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Cycling Across the Atlantic: A discussion of cycling culture in the Atlantic Region

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Cycling has gone through standardization and modernization processes that have functionally brought together a broad set of cultures and practices around the bicycle. What this article will demonstrate is that the interaction of Atlantic nations, people, and institutions has been central for the advancement of the sport of cycling globally.

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Cycling, like many other contemporary sports, has gone through standardization and modernization processes that have functionally brought together a broad set of cultures and practices around the bicycle (van Bottenburg, 2001). What this article will demonstrate is that the interaction of Atlantic nations, people, and institutions has been central for the advancement of the sport of cycling globally. With the progression of the sport within Atlantic nations, and through a process of interaction and translation between these nations, this region has driven the development of practices, people, institutions, cultures, and technologies in cycling. With recognition of other regions importance in cycling, what will be highlighted is that the transatlantic region continues to be at the heart of cycling's various disciplines. Indeed, this continues to be the case while those invested in administering the sport explore 'new' Pacific regions with an increasingly concerted effort (Rodgers, 2013).

As an example of the transatlantic regions' continuing centrality in the sport, the current Union Cycliste International (UCI) rankings for the different disciplines of cycling heavily lean towards Atlantic countries. In road cycling both the elite men's and women's highest ranking athletes are from Western Europe, the discipline of cyclocross is dominated by Western Europeans at almost all levels, and across the many para-cycling disciplines all but a few are dominated by athletes from the transatlantic region (Union Cycliste Internationale, 2019a). Indeed these rankings are just one example of the historic and ongoing impact the Atlantic region has had on cycling. The widespread impact of northern European nations in setting standards for cycling infrastructure development worldwide is also significant. The Netherlands in particular has lead this charge, building on its history of being at the center of Atlantic trade and cultural exchange, the country now exports models, expertise, and a popular imaginary of cycling centered transportation planning and infrastructure around the world. These facts and more only serve to highlight the importance of the region in driving bicycling in its many forms for sport, leisure, and transportation today.

However, it is not just the influence of Western Europe that is the focus of this article. Instead to fully understand the evolution of cycling in the transatlantic region this analysis should also include North America when considering people, practices, events, institutions, and companies in cycling across a time period spanning from the late 19^th century through to today. Hosting some of the largest and most prestigious cycling clubs in the 19^th century, being the birthplace of the off-road revolution in the sport, and continuing to drive manufacturing and product development, the U.S. in particular should not be discounted in its continued importance for the sport of cycling. Therefore, when taken together it is difficult to doubt that these regions on either side of the Atlantic are dominant in cycling's past and present. Indeed the interdependent development of cycling within and between these northern transatlantic regions should be central to any analysis of cycling, especially when viewed through the extended historical roots of its current formation. Other Atlantic nations will be considered as part of this analysis, alongside a recognition of other regional influences. However, consideration of both the independent and interdependent role of these two Atlantic regions will form the center of this discussion.

Working through historical periods it is possible to identify the evolution of cycling as a sport in the region, shaping what it has become today. From the invention of the modern bicycle in the 19^th century, a broad sporting system has built up around the central role of this technology. As such this article will look at the sport of cycling through three key historical periods, as well as looking towards the future of cycling in the transatlantic region. Starting with the period of time from 1860 to the start of the First World War in 1914 this section will highlight the initial spread of bicycling outwards from its origins in Western Europe, demonstrating the initiation of several early competitive events in Western Europe with oversight from a nascent international governing body (UCI), as well as the initial explosive growth of cycling on the U.S.

East Coast. From there the period between 1920-1950 was a period of gradual decline of the sport in the U.S. and a continual expansion of events across Europe, alongside forms of early commercialization. With the last period of the 20^th century cycling went through rapid change and expansion. As such this section will look to map the creation of new sport forms in the U.S. and Europe, and the rapid commercialization of cycling across and between nations at both sides of the North Atlantic. Lastly this article will also provide an exploration of the future of cycling across the Atlantic, specifically focusing on the more concerted influence of South Atlantic nations from Latin America to the African continent, considering how future developments will draw the center of the sport further South in the coming years.

1860s to the end of the First World War: Early establishment of a sporting system

While similar technologies existed previously, it wasn't until the design of the 'safety bicycle' in 1884 that the bicycle as we know it today was invented (Fletcher, 1987). Developed for sport, primarily the sporting pursuits of wealthy young men, bicycling would quickly expand in popularity throughout western Europe and eventually make it's way over to North America during this period.

The explosive growth of cycling in the U.S.

Well established in Britain and on the European continent by the 1880s and 1890s attempts were made to export cycling across the Atlantic to take advantage of the burgeoning American market. Initially drawing on the attention generated by hosting marquee events in major American cities, this period would start an exchange of athletes and a rivalry of talent that spanned between Western Europe and North America up until the turn of the century. Only tempered by the decline of cycling's popularity in the U.S. alongside the rise of automobility on the continent, Ritchie (1998) states "In fact, there was hardly a world class or championship event through the 1880s and 1890s which did not pit European against American cyclists" (p. 139).

With Massachusetts as its center, the growth of cycling in America would be explosive at the end of the 19^th century. As Balf (2008) discusses the League of American Wheelman (a bicyclists association) would count 75,000 due paying members during this period. Indeed "The huge meets of the League of American Wheelmen and the Springfield Bicycle Club continued to attract the cream of British cyclists" throughout the end of the 19^th century (Ritchie, 1998, p. 139). This demand also fueled a manufacturing industry where nationally in the U.S. the number of bicycle makers would rise up to more than three hundred. Taken together the effect of the bicycle were so extensive that Balf (2008) goes on to state:

> *"Simply put, all other activities in the year 1896 paled in comparison to "wheeling." Theatergoing, book buying, and piano playing — to name a few avocations — would plummet in popularity as both New York and America's obsession approached its peak." (p. 55)*

Often a forgotten part of the history of cycling, it really demonstrates that during this time period the U.S. was central to the development of the sport. This influence would later wane (Furness, 2010), but at this point North America was one of the two regional pillars of cycling globally.

European event expansion

Almost immediately after its design and development the bicycle went into widespread manufacture and cycling competitions of all sorts sprung up across northern Europe in particular. These focused mainly on road cycling and track events, with endurance and six day track events being the focus of many promoters. As Ritchie (1998) highlights the indoor six day race for cycling built on a history where "Indoor long-distance racing was part of the sporting and entertainment currency of the times, having first appeared in pedestrianism earlier in the nineteenth century" (p. 128). Additionally one-day races across Belgium, France, and the Netherlands became popular. One of the oldest of these races, now considered one of the 'spring classics' is *Liege-Bastogne-Liege* (Also know as 'La Doyenne' in French or 'The Old Lady' in English). This race started in 1892 and continues to be a part of the current UCI World Tour (Union Cycliste Internationale, 2019b).

This initial development of cycling events in northern Europe quickly spread globally and similar events were started throughout Europe and in various European colonies. By the beginning of the first world war there would be a whole series of races in Europe from Paris-Roubaix (first held in 1896), to Milan-San Remo (first held in 1907), and the fall classic Giro di Lombardia (first held in 1905). Races were even started in Australia such as the Melbourne to Warrnambool, which was first held in 1895. All of these races continue to run today, but this was a period of vast expansion in the sport.

In addition this period saw the first multi-stage races being formed in Europe. This was led by the prestige event for road cycling, Le Tour de France. As it would come to be commonly referred to in English, 'The Tour', was first held in 1903. This would be followed by the Giro d'Italia held for the first time in 1909 and the Vuelta á España coming in the interwar period in 1935. The Tour de France was an event used for helping promote a newspaper that would later develop into the current French daily, L'Equipe. As Gaboriau (2003) discusses the race would adopt and blend the style, structure, and promotional role of car races on the continent like the infamous Paris-Madrid. This period was certainly an end of an era where cycling was confined to the practices of the leisured upper classes, but:

> *"...the creation of the Tour de France was also a sign of a new beginning. The falling price of bicycles was allowing them to be bought by other classes, and the sporting press, bicycle manufacturers and cycle races were giving more and more coverage to cycling activities." (Gaboriau, 2003, p. 57).*

Across the Atlantic region and beyond, the end of this period saw a whole new direction for the sport of cycling. A greater commercial interest in cycling events drove investment into the sport and the falling cost of bicycles helped bring the sport to the masses and broke it of its narrow class confines. This also was the period in which the sport became standardized and the establishment of an international governing body would start a period of more strategic and structured governance in cycling.

Forming the UCI

Centered on governing the early development of cycling in road and track formats the Union Cycliste Internationale was founded on April 14, 1900, in Paris, France. The founding of the organization was a collaborative action taken by the Belgian, French, Italian, Swiss, and U.S. national federations (Union

Cycliste Internationale, 2019c). Despite this relatively early founding of the sports international governing body this founding still happened after the inclusion of cycling in the 1896 Olympic games and after a Track World Championships was held in 1893 (Union Cycliste Internationale, 2019c).

Where the UCI started to play an important role was in the internationalization of cycling and fostering its standardization across different events and competitions. It would not be until the interwar period and after WWII that the organization would take significant steps to establish world championships for the various disciplines. Yet without this centralized governance system it would be difficult to see a path towards the international coherence we see in the sport today. While individual event organizers or management groups continue to play a significant role in the sport (see the Amaury Sports Organization and the Tour de France), the UCI has taken up a position where it has a role in almost all cycling races from the highest level men's and women's 'World Tour', to its role in organizing world championships in all disciplines, all the way down to its presence in local community racing through its National Governing Body (NGB) partner organizations.

This centralizing and consolidating role that the UCI has played is not distinct from other sports. Certainly the spatiality and temporality of its founding mimics other key governing institutions. During this same period international sports governing organizations were being founded in Europe: Fédération Internationale de Football Association (founded on 21 May 1904 in Paris), the International Olympic Committee (created on 23 June 1894 in Paris), International Association of Athletics Federations (founded in 1912 in Stockholm), and later the Fédération Internationale de Basket-ball (The association was founded in Geneva in 1932). In this way the UCI has adhered to a similar path for the governance of many sports that are central to the global sports system we have today. From roots in the early modernization of sport, these institutions have fostered a period of what Maguire (1995) and others have termed as a sportization (Van Bottenburg & Heilbron, 2006) or a sportification (Pfister, 2007; Collinet et al, 2013) of these sports forms.

Cycling through the Interwar Period: 1920s-1950s

Following on from a period of rapid expansion on both sides of the northern Atlantic, the interwar period saw greater diversion of the sports evolution between North America and Western Europe. While in Europe the sport continued to expand and there was a process of secured establishment of certain key events, the U.S. in particular saw significant declines in the importance of the bicycle for transportation, recreation, and sport.

U.S. decline into the automotive era

Following on from the First World War the U.S. started to see a significant decline in cycling events, clubs, and manufacturing. This was a trend that ran counter to the general increase in demand for recreational opportunities and experiences in the U.S. at the beginning of the 20^th century. As Chance (2012) discusses advances in the design of recreational spaces at this time, such as "The modern recreation park were designed to meet the sport and leisure needs and expectations of modern society" (p. 1604). However, in the U.S. cycling deviated from this general trend, impacted both by the increasingly affordable nature of automobiles, driven by Ford's production of the model T, and the first federal highways act in 1916. Specifically the highways act would provide greater funding and support for the development of roadways that previously had been considered the responsibility of states and municipalities. This would also be a trend that continued through the midpoint of the 20^th century and beyond. Increased

investment into the auto-industry drove focus away from the bicycle as a significant part of the recreational, sporting, and transportation landscape. This was a function of transportation policy that omitted specific provision for bicycle infrastructure, as well as a broader cultural shift that tied U.S. modernity to the automobile. Within these changes, bicycles became symbols of failure to achieve modernization, and largely became resigned to the experiences of youth. As Furness (2010) discusses

> *"Bicycles occupy a unique and somewhat awkward space in the intersecting histories of technology and mobility. Despite the wild popularity of the bicycle in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, its overall historical role is perpetually shadowed, in the United States, by the sweeping impact narratives told about the development of the steam ship, the railroad, and, of course, the automobile." (p. 14)*

The widespread decline in the interest in cycling in North America in its various roles was also translated into the sport of cycling. Without a broader cultural investment in cycling, and general lack of experience with bicycles beyond childhood for many, the sport suffered from a lack of attention and investment. As a result this period saw the twin pillar model of cycling in the Atlantic region largely lose one of its sites of significance.

Continuing formalization and European expansion

In contrast to the general decline of cycling in North America, and within the sport of cycling specifically, Europe saw a continued expansion after WWI. Investment and sponsorship continued to flow into the sport, causing the number of events to continue to expand. There was also greater governance and oversight coming from the UCI during this period that continued to raise the standards of how events were managed on the continent. Additionally the continued expansion of the modern Olympic games through this period provided an important space for the development of track cycling especially.

Previously largely practiced as 'promotional spectacles' track cycling became more integrated into the Olympic model. Instead of mostly being a sport practiced in travelling velodrome shows, or six-day events that were as much about providing a show for reveling customers 'out on the town' as it was about the sporting competition, track cycling now became embroiled in the Olympic systems of national governments and adhered increasingly to standards set forth by the UCI, IOC, and individual NGBs.

In addition this period was the initial beginning of a process of discipline expansion that would happen largely across the Atlantic in North America in later time periods. Despite the almost entirely North American location for the 'off-road revolution' that would come later in the century, in this case the establishment of cyclocross was an almost exclusively northern European practice, and continues to be dominated by the low-countries today (Belgium and The Netherlands). Developed as a means to continue training through the harsh northern European winters, cyclocross worked from the basics of road cycling technologies and created competitions that demanded their use over a range of terrains and environments. A blend of sand, mud, and paved surfaces make up cyclocross racecourses and races mostly take place in relatively small bounded in event sites. In this sense cyclocross is some mix of road cycling technology and challenging off road terrain, but instead of covering vast point-to-point distances it is contested within tightly condensed sites. The sport of cyclocross has not become as recognized throughout the Atlantic region, but in Belgium and The Netherlands it is a central pillar of the sporting terrain. Scheerder et al (2002) outline that in Flanders cycling and cyclocross in particular are widespread working class sporting

practices consistently between 1969-1999. In this sense the sport has not only been widely popular in these nations, but it has been tied to a popular imagination of a traditional sporting culture that grounds each of these nations.

Where the sport has expanded beyond this European center it has brought the symbols and cultures of the low-countries with it. Increasingly the U.S. has started to be a bigger part of the cyclocorss elite competition circuit. Indeed the U.S. can now boast two rounds of the UCI Cyclocross World Cup, the same number of events held in The Netherlands and only one less than the number of races in Belgium, the sports homeland. Yet, at any of these races in the U.S. you are just as likely to see flags boasting the Flandrian Lion and be eating 'waffles' and 'frites' as you would be when attending races in Namur, Heusden-Zolder, or Koksijde.

Back on the road and the boards of the velodrome the interwar period would see a strengthening of the presence of already established events, as well as an expansion in new events across Europe. It is at this time that the third of the 'grand tours' would be run for the first time, the Vuelta a España. Mimicking the structure of the already existing Tour de France and Giro d'Italia, the Veulta would become the third extended country 'tour' in the cycling calendar. Essentially these three races would go on to become the backbone of the global road cycling competition tour, and would anchor the media presence of the sport globally. As Lucîa et al (2003) state "the most remarkable racing events in professional cycling are the 3-wk tours: Tour de France, Giro d'Italia, and Vuelta a España" (p. 872). Indoors on the velodrome track cycling events in the six-day format would continue to be popular, especially in northern European cycling centers (Belgium, France, and The Netherlands). However, it would be the sports inclusion in the Olympic games that would really drive new popularity in the discipline. Under the governance of the UCI and IOC there would be an establishment of common track design elements and new competition formats that are shorter and more consumable by a wider range of spectators (a move that would be essential with the advent of television later in the century, and a set of event design decisions that the UCI continues to pursue in streamlining the sport). The widening in popularity of track cycling as part of the Olympic structure would go on to inspire or connect with growing interest in the sport in Japan as Keirin racing became massively popular (Glascock, 2015), as well as providing key initial steps to establish world cup events outside of Europe such as in Latin America.

The Modernization of Cycling: 1960s to beginning of 21st century

Multiplying forms

Following on from the initial expansion of cycling disciplines into the establishment of cyclocross in Northern Europe, this post war period also saw a new range of off-road disciplines that arose out of the American west. In many senses this was an off-road revolution for the sport, where distinct changes were made from the on-road and track disciplines in both practice and equipment in particular. Emanating largely from northern California, the early 1970s saw the initial creation of Bicycle Moto Cross (BMX) and Mountain Biking. Savre et al (2010) identify four distinct periods in the process of these disciplines evolution:

- The Era of Pioneers: 1970--76
- Between Sports and Sales: 1976--81

- Institutionalization and Industrialization: 1981--86
- Towards International Recognition: 1986--90

Initially the early 1970s saw a group of pioneers driving the development of BMX in California as a route for young people into the sport of Moto Cross. At the same time in the Marin headlands various organizations were founded that looked to take advantage of the weather and environment in the region for expanding uses of the bicycle. These groups looked to modify bikes with bigger tires, stronger frames, and a riding position conducive to downhill riding. These bikes would come to be referred to as 'clunkers' and their creators would start the initial spread of mountain biking beyond the California borders. Starting in the late 1970s many of the pioneers took their sport out to Colorado first, and then further afield. With this expansion there came a move to the first steps towards a commercialization of the discipline. While the pioneers of mountain biking still drove its development and took decisive action in advancing the sport, the late 1970s and early 1980s did see initial steps that would pave the way for further institutionalization of the sport. As Savre et al (2010) discuss:

> *"As technological advances multiplied, the period from 1976 to 1981 finally resulted in a conjunction of cultural, technological and major events factors as well as a dynamic role for the pioneers. With better performing bikes, adapted cycling areas and an enthusiasm and growing admiration amongst the cyclists, the conditions were favourable for the institutionalization of the sport on a larger scale" (p. 1952).*

Building on from this time of initial development the 1980s would see a period of concerted institutionalization of these formats and an industrial scale commercialization of mountain bike manufacturing. Events spread outwards from the initial expansion of the sport from California into Colorado and Utah. During the 1980s mountain biking would take hold throughout the continental U.S., into Canada, and even make inroads into what Savre et al (2010) discuss as cycling's "old world" (p. 1953).

By the 1990s mountain biking would take a turn towards established global awareness, with the UCI recognizing the first mountain biking world championships in the first year of that decade. Indeed Savre et al (2010) discuss that "The September 1990 gathering marked the beginning of the modern era of the sport" (p. 1961). This has been an era in the sport that has only seen further commercialization, internationalization, formalization, and global event proliferation. Certainly it would be fair to say that while other off-road cycling disciplines are still extremely popular (cyclocross, BMX, and trials), mountain biking has taken up the center of off-road cycling along many dimensions. In fact there may be some argument to be made that the mountain bike has come to occupy a large portion of the popular cycling imagination as a whole.

The Americanization of cycling

Despite a significant role in the early development and popularization of almost all of cycling's various disciplines, North America has had a declining role in the performance of the sport overall. However, with this last historical period it is also important to recognize the continued influence on cycling from across the Atlantic as it has expanded in its contemporary center, Western Europe. With the significant, and now disgraced, presence of Lance Armstrong in road cycling taken out of the overall picture of the regions

performance, North Americans have had relatively undersized success. In the second half of the 20^th century countries such as Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and especially the UK after their 'post Atlanta' Olympic strategic plan, have had much better performance records (Gibson, 2012).

Where the American influence on the sport continues to linger is more in format than performance. Like with many other global sports, the latter half of the 20^th century has been a period of commercialization and corporatization in the sport of cycling that draws on a broader pattern of Americanization. Certainly the American influence on disciplines can be traced with the development of mountain biking, BMX, and later trials riding spreading out from the U.S. in the latter half of the 20^th century. However, the influence is not limited to form. The influence of an American style corporate sport model was seen throughout the sport and has helped drive its increased profit orientation and general commercialization. This is not to say that American style sport structures were transposed directly to the sport globally (Giulianotti, 2005), but a broad adoption of elements of this model could be seen. Blended with local economic and political structures, this adoption of a commercial sport model focused on greater spectator engagement, sponsorships, intensified mediation and marketing, rational location or relocation of event sites, and other strategies that centered on boosting profitability. In many senses this represents a glocalization of the sport, where a more Americanized corporate model for cycling became common as it interacted with local cycling cultures, practices, events, institutions, and individuals (Rick et al, 2015).

This broad period of change in the sport was not the first time cycling had been commercialized, or at the very least was the focus of commercial interests. Certainly the sport of cycling has always been commercial to some degree. As Gaboriau (2003) notes in reference to the Tour de France specifically, "Like all the road car- and cycle-races of this period, the infant Tour de France was linked to the sporting press... and the sports sector, put in place by the cycle manufacturers" (p. 63). Yet at the same time, the rational approach taken to making cycling part of the commercial sporting industry today has no historical point of comparison.

Cycling into the 21^st century

Heading into the 21^st century cycling has continued to see significant changes, and the North Atlantic in particular continues to drive the sport forward globally. Western Europeans continue to largely dominate in performance across all the disciplines. At the same time cycling's big commercial entities continue to be largely based in the U.S. Specialized and Trek bicycles are good examples of the country's influence on marketing, sales, and production around the world. Resultantly what will be highlighted in this last section is how these two regions continue to play a role in new disciplines in the sport, while also experiencing a growing influence from the South Atlantic region.

New Cycling Forms for the 21^st Century Athlete

In the seventeen years of the new millennium cycling practices and cultures have continued to advance. One of the biggest changes has come through a rise in non-traditional cycling events and formats. This has included 'Grinduro' type events, gravel racing, and new track bike events that are at the center of these changes. This last category ranges from informal allycat races that blend elements of work and play drawn from the cycle messenger culture; through to highly formalized track bike races on outdoor courses, such as the Red Hook Criterium series.

Allycat racing has been part of several research projects, but in particular the work of Jeffery Kidder interrogated these events in some depth. Kidder (2009) describes them as:

> *"...illegal street races held in open traffic. There is no course or predetermined route of travel. Instead, there are checkpoints dispersed throughout the city. Racers must use their geographic knowledge and skills with spatial capacity (along with cardiovascular fitness) to outwit, as well as outride, their opponents. At each checkpoint racers have their manifest (supplied by the race organizer at the starting line) stamped (a process which mimics the workday and proves that the rider went to each stop). Beyond the need to have a completed manifest, "there are no rules" (as numerous couriers have explained); the first one to the finish line wins. Alleycats vary in complexity, length, and attendance (some draw only a few local racers while others —especially certain New York races— can attract couriers from around the globe)." (p. 322)*

These events reject outright the tight strictures of traditional cycling disciplines. The formats make use of public urban spaces, rather than designated sporting arenas, and they draw the dynamic risks of open streets into the race itself. The prizes are often minimal and there is little in the way of a route from these events to a professional practice of the sport. Indeed, Kidder (2009) goes on to suggest, "All alleycats, however, are first and foremost hedonistic parties (and athletic competitions a distant second)" (p. 322). These events blur the line between play and work, existing as lifestyle sporting experiences (Wheaton, 2004) that also serve to push the risky nature of sporting play. This risky nature is at the heart of this type of cycling, and it is a trend towards risk in sports that Breivik (2010) suggests is in greater demand in contemporary late-capitalist societies.

As these have been incorporated into the logics of a more standardized, sanctioned, formalized sporting landscape there has also been the rise of events that take track bicycles out of the velodrome and on to street circuits. With the hallmark event in this format arising from the Red Hook neighborhood in Brooklyn, the style has become more popular. Blending the cultural cool of cycle messengers and their allycat races with the structures of cycling's contemporary sporting core, these events have become widely popular. However, again in both this more sanctioned format and in allycat racing the center of these new developments continues to largely be in the North Atlantic region and the exchange between the U.S. and Western European nations. As an example the Red Hook Criterium has had stops in Brooklyn NY, London, Barcelona, and Milan.

Establishing Cycling Cultures in the South Atlantic

The rise of new cycling formats and disciplines is certainly altering the landscape of cycling today. Yet at the same time these evolutions of the sport continue to be driven by the North Atlantic region and the exchanges that exist across its reaches. What has been an even more serious change to cycling in the 21^st century has been the inclusion of more regions in the sport. This has been a global shift, with the growing presence of South East Asia being particularly important to the ongoing development of the sport in many senses. That is not to say that the influence on cycling has excluded these regions before, but the growing number of events, organizations, and people from these areas has been significant. In addition, and importantly for this article, the growing inclusion of other Atlantic regions has been important to the sport of cycling recently. During the 2015 Tour de France the race included the first African team, MTN Quebeka (later to become Team Dimension Data), which fielded a number of African riders. Additionally, teams

such as the now disbanded Team Columbia aided in the growth of South American talent in cycling during its existence. Riders including Nairo Quintana, Mariana Pajon, Marcelo Gutiérrez, Fernando Gaviria, and Egan Bernal are all stellar examples of Colombian success in the sports many disciplines. Cycling has been part of a broader landscape of sporting import, localization, expansion, and nationalized identification in Latin America. As Arbena (1996) states:

> *"...the history (and language) of 'modern,' organized sport in Latin America is the history of the diffusion, adoption, and manipulation of sports invented and/or codified and institutionalized by Europeans, mainly the British and Anglo-Americans" (p. 211)*

Cycling alongside soccer, rugby, boxing, etc. all have been imported and then adopted throughout the region. Each being adapted within local contexts and going on to play important roles in various nationalist projects across the continent. From the inside sport has become a meaningful, organic, and tangible expression of identity from the local community to the nation. In worrying contrast, from the outside, Latin American sport has been understood inline with problematically orientalizing and exoticizing discourses of the sporting other, a trend in which cycling has played a significant part. Representations of the Latin American cycling other conform to a Said-ian idea of orientalism that Hodges (2016) describes as a process:

> *"...which understands Western narratives, depictions and statements about the 'Orient' as a 'man-made' distinction with a particular history relating to Western colonialism, whereby the Orient is constructed as a non-Western and inferior Other" (p. 411).*

Drawing on common tropes of performances as 'exciting' and riders as having 'flair', depictions of Latin American cyclists can conform to a common set of exoticizing logics that fail to reflect the complexity, diversity, and history of cycling in the region. Additionally the structural system of power in cycling continues to invest much of the decision-making power into the hands of European and North American teams, institutions, and individuals, placing these regions at the heart of the sport. In many ways this mimics other sports in the region that Arbena (2000) describes as being influenced or even manipulated by these Northern Atlantic powers. This has meant that while cycling is part of a varied history "...in the long-term spread of modern, Western sports outward from the North Atlantic realm..." the continued imbalance of a core-periphery relationship between these regions has resulted in a "...reduction in quality and change in character of sports in those poorer clubs and countries that export athletic talent up the line..." (Arbena, 2000, p.87). Cycling in Latin America and Africa continues to be at the negative end of a sporting system that has been tilted to benefit developed nations across the North Atlantic and beyond. What the 21^st century has brought is potential for change, as well as a recognition of the significant challenge that exists to creating sporting parity between the global north and south.

Conclusion

It would be hard to argue that the Atlantic region has not been at the heart of the historical development of cycling as a sport. Especially through the historical period of 1860-2000 the twin North Atlantic pillars of the USA and Western Europe have passed the role back and forth as being at the center of global cycling. From the initial design and development of the safety bicycle in Europe, to the boom in participation in

North America at the end of the 19^th century, the event proliferation in Europe during the interwar period, and the 'off-road' revolution in the sport from the 1970s into the late 1990s, the Atlantic nations and their interactions have been at the center of cycling.

Also into the 21^st century as the contributions of the South Atlantic region, specifically nations up and down the African continent and in Latin America have been recognized to a greater degree, the regions influence has only grown. Indeed looking forward as cycling continues to proliferate disciplines and the global regions of focus for the UCI are increased, the central role of the North Atlantic may start to decline in importance compared to other historical periods. Beyond the Atlantic region South East Asia, China, the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand, as well as the former Soviet Central Asian republics have all had more impact on the development of the sport, and look to continue in that role as the 21^st century progresses.

What this suggests is that while it appears that the Atlantic region will decline in its overall influence on global cycling it will continue to have a role to play. Both in traditional formats and with innovations as track cycling leaves the velodrome for the streets and cyclocross bikes head out of their tight confines in Northern European race tracks, the U.S. in particular looks to be important. Indeed this should be no surprise as the country continues to be at the forefront of event and equipment design, as well as offering potentially the biggest consumer market in the world for media and products.

Change is coming to the global terrain of cycling, and while the Atlantic may be only one of the global regions of influence in the sport, the significance of its influence should not be underestimated and is a function in large part of its history outlined in this paper.

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