Summary Report
on the
National Values Assessment for Canada
2009

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Executive Summary

A recent National Values Assessment for Canada revealed remarkable agreement across diverse subgroups — region, generation, gender, birthplace in and out of Canada, and broad occupational sectors — about their top 10 personal values, the values they see reflected in the current national culture, and those they desired in a culture of Canada into the future. The survey was conducted May 1-7, 2009 by the Todd Thomas Institute for Values-Based Leadership at Royal Roads University in partnership with the Barrett Values Centre headquartered in the UK and the US. Canada is the seventh nation to have implemented a survey using Richard Barrett’s National Values Assessment instrument.

In the domain of personal values, honesty ranked first. When added to responsibility and trust that ranked in the top 10, it is understandable that accountability is the top value for a desired Canadian culture. Accountability and governmental effectiveness, are the desired alternatives to what these Canadians polled saw as considerable dysfunction in the current culture in the forms of bureaucracy, wasted resources, crime/violence, and corruption. The bedrock strengths of the current Canadian culture are seen as human rights, freedom of speech and law enforcement. In spite of the level of dysfunction, quality of life is still a value seen as being expressed in the current culture.

Canadian personal values are focused intensively on relationship and qualities of relationship that foster a sense of purpose beyond self interest and are conducive to collaboration. With widely shared personal values that emphasize people and relationships, Canadians want to see strengthening the social safety net, concern for vulnerable citizens, and increased prevalence of effective health care. In the midst of the economic downturn, unemployment was seen in the current culture and employment opportunities and poverty reduction were highlighted as priority values for a desired Canadian culture.

While concern for future generations was in the top 10 values selected for a desired future, long term sustainability values took a back seat to what seems to be more immediate survival and safety demands, likely amplified by the uncertain economic times. Environmental awareness was the 12th priority value both for the current culture and the desired culture.

A key message coming from this Canadian National Values Assessment is that the massive infusion of funds for physical infrastructure is necessary but not sufficient. Social and organizational infrastructure is also critical in addressing the dysfunction that compromises Canada’s ability to move forward.

Participating in the electronic survey were 1251 Canadians, the sample adjusted to the most recent Canadian Census for representation by age and gender within Canadian regions. The margin of error of the overall sample is +/-2.8% 19 times out of 20, with wider margins for smaller segments of the population examined. Implementation of the study was assisted by Environics Research Group that has conducted a survey of social values in Canada for over 25 years. This project is the launch of monitoring Canadian values in a way that will allow Canadians to actively participate in communicating their values and priorities, and to put them to use in shaping their national culture toward a sustainable future.
Introduction

The Todd Thomas Institute for Values-Based Leadership conducted a National Values Assessment for Canada May 1-7, 2009, in partnership with the Barrett Values Centre, an international organization promoting values-based leadership in organizations and nations. The assessment was completed electronically in English and French by 1251 Canadians. The sample had been adjusted to the Canadian Census for region, age and gender.

The Institute undertook the National Values Assessment (NVA) for Canada as a project aligned with its mandate to advance knowledge and practice of values-based leadership in organizations and communities. The Institute was pleased to sponsor and implement the NVA since national culture is a crucible within which individual values are developed as well as the source of possibilities and constraints for the quality of organizational and community life. Richard Barrett, founder of the Barrett Values Centre dedicated to supporting leaders leading values-driven organizations, developed a model of values that enables measurement and, therefore, management of values, as demonstrated through his work on organizational culture in over 1000 organizations across 55 countries around the world. In the last three years, he and his colleagues have launched an application of the instrument for national cultures. Canada is the seventh country to conduct an NVA, after Bhutan and Latvia in 2007, Denmark and Iceland in 2008, and USA and Sweden, also in 2009.

The purpose of the National Values Assessment is similar to that of the Organizational Cultural Values Assessment, namely, to generate collective awareness of personal values, the values perceived to be expressed in the current national culture, and those values that are most important in the desired national culture. Richard Barrett’s instrument, the NVA, highlights the gaps between the current and desired cultures and suggests possible strategically focused initiatives to close them. As an applied research organization, we chose to align with the Barrett Values Centre in this work for three basic reasons:

(1) The Barrett model embedded in the NVA is a comprehensive construct that fosters attention to values and behaviour that optimize the quality of our national culture and its sustainability in global context.
(2) The model and the results can be easily understood and invite wide participation among leaders and citizens to interpret its significance for them in practical terms.
(3) The results are structured so as to foster active engagement by Canadians who are positioned to work on closing gaps between our current practices and our desired national culture.

We have been assisted in implementing this assessment by Dr. David Jamieson, Chief Scientist at Environics Research Group. His organization has conducted an annual survey of Canadian social values for the last 25 years. We used the same demographic variables as the annual Environics survey so results for both can be compared and related to sharpen the picture of our Canadian values.

Our underlying purpose in this project is to amplify our awareness in Canada of our values, our appreciation of their importance to our well-being as a nation, and our application of them in our choices and actions. It is our belief that our deepest values are exceedingly constructive, and that the
more conscious we are of what is profoundly important to us, the more likely that awareness will influence our choices and actions. Violence, civil disorder, inter-ethnic strife, corruption, poverty, lack of infrastructure to feed starving populations, and environmental devastation remind us how fragile national cultures can be and how much destruction can result when positive values are replaced by limiting, dysfunctional and/or destructive priorities. Our risk in Canada currently is that we may take our strengths for granted and become complacent. National culture is like mortar between the bricks; it is too often not noticed until it deteriorates to the point where its capacity to safeguard long term sustainability of the country is compromised. In a world that is in flux, do we have the level of national consciousness that will enable us to navigate the turbulence and choose wisely in the face of our challenges? Our experience has been that well-being, efficacy, and sustainability for individuals and organizations are enhanced by the awareness and consistent practice of values. Fostering this practice on a national scale seems exponentially important.

As an applied research project, the conduct and presentation of results of the NVA is only the beginning for the Institute. We expect to conduct the survey on a recurring basis as a resource to leaders and other citizens who are interested in improving organizational and national culture, the quality of community life, and the strength of our national character.

The Nature and Conduct of the 2009 NVA

The Instrument - The results in this report from the Barrett NVA are based on three questions posed by the instrument. Respondents were asked to select, from 85 or more values, their top 10 priority values or behaviours (i.e., values expressed in action):

- Personal Values: “...the 10 values that most reflect who you are”
- Current Culture Values: “...the 10 values or behaviours that most reflect how your society in Canada currently operates”
- Desired Culture Values: “...the 10 values you would most like to see reflected in Canadian society”

We adopted the demographic variables in Environics’ annual survey of Canadian Social Values (CSV) so that the results of each could be compared. This enables us to combine the strengths of both instruments, the two being structurally very different — the Barrett NVA largely qualitative and CSV quantitative. The demographic data gathered includes: gender, age, province or territory of residence, country of birth, highest level of education, current employment status, type of work, employment sector (including whether public or private sector), and income level.

The survey participants were members of a standing panel provided by a commercial research organization. The NVA was completed electronically on a website administered by the Barrett Values Centre in the UK. This mode of data gathering implies several limitations. The fact that those who participated required access and ability to operate a computer reduces representation of the elderly and disadvantaged populations. Also, participants had to be willing to be
members of a standing research panel and to respond to this unusual survey opportunity. It is typically difficult to gather data from busy people in surveys and electronic surveys are no exception. This led to the slight sample skews described below.

The final sample consisted of 1251 respondents aged 18 years and over who were selected to comprise a sample reflecting the Census targets of age by gender categories, within each of six Canadian regions. Since there were few respondents from the northern territories, they were dropped from this analysis. The six regions formed were: British Columbia, Alberta, the Prairies (Saskatchewan and Manitoba), Ontario, Québec, and the Atlantic region (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland). Four age cohorts were formed: Pre-Boomers (born between 1900-1945); Boomers (1946-1965); Generation X (1966-1979); and Generation Y (1980-1991). The resulting 48 target cells (2 gender x 4 age cohorts x 6 regions) were further assessed for geodemographic skews using Environics Analytics Group’s proprietary geodemographic cluster system, PRIZM-C2. All respondents provided FSAs (first three characters of their postal codes) which allowed modelling with probabilistic assignments into the 66 PRIZM-C2 geodemographic clusters; these clusters are further aggregated into 18 “Social Groups” which is a segmentation of the clusters that combines geographic density and social economic status (SES) information. It is worth noting that just over half (51.6%) of the respondents in this sample were employed at the time, a percentage somewhat lower than expected. This is not untypical for survey samples, a problem usually addressed by weightings. However, in this case, it was not possible to adjust the skew through post-survey weighting given this form of analysis. In reporting the results, we have examined response patterns to estimate the effect of these skews on the results.

The sample size of 1251 respondents provides a margin of error of +/-2.8% for the full sample. However, the average for the various demographic and geographic segments examined and reported is +/-6.2%, ranging from +/-3.0% to 11.2% (students). Those that are especially weak will be signalled in reporting the results.

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1 We included over 100 extra youthful respondents, aged 15 to 17, with the intention of examining emerging patterns within Gen Y at a later date. However, in order to permit comparisons, we included only respondents 18 and over in this report, which is consistent with the NVA’s of other nations.

2 The PRIZM-C2 geodemographic Social Groups are based on seven socioeconomic status levels and five density breaks used to define whether a respondent resides in an area that can be characterized as urban, suburban, ex-urban, town or rural. Each cluster and Social Group was indexed to the expected representation in the population based on the Census to identify any skews and to assess if the skews were systematic. The results show an overall skew towards lower socioeconomic (SES) status in our achieved sample. The top 28.8% of the Canadian population based on SES constitute only 23% of our sample (index=82), whereas the bottom 16.1% constitute 19.2% of our sample (index=119). The skew at the top end of under-represented SES adults, a finding typical of modern survey results.
Model Underlying the Instrument: Seven Levels of Consciousness

The interpretive framework embedded in the NVA as an instrument is a seven level developmental model of consciousness to which values are associated. The developmental schema is generally consonant with similar frameworks (e.g., Beck and Cowan, 1996, Wilber, 2000, Kegan, 1996) over the past 40 years. From our perspective, it is an embedded strength of the NVA because it directs our attention to the dynamics of moving from fear-based and inwardly focused living and leading to a more open, emergent, and values driven approach toward the common good. These qualities seem especially critical in an unpredictable and shrinking global context.

This model, an adaptation and extension of renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow’s theory of motivation (Maslow, 1943), was constructed by Richard Barrett initially to describe organizational consciousness and that of individuals and, particularly, people as members of organizations — employees and leaders (Barrett, 1997). The first four levels which are adapted directly from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs — physical survival and safety, inclusion and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization were elaborated into four subsequent phases — transformation, internal cohesion, making a difference, and service. For Barrett transformation is a pivotal shift away from fear into openness. This is a gateway to the creativity and open engagement with others that are essential for the flexibility and resilience required for long term well-being and sustainability. “Living in a constant state of internal
instability and external disequilibrium means that our minds are preoccupied with surviving, feeling safe and respected” (Barrett, Personal Consciousness, nd).

Successive levels then build on that foundation. The nature of the next level is pursuit of personal meaning and life purpose. “We begin to shift from belief-based decision-making, based on our past experiences, to values-based decision-making; we learn how to create the future we want to experience (Barrett, Personal Consciousness, nd). Barrett sees the next level characterized as the actualization of our values in action. We align with people in ever widening circles of association with those who share similar values but, perhaps, vastly different experiences and cultural heritages. The last level is dedication of our time and energy to service in a depth of experience living fully in the present.

Again, in the first three levels, excessive attention to any one level is associated with dysfunction or potentially limiting values. Barrett finds Maslow’s observations that we must reach a threshold level of need achievement at any given level if we are to move beyond it. This is critical if we are to emerge from preoccupation with survival challenges; otherwise survival issues will usurp our time and attention entirely. Dysfunction is generated by an inability to free ourselves from a particular level; a balance of attention to all levels is optimal well-being, perhaps best reflected in Buddhist wisdom, “First enlightenment, then the laundry”!

**National Values Related to Levels of National Consciousness** - Over the past several years, Richard Barrett has been collaborating with international partners to apply values assessment on a national scale. The translation of the seven level model to a national context is described in his article, “Stages in the Development of National Consciousness” (Barrett, National Consciousness, nd). The following diagram shows the needs associated with each stage in the growth and development of nations (Barrett, National Consciousness, nd). Again, specific values are associated with each of these levels. Values can be positive, or they can be behavioural expressions that are likely to have a negative impact; Barrett calls these “potentially limiting” values. The following figure describes Barrett’s levels of national consciousness with illustrative associated values.

![Stages in the Development of National Consciousness](http://www.valuescentre.com)
NVA for Canada: Results

There are many messages in the NVA for Canada. An important advantage of the unique Barrett Values Centre format for reporting results is that it fosters dialogue. The “dot plot” display of data makes the findings easily accessible to everyone in a comprehensive fashion. Potentially, diverse perspectives generate multiple relevant themes and dimensions of interpretation. This aligns with our intention to promote ongoing dialogue about our values in Canada to the greatest extent possible through adopting a 21st Century approach to systematic inquiry that makes a difference! So, the purpose of this summary report is to highlight the most prominent themes and implications while inviting you, the reader, to engage actively with the results and to contribute your own interpretations online on any of the social media options our website, www.royalroads.ca/tti.

Our examination of the results of the 2009 NVA for Canada will include patterns of the sample as a whole and also across the following subgroups or segments of the data set.

Segments Examined
Six regions include: British Columbia, Alberta, Prairies (Saskatchewan and Manitoba), Ontario, and the Atlantic region (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland). Since the response rate from the northern territories was too low, they are excluded from this assessment. An alternate approach to tapping the perspectives of northerners will need to be arranged in subsequent rounds of the NVA. As cited earlier, four generations were: Pre-boomers (1900 to 1945), Boomers (1946 to 1965), Generation X (1966 to 1979), and Generation Y (1980 to 1991). The broad occupational categories were: those employed full or part-time in either the public or private sector; those not working (including retired, stay-at-home parents, and those looking for work); and students.

The 10 most frequently selected values as personal values, those expressed in the current Canadian culture, and those of a desired culture for Canada are displayed in the following diagram. The rest of this summary report is a detailed examination of this overall picture, beginning with the Current Culture Values. (P=Positive; L=Potentially Limiting. The columns display: values by priority, frequency of selection; and values level out of a possible of 7)
Our Current Culture

The current culture, as perceived by respondents, is both a celebration of key strengths and a sound of warning about a significant level of vulnerability. Potentially limiting or dysfunctional features (designated with “L” in values tables) account for six out of the top 10 selections and 32% of the selections in the whole data set. This is an overall measure of cultural entropy, “the amount of energy in a human group structure that is consumed in unproductive activities. It is a measure of the friction and pent up frustration that exist within a group” (Barrett, 2009). The greatest proportion of dysfunction is concentrated on level 1, survival or economic stability, but the most prevalent value and next highest proportion of dysfunction is on level 3, institutional effectiveness (or not). Though only one value on level 4 - growth and change - made it among the top 10 choices, the greatest proportion of values (19%) on a single level in the data set relate to this level. Only two top values, but 24% overall, of values selected indicate attention to the domains of the common good, levels 5 and 6, collaborative engagement in the wider world and global sustainability. (The proportion of positive values selected on each level from all responses is indicated by the blue bars in the table below, and the proportion of potentially limiting values on each level from all responses is indicated in red.)

**Our Strengths** - It is, perhaps, not surprising that *human rights* is the highest positive value in the current Canadian culture. It was the second most frequently selected and it was unanimous across all segments examined; that is, it appeared in the top 10 for all regions, all generations, both genders, Canadian born, and across all broad occupation categories. We are one of the most diverse countries in

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. bureaucracy (L)</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. human rights</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. freedom of speech</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. wasted resources (L)</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. unemployment (L)</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. crime/violence (L)</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. law enforcement</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. corruption (L)</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. uncertainty about the future (L)</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. quality of life</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the world and there is evidence (Adams, 2008) that Canada values its newcomers from other
countries the most of any nation. Another strong positive value for
Canadians is freedom of speech which
was the third most frequently
occurring value, and unanimous across
all segments but BC, where it ranked
among the next 10, namely, 15th. Canadians value law enforcement which was identified in over
three-quarters of the segments examined and came 7th in frequency of selection; several
potentially limiting features discussed below may have amplified this cultural strength in
respondents’ attention. Before we turn to the more dysfunctional features perceived in the
current culture that outnumber the positive ones, we might note that quality of life, ranks in the
top 10 values reflected in our current culture.

Our Vulnerabilities – As seen by the Canadians polled, six out of the 10
values reflected in the current culture are Potentially Limiting or
dysfunctional. It is, perhaps, not surprising that during the worst
economic downturn since the Depression we see economic instability
reflected in this picture. However, only two of the top 10 selections, unemployment and uncertainty about the future, the fifth and ninth
respectively, are direct consequences of the economic collapse of 2008. Crime/violence and
corruption, across two-thirds of the segments examined, predate the
downturn but some instances, as in the case of Earl Jones in Montréal
who was charged with fraud and theft, were revealed by the economic
crisis. Canadian regulation of the banking industry has been widely
recognized as having been effective to the extent that Canada is the only
western nation that has avoided back bailouts (CBC News, March 29,
2009).

Bureaucracy was in the top ten across every subgroup we examined and wasted resources
was selected by every group except students. Taken together, these limiting values-in-action that
have to do with institutional dysfunction seriously constrain our capacity to execute effectively to
solve problems and turn our opportunities into benefit for ourselves and the world.

The distribution of the top 10 value selections of the whole sample across the seven levels
reflects a current inward preoccupation with our own institutional
and survival issues. This profile contrasts with the reputation and
self perception we have been evolving as constructive and
generous contributors in a global context. When we add the
current culture values selected in the second tier, that is, priorities
11 to 20 (additional positive in red and additional potentially
limiting in gray in adjacent figure), it was evident that positive
values focusing on the common good had been superseded by the
proportion of social and economic threats and ineffectiveness. These second tier positive values were: democratic process, environmental awareness, peace, community services, diversity, personal freedom, and effective healthcare. We also found materialism, blame and poverty again, focused primarily on the survival level. The implications of preoccupation with survival and organizational level issues for the focus on change (level 4) and for long term sustainability initiatives are evident — they are ‘placed on the back burner’.

**Cultural Entropy** - The proportion of potentially limiting values selected in the whole data set is a measure of our cultural entropy, in the case of Canada — 32% dysfunction and unproductive use of energy. The assessed level of dysfunction was similar for generations — Pre-Boomers 33%, Boomers 34%, Gen X 31%, and Gen Y 29%. The variation suggests a possible effect of the workplace and/or family responsibilities. Women assessed the current culture slightly more critically (34%) than men (31%). Being born in or out of Canada made no difference in this regard. While being cautious in light of a weak confidence level for the student segment (+/-11.2% 19 times out of 20), it is notable that students saw the lowest level of dysfunction in the current culture — 23%. This compares to 30% for public sector employed, 34% for private sector employed, and 33% for those not employed. The greatest variation was among regions — perhaps surprisingly BC with the highest at 39% and Québec with the lowest at 27%! It is not possible to assess the affect of the BC election occurring the week that the NVA was conducted, but that may have amplified respondents’ attention to issues that generalized to the country. Outside of Québec, cultural entropy appears higher in more populated regions — along with BC, Alberta at 35%, Ontario at 33%. Cultural entropy levels were assessed lower in the Prairies (31%) and in the Atlantic region (28%), though it is important to note that the statistical confidence levels are also weaker, (+/-10.6%) and (+/-9.9%), respectively.

In comparison to NVA’s in other countries, Canada’s cultural entropy score is about on par with Sweden’s (31%) and much less than the USA’s (52%). The USA’s NVA was also conducted in 2009 within seven months after the economic collapse. What does an entropy level of 30% or 50% mean?
In observing the events that co-occur with assessments of national values, a pattern is emerging. Most dramatic are those with over 50% cultural entropy. The NVA in Iceland, conducted in August 2008, predicted the declaration of bankruptcy in October. The US NVA was conducted in the middle of the extraordinary season of bank bailouts and economic stimulus packages requiring government record-breaking levels of government spending. The assessment in Latvia occurred in the midst of social and economic turbulence that brought down the government and, like Iceland, later had to submit to external control through a necessary bail out by the International Monetary Fund. Barrett observes this level of cultural entropy or dysfunction to be associated not only with a change in government but also with a change of political direction. Our risk in Canada is that comparisons with these more severe cultural conditions may invite us to be complacent. Cultural entropy over 30% does represent a very significant level of dysfunction that is thought to carry the risk of further deterioration, for example, in the form of social unrest (Barrett, 2009).

**Cultural entropy** represents the degree of dysfunction in a culture

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Entropy</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 10%</td>
<td>This a low level of entropy and augurs well for the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11%-20%</td>
<td>This is a relatively low level of entropy indicating that there is some degree of dissatisfaction with the current culture that could lead to social unrest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%-30%</td>
<td>This is a moderate level of entropy indicating potential unease among the population and/or potential conflict situations that need to be addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31%-40%</td>
<td>This is a relatively high level of entropy indicating unresolved issues that if left unaddressed could lead to significant social unrest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41%-50%</td>
<td>This level of entropy indicates leadership issues that if left unaddressed could lead to changes in government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 51%</td>
<td>This is a high level of entropy that could lead to riots, civil disobedience and social unrest. This indicates a need for a change in policy that could also be accompanied by a change in government.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We appear to be at a juncture in which making the right choices about national strategies for going forward will be critical. These findings suggest that the issues go beyond economic stability. What are the effective responses to our social and institutional vulnerabilities? We now turn to Canadian personal values and priorities for a desired culture in Canada to discern what those priorities might be.
Canadians’ Personal Values

Canadians’ top 10 personal values emphasize the importance of personal purpose and meaning — internal cohesion (level 5) and relationship (level 2). These levels of value account for 29% and 17%, respectively, of all values selected in the data set. Though only one level 4 value, responsibility, appears in the top 10, 18% of all values selected were level 4 values that emphasize continuous growth and change. These trends are can be understood as exemplifying the perspective from which the current culture was assessed, of course; they are emphases on what matters to Canadians, who we see ourselves to be. (The proportion of positive values selected on each level from all responses is indicated by the blue bars in the table below, and the proportion of potentially limiting values on each level from all responses is indicated in red.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. honesty</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. family</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. caring</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. humour/fun</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. respect</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. friendship</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. responsibility</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. positive attitude</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. trust</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. patience</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top two Canadian personal values are honesty and family; they are shared in the top 10 across all 18 segments we examined — six regions, four generations, gender, whether Canadian born or not, and four work categories — public or private sector employment, not employed, and students. Caring is shared across the same groups except in Quebec where listening and generosity were similar but more specific values that underlie the interpersonal disposition of caring. Humour/fun was shared across the same groups except by Pre-Boomers and in the Atlantic region, very surprisingly, given it is home to
many of our most renowned comedians and noted for everyday outstanding wit! We wonder, since it was not in the second tier (11 to 20) either, if it is something so familiar that it is just assumed. Top 10 values selected in at least 14 of the 18 segments were: Respect (not in Alberta until the second tier 15th priority, and with Pre-Boomers and Students); Friendship (not in Alberta — 19th priority, Prairies and with men); and Responsibility (but not in Québec — 13th priority, and with Gen Y and Students). Top 10 values that were shared across at least half of the 18 segments are: positive attitude, trust, and patience.

When we added the second tier personal values (11 to 20) there was little change in the distribution of values across the seven levels, suggesting that these emphases are very characteristic of Canadians (additional positive in red and potentially limiting in gray in adjacent figure). Compassion is added at level 7 (Service) and efficiency level 3 (Self-Esteem). But the rest consolidate the already predominant focus on level 5 (Internal Cohesion – fairness, integrity, creativity) and level 2 (Relationship – listening and being liked, considered a potentially limiting value). Values on level 3 (Transformation) have tripled with the addition of accountability and independence, augmenting the attention to openness to change and adaptation.

This personal value configuration is an affirmation of Environics’ social values survey (Adams, 2003) trends that suggest Canadians have been steadily moving toward both fulfillment and an individual orientation, that is, away from traditional authority, values that can be associated with autonomy and idealism. Their data say that youth are trending in that direction even more extremely.

This predominant value orientation is a mirror opposite to the distribution of attention on the current cultural values configuration and, to some extent as we shall see, to the desired cultural values configuration. Our personal values are not focused particularly on survival concerns, perhaps a reflection of our fortune to be living, until recently, in a relatively thriving and stable economy, and to the strength of our social safety net.

So we are a nation that is highly aligned in our personal values, most of which are held in common across regions, generations, gender, birthplace and work sector. This alignment, combined with the concentration in social relationship value domains, suggests a strong foundation for social cohesion through purposeful collaborative engagement. Canadian personal values do not emphasize making a difference in action by converting personal meaning into action and impacting the global context. We seem poised for action; leadership action for sustainability may be the next step.
Our Desired Culture

What are the values we want expressed in our future, our desired culture? Are we currently on the right track? (The proportion of positive values selected on each level from all responses is indicated by the blue bars in the table below, and the proportion of potentially limiting values on each level from all responses is indicated in red.)

The messages in this National Values Assessment suggest a change agenda for Canada in several respects.

First, while the number of the top 10 values in the domain of the common good (levels 5 to 7) have not increased, the portion of values in the total data set have increased from 30% to 42%, and there is a greater emphasis on level 4: Transformation, change and renewal (19% to 23%).

The Barrett organization expects to see three or four top 10 values that carry through from personal values and/or current cultural values; there is only one such carryover in Canada’s National Values Assessment, human rights. There is little alignment, so a change in direction is desired. Specifically, Canadians want to see more attention and energy directed at survival, health and safety, thereby addressing
the dysfunction observed at this level in the current culture. Affordable housing and effective health care, the 3rd and 4th most prevalent selections, were in the top 10 on every one of the 18 segments of the data set.

Employment opportunities were in the top 10 in over 80% of the segments and poverty reduction in over 50% of them. The other level of concentration is about continuous renewal represented by accountability and equitable support to the population represented by caring for the elderly and caring for the disadvantaged.

Finally, not only are there different values in the top 10 profile of the desired culture, but, as depicted in the following chart, the gap between the frequency they are perceived in the current culture and the desired culture are great.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Current Culture Votes</th>
<th>Desired Culture Votes</th>
<th>Jump</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accountability</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable housing</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for the elderly</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty reduction</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government effectiveness</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for the disadvantaged</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment opportunities</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective health care</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for future generations</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accountability is the top value and unanimous in the top 10 across all 18 segments. This is perhaps not surprising as a reaction to observed limiting features of wasted resources and corruption by people who value honesty and responsibility. It is also the greatest “jump” between current and desired culture in terms of how pervasively it appears as a characteristic of the culture. The additional positive features from priorities 11-20 are indicated in red.

Effective Health Care moved from 12th most prevalent in the present culture to the 4th priority of a desired culture, signalling a desire for it to be an even more common experience for citizens.

In summary, priority values of the desired Canadian culture find high agreement across regions, generations, gender and Canadian born or not:

- Effective health care and affordable housing are unanimous across all segments;
- Accountability, caring for the elderly, caring for the disadvantaged and employment opportunities were selected by all regions but Quebec where social justice may be seen as a comparable value that was selected;
- All generations selected accountability, affordable housing, caring for the disadvantaged, effective health care, concern for future generations, and human rights;
- Men and women selected nine of the 10 values in common and eight of the 10 values for the desired culture are held in common whether born in Canada or not.

The Way Forward—We can do Better

The 2009 National Values Assessment for Canada highlights both national strengths and a considerable level of dysfunction in the current culture. The issues to be addressed include and go beyond economic stimulus. Social and institutional vulnerabilities have been observed by Canadians across regions, generations, gender, Canadian born or not, and broad occupational groups. Accountability is the most prevalent value for a desired Canadian culture. While this sample of Canadians offers a number of messages to government, there is also indication that purposeful engagement is also a value.

The Todd Thomas Institute for Values-Based Leadership at Royal Roads University expects to conduct the National Values Assessment on a continuing basis. It plans to partner with organizations and individuals in fostering awareness of our Canadian values and the application of these values in shaping our future in Canada both in the context of domestic and global challenges. We invite you to participate with us beginning with a visit to social media that have been launched to foster discussion of the National Values Assessment at www.royalroads.ca/tti.

A Note of Appreciation: Most of the charts included in this report have been provided by the Barrett Values Centre.
References


