

# CHAPTER ONE

## CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS: THE TIES THAT BIND

## Identity, Diversity, Unity

---

### INTRODUCTION

In this report, we want to establish the relationship between *cultural identity*, *cultural diversity* and *political unity*, and the role that *communications systems* play in this process. While there are many definitions of culture, we have adopted a broad definition which embraces a collective way of thinking, feeling and doing, a collective way of being. The sum of the cultural values or cultural identities of the *individuals* in a community, society or country, can be considered as the *collective culture* of that community, society or country. The cultural values and identities of *individuals* are dynamic, in constant evolution. This also applies *collectively* at the level of a community, society or country.

Communications systems, defined broadly to include telecommunications, broadcasting, the print media, films and sound recordings, enable individuals to *exchange and share* their cultural values and identities with others. Using a McLuhan analogy, the communications system (the medium) facilitates the exchange (the message). It is through this process of exchange that we are made aware of and able to share in the diverse cultural values and identities to be found in Canada. In the final analysis, political unity, can be best achieved if communications are facilitated and the exchange encouraged in a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance.

### 1A. BUILDING UNITY: PRESERVING IDENTITY

*National identity, like the individual's identity is made up of many overlapping and inter-locking parts. Family, neighbourhood, and community connection; local, regional, and national interests; the personal and the political, the public and the private. These elements are not mutually exclusive. They are mutually affirming and supporting. The resonances vary and shift, but together they create circles of shared images and stories out of which identity emerges.* — Writers' Union of Canada, Brief, October 31, 1991, p. 4.

Culture reflects a country's values — and cultural activities are the means by which these values are nourished and expressed. Our purpose here is to consider the broad parameters of Canada's culture in its distinctive forms, while at the same time examining the many ways it is expressed in everyday life throughout Canadian society. We wish to look at all aspects of