

**Public Opinion towards Canadian Foreign Policy
in the 21st Century**

Timothy B. Gravelle
PhD Candidate
Department of Political Science
University of Toronto

gravelle@chass.utoronto.ca

Prepared for the
Canadian Political Science Association
Annual Conference

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
May 30–June 1, 2007

This paper is a draft. Please do not cite
without the author's permission.

Abstract

A recurring theme in the study of Canadian foreign policy has been the extent to which (and reasons why) Canada's foreign policy has at different times aligned with or diverged from that of the United States. The American-led "War on Terror" has renewed discussion about the prospects and desirability of a more independent Canadian foreign policy. But what does the Canadian public think? Using data from the Pew Global Attitudes Project, this paper examines Canadian public opinion on the question of an independent approach in foreign policy. Specifically, it evaluates several hypotheses relating to Canadians' desire for a more independent foreign policy, general perceptions of the United States, and attitudes towards George W. Bush, the War on Terror and American foreign policy.

Résumé

Un thème reparaissant dans l'étude de la politique étrangère canadienne est la confluence et différence (et leurs causes) à travers des différentes époques entre la politique étrangère du Canada et celle des États-Unis. La « guerre contre le terrorisme » mené par les États-Unis a renouvelé la discussion sur la possibilité et les avantages d'une politique étrangère canadienne plus indépendante. Mais que pense le public canadien ? En utilisant des données du Pew Global Attitudes Project, cet article recherche l'opinion publique canadienne sur la question d'une approche plus indépendante dans la politique étrangère. Spécifiquement, il évalue plusieurs hypothèses concernant le désir d'une politique étrangère plus indépendante, les perceptions générales des États-Unis, les attitudes envers George W. Bush, la guerre contre le terrorisme et la politique étrangère américaine.

The study of Canadian foreign policy often revolves around Canada's ties to the United States – and the policy space (or lack thereof) in international affairs such ties afford to Canada. The reasons for putting an accent on Canada–U.S. relations when considering Canada's "room to manoeuvre" in foreign policy are widely known: the size of Canada's trade relationship with the U.S. (in both percentage and absolute terms) is impossible for both academics and policymakers to ignore, as are the set of bilateral and multilateral institutions and agreements governing economic and security affairs. A recurring theme in analyses of Canadian foreign policy has therefore been the extent to which (and reasons why) Canada's foreign policy has at different times aligned with or diverged from that of the United States. The conventional approaches to the study of Canadian foreign policy – the "middle power" approach, the "principal power" approach and the "satellite" or "dependency" approach – have viewed policy independence (actual or prospective) differently, with those operating within the principal power framework observing or predicting the greatest, and those within the satellite/dependency approach the least.¹ The American-led "War on Terror" has renewed discussion about the prospects and desirability of a more independent Canadian foreign policy.

In this paper, I do not engage in the debate about the future direction of Canadian foreign policy in a direct fashion. Rather, I seek to inform this debate by asking a related question – one critical in a liberal democracy – *what does the Canadian public think?* Using recent data from the Pew Global Attitudes Project, I examine Canadian public opinion on the question of an independent approach in foreign policy. Specifically, I evaluate several hypotheses relating to Canadians' support for a more independent foreign policy, general perceptions of the United States, and the United States' international conduct.

1. Cooper (1997: 9–22) and Nossal (1997: 52–64) provide excellent reviews of these competing approaches to Canadian foreign policy.

The paper is structured as follows. The first section of the paper briefly reviews pertinent aspects of the literature on Canadian policy towards the U.S. The literature on Canadian foreign policy is extensive, and excellent reviews already exist. I therefore focus on public opinion research that address themes related to the direction and orientation of Canada's foreign policy vis-à-vis the U.S. or Canada-U.S. relations. In the second section, I introduce the Pew Global Attitudes Project dataset. I also discuss the survey item measuring support for a more independent Canadian foreign policy and the choice of explanatory variables. The third section discusses the results of the multivariate statistical analysis. It also points out a potential shortcoming of the dataset (and by extension of the statistical analysis), namely omitted variable bias, though I argue that this is not a critical one.

I. Canadian foreign policy and public opinion

Debate about an independent Canadian foreign policy is certainly not new. It was a major focus of the literature on Canadian foreign policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s (see e.g., Clarkson 1968; Gordon 1966), which coincided not only with growing public concern over increasing American investment in Canada – interpreted by some as a harbinger of the ‘Americanisation of Canada’ – but also initiatives by the Trudeau government to diversify Canada's economic relations away from the United and towards closer cooperation with Europe and Asia – Mitchell Sharp's famous ‘Third Option’ (1972).

Public opinion research conducted at the time generally found that the Canadian public was split on the question of whether American investment in Canada was a “good thing” or a “bad thing.” Depending on how the question was phrased, polls found that either a thin majority or a plurality of Canadians believed that American investment in Canada was a “good thing” (Munton and Poel 1977–78; Murray and Gerace 1972; Sigler and Goresky 1974). The reasons most frequently given for believing it was a “good thing” were that it created jobs, and that there was

a need for such foreign investment. The reasons most frequently given by those believing it was a “bad thing” were that American investment reflected a takeover of the Canadian economy, and that the expatriation of profits provided no benefit to Canada (Murray and Gerace 1972).

Not surprisingly, the Canadian public was similarly split three ways when presented with Sharp’s three options for Canada’s foreign policy. In three separate polls conducted in 1973, 1974 and 1975, Murray and Leduc (1976–77) found that a plurality of Canadians (between 39 and 46 per cent in any particular poll) preferred to maintain Canada’s existing arrangements with the United States without any policy adjustments (the ‘First Option’). Fewer (between 21 and 30 per cent) preferred closer cooperation with Europe and Asia (the ‘Third Option’), and even fewer still (between 18 and 22 per cent) preferred to move closer to the U.S. (the ‘Second Option’). Support for a more independent foreign policy was highest in Quebec and the prairie provinces, and lowest in the Atlantic provinces. As well, support tended to decrease with age. No substantive difference was discerned between women and men.

With the shift in the policy agenda in the 1980s from foreign investment to free trade and waning academic interest in the idea of an independent Canadian foreign policy, public opinion research followed suit, and polls reporting Canadians’ support for, first, the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, and later, the North American Free Trade Agreement proliferated. These polls, when examined over time, demonstrated that Canadian public opinion on the trade agreements was quite volatile, with support decreasing as an agreement drew nearer. For example, support for the FTA dropped from 65 per cent in June 1985 to 54 per cent in February 1986 (Dasko 1986). Similar patterns in support for NAFTA were also observed in the early 1990s, with polls done by Environics putting support at 41 per cent in 1990, 36 per cent in 1991 and 29 per cent in 1992. Support for NAFTA has

since rebounded, with support between 64 and 70 per cent in 2001-2002 – levels not seen since before the FTA (Mendelsohn and Wolfe 2000; Potter 2002). Research found that support for free trade was highest in the west and lowest in Ontario (Dasko 1986) and higher amongst men than women (Gidengil 1995). Despite such swings in overall public support, the results make clear that there is no consensus on free trade in Canada, even fifteen years after NAFTA. Public opinion in Canada remains divided on particular trade agreements and the benefits of free trade generally.

In surveying the literature on Canadian public opinion on foreign policy issues, it is important to note that much of the research is based (as is the case in most survey research) on ad hoc or one-time polls (cf. Eagles 2006). It is worth pointing out, though, that the Canadian Election Study (CES) has tracked opinion (since 1988) on Canada's "ties" to the United States, asking if these ties should be closer, about the same as now, or should be more distant. The wording of the CES question is (perhaps intentionally) non-specific, omitting any reference to particular issue-areas such as trade or security. This makes it difficult to judge which types of "ties" – e.g., cultural, political, economic, etc. – survey respondents have in mind when responding. That said, the CES survey item remains the only instance of a question with consistent wording tracked over an extended time period.² Looking at these data (reported in Table 1), we again see that public opinion in Canada is divided on the question of ties to the U.S. A plurality of respondents expressed a desire for closer ties in 1988 and 2004, while a plurality or majority expressed a neutral "about the same as now" opinion in every other year. Except for 1993, the proportion of Canadians wanting more distant ties to the United States has hovered between 16 and 22 per cent.

2. The wording of the survey item was, however, revised slightly in 1993 and once more in 1997. Please refer to the appendix for the question wording used in each wave.

Table 1: Canada's ties to the United States

Year	1988	1993	1997	2000	2004	2006
Closer	43%	34%	27%	31%	40%	36%
About the same as now	38%	38%	56%	53%	38%	43%
More distant	19%	29%	17%	16%	22%	21%

In sum, the greater part of public opinion research addressing Canadian foreign policy vis-à-vis the U.S. or Canada-U.S. relations produced from the late 1960s to the late 1990s has focused on economic affairs – investment or trade – or has asked questions pitched at a very high level of generality (in the case of the CES). Little public opinion research was conducted on the security arrangements between Canada and the U.S. during this period, reflecting the (more or less) settled nature of these arrangements. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, have, of course, raised the profile of the security dimension of Canada-U.S. relations, and public discussion on particular foreign policy actions – whether Canada's participation in the Afghanistan mission, the invasion of Iraq, ballistic missile defence or the continental security perimeter – can be understood as simply particular manifestations of a single underlying issue: what ought to be Canada's orientation towards the U.S., and towards the rest of the world (cf. Cox 2004)? In this context, recent polls conducted on behalf of the Pew Global Attitudes Project present an opportunity to revisit public opinion on the question of an independent foreign policy for Canada.

II. Data and Method

The data presented in this paper are drawn from two separate polls commissioned by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, a multinational public opinion research initiative of the Pew Research Centre that examines public opinion towards international affairs – in particular attitudes towards the United States, terrorism

and globalisation. A random sample of 500 Canadians aged 18 and over was interviewed in the period April 29–May 4, 2003 as part of a larger 21-country study; another random sample of 500 Canadians was interviewed May 6–11, 2005 as part of a larger 11-country study. The data collection in Canada was undertaken by Environics, a major commercial survey research firm. Though the 2005 survey was not a replication of the 2003 survey (the questionnaires are not identical), key attitudinal variables as well as all demographics were nevertheless included in each.³ A longitudinal (repeated cross-section) research design was therefore employed by combining the two datasets, increasing the overall sample size to 1,000 and permitting the investigation of changes in attitudes over time.

The core survey question measuring support for an independent Canadian foreign policy was: “Do you think the partnership between the U.S. and Canada should remain as close as it has been or do you think that Canada should take a more independent approach to security and diplomatic affairs than it has in the past?” Unlike previous polls that focused respondents’ attention on specific economic issues such as foreign (i.e., American) investment, trade or Canada–U.S. ties writ large, the wording of the Global Attitudes Project survey item is designed to direct respondents’ thinking towards Canadian international security policy. So what does the Canadian public think? When polled in April–May, 2003, a slim majority (56 per cent) of Canadians favoured maintaining a close partnership with the U.S., and 44 per cent wanted a more independent approach. Two years later, in May 2005, public opinion had swung in favour of a more independent Canadian foreign policy, with nearly three-in-five (58 per cent) Canadians favouring a more independent approach – a 14 per cent increase – while only two-in-five (42 per cent) favoured maintaining a close partnership (see Table 2). These results, while indicative of some diversity of opinion found in other polls, may also reflect

3. Datasets and codebooks are available online at: <http://pewglobal.org/>

increasing apprehension amongst the Canadian public with the content of American foreign policy – specifically the public justifications offered for the Iraq war as well as the actual prosecution of the war. In other words, the results reflect, in the first instance, Canadians’ preference for multilateralism and a consensual, rule-based approach to international affairs – one that stands in contrast to the unilateral, power-based approach taken by the Bush administration (Barry 2005; Richter 2005). They may also reflect particular developments in the two-year time period between the two polls that were widely reported in the Canadian news media: the original stated rationale for the Iraq war (Saddam Hussein’s possession of weapons of mass destruction) was widely discredited; abuses by American forces at the Abu Ghraib prison came to light; and there were regular reports of Iraqi civilian and troop casualties.

Table 2: Support for a more independent Canadian foreign policy

Year	2003	2005
Remain as close	56%	42%
More independent	44%	58%

If more than half of the Canadian public expresses support for a more independent foreign policy, what are the predictors of such support? Previous public opinion research has tended to model foreign policy attitudes as a function of province/region (quite often as the only predictor), political party preference, or demographic variables such as sex or income. It stands to reason, though, that explanations of public opinion on international affairs ought to incorporate attitudes about *international* affairs. This is to say that attitudes towards particular foreign policy issues may be a function of other perceptions and attitudes about international affairs, both general and specific, and not simply domestic-level

political orientations (or demographics).⁴ The polls conducted by the Pew Global Attitudes Project contain several such items measuring general impressions of the U.S., its foreign policy behaviour and its President, George W. Bush providing an opportunity to test such hypotheses. Specifically, I hypothesise that support for a more independent Canadian foreign policy is a function of general attitudes towards the U.S. and American foreign policy, as well as more specific factors: opposition to the War on Terror and impressions of U.S. President George W. Bush. In keeping with previous research, sex, education, income and region/province are also included in the models as controls. A time effect is also included in the model. Given that the measure of support for a more independent Canadian foreign policy, the dependent variable, is a dichotomy (remain as close versus more independent), the use of binary logistic regression is indicated (Menard 2002: ch. 1; Tabachnick and Fidell 2007: ch. 10). A sequential approach to the regression analysis is employed (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007: 454). The first model comprises sociodemographic variables and the time variable. The second model adds variables measuring general (or diffuse) attitudes towards the U.S. and American foreign policy. The third model then adds variables measuring more specific attitudes towards the War on Terror and confidence in George W. Bush.

To measure attitudes towards the U.S., two survey items – one measuring attitudes towards “the United States” and the other measuring attitudes towards “Americans” – were combined to create a composite score, or index.⁵ A high score on this scale thus represents a positive impression of the U.S.; a low score represents a negative impression. Similarly, the view that the U.S. takes into account the interests of states like Canada to a great extent is represented by a high score; the

4. In this respect, I follow recent work by Bennett (2004) and Wolfe and Mendelsohn (2005).

5. Reliability analysis confirmed that these items measured a single underlying construct (Cronbach’s alpha = .826).

view that the U.S. takes no account is represented by a low score. The item measuring opposition to the War on Terror is coded as a dummy variable. Finally, high confidence in George W. Bush is represented by a high score, and no confidence a low score.⁶ Complete details of the wording of the survey items and data coding appear in the appendix.

III. Analysis

A number of findings emerge from the logistic regression analysis (reported in Table 3). The first is the relative *unimportance* of demographic variables and region or province as predictors of support for a more independent Canadian foreign policy. In the first model, all of the predictors (with the exception of education) are statistically significant. Still, inspecting the standardised regression coefficients (indicated by the symbol b^*) shows these effects to be relatively small.⁷ As well, the model as a whole has relatively little predictive power, being able to account for only about 4–7 per cent of variation in the dependent variable. More importantly, most of these effects are no longer statistically significant once one controls for the effects of the attitudinal variables introduced in the second and third models. This finding suggests that the attention given to individual characteristics such as sex, age and region in earlier research on Canadian public opinion on foreign policy issues

6. Though the scales employed here are properly ordered categorical (ordinal) data, they may be treated in the data analysis as interval-level data (as required by the assumptions of the regression analysis (Menard 2002: ch. 1). This is justifiable for two reasons. First, one must acknowledge that the observed data in fact measure latent continuously-distributed variables, albeit imperfectly (i.e., with error). Second, the robustness of regression techniques permit them to be treated as interval-level data (Borgatta and Bohrnstedt 1980).

7. Some readers may be unfamiliar with standardised regression coefficients in the context of logistic regression analysis. These are fully-standardised logistic regression coefficients having the same interpretation as standardised regression coefficients (beta coefficients) familiar from ordinary least-squares regression. They are calculated using the following formula given by Menard (2002: 52; 2004: 219):

$$b^*_{YX} = (b_{YX})(s_x)(R) / s_{\log it(\hat{Y})}$$

may have been unwarranted; attitudinal variables are the stronger predictors in this analysis. Indeed, the findings of this paper as well as those of recent research employing more advanced statistical techniques suggest that this is the more fruitful direction for further research to take (see Bennett 2004; Noël, Thérien and Dallaire 2004; Wolfe and Mendelsohn 2005). That said, it is interesting to note that the variable for the Atlantic region remained statistically significant throughout the analysis, and that the sign of the coefficient is positive – indicating that Atlantic Canadians tend to be more supportive of a more independent Canadian foreign policy. This suggests an evolution in attitudes towards Canada–U.S. relations in a region of Canada that has historically been more pro-integration and pro-cooperation.

In contrast to the relative unimportance of demographic characteristics in predicting support for a more independent Canadian foreign policy, attitudes towards the U.S. and President George W. Bush are moderate-strength predictors (and are in fact the strongest predictors in the final model). We should not be surprised to discover that as Canadians' impression of the United States become more negative, support for a more independent foreign policy tends to increase, and that as confidence in George W. Bush decrease, support for a more independent foreign policy tends to increase. Model fit also improves dramatically when the attitudinal variables are introduced, increasing to 16–26 per cent of variation explained in the final model. These findings do not, however, imply that an anti-American sentiment pervades Canadian public opinion. Parkin's (2003) assertion that there is scant evidence of an anti-American streak amongst the Canadian public is supported by the Global Attitudes Project data: 63 per cent of Canadians have either a very favourable (21 per cent) or somewhat favourable (42 per cent) opinion of the U.S. When asked about their view of the American people, 74 per cent replied that they had either a very favourable (29 per cent) or

Table 3: Explaining support for a more independent Canadian foreign policy (logistic regression)

	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3						
	b	S.E.	b*	Odds Ratio	Sig.	b	S.E.	b*	Odds Ratio	Sig.	b	S.E.	b*	Odds Ratio	Sig.
Constant	1.67	0.81	-0.09	5.32	c	3.10	0.91	-0.06	22.17	a	2.54	0.96	-0.04	12.64	a
Male	-0.40	0.14	-0.09	0.67	a	-0.30	0.15	-0.06	0.74	c	-0.18	0.16	-0.04	0.83	
lnAge (years)	-0.50	0.19	-0.09	0.61	b	-0.31	0.21	-0.05	0.74		-0.17	0.22	-0.03	0.84	
lnEducation	-0.13	0.48	-0.01	0.87		-0.60	0.55	-0.04	0.55		-0.91	0.58	-0.05	0.40	
Atlantic	0.64	0.26	0.08	1.91	b	0.72	0.29	0.08	2.05	b	0.72	0.30	0.08	2.06	c
Quebec	0.63	0.18	0.13	1.89	a	0.24	0.21	0.04	1.27		0.06	0.22	0.01	1.07	
Prairies	0.38	0.20	0.07	1.47	c	0.38	0.22	0.06	1.46		0.34	0.22	0.05	1.40	
British Columbia	0.66	0.22	0.10	1.93	a	0.60	0.24	0.08	1.82	b	0.43	0.26	0.06	1.54	
Year (2005)	0.49	0.14	0.12	1.64	a	0.55	0.16	0.11	1.73	a	0.36	0.17	0.08	1.44	c
Attitude towards U.S.	-	-	-	-		-2.80	0.33	-0.33	0.06	a	-2.05	0.37	-0.24	0.13	a
U.S. takes account of other countries	-	-	-	-		-0.62	0.31	-0.07	0.54	c	-0.29	0.33	-0.03	0.75	
Oppose War on Terror	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		0.44	0.19	0.09	1.55	c
Confidence in G.W. Bush	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-		-1.01	0.30	-0.15	0.36	a
n	932					886					832				
Model chi-square	51.45					171.11					182.37				
Degrees of freedom	8					10					12				
-2LL	1242.44					1048.72					965.33				
Likelihood Ratio R ² (R ² _L)	0.04					0.14					0.16				
Nagelkerke pseudo-R ² (R ² _N)	0.07					0.24					0.26				

a: p ≤ .001, b: p ≤ .01, c: p ≤ .05

somewhat favourable (45 per cent) opinion. Nevertheless, anti-Americanism is to an extent associated with a desire for a more independent Canadian foreign policy.

Interestingly, of all of the variables measuring attitudes towards international affairs included in the analysis, it is views on American foreign policy that have the weakest effect. Although statistically significant, Canadians' evaluation of the extent to which the U.S. considers the interests of other states in its foreign policy plays only a very small role in driving support for a more independent Canadian foreign policy. Results for the item measuring opposition to the War on Terror tell a similar story, with opposition acting only as weak driver of support for greater foreign policy independence. This suggests that the Canadian public's preference in foreign policy direction has less to do with the contrast between Canadian-style multilateralism and the type of unilateralist foreign policy seen during George W. Bush's presidency than with perceptions of Bush himself (and perhaps his administration).

In sum, Canadians who hold negative general views of the U.S., express little (or no) confidence in George W. Bush, who oppose the War on Terror, and who feel that the U.S. does not take other states such as Canada into account in its foreign policy tend to support a more independent Canadian foreign policy. The strongest drivers of support for a more independent Canadian foreign policy are diffuse attitudes towards the U.S. and specific impressions of (or confidence) in George W. Bush. While still statistically significant, evaluations of American foreign policy (and its accommodation of the interests of other states) and opposition to the War on Terror are substantially weaker predictors.⁸

8. In addition to the models reported here, I ran a series of multiplicative interaction terms with the time variable and each independent variable in the final model. These analyses revealed no statistically significant interaction effects.

Though some insights about the Canadian public's view of foreign policy have come out of the analysis of the Global Attitudes Project data, all datasets have limitations. A particular shortcoming of the Global Attitudes Project datasets is that survey items related to political ideology – such as left-right political orientation, party support and vote intent – were not included in the Canadian survey.⁹ Acknowledging this shortcoming does not, however, dispense with the potential problem of omitted variable bias – and thus misspecification of the regression models.¹⁰ Simply put, estimates of the effects of the attitudinal items included in the logistic regression models may be biased as a consequence of being unable to estimate (and control for) the effects of political ideology and party preference.

It is plausible, for example, that political orientation will affect views on Canada–U.S. relations, with left-leaning Canadians favouring a more independent foreign policy and right-leaning Canadians favouring a foreign policy more in line with the U.S. Such a left-right cleavage in Canadian public opinion has been observed in other areas. Bennett (2004: 1312–1313) has observed such a cleavage in attitudes towards NAFTA, while Noël, Thérien and Dallaire (2004: 40–41) have found evidence of such a cleavage in attitudes towards development assistance. Munton and Keating (2001: 539–542) identify a latent variable (factor) that suggests distinct liberal and conservative internationalist attitudes. Studies during the 1970s by Munton and Poel (1977–78: 236–242) and Sigler and Goresky (1974: 649–651) found evidence of a relationship between party preference (specifically NDP support) and attitudes towards foreign or American investment in Canada. Nevitte

9. Vote intent was in fact only included in the American survey instrument. The Global Attitudes Project datasets therefore reflect a tendency in survey research noted by Noël, Thérien and Dallaire (2004: 41): “polls on foreign policy issues rarely asked questions about domestic issues or partisan preferences, whereas more conventional political surveys left most foreign policy issues aside.”

10. For discussions of omitted variable bias, see Clarke (2005) and King, Keohane and Verba (1994: 168–182).

and Gibbins (1986: 408–410) similarly found that left-right political orientation and party preference (again specifically NDP support) structure attitudes towards the U.S.

How serious, then, is the problem of omitted variable bias and model misspecification? Though this question cannot be answered through direct recourse to the Global Attitudes Project data, the survey item measuring opinions on Canada's ties to the United States from the CES can serve as a proxy for the Global Attitudes Project item in an effort to shed light on the extent of the problem (the CES surveys, of course, also include voting and party preference items). Linear regression analyses conducted using the CES data for each election since 1988 indicate that party support is a statistically significant predictor of opinions on Canada's ties to the U.S., though its explanatory power is relatively weak (see Table 4). The proportion of variation explained is greater than 10 per cent in only two of the regression models – those for 1988 and 2006. Both elections are notable for the (unusually) high profile of Canada–U.S. relations during the campaigns. The FTA was the major issue of the 1988 election, while the softwood lumber dispute and continental ballistic missile defence were issues during the 2006 campaign. Nevertheless, as Munton and Poel (1977–78: 221) have argued, albeit in a different context, “Two elections do not a general rule make.” With party preference explaining only 3–10 per cent at any other time, it would seem that the general rule is indeed that party preference is at best a weak predictor of opinions on Canadian foreign policy vis-à-vis the U.S. In any event, *all* of the models using the CES data and vote intent indicators fall short of the explanatory power of the final model using the Global Attitudes Project data. In short, modelling support for a more independent Canadian foreign policy as a function of general attitudes towards the U.S., the U.S. President, the War on Terror and American foreign policy have resulted in models with greater predictive power, and the models built using the

Table 4: Explaining support for more distant ties to the United States (OLS regression)

	Model 1 (1988)				Model 2 (1993)				Model 3 (1997)			
	b	S.E.	Beta	Sig.	b	S.E.	Beta	Sig.	b	S.E.	Beta	Sig.
Constant	0.78	0.05		a	0.62	0.08		a	0.58	0.06		a
Male	-0.08	0.01	-0.15	a	-0.02	0.02	-0.03	b	-0.03	0.01	-0.07	a
lnAge (years)	-0.06	0.01	-0.09	a	-0.01	0.02	-0.02		-0.01	0.01	-0.02	
lnEducation	0.09	0.03	0.05	b	0.02	0.05	0.01		0.09	0.03	0.06	a
Atlantic	-0.01	0.02	-0.01		0.02	0.03	0.02		-0.02	0.02	-0.02	
Quebec	-0.05	0.01	-0.08	a	-0.08	0.03	-0.10	a	-0.07	0.01	-0.13	a
Prairies	0.00	0.01	0.00		0.02	0.02	0.03		0.01	0.01	0.01	
British Columbia	-0.01	0.02	-0.02		0.02	0.02	0.02		0.00	0.02	-0.01	
Liberal 1988	-0.05	0.01	-0.09	a	—	—	—		—	—	—	
PC 1988	-0.24	0.01	-0.43	a	—	—	—		—	—	—	
Liberal 1993	—	—	—		-0.08	0.03	-0.14	b	—	—	—	
PC 1993	—	—	—		-0.18	0.03	-0.28	a	—	—	—	
Reform 1993	—	—	—		-0.16	0.03	-0.23	a	—	—	—	
Bloc 1993	—	—	—		-0.10	0.04	-0.09	c	—	—	—	
Liberal 1997	—	—	—		—	—	—		-0.07	0.02	-0.16	a
PC 1997	—	—	—		—	—	—		-0.08	0.02	-0.14	a
Reform 1997	—	—	—		—	—	—		-0.09	0.02	-0.17	a
Bloc 1997	—	—	—		—	—	—		0.00	0.02	0.01	
n	2449				1462				2215			
R ²	0.20				0.05				0.04			
Adjusted R ²	0.20				0.04				0.03			

a: $p \leq .001$, b: $p \leq .01$, c: $p \leq .05$

Table 4: Explaining support for more distant ties to the United States (OLS regression), cont'd.

	Model 4 (2000)				Model 5 (2004)				Model 6 (2006)			
	b	S.E.	Beta	Sig.	b	S.E.	Beta	Sig.	b	S.E.	Beta	Sig.
Constant	0.59	0.06		a	0.62	0.06		a	0.65	0.08		a
Male	-0.03	0.01	-0.07	a	-0.03	0.01	-0.06	a	-0.06	0.01	-0.11	a
lnAge (years)	0.00	0.01	0.00		-0.05	0.01	-0.06	a	-0.04	0.02	-0.06	c
lnEducation	-0.01	0.03	-0.01		0.19	0.03	0.11	a	0.14	0.04	0.08	a
Atlantic	-0.08	0.02	-0.10	a	-0.02	0.02	-0.02		0.01	0.02	0.01	
Quebec	-0.02	0.02	-0.04		0.06	0.02	0.09	a	0.04	0.02	0.07	c
Prairies	0.00	0.02	-0.01		0.01	0.02	0.02		0.00	0.02	0.01	
British Columbia	0.02	0.02	0.03		0.04	0.02	0.05	b	0.07	0.02	0.09	a
Liberal 2000	-0.12	0.02	-0.26	a	—	—	—		—	—	—	
PC 2000	-0.08	0.02	-0.12	a	—	—	—		—	—	—	
Canadian Alliance 2000	-0.13	0.02	-0.27	a	—	—	—		—	—	—	
Bloc 2000	-0.08	0.03	-0.11	a	—	—	—		—	—	—	
Liberal 2004	—	—	—		-0.12	0.02	-0.21	a	—	—	—	
Conservative 2004	—	—	—		-0.18	0.02	-0.32	a	—	—	—	
Bloc 2004	—	—	—		-0.06	0.02	-0.08	b	—	—	—	
Liberal 2006	—	—	—		—	—	—		-0.09	0.02	-0.17	a
Conservative 2006	—	—	—		—	—	—		-0.20	0.02	-0.38	a
Bloc 2006	—	—	—		—	—	—		0.00	0.03	-0.01	
n	1970				2620				1460			
R ²	0.04				0.10				0.15			
Adjusted R ²	0.04				0.10				0.14			

a: $p \leq .001$, b: $p \leq .01$, c: $p \leq .05$

Global Attitudes Project data are not invalidated as a consequence of not having a measure of political ideology or party preference. This conclusion should only be taken as tentative, though: a definitive test will require a more complete survey instrument designed to tap into both attitudes towards foreign policy and domestic politics.

To conclude, in this paper, I have endeavoured to contribute to discussions about the future direction of Canadian foreign policy by presenting recent public opinion data on the topic. Using recent polls by the Pew Global Attitudes Project, I have sought to elucidate not only the current state of public opinion on the issue of a more independent Canadian foreign policy vis-à-vis the U.S. but also to identify the drivers of support for a more independent foreign policy. The major findings from the data analysis are that the Canadian public is divided on the future direction of Canada's foreign policy when presented with the options of remaining close to the U.S. (42 per cent in 2005) or forging a more independent direction in foreign policy (58 per cent). As for predictors of support for a more independent foreign policy, the strongest drivers are shown to be general views general attitudes towards the U.S. and confidence (or rather lack thereof) in George W. Bush. Opposition to the War on Terror, and subjective assessments of American foreign policy were less important. Demographic factors and province/region were not significant.

So how will the Canadian public's attitudes toward foreign policy evolve in the future? This paper has pointed to a number of factors that may prove important. Since general impressions of the United States – specifically, *negative* impressions – were shown to be the strongest predictor of support for a more independent Canadian foreign policy, any actions by the United States viewed as objectionable by the Canadian public – for example, new irritants in trade relations, or the failure to resolve outstanding ones such as the softwood lumber dispute – may cause support for a more independent foreign policy to increase. The view of the Canadian public

on foreign policy issues will evolve after George W. Bush leaves office and (lack of) confidence in Bush ceases to be a factor. The Canadian public will also respond to how the War on Terror that Bush initiated is prosecuted by the succeeding administration.

Appendix

Global Attitudes Project data

More independent foreign policy: Do you think the partnership between the U.S. and Canada should remain as close as it has been (0) or do you think that Canada should take a more independent approach to security and diplomatic affairs than it has in the past (1)?

Male: Male (1), female (0)

InAge: Natural logarithm of age in years (18–97)

InEducation: Natural logarithm of education in six categories, from “no formal education” (1) to “university-level education” (6).

Atlantic: New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island (1), other provinces (0)

Quebec: Quebec (1), other provinces (0)

Prairies: Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan (1), other provinces (0)

British Columbia: British Columbia (1), other provinces (0)

Year (2005): 2005 (1), 2003 (0)

Attitude towards U.S.: Please tell me if you have a very favorable (1), somewhat favorable (.66), somewhat unfavorable (.33) or very unfavorable (0) opinion of the United States; Please tell me if you have a very favorable (1), somewhat favorable (.66), somewhat unfavorable (.33) or very unfavorable (0) opinion of Americans (the scores on both variables were summed and then divided by two).

U.S. takes account of other countries: In making international policy decisions, to what extent do you think the United States takes into account the interests of countries like Canada – a great deal (1), a fair amount (.66), not too much (.33), or not at all (0)?

Oppose War on Terror: Which of the following phrases comes closer to describing your view? I favor the US-led efforts to fight terrorism (0), or I oppose the US-led efforts to fight terrorism (1).

Confidence in George W. Bush: Now I'm going to read a list of political leaders. For each, tell me how much confidence you have in each leader to do the right thing regarding world affairs – a lot of confidence (1), some confidence (.66), not too much confidence (.33), or no confidence at all (0) – U.S. President George W. Bush.

Canadian Election Study data

Ties to U.S. (1988 pre-election survey): Some people believe that Canada should have closer ties with the United States. Others feel that Canada should distance itself from the United States. How about you? Do you think Canada should be: much closer to the United States (0), somewhat closer (.25), about the same as now (.5), somewhat more distant (.75, much more distant (1), or haven't you thought much about this (missing)?

Ties to U.S. (1993 pre-election survey): How about Canada's ties with the United States? Should Canada's ties with the United States be much closer (0), somewhat closer (.25), about the same as now (.5), somewhat more distant (.75), much more distant (1), or haven't you thought much about this (missing)?

Ties to U.S. (1997 post-election survey, 2000 post-election survey, 2004 pre-election survey, 2006 pre-election survey): Do you think Canada's ties with the United States should be much closer (0), somewhat closer (.25), about the same as now (.5), somewhat more distant (.75, much more distant (1)?

Male: Male (1), female (0)

InAge: Natural logarithm of age in years (18-102)

InEducation: Natural logarithm of education in recoded into six categories (to match the coding from the Global Attitudes Project education variable), from “no formal education” (1) to “university-level education” (6).

Atlantic: New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island (1), other provinces (0)

Quebec: Quebec (1), other provinces (0)

Prairies: Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan (1), other provinces (0)

British Columbia: British Columbia (1), other provinces (0)

References

- Barry, Don (2005) "Chrétien, Bush and the War in Iraq." *American Review of Canadian Studies* 35(2): 215–245.
- Bennett, Scott (2004) "American and Canadian Assessments of NAFTA: Opinion on Continental Policy and Its Drivers." *American Behavioral Scientist* 47(10): 1285–1318.
- Borgatta, Edgar F. and George M. Bohrnstedt (1980) "Level of Measurement: Once over Again." *Sociological Methods and Research* 9(2): 147–160.
- Clarke, Kevin A. (2005) "The Phantom Menace: Omitted Variable Bias in Econometric Research." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 22(4): 341–352.
- Clarkson, Stephen, ed. (1968) *An Independent Foreign Policy for Canada?* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Cooper, Andrew (1997) *Canadian Foreign Policy: Old Habits and New Directions*. Scarborough: Prentice Hall.
- Dasko, Donna (1986) "Canadian Public Opinion: Sources of Support and Dissent." *The Free Trade Papers*. Ed. Duncan Cameron. Toronto: James Lorimer.
- Eagles, Munroe (2006) "Canadian–American Relations in a Turbulent Era." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39(4): 821–824.
- Gidengil, Elisabeth (1995) "Economic Man–Social Woman? The Case of the Gender Gap in Support for the Canada–United States Free Trade Agreement." *Comparative Political Studies* 28(3): 384–408.
- Gordon, Walter (1966) *A Choice for Canada: Independence or Colonial Status*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Holmes, John W. (1974) "Impact of Domestic Political Factors on Canadian–American Relations: Canada." *International Organization* 28(4): 611–635.
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba (1994) *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Menard, Scott (2004) "Six Approaches to Calculating Standardized Logistic Regression Coefficients." *American Statistician* 58(3): 218–223.
- Menard, Scott (2002) *Applied Logistic Regression Analysis*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mendelsohn, Matthew and Robert Wolfe (2000) "Probing the Aftermyth of Seattle: Canadian Public Opinion on International Trade, 1980–2000." *International Journal* 56(2): 234–260.

- Munton, Don and Tom Keating (2001) "Internationalism and the Canadian Public." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 34(3): 517–549.
- Munton, Don and Dale H. Poel (1977-78) "Electoral Accountability and Canadian Foreign Policy: The Case of Foreign Investment." *International Journal* 33(1): 217–247.
- Murray, J. Alex and Lawrence Leduc (1976–77) "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy Options in Canada." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 40(4): 488–496.
- Murray, J. Alex and Mary C. Gerace (1972) "Canadian Attitudes Toward the U.S. Presence." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36(3): 388–397.
- Nevitte, Neil and Roger Gibbins (1986) "Foreign Policy Debates and Sleeping Dogs: All Quiet on the Public Front." *Canadian Public Policy* 12(3): 401–412.
- Noël, Alain, Jean-Philippe Thérien and Sébastien Dallaire (2004) "Divided over Internationalism: The Canadian Public and Development Assistance." *Canadian Public Policy* 30(1): 29–46.
- Nossal, Kim Richard (1997) *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*. Scarborough: Prentice Hall.
- Parkin, Andrew (2003) "Pro-Canadian, Anti-American or Anti-War? Canadian Public Opinion on the Eve of War." *Policy Options* 24(4): 5–7.
- Potter, Evan H. (2002) "Le Canada et le monde: Continuité et évolution de l'opinion publique au sujet de l'aide, de la sécurité et du commerce international, 1993–2002." *Études Internationales* 33(4): 697–722.
- Richter, Andrew (2005) "From Trusted Ally to Suspicious Neighbor: Canada-U.S. Relations in a Changing Global Environment." *American Review of Canadian Studies* 35(3): 471–502.
- Sigler, John H. and Dennis Goresky (1974) "Public Opinion on United States-Canadian Relations." 28(4): 637–668.
- Tabachnick, Barbara G. and Linda S. Fidell (2007) *Using Multivariate Statistics*. 5th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Wolfe, Robert and Matthew Mendelsohn (2005) "Values and Interests in Attitudes toward Trade and Globalization: The Continuing Compromise of Embedded Liberalism." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 38(1): 45–68.