Social Capital: Unpaid activities

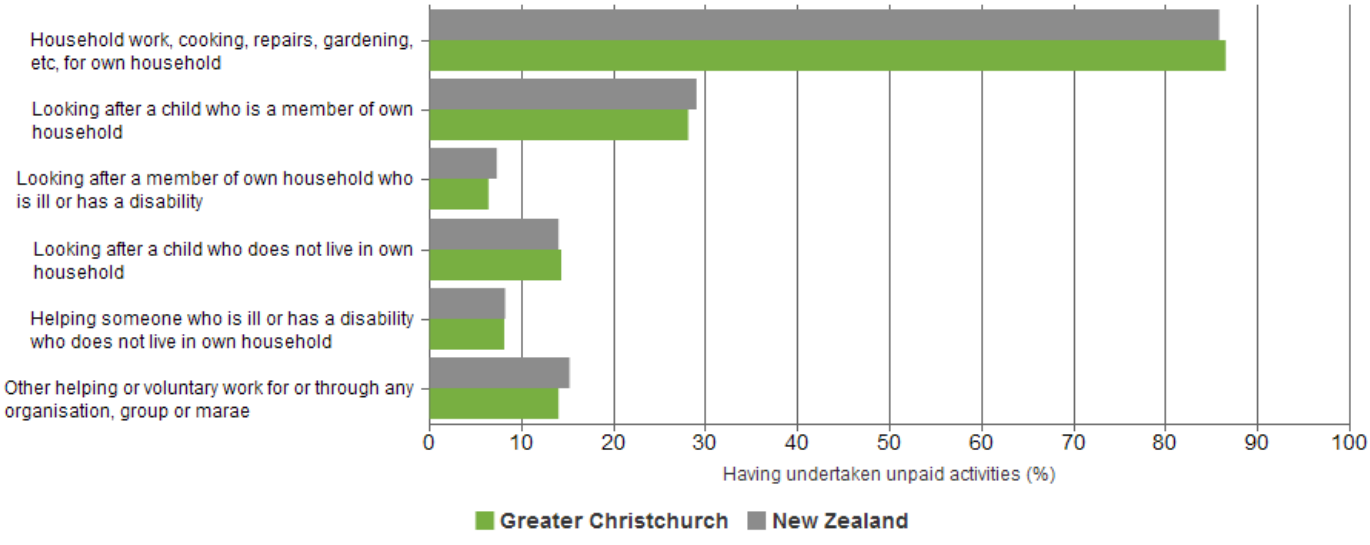
Unpaid activities are typically considered in two distinct categories: unpaid work and formal volunteering (informal volunteering is typically not captured). Unpaid work comprises non-remunerated family and household-related activities and is regarded as a building block of societal functioning [35,36]. The allocation of unpaid activities (often largely arising from the presence of children in households) tends to be shaped by household economics or 'who can best afford' to devote the most time to care activities, in terms of overall household income and other factors [37,38].

Formal volunteering is voluntary work performed in an organised manner, generally in the wider community, usually under the auspices of an organisation. People frequently involved in unpaid caring (be it for children, elderly, or disabled persons) are less likely to participate in formal volunteering [35].

Volunteering can play an important role in contributing to people's subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction – for example, by helping to build social connections and giving a sense of purpose and belonging within their communities [39]. Volunteering also contributes to skills development and strengthens social cohesion. However, while many people are willing, in principle, to volunteer, most do not [35].

This indicator presents the proportion of those 15 years and over who had undertaken unpaid activities, by type (five types of unpaid work plus formal volunteering) as recorded in the 2018 census. Unpaid activities are activities performed without payment, for people living either in the same household, or outside.

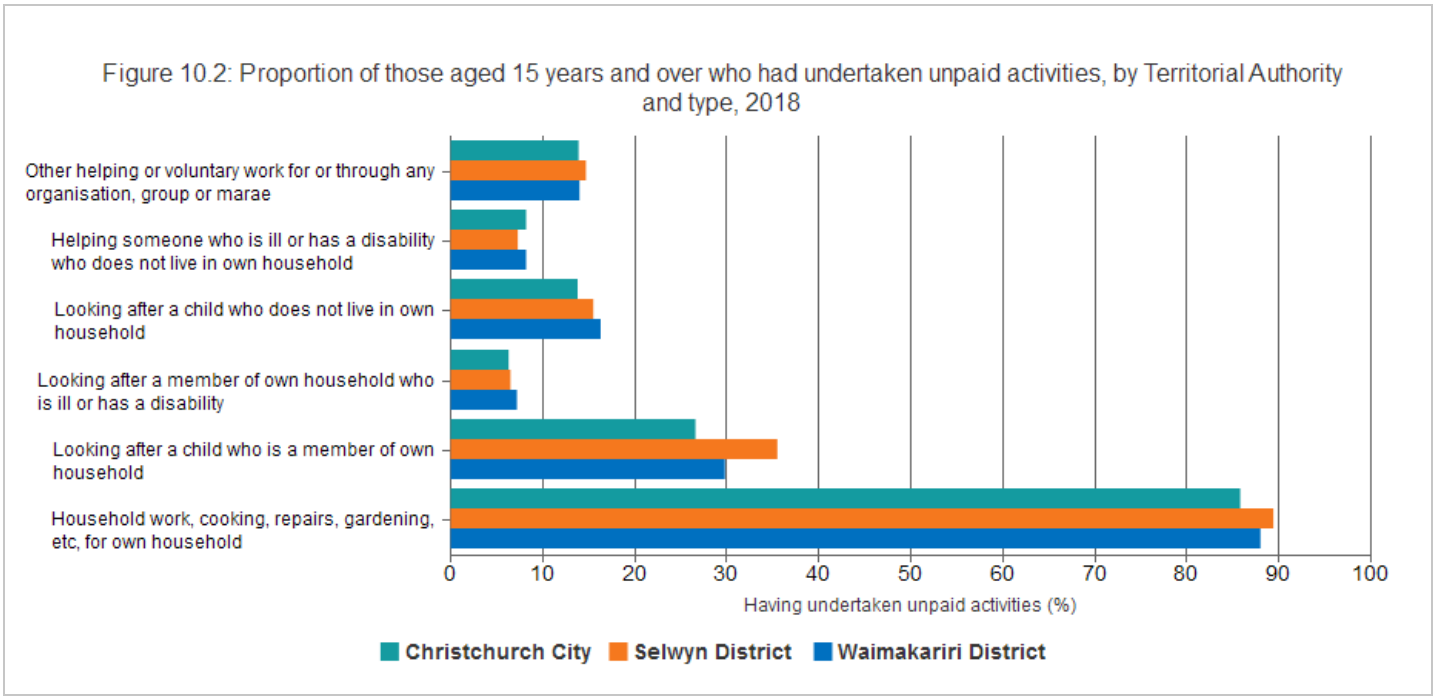
Figure 10.1: Proportion of those aged 15 years and over who had undertaken unpaid activities, in greater Christchurch and New Zealand, by type, 2018



The figure shows that in 2018, nearly all those completing the census in greater Christchurch regularly took part in at least one type of unpaid activity. Almost all respondents (86.5%) regularly took part in unpaid housework. Under one-third of respondents reported looking after a child who is a member of their own household (28.1%) while about six percent (6.4%) reported looking after a person who is ill or has a disability who is a member of their own household. Helping someone who is ill or has a disability who is not a member of their own household was reported by eight percent (8.1%) and looking after a child who is not

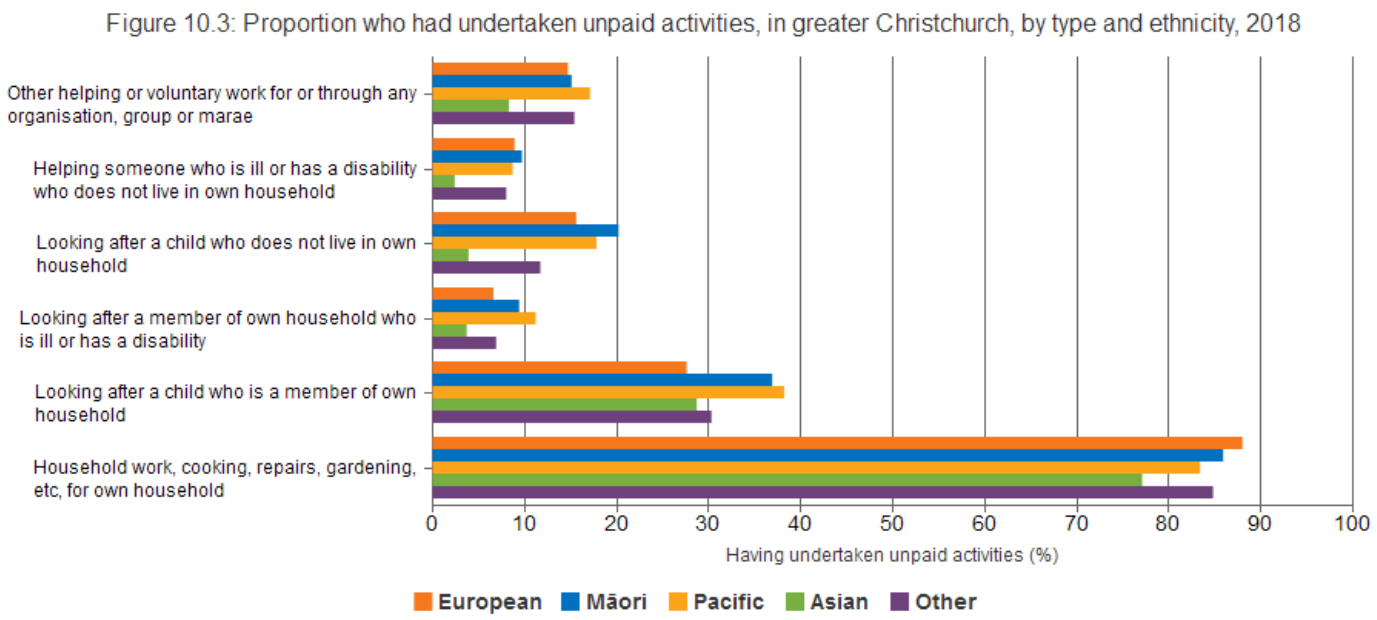
a member of their own household was reported by just over fourteen percent (14.3%). Fourteen percent of greater Christchurch respondents indicated that they took part in helping or voluntary work, for or through any organisation, group or marae. The responses for greater Christchurch were similar to those for New Zealand overall across all of the activity types.

Breakdown by Territorial Authority



The figure shows that in 2018, the proportions of census respondents who had undertaken unpaid activities, were similar for Christchurch City, Selwyn District, and Waimakariri District, for each activity type.

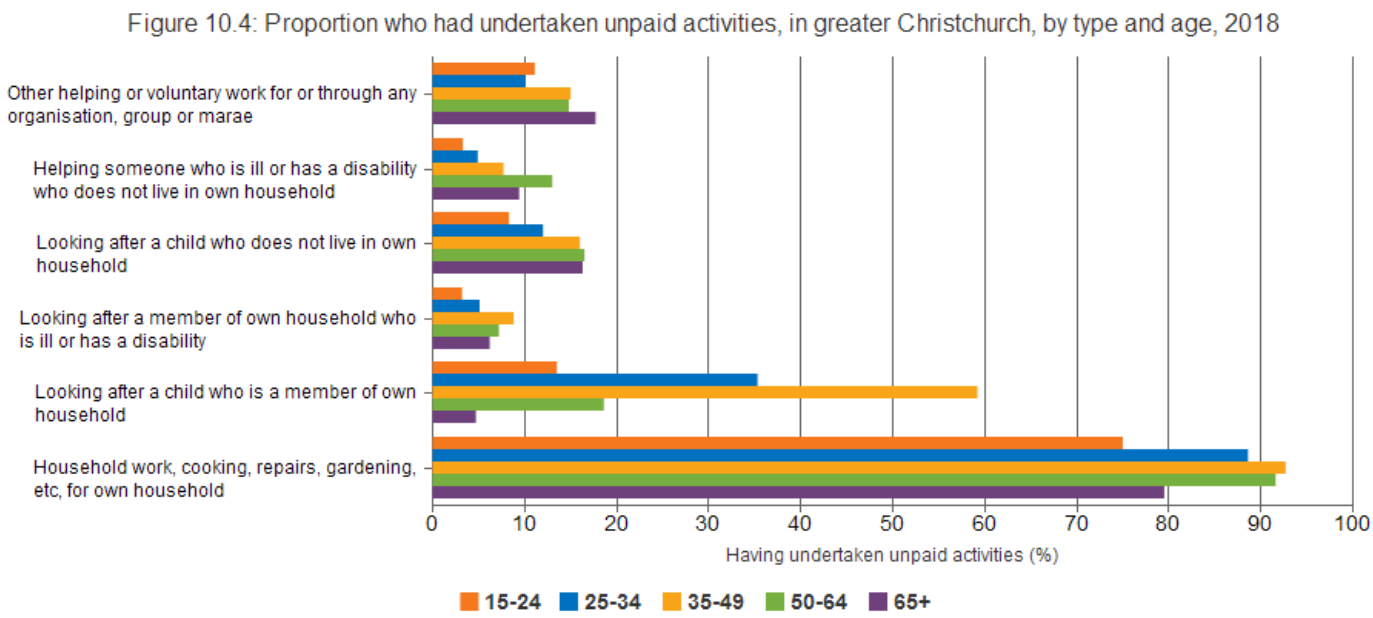
Breakdown by ethnicity



The figure shows that in 2018, the proportions of census respondents who had undertaken unpaid activities, were generally similar for the European, Māori, Pacific, and 'Other' ethnic groups in greater Christchurch. Two notable differences by ethnicity and type of activity were 'looking after a child who does not live in own household' (Māori 20.2%; European 15.6%) and 'looking after a child who is a member of own household' (Māori 36.9%; Pacific 38.2%; European 27.6%).

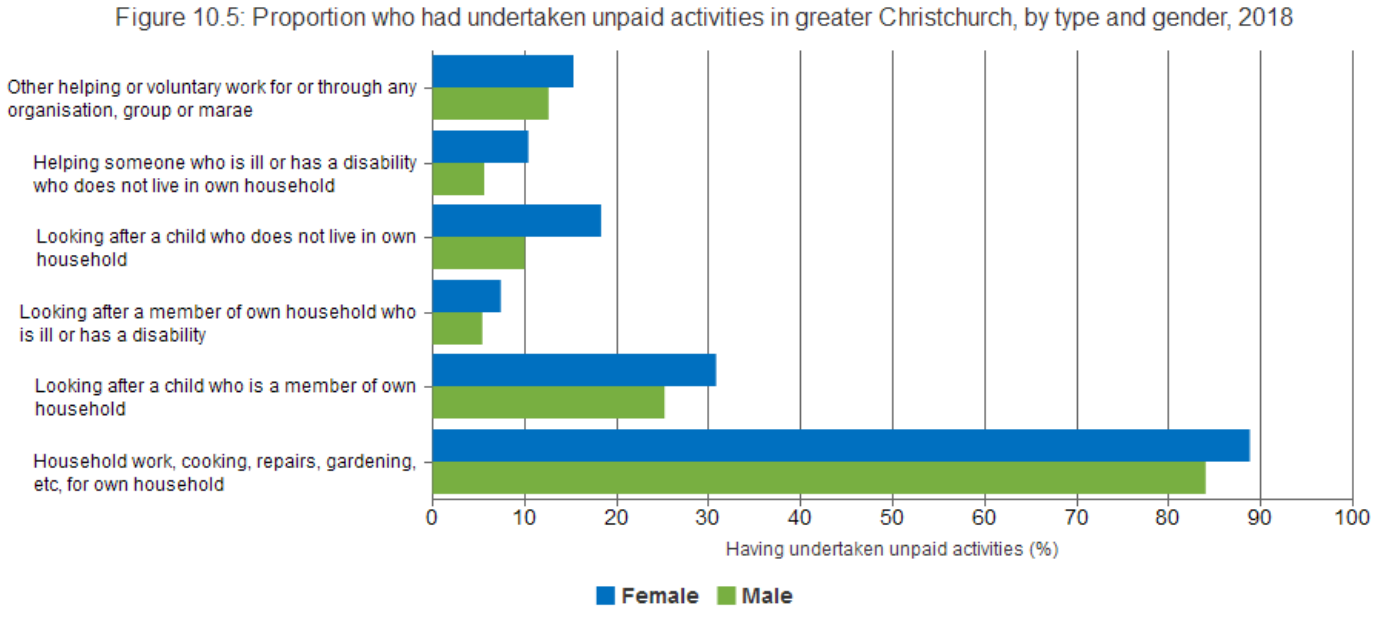
Respondents who identified as Asian, appear less likely to report engaging in unpaid work, across all activity types with the exception of looking after a child who is a member of own household, compared with the other groups (statistical significance testing was not applied to these data).

Breakdown by age



The figure shows two different patterns for unpaid activities, by age group, in 2018. Firstly, for unpaid activities within the household, the proportions of those respondents 15 years and over who had undertaken these activities were highest in the middle age bands (25 to 34 years, 35 to 49 years, and 60 to 64 years) and lowest for the 15 to 24 years (youngest) and 65+ years (oldest) age groups. Secondly, for the activities outside of the household (such as traditional volunteering), the proportions of those respondents reporting having undertaken these types of unpaid activities generally increased with each age band (a positive association between age and volunteering).

Breakdown by gender



The figure shows that females in greater Christchurch are more likely than males to undertake unpaid activities, with higher rates of participation in every activity type. The largest difference is for looking after a child who does not live in own household (females 18.3%; males 10.0%).

Data Sources

Source: Statistics New Zealand.
Survey/data set: Census of Population and Dwellings. Access publicly available data from the Statistics NZ website http://nzdotstat.stats.govt.nz/wbos/Index.aspx?_ga=2.74024852.706492025.1596487479-962330583.1594854687
Source data frequency: Census conducted every 5 years.

Metadata for this indicator is available at https://www.canterburywellbeing.org.nz/our-wellbeing/index-data

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