

7.0 CANADIAN CULTURE AND THE MEDIA

Several issues pertaining to cultural nationalism are examined in the individual media sections of this report. These include Canadians' attitudes toward the foreign ownership of Canada's media outlets, the influence of American media on our way of life, and the level of Canadian content on television and radio and in daily newspapers and magazines.

Canadians are divided in their opinions toward government protection of the media industry from foreign ownership. They are similarly divided over whether or not there should be fewer restrictions on American or other foreign programming on Canadian television stations. Television is the only medium which the majority of users identify as "too American" in its influence and as having too little content which "reflects a Canadian point of view."

In this section we find that most Canadians believe a separate cultural identity is a worthwhile objective, and that the media are important vehicles for the expression of this identity.

7.1 Canada As A Separate Cultural Identity From The United States

When Canadians are asked whether this country should be doing more, less or about the same as now to develop a separate cultural identity from Americans, the largest number - 50 per cent - say we should be doing more. Only five per cent say we should be doing less and over one-third (37%) would maintain current efforts to distinguish ourselves from Americans. Eight per cent have no opinion one way or the other.

Attitudes toward the development of a separate cultural identity are consistent across all demographic groups and regions of the country including Quebec.

7.2 Responsibility Of The Media

Canadian media, particularly public broadcasting, have always been expected to play a social role in this country, a role which includes building a sense of nationalism by connecting the various disparate regions through a common communications system and preserving or extending Canadian culture at both the national and local levels.

Canadians agree with these objectives. The vast majority say that all media outlets are responsible for building a stronger Canadian identity but also that the onus rests more heavily with some than with others.