

## Broadcasting Issues and Canadian Public Opinion

An Ipsos-Reid Survey for the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting

A Summary of Selected Findings on Issues Associated with the CBC,  
and Foreign Ownership and Media Concentration, May 2004

### Overview

The following presents the results from selected questions contained in a national broadcast issue public opinion survey conducted by Ipsos-Reid on behalf of the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting. These selected results address findings associated with the CBC, and foreign ownership and media concentration. They are provided in advance of a more complete summary of the full survey results. Interviewing was conducted between May 4<sup>th</sup> and May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004, among a representative cross-section of 1,100 Canadians. With a sample of this size, the national results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.0$  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.

### The CBC

- 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.

	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

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)

	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

- 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	-

- 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

- Canadians across all regions also continue to attribute a high level of importance to the issue of CBC’s regional mandate.

Another part of CBC’s mandate is to reflect Canada and <u>its regions</u> to national and <u>regional</u> 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

Another part of CBC’s mandate is to reflect Canada and <u>its regions</u> to national and <u>regional</u> 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 Rate Higher (rating 5-7)						
Total	BC	Alta	Sask /Man	Ont	Que	Atl
%	%	%	%	%	%	%
78	77	67	71	75	83	88

- 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 and be able to meet regional needs to the role of the CBC in differentiating Canada from the US and providing value for tax dollars.

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

- Consequently, Canadians across all regions continue to be more of the mind to maintain or increase the CBC's funding than to reduce it.

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

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	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

## Foreign Ownership and Media Concentration

- Twice as many Canadians have an unfavourable than favourable opinion of foreign ownership in the communications and broadcasting system in Canada. This applies regardless of whether Canadians are looking at telephone companies, cable companies or media companies.

As you may know, there has also been some discussion about foreign ownership in the communications and broadcasting system in Canada. Generally speaking what is your reaction to foreign ownership in...(READ AND RANDOMIZE)...very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable, very unfavourable? (Don't care/not matter volunteered)					
May 04					
	Very favourable	Somewhat favourable	Somewhat unfavourable	Very unfavourable	Don't care/DNK
	%	%	%	%	%
Telephone companies	6	26	36	29	3
Cable companies	4	29	36	29	3
Media companies	4	26	39	29	2

- Opinions on media concentration also show some concern among Canadians. This is reflected in opinions on issues such as media concentration undermining democracy, media owners injecting their own personal opinions into their media outlets and reporting, and the perceived degree of media concentration that currently exists. Against this, however, is a reasonably strong belief that Canadian media need to be concentrated to be competitive.

As you may know there has been some discussion about increased concentration in the media. For example [READ FOR ENGLISH INTERVIEWS -- Bell Canada Enterprises now owns the Globe & Mail and the CTV network, while Canwest Global owns many television stations and newspapers including the National Post] [READ FOR FRENCH INTERVIEWS -- Quebecor now owns TVA, Videotron and several daily newspapers] . Given this, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements...(READ AND RANDOMIZE)...? How about...?						
	May 04 Agree			Aug. 02 Agree		
	Strong	Some	Total	Strong	Some	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Media concentration undermines the health of Canada's democracy	26	36	62	26	42	68
Canadian media need to be concentrated to be competitive	28	38	66	24	40	64
Owners of Canada's media have gone too far in trying to inject their own personal political opinions into what their media outlets say and what they report	35	38	73	37	41	78
There is too much media concentration in Canada	25	35	60	27	35	62
The federal government should act to limit media concentration	29	34	63	N/A	N/A	N/A

- Canadians across all regions are firmly decided about what position a political party could take on foreign ownership that would fit with their own personal opinions. The overwhelming opinion is that a position to maintain Canadian ownership and control is far more appealing than a position permitting foreign ownership and control. Furthermore, Canadians are generally divided about what position a political party could take on media concentration that would fit with their own personal opinions. While a majority say that a position limiting media concentration would match their own, a strong minority say that a position allowing media concentration would do this. Some regional differences also emerge on this issue.

As you may know, there may be a federal election this year. One issue that some people consider important is the communication or broadcast system in Canada. For each of the following broadcasting issues, what general position do you think a party should take if they were to be in line with your own thinking...(READ AND RANDOMIZE)...?	
	May 04
	%
Maintaining Canadian ownership and control	85
Permitting foreign ownership and control	13
No opinion	2
Limiting media concentration	58
Allowing media concentration	39
No opinion	3

As you may know, there may be a federal election this year. One issue that some people consider important is the communication or broadcast system in Canada. For each of the following broadcasting issues, what general position do you think a party should take if they were to be in line with your own thinking...(READ AND RANDOMIZE)...?							
	May 04						
	Total	BC	Alta	Sask/ Man	Ont	Que	Atl
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Maintaining Canadian ownership and control	85	86	82	86	81	88	90
Permitting foreign ownership and control	13	12	16	14	16	10	9
Limiting media concentration	58	56	46	56	58	66	52
Allowing media concentration	39	41	48	39	37	33	46