'Once I Joined my Motivations Changed': Exploring the Initial and Continuing Motivations of Police Support Volunteers in an English Constabulary

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Abstract

Understanding and responding to motivations – both initial and continuing – are pivotal features of effectively involving volunteers within an organisation, influencing satisfaction and ongoing commitment. This article explores the initial and continuing motivations of Police Support Volunteers (PSVs) – citizens who give their time freely to perform tasks that complement the duties of police officers and staff. Drawing on survey and interview data with 160 PSVs in a large urban police service in England, the article considers motivations through three typologies – *The Altruistic PSV, The Social PSV,* and *The Career PSV.* It explores defining features of each typology and highlights the shifting nature of motivations as volunteer service progresses – most notably an increase in socially-driven volunteers, and a fall in those seeking fulfilment of career goals. Implications for practice are considered, in particular investing in dedicated volunteer resources that recognise and respond to the heterogeneity of volunteer cohorts and fluidity of motivations.

Introduction

Volunteers are a familiar presence in British policing, with the most recognisable figure – the Special Constable – formally acknowledged in legislation just two years after the formation of the modern police service in 1829. Emerging in forces from the early 1990s onwards, the non-warranted and (usually) non-uniformed Police Support Volunteer (PSV) is a relatively new addition to an established police volunteer history. PSVs carry out a range of tasks from administration, front counter duties, and community engagement activities, to operational functions (e.g., traffic speed checks, viewing CCTV footage) and specialist skill or interest roles such as scientific support, gardening, puppy walking, equine assistance, and mountain rescue, with the nature of volunteering varying by force location. A 2018 benchmarking survey estimated that there are 8,265 PSVs and 1,100 role profiles across police services in England and Wales. This reflects the breadth and diversity of the PSV role and contribution, and the extent to which this varies between forces (Callender et al., 2018; Britton et al., 2018).

The changing shape of policing, with increasingly complex workloads, reducing budgets, and pluralising workforces, coupled with a broader policy landscape that increasingly involves volunteers in the delivery of public services, arguably points to mounting prominence for the PSV going forward (Ren et al., 2006; Phillips and Terrell-Orr, 2013; Randol and Gaffney, 2014; Stenning and Shearing, 2015; Higgins et al., 2017). However, the role continues to develop with 'little research, scrutiny or debate' (Bullock, 2017: 355). Given the sizable volume of PSVs in England and Wales, Callender et al. (2019) refer to this gap in knowledge as 'critical'. Indeed, as further opportunities to involve volunteers in policing emerge, most notably through the Policing and Crime Act 2017 which puts in place a legislative framework to extend the powers of volunteers, the development of a robust evidence base is becoming increasingly urgent.

This article explores the initial and continuing motivations of PSVs to give their time to policing. While literature around volunteering in the broader sense (e.g., Clary et al., 1998; Clary and Snyder, 1999; Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen, 1991) and, to a lesser degree, Special Constable volunteering (e.g., Ramshaw and Cosgrove, 2019; Bullock and Leeney, 2014; Hieke, 2018) has explored motivations and their effect on volunteer experience, the evidence base has remained largely underexposed in a PSV context. This article seeks to address this void in empirical research, drawing on data collected through surveys and interviews with 160 PSVs in a large urban police service in England. It starts with a brief review of the literature around motivations for volunteering, both broadly and in a policing context, and an outline of study methods. Findings are presented through the lens of three typologies identified in this study – *The Altruistic PSV, The Social PSV,* and *The Career PSV* – exploring motivations by each, and the shifting nature of these as volunteer service progresses. In the discussion and conclusion, the article considers implications for practice, in particular the importance of identifying, responding to, and investing in volunteer motivations – both those that attract individuals to an organisation, and those that drive them to continue to give their time.

Literature Review

Volunteer Motivations

Motivations to volunteer generally fall within one of two schema: altruistic (associated with the needs of society) or egoistic (associated with volunteer needs) (Laverie and McDonald, 2007; Horton-Smith, 1981 in Rochester et al., 2012). Altruistic motivations – a sense of helpfulness, other-oriented empathy, and efforts to promote the welfare of others – are seen to be strong and sustainable drivers of helping behaviours, with volunteering perhaps one of the most organised expressions of altruism (Laverie and McDonald, 2007; Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Penner and Finkelstein, 1998). Social, self-oriented incentives have also been identified as influential on decisions to volunteer, with subject interest and enjoyment (Holmes, 2003), and opportunities for social connections, group identification, and interaction (Shye, 2010; Grossman and Furano, 1999) featuring prominently. Van Ingen and Wilson (2017) draw attention to these enhanced social benefits particularly for individuals no longer in the workplace, with volunteering offering compensation for the loss of social networks and other productive roles.

However, studies have challenged this *'altruistic-egoistic duality'* (Shye, 2010: 186), arguing that volunteer motivations are multifaceted (Dolnicar and Randle, 2007; Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen, 1991). Clary and Snyder (1999) propose a six-factor model of motivations in their Volunteer Functions Inventory, reflecting functions that are potentially served by volunteering: expression of values; acquiring or improving understanding, knowledge, skills or experience; self-enhancement or development; advancing knowledge related to a career, professional, or academic pursuit; issues related to social adjustments or adaptations; and protective factors aimed as escaping one's own problems. The authors argue that volunteers generally prioritise values, understanding, and enhancement, over career, social and protective; however, acknowledge that this varies, with people performing the same volunteering activity for different reasons. These differences are perhaps most notable in relation to age with career functions often more important

to younger volunteers, and seeking to do something worthwhile or gain personal satisfaction prioritised by older volunteers (Dolnicar and Randle, 2002; Katz and Sasson, 2019).

Police Volunteer Motivations

Police volunteering studies are considerably more limited in volume; however, highlight clear demarcations in motivations by volunteer type, with Special Constables considerably more likely than PSVs to express career-related motivations. On completion of training, 70 percent of Special Constables in Pepper's (2014) study stated that they wanted to be regular officers, increasing to 100 percent after six months in the role. Callender et al. (2018) found that career motivations of Special Constables tended to wane with age or length of service, while the frequency of altruistic reasons – helping the community, doing something worthwhile, and concern for law and order – increased. However, police volunteer motivations are not clear cut. Ramshaw and Cosgrove (2019) refer to dualistic pathways incorporating both altruistic and egoistic motivations of Special Constables, highlighting complexity within decisions to volunteer.

Studies of PSV motivations are even scarcer than Special Constables; however, those that do exist point to less prominent career-oriented motivations. Indeed, less than a quarter (23%) of PSV respondents to a national survey selected 'interested in a career in policing' as a top reason for volunteering, compared to over half (56%) of Special Constables (IPSCJ, 2016). This is likely linked to the considerably older age profile of PSVs (Britton et al., 2018). Although younger people do volunteer as PSVs (with some doing so with career motivated intentions), many PSVs in Millie's (2018; 2019) study were seeking a voluntary role post-retirement. However, while altruism often underpinned these PSVs' motivations, Millie (*ibid*), also highlighted self-oriented factors (being bored, wanting to fill time) at play. The varied motivations showcased within these studies support Bullock and Leeney's (2014) claim that police volunteers are not a homogeneous group, and are differently motivated to give their time.

The extent to which an organisation responds to an individual's motivations to volunteer has been recognised as influential on their decisions, behaviour, satisfaction, commitment, and intention to continue to give their time (Davis et al., 2003; Omoto and Snyder, 1995; Clary and Snyder, 1999). Turnover of volunteers is costly, time consuming, and potentially damaging to reputation, therefore it is in an organisations' interests to retain the volunteers in which they have invested (van Ingen and Wilson, 2017). This is an area of particular interest to police forces who recruit and manage PSVs, with a 2018 national benchmarking exercise highlighting that less than one in five PSVs (18%) had service of five years or more, reducing to one in twenty (5%) for ten years and over (Britton et al., 2018). With this in mind, it is important that organisations are able to identify and understand volunteer motivations – recognising that they are heterogeneous, dynamic and changing – in order to fulfil them where they are able, and manage expectations where they are not (Clary et al., 1998; Wisner et al., 2005; Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Omoto and Syder, 1995; Burns et al., 2006).

Methods

This article is based on a survey and interviews conducted with PSVs in a large urban police service in England between 2015 and 2017. The survey included a mixture of closed and open-ended questions, while interviews included open-ended questions only. A link to the online survey (with a paper-based version available on request) was disseminated to all volunteers in the force via the volunteer programme manager. The survey received 140 responses, representing 13 per cent of total PSVs in the force at that time (n=1,047). Survey responses were extracted into SPSS to allow easier data management. Given the sample size and spread of data across response categories, frequencies and cross-tabulations were deemed to be the most appropriate analysis to conduct. The survey attracted a notably older, female, White cohort of PSV respondents with almost half who supplied demographic information (n=56/117) aged 65 years or older, almost two-thirds (n=70/115) female, and the majority (n=96/117) defining their ethnic group as White (British, Irish, any other White background). Over two-thirds (n=42/113) were educated to degree level or equivalent. Given the older age profile, it was unsurprising that the largest category of

'work status' responses were 'retired' (n=67/115). In terms of PSV 'service', over half (n=70/122) had volunteered for three years or more, and half (n=61/122) gave on average more than twenty hours per month to their role.

Interviews were conducted with 20 serving PSVs drawing on a stratified sampling approach to identify participants who were underrepresented in the survey compared to the force as a whole (most notably younger volunteers, and those with fewer years' service). The interviews also presented an opportunity to explore themes highlighted in survey data in more depth. Interviewee characteristics showed similarities to PSV survey respondents, particularly in terms of gender (over half (n=12/20) were female) and ethnicity (n=15/20 defined their ethnic group as White British (n=10) or other White background (n=5)). A higher proportion of PSV interviewees were educated to degree level or equivalent compared to survey respondents (n=11/19). Despite attempts in the sampling process to access PSVs that were newer to the organisation, PSV interviewee 'service levels' were again slightly skewed towards longer-term volunteers with almost two-thirds (n=13/20) volunteering for three years or more. The interview sample showed most contrast compared to the survey in terms of age – a factor guiding the sampling process. More than two-thirds of PSV interviewees (n=13/19) were under 65 years of age and, perhaps unsurprisingly, just a third of interviewees (n=6/19) were retired. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded in NVivo qualitative data analysis computer software package.

Available data for all PSVs in the force at the time of fieldwork pointed to comparable proportions overall in both the survey and interview sample in terms of gender and length of time in role; however, a slight over-representation of White PSVs, and those aged 65 years, most notably in the survey sample (albeit in line with previous studies (e.g., Britton et al., 2018; Millie, 2019) which consistently report an older PSV profile). PSV programmes and practices vary nationally in terms of their scale, nature, and the degree to which they involve volunteers in the work of policing. While it is not possible to ascertain the extent to which this single force sample was representative of broader PSVs (nor, of course, PSV 'leavers' which may differ considerably from

those who have chosen to remain), the data presents useful insights into the experiences of a cohort of PSVs in a large urban force area – an important addition to a currently under-researched space.

Identifying PSV Motivation Typologies

PSVs in this study were asked to state their initial and continuing motivations for volunteering – in face-to-face interviews via an open-ended question inviting them to outline their motivations for volunteering with the police in their own words, and in the survey by ranking their reasons from a set list of options[1]. When coded within headline categories a clear set of underpinning themes emerged from interview and survey responses which pointed to three motivation typologies: *The Altruistic PSV* – those primarily motivated by a desire to make a positive difference and 'give back' to the police service or community; *The Social PSV* – those who volunteered as part of leisure or social pursuits, seeking enjoyment, excitement, or opportunities to meet and spend time with new people; and *The Career PSV* – those keen to pursue personal development goals to enhance their employability, either in the police service or other fields. Table one outlines the frequency of each typology within survey and interview data both for initial motivations (individuals' reasons for deciding to give their time from the outset), and continuing motivations (the drivers of ongoing volunteer service and commitment).

[Table 1 near here].

These typologies are used throughout this article to explore the motivations for becoming and continuing to be a PSV. Qualitative freetext responses from both surveys and interviews are

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[1] For initial motivations, survey response options included: 'To help make my community safer'; 'To help me feel safer'; 'To meet new people'; 'To develop new skills'; 'To have something to do in my spare time'; 'To help me get a job with the police'; 'To change the police service/help it serve the public better'; 'To do something different/exciting/interesting'; and a freetext 'other' option. For continuing motivations, survey response options were: 'I enjoy my volunteer role'; 'I like the people (other volunteers, staff and officers)'; 'I feel like I am making a positive difference in my community'; 'I am learning new skills'; 'I want to get a job with the police'; 'I don't want to let people (other volunteers, officers or staff) down'; 'I feel like I am changing policing for the better'; 'I feel proud to be part of the police service'; 'I feel like I am part of an organisation that is doing something good'; 'It gives me something to do in my spare time'; and a freetext 'other' option. The highest ranked motivation for volunteering was used to create typologies.

presented as quotes throughout (with pseudonyms to protect anonymity of participants), to help 'unpack' and make sense of patterns emerging through closed-ended questions.

Findings

The Altruistic PSV

Altruistic motivations were the most commonly highlighted by PSVs in this study, both as initial and ongoing reasons for volunteering. Two-thirds (n=87/133) of PSV survey respondents and two-fifths (n=8/20) of PSV interviewees defined their initial primary motivations, and almost half (n=66/135) of survey respondents and a similar proportion (n=9/20) of interviewees described their continuing motivations for volunteering within a response option classified as altruistic. *The Altruistic PSV* was the most likely of the typologies to have other volunteering experience (either previously or currently) compared to their social or career counterparts. *The Altruistic PSV* also demonstrated more notable 'longevity' in their service with some of the largest proportions of the sample volunteering for three years or more falling within this typology. In addition, *The Altruistic PSV* was generally older and (unsurprisingly given this age profile) retired.

Themes of supporting the police service and freeing up officer time were common throughout *The Altruistic PSV's* narratives for volunteering. As PSV Nancy commented: 'I like to believe I am helping the various police units by taking away some of the administrative burden that would otherwise slow them down and take time away from them doing their work' (Nancy, altruistic survey respondent). Interviewees were able to speak in more depth about their motivations, during which *The Altruistic PSV* often developed this narrative of releasing officers to duties they perceived to be more fitting of their training and powers, referring to the opportunity to vicariously (or, indeed, directly) contribute to the delivery of policing in their area. PSV Salma reflected:

> …the police can't do it all alone…there needs to be a bit of help and I figured there
> must be a need to do some of the boring admin stuff. Get them away from that. Keep

them on the streets, which is what you really want to see in your community…the fact that I know the police officers are getting on with their job, and hopefully in some small way they're doing it better and more efficiently because I'm part of that process (Salma, altruistic interviewee)

In a similar vein, PSV Ayla stated: '…if I can get a police officer on the street or doing something more constructive, obviously where crime is concerned, then yeah, go and do that, give them a hand' (Ayla, altruistic interviewee).

'Providing a service to the community' and 'making a difference' were phrases often used by *The Altruistic PSV* who seemed motivated by their potential to offer something positive to improve their local area. PSV survey respondents in particular (likely a reflection of the notable proportion – n=57/132 – of PSVs in police station front counter roles in the survey sample) often spoke about their motivation to volunteer to staff local police stations at times of uncertainty around closures: 'My local police station was closed and it was an opportunity to reopen it with volunteers. This is something I felt very strongly about' (Lia, altruistic survey respondent); 'I was angry that they shut our local station… When they offered to reopen it with volunteers, I applied'; (Courtney, altruistic survey respondent); 'Our station would be closed if not manned by volunteers' (Kyran, altruistic survey respondent).

For a small number of altruistic volunteers, motivations were specific to their role, in particular those volunteering with projects that involved young people. PSV Brianna, a volunteer at her local police cadet unit, spoke about helping young people to 'get on the right track, the right path' (Brianna, altruistic interviewee), while PSV Megan, a volunteer offering diversion support for young people in custody, highlighted her involvement in 'contributing to someone's well-being and the next step they take for their own development' (Megan, altruistic interviewee). PSV Jeremy, who volunteered on a police station front counter, had previously owned a customer-facing business. Jeremy drew heavily on the professional ethos from his working life in his police volunteering role: 'I realised for a long time that helping people is always a good thing…I tried to bring that philosophy to my business…when I retired I thought how can I help people?'

(Jeremy, altruistic interviewee). Indeed, these 'helping behaviours' that some PSVs had developed in their paid working lives were a significant driver in their decision to give their time on an unpaid basis following retirement.

The Social PSV

Around a quarter of survey respondents (n=32/133) and interviewees (n=5/20) gave socially-focused motivations – seeking excitement, opportunities to meet new people, and an interesting way to spend their spare time – for their initial volunteering, increasing notably (n=57/135 and n=8/20 respectively) for continuing motivations. *The Social PSV* gave the most time to their role and was most likely to be educated to degree level or above compared to their altruistic and career counterparts. For *The Social PSV* motivations were often geared around undertaking a role that was interesting or exciting, particularly in the police service – a realm that is largely closed to the public. Indeed, being 'on the inside' and the associated 'kudos' that this brought was highlighted by some volunteers. For PSV Alan, the iconic location of his role was a source of pride: 'It was an absolute joy at [police station location]. It had status. You tell people, you know, 'what do you do' – 'oh I work at [police station location]'' (Alan, social interviewee). PSV Frances outlined his motivations in terms of 'curiosity about the police…the police, particularly at senior level, are forever shooting themselves in the foot, and get lots of bad publicity. So what are they really like?' (Frances, social interviewee).

Even *The Altruistic PSV*, with their motivations primarily rooted in helping and supporting the police or community, made reference to these themes when discussing drivers for volunteering. PSV Isobelle saw the role as an opportunity to gain '…more of an insight. As the public you don't see what's going on…it's nice to say I've done that and I've sort of witnessed that side of it' (Isobelle, altruistic interviewee), and engage with officers: 'I find it intriguing…just getting an insight into what police do, having that conversation as well with police officers. I would never speak to a police officer probably anywhere else' (Brianna, altruistic interviewee).

Relationships with those around them – other volunteers and paid members of the workforce – also featured within *The Social PSV's* motivations to give their time. PSV Alan spoke about his reasons for continuing to volunteer over a number of years:

> It's a good place to work and we build up a lot of friendships…I've continued because of [volunteer name] and [volunteer name] and the crew I work with here. I've continued because I've been lucky enough to work with officers and help them and be appreciated (Alan, social interviewee).

This sense of being part of a team often took on renewed importance following retirement, with the volunteering environment offering *The Social PSV* opportunity to continue to enjoy the convivial benefits of being part of a 'workforce'. PSV Pippa stated:

> I didn't want you to think that I'm being altruistic…I just didn't like the thought of being involved in people my whole life and then not…I thought I could do less [paid] work and do more voluntary work (Pippa, social interviewee).

Similarly, PSV Fred commented: 'One of the things I missed when I left work was comradeship of fellow workers and the humour in there' (Fred, social interviewee).

A sense of wanting to feel useful after retirement also emerged within *The Social PSVs'* narratives, with some outlining motivations initially borne out of simply wanting something to do – of being, and carrying out tasks that are deemed to be, useful. PSV Verity stated:

> 'I wanted something else to do frankly, and something that would hopefully use some of my skills because I've worked hard over the years to develop lots of skills and experience so I wanted to be able to apply them somewhere' (Verity, social interviewee).

Similarly, PSV Connor commented:

> I had time on my hands so the first thing to say therefore is that I wanted to fill up time …the sense of doing something useful with that time that otherwise I would be spending doing the *Daily Telegraph* crossword…so yes, a sense of usefulness (Connor, social interviewee).

Connor went on to discuss altruism – separating himself somewhat from these motivations: 'I'm no great philanthropist or giving back to society or stuff like that – I just wanted to do something', referring to 'a constant supply of interest in just being an ear in the office [in which they volunteered] listening to what goes on'. PSV Fred was also keen to quash any suggestion of philanthropic intentions, although noted his expanding motivations as his volunteering role progressed:

> I've got to be honest I didn't join to help the community to start with. I joined to help me. Get me out of the house because I was falling asleep in front of the television…I find it invigorating. It's become a drug really I suppose (Fred, social interviewee).

The Career PSV

The Career PSV – whose main motivations were to develop skills or enhance employability, usually within policing or wider law enforcement fields – made up the smallest proportion of the survey sample in terms of initial motivations (n=14/133), although were more notable amongst PSV interviewees (n=7/20). However, despite being lower in overall volume, *The Career PSV* showed some of the most notable differences in this study in terms of their characteristics compared to the two other motivation typologies.

Given the employment-focused motivations of *The Career PSV* it is perhaps unsurprising that they were some of the youngest participants in the study and, therefore, least likely to be retired. *The Career PSV* was the most likely of all motivation typologies to undertake a volunteer role that was operational in nature (i.e., a role that a warranted police officer *may* have some involvement in conducting or supporting e.g., viewing CCTV footage or staffing a police station front counter), and amongst the least likely to have previous or other current volunteering experience. *The Career PSV* also gave the least service to their roles with proportionally fewer volunteering for more than three years (perhaps due to either securing a paid role or, alternatively, choosing to stop volunteering when their employment-focused goals were not realised), or more

than 20 hours per month compared to their altruistic or social counterparts. These variables may point to the instrumental nature of volunteering for *The Career PSV,* reflecting the narrower focus of their employment-oriented motivations rather than an expression of more general 'helping-behaviours'.

For *The Career PSV,* volunteering for the police service was viewed as an opportunity to develop skills and experience to improve their employability. For those interested in a career in policing, volunteering offered insight to the organisation and a chance to explore roles before committing to paid employment. PSV Charles referred to the role as 'a stepping stone to see if the police service is something that you would like to do' (Charles, career interviewee), while PSV Eliza commented:

> I got quite interested in police work…I wanted to see what it's like in real life, and also get a foot in the door as well, because to me I always thought of police as police officers and that's it. I didn't have any insight into what other roles there might be (Eliza, career interviewee).

Katy, who had recently secured a paid role with the police service, was clear that their time given in a voluntary capacity was a valuable part of securing employment: 'Volunteering helped me a lot, especially with going to interviews and looking at application forms. I knew what I was doing. I knew like all the organisational framework*'* (Katy, career interviewee). Being a PSV offered Katy an opportunity to explore job possibilities and develop interpersonal skills, within what they described as 'a worthwhile organisation'. Indeed, the prominence of giving time within an established organisation was an important feature for *The Career PSV,* with the high-profile police service 'brand' seen as a valuable addition to their CV.

Continuing Volunteering, Changing Motivations

Findings from this study suggest that PSVs engage in the same volunteering behaviour for different reasons and to achieve different ends. Indeed, volunteering that looks similar on the

surface may have diverse underlying motivations and serving a range of functions for individuals (Finkelstein, 2008; Omoto and Snyder, 1995). However, these motivations are not static. While initial motivations form the primary reasons for encouraging an individual to volunteer, drivers can alter as the volunteering 'journey' unfolds. The reasons why an individual remains committed to volunteering may differ considerably to the reasons that initially attracted them.

The transitory nature of volunteer motivations was a key feature of the data in this study. Although similar overall themes remained when considering PSVs' initial and continuing drivers for volunteering – *The Altruistic PSV* (albeit notably lower in volume) featured most frequently, followed by *The Social PSV,* then *The Career PSV* – there were some clear shifts *between* motivations. Almost half (n=58/133) of PSV survey respondents and a third (n=7/20) of interviewees reported shifts between their initial and continuing motivations for volunteering. When analysed by PSV characteristics and behaviours, there was little difference between those who reported a change in their motivations for volunteering, compared to those who retained their original drivers, with the exception of survey respondents with no previous or other current experience of volunteering (n=22/36 reported changing motivations, compared to n=26/73 who had volunteered currently or previously elsewhere). This could suggest that experienced volunteers have more feasible initial motivations when seeking out volunteering opportunities, tailoring their decisions on where and how to volunteer accordingly. Indeed, the expectations of individuals that are new to volunteering may be less realistic – particularly within police organisations that are restricted in terms of how and where volunteers can be involved – resulting in a shift to more achievable motivators to drive their continued commitment (Pepper et al., 2020).

The Rise of The Social PSV and the Demise of The Career PSV

The Social PSV and *The Career PSV* were the typologies that presented the most transient themes in this study. The presence of *The Social PSV* almost doubled within both survey and interview cohorts when comparing initial and continuing motivations for volunteering (n=32/133 vs.

n=57/135 in the survey, and n=5/20 vs. n=8/20 in interviews). Furthermore, *The Social PSV* was amongst the most likely in the sample to retain similar initial and continuing motivations: over half (n=17/32) of survey respondents and the majority (n=4/5) of interviewees who initially defined their motivations as social continued to do so as their volunteering 'journey' progressed, perhaps pointing to the enduring nature of socially focused motivations.

Conversely, *The Career PSV* was the least likely of all three typologies to retain the same continuing motivation for volunteering: just over a third (n=5/14) of survey respondents and less than half (n=3/7) of interviewees who cited these motivations initially spoke about career drivers as part of their decision to continue to volunteer. In the survey sample, *The Career PSV* remained the least cited motivation cohort for continuing volunteering, similar to initial drivers (n=14/133 initial vs. n=12/135 continuing). The shift in motivations of *The Career PSV* was most notable in interviews, accounting for over a third (n=7/20) of interviewees' initial motivations – the second largest proportion of all typologies – however, the lowest proportion (n=3/20) of continuing motivations.

For some career-focused PSVs, the employment motivations that initially led them to volunteering endured as their service progressed. PSV Harley continued to attach importance to their volunteering role in terms of developing desired skills, rather than seeking to give their time more generally across the organisation: 'My motivation was career-focused and I stuck at that. I'm pretty sure that [volunteer manager name] would have a lot more involvement if I was nipping into other areas, but I've not needed that' (Harley, career interviewee). However, for PSV Zoe, her initial career focus formed part of a 'suite' of personal motivations which shifted in importance as her volunteering role developed:

> My intention to originally volunteer was to kind of aid me getting in to the police force. But then once I joined my motivations changed…it wasn't about getting in the police anymore. When I was at the police cadets it was about helping them and giving them the support that they needed (Zoe, career interviewee).

For this initially career oriented interviewee, although future employment within policing remained an important personal focus, her reasons for continuing to volunteer had diversified into other areas as she gained experience within the organisation.

Discussion

This article has explored the motivations of a cohort of PSVs in a large urban police service in England, creating typologies to capture the features of three main drivers emerging from the data – *The Altruistic PSV, The Social PSV,* and *The Career PSV.* Those who volunteered for altruistic purposes – to make a positive difference, do something worthwhile, and support the police service – were the most frequently represented PSVs in this study, followed by socially motivated individuals (pursing a role that is interesting or exciting, a chance to get to know other people, or offering something to do in their spare time), and those engaged in volunteering primarily for personal development or career-focused purposes. However, motivations were not static: reasons for initially becoming a PSV did not always mirror those for continuing to volunteer, with a notable 'rise' of *The Social PSV* and 'demise' of *The Career PSV.* With studies of volunteering in both policing (e.g., Ramshaw and Cosgrove, 2019; Millie, 2018) and non-policing (e.g., Clary and Snyder, 1999; Davis et al*.,* 2003; Omoto and Snyder, 1995) fields highlighting the influence of initial and ongoing fulfilment of motivations on volunteer satisfaction and commitment to their role, the importance of recognising and responding to these shifting motivations is clear.

Recognising Shifting Volunteer Motivations

Reasons behind the transitory nature of motivations were not explicitly defined by PSVs in this study; however, there are a number of factors that may underpin these shifts: fulfilment of initial motivations; experiences once within the police service; an unanticipated group of friends or support network; or initial intents to make a difference or pursue career goals being tempered by the realities of the police service and opportunities to fulfil these expectations. Indeed, for some PSVs, initially unexpected benefits of volunteering coming to fruition once they had sight of the

organisation from the 'inside' may have prompted a shift. For others, changing motivations may reflect an adjustment once the reality of being a PSV set in, and it became clear what the role could (and, perhaps more importantly for some, *could not*) offer (Pepper et al., 2020).

The direction of these shifting motivations – towards social drivers and retreating from career-focused goals – reflects themes in broader studies of volunteering. Indeed, social incentives (which were more prominent amongst PSVs' continuing motivations in this study) hold particular resonance for volunteers in terms of their overall experiences within an organisation. While altruistic factors or personal development-focused drivers often form an important part of initial motivators, enduring involvement is more positively associated with volunteers' experiences of personal advantages including enjoyment, creating connections with others, self-confidence, and self-esteem (Laverie and McDonald, 2007; Omoto and Snyder, 1995; Stebbins, 1996).

The Career PSV cohort in this study exhibited downward trends when comparing initial and continuing motivations. Ramshaw and Cosgrove (2019: 938) noted similar fluidity of motivations in their study of Special Constables, particularly from those who initially volunteered as a 'stepping-stone' to join the regular police service but continued in order to 'give something back to the community and do something worthwhile'. The authors refer to this shift as part of a 'transitioning phase' and 'repositioning of the self over time' in which becoming a police officer is no longer desirable or viable; however, commitment to the role and organisation persists leading to a reorientation of motivations (*Ibid*: 939).

Responding to Volunteer Motivations

The influence of initial and ongoing fulfilment of motivations on volunteer behaviours and commitment to their role has been highlighted in studies of volunteering in both police (e.g., Ramshaw and Cosgrove, 2019; Millie, 2018) and non-police (e.g., Clary and Snyder, 1999; Davis et al*.,* 2003; Omoto and Snyder, 1995) settings. Individuals engage in volunteering because it

connects with specific goals or needs, and how (if at all) the organisation appeals to and acknowledges the importance of these personal motives is persuasive in terms of volunteer satisfaction and intention to continue to give their time (Chambre and Einholf, 2011; Millie, 2018; Omoto and Snyder, 2002; Penner, 2002).

However, as this article has highlighted, motivations for volunteering can shift over time. Assuming that volunteer programmes are seeking to engage and retain individuals, identifying motivations – both initial and continuing – and matching them to opportunities to fulfil them is an effective strategy. As Ramshaw and Cosgrove (2019: 939) argue, it is not only important to recognise what initially draws volunteers, but also the 'reorientation and transition' towards reasons that encourage them to stay. This requires an understanding that goes beyond assuming that volunteers engage simply to 'help others', to appreciating the multi-dimensional drivers for volunteering which combine both other and self-oriented elements (Bang and Ross, 2009; Chambre and Einholf, 2011; Penner, 2002).

Investing in Volunteer Motivations

In order to effectively engage volunteers, police organisations need to invest in identifying, understanding, and responding to these motivations, recognising their shifting nature throughout volunteer service (Finkelstein, 2008). Tailoring recruitment campaigns with functionally matched messages that address motivations offer opportunities to appeal more directly to would-be volunteers. Omoto and Snyder (1995) argue that, as self-oriented motives are the factors that keep volunteers involved, such recruitment campaigns should give heed to what volunteers can personally gain – rather than focusing solely on how their efforts benefit others. Developing volunteer tasks that respond to motives is also important here, with individuals who undertake tasks that match their personal drivers for giving time more likely to be satisfied and committed to their role (Houle et al., 2005). However, this flexibility is not always possible, particularly within police organisations where creating meaningful opportunities for PSVs is challenging (Pepper et al., 2020). As such, understanding PSV motivations takes on elevated levels of

importance in order to seek out tasks that offer motivationally related benefits (albeit perhaps less obvious ones), work with volunteers to align or adjust drivers for volunteering to opportunities that are available or, at least, manage expectations where this is not possible. PSV programmes vary widely across forces in terms of the individuals that give their time, their reasons for doing so, and the way in which they are tasked, involved, and recognised for their contribution. However, despite this variability, there are common factors that underpin effective approaches to involving volunteers, most notably an adequately resourced programme, an organisational ethos which embraces the contribution of volunteers and, perhaps most crucially of all, dedicated volunteer management. Furthermore, police organisations need to recognise differences in individuals' motivations for giving time, and the shifting nature of these as volunteering service progresses, rather than assuming a homogenous volunteer experience.

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Table 1. PSVs' initial and continuing motivations for volunteering

PSV typology	Initial motivations	Continuing motivations

PSV survey respondents		
The Altruistic PSV	n=87/133	n=66/135
The Social PSV	n=32/133	n=57/135
The Career PSV	n=14/133	n=12/135
PSV interviewees		
The Altruistic PSV	n=8/20	n=9/20
The Social PSV	n=5/20	n=8/20
The Career PSV	n=7/20	n=3/20