

VII. MAJOR DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

As has been the case in past research, the main differences of opinion on the free trade agreement based on demographic characteristics relate to age, education and gender. The following section discusses these differences.

A. Gender

1. Major differences

The free trade debate may not be the battle of the sexes, but a considerable "gender gap" between the two sexes continues to exist in terms of attitudes toward Canada-U.S. free trade. Men continue to be more optimistic about the potential economic results or consequences of the trade deal than are women, and, not surprisingly, they remain more supportive of the deal.

The most prominent gender gaps are as follows:

- o The decline from October to the first wave of the study in the number of both men (60%) and women (47%) who think that the free trade deal would benefit Canada's economy is somewhat compensated for by the third wave, when 62% of men and 54% of women indicate they believe the deal would benefit the Canadian economy. On a provincial basis, a similar trend also occurred;
- o Although the percentage of men who say more jobs would be gained than lost did not change from the first wave to the third wave, the percentage of women who feel this way did increase, from 41% to 48% in the third wave;
- o A slight decline from October is apparent in the number of men who think that more jobs would be gained than lost (55% in October and 52% in wave III of the November/December study). Just under half of all women feel that there would be more jobs gained than lost under the agreement, a number that has remained constant since October. In essence then, the "gender gap" on this issue has been diminishing since October;