

Chapter 21

Spain



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Abstract The volunteering boom that occurred in Spanish society in the 1990s was strongly associated with activities related to solidarity and altruism and did not contribute to increasing the social visibility of sports volunteering, even though the first sports clubs and associations were created in Spain at the end of the 19th century. This situation has changed in the past 15 years due to the growth in the number of initiatives that look at sports for social purposes, as well as the proliferation of large popular sports events and competitions whose organization requires the mass participation of sports volunteers. Coinciding with this evolution, the recently passed Volunteer Law 45/2015 proposes a broader vision of volunteering – that no longer views altruism as its main motivation – and explicitly refers to the sports volunteering phenomenon at the same time that it points out its benefits for society in terms of citizen cohesion, the community dimension of sports practice, social inclusion, and associative life.

21.1 Meaning and Understanding of Sports Volunteering

In Spain, the first sports clubs and associations began their activity at the end of the 19th century as a result of the commercial expansion of the British Empire. However, sports volunteering was not perceived as a new phenomenon until the 1990s. This decade witnessed a blossoming of cooperative activities and an increase in the social visibility of the volunteer, both clearly related to the greater dynamism of the civil society, the rise of the third sector, and the emergence of a large number of nonprofit organizations in Spain. This situation was interpreted at the time as just

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another indicator of the rapid transformation of the Spanish society after the death of General Franco in 1975 and the later restoration of democracy. Spain would again move toward modernity and shake off the authoritarian and paternalistic models of integration and connections, gradually adopting much more active and participatory guidelines for solving problems and providing services (Ruiz-Olabuénaga 2000; Ariño et al. 2001).

Although the collaborative boom and the rise in volunteering in the 1990s affected a variety of areas – including sports – the visibility of sports volunteering did not increase, unlike other areas that were much more linked to the discourse of solidarity and acquired a strong role in Spanish society at the time. Some of the most important areas were the healthcare field, social services, development cooperation, human rights, and the environment. Therefore, the Spanish term for volunteering – *voluntariado* – was strongly associated with these social action fields, and the type of volunteering carried out in sports entities did not completely fit this profile. These social areas were more associated with other types of motivations, even though sports volunteering has a strong tradition dating back to the origin and development of the first sports clubs in Spain (Pujadas and Santacana 2003) and has always been an essential component of the Spanish sports sector (Llopis-Goig and Vilanova 2015).

Proof of the growing importance of sports volunteering is the fact that Law 6/1996 on Volunteering – the first volunteering law passed in Spain – referred to sports as one of more than 14 possible areas that could be considered of general interest (article 4), whereas the new Law 45/2015 on Volunteering contains various explicit references to sports volunteering¹ and points out the benefits it can bring to society. Specifically, Article 6 of this law mentions that sports volunteering contributes to citizen cohesion, fosters the community dimension of sports practice, and favors social inclusion and greater commitment to the cooperative life of those who play sports. The same article also points to the importance of this type of volunteering in developing the practice of sports in people with handicaps. Previously, the figure of the sports volunteer had been contemplated explicitly in Law 19/2007 against violence, racism, xenophobia, and intolerance in sports. It proposed, among other things, that sports federations and professional leagues should foster and train groups of sports volunteers to provide information to spectators and contribute to the prevention of incidents in stadiums. In recent decades, regional governments have developed various public actions designed to encourage volunteering beyond the field of social services, extending it to fields such as sports. A good example of this would be Decree 55/2004 on sports volunteering in Andalusia.

All of this shows, on the one hand, the development and specialization of volunteering in Spanish society and, on the other, the clear presence of sports volunteering, especially due to two key processes. First, there has been a progressive development of the social dimension of sports, based on the increase in the number of sports-based initiatives and actions for the prevention of social problems (e.g.,

¹Along with other types of volunteering, including social, international, environmental, cultural, educational, healthcare, free and leisure time, community, and civil protection.

drug dependence, school failure) or the integration and development of socially vulnerable groups (e.g., women, young people, immigrants). This process has involved the gradual introduction of sports into the field of social policies, bringing them closer to the areas where volunteering has traditionally developed. Second, in recent decades, there has been an increase in the number of volunteers in many Spanish cities following the celebration of important sports events. The 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games marked a turning point in this regard. The appearance of citizen volunteers, understood as the individual commitment of citizens, was consolidated before the nomination of the city as the Olympic site, when it already had more than 100,000 volunteers signed up, ultimately receiving the collaboration of 34,548 volunteers (Moreno 2011). More recently, and after the celebration of the 32nd edition of the America's Cup in Valencia, the government organization that manages municipal sports – the Municipal Sport Foundation of Valencia – created an Office of Sport Volunteers that coordinates and manages this type of volunteering in the city. This initiative is designed to permanently establish channels to encourage, promote, foster, and coordinate volunteers in order to develop their activity in the area of sports in the city of Valencia (Brotons and Ródenas 2018).

21.2 Volunteer Workforce in Spain

A European study carried out a few years ago showed the unstructured and unsystematic nature of studies on volunteering in most European countries (GHK 2010a). The specific report on Spain, moreover, pointed out the lack of official statistics and updated data, as well as the methodological diversity and contradictory nature of the results offered by the available studies (GHK 2010b).

A Special Eurobarometer carried out in 2006 (European Commission 2007) showed that 34% of the adult European population performed volunteer tasks, whereas in Spain the percentage was only 18%, situating it in the group of countries with less voluntary participation. A study directed by García-Delgado a few years later (2009) estimated that the Spanish population engaging in volunteer actions reached 4,170,043 people, which meant that 9.5% of the Spanish population performed volunteer activities in general. Later, a 2011 survey taken by the Center for Sociological Research for the European Year of the Volunteer (CIS 2011) indicated that 30.4% of the adult Spanish population had volunteered at some time and 16.7% in the previous 12 months (Llopis-Goig and García-Alcober 2013), which would be approximately 6,487,321 people.

The disparity is even greater if the estimates – as often occurs – refer only to the Third Sector of Social Action.² Thus, according to the study by the Social Action

²In general, using the operative definition of Johns Hopkins University (Salamon and Anheier 1997), which excludes the calculation of churches, trade unions and political parties, business and professional associations, professional sports associations, local neighborhood communities, business and philanthropic foundations, and healthcare entities.

NGO Platform (2015), in 2013 this sector had approximately 1,272,338 volunteers, a figure that represents an increase of almost 4000 people compared to 2008 (EDIS 2012). Therefore, there is a clear disparity in the numbers on volunteering as a result of the lack of homogeneity in both the definition and the way this term is commonly used.

21.2.1 Sports Volunteering Rates

The most recent survey providing an estimate of the number of people who participate in sports volunteering in Spain was carried out in 2015 (MECD 2015). According to this survey, 7% of the Spanish population over the age of 15 engaged in sports volunteering (see Table 21.1), a total of approximately 2,756,727 people.

Sports volunteering is, therefore, an activity with a low presence in Spanish society. Its dimensions have declined slightly in recent years, as pointed out by the results of the Eurobarometers of 2010 and 2014 (European Commission 2010,

Table 21.1 Spain's volunteer characteristics

Characteristic	Status quo in Spain
Population size	46.5 million ^a
Official languages	Spanish (and five languages in their respective regions)
Volunteer rates	16.7% ^{b,d}
Existence of voluntary sports clubs	yes
List of large-scale events hosted in the past 10 years	World Indoor Athletics Championship (2008), America's Cup (2010), World Water Polo Championship (2013), FIFA Women's World Indoor Soccer Championship (2013), World Men's World Handball Championship (2013), World Swimming Championship (2013), World Basketball Cup (2014), World Overland Cycling Championship (2014), World Olympic Sailing Championship (2014), World Water-Skiing Championship (2017)
Sports volunteer rates	7.0% ^{c,e}
The word for volunteering	<i>Voluntariado</i>
The meaning of the word	Set of activities of general interest that people perform, whenever they are done freely and out of solidarity, without economic or material compensation, through nonprofit public and private organizations, and according to specific programs or projects
Events that have influenced volunteering	Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games and the emergence of the possibilities of sports as a social tool

Sources: ^aINE (2018); ^bCIS (2011); ^cMECD (2015)

^dPopulation aged 18 and above

^ePopulation aged 15 and above

Table 21.2 Evolution of sports volunteering in Spain

Sports volunteering	2010	2011	2014	2015
Do sports volunteering (%)	5	4	4	7
Do not do sports volunteering (%)	95	96	96	93
Total (%)	100	100	100	100

Source: Elaborated by the author based on the European Commission (2010), CIS (2011), European Commission (2014), and MECD (2015). The coverage of the surveys of 2010, 2014, and 2015 is of the population aged 15 and above, whereas in 2011, it is the population aged 18 and above

Table 21.3 Frequency of sports volunteering

Frequency of volunteering	2010	2014
Only occasionally, at specific events (%)	56	44
From 1-5 hours/month (%)	19	22
From 6-20 hours/month (%)	13	23
From 21-40 hours/month (%)	6	8
More than 40 hours/month (%)	4	3
NS/NC (%)	2	n.a.
Total (%)	100	100

Source: García-Ferrando and Llopis-Goig (2017)

2014). According to this source, Spain registered rates of 5% and 4%, respectively. A survey by the Sociological Research Center in 2011 also placed this rate at 4% (CIS 2011; see Table 21.2).

With regard to the frequency of volunteering, on the one hand, Table 21.3 shows that in 2010 and 2014, the majority of people who engaged in sports volunteering in Spain did so sporadically, although their numbers declined from 56% in 2010 to 44% in 2014. On the other hand, the available data indicate an increase in people who engage in sports volunteering up to forty hours per month. As Table 21.3 shows, there has been an increase in the volunteers who dedicate from one to five hours per month, from 19% to 22%, and those who dedicate from 6 to 20 hours, from 13% to 23%, and to a lesser degree, those who dedicate from 21 to 40 hours per month. However, the proportion of people who dedicate more than 40 hours per month to sports volunteering declined by one point.

According to one of the aforementioned surveys (CIS 2011), some of the reasons or motives for engaging in sports volunteering are, first, the intention to help others (52.3%), followed by feeling necessary and useful (42%). In addition, 23.9% state that they do it to acquire life experience and 21.6% to try to improve society. Next, there are other motives, such as meeting people and interacting with others (15.9%), moral convictions (14.8%), religious convictions (6.8%), and trying to fill their free time (4.5%). Only 2.3% stated that they want to acquire work experience, and 1.1% wanted to travel or see the world. Acquiring life experience is a much more frequent motive in sports volunteering than in other sectors. Nevertheless, helping others and moral convictions are reasons that appear much less among sports volunteers. The other reasons, however, have similar importance for sports volunteers and volunteers in other areas (Llopis-Goig and García-Alcober 2013).

21.2.2 Sociodemographic Profile of Sports Volunteers

Men are much more likely than women to participate in sports volunteering in Spain (see Table 21.4), as 9.5% of men volunteer compared to 5.3% of women (García-Ferrando and Llopis-Goig 2017). As far as age is concerned, sports volunteering shows a negative linear relationship with age: as people age, their rate of sports volunteering declines, to the extent that the percentage of young people from 15 to 24 years old who volunteer is almost six times that of people over 55 (14.3% and 2.5%, respectively).

With regard to their personal situation, single people living in their parents' homes are more likely to participate in sports volunteering tasks, at 12%, followed by 9.1% who are married or living together with children under the age of 18. This circumstance is related to the fact that parents often collaborate as volunteers in the sports clubs that their children attend; in this way, they feel that they are contributing to their progress. The other personal situations show below-average volunteering rates, with the lowest corresponding to married people whose children have already left home (2.4%).

Table 21.4 Characteristics of sports volunteers

Sociodemographic characteristics		Sports volunteering (%)
Sex	Men	9.5
	Women	5.3
Age	15 hours per month 24 years	14.3
	25 hours per month 34 years	10.1
	35 hours per month 44 years	8.7
	45 hours per month 54 years	8.6
	55 years and older	2.5
Personal status	Single living in parents' home	12.0
	Independent single person	6.2
	Married with no children	6.2
	Married with children under 18 years old	9.1
	Married with children over 18 years old	5.5
	Living alone (older children)	2.4
Education	Primary education or less	2.8
	Secondary education (first stage)	7.1
	Secondary education (second stage)	9.0
	Vocational training	8.3
	University	9.5
Employment situation	Works	9.8
	Unemployed	7.0
	Retired	1.6
	Student	14.3
	Housework	1.7
Total		7.0

Source: García-Ferrando and Llopis-Goig (2017)

Regarding the level of education, it can be stated that a higher educational level is related to a higher rate of sports volunteering, although this relationship ends when reaching university level. Thus, people who have studied vocational training (8.3%) and people with university studies (9.5%) have the highest rates of sports volunteering. The lowest rate is found among people with primary studies or no studies (2.8%).

Finally, with regard to their employment situation, people who are studying present the highest rates of sports volunteering, at 14.3%. The percentage among people who work is also high, reaching 9.8%. By contrast, retired people and those who dedicate themselves to housework have the lowest percentages, 1.6% and 1.7%, respectively.

21.2.3 Tasks and Satisfaction of Sports Volunteers

The most common task of sports volunteers – mentioned by 47% of the people who say they have done this type of volunteering – involves organizing or contributing to the celebration of a certain sports event (European Commission 2014). This result is completely compatible with the fact that in the same survey, 44% of the sports volunteers only volunteered sporadically. Second, but at a much lower rate, 30% mention participating as a coach. In third place, 16% mention being a referee, and fewer than 10% do other tasks, such as belonging to the board of directors (9%), supporting daily activities (6%), or performing administrative tasks (3%). In addition, 9% contribute by providing their own vehicle as a means of transportation to take the teams to sports competitions, and 3% contribute voluntarily to maintaining the sports installations (García-Ferrando and Llopis-Goig 2017). Complementary to these data, the results from a recent survey carried out with sports club volunteers from ten European countries (SIVSCE 2017) show that 37% of Spanish sports volunteers act as coaches/instructors, 10% are referees/officials, 39% are board members, and 43% are sporadically involved in the organization of club activities, events, and tournaments, or they contribute to them in some way (Van der Roest et al. 2017; Llopis-Goig and Sola 2017). These results do not differ from those found by the Spanish study, and they are also a clear example of the important contribution made by volunteers to the Spanish sports system, although their quantitative importance is much lower than in other European countries.

The analysis of the SIVSCE (2017) project sports volunteer survey makes it possible to extract information from other indicators that are also of interest in examining the opinions and attitudes of sports volunteers in Spain. As Table 21.5 shows, eight out of ten sports volunteers consider that the tasks they do are interesting and challenging, they are informed about major club affairs, and other club members support their work as a volunteer. However, the number of volunteers who respond negatively to these questions is not small and must be taken into account: 5.9%, 8.3%, and 5.6%, respectively.

Table 21.5 Sports volunteers' opinions and attitudes toward the clubs, tasks, and conditions

	Strongly disagree (%)	Partially disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Partially agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)	Total (%)
The tasks are interesting and challenging	4.4	1.5	7.7	38.0	48.4	100
I am informed about major club affairs	6.0	2.3	11.7	35.3	44.7	100
Other club members support my work as a volunteer	4.5	1.2	14.0	37.9	42.4	100
My work as a volunteer is appreciated	5.3	1.5	15.5	40.0	37.7	100
My problems and concerns as a volunteer are taken seriously	4.2	3.4	15.5	42.8	34.1	100
I can carry out my work autonomously	5.4	5.4	16.7	35.0	37.5	100
I get constructive feedback from the club management	5.7	5.3	17.8	37.1	34.1	100
The club honors me for my voluntary work	6.9	1.9	24.4	31.3	35.5	100
I get fringe benefits (e.g., reduced membership fee)	42.0	15.2	18.8	14.0	10.0	100
I get some payment for my voluntary work	50.8	12.7	13.1	10.7	12.7	100

Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on SIVSCE (2017)

A somewhat lower percentage of those surveyed state that their work as volunteers is appreciated (77.7%), their problems and concerns as volunteers are taken seriously (76.9%), they can carry out their work autonomously (72.5%), and they get constructive feedback from the club management (71.2%). The negative considerations in these cases range from 6% to 11%. Moreover, two-thirds of the Spanish sports volunteers stated that their clubs honor them for their voluntary work (66.8%), but this statement has a higher proportion of neutral answers (24.4%). Finally, 24% of Spanish sports volunteers said they get fringe benefits, such as a lower membership fee, and 23.4% get some payment for their volunteer work. In fact, these two statements show the highest percentages of disagreement: 57.2% and 63.5%.

These data show that, in general, Spanish volunteers have a high level of satisfaction with the situation, conditions, and sports clubs where they volunteer, although there are some percentages of dissatisfaction with some of the items included in the battery. In addition, according to a more generic indicator from the same study (Van der Roest et al. 2017; Llopis-Goig and Sola 2017), 79% of Spanish volunteers are satisfied with the conditions for volunteers in the club (compared to 71% of Europeans), and 12% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (compared to 10% of Europeans).

21.3 Volunteer Management in Sports

According to the data from a survey of sports clubs carried out in 10 European countries within the framework of a research project financed by the European Commission, mentioned above (SIVSCE 2017), Spanish sports clubs are among those that have evolved the most in their numbers of volunteers (Breuer et al. 2017). In fact, 29% indicate that the number of volunteers has increased in the past five years, compared to 20% registered for all European countries. Managers and people in charge of Spanish sports clubs support the idea that the clubs should be run exclusively by volunteers (59%), and they consider that volunteers carry out their tasks with dedication and energy (72%). They also stated that there is a low volunteer turnover rate in their clubs (65%) and that no special qualifications should be required to perform these types of tasks (90%). It is not surprising, therefore, that whereas the recruitment of volunteers is the main issue that German, Danish, Norwegian, and Dutch clubs say they have to deal with, in Spain it is the fifth, given that only 21% of Spanish sports clubs consider it a serious matter (Llopis-Goig and Sola 2017).

Regarding the challenge that is always involved in the task of recruiting and retaining volunteers in their organizations, Spanish sports clubs develop several strategies. The most common is to encourage them through speeches and conversations (verbal motivation), which is mentioned by 46% of Spanish clubs. In addition, 36% and 28% transmit expectations of voluntary participation to their members and the athletes' parents, respectively. Moreover, 32% of the clubs organize parties and volunteer gatherings to strengthen their group's identity, and 25% turn to networks of volunteers and current members to recruit new volunteers. Material incentives, however, are less common: only 22% provide their volunteers with some type of reward, and 13% pay for their training and qualifications. Finally, slightly more than a fifth of Spanish clubs (21%, compared to 13% for all European countries) state that they do not do anything special to recruit and retain volunteers (Llopis-Goig and Sola 2017).

21.4 Volunteering, State and Civil Society

As mentioned above, Law 45/2015 on Volunteering was recently passed in Spain as an instrument to strengthen the objectives of citizens' voluntary action and as an element of social transformation in the search for the greatest societal well-being and cohesion, as the law itself states in its preamble. This law defines volunteering as a set of activities of general interest performed by people freely and voluntarily, out of solidarity, without economic or material reward – but including repayment for expenses incurred while volunteering – through nonprofit public or private organizations, and according to specific programs or projects.

Law 45/2015 on Volunteering also represents progress compared to the previous law in setting the limits of volunteer activity. It establishes that the development of volunteer work cannot justify or support the extinction of work contracts in the public or private sector. In addition, the law includes a series of rights and duties for volunteers. On the one hand, some of the rights include being insured against risk of accidents and illness stemming from the exercise of the voluntary activity, receiving payment for expenses incurred while volunteering, doing the activity in the necessary safety conditions, receiving information about how to perform the activity, and participating actively in the organization, with their freedom, dignity, and beliefs being respected. On the other hand, it establishes that the volunteers are obligated to fulfill the commitments made, maintain confidentiality about the information received, reject any economic or material payment, respect the rights of the people receiving the voluntary action, act with solidarity, participate in the proposed tasks, and comply with the existing safety measures.

Furthermore, the law refers to the instruments institutions can use to promote and facilitate – following the current legislation – the adoption of measures to reduce or adapt the working day, so that contracted workers or public employees can do volunteer work. It also establishes the possibility of having an objective system that recognizes the competencies the volunteer can develop during the volunteer activity for purposes of personal promotion. In fact, it indicates that the entities where the volunteering takes place are obligated to give volunteers a certificate indicating the duration and activities carried out in the programs in which they participated.

21.5 Conclusion

Although the figure of the sports volunteer has been present since the origin of Spanish sports, this activity was not associated with the increase in volunteering that occurred as a result of the collaborative boom in the 1990s. The reason is that at that time, the concept of volunteering was strongly associated with the social realm and the discourse of solidarity that had acquired a key place in Spanish public opinion. The figure of the sports volunteer has become much more socially visible in recent years. Contributing to this, first, is the increase in the number of people who participate as sports volunteers in cities that have held large sports events in recent years. Second, it is important to mention the growth in the number of sports-based actions and initiatives designed to resolve social problems or favor the integration of collectives at risk of social exclusion, bringing sports volunteering closer to the field where volunteering has traditionally developed. Along with all of this, Law 45/2015 on Volunteering gives recognition to this type of volunteering. This most recent law not only involves an updating of the regulation of volunteer activities, but it also establishes various possibilities in terms of promoting and fostering volunteering in Spanish society. Some of these include measures such as reducing or adapting the working day in order to volunteer and recognizing the skills the volunteer develops

in his/her activity through an objective system and reflected on a certificate of accreditation.

Sports volunteering is performed by 7% of people 15 years and older in Spain. The people most likely to be sports volunteers are men, aged under 35 years old, single, with a high school education or higher, who are working or studying. In addition, four out of ten sports volunteers only do so occasionally, that is, they volunteer for a specific large sports event; and 34% dedicate more than six hours per month. It is not surprising, therefore, that the task most commonly performed by sports volunteers consists of contributing to a sports event, followed by fulfilling the role of coach, referee, and member of the board of directors.

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