**POR Number: 063-16**

**Contract Number: 82082-170182-001-CY**

**Contract Award Date: 2016-10-28**

**Date of Submission: 2017-03-30**

**FINAL REPORT**

**Cultural Diversity in Canadian Media**

*Prepared for:*

Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission

March 2017

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

Phoenix SPI is a ‘Gold Seal Certified’ Corporate Member of the MRIA



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About Phoenix Strategic Perspectives

Phoenix SPI is a Canadian-owned research firm specializing in public opinion research and opinion research with stakeholders and special audiences. For over a decade, we have been a trusted research supplier to the Government of Canada. Our areas of special expertise and experience include policy-related research, communications and advertising testing, and quality of service and client satisfaction measurement.

# Executive Summary

Phoenix SPI conducted qualitative research for the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to explore the issue of cultural diversity in Canadian media. A set of six focus groups was conducted between January 16th and 21st, 2017, with one group conducted in each of the following locations: Toronto, Ottawa (French), Montréal, Halifax, Vancouver, and Québec City (French). Participants were Canadians 18 years of age and older who watch programming on Canadian networks. Groups included representatives of visible ethno-cultural minorities, Indigenous peoples, women, people with disabilities, representatives of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ) community and adult members of the Canadian public. Turnout was as expected according to industry norms[[1]](#footnote-2), with between 7-9 participants taking part in each group.

**This research was qualitative in nature, not quantitative. As such, the results provide an indication of participants’ views about the issues explored, but they cannot be generalized to the full population of members of the general public or members of the targeted audience segments.**

**Perceptions about overall representation and portrayal of segments of Canadian society**

There was a widespread impression that, on the whole, the representation and portrayal of members of segments of Canadian society in Canadian broadcasting has generally improved over the past decade or so. That being said, there was an equally widespread impression that there is still room for improvement, in particular, for people with disabilities and Indigenous peoples. Compared to visible ethno-cultural minorities, women, and members of the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities and Indigenous peoples were viewed as faring poorly when it comes to the number of times they appear in television programming and the types of characters and roles they play. This was evident when participants were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: “*Canadian television is becoming a mirror in which all Canadians can see themselves*.”

Participants were more likely to disagree than agree with this statement. Just over half expressed disagreement with it compared to just over one-quarter who agreed with it. Expressions of agreement and disagreement were much more likely to be moderate than strong. In two cities, Halifax and Quebec City, a majority of participants disagreed with the statement while only in Vancouver did a majority agree with it. Participants in Ottawa and Montreal were almost equally divided between those agreeing and those disagreeing, while participants in Toronto were most likely to express mixed views, with equal numbers agreeing, disagreeing, and neither agreeing or disagreeing.

**Perceptions by segment of Canadian society and type of show**

Overall perceptions regarding cultural diversity in Canadian media, whether positive, negative, or neutral, tended to be anchored in perceptions regarding the specific groups in question (i.e., visible ethno-cultural minorities, Indigenous peoples, members of the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, and women). And when it came to perceptions regarding these groups a definite pattern revealed itself. On the whole, women were seen to be doing best both in terms of representation and portrayal, followed by members of visible ethno-cultural communities and members of the LGBTQ community. By contrast, people with disabilities and Indigenous peoples were routinely identified as doing poorly, especially in terms of representation. Indigenous peoples were also routinely identified as faring poorly in terms of portrayal.

There was also a relatively widespread impression that certain types of shows tend to do a better job depicting the diversity of Canadian society in general. Types of shows most often identified as doing a good job or a better job in this regard included dramas and comedies, sports, documentaries, and news and current affairs shows.

Below are summary assessments for each group, with a focus on the most commonly or frequently received feedback from participants:

* *Women*: On the whole, the perception is that women tend to be well represented and adequately portrayed. It was routinely observed that women are not only present as characters, but that they often play lead roles.
  + Representation: Underscoring positive impressions about representation is the fact that many participants were surprised to learn that, according to a study commissioned by the CRTC[[2]](#footnote-3), the representation of women still lags somewhat behind their proportion of the total population.
  + Portrayal:Despite a widespread impression that the portrayal of women is generally good (e.g., they are more likely to be portrayed as independent, confident, successful), there was also a sense that portrayal is still ‘stereotypical’ or ‘unrealistic’ at times. The most common criticism in this regard is that women are still sexualized at times or portrayed as men want them to be (e.g., as tall, slim, beautiful, and well dressed). Types of shows most likely to represent women included dramas and comedies, sports, reality TV, and news and current affairs.
* *Visible ethno-cultural minorities*: Assessments of the representation and portrayal of visible ethno-cultural minorities tended to be mixed.
  + Representation: There was a relatively widespread sense that they are more visible on-screen, both as characters on TV and as a result of channels like OMNI TV. At the same time, it was often suggested that, although programming was becoming more diverse, it was not reflecting the diversity of Canadian society.
  + Portrayal: In terms of portrayal, there was also general agreement that, while roles have improved, there is still stereotyping (e.g., Blacks portrayed as criminals, Hispanic and Latino people as religious, Muslims only being shown in traditional dress, people of Middle Eastern descent as terrorists). Types of shows most likely to represent visible ethno-cultural minorities included comedies, sports, game shows, news and current affairs, and children’s programming.
* *LGBTQ community*: There was an overall impression that members of the LGBTQ community were becoming more visible on-screen, with some adding that their representation is not viewed as taboo as it might have been in the past.
  + Representation:The main criticism in terms of representation is that the focus tends to be on members of the gay and lesbian community and less on members of the BTQ community. Underscoring participants’ perceptions that members of this community were becoming more visible is the fact that many participants were surprised to learn that, according to an American study[[3]](#footnote-4), only 32 out of 4,370 speaking characters were LGBTQ.
  + Portrayal: There was also a sense that the portrayal of members of this community tends to be good, though it was also often suggested that the portrayal can be stereotyped in the sense that they are depicted as extravagant or their character traits are exaggerated. Types of shows most likely to represent the LGBTQ community included comedies, reality TV, documentaries, and news and current affairs programming.
* *People with disabilities*: Participants tended to agree that the depiction of people with disabilities is better in terms of portrayal than representation. In other words, there are very few characters or personalities with a disability, but when there are, they tend to be well portrayed.
  + Representation:In terms of representation, some have the impression that the representation of people with disabilities on TV shows tends to be ‘thematic’ or ‘episodic’. In other words, a show will have an episode that includes a person with a disability, but the focus tends to be on how the main character(s) react to this, not on developing or exploring the character of the person with a disability. Participants also commented on the episodic representation of people with disabilities in sports programming (i.e., apart from coverage of the Paralympics there seems to be little coverage of people with disabilities in sports). Underscoring the impression that members of this community are not very visible is the fact that participants were not surprised to learn that a study commissioned by the CRTC found that people with disabilities are “crucially absent” from programs. Types of shows most likely to represent people with disabilities included dramas and comedies, reality TV, and news and current affairs programming.
  + Portrayal: Participants tended to agree that the depiction of people with disabilities is better in terms of portrayal than representation (i.e. there are very few characters or personalities with a disability, but when there are, they tend to be well portrayed.) In addition, some participants observed that characters with disabilities are often represented by actors who do not actually have that disability (e.g. a character in a wheelchair is represented by an actor who does not have a mobility disability).
* *Indigenous peoples*: Indigenous peoples were consistently described as faring poorly both in terms of representation and in terms of portrayal.
  + Representation: In the words of many participants, Indigenous peoples are virtually invisible on Canadian networks. Underscoring the impression that members of this community are virtually invisible is the fact that no one was surprised to learn that a study commissioned by the CRTC found that the Indigenous community is severely underrepresented. Not surprisingly, participants had difficulty identifying any types of shows that do a good or better job in terms of representing Indigenous peoples. The only example provided with any frequency was not a type of show but a network, APTN.
  + Portrayal: There was a widespread impression that depictions of Indigenous peoples tend to be stereotypical (e.g. depicted as poor, alcoholic, sniffing glue or gas).

**Perceptions of news coverage**

Most participants think there is sufficient coverage of issues of relevance to, or involving, visible ethno-cultural minorities, Indigenous peoples, women, people with disabilities and representatives of the LGBTQ community. However, some participants did identify issues which they think could receive or should receive more attention in the media. These included the following, presented by segment of the population:

* Women:
  + Sexism/sexual harassment in the Canadian military
  + Missing and murdered Indigenous women
  + Abuse of Indigenous women by police
  + Violence against women in general
* Indigenous peoples:
  + Waste disposal on lands of First Nations
  + Opposition to pipelines
  + Living conditions on reserves
  + Suicide rates among Indigenous peoples
  + Missing and murdered Indigenous women
  + Abuse of Indigenous women by police
  + Residential schools issue
* People with disabilities:
  + Soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD
  + Persons seeking assisted suicide
  + The condition of people living with mental illness
* Visible ethno-cultural minorities:
  + Police brutality/racism in police forces
  + Carding of people based on their ethnic origin
  + Condition of Syrian refugees in Canada
* LGBTQ community:
  + Hate crimes motivated by homophobia

Generally-speaking, participants tend to think or assume that the coverage of issues of relevance to, or involving, these segments of the population is balanced or neutral and unbiased. That being said, some provided examples of reporting that they described as biased in one way or another. Examples included the following:

* Reporting of the ‘Black Lives Matter’ protests in which coverage was perceived to focus on the violence instead of the peaceful protests.
* Coverage of conditions on reserves that had an air of ‘blaming the victims’ for their condition.
* Reports of murdered women which include the line: “she was known to be a prostitute”.
* Stories related to police brutality against visible minorities which include the line: “the suspect was known to police”.
* Reports of crimes which include the line “police are searching for a person of colour” (translation).

# Introduction

Phoenix Strategic Perspectives (Phoenix) was commissioned by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to conduct focus group research with Canadians on their views regarding the representation and portrayal of cultural diversity in the Canadian broadcasting system.

## Background and Objectives

Ensuring Canadians see themselves reflected in the broadcasting system is one of the key objectives of Canada’s *Broadcasting Act*. Cultural diversity refers to how different groups—like visible ethno-cultural minorities, Indigenous peoples and people with disabilities—are represented in broadcasting. The CRTC supports cultural diversity objectives in Canada’s broadcasting system by ensuring: a) there are opportunities for programming by and for specific groups; and b) that all broadcasting services appropriately reflect the diversity of Canadian society.

To inform a potential review of the Cultural Diversity Policy as identified in the CRTC Three-Year Plan 2016-2019, the CRTC wanted to conduct public opinion research to collect information on Canadians’ views regarding the representation and portrayal of cultural diversity[[4]](#footnote-5) in the Canadian broadcasting system. The CRTC needed to understand whether Canadians feel that the diversity of Canadian society is reflected in the Canadian broadcasting system. Specifically, the themes explored through the public opinion research included the following:

* General views on the representation and portrayal of cultural diversity in Canadian media;
* Representation and portrayal by genres of programming—e.g. news, drama, comedy, children’s programming, etc.; and
* The perceived evolution of representation and portrayal of cultural diversity in Canadian programming over the years.

The objectives of the research were to 1): determine whether Canadians feel that they are represented and portrayed in the Canadian broadcasting system; and 2) to add to the body of evidence and data available to the Commission in its determination on whether its policy on cultural diversity should be reviewed to ensure that the objectives of the *Broadcasting Act* are upheld.

## Methodology

Phoenix conducted a set of six two-hour focus groups between January 16th and 21st, 2017 with Canadians over 18 years of age who watch content on Canadian networks. Participants received an honorarium of $100 in appreciation of their time. One group was conducted in each of the following markets: Toronto, Vancouver, Halifax, Ottawa (French), Montréal, and Québec City (French). These six locations were selected to match recent research on cultural diversity commissioned by the CRTC. The March 2016 report, *Review of Cultural Diversity within Canadian Television Programming,* assessed the progress made by Canadian broadcasters in reflecting cultural diversity on traditional television in six markets in Canada (Toronto, Vancouver, Halifax, Ottawa, Montréal, and Québec City) since the [2004 report](http://www.cab-acr.ca/english/social/diversity/taskforce/report/cdtf_report_jul04.pdf) by the *Task Force for Cultural Diversity on Television*,

In each group, at least two-thirds of the participants were representatives of visible ethno-cultural minorities, Indigenous peoples, women, representatives of the LGBTQ community, and people with disabilities. The table below provides information about the composition of the groups.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Visible ethno-cultural minorities | Indigenous peoples | Women | Representatives of the LGBTQ community | People with disabilities |
| Vancouver | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Toronto | 4 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| Ottawa | 4 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Montréal | 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 | -- |
| Québec City | 4 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Halifax | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 |

Note: the categories are not mutually exclusive.

The rest were adult members of the Canadian public not falling within those categories. In addition, in all groups, there was a mix of participants by: 1) age, gender, education, and employment status; as well as 2) television viewing habits (e.g., types of genre (must watch multiple genre) and viewership hours). Groups lasted two hours and turnout was as expected according to industry standards, with at least eight participants taking part in each group (the exception was Vancouver where there were seven participants).

**This research was qualitative in nature, not quantitative. As such, the results provide an indication of participants’ views about the issues explored, but they cannot be generalized to the full population of members of the general public or members of the targeted audience segments.**

The investigators for this study were Alethea Woods and Philippe Azzie. Alethea moderated the groups in Vancouver and Halifax. Philippe moderated the focus groups in Toronto, Ottawa, Montréal, and Québec City. Both moderators contributed to the final report.

The research instruments are appended to this report as Annex 1.

# Detailed Findings

## TV Viewing Habits

### Participants watch various types of programming

Perhaps not surprisingly, when it comes to watching television participants’ viewing habits tend to be varied. Participants in every group tended to watch different types of programs that typically include a mix of the following:

* Drama and comedy
* Sport
* Reality TV
* Game shows, variety shows
* Documentaries
* News and current affairs
* Home improvement

Participants were less likely to watch children’s programming, though at least a few participants in most groups said they do so with their children.

### Virtually everyone watches TV via a cable/satellite subscription and/or Internet

Participants typically watch programs through a cable or satellite subscription, or through a combination of such a subscription and Internet. While a majority watch programs over the Internet, few watch programs exclusively in this way (i.e., most also have a cable or satellite subscription). A small number watch programming over-the-air, and only a few do so exclusively in this way.

### Convenience is the main reason for viewing on Internet

Convenience was the most frequently given reason for watching programs over the Internet. This included the ability to watch television ‘on demand’ (e.g., to watch an episode of a show they may have missed through their cable/satellite subscription), the absence of commercials, portability (e.g. the ability to watch a program away from home, in their bedroom/in private, or when someone is watching a different program on TV), and the absence of the need to record a program. Some also said they find it easy to locate programs on the Internet or can access programs not available through a cable/satellite subscription. A few also pointed to affordability as a reason for watching TV over the Internet.

### Nature of package/bundle, and convenience are the main reasons for cable/satellite subscription

Participants routinely offered two main reasons for watching programs through a cable/satellite subscription. One was the impression that they receive a good deal through their contract/package/bundle. The key element here is the variety and quality of programming available to them for the amount they pay. The other reason was convenience, which included the ability to choose the programming they like, ease in surfing/discovering what is available, and the ability to record programs. Other reasons cited by a small number of participants included having an old computer, which makes it difficult to watch programs on the Internet, a desire to limit their children’s time on the Internet by limiting their ability to watch TV through the internet, and lack of awareness that one could watch programs over the Internet.

The few participants who watched programs over–the-air explained that they do so because 1) it is cheap/free; 2) they have access to the programs that interest them in this way; or 3) sometimes cable does not work.

### Participants pay attention both to storylines and cast

Most participants did not distinguish between the storyline/content and the cast or characters when asked which they tend to pay attention to the most when watching television on Canadian networks. Some participants expressed the view that the storylines and characters are inseparable. A good story/storyline was often identified as being as important and captivating as character development and the capacity to identify with a character. When prompted to prioritize one over the other, most participants maintained that they pay attention to both, but with a slight emphasis on storyline/content.

## Representation

This section reports on participant feedback related to the ‘representation’ of various groups in Canadian media. Participants were informed that representation refers to the extent or number of times various groups appear on-screen.

### Mixed views on Canadian media’s representation of diversity

Participants tended to have difficulty assessing the extent to which the diversity of Canadian society is represented in Canadian media. Overall, they were more likely to hold a positive view, saying that Canadian media does a reasonably good job in representing the diversity of Canadian society. Few said that Canadian media does a poor job in this area, or were ambivalent, choosing to characterize their impression of the way in which Canadian diversity is represented in Canadian media as neutral.

Whether overall impressions leaned towards the positive, the neutral, or the critical, perceptions were often qualified in two key ways. One way was to take a longitudinal perspective (e.g. ‘it is better than it was’, ‘it is improving’, ‘there’s still room for improvement’). The other was to take a comparative perspective (e.g. ‘it is better for some groups than others’). A variation on the comparative perspective was expressed by a few participants in the Montreal group who believed the situation was not as good in Quebec as in the rest of Canada.

Reasons for positive impressions often focussed on growing representation of visible ethno-cultural minorities in television. Typical examples included the existence of shows with characters representing visible ethno-cultural minorities (e.g. ‘Little Mosque on the Prairie’, ‘Kim’s Convenience’), more newscasters from different visible ethno-cultural groups, ethno-cultural programming/television stations (e.g. OMNI), and increased coverage in news and documentaries of multiculturalism and ethno-cultural events.

Critical perspectives also tended to focus on the representation of visible ethno-cultural minorities in media. Participants expressing these critical perspectives either said that although programming was becoming more diverse, it did not necessarily reflect the diversity of Canadian society or suggested that diversity in programming tends to focus mainly on visible ethno-cultural representation and not on other groups. The former criticism was more frequently voiced than the latter.

**Perceptions of representation vary by segment of Canadian society**

Participants’ difficulty pronouncing themselves categorically or generally on the way in which the diversity of Canadian society is represented in Canadian media was underscored when they were asked specifically about the representation of the following specific groups in Canadian media:

* Visible ethno-cultural minorities
* Indigenous peoples
* LGBTQ community
* People with disabilities
* Women

Below are summary assessments for each group in terms of their perceived representation in Canadian media:

* *Women*: On the whole the perception is that women tend to be well represented. It was routinely observed that women are now pervasive as characters, often playing lead roles.
* *Visible ethno-cultural minorities*: Assessments of the representation of visible ethno-cultural minorities tended to be mixed. There was a relatively widespread sense that they are more visible, both as characters on TV and as a result of channels like OMNI TV. At the same time, it was often suggested that although programming was becoming more diverse, it did not necessarily reflect the diversity of Canadian society.
* *LGBTQ community*: There was an overall impression that members of the LGBTQ community are becoming more visible, with some adding that their representation is not viewed as taboo as it might have been in the past. According to a few participants representation of the LGBTQ community tends to focus on members of the gay and lesbian community and less on members of the BTQ community.
* *People with disabilities*: Participants tended to agree that there are very few characters or personalities on television clearly identified as having a disability. In addition, there was a relatively widespread impression that the coverage given to them in sports in particular tends to be limited or episodic (i.e. apart from coverage of the Paralympics there seems to be little coverage of people with disabilities in sports). Some extended this impression to programming in general, suggesting that the representation of people with disabilities on TV shows tends to be ‘thematic’ or ‘episodic’. In other words, a show will have an episode that includes a person with a disability, but the focus tends to be on how the main character(s) react to this, not on developing or exploring the character of the person with a disability. In addition, some participants observed that characters with disabilities are often represented by actors who do not actually have that disability (e.g. a character is a wheelchair is represented by an actor who does not have a mobility disability).
* *Indigenous peoples*: Indigenous peoples were consistently described as faring poorly in terms of representation. In the words of many participants: ‘*Indigenous peoples are virtually invisible on Canadian networks*’.

### Little perceived difference in representation over the Internet compared to cable/satellite

Most participants, a majority in each group, perceived little or no difference between the Internet and cable/satellite television when it comes to representing the diversity of Canadian society in general or the diversity of specific groups. Among those who did see a difference in this regard, some felt that cable/satellite TV was better because it gives access to more channels including specialty channels. Others however provided similar arguments in favour of the Internet, suggesting that it provides more variety and more niche programming than cable/satellite TV.

In short, differences of opinion on this issue tended to be based on a similar argument, the key point being which vehicle provides access to a wider range of programs. The underlying assumption at work here was that the wider the range of programs, the greater the potential to access shows that represent members of the groups in question.

### Some programs seen as doing a better job representing diversity in general and segments in particular

There was a relatively widespread impression that certain types of shows/programs tend to do a better job representing the diversity of Canadian society in general. Types of shows most often identified as doing a good job or a better job in this regard included dramas and comedies, sports, documentaries, and news and current affairs shows. Reasons given to explain these impressions tended to fall into two broad categories.

* *Topic driven focus*: In the case of news/current affairs shows, documentaries, and sports, there was a sense that what is covered or presented is issue or topic- driven so that there is not much choice in terms of what is represented. For example, sports include people from different visible ethno-cultural groups, so by necessity sports coverage will represent visible ethno-cultural diversity. Similarly, while news and documentaries can choose the substantive issues they cover, once they choose a topic the coverage will highlight or include members of communities impacted by that issue. For example, a documentary or news story on the condition of Indigenous peoples on reserves will necessarily represent Indigenous peoples.
* *Pushing boundaries and liberalization of society*: When it came to comedies and dramas in particular, but also news/current affairs shows and documentaries, there was a relatively widespread sense that these types of programs tend to explore issues that may not have been considered mainstream in the past (e.g. LGBTQ storylines). Comedy in particular was seen by some as a type of programming that ‘pushes the boundaries’. There was also a more general impression that society has become more liberal and accepting over time and this is reflected in a greater emphasis on cultural diversity in media.

There was also a relatively widespread perception that certain types of shows/programs tend to do a better job representing specific groups. Specifically,

* Types of shows identified as most likely to represent women included dramas and comedies, sports, reality TV, and news and current affairs programming. Specific programs/channels identified included the following:
  + Bachelorette (reality)
  + Fashion TV (reality)
  + Grey’s Anatomy (drama)
  + Madame Secretary (drama)
  + Murdoch Mysteries  (drama)
  + Orange is the New Black (drama)
  + Private Practice (drama)
  + Sopranos (drama)
  + Suits (drama)
  + Walking Dead (drama)
  + Breaking Bad (drama)
  + Iron Works (drama)
  + Hot in Cleveland (comedy)
  + Mike and Molly (comedy)
  + Monster High (children’s programming)
* Types of shows most likely to represent visible ethno-cultural minorities included comedies, sports, game shows, news and current affairs programming, and children’s programming. Specific programs/ channels identified included the following:
  + Cab cash/Taxi payant  (reality)
  + Master Chef (reality)
  + Breakfast TV  (talk-show)
  + Cityline (on City TV)  (talk-show)
  + Narcos (drama)
  + Orange is the New Black (drama)
  + Power (drama)
  + Homeland (drama)
  + Sopranos (drama)
  + Big Bang Theory (comedy)
  + Blackish (comedy)
  + Kim’s Convenience  (comedy)
  + Little Mosque on the Prairie  (comedy)
  + SCTV  (comedy)
  + Simpsons (comedy)
  + South Park (comedy)
  + Sugar Sammy comedy specials  (comedy)
  + The Mindy Project (comedy)
  + CBC Kids  (children’s programming)
  + Sesame Street (children’s programming)
  + OMNI  (channel)
* Types of shows most likely to represent the LGBTQ community included dramas and comedies, reality TV, documentaries, as well as news and current affairs programming. Specific programs/channels identified included the following:
  + Empire (drama)
  + Grey’s Anatomy (drama)
  + L’échappée  (drama)
  + Melrose Place (drama)
  + Orange is the New Black (drama)
  + Six Feet Under (drama)
  + The Fosters (drama)
  + Unité 9  (drama)
  + Gaycation (documentary)
  + Je suis trans  (documentary)
  + Voyages au bout de la nuit  (documentary)
  + Alt TV  (comedy)
  + Modern Family (comedy)
  + Will and Grace (comedy)
  + Vice Land  (channel)
* Types of shows most likely to represent people with disabilities included dramas and comedies, reality TV, and news and current affairs programming. Specific programs identified included the following:
  + Annie et ses hommes  (drama)
  + Breaking Bad (drama)
  + DeGrassi  (drama)
  + Homeland (drama)
  + Mémoires vives  (drama)
  + Sue Thomas FBI (drama)
  + Doctor am I normal (reality)
  + Handicap amoureux  (reality)
  + South Park (comedy)
  + Les beaux malaises  (comedy)
  + Le banquier  (game show)
* Participants had difficulty identifying types of shows that do a good or better job in terms of representing Indigenous peoples. The only example provided with any frequency was not a type of show but a network, APTN. However, some specific programs where identified including the following:
  + Arctic Air  (drama)
  + Au nord du 60e/North of 60  (drama)
  + Blackstone  (drama)
  + Fargo (drama)
  + Heartland  (drama)
  + Inuk and Kimik  (children’s programming/cartoon)
  + Les pays d’en haut  (documentary)

### Women doing best in terms of representation; people with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples doing worst

There was widespread agreement among participants that women in general are doing best in terms of representation, followed by members of visible ethno-cultural communities and members of the LGBTQ community. By contrast, people with disabilities and Indigenous peoples were routinely identified as doing poorly in terms of representation. In explaining their impressions regarding women, members of visible ethno-cultural minorities, and members of the LGBTQ community, participants tended to focus on ‘representation’ and point to the changing demographic profile of Canada and to shifting societal values, views or beliefs.

When asked why they believed that women, visible ethno-minorities and the LGBTQ community are better represented in Canadian media, participants were of the view that it was a result of the current demographic reality. For instance, women represent half or more of the population and western society has become much more multicultural or ethnically diverse. A key factor in the case of the representation of the LGBTQ community was seen to be the growing liberalization or acceptance in relation to various lifestyles. In other words, society in general has become much more open in terms of the diversity of lifestyles.

When it came to people with disabilities and Indigenous peoples, participants had more difficulty explaining their limited representation in Canadian media apart from a general sense that they are not as ‘vocal’ and/or do not seem to have the “visibility” of other groups. In other words, they do not seem to be on the ‘radar screen’ either in terms of numbers and/or in terms of advocacy.

## Portrayal

This section reports on participant feedback related to the portrayal of these same segments in Canadian media. In advance of the discussion, participants were reminded that ‘portrayal’ refers to the types of characters and roles played by people from these same groups.

### Mixed Views on Canadian media’s portrayal of diversity

Participants’ perceptions regarding the portrayal of members of specific groups were mixed, and tended to vary depending on the group in question. On the whole, women were seen to be doing best in terms of portrayal, followed by members of visible ethno-cultural communities, members of the LGBTQ community, and people with disabilities. Indigenous peoples were routinely identified as faring poorly in terms of portrayal.

Below are summary assessments for each group, with a focus on the most commonly or frequently received feedback from participants:

* *Women*: On the whole the perception is that women tend to be adequately portrayed, and it was routinely observed that women often play lead roles. However, despite a widespread impression that the portrayal of women is generally good (e.g. they are more likely to be portrayed as independent, confident, and successful), there was also a sense that portrayal is still ‘stereotypical’ or ‘unrealistic’ at times. The most common criticism in this regard is that women are still sexualized at times or portrayed as men want them to be (e.g. as tall, slim, beautiful, and well dressed).
* *Visible ethno-cultural minorities*: Assessments of the portrayal of visible ethno-cultural minorities tended to be mixed. Despite the widespread sense that they are more visible on-screen, there was also general agreement that, while roles have improved, there is still stereotyping at work (e.g. Blacks portrayed as criminals, Hispanic and Latino people as religious, Muslims only being shown in traditional dress, people of Middle- Eastern descent as terrorists).
* *LGBTQ community*: There was a relatively widespread sense that the portrayal of members of this community tends to be good, though it was also often suggested that the portrayal can be stereotypical in the sense that they are depicted as extravagant or their character traits are exaggerated.
* *People with disabilities*: Participants tended to agree that the depiction of people with disabilities is better in terms of portrayal than representation. In other words, there are very few characters or personalities with a disability, but when there are they tend to be well portrayed. Some added that the inclusion of a person with a disability on TV shows tends to be ‘thematic’ or ‘episodic’. In other words, a show will have an episode that includes a person with a disability, but the focus tends to be on how the main character(s) react to this, not on developing or exploring the character of the person with a disability.
* *Indigenous peoples*: Indigenous peoples were consistently described as faring poorly in terms of portrayal. There was a widespread impression that when they are portrayed the depiction tends to be stereotypical (e.g. depicted as poor, alcoholic, sniffing glue or gas).

### Examples of stereotypical portrayal of members of different groups

With one exception, at least a few participants in all groups were able to provide examples of depictions of members of the various segments which they considered to be stereotypical. The exception was people with disabilities. Examples are presented below by segment. In each case, the example is followed by the perceived stereotypical depiction.

* Women:
  + Bachelorette (reality) (stereotypical portrayal of a women’s ultimate goal as getting married).
  + Breaking Bad (drama) (stereotypical portrayal of a woman primarily as a house wife).
  + Hot in Cleveland (comedy) (stereotypical portrayal of women as always ‘dolled-up’).
  + Monster High (children’s programming/cartoon) (sexualized depiction of women/girls).
  + Orange is the New Black (drama) (stereotypical portrayal of black women as more likely to be in prison).
  + Sopranos (drama) (stereotypical portrayal of a woman primarily as a house wife).
* Visible ethno-cultural minorities:
  + Homeland (drama) (stereotypical portrayal of people of Middle Eastern decent as terrorists).
  + Kim’s Convenience  (comedy) (stereotypical portrayal of South-East Asians as convenience store owners as well as impression that actors are exaggerating accents).
  + Little Mosque on the Prairie  (comedy) (stereotypical portrayal of Muslims as only being shown wearing traditional clothing).
  + Narcos (drama) (stereotypical portrayal of Hispanics and Latinos as drug dealers).
  + Orange is the New Black (drama) (stereotypical portrayal of Hispanics and Latinos as religious).
  + Power (drama) (stereotypical portrayal of Blacks as drug dealers).
  + Sopranos (drama) (stereotypical portrayal of Italians as Mafiosos).
* LGBTQ community:
  + Will and Grace (comedy) (character of Jack too flamboyant/extravagant).
* Indigenous peoples:
  + Arctic Air  (drama) (depiction of Indigenous peoples as bad/glue-sniffers)
  + Au nord du 60e  (drama) (depiction of Indigenous peoples as bad/alcoholics).
  + Blackstone  (drama) (depiction of Indigenous peoples as bad/alcoholics).
  + Fargo (drama) (depiction of Indigenous peoples as criminals/hired guns).
  + Les pays d’en haut  (documentary) (depiction of Indigenous peoples as bad/glue-sniffers).
* People with disabilities:
  + Focus group participants were unable to provide examples of depictions of members of the various segments which they considered to be stereotypical.

According to a few participants, some types of programs seem to deliberately present stereotypical depictions of members of different groups. In other words, the goal is to caricature or stereotype people. Examples provided were mainly cartoon/comedy shows like Family Guy, South Park, The Simpsons, and American Dad, but they also included shows like Judge Judy and Cops.

## News Coverage

This section reports specifically on issues of representation and portrayal in relation to news coverage.

### Most watch news or current affairs

A majority of participants in each group indicated that they watched news or current affairs programming on Canadian networks. This coincides with what participants had indicated at the beginning of the session when they routinely identified news and current affairs shows as among the types of programs they watched.

### Coverage of Issues of Relevance to Segments Perceived as Generally Good

Generally speaking, most participants think there is sufficient coverage of issues of relevance to, or involving, these groups. It should be recalled in this regard that most participants had included news and current affairs shows among types of shows/programs that tend to do a better job representing the diversity of Canadian society in general. Some suggested that news, by its very nature, tends to be event or issue- driven so that it is difficult to say how much attention an issue should receive and how much is enough in terms of coverage.

That being said, some participants did identify issues which they think could receive or should receive more attention in the media. These included the following, presented by groups. Note that in a couple of instances the same issue falls into different categories (i.e. women and Indigenous peoples).

* Women:
  + Sexism/sexual harassment in the Canadian military
  + Missing and murdered Indigenous women
  + Abuse of Indigenous women by police
  + Violence against women in general
* Indigenous peoples:
  + Waste disposal on lands of First Nations
  + Opposition to pipelines
  + Living conditions on reserves
  + Suicide rates among Indigenous peoples
  + Missing and murdered Indigenous women
  + Abuse of Indigenous women by police
  + Residential schools issue
* People with disabilities:
  + Soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD
  + Persons seeking assisted suicide
  + The condition of people living with mental illness
* Visible ethno-cultural minorities:
  + Police brutality/racism in police forces
  + Carding of people based on their ethnic origin
  + Condition of Syrian refugees in Canada
* LGBTQ community:
  + Hate crimes motivated by homophobia

### Coverage of issues tends to be seen as neutral/unbiased

Generally-speaking, participants tend to think or assume that the coverage of issues of relevance to, or involving, these segments of the population are balanced or neutral and unbiased. That being said, some provided examples of reporting that they described as biased in one way or another. Examples included the following:

* Reporting of the ‘Black Lives Matter’ protests in which coverage was seen to focus on the violence instead of the peaceful protests.
* Coverage of conditions on reserves that had an air of ‘blaming the victims’ for their condition.
* Reports of murdered women which include the line: ‘she was known to be a prostitute’.
* Stories related to police brutality against Blacks which include the line: ‘the suspect was known to police’.
* Reports of crimes which include the line “police are searching for a person of colour” (translation).

## Overall Perceptions

This section reports on participants’ overall perceptions regarding cultural diversity in Canadian media.

### Mixed views on extent to which Canadian media is inclusive

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: “Canadian television is becoming a mirror in which all Canadians can see themselves” and to provide at least one example to support their view.

In response, participants were more likely to disagree than agree with this statement. Just over half expressed disagreement with it compared to just over one-quarter who agreed with it. Expressions of agreement and disagreement were much more likely to be moderate than strong.

Regional differences were evident on this issue as well. In two cities, Halifax and Quebec City, a majority of participants disagreed with the statement while only in Vancouver did a majority agree with it. Participants in Ottawa and Montreal were almost equally divided between those agreeing and those disagreeing, while participants in Toronto were most likely to express mixed views, with equal numbers agreeing, disagreeing, and neither agreeing or disagreeing.

The table below provides a breakdown of the scores by city. Caution should be exercised when interpreting these results as they reflect the views of participants only; they cannot be extrapolated to the population in general.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Strongly agree** | **Moderately**  **agree** | **Neither** | **Moderately**  **disagree** | **Strongly disagree** | **Total agree** | **Total disagree** |
| Toronto | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | **3** | **3** |
| Ottawa | 0 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | **3** | **4** |
| Halifax | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 2 | **0** | **7** |
| Montréal | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 0 | **3** | **4** |
| Québec City | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 1 | **0** | **5** |
| Vancouver | 0 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | **5** | **2** |
| **Totals** | **2** | **12** | **9** | **20** | **5** | **14** | **25** |

Those who agreed with the statement felt that the representation and portrayal of diversity was increasing/improving, but they also thought that there was need for further improvement. Indeed, some agreed with the statement because of the word ‘becoming’, noting that things are improving but not as good as they could be. Others suggested that the quality in terms of representation and portrayal varies by segment, but that generally-speaking they agree with the statement.

In support of their opinion they tended to identify the same shows/programs they had identified previously as types of shows/programs doing a better job representing specific groups. Specific examples included the following:

* Blackish (comedy)
* Mike and Molly (comedy)
* Modern Family (comedy)
* Sugar Sammy comedy specials  (comedy)
* Empire (drama)
* Shameless (drama)
* Six Feet Under (drama)
* Suits (drama)
* Master Chef (reality)
* Tout le monde en parle  (news/current affairs)
* Vice Land (channel)
* Voyages au bout de la nuit  (documentary)

Participants who disagreed with the statement acknowledged that while progress appears to have been made, they felt that further improvement is needed. Those who disagreed also acknowledged that progress had been made. That being said, they felt in general that programming was still limited enough in terms of representation and stereotypical enough at times to justify their disagreement with the statement.

Some suggested, for example, that the range in terms of representation of visible ethno-cultural groups tends to be more focussed on the Black community rather than reflecting the diversity of Canadian society (e.g. few characters who are of Middle-Eastern decent, Chinese, or Indigenous peoples). It was also suggested that despite improvements in the depiction of certain groups, there was still stereotyping. By way of examples they pointed to programs and characters identified previously (see list on pages 14-15). In the words of one participant: ‘I still do not see myself’.

### Situation regarded as much better than a decade ago with two exceptions

Regardless of the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement, there was a virtual consensus that, overall, the representation and portrayal of visible ethno-cultural minorities, members of the LGBTQ community, and women in Canadian broadcasting has improved over the last decade or so. While participants noted improvement in the representation and portrayal of people with disabilities and Indigenous peoples in Canadian broadcasting, this change has been much smaller for members of these groups.

On the whole, women were seen to be doing best both in terms of representation and portrayal, followed by members of visible ethno-cultural communities and members of the LGBTQ community. The situation of women in particular was seen as improved for three reasons: 1) the number of women represented, 2) the number of lead roles they have, and 3) their portrayal as independent, intelligent people with lives of their own (e.g. not subordinate to/dependent on a man, not looking to get married). Evidence of the improved situation of visible ethno-cultural minorities was seen primarily in the increased number of programs with ethno-cultural characters and the existence of ethno-cultural channels (e.g. OMNI TV). In the case of the LGBTQ community, the fact that they have a presence on the screen at all was seen as an improvement compared to a decade ago.

By contrast, people with disabilities and Indigenous peoples were routinely identified as doing poorly, especially in terms of representation. In this sense, little progress has been noticed over the past decade. In the opinion of many participants, they are still virtually invisible on-screen.

Specifically, with the exception of programs on APTN, participants had difficulties identifying examples of Indigenous characters. In the rare examples provided by participants, Indigenous peoples were routinely identified as faring poorly in terms of portrayal.

In addition, the participants found that people with disabilities were poorly represented. Participants found it challenging to provide examples of characters with a disability or programming depicting people with disabilities.

In the rare examples identified by participants, they found that people with disabilities tended to be portrayed in a positive manner. For some, the improvement in the portrayal of people with disabilities was reflected in the fact that characters with a disability are slowly becoming less of a vehicle for exploring a theme or issue (e.g. how the main characters react to a person with a disability). Instead, they are beginning to be characters in their own right.

## Suggestions to CRTC

This section reports on suggestions for the CRTC to consider when it comes to the representation and portrayal of visible ethno-cultural minorities, Indigenous peoples, members of the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities and women in Canadian media.

Participants offered only a few suggestions to the CRTC, perhaps because of limited familiarity with the Commission’s mandate and role. Specific suggestions included the following, none of which were made frequently:

* Ensure more cultural diversity among members of the CRTC.
* Review the portrayal in media with members of groups being depicted.
* Approach various groups themselves to explore how they want to be portrayed.
* Provide guidelines for broadcasters regarding representation and portrayal of groups in society.
* Have a committee review and analyse a cross-section of programs and make recommendations.
* Focus more on portrayal than representation. How people are portrayed is more important than their representation.

# *Appendix*

**Annex 1: Research Instruments**

**Recruitment Screener**

**A. Introduction**

Hello/Bonjour, my name is           . Would you prefer to continue in English or French? / Préférez-vous continuer en anglais ou en français?

**[INTERVIEWER NOTE: FOR ENGLISH GROUPS, IF PARTICIPANT WOULD PREFER TO CONTINUE IN FRENCH, PLEASE RESPOND WITH, "Malheureusement, nous recherchons des gens qui parlent anglais pour participer à ces groupes de discussion. Nous vous remercions de votre intérêt." FOR FRENCH GROUP, IF PARTICIPANT WOULD PREFER TO CONTINUE IN ENGLISH, PLEASE RESPOND WITH, “Unfortunately, we are looking for people who speak French to participate in this discussion group. We thank you for your interest.]**

I’m calling from Research House, a Canadian research firm. We’re organizing a series of discussion groups on behalf of the Government of Canada to discuss current issues of interest to Canadians. The groups will last up to two hours and people who take part will receive a cash honorarium to thank them for their time. May I ask you a few questions?

Yes CONTINUE

No THANK/TERMINATE

Participation is completely voluntary. We are interested in your opinions. No attempt will be made to sell you anything or change your point of view. The format is a "round table" discussion led by a research professional with up to ten participants. All opinions will remain anonymous and will be used for research purposes only in accordance with laws designed to protect your privacy.

**[INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF ASKED ABOUT PRIVACY LAWS, SAY: “The information collected through the research is subject to the provisions of the *Privacy Act*, legislation of the Government of Canada, and to the provisions of relevant provincial privacy legislation.”]**

Before we invite you to attend, we need to ask you a few questions to ensure that we get a good mix of people in each of the groups. This will take 5 minutes. May I continue?

Yes CONTINUE

No THANK/DISCONTINUE

**B. Qualification**

1. Do you, or does any member of your household or immediate family, work in any of the following fields? READ LIST

Marketing research, public relations firm, or advertising agency,

The media (radio, television, newspapers, magazines, etc.),

Media associations, such as the Canadian Association of Broadcasters or the Canadian Media Producers Association, or

Broadcasting industry (distribution, television station, production, etc.)

Yes THANK/DISCONTINUE

No CONTINUE

1. Could you please tell me which of the following age groups you fall into…? READ LIST; GET GOOD MIX

Under 18 THANK/DISCONTINUE

18 to 24

25 to 34

35 to 44

45 to 54

55 to 64

65 to 70

Over 70 THANK/DISCONTINUE

1. Do you identify as… WATCH QUOTAS.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No |
| …an Indigenous person (First Nation, Métis or Inuit)? |  |  |
| …a member of a visible ethno-cultural group? | ASK Q3A |  |
| …a person with a disability? | RECORD DISABILITY  IF NOT CLEAR, ASK Q3B |  |
| …part of the LGBTQ community? |  |  |

3A. Are you a member of any of the following ethnic or cultural groups? [READ LIST; ACCEPT ONE RESPONSE ONLY]

South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani)

Chinese

Black (e.g. African, Caribbean)

Filipino

Latin America

Arab

Japanese

Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodia, Indonesian)

Korean

Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3B. What is the nature of your physical disability? [RECORD SPECIFIC DISABILITY AND THEN CODE DISABILITY TYPE. GET GOOD MIX]

Disability:

DO NOT READ:

Mobility/Agility disability

Hearing Impaired/Deaf

Visually Impaired/Blind

Pain disability

Speech disability

Multiple sclerosis

Muscular dystrophy

1. On average, how many hours a week would you say you watch television programming aired by a Canadian broadcaster, such as CTV, Global TV or CBC? This includes original programming produced by Canadian broadcasters **or** programming aired by Canadian broadcasters that is produced outside of Canada by, for example, an American network. READ LIST

Less than 20 hours THANK/DISCONTINUE

20 to just under 30 hours

30 to just under 40 hours

More than 40 hours

VOLUNTEERED: DO NOT WATCH TV THANK/DISCONTINUE

IF THE INDIVIDUAL IS NOT CERTAIN S/HE WATCHES PROGRAMMING ON A CANADIAN NETWORK, OFFER THE FOLLOWING CANADIAN NETWORKS AS ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES:

City TV

Space

Discovery

W Network

YTV

TVA

Séries+

VRAK

1. Which of the following categories of TV programming do you watch on Canadian networks? READ LIST; ACCEPT ALL THAT APPLY

IF DO **NOT** WATCH 2 OR MORE, THANK/DISCONTINUE.

Drama and comedy

Sport

Reality TV

Game shows, variety shows

Documentaries

News and current affairs

Home improvement, such as programs you would see on HGTV

Children’s programming

Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. And, how do you tend to watch this TV programming? Do you view it….. READ LIST; GET MIX

…only over the Internet, on a smart TV, computer or mobile device? THANK/DISCONTINUE

…only on a TV through a cable or satellite subscription?

…only over-the-air, using an antennae?

…or using a mix of these?

1. Record gender by observation. WATCH QUOTAS.

Female

Male

1. What is the highest level of education you have completed? READ LIST IF NECESSARY; GET GOOD MIX

Less than high school

High school

Some college/technical school/CEGEP

Graduated college/technical school/CEGEP

Some university

Graduated university

1. What is your current employment status? READ LIST IF NECESSARY. GET MIX, BUT AT LEAST HALF IN EACH GROUP TO BE EMPLOYED (I.E. FULL-TIME, PART-TIME, OR SELF-EMPLOYED)

Employed full-time (30 hrs. or more/week)

Employed part-time (Under 30 hrs./week)

Self-employed

Unemployed

Student

Homemaker

Retired

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you ever attended a discussion group or interview on any topic that was arranged in advance and for which you received money for your participation?

Yes

No SKIP NEXT QUESTION

1. When did you last attend one of these discussion groups or interviews?

Within the last 12 months THANK/DISCONTINUE

Over 12 months ago

1. How comfortable are you with expressing your views in a group setting, including reading and commenting on written materials? READ OPTIONS

Very comfortable

Somewhat comfortable

Not very comfortable THANK/DISCONTINUE

Not at all comfortable THANK/DISCONTINUE

**C. INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE**

The group will take place on [DAY OF WEEK], [DATE], at [TIME]. It will last two hours. People who attend will receive $100 to thank them for their time and light refreshments will be served. Would you be willing to attend?

Yes

No THANK/DISCONTINUE

The discussion will be lead by a researcher from the national public opinion research firm, Phoenix SPI.

Do you have a pen handy so that I can give you the address where the group will be held? It will be held at [INSERT FACILITY]. I would like to remind you that the group is at [TIME] on [DATE]. We ask that you arrive 15 minutes early.

At the facility, you will be asked to produce photo identification, so please remember to bring something with you (for example, a driver's license). If you use glasses to read, please remember to bring them with you. Participants may be asked to review some materials in [ENGLISH/FRENCH] during the discussion.

The session will be video recorded for research purposes and representatives of the Government of Canada research team will be observing from an adjoining room. You will be asked to sign a waiver to acknowledge that you will be video recorded during the session. The recordings will be used only by the Phoenix SPI research team and the Government of Canada and will not be shared with others. As I mentioned, all information collected in the group discussion will remain anonymous and be used for research purposes only in accordance with laws designed to protect your privacy.

As we are only inviting a small number of people to attend, your participation is very important to us. If for some reason you are unable to attend, please call us so that we can get someone to replace you. You can reach us at [INSERT NUMBER] at our office. Please ask for [INSERT NAME].

Someone will call you the day before to remind you about the session.

So that we can call you to remind you about the focus group or contact you should there be any changes, can you please confirm your name and contact information for me?

**Moderator’s Guide**

Introduction (5 minutes)

* Thank participants for attending
* Introduce moderator and Phoenix
* Tonight, we are conducting research on behalf of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, to discuss the representation and portrayal of cultural diversity in our broadcasting system.
* My job is to facilitate the discussion, keeping us on topic and on time.
* Your job is to offer your opinions about the issues to be covered tonight.
  + Not a knowledge test; no right or wrong answers (interested in opinions)
  + Looking for candour and honesty;
  + Okay to disagree; want people to speak up if hold different view
* Comments treated in confidence; reporting in aggregate form only; recording for report writing purposes only; observers behind one-way glass.
* If you have a cell phone or other electronic device, please turn it off.
* Any questions?
* Roundtable introduction: Please tell us your first name and a hobby you have.

Contextual Information (10 minutes)

When you were recruited for this study, all of you said you watch television on Canadian networks. I’d like to begin with a few general questions about your viewing habits…

1. What type of programs do you tend to watch? [KEEP BRIEF]

Probe: USE LIST OF MAIN GENRE, AS NEEDED:

* Drama and comedy
* Sport
* Reality TV
* Game shows, variety shows
* Documentaries
* News and current affairs
* Home improvement (e.g., programs on HGTV)
* Children’s programming

1. How do you watch these programs…over the Internet, through a cable or satellite subscription, over the air or all of the above? For those of you who watch programs through the Internet, why is that? And for those of you who watch programs through a cable or satellite subscription, why is that? And for those of you who watch programs over the air, why is that?

Note: going forward, when we say “watching TV”, we are referring to over the air and through a cable or satellite provider.

1. When watching these programs, what do you tend to pay attention to the most…the cast or the storyline/content? Why?

Representation (45 minutes)

We will be asking questions related to the “representation” and the “portrayal” of various groups. By representation, we mean the number of times the various segments of the population appear in TV programming. By portrayal, we mean the types of characters and roles played by people from these same segments – how they are portrayed. So, representation focuses mainly on quantity and portrayal focuses mainly on quality. Is it clear what we mean by this? ENSURE CLARITY THEN CONTINUE

Thinking broadly now about the programming you watch,

1. What’s your overall impression of the way in which the diversity of Canadian society is represented in Canadian media? Overall, would you say the Canadian media does a good job or a poor job in representing this diversity? Why do you say that?

PROBE:

* positive vs. negative vs. neutral
* reasons for assessment

The next questions are about the representation of various groups in Canadian media[[5]](#footnote-6). By this, we mean the representation of different groups in different kinds of programming.

1. Now let’s focus on the following segments of the population…what do you think about the representation or visibility of [INSERT FROM LIST; ROTATE ORDER] in the programming you watch on Canadian TV networks?

LIST:

* Visible ethno-cultural minorities
* Indigenous peoples
* Members of the LGBTQ community
* People with disabilities
* Women

1. Some of you watch TV over the Internet while others do so over the air or through a cable or satellite subscription. Generally speaking, would you say that the diversity of Canadian society is better, worse or about the same on programming accessed [ROTATE: over the Internet / over the air and through a cable or satellite subscription]? Those of you who only watch TV over the air or through cable or satellite may not be able to compare, and that’s fine, but if you have any impression at all, please share it. Why do you say that? [PROBE FOR CONCRETE EXAMPLES]
2. Let’s focus on the visibility of the same segments of the population we discussed a few minutes ago…Are members of these groups more visible on programming available over the Internet or on programming you watch through a cable or satellite subscription? We’ll start with …. [INSERT FROM LIST; ROTATE ORDER]. Again, those of you who only watch TV through cable or satellite may not be able to compare, and that’s fine, but please share any impressions you have. Why do you say that?

LIST:

* Visible ethno-cultural minorities
* Indigenous peoples
* Members of the LGBTQ community
* People with disabilities
* Women

1. Thinking about the different types of programs you watch on Canadian networks, do you think certain programming does a better job, overall, of representing the diversity of Canadian society? If so, which ones and why? [PROBE FOR CONCRETE EXAMPLES; USE FLIPCHART]

USE LIST TO ENSURE MAIN GENRE ARE COVERED BY PARTICIPANTS:

* Drama and comedy
* Sport
* Reality TV
* Game shows, variety shows
* Documentaries
* News and current affairs
* Home improvement (e.g., programs on HGTV)
* Children’s programming

1. What about the representation of different segments of the population… Do you think certain types of programming better represent [INSERT FROM LIST; ROTATE ORDER]? If so, which ones and why? [PROBE FOR CONCRETE EXAMPLES; USE FLIPCHART]

LIST:

* Visible ethno-cultural minorities
* Indigenous peoples
* Members of the LGBTQ community
* People with disabilities
* Women

USE LIST TO PROBE AS NEEDED:

* Drama and comedy
* Sport
* Reality TV
* Game shows, variety shows
* Documentaries
* News and current affairs
* Home improvement (e.g., programs on HGTV)
* Children’s programming

1. All things considered, do you think some of these segments of the population are better represented in Canadian media than others? If so, which ones and why?

I’m going to pass around a one-page document that presents information on cultural diversity in Canadian and US media. Please take a few minutes to review the handout and circle anything that you find surprising or wish to comment on for any reason.

ALLOW PARTICIPANTS TIME TO READ DOCUMENT, THEN CONTINUE.

1. Let’s start with a general question…what do you think of what you just read? Why do you say that?
2. Did any of you circle anything that you found surprising or particularly interesting? Are these findings consistent with your experience watching TV?

Portrayal (25 minutes)

Now I’d like to change the focus of the discussion from the representation of these segments of the population to the portrayal of these same segments in Canadian television programming.

Just to remind you, by representation, we mean the number of times the various segments of the population appear in TV programming. By portrayal, we mean the types of characters and roles played by people from these same segments – how they are portrayed. So, representation focuses mainly on quantity and portrayal focuses mainly on quality. Is it clear what we mean by this? ENSURE CLARITY THEN CONTINUE

1. We’ll start with …. [INSERT FROM LIST; ROTATE ORDER]. Do you think [INSERT] are portrayed in a positive or negative way in Canadian television programming? Why do you say that? And, are they more or less likely to be cast as primary characters in programs? Why do you say that? [PROBE FOR CONCRETE EXAMPLES; USE FLIPCHART]

LIST:

* Visible ethno-cultural minorities
* Indigenous peoples
* Members of the LGBTQ community
* People with disabilities
* Women

USE LIST TO PROBE AS NEEDED:

* Drama and comedy
* Sport
* Reality TV
* Game shows, variety shows
* Documentaries
* News and current affairs
* Home improvement (e.g., programs on HGTV)
* Children’s programming

1. Thinking about the programming you’ve watched over the last year or so, have you noticed shows on Canadian networks that you felt were stereotyping any of the segments of the population that we’ve been discussing? If so, please describe. What about… [INSERT FROM LIST; ROTATE ORDER]? [PROBE FOR CONCRETE EXAMPLES]

LIST:

* Visible ethno-cultural minorities
* Indigenous peoples
* Members of the LGBTQ community
* People with disabilities
* Women

News Coverage/Content (10 minutes)

Up to this point we’ve been talking about all types of programming. I’d now like to focus on news coverage specifically.

1. To begin, how many of you watch news or current affairs programming on Canadian networks? This could be a news program, like the supper or evening news hour, or current affairs programs, like W5 on CTV, the Fifth Estate on CBC or 16X9 on Global. [GET HANDCOUNT]

For those of you who watch this type of programming,

1. Do you think there is sufficient coverage of issues of relevance to, or involving, these segments of the population? REMIND PARTICIPANTS IF NEEDED OF THE SEGMENTS. PROBE FOR DIFFERENCES BY SEGMENT. If yes, can any of you provide examples? PROBE FOR CONCRETE EXAMPLES.
2. For those of you who don’t think there’s sufficient coverage, what issues do you feel are not reflected in the programs you watch?
3. Thinking about the news and current affairs programs you’ve watched over the last year or so, do you think the coverage of issues of relevance to, or involving, these segments of the population is balanced? That is, the reporting and any discussion is neutral and unbiased? PROBE FOR DIFFERENCES BY SEGMENT. Why do you say that? Please provide examples of balanced or unbalanced news coverage. PROBE FOR CONCRETE EXAMPLES.

Overall Perceptions (20 minutes)

Now I’d like you to rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: “Canadian television is becoming a mirror in which all Canadians can see themselves.” When doing so, please use the page I am handing out, and provide at least one example to support your view.

HANDOUT ONE PAGE STATEMENT DOCUMENT, THEN CONTINUE.

1. Just a quick show of hands…how many put “1” meaning you strongly disagree? And how many put [INSERT SCALE AND CONTINUE TO 5]?
2. For those of you who agreed with the statement, either moderately or strongly, what programs can you point to as examples of how Canadian television is becoming more reflective of the different aspects of Canadian society? [USE FLIPCHART]
3. And what about those who disagreed with the statement, either moderately or strongly, what examples can you point to? [USE FLIPCHART]

Thinking broadly again,

1. All things considered, do you think the amount of representation of visible ethno-cultural minorities, Indigenous peoples, members of the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, and women in Canadian broadcasting has changed over the last decade or so? If yes, how?

PROBE:

* positive vs. negative vs. neutral
* differences by segment
* concrete examples

1. And what about the portrayal of these same groups in Canadian broadcasting… has it changed over the last decade or so? If yes, how?

PROBE:

* positive vs. negative vs. neutral
* differences by segment
* concrete examples

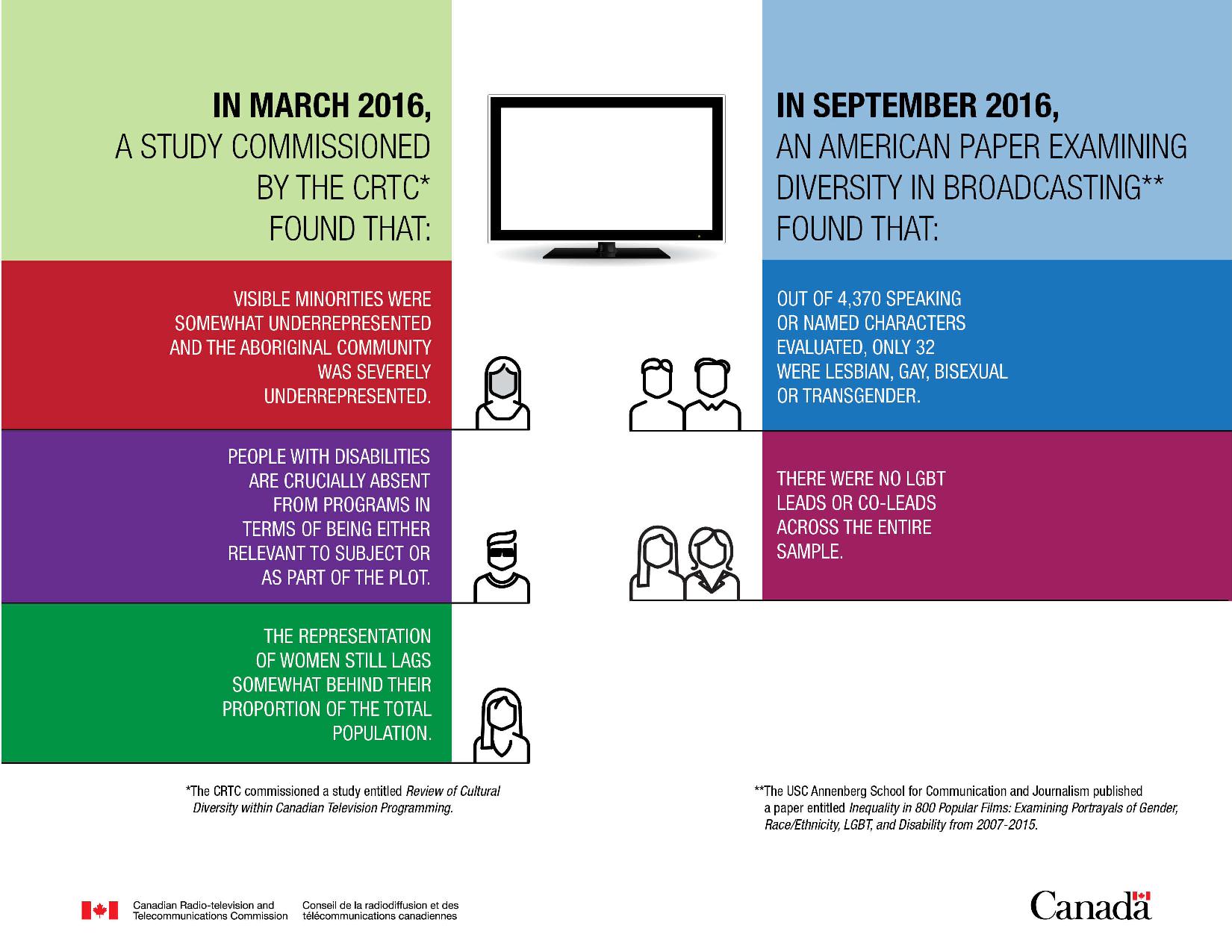
1. As you may know, the role of the CRTC is to regulate and supervise the broadcasting and telecommunications systems in Canada. With this in mind, do you have any suggestions for the CRTC to consider when it comes to the representation and portrayal of visible ethno-cultural minorities, Indigenous peoples, members of the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities or women on Canadian television?

Conclusion (5 minutes)

1. Any final thoughts or advice for the CRTC when it comes to reflecting Canada’s diverse society in our broadcasting system?

**Handouts**

1. **Infographic – Discussion Document**



1. **Rating Question**

**Statement:**

Canadian television is becoming a mirror in which all Canadians can see themselves.

**Rating:**

🔾 Strongly agree

🔾 Moderately agree

🔾 Neither agree nor disagree

🔾 Moderately disagree

🔾 Strongly disagree

**Examples:**

1. As is standard practice for focus group research, eleven participants were recruited for each group to ensure sufficient attendance. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Ensuring Canadians see themselves reflected in the broadcasting system is one of the key objectives of Canada’s *Broadcasting Act*. In order to inform a potential review of the CRTC’s Cultural Diversity Policy, the CRTC commissioned a study to assess the progress made by Canadian broadcasters in reflecting cultural diversity within the Canadian television broadcasting system since the [2004 report](http://www.cab-acr.ca/english/social/diversity/taskforce/report/cdtf_report_jul04.pdf) by the *Task Force for Cultural Diversity on Television*. The March 2016 study, *Review of Cultural Diversity within Canadian Television Programming*, provided recent data on how cultural diversity is or is not reflected on traditional television in six markets in Canada (Toronto, Vancouver, Halifax, Ottawa, Montréal, and Québec City). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. During the focus groups, participants were provided a handout (an infographic) that presented some statistics on the representation and portrayal of cultural diversity in the Canadian and American broadcasting systems. The handout was only meant to stimulate discussion and was not intended to be considered an authorized or complete overview of the current statistics. This was clearly explained to the participants when they were provided the handout. Canadian statistics were drawn from the 2016 study commissioned by the CRTC (cited in footnote 2) and the American statistics were drawn from a September 2016 paper published by the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, *Inequality in 800 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, LBGT and Disability from 2007-2015*. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Refers to visible ethno-cultural minorities, Indigenous peoples, women, people with disabilities and the LGBTQ community. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. IF ASKED: When focusing on Canadian media, we mean all types of programs – Canadian, U.S. and international – that appear on Canadian TV networks/channels. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)