

Distinguishing Characteristics of Active Volunteers in Canada

by

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Views and opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect
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Abstract

A detailed statistical portrait of the estimated 7.5 million Canadians who give more than the national median of 66 hours of their time each year as volunteers was produced using logistic regression techniques applied to a data file containing 18,301 cases from Canada's 1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating. This report profiles the most salient characteristics of active volunteers. At the national level, the key characteristic that universally sets active volunteers apart from others is their high level of involvement in a variety of other forms of contributing and participating such as charitable giving, informal volunteering, social activity, and civic participation. They are also likely to have above-average education and occupation, and to have children under the age of 17 in a larger than average household. The study also reveals how active volunteers have different patterns of distinctive characteristics in different regions and communities of different size across the country.

Introduction

In recent years, the roles and responsibilities pertaining to the provision of public goods have been shifting in Canada, both among institutions, and between institutions and other social entities such as individuals, families and communities. There has been a marked change in the certainty and stability of what could be called the *institutional division of labour*, and considerable public debate about the proper role of government, the reduction or transfer of some of its functions, and the way other components of society might be assigned responsibility for providing various kinds of collective benefits.

Much of this debate over the past decade has centred on broadening the roles of institutions within the nonprofit domain¹ to help foster social well-being. This rising interest in the “nonprofit sector”, especially its charitable and voluntary components, has also been accompanied by an impetus to enhance nonprofit organizations’ abilities to provide social services, in response not only to rising social needs but also to reductions in government-provided social services. This, in turn, has led to more interest in the important task of attracting and retaining volunteers, since the use of volunteers is, of course, a hallmark and mainstay of nonprofit or voluntary organizations.

Obtaining volunteers - those who give their time and effort to charitable and community organizations and causes - has always been a major challenge for voluntary organizations, but it appears to have become even more challenging in Canada in the 1990s. An estimated 31 percent of adult Canadians reported in a November 1997 national survey by Statistics Canada that they had served as volunteers during the previous year. This indicates that volunteering is indeed a sizable social phenomenon with significance for social policy and societal well-being. But compared with the 1987 Statistics Canada Survey of Volunteer Activity, the 1997 survey also showed that although the incidence of volunteering rose modestly over the decade, the average time each volunteer contributed throughout the year had actually declined by twenty two percent. The face of volunteering, it would appear, is changing.

Consequently, the desire by many voluntary organizations to recruit more volunteers more efficiently is creating an interest throughout the sector in understanding the characteristics of individuals who contribute time and effort to such organizations.

These factors prompted a research initiative to identify the characteristics of active, formal (i.e., organizational) volunteers in Canada in a way that would reveal how, and to what extent, they differ from the non-volunteering population of Canadians.

Volunteering is often seen as socially distinctive, insofar as it involves the seemingly unusual activity of giving something without material recompense. But if this activity is distinctive, does it mean that people who choose to be volunteers are also distinctive in some observable way? If they are, what are the characteristics that most clearly and generally distinguish volunteers from non-volunteers? These are the questions this study addresses.

Previous Studies

Reports about the characteristics of formal volunteers in Canada and the United States fall into several categories: those based on large national samples (of, say, 2,000 cases or more); those based on small, non-national samples; descriptive profiles; and studies that endeavour to explain some particular aspect of volunteering.

Descriptive profiles (Duchesne, 1989; Hodgkinson and Weitzman, 1996; Hall *et al.*, 1998) present the distribution of volunteers across each one of a series of traits. These descriptive profiles have consistently identified, for example, a heightened incidence among volunteers of being married, being female, having a university degree, and having an above-average income. However, these descriptive reports were designed to be multipurpose, and were based on univariate analyses (i.e., they only contrasted the presence or absence of a single factor at a time). Consequently, their accounts of how volunteers differ from non-

volunteers do not provide the more detailed and robust picture of such differences that multivariate analyses can offer (i.e., those which examine a number of different variables at once to reveal how they may be interrelated). Analytical studies based on large national samples have typically endeavoured to use multivariate analysis to construct accounts of the determining factors in volunteering, by using a particular set of survey-measured characteristics.

Vaillancourt (1994), for example, used 15 variables from the 1987 Canadian Survey of Volunteer Activity in a probit analysis to ascertain concomitant characteristics of volunteers. In addition to the profile cited earlier (married, female, university degree, above-average income), he found several other variables to be positively associated with volunteering, such as presence of dependent children; Protestant religious affiliation; and residence in smaller-sized communities.

Sokolowski (1996), using 10 variables from the 1992 Independent Sector/Gallup survey in the U.S., concluded that being asked by a socially significant other person to volunteer for or contribute money to a nonprofit organization was a good predictor of both the amount of time volunteered and the value of charitable donations. Wilson and Musick (1997), whose objective was to construct an integrated theory of volunteer work, used 12 variables in a sample of 2,846 adult Americans from the 1986 and 1989 Panel Survey on Americans' Changing Lives. They found all but two (race and gender) of these variables to be correlated with an index of volunteering, with church attendance and education having the strongest association (correlation coefficients of approximately .27), followed in descending order by family income, informal social interaction, frequency of praying, and number of dependent children.

In 1994, Smith reviewed the American social science literature spanning the period 1975-1992 that was concerned with what he termed the *determinants* of volunteer participation (but were often the *correlates*). The review covered a wide variety of studies that in general were based on relatively small samples and contained modest numbers of variables. Smith's summary of the literature identified the following factors as prominent: education (consistently the strongest); rootedness (home ownership, duration of residence,

being married); occupational level; income; other forms of social engagement and participation (such as charitable giving, informal helping, church attendance, civic and political participation, and involvement in outdoor sports and recreation); residence in smaller urban communities and rural areas; number of children under age 15 or 18 in the home; parental attitudes toward volunteering; and altruistic attitudes such as a sense of civic duty.

These existing analytical studies provide considerable piecemeal information about the traits of volunteers. However, even in combination, they do not provide a broad, systematic picture of the distinguishing characteristics of volunteers with a high degree of confidence, for several reasons. They are not all based upon large sample sizes; they considered only a very limited number of variables; and they did not all consider the same variables. Nor did they get the same results; e.g., only one found that “being asked” was relevant. Without further research, we cannot be sure whether the different results are simply artifacts of the different methodologies the studies employed, or if they are due to insufficient sample sizes, or if they indeed reflect a genuine heterogeneity within the target population.

Our study endeavours to remedy these deficiencies in the current state of knowledge - particularly regarding the Canadian context, which may differ from the American one in unforeseen ways - by applying multivariate analysis to a very large database of more than 18,000 cases and using a much larger set of variables (47).

Data and Methods

Our analysis uses data from the Canadian National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) that was conducted as a supplement to Statistics Canada’s monthly Labour Force Survey in November 1997. The NSGVP data file contained detailed information from 18,301 household-dwelling Canadians aged 15 years and older, of whom 31.4 percent reported that they had given time as an unpaid volunteer to a nonprofit organization at least once during the preceding 12 months.

The 1997 NSGVP revealed that of those 31 percent of adults who reported having been a volunteer, the top third (in terms of the total time they volunteered over 12 months) accounted for more than 80 percent of total volunteer time, while the bottom third accounted for only 3 percent. The average volunteer time of people in this latter group was so extremely low, we reasoned, that the trait profile of those individuals could be expected to resemble non-volunteers more closely than individuals who actively volunteered significant amounts of time.

For the purposes of an exploratory study, we considered it desirable to begin with a clear demarcation between truly active volunteers and non-volunteers. Hence we chose to focus on those people who volunteered more than the national median number of hours (66 hours per year). This group, the most active 50% of volunteers, was responsible for nearly 90 percent of total formal volunteering time in 1997. As a prelude to our main analysis, we compared their traits, not only with those of the less active volunteers (those who volunteered less than 66 hours per year), but also with those of the 69 percent of the populace which did not volunteer at all. When we assessed the results, we found that the traits of below-the-median volunteers were similar to those of non-volunteers, and that the patterns of difference of both groups were fairly comparable, in comparison to those of above-the-median volunteers ².

For our analysis, we selected forty-seven variables covering a wide range of social and economic characteristics which were part of the NSGVP data file. In addition to the standard variables of age, gender, marital status, education, employment status, occupation, income, ethnic identification, language, religious affiliation, and household size, we also included ones such as charitable giving, participation in civic organizations, early life involvement in volunteer and civic activities, reason(s) for charitable giving, self-assessed health status, satisfaction with life, religiosity, presence of children in the household, years of residence in present home, and community size. The full set of variables used in the analysis is described in detail in the Appendix.

An initial examination of the data revealed significant differences across regions in selected social and economic characteristics of volunteers. It also indicated significant links between variations in active volunteering and variation in two other independent variables: size of the respondent's community of residence, and religiosity (the importance that respondents assigned to their religious beliefs). Because we intended our analysis to be exploratory rather than confirmatory, we deemed it desirable to disaggregate the data by these three variables rather than try to estimate models with complex interaction structures. This disaggregation resulted in an analysis of a total of 30 subgroups: the product of the cross-classification of 5 regions (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, and British Columbia), 3 community size categories (large urban, small urban, and rural), and 2 categories of religiosity (low and high)³.

In reporting the outcome of the modelling process, we are concerned primarily with the prevalence and relative importance of the variables in the models. The prevalence of a variable refers simply to how often it appears as a significant predictor in the models for the 30 sub-groups. The more often it appears, the more prevalent it is as a distinguishing characteristic of active volunteers. The importance of a variable relative to the others in a given model is based on the *r* statistic reported by the SPSS (1997) logistic regression procedure. This statistic indicates the influence (in the form of a partial correlation coefficient) of a variable on the probability of volunteering given the other variables in the model, and as such is used to describe the ranked importance of each variable. We combine the information on prevalence and ranked importance into an overall composite score for each variable that consists of the prevalence for that variable divided by its average rank order position (because highest rank order positions have lowest numbers) and multiplied by ten (to raise the quotients by an order of magnitude because most scores were less than 1.0). The range of possible scores is from 0 (where a variable would appear in no model) to 300 (where it would appear in the top position in all 30 models).

Distinguishing Characteristics of Active Volunteers: Findings

Do volunteers have characteristics that distinguish them from non-volunteers? The answer is a clear 'yes.'

Some traits are widespread, while others occur in patterns that are particular to different regions, community types, and levels of religiosity. Overall, the models do a good job of describing the variation in the probability of volunteering in each of the 30 sub-groups we examine. The models work best in the Prairie region, while in Quebec they do least well⁴.

Only one trait was present in most of the profiles: Civic participation (the number of types of organizations a person belonged to), which appeared in 28 of the 30 models. Active volunteers are individuals who not only contribute personal time to charitable and community organizations but are also involved in other ways as members and participants. Another 4 traits appeared in one-third to one-half of the profiles (Table 1): Informal helping (present in 16 profiles), and Social participation, Religion, and Giving decile (all present in 10 of 30). A further 17 traits appeared in at least 5 of the 30 profiles, and 20 traits appeared in fewer than 5 profiles. Only one of the 43 independent variables - Voted - did not appear in any of the profiles.

We see, then, that active volunteers in Canada have relatively few common characteristics nationally, and those they do share constitute a core of involvement in varied forms of participating, helping, and contributing. Beyond this particular core cluster, there is little in the way of a standard set of traits which distinguishes active volunteers across all the regions of the country.

Complexity in the Patterns of Distinguishing Characteristics

Wide variation in the number and selection of significant variables exists in the models, as shown in Tables 2 to 6. For the Atlantic region, for example, the models are generally quite simple, containing from 1 to 8 variables, with an average of 4. At the other end of the scale, the models in Ontario contain between 7 and 28 significant predictors with the average being 12. Another way of expressing this is to say that volunteers in the Atlantic region differ from non-volunteers in few ways, while those in Ontario differ in the greatest number of ways. A second indication of the complexity of the trait profiles is the fact that 42 of the 43

independent variables we examined appeared in at least one of the 30 models⁵.

This level of complexity, and in particular the wide variation in the subsets of variables which were significant, suggests that the probability of being an active volunteer is not the product of one specific set of socio-demographic characteristics. If active volunteering, as one type of contributory behaviour, is at least partly the product of a value set that is concerned with a collective good of some kind, we would expect to find that indicators of such a value set are a common explanatory thread running through all the subgroups. The prevalence of civic participation as a predictor in all of the models suggests that this interpretation deserves consideration. However, if a value set is the main explanation, we would expect that socio-demographic characteristics that are highly correlated with the value set would also be consistent predictors of volunteering. Level of education, for example, is often associated with a more generalized social awareness, yet it is not a consistent predictor of active volunteering; it occurs in less than one-third of the models. So if higher education is indicative of a specific value set and is associated with active volunteering in large urban centres in Ontario (it is), then we would expect to see the same relationship in large urban centres in Quebec (we do not). As a result, either the value set is not consistently associated with such socio-demographic characteristics, or there is a situational component implicated in active volunteering that equally bears on the probability of volunteering. The complexity of these models strongly suggests this to be the case. This could be addressed by looking at the interaction of motives and socio-demographic characteristics in such models, but that was beyond the capability of the data. This is one area where our results point in a particular direction for further research.

Prevalence of Distinguishing Characteristics.

Nine variables appeared in more than one-quarter of the 30 models (Table 1). Four of these were civic participation, informal helping, giving decile, and social participation, and the fact that they appear in many models suggests that civic engagement is a multiform behavior that is expressed in not only one or two behaviours but in an interrelated set of behaviours concerned with contributing, connecting, and helping.

Those who are active participants in civic affairs, who are socially active, who help others on their own and who donate generously to charities, are also those who volunteer above-average amounts of time to voluntary organizations.

The other variables in the top 9 (namely, religion, education, ethnicity, presence of children 13-17, and having been involved in student government as a youth) are socio-demographic factors that influence active volunteering. Three of these - religion, education, and youth government experience - probably reflect the antecedent experiences that generate the value set that favours contributory behaviour, whereas the presence of children in the home may indicate that certain voluntary activities are associated with organizations that serve the needs of children (such as Little League sports, Scouts and Guides, 4H, etc.), and that parents are usually integrally involved in providing these services to their community's children. It is less clear why ethnicity should differentiate active volunteers, but the analysis shows that people of mixed British-French ancestry are more likely to volunteer than are other ethnic groups.

Of the most prevalent factors, civic participation stands out: it appears in all models except two. The number of types of informal giving reported appears in about half the models, and other variables appear even less frequently, so civic participation clearly represents the dominant common trait among active volunteers across Canada. It appears in all 10 Large Urban models, all 10 Rural models, and 8 of 10 Small Urban models. Moreover, civic participation is the most important variable (in terms of its partial correlation with volunteering) in 23 of the 28 models in which it occurs. In the remaining five models, it ranks as the second most important variable in four, and seventh in the other. No single characteristic is more consistently associated with volunteering than the level of civic participation; it is omnipresent and important even when we control for a wide range of geographic, social, and demographic factors. The same cannot be said for the other variables we examined. None appear in more than half the models, and the majority appear in less than one-fifth of the models. Clearly the set of characteristics that differentiate active volunteers from non-volunteers is not consistent across the country.

Composite Scores Indicating the Overall Significance of Variables

Prevalence is one way of measuring the significance of a variable in distinguishing between active volunteers and non-volunteers. However, prevalence does not capture the importance of each variable relative to the others. To provide a single integrated indication of the relative importance of variables, we combined the prevalence and aggregate rank order position of each variable to form a composite score that reflects both prevalence and rank together. The results are presented in the second column of Table 1 and show the approximate overall influence of each variable.

A word of caution about interpretation is in order here. The scores can be treated only as an ordinal scale, not an interval scale; each score is only approximately and relatively (rather than absolutely) indicative of the variable's influence and the difference between scores of any two variables cannot be taken as a precise measure of the difference in their ability to differentiate volunteers from non-volunteers.

Scores can be the product of such combinations as high prevalence in models and high rank order, relatively low prevalence but high rank order, or low prevalence and low rank order. Several examples will illustrate. Civic participation had a composite score of 200 based on its frequent occurrence (in 28 of 30 models) and consistently high rank, averaging 1.4. In contrast, the variable Marital status has a score of 11.1, located near the midpoint of the group of socio-economic variables, which was the result of appearing in only 3 of the 30 models but doing so with a rank order position of 2.7. Thus, its composite score appears to overstate its substantive importance as a general differentiating variable, although in particular contexts it is a powerful one. Hours spent watching TV, or having a child under age 5 in the home, are variables that play a negligible role in differentiating volunteers because they occur infrequently in the models and occupy low rank order positions.

Examination of the rank order of variables by composite score suggests the following clusters of variables, in descending order of importance: (a) Forms and Aspects of Giving and Caring (Civic participation, Informal helping, Giving decile, Social participation, Impure giving, Planned giver, and Secular donations);

(b) Household Characteristics (Household size, Children 6-12, Children 13-17, and Marital status) ; (c) Religion-Related Factors (Religious affiliation, Religious donations, and Percent donations to religious organizations); (d) Education; (e) Occupation (Occupation, and Hours worked/week); (f) Early Life Experiences (Youth student government, Youth religious organizations, Youth volunteering, Youth role model, and Youth sports team); (g) Evaluation of One's Life Situation (Satisfaction with life, Health status, and Perceived control of one's life); (h) Motivation (Owe community, and Personal interest). Altogether, these, along with religiosity, are the fundamental trait dimensions that differentiate volunteers. Also highly influential but not part of the rank order listing were Region and Community Size.

Conclusions and Implications

The results of our analysis speak directly to a number of issues. Are volunteers different from non-volunteers in Canada? Yes. Do the differences generally hold true across the country? The answer here is more equivocal: with respect to a small cluster of traits broadly concerned with helping, giving, and participating, the difference does hold nationally, but not for nearly all of the approximately 40 other characteristics contained in our data from the NSGVP. Our analysis reveals there is no single distinctive pattern of traits of the active volunteer; rather, volunteers are distinctive in different ways and to different degrees in different regions of the country, and in different kinds of communities. Volunteers, then, are distinguished by certain kinds of individual traits in combination with characteristics of the social contexts of those individuals.

Regarding how volunteers differ, this study has confirmed the prominence of an ensemble of correlates of volunteering that have been identified in other studies such as education, occupational level, presence of dependent children in the household, various forms of participation, religiosity and religious beliefs, and a sense of civic obligation. Contrary to other studies, however, we found that one measure of social rootedness - duration of residence in the community - was of relatively minor significance, and income played no distinguishing role at all. The latter result may be explained by the following: education and

occupation, which are both the principal precursors of income level, were influential variables in our analysis, but income, a derivative characteristic, may exert little direct effect of its own on behaviours that are not so contingent upon financial resources.

In broader terms, the picture that emerges from the many empirical details here is that an active volunteer in Canada is a person who: engages not only in volunteering but also in other forms of helping, contributing, and participating, especially through a religious organization; has children under age 17 living in a larger than average household; is other than a Catholic; has an above-average education and occupation; has been involved in civic activities as a youth; feels a sense of satisfaction and control in their life; and feels a sense of personal responsibility for or interest in civic affairs.

Needless to say, these elements can exist in quite different permutations and combinations, but they constitute the principal pool of defining traits. Many of these traits point not only to distinctive values of volunteers, but also to factors which mold those values - such as early life experiences, education, religious beliefs, and occupation - which receive recognition, support, and nurturing in particular contexts (defined by region, language group, and community size).

The marked heterogeneity of our 30 volunteer profiles, together with the existence of considerable variation in the efficacy of our statistical models in different regions, suggest that there are different social dynamics in different contexts that foster and sustain volunteers. Constructing an understanding of these varied dynamics will move us closer to understanding the reasons for the high level of heterogeneity we have identified among volunteers.

This study's findings - both in its details, and in its three themes of heterogeneity, the influence of social learning, and the importance of context - have potential implications for three important areas: our understanding of Canadian society; social theory and research; and recruiting and managing volunteers.

With few exceptions, organizations in the voluntary sector must work constantly to find and retain volunteers. Often, only the very largest organizations have the capacity to systematically generate information about who may be the likeliest potential volunteers which can be used to guide recruiting efforts. If there is a general presumption within the sector that the majority of actual and potential volunteers share a select number of important traits, our central finding that volunteers differ in significant and numerous ways across the country suggests that recruiting may be more effective if it recognizes these regional and community differences, and takes them into account in relatively targeted ways. Volunteer organizations in small towns in Nova Scotia will not likely attract the same kinds of individuals as organizations in a large Ontario city, in mid-sized communities in Quebec, or in rural communities in western Canada, for example.

A related question is whether volunteering can be cultivated or taught. The evidence - that experience with volunteering and civic participation early in life exerts a formative influence on the decision to be a volunteer during adult years - suggests that the answer is a strong but conditional “yes.” What is important is that volunteer opportunities for young persons not only contain volunteer activities *per se*, but also features that will positively affect their attitudes toward civic engagement, personal responsibility, and contributing to a common good. Janoski *et al.* (1998) found that although compulsory community service programs for students can raise the probability of volunteering in adulthood, socialization of attitudes and values regarding volunteering is more than twice as important. The very strong presence of university education among volunteers is another indication of the importance of social learning.

Several of this study’s findings also have a bearing on social theory concerned with explaining volunteering. One perspective, characterized in the literature as “the dominant status model,” holds that volunteer activity has the effect of expressing or creating heightened social status for volunteers. We believe the negligible role of income as a differentiating factor for volunteers in this study raises questions about the applicability of the dominant status model in Canada. We suggest that the strongly above-average incidence of higher education and occupation among volunteers, which is usually taken to support the dominant status model, can be taken equally well as evidence of a type of differential socialization that leads to a set of values

associated with a heightened probability of volunteering.

Specifically in this regard, we suggest that the majority of volunteers have: (a) an awareness of and concern for a significant common good of some kind, whether of a limited collectivity such as members of a club, or generally, such as the community or society as a whole; and (b) a desire, or a belief that as individuals they have a responsibility, to support and enable that common good rather than just delegating that responsibility to public institutions. There was a confluence of several kinds of traits in this study which lends support to this thesis that there is a distinctive world-view among active volunteers. For example, there was an intersection between characteristics such as feeling they owed something to the community, and personal interest in the volunteer activity; and between youth experiences and education (values socialization). Our conjecture, of course, must be subjected to empirical test using existing and new data on the values, attitudes, and social reasoning (including self-described motives) of volunteers.

We would also note that in identifying the relative influence of variables, this study provides guidance as to which correlates (singly or in clusters) of volunteering merit priority attention in future research to understand the dynamics of volunteering. In particular and in descending order it is generosity and caring, household characteristics, religious factors, education, occupation, assessment of one's life situation, motivation, region, and community size, that are most salient.

These findings certainly suggest the existence of a caring and contributing personality syndrome; they also prompt the question of (sub-)cultures of generosity. Are there particular social settings (such as small urban or rural communities in certain regional contexts) where the unique combination of (a) prevalent norms, values, social networks, and civic structures, and (b) the blend of both opportunity and need for helping, contributing and participating, produce conditions that are especially favourable to volunteering and that elicit such behaviour selectively from individuals who are heterogeneous in most other respects? And what is the importance of personality factors relative to subcultural elements. Answering these questions would surely bolster our understanding of volunteering, but it would also shed light on something far greater, a

profoundly important aspect of the fabric of Canadian society--- how Canadians of different kinds and in different locales perceive and support the common good.

Appendix

Variables Used in the Analysis

1. The dependent variable in the analysis is a two-category variable (hours volunteered by the respondent in preceding 12 months) that permits a comparison of active volunteers - those whose total annual hours volunteered were at or above the 1997 median (66 hours) of all hours volunteered - with those who were not formal volunteers (hours volunteered = 0).

Independent Variables

2. REGION: Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, British Columbia.
3. SIZE: size of respondent's community of residence. Large Urban = population over 100,000; Small Urban = 15-100 thousand; Rural = under 15,000.
4. RELIGIOSITY: self-assessed of importance of own religious beliefs. 0 = low, 1 = high.
5. AGE: recorded in years.
6. CIVICP: Civic participation score. A scale constructed by counting the positive responses to seven questions about membership and participation in meeting of civic organizations. (This does not include volunteering in such organizations.) Score runs from 0 = low to 7 = high.
7. SOCIALP: Social participation score. A scale constructed by counting the positive responses to 12 questions about participation in social activities. Score runs from 0 = low to 12 = high.
8. INCOME: Household income scale using group medians.
9. HH SIZE: Household size.
10. KIDS 0-5: Number of own children ages 0 to 5 living in the home.
11. KIDS 6-12: Number of own children ages 6 to 12 living in the home.
12. KIDS 13-17: Number of own children ages 13 to 17 living in the home.
13. KIDS 18+: Number of own children ages 18 and older living in the home.
14. EDUC: Education in years of schooling.
15. HRS/WK: Hours worked per week. 0 = part-time or not working; 1 = full-time.
16. FEMALE: Gender variable. 0 = male; 1 = female.
17. Class of Worker:
 - PAID (reference group): Paid employees.
 - SELF EMPL: Self-employed workers
 - UNPAID: Workers in unpaid jobs.
 - NO CLASS: Not in the labour force.
18. Marital Status:
 - MARRIED (reference group): Married.
 - SINGLE: Single, never married.
 - OTHER MS : Other marital status, (widowed, separated and divorced).
19. Occupation:
 - MANAGER (reference group): Managers and administrators.
 - PROFESS: Professionals.

WHITE COLL: White collar clerical, sales and service.

FARMER: Farmers.

BLUE COLL: Blue collar skilled and unskilled .

NO OCC: Not in the labour force.

20. Religion:

NO RELIG (reference group): No religion.

CATHOLIC: Catholic.

PROTEST: Protestant.

OTHER REL: Other religion.

21. HEALTH: Self-evaluation of health. Scale runs from 1 = poor to 5 = excellent.

22. IMMIG: Immigrant status. 0 = Canadian born; 1 = foreign born.

23. RES YRS: Years resident in current community.

24. Ethnicity:

CDN (reference group): Canadian ancestry.

ENGLISH: English, or English and Other ancestry.

FRENCH: French, or French and Other ancestry.

ENG-FREN: English and French ancestry.

OTHER ETH: Other ancestry.

25. LANG: Language of interview, 0 = English; 1 = French.

26. SATISF: Satisfaction with life. Scale runs from 1 = low to 4 = high.

27. SECULAR \$: Total dollars donated to secular (non-religious) organizations.

28. RELIG \$: Total dollars donated to religious organizations.

29. PCT REL \$: Percent of total annual donation dollars given to religious organizations.

30. VOTED: Respondent voted in last federal, provincial or local elections. Scale runs from 0 = did not vote, to 3 = voted in elections at all three levels.

31. NEWS: Scale measuring how much the respondent follows the news. Scale runs from 1 = not much, to 3 = often.

32. TVHRS: Hours per week spent watching TV.

33. GIVER: donated money to non-profit organizations. 0 = did not donate; 1 = did donate.

34. GIVE DECILE: Decile score of respondents for amount donated to charities - where they fit on a ten point scale reflecting the total range of dollars each person donated to charities in the year leading up to the survey.

35. PLAN GIVER: Respondent decides in advance who they will donate to. 0 = no; 1 = yes.

36. PURE GIVER: Number of types of "pure" Informal donations (i.e., not through an organization, and where there was no potential benefit to the donor).

37. IMPURE GV: Number of types of "impure" Informal donations where there was potential benefit to the donor, such as in a charitable lottery.

38. INFORNUM: Number of different types of informal volunteering respondent engaged in.

39. OWE COMM: Reason for donating to organizations is a belief that they owe something to their community. 0 = no; 1 = yes.

40. PERSONAL: Reason for donating to organizations is someone they know has been affected.

41. YTH VOL: Respondent did volunteer work as a youth. 0 = no; 1 = yes.
42. ROLEMODEL: Respondent's parents or someone they admired was a volunteer during their youth. 0 = no, did not have a role model; 1 = yes, had a role model.
43. YTH TEAMS: Youth experience in organized team sports. 0 = no; 1 = yes.
44. YTH GROUP: Experience in youth groups. 0 = no; 1 = yes.
45. YTH STUDT GOVT: Youth experience in student government. 0 = no; 1 = yes.
46. YTH REL ORG: Youth experience in religious organizations. 0 = no; 1 = yes.
47. CONTROL: Control over everyday decisions. Scale runs from 2 = some or none, to 4 = all.

Notes

1. We use the term “nonprofit domain” to cover a range of not-well-defined behaviours and institutions oriented toward improving varied aspects of quality of life. Concerning the themes mentioned in this Introduction, the term “nonprofit” should not be taken as either inclusionary or exclusionary (regarding whether it encompasses such things as co-ops and mutual support groups, for example). However, concerning the actual volunteering that is the subject matter of this report, it is confined to the “formal” volunteering which is done on behalf of nonprofit and charitable organizations, rather than at the broader forms of helping behaviour which is often called “informal” volunteering.
2. A detailed regression table for these and selected other results can be supplied by the authors by request; we may be contacted via e-mail at <reedpau@statcan.ca>.
3. Models were estimated separately for each of the 30 sub-groups. In each model all retained variables were significant at the 0.05 level. The fit of each model to the data was assessed with the Nagelkerke pseudo- R^2 , which is equivalent to variation explained, and with the proportion of cases correctly predicted to be volunteers or non-volunteers by the models (SPSS, 1997; Hosmer and Lemeshow, 1989; Ryan, 1997; Menard, 1995).
4. The percent of variation accounted for ranged from 19.1% for the Quebec, small urban, low religiosity model to 68.3% for the Prairies, small urban, low religiosity model. The average variation accounted for by region was: Atlantic region, 41%, Quebec, 38%, Ontario, 45%, Prairies, 54%, and B.C., 49%.
5. To some extent the number of significant variables in a given model depends on the number of cases involved in the analysis. However, the complexity of the models is not due entirely to differences in sub-group size. We found models based on larger sub-groups that had fewer significant variables than models based on smaller sub-groups.

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Table 1. Rank Order of Variables by Prevalence and Composite Score

Ranking by Prevalence		Ranking by Composite Score	
Civic participation	28	Civic participation	200.0
Informal helping	16	Informal helping	34.8
Giving decile	10	Giving decile	25.0
Social participation	10	Youth student govt	18.2
Religion	10	Social participation	16.7
Education	9	Religion	14.9
Ethnicity	9	Impure giving	14.3
Youth student govt	8	Household size	12.5
Children 13-17	8	Planned giving	12.0
Occupation	7	Occupation	11.5
Children 6-12	7	Children 6-12	11.1
Religious donations	7	Marital Status	11.1
Planned giving	6	Education	10.8
Satisfaction	6	Children 13-17	10.3
Owe community	6	Ethnicity	10.1
Youth religious org	6	Hrs worked/week	9.6
Secular donations	6	Religious donations	9.0
Household size	5	Satisfaction	8.6
Hrs worked/week	5	Owe community	8.6
Class of Worker	5	Youth religious org	8.1
Youth volunteer	5	Secular donations	8.0
Personal interest	5	Class of Worker	6.4
Impure giving	4	Youth volunteer	6.4
Youth rolemodel	4	Youth rolemodel	5.9
Giver	4	Health	5.0
Control	4	Pct religious giving	5.0
Gender	4	Giver	4.6
Marital Status	3	Yrs resident	4.5
Health	3	Personal interest	4.5
Yrs resident	3	Youth teams	3.9
Youth teams	3	Age	3.8
Age	3	Children 18+	3.8
Children 18+	3	Control	3.7
Pure giving	3	Gender	3.3
Pct religious giving	2	Immigrant	3.3
Immigrant	2	Pure giving	2.2
Youth group	2	Youth group	1.5
Language	1	Language	1.3
TV hours	1	TV hours	0.8
Income	1	Income	0.5
News	1	News	0.4
Children 0-5	1	Children 0-5	0.4
Voted	0	Voted	0.0

Table 2. Results of Logistic Regressions for the Atlantic Provinces^a

Community Size: Religiosity:	Large Urban						Small Urban						Rural					
	Low			High			Low			High			Low			High		
	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b
	1	civicp	0.257	1	infornum	0.228	1	civicp	0.377	1	civicp	0.273	1	civicp	0.339	1	civicp	0.242
	2	infornum	0.212	2	civicp	0.202				2	pure giver	0.221	2	infornum	0.180	2	give decile	0.191
	3	protest	-0.093	3	give decile	0.130							3	studs govt	0.146	3	infornum	0.170
	4	giver	0.063	4	educ	0.086										4	HH size	0.145
																5	socialp	0.085
																6	hrs/wk	-0.077
																7	educ	0.070
																8	other rel	0.066
Variation Expained:			38.0%			40.9%			40.5%			32.9%			42.0%			52.7%
Classification Table: Percent of cases correctly classified by the model:																		
	Non-volunteers		76			80			76			70			83			82
	Volunteers		79			72			81			73			77			79
	Total		77			78			76			71			82			81
Fit of the Model:	χ^2		39.0			86.7			13.0			19.6			51.0			173.7
	df		4			4			1			2			3			8
	p-value <		0.000			0.000			0.000			0.000			0.000			0.000

a. All variables in each model are significant at the 0.05 level.

b. The r statistic from logistic regression can be interpreted as the partial correlation between the dependent variable and the particular independent variable.

Table 3. Results of Logistic Regressions for Quebec^a

Community Size: Religiosity:	Large Urban						Small Urban						Rural					
	Low			High			Low			High			Low			High		
	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b
	1	civicp	0.240	1	civicp	0.295	1	civicp	0.306	1	socialp	0.210	1	civicp	0.204	1	civicp	0.296
	2	married	-0.232	2	yth rel org	0.166	2	manager	0.131	2	studs gov	0.178	2	secular \$	0.182	2	give decile	0.149
	3	hh size	0.232	3	kids 13-17	0.149				3	kids 18+	0.164	3	socialp	0.180	3	informum	0.106
	4	hrs/wk	-0.163	4	give decile	0.133				4	secular \$	0.157	4	satisf	0.086	4	health	0.092
	5	self empl	0.156	5	kids 6-12	0.131				5	informum	0.139						
	6	plan giver	0.155	6	yth vol	0.128				6	relig \$	0.134						
	7	kids 13-17	-0.150	7	other eth	-0.121				7	catholic	-0.105						
	8	language	-0.145	8	catholic	-0.103												
	9	yth teams	0.141	9	control	0.080												
	10	yth group	0.127	10	personal	-0.068												
	11	farmer	0.123	11	res yrs	0.055												
	12	owe com	0.110															
	13	blue coll	-0.109															
	14	no class	-0.093															
	15	age	0.092															
	16	informum	0.080															
	17	cdn	-0.076															
	18	satisf	0.075															
	19	control	0.064															
	20	eng-fren	0.051															
	21	socialp	0.033															
Variation Expained:			58.2%			40.2%			19.1%			49.7%			27.8%			34.6%
Classification Table: Percent of cases correctly classified by the model:																		
	Non-volunteers (%)	87		81		63		86		79		78		78		77		78
	Volunteers (%)	80		72		72		74		66		77		77		77		77
	Total (%)	86		80		64		84		77		78		78		77		78
Fit of the Model:	X ²	422.3		289.8		19.1		66.9		57.1		102.8		102.8		102.8		102.8
	df	21		11		2		7		4		4		4		4		4
	p-value <	0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000

a. All variables in each model are significant at the 0.05 level.

b. The r statistic from logistic regression can be interpreted as the partial correlation between the dependent variable and the particular independent variable.

Table 4. Results of Logistic Regressions for Ontario^a

Religiosity:	Community Size: Large Urban						Small Urban						Rural					
	Low			High			Low			High			Low			High		
	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b
	1	civicp	0.247	1	civicp	0.182	1	civicp	0.346	1	civicp	0.231	1	civicp	0.249	1	civicp	0.239
	2	informum	0.160	2	hrs/wk	-0.136	2	hh size	0.188	2	other eth	-0.166	2	studs govt	0.222	2	informum	0.142
	3	kids 13-17	0.137	3	aae	-0.102	3	rolemodel	0.162	3	studs aovt	0.147	3	vth vol	0.163	3	enlish	0.108
	4	blue coll	-0.112	4	res vrs	0.091	4	plan aiver	0.139	4	owe com	0.128	4	profess	-0.151	4	aive decile	0.093
	5	oct rel \$	-0.110	5	satisf	0.088	5	vth vol	0.138	5	personal	-0.123	5	aive decile	0.146	5	kids 6-12	0.080
	6	catholic	-0.097	6	kids 6-12	0.077	6	protest	0.101	6	no reliq	-0.118	6	socialp	0.139	6	educ	0.073
	7	female	0.082	7	protest	0.074	7	white coll	0.100	7	self emp	0.111	7	catholic	-0.108	7	studs govt	0.072
	8	health	-0.073	8	plan aiver	0.073				8	hh size	0.095	8	kids 6-12	0.100	8	relia \$	0.065
	9	satisf	0.064	9	studs aovt	0.072				9	informum	0.081				9	catholic	-0.060
	10	educ	0.056	10	vth rel ora	0.063				10	aive decile	0.064				10	vth vol	0.052
	11	secular \$	0.055	11	owe com	0.057										11	yth rel org	0.051
	12	socialp	0.055	12	no class	-0.057												
				13	tv hrs	-0.054												
				14	relia \$	0.053												
				15	secular \$	0.052												
				16	vth aroup	0.052												
				17	giver	-0.050												
				18	educ	0.050												
				19	kids 18+	0.049												
				20	self empl	0.048												
				21	eno-fren	0.047												
				22	income	-0.041												
				23	news	-0.039												
				24	kids 0-5	-0.038												
				25	kids 13-17	0.032												
				26	personal	0.031												
				27	pure aiver	0.031												
				28	female	-0.028												
Variation Expained:			38.8%	26.7%	57.9%	45.6%	49.2%	53.8%										
Classification Table: Percent of cases correctly classified by the model:																		
Non-volunteers (%)			77	78	83	80	80	82										
Volunteers (%)			80	77	77	78	80	79										
Total (%)			78	78	82	80	80	81										
Fit of the Model:			X ²	395.4	757.3	99.3	129.1	98.3	298.2									
			df	12	28	7	10	8	11									
			p-value <	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000									

a. All variables in each model are significant at the 0.05 level.

b. The r statistic from loistic ireression can be interpreted as the partial correlation between the dependent variable and the particular independent variable.

Table 5. Results of Logistic Regressions for the Prairie Provinces^a

Community Size:		Large Urban				Small Urban				Rural				
Religiosity:		Low		High		Low		High		Low		High		
Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b
1	civicp	0.311	1	socialp	0.151	1	impure gv	0.281	1	civicp	0.320	1	civicp	0.254
2	informum	0.200	2	civicp	0.151	2	civicp	0.255	2	impure gv	0.194	2	socialp	0.189
3	pct rel \$	-0.044	3	kids 6-12	0.107	3	hh size	0.222	3	educ	0.185	3	give decile	0.183
4	kids 13-17	0.156	4	relig \$	0.082				4	paid	-0.151	4	informum	0.125
5	giver	-0.129	5	give decile	0.075				5	relig \$	0.108	5	eng-fren	0.115
6	female	0.116	6	age	-0.069							6	informum	0.084
7	owe com	0.096	7	personal	0.065							7	impure gv	0.074
8	personal	-0.084	8	plan giver	0.064							8	kids 13-17	0.070
9	profess	0.069	9	secular \$	0.060							9	eng-fren	0.061
			10	educ	0.058									
			11	no class	0.058									
			12	rolemodel	-0.054									
			13	control	0.047									
Variation Expained:		47.9%		42.0%		68.3%		62.6%		53.0%		50.9%		
Classification Table: Percent of cases correctly classified by the model:														
	Non-volunteers (%)	81		77		90		89		82		79		
	Volunteers (%)	82		76		88		80		81		76		
	Total (%)	81		77		89		86		82		78		
Fit of the Model:	X ²	177.2		271.7		45.4		57.6		96.8		219.3		
	df	9		13		3		5		5		9		
	p-value <	0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		

a. All variables in each model are significant at the 0.05 level.

b. The r statistic from logistic regression can be interpreted as the partial correlation between the dependent variable and the particular independent variable.

Table 6. Results of Logistic Regressions for British Columbia^a

Community Size: Religiosity:	Large Urban				Small Urban				Rural									
	Low		High		Low		High		Low		High							
	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b	Rank	Variable	r ^b						
	1	civcjp	0.251	1	civcjp	0.308	1	satisf	0.227	1	other ms	-0.153	1	impure gv	0.204	1	civcjp	0.336
	2	control	0.161	2	plan giver	0.215	2	kids 18+	0.176	2	plan giver	0.130	2	civcjp	0.204	2	owe com	0.206
	3	immig	-0.155	3	informum	0.199	3	kids 13-17	0.170	3	relig \$	0.092	3	french	0.127	3	hrs/wk	-0.187
	4	rolemodel	-0.140	4	yth rel org	0.155	4	yth teams	0.157	4	secular\$	0.084	4	give decile	0.116	4	yth rel org	0.147
	5	socialp	0.139	5	res yrs	0.145	5	informum	0.155	5	other ms	0.071	5	educ	0.120	5	educ	0.120
	6	owe com	0.139	6	blue coll	-0.137	6	studs govt	0.141	6			6	health	0.114	6	health	0.114
	7	female	0.108	7	kids 6-12	0.136	7	civcjp	0.116									
	8	informum	0.102	8	rolemodel	-0.132												
	9	kids 13-17	0.094	9	immig	0.097												
	10	kids 6-12	0.089	10	yth teams	-0.096												
	11	hrs/wk	-0.087	11	profess	-0.095												
	12	pure giver	-0.069	12	educ	0.074												
	13	yth rel org	-0.066	13	eng-fren	0.049												
	14	relig \$	0.065															
	15	yth vol	0.058															
Variation Expained:			43.3%			58.2%			60.0%			31.5%			44.3%			57.3%
Classification Table: Percent of cases correctly classified by the model:																		
	Non-volunteers (%)	77		83		79		77		80		86						
	Volunteers (%)	76		79		80		62		79		76						
	Total (%)	77		82		79		72		79		82						
Fit of the Model:	X ²	187.4		284.7		70.1		35.1		63.1		97.9						
	df	15		13		7		4		5		6						
	p-value <	0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000						

a. All variables in each model are significant at the 0.05 level.

b. The r statistic from logistic regression can be interpreted as the partial correlation between the dependent variable and the particular independent variable.