



REPORT

Life After 50

The Social Values Story in Canada

ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH

AGING
INSIGHTS

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For more than 40 years, Environics Research has tracked Social Values across Canada.

Unlike attitudes or opinions, which can change quickly in response to current events, Social Values represent the deeper motivations, beliefs, and mindsets that shape how people see the world.



Introduction

Understanding the Mindset Behind the Trends

The first edition of our Life After 50 report documented how Canadians' attitudes, experiences and expectations around aging and retirement have changed over the past twenty years. In this second report, we build on those findings by examining how the underlying Social Values of Canadians aged 50+ have evolved over the same period. Together, the two reports provide a richer understanding of what has changed in the experience of aging and the shifting priorities, motivations and ways of seeing the world that sit beneath those changes.

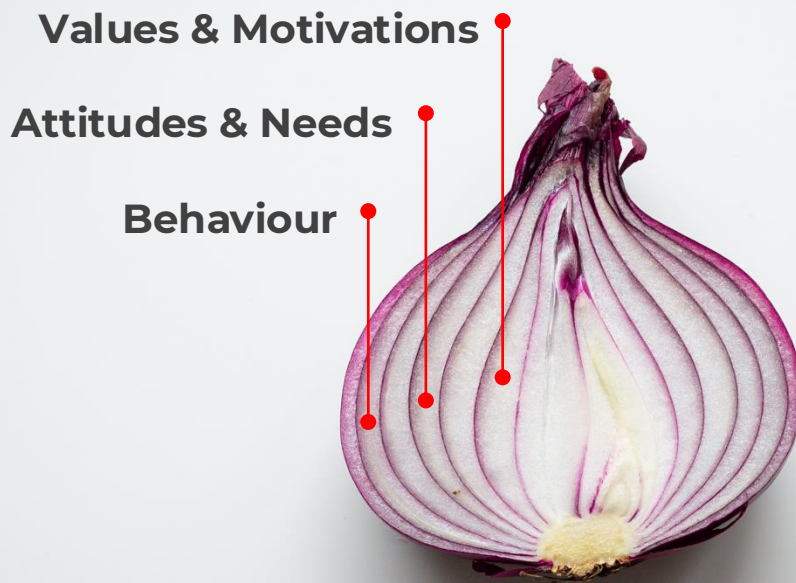
To understand how these deeper values have changed, we compared the Social Values profiles of Canadians aged 50+ in 2006 and 2026. This comparison looks at Canadians at the same stage of life, twenty years apart, allowing us to see how the values associated with life after 50 have shifted alongside the broader social and cultural context of aging.

We then looked across the values that increased or declined over the twenty-year period to identify broader patterns of change. This analysis revealed three themes that help explain how the priorities and outlook of Canadians 50+ have evolved.

Section 1

What are Social Values?





Social Values reflect a person's fundamental world view...

They're the deep motivations and mindsets that shape how they engage with others, respond to situations and events, and take on opportunities and challenges.

Section 1

Understanding People Through Social Values

Demographics tell us who people are. Social Values reveal **WHY** people who look similar on paper may think, choose and behave very differently. They help us understand the deeper motivations behind everything from lifestyle choices and behaviours to aspirations for the future and strongly held beliefs.

Two people might be demographically identical:

Age

Income

Geography



Age

Income

Geography

...But psychographically (Social Values) different:

Need for status recognition

Concern for appearance

Propriety



Saving on principle

Originality

Legacy

Social Values provide a framework for understanding the deeper motivations that shape how people respond to the world around them. By looking across a broad range of values, we can build a more complete picture of what matters to people, how they approach change and relationships, and what influences the choices they make.

Environics Research measures...

100+

Social Values

5+

Decades of Tracking

10,000

Canadians & Americans annually

Tracking values ranging from:



Confidence and adaptability



Tradition and authority



Work goals, motivations



Social liberalism



Social relations, family/friends



Consumer motivations

Section 2

What Is Shaping the New Aging Outlook



Section 2

Living on Your Own Terms

One of the clearest shifts in the Social Values profile of Canadians 50+ is a movement toward defining success and fulfillment according to one’s own values rather than external expectations or recognition.

Values related to status and self-presentation - including declines in *Need for Status Recognition* and *Concern for Appearance* - suggest that external recognition and projecting a particular image have become less central to how Canadians 50+ define success. At the same time, declines in *Consumptivity* and *Importance of Aesthetics* point toward a more measured and understated approach to consumption. Finally, the increase in *Control of Privacy* points to a stronger desire for personal autonomy and greater selectivity about what – and how much – one shares or consumes.



Key Consideration:

Taken together, these values point toward greater reliance on personal judgement and individual priorities, with less emphasis on seeking recognition, projecting status, or continually distinguishing oneself through appearance, materialism or consumption. Canadians 50+ appear to be increasingly defining success according to their own standards and making choices that reflect what personally matters most.

CONTROL OF PRIVACY

INCREASE

IMPORTANCE OF AESTHETICS

DECLINE

NEED FOR STATUS RECOGNITION

DECLINE

CONCERN FOR APPEARANCE

DECLINE

CONSUMPTIVITY

DECLINE

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

DECLINE

Section 2

Redefining Family, Community, and Belonging

The Social Values profile of Canadians 50+ also suggests a shift in how people define and experience family, community, and belonging.

Declines in *Traditional Family*, *Religiosity*, and *Duty*, point toward a shift away from prescribed roles and obligations and toward more personally defined sources of meaning and responsibility. The increase in *Parochialism* and decreases in *Attraction for Crowds* and *Introspection & Empathy* further suggest a more selective focus on one's immediate community and personal sphere, with less orientation toward broader social settings and perspectives beyond one's closest circles.



Key Consideration:

Taken together, these values suggest that while family, relationships, and belonging remain deeply important, they are increasingly understood through a more personal and flexible lens. Meaning and connection appear to be shaped less by traditional institutions and prescribed roles, and more by individual relationships, local communities, and personal priorities.

PAROCHIALISM

INCREASE



DUTY

DECLINE



TRADITIONAL FAMILY

DECLINE



RELIGIOSITY

DECLINE



ATTRACTION FOR CROWDS

DECLINE



INTROSPECTION & EMPATHY

DECLINE



Section 2

Prioritizing What Matters Most

Beyond changing definitions of success, family, and belonging, the Social Values profile of Canadians 50+ also suggests a growing tendency to simplify priorities and focus attention on what feels most immediate and meaningful.

Declining *Time Stress* and *Pursuit of Intensity* suggest greater emphasis on being present, slowing down, and making the most of everyday life. At the same time, increases in *Utilitarian Consumerism* and *Ethical Consumerism* point toward more considered and purposeful decision-making in everyday consumption. Declines in *Social Learning* and *Social Responsibility* further suggest that attention is increasingly directed toward the people, places, and priorities closest to home rather than broader external concerns or abstract principles.



Key Consideration:

Taken together, these values point toward a mindset that is increasingly grounded in the present and focused on what feels relevant and meaningful in everyday life. Canadians 50+ appear to be placing greater emphasis on personal wellbeing, practical choices, and investing their time and energy where they feel it can have the greatest impact.

UTILITARIAN
CONSUMERISM

INCREASE

ETHICAL
CONSUMERISM

INCREASE

PURSUIT
OF INTENSITY

DECLINE

TIME
STRESS

DECLINE

SOCIAL
LEARNING

DECLINE

SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY

DECLINE



Social Values provide a deeper perspective on the changing experience of aging in Canada among those 50+ over the past 20 years.

The values point toward a broad shift in priorities – away from external expectations and toward personal definitions of satisfaction and success; away from traditional structures toward more flexible sources of meaning; and from broader aspirations and affinities toward greater focus on the aspects of life that feel most meaningful day to day.



Conclusion | **Leverage Social Values**

Age and demographics alone can only tell us so much. Social Values add another layer by helping us understand the deeper motivations and priorities that shape how Canadians 50+ see the world, make decisions and respond to change.

For organizations looking to better understand and engage this changing and diverse population, Social Values can help move beyond assumptions about what people want based on age or life stage alone. They provide a way to identify meaningful differences within the 50+ population and understand not only what people think and do, but what is motivating those choices.

Social Values can help organizations:



Gain a deeper understanding of behaviour by uncovering the motivations, values and priorities that sit behind people's choices.



Move beyond demographic assumptions and stereotypes to better understand differences between people who may look similar on paper.



Build more relevant and empathetic communications by aligning messages with how different audiences see the world and what matters to them.



Identify new opportunities and perspectives that can inform strategy, products, services, experiences and policy.



Tailor the tone, content and delivery of communications to better connect with audiences and support behaviour change.

Combined with demographics, attitudes and behaviours, Social Values provide a more complete picture of Canadians and a stronger foundation for understanding how to connect with them.



Conclusion | **Work With Us**

Environics Research provides organizations with actionable, evidence-based solutions to real business problems. We partner with clients to understand the business challenges they face and leverage innovative and creative solutions to generate understanding and insights.

55

Years of Expertise

100+

Social Values

2+

Decades of Tracking Data

15+

Industry Sectors

To learn more about how we can support your team with custom insights, contact our experts:



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Custom Research – Quantitative and qualitative research designed around your business questions.



Target Audience Strategy – Identify, understand and translate distinct target segments' motivations, decision-making influences, and experience into marketing activation, customer experience, policy and growth.



Social Values – Go beyond demographics to understand the deeper motivations shaping how people think and act.



Aging Futures Trend Reports – Health, Retirement, Aging Lifestyle, and more

Contact us for more
information about
Aging in Canada.