THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

AN ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTEER PLACEMENTS

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1 CONTENTS

How can development organisations offering short term volunteer/internship placements generate and maintain sufficient social capital for their work to be effective?

INTRODUCTION

The aim and problem formulation of this project is to identify *"how development organisations, both non-profit and for-profit, offering or relying on short-term volunteer tourism (VT) 'packages' and volunteer interns, can generate and maintain sufficient social capital (SC) so as their development work is effective and beneficial to their host communities"*. An assumption that SC is important for development work is implied within this overarching aim. A key sub-question and part of the problem formulation of this project, therefore, is whether or not SC is indeed important when 'doing' development.

Both VT, whereby everyday tourists volunteer in local communities as part of their travels, and the desire to work in the development field have blossomed exponentially over the last two decades (Hall-Jones 2006). Annually about 1.6 million people engage in VT projects, spending on average between £832 million and £1.3 billion (Tourism Research & Marketing 2008). One organisation, Earthwatch, has contributed 90,000 volunteers to 1350 projects in over 100 countries, generating $67 million US dollars and 11 million hours of scientific fieldwork (Earthwatch Institute 2008). The kind of projects undertaken tend to run parallel with the notions of development aid and are often centred on environmental or humanitarian issues that negatively affect a given community (Wearing & McGehee 2013) Generally, according to research by Callanan and Thomas (2005), individuals on VT packages are there for a short period of usually less than 4 weeks and those on internships generally stay for about 3 months.

There are a number of reasons for the vast increase in popularity of the aforementioned volunteer placements. The opportunity to make the world a better place, for example, is attractive to many travellers and job seekers (Birrell 2010). This increase in wanting to 'give something back', it is argued, comes from growing social and environmental issues in developing countries, disasters such as the 2004 Tsunami in South East Asia (Wearing & McGehee 2013) and the increase in exposure to these ills through the media.

Despite on the surface seeming virtuous, these kind of placements, particularly VT placements, have faced criticism from many commentators. It is argued, for instance, that the motivating factor behind doing a VT project is not always purely altruistic. One study found that the key motivating factor was to travel rather than contribute or volunteer (Sin 2009) and that many volunteers used their experience to satisfy objectives relating to the 'self' such as making their CV look better (Sin 2009).

Short-term VT or internship placements have also been accused of strengthening negative stereotypes of developing communities as "inferior or less-able through the process of 'othering'" (Sin 2009, 497). In addition, it's contended that VT is often organised apolitically; ignoring issues of democracy and active citizenship and therefore running the risk of failing to be 'pro-poor' or of addressing inequalities (Sin 2009). In addition, Guttentag (2009) highlights that unsatisfactory or incomplete work was conducted by volunteers, host communities desires were often neglected, dependency was reinforced, and local employment opportunities were reduced. Moreover, Simpson (2004) argued that VT can be an over-simplified version of international development that can undermine successful development initiatives. Conversely, while they can cause harm, organisations offering VT packages or internships also have the potential to act as serious facilitators of positive change where it is needed most.

This is where SC ties into the discussion. Although the project will go into much more detail further on, right now SC can be defined rather simply as an "instantiated informal norm that promotes co-operation between two or more individuals" (Fukuyama 2001, 7). This is deemed important for development as growing evidence demonstrates that social cohesion is an important and necessary prerequisite for societies to achieve sustainable socioeconomic prosperity (World Bank 2011). It is contended, therefore, that the existence of SC between development workers and development recipients is crucial to the success of development work.

This is why the problem formulation for this project is important. SC, it is argued, is something built up over a long period of time and involves complex notions of trust, reciprocity, goodwill, friendship, culture, norms and networks. Is it possible, then, for short term un-trained volunteers to build up enough SC so that the work they are doing is meaningful and effective? Or is it unlikely that people on short-term projects can generate sufficient SC and, consequently, are having no, marginal or negative effects on the people they are trying to help? If it is possible, though, how can organisations generate and maintain SC?

The focus of this project is, moreover, both relevant and topical. SC has flourished over the past two decades from a concept to a field of its own (Kwon & Adler 2014) and, as aforementioned, VT has ballooned in popularity too, as both a popular activity and a field of research. Wearing and McGehee (2013, 127) also point out that "the role of [VT] and the creation and expansion of [SC] begs for additional research". It has also been highlighted that an appropriate theoretical basis for studying VT is needed so that ways to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts can be found (McGehee 2012). This project, by utilising SC theory, therefore, is an attempt to add to the growing literature on VT and aid in finding an appropriate theoretical foundation.

The problem formulation is also relevant to my own experience as an intern at a grass-roots development NGO in rural India that relied heavily on international volunteers and interns for all aspects of work. The vast majority of people employed in the organisation are short term international volunteers and it was my experience there that made me question the relationship between SC and VT.

Following the introduction, the methodology will be provided. The subsequent section will discuss SC theory before the sub-question of whether or not SC is an important prerequisite for socioeconomic development is answered. Next, in the analysis, the key part of the problem formulation will be analysed and answered before the project is concluded.

METHODOLOGY

The main research question of this project is *"How can development organisations offering short term volunteer/internship placements generate and maintain sufficient SC for their work to be effective?"* To answer this, first SC will be defined, its origins and rise in popularity explored

and its criticisms discussed. Subsequently, the key assumption within the research question, that SC is important for development work, will be analysed and evaluated. This will occur after the theory section and will use the work of a diverse number of both supporters and critics of SC. It's important to do this as it lays down an unbiased theoretical foundation for the analysis that takes into consideration both the benefits and drawbacks of SC.

To write the analysis I have used a variety of SC literature including, but not limited to, works from Fukuyama (2001, 1996), Woolcock (1998, 2010) and Ostrom et al. (2009), that discusses where micro-level SC comes from and how it is generated and sustained. This information was then analysed in conjunction with secondary research collected from the VT literature, from the likes of Wearing (2001), McGehee (2012) and Callanan and Thomas (2005), that discuss the benefits, problems, nature and work of VT organisations. The information collated on VT, such as the average length of a placement, was then applied to the conditions favourable to the generation and maintenance of SC in order to analyse whether or not under these circumstances SC is likely to be generated. Based on the results of this, recommendations are then given on how SC can be generated and sustained. My own unstructured ethnographic observations and results of discussions with various colleagues and superiors (I couldn't really converse with the host community due to language constraints) are also used as evidence throughout the analysis to back up my arguments.

I have primarily relied on qualitative secondary data (although occasionally quantitative data was used too) obtained through Aalborg University's e-Library with some online news sources, websites and my own ethnographic observations used too. The vast majority of the sources are academic and peer reviewed and any that were not were from reputable organisations such as The Guardian (2013) or World Bank (2011). Furthermore, to avoid bias a wide variety of sources from various authors were used. The primary data used are based on my own unstructured ethnographic observations and informal discussions with colleagues and superiors that answered certain relevant questions to this topic such as what the average length of an internship placement was. The observations were made during my four-months as an intern where I worked with numerous other short-term international volunteers and, occasionally, one Indian member of staff who would intermittently visit our site. The observations I have used in this project come

from situations in which the presence or absence of SC affected the work the organisation was trying to do. The benefit of these observations is that I experienced first-hand the dynamics of a development NGO that relies heavily on interns and volunteer tourists. However these would provide more of a benefit if I was able to speak and understand the local language.

LIMITATIONS

As with any project, there are limitations that need to be accounted for. Due to a lack of resources, a language barrier and the majority of my time being spent working I was unable to conduct any of my own inductive primary research, perhaps in the form of surveys, interviews or focus groups that could be used to supplement the conclusions made from the analysis. This could have provided research that is more focussed and relevant to the problem formulation. Still, my own ethnographic observations provide an added dynamic to the research that, nonetheless, bolster my arguments.

In addition, VT is a relatively new topic of academic interest and despite its consequent growth in literature, it's still in a somewhat embryonic stage in terms of the depth, variety and number of publications. As this project relied largely on secondary data, a larger number of VT publications from which to choose from may have provided more and, thus, stronger evidence on which conclusions could be based. Nevertheless there was still a sufficient amount of research already conducted on VT – as well as the existence of an incredibly rich pool of SC publications and my own observations - from which conclusions could be made.

THEORY

Since the 1980s SC has become ubiquitous, moving from the margins to the mainstream of social science (Woolcock 2010). It is regularly included in fields such as economics, business management and criminology (Kwon & Adler 2014) and is regularly mentioned or discussed in the realms of public policy, popular debate and mainstream media.

As with any concept - especially one as widely debated and utilised as SC - it is highly contested. Ostrom et al. (2009, 255), for instance, view SC as "the value of trust generated by social networks to facilitate individual and group cooperation, shared interests and the organisation of

social institutions at different scales". Bourdieu (1983, 249) believes it is "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition". Whereas Coleman (1990, 302) writes that SC "is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities, having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure". Putnam (2000, 19) contends that SC "refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense [SC] is closely related to what some have called 'civic virtue'. The difference is that '[SC]' calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in [SC]".

Within the extremely diverse array of SC literature, trust and networks are considered fundamental (Schuller et al. 2000). Networks are defined as a set of interconnected and interdependent actors such as individuals or organisations (Schuller et al. 2000). These are "open structures, able to expand without limits, integrating new nodes as long as they share the same communication codes" (Castells 1996, 470) that facilitate the transfer or flow of non-material and material resources (Schuller et al. 2000). Widespread agreement within the social sciences exists on the importance of networks at all levels as it is within these ties that SC can be sourced (Kwon & Adler 2014).

Trust, a vital and fragile commodity, is also necessary to study if one is to understand SC (Dasgupta 2000). According to Fukuyama (1996) the level of trust inherent within a given society determines a nation's wellbeing and ability to compete. Trust is defined as "the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and co-operative behaviour, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of the community" (Fukuyama 1996, 26). It remains unclear, however, whether trust is an intrinsic part of SC, a product of it or a precursor to it (Woolcock 2010). Nevertheless it has important payoffs: communities characterised by high levels of trust (between individuals, institutions and between individuals and institutions) are more likely to be happy, prosperous and virtuous (Uslaner 1999). This is

because it encourages cooperation (Putnam 1993), compromise, taking an active role in your community, respect and morality (Uslaner 1999).

Despite its current popularity, however, the term does not embody a new idea; it recaptures an insight that has always existed within the social sciences (Portes 1998). We must, then, account for its surge in popularity. It is a matter of contention who first deployed the idea of SC (Farr 2004) but, according to Woolcock (2010), the term originated in the early 20th Century and was subsequently reinvented several times until the pivotal work of Coleman (1987, 1988, 1990), Bourdieu (1983, 1985) and, in particular, Putnam (1993; 2000).

The mid 1990s saw the end of the cold war, with the subsequent fall of the Berlin Wall and the economic collapse of the post-socialist countries. This created demand for a tangible social theory that could help relieve and cure the ills of the post-Cold War period as both governments and markets had failed as solutions to the problems of "order, prosperity, distribution, and change" (Woolcock 2010, 473). SC, therefore, "was swept to prominence not on its merits, but on the defects of its alternatives" (Bowles & Gintis 2002, 419). A unique space was created therefore that allowed for a social explanation of why certain societies were successful and others weren't (Woolcock 2010).

Anxious policy makers were somewhat put at ease, then, with the publication of Putnam's (1993) study of civic traditions in Italy, *Making Democracy Work,* that provided a solution to issues such as inefficiency and poor economic and organisational performance. The main conclusion of the book was that SC strongly supported effective democratic governance and allowed groups to achieve much more together than they could alone. According to Putnam (2003) this accounted for development disparities between the rich north of Italy and the relatively poor south.

In addition, Portes (1998) believes the concept is attractive as it focuses attention on the positive outcomes of sociability while placing them in a framework of a broader discussion of capital. This demonstrates how non-monetary systems can be significant sources of influence and power, much like the amount of financial or productive assets one may own. The distance between sociological and economic perspectives is thus reduced due to the potential fungibility of different sources of capital; consequently drawing the attention of policy-makers who need cheap, non-economic solutions to social problems (Portes 1998).

Given SC's 'celebrity' status, though, it is hardly surprising that there are also many who are critical of the term. One of which is that SC is a tautology rather than an explanation. SC explanations often begin with the consequences of SC and then "describe the differences between negative and positive examples in terms of the way [SC] has been responsible for producing these effects" (Haynes 2009, 10) which, thus, is a circular argument.

Related to the previous point is also the issue of direction of causality (Haynes 2009). It is problematic deciding whether or not, for instance, an increase in SC leads to efficacious communities or if a community becoming or being efficacious leads to an increase in SC (Durlauf 1999). This difficulty, according to Haynes (2009), is born out of the fact that a multiplicity of concepts are operated under SC.

Providing a macro-level numerical measure of SC is also notoriously difficult with Fukuyama (2001, 15) stating that "producing anything like a believable census of a society's stock of [SC] is a nearly impossible task". Two broad methods have been adopted however: the use of survey data on levels of trust and civic engagement and a census of groups and group membership in a given society. Nevertheless, this involves multiplying numbers that are non-existent or subjectively estimated (Fukuyama 2001). Determining whether or not volunteers generate SC on a micro-level, however, could be done by conducting questionnaires or interviews with the host community that explore the perceived levels of trust and respect (other notions could also be used) that they have for volunteers.

SC is also regularly assumed to be positive, yet it can produce a number of negative externalities. Group solidarity in communities, for example, can often be gained at the expense of hostility towards non-group members. Strong, long-standing social groups also have the ability to stifle macroeconomic progress by securing a disproportionate portion of national resources. Mafia families, criminal gangs and gambling rings also demonstrate how being embedded in a social structure does not always produce an end that is socially desirable (Portes 1998). It's important to note, though, that SC is not something to be maximised, rather it is something to be optimised.

IS SOCIAL CAPITAL IMPORTANT FOR DEVELOPMENT WORK?

According to Woolcock (1998) SC is incredibly important for development. He distinguishes between four types of SC that span both the micro and macro levels. At the micro level there are integration and linkage, with the former referring to intra-community ties and the latter to extra-community ties. At the macro level, on the other hand, there are integrity and synergy, with the former referring to institutional coherence, capacity and competence and the latter referring to state-society relations (Woolcock 1998). Different combinations of these four categories lead to varying consequences for development.

Integration is an important source of SC and is particularly important for bottom-up development. This grass-roots development usually "functions in and through social relations among people with common neighbourhood, ethnic, religious, or familial ties" (Woolcock 1998, 171). It enables individuals within communities with high levels of integration to access and provide a range of important services (ranging from job referrals to property surveillance) and thus is important for doing development with marginalised communities.

Too much integration without linkage, however, can also be a bad thing. Bonds can be so strong that members of a group are strongly discouraged (due to a lack of trust, for instance) from engaging with outsiders, moving location or progressing economically, for example, and this can prevent socioeconomic development from occurring. This can be referred to as 'amoral familism' (Banfield 1958) and leads to a weakening in economic efficiency as transaction costs are much higher (Nelson 1949). Development problems in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and southern Italy have partly been attributed to this phenomenon (Woolcock 1998).

Anomie, a situation in which individuals' freedoms are inadequately constrained by a stable community (Durkheim 1997), occurs, however, when there is linkage but low levels of integration. This state of anomie is often associated with modernization and results in "heightened cognitive dissonance…increased rates of disaffection, suicide and violent crime" (Woolcock 1998, 173).

Linkage and integration, therefore, need to be linked together in order for development to be effective. In efficacious grass-roots development programmes, payback from initial intra-community integration, over time, must be supplemented with extra-community linkage; too

much or too little of either, however, weakens economic progress. VT organisations and their volunteers, as outsiders, then, are potential actors through which marginalised communities can gain access to linkage.

When it comes to development that occurs through NGOs and VT organisations, then, linkage is very important. NGO workers, development professionals and volunteers are often 'outsiders' and, as such, may be viewed with hostility and distrust by communities with high levels of integration and low levels of linkage. Those they are trying to assist may consequently be reluctant to engage with any implementation; ultimately leading to project failure. Where I worked in India, for example, the highly integrated low-caste host community had access to a number of government-led development schemes. They would not engage in these, however, as they did not trust government officials to treat them well. If, however, mutual trust, respect, fondness and high levels of reciprocity exist or can be created, community members may be much more enthusiastic and genuine in their engagement with a given project. VT organisations and volunteers' ability to create linkage, then, is very important.

Micro-finance projects in Bangladesh, run by Grameen Bank, successfully lifted millions of individuals above the poverty-line and much of their success in doing this can be accredited to SC (Bhuiyan 2011) and the combination of integration and linkage. The bank used a system in which intended borrowers had to form peer-monitoring groups of five people from within their social networks (Hasan 2008). This policy created peer pressure and thus facilitated high repayment rates of 98 per cent (Grameen Bank 2010) which in turn helped establish new normative behaviour and trust (Bhuiyan 2011). These marginalised individuals, therefore, created SC through social networking, group formation, trust and normative behaviour which in turn made a large contribution to the triumph of their micro-finance initiatives (Bhuiyan 2011).

Some more examples of developmental success associated with SC include a study by Fafchamps and Minten (2002) that found traders in Madagascar who enjoyed good relationships with suppliers, customers and other traders earned higher margins. SC was also shown to accumulate over time and improve economic performance considerably as transaction costs were reduced (Fafchamps & Minten 2002). Moreover, studies by Krishna and Uphoff (2002, 122) showed how the "investment in personnel in 'catalyst' roles produced a system of local organization with normative reorientations that fifteen years after creation continued to produce

remarkable economic as well as social and political benefits" with high rates of return in Rajasthan, India and Gal Oya, Sri Lanka. Isham et al. (1997) also show that development projects receive a higher return where civil liberties and SC are greater.

This bottom-up development, though, does not and cannot happen in isolation; it occurs in the "context of a particular history and regulatory framework that can itself strengthen or undermine the capacity of independent groups in civil society to organize in their own collective interest" (Woolcock, 1998, p. 176). State-society relations, or synergy and organisational integrity, therefore, are incredibly important for development work and an optimal environment is one in which all four forms of SC are present in complementary ways at multiple levels (Ostrom et al. 2009).

One macro study using indicators of trust and civic norms from the World Values Surveys for 29 different market economies finds that SC does indeed matter for measurable economic performance (Knack & Keefer 1997). Their findings show how the vast majority of economic transactions involve an element of trust (Arrow 1972) and are accomplished at lower costs when conducted in higher-trust environments (Knack & Keefer 1997). Shared and cooperative norms were also shown to be linked with favourable economic outcomes as they acted as constraints on narrow self-interest, affecting the benefits and costs of cooperating in prisoner dilemmas (J. Coleman 1990).

This aggregation of 'trust' and 'norm' data, however, loses its links with the historical and social circumstances in which SC is located (Sabitini 2006). As SC is dependent upon context that "is highly variable by how, when and whom" (Fine 2001, 105) the conclusions drawn from the study may not be strong enough to serve as a basis for generalisations. It's important to note, though, that quantitative measurements, particularly of an economic nature, are a human construct; they have achieved a supposed objective reality that is free from its social construction (Dale 2005). Yet it is the concepts that are difficult to define and measure like trust, good-will and beauty, that provide society with purpose and meaning (Frankel 1959).

Knack and Keefers (1997) findings also contradict those of Putnam's (1993) *Making Democracy Work.* The latter work shows how, in Italy, trust and norms can be strengthened through having dense horizontal networks (measured through the number of civic groups). The former, however, contends that horizontal networks do not affect economic growth and that if declining SC has

adverse consequences it is due to the erosion of trust and civic cooperation (Knack 1992). A study by Pagal et al. (2002), using a survey-based study of neighbourhoods in Bangladesh to establish whether or not SC is important for voluntary solid waste management systems, also shows that reciprocity was much more important than trust for its success. This suggests that depending on context, certain aspects of SC are more important than others. Nonetheless, this does not mean that trust, horizontal networks or any other aspects of SC that do not have a significant impact in a given situation are not important.

Furthermore, one of Putnam's (1993, 89-90) key arguments is that northern Italy is more prosperous because it has a higher proportion of civic engagement and group membership which "instil[s] in their members habits of cooperation, solidarity, and public-spiritedness". This, he argues, helps overcome collective-action problems and, thus, aids in achieving higher levels of prosperity (Putnam 1993). This could have negative impacts for development, though, as certain groups could lobby for preferential treatment at the cost of other groups (Olson 1982). In addition, economic performance could be hampered if different groups have incompatible economic goals. A group of business leaders bonded by SC, for instance, could decide to collude and unfairly raise prices of certain goods.

Some empirical studies also show that the link between SC and economic prosperity and development can be inconsistent. Two studies by Putnam (2000) and Costa and Kahn (2003), for instance, highlight a large decline in SC in the US during the 20th Century. However its economy flourished exponentially during this period (IMF 2000). The US during this time, though, was already relatively developed and had an efficient government and market that could act as a proxy for SC. Perhaps in countries where the government or market is unable to guarantee private property or contract laws SC is more important as trust and feelings of respect replace contracts and statutes.

Economic growth could even diminish levels of SC as the former requires consumption and labour. If people devote too much time to these endeavours there may be little time for social participation (Sabitini 2006). One study, for example, shows that switching from a full-time to a part-time job increases the inclination towards social participation (Alesino & La Ferrara 2000); inferring, then, that working more reduces social participation. This has been the case in the second half of the 20th Century in a number of societies where women have increasingly entered

the labour market and consequently seen a reduction in their social activities (Costa & Kahn 2003).

Much of the aforementioned development occurs in the context of a neo-liberal framework, however, which many contend is a 'race to the bottom' that puts profit before human well-being, the environment and sustainability. Many within the development field point towards a need to focus on more sustainable development where development "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland 1987) and isn't merely focussed on a rise in GDP.

For Dale (2005), then, SC is also important for sustainable development; she argues that it is the most fundamental capital for human reconciliation of natural, economic and human capital. Sustainable development on a global scale will require enormous changes that will require the collective mobilization of the will and engagement of all people worldwide (Dale 2005). Globally, we often can't fully appreciate the magnitude of a problem until crisis point is almost reached (Ornstein & Ehrlich 1998). The deployment of SC can mitigate this by filling ingenuity gaps (Homer-Dixon 2001) that exist because of the discrepancy between demand and supply of important knowledge during times of rapid change.

Deliberative dialogue, through the use of SC, can fill these gaps and disseminate important knowledge and strategies for collective action (Dale 2005). Sustainable development is "an issue of human behaviour and negotiation over preferred futures, under conditions of deep contingency and uncertainty" (Robinson 2004, 379). Unprecedented levels of collaboration and dialogue, therefore, are required and without SC this could be incredibly challenging.

Overall, then, SC is a neutral concept; it is neither innately good nor bad and "can lead to both positive and negative outcomes of competing interest" (Ostrom et al. 2009, 262). When faced with a socioeconomic dilemma, using SC to act collectively, individuals may choose to follow a short-term maximizing strategy that leaves them worse off. Or they could use their stocks of SC to create "mutually reinforcing expectations" and "overcome the perverse short-run temptations they face" (Ostrom et al. 2009, 262). The correct blend of SC also varies "within different local economic development dynamics according to situation, context and time and would thus produce different development outcomes" (Evans & Syrett 2007, 59). The benefits of SC also appear to be clearer at the micro-level while macro level analysis raises a number of issues.

Nevertheless, despite its drawbacks, if it is mobilized correctly, SC has an incredible potential to foster and facilitate efficient development.

ANALYSIS

When thinking about the generation and maintenance of SC the issue of context is critical. It is unequivocally important and necessary to situate any development activities contextually rather than proceeding arbitrarily using a unitary and universal definition and operationalization of SC (Evans & Syrett 2007). What constitutes SC in one environment, then, won't necessarily stand firm elsewhere (Flora 2004). For instance, in India, it was considered rude to say please and thank you to friends and family. It is granted that friends and family are 'there for you'; if please or thanks are given to them, they feel like they have been demoted to an acquaintance or stranger as it is implied that their gesture is unexpected. In the UK, on the other hand, if please or thanks are not given to family and friends it is considered rude and ungrateful.

Development organisations in general, then, need to take this into account. However, it is even more important for development or VT organisations that rely on foreign volunteers that are likely to be unexperienced, un- or under- trained, not necessarily required to have any work or academic background in development or have any prior experience in foreign cultures (Simpson 2004). A lack of sensitivity to context can quite easily but, perhaps innocently, damage relationships between volunteers and the host community thus hampering developmental success.

As well as context, there is the important issue of longevity. SC between individuals is built up over a long period of time. For mutual trust to occur, regular exchanges are necessary in which each person in the relationship proves their dependability, transferability, 'confirmability' and credibility (DeCrop 2004). Once these relational characteristics are established, however, they must be continuously reinforced through further interactions (Ostrom et al. 2009) that lead the concerned individuals to develop a stake in a reputation for reliability and honesty (Fukuyama 2001). However, as most volunteering placements are relatively short-term (Callanan & Thomas 2005) (where I worked, volunteers usually stayed for a period of three months), this process of developing trust, and thus creating linkage, must take place incessantly as new volunteers replace

old ones. Any trust developed, then, may not be given enough time to be nurtured and subsequently transformed into SC that will aid development.

It is possible, however, if the organisation itself has established a worthy reputation within a given community and thus acts as a gatekeeper between volunteer and host community (McGehee & Andereck 2008). If a strong level of trust already exists between the organisation and host community then perhaps the host community will be more likely and willing to trust new arrivals. This allows for an easier creation of SC by a largely fluid stock of volunteers which, in turn, is maintained through a foundation of trust and SC by a reputable organisation. This does not necessarily mean that the SC is transferable (Luloff & Bridger 2003), however, but perhaps that it is more accessible. Under this situation, then, VT organisations could carry out effective and efficient developmental activities.

Depending on the recruitment process of the organisation, however, this could be rather precarious. For-profit organisations, for instance, are likely to hire anyone interested in paying as their primary motivation is profit. Any calibre of volunteers, then, can work for their organisation regardless of their competence, background or experience. Even NGOs that heavily rely on volunteers may have to be lenient in who they hire if there is not a ready stock of competent applicants to choose from. The organisation I worked for, for example, was non-profit but also had an extremely small budget so relied heavily on foreign volunteers. Thus they were more willing to hire individuals regardless of their background and capabilities. It can take just one volunteer acting irresponsibly, then, to damage the trust given to an organisation (especially if the organisation, like the one I worked for, has very few permanent staff members).

The recruitment and subsequent training process of the organisations, therefore, is crucial to building up and sustaining SC. As well as hiring volunteers that have relevant skills for the work they will be undertaking, development organisations should also assess applicants so that they ensure beforehand that their volunteers are competent and 'volunteer-minded' rather than 'vacation-minded' (Brown 2005). As aforementioned, though, some organisations may be reliant on volunteer tourists for the implementation of their work and may be unable to attract enough volunteers if their application process is too stringent. A comprehensive induction, orientation and training period before volunteers enter the field would therefore also be highly beneficial (Raymond & Hall 2008) in nurturing the development and maintenance of SC. Specifically

tailored cultural awareness programmes, for instance, could teach volunteers prior to working about important norms and values of their host community that need to be respected or followed in order to develop good relationships. Training the volunteers - who are likely to be inexperienced in development work - in the importance of SC would also be an important step. This would teach the interns to be constantly aware of their actions and how they may be harmful or beneficial to creating and maintaining SC.

This begs the question, however, of whether or not small development organisations with very little in the way of financial resources can afford to spend what little they have on the recruitment and training process while their key priority should be the communities they are trying to help. In the technological age in which we live, though, it's conceivable that training could be provided online relatively cheaply, through a series of lectures and tests for instance, despite it being less personal and lacking the benefits of dynamic 'teacher-student' interaction.

Volunteers are also predominantly middle class individuals from developed countries in the West (Mowforth & Munt 2009) whilst the local development programmes they are engaged in are predominantly based in the developing world. Shared norms and values – another crucial pillar of SC – between volunteers and host communities, therefore, may be rather rare and difficult to develop in a short period of time as they are often path dependent (Fukuyama 2001). It is likely that someone born and brought up in the UK, for instance, will be accustomed to a completely different culture, life experiences and quite possibly religion and language than an individual from a village in rural India. These two individuals, therefore, may find they have very little in the way of shared norms and values around which they can build SC. Both modern and traditional communities and economies, however, use shared and informal norms to achieve co-operative ends (Fukuyama 2001).

Yet despite often being path dependent and thus originating from a shared religion, language and history that is often alien to volunteers, cooperative norms can arise as a result of recurrent community interaction (Ellickson 1991). Again, however, the issue of high labour turnover is problematic. Shared norms are complex and built over years - not over the course of a few months - so it seems unlikely that foreign volunteers with their own norms will be able to develop or take on new shared norms.

In addition, shared language is a particularly important characteristic of relationships. It's unlikely, though, that an individual going to volunteer in a foreign country for a few months is going to become fluent in the host communities language before or whilst being there. At the organisation I worked for, it was clear that the couple of interns with Hindi language skills had much closer relationships with individuals from the host community as they were able to develop SC. While, for interns like myself with no Hindi language skills, communication is possible using hand signals, for example, it is not sufficient to build meaningful relationships that can serve as the basis for cooperative action that can help foster development.

Perhaps, though, the development organisations in question could give local people, who already possess the language and particular shared norms, a stake in their development programmes. As a form of network, development organisations that rely on volunteers are extremely important as spaces for developing and sourcing SC (Kwon & Adler 2014). Linkage, then, can be created between host communities and volunteers via this particular form of network. This requires, though, that local community members are involved in the organisations; they could be employed by the organisation, as staff or volunteers, or be involved in decision making and implementation for example.

At the NGO I worked for in India there were four different centres spread across four states. Out of approximately 30-40 interns that ran the organisation there was just one Indian employee that shared the language and to some extent norms and values of the various host communities. Successful project implementation was rare at this organisation, but every success required his presence; he was respected, trusted, could communicate effectively with the host communities and thus worked through the SC he possessed. For example, when a volunteer wanted to have a discussion with an individual from a host community, the employee was required not just for his language skills but because the host community felt more comfortable answering their questions with him present. Without him, then, it was extremely difficult to achieve anything. Fukuyama (2001) states that it is often difficult for outsiders and organisations to foster SC in countries where they have no local roots. Some form of local involvement in the running of the organisations, then, would be extremely important for generating and sustaining SC.

Due to the reliance on volunteers, however, there is a problem that the experience of the volunteer will take precedence over the developmental needs of the host community (Wearing &

Ponting 2006) which in turn can lead to problems with accountability. Those organisations with a profit motive are particularly susceptible to this. Demand for the VT experience is what drives the market, not the needs of the host community; host communities are, thus, often left out of the development process (Wearing & McGehee 2013). Even NGOs, such as the one I worked for, that have low budgets and thus rely heavily on volunteers may end up being too accommodating to the wants of interns, at the expense of the needs of the host communities, to ensure they attract enough volunteers.

SC, according to Uslaner and Rothstein (2005) is also better generated in settings characterised by equality. More equal countries, such as the Nordic countries for example (Svendsen & Svendsen 2009), also experience higher levels of SC. VT, though, has been criticized as being neo-colonial (Vrasti 2013), increasing dependency and, consequently, widening inequality (Palacios 2010). Due to a neoliberal model of VT, tourists and host communities are often prevented from interacting on an equal footing thanks to profit repatriation, high rates of imports and high levels of expatriate management staffing (Wearing & McGehee 2013). Due to the fact volunteers are predominantly un- or under-trained in the development discourse, volunteers are also more likely to hold a western view of development which is often premised on a hierarchy that favours western thought and maintains Western hegemony (Bradley 2006). A projection of the host community members as a fictitious underdeveloped 'other' that need western 'enlightenment' is also conceivable given the likely lack of experience volunteer tourists have (Hobart 1993).

A more equal setting in which VT organisations operate, then, would be more conducive to generating and sustaining SC (Palacios 2010). Again, the importance of preparation for volunteers before entering the field must be stressed. In addition, a decommodified agenda that has a central role for the host community, it is argued, can shift away from the subjugating tourist approach (Wearing & Weaing 2006) that has the ability to empower host communities (Wearing & Ponting 2006). If the host communities wants and needs are given credence, a more equal environment can be created where 'otherness' "can include difference without inferiorization and identity fixity" (Wearing & McGehee 2013, 135).

VT organisations, then, do have the potential to act as an important addition to the wide range of actors already involved in the development field. Volunteers can act as an important source of

both cheap unpaid labour and funds for finance-restricted development (volunteers are often required to pay a fee to their VT organisation). However, a distinction must be made between for-profit organisations that offer shallow, consumer-oriented VT packages and non-profit organisations who provide a more genuine community centred approach that is more conducive to generating SC (Gray & Campbell 2007). In addition, VT exposes individuals to important issues of development who otherwise would be unable to engage in a field which needs interest and activism from individuals outside of the development discourse.

Therefore if VT is operated within an alternative framework away from the traditional neoliberal model of tourism (Chang 2008), and is community-centred, empowering and hence relevant to the hosts' needs (Wearing 2001) it can be a powerful addition to the world of development and tourism. Cultural Third spaces of volunteers, organisations and hosts can emerge - where linkage can be created - if the VT organisations offer a higher degree of participation opportunities to the host community (Wearing 2001). This allows for a breakdown of the dominant-subordinate dichotomy that VT, and development in general, can be perceptible to (Higgins-Desbiolles 2006).

CONCLUSION

Overall, then, the existence of SC is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for successful socioeconomic development, both in the framework of sustainable and neoliberal development. At the macro-level SCs importance was demonstrated but was also shown to pose a number of difficulties analytically. At the micro-level, however, evidence shows how integration allows people to 'get by' in life, but that to 'get ahead' linkage with outsiders, who can introduce technological innovations for example, is needed (ONS 2014). Dependent on context, however, differing combinations and aspects of SC may be more prominent than others.

VT organisations, as outsiders, then, can provide much needed linkage to communities across the developing world. While, perhaps, they potentially cause harm and provide no additional benefits than a conventional NGO with trained development experts, the fact remains that they exist and are spreading. It makes sense, then, that a policy of maximizing the benefits and minimizing the negative impacts of VT should be pursued. As this project has revealed, SC in development organisations is important. It is extremely relevant, therefore, as a new and different

form of development organisation, that methods of generating and sustaining SC are explored and analysed.

In the analysis it was shown that due to their volunteers being unexperienced, short-term, from completely foreign cultures and speaking different languages, the generation and maintenance of SC by development organisations is particularly challenging. Nevertheless, if development organisations hire volunteers prudently, adequately train volunteers, increase local participation and offer a decommodified package outside of the neoliberal tourism paradigm, generating and sustaining SC can be much less challenging. VT organisations, then, have huge potential to act as an effective adjunct to the already diverse field of development. Yet caution must be adopted; development organisations must be aware of the nature of VT and take into account the challenges they will face when trying to develop and sustain SC.

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