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It is worth noting, again, that even among moderate opponents to the Canada - U.S. FTA, there was a pervasive view that there may be benefits in the longer-term ("not past short-term adjustment yet"). Participants were not prepared to reject the deal entirely, but were prepared to withhold judgement until they had a better idea of the longer-term benefits that might accrue.

Moderate opponents of the FTA also singled out the negotiating process in their concerns about the agreement. They were strongly of the view that Canada did not get the best deal possible primarily because Canada was represented by poor negotiators and politicians. These reactions were driven, in part, by the general unpopularity of the government. There was a relatively strong belief that the U.S. was able to come out of the negotiations as the winner.

While substantial probing on the negotiating process itself was not included in the moderator's guide, it is worth noting that the negotiating process was identified, on an unprompted basis, as a significant concern among respondents in the opponent groups. While moderate opponents were unable to identify specific concerns regarding the negotiation process, negative perceptions of the free trade agreement appeared to coalesce around the negotiations. Given that moderate respondents were unable to articulate particular concerns about the content of the Agreement, they tended to return to negative impressions of the negotiations as the focal point for their criticism.

As noted, moderate opponents tended to believe that the United States came out of the negotiations as the winner. While not explicitly stated, respondents in the opponent groups indicated that the Canadian negotiators were forced into compromises that were perceived as 'giving in' to American demands in the negotiating process.

