

INAUGURAL RESEARCH PAPER

Moving Closer or Drifting Apart? Assessing the State of Public Opinion on the U.S.-Canada Relationship

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Executive Summary

The United States and Canada share a special relationship. Forged through geographic proximity, the relationship spans economic, trade, security, foreign policy, culture and environmental sectors. The intent of this study is to uncover, explore and ultimately to understand the nature of public opinion within Canada and the United States regarding the relationship. We focus on individual-level interaction with the other country and appraise the nature of aggregate opinion on key policies areas which are central to the relationship. The data analyzed in this report come from a new survey of Americans and Canadians conducted in early 2010. Stepping beyond what is oft-reported, we focus on both attitudes toward integration as well as the specific policy-relevant components of the relationship.

The findings of this study suggest a number of key conclusions. Americans generally have a positive view of the Canadian government and US relations with Canada but are overall less personally integrated with Canada than Canadians are with the United States. By contrast, Canadians have a more differentiated view of the US government and Canada's relations with it – many Canadians hold positive views but many also view it negatively. Our findings also suggest that citizens on both sides of the border are largely satisfied with the relationship as it exists, and that opinions are only slightly affected by one's familiarity with the other country. When it comes to which issues facing the relationship are most important, the responses in both countries are surprisingly similar. The clear direction of opinion in both countries is for greater government involvement on the most important issues (the economy, free trade, border security, environment and energy) facing the relationship. On these issues, the balance of opinion in Canada and the United States is that the Canadian government is out-performing the American one. Regardless of the distribution of these opinions or perhaps because of them, Canadians overwhelmingly view the United States as having a significant influence on the policies directions chosen by the Canadian government. Finally, to our great surprise, many Americans attribute important influence to the Canadian government on policy direction.

Our data suggest that policy-makers and legislators in Canada and the United States should be aware of what citizens feel about Canada-US relations and take these into account when negotiating policy. In Canada, citizens are watching closely for such policy developments, and evaluate them critically. On the other side of the border, one of the most interesting findings in this study is that Americans *expect* the Canadian government to have influence over their own. Coupled with a more positive evaluation of Canadian government action and policy, the extent of influence attributed to Canada may well indicate an important source of policy direction and a comparative benchmark for evaluation.

The results of this study present a comprehensive picture of opinion on the relationship and provide some key and possibly surprising insights into perceptions of the relationship. As the inaugural report of The University of Western Ontario's new Canada US Institute, we believe that the findings and resulting discussion provide the kind of policy-relevant and timely insight on important features of the US-Canada relationship which serves as the Institute's founding mandate.

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I. Introduction

The United States and Canada share a special relationship. Forged through geographic proximity, the relationship spans economic, trade, security, foreign policy, cultural and environmental sectors. The intent of this study is to uncover, explore and ultimately to understand the nature of public opinion within Canada and the United States regarding the relationship. We focus on individual-level interaction with the other country and appraise the nature of aggregate opinion on key policies areas which are central to the relationship. The results present a comprehensive picture of opinion on the relationship and provide some key and possibly surprising insights into perceptions of the relationship. As the inaugural research paper of The University of Western Ontario's new Canada US Institute, we believe that the findings and resulting discussion contained within this study provide the kind of policy-relevant and timely insight on important features of the US-Canada relationship which serves as the Institute's founding mandate.

The relationship between Canada and the United States has always been unique. The countries are geographic neighbours, share resources and much culture as well as the longest undefended border of any two countries in the world. The US and Canada are each other's largest trading partners: recent data indicate that 19.4% of American exports and 77.7% of Canadian exports went to the other country and 14.4% of American imports and 52.4% of Canadian imports came from the other country.¹ The United States is the top travel destination of Canadians by far while Americans prefer travel to Canada only second to Mexico.² The amount of goods and number of people that cross the border each day is astonishing, and policy decisions made in either country can have a dramatic effect on the cross-border traffic.

The relationship between the two countries is long-standing, complex and multi-faceted; the relationship is such that much of the closeness can be taken for granted, but it is rarely forgotten. As John F. Kennedy put it, when he addressed the Canadian Parliament in 1961, "Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners. And necessity has made us allies. Those whom nature hath so joined together, let no man put asunder."³

Yet, for all the closeness between the two countries, the American-Canadian political relationship is far from a stable affair. Depending on the political leaders and the political climate, relations can be closer or more distant, pleasant or strained. Consider, for example, the differences between the camaraderie that existed between Brian Mulroney and Ronald Reagan, or golfing partners Jean Chretien and Bill Clinton, and the hostility between Lyndon Johnston and Lester Pearson or Richard Nixon and Pierre Trudeau.

On the economic front, strain tends to become most prominent when the interests of domestic actors, such as lumber producers, cattle farmers or manufacturers, are affected by agreements between the two countries. When cross-border relations negatively impact citizens the pressures on politicians to "fix it" can be intense. A recent example occurred in light of the "Buy American" provisions contained within the economic stimulus plan of the United States government. On the Canadian side of the border, the conditions on spending and procurement deeply concerned many involved in cross-border production who realized the potential impact of mandated country of origin rules, and led to strong calls for government action. However, at a recent meeting of Canadian premiers and American governors, it was obvious that economic issues can clearly have a positive impact on the relationship as well. Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty argued that "[t]here is a very large need for Canadian crude [oil] in Minnesota" (Globe and Mail, February 20, 2010) and indicated that he was against any moves on the part of the American government to enact policies that worked against Canadian oil producers.

In the realm of foreign policy, Canada's decisions not to take part in the wars in Vietnam and Iraq were both contentious. President Lyndon Johnson was reportedly furious when Prime Minister Lester Pearson refused to commit Canadian troops in the Vietnam conflict. The decision to not join in the American invasion of Iraq after September 11 was also a point of disagreement. This disagreement led President George W. Bush to suggest a policy that would prevent non-active allies, such as Canada, from receiving Iraqi reconstruction contracts. These kinds of disagreements do little to strengthen the relationship, and an issue in one sector can have significant spill-over effects into other aspects of the relationship. Richter (2009: 2) argues that "the bilateral defence relationship is essentially a barometer of the larger political one, and a decline in the former is normally reflective of a weakening in the latter."

A less obvious but no less important influence on the nature of the cross-border relationship is public opinion. On both sides of the border, how citizens feel toward the other country (and the relationship with it) can influence the positions and nature of political interaction between the two countries. A significant body of work demonstrates the importance and relationship between public opinion and public policy (for example, Erikson, MacKuen and Stimson 2002; Soroka and Wlezien 2004, 2009; Stimson 2004; Wlezien 1995). Broadly speaking, with varying methods and measures, the scholarly literature finds that there is a positive relationship and a 'fit' between public opinion on matters of public policy and the nature of public policy as crafted by government. As such, if politicians are responsive to their citizens, as many scholars have documented, then

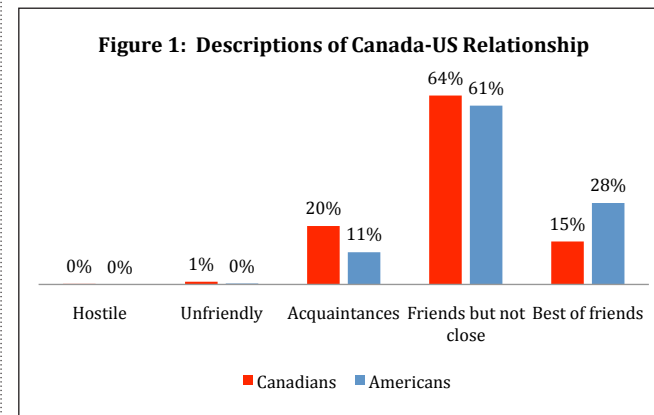
there is good reason to believe that citizen opinions should and will affect a government's policy choices as they relate to all aspects of close neighbors like Canada and the United States.

As much as it has the potential to affect ties between Canada and the US, the exact nature of Canadian and American public opinion on the relationship is not well understood. None of the information about the extent of the trading relationship, the closeness of elites or the disputes among producers tells us what average Canadians and Americans think about the relationship between the United States and Canada. How does this close relationship on paper manifest itself at the individual level? Knowing that citizen attitudes can influence policy decisions, this question is of fundamental importance, especially if, as Eagles et al. (2009: 1) indicate, attitudes toward closer ties differ significantly between average Canadians and those in the "chattering classes." Opinion polls on the relationship are common, at least emerging from Canada, but they tend to be used to report snapshots of specific and narrow elements of the relationship. For example, a headline in *The National Post* on February 11, 2004 read: "Canadians want Harmonized US-Canada Security Policy (poll: 7 out of 10 favour)", and one in *The Globe and Mail* on March 25, 2003 read: "Canadians seek closer ties with U.S., poll says (Liberal party pollster: 90% favour improved relations)." Headlines in major US papers, like the New York Times, are much rarer.⁴ Despite cursory attention to public opinion on the relationship, few scholarly studies have examined the relationship in recent years (for a notable exception, see Eagles et al. 2009), and it is not often that analysis delves into the nature of opinions and the issues that structure the attitudes.

In this study, we address this situation by taking an in-depth look at the attitudes that Americans and Canadians hold about their cross-border relationship. The data analyzed in this report come from a new survey of Americans and Canadians conducted in early 2010.⁵ Stepping beyond what is oft-reported, we focus on both attitudes toward integration as well as the specific policy-relevant components of the relationship. First, we consider underlying attitudes about the relationship and further integration as well as establish a baseline of citizen familiarity with the other country. Second, we explore the issues that citizens consider most important to the relationship. Finally, we assess those issues identified by respondents as being most important through appraising opinions on domestic and comparative evaluations of government performance. In so doing, we develop a nuanced understanding of how the Canada-US relationship is seen by individuals on both sides of the border and conclude with commentary about what opinion on the future of the relationship means in terms of specific policy areas.

II. Personal Integration and Attitudes Toward US-Canada Relations

To begin our investigation into public opinion about the Canada-US relationship, we first seek to understand the overall impressions of the relationship that citizens hold in each country. In Figure 1, we graph the responses to an initial question that asked, "How would you describe relations between Canada and the United States?"



Reflecting the enduring closeness of the relationship, a majority of respondents in both countries described the relationship in positive terms. In our samples, 64% of Canadians said they would describe the relationship as "friends, but not close", compared to 61% of Americans. A further 15% of Canadians thought the relationship was like "best of friends", and a comparatively greater number of Americans thought that this was an accurate description (28%). In contrast, 1% of Canadians and 0.3% of Americans described the relationship as unfriendly or openly hostile. The tight relationship that President Kennedy spoke of in 1961 is clearly still perceived today by citizens.

All diplomatic relationships have ups and downs, however, and changes in the political climate can have real effects on the closeness (perceived and policy) between countries. To gain a sense of the direction that Americans and Canadians see the cross-border relationship taking, we asked our respondents to indicate their retrospective and prospective views of relations between the US and Canada. We used a 5 year timeline for both evaluations. In Canada, the retrospective period begins with 1 year of a Liberal government followed by 4 years of a Conservative one. In the United States, the period includes 4 years of a Republican president and 1 year of a Democratic one.

In both countries, a majority of respondents indicated that relations had stayed "about the same" over the past 5 years. The percentage was particularly high in the United States (78% vs. 53% in Canada). Interestingly, more

Canadians and Americans felt the relationship had gotten worse than had gotten better. Of our American respondents, 12% indicated relations had gotten worse, compared to 10% who thought relations had improved. Among Canadians, 27% responded "gotten worse" compared to 20% who responded "gotten better". While the patterns are similar, the Canadians responses are more evenly spread across positive, negative and neutral responses, suggesting that Canadians have a more differentiated view of the Canada-US relationship than Americans.

Turning to the prospective evaluations, once again a majority of respondents in each country see the relationship staying the same (59% of Canadians and 72% of Americans). However, the future of the relationship seems more positive than negative – 31% of Canadians and 25% of Americans think the relationship will get better in the next 5 years compared with only 10% of Canadians and 3% of Americans who believe it will worsen. We cannot say definitively, but one possible reason for the difference in retrospective and prospective evaluations may be the change in executive leadership in the United States. George W. Bush did not have a close relationship with the Canadian government, centrally disagreeing over foreign policy (such as Iraq) and various trade related issues. Barack Obama, on the other hand, has proven to be very popular in Canada. For example, Maclean's magazine reported on "Canada's love affair with Barack Obama" on February 13, 2009, citing polls that indicated an 82% approval rating among Canadians. Perhaps, then, the change in Presidential leadership has led citizens on both sides of the border to foresee an improved relationship in the near future.

Familiarity and Personal Integration with "The Other"

As the earlier quote from President Kennedy's 1961 speech indicates, much of the relationship between Americans and Canadians is based on the geographic proximity of the two countries. Certainly this is an undisputable fact – but just being neighbours does not make people friends. From our above analysis, it is clear that Americans and Canadians do consider each other to be friends – often quite close ones – but such a measure does not indicate *how* familiar they are with each other. In a 1974 study of public opinion toward United States-Canada relations, Sigler and Goresky found that "inter-societal relations (economic ties and travel) were perceived as more salient than interstate relations (leaders and defence) in understanding the closer integration of the two countries." (pp. 641-2). Understanding the extent of intersocietal relations, and the nature of the "friendship", then, is key to appreciating citizen attitudes toward relations between the two countries.

We probed how integrated with the other country our pools of respondents are socially, personally and economically. In particular, we asked about the incidence and number of family or friends in the other country, the amount of time spent in the other country, and the extent to which income is dependent upon trading or business relations with the other country. First, on the social dimension, our survey data indicate that a majority of US respondents (75%) report having no family members or friends who live in Canada. By contrast, only 38% of Canadian respondents indicated having no family or friends in the US. While 20% of our American sample indicated that they had between 1 and 5 family members or friends across the border, the comparable Canadian value is 36%. Most interesting, however, is that 16% of Canadians reported having more than 10 friends or family members in the United States as compared to just 2% of Americans. Perhaps, given that the vast majority of Canadians live close to the US-Canada border, this difference is not surprising, but nonetheless it suggests that there is a much higher degree of personal integration on the part of Canadians with the United States than vice versa.

The second aspect of integration we investigated was time spent in the other country. One's level of comfort and familiarity with another country can be based on how often they have visited and had the opportunity to develop an impression. The response results indicate a similar pattern to that for knowing people in the other country. A majority of Canadians (55%) said they visited the United States occasionally. While 38% of Americans respondents indicated occasional visits to Canada, fully 32% said they had never visited Canada at all. By contrast only 4% of Canadians respondents had never visited the United States. As mentioned above, these results are not surprising given geographic distance and travel circumstances in each country, but they also suggest that familiarity with the other country is much higher in Canada than in the US.

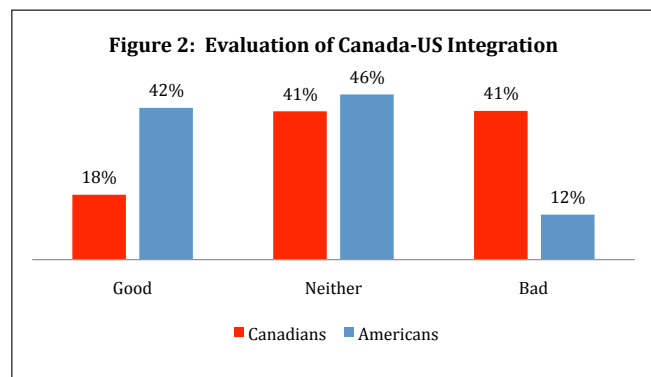
Finally, we considered whether citizens might be familiar with the other country due to the perception that the source and stability of their income was dependent upon business or trading relations with the other country. Due to the volume of cross-border business, it would not be surprising to find that many citizens feel dependent upon trade or business relations between the two countries for their own livelihood. Among Americans in our sample, the majority indicated their income was not very or not at all dependent on Canada (73%). However, 24% thought they were somewhat dependent, and 2% suggested that their income was very dependent upon the relationship. The comparable responses among Canadians paint a somewhat different picture on the other side of the border. A bare majority of Canadians believe their incomes are not very (23%) or not at all (28%) dependent on relations with the US while 33% think their incomes are somewhat dependent and 17% believe they are very dependent.

Taken together, the results presented thus far suggest that Canadians are more familiar with the United States than Americans are familiar with Canada. The greater familiarity and personal integration of Canadians with the United States than vice versa carries across different substantive areas – personal, social and economic. However, and most importantly, the lower level of familiarity and personal integration on the part of Americans does not seem to have created a more critical impression of the nature of the relationship, as more Americans than Canadians described the relationship in friendly terms.

Preferences over Further Integration

Given the patterns of attitudes toward and familiarity with the other country, it is interesting to consider how further political and economic integration of the two countries is viewed by citizens on both sides of the border. If, as Sigler and Goresky (1974) suggest, inter-societal relations are important for support for further integration, then the greater familiarity of Canadians with the United States than vice versa might lead to greater support for further integration on the northern side of the border.

Before asking about the future, however, we asked our respondents in the United States and Canada to give an overall evaluation of integration with the other country. The results are shown in Figure 2, and are somewhat surprising given the overall similarity of responses across countries in the other questions we have analyzed. The number of Americans who see integration positively is fairly high – 42% of our sample – while the proportion of Canadians who share the same opinion is comparatively low – 18%. On the whole, Canadians are much more negative about integration. The same percentage of Canadians view integration negatively as see it neutrally (41%) while only 12% of Americans see US-Canada integration as a “bad” thing.



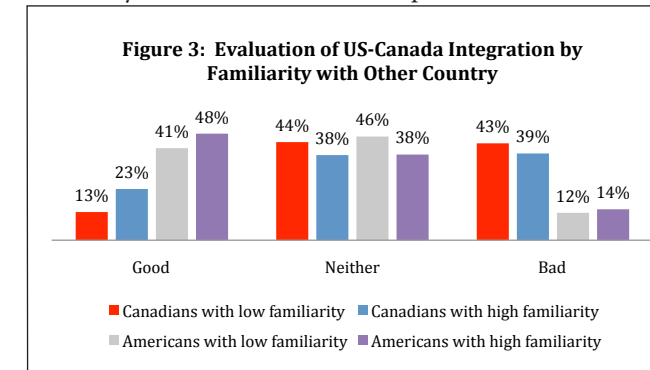
It might be expected, then, that a more negative view of integration would lead to demand for a weakening of the relationship in the future. Certainly this could have political implications – if integration is seen as a bad thing, then in the future politicians might be pressured to reduce their ties with the other country. The data do not bear out these expectations – it appears that these attitudes do not carry over into strong preferences for future changes in the relationship. Of all the Canadians surveyed, 55% would like to see political and economic ties stay about the same in the next 5 years; a similar percentage (52%) share the attitude in the United States. Only 25% of Canadians would like to see less integration while 21% would prefer more integration. This pattern holds even among the 41% of Canadians who believe integration with the United States is a “bad” thing. Of this group, only 14% think that the relationship should become ‘less integrated’, 62% think that the nature of integration should ‘stay about the same’ and 24% prefer ‘more integration’. American attitudes on future integration are more positive overall – 41% would like to see more integration, compared to only 6% who would like to see less.

These results suggest that Canadians and Americans see the close ties between their countries slightly differently. In Canada, a “glass half empty” view seems to exist, one that is closer to negative attitudes and slightly less in favour of further integration. Americans seem to have a more positive view of the relationship, both of integration in general and support for integration in the future. However, overwhelmingly the public on both sides of the border is in favour of maintaining the same level of integration, perhaps suggesting that the status quo is, if not a “good” thing, at least bearable.

Does Familiarity Breed Support for Integration?

To conclude this section, we consider whether familiarity and personal integration with the other country (social, personal and economic) has an impact on how integration is viewed. Does being more familiar with the other country mean an American or Canadian is more or less likely to support integration? To consider this question, we created an index of familiarity and personal integration by standardizing our questions about friends and family, travel and income dependence into 3 point scales and then adding them to create a 9 point variable. We then divided our sample according to the respondent’s position on this variable; those who scored 4 or higher on the scale are considered to have ‘high familiarity’. Finally, we considered the frequencies of responses to the integration questions separately for each subset of the data to see if familiarity influenced attitudes toward integration.

The results, shown in Figure 3, suggest that familiarity has a positive influence on attitudes about current Canada-United States integration, at least for Canadians.⁶ High familiarity and personal integration seems to result in a more positive view of integration – those exhibiting greater familiarity are less neutral and more positive.



Canadian attitudes about future integration are also significantly affected by familiarity with the United States. Among those who are more familiar, support for greater integration in the future is about 25%, compare to 16% for those with less familiarity. In sum, our data suggest that personal, social and economic familiarity with the other country is a positive factor increasing support for integration amongst Canadians. Knowing more about the other country, on a personal level, seems to lead to positive attitudes about closer ties.

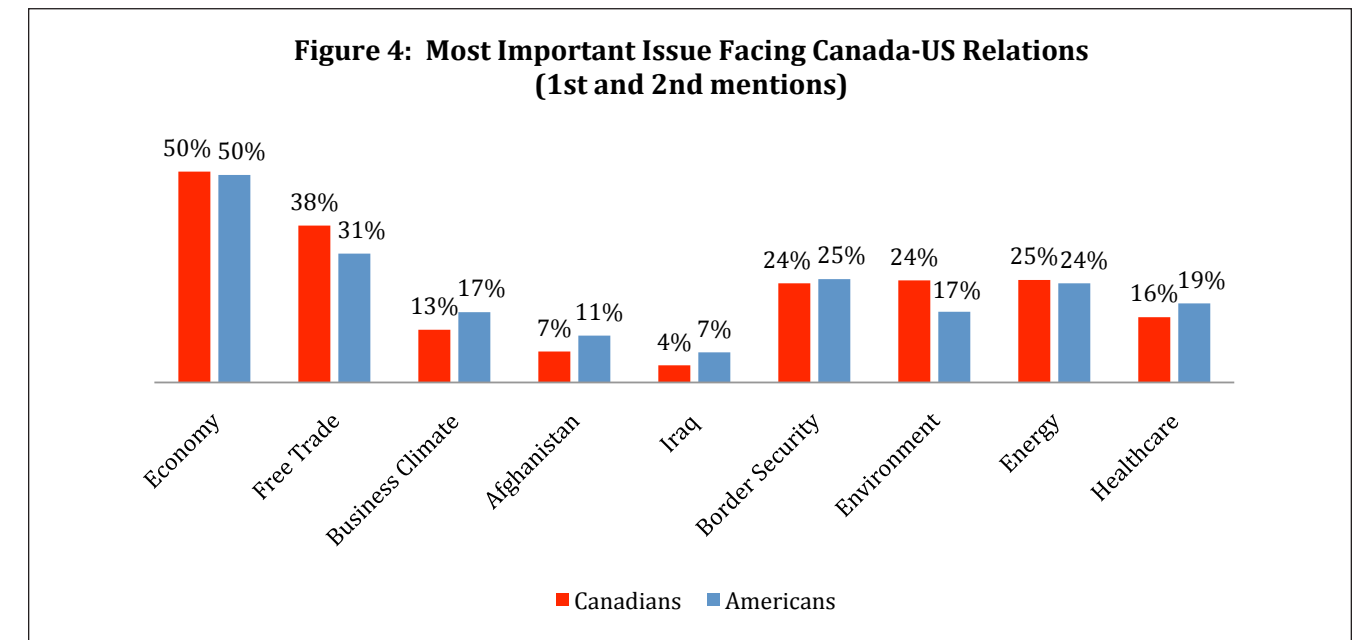
In this section we have concentrated on painting, with broad strokes, a picture of public opinion toward the Canada-US relationship. While we have found that overall attitudes are positive, and those attitudes are partly shaped by one’s experience with the other country, we do not know anything about what Americans and Canadians are referring

to when they thinking about the “relationship”. In the next section, we probe more deeply into understanding what Americans and Canadians see as the major issues facing the two countries’ relationship, and what they think about the direction that those particular issues should take.

III. Public Policy and Implications for US-Canada Relations

Clearly there are many policy issues of central importance to the US-Canada relationship. Many questions in our survey seek to tap public opinion on what the most important issues are and how respondents believe that both the Canadian and American governments are performing on these issues. Our discussion proceeds by identifying those issues of greatest importance to the Canada-US relationship before elaborating the nuances of public opinion on each of these issues.

The first step is to identify what Canadian and American respondents feel are the most important issues facing the Canada-US relationship. We asked respondents to rank in importance nine different issues which can be grouped under the headings economic (economy, free trade and business climate), security and terrorism (border security, Afghanistan, Iraq) and domestic (energy resources, environment and health care). The results for combined first and second mentions are reported in Figure 4. Of the issues presented, 32% of Canadian respondents and 31% of American respondents chose the economy as the most important policy issue facing Canada-US relations. Exhibiting the depth of concern for the economy, a further



19 percent of Canadian respondents and 18% of Americans feel that the economy was the second most important issue. Taken together, these results suggest that about half of all respondents in both countries believe that the economy is the first or second most important issues facing the relationship - a remarkably similar level of concern.

The second policy issue also garnering a significant level of attention is free trade. Amongst Canadian respondents, 38% feel that this issue is either the first or second most important issue facing the Canada-US relationship. Although not quite as high, 31% of American respondents believe that free trade is the first or second most important issue facing the relationship. Considering the economy and free trade areas together, it becomes evident that economic issues are the major focus for American and Canadian respondents collectively. In light of the global recession and the specific domestic impacts in Canada and the United States, this may not be surprising but these results do indicate how absolutely central economic concerns are in the minds of Canadians and Americans.

Of the security and terrorism issues that we consider, border security is easily the most important. Among American respondents, 25% indicate border security as the first or second most important issue facing the Canada-US relationship. A similar proportion of Canadian respondents (24%) chose the issue of border security as the first or second most important issue. In both countries, border security clearly outpaces the importance of either of the wars in Afghanistan (mentioned by 7% of Canadians and 11% of Americans) or Iraq (mentioned by 4% of Canadians and 7% of Americans).

Of the domestic policy issues which were assessed as important to the Canada-US relationship, energy resources and the environment are collectively rated as most important. In both countries, just under a quarter of respondents indicated energy resources are the first or second most important issue (25% in Canada and 24% in the US). Given both countries' dependence on and demand for energy, the relative importance of energy should not be surprising at all. The second domestic issue of interest is the environment. While 25% of Canadian respondents feel that the environment is the first or second most important issue facing Canada-US relations, only 17% of American respondents agree. The difference is largely made up from the greater number of Canadians indicating that the environment is the (first) most important issue as compared to Americans (14% and 7%, respectively).

Collectively, two broad conclusions can be derived from these data. The first is that, on the whole, Canadian and American respondents are remarkably similar in the extent of importance that they assign to policy issues facing the US-Canada relationship. The only clear, although subtle, differences are on free trade (where more Canadians believe that the issue is important compared to Americans, although

both countries agree on the relative importance of the issue) and the environment (where Canadians think the issue is a bit more important compared to Americans). The second broad conclusion is that economic issues (the economy and free trade) appear to trump all other issues facing the US-Canada relationship in the minds of respondents. In the next sections, we delve further into the attitudes that lie behind these "most important issues" for Americans and Canadians to develop a better sense of what direction the public would like the Canada-US relationship to take in these issue domains.

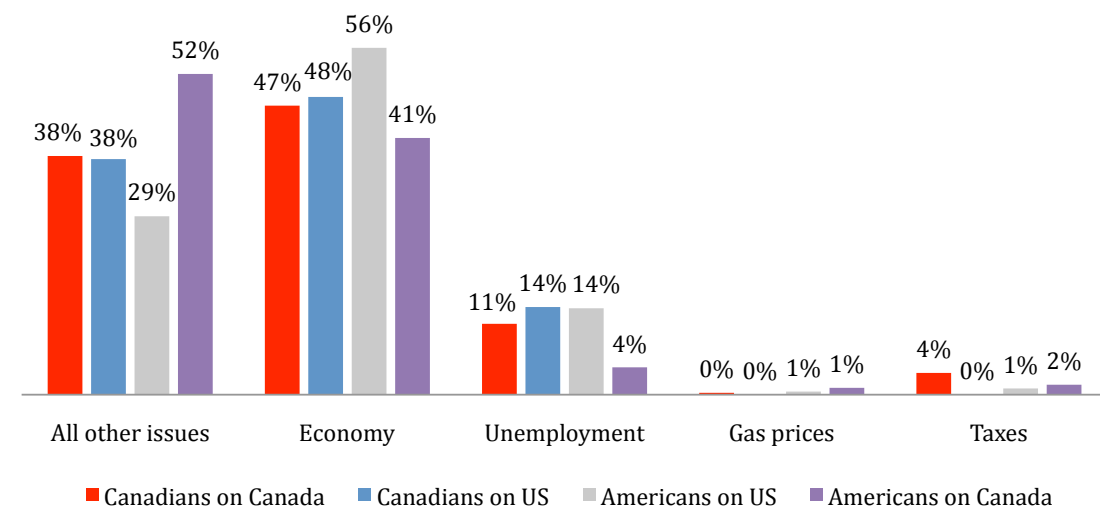
The Economy

Among the policy issues facing Canada-US relations, the economy consistently rises to the position of the most important issue facing the relationship. To delve into this issue further, we consider the distribution of responses to a question on the most important issue facing each of Canada and the United States domestically among those who say that the economy was the first or second most important issue facing the Canada-US relationship. In essence, we want to determine whether those who say the economy is most important *for the relationship* also believe that the economy is the most important domestic issue.⁷ Because we asked the same questions of respondents in both countries, we are able to report Canadians' views of the most important issue in Canada and the US as well as Americans' views for Canada and the US (see Figure 5).

Among those Canadians who say that the economy was the first or second most important issue facing US-Canada relations, 47% thought that the economy is the most important issue facing Canada, followed by unemployment (11%) and taxes (4%). All other issues together comprised 38% of responses. A strong majority (over 60%) of Canadians who thought that the economy was a very important issue in Canada-US relations also cited economic issues as being important in the domestic sphere. Asked about policy issues facing Canada, just under half (48%) of American respondents, who indicated a first or second response of the economy, thought that the economy or economic related issues were the most important issues facing Canada.

Turning attention to the American case, among American respondents who think that the economy is the first or second most important issue facing Canada-US relations, 56% believe that the economy is the most important issue facing the US followed by unemployment (14%) and gas prices and taxes (both 1%). Clearly a strong majority (over 70%) of those who respond that the economy is a very important issue in Canada-US relations carry their concern regarding economic issues into the domestic sphere. Compared to American respondents, Canadians were somewhat less likely to indicate that economic issues were the most

Figure 5: Most Important Issue Facing Canada and United States



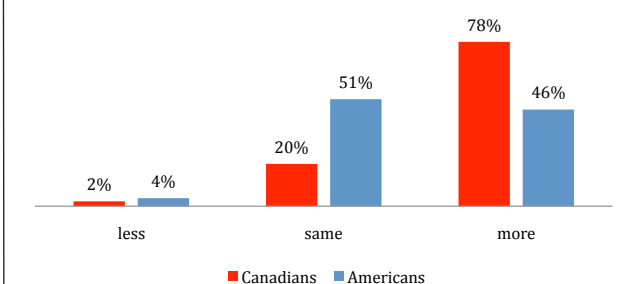
important ones facing the United States (62%).

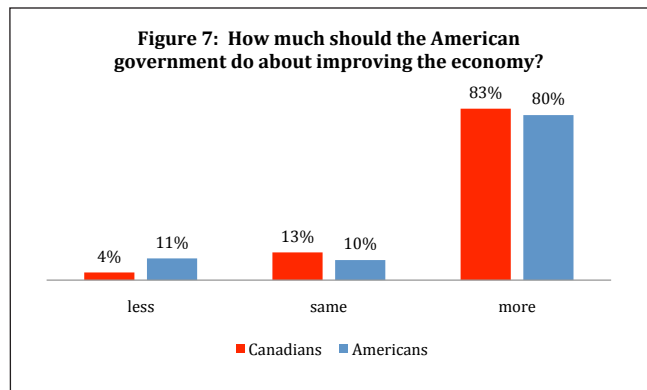
Taken together, these findings suggest that for many respondents strong concern for the economic aspects of the US-Canada relationship is matched by the salience of economic issues when assessing the domestic situation in each country. What this finding tends to suggest is that the economy is not an issue unique to one venue or the other but that the concern for and salience of the economy pervades views of one's own country as well as the relationship with the other country. It might also suggest that because of its domestic salience, the issue has perceived bilateral salience. However, it is interesting to consider what "the economy" means in a cross-border sense. What are the policies that the Canadian and American governments should work on to improve this issue? Are there any? Or, is the importance of the issue merely a reflection of the importance of the economy overall, and one that can only be solved at the domestic level? Unfortunately, our data do not allow us to ascertain the answer, but we can suggest that this is a potential reason for the overwhelming agreement on the importance of the economy to Canada-US relations.

Regardless of the reason, we have established that the economy is *the* central issue of concern among our respondents both in the context of the US-Canada relationship and of domestic politics in each country. With so much interest, attention and concern associated with the economy, we now turn to consider opinion on how much should be done for the economy, how much influence each country exerts on the other with respect to the economy, and which country is doing a better job managing the economy. We focus on these questions in order to get an idea of what Americans and Canadians expect their governments to do on this issue, such as working together or acting unilaterally.

Taking opinions on the Canadian government's handling of the economy first (Figure 6), there are clear differences between American and Canadian respondents. While a similar proportion of respondents in each country (2 and 4%) believe that less should be done on the economy file, almost 78% of Canadians hold that the Canadian government should do more for the economy. This stands in stark contrast to only 46% of American respondents who think that the Canadian government should do more for the economy. Clearly, Canadians feel that much more should be done for the Canadian economy as compared to Americans. This could reflect a few things: first, Canadians could simply be more aware of what is being done domestically and therefore perceive greater need, and second, Americans could perceive the Canadian economy as doing better than the American economy, to the point of needing less government assistance on the issue. Of course, there is also the possibility that Americans could be aware of the greater government involvement in the economy in Canada and think that it is not something that needs to be increased.

Figure 6: How much should the Canadian government do about improving the economy?



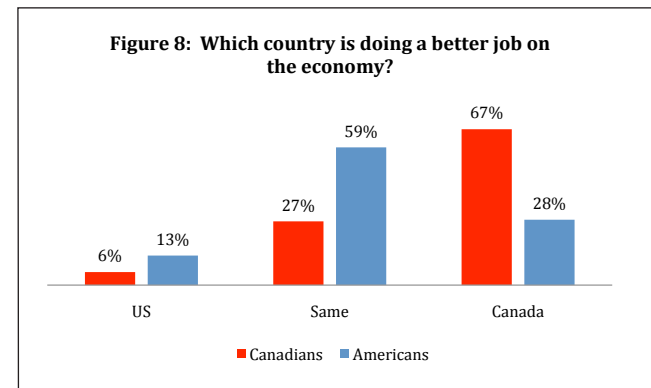


Considering the American economy, the distributions are broadly similar: both American (80%) and Canadian (83%) respondents overwhelmingly think that more should be done for the American economy (see Figure 7). Despite record deficit and debt levels currently experienced by the American government, the demand for continued and strengthened government involvement in the American economy appears insatiable. Of interest, is the comparatively greater demand of Americans for more to be done on their economy as compared to expectations of government action on the Canadian economy. There is a small but evident minority (10.5%) of American respondents who believe that less should be done for the American economy. The difference between Canadian and American attitudes may also reflect the greater comfort of Canadians with government activism. However and perhaps reflecting the magnitude of the US economic crisis, it is important to note that similar numbers of Americans and Canadians see the American economy as needing further government assistance.

That being said, is there any indication that citizens think the country across the border can be influential in their government's handling of the economy? To assess respondents' views on the relationship between Canada and the US we posed a question asking respondents to rate the relative influence of each country on the other in each of the policy areas under consideration. Answers to this question provide us with an indication of how important respondents believe the other country is in affecting government policy on important issues affecting the Canada-US relationship. In the context of the economy, the distribution of responses is fascinating if predictable. While less than 5% of Canadians indicate that the Canadian government is 'not at all' influenced by the US on the economy, over 85% of Canadian respondents think that the US has somewhat or a lot of influence on Canada's actions regarding the economy. This is a massive number and indicates the perception of vast US influence in the policy directions of the Canadian government on the economy.

On the same question, American respondents attributed, relatively speaking, much less influence to the

Canadian government on the economy. Almost 26% of respondents believe that the American government was not at all influenced by Canada on the economy. However, and perhaps a little surprising, just over 41% of American respondents feel Canada exerts somewhat or a lot of influence on American policymaking in the context of the economy. This may suggest a latent view in the minds of many Americans that other countries do have an influence on the actions of the American government.



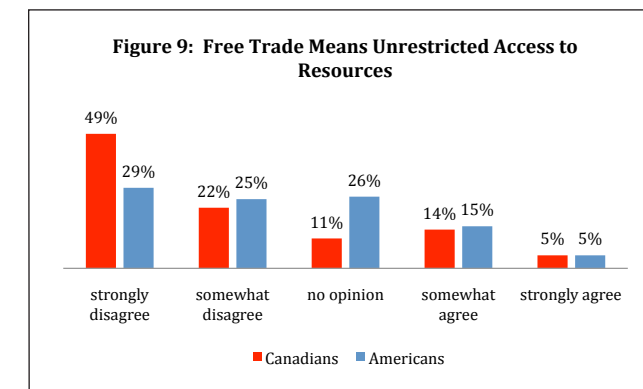
Finally, we consider the question of which country respondents believe is doing a better job of managing the economy (see Figure 8). Among Canadian respondents, while 6% suggest that the US is doing a better job, about two-thirds of respondents (67%) believe that Canada is doing the better job in managing the economy – evidently implying that their own country is outperforming the US. By contrast, 13% of American respondents feel that the US government is doing the better job on the economy and 28% suggest that it is Canada. A number of points can be made from this comparison. In the first instance, Canadians overwhelmingly think that their government is doing better than the US government on the economy (67% versus 6%). Second and importantly, on the whole American respondents believe that the Canadian government is doing a better job than their own government (28% versus 13%). Additionally, it deserves mention that the majority of American respondents answer that both countries are doing about the 'same' on the economy. In sum, these results may suggest that, in the minds of American respondents, the actions taken by the Canadian government on the economy are appropriate.⁸

Free Trade

Free Trade is one of the defining issues of the Canada-US relationship. Since the adoption of the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in 1988, the pursuit of unbridled trade relations between Canada and the US has been a consistent feature of the relationship. Indicative of this importance in the minds of citizens is the fact that 38% of Canadian respondents and 31% of American respondents

deem this issue was the first or second most important issue facing the Canada-US relationship. It is the collective views on free trade that we now consider.

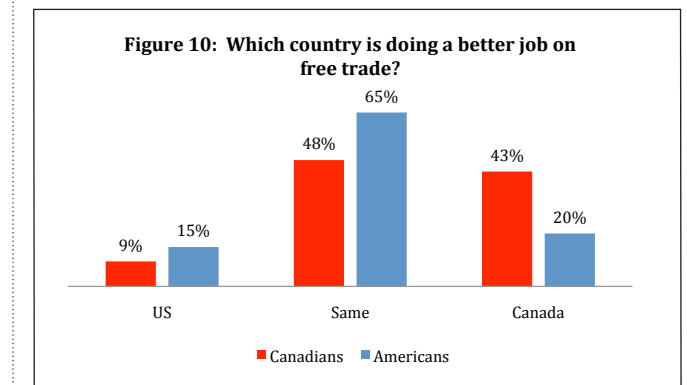
Before delving into the nuances of perception and evaluation of government action on the issue, we first consider what opinion on free trade between Canada and the US does or perhaps should mean (see Figure 9). First, in response to a question asking whether free trade implies unrestricted access to each country's water, oil and gas reserves, our data reveal that a strong majority of Canadian respondents (over 70%) either strongly or somewhat disagree with this statement. A majority of Americans (54%) also disagree (either strongly or somewhat) with this interpretation of free trade. Approximately 20% of both American and Canadian respondents agree (either strongly or somewhat) with this view of free trade between Canada and the United States. Notably, about 25% of American respondents indicate no opinion on the question compared to 11% of Canadians, which suggests that the understanding of what free trade means is much more polarized in Canada.



Next we consider the question of whether free trade *should* mean unrestricted access to water, oil and gas, similar patterns of opinion emerge. Canadians more often disagree with (87% to 64%) and have an opinion (5% to 17% having no opinion) on this statement when compared to Americans. Collectively, these results indicate a greater wariness on the part of Canadians than Americans to create unfettered access to key natural resources within North America but also that there is general agreement on the parameters of free trade on both sides of the border. The differences in the findings perhaps relate to Canadian fears of losing political control over important and valuable resource commodities.

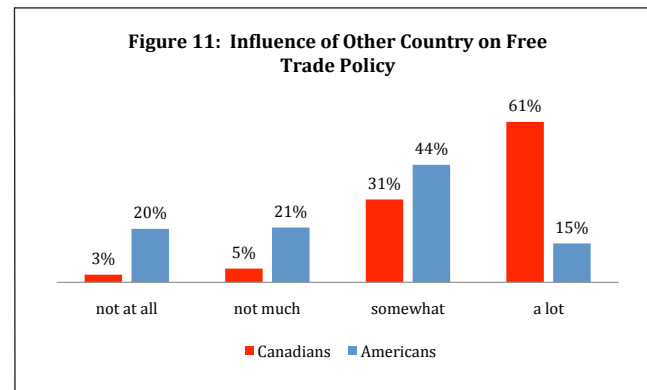
Given the understanding that Americans and Canadians have on the meaning of free trade between these two countries, how do respondents evaluate the actions, influence and performance of Canadian and American governments on this issue? Looking first at evaluations of the Canadian government performance, 12% of Canadian

respondents feel that Canada should do less on free trade while only 2% of Americans think the same thing. By contrast, a comparable percentage of respondents think that Canada should do more on free trade – 41% of Canadians and 44% of Americans. These results indicate marginally more polarization within the Canadian sample with respect to expectations of what Canada should be doing on free trade. In the case of evaluations of the American government, a comparable and relatively small number of respondents in both countries feel that the US should do less on free trade (5% of Canadians and 6% of Americans). Of interest and importance is the finding that a significantly greater percentage of Canadians (70%) than Americans (52%) believe that the US government should do more on the issue of free trade. This result indicates a much greater demand from Canadian respondents for the US government to do more on free trade as compared to the demand for the Canadian government doing more. Furthermore, it implies that, in the minds of Canadians, there is a perception of protectionism in US trade relations with Canada and that Canadians see this as a problem. As less than a majority of Americans feel that the Canadian government should do more, a parallel impression does not seem to exist.



Relatedly, we observe interesting patterns when we consider which country is perceived as doing a better job on the issue of free trade (Figure 10). Among Canadians, 48% think both governments are doing the same, compared to 65% of Americans. However, when it comes to those respondents who actually indicate one country over the other, Canada is chosen by a greater percentage of respondents in both countries. More respondents (43% of Canadians and 20% of Americans) believe that Canada is doing a better job, compared to 9% of Canadians and 15% of Americans who chose the US.

We next turn our attention to the question of what level of influence the other country is perceived to exert on policy making in the area of free trade. If a majority of Canadians want the US government to do more, and there is agreement that the Canadian government has an edge in dealing with the issue, might the Canadian government be able to have



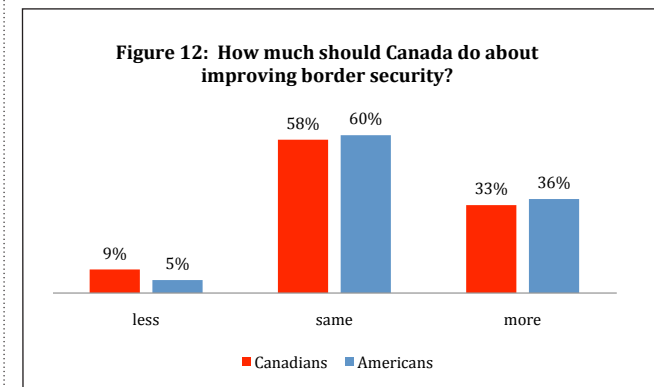
any effect? The data presented in Figure 11 suggest that, at least in the minds of Americans, this might be possible. Despite the differences in size of country and economy, 59% of American respondents believe that Canada has somewhat or a lot of influence on US free trade policy. Given the relatively small size of the Canadian economy and American dependence on it, the extent of influence attributed to Canada on free trade is stunning. On the other side of the border, and mirroring results observed for the issue of the economy, the vast majority of Canadians (92%) respond that the US has either somewhat or a lot of influence on Canada's policies regarding free trade. Given the extent of dependence on access to the US market for Canadian exports mentioned earlier, this should not be seen as particularly surprising.

Border Security

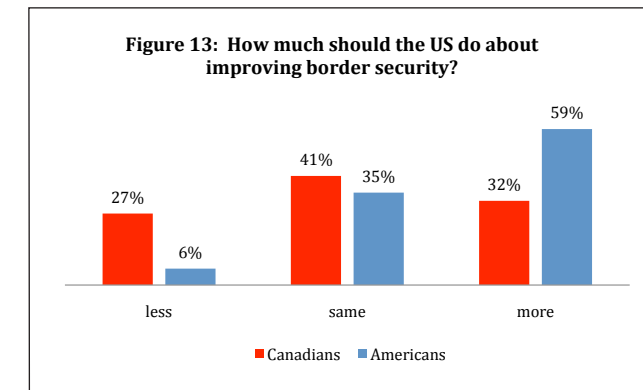
Of the three policy issues relating to security that the survey inquired about, the most important facing the US-Canada relationship rated by respondents in both the US and Canada was border security. While popularly referred to as the 'longest undefended border in the world,' the security of that border has been under close scrutiny since 9/11. In particular, there has been controversy over whether the lack of border security might have contributed to the events of 9/11. Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security, made comments in April of 2009 that suggested terrorists who entered the United States did so by crossing the Canadian border, prompting quick corrections and rebuttals by the Canadian Ambassador and Members of the Canadian Parliament (CBC News, April 21, 2009). With the attempted Christmas Day bombing in 2009, renewed fears over the security of borders between the two countries have resurfaced. What is less clear, however, is how average Americans and Canadians view border issues. The findings of Eagles et al. (2009, 7) indicate that less than 10% of Americans, but more than 20% of Canadians, feel that people from the other country travelling into their own should be "most thoroughly" questioned at the border. These numbers are not high, but they do suggest that Canadians are more wary of Americans than vice versa. Do our data confirm this

perception? We consider the issue of border security and assess the extent to which Americans and Canadians have similar views on this issue.

To re-iterate, approximately 25% of both American and Canadian respondents identify border security as the first or second most important issue facing the Canada-US relationship. Beyond indicating this as an important issue, what are the broad evaluations of government action on this issue and is there demand for more to be done? Looking first at evaluations of the Canadian government on this issue in Figure 12, there is a surprising similarity in the distribution of opinion between Canadian and American respondents. Very few respondents in either country think that the Canadian government should do less on border security (9% in Canada and 5% in the US). Similarly, virtually the same proportion of respondents in both countries feel that Canada should do more on border security (33% in Canada and 36% in the US). A majority of respondents in each country (58% Canadian, 60% American) indicate their belief that the Canadian government is doing just fine on the issue. Whatever the nature and extent of Canadian initiatives and policy on border security, it is clear that the opinion in both countries regarding Canadian action is broadly consistent.



This degree of consistency of views on Canadian action is patently not observed for views on American border security policy (see Figure 13). In the first instance, a small number of American respondents (6%) respond that the US government should do less on border security. Contrast that with the views of 27% of Canadian respondents who think that the US should do less on border security. On the other end of the spectrum, 32% of Canadians suggest that the US should do more on border security. The divide in opinion on this issue becomes massive when considering that 59% of Americans feel that more should be done by the American government on border security. What drives this difference is unclear. One possibility is that Americans are more likely to have fresh in their minds the Christmas Day bombing attempt and attribute those fears and concerns to border security. Interestingly, it appears that this concern for security is not rooted in a concern that security threats are arising from lax Canadian policies. Clearly, despite what



politicians might say or suggest, the general American public does not see Canada (or people coming from Canada) as a threat.

We turn next to perceptions of the influence of each country on the border security policies of the other. Mirroring other policy areas, Canadian respondents see a large influence of the United States on Canada. Over 90% of Canadian respondents suggest that the US government exerts somewhat or a lot of influence on Canada's policy making in the area of border security. By contrast, a significant though much smaller proportion (almost 55%) of Americans think that Canada exerts somewhat or a lot of influence on US policy making in this area. Despite being much smaller than the comparable number for Canadians, the proportion of American respondents thinking that Canada has influence is surprisingly high on an issue that might be seen as deriving centrally from America's post-9/11 experience.

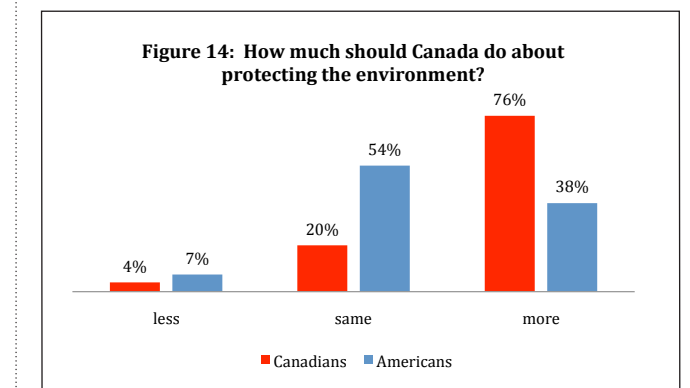
The final question we consider on border security is which country is doing a better job on the issue. Some very interesting findings emerge. Among Canadian respondents, 31% believe that the US is doing a better job compared to just 18% who think that Canada is doing a better job. This is the first issue we have examined where Canadians respond that the US government is doing a better job than their own government. Compare this with findings for US respondents. Only 18% of American respondents think that the US government is doing better – a number well below the perception among Canadians of which government is doing better. Additionally, 21% of American respondents feel that Canada is doing the better job on border security. Perhaps, then, Americans do not see the Canadian border as a concern because they perceive that Canada is doing a better job than their own government on the issue.

Taken together these findings suggest some interesting interpretations of government action on border security. Despite both American and Canadian respondents attributing roughly the same importance to border security as an issue facing the relationship, clear differences in terms of opinion and expectation emerge. In the first instance, regardless of a greater proportion of Canadians

than Americans who respond that the US should do less on border security, Canadian respondents are more likely to think that the US, not Canada, is doing a better job on the issue. Second, US respondents seem to have a dim view of their government's performance on the issue. This is evidenced by the fact that the majority of Americans respond that their government should be doing more on border security and that marginally more believe that Canada is doing a better job. Finally, and in light of the perceptions of influence that each country has on the other, it seems as though there is recognition and acceptance within the public that both countries can learn from the other on this issue. Perhaps this sort of issue, so central to the geographic proximity between the countries, is an exemplar in the minds of the public of a two-way street.

Environment

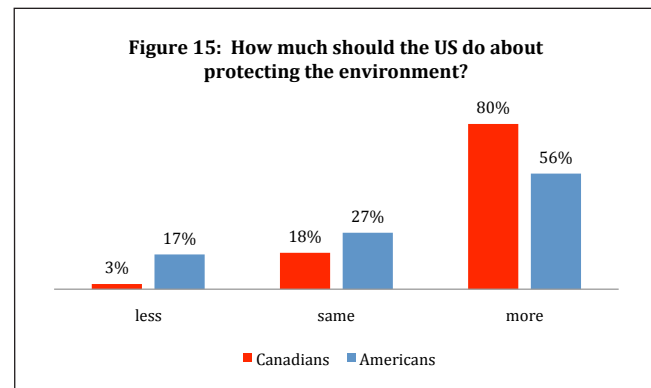
The environment is a policy field that can have great relevance at many levels. From local to regional to global contexts, the condition of the environment and policies relating to it have continually grown in importance around the world. Geographic proximity and shared geological and environmental spaces intricately tie Canada and the US together on the issue. Whether it be air pollution in common air sheds, shared coastal waters or the Great Lakes region, the management of the environment is an integral aspect of the US-Canada relationship. Among our



respondents, the environment ranked fourth as the most important issue in Canada-US relations among Canadians, and fifth among Americans. We now turn our attention to assessing public opinion on the environmental issue.

We first consider whether our respondents think the Canadian and US governments should do more, less or about the same on the environment in Figure 14. Considering Canada first, very few Canadian and American respondents (4% and 7%, respectively) indicate that Canada should do less on the environment. However, American and Canadian respondents differ greatly over whether Canada should continue the effort being devoted to the

environment or increase it. A small majority of American respondents (54%) believe that Canada should continue its current commitments to the environment and 38% respond that Canada should do more on the environmental issue. By contrast, an overwhelming number of Canadians



respondents (76%) favour more effort on the environment. This represents a clear difference of perspective between Americans and Canadians regarding the performance and action of the Canadian government on the environment.

Views of US government action on the environment reflect a somewhat different trend, at least among American respondents (see Figure 15). Starting with Canadian respondents, there is a very similar distribution of opinion regarding the US government as for their own: about 3% favour less government action and a sizable majority of 80% hold the position that the American government should do more on the environment. By contrast, the American responses reflect a more differentiated view of government action on the environment. 17% percent of these respondents feel that the US government should do less on the environment (an increase of 10% over the similar sentiment for the Canadian government). Further, a small majority (56%), but a majority nonetheless, respond that the US government should do more on the environment. Taken together these findings suggest that Canadians do not discriminate in their expectation for more to be done on the environment while Americans tend to believe that it is only their government that needs to do more.

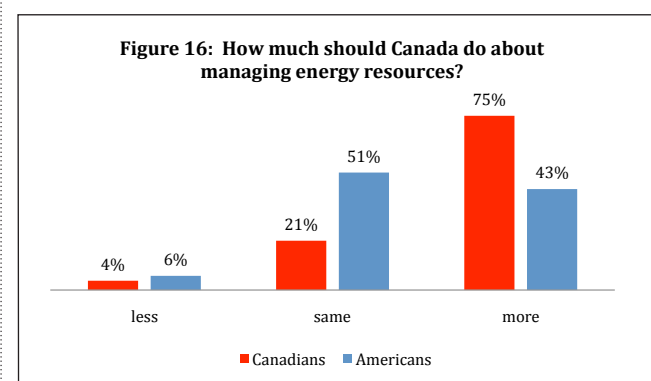
The perceived influence of each country on the other's policy making in the area of the environment conforms to the pattern we have already seen when assessing the other policy areas. Canadians feel that the US exerts considerable influence on Canadian environmental policy decisions- 41% think the US has somewhat of an influence and 32% believe that the US exerts a lot of influence. By contrast, 40% of US respondents believe that Canada has somewhat (32%) or a lot (8%) of influence on American policymaking on the environment. While the Canadian result is expected, the fact that so many US respondents think that Canada has influence remains a surprising finding.

Our final consideration centres on the question of which country respondents believe is doing a better job on the environment. Given that citizens in both countries seem to be calling for their governments to do more on the issue, do they see the other country as a possible model to follow? In comparison with their American counterparts, we find that Canadian opinion is more differentiated on this question. In the first instance, slightly more Canadian respondents (10%) believe that the US is doing a better job on the environment than their American counterparts (8%). This finding may reflect a softening of Canadian views with the new administration of President Obama. At the same time, almost 10% more Canadian respondents than American ones (52% to 43%) feel that Canada is doing a better job on the environment.

Taking the results from all of the questions pertaining to the environment into consideration, it appears that respondents in both countries are generally expecting more from their governments on the environmental issue and that Canada appears to be doing a better job on the environment in the eyes of many. Thus, the US does not stand as an example for the Canadian government to follow, nor does the Canadian government emerge as a definitively positive example for the American government to follow. Nonetheless, our findings suggest there is demand for positive action on the environment in both countries and that working together on the environment may well be a key aspect of the US-Canada relationship in the future.

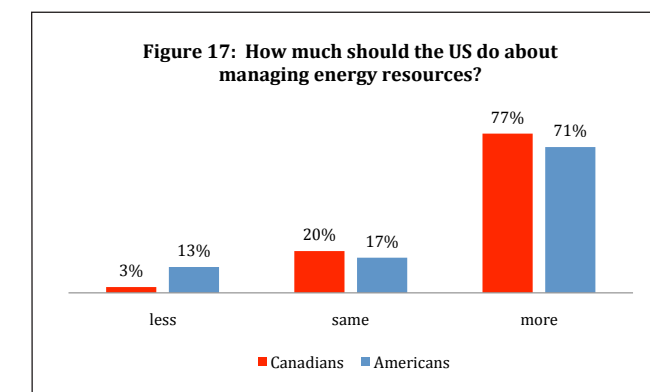
Energy Resources

The final substantive policy issue we consider is energy resources. In a North American economy heavily dependent on non-renewable energy sources (such as oil or coal) as well as renewable ones (including nuclear power, hydroelectricity and increasingly perhaps solar), sound policy and long-term vision is required. While our survey does not query respondents about their relative and specific preferences for different types of energy sources or the extent of concerns over dependence on foreign sources, we are able to speak to general viewpoints on these issues and to views of how the



Canadian and US governments are handling these issues.

We first consider views on whether the Canadian and American governments should do more, less or about the same on energy resources. When evaluating the Canadian government on energy (see Figure 16), very few respondents in either the US (6%) or Canada (4%) feel that Canada should do less. While a plurality (and small majority) of American respondents (51%) think that Canada should do about the same, a clear difference emerges between the countries in that only 21% of Canadian respondents believe that Canada should maintain the status quo. The vast majority of Canadian respondents (75%) respond that Canada should do more on energy. Concern over protecting and maintaining Canada's energy resources seems to be an important domestic issue.



The distribution of preferences is somewhat different for evaluations of the American government (see Figure 17). In the first instance, the positions of Canadian respondents evaluating the US government virtually mirror their evaluations of the Canadian government: very few feel the US should do less (3%) and a large majority of respondents (77%) believe that more should be done by the US on energy. In contrast, more American respondents think that less should be done on energy (13%) compared to their collective position on the Canadian government and energy (6%). Most striking however, is the massive jump in the proportion of American respondents who believe that the US government should do more on energy compared to their Canadian evaluations - fully 71% of US respondents respond that their government should do more on energy (compared to 43% who think the Canadian government should do more). This increase could reflect two things: first, Americans might have been less likely to take a stronger position on Canadian policy because they did not have much knowledge of Canada, and second, Americans might believe that the US needs to do more on energy. Given the long-standing concerns over maintaining access to oil, it seems plausible that Americans simply know much less about the Canadian situation and see energy as a clear domestic policy area.

We next consider perceptions of the relative influence

of each country on the energy resource policy of the other. Consistent with patterns for other issues, Canadian respondents tend to perceive significant influence of the United States on Canada's energy policy. Altogether almost 80% of Canadian responses indicate that the US has somewhat or a lot of influence on energy resource policy in Canada. While not as great, almost 50% of Americans attribute somewhat or a lot of influence to Canada on US energy resource policy. Given the centrality of energy to the American economy and way of life it is truly surprising to find that Americans attribute as much influence to Canada as they do. We expand more on this finding shortly.

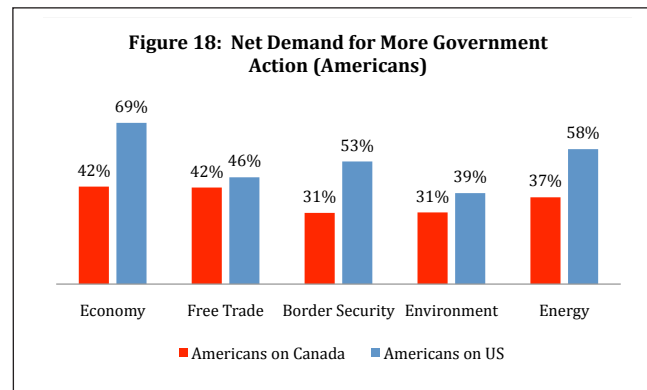
Finally, we consider evaluations of which country is doing the better job on energy resource policy. Fewer than 10% of respondents in both the Canadian and US samples believe that the US is doing the better job on energy. By contrast, 59% of Canadians and 42% of Americans believe that Canada is doing a better job on energy policy. In the aggregate, more respondents believe that Canada is doing the better job on energy, but given earlier responses most also think that both countries should do more on energy. While the Canadian government is in a favoured position on this issue it does not seem to imply overall satisfaction with their action as much as being comparatively better than the American government in the minds of our respondents.

IV. Discussion

Our study has provided us with a unique opportunity to map public opinion about the relationship between the United States and Canada. Our findings suggest that citizens on both sides of the border are largely satisfied with the relationship as it exists, and that opinions are only slightly affected by one's familiarity with the other country. When it comes to which issues facing the relationship are most important, the responses in both countries are surprisingly similar. In the section above, we delved into the meaning behind the "most important issue" choices to understand what it is that citizens think should be done on the issue, by either government, which government is expected to be more influenced, and which government is doing a better job. Our findings are sometimes predictable and sometimes surprising, but at all times informative.

In this section, we comment on the implications of those findings, as well as consider what it means for Canadian-American relations in the broadest sense. We commence by first considering what our results suggest about demand for more government action on the five most important issues facing the US-Canada relationship before turning to assess aggregate measures of government performance on these issues. Finally, we consider what our study indicates about appropriate models for policy change.

We should reiterate that even though the domestic politics in each country are unique, our data suggest that

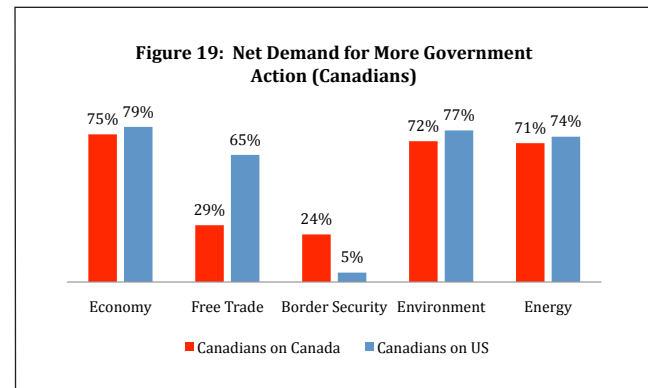


the issues that are seen as key to the relationship between the United States and Canada are mostly similar. However, there are real differences in terms of what citizens think each government should do on each issue. To provide an overall picture of citizen attitudes, we created summary measures to indicate whether there was a net desire for more or less action by each government on the issue. To do this, we simply subtracted the percentage of individuals who responded “do less” from those who responded “do more” for each issue, in each country. The scores on these net measures can theoretically go from 100% (if all respondents indicate “do more” and none suggest “do less”) to -100% (if all respondents indicate that government should “do less” and none advocate “doing more”). The results are presented in Figures 18 and 19, and suggest some real overall differences between American and Canadian attitudes.

Turning first to the opinions of our American respondents, we see in Figure 18 that for each issue the net preference is for more action rather than less on the part of both governments. Of the American government, American citizens desire considerably more action on each issue overall, especially the economy. This is not surprising given the global importance of economic considerations at the time the survey was conducted. In terms of American opinion about what the Canadian government should do, the results are less activist. It is interesting to note that while net opinion favours doing more, the strength of the signal is weaker than that for the American government. A greater number of Americans think that the Canadian government should pursue additional action rather than less on each of these issues facing the American-Canadian relationship, but in no case is the net American opinion greater in calling upon the Canadian government rather than the American government to do more.

Turning to Canadian opinion about government activity on both sides of the border, Figure 19 shows a different pattern than Figure 18. Canadian opinion on the actions of both governments appears to be stronger on average. On the economy, the environment and energy issues, a great many Canadians are in favour of each government doing more. On the remaining two issues, free trade and border security,

opinion is differentiated by country. A greater number of Canadians think that the US government should act on free trade with Canada than think the Canadian government should move on free trade with the US. On the issue of border security, the pattern is reversed. The net percentage of Canadians who think that the US should increase their actions on border security is quite small compared to the net percentage in favour of the Canadian government doing more. What is particularly interesting is that Canadians clearly are not shy about voicing strong opinions about American policy choices, which is different than what the American results seem to imply.

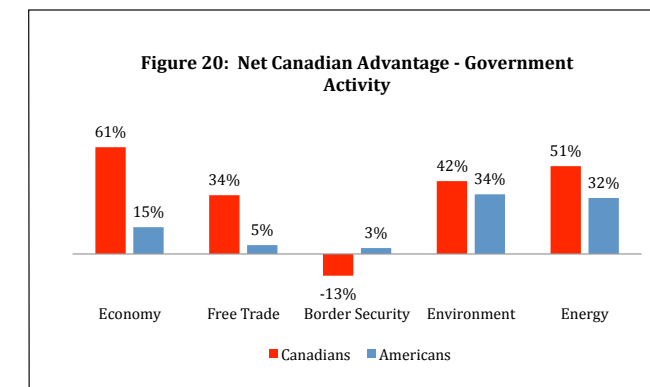


What about the performance of each country? Which country is perceived to be doing a better job of dealing with the issues identified as being most important to the relationship? We again calculated a net measure from the questions that asked which government was doing a better job on each issue. The results, presented in Figure 20, show that the Canadian government is perceived as doing a better job on almost all issues when compared to the American one. Among Canadian respondents, the sense that the Canadian government is performing better on these key issues is clearly evident on all but border security, where the American government holds the balance of positive performance evaluations. This result holds even among American respondents, who might be expected to favour their own government. On each issue, American respondents give the Canadian government the performance edge - with a particularly wide margin on the environment and energy issues and a moderate gap on the economy. Taken together, the aggregate results presented in Figures 18-20 suggest that publics in both Canada and the United States favour greater action on these issues and, on balance, prefer the policy directions pursued by the Canadian government. A key question thus arises - does the net Canadian advantage imply that Americans expect their government to follow the Canadian lead on these key issues for the cross-border relationship?

Our data suggest that is not entirely the case. Even

though citizens on both sides of the border expressed preferences for what the other government should do on issues (Canadians more so than Americans) and there is evidence to suggest that respondents in both countries think the Canadian government is doing a better job than the American one, our data indicate that, on balance, American citizens are less likely than Canadians to think that the other country has influence on policy choices. However, it is important to recall from the discussion above that a solid proportion of Americans *did* perceive the Canadian government as having some influence over their own. Across these five issues, between 40% and 59% of American respondents attribute somewhat or a lot of influence to Canada. Much less surprising is the summary finding that between 73% and 94% of Canadians ascribe somewhat or a lot of influence to the US. Considering this interpretation of the data alone, it seems that Americans expect their government to be somewhat influenced by the Canadian government's performance and actions. This is something worth noting as public policy directions are being considered.

The recent experience with the “Buy American” provisions in the US stimulus bills reflect importantly on the nature of Canadian influence on American policy decisions. As a condition of the pivotal stimulus spending program initiated to pull the American economy out of recession, US lawmakers likely did not consider the effects of the Buy



American provisions on the economic interests of Canadian producers and manufacturers who work in relevant sectors. Certainly the program, as it was first introduced, seemed to contradict tenets of the Canada-US partnership. The strong Canadian response in opposition to these conditions by both government and industry ultimately brought attention to the detrimental effects that these conditions would pose on Canadian producers, the Canadian economy and ultimately the US-Canada relationship. In response to the Canadian outcry, US lawmakers amended and removed these contentious conditions on stimulus monies. In our estimation, this recent example perfectly highlights the

kind of influence of Canada on the US that our American respondents identify. In light of this end result and the influence attributed to Canada on American policy by our respondents, it seems that an evident and important policy implication of this finding is for lawmakers on both sides of the border to always take into account the Canada-US relationship.

V. Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest a number of key conclusions. Americans generally have a positive view of the Canadian government and US relations with Canada but are overall less personally integrated with Canada than Canadians are with the United States. By contrast, Canadians have a more differentiated view of the US government and Canada's relations with it. The clear direction of opinion in both countries is for greater government involvement on the most important issues (the economy, free trade, border security, environment and energy) facing the relationship. On these issues, the balance of opinion in Canada and the United States is that the Canadian government is out-performing the American one. Regardless of the distribution of these opinions or perhaps because of them, Canadians overwhelmingly view the United States as having a significant influence on the policies directions chosen by the Canadian government. To our surprise, many Americans also attribute important influence to the Canadian government on US policy direction.

In terms of the existing literature on the Canada-US relationship, our findings present an important update on several issues. First, existing work stresses that Americans are less aware of Canadians than vice versa (see, for example, Lipset 1990; Sigler and Goresky 1974). The results for social, economic and personal integration discussed above are in line with this. Importantly, our findings also indicate that attitudes toward integration are affected by such awareness, similar to what Sigler and Goresky found decades earlier. Inter-social experience remains a key factor in understanding attitudes toward relations with the other country. Second, our findings regarding attitudes toward integration and free trade can be compared with those of Inglehart et al. (1996). They found that Canadians were more supportive of closer economic ties and free trade than Americans. Our findings confirm that more Canadians think the US should do more about free trade than Americans, but also find that support for integration is very similar - in both countries, a majority of citizens seem satisfied with the status quo. Inglehart and his colleagues comment that their findings were surprising in light of nationalistic concerns about integration; our findings suggest that perhaps Canadians have come to a new understanding of what integration with the United States means. Although

there is a lot of support for free trade, a sizable minority also express critical evaluations of integration, more so than in the United States. Overwhelmingly, however, there seems to be an expectation on both sides of the border that the close relationship should continue in the future. Somewhat relatedly, the results we have reported above also indicate that attitudes among Canadians and Americans continue to be differentiated when it comes to various aspects of the cooperative relationship. While not surprising, this does confirm that increased integration over the past 20 years has not led to convergence in the two societies. This echoes the findings of Adams (2003).

Our results can also be compared to those of the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, which regularly conducts surveys in the United States and internationally. According to Pew data, Canadians' opinion of the United States has improved since President Obama took office, but most Canadians think the US economy is having a negative impact on the Canadian economy.⁹ These results are in keeping with those we have shown above – Canadians hold more positive prospective evaluations of Canada-US relations than retrospective evaluations, Canadians think the US government should do more to help the economy, and that the US government has a great deal of influence over the actions of the Canadian government. Finally, our results are also in keeping with those reported in *America's Place in the World 2009*, a joint effort of Pew and the Council for Foreign Relations.¹⁰ Their data show that the image of Canada among Americans has improved steadily since 2003, when 65% of Americans expressed a favourable opinion of Canada. The 2009 results indicate that 84% of Americans now see Canada favourably, more than for any other country studied. Thus, the fact that our results show positive attitudes toward Canada and relations with Canada is consistent with other studies.

As a final comment, and building on the core findings of this report, a few policy implications present themselves. Our data suggest that policymakers and legislators in Canada and the United States should be aware of what citizens feel about Canada-US relations and take these into account when negotiating policy. In Canada, citizens are watching closely for such policy developments, and are ready to evaluate them critically. Many Canadians have strong personal, social and economic ties with the United States and these affect their evaluations of government choices.

On the other side of the border, one of the most interesting findings in this study is that Americans seem to *expect* the Canadian government to have influence over their own. Coupled with a more positive evaluation of Canadian government action and policy, the extent of influence attributed to Canada may well indicate an important source of policy direction and a comparative benchmark for evaluation. If American policy-makers take note of public opinion, as they have been shown to do in other instances

(see, for example, Kohut 2007) then following the Canadian government's lead on policies or at least considering their positions and interests may be a wise choice. Clearly, the Buy American experience mentioned previously reflects this observation. Furthermore, Dobell (1974) shows that using the Canadian experience as evidence in favour of policy initiatives can be well-received among American legislators.

Finally, we would stress the need for greater communication with the public about the size, extent and nature of the relationship between the United States and Canada. Just as NBC prepared a "primer" on Canada to air before the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver to make Americans aware of just how close the two countries are, so too should lawmakers consider enlisting public opinion by arming citizens with greater information with which to form realistic opinions about cross-border affairs. As President Kennedy stated in 1961, nature forged the ties between the two countries, and it is hard to imagine any situation that might change that. At this point, how the relationship evolves is the most important issue, and public opinion's role in influencing the direction of that evolution should not be ignored.

Notes

1. Information drawn from Invest in Ontario, "Canada Is A Trading Nation" (www.investinontario.com) and US Census Bureau Foreign Trade Statistics, "Top Trading Partners – Total Trade, Exports, Imports" (www.census.gov).
2. Information drawn from Statistics Canada, Canada at a Glance 2009 and US Department of Commerce International Trade Administration Manufacturing and Services Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, 2007 United States Resident Travel Abroad.
3. Text of speech available from The American Presidency Project (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=8136>).
4. A search of the New York Times archives revealed very few stories reporting about the Canada-US relationship. Prominent among those that were found were reports of presidential and prime ministerial visits to the other country, which inevitably included a discussion of the countries' relationship. An example is the headline from February 5, 2001 - "Canada Determined to Be First Neighbor to Bush" – in which Canadian anxiety over losing priority in the eyes of George W. Bush to Mexico is discussed.
5. The data we examine in this paper come from an online survey of 1002 Americans and 1002 Canadians conducted by Harris Interactive. The study was restricted to those over 18 years of age and a citizen of their country. The Canadian survey was conducted between January 29 and February 8 and the American survey was conducted between February 2 and February 8. The response rates were 14.3% (Canada) and 7.2% (United States). Completion rates of those who responded to the email invitation from Harris Interactive were 75.5% (Canadian survey) and 69.4% (American Survey). We designed two comparable surveys of 130 questions which were administered in each country (see the Appendix for the wordings of the questions analyzed in this study). For our purposes, the resulting dataset holds unparalleled value. The data has a comparative advantage over most opinion data in that the questions analyzed for this study were worded exactly the same way in each survey. The surveys were also conducted contemporaneously, thus avoiding the influence of external events that may occur if surveys are conducted at different times. Given the complexity and scope of the Canada-US relationship, such events are not uncommon. Thus, our ability to compare responses to questions across the two countries is unusually strong.
6. The difference in the response distributions for familiar and non-familiar respondents is significant ($p=0.0009$) in Canada, but not in the United States ($p=0.3810$).
7. In this assessment, we consider the economy and classify related domestic issues such as unemployment, gas prices and taxation under the 'economy' label as well.
8. Key differences commonly noted between the economic regulation of Canada and the United States include tighter regulation of the banking industry and more restrictive rules on accessing and qualifying for mortgage lending, as well as the relatively less burdensome debt and deficit position of the Canadian government.
9. Information taken from Wike (2009), available from PewResearchCenter Publications website (<http://pewresearch.org/pubs>).
10. The report is available at <http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/569.pdf>.

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Appendix: Question Wordings

How many family members and/or friends do you have who live in Canada/the United States? None, 1-5, 6-10, More than 10, Prefer not to say

How much time have you spent in Canada/the United States? Have never been, Visited once, Visited occasionally, Visited frequently, Lived there for a time, Prefer not to say

To what extent do you think your household income is dependent upon trading or business relations with Canada/the United States? Very dependent, Somewhat dependent, Not very dependent, Not at all dependent, Prefer not to say

How would you describe relations between Canada and the United States? Like family, Best of friends, Friends, but not close, Acquaintances, Unfriendly, Openly hostile, Prefer not to say

Do you think relations between Canada and the US have gotten better, worse or stayed about the same in the past 5 years? Better, Worse, Stayed about the same, Prefer not to say

Do you think relations between Canada and the US will get better, worse or stay about the same in the next 5 years? Better, Worse, Stay about the same, Prefer not to say

Generally speaking, do you think that Canadian/American integration with the United States/Canada is a bad thing, neither bad nor good, or a good thing? Bad, Neither bad nor good, Good, Prefer not to say

In the next 5 years, would you like to see political and economic ties between Canada and the United States become more integrated, stay about the same or become less integrated? More integrated, Stay about the same, Less integrated, Prefer not to say

In your opinion, please rank the following policy issues or areas in terms of importance to Canada-US relations from the most important issue (1) to the least important (9). Border Security, Free Trade, The environment, Energy resources, Health care, The economy, The business climate, The war on terror in Afghanistan, The war on terror in Iraq

Of the following, which do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today? The economy, Unemployment, Gas prices, Environmental issues, Health care, Social or moral issues, Terrorism, Foreign policy issues, Crime, Energy, Immigration, Racism/discrimination, Inequality, Canada - US relations, Government spending/deficit, Education, Taxes, Other, Prefer not to say

Of the following, which do you think is the most important issue facing the United States today? The economy, Unemployment, Gas prices, Environmental issues, Health care, Social or moral issues, Terrorism, Foreign policy issues, Crime, Energy, Immigration, Racism/discrimination, Inequality, Canada - US relations, Government spending/deficit, Education, Taxes, Other, Prefer not to say

Do you think the Canadian government should do more, do less, or do about the same as now about...

	Government should do more	Government should do less	Government should do about the same	Prefer not to say
Improving border security				
Increasing free trade globally				
Increasing trade with the US				
Protecting the environment				
Managing energy resources				
Improving healthcare				
Improving the economy				
Limiting immigration				
Eliminating racism/discrimination				
Promoting equality				
Improving the business climate				
Reducing crime				
Winning the war on terror in Afghanistan				
Winning the war on terror in Iraq				

Do you think the American government should do more, do less, or do about the same as now about...

	Government should do more	Government should do less	Government should do about the same	Prefer not to say
Improving border security				
Increasing free trade globally				
Increasing free trade with Canada				
Protecting the environment				
Managing energy resources				
Improving healthcare				
Improving the economy				
Limiting immigration				
Eliminating racism/discrimination				
Promoting equality				
Improving the business climate				
Reducing crime				
Winning the war on terror in Afghanistan				
Winning the war on terror in Iraq				

To what extent do you think that the Canadian/American government's actions on each of the following policy areas are influenced by the American/Canadian government? A lot, somewhat, not much, or not at all?

	A lot	Somewhat	Not much	Not at all	Prefer not to say
Border security					
Free trade					
The environment					
Energy resources					
Healthcare					
The economy					
Immigration					
Racism/discrimination					
Promoting equality					
The business climate					
Crime					
The war on terror in Afghanistan					
The war on terror in Iraq					

On each of the following issues, please indicate which country you think is doing a better job.

	Canada	United States	Both about the same	Prefer not to say
Border security				
Free trade				
The environment				
Energy resources				
Healthcare				
The economy				
Immigration				
Racism/discrimination				
Promoting equality				
The business climate				
Crime				
The war on terror in Afghanistan				
The war on terror in Iraq				

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