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Article Title: The Evolution of Active Sport Event Travel Careers

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Abstract

Utilizing the event travel career concept, this study examined the trajectory of active sport event travel careers through stages of development and the corresponding factors and dimensions perceived to influence career progression in the sport of cycling. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with N=12 amateur cyclists engaged in lifestyles based on active event travel. A grounded theory approach revealed active event travel careers evolve through a complex progression of nine core themes and related subthemes. The core themes included the first event, starting out, motivation, temporal, travel style, destination criteria, event types, spatial, and later in life. Based on these findings a six-stage Active Sport Event Travel Career model is proposed consisting of: initiation, introduction, expansion, peak threshold, maintenance, and maturity. From this model, theoretical contributions, suggestions for future research, and practical implications for sport tourism and event management are discussed.

While concerns grow over declining physical activity rates in the United States (Brownson, Boehmer, & Luke, 2005), some individuals have adopted and created lifestyles based upon active leisure. Accordingly, individuals engaged in active leisure pursuits often travel to participate in events related to their interests, which has aided in the establishment of sport tourism as a distinct niche within the tourism industry (Gibson, 1998a). Sport tourism has grown significantly in recent years and has attracted attention from both scholars and communities attempting to attract tourists (Hinch & Higham, 2011). Similarly, participation in the sport of cycling has grown and is now the third most popular outdoor activity with 42.3 million participants in the US (Outdoor Foundation, 2013). Cyclists regularly take part in organized events and as their participation often involves travel to an event, they can be categorized as event active sport tourists (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010). Indeed, it is estimated that active sport tourists engaged in cycling specific travel are spending over $70 billon on travel related expenses annually in the process (Outdoor Industry Association, 2012).

As active event-related travel has gained in popularity, Getz (2008) proposed that tourists might follow a career like pattern in terms of their involvement and commitment to their sport and coined the term *event travel career* (ETC). Getz defines an ETC as a potential lifetime pursuit of travel to participate in sport events that develops over time and leads to evolving preferences for event characteristics and travel arrangements (p.416). As individuals *progress* along a career this leads to *modified behavior* from the experienced event tourist. To distinguish active sport event travel from other types of event travel, we propose the use of the term *Active Sport Event Travel Career (ASETC)* as travel can vary based on event type and if the purpose of the travel is to act as a spectator or participant (Gibson, 1998b). Thus, ASETCs are defined as a career like pattern of involvement and commitment to event-related travel and participation in

physically active sport events, which leads to progression through time in regards to motivations, preferences, and modified behavior. Research on ASETCs is important as this type of potentially lifelong devotion towards travel and sports participation is innately linked to benefits such as social connection, identity, mental/physical health, economic development, and tourism development (e.g., Beaton & Funk, 2008; Filo, Spence, & Sparvero, 2013; Funk, Jordan, Ridinger, & Kaplanidou, 2011; Gibson & Chang, 2012; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010).

The ETC concept is a relatively new idea within sport tourism research. As such, little is known about the trajectory and interrelated concepts besides the six hypothetical dimensions proposed by Getz (2008) and Getz and McConnell (2011). The authors proposed that the dimensions of motivation, travel style, temporal patterns, geographic preferences and patterns, event type, and destination criteria, provide a framework for studying the trajectory of ETCs. Indeed, Lamont, Kennelly, and Wilson (2012) suggest future research should focus on defining the stages of an ETC. Lamont et al. and Getz (2008) suggest defining the specific stages of a sport ETC will aid in understanding the antecedents and choices individuals make in developing an ETC. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the trajectory of ASETCs through stages of development among cyclists and the factors and dimensions that affect this progression. The guiding research questions were as follows:

- **RQ1:** How do amateur cyclists progress or regress through ASETCs?
- **RQ2:** How do event travel career dimensions evolve throughout ASETCs?
- **RQ3***:* What factors affect movement along ASETCs?

Review of Literature

The Event Travel Career

In proposing the ETC, Getz (2008) combined the ideas of serious leisure (Stebbins, 1982) and the travel career pattern (Pearce, 1988). In doing so, Getz suggested amateur athletes who are engaged in serious leisure may create a lifelong career of travel to sport events. Getz argued that Pearce's (1988; Pearce & Lee, 2005) idea that tourists can be discerned in terms of a travel career, might actually be more applicable to individuals with special interests. Particularly, as these individuals often increase their involvement over time as might be the case with amateur athletes attending competitive events. In describing the idea of an ETC, Getz suggested a travel career trajectory is characterized by changes in the six hypothetical dimensions outlined above.

To understand Getz's (2008) conceptualization of the ETC it is useful to examine the concept of *serious leisure*. Engagement in leisure behavior such as sport tourism can range from casual to serious (Stebbins, 1982). Stebbins (1992) defined serious leisure as "the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge" (p. 3). Serious leisure is defined through six distinctive qualities, which distinguishes it from unserious forms of leisure activity. These qualities are: perseverance through the activity, career potential, significant personal effort to gain skill and knowledge, obtainable durable benefits, a unique ethos/social world, and identification with the leisure pursuit (Stebbins, 1982). Stebbins proposed that as participants become more involved and engrossed in their leisure pursuits, a career is built upon exerting significant effort based on special knowledge, training, and/or skill specific to the activity. This effort and special

skills/knowledge/training differentiates what he calls amateurs and hobbyists from other lesser involved individuals.

A distinct quality that separates serious leisure from unserious forms of leisure and is exceptionally important to the study of ASETCs is involvement in the unique ethos that surrounds the activity. As participants experience the aforementioned qualities they develop and maintain a subculture with unique beliefs, values, morals, norms, and performance standards (Stebbins, 1982). Unruh (1980) describes these subcultures as social worlds, which are "…amorphous and diffuse constellations of actors, organizations, events, and practices which have coalesced into spheres of interest and involvement for a participant" (p. 277). Arguably, the most important quality of serious leisure and the ETC occurs when participants identify with their selected leisure pursuit. Serious leisure has the ability to create its own social identities, which include patterns of time allocation, expenditures, family relationships, and norms (Gillespie, Leffler, & Lerner, 2002) and sport tourism allows individuals to actuate these identities (Green & Jones, 2005). The three types of serious leisure (amateurs, professionals, volunteers) are discernable by the style, individual characteristics, and the nature of the particular leisure pursuit. Amateurs, the focus of this study, have a desire to move beyond being a novice and as such their participation in an activity evolves into an avocation motivated by seriousness and commitment which is expressed through structured practice, schedules, and organization (Stebbins, 1982). The serious leisure perspective has been used in studies exploring a wide range of sport participant involvement from US college football (Gibson, Willming & Holdnak, 2002) to youth sports (Siegenthaler & Gonsalez, 1997).

The idea that tourists develop travel careers involving short and long-term motivation was first conceptualized by Pearce (1988) as the *travel career ladder* (TCL). Pearce argued a

career perspective is valuable for studying travel as it is based on the idea that individuals progress through a series of ordinal stages as they gain more experience traveling. Early research by Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) adapted Maslow's (1970) five levels of motivational hierarchy to understand tourists' experiences and develop the travel career model. Pearce (1988) refined this idea and argued that travel careers can be viewed as a laddered system encompassing change and promotion both across and within motivation levels. The TCL depicts tourism needs/motives through five subdivided hierarchal levels including: physiological needs, safety/security, love and belonginess (relationship needs), self-esteem (development needs), and self-actualization (fulfillment needs) (Pearce, 1988). Later, Pearce (2005) modified the TCL by increasing the emphasis on the change of motivation patterns rather than on the hierarchal levels, this reconceptualization was termed the *travel career pattern* (TCP). Under the TCP, Pearce describes a travel career as a dynamic concept based on the idea that tourists experience identifiable stages in their travels. Pearce further proposed travel motives are linked to the current state of an individual's travel career, which can be assessed through a combined attention to travel experience, age and life cycle (p. 55). The term life cycle refers to a sequence of eras biopsychosocial in nature, based on an individual's age (Levinson, 1986) and has been used to investigate activity preferences in sport (Gibson & Chang, 2012) and tourism (Oppermann, 1995). Pearce and Lee (2005) argue stimulation, personal development, self-actualization, and recognition motives are more important to less experienced tourists while self-development through host-site involvement, and nature seeking motives are emphasized by experienced tourists. Moscardo and Pearce (2004) built upon the TCP and revealed a combination of traveler motivation, life cycle, and demographic characteristics dictated preferred travel style and destination criteria, concepts that Getz (2008) adopted for the ETC.

Getz and McConnell (2011) explored the idea of an ETC by conducting a study on cyclists who participated in an iconic Canadian mountain bike event. A similar study was also completed by Getz and Anderson (2010) with runners participating in a Swedish half-marathon. In both studies, the authors focused on the six ETC dimensions and found the following: (1) Motivation: highly involved participants were primarily motivated by self-development regarding athleticism and challenge, while social motives and extrinsic motives were less important. Also, higher involved runners reported a significant change in their motives over time compared to lesser involved runners; (2) Travel style: primarily male participants who traveled in groups of friends locally, regionally, and internationally; (3) Temporal: higher involved participants took part more frequently than lesser-involved participants and were more willing to travel throughout the year compared to seasonally; (4) Spatial: inconclusive results partially confirmed the idea that higher involved runners were more willing to travel further to events. (5) Event types: participants completed a portfolio of different events in their career and more highly involved runners were more motivated to attend iconic events; (6) Destination criteria: the higher involved were more highly motivated to visit iconic destinations, while the participants in general placed less emphasis on destination criteria in regards to iconic events.

Outside of the initial work conducted by Getz and colleagues on ETCs, only two other published studies have investigated this concept to date. This work by Lamont and Kennelly (2011) and Lamont et al. (2012) suggests that the progression of a sport related ETC is constrained by interrelated and cyclical competing priorities that interfere with daily life and the pursuit of such a career. In a study analyzing Australian triathletes, Lamont and Kennelly discovered competing priorities exist as intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints. Later, Lamont et al. identified seven competing priorities as constraints, which include:

sociability, domestic responsibilities, finances, leisure, well-being, work/education, and familial relationships. These different priorities were identified as being interrelated and as such, individuals must accept opportunity costs in one domain to be able to pursue another in an attempt to negotiate constraints. In regards to ETC trajectory, Lamont et al. (2012) found progression was heavily influenced by the number of events available compared to the desire to travel to larger, more challenging, or more iconic events. Nevertheless, Lamont et al. argued ETC participation pulsates as individuals go through phases of intense training when ETC priorities prevail before an event and after an event the participants experience a recovery phase when non-ETC priorities are dominant.

Cycle Tourism

As noted earlier, cycle tourism is growing and conceivably as individuals gain more experience in the various forms of cycle tourism they may follow a career-like progression. Indeed, over the years scholars have identified a range of behavioral and motivational patterns among cycle tourists that provide a further foundation for the current study. In an early study exploring bicycle tourism among New Zealand cycle tourists, Ritchie (1998) found that there was a relationship between motivation and experience as less experienced cyclists reported that they were more likely to be motivated by *competence mastery*, while more experienced cyclists were motivated by *solitude*. Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007) also found that experience was related to destination preferences among cycle tourists. They found that for bicycle tour participants, destination image and experience significantly contributed to revisit intentions. Bull (2006) found quite a complex picture of motives, destination criteria, event quality, and social connections among English racing cyclists. In an attempt to clarify and expose the full range of cycling tourism markets Lamont (2009) compared previous attempts at defining cycling tourism

and proposed a new definition that delineated minimum trip distances and time away from home to be defined as a cycle tourist.

Recently, scholars have also focused on socio-demographic characteristics as well as experience and motivation to understand participation patterns in cycle tourism. Gibson and Chang (2012) using a life cycle perspective to examine cycle tourism participation found middle aged participants rated relaxation as their main motive, whereas later life participants sought new experiences from taking part in the bicycle tour. In an investigation into the expenditures of cycling tourists, Downward, Lumsdon, and Weston (2009) found income, group size and activity duration were interconnected determinants of expenditure among cycle tourists. As charity sport events have become more pervasive, several studies have focused on charity cycle tours. Using autoethnographic methods, Snelgrove and Wood (2010) found that first time charity cycle participants were motivated by the physicality of the event and the destination while repeat participants were more motivated by identification with the charitable cause. In another autoethnographic study of a charity cycle event, Coghlan (2012) identified two previously unidentified themes: fear and anxiety related to event safety as a potential barrier to event participation and the expression of creativity through fundraising. Additional work on cycle tourism has investigated a range of issues including: authenticity (Lamont, 2014), recreational specialization (Lamont & Jenkins, 2013), enduring involvement and travel motivation (Ritchie, Tkaczynski, & Faulks, 2010), event motivation and charitable giving (Hendriks & Peelen, 2013), physical activity intervention (Bowles, Rissel, & Bauman, 2006), and the ETC (Getz & McConnell, 2011).

Method

Due to the infancy of the work on the ETC, a qualitative grounded theory approach utilizing in-depth interviews was adopted. The target population was amateur cyclists residing in Florida that were actively engaged in, beginning, or had culminated ASETCs. The sport of cycling presented an ideal arena for the study as cyclists are distinctly engaged in levels of involvement that vary by skill level (subjective and objective by the governing body) and competitive disposition (i.e., racing or non-racing).

Data Collection

Prospective participants were recruited using organizational affiliations (i.e., local cycling clubs) and social networks. Prior to the interviews, prospective participants completed a brief online questionnaire to assess their cycling tourism characteristics and to collect basic demographic and contact information. A total of 77 individuals responded. Participants for the interviews were selected using theoretical sampling procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Three sets of criteria were used to purposively select participants. First, potential participants were identified based on the six ASTEC dimensions (Getz, 2008; Getz &McConnell, 2011). Second, several demographic characteristics were used in the purposive sampling process including: gender, age, employment status, dependent children, and marital status as these variables have been shown to influence sport event participation (Lamont & Kennelly, 2011). Third, participants were selected based on their years of experience travelling to participate in cycling events in order to include both lesser and more experienced individuals. As part of the interview process, the influence of these factors was explored on the progression of the interviewee's ASTEC (e.g., change in marital status or birth of a child). As the interviews progressed, in accordance with theoretical sampling and constant comparison methods (Strauss & Corbin,

1990), relational, variational, and discriminate, sampling strategies were employed to discover similarities and differences among the data and to validate the emerging theory.

Interviews were conducted by the lead researcher at a physical location of the interviewee's choosing, over the phone or via Skype. Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes in duration and was audio recorded. In order to stimulate the collection of relevant data and to assist in the interview process a semi-structured interview guide was generated and utilized. The interviews began with warm up questions then questions pertaining to each of the ETC dimensions. For instance, destination criteria was investigated by "Can you tell me about the role of travel destination criteria in events you have traveled to? or plan to travel to? Has this changed over time?" The order of the questions varied depending on individual responses and probing/follow-up questions were asked to gain a thorough understanding of the complexities of active sport event travel.

Participants

Sample size was determined as the study progressed and terminated when saturation of data was achieved as described by Marshall (1996), which resulted in a total sample of 12 participants, four females and eight males (Table 1). To protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms were assigned to each individual. The participants ranged in age from 22 to 67 years old and 1.5 to 40 years of experience of active cycling event travel. The participants' predominant competitive orientation was assessed during the interview although some had changed their competitive orientation earlier in their career. Seven reported a current racing orientation, two a mixed orientation, and three a recreational orientation.

Data Analysis

A qualitative grounded theory approach to understand how individuals (i.e., amateur cyclists) make sense of their lived experiences with travel to, and participation in, sport events was implemented. Each interview was transcribed verbatim then analyzed as each phase of data collection was completed resulting in 334 typed pages. Prior to analysis, in accordance with constant comparison, open coding was conducted by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts. Subsequently, NVivo 8.0 qualitative data analysis software was used in the axial and selective coding phases. The lead researcher conducted the initial coding procedure for each interview then consulted with the second researcher to confirm the findings. Throughout the analysis, codes emergent from the data and a priori codes from the literature were considered.

Findings

The findings revealed that the trajectory of ASETCs is associated with nine main themes and related subthemes that are in turn linked to an individual's life context, which included: the first event, starting out, motivation (competition, accomplishment, enjoyment, health concerns, social connections, and charitable intentions), temporal (peak threshold, seasonality, & location), travel style (racers make poor tourists, & the overnight cutoff), destination criteria (the destination is important occasionally), event types (it's all about the ride, expanding interests), spatial, and later in life. These themes include the original six ETC dimensions (Getz, 2008; Getz & McConnell, 2011) as well as the unique patterns that were identified in the data.

The First Event

The first theme termed *the first event* was depicted through the participants' experiences traveling to and participating in their first event and the subtheme termed *established peer influence*. The majority of respondents described their first event as predominantly local or in a

neighboring area that did not require an overnight stay in the host city. If the decision to attend the first event was not heavily influenced by a peer, participants typically traveled to the event individually or with a friend, participated in the event and then returned home without overnight accommodations. This was exemplified by Walter, a 43 year old veteran racing cyclist as he described the first cycling event he completed: "The race started probably a ten minute drive from my parent's house, so I'm sure that I just borrowed my dad's pick-up, threw the bike in the back and drove there, did the race, and then went back home." However, the subtheme, established peer influence materialized when participation in the event was driven by a peer or a group of peers that were established career cyclists, the respondents were willing to travel further to participate in their first event. This subtheme was articulated by Marie, a 35 year old experienced racing cyclist as she described her overnight travel to her first cycling event, "The first one was a collegiate mountain bike race up in North Carolina …it was mostly because my best friend was going and it sounded like a good idea at the time, it sounded like something fun to do." Still, the respondents who traveled outside of their home community to participate in their first event chose a similar travel style as they traveled to and from the host city for the sole purpose of participating in the event while taking part in few if any other tourist activities.

Starting Out

The second theme, *starting out*, emerged as participants described their lifelong experiences with travel to cycling events. Several different sources emerged that drove initial involvement in the sport. Participants reported originally gaining interest and becoming involved with cycling due to health concerns, injury, involvement in triathlons, friends and family, and culture. Initial involvement due to health concerns and a desire to lose weight were voiced by two participants as Ted a 42 year old relatively inexperienced racing cyclist said, "I started like

three or four years ago, 2010. I was trying to actually just lose some weight. I was like 230 pounds and trying to go to the high school class reunion and just started focusing on cycling." Injury caused two participants to give up a different sport and they chose to pursue cycling as a low impact alternative. Walter illustrated this as he explained:

> I broke my ankle skateboarding and at the time, I was a pole-vaulter. During the three months of physical therapy, my doc recommended that I find a low impact way to stay in shape and asked if I had a 10 speed…I didn't but my dad did, so I borrowed his bike and started riding.

Participation and involvement in triathlons motivated two participants to pursue cycling events initially, which then led to a reduction in triathlon participation. As Marie explained, "I originally was doing triathlons, then when I got more into the bike side of it I realized that cycling was a lot more fun than running." The influence of friends and family was also described as sources for initial involvement.

Motivation

The first ASETC dimension hypothesized by Getz and McConnell (2011), motivation, emerged throughout the interview process as participants retrospectively reflected on their individual motivation to travel and participate in cycling events, which constitutes the third theme. The findings revealed motivational factors shifted among six subthemes: *competition, accomplishment, enjoyment, health concerns, social connections, and charitable intentions*.

The thrill of competition. Motivation related to competition was consistent throughout all of the participants. However, the type of competitive motivation differed between individuals and across time manifesting as either competing with other cyclists or competing against oneself. Competing against oneself or others tended to emerge after participants had established their careers. Lydia a 22-year-old inexperienced racing cyclist explained, "first events I was just obviously trying to survive. I didn't really care too much about winning. I was just there...now, I

want to do well." However, participants in later stages of their careers reported that the motivation to compete against others had shifted to internal competition. This was articulated well by Peter a 67-year-old veteran cyclist who mixed racing and non-racing events when asked about the changes in his motivation from his initial involvement he said, "it was harder to be motivated then…cycling was more you went training or you went racing and so you're always pushing yourself and it's what you did that day after day…now, I want to do it."

Accomplishment and enjoyment.. Although, some sources of motivation seemed to change as individuals gained more experience, motivation related to pleasure and accomplishment appeared throughout different stages of individuals' careers. However, participants often reported experiencing unpleasant emotions when actually participating in some events, especially during events that were more difficult. Retrospectively, once the event was over participants tended to describe an event as enjoyable and the feeling of overcoming a challenge actually encouraged them to continue their career. This subtheme is described as *type II fun* as participants often only described an event as enjoyable post hoc. Hank a 61-year-old experienced non-racing cyclist exemplifies type II fun as he said, "these events are kind of addictive. I can remember climbing this awful climb...and saying, 'I know I'm not going to do this next year' within a couple months I'd forgotten about that and I'm ready to go again." The general sentiment among the participants was that event participation allowed them an opportunity to benefit from their training and time spent dedicated to the sport.

Social connection. The third motivation subtheme, *social connection*, appeared throughout the different career stages as the participants described the varying importance of social motivation, with the actual source of social motivation shifting from early career stages and later career stages. As aforementioned, several participants gained awareness and were

motivated to complete their first event due to social connections. However, these social connections often evolved over time from a social connection with non-cyclists or cyclists new to the sport to a connection with other career cyclists. This became paramount as participants described lost connections with non-cycling friends to a proliferation of career cycling friends as articulated by Andrea a 55-year-old experienced non-racing cyclist, "what happens over time is that you just pick cyclists for friends." A distinct increase in the social connectivity in the cycling social world was evident among all the participants. This subtheme was described by Jane a 54-year-old moderately experienced non-racing cyclist while talking about her initial involvement said:

> I went by myself or maybe a training partner, somebody I trained with we'd say we'd do an event and hopefully we'd see some other people we knew. Now, I have a bigger base of cycling friends…so in the last couple of years, I've been going with the same people cycling, and we look for events to go to together. My non-cycling friends always tease me that I'm off riding my bike and not available to do other things.

Regardless of the level of competition, all of the participants reported that creating and maintaining connection with other career cyclists was an important motivational factor for traveling to events. The participants generally felt that social connections served as a highly desirable characteristic of cycling when compared to other sports, which actually discouraged them from participating in other sports as they were perceived to be less social. Participants that appeared to have reached an advanced career stage described an immersion in the cycling social world and a detachment from individuals outside of the cycling social world. Gus described his desire to be connected with other career cyclists when asked about his connections with co-workers he said, "I realize that these people don't know a lot about cycling, so I don't go into detail…when I say I won, they go like 'oh congratulations' and I just leave it at that." Many of the participants also mentioned the social connections combined with health concerns motivated

them enough to continue their career and negotiate difficult constraints. This trend was articulated by Marie "fitness, good health, enjoyable times. Lots of times it was the only social life I would get was when I would go on group rides."

Health concerns. Another common subtheme among the participants was a desire to participate in cycling events to maintain a healthy lifestyle. As aforementioned, some participants began their initial involvement in cycling due to health concerns. However, the majority began to appreciate and realize the health benefits related to participating in cycling events later in their careers and this strongly contributed to the decision to continue their travel career. As Andrea explained, "I think when I was first into it, the motivation was more adventure and meeting new people and being outside and now it's more ... I'm much more aware of how difficult it is to stay fit." Participants were also motivated by mental health concerns as they sought out cycling events to relieve everyday anxiety. Todd a 47-year-old relatively inexperienced cyclist who participated in racing and non-racing events verbalized this trend when he said "cycling is such a good fitness tool and it's a good stress relief for me and I just … I mean cycling just makes me feel like a kid."

Charitable intentions. The sixth motivation subtheme emerged as three participants described their involvement in cycling events was motivated by charitable intentions and the desire to raise funds for a charity based event. Early in the participants' cycling careers charity based events often served as a primary motive for event travel. The charity aspect of the events motivated these participants to partake in events that expanded the distance they were willing to travel and to increase the difficulty of the event. As Jane explained the style of riding she preferred she said, "cycling basically to do the MS ride…to raise money for charity. That's probably how I really got going in the distance cycling, was to do longer distance charity rides."

However, as these participants progressed in their travel career, motivation related to and the importance of charity events diminished as the events became constraining. Jane explained "I'm not doing the big charity events like MS because they keep increasing the amount of money you have to fundraise, and there are so many other events where you just have to pay a small fee."

Temporal

The fourth theme and second ASETC dimension, *temporal*, was depicted through three subthemes: *peak threshold, seasonality, and location*. An initial introductory phase was described by several participants as they became acclimated to cycling event travel. However, once they became more immersed in their cycling career, event travel frequency increased. Jane enunciated this trend as she stated, "[for the] first couple of years probably just three or four a year, and it built from there…I didn't know about events. Now, I am in groups where there's almost really something every weekend." In some cases, participants reported increasing the frequency of their travel and event participation rapidly after their first event, as described by Marie, "I really did start pretty strong and hardcore, it wasn't really much build up. I was all in from the beginning."

Peak threshold. The first subtheme, *peak threshold*, developed as the majority of participants described the frequency of their active event travel as a steady progression with varying rates of escalation that increased until a peak frequency or a threshold was reached. From this point, the participants either attempted to maintain this high level of travel for a period or succumbed to constraints and reduced their active event travel frequency. Todd explained:

> It's probably leveled off just because last year I was with the cross racing everything just worked, schedule, my work travel, just everything worked that fell together so I was able to do them all except that one…I don't know if it'll be that good this year.

Cyclocross or often referred to as "cross" is a distinct cycling discipline requiring specialized equipment that combines characteristics of road and mountain bike events. After the peak threshold was reached, several participants reported taking a break from the sport due to overwhelming constraints. Michael described his break from cycling was due to his kids' sport involvement "there was a big fifteen year gap where I just concentrated on (his kids') soccer." However, these participants became re-engaged with the sport and resumed their travel career as constraints became more negotiable, this sabbatical from the travel career lasted several years in some instances. Walter explained this as his work life became more flexible he said he began riding his bike and "within about four weeks, I was really back into it and enjoying it a lot and figured that I'd probably enjoy racing some more equally." However, after the sabbatical, their approach to cycling appeared to take on a new meaning and the seriousness of the involvement achieved during the peak years was no longer a career objective. Marie articulated this as she described her return to cycling after a sabbatical she said, "I went from being a competitive type of athlete to dropping in the competitive side and just wanting to go out on my bike and enjoy the ride and look at the trees and enjoy the weather."

Seasonality. The second subtheme under the temporal theme was related to the *seasonality* of cycling events, which in turn was influenced by the location, cycling discipline, and constraints related to attending an event. The only discernable pattern amongst the participants was a higher amount of event travel within the state of Florida during the spring and fall due to limited event offerings during the summer. The reduction in event offerings during the summer months in Florida provided an incentive for some participants to travel out of state. As Ted explained, "unless you're doing the road bike racing in Florida, the mountain bike, there's really not much going on in the summer." However, opportunities for year round travel based on

different cycling disciplines were available to the participants depending on their specific interests as described by Walter he said "cyclocross was in the fall, collegiate road racing was in the spring, and then mountain bike racing would be throughout the summer."

Location. The third subtheme under temporal, *location,* was related to where the participants were living during their career. Although inclusion in the study required the participants to reside in the state of Florida, several participants discussed portions of their career while they lived in other areas of the country. As these participants described their event travel frequency in other states a common pattern appeared. The participants engaged in cycling travel while residing in other states described varying levels of event travel frequency based on the availability of events. The number of event offerings within close proximity varied as some locations were described as having more events than Florida. Steven explained:

> When I first had my USCF card (cycling race license), I probably only did five or six races '92, '93, '94. I was living in Cleveland and then I moved to Dayton, Ohio and I had more events around within an hour and a half or so. Probably went up to 10 or 15 up until about '98 or '99. 2002, it's where it picked up to 35 or 40 races a year.

Other locations were described by participants as having very few events compared to Florida as enunciated by Peter, "I did a little more, a little more, then a little more, and then moved from Florida to Vermont. That was a whole different atmosphere for cycling up there. There wasn't nearly as much activity back in the backwoods." Thus, event travel frequency at times was due to the availability of events based on location.

Travel Style

The findings revealed two subthemes associated with the fifth theme and the third ASETC dimension of *travel style* as the participants described their style of travel related to cycling events throughout their career.

Racers make poor tourists. The first subtheme, *racers make poor tourists*, describes the participants' style of travel when participating in competitive events as vastly different compared to that utilized when participating in non-competitive events. Competitive event participants chose to travel alone, or with a group of friends and would participate in the event and return home without partaking in any other tourist activities. Competitive event participants expressed extreme frugality and put great effort into reducing travel expenses to a minimum. As Peter described his experiences traveling to competitive events early in his career, he said:

> We didn't travel that far, we were in Florida and there just you get six or eight guys packed into a van or two and just a lifestyle thing. You don't have much money, everybody's pitching in for gas, and you're buying McDonald's on the way home. You're just trashing yourself on your bike for a couple of hours in a road race…it was bare bones put it that way. Just get there and get back.

The desire to use a minimalistic style of travel and to reduce expenses ultimately influenced the participants' decisions as to which specific events they would attend. Marie explained, "if I knew different people in different towns who I could stay with, that definitely, put a priority on going to those races or events to try to control the cost of traveling and racing." However, if participants were traveling with non-cyclists such as a spouse or children their travel style changed drastically from an event specific to a mixed motive trip in order to accommodate the interests of the non-cycling travel companion(s). Steven described this trend as he reflected on the travel style he chose when traveling with his family:

> The hotel, they got to have a nice pool. It's got to be a nice quality hotel…have free breakfast for the family. The events that I travel to now are as much family events as they are athletic events. In the past, it was purely about the racing and just about athletics.

The overnight cutoff. The second subtheme associated with travel style, *the overnight cutoff*, emerged as the participants typically drove to events and only utilized a plane flight in rare circumstances, partially due to the high cost of shipping cycling equipment. The participants

often employed a travel distance rule for staying overnight when driving to an event. If a single day event required more than two to three hours of travel time then the participants would typically stay overnight in the host community, otherwise they would travel to and from the host community without an overnight stay. Michael explained this as he said, "we kind of made our own cut off that if it was less than a two hour drive we won't stay overnight that we just kind of try and do it in one day." However, some participants were willing to drive during the early morning to reduce their travel costs as articulated by Peter, "I've gotten up at some odd hours to get to an event to ride it and then drive back the same day so I don't have to spend the night."

Destination Criteria

The fourth ASETC dimension investigated was *destination criteria* and was the sixth theme. Similar to the findings related to travel style the findings revealed a distinct divide between travel to competitive events and travel to non-competitive events regarding destination criteria. As the participants described travel to competitive events, the destination was mostly an afterthought and the focus was solely on event aspects not the attractiveness of the destination. This trend was enunciated by Gus when he was asked about the role of the destination in his decision to attend an event he said, "no, I mean, if it's there and I want to do it, then I'll go…like in this town called Reddick and there's nothing there. So I went to it, I didn't care. It's just a race and you go." If a competitive event happened to be located in an attractive destination, then the auxiliary benefits (e. g, scenery, uniqueness) were thought of as an added benefit and rarely influenced the initial decision to attend the event.

The destination is important occasionally. The first subtheme associated with destination criteria was *the destination is important occasionally*. If participants were traveling to an event that was non-competitive then destination criteria became increasingly important. This

pattern was evidenced with both racing cyclists and non-racing cyclists, but the specific event attributes that stimulated the importance of destination criteria differed. Racing cyclists began to consider individually important destination criteria if they were traveling to an event that required extensive travel. For example, Michael explained:

> Seventy percent of the events I do within a two, two and a half hour radius around (home city). There, you do the event whether you like the scenery or not. You just do it because it's there and you're friends are there. But then two or three events a year you pick because of the scenery. So, the events further than two and a half hours, I'm a little picky.

When racing cyclists began to evaluate an event based on destination criteria, their evaluation was directed towards the quality and the terrain of the event course, rather than the usual tourism related characteristics as Marie explained, "the destination determines and dictates what the terrain is going to be and what the course is going to be."

However, when extended travel was due to participation in a national level competition, destination criteria was no longer a factor in the decision to attend as described by Ted, a racing cyclist "well, you know, the destination is just wherever USA Cycling decides to put nationals." Racing cyclists only appeared to become interested in other destination characteristics when traveling with non-cyclists. Walter, a racing cyclist explained the difference in the importance of destination criteria when traveling with his family compared to traveling along, he said:

> If we all four go, and then if it's any length of time travelling at all, the question will be is there something fun that all four of us can do? If it's just me, then I'm much more likely to just go and do the race and spend minimal time at the venue and come back home.

Non-racing cyclists typically considered destination criteria more important in their decision to attend an event regardless of having travel companions. However, the role of the destination in making travel choices only became important after the career became established as evidenced by Andrea, a non-racing cyclist said, "when I first started, it was a stretch to drive

50 miles and then spend the night...if it's within 8-10 hours, I don't think anything about driving, my reach has gotten bigger." Once Andrea's travel career became established she began to appreciate and evaluate an event based on destination criteria as she said, "like I mentioned earlier, is it a new place I haven't seen or ridden my bike in or is there some new geographical feature that I haven't seen…is there some special feature in conjunction with the bike ride."

Event Types

The fifth ASETC dimension explored and seventh theme was *event types*, as the findings revealed both similar and dissimilar patterns when participants were asked about the type of events they preferred throughout their career. As the participants progressed in their career, they became more knowledgeable about event travel and as a result, their event preferences evolved. The more experienced participants overwhelmingly demanded more out of their event experience and more carefully deliberated as to which events they would attend. Early in the participants' travel career they put much less effort into evaluating an event prior to their actual travel. Steven, a racing cyclist described his increase in event assessment as he said, "I tell you this I'm more picky now with events. I expect them to be well run, well managed, the results available on time. I hate when they're running behind." A variety of event aspects were considered important to the participants including, but not limited to: distance, cycling discipline, competition, course quality, size, quality of organization/promoter, location, course support, awards, prestige, and safety. For example, Michael explains the growing importance of safety as a favorable event attribute, "in 1991…I would ride any event. But over the years, safety has become a bigger issue to me that has changed." The farther the participants traveled to an event the more rigorous their evaluation of event attributes became. If an event required minimal travel and was low cost, the participants were more lenient in their evaluation of event attributes. Lydia

described her increase in event assessment as she traveled to an event requiring extensive travel she said, "it was a lovely 18 hour drive…it wasn't just racing for us since it was such a big travel event…it's not like we are going all the way to Illinois and not seeing the sights."

It's all about the ride. Two subthemes were evident in the event types dimension, the first was *it's all about the ride*. As participants progressed into the later stages of their career, the quality of the actual ride (i.e., course quality, difficulty, competition) became the most important aspect, and other superfluous event attributes (e.g., charity, entertainment, food) that might have originally drawn them to event travel became less important. Jane described the importance of the actual ride later in her career by stating "It's not like a prestige thing. It's about riding."

Expanding interests. The second subtheme was *expanding interests* as the findings revealed the majority of the participants were originally involved in a single cycling discipline early in their career, but as their career progressed they began to expand their travel to events for different cycling disciplines. This subtheme was articulated by Michael:

> Because then I didn't do any cyclocross, and now I pick out some cyclocross events here and there, which I really like and I didn't do any mountain biking in the early 90s either, which I do now. In the early 90s I had one bike in my garage, now I have nine.

However, some cyclists were reticent about expanding their interests to other cycling disciplines and chose to concentrate only on one discipline. Steven a career road cyclist described his hesitance about participating in other disciplines by stating "I'm not really into mountain biking, I was never really that good at it, but just never really got into mountain biking a whole lot."

Spatial

The findings confirmed *spatial as* the sixth ASETC dimension and eighth theme, which was related to the distance participants were willing to travel for an event. Although foreseeably

career progression would be marked with an increase in travel distances, expanding travel distance was dependent on constraints. This was evident in Gus's interview as he talked about his desire to expand his traveling distance, he said:

> Tough question because Florida obviously is not going to change, but then maybe I'll have more time off of work or more money, to start something and then I'll be able to do like, all right, let's go do a race in California…until then, I doubt it.

However, the willingness to travel further appeared to also to be directly related to the uniqueness and attractiveness of the event. Michael explained, "like Six Gap and that's about a six-hour drive. I've done that 15 years in a row…if I had to walk, I'd go do it. That's still worth it for a good century once a year that is picturesque." A century is a non-competitive road cycling event that requires participants to complete a paved 100-mile route and is supported with rest stops. Steven described his willingness to increase his typical travel distance when he described a trip to a national championship event, he said "the draw there was just the scope of the event itself, being a national championship event and just everything that went along with that." The findings also revealed the participants would travel to events in other states in the very beginning of their careers, this pattern was described by Marie as she said, "initially, I would do lots of distance (travel distance). It wasn't unusual for me...to go into the mountains in North Carolina and Georgia every weekend initially, not every year but probably 10 to 20 times a year."

Later in Life

The ninth and final theme termed *later in life* was revealed as the interview process asked the participants about their plans for the later stages of their travel careers. These responses were compared with the four participants above the age of 50, in order to discern advanced career stages from intermediate stages as a result several trends and one subtheme emerged. As two participants approached the conclusion of their travel careers, they reported a decline in event

travel frequency and a slight focus on non-competitive events. This trend was evidenced by Peter, "those days have kind of passed, and as I get older I'm slower than I used to be, there's not a big incentive to go and put myself on the line anymore for events of most nature." Later stages of ASETCs were also depicted by an increase on the importance of each event participation experience and enjoying the event destination. Michael explained, "when I'm 65…you don't think I'm going to make my destinations worthwhile? I may go to Hawaii and go bike the volcanoes, whereas today that wouldn't be a choice."

Giving back. As the participants described the later stages of their travel career a common subtheme emerged indicating a desire to give back to the sport through two different methods. First, an increased willingness to volunteer at cycling events emerged and was portrayed by Michael as he said "I see a bigger involvement when I retire in volunteering and helping with setting up events. I always thank the people that volunteer at these events…it will be my turn to do that then so people can bike." Second, the findings indicated participants desired to give back to the sport by helping new cyclists progress through the early stages of their event travel career. Steven explained:

> Now I'm working with a club…the focus of the whole team now is about getting people that are new to racing …trying to get them involved in competitive events. A couple of us have worked together and tried to get some new folks involved in racing.

Discussion

Regarding research question one**,** a grounded theory model of the complex progression and regression of ASETCs is presented in Figure 1. Further, research questions two and three investigating travel career dimensions and the factors affecting ASETC movement are intertwined into the presentation of the grounded theory model and the following discussion. ASETCs appear to be initiated due to a variety of antecedents including health concerns, injury,

involvement in triathlons, friends and family, and culture. After an initial introductory career stage was completed, the participants appeared to become more immersed in their travel careers and their event travel frequency increased until a peak threshold was reached and participants either took a sabbatical from the sport, maintained involvement, or decreased frequency. The discovery of the peak threshold confirms Getz and McConnell's (2011) idea that "there must be an upper limit on what is possible" (p. 336), which advances the idea of focusing on individual experiences rather than a singular event. In contrast, most of the existing work in this area has concentrated on a single event (e.g., Getz & McConnell, 2011; Getz & Anderson, 2010). By focusing the interviews on career progression it was possible to identify how cyclists encounter various stages in their travel careers, including negotiating constraints and making changes based on competing life priorities (Lamont et al. 2012; Lamont & Kennelly, 2011).

In relating the ASETC to Pearce's (2005) work on travel careers, individual motivation to travel and participate in events was derived from several sources, although *social connection*, *enjoyment*, and *accomplishment* were the most important. The findings here reflect the distinctive qualities of serious leisure, which suggests perseverance, career potential, personal effort, durable benefits, a unique ethos, and identification with the leisure pursuit are fundamental to serious forms of leisure (Stebbins, 1982). However, social motives had an evolutionary nature as social connections evolved from connections with non-cyclists or cyclists in the introductory stage to connections with other career cyclists. Social connections with other career cyclists became so significant, that it actually discouraged participation in other sports, and led to moderate detachment from individuals outside of the cycling social world. This extends Green and Jones's (2005) discussion as group membership and identification become so important to individuals it amplifies the seriousness of in-group and out-group membership.

Although, contrary to Snelgrove and Wood (2010) who suggested repeat participants are more motivated by identification with a charitable cause, this study found charity event participation diminished with career progression as it became a constraint. Thus, charity events might present an ideal venue to attract inexperienced cyclists and initiate an ASETC.

Although the participants were quite homogenous in their responses, racing and non-racing cyclists diverged in their style of travel and the importance of destination criteria, which extends the findings of previous ETC research. Racing cyclists typically chose an event specific minimalistic travel style directed at frugality and put little emphasis on destination criteria as the focus was on event characteristics. Bull (2006) suggests a similar finding that the destination and the setting are relatively unimportant while the quality of the race and environment are important for racing cyclists. The "dedicated runners" researched by Chalip and McGuirty (2004) demonstrated similar patterns in their travel behavior as the actual event was identified as their only attraction to the destination. However, if racing cyclists were traveling with non-cyclists such as a spouse or children the travel style changed dramatically from an event specific to a mixed motive trip focused towards destination criteria to accommodate the interests of the non-cyclists, a finding also mirrored in Bull's (2006) study. Gibson and Chang (2012) found similar differences in travel behavior based on life stage with the older participants placing more emphasis on novel experiences and learning new things as they cycled. This shift in travel behavior for racing cyclists from low destination importance to high importance also occurred with increased travel distance as the racing cyclists felt the need to experience and enjoy the destination once heavily invested. Conversely, non-racing cyclists considered destination criteria important in their decision to attend an event regardless of travel companions. Thus, it appears that competitive orientation may be quite influential in shaping travel style and a wider touristic

interest in a destination. Similar findings have been discovered in other areas of sport tourism including skiing where more skilled participants are more concerned about the terrain and conditions (Richards, 1996) or sport fans where so called avid fans have little interest in anything outside of the stadium compared to less serious fans (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2003).

Career progression was portrayed by an emphasis on event evaluation rigor, increased social connection, shifting motivation, and a reduction on the importance of superfluous event attributes (e.g., charity, entertainment, food) that might have originally attracted participants to event travel. This changing focus on what is viewed as important is common among more involved and experienced event participants (Ryan & Lockyer, 2002), with an increased focus on the quality and execution of the event. Findings that are more unique was the growing importance of event and destination safety as participants described lower risk tolerance later in their career, which is an important finding as fear and anxiety might act as barriers to event participation (Coghlan, 2012). These findings suggest the event and destination preferences identified by Getz and McConnell (2011) are dependent not only on competitive orientation and family dynamics, but also on perceptions of risk that are known to increase with age (Gibson, 1996), as was evident in these interviews. Moreover, contrary to propositions advanced by Getz (2008) and Getz and McConnell, expanding travel distance was more dependent on constraints rather than travel career progression and frequency of event travel was dependent on a number of factors including the location of the individual's primary residence, the availability of events, and other constraints. Similarly, the concept of pulsation advanced by Lamont et al. (2012) did not manifest in the current study, which may suggest cyclists are better able to rebound from each event and maintain a higher event frequency than other participatory sports. However, the willingness to increase travel distance was directly related to the uniqueness and prestige of an

event similar to Bennett, Mousley, Kitchin, and Ali-Choudhury's (2007) findings whereby participants were willing to pay a higher registration fee for an event considered prestigious.

The findings here reflect the overall notion of progression through social worlds types described by Unruh (1983; reconceptualized by Shipway, 2008) from a stranger (outsider), to a tourist (occasional), regular, and finally an insider. As individuals move through the initiation and introduction stages they become more immersed in the cycling social world and transition from a stranger to a tourist as their involvement becomes more meaningful and committed. Then as individuals begin to move through the expansion and maintenance stages they enter the territory of social world regulars as their participation becomes habitual, committed, and integrated into the ongoing activities of the social world. This progression in social world membership is likely underpinned by the process of socialization into sporting subcultures as described by Donnelly and Young (1988). Socialization into sport is the process through which individuals are enculturated into the unique ethos of a sporting subculture and also fits with one of six characteristics of serious leisure as described by Stebbins (1982).

Similar to the development of ASETCs, Donnelly and Young (1988) suggested subcultural sport careers progress through several stages where individuals learn the norms, values, and attitudes of a particular group. Beginning with the presocialization stage, individuals acquire knowledge from media, friends, family, peers, and established members of the subculture prior to initial participation. Then, individuals experience their first event during the initiation stage of an ASETC. Next, Donnelly and Young argue the selection and recruitment stage occurs in which an individual must be motivated, interested, and have an opportunity (Donnelly, 1980) before actually being selected by an established member or actively seeking out subculture membership. These stages of socialization likely occur while individuals move through the

introduction and expansions stages of ASETCs as the participants progress from a minimal to an increasing social connection with other cyclists and become more knowledgeable. Subsequently and similar to the ASETC expansion stage, the socialization stage occurs as individuals learn the characteristics of the subculture and begin to adopt the group's values. Lastly, Donnelly and Young contend acceptance/ostracism is the final stage as individuals confirm their group identity. This final stage mirrors the ASETC maintenance stage as individuals begin to ostracize non-members of the group and distance themselves from these non-members.

Similar to the findings by Gibson, Attle, and Yiannakis (1998), the final phases of travel career progression was revealed as participants reported a decline in sport related travel as participants aged. However, while the frequency of event related travel declined, at the same time an increased focus on non-competitive events, an increased willingness to volunteer at cycling events, and a desire to mentor new cyclists was revealed among the older participants. This finding describes the final stage of the proposed ASETC model and suggests individuals may transition later in their career from an amateur to a volunteer within the serious leisure framework (Stebbins, 1992) or in terms of Unruh's (1980, 1983) social worlds concept, an Insider. Indeed, the desire to mentor new cyclists relates to the fundamental principles of social world insiders, as these individuals take on the responsibility for creating and expanding social worlds by recruiting new members and creating and maintaining activities for existing members (Unruh, 1980).

The ASETC model identified in this study portrays the trajectory of career cyclists from initiation to maturity and provides a framework for the future study of active event travel and a potential guide for lifetime physical activity and improved event management. Advocacy groups seeking to cultivate cycling event participation would be advised to promote the factors related to

career initiation (e.g., health concerns, injury) and the motives that drive continued participation (e.g., social connection, healthy lifestyle). Important for the promotion of physical activity, the ASETC model identifies factors that may attract and retain individuals to a lifestyle based on active leisure (Beaton & Funk, 2008). Improved organization and marketing of events may encourage more individuals to successfully travel to and participate in sport events so they can acquire the benefits related to participation such as social connection, subcultural identity, mental health, and physical health. As such, implications from this study may also aid in the study and practice of physical activity intervention as the participants here successfully created and maintained potentially lifelong physically active lifestyles.

The results also present specific actionable outcomes for event managers and destination management organizations (DMOs – tourism agencies) to improve event management. These groups should seek to market and organize events in regards to the competiveness of the event along with the family dynamics and experience of their potential participants to maximize participant attendance and satisfaction. DMOs and event managers seeking to expand the travel distance of their potential participants should focus on the identified event characteristics (e.g., uniqueness) that promote this behavior. Further, if DMOs and event managers are seeking to increase the economic impact of their event then it should be organized and marketed to cater to individuals traveling with non-cyclists (e.g., family members). For individuals travelling with non-cyclists, attractive destination criteria is often more important than event characteristics. Increased emphasis on the role of travel related to participant sport events is important for tourist destinations as individuals engaged in cycling event tourism can induce positive economic impact for local communities (Downward et al., 2009). One particular study found that a singular Canadian mountain bike event generated more than $11.5 million in visitor expenditures

(Mountain Bike Tourism Association, 2006). DMOs seeking to attract tourists, especially lesser known destinations, should leverage participant sport events and help develop and market these events as a form of sustainable tourism development (Gibson et al., 2012). Lastly, sport organizations need to structure events in an effort to allow for successful career development and facilitate the participant's membership into the subculture of the sport (Donnelly & Young, 1988; Green & Jones, 2005). In order for individuals to advance through a career, a portfolio of events must be available based on different career stages.

However, despite the potential advances towards a better understanding of ASETCs in this study, there are limitations and delimitations that necessitate acknowledgement and present opportunities for future research. While every effort was made to establish rapport with the participants there is always the chance of social desirability and recall issues when asking about memories of cycling participation. The effects of these issues were minimized by the lead researcher who is a member of the cycling subculture and was able to use his insider knowledge during the interview process. In terms of delimitations, generalizability is a concern, but depth of knowledge is the goal for qualitative studies, which opens the door for future studies using quantitative methods with a larger sample. Replication of the study within other active event travel contexts (e.g., rowing, climbing) or other geographic regions would strengthen and expand the findings presented here as the current study is limited to the cycling context and drawn from a sample residing in Florida. Many active event travel contexts are relatively unexplored as the bulk of research in this area has focused on running or cycling. Also, the ideas associated with event travel careers could be applied beyond sport or active travel such as event travel career pursuits related to music or art as suggested by Lamont and Kennelly (2011).

Perhaps the most important recommendation for future research emanating from this study is the promotion of the measurement of the individual not a singular event, an approach also promoted by Getz and McConnell (2011). Scholarly articles on singular participatory sport events are likely affected by sampling bias, while a research design focused on the measurement of the individual allows for a broader inclusion of participants in regards to a variety of important factors (e.g., event difficulty, location, experience, family dynamics, racing orientation) that effect this style of travel. Future research on ASETCs should seek to reduce sampling bias by conducting research focused on individual athletes, a portfolio of events, or at the minimum an event that appeals to wide range of potential participants.

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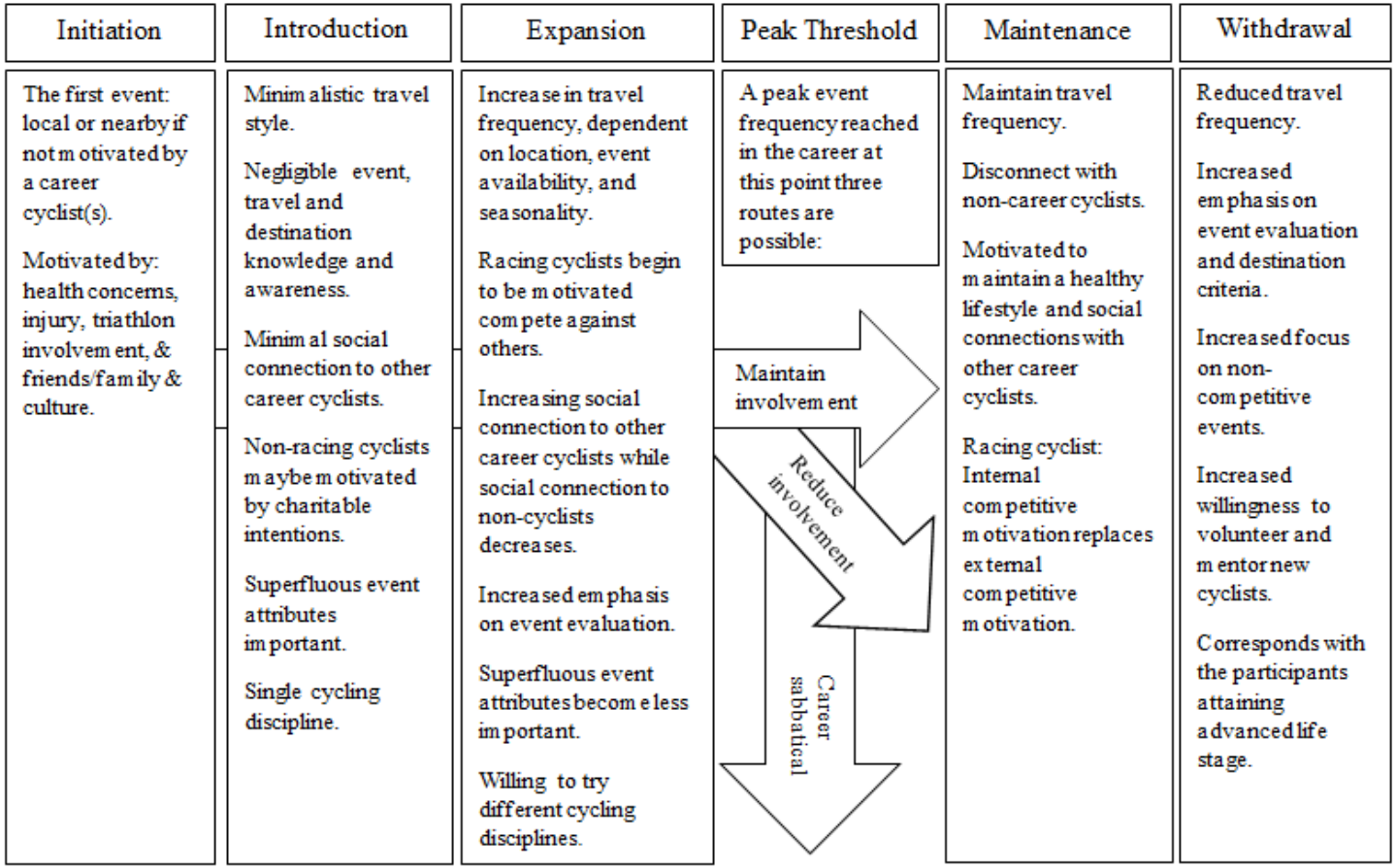

Figure 1. Proposed Active Sport Event Travel Career stages. The following themes are depicted across stages in the model: motivation, temporal, destination criteria, and event types. The initiation stage corresponds with the theme starting out, while the theme later in life corresponds with the withdrawal stage. The theme spatial was not included in the model as it was found to be dependent on constraints not career progression. Reduced involvement/career sabbatical driven by constraints, while preferences for event, destination, and travel style characteristics were based on a participant's orientation towards racing events, travel distance, and the presence of non-cycling travel companion.

Table 1: Participant Pseudonyms and Demographic Information

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Employment	Marital status	Predominant competitive orientation	Approximate years traveling to events
Marie	Female	35	Full-time	Married with children	Racing	11.9
Walter	Male	43	Full-time	Living with partner	Racing	27.4
Hank	Male	61	Full-time	Married with children	Non-racing	11.1
Gus	Male	29	Full-time	Single	Racing	13.3
Jane	Female	54	Full-time	Married without children	Non-Racing	7.5
Todd	Male	47	Full-time	Married with children	Mixed	2.2
Andrea	Female	55	Full-time	Single	Non-racing	34.7
Steven	Male	44	Full-time	Married with children	Racing	24.1
Lydia	Female	22	Student	Single	Racing	1.5
Ted	Male	42	Full-time	Married with children	Racing	3.2
Peter	Male	67	Retired	Divorced	Mixed	40
Michael	Male	56	Full-time	Married with children	Racing	Unknown