The Structure of the Charitable Sector: A Provincial Perspective

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Highlights

- On a per capita basis, Saskatchewan has the highest number of charities while Quebec and Newfoundland have the lowest.
- Places of Worship are uniformly the largest group of charities in each province while Social Service charities are the second largest.
- Community Benefit charities are a larger category of charities in the Maritime provinces (N.S., N.B., and P.E.I.) and British Columbia than elsewhere.
- Recreation organizations are a larger category of charities in the Prairie Provinces (Alta., Sask., Man.) than elsewhere.

The Centre's publication, *A Portrait of Canada's Charities* (Sharpe, 1994), details the numbers and types of charities that exist in Canada. However, there is little information available about charities at the provincial level. In a forthcoming report, the Centre will describe the size, structure and financing of charities from a provincial perspective. In the interim, this Bulletin provides provincial data on the number and types of charities.

We begin by looking at the provincial distribution of charities. Next, we look at commonalities among provinces. Finally, we outline some of the unique features of each province's charitable sector.

**Distribution of All Charities**

As Table 1 shows, the number of charities in a province is, for the most part, proportional to the size of its population. A different picture emerges, however, if we look at the number of charities on a per capita basis. Looking at the number of charities in each province for every 1,000 residents, the data show that Saskatchewan has by far the highest number of charities for its population (4.88 per 1,000 - twice the national rate of 2.42 per 1,000). On a per capita basis, PEI and Manitoba have the second and third highest number of charities respectively. In contrast, Quebec and Newfoundland have the lowest.

**Patterns Among Provinces**

There are some common patterns among the provinces in the composition of their charitable sectors. Table 2 shows the three largest categories of charities in each province. Places of Worship are the most prevalent type of charity in every province. Social Service charities are the second most prevalent in every province except Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia.

There are, in addition, three major regional patterns among the provinces. First, Community Benefit charities are more commonly found in the Maritime provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island) comprising the second most common type of charity in PEI and Nova Scotia and the third most common in New Brunswick.

Second, the Prairie Provinces, (Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) have a larger percentage of Recreation organizations than do other provinces. These organizations are the third most prevalent type of charitable organization in Saskatchewan and Alberta and the fourth most prevalent in Manitoba.

Finally, Ontario and Quebec differ from other provinces in three respects: they have a far greater percentage of their charities in the Private Foundations and Other categories, and a lower percentage in Hospitals (see Table 3).

**Distribution of Charity Types within Provinces**
There are substantial variations in the extent to which different types of charities have been established in each province. These differences are most clearly seen by examining the percentage of each type of charity within each province (see Table 3). The unique characteristics of each province's charitable sector are briefly outlined below.

**Newfoundland.** Newfoundland is the only province in which over half the charities (61.9%) are *Places of Worship*. Because of the predominance of the *Places of Worship* category, Newfoundland has a much lower percentage of charities in the remaining categories than do other provinces. It has, for example, a relatively low percentage of *Social Service, Private Foundations* and *Religion* charities.

**Prince Edward Island.** *Places of Worship* are more prevalent than the national rate (41.3% vs. 36.4%) in PEI. Both *Health* and *Education* charities comprise a larger percentage of charities than they do in any other province while the *Community Benefits* category is larger than in any province but Nova Scotia. Most other types of charities are less prevalent than is the case in other provinces.

**Nova Scotia.** Nova Scotia leads all provinces in the extent to which it has charities in the *Community Benefits* category (13.0% vs. the national percentage of 6.5). It also has somewhat more *Recreation, Places of Worship* and *Health* charities than the national norm. In contrast, there are fewer *Social Service, Teaching Institution, Religion*, and *Private Foundation* charities.

**New Brunswick.** *Places of Worship* comprise 45.6% of all charities in New Brunswick which is second only to Newfoundland in this regard. There are relatively fewer *Health, Teaching Institutions, Religion, Arts & Culture* and *Private Foundations* in the province than the national norm. However, the remaining types of charities are present in approximately the same proportions as they are nationally.

**Quebec.** Although *Places of Worship* are the largest single group of charities, the percentage of charities that they comprise is the smallest in the country (27.9% vs. a national rate of 36.4%). There are also proportionally fewer *Libraries & Museums* in Quebec than in any other province. However, Quebec has the highest percentage of charities in the *Social Service* and *Other* categories. In addition, a larger percentage of its charitable institutions are *Public and Private Foundations* than is the national rate.

**Ontario.** Both *Religion* and *Private Foundations* charities are more prevalent in Ontario than is the national norm. In fact, Ontario has a higher percentage of *Religion* charities than any other province. On the other hand, *Social Service, Recreation* and *Hospital* charities are relatively less common in Ontario than in other provinces.

**Manitoba.** Although *Places of Worship* is Manitoba's largest category of charities, there is a somewhat smaller percentage of the province's charities in this group than is the national norm. *Community Benefit* and *Education* charities also appear to be less common than is the national norm. *Recreation* charities, on the other hand, comprise 6.2% of the charities in Manitoba compared to the national norm of 3.8%.
Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has a larger percentage of its charities in the Recreation category than any other province (7.1% vs. the national rate of 3.8%). The percentage of charities that are Social Service organizations is second only to Quebec. Places of Worship and Hospitals comprise a higher percentage of charities than in most other provinces.

Alberta. Places of Worship, Recreation organizations, and Libraries & Museums are all more common in Alberta than they are in the country as a whole. The province has a greater percentage of Libraries & Museums than any other province and is second only to Saskatchewan in the percentage of its charities that are Recreation organizations. It also has a larger percentage of charities that are Places of Worship than the Canadian norm (42.7% vs. 36.4%). In contrast, Alberta has a smaller percentage of Social Service, Health, Education, Public Foundation and Private Foundation charities than is the case nationally.

British Columbia. Teaching Institutions and Arts & Culture comprise a larger percentage of charities in B.C. than they do in any other province. The percentage of Health charities in B.C. (8.1%) is second only to PEI. B.C.’s percentage of charities in Community Benefits is also higher than the national norm. On the other hand, B.C. is lower than the national norm in the percentage of charities that are Private Foundations and Places of Worship.

Conclusion

There are many ways in which the distribution of charities varies from province to province. In terms of total numbers of charities, Ontario and Quebec have the most. However, on a per capita basis Saskatchewan leads the country. Quebec and Newfoundland, in contrast, have the fewest number of charities per capita. The Places of Worship and Social Service types of charities predominate in all provinces although the extent of their predominance varies. There is also variation in the extent to which other types of charities are found in each of the provinces.

Although provincial variations in both the total number and the types of charities are evident, there has not been any research which attempts to explain why such differences occur. There are a number of possible explanations. First, people in different provinces may have different values about charitable activity (e.g. how formal or informal it should be). Secondly, different patterns of charitable activity may arise out of different needs. Finally, the composition of charitable sector at the provincial level may reflect differing political priorities in funding. Unfortunately, we are unable to investigate all of these possibilities. We will, however, be examining variations in provincial funding of charities in our forthcoming report that describes the size, structure and financing of charities from a provincial perspective.
References


Table 1: Distribution of Charities among Provinces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number of Charities</th>
<th>% of all Charities</th>
<th>Population ('000)</th>
<th># per 1,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nfld</td>
<td>987</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>579.8</td>
<td>1.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.E.I.</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>131.1</td>
<td>3.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>3303</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>921.5</td>
<td>3.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.B.</td>
<td>2506</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>749.0</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>11891</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>7182.2</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ont.</td>
<td>24944</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>10673.8</td>
<td>2.34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man.</td>
<td>4238</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1113.5</td>
<td>3.81</td>
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<td>Sask.</td>
<td>4894</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>1002.0</td>
<td>4.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta.</td>
<td>7219</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>2646.9</td>
<td>2.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>8491</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>3499.9</td>
<td>2.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>CANADA*</td>
<td>69230</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>28593.2</td>
<td>2.43</td>
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*Includes Yukon and North West Territories.
Source: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy Data Base (1994) and Statistics Canada (1994)

Table 2: Top Three Types of Charities in Each Province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nfld</td>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
<td>Social Service</td>
<td>Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>P.E.I.</td>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
<td>Community Benefits</td>
<td>Social Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.S.</td>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
<td>Community Benefits</td>
<td>Social Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.B.</td>
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<td>Social Service</td>
<td>Community Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
<td>Social Service</td>
<td>Public Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ont.</td>
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<td>Social Service</td>
<td>Health</td>
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Table 3: Distribution of Charity Types within Provinces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Social Service</th>
<th>Hospitals</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Education &amp; Research</th>
<th>Places of Worship</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Arts &amp; Culture</th>
<th>Recreation</th>
<th>Other Charities</th>
<th>Public &amp; Private Foundations</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Man.</td>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
<td>Social Service</td>
<td>Health</td>
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<td>Sask.</td>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
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<td>Recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
<td>Social Service</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.C.</td>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
<td>Social Service</td>
<td>Health</td>
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