

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

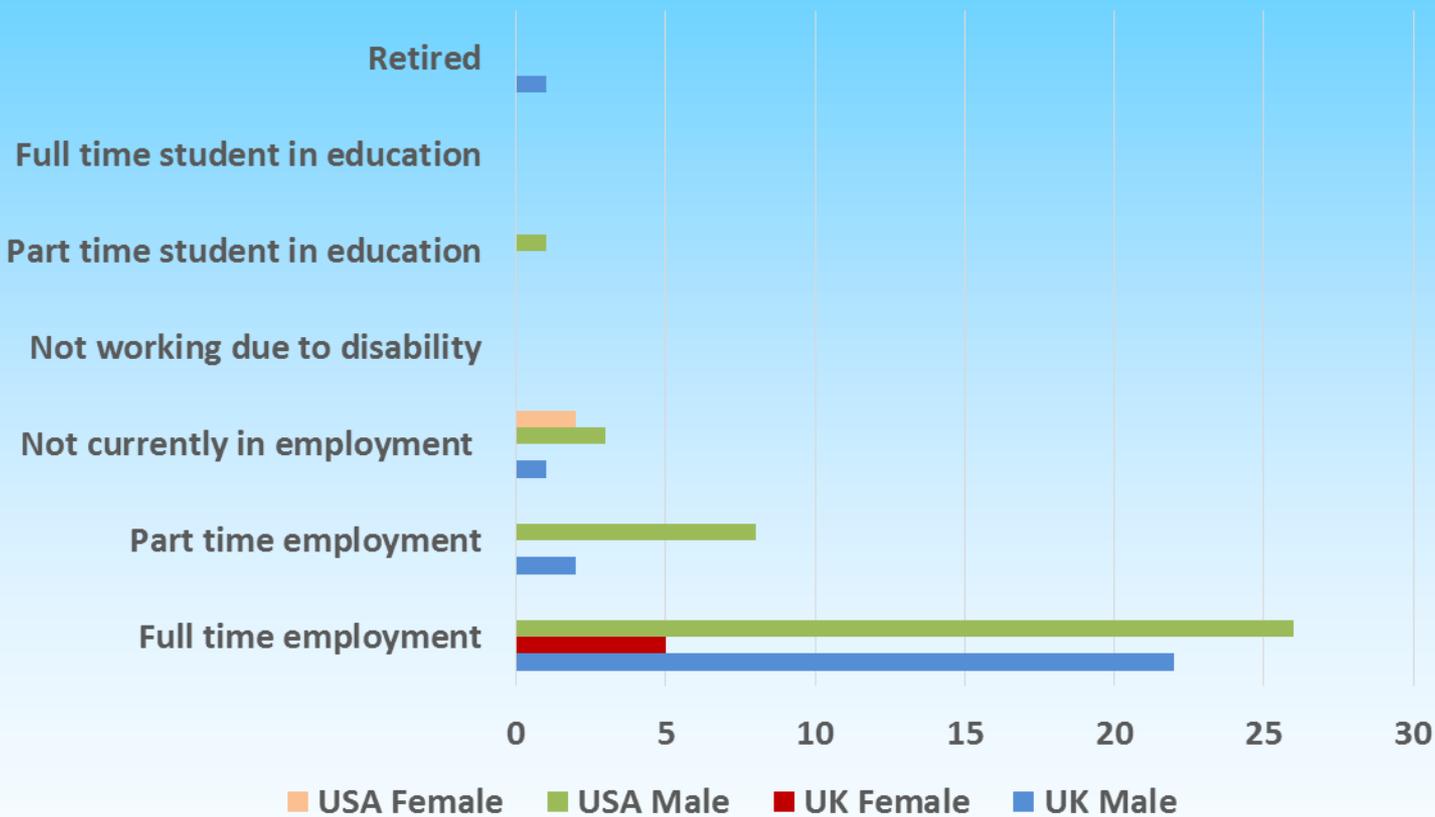
- Sought Institutional Review Board (USA) / Ethics Committee (UK) university approval.
- Approval of both volunteer police agencies and Force executives.
- Questionnaires were distributed to participants selected using convenience sampling during a regular meeting.
- Informed consent was obtained from 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 km² 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 km². Also has high population density and high crime.

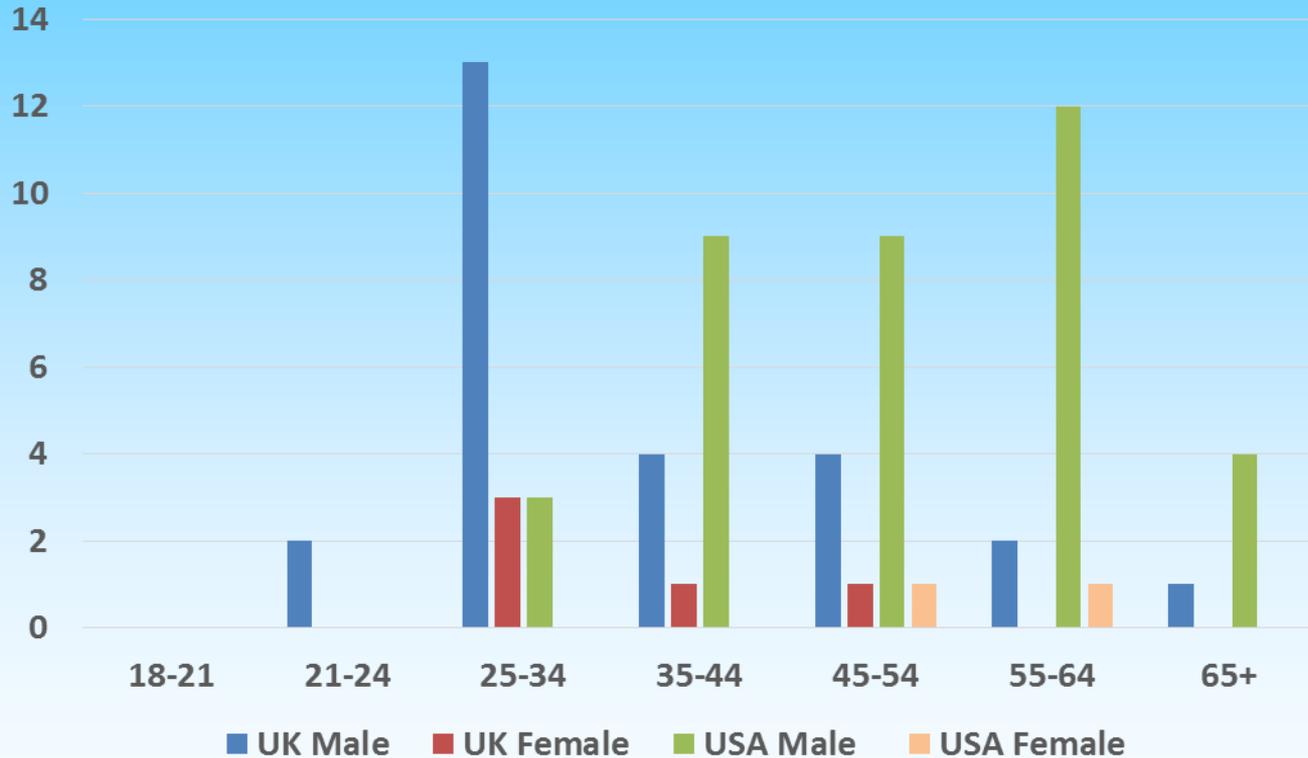
Outcomes

Current Status



Outcomes

Age Range of Participants



Outcomes

Hours Donated per month

	UK	UK		USA	USA
	Male	Female		Male	Female
Mean	29	26.8		27.8	4
Median	30	21		20	4
Mode	16	16		20	8
Highest	120	60		80	8
Lowest	8	16		8	0

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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