

# The Inevitability of Integration? Neoliberal Discourse and the Proposals for a New North American Economic Space after September 11

Emily Gilbert

*University of Toronto*

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 had an immediate impact on Canada–U.S. relations. Whereas security became foremost among U.S. concerns, Canada became preoccupied with ensuring that the newly fortified border would not impede trade. Within days of the attacks, Canadian analysts argued that the only way to guarantee open access to U.S. markets would be to negotiate some form of deeper North American economic integration. Previous proposals for a North American Monetary Union were revived, while new initiatives such as a customs union or a “strategic bargain” also emerged. These schemes were designed to forge a “new economic space” in North America. Business think tanks and interest groups played a central role in pushing forward a platform of deeper integration, but the ideas have also made their way into the policy platforms of the Canadian federal government. This paper draws upon discourse analysis and theories of governmentality to interrogate the rhetoric of inevitability that has underpinned these proposals. The fatalism has been justified by allusions to the shifting North American geopolitical relations in the post-September 11 context and the fear and risk that have prevailed since the terrorist attacks. It also, however, resonates more broadly with neoliberal and globalizing narratives that externalize and naturalize market forces, and, therefore, limit alternative futures. More importantly, the logic and language of inevitability have provided advocates of deeper integration with a strategic manoeuvre to downplay concerns regarding the loss of political sovereignty and the transformations to state–society relationships that would result from the new North American economic space that is being imagined. *Key words:* *Economic Integration, Neoliberalism, September 11, Canada, United States.*

Nothing is inevitable provided you are willing to pay attention.

—Marshall McLuhan

Writing just weeks after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States, one of Canada’s leading historians, Michael Bliss, observed that, “[a]lthough we may chant the camp songs of Canadian sovereignty, there is probably no turning back. We are heading toward some kind of greater North American union” (Bliss 2001b, A1). A day later, liberal nationalist Richard Gwyn chimed in with his assessment of the impact of September 11 on Canadian sovereignty, captured by his newspaper byline: “We must accept the inevitable” (Gwyn 2001). James Travers, in a commentary that first appeared in the *Toronto Star*, echoed this view: “Call it traitorous, inevitable or simply necessary but recognize that Canada is on track and moving fast toward greater integration with the United States” (Travers 2001, A6). By the end of November 2001, Bliss had already begun to ruminate over the nature of the union:

Perhaps the logic of free trade and 9/11 will lead to the explicit harmonization of continental tariff and immigration policies, security and defence. Gradually Canada’s tax policies will have to be harmonized with those of the nearby US states. The debate on a common currency is not likely to recede. As American economic influence on Canada continues to evolve, the pressure for erasing the border in every non-political way will be irresistible. (Bliss 2001a, A18)

A year later, the discussion of economic integration had not let up and was still framed in terms of a rhetoric of inevitability. Perrin Beatty, president and CEO of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters and founder of the Coalition for Secure and Trade Efficient Borders,<sup>1</sup> pronounced that “[a] new North American partnership is inevitable. It will come either by default, as the forces of technology, commerce and common security bind the three countries more closely together, or by design, if politicians, with advice and support from the business community among others, create a compelling vision of a true North American community” (Beatty 2002, FP15). In January 2003, in a series of New Year’s reflections in

the *National Post*, Bliss reiterated his earlier views on integration, but now with the suggestion that a U.S.-led North American confederation was imminent (Bliss 2003, A14).

Why has this alarmist rhetoric of “inevitable” integration been so prevalent? In large part, this discourse has emerged in response to the clampdown on the U.S. border in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11. The sustained U.S. preoccupation with homeland security has hardened the forty-ninth parallel. Peter Andreas writes that “[i]n both political debates and policy practice, borders are very much back in style” (Andreas 2003, 1). In Canada, while security issues have not been unimportant, the U.S. fixation with border security has been of most concern, largely because it affects cross-border trade. Thanks to successive free trade agreements, Canada and the United States are the most economically interdependent countries of the world: nearly \$2 billion CDN in trade passes across the Canada–U.S. border every day, and over 14 million trucks and 220 million people cross each year. While it is certainly true that the United States benefits to a certain degree from its trade with Canada—25 percent of U.S. foreign trade is with Canada, with exports making up 2.5 percent of U.S. GDP—Canada is *dependent* on its trade with the United States: it sends 87 percent of its exports to U.S. markets, which comprises over 35 percent of Canadian GDP (Andreas 2003, 12). When the United States shut down its airspace and land borders in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks, this stream of cross-border movement was curtailed. At the largest crossing at Windsor-Detroit, lineups of trucks reached over thirty-five kilometers long (Hart and Dymond 2001, 7). Even once the border reopened, passage continued to be slow, thanks to more careful security and customs checks (SCFAIT 2001b). The economic impact was immediate. Among the first casualties was the auto industry. In the weeks following the attacks, Ford temporarily closed its engine assembly plants in Windsor, Ontario, and in St. Thomas, Ontario, production decreased. Altogether, the auto industry reported that they “assembled 47,000 fewer vehicles in September-October than anticipated by their production plans” (Molot and Hillmer 2002, 17). As Stephen Clarkson has noted, the border holdups threatened the whole just-in-time production strategy upon which the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was premised, and upon which it depended—with the potential outcome “a monumental disaster with an impact no less significant than the destruction of New York’s twin trade towers” (Clarkson 2001, 8; see also SCFAIT 2001b).<sup>2</sup>

Yet Canada was cast not simply as a victim of the new U.S. retrenchment, but as a source of the problem. New York Senator Hillary Clinton, among others, blamed the porous northern border for enabling the terrorists to enter the United States. Television programs such as “The West Wing” and “America’s Most Wanted” encouraged the perception that the terrorists had entered the United States through Canada (Clarkson 2003, 76). This myth persisted even after the allegations were proven false and it was discovered that none of the terrorists had entered the United States from Canada, but, rather, that several of them held U.S.-issued visas (Hart and Dymond 2001, 39; Dobson 2002, 5; Roach 2003, 5). The concern was fueled by an earlier incident. In December 1999, Ahmed Ressam was arrested at the Washington–British Columbia border. His car, which had just arrived off the ferry from Victoria, British Columbia, was found to be full of bomb-making equipment, destined for the Los Angeles International Airport. The arrest reinvigorated longstanding U.S. doubts about lenient Canadian security and policing, especially when it was found that Ressam had immigrated to Canada on a false passport and had later acquired false Canadian documents. Ressam had been ordered deported when his refugee claim was abandoned, but no deportation had taken place. Although he was not the first to be arrested trying to cross the border with explosives, Ressam’s case has frequently been held up by both Canadians and Americans as emblematic of Canada’s lax immigration policies (Rekai 2002, 13; Thompson and Randall 2002, 312).<sup>3</sup>

After Ressam’s arrest, the United States moved quickly to debate the security threat posed by Canada, with hearings held in January 2000 by the Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims of the House Judiciary Committee (Sands 2002, 63). Thus, in the months leading up to September 11, suspicions about the porous Canada–U.S. border were already high. After September 11, anxieties festered. For the Canadian business community, alleviating these anxieties has been crucial. Security cooperation has been seen as helpful to this end, but it has not been deemed sufficient for offsetting U.S. concerns about an open border. Hence, alongside the discussions regarding border security, in the three years since the terrorist attacks, there have emerged numerous proposals on how to forge a new North American economic agreement. That Canada should want to secure its access to U.S. markets in a heightened security context is not surprising. What bears further attention, however, is why the discussion of deepening economic integration has so often been presented in terms of a discourse of inevitability. Why has this discourse of

inevitability emerged? Who has deployed such terminology and why has it become so prevalent? What have been its effects, whether in terms of public perception or government policy? And, finally—and this is especially important—how has a logic of inevitability framed the options that have been placed on the table with respect to the future of the Canada–U.S. relationship? Thus, while the abundant use of the term *inevitability* is the focus of attention here, this article is not simply concerned with the word itself, but, to draw upon the words of Nikolas Rose, how language “functions in connection with other things, what it makes possible, the surfaces, networks and circuits around which it flows, the artifacts and passions that it mobilizes and through which it mobilizes” (Rose 2002, 29).

The importance of discourse analysis and ideas of governmentality to the examination of “inevitability” will be discussed in more detail below. Before doing so, however, I begin in the next section with an overview of the major proposals for deeper North American economic integration. The first of these is North American Monetary Union (NAMU), an idea that first drew national interest in 1999. Monetary union was presented as a mechanism for bettering the Canadian economy, but also for ensuring greater coherence with U.S. markets. While interest in a NAMU rose after the terrorist attacks of September 11, support has since waned as monetary union provides no mechanism for helping to diffuse the heightened security concerns of the United States. Instead, support in Canada has shifted toward other models of integration along the lines of a customs union and/or a common market, to be combined with security measures and other issues such as energy. After this review, I provide a more careful examination of how these various proposals have been underpinned by a language and logic of inevitability. The following section links this fatalism to the ongoing security concerns in North America and how the lingering fears and risks associated with terrorism have been manipulated to make the case for deeper integration. But it is not simply that the United States has pressed Canada to change its domestic policies, but that the cooperation between the two countries that has ensued in areas such as security and immigration have effectively established the conditions to make deeper economic integration more feasible and more likely. There is yet another dimension to this discourse. As I argue in the penultimate section, the fatalistic logic has been mobilized to make more acceptable the neoliberal precepts that lie behind the various proposals that, if implemented, would result in significant challenges to national sovereignty and to values that have been traditionally identified as typically

Canadian. A language of inevitability, I argue, harnesses facts and figures, institutions, and practices in such a way as to legitimate particular kinds of neoliberal proposals in the name of national sovereignty while, at the same time, limiting the options that can be placed on the table for discussion. It is this fatalism that has infused the proposals with their greatest potency.

As I have intimated above, discussions regarding new continental arrangements are not in themselves new. Bliss, Beatty, and others have made similar suggestions in the past. Nor is it surprising that much of this rhetoric has originated from right-wing think tanks, such as the C. D. Howe and Fraser Institutes, or that the ideas have been most widely discussed in the *National Post*, Canada’s national, right-wing newspaper launched by Conrad Black’s Hollinger Inc. in 1998. What has changed, however, is how the debates have taken on a particular urgency since September 11. What has also changed is how this deepened economic integration has been increasingly presented as inevitable. This fatalism has quickly caught on, buoyed by the climate of risk and fear. As I shall discuss further below, there is rising support for deeper integration in the private sector, among business leaders, and at the central bank. Moreover, forging a “new economic space” in North America is now being formally considered in government documents and policy-making initiatives. There is thus an especial need to engage with these ideas, before the very rhetoric of inevitability that is presented becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

## The Proposals for a “New Economic Space” in North America

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, the Canadian business community has pressed for the extension and deepening of the trade relationships set out in Canada–U.S. Free Trade Agreement (CUFTA) and NAFTA.<sup>4</sup> One such proposal, which was already being discussed prior to the terrorist attacks, was the possibility of a North American Monetary Union (NAMU). The idea for a NAMU had emerged in full force in 1999 with the publication of two policy papers on the subject, the first by Thomas Courchene and Richard Harris (1999), and the second by Herbert Grubel (1999). The eruption of the debate in 1999 was prompted by the advent that year of the Euro as a unit of account (Buiter 1999). But there were also domestic reasons, particularly the declining Canadian dollar, which was hovering at a then all-time low of 68 cents U.S. (it would later drop to below 63 cents U.S.). While there was widespread

acknowledgement that the Canadian dollar was undervalued in relation to the country's positive economic performance, the devalued currency was nonetheless blamed for a whole range of effects including a lower standard of living in Canada compared to the United States; the brain drain to the United States; the significantly lower productivity rates in Canada; and a "lazy," uncompetitive economy, too reliant on resources, and not keeping up with the times (Grubel 1999, 14; Landry 2000, 35; Courchene 2001, 5; McIver 2001, 2). Moreover, the fluctuations of the currency were also criticized because of the instability that they wreaked on Canada-U.S. trade; both importers and exporters incurred a variety of hedging costs as they sought to minimize the risks associated with future currency uncertainties.

The advocates of NAMU suggested that a monetary union would help to solve all the above problems. It would do away with the risks associated with trade in multiple currencies. Transaction costs, which by some estimates total \$3 billion CDN annually, would be eliminated (Robson and Laidler 2002, 3; SCFAIT 2002b; but see Williams 2001). Canadian businesses would no longer be able to use the low dollar as a crutch. The harmonization of interest rates with the United States, and the fiscal discipline that this would require, would be an added bonus for those more critical of Bank of Canada monetary policy and Canadian social spending (e.g., Grubel 1999; McIver 2001). It was also assumed that monetary union would help to increase trade among the member countries—with some projections of an increase of between 30 and 50 percent, with a corresponding rise in GDP (Carmichael 2002, 3; see also Robson and Laidler 2002, 4). Finally, advocates of NAMU warned that a monetary union was the only way to prevent increasing market dollarization—that is, the rising ad hoc use of U.S. money in the Canadian market—that could create a "slippery slope" whereby the U.S. dollar would become the de facto currency used in Canada (Courchene and Harris 1999, 21; see also Grubel 1999; Williams 2001).

Once the proposals for NAMU were out in the public domain, they received widespread media attention. Support from the business community, however, was qualified at best. No coalition in favor of NAMU emerged along the lines of the intensive networks of support that pushed forward the original free trade agreement (Helleiner 2003a). When the issue was raised in the House of Commons, it was quickly dismissed, and no senior members of government expressed support for NAMU. In fact, the current prime minister, Paul Martin, has explicitly rejected this option in the past. For, despite the promises presented by NAMU advocates, numerous

problems have been identified. Economists have argued that the two economies are not similar enough to warrant a common currency, while others have expressed concern that the asymmetry of the Canada-U.S. relationship would undermine Canadian sovereignty (see Gilbert 2004). Without strong support among either the business community or the government, the NAMU proposals waned considerably at the beginning of the new millennium.

After the attacks of September 11, however, there was a sudden surge of interest in NAMU. A survey undertaken in November 2001, for example, indicated that an astonishing 54 percent of business leaders believed that Canada should adopt outright the U.S. dollar (Vardy and Thorpe 2001, FP2; Carmichael 2002, 2). A month later, Paul Tellier, who was then president and CEO of CN Railways, urged a serious consideration of monetary union, the first such statement by the CEO of a leading Canadian company. Less than a year later, and just days after the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks, Alcan Inc. came out with the first outright declaration of support for a North American currency by a major Canadian corporation (Merszei 2002, FP1). This spate of support from the business community was also manifest in public opinion. A NFO survey in March/April 2002 showed that 31 percent of respondents (and 43.6 percent in Quebec) were willing to use the U.S. currency, with slightly more Canadians (34 percent, and 39.8 percent in Quebec) supporting the creation of a North American currency (NFO 2002).<sup>5</sup> By October 2002, support for a common currency was even stronger. A poll by Environics for the Centre for Research and Information found that 53 percent of the public was favorable to a common currency (MacDonald 2002, A21).

Despite the growth in support, the issue once again receded, and discussions of monetary union faded into the background. There were several reasons, many economic, including the surge in value of the Canadian dollar, which in the second quarter of 2003 leapt above 77 cents U.S., the highest that it had reached in a decade. But it was also clear to many analysts that U.S. interest in a NAMU was muted at best. Security at the U.S.-Canada border continued to be their most pressing and enduring concern, and a NAMU offered little if anything in the way of mitigating these concerns. Thus, interest shifted toward presenting the United States with another kind of proposal, a "big idea" that could capture U.S. attention.<sup>6</sup> The first such proposal emerged just weeks after the terrorist attacks. Michael Hart and Bill Dymond, both former trade officials during the CUFTA negotiations, argued for presenting the United States with a new Canadian initiative, much as had been done

in the CUFTA negotiations of the 1980s (Hart and Dymond 2001, 1). They proposed deepening trade more incrementally than would a NAMU, but argued for including other items of interest to the United States in the mix, such as security and immigration. Only by linking economic and security concerns, they suggested, could a future “North America that is more open, more secure, and more prosperous” be ensured (*ibid.*, 4).

The need for a “big idea” was reiterated in the first of the Border Series papers issued by the C. D. Howe Institute, a right-leaning research institute that published Courchene and Harris’s proposal for a NAMU. Wendy Dobson’s (2002) paper, *Shaping the Future of the North American Economic Space*, became a catalyst for discussions of North American integration. Like Hart and Dymond, she too recommends that Canada put forth a “big idea” to pique the interest of the United States. Her preferred model is a “strategic bargain” that would extend the liberalization of trade begun with CUFTA by implementing elements of both a customs union and a common market. A customs union, often seen as the next step after free trade, would establish common external tariff rates and hence do away with complex rules of origin regulations and the paperwork associated with them.<sup>7</sup> In several sectors, Canada and the United States already have common external tariffs, so it has been suggested that an incremental customs union could be easily implemented (see Goldfarb 2003). But even a minimal customs union would have significant impact. In terms of external tariffs, Canadian policy would have to change so that its Most Favored Nation trading provisions were kept in line with those of the United States. This move would entail the renegotiation of parts of the trade agreements that Canada has with other countries, as well as coming to terms with special cases such as Cuba (Goldfarb 2003, 23). The region would also have only one voice in multilateral negotiations—just as the European Union has only one voice at the WTO—which makes it likely that Canada’s ability to push for exemptions on health and social services in future trade negotiations would be impeded (Jackson 2003, 31).

Taking a customs union a step further would involve the creation of a common market union, whereby not only the movement of goods would be liberated, but also the movement of capital and people. Here too there is already some coherence between the United States and Canada. There are few restrictions on the movement of capital, for example, and there are already provisions in place to facilitate cross-border employment and relocation, although almost exclusively for the professional and business classes. Dobson’s “big idea” would immediately formalize the elements of a customs union and a com-

mon market already in place, with the ultimate aim of extending their reach and breadth (Dobson 2002, 19, 29). With respect to labor, the arguments made are quite limited, with suggestions that only the movement of the elite should be further liberalized (*ibid.*, 8; see also CCCE 2004). Significant changes could be implemented in the realm of taxation, however, especially with respect to the differentials regarding “withholding taxes on dividends, interest, and other payments of income to nonresidents” and greater harmonization of corporate income tax—changes that would reduce Canada’s taxation income (Dobson 2002, 9). The new, more harmonized economic area that would result would be further defined and delimited by the hardening of a secure perimeter, established and sustained by cooperation on immigration policies, military defense, and border security. Other issues, such as energy security, could also be included in the negotiations, as these would be of particular interest to the United States and would also draw the two countries more closely together. Transnational governance structures would be circumvented by relying on market pressures and directives to guide the cross-border coordination.

For Dobson, director of the Institute of International Business and Professor at the Joseph L. Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, only such a “radical” package of initiatives, or “big idea,” would garner enough interest from the United States to compel a renegotiation of the terms of NAFTA (Dobson 2002, 25). This position is widespread, and numerous variants on the “big idea” have been advanced (e.g., Beatty 2002; d’Aquino 2003b; Gotlieb 2003; Segal 2003). Allan Gotlieb, former Canadian ambassador to the United States, has presented his own version, which is to create a North American “community of law” modeled on the single European economic space, but designed with the specific dynamics of North America in mind. Despite the emphasis on the legal realm, this “grand bargain,” as Gotlieb calls his proposal, is similar to Dobson’s “big idea” in that it would include elements of a customs union and a common market, and would also address border concerns around immigration and homeland security (Gotlieb 2003, 28). These themes are reiterated in the many publications arising out of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE), an organization that played a central role in pushing forward the discussions on free trade in the 1980s under its previous moniker, the Business Council on National Issues. The CCCE’s vision also includes aspects of a customs union, alongside the increased mobility of skilled labor, and cooperation on security and defense issues (d’Aquino 2003b, 9). All of these proposals clearly link

economic and border security issues, a strategy that some U.S. analysts have agreed will be necessary to secure U.S. interest (Hufbauer and Schott 2004, 7).

The proposals described above have all emanated from business interests, but they have quickly moved beyond that community to be accepted by government representatives. Stephen Harper, former leader of the Canadian Alliance party and the recently elected leader of the newly re-formed Conservative Party, has lent his support to a form of “strategic partnership” with the United States “that would link freer flows of goods, services, labour, capital and technology with improvements in continental security” (CCCE 2004, 2). The Conservative Party platform, released during the run-up to the federal election of 28 June 2004, also clearly outlined these same goals, drawing heavily from the program set out by the CCCE. Even the usually more neutral Governor of the Bank of Canada, David Dodge, has publicly ruminated on the benefits of deeper integration, evoking models of both customs unions and common markets as viable options. In a presentation to the Commons Finance Committee on 23 October 2002, he “advocated a radical update of the original NAFTA agreement, implemented by the Chrétien government in 1993. His most specific recommendation was that there ought to be a free flow of labour and capital, as well as goods and services, across the Canada–U.S. border” (Newman 2002, 46; see also Dodge 2002; Goldfarb 2003, 1, ft. 1). Members of the reigning Liberal Party have also echoed these views, even in the halcyon days of the Jean Chrétien government when Canada–U.S. relations soured. A day after Dodge made his remarks to the Commons Finance Committee, Deputy Prime Minister John Manley made similar comments in favor of North American integration in public. This was followed, a day later, by a statement by International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew who announced that he had already begun discussions with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick along such lines. One day later, Prime Minister Chrétien also suggested, albeit in more muted tones, that it was time to renew NAFTA (Newman 2002, 46).

Furthermore, government policy documents increasingly reflect this agenda. In November 2002, the Canadian government circulated a brief, *Securing Growth: Beyond the Border Accord*, that proposed moving toward greater regulatory harmonization of goods that cross the border—effectively a NAFTA-plus kind of agreement, with due attention to continental energy security, as suggested in Dobson’s proposal (Fagan 2003, 38). One of the recommendations of the 2002 report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (SCFAIT) was for the government to undertake a review

of the viability of a customs union. In 2003, the federal government think tank, the Policy Research Initiative (PRI), put the assessment of a customs union front and center in its North America Linkages project, with an affirmation that economic and security issues would need to be linked. Finally, under the current leadership of Prime Minister Paul Martin, who succeeded Jean Chrétien on 12 December 2003, many more initiatives have been put in place to affirm the importance of the Canada–U.S. relationship and to affirm Canada’s concern with security matters. On his first day in office, Prime Minister Martin set up a new Cabinet Committee on Canada–U.S. Relations, to be chaired by the prime minister, reinforced by a Secretariat on Canada–U.S. Relations in the Privy Council Office, as well as a Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister on Canada–U.S. Relations. Alongside these new committees and offices, a series of new security positions have also been enacted, from a minister of public safety and emergency preparedness, to national security advisor to the prime minister in the Privy Council office, to the creation of the Canada Border Services Agency.

That the terrorist attacks of September 11 prompted a reconfiguration of Canada–U.S. relations and the introduction of new Canadian policies is not in itself a surprise. The Canadian government has been anxious to anticipate U.S. concerns and adjust domestic policy priorities. The United States has, after all, modified its own domestic and international priorities—necessarily including its relationship to Canada—in the aftermath of these events. The importance of Canadian business interests in pushing forward the Canadian agenda, however, needs further attention. Spokesmen behind the current proposals for deeper integration, such as Thomas d’Aquino and Paul Tellier, were also key players behind the push for a free trade agreement in the 1980s and are again proving just as effective in promoting their current agenda. As a result, a growing consensus has emerged that the question is no longer *if* increasing integration should take place, but *how* Canada might negotiate the terms of a new agreement. While the proposals have yet to be implemented in full, the discussion has moved quickly from private sector publications and media statements, to government directives and policy initiatives. This agenda is no longer simply the idle musing of interested parties, but a program that is being ingrained into policy documents and into government practices. In the following sections I turn to examine the ways that a rhetoric of inevitability has been deployed to encourage the acceptance of this agenda and to limit the alternatives that have been put forward.

## The Inevitability of Integration

How have so many “experts”—analysts, policy makers, politicians, and academics—arrived at this consensus around deeper integration? I suggest that instrumental to this consensus making has been the language and logic of “inevitability” that has propelled the discussions. As noted above, many of the very first responses to the events of September 11 drew upon this language to characterize the future shape of North American geopolitical relations. It also permeated the NAMU proposals when they were revived in the weeks after the terrorist attacks. When Paul Tellier suggested in December 2001 that a monetary union warranted closer attention, he did so by assuring his audience that economic integration “will continue. It is *inevitable*. It is irreversible. It’s happening on a global basis, and it’s certainly happening in North America” (Tellier 2001, emphasis added). Soon thereafter, Richard Harris, one of the early proponents of NAMU and an economics professor at Simon Fraser University (British Columbia), pressed his case using a similar rhetoric, maintaining that “the adoption of the U.S. dollar is already taking place through financial markets, along with other mechanisms, and is *inevitable* as a natural outgrowth of the ongoing integration of North American and particular US and Canadian economies” (Scotton 2002, D4, emphasis added). As support for monetary union grew among the business community, so too did a sense of inevitability. In Quebec, where support for closer U.S. ties was greatest, not only did 52.5 percent indicate that a future monetary union was possible, but another 18.4 percent of respondents believed monetary union to be “inevitable” (Carmichael 2002, 2). That respondents were even asked to comment on inevitability is suggestive of how widespread the framing of the debates in these terms had become.

Similarly, the language of inevitability was used with respect to the other proposals for integration. Sherry Cooper, vice president and chief economist of BMO Nesbitt Burns and one of Canada’s more lauded economic forecasters, has proclaimed that the “Canadian economy will benefit from further economic integration. Indeed, the integration is *inevitable*” (Cooper 2002, FP15, emphasis added). In March 2003, Perrin Beatty, CEO of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, and founder of the Coalition for Secure and Trade Efficient Borders, repeated almost verbatim his comments on inevitability made the previous year (cited above), although now they were presented to a largely U.S. audience, the Canada–Minnesota Business Council and the Minnesota Business Partnership (Baxter 2003, A3). The

term *inevitability* has also cropped up in government studies of the Canada–U.S. relationship, in comments made by industry representatives such as Richard Paton, president of the Canadian Chemical Producers’ Association, and Sean McCarthy, of the Newfoundland Branch of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (SSCFA 2003, 84; SCFAIT 2002b, 23). Professor Louis Balthazar of Laval University in Quebec echoed this perspective in his presentation to the SCFAIT committee when he “suggested that a customs union with the United States is eventually *inevitable*, given the tremendous economic integration that currently exists and the need to avoid costly border delays already experienced immediately following the events of September 11th” (SCFAIT 2002b, 192, emphasis added).

Even government has drawn upon a language of inevitability. The SCFAIT document, *Canada and the North American Challenge*, which sets out background materials for the discussion of the future of North America, draws upon this kind of terminology. In part VII, entitled “NAFTA and beyond: Next steps?” the first question presented for debate is: “What factors are fuelling the push toward greater North American economic integration? Is greater integration *inevitable*?” (SCFAIT 2002a, emphasis added). Several senior government figures have used the term. Jacques Saada, a Liberal MP from Montreal, and the Canadian chair of the Canadian–U.S. Permanent Joint Board on Defence, has said vis-à-vis the Canadian relationship to the United States, “We no longer have the luxury of remaining completely autonomous. Greater integration is unavoidable, *inevitable*, and necessary” (Fraser 2002, H01, emphasis added). And while Honorable John Manley, who was chair of the ad hoc committee on public security and antiterrorism (and later deputy prime minister and finance minister), doesn’t actually use the term “inevitable,” he has also evoked the logic of fatalism: “I don’t think there’s a policy choice here, as there is a reality that the North American economy, Canada, the United States, and Mexico, have integrated in the course of NAFTA over the last 10 years quite considerably and that is going to continue to be the case” (quoted in Beauchesne 2003, B2).

As Manley’s comments suggest, even where the precise term “inevitable” is not used, this logic of inexorability, of irreversibility, has permeated the discussions about the Canada–United States relationship (e.g., Hart and Dymond 2001; Dobson 2002; Goldfarb 2003; CCC 2003a, b; CCCE 2004). The title of Hart and Dymond’s report, for example, “Common Borders, Shared *Destinies*,” evokes this sense of fatalism. Similarly, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce submission to the Senate

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs declared that “the depth of Canada–U.S. business and economic integration may not be apparent to every Canadian but it is growing and deepening every day. Moreover, this is a process that is *irreversible*” (CCC 2003b, 3, emphasis added). The preamble of the recently released CCCE discussion paper, *New Frontiers*, begins with the statement: “North American economic integration is now well advanced and *irreversible*” (CCCE 2004, ii, emphasis added). While the use of the term *inevitable* is remarkable for its pervasiveness, it is just one manifestation of a broader tendency to describe deeper North American integration in fatalistic terms.

What difference does it make how the issues are presented and what language is used? Well, as the C. D. Howe Institute has recently acknowledged, “Canadians’ responses in opinion polls show that they are confused over—and do not favour—any policy described as *economic integration* with the United States. Still, they are open to improving the relationship with the United States. How matters are labeled can, in fact, have an impact on whether Canadians initially approve or disapprove of an initiative” (Alexandroff and Guy 2004, 1, emphasis in the original). That this report, published by the think tank that has produced the bulk of the discussion papers on integration, recognizes the importance of “spin” to the success of the proposals is indicative of the power of language to influence public opinion. But language just as likely affects the opinions of “experts” who help to produce the discourse and to frame the limits of what is imagined to be possible. Language encourages or formalizes structures of thought. It makes possible and legitimizes certain ways of thinking, of making sense of the world, while at the same time foreclosing other ways of thinking.

Several recent studies by geographers have pursued these issues in their examination of how language produces, reproduces, and regulates economic activity and economic spaces (e.g., Barnes 1996, 2003; Gibson-Graham 1996; Lee and Wills 1997; Gilbert 1998, 1999; Thrift 1998, 2000, 2001; Amin and Thrift 2000; Kelly 2001; Cameron and Gibson-Graham 2003). Philip Kelly, for example, contrasts the metaphors used by the political leaders in Singapore and Malaysia vis-à-vis the “Asian crisis” of the late 1990s to illustrate how the differing political narratives constructed by these countries reflect not only dissimilar understandings of cause and responsibility regarding the economic crises, but how these metaphorical representations correspond with different forms of government response. He argues that “exactly how the crisis is to be understood, where culpability is to be located, and how policy responses should

be formulated, are all embedded within the discourses of political power in particular contexts” (Kelly 2001, 720). As the above discussion of the proposals for deeper North American economic integration suggest, however, it is not only the state and its political representatives who can deploy language with effect. Policy makers, bankers, analysts, academics, and others all contribute to the production of consent around certain kinds of economic “truths” that work to structure events, practices, and interpretations. Nigel Thrift, writing about the dynamics of contemporary capitalism, calls this iterative process a “cultural circuit” that is an extensive chain of communication among various stakeholders, including “business schools, management consultants, management gurus and the media [that] has produced a process of continuing critique of capitalism, a feedback loop which is intended to keep capitalism surfing along the edge of its own contradictions” (Thrift 2001, 377).

These examples suggest that it is not so much that words on their own are particularly important to the production and reproduction of economic space, but how these words are uttered by authority figures, how they are linked to material practices, and how they produce and sustain relations of power. This way of thinking about the work of language is clearly indebted to the writings of Michel Foucault on discourse as the systematic articulation of statements—linguistic, material, and/or performative—that regulate and legitimize certain thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors (Foucault 1973). Where Foucault’s writing is particularly instructive is with regard to the links that he establishes between discourses, power, and truth, and the power relations necessary to give strength to particular articulations of truth. Foucault observes:

Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth—that is, the types of discourses that it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault 1994, 131)

Implicitly then, truths are constituted by and constitutive of power relations. The task is to understand how truths become spoken, which authorities lie behind the truth making, the conditions and institutions that make the authorities and their truths possible, and the social practices through which truths are produced and reproduced (Rose 2002, 30). Language is an important component of how truth claims and the discourses around them come to be expressed. The power of



language is hence precisely like that of the truth claims themselves, derived from the authority invested in the individuals, institutions, and organizations who issue the statements, including policy analysts, think tank pundits, and the media (Rose 2002, 4). The effects that the language is able to provoke, the ways that thought and action are limited by the statements that are uttered, and the social ordering that the discourse brings into being at particular times and places all speak to the power that can be wielded through language (Foucault 1973). J. K. Gibson-Graham, for example, explains how the use of a metaphor of rape to describe globalization can work to “normalize an act of non-reciprocal penetration” (Gibson-Graham 1996, 123). As she argues, the analogy makes possible a script for globalization whereby “the standardized and dominant globalization script constitutes noncapitalist economic relations as inevitably and only ever sites of potential invasion/envelopment/accumulation, sites that may be recalcitrant but are incapable of retaliation, sites in which cooperation in the act of rape is called for and ultimately obtained” (Gibson-Graham 1996, 126).<sup>8</sup> As I shall argue in the following sections, in the proposals for deeper North American economic integration, the language of “inevitability” has been deployed to encourage particular truth claims so as to normalize the reconfiguring of geopolitical relationships and the redefinition of sovereignty.

### Risk, Fear, and Inevitability

The language of inevitability described above can be understood as a specifically Canadian response to changing geopolitical relations after the terrorist attacks of September 11. But the trope of inevitability is just one local manifestation of a much more widespread discourse. Indeed, this language and logic draw strength from the ways that they resonate with broader narratives of economic neoliberalization and globalization. As Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell have pointed out,

Both [globalism and neoliberalism] have been associated with a mode of exogenized thinking in which globalism/neoliberalism is presented as a naturalized, external “force.” Both ascribe quasiclimatic, extraterrestrial qualities to apparently disembodied, “out there” forces, which are themselves typically linked to alleged tendencies towards homogenization, leveling out, and convergence. (Peck and Tickell 2002, 382)

Peck and Tickell thus suggest that a logic of externalization is part and parcel of the discourses around globalism and neoliberalism. It is used both to explain

and rationalize ongoing economic transformations, including the withdrawal of the state from regulatory procedures, the reduction of obstructions to the movement of money and capital, the greater regionalization of economies, and the increased measures to promote the efficiency of the workforce. For Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc Wacquant, these discourses have become so entrenched that they have become the new “commonsense,” or the new “planetary vulgate” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2001, 3).

One additional effect of this grand deployment of externalized or fatalistic languages is that it limits the imaginable alternatives. Globalization discourses become so naturalized that the integration, the homogenization, and the convergence that Peck and Tickell describe are presented as the only possible outcome, the only future (Peck and Tickell 2002, 382). Margaret Thatcher was eponymous with this kind of strategy as she pushed forward with her drastic economic transformations; her stock phrase about the economy, “There is no alternative,” was used so frequently that she was colloquially referred to TINA (an acronym of the phrase). Thatcher’s rhetoric was wielded so vigorously that she was able to disregard the many alternatives that were actually presented to her, whether by her own cabinet, or from outside, such as the letter, signed by 364 economists and published in *The Times* in 1980, soon after her first use of the term (McLean 2001, 225).

Underpinning this absolutist rhetoric is a sense of risk and fear that is attributed to other options, with taking another path, and hence which disciplines alternative visions. Indeed, Ulrich Beck argues that globalization discourses harness their strength from the “staging of threats. This is the realm of the ‘might,’ the ‘should,’ and the ‘if . . . then’” (Beck 2000, 122). Contemporary society is characterized in terms of risk, no longer beholden to the past, but constantly with an eye to the future, to the unknown (Beck 2000, 100). The future can hold much potential, but the fear of the unknown can also constrain: “The more threatening the shadows cast by future prospects, the most lasting are the disruptions that can be brought about today through the dramaturgy of risk” (Beck 2000, 100).

In Canada this fear has been rife. It is not simply that Canada was (wrongly) blamed in the immediate post-September 11 fallout, but there have been ongoing threats issued by high-placed U.S. spokesmen and picked up by Canadian business representatives. Just days after September 11, for example, U.S. Ambassador Paul Cellucci warned that it would be necessary to create a North American “security perimeter” to ensure that the border remained open. In an interview on PBS-TV,

former U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Richard Holbrooke, echoed these views: “Either the border is going to have to be closed, which would wreck the Canadian economy, or we’re going to have a common [security] perimeter” (Holbrooke, cited in Gwyn 2001, A13). Members of the Canadian business community chimed in with similar statements. Just four days after the terrorist attacks, for example, the CEO of Canadian Pacific stated that “Canada will have to adopt U.S.-style immigration policies if it doesn’t want the border between the two countries to become impossible to cross . . . We have to make North America secure from the outside. We’re going to lose increasingly our sovereignty, but necessarily so” (quoted in Roach 2003, 135). Such comments became common parlance among the business community. Three-quarters of Canadian chief executives polled in October 2001 indicated that they would welcome common immigrant and refugee policies if they would secure Canada–U.S. trade (Molot and Hillmer 2002, 18).

Canada’s decision not to participate in the aggression on Iraq became another tipping point. The business community argued against slighting the U.S. offensive because of the potential impact on free trade, even when polls indicated that two-thirds of Canadians were opposed to a unilateral war on Iraq (Sallot 2003, A15). Nancy Hughes Anthony, president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce is quoted as saying, “We do have to appreciate that this is a package deal here, that with the economic advantage of being north of the border comes also the kind of duty and responsibility of standing up for your friends in hard times” (cited in Chase and Kennedy 2003, B1). The fear of reprisal was borne out to a certain degree. Ambassador Cellucci said, “Ottawa’s decision to sit out the war may strain relations between the world’s two largest trading partners” (cited in Chase and Kennedy 2003, B1).<sup>9</sup> On 8 May 2003, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick announced that “any country wanting to establish free-trade agreements with the United States would have to agree to ‘co-operation or better on foreign policy and security issues’” (Zoellick, cited in Winham and Ostry 2003, A15). The intensified border security put in place by the United States after September 11 also did not bode well for keeping the border open. With the passing of the Patriot Act, the United States tripled its defense resources at the Canada–U.S. border (Hart and Dymond 2001, 39). The Homeland Security Advisory System also threatens border delays when the alert is raised, as it was before Christmas 2003, when a high (orange) alert was issued. There have also been concerns that the revival of Section 110 of the U.S. Customs Modernization Act—which requires that the U.S. Immigration and Natural-

ization Service track the entry and exit of all non-U.S. citizens—will bottleneck the free flow of people and trade at the border (Patrick 2003, A12).<sup>10</sup>

Yet Canada, in fact, moved quickly in the wake of the terrorist attacks to affirm its own commitment to anti-terrorism by introducing a slough of new policies in the realms of immigration and security. In terms of immigration policies, one month after the terrorist attacks, Elinor Caplan, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, announced a “five-part security strategy” to prevent terrorism and prosecute terrorists, with an investment of nearly \$50 million CDN. Plans were made “to conduct more thorough front-end screening of refugee claimants and increase the use of detention for security reasons,” which would result in longer detentions (Rekai 2002, 14). In June 2002, a new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act was passed. Already in the works before September 11, the act was significantly revised, with border issues in mind, to include a more explicit statement about security threats and reduced eligibility for refugee status (Clarkson 2002a, 18). In addition, Canada has cooperated with the United States with a “joint review, cooperation, and synchronization of [immigration] procedures” and a new “safe third-country agreement,” as well as more information sharing on immigration issues (Dobson 2002, 17; Rekai 2002, 14). While domestic security concerns have no doubt been one incentive for new policies, as Stephen Clarkson suggests, these changes “were used primarily to reassure the U.S. government that Canada was not in fact a terrorist mecca, and to send the message, through the new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, that Canada was no longer a ‘soft-touch’ for prospective immigrants” (Clarkson 2003, 80). Indeed, these policy changes have been implemented despite domestic concerns regarding the ways that security fears are being played out differentially on Canadian citizens; those of presumed Middle Eastern descent have been photographed, fingerprinted, and registered at the border. Rohinton Mistry, for example, canceled the U.S. book tour for his award-winning novel *Family Matters*, citing disagreeable treatment by customs agents at the border (Roach 2003, 12; see also Galloway 2003).<sup>11</sup>

The changes to immigration policy went hand in hand with other domestic antiterrorism measures, including the introduction, on 15 October 2001, of Bill C-36, the Anti-Terrorism Act (Daniels et al. 2001). The act had deterrence and punishment as its aim. Terrorism was added to the Criminal Code, as was support for terrorism, intentional or inadvertent, at home or abroad. Vocal and wide-ranging concerns that the breadth of the bill would infringe upon civil liberties and public protests

were presented, but the bill passed, with only a few amendments, on 29 November 2001 in a vote of 189 to 47 (Roach 2003, 8). It then was quickly approved in the Senate, without further amendments, and proclaimed into force on 24 December 2001 (Roach 2003, 21; see also Daniels et al. 2001). Domestic concerns were again behind the introduction of an Anti-Terrorism Act. But the government announcement of Bill C-36 made clear that one of the objectives of Canada's Anti-Terrorism Plan was to "prevent the Canada-U.S. border from being held hostage by terrorists and impacting on the Canadian economy."<sup>12</sup>

Canada has also intensified its border security, largely in response to the demands of the business community. On 26 November 2001, twenty-one business leaders from Canada and the United States signed a letter addressed to Prime Minister Chrétien and President Bush, arguing for the creation of a "zone of confidence" and a "smart border" to keep the border open to trade and investment.<sup>13</sup> The following month, Canada announced a "security budget" with nearly \$8 billion CDN for anti-terrorism and border security. In December, the 30-Point Smart Border Action Plan was signed into place by Deputy Prime Minister John Manley, and U.S. Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge. The plan included many provisions to track border crossings, with technological innovations such as iris-scanning technology, Permanent Resident Cards in Canada, and NEXUS biometric ID cards to preapprove travelers, measures that are now already in place at several border points (Janigan 2003). Security issues are paramount, but there is recognition that the liberal passage of "legitimate" goods and people needs to be preserved. Special provisions have been made for some goods, so that customs officers are placed at ports of origin to screen cargo, and Fast and Secure Trade (FAST) lanes have opened to speed up the commercial shipments of preapproved companies (Rekai 2002, 20; Janigan 2003). As a result, the "security perimeter" or "zone of confidence" that Holbrooke demanded is quickly sliding into place.

The extent to which Canada has cooperated and has sought to reconfigure its domestic policies has not gone unnoticed in the United States. In a presentation to SCFAIT in December 2001, Ambassador Cellucci observed that "the law enforcement and intelligence cooperation which had been very good even before September 11 can be characterized by the word 'extraordinary' right now" (SCFAIT 2001a). Clifford Krauss, writing in the *New York Times* in February 2002, noted that "Canada has thoroughly overhauled its security policy since the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States, tightening coordination with Washington in

military, intelligence and law enforcement matters while easing its traditional concerns over privacy and other civil liberties" (Krauss 2002, A8).<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, there is a lingering sense that not enough has been achieved. In Krauss's article, a senior Bush administration official is cited as saying, "They have done a lot, yes, but at the same time, they have a lot to do, and they know it" (Krauss 2002, A8). Indeed, that year, Ambassador Cellucci and President Bush made repeated calls—the latest at an international forum at a Prague summit of NATO—for Canada to increase its defense spending. In early December, Tom Ridge made it clear that "despite Canadian reservations, the United States is going to stick with its plan to toughen border security because it is worried about terrorists coming south from Canada" (Cienski 2002, A4).<sup>15</sup> The U.S. State Department report on global terrorism for 2002, released in May 2003, though it acknowledges Canada's "excellent" cooperation in the fight against terrorism, also makes it clear that "Canadian laws and regulations intended to protect Canadian citizens and landed immigrants from Government intrusion sometimes limit the depth of [anti-terrorism] investigations" (United States Department of State 2003, 98).

Hence, despite the numerous security and immigration changes introduced by the Canadian government, sometimes to considerable domestic opposition, U.S. concerns and threats over border closures persist. The connections that leading U.S. figures have drawn between trade and security and the thinly veiled threats that have been uttered by people such as Senator Clinton, Cellucci, Zoellick, and Holbrooke indicate that the fears that the Canadian business community will suffer the fallout of a heightened security environment are not unfounded. They go a great distance toward understanding how the two countries have responded to the terrorist attacks of September 11 in very different ways. Whereas the United States adopted nationalist strategies to push ahead their globalizing ambitions (see Smith 2001), Canada has sought to capture the continental scale. The risk and the fear that have been generated over trade relationships provide a good sense of why advocates would characterize deeper integration as necessary. Indeed, it is precisely these fears that have fueled proposals for deeper economic integration and that make such proposals so seductive. In the words of Thomas d'Aquino of the CCCE, "Because Canada faces the greatest risk, our country must take the lead in advancing new ideas" (d'Aquino 2003a, E2). The ongoing U.S. concerns about Canadian policies, however, suggest that this integration is hardly "inevitable." Indeed, in this respect, the rhetoric appears to be entirely

counterintuitive. So why, then, are such language and logic being deployed? What is it that this mode of framing the debates, this fatalism, makes possible for the advocates of deeper integration to push forward?

### What Kind of “New Economic Space”?

To put the question differently, if the imagined inevitability were actually to transpire, what kind of “governable” economic space would emerge? Framing the question in this way is a deliberate appeal to thinking through the issues in terms of the concept of governmentality, introduced by Foucault and since expanded by many others (e.g., Foucault 1991; Rose 2002; Barry et al. 1996; Bratich et al. 2003). Nikolas Rose offers a particularly useful version of governmentality that not only directly implicates space but also reflects upon the methodological dimensions of this approach. As he explains, *governmentality* very simply refers to “the conduct of conduct,” whereby *conduct* refers to “all endeavours to shape, guide, direct the conduct of others, whether these be the crew of a ship, the members of a household, the employees of a boss, the children of a family or the inhabitants of a territory” (Rose 2002, 3). This approach to political power draws attention away from an analysis of events and outcomes, to “that dimension of our history composed by the invention, contestation, operationalization, and transformation of more or less rationalized schemes, programmes, techniques and devices which seek to shape conduct so as to achieve certain ends” (Rose 2002, 20). In other words, this means thinking about the multifaceted ways that actions, thoughts, and beliefs are encouraged with particular outcomes in mind. With respect to discourses of globalization, Rose writes that this approach makes it possible to analyze “the shifting forces, conditions and forms of visibility that have allowed the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of economic government, [and] the emergence of a novel conception of economic space” (Rose 2002, 34).

I argue that in the case of deeper economic integration, a language of inevitability has been deployed to rationalize the creation of what Wendy Dobson calls a “new economic space,” to bring it into being, to make it real and visible. But what is the “new economic space” that is envisioned by Dobson and others? It is not simply a stronger continental region in which extant cross-border trade is deepened to offset heightened border concerns since September 11. Rather, it is a new form of neoliberalized space in which the sovereignty of national governments is redefined and undermined. Whether national governments are actually sovereign is much

disputed. But what differentiates these proposals is that government is forcefully displaced. Limited forms of governance and citizenship are envisioned for the “new economic space” that would be governed largely by market forces, and, as a result, inter-state and state-society would both be reconfigured. It is in this latter respect, in terms of this new vision of state-society relations, that the allusions to inevitability have been particularly strategic. Drawing upon the 1999 proposals for NAMU at this point is useful, because these earlier proposals also worked with an implicit logic of inexorability. As noted briefly above, one of the key rationales for proposing a NAMU was to present a “made-in-Canada” solution to deal with the threat of market dollarization (Courchene and Harris 1999). If Canada did not act quickly, it was argued, it would soon be swept up under U.S. monetary control, much like the dollarized countries of Latin America. A NAMU, by contrast, would enable some Canadian input on monetary policy by providing for the creation of North American Central Bank (NACB) that would likely include one Canadian seat alongside the twelve representatives from U.S. district banks who now sit on the Federal Market Open Committee (Grubel 1999, 5). National symbols might even be retained on one side of the new paper currency, which Grubel names the “amero” (Grubel 1999, 5; Courchene and Harris 1999, 24). But even the advocates of NAMU agreed that it would result in the end of sovereignty over monetary policy and that the state would have, at best, only minimal representation in any new institutions, such as the NACB, that would be formed (Courchene and Harris 1999, 23). What makes this scenario palatable to its proponents, however, is the argument that monetary union would *at least* enable a minimal contribution to policy making in the new monetary area, whereas the alternative that is present—dollarization—permits none at all.

The parallels with the “big idea” proposals are clear. As described above, Canada is presented with two choices: integrate, or the \$2 billion CDN in trade that passes the border every day will be shut down. Since the loss of trade is characterized as unsustainable, integration becomes the only alternative. But, just as with NAMU, advocates of a “big idea” have been at great pains to assert that their proposals offer the best possible scenario under the circumstances. It is contended that this made-in-Canada proposal will provide Canada with a modicum of say in terms of how the “inevitable” integration with the United States will unfold (Hart and Dymond 2001; Dobson 2002; SCFAIT 2002b; CCCE 2004). In fact, advocates of a “big idea” have gone to great lengths to insist that their models of integration

have advantages for Canada and to deflect the criticisms that their proposals will end political sovereignty—perhaps having learned from the free trade debates of the 1980s and 1990s and the NAMU debates of 1999, that sovereignty is the bugbear that can derail public and government support. Dobson, for example, assures her readers that Canadian “sensitivities” will be taken into consideration, that the “next steps must be ones that preserve and enhance political independence and distinctive national institutions,” while the CCCE report insists that “Canada must affirm a vibrant independence and distinct personality in North America and the world” (Dobson 2003, A15; CCCE 2004, 2). None of these assertions about Canadian distinctiveness are unpacked any further, but their vagueness speaks to pervasive concerns regarding the preservation of national sovereignty when dealing with the United States (e.g., Barlow 2004; Campbell 2003; Dobbin 2003; Jackson 2003).

There is very little indication, however, as to how Canada’s national institutions or policies are to be secured in the “new economic space,” particularly given the asymmetrical power of the United States and Canada. On the one hand, the arguments for a “big idea” are being put forward because Canada is said to be at the mercy of U.S. border decisions. If no agreement is negotiated, we are led to believe, border problems will become so pressing that for Canada to retain its economic viability, it would necessitate assimilation into the United States. Yet, on the other hand, when it comes to the negotiations, advocates such as Dobson present quite the opposite scenario. She suggests that the United States and Canada would hold similar bargaining positions because “once such discussions began, the United States would become an equal partner. Harmonization may be proposed, but the other partner has a say in whether the proposal is accepted” (Dobson 2002, 29). This approach appears to ignore the history of Canada–U.S. negotiations whereby, as Stephen Clarkson asserts, the demands of the United States have usually been conceded (Clarkson 2002b). This possibility is more in keeping with Goldfarb’s observation that if a customs union were to be negotiated, the United States would likely have the upper hand in determining external tariff rates (Goldfarb 2003, 7). Or, with the remarks by Gary C. Hufbauer and Jeffrey Schott who have written vis-à-vis a NAMU that “the United States would insist on calling the shots on monetary policy if the three countries got together on a common North American currency” (Hufbauer and Schott 2004, 16).<sup>16</sup>

To circumvent this asymmetry, the advocates of deeper integration argue that Canada needs to bring

additional items to the table so that it may improve its bargaining leverage. Security and immigration are two key issues, but it is unclear how much more cooperation can take place in these realms without moving toward outright harmonization. Moreover, as noted above, despite the degree of cooperation already underway, it has not been enough for the United States. Hence, several of the proposals for integration have recommended adding additional items to the negotiations, including energy security. But at what cost? Including energy security in the negotiations would involve an “even closer integration of energy policy through the full deregulation of the electricity sector, and even more rapid development of frontier and non-conventional oil and gas reserves for the export market” (Jackson 2003, 23; see the proposals by Dobson 2003; d’Aquino 2003b; CCCE 2004).<sup>17</sup> In addition, Dobson recommends that a crisis agreement be established that would set out a pricing strategy to be used in the case of an energy crisis, so that the United States would have clear and set terms with which to deal with the problem (Dobson 2003, 26–27). These kind of provisions appear to be sought after by the United States. In the months prior to September 11, President Bush had already announced a National Energy Plan with an aim of increasing and securing North American energy imports, and reducing its reliance on the Middle East (and Venezuela) (Doern and Gattinger 2002, 77). In the wake of the United States’ attack on Iraq, securing energy reserves outside of the Middle East has assumed even greater importance, and Ambassador Cellucci has made statements recommending the further integration of energy markets since then (Doern and Gattinger 2002, 77; CCCE 2004, 10).

Canada is well positioned to discuss energy matters with the United States as it is its largest foreign supplier of energy. Canada provides 94 percent of natural gas, supplies more crude and refined oil products to the United States than any other supplier (including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, or Venezuela), provides nearly 35 percent of the uranium required for nuclear power, and, last but not least, provides almost 100 percent of electricity imports (d’Aquino 2003b, 2). There are grave concerns, however, that further energy integration would entail radical changes to Canadian policy. Bringing electricity into the agreement would likely result in more market-based policies, as occurs in the United States, whereas, in Canada, such policies are currently the domain of public utilities (Jackson 2003, 22). Fears have been expressed that, as a result, bulk water exports would be commodified, although this is not specified in the “big idea” proposals. Further integration of the energy

markets, however, would likely affect Canada's ability to create domestic environmental policies that are different from those of the United States, and help intensify practices of exploitation, rather than conservation and efficiency (Jackson 2003, 22–23). There are already concerns that current oil and gas industry integration pose problems for Canadian international energy commitments such as the Kyoto protocol. Deepening energy integration would exacerbate these concerns.

While bringing energy security to the bargaining table would provide Canada with a useful bargaining chip, the suggestion raises significant political, social, and environmental policy concerns over issues that will affect the Canadian state's ability to act in the interests of civil society (Held 2000, 398). This is in addition to the changes that would ensue from formalizing a customs union or common market and the impact that formalization would have on domestic taxation policies and foreign policy. And this, in turn, is on top of the concerns already in place regarding the extant changes to immigration and security policies, which have not only weakened civil rights but also cast blame on Canada's multiculturalism policies for being conducive to terrorism (Daniels et al. 2001; Roach 2003, 6, 12). But yet another concern is that the proposals offer little in the way of new forms of governance. This means that there would be no institutions formed that could mitigate the asymmetry of U.S. power. It also means that no mechanisms would be put in place to ensure citizen representation and accountability in the economic, social, political, or environmental realms that would be subsumed under the agreement. This is not atypical of the U.S.–Canada free trade relationship, however, as it has included “minimal institutions for collective governance,” even when compared to the European Union (Clarkson 2001, 7). Indeed, it is unlikely that the United States would support initiatives toward creating transnational institutions, as agreements involving shared sovereignty or decision making have been deemed to be “alien to American thinking and American history” (McCallum 2000, 2; see also Robson and Laidler 2002; Golden 2001b, A19).

Effectively, at the heart of the proposals for deeper integration is a neoliberal agenda for the greater deregulation of the economy as well as more market-driven initiatives, which would go hand in hand with greater coordination of security, immigration, and energy issues. Given that policies in these areas have been at the core of the traditional differences between Canada and the United States (together with health care), it is unclear how a “big idea” can, as Dobson argues, “preserve and enhance political independence and distinctive national

institutions,” or live up to the CCCE's affirmation of Canada's “vibrant independence and distinct personality.” That these proposals are able to make these pretences at all depends upon the ways that inevitability is deployed to rationalize a new form of understanding national sovereignty. Sovereignty is reconfigured so that it entails the short-term actions that a state can take rather than its ability to forge long-term vision or goals, given that the shape of the future is already determined. D'Aquino, for example, asserts, “The choice is clear: either we affirm our sovereignty effectively, or we run the risk of losing it” (d'Aquino 2003b, 10). Offering slightly different terms, Dobson suggests, “We should think about Canadian sovereignty in terms of *exercising* it, not *guarding* it” (Dobson 2002, 29; emphasis in the original; see also Hart and Dymond 2001; SCFAIT 2001a, b; Dymond and Hart 2003; Gotlieb 2003). These descriptions nicely retain an allure of muscular sovereignty, of an active state. But, really, the sovereignty that is being described here is simply about what kinds of little steps a country takes on a path that is already decided, with an outcome characterized as “inevitable.” Sovereignty is no longer construed as the state's role in representing and conveying the aspirations of its citizens regarding what kind of path the country should take. What is lost in this conception of sovereignty is thus “the capacity of government to carry out its democratic mandate” and hence to address the needs of its citizens (Campbell 2003, 3).

The proposed concessions to the United States are made palatable because they provide a modicum of decision making in a scenario of inevitable integration. The “big idea” is presented as the best possible outcome under the circumstances. The state retains an active, muscular dimension, while, at the same time, continentalism assumes its own, externalized dynamic. Moreover, thanks to the language of inevitability, the processes driving the integration—like those of globalization or neoliberalism more generally—are depicted as inexorable, as removed from agency and responsibility (Peck and Tickell 2002). This downplays the incredible amount of work—much of it detailed in this article—that has been necessary to push forward this agenda. Advocates have written papers, policy reports, and books; they have given presentations at academic conferences, to policy makers and to the public; they have published articles in the newspapers and given interviews to television media. Effectively, a lot of hard work has been invested in securing the conditions that will render the inevitable inevitable and will create a new, and even more neoliberalized, North American economic space.

## Conclusions: Paying Attention

This article has sought to demonstrate the ways that a discourse of inevitability has been used in the discussions around deepening North American integration to rationalize and make acceptable a “new economic space.” The language that has been used is all important, for, as Rose has remarked, “It is possible to govern only within a certain regime of intelligibility—to govern is to act under a certain description. Language is not secondary to government; it is constitutive of it. Language not only makes acts of government describable; it also makes them possible” (Rose 2002, 28). Indeed, as the discussions around NAMU attest, scenarios for drawing the United States and Canada more tightly together predate September 11. The advocates of deeper integration have simply seized upon the opportunities offered by the climate of risk and fear that has permeated bilateral relations since the terrorist attacks. As Stephen Clarkson has remarked, for advocates of integration, September 11 was not just a human tragedy but an opportunity to press a long-standing agenda forward: “[T]he United States catastrophe [is] an opportunity to trot out their nostrums for completing the unfinished job of continental union” (Clarkson 2001, 9). Robert Pastor, a professor of international relations at Emory University, who, prior to the attacks, published a book advocating the move toward a North American community, has provided a similar assessment: “Sept. 11 was not only a tragedy, it was an opportunity to rethink the relationships between the three countries of North America and to accelerate the process of integration” (Pastor, cited in Baxter 2001, A1). The logic and language of inevitability that has been used since September 11 is one key to understanding how this program of deeper integration has so quickly moved from the realm of the abstract, where it remained mired only a few years ago, to a general consensus among the business community and government that this is the only alternative for the future of Canada–U.S. relations.

And yet this is not to say that the proposals have gone uncontested. As Foucault remarks,

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (Foucault 1980, 100–101)

Deeper integration may yet take place, but the terms under which it unfolds and the logic that has framed it will continue to be negotiated and contested. As political author and commentator, Linda McQuaig, has said in her usual tongue-in-cheek fashion, “It may not be inevitable that you’ll be injured crossing the street. But if someone pushes you directly in front of an oncoming car, it can turn out to be inevitable. Funny how that works” (McQuaig 2002, FP14). Equally, the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade has also been skeptical of how the debates have unfolded. In the *Partners in North America* report, the Committee stresses that there are various options in what political choices are taken, that “what the next steps should be in North American partnership are far from obvious, much less automatic or ‘inevitable’ . . . In the Committee’s view, this should be seen as less than a problem than as an opportunity to shape the future in accord with Canadian public values and interests” (SCFAIT 2002b, 54). Finally, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister Bill Graham, who supports a closer relationship with the United States on many fronts, has sought to counteract the rhetoric of inevitability because of the ways that it undermines democratic legitimacy. At the 2003 Conference of the Couchiching Institute on Public Affairs, Graham remarked,

To those who say then that Canada has no choice but to proceed full steam ahead with economic and security integration, I would firmly disagree on two counts. First, our pragmatic margin of manoeuvre is, in fact, considerably larger than some would choose to admit; and, second, to claim that “we have no choice” is to undercut the democratic legitimacy of decisions that must, in the end, be responsible to the full range of what Canadians want from their foreign policy. (Graham 2003)

Hence skeptics of “inevitability” do exist, although public statements that counter this narrative are still few and far between.

Rising protectionism and anti-free trade sentiments in the United States and generally lukewarm interest in the proposals also indicate that the inevitability of deeper North American economic integration is shaky at best.<sup>18</sup> As greater critical attention is focused on the details of the proposals by left-leaning think tanks such as the Council of Canadians, the Conference Board of Canada, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, domestic opposition to the proposals may coalesce (see Golden 2001a, 2003; Campbell 2003; Jackson 2003; Barlow 2004). Certainly, the Canadian public appears to be apprehensive about deepening integration. In an EKOS poll at the end of September 2001, nearly

half—45 percent—of the people polled agreed that North American integration would henceforth accelerate (EKOS 2001, 20). But more recent polls suggest that while Canadians favor economic ties with the United States, there is increasing concern over the convergence of values that is taking place (May 2002, A8). The tensions over the buildup to the U.S. attack on Iraq accentuated these concerns. In a poll of November 2002, nearly 70 percent of respondents were critical of the U.S. position, and agreed with the statement that the United States “is starting to act like a bully with the rest of the world” (Greenaway 2002, A6). Controversial anti-U.S. sentiments were also forthcoming at this time from several significant figures in the federal Liberal party. Natural Resources Minister, Herb Dhaliwal, called President Bush a failed statesman; Liberal Member of Parliament, Carolyn Parrish, commented, “Damn Americans; I hate those bastards”; and Françoise Ducros, communications director to the prime minister, called President Bush a “moron.”<sup>19</sup>

These criticisms and concerns suggest that deeper North American integration is not as inevitable as it has been made to seem. But the power that has been invested in this discourse and its appeal to the current Canadian Liberal government of Paul Martin cannot be denied. There has been an incredible amount of work invested in pushing forward a narrative of inevitability in order to elicit a greater consensus on the discussions of a “new economic space,” a program that has now been taken up in numerous policy documents, as detailed above. The ethos of risk and fear that has permeated North American relations since the terrorist attacks of September 11 has been used to buttress the neoliberal agenda that is behind deeper integration. The “big ideas” that have been proposed for deeper economic integration are presented as necessary for further ensuring Canada’s secure access to U.S. markets in this new geopolitical reality. The framing of this integration as inevitable has meant that a “big idea” can be presented as a tactic for Canada to affirm its sovereignty in the face of impending regional concentration. But this is a very limited form of sovereignty that hinges solely on whether the state is able to make a limited number of decisions under pressure from international markets, with little attention to impact on state-civic society relationships.

Surely it is possible, however, to renegotiate Canada–U.S. relations in ways that attend to security and economic vulnerabilities, even to deepen existing trade relations, while remaining sensitive to the needs of civil society, and without “inevitably” assimilating Canada into the social, cultural, political, and environmental orbit of the United States. There are significant problems

if the only models presented for discussion are ones that deepen the very ideologies that have contributed to these vulnerabilities, rather than thinking social and national relations anew. As noted above, some alternatives are emerging, but the dissenting voices are weak compared to the overbearing consensus for integration among government and business. It may well be that the actors involved, many of whom played an integral role in putting the free trade agreement on the table, are able to present the United States with a package that is to its liking. Given the ongoing uncertainties that face Canada, the United States, and the border between them, however, it is impossible to know with complete assurance what the future holds. Attempting to do so, moreover, would be to try and tell a story that would ring with the same authority as the integrationists, that is, “with a kind of supernatural confidence that is more appropriate to the old Norse sagas than to the soap operas of everyday economic life” (Thrift 1998, 161). What is important, however, as Marshall McLuhan suggests in the quotation that begins this article, is to make sure that these issues are brought to the fore so that the “inevitable” does not unfold simply because no one was paying attention.

## Postscript

As this article was going to press, further announcements have been made on deepening economic integration in North America. On 15 October 2004, the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations announced a joint task force among Canada, Mexico, and the United States to examine the future of NAFTA and to consider greater cooperation in at least five areas, including trade and security. The task force is chaired by John Manley, former Canadian deputy prime minister; Pedro Aspe, former Mexican finance minister; and Assistant Attorney General William Weld, former governor of Massachusetts. The Canadian and U.S. vice chairs will be the CEO of the CCCE, Thomas d’Aquino, and Robert Pastor, vice president of international affairs at American University, respectively —two actors who have long played key roles in pushing forward a continentalist vision. The stated aims of this task force, and the people who are involved, suggest that a new North American economic space is one more step closer to being called into being.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Deborah Cowen for her valuable comments on an earlier version of this article and for



many stimulating discussions on these issues. I am very grateful to the three anonymous reviewers who provided me with extremely thoughtful and helpful criticism and who pushed me to sharpen my arguments. Audrey Kobayashi provided excellent editorial guidance throughout.

## Notes

1. The Coalition for Secure and Trade Efficient Borders is an organization of fifty-plus business organizations and individual companies set up in the aftermath of September 11 to apprise the government of the importance of border issues from a business perspective.
2. The speed of border crossings continues to be a high priority. Travel delays at the Canada–U.S. border are monitored continuously by the Canada Border Services Agency. Their website, <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/general/times/menu-e.html>, provides updates for each land border crossing, with the website information refreshed every ten minutes to maintain the accuracy of information.
3. That Canadian intelligence was integral to Ressam's arrest is usually ignored (Clarkson 2003, 89, ft. 15).
4. Most of the proposals recommend the eventual inclusion of Mexico in the new arrangements but recommend that a bilateral agreement be arranged first, and only later extended to Mexico, just as the CUFTA of 1988 was later expanded into NAFTA. Mexican President Vincente Fox, however, has been one of the strongest advocates for deepening continental ties and has accused the Canadian government of dragging its feet in the process. Given that the Canada–U.S. relationship is foremost in the proposals, it is the focus of this paper. What role Mexico might play in these discussions, however, warrants more detailed analysis.
5. Quebec has typically been strongly in favor of deeper integration with the United States, as demonstrated during the rancorous free trade debates in the 1980s. Many sovereigntists believe that monetary union would help protect an independent Quebec from being cast adrift economically (Helleiner 2003b).
6. Many of the proposals use the phrase “big idea” to advance their program, a phrase that itself has loaded connotations. President George H. W. Bush used it in his 1991 State of the Union address to characterize the New World Order he was promoting: “What is at stake is more than one small country; it is a big idea: a new world order, where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind—peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law. Such is a world worthy of our struggle and worthy of our children's future.” <http://www.geocities.com/americanpresidency.net/1991.htm> (last accessed 3 September 2004).
7. Generally, free trade agreements eliminate (or at least greatly reduce) the tariff and nontariff barriers to trade between member countries, as did CUFTA and NAFTA (alongside other provisions such as trade dispute arbitration and trade remedy law). Under free trade, however, the tariff rates that member countries have with countries outside the agreement remain variable. This means that goods with high North American content have relatively free passage within the free trade area, while other goods need more careful monitoring and can be subject to tariffs.
8. Indeed, language is deemed so important to economic practice that, elsewhere, Gibson-Graham and Jenny Cameron suggest that by initiating new economic scripts, it may be possible to create alternative spaces for thinking about a revisionist, feminist, and noncapitalist economy (Cameron and Gibson-Graham 2003).
9. Cellucci adopted disciplinary tactics again in May 2003 when the Canadian government introduced legislation to decriminalize marijuana, and he reiterated that divergent Canadian policies could lead to slowdowns at the border.
10. Section 110 was introduced in 1993 after the first attacks on the World Trade Center, but they also notably coincided with the inclusion of Mexico into the free trade agreement and the fears over immigration that ensued. The legislation had passed in Congress in 1996, but implementation was slow. After September 11, promises were made to have implementation complete by 2005.
11. In response to this differentiation of Canadian citizens by U.S. border security, Foreign Minister Bill Graham declared in the House of Commons, “A Canadian is a Canadian for all purposes” (Galloway 2003), and the government issued a short-lived travel advisory to the United States (Roach 2003, 11).
12. See the government announcement of 15 October 2001 on the introduction of Bill C-36: [http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/news/nr/2001/doc\\_27785.html](http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/news/nr/2001/doc_27785.html) (last accessed 3 September 2004).
13. Information about this letter can be found on the Canadian Council of Chief Executives website at [http://64.26.159.96/en/view/?document\\_id=42&type\\_id=1](http://64.26.159.96/en/view/?document_id=42&type_id=1) (last accessed 3 September 2004).
14. The simulated emergency response to a mass anthrax attack that was coordinated between Vancouver and Seattle is but one example of this cross-border cooperation (Krauss 2002, A8). That Canada sent troops into Afghanistan—under U.S. command—is also testament to an ethos of cooperation, although Canada's participation in the war on terror is not always recognized by the United States.
15. And later that month President Bush ordered a nationwide manhunt for five men of Middle Eastern or Pakistani descent who were believed to have entered the United States illegally from Canada, a search that was dropped when it turned out that one of the informants, who was in jail at the time, had lied to authorities (Roach 2003, 138). But the perception of a porous northern border was once again reinvigorated and continues to occupy a significant place in the U.S. imagination.
16. Even if Mexico were to be included in a currency union, which most advocates assume would eventually come about, the United States would dominate its two partners since it comprises nearly 90 percent of the NAFTA-area production and nearly 70 percent of population (Dobson 2002, 5).
17. Under the free-trade agreement there is already a significant amount of energy integration—something that was made apparent by the massive blackout of August 2003, which stretched right across the border. Moreover, thanks to free trade, the United States has a significant amount of energy security. Canada, for example, cannot cut off supply of oil and gas to the United States, even at a time of domestic shortages, nor can it hike prices in the United

States without also doing so in its domestic markets (Doern and Gattinger 2002, 81).

18. In the buildup to the 2004 U.S. elections, free trade policies have come under virulent attack, especially by the Democratic Party, with some public support, especially regarding the off-shoring of jobs.
19. These comments echoed with the significant amount of criticism of the United States in the days after the terrorist attacks. On 12 September, Thomas Homer-Dixon suggested that the roots of the tragedy resided in “underlying disparities of wealth”; two days later, Naomi Klein asked whether U.S. foreign policy was to blame; within the week, Haroon Siddiqui wrote that “American complicity in injustice, lethal and measurable on several fronts” was partly to blame for the attacks (Roach 2003, 116–17). Even more pointed were the remarks made by Professor Sunera Thobani on U.S. foreign policy, which set off a maelstrom of debate on anti-Americanism (Roach 2003, 119–21). And even Prime Minister Chrétien, who was disparaging of Thobani’s remarks, drew U.S. criticism when he remarked in a television interview one year after the attacks that “the Western world is getting too rich in relations to the poor world . . . we’re looked upon as being arrogant, self-satisfied, greedy, with no limits . . . you cannot exercise your powers to the point of humiliation of others” (Roach 2003, 121).

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*Correspondence:* Canadian Studies and Geography, University College, 15 King's College Circle, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 3H7, e-mail: emily.gilbert@utoronto.ca