

On the question of whether an agreement threatens Canadian identity in any way, a majority (56%) feel that Canadians should be confident "because Canada's identity is now strong enough that it no longer needs as much protection through government measures. This constitutes a slight difference in opinion from that evident in August prior to the signing of an agreement -- at which time opinion was split. Residents of Ontario (51%) and Saskatchewan (60%) are more likely than average to oppose free trade in this context and to be concerned about the effect it could have on Canada's identity. Quebecers, in contrast, are more apt (60%) to express confidence that Canada's identity is strong enough to withstand the absence of protection from various government measures.

As might be expected, views concerning the independence question are strongly related to support for free trade. Those Canadians who are confident of Canada's identity under the free trade agreement are more likely (83%) than average (55%) to support the agreement, whereas those who oppose free trade because of its anticipated effects on Canadian identity are more likely to oppose (76%) the agreement.

Aggregate results regarding the independence question show a similar 60/40 split in opinion, but in a different direction. In this case, the majority of 56% think that the free trade agreement will "tie Canada so closely to the United States that it will weaken our ability to play an independent role in the world." Quebecers (50%) and Canadians with annual family incomes of over \$50,000 (50%) are more likely to think that free trade will strengthen our ability to play an independent role in world affairs.

As above, a relationship is apparent between respondents' views on this independence question and support for the free trade agreement. Those in opposition are more likely (84%) to think that the effect of free trade will be to weaken Canada's ability to play an independent role in the world.

In contrast, those supporting the agreement think it will strengthen Canada's independence in this context. Moreover, views on this question are quite strongly related to overall support or opposition to free trade.