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NCT Report 20

Household and Volunteer Activities

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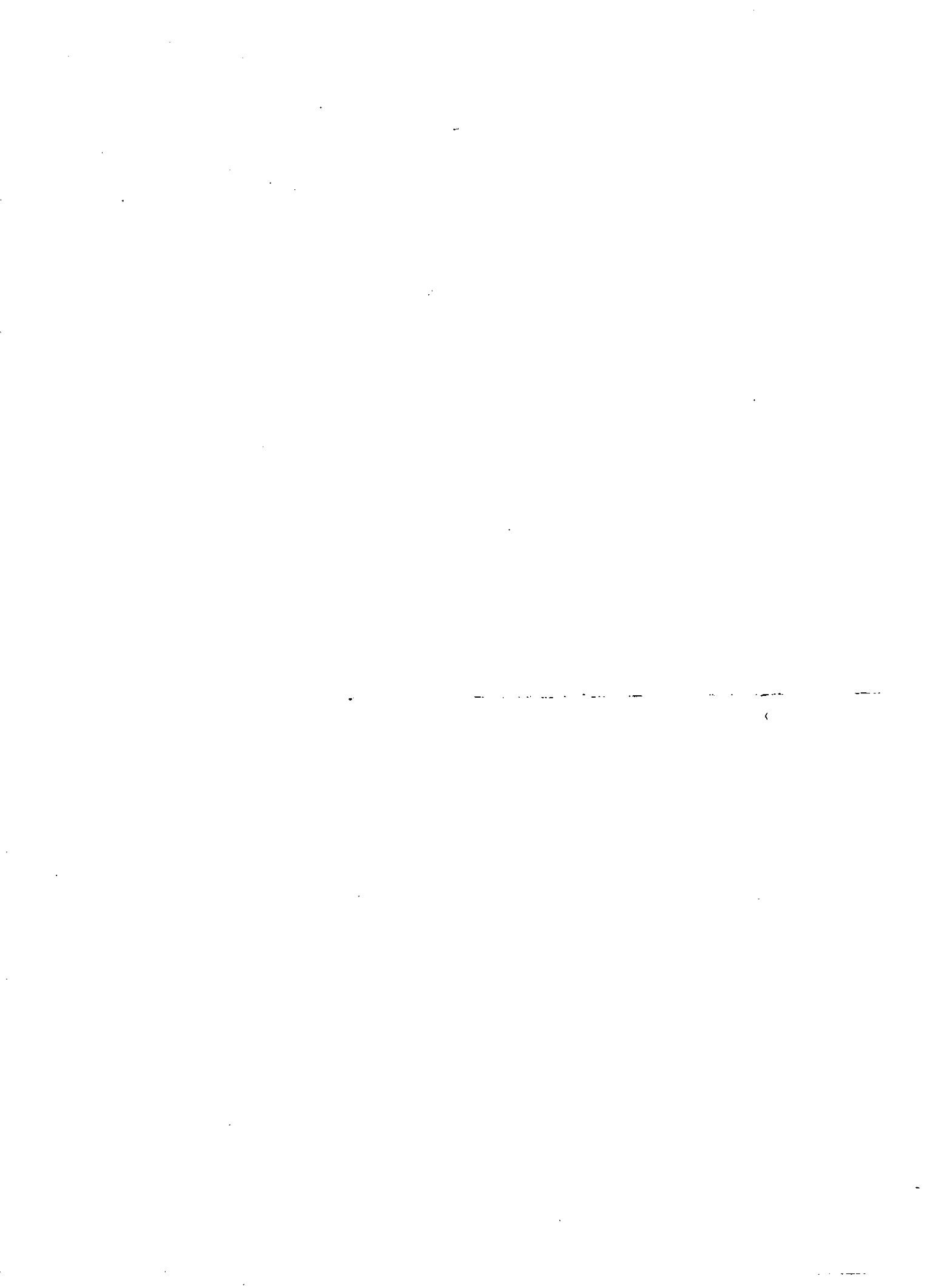
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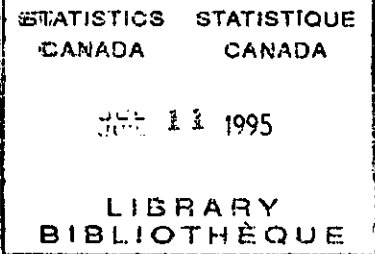


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NCT Report 20

Household and Volunteer Activities

Sandra Swain

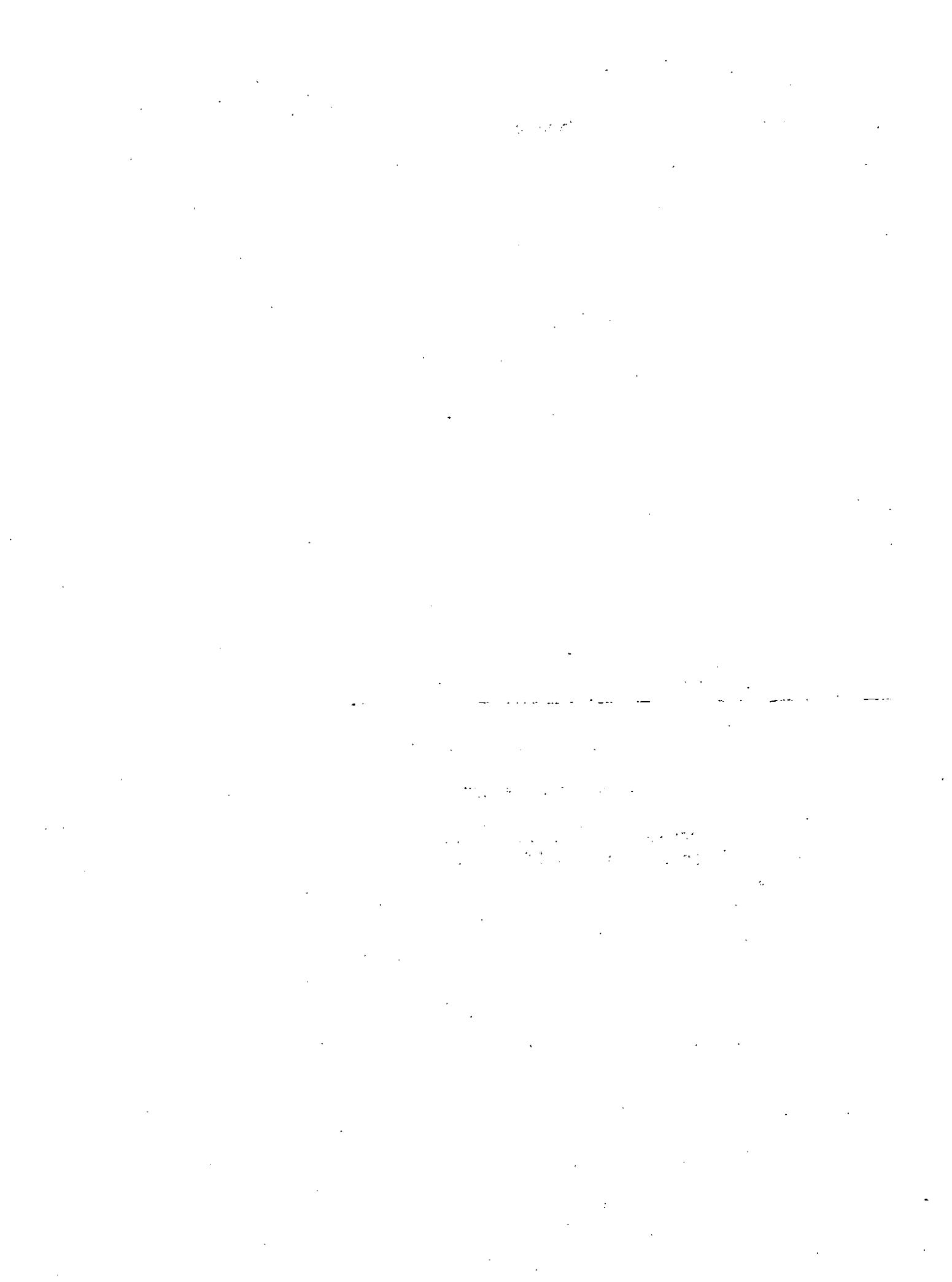
**Labour and Household Surveys
Analysis Division**

September, 1994



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Executive Summary

Background

Since the mid-1970s, Statistics Canada has tested questions on unpaid work for inclusion in the census. These past efforts were unsuccessful since, given the limitations of the tested questions, respondents experienced difficulty estimating their hours of unpaid work, knowing what activities to include and how to separate hours of overlapping activities such as housework and childcare.

To address these problems, further research was conducted in conjunction with planning for the 1996 Census. An interdepartmental committee was formed, made up of representatives from Statistics Canada, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the National Advisory Council on Aging (Health Canada), the Voluntary Action Directorate (Canadian Heritage), Status of Women Canada and the Farm Women's Bureau (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada). From the beginning, this committee was involved in the questionnaire development process including observing the 11 focus groups who filled out and then discussed the various draft versions of the questionnaire. The interdepartmental committee was also consulted on the evaluation of the 1993 National Census Test (NCT) results.

Draft versions of the potential questions on unpaid work were pre-tested using a combination of one-on-one interviews and focus groups. These focus groups were designed to include respondents with a variety of backgrounds and experience, for example, women and men from urban and rural areas, francophones and anglophones, immigrants, respondents with disabled children and senior citizens.

The results of the focus group testing were used to finalize the questions to be included on the 1993 NCT. In all, five questions were tested. They asked for the number of hours spent in the week prior to the NCT on the following unpaid activities:

- housework/home maintenance;
- childcare;
- providing care or assistance to seniors;
- providing care or assistance to others;
- volunteer work through an organization.

Following is an overview evaluation of the ability of the proposed questions to collect meaningful, reliable data on unpaid work. The evaluation criteria used are:

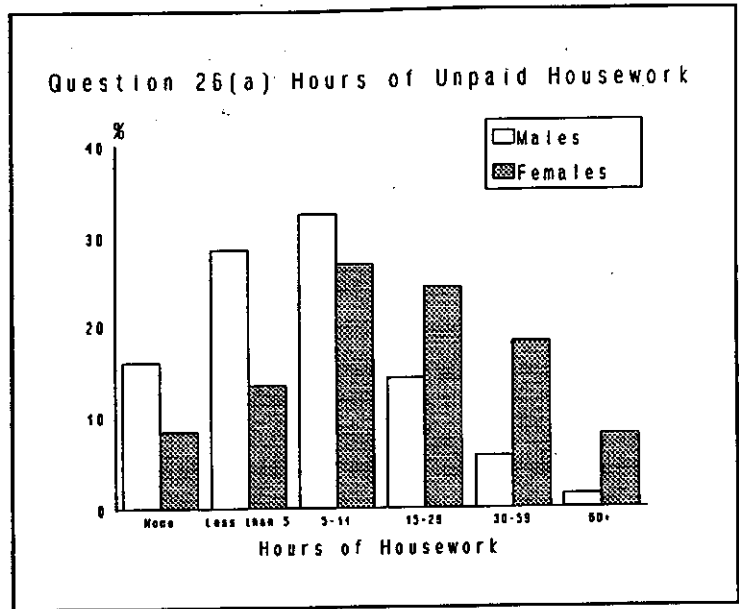
- the adequacy of the hours categories to describe the distribution of unpaid hours;
- the logical consistency of the estimates with respondent characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, labour force status and hours of paid work;
- the compatibility of the results with other sources of data on unpaid work.

An assessment is also made of respondent comprehension and reaction to the new questions.

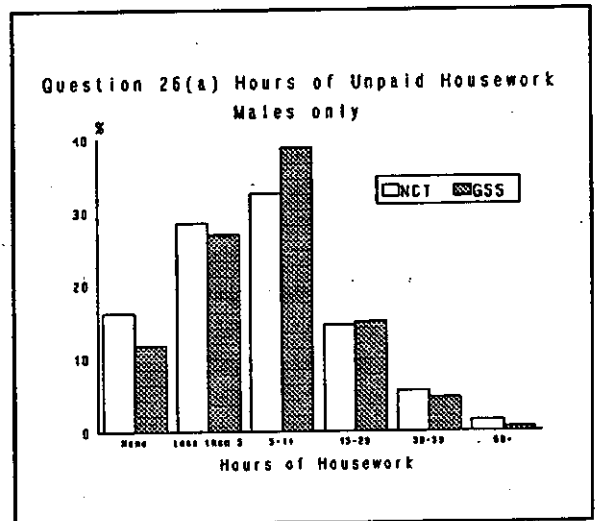
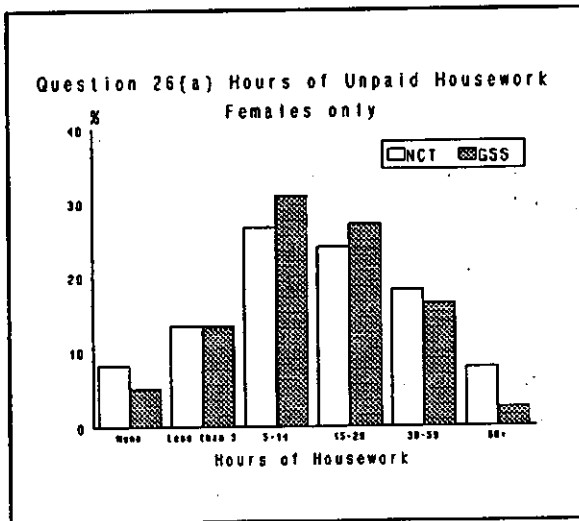
Summary of Results

Question 26(a) Hours of Unpaid Housework/Home Maintenance

The responses to this question appear to be appropriately distributed through the hours categories. About 12% of respondents reported no hours of housework/home maintenance in the week preceding the NCT, 30% reported 5 to 14 hours, and almost 5% reported 60 hours or more. Women reported far more hours of housework than men: 50% of women did 15 or more hours of housework in the reference week compared with 22% of men. When cross-tabulated by age, marital status and paid labour market activities, the estimates varied as expected. For example, very young respondents and seniors were more likely to report "none" for hours of housework, those who were married spent more time than those who were not, and those who also worked for pay did fewer hours of housework than those who were not in the paid labour force.



The NCT results for Question 26(a) were compared to similar data from the 1992 General Social Survey (GSS) on Time Use. On the whole, the NCT data compared reasonably well with the GSS.

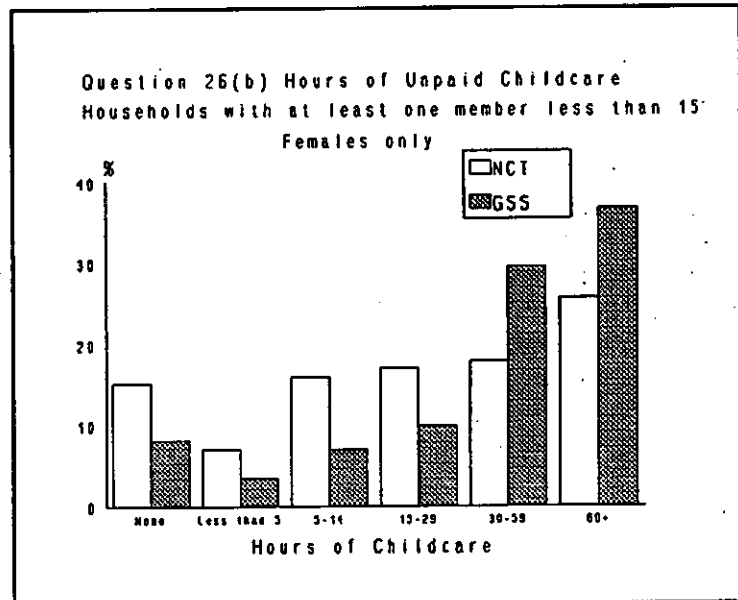
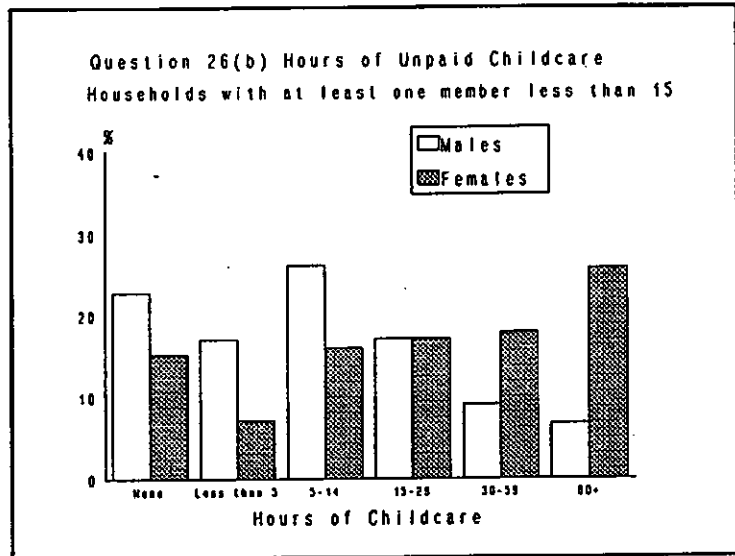


Question 26(b) Hours of Unpaid Childcare

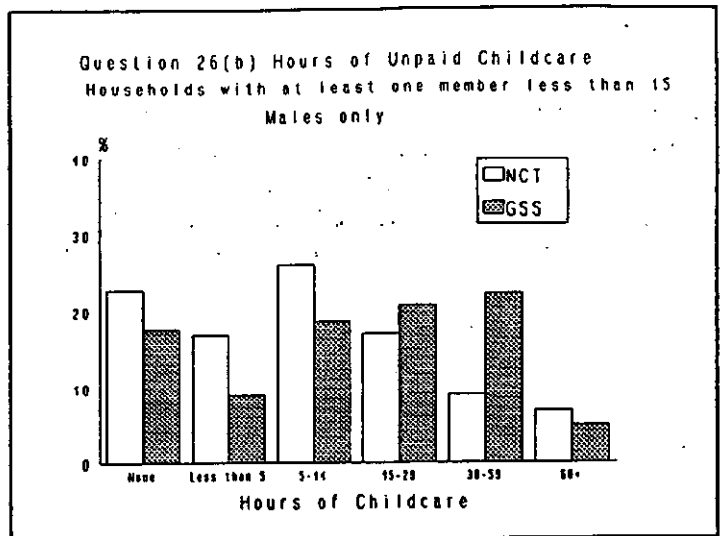
The number of hours of unpaid childcare reported by respondents generally followed predictable patterns, the most important of these being that they varied considerably by the presence and age of children in the respondent's household. In households where no children under 15 were present, over 80% of respondents reported "none" for hours of childcare. In households with at least one child under 15, the proportion of respondents answering "none" fell to 19% and in households with at least one child under 6, only 11% of respondents reported "none" for hours of childcare. Conversely, the proportion of respondents reporting 60 or more hours of childcare increased as the age of children in the household decreased. For childless households, only 1% of respondents reported doing 60 or more hours per week. This figure rose to 17% for households with at least one child under 15, and to 26% for the subset of households with at least one child under 6.

As expected, women reported more hours of unpaid childcare than men; married, separated and divorced respondents reported more hours of childcare than single or widowed respondents. Generally, the hours of childcare decreased as the respondent's (and the children's) age increased. Finally, those who worked full time in the paid labour market did fewer hours of childcare than those who worked part time, were unemployed, or not in the labour force.

Although the NCT results exhibited this internal consistency, when compared to the GSS a few disparities are evident. For example, the NCT estimates of hours of unpaid childcare appear under-reported for the long hours categories of 30 to 59 hours and 60 hours or more. A possible explanation of this apparent under-reporting may be derived from the respondent's written comments. Some respondents wrote that they had difficulty separating their childcare and housework activities. The comments suggest that an instruction should have been added to the question to inform respondents that they should report overlapping hours of housework and childcare in both parts (a) and (b). Interestingly, for women, there was an over-reporting of 60 hours or more of housework on the NCT compared to the GSS; it may be that respondents chose to report their combined activities in part (a) only.



Another factor which is conceivably at work here is proxy reporting. Proxy reporting occurs when a questionnaire is filled out by one household member on behalf of all other household members. Proxy respondents may not have full knowledge of the amount of unpaid activities performed by other household members. Previous studies have found, for example, that spouses tend to underestimate the time spent on unpaid work by their partners. (See B. Paillé, *A Note Concerning Proxy Reporting Effects on Estimations of Unpaid Work*, GSS internal report, July, 1993.) Proxy reporting is a fact of life in the census. In contrast, the GSS data utilized in this study were all obtained directly from the respondents.

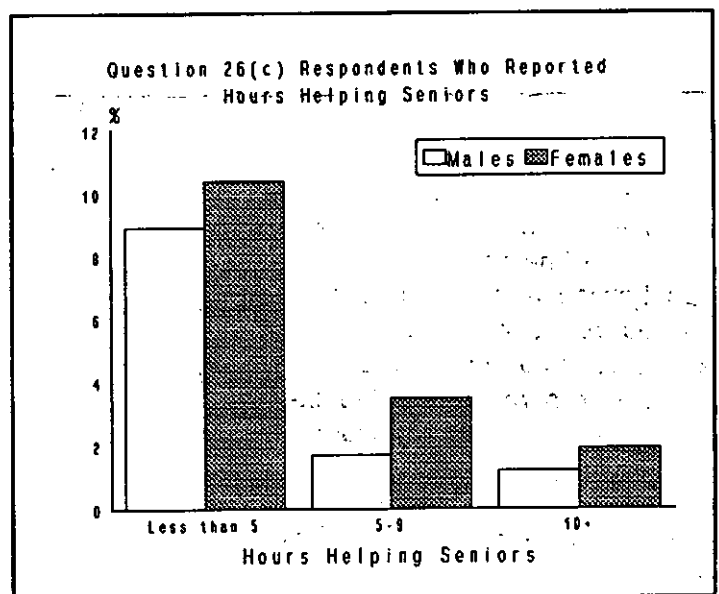


In the light of the previous studies, it may be that proxy reporting contributed to the lower incidence of long hours and the higher incidence of short hours of childcare when compared to the GSS.

Proxy reporting may also have an impact on the data obtained from other questions.

Question 26(c) Care or Assistance to Seniors

A high proportion of respondents (85%) answered "none" to Question 26(c); 10% of respondents reported fewer than 5 hours, while just over 4% reported more than 5 hours. Again, women reported more hours than men and married respondents more hours than those not married. Respondents aged 45 to 64 had the lowest proportion (80%) reporting "none" to this question; these respondents are most likely to have elderly relatives who may require help. Finally, those who worked full time at a paid job spent the least amount of hours providing care or assistance to seniors.

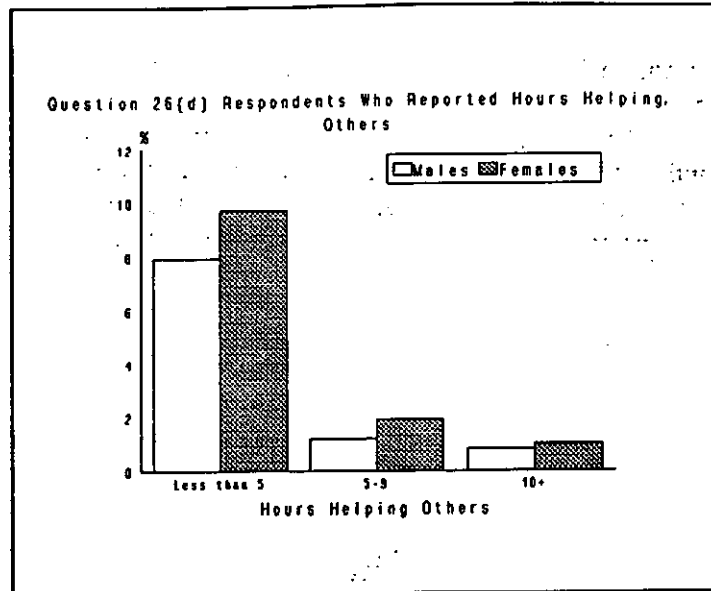


The GSS Time Use Survey cannot produce estimates to which the results of Question 26(c) can be compared. The closest data sources are the 1985 and 1990 General Social Surveys. (See, for example, the report *Family and Friendship Ties Among Canada's Seniors* (Catalogue No. 89-508), based on data from the 1985 GSS, and the November 1991 issue of *Info-Age*, published by the National Advisory Council on Aging, based on data from the 1990 GSS.) While not directly comparable, the NCT results are at least not inconsistent with those from the earlier surveys.

Question 26(d) Care or Assistance to Others

A high proportion of respondents (86%) also answered "none" to Question 26(d). Only 9% reported fewer than 5 hours while not even 3% reported more than 5 hours. Since there is no other data source to which these new data can be compared, it is not clear how valid the observed low incidence of this kind of work might be.

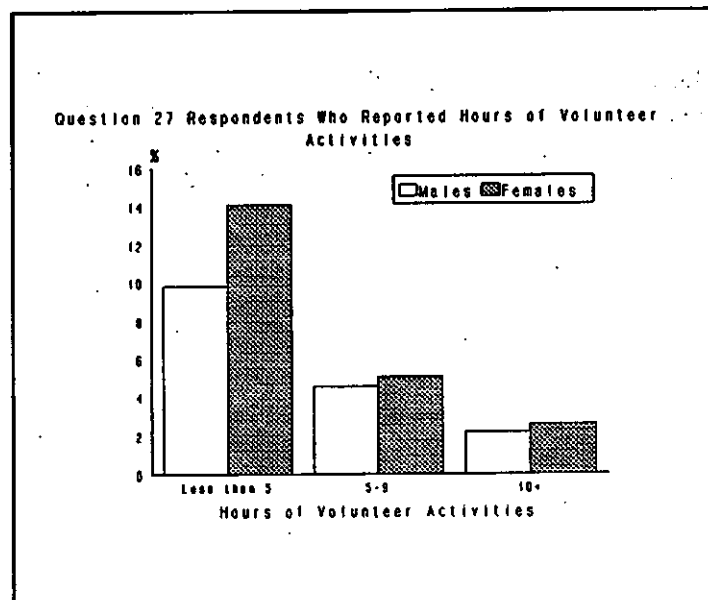
In addition, the results of this question were relatively "flat" when cross-tabulated by the respondent's sex, age, marital status, or paid labour market activity. This is in contrast with the other questions (particularly 26(a) and 26(b), and to a lesser extent 26(c)) where the incidence of the kind of unpaid work measured in each of those questions was appreciably higher or lower depending on the respondent's other characteristics. Again, since there is no other data source to which these new data might be compared, it is not clear how this "flatness" in the responses should be interpreted. It may be that providing unpaid care or assistance to persons other than children or seniors does not, in reality, vary much from one person to another. Alternatively, it may be that the intention of question 26(d) was so unclear to the respondents that the results have very limited intrinsic meaning.



Of the four parts of Question 26, part (d) had the highest non-response.

Question 27 Volunteer Activities

Although not as high as Questions 26(c) or 26(d), the proportion of respondents who reported "none" for hours of volunteer work was some 79%. Another 12% reported fewer than 5 hours of volunteer work in the reference week, while just over 7% reported 5 hours or more. As in the case of other unpaid work activities, women did more volunteer work than men. Some variation by age and marital status was also evident: married and widowed respondents did more volunteer work than those who were separated, divorced or unmarried; those aged 15 to 24 were much less likely to do volunteer work than respondents in other age categories.



Information from the 1987 Survey of Volunteer Activity suggests that the NCT results for Question 27, although not directly comparable, are not out of line. The volunteer survey found 27% of Canadians did some volunteer work over a one-year period. Given that the NCT question refers to volunteer activities only in the week prior to the survey, and given that not all volunteer work is done every week, the NCT estimate of 20% of respondents reporting volunteer activities would appear to be compatible with the 1987 Survey of Volunteer Activity.

Respondent Reaction and Difficulties

Step 10 on the NCT questionnaire asked respondents to provide written comments regarding difficulties or objections they may have had regarding any of the NCT questions. Respondent reaction to the unpaid work questions was assessed using their write-in comments. Very low percentages of respondents indicated that they found the unpaid work questions either difficult or objectionable (fewer than 1 percent in each case). However, out of the 48 questions on the NCT, the unpaid work questions ranked third both in terms of difficulty and respondent objections.

The objections cited by respondents expressed doubt about the information that was being collected - "*One week specifically is ludicrous*"; "*Answers are only guesses - not accurate info for stats*"; and inability to see the relevance of such questions - "*I fail to see how many hours of housework I do relates to the census*"; "*These are personal things and no one else's business but our own*"; "*This type of question is a waste of time*".

Among the difficulties reported by respondents were: problems of recall - "*Trying to remember what you did in the previous week is difficult unless you know in advance and kept some type of records*"; difficulty in estimating hours - "*It is difficult to estimate the number of hours spent looking after children and doing housework chores since they are done simultaneously*"; and problems with how to report overlapping hours of housework and childcare - "*hard to estimate actual hours also, how do you count hours if you are watching kids and doing housework at the same time? Do you double count the hours?*"

Putting these comments into perspective, it should be noted that the respondents were not asked to identify which questions they approved of. Perhaps more importantly, the vast majority of participants in the focus groups, which were held prior to the NCT, were in favour of including questions on unpaid work in the census.

Summary

Of the five unpaid work questions on the NCT, some yielded demonstrably better data than others. For some of the Questions, such as 26(d), the absence of alternative data through which assessments could be performed, limited the conclusions that could be drawn.

That having been said, while the range and quality of the NCT data cannot be expected to match those from far more complex instruments such as time use surveys, with the possible exception of 26(d), taken as a group the NCT unpaid work estimates seem to exhibit a plausible coherence.

NCT Report 20

Household and Volunteer Activities

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present the evaluation of the new unpaid work questions as tested on the 1993 National Census Test. The focus of the evaluation will be on the ability of the questions to collect meaningful, reliable data on unpaid activities. It will also look at the issues of respondent reaction to, and comprehension of, such questions.

The ability of the questions to collect meaningful and reliable data will be evaluated by looking at:

- the distribution of responses to the unpaid work questions by themselves to determine if the hours categories are adequate, for example, to ensure that open-ended categories such as '10 hours or more' do not contain an excessive proportion of respondents;
- the reasonableness of the distributions of the unpaid work questions when cross-tabulated by other census variables such as, age, sex, marital status, labour force status and hours of paid work;
- the comparability of the results with other sources of data on unpaid work, namely, the 1992 General Social Survey (GSS), the 1987 Survey of Volunteer Activity, and to a lesser extent, the 1990 GSS.

The following will be used to evaluate respondent comprehension of, and reaction to the unpaid work questions:

- non-response to one or all parts of question 26 and question 27;
- respondent comments taken from Step 10 on the questionnaire.

The results for each question will be presented individually in the order in which they appeared on the questionnaire, followed by a discussion of non-response and respondent reaction.

2. Background

Statistics Canada first tested a question on unpaid work in the mid 1970s for possible inclusion on the 1981 Census. Prior to the 1991 Census, Statistics Canada tested a set of questions on unpaid household work, childcare and volunteer activities. In both cases, the unpaid work questions were unsuccessful because of unclear wording and definitions which caused respondents difficulty in knowing what activities to include, how to estimate the number of hours and how to report hours of overlapping activities such as housework and childcare.

To address these problems, further research was conducted in conjunction with planning for the 1996 Census. An interdepartmental committee was formed, made up of representatives from Statistics Canada, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the National Advisory Council on Aging (Health Canada), the Farm Women's Bureau (Agriculture Canada), the Voluntary Action Directorate (Heritage Canada) and Status of Women Canada. From the beginning, this committee was involved in the questionnaire development process including identifying the most important issues related to unpaid work, formulating possible questions, participating in the testing of draft questions and in the reformulating and refining of the final set of questions to be included in the National Census Test (NCT). Finally, the interdepartmental committee was also consulted on the evaluation of the 1993 NCT results.

The development of the unpaid work questions was an intensive process. Putting aside previous efforts by Statistics Canada, the committee started anew to create a set of questions. A great deal of effort was spent in the development of their content and wording. Potential questions were pre-tested using a combination of one-on-one interviews and focus groups. These focus groups were designed to include respondents with a variety of backgrounds and experience, for example, women and men from urban and rural areas, francophones and anglophones, immigrants, respondents with disabled children and senior citizens. In these focus groups, participants were asked to complete a draft version of the census questionnaire containing the unpaid work questions. They then discussed their experiences in filling out the questionnaire. In all, 11 such groups were observed by the committee members. These groups were instrumental in identifying confusing or ambiguous question wording and instructions and suggesting possible improvements.

The results of the focus group testing were used to finalize the questions included on the 1993 NCT. In all, five questions were tested. They asked for the number of hours spent in the week prior to the census test on the following unpaid activities:

- housework/home maintenance
- childcare
- providing care or assistance to seniors
- providing care or assistance to others
- volunteer work through an organization.

Appendix 1 shows the questions as they appeared on the NCT questionnaire.

3. Data Sources

3.1 The 1993 National Census Test

The 1993 National Census Test (NCT) was the major field test of proposed questionnaire content for the 1996 Census. The NCT took place in November, 1993. Two different methods to sample households were used. Approximately 17,000 households were selected using a Labour Force Survey (LFS) based sample. The LFS sample was made up of persons living in the 10 provinces excluding the territories. Also excluded were persons living on Indian Reserves, full-time members of the Armed Forces and residents of institutions. The LFS sample is nationally and regionally representative.

An additional 4,000 households were selected as part of a Special Population Sample. This sample was made up of twelve special samples consisting of certain ethnic groups residing in large metropolitan centres.

To facilitate the analysis of the NCT data, the variables age and sex were imputed for non-response. That is, records with missing values for these variables were assigned a response. For the other variables such as, marital status, labour force status and the unpaid work questions, missing values were left as 'not stated'. In the actual census, these variables would also be imputed for non-response.

The data presented in this paper are based on the LFS sample only. Only respondents 15 years of age and over were required to answer the questions on unpaid work.

3.2 The 1992 General Social Survey on Time Use

The 1992 General Social Survey (GSS) on Time Use provides a source of unpaid work data against which the census test results for housework and childcare can be compared. The 1992 GSS was conducted monthly from January to December 1992 and asked questions on the amount of time spent on unpaid household activities such as childcare, housework and home maintenance. The GSS sample consists of persons 15 years of age and over, living in the ten provinces excluding the territories. People living in institutions are excluded. Thus, the data are comparable with the Labour Force Survey portion of the NCT sample.

3.2.1 Differences Between the NCT and 1992 GSS Questions

The GSS was conducted once a month from January to December 1992. The NCT data are limited to the reference week (November 8th, 1993) of the test. Therefore, seasonal changes in unpaid activities will be accounted for in the GSS, but not in the NCT. This can be an important factor in the collection of information on home maintenance activities and volunteer activities.

The GSS collects data on only one respondent from each household. This respondent is asked questions directly about his/her hours of unpaid work. In the NCT, unpaid work activities are reported for all household members aged 15 and over, however, in the majority of cases, one member answers the questionnaire for the other members of the household. The effect of proxy reporting on the results of NCT questions on unpaid work must be considered.

The GSS asked two separate questions on unpaid household work: the number of hours spent doing housework; and the number of hours spent doing home maintenance. Respondents provided the specific number of hours rather than a range as was done on the NCT. The questions on the GSS concerned unpaid work done for the respondents household only; the NCT questions could refer to the respondents household or the household of others as long as the work was unpaid. It is likely, however, that the majority of work reported in the NCT refers to the respondents household only.

In the GSS, only respondents in households with at least one member under age 15 are asked the question on unpaid childcare; childcare is limited to children in the household. The NCT question on childcare pertains to any child, age unspecified, and whether or not the child is a member of the household as long as the childcare activity was unpaid.

The remaining NCT questions on unpaid care or assistance for seniors, for others and unpaid volunteer work for an organization, have no equivalents in the GSS.

3.3 The Survey of Volunteer Activity

The Survey of Volunteer Activity was conducted by Statistics Canada as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey on behalf of the Secretary of State of Canada. It collected information on the volunteer activities of Canadians over the period November 1, 1986 to October 31, 1987. The sample consisted of persons aged 15 and over in all 10 provinces excluding the territories. People living on Indian reserves, full-time members of the Armed Forces and residents of institutions were also excluded.

The Survey of Volunteer Activity asks about the respondent's volunteer activities over a one year period; the NCT asks only about the respondent's volunteer activities during the week prior to the test. While there are no questions allowing for direct comparison between the two surveys, information from the volunteer survey can give perspective to the NCT results.

4. NCT Results

4.1 Question 26(a) Number of Hours of Housework/Home Maintenance

Table 1 shows the distribution of responses to question 26(a). Overall, the data appear appropriately distributed through the hours categories. About 12% of respondents reported doing no housework/home maintenance in the week preceding the census test, while the highest proportion (30%) reported 5 to 14 hours. Only 5% of respondents reported 60 or more hours. It would seem that 60 hours is an appropriate cut-off for hours of unpaid housework.

By sex, 16% of males and 8% of females answered 'none' to this question. At the other extreme, almost 5% of respondents reported doing 60 or more hours of housework; almost 8% of women gave this response compared to only 1.5% of men. Overall, women reported more hours of housework/home maintenance than men: 50% of women did 15 hours of housework or more compared to almost 22% of men. That women report more hours of household work than men is consistent with many current findings on the unpaid work of men and women.

Table 1 Question 26(a) Number of Hours of Unpaid Housework

Number of Hours of Unpaid Housework	Total (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
Not Stated	1.4	1.4	1.5
None	12.1	16.1	8.3
Less Than 5 Hours	20.8	28.5	13.5
5 to 14 Hours	29.5	32.5	26.7
15 to 29 Hours	19.3	14.4	24.0
30 to 59 Hours	12.0	5.6	18.2
60 Hours or More	4.8	1.5	7.9

The distribution of responses to question 26(a) was also found to be consistent with respondent characteristics of age and marital status (Tables 2 and 3): respondents aged 25 to 44 and 45 to 64 reported more hours of unpaid housework than those aged 15 to 24 or 65 and over; married, separated or divorced respondents also reported more hours of unpaid housework than those who were widowed or single.

Table 2 Question 26(a) Number of Hours of Unpaid Housework by Marital Status

Number of Hours of Unpaid Housework	Not Stated (%)	Married (%)	Separated/ Divorced (%)	Widowed (%)	Never Married (%)
Not Stated	25.7	1.2	1.2	2.2	1.3
None	4.9	8.6	9.6	20.1	17.9
Less Than 5 Hours	10.8	13.9	18.5	12.7	35.6
5 to 14 Hours	30.6	29.8	32.3	24.6	29.2
15 to 29 Hours	11.9	23.6	22.0	23.4	10.3
30 to 59 Hours	11.7	16.4	12.2	13.1	4.0
60 Hours or More	4.6	6.6	4.3	4.0	1.7

Table 3 Question 26(a) Number of Hours of Unpaid Housework by Age

Number of Hours of Unpaid Housework	15 to 24 Years (%)	25 to 44 Years (%)	45 to 64 Years (%)	65 Years and Over (%)
Not Stated	1.6	1.0	1.5	2.4
None	19.7	8.0	10.2	18.5
Less Than 5 Hours	41.9	18.2	15.4	12.9
5 to 14 Hours	25.7	33.0	30.1	23.0
15 to 29 Hours	7.6	21.4	22.3	22.0
30 to 59 Hours	2.5	12.3	15.2	16.9
60 Hours or More	1.1	6.0	5.4	4.4

Table 4 looks at the number of hours of housework/home maintenance by labour force status. Generally, one would expect that employed persons would have less time to spend on housework and, therefore, would report fewer hours. Table 4 shows a lower proportion of employed respondents (10%) reporting 'none' for hours of housework compared to respondents not in the labour force (17%). However, the not in the labour force category includes young persons going to school full-time and retired persons; two groups which, we have seen from the age data, report lower numbers of hours of housework. On the other hand, respondents not in the labour force were also more likely to report 30 to 59 hours and more than 60 hours of unpaid housework, than employed respondents.

Table 4 also shows the number of hours of paid work for respondents who were employed during the week of the census test. Respondents who worked more than 30 hours in the reference week, were less likely to report 30 hours or more of housework than those who worked less than 30 hours in the reference week. While it would be expected that an increase in the number or paid hours of work would leave less time for unpaid work, it should be pointed out that the majority of part-time workers are women, many of whom work part time in order to meet the demands of housework and childcare. To some extent, the separation of paid work into part-time and full-time hours is a further reflection of the differences in the number of hours of housework performed by men and women.

Table 4 Question 26(a) Number of Hours of Unpaid Housework by Labour Force Status¹ and Number of Hours of Paid Work

Number of Hours of Unpaid Housework	Not in Labour Force (%)	Unemployed (%)	Employed (%)	Employed <30 Hours ² (%)	Employed 30 Hours or More (%)
Not Stated	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.4
None	16.6	10.7	9.5	8.7	9.1
Less Than 5 Hours	17.1	18.1	23.7	25.1	23.7
5 to 14 Hours	22.5	24.7	35.2	26.5	38.2
15 to 29 Hours	19.3	19.6	19.8	19.0	20.3
30 to 59 Hours	16.5	18.7	8.7	15.3	6.5
60 Hours or More	7.3	7.7	2.7	5.2	1.8

See footnotes at the end of this report.

Table 5 compares the distribution of hours of unpaid housework/home maintenance between the NCT and GSS for males and females. The hours reported for the two questions on the GSS have been added together for the comparison. Overall, the NCT shows a higher proportion of respondents reporting 'none' for hours of housework (12% vs 8%), as well as a higher proportion of respondents reporting 60 hours or more (5% vs 1%). For women, 8% reported 60 hours or more on the NCT compared to 3% for the GSS. On the other hand, fewer respondents in the NCT reported 5 to 14 hours of housework compared to the GSS (30% vs 35%).

Table 5 Number of Hours of Unpaid Housework Comparing the NCT and GSS

Number of Hours of Unpaid housework	Total		Males		Females	
	NCT (%)	GSS (%)	NCT (%)	GSS (%)	NCT (%)	GSS (%)
Not Stated	1.4	3.7	1.4	2.9	1.5	4.6
None	12.1	8.3	16.1	11.7	8.3	5.1
Less Than 5 Hours	20.8	20.6	28.5	27.9	13.5	13.6
5 to 14 Hours	29.5	34.3	32.5	37.8	26.7	31.0
15 to 29 Hours	19.3	21.0	14.4	14.9	24.0	27.0
30 to 59 Hours	12.0	10.5	5.5	4.4	18.2	16.3
60 Hours or More	4.8	1.5	1.5	0.5	7.9	2.5

4.2 Question 26(b) Number of Hours of Childcare

In analyzing the data on hours of childcare, the presence and age of children in the household must obviously be taken into consideration. Table 6 compares the distribution of responses to question 26(b) for all households to respondents in households with: no members less than age 15; at least one member less than age 15; and at least one member less than age 6. It is obvious from this table that there is a direct relationship between the presence of children, and especially young children, in the household and the number of hours of childcare.

The proportion of respondents reporting 'none' for hours of childcare drops from a high of 82% for households with no children under 15 years of age to 19% for households with at least one child under 15, and to 11% for households with at least one child under 6 years of age. At the other extreme, less than 1% of respondents with no children under 15 in the household reported 60 hours or more of childcare, while 17% of respondents with at least one child under 15 and 26% of respondents with at least one child under 6 in the household reported 60 hours or more of childcare.

Table 6 Question 26(b) Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare by Presence and Age of Children in the Household

Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare	All Households (%)	No Children in Household (%)	At Least One Child <15 (%)	At Least One Child <6 (%)
Not Stated	1.7	2.0	1.2	0.9
None	60.6	81.9	18.8	10.7
Less Than 5 Hours	9.2	7.9	11.7	7.6
5 to 14 Hours	10.3	4.9	20.7	18.2
15 to 29 Hours	7.0	1.8	17.1	18.2
30 to 59 Hours	5.3	1.0	13.8	18.3
60 Hours or More	5.9	0.4	16.7	26.0

Table 7 shows the distribution of responses to question 26(b), by sex, for households with at least one member less than 15 years of age. Again, women tend to report more hours of childcare than men: 26% of women spent 60 hours or more caring for children compared to 7% of men. When households with at least one member less than 6 years of age are considered (Table 8), the number of hours of childcare increases for both men and women, however 41% of women report 60 hours or more of childcare compared to 9% of men.

Table 7 Question 26(b) Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare
(Households With at Least One Member Less Than 15 Years of Age)

Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare	Total (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
Not Stated	1.2	1.3	1.0
None	18.8	22.8	15.2
Less Than 5 Hours	11.7	17.0	7.1
5 to 14 Hours	20.7	26.0	15.9
15 to 29 Hours	17.1	17.9	17.1
30 to 59 Hours	13.8	9.1	17.9
60 Hours or More	16.7	6.7	25.8

Table 8 Question 26(b) Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare
(Households With at Least One Member Under 6 Years of Age)

Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare	Total (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
Not Stated	0.9	1.1	0.8
None	10.7	13.3	8.5
Less Than 5 Hours	7.6	12.9	3.1
5 to 14 Hours	18.2	29.0	9.0
15 to 29 Hours	18.2	22.2	14.9
30 to 59 Hours	18.3	13.0	22.8
60 Hours or More	26.0	8.6	40.9

The remaining tables on number of hours of childcare are limited to households with at least one member under 15 years of age. Tables 9 and 10 look at respondent characteristics of marital status and age. Again, the number of hours of childcare appear consistent with these characteristics. Married and separated or divorced respondents (who are more likely to have children in the household) report more hours of childcare than single or widowed respondents.

Over half (56%) of respondents aged 15 to 24 reported 'none' for hours of childcare despite living in a household with a child under 15. These respondents are most likely older brothers and sisters who would not be primarily responsible for childcare in the household. On the other hand, young families with small children can also be found in this age group; it had the second highest proportion (10%) reporting 60 hours or more of childcare. The changes in the distribution of hours of childcare between respondents aged 25 to 44 and 45 to 64 likely reflect changes in the ages of family members. Those aged 25 to 44 are more likely to have small children requiring more hours of childcare than those aged 45 to 64. Finally, of respondents aged 65 years and over, 47% reported 'none' for hours of childcare, while only 1% reported 60 or more hours in the reference week. These respondents are likely to be living with their adult children and their families and are not primarily responsible for childcare.

Table 9 Question 26(b) Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare by Marital Status
(Households With at Least One Member Less Than 15 Years of Age)

Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare	Not stated (%)	Married (%)	Separated/ Divorced (%)	Widowed (%)	Never Married (%)
Not Stated	19.1	0.8	0.6	0.5	1.7
None	23.6	10.0	12.7	37.8	45.4
Less Than 5 Hours	6.7	11.2	8.6	16.4	14.3
5 to 14 Hours	32.7	23.8	22.1	19.5	11.0
15 to 29 Hours	5.7	20.4	16.9	13.5	8.3
30 to 59 Hours	6.5	15.6	17.0	5.3	8.1
60 Hours or More	5.8	18.3	22.2	7.0	11.3

Table 10 Question 26(b) Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare by Age
(Households With at Least One Member Less Than 15 Years of Age)

Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare	15 to 24 Years (%)	25 to 44 Years (%)	45 to 64 Years (%)	65 Years and Over (%)
Not Stated	2.0	0.9	1.6	2.1
None	56.3	9.1	21.2	46.5
Less Than 5 Hours	15.6	9.7	18.3	17.8
5 to 14 Hours	7.2	22.7	28.9	13.0
15 to 29 Hours	4.6	20.2	16.4	15.0
30 to 59 Hours	4.1	17.2	7.9	4.6
60 Hours or More	10.2	20.3	5.8	1.1

The number of hours of unpaid childcare was compared to the respondents' labour force status and, for employed respondents, the number of hours of paid work (Table 11). Respondents 'not in the labour force' show patterns of childcare similar to that found for the age variable. Again this category is likely made up of a variety of respondents such as full time students, retired persons, as well as stay at home parents. Thus, this category shows the highest proportion of respondents who report no hours of childcare and the second highest proportion of respondents who report 60 or more hours of childcare in the reference week.

Table 11 Question 26(b) Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare by Labour Force Status¹ and Number of Hours of Paid Work

(Households With at Least One Member Less Than 15 Years of Age)

Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare	Not in Labour Force (%)	Unemployed (%)	Employed (%)	Employed <30 Hours ² (%)	Employed 30 Hours or More (%)
Not Stated	0.6	0.1	0.7	0.6	0.7
None	29.4	14.2	15.1	22.7	13.4
Less Than 5 Hours	9.1	10.8	13.0	11.3	13.7
5 to 14 Hours	12.2	16.2	24.8	15.7	27.8
15 to 29 Hours	11.1	14.0	19.8	13.1	21.7
30 to 59 Hours	11.7	18.4	14.1	14.9	13.9
60 Hours or More	25.8	26.3	12.5	21.8	8.9

See footnotes at the end of this report.

Unemployed and employed respondents had similar proportions (14% and 15%) reporting no hours of childcare, however, the unemployed were far more likely to report 60 or more hours (25%) than the employed (13%). When the number of hours of paid work is considered, patterns similar to those found for those not in the labour force are repeated for respondents working less than 30 hours: that is, high proportions of respondents reporting none and 60 or more hours. Not unexpectedly, those who worked 30 or more hours in the reference week were least likely to report 60 or more hours of childcare.

Finally, Table 12 compares the NCT results with those from the 1992 GSS. Compared with the GSS, the hours of childcare reported on the NCT appear under-estimated. Table 12 shows a higher proportion of respondents on the NCT reporting 'none' for the number of hours of childcare than on the GSS (19% vs 13%), while at the other extreme, the NCT has a lower proportion of respondents reporting '60 hours or more' (17% vs 22%) or even '30 to 59 hours' (14% vs 26%). For women, the differences between the NCT and the GSS are pronounced: 18% of women on the NCT reported '30 to 59 hours' of childcare compared to 30% on the GSS, while 26% of women on the NCT reported '60 hours or more' compared to 37% of women on the GSS.

Table 12 Hours of Unpaid Childcare Comparing the NCT and GSS
(Households With at Least One Member Less Than 15 Years of Age)

Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare	Total		Males		Females	
	NCT (%)	GSS (%)	NCT (%)	GSS (%)	NCT (%)	GSS (%)
Not Stated	1.2	5.9	1.3	6.8	1.0	5.0
None	18.8	12.7	22.8	17.7	15.2	8.2
Less Than 5 Hours	11.7	6.1	17.0	9.0	7.1	3.5
5 to 14 Hours	20.7	12.6	26.1	18.7	16.0	7.1
15 to 29 Hours	17.1	15.1	17.1	20.8	17.1	9.9
30 to 59 Hours	13.8	26.1	9.1	22.3	17.9	29.5
60 Hours or More	16.7	21.6	6.7	4.7	25.7	36.7

One explanation for the apparent under-reporting of hours of childcare on the NCT may be found in the respondents' written comments. Some respondents wrote that they had difficulty separating housework and childcare activities. The comments suggest that the format or wording of question 26 was unclear as to how the respondents should report overlapping activities. For example, if the respondent spent one hour preparing a meal and at the same time was looking after a child, then he/she should have reported one hour in both parts 26(a) and 26(b). To help respondents, perhaps an instruction should have been added to the question itself. Finally, it should be recalled that the proportion of women reporting 60 hours or more of housework was higher on the NCT than the GSS, further suggesting that respondents may have chosen to report their overlapping activities in part 26(a) only.

Another factor which would affect the NCT results is proxy reporting. Proxy reporting occurs when a questionnaire is filled out by one household member on behalf of other household members. The proxy respondent, however, may not have full knowledge of the amount of unpaid activities performed by other household members. Previous studies have found, for example, that spouses tend to underestimate the time spent by their partners (B. Paillé, A Note concerning Proxy Reporting Effects on Estimations of Unpaid Work, GSS internal report, July, 1993). Thus, it may be that proxy reporting contributed to the lower incidence of long hours and the higher incidence of short hours of childcare when compared to the GSS.

Proxy reporting is a fact of life in the census.

A detailed analysis of its effects on the estimates of hours of unpaid work is beyond the scope of this paper. It should be noted, however, that proxy reporting will have an impact on almost all data obtained from the census.

4.3 Question 26(c) Number of Hours Helping Seniors

Table 13 shows the distribution of responses to question 26(c) by sex. What is immediately noticeable is the high proportion (almost 85%) of respondents who answered 'none' for this question. Women (83%) were slightly less likely than men (87%) to report no hours. Of those who reported hours, 10% of women and 9% of men reported that they helped seniors less than 5 hours in the previous week. Only 4% of men and 6% of women reported spending more than 5 hours helping seniors.

Table 13 Question 26(c) Number of Hours Helping Seniors

Number of Hours Helping Seniors	Total (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
Not Stated	1.5	1.6	1.4
None	84.6	86.5	82.8
Less Than 5 Hours	9.7	8.9	10.4
5 to 9 Hours	2.6	1.7	3.5
10 Hours or More	1.6	1.2	1.9

Tables 14 and 15 show the number of hours caring for seniors by marital status and age. Overall, those who were married spent the most time caring for seniors, while those who were never married spent the least. A relatively high proportion of those who were widowed (4%) reported 5-9 hours caring for seniors. By age, 91% of respondents aged 15 to 24 reported 'none' for this question compared to 80% of persons aged 45 to 64 years. Persons in the 45 to 64 year age category reported the most hours of care for seniors. These respondents are most likely to have elderly parents or relatives who may require help.

Table 14 Question 26(c) Number of Hours Helping Seniors by Marital Status

Number of Hours Helping Seniors	Not Stated (%)	Married (%)	Separated/ Divorced (%)	Widowed (%)	Never Married (%)
Not Stated	32.9	1.2	1.3	2.0	1.4
None	55.0	82.1	84.9	84.4	89.7
Less Than 5 Hours	8.8	11.8	9.7	7.7	6.3
5 to 9 Hours	2.9	3.1	2.1	4.1	1.7
10 Hours or More	0.5	1.9	1.9	1.9	0.8

Table 15 Question 26(c) Number of Hours Helping Seniors by Age

Number of Hours Helping Seniors	15 to 24 Years (%)	25 to 44 Years (%)	45 to 64 Years (%)	65 Years or More (%)
Not Stated	1.7	1.2	1.4	2.6
None	91.1	85.3	79.9	83.4
Less Than 5 Hours	6.1	9.9	12.6	8.2
5 to 9 Hours	1.0	2.5	3.4	3.5
10 Hours or More	0.2	1.2	2.9	2.3

By labour force status (Table 16), the NCT found that employed respondents reported fewer hours for this question than the unemployed or those not in the labour force. However, when the employed are further broken down by hours of paid work, those who worked less than 30 hours in the reference week actually reported the highest number of hours helping seniors. These findings are in part due to the variety of respondents who make up the not in the labour force category as has already been discussed in the section on childcare.

Table 16 Question 26(c) Number of Hours Helping Seniors by Labour Force Status¹ and Number of Hours of Paid Work

Number of Hours Helping Seniors	Not in Labour Force (%)	Unemployed (%)	Employed (%)	Employed <30 Hours ² (%)	Employed 30 Hours or More (%)
Not Stated	0.7	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.5
None	84.8	84.4	85.8	83.1	86.4
Less Than 5 Hours	9.2	10.4	10.2	12.3	9.8
5 to 9 Hours	3.1	3.4	2.3	2.6	2.2
10 Hours or More	2.2	1.7	1.2	1.3	1.1

See footnotes at the end of this report.

The low number of respondents who reported any hours of help to seniors is a concern, but does not necessarily indicate that the data are erroneous. To investigate this further, studies using data from the 1985 and 1990 GSS (Stone and Fletcher, 1991; Info-Age, 1991; Stone, 1988) on patterns of support were consulted. While not directly comparable, these studies do suggest some factors which may affect patterns of help to seniors. For example, the number of hours children spend helping their parents - probably the most frequent kind of help reported for this question - will depend on the proportion of respondents with at least one parent still alive. Those aged 15 to 25 (because their parents are not likely to be seniors) and 65 and over (because their parents are not likely to be alive) are likely to report fewer hours of help to seniors.

Secondly, the physical proximity of parents to their children will affect the kind of help given to parents and the frequency with which it is given. Children whose parents live with them are able to provide more hours of support (and may have to if the parents are in poor health) than children whose parents live in another city. Data from the 1990 GSS found only 8% of persons aged 25 to 44 lived with a parent (age of parent unspecified), while only about 5% of those aged 45 to 64 and 3% of those over 65 lived with a parent. Thus, the proportion of persons in a position to provide frequent support to parents is quite small. A second study looking at children whose parents did not live in the same home, found that between 5 and 10% of those aged 25 to 44 and about 10% aged 45 to 64 reported 'relatively high levels of help' to parents. (Note: High levels of help were defined as weekly help with one of, or monthly help with two of, the following items: household maintenance; housework; financial help; personal care; transportation; and childcare).

The findings from the 1990 GSS are limited as they only consider help to parents and the forms of help surveyed do not include emotional support such as visiting or providing companionship. However, they do suggest that only a small proportion of the population provides help to seniors once a week. Thus, the chances that such activities occurred in the reference week of the NCT and were 'eligible' to be reported is likely to be small. Furthermore, the 1990 GSS data suggest that few respondents will report significant numbers of hours helping seniors. In this respect, the NCT results do not contradict the findings of these earlier studies.

4.4 Question 26(d) Number of Hours Helping Persons Other than Children or Seniors

The distribution of responses by sex to question 26(d) are shown in Table 17. Like question 26(c) the proportion of respondents answering 'none' to this question is very high at 86%. Only 9% of respondents reported less than 5 hours, while not even 3% reported 5 hours or more. Women were slightly more likely than men to report hours helping others.

Table 17 Question 26(d) Number of Hours Helping Others

Number of Hours Helping Others	Total (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
Not Stated	2.6	2.5	2.6
None	86.2	87.6	85.0
Less Than 5 Hours	8.8	7.9	9.7
5 to 9 Hours	1.6	1.2	1.9
10 Hours or More	0.9	0.8	1.0

By marital status (Table 18), about 86% of married and separated or divorced respondents reported 'none' for this question compared with 88% of those who were widowed or never married. Only 8% of widowed respondents reported spending time helping others. This may be related to the fact that the widowed had the highest rate of non-response for this question at 4%.

Table 18 Question 26(d) Number of Hours Helping Others by Marital Status

Number of Hours Helping Others	Not Stated (%)	Married (%)	Separated/ Divorced (%)	Widowed (%)	Never Married (%)
Not Stated	37.3	2.0	2.1	4.0	2.5
None	53.9	85.9	85.6	87.9	87.5
Less Than 5 Hours	7.5	9.4	8.9	5.8	8.1
5 to 9 Hours	1.3	1.7	2.1	1.4	1.2
10 Hours or More	0.0	0.9	1.2	1.0	0.7

Similar results are found when the data are cross-tabulated by age (Table 19). Again the proportion of respondents reporting 'none' did not vary significantly across the age categories. Those aged 25 to 44 years reported the most hours helping others, while those aged 65 and over reported the least. The 65 and over category also had a high proportion of non-response at almost 5%. These results suggest that this question may have been particularly problematic for the seniors.

Table 19 Question 26(d) Number of Hours Helping Others by Age

Number of Hours Helping Others	15 to 24 Years (%)	25 to 44 Years (%)	45 to 64 Years (%)	65 Years or More (%)
Not Stated	3.1	1.6	2.7	4.6
None	87.2	85.0	86.6	87.9
Less Than 5 Hours	8.1	10.5	7.9	6.0
5 to 9 Hours	1.1	1.9	1.6	1.0
10 Hours or More	0.4	1.0	1.3	0.5

Table 20 shows the number of hours helping others by the respondent's labour force status. Those not in the labour force had the lowest proportion reporting hours helping others even when compared to respondents who worked more than 30 hours at a paid job. As in the case of question 26(c), those who worked less than 30 hours at a paid job reported the most hours for this question. Again, it should be mentioned that the majority of those working less than 30 hours are women. To some extent, the difference in the number of hours of care or assistance performed by part-time and full-time workers is a further reflection of the difference in the number of hours reported by women and men.

Table 20 Question 26(d) Number of Hours Helping Others by Labour Force Status¹ and Number of Hours of Paid Work

Number of Hours Helping Others	Not in Labour Force (%)	Unemployed (%)	Employed (%)	Employed <30 Hours ² (%)	Employed 30 Hours or More (%)
Not Stated	1.9	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.3
None	88.1	84.8	87.0	83.7	88.0
Less Than 5 Hours	7.6	10.7	9.4	12.4	8.5
5 to 9 Hours	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.5
10 Hours or More	0.8	1.7	0.8	0.9	0.7

See footnotes at the end of this report.

The high proportion of respondents who reported 'none' to this question, plus the relatively high proportion of non-response may indicate low quality data. Moreover, the results of this question were relatively 'flat' when cross-tabulated by the respondent's sex, age, marital status, or paid labour market activity. The flatness of responses to question 26(d) relative to the other unpaid work questions is illustrated in Table 21. The figures contained in Table 21 have been derived using data which has been presented throughout this report. For each of the respondent characteristics examined, the range between the highest and lowest percentage reported was calculated for each of the hours categories. For example, under the characteristic of sex, the range between the highest and lowest percentage reporting 'none' for question 26(a) - 7.8 percentage points - is the difference between the percentages for males and females as reported in Table 1 of this report. Similarly, for the characteristic of age, the range between the highest and lowest percentages of respondents reporting 'none' to question 26(a) is derived using the data in Table 3. Table 3 shows that when question 26(a) is cross-classified by age, the percentage reporting 'none' ranges from 8% for those aged 25 to 44 years, to 19.7% for those aged 15 to 24 years. The difference between the two figures - 11.7 percentage points - appears in Table 21 in the 'none' column for Age, question 26(a).

Table 21 shows that in almost all cases, question 26(d) had the smallest range or variability between the highest and lowest percentage responses compared to the other unpaid work questions. The exception is the results for the characteristic of labour force status, where 26(c), care or assistance to seniors, shows less variability for the hours categories of 'none' and 'less than 5 hours' than found for 26(d). Even so, at 3 percentage points, the range between the highest and lowest percentages is still relatively small.

In the absence of alternative data sources for comparison, it is not clear how these results should be interpreted. It is possible that providing care to other persons does not vary much from one person to another. Alternatively, the question may have been too ambiguous and perhaps too broad with respect to the kinds of activities which should be included and too broad with respect to the characteristics (e.g., age) of the recipient of the respondent's help. For example, while the question itself asked about 'care and assistance' to others, the examples provided were of activities of short duration and which may take place less than once a week (thus, the concentration of responses in 'none' and less than 5 hours). Activities of a more intense nature such as the care of an adult with a disability, may not have been included by respondents. Similarly, the wording 'persons other than children or seniors' may have seemed so vague, that respondents overlooked including activities done for their spouse or other close family members.

Table 21 Comparison of the Unpaid Work Questions by Respondent Characteristics, Showing the Range Between the Highest and Lowest Percentage of Responses for the Hours Categories

Respondent Characteristics by Question	Hours			
	None	< 5	5-9	10+
Sex				
26 a)	7.8	15.0	-	-
26 b)	7.6	9.9	-	-
26 c)	3.7	1.5	1.8	0.7
26 d)	2.6	1.9	0.7	0.2
27	5.0	4.3	0.5	0.4
Marital Status³				
26 a)	11.5	22.9	-	-
26 b)	35.4	7.8	-	-
26 c)	7.6	5.5	2.4	1.1
26 d)	2.3	3.6	0.9	0.5
27	11.3	7.0	3.4	2.0
Age				
26 a)	11.7	29.0	-	-
26 b)	47.2	8.6	-	-
26 c)	11.2	6.5	2.5	2.6
26 d)	2.9	4.5	0.9	0.9
27	10.9	6.8	3.4	2.6
Labour Force Status⁴				
26 a)	7.1	6.6	-	-
26 b)	14.3	3.9	-	-
26 c)	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.0
26 d)	1.1	1.1	0.1	0.9
27	6.3	5.3	0.9	0.4

See footnotes at the end of this report.

4.5 Question 27 Number of Hours of Volunteer Work

The results of question 27 are shown in Table 22. While not as high as questions 26(c) and (d), the proportion of respondents who reported 'none' for hours of volunteer work was 79%. Again, males (82%) were more likely to report 'none' than females (77%). Of those who reported hours of volunteer work, the majority reported 'less than 5 hours' in the previous week.

Table 22 Question 27 Number of Hours of Volunteer Work

Number of Hours of Volunteer Work	Total (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
Not Stated	1.4	1.5	1.4
None	79.3	81.9	76.9
Less Than 5 Hours	12.0	9.8	14.1
5 to 9 Hours	4.8	4.6	5.1
10 Hours or More	2.4	2.2	2.6

Tables 23 and 24 show considerable variation by marital status and age. Those who were married had the highest proportion, overall, reporting hours of volunteer work, while those who were never married had the least. The widowed, on the other hand, had the highest proportions reporting 5 to 9 hours and 10 hours or more of volunteer activities. By age, those 15 to 24 were least likely to do volunteer work, while those 45 to 64 were most likely. Respondents 65 years and over, however, had the highest proportion reporting 10 or more hours of volunteer activity in the reference week.

Table 23 Question 27 Number of Hours of Volunteer Work by Marital Status

Number of Hours of Volunteer Work	Not Stated (%)	Married (%)	Separated/ Divorced (%)	Widowed (%)	Never Married (%)
Not Stated	34.8	1.1	1.2	1.9	1.3
None	44.5	75.5	81.2	77.7	86.8
Less Than 5 Hours	19.2	14.6	11.7	10.5	7.6
5 to 9 Hours	0.9	6.0	3.3	6.4	3.0
10 Hours or More	0.6	2.8	2.6	3.4	1.4

Table 24 Question 27 Number of Hours of Volunteer Work by Age

Number of Hours of Volunteer Work	15 to 24 Years (%)	25 to 44 Years (%)	45 to 64 Years (%)	65 Years or More (%)
Not Stated	1.6	1.0	1.5	2.5
None	87.6	77.9	76.7	78.3
Less Than 5 Hours	6.9	13.7	13.3	10.9
5 to 9 Hours	2.9	4.7	6.3	4.7
10 Hours or More	1.0	2.6	2.3	3.6

Finally, those who were employed, whether part-time or full-time, were more likely to report hours of unpaid volunteer work than those who were unemployed or not in the labour force (Table 25).

Table 25 Question 27 Number of Hours of Volunteer Work by Labour Force Status¹ and Number of Hours of Paid Work

Number of Hours of Volunteer Work	Not in Labour Force (%)	Unemployed (%)	Employed (%)	Employed <30 Hours ² (%)	Employed 30 Hours or More (%)
Not Stated	0.7	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.4
None	81.8	84.6	78.3	76.5	78.3
Less Than 5 Hours	10.2	8.6	13.9	14.1	14.1
5 to 9 Hours	4.6	4.3	5.2	6.3	5.0
10 Hours or More	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.2

See footnotes at the end of this report.

While there is no data available for direct comparison, information from the 1987 Survey of Volunteer Activity can help put the NCT results in perspective. The volunteer survey found that during its reference year (November 1, 1986 to October 31, 1987), 27% of Canadians aged 15 and over participated in some form of volunteer activity. Given that some volunteer work is only performed during certain times of the year and/or that it may not be performed on a weekly basis, the figure of 20% of respondents reporting volunteer work on the NCT is not unreasonable; this may be the maximum number of respondents that could be expected to respond to a question on volunteer work using a time frame of one week.

The volunteer survey also found that the average weekly hours for volunteers was 3.7 hours. So again, it is not surprising that the majority of respondents who had hours of volunteer work, reported 'less than 5 hours' in the reference week.

5. Respondent Comprehension and Reaction

5.1 Non-response

Non-response to the NCT questions was estimated at two different points in the data collection process: after the questionnaire was returned by the respondent, but before the NCT interviewer had 'followed-up' the questionnaire for non-response; and after interviewer follow-up had taken place. Non-response rates taken before follow-up can help to identify questions which may be difficult for the respondent to answer or which may be offensive. The rates before follow-up are based on a sub-sample of the larger Labour Force Survey sample and consist of questionnaires mailed back to their respective Regional Offices before the NCT cut-off date.

Table 26 compares the non-response rates before and after follow-up. It shows, first of all, that interviewer follow-up played a significant role in reducing non-response. This reduction in non-response is probably much higher than could be achieved in the actual census. Many of the interviewers hired for the NCT had previous survey experience and were very effective at following-up missing questionnaire information. In contrast, interviewers for the census generally have little if any previous survey experience, nor do they have the time to be as thorough in follow-up.

Table 26 also shows that non-response increased for parts (b) through (d) of question 26 and then decreased for question 27. This pattern fits observations made by the interviewers that for questions divided into parts, respondents tend to answer only the first part of the question, leaving the remaining parts blank. This response problem was also observed for the questions on activity limitations. (It should be noted that similar observations regarding 'part-questions' have been made in previous censuses.)

Finally, of the five questions on unpaid work, non-response was highest for question 26(d) Hours helping Others. Before follow-up the non-response rate for this question was 10%; even after follow-up, non-response remained one percentage point higher than for the other unpaid work questions. Possible difficulties with question 26(d) have already been discussed in section 4.4.

Table 26 Comparison of Non-response Rates Before and After Interviewer Follow-up - Unweighted Data

Question	Non-response Before Follow-up (%)	Non-response After Follow-up (%)
Q26(a) Number of Hours of Unpaid Housework	5.4	1.5
Q26(b) Number of Hours of Unpaid Childcare	8.2	1.8
Q26(c) Number of Hours Helping Seniors	7.3	1.6
Q26(d) Number of Hours Helping Others	9.9	2.7
Q27 Number of Hours of Volunteer Work	6.4	1.6

5.2 Respondent Reaction and Difficulties

At the end of the NCT questionnaire, respondents were invited to provide written comments about any of the Census test questions which they found difficult and whether there were any questions to which they had objections.

Only 1,851 households reported difficulty with at least one of the test questions. Of these, 105 (less than 1% of all households) specifically mentioned the questions on household and volunteer work. Among the difficulties reported by respondents were: problems of recall - *"Trying to remember what you did in the previous week is difficult unless you know in advance and kept some type of records"*; difficulty in estimating hours - *"It is difficult to estimate the number of hours spent looking after children and doing housework chore since they are done simultaneously"*; and problems with how to report overlapping hours of housework and childcare - *"Hard to estimate actual hours also, how do you count hours if you are watching kids and doing housework at the same time? Do you double count the hours?"*

There were 2,824 households which objected to at least one of the test questions. Of these, 98 (again less than 1% of all households) objected to the questions on household and volunteer activities. The objections cited by respondents expressed doubt about the information that was being collected - *"One week specifically is ludicrous"*; *"Answers are only guesses - not accurate info for stats"*; and inability to see the relevance of such questions - *"I fail to see how many hours of housework I do relates to the census"*; *"These are personal things and no one else's business but our own"*; *"This type of question is a waste of time"*.

While the above number are small, it should be noted that, out of 48 questions on the NCT, the unpaid work questions ranked third both in terms of difficulty and respondent objections. On the other hand, respondents were not asked to identify any questions which they approved of. It is worth mentioning, that the vast majority of participants in the focus groups which were held prior to the NCT were in favour of including question on unpaid work in the Census.

6. Summary

Of the five unpaid work questions on the NCT, some yielded demonstrably better data than others. The results for question 26(a) Hours of housework appeared reasonable and generally compared well with data from the 1992 General Social Survey. Question 26(b) Hours of childcare showed internal consistency with other census test data, however, compared to the GSS, the number of hours reported in the NCT appeared under-reported, especially for women. There is some evidence to suggest that respondents may have had difficulty deciding how to report overlapping hours of housework and childcare and may have reported these hours in question 26(a) only.

In the absence of comparable data sources, the conclusions which can be drawn about question 26(c) Hours helping seniors, and question 26(d) Hours helping others, are limited. Of particular concern is the high (over 85%) proportions of respondents who reported 'none' in both these questions. Question 26(d) especially appears to have been problematic for respondents.

Question 27 Volunteer activities also exhibited high proportions of respondents reporting 'none' for hours of volunteer work. However, findings from the 1987 Survey of Volunteer Activity suggest that these results may be reasonable given the limited reference period (one week) of the question.

In summary, while the range and quality of the NCT data cannot be expected to match those from more complex instruments such as time use surveys, with the possible exception of 26(d), taken as a group the NCT unpaid work estimates seem to exhibit a plausible coherence.

Footnotes

- ¹ For presentation purposes, the category 'labour force status not stated' is not shown.
- ² Employed persons who worked no hours in the reference week are not included.
- ³ The category 'Marital Status Not Stated' is not included in the calculation of the range.
- ⁴ The range is based on the difference between the Employed, Unemployed and Not in the Labour Force categories. The categories Employed <30 hours and Employed 30 hours or more are not included.

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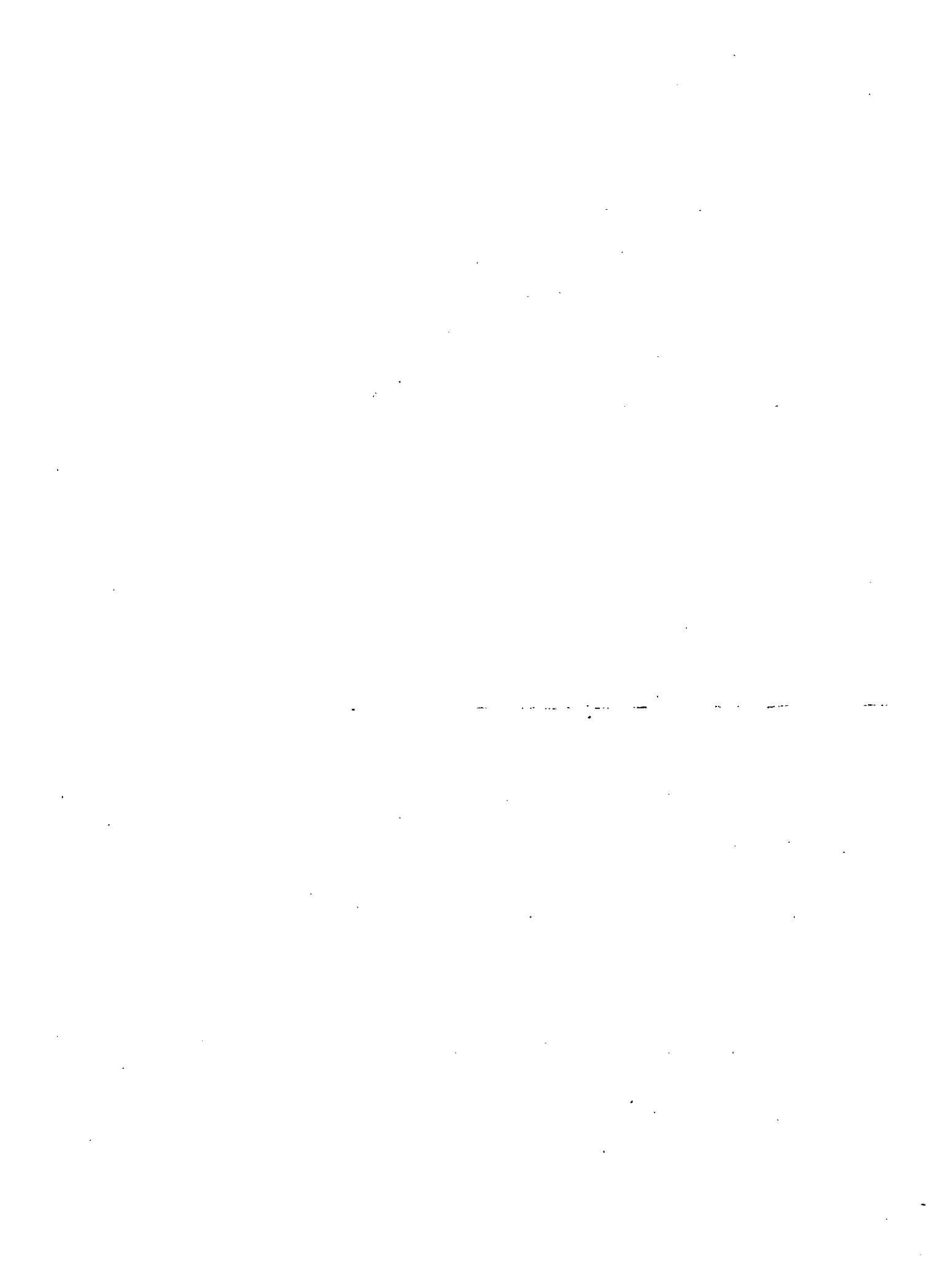
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APPENDIX A

NCT Unpaid Work Questions



1. NAME
 Make sure you copy the names in the same order as your list in Step 2.

PERSON 1	
Family name	
Given name	Initial

PERSON 2	
Family name	
Given name	Initial

If you need help, please use the Guide or call us toll free at 1-800-565-5595.

HOUSEHOLD, VOLUNTEER AND LABOUR MARKET ACTIVITIES

6. Last week (all 7 days), how many hours did this person spend doing the following activities?

(a) Doing unpaid housework, yard work or home maintenance for members of this household, or others.

Some examples include: preparing meals, doing laundry, household planning, shopping and cutting the grass.

01 None
 02 Less than 5 hours
 03 5 to 14 hours
 04 15 to 29 hours
 05 30 to 59 hours
 06 60 hours or more

01 None
 02 Less than 5 hours
 03 5 to 14 hours
 04 15 to 29 hours
 05 30 to 59 hours
 06 60 hours or more

(b) Looking after one or more of this person's own children, or the children of others, without pay.

Some examples include: bathing or playing with young children, driving children to sports activities, helping them with homework, talking with teens about their problems.

07 None
 08 Less than 5 hours
 09 5 to 14 hours
 10 15 to 29 hours
 11 30 to 59 hours
 12 60 hours or more

07 None
 08 Less than 5 hours
 09 5 to 14 hours
 10 15 to 29 hours
 11 30 to 59 hours
 12 60 hours or more

(c) Providing unpaid care or assistance to one or more seniors.

Some examples include: visiting seniors, talking with them on the telephone, helping them with shopping, banking or with taking medication, driving them to appointments or other activities.

1 None
 2 Less than 5 hours
 3 5 to 9 hours
 4 10 hours or more

1 None
 2 Less than 5 hours
 3 5 to 9 hours
 4 10 hours or more

(d) Providing unpaid care or assistance to persons other than children or seniors.

Some examples include: helping relatives with their banking, driving friends to appointments, house-sitting for neighbours.

5 None
 6 Less than 5 hours
 7 5 to 9 hours
 8 10 hours or more

5 None
 6 Less than 5 hours
 7 5 to 9 hours
 8 10 hours or more

27. Last week (all 7 days), how many hours did this person spend doing unpaid volunteer activities for a non-profit organization, a religious organization, a charity or a community group?

Some examples include: organizing a special event, advocating for a cause, canvassing or fund-raising, coaching or teaching, serving on a committee or on a board of directors.

1 None
 2 Less than 5 hours
 3 5 to 9 hours
 4 10 hours or more

1 None
 2 Less than 5 hours
 3 5 to 9 hours
 4 10 hours or more

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