EVENT LEVERAGING AND HEALTH PROMOTION: 
THE CASE OF THE TOUR OF FLANDERS

by

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Abstract
This dissertation examines event leveraging for health promotion with the outcome of increasing physical activity participation. The case of the Tour of Flanders (Flemish: Ronde van Vlaanderen) is unique because it is a medium-sized, joint spectator and participatory sport event. Although the literature provides examples of social event leveraging for health promotion, one of the limitations of the existing social event leveraging framework is that it does not integrate any concepts and principles of the field of health promotion. Therefore, social ecological theory has been applied to further examine event leveraging through an understanding of systems and targets. In doing so, a socioeconomic event leveraging framework for health and physical activity has been developed and proposed. Qualitative interviews were conducted with former and current event organisers of the Tour of Flanders (i.e., Het Nieuwsblad and Flanders Classics), start and arrival host cities (i.e., Sint-Niklaas, Ninove, Bruges, and Oudenaarde), and municipalities that hosted the Village of the Tour (i.e., Zwalm, Torhout, and Rekkem). In addition to interviews, quantitative surveys were administered with participants from the 2013 edition of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, before ($N = 1,091$) and after the event ($N = 639$). The findings confirmed the socioeconomic nature of event leveraging aimed at increasing bicycle tourism in the region, as both the properties of the event and the context of the host were recognised as leverageable resources. The use of Flanders’ cycling heritage was an excellent tactic to inspire host residents and international visitors to actively participate in new cycling initiatives. Social ecological theory promoted consultation between the event organiser and the host government to develop initiatives that complemented each other in terms of systems and targets. Environmental targets were employed by the regional government by developing new cycling infrastructure and organising participatory cycling events, whereas individual targets were employed by the municipal government by providing cycling education to children. The findings provided sound evidence for organising joint spectator and participatory sport events to promote physical activity participation, while at the same time leveraging these events by providing physical, structural, and social resources in the host community.
Preface

Ethics approval for the project hosting and leveraging the Tour of Flanders was received from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board at The University of British Columbia on November 27, 2012. The certificate of approval was minimal risk and the certificate number was H12-03172.

A summary of chapters 4, 5, and 6 has been accepted for publication [Derom, I., & VanWyensberghe, R. (in press). Extending the benefits from cycling events: Evidence from the Tour of Flanders. European Sport Management Quarterly. doi:10.1080/16184742.2014.997772]. Inge Derom was the lead investigator, responsible for all major areas of conception and design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation, as well as manuscript composition. She also responded to the reviewers’ comments and approved the final proofs prior to publication. Dr. Rob VanWyensberghe was involved as the supervisory author and helped in conception and design, as well as manuscript composition. He also contributed to manuscript edits.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Topic of the dissertation

This dissertation examines event leveraging for health promotion with the outcome of increasing physical activity participation in the case of the Tour of Flanders (Flemish: Ronde van Vlaanderen). The Tour of Flanders is Belgium’s most popular annual cycling event. The topic of event leveraging has become a widespread strategic planning process that seeks to create benefits for the host community that are derived from hosting publicly funded sport events. Throughout the process of event leveraging, leverageable resources are aligned with newly developed initiatives, which preferably are integrated into a public policy strategy. This strategy uses the sport event as a hook to achieve greater interest in leveraging initiatives and better outcomes in terms of attendance and participation (Smith, 2014). Leveraging sport events to create public health benefits appears to be a natural fit, because there is a general assumption – with the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in London as a well-known example – that hosting and watching sport events stimulates an inherent inspiration to be physically active among host residents (Weed, 2013). London, however, was not the first host to have used the Olympic momentum with the purpose of creating a public health legacy (e.g., Beijing see Dapeng, Ljungqvist, & Troedsson, 2010 and Vancouver see De Lisio, Derom, & VanWynsberghe, 2015; Derom & Lee, in press). What was different and unique in the case of the London was the fact that in the early stages of planning and bidding for the event, the objective of increasing physical activity participation at the population level was announced as an Olympic legacy that would benefit host residents. This legacy promise was a ‘raison d’être’ for the bid – influenced by the International Olympic Committee’s amended charter that seeks to promote a positive legacy for the Olympic host (Weed, 2013) – and therefore it was a contributing aspect of winning the Olympic bid (Gold & Gold, 2009; Weed et al., 2012). This effort in the bid phase of the event suggests a more progressive approach to leveraging when compared to previous Olympic Games (Smith, 2014).
The main rationale underpinning the decision to investigate event leveraging for health promotion is the belief that event leveraging has become an important element in the planning, bidding, hosting, and aftermath of sport events. Similar to the trend of event leveraging for sustainable development in which host cities seek to outperform efforts of previous hosts (Pentifallo & VanWynsberghe, 2012), leveraging for physical activity outcomes influences the future of organising sport events. Research revealed, however, that to truly realise authentic health outcomes, sport mega-event hosts must confront evidence that suggests that events smaller in size might be better suited to achieve social benefits for the host population (Taks, 2013). Based on the available research, it is clear that hosting an Olympic Games or any other sport mega-event is no automatic guarantee of increased physical activity participation among the nation as a whole (Mahtani et al., 2013; McCartney et al., 2010; Mitchell et al., 2012). A sustained increase in physical activity is more likely to be achieved via direct local investment (Coalter, 2004), which takes into consideration the host’s available resources and social needs (Weed, Coren, & Fiore, 2009). This is perhaps more easily achieved through organising and leveraging small to medium-sized sport events that promote community-wide participation. Smith (2009) noted that the Olympic Games is a mega-event “that is more likely to be socially disruptive than smaller equivalents” (p. 118). These smaller equivalents provide different opportunities for event leveraging as they “are more likely to build on the existing resources of a city; they are more likely to benefit local people and companies; and they do not come with the same [financial] risks” (Smith, 2012, p. 261). Therefore, this dissertation investigates event leveraging for health promotion in the case of the Tour of Flanders which is not a sport mega-event but a medium-sized sport event. Scholars have proposed different typologies of sport events (e.g., Coalter, 2008; Getz, 2007; Gratton & Taylor, 2000; Solomon, 2002). For the purpose of this dissertation, it is necessary to combine elements of these different typologies since sport events are generally understood to be dominated by spectators, competitors, or participants. The Tour of Flanders, however, is a unique sport event since it combines a major spectator event and a minor participatory event on the same weekend. Although the event generates a significant annual economic impact that has been estimated between €14 million (van Schendel, Tike, & van Dijk, 2009a) and €18 million (Van de Velde, 2010), major and minor in this case refer to the perceived importance of the sport outcomes rather than the size, reach, and potential of the event. While the Tour of Flanders is a competitive road cycling race that is
sanctioned by the International Cycling Union and attracts elite athletes from across the world, the Tour of Flanders Cyclo is a non-competitive cycle touring event that is open to the general public. To highlight the unique spectator and participatory connections, the Tour of Flanders in this dissertation is defined as a medium-sized, joint spectator and participatory sport event.

The Olympic Games – and by extension also other small and medium-sized sport events – are no longer solely used to achieve important outcomes in terms of economic growth, urban regeneration, and community engagement, but also in terms of public health (Bauman, Murphy, & Matsudo, 2012). Kohl and Murray (2012) argued that “public health is a field that encompasses many disciplines in an effort to promote and protect health and prevent disease and disability in defined populations and communities” (p. 4). Purposefully connecting the hosting of sport events to the creation of public health benefits is a positive trend, because public health is currently and urgently threatened by the increased prevalence of chronic diseases and obesity. Heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are among the leading causes of death in many developed countries and share one common and major risk factor: a lack of physical activity (Bouchard, Blair, & Haskell, 2012; Kohl & Murray, 2012). Physical activity has been defined to include “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in an increase in metabolic rate over resting energy expenditure” (Bouchard et al., 2012, p. 12), covering leisure and occupational activities, household chores, and active transportation. It is widely accepted that the most important health benefits of physical activity participation are the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases (Bouchard et al., 2012; Kohl & Murray, 2012; Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006). Regular physical activity participation improves an individual’s physical health which can be measured through the physical condition of the body (e.g., blood pressure, heart rate, muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility). Although physical health is only one dimension of health, it serves as an important foundation to achieve benefits in mental, social, emotional, and spiritual health dimensions (Butler, 1997).

Based on extensive public health research, international physical activity guidelines have been developed to promote health and prevent disease (Kohl & Murray, 2012). The World Health Organisation recommends that adults aged 18 to 64 should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity throughout the week,
generally five days out of seven (World Health Organisation, 2011). Moderate intensity activities require a physical effort but are non-exhaustive, for example brisk walking, easy jogging, or raking leaves, whereas vigorous intensity activities are exhaustive as people work up a sweat and become out of breath, for example running, playing competitive sports, or moving heavy loads (Pate et al., 1995). Individuals not achieving these minimum guidelines are considered insufficiently active to achieve health benefits, and Table 1 shows that 62 percent of the Belgian population can be classified as such. The Federal state of Belgium is divided into three regions that have considerable independence: the Flemish region, the Walloon region, and the Brussels Capital region (Appendix A). These regions have a common parliament and government with responsibilities for territorial and personal matters, including supervision of municipalities and provinces, transportation, sport, health, and tourism, among others (Belgian Federal Government, 2012). Physical activity participation shows great differences across the regions, with the Flemish region (also referred to as Flanders) being the most active region. These data adhere to the physical activity guidelines of the World Health Organisation, meaning that those who are sufficiently active participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate (or vigorous) intensity physical activity on most days of the week, generally five days out of seven. Across the three regions, men are more active than women. Also, older individuals participate less and individuals with higher educational attainment and higher income participate more in physical activity (Tafforeau, 2008).

In addition to general physical activity participation in Belgium, research has described how leisure-time physical activity participation in Europe (Van Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010) and sport participation in Flanders (Scheerder, Vos, Pabian, et al., 2011; Scheerder, Vandermeerschen, Borgers, Thibaut, & Vos, 2013; Scheerder, Vanreusel, Taks, & Renson, 2002) are socially stratified. According to Rose and Harrison (2010), “social stratification refers to social inequalities that may be attributed to the way a society is organised, to its socioeconomic structure” (p. 6). Important indicators of this socioeconomic structure are educational attainment, employment status, income, wealth, prestige, and other aspects that determine one’s status in society. Individuals who share a similar position within society commonly belong to the same social class (Bollen, Glanville, & Stecklov, 2001). This current social stratification, however, does not reflect the Sport for All policy that has been implemented in many countries in
the 1970s, including Belgium. Central to this policy is the idea that sport and physical activity participation should be equally accessible for every resident, regardless of one’s gender, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and physical ability (Scheerder, Vos, Pabian, et al., 2011). The European data suggested that women, older adults, and individuals from lower socioeconomic status groups generally participate less in leisure-time physical activity (Van Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010), which means that they have a greater chance to have poorer health (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). In addition to the aforementioned groups of women, older adults, and individuals from lower socioeconomic status groups, the Flemish data also suggested that individuals with lower educational attainment and lower income, and those who are unemployed or retired are less active in sport when compared to their counterparts (Scheerder, Vos, Pabian, et al., 2011). Furthermore, although sport participation has increased across all social class groups in Flanders during the past 40 years, the type and number of sports an individual engages with are determined by one’s socioeconomic status. As an example, golf, tennis, and skiing are high status sports, whereas boxing, angling, and bowling are low status sports (Scheerder et al., 2002; Scheerder et al., 2013). Both cycle racing and cycle touring – which reflect the Tour of Flanders and the Tour of Flanders Cyclo in this dissertation – are noteworthy sport examples because at the turn of the century, the popularity of these sports has increased significantly and they have moved from being a popular activity among lower socioeconomic status groups to becoming a popular activity among higher socioeconomic status groups in Flanders (Scheerder et al., 2013). The increasing popularity of cycle touring, for example, comes from a growing number of highly educated individuals who are in their twenties or thirties and a growing number of women who are in their forties who started participating (Scheerder, Vos, & Thibaut, 2011). In addition to gender, age, and educational attainment, various other factors have been found to influence physical activity participation and by extension health, making physical inactivity a complex problem that requires a social ecological analysis (Bauman, Reis, et al., 2012).

Although the literature provides examples of social event leveraging for health promotion, one of the limitations of the existing social event leveraging framework is that it does not integrate any concepts and principles of the field of health promotion. This is an issue because health and physical activity appear to be a natural legacy to seek from hosting publicly funded sport events.
Therefore, social ecological theory is applied to complement the analysis on the Tour of Flanders and further examine how leveraging efforts can effectively increase physical activity participation. In doing so, the existing framework on social event leveraging is extended to better fit the purpose of seeking health and physical activity outcomes. This extension involves critical recommendations for the organisation of future sport events. Social ecological theory is widely adopted within the field of health promotion as it provides a broad and holistic understanding of individual health behaviour (Green, Richard, & Potvin, 1996; Richard, Potvin, Kishchuk, Prlic, & Green, 1996). The major assumption underpinning this theory is that individual behaviour is influenced by the interactions between an individual and his or her social and physical environments (e.g., culture, economics, politics, and geography) (Stokols, 1992, 1996). For the purpose of theorising, these environments have been operationalised and stratified into different systems in which an individual and his or her family are nested within a broader set of systems, including organisations and communities. At each system, health promotion interventions can be implemented to modify various determinants of physical activity by targeting, for example, individuals, organisations, or communities (Richard et al., 1996). The application of the health promotion concepts of systems and targets is examined in the case of the Tour of Flanders and its related leveraging efforts.

1.2 Context of the research

1.2.1 Tour of Flanders

The Tour of Flanders is a competitive single-day road cycling race in Belgium that was first organised in 1913 by the newspaper Sportwereld as a publicity event to boost its circulation. Publishers organised their own events to create attractive content for their newspapers and cycling races were used a marketing instrument ‘avant la lettre’ (e.g., similar to the Tour de France by L’Auto in 1903, the Giro d’Italia by Gazzetta dello Sport in 1909, and the Vuelta Ciclista a España by Informaciones in 1935). Professional road cycling, as explained by Morrow and Idle (2008), is a sport founded on commercialism. The newspaper Sportwereld was founded in 1912 by Karel Van Wijnendaele, Leon Van den Haute, and August De Maeght. Although it is generally accepted that Karel Van Wijnendaele is the founding father of the Tour of Flanders, Knuts and Delheye (2013) revealed that the honor must go to Leon Van den Haute. On May 25, 1913 the first edition of the Tour of Flanders, also the longest race in its history, covered 324 km
starting and arriving in Ghent. From the 37 cyclists who started, only 10 finished the race with the winner Paul Deman crossing the finish line after more than 12 hours on the bicycle (Vanwallegem, Van de Velde, Decramer, & Vandenbon, 2013).

The Tour of Flanders was organised by Sportwereld for more than 25 years after which the newspaper was acquired by a larger publishing company. This company published Sportwereld together with Het Nieuwsblad, resulting in one newspaper that consisted of a news section and a sport section. In the eyes of the general public, Het Nieuwsblad was the organiser of the Tour of Flanders up until 2008 when the rights to the event were sold to Flanders Classics. When asked about why the rights to the Tour of Flanders were sold, the Marketing Manager at Het Nieuwsblad responded the following:

I think the first discussion had already begun in the late 1990s: ‘Should we sell the Tour?’ The importance of the event had decreased because you obviously do not sell one newspaper extra – speaking bluntly – by organising the Tour of Flanders. So eventually it came down to selling, which was an emotional experience for the editors and the employees in the company. (Interview, December 2013)

The sale resulted in some speculation about the fact that the event was operating at a loss, but the Marketing Manager strongly denied that since the road cycling race resulted in an annual profit of approximately €750,000 (De Preter, 2012). There was, however, a realisation that the organisation of the Tour of Flanders exceeded the core business of the publisher and this was anticipated by Flanders Classics (interview with Marketing Manager at Het Nieuwsblad, December 2012). Flanders Classics is a commercial organisation that has no affiliations with a publishing company but aims to further professionalise Flanders’ road cycling races. Road cycling has become a global sport with events being organised in Australia, Canada, and China, for example. As a result, Flanders Classics, far more so than Het Nieuwsblad, can effectively negotiate with the International Cycling Union to schedule the Flemish road cycling races early in the springtime on the international cycling calendar (interview with Race Director at Flanders Classics, January 2013). This change from Het Nieuwsblad to Flanders Classics also highlights the increase in size, revenue, and interest of the Tour of Flanders. As an example, the logistical
tasks associated with the event fell to the responsibility of the editor at *Het Nieuwsblad* in the 1980s and could be understood as a side project that was performed out of personal interest (interview with Race Director at *Het Nieuwsblad*, February 2013). Flanders Classics, on the contrary, currently employs ten full-time employees who are responsible for organising, developing, and promoting six spectator and twelve participatory cycling events in Flanders. Professional cycling teams from across the world take part in the 259 km long Tour of Flanders, which is sanctioned by the International Cycling Union and is part of the World Tour calendar and ranking. The International Cycling Union is the governing body for cycling that is responsible for the development, promotion, and regulation of all cycling disciplines at the international level. This non-profit organisation was founded in 1900 by the national cycling federations of Belgium, the United States, France, Italy, and Switzerland (Lagae, Vanclooster, Heijl, & Benijts, 2011). Since its inception, the Tour of Flanders has been hosted annually (except during the First World War) in and around the same cities in Flanders. Only three cities have hosted the start and seven have hosted the arrival of the race. The current start and arrival host cities are Bruges and Oudenaarde, with the former being the capital and largest city in the province of West Flanders and the latter a city in the hilly region of the Flemish Ardennes in the province of East Flanders (Table 2). Since 2004, the Tour of Flanders for Women has been organised on the day of the men’s race. This event starts and arrives in Oudenaarde and covers a distance of 140 km, of which only the final leg copies the route of the men’s race. The women’s race is part of the International Cycling Union’s Women’s Road World Cup. Although using the name, the timing, and the route of the Tour of Flanders is a positive step towards promoting women’s cycling among the general public, Lagae and Heijl (2013) argued that more media attention is necessary to change the dominant masculine culture of cycle racing.

There is quite a bit of competition to gain the rights to host the start and arrival of the race. The most recent evidence came from the 2011 arrival host city of Ninove that, in collaboration with Geraardsbergen and Galmaarden, presented the project *Here is the home of the Tour* to convince Flanders Classics to renew the contract with Ninove as the arrival host city in 2012. More than 37,000 signatures were collected from host residents who supported the arrival of the Tour of Flanders, representing approximately half of the host population within the three communities.
(City of Ninove, 2011). This project, however, was unsuccessful and Oudenaarde was selected as the new arrival host city. The competition among hosts is also evident from the increasing amounts of money that host cities have paid to the event organiser to gain the rights to host the Tour of Flanders. Public funds are an important element of the financial turnover of Flanders Classics, together with television rights, sponsorship, and advertising. There is no revenue through gate receipts because the race takes place on public roads. The current start and arrival host cities paid €125,000 and €150,000 respectively to host the event in 2013 and these amounts will increase to €200,000 by 2016. Table 3 shows that these amounts have increased exponentially since the 1990s. It is important to understand that (candidate) host cities have never been bidding against one another financially to gain the rights to host the event; it has always been the event organiser – previously Het Nieuwsblad and currently Flanders Classics – that set the price and selected the city (interview with Mayor of Sint-Niklaas and Head of the Department of Sport, February 2013). Furthermore, changing the host city of the race has been identified by the event organiser as an opportunity to increase the required public investment. As an example, this public investment almost doubled in 1998 when Bruges became the start host city and has continued to increase ever since. Not only local governments are involved financially, the Flemish government also signed a multi-year partnership agreement with Flanders Classics because of the leveraging potential of the Tour of Flanders to achieve sport development, tourism, and economic impacts (Bourgeois, 2013). Based on the allocated funding by the Flemish government, the Tour of Flanders is the most important event in Flanders receiving €240,000 in 2013, of which €170,000 came from the Department of Sport and €70,000 from the Department of Communication in Flanders (Muyters, 2013). In addition, Flanders Classics received approximately €275,000 from the Department of Tourism to set up initiatives and communicate around the 2013 Centennial Tour celebrations. It is important to emphasise that these aforementioned public investments have solely contributed to the Tour of Flanders and not to the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Given these significant public investments, the tourism and economic impacts of the Tour of Flanders have been examined (Leenknegt, 2005; Van de Velde, 2010; van Schendel et al., 2009a), but the sport development or physical activity impacts or outcomes have not yet received any research attention.
1.2.2 Tour of Flanders Cyclo

Although the Tour of Flanders has been organised since 1913, it was not until 1992 that the first edition of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo took place. The Tour of Flanders Cyclo was organised by the commercial organisation Consultants in Sports (CIS) that was founded by former Olympic track and field athlete Bob Verbeeck. This organisation has undergone many name changes from CIS to Octagon CIS to Golazo sports, as it is known today. Golazo sports is an international marketing company that organises events, represents athletes, and offers consultancy and support for cities and businesses. Organising the Tour of Flanders Cyclo – a participatory cycling event that is open to the general public – was one of the first accomplishments of CIS. Participatory cycling events have been delineated by Lamont and Jenkins (2013) in terms of their length, duration (single-day versus multi-day), number of participants, terrain (flat versus hilly), setting (urban versus countryside), and purpose (charity versus profit). The Tour of Flanders Cyclo is known as a cyclosportive in the European context or gran fondo in the North American context. Essentially, it is a single-day event that covers a long distance and requires great endurance. It includes three routes that differ in length, intensity, and difficulty, namely 83, 133, and 259 km, and these currently start and/or arrive in Bruges and Oudenaarde. The backdrop to this physically demanding sport event is formed by the many cobblestoned hills of the Flemish Ardennes. Although the event is not a competition because participants do not start simultaneously, it definitely includes competitive elements such as the physical challenge of the distance, speed, cobblestones, and hills that are covered on a race bike by most participants. Participants carry a number and the time they take to complete both the entire event and some individual hills is recorded. This information can be accessed online and shared via social media following the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. The routes are marshalled at intersections and participants are able to use feeding stations along the route. Mechanical and medical support is also provided. The Tour of Flanders Cyclo is definitely a commercial event with an average registration fee of €27 in 2013, depending on the length of the selected route and the time of registration. By means of comparison, the registration fee for participatory cycling events that are organised by Flanders Classics is only €10.

The name, the timing, and the route of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo confirm that the participatory equivalent of the Tour of Flanders is an example of event leveraging. In an interview, the Race
Organiser at Pinguin Productions noted that Bob Verbeeck negotiated a deal with *Het Nieuwsblad* in the 1990s to organise the Tour of Flanders Cyclo with the purpose of generating economic benefits (interview, January 2013). This was almost visionary because the Tour of Flanders Cyclo was not immediately a huge success as it only attracted 517 participants in 1992 (Figure 1). Although general cycling participation had increased in the 1970s following the implementation of the *Sport for All* policy (Scheerder, Vos, & Thibaut, 2011), only 2.9 percent of the adult population in Flanders participated in cycle touring at that time (Scheerder et al., 2013). However, both the timing and the route of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo have been influential in terms of its current success. In its early years, the Tour of Flanders Cyclo was organised in July whereas the Tour of Flanders took place in March or April, depending on the calendar of the International Cycling Union. In 1999, the event organiser made the strategic decision to organise the Tour of Flanders Cyclo on the same weekend as the Tour of Flanders with the purpose of increasing the popularity of the participatory event by making a more direct connection to the spectator event. In doing so, the Tour of Flanders Cyclo can be understood as an example of event-led leveraging where the participatory equivalent is inextricably linked to, and leverages benefits from, the spectator event by using the same timing and route (Smith, 2014). The fact that participants can ride their own Tour of Flanders on the day before the elite cyclists – while, depending on the length of the route, completely or partially copying the route of the elites – makes it a unique participatory cycling event. Since 1999, the Tour of Flanders Cyclo has grown rapidly, exceeding 10,000 participants by 2003 and 15,000 by 2006 (Vannoppen, as cited in Leenknegt, 2005). The weather has been an important element in determining the number of participants on the day of the event. The sunny weather in 2011 resulted in a peak of nearly 20,000 cyclists, whereas the cold weather in 2012 attracted approximately 15,000 cyclists. Since 2013, the organiser has implemented a maximum number of 16,000 registrations to guarantee safety and accessibility on all hills. The event has been ‘sold-out’ annually since then. Although the Tour of Flanders Cyclo can be understood as an event in itself because of its popularity, the enduring connections with the spectator event confirm that the event is an example of event leveraging. More importantly, this event highlights the potential of leveraging physical activity outcomes as the Tour of Flanders Cyclo engages a substantial number of individuals as active participants each year, which is the key interest of this dissertation.
In an interview, the Race Director at Flanders Classics described two other participatory events that are organised in and around Oudenaarde that are noteworthy, namely the Tour of the Flemish Cycling Union and the Cardio Tour. Similar to the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, the event organiser has leveraged the name, the timing, and the route of the Tour of Flanders to promote cycle racing among youth and promote cycling as a means of cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation among the general population. Since 2005, young children under the age of 14 can cycle the final 40 or 60 km of the Tour of Flanders in group, just two hours prior to the arrival of the elite athletes. What this means is that these children can experience the atmosphere of the Tour of Flanders while personally and physically exploring the culture of cycle racing. Once these children cross the finish line, they can stay and watch their own heroes do the same later. The enthusiasm for Tour of Flanders is used as a hook to inspire long-term participation in cycle racing. Since 2010, cardiac patients and their families can also cycle the final 40 km of the Tour of Flanders in an effort to promote the importance of physical activity in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases. These participants exercise weekly in the lead-up to the event and taking part in ‘Flanders’ Finest’ cycling race can be understood as a personal and satisfying award for their physical efforts and commitment. All the cardiac patients and their family members wear the same cycling jersey to promote the Cardio Tour among spectators and emphasise the underlying social connection between participating cyclists. These events are sanctioned by Flanders Classics in partnership with the Flemish Cycling Union, the Flemish Cycling School, and the Belgian Cardio League (interview, January 2013).

The Tour of Flanders Cyclo is a cycle touring event that generally attracts participants who enjoy long cycling trips equipped with expensive cycling gear, including a race bike. The 2013 edition of the Tour of Flanders attracted participants from countries across the world, including Canada, Brazil, and South Africa. O’Connor and Brown (2007) referred to cycle tourists as “weekend warriors” (p. 95) who congregate in bunches to ride during the weekends and are perceived by others to sometimes terrorise public roads with their fast pace. Cycle touring is consistent with the structure and culture of a traditional sport club where participants ride and train in groups to improve their performance. In Flanders, these weekend warriors are also known as ‘cycle terrorists,’ implying a subtle reference to cycle tourists. Following many complaints about the
negative behaviour of cycle tourists along tow-paths, the Flemish government introduced speed
bumps to slow down the pace of large groups of cyclists in 2013 (Van Assche, 2013). This was
followed by a new cycling education campaign Bike Wisely in 2014 to encourage active cyclists
to cycle environmentally friendly, safely, and courteously (Grinta, 2014). Currently, cycle
touring is the ninth most popular sport in Flanders, with a prevalence of 7.1 percent among adult
men and 2.1 percent among adult women. In comparison, recreational cycling is the second most
popular sport, with a prevalence of 31.2 percent among adult men and 20.6 percent among adult
women. Recreational cycling can be performed individually on a regular bicycle, outside of the
formal club structure. It is assumed that motives such as relaxation and socialisation are more
important for recreational cyclists when compared to motives such as individual performance
and development for competitive cyclists (Scheerder et al., 2013). Research has suggested that
participants in cycle touring events and those in recreational cycling events in Flanders differ
based on socio-demographic variables. Scheerder, Vos, and Pauwels (2011) have described
Flemish cyclists who participated in at least one cycle touring event (which can include the Tour
of Flanders Cyclo but possibly also other events) as mostly men who are in their thirties or
forties and have completed secondary education. Recreational cycling events were found to
attract participants who are more likely to be female, older, and less educated when compared to
cycle touring events (Scheerder, Vos, & Pauwels, 2011).

The Tour of Flanders Cyclo is organised by Golazo sports, whereas the Tour of Flanders is
organised by Flanders Classics. In an interview, the Race Director at Flanders Classics explained
that Golazo sports successfully negotiated and signed a 10-year contract to organise the Tour of
Flanders Cyclo with Het Nieuwsblad in 2007. Up until 2008, Het Nieuwsblad was the owner of
the official and protected trademark of the Tour of Flanders, and the rights to organise any
activity that leveraged the Tour of Flanders could be acquired from this commercial organisation
for a particular period of time. Although Flanders Classics bought the rights to host the Tour of
Flanders from Het Nieuwsblad in 2008, it is not able to organise the Tour of Flanders Cyclo until
2017, when the official contract between Het Nieuwsblad and Golazo sports expires. After 2017,
Flanders Classics aims to add the Tour of Flanders Cyclo to its own portfolio, working perhaps
in collaboration with Golazo sports or parting in conflict (interview with Race Director at
Flanders Classics, January 2013). Since 2011, Golazo sports has organised the participatory
equivalent of two other road cycling races that are sanctioned by the International Cycling Union and part of the World Tour calendar and ranking, namely Paris-Roubaix and Liège-Bastogne-Liège. Similarly, Flanders Classics organises participatory equivalents of its road cycling races that are sanctioned by the International Cycling Union and part of the Europe Tour calendar and ranking, namely Omloop Het Nieuwsblad, Dwars door Vlaanderen, Ghent-Wevelgem, Brabantse Pijl, and Scheldeprijs. In general, there is an increasing number of elite spectator cycling events that have a participatory event linked to them (International Cycling Union, 2014). Not only has the total number of organised events grown, but the participant numbers have also increased. As elaborated upon previously, this is a positive trend since these events engage a substantial number of individuals as active participants. Recently, this trend was recognised by the International Cycling Union when it established its Mass Participation Commission in April 2014. When discussing the purpose of this commission, the International Cycling Union’s President Brian Cookson argued that:

With more leisure time and an increasing desire by governments and individuals to improve health, there is a real opportunity to significantly grow mass participation events across all territories. I regularly ride mass participation events and I want the UCI [International Cycling Union] to help bring the pleasure they give to more and more people, whatever their age or cycling standard. (Cookson, as cited in International Cycling Union, 2014, para. 4)

This quotation showcases the important connections between event leveraging and social ecological theory. Not only is growing the number and reach of participatory cycling events important – perhaps as one element in leveraging elite spectator cycling events – but organisers should also ensure that these participatory events are an accessible resource for individuals from varying socio-demographic backgrounds and physical activity experiences.

1.2.3 Cycling in Flanders
When describing the context of cycling in Flanders, it is necessary to distinguish between recreational and functional cycling and elaborate upon the prevalence within the population and the infrastructure provided to support this. As elaborated upon previously, recreational cycling
involves leisure-time cycling as a form of physical activity which falls under the responsibility of the Department of Tourism, whereas functional cycling involves cycling as a means of everyday transportation to and from school or work which falls under the responsibility of the Department of Mobility (Transport). Together with the Netherlands and Denmark, Flanders is one of the leaders regarding bicycle ownership and use in Europe. More than 80 percent of all Flemish households possess at least one bicycle and Flemish residents annually cycle on average approximately 600 km (Department of Mobility Policy and Road Safety, 2002). The popularity of cycling, however, is highly correlated with recreational cycling and functional cycling is far less popular overall. As an example, more than 25 percent of the daily journeys in the Netherlands – where there is a strong everyday cycling culture – are made by bicycle (Buehler & Pucher, 2012; Cox, 2012), compared to less than 15 percent in Flanders (Department of Mobility Policy and Road Safety, 2002) and less than 10 percent in Belgium (Federal Department of Mobility and Transport, 2012). More than 60 percent of those who are cycling on a daily basis are individuals under the age of 25. Once individuals reach this age, the data suggest a mass uptake of the use of the car as the primary mode of transportation. Almost 62 percent of the daily journeys in Flanders are made by car (either as a driver or passenger) and about 42 percent of these journeys cover a distance of 5 km or less, which highlights the potential of increasing functional cycling (Department of Mobility Policy and Road Safety, 2002). To capitalise on this potential, the regional and provincial governments of Flanders started with the development of a supra-local functional bicycle network that connects main municipal and urban centres to promote functional cycling in the late-1990s. A total of 11,733 km of functional routes were planned across the Flemish region (Department of Mobility and Public Works, 2006) and an annual bicycle fund of €10 million was set up by the regional and provincial governments to fast-track the development of this network. The latest data show that about 70 percent of the network is effectively in use as a bicycle route (Eltis, 2012). Despite these investments, functional cycling rates have not improved significantly, which stands in sharp contrast to the high recreational cycling rates (Furniere, 2014).

Almost 20 percent of bicycle trips in Flanders are completed for recreational purposes, representing more than half of the total number of cycled kilometers (Department of Mobility Policy and Road Safety, 2002). The recreational cycling network which is based upon a node
system was pioneered by the province of Limburg in the mid-1990s, where 400 km of new recreational routes attracted approximately 325,000 cyclists during the first month (Lippens & Verstraten, 2011). Currently, there are more than 8,000 km of recreational routes across the region and provinces. Individual nodal points cover low-traffic, bicycle-friendly routes that are numbered and signposted. At each intersection, a sign identifies the direction and number of adjacent nodes. The majority of these nodal points are routed along existing roads, which suggests that recreational cycling “does not require extensive investment in new facilities, but that the road network already supplies a vast and under-utilised resource which may be better exploited” (Cox, 2012, p. 34). The nodes form a network that can be accessed online where users can prepare their cycling activity by writing down the nodes of the route they want to complete, downloading the route onto their satellite navigation system, or buying a printed map of the nodes in a particular area. The most comprehensive approach to promoting recreational cycling and cycle tourism can be found in the province of East Flanders, where the culture of cycle racing has been epitomised by the history of the Tour of Flanders and the associated recreational cycling infrastructure (Cox, 2012). As elaborated upon previously, recreational cycling is the second most popular sport in Flanders, with a prevalence of 31.2 percent among adult men and 20.6 percent among adult women (Scheerder et al., 2013).

1.3 Purpose of the dissertation

Given the importance assigned to physical activity participation world-wide, the purpose of this doctoral dissertation is to examine how sport events are organised and leveraged to promote health and achieve outcomes of increased physical activity participation. The following research questions are examined in the case of the Tour of Flanders:

RQ1: What processes undertaken by the municipal, provincial, and/or regional levels of government in Flanders have leveraged the Tour of Flanders by connecting leverageable resources to outcomes of increased physical activity participation?
RQ2: Based on the developed leveraging initiatives and the achieved outcomes, how effective is event leveraging for increased physical activity participation reported by the Tour of Flanders Cyclo participants?
RQ3: Based on social ecological theory and the research findings, what are the lessons learned to improve event leveraging for increased physical activity?

From a methodological point of view, the research design combines qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the processes and outcomes of event leveraging for health promotion. By interviewing individuals responsible for organising and leveraging the Tour of Flanders, this study thoroughly examines the processes of event leveraging. Furthermore, by surveying participants at the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, this study obtains insights into health outcomes in terms of increased physical activity participation. By adding primary quantitative data, this study extends previous research that has used secondary data to evaluate whether or not event leveraging resulted in significant outcomes (e.g., Berridge, 2012; van Bedaf, 2012).

There are solid rationales for selecting the Tour of Flanders as the case to be examined in this dissertation. First, the Tour of Flanders is a cycling event and in terms of promoting physical activity participation, cycling has been identified as an activity that is easy to adopt and adhere to over the long term, with few barriers to participation (Frank, Engelke, & Schmid, 2003). The health benefits that can be achieved through cycling are significant and can be complemented with economic and environmental benefits (Garrard, Rissel, & Bauman, 2012). Since cycling as a physical activity can yield positive benefits in many policy areas, the organisation and leveraging of cycling events can be understood as a public policy tool that seeks to achieve certain predetermined outcomes for the host by investing public funds in leveraging initiatives. Cycling events have been previously identified as opportunities to promote physical activity among host residents. As an example, the 2010 edition of Tour de France Grand Départ, the official start of the Tour de France that was hosted by the city of Rotterdam in the Netherlands, has been leveraged to increase cycling participation among host residents, and in particular immigrants, youth, and women. Leveraging efforts resulted in the organisation of cycling clinics, the provision of a free bicycle repair shop, and the improvement of local cycling infrastructure, to name a few (van Bedaf, 2012). Following the event, functional cycling, which refers to cycling for transportation, increased by six percent in the host city (de Graaf, as cited in van Bedaf, 2012), and so did cycle touring as the Rotterdam Cycling Federation welcomed 50 new members (Nederlandse ToerFiets Unie, as cited in van Bedaf, 2012).
Second, most sport event research examines either spectator or participatory events. The Tour of Flanders is a unique event as it combines both a spectator and participatory sport event on the same weekend, and as a result, a spectator and participatory sport event are combined into a single dissertation. As elaborated upon previously, the Tour of Flanders in this dissertation is defined as a medium-sized, joint spectator and participatory sport event. In general, spectator events attract a large number of (inter)national spectators compared to a small number of elite athletes. These events have significant sport outcomes as the results influence an athlete’s ranking, qualification, and sport career. Participatory events have the potential for community-wide participation and they attract a small number of spectators, many of whom are often friends and family of participants or local residents. These events have insignificant sport outcomes for the participants as they are not tied to an ongoing competition and are open for participants at every level. Participatory events have become increasingly popular; not only has the total number of organised events grown but the participant numbers have also increased. Due to their popularity, some events are ‘sold-out’ weeks or months before the event. Because on most occasions participants are required to pay a registration fee, organising participatory sport events can also be a profitable business that generates substantial economic impacts (Coleman & Ramchandani, 2010; Colijn & Kok, 2007; Gratton & Taylor, 2000; Murphy & Bauman, 2007; Saayman & Saayman, 2012).

Third, the topic of this dissertation aligns well with the policy objectives of the Flemish government, both in terms of promoting physical activity participation and organising sport events. This alignment shows a clear public policy need for the research undertaken and analysed in this dissertation. Understanding that the regional government should take an active role in health promotion, the Flemish Minister of Health developed and implemented the Action Plan on Nutrition and Movement of which the main objective is “to achieve health gains at the population level through an increase in the number of people who are sufficiently active, eat a balanced diet, and pursue a healthy weight” (Flemish Government, 2009a, p. 6). Two out of the five sub-objectives are about physical activity, namely: (1) the percentage of people who are sufficiently active to achieve health benefits increases by 10 percent by 2015; and (2) the percentage of people who are sedentary decreases by 10 percent by 2015 (Flemish Government, 2009a). These
objectives highlight that there is a need to find effective tools to increase physical activity participation among the general population and organising and leveraging sport events can perhaps be one of those tools. Furthermore, the Flemish Minister of Sport recognised the importance of evaluating the impacts and outcomes of spectator and participatory events, demonstrated by the following quotation:

   Each year, a mix of participatory events, spectator events, and events for specific target groups are organised. The effects of these events, however, are not always clear. It is important to have an overview of the various indicators that demonstrate the impact of an event. (Flemish Government, 2009b, p. 26)

This quotation highlights the need to evaluate the impacts and outcomes of different types of sport events. Currently, the Flemish government only seems to acknowledge the importance of spectator events in terms their potential to achieve sport development, tourism, and economic impacts. Only spectator events are able to receive funding – which has been elaborated upon previously in this introduction – to cover parts of the organising costs based on the alleged impacts (Flemish Government, 2009b). The findings of this dissertation may promote the funding of participatory sport events based on their physical activity impacts or outcomes. To start examining how sport events can be organised and leveraged to achieve outcomes of increased physical activity participation, the following chapter discusses the literature on event leveraging with a specific consideration of event leveraging for social outcomes, including health and physical activity outcomes.
Table 1. Physical activity participation according to subsamples of the Belgian population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Belgium</th>
<th>Flanders</th>
<th>Wallonia</th>
<th>Brussels Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sufficiently active</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insufficiently active</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tafforeau, 2008

Note. The employment rate in Flanders is significantly higher compared to the employment rate in Wallonia, resulting in higher welfare dependence in the southern region of Belgium. Family composition also differs, with more single households and single income families in Wallonia and more dual households and dual income families in Flanders (Cantillon & De Maesschalck, 2007).
Table 2. Start and arrival host cities of the Tour of Flanders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start city</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Arrival city</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghent</td>
<td>1913-1976</td>
<td>Ghent</td>
<td>1913-1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wetteren</td>
<td>1928-1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ghent</td>
<td>1942-1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wetteren</td>
<td>1945-1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ghent-Bruges</td>
<td>1962-1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruges</td>
<td>1998-…</td>
<td>Oudenaarde</td>
<td>2012-…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Vanwalleghem, 1998
Table 3. Public investments by host cities in the Tour of Flanders by year, 1977-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Start city</th>
<th>Amount $^a$</th>
<th>Amount $^b$</th>
<th>Arrival city</th>
<th>Amount $^a$</th>
<th>Amount $^b$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>3,718</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>750,000</td>
<td>18,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>4,462</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>37,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>4,214</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>37,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>1,859</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>37,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>1,859</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>37,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1,239</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>37,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>2,479</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>37,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>12,394</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>750,000</td>
<td>18,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
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<td>9,296</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>37,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>412,500</td>
<td>10,225</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>37,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>14,873</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>37,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>16,113</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>37,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Bruges</td>
<td>1,100,000</td>
<td>27,268</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>37,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Bruges</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Bruges</td>
<td>80,000</td>
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<td>2012</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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<td>2014</td>
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<td>Oudenaarde</td>
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<td>Oudenaarde</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>Oudenaarde</td>
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Source: Interview with the Mayor of Sint-Niklaas and Head of the Department of Sport, February 2013; Interview with the President of the Arrival Committee, February 2013; and Interview with the Manager at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, November 2012

Note. a The amounts of money are presented in Belgian franc, which was the currency in Belgium before the introduction of the Euro in 2002. b The amounts of money are presented in Euro. The values that are italicised are those that have been calculated manually using the exchange rate of October 3, 2013 (1 Belgian franc = 0.0248 Euro) (www.tijd.be/wisselkoersen) with the purpose of better comparing public investments over time.
Figure 1. Participant numbers at the Tour of Flanders Cyclo by year, 1992-2014

Source: Vannoppen, as cited in Leenknecht, 2005; Sportinez and Golazo sports, 2013
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review begins with defining event leveraging by elaborating upon the relationship between event impacts and event outcomes. Although event leveraging has been introduced from an economic perspective, the scope that is attributed to the concept of leveraging has expanded considerably and it currently also includes event leveraging for social outcomes, which is referred to as social event leveraging. Following a discussion of the literature on social event leveraging for health promotion, which focuses in particular on sport mega-events as opposed to other small and medium-sized sport events, the main theoretical assumptions and concepts of social ecological theory are introduced. When integrating and applying social ecological theory to the strategic planning process of event leveraging, both cycling infrastructure and participatory cycling events are discussed as possible leveraging tools or health promotion targets. These tools or targets can be implemented at the community system to leverage an increase in physical activity participation in the host region. The development of cycling infrastructure and the organisation of participatory cycling events have been supported with evidence from the Tour de France Grand Départ.

2.1 Event leveraging

The term ‘leveraging’ emerged in the business literature to describe the processes and strategies used by individuals to maximise the economic return on their marketing investments and to promote financial growth of the company (Slywotzky & Shapiro, 1993). Leveraging was introduced to the sport mega-event literature from a business point of view by Chalip (2004), who recognised sport mega-events as opportunities to realise economic benefits by attracting potential investors and tourists to the host city. Chalip (2004) put forward a general framework on event leverage, which has been used as the basis for existing definitions of both economic and social leverage (Chalip, 2006; O’Brien & Chalip, 2007, 2008). The majority of scholars continue to examine leverage in the case of sport mega-events. Nonetheless, the application to smaller events is a current developing research area to which this dissertation contributes (e.g., Hoskyn, 2011; O’Brien, 2007; Smith, 2010; Snelgrove & Wood, 2010; Taks, Misener, Chalip, & Green, 2013). The delineation between impacts and outcomes, which is important to understand event
leverage, is simplified in the case of smaller events because planning for these events occurs in a regional – instead of national or international – context.

Event impacts refer to the positive or negative effects of planned event projects. These event projects are required by the event rights holder to stage the event and therefore, they appear to be the automatic result of hosting the event (Smith, 2012). One example of an event impact is the construction of a new track and field facility to host a medium-sized, one-off sport event (Taks, Green, Misener, & Chalip, 2014). Event outcomes are more strategic than event impacts as they refer to the positive or negative effects of planned parallel projects. These parallel projects are not required by the event rights holder to stage the event, but they result from voluntary, non-compulsory efforts by various event stakeholders to leverage the event (Smith, 2012). Parallel projects emerge at the opportunity of planning the event and are used as an instrument to achieve – and sometimes fast-track (Andranovich, Burbank, & Heying, 2001) – pre-existing and long-term public policy objectives (Smith, 2014; Smith & Stevenson, 2009). One example of an event outcome is the implementation of specific strategies to stimulate track and field participation among various stakeholder groups to promote the use of the new track and field facility in the post-event period (Taks et al., 2014). Chalip (2004) introduced a general framework on event leveraging by elaborating upon the distinction between event impacts that are required and event outcomes that are not.

The shift in thinking from event impact to event leverage mandates a shift in the ways that events are planned, managed, and evaluated. It is no longer suitable merely to host an event in the hope that desired outcomes will be achieved; it is necessary to form and implement strategies and tactics that capitalise fully on the opportunities each event affords. (Chalip, 2004, p. 245)

This quotation highlights the main assumption that underpins the framework, which is now widely accepted, namely that event stakeholders should capitalise on the opportunities that are presented by the event. The sport event, however, does not do anything in and by itself, but hosting the event does create a window of opportunity for event stakeholders to strategically use the event to plan for additional economic or social outcomes.
Based on this understanding, two related frameworks on event leverage have been developed, one focused on economic leverage (Chalip, 2004) and one concerned with social leverage (Chalip, 2006; O’Brien & Chalip, 2007, 2008). In terms of economic leverage, the sport event itself – or, when applicable, a portfolio of several events throughout the year – is conceived to be a leverageable resource or, more specifically, a financial asset that sets apart a host community from its competitors by providing opportunities for economic growth (Chalip, 2004; O’Brien, 2006; Sparvero & Chalip, 2007). Event leveraging then, fits into an extensive and sound literature that largely agrees on the idea that hosting sport mega-events can successfully employ place promotion and host branding with Olympic-related but unique meanings (e.g., Waitt, 2008; Whitson, 2004). The framework on economic leveraging suggests that event leveraging leads to the strategic creation of additional sources of economic activity for select parts of the host community via two related business and tourism processes. The first process highlights the immediate increased revenues originating from tourists who patronise local businesses during their stay. The second long-term source of economic activity comes from heightened international media exposure, which in turn sponsors international, national, or local contracting for commercial and public organisations. The economic outcomes that are possible, however, are relatively circumscribed in the case of sport mega-events in that venues, infrastructure, and accommodations have to be built or hosting the massive number of tourists is impossible. Tourists are virtually guaranteed and can reach into the hundreds of thousands. In this sense, leveraging economic outcomes in the case of sport mega-events is presumably an accomplished fact for potential host cities.

In just two years, the scope attributed to the concept of event leveraging has expanded considerably. This expansion appears to be linked to O’Brien’s (2007) hunch that the knowledge of the leveraging phenomena has grown, and it appears to receive support from Smith (2009) who confirmed that researchers have begun to explore other outcomes such as sustainable leveraging for host communities. Sport events are no longer solely understood as leverageable resources for economic development, they are, instead, referred to as “seed capital” – arguing that it is the responsibility of host communities to use this capital to realise sustainable longer-term legacies (O’Brien, 2006, p. 258). In other words, while the resources by which leveraging
occurs remain largely described as economic, the meaning and purpose of event leveraging has been extended to also include the social outcomes sought by a broader groups of community stakeholders, as explained by O’Brien and Chalip:

Thus, rather than the traditional ‘build it and they [benefits] will come’ approach to sport events, the purpose of event leveraging is to be proactive in planning for the creation of specific event benefits for the host community, and taking strategic measures to make those events sustainable. (O’Brien & Chalip, 2008, p. 320)

While it is unclear whether the invocation of the concept of sustainability in relation to the framework on social leveraging refers to just the viability of the event or if it also includes the outcomes of efforts to leverage the event (O’Brien, 2006; Taks, 2013), it is important to recognise the growing nexus between sustainability and sport events. According to Smith (2009), the inclusion of sustainability changed the formerly economically-focused perspective on event leveraging to include long-term and equitably distributed social benefits, extending outcomes to ones beyond tourism and other businesses. The implications of recognising this shift towards (social) sustainability should include the development of a standard against which sustainable outcomes can be measured (Vanwynsberghe, 2014).

Underlying this shift in the focus from economic to social event leveraging is a more profound shift in understanding the concept and workings of event leveraging. In terms of the framework on economic leveraging, Chalip (2004) argued that positive impacts that result from hosting a sport event should be converted into positive and long-term outcomes for the host. The sport event itself is understood as a financial asset which is known to – no matter what – attract international tourists to the host. What is different in terms of the framework on social leveraging is that it permits us to focus on the mechanisms of converting negative impacts that are generally associated with hosting sport mega-events (e.g., distortion of the residential property market, environmental degradation, and government budget cuts) into positive and long-term outcomes for the host. The inherent financial resource of the sport mega-event itself, however, is not sufficient to unlock or forecast the social potential of the event. One important factor in changing the scope of event leverage to include social benefits has been host residents who juxtapose the
hosting of sport mega-events with budget cuts in areas such as housing, social support, recreation, and public health with investments in world-class sport facilities (e.g., Bloyce & Smith, 2010; Girginov & Hills, 2008; Lenskyj, 2000). The resident-inspired critique of sport mega-event hosts is that these jurisdictions use “bread and circuses” in the process of building a “world-class” city, which is not intended to benefit the host community (Eisinger, 2000, p. 331). More generally, community stakeholders have started to demand positive social value, since host residents themselves should benefit from hosting, leveraging, and funding different sport events.

2.2 Social event leveraging

When leveraging an event for social benefits, the leverageable resource is not the event itself but rather the liminality and communitas which are the resources that create a leverageable climate (Chalip, 2006; O’Brien & Chalip, 2007, 2008). While borrowing from the work of van Gennep, the concept of liminality has been applied to the context of cultural performances by Turner (Turner, 1979, 1984). In what signals a radical departure from the original conception of event leverage, the object of focus for understanding social leverage appears to be the pre-event moment (which can encompass years in the case of sport mega-events) when ambitions for society are heightened and routine is replaced by possibility. In anticipation of the event, there is a liminal period in which people can safely express desires, possibilities, and ideas – or explore social concerns (Chalip, 2006) – that can inspire and stimulate social action (Turner, 1979). Liminality presents an almost parallel state that seems potentially realisable, a state which reveals a society’s deepest values (Turner, 1984). In these liminal periods when society weakens its hierarchical structure, communitas emerges (Turner, 1979). Communitas has an unstructured and spontaneous character that is based upon relations of equality and solidarity among community members, which opposes the normative social structure. According to Turner (1969), “it is almost everywhere held to be sacred or ‘holy,’ possibly because it transgresses or dissolves the norms that govern structured and institutionalised relationships and is accompanied by experiences of unprecedented potency” (p. 128). In relation to hosting sport events, Chalip (2006) described liminality as a feeling that something important and sacred is happening and this feeling can be experienced by all members of the host community.
Certainly, the event itself is not the explanation [italics added]. If the occasion is a sporting event, the sport may be the catalyst, vehicle, or rationale for the felt sense of importance, but it is neither the object nor the cause. The sporting outcomes may matter to some, but there is a sense that something more important – something that transcends the sport – is going on. It feels as if new energy has been injected into the communal atmosphere – an energy that can be shared by all [italics added]. Social rules and social distinctions seem less important, and are sometimes suspended altogether. There is a heightened sense of community among those who are present. (Chalip, 2006, p. 110)

What this quotation again highlights is that the sport event does not do anything in and by itself, but it can be a catalyst for event stakeholders to take social action. Furthermore, although the focus here is on social leverage, one cannot be blind to the fact that social objectives often simultaneously and strategically serve economic, political, and perhaps even environmental ones (e.g., De Lisio et al., 2015; VanWynsberghe, Derom, & Maurer, 2012).

The framework on social event leveraging (Figure 2) asserts that there are powerful resources present in the host community in the pre-event period, for which novel strategies can be designed to make use of (leverage) these resources to achieve particular social objectives (Chalip, 2006; O’Brien & Chalip, 2007, 2008). The framework begins with the leverageable resources that are socially-oriented and/or part of the hosts’ existing urban development, history, and reputation (step 1). These resources can be uniquely reconfigured to align with the opportunities present in hosting the event (step 2). From this, the sport event provides opportunities for government administrators to achieve key strategic policy objectives (step 3). The final step or the means to achieve the objective (step 4) is particular to the host and its targeted social issue(s). This framework has been used to examine leveraging processes observed in both the context of the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympic Games (Tian & Johnston, 2008), as well as the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games (VanWynsberghe et al., 2012). A process can be understood as a series of actions for achieving a particular objective, while converting the available resources from the host community into initiatives that benefit the host (Chelladurai, 2009). In essence, the use of the term leveraging process refers to different event units that cover an extensive timeline from the pre-event until the post-event period. In focusing on Beijing, Tian and Johnston (2008) called
for an extension of the framework to include greater attention on the “leveragers” (i.e., those who are responsible for conducting the leverage) and the “leveragees” (i.e., those who are recipients of leveraging efforts). The example that is presented in Figure 2 elaborates upon the case of Vancouver and how the municipal government leveraged the hosting of the 2010 Olympic Games through the Greenest City initiative to further develop its sustainability business brand. This research illustrated the vital yet often overlooked role of political parties in power (whether municipal, provincial, or federal) to act as “leveragers” in the leveraging process and it also illuminated the complex and iterative (rather than linear) nature of leveraging (VanWynsberghe et al., 2012). Building on the social leveraging framework proposed initially by O’Brien and Chalip (2007, 2008), both studies presupposed the presence of liminality within the event context as an important leverageable resource. According to Chalip (2006), there are preconditions for creating liminality through an event, namely fostering social interaction and prompting a feeling of celebration, which can be achieved by providing social opportunities in which event participants and host residents can take part (Kellett, Hede, & Chalip, 2008). The concept of liminality, however, is limited temporally and geographically and this is largely unaddressed in the framework on social leveraging. A progressive approach to event leveraging should initiate social leveraging in the earliest phases of event planning, ideally in advance of submitting a bid to host an event (Smith, 2014). Although anecdotal evidence of experiences of liminality can be collected in any sport mega-event host during the event, one can question whether the bid phase is a special enough period of time for liminality to occur and social leveraging to be initiated.

Despite the existing framework on social leverage, O’Brien (2007) suggested that “strategically leveraging sport events to shift a host community’s social change agenda remains empirically unexplored” (p. 162). This comment underscores a central problem in applying the framework, namely the manifold ways that a growing list of stakeholders is participating in event leveraging. What is missing from the framework is any reference to stakeholders’ responsibilities regarding the processes and outcomes of social event leveraging, and more specifically, there is no discussion as to whom is responsible for conducting the social leverage and whom should benefit from it (Tian & Johnston, 2008). This is quite different from economic event leveraging where event owners, public sector agencies responsible for economic and tourism development, and commercial organisations have been identified as leaders in initiating and conducting the
leverage (O’Brien, 2006). O’Brien and Chalip (2008) were too ambiguous when they noted that, “it is incumbent upon event stakeholders [italics added] to become aware of (potentially) relevant issues…and then mount initiatives designed to address those issues” (p. 329), without elaborating upon the various event stakeholders involved in organising sport events and those having a potential ‘stake’ in the social issues.

Considering the most recent effort to describe leveraging, it was explained that “there is no single entity for which event leverage is necessarily a natural assignment” (Chalip & Heere, 2014, p. 189). The absence of this entity exacerbates the ambiguity of leveraging. The good news is that bid and organising committees have recognised that non-economic benefits need to receive greater attention, at least in the early stages of event planning (e.g., Pentifallo & VanWynsberghe, 2012). In terms of social leveraging as it has been (barely) practiced, it has become clear that the organising committees cannot handle the burden of addressing social issues, even minor ones, alone (e.g., VanWynsberghe, Surborg, & Wyly, 2013). Leveraging for social benefits is increasingly falling under the responsibility of various event stakeholders, including different levels of government, non-governmental organisations, event owners, community groups, and others who are not part of the official organising committee but who share the purpose of creating a social legacy in the host community (Smith, 2014; VanWynsberghe, Kwan, & Van Luijk, 2011). Currently, sport mega-event hosts are globally challenged – including by the International Olympic Committee – to use the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity of hosting to produce social outcomes and legacies in the host community, for example by alleviating social issues such as crime, homelessness, and social exclusion that typically rate high in most mega-event hosts. Although O’Brien and Chalip (2008) suggested that event leveraging can create positive social benefits in terms of health promotion in the host community, the existing framework on social leveraging does not yet provide the instructions to implement strategies and tactics necessary to do so.

2.3 Social event leveraging for health promotion
The concept of health legacy was first discussed and defined at an Olympic symposium in Lausanne in 2002 as “the sustainable, positive health impacts on the host city or country, associated with the hosting of the Olympic Games” (Troedsson, Ljungqvist, Wei, & Dapeng,
2010, p. 5). This definition, however, assumes that a legacy can be obtained through the automatic impacts that are associated with hosting the event, which eliminates the need for event leveraging to achieve pre-determined, long-term outcomes. Event legacies have been conceptualised as part of a legacy cube which covers all “planned and unplanned, positive and negative, intangible and tangible structures created through a sport event that remain after the event” (Gratton & Preuss, 2008, p. 1924). According to Girginov and Hills (2008), legacies are constructed – planned for – and not given. As Misener, Darcy, Legg, and Gilbert (2013) argued, “planning for legacy then is about developing enduring, long-term positive benefits usually on a regional or national scale because the funder is typically a government agency” (p. 329). Several studies have helped to illustrate that health legacies “should not be considered as an automatic ‘trickle down’ – rather, they need to be planned for, organised, and funded in the same way as the mega-sport events” (Mitchell et al., 2012, p. 17) (e.g., Mahtani et al., 2013; McCartney et al., 2010; Shipway, 2007). Weed et al. (2012) turned to event leveraging to compensate for the lack of an “inherent” health legacy of the Olympic Games (p. 76).

The 2012 Games (or any major sports event or sport franchise) is not a magic bullet to raise participation in physical activity and sport, or to encourage positive health behaviours. Undoubtedly, if leveraged, the 2012 Games can contribute, but as part of wider physical activity and sport participation initiatives and within the wider 2012 legacy effort. (Weed et al., 2009, p. 12)

A great deal of theoretical emphasis is now beginning to be placed on the mechanisms that produce legacies. Similarly to the literature on leveraging more generally, the majority of scholars continue to examine leveraging for health promotion outcomes in the case of sport mega-events. Nonetheless, some scholars have applied the concept to smaller sport events. As an example, a recent study conducted by Taks et al. (2014) confirmed the assumption of the automatic trickle-down effect of a health legacy in the case of a medium-sized track and field event. In order to host the event, a new athletics facility was built which enhanced opportunities for those who were already involved in sport, but unfortunately no leveraging strategy was developed or coordinated to stimulate sport participation among the wider host community. The authors concluded that:
Creating ‘awareness’ was the magic word for attracting new participants into track and field. It was assumed that the uniqueness of the event (i.e., a one-time international sporting event), its brand new facility, and the tremendous positive media coverage, would automatically create a buzz and attract new participants [italics added]. Unfortunately, the findings provide no evidence to support this assumption. (Taks et al., 2014, p. 16)

These findings resemble Weed’s (2013) critique in that event legacies are often limited to providing a supply of facilities, playing fields, coaches, and volunteers to satisfy the increase in demand that is assumed to inevitably result from hosting the event. This supply, however, mostly affects those who are already participating in sports and does very little to inspire those who are currently not active to take part (Weed, 2013).

Adhering to previous work on event leveraging in semantics, Weed et al. (2009) argued that the objective of event leverage is to identify the strategies and tactics that can be implemented prior to and during an event in order to generate particular outcomes. What was different in their research is firstly, the elimination of discussing health legacies in terms of the framework on social event leveraging that was proposed by O’Brien and Chalip (2007, 2008), and secondly, the argument that strategies and tactics need to be integrated into a “legacy strategy to leverage participation” (Weed et al., 2009, p. 25). The purpose of this strategy is to serve an existing need, undertaken in conjunction with or parallel to the event to maximise social value (Potwarka & McCarville, 2008; Prest & Partridge, 2010; Smith, 2009, 2010; Weed et al., 2009). Various tactics can be strategically and purposefully – as opposed to a case of happenstance (O’Brien, 2007) – integrated into this strategy, including community and educational programs, opportunities for coaching, and well-planned, accessible facilities (Weed et al., 2009). As a result, the sport mega-event itself is only one element that is embedded in a broader and long-term strategy that exists long after the event itself (Coalter, 2004; Murphy & Bauman, 2007).

When hosting the 2012 Olympic Games in London, there was a strong belief that the sport mega-event would inspire host residents to be physically active (Weed, 2013). Event leveraging was
initiated in the bid phase, more specifically in 1997 when the British Olympic Association commissioned a feasibility study for London to host the Olympic Games. Influenced by reviewing the failed bids by Birmingham for the 1992 Olympic Games and Manchester for the 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games, it was clear that the creation of sport outcomes alone (e.g., sport infrastructure, sport development, sport performance, and sport tourism) would be insufficient to gain support for the bid. Therefore, plans for event leveraging included broader outcomes such as regeneration, employment, tourism, new housing, and the health of the nation, although there was only weak research evidence to support these claims (Gold & Gold, 2009). The bid committee outlined legacy ambitions and one of the five legacy promises was to “make the United Kingdom a world-leading sporting nation,” which included the target of “helping at least two million more people be more physically active by 2012” through sport and general physical activity (Hover, Straatmeijer, Romijn, & Breedveld, 2013; Weed, 2013). Once London was selected as the Olympic host, the responsibility for developing and delivering the legacy strategy was taken on by the government’s Department for Culture, Media and Sport with the involvement of governments in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the nine English regions (Weed, 2013). One year prior to the London Olympic Games, however, the target of inspiring one million more people to participate in sport – towards which only negligible progress was made – was dropped in favour of spending resources more effectively on young adults (Gibson, 2011).

One example that aligns with the topic of this dissertation is that the promotion of cycling was recognised as one way to increase physical activity participation among the general population in the lead-up to the 2012 Olympic Games. The Department for Transport and the Department of Health provided £155 million in funding to Cycling England to create an environment that facilitates physical activity participation. One initiative that was created was the Cycling Demonstration Towns program that focused on improving cycling infrastructure, removing barriers to cycling (e.g., lack of equipment, skills, or confidence), and promoting cycling in schools and at workplaces (Department of Transport, 2010a). Results from the first three years of the Cycling Demonstration Towns program showed that cycling participation in participating towns increased on average with 27 percent, and because of these positive results, the program was implemented in other communities across the country. This increase was the result of more
new people who started cycling and not just current cyclists who cycled more often (Department of Transport, 2010b), which can be attributed to the hosting of the 2012 Olympic Games since the funding for this program was specifically made available because of hosting and leveraging the event. Whether this increase in cycling participation has been sustained in the post-event period, has not yet been disclosed (Department of Transport, 2011).

The sport mega-event literature describes efforts of various event stakeholders that have introduced health promotion initiatives in the advent of previous Olympic Games. In the context of the Atlanta 1996 Olympic Games, the Georgia-state health agency started to plan for event-related health legacies immediately after Atlanta won the bid in 1990. One action taken was the creation of a health promotion brochure that was mailed with ticket information to those who participated in the Olympic ticket lottery. Information covered in the brochure included physical fitness, health care and insurance, heat related illness, injury prevention, and tobacco use (Meehan et al., 1998). Similarly, in the context of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, health promotion initiatives were explicitly developed by the organising committee, the national government and municipalities hosting Olympic events, the National School of Public Health, and official commercial sponsors of the Games. One initiative provided information about physical activity and healthy eating to Greek students through brochures and lectures (Soteriades et al., 2006). The total cost of these health promotion initiatives, however, was only a small fraction of the total cost of the Games, which led Smith (2014) to argue that these low-cost initiatives arise from event-led opportunities that are designed merely as symbolic efforts to deter local opposition and dampen press criticism in relation to the massive investment in sport mega-events. Furthermore, these two cases are not very innovative in terms of health promotion as they cover an information-based approach grounded in health education. This approach seeks to promote health by modifying individual behaviour (e.g., eating, drinking, smoking, and physical activity habits) (Breslow, 1999). Health education interventions have been proven to have little effect in terms of sustained behaviour change because they fail to change elements in the social and physical environments that – for some part unconsciously – influence an individual’s health. Health promotion is an extension of health education that also seeks to address environmental conditions in the community (O’Neill & Stirling, 2007; Scheerder, Van den Broucke, & Saan, 2003).
The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games provide a more innovative example of event leveraging for health promotion. Before the Olympic bid, governments in China did not attach great importance to physical activity and mass sport participation in favour of the almost exclusive devotion to elite sport development. Most sport and recreation facilities were in poor condition and participation numbers were low, but in order to gain support for the bid, governments tailored their policies to the needs of the local population. Qingdao, the host city of the Olympic sailing regatta, leveraged the mega-event through direct provision of facilities, the organisation of low or no cost programs available to host residents, and the training of instructors (Wang & Theodoraki, 2007). In addition to building elite facilities such as the Qingdao Yacht Centre, over 500 fitness paths and other accessible recreation facilities were built for public use between 2003 and 2004. As a result, general health and physical activity participation increased across all ages as health benefits were measured with annual survey data collected by the sport administration of Qingdao in 2004, 2005, and 2006, comparable with baseline data from 1987. Wang and Theodoraki (2007) argued that though there has been little evidence that previous Olympic Games had positively influenced participation, “the case of China and Qingdao appears to be different…. More and more people now show interest in sports and in the improvement of their health” (p. 130). Whether these increased activity levels have been sustained has not been reported. As explained by Troedsson et al. (2010), enhancing the living or community environment for host residents – through, for example, access to facilities, programs, and instructors – was a key element of the health legacy of the 2008 Olympic Games.

The announcement in 2003 that Vancouver would host the 2010 Olympic Games opened a window of opportunity for the province of British Columbia (BC) to reallocate funding to policy areas that typically may not be prioritised, such as public health and physical activity promotion. This led to the inception of ActNow BC, a provincial health initiative that was designed to initiate action across different ministries and agencies to brand the province as the healthiest jurisdiction to ever host an Olympic Games. Under the umbrella of ActNow BC, various public policies were implemented at different levels of government. As an example, Daily Physical Activity was a provincial school-based health promotion policy that made it compulsory for all children in the province to participate in and record moderate to vigorous physical activities (150
minutes per week) in order to graduate (De Lisio et al., 2015). Vancouver Active Communities was a municipal health promotion policy that aimed to increase physical activity participation among Vancouver residents by 20 percent by 2010 (Derom & Lee, in press). Although the objectives of these policies were commendable in that they sought to provide opportunities for the least active (and those in the inner-city who were most in need of health promotion interventions) to increase their physical activity participation, after the bid phase the naming of event legacies and their associated leveraging efforts appeared to be a highly political process. Health promotion among neoliberal parties in power almost exclusively focused on the individual who is responsible for his or her own health, rather than broader social and physical environmental conditions in the community (e.g., Bercovitz, 1998; Crawford, 1980; Hancock, 2011; Robertson, 1998). Individual accountability diverts attention away from social processes, including poverty, unemployment, and poor quality of services, which are associated with greater ill-health in the inner-city (Waddington, as cited in Bloyce & Smith, 2010). Those in power were interested in creating a favourable impression of certain select communities while ignoring (or worse, concealing) the less glamorous social realities that were experienced across the host region. As a result, leveraging initiatives focused on individual lifestyle changes among the general population and youth in particular to perpetuate an image of healthy, active citizenship (De Lisio et al., 2015; Derom & Lee, in press).

The existing framework of social event leveraging, however, does not yet elaborate on the processes, initiatives, and outcomes of leveraging for increased physical activity. Therefore, following the call from Potwarka and McCarville (2008), social ecological theory is integrated and applied to the research findings on the Tour of Flanders to further examine how leveraging efforts can more effectively increase physical activity participation. The major assumption underpinning this theory is that individual behaviour is influenced by the interactions between an individual and his or her social and physical environments (e.g., culture, economics, politics, and geography) (Stokols, 1992, 1996). These environments are operationalised and stratified into different systems in which an individual and his or her family are nested within a broader set of systems, including organisations and communities. Applying this theory to the evidence from Vancouver, for example, one can understand that the individual can never be solely responsible for his or her own health as various other systems – including where one works and lives – have
an influence. At each system, health promotion interventions can be implemented that target various determinants of physical activity (Richard et al., 1996). The application of the health promotion concepts of systems and targets is examined in the case of the Tour of Flanders to further clarify how leveraging efforts can increase physical activity participation.

2.4 Social ecological theory
The ecological approach is a paradigm for research and action that has been applied in many disciplines (Richard et al., 1996). Ecological theory has its roots in biology where the term ecology refers to studying the relationships between organisms and their natural environments. Biological ecology seeks to provide an understanding of why some plants and animals are only found in certain environments and what factors influence this variation (Green & Kreuter, 1999). Ecological analyses have been extended to study human communities in the fields of sociology, psychology, and public health (Stokols, 1996). Humans, however, as opposed to other organisms, have a greater capacity to react to and modify their environments (McLaren & Hawe, 2005). As a result, our understanding of these environments has been extended by Stokols (1992, 1996) – who has been a major contributor to the social ecological perspective – to include important social, institutional, and cultural dimensions. This has been supported by the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), an American psychologist who provided a theoretical analysis of children’s personal development by elaborating upon the environment as an important element. Children are influenced by the proximal environment through interactions with parents and teachers. The dynamic of these interactions, however, is influenced by the larger context of the environment in which these take place, for example through the socio-economic status of the parents or through the location and culture of the school (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Social ecological theory is widely adopted within the field of health promotion as it provides a broad and holistic understanding of individual health behaviour. Although many scholars and practitioners have tried to define health promotion, there is no agreed upon definition as well as no obtainable unifying theory (McQueen, 2007). Social ecological theory is seen as a framework for understanding the interrelations among diverse personal and environmental factors in human health and illness. By acknowledging that health is shaped by many environmental subsystems, this framework compensates for the limitations of traditional individual health behaviour
approaches that promote healthy lifestyles, assuming that individuals can simply overcome barriers and make healthier choices if they are educated on how to improve their health or if healthier options are made available to them. A failure to take advantage of these options then becomes the fault of the individual, resulting in a victim-blaming approach (Raphael, 2012; Richard et al., 1996). Contemporary developments have reinforced the relevance of social ecological models to the field of health promotion. In particular, research into social inequalities in health has redirected interest into the central role of larger contextual determinants of health, including gender, socio-economic status, and other social and cultural influences (Richard et al., 2011).

Social ecological theory assumes that the dynamic interactions between an individual and his or her social and physical environments are complex and reciprocal, as individuals not only react to but also modify their environments (McLaren & Hawe, 2005; Stokols, 1992, 1996). In essence, social ecological theory helps us to understand how individual health behaviour, including physical activity participation, is influenced by the environments in which an individual plays, works, lives, and interacts. From a social ecological perspective, an individual is always part of a social and physical environment upon which he or she is dependent for social development and nourishment. Furthermore, because individuals have an innate tendency to preserve and expand life, they have the capacity to change their health behaviour while being influenced not only by their individual characteristics but also by the environments in which they participate (McLaren & Hawe, 2005). To better study and understand how these environments influence individual health behaviour, including physical activity participation, they have been stratified into various systems (Richard et al., 1996). Borrowing from the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979), the visual metaphor for this stratification is a series of nested or concentric systems that surround the individual who is the most nested and central system. Other systems represent a nearby or more distant influence on the individual (Stokols, 1992), ranging from interpersonal, organisational, and community systems, to society and supranational systems (Kok, Gottlieb, Commers, & Smerecnik, 2008; Richard et al., 1996) (Figure 3). The individual system represents a single individual, whereas the interpersonal system consists of small informal groups that surround the individual, such as family and friends. The organisational system is based upon a formal hierarchy and operates in pursuit of specific objectives, and this system includes schools,
businesses, and other local organisations. The community system mainly refers to municipalities or cities, whereas the society system refers to provinces, states, and countries that not only represent a larger geographic area but also a politically and financially more autonomous area. Lastly, the supranational system is an association of two or more society systems, for example the United Nations and the European Union (Kok et al., 2008; Richard et al., 1996).

These multiple systems are the first key element of the social ecological model. Important to understand is that each individual simultaneously participates in multiple systems in his or her daily life. Individuals have a family, take part in leisure-time activities, go to school and/or work, live in a particular neighbourhood in a particular city, and so forth. The systems interrelate and impact one another to determine an individual’s physical activity behaviour, which makes physical inactivity a complex problem. The nested structure allows for multiple influences both vertically across and horizontally within the systems, which is described as reciprocal causation (Kok et al., 2008; McLaren & Hawe, 2005). The arrows in Figure 3 represent these influences across and within the systems. Various determinants of health – factors/variables that are assumed to play a causal role in explaining physical activity behaviour – are located at these different systems (Richard, Gauvin, & Raine, 2011). Although the decision to participate in physical activity is an individual one which is influenced by personal attributes at the individual system, other systems can enable or facilitate physical activity participation by providing resources that support physical activity participation. The opposite is also true as other systems can prevent or inhibit physical activity participation, when the necessary resources are absent or restricted (Stokols, 1992, 1996). As an example, the development of new cycling infrastructure at the community system might positively influence the operation and membership numbers of local cycling clubs at the organisational system, and this new infrastructure might also motivate parents to go cycling with their children at the interpersonal system. The decision to react to and use the available infrastructure remains an individual one, but the infrastructure itself is a mechanism that can promote physical activity participation at lower-order systems. Individuals themselves can also advocate for change at higher-order systems, resulting in reciprocal influences between the systems. As another example, individuals who cycle to work can advocate for modifications of the environment through the installment of showers and secure parking for bicycles at their workplace, and this in turn might motivate other employees to start
cycling to work. The social ecological interconnections between individuals and their environments seem almost endless, which makes using the concept of targets to promote physical activity participation an important second key element of the social ecological model.

The concept of targets incorporates the focus of a health promotion intervention at a certain system, by elaborating upon the determinants of physical activity behaviour that the intervention seeks to modify or influence (Kok et al., 2008; Richard et al., 1996). Based on the work of McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, and Glanz (1988), targets have been operationalised as individual, interpersonal, organisational, community, political, or a combination of these. It is important to understand that there is no one-on-one relationship between systems and targets as, for example, the community system is not limited to only include community targets. Individual targets focus on changing individual determinants of physical activity participation, including knowledge, skills, attitudes, and intentions, among others. For example, a mass media campaign can educate individuals about the health benefits of regular physical activity, and once individuals better understand the health benefits they may engage in physical activity more often. Interpersonal targets focus on providing social support for physical activity participation among family members, friends, neighbours, and colleagues. For example, the implementation of a safe route to school program can bring together parents and children from a particular neighbourhood in their efforts to engage in active transportation to and from school. Organisational targets can include incentives, policies, and regulations to promote physical activity participation at schools and businesses. For example, schools can reward children who cycle or walk to school at least three times a week, and this reward might encourage other children to engage in active transportation to and from school. Community targets focus on providing social and physical resources for physical activity participation, for example through the provision of recreational services, programs, and infrastructure which can serve as mechanisms to promote physical activity participation among groups of individuals. Lastly, political targets refer to policies at different levels of government, which can allocate financial resources to or cover financial incentives for physical activity promotion (McLeroy et al., 1988).

In essence, social ecological theory assumes that individual health behaviour can be changed one of two ways, namely directly by targeting the individual and modifying individual determinants
of physical activity or indirectly by targeting the environment(s) in which an individual participates. This indirect approach modifies environmental determinants of physical activity which include interpersonal, organisational, community, and political targets (Kok et al., 2008; Richard et al., 1996). As an example, ‘Tutti Frutti’ is a health promotion initiative that has been implemented by the Flemish government that is an actor within the society system with the purpose of increasing fruit and vegetable intake among children. Although children are the end beneficiaries, this initiative targets organisations in the environment of children, more specifically elementary and secondary schools across the region, to provide fruits and vegetables as a snack to all students one day a week (www.fruit-op-school.be). Organisations such as schools, businesses, and families, are important targets because they can exert a disproportionate amount of influence on an individual’s health since principals, managers, and parents operate at a close distance to the individual and are able to achieve change by providing resources or eliminating barriers (Grzywacz & Fuqua, 2000; Kok et al., 2008; Stokols, 1996).

Social ecological theory postulates that in order to be effective and achieve enduring changes, health promotion interventions must cover multiple systems and include multiple targets, directed at the individual and other systems in which the individual participates (Stokols, 1992). The social ecological character of a health promotion intervention is determined by the number of targets more so than the number of systems (Richard et al., 1996). Health promotion interventions that only cover the individual system and individual targets, such as the health education examples when leveraging the Atlanta and Athens Olympic Games, do not acknowledge the complexity of interrelations between health and its individual and environmental determinants. These interventions do not fully integrate the principles of a social ecological approach to health promotion (Richard et al., 2011). Acknowledging that both individual and environmental factors determine an individual’s physical activity participation is necessary for the advancement of knowledge in the area of social event leveraging.

The limitations of social ecological theory, however, also need to be discussed. “Although comprehensiveness is perhaps the greatest strength of ecological models of health,” Grzywacz and Fuqua (2000) noted that “it is also the greatest limitation” (p. 110). Potential over-inclusiveness of variables into the social ecological model and the related health promotion
interventions limits their utility and applicability (Stokols, 1994). This is especially true since many of the proposed influences on physical activity have not been confirmed with sufficient empirical evidence (Sallis et al., 2006). As a result, there is a need for transdisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary research that includes the combined long-term efforts of researchers from a variety of disciplines to improve our understanding and applicability of social ecological theory (Sallis et al., 2006; Stokols, 1996). Furthermore, the practical implementation of health promotion interventions that cover multiple systems and include multiple targets is also complex. “Within the physical activity field, practitioners are most experienced with interventions that target the individual, so partners from multiple sectors will need to become involved in implementing environmental and policy changes” (Sallis et al., 2006, p. 316). Also, the variables that should be addressed through health promotion interventions are often not prioritised. Stokols (1996) and later Grzywacz and Fuqua (2000) sought to address this limitation through the incorporation of leverage points which are variables that exert a disproportionate amount of positive influence on health. These leverage points can be situated at the individual system (e.g., socio-economic status) or the environmental system (e.g., family, work, and school) (Grzywacz & Fuqua, 2000; Stokols, 1996). One last limitation of social ecological theory is that research often includes white, middle class adults living in urban and suburban settings. This is problematic since older adults, youth, individuals with lower income, specific ethnic populations, and rural residents might experience different personal and/or environmental barriers to physical activity which remain uncovered by empirical research (Sallis et al., 2006).

2.5 Cycling infrastructure
The development of new cycling infrastructure as a community target to promote physical activity participation among host residents has been part of the leveraging efforts around the Tour de France, one of the most premier sport events in the world. Each year, an estimated 15 million people watch the peloton pass by over nearly 4,000 km of public roads in France and neighbouring countries. Alongside the Tour of Flanders and Paris-Roubaix, the Tour de France is the only cycling race to get world-wide live coverage. The event is televised in 84 countries and half of them cover the three-week event live. The total television audience amounts one billion spectators world-wide (Van Reeth, 2013). Hosting the Tour de France includes inner-city competitions similar to those around sport mega-events as cities bid to host the start or finish of
one of the 20 separate stages, with the Tour de France Grand Départ or the official start of the race being the most important and prestigious event. The Tour de France Grand Départ is not only believed to boost the local economy, promote the city as a tourist destination, and attract investors and developers, but also promote cycling among host residents (Balduck, Maes, & Buelens, 2011; Bull & Lovell, 2007). Examined from a social ecological perspective, event leveraging of the Tour de France Grand Départ in London in 2007 (Berridge, 2012) and in Rotterdam in 2010 (van Bedaf, 2012) included environmental targets that were employed at the host community system, focusing in particular on the development of new cycling infrastructure.

Scholars have promoted interventions that modify the environment as these interventions may have the potential to increase physical activity participation by benefitting all people who are exposed to a particular environment, more so than individual behaviour-based interventions where only one person at a time benefits (Brownson et al., 2000; Frank et al., 2003; Sallis, Bauman, & Pratt, 1998). In addition, following a social ecological approach, it is unrealistic to expect people to change their behaviour when the environment discourages such changes (Frank et al., 2003). Because the physical environment influences individual health behaviour, different levels of government have an important function in promoting positive changes in cities and communities by making them more conducive to physical activity (Dill & Weigand, 2010; Feldstein, 2011). Access to places where individuals can be physically active is an important element, and places that positively influence physical activity participation are venues, parks, and trails – even more so when these places are separated from motorised traffic to increase perceived safety among participants (Brownson, Baker, Housemann, Brennan, & Bacak, 2001; Dill & Weigand, 2010; Frumkin, Frank, & Jackson, 2004). Following a review of literature on interventions to increase cycling, Pucher et al. (2010) argued that the most common interventions are those that aim to separate cyclists from motor vehicles, making separate bike paths, trails, and lanes common across Europe and more recently also across North America. These paths, trails, and lanes can be referred to more generally as ‘cycling routes’ that are an essential part of the general transportation system and provide opportunities for cycling trips of any purpose. Downward and Lumsdon (2001) delineated between cycling routes for functional and recreational use:
Cycle routes, which are located on existing highways with tarmac surfaces and which are sometimes segregated from other vehicles, tend to be primarily used for transport purposes. In contrast, cycle routes which are mainly off-road or use ‘quiet roads’ with a mixture of surfaces tend to be designed and used primarily for recreational or tourism purposes. (Downward & Lumsdon, 2001, p. 52)

The findings from the Tour de France Grand Départ suggest that, on the one hand, London focused on functional cycling infrastructure to reduce traffic congestion, emissions, and overcrowding on public transport (Berridge, 2012). On the other hand, Rotterdam focused on recreational cycling infrastructure in line with the theme of the event. Although functional cycling was part of the city’s cycling policy, active commuters were not specifically targeted in the leveraging efforts around the Tour de France in Rotterdam (van Bedaf, 2012).

Since there has been an increase in the provision of cycling routes in many countries – which is a positive trend as those living closer to routes are more likely to use them (Saelens, Sallis, & Frank, 2003) – it becomes increasingly important to design and plan routes to satisfy the users’ expectations and needs in order to safeguard and promote participation. Users of recreational cycling routes find it important that routes cover traffic-free, quiet roads that connect to a larger network of routes through an easy to follow signage system (Downward & Lumsdon, 2001). Detailed cartographic maps appear to be a valuable aid for those who cycle longer distances (Lamont & Causley, 2010). Along the routes, an enjoyable scenery, including sights and architecture, and other people who are physically active are also important positive elements (Frumkin et al., 2004; Pikora, Giles-Corti, Bull, Jamrozik, & Donovan, 2003). Social interaction among users can be promoted by designing wider routes that allow individuals to ride in groups and by providing sufficient ancillary facilities such as picnic tables and rest areas (Downward & Lumsdon, 2001), but also by organising participatory cycling events or other cycling initiatives.

In the case of London, the Tour de France Grand Départ was only one element in a wider and long-term development plan to promote cycling in the city. This plan included policy changes, infrastructure developments, and individual programs that were implemented prior to and following the road cycling race to promote cycling among host residents. Policy changes started
as early as 2000 with the establishment of Transport for London, a new department responsible for implementing Mayor Ken Livingstone’s transportation strategy. Two years later, the Cycling Centre of Excellence was established at Transport for London, assigning an important role to the bicycle within the preferred future of the city and its transportation mechanisms. In 2004, Transport for London published the *London Cycle Action Plan* which outlined the goal of installing 5,000 new cycling spaces by 2015 and increasing cycling participation by 200 percent by 2020. Parallel to these changes, the city wanted to position itself as a major tourism and event destination and by doing so help to secure the rights to host the 2012 Olympic Games. The 2004 bid to host the 2007 Tour de France Grand Départ aligned well with this vision. From 2000 to 2006, cycling participation in London increased by 72 percent and Transport for London wanted to use the excitement for the Tour de France to increase cycling participation even more (Berridge, 2012).

Following the 2007 Tour de France Grand Départ, new Mayor Boris Johnson continued to support and promote cycling participation, seeking to harness the increased interest in cycling that was generated through the event. In 2010, the *Cycling Revolution London* was published with the objective of making London a truly cycling city by 2015. In order to do so, initiatives have focused on developing new cycling infrastructure including a bicycle sharing scheme and superhighways, creating new partnerships with schools, commercial organisations, and communities, and raising awareness about safety, security, and events. Participatory cycling events have also been important, attracting about 85,000 cyclists in 2010 – a number that almost tripled from 30,000 in 2007 (Berridge, 2012). Berridge (2012) argued that the Tour de France Grand Départ “has been shown to contribute to social and cultural development and to health promotion, outcomes recognised as very positive for any single sports tourism event” (p. 57). Contributions to health promotion were identified in the form of increased cycling participation among London residents and the creation of an environment that facilitates cycling.

The social ecological perspective reminds us that hosting the Tour de France cannot be isolated from the public investments that were dedicated to the promotion of cycling, which have increased from approximately £5.5 million in 2000 to £110 million in 2009 (Berridge, 2012). Furthermore, hosting the Tour de France cannot be isolated from other events such as the 2012
Olympic Games where Team Great Britain achieved great triumphs in cycling. Following these successes, Mayor Boris Johnson argued that “the main cross-London physical legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games will be a proper network of cycle routes throughout the city, a substantial increase in cycling, and all the benefits – fitness, enjoyment, and easy travel for millions, cleaner air, and less traffic for all – that will follow” (Greater London Authority, 2013, p. 4). To sustain this legacy and high levels of cycling participation, almost £400 million is contributed to cycling over the next three years, confirming London’s vision and efforts of becoming a cycling city (Greater London Authority, 2013).

Although London was a city with low levels of cycling participation, cycling levels in the Netherlands were among the highest in the world, achieved in part by its long-term history of transportation policies and infrastructure that encourage cycling (Pucher & Dijkstra, 2003; Pucher et al., 2010). The city of Rotterdam, the host of the 2010 Tour de France Grand Départ, leveraged the event by fast-tracking the development of 30 km of cycling routes and additional cycling spaces. These infrastructure developments would have also occurred without the hosting of the Tour de France Grand Départ, but hosting the event facilitated collaboration among six municipalities in realising this additional infrastructure. Promoting this infrastructure as one element in the increased media attention for cycling before, during, and after the event was believed to inspire broad-based participation (Cycling in the area of Rotterdam, 2014).

The Tour de France Grand Départ was leveraged to increase cycling participation among specific groups of host residents, in particular immigrants, youth, and women (van Bedaf, 2012). The municipal Department of Sport and Recreation was responsible for hosting and leveraging the event and organised 235 leveraging initiatives in the year leading up to the Grand Départ. Different initiatives to inform individuals about cycling and cycling opportunities, and to inspire more frequent participation were offered, including cycling clinics, adapted cycling activities for older adults and individuals with disabilities, and cycling demonstrations by elite athletes in schools. These activities targeted particular individuals who demonstrated low cycling participation levels by engaging them as active cyclists and by providing skills and knowledge to cycle more often (McLeroy et al., 1988). In order to eliminate some barriers that could limit cycling participation, a free bicycle repair shop was provided to ensure that everyone could
participate on a proper working bicycle. Following the event, both functional cycling and cycle touring rates increased, but whether this increase resulted from more immigrants, youth, and women who started cycling was not reported (van Bedaf, 2012).

In addition to the development of cycling infrastructure in the host community, the organisation of participatory cycling events and other cycling initiatives are also important health promotion targets within the community system. The organisation of participatory sport events has been shown to increase physical activity participation among those taking part (e.g., Crofts, Schofield, & Dickson, 2012; Lane, Murphy, Smyth, & Bauman, 2010). Participatory sport events have the potential for community-wide participation as they are open to the general public and often attract a large number of participants (Coleman & Ramchandani, 2010; Gratton & Taylor, 2000; Murphy & Bauman, 2007). Social ecological theory highlights that the organisation of participatory sport events with the intent of increasing physical activity in the host region cannot be a standalone health promotion intervention in the community as other systems and targets are important in determining physical activity participation.

2.6 Participatory cycling events

Participatory sport events have become increasingly popular over the past ten years. Not only has the total number of organised events grown, but the participant numbers have also increased. Participatory sport events are not tied to an ongoing competition and are open for participants at every level. Due to their popularity, some events are ‘sold-out’ weeks or months before the event (Colijn & Kok, 2007). In 2007, Murphy and Bauman wrote “there is a paucity of research on the impact of mass participation running or cycling events on subsequent PA [physical activity]… unfortunately no evaluations have assessed pre-event PA, or tracked activity post event” (p. 195). Since then, different participatory sport events that vary in terms of target audience, length, and intensity have been examined. Most research, however, has been limited to describing the individual profile of event participants (e.g., Crofts et al., 2012; Dickson, Phelps, Schofield, & Funk, 2010) and does not elaborate upon how multiple social ecological systems and targets influence physical activity participation.
Physical activity participation in Belgium and many other countries is in part determined by the individual system. Existing social stratification, as elaborated upon in the introductory chapter, reflects itself in levels of physical activity as women, adults older than 60, and people with lower educational attainment and lower income are less active (Tafforeau, 2008). Based on the available research, these groups are generally underrepresented at participatory sport events as well. When sport events are open to both men and women, the majority of participants are male (Adams & White, 2009; Bowles, Rissel, & Bauman, 2006; Dickson et al., 2010). This makes the organisation of women’s-only participatory sport events a positive trend. However, women’s-only events attract predominantly participants who are in their thirties or forties, highly educated, and employed (Crofts et al., 2012; Lane et al., 2010). Individuals from lower socioeconomic status groups or those living in areas of high deprivation are generally participating less in sport events (Adams & White, 2009).

Participatory sport events can be a stimulus for physical activity. At a women’s-only running event that covers a 10 km distance, 90 percent of the respondents completed some training prior to their participation, with more than 60 percent training for at least three months (Lane, Murphy, & Bauman, 2008). About 75 percent of the respondents were sufficiently active just prior to the event (Lane et al., 2010), which means that these individuals met the minimum physical activity requirements that have been set out by the World Health Organisation (2011). These data, however, do not give us any insight into whether or not these individuals were sufficiently active regardless of their training for the event. Therefore, research should examine physical activity data prior to the commencement of training for a specific event (Crofts et al., 2012; Dickson et al., 2009). It is also important to document how long individuals have been active. Research has shown that those who have been active for less than six months have a greater chance of abandoning and stopping their physical activity participation, when compared to those who have been active for longer than six months (Dishman, 1988).

According to Crofts et al. (2012), about 12 percent of the respondents at a women’s-only mini-triathlon event (i.e., 300 m swim, 10 km cycle, and 3 km run) were insufficiently active prior to their commencement of training. This means that about 88 percent of the respondents had been sufficiently active, of which 25 percent had been so for less than six months. Similarly,
According to Dickson et al. (2010), about 4 percent of the respondents at a participatory cycling event covering distances of 20 to 160 km (completed individually or as part of a relay team) were insufficiently active prior to their commencement of training. This means that about 96 percent of the respondents had been sufficiently active, of which 13 percent had been so for less than six months. Since the majority of participants have been sufficiently active for longer than six months prior to their event training, “the public health benefits of MPSE [mass participation sport event] may be in their ability to prevent relapse\(^1\) in people who achieve sufficient levels of PA [physical activity]” (Crofts et al., 2012, p. 156). This has been confirmed by Adams and White (2009) who found that more than 90 percent of the participants in a half marathon running event were sufficiently active both five months before and five months after the event. There was little evidence of increased physical activity among respondents between pre- and post-event measures since they were already highly active, but findings suggested that the event may provide a focus and reward for maintaining physical activity (Adams & White, 2009). There is less evidence of the public health benefits of participatory sport events in promoting physical activity among those who are inactive (Lane et al., 2008). Nonetheless, nearly half of those who were insufficiently active prior to their commencement of training for the women’s-only mini-triathlon were sufficiently active three months post-event (Crofts et al., 2012). In general, there is great interest in examining the post-event period to further determine how participatory sport events can be a target to prevent relapse from sufficient levels of physical activity pre-event to insufficient levels of physical activity post-event, and thus ensure that individuals maintain their physical activity.

Although participatory sport events can be a stimulus for physical activity, social ecological theory highlights that physical activity is influenced by multiple systems and targets. In one study, about 13 percent of the women who took part in the women’s-only 10 km running event relapsed from being sufficiently active pre-event to being insufficiently active post-event (Lane et al., 2010). It is important to study the influence of factors at various social ecological systems

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\(^1\) The current use of the term ‘relapse’ implies that physical inactivity is understood as a treatable medical problem. The term relapse was originally used when evaluating interventions that were aimed at reducing undesirable and addictive behaviours such as smoking and substance abuse. Treating physical inactivity is aimed at increasing a desirable but low frequency behaviour. Relapsing into physical inactivity and relapsing into smoking and substance abuse share a similar connotation in terms of harming an individual’s health (Dishman, 1991).
to determine what factors can protect women against relapsing and thus assist them in maintaining their physical activity behaviour. At the individual system, those who ran the event, completed tertiary education, had a low body mass index, and/or had high levels of self-efficacy were protected against relapse. Interpersonally, those who had high levels of social support, which was fostered by training in groups, were protected against relapse. At the community system, those who lived in an environment that promoted physical activity through the availability of safe streets and green spaces were also protected against relapse (Lane et al., 2010). Applied to these data, social ecological theory highlights that physical activity participation generally and event participation specifically is determined by targets at the individual, interpersonal, organisational, and community systems. This means that, ideally, a participatory sport event should be organised in conjunction with other targets such as the completion of new off-road cycling routes, the distribution of free cycling maps and water bottles, and free skill courses, among others, to more effectively increase physical activity participation (Rissel et al., 2010). Similarly, Pucher et al. (2010) emphasised the need to complement different targets into one health promotion initiative because a comprehensive approach to promote cycling participation produces a much greater impact than individual measures that are not coordinated.

The impact of any particular measure is enhanced by the synergies with complementary measures [italics added] in the same package. In that sense, the whole package is more than the sum of its parts. However, the more successfully a city implements a wide range of policies and programs simultaneously and fully integrates [italics added] them with each other, the more difficult it becomes to disentangle the separate impacts of each measure. (Pucher et al., 2010, p. S122)

Understood in terms of social ecological theory, this quotation highlights the importance of synergies between the various health promotion systems and targets, which is also referred to as reciprocal causation (Kok et al., 2008; McLaren & Hawe, 2005). A comprehensive health promotion intervention that employs environmental and individual targets most likely results in the greatest physical activity outcomes. Similar to previous research on the Tour de France Grand Départ in London and Rotterdam, this quotation also highlights the difficulties in
attributing changes in physical activity outcomes to specific parts of the greater package that constitutes the leveraging efforts around the event. This dissertation explores the use of social ecological systems and targets in the case of the Tour of Flanders. Both the development of cycling infrastructure and the organisation of participatory cycling events or other cycling initiatives are conceptualised as health promotion targets within the host community system. By integrating and applying social ecological theory, the findings from this dissertation can assist in developing more effective health promotion interventions to leverage sport events.
Figure 2. Framework on social event leveraging

Leverageable resource in the host community (e.g., Vancouver’s international reputation as a sustainable city) → Opportunity for social leverage (e.g., being the host city of the 2010 Games) → Strategic objective (e.g., become a cleaner, greener, healthier, and wealthier city) → Means to achieve objective (e.g., Greenest City initiative)

Source: Adapted from O’Brien & Chalip, 2007, 2008
Figure 3. Social ecological model

Source: Adapted from Bronfenbrenner, 1979
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Pragmatic assumptions

A case study of the Tour of Flanders has been conducted to better understand the phenomenon of social event leveraging for outcomes of increased physical activity participation. According to VanWyensberghe and Khan (2007), a case study is “a transparadigmatic and transdisciplinary heuristic that involves the careful delineation of the phenomena for which evidence is being collected (event, concept, program, process, etc.)” (p. 80). This definition fits well with sport event research as scholars can define their unit of analysis regardless of their paradigm and discipline. As a result, many different fields – for example economics, geography, leisure, policy, sociology, tourism, and urban planning – are contributing to the sport event literature by conducting case study research. This dissertation will do so by adhering to the paradigmatic assumptions of critical realism.

Critical realism is a paradigm that offers an alternative to positivism and interpretivism and supports the use of mixed methods research (McEvoy & Richards, 2006; Poland, Frohlich, & Cargo, 2008). Influenced by the works of Bhaskar, critical realism is a logic of inquiry that critiques the empirical realist ontology in which social reality – and, relatedly, the social sciences employed to understand this reality – are reduced to empirical observations (Gijselinckx, 2006). According to Bhaskar who applied a social ontology, social reality cannot be limited to empirical observations only. He argued that social reality is stratified into different domains – ones that we can and ones that we cannot directly observe – including the empirical, the actual, and the real domains (Figure 4). The real domain is the domain that social sciences seek to disclose, as this domain includes deep unobservable structures and objects (called mechanisms) that have the capacity to generate a certain phenomenon, which may or may not be experienced in other domains. The actual domain refers to a phenomenon that actually occurs, whereas the empirical domain refers to a phenomenon that is experienced, while simultaneously creating a social construction of deeper domains (McEvoy & Richards, 2006; Wuisman, 2005).
The essence of this stratification is that it theorises social reality to be an open system in which structures and objects exist permanently and operate independently of our knowledge, conceptualisation, and scientific activities (i.e., these are intransitive). Moreover, these structures and objects may behave as causal mechanisms, which may or may not result in a phenomenon that can be empirically observed (i.e., these are transfactual) (Gijselinckx, 2006). The key and unique feature of critical realism, Byers (2013) argued, is that multiple realities exist for the phenomenon under investigation but an accurate understanding of the phenomenon can only be obtained when considering all realities. The three domains of reality are not mutually exclusive but overlapping, with the real domain including all three ontological layers of a phenomenon (Wuisman, 2005). The ultimate goal for critical realists is to develop deeper levels of explanation and understanding, in particular an understanding of the mechanisms that generate a particular social phenomenon (McEvoy & Richards, 2006; Poland et al., 2008).

This stratification of social reality implies that individuals always act within pre-existing social structures that are relevant to a specific historical and geographical context. Examples of these structures are culture, economy, government, policy, language, conventions, and resources, to name only a few (Byers, 2013; Connelly, 2007; Easton, 2010). These social structures existed prior to an individual’s engagement and participation in society. Although ontologically speaking individuals and structures are located in different domains of reality, individuals are simultaneously products of and producers of these social structures (Gijselinckx, 2006). What this means is that structures enable and constrain – rather than determine – an individual’s behaviour, and individuals have the ability to not only influence other individuals but also to reproduce and transform structures (Cruickshank, 2012). This assumption has strong connections to social ecological theory in which both the individual and his or her environments influence individual health behaviour, with reciprocal causal relationships between an individual and his or her environments (McLaren & Hawe, 2005). Both the individual and the environments interact and impact one another to determine an individual’s physical activity behaviour. Thus, although the decision to participate in physical activity is an individual one which is influenced by personal attributes that one can directly observe, other unobservable mechanisms can facilitate or inhibit physical activity participation (Stokols 1992, 1996).
In this dissertation, critical realism provides a useful perspective for approaching the research questions since several underlying structures and generative mechanisms not only influence host governments’ event leveraging potential and efforts but also physical activity participation among individuals. Critical realism supports the use of mixed methods research to explore a particular phenomenon. Therefore, in this dissertation, a qualitative data collection and analysis phase was followed by a quantitative data collection and analysis phase. The findings of these two phases were then integrated during the interpretation phase (Creswell, 2003). The qualitative research sought to understand the resources and processes of social event leveraging whereas the quantitative research elaborated upon the initiatives and outcomes in terms of increased physical activity participation. Previous research has identified this combination of qualitative and quantitative research as valuable in the examination of event impacts and outcomes (e.g., Berridge, 2012; Smith & Fox, 2007). The study procedures for the qualitative and quantitative research methods were approved by the Research Ethics Board of The University of British Columbia.

3.2 Qualitative interview and document data

3.2.1 Data collection

Although Chalip and Heere (2014) argued that “there is no single entity for which event leverage is necessarily a natural assignment” (p. 189), the main responsibility for social leveraging falls to the different levels of government in the host, as these have an expertise and a long-term stake in the social issue(s) (Smith, 2014). For this reason, qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted with former and current organiser and administrators from municipal and provincial governments, who are/were involved with organising and leveraging the Tour of Flanders in former and current host cities. Based on secondary sources from the archives of the National Cycling Museum in Roeselare and the Sportimonium Museum in Hofstade (e.g., books and newspaper articles), potential interviewees were purposefully sampled and invited via telephone and/or e-mail. To better understand the history of event leverage, interviews were purposefully conducted in previous and current host cities, namely Sint-Niklaas, Ninove, Bruges, and Oudenaarde. To ensure that interviewees could accurately recall how the Tour of Flanders was organised and what event leveraging strategies had been used, it was important to select interviewees that had been involved with the event for a significant period of time. As a result,
interviewing in previous host cities of Ghent, Ghent-Bruges, and Wetteren was not feasible given that individuals involved with the Tour of Flanders had moved on to different positions or had passed away, which means that accurate recall could not be guaranteed.

All interviewees signed consent prior to interview (Appendix B). Because of the positions the interviewees hold or have held in the respective host cities and organisations, confidentiality could not be guaranteed. The names of the interviewees were solely published in this dissertation, but not in other articles, book chapters, or conference presentations. Between November 2012 and March 2013, 16 individuals who are/were involved with the Tour of Flanders were interviewed. Twelve were male and four were female. On two occasions, the interview was conducted as a joint interview where two individuals were interviewed simultaneously. These interviews had not been purposefully planned as joint interviews, but it was the interviewee who invited another person whom he or she believed could provide valuable insights to the research. The interviews were conducted in a location selected by the interviewee, which was in almost every case the interviewee’s office except one which was conducted at the interviewee’s home. An interview guide based upon the frameworks of event leverage (Chalip, 2004; O’Brien & Chalip, 2007, 2008) was developed (Appendix C). Interview questions covered the central concepts of these frameworks, including leverageable resources, opportunity for leverage, strategic objectives, and means for leverage. Social ecological theory was applied to the questions to further examine the means and outcomes of event leveraging in terms of public health, covering the central concepts of systems and targets. Because the interviews were semi-structured, there was leeway to follow-up on things said by the interviewees by posing additional questions (Bryman, Teevan, & Bell, 2009). Some interviewees could only assign one hour of their time to the interview, and therefore, it was important to manage the available time during the interview and make sure the questions covered all central concepts that were included in the interview guide. All the interviews were conducted in Flemish and digitally recorded with the interviewees’ consent. The interviews ranged in length from 20 minutes to 90 minutes, with an average length of 59 minutes. In total, 13 hours and 45 minutes of interview hours were completed. What follows is a more detailed description of the interviewees who participated in the study, according to the list that is presented in Table 4.
**Event organiser.** The newspaper *Sportwereld* followed by the newspaper *Het Nieuwsblad* were historically the event organisers of the Tour of Flanders, making the event one of its oldest marketing instruments. In the 1980s, it was the editor who took on the logistical task of organising the road cycling race, whereas in the 1990s there was one almost fulltime Race Director employed at *Het Nieuwsblad* who later joined Flanders Classics when the rights for the Tour of Flanders were sold.

- Marketing Manager at *Het Nieuwsblad*: Nicole Lasseel (Manager from 1985 until 2007).
- Race Organiser at Pinguïn Productions: Geert Vandenbon (Contracted by *Het Nieuwsblad* to be a first point of contact for the start and arrival host cities and later also for the hosts of the Village of the Tour from the 1980s until 2008).
- Race Director at Flanders Classics: Wim Van Herreweghe (Since the 1990s employed by *Het Nieuwsblad* as Race Director and currently employed by Flanders Classics).

**Start/arrival host city.**

- Mayor of Sint-Niklaas and Head of the Department of Sport: Lieven Dehandschutter and Johan Heirbaut. The former started his political career in the city in 1989 as a member of City Council, whereas the latter joined the Department of Sport in 1980. The start of the Tour of Flanders moved from Sint-Niklaas to Bruges in 1998. Nonetheless, the enthusiasm for the event was still very much present in Sint-Niklaas at the time of conducting this research, which facilitated my request for an interview. As an example of this enthusiasm, the current Mayor – in his previous position of Alderman of Tourism – submitted an unsuccessful application to the Flemish government for the Centennial Tour celebrations in 2012. The interview in Sint-Niklaas was a joint interview.
- President of the Tour of Flanders Arrival Committee in Ninove: Willy Verlé. In 1989 this local businessman founded a non-profit organisation to professionalise the arrival of the Tour of Flanders in Ninove. The municipal government was not involved with the road cycling race to the same degree as other start and arrival host cities, and perhaps consequently this was the reason why no one from the local administration consented to an interview.
Director of Bruges Plus: Filip Strobbe. In the current host city of Bruges, I encountered some issues when recruiting interviewees. It had been the previous Mayor of Bruges who successfully negotiated an agreement with Het Nieuwsblad to select Bruges as the start city of the Tour of Flanders in 1998. I started contacting potential interviewees in November 2012, including the Mayor of Bruges who was at the top of my list. One month earlier, however, municipal elections had been held and the Mayor was not re-elected which means that he was preparing himself to leave the office around the time I contacted him. I not only received a negative response from the Mayor, but also from the Department of Sport, the Department of Tourism, and the Department of Mobility (Transport). I eventually learned about the non-profit organisation Bruges Plus, which is the successor of the non-profit organisation that was responsible for organising Bruges Cultural Capital in 2002. Bruges Plus is currently funded by the city of Bruges and fulfills tourism, cultural, and sport functions, including the organisation of a free music concert on the night before the Tour of Flanders.

Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre: Rik Vanwalleghem. The situation in Bruges was in stark contrast to the one in Oudenaarde where my study was welcomed with great enthusiasm. The municipal government of Oudenaarde organises the arrival of the Tour of Flanders in collaboration with the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre which opened its doors in Oudenaarde in 2003. The Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre agreed to an interview and this interviewee has also been a journalist and editor at Het Nieuwsblad in the 1980s and 1990s.

**Village of the Tour.** I contacted all the previous hosts of the Village of the Tour to request information about the bid document and initiatives that had been organised to leverage the Tour of Flanders. I also requested an interview with a local administrator who had been involved with organising and managing the Village of the Tour. It was immediately obvious that this would not be an easy task as front-line administrative personnel were not always aware of who had been involved with the Village of the Tour. I eventually interviewed local administrators from the Village of the Tour in Zwalm (2011 Village of the Tour), in Torhout (2012 Village of the Tour), and in Rekkem (2013 Village of the Tour). These local administrators were working in different departments. Filip Loobuyck, the coordinator of the 2011 Village of the Tour, was an
administrator working within the Department of Community Development in Zwalm. In Torhout, two individuals were interviewed separately, namely Michiel Mestdagh who was the coordinator for the 2012 Village of the Tour while working within the Department of Culture and Sofie Senaeve who was with the Department of Sport and mainly organised the physical activities that leveraged the event. Lastly, Björn Grouwet was the coordinator for the 2013 Village of the Tour in Rekkem while working within the Department of Communication. These interviews were complemented with documents including minutes of meetings, scripts, evaluations, activities, and so forth. These documents assisted interviewees to more accurately recall the initiatives that had been organised to leverage the Tour of Flanders, including on some occasions its participant numbers. The fact that I had contacted all the previous hosts of the Village of the Tour had some positive results because in doing so I received similar documents via e-mail from Ichtegem (2006 Village of the Tour), Wetteren (2009 Village of the Tour), and Desselgem (2010 Village of the Tour) via Antoon Naert (Head of the Department of Culture, Tourism, and Archive Services in Ichtegem), Stijn Vandeplas (Head of the Department of Tourism and Events in Wetteren), and Geert Coussement (Financial Administrator in Waregem).

Overall, data on six editions of the Village of the Tour were collected. Unfortunately, data from the 2007 edition in Gavere and the 2008 edition in Bellegem were unavailable, resulting in a data gap between the 2006 edition in Ichtegem and the 2009 edition in Wetteren.

**Centennial Tour.**

- Manager at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre: Joeri Wannijn. This interviewee is the current coordinator of the arrival of the Tour of Flanders in Oudenaarde, a position that is subsidised by the municipal government. Prior to this, he worked on a project for the Flemish Minister of Tourism that focused on leveraging the Tour of Flanders to promote the region of the Flemish Ardennes. During this interview, I learned about the Centennial Tour policy in which the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre was also involved.

- Manager and Project Coordinator Centennial Tour at Westtoer: Josephine Fassaert and Karen François. Since the visitor centre was located in the province of East Flanders, I decided to select another organisation located in the province of West Flanders for an interview about the Centennial Tour policy. Two employees from Westtoer agreed to participate in the study and this interview was a joint interview. To clarify, Westtoer is a
financially autonomous public organisation that is responsible for tourism and recreation in the province of West Flanders. As a provincial level organisation, it is situated between the regional and municipal levels of government.

As mentioned previously, all the interviews were conducted in Flemish which is my native language and the common language for everyone who is involved with the Tour of Flanders. Since its inception in 1913, the Tour of Flanders has been used as an instrument to promote a Flemish-written newspaper among a Flemish-reading audience. Karel Van Wijnendaele was one of the editors of Sportwereld who identified cycling as an ideal vehicle to create attractive newspaper content while writing about local Flandriens. These Flandriens were ordinary men from farming families who could rise through the ranks based on their cycling abilities, seemingly exempt from the restrictions of socioeconomic status and social class, providing them the status of cycling heroes. Flandriens were diligent workers who continuously choose to attack during the race, battling the cobblestones and their competitors in difficult weather conditions (Knuts, Vander Elst, Boen, & Delheye, 2011). The language that Van Wijnendaele used to describe the physical efforts of these Flandriens was understandable, simple, smooth, straightforward, and without too many frills, which made his sport journalism destined for a broad Flemish-reading audience, regardless of their socioeconomic status or social class (Backelandt, Cornillie, & Vanwalleghem, 2006). Given the historical connections between the Tour of Flanders and the Flemish language, it was not possible to conduct the interviews in any other language and furthermore, all the interviewees were native Flemish speakers. The fact that I was a native Flemish speaker was definitely an influential factor when inviting potential interviewees. In addition, when contacting potential interviewees, I also mentioned that I had completed a Master’s degree at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, which is a distinguished Flemish-speaking university in Belgium, prior to moving to Canada to continue my education. Most interviewees, however, questioned the relevance of the topic of the Tour of Flanders to a Canadian audience. Therefore, it was important for me to use my knowledge about the impacts and outcomes of sport events to convince interviewees that the findings from this dissertation would have implications beyond the Tour of Flanders. Lastly, although the dominant culture of cycle racing remains masculine and although I do not actively participate in cycle racing myself, I never experienced any difficulties in gaining access to potential interviewees because of that.
3.2.2 Data analysis
The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed in Flemish in an effort to remain as close to the interviewees’ meanings as possible and to depict their own perceptions and realities as precisely as possible. Translating the final research findings to English was a challenging task because it was not only important to represent the words of the interviewees correctly but also to describe the context of the case thoroughly to a North American audience that is perhaps not familiar with the Tour of Flanders. Due to the language of the data, I was the only one responsible for the process of data analysis, although the findings were discussed with my supervisor Dr. Rob VanWynsberghe throughout the research process. The transcription of the interviews produced 213 pages of single-spaced text. Interview data were complemented with 21 government documents presenting detailed information about leveraging the Tour of Flanders. For example, policy documents on the Centennial Tour were analysed, together with programs from six municipal governments organising the Village of the Tour. The interview transcripts and government documents were analysed with ATLAS.ti (Version 7), using a thematic analysis proposed by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). ATLAS.ti is a computer program that facilitates the process of qualitative data analysis since it enables storage of the data and it provides easy access to codes and memos (Friese, 2012). Throughout the thematic analysis, a combination of deductive and inductive codes were generated (Wuisman, 2005). Deductive codes were generated by returning to the concepts of the event leveraging framework and social ecological theory, and these were supplemented with inductive codes that were generated from interesting pieces of data. Influenced by the stratification of social reality that forms the foundation of critical realism, it was also important to acknowledge abduction or retroduction. These terms are synonyms for a creative process that enables the researcher to discover underlying domains of reality in an attempt to explain the mechanisms that could have generated the phenomenon under examination, in this case social event leveraging for outcomes of increased physical activity participation (Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011; McEvoy & Richards, 2006; Wuisman, 2005). It has been defined as “a mode of analysis in which events are studied with respect to what may have, must have, or could have caused them. In short, it means asking why events have happened in the way they did” (Olsen & Morgan, as cited in McEvoy & Richards, 2006, p. 71). Thus, in addition to generating deductive and inductive codes from the
data, it was important to continuously remind and push myself to explore the data even further to the level of understanding the unobservable mechanisms that could have generated event leveraging. In doing so, different characteristics of event leveraging were identified and theorised throughout this case study analysis. Conceptualisations of event leveraging have changed as the case study progressed.

Following a close reading of the transcripts and documents, 71 initial codes were generated. The next step went beyond the descriptive level to the conceptual level of analysis by organising these codes into themes, which have also been referred to as code families or categories by Friese (2012). Themes show the overarching commonalities within a collection of codes. Organising codes into themes can be understood as sorting and structuring the codes to prepare the data for the next level of analysis where the researcher starts to look for relations and patterns. Throughout the data analysis, I used the memo function in ATLAS.ti to create research question memos to help interpreting the data and linking this interpretation to codes and quotations. The example in Figure 5 depicts the way in which the data were coded. One of the emergent themes was entitled ‘leverageable resources’ in line with the framework on event leveraging. This theme included a number of sub-themes, for example the Tour of Flanders, social resources, and financial support, to name a few. These sub-themes were developed using various codes. For the Tour of Flanders, for example, these codes included the attraction of the Tour of Flanders, the uniqueness of cycling, and the cycling culture. A comprehensive list of the themes and codes that were generated throughout the data analysis is presented in Table 5.

To better understand the leveraging initiatives that have been developed in the hosts of the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour, interview and document data have been extensively analysed to provide an understanding of the systems and targets that were employed to promote physical activity participation. The following three steps were taken to examine the leveraging initiatives (i.e., activities, programs, events) that were organised in name of the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour. First, the number of initiatives that were organised to specifically leverage the Tour of Flanders was recorded. In general, in the lead-up to the Tour of Flanders and in some case following the event, several initiatives took place in the Village of the Tour. On the day of the Tour of Flanders, several activities were organised in the city centre (e.g.,
marching band playing, watching the race on a big screen, musical performances). These activities counted as one initiative, as it represented the social festival that is the essence of the Village of the Tour. Only activities that were organised on the day of the Tour of Flanders that specifically included physical activity were counted as a separate and additional initiative. From this, the total number of initiatives was determined. Figure 6 shows that each Village of the Tour resulted in a program with approximately 20 to 30 initiatives, for a combined total of 175 initiatives over six editions. For the Centennial Tour, determining the number of initiatives was straightforward as it referred to the 15 initiatives that were subsidised by the Flemish government. Second, the recorded initiatives were categorised according to different types of activities. A typology was developed inductively and referred to the main purpose of the initiative, including cultural activities (e.g., theater play, photo exhibition, book presentation), social activities (e.g., sport quiz, cycling show), and physical activities (e.g., cycling event, walking tour), but also educational activities (e.g., traffic education week) and tourism activities (e.g., press conference, promotional event). Some initiatives were categorised according to more than one type of activity. In the case of the Village of the Tour, some initiatives were categorised as products, including, for example, the creation of the Tour of Flanders song and the Achiel Buysse pastry. It is important to note that physical activities were not categorised as social activities also, although for some participants the social element might be more important than the physical element. Figure 7 shows the breakdown of the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour according to the different types of initiatives. Over six editions of the Village of the Tour that totalled 175 initiatives, cultural activities have been organised most frequently (61 initiatives), followed by physical activities (45 initiatives), and social activities (43 initiatives). Nonetheless, there have been significant differences among the hosts regarding the frequency of the three types of initiatives. In the case of the Centennial Tour, all the 15 initiatives had a tourism component as this reflected the main purpose from the Department of Tourism in Flanders, but the initiatives were further categorised into cultural activities (six initiatives), physical activities (seven initiatives), and social activities (one initiative). Third, the content of the initiatives that had been categorised as physical activities was further analysed using the concepts of social ecological theory. This is important because the use of health promotion systems and targets determines, to some extent, the effectiveness of the leveraging processes. However, conclusions regarding the effectiveness of event leveraging for health promotion
cannot be made based solely on the number of physical activities. It is not because the 2009 and 2012 hosts of the Village of the Tour organised twice as many physical activities to leverage the Tour of Flanders when compared to the 2006 and 2010 hosts, that the former achieved greater physical activity outcomes when compared to the latter. In order to draw such conclusions and better understand the outcomes of event leveraging, it is necessary to further analyse and discuss the health promotion targets that were employed. An overview of the physical activity initiatives that have been organised in the hosts of the Village of the Tour is presented in Table 6. Within this table, the initiatives are ranked according to popularity, which does not reflect the number of participants but the number of times that a particular initiative has been organised across different editions of the Village of the Tour. Table 7 presents an overview of the physical activity initiatives that have been organised in the hosts of the Centennial Tour. Chapter 6 provides an in-depth analysis and discussion of these initiatives, which – where possible – is complemented with data on the number of participants, as these obviously also provide an indication of its outcomes.

3.3 Quantitative survey data

3.3.1 Data collection

The quantitative survey data were collected via a pre- and post-event online survey among participants of the 2013 edition of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. The Verint survey tool was used as it complies with the British Columbia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy act. Based on the international attendance at the event and the bilingualism in Belgium, the surveys were developed in Flemish, English, and French, and they were accompanied by an e-mail explaining that participation was voluntary, confidential, and anonymous (Appendix D). When completing both the pre- and post-event survey, respondents were entered into a draw to win one of five cycling jerseys donated by the event organiser. There were a total of 16,000 participants at the 2013 Tour of Flanders Cyclo, of which 15,700 registered online and 300 in person. The online registrants received an e-mail from the event organiser ten days prior to the event that included information about their participation and an invitation to complete the pre-event survey. A total of 1,091 registrants completed the pre-event survey (response rate = 6.95 percent). Registrants received the e-mail and invitation to the survey in Flemish, English, or French based on their language preference when signing up for the event. About 77 percent of the baseline
surveys were completed in Flemish, 15 percent in English, and 8 percent in French. The survey tool showed that another 760 registrants accessed but abandoned the web link without completing the survey, which means that the response rate could have been 11.79 percent without using follow-up reminders. It is important to note that the event organiser agreed to send out the invitation to the survey only once. A follow-up reminder, which was not permitted, could have improved the response rate although it is possible that event participants did not complete the survey for other reasons. As an example, some participants had used their work e-mail when registering for the event. This means that they received the invitation to complete the survey at work where they might not have had the time to respond to the survey request. Furthermore, the invitation noted that the survey was about physical activity and therefore, individuals who were already active might have been more likely to respond to the survey request while possibly excluding some previously inactive individuals. At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to provide their e-mail address if they agreed to partake in the post-event survey and 1,043 of the respondents did so. The e-mail address was used to reconnect with this sample three months after the event. This time frame has been used in other studies, allowing for a relapse in physical activity participation to occur post-event (Bowles et al., 2006; Crofts et al., 2012; Lane et al., 2010). In total, 664 respondents completed the post-event survey (response rate = 63.66 percent). About 78 percent of the follow-up surveys were completed in Flemish, 14 percent in English, and 7 percent in French. The survey tool showed that another 137 individuals accessed but abandoned the web link without completing the survey. In total, 639 respondents could be matched for pre-and post-event analysis by matching their e-mail address in both surveys. Respondents were excluded for further analyses when matching was not possible.

### 3.3.2 Survey design

Influenced by social ecological theory, questions addressing variables that outline the individual and community systems were included in the survey (Appendix E). Five university researchers who are experts in sport and health reviewed the content validity of the survey questions. Subsequently, a pilot examination of the survey questions was conducted among doctoral students at The University of British Columbia and the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. The pilot resulted in some minor changes regarding the wording of some questions. The pilot also determined that it took about 10 minutes to complete the survey.
**Individual system.** Data on socio-demographic variables including gender, age, education, professional status, and subjective income status were collected. Individual behaviour in terms of active participation in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo and passive spectating of the Tour of Flanders was measured as followed. Respondents were asked whether they had previously participated in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo and whether they would participate in other participatory cycling events in addition to the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. The survey asked whether they would watch the Tour of Flanders and how many professional cycling races they had attended during the past year. In order to understand respondents’ cycling orientation, they were asked to identify themselves as being competitive (i.e., I cycle to improve my distance, time, and/or performance and may do this through a competition), recreational (i.e., I cycle to relax, socialise, improve my health), and/or functional cyclists (i.e., I cycle to get to work, to the store, to school). Respondents were able to select more than one option. Asking about recreational cycling could soften the general understanding about cycle tourists being competitive weekend warriors or cycle terrorists (as they have been referred to in the introductory chapter), whereas asking about functional cycling could broaden the understanding of cycling participation in addition to the well-known leisure time activities.

Using a baseline and follow-up survey, this research measured physical activity participation at two points in time using two different measures. First, in the baseline survey, physical activity was measured retrospectively by asking questions about the time before the commencement of training for the event. Dickson et al. (2010) considered the time of event registration a poor baseline measure because participants might already be training for the event prior to their registration, which could skew the data in terms of higher baseline physical activity levels. Following Dickson et al. (2010) and Funk et al. (2011), the question prompts in the baseline survey emphasised ‘Thinking back to the period before you started training for the Tour of Flanders Cyclo…’; allowing for individuals to assess their physical activity retrospectively. Using a note to inform respondents, the survey reinforced that physical activity can include many activities on top of the well-known leisure time activities; namely occupational activities, household chores, and active transportation. The difference between moderate and vigorous intensity activity was also explained to ensure validity of the measures. Based on these standards
of activity (i.e., moderate and vigorous), each respondent classified him or herself as being insufficiently active or sufficiently active and this for less or more than six months prior to the commencement of training for the event.

Second, in the follow-up survey, physical activity was measured using the short version of the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) at three months after the event (Appendix F). The IPAQ questionnaire, including definitions and scoring protocols, are available online (www.ipaq.ki.se). The question prompts in the follow-up survey emphasised ‘Think about the activities that you did in the last seven days…’; allowing respondents to answer questions about how many days and for how many minutes they engaged in different types of physical activity. Based on the internationally validated scoring protocol, individuals were classified as being insufficiently active, moderately active, or highly active. Although the long version of the IPAQ could have provided more detailed information about the different settings in which individuals were active, the time burden associated with this longer questionnaire meant that it was not an option. Furthermore, the IPAQ could not be used in the baseline survey because participants could not be expected to recall the minutes of physical activity with accuracy retrospectively prior to their commencement of training for the event. The IPAQ survey has been used successfully in the context of participatory sport events (e.g., Adams & White 2009; Lane, Murphy, & Bauman 2008).

Lastly, the training impact and event impact on physical activity were also measured, using questions adapted from a previous survey by Thomson, Darcy, and Edwards (2010). These authors originally examined perceptions of whether taking part in a participatory sport event influenced individuals’ sport and physical activity participation. The questions asked whether respondents had been more active, active at the same level, less active, or inactive using the question prompts of ‘Since you started training for the Tour of Flanders…’ (baseline survey) and ‘Since you participated in the Tour of Flanders…’ (follow-up survey). One other physical activity measure asked how many weeks participants had trained to prepare themselves for the Tour of Flanders Cyclo.
**Community system.** Through the availability of social and physical resources, the community can facilitate an individual’s physical activity participation. Twenty-seven items measured the importance of specific elements in the community in helping event participants to become more active or to maintain their physical activity. Ten of the items have been previously used by Ramchandani and Coleman (2012) in a study that examined the levers that might cause spectators at major sport events in the United Kingdom to act on the demonstration or inspiration effect (e.g., the chance to meet athletes and hear how they started their participation in the sport). The other items were developed from the available literature on promoting physical activity through environmentally-based changes, focusing on the availability of social and physical resources in the community (e.g., the presence and quality of outdoor recreation infrastructure). Twelve items measured the importance of specific elements of the Tour of Flanders in promoting physical activity among event participants, again conceptualising the organisation of a participatory sport event as a target within the community (e.g., the tradition of the Tour of Flanders). The response range was a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*not important at all*) to 4 (*very important*). The means and standard deviations of these items are presented in Table 8 (*N* = 1,091). A principal component analysis was conducted to reduce the data on the 27 community items to a smaller set of factors. Influenced by social ecological theory, these factors can be understood as important targets to incorporate in future health promotion interventions.

### 3.3.3 Study participants

In the Tour of Flanders Cyclo baseline sample (*N* = 1,091), just over 95 percent of the respondents were male and approximately 62 percent were in their thirties or forties. About 68 percent completed tertiary education and 88 percent were employed. Only 2 percent of the respondents reported having a difficult time making ends meet with their current disposable income. The most popular event distance was the 133 km, followed by the 259 km and the 83 km distances. Using a Pearson chi-square test, the respondents who only completed the pre-event baseline survey were compared with those who completed both the baseline and post-event follow-up survey. Table 9 reveals that both samples differed significantly in terms of age, as the follow-up sample was slightly older and included a higher percentage of individuals in their fifties and sixties. More individuals who were younger only completed the baseline survey and did not get around to also completing the follow-up survey. There were no significant differences
between both samples based on gender, education, professional status, subjective income status, and race distance.

3.3.4 Data analysis
All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS (Version 20). There were no missing values in the data sets as participants could not submit the survey without responding to all the questions. First, to examine the demographic profile of event participants, the variables from the baseline survey were analysed descriptively. Second, to measure changes in physical activity participation between the pre- and post-event periods, data from the baseline and follow-up surveys were matched. Spearman’s correlation coefficient was calculated to rank the physical activity data according to the sufficiency levels in the pre- and post-event periods. This correlation was appropriate because the physical activity data were reported in categories that have a meaningful order (i.e., sufficiently active is better than insufficiently active). Using a Pearson chi-square test, the respondents were compared based upon their reported pre- and post-event physical activity levels to assess changes in physical activity participation. Third, to examine how the individual and community systems influenced physical activity participation among event participants, a principal component analysis (PCA) was performed. This PCA was performed on the 27 items that measured the importance of specific elements in respondents’ community that helped them to become more physically active or helped them to maintain their physical activity. This analysis provided a better understanding of the influence of the community on physical activity participation by reducing these items to a smaller set of factors, while retaining as much of the original information as possible. The PCA decomposed the original data into a set of linear factors and established how a particular item contributed to that factor (Field, 2013). These factors provided valuable information on what type health promotion targets can or should be employed to promote physical activity among participants of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo.

The response range for the 27 items was a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not important at all) to 4 (very important). The list of items and the mean scores for the baseline sample are shown in Table 8, ranked in order of importance as indicated by the mean values. Different criteria for conducting a PCA were examined and confirmed the use of this analysis. Firstly,
multicollinearity among the items was not a problem. Secondly, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .89, above the recommended value of .60. A value score on the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure close to one indicated that patterns of correlations were relatively compact, which means that distinct and reliable factors could be generated. Furthermore, the Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 (276) = 11089.41, p < .0001$), which means that the correlations between all items were significantly different from zero. Thirdly, the diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were all over .50, which referred to appropriate measures of sampling adequacy for the individual items, and the communalities were all above .30, which referred to appropriate common variance between the items. An initial PCA with orthogonal rotation (varimax) analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each factor. The varimax analysis attempted to maximise the dispersion of loadings within factors, which means that fewer items load highly on each factor, resulting in a more interpretable clusters of factors (Field, 2013). Six factors had eigenvalues that achieved the Keiser’s criterion of one but after examining the reliability of all factors, one factor consisting of three items was unreliable and excluded for further analysis ($\alpha = .42$). The PCA was performed again and five factors were retained, explaining 60.57 percent of the variance between the items. The factor loading matrix is presented in Table 10.

---

The three items were the following: good street connectivity, mixed land use, and activities that have been organised around the Tour of Flanders. Perhaps unreliable because most areas in Belgium – as opposed to the United States where most of the literature comes from – have good street connectivity and mixed land use. Also, no additional activities for the Tour of Flanders Cyclo participants were organised on the day of the event.
Figure 4. Levels of reality according to critical realism

Real
- Structures and mechanisms with enduring properties that have the potential to generate an actual phenomenon

Actual
- Phenomenon that actually occurs

Empirical
- Phenomenon that is experienced

Source: Adapted from McEvoy & Richards, 2006
Table 4. List of interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event organiser</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Het Nieuwsblad</td>
<td>Race Director</td>
<td>1988-1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Het Nieuwsblad</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>1985-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinguïn Productions</td>
<td>Race Organiser</td>
<td>1980s-2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flanders Classics</td>
<td>Race Director</td>
<td>1990s-…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start/arrival host city</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>Mayor of Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>1977-1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sint-Niklaas</td>
<td>Head of the Department of Sport</td>
<td>1977-1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninove</td>
<td>President of the Tour of Flanders Arrival Committee</td>
<td>1973-2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruges</td>
<td>Director of Bruges Plus</td>
<td>1998-…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oudenaarde</td>
<td>Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre</td>
<td>2012-…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village of the Tour</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zwalm</td>
<td>Department of Community Development</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torhout</td>
<td>Department of Culture</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torhout</td>
<td>Department of Sport</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rekkem</td>
<td>Department of Communication</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centennial Tour</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oudenaarde</td>
<td>Manager at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre</td>
<td>2005-…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Flanders</td>
<td>Manager at Westtoer</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Flanders</td>
<td>Project Coordinator Centennial Tour at Westtoer</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5. An example of the use of codes and themes in ATLAS.ti
Table 5. A list of the themes and codes that were generated from the qualitative data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leverageable resources</td>
<td>● Physical infrastructure</td>
<td>• Attraction of the Tour of Flanders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Political commitment</td>
<td>• Enthusiasm audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Financial support</td>
<td>• Liminality and communitas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Historical resources and cycling heritage</td>
<td>• Uniqueness of cycling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Social resources and social enthusiasm</td>
<td>• Start of the race as separate event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Event properties</td>
<td>• Cycling culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Context of the host</td>
<td>• Financial investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Personal attachment by politicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Necessary input from host cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cycling heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leveraging processes</td>
<td>● Opportunity for leverage Village of the Tour Centennial Tour</td>
<td>• Route of the Tour of Flanders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Strategic objectives</td>
<td>• Media attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Socioeconomic benefits</td>
<td>• Bicycle tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Bicycle tourism</td>
<td>• Municipal government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Event stakeholders</td>
<td>• Flemish government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tourism Flanders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Financial investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• City marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Public policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• International spectators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leveraging initiatives</td>
<td>● Cycling infrastructure</td>
<td>• Cyclists as heroes - Flandriens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Participatory cycling events</td>
<td>• Cycling clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Cycling initiatives</td>
<td>• Cycle touring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Competitive and recreational</td>
<td>• Tour of Flanders cycling routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Cycling education</td>
<td>• Health promotion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6. The total number of initiatives organised across the two leveraging processes
Figure 7. Breakdown of the two leveraging processes according to the types of initiatives
### Table 6. Overview of physical activity initiatives within the Village of the Tour events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indoor cycling competition</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle touring activity</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational cycling activity</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational walking/running activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling education activity for children</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling race</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling competition for children</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling camp for children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapted cycling activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retro cycling activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelchair dancing activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petanque activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table 7. Overview of physical activity initiatives within the Centennial Tour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Subsidy (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience Centre</strong></td>
<td>Province of Flemish Brabant</td>
<td>This project combines tourism and sport experiences for cyclo cross. The site is currently home to an annual cyclo cross event and will be complemented with a training and visitor centre. Visitors will be able to cycle or walk along the official route of the event.</td>
<td>495,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Live your own Tour of Flanders</strong></td>
<td>Province of East Flanders</td>
<td>This project updates the existing Tour of Flanders cycling network. The three new routes are supported with user friendly signage, a brochure, and website. Time registration is available on some hills.</td>
<td>370,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Everyone Flandrien</strong></td>
<td>Province of West Flanders</td>
<td>This project includes six thematic cycling routes. Along these routes, the story of local Flandriens is used as a theme to engage cyclists with Flanders’ cycling heritage.</td>
<td>140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cycling Dreamer</strong></td>
<td>Province of Limburg</td>
<td>This project bundles the cycling heritage of Limburg through an interactive website that covers the cycling network, the events calendar, and accommodation arrangements.</td>
<td>96,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In the wheel of Eddy Merckx</strong></td>
<td>Province of Flemish Brabant</td>
<td>The Sportimonium museum displays a collection dedicated to Eddy Merckx. Furthermore, a permanent cycling network covering three routes is promoted and along these routes there are 36 sites that have specific links to local cycling heritage.</td>
<td>92,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RetroTour Deluxe</strong></td>
<td>Province of East Flanders</td>
<td>The RetroTour is a participatory cycling event that includes routes of 40, 70, and 100 km that are completed on vintage style bicycles.</td>
<td>68,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tour 100 Classic</strong></td>
<td>Province of East Flanders and West Flanders</td>
<td>The Tour 100 Classic is a participatory cycling event that brings back to life the first Tour of Flanders from 1913. Experienced national and international cyclists are invited to participate in the 324 km distance from Ghent to Ghent or the 162 km or 100 km from Oudenaarde to Oudenaarde.</td>
<td>42,486</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Subsidy**: 1,305,349
Table 8. Descriptive analysis of the community elements that promote physical activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riding an event with legendary hills</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>(0.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding a classic event such as the Tour of Flanders</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>(0.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pride that comes with finishing the Tour of Flanders</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>(1.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding the same event as the elite cyclists</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>(1.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole atmosphere around the Tour of Flanders (spectacle, crowd, excitement)</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>(1.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tradition of the Tour of Flanders</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>(1.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe environment to participate in activities (lighting, traffic)</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>(0.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable scenery, pleasant surrounding landscape</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>(0.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence and quality of outdoor recreation infrastructure</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>(1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riding the Tour of Flanders on the day before the elite cyclists</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>(1.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low neighbourhood density</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>(0.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation of participatory sport events in which I can participate</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>(1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability of admission, membership, and subscription</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>(1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about sports that are appropriate for my fitness and ability</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>(1.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill and ability of current elite cyclists</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>(1.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good street connectivity</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>(0.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishments of past ‘Flandriens’</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>(1.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the competition among current elite cyclists</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>(1.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence and quality of indoor recreation infrastructure</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>(1.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance of the elite cyclist I am supporting</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>(1.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities that have been organised around the Tour of Flanders</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>(1.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information about local clubs and centres where I could have a go</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>(1.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance to try activities in a non-threatening environment with other inexperienced people</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>(1.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient transportation to activities</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>(1.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance to meet athletes and hear how they got started in their sport</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>(1.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tester sessions where I live</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>(1.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed land use</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>(1.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M stands for mean (min = 0; max = 4) and SD stands for standard deviation.
Table 9. Demographic profile of survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline (N = 1,091)</th>
<th>Follow-up (N = 639)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong> (χ²(1)=0.06; NS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong> (χ²(4)=9.90; p&lt;.05)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenties</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirties</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forties</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifties</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixties</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong> (χ²(2)=2.60; NS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional status</strong> (χ²(3)=0.81; NS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No paid employment</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subjective income status</strong> (χ²(2)=4.60; NS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Very) easy to make ends meet</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In between</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Very) difficult to make ends meet</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Event distance</strong> (χ²(2)=3.83; NS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83 km</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133 km</td>
<td>56.1%</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>259 km</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home country</strong> χ²(1)=0.21; NS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad a</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The baseline survey was conducted ten days prior to the event, whereas the follow-up survey was conducted three months after the event. NS stands for not statistically significant. a The international respondents came from the Netherlands (20.3 percent), the United Kingdom (8.0 percent), France (5.0 percent), and Germany (1.5 percent). A chi-square test revealed that there were no significant differences between the baseline survey respondents and the event participants (N = 16,000) in terms of race distance (χ²(2) = 1.36; NS) and home country (χ²(4) = 0.46; NS).
### Table 10. Principal component analysis results

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<tr>
<td>Riding a classic event such as the Tour of Flanders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riding the same event as the elite cyclists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riding an event with legendary hills</td>
<td>.79</td>
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<td>Whole atmosphere around the event (spectacle, crowd, excitement)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tradition of the Tour of Flanders</td>
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<td>Riding on the day before the elite cyclists</td>
<td>.71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pride that comes with finishing the Tour of Flanders</td>
<td>.61</td>
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<td>Quality of the competition among current elite cyclists</td>
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<td>Skill and ability of current elite cyclists</td>
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<td>Performance of the elite cyclist I am supporting</td>
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<td>Accomplishments of past ‘Flandriens’</td>
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<td>Information about local clubs and centres where I could have a go</td>
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<td>Tester sessions where I live</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chance to try activities in a non-threatening environment with other inexperienced people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chance to meet athletes and hear how they got started in their sport</td>
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<td>Information about sports that are appropriate for my fitness/ability</td>
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<td>Organisation of participatory sport events in which I can participate</td>
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<td>Low neighbourhood density</td>
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<td>Enjoyable scenery, pleasant surrounding landscape</td>
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<td>Safe environment to participate in activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presence and quality of outdoor recreation infrastructure</td>
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<td>.45</td>
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<td>Convenient transportation to activities</td>
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<td>.74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presence and quality of indoor recreation infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordability of admission, membership, and subscription</td>
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| Eigenvalue | 6.187 | 3.268 | 2.599 | 1.277 | 1.206 |
| % of variance | 25.79 | 13.62 | 10.83 | 5.32 | 5.02 |
| $\alpha$ | .89 | .88 | .76 | .66 | .70 |
| $M$ | 3.13 | 2.06 | 1.93 | 2.90 | 2.24 |
| $(SD)$ | (0.84) | (1.03) | (0.72) | (0.73) | (0.86) |

*Note. N = 1,091. Factor loadings <.40 are suppressed. The variable ‘presence and quality of outdoor recreation infrastructure’ loads on two factors – higher on factor 5 (structural resources; 0.53) than on factor 4 (physical resources; 0.45), although the difference is rather small. This means that in terms of outdoor recreation infrastructure, there is a relationship between physical and structural resources in the community. This highlights the importance of the location where cycling infrastructure should/could be developed, namely in an area that is accessible and convenient, but also calm, safe, and enjoyable.*
CHAPTER 4 LEVERAGEABLE RESOURCES

Drawing on the literature on event leveraging, which focuses in particular on sport mega-events as opposed to other small and medium-sized sport events, events have been traditionally understood as a leverageable resource that can set apart a host community from its competitors by providing opportunities for economic growth and social change (Chalip, 2004; O’Brien & Chalip, 2008; Sparvero & Chalip, 2007). Scholars have referred to sport events as “seed capital,” making it the responsibility of stakeholders within the host communities to use this capital in realizing sustainable, longer-term legacies (O’Brien, 2006, p. 258). In terms of economic benefits, sport events – or, when applicable, a portfolio of several events throughout the year – provide a leverageable financial resource since they are able to attract additional tourists to the host (Chalip, 2004). This financial resource, however, is not sufficient to unlock or forecast the social potential of the event. The question of what is being leveraged in seeking social benefits can be answered in term of the concepts of liminality and communitas, which are described as leverageable social resources that are able to bring host residents together around the event and focus their attention on social issues (O’Brien & Chalip, 2008). In anticipation of the event, liminality is understood as a new and shared energy that creates a heightened sense of community (Chalip, 2006). In what signals a radical departure from the original conception of event leveraging, the object of focus for understanding social leveraging appears to be a pre-event moment when leverageable socially-oriented resources can stimulate new social ambitions for the host community. It is not clear, however, how special the anticipation of the event has to be to produce enough newfound energy in the host community to politically leverage important social outcomes (De Lisio et al., 2015; VanWynsberghe et al., 2012).

The purpose of this chapter is to better understand the leverageable resources that have been used, developed, and perhaps even deliberately pursued in previous and current host cities of the Tour of Flanders. By focusing the analysis on the historical trajectory of hosting the road cycling race in four different start and arrival host cities since the 1970s, the findings seek to understand how, when, why, and by whom event leveraging was introduced. Through a careful analysis of both the properties of the Tour of Flanders and the context of the start and arrival host
cities, the findings seek to go beyond an understanding of event-related and socially-oriented leverageable resources that are currently discussed in the literature. Contrary to the case of sport mega-events where the context of the host is rarely the same twice, the Tour of Flanders is a medium-sized sport event that has been hosted annually in and around the same cities in Flanders. As an example, Meerbeke, which became a borough of Ninove in 1977, was the arrival host city for the Tour of Flanders from 1973 until 2011, whereas Sint-Niklaas was the start host city from 1977 until 1997. Both cities hosted the event for an extended period of time during which they closely experienced the increasing popularity of the Tour of Flanders, especially in the 1990s. Although these cities were able to satisfy the event organiser’s increasing demands in terms of financial resources, the start of the Tour of Flanders relocated to Bruges in 1998 and Oudenaarde has hosted the arrival since 2012. Reflecting on why the event organiser changed host cities in the past can illustrate some future opportunities for the event and potential new host cities. It appears that the event organiser has actively searched for host cities where the processes of event leveraging can provide long-term outcomes for both the event and the host. What follows is a discussion of the leverageable resources that have been necessary to successfully host and leverage the Tour of Flanders.

4.1 Road cycling’s potential
Professional road cycling, as explained by Morrow and Idle (2008), is a sport founded on commercialism as publishers started to organise their own events to create attractive content for their newspapers. Road cycling races were used as a marketing instrument ‘avant la lettre’ in different European countries, including France where the Tour de France was organised by L’Auto since 1903 and Italy where the Giro d’Italia was organised by Gazzetta dello Sport since 1909. The Tour of Flanders continued the tradition of commercialising road cycling. When it was founded in 1913 by the newspaper Sportwereld, it was done so as a publicity event to boost circulation of the newspaper. Over the years, major race organisers extended their races beyond commercialism and sport by invoking social and cultural issues. By highlighting its potential to produce a feeling of national pride and prestige, road cycling events have been celebrated as social and cultural tributes to their host countries (Morrow & Idle, 2008). As a result, the current role of the Tour of Flanders appears to be much broader than the provision of a world-class sport competition:
The Tour of Flanders is much more than a sport event; it transcends sport [italics added]. Everyone is concerned with the Tour of Flanders on the day of the event. There are few other activities that afternoon and there will be no soccer game. Everyone wonders and chats about who won – women, young and old people, everyone…. The event is something that belongs to us [Flemish residents], it is anchored here. It became a Flemish folk festival [italics added] and sometimes we even say it is bigger than the official Flemish holiday. (Interview with Race Director at Flanders Classics, January 2013)

The comments of the Race Director resonate with Chalip’s (2006) description of liminality, observing that something sacred is occurring that transcends sport on the day of the Tour of Flanders. This liminality creates a heightened sense of community (also known as communitas in the sport mega-event literature) among those who attend the event, which is understood as a “new energy [that] has been injected into the communal atmosphere – an energy that can be shared by all” (Chalip, 2006, p. 110). The Director at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre argued that this energy is able to bond people at a social level by providing a positive topic in which people share a genuine interest (interview, March 2013). When liminality occurs, social interactions between a diversity of individuals are heightened because the regular social norms and structures are weakened (Fullagar, 2012). However, this liminality and sense of community, which is assumed to unite the whole of a given city across the boundaries of structure, rank, and socioeconomic status in support of pursuing a common goal (Smith & Ingham, 2003), should not be uncritically accepted.

In general, up to 1.6 million residents in Flanders and 50 million people world-wide watch the event live on television. About 160 million people world-wide see some images of the Tour of Flanders (Vanwalleghem et al., 2013). Furthermore, between 600,000 and 750,000 people watch in person as the peloton passes by on public roads (Lagae & Vanclooster, 2011). These numbers make it the largest single-day sport event in the country. Nonetheless, research conducted in four cities along the route – including the arrival host city, the Village of the Tour, and two other important locations in the race – revealed that more than 70 percent of the spectators are non-residents who have travelled to watch the event (van Schendel et al., 2009a). This low
percentage of local residents suggests that perhaps not everyone in the host city collectively joins in support of the event. In addition, the high percentage of non-residents suggests that the event has the potential to benefit individuals beyond the host city to include those who have travelled to join the local residents who share an interest in cycling. These non-residents can benefit socially because they are actively included in the communitas that is created around the event. Many spectators along the route wear striking outfits, wave with flags of Flanders, and try to show off their home made banners while cheering on the elite cyclists. The Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre described this spectatorship as a major social phenomenon that appears to put public life on hold:

I mean, suddenly there is a population that says: guys, look, forget everything, today is the Tour of Flanders. The normal social criteria are abandoned. A bit like carnival, things are allowed that would not normally be allowed. The Tour is another dimension, another planet, very bizarre. (Interview, March 2013)

The Director also noted that the sport event is a trigger for people to do something together and unite around the event. However, this has not always been the case as the findings that are elaborated upon later on in this chapter suggest that neither the production of this shared energy in the lead-up to the event nor the strategic processes to capitalise on this leverageable resource to create additional outcomes have been inherent to the Tour of Flanders.

4.2 Ready to host the Tour of Flanders
The arrival host city of the Tour of Flanders changed from Ghent-Bruges to Meerbeke (Ninove) in the 1970s. Changing the arrival host city was a strategic decision taken by the event organiser to maintain the event’s character of being a physically challenging cycling race. The location of the arrival host city became increasingly important in terms of the final 30 km of the race, which should include cobblestoned hills where cyclists can compete and battle to determine the winner of the race. During an interview, the Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre described that, after the Second World War, more and more cobblestoned roads were being paved, which threatened the unique image and features of the Tour of Flanders (interview, March 2013). Meerbeke appeared to be an ideal candidate host city because of its location in the Flemish
Ardennes, a hilly region in the province of East Flanders. Meerbeke was only 16 km away from Geraardsbergen that with the Wall of Geraardsbergen – officially called the Oudenberg – was home to an iconic cobbled hill with a maximum gradient of almost 20 percent. This hill has been included in the route of the Tour of Flanders 45 times, with its first appearance in 1950 (Vanwallegem et al., 2013). The President of the Arrival Committee described that although Meerbeke was officially the arrival host city, a unique partnership between Meerbeke and Geraardsbergen was established, each providing resources that highlight the importance of the properties of the event and the context of the host. The Wall of Geraardsbergen not only attracted thousands of spectators each year to cheer on the elite cyclists during the race, it was also referred to as an ‘executioner’ in determining the genuine winner of the race. “Meerbeke was pleased that the Wall was located just a few kilometers from the finish and Geraardsbergen was pleased that we organised the arrival so well, so it was a win-win situation for both” (interview, February 2013). This partnership also illustrated that the objective of place promotion could be achieved even for those locations that are neither hosting the arrival nor the start of a medium-sized sport event, as articulated by the President of the Arrival Committee:

In the media reports following the relocation of the arrival host city from Ninove to Oudenaarde, Geraardsbergen was named eight times and Ninove only twice – so to speak. That is evidence that Ninove was not in the spotlight while we were the ones who had the arrival of the Tour of Flanders. But the Wall of Geraardsbergen is more important as cycling enthusiasts continue to cycle there all year round. (Interview, February 2013)

What this aforementioned quotation also illustrates is the potential of active participation in cycling as a means of place promotion when, as in the case of Geraardsbergen, exceptional physical infrastructure in the form of an iconic cobbled hill is available in the host. Although the route of the Tour of Flanders does not currently cover the Wall of Geraardsbergen, this infrastructure continues to be an important resource for organising other sport events to date. As an example, ‘Red Bull The Wall’ is an annual participatory cycling event that was first organised in 2012 on the Wall of Geraardsbergen. This event is a competition in which non-elite cyclists, either individually or in teams, race up the cobbled hill as fast as they can.
It had been the Mayor of Meerbeke who, through his good relationship with the former Race Director at *Het Nieuwsblad*, was able to attract the Tour of Flanders to the city. A local cycling club became the local organiser for the arrival of the cycling race together with the Flemish Cycling Union. This cycling club had many years of hosting experience in terms of professional and amateur cycling events, with for example the organisation of the Race of the Flemish Regions from 1968 until 1972 (Vanwalleghem, 1998). Although local cycling clubs received annual subsidies from the municipal government, those appeared to be insufficient to cover the increasing costs of hosting the Tour of Flanders. The main cost for start and arrival host cities was the amount that was payable to the event organiser in order to receive the rights to host the event. This amount had increased significantly over the years, which was justified by the event organiser because of the potential of the Tour of Flanders to promote the host city and region to an international audience (Lagae & Vanclooster, 2011). In the case of Ninove, a non-profit Arrival Committee was established in 1989 to host the arrival of the Tour of Flanders. In an interview, the President of the Arrival Committee explained that he was approached by the Mayor of Ninove with the request of creating some financial security to keep the Tour of Flanders in the city through the collection of commercial sponsorship funding. This non-profit organisation had always successfully met the financial requirements that were set by the event organiser. Nonetheless, because of the growing size of the event and the related financial investment, the Race Director at *Het Nieuwsblad* insisted that the municipal government also got involved. As a result, influenced by the event organiser, the municipal government of Ninove started to contribute roughly half of the financial investment that was required to host the arrival of the Tour of Flanders in 2005 (interview with the President of the Arrival Committee, February 2013). The financial structure in Ninove was quite different from Sint-Niklaas, Bruges, and Oudenaarde where the municipal government has been responsible for the entire amount payable to the event organiser. Inevitably, this requires a much greater investment of public resources, especially in the current host cities.

The location of the start host city has also been important for the event organiser but more from a logistical standpoint – covering issues such as size and space – since the start has a less critical impact on the outcome of the race. The first kilometers of the 259 km road cycling race are
completed by forming a peloton that is intended to cover some distance without many breakaways early on. A few years after Meerbeke was selected as the new arrival host city, the start of the race relocated from Ghent to Sint-Niklaas. Sint-Niklaas is home to the largest market square in Belgium, covering 3.2 ha with an adjacent large city hall that was ideal to host the press and team directors (Vanwalleghem, 1998). This physical infrastructure has been strategically used by the event organiser to develop and professionalise the start of the Tour of Flanders. Originally, elite cyclists had to register to participate on the day before or on the morning of the Tour of Flanders in the city hall of Sint-Niklaas. Although spectators were allowed, the general public was not interested and there were only a few people watching (interview with Mayor of Sint-Niklaas and Head of the Department of Sport, February 2013).

The Race Director, inspired by watching his own cycling heroes registering for the event, decided to create a spectacle on the morning of the race, using the greatest heroes in the world of cycling as performers. A large podium where cyclists could drive onto with their race bikes and register to participate was built in the centre of the city. Event registration became one element of a larger show that was televised live and included interviews conducted by well-known journalists and musical performances (interview with Race Director at Het Nieuwsblad, February 2013). This morning show, which was entirely directed by the event organiser, developed to become the largest event in Sint-Niklaas, attracting 10,000 spectators on the morning of the Tour of Flanders. To better understand these numbers, it is important to keep in mind that this morning show only lasted about two hours prior to the start of the race. These spectators were not only local residents and non-residents who had travelled to watch the start of the race, but also sponsors of the Tour of Flanders who were offered breakfast and could follow the race in one of the publicity cars that trailed the elite cyclists from start to finish (interview with Mayor of Sint-Niklaas and Head of the Department of Sport, February 2013).

Similarly to the situation in Meerbeke, there was collaboration between a local cycling club and in this case not the Mayor but the young Alderman of Sport to attract the event to the city of Sint-Niklaas. There was some talk about the fact that Het Nieuwsblad was seeking a new start host city and the Alderman of Sport, who was passionate about cycling, recognised the attraction of a prestigious event to the city as an opportunity to further develop his political career (interview with the Head of the Department of Sport, February 2013). Prior to organising the
start of the Tour of Flanders, the city had an extensive experience in terms of hosting professional and amateur cycling events. As an example, between the stages in Rotterdam and Roubaix, the Tour de France of 1973 included one stage with start and arrival in Sint-Niklaas. Furthermore, since 1932 the city has been organising an annual criterion, which since 2009 takes place following the Tour de France and has attracted former and popular Tour de France winners including Cadel Evans, Andy Schleck, and Chris Froome to participate. A criterion is quite different from literally ‘a tour across Flanders’ as it covers multiple rounds in and around the same city for a maximum event distance of 100 km. During the interview, the Head of the Department of Sport described how the organisation of these cycling events created what he referred to as a ‘cycling hunger’ which in 2001 – three years after Bruges was selected as the new start host city – inspired the municipal government to, although unsuccessfully, submit a proposal to Het Nieuwsblad to return the start of the Tour of Flanders to Sint-Niklaas. Also, in 2012 a proposal for the Centennial Tour was submitted by the current Mayor in his former role as Alderman of Tourism, again unsuccessfully as it was not shortlisted by the Department of Tourism in Flanders (also referred to as Tourism Flanders) to receive any subsidies. Once he had reviewed the proposals that had been funded, the Mayor of Sint-Niklaas assumed that Tourism Flanders was more interested in subsidising permanent infrastructure when compared to one-off events, with the latter being the main focus of the city’s unsuccessful proposal (interview, February 2013).

In 1998, Bruges became the start host city of the Tour of Flanders to the detriment of Sint-Niklaas. Although the available physical infrastructure in Sint-Niklaas was incomparable to other cities in Flanders, changing the start from Sint-Niklaas to Bruges revealed that the physical infrastructure should not only satisfy the event properties and the event organiser logistically, but it should also speak to the increasing number of international spectators who watch the event. The unofficial start of the Tour of Flanders has been traditionally organised in the city centre where cyclists ride in group prior to the official start of the race a few kilometers later (interview with Race Director at Flanders Classics, January 2013). The current start in Bruges, far more so than the start in Sint-Niklaas, serves to showcase the historic city centre, including its well-known medieval bell tower.
Besides the sporting spectacle, increasingly cycling is about presenting a décor. Why are Québec and Montréal organising a cycling race? Why does one pass through central London during the Olympic cycling race or in Beijing through the Forbidden City and along the Great Wall of China? You can pass a number of attractions and present the assets of the hosting country, region, and city. (Interview with the Race Director at Flanders Classics, January 2013)

The international image and appeal of the host city appear to be an increasing concern for the event organiser, as these represent and influence to some extent the international status and standing of the Tour of Flanders, in particular because 160 million people world-wide see some images of the event (interview with Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, March 2013). This finding highlights that the connections between the properties of the event and the context of the host have been actively sought by the event organiser that currently leverages the image and appeal of the host city to benefit the event internationally. The event organiser has pursued historically significant and aesthetically appealing locations to start, finish, and run the race. This unique and attractive backdrop to the event generates tourists who Chalip (2004) signalled as key to economic event leveraging. Furthermore, this international audience provides an opportunity to strategically leverage the event with, for example, tourism campaigns that involve active participation in cycling (interview with Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, March 2013). In this regard, the Mayor of Sint-Niklaas was not surprised when the event organiser selected Bruges as the new start city and argued that “when you look at the appeal of Bruges at the European and even global level, there is no way we can compensate that in Sint-Niklaas in any way, not even financially” (interview, February 2013). In Bruges, it was the former Mayor who had made a significant financial effort to promote the city, which not only included the start of the Tour of Flanders but also the hosting of the European Football Championships in 2000 and the European Cultural Capital in 2002 (interview with Director of Bruges Plus, February 2013). The interviewees revealed that in terms of international image and appeal, there are only a few cities in Flanders that could possibly host the start of the Tour of Flanders in the future, and these are what the Director of Bruges Plus referred to as the ‘big league’ cities including Antwerp and Ghent (interview, February 2013), and perhaps even Brussels (interview with Mayor of Sint-Niklaas, February 2013). These cities are currently the
most popular cities in Belgium in terms of their annual number of (inter)national visitors (Mast, 2013; Tourism Flanders, 2011).

As a means of comparison, Ghent hosted the arrival of the second leg of the Tour de France in 2007 for which it paid €500,000 to the Amaury Sport Organisation (interview with Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, March 2013). Furthermore, Antwerp will host the start of the third leg of the Tour de France in 2015. Hosting one leg of the race can be understood as a strategic planning process to gain valuable hosting experience since Antwerp also wants to host the Tour de France Grand Départ in 2020, exactly one hundred years after hosting the Olympic Games (de Vlieger, 2013). These financial investments in the Tour de France send a clear message that cities are willing to pay a significant amount to leverage an ever-widening spectrum of benefits. Although there is no evidence of any indications that a new start host city for the Tour of Flanders would be selected in the near future, the Director of Bruges Plus was very clear when arguing that, “I have no illusions about the fact that the Tour of Flanders is up for sale. That was already the case in Bruges and it will only be more so in the future” (interview, February 2013). Nonetheless, cities have never been bidding against one another financially to gain the rights to host the event, it has always been the event organiser that set the price and selected the city (interview Mayor of Sint-Niklaas and Head of the Department of Sport, February 2013).

These findings from previous and current start and arrival host cities of the Tour of Flanders illustrate that a city needs to possess a number of resources in order to be a successful (candidate) host and satisfy the properties of the event for the event organiser. These properties highlight that the largest single-day sport event in the country is one that has an international status and standing. Even among the international audience, the Tour of Flanders is known to be a physically challenging cycling race that runs through historically significant and aesthetically appealing locations. The image of the Tour of Flanders further highlights the importance of exceptional physical infrastructure in (candidate) host cities. In the case of cities hosting the start of the race, physical infrastructure should include historical buildings such as a city hall and a market square that are large enough to accommodate the media, the cyclists and their teams, the sponsors, and the increasing number of spectators. To give the reader some indication about the
scale of the event, the 2013 edition of the Tour of Flanders attracted 258 cyclists from 26 different cycling teams. Each team had a team bus that navigated the cyclists to the start of the race and multiple support vehicles that assisted them during the race. Another 200 publicity cars that drove around some of the 8,000 sponsors followed the elite cyclists along the route. In total, about 15,000 individuals attended the start of the Tour of Flanders in Bruges. Thus, near the start of the event, there needs to be sufficient public space to accommodate the increasing number of vehicles and spectators. In the case of cities hosting the arrival of the race, physical infrastructure should include plenty of cobblestoned hills that can determine the genuine winner of the race. Cobblestones have become an important element of Flanders’ cycling culture as they not only attract elite cyclists and their teams when training in the lead-up to the road cycling race but also active cycling participants who take on the challenge of battling the cobblestones. For that reason, the Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre argued that the arrival host city has to be located in the Flemish Ardennes where the image of the Tour of Flanders, especially for the younger generation of cycling enthusiasts, is strongly embedded. There are of course other cities in this region besides Oudenaarde that could potentially host the arrival of the Tour of Flanders, but the Director quite freely noted that the event organiser would not benefit from a greater image and exposure when relocating for example to Ronse, Brakel, or Geraardsbergen (interview with Director at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, March 2013). This again highlights that the event organiser seeks to leverage the image and appeal of the host city to benefit the Tour of Flanders. Nonetheless, both Ronse and Geraardsbergen (the latter city in collaboration with Ninove) were official but unsuccessful candidates in competition with Oudenaarde to host the arrival of the Tour of Flanders in 2012 (interview with Race Organiser at Pinguin Productions, January 2013).

Because of the growing size of the Tour of Flanders and the related financial investment, the event organiser has required some political commitment and financial support from the municipal government to safeguard hosting and funding the event. In return for this increasing financial support, previous host cities have mainly sought event impacts related to place promotion when hosting the Tour of Flanders. Based on the economic leveraging framework that was introduced by Chalip (2004), these place promotion efforts provide an economic impulse to local businesses during the event, while the increased media attention also promotes tourism
following the event. When asked about the main impact resulting from hosting the Tour of Flanders in Sint-Niklaas and Ninove, the interviewees elaborated upon promoting the city, nationally and internationally. The Mayor of Sint-Niklaas and the Head of the Department of Sport noted that:

From the perspective of city promotion, when you mention the name of a city, you can link it to a number of concepts, including sport events, buildings, historical events, and figures. The Tour of Flanders was an event that certainly appealed to a sport audience and cycling-loving public, which still means something in Flanders. It gave the city a certain prestige. (Interview, February 2013).

Perhaps lacking the buildings, historical events, and figures that can be uniquely connected to the city of Ninove, the President of the Arrival Committee confirmed that the Tour of Flanders was very important for city promotion.

Ninove has been put on the map – you have to be honest about that – because of the Tour of Flanders. The city is still known for it. If you go anywhere on holidays, perhaps it will diminish a little bit now, but if you tell people in Spain or Italy: we are from Ninove, seven out of ten times they will respond: ah Giro delle Fiandre [Tour of Flanders in Italian]. (Interview, February 2013)

As anticipated, interviewees in both cities noted that event impacts related to place promotion were exclusively linked to hosting the event. When the event organiser decided to relocate the start or arrival of the race, the former host city lost the privilege and prestige of organising the Tour of Flanders to a new locality. Furthermore, the political commitment and financial support for the Tour of Flanders, together with exceptional available physical infrastructure that can benefit the organisation of the event, did not provide any comprehensive evidence of event leveraging. The examples of Sint-Niklaas and Ninove demonstrate that event leveraging is not an automatic process, even if these cities could successfully host the event. When asked about event leveraging, the President of the Arrival Committee in Ninove argued the following:
The arrival in Ninove was a tradition that everyone loved. Everyone was happy that the Tour stayed in Ninove. You could tell from the sponsors that we had and the ones that we were able to retain over those years…. But Ninove in itself did not contribute the same as Oudenaarde – we have to be honest about that. For years and years I told the administrators of the city, including the Alderman of Tourism and the Alderman of Culture: do something with the Tour of Flanders [italics added]. There are about 5,000 to 7,000 people at the arrival. I told them: I can take care of shuttle services to bring people from the arrival to the central city square. But they never responded. I regret that, yes. And that was also a disadvantage because Oudenaarde did it right from the first time and it was a success it seems. (Interview, February 2013)

Like the Tour of Flanders itself, the previous start and arrival host cities successfully sparked interest and enthusiasm at the social level, demonstrated by the increasing number of spectators over the years. However, there was no strategic plan to leverage the event by embedding the Tour of Flanders within the receptive social context of the host and creating additional outcomes in areas such as tourism, culture, or public health. One can speculate about whether the lack of public investments in the case of Ninove and Sint-Niklaas, to some extent, influenced the lack of leveraging efforts. In Ninove, as elaborated upon previously, the municipal government did not provide any financial resources to host the arrival of the Tour of Flanders prior to 2005, which means that the event was entirely privately funded and contracted by a non-profit organisation. In Sint-Niklaas, although the municipal government had signed a contract with the event organiser, the financial resources were provided by one commercial organisation that entirely sponsored the start of the Tour of Flanders between 1990 and 1997. This commercial organisation was De Koninck Brewery, one of the oldest businesses in Antwerp that was founded in 1833. Interestingly, 1997 also marks the year that the brewery ended its sponsorship agreement and consequently, the start relocated to Bruges (interview with Mayor of Sint-Niklaas and Head of the Department of Sport, February 2013). While the lack of public investments might have had some influence, the following research findings demonstrate how other leverageable resources have been used by the event organiser to strategically connect the event to the context of the host. Through this connection, the sport event was embedded within a
particular host context, which provided a foundation for the development and implementation of successful event leveraging efforts.

4.3 Event leveraging as the new challenge
The former event organiser Het Nieuwsblad first applied event leveraging in 1988 with the objective of attracting non-sport enthusiasts to the event, and consequently to the sport section of its newspaper. Prior to these leveraging efforts, the Race Director described spectators as being mostly middle-aged men who did not have the physical appearance of being active sport participants (interview with Race Director at Het Nieuwsblad, February 2013). It appears that cycling in general and the Tour of Flanders in particular continue to have a great attraction among men, although among a younger sample, to date. One study documented that about two-thirds of those who watched the event along the route were men and almost half of these spectators were under the age of forty (van Schendel et al., 2009a). Furthermore, the findings in chapter seven elaborate upon the individual profile of event participants in the 2013 edition of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, the participatory equivalent of the Tour of Flanders. Almost all of the survey respondents were men who were in their thirties or forties and who watched the Tour of Flanders as passive spectators along the route of the event or on television. These spectators were also active participants as almost all of the respondents were sufficiently active prior to partaking in the event. These men, however, were no longer the sole group of spectators who watched the Tour of Flanders thanks to the leveraging efforts of the event organiser that sought to expand the subculture that shows an interest in cycling at the end of the 1980s. The event organiser strategically complemented the Tour of Flanders with additional elements that appealed to young people and women in particular, for example music, fashion, and humor. In a very similar way as the event itself, the newspaper Het Nieuwsblad was complemented by a weekly section on lifestyle that covered topics such as entertainment, music, culture, recreation, and leisure.

As an example of these leveraging efforts, on the morning of the Tour of Flanders, elite cyclists were (and still are) interviewed by popular sport journalists on a large podium in the centre of the start city, drawing a crowd of more than 10,000 cycling enthusiasts. As the Race Director at Het Nieuwsblad pointed out, this morning show is televised live and presents cyclists as heroes,
making their presence very appealing and perhaps even inspiring (interview, February 2013). Near the podium, spectators can walk around, inspect the latest cycling equipment and even observe warm ups from their favorite cyclists. The world’s greatest cyclists are seemingly touchable when they ride through the city centre in group prior to the official start of the race a few kilometers later (interview with Race Director at Flanders Classics, January 2013). The most important change in the demographic among those who attend the Tour of Flanders has come from women who currently make up one-third of the spectators (van Schendel et al., 2009a). These women, however, as elaborated upon later in chapter seven, have not yet fully engaged in the subculture of cycling as they are not actively participating in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo to the same extent as their male counterparts.

This morning show, which has become an important element of the Tour of Flanders, can be understood as a staged performance that creates a symbolic social space in the host community. According to Ziakas (2013), the performance element has great potential for social leverage since it is characterised by spectators and participants who collectively identify as individuals who share an interest in, and perhaps even a passion for, cycling and the Tour of Flanders. This collective experience can create a heightened sense of communitas by unlocking a new and shared energy among host residents (Chalip, 2006). The morning show can be understood as a symbolic social space because it creates an opportunity to enable meaningful social interaction among spectators without imposing social boundaries but by temporarily uniting individuals around the topic of the Tour of Flanders. In doing so, it can perhaps even convince those who have no interest in cycling to attend the morning show or join the many spectators who are watching the race along the route. It is symbolic in the sense that it strategically uses the cycling history that residents of Flanders have seemingly in common to stage a cycling festival that, as elaborated upon previously, is believed to be more important than the official Flemish holiday.

The success of this morning show, in terms of the number of spectators and the enthusiasm from the event organiser and the elite cyclists, resulted in a more general recognition of the various opportunities to celebrate the Tour of Flanders while using socially-oriented leverageable resources. The Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre further explained that “at a certain point in time, when a certain social crowd is reached around a certain phenomenon, it begins to explode and all sorts of strange things happen” (interview, March 2013). These “strange things”
included photo expositions, local pastries, beers, street names, monuments, theater performances, and books all themed around the Tour of Flanders. These elements originated spontaneously within various communities extending beyond the start and arrival host communities, without being managed by the event organiser or host governments. This collective enthusiasm resulted in a general realisation that the Tour of Flanders is much more than a sport competition, more specifically an event with a significant economic and social potential (interview with Race Organiser at Pinguin Productions, January 2013).

Starting in the mid-1990s, municipal, provincial, and regional levels of government joined the event organiser in recognising the Tour of Flanders as an instrument to achieve the long-term public policy objective of increasing tourism in the region, and more specifically bicycle tourism. What sets Flanders apart from other bicycle-friendly destinations is the available cycling culture and history, of which the Tour of Flanders is an important element. Lamont (2009) defined bicycle tourism as trips in which “cycling, involving active participation or passive observation, for holiday, recreation, leisure and/or competition, is the main purpose for that trip” (p. 20). The objective of increasing bicycle tourism is a socioeconomic one as it has the potential for economic, social, and even environmental benefits for the host community and those who participate (Faulks, Ritchie, & Fluker, 2007). The public policy objective was not only to attract people from outside the region to spend the night, but to also offer recreational opportunities for local residents, resulting in a 3,500 km long cycling network in the province of East Flanders. The spontaneous enthusiasm for the event was strategically captured through the development of new cycling infrastructure that was themed around the Tour of Flanders (Goffaux, as cited in Leenknegt, 2005). The Marketing Manager at *Het Nieuwsblad* described these leveraging efforts as a positive type of promotion for the Tour of Flanders.

We felt pretty great when we received a request about developing a Tour of Flanders cycling route, because the more promotion that occurs around the Tour of Flanders the better for us actually. But remember that we never deliberately decided to make a Tour of Flanders cycling route ourselves. (Interview, December 2012)
The municipal government of Oudenaarde – even prior to becoming the current arrival host city – leveraged the event by creating a permanent visitor centre dedicated to the Tour of Flanders and three permanent signposted Tour of Flanders cycling routes in 2003. These leveraging efforts were supported by the event organiser that allowed the use of the official and protected trademark and name of the Tour of Flanders without any financial consequences (interview with Marketing Manager at Het Nieuwsblad, December 2012). In addition, the provincial government of East Flanders and the regional government of Flanders also contributed financially (interview with the Director at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, March 2013).

The Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre can be understood as an instrument that cultivates heritage through displays and artefacts (MacAlloon, 2008; Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005). Heritage refers to what contemporary society chooses to inherit and pass on, including its history and culture (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). The Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre emphasised that the visitor centre is not a typical museum because it also provides interactive attractions to relive and experience the unique atmosphere and history of the race, while focusing on extraordinary winners, difficult cobblestoned hills, and harsh weather conditions (interview, March 2013). When interviewed, the Director further explained that the visitor centre and the cycling routes are instruments that preserve and celebrate the popular Flemish cycling heritage through communicating traditions, memories, and nostalgia, but also through physically experiencing the Tour of Flanders cycling heritage. Following McKercher, Ho, and du Cros (2005), heritage includes “tangible assets, such as natural and cultural environments, encompassing of landscapes, historic places, sites, and built environments as well as intangible assets such as collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge, and living experiences” (p. 541). Based on this definition, the physical experience of tangible heritage can refer to cycling the cobblestoned hills of the Tour of Flanders in the Flemish Ardennes, whereas the physical experience of intangible heritage can refer to exploring the history of the Tour of Flanders in the visitor centre. These physical experiences of cycling heritage have the capacity to attract visitors from Western Europe and North America (interview with the Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, March 2013), which highlights the strategic opportunities for local tourism development (Mason, Duquette, & Scherer, 2007). The Manager at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre also elaborated upon the attraction among local residents:
The cycle touring trips that start and arrive here have received a great boost [italics added] the past 10 years [referring to the opening of the visitor centre]…. The number of people who cycle here in the area, who tour around the Flemish Ardennes on a Sunday morning, that number is actually gigantic. (Interview, November 2012)

This quotation highlights the positive impact of the available cycling heritage – either through tangible elements such as the cobblestones in the Flemish Ardennes or through intangible elements such as the history of cycling and the Tour of Flanders – on bicycle tourism and consequently active participation in cycling. Because the Tour of Flanders is a road cycling race, active participation is unmistakable linked to cycle touring. For cycling enthusiasts who are also active cycle tourists, the Flemish Ardennes provide what the administrator in Torhout who was responsible for the 2012 Village of the Tour described as some sort of ‘mythical stimulation’ and ‘Flandrien feeling’ (interview, December 2012), as people from across the world are inspired to physically experience what it feels like to ride the cobblestoned hills in and around Oudenaarde.

The objective that the city of Oudenaarde devoted to the organisation of the arrival of the Tour of Flanders – which came about ten years after the opening of the visitor centre – was to further promote bicycle tourism in the city (interview with Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, March 2013). Interestingly, the Manager at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre argued that this strategic objective has been extended beyond attracting those visitors who share an interest in the Tour of Flanders. What this means is that in addition to the cycling routes of the Tour of Flanders, the city of Oudenaarde has developed new cycling routes that are themed around its history of local breweries and cultural monuments (interview, November 2012). Although the unique décor of the Tour of Flanders throughout the Flemish Ardennes remains one of the city’s prime leverageable resources, other historical resources have been strategically leveraged to further promote bicycle tourism in the city. In doing so, the city not only seeks to target cycling enthusiasts, but also their immediate family members and other visitors to explore Oudenaarde by bicycle (interview with Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, March 2013).
The city of Bruges’ lack of effort in leveraging the Tour of Flanders stands in sharp contrast to the case of Oudenaarde. Besides hosting the start of the event, there has been no direct and distinct connection or alignment between Bruges and the history or heritage of the Tour of Flanders. As an example, although Bruges enjoys many cycling routes, none have been themed around the Tour of Flanders. The physical experiences of the typical cobblestoned hills and the history of the Tour of Flanders are unmistakably located in the Flemish Ardennes in and around Oudenaarde. The history of the event and the life stories of local Flandriens have not been widely celebrated in Bruges. What this means is that the properties of the event – including its heritage, history, and culture – have not been deeply embedded within the city of Bruges, which is a disadvantage as this influences the leveraging potential of the host. This finding also highlights that the connection between the properties of the event and the context of the host is a delicate one, as for Bruges – a city that hosts many well-renowned international expositions – the topic of the Tour of Flanders and its Flandriens might be considered too local or too typical to satisfy the interests of visitors from across the world. When compared to Oudenaarde, the event is less of a leverageable resource in Bruges perhaps because there are so many other things to visit and enjoy in the city. Although the start continues to attract a significant number of spectators who share an interest in cycling and the Tour of Flanders, the event does not appear to produce a heightened sense of communitas or a new shared and collective energy among host residents.

Nonetheless, prior to the start of the 2014 edition of the Tour of Flanders, the Mayor of Bruges argued that “as a host city we are now trying to do more than before. I admit this is due to my own love for cycling and especially due to our Alderman of Sport” (Flanders Classics, 2014, p. 6), which again highlights the importance of political commitment to hosting and leveraging the event. The current municipal government sought to create some social interest in the Tour of Flanders among cycling enthusiasts by producing a cycling jersey that carried the name of Bruges and the logo of the Tour of Flanders. This jersey was promoted through the local media in the weeks leading up to the Tour of Flanders and in particular through the organisation of a 45 km participatory cycling event for all cyclists of Bruges (Bruges, 2014). The cycling jersey and the participatory cycling event present a more subtle approach to event leveraging that was not intended to promote bicycle tourism in the host city, but served to convince local residents and
international visitors that Bruges is a world heritage city with a vibrant and active character (interview with Director of Bruges Plus, February 2013).

4.4 Chapter summary

As a first step in understanding event leveraging, this chapter elaborated upon the leverageable resources that have been used, developed, and deliberately pursued in previous and current host cities of the Tour of Flanders. The findings in this chapter demonstrated that a broad spectrum of leverageable resources have been influential in hosting and leveraging the Tour of Flanders. Similar to what the event leveraging literature suggests, the Tour of Flanders as a medium-sized sport event has been understood as a leverageable financial asset that sets apart the host community from other localities in Flanders (Chalip, 2004; Sparvero & Chalip, 2007). This has been confirmed by the increasing financial contribution that municipal governments invested to gain and maintain the rights to host the Tour of Flanders, and relatedly, the willingness that host cities displayed to pay for the opportunities that the event presents. In terms of those opportunities, previous host cities have mainly recognised the impacts of place promotion when organising the largest single-day sport event in the country. Through the international image and standing of the Tour of Flanders and the related media attention, host cities have been able to reach an (inter)national audience of potential visitors and tourists. These impacts, however, were exclusively linked to hosting the event, which has been a limitation because the event has been hosted by different cities across different editions. Relocation of the event meant that former host cities – almost immediately – lost the potential to generate impacts from the event.

In addition to the desired impacts of place promotion in previous host cities, the Tour of Flanders has been leveraged by different levels of government to achieve the public policy objective of increasing bicycle tourism. For the purpose of this dissertation, bicycle tourism is important as it not only involves passive spectating but also active participation in cycling (Lamont, 2009), which evidently has health benefits for those who participate. Event leveraging was first applied by the event organiser that, through the organisation of the morning show, created a new shared energy and spontaneous enthusiasm for the Tour of Flanders among spectators, including local residents as well as non-residents. This collective interest for the Tour of Flanders has influenced other event stakeholders to recognise the economic and social potential of the event. These other
Event stakeholders include municipal, provincial, and regional levels of government, whose leveraging efforts have been supported by the event organiser that has allowed the use of the official and protected trademark of the Tour of Flanders without any financial consequences.

Event leveraging, however, is not a process that results automatically from successfully hosting an event. It requires strategic planning by event stakeholders to connect leverageable resources that are available in the context of the host with newly developed initiatives (Smith, 2014). Moreover, there needs to be some alignment between organising the event and whatever the host seeks to achieve through the processes of event leveraging within its local context (Gratton & Preuss, 2008; Preuss, 2007). The findings from this chapter add to the literature on event leveraging by elaborating upon cycling heritage as a powerful and successful leverageable resource to promote bicycle tourism in the region. By leveraging the available cycling heritage through the development of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre and the Tour of Flanders cycling routes, the city of Oudenaarde has been able to create a long-term connection between the event and the context of the host. This connection can be expected to be sustained, even if the event organiser selects a new host city in the future.

Following the definitions from McKercher et al. (2005), heritage is understood to be a broad concept that includes tangible and intangible elements. In the case of leveraging the Tour of Flanders to increase bicycle tourism in and around the city of Oudenaarde, the physical experience of tangible heritage refers to cycling the routes and cobblestoned hills of the Tour of Flanders, whereas the experience of intangible heritage refers to exploring the history of the Tour of Flanders in the visitor centre. Although Flanders has an extensive cycling history, cycling heritage is not available to the same extent in every city and as a result, it clearly influences the host’s leveraging potential and opportunities. Especially since the event organiser appears to pursue those host cities that can leverage the Tour of Flanders to benefit both the event and the host. The city of Oudenaarde has used the available cycling heritage as a resource to promote the city and the Flemish Ardennes as the exclusive location where cycling enthusiasts can personally and physically experience what it feels like to ride their own Tour of Flanders and where they can learn more about the unique history of the event. The development of this local cycling infrastructure overcomes some of the temporal limitations of liminality and communitas as these
are usually produced in the pre-event period but now have a permanent and year-long impact among fans of the Tour of Flanders. Furthermore, there is almost a certainty that this liminality will reappear year after year given the interest in the Tour of Flanders among residents of Flanders, which is quite different from sport mega-events that take place only once in a host community and often fail to inspire local stakeholders to create additional social outcomes. After elaborating upon cycling heritage as an important leverageable resource, the purpose of the following chapter is to discuss two processes of event leveraging that have used (leveraged) the available cycling heritage to create additional outcomes from the Tour of Flanders. These processes have extended event leveraging geographically beyond the start and arrival host cities to benefit a variety of communities in Flanders.
CHAPTER 5 LEVERAGING PROCESSES

By focussing on the previous and current start and arrival host cities of the Tour of Flanders, the findings from the previous chapter elaborated upon those leverageable resources that have been deliberately pursued by the event organiser to strategically select host cities that can successfully leverage the event. The available cycling heritage in Oudenaarde has been successfully leveraged to increase bicycle tourism among (inter)national visitors and host residents. However, the example of Oudenaarde that was discussed in the previous chapter is limited in its scope because event leveraging and the potential for leveraging outcomes involve only one municipality. The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate upon two processes of event leveraging that have used (leveraged) the available cycling heritage as a leverageable resource to create additional outcomes from the Tour of Flanders. The two processes of event leveraging that have been identified throughout the case study analysis are the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour. Both the municipal and regional levels of government in Flanders have been influential stakeholders within these processes and as a result, public policy has been an important element within the event leveraging efforts. Based on the work of Pal (2006), public policy has been defined as “a course of action or inaction chosen by public authorities to address a given problem…or capitalise upon an opportunity” (pp. 2-3). Public policy has guided the development and implementation of leveraging initiatives via the provision of financial subsidies in hosts of the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour. The leveraging processes have been intended to capitalise upon socioeconomic opportunities that emerged from organising the Tour of Flanders, involving both municipalities that are located along the route of the event and those interested in celebrating the centennial anniversary of the event. What is notable in the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour is that the benefits of event leveraging have been extended geographically beyond the start and arrival host cities by using the available leverageable resources in a variety of communities in Flanders. The Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour are elaborated upon in this chapter.
5.1 Village of the Tour

The Tour of Flanders passes through multiple cities and villages in Flanders each year. Since 2000, the event organiser annually selects one host municipality along the route to receive the title of Village of the Tour. This specific municipality is included in the media attention and promotions of the Tour of Flanders, while enthusiastically awaiting its arrival. The creator of the idea of the Village of the Tour was Harry Van den Bremt, a journalist who was involved with the Tour of Flanders since the 1970s and who was responsible for drafting and outlining the route of the race. In an interview, a former Race Organiser described how Het Nieuwsblad came about organising the Village of the Tour.

In the late 1990s, we received more and more requests from people who wanted to spontaneously organise activities around the Tour of Flanders and asked for support in terms of money, newspaper articles, and advertisements. At a certain point, we felt that we could not continue to support all these requests. We also had to make sure that there was no exploitation of our brand when, for example, people would organise an activity that was themed around the Tour of Flanders and put up banners from Het Laatste Nieuws [competitor newspaper]. We did not want that. So the approach taken by Harry Van den Breint was to select one village each year and to call that village ‘Village of the Tour.’ That was a brilliant idea. (Interview with Race Organiser at Pinguïn Productions, January 2013)

The Race Organiser elaborated upon the success of the morning show that was introduced in the late 1980s as an explanation of the increasing popularity of the Tour of Flanders more generally. “I think it actually started snowballing from there” (interview with Race Organiser at Pinguïn Productions, January 2013).

During the first four years, the event organiser approached potential hosts with the idea of hosting the Village of the Tour. “Then, to our surprise, municipalities spontaneously applied. I think we always had about fifteen applications, from which we selected one annually” (interview with Race Organiser at Pinguïn Productions, January 2013). Lichtervelde, the 2004 host of the Village of the Tour, was the first candidate that spontaneously applied and after that, other
municipalities followed this example. Given this growing local interest, there was a need to develop bid guidelines in which the Village of the Tour was identified as an opportunity for social leverage:

The title of Village of the Tour is an asset for the municipality and it should inspire and encourage them to develop new initiatives [italics added]. In the period before the Tour, when the attention for the classic event in the media grows, the title is an ideal hook [italics added] for different initiatives in the concerning municipality and at the same time an incentive [italics added] to develop new social and cultural actions. *(Het Nieuwsblad, 2007, p. 4)*

Although the event organiser has an unwritten rule that the Village of the Tour should alternate annually between the provinces of West Flanders and East Flanders, the four most recent editions were all located in the province of West Flanders. Moreover, the 2008 and 2014 editions were organised in two different subdivisions within the same city in the province of West Flanders. The Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, as elaborated upon previously, argued that the image of the Tour of Flanders is strongly embedded in the Flemish Ardennes, especially for the younger generation of cycling enthusiasts. The Flemish Ardennes is an area that is located in the province of East Flanders. By awarding the Village of the Tour to a municipality in the province of West Flanders, the event organiser perhaps seeks to emphasise the ongoing importance of the province and its municipalities to the history and future of the road cycling race. This might compensate, to some extent, the long-term and extensive leveraging efforts and cycling infrastructure developments that have been supported in the province of East Flanders.

Table 11 provides an overview of the municipalities that have been selected as hosts of the Village of the Tour to date. One might tentatively argue that the Village of the Tour is more frequently organised in larger municipalities with a greater number of inhabitants. Perhaps the event organiser assumes that the size of the municipality determines the size of the financial resources that are available for hosting. It is necessary to note that when the Village of the Tour was first organised, receiving the title did not have any financial implications for the host.
community. This changed in 2007 when the host was required to pay €5,000 to the event organiser to cover basic costs related to communication, participation, and supervision – an amount that increased to €7,500 in 2009 (exclusive of 21% VAT) (Van de Velde, 2010).

Although this amount does not have any financial consequences for Flanders Classics in terms of profit (interview with Race Director at Flanders Classics, January 2013), the total direct costs associated with organising the Village of the Tour for local municipalities have been significant. In addition to the financial contribution that is payable by the local municipality to the event organiser, the total direct costs also cover logistical, promotion and printing costs, financial subsidies to local organisations, and all other costs related to organising various initiatives.

Figure 8 shows that there has been a significant increase in the investment of municipal financial resources into organising the Village of the Tour, totalling almost €100,000 in the 2008 edition and peaking to more than €130,000 in the 2009 edition, which has been followed by a more financially modest and careful approach during the previous years (Van de Velde, 2010). The administrator responsible for the 2012 Village of the Tour explained during the interview that municipalities seek to outperform last year’s host, resulting in an event that continues to grow in cost and attendance year after year.

In the beginning, the cost of hosting the Village of the Tour for a municipality was hardly anything [italics added]. The passage of the Tour of Flanders, hanging some flags, inviting the marching band, and so forth. So indeed it has become quite important [italics added] in the course of the years, because each municipality along the road…has made it into something bigger and nobody wants to be inferior to the previous host. (Interview, December 2012)

There is no evidence, however, that hosts of the Village of the Tour have been able to achieve greater outcomes due to their increased financial investments.

Submitting an application to host the Village of the Tour to the event organiser is done by the Mayor and Aldermen of the candidate municipality. However, there appears to be no consensus on what this bid application looks like or should look like. This highlights the need for the event organiser to write specific and detailed bid guidelines that correspond with leveraging feasible
outcomes to improve the hosting of future editions of the Village of the Tour. During the interviews, the administrators described different scenarios about submitting an application to host, including “I think we have sent that one letter [to the event organiser] during five or six years, because we did not have a large application at all” (interview with administrator Torhout 2012 Village of the Tour, December 2012) and “I do not know if such a bid document was submitted…. I actually learned more once it was communicated that we would be the next host” (interview with administrator Zwalm 2011 Village of the Tour, January 2013). There is also evidence of submitting an official and substantial bid application by different candidate hosts. In the 2013 edition of the Village of the Tour, the bid from the municipality of Rekkem was a small booklet with arguments and facts about the local cycling history and in particular about Paul Deman, and it included signatures from the Mayor, Aldermen, and 3,000 local residents who supported the bid (interview with administrator Rekkem 2013 Village of the Tour, December 2012). Furthermore, the bid document to host the 2009 edition from the municipality of Wetteren and the 2010 edition from the municipality of Desselgem was 26 and 46 pages long respectively. These documents mainly discussed the political support from the Mayor and Aldermen in the candidate host, the social enthusiasm for the Village of the Tour through a list of proposed initiatives that require active participation from various local organisations, and the historical connection between the particular municipality and the Tour of Flanders.

For the event organiser, “selecting the host is mainly about the content; it is about the celebration that is happening” (interview with Race Director at Flanders Classics, January 2013). This highlights the importance of two criteria when selecting the Village of the Tour: first, presence and appreciation of local cycling heritage, and second, social and political support for the application within the local community (Het Nieuwsblad, 2007). Candidate hosts must have a history related to the Tour of Flanders either through a person, place, or date, for example with the residence of a cycling champion or another person who has been involved with the event (interview with Race Organiser at Pinguïn Productions, January 2013). As an example, the 2013 edition Rekkem is the birthplace of Paul Deman who was the winner of the first Tour of Flanders in 1913 and the 2009 edition Wetteren is the birthplace of Achiel Buysse who is a Tour of Flanders record holder with three victories. Also, to be awarded the title Village of the Tour, candidate hosts must provide evidence of support for the application from different local
organisations, including municipal departments, schools, sport clubs, youth clubs, music groups, environmental groups, and businesses, among others (interview with Race Organiser at Pinguïn Productions, January 2013). For the organiser, this social and political support for the application represents some sort of a safeguard in that a broad program will be developed once the community is awarded the title.

The local cycling history and associated heritage are widely celebrated during the Village of the Tour. Social celebrations that bring host residents and local organisations together form the core of the leveraging efforts, promoting a shared and symbolic energy. Because of the importance of the Tour of Flanders as an international well-known road cycling race, host residents join in large numbers around the event. They attach great important to being the host of the Village of the Tour, which symbolises a ‘once-in-a-lifetime’ opportunity for local communities, similar to what the literature on sport-mega events suggests although obviously on a much smaller scale. The Village of the Tour represents a festival in which host residents have the opportunity to partake in celebrations and initiatives that are perceived to be bigger than and beyond sport (Weed et al., 2009). As an example, the initiative ‘Let the Games Begin’ officially opened the 2011 edition of the Village of the Tour in Zwalm. The initiative brought together two local running clubs that had separated many years ago over an argument between club members. Symbolically, 95 runners from the two clubs completed the distance from Bruges (the start host city) to Zwalm together in relay teams. The number of runners was also a symbolic choice because in 2011 the ninety-fifth edition of the Tour of Flanders took place. When arriving in Zwalm, the two chairmen of both clubs lit the official torch of the Village of the Tour to mark the start of the celebrations. This initiative was obviously very symbolic and bringing these clubs together resulted in new collaboration as just two years later these clubs jointly hosted ‘Flanders’ Most Beautiful Marathon’ that crossed all twelve subdivisions of Zwalm (interview with administrator Zwalm 2011 Village of the Tour, January 2013).

The interviewees discussed that once the municipality was selected as the upcoming Village of the Tour, different local organisations – including those who had supported the bid to host the event – were invited to attend information meetings and brainstorm about the development of the program. These meetings were hosted by the administrators in the community who were
responsible for overseeing the organisation of the Village of the Tour, acting as the first point of contact for other local administrators, organisations, and residents. The purpose of these meetings was to motivate local organisations to take part in the Village of the Tour and to organise initiatives that were specifically developed to leverage the Tour of Flanders. By involving local organisations, a positive perception of the event and local ownership could be created among host residents, resulting in greater support and better outcomes in terms of attendance and participation (Mahtani et al., 2013; Weed et al., 2009). These outcomes indicate that the host community values and supports not only the history of the event but also the current leveraging efforts, especially since these efforts invite the host community to be an active contributor to the future of the event. The interviewees agreed that involving local organisations had been a successful tactic. As the administrator from Zwalm 2011 Village of the Tour explained:

One of the success factors was the development of the initiatives from the bottom-up [italics added]. It is different when you as a municipality say we are going to do this and that, or when you let residents and organisations put forward proposals and you accept these proposals. Then things begin to move in the community, resulting in greater local support. (Interview, January 2013)

In order to entice engagement from and with these local organisations, host governments implemented a public policy that provided financial subsidies for organisations to create one-off initiatives that were specifically designed to leverage the Tour of Flanders. The proportion of these subsidies in terms of the total costs of organising the Village of the Tour has been relatively small, accounting for five percent in 2007 for an amount of approximately €3,000 (Van de Velde, 2010) and only one percent in 2012 for an amount of €700 (interview with administrator Torhout 2012 Village of the Tour, December 2012). Nonetheless, these subsidies show that the municipal government supports the leveraging efforts around the Tour of Flanders, which might convince organisations that getting involved in the Village of the Tour is important and appreciated.
The objectives that hosts themselves attach to organising the Village of the Tour have changed over time. The event has become a strategic instrument in local public policy, sometimes even extending beyond the one-off organisation of the Village of the Tour. As an example, the 2006 Village of the Tour in Ichtegem sought to organise the biggest cycling festival that the region has ever seen by highlighting the culture and tourism dimensions of the local cycling heritage. Following the Village of the Tour, the local government included the attraction of major cycling events as a priority in its local policy, which led to a passage of the Tour de France in 2007 and the title of arrival host city of the Circuit Franco-Belge since 2009. As another example of extending public policy objectives beyond organising the Village of the Tour, the 2009 edition in Wetteren sought to promote an interest in cycling and encourage children to cycle more. Following the Village of the Tour, building on the same objective, a safe route to school map was implemented in collaboration with the provincial government. Following the example of two other municipalities in the area, this safe route to school map was officially presented at the start of the new school year in 2009 and was believed to increase functional cycling by 20 percent by targeting schools, students, and their parents (Province of East Flanders, 2014).

One objective that was somewhat consistent across different municipalities is that hosting the Village of the Tour can create media attention for the host in the advent of an international well-known sport event. The interviewees confirmed that the Tour of Flanders presents valuable, and otherwise unaffordable, place promotion opportunities. As an example, the 2013 edition was featured in a broadcast of about 11 minutes on a regional television station, for an estimated value of €16,500 (personal communication with administrator Rekkem 2013 Village of the Tour, December 20, 2013). The Village of the Tour was also featured on the national television news and radio, in national and local newspapers, in magazines, on the internet, and so forth. Receiving the title allows municipalities to officially affiliate with the Tour of Flanders, for example by referencing the program and initiatives on a specifically developed website which the municipality is allowed to keep online until the following Village of the Tour is selected (e.g., www.heuledorpvanderonde.be). Because the economic objective of place promotion has been observed in the four most recent hosts, it is evident that event impacts remain an influential factor when deciding to organise the Village of the Tour. Nonetheless, economic objectives have been complemented with a wide range of social objectives, including community development.
(interview with administrator Zwalm 2011 Village of the Tour, January 2013), restoring a sense of identity that has been lost (interview with administrator Torhout 2012 Village of the Tour, December 2012), and boosting the image of a region that has suffered socially and economically (interview with administrator Rekkem 2013 Village of the Tour, December 2012). It is important to understand that the inclusion of social objectives has shifted the focus from event impacts to event outcomes and from organising to leveraging. Although this shift towards event leveraging can be regarded as highly positive, the question that rises is: who should provide municipal governments with the leveraging tools and health promotion targets to leverage the Village of the Tour for social outcomes such as those related to health promotion? One cannot assume that local administrators who are responsible for organising and managing the Village of the Tour automatically possess the knowledge to successfully set up effective event leveraging initiatives. It is here that this dissertation seeks to make a significant theoretical and practical contribution. The potential for social leveraging is definitely present, as the administrator from Zwalm explained:

Cycling in general and the Tour of Flanders in particular proved to be the ideal vehicle [italics added] to bring a story about community development. The race is a binding element [italics added] that brings people closer together again…. Unseen partnerships and high volunteer enthusiasm, combined with ambitious plans and original goose bumps moments, resulted in a special community involvement. (Interview, January 2013)

This quotation suggests that the Tour of Flanders has an unlimited attraction that invites host residents to come together in the community. This social enthusiasm – which can be strategically leveraged by the host to achieve a wide range of social objectives – also adds an additional dimension to the sport event itself as (inter)national spectators view how cyclists in many communities along the route in general and in the Village of the Tour in particular are welcomed with great excitement and energy. This might in turn inspire more individuals to attend the event the following years. To some extent, this determines the longevity of the Tour of Flanders because the event would not continue to exist in its current form – as a Flemish folk festival – if it was no longer valued and supported by local communities.
5.2 Centennial Tour
In addition to municipal governments organising and funding the Village of the Tour, the regional government of Flanders signed a multi-year partnership agreement with the event organiser to leverage sport development, tourism, and economic outcomes from the Tour of Flanders (Bourgeois, 2013). In the eyes of the Flemish government, the Tour of Flanders is not only believed to be an elite sport competition that can promote cycling and Flanders at the international stage; it is also an excellent communication vehicle to connect with the residents of Flanders. The Tour of Flanders and other smaller cycling events in the region are subsidised to bring the services of the Flemish government to the attention of residents. In return for strategically using the opportunities that the event affords, Flanders Classics received a financial subsidy of €240,000 from the Flemish government in 2013, of which €170,000 came from the Department of Sport and €70,000 from the Department of Communication in Flanders (Muylters, 2013).

In order to place these numbers into some perspective, hosting and leveraging the one-time arrival of the second leg of the 2007 Tour de France in Ghent totalled €500,000 (interview with Director at Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, March 2013). Both the city of Ghent and a newly created local non-profit organisation invested €250,000 each (All about Ghent, 2007). It is interesting to note that the province of East Flanders did not contribute financially, which is contrary to the evidence from the 2012 Tour de France Grand Départ that was hosted in the city of Liège. The province of Liège paid more than €2.5 million to the event organiser Amaury Sport Organisation to host the prologue, the first leg, and the start of the second leg of the race. Combined with the costs related to promotion and safety, the total expenditures for the province of Liège exceeded €4 million (Het Nieuwsblad, 2012). It appears that one-off events such as the Tour de France Grand Départ demand and require greater financial investments to promote the unique but short-term connections between the event and a specific host locality. By virtue of its name, the Tour of Flanders will always promote the Flemish region regardless of the financial contributions from different levels of government. Moreover, the financial burden of the event currently falls to the municipal governments in Bruges and Oudenaarde that are contributing more than the Flemish government. On multiple occasions, however, interviewees discussed these and other examples to emphasise that a greater and more regular financial commitment
from the regional government was needed to ensure the viability of the event and the related leveraging efforts to benefit all of Flanders.

The previous chapter elaborated upon how the Tour of Flanders has been used as a means to promote bicycle tourism by building the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre and the Tour of Flanders cycling routes in and around the city of Oudenaarde in the province of East Flanders. In addition to the Tour of Flanders itself, the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre has also been subsidised by the Department of Tourism in Flanders. As an example, the non-profit organisation behind the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre has been financially supported for its employment expenditures since 2007 and its operation and promotion expenditures since 2009 (Bourgeois, 2011), and this subsidy totalled more than €210,000 in 2012 (Bourgeois, 2012). Furthermore, when the Flemish Minister of Tourism presented the issues, objectives, and instruments in the area of tourism and recreation that would receive specific attention in the legislative period from 2009 to 2014, he announced the use of a financial incentive policy that would allocate funding to target and support regions with particular tourism potential. In doing so, Tourism Flanders distinguished between regions based upon a geographic and thematic classification, with the centennial anniversary of the Tour of Flanders being a relevant theme for all of Flanders. The Flemish region in general is promoted as a cycling-friendly destination for which the Tour of Flanders serves as a specific and unique leverageable resource (Bourgeois, 2009).

The Flemish government was convinced that the one hundredth anniversary of the Tour of Flanders was important for Flanders as a region. Two years prior to the centennial celebrations, the Flemish Minister of Tourism announced the implementation of a financial incentive policy that was themed around the Tour of Flanders. This public policy was titled ‘Stimulus Program: Thematic Call 2012 Cycling Heritage and Centennial Tour’ (hereafter referred to as the Centennial Tour policy). The celebration of milestone dates is an important ingredients in the continued production of heritage (Ramshaw & Bottelberghe, 2014), which links cycling heritage to the Centennial Tour. The strategic objective of the Centennial Tour policy was to attract (inter)national tourists by further positioning the region as a cycling region by linking the heritage of the Tour of Flanders to the physical experience of cycling (Tourism Flanders, 2012). This physical experience can be either as an active participant – which is of interest in terms of
health and physical activity promotion – or as a passive spectator. In order to achieve this strategic objective, the Flemish government and the Department of Tourism – the authors of the policy – invited commercial, non-profit, and public organisations (including municipalities and provinces) to voluntarily submit an application for realising tourism and recreation initiatives that would help to promote Flanders as a cycling region. The Centennial Tour policy can be categorised as an expenditure-based policy since the regional government financially subsidised the initiatives that were deemed favourable (Pal, 2006). The Flemish government agreed to subsidise eligible initiatives for a maximum of 60 percent of the total costs, and this within the limits of the budgetary credits which were set at €3 million.

Event leveraging was the major idea behind the Centennial Tour policy, which is supported by the following quotation from the call for proposals:

In Flanders, there is cycling, everyone lives and breathes cycling. The bicycle and cycling are part of our culture. On May 25, 2013 it will be exactly one hundred years since the first Tour of Flanders commenced. Tourism Flanders takes this anniversary to build a high-quality, sustainable, attractive, and integrated tourism product in Flanders that positions the region internationally as a cycling region, using the valorisation and the unlocking of the existing cycling heritage.

Tourism Flanders wants to create a tourism lever. Other policy areas such as urban planning, mobility, employment and social economy, cultural and immovable heritage, and scientific research are hopefully motivated to participate and undertake other initiatives. (Tourism Flanders, 2012, p. 5)

It is important to elaborate on two assumptions that this quotation implies. First, there is a belief that everyone in Flanders shares an interest in cycling and the Tour of Flanders. To the national and international audiences, the region of Flanders is represented and described as an imagined community of cycling enthusiasts. This shared cycling enthusiasm makes it difficult to oppose the significant tourism investments that will follow, especially since they engage residents and visitors as active participants. Second, there is a belief that the actions taken by the Department
of Tourism inspire other departments in the Flemish government to contribute strategically to the policy areas that involve tourism and cycling. These departments are assumed to involve organisations other than those that contribute through the Centennial Tour policy. Critically questioning this tourism lever, the Director of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre suggested that it would be more effective if the Flemish government developed a general ten-point program of which one of the points should be the bicycle. This prioritisation could more effectively promote the long-term inclusion of cycling in different policies and programs well beyond the 2013 centennial year (interview, March 2013).

The terms and conditions to apply for a financial incentive through the Centennial Tour policy clarified that organisations were required to submit an application for building permanent infrastructure and/or organising one-off events, with the main underpinning that the existing cycling heritage had to be used as a leverageable resource. The Flemish government encouraged organisations to capture and leverage elements of the cycling heritage through one of four elements: (1) physical environment (e.g., the route of the Tour of Flanders), (2) individuals (e.g., cycling icons such as Flandriens), (3) cycling products, and/or (4) stories or folklore (Tourism Flanders, 2012). The first two elements are particularly important in constructing and preserving Flanders’ cycling heritage (Vanwalleghem, 1998). The importance of the physical environment has increased since more and more roads were being paved and cobblestoned roads were disappearing after the Second World War. This threatened the unique décor of the Tour of Flanders and its image of being a physically challenging race. As a result, organisers turned to the cobblestoned hills of the Flemish Ardennes in the province of East Flanders to host the finale of the race. Furthermore, the Flemish government decided to protect the cobblestoned hills of the Flemish Ardennes – in particular the sunken roads – as national monuments in order to preserve this element of Flanders’ cycling heritage (Vanwalleghem et al., 2013). An example that highlights the current importance of these cobblestoned hills is the use of a coloured photograph of the ‘Koppenberg’ to promote the Flemish Ardennes on the new tourism information signs from the Department of Tourism which have been installed in 2014. These information signs have been placed along the highways in Flanders and they replace old brown signs from the 1980s that included three white icons, representing the main attractions of the area (Tourism Flanders, 2013a). Prior to the image of the Koppenberg, these attractions for the Flemish
Ardennes were the city hall of Oudenaarde and the Saint Hermes Crypt of Ronse, together with the countryside (Darragas, 2013). These two historical buildings have been replaced by an image of one of the famous cobbled hills from the Tour of Flanders, strongly embedding the identity of the event in the province of East Flanders. In addition to the physical environment, individual cyclists and more specifically local Flandriens also play an important role in Flanders’ cycling heritage. Local cyclists are referred to as Flandriens. The identity of Flandriens is strongly embedded within the province of West Flanders, conveying a more general image of host residents in the province being diligent workers based on the efforts of Flandriens in the past.

The Centennial Tour policy was launched in October 2011 and commercial, non-profit, and public organisations were invited to submit an application by February 2012. The Manager at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre expressed concerns about the timing of the policy, and argued that “actually, I think they [Tourism Flanders] started a little bit late. People have to learn about the Centennial Tour years in advance to prepare their trip to Flanders and actually come here in 2013” (interview, November 2012). What the interviewee here refers to is the need for the leveraging process to commence well in advance of hosting the event, which refers to what Smith (2014) calls a progressive event-themed approach. The term progressive is used to mark the leveraging efforts that are guided by the preferred future host cities want to pursue, rather than the ad hoc leveraging efforts that are too reliant on the event itself. The efforts from the Flemish government that focus in particular on the attraction of (inter)national visitors resonate more with an event-led approach that seeks to extend the positive economic impacts that would normally be expected from hosting the Tour of Flanders and turn these into long-term outcomes (Smith, 2014).

When developing the Centennial Tour policy, the Flemish government consulted different organisations that have a mandate that involves an interest in cycling to learn from their contributions. This consultation was described as being an effective tactic to interact with various provincial and municipal level organisations. As the Manager at Westtoer explained:
We were actually involved in setting up the policy in a very early stage. So even before it was actually launched, there were some ideas about what we could do. We partnered with the Cabinet of Minister Bourgeois together with someone from the province of East Flanders, someone from the Cycling Museum, along with someone from the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre. And thus we were able to make some mutual agreements and outline the focus of our own proposals for the policy. (Interview, March 2013)

The early partnerships among different organisations resulted in the submission of a wide variety of applications, each with a different focus. For example, the province of East Flanders targeted competitive cyclists using the cycling heritage of the cobblestoned hills of the Flemish Ardennes as a leverageable resource (interview with Manager at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, November 2012). The province of West Flanders targeted recreational cyclists focusing on the cycling heritage of local Flandriens as a leverageable resource (interview with Project Coordinator Centennial Tour at Westtoer, March 2013). The great attraction and leveraging opportunity that the Tour of Flanders presents resulted in 30 applications that have been evaluated based on predetermined criteria (e.g., international potential, location, innovation, experience-orientation, etc.). In June 2012, the Flemish Minister of Tourism announced that 15 initiatives would be subsidised for a combined total of almost €3 million, of which seven focused on active participation in cycling (Tourism Flanders, 2013b).

5.3 Chapter summary
Building upon the findings from the previous chapter on the use of cycling heritage as an important leverageable resource, the purpose of this chapter was to elaborate upon two processes of event leveraging that have used (leveraged) the available cycling heritage to create additional outcomes from the Tour of Flanders. The use of the term process refers to different event units that cover an extensive timeline from the pre-event until the post-event period. These units can be understood as a series of actions for achieving a particular objective, while converting the available resources from the host community into initiatives that benefit the host (Chelladurai, 2009). The Village of the Tour has been identified as a municipal leveraging process that takes place at the community system (Kok et al., 2008; Richard et al., 1996), more specifically a city or municipality in the province of East Flanders or West Flanders. Although the event organiser
preferably alternates between these two provinces, the four most recent editions were all located in the province of West Flanders. When compared to the permanent cycling infrastructure that has been developed in the province of East Flanders (i.e., the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre and the Tour of Flanders cycling routes), hosting the Village of the Tour in the province of West Flanders might be a tactic to sustain the social relevance of the event for multiple host communities outside of those in the Flemish Ardennes. The findings reveal that the event organiser seeks out those municipalities that can further promote the Tour of Flanders through their local event-related history and their high level of social engagement. A rich local cycling history and high social support for the Tour of Flanders are two critical factors that determine the success of creating a social festival in which everyone in the host municipality is able to participate. Nonetheless, the importance of political commitment and financial support cannot be underestimated, in particular in small communities where it is less common to heavily invest in one-off events that not necessarily provide a long-term, tangible return on investment.

Host municipalities are believed to benefit economically from the media attention and promotions of the Tour of Flanders which also reference the Village of the Tour to the national and sometimes even international press. Given the increasing national and international popularity of the Tour of Flanders, this economic objective can be expected in future editions of the Village of the Tour alongside other more locally relevant ones. In addition to the objective of place promotion, municipal governments have fostered social objectives that are relevant to their own local context, including identity building, increased participation, and developing a sense of community. Relevant in this case means that these objectives are influenced by the resources and needs that exist in the local context of the host. As an example, the purpose of organising the 2011 Village of the Tour in Zwalm was to bring residents closer together and reduce some barriers that restricted new residents who had moved from larger cities in Flanders to Zwalm from fully engaging in the community. Hosting the Village of the Tour resulted in a new sense of community because residents were able to get to know and connect with fellow residents by organising and participating in various event leveraging initiatives (interview with administrator Zwalm 2011 Village of the Tour, January 2013).
For the event organiser, the public policy objectives are subordinate to the local enthusiasm for the Tour of Flanders and the celebration of local cycling heritage, which are key ingredients for winning the title Village of the Tour. The event organiser values the social enthusiasm that is created in the host community as many spectators who watch the event on television might feel inspired to join the celebrations along the route the following years, safeguarding the social relevance of the event. In order to take full advantage of the available social and historical resources in the community, a bottom-up approach has been typically used which involves a wide range of local stakeholders. This bottom-up approach implies that ideas for event leveraging are proposed, developed, and implemented by host residents and local organisations who share a social enthusiasm for the event. This enthusiasm, to some extent, is promoted by providing organisations the opportunity to receive a small financial subsidy to cover some of the basic costs associated with their efforts and involvement in event leveraging. Developing the program of the Village of the Tour requires consultation between the local administrator who is responsible for overseeing this municipal leveraging process and the various local stakeholders. In order to truly make it a festival that speaks to the entire community, initiatives not only focus on cycling in line with the theme of the event, but also include culture, arts, music, education, and volunteering opportunities to encourage non-cyclists to take part. The administrators generally agreed that the Village of the Tour was able to inspire broad-based community participation.

The Centennial Tour policy has been identified as one element within a regional leveraging process that takes place at the society system (Kok et al., 2008; Richard et al., 1996), more specifically the Flemish region that covers five provinces and 308 municipalities. Although the Flemish government is an event stakeholder at the higher-order society system, it effectively engaged lower-order systems by leveraging additional financial investments from municipalities and organisations to promote bicycle tourism in the region. As elaborated upon previously, the Flemish government agreed to subsidise eligible initiatives for a maximum of 60 percent of the total costs, and this within the limits of the budgetary credits which were set at €3 million. These significant financial subsidies resulted in an additional investment of €2 million from commercial, non-profit, and public organisations that were involved. These organisations operated either at the provincial or municipal level. It is evident that significant financial
resources were necessary to participate in the Centennial Tour celebrations, with the downside being that proposals that were not shortlisted were not implemented due to a lack of financial resources.

The Flemish government used a top-down approach as host residents themselves were not able to present ideas for event leverage initiatives; instead these ideas came from organisations that already had a mandate that involved cycling in various different ways. The Flemish government counted on these provincial and municipal level organisations to connect with individuals in and well beyond the host communities, hoping to inspire participation and attract visitors. In terms of leverageable resources, the Centennial Tour policy clearly emphasised the use of Flanders’ cycling heritage as a central element, most prominently the use of the route of the Tour of Flanders and the history of local Flandriens. The 15 initiatives that were funded through the Centennial Tour policy were mainly located in communities in the provinces of East Flanders and West Flanders. This is not surprising since these are the provinces where the entire road cycling race takes place from start to finish. Nonetheless, the initiatives were not necessarily located in host communities along the route of the event. Moreover, some initiatives were located outside of the provinces of East Flanders and West Flanders and one cycling exhibition travelled across Flanders and was displayed in more than 75 municipalities. Extending the benefits from event leveraging geographically is a positive trend as benefits can possibly benefit all of Flanders.

In sum, both the municipal and regional levels of government in Flanders implemented public policies that provided financial subsidies to guide the development and implementation of leveraging initiatives that were intended to capitalise upon socioeconomic opportunities that emerged from organising the Tour of Flanders. The regional government leveraged the centennial celebration of the Tour of Flanders to promote bicycle tourism in the region, which includes a recreational component of active cycling participation. Only the Department of Tourism, however, was involved with the Centennial Tour policy and not the Department of Health, for example. This suggests that leveraging health and physical activity outcomes remains subordinate to leveraging economic and tourism outcomes. Nonetheless, since the regional government is responsible for supervising the provinces and municipalities, it should be inspired
to lead by example and actively collaborate with different departments when leveraging a wide range of outcomes from the Tour of Flanders. Following Cox (2012), who argued that “cycle tourism policies and planning are enacted both at regional level and at a further devolved level of individual provinces, of which there are five in the two main regions” (p. 29), the regional government should provide leveraging tools and health promotion targets to leverage the Tour of Flanders to lower levels of government. These lower levels of government can implement these tools and targets by, for example, hosting the Village of the Tour. These lower levels of government already present the potential of leveraging a wide range of outcomes since different municipal departments are currently involved in supporting and developing the initiatives that are organised in the Village of the Tour.

For the purpose of this dissertation it is necessary to examine the content of the initiatives that were funded through the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour to better understand how sport events can be effectively leveraged for health benefits with the outcome of increasing physical activity participation. Although the literature provides examples of social event leveraging for health promotion, one of the limitations of the existing social event leveraging framework is that it does not integrate any concepts and principles of the field of health promotion. Therefore, following the call from Potwarka and McCarville (2008), insights from social ecological theory are used to empirically examine event leveraging for increased physical activity participation in the following chapters. The health promotion concepts of systems and targets are explored within the case of the Tour of Flanders. Outcomes in terms of increased physical activity participation are also examined as a necessary step to reflect on the end result of intensive and collaborative leveraging efforts and improve its application at future events (Schulenkorf, 2009; Ziakas, 2013).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number of inhabitants</th>
<th>Previous winners from this village</th>
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<td>West Flanders</td>
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<td>Marcel Kint</td>
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*Note.* If the Village is a subdivision, the main municipality is mentioned between brackets. The number of inhabitants refers to the main municipalities. These data are from 2008 and are retrieved from [www.kadaster.be](http://www.kadaster.be).
Figure 8. Total direct costs of organising the Village of the Tour

Note. Amounts are expressed in Euro and exclude the indirect costs in terms of working hours by municipal personnel and volunteers. The data from 2007, 2008, and 2009 were adapted from Van de Velde (2010). Other data were gathered from documents that were received during the interviews with administrators responsible for organising the Village of the Tour in Zwalm, Torhout, and Rekkem. The data from Ichtegem were received from a local administrator via e-mail.
CHAPTER 6 LEVERAGING INITIATIVES

To better understand how sport events can be effectively leveraged to achieve health outcomes of increased physical activity participation, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss the health promotion systems and targets that have been employed in the event leveraging processes and initiatives of the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour. These two processes have been developed by different levels of government in collaboration with the event organiser and various other stakeholders. The Village of the Tour is an annual leveraging effort that has been directed by the community system, namely a municipality that is located within the province of East Flanders or West Flanders. The Centennial Tour is a one-off leveraging effort that has been directed by the society system, namely the Flemish government. Although these processes have been initiated by different social ecological systems, both the community and society systems can enable positive health behaviour at the individual system, either directly by changing or targeting an individual or indirectly by changing or targeting elements of an individual’s environment (Richard et al., 1996; Stokols, 1992, 1996).

When reviewing the physical activity initiatives that have been organised in the hosts of the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour, using Table 6 and Table 7 that have been included in the methodology chapter, there are a few distinctions that draw immediate attention and have important implications for health promotion. The first noteworthy distinction among initiatives concerns those that include the development of permanent cycling infrastructure (e.g., Live your own Tour of Flanders) and those that include the organisation of one-off events (e.g., Tour 100 Classic). Both permanent infrastructure and one-off events are conceptualised as community targets as they change either the physical or social environment in a particular host community. By providing and funding permanent cycling infrastructure, there is an assumption that access to proper cycling infrastructure is important for everyone in and beyond the host community. By providing and funding one-off events, there is an assumption that participation in initiatives in which individuals are physically active is valued and beneficial. Furthermore, given the nature of the Tour of Flanders, the majority of these one-off events are cycling initiatives which are believed to strengthen the cycling culture in the host community (Sallis et al., 2006; Sallis,
Owen, & Fisher, 2008). Both the physical and social environments in a host community can enable cycling participation but, as highlighted by social ecological theory, both environments interact and influence one another (McLaren & Hawe, 2005). What this means is that when the physical infrastructure is available, a social network should encourage sustained use of these physical resources. The opposite is also true, namely that when the social environment promotes cycling participation, physical resources should be developed to promote sustained participation.

The second distinction that draws attention is the one between initiatives that have a competitive character and those that have a recreational character. As elaborated upon in the introductory chapter, cycle touring that is completed on a race bike and covers long distances, which resembles participation in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, is understood to be a competitive activity. Leisure-time cycling that is completed on a normal bicycle and covers shorter distances is understood to be a recreational activity, which is more suitable and accessible for families with (young) children and older adults. As a result, recreational cycling initiatives can be completed by those who have less cycling experience. Scenic cycling routes along points of interest where participants can make frequent stops are excellent for recreation. In terms of the Centennial Tour, there is a balance between the number of competitive and recreational initiatives that have been put forward. In terms of the Village of the Tour, however, initiatives with a competitive character clearly outnumber the recreational initiatives that are seemingly less popular among organisers. Examples of these popular initiatives, which are discussed later on, include indoor cycling competitions, cycle touring activities, cycling races, and cycling competitions for children. The fact that competitive initiatives outnumber recreational initiatives in the Village of the Tour is understandable given the nature of the Tour of Flanders as a competitive road cycling race and the involvement of local cycling clubs in organising and leveraging the event. As discussed in the previous chapters, the experience of local cycling clubs in organising professional and amateur cycling events has been an important criterion for the event organiser when selecting the start and arrival host city. This experience was also mentioned when bidding to host the Village of the Tour. Thus, since local cycling clubs are influential in attracting the event to the host community, it is evident that these clubs are also an important stakeholder that influences the leveraging processes and its outcomes. One element that demonstrates this influence is the popularity of competitive cycling initiatives across different editions of the Village of the Tour.
This distinction between competitive and recreational initiatives is important when developing event leveraging initiatives for health outcomes because both types of initiatives employ different individual health promotion targets in terms of motivation, skill, knowledge, intention, and physical activity preferences, to name a few (McLeroy et al., 1988; Vanhauwaert, 2007). Among the general population, competitive cycling in the form of cycle touring or cycle racing is far less popular in Flanders when compared to recreational cycling (Scheerder et al., 2013). More importantly, participation in competitive and recreational cycling is socially stratified, attracting a very distinct target group among Flemish residents. Men, younger individuals, and higher educated individuals are more often competitive cycling participants, whereas women, older individuals, and lower educated individuals are more often recreational cycling participants (Scheerder, Vos, & Pauwels, 2011). As elaborated upon previously, women, older adults, and individuals from lower socioeconomic status groups generally participate less in leisure-time physical activity, including sport (Scheerder, Vos, & Pauwels, 2011; Van Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010). These groups of individuals can thus greatly benefit from an increase in physical activity participation, which should be a consideration when developing event leveraging initiatives for health outcomes. When solely organising competitive initiatives for example, these groups are not likely to be actively engaged. In terms of physical activity promotion, the intensity of both types of initiatives is also relevant, which is, to some extent, determined by the distance of the initiative and the physical effort that is required to complete the initiative. Research has suggested that competitive initiatives resemble vigorous intensity events that cover long distances and require great physical effort, whereas recreational initiatives resemble more moderate intensity events. Moreover, vigorous intensity events are more likely to promote sustained physical activity among long-term active individuals (Adams & White, 2009; Dickson et al., 2010), whereas moderate intensity events are more likely to promote increased physical activity among recently active or inactive individuals (Bowles et al., 2006; Crofts et al., 2012; Lane et al., 2010). Although both increasing and sustaining physical activity participation are important in terms of health promotion, it is evident that the competitive or recreational character of the leveraging initiatives determines, to a large extent, who will participate. Participating cyclists not only differ in terms of psychological factors such as motivation and intention, and in terms of socio-demographical factors such as gender, age, and educational attainment, but also in
terms of individual physical activity behaviour and experience. What follows is a discussion of the community and individual targets that were employed in the Centennial Tour at the society system and the Village of the Tour at the community system to better understand the outcomes in terms of changes in the individual and his or her environments.

6.1 Centennial Tour

6.1.1 Community targets – cycling infrastructure

Social ecological theory suggests that higher-order systems such as federal and regional levels of government can implement environment-based strategies that can benefit a greater number of people who are exposed to a larger geographical area when compared to lower-order municipal levels of government (Brownson et al., 2000). In the case of Belgium, different levels of government are responsible for funding and developing different levels of cycling infrastructure. It is the regional government of Flanders that is responsible for funding regional cycling infrastructure along its major roads. Functional cycling infrastructure falls under the responsibility of the Flemish Minister of Mobility (Transport) (Flemish Government, 2013), whereas recreational cycling infrastructure falls under the responsibility of the Flemish Minister of Tourism (Tourism Flanders, 2000). The provincial government is responsible for funding provincial cycling infrastructure that connects multiple communities in the area, whereas local communities are responsible for the refinement of the provincial cycling network into a dense municipal network. Funding for and coordination of this infrastructure mainly comes from the regional and provincial levels of government, which is a positive element as coordination from higher levels of government results in a coherent network that shows continuity and uniformity across the region (Flemish Government, 2014). Through the development and implementation of the Centennial Tour policy, the Flemish government and in particular the Department of Tourism invited provincial and municipal level organisations to further develop recreational cycling infrastructure in Flanders. As elaborated upon in the previous chapter, subsidies from the Flemish government were used as a financial incentive to do so.

According to the Department of Tourism in Flanders, recreational cycling infrastructure serves an important recreational and tourism objective as cycling along loops, routes, and networks is an excellent way to explore the nature, culture, and local character of an area (Tourism Flanders,
As elaborated upon previously, three permanent signposted Tour of Flanders cycling routes were developed to leverage the Tour of Flanders in 2003. These routes were at the forefront of developing a coherent and dense cycling network in the Flemish Ardennes, which the Department of Tourism in Flanders started in 2006 in collaboration with the Department of Tourism in East Flanders. This cycling network developed rapidly, covering 880 km by 2010.

According to the Flemish Minister of Tourism, the cycling routes of the Tour of Flanders remain an important resource for tourism and recreation for the province of East Flanders in particular and for the Flemish region more generally:

> The many cycling races in the spring are an attraction and source of inspiration for many cycle tourists to come to the Flemish Ardennes before or after the cycling season.…

> Besides the cycling races, there are more and more recreational and competitive cycling events that attract people to the Flemish Ardennes. (Bourgeois, 2010, p. 2)

In terms of health promotion, recreational cycling infrastructure can be understood as a physical resource in a particular community that can be used by anyone who shares an interest in cycling, competitive as well as recreational cyclists. Under the authority of the Department of Tourism in Flanders and the Department of Tourism in East Flanders, two initiatives were taken to use the existing nodes and that are located around the start and arrival host cities of the Tour of Flanders.

Two pieces of infrastructure that use the existing nodes and that are located around the start and arrival host cities of the Tour of Flanders are discussed, namely *Live your own Tour of Flanders* in the Flemish Ardennes in and around Oudenaarde and *Everyone Flandrien* in the Bruges Woodland Wetland and the Lys Valley around Bruges.

The initiative *Live your own Tour of Flanders* was funded by the Department of Tourism in Flanders and the Department of Tourism in East Flanders and extended the Tour of Flanders Cyclo from a single-day event into a year-long bicycle tourism activity. The three permanent signposted Tour of Flanders cycling routes which were developed in 2003 have been renewed for the Centennial Tour celebrations in 2013. The routes that cover distances of 78, 104, and 116 km now include time registration on four hills so that participants can measure their own performance against their friends or against elite cyclists by uploading their results online (www.liveyourowntour.com). This website attracted about 11,500 unique visitors during the first six months after the initiative was launched and so far about 3,100 printed maps of the new Tour
of Flanders cycling routes have been sold (De Backer Steven, personal communication, November 21, 2013). The Manager at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre explained that updating the routes was necessary to more closely imitate the route and the experience of elite cyclists who ride the Tour of Flanders.

The old routes avoided all the Tour of Flanders hills so that *everyone* [italics added] could take part, but in practice far fewer cyclists with an ordinary city bicycle came to the Flemish Ardennes because they knew it is far too difficult here. So the new routes *include all the Tour of Flanders hills* [italics added] and we can actually promote this: if you come to cycle in the Flemish Ardennes, it will be difficult but at least you have conquered different hills. (Interview, November 2012)

This quotation demonstrates that the route of the Tour of Flanders with its cobblestoned hills has been used as a leverageable resource to provide cyclists a unique opportunity to experience tangible elements of the available cycling heritage in the province of East Flanders. Some sections of the route of the Tour of Flanders are protected as national monuments, which highlights the importance of the cobblestones as one element of Flanders’ cycling heritage (Vanwalleghem et al., 2013). This heritage is used as a source of inspiration to invite and motivate cyclists from around the world to come cycling in Flanders. These cyclists are most likely competitive because participants need to have a proper race bike and sufficient cycling experience and training in order to take part. Even the shortest distance of 78 km includes more than ten difficult climbs. The vigorous intensity that is required to successfully complete the long routes and cobblestoned hills suggests that participants are most likely those who are already physically active and cycling regularly. These routes provide a physical and personal challenge, one that participants can train for and feel proud about when they cross the finish line, when of course they have completed the route in a respectable time. The competitive element within leisure-time cycling that is promoted through the available time registration, however, does not come without health risks as the demands placed on competitive participants have increased exponentially. In current times, the physical challenge motivates participants to perform at their best, improve their personal records, and outperform their fellow cyclists (Van Den Bosch,
2014). Therefore, it is encouraging to see that Flanders’ cycling heritage is not only leveraged to promote competitive but also recreational cycling through the initiative *Everyone Flandrien*.

The initiative *Everyone Flandrien* was funded by the Department of Tourism in Flanders and Westtoer. When discussing the call for proposals for the Centennial Tour policy, the Project Coordinator at Westtoer argued:

> Actually, a very important goal of our organisation is to seek opportunities to attract tourists or holidaymakers to our province by using a new angle every time. So we are looking for new cycling routes or new walking routes to offer something new in the province and this [the Centennial Tour] was a very nice approach because the subject is definitely connected to our province. (Interview, March 2013)

Calling the initiative *Everyone Flandrien* suggests that host residents of the province of West Flanders form a symbolic community of individuals who exemplify characteristics of former Flandriens. As elaborated upon previously, these Flandriens were local cycling heroes who could rise through the socioeconomic ranks based on their cycling abilities. They were diligent workers who shaped the identity of the province and its residents. Fourteen local cyclists who, together, won the Tour of Flanders 21 times were born and raised in the province of West Flanders, including Paul Deman who won the inaugural edition in 1913. Because the Tour of Flanders is an important and emotional event for residents in the province, local Flandriens take on a central role in this initiative (interview with the Project Coordinator Centennial Tour, March 2013).

The initiative *Everyone Flandrien* included the development of six new and permanent bicycle loops that are themed around Flandriens, for example what their training and eating habits looked like, what cycling equipment they used, and how they made a living. The start and arrival points of these loops are located in six municipalities in the Bruges Woodland and Wetland and the Lys Valley areas, namely: Tielt, Torhout, Gistel, Roeselare, Bossuit, and Waregem. The bicycle loops are based on the available node system. However, the nodes are not supplemented with additional signposts that mark the name of this particular cycling initiative as it is the case with *Life your own Tour of Flanders*. Instead, individuals can buy a printed map to cycle the
routes of *Everyone Flandrien*. In the province of West Flanders, Westtoer developed more than 60 cycling routes of which 17 are themed around a particular topic, including the one on Flandriens. Because this initiative was a special project that celebrated the centennial anniversary of the Tour of Flanders, the organisation wanted to go beyond the development of new bicycle loops. Therefore, permanent arches that mark the start of each loop have been designed and built in the participating communities. These arches are similar to the ones that mark the start of professional road cycling races. Every arch is followed by a strip of cobblestones, highlighting the theme of the Flandriens and providing subtle connections between the initiative and the tangible heritage aspects of the Tour of Flanders. To highlight the recreational character of the initiative, the starting points are supplemented with charging stations for electric bicycles, picnic tables, and a free Wi-Fi hotspot to download the smartphone application that navigates you from node to node. The smartphone application also uses sounds to signal where individuals can drink and eat something or make a sanitary stop, and where they approach a point of interest such as a panoramic view, monument, sculpture, or experience element that shares a story about local Flandriens.

Experience elements are large structures in the environment that have been specifically designed and developed for the initiative *Everyone Flandrien* with the purpose of providing children a fun way to learn something about the history of the Flandriens and the culture of cycling. Two experience elements have been incorporated along each loop, totalling 12 new structures. As an example, the loop ‘training and nutrition’ that starts and ends in Roeselare provides information about the importance of particular training and eating habits for local Flandriens and cyclists in general. To highlight the importance of hydration, the first experience element is a huge water bottle where participants can take a refreshing refill. The second experience element is a large mat where participants can practice yoga to the progressive example of Jean-Pierre Monseré. This local Flandrien who was born in Roeselare was a successful elite cyclist who practiced yoga in the 1960s and 1970s to improve his flexibility, balance, endurance, and vitality (Cycling Museum Roeselare, 2013). Although the intention was to only maintain the experience elements during the centennial year, the participating communities decided to keep the experience elements as an added value and interactive element along the loops. Installing these twelve experience elements, nonetheless, turned out to be a very difficult task. Westtoer was responsible
for designing the elements and selecting an ideal location where the construction would fit in terms of content and storyline. The proposed location often turned out to be private property, which meant that the elements had to be moved somewhere else. The challenging interaction and collaboration among various systems, including the provincial organisation, municipal governments, and local residents, resulted in the fact that in some cases the content and storyline of the experience element did not match the specific locality as initially intended (interview with Project Coordinator, March 2013).

The target population of this initiative was very broad, focussing on recreational cyclists both locally and internationally as all the information was available in three languages (i.e., Flemish, French, and English). The loops cover relatively short distances between 20 and 40 km to attract families with (young) children and older adults. Each loop, however, can be extended to cover longer distances to also attract competitive or more experienced cyclists. Following the Centennial Tour year, the Project Coordinator revealed that the smartphone application had been downloaded almost 2,000 times and the website had attracted almost 16,000 visitors (www.iedereenflandrien.be). This initiative was reported to have a smaller tourism impact than expected – attracting fewer people from outside of the province – but a greater physical activity impact for local residents, in particular active seniors who were often seen cycling the loops. Funding to evaluate the initiative more extensively was unfortunately not available (Project Coordinator Centennial Tour at Westtoer, personal communication, February 18, 2014). The attraction of active seniors, nonetheless, is a positive outcome since older adults in general participate less in physical activity across the country (Tafforeau, 2008). Furthermore, participation among seniors is logical since additional infrastructure such as stop and rest areas that serve their recreational needs was included along the loops (Bourgeois, 2010).

It is interesting to note that the Department of Tourism in the province of East Flanders also developed five new recreational cycling loops that were themed around the Tour of Flanders. This is quite surprising because the province of East Flanders mainly focused on targeting competitive cyclists. These recreational loops were seemingly bolted onto the centennial celebrations after key decisions about the Centennial Tour policy and the Live your own Tour of Flanders initiative were made. These routes start in five cities in the Flemish Ardennes,
including Oudenaarde, Geraardsbergen, Ronse, Ninove, and Zottegem. The connection with the Tour of Flanders is that five individuals who are either experts on the Tour of Flanders, cycling icons, or celebrities from the region, have each developed one route that covers some of the most beautiful landscapes of the area. The routes cover relatively short distances – between 30 and 54 km – and although they usually include one hill of the Tour of Flanders, they guide participants along museums, churches, chapels, mills, monuments, pubs, and restaurants. Information on these routes is bundled in a small booklet that includes various cycling maps (Tourism East Flanders, 2013). The first mentioning of these recreational loops was in a cycling magazine that was published right before the 2013 edition of the Tour of Flanders, followed by provincial and municipal promotions during the summer months. By inviting less experienced cyclists to the Flemish Ardennes to explore – nonetheless small – sections of the route of the Tour of Flanders and more importantly the beautiful landscapes of the Flemish Ardennes, the province of East Flanders seeks to expand the subculture of cyclists who visit the heart of the Tour of Flanders to not only include competitive cyclists.

6.1.2 Community targets – participatory cycling events

Two very different participatory cycling events have been part of the Centennial Tour and were funded by Flanders Classics, the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, and the Department of Tourism in Flanders. These events, namely the Tour 100 Classic and the RetroTour Deluxe, have been promoted internationally to create an attraction and excitement around the Tour of Flanders and the centennial celebrations. Both participatory cycling events took place during the last weekend of May in 2013, which marked exactly one hundred years after the inaugural Tour of Flanders in 1913. Although the Tour of Flanders is currently one of the road cycling races that mark the start of the international cycling season, it was not until 1948 that the event was included on the International Cycling Union calendar and programmed annually on the fourteenth Sunday of the year (Vanwalleghem et al., 2013). The Tour 100 Classic started in Ghent, the first start host city of the Tour of Flanders, and arrived in Oudenaarde, which was also the city where the RetroTour Deluxe took place. Tourism Flanders invited about 40 journalists and bloggers from various countries to attend the Centennial Tour celebration weekend in Oudenaarde, who extensively promoted the hub of cycling activity in the Flemish Ardennes through their pictures and stories.
The *Tour 100 Classic* is a cycle touring event that was organised by Flanders Classics to celebrate the inaugural race of the Tour of Flanders exactly one hundred years later. Although the original distance of 324 km was covered – the longest distance in the history of the event – the original route was modified to purposefully connect different locations that have been important for the Tour of Flanders. The Race Director at Flanders Classics described the inspiration for the event as follows:

Ghent was the original start city and Oudenaarde is the new arrival city, so we connected the old with the new. We will also complete a part of the old finale with the Wall of Geraardsbergen and Ninove and we will complete a section of the new finale around Oudenaarde. It is a little bit a ‘best off’ the Tour of Flanders – if I can call it that – over 324 km. (Interview, January 2013)

The event passed through all important and strategic locations along the route, including the previous hosts of the Village of the Tour, the main cobblestoned hills, the various arrival host cities, and so forth (interview with Manager at Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, November 2013). Many hosts experience a feeling of emptiness or loss when the Tour of Flanders or the Village of the Tour relocates to a different community, because they have been extensively and passionately involved with organising and leveraging the event. For the current event organiser, the *Tour 100 Classic* provided an opportunity to show some form of appreciation for what municipalities have contributed to the Tour of Flanders by physically riding through former host communities in celebration of the event (interview with Race Director at Flanders Classics, January 2013).

For inexperienced cyclists, it is almost incomprehensible that participants can complete the 324 km distance in one day, lasting more than 12 hours on their bicycle. Nonetheless, this ambitious distance was completed by 80 participants who, together with former winners of the Tour of Flanders such as Eddy Merckx and Johan Museeuw, cycled together from Ghent to Oudenaarde. To prepare participants for this once-in-a-lifetime cycling opportunity and to limit the number of injuries they might incur, Flanders Classics collaborated with a research and development centre for elite athletes to provide participants with appropriate training and nutrition advice. The *Tour
100 Classic also included two more accessible distances of 100 and 162 km with start and arrival in Oudenaarde. The Manager at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre argued that “the longest distance is an extreme one, whereas the two others are ‘light versions’ for those who cycle a lot” (interview, November 2013). In particular, participating in the longest distance generated a heightened sense of community, because these individuals are now part of a very select group who can call themselves ‘true Flandriens’ because the distance they completed during the Tour 100 Classic represents the pinnacle of cycling in Flanders. These true Flandriens received a unique and authentic cycling jersey that was specifically designed for the centennial celebration, and they were invited to attend an evening dinner where numerous former winners and fellow cycling heroes were present. The presence of these cycling heroes, as elaborated upon when discussing the morning show of the Tour of Flanders, creates a new and shared energy among those who are present which has proven to be a valuable resource for future leveraging initiatives.

In addition to the production of heritage by celebrating milestone dates (Ramshaw & Bottelberghe, 2014), heritage can also be celebrated and experienced through goods and services such as retro equipment and jerseys that refer to previous generations (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005). It is in this regard that the RetroTour was first organised in 2007 by the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre. Cyclists who wish to participate are encouraged to indulge their nostalgic fantasies by dragging out their vintage bicycles and clothing. The rules stipulate that all bicycles should date from before 1987 and they should be in the vintage style of a steel framed bike with down tube shifters. Clothing should be made from wool, saddles from leather, and modern accessories should be left at home to create a retro ambiance for all participants (Arthur, 2013). A former Race Organiser argued “it is a hype this type of re-enacting. You also see that with wars and people who are pretending to be soldiers and here people are actually pretending to be cyclists” (interview with Race Organiser at Pinguïn Productions, January 2013). The inspiration for the RetroTour comes from L’Eroica which was first organised in Italy in 1997 and currently attracts about 5,000 participants. The philosophy of L’Eroica is to protect the heritage of the white gravel roads of Tuscany by providing an example of environmental sustainability, sustainable lifestyle, and clean cycling. L’Eroica had extended geographically with events in Japan and the United Kingdom (www.eroica.it).
Participants can choose to cycle 40 or 70 km, but for the centennial celebration of the Tour of Flanders an additional event distance of 100 km was included, with start and arrival in Oudenaarde. The *RetroTour* is not a competitive cycling race; it is a celebration of and homage to the actual competitive cycling race but it is run as a leisurely event. For the 2013 edition, the *RetroTour* was transformed into the *RetroTour Deluxe*. The day before the event, the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre organised a bicycle flea market and swap meet, free photo opportunities, an election of the most authentic and charming riders, a criterion race in the city centre of Oudenaarde, as well as a retro swing dance. These informal social opportunities provide an even stronger reference to and experience of Flanders’ cycling heritage as participants collectively take part in a retro-themed weekend. When asked about those who participate in the event, the Manager at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre described them as follows:

There are those who complete their weekly bicycle ride, so real cycle tourists who still have an old bicycle and participate. You also have those individuals who cycle a lot anyways, but also fanatically search for bicycles that are a collector’s item. Those are also cycle tourists, but they enjoy the *RetroTour* because they can say ‘look at the bicycle I have, look at the jersey I found’. They really want to parade that. Then you still have those who participate just for the charm of the event. (Interview, November 2012)

Although the event may attract competitive cyclists, this initiative is understood as a recreational activity in which the event experience is more important than one’s individual performance. This is especially the case since ice cream and alcohol are provided along the route of the event, on locations where participants are expected to make longer stops to enjoy the musical performances and the carnival atmosphere, while socialising and inspecting others’ vintage equipment and jerseys. The 2013 edition of the *RetroTour* attracted 535 participants, a number that has increased from 450 in 2012 and 225 in 2011 (interview with Manager at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, November 2012). In 2014, the number of participants was limited to 1,000 and one month prior to the event there were only 300 entries left. In total, 860 participants from 21 different nationalities took part in the 2014 edition of the *RetroTour* (Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre, 2014). Although the number of participants is perhaps insignificant in absolute
terms, the event provides a beautiful story to foreign visitors and a unique experience for participants, while at the same time also promoting the soul of the Tour of Flanders.

The media attention that has been created around these two participatory cycling events confirms that the Tour of Flanders – including its tangible and intangible heritage elements – is an important and unique leverageable resource for the region, one that is not easily found elsewhere. In essence, these two participatory cycling events highlight the passion for cycling in Flanders, which for some is a competitive obsession and for others an enjoyable recreational pastime. On both occasions, the Tour of Flanders has been connected to tangible or intangible heritage elements, either through the vintage style bicycles and clothing or the inaugural event distance. Since both events covered important sections of the historical and current route of the Tour of Flanders, participants could experience or imitate what it feels like to be a Flandrien. In the Tour 100 Classic, imitation was based upon completing the heroic distance of 324 km by using the newest racing equipment. For those participating in the RetroTour Deluxe, imitation was based upon cycling a shorter distance using vintage style bicycles. On both occasions, the event included various informal social activities in which cyclists had the opportunity to connect with one another at the interpersonal level by celebrating Flanders’ cycling culture and their shared identity as cyclists (Green & Chalip, 1998). This can generate a heightened sense of community among those who take part as there are only very few individuals who can call themselves a true Flandrien by completing a 324 km cycling event. Those who take an interest in retro experiences are very likely to take part in other retro events, perhaps meeting the same participants on different occasions. The creation of symbolic communities among those who share an interest in cycling influences, to some extent, the success of future leveraging efforts in terms of participant numbers as outcomes.

6.2 Village of the Tour
6.2.1 Community targets – cycling infrastructure
Although hosting the Tour of Flanders does not require the building of any new infrastructure because the professional cycling race is held on existing public roads, the event organiser requires that start host city to possess physical infrastructure sufficient in size and space to host the increasing number of cyclists, team managers, media, sponsors, and visitors. One of the key
properties of the Village of the Tour is the social celebration of local cycling heritage, which excludes any requirements from the event organiser in terms of size, number of inhabitants, or available physical infrastructure in the (candidate) host community. Given this lack of attention to physical infrastructure, the findings show that the organisation of the Village of the Tour does not include community targets that provide physical resources similar to the new cycling infrastructure that was encouraged in the host communities of the Centennial Tour. Nonetheless, two previous hosts of the Village of the Tour realised that the media attention and excitement around the Tour of Flanders provided an opportunity to promote the existing local cycling infrastructure. In Torhout, the host of the 2012 Village of the Tour, information about five existing recreational cycling routes was included in the programs and brochures of the Village of the Tour. One of these routes honors Karel Van Wijnendaele who is generally believed to be the founding father of the Tour of Flanders. Van Wijnendaele was born in Torhout and as a result, he was the key local cycling figure who was celebrated during the Village of the Tour. One other route was a mountain bike route that crossed Torhout and Ichtegem, two municipalities that have made significant contributions to the history of cycling in Flanders. This renewed attention for existing infrastructure can assist in the promotion of long-term physical activity participation, extending beyond the hosting of the Village of the Tour (interview with administrator responsible for the 2012 Village of the Tour in Torhout, December 2012). Desselgem, the host of the 2010 Village of the Tour, also promoted four recreational cycling routes that honored Briek Schotte by including mini expositions along the routes. Again, Schotte was the key local figure who was celebrated during the Village of the Tour. He took part in the Tour of Flanders twenty times and won two editions. These cycling routes are referred to as the ‘Tour de Briek’ and have been organised annually (without the expositions) since its introduction during the Village of the Tour. The routes, however, have not yet been incorporated in the local permanent cycling infrastructure of Desselgem through signposts or printed maps, most likely due to a lack of funding at the municipal level. This, however, is a limitation because the ‘Tour de Briek’ has not been extended into a year-long activity for local residents to enjoy.

6.2.2 Community targets – cycling initiatives

During the interviews, the administrators who were responsible for organising the Village of the Tour discussed that they had consulted former organisers to learn from their negative and
positive experiences and outcomes. This consultation seemingly resulted in the organisation of popular competitive initiatives across several editions of the Village of the Tour. The key to this popularity appears to lie in the fact that these initiatives are organised by local cycling clubs, of which each community in Flanders has at least a few. As an example, in Sint-Niklaas there are 12 cycling clubs that solely organise competitive cycling events, on top of the other cycling clubs that solely offer cycle touring activities (interview with Mayor of Sint-Niklaas and Head of the Department of Sport, February 2013). These cycling clubs are not only an important stakeholder in attaining the rights to host the Village of the Tour by showing previous hosting experience, but they are also an important stakeholder in organising the Tour of Flanders by delivering sufficient volunteer signallers who are an indispensable factor during the race. As a result, their contribution to event leveraging is clearly visible. One such initiative that has been consistently organised across several editions of the Village of the Tour is the indoor cycling competition. Using computer simulation on indoor bicycles, individuals participate in teams of two and compete in different categories, including individual sprints, team time trials, various distances, and so forth. Teams can earn points in each category which, taken together, determine the winner of the event. On some occasions, the computers were specifically programmed to simulate certain hills of the route of the Tour of Flanders, whereas on other occasions, participants could compete against local politicians who openly supported the Tour of Flanders and the related leveraging efforts. There are only a limited number of individuals who can participate in this initiative, given the limited number of indoor bicycles that are available. Previous editions were ‘sold-out,’ attracting 56 participants in 2012 (Vanderbeke Alexander, personal communication, November 23, 2013) and 52 participants in 2013 (Ossieur Wilfried, personal communication, November 25, 2013), the majority being men. Although these are relatively small participant numbers, this initiative also attracts family and friends of participants as local spectators. These participants and spectators are informed about other initiatives that are organised in the Village of the Tour and in doing so, a collective local enthusiasm can be created in the lead-up to the Tour of Flanders.

Another initiative that has been organised in almost all the hosts of the Village of the Tour is the cycle touring activity. Since the Tour of Flanders passes through the Village of the Tour each year, there is an opportunity to organise a cycle touring activity in and around the host
community that covers selected parts of the route of the Tour of Flanders. On average, these
initiatives included a distance of about 75 km. In 2009, the former arrival host city of Wetteren
was celebrated as the host of the Village of the Tour. The 2009 edition of this cycle touring
activity symbolically started in Bruges and arrived in Wetteren. The route covered the distance
from the current start host city to the former arrival host city of the Tour of Flanders. Lastly, the
cycling races that were organised in the lead-up to the Tour of Flanders were official cycling
events that were sanctioned by the Flemish Cycling Union. The Flemish Cycling Union, similar
to the International Cycling Union, mandates that cycling races are organised according to
different categories based on age and cycling permit of individual participants. Not every age
category is included or represented in every cycling race. As an example, the 2013 edition of the
Village of the Tour included two cycling races, which were organised by the same local cycling
club. The first race was for participants in the categories U23 (between the ages of 19 and 22)
and elites (23 years of age or older), and attracted 95 participants who completed the 120 km
distance. The second race was for amateurs (between the ages of 19 and 29) and masters (30
years of age or older), and attracted 70 participants who completed the 80 km distance
(Demeyere Ivan, personal communication, November 28, 2013). In general, participants were
active cyclists who are registered with the Flemish Cycling Union and a local cycling club.

It is noteworthy that these aforementioned competitive initiatives of the Village of the Tour
events mainly target local residents who share at least some basic involvement in cycling.
Moreover, given the physical effort, endurance, and skill that are desired to successfully
complete these initiatives, it is reasonable to assume that participants are cycling enthusiasts who
are most likely physically active, trained, and experienced. Individual determinants that are at the
core of these initiatives focus on individual motivation by providing a physical challenge that
inspires people to take part in a unique local initiative with friends, family members, or co-
workers. The uniqueness comes from the connection between the properties of the event and the
context of the host, through the physical experience of local cycling heritage. On most occasions,
this experience is facilitated by cycling parts of the official route of the Tour of Flanders – either
indoor or outdoor – which in the wake of the arrival of the actual Tour of Flanders has a mystical
attraction. It seems as if local residents, through this active participation in competitive
initiatives, are preparing for and getting excited about the arrival of the Tour of Flanders in their
local community. For those participating in the cycling races, individual determinants also focus on developing individual skills as these initiatives provide valuable racing experience which is a necessary element for talented young cyclists to be drafted by (semi-)professional cycling teams. The competitive initiatives that have been elaborated upon thus far are all single-day initiatives for which participants have to register in order to receive a race number to cycle. These initiatives can be understood as social resources in various host communities, since local organisations provide one-time initiatives that have been leveraged from the Tour of Flanders. On most occasions, these local organisations also offer other services and programs all year round in addition to the ones described herein. Individuals who wish to continue to participate in a welcoming social environment can approach the local organiser of these initiatives and sign-up to participate in other activities following the Village of the Tour.

From the perspective of health promotion and event leveraging, it is encouraging to see that recreational cycling and recreational walking/running activities were also frequently organised across the Villages of the Tour. These activities, for example a literary walk organised in the 2012 edition of the Village of the Tour in Torhout that was themed around the Tour of Flanders, were recreational in the sense that even individuals who have limited experience with physical activity could participate. The intensity and distance of the activities were purposefully low in order to target families with (young) children and older adults, or perhaps individuals who are currently insufficiently active. In many cases, the local organiser was not a cycling club but a cultural or social organisation which explains the non-competitive character of these initiatives. By organising cycling quests similar to the one organised in the 2013 edition of the Village of the Tour in Rekkem, children were actively engaged as they had to cycle to specific places and monuments in the host community to answer questions about the host and its connection with the Tour of Flanders. Elements of the Tour of Flanders were used as a hook to inspire participation and engagement. The 2013 edition of this cycling quest attracted 88 families, which due to the bad weather conditions was a lower turnout than the local family association had anticipated (Loosvelt Christian, personal communication, November 26, 2013). Nonetheless, it is encouraging to see that initiatives engage families, parents, and children as social ecological theory suggests that connections at the interpersonal system can promote sustained positive behaviour change (Grzywacz & Fuqua, 2000). What this means is that by taking part in this
cycling quest, parents might be encouraged to cycle more often with their children using the existing cycling infrastructure in their local communities.

Older adults were targeted through the organisation of guided walks that covered the life stories of local Flandriens or explored physical elements of various cycling races. As an example, one guided walk in the 2013 edition of the Village of the Tour in Rekkem took participants to the cobblestones in Mons-en-Pévèle, a village in the French region Nord-Pas-de-Calais that is well-known because of the organisation of Paris-Roubaix. Somewhat disappointing, especially since the initiative Everyone Flandrien has been popular among older adults, is the lack of recreational cycling initiatives for this target population. Only on one occasion, namely the 2006 edition of the Village of the Tour in Ichtegem, a recreational cycling activity that was tailored specifically to the needs of older adults was organised by a local cycling club in collaboration with the municipal Department of Sport. The initiative used the catchphrase that “every local resident is expected to cycle in the Village of the Tour.” It covered a relatively short distance and was completed at a low intensity, followed by an informal social gathering at the end. The social aspect might have been more important than the physical activity aspect for some, but in essence that does not really matter since these older adults were actively engaged in a manner that has been adjusted to their skills and motivation.

6.2.3 Individual targets – cycling education

It is encouraging to see that cycling education activities that target young children were quite popular in the Village of the Tour, with nonetheless great differences across the different editions and participating municipalities. Only Ichtegem in 2006, Wetteren in 2009, and Torhout in 2012 included education into their event leveraging program. Furthermore, Torhout included four different cycling education initiatives, but none were organised in the preceding or subsequent hosts. In the majority of the educational activities that have been organised, the school environment was an important setting where children could participate in large numbers. Initiatives focused on changing individual determinants of physical activity participation, including the development of skills, knowledge, and confidence to cycle, while using the Tour of Flanders as a hook to promote participation in a fun and attractive way. As an example, one local high school received the title School of the Tour in Torhout and incorporated the topic of cycling
as a central theme in different lessons. The climax of this initiative was a 40 km recreational cycling activity in which 184 students, who were 14 years of age and older, participated (Senaeve Sofie, personal communication, November 20, 2013). As another example, in addition to incorporating cycling in different lessons, various elementary schools in Ichtegem organised a traffic education week for young children in collaboration with the local police department. This initiative included theoretical and practical lessons in cycling, traffic quizzes, and cycling agility trials. Again, the climax of this week was a 15 km recreational cycling event in which 368 students between the ages of 10 and 12 participated.

Younger children have also been targeted, for example through the initiative Look, I am cycling!, which provides training and useful tips for children and their parents to learn how to cycle without support wheels. In total, 60 children took part in 2012 and almost all of them successfully learned to cycle independently after the three hour program (interview with administrator Torhout 2012 Village of the Tour, December 2012). Since then, the program has been delivered in municipalities across the province of West Flanders attracting almost 1,200 children thus far, and Torhout continues to offer the program annually (Potié Chiron, personal communication, November 23, 2013). In general, it is encouraging to see that cycling education has been incorporated in the Village of the Tour, because if regular cycling participation is the desired outcome, young children need to learn how to cycle. These learning experiences in and around the school environment can enhance children’s skills, knowledge, and confidence to cycle, even on high traffic public roads. This can inspire children to cycle more often, including as active commuters to and from school and as a leisure-time activity. Unfortunately, the interviewees responded negatively when asked about whether these educational initiatives resulted in any permanent changes to the physical and/or social school environments. Local stakeholders did not believe that permanent changes were necessary or they discussed that there was no funding to support such changes. Social ecological theory, however, highlights the important connections between organisational and individual systems where the school environment can promote or inhibit physical activity participation. Although the organisation of educational initiatives is definitely positive – which, on one occasion was complemented with the provision of fluorescent vests to increase cycling safety – other changes such as secure
parking for bicycles or incentives for cycling to school could perhaps encourage cycling participation even further.

6.3 Chapter summary

In order to evaluate event leveraging for increased physical activity participation among the Tour of Flanders Cyclo participant in the next chapter, it is important to summarise the event leveraging initiatives of the Centennial Tour and Village of the Tour by elaborating upon the health promotion systems and targets that have been employed. As argued previously, to achieve a sustained increase in physical activity, a direct local investment (Coalter, 2004) which takes into consideration the host’s available resources and social needs (Weed et al., 2009) is warranted. The findings suggest that the Tour of Flanders, as a medium-sized sport event, has been recognised by different levels of government as an opportunity to increase bicycle tourism and consequently promote physical activity participation through active cycling. This has been accompanied by strategic financial contributions from different levels of government that operate within different social ecological systems. Nonetheless, throughout the event leveraging processes, both lower-order and higher-order systems have been actively engaged. The Flemish government is an actor within the society system which effectively targeted physical resources in the community environment through the provision of new and permanent cycling infrastructure when hosting the Centennial Tour. The municipal government is an actor within the community system and various municipal governments have effectively targeted individual determinants through the provision of new skills, knowledge, and confidence for children to cycle when hosting the Village of the Tour. Both the society and community systems were able to offer social resources in various host communities by organising one-off participatory cycling events or other competitive and recreational cycling initiatives.

The findings suggest that the initiatives of the Centennial Tour that were directed by the regional government employed more environmental targets, whereas the initiatives of the Village of the Tour that were directed by the municipal governments employed more individual targets. In terms of health promotion, environmental targets, on the one hand, imply an indirect connection with host residents as initiatives seek to influence the individual by influencing its environment. Individual targets, on the other hand, imply a direct connection with host residents as initiatives
seek to influence the individual or a particular group of individuals. The regional government operates at a political distance from the host residents and used a top-down approach to modify the community environment by offering physical and social resources for host residents and international visitors. Although provincial level organisations were involved in the Centennial Tour, local residents were not consulted. This has been quite different in the case of the municipal government that used a bottom-up approach to fully engage host residents as contributors and owners of the Village of the Tour celebrations and events. The main strength of the Village of the Tour is that it offers a rationale for the creation of a broad program in which everyone can find an interest and take ownership. The lack of financial involvement from higher-order systems, however, explains why no long-term physical changes were possible in the host communities. Once the Tour of Flanders leaves the host community and moves to the next one, there is nothing tangible left to show for it. This can be a limitation, depending on whether sufficient cycling infrastructure is available in the host community or not.

The need for organisers of leveraging initiatives to actively create subtle connections between the properties of the event and the context of the host by using locally relevant leverageable resources is an important finding. Social ecological targets were successful when they employed a combination of event-related and socially-oriented leverageable resources, which in the case of the Tour of Flanders can be found in Flanders’ cycling heritage. Successful in this sense refers not only to the number of individuals who participated in a particular initiative in the Village of the Tour, but also, as an example, to the host communities who wanted to maintain the *Everyone Flandrien* experience elements following the Centennial Tour celebrations. During the annual organisation of the Tour of Flanders and during the special celebration of milestone dates, the available cycling heritage appears to create a social enthusiasm and attraction among host residents and international visitors. One advantage of leveraging the available cycling heritage is the fact that it includes Flanders’ cycling history and culture, which has been recognised as important enough to inherit and pass on from the past to the present (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). What this means is that, even if the Tour of Flanders would no longer be organised in the future, the road cycling race – including its unique route and former winners – would always remain part of Flanders’ cycling heritage. This is not the case when organising and leveraging one-off events such as the Tour de France Grand Départ in countries such as the United
Kingdom, the Netherlands, or Belgium for example, where the connections between the properties of the event and the context of the host are less sustainable.

The Centennial Tour and Village of the Tour are similar in the fact that they offered initiatives that targeted both competitive and recreational cyclists by using Flanders’ cycling heritage as a leverageable resource. This heritage has been connected to either a physical challenge for serious and competitive cycling enthusiasts (e.g., cycling the inaugural 324 km distance of the Tour of Flanders) or to a social experience for more casual and recreational cyclists (e.g., cycling to learn more about the history of local Flandriens). By using the available cycling heritage as a unique angle and stimulus, initiatives that are themed around the Tour of Flanders go above and beyond ordinary events that are offered regularly by the various local stakeholders involved. These stakeholders, who in the case of the Village of the Tour are local sport, cultural, and social organisations, determine what initiatives are organised in the weeks leading up to the passage of the event. The intention is to encourage host residents to participate in the Village of the Tour and its related celebrations, making the passage of the Tour of Flanders an unforgettable and collective experience for the host and its residents. Therefore, it is important to emphasise that in order to promote and achieve broad-based community engagement, both sport and non-sport local organisations should be involved as active stakeholders in the leveraging processes to ensure the organisation of a wide range of competitive and recreational, sport, and non-sport initiatives. In doing so, event leveraging has the greatest chance to result in outcomes of increasing and sustaining physical activity by encouraging participation among individuals who are insufficiently active and those who are sufficiently active. As elaborated upon previously, both increasing and sustaining physical activity are important in terms of health promotion.

The Centennial Tour that was hosted specifically in 2013 to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the Tour of Flanders occurred once, which provides some limitations to extend leveraging benefits beyond the centennial year. There are some discussions by the Flemish government about leveraging the Tour of Flanders in 2016 which marks the one hundredth edition of the Tour of Flanders since the road cycling race was not organised during the First World War. Leaving this celebration aside, it is the Village of the Tour that presents an annual reoccurring window of opportunity to use the Tour of Flanders – and relatedly, the local enthusiasm for the
event and its past local winners – as a hook to create interest and increase participation in physical activities. The use of the term ‘hook’ implies a connection between the initiative itself and the Tour of Flanders, for example, when participants can cycle along the route of the Tour of Flanders or along historic sites that have marked the lives of local Flandriens. This chapter elaborated upon some of the differences between previous hosts of the Village of the Tour, for example in terms of promoting existing local cycling infrastructure and organising different types of cycling initiatives. Adhering to the social ecological principles, health promotion interventions should ideally include multiple targets, seeking to influence the individual and the various systems in which the individual participates. These systems include the host community environment and lower-order local organisations such as schools, businesses, sport clubs, youth clubs, music groups, and environmental groups, among others (Stokols, 1992, 1996). Based on this theoretical assumption, it is up to the event organiser Flanders Classics in collaboration with the government of Flanders to recognise the Village of the Tour as an opportunity to promote cycling participation and perhaps set aside an annual investment into local cycling infrastructure. In doing so, the celebrations can extend beyond the social environment in the host community to also cover modifications of the physical environment.

It is not the intention to compare the health outcomes of the Centennial Tour to those of Village of the Tour with the purpose of arguing that one event leveraging process performed better than the other. It is more appropriate to argue that the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour complemented one another, especially in terms of the health promotion systems and targets that were employed. Individuals need proper cycling infrastructure in and around their communities as this creates additional opportunities to be active and facilitates sustained engagement with physical activity. Furthermore, individuals also need local organisations to provide initiatives that introduce them to this infrastructure and promote its usage. The opposite reasoning is also true which means that when local organisations have successfully created an interest in cycling, there is a need for proper infrastructure to promote sustained involvement. Even though there were large differences in terms of participant numbers between the organised initiatives of the Centennial Tour and the Village of the Tour, the implications in terms of individual behaviour can also be very different depending on who participated in what initiative and why. As elaborated upon previously, participation in physical activity more generally and competitive and
recreational cycling in particular is socially stratified in Flanders. What this means is that women, older adults, individuals from lower socioeconomic status groups, individuals with lower educational attainment and lower income, and those who are unemployed or retired are less physically active when compared to their counterparts. Furthermore, men, younger individuals, and higher educated individuals are more often competitive cycling participants, whereas women, older individuals, and lower educated individuals are more often recreational cycling participants (Scheerder, Vos, & Pauwels, 2011; Scheerder, Vos, Pabian, et al., 2011; Van Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010). Depending on socio-demographical, psychological, and behavioural factors of individual participants, some groups of individuals – in particular those who are insufficiently active – would benefit more from participating in physical activity initiatives in terms of health benefits when compared to other groups that are already active regardless of the organised initiatives. This distinction that stems from a social stratification should be a consideration when developing event leveraging initiatives for health outcomes. Unfortunately, funding to evaluate the participants and outcomes of the initiatives more extensively was not available. The following chapter, nonetheless, examines these issues in greater detail in the case of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. This annual participatory cycling event first was leveraged from the Tour of Flanders in 1992.
The previous chapter elaborated upon the physical activity initiatives that have been developed to leverage the Tour of Flanders through the Centennial Tour and the Village of the Tour. The leveraging efforts of different levels of government, in collaboration with local and provincial organisations – including ones that have a sport orientation and ones that have a cultural or social orientation – resulted in the development of a wide range of physical activity initiatives. These initiatives targeted either competitive or recreational cyclists, depending on the distance and intensity of the activity and the cycling equipment that was required. Initiatives of the Centennial Tour, which were managed and partially funded by the regional government, included the development of permanent cycling infrastructure which improved the physical resources in participating communities. Initiatives of the Village of the Tour, which were managed and fully funded by the municipal government, exclusively took place in pre-existing infrastructure in the host community. These initiatives focused in particular on improving the social resources in participating communities by organising cycling and other physical activity initiatives. The media attention around the Village of the Tour has been used to promote pre-existing cycling routes in the community, especially when this cycling infrastructure was themed around the Tour of Flanders or local Flandriens. In both event leveraging processes, Flanders’ cycling heritage was used as a leverageable resource to deliver successful and popular initiatives.

Although evidence of new initiatives that provided additional opportunities for physical activity participation – either through the organisation of one-off events or the development of permanent cycling infrastructure – has been presented in this dissertation, changes in health outcomes among participants have not been documented thus far. Whether event leveraging efforts at the community system actually triggered people to be more physically active and encouraged people to cycle more often have not yet been measured. Also, whether host residents used the new cycling infrastructure that was largely funded by actors at the society system has not yet been evaluated. This chapter seeks to examine health outcomes of event leveraging at the individual level, in particular by measuring changes in physical activity participation among event participants prior to and following their participation in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo.
As elaborated upon in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, the Tour of Flanders Cyclo is the participatory equivalent of the Tour of Flanders. It is a participatory cycling event that is open to the general public. Essentially, it is a single-day event that covers a long distance and requires great endurance. It includes three routes that differ in length, intensity, and difficulty, namely 83, 133, and 259 km, and these currently start and/or arrive in Bruges and Oudenaarde.

The backdrop to this physically demanding sport event is formed by the many cobblestoned hills of the Flemish Ardennes. The Tour of Flanders Cyclo is a unique participatory sport event in the sense that participants can ride their own Tour of Flanders on the day before the elite cyclists, while—depending on the length of the selected route—completely or partially copy the route of the elites. This alignment between the timing and the route of the Tour of Flanders and the Tour of Flanders Cyclo provides cycling enthusiasts a weekend to indulge in the subculture of cycling, both as an active participant and passive spectator. To highlight these connections, the Tour of Flanders is defined as a medium-sized, joint spectator and participatory sport event.

The Tour of Flanders Cyclo can be categorised as a cycle touring event, which is also referred to as a cyclosportive in the European context or a gran fondo in the North American context.

Reiterating some of the findings from the previous chapter, cycle touring events are assumed to mainly target cycling enthusiasts who are most likely already active, trained, and experienced cyclists, given the physical effort, endurance, and skill that are desired to successfully take part. Individual determinants that are at the core of these events focus on individual motivation by providing not only a physical challenge that inspires individuals to participate, but also by linking this challenge to the experience of local cycling heritage through the route of the Tour of Flanders. The purpose of this chapter is to validate these claims in the case of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. In doing so, this chapter seeks to determine the value of event leveraging—with the Tour of Flanders Cyclo being an example of event leveraging—to achieve outcomes of increased physical activity participation. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is threefold: (1) to determine the individual profile of event participants, (2) to measure changes in physical activity participation that can be attributed to the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, and (3) to determine what elements at the community system promote physical activity participation in general and event participation in particular, both short-term and long-term. In doing so, this chapter elaborates
upon the findings from the quantitative, online survey undertaken among participants of the 2013 edition of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo.

7.1 Profile of event participants

The Tour of Flanders Cyclo participants ($N = 16,000$) are almost exclusively men (94.5 percent) who are between the ages of 25 and 45 (59.0 percent) (Meulders Bert, personal communication, April 15, 2013). Findings from the survey undertaken for this research ($N = 1,091$) further clarify that these men are highly educated and employed. Similar to previous discussions on social stratification of physical activity participation, groups of women, older adults, individuals with low educational attainment or low income, and those who are retired or have no paid employment hardly take part in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. This resembles the sociodemographic profile of participants at other participatory sport events that generally attract individuals from higher socioeconomic status groups (Adams & White, 2009; Bowles et al., 2006; Crofts et al., 2012; Lane et al., 2010). However, the almost exclusive attendance of men at a participatory sport event that is open to both men and women has not yet been documented in the literature. Although participation in cycle touring is increasing among women in Flanders (Scheerder et al., 2013), the Tour of Flanders Cyclo does not appear to be an accessible resource for physical activity among women who are interested in cycle touring. Almost all of the women who completed the survey ($n = 51$) undertook either the 83 or 133 km event distance, which means that they were nearly absent in the longest one. The Tour of Flanders Cyclo – with its significant higher cost of registration – is not representative of other cycle touring events in Belgium since other events have been found to proportionally attract more women, more older individuals, and less highly educated individuals (Scheerder, Vos, & Pauwels, 2011) (Table 12). This means that for those who do not participate in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, other cycle touring events that are organised across Belgium are available and perhaps more accessible. Furthermore, the high percentage of highly educated individuals at the Tour of Flanders Cyclo can possibly be explained by the fact that “cycling is the new golf…catching up as the preferred way of networking for the modern professional” (The Economist, 2013), which again implies a relationship between event participation and socioeconomic status. The Tour of Flanders Cyclo is currently used as a team-building and networking instrument among working professionals, followed by drinks at the end (interview with the Director at the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre,
March 2013). In terms of social ecological theory, this highlights that different systems –
including the individual and the work environment – interact in determining physical activity
behaviour by means of event participation.

The most popular distance among event participants ($N = 16,000$) was the 133 km that attracted
more than half of the total number of event participants, followed by the 259 km and 83 km
distances. Although the majority of the participants had Belgium as their home country, more
than 40 percent travelled from abroad to take part in the event. The majority of these
international participants travelled from neighbouring countries, including the Netherlands, the
United Kingdom, France, and Germany (Cycling.be, 2013). Findings from the survey revealed
statistically significant differences among survey respondents ($N = 1,091$) who participated in the
three event distances (Table 13). First-time participants more often participated in the shortest 83
km distance, whereas repeat participants more often participated in the longer 133 and 259 km
distances. Participants from Belgium more often participated in the 83 and 259 km distances,
whereas international participants more often participated in the 133 km distance. Furthermore,
more participants who completed the longest distance also took part in other participatory
cycling events, and these individuals also attended other professional cycling events as spectators
more frequently.

In terms of cycling orientation – for which more than one option could be selected – the majority
of the survey respondents defined themselves as recreational cyclists (70 percent) and to a lesser
extent as competitive cyclists (40 percent) and/or functional cyclists (24 percent). About one-
tenth of the survey respondents defined themselves as both recreational and competitive cyclists.
This means that the majority of the respondents indicated to cycle for socialisation, relaxation, or
health purposes. Although cycle touring can be understood as a competitive activity that requires
commitment, endurance, and expensive cycling equipment, participants do not necessarily
identify themselves as competitive cyclists. This was also illustrated by O’Connor and Brown
(2007) who documented how serious cycle tourists have distanced themselves from pure
competitive values to place greater emphasis on the collective experience of an activity that is
seen as fun and enjoyable. Another survey that was conducted for the event organiser showed
that only one-fourth of the respondents ($N = 1,106$) participated in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo
alone, whereas others cycled with family, friends, or cycling club members. This confirms some social engagement and group riding in which it is not the purpose to compete against fellow cyclists but rather to cross the finish line together. Participating in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, nonetheless, remains an activity with a competitive character in particular for those who completed the 133 and 259 km event distances.

It is encouraging to see that the majority of the survey respondents were repeat participants in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. This again resembles findings from other participatory sport events (Bowles et al., 2006; Crofts et al., 2012; Lane et al., 2010). They seem to participate in the shortest distance first and increase their event distance when they continue to take part the following year(s). The event may not only provide an annual goal to be active (Funk et al., 2011), individuals also seem to challenge themselves to perform better and complete a longer event distance at future editions. It also appears that those who completed the 259 km were more seriously involved with cycling as they took part in other participatory cycling events in addition to the Tour of Flanders Cyclo and attended professional cycling events as spectators more frequently. They also identified themselves as competitive cyclists who cycle to improve their distance, time, and performance, more so than participants in the other event distances did. Those who completed the 83 km identified themselves as recreational cyclists, who cycle to socialise, relax, and improve their health, which indicates a more casual leisure pursuit. These individuals might become more seriously involved if they continue to take part the following year(s).

The socio-demographic profile of event participants of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo highlights some important implications for theorising about event leveraging for health outcomes. First, more than 40 percent of the event participants in the 2013 edition were international participants who travelled from mostly neighbouring countries to take part (Cycling.be, 2013). Although the number of participants in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo has been limited since 2013, the number of international participants has continued to increase annually. More specifically, international participants accounted for about 30 percent of the participants in 2012, more than 40 percent in 2013, and about 50 percent in 2014 (Malaise & Snick, 2014). Based on the increase in the number of international bicycle travel companies that organise trips to road cycling races, the number of international participants can be expected to increase even more (Johnson, 2013).
Therefore, even if event leveraging serves social objectives such as those related to health and physical activity, the implications of event leveraging for economic objectives such as those related to tourism cannot be ignored. The international popularity of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo and the increasing number of international participants suggest that a decreasing number of host residents can experience the social benefits of event leveraging, while the event organiser can place a greater emphasis on the economic benefits derived from travelling participants.

Second, the socio-demographic profile of event participants of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo implies that the event attracts individuals from higher socioeconomic status groups in Flanders and abroad, despite the fact that data on employment positions were not collected. Related to that is the fact that the Tour of Flanders Cyclo has a significant higher cost of registration compared to other cycle touring events in Flanders, which makes it difficult for individuals with lower income to participate. In particular because the event organiser does not take any measures to actively engage host residents – whatever their gender, age, and socioeconomic status – as participants, it is clear that social objectives are secondary to economic ones for Golazo sports. However, it is here that different levels of government can and should influence the processes of event leveraging by perhaps also providing financial incentives to organisers of participatory sport events with the purpose of creating and extending social and health benefits for all groups of host residents.

7.2 Physical activity participation

In terms of physical activity participation, more than 96 percent of the respondents of the baseline survey \((N = 1,091)\) were sufficiently active prior to their commencement of training for the event. This means that these individuals were meeting the minimum physical activity guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity throughout the week (World Health Organisation, 2011). Table 14 shows that there were statistically significant differences in physical activity participation in terms of the chosen event distance. Those completing the shortest distance were more likely to have been insufficiently active prior to the event or prior to their commencement of training for the event, when compared to those participating in the longer distances. Prior to their participation in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, 97 percent of the respondents completed some training, on average for about 16
weeks. Again, training duration but also training impact differed by event distance. Those completing the longest distance trained almost two months longer when compared to those in the shortest distance. Furthermore, those completing the longest distance also significantly increased their physical activity once they commenced training. A greater percentage of those completing the shorter distances maintained their physical activity once they commenced training, which means that they did not alter their physical activity habits in anticipation of the event. These data suggest that participating in the 259 km distance is better in terms of physical activity participation as these individuals train about two months longer to prepare themselves for the Tour of Flanders Cyclo and possibly other events, when compared to those participating in the 83 km distance. However, the importance of and access to social and physical resources should not be underestimated when participating in the longest event distance. Individuals need social support from family, friends, and perhaps co-cyclists to train for longer periods. Also, community resources in terms of other participatory and spectator events need to be available to immerse oneself in the subculture of cycling and become seriously involved with cycling. The availability of cycling infrastructure then obviously also plays an important role in promoting sustained involvement.

These findings highlight that a participatory sport event is an important stimulus for physical activity, regardless of the event distance that is completed. Almost the entire sample trained on average for about four months to prepare themselves for the event and the training duration increased with event distance. In terms of physical activity participation, the Tour of Flanders Cyclo mostly attracted participants who were already physically active. Almost the entire sample (n = 1,051) was sufficiently active prior to their commencement of training for the event, with nonetheless statistically significant differences according to the chosen event distance. Individuals who completed the shortest distance were more likely to have been inactive or have become active in the past six months, which resembles other more moderate intensity events (Bowles et al., 2006; Crofts et al., 2012; Lane et al., 2010). The six month time mark indicates that this group might have set a goal to participate in the event and as a result increase their physical activity, or might have increased their physical activity and as a result decide to participate in the event. Individuals who completed the longest distance were more likely to have been active for longer than six months prior to their commencement of training, with resembles
other more vigorous intensity events (Adams & White, 2009; Dickson et al., 2010). For this group, the event might be a means to maintain their physical activity.

One of the objectives of this dissertation was to examine the effectiveness of event leveraging for increased physical activity participation among the Tour of Flanders Cyclo participants. It was not anticipated, however, that physical activity participation rates would be already so high among those taking part, even prior to the event. Nonetheless, statistically significant differences in terms of physical activity participation were found between participants in the three event distances of 83, 133, and 259 km. Those undertaking the shortest distance were the least active and those undertaking the longest distance were the most active. These findings suggest that to better understand event leveraging for health benefits, data from individuals taking part in less physically challenging participatory cycling events are warranted. These events can include, for example, the Tour of the Flemish Cycling Union and the Cardio Tour that have been described in the introductory chapter. These participatory cycling events are organised to promote cycle racing among youth and promote cycling as a means of cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation among the general population. The data on the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, nonetheless, provide an opportunity to examine relapse in physical activity participation following the event.

The inclusion of a pre- and post-event survey resulted in the matching of 639 participants at baseline and follow-up. While at baseline approximately four percent of the respondents were insufficiently active, this increased to more than 12 percent at follow-up. Spearman’s correlation coefficient indicated that some individuals switched physical activity categories between baseline and follow-up because the data that were ranked according to the sufficiency levels in the pre- and post-event periods were not statistically significant \( r_s = 0.03, N = 639, p = 0.44 \). Table 15 presents the frequencies of pre- and post-event physical activity. Only 3 percent of the total number of respondents increased their physical activity participation from being insufficiently active at baseline to sufficiently active, either moderate or high, at follow-up. The proportion of relapers – those who decreased their physical activity participation from being sufficiently active at baseline to being insufficiently active at follow-up – was almost 12 percent. Although other studies have reported a similar percentage of relapers (Crofts et al., 2012; Lane
et al., 2010), this is a negative trend in terms of physical activity promotion. Furthermore, the Pearson chi-squared test revealed that there was an association between pre- and post-event physical activity levels for those individuals who had been active for more than six months prior to their commencement of training. In particular, about 63 percent of those individuals who had been sufficiently active for more than six months prior to their commencement of training were highly active in the post-event period. Only about 25 percent of those long-term active individuals were moderately active following the event and only about 12 percent were insufficiently active ($\chi^2(4, N = 636) = 9.83, p < .05$). This means that long-term physical activity participation can be relatively easily extended into the post-event period. Although research has shown that those who have been active for less than six months have a greater chance of abandoning and stopping their physical activity participation when compared to those who have been active for longer than six months (Dishman, 1988), the findings here show no statistically significant differences for the former group of individuals.

The Pearson chi-squared test also revealed that there was an association between the chosen event distance in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo and post-event physical activity levels, in particular for those participating in the 83 and 259 km event distances. No statistically significant differences for those participating in the 133 km event distance were found. About 16 percent of those individuals who participated in the 83 km event distance were insufficiently active in the post-event period, which is the largest percentage among the three event distances. Furthermore, about 45 percent of those individuals were highly active following the event, which is the smallest percentage among the three event distances ($\chi^2(4, N = 636) = 18.44, p < .01$). About 70 percent of those individuals who participated in the 259 km event distance were highly active in the post-event period. Only about 11 percent of those individuals were insufficiently active following the event. This means that participation in the longest event distance can more positively influence post-event physical activity participation, when compared to participation in the shortest event distance.

### 7.3 Promoting physical activity participation

The findings of the principal component analysis (PCA) show that different elements in the community environment are important to facilitate engagement with physical activity – either
through increasing or maintaining physical activity participation – as measured in the pre-event period (Table 10). The PCA reduced the data that were collected on 27 items to five factors, explaining 60.57 percent of the variance between the items. These five factors ranked in order of importance, as indicated by the mean factor scores, from highly to somewhat important as follows: (1) the event, namely the Tour of Flanders (e.g., riding the same event as the elite cyclists) ($\alpha = 0.89$); (2) physical resources (e.g., enjoyable scenery, pleasant surrounding landscape) ($\alpha = 0.66$); (3) structural resources (e.g., affordability of admission, membership, and subscription) ($\alpha = 0.70$); (4) the performance of elite athletes (e.g., skills and ability of current elite cyclists) ($\alpha = 0.88$); and (5) social resources (e.g., tester sessions where I live) ($\alpha = 0.76$). The PCA extended the findings from previous chapters that elaborated upon community targets that modified physical resources in terms of cycling infrastructure and/or social resources in terms of organising participatory cycling events and other cycling initiatives. Although physical resources – which include not only the presence and quality of outdoor recreation infrastructure but also a safe environment that has an enjoyable scenery and low neighbourhood density – are ranked as highly important, social resources are seemingly less important overall. These social resources not only include the organisation of participatory sport events, but also information about local clubs where individuals could try different activities with other inexperienced individuals and test whether these activities are appropriate to their fitness and ability. Since the Tour of Flanders Cyclo mainly attracted participants who were sufficiently active both at baseline and follow-up, it is not surprising that physical resources were highly important because these individuals were active cyclists. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that social resources would be more important among individuals who are currently insufficiently active and who can use a welcoming social environment to become more actively and regularly involved and make decisions about what type of activity they want to select and where they want to register.

The items that have been previously used by Ramchandani and Coleman (2012) corresponded in the PCA to two factors, namely the performance of elite athletes and social resources. Among the Tour of Flanders Cyclo participants, these two factors were rated as least important when compared to the other factors. Figure 9 presents a descriptive comparison of the mean scores of the individual items, based on data from spectators at major sport events (Ramchandani &
Coleman, 2012) and participants at the Tour of Flanders Cyclo (baseline survey). The responses on these items ranged from minimum 0 to maximum 4. Figure 9 clearly shows that event spectators attach greater importance to the performance of elite athletes (e.g., the skills and ability of current elite cyclists, the quality of competition among current elite cyclists; mean scores greater than 3) when compared to event participants. This has clear implications for physical activity promotion as spectators are merely passive observers of the elite athletes who are being physically active. The inspiration effect of these elite athletes needs to have a long-term influence well beyond watching the event to inspire and motivate spectators to engage in physical activity in their home community or environment. In the case of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo – a participatory event that is strongly connected to a spectator event – participants can actively imitate and copy the performances of the elite athletes themselves, and as a result, they are already physically active during the event. Furthermore, event participants at the Tour of Flanders Cyclo rated social resources as less important when compared to event spectators at major sport events (e.g., the chance to try activities in a non-threatening environment with other inexperienced people, tester sessions where I live; mean scores lower than 2). This can be explained by the fact that the majority of event participants were already sufficiently active and thus less reliant on social resources to be introduced to physical activity.

There was only one item on which event participants scored higher than event spectators, namely the whole atmosphere of the event (i.e., spectacle, crowd, and excitement) (Figure 9). This only begins to demonstrate that the Tour of Flanders is an event that possesses some unique and attractive characteristics that are particularly important in the promotion of physical activity. The items that are presented in Table 8 further elaborate upon these characteristics. In addition to the atmosphere of the event, the tradition, the history, and the route of the Tour of Flanders with its legendary cobblestoned hills that the elite athletes compete on the following day were valued as very important. These unique and attractive characteristics promote physical activity in the pre-event period. The fact that the event itself is the most important factor to promote physical activity among Tour of Flanders Cyclo participants in anticipation of the event is a significant contribution to the literature. The current literature suggests that the performances of elite athletes at major spectator events inspire individuals to be active (e.g., Ramchandani & Coleman, 2012; Veal et al., 2012; Weed et al., 2009). The findings here demonstrate that the performances
of elite athletes are less important than the event itself and the available physical and structural resources in the community environment. These physical and structural resources provide an opportunity to participate and maintain one’s physical activity participation in the lead-up to and following the event. While physical resources refer to the availability and quality of outdoor infrastructure in an area that has low density, low traffic volume, and enjoyable scenery, structural resources refer to convenient transportation to and affordability of activities organised in indoor infrastructure. In terms of the importance of the event itself, it appears that the participants in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo are inspired to personally and physically experience what it feels like to ride the route that the elite cyclists complete the following day. The cobblestoned hills of the Flemish Ardennes in and around Oudenaarde are an important element of the route of the Tour of Flanders and Flanders’ cycling heritage. The inclusion of these cobblestones maintains the event’s character of being a physically challenging cycling race (Vanwalleghem et al., 2013). The event organiser of the Tour of Flanders – Flanders Classics – is essentially the main stakeholder that manages this factor by annually (re)designing the route of the event for the elite cyclists. Consequently, the event organiser of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo – Golazo sports – seeks to design a route that copies as much of the route of the Tour of Flanders as possible for the non-elite participants. This can be a challenging logistical task given the high number of participants in the event and the safety measures that need to be taken to protect cyclists on public roads.

The Tour of Flanders Cyclo is organised only once every year. However, thanks to the development of a Tour of Flanders cycling network that includes three cycling routes in and around Oudenaarde, the event has been leveraged to benefit the health and physical activity of host residents and international visitors. The Tour of Flanders cycling network has been established as a community resource that is available for everyone to use without a cost all year round. This is important because it highlights the various social ecological connections between different elements at the community system that can promote physical activity participation by interacting with the interpersonal and individual systems. The development of the Tour of Flanders cycling network overcomes some of the temporal limitations associated with one-off participatory sport events, as individuals might train in the lead-up to the event and relapse to lower levels of physical activity following the event. Moreover, the cycling network combines
the two most highly ranked factors that were found to promote physical activity participation in
the pre-event period, namely the event and physical resources, as the route of the Tour of
Flanders is now established an accessible, signposted, and permanent community resource.
Linking the event to physical resources in the community, the findings of this dissertation
confirm that it is important to develop cycling infrastructure in an area that has low density, low
traffic volume, and enjoyable scenery, which is definitely the case for the Tour of Flanders
cycling routes and the recreational cycling network in Flanders more generally (Brownson et al.,
2001; Downward & Lumsdon, 2001; Frumkin et al., 2004; Pikora et al., 2003). The Tour of
Flanders cycling routes can also be understood to have social implications, as less experienced
cyclists might feel more comfortable to try cycling along one of the routes where they can make
frequent stops, instead of participating in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo with more experienced
cyclists. Interested individuals can explore the routes by following the signposts in the area,
buying a printed map, or downloading the route onto their satellite navigation system. There is
relatively no preparation necessary to cycle one of the Tour of Flanders routes, which means that
it is an excellent opportunity to cycle with family members, friends, co-workers, or fellow
cycling club members, highlighting the social ecological influence at the interpersonal level.

Different from previous research that elaborated on the positive relationship between high
neighbourhood density and functional physical activity (Frumkin et al., 2004), the Tour of
Flanders Cyclo participants rated low neighbourhood density as an important element to be
physically active. Less than one-fourth of the event participants described him or herself as a
functional cyclist, and therefore, low density of rural areas has been significantly more important
as this provides plenty of space for recreational cycling, when compared to high density that can
positively influence functional cycling (Downward & Lumsdon, 2001). Applied to social
ecological theory, these findings demonstrate the important connections between individual
physical activity behaviour and available resources in the community. Cycling is a form of
physical activity that individuals can easily adopt and adhere to over the long term and therefore,
building cycling infrastructure can be a low cost but highly effective health promotion target for
communities to increase physical activity participation among its residents (Frank et al., 2003).
Strategically linking this infrastructure to a local popular sport event – perhaps as one element
when leveraging a medium-sized, joint spectator and participatory sport event – can be
anticipated to result in health promotion benefits by providing additional opportunities for physical activity, even more so when the infrastructure is conducive to participation from individuals with varying levels of physical activity experience and behaviour.

### 7.4 Promoting event participation

Although the previous findings elaborated upon the unique characteristics of the Tour of Flanders that promoted engagement with physical activity in the pre-event period, it was also important to ask event participants themselves why they participated in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Therefore, one open-ended question was included in the baseline survey. Respondents were invited to provide a short answer but this question was not mandatory in order to submit the survey responses. Of the 639 individuals who were matched between the baseline and follow-up surveys, only four did not provide an answer to this open-ended question, which highlights a keen interest and enthusiasm to elaborate on different motives for participation. The responses were analysed using a combination of deductive and inductive coding, assisted by the second version of the Exercise Motivations Inventory (Markland, 2007). When respondents provided multiple answers, only the first one was coded in order to maintain a clear and workable dataset. Figure 10 presents the various motives for participating in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, according to the matched sample and the three individual event distances.

In general, the majority of the event participants elaborated upon three important motives to take part in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, and these have been labelled heritage, challenge, and enjoyment. More than 33 percent of the respondents provided an answer that described the aforementioned unique and attractive characteristics of the Tour of Flanders, including its cobblestoned hills, history, and atmosphere. Through these responses, which refer to Flanders’ cycling heritage, participants implied that the Tour of Flanders is an event that you have to ride at least only once when you consider yourself to be a real cycling enthusiast. Almost 33 percent of the respondents argued that they took part in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo because the event provides a personal and physical challenge that tests their abilities. Less important, but still relevant for almost 16 percent of the respondents, was the enjoyment they experienced when they are cycling. These respondents participated for fun and pleasure and because they were passionate about cycling, with the event being one opportunity to cultivate that passion. Also
noteworthy, is the fact that more than seven percent of the respondents specifically indicated that
the Tour of Flanders Cyclo was only one element in their long-term training plans – labelled as
strength and endurance – which for some involved participation in similar cycling events in
Belgium and abroad later in the season.

It is interesting to note – but not surprising given the findings from previous chapters that
highlighted the use of cycling heritage as a leverageable resource – that the motives of heritage,
challenge, and enjoyment were ranked highly by respondents across the three event distances.
Only the ranking for those who participated in the 259 km event distance differed from the two
shorter distances. For those completing the longest distance, challenge was the most important
motive before heritage which came in second place, followed by enjoyment. This is
understandable given the incredible distances they cycle and the amount of training that is
required to successfully finish the longest distance of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Also
noteworthy is that for five percent of the respondents who completed the shortest event distance
positive health was the most important factor. These individuals noted that the Tour of Flanders
Cyclo motivates them to stay fit, be physically active, and maintain good health. For those who
completed the longer event distances, positive health was less a determining factor. This small
percentage for positive health can perhaps be explained by the fact that respondents are
influenced by various elements simultaneously. Some respondents might have added positive
health as a second or third element in their responses, but only the first element was analysed.
Regardless of whether positive health was a significant motivator, the physical activity data
described in this chapter have confirmed the health promotion potential of the Tour of Flanders
Cyclo and other participatory sport events more generally.

The importance of heritage as an individual motivator might explain why almost 48 percent of
the respondents in the baseline survey indicated that they only participate in the Tour of Flanders
Cyclo and not in other participatory cycling events throughout the cycling season. This
percentage increased to almost 62 percent for the participants in the 83 km event distance and
decreased to approximately 33 percent for those participating in the 259 km event distance.
Furthermore, the combination of heritage and challenge that is present in the Tour of Flanders
Cyclo – through its event distances and intensity – is an important finding that can be applied to
the previous chapter and the examples of the *Tour 100 Classic* and the *RetroTour*. Similar to the differences between the three event distances of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, both the *Tour 100 Classic* and *RetroTour* most likely attract cyclists who are motivated by different elements and who have varying physical activity experience and behaviour. On the one hand, the *Tour 100 Classic* covered the inaugural 324 km distance of the Tour of Flanders, which is longer than the 259 km in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Therefore, challenge is likely to be an even more important motive. On the other hand, the *RetroTour* is an event that covers shorter distances of 40 and 70 km, completed on vintage style bicycles while wearing retro jerseys. It is very likely that both heritage and enjoyment are more important motivators than the physical challenge, which is perhaps absent because the event promotes longer stops to socialise with other retro riders.

### 7.5 Long-term physical activity and event participation

Given the importance of long-term physical activity participation, the following analyses seek to better understand, firstly, which individuals have a greater chance to relapse to insufficient levels of physical activity following their participation in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, and secondly, which individuals have a greater chance to continue to participate in future editions of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Although the majority of the respondents were both sufficiently active before and after the event, about 12 percent relapsed from being sufficiently active pre-training to being insufficiently active post-event. Table 16 provides an overview of the results of the binary logistic regression analyses that predict a relapse in physical activity participation in the post-event period and repeat participation in the event. This table shows that individuals who only completed secondary education had almost 70 percent less chance to relapse to insufficient levels of physical activity post-event, when compared to those respondents who also completed tertiary education. This finding is contrary to previous research that argued that those who have also completed tertiary education are protected against relapse (Lane et al., 2010). In the case of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, this might in part be explained by the fact that highly educated individuals are encouraged to participate in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo through their work environment, as the event is used as a team-building and networking instrument among working professionals. However, when the work culture does not continue to promote physical activity, these highly educated individuals might abandon their training habits in the post-event period,
resulting in a greater chance to relapse. Unfortunately, data on whether or not individuals participated because of work were not collected through the survey. Furthermore, although cycle touring has become a higher socioeconomic status activity among residents of Flanders during the past 40 years (Scheerder et al., 2013), cycle touring events have attracted proportionally more participants who only completed secondary education as opposed to those who also completed tertiary education (Scheerder, Vos, & Pauwels, 2011). The findings in this chapter, however, have demonstrated that the Tour of Flanders Cyclo is an exception to this by attracting a high proportion of highly educated individuals. Nonetheless, individuals who are less highly educated are more likely to continue to be active post-event, which means that these individuals perhaps continue to participate in other cycle touring events throughout the season.

Furthermore, participants who were from Belgium had more than two times the probability of relapsing, when compared to international participants. This suggests that travelling to take part in a participatory sport event is a serious leisure pursuit that requires great commitment and protects individuals against relapse. Also recreational cyclists had a greater likelihood to relapse, indicating that cycling recreationally – for example to relax, socialise, or improve one’s health, perhaps through a leisurely bike ride with the family during the weekends – is not completed frequently enough or at a high enough intensity to achieve the minimum physical activity guidelines. This is an important finding especially since the previous chapter discussed how various recreational cycling initiatives have been organised to leverage the Tour of Flanders. Both the Centennial Tour and the Village of the Tour included the organisation of initiatives that could be completed on a regular bicycle, covered short distances, and required only moderate intensity (e.g., Everyone Flandrien). What the findings here suggest is that participation in these recreational initiatives nonetheless provides important outcomes such as socialisation and relaxation, but result in only limited long-term health outcomes. For individuals who are insufficiently active, these initiatives can be better understood as an introduction to physical activity and the subculture of cycling, but other initiatives to effectively cultivate this new interest into more frequent participation are needed to achieve greater health outcomes from leveraging overall. Lastly, post-event physical activity behaviour was also a significant predictor of relapse as individuals who decreased their physical activity participation following the event had almost three times the probability of relapsing, when compared to those who increased their
physical activity behaviour. Almost all respondents trained to prepare themselves for the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, but there is a danger in the fact that some might abandon their training habits in the post-event period. Decreasing physical activity in the post-event period poses a significant risk of relapsing to insufficient levels of physical activity. Although cycling is a seasonal activity, it is important to keep in mind that the follow-up survey was administered at the beginning of July. Active participation in cycling was not expected to decrease significantly among event participants at that time, but more likely at the end of the year in the months October and November when the weather changes.

Given the annual organisation of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo and its increasing international popularity, it was also opportune to examine the variables that predict repeat participation in the event. Both gender and age were significant predictors of repeat event participation. Men had more than two times the probability of participating again, when compared to women. As individuals get older, the likelihood of participating again also increased. These findings are important because the data not only suggested that women and older adults were hardly participating in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, those who did participate were also less likely to continue to participate in the future. This means that there is not only evidence of social stratification in terms of physical activity and event participation, but there is also evidence of the event being complicit in sustaining this stratification, which has negative implications in terms of its ability to promote health and physical activity. Furthermore, participants who were from Belgium had more than two times the probability of repeat participation, when compared to international participants. Travelling from abroad can be considered a barrier for future participation, perhaps indicating a once-in-a-lifetime event experience. Individuals who participated in the longest event distance and those who took part in other participatory cycling events in addition to the Tour of Flanders Cyclo had more than two times the probability of becoming repeat participants, when compared to those who completed the shortest event distance and those who only participated in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Relatedly, watching the Tour of Flanders for elite cyclists along the route or live on television following their event participation also positively predicted future participation. As described earlier in this chapter, individuals completing the longest distance were more seriously involved with cycling, both as an active participant and passive spectator. They were highly committed to the Tour of Flanders and the
Tour of Flanders Cyclo, suggesting long-term participation in the event. This finding in essence highlights the important connections and leveraging opportunities that exist between spectator and participatory sport events to not only promote long-term physical activity participation but also long-term commitment to a medium-sized, joint spectator and participatory sport event. Lastly, training impact also had an effect on future event participation. Those participants who remained active at the same level once they commenced training for the event – i.e., those who did not alter their physical activity habits in anticipation of the event – had a greater chance to become repeat participants. These individuals most likely already cycled multiple times a week and event participation was an annual element in their regular cycling behaviour. Perhaps surprising is the fact that those individuals who did not train sufficiently in preparation of the event had a greater chance to participate again in the future. These individuals might have had a poor result in the event, which might motivate them to train more intensely and do better next year. Other practical implications of these findings are discussed in the following chapter.

7.6 Chapter summary

Participatory sport events have become increasingly popular in terms of participant numbers, which has increased their health promotion potential. The individual profile of cyclists of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo who took part in this study appears to be very similar. Nonetheless, an important contribution to the literature has been provided by elaborating upon the significant differences in terms of physical activity participation between participants in the three event distances of 83, 133, and 259 km. The findings in this chapter confirmed similarities between the shortest event distance and other moderate intensity participatory events, as this event distance attracted more first-time and previously inactive or recently active participants. Furthermore, similarities between the longest event distance and other vigorous intensity events were also found, as this event distance attracted more repeat and long-term active participants. In general, it was demonstrated that participatory sport events can be an effective tool to promote physical activity participation, especially since the majority of the event participants physically trained to prepare themselves for the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Social ecological theory highlights, however, that the organisation of participatory sport events with the intent of increasing physical activity in the host region cannot be a standalone health promotion intervention in the community as other systems and targets are important in determining physical activity participation. The use and
availability of different community resources are important in the pre- and post-event periods, not only to increase but also to prevent relapse in physical activity after event participants cross the finish line. This means that participatory sport events should be organised and planned as one leveraging tool or health promotion target in the community, while at the same time also offering other physical, structural, and social resources in relation to the event – for example by developing cycling infrastructure that is themed around the event – to more effectively promote physical activity among event participants. This might lead to more sustained physical activity outcomes while awaiting participation in the following event. The conclusions and implications of this dissertation are thoroughly discussed in the following chapter.
Table 12. Comparison between event participants in Flanders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leisure-time cyclists</th>
<th>Recreational cycling events</th>
<th>Cycle touring events</th>
<th>Tour of Flanders Cyclo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 871)</td>
<td>(N = 228)</td>
<td>(N = 227)</td>
<td>(N = 1,091)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenties</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirties</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forties</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifties</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixties</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Scheerder, Vos, and Pauwels (2011)

Note. The study conducted by Scheerder, Vos, and Pauwels (2011) described that 26.2 percent of the leisure-time cyclists participated in at least one recreational cycling event during the past 12 months, whereas 26.1 percent participated in at least one cycle touring event. Going from left to right, the second and third columns of this table are subsamples from the first column.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Tour of Flanders Cyclo participants</th>
<th>Baseline (N=1,091)</th>
<th>83 km (N=189)</th>
<th>133 km (N=612)</th>
<th>259 km (N=290)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender ($\chi^2(2)=61.33; p&lt;.001$)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95.3%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84.7%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>99.3%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event experience ($\chi^2(2)=25.18; p&lt;.001$)</td>
<td>First-time participant</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repeat participant</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>51.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home country ($\chi^2(2)=25.98; p&lt;.001$)</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abroad</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other participatory events ($\chi^2(2)=41.74; p&lt;.001$)</td>
<td>Yes, other events</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No, only Tour of Flanders</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other professional events ($\chi^2(6)=16.89; p&lt;.05$)</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 time</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-3 times</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 3 times</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational cyclist ($\chi^2(2)=11.96; p&lt;.01$)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69.9%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive cyclist ($\chi^2(2)=21.15; p&lt;.001$)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional cyclist ($\chi^2(2)=1.51; NS$)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* NS stands for not statistically significant.
Table 14. Physical activity of Tour of Flanders Cyclo participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline (N=1,091)</th>
<th>83 km (N=189)</th>
<th>133 km (N=612)</th>
<th>259 km (N=290)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity pre-training ($\chi^2(8)=43.55; p&lt;.001$)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficiently active</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suff. active &lt; 6 months</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suff. active &gt; 6 months</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training duration ($\chi^2(12)=97.96; p&lt;.001$)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No training</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 weeks</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 6 months</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 6 months</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training weeks ($F$ Welch=9.81 (2, 273), $p&lt;.001$)</td>
<td>16.54 $^a$</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>16.82</td>
<td>19.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training impact ($\chi^2(6)=19.95; p&lt;.01$)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More active</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active at the same level</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less active/inactive</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $^a$ Those living in Belgium trained on average for 15.17 weeks ($N=650$), whereas those living abroad trained on average for 18.55 weeks ($N=441$).
Table 15. Physical activity prior to and following the Tour of Flanders Cyclo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Post-event</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>insufficient</td>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>high</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-training</strong></td>
<td>n = 4</td>
<td>n = 10</td>
<td>n = 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within pre-training</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sufficient &lt; 6 months</strong></td>
<td>n = 12</td>
<td>n = 30</td>
<td>n = 42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within pre-training</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sufficient &gt; 6 months</strong></td>
<td>n = 62</td>
<td>n = 135</td>
<td>n = 335</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within pre-training</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Event-distance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>83 km</strong></td>
<td>n = 16</td>
<td>n = 40</td>
<td>n = 45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within event-distance</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>133 km</strong></td>
<td>n = 43</td>
<td>n = 100</td>
<td>n = 214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within event-distance</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>259 km</strong></td>
<td>n = 19</td>
<td>n = 35</td>
<td>n = 127</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within event-distance</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 639*
Figure 9. Descriptive comparison between spectators and participants

- The skill and ability of current elite cyclists: Spectators, 2.19; Participants, 2.89
- The quality of competition among current elite cyclists: Spectators, 2.08; Participants, 3.07
- The performance of elite cyclists I am supporting: Spectators, 1.88; Participants, 2.83
- Whole atmosphere around the Tour of Flanders (spectacle, crowd, excitement): Spectators, 2.25; Participants, 3.14
- Information about sports and physical activities that I can do where I live at a level appropriate to my fitness and ability: Spectators, 2.72; Participants, 2.25
- Information about local clubs or centres where I could have a go: Spectators, 1.81; Participants, 2.69
- The chance to try activities in a non-threatening environment with other inexperienced people: Spectators, 1.76; Participants, 2.47
- The chance to meet athletes and hear how they got started in their sport: Spectators, 1.61; Participants, 2.38
- Tester sessions where I live: Spectators, 1.54; Participants, 2.25
- Activities that have been organised around the Tour of Flanders: Spectators, 1.81; Participants, 1.83

Mean scores (min = 0; max = 4)

- Spectators at major sport events (Ramchandani & Coleman, 2012)
- Participants at the Tour of Flanders Cyclo (baseline survey N = 1,091)
Figure 10. Motives for taking part in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo

Note. \( N = 635 \)

- Heritage: It is a classic event with cobblestones – To experience the route up-close – It is an iconic event – It is a historical cycling event
- Challenge: To test my own physical ability – It is a sport challenge
- Enjoyment: Passion for cycling – Because I enjoy cycling
- Strength & Endurance: To prepare myself for the Mont Ventoux (France) – To train
- Affiliation: Being together with friends – To take my son so he can participate
- Imitating Elite Athletes: To experience the same as the elite athletes – To get an idea of the physical effort that elite athletes must provide during the race
- Positive Health: The challenge motivates me to keep fit – Being active – To maintain my health
Table 16. Findings from the binary logistic regression analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables and categories</th>
<th>Relapsing to insufficient levels of physical activity post-event (^a)</th>
<th>Repeat participation in future Tour of Flanders Cyclo events (^b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Odds Ratio</td>
<td>Wald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (ref. cat. Female)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous variable</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (ref. cat. Tertiary)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td><strong>0.32</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.02</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional status (ref.cat. Employed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No paid employment</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective income status (ref. cat. Very difficult)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very easy</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In between</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event distance (ref. cat. 83 km)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>259 km</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133 km</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home country (ref. cat. Abroad)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td><strong>2.13</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.87</strong>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event experience (ref. cat. Repeat participant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-time participant</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other participatory events (ref. cat. No)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational cyclist (ref. cat. No)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td><strong>2.68</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.03</strong>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive cyclist (ref. cat. No)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional cyclist (ref. cat. No)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour of Flanders along route (ref. cat. No)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour of Flanders on television (ref. cat. No)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables and categories</td>
<td>Relapsing to insufficient levels of physical activity post-event&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Repeat participation in future Tour of Flanders Cyclo events&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Odds Ratio</td>
<td>Wald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other professional events (ref. cat. Never)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 times</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 times</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 time</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity pre-training (ref. cat. Suff. active &gt; 6 months)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suff. active &lt; 6 months</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficiently active</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training impact (ref. cat. More active)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive or less active</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active at the same level</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event impact (ref. cat. More active)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive or less active</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>6.62*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active at the same level</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous variable</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>6.41*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001, ref. cat. stands for reference category.</sup>

<sup>a</sup> N = 635, Hosmer-Lemeshow = .06, Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> = .19, and Cox and Snell R<sup>2</sup> = .10

χ<sup>2</sup>(29) = 63.85, p < .001

<sup>b</sup> N = 1,091, Hosmer-Lemeshow = .53, Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup> = .21, and Cox and Snell R<sup>2</sup> = .16

χ<sup>2</sup>(26) = 188.31, p < .001
CHAPTER 8  CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In the preceding chapters, event leveraging for health promotion with the outcome of increasing physical activity participation has been discussed in the case of the Tour of Flanders. The Tour of Flanders has been defined as a medium-sized, joint spectator and participatory sport event. Although the literature on sport events and sport mega-events in particular provides examples of social event leveraging for health promotion, one of the limitations of the existing social event leveraging framework is that it does not integrate any concepts and principles of the field of health promotion. Therefore, social ecological theory has been applied to the research findings to better understand how leveraging initiatives can result in physical activity outcomes. Based on the findings from the Tour of Flanders, the existing social event leveraging framework has been extended to better fit the purpose of seeking health and physical activity outcomes. This resulted in the development of a socioeconomic event leveraging framework for health and physical activity, which is discussed in greater detail in this final chapter. The research findings are summarised by providing answers to the three research questions that were outlined in the introduction of this dissertation. The answers are elaborated upon in separate sections that note the theoretical contributions, methodological reflections, and practical implications of this research. The growing importance of physical activity participation and the growing number of spectator and participatory sport events that are organised world-wide provide a foundation to discuss future research opportunities.

8.1 Answering the research questions

RQ1. What processes undertaken by the municipal, provincial, and/or regional levels of government in Flanders have leveraged the Tour of Flanders by connecting leverageable resources to outcomes of increased physical activity participation?

This research question is answered based upon the findings that have been presented in chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation that detailed the leverageable resources and the leveraging processes in the case of the Tour of Flanders. The specific content of the leveraging processes has been elaborated upon in chapter 6 that detailed the leveraging initiatives. Adding to the literature on event leveraging, cycling heritage has been identified as a powerful and successful leverageable
resource to promote bicycle tourism in the region. In the current arrival host city of Oudenaarde, the available cycling heritage has been leveraged through the development of the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre and the Tour of Flanders cycling routes, creating a long-term connection between the event and the context of the host. Two processes of event leveraging – in particular the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour – have continued to use the available cycling heritage in host communities to develop a cycling festival for local residents and international visitors. This festival serves to achieve a wide range of socioeconomic objectives. What is notable in the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour is that the benefits of event leveraging have been extended geographically beyond the start and arrival host cities by using the available leverageable resources in a variety of communities in Flanders.

By interviewing government officials as well as previous and current event organisers, the findings revealed that although different levels of government are currently active stakeholders in the processes of event leveraging, it was the event organiser Het Nieuwsblad that first applied event leveraging in the 1980s. Through leveraging initiatives such as the organisation of the live morning show prior to the start of the Tour of Flanders, the event organiser sought to expand the subculture that was interested in cycling and the event, and subsequently the popularity of the cycling news that was reported in its newspaper. At the time of writing, this morning show continues to present the world’s greatest cyclists as heroes, creating an attractive and shared enthusiasm among spectators. These spectators of the morning show are both local residents and non-residents who have travelled to watch the event. During the 1990s, this enthusiasm for the Tour of Flanders increased, with about 7,000 to 8,000 spectators attending the start of the race compared to about 1,500 in previous years. Similarly, an increasing number of spectators watched the Tour of Flanders along the route – up from about 200,000 in the 1980s to about 350,000 in the 1990s – preferably at a strategic location where they could watch their heroes battle to win the race (e.g., the Wall of Geraardsbergen). The number of spectators has continued to increase even further, to somewhere between 600,000 and 750,000 in recent years. Moreover, this enthusiasm was also visible before and after the event through the increasing number of applications that the event organiser received from residents who wanted to set up unique, local initiatives to show their commitment to the Tour of Flanders. Examples of these initiatives were photo expositions, local pastries, beers, street names, monuments, theater performances, and
books that were all themed around the Tour of Flanders. These initiatives originated spontaneously within various communities extending beyond the start and arrival host cities, without any influence from the event organiser or host governments. This collective enthusiasm – also referred to as communitas – resulted in a more general realisation that the Tour of Flanders was an event with noteworthy economic and social potential.

The findings of this study led to the possible understanding of socioeconomic event leveraging as a strategic planning process in which both the properties of the event and the context of the host are recognised as important leverageable resources. To fully comprehend the leveraging potential of a particular sport event or a particular host city, it is necessary to examine the resources that each delivers because the properties of the event and the context of the host influence event leveraging simultaneously. Event stakeholders should ideally consider pursuing economic, social, or even environmental leveraging objectives in which these two sets of resources can be strategically connected and aligned as different outcomes are more or less feasible depending on the leverageable resources that are available. Researchers have suggested that host cities should go after those sport events that involve particular event properties (e.g., infrastructure, knowledge, image, emotions, networks, or culture) that satisfy the host context and will serve the city in the long-term (Gratton & Preuss, 2008; Preuss, 2007). As an example, host cities can build sport infrastructure that can be used by host citizens in the post-even period or they can create a greater awareness of the host’s culture and history to promote increased tourism among international spectators in the post-event period. However, the findings from the Tour of Flanders revealed that event organisers also go after those cities with a particular host context (e.g., particular historical or natural backdrop to the event or social enthusiasm for the event) that satisfies the event properties and will serve the event in the long-term. What this means more specifically is that the event organiser leverages benefits for the event from the context of the host and vice versa as the host government leverages benefits for the host and its citizens from the event. As an example, the context of the host and in particular its international image and appeal are an increasing concern for the event organiser because these represent to some extent the international status and standing of the event itself. To satisfy the 160 million people worldwide who see some images of the Tour of Flanders, the event organiser actively pursues historically significant and aesthetically appealing locations to start, finish, and run the race.
What this means is that the event organiser leverages the image and appeal of host cities to benefit the event internationally. The properties of the event are also increasingly important to the context of the host as, for example, the current arrival host city of Oudenaarde leverages the event with bicycle tourism campaigns that involve active and passive participation in cycling. The unique décor of the Tour of Flanders with its cobblestoned hills throughout the Flemish Ardennes and the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre in Oudenaarde – which represent important tangible and intangible elements of Flanders’ cycling heritage – are the city’s prime leverageable resources. What this means is that the city leverages the properties of the event to benefit the city both economically and socially.

A similar connection between the properties of the event and the context of the host has been documented in the hosts of the Village of the Tour. What is notable here is the fact that an internationally renowned road cycling race has the potential to benefit host residents locally by attracting, inviting, and encouraging them to come together and actively participate in the Village of the Tour. The Village of the Tour can be understood as a leveraging process at the municipal level which has been used to achieve a wide range of socioeconomic objectives, influenced by the resources and needs that exist in the context of the host. The Village of the Tour is designed to celebrate the local cycling heritage by highlighting the unique connections between the host and the Tour of Flanders. In doing so, the event organiser is able to embed the Tour of Flanders in various communities along the route of the event, ideally alternating between the province of East Flanders and West Flanders to extend the socioeconomic benefits (e.g., place promotion or community development) well beyond the start and arrival host cities. By organising a wide range of initiatives in the lead-up to the Tour of Flanders that can appeal to the entire community, a collective enthusiasm is promoted in the Village of the Tour. This local enthusiasm also adds an additional dimension to the event itself that benefits the event organiser. The many (inter)national spectators who watch some elements of the Tour of Flanders on television now see how cyclists in various communities along the route and in the Village of the Tour in particular are welcomed with great excitement and energy. This might in turn inspire more individuals to attend the event the following years. To some extent, this also determines the longevity of the Tour of Flanders because the event would not continue to exist as a Flemish folk festival if it was no longer valued and supported by local communities. Together with its unique
setting and history, the enthusiasm generated along the route by spectators has become one of the key characteristics of the road cycling race.

As mentioned, in the case of the Tour of Flanders, both resources that are related to the properties of the event and the context of the host are leveraged simultaneously. By drawing upon a combination of resources, leveraging outcomes can provide long-term benefits to a wide spectrum of event stakeholders, including the event organiser and host governments. Municipal, provincial, and regional levels of government agreed to strategically use the Tour of Flanders with the objective of increasing bicycle tourism. Initial leveraging efforts started in 2003 with the building of permanent cycling infrastructure in and around Oudenaarde and efforts continued in 2013 with the implementation of the Centennial Tour policy that was intended to benefit all of Flanders. The objective of promoting bicycle tourism, which involves both passive spectating and active participation (Lamont, 2009), is a socioeconomic one as it has the potential for economic, social, and even environmental benefits for the host community and those who actively participate (Faulks et al., 2007). Although cycling is a physical activity that can lead to significant health outcomes, leveraging health or physical activity outcomes remains subordinate to leveraging economic and tourism outcomes from the Tour of Flanders. This subordination can be understood to result from a lack of collaboration among different government departments in Flanders. As an example, the development of recreational cycling infrastructure falls under the responsibility of the Department of Tourism in Flanders as cycling to explore a certain local area serves an important recreational and tourism objective. None of the infrastructure developments, however, including those that resulted from the Centennial Tour policy, received any funding from the Department of Health which could have indicated an effort to leverage the event for public health outcomes. This lack of collaboration between different departments is a limitation, especially when it comes to event leveraging, as greater collaboration could extend the use and benefits of recreational cycling infrastructure even further. In the case of the 2012 Olympic Games in London, the Department of Transport and the Department of Health collaborated by providing a significant amount of public funding to Cycling England to create an environment that facilitates physical activity participation. In doing so, different social ecological systems worked together to target particular community environments by improving infrastructure, removing barriers, and promoting cycling in schools and at workplaces (Department of
Transport, 2010a). It is evident that greater collaboration could extend the outcomes of event leveraging into areas such as transportation, public health, physical activity, sustainability, and urban planning, to name only a few.

In relation to the Tour of Flanders, by building the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre and the Tour of Flanders cycling routes, the provincial government of East Flanders in collaboration with the municipal government of Oudenaarde and the regional government of Flanders successfully embedded the Tour of Flanders in the context of the host. Even prior to becoming the current arrival host city, Oudenaarde has been the hub in the Flemish Ardennes where one can experience physical, historical, and social elements of Flanders’ cycling heritage. The route of the Tour of Flanders that covers internationally recognised and nationally protected cobblestoned hills in the Flemish Ardennes is an example of Flanders’ cycling heritage that has been used as a leverageable resource. The collective interest in the Tour of Flanders, especially among cycling enthusiasts in and beyond the host city, has been cultivated locally by inviting visitors to physically experience Flanders’ cycling heritage and cycle parts of the official route of the Tour of Flanders. The focus on heritage allows public, non-profit, and commercial sector organisations to not only celebrate cycling achievements from the past, but to also use these achievements as a leverageable resource in the present by creating new and unique experiences such as the RetroTour, the Tour 100 Classic, or the Tour of Flanders Cyclo (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2005). This heritage, however, is not available in every host city and as a result, it clearly influences the event leverage potential of cities to capitalise on the opportunities that the Tour of Flanders affords.

The findings from this dissertation identified the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour as two event leveraging processes. These processes used the available leverageable resources in a particular host community to develop a series of initiatives and achieve a particular strategic objective. Reflecting on the tenets of social ecological theory, these processes occurred at different social ecological systems and employed different social ecological targets to promote physical activity participation. On the one hand, the Centennial Tour was identified as a regional leveraging process that occurred at the society system, more specifically the Flemish region that represents a politically and financially autonomous area. Although the Flemish government was
an actor within the higher-order society system, it effectively engaged lower-order community and organisational systems to fund the promotion of bicycle tourism in the region. The implementation of the Centennial Tour policy, which was designed to attract (inter)national visitors to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the Tour of Flanders in 2013, provided organisations a financial incentive to actively take part in event leveraging. The Flemish government used a top-down approach as host residents themselves were not able to present ideas for event leverage initiatives; instead these ideas came from public, non-profit, and commercial sector organisations that already had a mandate that involved cycling. The Flemish government counted on these organisations to use their existing connections to individuals in and well beyond the host communities and provide changes to the physical and/or social environments. Investments were coordinated into different initiatives, which were mainly located in communities in the provinces of East Flanders and West Flanders. This is not surprising since these are the provinces where the Tour of Flanders is organised. The communities, however, were not necessarily located along the route of the event, which extended leveraging benefits geographically as they were intended to benefit all of Flanders. The physical environment was modified by building new permanent cycling infrastructure (e.g., Live your own Tour of Flanders), whereas the social environment included the organisation of one-off participatory cycling events (e.g., Tour 100 Classic). On both occasions, additional opportunities to be active and to facilitate engagement with physical activity were provided. Infrastructure changes were not only possible because the Flemish government was responsible for funding regional cycling infrastructure, but also because the Flemish government identified the one hundredth anniversary of the Tour of Flanders as a unique leverageable resource to promote the region as a cycling-friendly destination.

On the other hand, the Village of the Tour was identified as a municipal leveraging process that occurred at the community system, more specifically a city or municipality in the provinces of East Flanders or West Flanders. Since host communities used a bottom-up approach, ideas for event leveraging initiatives were presented and implemented by local organisations and host residents. In terms of social ecological theory and the assumption of reciprocal causality, host residents are not only influenced by their environments but they also have the opportunity to modify their social and physical environments through the consultation process that took place to
develop the program of the Village of the Tour. However, given the limited financial budgets that have been available so far, organisations within the community exclusively provided one-off social, cultural, educational, and physical activity initiatives in the months leading up to the Tour of Flanders, while using pre-existing infrastructure. Although this wide variety of initiatives is a positive trend that can inspire broad-based community engagement, there was no funding to modify the community environment in the host through, for example, the building of new cycling infrastructure. Depending on the existing cycling infrastructure in the particular community, this can be a limitation since some communities can benefit economically, socially, and even environmentally from additional cycling infrastructure. Nonetheless, one of the properties of hosting cycling events is that no additional infrastructure is necessary since events are organised on existing public roads. This means that any community that has a significant historical and social connection to the Tour of Flanders can host the Village of the Tour without restrictions in terms of infrastructure. However, the building of additional cycling infrastructure could extend the benefits from event leveraging even further.

The initiatives that have been developed in the hosts of the Village of the Tour to date have targeted particular individuals from the community, with cycling enthusiasts and children being the most important ones in terms of the number of initiatives. This is quite different from the leveraging initiatives around the 2010 Tour de France Grand Départ in Rotterdam where individuals who demonstrated low cycling participation levels were targeted – in particular immigrants, youth, and women – by engaging them as active cyclists (van Bedaf, 2012). The philosophy of the Village of the Tour has been to inspire broad-based community engagement through the organisation of a local festival. It appears that local administrators have been more likely to support initiatives that attracted participants who had at least some cycling experience and were more likely to participate, instead of inviting those who demonstrated low cycling participation levels which obviously presents some organisational challenges and perhaps disappointing participant numbers. It has been positive that schools, families, and children were invited and encouraged to participate, in some editions of the Village of the Tour more profoundly than in others, to leverage change in the physical activity behaviour of young children (Grzywacz & Fuqua, 2000). Initiatives focused on changing individual determinants of physical activity participation, including skills, knowledge, and confidence to cycle (McLeroy et
The Tour of Flanders was used as a hook to promote participation, with the purpose of making cycling fun and attractive among children and their parents. The administrators who were responsible for organising and managing the Village of the Tour discussed during the interviews that they had consulted previous organisers – colleagues in former hosts – to learn from their experiences and outcomes. This consultation seemingly resulted in the organisation of previously popular initiatives across several editions of the Village of the Tour, targeting individuals who are likely to already participate in cycling, including cycle tourists but also competitive and recreational cyclists. In these initiatives, individual determinants of physical activity focused on providing a physical challenge that inspired cycling enthusiasts to take part. This physical challenge drew upon the opportunity to experience the available local cycling heritage as a leverageable resource. In terms of evaluating event leveraging for physical activity outcomes, the question then becomes whether individuals were already physically active or not prior to their participation.

Although different levels of government have contributed financially to the Tour of Flanders, the event leveraging processes and leveraging initiatives that were implemented by local, provincial, and regional governments to increase physical activity participation appear to be very different. The leveraging tools or health promotion targets that were employed were influenced by the social ecological system at which the event leveraging process was implemented. Higher-order systems had a greater focus on modifying the environment, whereas lower-order systems focused on modifying the individual. Without financial support from higher-order systems, communities were unable to provide tangible, long-term environmental changes in the form of infrastructure, which has been proven to act as a mechanism to promote cycling among local residents at lower-order systems (Yang et al., 2010). Both the community and society systems, nonetheless, recognised Flanders’ cycling heritage as a relevant leverageable resource that was attractive and inspiring enough to promote participation among host residents and international visitors.
RQ2: Based on the developed leveraging initiatives and the achieved outcomes, how effective is event leveraging for increased physical activity participation reported by the Tour of Flanders Cyclo participants?

This research question is answered based upon the findings that have been presented in chapters 6 and 7 of this dissertation that detailed the leveraging initiatives in the case of the Tour of Flanders and the physical activity outcomes among event participants of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. In terms of physical activity promotion, the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour included environmental and individual targets. The physical environment was modified through the provision of new cycling infrastructure, whereas the social environment was modified through the organisation of one-off participatory cycling events and other cycling initiatives that had a competitive or recreational character. Initiatives were linked to elements of Flanders’ cycling heritage, either through a physical challenge or through a social activity in local communities. Based on the findings from the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour (chapter 6), it is important to examine whether physical and social resources in the host community can be important leveraging tools or health promotion targets to increase and/or sustain physical activity participation. This has been done through a quantitative survey undertaken among event participants of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo (chapter 7). The findings from this survey have extended the qualitative findings that mainly covered physical and social resources in the community in the form of cycling infrastructure and participatory cycling initiatives, by elaborating upon the event itself (i.e., the Tour of Flanders) as an important factor to promote physical activity participation among event participants.

The name, the timing, and the route of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo confirm that the participatory equivalent of the Tour of Flanders is an example of event leveraging. In its early years, the Tour of Flanders Cyclo was organised in July whereas the Tour of Flanders took place in March or April, depending on the calendar of the International Cycling Union. In 1999, the event organiser made the strategic decision to organise the Tour of Flanders Cyclo on the same weekend as the Tour of Flanders with the purpose of increasing the popularity of the participatory event by making a more direct connection to the spectator event. In doing so, the Tour of Flanders Cyclo can be understood as an example of event-led leveraging where the participatory equivalent is inextricably linked to, and leverages benefits from, the spectator event by using the same timing
and route (Smith, 2014). The fact that participants can ride their own Tour of Flanders on the day before the elite cyclists – while, depending on the length of the route, completely or partially copying the route of the elites – makes it a unique participatory cycling event. Although the Tour of Flanders Cyclo can be understood as an event in itself because of its popularity, the enduring connections with the spectator event confirm that the event is an example of event leveraging. More importantly, this event highlights the potential of leveraging physical activity outcomes as the Tour of Flanders Cyclo engages a substantial number of individuals as active participants each year.

Quantitative survey data on 27 items that facilitated engagement with physical activity in the community environment were collected from a sample of Tour of Flanders Cyclo participants \( (N = 1,091) \). A principal component analysis reduced these items to five factors. Influenced by social ecological theory, these factors can be understood as important health promotion targets to incorporate in future health promotion interventions to achieve sustainable health outcomes when leveraging sport events. The most important factor to promote physical activity as indicated by the mean factor scores was the event, namely the Tour of Flanders, which was followed by physical resources, structural resources, the performance of elite athletes, and lastly, social resources. These factors extended the qualitative findings from the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour, which mainly covered physical and/or social resources in the community environment. Although physical resources – which include not only the presence and quality of outdoor recreation infrastructure, but also a safe environment that has an enjoyable scenery and low neighbourhood density – were ranked as highly important, social resources were seemingly less important overall. These social resources not only include the organisation of sport events in which individuals could participate, but also information about local clubs where individuals could try different activities with other inexperienced individuals and where they could test activities that are appropriate to their fitness and ability. Since the Tour of Flanders Cyclo mainly attracted participants who were already sufficiently active both prior to and following the event, it was not surprising that physical resources were highly important because these individuals were active leisure-time cyclists. In order to maintain their cycling participation, they valued not only the presence and quality of cycling infrastructure, but also its perceived safety and location. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that social resources would have been more important
among individuals who were insufficiently active and who could use a welcoming social environment to become more actively and regularly involved. Social resources have been found to be more important among event spectators at major sport events (Ramchandani & Coleman, 2012) when compared to active participants such as those in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. This finding suggests that, in terms of event leveraging for public health benefits, spectator events present an opportunity to promote those social resources that are related to health and physical activity and those that are available in the host community to event spectators. Leveraging efforts should aim to reach those event spectators and host residents who are insufficiently active in social ways by organising tester sessions in the wake of the event or by promoting local sport organisations that offer activities suitable for individuals from varying experience levels. In terms of participatory events, this finding also supports the organisation of physical activities with a recreational character in the hosts of the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour. The organisation of recreational initiatives that purposefully demand low intensities and cover short distances can be an effective tool to engage those who are in need of greater physical activity, while at the same time promoting registration at local organisations that are managing these initiatives.

The Tour of Flanders possesses some unique and attractive characteristics that have been particularly important in the promotion of physical activity. In addition to the atmosphere of the event, the tradition and history of the Tour of Flanders have been highly valued. One key characteristic has been the route of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo that includes legendary cobblestoned hills that the elite athletes compete on the following day. More generally, the fact that the event itself was the most important factor that promoted physical activity among Tour of Flanders Cyclo participants in the pre-event period is a significant contribution to the literature. The current literature suggests that the performances of elite athletes at major spectator events inspire individuals to be active (e.g., Ramchandani & Coleman, 2012; Veal et al., 2012; Weed et al., 2009). The findings here demonstrate that the performances of elite athletes were less important than the event itself and the available physical and structural resources in the community environment. While physical resources refer to the availability and quality of outdoor infrastructure in an area that has low density, low traffic volume, and enjoyable scenery, structural resources refer to convenient transportation to and affordability of activities organised
in indoor infrastructure. In terms of the importance of the event itself, it appears that the participants in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo were inspired to personally and physically experience what it feels like to finish the route – either entirely or partially, depending on the selected event distance – that the elite cyclists complete the following day. These findings confirmed that the Tour of Flanders Cyclo and similar participatory events can be an effective leveraging tool to promote physical activity participation. This has implications for spectator events of different sizes as individuals world-wide might benefit more in terms of increased physical activity participation when they are not only able to watch elite athletes perform but when they are also able to imitate these performances through the participatory equivalent of the spectator event. In essence, this strongly supports the organisation of joint spectator and participatory sport events.

The Tour of Flanders Cyclo is organised only once every year. However, thanks to the development of the Tour of Flanders cycling network that includes three cycling routes in and around Oudenaarde, the event has been leveraged to benefit the health and physical activity of host residents and international visitors. The Tour of Flanders cycling network has been established as a community resource that is available for everyone to use without a cost all year round. The development of the Tour of Flanders cycling network overcomes some of the temporal limitations associated with one-off participatory sport events, as individuals might train in the lead-up to the event and relapse to lower levels of physical activity following the event. With the development of the cycling routes, individuals can cycle the Tour of Flanders any time. The cycling routes combine the two most highly ranked factors that were found to promote physical activity participation, namely the event and physical resources. Linking the event to the physical resources in the community, the findings of this dissertation confirm that it is important to develop cycling infrastructure in an area that has a low density, low traffic volume, and enjoyable scenery, which is definitely the case for the Tour of Flanders cycling routes and the recreational cycling network in Flanders more generally (Brownson et al., 2001; Downward & Lumsdon, 2001; Frumkin et al., 2004; Pikora et al., 2003). Given the importance of the event and physical resources, it is encouraging to see that the initiative Live your own Tour of Flanders has been funded through the Centennial Tour policy. This leveraging initiative has provided a better connection between the Tour of Flanders and the available cycling infrastructure as cyclists now can complete all the cobblestoned hills of the Tour of Flanders. The cycling routes can also be
understood to have social implications as less experienced cyclists might feel more comfortable to try cycling along one of the routes where they can make more frequent stops, instead of participating in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo with more experienced cyclists. Interested individuals can explore the routes by following the signposts in the area, buying a printed map, or downloading the route onto their satellite navigation system. Including a shorter distance along the Tour of Flanders cycling network might develop this social resource even further.

Survey respondents verified that heritage, challenge, and enjoyment were the most important motivators to take part in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Heritage referred to the aforementioned unique and attractive characteristics of the Tour of Flanders, including its cobblestoned hills, history, and atmosphere. Furthermore, the Tour of Flanders Cyclo was found to provide a personal and physical cycling challenge against which participants can measure their own abilities. In general, respondents were passionate about cycling and the Tour of Flanders Cyclo was one opportunity to cultivate that passion. This dissertation highlighted the use of cycling heritage as a leverageable resource in the processes of event leveraging, which has been confirmed as an excellent tactic by the survey respondents who highly valued Flanders’ cycling heritage in their overall event experience. The importance of heritage as an individual motivator might explain why almost half of the survey respondents indicated that they only participated in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo and not in other participatory cycling events throughout the cycling season. It is encouraging to see that the elements of heritage, challenge, and enjoyment have been included in other leveraging initiatives such as the Tour 100 Classic and to a lesser extent the RetroTour. These events most likely attract cyclists who are motivated by different elements and who have different physical activity experience and behaviour. On the one hand, the Tour 100 Classic covered the inaugural 324 km distance of the Tour of Flanders, which is longer than the 259 km in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Therefore, challenge is likely to be an even more important motive. On the other hand, the RetroTour is an event that covers shorter distances of 40 and 70 km, completed on vintage style bicycles while wearing retro jerseys. It is very likely that both heritage and enjoyment are more important motivators than the physical challenge which is perhaps absent as the event promotes longer stops to socialise with other retro riders.
Although one of the objectives was to examine the effectiveness of event leveraging for increased physical activity participation among the Tour of Flanders Cyclo participants, it was not anticipated that physical activity rates would be already so high among those taking part, event prior to the event. In addition, it was also not anticipated that the Tour of Flanders Cyclo would attract participants with a very similar socio-demographic profile from higher socioeconomic status groups in Flanders and abroad. The majority of event participants were men who were in their thirties or forties, highly educated, and employed. Similar to previous discussions on social stratification of physical activity participation, groups of women, older adults, individuals with low educational attainment or low income, and those who are retired or have no paid employment hardly take part in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Furthermore, the women and older adults that did take part were less likely to continue to participate in the future. This means that there is not only evidence of social stratification in terms of physical activity and event participation, but there is also evidence of the event being complicit in sustaining this stratification, which has negative implications in terms of its ability to promote health and physical activity. In particular because the event organiser does not take any measures to actively engage host residents – whatever their gender, age, and socioeconomic status – as participants, it is clear that event leveraging for economic objectives is the primary concern for Golazo sports. However, based on the data in this dissertation and other resources on social stratification, it is here that different levels of government should influence the processes of event leveraging by ensuring that leveraging initiatives are an accessible resource for individuals from varying socio-demographic backgrounds and physical activity experiences. One tactic to extend the social and public health benefits of participatory sport events among all groups of host residents is the provision of financial incentives to event organisers to actively engage individuals who demonstrate low physical activity levels as participants. As suggested elsewhere, this funding can be used to promote resources on physical activity that have been developed by national public agencies (e.g., www.10000stappen.be) on the websites of event organisers and in the registration packages of event participants (Lane et al., 2010).
RQ3. Based on social ecological theory and the research findings, what are the lessons learned to improve event leveraging for increased physical activity?

This research question is answered based upon the findings from all the previous chapters that detailed event leveraging in the case of the Tour of Flanders and the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. This dissertation examined event leveraging for health promotion with the outcome of increasing physical activity participation. Although O’Brien and Chalip (2008) suggested that event leveraging can create positive social benefits in terms of health in the host community, the existing framework on social leveraging does not yet provide the instructions to implement strategies and tactics necessary to do so. Furthermore, while the topic of event leveraging for health promotion has received some academic attention, research has not systematically applied the framework on social leveraging as it has been proposed by O’Brien and Chalip (2007, 2008). This evidently questions the applicability of this framework, in particular because health and physical activity appear to be a natural legacy to seek from hosting publicly funded sport events. Therefore, social ecological theory has been applied to complement the analysis of the Tour of Flanders and further examine how leveraging efforts can effectively increase physical activity participation through an understanding of social ecological systems and targets. In order to make a theoretical contribution to the literature on event leveraging, the findings from this dissertation have been used to extend the existing social event leveraging framework to better fit the purpose of seeking health and physical activity outcomes. In doing so, a socioeconomic event leveraging framework for health and physical activity has been proposed and discussed in this section of the dissertation (Figure 11).

The findings from the Tour of Flanders and in particular the leveraging efforts to increase bicycle tourism in the region have demonstrated the need to integrate the frameworks on economic and social event leveraging. It is too simplistic to suggest that event leveraging solely focuses on either economic objectives such as attracting business and promoting tourism (Chalip, 2004) or on social objectives such as positive community change and promoting health (O’Brien & Chalip, 2007, 2008), when investments in the context of the Tour of Flanders simultaneously served economic and social objectives. There can even be an ambition towards sustainability in the future as cycling participation can bring about economic, social, and environmental benefits for the host (Garrard et al., 2012). What sustainability means in the case of leveraging sport
events can be three-fold: the creation of outcomes that reconcile economic, social, and environmental needs of host residents (McKenzie, 2004), the creation of outcomes that are maintained for a long period of time after the event (Taks, 2013), and the longevity of the sport event itself (O’Brien, 2006). All three are important but the longevity of annual smaller events is sometimes overlooked and perhaps even taken for granted.

What is important in this socioeconomic impulse is the realisation that both the properties of the event and the context of the host simultaneously have an influence, and that the connection between the two provides the leverageable resources that influence the processes and outcomes of event leveraging. The importance of this connection has been emphasised by placing the leverageable resources at the beginning of the socioeconomic event leveraging framework, followed by a cyclical process of event leveraging in which the leverageable resources influence every step (Figure 11). This is quite different from previous frameworks that assumed that leverageable resources – via a linear sequence of causes and presumed effects – can lead to particular economic or social outcomes (Figure 2) (Chalip, 2004; O’Brien & Chalip, 2007, 2008). This traditional logic triggers many methodological difficulties, since attributing outcomes to leveraging efforts is difficult even with outcomes as evidence (Coalter, 2007; Weed, 2010). Research on the Tour de France Grand Départ highlighted the difficulties in attributing outcomes to specific parts of the leveraging efforts around the event (Berridge, 2012; van Bedaf, 2012; Pucher et al., 2010). Furthermore, there has been no discussion as to whom is responsible for conducting the social leverage and whom should benefit from it (Tian & Johnston, 2008). This is quite different from economic event leveraging where event owners, public sector agencies responsible for economic and tourism development, and commercial organisations have been identified as leaders in initiating and conducting the leveraging (O’Brien, 2006). By elaborating upon the important connections between the properties of the event and the context of the host when identifying leverageable resources, the proposed socioeconomic framework recognises the event organiser and the host government as two main stakeholders that determine the processes and outcomes of event leveraging, preferably as early in the planning process as possible.
It appears that the event organiser not only seeks out those host cities that have an appealing image that can inspire international spectators to visit the historical and natural backdrop of the Tour of Flanders, but also those cities where the event can be embedded within a receptive social context. In order to differentiate the host from other locations, the available cycling heritage of that particular host has been used as an exceptional and scarce resource to leverage the event. What is unique about this cycling heritage is that it connects the history of the Tour of Flanders and the culture of cycling to the physical and social context of the host in different ways depending on the community. Not every community, however, can contribute the same resources to the strategic objective of increasing bicycle tourism or any other public policy objective that has been connected to hosting the event. This means that the availability of leverageable resources determines, to a large extent, the leveraging potential of (candidate) hosts.

The qualitative analysis of event leveraging confirmed that leveraging is a complex process that involves a wide range of event stakeholders. These stakeholders operate at various social ecological systems, including the society, community, organisational, interpersonal, and individual systems. Whereas any reference to event stakeholders has been absent from the previous framework on social leveraging, the proposed framework herein emphasises that consultation should take place between the event organiser and the host government, while also including stakeholders from a wide spectrum of social ecological systems as a necessary first step in event leveraging. Examples of these stakeholders are government departments, sport organisations, schools, and businesses, to name only a few. This consultation is important since social ecological theory suggests that systems interrelate and impact one another to determine an individual’s health behaviour (Kok et al., 2008). What this means is that the consultation process can conduct an assets evaluation to reveal those community resources that can enable physical activity participation and that are already available in the host community. Influenced by the involvement from higher levels of government, one can speculate about those new resources that can be additionally provided through event leveraging (e.g., infrastructure that requires significant investments), whereas the involvement from host residents can focus attention on those resources that are locally desired (e.g., initiatives designed to actively engage older adults). The end goal of this consultation process is a dialogue on how to use the event as a leverageable resource in a manner that is responsive to the host community, with the objective of promoting
health and increasing physical activity participation while being mindful of local resources and needs (Weed et al., 2009).

To some extent, the effectiveness of this consultation is dependent on whether or not event stakeholders are able to secure political commitment and financial support for the implementation of leveraging initiatives. By alluding to the development and implementation of socioeconomic public policies as one opportunity of securing this commitment and support, government has been described as a key stakeholder that is responsible for funding and conducting the leverage. Especially in terms of leveraging an event that is organised annually in and around the same cities, the integration of the event and its related leveraging efforts into public policy could provide a more sustainable trajectory for event leveraging. Sustainable here refers to the use of the event as a resource to achieve particular long-term social objectives. When an event is organised annually, progress towards these objectives can be evaluated frequently, which can perhaps lead to changes in leveraging initiatives and outcomes. This is quite different from organising sport mega-events where host governments often fail to inspire local stakeholders to create additional social outcomes. Nonetheless, it must also be recognised that other local stakeholders, including sport and non-sport organisations, are important to be included and acknowledged when leveraging an event. This is particularly important since the findings from the Tour of Flanders suggested that sport and non-sport organisations provide leveraging initiatives with a different character (i.e., competitive versus recreational), which has important implications to achieve broad-based participation. In recognition of this fact, local stakeholders have been placed at the centre of the proposed socioeconomic framework, indicating their influence at all points in event leveraging. In order to entice engagement from and with these stakeholders, host governments have implemented a subsidy regulation, which made it possible for local organisations to receive financial support for the organisation of one-off initiatives that were specifically designed to leverage the Tour of Flanders. Subsidies can be an effective tool to facilitate engagement and leverage additional investments.

The interviewees who were involved with organising the Tour of Flanders – not surprisingly given their positions with the event – frequently discussed that a greater and more regular financial commitment from the Flemish government was needed to ensure the viability of the
event and the related leveraging efforts to benefit all of Flanders. The financial burden currently falls to the municipal governments in Bruges and Oudenaarde that are contributing more than higher levels of government. The Tour of Flanders, however, will always promote the Flemish region by virtue of its name, more so than other road cycling races such as the Tour de France Grand Départ, regardless of the financial contributions the organiser receives. Furthermore, the Flemish government financially supports the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre and the Centennial Tour celebrations which represent efforts to leverage the event and to preserve Flanders’ cycling heritage, but these financial contributions do not necessarily aid the event organiser to ensure the international status and standing of the Tour of Flanders itself. What this means is that the connections between the properties of the event and the context of the host are not only beneficial to the processes and outcomes of event leveraging, they are also delicate.

The application of social ecological theory to event leveraging confirmed that achieving social benefits from leveraging sport events is a collective and coordinated responsibility for different levels of government. This is especially the case because event leveraging efforts should complement each other in terms of systems and targets, influencing the individual and its environments simultaneously (Stokols, 1992, 1996). The integration of health promotion targets has been very valuable to better understand what leveraging initiatives are necessary to promote health and physical activity participation. The findings from the Tour of Flanders revealed a difference between the levels of government that initiated leveraging and the individual and environmental targets that were employed. Higher-order systems were found to target the community environment through the Centennial Tour celebrations and the provision of new cycling infrastructure, whereas lower-order systems targeted the individual through the Village of the Tour events and the provision of new skills, knowledge, and confidence to children and a physical challenge to cycling enthusiasts. The collective and coordinated responsibility for different levels of government suggests that local communities are important systems to not only educate but also motivate individuals to cycle in their everyday environments. This can be followed by efforts at higher levels of government to encourage these individuals to cycle in more distant locations across the region, by using the experience of Flanders’ cycling heritage as a source of inspiration to promote participation.
This dissertation provided sound evidence for using the organisation of participatory sport events as one health promotion target in the process of leveraging spectator sport events to promote physical activity participation. Participatory sport events can be an effective tool to promote physical activity participation, especially since the majority of the event participants physically train to prepare themselves for the event. Social ecological theory highlights, however, that the organisation of participatory sport events with the intent of increasing physical activity in the host region cannot be a standalone health promotion intervention in the community as other systems and targets are important in determining physical activity participation. The findings have demonstrated the important connections between individual physical activity behaviour and available resources in the host community environment. The use and availability of different community resources are important in the pre- and post-event periods, not only to increase but also to prevent relapse in physical activity after event participants cross the finish line. This means that participatory sport events should be organised and planned as one health promotion target in the community, while at the same time also offering other physical, structural, and social resources in relation to the event – for example by developing cycling infrastructure that is themed around the event – to more effectively promote physical activity among event participants. This might lead to more sustained physical activity outcomes while awaiting participation in the following event.

In general, cycling is a form of physical activity that individuals can easily adopt and adhere to over the long term, with few barriers to participation (Frank et al., 2003). Cycling events have previously been identified as opportunities to promote physical activity among host residents (Berridge, 2012; van Bedaf, 2012). Therefore, building cycling infrastructure can be a relatively low cost but highly effective health promotion target for communities to increase physical activity participation among its residents (Yang et al., 2010), in particular when leveraging the organisation of a cycling event. Furthermore, building infrastructure can also be understood as a sustainable, positive, long-term outcome of event leveraging because this infrastructure remains present in the host community in the post-event period. Strategically linking this infrastructure to a popular medium-sized, joint spectator and participatory sport event with an extensive local history can be anticipated to result in even greater health promotion outcomes, in particular when the infrastructure and the event invite participation from individuals with varying levels of
physical activity experience and behaviour. In the case of the Tour of Flanders, these varying levels of physical activity experience were recognised by building infrastructure that attracts competitive and/or recreational cyclists, for example *Live your own Tour of Flanders* and *Everyone Flandrien*. In terms of participatory sport events, the event distance and event intensity are also important considerations when seeking broad-based community engagement. Moderate intensity events are likely to promote increased physical activity among insufficiently active or recently active individuals (e.g., Bowles et al., 2006; Crofts et al., 2012; Lane et al., 2010), whereas vigorous intensity events are likely to promote sustained physical activity among long-term active individuals (e.g., Adams & White, 2009; Dickson et al., 2010). Both increasing and sustaining physical activity are important in terms of promoting health, but event organisers must realise that the distance and intensity to a large extent determine who participates and thus who benefits in terms of health and physical activity outcomes.

The outcomes of event leveraging are included in the proposed framework on socioeconomic event leveraging, although they have been absent in previous ones. Scholars have illustrated the need to include outcomes as they reflect the end result of intensive and collaborative leveraging efforts (Schulenkorf, 2009; Ziakas, 2013). Evaluating outcomes is a necessary step to assess whether the process of event leveraging is worthwhile, and if so, improve its application at future events. Therefore, the developed socioeconomic event leveraging framework links outcomes to consultation, which suggests that outcomes should not be evaluated in a vacuum but rather by reflecting on alternative scenarios about what would have happened most likely in the absence of leveraging the event (Weed, 2010). Whatever the health outcomes of the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour might be, it is important to emphasise that event stakeholders should continue to leverage the Tour of Flanders. In fact, regional and municipal levels of government successfully leveraged the Tour of Flanders in terms of their ability to secure additional funding devoted to initiatives that promoted active participation in cycling. Interviewees argued on multiple occasions that the financial investments would not have been devoted to the development of cycling infrastructure or the organisation of cycling initiatives in absence of the Tour of Flanders. However, it is recommended that future host cities should use the leveraged funding to create health promotion initiatives that benefit a wide range of target groups, in particular those who are in need of greater physical activity.
Based on the work of Nutbeam (1998), outcomes can reflect either environmental changes and/or individual behaviour changes. Based on social ecological theory, it is generally accepted that the environment is an important influence to individual health behaviour. Environmental changes have been defined as ‘health promotion outcomes’ because modifications can make environments more conducive to physical activity participation. This does not mean that individuals are automatically more active because of these changes, but rather that the environment now includes more opportunities to be physically active. The environment is understood to be a mechanism that allows for physical activity outcomes to occur at the individual level. Individual behaviour changes have been defined as ‘health outcomes’ because an increase in physical activity participation (or a decrease in sedentary behaviour) can lead to improvements in physical health and reductions in the risk for chronic diseases and obesity (Nutbeam, 1998; Vanhauwaert, 2007).

When using the language of impacts and outcomes, it is important to emphasise that no planned infrastructure projects have been required by the event rights holder to organise the Tour of Flanders. Although the building of cycling infrastructure in the wake of the event resembles the building of sport infrastructure when hosting a medium-sized track and field event (Taks et al., 2014) since both modified the host community environment with money that has been made available specifically for the event, the former is understood to be a leveraged event outcome whereas the latter is an automatic event impact. The current belief when hosting publicly funded sport events is that event leveraging to create additional outcomes should be the norm. However, the previous example shows that both impacts and outcomes in the form of environmental changes cannot be the end result of leveraging as additional infrastructure most likely enhances opportunities for physical activity among those who are already active (Taks et al., 2014; Weed, 2013). What this means is that event leveraging initiatives should be developed to use this infrastructure as a mechanism to promote physical activity participation and leverage outcomes at the individual level. This might be more easily achieved when organising an event for which there is a great social enthusiasm among host residents because communitas has been proven to be a valuable resource that can create a positive perception and local ownership of the event.
These in turn might result in greater support and better outcomes in terms of attendance and participation (Mahtani et al., 2013; Weed et al., 2009).

Although individual health behaviour change is the desired health outcome, the findings from the Tour of Flanders Cyclo have raised important issues and concerns in terms of who benefits from event leveraging and event participation. It is important to be mindful of the socio-demographic profile of those who actively take part in the leveraging initiatives. This dissertation has suggested that in addition to health and physical activity participation, event participation is socially stratified since individuals from higher socioeconomic status groups are more likely to take part. What this means is that stakeholders should take measures to actively engage host residents – whatever their gender, age, and socioeconomic status – as participants to ensure that the social and public health benefits can reach all groups of host residents. This is particularly important for women, older adults, individuals with low educational attainment and low income, and those who are retired or have no paid employment. These groups were basically absent from the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. It is up to researchers to inform event stakeholders about who is likely to participate more or less, especially when these stakeholders are using catchphrases such as “every local resident is expected to cycle in the Village of the Tour,” which is a commendable philosophy. Related to the issue of social stratification is the concern that the type of leveraging initiative not only determines who participates, but also whether health outcomes involve maintaining or increasing physical activity. Competitive and recreational initiatives attract individuals with varying levels of physical activity experience and behaviour, which means that organisers should be mindful of the fact that the distance and intensity of the initiative determine who participates as well as what health benefits these individuals receive. Connecting these issues and concerns to the community-based consultation where event leveraging is framed, is a necessary step to evaluate the event leveraging efforts and determine how future initiatives can be improved to better achieve the desired health outcomes. Furthermore, it is also important to be mindful of the fact that event leveraging efforts and initiatives do not automatically nor necessarily lead to positive health outcomes. In addition to the fact that the Tour of Flanders Cyclo attracted a very specific target group, one should keep in mind the poor outcomes for physical activity participation that have been documented among a sample of event participants. Although the majority of survey respondents reported being sufficiently active prior to the
commencement of training for the event as well as after participating in the event, about 12 percent of the survey respondents relapsed from being sufficiently active in the pre-event period to being insufficiently active in the post-event period. Although other studies have reported a similar percentage of relapsers (e.g., Crofts et al., 2012; Lane et al., 2010), this is a negative trend in terms of health and physical activity promotion.

8.2 Methodological reflections

The literature on event leveraging has been rapidly increasing, both in terms of the quantity of work that has been produced and in terms of the types of sport events that have been researched. The strength of this dissertation is that it combined both a spectator and participatory event into a single study. This combination facilitated the examination of the processes of event leveraging and its outcomes. In doing so, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed. The philosophical principles of critical realism were valuable in guiding the integration of the qualitative and quantitative data as both the leverageable resources and the health promotion targets can be understood as underlying, unobservable structures or mechanisms that can generate certain observable outcomes in a particular host context. The availability of leverageable resources that connect the properties of the event to the context of the host significantly determine the (candidate) host’s potential to achieve desired outcomes of increased physical activity participation.

In terms of the qualitative interviews, it is important to reflect upon who was and who was not interviewed in this study and in particular be mindful of host residents. Studies on sport mega-events have documented how residents can be positive about hosting the event, while at the same time express concerns about carrying the extensive infrastructure costs or tolerating social inconveniences such as traffic congestion, road disruption, litter, and overcrowding, among other things (Ritchie, Shipway, & Cleeve, 2009; Waitt, 2003). Similarly, studies have documented negative perceptions of the Tour de France among residents, including excessive spending and mobility problems (Balduck, Maes, & Buelens, 2011; Bull & Lovell, 2007). Only when specifically asked about the negative impacts of the Tour of Flanders on host residents, the interviewees elaborated upon mobility problems and traffic limitations that can be experienced during the event. Residents of the Koppenberg, for example, are basically trapped in their homes.
for the weekend since on the first day thousands of cycle tourists and on the second day thousands of spectators travel to their front yards. Interviewees were clearly supporters of the Tour of Flanders when they diminished these issues by arguing that some individuals – those who are generally believed to be not a fan of cycling – will always complain when a medium-sized event is organised (interview with the Mayor of Sint-Niklaas and Head of the Department of Sport, February 2013). However, a positive perception of the event among host residents can be a determining factor in leveraging positive social outcomes and safeguarding the longevity of and the social support for the event. This is particularly important because research conducted in four cities along the route of the Tour of Flanders – including the arrival host city, the Village of the Tour, and two other important locations in the race – revealed that 20 percent of host residents were not fond of the Tour of Flanders and more than 10 percent deliberately left the region during the event to escape some of the negative impacts of the event (van Schendel, Tike, & van Dijk, 2009b). What this means is that interviewing host residents, including those who are and those who are not involved with the Tour of Flanders, the Village of the Tour, or the Tour of Flanders Cyclo provides an interesting future research opportunity that should be examined from a more critical perspective. In this dissertation, the event organiser, public administrators, and event participants expressed a general positive perception of the Tour of Flanders without critically questioning some of its downsides.

The qualitative interview and document data discovered a considerable number of initiatives that were organised to leverage the Tour of Flanders in the hosts of the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour. However, in this dissertation only the content of these initiatives was discussed, which – where possible – was complemented with data on the number of participants, as these obviously also provide an indication of its outcomes. The Tour of Flanders Cyclo is an example of event leveraging that was first organised in 1992, prior to the establishment of the Village of the Tour in 2000 and the Centennial Tour celebrations in 2013. Nonetheless, this participatory cycling event was identified as a feasible opportunity to examine the outcomes of event leveraging in terms of physical activity participation. It was not anticipated, however, that physical activity participation rates would be already so high among those taking part. To better theorise about event leveraging for public health benefits, data from individuals taking part in less physically challenging participatory cycling events are warranted. The inclusion of data
from other competitive and recreational cycling initiatives from the Village of the Tour and the Centennial Tour in this dissertation could have provided a more complete picture in terms of physical activity outcomes. My request to survey the participants of the *Tour 100 Classic*, however, was turned down by the event organiser Flanders Classics with the argument that the respondents’ characteristics would be similar to those who participate in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Based on the findings in this dissertation, it can be assumed that those who participated in the *Tour 100 Classic* have similar characteristics to those who participated in the longest event distance of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Nonetheless, future research is necessary to confirm or reject this hypothesis.

In terms of the quantitative data, survey respondents were matched at baseline and follow-up, tracking physical activity participation across multiple data points. The event organiser invited all event participants via e-mail to take part in the online survey. The invitation noted that the survey was about physical activity and therefore, individuals who were already active might have been more likely to respond to the survey request. This could have resulted in a bias towards higher levels of physical activity prior to the commencement of training, and possibly excluding some previously inactive individuals from participating in the survey. The study also assessed physical activity participation through self-report, which could have resulted in a bias towards higher levels of physical activity. In general, valuing the health benefits of cycling and physical activity is a challenging task because benefits are difficult to quantify and monetise. This dissertation assumed that cycling participation – at whatever intensity – can be beneficial to an individual’s health. Retrospectively, it would have been helpful to include a survey question about whether respondents incurred an injury during cycling or whether they valued their cycling behaviour as beneficial to their health. Some respondents e-mailed me spontaneously about their injuries when filling out the survey. They wanted to discuss the fact that their physical activity participation had recently decreased from their normal higher levels of activity because of an injury that prevented them to cycle more often.

8.3 **Practical implications**

The findings of this dissertation suggest that a medium-sized, joint spectator and participatory sport event that is hosted annually in and around the same cities presents valuable leveraging
opportunities. In general, the start and arrival host cities are believed to produce and collect the majority of impacts and outcomes. However, the celebration of milestone dates (e.g., Centennial Tour) and unique localities (i.e., Village of the Tour) can create a spontaneous enthusiasm among host residents beyond the start and arrival host cities, and thus extend the benefits of event leveraging even further. The initiatives that were developed in previous editions of the Village of the Tour differed greatly in terms of what type of initiatives were organised for whom, and relatedly the social ecological systems and targets that were employed. This has obvious implications for producing health and physical activity outcomes in the particular host community. Flanders Classics, the organiser of the Tour of Flanders that is responsible for selecting the annual Village of the Tour can positively influence the leveraging potential of the Village of the Tour by fine-tuning the bid guidelines to include health promotion as a criterion. The current bid guidelines are limited in the sense that they only require evidence of a specific connection between the Tour of Flanders and the candidate host through the celebration of local cycling heritage and the local support in hosting this celebration in the lead-up to the passage of the Tour of Flanders. The event organiser could include a section in the bid document that covers health promotion by focussing on the importance of physical, structural, and social resources that can provide valuable health outcomes in the community environment. These resources should be ideally connected to competitive and recreational participatory initiatives that are themed around the sport event, using the event as a hook to inspire participation in physical activity in local communities. By expanding the bid guidelines, municipal governments could feel encouraged to include more locally relevant social policy objectives to hosting the Village of the Tour in addition to the economic objectives of place promotion.

The findings on the unique and attractive characteristics of the Tour of Flanders that encourage physical activity participation (e.g., experience what it feels like to ride the cobblestoned hills in the Flemish Ardennes) have implications for other sport events. More specifically, it is important for event organisers and host governments to recognise and capitalise upon the leverageable resources that are available in a particular host community. Popular leverageable resources can include historical spectator events that attract a great number of enthusiastic spectators, for example baseball at Fenway Park in Boston, the United States or ice hockey at the Bell Centre in Montréal, Canada. Event stakeholders should be supported to leverage and extend popular
single-day spectator events by anchoring these events within the host community, for example via the development of physical infrastructure and the organisation of participatory events. This infrastructure – similar to the Tour of Flanders cycling network – can inspire experienced and inexperienced, competitive and recreational, host residents and (inter)national visitors to be physically active. Furthermore, connecting participatory events to spectator events can inspire long-term physical activity participation when non-elite participants can enjoy watching elite athletes performing in the same event.

The findings from the Tour of Flanders Cyclo also resulted in practical implications for the event organiser Golazo sports. This commercial organisation not only organises the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, but also 13 other participatory cycling events throughout the season. These other events highlight that there are sufficient opportunities for physical activity participation following the Tour of Flanders, which typically marks the start of the international cycling calendar. Offering a price discount when participants register for multiple events in the same year might benefit the event organiser as well as the event participants, in particular when this discount targets individuals with lower income. In terms of social ecological theory, this means that participatory sport events could be more available and more easily accessible as a community resource. In doing so, the organiser can strategically use the enthusiasm for the Tour of Flanders Cyclo to promote its other events, which in terms of participation numbers are far less popular. In general, other participatory cycling events present some salient possibilities for creating additional post-event interventions that can be organised in a timely fashion and provide participants with another goal to be active. For example, joining other participatory cycling events can provide a new cyclical focus to train and maintain one’s physical activity (Funk et al., 2011; Nowak, 2013). Following the Tour of Flanders Cyclo in March, individuals might train to participate in the Tilff-Bastogne-Tilff participatory cycling event in May or the Liège-Bastogne-Liège event in August. This implies that physical activity participation can be promoted by encouraging individuals to take part in multiple participatory sport events that are scattered across the season, which further promotes the social aspects of event participation. Other participatory cycling events could ideally cover additional distances to target a wider range of individuals based on their physical activity experience and behaviour. Completing a 160 km distance, which is common at other participatory cycling events, might provide a necessary challenge for those who
have completed the 133 km distance but find the 256 km distance too challenging. After completing the 160 km distance, they might find a 200 km event distance the logical next step. Another option would be to include a shorter distance, for example a 60 km event distance, which might attract a group of less experienced cyclists. Many of the survey respondents, however, indicated that they only participate in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, in part because of its unique characteristics. This highlights a challenge for other event organisers to offer unique experiences that reference Flanders’ cycling heritage to promote sustained event participation.

The low number of female participants at the Tour of Flanders Cyclo is an issue that definitely requires attention from the event organiser. Furthermore, the women that do participate are less likely to participate again in the future. This means that there is not only evidence of social stratification in terms of physical activity and event participation, but there is also evidence of the event being complicit in sustaining this stratification, which has negative implications in terms of its ability to promote health and physical activity. Since this dissertation only collected quantitative data from event participants at the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, one can only speculate about why women are less interested in the event. Perhaps women feel less supported to continue to participate year after year in an environment that is visibly male dominated. Or perhaps they are less interested in the competitive character of the Tour of Flanders Cyclo as research conducted by Fullagar (2012) revealed some gendered differences in cycle touring. Women were less interested in competitive aspects such as speed and distance but more interested in recreational aspects such as travelling to different places and connecting socially to other riders, which suggests that many aspects are important when linking events. The event organiser has at least two options to further promote the Tour of Flanders Cyclo among female cyclists that are elaborated upon here. The first option is to include an informal social event where female cyclists can come together prior to or following their participation in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo to connect socially with one another. By creating additional opportunities for female participants to come together, women can celebrate their identity as cyclists and might feel more supported by a community of female riders to continue to participate in the future (Green & Chalip, 1998). The event organiser can work together with Flanders Classics to set up a location along the route where all participants from the Tour of Flanders Cyclo can come together to watch the elite event and simultaneously relive their own event experience from the previous day. For both men and
women, this social gathering can be complemented with other activities such as a presentation of new cycling equipment or a video projection of participants’ photos, which might positively influence their self-identity and social identity as cyclists, giving them a greater chance for long-term participation (Green & Tanabe, 1998). Creating more meaningful connections between the participatory and spectator event of the Tour of Flanders might benefit the event organiser in terms of social support and the event participants in terms of event experience. The second option is to create a women’s-only Tour of Flanders Cyclo alongside the men’s event, resembling the Women’s Tour of Flanders that has been organised in and around Oudenaarde since 2004. This new event can include other distances that women can complete in a less competitive, women-friendly environment. This new Tour of Flanders Cyclo event could simultaneously promote women’s cycling among the general population and cycle touring among women by inviting female members of the Flemish Cycling Union to participate. These female members made up one-third of the 60,000 members in 2011, a number that is up from one-fifth of the 28,000 members in 2007 (Clint.be, 2011; Cycling.be, 2008). The significant increase in both male and female members of the Flemish Cycling Union suggests that this non-profit sport organisation should be involved as a stakeholder in organising and leveraging the Tour of Flanders.

8.4 Future research

Although the majority of scholars continue to examine event leverage in the case of sport mega-events, the application to smaller events is a developing research area to which this dissertation contributes (e.g., Hoskyn, 2011; O’Brien, 2007; Smith, 2010; Snelgrove & Wood, 2010; Taks et al., 2013). Future research should test the proposed socioeconomic event leveraging framework for health and physical activity in the case of small and medium-sized sport events. This research challenge follows the call from Taks (2013) who argued that because small and medium-sized sport events are so frequently organised across communities world-wide, these events have a greater “potential or capacity for leaving a positive and sustainable legacy in the global world” when compared to sport mega-events that are only hosted once every few years (p. 137). The benefits of smaller events, as described by Smith (2012), are that these events “are more likely to build on the existing resources of a city; they are more likely to benefit local people and companies; and they do not come with the same [financial] risks” (p. 261). This has definitely
been true in the Tour of Flanders and in particular the Village of the Tour. Future research should examine sport events where intense and honest collaboration among event stakeholders at different social ecological systems is feasible, including the event organiser, host governments, local organisations, and host residents. Popular small or medium-sized, (joint) spectator and participatory sport events that are hosted annually in and around the same cities might be one avenue for future research since these events can have an extensive local history that inspires collaboration among different event stakeholders. This collaboration also highlights the connection between the properties of the event and the context of the host, as the event organiser can seek out potential host cities that can benefit the event and cities can seek out potential sport events that can benefit the context of the host.

Although the concept of ‘Fan Fest’ or ‘Fan Village’ is well-known in the sport marketing literature, the festival that is organised for sport fans is completely managed by the event organiser, with high reliance on the event itself and not extending beyond sport initiatives. It often provides interactive fan experiences while also promoting corporate sponsors and encouraging the sale of licenced merchandise (Sutton & Davis, 1999). The Village of the Tour, however, is a festival that is organised with a bottom-up approach in a particular community that has a unique historical and social connection to the sport event. To make it a festival that appeals to the entire community and inspires broad-based participation, initiatives not only focus on cycling in line with the theme of the event, but also include culture, arts, music, education, and volunteering opportunities to encourage non-cyclists to take part. Through local ownership of the event leveraging program, more sustainable outcomes can be achieved for local organisations and host residents who are actively involved. Future research should examine the properties of the Village of the Tour as an exemplary case. The findings can then be used to demonstrate how villages similar to the ones in the Tour of Flanders can be included in other annual sport events that travel across multiple locations, including smaller cities and communities. In addition, the findings can also be used to examine how fan fests can be transformed to better represent the properties of the Villages of the Tour. As an example, the organisation of the fan fests is very limited in time as these usually take place solely on the day of the sport event or perhaps the day before the event. Extending the fan fest to cover a longer period of time prior to the event can increase the local enthusiasm and excitement about the arrival of the event in the local
community. This local enthusiasm or communitas has been proven to be a valuable and powerful resource that can be managed to achieve a wide range of socioeconomic objectives (Chalip, 2006; Mahtani et al., 2013; O’Brien & Chalip, 2007, 2008; Weed et al., 2009).

This dissertation elaborated upon the importance of connecting spectator and participatory sport events to provide valuable health benefits. Perhaps this seemingly unique phenomenon in Belgium can be disseminated to other countries and other sports to better understand how participatory sport events – and not necessarily elite athletes who perform at major spectator events – can be used as a community resource and health promotion target for physical activity promotion. Future research should continue to examine pre- and post-event physical activity with the intention of matching individual data across different points in time. Tracking individuals who take part in multiple participatory cycling events throughout the cycling season provides an original research challenge, one that can help us to understand how additional events can be a leveraging tool to prevent relapse in the post-event period. Furthermore, not only should future research examine other types of sport events in other countries, a similar model might be piloted elsewhere to determine if such leveraging tools also work to achieve health benefits for particular target groups such as youth, women, seniors, and individuals with physical or mental disabilities who can all benefit from increased physical activity participation. Collaboration between researchers from different countries can help in conducting a cross-case analysis that enables comparison within and across different types of sport.

This dissertation also encourages future research to specifically focus on women and their passive and active participation in cycling. Research suggested that women are underrepresented as spectators who watch the Tour of Flanders along the route, accounting only for one-third of spectators (van Schendel et al., 2009a). The findings from this dissertation also suggested that women are underrepresented as participants in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Although women in general are increasingly participating in recreational cycling (events) and cycle touring (events) in Flanders (Scheerder et al., 2013; Scheerder, Vos, & Pauwels, 2011), this has not been evident from the findings of the Tour of Flanders. Following Garrard (2003), who argued that “because few studies have systematically investigated women’s perceptions and experiences of cycling, little is known about what motivates and sustains their involvement” (pp. 214-215), future
research should seek to better understand the gender imbalance in cycling, the Tour of Flanders, and the Tour of Flanders Cyclo. Since cycling is a traditional male sport culture, much of the research on cycle touring has focused on male participants (e.g., Lamont & Causley, 2010; Lamont & Jenkins, 2013; O’Connor & Brown, 2007). By employing qualitative research methods, future research could for example interview female participants at other cycle touring events – preferably both mixed gender and women’s-only events – to better understand why women participate in cycle touring and why they prefer some events over others. Research on recreational cycling events is also warranted (i.e., those events that cover relatively short distances that can be completed on a normal bicycle) as these events might not only attract a greater proportion of women, older adults, and individuals with lower educational attainment, but also a greater proportion of individuals who have been insufficiently active. Findings from these studies might help to clarify our understanding of competitive and recreational, serious and casual leisure participants and how their physical activity behaviour has been influenced by the various environments in which they participate. Furthermore, the findings can be used to ensure that cycling or other participatory events are an accessible resource for physical activity among both men and women.

One last element that could receive additional research attention is functional cycling, which more so than recreational and competitive cycling has a great potential to increase physical activity participation. Furthermore, functional cycling can contribute to healthier environments by reducing traffic congestions, improving air quality, and reducing noise (Bauman, Titze, Rissel, & Oja, 2011). Previous research on the Tour de France Grand Départ included a focus on the infrastructure needs of active commuters (Berridge, 2012). In the case of Belgium and the Tour of Flanders, the responsibilities for functional and recreational cycling are located in two different departments, namely the Department of Mobility (Transport) and the Department of Tourism. The Flemish government solely uses the Tour of Flanders as an instrument to promote bicycle tourism and by extension recreational cycling and it still needs to unlock the potential of the event to promote active commuting. None of the leveraging initiatives used the work environment as a health promotion target to achieve individual behaviour change (Grzywacz & Fuqua, 2000). This is a missed opportunity that could extend the benefits of cycling events even further beyond bicycle tourism and recreational cycling to also include functional cycling.
Evidence to support this claim has been presented through the quantitative survey data which revealed that those event participants who were also functional cyclists were protected against relapsing to insufficient levels of physical activity participation in the post-event period. What this means is that integrating physical activity participation into one’s daily life activities has clear benefits in terms of health outcomes by maintaining one’s physical activity participation. To further examine this, there is a need to integrate aspects of recreational and functional cycling into one research project. As an example, future research that surveys event participants such as those at the Tour of Flanders Cyclo could include questions about specific conditions that promote and hinder functional and/or recreational cycling in their communities. The findings can be used to more effectively integrate the development of both functional and recreational cycling infrastructure into event leveraging. Furthermore, future research could also examine how other participatory cycling events such as ‘Bike to Work’ days can be integrated into event leveraging as these events have been found to positively change cycling behaviour, especially when these events have been embedded within a broader program (e.g., Pucher et al., 2010; Rose & Marfurt, 2007).

8.5 Concluding remarks
When conducting this research, I was able to satisfy my personal interests in sport, sport events, and physical activity. When I arrived in Vancouver in 2009, I was determined to balance my upcoming experience with the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games with research on other types of sport events. While living in an Olympic host city, I engaged in research that closely examined public policies that leveraged the Olympic momentum with the intention of benefiting the health of Vancouver residents. Following this research, which exposed many shortcomings of these public policies, I was convinced that greater research attention should be devoted to participatory sport events as these events could have a greater inherent potential to promote health than sport mega-events. When I moved back to Belgium in 2012, I decided to select the Tour of Flanders as the case to examine in my doctoral dissertation because cycling is to Flanders what ice hockey is to Canada. To my surprise, no research had examined the sport development or physical activity impacts or outcomes of the Tour of Flanders, although it is Belgium’s most popular annual joint spectator and participatory event. Through this research on the Tour of Flanders, I was able to apply my understanding of the concept of event leveraging.
which originated in the sport mega-event literature, to a medium-sized sport event. Future research should continue to apply event leveraging to small and medium-sized sport events that reoccur annually and that are strongly embedded socially within the host community.

As a final remark, I strongly advise the Flemish government to recognise the health promotion potential of participatory sport events. As outlined in the introduction of this dissertation, the Flemish government only acknowledges the importance of spectator events in terms their potential to achieve sport development, tourism, and economic impacts. Only organisers of spectator events are able to receive funding to cover parts of the organising costs based on the alleged impacts. The findings from this dissertation, however, show that this understanding is extremely limited as financial support for the organisers of participatory sport events is also justified based on their health promotion potential. Although it is understandable that the Flemish government recognises the millions of people world-wide who watch some elements of the Tour of Flanders as an opportunity to promote Flanders as a bicycle-friendly region, I advise them to also take the thousands of people who actively cycle the Tour of Flanders seriously in an effort to promote physical activity among Flemish residents. There is an opportunity to clearly align the public health objectives of the Flemish government (i.e., increase the percentage of people who are sufficiently active to achieve health benefits by 10 percent by 2015 and decrease the percentage of people who are sedentary by 10 percent by 2015) with the organisation and funding of participatory sport events. This funding can be an incentive for organisers to create and extend public health benefits for all groups of host residents, whatever their gender, age, or socioeconomic status, for example by offering different event distances to ensure broad-based engagement among residents with varying levels of physical activity experience and behaviour.
Figure 11. Socioeconomic event leveraging framework for health and physical activity
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APPENDICES

A. Map of Belgium
B. Consent form for interviews

Who is conducting the study on the Tour of Flanders?

The principal investigator is Dr. Rob VanWynsberghe, assistant professor in the Department of Educational Studies at UBC. He is the academic supervisor of Inge Derom, a PhD Candidate in the School of Kinesiology at UBC and co-investigator on this project.

Why do we need you?

We want to gain an understanding about how the hosting and leveraging of major sport events can result in social benefits for the host community, in particular an increase in physical activity participation and health. With your experience in municipal politics, you are in an excellent position to offer us expert advice on hosting the Tour of Flanders.

How is the study done?

If you agree to take part in the study, we will meet once or twice and ask you series of questions about the hosting of the Tour of Flanders. The interview will be between 60 to 90 minutes in length and will be audio-taped with your permission.

What happens with the results?

The results of the study will be summarised in a report of which we will provide you a copy. The results may also be presented at conferences and published in journal articles or books.

What are the risks of participating?

There are no known risks to participating in this study. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to.

What are the benefits of participating?

You will not experience any direct benefits.

Is what I say during the interview confidential?

Yes. All data from the study (notes, audio-tapes, and computer sound files) will be stored in locked cabinets and on a password-protected computer, and will be destroyed five years after completion of the study. Only our research team will have access to the data. While the name of your municipality might be identified in reports and presentations from the study, your name and contact information will not be identified. Results will be presented in aggregated form only. However, some people may guess at the identity of participants based on the content of the answers. You may, as an option, wave confidentiality (see end of consent form).

Will you be paid for taking part in the study?

We will not pay you for the time you take to be in this study.
Who to contact if you have questions about the study?
If you have any questions or concerns about what we are asking of you, please contact the co-investigator.

Who to contact if you have complaints or concerns about the study?
If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services.

What happens next?
Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records. Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

Participant Signature ___________________________ Date ________________

Printed Name of the Participant signing above ________________________________

Optional (waive confidentiality): Given that some people may guess at the identity of participants based on the content of the answers, you may waive confidentiality. If you wish to waive confidentiality, please initial here: ____________.
C. Interview guide

This interview guide is an example from Oudenaarde, the current arrival host city. These questions form the basis that was adapted according to the setting of the interviewees.

Background/introduction

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your involvement with the Tour of Flanders and the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre?
- Why was the Tour of Flanders Visitor Centre established in Oudenaarde in 2003? What organisations were involved with this project?

Leverageable resources

- Why did Oudenaarde submit its candidacy to organise the arrival of the Tour of Flanders? Who was the main driver behind this project and what other organisations were involved?
- Why do you think Flanders Classics ultimately chose for Oudenaarde, instead of Ronse and Meerbeke? What are the unique characteristics and resources of Oudenaarde?

Opportunity for leverage

- What makes the Tour of Flanders attractive to host residents, host governments, and international spectators?
- Where does this attraction for the Tour of Flanders come from and how can it be encouraged?

Strategic objectives

- Why is it important to organise the arrival of the Tour of Flanders?
- What are the objectives that the municipal government has linked to the organisation of a successful event?

Means for leverage

- Numerous other cycling events have been organised in Oudenaarde, including the Tour of Flanders Cyclo and the RetroTour. What objectives have been linked to the organisation of these events? How do these events promote health and physical activity among host residents and/or event participants?
- What new opportunities for physical activity have been created through organising the arrival of the Tour of Flanders?
- What other organisations have been involved in leveraging the Tour of Flanders for increased physical activity? How has this involvement been supported or established?

Outcomes of leverage

- What are the positive or negative impacts of organising the arrival of the Tour of Flanders for host residents of Oudenaarde?
- Does Oudenaarde experience a higher cycling rate compared to other municipalities in the province because of the Tour of Flanders or for other reasons? How is or can this be measured?
- Would the municipal government be able to achieve the same results (whether economic and/or social) by organising another medium-sized sport event?
D. Invitation letter for online survey

Dear cycling enthusiast,

I invite you to participate in an online survey that is part of my doctoral research at The University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada). In this research I examine the health promotion potential of mass participation events. Since you are a participant of the Tour of Flanders, I would like to hear from you.

The online survey includes 20 short questions and filling out the survey only takes 10 minutes. The questions are about your physical activity and active participation in the Tour of Flanders as a participant, as well as your passive participation in the Tour of Flanders for elite cyclists as a spectator. At the end of the survey we will explain how you can win a cycling jersey.

Your participation is completely voluntary. Your responses will be anonymous and confidential and will not be used for commercial purposes. By filling out the survey you are consenting to participate. Please keep this e-mail for your records.

I thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.
E. Baseline survey questions

1) In which event will you participate during the Tour of Flanders Cyclo on March 30, 2013?
   o 83 km
   o 133 km
   o 259 km

2) Why do you participate in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo? Provide a short answer.
   ________________________________

3) Did you previously participate in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo? If yes, how many times?
   o No, 2013 is my first time
   o Yes, 1 time
   o Yes, 2 times
   o Yes, 3 times
   o Yes, 4 times
   o Yes, 5 times
   o Yes, more than 5 times

4) Do you participate in other events in addition to the Tour of Flanders Cyclo? Multiple answers are possible.
   o No, I only participate in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo
   o Ename Classic
   o Omloop van Vlaanderen
   o Peter van Petegem Classic
   o Liège-Bastogne-Liège Challenge
   o Tilff-Bastogne-Tilff
   o Climbing for Life-Col du Galibier
   o Omloop Het Nieuwsblad
   o Dwars door Vlaanderen
   o Ghent-Wevelgem
   o Brabantse Pijl
   o Scheldeprijs
   o Word Flandriens
   o Trofee De Muur
   o Dwars door de Druiven- en Witloofstreek
   o Marc Wouters Classic
   o Jean-Marie Pfaff Classic
   o East Flanders Cycle and MTB Weekend
   o Tour 100 Classic

5) How many weeks do you train to prepare yourself for the Tour of Flanders Cyclo? (Answer between 0 and 52 weeks).
   ________________________________
6) Thinking back to the period before you started training for the Tour of Flanders Cyclo, which of the following categories best describes you?

Physical activity includes leisure-time activities, work related activities, household chores and active transportation. To be considered active at vigorous intensity, you need to do activities that are exhaustive for at least 75 minutes a week on 5 different days (e.g., fast cycling, running, digging, moving heavy furniture). To be considered active at moderate intensity, you need to do activities that are non-exhaustive but require a physical effort for at least 150 minutes a week on 5 different days (e.g., bike riding, brisk walking, weeding, polishing the floor).

Before I started training for the Tour of Flanders Cyclo...
- I was active at vigorous intensity for more than 6 months
- I was active at vigorous intensity for less than 6 months
- I was active at moderate intensity for more than 6 months
- I was active at moderate intensity for less than 6 months
- I was not active but I intended to become more physically active

7) Please indicate which category applies to you.
Since I started training for the Tour of Flanders Cyclo...
- I am more active
- I am active at the same level
- I am less active
- I am not active (I did not participate in any training)

8) What type of cyclist are you? (Multiple answers are possible).
- Recreational cyclist (i.e., I cycle to relax, socialise, improve my health, ...)
- Competitive cyclist (i.e., I cycle to improve my distance, time, and/or performance and may do this through a competition)
- Functionalist cyclist (i.e., I cycle to get to work, to the store, to school, ...)

9) Please rate how important the following elements are in helping you to become more physically active or helping you to maintain your physical activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Not important at all</th>
<th>Hardly important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Rather important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1 Presence and quality of footpaths and hiking trails, bike paths</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2 Presence and quality of sports facilities, swimming pools, fitness</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3 Convenient transportation to</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>Affordability of admission, membership, and subscription in physical activities (e.g., via public transportation and/or cycling and hiking trails)</td>
<td>O  O  O  O  O  O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Safe environment to participate in physical activities (e.g., good lighting, low traffic volume)</td>
<td>O  O  O  O  O  O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>Enjoyable scenery, pleasant surrounding landscape</td>
<td>O  O  O  O  O  O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>Good street connectivity (more and shorter routes to destinations)</td>
<td>O  O  O  O  O  O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>Low neighbourhood density (rural area)</td>
<td>O  O  O  O  O  O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>Mixed land use with shops and restaurants within walking distance</td>
<td>O  O  O  O  O  O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>Information about sport and physical activity that I can do where I live at a level appropriate to my fitness and ability</td>
<td>O  O  O  O  O  O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11</td>
<td>Information about local clubs or centres where I could have a go</td>
<td>O  O  O  O  O  O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12</td>
<td>The chance to try activities in a non-threatening environment with other inexperienced people</td>
<td>O  O  O  O  O  O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.13</td>
<td>The chance to meet athletes and hear how they got started in their sport</td>
<td>O  O  O  O  O  O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.14</td>
<td>Tester sessions where I live</td>
<td>O  O  O  O  O  O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.15</td>
<td>The organisation of sport events in which I can participate</td>
<td>O  O  O  O  O  O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10) Will you watch the 2013 Tour of Flanders for elite cyclists? (Multiple answers are possible).
   - No
   - Yes, I will watch the event live along the route
   - Yes, I will watch the start live in Bruges
   - Yes, I will watch the finish live in Oudenaarde
   - Yes, I will watch the event live on television and/or Internet
   - Yes, I will watch the event through summaries or highlights (newspaper, television)

11) In the past 12 months, how often have you attended an elite cycling event?
   - Never
12) By attending a cycling race, I am inspired to be more physically active.
   - Completely disagree
   - Tend to disagree
   - Neutral
   - Slightly agree
   - Completely agree

13) Please respond to the following statements regarding your participation in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Completely disagree</th>
<th>Tend to disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Completely agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.1 The tradition of the Tour of Flanders motivates me to participate.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.2 The accomplishments of past ‘Flandriens’ motivate me to participate.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.3 The skill and ability of current elite cyclists motivate me to participate.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.4 The quality of the competition among current elite cyclists motivates me to participate.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5 The performance of the elite cyclist I am supporting motivates me to participate.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.6 The whole atmosphere around the Tour of Flanders (i.e., the spectacle, crowd, excitement) motivates me to participate.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.7 The route with legendary hills such as the ‘Koppenberg’ motivates me to participate.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.8 Being able to ride the same route as the elite cyclists motivates me to participate.</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.9 Activities that have been organised around the Tour of Flanders motivate me to</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13.10 Being able to ride the Tour of Flanders on the day before the elite cyclists motivates me to participate.
13.11 Being able to ride a classic event such as the Tour of Flanders motivates me to participate.
13.12 The pride that comes with finishing the Tour of Flanders motivates me to participate.

14) What is your gender?
   ○ Male
   ○ Female

15) What is your age? (Respond between 1 and 100 years)

16) Where do you live?
   ○ I live in Belgium
   ○ I live outside of Belgium

17) If you live in Belgium, what is your postal code?
   If you live outside of Belgium, what is your home country and city?

18) What is your current or highest completed education level?
   ○ None
   ○ Primary education or lower secondary education
   ○ Higher secondary education
   ○ Higher non-university education
   ○ Higher university education

19) What applies to you?
   ○ I am employed
   ○ I am a student
   ○ I have no paid employment (household work, unemployment, unable to work)
   ○ I am retired

20) How can you make ends meet with your current total disposable household income?
   ○ Very difficult
   ○ Difficult
   ○ Rather difficult
   ○ Rather easy
- Easy
- Very easy

21) Three months after the Tour of Flanders you will receive a second survey that asks about your physical activity participation. Completing the second survey is very important as I seek to compare physical activity levels before and after the event. If you complete both surveys, you can win a cycling jersey. The winners will be notified personally. Please enter your e-mail address or full name here.

____________________________________________________________

Thank you for your cooperation and good luck during the Tour of Flanders Cyclo.
F. Follow-up survey questions

1) Think about all the vigorous activities that you did in the last 7 days. Vigorous physical activities refer to activities that take hard physical effort and make you breathe much harder than normal. Think only about those physical activities that you did for at least 10 minutes at a time. During the last 7 days, on how many days did you do vigorous physical activities like heavy lifting, digging, aerobics, or fast bicycling?

   0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7

2) How much time did you usually spend doing vigorous physical activities on one of those days?
   Minutes per day
   ____________________________________________

3) Think about all the moderate activities that you did in the last 7 days. Moderate activities refer to activities that take moderate physical effort and make you breathe somewhat harder than normal. Think only about those physical activities that you did for at least 10 minutes at a time. During the last 7 days, on how many days did you do moderate physical activities like carrying light loads, bicycling at a regular pace, or playing tennis? Do not include walking.

   0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7

4) How much time did you usually spend doing moderate physical activities on one of those days?
   Minutes per day
   ____________________________________________

5) Think about the time you spent walking in the last 7 days. This includes walking at work and at home, walking to travel from place to place, and any other walking that you have done solely for recreation, sport, exercise, or leisure. During the last 7 days, on how many days did you walk for at least 10 minutes at a time?

   0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7

6) How much time did you usually spend walking on one of those days?
   Minutes per day
   ____________________________________________

7) Please indicate what applies to you. Since I participated in the Tour of Flanders Cyclo...
   ○ I am more active than before
   ○ I am active at the same level than before
   ○ I am less active than before
   ○ I am not active anymore

8) Please enter your e-mail address here to match the pre- and post-event data and to have a chance at winning a cycling jersey. The winners are notified personally. Thank you for your cooperation!