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PARTICIPATORY SPORT EVENT TRAVEL CAREER

A Model of Participants' Behaviour

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GOALS of THIS PRESENTATION

- Discuss the relevance of theories about “Serious Leisure”, ”Travel Career Ladder” and “Involvement” to the study of sport, tourism and events.
- Illustrate concepts and methods with data from Göteborgsvarvet - an annual Half Marathon Race with more than 40.000 participant runners.
- Derive implications for practitioners and researchers.



Serious Leisure - characteristics

- **Perseverance.** It may be cold and frightening and you can make a fool of yourself.
- **Leisure career.** A development from "beginner" to an "experienced veteran"
- **A need to make efforts.** There is pressure on you to improve and develop your skills
- **Special benefits.** Belong to a group, Earn a bit of money, Self actualisation.
- **Ethos** Ideals, norms, a social world and a subculture
- **Identity.** Pride of playing a role; a stronger feeling of self realization.

Stebbins, R., 2006. *Serious Leisure: A Perspective for Our Time*.
Somerset NJ: Aldine Transaction Publications.

TRAVEL CAREERS

based on Pearce (1988) "Travel Career Ladder"

- It is assumed that tourists change motives for travel as they become more experienced travellers.
- More experienced tourists will consequently put less emphasis on relaxation and social motives but more emphasis on self achievement and new experiences
- Another consequence could be that more involved tourists will travel more and develop a "Tourist Career" related to their interests.



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Travel Career Ladder

Self actualization

**Make dreams come true; Achievements
Experience inner peace and harmony**

Development

**Adventures to learn new things
Reinforce your identity**

Socializing

**Socializing with friends and relatives
To be part of a group**

Stimulus

**Exciting experiences under
secure circumstances**

Relaxation

Rest and relax



INVOLVEMENT

Involvement definition

“...an unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest toward a recreational activity or associated product, evoked by a particular stimulus or situation, and which has drive properties”.

(Havitz, Dimanche, 1999, p. 246)

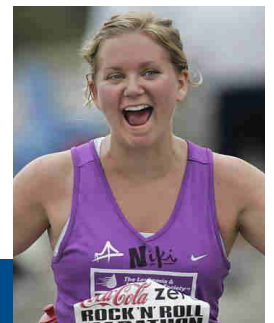
Involvement Dimensions

Leisure involvement is best conceptualized as a multidimensional construct with the following four dimensions (cf. Kyle and Chick (2002):

- (1) ***Attraction***: perceived importance and pleasure derived from consumption
- (2) ***Sign***: unspoken elements that consumption conveys about the person
- (3) ***Centrality to lifestyle***: referring to the role of the activity in the person's life
- (4) ***Risk***: the concern about not making the correct consumption decisions

Research questions

- Are highly involved long distance runners special?
- Do highly involved long distance runners make up an interesting tourism segment?
- What attracts highly involved long distance runners to an event?





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THE CASE STUDY: 21 KM GÖTEBORGSVARVET

- A well established annual half marathon arranged annually since 1989.
- Was (in 2015) the world's largest half marathon in terms of participation numbers (around 40,000)
- Targeted primarily at good local amateur joggers.
- Is NOT targeted at international tourists.
- There are nevertheless a good number of involved runners from other countries.





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21 KM GÖTEBORGSVARVET

Methods of the study

A "web based" survey before the race (1800 answers)

Questions concerning:

- *Involvement* in long distance running
- *Motivation* for running (and how it has changed)
- *Travel habits*
- *Factors influencing* the choice of events and destinations

Another "web based" survey after the race (1700 answers)

Questions concerning:

- Travel patterns
- Expenditures
- Assessments of the event and the destination



Choice criteria for "highly involved" marathon runners

The following four items (1-7) were summed up for an Involvement scale:

- *"Competition is a pleasurable experience"* - **"Attraction"**
- *"My choices of races describes me as a person"* - **"Sign and self-identity"**
- *"I spend a lot of money on running equipment"* - **"Centrality to lifestyle"**
- *"I hate poorly organized races"* - **"Risk"**

All 4 items are on a scale 1-7; the sum is therefore between 4 and 28.

"Highly involved" is defined as when the sum is 23 -28 and

"Highly involved" represents 8.5% of the sample.



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DIFFERENCES BETWEEN "INVOLVED" AND AVERAGE RUNNERS

A Highly involve runner ...

- Travels often with family to races
- Participates in many long distance races
- Participates also a great deal in Full Marathons and Mountain-bike races.





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DIFFERENCES BETWEEN "INVOLVED" AND AVERAGE RUNNERS

Travel patterns today have *changed* compared to five years ago:
A Highly involve runner ...

- Travels long distances to races
- Travels to many races
- Selects races in attractive destinations
- Travels by air to races
- Travels to races during the whole year
- Participates in international races
- Combines holiday and races
- Participates in "prestige" races
- Travels with family to races



SIMILARITIES BETWEEN "INVOLVED" AND AVERAGE RUNNERS

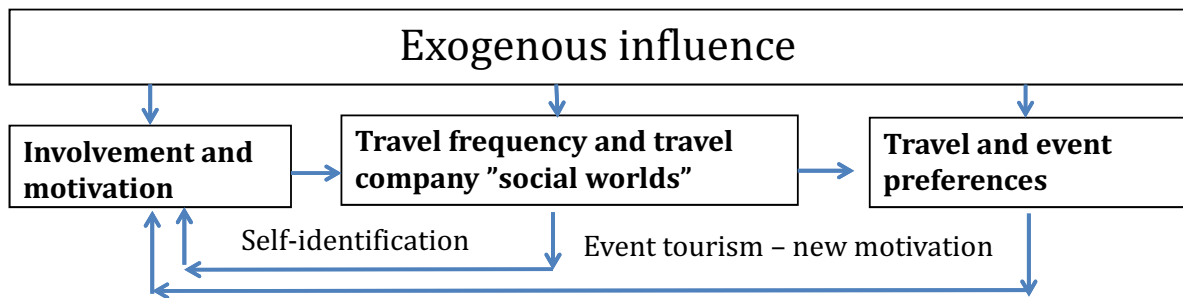
- Gender (43% Q "involved" and 37% Q average)
- Age (37)
- Civil status (30% Single)
- Education
- Employment
- Year started to participate in long distance races (1997)



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SPORT EVENT TRAVEL CAREER TRAJECTORY 		
Travel Style and Frequency	Seldom	Frequently
Involvement and motivation	Low	High
Temporal pattern of event travel	Seasonal	Year around
Spatial pattern of event travel	Local	International
Event types visited	Popular	Prestige
Destination choice	Convenient	Attractive





MOTIVATION

MOTIVATION	Important motives for participating in Göteborgsvarvet Scale 1- 7
To challenge myself	6,44
Have fun	6,40
Improve my physical ability	6,16
Travel to interesting places	4,32

Do highly involved long distance runners constitute an interesting tourism segment?

TOURIST BEHAVIOR IN GOTHENBURG	"HIGHLY INVOLVED" PARTICIPANT IN GÖTEBORGS- VARVET	AVERAGE PARTICIPANT IN GÖTEBORGS- VARVET
Did you stay at a hotel in Gothenburg during your visit?	22%	15%
How many nights did you and your company stay in Gothenburg for Göteborgsvarvet 2008?	1,1	0,8
Percentage of annual travel/holiday budget spent on travel related to sports events that you participate in.	28%	14%
How many nights do you spend on average when travelling to running events?	1,6	0,9

Some implications for event managers

IMPORTANT CRITERIA FOR CHOICE OF RUNNING EVENT	"HIGHLY INVOLVED" (SCALE 1- 7)	"AVERAGE" (SCALE 1- 7)
A GOOD WEB PAGE	6,1	5,3
WELL ORGANIZED	6,1	5,2
A SCENIC ROUTE	5,5	4,7
ATMOSPHERE AROUND THE EVENT	5,1	4,5
WEATHER EXPECTED TO BE GOOD	4.8	4.3

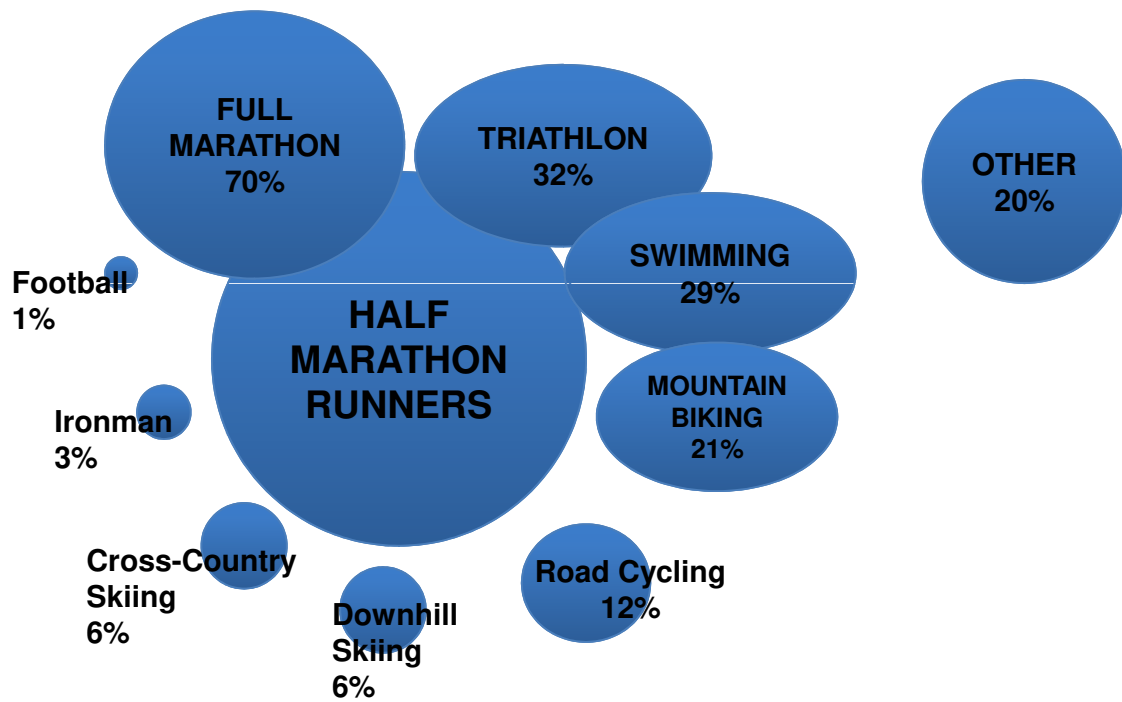
Some more ongoing research:

Participants' "portfolios of events" (Constellations)
Specialization or Diversification

Participants' life running career (a qualitative study)

Organizations' "portfolios of events"

PERSONAL EVENT CONSTELLATIONS of the VARVET HALF-MARATON RUNNERS





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We've made it!





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QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION





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BONUS MATERIAL



Implications of Personal Event Constellations

- Half Marathon runners seem to include mainly similarly challenging, individual athletic sports.
- Destinations can create and co-market events within constellations (i.e., their own event portfolios) for target markets.
- Destinations can be branded on the concept of having one or more portfolios of sport events



Motives:	LESS INVOLVED	HIGHLY INVOLVED	ANOVA	
<i>Why do you compete in this sport?:</i>	Mean	Mean	F	Sig.
To challenge myself	5,810	5,930	9,189	0,002
Improve my athletic ability	5,161	5,508	57,819	0,000
Be with family or spouse	2,870	3,192	28,412	0,000
Be with my friends	3,383	3,886	73,394	0,000
Meet new people	3,030	3,571	97,149	0,000
Participate in a famous event	3,790	3,894	2,896	0,089
Travel to interesting places	3,097	3,890	172,814	0,000
To improve my time	4,367	5,083	142,501	0,000
Prepare for more important events	2,965	3,889	236,020	0,000
Prove to others that I can do it	3,227	3,216	0,028	0,868
Prove to myself that I can do it	5,682	5,759	2,243	0,134
Have fun!	5,815	6,153	67,512	0,000
For the thrill of it!	4,903	5,248	37,799	0,000
For health benefits; to get fit	5,868	6,048	17,110	0,000





IMPORTANT FOR EVENT CHOICE:	Less Involved	Highly Involved	ANOVA	
	Mean	Mean	F	Sig.
Spouse/family wants to go to the event	2,93	3,17	13,240	0,000
I want a new event experience every time	3,043	3,402	39,223	0,000
A low registration fee	3,246	3,405	7,903	0,005
It is part of the "Swedish Classics"	3,638	2,643	153,876	0,000
My friends are also going to the event	3,132	3,415	20,038	0,000
The event is highly visible in social media	2,228	2,404	12,340	0,000
The course is fast	2,287	2,767	90,195	0,000
A recommendation to attend the event from someone I trust	3,121	3,614	63,000	0,000
The reputation and prestige of the event	4,121	4,343	14,810	0,000
A party atmosphere surrounding the running event	3,757	4,053	23,111	0,000
It is a very scenic, interesting track	4,766	5,118	44,413	0,000
Special travel and accommodation packages are provided	2,336	2,700	45,127	0,000
The running event is really well organized	5,653	5,748	4,594	0,032



EXPENSES IN GOTHENBURG SEK per visitor and visit	"HIGHLY INVOLVED" PARTICIPANT IN GÖTEBORGSVARVET	AVERAGE PARTICIPANT IN GÖTEBORGS- VARVET
LODGING IN GOTHENBURG	1 462	412
Restaurant /Café in Gothenburg	557	400
Entertainment in Gothenburg	228	102
Souvenirs from Göteborgsvarvet 2008	50	24
Shopping in Gothenburg	253	311
Groceries bought in Gothenburg	112	105
Local transports in Gothenburg	40	35
Other attractions in Gothenburg	11	24
Fuel bought in Gothenburg	64	41
Other expenditure in Gothenburg	15	46
TOTAL	2 792	1 501

Segmenting Sport Event Tourists: Spectators and Participants



TransRockies Challenge:

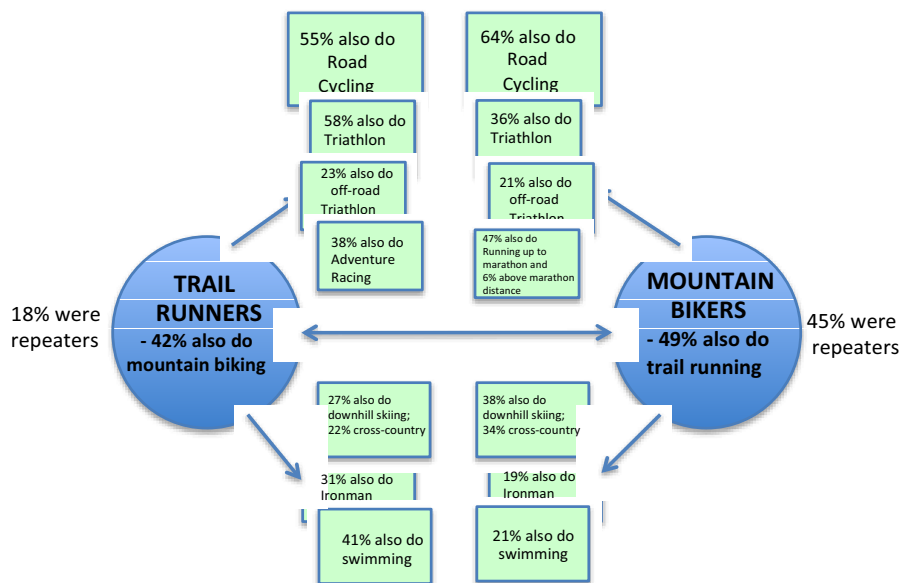
-Mountain Bikers (Alberta)

-Runners (Colorado)

Choice criteria for "highly involved" marathon runners

- I hate poorly organized races - "*Risk*"
- My choices of races describes me as a person - "*Sign and self-identity*"
- Competition is a pleasurable experience - "*Pleasure*"
- I spend a lot of money on running equipment - "*Centrality to lifestyle*"

THE COMPETITIVE-EVENT PORTFOLIOS OF TRAIL RUNNERS AND MOUNTAIN BIKERS





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INVOLVEMENT MEASURE

Choice criteria for "highly involved" marathon runners

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FUTURE RESEARCH

- Conduct in-depth interviews with runners, at different levels of social world involvement.
- Compare amateur athletes in different sports.
- Compare sports with arts and other leisure pursuits.



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Serious Sports Leisure

Shipway and Jones (2007) studied long distance runners as an example of "serious leisure" and suggested the concept: **"serious sport tourism"**.

McGehee, Yoon, and Cardenas, (2003) studied *involvement* among long distance runners and found:

- Involved runners participate in more events at home as well as away from home;
- Degree of involvement affects the search behaviour for information.

