

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

David G. Haglund

The Oxford Handbook of Peaceful Change in International Relations

Edited by T.V. Paul, Deborah Welch Larson, Harold A. Trinkunas, Anders Wivel, and Ralf Emmers

Subject: Political Science, International Relations Online Publication Date: Nov 2020

DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190097356.013.36

Abstract and Keywords

Interstate relations among the North American countries have been irenic for so long that the continent is often assumed to have little if anything to contribute to scholarly debates on peaceful change. In good measure, this can be attributed to the way in which discussions of peaceful change often become intertwined with a different kind of inquiry among international relations scholars, one focused upon the origins and denotative characteristics of “pluralistic security communities.” Given that it is generally (though not necessarily accurately) considered that such security communities first arose in Western Europe, it is not difficult to understand why the North American regional-security story so regularly takes an analytical back seat to what is considered to be the far more interesting European one. This article challenges the idea that there is little to learn from the North American experience, *inter alia* by stressing three leading theoretical clusters within which can be situated the scholarly corpus of works attempting to assess the causes of peaceful change on the continent. Although the primary focus is on the Canada-US relationship, the article includes a brief discussion of where Mexico might be said to fit in the regional-security order.

Keywords: peaceful change, stable peace, pluralistic security community, North American security, democratic peace theory, realist peace theory, exceptionalism

The story has it that as he was leaving the federal constitutional convention that had gathered in Philadelphia midway through 1787 to design a new political framework for the fledgling American republic, Benjamin Franklin was asked what he and the other delegates had brought into existence through their heated deliberations. Franklin’s cautionary response: “A republic—if you can keep it” (McHenry [1787] 1906, 618). So, too, might we conceptualize a challenge that has intermittently faced two North American countries upon which this chapter mainly concentrates, the United States and Canada. That challenge has been how to construct and maintain what, in the annals of peaceful change, has been a fairly new (*i.e.*, twentieth-century) dispensation, namely their regional security community, or “zone of peace.”

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

If ever there has been a regional embodiment par excellence of the phenomenon of peaceful change in international relations, it has been the North American continent north of the Rio Grande, even if not too many scholars of international relations appear to realize this. Indeed, it is regularly assumed that the distinction of being first and foremost in the domain of peaceful change really ought to belong to a different region, Western Europe—an assumption reiterated in the Introduction to this volume, with its observation that Europe has indeed been the “key region where the security community arose” (Paul, this volume). It is understandable why the Western European security community should have been, and remains, the focus of so much interest on the part of scholars exploring the processes of peaceful change, given that the dismal track record of what one author has suggestively labelled the “dark continent” is without historical parallel (Mazower 1999). Because for so long Europe, especially its westernmost reaches, was where the great powers “lived,” it was also the region that, by definition, spawned so much great-power war, with such hideous consequences for states and peoples near and distant. Anything that could be said to have put paid to this European pattern of deadly blood-letting has to be considered to be a very big deal. And it is. But “continental” Europe is really not where the modern, pluralistic, security community first arose, even if it is the place where logic and necessity suggest it *should* have first arisen. I emphasize continental Europe here, because there is a case for regarding Scandinavia as the site of the West’s first, even if not continuously operating (because of the Nazi conquest of Norway and Denmark), pluralistic security community (Ericson 2000).

So from the point of view of theory, though probably not from that of practical policy consequences, Europe hardly deserves this pride of scholarly place. Notwithstanding that so many scholars like to find the rootage of the modern pluralistic security community in European soil following World War II, it has really been North America that has served as the nursery for stable peace theory. This latter notion is borrowed from Charles Kupchan. It is a useful means of capturing the stages of *peaceful* change. What Kupchan calls “stable peace theory” can be regarded to be both a derivative of democratic peace theory and an addendum to it. His ultimate aim, in developing this concept, is to show how animosity can become transmuted into friendship, through a three-step process that depends upon (1) institutionalized restraint in diplomatic interactions; (2) the presence of compatible social orders as between the interacting states; and (3) cultural commonality among them. Of these three conditions, Kupchan considers only the latter two to be necessary, with the first, restraint, merely being a “favoring” one (Kupchan 2010, 6–8).

Kupchan also proffers a second tripartite distinction, one identifying the trio of stages through which a developing irenic interstate relationship must proceed, in the process generating progressively more intense phases of “stable peace.” The first of these is rapprochement. The second is security community, understood as meaning that sovereign states abjure, as a means of settling whatever disputes may arise between them, the use of force or even the threat to use force (Deutsch et al. 1957; Adler and Barnett 1996). The third, and most intense, phase of stable peace Kupchan refers to as “union,” which as I employ it in this chapter, can be taken as synonymous with a certain species of deep and comprehensive security cooperation suggestive of tight military alliance. As Kupchan em-

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

employs the same concept, union denotes the highest stage of stable peace, one in which the interacting states participate in the shaping of a new identity through the process of “narrative generation,” meaning that elites in one state can no longer quite see those in the other as being fundamentally different from themselves, in matters appertaining to the defense of North America. This is why he says that in a theoretical sense, the iterative construction of stable peace starts in realism (rapprochement engendered by restraint), goes through liberalism (security community), and finishes in constructivism (collective identity) (Kupchan 2010, 52).

The two northernmost states of North America pioneered the frontier of this kind of peaceful change in international relations. Whether what they managed to accomplish could be replicated elsewhere in the international system has long been a question that has animated a great deal of policy discussion, especially upon the part of enthusiasts who saw in the “North American idea” a promising remedy to interstate conflict in other, less fortunate, regions, at a time when a great-power war loomed as the international system’s greatest recurring problem (Macdonald 1917). But even though the policy aspiration somehow to spread North America’s peaceful ways throughout the system came a cropper, there remains merit in assessing the rise and maintenance of the North American stable peace; for while the “lessons” of peaceful change in North America may not be exportable, they do remain highly revelatory for a Handbook such as the present one.

The chapter’s next section begins by recollecting what in recent time has mostly been forgotten, namely the lengthy period when North America resembled a “zone of war” much more than it did a zone of peace. Following this section’s exposition of the continent’s bleak (Hobbesian) past, we turn to its happier (Kantian) present, and see what it was about the processes of peaceful change that made North America such an apparent outlier from the “normal” pattern of regional security interactions elsewhere as to lead so many analysts wrongly to conclude, that there was no interesting, or at least relevant, security “story” to be told about North American peaceful change, given their belief that the big theoretical and policy innovations were, and *had* to be, of European provenance. In the fourth, concluding, section, the ambit of *North American* regional security is broadened geographically, to incorporate a brief discussion of Mexico. Even with this broadening, it cannot be maintained that this chapter provides comprehensive regional coverage, given that the North American continent *geographically* if not ideationally extends all the way down past the Panama Canal, thus including Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama.

Although limitations of space preclude any substantial weaving of Mexico into the chapter’s analytical fabric, bringing the third large North American country briefly into the story’s concluding section at least enables us better to grasp the important distinction drawn by this volume’s editors between the two variants of peaceful change. The first variant they identify is a “minimalist” one, whose primary defining quality is the existence of a norm of regional coexistence, accompanied by the elaboration of institutionalized mechanisms for nonviolent conflict resolution. Their second variant is a “maximalist” one in which conditions of stable peace are enhanced by the kind of strategic “union” associ-

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

ated with military alliance and deep, comprehensive security and defense cooperation. Both versions assume the existence of security community, but for the maximalist variant, something further is on offer—a high level of security integration between sovereign states, generating a security “narrative” that shapes the quality of their mutual relations in a manner not found in the minimalist variant. This is why, in the Canada-US context, one frequently encounters security and defense cooperation being conceptualized in terms of “binationalism” rather than merely “bilateralism” (Brister 2012). Thus, the US-Mexican security community can be taken in the minimalist instantiation as evidence of peaceful change, in that the two states are thought most unlikely ever again to use force against each other, or even to threaten so to do. Yet—and this is the point to stress—they are not allies; thus, the quality of their defense and security cooperation remains far less robust than is the case of the US-Canada security community.

The North American “Zone of War”

From the perspective of scholars investigating the conditions of peaceful change in international relations, North America can bring to mind Gertrude Stein’s famous dissing of her quondam hometown of Oakland, California, as a place where “there’s no *there*, there” (Safire 1985). For those who think this way, Europe has been to North America what San Francisco is to Oakland—the much more exotic, thus more pertinent, locale across the water. Yet those who think this way, at least when attention strays to international peaceful change, think mistakenly. North America’s history resembles, albeit in miniature, what Europe’s once was, and if Europe has managed to attain the conditions of stable peace, North America did so before it. But before we see how peaceful change was achieved on the North American continent, it would be well to have some appreciation of how regional security relations used to look, when it was Hobbes rather than Kant who served as the go-to referent on matters related to war and peace.

It has only been in the past century or so that one could detect the onset of what would develop into the most fundamental aspect of the North American regional security order, built as it has been upon peaceful change. Over the years spanning the early 1900s and the present, Canada and the United States managed to develop a habit of relating to each other that was truly light-years, and not merely one hundred years, removed from the previous quality of their existence as cohabitants of the Hobbesian jungle. As a result, for a long time now they have been residing in a Kantian “paradise”—so long a time that the memory of the even *longer* period during which they had cohabited a Hobbesian hell has been effaced from collective consciousness. Such a radical reversal of behavioral patterns begets an equally radical reversal in the words and symbols employed to capture the “essence” of that altered security relationship, with zone of peace having emerged as the replacement trope for that other semantic construct, the zone of war. Nor is this all. The Canada-US security community is often said to be “idiot proof,” in that it is extremely hard for most observers to imagine how it might possibly unravel, notwithstanding who ever happens to be presiding over the respective states.

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

But if the North Americans have somehow managed to find the secret of living peacefully together, it has only been a relatively new discovery. Because it is so often thought that “history” for both the United States and Canada only began fairly recently as these matters go—1783 for the Americans, when independence from Britain was recognized, and 1867 for Canada, when today’s federation was established, albeit within the British Empire—it is easy to forget that the Old World was very much present in the New, such that the rivalries of the former were necessarily projected into the territory of the latter well before today’s United States and Canada emerged as states in their own right (Anderson and Cayton 2005). Thus, since Europe lived in a Hobbesian world, so too did the developing polities of the New World. During the first 150 years of European existence on the continent, the northeasternmost portions of North America were the kind of setting where life could definitely be counted upon to be “nasty, brutish, and short.” In the well-chosen words of one historian of the colonial era, “[W]ar was a fundamental part of life in early America. A man or woman who lived to adulthood in colonial times by definition lived through war” (Melvoin 1989, 12). Much the same has to be said of life in early Canada, to whose inhabitants the rifle was figuratively, and sometimes literally, attached to the plow, so ubiquitous was the warfare that stamped their collective psyche with a profoundly militaristic impress (Gravel 1974; Eccles 1990).

Few remember them today, but four great-power wars pockmarked the face of North America between 1689 and 1763, and though they occurred prior to the political “birth” of today’s American and Canadian federal states, they certainly have to be considered conflicts between Americans and Canadians. These were the intercolonial wars, in Europe and elsewhere, pitting English against French, with each side backed by its aboriginal allies: the War of the League of Augsburg (1689–1697), brought to a close with the treaty of Ryswick, and known in North America as King William’s War; the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–1713), ending with the Treaty of Utrecht, called in North America Queen Anne’s War; the War of the Austrian Succession (1744–1748), ending with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, known in North America as King George’s War; and the Seven Years’ War (1756–1763), better remembered in North America as the French and Indian War, and terminated with the Treaty of Paris, ceding Canada to England (Peckham 1964; Steele 1969).

Therefore, of conflict between Canadians and Americans during the foundational period of their not-so-peaceful coexistence, we can make three observations: (1) it was a frequent occurrence; (2) it was a bloody phenomenon, maybe not so much in terms of the absolute as in the per capita numbers of casualties, and certainly because of the brutal manner in which the slayings often occurred; and (3) it did result in territorial “cleansing” of ethnic groups, either via their mass transfer from territories in which they had already settled or because of their having been prevented from settling in the first place.

King William’s War marked the onset of the *intercolonial* phase of ethnic conflict between the Canadians and the Americans. There had already been, it is true, instances of territorial cleansing and ethnic conflict in North America prior to 1689, but these did not directly pit Canadians (i.e., French) against Americans (i.e., English). These earlier episodes fea-

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

tured sanguinary struggles in which both French and English fought, separately, against their respective indigenous adversaries on their own side of the indeterminate geopolitical frontier. For the French, this meant the Iroquois, with whom a long conflict commenced in 1609 and reached its crescendo of brutality with the raid on Lachine eighty years later, in August 1689, costing more than one hundred French settlers their lives (Hunt 1960). For those Americans who were the most significant neighbors of the French on the continent, that is to say primarily the New Englanders, the fighting commenced with the short war of 1637 against the Pequots, only to reignite in the vastly more deadly King Philip's War, of 1675–1676. This latter war, which ranged the New England colonies—Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, and Connecticut—against an Algonquian coalition led by Philip (also known as Metacom, sometimes Metacomet) and his Wampanoags (Lepore 1998, xi–xiii), was noteworthy not only in foreshadowing the ethnic conflict that would lie ahead for the region but also for the brutality and high cost of the struggle, which for both sides could and did appear to be a fight to the finish, nothing short of a “war of extermination” (Leach 1958, 243; Drake 1999), whose outcome was to determine who would preside over, or even get to live in, the disputed territory (Webb 1984).

On a per capita basis (i.e., rate of casualties suffered by the total population, combatant as well as noncombatant), this short war is generally remembered, when it is remembered at all, as having been the bloodiest in American history, not excluding even the Civil War. More than half of the English settlements (fifty-two out of a total of ninety) were attacked during the year of fighting, with thirteen being destroyed, while some 10 percent of the combat-eligible English males ended up as casualties. High though the rate of casualties may have been among the English, it paled in comparison with the losses sustained by their indigenous adversaries (both combatant and noncombatant): at the start of the war, Philip's army counted 2,900 combatants, out of a total aboriginal population of 11,000; within a year, some 2,430 combatants and noncombatants had been killed or captured, and most of the Algonquian survivors had fled the region (Melvoine 1989, 80–81; Morone 2003, 80–81). The question as to who would dominate the region—English or Algonquian—looked, finally, to have been settled.

Within less than a century, the question of who would dominate the northeastern portion of the continent—English or French—also would become decided. But the close of the epoch of intercolonial warfare in North America hardly gave rise to lasting visions of peaceful change, for a new dynamic of bellicosity set in, this time an interstate one that featured the fledgling United States against its former mother country, the United Kingdom. While Canadians (for the most part at that time, *French* Canadians) sat out the American independence war with England that broke out shortly after the last of the intercolonial wars ended, it did not take long for Americans and Canadians once more to be fighting it out with each other, most memorably in the War of 1812, the recent bicentenary of which was marked with much more enthusiasm on the Canadian than the American side, given that the war has been considered by many as having been foundational of the Canadian national identity—as well as a rather successful undertaking, to boot (Watts 1987; Taylor 2010; Marche 2012). Sometimes, though, this war gets eulogized for a differ-

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

ent reason. Because it was the last occasion on which Canadians and Americans ever engaged in interstate armed conflict against each other, the War of 1812—or at least, its ending in early 1815—often gets taken as the starting date for the North American dynamic of peaceful change that led to what is heralded as the continent’s “long peace.”

This chronology could not be more misleading, however. For at the time the Treaty of Ghent brought that war to a close, the construction of the North American regional security community (the Canada–US zone of peace) still lay many decades in the future. Let us see next how many decades in the future it lay, and why peaceful change was able to prevail as the dominant perspective in interstate relations for so much of North America.

The North American Zone of Peace

Inquirers into the processes of peaceful change in North America must grapple with two fundamental questions. The first concerns timing: *when* did nonviolence become the default security option for the two countries? And the second concerns theory: *why* did it become such an option? On both scores, there has been much scholarly disputation, and each question is more complicated than it might seem at first glance. For reasons of space, I am only going in this section to address the *why* and not the *when* of North American peaceful change, even though the two questions are obviously interconnected.

We can take it as a given that those who trace the North American “long peace” all the way back to Ghent in early 1815 do so in error. There were far too many instances during the post-1815 decades, and even into the early years of the twentieth century, when it looked as if the use of force, by either state or, more commonly, by what one scholar calls “non-state-armed actors,” could hardly be ruled out (Davis 2009; Haglund 2015). Starting, though, in the latter part of the twentieth century’s first decade—a decade that two scholars have classified as the “slate-cleaning” moment in Canada–US relations (Hillmer and Granatstein 1994, 39–40)—the pendulum shifted perceptibly away from the possibility of violent resolutions of conflict toward nonviolent ones, even though each country’s military continued, well into the interwar years, to draft contingency plans for operations against the other (Morton 1960; Eayrs 1964, 70–78, 323–328; Preston 1977). But while everyone may be in agreement about regional security undergoing a great transformation, there is much less agreement as to *why* it did so.

Three basic theoretical and analytical divisions can be detected on this matter of causality. One school, let us call them the “exceptionalists,” holds that there really is nothing terribly complicated needing to be explained, because Canadians and Americans are just not the kind of folk who would think of solving their disputes by fighting things out. A second camp, call it the realist one, would argue that the structure decreed by the continental distribution of “relative capability” (styled by some as US “hegemony”) tells us all we need to know about the absence of fighting between Canada and the United States. The third school, somewhat like the first but decidedly unlike the second, would insist the answer to the question of peaceful change has to be found in Waltzian “second-image” qualities associated with the respective liberal-democratic orders of the North American poli-

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

ties. Let us take them in reverse order, starting with this last-named explanatory grouping.

Among this grouping, no one has done more than Stéphane Roussel to focus our attention upon the second-image, and liberal, source of continental peaceful change. Sounding almost like Gertrude Stein, save that he comes to *praise* Oakland not to dispraise it, Roussel assures us that the theoretical basis of the North American zone of peace is not to be found *there*, but rather in Europe; in short, from the standpoint of “exceptionalism,” there really *was* no there, there, in North America. For the answer to the question, why did war, or even threats of war, disappear from the northern half of North America, Roussel turns to democratic peace theory, as developed and refined by European thinkers, including though hardly restricted to Immanuel Kant himself. Not just the institutional constraints identified and touted by Kant ([1795] 1991; Doyle 1986; Waltz 1962), but even more importantly the *normative* ones that feature in so many liberal-constructivist research initiatives in recent decades, combined to solve the riddle of continental peaceful change. To Roussel, it is the fundamental isomorphism of the two North American countries’ liberal-democratic orders, coupled with growing economic interdependence, that has built their stable peace, for reasons that are not exceptional to North America. He explains,

[T]he chief characteristic of the North American international order derives not from something unique to the Canadian-American relationship, but rather from a quality equally on display in Western Europe in the postwar era, something broadly known as an international “liberal order.” The particular North American aspect of this order has often been overlooked because, unlike various European international systems created after major conflicts, its elements are defined more by practices than by formal enunciations. ... This order has, however, well and truly existed; it is apparent in the patterns of cooperation between the two states and comes most into focus when these patterns are viewed through the prism of their shared liberal values. (Roussel 2004, 31; Patsias and Deschênes 2011)

Thus, while the North Americans might indeed possess an admirable set of political values, they have hardly been the only ones to enjoy such a set; in fact, they *imported* rather than developed those values, which stemmed from an older, transatlantic, political tradition. This view stands in contradistinction to both the (structural) realists’ and the exceptionalists’ accounts of the continent’s peaceful change, each of which stresses how *different* North America was from other regions. Although some scholars will highlight (wrongly) the “inability of realists to envision a peaceful transformation of international politics” (Matthews and Callaway 2017, 59), there actually *is* a realist version of this kind of transformation—in the bargain, even a structural-realist one. This version of the North American peace would rely on asymmetries of power more than any other variable, such that its proponents would find unsurprising the absence of bellicosity in the bilateral Canadian-US relationship, for the good reason that the continental balance of power effectively precluded either country’s applying or threatening force as a “rational” means of conflict resolution. Thus, for this telling of the peaceful-change story in North America, the most important clue is to be uncovered through a forensic examination of the struc-

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

tural change that occurred in the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom at the tail end of the nineteenth century, the moment of the two English-speaking powers' "great rapprochement" (Perkins 1968; Rock 1989).

According to this version of events, peaceful change on the North American continent (north of the Rio Grande) required first and foremost a resolution of the long-running political contestations between the United Kingdom and the United States. Scholars continue to debate why and how Britain and the United States ceased to be such mutual antagonists on the North American continent (Vucetic 2011; Hitchens 2004). But that they managed to bury the hatchet, no one denies. And since Canada at this time remained, in matters appertaining to foreign policy, very much a component of the British state, it follows that one can claim the onset of peaceful change in North America to have been part and parcel of the British willingness to "accommodate," for *whatever* reason(s), America's rise to great-power status (Schake 2017). Thus, the balance-of-power explanation, say many analysts, is ultimately the most satisfactory one, if we want to know how and why peaceful change "broke out" in North America. Because, to those who think this way, any risk of another Anglo-American war evaporated with the rapprochement, it followed that so too must the risk of any further Canada-US conflict have dissipated.

A refinement of the realist explanation became necessary once it proved no longer possible, or even polite, to interpret Canada-US relations in the context of Anglo-American relations, say, sometime during the interwar period. Again, recourse has been had by the realist school to balance-of-power formulations, only this time what was being emphasized was a function much more of *imbalance* than of balance, properly considered, and the rationality in decision making held to be derivative of such imbalance. The argument of the peace-through-imbalance school was a simple one: a war between the United States and Canada was precluded by the lopsided structure of the regional international system (Lennox 2009). Because the United States was so much more powerful than Canada, it made no sense for the former to think of waging war against the latter, as there could be no realistic threat to its physical security stemming from the north sufficiently grave to warrant violent response, therefore why waste time and resources worrying about a "threat" from Canada? And because Canada was so much weaker than the United States, it would make no more sense for it to imagine preparing for an armed conflict with the neighbor to the south than it would for it to draft preparations to commit national suicide. Ultimately, the peace-through-imbalance version rested on reason prevailing whenever disputes needed to be settled, since in the American case "vital interests" could scarcely be engaged, while in the Canadian case they could hardly be defended.

Despite the aura that, like a gimcrack necklace purchased at a run-down flea market, hangs so unfashionably upon Canadian academic discussions of realism (Haglund 2017), this structural-realist account of the North American experiment with peaceful change can meld easily with the "exceptionalist"—and *ur*-idealistic—explanation of that same phenomenon, associated as it has been with the aforementioned "North American idea." After all, and in contradistinction to the liberal-constructivist version of the North Ameri-

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

can stable peace, both structural-realist and idealistic accounts stress North American exceptionalism. Where they differ is on the *basis* of that exceptionalism.

To say again, the heyday of North American exceptionalism, exemplified by the growing popularity of the North American idea, occurred during the second and third decades of the twentieth century. Its adherents refused to treat the phenomenon of peaceful change as the kind of “puzzle” that needed a solution. North Americans, by the twentieth century, had simply become inoculated against regional strife as a result of changes in the behavior and the thinking of publics in both Canada and the United States. It was not that their liberal-democratic institutions had *made* them better people; it was that they had *become* better people, and in so becoming had demanded a better bilateral relationship. To some of the ardent defenders of this irenic “idea” of the continent, the North American neighbors were blessed to be living in a special part of the planet and in possession of a collective consciousness generative of a kind of geopolitical DNA that was theirs and theirs alone—of exceptional people living on an exceptional continent (Barry 1980). This was so, even before the rise of the Nazi threat by the late 1930s led to a further tightening of security bonds between the two countries.

What Stéphane Roussel has represented for the liberal-democracy explanation of the Canada-US stable peace, Oscar Douglas Skelton has represented for the exceptionalist one. Skelton, who abandoned an academic career at Queen’s University in 1925 to become the principal foreign-affairs advisor to Canadian prime ministers, and especially to the long-serving William Lyon Mackenzie King, was never slow to argue that Canada, despite its historic ties to Britain, was no longer the “European” entity it once had been, and henceforth should more properly be construed as a “North American” one. During those early decades of the twentieth century, this assertion could pack a powerful normative and epistemological punch in Canada, and not for nothing did one of the country’s leading historians reflect, as recently as the mid-1990s, that “there was a time, not so many years ago, when to speak of Canada as a North American nation was viewed, at least in some quarters, as heresy” (Cook 1995, 174–175).

As far as Skelton was concerned, Canada unquestionably *was* a North American country (Hillmer 2004–2005). As early as the mid-1920s, during the debate over whether Canada should assume any obligations in connection with Britain’s signing of the Locarno treaties intended to guarantee key interstate borders in Europe—treaties raising in his mind the possibility of Canada’s being sucked into another war on that continent—Skelton ventured to ask, “Do we owe anything to Europe?” He did not just mean continental Europe, either, for his views on Canada’s obligations to Great Britain and imperial defense were marked by a conviction that the time was long past for Canada to stake out a posture of greater independence from what had only recently ceased to be regularly referred to as the British Empire, and had just begun to be called, with the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921, the British Commonwealth. Such a nationalist stance might have carried risks in an earlier period, but security matters had evolved so dramatically on the North American continent that Skelton could answer, with confidence, his own question:

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

Canada lies side by side for three thousand miles with a neighbour fifteen times as powerful. ... She knows that not a country on the Continent of Europe would lift its little finger to help if the United States were to attack her. Her security lies in her own reasonableness, the decency of her neighbour, and the steady development of friendly intercourse, common standards of conduct, and common points of view. Why not let Europe do likewise? (Hillmer 1976, 76; Hillmer 2013)

It was at the tail end of this same Interwar period that the third stage of the North American stable peace was effected, with the elaboration of a kind of “union” that can be taken, in the security and defense context, to be synonymous with *alliance*. Canada and the United States became allies prior to America’s entry into World War II—that is, at a time when America was still doctrinally “isolationist.” True, the two countries did not become allies as a result of any *treaty* (a mechanism whose employ would have to await 1949’s Washington Treaty, establishing NATO). Nonetheless, they became very much allied in political and institutional reality.

In the case of the Canadian-American alliance, the starting point is generally considered to have been an executive agreement, the “Ogdensburg Agreement,” reached by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Mackenzie King in the upstate New York town of that name, in mid-August 1940 (Gibson and Rossie 1993). This accord led directly to the creation of the first of what would be a long line of binational defense arrangements, the Permanent Joint Board on Defense (PJBD), which set to work planning a series of measures to enhance continental security (Conliffe 1989). The line has extended down to the present, and it has embraced not only tight institutional cooperation between the two countries’ militaries but also other components of their security establishments, including intelligence and policing entities.

Thus, quite apart from its status as America’s “oldest” continuous ally, Canada’s alliance ties contribute to the robustness of the continent’s stable peace because of the overlap between “homeland security” and the normative core of the security community. It is not that these ties guarantee that relations between Canada and the United States will always be harmonious; the current funk with which most of Canadian public opinion assesses the meaning of the Trump administration for Canadian interests testifies to the marked deterioration in attitudes toward America since the administration of the extremely popular (in Canada) Barack Obama. The point is rather that even though Trump’s America is only “worsted” in Canadian eyes by Xi Jinping’s China (Zilio 2019), the continued close cooperation between the Canadian and American militaries serves as a reinforcing, institutional buttress of the continental stable peace, putting into place a floor below which security relations between the two countries are unlikely ever to sink.

The more strained Canada-US diplomatic relations become, the more important become these institutionalized security arrangements. The PJBD still exists, but it has long been supplemented, and often overshadowed, by subsequent institutional means of safeguarding North American defense and security cooperation, among the most important of these being the Military Cooperation Committee (MCC) of 1946, the North American Air (now

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

Aerospace) Defense Command (NORAD) of 1958, and for a time the Binational Planning Group (BPG) of 2003 to 2006 (Mason 2005). To these must be added a thick network of other accords, committees, and arrangements appertaining to North American defense, whose numbers are no easy matter to keep count of, but which run into the hundreds (Bi-National Planning Group 2006). Thus, in a manner distinctly different from most of America's transatlantic relations, the United States and Canada were solidly allied (if not always in total agreement on perceiving and responding to threat) well before the formation of NATO, and they would almost certainly still be allied had the latter organization never come into existence. Moreover, it can be taken as a given that the strength of their commitment to the "common defense" of North America far exceeds the strength of the commitment of most NATO allies to the defense of the transatlantic area.

Conclusion: What's Mexico Got to Do with It?

How different things are when the focus shifts to US-Mexican relations. To reiterate, there is a "minimalist" sense of peaceful change embodied in this other dyadic relationship on the North American continent, but it falls short of what would be expected in the "maximalist" variant. This is because Mexico, no matter how often it may be called in the press an American (or even Canadian) "ally," is not the kind of ally that Kupchan's theory of stable peace envisions. It is not a robust security and defense partner, even if it remains economically interconnected with its two northern neighbors through the successor to NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), the USMCA (US-Mexico-Canada Agreement). It is true that at one time Mexico *used* to be an American ally, even to the extent of sending a few combat units to the Pacific theater to support American military operations during World War II. But that time is no more, as Mexico severed its alliance bonds with Washington in September 2002, when it withdrew from the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (the "Rio Pact"). Mexico, therefore, is neither America's nor Canada's ally, meaning that it is institutionally enmeshed with no partners in pursuit of North American "collective defense," while Canada is America's most behaviorally "special" ally of all, because of the tight regional-security bonds (Haglund 2012).

Does this mean that the Mexico-US security community is imperiled? Not really, but it does suggest that to the extent Benjamin Franklin's cautionary remarks of 1787 can find any echo in today's North America, it will be on America's southern, not its northern, border. For unlike the maximalist stable peace that prevails in the more northerly reaches of the continent, the Mexico-US minimalist version lacks the institutional security and defense backstopping that one sees, even if one does not always celebrate, in the Canada-US "union."

References

Adler, Emanuel, and Michael N. Barnett. 1996. "Governing Anarchy: A Research Agenda for the Study of Security Communities." *Ethics & International Affairs* 10: 63-98.

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

Anderson, Fred, and Andrew Cayton. 2005. *The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America, 1500–2000*. New York: Viking.

Barry, Donald. 1980. "The Politics of 'Exceptionalism': Canada and the United States as a Distinctive International Relationship." *Dalhousie Review* 60, no. 1 (Spring): 114–137.

Bi-National Planning Group, 2006. *The Final Report on Canada and the United States (CANUS) Enhanced Military Cooperation*. Peterson AFB (CO), March 13, Appendix G.

Brister, Bernard J. 2012. *The Same Yet Different: Continuity and Change in the Canada-United States Post-9/11 Security Relationship*. Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy Press.

Conliffe, Christopher. 1989. "The Permanent Joint Board on Defense, 1940–1988." In *The U.S.-Canada Security Relationship: The Politics, Strategy, and Technology of Defense*, edited by David G. Haglund and Joel J. Sokolsky, 146–165. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Cook, Ramsay. 1995. *Canada, Quebec, and the Uses of Nationalism*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

Davis, Diane E. 2009. "Non-State Armed Actors, New Imagined Communities, and Shifting Patterns of Sovereignty and Insecurity in the Modern World." *Contemporary Security Policy* 30, no. 2 (August): 221–245.

Deutsch, Karl, et al. 1957. *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Doyle, Michael. 1986. "Liberalism and World Politics." *American Political Science Review* 80, no. 4 (December): 1151–1169.

Drake, James D. 1999. *King Philip's War: Civil War in New England, 1675–1676*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Eayrs, James. 1964. *In Defence of Canada: From the Great War to the Great Depression*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Eccles, William J. 1990. *France in America*. Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

Ericson, Magnus. 2000. "A Realist Stable Peace: Power, Threat, and the Development of a Shared Norwegian-Swedish Democratic Security Identity 1905–1940." PhD diss., Lund University.

Gibson, Frederick W., and Jonathan G. Rossie, eds. 1993. *The Road to Ogdensburg: The Queen's/St. Lawrence Conferences on Canadian-American Affairs, 1935–1941*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Gravel, Jean-Yves. 1974. *Le Québec et la guerre*. Montréal: Boréal Express.

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

- Haglund, David G. 2012. "Mexico's Place in Regional and Global Security: Toward a North American Security 'Imaginary'?" In *The State and Security in Mexico: Transformation and Crisis in Regional Perspective*, edited by Brian Bow and Arturo Santa Cruz, 173–191. New York: Routledge.
- Haglund, David G. 2015. *Ethnic Diasporas and the Canada-United States Security Community: From the Civil War to Today*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Haglund, David G. 2017. "The Paradigm that Dare Not Speak Its Name: Canadian Foreign Policy's Uneasy Relationship with Realist IR Theory." *International Journal* 72, no. 2 (June): 230–242.
- Hillmer, Norman. 1976. "The Anglo-Canadian Neurosis: The Case of O. D. Skelton." In *Britain and Canada: Survey of a Changing Relationship*, edited by Peter Lyon, 61–84. London: Frank Cass,
- Hillmer, Norman. 2004–5. "O. D. Skelton and the North American Mind." *International Journal* 60, no. 1 (Winter): 93–110.
- Hillmer, Norman, ed. 2013. *O. D. Skelton: The Work of the World, 1923–1941*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Hillmer, Norman, and J. L. Granatstein. 1994. *Empire to Umpire: Canada and the World to the 1990s*. Toronto: Copp Clark Longman.
- Hitchens, Christopher. 2004. *Blood, Class, and Empire: The Enduring Anglo-American Relationship*. New York: Nation Books.
- Hunt, George T. 1960. *The Wars of the Iroquois: A Study in Intertribal Trade Relations*. 2nd ed. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Kant, Immanuel. [1795] 1991. "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch." In *Kant: Political Writings*, edited by Hans Reiss, 93–130. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Kupchan, Charles A. 2010. *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Leach, Douglas. 1958. *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War*. New York: Macmillan.
- Lennox, Patrick. 2009. *At Home and Abroad: The Canada-US Relationship and Canada's Place in the World*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Lepore, Jill. 1998. *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*. New York: A. A. Knopf.
- Macdonald, James A. 1917. *The North American Idea*. Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart.

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

- Marche, Stephen. 2012. "That Time We Beat the Americans: A Citizen's Guide to the War of 1812." *The Walrus* (March): 24–31.
- Mason, Dwight N. 2005. "The Canadian-American North American Defence Alliance in 2005." *International Journal* 60, no. 2 (Spring): 385–396.
- Matthews, Elizabeth G., and Rhonda L. Callaway, 2017. *International Relations: A Primer*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mazower, Mark. 1999. *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*. New York: A. A. Knopf.
- McHenry, James. [1787] 1906. "Papers of Dr. James McHenry on the Federal Convention of 1787." *American Historical Review* 11, no. 3 (April): 595–624.
- Melvoin, Richard I. 1989. *New England Outpost: War and Society in Colonial Deerfield*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Morone, James A. 2003. *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Morton, Louis. 1960. "Germany First: The Basic Concept of Allied Strategy in World War II." In *Command Decisions*, edited by Kent Roberts Greenfield, 12–22. Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army.
- Patsias, Caroline, and Dany Deschênes. 2011. "Unsociable Sociability: The Paradox of Canadian-American Friendship." *International Politics* 48, no. 1 (January): 92–111.
- Peckham, Howard H. 1964. *The Colonial Wars, 1689–1762*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Perkins, Bradford. 1968. *The Great Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1895–1914*. New York: Atheneum.
- Preston, Richard A. 1977. *The Defence of the Undefended Border: Planning for War in North America, 1867–1939*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Rock, Stephen R. 1989. *Why Peace Breaks Out: Great Power Rapprochement in Historical Perspective*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Roussel, Stéphane. 2004. *The North American Democratic Peace: Absence of War and Security Institution-Building in Canada-US Relations, 1867–1958*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Safire, William. 1985. "There, There." *New York Times Magazine*, May 19, p. 20.
- Schake, Kori. 2017. *Safe Passage: The Transition from British to American Hegemony*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Origins and Evolution of the North American Stable Peace

Steele, Ian Kenneth. 1969. *Guerillas and Grenadiers: The Struggle for Canada, 1689-1760*. Toronto: Ryerson Press.

Taylor, Alan. 2010. *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies*. New York: A. A. Knopf.

Vucetic, Srdjan. 2011. "A Racialized Peace? How Britain and the US Made Their Relationship Special." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 7, no. 4 (October): 403-421.

Waltz, Kenneth N. 1962. "Kant, Liberalism, and War." *American Political Science Review* 56, 2 (June): 331-340.

Watts, Steven. 1987. *The Republic Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal America, 1790-1820*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Webb, Stephen Saunders. 1984. *1676: The End of American Independence*. New York: A. A. Knopf.

Zilio, Michelle. 2019. "Canadians More Positive about Ties with Europe Than with the U.S., China: Poll." *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), May 3, p. A6.

David G. Haglund

Queen's University, Canada