

# The Consumption Impact Of Amateur Athletes At Non-Mega Sport Events: Evidence From A Cycling Race In Germany

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## Aim of the research

While mega sport events, like the Olympics, are increasingly controversial as to their socioeconomic impacts, so-called non-mega events or small-scale events attract the interest of destination marketers and researchers alike. This shift raises the question on the potential of these events to generate an impact on host communities. Therefore, this study examines the economic and touristic potential of the non-mega sport event "neuseen classics", an amateur cycling race in Leipzig, Germany. The focus of the survey study is to (a) assess the direct primary spending by non-local participants and to (b) gather information on the touristic motives and behaviour of these amateur athletes.

## Theoretical background

Non-mega sport events induce a substantially lower media and business interest on a rather national and regional level than mega sport events which require high infrastructure investments and generate tremendous global awareness. Still, they have the theoretical potential to attract sizable numbers of tourists to the host region while avoiding expensive investments (Agha & Taks, 2015). To what extent these events contribute to the touristic development of hosting destinations, is a largely empirical question. Some studies on non-mega sport events have already examined the economic role of spectators. It was shown that their direct primary spending accounts for the largest part of the economic impact of the event (Kwiatkowski, 2016b). This study shifts the focus to the participants of such events and examines their primary direct spending. The key issue is to identify the cash flows that are a net injection of funds from outside the host region of the event.

## Methodology

The case of interest in the present study is the "neuseen classics", one of the largest amateur cycling races in Germany. At the 2016 edition, 1,386 participants were registered and 76.6% of the riders had their residence outside of the defined impact area of Leipzig. The race is part of Germany's biggest amateur cycling series, the "German Cycling Cup" covering 10 other races. For the study, participants were asked to fill in a self-administered, paper-pencil questionnaire on the event site and, via the organiser's newsletter, a day after the event (N = 354). Questions were asked about the participants' trip, their estimated consumption pattern, their motivation to participate, and socio-demographics. The primary impulse of the consumption was calculated using the event visitor typology by Preuss (2005). Tobit regression was run to examine the spending determinants due to the substantial number of zero values (Humphreys, 2013). Cluster analysis was used to analyse the participants' motives.

## Results and discussion

The representativeness of the survey enabled the assessment of the total direct primary spending of all participants based on individual average spending. Notably, age, gender and the travel distance to Leipzig of the sample did not vary more than 6.6% compared to the population. Overall, the participants induced a primary consumption impulse for the city of Leipzig of Euros 59,308. Non-local participants showed expenditures of Euros 72.4 on average during their trip and stayed 1.8 nights on average. Participants, who stayed at least one night, spent 1.8 times less than regular overnight tourists in Leipzig. The low expenditures can be explained partly by the high number of participants staying with friends or family (45.1% of all participants staying overnight). Compared to other non-mega sport events (Kwiatkowski, 2016a), the "neuseen classics" indicate a high number of the most relevant attendee categories of "event visitors" (55.6%) and "home stayers" (14.6%). This evidence emphasizes the touristic potential of the event.

In line with the literature, Tobit regression found two significant spending determinants: age and travel distance. The results of the cluster analysis also confirmed existing evidence. Two out of five clusters are relevant target groups for the tourism industry: Ambitious riders who prefer inexpensive offers and tourism oriented riders who bring their families along and tend to high expenditures. The dominating motives for the other three clusters were an attractive course, the proximity of the race, and the competitive atmosphere of the race.

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the economic potential of small-scale amateur sport events for the example of amateur cycling. It generates evidence on interesting target groups of cycling

event participants. Decision-makers in destination management and the tourism industry may use this information to create attractive products to leverage the business impact of the event. However, further evidence on similar events is needed to replicate and compare the findings. Moreover, the findings here may be used for an economic impact analysis accounting also for indirect second round effects.

## References

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