

Evolving Values and Political Orientations of Rural Canadians: Insights from Longitudinal WVS Data

This paper examines shifts in values and political attitudes among rural citizens in Canada over the past two decades based on data from the World Values Survey (WVS) (4-7 waves, 2000-2020). Comparative analysis is provided with urban Canadians to uncover key relationships and trends. The study finds rural populations in Canada have become gradually more socially progressive, politically moderate, and less religious over time, converging with urban orientation. However, significant value gaps persist including weaker environmental concern and multicultural tolerance. The data reveals high and increasing life satisfaction alongside declining institutional confidence. Politically, rural Canadians lean left but remain more conservative than urban compatriots. These value dynamics interact in ways indicating potential receptiveness to populist appeals, if material conditions worsen or social divides increase. The study concludes that understanding the evolving worldviews of rural citizens is crucial for mitigating extremism and resentment through evidence-based policy. Deeper analysis incorporating demographic factors and psychological drivers is warranted. But longitudinal (2000-2020) WVS data provides useful indications of value shifts and socio-political proclivities among a significant segment of the Canadian populace.

