

Quintessentially Un-American? Comparing Public Opinion on National Identity in English Speaking Canada and the United States

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Résumé de l'article

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Abstract

This paper examines national identities in Canada and the United States in 1995 and 2004, a period of considerable change in both countries. Drawing on data from the International Social Science Programme National Identity modules and on research from social psychology, the central argument forwarded is that in several respects the national identities of Canadians are becoming more similar to those of Americans over time. These similarities have often been overlooked in previous Canadian research, which tends to emphasize the differences between the two countries while downplaying their shared characteristics.

Résumé

Cet ouvrage porte sur les identités nationales au Canada et aux États-Unis en 1995 et en 2004, deux périodes de changement fondamental pour ces deux États. Cette étude se fonde sur des données extraites des modules de l'International Social Science Programme National Identity et sur la recherche en psychologie sociale. Son principal argument est que, à plusieurs égards, les identités nationales des Canadiens sont devenues de plus en plus similaires à celles des Étatsuniens au fil du temps. Au Canada, ces similitudes ont souvent été omises dans des recherches antérieures, lesquelles étaient axées sur les différences entre les deux pays et où on minimisait leurs caractéristiques communes.

Introduction

Are Canadians the world's most enduring un-Americans, or have they become so alike their neighbours to the south that they can no longer be differentiated from them? The answer to this question has not been of great concern to most Americans, but north of the border it has generated a great deal of discussion. For proponents of Canadian nationalism outside Quebec, Canada's geographic, economic, and cultural proximity to the United States has meant that it must protect its national culture and sovereignty from American domination, and that further continental integration with the United States will erode Canada's already weak national identity (see Laxer; Hurtig). Often expressed as the "Americanization of Canada" and advanced by nationalists, literary figures, the media, politicians, and social scientists, this viewpoint maintains that the cultural, economic, and technological influences

of the United States over Canada pose a significant threat to Canada's national identity, which, if not counter-posed by a strong interventionist state, will vanish (Nesbitt-Larking; Brodie; Dobbin).

Given the important place of the United States in constructions of Canada's national identity, it is somewhat surprising how little comparative attention has been paid to national identity at the individual-level. Most of the evidence used to substantiate the "Americanization of Canada" position relies on institutional/political elite analyses (e.g. Nesbitt-Larking; Brodie; Resnick) without paying much heed to how nations and nationalisms function at the individual level. Yet scholarship outside Canada recognizes that citizens are vitally important to most definitions of "nation": For Anderson (6), nations are "imagined communities" comprised of a "deep, horizontal comradeship" of citizens. In addition to sharing a common territory, and economic and legal rights and duties, Smith writes, nations are "inherently social, and require such things as a common myths, historical memories, and a public culture" (14). Citizens' national identities are therefore important components of any nation's collective "national identity," and are defined here as feelings of attachment and belonging to a national group.

At the mass level a considerable amount of survey data has been used to track citizens' broader values, beliefs, and attitudes in each of these countries (see Baer, Grabb, and Johnston; Adams, *Sex in the Snow* and *Fire and Ice*; Nevitte and Inglehart; Nevitte). These data are then aggregated to characterize the collective values of each nation, their national characters, overarching national identities, and so forth, from which conclusions are drawn about how and whether Canada and the United States differ. Comparative empirical research that focuses on how individuals in these two countries construct their *national identities* specifically however—as opposed to inferences made about nation identity from broader values and beliefs—remains underdeveloped.¹

This paper aims to fill this gap through an examination of public opinion on the national identities of Canadians and Americans drawn from the International Social Science Programme National Identity I (1995) and National Identity II (2003) modules.² The ISSP data are appealing because of their large sample sizes in both countries, and because they allow us to plot responses to questions on national identity between two points in time, 1995 and 2004.³ Two sets of explorations are followed: first, a comparison of the strength or salience of respondents' national identities in Canada and the United States, and second, whether respondents' definitions of nationality in each country are converging, diverging, or moving in parallel trajectories over time. By using the United States as a baseline, we can assess the extent to which Canadians' national identities are especially different from those of Americans—a core assumption of many Canadian nationalists outside Quebec.

The paper unfolds as follows: after reviewing the relevant literatures I introduce key concepts from social psychology, a field that offers much utility to explorations of national identity at the individual level, and that has yet to be drawn into the comparative setting of Canadians' and Americans' national identities. I then present the main findings of the paper, which show how Canadians and Americans define their nationalities over time. Finally, I offer some perspectives on the results, which demonstrate that while there is some dissimilarity between the two countries, in several important ways how Canadians and Americans define their national identity is becoming more alike over time.

Theoretical Orientation

Nationalisms and the national identities that sustain them can take different forms. Early theories identify two types of nationalism. The first is an ethnic/particularistic national group bound by ancestral, religious, or birth ties. The second is a civic-territorial/voluntary national group bound by citizen allegiance and loyalties to political institutions and universal values, such as democracy and the rule of law. Civic nations were believed to be found generally in the West while ethnic nations were believed to be found in the East (see Kohn or Plamenatz).

Assumptions that Western "liberal" states have always been civic and that all nations fit cleanly into one or the other category have been challenged more recently (Smith; Kaufmann 134; Kuzio 21). Research shows that most nations and nationalisms likely possess some combination of ethnic/particularistic and civic/voluntary elements (Smith; Kuzio 20). For instance, while the United States has been historically considered a "civic" nation, evidence shows that since 11 September 2001 attitudes of cultural homogeneity, nativism, and ethnicity have risen in the United States and are linked to a "core essence" of American identity (Li and Brewer 737).

In Canada, less attention has been paid to the possibility that Canadian nationalism outside Quebec may contain both civic and ethnic elements (for a recent exception see Raney). The belief that Canada is a multicultural, civic nation bound not by "blind patriotism or narrow xenophobia, but [by] pride in and a commitment to broad social democratic ideals" remains largely unchallenged (Dobbin 1).

Canadian Nationalism and the Americanization Argument

Claims of Canadian nationhood outside Quebec are closely intertwined with expressions of how Canada is "different from" that of the United States. As Granatstein observes, an un- (and sometimes even anti-) American streak has usually existed in Canadian nationalist discourse (for an historical account, see *Yankee Go Home?*). This is not entirely surprising given that nations and

nationalisms are by definition relational, relying on an oppositional frame in order to differentiate the shared values, characteristics, and beliefs of one nation over another. In Canada outside Quebec, this out-group has usually been the United States. As Lipset ("Canadian Identity," 93) describes, "Canadians are the world's oldest and most continuing 'un-Americans.'"⁴

That Canadian values have become too "Americanized" has been a central concern of many Canadian nationalists for some time. This argument rests on three interlocking assumptions: the first is that Canada's economy and culture are becoming more intertwined with the United States over time. This portion of the argument is incontrovertible: Over the last quarter century or so, Canada's economy has shifted continentally, becoming more closely interconnected with the United States. Both countries signed the Free Trade Agreement in 1988, and in 1994, launched down the path of further continental integration with the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), solidifying a regional economic trading bloc with Mexico and the United States. Since NAFTA, Canada has experienced more trade with the United States than it ever has before, and in 2007, more than \$1.7 billion in goods and 300,000 people move across the Canada-US border each day (Wilson). New technological advances in the television, satellite, and Internet industries mean that American culture is more accessible to Canadians than ever before.

The second assumption is that Canadian values are, in fact, distinct from American ones. On this point, the evidence is mixed. Lipset's continental divide thesis (*Revolution*) maintains that profound differences can be found in the values and cultures of the two countries. Lipset traces these differences to each country's founding events and revolution/counterrevolution histories, which he argues have made Canada a more class-aware, elitist, law-abiding, statist, collectivity-oriented, and particularistic (group-oriented) society than the United States. Emerging from this set of distinctions is the belief that the United States can be characterized as a "melting pot" of various identities (ethnic, religious, racial, linguistic) into a single "American" identity; *E Pluribus Unum* (from the many, one), relative to Canada's multicultural "mosaic" of plural identities and its motto of "peace, order, and good government." Others have written on the special place of religion in American national identity, providing a moral justification for American exceptionalism and the perception of the United States' "providential destiny" as the redeemer of the nation—separate from, and superior to, other nations (Lipset *The First New Nation*). Adams' empirical work (*Fire and Ice*) suggests that values differences between Americans and Canadian are in fact diverging.

In contrast, others argue that Canadians and Americans fundamentally share the same values (see Hartz; Horowitz; Grabb and Curtis). Hartz looks to the founding origins of each country as cementing national values and

characters and argues that because English Canada and the United States were born of the same British “fragment” they are essentially the same. I.L. Horowitz’s “lagged development” idea suggests that the United States shows Canada a projection of what its future will be. More recently, Grabb and Curtis (257) argue that English Canadians and northern Americans share more in common with one another than they do with either Quebeckers or southern Americans respectively, with Quebec values considerably more progressive than those in English Canada, and southern American values considerably more religious and anti-statist than those of northern America. In his values change thesis, Nevitte’s (15) empirical work focuses on the “main values” of Canadians and Americans, which shows that since the Free Trade Agreement (1988), many Canadian and American values have converged. In sum, little consensus exists on the extent to which Canadian values differ from those of their American counterparts.

The third and final assumption of the “Americanization argument” is that greater continental economic and cultural integration will lead to the demise of Canada’s national identity (Nesbitt-Larking; Hurtig; Brodie; Dobbin). This position has been argued most cogently by those on the Canadian political left, although notable exceptions can be found on the right (see George Grant’s *Lament for a Nation*).⁵ A common theme that emerges from this perspective is that Canada needs a strong, interventionist federal state in order to safeguard the country’s national identity, unique values, and sovereignty—embodied in a “the state or the states” mentality.⁶ In the post-war era especially, arguments in support of Canadian protectionism from American economic and cultural influences culminated in the position that a strong, interventionist Canadian state was necessary to shield Canadian values and identity from American influences (Brodie). Without it, Canadian nationalists outside Quebec worried, its already weak and fragile identity would disintegrate.

Others suggest that the processes of Americanization have not been met with much protest or concern by ordinary Canadians. Nesbitt-Larking (17) writes that, “there seems to be very little active will to nurture Canada. While it is possible to be reserved in one’s patriotism, our continued silence in the context of accelerated Americanization is deafening.” Taken together, these arguments suggest that Canada’s economy and culture are becoming more integrated with those of the United States over time, that its values and national identity are under threat from the United States, and that without state intervention and protection, its national identity—if one exists at all—will evaporate.

Social Psychological Accounts of National Identity

Social psychological theories offer an alternate take on group identities. Social Identity Theory (SIT) research tells us that individuals’ social identities are clarified through social comparisons between in-groups (the group

to which one aspires to belong) and out-groups (the group from which one aspires to differentiate oneself) (Tajfel). Social identities are thus relational, relying on identification with an in-group and on the processes of inter-group comparisons. Optimal distinctiveness theory, a close cousin of SIT, suggests that social identity can be viewed as a compromise between two competing impulses: assimilation and differentiation (Brewer 477). In order to secure group allegiance and loyalty, in-groups must satisfy both the assimilative needs of members, and maintain the boundaries of the group in order to make the group distinctive from other groups (Brewer 477). Research shows that group identities can also act as “buffers” to protect and insulate individuals from threat, and that threat perceptions can sometimes intensify individual identification with a group, prompting members to assert group distinctiveness and establish boundaries in more restrictive ways (Sherman, Hamilton, and Lewis 83). SIT also instructs us that in circumstances of national threat, individuals’ identifications with a nation may become more salient, or even that perceptions of threat may act as a catalyst for some to “re-imagine” group membership more restrictively, for example, by developing narrower traits of what might constitute a prototypical “Canadian” or “American” (Raney).

Moreover, national states—with their vast institutional, economic, and symbolic resources—could be thought of as especially valuable to citizens because of their capacities to act as psychological anchors. In times of global uncertainty or insecurity where goods, ideas, capital, and people move more frequently, the argument suggests, citizens *need* nations to provide a constant, steady mooring with which they can feel a sense of collective identity and security. Rather than attenuate the bonds of national belonging, nations might provide fixed, stable, and safe sources of identity.

Social psychological research offers a compelling account of group identification at the individual level, and provides us with an opportunity to consider other possible scenarios of national identity in Canada beyond those articulated by the Americanization argument. One possibility is that because of the confluence of recent geopolitical events such as continental economic and cultural integration and global terrorism, national identity and sovereignty may have become more salient in citizens’ minds, rather than less. For instance, if in-group identification is heightened during times of anxiety, and if threat-perceptions induce group members to cast the terms of group membership more narrowly, the result may be that the nation becomes even more important to citizens—a “rally’ round the flag” effect. It is also possible that national identities of both Canadians and Americans have shifted in recent years, becoming more salient, and defined more narrowly.

We might further expect to find that these continental/global trends pose a significantly larger threat to Canada than they do in the United States, where fears of “Americanness” have deep roots in Canada’s collective psyche. The

central question that social psychological research poses in this context is thus the following: given recent trends of continentalization and globalization, have Canadians' national identities eroded as predicted by the Americanization hypothesis, or have they strengthened and become more restrictive, as predicted by social psychological research? In sum, the SIT expectation is that nations have risen in importance in both countries, and that while exclusive definitions of nationality will have increased in both countries, the rate of increase may be more pronounced in Canada than in the United States.

Findings

The data in the paper are drawn from the International Social Science Programme's 1995 and 2004 modules on national identity, an annual program that links research teams from thirty-nine different countries.⁷ I am first interested in how important the nation is to Canadians and Americans comparatively. Respondents in both countries were asked: "How close do you feel to your country: not close at all (coded as '0'), not very close (coded as '1'), somewhat close (coded as '2') and very close (coded as '3')." I am also interested in whether narrow definitions of nationality are rising over time in both countries. Respondents were asked: "Some people say that the following things are important for being truly [nationality]. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is: to have been born in [country], to have lived in [country] for most of one's life, and to be Christian? Responses were coded as 3 = "very important," 2 = "fairly important," 1 = "not very important," and 0 = "not important at all."⁸

Catch Table 1

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for each variable of interest. Considering the possibility that Quebec respondents may interpret questions of national identity differently than respondents from other provinces, Quebec responses were removed.⁹ Looking at feelings of national closeness in the US first, we see that while in 1995 34 percent of Americans said they felt "very close" to their country, that percentage jumps to 51 by 2004, an increase of 17 percentage points. Interestingly, we see the exact same increase of feelings of national closeness in Canada outside Quebec, where in 1995 38 percent of respondents said they felt "very close" to Canada, that increases to 55 percent by 2004, again an increase of 17 percentage points. On balance, in 2004 a higher percentage of Canadians outside Quebec felt "very close" to their country than did Americans.

Table 1: Feelings of National Closeness and Definitions of Nationality in Canada Outside Quebec and the United States, 1995 and 2004

	% (N)	1995					2004				
		Not at all	Not very	Fairly	Very	Total	Not at all	Not Very	Fairly	Very	Total
Canada Outside Quebec	Feel Close to Country	3 (35)	13 (132)	43 (433)	38 (385)	100 (985)	2 (19)	4 (38)	38 (335)	55 (477)	100 (869)
	Important to be born in country	25 (257)	28 (281)	20 (201)	24 (248)	100 (987)	10 (89)	14 (121)	26 (226)	49 (431)	100 (867)
	Important to have lived most of one's life	13 (136)	31 (319)	29 (294)	24 (246)	100 (995)	3 (34)	17 (149)	29 (254)	50 (440)	100 (877)
	Important to be Christian	51 (520)	19 (192)	10 (105)	15 (147)	100 (964)	24 (210)	17 (153)	23 (198)	34 (302)	100 (863)
US	Feel Close to Country	4 (48)	15 (200)	44 (596)	34 (463)	100 (1307)	2 (23)	8 (102)	36 (442)	51 (623)	100 (1190)
	Important to be born in country	12 (164)	18 (250)	27 (365)	40 (546)	100 (1325)	6 (74)	16 (196)	20 (245)	56 (679)	100 (1194)
	Important to have lived most of one's life	6 (86)	20 (270)	28 (381)	43 (587)	100 (1324)	2 (28)	16 (200)	22 (271)	58 (706)	100 (1205)
	Important to be Christian	24 (324)	21 (282)	15 (198)	37 (505)	100 (1309)	16 (194)	17 (209)	16 (192)	48 (585)	100 (1180)

Source: ISSP National Identities I (1995) and II (2003) modules, Canada and US only. Rows may not total 100% due to rounding.

Turning to definitions of nationality, we find other similarities between the two countries. Across all the items, Table 1 shows that between 1995 and 2004 there are increases in how important respondents felt that being born in their country, living most of one's life in their country, and being Christian, were to both Canadian and American nationalities. It appears as though restrictive definitions of nationality are rising in both countries. The findings in Table 1 show that, on average, Americans were more likely than Canadians to define their nationality by birthplace, length of time lived in the country, and religion.

Surprisingly, the increases in exclusive nationalist attitudes are more pronounced in Canada (outside Quebec) than in the United States: while in 1995 24 percent of Canadians felt that “being born” in their country was “very important” to their nationality, by 2004 this increased to 49 percent of Canadians, a jump of 25 percentage points. In comparison, while 40 percent of Americans felt that “being born” in their country was important to their nationality in 1995, by 2004 this increased to 56 percent, a rise of 16 percentage points. Similar patterns are observed for “living most of one’s life in the country” and “being Christian.”

Catch Table 2

Next, we are interested in seeing whether exclusionary nationalist attitudes rose at a faster rate in Canada than in the United States when controlling for other factors. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the socio-demographic variables included in the model. In order to determine whether and how definitions of national identity vary over time, the 1995 and 2004 Canada and US datasets were pooled and an Ordinary Least Squares regression was used to fit the data. The dependent variable is a composite scale of responses from the three questions on nationality (importance of birthplace, living most of one’s life, and being Christian to one’s nationality). These three items were combined into a scale ranging from 0 (non-exclusive national in-group attitudes) to 9 (very exclusive national in-group attitudes).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Socio-demographic Variables

	% (N)	Canada		United States	
		1995	2004	1995	2004
Citizen	No	4(56)	2(26)	4(57)	4(47)
	Yes	97(1484)	98(1158)	96(1285)	96(1168)
Christian	No	41(627)	36(440)	18(242)	22(262)
	Yes	59(916)	64(771)	82(1125)	79(954)
European Ancestry	No	18(277)	12(142)	43(590)	21(250)
	Yes	82(1266)	88(1069)	57(777)	79(966)
Age	18–24	12(183)	2(24)	10(133)	10(116)
	25–54	63(976)	46(557)	65(882)	61(741)
	55+	25(384)	52(630)	26(352)	30(359)
Education	12 yrs	26(402)	40(484)	45(614)	37(450)
	13–15 yrs	27(409)	22(264)	29(391)	31(371)
	16+ yrs	47(732)	38(463)	27(362)	33(395)
Religious Attendance	Never	3(29)	12(123)	16(206)	9(102)
	Occasionally	65(603)	58(578)	54(714)	57(638)
	Frequently	32(293)	30(293)	31(405)	34(376)

Source: ISSP National Identities I (1995) and II (2003) modules, Canada and US only.

Dummy variables of “year” (2004 = 1, 1995 = 0) and “country” (Canada = 1, United States = 0) were introduced. In order to assess whether the effects of year on the dependent variable vary by country, an interaction term was created.¹⁰ The coefficient of the interaction term represents the value when both of the main effects variables are set at 1 (e.g. Canada in 2004). If Canadians are defining their nationality more restrictively over time than Americans, we should expect to find a positive coefficient for the interaction term in the model.

Several socio-demographic variables are also included: the respondent’s age, educational background, whether they were Christian (“yes” coded as “1,” “no” coded as “0”), whether their ancestral background was European (“yes” coded “1,” “no” coded “0”),¹¹ and citizenship status (“citizen of country” coded “1,” “not a citizen” coded “0”). Given the importance of religiosity to national identity in the United States, religious attendance is also included with “devout” (attend at least once a week) and “attend occasionally” (a few times a year) added to the model, and “never attend” is the reference category.

Catch Table 3

Table 3 shows the OLS estimates for in-group nationalist attitudes in Canada and the United States. Taking into consideration that both Quebeckers and southern Americans may have different attitudes about nationality (the Grabb and Curtis argument discussed earlier), a second model is also presented with responses from Quebec and the southern United States removed.¹² The results for each model are shown in two steps: step one shows the main effects only (without the interaction term); step two shows the fully specified model (with interaction terms present).

Step 1 of the full sample model shows that Christians and those who attend religious ceremonies (both devout and occasionally) were more likely than non-Christians and those who never attend a religious ceremony to have exclusionary in-group nationalist attitudes. Step 1 also shows that, on average, exclusionary national in-groups are on the rise in both countries and that Canadians are less likely than Americans to hold restrictive nationalist attitudes. Step 1 in the model without Quebec and the southern US states shows the same pattern: Canadians outside Quebec were less likely than Americans outside the south to hold restrictive nationalist attitudes based on birthplace, length of time lived in one’s country, and religion.

Table 3: Effects of Year and Country on Exclusionary In-group and Out-group Attitudes in Canada and the United States

	Canada and US In-group Attitudes		COQ and NUS In-group Attitudes	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
	Estimate(S.E.)	Estimate(S.E.)	Estimate(S.E.)	Estimate(S.E.)
Constant	4.320(.261)a	4.430(.263)a	3.903(.313)a	4.006(.316)a
Age	.021(.002)a	.019(.002)a	.020(.003)a	.091(.003)a
Citizenship Status	1.440(.199)a	1.436(.199)a	1.451(.233)a	1.420(.233)a
Education	-.150(.009)a	-.147(.009)a	-.155(.011)a	-.152(.011)a
Christian	.874(.094)a	.872(.093)a	.989(.115)a	.989(.115)a
European ancestry	-.255(.087)b	-.226(.087)b	.043(.108)	.063(.109)
Devout	.867(.113)a	.863(.113)a	.742(.141)a	.730(.141)a
Attend Occasionally	.388(.098)a	.375(.098)a	.280(.122)c	.271(.122)c
Canada	-1.032(.074)a	-1.239(.099)a	-.591(.090)a	-.788(.122)a
Year	1.238(.073)a	1.029(.099)a	1.323(.090)a	1.120(.124)a
Canada*Year	¼	.499(.002)a	¼	.425(.177)c
Adj. R2	.276	.277	.255	.257
F Change	197.362a	9.730b	117.941a	5.757c
N	4642		3103	

Source: ISSP National Identities I (1995) and II (2003) Modules, Canada and US only. Estimates are OLS unstandardized partial beta coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. a: $p < .001$, b: $p < .01$, c: $p < .05$.

If the analysis stopped here, we could conclude that exclusionary nationalist attitudes are stronger in the US than in Canada. However, we are also interested in whether these attitudes are increasing in Canada at a greater rate than they are in the US between the two periods under investigation. This possibility is accounted for with the interaction term. If we find a positive, statistically significant effect between the interaction term and our dependent variable, we can conclude that between 1995 and 2004, exclusionary nationalist attitudes increased at a greater rate in Canada than they did in the United States. This is in fact what we find: all else being equal, on average, between 1995 and 2004 exclusionary nationalist attitudes rose more quickly in Canada than they did in the United States. Turning to the model with regional controls, the pattern continues: on average, restrictive national in-group attitudes increased in Canada outside Quebec faster than they did in the United States outside the southern states.

Discussion

While analyses of national identities at the individual-level are commonplace in the United States (e.g. Citrin, Reingold, and Green; Wong, Citrin, and Duff; Li and Brewer), they have been employed much less frequently in discussions of national identity in Canada. This gap could in part be explained by the fact that most studies of nationalism and national identity in Canada tend to focus on institutional/political elite explanations, seeking to show the importance of the Canadian state/state actors in promoting and nurturing a collective national identity rooted in social policies and common, universal values such as “democracy” and “multiculturalism.” Such analyses are important, but they tend to gloss over the significant place of individual citizens in constructions of the nation. Moreover, while most comparative public opinion research between these two countries examines the general values, beliefs, and attitudes of individuals, systematic comparisons of survey data on the salience and content of national identities of Canadians and Americans specifically remain underdeveloped.

When we turn our attention to empirical comparative research on national identities, some interesting patterns emerge. First, feelings of national closeness are rising in both countries: over half of the respondents in Canada and the United States felt “very close” to their country in 2004. This tells us that for many citizens the emotional appeal of the nation has grown in both countries. Second, the results presented here indicate that, on average, Americans define their nationality through a more restrictive lens than do Canadians—being born in one’s country, living most of one’s life in one’s country, and being Christian are all more important markers of nationality to Americans than they are to Canadians. The forty-ninth parallel clearly matters to national in-group definitions in Canada and the United States.

Yet the findings observed here also reveal important similarities in the trajectory of national in-group definitions in both countries. Between 1995 and 2004 (a relatively brief window of time) definitions of nationality based on religion and birthplace are on the rise in both countries. These observations are consistent with social psychological research that predicts an increase in intensity of national identity and that group perceived group threat. On balance, Canadians’ national identities appear to be travelling on parallel paths with those of Americans’ national identities, becoming both more emotionally salient and more narrowly defined.

What is of particular interest is the finding that rigid definitions of nationality on the basis of birth, religion, and time lived in one’s country appear to be rising faster in Canada than in the United States. What we observe is that, on average, restrictive national attitudes increased more substantially in Canada than they did in the United States while the Americanization hypothesis predicts that in the presence of increased threat from the United States,

Canada's national identity will erode. This argument is not supported here. Instead, what is observed is that some Canadians are redefining their national identity in ways that are similar to those of Americans in content, and that they appear to be marching down this path at a quicker pace than are Americans.

How might we explain these results? One possibility is that while Canada's economic and cultural borders have become more porous over time, these events have not triggered an identity crisis in Canada but rather, have acted as catalysts in changing the national identities of citizens in both countries. Additionally, pressures to national sovereignty and identity, such as the rise of terrorism and globalization, also need to be factored into such an explanation.

The findings in the paper do not contest the reality that continental integration has had a profound influence on Canada, and significant economic and cultural changes have altered the relationship between Canada and the United States over the last decade. However, the results are suggestive that the expectation that Canada's identity has disappeared because of these processes is not sustained, at least during the timeframe under investigation here. These observations lend support to SIT research that in the face of perceived in-group threat, group members will rally around the group, and some may seek to define more rigid boundaries in order to distinguish members more clearly from outsiders. Possible future research might explore not whether the Canadian nation will survive at all, but rather how various future domestic and international events may influence Canadians' national identities in both salience and content. At the least, the results here tell us here that researchers ought not to exclude the possibility that Canadians' national identities are robust, in flux, and may in fact share similarities with Americans' national identities.

These observations raise a number of important questions about Canadian nationalism and national identity outside Quebec. First, although Canadians do not define their national identity as restrictively as do Americans, they appear to be catching up. This is a substantially important finding given the imminent place of the United States in the construction of Canadian nationalism historically as a perennial out-group. While the acquisition of social identities requires clear in-group/out-group differentiation, the findings reported here suggest that in the case of Canada, while the national in-group has grown in salience, how it is defined by some of its members has become more alike that of its main historical reference out-group. Put another way, some Canadians appear to be honing their own brand of nationalism, which, on balance, bears some resemblances to that of American nationalism. Revisiting the Americanization of Canada idea, one interpretation of the results here is that Canada is not in danger of losing its own unique national identity, but rather, that its national identity is becoming more important to and more restrictively defined by its members—two aspects considered to be trademarks

of American nationalism. Somewhat ironically then, the findings might appear to be pointing us toward an “Americanization” of Canada’s national identity of another kind entirely.

In proposing that there are similarities in how some Canadians and Americans define their national identities, the findings documented here clearly rub up against deeply entrenched, widely accepted beliefs about what makes Canadians different from Americans. As evidenced here, when we examine the strength and content of individuals’ national identities empirically, some of the assumed differences embedded within current theories of Canadian nationalism and the “Americanization of Canada” position are challenged. One of these assumptions that Canadian nationalism is strictly “civic,” possessing only those aspects of a national in-group that can be universally shared. The image of Canada as a multicultural, diverse “mosaic” nation opposed to the United States as a monolithic ethnic “melting pot” does not appear to fully capture the findings documented here. Additional research that extends beyond Canadian nationalist myth—especially as Canada’s national identity stands in relation to the United States out-group—is needed.

Empirical examination of Canadians’ national identities compared to those of Americans is revealing in another respect: the findings support a socio-psychological explanation of national identity in Canada over other more widely known explanations that the Canadian identity is in danger and/or disappearing. The strength and validity of the socio-psychological approach clearly warrants further attention in studies of national identities in Canada.

The analyses offered here are open to a number of criticisms. First, one could suggest that the timeframe under investigation is too narrow to capture the full weight of the Americanization argument adequately. It could be argued, for example, that the observations documented here are too short-sighted and that what is needed is longitudinal evidence of national identities once the processes of Americanization have been more fully set in motion. Such analyses might reveal that Canada’s “Americanization” has withered away Canada’s unique identity after all.

While longitudinal data would shed important light on Canadian national identity in the future, the strength of this criticism is weakened somewhat by comparative data outside North America that show similar patterns in other parts of the world. Eurobarometer data between 1992 and 2003 (roughly the same period under investigation here) reveal a stable and, in some cases, a growing salience of national identities in European Union member states.¹³ Simply put, nations and nationalisms both within and outside of North America do not appear to be fading away any time soon. Moreover, even if Canada’s national identity outside Quebec was to disappear eventually (thus supporting the Americanization hypothesis), current theory-making has yet

to account for the commonalities shared between Canadians' and Americans' national identities today.

A second criticism could be found in the paper not casting a wide enough comparative net, beyond Canada and the United States. Given widespread trends in nations and nationalisms in other parts of the world, it could be argued that Canadians' national identities are not becoming more American but rather that national identities in both countries are becoming more like those in other countries. I do not exclude this as a possibility; however, given the imminent importance of the US as an out-group to constructions of Canadian nationalism historically, the aim here has been to isolate the national identities of Canadians and Americans explicitly in a way that previous research has not. A comparative empirical investigation of Canadian national identity needs to confront the "American question" directly by recognizing the possibility that national identity in Canada may resonate with its citizens.

Conclusion

In the paper, I set out to develop a more nuanced framework in which to understand national identity in Canada and the United States by focusing on national identities at the individual level. The findings suggest that while Americans define their nationality in more essentialist terms than do Canadians, Canadians outside Quebec appear to be catching up. Although the window of 1995 and 2004 used here is too narrow to draw long-term conclusions about whether these trends might continue, what we can say is that the narrative that Canadian identity is by definition weaker than American identity is not consistent with the results presented here. The paper thus challenges one of the central assumptions embedded within the "Americanization" idea in Canada: rather than erode Canadian national identity, increasing cultural and economic continental integration appear to be correlated with a strengthened and redefined Canadian national identity outside Quebec. Despite profound domestic and international changes over the past two decades, the myth that Canadian identity remains fundamentally different from (and superior to) American identity remains a dominant feature of Canadian nationalism today. Future research that digs beneath nationalist mythology needs to be undertaken.

The term "Americanization" carries special meaning in Canada outside Quebec, and the results presented here offer a possible reinterpretation of what the Americanization hypothesis may mean for Canadian national identity outside Quebec into the future. While some Canadians appear to be more confident in their national identities, others are also defining them in ways that are more restrictive. Rather than lose its national identity to the United States, it is possible that Canadians' national identities outside Quebec will continue to become more like Americans' national identities over time,

becoming both more salient and narrowly defined. Future research that does not assume that Canadians outside Quebec have no shared sense of national identity is clearly needed.

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Notes

1. I am grateful to a reviewer for drawing my attention to the fact that some French-language research is grounded on this very question. In particular, Historian Pierre Nora's significant seven-volume work, *Les Lieux de mémoire* (reprinted in 1997), offers an examination of national identity at the socio-psychology level of individual citizens.
2. The data utilized in this paper were documented and made available by the Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung at the University of Cologne. The data for the ISSP are collected by independent institutions in each country: the Canadian surveys were administered through the Carleton University Survey Centre and the US surveys were administered through the National Opinion Research Center, NORC, at the University of Chicago. Neither the original data collectors nor the Zentralarchiv bear any responsibility for the analysis or conclusions presented here.
3. Although the National Identities II survey is referenced as 2003, the fieldwork occurred in 2004 in Canada and in 2005 in the United States. For the purposes of simplicity, I use 2004 as the date the data were collected throughout the paper.
4. For example, as early as pre-Confederation, the framers of the Canadian constitution were concerned by fears of annexation with the United States after the House of Representatives passed an Annexation Bill in July 1866, while Sir John A. Macdonald's 1879 National Policy was designed in part to favour Canadian industries and to promote economic independence as a new nation.
5. Several movements and organizations responded to the increasing concern of Canada's economic and cultural independence from the United States, including the Waffle Movement (1969), the Committee for an Independent Canada (1970), the Council of Canadians (1985), and the Pro-Canada Network (1987).
6. Quoted from Graham Spry, the chair of the Canadian Radio League from 1930–1934, while campaigning for a national, public broadcasting system in 1932.
7. Fieldwork for the 1995 National Identity Canadian module was conducted 1–30 November 1995 with a response rate of 52 percent (N = 1557, without Quebec = 1016). A stratified multi-stage sampling method was employed using the five primary regions: Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, Western Canada, and B.C. The 2003 National Identity Module for Canada was conducted 29 January 2004–31 March 2004 with a response rate of 43 percent (N = 1278, without Quebec = 878). Fieldwork for the 1995 American survey

was conducted 1 February through 25 May 1996 with a response rate of 30 percent (N = 1367), and included a self-administered supplement completed after the General Social Survey questions. The sample is a full-probability sample, and is weighted by number of eligible respondents 18 and over in the household. Fieldwork for the 2003 US National Identity US module was conducted between August and December of 2005, with a response rate of 47 percent (N = 1216) and included in-person interviews. The sample relies on a multi-stage, area probability method. The pooled data used for this paper are not weighted. For a more detailed account of sampling procedures for the data, see <http://www.issp.org/data.shtml>.

8. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability score of .791.
9. The exclusion of Quebec respondents will undoubtedly skew the findings in the direction of a perceived cohesion to Canadian national identity that would not exist if Quebec were included. However, given the unique historical claims of nationhood in Quebec, a rigorous analysis of national identity in Quebec is beyond the scope of this paper. For a more thorough discussion of Quebec nationalism, see Mendelsohn or Henderson.
10. The interaction term is the product of the two main effects variables of year (coded 1 = 2004, 0 = 1995) and country (coded 1 = Canada, 0 = US).
11. Questions on respondents' ancestral background were asked differently in Canada and the United States and should be interpreted with a great deal of caution. In Canada, respondents were given a list of different ethnicities/language groups and in the United States, respondents were able to self-identify in any group.
12. The southern US states as defined by the US Census Bureau include: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas.
13. As cited from the European Commission's Standard Eurobarometer Reports: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/standard_en.htm

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