

Broadcasting Issues, Canada/US Relations and Canadian Public Opinion

An Ipsos-Reid Survey for the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting

Results Summary, May 2004

Overview

The following presents the results from a national broadcast issue public opinion survey conducted by Ipsos-Reid on behalf of the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting (FCB). Interviewing was conducted between May 4th and May 9th, 2004, among a representative cross-section of 1,100 Canadians. With a sample of this size, the national results are considered accurate to within ± 3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to 2001 Census data. Tracking data from the 2002 FCB national survey are included where appropriate.

Highlights

Canadian Culture and Identity and Canada/US Relations

- Canadians are very proud of their culture and identity. They overwhelmingly believe that it is something that we should be promoting. They also see a role for government in doing this, especially in the context of maintaining and building our culture and identity distinct from the US as our economic ties increase.
- Canadians' beliefs that government has an increasingly important role to play in maintaining culture and identity distinct from the US appear to be grounded as much in pride than in fear. Over 80% believe that Canadians currently have at least a moderate sense of their culture and identity. Furthermore, a larger proportion believe that our culture and identity is stronger than weaker vis a vis the US than five years ago.
- There is a consistent trend throughout the data, particularly results associated with culture and identity, Canadian content and related issues, which shows that women, Atlantic Canadians, Quebecers and current Liberal, NDP and Bloc supporters are generally more concerned with these issues, attribute higher importance to them and are more supportive of government action in these areas. Current Conservative supporters, men and Albertans tend to be consistently less so.

Canadian Content

- The vast majority of Canadians believe that Canadian content and programming are important overall and in terms of their impact in helping to maintain and build Canadian culture and identity.
- Consequently, six-in-ten Canadians believe that there should be a required, minimum amount of Canadian programming on Canadian television. Furthermore, almost as many believe that the current regulations requiring one hour of Canadian programming in prime time is too little.

The CBC and Culture/Identity

- The vast majority of Canadians believe that the CBC is important in helping to maintain and build Canadian culture and identity, and as a symbol of culture and identity. There is also widespread agreement that the CBC is one of the things that helps distinguish Canada from the US.
- The CBC receives the highest ratings among 13 groups/organizations examined in terms of public confidence/trust to protect Canadian culture and identity on television.
- Noteworthy is that while the CRTC ranks in the middle of the pack in terms of confidence/trust ratings to protect Canadian culture and identity on TV, the vast majority of Canadians continue to see a need for the CRTC and its activities in Canada today.

CBC and its Mandate

- Canadians continue to give the CBC positive marks in meeting its mandate of providing “radio and television services incorporating a wide range of programming that informs, enlightens and entertains.”.
- Canadians attribute a high level of importance to the issue of CBC’s regional mandate. While not as high as its rating on meeting its general mandate, a majority nevertheless rate CBC television and radio positively in meeting the corporation’s regional mandate.
- What may be underlying the importance that Canadians associate with the CBC’s regional mandate is a sense among many Canadians that neither people in other provinces nor the federal government understand the issues and concerns of people in their own province or region. These beliefs tend to decrease moving across the country from west to east.

CBC and Funding

- Canadians across all regions continue to be more of the mind to maintain or increase the CBC’s funding than to reduce it. This also cuts across partisan lines, although current Conservative supporters are more divided in their opinions.

Canadian Culture and Identity and Canada/US Relations

- Canadians are very proud of their culture and identity. They overwhelmingly believe that it is something that we should be promoting. They also see a role for government in doing this, especially in the context of maintaining and building our culture and identity distinct from the US as our economic ties increase.

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements...(READ AND RANDOMIZE)...						
	Strongly agree		Some agree		Total agree	
	04	02	04	02	04	02
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I am proud of Canadian culture and identity	77	70	17	24	94	94
We should be promoting our Canadian culture and identity more; it's something to be proud of	74	74	20	20	94	94
It is important that the Canadian government work to maintain and build a culture and identity distinct from the US	66	66	22	23	88	89
As Canada's economic ties with the United States increase, it is becoming more important to strengthen Canadian culture and identity	59	N/A	28	N/A	87	N/A

- One of the more interesting comparisons across key subgroups is on the issue of the importance of strengthening Canadian culture and identity as our economic ties with the US increase. While 80% or more of residents in all regions agree with this, it is highest in Quebec (91%) and Atlantic Canada (89%). Women (91%) are also more likely than men (82%) to agree. While no real differences emerge by age, 90% of current Liberal supporters, 88% of current NDP and 93% of current Bloc supporters agree, with current Conservative supporters (79%) somewhat lower.
- Indeed, there is a consistent trend throughout the data, particularly results associated with culture and identity, Canadian content and related issues, which shows that women, Atlantic Canadians, Quebecers and current Liberal, NDP and Bloc supporters are generally more concerned with these issues, attribute higher importance to them and are more supportive of government action in these areas. Current Conservative supporters, men and Albertans tend to be consistently less so. This trend is noted here to minimize repetition throughout this summary.

- Canadians' beliefs that government has an increasingly important role to play in maintaining culture and identity distinct from the US appear to be grounded more in pride than fear. Over 80% believe that Canadians currently have at least a moderate sense of their culture and identity. Furthermore, a larger proportion believe that our culture and identity is stronger than weaker vis a vis the US than five years ago.

Do you think that currently Canadians as a whole have a very strong, strong, moderate, weak or very weak sense of Canadian identity and culture?*		
	Apr. 04	Aug. 02
	%	%
Very strong	8	7
Strong	34	32
Moderate	41	43
Weak	12	12
Very weak	5	4
Don't know/no opinion	1	1

*An FCB poll in 1993 showed 29% saying very strong/strong, 39% moderate, 32% weak/very weak

As you may know, there has been an ongoing discussion about the impact that the US has on Canada. One area is culture and identity. Overall, compared to 5 years ago would you say that Canadian culture and identity is much stronger, somewhat stronger, about the same, somewhat weaker or much weaker in terms of being distinct from the US?		
	Apr. 04	Aug. 02
	%	%
Much stronger	13	10
Somewhat stronger	30	33
About the same	34	30
Somewhat weaker	14	21
Much weaker	7	5
Don't know/no opinion	1	1

Canadian Content

- The vast majority of Canadians believe that Canadian content and programming are important overall and in terms of their impact in helping to maintain and build Canadian culture and identity.

On a scale of 1 meaning not at all important to 7 meaning very important, overall how important...? [READ AND RANDOMIZE]										
	Avg.		Rate 5-7		Rate 4		Rate 1-3		DNK	
	04	02	04	02	04	02	04	02	04	02
			%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
is it that Canadian radio and television have Canadian content and programming	5.5	5.4	78	79	9	10	13	11	-	-
is Canadian content and programming on television and radio in helping to maintain and build Canadian culture and identity	5.3	5.3	73	74	12	13	15	13	-	-

- Across key subgroups, women (79%), younger Canadians (77%), and Quebec (82%) and Atlantic (83%) residents associate the highest importance to Canadian content and programming helping to maintain and build Canadian identity and culture. Residents in Alberta (61%) fall below. Politically, importance is reported by 77% of current Liberals, 82% of current NDP and 86% of current Bloc supporters, compared with 60% of current Conservative partisans.

- Consequently, six-in-ten Canadians believe that there should be a required, minimum amount of Canadian programming on Canadian television. Furthermore, almost as many believe that the current regulations requiring one hour of Canadian programming in prime time is too little.

There has been some discussion about the amount of Canadian programming on television. Do you personally think that there should be a specified, minimum amount of Canadian programming on television?		
	Apr. 04	Aug. 02
	%	%
Yes	63	61
No	37	38
Don't know/no opinion	-	1

* An FCB poll in 1995 showed 50% saying yes

Currently, the government's television regulations have the effect of ensuring that an average of at least one hour of Canadian programming is available on Canadian television channels in prime time, that is between 7 pm and 11 pm each day. Do you personally think that one hour of Canadian programming in prime time is too little, about right or too much?		
	Apr. 04	Aug. 02
	%	%
Too little	57	57
About right	37	38
Too much	5	4
Don't know/no opinion	1	1

* An FCB poll in 1995 showed 47% saying too little

The CBC and Culture/Identity

- The vast majority of Canadians believe that the CBC is important in helping to maintain and build Canadian culture and identity, and as a symbol of culture and identity. There is also widespread agreement that the CBC is one of the things that helps distinguish Canada from the US.

On a scale of 1 meaning not at all important to 7 meaning very important, overall how important do you think the CBC is...[READ AND RANDOMIZE]?										
	Avg.		Rate 5-7		Rate 4		Rate 1-3		DNK	
	04	02	04	02	04	02	04	02	04	02
			%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
For maintaining and building Canadian identity and culture	5.5	5.5	78	81	11	8	12	10	-	-
In terms of being a symbol of Canadian identity and culture	5.5	5.6	78	82	10	7	12	10	-	-

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements about the CBC...? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)						
	May 04 Agree			Aug. 02 Agree		
	Strong	Some	Total	Strong	Some	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The CBC is one of the things that helps distinguish Canada from the US	56	33	89	58	31	89

- The CBC receives the highest ratings among 13 groups/organizations examined in terms of public confidence/trust to protect Canadian culture and identity on television. This cuts across regional lines. Furthermore, while the CBC has been able to maintain its rating from 2002, ratings associated with almost all of the other groups/organizations have declined somewhat.

I am going to read to you the names of several groups. Please tell me how much confidence or trust you personally have in each group to protect Canadian culture and identity on television using a scale of 1 meaning very low trust and confidence to 7 meaning very high trust and confidence. (READ AND RANDOMIZE)		
	Rate Higher (rating 5-7)	
	May 2004	Aug. 2002
	%	%
CBC	76	76
TVA (French only)	66	66
The CTV Network (English only)	62	68
Specialty channels like (English -- Much Music, TSN or the History Channel; French - Musique Plus, RDS, ou le Canal D)	54	61
TQS (French only)	57	58
The Global TV Network (English only)	53	58
The CRTC	48	51
Consumer Groups	43	48
The federal government	40	44
Your provincial government	40	43
Telephone companies	29	33
Cable television companies	30	32
Satellite television companies	23	30

By region...							
	May 04 Rate Higher (rating 5-7)						
	Total	BC	Alta	Sask /Man	Ont	Que	Atl
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
CBC	76	74	67	72	79	77	82
TVA (French only)	66	-	-	-	-	66	-
The CTV Network (English only)	62	51	61	52	66	--	66
Specialty channels like (English -- Much Music, TSN or the History Channel; French - Musique Plus, RDS, ou le Canal D)	54	48	54	51	59	52	51
TQS (French only)	57	-	-	-	-	57	-
The Global TV Network (English only)	53	47	55	49	57	-	41
The CRTC	48	45	46	31	49	52	48
Consumer Groups	43	33	31	30	38	67	40
The federal government	40	34	31	36	42	40	50
Your provincial government	40	21	47	38	39	50	42
Telephone companies	29	17	18	27	30	38	32
Cable television companies	30	27	23	28	29	35	27
Satellite television companies	23	13	17	22	21	32	25

- While both CBC radio and television are seen as contributing to Canadian identity and culture by a significant number of Canadians, CBC television remains the focus for a majority.

Between CBC Radio and CBC Television, which one do you think makes the biggest contribution to Canadian identity and culture?		
	May 04	Aug. 02
	%	%
CBC radio	35	33
CBC television	58	61
Both	4	4
Neither	1	1
Don't know/no opinion	2	2

- Also noteworthy is that while the CRTC ranks in the middle of the pack in terms of confidence/trust ratings to protect Canadian culture and identity on TV, the vast majority of Canadians continue to see a need for the CRTC and its activities in Canada today.

As you may know, the CRTC is an agency that regulates broadcasting and telephone services on behalf of the Canadian government. On balance, do you think that there is a great deal of need, some need, not very much need, or no need at all for the CRTC in Canada today?		
	Apr. 04	Aug. 02
	%	%
Great deal of need	34	35
Some need	48	48
Not very much need	9	9
No need at all	7	7
Don't know/no opinion	2	1

* An FCB poll in 1993 showed 31% saying great deal, 48% some, 20% not very much/not at all

CBC and its Mandate

- Canadians continue to give the CBC positive marks in meeting its mandate of providing “radio and television services incorporating a wide range of programming that informs, enlightens and entertains.” As in 2002, currently 81% of Canadians rate the CBC good or better in this regard.

As you may know, as the national broadcaster the mandate of the CBC is to provide radio and television services incorporating a wide range of programming that informs, enlightens, and entertains. Overall, how would you rate the performance of the CBC in fulfilling this mandate to-date...excellent, very good, good, fair, poor or very poor?		
	May 04	Aug. 02
	%	%
Excellent	13	9
Very good	29	31
Good	39	41
Fair	13	14
Poor	4	3
Very poor	2	2
No opinion	1	-

* An FCB poll in 1995 showed 34% saying excellent/very good, 44% good, 14% fair, 5% poor/very poor

- Further questioning reveals that Canadians attribute a high level of importance to the issue of CBC's regional mandate. While not as high as its rating on meeting its general mandate, a majority nevertheless rate CBC television and radio positively in meeting the corporation's regional mandate.

Another part of CBC's mandate is to reflect Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences, while serving the special needs of those regions. How important is it that programming made in and about your part of the country be produced...Please use a scale from 1 not at all important to 7 very important?		
	May 04	Aug. 02
	%	%
Higher importance (rate 5-7)	78	79
Moderate importance (rate 4)	11	12
Lower importance (rate 1-3)	11	9

By region...						
May 04 Rate Higher (rating 5-7)						
Total	BC	Alta	Sask /Man	Ont	Que	Atl
%	%	%	%	%	%	%
78	77	67	71	75	83	88

And overall, how would you rate the performance of...(READ AND RANDOMIZE)...in fulfilling this mandate to make programs in and about your part of Canada.... excellent, very good, good, fair, poor, very poor?				
	CBC television		CBC radio	
	Apr. 04	Aug. 02	Apr. 04	Aug. 02
	%	%	%	%
Excellent	8	8	11	9
Very good	26	21	24	21
Good	37	41	35	35
Fair	17	22	14	18
Poor	7	6	6	4
Very poor	3	1	2	2
Don't know/no opinion	2	1	8	11

- The generally positive attitudes that Canadians have toward the CBC in terms of its importance and mandate carries over into other attitudes toward the corporation. This ranges from issues such as a desire to see the CBC prosper to being able to meet regional needs.

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements about the CBC...? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)						
	May 04 Agree			Aug. 02 Agree		
	Strong	Some	Total	Strong	Some	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I want to see the CBC survive and prosper	71	23	94	69	25	94
The CBC is one of the things that helps distinguish Canada from the US	56	33	89	58	31	89
I would like to see CBC strengthened in my part (region) of Canada	44	41	85	48	40	88
We should build a new CBC capable of providing high quality Canadian programming with strong regional content throughout Canada	45	35	80	51	32	83
The CBC provides value for taxpayers money	29	48	77	27	52	79

- What may be underlying the importance that Canadians associate with the CBC's regional mandate is a sense among many Canadians that neither people in other provinces nor the federal government understand the issues and concerns of people in their own province or region. These beliefs tend to decrease moving across the country from west to east.

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements...? (READ AND RANDOMIZE)			
	Strongly agree	Some agree	Total agree
May 04			
	%	%	%
People in other provinces or regions understand the issues and concerns of people in my province or region	11	38	49
The federal government understands the issues and concerns of people in my province or region	11	37	48

By region...							
May 04 Agree							
	Total	BC	Alta	Sask/Man	Ont	Que	Atl
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
People in other provinces or regions understand the issues and concerns of people in my province or region	49	38	46	45	53	47	53
The federal government understands the issues and concerns of people in my province or region	48	27	30	38	58	50	56

CBC and Funding

- Canadians across all regions continue to be more of the mind to maintain or increase the CBC's funding than to reduce it. This also cuts across partisan lines, although current Conservative supporters are more divided in their opinions.

Assume for a moment that your federal Member of Parliament asked for your advice on an upcoming vote in the House of Commons on what to do about CBC funding. Which of the following three options would you advise him or her to vote for...decrease funding for the CBC from current levels, maintain funding for the CBC at current levels or increase funding for the CBC from current levels?		
	May 04	Aug. 02
	%	%
Decrease funding for the CBC from current levels	9	9
Maintain funding for the CBC at current levels	51	49
Increase funding for the CBC from current levels	38	41
Don't know/no opinion	2	1

By region...							
May 04							
	Total	BC	Alta	Sask/Man	Ont	Que	Atl
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Decrease	9	12	16	20	8	4	6
Maintain	51	46	53	42	52	56	46
Increase	38	40	29	35	38	39	46

By current federal vote...					
May 04					
	Total	Lib	Cons	NDP	Bloc
	%	%	%	%	%
Decrease	9	4	22	3	2
Maintain	51	53	50	45	53
Increase	38	42	26	51	43

- In terms of governance, Canadians are generally divided in their opinions about whether or not the Prime Minister's power to appoint the CBC President and Board of Directors gives the government too much influence over the corporation.

Thinking specifically about the CBC...which of the following two statements is closer to your own opinion?		
	May 04	Aug. 02
	%	%
The Prime Minister's power to appoint the CBC President and Board of Directors gives the government too much influence over the nature and content of programs broadcast on the CBC	45	46
The CBC is independent and it doesn't matter who appoints the Board of Directors and President	52	50
Don't know/no opinion	3	5