

B. Canadian Culture and Identity

Participants were asked to define Canadian culture and identity and Quebec culture and identity. The main images conveyed by participants as reflecting "Canadian culture and identity" were: "regional identities and specificities," "way of life," "not like the Americans, but hard to say why," "French and English cultures," "Canadians are 'straighter' than Quebecers," "neutral country," "pride," and "patriotism."

Very clear distinctions existed in participants' minds between Canadian culture/identity and Quebec culture/identity, although the majority thought of themselves as personally belonging to both. A few did not want to define Canadian culture or identity, because they did not believe it existed or claimed it did not apply to them.

Some of the main images participants used to define "Quebec culture and identity" included: "folklore," "minority," "diversity," "tongue," "bon vivant," "more tolerant," "more open-minded," and being "more natural and hospitable."

Among the central components of Canadian culture and identity described were respect for human life, freedom, multiculturalism, more tolerance between anglophones and francophones, a culture to be developed, a young country, and team spirit.

The majority is concerned that the sense of identity among Canadians is not sufficiently strong and can be threatened by increased American influence under free trade.

For the participants in Montreal, another attitudinal dimension further reinforces this insecurity: a French minority living in a dominantly English-speaking continent. Almost all believed that in time (over the next hundred years for some and over generations for others) their French cultural heritage will be Americanized. Free trade was perceived as likely to accelerate this process.