

Canadians vs. Americans: We're more worldly

BY KATHRYN MAY

Canadians have a very different view of the world than Americans, which goes a long way to explaining the countries' strained relations over the Iraq war, say the authors of a sweeping new study into Canadians' values.

Daniel Yankelovich, consid-

ered the founding father of public opinion research in the U.S., said the study drives home the differences between Americans and Canadians, especially in their attitudes to other countries. Canadians see themselves as part of the world. Americans see themselves as part of the United States.

"Canadians have a deeper sense of obligation towards other nations and feel more interdependence with them. While Americans prefer to exercise leadership in concert with allies, they feel their power buys them independence from world opinion," wrote Mr. Yankelovich, an ad-

viser on the study, which was led by think-tank Canadian Policy Research Networks. The study, based on the views of 400 Canadians, was conducted last fall, before the U.S. showdown with Iraq escalated into war.

See **VALUES** on page A2

Values: Social morality differs

Continued from page A1

Judith Maxwell, president of the Canadian Policy Research Networks, said recent tensions are symptomatic of different values that have shaped Canada's foreign policy since the Second World War.

Canadians accept that their economy is tied to the U.S. and worry that the latest dispute over Canada's war stance will spill over into economic and trade issues. But they also hold fiercely independent views about their social and foreign policies.

"This is probably an example of the way Canadians believe we have to live out our relationship with the United States. We still need to maintain the respect, strong working relationship and economic ties, but there are likely to be, based on our different values, areas where we will want to take a different stand," said Ms. Maxwell.

"What's happening here is the U.S. is probably at one of its peak periods in its sense of power and independence and Canada is being consistent with its long history of multilateralism."

Despite the differences, Ms. Maxwell said the study found no hostility, resentment or American-bashing like "out-of-line" comments made by officials in the Chrétien government.

The study — called *Citizen's Dialogue on Canada's Future: A 21st Century Social Contract* — was based on "dialogues" with more than 400 Canadians in day-long workshops held in 10 cities across Canada. These workshops were aimed

at getting at the participants' "core values" rather than the top-of-the-mind responses given in surveys and polls.

Mr. Yankelovich's firm, Learning Viewpoints, teamed up with the Canadian think-tank for the project to take stock of the "social contract" that underlies what Canadians expect from each other, business, the markets and governments.

Ms. Maxwell said the study shows that Canadians and Americans share more values today than 20 years ago, but part company on the role of government, the market, individuals and social morality.

Both believe in multiculturalism and "an ethic of self-help and reciprocity," which means those who receive are obliged to give. Both support the kind of education that lets people take charge of their own lives; are skeptical about government and business and hunger for more say or citizen involvement in policy-making. And both are fiercely proud of their identities.

But the similarities end there, says Mr. Yankelovich, who has tracked social trends for 40 years. Americans are free enterprise. They want government to stay out of their lives and act as "cops and watchdogs to enforce the law and catch the cheaters." Canadians, however, see government as a protector to help those left behind by the market.

Americans' prize an "aggressive, competitive, my-needs-come first" individualism and will tolerate huge gaps between the rich and poor, while Canadians' brand of individualism comes

with a sense of community. We won't stand for inequalities between rich and poor and believe basic needs like health care and shelter should be provided.

Americans' social morality is dictated by law and religion and the litmus test is: "If it's not illegal, it's OK," said Mr. Yankelovich.

Steven Rosell of Viewpoint Learning said the study revealed Canada as a "distinct" nation that won't be swallowed by its powerful U.S. neighbour any time soon.

"If there is not a significantly different set of values on either side of the border, it's an open question how long there would be a society north of the border. But what this showed is that (Canada) is a unique society to sustain and build upon."

Ms. Maxwell said the most dramatic finding is that Canadians have updated the "social contract" that led to the rise of welfare state by the 1960s. She said Canadians recognize they need a strong economy to afford the social programs. As a result, they have traded the long-held view of "rights and entitlements" to social programs for a notion of "mutual responsibility."

Another shift is Canadians' changing attitudes to diversity. We no longer accept the "anything-goes" style of multiculturalism of the 1960s and 1970s when immigrants were encouraged to keep their culture with their own schools, churches and communities. Canadians are highly tolerant of ethnic and religious differences, but they must conform to Canadian values, such as equality for women.