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## Article

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## Working Tourist Serious Leisure: A Qualitative Study of Irish and New Zealand Leaders in South Korea

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### ABSTRACT

This study sought to understand working tourist's activities based in South Korea, and how their leisure activities and leadership roles impacted their lives, their leisure groups, and also unique forms of tourist activity. Using semi-structured interviews with 11 serious leisure volunteers from New Zealand and Ireland currently based in South Korea as working tourists, this research looked to understand their motivations and the benefits that their participation and leadership roles played in their lifestyle. It also sought to analyze how they utilized their prior knowledge, skills, and home country and culture to improve their working tourist lifestyle. Using qualitative analysis and three layers of coding, the interview results indicated the surprising importance of the social aspect as a main motivation and outlined four strong and distinct benefits that seem to differ from serious leisure volunteering in their home country. It also identified three key impacts that these working tourists have on their groups and outlines the importance that serious leisure plays in their life satisfaction. The results can offer insights for domestic and international tourism as these leaders impact their leisure group's activities in several ways, and also show how important leisure is for working tourist community's. It also shows the changing dynamics of tourism, where leisure activities and home culture are no longer concepts that tourists must live without.

*Keywords: Benefits, Motivations, Qualitative Research, Serious Leisure, Working Tourists*

### 1. Introduction

In 2016 the United Nations announced that over 244 million people are living in a country different to the one that they were born in (United Nations, 2016). This figure had increased by 41% from 15 years earlier, and is expected to not only increase exponentially, but also that the need to understand

the needs and lifestyles of these broad sub-groups will become increasingly important. Migration is one subsection of a continuum of mobility that includes permanent relocation through to occasional travel, and various forms in between (Willekens, Massey, Raymer, & Beauchemin, 2016). Along with permanent migrants, retirees, business expatriates, and refugees, there have been an increase in other forms of international people spending time abroad; this includes SIE (Self-initiated expatriates), international students, and long-term stay tourists. These various forms of foreigners based abroad will seek leisure opportunities both familiar and also new to them to some degree.

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South Korea has seen its number of international residents drastically increase since 1980, when the figure was just over 40,000, to over 2 million in 2016 (Ock, 2016). The Korean Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs reported that the foreign residential population of 1,741,919 had tripled since 2009 (Eum, 2015). This population was divided into several categories, with 1.46 million (74%) staying for over 90 days. South Korea, formerly known as the “Hermit Kingdom” (“Trade Profile...,” 2017) due to its isolation, has changed dramatically in various areas, including political (Park, 2017), economic (Kalia, 2007) and social (Hundt, 2017) compel this once shy nation to ease the entry for many forms of visitors and long-term stay tourists. South Korea still has a long way to go towards taking multiculturalism seriously (Kang, 2014), but Seoul is now one of the most visited cities in the world, coming in at 7<sup>th</sup> place with over 12 million international visitors in 2016 (Millington, 2017).

This research seeks to understand how important the efforts and time that volunteers contribute are to the serious leisure activity and the greater working tourist and expat community's. The goal of this paper is to understand the motivations of these volunteers, outline what benefits they receive, clarify the impacts that they have on their group and reveal the importance that these leisure community's play on their satisfaction as expatriates. This research will reveal the importance that serious leisure plays for those living abroad, how key the work of volunteers is for these activities, and how the ability to maintain and share their culture helps improve the lives of expats- with InterNations categorizing leisure as one of the five key areas when surveying expats quality of life (“*Expat Insider...*,” 2017). It will also look at the impacts that these groups activities have on Korea's domestic and international tourism, with each leisure group contributing in differing ways.

## II. Literature Review

This literature review seeks to discuss the relevant information and previous research that pertains to key areas. New Zealand and Ireland are two countries with high percentages of their population living abroad, and maintain strong ties with their culture and heritage, so their motivations and actions in South Korea provide unique insights into these areas. This review will first outline the increasing trend of outward migration and then look at the history of both New Zealand and Ireland as countries with high degrees of citizens living and working abroad. It will also define serious leisure and review common themes on the motivations and benefits for being involved before looking at previous research on serious leisure amongst expat communities.

### A. Diasporas

Globally, in 2017, the expatriate population was estimated to be 56.8 million (“*Global Expatriate...*,” 2016), comprised primarily of individual workers. Looking at the overall population of those living in a country different to that which they were born in, almost 20% of these people are based in the world's largest 20 cities, with cities like London, Auckland, Singapore and Sydney having more than one third of their total population comprised of these migrants (IOM's World Migration Report 2015). Looking at the G20 Nations, a 2017 reported noted that almost 157 million migrants (close to two thirds of the total) lived in those countries. Looking at sub-set of this global group, international tertiary students, the G20 nations accounting for 95% (or almost 3.5 million) of the total. This shows that this group of countries is popular destinations for all forms of migration,

**Table 1.** International Residents in South Korea

| Year               | 1980   | 1990    | 2000    | 2005    | 2010      | 2016      |
|--------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Foreign population | 40,519 | 100,000 | 491,234 | 747,476 | 1,261,415 | 2,034,878 |

but two countries with an interesting history of migration are not included in this groups; Ireland and New Zealand.

Ireland and New Zealand both have high proportions of their citizens living abroad. According to a 2015 list of countries with high diasporas, Ireland (with 17.5%), and New Zealand (14.1%) came in at the first and second positions (McCarthy, 2016). This percentage gives Ireland the highest number of nationals who live in another country out of 34 developed nations according to the OECD (Hennigan, 2015). Irish Immigration is nothing new; two million people fled the country in just a 10-year period between 1845-55 (Gallna, J.M., 2000,), and from 1700 until 2013, that figure is said to be over 10 million people, more than twice of the current population (Kenny, 2017). New Zealand is similar - it is thought that between 1954 and 2001, almost half a million people (484,000) moved abroad from New Zealand (Bushnell and Choy, 2001). In 2013, an estimated one million New Zealanders were living abroad (Philp, 2013), with almost 50% of them settling in Australia. IN 2017, the number residing in Australia had risen to over 600,000 (Stünzner, 2017), although this trend was beginning to slow down despite the ease of becoming permanent residence and receiving welfare.

## B. Serious Leisure, motivations and benefits

Serious leisure is one of three forms of leisure identified by Stebbins (1982), who also noted that society was changing, and that leisure was becoming an important way for people to express and identify themselves. Participants in serious leisure are defined

by their high degrees of emotional, physical and financial investment (Herman, 2015). Serious leisure (as opposed to the other two, casual, and project based) is defined as “the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience” (Stebbins, 1992, p. 3). He also outlined six core qualities of serious leisure (2007), presented in the table below.

As well as being volunteers in serious leisure, the respondents have to deal with a range of issues to maintain and grow their group’s activities whilst also being working tourists operating in a different culture and country. As leaders, they not only have to deal with a diverse range of members within their leisure community, but also Korean culture, customs, and language, making the challenges very unique. One useful perspective to adopt would be transformational leadership, an approach that saw leaders utilize four factors (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) to help the group work together towards the organizations goals (McCleskey, 2014). This leadership technique proved useful for Australian expat managers in Thailand (Muenjohn, & Armstrong, 2015), and research into leaders in NGO’s, groups that must deal with various similar difficulties in terms of coordinating a non-profit organization in an often foreign environment, found that the use of transformational leadership helped develop trust in both the leader and the group and also improve commitment levels (Koo, Kim & Kim, 2017). Working tourist volunteers must look to apply similar leadership

**Table 2.** Stebbins Six Serious Leisure Qualities

|   | Qualities                   | Details   |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 | Perseverance                | The ability to overcome different obstacles that arise.   |
| 2 | Significant Personal Effort | Individuals exert and give their energies in their pursuit  |
| 3 | Strong Group Identity       | The individual possesses a connection and commitment to the pursuit and its community.                        |
| 4 | Careers in endeavors        | Participants displayed and utilized skills and abilities similar to that which would be required for a career |
| 5 | Unique Ethos                | The creation of a culture and identity around the activity shared only by its members                         |
| 6 | Durable Individual benefits | 10 benefits divided into both personal and social.  |

styles to succeed.

Motivations for leisure participation are varied; an overall perspective saw them divided into four general categories; physical, social, psychological and emotional (Kraus, 1971). With serious leisure pursuits often being more specific, so too are the motivations as both participants and volunteers. Murray & O'Neill (2015) captured Stebbins thoughts, stating that through serious leisure, participants can find "meaning and a profound lifestyle that adds individual richness and contributes to the community, human fulfilment and the maximization of human potential". Research into motivations is often related to very specific serious leisure pursuits and often locations. The motivating factor of cyclists found the main factors were the pleasure derived from the activity, followed by the sense of effort (Herman, 2015), whereas mountain bikers were mostly motivated by the sense of risk and the social connection. Looking at the motivations of female private pilots, Shupe, & Gagné (2016) noted that their drives may be different to that of males, especially the social component. South African marathon runners were strongly motivated by identifying with the activity and the social ethos and culture of the group (Fairer-Wessels, 2013), whilst rock climbing enthusiasts found motivation in both personal interest but also the social aspect and culture of the group (Lee, 2014).

One of Stebbins six seriously leisure qualities were called durable outcomes, which was divided into ten outcomes, or benefits of participation, and divided into either personal or social. Research into serious leisure amongst elderly Koreans found psychological, physical and social benefits (Kim, Yamada, Heo, & Han, 2014), whilst American male rugby players benefited from the self-actualization and social attraction aspects (Dong, Zhang, Choe & Pugh, 2013). Participation in serious leisure offered Australians with disability's a chance to increase their self-esteem, improve their skills and confidence (Patterson, & Pegg, 2009). Understanding benefits for both leisure participation and volunteering can help these communities maintain their activities, their membership numbers and also develop and grow.

### C. Leisure, Working Tourists & Expatriates

Research into leisure undertaken by working tourists and expatriates has been quite infrequent (Zhang, 2012), was very location focused, or activity specific, limiting their helpfulness. Analyzing the lives of expatriate wives in China (Ariele, 2007), it was noted that many of the clubs and organization that they belonged to (such as churches) were restricted to foreigners only. Also, a majority of their leisure time

**Table 3.** Stebbins (2007) Serious Leisure Substantial Rewards

| <b>Personal Rewards</b> |  |   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| 1                       | Personal enrichment                    | Cherished experiences, a sense of fulfillment   |
| 2                       | Self-actualization                     | Developing skills, abilities, knowledge   |
| 3                       | Self-expression                        | Expressing skills, abilities, knowledge already developed   |
| 4                       | Self-image                             | Known to others as a particular kind of serious leisure participant   |
| 5                       | Self-gratification                     | Combination of superficial enjoyment and deep satisfaction — fun, flow  |
| 6                       | Re-creation /regeneration              | Of oneself through serious leisure after a day's work   |
| 7                       | Financial return                       | From a serious leisure activity   |
| <b>Social Rewards</b>   |  |   |
| 8                       | Social attraction                      | Associating with other serious leisure participants, with clients as a volunteer, participating in the social world of the activity |
| 9                       | Group accomplishment                   | Group effort in accomplishing a serious leisure project; senses of helping, being needed, being altruistic                          |
| 10                      | Contribution to the groups maintenance | Along with the development of the group (including senses of helping)   |

was spent shopping, usually with their fellow expats. These two situations highlight common issues for leisure in an expatriate context - often language and cultural differences, mean these activities are done with fellow expatriates which has negative consequences as well as positive. Research on the leisure patterns of expatriates in China noted their patterns of participation changed once they moved abroad (Zhang, 2012). Research into the journey of expat runners when they relocated to China found that the move helped them open to new opportunities, deal with a temporary move, and see it as a chance to mature and grow, while they noted this leisure activity help both find a community and develop a sense of themselves (Ronkainen, Harrison, Shuman, & Ryba, 2017).

Research into expats based in Finland noted many suggestions for the organizations to improve the lives of foreign aid workers, including non-work aspects like improving their social lives and what leisure activities they had access to (Väre, 2006). This was one of several research pieces that started to acknowledge the increasing importance of non-work components with regards to the lives of expatriates, a role that this study hopes to contribute to. Research into serious leisure amongst migrants in South Australia revealed that several constraints (financial, discrimination, work, etc.) hindered their ability to fully receive the rewards others would get from their participation (Hasmi, Gross & Scott-Young, 2014).

One study looked at how western expatriates undertook leisure when they relocated to South Korea and noted that they partook in activities currently being utilized by the host residents, which had the added benefit of helping them acclimatize and understand their new communities (Kim, Park, Malonebeach & Heo, 2016). The results noted that they were more open to embracing new leisure activities, leisure helped them make new friends with both fellow expats and host residents and improved their cultural understanding, which is in direct contact to the leisure activities and participants in this study. Whilst the groups or organizations that the respondents in this research belonged to all satisfied the serious leisure criteria, most could also offer both casual and project-based leisure experiences

for other participants.

## D. South Korea & Tourism

South Korea has changed extensively over the last 28 years, from political, economic, social, etc. since 1990 (Shen, 2017), at which point its migration figures dramatically increases. Following on from previously hosting of two previous successful, large scale sporting events (2002's FIFA World Cup Finals and 1988's Seoul Summer Olympics), the hosting of the 2018 Winter Olympics is another chance for Korea to show the world how much it has developed and grown. Along with tourism, another important reason to promote the new South Korea is the rapidly aging population and declining birthdate, two factors that have lead the call for South Korea to become more multi-cultural and welcome more foreigners (Hundt, 2017). The increasing numbers of migrants is actually leading to changes in the nations identity, as it seeks to accept and adapt to being more multicultural (Denney, 2015), said author Lee Jin-kyung. From a tourist perspective, understanding international residents can offer great insights that could be used to attract more overseas visitors, as well as better managing domestic tourism aimed at non Koreans Research into the travel experiences of Korean based international residents found that these were impacted by both physical places but also the people they interact with (Singh, Chung & Choi, 2017),

From a tourist perspective, the serious leisure group's activities directly impact domestic tourism and also inbound and outbound international tourism. The Korea Touch Association (KTA) regularly host five events in Seoul that attract touch rugby teams from all over the country, have hosted events outside of Seoul on an annual basis, and over the last 10 years has attracted teams from Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore for competitions. The Seoul Survivors rugby club host teams from all over the country throughout the year, and also send entire squads to Busan, Daejeon, Ulsan, for 5-6 events each season, and usually travel overseas twice annually as well.

The Seoul sisters also often travel domestically and at least once a year compete overseas, whilst the Seoul Gaels compete in two international vents every year along with 4-5 usual contests outside of Seoul. The efforts of these working tourist volunteers in organizing their leisure organizations have a strong impact on tourism on various perspectives also remain something that could be better exploited by the Korean Tourism industry.

For Seoul's reputation as an international tourism destination, hosting such events could help utilize soft power in new ways and open up new avenues. Recent research into how Chinese visitors perceived Seoul noted the cultural fascination, environmental safety, and tourism attractiveness based simply on how they reacted to 103 photos; the visual method offering interesting analysis (Wu & Kim, 2017). By raising the profile and awareness of these international leisure events, Seoul could look to develop and foster a differing image perception from potential tourists, and through improved promotion and management of these events, actually attract more visitors. The leisure groups involved in this research have attracted sports teams to Seoul from Japan, Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Shanghai and Singapore over the last few years, and yet still mostly exist separate to official Korean tourism avenues.

### III. Method

#### A. Participants

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with 11 serious leisure volunteers currently based in South Korea; five from Ireland and six from New Zealand. Each participant has been involved as a volunteer for their leisure group for at least one year. All members spoke English as their first language, and there was an almost equal gender split of five female and six male respondents. Purposeful and snowball strategies were used to find participants who fit into the very specific criteria and were available. Contact was made with the leisure groups and with one ideal volunteer, and then they helped find the next participant, and so on. The serious leisure activities these participants belonged to were Gaelic football (Seoul Gaels, 4), Men's rugby (Seoul Survivors, 2), Touch rugby (KTA 2), women's rugby (Seoul Sisters, 1) a workout group (BMHP, 1), and a theatre performance group (Seoul Shakespeare Company, 1). The six males and five females were aged between 28 and 43. Here is an overview of the 11 expat serious leisure volunteers

#### B. Procedure

This research will utilize semi-structured qualitative

**Table 4.** The Research Participants

| Number | Age | Gender | Country | Leisure Group     |
|--------|-----|--------|---------|-------------------|
| 1      | 37  | Female | NZ      | KTA               |
| 2      | 33  | Female | Ireland | Seoul Gaels       |
| 3      | 32  | Male   | NZ      | Seoul Survivors   |
| 4      | 29  | Female | Ireland | Seoul Gaels       |
| 5      | 32  | Male   | Ireland | KTA               |
| 6      | 40  | Male   | NZ      | Seoul Survivors   |
| 7      | 37  | Male   | NZ      | BMHP              |
| 8      | 37  | Female | NZ      | Seoul Sisters     |
| 9      | 43  | Male   | NZ      | Seoul Shakespeare |
| 10     | 30  | Male   | Ireland | Seoul Gaels       |
| 11     | 28  | Female | Ireland | Seoul Gaels       |

interviews to allow the respondents to share their stories in detail. This method analyses the data and strives to find new or emerging theories using inductive and exploratory methods and uses the interviews and analysis to find meaning (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2010). In-depth interviews are used as the participants can share their thoughts and feelings with the freedom for self-expression (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012). Research amongst expatriates involved in Serious Leisure in South Korea has never been conducted, meaning that this form of research is the most useful (Boyce & Neale, 2006). The semi-structured interview guide was compiled using an analysis of previous research and a review about the different groups and their history and activities in South Korea.

### C. Data Collection

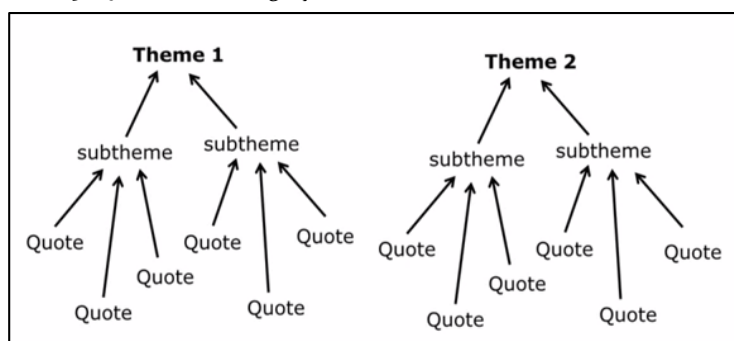
The interviews were conducted in a centrally located part of Seoul, usually in a café in the Itaewon/Haebangchon area for the respondent's convenience. Time was taken prior to starting the interview to allow the interviewees to relax and feel comfortable and also to gather background information. The interviews lasted between 50 and 90 minutes and finished with time for them to ask any questions. The questions covered the participant's background prior to Korea, their reasons to move and their situation in Korea, their serious leisure activity, their role and duties, and their opinions about their activity and South Korea. The respondents were informed that

their information will be kept anonymous and that names and other important aspects will be removed from the results, and contact details were shared in case they had questions in the future.

### D. Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded onto MP3 format, and transcribed into word documents. They were then analyzed utilizing a software program called QUIRKOS, which was designed specifically for analyzing qualitative data. This process is often considered the most important and the biggest challenging part of qualitative research (Basi, 2003). This research utilized Grounded Theory, which is used where no previous research or theories are able to offer insights into the target area. With grounded theory, research is conducted and then the results are then analyzed and broken down to "synthesize, to explain and to understand ... and to identify patterned relationships within it" (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007). It will be coded through three steps in order to break down the responses into meaningful chunks - this means that new codes are creating as the data is analyzed (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007), also known as inductive coding (Joffe, & Yardley, 2004) or "open coding". Once the qualitative data is analyzed to find fragments (as opposed to quantitative data, which is organized into closed codes that have been pre-categorized (Life, 1994)), the next round is conducted. Coding is not an exact science, and is mostly an act of interpretation (Saldaña, 2015) and is the process

**Table 5.** Qualitative Coding by Theme





of breaking down interviews and words into smaller groups and finding meaning and patterns. The words and ideas of the interviewees will reveal the themes and their own words will be used to offer these insights.

## IV. Results & Discussion

The analysis of the interviews revealed several insights into the motivations of the participants, the impacts that their efforts had on the serious leisure groups, how they themselves were impacted and the overall satisfaction that they found living abroad as volunteers. Four key motivations were identified, whilst the impacts were categorized into three distinct roles. In terms of the impacts this involvement had on the participants, the interviews revealed five different themes, and four key ideas were revealed in terms of how this impacted their overall life satisfaction.

### A. Motivations to participate and volunteer

#### 1. Social Reasons

A key drive for their involvement was the social aspect, with most respondents noting how important this was. “... *when you move into a city- finding friends groups, unless you play sports, is hard, right*”. (Male, NZL, 37) One noted that the social aspect was continuously ongoing & cyclical; “*Every year new guys come in, so you meet new friends...and playing (leisure activity) breaks down many barriers.*” (Male, NZL, 32) “*Companionship! Seoul’s a really large and very lonely city... (some people)...find it very hard to make friends over here, very hard to date. So, I think people gravitate toward it...*” (Male, Ire, 32) “*These days I’m doing it more as a social aspect, whereas before I was always focused on being competitive and the team winning.*” (Fem, Ire, 33) Another noted their activity made making friends so easy: “*You’re guaranteed to walk into 15 people who have to be your friends*”, (Fem,

Ire, 29) One noted now just how great it was to meet people but also those from different backgrounds; “*it’s good to socialize with other expats in different environments, and I get around with people that I probably wouldn’t socialize with otherwise*” (Fem 1, NZ, 37).

#### 2. To participate

For many, their journey simply began with wanting to be part of the activity. “*I think that’s the main one, just being involved with a team.*” (Fem, Ire, 29). “*Because I wanted to play...*” (Fem 2, NZL, 37). Another missed it from his home country; “*I just wanted to do (leisure activity) again, I wanted to do what I was passionate about*” (NZL, Male, 43). As their leisure activity was very unique and new, one volunteer felt the novelty factor was a pull factor. “*Yeah, I think ...that to be part of something that is sort of fresh and new is really exciting*” (Male, NZL, 37). As many participants, and expatriates in Korea, are English teachers, there can be a lot of free time for serious leisure; “*I think, some people might just wanna be involved, just to be involved with something, to have something else going, rather than just teaching English*” (Fem, Ire, 28).

#### 3. To get fit, healthier

A core motivating factor was to become fitter and healthier, both physically and mentally as well. One felt this it was main reason everyone initially came to the group, “*you’re obviously gonna get, you know, improve your fitness levels*” (Male, NZL, 37). Another mentioned how important exercise was for them; “*My character is that I need to burn calories. Otherwise I get very frustrated.*” (Male, NZL, 32) One stated that participation pushed them to do additional fitness work, “*Playing (leisure activity) motivates you to do a bit of fitness work...*” (Male, NZL, 40), and another felt becoming healthier was the key motivating a factor for everyone... “*Because it’s a sport, and anyone, at the end of the day, it’s your health.*” (Fem, Ire, 32) One said that leisure participation offered an all-round positive option: “*I would be a little bit worried about myself. I don’t think I’d last too long, I’d have to get*

*out of here. I'd have to do something"* (Ire, Male, 30).

#### 4. To use their leadership skills and experience

The last factor was a desire to help the group and use their skills and knowledge to help the group grow. One saw that help was wanted; *"I saw a need for the team, to get stuff done. I had a love for the team, it was my team, I became, it was part of my family. ... there's just the love for the team."* (Male, NZL, 32) Others were internally motivated *"I like being in control, I would get very frustrated if somebody else was in charge and I didn't like how it was being done"* (Male, Ire, 30), or became frustrated with how things were being conducted; *"I was just kind of tired of the shitty coaches we had, just thrown in for the sake of it. And they were men who just weren't very experienced coaches and weren't very committed or passionate about it. So. I was like, f\*\*\* that, we can do this ourselves."* (Fem, Ire, 28) Another took on leadership to try and grow the game; *"I was hopeful that we could build women's (leisure activity)"* (Fem 2, NZL, 37).

The four motivations showed differing drives to both be participants and volunteers, a concept known as "mixed leisure" (Bendle & Patterson, 2009). For many their journey to becoming a participant seemed relatively casual, as they are looking for something to do or a chance to exercise, and then the benefits often were different or exceeded their expectations. Although most of the leisure pursuits covered in this research were physical in nature, even the artistic volunteer noted how important being physically and mentally fit is as a motivating factor. At one point in their time in Korea, each of the 11 participants had worked as a teacher (mostly English) to some capacity, although at the time of the interviews two were working in business and four were university professors. Often in South Korea, English teachers have plenty of spare time, making the opportunity for serious leisure pursuits easily attainable if one can overcome the language and cultural obstacles. This paves the way for the desire to simply participate, and more often than not, people who are just participants for a while are then drive to a volunteer role.

Of these four main motivations, two were impacted or exaggerated by the working tourist nature; the first being the social aspect. This was due to people being away from their friends, families and familiar surroundings. The chance to make new friends, from both similar backgrounds (as was frequently mentioned by people from both New Zealand and Ireland) and also new helps overcome culture shock and homesickness. The other factor connected to the expat nature was the chance to use their leadership skills and experience. Along with the often abundance of free time as mentioned above, many people were able to use their education, as well as previous work and leisure experiences (in both the same and also different leisure activities) to help in their volunteer role. Two of the volunteers had university degrees directly related to their leisure pursuit, and five had previously held leadership roles in their work. Eight of the 11 had previously being involved in their activity in their home country, and the other three had done something very similar. These backgrounds, along with the desire to help, made them ideally suited to help grow and develop their serious leisure community's, and were accentuated by the fact that many leisure groups were newer or much less developed than they would be in their home country, and more likely to have a higher turnover of participants and volunteers.

## B. Benefits from their involvement

### 1. Strong social support

For several respondents, the main impact that their involvement had on their lives was the social component, or the development of a strong social circle. For some but not all, this was a main factor, but even for those not driven by it, the outcome was deemed very important for them. *"Coming into an environment where you've got a group of mates, almost instantaneously, almost with the sport, and that's two-fold"* (Male, NZL, 40). *"I came in and was able to just swoop straight in and make very solid friends very quickly"* stated one female respondent (Ire, 29) who then discussed its

role in general *"I think it's a huge support system, that. I think some people who might be struggling, from being so far away from home wherever they from. The social component was considered essential for one volunteer: "That's our social life! Me and (his wife)- the only reason we see other people now, is through the (activity)" (Male, NZL, 43).*

## 2. Connection to home/ share their culture with others

Many of the respondents noted how being involved with their serious leisure activity helped them to maintain a stronger connection to their home country and culture. For several their serious leisure pursuit is considered a strong part of their home countries culture (predominantly Rugby for New Zealanders and Gaelic Football for the Irish). Doing something that they would do back home was noted by several; *"It definitely helps, I think, that when we live overseas we try and do stuff that reconnects us to what we would be doing back in NZ. I know that if I was back in NZ, I would be playing (leisure activity), I definitely would be in a league."* (Fem 1, NZL, 37) *"Something to remind you of home, I guess. Cause you know, you grow up doing that. And you just want something to remind you - "oh, I used to do this."* (Fem 2, NZL, 37) Maintaining a connection to home was also mentioned; *"It's helped me keep a hold of a lot of my culture, the cultural side of NZ, its helped me give back to a lot of young kids that have come through."* (Male, NZL, 32); *"Being proud of being Irish and having this sport that I can share with a girl from halfway around the world."* (Fem, Ire, 28)

## 3. Learn new skills/ Professional development

One benefit that most participants did not plan on, or seem to expect, was the chance to learn and develop new skills and traits via their volunteer work. Areas such as patience (*"I have had to develop being a lot more patience, as I realized that as a committee members that I cannot be as vocal as I used to be"* (Fem, Ire, 32)), planning (*"I had to be more kind of organized"*, (Fem, Ire, 29) and diplomacy (*"I've had to learn how to moderate sometimes and be more diplomatic"* (Male,

NZL, 43) were mentioned. Two respondents discussed a deliberate process of reflection for self-development; *"we do a lot of self-assessment, we have coaches they need to understand where their weaknesses are and what their strength are, so we can build on them and get better at that kind of stuff"* (Male, NZL, 37); *"I'm learning too. And I'm learning from mistakes I make and I'm learning from what works and what doesn't work. With communicating with players and different levels of course"* (Fem, Ire, 28). Another said that dealing with people from a diverse range of places and demographics led them to change; *"I think I've got better. I've got more patient and understanding about people coming from different backgrounds and their sort of style"* (Male, NZL, 40), while one would list her work on her CV; *"I think just the management, organization side. I've put that on my resume"* (Fem 2, NZL, 37).

## 4. Impacting future plans

Another interesting and unexpected result saw their leadership roles have an impact on their future plans. For some, it was simply wanting to take the sport to their home country. *"(leisure activity) is not in existence (back home). That's one thing I want to do when I go home, is set up a (leisure activity) competition"* (Male, Ire, 32) Another, who met his wife through the serious leisure group, noted they are both planning to continue doing it when they leave Korea by starting a new group from scratch; *"We have done some, and when we eventually leave...we're going to keep doing that. We're gonna maybe create a different (leisure activity)."* (Male, NZL, 43) Three talked about the coaching skills they learned and developed as a serious leisure volunteer would play a large part in their future plans; *"The experience has been good, and I want to keep coaching, it's something that I enjoy doing, so it's good to get, have that experience"* (Male, NZL, 40); *"I am getting a lot of coaching experience and I do want to do coaching in the future, definitely"* (Fem Ire, 28).

The benefits from their participation and volunteer work, and the outcomes from these had four key impacts on the interviewees. The strong social component was frequently mentioned, and encompassed friendship, meeting new people of both similar and different

backgrounds, and the development of a virtual family to help overcome homesickness and culture shock. The social impacts are of the most importance, and can severely affect their lives in South Korea, causing some to stay longer and even return to South Korea. Whilst a motivating factor for many, even those that partook for other reasons noted how helpful it had been and had the added benefits of making friendships that would extend beyond Korea, lead to business opportunity's, and one marriage.

Another benefit that would only exist in the working context was the chance to both connect to their home country and culture, and also share it with others. It could be accentuated by the fact that both Ireland and New Zealand are relatively small counties, or that their leisure culture is dominated by two main sports (Gaelic Football and Rugby), it remains to be researched if other countries would have the same passion abroad for their pursuits. For some simply playing the sport was a great reminder of home, and many remarked of the joy of being able to share it with new people and pass on their experiences and help others. The last two benefits would also be more accentuated by the expat context; learning new skills and also changes to future plans. Have more time, more passion, or perhaps the fact that the groups perhaps need more help and have more room for development can be an attraction for those who are able to learn new skills, while the changes to the future could be due to connected to the types of people who are based in South Korea -they might be looking for direction, in between careers, more open minded, or simple interested in redirecting their careers when they leave South Korea.

### C. Impacts of these volunteers

The respondents all had different impacts on their activities, but these can be categorized into three different categories. The first category had only one respondent fit into (although another came close), whilst the next two both had five respondents who would fit these classifications.

#### 1. The "Creator"

The first is a "Creator", a role in which this person developed and launched this serious leisure activity from scratch. Obviously, every group started somewhere, but the obvious conclusion might be that an expat focused group might have spun out of a Korean focused one, but this person utilized their passion and background to create something out of nothing, overcoming more obstacles and costs that other leadership roles wouldn't even contemplate. They utilized their previous business and leisure backgrounds to create it. *"I just think, always, really proud of starting something from zero"* (NZ Male, 37). Discussing the flexible nature of his group he stated, *"when I first set it up, the whole idea is to make it a platform for everything"*. Another found himself in a virtual "creator" role when he (and his wife) overtook the management of a serious leisure group and changed many things, almost recreating it from start. *"(we) restructured it again when she took over...; and now we try to meet at least once a month. We are a bit more serious about it"* (Male, NZL, 43).

#### 2. The "Adapter"

The second category is called an "Adapter". This role saw the leaders take the leisure pursuit to new heights and/or different directions and focused on altering some aspect of the activities or structure or trying new things. *"We brought in the two-point rule for women, cause we were trying to grow the sport for a mixed tournament"* (NZ, Female 2, 37). She added the reason for it being something she learned from her own experiences; *"you come as a girl on your own, and you get completely intimidated and, you know, they just run circles around you."* Another noted that they oversaw changes in their leisure group for both PR and financial reasons. *"At the time, we were struggling to get sponsorship...so, we really tried to rebrand ourselves in the community by giving back..."* (NZ, Male, 31).

#### 3. The "Improver"

The last leadership form is known as a "Improver".

This role was not focused on making changes to the activities or structure of the group as such, but tried to make things more professional, organized, and effective. One volunteer noted this change across the whole leisure group. *"Since I've been involved in my first year, it's completely changed. The last two years, more efficient, more organized, and, just overall, more put together, Not more serious as such, just more organized."* (Fem, Ire, 28) For some, this change was simple being able to attract or recruit new members. *"I really wanted to encourage new players and to make the, it a renowned sport, not just in those, I kind of wanted more Koreans to come along and make it more a global sport that anything else"* (NZ, Female, 37). *"We are trying to get more people to come along"* (IRE, Female, 32). *"This year was the development of the ladies" side - we got a big influx of girls who have lived here for a long time but have never played"* (IRE, Female, 29). One went out of her way to get more participants and volunteers involved, starting with her friends. *"I was trying to get more people to come in and I eventually got Mel and them, and Anina and others to, like come and start playing more (leisure activity)"*. (Fem 2, NZL, 37).

The interviews and analysis revealed three different impacts that the volunteers had on their activities, divided into specific roles. The roles would have developed out of a combination of things; 1) the skills, experiences and motivations of the individuals, 2) the needs of the serious leisure activity, and 3) the current mix of volunteers helping out the group. For example, one of the leisure groups has established great participation and retention numbers, has a solid organization structure and strong roots in the community, making the volunteers role much easier, where as another one went through an almost complete overhaul at the time one of the volunteers joined. A volunteer's impact would be most beneficial when the timing of these factors is in sync. If it isn't broke, then there is no need to fix it- and maintainers can prove invaluable for every group, where as those groups struggling would have a strong need for an Adapter. The three impacts are not mutually inclusive in terms of time, one person could flow between the roles, and are often based on the special goals

set by the leisure organizations (usually created or established at the AGM or planning meetings).

## D. Satisfaction with life

The role of being involved as a serious leisure volunteer played an important part in the life satisfaction for these working tourists. The ability of serious leisure to help them overcome homesickness, contribute to their happiness, as well as offer a sense of direction and even help with their future life direction.

### 1. Homesickness

Dealing with ideas like homesickness and culture shock can make or break someone's time aboard, and when serious leisure communities can help alleviate these concerns, it highlights its potential in new ways. One interview summed it up nicely: *"I think it's a huge support system, that. I think some people who might be struggling, from being so far away from home wherever they from."* (Fem, Ire, 29) Another concurred; *"I think when you are an expat away from home, it can become your family. There is a social aspect, and friendships are obviously developed because the sport does become very important to people..."* (Fem, Ire, 32). One directly noted how they never felt homesick due to their leisure group; *"...it's just prevented me from ever feeling homesick. Like, I've never felt homesick here. That's one of the main reasons, is because I feel like I've got a lot of family here"* (Male, Ire, 30). Another mentioned that without the support of their leisure community, they would not still be in South Korea; *"I wouldn't be here. I basically- what would have happened is, ... I would have just gone home"* (Male, NZL, 43).

### 2. Sense of direction

Another interesting outcome was volunteer developing a sense of purpose, contributing to their community, and growing as individuals by being able to help out their leisure group. Various ideas were mentioned, like pride (*"Being part of the (leisure group)*

kind of, it had a sense of pride because I was part of a volunteer association that was helping other expats.” (Fem 1, NZL, 37)), involvement (“*It makes me feel involved in the local community. Which is really important*” (Male, Ire, 32)), and a sense of fulfillment (“*A lot more fulfilling in that you know you’re making a difference somewhere. That you’re providing opportunities for expats to feel more at home or more involved in a community*” (Fem 2, NZL, 37)). On reflection, one discussed how she felt about it: “*complete appreciation and I don’t think I’ll ever take it for granted again. For a committee member, and I wish I did it sooner*, (Fem, Ire, 29) and added “*I kind of felt that I gained a huge amount.*” Another took warmth from one team’s success: “*Yeah, from a personal point of view, we’ve had quite a bit of success with the men’s team and that’s obviously been very satisfying*” (Male, Ire, 30).

### 3. Strong connection to the group

Another connection between the serious leisure groups and how they contributed to the happiness of the participants was them gaining a sense of purpose, direction, and developing a strong connection to the activity. One put it simply; “*I’d be a bit lost, I think, without this activity.*” (Male, 43, NZL) Another talked about its overall role in their expat life; “*It’s become a very good key part of my life ...and hopefully I’ve become a key part of the (leisure group)*” (Male, 32, NZL) One stated the bond became stronger over time; “*I think a lot of people are scared of that at the start, but then you become really addicted to that kind of group, you know, that group mentality*” (Male, NZL, 37) Two talked about how different their lives would be if they were not involved in their serious leisure communities with different possible outcomes; “*I probably wouldn’t be here for as long. I wouldn’t have as much friends, of course*” (Fem, Ire, 28): “*But, if I wasn’t playing (leisure activity) here, I don’t know if I’d be there now.*” (Male, Ire, 30)

### 4. Happiness

Several remarked about how their involvement really helped their overall happiness living in South

Korea. Some were subtle (“*it’s a very, supportive community*” (Fem 1, NZL, 37), others more blatant (“*The (leisure group) ...it is one of the main reasons that I am so happy in Korea.*” (Fem, Ire, 32)). Another also stated it clearly: “*It’s become a very good key part of my life,*” (Male, NZL, 32), while he that for “*a lot of these guys, the (leisure group) is the only family they have.*” Describing what the club means to her and her teammates, one stated “*a lot, the friendships and the social aspect, for a lot of us that are involved, everybody, men and woman, the (leisure group) - it does become you family and your, it’s how you socialize, ...they are your friends and family in Korea...*” (Fem, Ire, 32)

Another said it meant that she was thankful to have something outside of work to rely on; “*I think that I’d be very linked to my work colleagues, whereas this gave me a new outlet where, in a new city, not to be too dependent on my work colleagues for my social life.*” (Fem, Ire, 28). The ultimate compliment a leisure community would get was shared by one volunteer: “*So, yeah, it was one of the drives to bring me back to Korea, I really wanted to get involved with the club again.*” (Male, Ire, 30)

From an overall perspective, evidence showed how this involvement in mixed leisure (i.e. as both a participant and a volunteer) had a strong impact on the overall satisfaction of the interviewee’s lives. The differing ways in which their lives are improved were felt by the individuals to different degrees and were mostly elicited upon deeper reflection in comparison to other responses. These activities were not their primary reason to move abroad and settle in South Korea, but the impact that they can have poses interesting implications for the way we look and think about expatriate’s lives. From those making contact with leisure groups prior to choosing their next destination, others getting employment help through the group, through to those who find their way to the activity in their own time, the impact serious leisure can play may be life changing for many. This was severely accentuated in this research by the proclivity of New Zealand and Irish people towards living abroad, the existence of their key leisure activities in South Korea, and the mutually

beneficial relationships that developed.

## V. Conclusion and Implications

This research looked to offer understanding on how serious leisure impacted the lives of New Zealand and Irish working tourists in South Korea. It sought to outline their motivations to become involved as both participants and volunteers, and found four distinct reasons, especially the social aspect, but interestingly, also the chance to use their skills and help the group. It outlined the benefits they received from this mixed leisure experience, and clarified four, with a chance to maintain connections to (and share) their culture, along with guidance towards changing their future plans, being the most insightful. It also wanted to clarify their roles and identified three distinct impacts that these leaders had on their groups from creating the groups, to varying degrees of maintain and developing them. Lastly, this research proposed that this involvement strongly impacted their satisfaction with their lives as working tourists in South Korea in four ways, which were most likely predominantly limited to this unique situation.

This researched showed that Stebbins Serious Leisure qualities still apply, but with emphasis on different aspects in the working tourist context. It highlighted the importance of leisure volunteers and groups and can help these groups understand how best to promote and manage their activities in the expat context, how to recruit and utilize their volunteers, and clarity in what they actually represent. It can also help volunteers understand what role and impact they could have, and also the benefits that can be obtained which can be applied to not just working tourists but all forms of migrants and expats.

Future research could look to build on the increasingly important role that serious leisure plays for the lives of those living abroad, how important leisure with a culture connection can be, and the different roles or impacts that expat leisure volunteers

can have. The importance these groups play on attracting and retaining expatriates would also be an interesting research area. With regards to mixed leisure, research could be done that more strongly divides both the motivations and benefits that they feel as both participants and volunteers. Ideally this article sheds light this unique but growing subsection of serious leisure participants and encourages further research in its direction. With several of the leisure activities growing in South Korea and Asia, such as Gaelic Football and Touch rugby, there is a unique opportunity to turn (predominantly) working tourist based leisure into genuine tourist avenues for the county.

There were a few limitations of this research; the first of which was the “mixed leisure” nature, which made it difficult at times for the interviewees to separate the motivations and benefits between being participants and volunteers. Also, comparing different leisure groups and leadership roles can be difficult as the roles, responsibilities and efforts vary, not just between the activities, but also from year to year within the groups. For destinations attracting working tourists and expats, understanding the role and importance of serious leisure groups and communities can highlight the need to support and foster them, and to possibly offer a greater variety of activities.

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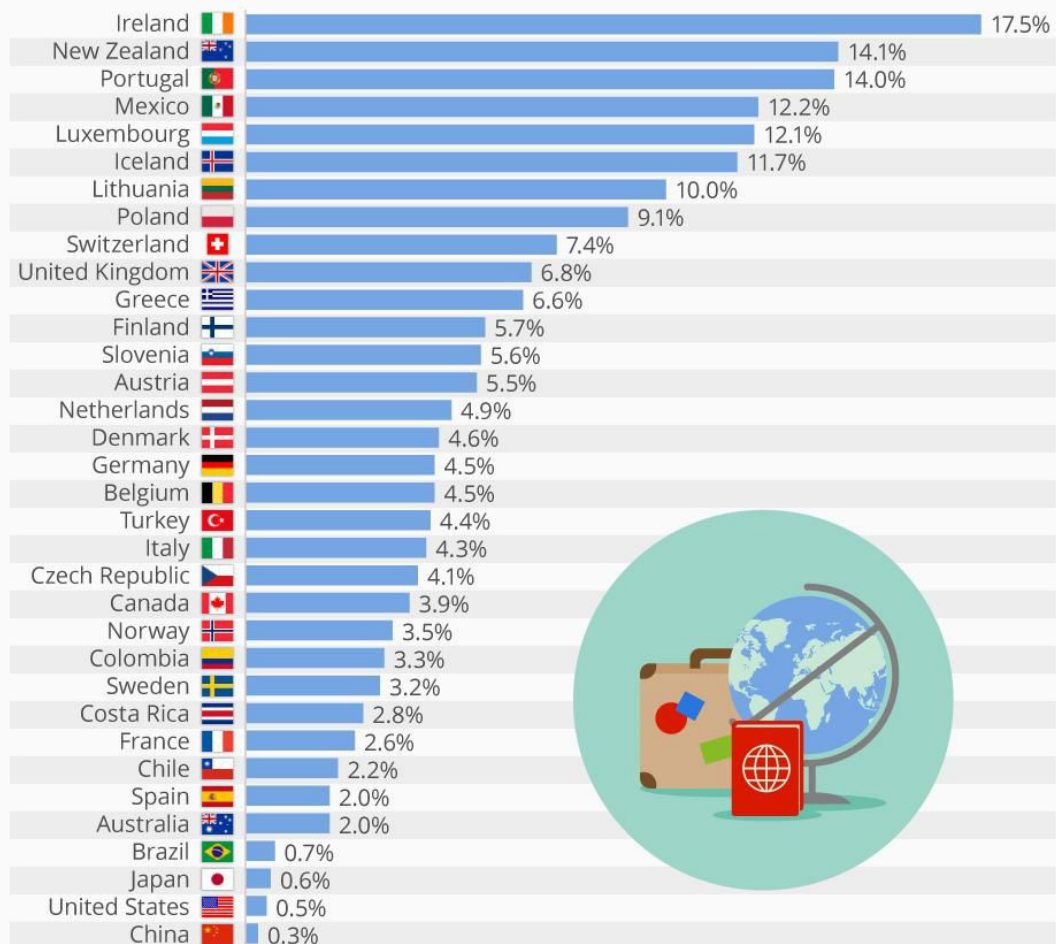
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## The Countries With The Most People Living Overseas

Percentage of the native-born population living abroad in 2014



Source: OECD

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