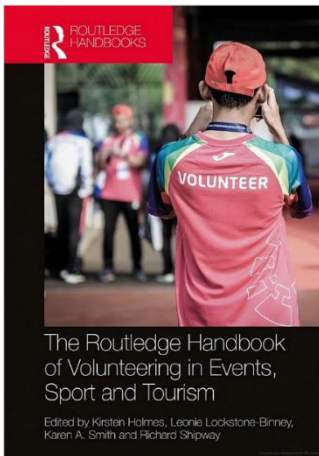


## **The Routledge Handbook of Volunteering in Events, Sport and Tourism: A Book Review**

**Marjan Shirahmad<sup>1</sup>**

[Holmes, Kirsten, Lockstone-Binney, Leonie, A. Smith, Karen & Shipway, Richard (Eds.) (2022). *The Routledge Handbook of Volunteering in Events, Sport and Tourism*. Routledge, ISBN 978-1-032-12724-8]



*The Routledge Handbook of Volunteering in Events, Sport and Tourism* represents a seminal consolidation of knowledge at the intersection of leisure studies, human resource management, and economic sociology. Published by Routledge, this volume addresses the global industries' increasing reliance on unpaid labor and provides a timely, multidisciplinary response to the professionalization of volunteer management. The handbook's authoritative status is reinforced by its diverse and globally distributed authorship, which bridges the gap between theoretical sociology and applied

management. This intellectual diversity is matched by a vast international scope, incorporating perspectives from 45 countries, including established research hubs in the UK and Australia, as well as emerging contexts in Poland, India, and South Korea. By integrating the work of academic pioneers with practitioner-scholars, the handbook ensures that its analysis remains both theoretically rigorous and practically relevant to the global workforce.

The core theoretical value of this handbook is found in its detailed analysis of the multi-layered nature of volunteering, which it examines by breaking down the activity into various dimensions such as the degree of free will, the nature of reward, and the type of organization involved. A critical scientific

---

<sup>1</sup> SHIRAHMAD, Marjan

PhD student, University of Sopron Alexandre Lamfalussy Faculty of Economics, István Széchenyi Economics and Management Doctoral School, Sopron, Hungary  
Marjan.Shirahmad@phd.uni-sopron.hu; ORCID: 0000-0002-0614-596X)

focus of the volume is the nuanced distinction between the sport volunteer and the volunteer tourist (guest volunteer). The editors successfully bridge the gap between “pure” volunteers and “grey areas” of leisure-based contribution, arguing that sport volunteering often constitutes nearly one-third of all formal volunteering in Western contexts. This synthesis is particularly vital for research, as it contextualizes the volunteer tourist not merely as a traveler, but as a proactive agent in a complex spectrum ranging from formal institutional labor to informal civil action. Furthermore, by addressing the dichotomy between “host volunteers” in destination services and “guest volunteers” in international development, the volume challenges the traditionally siloed nature of literature.

The first part of the handbook establishes a rigorous foundation by synthesizing economic, geographic, psychological, and administrative perspectives to move beyond a singular descriptive lens. It specifically addresses the economic valuation of unpaid work in sport and tourism through international statistical standards. Furthermore, by contrasting New Public Management (NPM) with network governance in the context of international sporting events, the handbook provides a sophisticated analysis of how professionalized administrative paradigms impact the sport volunteer workforce. The second part explores the operational diversity of these sectors through a critical analysis of destination service volunteering and grassroots organizations. The volume provides a model for destination management categorization contributing to planning and experience co-creation while simultaneously addressing the demographic crisis in heritage institutions and nature-based attractions. By scrutinizing the Appalachian Trail case study and neoliberal ideologies underlying the volunteer tourist phenomenon, the handbook effectively debates the ethical tension between altruism and commercialized service delivery.

In the third part, the focus shifts to the operational dynamics of the events sector, utilizing the Olympic Games as a primary case study to examine skill enhancement for sport volunteers. A critical scientific contribution is made through the comparative analysis of Western versus non-Western volunteer motivations, specifically contrasting English-speaking cohorts with those from the PyeongChang Olympic Games, to address cultural gaps in the literature. Furthermore, the volume explores under-researched areas such as “volunteering as an event” through National Days of Service, as well as the commercialization of student volunteering in China. The fourth part provides a rigorous analysis of the management life cycle, transitioning from programmatic design to socio-psychological drivers of retention. A significant

scientific highlight is the application of the “Volunteer Stewardship Framework”, which distinguishes between the “programmed management” approaches suited for large-scale events and community-based management appropriate for grassroots associations. By incorporating the influential Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI), the handbook demonstrates how persuasive communication and motive fulfilment are critical for the retention of sport volunteers.

The fifth part of the volume examines the dualities of impact and legacy, moving beyond traditional quantitative metrics to adopt a sustainability-oriented approach. The volume evaluates how social connectedness generated by sport volunteers can be leveraged into long-term behavioral change, while acknowledging the inherent difficulty in measuring the immersive, cross-cultural impacts of the volunteer tourist. The sixth part addresses the historically overlooked “dark side” of volunteering by applying a critical lens to ethical and socio-political dimensions of EST participation. A significant contribution is made through the deconstruction of neo-colonial trends in volunteer tourism and the exploration of diversity and inclusion. In particular, the volume examines the role of LGBT+ and disabled volunteers in challenging systemic barriers within sports organizations. Furthermore, by contrasting service-learning initiatives in China’s commercial sector with sociological interpretations of “agreeable obligation”, the handbook questions the neoliberal assumption that volunteering is always entirely voluntary and inherently positive.