military action in lieu of multilateral operations. They cited Ottawa's role in the UN founding and Lester Pearson's "invention" of peacekeeping in the 1956 Suez Crisis, but omitted or overlooked how that operation and the Cyprus mission related to maintaining harmony in NATO. The peacekeeping legend created a mythology of Canadian virtue and global importance. In upper North America, geography, proximity, and asymmetry played their usual roles while the United States achieved global political and military pre-eminence. Upper North American cultural, social, and economic integration showed Canadians and Americans the impact and outcomes of U.S. global policies through the 300 channel universe over cable and satellite TV, with twenty-four hour newscasts, commentary, and later on the



Internet, all with same-day (if not live) coverage of crises, triumphs, and disasters. In October of 1962 North Americans held their metaphorical breath as Soviet cargo ships steamed for Cuba and the U.S. navy maneuvered to block them. Washington's Vietnam intervention, combat, and disaster became the first of many living-room wars, ironically dramatized when U.S. television crews on the beaches of Somalia covered U.S. troops live while they came ashore in 1991.

Canadians and their commentators judged the wisdom of relations with the United States throughout according to the tone of president-prime minister relationships. John Diefenbaker's notorious disagreement with John F. Kennedy created an immediate sense of crisis. By then the World War II-bred 'special relationship' with the United States was in its last days as that generation of policy makers and managers retired and faded from view. Their successors worked under different conditions. Washington officials still viewed Canadians as friendly, reliable neighbors and allies, part of the upper North American family. In general, Canadians reciprocated, although through the 1960s nationalists and left-leaning ideologues scowled and fretted, certain of Canada's subordination to Washington, aghast at the Vietnam War, and shocked by U.S. civil disorder. Subsequent generations of observers, politicians, and policy makers argued for moving farther away from Washington. As a result, the border acquired a greater emotional, psychological, and jurisdictional significance for many Canadians. Canadian sovereignty became a code for getting farther away from the Washington policies of any given day or president. At the same time, domestic commentators and politicians continued to berate U.S. administrations for partisan advantage. Policy-oriented opposition to Washington therefore became a generalized criticism of the United States and Americans as a whole. The anti-Americanism that arose in the 1960s and continued through coming decades reflected policy and political, but mostly not cultural, social, or economic attitudes about the United States.<sup>38</sup>

These political themes first emerged during the Confederation era. Only a few provincial agents lobbied Congress while Ottawa worked to foreclose possible U.S. acquisition of western territories, including British Columbia, with promises of provincial status and a railroad. Federal leaders also knew that British interests would stop short of any challenge to the United States in North America. American politicians and officials who thought about Canada through



these years broadly held to an historical propinquity thesis. Geography, cultural and social similarities, the Dominion's increasing political distance from Britain, and upper North American economic interests would in time produce political union. The Canadians would have to take the initiative, however, and all parties would have to consent. Meanwhile, Washington administrators promoted economic links and boundary adjustments that favored U.S. interests. The Alaska Boundary settlement in Washington's favor in 1903 infuriated Ottawa and convinced many Canadians were truly on their own in North America.<sup>39</sup>

During World War I, although the British Embassy in Washington was responsible for Canadian affairs, Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden authorized a Mission in Washington. His War Trade Board and Munitions ministers dealt directly, albeit informally, with their U.S. counterparts. Borden also conferred with President Woodrow Wilson at the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference. They felt kinship as North Americans among Europeans who generally ignored them. Wilson was ready to recognize Canada's full sovereignty, but illness removed him from public life. *De facto* Ottawa-Washington relations emerged in 1926 when Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King and President Calvin Coolidge agreed to establish ministries in each other's capitals after London's 1925 Balfour Declaration promised the dominions full independence and power over their foreign policy. Political and bureaucratic connections developed through the 1930s, most dramatically as World War II broke out at Ogdensburg and Hyde Park. Wartime interlinkages included all federal departments and agencies in both countries. U.S. and Canadian officials worked together in the conferences that founded the UN, IMF, NATO, and other post-war agencies. This was the "Special Relationship" generation in which political interlinkages proliferated. Canada's first U.S. consulate opened in Chicago in 1947 and others followed in New York and other cities. By the 1970s fourteen border states and all provinces had signed two-thirds of the more than seven hundred formal agreements in force.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, close bureaucratic and personal relations permeated all federal department staffs and among members of Parliament and Congress. The two military organizations interwove at planning, command, and operational levels. The Royal Canadian and U.S. navies became interoperable. Governors and premiers, borderland provincial and state legislators met regularly to discuss shared issues and plan



cooperative solutions. Because some communities sit adjacent to or athwart the border, municipal officers in towns such as Calais and St. Stephen on the St. Croix River, or the two Sault Ste. Maries at the Long Sault, coordinated some local services.

False dichotomies about getting closer or farther away had no meaning in these circumstances as such patterns proliferated. Liaison and joint working groups managed law enforcement from federal to local levels. A "Committee on our Shared Border" convened in the 1990s and discussed joint management to improve transit efficiency. After 9/11, Quebec and Vermont signed agreements to police border communities. Relationships across the international boundary multiplied and intertwined more than neighboring provinces. By 2006 Ottawa and Washington customs and border officers at crossing ports reportedly trusted their immediate colleagues more than their own bureaucratic superiors in the two capitals. The FBI granted the RCMP access to its databases, including fingerprints. The RCMP was the only other agency it trusted to that extent. Other agencies shared domestic and foreign intelligence in the War on Terror. The interwoven agreements and interdependent groups became so numerous and complex that when an federal Privy Council working group essayed a comprehensive *tabulation*, it had to settle for an abridged compendium still staggering in its complexity and implications. Twenty-eight Ottawa departments had multiple linkages with Washington counterparts, for example, and all provinces had several liaison and working groups with neighboring states that formed regional bureaucratic patterns. Even tiny Prince Edward Island sat on fifteen binational working and liaison groups.<sup>41</sup>

Neither federal government could effectively coordinate such a diffuse network where officials perforce operated with considerable autonomy under broad policy guidelines. Furthermore, neither Ottawa, nor Washington, nor the public, had a full grasp of this proliferating dispersal and diffusion of formal and informal agency, departmental, office, working group, and personal relationships. Washington and Ottawa could fashion coherent policies toward Britain, the European Union, or Japan, but not toward each other. Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade invented "Intermestic." This term characterizes how Canada's upper North American policy blended international and domestic themes when the domestic cultures, societies, and economies had become so interwoven.<sup>42</sup> The myriad upper North American interests, func-



tions, interlinkages, and interdependencies could be monitored and managed at the border, but not restricted to it. Too cozy/close or getting closer/farther apart were not just false dichotomies, but meaningless. By default, therefore, "just right" could only be an exercise in pragmatism.

This bewildering complexity may help to explain why so much Canadian attention goes onto prime minister-president relationships. Such a focus simplifies impressions and can ignore the larger context with its overwhelming and fluid complexity. The media also prefer personalities and issues, often portraying such coverage as crises. The complex character and ambiguity of upper North American relations escape capture in headlines, or sound and film bites. Despite the formality of public appearances, viewers can interpret body language and other clues to divine whether a given pair of chief executives appear too friendly, too aloof, or just right. The other major opportunity for a close/far or moving one way or the other judgment is when Washington and Ottawa handle "issues" (i.e., disputes) such as softwood lumber or border transit. Most arise out of the four fundamentals of the upper North American historical experience. But the president-prime minister relationship remains a handy barometer for politicians, commentators, and the public to judge how close/cozy, far/alooof, or just right the two countries are at any given moment.

The historical record shows such judgments were not generally rendered until the 1960s. Canadian politicians might play the anti-American card at election time, like Macdonald in 1891 and Robert Borden in 1911. Once the ballots were counted, however, the winner became pragmatic about dealing with Washington. Mackenzie King cultivated close personal relations with Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman to serve Canada's interests. So did Louis St. Laurent with Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower. In the 1950s such bonhomie seemed part of the "Special Relationship." Diefenbaker and Kennedy took an instant dislike to each other and behaved like two cats in a wet sack by comparison. Ruffled sensibilities smoothed when Lester Pearson took power. He dealt comfortably with Kennedy and with Lyndon Johnson, despite the latter's volcanic reaction when the president thought Pearson had broken protocol in a speech about the Vietnam War at Temple University. Pierre Trudeau was civil with Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and James E. Carter, but Trudeau's nationalist policies ruffled Ronald Reagan. Many Canadians (Liber-



als especially) cringed when Brian Mulroney cajoled Reagan and their wives into a chorus of “When Irish Eyes are Smiling,” seemingly a spontaneous political moment. They remained personal friends until Reagan died in 2004, and Mulroney was one of five invited eulogists at the state funeral. In American eyes, at least, this was a great honor.

For his part, Jean Chrétien seemingly eschewed closeness. He once said unknowingly into a live microphone that Canadian prime ministers too cozy with presidents alienate the domestic electorate. That notwithstanding, he became famously friendly with President Bill Clinton. When in Washington, Chrétien reportedly wanted to just ‘drop in’ on Clinton. Once Christmas season, while Clinton steered a television crew through the White House for a special broadcast, Chrétien hovered in the background with a drink in his hand. Clinton even introduced him. Was that acceptable or unacceptable closeness and coziness?<sup>43</sup> Those close personal relations arguably benefited Ottawa in the early fall of 1995 when Quebec separatists seemed on the cusp of a referendum victory. Clinton gathered Canadian correspondents in Washington and extolled their country’s success and reputation. Their reports appeared in Canadian newspapers on voting day. No one can say what effect all this had on the referendum results, but many concluded that Clinton had done Canada an enormous favor. Later, Clinton scolded Quebec separatists at a conference, insisting that they had no moral claim to independence.<sup>44</sup>

Close and cozy, aloof and distant, or motion between the extremes amount to subjective, personalized, and emotional opinions based mostly on superficial observation. If a prime minister or other politician becomes gratuitously harsh or critical of a president merely to assert independence, as Chrétien seemed to be with George Bush over the invasion of Iraq, this can prejudice other interests. Furthermore, Washington officials know that in parliamentary systems government and opposition politicians exploit any opportunity to discredit one another, but ministers always voice cabinet views. In the media age, after all, no statement goes unheard, or disappears as yesterday’s news. Public false dichotomy assertions may please domestic voters, but they can undermine policy makers and negotiations. They also can mislead the public over the need for the balanced and pragmatic discourse necessary to manage upper North American affairs as close to just right as possible. Moreover, Canadian



liberals of all parties tend to conflate Republicans with Conservatives and Democrats with themselves, which glosses over the blocs and diversity of opinion in all parties in both countries. This risks gratuitous labelling of Republican/Conservative and Democratic/Liberal candidates at election times. Besides, many cultural, social, economic, and political patterns in upper North America are transnational. When combined with the broad ignorance Canadians have about the U.S. political system, this risks a blowback if the candidate they openly favor loses, as John Kerry did in 2004. Ottawa-Washington relations through the Chrétien-George W. Bush years offer eloquent testimony to the policy perils of playing favorites based on clichés, personal preferences, likes and dislikes, and false dichotomies.

The 2000 U.S. election provides a case study in this process insofar as the future Jean Chrétien-George W. Bush divergence was concerned. Ambassador Raymond Chrétien, the prime minister's nephew, noted prior to the 2000 U.S. general elections that Canadians felt more comfortable with Democrats than Republicans, a gaffe at the least, however delicately phrased. After a hotly contested and controversial electoral result, Republican George W. Bush became president-elect.<sup>45</sup> Liberal commentators in both countries described him as "illegitimate." Canadian observers next insisted (on shaky grounds) that Bush broke a precedent when his first official visit was with Mexico's president instead of Canada's prime minister.<sup>46</sup> This assertion may have established a preordained unfriendly relationship. At the same time, however, Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister John Manley worked closely with Colin Powell, Bush's first Secretary of State. So did other senior Ottawa officials with their Washington counterparts. Then came 9/11 and Bush's retaliatory assault on al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Manley at once forged links with former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, first a presidential advisor on, then first Secretary of, Homeland Security. Manley and Ridge became a binational team to keep the border open. No one accused them of being too cozy because it was clear that Canada's prosperity and economic survival depended on efficient commercial and personal transit with the United States.<sup>47</sup> Before long, however, Bush's "War on Terror" smudged the lenses Canadians used to view the United States, and affected all upper North American affairs.

Chrétien, many Liberals in Parliament, and many Canadians and commentators, attacked Bush and U.S. foreign policy makers,



often in spates of anti-American vitriol that stunned observers. A loose assembly of anti-business, civic action groups, ideologues, and nationalists complained about economic integration, any and all U.S. policies, Republicans, and especially Bush. Chrétien by default became the symbolic heart of this attack on Ottawa-Washington relations. The prime minister said nothing in public when government Members of Parliament derided Bush and moralized about his policies. U.S. officials were appalled when, in an interview a year after 9/11, Chrétien suggested that U.S. wealth and power had bred Muslim resentment and drawn al Qaeda's attack. When one cabinet minister publicly denounced Bush as a failed statesman, Washington observers concluded that he spoke for Chrétien. Meanwhile, upper North American interdependent integration continued while Manley received praise for his warmth toward the United States and Ridge. Manley and Ridge became surrogates for their chief executives while the White House increasingly ignored Chrétien and awaited his successor, Paul Martin, to take office as prime minister.<sup>48</sup>

Martin proved cordial and businesslike, but kept his distance on policies or programs Canadians disliked, such as ballistic missile defense (BMD). When the 2004 election reduced his government to a minority, Martin became cautious, visibly worried about seeming too close to Bush.<sup>49</sup> Cozy or aloof, prime ministers and presidents could facilitate or strain the public political relationship. But the complex character and course of upper North American cultural, social, and economic interlinkages with their myriad components in both countries built the bureaucratic and personal momentum to sustain upper North American interests.<sup>50</sup> In the January 2006 Canadian election Martin still ran as hard against Bush and Washington as against Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party. This time the putative anti-American electoral ace turned out to be a joker. Harper formed a minority government, but remained formal in manner toward President Bush. U.S. commentators meanwhile cheered, convinced that this meant the death of Canadian anti-Americanism.<sup>51</sup> The cozy / aloof genie remained out of the bottle, but its potential to shape future Canadian policy or elections remained unclear. Policy makers must, however, resist easy generalizations and the impulse to exploit disagreements with U.S. administrations to curry domestic partisan favor.



## V. CONCLUSION

False dichotomies tempt the uninformed and the unwary to judge cultural, social, economic, and political issues and problems in over-generalized, yet narrow terms. Whatever Ottawa-Washington policies prevail, false dichotomies also blur the complexity and heterogeneity of upper North American affairs and miss transnational forces at work.<sup>52</sup> The two national identities are closer to each other than either one is to any other society. Domestic concern over U.S. popular/mass culture in various media and genres has muted save in small, closed circles while the mass of Canadians continues to patronize entertainment that meets their approval, often in facsimiles of U.S. programs, such as *Canadian Idol*. The mutual social diversity of Upper North America continues to evolve, although 9/11 has brought a new focus on immigration policies, domestic intelligence, police work, and inter-agency cooperation at and across the border. The integrated and interdependent economies continue. Too close? Too far? Just right? How can we tell and what would it mean if we could? Better, surely, to forget this mug's game altogether. "Just right" should mean informed understanding and a pragmatic consideration of interests that avoids the impulse for the winner-take-all attitude domestic constituencies often demand, as in the softwood lumber case. Framers of the major cross-border commercial agreements, in 1854, 1911 (aborted by the election), 1935, 1948 (King's government drew back because of electoral qualms), 1989, and 1994 sought to manage, ease, provide a framework for, and extend interdependent systems that already existed.

The too close or too far dichotomy has in Canada served domestic ideological conceits and partisan camps chasing majorities in national (but never provincial) elections. John Diefenbaker captured the spirit of this on the 1963 election trail: "It's me against the Americans, fighting for the little guy."<sup>53</sup> Nowadays we should ignore such oversimplifications. The seventeenth century concept of sovereign independence that fuelled nineteenth century state nationalism never really applied to Canada-United States relations after 1867. Anti-American innuendo and rhetoric failed to rescue the Liberal Party in the 2005 / 2006 Canadian election, in part because the Conservatives kept firmly in mind who their opponents were.<sup>54</sup> Once in power they continued the policy trajectories inherited from the 2004 American Assembly and U.S. Council on Foreign Relations study groups that informed the NAFTA leaders who pledged to pursue



shared, if not common, economic and security policies in the SPP of March 2005.<sup>55</sup> The central dynamics of upper North American relations in the post 9/11 era will likely remain consistent into the foreseeable future. In the operation and management of the integrated and interdependent economy, fiscal and political costs will rise. Those who work in this economy already have become more efficient. The Democratic Party took control of Congress in the 2006 mid-term elections, but upper North American security policies will remain in place and extend further. Close cooperation will continue. Upper North American mass culture and entertainment, on the other hand, have been virtually untouched throughout. The age of cross-border social movements has largely ended, except for temporary relocations. Even with amendments and delays, the WHTI regulations will strain friendly interaction in border communities. Various interest groups, communities, and sub-federal governments continue to lobby Washington over WHTI, but their effectiveness will be limited. Arguably, an incremental North American perimeter has appeared, even though the “Scarlet P” letter never passes the lips of Ottawa officials and politicians.

Withal, domestic commentators and politicians currently seem less inclined to voice false dichotomies, although in future Canadian elections politicians may resort to demonization of Washington or a particular president for domestic advantage.<sup>56</sup> In the end, the long history and complex upper North American interlinkages and interdependencies retain the potential for disagreements, disputes, and periodic antagonism. Commentators and politicians will doubtless fulminate and posture over particulars, but the depth of shared interests will ensure that Ottawa and Washington usually will manufacture just-right solutions. No reasonable foundation thus exists for Canadians to lament, as a Mexican statesman once did, that their country is so far from God, but so close to the United States.



## ACRONYMS

ACSUS	Association for Canadian Studies in the United States
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
CANCON	Canadian Content
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CBSA	Canada Border Security Agency
CSB	Committee on Our Shared Border
CUSP	Canada-United States Partnership
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FIRA	Foreign Investment Review Agency
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
IBET	Integrated Border Enforcement Team
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NEP	National Energy Policy
9/11	September 11, 2001
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defense Command
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SPP	Security and Prosperity Partnership
UN	United Nations
WHTI	Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative



## FREQUENTLY CITED WEBSITES:

<a href="http://www.csis.org">www.csis.org</a>	Center for Strategic and International Studies
<a href="http://www.irpp.org">www.irpp.org</a>	Institute for Research on Public Policy
<a href="http://www.globeandmail.com">www.globeandmail.com</a>	<i>The Globe and Mail</i>
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NB: consultation occurred on the date cited unless otherwise noted.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Upper North America" separates Canada-United States affairs from the NAFTA context and the SPP. See Anthony DePalma, *Here: A Biography of the New American Continent* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001); and Joel Garreau, *The Nine Nations of North America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981). Stephen Brooks, *As Others See Us: The Causes and Consequences of Foreign Perceptions of Canada* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006), suggests Canadians are for most criteria far closer to Americans than any other people surveyed.

<sup>2</sup> James Laxer, *The Border, Canada, the U.S. and Dispatches from the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 2003); Daniel Drache, *Borders Matter: Homeland Security and the Search for North America* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Don Martin, "The Undecided Border." *National Post* (NP) [five parts] August 5-9, 2003; Jerry Seper, "Guarding America's Border." *Washington Times* [three parts], December 8-10, 2003; websites, accessed January 15, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003); and Reginald C. Stuart, "Death of the Nation State? Global Mass Culture in the Twenty-First Century: A Roundtable Discussion." *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 31, 3 (Autumn 2001): 427-40.

<sup>5</sup> Tara Brautigam, "Canadians Becoming Somewhat More Pushy." [Halifax] *Chronicle Herald*, July 1, 2005, A 6; Michael Adams, *Fire and Ice: The United States, Canada, and the Myth of Converging Values* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2003); Philip Resnick, *The European Roots of Canadian Identity* (Peterborough: Broadview, 2005); Stephen Brooks, "Book Review Essay: An Essay for Its Times." *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 36, 1 (Spring 2006): 131-36; Gilbert Gagné, "North American Integration and Canadian Culture." George Hoberg, ed., *Capacity for Choice: Canada in a New North America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 160-183; Rima Burns-McGown, "Political Culture, not Values." *International Journal* (Spring 2005): 341-349; Steve Maich, "Closer Than You Think." *Macleans* (October 17, 2005): 16-19; Terry O'Neill, "Peas in a Pod." *National Post*, March 23, 2006, website.



<sup>6</sup> Compare Nick Mount, *When Canadian Literature Moved to New York* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); and Katherine L. Morrison, *Canadians Are Not Americans: Myths and Literary Traditions* (Toronto: Second Story Press, 2003).

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