

**Voluntary Sector Research in Canada
Since the Mid-1970s and Mid-1990s**

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Introduction: Structure and Basis of the Report

This report presents a descriptive statistical analysis of some major characteristics of all the contemporary Canadian voluntary sector research works that could be discovered in a certain period. It begins with an overview of the size, scope, and chief bibliographic characteristics of the entire domain over a thirty year interval (since the mid-1970s), and then focuses upon an important subset of this: the “primary” research produced since the mid-1990s which has broader application to the Canadian nonprofit sector in general.

The genesis and evidence for this report is a specialized database that I – an independent researcher who specializes in literature reviews on the nonprofit sector – compiled between October 2002 and May 2003, to consolidate and supplement all the existing, more partial ones. This new database covers all those items I could find and classify which met the following criteria: they are **publicly available** (not just proprietary to the sponsoring organization, as many surveys, needs assessments, or evaluations are) **research** (with empirical or analytical content based on some sort of study) **publications** (articles, books, reports, theses, etc., including those available only the Internet, but not including newsletters, pamphlets, videos, etc.), whose subject is the **voluntary sector**¹ or some of its critical inputs or operating conditions (such as volunteers or government regulations), which either have **at least one Canadian author** (including as second or other authors), or they have studied some aspect of the **Canadian** voluntary sector in particular (regardless of the authors’ nationality). (For more detail on the method and criteria for the data collection, please see Appendix 1.)

The database’s holdings ended up covering nearly a 30-year span, from 1974 to the first half of 2003, along with some titles believed to be forthcoming. Note, although a smattering of historical titles² and a fair selection of French-language literature³ are available in a slightly extended version of this database, the principal focus of the database itself and the analysis in this Report is solely on the **English-language** literature on the **contemporary** Canadian voluntary sector.⁴

¹ As the federally sponsored Voluntary Sector Initiative (www.vsi-isbc.ca) put it, “The voluntary sector comprises self-governing organizations that exist to serve a public benefit, generate social capital but do not distribute private profit to members, depend to a meaningful degree on volunteers, involve participation on a voluntary basis, and are independent or institutionally distinct from the formal structures of government and the profit sector. Some are registered charities, some are incorporated non-profit organizations and others exist independent of these classifications. The diverse multitude of organizations range from small community-based groups to large, national umbrella organizations, all enriching the lives of Canadians in various ways.”

² I compiled 65 records of studies which concern aspects of the voluntary sector prior to the 1970s, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. There are entire journals dedicated to this, such as the Canadian Catholic Historical Association’s *Historical Studies*, which began as the *Report of...* in 1934. See www.history-journals.de/journals/hjg-region-can.html for a listing of other Canadian history journals, and for a representative selection of 16 such articles, search the Philanthropic Studies Index using the keywords, “Canada history” <http://cheever.ulib.iupui.edu/psipublicsearch/PSIsearchForm.htm>

³ The extended database has an additional 177 records on studies which mostly concern the “social economy” in Québec. These have been excluded from most of this analysis, except for in a sub-section concerning journal articles alone.

⁴ There are several reasons for this focus on the contemporary English literature. It is partly scholarly: to distinguish the emerging field of Canadian voluntary sector studies from the existing, more well-defined discipline of history; partly pragmatic: the database was intended mainly for voluntary sector practitioners who want to learn how to adapt or

Each listing in this database provides standard bibliographic information (author(s), title, publisher, year of publication, etc.), along with various identifiers on the work's primary subject matter, data sources or methodology, and scope of application, as well as the main institutional affiliation, discipline, or occupation of its first-listed author. And because it *is* a database (in the Microsoft Excel® format), most of these columns of identifiers or 'fields' can be analyzed in terms of the counts, relative frequencies, or ranks of various items – the chief units of analysis for this report.

Thus, the principal characteristics of this research to be analyzed and some of the questions to be answered here, are:

- the **Total** number of works, and the **Years** they were published. (How much of it is very recent?)
- the **Scope** of the works, in terms of the data they draw on or the applicability of their findings. (What proportion transcend individual regions or sub-sectors to apply to the Canadian voluntary sector as a whole?)
- the **Type** of format or media the works appear in. (Do they mostly consist of peer-reviewed articles, books, or dissertations, or are they mainly commissioned reports?)
- the **Authors** of the works. (How many are there engaged in producing the works of the three major scopes? What region of Canada (or elsewhere) are they located in? Who is the most prolific among them?)
- the **Sectoral Affiliation** of the first-listed authors. (What are the relative contributions of the academic, voluntary, public, or private sectors in producing or commissioning these works?)
- the specific **Institutional Affiliation** of the first-listed authors. (Which are the leading producers among our post-secondary institutions? And how do these stack up against the contributions of the other types of institutional affiliations, and they with one another?)
- the **Disciplines** of the academic first-listed authors. (How varied or concentrated are they?)
- the main **Subject(s)** of the individual items. (What is the range of the main and somewhat more detailed topics under active consideration for each scope... and how varied are they?)
- and, the main **Data source** or **Evidentiary Method** in use for each work. (What types of empirical content [e.g., survey, or case study] involving Canadian voluntary organizations or their fundamental inputs or operating conditions are being reported on or analyzed afresh? How many of the works are mainly secondary research, and how many or more speculative or theoretical in nature?)

improve their current programs; partly theoretical: the “*économie sociale*” and the literature on it contains ostensibly for-profit entities such as co-ops and social ventures, whereas the voluntary sector is non-profit; but mostly from necessity: with no funding for this research, a very limited understanding of French, and a base far from the national archives in Ottawa, I did not have the time or resources to locate or classify all the historical and French studies.

Part I of this report will present statistical profiles of most of those characteristics for the totality of the Canadian voluntary sector research captured in this database: i.e., for all the literature since the mid-1970s. It also include a more in-depth focus on certain “bibliographic” characteristics of the journal articles in particular (such as authorship rates), where we can make comparisons to various other scholarly disciplines using some fairly well-established laws or tests employed in the library sciences. In addition, the state of development of the Canadian voluntary sector research field will also be compared to that of the United States in a tentative way at a couple of junctures, partly in order to address fundamental concerns about the data quality of the database concerning the relative absence of older titles.

Part II focuses upon a core subset of these publications, to concentrate upon only the more wide-ranging research appearing since the mid-1990s. This latter set has been ‘distilled’ in several respects to filter out the more peripheral works; they will be restricted in: (i) scope (including only what has been termed the ‘cross-cutting’ research); (ii) time (only from 1993-2003); (iii) type of publication (favouring those which are longer or peer-reviewed); and (iv) principal evidentiary source (eliminating most “secondary” research)..

Part I: Overview of the Entire Canadian Voluntary Sector Research Field from 1974-2003

We shall begin by getting a sense of the entire size of this research domain (relatively small) and its state of development (relatively recent), pausing also to consider how much of those findings may be due to deficiencies in the database itself. Following that, there will be an overview of what types of research publications have predominated; how concentrated the field is in terms of the journal articles alone (both in terms of the number of journals and of authors); who the major producers have been (not only individually and institutionally, but also by economic sector); and what has been studied; and how it has been studied; among other things.

Total Size of the Canadian Voluntary Sector Research Field

When the data collection for this project ended in May 2003, it appeared that there were a total of 1,788 available items of contemporary English-language Canadian voluntary sector research appearing over the entire twenty-nine and a half year interval covered by the database, for an average of about 60 items per year.

This may not sound like a lot (many fields produce over ten times that average *each year*⁵), but arguably, it is a fairly impressive amount, in Canadian terms, especially for a new field such as this. This can be corroborated in two ways.

The first way is to compare the number of Canadian research publications for this particular subject area to the amount of Canadian research available in some other new field in the social sciences – such as Women’s Studies. This can be done in a provisional way using the Scientific Citation Index® or SCI®,⁶ which indexes about ten thousand journals in three main databases.⁷ When this research was completed, it indicated there were 1,203 relevant items (in a search with “Women’s Studies” as the Topic, the dates confined to “1974-2003” and the supplied addresses of the authors to include “Canada”). That is comparable to the approximately 1,800 Canadian voluntary sector items, considering that the latter also contains a great deal of ‘gray literature’⁸ which appears outside the mainstream academic publications the SCI® is restricted to.

The second way is to compare the amount of Canadian voluntary sector research uncovered to a very similar domain – research on the United States’ voluntary sector – over a comparable

⁵ E.g., a recent study of the production of Environmental Science research articles by Canadians found at least 21,503 articles distributed among 317 journals in the period between 1980 and 1998 (OST, 2002). That’s an average of 1,132 articles per year, and it does not even include all the other types of formats included here, such as books and reports.

⁶ This subscription-based database is compiled by the ‘ISI Web of Science’ division of the Thomson Corporation’s Institute for Scientific Information in Philadelphia. It is widely available through university libraries, and online at www.isinet.com/isi

⁷ *Viz.*, the Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED) – 1945-present; the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) – 1956-present; and the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) – 1975-present

⁸ The ‘GrayLit Network,’ for example, defines gray literature as “material that usually is available through specialized channels and may not enter normal channels or systems of publication, distribution, bibliographic control, or acquisition by booksellers or subscription agents” (from www.osti.gov/graylit/whatsnew.html)

period, making suitable adjustments for the differences in population. To convert the Canadian units of production to U.S. terms, it would probably suffice to adopt the general rule of thumb used in many such discussions: simply scale them up by a factor of ten (given the relative sizes of our populations⁹). Hence, we might expect to find about 18,000 items of American voluntary sector research over the same period, if the fields in the two countries are in a similar stage of development¹⁰ – or far more, if Canada’s has been lagging a great deal.

Unfortunately, this comparison cannot quite be made satisfactorily, because a comparably thorough mapping exercise has not been performed on the United States’ voluntary sector literature, yet. However, when we consult the two most comprehensive databases available on the U.S. literature, to date, it appears that the Canadian total (approximately 1,800, projected to 18,000 in U.S. terms) is certainly in accord with the number of items found in both:

- i) the Philanthropic Studies Index (or PSI) of Indiana University (available online at <http://cheever.ulib.iupui.edu/psipublicsearch/PSIsearchForm.htm>), which featured 12,948 periodical titles in all, as of Spring 2003 (note, even though not all of these are relevant,¹¹ this database only includes periodical articles, so the true figure may be about double that once other types of publications such as books and reports are included); and
- ii) the Foundation Center’s Literature of the Nonprofit Sector Online (<http://lnps.fdncenter.org>), which boasts 21,700 records, in all. Not all of these qualify, however: there are only 20,855, when confined to the same dates (1974-2003) as the Canadian database, but some of those are by Canadians or other foreigners about other countries’ sectors; and many more are not actually *research* publications *per se*. (This particular database is not confined to research: thousands of items are simply news articles, speeches, or manuals, tapes, and videos of a more “How-To” or prescriptive nature.¹²) Unfortunately, there is no apparent way to filter out such items, but a rough guess would be that there are over five thousand of them, leaving about 16,000 to 18,000 remaining American voluntary sector research entries, in all, as expected, which suggests that our two fields are indeed quite comparable.

⁹ There were about 31-million Canadians and 285-million Americans, as of July, 2001.

¹⁰ In contrast to the aforementioned field of Women’s Studies, for example, where it seems Canada is relatively ahead. A comparable SCI search shows only 9,575 rather than 13,000 items on it with identified U.S.A. author addresses, resulting in a 1 to 7.3 ratio, much less than the one to ten ratio one might expect.

¹¹ They date back as far as 1940; over 800 of them are historical studies; and some concern philanthropic themes in movies and literature rather than actual studies of the voluntary sector *per se*.

¹² E.g., over this interval, there are 2,571 items from the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* alone, 876 from the *Nonprofit Times*, 508 from *Nonprofit World*, 795 in *Foundation News* or *Foundation News Commentary*, 1,114 in *Fund Raising Management*, and so on.

Recency of the Literature and/or Limitations of the Database

Most of this contemporary, English-language Canadian voluntary sector research appeared quite recently; in fact, the vast majority (76%) has been published within the last decade alone. That represents an almost six-fold increase in production relative to the first seventeen years the database covers, and double the rate for the intervening twenty years, as revealed in Table 1:

Table 1: Total and average number of Canadian voluntary sector research publications, for selected intervals

Interval	Number of publications ¹³	% of all these works	Average titles per year over this interval	Average for most recent interval in proportion to this one
Most recent decade (1994-2003/forth.)	1,357	76.3%	139.2	=
Early period (1977 ¹⁴ -1993, inclusive)	421	23.7%	24.8	5.6
Total 26.75 year span (1977 to third quarter of 2003, incl. forthcoming titles)	1,778	100.0%	66.5	2.1

This total amount of production can also be broken down, not only by year or broader periods, but also by what might be termed the “scope of application.”

The definitions, breadth, and rationale for the database’s categories on that latter notion are as follows. Not every publication applies equally to the entire Canadian voluntary sector. One-seventh of the items have been classified as “Regional,” meaning that their studies have been confined to particular regions of the country, either in terms of the data they draw on or the probable scope of applicability of their findings. And two-fifths of the studies have only drawn on one or two “Sub-Sectors” or types of service area of the nonprofit sector (e.g., Social Services) for their data or analysis. However, the remainder – nearly half of the database’s holdings – appears to transcend or “cross-cut” the majority of regions and sub-sectors to apply to the Canadian voluntary sector as a whole. (Table 2)

Table 2: Total number of English-language contemporary Canadian voluntary sector research publications, 1974-2003/forth., by scope of data and/or application

Scope	No. of titles	% of titles
Cross-Cutting (C-C)	852	47.7%
Regional (Reg.)	199	11.1%
Sub-Sectors (S-S)	737	41.2%
Total*	1,788	100.0%

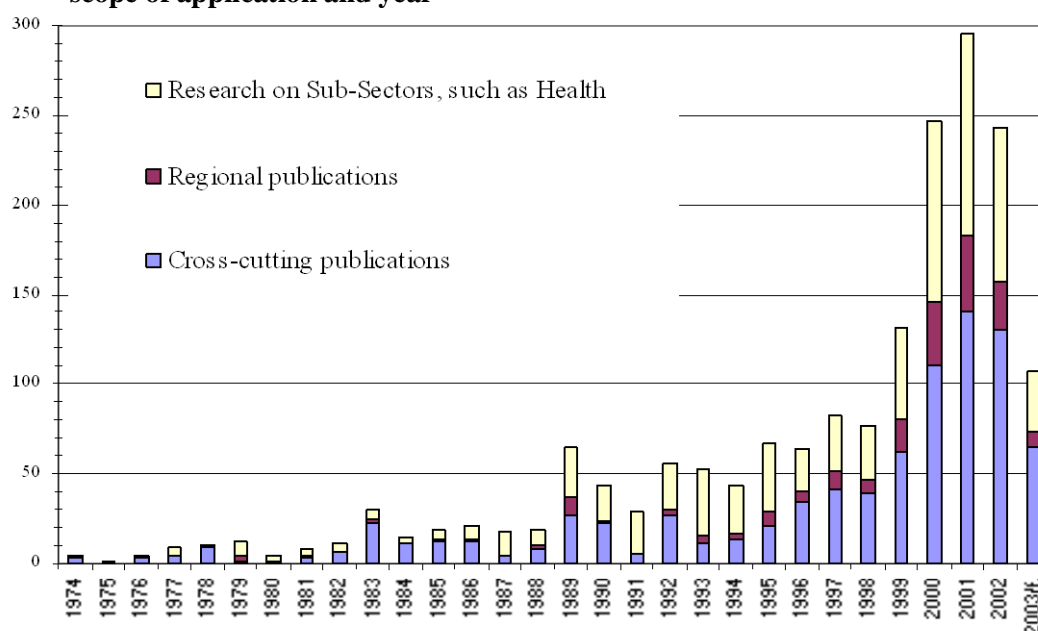
* For all the English-language, contemporary holdings of the database as of August 19, 2003.

¹³ These figures include non-traditional publications, such as reports available only on the Internet.

¹⁴ For comparative reasons to be introduced shortly, these particular calculations will be confined to the database’s holdings from 1977 forward, omitting ten titles published between 1974 and 1977.

As we can see in Figure 1, there was a fairly meager amount of Canadian voluntary sector research for all three scopes of application during the first two decades. The main exception to this – the flurry of activity in 1989-90 – was largely due to a series of publications by Statistics Canada based upon the release of its first major national survey on volunteering.

Figure 1: Total English-language contemporary Canadian voluntary sector research production by scope of application and year



For more detail on the actual number of items of each scope of application published each year, see Appendix 2. Some summary statistics also appear here in Table 3.

Table 3: Number and average production of the Canadian voluntary sector research items in the database for three selected intervals, 1974-2003, by scope of application

	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total
Total number of publications	852	199	737	1,788
No. of years with published works*	30	21	29	30
Ave. across all 29.75 yrs. (1974-2003*)	28.4	9.5	25.4	59.6
Median no. of works per year*	28.6	6.7	24.8	60.1
Maximum per year* [all in 2001]	140	43	112	295
Mode/most frequent in any given yr.*	12	5	20	30
Number of publications in most recent decade (1994-2003/forth.*) alone	656	168	533	1,357
% of all publications of this scope	77.0	84.4	72.3	75.9
Average titles per year in this interval	67.3	17.2	54.7	139.2
Number of publications appearing in the first two decades (1974-1993)	196	31	204	431
% of all publications of this scope	23.0	15.6	27.7	24.1
Average titles per year in this interval	9.8	1.6	10.2	21.6
Average for the most recent decade relative to the two earlier ones	6.9	11.1	5.4	6.5

* Including the Jan. to May 2003 and believed-to-be-forthcoming titles together as three-quarters of one year

As you can see in the final row, in the most recent decade (since the mid-90s), the average number of publications appearing each year was from five to eleven times higher than it had been in the early interval (depending on the scope of application). This relatively poor showing for those two preceding decades could possibly be an artifact of the data collection method for this mapping exercise, however. By necessity, this was predominantly conducted through a variety of Internet-based databases and search facilities. But the pre-1990 contents of many journals are not electronically indexed, and the holdings of some smaller post-secondary institutions are still on card-catalogues. These older records would have to be looked up and uploaded manually for all the libraries in the country: obviously, a prohibitive undertaking. Hence, the present database could be missing at least ten percent of what might be found through a more exhaustive search – probably much more, for the more regionally-based studies in particular.¹⁵

Undoubtedly, some relevant titles have been missed. However, there are two lines of evidence to support the idea that the existing database provides an accurate indication of the genuine recency of this field of study and the relative dearth of (published¹⁶) Canadian voluntary sector research over most of this period.

- i. This extreme recency seems to be true of the United States-based voluntary sector research in general, as well – at least, for the more mainstream published research.
- ii. It also seems true of the most extensively studied sub-sector in the Canadian literature, in particular (Health¹⁷), which has been reviewed independently. (And there is no *prima facie* reason to think that the other areas of the Canadian voluntary sector have been studied in more depth for any longer.)

For the evidence to support these points, please see Appendix 3.

Distribution by Type of Publication Format

Of course, not all of this Canadian voluntary sector research under consideration appears in the peer-reviewed journals typically featured in academic databases such as the SCI®. About a dozen different types of formats or media are involved. This subsection will briefly characterize each of these different types, provide a bird's eye view of the entire distribution over the thirty years, and provide a more comprehensive and detailed table showing their distribution for each of the three main scopes of application.

The various type of publication format or media captured in the Canadian voluntary sector research database vary in terms of their length, accessibility (in both major senses), and credibility. They are listed here in alphabetical order:

¹⁵ This could explain why the more-to-less-recent average shown in the final row of Table 3 was twice as high for the regional items as for the other two scopes of application.

¹⁶ As opposed to the proprietary market research and evaluations over the years commissioned by individual agencies.

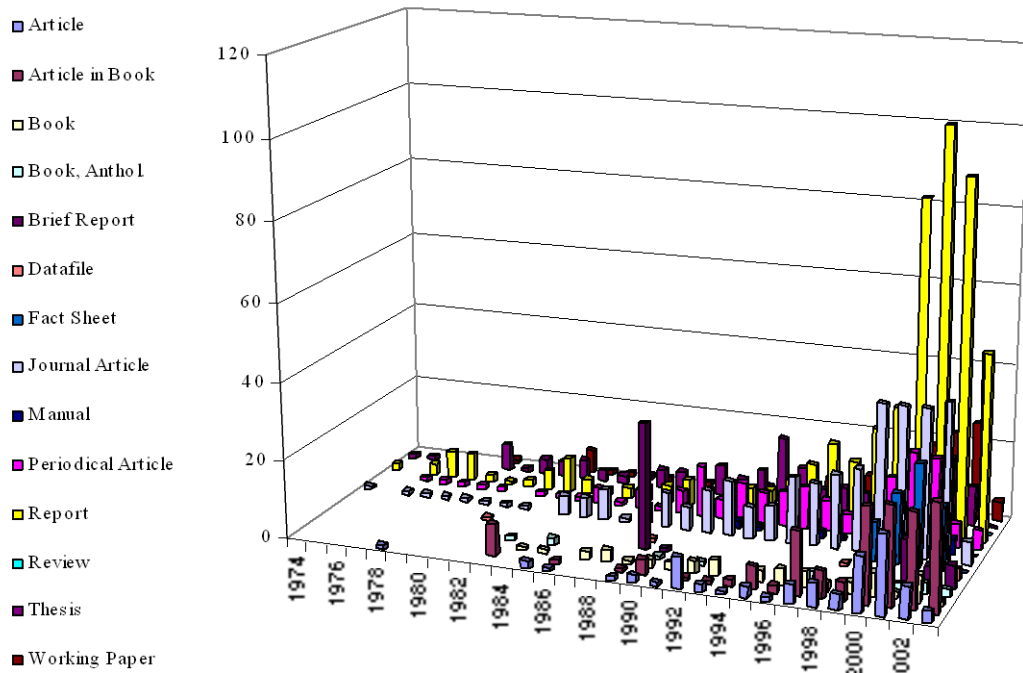
¹⁷ Over a fifth of all the Canadian sub-sector publications pertain to Health, as indicated in Table 4 of Appendix 12.

- *Articles* are generally shorter pieces in non-peer-reviewed media such as newsletters or a think-tank’s house journal; or very short (under 2 pg.) items even in peer-reviewed journals.
- *Articles in Books* are generally primary research studies which were presented at conferences and then packaged as *Proceedings*, or which appear in compilations of studies, either on a single theme, or along with other studies commissioned by a single funding competition.
- *Books, Anthologies* are those conference proceedings or compilations. For these works, the credited authors’ roles are actually as Editors.
- *Books* are generally a large study or series of articles by a single author published initially in hardcover by a commercial or academic publisher.
- *Brief Reports* are short items (usually about 2 to 4 pages) which are essentially Executive Summaries of the longer *Reports* (see below).
- *Datafiles* are computerized records of survey responses or information on individuals or organizations, available on a subscription basis or for a fee. A number which have been the basis for much of the existing Canadian voluntary sector research have been included, such as the National Survey(s) on Giving, Volunteering, and Participating (NSGVP).
- *Fact Sheets* are usually a two-page format which are offshoots of a larger study – with the results from a large national survey being broken down into separate two-page reports for individual regions or demographic groups, for example.
- *Journal Articles* are both in peer-reviewed journals **and** over 10 pages in length: i.e., they are *feature-length* journal articles.
- *Manuals* or ‘How-To’ Guides have not been included, as a rule, since they don’t usually indicate whether there’s an actual research basis behind them, but an exception was made for about 10 items which are heavily laden with NSGVP data or drew on explicit case studies.
- *Periodical Articles* are shorter pieces (under ten, but over two pages) in peer-reviewed periodicals, including certain government serials (primarily by Statistics Canada).
- *Reports* are official, finalized reviews or studies intended for public consumption, and they have often been commissioned. Usually they are not independently peer-reviewed, however, with two notable exceptions (those by Statistics Canada and the Canadian Policy Research Networks). Many of these are literature reviews rather than primary research.
- *Reviews* are Book Reviews which appear in journals; most have been excluded from the database altogether, but a handful which brought other data forward have been included.
- *Theses* are Master’s theses or Doctoral dissertations from post-secondary institutions, which have been reviewed and accepted by an academic committee.
- *Working Papers*, also known as research manuscripts, occasional papers, preprints, technical reports or memoranda, are usually 10-30 page primary research papers produced for a conference or intended for eventual publication. The distinction between them and Reports hinges on whether item appears to be a finalized, often commissioned/purchased report

intended for public consumption, or if remains a conference paper, Departmental, or even personal product.

The most prevalent format for the Canadian voluntary sector research is the Report, as indicated in Figure 2. This is particularly in true for the most recent years, principally because there were multi-million dollar government ‘Voluntary Sector Initiatives’ at the federal and some provincial levels arising from the International Year of Volunteers, in 2001, which commissioned scores of research reports relating to volunteerism.

Figure 2: Complete English-language Canadian voluntary sector research database holdings by type of format and year



All told, nearly thirty percent of all the contemporary English-language Canadian voluntary sector research publications over this period are Reports (with 535 items), although the intermediate- and feature-length journal items combined are quite close (with 492 items, for 27.5% of the whole field). This is shown in Appendix 4, in a table which sets out the distribution of the various formats for each of the three main scopes of application of the research.

From one point of view, this preponderance of Reports certainly represents a deficiency. In the vast majority (82%) of cases, these reports are probably not subjected to independent peer-review,¹⁸ which obviously raises concerns about their overall quality. On the other hand, most reports do not have the same restrictions on their length as journal articles do, so they can supply far more detail. Moreover, these reports are also far more *accessible* to voluntary sector practitioners and consultants, in both senses. First, they are generally intended for a broader

¹⁸ With the notable exception of those produced by Statistics Canada, the Canadian Policy Research Networks, and the Status of Women research program.

audience than the academic articles, which may be impenetrable to those outside a specialized discipline (which is why the Fact Sheets and Brief Reports have been developed, as well). Second, the majority of the (recent) reports can also be downloaded for free from the Internet. In contrast, the academic journals are often inaccessible in all but the major cities, because the serial holdings of many Canadian post-secondary institutions are extremely limited, and community users generally do not have access to inter-library loans from universities, even if there is one which stocks it.¹⁹

To underscore those points on accessibility, a supplementary table in Appendix 5 provides breakdowns on the distribution of these formats among the four economic sectors (public, private, voluntary, and academic) which have commissioned these research works or employed the lead authors of them. As might be expected, it shows that academics are the leading producers of articles in books; books; book anthologies; book reviews; theses; and working papers. In contrast, public sector employees or contractors are the leading producers of brief reports, datafiles, and periodical articles, while voluntary sector contractors or employees out-produce the other sectors in articles, fact sheets, manuals, and reports.

A total of 859 of the relevant entries are believed to have been peer-reviewed, for 48% of all the English-language contemporary Canadian voluntary sector research. For details on their distribution by scope of application and type of publication format, please see Appendix 5.

We shall briefly examine some of those sectoral factors underwriting this research just alluded to in a little more detail momentarily, and then go on to review some of the individual authorship statistics, in the next major subsection after that. But first, let's pause to examine two of these formats – periodical or serial articles – in more detail, because they provide an important window for assessing the state of development of any given discipline and comparing it to others.

Assorted Statistics on Canadian Voluntary Sector Research in Peer-Reviewed Serials

This subsection concentrates on a combination of the two formats categorized in the database as either “periodical articles” (if they are research articles of between two and ten pages in length appearing peer-reviewed periodicals, including certain government serials) or (feature-length) “journal articles” (if they exceed 10 pages). Due to the relatively low totals, the range of research has been expanded slightly to include some of the French-language literature omitted from the other calculations (an additional 25 articles, altogether) in order to facilitate some comparisons with other domains, but book reviews have not been included.

We can begin with an overview of the total and annual number of identified contemporary Canadian Voluntary Sector Research articles which have appeared in peer-reviewed serials over these past three decades. This data is summarized in Table 4, on the next page. Clearly, a fairly modest number of titles is involved: only about 500 articles over a thirty-year span, for an average of a little over seventeen per year. Most of it is also of fairly recent vintage: 72%

¹⁹ Of course, there are some commercial services available now such as UnCover which will track down and photocopy periodical articles on request, but at as much as \$25-U.S./\$40-Cndn. plus shipping per article, this may be regarded as prohibitive for most voluntary sector agencies: that's almost a full day's pay for some of their front-line staff.

appeared within the past decade. This is broken down into five year increments in Table 5, which shows the production of peer-reviewed Canadian voluntary sector research articles rising from just one or two articles per year in the first decade (1974-83), to from seven to eighteen per year in the second (the mid-80s to early 90s), and dozens per year since the mid-90s.

Table 4: Summary statistics on the number of Canadian voluntary sector research articles in peer-reviewed periodicals or journals per year, by scope of application, 1974-2003

	Cross-Cutting application	Regional in scope	Mainly on Sub-Sectors	Total	% of all these articles
Total articles	204	58	255	517	100%
Average per year (over all 29.25 ²⁰ years)	7.0	2.0	8.7	17.7	3.4%
Maximum per year	29	17	36	65	12.6%
No. of years actually featuring these articles	25	13	25	29.25	

Table 5: Number of Canadian voluntary sector research journal articles in five-year intervals by scope of application

Interval	Cross-Cutting application	Regional in scope	Mainly on Sub-Sectors	Total	% of all these articles	Ave. per yr. in this interval
1974-78	5	0	2	7	1.4%	1.4
1979-83	2	1	6	9	1.7%	1.8
1984-88	25	1	10	36	7.0%	7.2
1989-93	37	2	52	91	17.6%	18.2
1994-98	45	18	65	128	24.8%	25.6
1999-2002/3 ²⁰	90	36	120	246	47.6%	57.9 ²⁰
Total	204	58	255	517	100.0%	17.7 ²⁰

A considerable number of scholarly outlets have been available for this voluntary sector research, though: 171, altogether. Their number and average production of the three sub-types of this literature appears here in Table 6, and a full list of all the serials involved is available in Appendix 6, which also shows the total number of articles, relative shares or percentages, and rank contributions for each.

Table 6: Summary statistics on the number and average production of the serials involved in featuring Canadian voluntary sector research articles, by scope of application, 1974-2003/forthcoming

	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total
Total journal articles with Canadian voluntary sector authors or content	204	58	255	517
No. of journals publishing in each scope	55	23	126	171
Average number of Canadian voluntary sector research articles per journal	3.7	2.5	2.0	3.0
Maximum number per journal	90	25	35	124

²⁰ Most of the data-collection for this project was completed in May 2003, and given the lag-time for journals to publish and index their issues, only the first quarter of 2003 is adequately represented here. Thus, "2003" is only counted as one-quarter of a year in these calculations.

Of course, not all of these serials are equal in terms of how frequently they feature this type of research. Three journals alone account for over a third (35.6%) of all these articles. These three “core” publications are: i) *The Philanthropist/Le Philanthrope*, Canada’s only dedicated academic journal on nonprofit issues, which accounts for 124 or 24% of these articles (although many are of the ‘Legal Update’ variety, rather than being feature-length articles); ii) *Focus on Culture*, a Statistics Canada serial with 35 qualifying articles (6.8% of this set), primarily featuring baseline data on certain inputs, outputs, and consumptive patterns of the arts, culture and recreation sub-sectors; and iii) *Nouvelles pratiques sociales*, a Quebec journal (with 25 articles mainly in the social economy, for 4.8% of the total).

The remaining publications can be clustered into two groups accounting for about one third of the articles, each. The middle cluster consists of 25 serials that have published between three and nineteen articles of Canadian voluntary sector research over this interval, for a total of 162 (or 31.3% of the 517 in total). And the outer ring is comprised by 143 different serials that have only published one or two such articles, each, for a total of 171 (or 33.1% of that total).

Although it is an imperfect fit, this particular three-tiered distribution of more and less concentrated serials is *roughly* in accord with “Bradford’s Law of Core and Scatter in Journals,” a standard bibliometric²¹ test to determine the number of “core” and more peripheral journals in a given field. For a detailed discussion and presentation on this topic, please see Appendix 7.

Turning to the relative productivity of the individual authors of these articles, now, let’s start with the first-listed authors. When the articles which have only been credited to institutional authors in the database are omitted, there are 493 articles, with 379 distinct²² first-listed authors, for an average of 1.3 titles, each, to a maximum of eight.²³ (Table 7)

Table 7: Number and overall productivity of first-listed authors of peer-reviewed Canadian voluntary sector research serial articles, by scope of application, 1974-2003/forth.

	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total
Total articles by individual authors	204	58	231	493
Number of first-listed authors	149	52	196	379
Ave. no. of articles per first-listed author	1.37	1.12	1.18	1.30
Max. no. of articles per first-listed author	7	2	4	8
Median per first-listed author	1	1	1	1
Mode per first-listed author	1	1	1	1

²¹ Bibliometrics is a sub-discipline within the Library and Information Sciences. As, e.g., Wilson (1995) explains, it is the precise quantitative analysis of certain properties of a given set of documents, and the term itself is commonly believed to be coined by Alan Pritchard in 1969 to replace an earlier term, “statistical bibliography.” Palmquist (n.d.) elaborates: “Bibliometrics is a type of research method used in library and information science. It utilizes quantitative analysis and statistics to describe patterns of publication within a given field or body of literature. Researchers may use bibliometric methods of evaluation to determine the influence of a single writer, for example, or to describe the relationship between two or more writers or works.”

²² To reduce ambiguities and overlaps which could confound these counts, the full first given names of the authors (or the first initial followed by the full middle name, if that is their preferred usage) have been used in the database, and the results of various tables have been reviewed to ensure that additional names introduced by spelling mistakes and variations in the use of initials or nicknames have been eliminated.

²³ By Femida Handy, an economist then based primarily at York University, in Toronto.

Considering the interval (nearly 30 years), these are quite modest production figures. Not only are the totals and averages low, but the medians and modes are also just one article per author. In fact, the vast majority (83%) of these 379 lead authors only appear to have one peer-reviewed Canadian voluntary sector research journal or periodical article credited to them as first authors. About ten percent have exactly two such articles; and for the remaining distribution, see Table 8.

Table 8: Distribution of first-listed authors by number of Canadian voluntary sector research journal articles credited to them as lead author, 1974-2003/forth.

	Only 1	2 titles	3 titles	4 titles	5 titles	6 titles	8 titles	Total
Number	313	42	12	5	4	2	1	379
Percent	82.6%	11.1%	3.2%	1.3%	1.1%	0.5%	0.3%	100.0%

It is a slightly different picture when we take multiple authorship into account. When all the co-authors are assigned an equal publication credit and their totals are consolidated with those of the first-listed authors, the results are as indicated in Table 9. This represents *some* improvement: an additional 261 authors, for a total of 640 individual authors of these 493 articles, and an increase in the maximum number articles by an individual author, to fifteen.²⁴ But even when all the co-authorship is taken into account, the average production of peer reviewed articles by the participating authors only goes up slightly (from 1.3 to 1.35, overall), and the vast majority (81%) of these 640 participating authors still only appear to have one qualifying peer-reviewed Canadian voluntary sector research journal or periodical article credited to them, each.

Table 9: Consolidated authorship statistics peer-reviewed Canadian voluntary sector research serial articles, by the articles' scope of application, 1974-2003/forth.

	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total	%
Total no. of articles	204	58	231	493	100.0%
Total no. of attributions of authorship to individual authors	323	121	422	866	
Number of authors participating in each scope	222	111	345	640	
Average no. of articles among those participating in each scope	1.45	1.09	1.22	1.35	0.3%
Max. among all indiv. authors	9	2	6	15	3.0%
Median among all indiv. authors	1	1	1	1	0.2%
Mode among all indiv. authors	1	1	1	1	0.2%

Note, these calculations omit the “*et al.*” authors of two sub-sector articles, since they are of indeterminate number

Table 10: Distribution of all authors (including co-authors) by number of Canadian voluntary sector research journal articles attributed to each author, 1974-2003/forth.

	1 title	2 titles	3 titles	4 titles	5 titles	6 titles	7 titles	9 titles	10 titles	15 titles	Total
No.	519	76	22	10	6	3	1	1	1	1	640
%	81.1%	11.9%	3.4%	1.6%	0.9%	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	100.0%

²⁴ By Victor Murray, recently retired from the Faculty of Public Administration at the University of Victoria, BC, and formerly with York University.

Nevertheless, in addition to giving a more accurate sense of the true size of a research field, the statistics on multiple authorship can sometimes serve as an indicator of the relative quality or state of development of that field, as well. As Narin and Hamilton (1996) note, one of the fundamental tenets of bibliometrics²⁵ is that,

Counts of authorships, and especially coauthorships are an indicator of quality, and that scientists who cooperate with their colleagues are more likely to be doing quality research than those that are relatively isolated....²⁶

To determine how well the current literature does in this regard, we can start by seeing its own rates. For the Canadian voluntary sector research articles under consideration, 56% of the articles have been singly authored, a quarter have two authors, and just 19% have three or more, for an overall average of about 1.8 authors per article. (Table 11)

Table 11: Distribution of number of authors per peer-reviewed Canadian voluntary sector research serial article, by scope of application, 1974-2003/forth.

	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total	%
Only One Author	127	29	122	278	56.4
Exactly Two Authors	53	13	57	123	24.9
Exactly Three Authors	13	7	32*	52 *	10.5
Exactly Four Authors	8	3	13*	24 *	4.9
Exactly Five Authors	-	4	4*	8 *	1.6
Exactly Six Authors	1	1	1*	3 *	0.6
Exactly Seven Authors	2	1	2*	5 *	1.0
Total items with at least one credited Individual Author	204	58	231	493	100.0
Ave. Authors per Article	1.58	2.09	1.83	1.76	

* These totals may be one or two items higher – and the number with two authors, correspondingly lower – since two journal articles in the database simply record “*et al.*” after the first-listed author

Next, we can compare these co-authorship rates with other domains. Compared to certain ‘hard’ sciences – where multiple authors are the norm, and there may be between four to nine authors per article, on average – these may indeed turn out to be fairly low rates. However, it appears that these multi-authorship rates for the Canadian voluntary sector research are about par for the course, both for, i) the social sciences, in general; and ii) the voluntary sector research based in other nations, in particular. The evidence and principal findings on this are summarized briefly here; for more detail, please see Appendix 8.

- i) According to what I could determine from various reviews of this topic and some bibliometric studies of other domains, for many physical sciences, the rates of co-authorship ranged from about 2.5 to 9 authors per paper, on average (even though as

²⁵ For a brief definition and characterization of bibliometrics, see note 21 on p. 10 above.

²⁶ To illustrate this point, they go on, “A particularly interesting demonstration of this is contained in a study for the European Community, which showed that Community papers that were coauthored with scientists outside the home country were more than twice as highly cited as those that were authored at a single institution within a single country; papers coauthored within one country were cited intermediate between the single institution papers and the internationally coauthored papers.” (Citing F. Narin, K. Stevens, and E. Whitlow, “Scientific cooperation in Europe and the citation of multinationally authored papers,” *Scientometrics*, 21(3): 313-23, 1991.)

many as three-quarters of the papers in some fields only had *one* cited author). But for the various social sciences and interdisciplinary fields I could find data on, the rates only ranged from about 1.5 to 2.1 authors per paper, and overall there was about a 50/50 split between the number of multiple- and sole-authored articles in each field. This is quite comparable to the figures for the Canadian voluntary sector research – an average of 1.8 authors per paper, with 44% of the papers actually having more than one – especially if we take into account the varying intervals for the other fields under review. Moreover, if we just concentrate on those articles which *do* have more than one author, the Canadian voluntary sector research has a higher proportion of articles with at least four authors (19%) than most of the fields I looked at, particularly in the social sciences.

- ii) I also drew on a more partial dataset – the aforementioned SCI[®] database – for its holdings on a similar time-span (mid-70s to 2003) for the authorship rates of the voluntary sector literature with authors based in the United States. In addition, I constructed a more specialized but *complete* database of all the ‘international’ voluntary sector research articles appearing in the field’s three main core journals,²⁷ albeit in a far more limited time-frame (1996 to the first half of 2003), for the same purpose. The results? The average of 1.8 authors per article Canadian voluntary sector research is slightly higher than the U.S. and International voluntary sector research averages (about 1.6); their proportions of singly to multiply articles are nearly identical (about 55/45); and for those articles which are multiply-authored, 43% of the Canadian research has at least three authors, compared to about 27% for the U.S.- or internationally-based or research.

Thus, there does not seem to be anything anomalous about the Canadian voluntary sector research’s rates of multi-authorship which might cast doubt on the adequacy of the database or the quality of the research contained therein.

Finally, there is one other standard bibliometric test which can be applied to these Canadian voluntary sector research serial articles to help assess how this area is shaping up as a research domain: “Lotka’s Law of scientific productivity.” As Palmquist (n.d.) explains,

Lotka's Law describes the frequency of publication by authors in a given field. It states that " ... the number (of authors) making n contributions is about $1/n^2$ of those making one; and the proportion of all contributors, that make a single contribution, is about 60 percent" This means that out of all the authors in a given field, 60 percent will have just one publication, and 15 percent will have two publications ($1/2^2$ times .60). 7 percent of authors will have three publications ($1/3^2$ times .60), and so on. According to Lotka's Law of scientific productivity, only six percent of the authors in a field will produce more than 10 articles. ...(Potter 1988²⁸).

At first blush, it appears that this body of research does not really conform to Lotka’s Law, at all. After all, as Tables 8 and 10 (on p. 14) show, over 80% of these authors have only one article each, rather than just 60%, and there are only fractions of the proportions of authors with

²⁷ Viz., *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*; *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*; and *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*.

²⁸ Potter, William Gray. "Of Making Many Books There is No End": Bibliometrics and Libraries." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 14 (September 1988), 238a-238c (insert between 238 and 239).

progressively more articles each that would be predicted by that initial formulation of Lotka's.²⁹ However, as Palmquist (n.d.) observes, "Lotka's Law, when applied to large bodies of literature over a fairly long period of time, can be accurate in general, but not statistically exact." This could explain why the results were so far off in this case, when an inexact formulation is applied to such a small body of literature. If we consider other forms and formulations of this test, though, it turns out that these distributions of more and less prolific serial authors *do* conform to more generalized versions of Lotka's Law, despite the small numbers. This is shown and explained in some detail in Appendix 9.

In sum, although it is still a young area with a relatively limited number of authors and titles, the Canadian voluntary sector research field does appear to be shaping up into a genuine field, as judged by a number of bibliometric measures of its articles appearing in peer-reviewed serials. It has more or less the expected distribution of journals, proportionally speaking; multiple authorship rates comparable to those in the social sciences and the voluntary sector research based in other jurisdictions; and a distribution in the number and relative productivity of authors which conforms to a generalized form of Lotka's Law of Scientific Productivity.

Authorship Statistics for the Entire Canadian Voluntary Sector Research Holdings

Returning to the entire body of contemporary English-language Canadian voluntary sector research as a whole, now, let's resume with that same topic, of authorship statistics.

Wherever possible, the names of the actual individuals responsible for writing a given item have been provided in the database (although they are not always given credit within the documents themselves, especially in the commissioned research). In some cases, however, these names were not readily available, especially for the older (i.e., more poorly indexed) titles, as well as the forthcoming titles. The majority of these institutional titles involve government departments.³⁰ The actual breakdown of the institutional vs. individually credited authors is given in Table 12.

Table 12: Distribution of institutional and individually credited authors of the contemporary English-language Canadian voluntary sector research, by scope, 1974-2003/f.

Type of Author Credited	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total
Titles by Individual Authors	726	157	636	1,519
Titles by Institutional Authors	126	42	101	269
Total Titles	852	199	737	1,788
Institutional Author as % of Total titles	14.8%	21.1%	13.7%	15.0%

²⁹ I.e., instead of there being 3.8%, 2.4%, 1.7%, 1.2%, 0.9%, and 0.7% of the authors with from 4 to 9 articles, each, respectively, I only found 1.6%, 0.9%, 0.5%, 0.2%, 0.0% and 0.2%. And instead of finding enough prolific authors to add up to about 6% of the authors with at least 10 articles each, I only found 0.3% of the authors fit that bill.

³⁰ E.g., 87 are from Statistics Canada (although the actual authors' names for a fair portion of these can be obtained from the *Focus on Culture* serial from which many of its sub-sector titles derive), 13 are from the Canada Council for the Arts, 9 are from the Finance Department, 6 are from Auditor-Generals, and two from the B.C. Government. Among the other sectors, 11 are credited to the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy; 10 to the Canadian Association of Food Banks; 7 to EKOS Research Associates; and 6 to Canadian Council on Social Development; 4 to the Canada West Foundation; and the rest to a variety of organizations with between one and three publications each.

For the remaining 1,519 titles with credited individual authors, this subsection sets out some key indicators on the number of individual authors involved in the production of this research and where they are located, and also identifies some of the most prolific authors in this area.

We can begin with an overview of the actual number of individuals involved, both per publication (i.e., multi-authorship) and altogether, for each scope of application. Regarding the co-authorship question, first, Table 13 shows that nearly two-thirds of the contemporary English-language Canadian voluntary sector research titles by individual authors have just one author; about a quarter have two; and the remainder have three or more authors.

Table 13: Number of authors per contemporary English-language Canadian voluntary sector research publication for 1974-2003/forth. combined, by scope of application

	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total
Total Titles with one or more individual Author	726	157	636	1,519
Solo-Authored Only: exactly one credited author	451	104	415	970
% with just One individual author, by Scope	62.1%	66.2%	65.3%	63.9%
Titles with exactly two credited authors	201	30	128	359
% with exactly two authors, by Scope	27.7%	19.1%	20.1%	23.6%
Titles with exactly Three Authors	50	14	50	114
% with exactly three authors by Scope	6.9%	8.9%	7.9%	7.5%
Titles with exactly Four credited authors	14	3	24	41
% with exactly four authors	1.9%	1.9%	3.8%	2.7%
Titles with exactly Five credited authors	3	3	15	21
% with exactly five authors	0.4%	1.9%	2.4%	1.4%
Titles with exactly Six Credited Authors titles	3	1	1	5
% exactly Six Authors	0.4%	0.6%	0.2%	0.3%
Titles with exactly Seven credited Authors	3	1	3	7
% with exactly Seven Authors	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%

(...plus one regional report with exactly eight authors and a cross-cutting article with nine)

Concerning the number and relative productivity of all the individual authors involved, now, 897 distinct individuals (including 42 non-Canadians³¹) have served as the first-listed authors of these works, for an average of 1.7 titles, each, to a maximum of 45 (by Paul Reed, of Statistics Canada and the University of Carleton). Hundreds of others are also involved as second or other authors, albeit with substantially lower rates of productivity in those roles. (Table 14)

Consolidating these elements together, Table 15 shows that there are nearly fourteen hundred distinct individuals involved in the production of these works, altogether (including over fifty non-Canadians). Fewer researchers are writing about cross-cutting issues or drawing on national data (587 distinct authors) than on the individual sub-sectors (736), and they are slightly less likely to have co-authors than for the literature of the other two scopes of application (an average

³¹ There are 48 titles attributable to foreign primary authors, as indicated in Table 13 below; they involve 15 individual Americans, Britons, or other foreigner primary authors of cross-cutting titles; 1 foreign lead author of a regional title; and 24 foreign authors of sub-sectors works, for a consolidated total of 42 non-Canadian lead authors.

of 1.5 authors per title vs. 1.6), for a somewhat higher average number of titles each (1.9 each for cross-cutting authors vs. 1.4 publications for those producing the other types).

Table 14: Overall production statistics by individual authors (including non-Canadian authors) of contemporary English-language Canadian voluntary sector research publications for 1974-2003/forth. combined, by scope of application

	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total	%
Total titles by individual authors (some with co-authors)	726	157	636	1,519	100.0%
Number of distinct first-listed authors	413	105	467	897	n/a
Average among the participating first-listed authors	1.76	1.50	1.36	1.69	0.1%
Average among all 897 first-listed authors per scope ³²	0.81	0.18	0.71	1.69	0.1%
Maximum among first-listed authors	42	13	20	45	3.0%
Mode among First (and indeed all other)-listed Authors	1	1	1	1	0.1%
Titles with at least Two individual authors	275	53	221	549	36.1%
Number of second-listed authors	178	46	190	385	n/a
Average per participating second-listed authors	1.54	1.15	1.16	1.43	0.1%
Maximum among second-listed authors	26	3	4	27	1.8%
Titles with Three or more Authors	74	23	93	190	12.5%
Number of Third-listed Authors	63	22	84	167	n/a
Average per Third Author with works	1.17	1.05	1.11	1.14	0.1%
Maximum among Third authors	3	2	3	3	0.2%
Titles with Four or more Authors	24	9	43	76	5.0%
Number of Fourth Authors	20	9	37	65	n/a
Average per Fourth Author with works	1.20	1.00	1.16	1.17	0.1%
Maximum among Fourth authors	2	1	3	3	0.2%
Titles with Five or more Authors	10	6	19	35	2.3%
Number of Fifth Authors	9	6	14	29	n/a
Average per Fifth Author with works	1.11	1.00	1.36	1.21	0.1%
Maximum among Fifth authors	2	1	3	3	0.2%
Titles with Six or more Authors	7	3	4	14	0.9%
Number of Sixth Authors	6	3	4	13	n/a
Average per Sixth Author with works	1.17	1	1.00	1.08	0.1%
Maximum among Sixth authors	2	1	1	2	0.1%
Titles with Seven Authors	4	2	3	9	0.6%
Number of Seventh Authors	4	2	3	9	n/a
Average per Seventh Author with works	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.1%
Maximum among Seventh authors	1	1	1	1	0.1%

³² Note, unless otherwise indicated (as in this case), the averages presented within the individual Scope columns in these tables only range over those variables which actually have eligible works within those columns; that is, those with zero contributions in a given scope have not been included in the denominators when calculating those averages.

Table 15: Consolidated production statistics for the individual authors of contemporary English-language Canadian voluntary sector research publications (including their works as second or other authors), for 1974-2003/forth. combined, by scope of application

	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total	% of indiv. titles
Total titles by individual authors	726	157	636	1,519	100.0%
Total Attributions to authors per scope	1,119	252	1,017	2,388	
Number of distinct Authors*	590	181	736	1,375	
Ave. per author with works	1.90	1.39	1.38	1.74	0.11%
Max. among individual Authors	48	13	20	52	3.42%
Median among individual Authors	1	1	1	1	0.07%
Mode among individual Authors	1	1	1	1	0.07%
Average no. of authors per work	1.54	1.61	1.60	1.57	

Among the first-listed authors, the twenty most prolific authors of these identified works and their total number of works each are:

Paul Reed (45); Warren Dow (27); Frank Jones (25); Michael Hall (20); Marcus Parmegiani (19); Susan Phillips (17); Femida Handy (16); Stephanie Saunders (15); Agnes Meinhard (11); Vic Murray (11); Kathy Brock (10); Brenda Gainer (10); Michelle Goulbourne (10); Jason Azmier (9); Jim Phillips (9); Arthur Drache (8); Larry McKeown (8); Jack Quarter (8); and Keith Seel (8).

When all the multiple-authorship roles and publications are included, as well, the twenty most prolific authors are:

Reed, Paul (52); Selbee, L. Kevin (31); Dow, Warren (27); Hall, Michael (27); Murray, Vic (26); Jones, Frank (25); Parmegiani, Marcus (21); Phillips, Susan (19); Handy, Femida (18); Meinhard, Agnes (18); Foster, Mary (16); Saunders, Stephanie (15); Cutt, James (12); Gainer, Brenda (12); McKeown, Larry (12); Goulbourne, Michelle (11); Brock, Kathy; & Phillips, Jim (10, each); and Azmier, Jason; Quarter, Jack; and Slivinski, Al (with 9 studies, each).

When all these individual authors' total number of works are collected and grouped together in rank order of distribution, it turns out that their total productivity also conforms to "Lotka's Law of Scientific Productivity," or at least a Lotka's-like 'power law' distribution on the expected number and relative productivity of the authors contributing to the field; there is a brief presentation on this at the end of Appendix 9.

Moving to a different aspect of authorship, now, it is also possible to review where most of these Canadian voluntary sector research authors are based – whether within Canada, or elsewhere – since each item has been coded according to the home province or other locale of its lead author. Table 13 shows the results, including the titles by institutional authors, as well.

Table 16: Main geographic base of first-listed and institutional authors, for all English-language contemporary Canadian voluntary sector research, 1974-2003/forth., by scope

Geographic Base of first-listed or instl. authors	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total	% all Titles	% Cndn. Pop.	Rank of Prov's
Alberta	51	21	51	123	6.9%	9.9%	3
British Columbia	78	18	76	172	9.6%	13.2%	2
Manitoba	27	14	28	69	3.9%	3.7%	5
New Brunswick	4	1	5	10	0.6%	2.4%	8
Newfoundland/Lab.	2	3		5	0.3%	1.7%	9
North West Territories	1			1	0.1%	3.0%	11
Nova Scotia	21	6	19	46	2.6%	0.1%	6
Ontario	623	107	459	1,189	66.5%	38.4%	1
Prince Edward Island		1	1	2	0.1%	0.4%	10
Québec	18	16	49	83	4.6%	23.7%	4
Saskatchewan	7	11	17	35	2.0%	3.2%	7
class'd Ca. Sub-Total	832	198	705	1,735	97.0%	99.7%	
Unclassified			2	2	0.1%		
United Kingdom	4		3	7	0.4%		
United States	12	1	24	37	2.1%		
Other foreign	4		3	7	0.3%		
Foreign Sub-Total	20	1	30	51	2.8%		
Total	852	199	737	1788	100.0%		

Upon initial inspection, the vast majority of these items (fully two-thirds) emanate from our most populated province, Ontario, although almost twice as much as might be expected, on a per capita basis. This must be taken with a grain of salt, however: quite a number of the Ontario titles owing to federal government authors should probably technically be credited to Québec.³³ But when those two provinces are combined, they have 71.1% of the lead authors' titles, and only 62.1% of the population.

Let's proceed to consider which sectors of the economy these voluntary sector researchers have been employed by for these works, and the relative contributions of each sector, next.

³³ I confess that I automatically attributed most federally authored reports to Ontario, where the capital is located, without verifying how many were actually published in Hull, Québec, which is across the river from the Parliament buildings.

Distribution of Research Production among the Three (and a half) Sectors

Which of the three main economic sectors – Public, Private, and Non-Profit (subdivided into the Academic sector and the [rest of ³⁴] the Voluntary Sector) – is most responsible for producing all this literature?

Although I am no position to answer this in terms of who actually *funded* all the research (since that it usually only indicated partially if at all within the works themselves), I *can* profile the literature in terms of which economic sector was employing or commissioning the first-listed authors of these works, based on publication information and a little background research on the authors’ institutional affiliations.³⁵

The results, shown in Table 17, indicate a fairly healthy division of labour among the various sectors, with the academic sector clearly in the lead, with almost 42% of the publications overall (not including the works some academics have done as paid consultants); followed by the voluntary sector, with 28% of the titles; and the public sector, with almost a quarter of the items.

Table 17: Main economic sector commissioning the work or employing the first-listed author of each Canadian voluntary sector research work, by scope, for 1974-2003/f. combined

Economic Sector (and overall Rank)	Cross- Cutting	%	Regional	%	Sub- Sectors	%	Total	%
Academic (1)	313	36.8%	59	29.6%	373	50.7%	745	41.7%
Private (4)	89	10.5%	8	4.0%	41	5.6%	138	7.7%
<i>Federal Gov.</i>	206	24.2%	16	8.0%	147	20.0%	369	20.7%
<i>Provincial Gov.</i>	7	0.8%	14	7.0%	10	1.4%	31	1.7%
<i>Municipal Gov.</i>	1	0.1%			1	0.1%	2	0.1%
Public (3)	214	25.1%	30	15.1%	158	21.5%	402	22.5%
Voluntary (2)	235	27.6%	102	51.3%	163	22.2%	500	28.0%
Totals*	851	100.0%	199	100.0%	735	100.0%	1785	100.0%

* Excluding two sub-sector titles with ambiguous (half academic, half voluntary) affiliations and one unclassified cross-cutting work.

³⁴ This is a definitional point of some contention here in Canada, where (non-private) post-secondary institutions tend to be categorized as QUANGOs (Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organizations) or even public institutions, rather than as part of the voluntary sector, *per se*, despite their non-profit orientation and the presence of volunteer Trustees. The reason for this is that they are heavily subsidized by the provincial governments, to the extent that they can be required to freeze their tuition fees for political reasons, for example, which runs afoul of the requirement that they be “independent or institutionally distinct from the formal structures of government,” as stated in the definitions by the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (see www.jhu.edu/~cnp) and others.

³⁵ Note, in order to track the relative contributions of these sectors without muddying the waters too much, the criteria for the Academic portion of the “Sector employing first-author” field in my database are that it essentially be full-time employment for the Academic authors creating the works in the course of their regular activities, since many private sector consultants and even some government employees also hold part-time appointments as lecturers, but most of their Canadian voluntary sector research publications are not produced *qua* academics. By the same token, academics sometimes ‘moonlight’ outside the scope of their regular academic employment as paid consultants on commissioned works. For these and other authors producing works for all the other Sectors, part-time or contract employment is included, in which case the works are credited to the commissioning agency.

It may also be of interest to track the contributions of the various economic sectors producing or commissioning these works on a more longitudinal basis, to see whether the academics have been “Johnny Come Latelies” given the increased availability of funding over the past several years, with the public and voluntary sector carrying disproportionate shares of the non-commissioned research load over the first two decades. Table 18 addresses this by showing the number of contributions per sector, per year. It shows that although there has been a fair amount of fluctuation in the relative contributions of each sector, from year to year, the academics have been making significant contributions for at least twenty years.

Table 18: Number of Canadian voluntary sector research publications attributable to each economic sector employing the first-listed authors, per year

Year	Academic	Private	Public	Voluntary	Year	Academic	Private	Public	Voluntary
1974	1			2	1991	14	5	7	3
1975	1				1992	25	10	13	7
1976	1		1	3	1993	32	2	8	10
1977	1	1	4	3	1994	22	3	13	6
1978	2	1	7		1995	26	11	11	19
1979	8		2	2	1996	29	5	15	15
1980	2		1	1	1997	29	15	13	25
1981	5		2	1	1998	39	5	10	23
1982	6		3	2	1999	50	10	28	44
1983	15	1	8	6	2000	89	21	50	86
1984	6	2	2	5	2001	109	16	60	110
1985	11	4		4	2002	113	11	52	67
1986	15	3	2	1	2003/f.	40	2	32	33
1987	9	2	3	4	Ave. per year	25.0	4.6	13.5	16.8
1988	10	4	3	2	Ave. ann. share	42.7%	7.9%	22.5%	23.6%
1989	14	2	41	8					
1990	21	2	11	8					

For anyone who may be curious about the role of authors based in the private sector in all of this, or in further breakdowns based on the particular occupations (e.g., consultant, or lawyer) or roles (e.g., research fellow, or graduate student) of the first-listed authors, please see Appendix 10. But before we leave the complete range of this Canadian voluntary sector research behind and turn to a more select part of the last ten years of it in particular, some readers may also want to know about certain other characteristics of the participants of these other three main economic sectors involved in producing this literature: like, which organizations or institutions have they been working for, and what their academic disciplines are (where applicable).

It is possible to provide more information on that, because, as mentioned, wherever possible, each publication in the database has been coded for which main sector was employing its first-listed author; which post-secondary institution was engaging the individual as either a faculty member or graduate student, and what their main discipline is (for the academic authors); or which public, voluntary, or private sector organization the first-listed author was working for (if those organizations reached a threshold of at least three items in the database, altogether). This was only done for the first-listed authors, however, in order to keep the database to a more manageable size.

Some of the main findings for these areas shall summarized here, and for more detail on the contributions from each individual economic sector, please see Appendix 11.

First, an overview of the actual number of institutions involved and their relative productivity. If we bracket out all the titles whose first-listed authors are based in other countries,³⁶ and set aside those publications issuing from nonprofit or public organizations whose employees have only contributed one or two items as lead authors, it turns out there are about ninety Canadian post-secondary institutions or other types of organizations involved in this research, for an average of 17 titles each, overall. (Table 19). And, remember, that's just as the employers (or graduate schools) of the first-listed authors alone: not counting all the organizations employing the co-authors, nor all the non-academic organizations which have only one or two qualifying entries by their employees as lead authors.

Table 19: Summary statistics on the distribution of works among the major Canadian institutions involved in the production of English-language contemporary Canadian voluntary Sector research, by scope of application, for 1974-2003/forth., combined

	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total	% of All Titles	% of maj. Inst'ns
Total titles with major* Canadian institutional affiliations	709	176	616	1,501	83.9%	100.0%
Number of major institutions involved*	74	43	77	89		
Average production by the major institutions participating in each	9.8	4.1	8.0	17.1	1.0%	1.1%
Max. among these institutions	104	40	77	184	10.3%	12.3%

* Several University of Quebec branches have been combined. Some affiliated voluntary sector organizations have also been consolidated, as have some federal and provincial government ministries (details follow).

As you can see, one institution actually accounted for 184 or over 10% of the Canadian voluntary sector research works, in all. This is Statistics Canada, which is the leading institutional Canadian voluntary sector research producer, by far – not only within government, where there were about a dozen major Departments involved (see Table 1 in Appendix 11), but also across all the economic sectors.

The runner-up to this was the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (now known as 'Imagine Canada'), which is associated with 123 qualifying items, in all, for 6.9% of all the Canadian voluntary sector research. It was the leading voluntary sector producer, by far, with almost a quarter of works with voluntary sector workers as the lead employees. That is about five times as many as its nearest competitors. There are about 25 voluntary sector organizations associated with at least three publications: or slightly more, since a variety of them were collapsed into types (such as Volunteer Centres or Social Planning Councils). (See Table 2 in Appendix 11)

Turning to the number of institutions and disciplines the academic lead authors have been working within, next, a considerable number of Canadian academic institutions have had faculty

³⁶ E.g., for 56 of these voluntary sector research publications which either drew directly on Canadian data or had at least one Canadian author, the first-listed authors were actually academics primarily based in other countries (although some of them held temporary appointments or were on sabbatical in Canada): 43 were based in the United States, 7 in the U.K., and 6 in other countries. This represents about seven percent of all the academically-affiliated titles, and 3.1% of all the English-language Canadian voluntary sector research titles.

and/or graduate students producing Canadian voluntary sector research. At least fifty post-secondary institutions have been involved – that’s nearly one-fifth of all the Canadian universities and colleges³⁷ – for an average of fourteen titles, each (Table 3 in Appendix 11). (And, again, that’s not including the works commissioned by other sectors, or the works of academics in their capacity as second- or other-listed authors.)

Of these, the leading producers are: the University of Toronto (which has 75 titles attributable to it, for 10.9% of the Canadian academic works, and 4.2% of all the Canadian voluntary sector research works under review); York University, at a fairly close second (68 titles); followed by Carleton University in third place (with 41 titles), and the Universities of British Columbia and Victoria tied for fourth (with 39 each, for 5.7% of the Canadian academic works and 2.3% of all). Their number per scope and the identities and number of contributions from all the remaining ones are all set out in Table 4 in Appendix 11.

Regarding which disciplines the first-listed authors of the contemporary voluntary sector research based at Canadian academic institutions have been working within, the five leading ones are: Business Admin./Management (with 82 publications attributable to it, for 4.6% of all the titles, and 13.1% of the Canadian academic ones with identified disciplines); Economics (65 publications); Sociology (63); Social Work (60); and Public Administration (53 titles: for 3.0% of all the works and 8.5% of the identified Canadian academic disciplines). However, several *dozen* disciplines are involved, altogether (see Table 5 in Appendix 11). This is an encouraging development, in terms of bringing a variety of perspectives to bear on the subject, rather than just the few main disciplines where the various nonprofit management and studies programs are usually housed (namely, Business, Public Administration, and Social Work).

Finally, for an indication of the total number of Canadian academics engaged in this research, there have been about 450 individual Canadian academics (including graduate students) engaged as the lead authors of Canadian voluntary sector research over the past thirty years (even apart from commissioned works), for an average of over one and a half titles, each. Of these, 310 were faculty members at the time of publication, based at a total of 47 Canadian post-secondary institutions, altogether, and working in at least 35 different disciplines. A total of 160 students have also served as lead authors of these works, altogether, working in at least 21 disciplines. In the vast majority of cases (for 130 or 81.3% of those 160 people), it appears that their only publicly available voluntary sector work, to date, has been their thesis.³⁸ However, students have also been involved as the lead authors of at least five journal articles, one periodical article, and four publicly available working papers, *qua* students. And of the 25 individuals with a thesis plus some other type of work in the database, 18 of them published works in the years after their thesis was accepted, and in at least six cases, the content of some of their subsequent works appears to be materially different from that of their thesis.

³⁷ According to *Education in Canada, 2000* (Cat. no. 81-229-X1B, Statistics Canada, 2001), Canada had 199 community colleges and 75 universities and other degree granting institutions as of 1998/99.

³⁸ There are 41 theses in the database at the doctoral level, and 117 at the Master’s or other level. The top three Canadian post-secondary institutions producing English-language contemporary Canadian voluntary sector research Masters theses – with 10 graduates, each – are Carleton University in Ottawa; Royal Roads University in Victoria, B.C., and the University of Alberta, in Edmonton. For graduating PhD’s who focussed on a voluntary sector topic, the three leading Canadian institutions are the Universities of Toronto (with 8), York (7), and Alberta (4).

That concludes the overview of the production statistics by academically-affiliated authors and indeed by authors affiliated with any other economic sector, for the Canadian voluntary sector research as a whole. Let us turn now to two other important aspects of this research, related to its **content**.

Distribution of Principal Research Methods or Sources of Data

Of course, some of the most important aspects of a given piece of research concern, “How has it been conducted?” and “Where it gets its data from?” To try to get a handle on how the field has been shaping up in these regards and for the benefit of the intended end-users, I attempted to code each item in the database according to which main type of methodology the underlying study appeared to be using. For the more “Primary,” substantive, and original versions of this research, the categories I used are:

- *Case Studies* (loosely defined³⁹);
- *Economic theorems*, or even the occasional economic *Experiment* (especially regarding altruistic behavior such as donating or volunteering);
- *Legal Analyses* of the legal frameworks or political philosophies governing nonprofit organizations;
- *Surveys* (with the acronym of major Statistics Canada surveys being entered, if applicable);
- or *Various* (for some combination of the above, often with a heavy literature review component).

The categories for the more “Secondary” research such as the type I have specialized in, are:

- *Literature Reviews*, for those mainly synthesizing the existing Canadian or other voluntary sector research; and
- *Legal Updates*, which are mainly accounts written for lay people about recent changes in the legal frameworks or regulatory policies governing nonprofit organizations (such as accounts of recent court decisions).

The overall distribution of each of these main types of data sources or methodologies is set out in Table 20. The results indicate that **surveys** are the most common sources of data, informing slightly over a third (36%) of the publications. Among these, there is almost a 50-50 split between the use of the major Statistics Canada surveys in particular (see Table 21 for their distribution), which often have sample sizes in the thousands, and ‘Other’ surveys, often administered by the investigators themselves, which generally have much smaller *N*’s.

³⁹ The “case study” classification has been used quite broadly in the database, to include not only the classic definitions (of predominantly qualitative research involving the “collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular participant or small group, frequently including the accounts of subjects themselves,” or “a written description of a problem or situation ... which does not contain an analysis...”), but also analyses of historical or contemporary situations informed by interviews, news accounts, or other sources.

Case studies (including historical or political analyses) are the next most prolific methodology, for just under a third (31%) of the works.

But only a very limited number of items (3.3% of the classified items) are based upon Income Tax Records, whether of individuals or corporations (concerning donations), or especially of charities or nonprofits (concerning their relative sources of income and expenditures). The reason for the latter is likely that these records were prohibitively expensive to obtain (at \$8 per return), until only very recently (Fall 2002), when the public portions of the charities' T-3010 income tax returns for the past couple of years were somewhat surreptitiously placed online alongside their basic listing on the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency's site.⁴⁰

Table 20: Distribution of main data source or evidentiary basis, for all the English-language contemporary Canadian voluntary sector research, by scope, 1974-2003/f. combined

(includes many items cross-classified under two different main sources or methods)

	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total	% of all	% of class'd
<i>Major StatCan Surveys</i> (see Table 21, below)	137	55	111	303	16.9%	17.6%
<i>Other Surveys</i>	140	68	128	336	18.8%	19.5%
<i>World Values Survey</i>	9			9	0.5%	0.5%
Surveys Sub-Total	284	123	237	644	36.0%	37.4%
Case studies	167	52	329	548	30.6%	31.8%
Income Tax returns	44		13	57	3.2%	3.3%
Economic Theory (or Experiments)	34		5	39	2.2%	2.3%
<i>Legal Analyses</i>	48	1	15	64	3.6%	3.7%
<i>Legal Updates</i>	49	1	10	60	3.4%	3.5%
<i>Lit. Review/Legal Update manuals or reports</i>	10	1	1	12	0.7%	0.7%
Legal Analyses/Updates Sub-Total	107	3	26	136	7.6%	7.9%
Literature Reviews (with some also doing conceptual analysis or theory development)	157	21	98	276	16.1%	16.6%
Various or Other	33	4	25	62	3.5%	3.6%
Total Classified *	812	195	717	1,724	96.4%	100.0%
Unknown/unclass.	43	4	20	67	3.6%	
Totals (actual*)	852	199	737	1,788	100.0%	

* Not including the double-counts of items which have been cross-classified under two different types of content or methodologies in some of the rows above

⁴⁰ At www.ccr-a-drc.gc.ca/tax/charities/online_listings/canreg_interim-e.html Unfortunately, these individual tax records can only be viewed one at a time, and the data would all have to be re-entered manually to be analysed.

Table 21: Distribution of major Statistics Canada surveys among the data sources, for all the English-language contemporary Canadian voluntary sector research for 1974-2003/forthcoming combined, by scope of application

	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total	% Stat Can	% of class'd	% of surveys
<i>1980 volunteer survey</i>	2			2	0.7%	0.1%	0.3%
<i>1987 VAS (Survey of Voluntary Activity)</i>	23	12	15	50	16.5%	2.9%	7.8%
<i>1997 NSGVP (National Survey of Giving, Volunteering & Participating)</i>	52	43	28	123	40.6%	7.1%	19.1%
<i>2000 NSGVP</i>	30		4	34	11.2%	2.0%	5.3%
Major Volunteering/Donating surveys sub-total	107	55	47	209	69.0%	12.1%	32.5%
Census			8	8	2.6%	0.5%	1.2%
General Social Surveys	9	3	11	23	7.6%	1.3%	3.6%
Heritage Institutions or Performing Arts surveys			35	35	11.6%	2.0%	5.4%
Household Spending Surveys	22		3	25	8.3%	1.5%	3.9%
Workplace and Employee Survey & Business Registry	5			5	1.7%	0.3%	0.8%
Transition Home Survey			13	13	4.3%	0.8%	2.0%
Sub-Total for All Major Statistics Canada surveys (not including overlaps)	137	56	111	304	100.0%	17.6%	47.0%

Subject Matter

Finally, we shall close this analysis of all the contemporary English-language Canadian voluntary sector research publications in the database as a whole with a broad sketch of the subject matter of all this literature. For slightly more detail, the main topic areas for each of the three main scopes of application have been profiled separately in a series of five tables in Appendix 12; only a brief overview of their highlights and some more consolidated findings are featured here.

Among the 852 publications that were deemed more “cross-cutting” in terms of their units of analysis or the evidence they drew on, the leading thematic areas are: i) **volunteering** (which one-quarter of the all the publications discussed, even apart from the ones concerned with corporate or employee volunteering in particular); ii) (non-corporate) **donations** (addressed in 18% of the cross-cutting literature, or 23%, if we broaden that topic to include the related topics of fundraising and charitable gaming); iii) **organizational development** issues such as assessing managerial or technical performance, or ancillary programs to try to generate new forms of revenue (about 15% of the publications); followed closely by iv) analyses of **legal issues** impacting the sector (also about 15%); and then of v) how **government relations and/or**

cutbacks do the same (nearly 11% of the cross-cutting publications). Rounding out the list with between five and seven percent of the cross-cutting publications, each, are: vi) baseline **overviews** of the nonprofit sector's overall dimensions, including addressing **fundamental research issues** (like, how to define it); vii) assessing the functioning of nonprofit agencies' **governance and leadership**; viii) examining the extent or nature of **corporate** volunteering, donations, or partnerships; ix) addressing a cluster of issues (Accountability, Evaluations, Social Impact, and Public Opinion) on how well nonprofit are doing – or at least, are *perceived* to be doing – in meeting their missions responsibly; and finally, x) addressing Human Resources Management issues, such as staff training, satisfaction, pay, and turnover.

Within the Regional titles, among this English-language literature which was not pan-Canadian in scope in terms of the evidence it drew on, the most studied provinces are Ontario (implicated in 40% of the regional publications); followed by Alberta and B.C. (tied at 14%), followed closely by Québec (13%). Regarding which topics these more regionally-based studies have addressed, the leading five are: volunteering (addressed in 29% of these 199 publications); government relations/funding/cutbacks (22%); donations and fundraising (19%); and two sub-sectors in particular were common topics of the regionally-based literature: health-related organizations or developments impacting the non-profit sector (17% of the regional items); and the Social Services (10%).

Within the sub-sector publications proper (which were more than just –regionally based), the most studied areas of the non-profit sector among the contemporary English-language Canadian voluntary sector literature are: Social Services and Health⁴¹ (which were each involved in nearly 22% of these 737 Sub-Sector titles); followed by Arts & Culture (12%: not including studies on Sports/Recreation or Service and Member-Benefit Clubs, which were the subjects of an additional 6% of these studies); Legal, Justice, or Advocacy matters or organizations (nearly 10%); and Housing (approaching 9% – not counting the kindred areas of Community Economic Development (1.5%) and Co-ops and the Social Economy⁴² (5.4%)); and Religion (almost 7%). Note, not all of these studies concern the associated types of organizations themselves: frequently, they concern the government support for or regulation of same, or the extent of the public's or consumer groups' support for or participation in them. International development organizations figured into a slightly under 6% of these titles, and several sub-sectors – Philanthropic Intermediaries such as Foundations and Volunteer Centres; and Educational; or Environmental organizations – received fairly scant attention, with only one or two dozen items addressing them, each.

The main topics that these studies of the individual sub-sectors looked at were: Organizational Development issues (for about one-fifth of all these publications); Government Relations or Cutbacks (a little over 14%); establishing baseline data on the sub-sector or addressing

⁴¹ Note, by and large, studies of various aspects of **Hospitals** and other predominantly governmentally funded and/or governed facilities have not been included in the database or these analyses, except for a select few (14), which are mainly related to hospitals' foundations, fund-raising, or volunteering programs.

⁴² Strictly speaking, the "social economy" and its main exemplar, co-operatives, are mainly outside the focus of this database and analysis, but they have received some representation here, because some co-ops are structured as nonprofits.

fundamental research issues (also about 14%); Accountability, Public Opinion, or Evaluation issues (nearly 12%; and volunteering issues (involved in 10% of the sub-sector publications).

If we collect all these streams together and consolidate them into one pool, and organize them according to whether they at least partially address some of the more over-arching areas identified in the cross-cutting literature, we can see the ten areas addressed most frequently (in descending order), in Table 22.

Table 22: Consolidated distribution of the broader theme areas covered in all the contemporary English-language Canadian voluntary sector research titles (abstracting away from the particular sub-sectors or regions they relate to), for 1974-2003/forth., combined

Broad Cross-Cutting Theme Areas	Cross-Cutting	Regional	Sub-Sectors	Total	%	Rank
(non-corp.) Volunteering issues	210	60	69	339	19.0%	1
Organizational Development (incl. Commercial Ventures, Collaborations, & Information Mgmt/Technology)	132	5	152	289	16.2%	2
Donations & Fundraising from individuals (incl. legal aspects of this, and also including Charitable Gaming)	193	41	20	254	14.2%	3
Government Relations/ Funding / or Cutbacks impacting nonprofit sector	91	44	106	241	13.5%	4
Overview of the Sector or a Sub-Sector; or addressing a fundamental Definitional or Research Issues	62	12	101	175	9.8%	5
Legal Framework or Other Legal issues	125	6	30	161	9.0%	6
Accountability, Evaluations, Social Impact, & Public Opinion	48	6	86	140	7.8%	7
Human Resources Management (incl. managing volunteers)	44	10	34	88	4.9%	8
Board Governance & Leadership	50	3	31	84	4.7%	9
Corporate/Employee Volunteering, Donations, or Partnerships	49	1	5	55	3.1%	10
Total Titles	852	199	738	1,787	100.0%	

Part II: Canadian Voluntary Sector Research Since the Mid-1990s

Introduction

As we have just seen in Part I, according to my research, if we set aside the historical works primarily concerned with voluntary sector issues prior to the 1970s, there are approximately 1,800 research publications altogether making up the field of English-language Canadian voluntary sector research since the mid-1970s, issuing from a total of over 1,500 individual authors and at least 90 different Canadian post-secondary institutions, nonprofit organizations, and government departments over the years, in a wide myriad of publication formats and venues – and of widely differing degrees of quality and depth, it could be added.

In this Part, however, we shall concentrate upon a core subset of all these works. This more ‘distilled’ set is what remains of the research after applying a series of four filters to the database of records, which each cut out a swath of more peripheral or secondary works. The remaining publications to be profiled in this half of the report are restricted in: (i) scope: only the ‘cross-cutting’ research; (ii) time: only the ones appearing in the last decade (since the mid-90s); (iii) type of publication format: favouring longer and peer-reviewed types of media over shorter, “Executive Summary” types of media; and (iv) principal evidentiary source: setting aside most of the “secondary” research.

The nature of these four limitations and the rationale for imposing them here shall now be set out a little more detail in the remainder of this Introduction, and then we will go on to profile these holdings along most of the same dimensions that we saw concerning the entire field, in Part I.

i) Explanation of the Limitation in Scope

We can begin with a little background on the actual term, “cross-cutting,” and how it came to be used in this context. The term is used in the field of public administration: especially with reference to proposals or studies addressing how to tackle those societal problem areas such as crime which *cut across* or transcend government departments and agencies, which tend to be highly compartmentalized, and don’t always come together to try to see the bigger picture on phenomena outside their immediate purview.⁴³

This category first came to the fore in the context of Canadian voluntary sector research at the First National Research Symposium on the Voluntary Sector convened in Banff, Alberta, in the Fall of 2000, and was subsequently fostered by that and an expanded group of Canadian voluntary sector researchers which came to be known as the “Non-Profit & Voluntary Sector Network,” following the second such conference, held in Toronto in January 2003.⁴⁴

⁴³ E.g., the U.K. government has conducted a series of cross-cutting reviews, including one on the voluntary sector, available through www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_ccr/spend_ccr_index.cfm

⁴⁴ See www.nvsn.org/english/origins/index.htm

The term has been applied to the voluntary sector in a similar, but somewhat more positive vein. In some respects, the nonprofit sector itself tends to be highly compartmentalized: the various organizations working in one area (e.g., child care) or sub-sector (Social Services) may not have a very good idea of what is happening with the organizations involved in other types of services or activities; and until quite recently, there hasn't been very much dialogue amongst networks of nonprofit organizations based in different provinces about the issues impacting them at a regional level, such as changes in provincial government funding or contracting policies. Quite naturally, the associated studies by these specialized-service organizations and regional networks have tended to focus on their own issues. Similarly, much of the research on nonprofit organizations based out of universities has tended to be focussed on the particular service areas the Department studying it (e.g., social work) has a professional interest in, or it has been done in partnership with local agencies as research or internship partners as the objects of research, where we can't always be sure that the findings aren't mainly the result of local conditions.

Nevertheless, there are cross-cutting issues for the voluntary sector to be addressed: those which transcend a given sub-sector or region because they potentially apply to nearly every type of voluntary organization. Examples include issues concerning agencies' fundamental inputs (volunteers, donations, other funding); operating conditions (legal framework, government relations); or modes of operation (governance, board-staff relations). In contrast, some topics are unique to certain sub-sectors (such as models of optimal service delivery in palliative care), while others may involve demographic or political circumstances confined to a given locale (such as the impacts of a particular province's budget cuts).

Thus, an item of cross-cutting voluntary sector *research* is distinguished from the other two scopes of nonprofit research (the *sub-sector*, and *regional*, literature) by the fact that it is **not** restricted to one or two service or geographic areas, either in the data informing it or in the breadth of its findings' application. That is, it is at least *multi-*, if not *pan-*sectoral in scope, regarding the types of organizations it studies, and it has national rather than merely regional respondents, if based on a survey. Similarly, if its conclusions are based on case studies, there should be ample reason to believe they are indeed transferable to other sub-sectors and regions.⁴⁵

ii) Explanation of the Limitation in Time

Even though some contemporary Canadian voluntary sector research dates back at least to 1974, the second main limitation on the subset to be analyzed here is to restrict it to items published since 1994. There are three main reasons for this. First, there really is not that much Canadian voluntary sector research to be seen for the first twenty years, to concern ourselves with. Under a quarter of all the database's entire holdings predate the mid-nineties, as we saw in Table 1 (on p. 6) and this applies to the cross-cutting literature in particular, as well. This is shown below in Table 23, which shows that the average annual production in the last decade is over twice as high as for the interval as a whole, and almost seven times higher than for the previous twenty years.

⁴⁵ Unfortunately, in many cases, this required educated guesses on my part based on the titles and/or abstracts, since I did not have enough time to actually read and digest all these materials. Thus, some of the sub-sector or regional items should perhaps be 'promoted' to cross-cutting ones, and the other way around.

Table 23: Total and average production of the cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research in the database for selected intervals, 1974-2003/forth.

Interval	Sub-Total for this interval	Share for this interval	Ave. titles per year during this interval*	Ave. this interval relative to most recent interval
Early: 1974-1993	196	23.0%	9.9	6.8
Recent: 1994-2003/f.	656	77.0%	67.3	-
All: 1974-2003/f.	852	100.0%	28.6	2.3

* The denominators for these two periods are 9.75 and 29.75 since not all of 2003 is covered

Second, quite a number of the researchers who were involved in this type of research a generation ago are long since retired,⁴⁶ whereas part of the intent for this report is to highlight the activities of those leaders in the field we might be expecting to see more studies from.

Third, much of the previous research was fairly rudimentary, confined largely to providing baseline data or anecdotal reports, with very little methodological or theoretical sophistication. That was the conclusion of an independent review by one the leaders of the Canadian field who straddles the two periods – Victor Murray, a recipient of ARNOVA’s Award for Distinguished Lifetime Achievement.⁴⁷ A similar sentiment has been echoed by other scholars with respect to much of the early voluntary sector literature based in the United States, as well (Aspen Institute, 2002).

Hence, it seems reasonable to key in on just the research from the last decade (which has been much more concentrated in its output and has built on this earlier work), if only to address whether it has transcended some of the identified shortcomings of the earlier work.

⁴⁶ Some of the most notable names from this period who are no longer actively publishing research on this area are Allan Arlett, Harry Kitchen, Samuel Martin, Don Ross, and Jacquelyn Wolf.

⁴⁷ In a presentation on this topic at the first National [Canadian] Voluntary Sector Research Symposium held in 2000, Murray noted that the early Canadian research (spanning 1977 to 1999) is:

...[1] Largely atheoretical. In most Canadian research reports, little reference is made to the theoretical underpinnings of the work and the conclusions rarely refer to the theoretical implications of their findings. In terms of the unspoken, underlying meta-theories that inform Canadian research to date, most of it comes out of the positivist empirical tradition and very little is informed by recent post-modern theories. ...[2] General[ly] ...methodologically unsophisticated. Surveys and qualitative methods such as case studies and focus-group interviewing are common. There is comparatively little use of complex multivariate analytic methods or careful ethnographic reporting.... (As summarized by Orsini, 2000)

ARNOVA is the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action, a network of mostly American researchers which convenes an annual research conference and publishes the premiere journal in the field, the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly. See www.arnova.org/awards.html for a notice on Dr. Murray’s award.

iii) Explanation of the Limitations in Methods or Evidence

The next major filter being applied to the entire volume of Canadian voluntary sector research works is intended to remove the bulk of what is sometimes termed the “secondary” research, in order to concentrate on the “primary” forms. The rationale for their inclusion in the database but exclusion from this analysis follows.

Although the database focuses on research materials to the exclusion of most related types of items pertaining to the voluntary sector (such as speeches, ‘how-to’ manuals, and news reports), it does include secondary research by Canadian authors or about the Canadian sector. There were two main reasons for this. First, even secondary research can qualify *as* research, under some accounts, if it is performed in a scholarly manner and contributes to the field by synthesizing many studies it would take others a good deal of time to locate and get through. Indeed, some exemplars of this largest category of secondary research to be excluded – Literature Reviews – have even been published in peer-reviewed journals,⁴⁸ for that reason. Second, the database is intended for a multi-purpose audience with varying degrees of education and access to primary materials,⁴⁹ and some segments may prefer to read the secondary literature, instead. Similarly for the next major category of secondary literature in the database: the “Legal Updates.” These are articles which present legal commentators’ reportage on new bills, Supreme Court decisions, or changes in government regulators’ policy or practice. Even though these items are based on few sources and lack much in the way of analysis, they have been included in the database because they likely bring new knowledge forth to all those who are unlikely to read or understand these legal materials in their original text.

However, from several other points of view – whether the items primarily concern knowledge of the Canadian sector; whether they actually bring new knowledge forth to the *cognoscenti* or research community; and whether there are enough researchers to constitute, much less sustain, a full-fledged discipline, here – these items should be excluded from consideration, particularly to assess the relative contributions of the Canadian voluntary sector research ‘peerage.’ To be a member of the latter, one should be the first to bring new knowledge of the Canadian voluntary sector forward, or be the first to apply some advanced methods to extract new findings from existing data.

Eliminating these more derivative types (Literature Reviews, Legal Updates, or a combination of the two) brackets off about a quarter of the past decade’s cross-cutting items (129, 27, and 7 titles, respectively).

⁴⁸ 41 of the 1,788 items in the database (including sub-sectors and regions) that have been classified as getting their information primarily from literature reviews actually appear in peer-reviewed periodicals or journals.

⁴⁹ Most nonprofit practitioners, for example, will not have ready access to academic journals, especially those outside the major cities where most of our larger universities are located, and they would likely have trouble justifying the \$25-U.S. per item they might have to pay from fee-based services. Hence, an online report by a Canadian which summarizes the major findings of that literature may be their only access to it.

iv) Explanation of the Limitations in Types of Publication

By the same token, not all of the items in the database which *do* draw on empirical data on the Canadian voluntary sector should be ranked as making an equal contribution. Some are quite slight or derivative in nature, inasmuch as they are simply subsets or offshoots of a larger study: with the results from a large national study being broken down for individual regions or demographic groups, for example (in a format sometimes known as *Fact Sheets*); or with full-length reports being condensed into stand-alone, three or four page ‘Executive Summary’ versions (*Brief Reports*), or presented in less detailed form in newsletters or other types of *Articles*. Appendix 13 provides an brief overview of the nature of all fourteen types of formats included in the database and indicates why some more redundant types are excluded from this analysis.

In addition to the excluded types of format (Articles; Brief Reports, Datafiles, Fact Sheets, Manuals, and Reviews) and roles (Editors of Book Anthologies), twenty entries with duplicated content have also been eliminated from the subsequent tabulations, so as to obtain a more accurate reading of the true dimensions of the core cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research. Some of these bracketed items are Reports or Working Papers which may still be available despite being published since in a journal or anthology (albeit in a reduced form). Others are journal articles which ran in two or more serials with essentially the same content.⁵⁰

Finally, the *Tax Expenditures and Evaluations*, a series of annual reports by the Canadian Department of Finance, have been reclassified as datafiles and so excluded for the purposes of this analysis, since they only touch on the voluntary sector in a tangential fashion, by providing aggregate figures on what charitable donations cost the federal government in foregone revenues, based on an summary analysis of individual and corporate tax records.

With that by way of explanation for what will and won’t be included in the analysis, then, let’s proceed to the actual statistical analysis of some of the most salient characteristics of this more ‘distilled’ subset of the last ten years of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research.

⁵⁰ A listing of these, along with an indication of why they were eliminated, or what remaining item the database they duplicate, is available from the author on request, via wadow@mts.net Ask for “Table 34: Bibliography of Cross-Cutting Records in the Database with Duplicate Content Eliminated from the Analysis.”

Total Number of Selected Types of Works per Format and Year

There are 358 qualifying items, altogether. The most common format is Reports (for 42% of these items), which tend to be self-published by the authors' home institutions without external review. However, about one hundred (28%) of these works appear in a total of 47 peer-reviewed journals or periodicals,⁵¹ which is a fairly encouraging development for an emerging field,. Table 24 shows the total distribution by media type.

Table 24: Total distribution of selected publication formats of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research items, 1994-2003/forthcoming

	Article in Book	Book	Feature-length Journal Article	2-9 pp. Periodical Article	Report	Thesis	Working Paper	Total
Total titles	39	12	74	27	150	16	40	358
Distr. by Type	10.9%	3.4%	20.7%	7.5%	41.9%	4.5%	11.2%	100.0%

There has been a sharp increase in production since 2000, with 71 qualifying items per year in 2001 and 2002. (Table 25) The main reason for has likely been the availability of two new funding sources: the Kahanoff Foundation's Non-profit Sector Research Initiative (NSRI), a five year initiative which began in 1997,⁵² and the Voluntary Sector Initiative, a five-year federal program which began in 2000.⁵³

Table 25: Distribution of selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/forth., by publication format and year

	Article in Book	Book	Journal Article	Periodical Article	Report	Thesis	Working Paper	Total	%
1994			3	2	3		2	10	2.8%
1995		1	6	1	5		1	14	3.9%
1996	2	3	8	2	10	1	2	28	7.8%
1997	3	2	7		3		4	19	5.3%
1998	2	1	6		8		3	20	5.6%
1999	2	1	5	4	12	5	5	34	9.5%
2000	6	1	10	4	19	2	4	46	12.8%
2001	10		13	11	24	6	7	71	19.8%
2002	4	3	14	1	37	2	10	71	19.8%
2003/f. (3/4 of yr.)	10		2	2	29		2	45	12.6%
Total	39	12	74	27	150	16	40	358	100.0%
Ave. per year (9.75 years)	4.0	1.2	7.6	2.8	15.4	1.6	4.1	36.7	10.3%
Max. per yr.	10	3	14	11	37	6	10	71	19.8%

⁵¹ A listing of all these serials' names and the distribution of articles within them is available in Appendix 14. The top three are *The Philanthropist/ Le philanthrope*, with 19 articles; *Canadian Social Trends*, with 8; and *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, with 7.

⁵² The academic stream of the Kahanoff Foundation NSRI, which has been administered by Queen's University, was also partially matched in 2000 and 2001 by the Canadian government's Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) granting program (homepage: www.sshrc.ca).

⁵³ See www.vsi-isbc.ca for an account of this initiative and to download many of its commissioned works.

Authorship Statistics

The next most important area of interest to gauge the relative size and stage of development of an emerging research field is its authors: particularly their total number and relative productivity.

There are two major classes of authors in the database to be considered here: *Individual Authors*, of course, where this has been possible to determine; and *Institutional Authors*, where no specific individual has been credited within the document (or the bibliography or database the citation was found in), and I lacked any ‘inside information’ to indicate otherwise.

About one in seven titles have no individual authors credited (some because the items are forthcoming). The vast majority of these appear in Reports. In fact, nearly a third of all the reports in this subset of Canadian voluntary sector research works are branded as institutional rather than individual research products, and there’s an inverse relationship between the types most associated with peer-review and academic promotion and the lack of individual attribution which is discernible in Table 26.

Table 26: Distribution of selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/forth., by the individual or institutional status of the authors

	Article in Book	Book	Journal Article	Periodical Article	Report	Thesis	Working Paper	Total
Indiv. Authors	37	11	74	27	108	16	38	311
Institutional	2	1			43		2	48
Total titles	39	12	74	27	151	16	40	359
Inst. authored as % of total	5.1%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	28.5%	0.0%	5.0%	13.4%

There are 22 actual institutions or *ad hoc* bodies involved as Institutional Authors. The main ones are Statistics Canada (with 10 titles, for 21% of the non-bylined titles); EKOS Research Associates (a polling firm, with 7, or 15%); and the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (13%).

As for the individual authors involved in this research, they, too, can be divided into two classes, and analysed for the relative productivity of each type: All individual authors combined (including the second, third, or other authors for each item); and the first cited authors alone.

To start with the latter: the core group producing this more distilled set of Canadian voluntary sector research. As Table 27 shows, a total of 192 individuals have served as first authors of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector primary research publications over the past decade. They averaged 1.6 works each, in total. Their most common publication format is the Report (over a third of all the individually authored titles), for an average of 1.8 reports, each, for the 58 lead authors who have written reports, or a little over half a report each, when averaged across all 192 first-listed authors. Almost a quarter of the items are that most esteemed form, feature-length peer-reviewed journal articles, and there’s a comparable number to the Reports when combined with the intermediate length periodical articles.⁵⁴ The most common contribution (or mode) per author is just one item, whether in total, or for any given type (not shown). But the most prolific

⁵⁴ For the journal articles and periodical articles combined, the corresponding figures are: 101, or 32.5% of the individual titles, by 80 distinct authors, for an average of 1.26 each, a maximum of 6, and a mode of 1.

author has produced 23 primary research reports, and a total of 29 items altogether: over eight percent of the whole lot, and 9.4% of those credited to individuals. He is identified in Table 28, along with the other top five individual producers.⁵⁵

Table 27: Selected statistics on the research output of individual first-listed authors for selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/forth. (not including their works as second- or other-listed authors)

	Article in Book	Book	Journal Article	Periodical Art.	Report	Thesis	Working Paper	Total	% indiv. titles
Total titles by individual authors	37	11	74	27	108	16	38	311	100.0%
% of indiv. authors' titles per type	11.9%	3.5%	23.8%	8.7%	34.7%	5.1%	12.2%	100.0%	
No. of individual first-listed authors participating in each type	35	11	59	23	58	16	26	192	n/a
Average titles per "	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.2	1.9	1.0	1.5	1.6	0.5%
Ave. across all " per type	0.19	0.06	0.39	0.14	0.56	0.08	0.20		
Max. titles per " "	2	1	6	4	23	1	5	29	9.3%

Table 28: The five most prolific individual first-listed authors producing selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/forth.

Name and main inst. affil. of indiv. first-listed author	Article in Book	Book	Journal Article	Periodical Art.	Report	Working Paper	Total	% indiv. Titles
Reed, Paul; Statistics Canada	2		2	2	23		29	9.3%
Hall, Michael; Canadian Centre for Philanthropy			1		14		15	4.8%
Handy, Femida; York U.	1		6				7	2.3%
Phillips, Susan; Carleton U.	1		2		2	2	7	2.3%
Meinhard, Agnes; Ryerson Polytechnic University	1					5	6	1.9%

Of course, not every research item has just a single author – only half of them do – so there are many more individual authors involved than this. In fact, there are as many as seven credited authors for some items, particularly for journal articles. (To see the distribution of co-authored works among these six types of publication format by number of authors, see Appendix 15.)

The collaboration of these additional authors has involved nearly 150 individual second- or other-listed authors (some of whom are also first-listed authors), for a total of 303 distinct individual authors of these 311 individually-authored works (see Table 29). Not all are based in Canada, however.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ A complete “Report-Card”-like listing of the names and output by all 192 first-listed authors – or indeed of all 303 authors including co-authors – can also be provided upon request via wdow@mts.net. Ask for either Table A-1 [“Distribution of Selected Types of Cross-Cutting Canadian Voluntary Sector Research Publications among the individual First-Listed Authors, 1994-2003/forth. (not including their works as second or other authors)”]; Table A-2 [Consolidated Authorship Totals for Selected Types of Cross-Cutting Voluntary Sector Research, 1994-2003/forthcoming], which shows just the aggregate totals as first or other author, for all the authors; or Table A-3 [Consolidated Authorship Totals for Selected Types of Cross-Cutting Voluntary Sector Research by format, 1994-2003/forthcoming], which shows the total number of items per format type per author, regardless of authorship role.

⁵⁶ There are eight non-Canadians (Jeff Brudney, Christopher Miller, Stephen Osborne, Renée Price, R. Dale Safrit, Jen-Chieh Ting, and Eric Uslaner) and one émigré (Marc Bilodeau, for his most recent entry) among the first-listed authors

Table 29: Consolidated authorship totals for selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/forth.

	Total as First-listed Author	Total as Second or Other Author	Totals
Total Titles* or Attributions	311*	219	530
Count of Authors	192	149	303
Average per Author in each role	1.6	1.5	1.7
Maximum per Author	29	20	33

* The first figure (311) is the actual number of titles by individual authors; when all the attributions to multiple authors are included, it sums to 530

There is an average of 1.7 individual authors per title, for all these works combined. That varies somewhat among the various research formats, of course. Table 30 shows the breakdowns for the total number of authors as an aggregate, and the average production per author for each format or type.

Table 30: Total authorship statistics for selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/forth.

	Article in Book	Book	Journal Article	Periodical Art.	Report	Thesis	Working Paper
Total Titles by indiv. authors	37	11	74	27	108	16	38
Total Attributions to all indiv. authors for these works	66	16	148	37	178	17	69
Count of all participating individual Authors	61	16	111	29	90	17	45
Ave. per Author for those participating in each type	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.3	2.0	1.0	1.5
Average across all 303 individual authors	0.2	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.2
Maximum per indiv. author	2	1	6	4	25	1	7
Ave. no. of Authors per Type	1.8	1.5	2.0	1.4	1.6	1.1	1.8

Finally, to see the combined number of publications by the ten most prolific authors of this more “cross-cutting” type of primary Canadian voluntary sector research over the past decade (whether as first- or other-listed authors), please see Appendix 16. The comparable information for all 303 individual authors has also been set out in two separate Appendices, and is available upon request from the author.⁵⁷

for this subset of works, and perhaps 20 or more among the second and other authors (who have not been coded for their affiliations in the database.

⁵⁷ In electronic format only, via wdow@mts.net. See footnote 55 above for more detail.

The Distribution of Research Production among the Three (and a half) Sectors

Again, each item in the database has been coded according to which economic sector has engaged the lead author to do the study: the three main sectors – Private; Public; and Voluntary – plus the Academic sector, which mostly straddles the latter two, in Canada.⁵⁸ If the publication is clearly a commissioned work, it has been credited to the sponsoring organization and its corresponding sector, rather than to the authors' affiliations.

The findings on this issue are presented in Table 31. It indicates that:

- the academic sector is responsible for most of the works: for 152 or about 42% of the titles (including those by institutional authors), the first-listed authors were full-time academics producing the work in the course of their regular academic duties;
- the voluntary sector is in second place, with 91, or 25% of the titles being authored by individuals employed or contracted by voluntary sector organizations for the work;
- the public sector is a close third, with 88 titles having first-listed authors employed or contracted by government organizations (almost exclusively federal); and
- the private sector is involved, as well, with 7.5% of the works, overall, by independent consultants, marketing firms, lawyers, or journalists engaged in the study of the various aspects of the Canadian voluntary sector (apart from commissioned works).

Naturally, some sectors are more involved in some formats than others. The dissertations or theses are, of course, confined to the academics, who also account for three-quarters of the feature-length journal articles and the scholarly articles in compilations or anthologies. The public sector is responsible for more of the intermediate-length periodical articles than any other sector, while the voluntary sector produces the majority of the reports.

Table 31: Number of titles attributable to each economic sector employing first-listed authors, for selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/f.

	Article in Book	Book	Journal Article	Periodical Article	Report	Thesis	Working Paper	Total	%
Private Sector	3	2	10	5	5		2	27	7.5%
Public Sector:	4	1	4	13	63		3	88	24.6%
<i>Federal</i>	4		4	13	63		3	87	24.3%
<i>Provincial</i>		1						1	0.3%
Voluntary Sector	1	4	3	3	76		4	91	25.4%
Academic Sector	31	5	57	6	6	16	31	152	42.5%
Total	39	12	74	27	150	16	40	358	100.0%

⁵⁸ As noted previously, the vast majority of post-secondary institutions in Canada are public rather than private, and although they have unpaid Boards of Governors, some of these Trustees are government appointees, and the universities and colleges are heavily subsidized by the provincial governments, to the extent that they can be required to freeze their tuition fees for political reasons, for example, as has happened in Manitoba and British Columbia. This runs afoul of the requirement that voluntary organizations be “independent or institutionally distinct from the formal structures of government,” as stated in the well-known Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project inspired definitions. Hence, they tend to be categorized as QUANGOs (Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organizations) or even as actual public-sector institutions, in Canada.

The relative contributions of the major institutions or departments within the public, voluntary, and academic sectors will now be reviewed, in turn.

As mentioned, the Canadian government has funded a great many studies on the voluntary sector in the last few years as part of its \$94.6-M. Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI). Part of that legacy will continue on in the form of tangible research products for several years to come, albeit all restricted to the general topic of volunteerism, as part of the \$30-M Canada Volunteerism Initiative, with the research grants portion of that being administered by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (now known as ‘Imagine Canada’) through the “Knowledge Development Centre” (see www.kdc-cdc.ca).

In addition, the majority of the voluntary sector studies conducted by academics and voluntary organizations over the years have probably received seed money from at least one level of government (federal, provincial, or municipal).

But the federal government has also completed numerous studies within its own departments: particularly Statistics Canada, with 56 titles, which stands out as the leading institutional producer of Canadian voluntary sector research, both within government (for 64% of the titles owing to the public sector) and among all institutions involved in this research⁵⁹ (for 16% of all the selected types of cross-cutting items). Its output is set out in Table 32 along with the other federal departments having at least two eligible titles each over the past decade. Statistics Canada’s publications are generally of two kinds, however: those containing descriptive statistics with a minimum of analysis or text, and those that are clearly analytical. The majority of the latter type on the voluntary sector at Statistics done have been done under the aegis of the Nonprofit Sector Knowledge Base Project, led by Dr. Paul Reed.⁶⁰

Table 32: Main public sector departments or institutions involved in production of selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/forth.

	Article in Book	Book	Journal Article	Periodical Article	Report	Working Paper	Total	% of all Titles	% Gov. Titles
Auditor-General	2						2	0.6%	2.3%
Finance Ministry					1	1	2	0.6%	2.3%
Heritage Ministry			2				2	0.6%	2.3%
Human Resources Development Can.					4		4	1.1%	4.5%
Industry Canada					3		3	0.8%	3.4%
Statistics Canada	2		2	12	40		56	15.6%	63.6%
Voluntary Sector Initiative or Other		1	0	1	15	2	19	5.3%	21.6%
Total Titles	4	1	4	13	63	3	88	19.5%	100.0%
Dist. by Type	4.5%	1.1%	4.5%	14.8%	71.6%	3.4%	100.0%		

⁵⁹ Appendix 17 provides a listing of the attendant research output of all the major organizations, post-secondary institutions, or government departments the first-listed authors are affiliated with for this subset, in rank order.

⁶⁰ A number of these ‘NSKB’ works are available at www.statcan.ca/cgi-bin/downpub/listpub.cgi?catno=75F0048MIE

Regarding the extent and character of the research sponsored by voluntary sector institutions, over thirty Canadian voluntary organizations have been involved in studying our sector in this interval (with some affiliated organizations such as Volunteer Centres or Social Planning Councils being collapsed into types). Table 33 sets out the summary statistics on the distribution of titles among those which have at least two qualifying titles by the lead authors employed by them for these works, and then features the top five individual institutions among these.

Some highlights on the more prolific voluntary sector institutional producers are that:

- self-published reports are their most prevalent format, for 91% of their titles (83%, including all the less prolific institutions), with peer-reviewed journal and periodical articles being quite rare. Although this may be a function of voluntary sector employees lacking the advanced training to employ more sophisticated methodologies, it may also be because scholarly publications do not have the same career implications for them as they do for academics, and they may also want a broader form of dissemination (the great majority of these reports have been available for free, online).
- the (former) Canadian Centre for Philanthropy is the leading voluntary sector producer, with 21 qualifying works (excluding commissioned works), accounting for nearly a quarter of the voluntary sector titles and 5.6% of all the titles.
- the output by most of the other voluntary sector institutions is an order of magnitude lower, with most only having two relevant items or less authored by their employees. (See Appendix 17 for the names of the other voluntary sector institutions with several works.)

Table 33: Summary statistics on the major voluntary sector affiliations of the first-listed authors and top five institutions among them, for selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/forth.

	Article in Book	Book	Journal Article	Period- ical Art.	Report	Working Paper	Total	% all	% VS
Total attributable to Ca. vol. sec. instl. affils. with 2 or more titles	1	2	2	1	69	1	76	21.2%	83.5%
Distribution by type	1.3%	2.6%	2.6%	1.3%	90.8%	1.3%	100%		
Count of Ca. vol. sec. institutions with at least 2 attributable titles	1	2	2	1	15	1	15	n/a	n/a
Ave. per major Ca. vol. sec. instn. participating in each type	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.60	1.00	5.07	1.4%	5.6%
Max. per affiliated vol. sec. instn.	1	1	1	1	20	1	21	5.9%	23.1%
Canadian Centre for Philanthropy			1		20		21	5.9%	23.1%
Muttart Foundation					13		13	3.6%	14.3%
Canada West Foundation					6		6	1.7%	6.6%
Canadian Policy Research Networks					5		5	1.4%	5.5%
Canadian Centre(s) for Policy Alternatives	1	1			2		4	1.1%	4.4%

Turning to the **academically** affiliated titles, Table 34 sets out the summary statistics on the distribution of non-commissioned titles among all the Canadian⁶¹ post-secondary institutions with qualifying titles by those first-listed authors who were their faculty or graduate students at the time of publication, and it also features the top five institutions among these. Some highlights on the academically-affiliated studies are that:

- slightly over 40% of them are feature- or intermediate-length peer-reviewed serial articles, with reports being comparatively rare (in contrast to the voluntary and public sector groups);
- quite a number of Canadian post-secondary institutions have been involved in them: 34, in all (half these schools can only be attributed one first-authored title, each, however; see Appendix 17 for a listing of all the institutions involved);
- they are mostly based in southern Ontario (as indeed most of the titles as a whole are);⁶²
- a total of 97 individual Canadian academics have served as the first-cited authors of these works (14 of them doing theses or dissertations), for a maximum of 7 items (not shown).

Table 34: Summary statistics on the post-secondary institutions of the Canadian academic first-listed authors and the top five institutions among them, for selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/forth.

	Article in Book	Book	Journal Article	Periodical Article	Report	Thesis	Working Paper	Total	% All	% of Ca. Ac.
Total Titles	29	5	52	6	6	14	29	141	39.4%	100.0%
Distr. by Type	20.6%	3.5%	36.9%	4.3%	4.3%	9.9%	20.6%	100.0%	n/a	n/a
No. of Cndn. acad. affils. for 1st auth's	16	4	20	6	3	6	11	34	n/a	n/a
Ave. titles per ac. affil. for participating instns.	1.81	1.25	2.60	1.00	2.00	2.33	2.64	4.15	1.2%	2.9%
Max. per Ca. ac. affil. of 1st auth's	6	2	11	1	3	5	9	21	5.9%	14.9%
1) York U., ON	6		11			2	2	21	5.9%	14.9%
2) U. Toronto, ON	6	1	4			3		14	3.9%	9.9%
3) Carleton U., ON	2		4	1	2		4	13	3.6%	9.2%
4) Ryerson Poly-technic Univ., ON	1	1	1				9	12	3.4%	8.5%
5) U. of Victoria, BC	2	2	2	1	3			10	2.8%	7.1%

⁶¹ Note, because the focus here is on gauging the relative robustness of the Canadian voluntary sector research body, eleven studies credited to first-listed authors based at foreign universities have been omitted from these calculations.

⁶² A listing of the geographic base of the first-listed author for each work is provided in Table 20 of the Appendix. It appears 72% of them are based in Ontario, even though that province only has 38% of Canada's population.

The **disciplines** these academic lead authors have been working within have also been recorded in the database. Table 35 sets out the findings on all the identified ones (two are unknown), and lists the five leading ones among them, broken down by publication format. Among the Canadian academic first-listed authors, the predominant discipline is Economics, with almost a quarter of these academic works (with a proviso regarding the actual affiliation of its most prolific exponent⁶³). The runner-up is Business Administration or related departments, with 19%; followed by Public Administration (15.6%); Law (9.2%); and Sociology (8.5%).

Table 35: Summary statistics on the distribution of disciplines for the Canadian academic first-listed authors and the top five disciplines among them, for selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/f.

	Article in Book	Book	Journal Article	Periodical Article	Report	Thesis	Working Paper	Total	% ID'd disc. titles
Total Titles	29	5	52	6	6	14	28	140	100.0%
Count of ID'd disciplines of Canadian academic 1st auth's	14	4	11	4	2	7	7	20	
Ave. per ID'd discipline of Ca. academic first-listed authors participating in each type	2.07	1.25	4.73	1.50	3.00	2.00	4.00	7.00	5.0%
Maximum per ID'd discipline of Ca. academic first-listed authors partic. in each type	8	2	19	3	4	5	13	33	23.4%
1) Economics	4		19	3		1	6	33	23.4%
2) Business Admin./ Manage- ment or Commerce	3		10			1	13	27	19.1%
3) Public Administration	3	2	3	1	4	5	4	22	15.6%
4) Law	8		4				1	13	9.2%
5) Sociology	2		5			3	2	12	8.5%

Of course, these distributions would be quite different if all the historical studies on the Canadian voluntary sector were included, as well, but, again, they were outside the scope of this review.

The list of disciplines associated with the first-listed academic authors of these works is rounded out by: Political Science (4.3% of the Canadian academic titles with assigned disciplines); Social Work (3.5%); Women's Studies (3.5%); Education (2.1%); Health (2.1%); Recreation (1.4%); Anthropology (0.7%); Gerontology (0.7%); Home Economics/Family & Consumer Sciences (0.7%); Info. Tech. (0.7%); Nonprofit Studies (0.7%); Northern Studies (0.7%); Nursing (0.7%); Psychology (0.7%); and Rural Planning (0.7%).

For the details on the actual number of publications associated with each discipline broken down by format, please see Appendix 18.

⁶³ Over a fifth (7) of these economics titles have been authored by Femida Handy of York University, who teaches Economics and writes papers in the economic tradition (which is how they have been coded in the database), but technically she is employed by the Faculty of Environmental Studies.

Principal Research Methods or Sources of Data

We turn now to some areas alluded to in the introductory section of Part II, concerning the methodological and theoretical shortcomings some have observed in the earlier Canadian research. Has the voluntary sector research in Canada since the mid-1990s undergone much improvement in these areas?

The current study can address this to some extent. As noted, each item in the database has been coded according to which main type of methodology it appears to be using, or the principal source of its data. For the primary research now under review, the categories in use are: *Case Studies* (loosely defined); *Economic Theorems*, or even the occasional *Economic Experiment* (especially regarding altruistic behavior); *Income Tax Records* (of individuals or corporations, concerning donations; or of charities or nonprofits concerning their relative sources of income and expenditures); *Legal Analyses* of the judicial frameworks or political philosophies governing nonprofit organizations; *Surveys* (with the acronym of major Statistics Canada surveys being entered, if applicable); and *Various* or *Other* (for some combination of the above, often with a heavy literature review component).

The overall distribution of each of these types of data sources or methodologies used in this subset for all the selected publications since the mid-1990s is set out in Table 36.

Table 36: Main data source, method, or evidentiary basis for selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/forth.

	Article in Book	Book	Journal Article	Periodical Article	Report	Thesis	Working Paper	Total	% of class'd
<i>Major StatCan surveys</i> ⁶⁴	1		12	13	42		2	70	20.2 %
<i>Other Surveys</i>	3	1	11	4	58	1	15	90	26.9 %
<i>World Values Survey</i>	2		1	1			1	5	1.4 %
Surveys, sub-total	6	1	24	18	100	1	18	168	48.6%
Case studies	19	8	24	9	23	13	11	107	30.9%
Income Tax returns	1	1		1	8		3	14	4.0%
Economic Theory or Exp't	2		13		1	1	3	20	5.8%
Legal Analysis	8	1	10		5		2	26	7.6%
Various or Other	1	1	1		9	1	1	14	4.0%
Unknown/Unclass'd	3		2		5		2	12	n/a
Totals (actual*)	39	12	74	27	150	16	40	358	

* Not including double counts of some items with overlapping data sources in these final totals.

The results indicate that **surveys** are the most common source of data, being implicated in nearly half the works. Among these, there is almost a 45-55 split between the use of the major Statistics

⁶⁴ Their identity and overall distribution among these selected works is as follows: the 1987 Volunteer Activity Survey (informing 8, or 2.3% of these publications) and the 1997 and/or 2000 National Survey on Giving, Volunteering, and Participating (in 45 or 13.0%), for a total of 50 (or 14.5%) of these titles involving StatCan's major volunteering and donating surveys; the Survey of Household Spending or Family Expenditures Survey (for 10 or 2.9% of these works); the General Social Surveys (involved in 6 or 1.7%); and a combination of the Business Register and Workplace Employment Surveys (involved in 4 or 1.2% of these publications).

Canada surveys (such as the now tri-annual National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating) which typically have sample sizes in the thousands, and the ‘Other’ surveys, which are often administered by the investigators themselves and generally have much smaller *N*’s (some are just focus groups, e.g.).

Ideally, the database would have also coded the type of analysis being performed on these surveys, to indicate if they are only reporting basic frequencies or simple cross-tabulations or if they do some type of multivariate analysis, e.g.. Unfortunately, I had neither the time nor the budget to assemble all these works to actually *see*, much less read them all, so this has not been done. Most of the ones I have seen, however, are in the former category, with the notable exception of the works by Reed and Selbee, which employ sophisticated techniques such as logistic regressions.

Similarly for the almost one third of items broadly characterized as case studies. A more thorough categorization would give some indication of how involved the analysis is, and the level of sophistication of its theoretical grounding. Here, again, I can only comment that most of the ones I have seen have seemed to be at a simple descriptive level, but I have not read or consulted others for more expert independent assessments of them all.

A fair number of items (about 25 works) are mainly performing an analysis of the legal or political philosophies underpinning areas such as the laws on the definition of a charity, the amount of advocacy charities can do, or the rationale behind tax deductions for donations. These areas have been a large part of the focus of the aforementioned Voluntary Sector Initiative.

Twenty studies use economic theorems to explore hypotheses about the nature of altruism (volunteering or donating), and a few of these actually do limited experiments with college students (concerning the type of appeals they respond to, for example).

Only a limited number of items (14, for 4% of the classified items) are based upon Income Tax Records, with hardly any of these being on organizations’ records, likely because these were prohibitively expensive to obtain, until very recently.⁶⁵

We can also look at the evolution of the use of these principal methods over the decade, both in absolute terms in Figure 3 and Table 37, which show how many of these core publications used each type per year, and in relative terms in Figure 4 and Table 38, which show the proportions for each method and year. They show an increasing divergence in methodology with the advent of new works. At the start of the decade (1994), there was a dead heat (of just one item, each) between both some empirical methods (case studies, tax records, and both major and smaller surveys) and what we philosophers would call more of an “armchair science”: using economic theorems to try to explain altruistic behavior (away). And the other two armchair methods (legal analysis, or other, which mostly tend to involve literature reviews and theorizing) were not in use

⁶⁵ Until the Fall of 2002, to obtain the public portions of a charity’s T-3010 income tax return, one had to pay \$8 to the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. Now the tax records for 2000 through 2002 are available online alongside each charities basic listing at www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca/tax/charities/online_listings/canreg_interim-e.html Unfortunately, these can only be viewed one at a time, and the data would all have to be re-entered manually to be analysed, which is an obstacle to research.

at all, at that point. Since then, there has been a huge increase in the use of surveys of both types (StatCan or Other), and especially in the use of case studies, which ranked second overall among the methods (Table 39), or even first, if the two types of surveys (StatCan or Other) are considered separately (Table 40).

Figure 3: Number of selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research publications using each main type of evidentiary method per year, for 1994-2003/f.

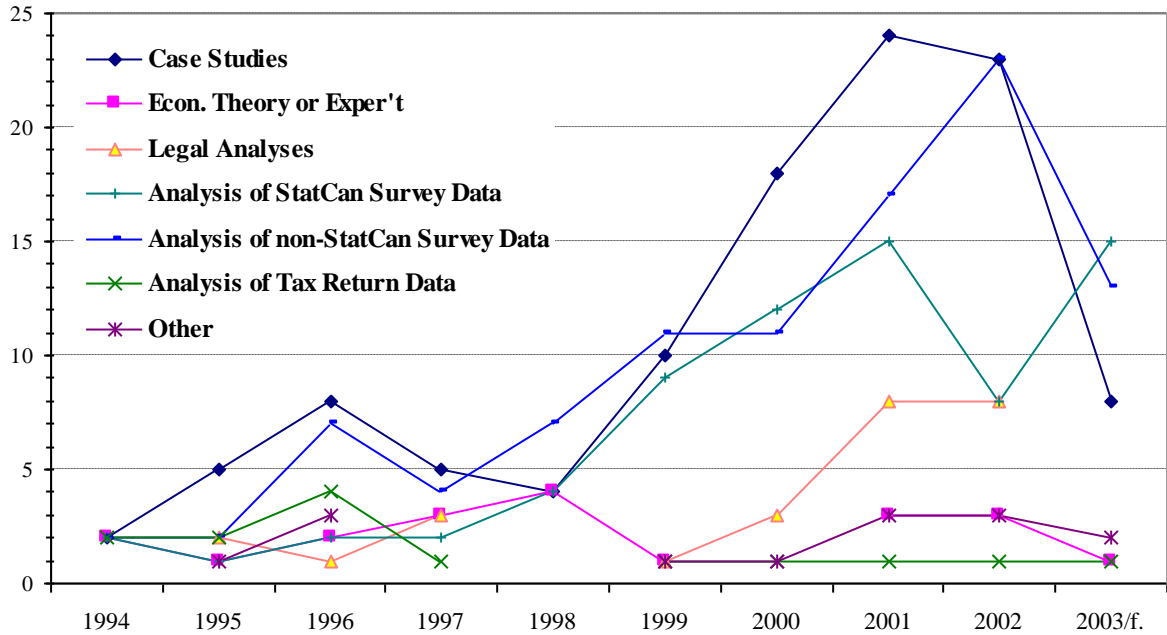


Figure 4: Proportion of selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research publications using each main type of evidentiary method per year, for 1994-2003/f.

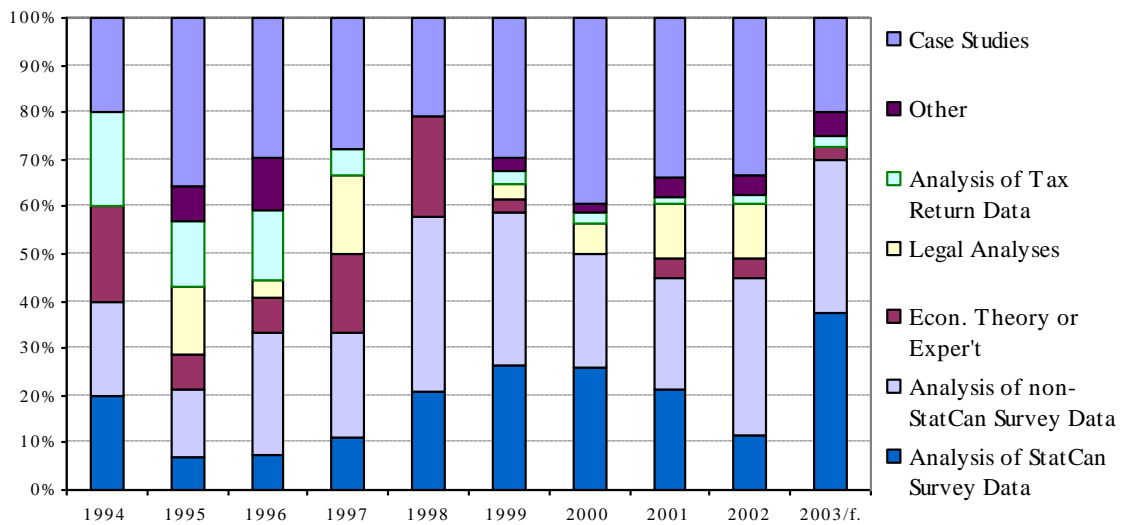


Table 37: Distribution of evidentiary methods among the core Canadian voluntary sector research publications, per year, 1974-2003/f.

	Case Studies	Econ. Theory or Exper't	Legal Analyses	Analysis of StatCan Survey Data	Analysis of non-Stat-Can Survey Data	Total drawing on Surveys	Analysis of Tax Return Data	Other or Various	Total Classified	Unknown	Total
1994	2	2		2	2	4	2		9	1	10
1995	5	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	14		14
1996	8	2	1	2	7	9	4	3	27	1	28
1997	5	3	3	2	4	6	1		18	1	19
1998	4	4		4	7	11			19	1	20
1999	10	1	1	9	11	20	1	1	34		34
2000	18		3	12	11	23	1	1	46		46
2001	24	3	8	15	17	32	1	3	71		71
2002	23	3	8	8	23	31	1	3	69	2	71
2003/f.	8	1		15	13	28	1	2	39	6	45
Total	107	20	26	70	97	167	12	14	346	12	358

Table 38: Annual distribution of evidentiary methods among selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research publications (horizontal percentages; excluding unclassified items)

	Case Studies	Econ. Theory or Exper't	Legal Analyses	Analysis of Stat, Canada Survey Data	Analysis of non-StatCan Survey Data	Total drawing on Surveys	% of surveys that are StatCan	Tax Returns	Other	Total Classified
1994	22	22		22	22	44	50	22		100
1995	36	7	14	7	14	21	33	14	7	100
1996	30	7	4	7	26	33	22	15	11	100
1997	28	17	17	11	22	33	33	6		100
1998	21	21		21	37	58	36			100
1999	29	3	3	26	32	59	45	3	3	100
2000	39		7	26	24	50	52	2	2	100
2001	34	4	11	21	24	45	47	1	4	100
2002	33	4	12	12	33	45	26	1	4	100
2003/f.	24	3		45	39	85	54	3	6	100
Total	31	6	8	21	29	49	42	4	4	100
Range	21 to 39	0 to 22	0 to 17	7 to 45	14 to 39	21 to 85	22 to 54	0 to 22	0 to 11	n/a
Mean	30	9	7	20	27	47	40	7	4	100
Change	Slightly Upward	Major Decline	None	Upward	Almost None	Strongly Upward	Upward	Major Decline	None	n/a

Table 39: Rankings of principal evidentiary methods used per year among the core Canadian voluntary sector research publications, with all surveys included together

	Case studies	Econ. Theory or Exper't	Legal Analyses	Surveys	Tax Returns	Other
1994	2	2	5	1	2	5
1995	1	5	3	2	3	5
1996	2	5	6	1	3	4
1997	2	3	3	1	5	6
1998	2	2	4	1	4	4
1999	2	3	3	1	3	3
2000	2	n/a	3	1	4	4
2001	2	4	3	1	6	4
2002	2	4	3	1	6	4
2003/f.	2	4	n/a	1	4	3
Total	2	4	3	1	6	5

Table 40: Rankings of principal evidentiary methods used per year among the core Canadian voluntary sector research publications,

with StatCan and Other surveys treated distinctly

	Case Studies	Econ. Theory or Exper't	Legal Analyses	Analysis of StatCan Survey Data	Analysis of non-StatCan Survey Data	Analysis of Tax Return Data	Other
1994	1	1	n/a	1	1	1	n/a
1995	1	5	2	5	2	2	5
1996	1	5	7	5	2	3	4
1997	1	3	3	5	2	6	n/a
1998	2	2	n/a	2	1	n/a	n/a
1999	2	4	4	3	1	4	4
2000	1	n/a	4	2	3	5	5
2001	1	5	4	3	2	7	5
2002	1	5	3	3	1	7	5
2003/f.	3	5	n/a	1	2	5	4
Total	1	5	4	3	2	7	6

Subject Matter

Another criticism levied by Dr. Murray and other informants in a prior review of this field was that there are major **gaps** in the areas covered by the Canadian cross-cutting research:

For example, many aspects of the sector in Canadian society and determinants of its size, structure, and impact have not been looked at. Sector-government relations are only beginning to be studied and there is almost no research on fundraising in Canada, in spite of a strong belief that Canadian patterns of philanthropy are different from the U.S....As well, almost everything [in the Canadian literature] dealing with nonprofit management is based on U.S. research; for example, research on governance, inter-organizational collaboration, accountability and evaluation, accounting, and finance. (Orsini 2000)

To address whether these *remain* gaps, Appendix 19 sets out the distribution of the principal subject matter of all the core Canadian voluntary research publications from the past decade, involving the more detailed topics. It shows there's been at least something on almost all these areas: with more than 15 publications on the overall dimensions of the sector or how to measure it since the mid-1990s, and at least *some* Canadian-based primary research publications on fundraising (10); government relations (about 40, including overlapping topics); governance or leadership (21); collaborations (6) and about a dozen studies on other generally more cutting-edge aspects of nonprofit management (lumped here into "Organizational Development"); accountability (10); and evaluation (5) – but nothing within this particular collection specifically on accounting and finance.⁶⁶

Although these scarcely *fill* the gaps, of course, they at least provide some stepping-stones across them. A total of 37 new more detailed topics were covered in 105 publications, for an average of 2.8 works on each area (see middle rows of Appendix 20), which is quite encouraging.

However, there was certainly a great deal of overlap in the remainder. Fully 70% of these more recent items are on a range of 24 topics which had been already been addressed in the first two decades of core Canadian voluntary sector research. Of course, many of these had only received cursory treatment: about ten topics only appeared in one or two cross-cutting primary research publications pre-dating 1994. But even where they do differ, many of the subject-headings brought into play in the more recent literature are only slight variations on the preceding ones, rather than bold new ventures into new territory.

Moreover, if we look at their overall distribution in terms of ten broader subject categories and we consider the two subjects receiving the *most* attention over these two main periods, it appears there was even less progress in the shift of research priorities (see Table 41). Volunteering and/or donations still commanded the lion's share of attention: as it did for a combined 49% of the pre-1994 cross-cutting primary research Canadian voluntary sector research publications, and over 40% of the post-1994 core items, as well (Table 42); and there was very little change in relative position among the other main subject categories, either relative to the whole body of research or just to the preceding two decades of the "core" research.

⁶⁶ There are two articles by Vic Murray himself and his colleague James Cutt and others on accounting and costing issues in the database, but they have been classified as Sub-Sector titles, given the sample their study used.

Table 41: Distribution of broad subject-matter for three clusters and intervals of Canadian voluntary sector research, 1974 to 2003/f.

('CVSR' = Canadian voluntary sector research)	All the CVSR pubs. since 1974, incl. sub-sectors & regions			Only the core cross-cutting CVSR pubs. from 1974-1993/f.			Only the Core cross-cutting CVSR pubs. from 1994-2003/f.		
	No.	%	Rank	No.	%	Rank	No.	%	Rank
Volunteering issues*	339	19%	1	32	24%	2	96	27%	1
Donation, Fundraising, or Gaming issues*	254	14%	3	38	29%	1	69	19%	2
Organizational Development, incl. business ventures, collaborations, & info. tech./mgmt.	289	16%	2	21	16%	3	65	18%	3
Government Relations/ Funding/ Cutbacks issues	241	13%	4	12	9%	5	44	12%	4
Analysis of Legal issues	161	9%	6	19	14%	4	36	10%	5
Governance or Leadership issues	84	5%	9	10	8%	6	25	7%	6
Accountability , Evaluation, Social Impact, or Public Opinion	140	8%	7	5	4%	10	24	7%	7
Human Resources Management , including managing volunteers	88	5%	8	8	6%	8	21	6%	9
Corporate Volunteering, Donations, or Partnerships	55	3%	10	6	5%	9	22	6%	8
Descriptive Overview of sector, including basic research issues like how to define or measure it	175	10%	5	10	8%	6	17	5%	10
Totals	1,699	95%		132	100%		358	100%	

* Studies of corporate volunteering or donations have been excluded from these first two categories.

Table 42: The two most prevalent broad subject-matter groupings per year, for selected types of cross-cutting Canadian voluntary sector research, 1994-2003/forth.

	Leading subject this interval	Pubs. on it	Share of that year's pubs.	Second most prevalent subject this period*	Pubs. on it	Share of that year's pubs.
1994	individual Donations, Fundraising, or Gaming	3	30%	None with 3+ items	n/a	n/a
1995	Government Relations/ Funding/Cutbacks	4	29%	Organizational Development etc.	3	21%
1996	Organizational Development (OD), including business ventures, collaborations, and information tech./mgmt.	5	18%	OD; and Board Governance or Leadership (tie)	4 each	14% each
1997	Government Relations/ Funding/Cutbacks	5	26%	Organizational Development etc.; Legal issues (tie)	4 each	21% each
1998	Volunteering issues	7	35%	Donations, etc.	4	20%
1999	Volunteering issues	8	24%	Government Rel'ns/ Funding/ Cutbacks	6	18%
2000	Volunteering issues	15	33%	Donations, etc.	11	24%
2001	Volunteering issues	21	30%	Gov't Rel'ns etc.; Legal issues (tie)	10 each	14% each
2002	Volunteering issues	19	27%	OD	15	21%
2003/f.	Volunteering issues	14	31%	Donations, etc.	9	20%

Thus, most of the Canadian voluntary sector research efforts have been put into looking at what has been contributed to the sector in the way of volunteering, donations, or funding, but not that much on what voluntary organizations are *actually* doing, or could be doing better.

For a case in point, take the formerly neglected topic which received the *most* treatment recently: Human Resources Management, which hasn't received that *much* treatment: only 21 or 6% of the most recent decade's core research publications are dedicated to that (including managing volunteers), leaving it in ninth place among the ten major subject areas. (Table 41)

This all leads to the concern that the tail may be wagging the dog a little too much here, in that the research may mostly be addressing the topics the funders are interested in (particularly volunteering, which has been one of the main foci of the Voluntary Sector Initiative), but not necessarily the most interesting and important topics, either for the voluntary sector itself and its most immediate needs, or even for the policy community the research was commissioned for.

Conclusion

The current author has compiled a database of publicly available Canadian voluntary sector research items which are either by Canadian researchers (occasionally on other countries' sectors); or on Canadian voluntary sector organizations or some of their fundamental inputs (such as volunteers) or operating conditions (such as government regulations), by authors of any nationality.

Several types of studies have been excluded, however: most program evaluations or needs assessments performed by or for individual agencies, and studies of political or member-benefit organizations (such as trade unions); or of associations which are not actually organizations; or quasi-governmental organizations (such as universities or hospitals); and historical accounts of organizations or aspects of the sector prior to the 1970s. Even with all those restrictions, an analysis of this database indicates there is now a fairly large body of contemporary Canadian voluntary sector research – and researchers.

As of June, 2003, the database contained 1,778 English-language entries. Of these 852 (48%) are “cross-cutting” or wide ranging in their data or scope of application, 199 (11%) are Regional, and 737 (41%) are on the Sub-Sectors alone. This area appears to be quite young, however, since about 80% of the titles in this database have been published or made available on the Internet within the last decade.

Not all of these items are equally weighty in terms of their size or quality, however. Although peer-reviewed serial articles do constitute almost 28% of the total (with 18% being feature-length articles, and 9.5% being under 10 pages in length), a slightly greater number are Reports, of which only 95 (or 17.8% of those 535 titles) are known to be peer-reviewed, with most of the rest being published by their home institutions without independent review. There are several other formats associated with academics which may have been peer-reviewed to some extent, particularly the Theses or dissertations (which constituted 8.8% of the titles), and the Articles in Books, such as conference proceedings (8.7%), and perhaps some of the Working Papers (7.0%). However, there are also several other formats geared more to practitioners which tend not to be independently reviewed, such as Articles (4.0% of these publications), Manuals infused with data (0.8%), Brief Reports (3.8%), and Fact Sheets (3.9%), although they, like many of the Reports, have the virtue of being available online for free, for the most part. The assortment of media types covered in the database with empirical content on the Canadian voluntary sector is rounded out by Books (2.9% of the items); Book Anthologies (0.9%); Datafiles (1.0%); and just a handful of Book Reviews with additional data. It is likely that a total of 859 or 48% of the 1,788 items under consideration were peer-reviewed.

It was not always possible or feasible to determine the names of those authoring these works: 15% of them remain credited to institutional authors. For the remaining 1,519 titles, a total of 1,375 distinct individuals (not all Canadians) authored them, for an average of 1.7 titles, each, and a median and mode of 1, to a maximum of 52 items (by Paul Reed, of Statistics Canada and Carleton University). Among these, 897 served as the first-listed authors, for an identical average, to a maximum of 45 items (also by Dr. Reed). Sixty-four percent of the items have just one author, about a quarter are co-authored, and there's a sharp drop-off after that for multiple authors, for an overall average of 1.57 authors per title.

Nearly three-quarters (71%) of the publications had lead authors who were based in Ontario or Québec at the time of publication (including institutional authors), even though these two provinces only account for 62% of the Canadian population.

For nearly 42% of the titles (743, in all) the first-listed authors were academics acting in their regular capacity as faculty or graduate students (rather than as consultants). This involved about 450 Canadian academics from at least 50 Canadian post-secondary institutions (especially the Universities of Toronto, York, and McMaster), and at least three dozen different disciplines (especially Business Admin./Management, Sociology, and Social Work). Although the majority of these academic publications appeared since the year 2000 and were fostered by two major funding initiatives, academic authors have actually been involved through-out this interval (the first year, 1974, as a co-author), averaging 43% of all the titles, per year.

Almost 28% of the Canadian voluntary sector research titles (500 items) emanated from the voluntary sector itself, from first-listed authors who were employed or contracted by at least 100 voluntary sector institutions, with 25 of these organizations accounting for at least 3 titles, each. Among these, the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy alone produced 25% of all the voluntary sector works, for 124 items (131, including its commissioned works).

Over one-fifth (22.5%) of the works (402 publications), issued from over a dozen public sector Departments or Ministries. Almost half of them are from Statistics Canada, with 183 titles, for 10% of all the contemporary English-language voluntary sector research, making it the leading institutional producer.

All told, there have been about ninety major Canadian institutional producers involved in this research, including all the post-secondary institutions with at least one title by one of their faculty or students, and those from the other sectors with at least three titles, each (including some affiliated organizations, such as Volunteer Centres, collapsed into types).

About one hundred private sector consultants, lawyers, and journalists also contributed 138 titles or 7.7% of all the works, between them, not counting what they did on contract for the other sectors. In fact, about one-eighth (225 or 12.6%) of all the works were produced by lead authors acting as paid consultants (some of them academics), rather than as regular employees or managers of the agencies commissioning the studies.

Most of this research – at least 36% of all the publications – is based primarily on surveys. Over half of these drew on major surveys conducted by Statistics Canada, in particular. Case studies are the next most prevalent methodology, informing about 31% of the works. The third most prevalent source of information for these works is actually – other studies, since about 16% are primarily Literature Reviews (many of them concerning the American or British literature).

Finally, these studies covered scores or even hundreds of topic areas. If all the sub-headings and combinations are included, the cross-cutting items have 117 subjects; the regional titles, 98; and the sub-sectors, 346. However, when all the items are stripped of their specifically regional or sub-sector elements and collapsed into broad theme areas, they mainly concern: (non-corporate)

Volunteering issues (19.0% of the titles); Organizational Development and capacity building (16.2%); (non-corp.) Donations and Fundraising (14.2%); Government Relations (13.5%); an overview of the sector, or one of its sub-sectors or regions, or an analysis of some fundamental research questions on how to define or measure the same (9.8%); Legal Issues (9.0%); Accountability, Evaluations, or Public Opinion issues (7.8%); Human Resources Management (4.9%); Board Governance or other Leadership issues (4.7%); and Corporate Volunteering, Donations, or Partnerships (3.1%).

Of course, many of these publications only contain fairly rudimentary information, if they were conducted when the Canadian nonprofit sector was only beginning to receive serious research attention; or they only concern particular aspects of the sector, in either service or geographic area; or they merely summarize other, more in-depth studies. If we just concentrate on the more recent studies with the broadest application and set aside the duplicate, secondary, and more peripheral works, we can get a better sense of the true dimensions of the field of researchers actively engaged in studying some of the broader dimensions of the Canadian voluntary sector.

Accordingly, this analysis of the sum total of the “cross-cutting” English-language contemporary Canadian voluntary sector research indicates that the field has:

- some 192 first-listed authors involved in producing primary research on this sector, based at over fifty different institutions, in all three (and a half) sectors;
- about 100 first-listed authors based at about three dozen Canadian colleges and universities, drawn from at least twenty disciplines;
- 302 distinct authors, altogether, including the second and other authors (some foreigners);
- dozens of subject areas being addressed in the course of several hundred publications (over a quarter of them appearing in about four-dozen peer-reviewed periodicals), including some formerly neglected areas; and
- a growing range of data from large surveys, and some sophisticated methodologies such as logistic regression being applied.

Of course, the field is still quite young and small, but it *has* grown sufficiently to the point that it can at least be *measured* along some of the dimensions commonly applied to other research domains.

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