

Other Issues

Questions about how free trade might affect Canada's ability to retain its independence from the U.S. have attracted a lot of public attention. Nevertheless, the number of people who say they consider this issue to be paramount and who feel that our independence will be weakened has not at any time exceeded 30%.

There is a consistent majority who feel that closer economic ties will mean a loss of some control for Canada, and that free trade will increase American cultural influences. This appears moderated somewhat by the fact that people say it is possible for the two countries to become more similar while the two peoples remain different.

Alongside this, people do not think that closer ties will affect Canada's ability to maintain its distinctive social programs.

Most Canadians expect a moderate amount of federal adjustment assistance, and as of this sounding seem uncertain about whether such assistance is being planned. There seems little strong consensus about the form this aid should take, but there is a mild preference for the government helping shoulder the financial costs of adjustment.

Most people believe that this Agreement will affect average workers and think the time has arrived to start planning on how to take advantage of the opportunities free trade presents.

A majority continue to say they view the Agreement as part of a larger effort to enhance Canada's trade situation around the world.

Some doubts persist about whether Canada got the best deal possible, however, it remains worth noting that people can hold concerns in this area but still be of the view that the deal is in Canada's best interests.

Consistent with earlier findings, a majority continue to feel that Canada-U.S. free trade is more a question of economics than one of Canadian independence.