
When probed specifically on the benefits of NAFTA, supporters were readily able to identify several. Moderate FTA supporters in all cities recognized the advantage of a larger market in Mexico although some scepticism was expressed about Mexico's ability to afford to purchase Canadian goods. The supportive group in Ottawa focused on the advantage of Canada's bargaining position resulting from three-way trade ("gives us more bargaining position. We'll be one of three rather than one of two;" "better for bargaining, together with Mexico"). In Vancouver, in addition to opening new markets, supporters identified such benefits or advantages for Canada as improved buying power and a new freedom to market new products anywhere in North America.

Interestingly, even those moderate FTA opponents were able to identify some advantages for Canada. While opponents overwhelmingly stated that "Canada has to be there to protect its interests," respondents in Ottawa pointed out it could establish North-South trade patterns and opponents in both Vancouver and Winnipeg referenced potential opportunities to sell Canadian goods and services.

(iv) The Negotiating Process

In general, respondents were unhappy with the negotiating process for the Canada - U.S. Free Trade Agreement. While opponents were more intense in their views, there was a pervasive sentiment that the U.S. got a better deal, that Canada gave in on important components of the agreement (notably energy and water) and that the public was not kept informed of the negotiation process and the content of the agreement.

Much of the antipathy was directed at the government and politicians with little identification of trade negotiators.

