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VOLUNTEERS AND MEGA SPORTING EVENTS: DEVELOPING A RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

Interest in all aspects of the politics, financing, planning, management and operation of mega sporting events has been highlighted both by success stories and ongoing problems associated with Olympic Games, Football World Cups and other similar events. There is a growing literature that addresses these and related matters through both case history and comparative analyses. Within the context of mega sporting events, the issue of employment creation is an important motivator for host cities and features high on the political justification agenda for bids to host events. At the same time, the most significant working contribution to major mega events in sports, as in other areas, is provided by the very large numbers of volunteers who undertake tasks across the range of opportunities afforded by such events. Numbers of volunteers between 40,000 and 60,000 have been noted for some recent major events. Relatively little is known about these volunteers at mega sporting events and yet their contribution and wider impact is very significant, both to the events themselves and within the host community. This paper seeks to identify the evident gaps that exist in understanding areas such as what volunteers do at mega sporting events; who they are; what motivates them; how volunteering impacts upon their lives; what associated activities they do surrounding the event in the host city; and the extent to which volunteering is recidivistic. The paper concludes with the presentation of a tentative research framework agenda in order to guide future study of this important area.

KEYWORDS

Mega events, Sports employment, Volunteering

INTRODUCTION

Mega sporting events, such as those of global interest including the football World Cup and the Olympic Games, provide a public interest agenda that addresses issues across a wide spectrum of concerns and opportunities. Such sporting events are part of the wider and growing analysis of major events within diverse fields of urban regeneration, economic development, politics and tourism (Getz, 1997). These address matters such as cost and viability, economic regeneration (physical, employment), creation of resources and infrastructure for future community and event use, community, civic and national pride and environmental impact among a plethora of

others. The justification for or arguments against a country or city competing for ultimate sporting prizes such as these (or, indeed "lesser" events such as the Commonwealth Games, the final of the UEFA Champions League or the hosting of rounds of the Formula 1 circuit) are well rehearsed and rarely definitive, combining both political and economic sophistry in order to pursue a particular cost-benefit analytical case, for or against. There is a growing case literature on the immediate and sustainable impact of sporting and other mega events on cities and communities (as examples from many, Ritchie and Aitken, 1984; Hall, 1987; Ritchie & Lyons, 1990; Ritchie & Smith, 1991; Hiller, 1995; Jones, 2001; Lee,

Lee & Lee, 2005; Kim & Petrick, 2005; Lee & Taylor, 2005; Kim, Gursoy & Lee, 2006) but little that is definitive to guide policy makers and politicians along a path of certainty in their decision making in this area. The wider domain of sports tourism, including as it does participation in sports as well as spectator access, is also an important, emerging area within the wider tourism and leisure literature. Hinch and Hingham (2001), address a conceptualisation of the phenomenon that places sports as a central attraction within events and activity tourism and seeks to explore its impact in spatial and temporal terms. They further recognise the uncharted territory that is explored in their discussion and propose a research agenda for exploration of the area. This approach and analysis is useful to the specific context of our discussion here.

Within the context of the organisation of mega sporting events, the issues of employment impact and the delivery of services are not widely considered. Ingerson (2001, p. 55) notes that "the majority of events conducted rarely accommodate permanent long-term employment. Both the arts and sports industries generally have a high level of volunteer workers and with events and festivals held over a number of days, the use of volunteers is economically beneficial for the event organisers". Indeed, the economic impact of direct employment generation through mega sporting events is questioned by, among others, Black and Pape (1996) who query the optimism of governments in claiming employment generation within the case-making for mega events. Hall is similarly critical of claims by the organisers of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games that the event would create 5,300 jobs in New South Wales and 7,500 jobs throughout Australia, describing the event as "an expensive job creation exercise" (Hall, 2001, p. 172). In Germany, this argument, likewise, featured in the run-up to the 2006 Football World Cup, with claims of up to 60,000 new jobs directly attributable to the event. Similarly, Symon (2006) reports projections of 10,000 jobs, 6,000 of which are permanent, as a potential benefit for Glasgow from hosting the 2014 Commonwealth Games. At the same time, there is evidence of new economic activity at a micro, entrepreneurial level within destinations hosting mega sporting events, creating self-employment (and potentially more) in a manner that is imperceptible to standard economic employment indicators (Spilling, 1996).

At the same time, as Ingerson (2001) notes, the role of volunteers is widely recognised as contributing an

important economic and cultural dimension to the effective operation of mega sporting events. Public recognition of the contribution of volunteers to major sporting events is widely heralded. Kemp (2002, p. 110), for example, reports this with respect to the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games:

Without the personal investment of the volunteers, these mega-events could simply not have been arranged. This fact was nowhere more recognised than at the conclusion of the Sydney Olympic Games when volunteers were given the chance to take up free tickets to the Olympic closing ceremony and later when the central business district of Sydney was closed for half a work day to provide the volunteers with their own ticker-tape parade.

Likewise, the official brochure for the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne (Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, 2006) formally recognizes the contribution of its "Unsung Heroes" by listing all 14,500 of them by name and state over twelve pages of the publication. Green and Chalip (2004, p. 49) note that:

... volunteers have become essential to the delivery of sport and recreation services, adding several hundred dollars of value per capita to the contribution that sport and recreation make to gross domestic product...Volunteers have become particularly vital for the delivery of special events, as most events now depend to some degree on volunteers for event planning and operations.

The literature on volunteering is relatively recent with regard to time-bound mega events, sporting and cultural, although the contribution of, for example, Elstad (1996); Farrell, Johnston and Twyman (1998); Chalip (2000); Moragas, Moreno and Paniagua, 2000; Kemp (2002); and Green and Chalip (2004) is evidence of an emerging field of study. At the same time, there is rather wider discussion of volunteering within the wider, participant sports environment (for example, Andrew, 1996; Amis and Slack, 1996; Cuskelly, 1995). By contrast, rather more is known about volunteering and volunteers within a more stable and long-term working environment in areas such as social services (SCER, 2005) and the cultural and heritage sector (Lockstone, Deery & King, 2003;

Lockstone, 2004; Edwards, 2006; Graham and Foley, 1998). Indeed, the focus of much work to promote voluntary work is on the establishment of long-term, essentially professional working relationships between volunteers and their employers (Baum, 2006; Kent Sports Development Unit, undated). The focus on long-term commitment is influenced, for example, by the changing legal environment in many countries which increasingly demands extensive and expensive personal checks on those volunteering for work with the young and vulnerable.

This paper proposes a tentative framework as the basis for the development of a research agenda that, if implemented, would go some way to redressing the limited scope of information available with regard to volunteers in major time-bound events, notably in the sporting context. The framework identifies areas for consideration with regard to the volunteers themselves (demographics, relationship to the event, motivation, circumstances, personal histories of volunteering, short- and long-term outcomes and benefits of volunteering) as well as addressing dimensions relating to the economic and cultural contribution that volunteering makes to the success and, indeed, viability of mega sporting events. As an approach to the analysis of volunteers and voluntary work, our paper here is, in part, modelled on the earlier work of Ellis (1985) who set out an early research agenda for the address of what has become an important field for academic and practitioner research.

MEGA SPORTING EVENTS

Roche (1994, p. 1) describes mega events (of which those in the sporting calendar are key examples) as "short-term events with long-term consequences". This description points clearly to the economic as well as political, social and cultural motives that persuade cities and countries to bid for the hosting of events such as the Olympic Games and the Football World Cup. Roche (2000, p. 1) further defines such happenings as "large-scale cultural (including commercial and sporting) events which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance". Getz (1997, p. 6) quantifies the definition by noting that "their volume should exceed 1 million visits, their capital cost should be at least \$500 million and their reputation should be that of a 'must see' event". This latter point highlights the role such events can have in destination development and image building. These outcomes are most closely

associated with hallmark events and as such both Hall (1992, p. 1) and Getz (1997, p. 6) have recognised the cross over between these two event types.

Roche (2000) emphasises that mega events are typically, organized by the collaborative efforts of international non-governmental organizations (such as the IOC or FIFA) and national governments and their associated bodies. To these, increasingly, needs to be added the role of global companies as sponsoring partners to mega events, providing both financial contribution and widespread exposure to the event in question. There is little doubt that mega sporting events cost major sums of money to mount and that there is ongoing debate as to the balance between costs and benefits associated with hosting.

Mega sporting events are justified, in terms of the public expenditure that is required to host them, on the basis of their long-term benefits through new event and urban infrastructure, urban renewal, enhanced international reputation, increased tourist visitation and related benefits (Ritchie & Aitken, 1985; Hall, 1987; Hall, 1992; Crompton, 1999; Kasimati, 2003). The process of bidding for mega sports events is also highly complex and political (Westerbeek et al, 2002). Many mega sporting events, especially those that are "one off" rather than annual dates on circuit timetables (FI races, Tennis Grand Stand tournaments), also develop strong cultural dimensions and the importance of these links to the development of culture and heritage in a community is widely recognized (Scott, 2004).

Sports events and tourism are inexorably linked and there is considerable evidence that the tourism potential of mega sporting events is a major factor in encouraging cities to bid to host such events. Such tourism potential relates to the immediate attraction of the event to international and domestic visitors as spectators and participants in the cultural environment that frequently surrounds mega events of this nature. It can also be seen in terms of longer-term contribution to raising the profile of the destination and to the attraction of new visitors to the city on a recurring basis in the future. The literature on sports tourism is one that is growing rapidly (for example, Getz, 1998; Ritchie & Adair, 2002; Hinch & Higham, 2004; Higham, 2005) but they make scant reference to the core concern of this paper in the mega sporting events context, that of employment issues in general and volunteering specifically.

Roche (2000, p. 3) refers to an "ecology" of events, based on their scale; their geographical impact (global, regional, national, sub-national, local); and their socio-political position (commemorative events, national days, political rallies). Each level and context have some similar attributes in terms of organizational features and participant adherence. At the same time, there are also clear levels of distinctiveness between such events, that enable us to distinguish an Olympic Games from, for example, a local football derby in Milan or an Ashes cricket test between Australia and England.

Mega sporting events generate economic activity on a major scale, within the preparatory phase, during the event itself and, if aspirations are met, as a longer-term consequence of the event in terms of inward investment and tourism. A major component of such economic impact is in terms of employment generation, new jobs that are created as a direct result of the event across a wide spectrum of the economy. Some of these new jobs are long-term and within the wider economy (train drivers given working opportunities as a result of new transport infrastructure projects in the city) while others are time-bound and specific to the event itself or similar activities using the same venues (stadium catering, security and the like). In numerical terms, probably the most significant cohort of workers at mega sporting events are people who are working without remunerative benefits, the army of volunteers who seek to contribute to a wide range of tasks and responsibilities within the event host city. The paper now considers the phenomenon of volunteering and volunteer motivation.

VOLUNTARY WORK AND VOLUNTEERING

It is important to define the concept of volunteering prior to discussing and mapping volunteer research in the context of mega sporting events. This is a complex task in view of the considerable scope for defining volunteering in terms of motives (altruism, self-interestedness), activities (leisure-oriented, work-oriented) and setting (voluntary organisations, government bodies).

Five elements have been identified as comprising the conceptual framework of volunteering (Davis Smith, 1999). These elements include rewards, the issue of free will, nature of benefit received from volunteer activity, organisational setting and level of commitment of volunteers. Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth (1996)

incorporated similar dimensions in their volunteer typology. A code of volunteering developed by Volunteering Australia (Cordingley, 2000, p.74) has acknowledged principles such as:

Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work.
and
Volunteers do not replace paid workers and do not constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers.

In discussing the various elements of volunteering, Noble (1991) noted that the activity is done without expectation of monetary reward. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001, p.44) study into voluntary work in Australia classified a volunteer as "someone who willingly gave unpaid help, in the form of time, service or skills, through an organisation or group". The reimbursement of expenses (in full or part) or the provision of small gifts did not preclude people receiving such benefits from being considered as volunteers. These definitional aspects relating to the absence of financial gain and the reimbursement of expenses (to a value less than the work provided) help to distinguish between paid employees and volunteers.

The issue of free will is a fundamental element of volunteering (Noble, 1991). The willingness of people to give their time to an activity or organisation without compulsion and in consideration of the limited rewards available is a primary research question arising from the study of volunteering. In relation to free will and motivation to volunteer, peer pressure and social obligation factors have been found to exert some influence (Babchuk & Booth, 1969; Freeman, 1997).

A further aspect in defining volunteering is the nature of the benefit received from the activity in question. This element of the conceptual framework (Davis Smith, 1999) draws a distinction between volunteering and pure leisure by providing that there must be a beneficiary to the activity other than (or in addition to) the volunteer. The scope to which a beneficiary is defined may be open to interpretation. For example, Darvill and Munday (1984), cited in Parker (1992, p. 2), defined a volunteer as being "a person who voluntarily provides an unpaid direct service for one or more persons to whom the volunteer is not related".

The research literature has identified some similarities between volunteering and leisure. Building upon a concept proposed by Stebbins (1982), Parker (1992) defined volunteering as being a type of 'serious leisure', the characteristics of which include a need to persevere with the activity, the tendency to have a career in it, durable benefits, unique culture and participant identification. Henderson (1984) outlined some common features including participant free will and various benefits sought from both volunteer and leisure activities. The author goes on to suggest that motivation may act as a link to describe the relationship between leisure and volunteerism.

Stebbins (1996, p. 216) noted early on that "serious leisure volunteering is career volunteering". This concept has been compared to its counterpart, casual leisure volunteering, which Stebbins suggests "is momentary; it requires little skill or knowledge but is nonetheless satisfying, perhaps even enjoyable" (1996, p. 219). Whilst the temporal aspect of casual leisure might be most apt in relation to mega event volunteering, the definition itself does not sit well with the skills base often required or acquired as a result of this type of participation. Acknowledging this gap, Stebbins recently added to his seminal theory, suggesting that in addition to serious leisure, volunteering occurs in project-based leisure opportunities that can be short-term, infrequent, yet of a relatively complicated nature. The author goes on to note that these opportunities require "considerable planning, effort and sometimes skill or knowledge, but is for all that neither serious leisure nor intended to develop into such" (Stebbins, 2004, p. 7). Volunteering for sports events is given as a specific example of project-based leisure.

Moving on, organisational setting refers to the environment in which volunteering occurs. Such settings may be defined broadly and can range from formal (organised) to informal (one-to-one) volunteer activities. Wilson and Musick (1997) distinguished between formal volunteering as being typically carried out in the context of organisations, with the work undertaken contributing to the collective good. They defined informal volunteering as 'helping' and noted that these activities (for example, assisting friends, neighbours and relatives) were more private and unorganised in nature. A number of sectoral differences may also affect the formal setting. With reference to the principles of volunteering established by Volunteering Australia, Cordingley (2000, p.74) noted, "there are compelling reasons for volunteer work to be

undertaken only in non-profit organisations. Non-profit organisations, variously known as the third sector, non-profit, charitable, benevolent, voluntary, or non-government organisations are separate from both the state and the for-profit sector". Unfortunately, this perspective of volunteer work does not encompass the variety of roles filled by volunteers within the public sector including museum guides, fire fighters, teacher's aides, recreation assistants and information guides.

The final element of the conceptual framework (Davis Smith, 1999) is the level of commitment by which volunteer activity can be defined. Definitions such as that utilised by Du Boulay (1996) specify, "a volunteer is a person who, on a regular basis, contributes his or her time and energy" (p.5). Such a definition may be considered too narrow to encompass one-off volunteer activities (for example, special event volunteering) and this is a problem from the perspective of this discussion.

In the context of volunteer motivation, Harrison (1995, p.372) was one of the first to acknowledge that volunteer participation can be "discrete or episodic, rather than continuous or successive". Sports event volunteering is an example given by the author of this type of participation. Support was found for the theory of episodic volunteer motivation, with Harrison (1995, p.373) noting that "taking part in volunteer work at a specified time and place is a direct, positive function of the intention to do so". Recognising the differences between episodic and sustained volunteering, it was suggested that the results of the study may not generalise well to ongoing volunteers as the theory presupposes deliberate decision processes and this type of volunteer is more likely to be routinised in his or her approach and less conscious of alternative activities.

More recently, Hustinx and Lammertyn (2004) examined different patterns of volunteering. In this context, the authors contend that collective volunteers are ongoing volunteers who are committed on a long-term basis, whilst reflexive volunteers are highly individualised in selecting their assignments and will tend to do so in a series of fragmented episodes (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2004, p.553). These patterns were tested based on items representing attitudinal and motivational characteristics. Cluster analysis yielded four clusters, two of which, the researchers interpreted as being most closely aligned to collective and reflexive forms of volunteering. These

volunteer types were respectively named unconditional and distant. Hustinx and Lammertyn (2004, p.568) mention the strong ties unconditional volunteers have to their organisations, whilst "the distant volunteer group is clustered around volunteers with loose type involvement: infrequent, not really time-consuming, and on a short-term basis. Moreover, the nature of their activities is very focused". Despite these somewhat negative sounding connotations, Hustinx and Lammertyn suggest that a reflexive volunteer can demonstrate a strong sense of loyalty to their organisation and its mission. Whilst neither study (Harrison 1995; Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2004) was set in the context of special events, there is considerable scope to undertake research that is, given the suitability of episodic or distant volunteering to the nature of this area and the overwhelming focus of most research on sustained or ongoing volunteering.

In examining the various defining elements of volunteering, it is evident that determining a comprehensive and accepted definition of the concept may not be entirely feasible from a research perspective. The discussion does, however, offer a comprehensive examination of issues relating to volunteering. A further debate that has contributed to the lack of consensus in defining volunteering is whether only purely altruistic behaviours should be construed as volunteering or if an element of exchange exists in the volunteer relationship. In providing an overview of the relevant literature, Pearce (1993) suggested that a more appropriate term for use in the volunteer context might be 'prosocial' rather than 'altruistic'. As the author noted, altruism may involve a form of self-sacrifice on the part of the volunteer that may not be within their best interests. Reference to 'prosocial' acts in relation to volunteering however, may appropriately convey behaviours that assist others while not causing detriment or restriction to the person undertaking them.

In light of the foregoing discussion, selecting an appropriate definition of volunteering may be viewed as a relatively subjective exercise. In the context of special events, the sense of regularity and temporal commitment that underpins the above attempts to define volunteering and volunteers are not necessarily present. Indeed, as we have seen, some discussion of definitions explicitly excludes special event volunteers (Du Boulay, 1996). For the purposes of this paper, concept definition should allow for the operational features of mega sports events that are the impetus for volunteer roles. These features

relate to the large number of participants (competitors, technical support staff, administrators and spectators) in a time-bound but intensive congregation in one or more locations within a defined geographical region (city, state or country). In the present context, volunteering is defined as "people exercising their own free will, for no remuneration at all, in a formal setting to help others" (Paull, 1999, p.27). This definition has been chosen because it is broad enough to encompass the range of roles event volunteers might undertake, whilst still embodying the basic tenets of the volunteer concept.

As we have seen, mega sporting events attract and depend upon very large numbers in terms of the volunteers who contribute to such events but information about their characteristics against the range of criteria addressed above is limited (Kemp, 2002 is very much the exception here). It is, however, a reasonable (but relatively untested) assumption that that volunteers who contribute to mega sporting events exhibit some of the characteristics of those committed to volunteering in other contexts. The nature of commitment at such events (time constrained, high profile context) however, means that such volunteers could also exhibit features that diverge from those that characterise more standard models of volunteering. The purpose of this question is to identify the questions that can be asked to map the areas where mega sports events volunteers are similar and where they diverge from their colleagues in other settings of volunteer work.

VOLUNTEERS AND TIME-BOUND MEGA EVENTS: A RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AGENDA

The discussion of mega sporting events and the role of volunteers within their organizations thus far leads to the conclusion that the relationship between the two areas of analysis is one that has been relatively poorly served in the literature. At the same time, it is evident that researchers do have considerable opportunity to develop work that aims to provide clearer analysis of, for example, the role that volunteers can and do play in mega sporting events, their contribution across a range of economic and cultural dimensions and the long-term impact of volunteering on volunteers themselves.

Therefore, this paper proposes a framework for future research, the outcomes of which have the potential to inform thinking by policy makers, sports administrators, tourism interests and academics when considering both

the possible impact (of future events) and evaluating the long-term effects of past events.

Volunteers and the organization of mega sporting events

(1) Defining volunteerism in the context of mega sports events – can “standard” definitions that are, primarily, drawn from social and community sector (Noble, 1991; Osborne, 1998) be applied uncritically to major events or is some reappraisal required in this very different context? While there are evidently social and cultural dimensions to mega games volunteering when, for example, such events include disabled athletes and spectators, the general context is very different as is the duration of commitment expected from volunteers.

(2) Numbers – how many volunteers are employed at different types of mega sporting events? Both Green and Chalip (2004) and FIFA (2004) note volunteer levels for a number of mega sporting events but figures quoted seem to provide a fairly crude estimate of the numbers involved and give no indication of the characteristics of volunteers and their origin (See Appendix 1 for estimates of event volunteer numbers).

(3) Sports events types and volunteers – are sporting events that are perceived to be more “amateur” in ethos (such as the Olympics and Commonwealth Games) more likely to attract/seek volunteers than overtly commercial and professional sporting events such as Formula 1 Motor Racing? Evidence from Football World Cups (FIFA, 2004) suggests that this may not necessarily be the case. Are cultural showcasing and the nation representative state status of those taking part an influencing factor – Olympic Games and World Cups go beyond individualistic sporting prowess and focus on national achievement. Do differing types of sporting events attract volunteers who have different motivations and backgrounds?

(4) Roles and responsibilities – what is the range of activities undertaken by volunteers at mega sporting events? To what extent do they contribute to categories of responsibility such as technical, sporting support; ancillary services; visitor care; and the local/ national cultural dimension? FIFA (2004) list a wide range of areas of work that volunteers can undertake but it is not clear from this listing what specifically is required and what levels of responsibility are expected (see Appendix 2 for assigned roles).

(5) To what extent do they take supervisory and management responsibility in their area of volunteering work? How does the responsibility and authority profile of volunteers relate to the work and responsibilities of paid employees at mega sporting events?

(6) Selection criteria and selection process – how are volunteers recruited in terms of promotion and selection process? Are potential volunteers rejected and, if they are, on what basis? There is some evidence that mega sporting events do receive many more applications than they are able to accommodate (FIFA, 2004) but the detailed criteria employed in such selection in terms of specific roles and responsibilities are unclear (See Appendix 3 for details). Given contemporary security sensitivities at mega sporting events, how are volunteers vetted and security controlled?

(7) Demographics in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, status, experience – do volunteers at mega sporting events exhibit similar demographic characteristics to those identified with regard to other areas of volunteering? “When Sydney won the Olympics, 75,000 people applied to be volunteers. More half than were over 60 and three quarters were from NSW” (Commonwealth Games and Volunteers Update, 2005a, p. 8).

(8) Geographical – local, national, international, is volunteering for mega sports events a localized phenomenon or does it attract participants from outside the city/ region/ country? At a rough estimate, some 10 – 15% of the 14,500 volunteers working at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne were “out of state”, from parts of Australia other than Victoria but none are identified as based outside of the country (Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, 2006) (See Appendix 4 for a breakdown by State). Of the 25, 000 volunteers who signed up to work at the 2006 Football World Cup in Germany, applications “came from around the world, including Canada, Argentina and included people with experience from the 2002 World Cup in South Korea and Japan and even from 1974, when Germany last hosted the event” (World Volunteer Web, 2005). Do some forms of mega events attract international volunteers? How would such international volunteering reconcile with the national cultural hosting function that many volunteers fulfill?

(9) Background – sporting, cultural, formal links to event area (coach, participant). Do volunteers for mega sporting events have a specific commitment to and interest in the theme of the event or to particular sports within it? Do they have participant experience in the event area or are they formally affiliated to organizations participating through club membership etc? Are they part of an associated heritage or cultural movement or association?

(10) Motivation – why do volunteers volunteer for mega sports events? Are their motivations similar to that of long-term volunteers? Both Elstad (1996) and Farrell et al. (1998) suggest that volunteer commitment to an event will be driven, in part, by their satisfaction with the actual experience. Green and Chalip (2004), however, point out that while this may be part of the explanation, there is little in this analysis to tell us what actually causes volunteer satisfaction.

(11) Previous volunteering behaviour – do volunteers repeat their experience in mega sports events (this sport, others)? Byren (2006) talks about the “bounce-back” behaviour of episodic volunteers in the context of work within community groups but little is known about similar repeat volunteering for mega sporting events. Is, for example, there evidence of such volunteer behaviour between, for example, the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000 and the Melbourne Commonwealth Games in 2006? World Volunteer Web (2005) points to some evidence of repeat volunteering at Football World Cups but provides no quantification of the extent of this phenomenon. Furthermore, to what extent are mega sporting event volunteers drawn from an established volunteer pool in other areas (social, cultural, sporting)?

(12) Training – what new skills do volunteers acquire and how do they acquire them? To what extent is use made of volunteers’ existing skills profile? Farrell et al. (1998) found that educational/ learning outcomes were major factors underpinning volunteer motivational behaviour at sporting events while both Elstad (1996) and Kemp (2002) also point to learning benefits. What is not clear is how impactful such learning is on the long-term development and careers of volunteers and whether returning volunteers, on a bounce-back experience, seek to learn more of the same or focus on new learning opportunities from their repeat experience. Indeed, are bounce-back volunteers serial learners or is the developmental aspect of volunteering confined to first time participants as mega sporting event volunteers?

(13) Therefore, analysis is required of the medium- to long-term impact on life and careers – how, if at all, does the experience of short-term volunteering impact on volunteers’ working and personal lives?

The Economics of volunteering

(1) City economics – to what extent do the economics of staging mega sporting events depend on the contribution of volunteers? Green and Chalip (2004, p. 49) describe events as “becoming increasingly dependent on volunteers” and this conclusion is also reached by Mules and Faulkner (1996) and Getz (1998).

(2) Paid work substitution – how much do volunteers “save” event organizers? How many paid employees would be taken on if volunteers were not available?

(3) Individual economics – what is the extent of commitment by volunteers to mega sporting events in terms of time, loss of earnings, travel (especially from out of town volunteers), cost of accommodation etc.?

(4) Volunteers as spending tourists - what is the local tourism spend of out-of-town volunteers during events? Do they bring family, friends with them and what are the financial costs to them of this? Interestingly, Kasimati (2003, p. 435) develops a fairly inclusive schema to represent the multiplier impact of money spent at major sporting events such as the Olympic Games. The contribution of volunteers (and, indeed, paid employees) is ignored and there is a strong case to develop a parallel volunteer multiplier impact model to represent the value of this group to a local economy. Gratton, Shibli and Coleman (2005) do recognize, in part, the economic dimensions of volunteering. In their analysis of the Flora London Marathon in 2000, they identify the number of volunteers (7,000) and their expenditure in terms of food and drinks consumed but do not consider further impacts that volunteering may have on the destination.

(5) Volunteers as visiting tourists – what do out-of-town volunteers do and see as tourists in a strange city/ location?

(6) Cost of recruitment/ training – how much do mega sporting event organizers budget for the recruitment and training of their volunteers? How do they handle specialist aspects of training, for example security?

(7) Cost of providing uniforms, food, local travel, facilities – what budget is allocated to volunteer care?

(8) Service quality and management costs – how is service quality managed in terms of volunteer service delivery and what are the costs involved with the management of this area?

The image of volunteering

(1) Is volunteering at mega sporting events socially and ethnically inclusive? Do volunteers to mega sporting events reflect the social composition of the host community?

(2) Social and cultural representation of city/ destination? Does the volunteer force provide an appropriate representation of the cultural and ethnic composition of the host community?

(3) Volunteering and developing country host cities (Beijing Olympics, 2008; South Africa, Cricket World Cup, 2003; Football World Cup, 2010; Commonwealth Games, Kuala Lumpur, 1998; F1 in Kuala Lumpur, Shanghai). In a general sense, the impact of mega sporting events is relatively uncharted in a developing country context although there is an emerging literature in this field (Matheson and Baade, 2004). However, such sources do not really address how is volunteering is perceived and managed across different cultural, political and economic environments (Bramante, 2004).

(4) Perceptions of volunteers among key stakeholder groups at mega sporting events – the local community, spectators, participants/athletes, paid event employees, city administrators and managers among others. The media coverage of volunteering at major events is, frequently, bland to the point of patronization (Melbourne Says 'Thank You', 2006) with the use of overused platitudes ("unsung heroes") and an absence of depth and critical analysis (Lockstone and Baum, 2006).

This tentative framework undoubtedly contains many important omissions in terms of the wide range of considerations that the field of volunteering at mega sporting events merits. It is not intended to be wholly inclusive but rather to spark discussion and, more importantly, to trigger research agendas for this with an academic and wider professional interest in this area.

CONCLUSIONS – A WAY FORWARD

The purpose of this paper has been to survey existing work on volunteering in the context of mega sporting events such as the Olympic Games and the Football World Cup. Specifically, this paper argues that there is a lack of holistic research that takes into consideration the wide range of themes and issues that pertain to volunteering in the sports events context. The prime focus of existing work to date has been on the volunteers themselves, their motivation and causes of satisfaction. Secondary to this has been limited work to assess the economic value of volunteers to host cities and sports organisers. Beyond these themes, the level of analysis of volunteers and their roles and impacts has been limited.

This paper highlights a tentative research framework agenda that is by no means inclusive in seeking to identify the wide range of potential avenues for investigation that the field of volunteering merits. Further research in the areas highlighted will be of value to mega sporting event organisers in maximising the value they can derive from effective use of volunteers. Such research however can also contribute significantly to a wide range of other academic and political debates, for example the understanding of the dynamics of a host community and its sense of ownership of mega sporting events; the contribution that volunteering can make to developing the human capital resident within a city or community; and the value of volunteer tourism (a phenomenon generally seen in a developing country context) to host communities.

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