

One important issue did emerge in the groups which was not revealed in the June survey results. That is a concern evident among participants in all groups, but particularly those in Ontario, with whether free trade will in fact be "free." Participants expressed concerns about whether the Americans are prepared to reach a fair, balanced and "equal" agreement, of mutual benefit to both sides. Part of this, for a plurality of group participants, involves a belief that the Americans will not or are not prepared to give up the right to take "protectionist" measures, even under a free trade deal.

B. Attitudes Towards the U.S.

While there were some mixed views, most people expressed positive overall feelings or impressions about the United States and Americans in general. These impressions were defined and expressed for the most part in very personal and person-to-person terms.

When the U.S. and Americans were viewed from a more macro or less-personal perspective, the saliency of concern with U.S. control and power vis-à-vis Canada was greater. Typical of the positive impressions expressed were statements defining the Canada-U.S. relationship in almost family-like terms. A frequent comment was that the two countries were kind of like a brother and sister, though there was a recognition that "...like our families, we often disagree." Overall, the U.S. was seen as basically a friendly country which has been a good neighbour to Canada.

Several themes emerged among the statements expressing positive impressions of the U.S. These include praise for Americans' pride and patriotism in their country, their sense of individual freedom, the protection they offer to Canada and their entrepreneurialism. Those expressing more negative impressions pointed to Americans' lack of knowledge or even ignorance about Canada, commenting that "They're ignorant of Canada" and "They don't even know Canada exists." They also mentioned aspects of Americans' culture and society, such as prevalent violence. Some perceived Americans as arrogant and aggressive.