

## Understanding volunteers at local recurring sport events

**Authors:** Oskar Solenes & Hallgeir Gammelsaeter

**Institutions:** Molde University College

**E-mail:** oskar.solenes@himolde.no

The aim of this paper is to understand why volunteers do voluntary work. There is a growing interest in understanding the motivation of volunteers at big sporting events. The trend seems to be that less people do voluntary work in general, and that the motivation for doing voluntary work has shifted from collectivistic motivations towards being more individualistic (Wollebæk and Sivesind 2010). This can, according to the literature, be observed as the interest for taking part and volunteering in different kinds of (sport) events is increasing. Many of these events are "once-in-a-life-time" happenings to the volunteer and not so much recurring events during a year or season. In this paper we explore the motivation for sport event volunteering in the Norwegian premier league soccer which rely heavily on volunteers for organizing the matchday: how do volunteers explain their voluntary work at such recurring sport events?

The described individualistic turn in voluntarism is what Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) refer to as reflexive volunteering and which is seen as a consequence of shifting social patterns in late modernity. The motivation for volunteering is self-centered and voluntary work is seen as a field or a 'market of possibilities'. This reflexive volunteering is contrasted by collective volunteering which is rooted in a

"communal orientation" where duty or responsibility to a local community is the prime motivation (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, p173). This typology should not be seen as some sort of polarization between the modern and the traditional, but instead as a continuum where pluralization is the key word where "collective" and "reflexive" ingredients are blended together into a personal volunteers' cocktail' (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, p171). One might expect that there are variance in volunteers' motivation across types of events, such as large recurring local events and mega events that takes place less frequently and always at diverse locations. When trying to identify and understand how volunteers at Norwegian football stadiums reason their own voluntary work this perspective seems fruitful.

Data was collected through qualitative interviews among volunteers in 3 different clubs. The 15 participants in this study was randomly selected among the registered volunteers in these 3 different clubs.

The bulk of the data collection took part during spring 2012. Some preliminary findings indicates that the motivation of volunteers at these events seems to be more communal than reflexive and individualistic.

### References

- Hustinx, L., & Lammertyn, F. (2003). Collective and Reflexive Styles of Volunteering: A Sociological Modernization Perspective. *Voluntas: International Journal and Nonprofit Organizations* 14 (2), 167-187
- Wollebæk, D., & Sivesind, K.H. (2010); *Fra folkebevegelse til filantropi? Frivillig innsats i Norge 1997-2009*. Oslo: Senter for forskning på sivilsamfunn og frivillige sektor