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The Canadian Values Study: A joint project of Innovative Research Group, the Dominion Institute and the National Post

Day Five Release

Canadians Values Similar to Other Advanced Democracies

Toronto – September 28, 2005 – Marshall McLuhan was right – Canadians have become citizens of a global village.

As part of *The Canadian Values Study*, a joint project of the National Post, the Dominion Institute and Innovative Research Group, Innovative reviewed the findings of the *World Values Study* to see where Canadians stand in an international context? Forty one years after McLuhan first coined the term “global village”, the World Values study shows that on value after values, Canadians hold very similar views to people from other advanced industrial democracies. While in some value domains Canadians are somewhat more pluralistic or liberal than other advanced industrial democracies, in other areas Canadians are more conservative.

“When we compare Canada to the world, Canadian Conservatives can find no alibi for their lack success” notes Greg Lyle, Innovative Research’s Managing Director. “In fact, on most measures of political values other than social conservatism, Canada has as many people with a conservative viewpoint as any other advanced industrial democracies, even when compared to the United States.”

Moral Issues and the Role of Religion

As we noted on Monday, while roughly 30 per cent of Canadians are willing to endorse social conservative positions on same sex issues and the role of women, just 20 per cent felt the government should set moral standards.

The World Values study shows that Canada is a fairly religious country compared to some of our peers. For instance, nine in ten Canadians (89%) say they believe in God. While respondent in the US (96%), Italy (94%) and India (95%) ranked higher, Britain (72%), Germany (68%) and France (62%) are all considerably lower.

However, believing in God doesn't mean believing God should have a role in Government. Just as we found in the National Post | Dominion Institute | Innovative Research Canadian Values Study, the World Values Study show that 67 per cent of Canadian agree "Religious leaders should not influence government decisions. British, German, Italian and Indian respondents all have similar levels of agreement with this statement. The French very strongly agree that religious leaders should not play a role in government decisions. Even a bare majority (51%) of Americans agree that the Church should stay out of the affairs of the State.

Welfare and Self-Reliance

While Canadians are firm supporters of a strong social safety net for those that cannot help themselves, there is a nervousness about the impact of the welfare system on Canadians' sense of self reliance. It can be seen in popular cultural through such eclectic examples as the Stan Rogers' song, *The Idiot*. And the National Post | Dominion Institute | Innovative Research Canadian Values Study shows 60% of Canadians agree with the view that "People who don't get ahead should blame themselves, not the system."

The World Values Study asked respondents to review a list of 10 qualities that we can encourage our children to learn and indicate which if any were particularly important. Just over half (53%) of the Canadians interviewed selected hardwork. While the United States was somewhat higher at 61 per cent, countries like Britain (39%), Italy (36%) and even Germany (23%) were much lower. There was almost universal support for the value of hardwork in China (86%) and India (85%), perhaps one of the reasons these countries are the world's economic tigers when it come to GDP growth.

The World Values Study also asked respondents to agree or disagree with the statement "People who don't work turn lazy." Just over half (53%) of Canadians agreed with that statement. So did 53 per cent of Americans. Germany and France were very close to Canada and the US (with 50% and 55% agreeing respectively) while Britain trailed with only 43 per cent agreement. With 76 per cent saying "people who don't work turn lazy", Italy ranks right up with India (85%) and China (86%).

Economic Values

While Canada has general embraced the free enterprise system, there continues to be some skepticism of the profit motive. The National Post | Dominion Institute | Innovative Research Canadian Values Study asked two questions about Canadian attitudes towards business.

First, when asked about government regulation of business, a majority (53%) believe regulation is necessary to keep business from becoming too powerful while 38 per cent believe government regulation does more harm than good. As well, Canadians do not buy into the trickle down theory with just 35 per cent agreeing that “When business makes a lot of money, everyone benefits, including the poor”.

However, Canadian is not particularly hostile to business compared to other countries. For instance, the World Values Study asked people to chose whether “Competition is good – it stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas” whether “Competition is harmful – it brings out the worst in people.” Just over two thirds (68%) of Canadians said competition was good, very close to the American response of 71 per cent and the Chinese level of 70 per cent. Sixty-four per cent thought competition was good in Germany while just over half agreed in countries like Britain (57%) and Italy (55%). Just under half thought competition was good in France (45%) and India (48%).

In a surprising World Values study finding, while 60% of Canadians thought there should be more private ownership of industry and business in Canada (the US edged us out at 68%), the Asian tigers of India (36%) and China (57%) are most likely to see more government ownership of business.

The Environment

The Canadian Values Study show Canadians tend to favour the environment over the economy. A majority of 64 per cent disagree with the view “I think a lot of the claims about environmental issues such as global warming are exaggerated” while a majority of 57 per cent agree that “Protecting the environment is more important than creating jobs”

The World Values study posed a similar question asking responding to chose between two statements:

- Protecting the environment should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs; OR
- Economic growth and creating jobs should be the priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent.

Again, 64 per cent of Canadians chose the pro-environment position. But so did 61 per cent of both Americans and Chinese respondents.

About this survey

The National Post | Dominion Institute | Innovative Research Canadian Values Study is a telephone survey of 815 randomly selected Canadians was conducted between September 22nd and September 24th, 2005, and has a margin of error of +/- 3.43 %, 19 times out of 20.

The survey was co-commissioned by The Dominion Institute (www.dominion.ca) and the National Post (www.canada.com/national/nationalpost). The Dominion Institute is a national charity dedicated to the promotion of Canadian history and shared citizenship.

The survey was conducted by Innovative Research Group, Inc. (www.innovativeresearch.ca), a Toronto-based research and polling firm.

The World Values Study is a set of common questions run on independent surveys conducted from 1999 to 2001 in 81 countries containing 85% of the world's populations. More information on this study can be found at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>.

Survey Attribution

The results of this poll are being provided exclusively to the National Post.

The first instance of survey should attribute the survey as "The Canadian Value Study, a joint project of the National Post, the Dominion Institute and Innovative Research Group". All subsequent attributions can use the shorter convention of: "National Post/Dominion Institute / Innovative Research survey".

If space allows, all survey articles will include a project header labeled "*The Canadian Value Study is a joint project of the National Post, the Dominion Institute and Innovative Research Group.*" All survey articles will end with a tag at the end of the story as follows: "*The Canadian Value Study is a joint project of the National Post, the Dominion Institute and Innovative Research. Visit Innovativeresearch.ca for more information.*"

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NP24. Do you think government regulation of business: **(ROTATE OPTIONS)**

1	Usually does more harm than good, OR	38%
2	Is necessary to keep industry from becoming too powerful	53%
8	Don't know (VOLUNTEERED)	8%
9	Refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1%

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (IF AGREE OR DISAGREE: Is that strongly or just somewhat agree/disagree?)

NP25. People who don't get ahead should blame themselves, not the system.

1	Strongly agree	29%
2	Somewhat agree	31%
3	Neither agree nor disagree/Neutral (VOLUNTEERED)	4%
4	Somewhat disagree	20%
5	Strongly disagree	13%
8	Don't know (VOLUNTEERED)	2%
9	Refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1%

NP26. When businesses make a lot of money, everyone benefits, including the poor.

1	Strongly agree	16%
2	Somewhat agree	20%
3	Neither agree nor disagree/Neutral (VOLUNTEERED)	1%
4	Somewhat disagree	25%
5	Strongly disagree	38%
8	Don't know (VOLUNTEERED)	1%
9	Refused (VOLUNTEERED)	-

NP27. Protecting the environment is more important than creating jobs.

1	Strongly agree	24%
2	Somewhat agree	33%
3	Neither agree nor disagree/Neutral (VOLUNTEERED)	5%
4	Somewhat disagree	21%
5	Strongly disagree	13%
8	Don't know (VOLUNTEERED)	3%
9	Refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1%

NP28. I think a lot of the claims about environmental issues such as global warming are exaggerated.

1	Strongly agree	12%
2	Somewhat agree	21%
3	Neither agree nor disagree/Neutral (VOLUNTEERED)	1%
4	Somewhat disagree	22%
5	Strongly disagree	42%
8	Don't know (VOLUNTEERED)	2%
9	Refused (VOLUNTEERED)	-

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