

B. Age

1. Summary of major differences

The two segments of the population defined on the basis of age which stand out as having distinct views on many of the trade questions are youths and those over the age of 55. The former are basically less informed and less aware of the details of the issues involved in free trade, yet in some cases are more likely to be optimistic about the economic effects of free trade for Canada. In contrast, people aged 55 and over are more informed about free trade, but less supportive and more likely to anticipate negative economic effects.

Specific differences of note include:

- o More people than average aged 55 years and over claim to be familiar with the deal, with only about 7% saying they are "not familiar at all with the deal." At the other extreme, 18-24 year olds are least informed, with 75% claiming to be "not familiar at all with the deal";
- o Canadians over the age of 55 are also most opposed to the deal (50%) and also far more pessimistic about free trade in a number of areas than are the younger respondents. For instance, fewer than average think that "we will be able to maintain current government programs such as Unemployment Insurance and health insurance." In addition, as the age of respondents increases, so too does the percentage believing it "very likely" that Canada would lose auto industry jobs to the U.S.;
- o These Canadians over 55 years of age also are more likely (61% versus 55% on average) to believe the agricultural industry will be worse off with a free trade deal. On the other hand, Canadians of retirement age think the oil and gas industry in particular and the energy industry in general would be better off under the free trade agreement. Those at the other end of the age spectrum (18-24 years) are the most optimistic, with 54% seeing free trade as a good deal for the energy sector.