



Motivations of Sport Volunteers in England

A review for Sport England – January 2016

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Structure

- Describes review conducted for Sport England
- Covers results for sports clubs volunteers
- Describes the theoretical ideas: Pathways to participation / sporting capital / volunteering capital
- Suggests policy, out of the political box, and in it.
- Notes some ideas for further research

Methods

- Over 130 papers or research reports
- Fifty nine of which have been reviewed in depth
- Include previous reports for Sport England and Sport Wales.
- Thirteen experts/organisations consulted
- Combined work from sport and volunteering – first time



Results cover volunteers in:

- Clubs / Mega events / Regional events / Coaches / education and youth organisations / young people and students / older volunteers
- Volunteers' effect on the sporting experience of participants
- Clustering volunteers and explaining sports volunteering

Research methods – some provisos

- Surveys are generally not designed to build on theory – they ask different questions
- There is little work which tracks changes over time
- How the question is asked affects the answer
- Responses favour the socially acceptable
- Research has to try and understand a depth of motivation
- Life history approach can show changes [as pathways to participation]
- Research may be politically influenced or results withheld
- Under-represents 'informal' volunteering

Motivations –club volunteers

- Being a parent of a child participating in a sports club and wanting to help friends and family social benefits
- Giving something back to the community
- Enthusiasm, or passion, for a sport
- Learning new skills
- Satisfaction
- Pride in helping a club do well
- To remain involved with the sport after retiring from playing
- To enhance a CV



De-motivations –club volunteers

- Time required
- Training needs not met
- Other needs not met, such as financial and information
- Lack of support from other organisations
- 'Poor social environment'
- More work and responsibility required by the roles
- Anti-social hours (e.g. swimming training at 5am)
- Legislation increasing the formal responsibilities of coaches, team managers, event officials etc.
- Not enough or fewer volunteers to help out
- Family commitments
- Training courses for coaches too expensive

Pathways Through Participation

- 101 in depth interviews – biographies of volunteering
- Motivations are complex [as many as there are people]
- - any one person's volunteering is as a result of personal values and attitudes; circumstances; and the influence of past experience.

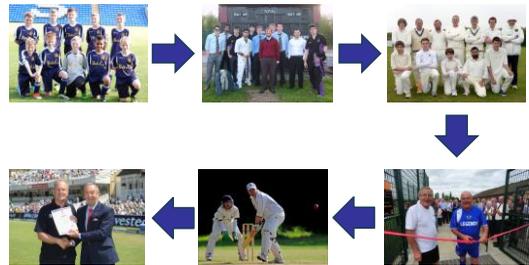


Pathways Through Participation

Volunteering is influenced by:

- *Individual factors* such as personality, values, identity and resources
- *Relationships and social networks* with family, friends, neighbours and colleagues
- *Groups and organisations* of which they are a member and the way these are organised
- *The local environment and place* where they live, including public spaces, events, institutions and politics
- *Wider societal and global factors* such as national and international events, social movements and trends

Pathways – an example



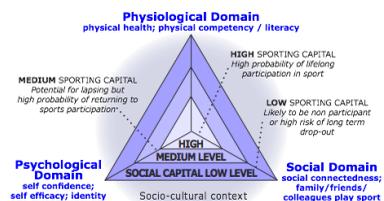
Sporting Social Capital

- Physical health and competency
- Confidence and identity
- Social connections;
 - explains sports participation as a developmental process
 - early socialisation is important in establishing a sporting commitment and literacy, enabling participation to continue through changes in circumstances



(Nick Rowe, 2012)

Developing Sporting Social Capital (Nick Rowe)



Developing Volunteering Social Capital

- Values and attitudes
- Family socialisation
- Links to organisations
- Specific skills



Other General Insights

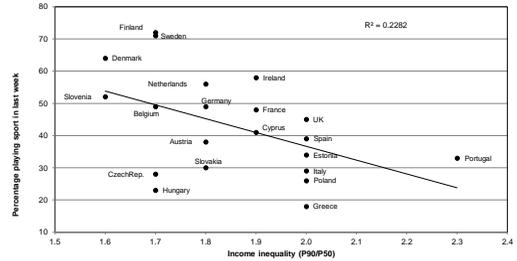
- Altruism vs self-interest
 - Is the balance changing, young people?
- To episodic/micro volunteering
 - Needs co-ordinating, burden on core volunteers, enabled by IT – Parkruns
- Potential of older/retired
 - More likely if volunteering before retirement



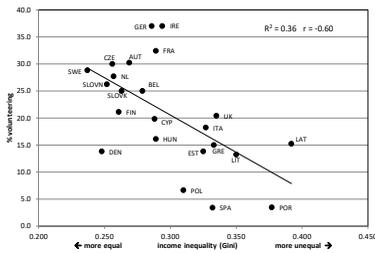
Policy – out of the box

- why do the Nordic countries have higher sports and volunteering participation than England; more leisure time and higher levels of trust?
- They are more equal...?

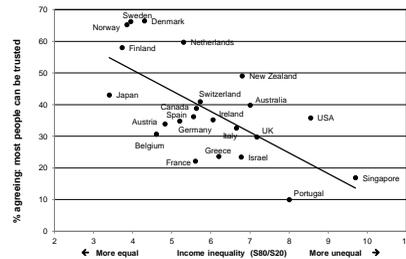
Sport participation by income inequality, European countries, 2009



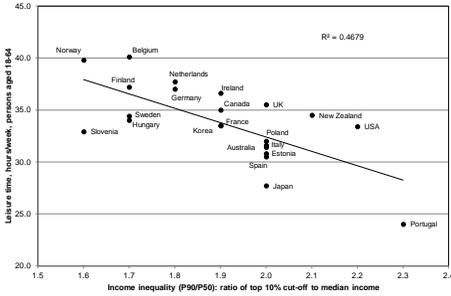
Income inequality by sports-related volunteering Veal / Nichols



Income inequality and trust in the community: international comparisons



Leisure time by income inequality (P90/P50), 22 countries Veal 2016



- sports participation and volunteering are also positively related to GDP per head
- correlation does not = causality
- there are a set of inter-related characteristics of societies with high volunteering and sports participation

'It is evident that generalised social trust is tightly integrated into a single syndrome of ethical/cultural, social, economic, and structural conditions which are either theoretically or empirically linked, and usually both ... Trust is tangled up as both cause and effect with these conditions, and it is probably both pointless and impossible to try to disentangle its relations with them, even if we had perfect data. (Delhey & Newton, 2005, p.324)

Delhey, J., & Newton, K. (2005). Predicting cross-national levels of social trust: global pattern or Nordic exceptionalism? *European Sociological Review*, 21(4), 311-327.

Policy in the box

- Parallel development of volunteering and sporting social capital: dispositions, values, skills, confidence, sense of efficacy, social networks. - to carry through changed life circumstances
- So – both need to be developed and pathways through participation facilitated



Policy – in the box

- Support volunteers with training and accreditation costs
- Some European countries allow volunteers tax rebates for time spent volunteering, or other rewards
- Super volunteers act as bureaucratic fixers
- A culture of volunteering engendered – its expected, eg Park Runs.
- Members not customers.
- Accommodate episodic volunteers – but with pathways to more involvement – eg ECB 'do up the ground' weekend.

Further questions - many

- Replicate Pathways research for sports volunteering and participation together
- How can sporting and volunteering capital be cultivated
- Accommodating episodic volunteers.
- Student volunteering – how can this fit into a volunteering pathway?



Thanks for listening – discussion / questions

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Nichols, G., Hogg, E., Knight, C., Mirfin-Boukouris, H., Storr, R. and Uri, C. *Understanding motivations of Sport Volunteers in England: a review for Sport England*
<http://www.sportengland.org/sport-you/volunteers-and-coaches/volunteers/>
 and at:
<http://svm.group.shef.ac.uk/research-reports-on-volunteers-in-sport/>

Motivations – mega-events

- Distinctive 'once-in-a-lifetime' experience
- Pride in one's country and location
- Distinctive or transferable? Maybe an overlap with before and after the event
- Can generate a strong feeling of wanting to continue to express a sense of euphoria and camaraderie experienced at the event. For some, this can be converted into long-term volunteering if the supporting structures are in place
- Structures can provide the opportunity for repeat episodic volunteering
- Repeat volunteering can generate a different and deeper set of rewards and motivations



Motivations - regional events

- Organised around a sport, a cause or a community
- Motive of being part of a once in a lifetime experience is replaced by a connection to the event: a commitment to the sport, cause or community
- Likely that regional event volunteers are involved in sports volunteering in another capacity



Motivations - coaches

- Strongly linked to enthusiasm for the sport – 'giving back to the sport'
- Involvement of one's own children
- Professionalism of coaching is blurring the boundary volunteer/professional
- A changed discourse of coaching as 'professional', and increasing regulation, may present a de-motivator, as may management systems in some clubs

Motivations - youth organisations

- Purpose of these organisations is the development of young people rather than the development of sports participation
- This purpose of is a motivator for volunteers
- Initial motivations are often associated with a child's participation although the parent may have had a previous involvement in the organisation
- Many volunteers remain beyond their child's involvement
- Identification with the values of the organisation and the rewards of friendship in it become very significant as long-term
- The ethos of the organisation and the shared norms of long-term volunteers is part of a definition of a 'recruitment niche', and can define 'people like us' who are suitable as volunteers. [It is interesting to relate this to the willingness of sports clubs to recruit new volunteers or members]

Motivations - young people / students

- Difficult to disentangle motives from personal outcomes
- Gaining marketable skills
- Also want to improve things, express positive values and improve the community
- Social relationships, expressing values, and personal development become more important with experience
- Volunteers in student sport are under-researched
- young people's volunteering is strongly predicted by if their parents volunteer

Motivations - older volunteers

- A big potential contributor
- Administrative roles tend to be taken by older volunteers
- Can offer strong rewards of feeling 'included' in communities and society
- Older volunteers can become involved through event volunteering, or remain involved in sports clubs, - limited research on other ways of introducing them into sports volunteering.
- Volunteering after retirement predicted by volunteering before it

Volunteers' effect on the sporting experience

- Yes! - positive or negative
- Not normally a strong enough factor to cause them to lapse
- Core members and new members may have different views of the club (balance of service delivery, mutual aid and conviviality)
- In a voluntary social gathering - the definition of 'someone like us' is partly subjective – it will exclude some

Clustering volunteers

- Young sports enthusiasts: mixture of seeking marketable experience and altruistic / improve things
- More likely to volunteer if their parents' volunteered
- Parents : Typically aged 30-45; may develop motivations strong enough to maintain their involvement



Clustering volunteers

- Participant volunteers: 20 years +, extension from participation or alongside it as participation declines. Motivations of: social rewards, status and identity - a commitment to the organisation and the sport
- Established / core volunteers: Older and typically developing from the participant volunteer with a deepening of motivations
- Episodic – peripheral volunteers: Motives may include a mixture of those above