

Turning A Critical Lens On Social Inclusion And Volunteering

Doherty, Alison

Western University, Canada

E-mail: adoherty@uwo.ca

Volunteerism is inarguably fundamental to community sport club governance, operations, and program delivery that benefits members and, by extension, the broader community within which those clubs operate (Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006; Nicholson, Hoye, & Houlihan, 2011). Scholars are beginning to consider the personal and societal benefits of sport volunteerism itself, as a vehicle for social inclusion and, specifically, the integration of volunteers in and through the sport they serve (Morgan, 2013; SIVSCE, 2016; Welty Peachey et al., 2011; Whittaker & Holland-Smith, 2016). In this presentation, I argue that adopting a critical lens through which to view social inclusion and volunteering can help to uncover additional and alternative insights by critiquing what may be unfolding assumptions about this phenomenon (Frisby, 2005). Critical social science research encourages us to ask what may be difficult questions about a phenomenon, and pursue “both sides to the story.” This more holistic approach allows us to generate a more balanced understanding of “people coming together” (Arai & Pedlar, 2003, p. 185). Framed by theory and research on social capital (“social energy” generated through individuals’ connections; Doherty & Misener, 2008), organizational culture (norms and expectations that guide behavior; Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999), and capacity (assets and resources that enable goal achievement; Doherty, Misener, & Cuskelly, 2014), the potential exclusionary nature of sport club volunteering, the possibility of a model that conceptualizes this activity too narrowly, and their implications for community sport delivery are examined.

Selected References:

- Arai, S., & Pedlar, A. (2003). Moving beyond individualism in leisure theory: A critical analysis of concepts of community and social engagement. *Leisure Studies, 22*, 185–202.
- Cuskelly, G., Hoye, R., & Auld, C. (2006). *Working with volunteers in sport: Theory and practice*. London: Routledge.
- Doherty, A., & Chelladurai, P. (1999). Managing cultural diversity in sport organizations: A theoretical perspective. *Journal of Sport Management, 13*, 280–297.
- Doherty, A., & Misener, K. (2008). Community sport networks. In M. Nicholson & R. Hoye (Eds.), *Sport and social capital* (pp. 113–141). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Doherty, A., Misener, K., & Cuskelly, G. (2014). Toward a multidimensional framework of capacity in community sport clubs. *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 42*, 1245–1425.
- Frisby, W. (2005). The good, the bad, and the ugly: Critical sport management research. *Journal of Sport Management, 19*, 1–12.
- Morgan, H. (2013). Sport volunteering, active citizenship, and social capital enhancement: What role in the big society. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics, 5*, 381–395.