

Twenty years of trade: Canadians solidly support CETA in 2014; soundly opposed NAFTA in 1993

US, European Union, China are identified as Canada's most ideal trading partners today

July 24, 2014 – Two decades after Angus Reid Global first asked Canadians their opinions about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the trade pact between Canada, the US and Mexico is still dividing Canadians.

However, they are more accepting of CETA, the proposed trade deal between Canada and the European Union.

These are the results of public opinion surveys commissioned and conducted by Angus Reid Global.

The surveys asked Canadian adults their views in 1993 and 2014 about NAFTA, and about the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) in 2014. A majority (58%) opposed NAFTA two decades ago, while support for CETA is the majority view (68%) now.

Opinions on CETA:

Nearly seven-in-ten Canadians (68%) say they either strongly (25%) or moderately (43%) support CETA, the yet-to-be-concluded trade deal between Canada and the European Union. Just over one-in-ten (11%) either moderately (7%) or strongly (4%) oppose the pact.

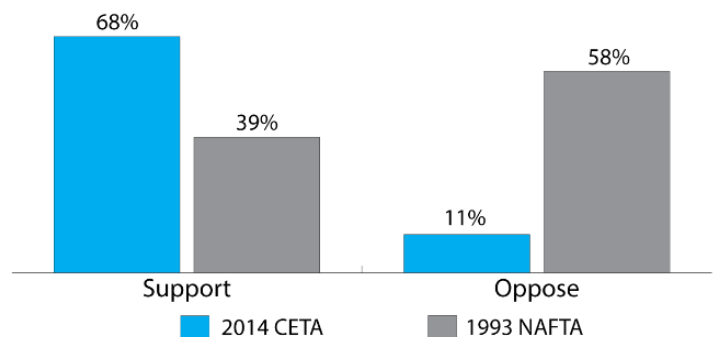
A significant number of Canadians don't offer an opinion in regards to CETA. In 1993, four per cent of Canadians responded that they were "unsure" about NAFTA. This is five times higher (22%) for CETA, reflecting the lack of public detail about this yet-to-be concluded agreement.

NAFTA: then and now

In 1993, the 58 per cent of Canadians surveyed were either strongly or moderately opposed to NAFTA. Of note, the ratio of strong opposition (39%) over moderate opposition (19%) was 2:1. By contrast, 39 per

METHODOLOGY:

Canadians on Free Trade Agreements
1993 vs. 2014



In April 1993, Angus Reid Strategies (now Angus Reid Global) conducted a telephone survey of 1500 randomly selected Canadian adults. The margin of error was +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20.

On May 15-16 2014, ARG conducted an online survey among 1508 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. A probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

This survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARG.

Detailed charts, tables and regional results are found at the end of this release.

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cent said they were either moderately or strongly supportive of the trade pact between Canada, the US and Mexico. Here, moderate support (26%) doubled strong support (13%).

Just over twenty years later, Canadians are more evenly divided on the benefits and/or harm caused by NAFTA. One-third (34%) say the trade pact has benefitted this country, and about the same number (31%) say it has hurt Canada. Slightly more respondents (35%) say it hasn't had an impact on the country one way or the other.

Views are more polarized when analyzed by age. Canadians aged 18-34 are nearly twice as likely to point to the benefits of the trade deal as middle aged and older Canadians; middle aged and older Canadians are more likely to say NAFTA has hurt the country. (See tables at the end of this release).

Competitiveness:

Regardless of their views on individual trade agreements, just over half (54%) of Canadians say their nation is "falling behind other countries" when it comes to international competitiveness, while 46 per cent say Canada is "keeping up with other countries and competing as well as we should be". This national sentiment is generally mirrored regionally in BC, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada. Respondents in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba hold the inverse view. (See tables at the end of this release).

Preferred Trading Partners:

When asked which countries or regions Canada should develop closer trade ties to in the future, Canadians put the EU, US and China at the top of their list (37%, 36% and 34% respectively), followed by India (18%), South and Central America (16%) and South East Asia (12%).

Respondents from British Columbia and the western provinces – Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) were more inclined to look east to Asia Pacific trading partners. Atlantic Canada, Quebec and Ontario respondents preferred the Americas and European countries as trading partners. (See tables at the end of this release).

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Detailed tables are on the following pages.

Angus Reid Global is headed by Dr. Angus Reid, Canada's best known and longest practicing pollster. He's spent more than four decades asking questions about what people feel, how they think and who they will vote for. He is supported by a team of practitioners conducting high quality research for corporations, governments and non-profit organizations.

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Canada is currently negotiating a free trade agreement with the European Union, based on whatever you may have seen or heard about this, would you say you support or oppose this initiative?

2014	Total (1508)	Region					
		BC (202)	AB (177)	MB/SK (90)	ON (538)	PQ (362)	ATL (139)
Support strongly	25%	24%	24%	21%	25%	26%	24%
Support moderately	43%	46%	49%	43%	42%	42%	42%
Oppose moderately	7%	4%	5%	5%	6%	11%	4%
Oppose strongly	4%	4%	2%	3%	5%	2%	4%
Don't know	22%	21%	20%	28%	22%	19%	26%

Overall based on whatever you may have seen or heard, would you say you support or oppose Canada entering into a North American Free Trade Agreement?

1993	Total (1500)	Region					
		BC (183)	AB (135)	MB/SK (112)	ON (560)	PQ (387)	ATL (128)
Support strongly	13%	7%	15%	9%	12%	19%	9%
Support moderately	26%	22%	23%	21%	23%	32%	28%
Oppose moderately	19%	15%	24%	22%	18%	18%	21%
Oppose strongly	39%	51%	33%	47%	44%	25%	40%
Unsure	4%	5%	5%	2%	3%	6%	2%

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Canada, the US and Mexico formed the North American Free Trade agreement, (NAFTA) 20 years ago. Overall, would you say NAFTA has generally:

2014	Total (1508)	Region					
		BC (202)	AB (177)	MB/SK (90)	ON (538)	PQ (362)	ATL (139)
Benefitted Canada	34%	34%	45%	35%	31%	35%	36%
Hurt Canada	31%	32%	21%	28%	39%	24%	26%
Hasn't really had an impact one way or the other	35%	34%	34%	37%	30%	41%	38%

Canada, the US and Mexico formed the North American Free Trade agreement, (NAFTA) 20 years ago. Overall, would you say NAFTA has generally:

2014	Total (1508)	Age		
		18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Benefitted Canada	34%	49%	28%	28%
Hurt Canada	31%	20%	35%	35%
Hasn't really had an impact one way or the other	35%	31%	37%	36%

Thinking about Canada's international competitiveness, which of the following is closest to your opinion?

2014	Total (1508)	Region					
		BC (202)	AB (177)	MB/SK (90)	ON (538)	PQ (362)	ATL (139)
We are keeping up with other countries and competing as well as we should be	46%	44%	55%	53%	41%	47%	45%
We are falling behind other countries and are not competing as well as we should be	54%	56%	45%	47%	59%	53%	55%

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As we look to the future, with which of the following countries or regions do you think Canada should try to develop closer trade ties?

2014	Total (1508)	Region					
		BC (202)	AB (177)	MB/SK (90)	ON (538)	PQ (362)	ATL (139)
The European Union	37%	32%	35%	26%	44%	35%	35%
Continue to focus on the US	36%	29%	29%	34%	39%	36%	43%
China	34%	38%	48%	36%	29%	37%	30%
India	18%	25%	23%	24%	18%	11%	16%
South and Central America	16%	14%	13%	13%	17%	16%	14%
South East Asia	12%	20%	14%	14%	10%	9%	11%
Other	5%	7%	6%	2%	4%	4%	5%

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