

V. TRADE

A. Protectionism and Free Trade

Most of the upscale participants were familiar with the terms protectionism and free trade, while it appeared only a few in each of the general public groups were able to define these terms. Free trade was described as the ability to trade products with other countries without the imposition of tariffs and quotas. Protectionism was defined as the use of tariffs and quotas in order to protect your own countries' industries from competition.

Beyond the ability to define the terms, however, participants were extremely limited in their understanding of how these issues are developing at present. Most of the general public participants were not sure whether Canada maintains greater protectionist barriers than the U.S.; some felt the barriers were equal between the two countries and many believed that the U.S. impose greater protectionist barriers. Among the upscale participants it was generally recognized that Canada has greater protectionist barriers, based on their perception that without these we would not be able to compete with the U.S.

Almost none of the general public participants had an opinion on whether protectionism was increasing or decreasing in the U.S. Among the upscale participants there was some feeling that certain industries in the U.S. were more in favour of protectionism than others and had been putting pressure on the U.S. government in this regard, e.g., steel industry.