

# North America: Mosaic, Community, or Fortress?

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## ABSTRACT

The author uses recent survey data to evaluate the plausibility of three competing metaphors for North America: community, mosaic, or fortress. While there is support for all three metaphors, the mosaic metaphor of separate national societies coexisting within a common economic space appears to most closely fit the empirical data. This model has been challenged by the profound influences of American concerns with security and an increasingly isolationist outlook toward the world. The author discusses how the various social, political, and economic forces currently at play may alter the North American trajectory in the future.

**Key words:** North America, NAFTA, border security, national identity, international relations

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## INTRODUCTION

Many commentators and scholars have attempted to describe the evolving nature of North America relations. A variety of sharply different descriptions of North America are evident, ranging from an emerging community (Pastor, 2001) to transnational regions (Grab and Curtis, 2002) to less-than-eager partners or a “reluctant trinity” (De Palma, 2001) to elementally and increasingly distinct societies (Adams, 2004). This has also been an important public issue as evident from the fierce debates around the original Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to its most recent appearance on the political agenda in the form of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) of North America in Montebello, Canada (August 2007).

Clearly, the interrelationships among the three constituent countries are profoundly different today from what they were before the establishment of NAFTA. The relationships are also very different from the European experience following the original Maastricht Treaty and the evolution of the European Economic Community. In this overview, we attempt to identify the current trajectory of North American relations. We do so by empirically evaluating the plausibility of three different metaphors for North America: mosaic, community, or fortress?

This analysis is drawn from the perspective of the citizens of those societies as expressed through the tools of public opinion research. Some critics of the current public debate around the SPP have bemoaned the fact that general public input is a conspicuous *lacuna* in the current process, dominated more by business leaders and politicians. Notably, our research suggests that public opinion is indeed poorly captured by protestors and “civil society.” Neither do business leaders nor media pundits seem to capture the true public mood. The evolution of public opinion and attitudes and values is an important missing ingredient from current debate and, in many cases, jarringly disconnected from the narratives evident in the popular media. So, as my colleague Robert Pastor has noted (Pastor, 2007), the right-wing rhetoric of Lou Dobbs, among others, is no more representative of true American public opinion than the leftist, nationalist positions of spokespersons such as Maude Barlow in Canada. In general, we find public support for trade liberalization and deeper economic integration has converged at a point of strong support in all three countries following a period of equally strong opposition in the early 1990s.

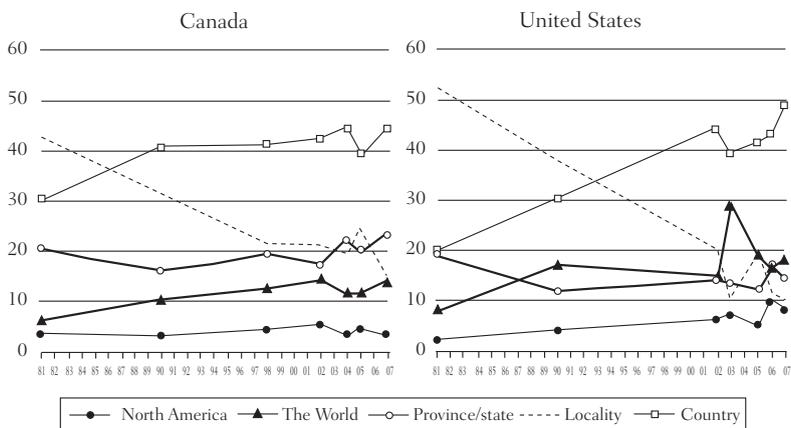
Importantly, this support for free trade has not produced a diminution of national identities and a corresponding rise in continental identification. Initially, theorists such as Karl Deutsch predicted that closer integration of both values and identities would be the result of deeper trade liberalization. To a great extent, this prediction

has been borne out in the European experience. The North American trajectory, however, is qualitatively different from the European experience where national identities now co-exist with a nearly equal sense of European community.

As Figure 1 highlights, local identities have been declining in North America while national attachment continues to rise. This strong sense of national identity has resulted in continental attachment being a relatively minor and flat force compared to Europe, which has seen local identities rise, national attachment decline, and European identity rise dramatically over the last few decades (also see Figures 2 and 3).

**Figure 1**  
TRACKING PRIMARY IDENTITY

**Q:** To which of these groups would you say you belong, first and foremost?



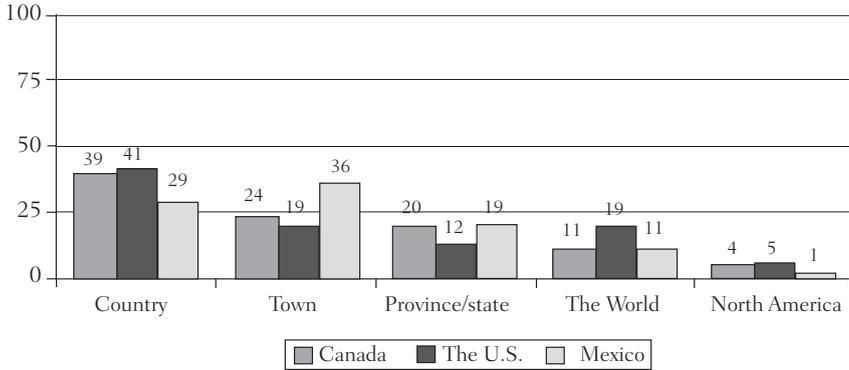
**Base:** Most recent data points, Canada, January 2005; United States, March 2006. \* Earlier tracking provided by World Values Survey.

**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

In our view, the North American trajectory may best be described as an economic community co-existing within a societal mosaic. The mosaic metaphor has, however, been challenged recently by the salience of concerns with security and threat in the post-September 11 world. In this article, we will assemble some of our recent tracking of North American public opinion in order to put these shifts in a clearer

**Figure 2**  
PRIMARY IDENTITY

Q: To which of these groups would you say you belong, first and foremost?

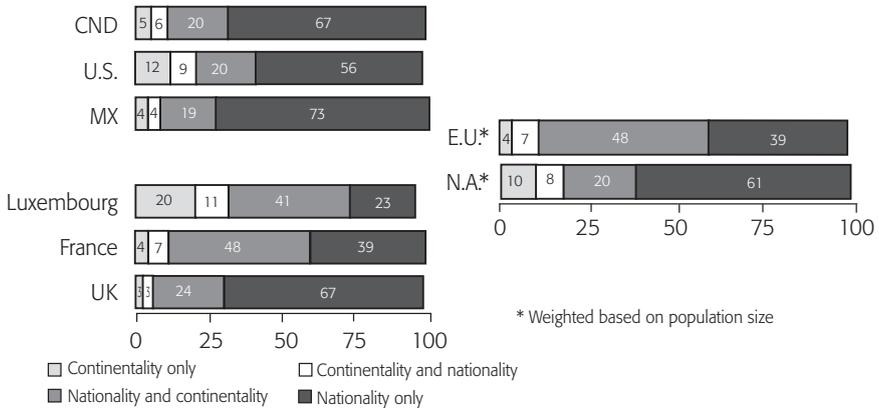


Base: June 2005, Canada n = half sample; U.S. n = half sample; Mexico n = 1510

Source: EKOS Research Associates.

**Figure 3**  
COMPLEMENTARY IDENTITIES

Q: Would you say you see yourself as...?



Source: EKOS Research Associates; European data provided by Eurobarometre.

perspective. The results are both surprising and important as political leaders discuss options for the future of North America in a dramatically different global context. The citizen perspective, even gleaned through the flawed lens of public opinion research, is a crucial missing ingredient in the current debate about North America.

Our results consider other external data sources but rely most heavily on our ongoing surveying of publics in all three countries under the aegis of the Rethinking North America syndicated project (EKOS Research Associates, 2002-2007). We also utilize some of the more recent comparative U.S.-Canada data drawn from our ongoing syndicated *Security Monitor* (EKOS Research Associates, 2002-2007).

Our article is organized into the following four areas:

1. North American Relations and Reciprocal Images
2. Risk and Security: North America in an Era of the "New Normal"
3. Trade, Borders, and Population Flows
4. Identity and Values in North America

## NORTH AMERICAN RELATIONS AND RECIPROCAL IMAGES

Since 1999, we have been tracking indicators of how the citizens of North America view their neighbors. The tracking is less recent and less complete in the case of Mexico. But we have a fairly good sense of how the public of each country views the other countries and how this has changed.

It is important to situate these trends in the broader context of how Americans view the external world and *vice-versa*. For example, there has been a marked decline in favorable impressions of both Canada and Mexico in the United States over the past five years. There also has been an even earlier decline in favorable outlook on the United States within both Canada and Mexico. Yet, it is very important to understand that these trends of eroding outlook are actually more modest than the generalized decline in global outlook on the U.S. and the subsequent erosion of U.S. outlook on the external world. In other words, the declining reciprocal outlooks may have less to do with specific bilateral issues than with the broader shifts in global antipathy to the United States and, in particular, the direction the U.S. administration's foreign policy has taken since the Iraq invasion. Similarly, declining U.S. outlook on Canada and Mexico is not particularly notable compared to broader declines in its outlook on the broader external world. It may be that, following the exuberant internationalism evident in the U.S. public in the aftermath of September 11, we are witnessing the emergence of neo-isolationism in the United States. Ironically, the decline in external views of the U.S. is directly mirrored within the

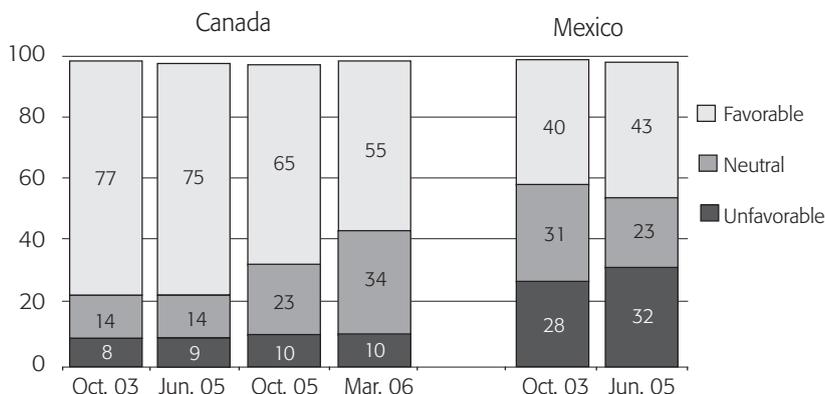
U.S., itself, where we now find that a staggering 70 percent of Americans believe that their country is headed in a fundamentally wrong direction (EKOS, 2007).

At the close of the last decade we found largely positive attitudes among the North American neighbors. American attitudes to Canada were fairly murky but highly favorable, while U.S. attitudes towards Mexico leaned favorably, but were much more mixed. In fact, asymmetrical U.S. attitudes to Canada and Mexico are a major barrier to deeper integration. Canadian attitudes to the U.S., while largely positive, are more mixed than U.S. attitudes toward Canada and are based on higher levels of fluency and attention. Canadian attitudes to Mexico are largely positive. Mexican attitudes to the U.S. and Canada lean favorably and are dominated by images of economic opportunity. As noted above, these attitudes have become modestly less positive over the past five years.

Figures 4 and 5 display some of these trends. Notable in Figure 4 is the large and growing discrepancy in favorable U.S. outlook on Canada *vis-à-vis* Mexico. Although U.S. attitudes to Canada are far less favorable today than they were in 2003, they have rebounded somewhat recently. Mexico, however, has moved from revealing a modest plurality of favorable outlook, in 2003, to a mild plurality of unfavorable outlook today. Perhaps, more tellingly, unfavorable outlook on Mexico

**Figure 4**  
RECIPROCAL IMAGES: U.S. OUTLOOK ON CANADA AND MEXICO

Q: In general, would you describe your opinion of ...as favorable or unfavorable?

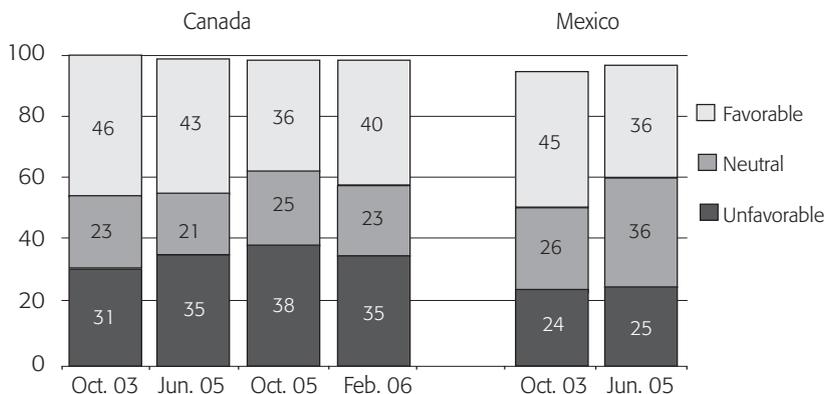


**Base:** All Americans.

**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

**Figure 5**  
RECIPROCAL IMAGES: CANADA/MEXICO OUTLOOK ON THE U.S.

**Q:** In general, would you describe your opinion of the United States as favorable or unfavorable?



**Base:** Canadians and Mexicans.

**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

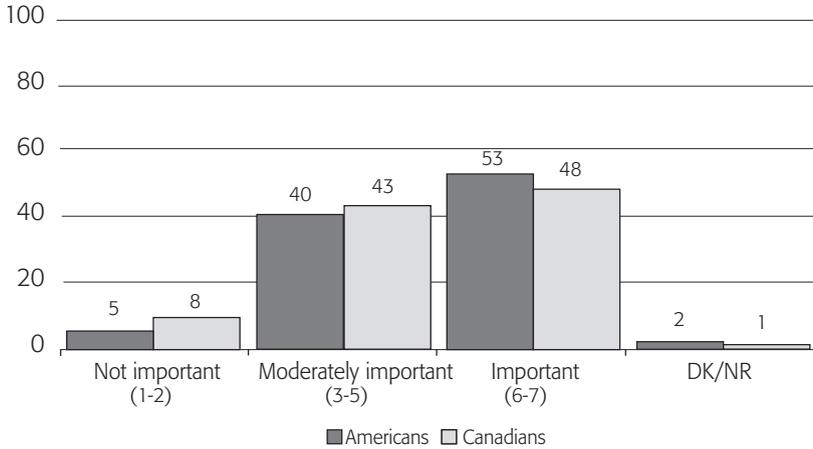
is now three times as prevalent among the U.S. public as it is for Canada. This stark and widening asymmetry is expressed in many other realms, notably, an expressed desire for closer relationships, attitudes to the free movement of people, and perceived threats to national security.

A few concluding observations on the nature of North American relations are, in order:

- The growing asymmetry in U.S. outlook on Canada (relatively positive and benign) versus Mexico (increasingly negative and closed) poses important obstacles for deep North American integration.
- The recent erosion of Canadian outlook on the United States, while significant, should not be overstated. Canadians still identify the United States as their best friend, whereas Americans have replaced Canada with Britain in this category. Canadian's disapproval of the U.S. is largely focused on the administration and mirrors internal dissatisfaction in the U.S. public, themselves. It also is proportionately smaller than the rise of these sentiments in Europe. There is deep ambivalence in Canadians' outlook, but 95 percent of both Americans and Canadians feel it is at least somewhat important to strengthen the relationship (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6**  
IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVING CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS

**Q:** How important do you think it is to improve the quality of U.S.-Canada relations?



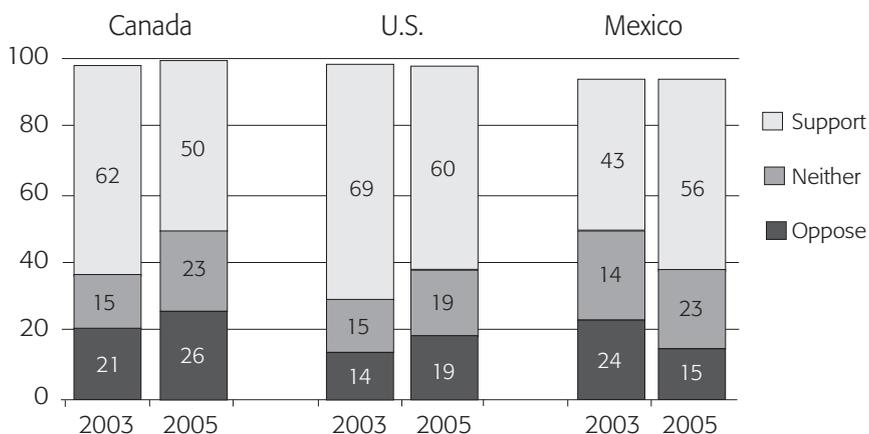
**Base:** Americans, May 07 n = 1000; Canadians, May 07 n = 1006

**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

- The significance of rising isolationism in the United States is a crucial factor for the future of North America. It is a second-wave response to the pervasive transformation of the United States which occurred following September 11. The initial desire to go out into the world and inoculate the United States against terror through viral democracy has been replaced by a new wariness of the external world. This is expressed in extremely high resistance to immigration, increasingly negative views of the external world, rising protectionist sentiments, and a sharp and rising tilt to retrenching the focus on domestic, not international, issues. The significance of these effects is uncertain but a crucial question will be whether U.S. instincts will be to pull up the drawbridge at the forty-ninth parallel/Rio Grande or to favor a continental perimeter. So far, there is evidence that both are favored; a sort of “belt and suspenders” strategy. In both Canada and the United States, the trajectory is for support for less porous borders while perimeter support has softened somewhat (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7**  
SUPPORT FOR A COMMON SECURITY PERIMETER

**Q:** Would you support or oppose Canada, the United States and Mexico establishing a common security perimeter?



**Base:** Most recent data points from June 2005; Canada overall n = 2005; U.S. = 1505; Mexico = 1510

**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

## RISK AND SECURITY: NORTH AMERICA IN AN ERA OF THE "NEW NORMAL". THE THREE METAPHORS

The underlying question in this paper is what is the most appropriate description of where North America is headed? We outlined three broad hypothetical models:

### *A North American Mosaic*

This is the metaphor which we believe most closely describes the North American trajectory to date, but which has been challenged and disrupted by issues of security in the early twenty-first century. This model features deep economic integration while preserving strong and even strengthened national identities with trilateral legal and administrative institutions that are quite weak. Hence, strong separate societies coexist within a shared marketplace.

### *A North American Community*

This is tantamount, but not identical, to the notion of a European community, with not merely economic interdependencies but stronger political and legal institutions, though not compared to the European community. It also features a heightened sense of continental identity; Robert Pastor develops a unique conception of a North American community, which is profoundly different from the European experiment based on origin, composition, balance of members, and so on. His recommendation for institutional reform is less stringent than the European experience. It still, however, entails the emergence of greater sense of continental community (Pastor, 2001). In our view, this metaphor does not closely correspond to the public opinion trends observed to date, nor the political agendas of the three states. While there is some polling evidence that suggests it may become a plausible outcome in the future, to date, however, this has not been the case.

### *Fortress North America*

This dramatic term is used to convey the possibility that the unabated U.S. focus on security and threat, coupled with growing isolationism and disenchantment with foreign affairs, produces a major shift from the broad enthusiasm for globalization and internationalism evident in the early part of the decade to a new, more isolated, continentalism. Perhaps the notion of a North American “haven” would be a less spectacular term to describe this notion. The impacts of a further security shock tantamount to, or eclipsing, September 11 would, undoubtedly, accelerate the plausibility of this metaphor. The crucial question would, then, become whether Canada or Mexico, or both, would seek greater union with an even more isolated United States.

The pervasive and transformative effects of concerns with security, threat, and terror are, perhaps, the most important new forces altering the North American trajectory. As noted, earlier, the mosaic model seemed to line up most closely with the observed data. Since September 11, however, the fortress metaphor is posing a serious challenge to the continued unfolding of the common marketplace/distinct society (mosaic) metaphor.

## THE SECURITY ETHIC AS THE “NEW NORMAL”

Any proper understanding of the future of North America must take into account the salience of security and threat. The unusual prominence of security has produced a fairly stable and deeply rooted “security ethic” that brings together a constellation of values and attitudes which place concerns with terror and security in a dominant position *vis-à-vis* many other societal priorities (e.g. civil liberties, economics, sovereignty, and convenience). This security ethic is equally powerful in both Canada and the United States, although there are important differences in the nature of risk perception and preferences for a national security strategy (Graves, 2005). Our Mexican research suggests that there is a commitment to security issues, as well. But the public commitment is considerably more tepid and rooted more in a sense of accommodating U.S. concerns (and, hence, Mexican economic interests) rather than the visceral alarm about terror and threat which continues to extend a pervasive influence on U.S. society.

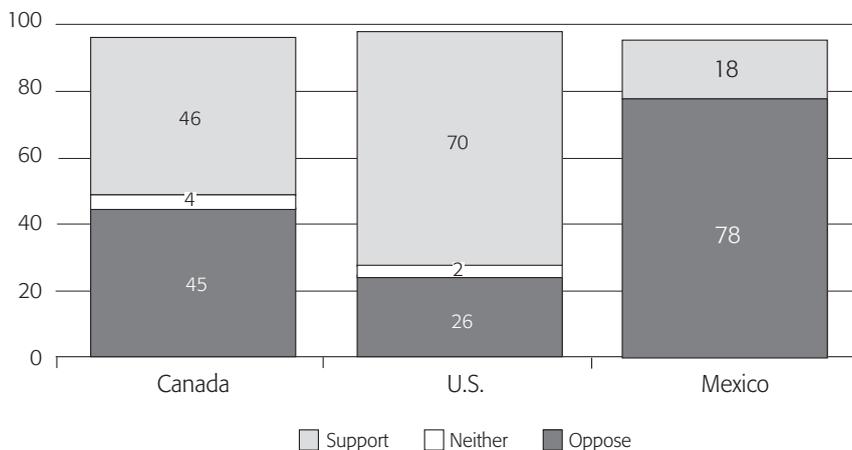
One revealing indicator drawn from our past surveys shows that 47 percent of Americans support the construction of a wall at the Canadian border. As shocking as this statistic might be (given the long history of the world’s longest undefended-shared border), it pales in comparison to the 70 percent of Americans who believe a wall at the Mexican border would be a good idea (as seen in Figure 8). Unsurprisingly, our Mexican polling found only 18-percent support for this idea among Mexican citizens.

As Figure 9 shows, there is a broad consensus that the world has become more dangerous over the past five years. The actual evidence of global risks would not support the overwhelming rejection of the view that the world may, in fact, be becoming safer. This increasingly dark and wary orientation to the external world stands in sharp contrast to the exuberant globalization seen at the close of the last decade, perhaps best captured in Thomas Friedman’s book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (Friedman, 1998).

Triggered by September 11, but also reinforced by unique demographics skewed by the unusual preponderance of aging baby boomers in Canada and the U.S., there is a newer sense that the balance of global risks to opportunities leans decisively to the former. The protracted Iraq engagement and seemingly intractable nature of geopolitical instability in the Middle East have dampened enthusiasm for internationalism. These new sentiments clearly have challenged the path to further globalization. A crucial question is whether U.S. isolationism will imply continentalism or nationalism. If continentalism is favored, what are the implications of asymmetrical attitudes within, and toward, Mexico and Canada? Finally, we must consider

**Figure 8**  
ATTITUDES TOWARD BARRIERS AT THE MEXICO-U.S. BORDER

**Q:** Would you say you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the construction of barriers at the U.S.-Mexico border?\*



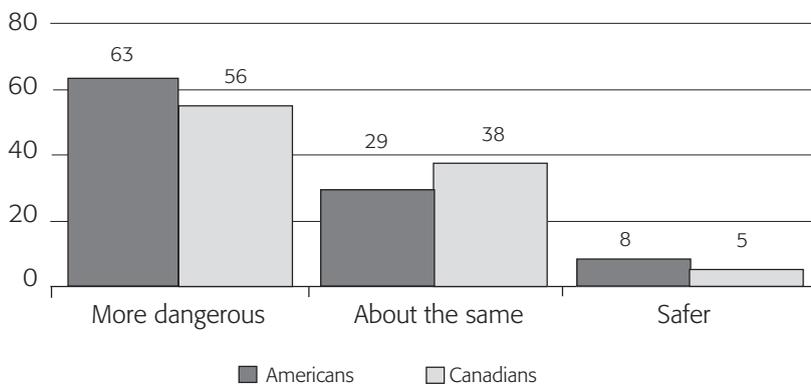
\* Please note that no neutral data point was provided in the Mexican questionnaire.

**Base:** Most recent data points from June 2005; Canada n = 2005, U.S. n = 1505; Mexico n = 1510

**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

**Figure 9**  
TRACKING PERCEPTIONS OF THE SAFETY OF THE WORLD

**Q:** From your own point of view, do you feel that, overall, the world is safer, more dangerous, or about the same as it was five years ago?



**Base:** Americans, May 2007, n = half sample; Canadians, April/May 2007, n = 1006.

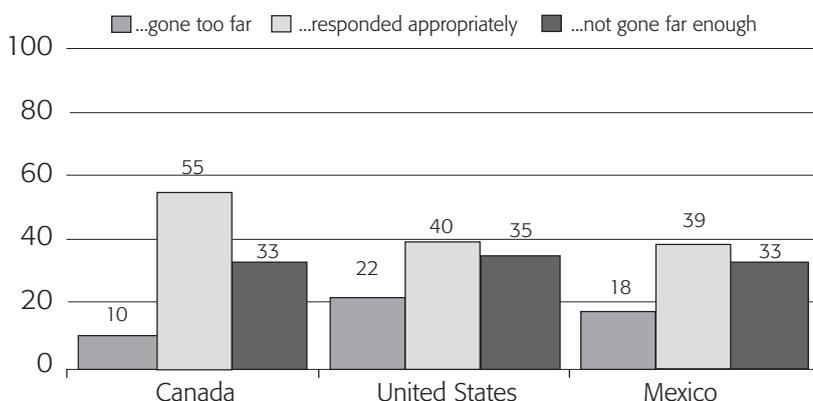
**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

increasingly divergent attitudes to cosmopolitanism, diversity, and immigration across U.S. and Canadian publics, particularly among those under 40.

The new security ethic also has changed citizen expectations of the role of the state, vaulting security concerns to higher prominence and diminishing support for traditional trade-offs with privacy, economic, and civil liberties. Figure 10 demonstrates a sense that governments have not gone “too far” in pursuit of security. A sense that we are being too reckless in our pace is dwarfed by either satisfaction with the current pace or by a desire to increase government focus on this priority. This lean to “security first” is expressed in a broad range of parallel tests and indicators and the security lean is a fairly stable pattern. We also find that the North American publics have been generally satisfied with the broad direction of their national governments in this area –more so than in general terms or with other key policy priorities.

**Figure 10**  
APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

**Q:** Thinking about (Canada/the United States/Mexico’s) security response to the issue of terrorism, would you say we have...?



**Base:** June 2005; Canada overall n = 2005, U.S. n = 1505, Mexico n = 1510.

**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

The issue of security has also been politically potent at the balloting box, particularly in the U.S. In Canada, the issue is politically significant. But “security” constitutes a broader panoply of threats for Canadians (such as health and the environment) than for Americans who give terror threats relatively more one-dimensional prominence.

A notable shift that is evident in our most recent U.S. polling (Security Monitor 2007) is that the pattern of broad satisfaction with the governmental direction of security is eroding rapidly, as is confidence in broad national and federal direction. It is important to note that this declining confidence is not fueled by heightened doubts about the significance of security, which remains one of the few areas of societal consensus in a deeply divided United States. The new factor is a growing conviction that security efforts, particularly foreign policy and the war in Iraq, have had the perverse effect of exacerbating the very threats they were designed to lessen. This combination of steadfast concern with terror and security but profound disagreement on how to achieve it is fueling a new period of isolationism which is expressed in increasingly resistant attitudes to immigration, a decisive desire to tilt to a more domestic-first policy focus, and heightened support for protectionism and tighter borders.

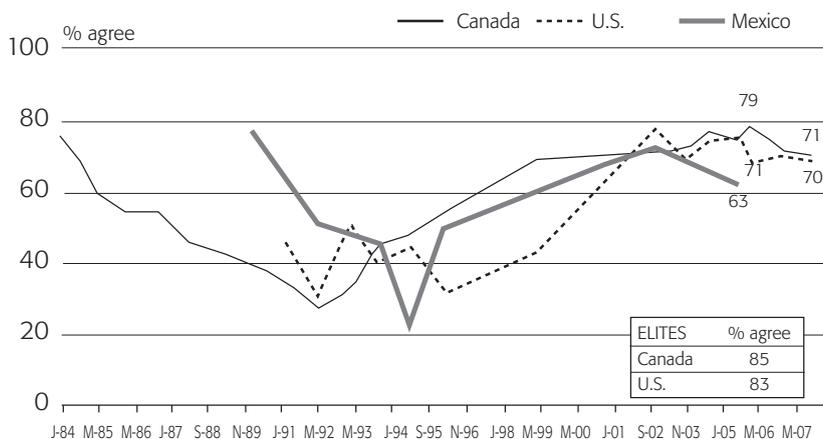
## TRADE, BORDERS, AND POPULATION FLOWS

One of the most crucial aspects of the North American trajectory is the circulation of people, goods, and services. Public attitudes and public policy in this area have undergone tremendous changes over the past two decades. Public opinion and public policy have not always been in sync, although there are surprising commonalities in the public opinion trajectories expressed in all three countries of North America. Beginning with attitudes to trade, we have borrowed benchmark measures of support for trade liberalization and NAFTA from all three countries. We have updated this data with our own tracking since 1999 and the results are displayed in Figure 11.

Interestingly, while the FTA and NAFTA were fiercely debated (even after these agreements were signed), there had been staunch public opposition in all three countries throughout the previous decade. It is remarkable to note, however, the synchronicity of rising public support in all three countries. The strong majority support for free trade across North America is a surprise to many critics and “experts.” Two comments are in order here. First, we have consistently found a large gap between the media and expert accounts of public opinion and the actual empirical record on many key issues of the day. Second, the strong support for NAFTA, which continues over to strong support for further strengthening NAFTA, contains some underlying contradictions. When asked about the overall costs and benefits of NAFTA, respondents are much more ambivalent; not only are ratings of benefits more highly divided, but there is a clear belief that the other NAFTA partners have benefited more.

**Figure 11**  
SUPPORT FOR TRILATERAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

**Q:** Should there be free trade between Canada, the United States and Mexico?



**Base:** Most recent data points September 2007 Canada overall n = half sample; U.S. n = half sample; June 2005 Mexico n = 1510.

**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

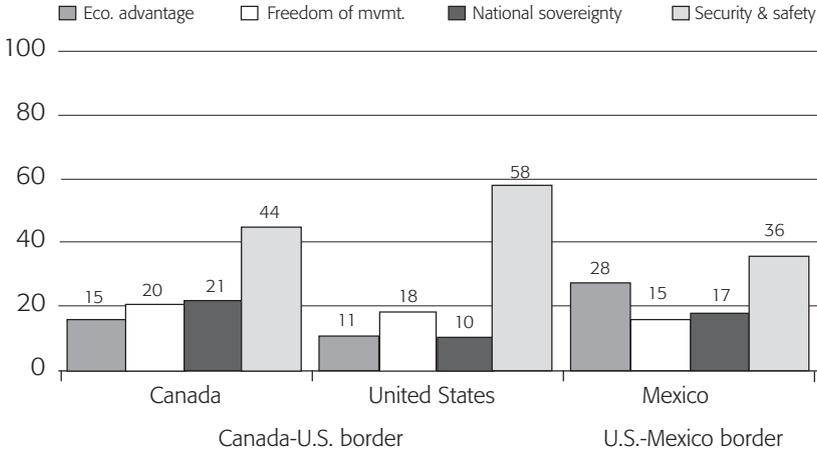
Separate polling of public and private sector elites in Canada and the United States shows even higher levels of overall support for free trade than from the general public. These results fly in the face of the protectionist sentiments expressed by many media commentators.

A final comment on the trade liberalization issue is in order. In our most recent iterations of these indicators, we see a modest, but significant, decline in support for free trade in both Mexico and the United States and, more recently, Canada. Once again, all three countries are moving in lockstep but the trajectory is now modestly downwards with respect to support for free trade. The U.S. decline is notable in concert with a broad range of other data signaling support for a more insular and isolated United States. These trends may not augur well for the future of NAFTA. Security, in this instance, may, indeed, trump trade. It is more difficult still to imagine a community model emerging within this context.

The fact that there has only been a mild erosion of support for free trade is surprising, given the huge salience of security concerns (in the U.S. and Canada mostly) and the rising support for less porous borders. Figure 12 shows what respondents in the three countries think should be the dominant consideration in border dis-

**Figure 12**  
SECURITY TOP BORDER CONCERN

**Q:** In discussions about the (Canada-U.S./U.S.-Mexico) border, what do you think should be the most important consideration?



**Base:** June 2005; Canada overall n = 2005, U.S. n = 1505, Mexico n = 1510.

**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

cussions. In Canada and the U.S., security concerns eclipse issues of sovereignty, economic advantage, and free movement of people. A modest plurality of Mexicans select security. In all three countries, these patterns have been stable.

There is a surface contradiction in the strong support for free trade and rising support for “thicker” borders. Americans and Canadians still support the free movement of their citizens throughout their respective countries. This generosity is less evident in U.S. attitudes to Mexico, while Canadians are more receptive to free circulation of Mexican citizens in North America. The recent modest decline in American support for NAFTA may be evidence that this contradiction is challenging support for trade liberalization.

Some additional comments are worth noting here. Mexican umbrage at American opposition to Mexican migration and the construction of a border fence is steeped in much greater emphasis on economic opportunity, lower alarm about terror, and rising American antipathy. American support for stronger borders is rooted in rising opposition to immigration and profound and stable concerns with terror threats. Canadian support for a stronger U.S.–Canada border is an expression of rising U.S. antipathy and concerns with issues such as keeping out illicit handguns

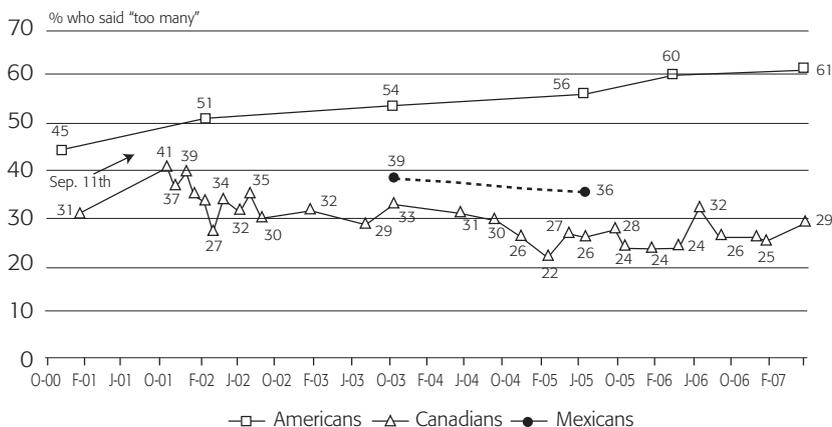
and drugs. In Canada, attitudes to free trade remain the most positive and unaffected. This links with a unique pattern of low and declining opposition to immigration. As the United States becomes more isolationist, Canada is more cosmopolitan and pro-trade. These differences are notable against a backdrop of broader value convergence.

An interesting anecdotal finding is that, although there is support for more coordinated North American approaches to key policy areas (for example, the environment and security), for Americans, U.S.-Canada integration is more acceptable than "North American" coordination. For Canadians and, possibly, Mexicans, the North American rubric is more acceptable than closer U.S.-Canada integration.

Figure 13 shows what we consider to be a highly revealing and extremely important contradictory trend line on attitudes to immigration. At the close of the 1990s, opposition to immigration, particularly those who said there are "too many" immigrants coming to their respective country, was slightly higher in the U.S. (just over 40 percent) than in Canada (around the mid-30s). Immediately following the shock of September 11, opposition rose dramatically. Since then, however, opposition has dropped off in Canada (running around the mid-20s), while continuing to rise in the U.S. (now over 60 percent). Mexico tends to look more like Canada on this indicator and the issue of the Mexican border has a huge effect on American

**Figure 13**  
TRACKING OPPOSITION TO IMMIGRATION

**Q:** In your opinion do you feel that there are too many, too few, or about the right number of immigrants coming to (the United States/Canada)?



**Base:** Most recent data points, Americans, May 07 n = 1000; Canadians, April/May 07 n = 1018.

**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

attitudes to immigration. Nonetheless, we now have over twice as much opposition to immigration in the United States than Canada, while the United States is experiencing less than half as much (relative to population) immigration than Canada.

Coupled with higher ethnic diversity in younger Canada than younger America, and more favorable value orientations to diversity in Canada, this may presage a major potential future conflict. This is particularly so when viewed through the U.S. security lens and rising concerns with “the border.” This area of value divergence is notable, but not representative, of the overall patterns across a broad range of values. In the final section we will briefly summarize the patterns of value and identity convergence and divergence in North America.

## IDENTITY AND VALUES IN NORTH AMERICA

As we noted earlier, North American societies seem to be pursuing a very different trajectory than European societies in terms of citizen identification and sense of belonging. Unlike the European experience, we find national identities actually strengthening in North America. Hence, we have the notion of a mosaic of distinct societies within an increasingly interdependent economic space (see Figure 1). It will be interesting to see if the increased pressures of the security ethic reinforce this trend or produce a search for a continental haven, which could strengthen a sense of belonging to North America. So far, the short-term evidence suggests it is, once again, national identity that is strengthening in both Canada and the United States.

This issue of “identity” is extremely complex and its measurement is quite sensitive to the survey methodology that has been used. The longer term tracking from Figure 1 used a method borrowed from the World Values Survey (wvs), which forces respondents to choose one of five sources of identity. One can argue that this ignores the possibility of multiple, nested, or shared identities. One alternate approach is that used by the Eurobarometre which allows the choice between primary and shared national continental identities (see Figure 3). In 2002, we took the opportunity to ask these questions in the three North American countries and to compare them to the European results. Some have argued that the forced-choice (wvs) questions may not reveal the possibility of shared national and continental identity in North America as in Europe.

As Figure 3 shows, the differences between North Americans and Europeans on this indicator are profound, perhaps as much so as on the forced-choice question. Canada, the United States, and Mexico all show a strong leaning to solely-national identification. In Europe, there is more internal heterogeneity across countries but

the overall differences are vivid. Aggregating across countries (weighted roughly by population size), we see that the strong plurality of Europeans (48 percent) see themselves as possessing a shared national and European identity. Whereas about half of Europeans think of themselves in these shared identity terms, the corresponding incidence in North America is only 20 percent. This tenacious adherence to nationalism, despite highly convergent economic markets, is one of the most glaring and crucial differences across Europe and North America. It is one of the reasons we believe that the mosaic metaphor is a more accurate description than the community metaphor.

If anything, the time series data points to a shorter term drift away from an emerging community metaphor, even recognizing the less stringent institutional machinery implicit in Pastor's unique conception of a North American (as opposed to European) community. There is little evidence of an imminent community emerging under either the forced choice or shared identity indicators. There is, however, support for the future possibility of something closer to a community emerging based on expressed receptivity to trade, shared policy development in certain crucial areas, and evidence of broader value convergence in the shorter term. However, we note that nationalism is once again on the rise in the United States and Canada and support for free trade, while still high, is declining. The specter of a North American fortress may be as plausible as the community metaphor at this particular time.

The issue of values, roughly seen as the ultimate "ought" statements about what constitutes the "right" society, is closely related to the issue of identification. Some theorists have argued that relatively common values may be both a precondition and a result of trade liberalization.

Our data is imperfect but seems to support the thesis that values are relatively similar across the three nations of North America. Table 1 shows the comparative results of one value test we applied to all three countries in 2002. The similarities are far more impressive than the differences. Although there is relative congruence across all three societies, the U.S.-Canada differences are smaller than those across Mexico-U.S. or Mexico-Canada. Similar results are obtained using separate indicators that ask respondents how closely certain value statements correspond to their conception of being an American, Mexican or Canadian. When we retest these through time, we find remarkable stability in values, as we would expect from the values literature.

In the case of Canada and the U.S., we are able to use the two different sets of indicators to conduct a test of whether value differences are becoming greater or smaller. Recall that we just discussed some significant normative widening in the areas of diversity and cosmopolitanism. Similarly, there are highly influential

**Table 1**  
VALUES AND GOALS FOR DIRECTION OF COUNTRY

**Q:** If you were to direct the federal government, how important would you say each of the following values or goals are in shaping the direction of the country/Canadian society?

	(n=2002)	(n=2002)	(n=500)
Freedom	91 (1)	96 (1)	91 (1)
A healthy population	88 (2) ↔ 88 (7)	88 (7)	87 (3)
A clean environment	87 (3) ↔ 87 (8)	87 (8)	83 (6)
Respect	87 (4)	90 (5)	83 (7)
Family values	86 (5)	91 (2)	91 (2)
Integrity and ethics	85 (6)	91 (3) ↔ 83 (8)	83 (8)
Security and safety	85 (7)	90 (4) ↔ 82 (10)	82 (10)
Collective human rights	83 (8)	87 (9)	82 (11)
Tolerance	81 (9)	83 (12)	83 (9)
Hard work	81 (10)	89 (6) ↔ 82 (12)	82 (12)
Traditional family values	79 (11) ↔ 87 (10) ↔ 85 (4)	87 (10)	85 (4)
Innovation	79 (12)	84 (11)	77 (14)
Excellence	77 (13)	81 (13)	82 (13)
National identity	76 (14) ↔ 75 (14) ↔ 84 (5)	75 (14)	84 (5)
Prosperity and wealth	73 (15)	70 (15)	76 (15)
Redistribution of wealth	72 (16)	67 (17)	75 (16)
Minimal government	65 (17)	69 (16)	67 (17)

January-March 2002      Mean rating on a 100-point scale

**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

works suggesting the value differences across the U.S. and Canada are elemental (Adams, 2004) and diverging. We also know that Canadians would emphatically prefer this to be the case with only 10 to 15 percent agreeing that we should become “more like the United States.” Yet most Canadians agree that, despite the clear preference not to become more like the United States, they are, in fact, becoming more like the United States. The empirical data would support this reluctant conclusion.

Tables 2 and 3 show that the sum of differences across the sets of value tests has become smaller, not larger, over the past several years. There is high stability but the evidence in the shorter term clearly favors convergence. It is crucial to understand that this occurs while distinct national identities are robust and strengthening, through time. In other words, closer value alignment does not seem to preclude a strong separate sense of distinct national identity.

**Table 2**  
MEANING OF BEING CANADIAN/AMERICAN\*

Q: What does being a Canadian/American mean to you?	2002			2005		
	CAN	U.S.	Dif.	CAN	U.S.	Dif.
Leaving a healthy environment to future generations	64	53	11	61	58	3
Having social and health programs to support all citizens	48	31	17	61	39	22
Being free to do and think as I please	60	64	4	60	65	5
Having the opportunity to pursue a good life	58	73	15	58	59	1
Living in a tolerant, multicultural country	61	56	5	55	47	8
Sharing many values and beliefs with other citizens	50	58	8	53	51	2
Having a say in political, social and economic development	47	57	10	47	55	8
Living in the best society in the world	54	498	5	47	44	3
Being able to count on your fellow citizens if you are in need	40	48	8	47	48	1
Feeling distinctly different from people in other countries	39	28	11	35	23	12
Serving my country when it needs me	37	50	13	31	46	15
Paying taxes	31	14	17	20	20	0
Sum of total differences				124		80

**Base:** June 2005, Canada n = 2005; U.S. n = 1505; \* presented as a series of randomly paired choices.  
**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

**Table 3**  
CONVERGING VALUES?\*

Q: How important would you say each of the following goals and values should be for shaping government direction?	1998/99			2005		
	CAN	U.S.	Dif.	CAN	U.S.	Dif.
Freedom	89	94	5	90	95	5
A healthy population	86	87	1	87	87	--
Integrity and ethics	81	87	6	86	90	4
A clean environment	83	85	2	86	86	--
Security and safety	80	87	7	84	88	4
Hard work	79	85	6	80	87	7
Tolerance for different people/cultures	75	80	5	80	81	1
Respect for authority	79	80	1	78	82	4
Traditional family values	79	86	7	77	83	6
Sharing of wealth among rich and poor	72	57	15	74	64	10
Prosperity and wealth	72	67	5	68	69	1
Minimal government intrusions	66	68	2	65	67	2
Sum of total differences				62		44

**Base:** June 2005, Canada n = 2005; U.S. n = 1505; \* presented as a series of randomly paired choices.  
**Source:** EKOS Research Associates.

Two final comments are worth noting. First, the distribution of values operates very differently in Canada and the United States. U.S. values are highly polarized and much more differentiated across social class, race, and ideological orientation. In Canada, the same values are much more concentrated around the center of Canadian society, more consensual and less attached to ideological orientation. Second, the process of value convergence, under what Inglehart has called the “rhythms of post-materialism,” probably is a broader characteristic of advanced Western societies. It is, however, noteworthy that this values analysis does not definitively preclude any of the three North American metaphors we presented earlier (Inglehart, 1995).

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS: DISRUPTED TRAJECTORY?

The future of North America is highly uncertain. The unique trajectory in place at the close of the last decade showed a clear alternative to the European community model. In North America, distinct national societies coexist within a highly interdependent economic space provided an alternate path to continental economic integration. This demonstrates an alternative path to continental economic integration. The North American experience showed that trade liberalization need not necessarily produce the subordination of national identity and the creation of a continental institutional infrastructure –e.g., common currency and/or parliament. This “mosaic” metaphor was an unexpected and interesting alternative to the European community model and it may, or may not, have contained the seeds of an incipient North American community.

Recent history and the current political context within the countries forming North America seems to render the community model to be less, not more, likely in the near future. For example, national attachments continue to dwarf a sense of continental community, and nationalism is once more on the rise in North America. The large and growing asymmetry in American attitudes to Mexico and Canada act as an increasing barrier to further integration. Mexico, in particular, represents a special challenge to deeper North American integration. While value differences are by no means insurmountable barriers, Mexico is the most “different” and considerably less welcome by Americans. Moreover, tensions are rising across the U.S. and Mexican publics. There is, however, continued evidence of overall value convergence which, coupled with the powerful forces of a shared geography and mutual economic interest, may, ultimately, facilitate the evolution of a North American community.

Perhaps an even more important disruption to the mosaic trajectory is the cascading impact of the security shock associated with September 11, which has ma-

tured into a deeply entrenched security ethic. Ironically, a more deeply integrated North America may result, particularly in the aftermath of another severe security shock. The resulting impact of this could probably be better characterized as a North American fortress or, perhaps, a “haven.” It is, also highly unclear as to whether such an episode, coupled with the new isolationist outlook gripping the U.S. public, would result in either a more insulated and separate United States or a more integrated North America where perimeter security becomes paramount. The growing asymmetry across attitudes to Mexico and Canada may also produce a more integrated U.S. and Canada with Mexico left as a relative outsider. It will be crucial to determine whether the growing search for less porous borders and weakening support for trade continue to the point at which they begin to challenge the still-strong, shared public commitment to free trade and the growing value consonance across North American publics.

The rising gaps in attitudes to immigration, diversity, trade, and cosmopolitanism are also important trends to watch. In the case of Canada-U.S., these stark and growing differences may produce profound collisions on issues around immigration and multicultural policies, particularly when scrutinized through the unblinking security lens that continues to dominate the U.S. outlook. The dispute over immigration and population movements is even more divisive as it applies to Mexico and the United States.

On a more positive note, we suggest that the growing public preoccupation with environment and climate change may ultimately trump the shorter-term obsession with security. Our research shows that an integrated North American approach that explicitly balances the disparate priorities of the three publics over issues of climate change and the environment, energy and freedom from reliance on the energy of countries in a state of geo-political instability, and security issues produces strong public support in all three countries. Moreover, the longer-term perspective suggests that climate change, in particular, will likely produce major –perhaps, even unprecedented– population shifts, e.g., away from low-lying coastal cities to a more newly-temperate north. A fully navigable Northwest Passage is another, profoundly important development. Against the backdrop of a turbulent global context, all of these factors may coalesce to make the future of North America the defining issue of the twenty-first century.

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