

The results reveal that in the third wave, close to six-in-ten Canadians indicate they think that the free trade agreement is a good thing in the various economic contexts presented. Also notable is the fact that the above results are virtually identical to the reported aggregate level of support for the free trade agreement in the Wave III results (57% support).

This would imply that, as evident in previous research, perceptions of the economic effects of the deal are strongly related to Canadians' support for or opposition to it. Confirmation of this is reflected in an extremely strong correlation between views on the basic economic effects of the agreement and support for or opposition to it. For instance, the following Gamma¹ measures of correlation were obtained for the association between those who support/oppose the agreement and expectations as to its effect on the Canadian economy (.934), the respondent's provincial economy (.907) and the economic well-being of "you and your family" (.912). In short, perceptions as to the economic effects of free trade are almost a perfect predictor of respondents' support for or opposition to the agreement.

Regional differences in respondents' expectations as to the economic effects of the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement are fairly predictable. Results from Wave III show that Quebec residents are considerably more optimistic than average about the effects of the agreement on the national economy and their provincial economy (74% and 72% respectively think free trade would be a good thing in these contexts) and 66% say they think it would be a good thing for the "economic well-being" of themselves and their families. Residents of the Prairies (60% good thing) and particularly Albertans (74% in Wave I and 67% in Wave III) expect free trade to have positive effects on their province's economy. British Columbia residents are also more optimistic than average about the economic effects of free trade.

At the other end of the spectrum, Ontarians continue to exhibit more skepticism than average about the economic effects of free trade with the United States. They are less likely to think it would be a good thing for the national economy (44%), for the economy of their own province (44%), or for themselves and their families (43% say it would be a good thing).

¹The larger the Gamma statistic the more closely associated the two attributes, with a perfect correlation being +1.0 or -1.0. The plus/minus sign indicates the direction of association.