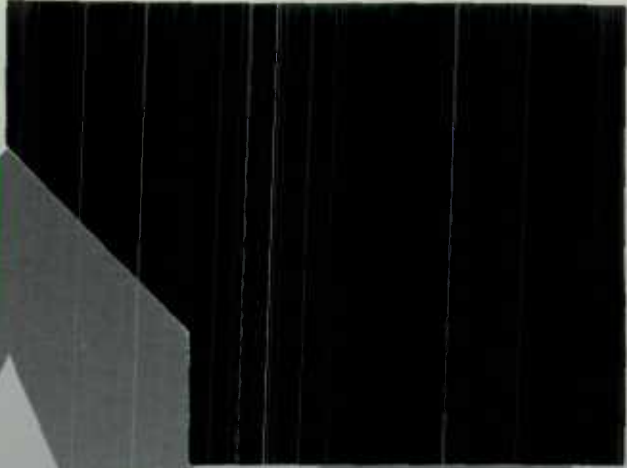
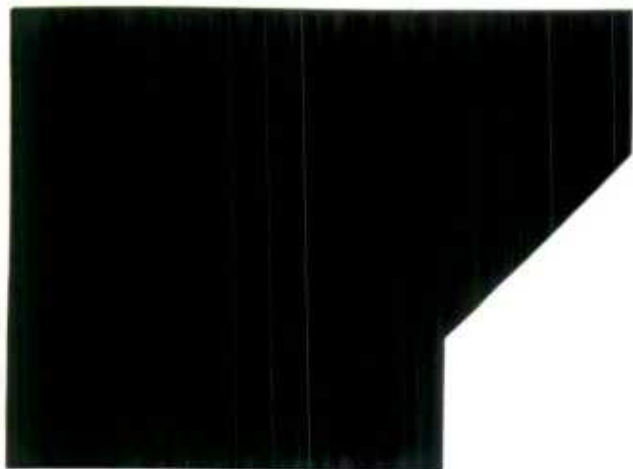


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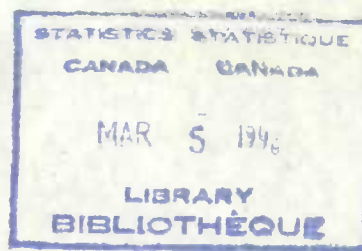
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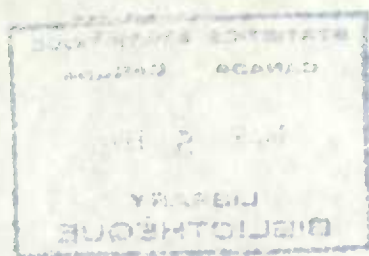


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Residential Mobility of Canadians



by
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Statistics Canada
1992



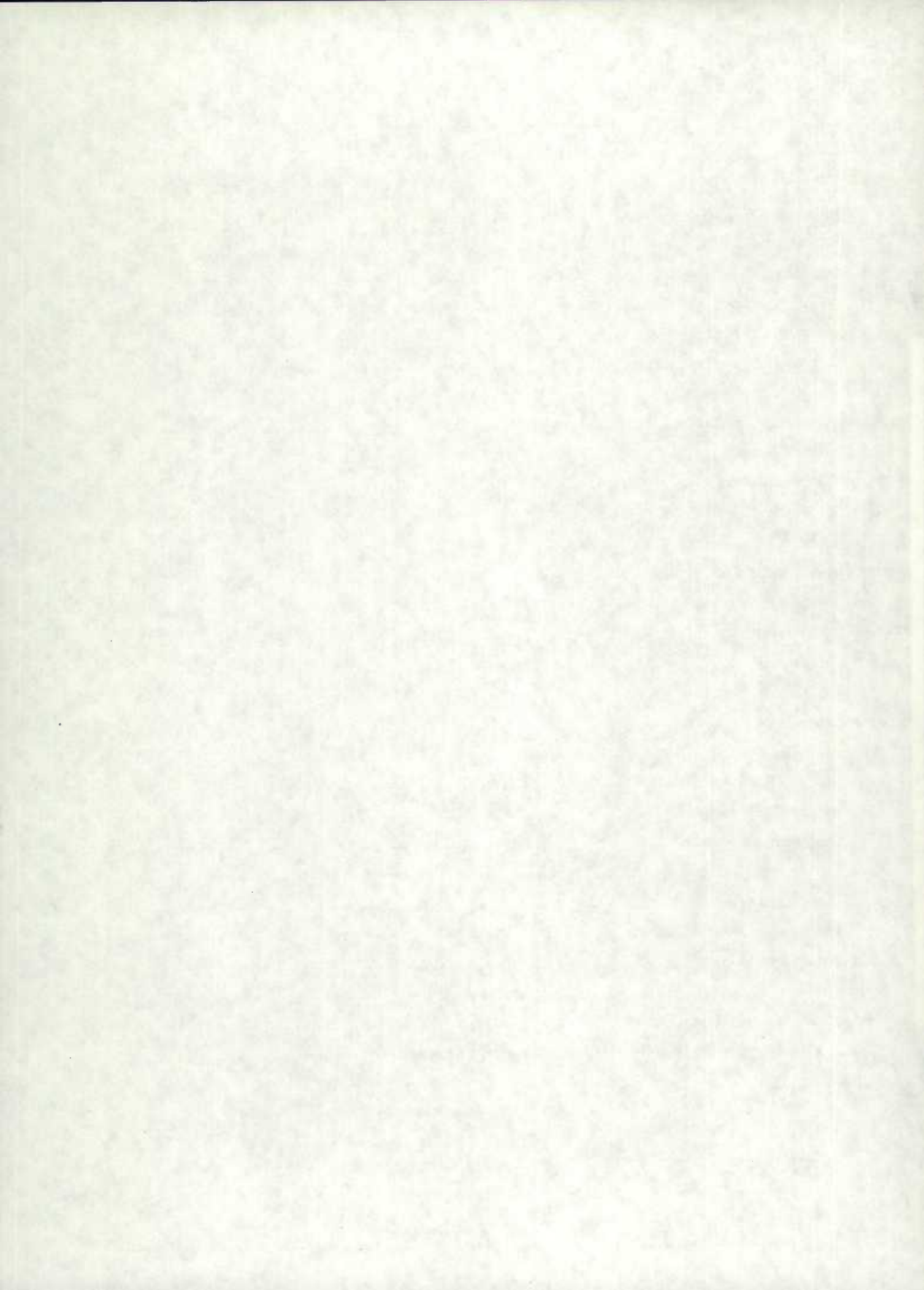
Acknowledgement

The author wishes to thank the General Social Survey staff, particularly Douglas Norris, Josephine Stanic, Judith Cotterill and Jeanne Sarault for their clarifications, opinions and data provision. Valuable review comments were given by Gordon Priest, John Engeland and Roger Lewis. The author is especially grateful to Paddy Fuller who has assisted with the publication of this report and Mary Sue Devereaux for her generous editorial service.

The author is solely responsible for the interpretation of data and the views expressed in this study.

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Highlights

- Canadians are highly mobile — in 1989 alone, about 18% of adults changed their residence.
- Albertans and British Columbians had the highest mobility rates: more than one-fifth of them moved in 1989, and well over half had moved in the previous five years.
- Moving peaks in the summer months of June, July and August, which together account for one-third of all moves.
- Most movers do not go far: the majority of moves (81%) involve no more than 50 km, equivalent to about 30 minutes' driving time.
- Age, tenure status and educational attainment are associated with residential moves. Younger people, renters, and the highly educated are the most likely to undertake a residential move.
- Canadians' number one motivation for moving is to change their housing situation. Fully two-thirds (67%) of movers made their last change of address for reasons such as purchasing a home, moving to a larger home, or to a better neighbourhood.
- Employment consideration ranked second as a motive for moving. About 15% of movers made their last move for job-related reasons.
- Family-related concerns accounted for nearly as many moves as employment considerations. Almost 14% of all moves occurred for reasons such as marriage, separation, wanting to be closer to family, or taking care of a family member.
- Reasons for moving varied according to the distance covered. Employment considerations were the most likely to trigger a long-distance move (1,000 km or farther), while short-distance moves were largely undertaken for housing-related reasons.
- Reasons for moving also varied with the movers' age and tenure status. For people aged 25-54, buying a home and the desire for a larger home were the reasons most frequently cited, whereas for people aged 65 and over, the need for a smaller home became paramount. While housing-related reasons ranked high for both owners and renters, purchasing a home was the number one reason why owners had moved.
- The majority of Canadians (90%) were satisfied with their current housing; only 8% (1.6 million) expressed dissatisfaction.
- The primary complaint among the 1.6 million dissatisfied residents was that their housing was too small. The next two most common reasons for dissatisfaction were the desire to own than rent and dwelling costs.
- If past experience is any guide, close to half of Canadian adults will move within the next five years.

Introduction

This report describes the residential mobility of Canadians using the results of Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (GSS). Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) was one of the sponsors of this Survey.

Statistics Canada initiated the GSS with the aim of reducing gaps in the statistical information system particularly in relation to socio-economic trends (See Appendix A). For the study of residential moves, the 1990 GSS provides data on mobility status, reasons for moving, nature of moves, housing satisfaction and reasons for dissatisfaction (For the specific questions, see Appendix B).

The 1990 GSS is the first national survey to ask respondents questions on both residential moves and housing satisfaction. This report integrates this information to provide an overview of the residential moves of Canadians.

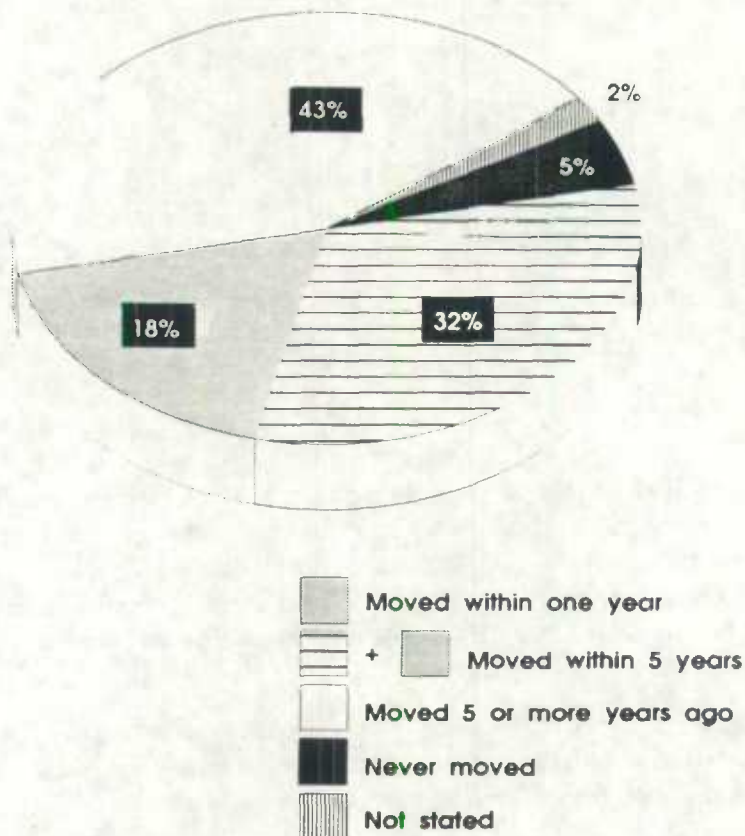
Residential Moves

Mobility Status

Canada is a nation of movers. Only a small minority of the population have never changed residence; the rest have moved in search of bigger, better or more affordable homes, more congenial neighbourhoods, employment opportunities, or proximity to family.

The 1990 General Social Survey showed that 93% of respondents aged 15 and over had made one or more residential moves; only 5% had always lived at the same address (Chart 1). (The remaining 2% did not answer the mobility question.)

Chart 1
Mobility status, population aged 15 and over,
Canada, 1990



Source: 1990 General Social Survey

Some moves, of course, occurred more recently than others. In 1989, more than 3.6 million people, 18% of the adult population, made a residential move. And close to half (48%) of all respondents had moved in the five years before the Survey. This was slightly higher than mobility rates during the past decade. The 1981 Census reported that 47% of the adult population had moved within the previous five years; the comparable proportion from the 1986 Census was 44% (Table 1). Thus, from 1976 to 1990, almost half the population changed their residence at least once every five years.

Table 1
Mobility status, population aged 15 and over,
Canada, 1981, 1986 and 1990

	1981 Census		1986 Census		1990 GSS ¹	
	Total	Moved in last 5 years	Total	Moved in last 5 years	Total	Moved in last 5 years
(Number in thousands)						
Canada	18,593	8,820	19,615	8,544	20,526	9,934
%	100	47	100	44	100	48

¹ Includes residential moves occurring in the five years from January 1985 to December 1989.

Source: 1981 Census, Catalogue No. 92-907, Table 1,
1986 Census, Catalogue No. 93-108, Table 2,
1990 General Social Survey.

Frequency of Moves

The mobility of Canadians is even more evident in the frequency with which they move. In the ten years since January 1980, close to two-thirds of adults changed their residence. The largest proportion, 21%, moved just once; 13% made two moves; and 10%, three (Table 2). Another 20%, however, moved four or more times during that decade. Among them were people who could be termed chronic movers, in that they reported an average of at least one move a year. Although these chronic movers represented just 2% of adults, they numbered an estimated 373,000.

In a recent publication, *The Trauma of Moving* (1991), Audrey McCollum noted that newcomers generally need about six months to settle in. By this criterion, chronic movers would hardly have time to adjust and adapt to the new location before their next move.

Table 2
Frequency of moves in past 10 years,
population aged 15 and over,
Canada, 1990

Total	Number of moves since 1980								
	None	1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11+	Not Stated
(Number in thousands)									
20,526	7,119	4,235	2,607	2,053	1,261	888	1,717	373	273
100%	35%	21%	13%	10%	6%	4%	8%	2%	1%

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Regional Differences

It is not possible to derive provincial mobility rates from the General Social Survey, as respondents did not indicate their pre-move location. Nonetheless, some idea of the level of mobility of residents of different provinces can be inferred by examining their destinations.

The extent of residential mobility varies substantially across the country (Table 3). More than one-fifth of residents of Alberta (22%) and British Columbia (21%) had moved in the previous year, and well over half (58% and 55%, respectively) had moved in the previous five years¹. The proportions of movers in Ontario and Quebec were close to the national average (17% for both in 1989; 48% for Quebec and 51% for Ontario in the previous five years). Residents of the Atlantic Region, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan moved somewhat less frequently: their rate of moving in the previous year was 15% or less, and not more than 45% within the previous five years.

The pattern in the frequency of moves is similar (Table 4), with Alberta and British Columbia having high proportions of residents making frequent moves. About 23% of Albertans and 22% of British Columbians had moved five or more times in the previous decade. By contrast, only 11% of respondents in the Atlantic Region reported the same frequency of moves. The proportion of chronic movers, that is, those who moved 11 or more times within the decade, was also high in Alberta and British Columbia (3%), compared with the Atlantic Region (1%).

¹ Throughout this report (except Table 1), the five years prior to the Survey refer to the period from January 1985 to January 1990.

Table 3
Mobility status, population aged 15 and over,
Canada, regions and provinces, 1990

	Total	Moved in 1989	Moved since January 1985
(Number in thousands)			
Canada	20,526	3,624	10,253
%	100	18	50
Atlantic	1,784	275	751
%	100	15	42
Quebec	5,286	884	2,546
%	100	17	48
Ontario	7,587	1,305	3,845
%	100	17	51
Manitoba	831	126	371
%	100	15	45
Saskatchewan	744	105	322
%	100	14	43
Alberta	1,849	412	1,066
%	100	22	58
B.C.	2,444	516	1,352
%	100	21	55

Note: The sum of the table cells may not equal to the totals due to data rounding.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Table 4
Number of moves, population aged 15 and over,
Canada, regions and provinces, 1990

	Number of moves in last ten years						
	Total	Did not move	1-2	3-4	5-10	11 or more	Not stated
(Number in thousands)							
Canada	20,526	7,119	6,842	3,314	2,605	373	273
%	100	35	33	16	13	2	1
Atlantic	1,784	788	521	255	182	25	13
%	100	44	29	14	10	1	1
Quebec	5,286	1,963	1,851	826	519	57	70
%	100	37	35	16	10	1	1
Ontario	7,587	2,548	2,673	1,255	891	128	91
%	100	34	35	17	12	2	1
Manitoba	831	319	267	141	74	--	--
%	100	38	32	17	9	-	-
Saskatchewan	744	286	231	107	98	--	--
%	100	38	31	14	13	-	-
Alberta	1,849	510	537	340	373	64	--
%	100	28	29	18	20	3	-
B. C.	2,444	705	762	389	467	79	43
%	100	29	31	16	19	3	2

-- Number too small to be expressed.

- Less than 1%.

Note: The sum of the table cells may not equal to the totals due to data rounding and suppression.

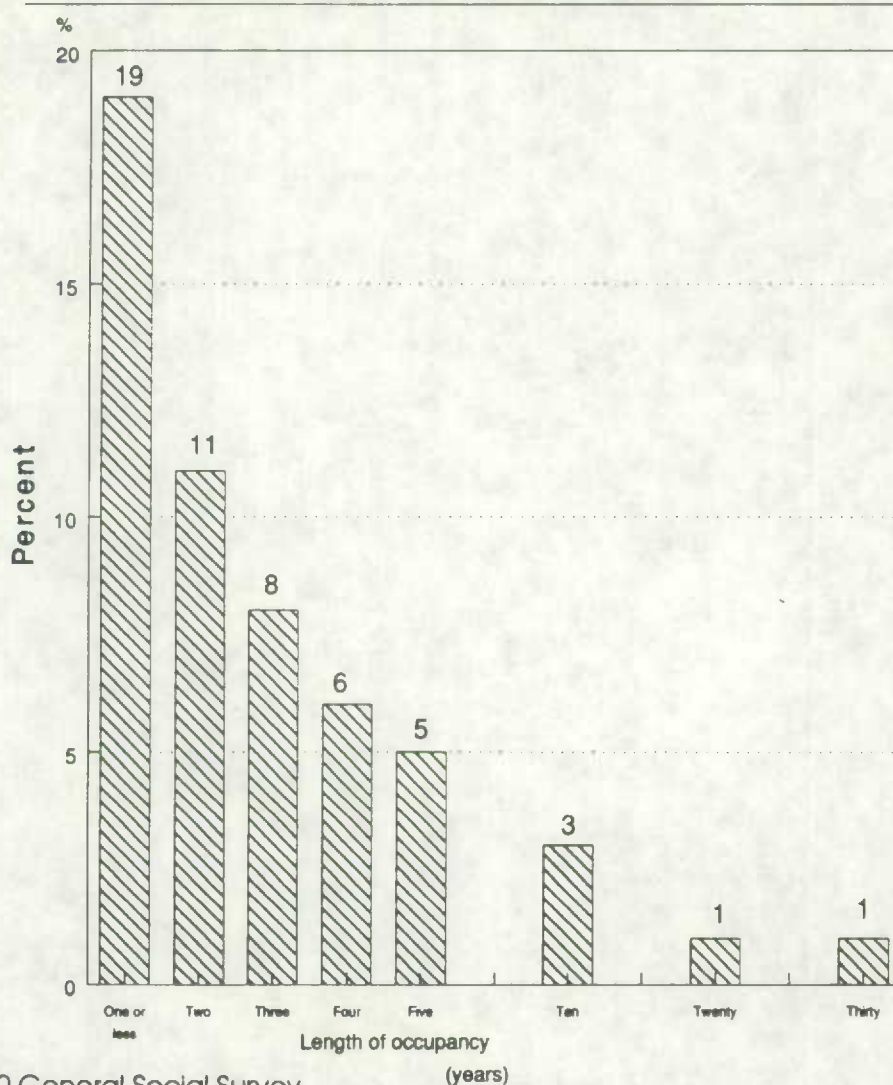
Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Length of Occupancy

Canadians' high level of mobility translates into a relatively short length of occupancy in their current dwelling.

In 1990, 19% of the adult population had lived at their current address one year or less. Another 11% had been there for two years, 8% for three years, and 6% for four years. At ten years' occupancy, the figure was 3%; at twenty years, 1%; and at thirty years, less than 1%. (Chart 2 shows the distribution for selected years.)

Chart 2
Percentage distribution of length of occupancy,
population aged 15 and over, Canada, 1990



Source: 1990 General Social Survey

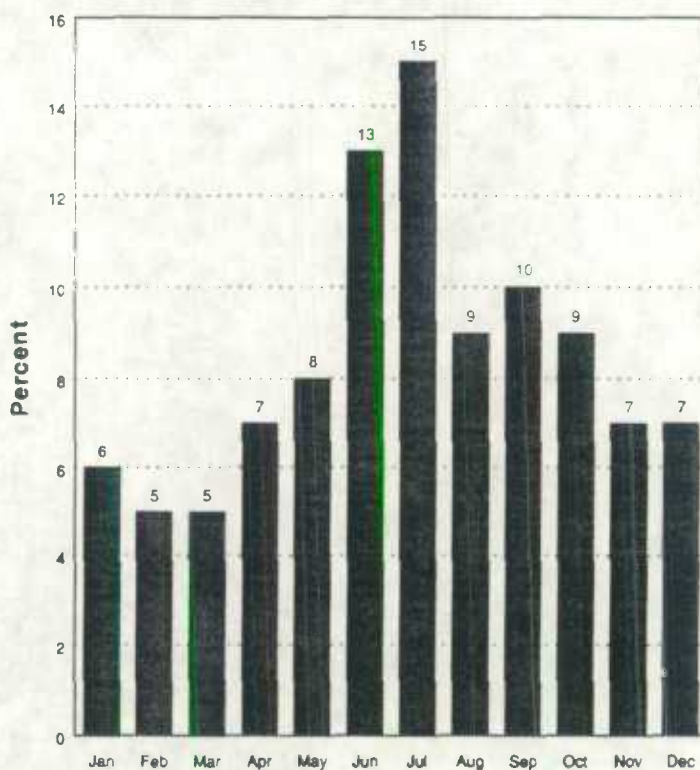
Moving Time and Distance

Moving Season

Residential moves are most likely to occur in summer when the weather is more favourable. Moving is also related to the normal yearly cycle of activities and events. Thus, people are more likely to move when the school term/year is over than in the middle. On the other hand, they tend to avoid busy business periods when scheduling moves.

Approximately one-third of the 18 million people who had ever moved reported that their last change of residence took place during the summer months of June, July, and August (Chart 3). Moving peaked in July, which accounted for 15% of all moves, followed by June at 13%. In August, the proportion of moves fell to about 9%. This drop may be attributable to the popularity of August as the month for families to take their vacations.

Chart 3
Month in which last move took place,
Canada, 1990



Source: 1990 General Social Survey

Moves pick up momentum once fall arrives. September marks the beginning of the school year when many students have to move to attend college or university. September alone accounted for 10% of all moves, a slightly higher proportion than August.

After September, the incidence of moves generally dropped in successive months to a low of 5% in March. An upturn thereafter brought the percentage to 7% in April and 8% in May.

The overall monthly distribution of residential moves also applies on an annual basis. For example, in each of the five years preceding the Survey, July was the peak month for moves (Table 5). And while the proportion of moves occurring in specific months was by no means identical in each of these five years, the pattern in the distribution of moves was consistent.

Table 5
Monthly distribution of moves,
Canada, 1985-1990

Month		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
January	(%)	4	5	5	4	4
February	(%)	4	6	5	5	5
March	(%)	7	4	5	5	4
April	(%)	8	7	6	5	6
May	(%)	7	8	9	7	7
June	(%)	15	15	13	12	11
July	(%)	17	15	17	16	14
August	(%)	10	13	9	10	9
September	(%)	8	9	9	11	13
October	(%)	8	8	9	10	10
November	(%)	5	6	8	8	8
December	(%)	7	6	5	9	9
Total	('000)	1,042	1,235	1,667	2,169	3,582

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

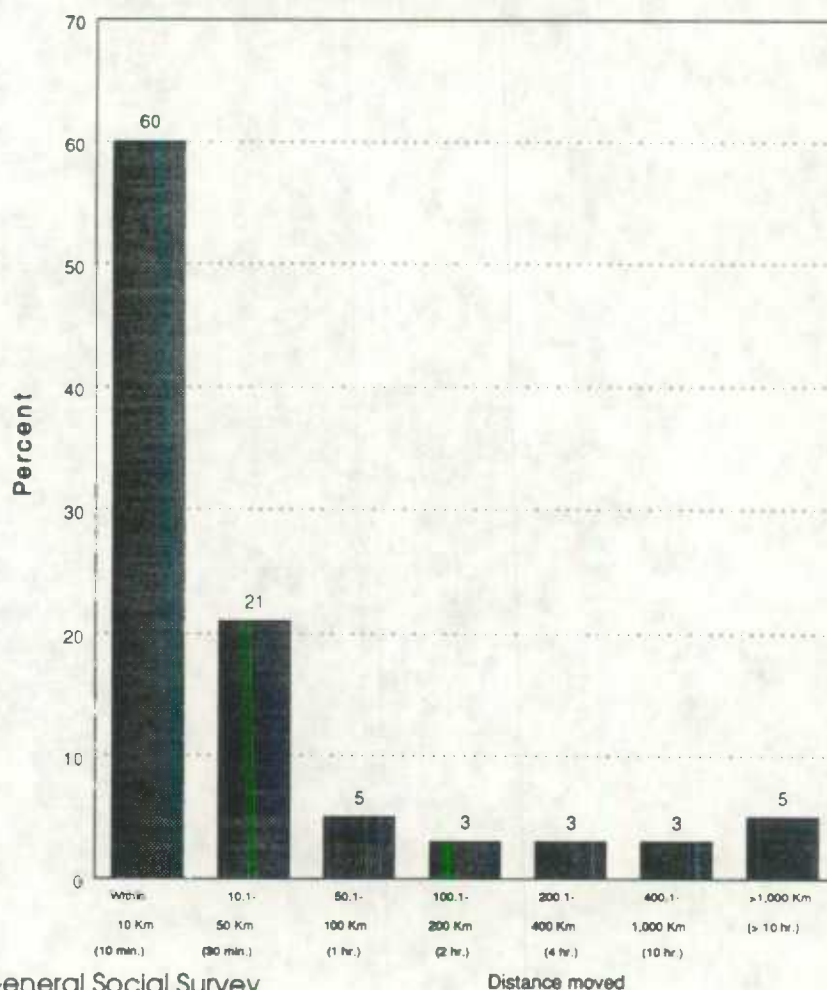
Distance Moved

Most movers do not go far. The overwhelming majority (81%) of residential moves involved no more than 50 km, equivalent to within 30 minutes' driving time. In fact, 60% of all moves were 10 km or less. These figures imply that the moves were intra-city rather than inter-city. They also suggest that relocation took place within the same municipality or even the same neighbourhood.

Another 8% of moves meant travelling from 50 km to 200 km. These distances require approximately one to two hours' driving time. Normally, a round-trip of this distance can easily be made within a day. Only 3% of movers travelled 200 km to 400 km. Although a round-trip of this length is possible in one day, it would generally be spread over two.

Long-distance moves, those covering more than 400 km, are the most likely to involve crossing provincial boundaries. About 8% of all moves fell in this range.

Chart 4
Distance moved from last address,
population aged 15 and over, Canada, 1990



Source: 1990 General Social Survey

Mobility Factors

Gender

Overall, men and women are equally likely to move. In 1989, 18% of both men and women moved at least once (Table 6). And even if the five years from January 1985 to January 1990 are considered, the proportions of movers among men and women were virtually the same: 50%.

Table 6
Mobility status, population aged 15 and over,
by gender, Canada, 1990

	Total	Moved in 1989	Moved since January 1985
	(Number in thousands)		
Total	20,526	3,624	10,253
%	100	18	50
Men	10,038	1,788	5,047
%	100	18	50
Women	10,487	1,836	5,206
%	100	18	50

Note: The sum of the table cells may not equal to the totals due to data rounding.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Similarly, there is little difference between men and women in the frequency with which they have moved. In the ten years before the Survey, the proportions making one or two moves were 34% among men and 35% among women (Table 7). At higher frequencies of moving, the figures for men and women were identical.

Table 7
Number of moves, population aged 15 and over,
by gender, Canada, 1990

		Number of moves in last ten years					
	Total	None	1-2	3-4	5-10	11 or more	Not stated
(Number in thousands)							
Total	20,526	7,119	6,842	3,314	2,605	373	273
%	100	35	33	16	13	2	1
Men	10,038	3,440	3,371	1,589	1,277	199	163
%	100	34	34	16	13	2	2
Women	10,487	3,679	3,471	1,724	1,328	174	110
%	100	35	33	16	13	2	1

Note: The sum of the table cells may not equal to the totals due to data rounding.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Age

The likelihood of moving varies substantially at different ages. Age is strongly linked to other factors associated with residential moves such as family life cycle, employment, income, housing needs, individual lifestyle, and neighbourhood perception. At different ages, these factors play different roles in the decision to move.

It is possible to derive the age of respondents at the time of their last move from the General Social Survey. Age at the time of last move is used to examine how the likelihood of moving is related to age.

People in the 15-24 age range were the most likely to move (Table 8). Fully 66% of this group moved at least once in the last five years, and about 30% moved in 1989. This high rate of residential mobility is not surprising as 15-24 is the age range when people attend college or university, establish their own household and start a family, events that frequently entail a move.

The proportion of respondents who moved within the last five years declined steadily among the next three age groups: at ages 25-34, it was 54%; at ages 35-44, 51%, and at 45-54, 47%. But starting from age 55, the proportion of movers rose from 50% for 55-64-year-olds to 64% for people 65 and over. The higher mobility rates among older respondents reflects their stage in the life cycle. Moving to a smaller house is a common choice for older parents as they become empty-nesters. Also, some of them may have reached retirement, and the attraction of not only a smaller home, but also a maintenance-free dwelling is strong. As these older people are widowed, moving is even more likely because of the desire to be close to their children or other relatives.

Table 8
Mobility status, age of respondents at last move,
Canada, 1990

Age at last move	Total	Moved in 1989	Moved since January 1985
(Number in thousands)			
Total	20,526	3,624	10,253
%	100	18	50
< 15	1,243	--	323
%	100	-	26
15-24	3,867	1,150	2,566
%	100	30	66
25-34	6,617	1,298	3,585
%	100	20	54
35-44	3,609	614	1,858
%	100	17	51
45-54	1,699	217	793
%	100	13	47
55-64	1,205	152	603
%	100	13	50
65 & over	826	166	525
%	100	20	64

Note: The sum of the table cells may not equal to the totals due to survey non-response, data rounding and suppression.

-- Number too small to be expressed.

- Less than 1%.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Unlike age, other characteristics of movers at the time they changed residences cannot be determined. For instance, data on the living arrangements, tenure status, and income of respondents are available only for 1990 when the General Social Survey was conducted. For movers, however, these characteristics are, by definition, "post-move," and they may have been different at the time of the move. In fact, a change in these characteristics may even have been the precipitating factor in the move. For example, some people may have moved to accept a job that offered them a higher income than they were earning in their original location. Thus, their income in 1990 would differ from what they were receiving at the time of the move. Similarly, homeowners who responded to the GSS in 1990 might have been renters who moved expressly to purchase a home. By the same token, a marriage breakdown might have been the event that triggered the last move of respondents who were separated or divorced at the time of the Survey.

Because these characteristics can vary substantially in a short time, analysis will concentrate on the 3.6 million adults who moved in the year just before the Survey, 1989. Although their status could certainly have changed in that year, there is not as great a chance of a major difference as there would be over a longer period. For comparative purposes, however, figures for five years are also shown.

Living Arrangements

Living arrangements have an impact on residential moves. Whether people live alone or in a family affects their likelihood of moving.

Regardless of age, lone parents and people living alone are most likely to undertake residential moves. Over one-fifth of lone parents (23%) and persons living alone (22%) moved in 1989, compared with 19% of husband and wife couples with no children and 13% of couples with children (Table 10). The pattern is similar for moves within the last five years.

Mobility rates of people with different living arrangements, however, vary slightly according to age (Table 9).

People younger than age 35 are the most mobile, particularly those living alone and couples without children. Close to half (46%) of people living alone and 41% of childless couples in this group moved in 1989.

At older ages, lone parents were more likely to move than were people in other household situations. At ages 35-44, 41% of lone parents had moved the previous year. The proportions of movers among lone parents were lower at older ages, but they were still the group most likely to move.

These high mobility rates are not surprising, as the majority of cases of lone parenthood result from the dissolution of a marriage (or common-law union) or the death of a spouse. Regardless of the cause, one or both parties often move out of the matrimonial home, thereby contributing to the high mobility rate among lone parents.

In all three older age groups, after lone parents, the proportions of movers were highest among people living alone, followed by couples with no children.

Table 9
Mobility status, living arrangements,
population aged 15 and over, Canada, 1990

Age group and living arrangements	Total		Moved in 1989		Moved since January 1985	
	(Number in thousands)					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
All ages						
Living alone	2,438	100	526	22	1,345	55
Husband/wife, no child	5,252	100	978	19	2,597	49
Husband/wife with child(ren)	7,550	100	1,013	13	3,667	49
Lone parent	1,052	100	247	23	986	94
< 35						
Living alone	660	100	306	46	608	92
Husband/wife, no child	1,598	100	657	41	1,463	92
Husband/wife with child(ren)	2,693	100	626	23	1,971	73
Lone parent	279	100	69	25	276	99
35-44						
Living alone	347	100	79	23	239	69
Husband/wife, no child	443	100	97	22	272	61
Husband/wife with child(ren)	2,820	100	315	11	1,249	44
Lone parent	244	100	100	41	240	98
45-54						
Living alone	256	100	44	17	132	52
Husband/wife, no child	807	100	81	10	290	36
Husband/wife with child(ren)	1,276	100	53	4	313	25
Lone parent	186	100	43	23	175	94
55 and over						
Living alone	1,174	100	97	8	366	31
Husband/wife, no child	2,336	100	137	6	547	23
Husband/wife with child(ren)	692	100	--	-	107	15
Lone parent	344	100	35	10	295	86

Note: Husband/wife, no child refers to childless couples or couples with no child(ren) living in the same household. Husband/wife with child(ren) and lone parent households refer only to those in which the parent is the respondent. Age of husband/wife couples refers to age of wife. The sum of the table cells may not equal to the totals due to survey non-response and data rounding and suppression.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Tenure Status

Renters generally move more readily than homeowners who may be constrained by their financial investment in their dwelling.

In 1989, fully a third (33%) of respondents living in rental units moved, compared with 12% living in owned units (Table 10). The proportion of renters who had moved at least once since 1985 was almost twice that of owners: 76% versus 40%.

Table 10
Mobility status, population aged 15 and over,
by tenure and age, Canada, 1990

Tenure and age group	Total		Moved in 1989		Moved since January 1985	
(Number in thousands)						
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
All ages	20,526	100	3,624	18	10,253	50
Own	14,232	100	1,642	12	5,635	40
Rent	5,965	100	1,959	33	4,553	76
< 35	8,544	100	2,418	28	5,963	70
Own	5,198	100	1,019	20	3,025	58
Rent	3,240	100	1,387	43	2,893	89
35-44	4,080	100	659	16	2,068	51
Own	3,028	100	359	12	1,332	44
Rent	979	100	290	30	722	74
45-54	2,768	100	221	8	981	35
Own	2,242	100	131	6	677	30
Rent	472	100	90	19	302	64
55 & over	5,132	100	326	6	1,241	24
Own	3,763	100	133	4	601	16
Rent	1,275	100	192	15	636	50

Note: The sum of the table cells may not equal to the totals due to survey non-response and data rounding.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

At all ages, renters are consistently more mobile than owners. Moreover, the difference in mobility rates becomes greater with advancing age. At age 55 and over, renters were more likely than owners to move (50% versus 16%).

Tenure is also related to the frequency of moves (Table 11). While 28% of renters had moved five or more times within the last 10 years, the corresponding proportion among owners was 9%. In fact, at all frequencies of moves, the proportion among renters consistently exceeded that among owners.

Table 11
Frequency of moves in past 10 years,
by tenure, population aged 15 and over,
Canada, 1990

Tenure	Total	None	1-2	3-4	5-10	11 or more	Not stated
(Number in thousands)							
Total	20,526	7,119	6,842	3,314	2,605	373	273
%	100	35	33	16	13	2	1
Own	14,232	6,379	4,666	1,849	1,163	149	25
%	100	45	33	13	8	1	-
Rent	5,965	712	2,138	1,430	1,428	223	34
%	100	12	36	24	24	4	1

- Less than 1%.

Note: The sum of the table cells may not equal to the totals due to survey non-response and data rounding.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Education

Educational attainment is also associated with residential mobility: generally, the higher their level of education, the more likely are people to move.

Canadians with university training are the most mobile. Close to a quarter (23%) of those with at least some university education moved in 1989. By contrast, just 8% of people with less than Grade 9 moved that year. The trend was similar for moves in the past five years (Table 12).

This association between educational attainment and residential mobility generally prevailed at all ages up to 55. However, most people aged 55 and over have established their homes and regardless of their level of education, are quite stable. Thus, level of education does not seem to be associated with the mobility of this age group.

Table 12
Mobility status, population aged 15 and over,
by educational attainment and age, Canada, 1990

Educational attainment and age	Total		Moved in 1989		Moved since January 1985	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
	(Number in thousands)					
All ages	20,526	100	3,624	18	10,253	50
< Grade 9 ¹	1,705	100	134	8	525	31
Grades 9-13	5,152	100	764	15	2,200	43
Secondary cert.	2,878	100	509	18	1,559	54
Postsecondary non-university	6,247	100	1,212	19	3,463	55
Some university or degree	4,208	100	983	23	2,449	58
< 35	8,545	100	2,418	28	5,963	70
< Grade 9 ¹	114	100	38	33	85	75
Grades 9-13	2,339	100	536	23	1,371	59
Secondary cert.	1,371	100	356	26	970	71
Postsecondary non-university	2,785	100	826	30	2,060	74
Some university or degree	1,855	100	654	35	1,448	78
35-44	4,080	100	659	16	2,068	51
< Grade 9 ¹	138	100	--	-	77	56
Grades 9-13	641	100	76	12	249	39
Secondary cert.	635	100	92	14	319	50
Postsecondary non-university	1,546	100	267	17	823	53
Some university or degree	1,065	100	211	20	595	56
45-54	2,768	100	221	8	981	35
< Grade 9 ¹	234	100	--	-	79	34
Grades 9-13	669	100	51	8	236	35
Secondary cert.	341	100	--	-	133	39
Postsecondary non-university	786	100	57	7	287	37
Some university or degree	665	100	70	11	236	35
55 & over	5,132	100	325	6	1,241	24
< Grade 9 ¹	1,219	100	70	6	284	23
Grades 9-13	1,504	100	102	7	344	23
Secondary cert.	531	100	37	7	137	26
Postsecondary non-university	1,131	100	62	5	293	26
Some university or degree	623	100	48	8	170	27

¹ Includes no schooling.

-- Number too small to be expressed.

- Less than 1%

Note: The sum of the table cells may not equal to the totals due to survey non-response, data rounding and suppression.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Frequent moves were also more common among people with university training than among those with less education (Table 13). While 21% of respondents with university education had moved five or more times in the past ten years, the proportion fell to 17% among those with postsecondary non-university training; 14% among high school graduates; and 10% among those with Grades 9-13. The lowest proportion of frequent movers was among people with less than Grade 9 (3%).

Table 13
Number of moves in last ten years,
respondents aged 15 and over,
by education, Canada, 1990

Education	Total	None	1-2	3-4	5-10	11 or more	Not stated
(Number in thousands)							
Total	20,526	7,119	6,842	3,314	2,605	373	273
%	100	35	33	16	13	2	1
< Grade 9 ¹	1,705	978	512	142	54	--	--
%	100	57	30	8	3	-	-
Grades 9-13	5,152	2,270	1,620	713	470	63	--
%	100	44	31	14	9	1	-
Secondary certificate	2,878	891	1,051	546	337	49	--
%	100	31	37	19	12	2	-
Postsecondary non-university	6,247	1,807	2,229	1,095	960	141	--
%	100	29	36	18	15	2	-
Some university or degree	4,208	1,117	1,399	801	769	107	--
%	100	27	33	19	18	3	-

¹ Includes no schooling.

-- Number too small to be expressed.

- Less than 1%.

Note: The sum of the table cells may not equal to the totals due to survey non-response, data rounding and suppression.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Income

It might be anticipated that people with low income would tend to move less often since they would generally have more difficulty finding affordable alternative accommodations. Middle and high income earners, on the other hand, have wider housing choices and can afford to move if the need arises.

But results of the General Social Survey refute this supposition. In fact, the people with the highest mobility rate in 1989 were at the lower end of the income scale: 21% for those earning \$10,000 to \$29,999 annually (Table 14).

When age is held constant, the lower income groups still had the highest probability of making a residential move. Indeed, in each age group, the group with the highest mobility rates in 1989 was earning \$10,000 to \$29,999. For example, among people under age 35, the rate was 33% for those in the \$10,000-\$29,999 income bracket, compared with 28% for their contemporaries earning \$30,000-\$49,999 and 30% earning \$50,000 or more. While mobility rates were lower among older people, the relationship with income was similar.

The low proportion of residential moves among higher income earners could be attributable to the fact that these individuals are likely to be well-established in their career. At this income level, they would be more likely than people with lower incomes to have purchased a desirable home in the neighbourhood they want². As a result, their need to change their residence was minimal.

² See "Reasons for move", pages 21 to 26.

Table 14
Mobility status, population aged 15 and over,
by personal income, Canada, 1990

Personal income and age	Total		Moved in 1989	
	(Number in thousands)			
	No.	%	No.	%
All ages	20,526	100	3,624	18
< 10,000 ¹	5,313	100	898	17
\$10,000-29,999	6,340	100	1,356	21
\$30,000-49,999	3,301	100	554	17
\$50,000 & over	1,389	100	214	15
< 35	8,545	100	2,418	28
< 10,000 ¹	2,820	100	681	24
\$10,000-29,999	2,945	100	970	33
\$30,000-49,999	1,214	100	344	28
\$50,000 & over	284	100	85	30
35-44	4,080	100	659	16
< 10,000 ¹	614	100	96	16
\$10,000-29,999	1,277	100	224	18
\$30,000-49,999	996	100	135	14
\$50,000 & over	512	100	85	17
45-54	2,768	100	221	8
< 10,000 ¹	488	100	31	6
\$10,000-29,999	683	100	57	8
\$30,000-49,999	613	100	43	7
\$50,000 & over	365	100	28	8
55 & over	5,132	100	325	6
< 10,000 ¹	1,392	100	89	6
\$10,000-29,999	1,436	100	105	7
\$30,000-49,999	478	100	32	7
\$50,000 & over	227	100	--	-

¹ Includes no income.

-- Number too small to be expressed.

- Less than 1%.

Note: The sum of the table cells may not equal to the totals due to survey non-response, data rounding and suppression.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Reasons for Move

Main Reasons

While Canadians' motivations for moving vary widely, the majority of movers cited housing-related reasons for their last change of address. Fully two-thirds (67%) of movers had made their last move to change their housing situation (Table 15). The most common reason was to purchase a home, which accounted for 26% of movers. The desire for a larger home ranked second (19%), followed by the appeal of a better neighbourhood (12%). Other housing-related reasons for moving were the need for a smaller home (3%) or a less expensive home (3%), accommodation no longer available (2%), the desire for better accommodation (1%), and to build a home (1%).

Employment considerations - either one's own job or that of a family member - also ranked high as reasons for moving. Overall, 15% of movers had made their last move for job-related reasons: 10% because of their own work; 5% because of a family member's work.

Family-related motivations accounted for nearly as many moves (14%) as did employment factors. Primary among them was marriage, which had triggered 7% of all moves. Being closer to family had been the motivation behind another 3% of moves, while separations also accounted for 3%. Together, taking care of family members and death in the family had prompted just over 1% of movers.

Other reasons for relocation ranged from financial considerations (3%) and attending school (2%) to retirement (1%) and health (1%).

Table 15
Reason for last move

Reasons	Rank order	% of total movers ¹	% of total reasons	Total movers (000's)
Total		100		19,086
Purchase home	1	26	23	5,021
Larger home	2	19	17	3,571
Better neighbourhood	3	12	11	2,318
Own work	4	10	9	1,983
Marriage	5	7	6	1,245
Establish household	6	6	5	1,114
Other family member's work	7	5	4	895
Be closer to family	8	3	3	650
Smaller home	9	3	3	625
Financial	10	3	3	618
Less expensive home	11	3	3	601
Separation	13	3	2	506
Accommodation no longer available	14	2	2	366
Attend school	15	2	2	343
Better accommodation	16	1	1	246
Retirement	17	1	1	234
Health	18	1	1	165
Build house	19	1	1	162
Take care of family member	20	1	1	135
Disagreement	21	-	-	92
Landed immigrant	21	-	-	92
Death in family	22	-	-	64
Other	12	3	3	583

- Less than 1%.

¹ Percentages may not add to 100 because of multiple responses; close to 11% of respondents who provided a reason for moving gave more than one reason.

Note: The relative proportions of each reason are expressed first as a percentage of all movers who provided a reason, and second, as a percentage of total reasons given by all respondents including multiple responses.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Age and Reasons

Of course, reasons for moving vary substantially at different ages,³ reflecting the milestones that typically accompany different stages of life.

From ages 15⁴ to 54, "buying a home" was the primary reason for moving (Table 16). At ages 55-64, "a better neighbourhood" took precedence, while at age 65 and over, the major motivation was the desire for a smaller home.

Among people in the age ranges from 25 to 54, the appeal of a larger home ranked second as a reason for moving. However, different positions in the life cycle are evident in the third-ranking reasons for relocation. For 25-34-year-olds, employment considerations stood third, whereas the quest for a better neighbourhood ranked third at ages 35-44 and 45-54.

Life cycle stages are also apparent in other leading reasons for relocating. At ages 25-34, a considerable number of moves were due to the establishment of households; at ages 35-44, marital separations ranked high; at ages 45-54, many movers were looking for a smaller home.

Some reasons ranked in the top five for only a few age groups. For example, marriage ranked second among those aged 15-24, and separation ranked fifth only for 35-44-year-olds. Similarly, establishing a household was important at ages 15 to 34. The need to be close to family became one of the top five reasons at age 55. Retirement was a leading reason for moving only after age 55.

Changing dwelling size needs are evident among the various age groups. For people younger than 55, the desire for a larger home was consistently a frequent reason for moving. On the other hand, the need for less space became evident at age 45. In fact, by age 65 and over, the desire for a smaller home was the paramount reason for moving.

³ Age at the time of the last move is used here. Because reasons refer only to the last move, it is possible to determine movers' ages when the move took place.

⁴ It is likely that most people aged 15-24 who cited "buying a home" as their reason for moving were living with their parents when the move occurred and relocated when their parents purchased a house.

Table 16
Top five reasons for moving,
by age at last move,
Canada, 1990

Reasons	Age at last move					
	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 & Over
	(Rank Order)					
Purchase home	1	1	1	1	2	5
Larger home	3	2	2	2	4	-
Better neighbourhood	-	4	3	3	1	2
Own work	5	3	4	4	-	-
Establish household	4	5	-	-	-	-
Marriage	2	-	-	-	-	-
Separation	-	-	5	-	-	-
Smaller home	-	-	-	5	3	1
Retirement	-	-	-	-	5	4
Closer to family	-	-	-	-	5	3

- Not one of top five reasons.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Tenure and Reasons

As might be expected, owners and renters have different motives for moving. (Table 17). "To purchase a home" was the number one reason why owners had moved, whereas renters, by definition, were excluded from this category. On the other hand, regardless of tenure, two housing-related reasons ranked high: "a larger home" and "a better neighbourhood."

For both owners and renters, employment considerations ranked next as a reason for moving: fourth for owners and third for renters.

The relative importance of other reasons for moving differed considerably for owners and renters. Establishing a household ranked higher among tenants (fourth) than owners (seventh). This is expected, as new households usually start with renting when the movers leave their parental home. Furthermore, renters generally have more financial constraints than do owners. Consequently, financial reasons ranked sixth among renters as a reason for moving, compared with tenth among owners. As well, the desire for a less expensive home was not one of the top ten reasons why owners moved, but ranked fifth for renters.

Marriage figured more prominently among owners than among renters: fifth versus seventh place. On the other hand, renters were more likely to face the problem of accommodations no longer being available.

Table 17
Top ten reasons for move, by tenure,
Canada, 1990

Reasons	Total	Owner	Renter
	(Rank Order)		
Purchase home	1	1	-
Larger home	2	2	1
Better neighbourhood	3	3	2
Own work	4	4	3
Marriage	5	5	7
Establish household	6	7	4
Other family member's work	7	6	-
Closer to family	8	8	10
Smaller home	9	9	8
Financial	10	10	6
Less expensive home	-	-	5
Accommodation no longer available	-	-	9
Separation	-	-	9

- Not among top ten reasons.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

Distance and Reasons

The reasons behind short-distance moves (50 km or less) differ from those resulting in long-distance moves (1,000 km or farther).

Short-distance moves are largely undertaken for housing-related reasons. The top three reasons for short-distance moves were: home purchase, larger home, and better neighbourhood (Table 18). Marriage ranked fourth, while establishing a household held fifth place.

By contrast, the primary reason for long-distance moves was because of one's work. About 37% of long-distance moves were caused by the mover's employment, compared with only 5% of short-distance moves.

As well, the second most frequent reason for long-distance moves was also work-related. About 18% of respondents moved because of a family member's work, whereas only 2% of short-distance movers relocated for this reason.

Apart from work-related reasons, a relatively large number of long-distance moves were made to be closer to family, which ranked third. As well, landed immigrants, students attending school, and people who are retiring constitute substantial numbers of long-distance movers.

Table 18
Top ten reasons for last move, by distance,
Canada, 1990

Reasons	Total	50 km or less	1,000 km or more
(Rank Order)			
Purchase home	1	1	10
Larger home	2	2	-
Better neighbourhood	3	3	4
Own work	4	6	1
Marriage	5	4	7
Establish household	6	5	-
Other family member's work	7	-	2
Closer to family	8	-	3
Smaller home	9	7	-
Financial	10	9	9
Less expensive home	-	8	-
Landed immigrant	-	-	5
Attend school	-	-	6
Retirement	-	-	8
Separation	-	10	-

- Not among top ten reasons.

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

A Look to the Future

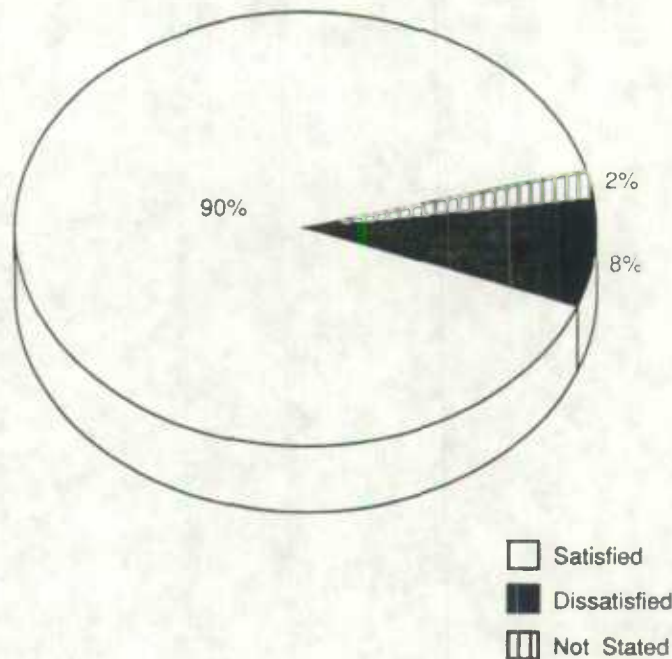
Housing Satisfaction

As indicated in the previous Section, the majority of moves are housing-related. In light of this, Canadians' satisfaction with their housing situation may be an indicator of their propensity to move.

In 1990, the overwhelming majority of Canadians (90%) were satisfied with their current housing; 8%, numbering 1.6 million, expressed dissatisfaction with their accommodations.⁵ (Chart 5).

An examination of the reasons these people gave for dissatisfaction with their housing may shed light on their likelihood of moving and on the type of accommodation they seek. Such information is useful not only to housing researchers, but also to policy makers and the real estate and building industries.

Chart 5
Housing dissatisfaction, population aged 15 and over,
Canada, 1990



Source: 1990 General Social Survey

⁵ The remaining 2% had no opinion or did not state an opinion.

Reasons for Dissatisfaction

Canadians' primary complaint about their housing was that it was too small (Table 19). Well over a third of people who were not satisfied with their housing indicated that they wanted more space. In fact, as demonstrated earlier, the second most common reason for moving was to live in a larger home.

Table 19
Reasons for housing dissatisfaction,
population aged 15 and over,
Canada, 1990

	Total	% of dissatisfied respondents	% of all reasons	Rank order
(Number in thousands)				
Too small	530	37	26	1
Want to own	309	21	15	2
Cost of mortgage/rent	265	18	13	3
Neighbourhood	219	15	11	4
Building maintenance	178	12	9	5
Poor conditions	98	7	5	6
Different housing type	72	5	4	7
Maintenance cost	59	4	3	8
Transportation difficulties	59	4	3	8
Too large	59	4	3	8
Want to establish own household	52	4	3	9
Traffic	47	3	2	10

Source: 1990 General Social Survey.

The second leading reason for housing dissatisfaction was the desire to own rather than rent, accounting for 21% of those who were dissatisfied. Moreover, as Table 15 demonstrates, this was also the primary reason for moving. Homeownership is high on Canadians' agenda. And as long as this desire prevails, the probability of residential moves will be high as well.

Of those who were tenants at the time of the Survey, some 309,000 indicated that they were dissatisfied with their housing because they would like to be owners. While this group of renters constitutes a pool of potential homebuyers, their ability to purchase a home depends not only on their desire to do so, but also on housing prices, interest rates, and other factors that cannot be predicted.

Dwelling costs were the third leading reason for housing dissatisfaction, mentioned by 18% of those who were dissatisfied. Renters were considerably more likely than owners to mention this reason.

The neighbourhood and building maintenance ranked next as reasons for dissatisfaction. Other reasons ranged from poor housing conditions and wanting a different type of dwelling to traffic problems.

Summary

If past experience is any guide, within the next five years, close to half of all Canadians will have a different address than they do today. They will move because they want to be homeowners, because their housing needs have changed, because of the dictates of their jobs, or for a variety of other reasons. There is no way to predict exactly how many people will move, why, or when they will do it. The only constant may be Canadians' continuing quest for a better housing situation.

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Appendix A

General Social Survey

The fifth General Social Survey (GSS), completed by Statistics Canada in the first months of 1990, was developed around the general topic **Family and Friends**.

Respondents to the 1990 GSS were questioned about a range of topics, including: relationship with parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters and friends; relationships with their children; their children's birth history; type of childcare provided; contact with children living outside the household; fertility intentions; household help shared by persons living together and household help given and received by persons not living in the household; physical and emotional support; marriage and common-law history; and satisfaction measures. For classification purposes, respondents also answered background socio-economic questions.

The General Social Survey was initiated by Statistics Canada to reduce gaps in the statistical information system, particularly in relation to socio-economic trends.

The two principal objectives of the GSS are: to monitor changes in social trends in Canadian society over time, and to provide information on specific issues of current or emerging interest.

In recognition of the broad scope of the data produced by the GSS, as well as the wide range of expected users from governments, universities, institutes, business, media and the general public, the project has placed particular emphasis on access to the survey database. In addition to reports such as this, a public use microdata file is available that will allow researchers to carry out their own analyses.

Sample Design

A total of 13,495 individuals were surveyed in 1990, representing the non-institutionalized population (age 15 and older) of the ten provinces. The response rate for this telephone survey was 76%.

The population was sampled using random digit dialling techniques and interviewed by telephone, thus excluding persons in households without telephones. These households account for less than 2% of the target population. The sample was allocated to provinces in proportion to the square root of the size of their populations, and to strata within provinces proportionate to their population.

Appendix B

Excerpt from 1990 General Social Survey Questionnaire Questions on Mobility and Housing Satisfaction

K4. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with ...

Is that somewhat or very?

Somewhat

Very

a) Your relationship with your spouse/partner, or your single status?

Satisfied 01 ☐ —————→ 02 ☐
Dissatisfied 04 ☐ —————→ 05 ☐
No opinion 07 ☐

03 ☐
06 ☐

b) Your relationship with your immediate family?

Satisfied 08 ☐ —————→ 09 ☐
Dissatisfied 11 ☐ —————→ 12 ☐
No opinion 14 ☐

10 ☐
13 ☐

c) The way housework is shared in your home?

Satisfied 15 ☐ —————→ 16 ☐
Dissatisfied 18 ☐ —————→ 19 ☐
No opinion 21 ☐

17 ☐
20 ☐

d) Your job or main activity?

Satisfied 22 ☐ —————→ 23 ☐
Dissatisfied 25 ☐ —————→ 26 ☐
No opinion 28 ☐

24 ☐
27 ☐

e) The balance between your job or main activity and family and home life?

Satisfied 29 ☐ —————→ 30 ☐
Dissatisfied 32 ☐ —————→ 33 ☐
No opinion 35 ☐

31 ☐
34 ☐

f) The amount of time you have to pursue other interests?

Satisfied 36 ☐ —————→ 37 ☐
Dissatisfied 39 ☐ —————→ 40 ☐
No opinion 42 ☐

38 ☐
41 ☐

g) Your relationship with your friends?

Satisfied 43 ☐ —————→ 44 ☐
Dissatisfied 46 ☐ —————→ 47 ☐
No opinion 49 ☐

45 ☐
48 ☐

h) Your current accommodation or housing?

Satisfied 50 ☐ —————→ 51 ☐
Dissatisfied 53 ☐ —————→ 54 ☐
No opinion 56 ☐

52 ☐
55 ☐

Why are you dissatisfied with your accommodation or housing?

(Mark all that apply)

- Cost of mortgage/rent 57 ☐
- Property taxes 58 ☐
- Traffic in neighbourhood 59 ☐
- Other neighbourhood dislikes 60 ☐
- Accommodation too small 61 ☐
- Accommodation too large 62 ☐
- Would like to own 63 ☐
- Building maintenance 64 ☐
- Maintenance costs 65 ☐
- Transportation difficulties 66 ☐
- Other 67 ☐

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