

International Journal of Canadian Studies

Self-Interest in Canadian Foreign Policy: The Principle and Practice of Internationalism

George A. MacLean

Borders, Migrations and Managing Diversity: New Mappings
Numéro 38, 2008

URI : id.erudit.org/iderudit/040816ar
<https://doi.org/10.7202/040816ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Conseil international d'études canadiennes

ISSN 1180-3991 (imprimé)
1923-5291 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

MacLean, G. (2008). Self-Interest in Canadian Foreign Policy: The Principle and Practice of Internationalism. *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, (38), 245–259. <https://doi.org/10.7202/040816ar>

Tous droits réservés © Conseil international d'études canadiennes, 2008

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne. [<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>]

Érudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche. www.erudit.org

George A. MacLean

***Self-Interest in Canadian Foreign Policy:
The Principle and Practice of Internationalism***

Abstract

Internationalist impulses in Canadian foreign policy are best understood from both functional and ideological perspectives. This article suggests that the practice and principle of Canadian internationalism reflect a set of core values emanating from domestic society, as well as an indispensable emphasis on multilateralism in foreign policy. The article explores the tradition of Canadian internationalism, multilateral instincts evident in collective action, and the core values which are entwined in the constitutional premise of "peace, order, and good government" (POGG). The article concludes that, though paradoxical upon first examination, Canada's cooperative internationalist tradition was and remains fundamentally self-interested.

Résumé

C'est tant du point de vue fonctionnel que du point de vue idéologique que l'on peut mieux comprendre les dimensions internationalistes de la politique étrangère canadienne. Le présent article donne à entendre que la pratique et le principe de l'internationalisme canadien reflètent, d'une part, une série de valeurs fondamentales issues de la société nationale et, d'autre part, l'importance accordée au multilatéralisme dans la politique étrangère. L'article se penche sur la tradition internationaliste du Canada, sur l'instinct multilatéral ancré dans l'action collective ainsi que sur les valeurs fondamentales imbriquées dans le principe constitutionnel « de paix, d'ordre et de bon gouvernement » (POBG). Il conclut que, quoiqu'il semble paradoxal à première vue, la tradition de coopération internationaliste du Canada a été et est mue essentiellement par ses propres intérêts.

Introduction

Reg Whitaker noted that two principal factions had emerged in the field of Canadian foreign policy analysis. He pointed out that, on the one hand, there were a number of scholars who held a "nostalgic lament for a lost golden age"; on the other was a group "impatient with traditional categories

... [who] do not worry about having lost their place" (Whitaker 2004). A scholarly divide was not that surprising in the context of an increasingly globalized system, but it emerged as the adjustment to the new era that left more questions than answers regarding Canada's foreign relations. Given what was at stake – relations with allies, defence and aid budgets, and the very ideological direction for foreign policy – one might assume of the factions that ne'er the twain should meet, and that the study of Canadian foreign policy would bifurcate into opposing camps with no hope for middle ground. However, those differing perspectives meet on one significant point: the primacy of internationalism in Canadian foreign policy.

Internationalism may be defined as cooperation among countries for the purpose of mutual benefit. Manifest in a variety of forms – political, economic, military, developmental – internationalism at its most basic level holds promise for long-term collective interests as opposed to atomistic short-term gains. Yet underlying internationalism is a set of ideas and values that make up a comprehensive vision of the world that, once realized, would bring with it a peaceful environment and a more favourable standard of living. In the Canadian context, internationalism is assumed to result in benefits at home as well as abroad. But from where does this impulse emerge? And what are the sources of its future direction?

This article examines the practice and principle of Canadian internationalism. Broadly speaking, it argues the Canadian internationalist impulse can be explained from both functional and ideological perspectives. Functionally, internationalism through multilateralism gives Canada greater input at the table. Ideologically, internationalism represents a dominant vision for foreign policy reflecting the core values of Canadian society. The article explores the history of internationalist impulses in Canadian foreign policy, connecting it with the logic of collective action inherent in multilateralism. It suggests that an important link may be made with the values and principles entwined in peace, order, and good government (POGG) in domestic Canadian politics, and concludes that there has been little substantive change in policy over the past decade. In what appears paradoxical at first glance – but far more reasonable upon reflection – the practice and principle source of Canada's cooperative pursuit remains more self-interested than selfless.

Canadian Internationalism

To begin, one must distinguish Canadian internationalism from other variants. It is not, for instance, proletarian internationalism which seeks (once sought?) a world revolution through worker solidarity (Waterman 1991). Nor is it the "internationalism" of citizen-based organizations such

as the World Federalists Movement or Citizens for Global Solutions that seek a form of constituted authority for global institutions. And, though Canada's internationalism has included a focus on the role for international organizations, it is not merely institutionalism. Rather, as explored below, organizations provide a functional means to achieve the objectives of Canadian internationalism.

It may seem intuitive to speak of internationalism in foreign policy since every nation-state seeks to affect global politics at some level. However, the emphasis on institutions, coupled with a unique and dependent relationship with the United States, makes Canadian internationalism idiosyncratic. And as Brian Stevenson has observed, Canadian internationalism has evolved from the "middlepowermanship" of its "golden age" of the 1940s and 1950s to a more institutional and issue-specific form today (Stevenson 2000: 52, 157). The distinctive relationship with the United States – with its associated costs and benefits – framed Canada's security and economic relationship in an inimitable way. These two points – the growing emphasis given to international organizations and the implications of the Canada-US relationship – were the bedrock of Canada's evolving internationalist bent.

Functionalism: Multilateralism and Collective Action

The post-war experience of institution building was a source of Canada's evolving internationalism, as this provided an effective functional basis for enhancing its global influence. Canada's foreign policy at this time no doubt contained an ideological element – more on that later – but its functional design was crucial. Collaboration, cooperation, and compromise through multilateral bodies such as the UN and NATO bore clear results over what surely would have been a greatly diminished role among nations. Internationalism during the golden age progressively became more multilaterally based. Indeed at the time, the two terms were often linked: in 1948, for example, Lester Pearson said that multilateralism was "another name for internationalism" (Pearson 1970: 69).

Kim Nossal has described the features of Canadian internationalism as responsible involvement, multilateralism, and a willingness to make prior commitments to international institutions (Nossal 1997: 53). Of these features, we are most interested in multilateralism, which at once envelops all of Nossal's features while providing functional linchpin for Canada's internationalism. Multilateralism is the integration of a decision-making process or approach with three or more independent political actors. It is premised on the logic of collective action since it is supposed to bring benefits that could not be achieved independently. But it is more

than just interaction; it assumes reciprocity among participants, a regulated environment, and shared benefits that would be impossible for states to achieve if they acted alone.

Multilateralism is most commonly associated with the post-war order. This early period of multilateral behaviour can be seen as somewhat revolutionary, since the actors involved – initially the allied states – placed some faith in the theory that harmonious organizational behaviour would produce benefits and prevent further wars. Early approaches to multilateralism, notably the Bretton Woods institutional arrangement, were virtually universal in membership, (and perhaps a far better example of globalization than what we witness today).

But universal multilateralism was not without its drawbacks. Far from being a collective source of self-interest on the part of all member states, there were certain risks associated with collective action. The assumption was that ultimately national interests would be achieved; however, the process of collective action evident in multilateralism required states to back off their independent maximized goals. In other words, states could not possibly achieve *everything* they sought in a multilateral arrangement as there are too many diverse interests and potential antagonisms to permit this to happen. However inimical multilateralism might seem to a state's self-interests, *collective action*, as Mancur Olson argued, allows states to seek maximized benefits through a process that *could* leave them worse off than if they were to act alone but provides a better assurance of collective gains. But states active in multilateral behaviour are not really maximizing their objectives; they are seeking to "satisfice," or to obtain an outcome that is "good enough." The adage, according to Olson, is that benefits "must be available to everyone to be available to anyone" (Olson 1965). Those collective benefits, ultimately, are more long-term and desirable than atomistic gains.

The post-war evolution of multilateral arrangements involved coordinated national policies, often in a formal organizational structure (Ruggie, 1993). Since these mutual initiatives were to reap gains that otherwise could not be achieved through unilateral action, there was a certain normative ideology implied (Caporaso 1992). Not all saw the same results – relative power, functional differentiation, and resource capability led to asymmetry.¹ Beneficial collective action did result in overall improved conditions for participants through collective decision making, policy coordination, cooperation, and integration. Furthermore, the more long-term goal of war avoidance was achieved. Another "revolutionary" aspect of early multilateral behaviour was the willingness of great powers to satisfice rather than maximize their goals. This dimension of collective action – disregarding, to some degree, the impulse to exploit a process or

situation to meet the self-interest of the nation – showed a sea change in foreign policy integration, and a readiness to seek a better way, even with costs involved (which meant reduced net benefits for some in exchange for overall benefits).

This might be seen as maximizing in any case, since all involved wound up with a process that worked and won support. We now see that the outcome of multilateralism was what John Ruggie called “diffuse reciprocity,” involving coordinated and mutually beneficial relations and reciprocal behaviour from partners (Ruggie 1992). There are various benefits from a multilateral order. Harmonized pluralistic arrangements are a logical option for weaker states seeking influence within the context of growing trade, communications, and population movements (Deutsch 1957). Also, multilateralism is an effective tool for gaining a better understanding of the decision-making process that leads to foreign policy adjustment and coordination (Keohane 1990).² And even the smallest of multilateral agreements provides participants beneficial opportunities for goal attainment through efficient and legitimate decision-making mechanisms (Kahler 1992).

Beneficial opportunities are one thing; maximized opportunities are another. The benefits of collective action were clear, but another dimension is the tendency to “go small.” Organizational behaviour theory informs us that small groups are more effective at seeking the individual goals of those involved (Miner 2006; DuBrin 2005). Simply put, the more involved, the greater the net benefit, but with a cost: reduced individual benefit. So, what of smaller groups? Would fewer in the ranks still win support, but perhaps with something closer to maximized goals? If satisficing carries a cost, then the costs could be reduced with fewer actors, and with more harmonized interests.

In practice universal multilateralism may have brought benefits to all actors – varying, to be sure – but the great powers and their closest allies recognized the enhanced potential of smaller, more integrated groups. The more actors involved, the more dispersed the benefits will be since satisficing implies that some processes will not be pursued. Indeed, the *best* processes for some actors might be disregarded completely because, while they might maximize benefits for one or a few, they would minimize or downgrade benefits for others. Better ways, therefore, imply costs and may not be optimal for the self-interest of some. Yet multilateralism demands collective benefits, which simply cannot be optimal for all. Universality compounds the problem. Suboptimal solutions, then, are sometimes necessary in order to win support and maintain success for the collective: to satisfice, in other words. These were, of course, the industrialized nations which changed the nature of multilateral behaviour.

More restrictive multilateral arrangements changed the nature of collective action. The immediate post-war multilateral order, which was premised on institutionalism, rule making, and – most importantly – universality, gave way to the rise of smaller arrangements, which often broke off from the previous multilateral order. Regional associations, free trade agreements, and what Miles Kahler referred to as “minilateral” arrangements came to typify the real direction of late twentieth century multilateralism: smaller groups, usually geographically collocated, with greater potential for substantive integration and, ultimately, greater benefits. Functionally, then, the utility of multilateralism is evident in both its universal and minilateral variants.

Multilateralism and Canada

The Canadian foreign policy literature has critically explored the concept of multilateralism to some extent, (Black and Sjolander 1993; Diebold 1988) and principal works in Canadian foreign policy have documented the rise in multilateral links (Nossal 1997; Cooper 1997; Cutler and Zacher 1992). But the broader context of normative goal setting and independence in policy has not been examined. Canada has a tradition of multilateral behaviour with like-minded states on various aspects of its foreign policy, including military, cultural, political, and economic affairs. Canada's multilateral tradition reflects Canada's domestic interests and global ideals, and as Keating has argued, is Canada's “best option” for pursuing national and international interests (Keating 2002). It has also led to the judgment that Canada's foreign policy is dependent, responsive to the wishes and interests of major allies, and devoid of any emphasis on and independent of “national interest.” Early multilateralism, which sought satisficing over maximized individual goals, was not the best instance of Canada's self-interest; it could not have been, given the diffuse net results of universal multilateralism. At that time, Canada's middlepowermanship emphasized integrating policies with other actors, and what was available to anyone would be available to everyone. In the short term, multilateralism immediately served an important task for Canadian foreign and security policy since it allowed Canada to rise above the status of observer, and become a more active participant in global affairs. It gave Canada a functional role that distinguished it from other non-great powers, largely due to the close bilateral relationship it shared with the United States. It was a foreign policy more dependent on the United States perhaps, but nonetheless more integrated as well. Importantly for Canada, the prevalence of antagonistic relations within multilateral bodies did not generally extend to the Canada-United States relationship, where “self” interests were closer to “common” (bilateral) interests than for other actors.

Another customary assessment of Canadian multilateral commitments is that Canada has always been a strong proponent of multilateral behaviour for altruistic reasons, or the good of the international system. The conventional wisdom is perhaps the greatest perpetrator here, as the “boy scout” or international mediator/fair player image is only partly true. These tendencies may be part of Canadian foreign policy, but they are not necessarily the driver. Real altruism is the exception, not the rule, and no benefits could be realized were self-interests not pursued. In other words, Canada’s foreign policy practice no doubt is legitimately seen as beneficial to the international community, but this does not assume the absence of interests. Indeed, this could well result in minimized goals for Canadian foreign policy, which is neither realistic nor accurate.

Drawing from conventional wisdom (Canada as the “selfless supporter”), one might question whether there is any national interest in Canada’s coordination of policies with others. But the broader goals and activities of Canadian foreign relations reflect normative values and interests. Peyton Lyon and Brian Tomlin, among others, have explored the conceptions and attitudes that surround Canadian “roles” in world politics. “Mediator,” “middle power,” “community-builder,” “peacekeeper,” and “bridge,” Lyon and Tomlin suggest, characterize Canadians’ self-perception of their influence in the international system (Lyon and Tomlin 1979). However, outside the parameters of a nation’s self-perception, the actual role played is influenced by exogenous factors, as well. Canada the “selflessly multilateral nation” (Keenes 1995), is not a complete image of Canada’s basic objectives in its foreign policy, which in fact are really more self-serving. This does not mean Canadian foreign policy cannot be beneficial for the international community but rather that Canada’s basic objectives are not simply selfless or altruistic. In fact, Canada’s basic objectives are self-interested.

All of this has a direct, and crucial, bearing on the conduct of Canadian internationalism. The belief system underlying multilateralism implies that dominant attitudes have an important influence on the decision to work with others to achieve goals. Moreover, the fact that all nation-states seek objectives in the broader guise of their national interest – pursuing policies that create, maintain, and enhance the security and welfare of a country – raises an intriguing issue concerning Canada: how to implement policies in the national interest through collective behaviour (multilateralism)? There are two forces here that are, at first glance, at odds with one another: seeking an independent policy, yet doing so within a unified or multilateral forum.

Importantly for Canada, multilateralism creates positive conditions for effective action by weaker powers in the international system. As Dewitt

and Brown have noted, multilateralism gives “marginally regional actors opportunities for responsible participation without the perceived intent or actual attributes of great power-style intervention, while ensuring that states of and in the region do not lose control over the agenda while having a forum (“regime”) to constrain the actions of the more powerful” (Dewitt and Brown 1995). For smaller states such as Canada, multilateralism shows the utility of Ruggie’s “diffuse reciprocity”: coordinated and mutually beneficial relations reached through collaboration, suasion, and negotiated assurance can achieve more for non-determining powers than unilateral action. For more modest powers such as Canada, working together multilaterally secures reciprocal behaviour with partners.

Seen in this light, multilateralism presents opportunities for Canada because coordinated decision making and policy implementation creates greater authority and influence in the international system. States that are able to determine the structure of the international system, or have close access to states that do, are in a position to shape and influence the alignment of policies of allies. Favourable multilateral memberships permit Canada to affect the policies of larger states in a manner that would be impossible if it acted alone.

Multilateralism actually has led to a degree of independence in Canadian foreign relations. Given its middle power status, Canada has achieved a level of influence in its foreign policy through organizational links with other states that it otherwise would not have realized. Consensus building and the ability to articulate independent views simply would not be possible were it not for institutional fora that permit the involvement and capacity of non-system determining powers. Multilateralism provides greater coordinated decision making and policy implementation, and consequently for its participants, greater authority and influence in the international system.

Ideology: Core Values and POGG

“Peace, order, and good government,” or POGG (Section 91, Constitutional Act 1867) describes the national source of Canada’s internationalist impulse in foreign policy and draws a connection between the foundations of basic law domestically, and the national interest in foreign policy. POGG is also found in other constitutional orders, including the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. It describes the legal placement of authority within the state, prescribing powers to certain levels of government where such authority may not otherwise be so clear. Functionally, its purpose is to provide direction for orderly division of powers, but POGG also has come to take on a sociological value in

Canada: peace, order and good government are often used to describe a set of values that underpin Canadian political culture.

POGG represents a core interest in Canadian foreign policy and is important for a variety of reasons. First, it distinctively represents an early constitutional premise of hierarchy, institutionalism, and deference to authority. It may be differentiated from the United States focus on individualism and rights of citizens, for example, which framed state-society relations in that country. Although “peace, order, and good government” is a less catchy phrase than “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (Declaration of Independence 1776), it reflected a political and social order in Canada.

Second, POGG reflects the Canadian version of the division of powers. POGG is a constitutional “residual” clause, meaning that authority not specified for a level of government would be left for the federal government (O’Hearn 1964). Here we see the function in the principle. Though later employed as an “emergency power” clause in the 1920s (Stanley 1969), POGG was intended to deal with problems of authority in basic law.

Third, POGG has been used functionally to represent core Canadian national values. George Woodcock argues that constitution building by Canadians since 1867 has been a “mission” to assert their national identity. POGG, then, can be seen as “a largely inarticulate recognition by Canadians of the necessary pluralism in the society that various histories and a varied geography have combined to give them...a statement regarding the nature of the good society that will be of interest and perhaps of value to the rest of the world” (Woodcock, in Banting and Simeon, 334). Rule of law, equality, diversity, tolerance, freedom, and democracy are all predicated on POGG. It is a *sui generis* definition of the package of rights and responsibilities of a society, and is about more than “government”, it is also about “governance”. More than an ideal for setting up institutions of authority, it is also an active concept (governance), and a set of standards.

POGG, then, is more than a functional principle or a mere constitutional clause. It is also a description of order within civil society, particularly regarding the allocation of power. Often depicted as the Canadian “ideal” (perhaps in lieu of something with a better ring to it), the POGG clause exemplifies the Canadian emphasis on legitimacy in civil society.

Indeed, while it may be too one-dimensional to portray Canada’s identity wholly as POGG, there is a wide literature that spells out the connection between values of Canadian society and the functional purpose of

foreign relations. For example, in *Continental Divide*, Seymour Martin Lipset ascertained Canadians were more collective than individual, more law abiding, and more linked to society (Lipset 1990). More recently, Michael Adams argued that these national characteristics extend to foreign policy, as well. His analysis concurs with Lipset's interpretation of Canadian society, but goes further to suggest that the same characteristics link Canadians to the global system of politics (Adams 2003).

The values inherent in POGG have framed Canadian foreign policy for a very long time. Six decades ago, Secretary of State for External Affairs Louis St. Laurent commented on the "values which lay emphasis on the importance of the individual, on the place of moral principles in the conduct of human relations, on standards of judgment which transcend mere material well-being." Canadians, he said, had a responsibility to "protect and nurture" these values (Blanchette 2000: 5). In *Right and Wrong in Canadian Foreign Policy*, James Eayrs spoke of the value-laden idealist tradition in foreign policy. Liberal idealism in foreign policy, he said, is about improving the standards of life through moral progress, decency, and principles of behaviour (Eayrs 1966). The ideals, standards, and functions of POGG are the humanitarian impulses and tradition of values in Canadian foreign policy. Together with the functionalism of multilateral behaviour, the normative foundation of POGG represents the values inherent in Canadian foreign policy. Moreover, practice and principle in internationalism contribute to the national interest.

Internationalism and the National Interest

The term "national interest" is necessarily imprecise, since the core interests of a nation are intangible, perceptual, and normative. Categorizing or quantifying the national interest in a manner that satisfies everyone would be impossible. It defies concrete definition and therefore is criticized for its inability to predict or form an explanatory model. Yet despite its ambiguity, it is fundamental for any foreign policy, and shows the underlying intent of the decision makers that employ it.

A country's national interest may be defined as that which contributes to its self-preservation, national security, sufficiency, and prestige (Osgood 1953). More substantively, however, the interests of a nation are influenced by both subjective and objective bases – this is why the term is of little use for predicting behaviour, outside of the widest parameters of what matters to a nation's preservation and well-being. A nation's objective interests are those it seeks to protect through its foreign policy: the preservation of its territorial integrity, the maintenance of political administration, and the defence of its resources, values and identity, for exam-

ple. Foreign policy decision making and these objective interests form something of a tautology: the objective interests exist and inform policy, which in turn seeks to maintain and strengthen the interests. There is, then, a universal core to these objective interests because they are necessary for the preservation of the state itself.

National values and political considerations confuse the more self-evident side of the national interest, creating an ill-defined subjective bias that relates to priorities in foreign policy. This subjectivity is often used to explain a decision *after it has been taken* as “in the national interest”. Subjective considerations, as well as its imprecision, create unavoidable problems for applying the national interest. Evaluations change according to the individuals involved and the environmental milieu within which the decisions themselves are made. This does not mean that the national interest cannot be utilized; rather, foreign policy analysis must strike a balance between the objective and immediate concerns of a nation and its political values. There are no useful alternatives to the national interest, and it does permit a much richer analysis because it incorporates the process and prioritization of political decision making.

Canadian governments generally avoid referring to “interest” in discussions of what frames Canadian foreign policy. This is not limited to government. David Haglund has suggested that Canadians are not so much concerned with the national interest as they are with whether Canada should “even stoop to admit” to having one (Haglund 2000: 10). It may be that the national interest is seen as more suitable for the United States and other great powers, or that it really implies military strategy. In any case, the national interest assumes a certain self-interest or egoism unfamiliar or repugnant to Canadians; it is somehow “un-Canadian.”

But Canadian foreign policy has always been about self-interest. Any other basis for a foreign policy makes no sense. The real problem, as Haglund suggests, is *admitting* that such interests exist at all. Indeed, to ignore the national interest would be to pretend that Canadians are unaffected by events in the world. This is clearly not the case, and more to the point, there is an irony here. Those who deny a national interest would at once likely defend the internationalist tradition. Yet one cannot exist without the other. There is a crucial link between a view of a “place in the globe” and the interest of the nation as a whole. Canadians are not disinterested when it comes to foreign policy. Michael Adams’ analysis of polling data shows a strong feeling among Canadians regarding their global role. Other analyses have similar conclusions (Martin and Fortmann 2000). Allan Gotlieb notes that “Canadians are now far more conscious than even before of the encroachment of the international environment on our daily lives” (Gotlieb 2005: 17), and Jennifer Welsh

argues that Canadians believe they “should take part in defining and implementing the country’s international agenda” (Welsh 2005: 59).

Internationalism is clearly in the Canadian national interest. Collective benefits are best achieved through multilateral institutions, which also provide the best opportunity to extend values and principles of behaviour abroad. As universal multilateralism gave way to smaller organizational structures, the potential for maximized objectives increased; conversely, the possibility of net losses also rose. Assumptions of reciprocity remained, but collaborative decision making may be more difficult with fewer actors and – importantly – the presence of a system-determining power. The upshot for Canada was, and remains, clear: maintaining a place in the world and protecting benefits through multilateralism in smaller numbers. This is internationalism in a nutshell.

Conclusion

This article has argued that Canada’s tradition of internationalism is premised on the institutional mechanism of multilateralism. This is nothing less than a necessity for Canada. Given the alternative, which would be a severely degraded role in the international system, multilateralism forms the basis of what allows Canada to rise above the level of mere observer or largely passive participant status. In the Canadian experience, emphasis on multilateralism, in concert with its middle power status, permits Canada to have its objectives achieved in the international system, even without being a “great” power. (This is not to suggest, of course, that the relationship is symmetrical; rather, interdependence does not denote equality, but mutual interests.) Instead, multilateralism presents a functional means of achieving policy goals in Canada. In this sense, “functional” is not meant merely to suggest what a state may *contribute* to the international system, but rather how a state’s objectives are *attained* in the international system.

Changes in the global order could lead us to theorize that the integration of a network of global sub-systems might indicate the end of multilateralism, but the opposite is quite likely more correct. As structures such as innovation and communications become increasingly important in the determination of state power and influence, the national interest ingrained in multilateral relations will continue to grow. Smaller groups mean greater potential for harmonized interests and more substantive integration. Most importantly, smaller groups allow for improved possibilities for maximized goals – or at least not simply satisficing – as a net result.

In addition, this article has argued that there are principles at stake in internationalist behaviour. Canadian values, which may be understood

through “peace, order, and good government,” represent a normative vision of the world that could not be achieved in any way through independent action. Canadian internationalism has evolved from its earlier form, and remains a normatively charged, value-oriented exercise. One of the most fundamental questions facing Canada is its ability to exert foreign policy initiatives in a relatively independent manner. Acting unilaterally is usually not an option, leaving the alternatives of working with great powers bilaterally, or through a multilateral regime. The element of *independence* here is crucial: that is to say, it is not merely a matter of establishing a foreign policy position, but rather the ability to do so in an autonomous manner. There may not be agreement about the direction of Canadian foreign policy, but as this article has shown, its internationalist impulse is rooted in both practice and principle.

Notes

1. Dominant groups will still be more proficient at implementing preferred policy options. Multilateralism “works” when a hierarchy exists: major powers must play major roles for other players to want to participate. See Peter Cowhey, “Elect Locally – Order Globally: Domestic Politics and Multilateral Cooperation,” in Ruggie, *Multilateralism Matters*; and Peter Gourevitch, *Politics in Hard Times: Comparative Responses to International Economic Crises*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).
2. On the other hand, others have suggested that multilateralism may be explained using a variety of theoretical frameworks. James Caparaso argues that the realist argument of rational self-serving choice, the liberal social-communicative explanation, and the functional or neo-liberal institutionalist focus on the utility of institutions may all be clarified by multilateralism. See Caporaso, “International Relations Theory and Multilateralism.”

References

- Adams, Michael (2003). *Fire and Ice: The United States, Canada, and the Myth of Converging Values*. Toronto: Penguin Canada.
- Banting, Keith and Richard Simeon, eds., *And No One Cheered: Federalism, Democracy and the Constitution Act*, (Toronto: Methuen, 1983).
- Black, David and Claire Turenne Sjolander, (1993). “Canada in the Transition: Prospects for a Re-constituted Multilateralism.” Paper given at Canadian Political Science Association annual meeting, 6-8 June.
- Blanchette, Arthur E. ed. (2000) *Canadian Foreign Policy, 1945-2000: Major Documents and Speeches*. Ottawa: The Golden Dog Press.
- Canada (1867). Constitutional Act.
- Caporaso, James A. (1992). “International Relations Theory and Multilateralism: The Search for Foundations.” *International Organization*, 46 (3), 599-632.

- Cooper, Andrew F. (1997). *Canadian Foreign Policy: Old Habits and New Directions*. Scarborough, Prentice-Hall).
- Cutler, A. Claire and Mark W. Zacher, eds. (1992). *Canadian Foreign Policy and International Economic Regimes*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Deutsch, Karl (1957). *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Dewitt, David and David Leyton Brown, eds. (1995). *Canada's International Security Policy*. Scarborough: Prentice Hall.
- Diebold, William, ed. (1988). *Bilateralism, Multilateralism and Canada in US Trade Policy*. Washington: Council on Foreign Relations.
- DuBrin, Andrew J. (2005). *Fundamentals of Organizational Behavior, 3rd ed*, Mason: Thomson/South-Western.
- Eays, James (1966). *Right and Wrong in Foreign Policy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Gotlieb, Allan (2005). "Romanticism and Realism in Canada's Foreign Policy." *Policy Options*. 26 (February).
- Gourevitch, Peter (1986). *Politics in Hard Times: Comparative Responses to International Economic Crises*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Haglund, David G. (2000). *The North Atlantic Triangle Revisited: Canadian Grand Strategy at Century's End*. Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs.
- Kahler, Miles (1992). "Multilateralism with Small and Large Numbers." *International Organization*, 46 (3), 681-708.
- Keating, Tom (2002). *Canada and World Order: The Multilateralist Tradition in Canadian Foreign Policy, 2nd ed*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.
- Keenes, Ernie (1995). "The Myth of Multilateralism: Exception, Exemption, and Bilateralism in Canadian International Economic Relations." *International Journal*. 50 (4).
- Keohane, Robert (1990). "Multilateralism: An Agenda for Research." *International Journal*, 45 (4), 731-64.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin (1990). *Continental Divide*. New York: Routledge.
- Langford, J. Stuart, *The Law of Your Land: A Practical Guide to the New Canadian Constitution*, (Toronto: CBC Enterprises, 1982).
- Lyon, Peyton and Brian Tomlin, (1979). *Canada as an International Actor*. Toronto: Macmillan.
- Marton, Pierre and Michel Fortmann (2000). "Public Opinion and Canadian Internationalism after the Cold War: Obstacle, Partner, or Scapegoat?" Paper presented at the "Challenges to Governance: Military Interventions Abroad and Consensus at Home" conference, Montreal, 17-18 November.
- Miner, John B. 2006. *Organizational Behavior: Historical Origins, Theoretical Foundations, and the Future*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.
- Nossal, Kim Richard (1997). *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy, 3rd ed*. Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall Canada.
- O'Hearn, Peter J.T. (1964). *Peace, Order and Good Government: A New Constitution for Canada*. Toronto: MacMillan.

*Self-Interest in Canadian Foreign Policy:
The Principle and Practice of Internationalism*

- Olson, Mancur (1965). *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Osgood, Robert Endicott (1953). *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pearson, Lester B. (1970). *Words and Occasions*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Rudd, David and Jim Hanson, Adam Stinson, eds., *Playing in the Bush League: Canada-US Relations in a New Era*, (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 2001).
- Ruggie, John Gerard (1992). "Multilateralism: Anatomy of an Institution." *International Organization*, 46 (3), 561-98.
- Ruggie, John Gerard, ed. (1993). *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Stanley, George F.G. (1969). *A Short History of the Canadian Constitution*. Toronto: Ryerson Press.
- Stevenson, Brian J.R. (2000). *Canada, Latin America, and the New Internationalism*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Waterman, Peter (1991). "Understanding Socialist and Proletarian Internationalism: The Impossible Past and Possible Future of Emancipation on a World Scale." *Working Papers - General Series*, 97 Institute of Social Studies.
- Welsh, Jennifer (2005). "Fulfilling Canada's Global Promise." *Policy Options*. 26 (February).
- Whitaker, Reg (2005). *International Journal*, 55 (2), 574-578; review of Welsh, Jennifer (2004). *At Home in the World: Canada's Global Vision for the 21st Century*, Toronto: HarperCollins Canada.
- United States (1776). The Declaration of Independence. Second Continental Congress, July 4.