An international comparison of the composition and motivations of volunteer officers in a UK and US police force

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Aim of research

• Compare the composition of the part-time volunteer police services in Cleveland Police, UK and the Orange County Sheriff’s Office, Florida, USA.
• This included the uniformed volunteer’s employment status, age, gender, years of experience, motivations for volunteering and the hours volunteered.
Methodology

• Sought Institutional Review Board (USA) / Ethics Committee (UK) university approval.
• Approval of both volunteer police agencies and Force executives.
• Questionnaires were distributed to participants selected using convenience sampling during a regular meeting.
• Informed consent was obtained from each participant with their confidentiality assured.
Participants

• Of the 72 part-time volunteer police officers within Cleveland Police, 31 participated. (The force has 1,378 regular officers)

• Cleveland Police covers an area of 600 km$^2$ with a high population density and high crime

• Of the 85 part-time volunteer deputies within Orange County Sheriff’s Office, 40 participated. (The department also has 1,400 full-time deputies).

• Orange County Sheriff’s Office covers an area of 2,600 km$^2$. Also has high population density and high crime.
Outcomes

Age Range of Participants

- UK Male
- UK Female
- USA Male
- USA Female

18-21
21-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65+

University of Central Florida

University of Teesside
# Outcomes

*Hours Donated per month*

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<th></th>
<th>UK</th>
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<th>USA</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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Outcomes

Cleveland Police (UK) Motivations for Volunteering:

• 42% of officers selected ‘I want to join the regular police service and this provides an insight into that role’,

• 36% of officers selected ‘I want to contribute to my community’,

• 32% of officers selected ‘I have an interest in law and policing in general’
Outcomes

Orange County Sheriff’s Office (USA) Motivations for Volunteering:

- 35% of deputies selected ‘I have an interest for law and policing in general’,
- 20% of deputies selected ‘I want to contribute to my community’
- 20% of deputies selected ‘I used to be a regular officer and want to make use of my knowledge and expertise’.
- 5% of deputies selected ‘I used to be a regular officer and want to keep in touch with my colleagues’.

Thoughts

• Volunteers participants were highly male dominated.
• Age range was predominantly younger in the UK with the US having a far more even spread of ages.
• Majority UK/US in full-time or part-time employment
• Average hours donated a month is 28.6 (UK) and 27.3 hours (USA).
• Motivations fell mainly into either the category of improved personal development or personal values.
• Quarter of US respondents reported that they are volunteers in the force because of prior employment.
Implications

• Cost savings.
  Example: (West Yorkshire Police, 2012) reported that during the year 2011/2012, volunteer police officers completed over 129,000 duty hours, which would have cost over £2 million.

• Recruitment of students or those not in employment.

• Recruitment of more female volunteer officers and retired officers.

• Future research to be widened to include additional UK, US and European volunteer police services.
References/Bibliography


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