



**AMERICANS ON GLOBALIZATION:
A Study of US Public Attitudes
March 28, 2000**

Appendix B: Americans on NAFTA

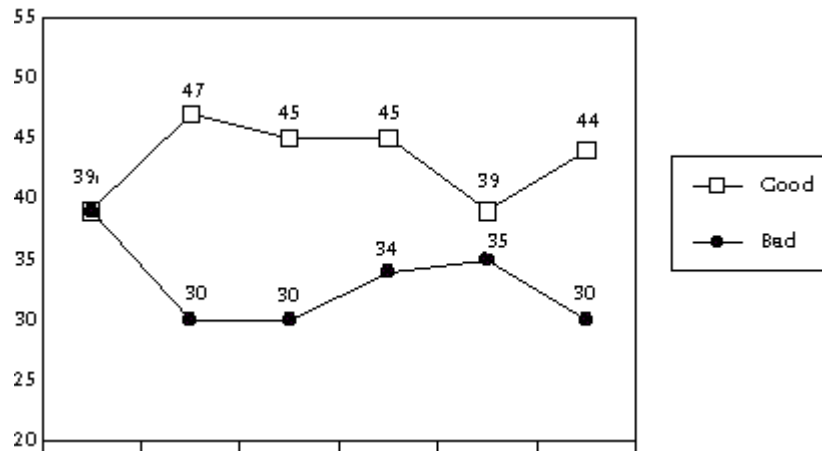
Summary

Since late 1997, a plurality of Americans has felt that the NAFTA agreement has produced net benefits for the US. Only a small minority wants to withdraw from it. But a majority does express some dissatisfaction with NAFTA in its present form. Strong majorities think NAFTA is good for US businesses; however, the public is divided about its benefits for consumers and workers. A plurality or slight majority believes NAFTA is costing US jobs and is putting a downward pressure on US workers' wages.

As a microcosm of the universe of attitudes on trade, there are few better examples than public attitudes on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). NAFTA enjoys lukewarm support even though it has several of the elements that make Americans uneasy about expanded trade: the perception of unfair trade practices by a trading partner, the potential loss of jobs due to low-cost imports, and competition with low-wage foreign workers.

Modest Support for NAFTA

In the current, 1999 PIPA poll, NAFTA elicited modest support. Asked, "Do you think the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, has been good or bad for the United States?" a 44% plurality viewed NAFTA as good for the US, 30% viewed it as bad, and 18% said they did not know. This is largely the same result other polls have seen since late 1997. As shown below, a stable plurality has had a positive view of NAFTA.¹



When a *Washington Post/Kaiser/Harvard* poll also offered the option, "or haven't you heard enough to say?" and 51% chose that option, while 24% said NAFTA had been good, and 20% thought it had been bad.^{2 3}

When posed the question of whether the US should withdraw from NAFTA, only a small minority favors doing so. Three *Time/CNN* polls from early 1996 found only about one-third of the public in favor of "withdrawing," while roughly half were opposed, and the remainder were unsure.⁴ In May 1999, an Epic-MRA poll probed for a five-year assessment of NAFTA by asking whether the US should continue in NAFTA or not. Just 18% wanted to "pull out of NAFTA."

However, some reservations about NAFTA clearly persist. In the May 1999 Epic-MRA poll, though just 18% wanted to "pull out of NAFTA," only 24% said they wanted to "continue the NAFTA agreement" as is. A plurality of 40% believed NAFTA should be "continued with changes." Thus, 58% expressed dissatisfaction with NAFTA.⁵

In the 1999 PIPA focus groups, general approval of NAFTA also seemed to be the dominant feeling. Some based their view on a generally positive view of free trade:

Well, I really have a positive view [of NAFTA] because I have been in favor of the whole free market idea. I mean, let's find out how we compete with Canada and Mexico. (Woman, Dallas)

Others noted that the dire negative consequences that had been predicted had not panned out:

When [NAFTA] started up a few years ago I was leaning against it because of the so-called job sucking, but what I read and for what I've observed I hasn't worked out that way... . Look at our employment, it's as high as it's ever been. (Man, Dallas)

Also some mentioned that NAFTA seemed to be positive for Mexico:

Well, for one thing I think it's helped Mexico become a more stable country -- politically and economically. (Man, Battle Creek)

Attitudes about NAFTA have gone through a complex evolution. In 1991 and 1992, prior to congressional debate, support for NAFTA was quite high.⁶ The high-profile 1993 debate, though, engendered considerably more uncertainty such that shortly before NAFTA's passage, the public was split on whether it favored or opposed it. In early November 1993, a *Time/CNN* poll found 41% supported the agreement to "eliminate all trade barriers" between the US, Canada and Mexico. An almost equal number were opposed (39%), with 20% undecided.⁷ At the same time, ABC News found the public evenly split as to whether "Congress should approve or reject NAFTA"; 42% said Congress should, and 42% said it should not.⁸ Other available data from this period reveals similarly divided views; for example, CBS/*New York Times* in November 1993 found 37% in favor and 41% opposed -- a difference that falls within the margin of error.⁹

However, in December, after Congress approved the trade deal, 53 percent of Americans said it was a "step in the right direction," and just 33 percent said it was a "step in the wrong direction."¹⁰ Also in December 1993, *Times Mirror* found that, among those who were following NAFTA closely, 52% favored the treaty, and 33% opposed it.¹¹

Between 1994 and 1997, a plurality felt that the net results of NAFTA for the US were not positive as yet. For example, between July 1994 and July 1997, NBC/*Wall Street Journal* polls asked the public for an assessment of NAFTA's impact on the United States "so far." In all four cases, a modest plurality said they believed NAFTA had "more of a negative impact" on the US. In July 1997, 42% said NAFTA had been negative so far, while 32% said it had been positive.^{12 13}

As noted, in late 1997 support increased and has stayed steady since. This may have been in response to general improvements in the economy.

Businesses Seen as Benefiting More Than Consumers

Public attitudes about NAFTA are consistent with the general attitude, discussed above, that international trade is a boon for American business but a marginal benefit for average Americans. This helps to explain the less-than-enthusiastic support for the trade agreement.

In various polls, about 3 in 5 respondents have said that NAFTA would be good for American "companies" or "corporations." Most recently, in February 1996, a *Time/CNN* poll found 58% thought "free trade agreements like NAFTA and GATT are mostly good" for "American corporations." Only 23% said these agreements would be bad for corporations.¹⁴ Also in February 1996, *Time/CNN* found 57% thought NAFTA would be "mostly good" for "Wall Street investors"; just 15% said it would be mostly bad.¹⁵ In an NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll from September 1993, 55% of Americans agreed that "only big American corporations will benefit" from NAFTA; 37% disagreed.¹⁶

Americans are less certain about NAFTA's benefits for US consumers. In the February 1996 *Time/CNN* poll, 45% said that "free trade agreements like NAFTA and GATT are mostly good" for "American consumers." Thirty-five percent said they had been "mostly bad," and 20% were unsure.¹⁷

Concern For Effects on US Workers

Pluralities or slight majorities believe NAFTA has cost Americans jobs. A September 1997 Zogby poll asked those who said they were familiar with NAFTA (58% of the sample) whether they believed it "has created more jobs or that it has led to a net loss of jobs." Only 28% said NAFTA had led to more jobs, while 44% thought it had resulted in a net loss of jobs.¹⁸ In August 1996, a *Los Angeles Times* poll found that a majority of Americans (52%) said the "free trade agreement between Mexico and the United States" -- with no mention of Canada -- had "taken jobs away from the American people." Only 6% said it had "generated more jobs," and 24% said it made no difference one way or the other.¹⁹ In an October 1996 survey by the Associated Press, just 21% said NAFTA "makes for more jobs" in the US, while 47% said it makes for less jobs (29% said they did not know).²⁰

Moreover, in addition to concerns for jobs leaving the US, a plurality believes NAFTA exerts a downward pressure on wages of US workers. In a 1997 poll sponsored by Wisconsin Public Television, 45% said they believed free trade agreements like NAFTA have done more to "keep wages down" in the US. Twenty-six percent said such agreements have not had much effect, and only 17% said they believed the agreements have done more to increase wages.²² This is similar to data from 1993, when a Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* poll found 49% thought NAFTA would lower wages, 30% thought it would have no effect, and just 11% thought it would raise wages.²³

All End Notes

¹ Question: Do you think the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, has been good or bad for...?		
	The US	Mexico
Good	39	57
Bad	35	11
Neither (vol.)/Don't know	25	32
Organization: Louis Harris And Associates Population Size: 1006 Date: APR 13, 1999		
Question: Do you believe NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) has been a good thing or a bad thing?		
Good	45%	
Bad	30	
Not sure/No opinion	26	
Subpopulation: Asked of those familiar with NAFTA (58%) Organization: Zogby International Population Size: approx. 600 Date: SEP 1997		
Question: Do you think that NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, is a good thing or a bad thing from a US (United States) point of view?		
	11/16/97 (~600)	9/11/97 (~1000)
Good thing	45	47
Bad thing	34	30
Don't know/Refused	21	23
Organization: Princeton Survey Research Associates / Pew Research Center Population Size: as noted Date: as noted		
Question: In 1993 Congress approved the North America Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, which substantially reduced trade barriers between Mexico, Canada and the United States. On balance, do you think the NAFTA treaty has been a good thing or a bad thing for the United States?		
Good thing	39%	
Bad thing	39	
Mixed blessing (vol.)	7	
Don't know	15	
Organization: Los Angeles Times Population Size: 1258 Date: SEP 9, 1997		

² Question: In 1993, Congress approved the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, which reduced trade barriers between Mexico, Canada, and the United States. Do you think the NAFTA treaty has been good or bad, or haven't you heard enough to say?

Good	24%
Bad	20
Haven't heard enough to say	51
Neither (vol.)	2
Don't know	2

Organization: Washington Post / Henry J. Kaiser Family Fdtn., Harvard Univ.
 Population Size: 4614
 Date: AUG 30, 1999

³ Question: Do you favor or oppose NAFTA--the North American Free Trade Agreement between Mexico, Canada, and the U.S. (United States), or don't you know enough about NAFTA to say?

	10/27/96* (1528)	8/5/96+ (~900)
Favor	30	32
Oppose	17	21
Don't know enough to say	50	45
Don't know/No answer	3	3

+Registered voters only
 Organization: CBS News/New York Times, *CBS News
 Population Size: as noted
 Date: as noted

Question: As you may know, Mexico and the United States (are negotiating/have negotiated) a free trade agreement that, if agreed to, will mean many of the restrictions, laws and controls that now govern commerce between the two countries, would disappear. Do you favor or opposed the free trade agreement between Mexico and the United States, or haven't you heard enough about the proposal to say?

	9/28/93 (1491)	6/14/93 (1474)	1/17/93 (1733)	10/5/92 (1833)	9/25/91 (1623)
Not aware	37	41	49	49	17
Favor strongly	13	9	9	11	14
Favor somewhat	13	13	13	12	15
Oppose somewhat	9	10	8	7	5

Oppose strongly	22	23	17	17	11
Don't know	6	4	4	4	38

Organization: Los Angeles Times
Population Size: 1833
Date: OCT 5, 1992

Question: Do you favor or oppose the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada that eliminates nearly all restrictions on imports, exports, and business investment between the United States, Mexico, and Canada? If you feel you have not heard enough about this issue yet to have an opinion, please just say so.

Date	N	Favor	Oppose	Not Heard Enough	DK
10/08/96*	1011	20	25	54	1
11/15/93	803	36	31	26	7
10/26/93	1508	29	33	34	4
09/13/93	1006	25	36	34	5
07/27/93	1006	31	29	36	4
04/20/93	~500	27	25	44	4
01/26/93	1009	28	31	36	5
10/21/92	unk.	21	36	39	4

Organization: NBC/Wall Street Journal, *Associated Press
Population Size: as noted
Date: as noted

⁴ Question: (Do you favor or oppose each of the following?)... Withdrawing the United States from the North American Free Trade Agreement, which reduces trade barriers between the United States, Mexico, and Canada

	3/07/96	2/27/96	2/22/96
Favor	34	39	34
Oppose	51	51	48
Not sure	15	10	18

Organization: Yankelovich Partners Inc. / Time, Cable News Network
Population Size: varies
Date: as noted above

⁵ Question: This year marks the 5th anniversary of NAFTA. After observing how NAFTA has worked between the United States, Mexico, and Canada over the past few years, do you think America should continue the NAFTA agreement, should America pull out of NAFTA, or should it

be continued with changes?	
Continue	24
Pull out	18
Continue with changes	40
Undecided/Don't know	18
Organization: Epic-MRA, Women in International Trade Population Size: 850 Date: May 1999	

⁶ Question: As you may know, Canada and the United States now share a free trade agreement which ensures that trade between the two countries is not subject to tariffs or import quotas. It has been suggested that a wider free trade zone could be established, consisting of Canada, the United States, and Mexico. In general, do you think a North American free trade zone consisting of these three countries would be mostly good for the U.S., or mostly bad for the U.S.?			
	9/20/92 (1000)	3/17/91 (1005)	3/10/91 (1018)
Mostly good for this country	54	72	72
Mostly bad for this country	24	20	15
Neither good nor bad (vol.)	5	2	3
No opinion	16	7	10
Organization: Gallup Organization Population Size: as noted Date: as noted			
Question: From what you have heard or read about the North American Free Trade Agreement among the United States, Canada and Mexico, do you think it will be good for the U.S. or bad for the U.S.?			
Good for U.S.	46%		
Bad for U.S.	32		
Haven't heard/read about (vol.)	9		
Don't know/Refused	13		
Panel of registered voter debate watchers--pre debate interview 10/8-9/92			
Organization: Gallup Organization / Newsweek Population Size: 433 Date: OCT 11, 1992			

⁷ Question: Here are a few questions about the North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada which is also known as 'N.A.F.T.A.'. Do you favor or oppose the free trade agreement between the United States and Mexico that would eliminate all

trade barriers between those two countries?		
	11/11/93 (1000)	9/9/93 (1108)
Favor	41	41
Oppose	39	42
Not sure	20	17
Organization: Yankelovich Partners Inc. / Time, Cable News Network		
Population Size: as noted		
Date: as noted		

⁸ Question: Do you think Congress should approve or reject N.A.F.T.A. (North American Free Trade Agreement)?				
	11/14/93	11/11/93	11/09/93	9/19/93
Approve	42	38	40	33
Reject	42	46	45	45
No opinion	16	17	15	23
Survey Organization: ABC News				
Population Size: varies				
Date: as noted above				

⁹ Question: Do you favor or oppose the North American Free Trade Agreement--called N.A.F.T.A.--with Mexico and Canada that eliminates nearly all restrictions on imports, exports, and business investment between the United States, Mexico, and Canada?				
	11/14/93 (1334)	9/19/93 (1136)	8/3/93 (870)	6/24/93* (~650)
Favor	37	33	35	43
Oppose	41	40	46	45
Don't know/No answer	22	27	19	12
*Asked of those who had heard of the North American Free Trade zone (51% of sample)				
Organization: CBS News/NYT				
Population Size: as noted				
Date: as noted				
Question: Do you favor or oppose N.A.F.T.A. (North American Free Trade Agreement), the free trade agreement between the U.S. (United States), Mexico and Canada?				
Favor	42%			
Oppose	37			
Don't know/Refused	21			

<p>Asked of those who followed news stories very/fairly closely in the past month (50%) Organization: Princeton Survey Research Associates / Times Mirror Population Size: 1529 Date: SEP 27, 1993</p>			
<p>Question: Do you support or oppose the North American Free Trade Agreement (N.A.F.T.A) that would bring the United States, Canada and Mexico into a single trading bloc?</p>			
Support			46%
Oppose			42
Don't know/Refused			12
<p>Asked of those who said they were following debates about N.A.F.T.A. very or fairly closely in the news this past month (43%) Organization: Princeton Survey Research Associates / Times Mirror Population Size: approx. 860 Date: SEP 15, 1993</p>			
<p>Question: In general, do you think a North American Free Trade zone consisting of Canada, the United States, and Mexico would be mostly good for the United States, or mostly bad for the United States?</p>			
	11/14/93 (1334)	9/19/93 (1136)	6/24/93 (1363)
Mostly good	46	37	46
Mostly bad	38	40	31
Mixed (vol.)	3	4	2
Don't know/No answer	13	19	21
<p>Organization: CBS News/New York Times Population Size: as noted Date: as noted</p>			

<p>¹⁰ Question: I am going to read you several laws that were passed in 1993. For each one I read, please tell me if you think this law is a step in the right direction or a step in the wrong direction... N.A.F.T.A., the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico.</p>	
Step in right direction	53%
Step in wrong direction	33
Not sure	14
<p>Organization: Hart And Teeter Research Companies / NBC News, Wall Street Journal Population Size: 1002 Date: DEC 14, 1993</p>	

<p>¹¹ *Question: How do you feel about N.A.F.T.A. (North American Free Trade Agreement), the free trade agreement between the U.S. (United States), Mexico and Canada? Do you favor or</p>

oppose this treaty?	
Favor	52
Oppose	33
Don't know/Refused	15
*Those who followed NAFTA very/fairly closely Organization: Princeton Survey Research Associates / Times Mirror Population Size: approx. 1100 Date: December 5, 1993	

12 Question: As you may know, [time frame] Congress passed NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), the free trade agreement with Mexico and Canada. So far, would you say that NAFTA has made more of a positive impact on the United States or more of a negative impact on the United States?				
	7/28/97	4/28/97	3/05/96	7/26/94
Positive impact	32	28	21	28
Negative impact	42	43	48	35
No impact (vol.)	7	8	7	16
Not sure	19	21	24	21
Organization: Hart And Teeter Research Companies / NBC News, Wall Street Journal				

¹³ Question: Do you favor or oppose N.A.F.T.A., the North American Free Trade Agreement signed by Canada, Mexico, and the United States?	
Favor	48%
Oppose	39
Not sure	13
Organization: Louis Harris And Associates Population Size: 1255 Date: APR 20, 1995	
Question: How do you feel about N.A.F.T.A. (North American Free Trade Agreement), the free trade agreement between the U.S. (United States), Mexico and Canada? Do you favor or oppose this treaty?	
Favor	43
Oppose	38
Don't know/Refused	19
Organization: Princeton Survey Research Associates / Times Mirror Population Size: approx. 900 Date: March 26, 1995	

14 Question: Do you think free trade agreements like N.A.F.T.A. (North American Free Trade Agreement) and G.A.T.T. (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) are mostly good or mostly bad for each of the following?... American corporations		
Mostly good		58%
Mostly bad		23
Not sure		19
Survey Organization: Yankelovich Partners Inc. / Time, Cable News Network Population Size: 1218 Date: FEB 22, 1996		
Question: (Here are a few questions about the North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada which is also known as 'N.A.F.T.A.'). Do you think the free trade agreement with Mexico will be mostly good or mostly bad for each of the following?... American corporations		
	11/11/93 (1000)	9/9/93 (1108)
Good	69	59
Bad	20	28
Not sure	11	13
Organization: Yankelovich Partners Inc. / Time, Cable News Network Population Size: as noted Date: as noted		
Question: For each group I name, please tell me if you think it will be helped or hurt by N.A.F.T.A. (North American Free Trade Agreement):... American companies.		
	11/14/93 (1218)	11/9/93 (574)
Helped	59	56
Hurt	30	32
Neither/Stay same (vol.)	2	5
No opinion	10	8
Organization: ABC News/Washington Post Population Size: as noted Date: as noted		
[This question for comparative purposes] Question: Do you believe increased trade between the United States and other countries mostly helps or mostly hurts...American companies?		
Helps		56%
Hurt		39
No opinion		5
Organization: Gallup Organization		

Population Size: approx. 500
Date: NOV 21, 1999

¹⁵ Question: (Do you think free trade agreements like N.A.F.T.A. (North American Free Trade Agreement) and G.A.T.T. (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) are mostly good or mostly bad for each of the following?)... Wall Street investors

Mostly good	57%
Mostly bad	15
Not sure	28

Organization: Yankelovich Partners Inc. / Time, Cable News Network
Date: FEB 22, 1996

¹⁶ Question: (Now I would like to read you some statements that have been made about what may happen if the North American Free Trade Agreement (with Mexico and Canada) is passed. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each statement.)... Only big American corporations will benefit.

Agree	55%
Disagree	37
Not sure	8

Organization: Hart And Teeter Research Companies / NBC News, Wall Street Journal
Population Size: 1006
Date: SEP 13, 1993

¹⁷ Question: (Do you think free trade agreements like N.A.F.T.A. (North American Free Trade Agreement) and G.A.T.T. (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) are mostly good or mostly bad for each of the following?)... American consumers

Mostly good	45%
Mostly bad	35
Not sure	20

Organization: Yankelovich Partners Inc. / Time, Cable News Network
Population Size: 1218
Date: FEB 22, 1996

¹⁸ Question: Do you believe NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) has created more jobs or that it has led to a net loss of jobs?

More jobs	28%
Less jobs	44
Not sure/No opinion	28

Asked of those familiar with NAFTA (58%)

Organization: Zogby International

Population Size: 1015

Date: SEP 1997

¹⁹ Question: As you may know, in 1993, Congress passed the North American Free Trade Agreement, known as N.A.F.T.A. Do you believe that the free trade agreement between Mexico and the United States has generated more jobs for the American people or has taken jobs away from the American people, or hasn't the free trade agreement made a difference one way or the other about generating or losing jobs?

Generated jobs	6%
Taken jobs	52
No difference	24
Not sure/Refused	18

Organization: Los Angeles Times

Population Size: 1572

Date: AUG 6, 1996

²⁰ Question: Do you think the trade agreement, known as N.A.F.T.A. (North American Free Trade Agreement), makes for more jobs or fewer jobs in...[country]?

	U.S.A.	Mexico	Canada
More jobs	21	56	39
Fewer jobs	47	12	17
About the same (vol.)	3	1	4
Don't know	29	32	40

Organization: Associated Press

Population Size: 1011

Date: OCT 8, 1996

²¹ Question: Which country do you think benefits more from the North American Free Trade Agreement: the United States or Mexico or do both countries benefit equally, or do neither of the

countries benefit from the free trade agreement?	
U.S.	12%
Mexico	49
Both	16
Neither	9
Not sure/Refused	14
Organization: Los Angeles Times Population Size: 1572 Date: AUG 6, 1996	

²² Question: I'm going to read you some different things that might have affected the wages American workers are being paid these days. Please tell me if you think each has generally done more to increase wages or keep wages down--or hasn't had much effect either way. What about... free trade agreements with other countries, such as NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement)? Has this done more to increase wages or keep wages down, or hasn't it had much effect either way?

Increase wages	17%
Keep wages down	45
Not much effect	26
Don't know	12
Organization: Princeton Survey Research Associates / Wisconsin Public Television Population: 832 (National adults employed full or part time) Date: JUL 9, 1997	

²³ Question: Do you think the (proposed) free trade agreement (with Mexico) would raise wages in the U.S. (United States), would it have no effect, or would it lower wages?

Raise wages	11%
No effect	30
Lower wages	49
Don't know/Refused	12
Organization: Gallup Organization / Cable News Network, U.S.A. Today Population Size: 1003 Date: AUG 10, 1993	