

Canadian Values: Country's Urban-Rural Gap Widens

for **Monday, June 2, 2003**

Analysis by **Chris Baker**
Environics Research Group (613-230-5089)
and **Jack Jedwab**

(Executive Director, Association for Canadian Studies / 514-987-7784 or 514-502-7784)

The Association for Canadian Studies commissioned this poll from Environics Research Group/Focus Canada. The survey of 2,002* Canadians 18 years of age and over looks at urban/rural issues. The ACS-Environics survey was carried out by telephone from March 15-23, 2003. Results are accurate to within plus or minus 3,5%, 19 times out of 20.

CANADA'S POLICY-MAKERS have been very concerned about the extent to which the population share's common values and ideals. Sharing certain core values is seen as a precondition to a harmonious society. In the absence of this social cohesion-however defined is at risk. When it comes to values there is much upon which Canadians agree. With respect to national values and international standards and cultural diversity there seems less divergence than is often assumed. Moreover most Canadians are not parochial and thus disagree that local concerns outweigh other matters. Language and region of residence seem to have little bearing on common values. However Canadians believe that there is an important difference in values based on whether one is an urban or rural dweller. This may be all the more relevant for Canada's future as the country grows increasingly urbanized and those in the rural areas call for greater government support. Differences on the question of values are laid out in the tables below.

Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

By Language spoken at home

	Total		English		French	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Values driving Cdn. society today similar to my own	64	34	65	34	65	33
International standards on human rights/environment benefits Cdns.	86	12	86	13	87	11
Only issues that affect local community concern me	19	80	16	83	26	73
Cdns. basically have same values regardless or whether urban or rural dwellers	39	61	39	60	37	62
Multiculturalism contributed positively to Cdn. Identity	81	18	82	17	76	23

As observed below it is Ontarians and Western Canadians that are more inclined to believe that the urban-rural values divide is greater than is the case in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces.

Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

By Region

	Atlantic Provinces		Quebec		Ontario		Western Canada	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Values driving Cdn. society today similar to my own	77	23	64	34	66	34	60	37
International standards on human rights/environment benefits Cdns.	91	7	87	11	87	12	82	16
Only issues that affect local community concern me	18	82	26	73	15	84	19	80
Cdns. basically have same values regardless of whether urban or rural dwellers	44	54	40	57	36	62	39	61
Multiculturalism contributed positively to Cdn. Identity	86	12	76	22	81	17	82	18

Amongst Whom is the Growing Urban-Rural Gap?

The widening gap in regard to shared values between urban and rural is in evidence outside of Quebec where the percentage that strongly agreed dropped between 2000 and 2003 from over one out five to approximately out of six holding the view that Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

Respondents who strongly agree with the following statement: Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

By Language spoken at home

	2000	2003
Total	22	16
English	22	15
French	18	17

Conversely there has been growth in the degree to which English Canadians disagree that they share the same values whether they live in urban areas or not.

Respondents who **disagree** with the following statement: Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

By Language spoken at home

	2000	2003
Total	54	61
English	53	60
French	61	62

On a regional basis the urban-rural values divide has grown mostly in the Atlantic provinces followed by Ontario and Western Canada.

Respondents who **strongly agree** with the following statement: Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

By Region

	2000	2003
Total	22	16
Atlantic Provinces	29	15
Quebec	18	18
Ontario	23	15
Western Canada	21	14

Respondents who **disagree** with the following statement: Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

By Region

	2000	2003
Total	54	61
Atlantic Provinces	45	54
Quebec	61	57
Ontario	51	62
Western Canada	55	61

The perception is not confined to those who reside in smaller centers and is indeed held across communities irrespective of size.

Respondents who **strongly agree** with the following statement: Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

By Community Size

	2000	2003
Total	22	16
1 Million +	21	16
100K to 1 Million	19	13
5K to 100K	24	19
Less than 5K	23	15

However it seems that the tendency to disagree that urban and rural dwellers share the same values is more pronounced in the mid-size urban areas.

Respondents who **disagree** with the following statement: Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

By Community Size

	2000	2003
Total	54	61
1 Million +	59	62
100K to 1 Million	52	64
5K to 100K	51	57
Less than 5K	54	58

While the rising urban-rural divide is felt across all groups perceived it is especially apparent amongst persons in the highest income brackets. But the extent to which the gap is believed to be widening tends to have accelerated amongst the lower income groups.

Respondents who **strongly agree** with the following statement: Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

By Household income

	2000	2003
Total	22	16
Less than \$20K	30	22
\$20K to \$30K	28	22
\$30K to \$40K	25	17
\$40K to \$60K	23	14
\$60K to \$80K	20	12
\$80K or more	12	9

Conversely the rate of disagreement has risen across the various income brackets as seen in the table below.

Respondents who **disagree** with the following statement: Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

By Household income

	2000	2003
Total	54	61
Less than \$20K	43	48
\$20K to \$30K	46	53
\$30K to \$40K	55	61
\$40K to \$60K	56	66
\$60K to \$80K	55	62
\$80K or more	62	71

Those with higher levels of education are more inclined to think that the gap is wide than are those with less education. Still there has been little change in opinion on this matter between 2000 and 2003 amongst the most and least educated segments of the population.

Respondents who **strongly agree** with the following statement: Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

By Education

	2003	2000
Total	22	16
Less than High School	32	29
High School	26	17
Comm. College Vocation	23	18
Some University	19	7
University degree	12	11

Respondents who **disagree** with the following statement: Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

By Education

	2000	2003
Total	54	61
Less than High School	41	40
High School	50	54
Comm. College Vocation	52	62
Some University	60	71
University degree	66	67

Immigrants also regard the urban-rural gap as widening with those of European origins standing out particularly on the issue” As observed below their opinion has evolved considerably since 2000.

Respondents who **strongly agree** with the following statement: Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

By Non-British Immigration

	2000	2003
Total	22	16
Europe	32	20
Other	25	21

Respondents who **disagree** with the following statement: Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

By Non-British Immigration

	2000	2003
Total	54	61
Europe	48	54
Other	42	51