

“I Don’t Think That’s Special to Curling:” Older Men’s Experiences of Curling’s New  
Rationality

Kristi A. Allain

Curling was perhaps once the sport the least associated with discipline and athleticism, instead having a reputation for drinking and smoking, an ethos prizing conviviality over competition, and a structure enabling amateurs to compete at the highest levels. However, during the gold-medal-winning performance of Team Brad Jacobs, a group of muscular young Canadian men, at the 2014 Winter Olympics, the public and media began celebrating changes in the sport that were already well under way. As curling enters a new era of rationalized training, fitness, and professionalization, this paper draws on interviews with older male curlers in two mid-size Canadian cities, and Ratele's work on tradition, to ask what has been lost. Participants often embraced curling's new emphasis on physical fitness. However, they also worried about the diminishing traditions of sociability, sportsmanship, and accessibility within the sport.

Keywords: Curling, embodiment, rationality, aging, neoliberalism, tradition, third age, masculinity

The sport of curling, traditionally associated with older adults, beer bellies, cigarette smoking, and sociability, has entered an age where dominant discourses promote a strict diet, little alcohol, no smoking, and constant physical activity as a means of “aging well” in the sport. In light of these new social pressures to age well through rationalized participation in curling, what are the experiences of old(er) men in the sport? To answer this question, I explore the binary between curling practices associated with rational achievement and health, and those associated with tradition, or the history of the sport. I examine how old(er) male curlers both take up and resist new pressures on the old to stay fit and active in order to avoid old-old age, a life stage associated with dependency and death (Lamb, 2017; Laslett, 1989; Shimoni, 2018). These pressures feed into the growing rationality of the sport and its increasing focus on youthful physicality, competition, and bodywork (see Mair, 2007), a process that ironically leaves little room for the celebration of older bodies, traditional sport practice, and intergenerational connection developed as a result of the expertise once associated with older curlers. The curlers in this study often expressed resistance to this rationalization of their sport, and to related pressures designed to keep them fit and active. Many participants asserted an understanding of themselves as good moral citizens, and located this morality in their sociable bodies and *traditional* curling culture. These bodies stand in contradiction to the buff bodies increasingly found in popular representations of elite-level curling today (see Author, 2018; Author & Collaborator, 2018). Drawing from Brittany Everitt-Penhale and Kopano Ratele (2015) and Ratele’s (2018) important work on post-coloniality, masculinity, and tradition, I extend their

arguments about the significance of critically examining notions of tradition and apply this to the lives of aging settler-colonial subjects, in this case old[er] white men who curl. I demonstrate that paying attention to the kinds of tradition associated with the lives of aging men offers a social challenge to commonsense, often neo-liberal notions of health and healthy aging and may work to disrupt commonsense ideology that positions near constant activity and a will to health as the only appropriate way to age well.

This examination of curlers' attitudes toward the rationalization of their sport and the imperatives of healthy aging will begin by explaining new pressures on the old to age well through physical activity. I will then examine the importance of studying curling culture before outlining the ongoing rationalization of the sport of curling and its link to a new curling culture that resembles the corporeal style of other men's professional sports. Next, I will describe the study's methods of data collection and analysis and discuss the data's findings about the ways that later-life curlers have come to understand curling's buff turn. I will conclude by drawing from the insights of Everitt-Penhale and Ratele (2015) and Ratele (2018).

### **Growing Old and Aging Well**

There is no shortage of actors or institutions promoting sport and physical activity as necessary components of healthy living, with the potential to delay the aging process and reduce health care costs (see Katz, 2005; Tulle, 2008; Tulle & Phoenix, 2015). Health advocates, exercise scientists, government institutions, individual state actors, the media, and members of the public perpetuate taken-for-granted assumptions that exercise (often ill-defined) is essential for keeping the old

young. For example, an article in *Time* magazine asserts, “Exercise makes you younger at the cellular level” (MacMillan, 2017, para. 1). Similarly, the Canadian Women’s Health Network describes exercise as “the best way to age in good health and stay autonomous” (“Exercise for Healthy Aging,” n.d., para. 1), while a science radio show on the CBC, Canada’s public broadcaster, claims exercise “is the best anti-aging therapy” (McDonald, 2018, para. 1). Implicit in these attitudes is an understanding that aging and dependence should be avoided at all costs.

As media, social actors, and institutions work to produce aging as a social problem, they connect commonsense understandings of sport and physical activity to moral imperatives, where care and responsibility for the self, especially through exercise, is linked to moral self-worth. Under this paradigm, care of the self is a personal responsibility, and those who dodge such responsibility are immoral, a drain on scarce social resources, and responsible for their own poor health outcomes (e.g., Jackson & Clemens, 2017; Jones, 2018). White, Young, and Gillett (1995) argue that the body works as a visible (yet inaccurate) symbol of health and self-care, signaling our moral virtue, as well as our social value.<sup>1</sup> However, even as commonsense understandings increasingly position “bodywork as a moral imperative” (White, et al., 1995), not all bodies are subject to the same level of social scrutiny. People on the social margins, such as those who are poor, fat, disabled, racialized, pregnant, marginalized through their sexuality and gender identities, and — importantly for the purpose of this paper — old, experience increased social

---

<sup>1</sup> For example, White et al. (1995) argue that while popular understandings conceptualize thin bodies or hard bodies as healthy, the types of bodywork required to produce these bodies (e.g., restrictive diets or steroid use) may in fact be bad for the body.

surveillance of their bodies and the kinds of bodywork they perform (e.g., Author & Collaborator, 2018; Elliott & Bowen, 2018; Maynard, 2017; Silva & Howe, 2012; Valverde, 2008). Furthermore, as Smith Maguire (2008) points out, these moralizing discourses assert real pressures on social actors to stay fit and active, as “health and appearance, and the perceived worth attached to them, are often inextricably linked in people’s understandings of the meaning and rewards of fitness, and their motivations for participating in fitness activities” (p. 25).

Social surveillance and its related moralizing discourse, which links bodywork to fitness, good health, and physical hygiene, are increasingly connected to so-called “new” social and economic crises related to the West’s aging populations. As the West ages and the baby boomers retire, there are new concerns, or a “moral panic” (Pike, 2011) about these populations. Stephen Katz (2005) argues:

The image of the aging population is that of a burdensome and cumbersome behemoth that roves greedily across fiscal territories, demanding and consuming resources, and sacrificing the future prosperity of shrinking younger generations to the priorities of its own needs. (p. 13)

Scholarly evidence supporting exercise as a “cure” to aging is often spurious, involving small sample sizes, a limiting focus on healthy populations, and gender imbalances, including little research on older women and the over-representation of athletes and those who are already physically fit (Tulle, 2008). Nonetheless, various social actors and institutions prescribe near constant activity (with researchers, health experts, and popular culture citing exercise as the activity *par excellence*) to thwart the aging process (Katz, 2005). These attitudes, specifically when directed

towards rational and economic ends (Foucault, 2008), buttress the idea that in order to be morally upstanding, one must stay healthy in an effort to reduce healthcare costs for the wider population. In other words, popular discourse claims that aging is a social burden that social actors should quixotically avoid at all cost. These pressures to avoid aging, and especially age-related decline, are beginning earlier and earlier in life. For example, The World Health Organization's (WHO) report on *Global Health and Aging* (2011) reasons that anti-aging strategies should begin as early as in infancy (and even in utero). Although these attitudes create pressures on members of the wider population to take personal responsibility for their own health, particularly as they age, social actors do not take up these attitudes evenly, or without resistance. As Everitt-Penhale and Ratele (2015) and Ratele's (2018) works on traditional masculinity make clear, various social actors mobilize ideas about tradition, and juxtapose them against the rational, creating a powerful force of resistance to rationalizing discourse.

### **Unpacking Tradition**

Everitt-Penhale and Ratele (2015) and Ratele's (2018) importantly assert that the notion of traditional masculinity is often uncritically used by academic scholars, who do not properly explain or contextualize the concept. They argue that the term is often poorly defined, used in contradictory ways, and presented as static and in contradiction to more progressive gender expressions associated with modernity. In this regard, the traditional-modern binary, often forwarded by the public and academics as common sense, naturalizes notions of progress that work to degrade particular men and their expressions of masculinity (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele,

2015). In order to combat these commonsense ideas, Everitt-Penhale and Ratele (2015) argue that the concept of traditional masculinity must be analyzed as a social object that varies by space and time, and should not be “uncritically equated with hegemonic masculinity” (p. 6).

It is therefore important that we view the traditional and its related gender expression not as a product of the past, but as something that is deeply embedded in the social relations of the present (Everitt-Penhale & Ratele, 2015). Ratele (2018) is interested in the ways that “*cultural* traditions knock against other social forces and institutions” (p. 214). He argues that in spite of academic parlance that often describes traditional masculinities as problematic, tradition is an important part of belonging and identity:

Tradition may be considered to be a set of shared beliefs, and accompanying acts, that the actors who identify with the tradition take to be a resource in making sense of, and acting in, the present — a resource that has social, political, symbolic, or ideological functions. (p. 224)

Although Ratele’s work specifically calls for an academic re-evaluation of tradition (and more specifically traditional gender expressions) within colonial contexts, he notes that “all gender practices have traditions” (p. 217). Further, the very notion of tradition engenders engagement with discourse on aging, as the keepers of tradition are generally elders. In the case of the curling club, the tradition-keepers are those in late(r)-life who work to maintain both the culture and the physical structure of the curling club (see Author & Collaborator, under review). In this regard, I argue that Everitt-Penhale and Ratele (2015) and Ratele’s (2018) works allow for an

important critique of the social disavowal of aging and expressions of aging masculinity amongst men in late(r) life. Ratele asks scholars to consider if “‘traditional men’ [can] mobilize against gender-based violence, and, vice versa, can egalitarian men like tradition?” (p. 222). In this paper, tradition becomes an important strategy of resistance amongst old(er) men in the face of neoliberal rationalized health discourse, with research participants connecting traditional values to their understandings of what it means to be a morally responsible citizen in later life. The curling club is an importance social space in mobilizing this resistance.

### **Why Curling?**

Curling is a sport where players, working in teams, slide heavy stones down a long sheet of pebbled ice toward a target marked at the end of the ice. Teammates sweep the ice with curling brooms, guiding the stone’s travel. The purpose of the sport is to gain points by placing your rock closest to the target. Brought to North America by Scottish settlers, curling is widely celebrated in Canada (Mair, 2007), with approximately 4.8% of the Canadian population regularly engaging in the sport (Potwarka, Wilson, & Barrick, 2015). Despite its popularity, especially amongst older adults — 20.10% of the Canadian curling population is between the ages of 50 and 65 years (Potwarka et al., 2015) — it is oftentimes disregarded, or at least extensively understood as marginal, within other national contexts.<sup>2</sup> In spite of the

---

<sup>2</sup> Using Google search data, Jayson MacLean (2018) argues, “Curling is four times more popular to Canadians than it is to its nearest rival [Switzerland] and a full ten times more popular than to Norwegians or Americans” (para. 7). Further, Canada produces 80–90% of the world’s curlers (MacLean, 2018).

current limited appeal of curling broadly (a situation that might be changing),<sup>3</sup> this work on men's curling is important for a number of reasons. First, men's curling offers older men a space of celebrated masculinity that oftentimes breaks with hegemonic sporting ideals linked to youth, aggression, and muscular physicality.<sup>4</sup> As European and North American populations in particular are growing old at a quickening pace ("Report: World Population," 2015), curling has the potential to be an important space for older men to practice styles of masculine expression that are more diverse and that may challenge hegemonic ideals of masculinity tied to the bodies of young men. Furthermore, curling is one of few sports where older people are celebrated in the press and represented as national sports celebrities. Most importantly, curling represents a social place where older people privilege good moral conduct and sociability, and engage with new social pressures associated with aging, fitness, and rationalized sport in ways that sometimes favor the traditional ways of doing things and, as a result, challenge commonsense understandings about how to age well.

### **Curling's Evolution: From Celebrating the Sociable to Privileging the Rational**

In 2001, Wieting and Lamoureux (2001) claimed that curling was undergoing a process of rationalization, linked to curling federations' "attempts to make it a popular and marketable sport" (p. 141). This process aligned with curling's inclusion in the Olympics, where it began as a full Olympic sport in 1998. Wieting

---

<sup>3</sup> During the 2018 Olympic Games, American celebrity Mr. T became enamored with the sport, regularly posting on social media about curling's coverage in the press. The media (Canadian, American and some international) widely reported on this (e.g., "Controlled Mayhem," 2018; Gregory, 2018), while fellow Twitter users enthusiastically engaged with and retweeted his online comments.

<sup>4</sup> Mair (2007) reports a similar phenomenon for women curlers.

and Lamoureux argued that the rationalization of the sport was important to both Canadian and American curling federations, as it connected to the production of popular interest in the sport, a requirement they contended was essential for ensuring its continued place on the Olympic roster. These early rationalization and professionalization efforts involved a growing focus on standardized rules, the regularization of curling events, efforts to increase revenues, and the introduction of prize money for elite curlers. At first, curling maintained its unique style of sports comportment in the midst of this rationalization, still celebrating conviviality, good etiquette, and beer drinking. Wieting and Lamoureux (2001) further noted that curling initially evaded a culture of rationalized fitness training. Instead, it appeared to celebrate the diverse bodies of men and women, even those in mid and later life. For example, numerous newspaper stories celebrate late-life curlers, including a recent CBC piece about a Vancouverite securing a place in the Guinness World Records by curling beyond her 100th year (Zeidler, 2018). The kind of buff physicality and focus on constant intense physical training associated with other sports appeared to elude curling culture, in favor of a more sociable form of comportment, linked to old age, beer drinking, and time spent with teammates and opponents.

Given Canadian curling's focus on conviviality and camaraderie, it is not surprising that elite-level curlers and their bodies symbolically disrupted taken-for-granted understandings of what it meant to be an elite-level athlete. First, curlers were often much older than other high-profile athletes. For example, an ABC News headline joked, "Too Old to Be an Olympic Figure Skater? There's Always Curling"

(Lupkin, 2014). Second, curlers were widely believed to be in poor physical shape, with popular culture (at least in the recent past) describing them as overweight, cigarette-smoking beer drinkers. Canadian sports and culture writer Roy MacGregor (2014) explained that curlers:

like[d] smoking. And eating. In the lead-up to the 1988 Calgary Winter Games, two of the Canadian curlers were told to lose weight after a simple fitness test determined neither of them could do a sit up. (para. 12)

This unique form of sports culture (especially when tied to highly publicized and celebrated events such as the Brier, the Tournament of Hearts,<sup>5</sup> and especially the Olympic Games) worked, both within Canada and beyond, to provide alternative national sporting icons, offering the public different kinds of national celebrities to revere and celebrate. Importantly, these celebrities were often older, did not (appear to) embrace aggression and violence, and had bodies that more directly resembled those of “ordinary people,” as opposed to elite athletes.

Curling’s disavowal of the diligently trained athlete and the ascetic sporting environment aligned nicely with a culture that privileged a very particular kind of sports etiquette or tradition. The sport comes complete with a “Curler’s Code of Ethics,” which claims that curlers should “play the game with a spirit of good sportsmanship” and “take no action that could be interpreted as an attempt to intimidate or demean opponents, teammates or umpires” (Canadian Curling Association, 2010, p. 3). Curling Canada attests that as a result of players’ respect for

---

<sup>5</sup> The Brier and the Tournament of Hearts are the Canadian men’s and women’s curling championships, respectively. These tournaments are important Canadian cultural events, featured heavily on Canadian television and in the Canadian media.

the game and each other, curling requires no referees or umpires, except at the highest levels of competition. Competitors are expected to follow the rules and self-regulate breaches in conduct (Mills, 2010). Importantly, tied to this decorum is an attitude that competitors and teammates alike should spend social time together drinking beer and enjoying each other's company. As Sam, a research participant in my study, remarked, because "the winner buys the loser a drink . . . there is no one that loses out."<sup>6</sup>

However, by 2014, the media brought changing attitudes about curling into full public view. As I have documented elsewhere (see Author, 2018; Author & Collaborator, 2018), during the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games, the public, media, and curling institutions celebrated the Canadian men's team (Team Brad Jacobs, noted by the press for their youth, aggressive play, and large muscles) for moving curling culture from old to young, from affable to aggressive, and from fat to fit (Author & Collaborator, 2018). Popular media in Canada and beyond sung the praises of this changing identity, celebrating a sporting culture that no longer disrupted the status quo but fully aligned with it. A headline in *The Wall Street Journal* professed, "Curlers: They're Not So Fat Anymore." The subhead continued, "Once the sport of smokers, curling now showcases the fit" (Costa, 2014). An article in the *Ottawa Sun* described Canadian curler Randy Ferbey,<sup>7</sup> once emblematic of the sociable curler, as the last of "a dying breed" (Pavia, 2015, para. 1). The article explained, "Elite curlers

---

<sup>6</sup> All participant names in this document are pseudonyms.

<sup>7</sup> Randy Ferbey is a now-retired, elite-level curler from Alberta. The winner of several national and world curling championships ("Randy Ferbey," n.d.), he is a celebrated ambassador of the sport and one of Canada's all-time best curlers ("Ferbey," 2014).

— those competing for an Olympic berth . . . train more seriously nowadays as the sport becomes less social and more competitive” (para. 4).

Existing alongside media representations celebrating curling’s fit identity were curling associations that also appeared to welcome this “buff turn.” Interestingly, this celebration occurred despite the sport’s appeal to older adults (Hamilton, 2016) and those with physical disabilities (Furlong, 2009), the very populations potentially displaced by this shift. For example, Curling Canada (“Fit For Curling,” 2012) appeared eager to uncouple curling from other alcohol-affiliated pastimes such as billiards. An article on the association’s blog cited one curler saying, “You have to keep fit. If you don’t, you’re going to slip behind” (para. 10). It went on to quote an elite-level curler, who stated, “It’s not an old-man, beer drinking sport anymore. Fitness is the key now” (para. 13). Along with this shifting attitude, curling associations both in Canada and the United States have ushered in new fitness training programs for their curlers, targeting those in elite-level programs. The head athletic trainer of the US Olympic Curling Team claimed that the sport had undergone a remarkable fitness transition in the past 12 years, moving from a sport of smokers and drinkers to athletes. The trainer stated, “We stopped using the word ‘curler’ and used the word ‘athlete’” (as cited in Bergland, n.d., para. 21). He remarked that this change was evolutionary in the sport, marking a commitment to a “hardcore training regimen” (para. 7).

Social changes connected to neoliberalism and its relationship to rationalism help to explain curling’s buff turn. As David Harvey has pointed out, neoliberalism operates as common sense, “taken for granted and beyond question” (2007, p. 24;

see Read, 2009). Perhaps as a result of this, the concept itself is often taken up without careful definition or explanation (Gilbert, 2013; Thorsen, 2010). I draw from the work of Michel Foucault (Foucault & Davidson, 2008) and his argument that neoliberalism, as distinct from traditional liberalism, puts pressures on individuals to conduct themselves in ways that are aligned with rational, economic ends. Neoliberalism is a particular form of governmental rationality, where the individual's freedom to choose — or, in this case, make decisions about active aging (Gilleard & Higgs, 2000, 2013; Katz, 2005) — are dictated through various dynamics of power (Dilts, 2011). As Dilts has explained, this phenomenon is extremely flexible, allowing for “microeconomic analysis to be applied to . . . nearly any social phenomena” (pp. 1–2). Foucault (2008) clarified that this new social environment compels the individual to be “an active economic subject” (p. 223), who dynamically invests in themselves. In the realm of health and healthy aging, this means that the individual is morally responsible to keep fit and healthy in order “to improve human capital” (p. 230). In regard to the exercise and fitness regimes of later life, Shir Shimoni (2018) argues, “The fitness paradigm directs ageing people to treat their bodily conditions as substantially amenable to their personal management, which could either increase or reduce its value” (p. 43).

The rationalization of fitness culture in curling makes it an interesting sport for sociological examination. At this particular moment, it appears that two unique curling identities exist simultaneously and in contradiction with one another. The first is a curling identity that privileges conviviality and sportsmanship, or, drawing on the work of Ratele (2018), tradition; the second is premised on an elite-level

sports model that celebrates physical achievement, athletic bodies, evolution, and rationalized sports practice (see Barrick, Norman, & Mair, 2016; Brooks, Barnes & Stevens, 2017). These two identities are potentially incompatible with each other in terms of their understandings of how the sport should be played, and, most importantly, who should be (celebrated for) playing it. In some ways, this distinction is between elite-level and recreational sport, and exists in almost every sport (Guttmann, 2012). However, this division is more notable for curling because curling culture has tended to privilege its social dynamics, instead of individual investment in the body, and until very recently, elite-level curlers competed in local curling clubs under the same conditions as recreational players, alongside competitors of different skill levels.

Before its inclusion in the Olympic games beginning in 1998, and perhaps even more recently, curling appeared to defy some of the standards of modern sport. Although, as Rick Gruneau (2017) points out, both the terms modernity and sport are difficult to conceptualize, resulting in sometimes competing definitions, modern sports have often been linked to projects that centre on progress, future-oriented thinking, evolution, and rationalization, which is linked to efficiency. Likewise, Allen Guttmann's (2012) template for understanding the differences between modern and premodern sport finds that modern sport is characterized by secularism, specialization, equality of conditions in playing spaces, record-keeping, rationalization, quantification, and bureaucratic organization (p. 16). Thus, although sport reporters and curling associations celebrate this new curling identity as an important evolution in the game, it nonetheless necessitates critical engagement.

Guttmann (2012) astutely points out a potential critique of curling's ongoing structural change, stating, "What society needs is not greater pressure for more achievement, but freedom from the incessant demands for achievement" (p. 69). Such freedom, I argue, may work to reposition pleasure as an important element in one's life and help to disrupt neoliberal health practices that ultimately work to marginalize those in poor health, particularly when they are old. Interestingly, Guttmann's (2012) comment is in line with older curlers' critique of curling's commitment to rational sports projects.

### **Methods**

This work is part of a larger examination of expressions of masculinity in Canadian men's curling. In this research, which draws its methodological foundation from Michael Messner's (2002) examination of gender and sport, my research team sought to understand what appeared to be shifting gender expressions within the sport of men's curling, specifically from a sport that celebrated an alternative style of Canadian sports masculinity, one tied to conviviality and older men, to one aligned with the sports practices of Canadian hegemonic sports masculinity, often represented by the bodies of young buff men (see Author, 2008). To understand this phenomenon, I examined men's curling through its policies, media representations, and the embodied experiences of older men who participate(d) in the sport (Messner, 2002). In this paper, I specifically assess how older men resist what appear to be rapid social changes in elite-level curling, a style of curling play directly aligned with both neoliberal health strategies and rationalized sport practice, which

privileges fitness and training regimes over pleasure and sociability (see Barrick, Norman, & Mair, 2016).

This work is based on semi-structured interviews with 19 men over the age of 50 years who curl regularly. Participants were members of one of two curling clubs located in eastern (10 participants) or central Canada (9 participants), in mid-sized cities noted for their aging populations. The clubs were relatively large in size, accommodating both recreational and competitive curlers. For example, both clubs had approximately 500 members and 13 to 14 active leagues. The research participants had a mean age of approximately 68 years, ranging in age from 57 to 86. Many of these participants were active members of their curling clubs, curling more than once a week and sometimes in weekend tournaments called bonspiels. Several were also involved in club governance (e.g., as board members), or volunteered their time with the club in some other capacity (e.g., fundraising, mentoring young curlers, hosting tournaments, participating in club maintenance). Most had a long history with the game, with many having curled for multiple decades. Although curling clubs and those in the press frequently note that curling is a sport that one can learn in later life (Hamilton, 2016), only one participant was new to the sport, joining after he had retired from regular paid employment.

I completed semi-structured interviews with participants, lasting between 45 minutes and two hours, at a time and location of their choosing. During these interviews, I asked research participants about issues associated with masculinity, aging, and their bodies. I also inquired about themes related to the changing nature of curling (i.e., curling's seemingly buff turn), exploring the participants'

understandings of these changes. Research assistants transcribed the interviews and uploaded them into the qualitative data analysis software program *NVivo 11* for thematic coding. Using what Hsieh and Shannon (2005) call conventional content analysis, I listened to the audio files, read the interview transcriptions several times, coded the data thematically into several research codes, and then sorted these codes into the following broad research themes, or “meaningful clusters” (p. 1279):

rationalization, changes in the game, the body, aging, curling governance, elite curling, etiquette, gender, and healthy lifestyle. These research themes worked to inform my analysis, where I focused on changing curling culture and a rationalization of the game while exploring the ways that old(er) men who curl resisted some of these pressures.

### **“It’s Like Any Sport”: Rationalization of the Game**

Curlers recognized that rationalization and its requisite link to a culture of physical fitness was part of most contemporary sports, particularly when played at the elite level. When discussing curling, some called this an “evolution” in the game (Larry), while others claimed that these changes would “be true in all sports” (William). For example, Don, a 69-year-old retired biologist, focused on the similarities between curling’s fitness movement and other professional sports, saying, “These guys are ripped, both men and women, curling at that level. . . . So are the golfers. So are the hockey players.” Larry, the president of the senior men’s curling program at his club, commented, “It’s the same way in hockey.” Participants recognized this change in physicality as privileging younger curlers. In the words of

Max, a deeply committed curler who ran an evening curling league at his club: “It is becoming a younger man’s game.”

Some participants believed this shift was linked to an increasing focus on curling’s corporate culture and the need to develop revenue streams. John described the change as “money-driven, just like everything else,” and William conceded that the change was good, “as long as they’re growing the sport.” On the other hand, John, a 40-year veteran of the sport, complained that everything was “turning . . . super competitive.” In spite of this critique, most participants believed that curling’s move to a professionalized, rationalized, money-focused, and fitness-obsessed culture was part of the natural evolution of any sport, or in the words of Wayne, a 76-year-old advocate for seniors’ services in his home town, “It is just the way the world is.”

The participants seemed, at least on the surface, to accept this transition from a culture of fun to one of hard, laborious, rationalized physicality. Sport scholars Simon Barrick, Richard Norman, and Heather Mair (2016) have addressed this change in curling culture through an examination of the attitudes of sport journalists, curling administrators, coaches, and elite-level athletes. Like the participants in this study, their work described curling’s move from a sport that privileged a “socially-cohesive environment where everyone was potentially the same” (p. 20) to a “system where competitors were delinked from the club experience and increasingly held up as ‘athletes’” (p. 21). They found a lack of evidence for the claim that a shift toward elite-level, rationalized curling would ultimately grow the sport at the club level, and in fact argued that the shift might “contribute to the declining health of grassroots curling” (p. 25). Nonetheless, many

in their study (e.g., elite athletes, culture makers, and decision makers) celebrated this shift, particularly because of the increased legitimacy that the rationalization brought to the sport.

In my study, curlers noted their ambivalence to the changing culture of their game. Unlike the participants in the study above, these later-life curlers were likely the group most negatively impacted by this shift. Indeed, they recognized that success in the sport now demanded increasingly rationalized labour. For example, John, a 76-year-old who had been curling for most of his life, commented, “So you could be quite a decent curler and get there, and look quite good at it. But this day and age, it is more or less a profession for a lot of people.” He continued:

It used to be called the old man's game. Bunch of old farts out there with some brooms, throwing some rocks, going in for a drink. And then we gradually got over that, and we got into the super competitive stuff, and so we seem to jump from one end to the other without any break in between.

Similarly, Gary noted that “the beer bellies, and all that, is gone. And to play at the elite level you have to be in shape. So physical fitness has become the norm, where it was the exception back fifteen, twenty years ago.” Sam commented that “the demands to play at a high level are much higher than they used to be,” continuing, “the requirements are higher for men and women, and even at the seniors and masters [levels]. . . . [There’s] a lot more practicing.” Harry, who had curled competitively but was never an elite-level player, explained that elite-level curling and systematic practice wasn’t for him: “It certainly wasn't the way I wanted to curl,

so I enjoy the game. But there is no way that I want to do 70 or 80 peels a day just to keep up [with the elite-level curlers].”<sup>8</sup>

While some recognized curling’s shift towards rationalized fitness and training as progress (Larry), many also observed that this meant that the sport was now associated with a buff physicality and might no longer be subject to public scorn and ridicule. Several participants enjoyed the increased legitimacy this shift brought to their sport. Some referenced the fat-phobic language and commonsense understandings that malign those with fat bodies, noting that “people used to ridicule the sport, which is . . . hurtful.” (Sam). During these interviews, participants repeatedly told me about the shame associated with 1988 Calgary Olympics, where curling was an exhibition sport and the media widely reported that two Canadian curlers were unable to complete a sit-up in a pre-Olympic fitness test (MacGregor, 2014). In spite of the fact that the public has appreciated elite-level curlers with portly frames in somewhat recent history (e.g., Ed Werenich, one of the two 1988 curlers mentioned above), participants routinely commented that the ideal curling body was slender, as being “too heavy” (Sam) could interfere with one’s ability to successfully play the game. Gary, a former elite-level curler and now coach, used a sport science model to explain what makes a good curler:

You've got to be fit. You've got to have the endurance down. [The] anaerobic lactic system is the biggest for curling, because it's short bursts for 20 to 30 seconds of sweeping. Throwing, you need to be flexible too, because of the

---

<sup>8</sup> In curling, a peel is “a shot designed to remove a guard.” A guard is “a stone that is placed in a position so that it may protect another stone” (“A-Z of Curling,” n.d.).

throwing position: flexible, balanced. Sweeping is strength and endurance. And then you've got to be able to do it for ten ends, so that's where the nutrition and loading and sports science comes into it.

Even as new models for curling worked to erase the public visibility of older participants, many curlers that I interviewed supported, at least in part, a culture of systematic intense fitness and training that would ostensibly legitimize the sport by situating it within a rationalized fitness culture that disavows fatness, produces elite-level athletes, and ultimately works to move the sport from its associations with old age to associations with youth. They believed that this ever-increasing focus on practice and elite-level competition would bring more money to Curling Canada. Given the abundance of neoliberal discourse pressuring third agers to age well by adopting fitness and training regimes to ward off age-related decline (Shimoni, 2018), it is not surprising that participants saw the value in reshaping popular understandings of curling from a social activity associated with poor health to a sport focused on fitness. Although most participants did frame the changes to curling culture positively, specifically those changes in the sport that drew on neoliberal understandings of management and investment in the self (Shimoni, 2018), they also took this up with remarkable ambivalence. Participants frequently noted (often in contradictory respects) the ways that these structural changes fundamentally altered the social foundation of the game, often calling the morality of rationalized fitness projects into question, sometimes suggesting that some elite athletes might in fact be cheating. In this regard, although they admitted to seeing

the logic of curling's new rationalized fitness culture, they nonetheless regularly worked to privilege the idea of the traditional over the rational.

**“It’s More on the Social Side of Competitiveness”: Critiquing the Rational, Valuing the Social**

As some social scientists attempt to argue that sport and sport participation should be about pleasure (Guttmann, 2012; Phoenix & Orr, 2014), the rationalization of sport aligns with neoliberal understandings of the social world that privilege investment in the self through regular, planned, and intense physical activity. So even as Guttmann (2012) asserts through the scholarship of Hans Lenk that “in the achievement of sport one can experience a sense of wholeness denied elsewhere” (p. 76), scholars of physical activity and later life like Cassandra Phoenix and Noreen Orr (2014) remind us that “pleasure remains an under-theorized and under-researched area in relation to health, embodiment and physical activity in older age” (p. 99). Importantly for this work, however, the research participants not only engaged with the rationalization of curling culture, but also frequently privileged a conceptualization of their sport that called into question a commonsense morality often associated with self-discipline, while privileging pleasure and sociability over rationalized training. In this regard, they often revered a culture that celebrated traditional values associated with etiquette and good comportment over intense competition and physicality.

Although many of the participants lauded the increased respectability that rationalized fitness training brought to the sport (discussed above), they also (sometimes contradictorily) questioned the need for this training, doubting its

overall value. For example, when I asked Harry, a retired lawyer who had curled off and on throughout his life, if curlers needed the kind of visible muscles that the press had recently celebrated in its coverage of athletes like 2014 Olympic champions Team Brad Jacobs, he responded: “Don’t think you do. No, no. Don’t think you do. Nope.” He continued:

If you are celebrating their fitness, if their looks or fitness overlooks how they are playing the game, then yeah, I think your focus has gone offline. It should be the game, and how they are curling and how they are competing, and how graciously they are competing. Because, like I say, the thing is you don’t have to be super buff to be a curler.

Many others in the study echoed this sentiment. Don, a lifelong curler with a history of volunteering in club governance, spoke of Team Jacobs, arguing, “You don’t need to look like them.” Wayne, a former guidance counselor and teacher, cited concerns about the “objectification” of both men’s and women’s bodies, while Frank asserted that the new focus on being “muscle bound” meant that curling associations were “pushing the wrong thing.”

Some participants even went so far as to call into question the health of athletes like Jacob, his teammates, and other buff curlers, wondering if these athletes were taking performance-enhancing drugs. For example, Don remarked:

When they muscled up, that was all fine and good. What you didn't see in that, and I was surprised . . . was a lot of discussion about steroids. . . . I heard it mentioned around the club a couple times. . . . So all of a sudden, when someone

goes plop [gestures to indicate a large bicep], you know . . . someone will inevitably ask that question.

Participants valued the newfound respectability that fit, buff curlers and their representation in the popular press brought to a culture previously maligned as frivolous, involving a lack of physical skill and excessive drinking. One confused Olympic viewer and TV personality summed up this attitude when she tweeted, “Is curling just Swiffering on ice?” (@katie\_Krause from Daro, 2018). Participants in this study nonetheless resisted a culture of intense physical training, suggesting that it focused on the wrong parts of the sport, and in fact could lead to unhealthy and unfair practices such as drug use. They supported a curling environment that privileged etiquette and good conduct over physicality and intense competition.

For participants such as John, the change in curling from a social sport to an overtly competitive one ran counter to the tradition of the sport. Over the course of the interview, John lamented the presence of new competitive curlers, arguing that their fitness regimes put the club in peril, as they required expensive technicians to care for the ice and the costly resurfacing of curling stones.<sup>9</sup> Even more problematically, these curlers’ commitment to healthy athletic bodies meant that they did not contribute to the after-match culture of drinking, decreasing bar revenues and impacting the very livelihood of the club (a point also echoed by George). John stated that competitive curling “took away from the social aspect of the game. . . . Curling clubs can’t survive on competitive curling.” John further

---

<sup>9</sup> An article on the Oshawa Curling Club’s website states that curling stones require periodical resurfacing, which should occur when stones become inconsistent, either curling too much or not at all. This kind of maintenance can cost clubs thousands of dollars (Daffern, 2014).

recounted the ways he contested the culture of competition, telling a story of a teammate who used a stopwatch on the ice to time shots. In an attempt to poke fun at this unnecessarily rationalized play, John “wore a pair of overalls and . . . a piece of binder twine with an old alarm clock.” Fred, on the other hand, welcomed elite players as long as they respected the culture of the club, stating, “The only time I would have a problem would be if they come in and just created expectations that they were above everybody else.” Frank, a lifetime curler, opined that trying to get a leg up on an opponent by testing the ice or using other forms of competitive advantage was taboo in the sport.<sup>10</sup> He was concerned that these attitudes were shifting, stating, “Nowadays there is so much money involved that . . . people are not quite as nice to one another anymore.”

Curlers also spoke of the importance of etiquette. This included self-policing on-ice conduct, shaking hands with competitors, and not embarrassing an opponent or teammate, especially if they were new to the sport. Curlers told me that it was important not to laugh at new curlers, and to make sure that participants never felt embarrassed while struggling to stay upright on the ice. Sam recounted that this etiquette existed throughout curling and was important at every level. He explained, “Someone like Arthur would tell ya, and he's played at very high levels, he's a world champion, right? . . . He would tell you, ‘You just don't do that.’ You might play head games with the other person, but there are limits to what you do.” Larry, a retired accountant with 35 years of curling experience, stated, “There is an etiquette. So it

---

<sup>10</sup> As ice conditions vary from playing surface to playing surface and from club to club, competitive curlers sometimes try to obtain an advantage by throwing the rocks before games in order to assess the speed and movement of the stone on the ice.

isn't competitive with your elbows up kind of type of thing but there is ways of doing things. . . . At the end of it, you shake hands, well actually before and after games.”<sup>11</sup>

This form of etiquette and good conduct laid the groundwork for a sport that honored camaraderie and community over competition and rationalized fitness. As Arthur, the world champion curler referred to above, pointed out:

[Curling is] a fabulous sport itself but I think one of the most important things is the people . . . You can be a fearless competitor, but after the game, it's very social. The camaraderie is almost unexplainable. It is just a great feeling, and I guess that's my demeanor. . . . I like to have fun, but I like to compete. . . . I'll play hard, but after the game . . . we talk about it, and we share, and everything else.

In interview after interview, participants explained the importance of curling in their lives in terms of community and friendship. Although they mentioned the importance of being active and staying fit in later life, this often took a back seat to the relationships and community-building that curling culture afforded them. Sam stated, “That’s what I love about the sport. It is very social.” In the words of Max:

I do curl three different days of the week, so I like the exercise, but I guess the biggest thing I like is just the friendship that you get from various leagues that you curl in, because there are different people in them. . . . So that is my main

---

<sup>11</sup> A memorable Canadian sports controversy occurred in 2018 when a men’s curling team was removed from a Red Deer, AB tournament because members of the team, including 2014 Olympic champion Ryan Fry, were intoxicated and disorderly. Jacobs, the skip (or captain) of the 2014 Olympic team, publicly admonished Fry, calling the behavior inappropriate, and Fry was forced to leave the team for a short while (“Olympic Champ,” 2018).

thing: just the friendships that you develop. . . . You grow a bigger family is what you do.

Participants universally echoed this idea. When asked what they liked best about the sport, they said they liked how social it was. Wayne remarked, “I think the camaraderie. I always get there half an hour early, so we can have coffee with the boys and talk and see what’s going on and see who is sick and can’t make it anymore. . . . And you get some exercise, of course.”

When working with aging male curlers, it became clear that although they wanted the public to take their sport seriously, they valued their own places within the sport. As clubs and national curling organizations promote elite-level training and rationalized versions of the game, the place of these older curlers within the clubs (which may attempt to accommodate elite-level players by increasing club fees and limiting opportunities for recreational curlers) and within national public discourse (which increasingly focuses on younger competitors) are potentially under threat. The significant place of older men in the curling club (at least in the past) worked to secure what they felt was the most important part of the game: the careful etiquette between players, the privileging of fair play and good conduct on the ice, and the celebration of close personal relations and deep caring amongst members of the club. Although these aforementioned factors do not need be linked to the bodies of older curlers, they are often misaligned with a sporting culture based on intense competition. In fact, there have been several high-profile incidents of bad etiquette associated with youthful Canadian curlers (for example see Fitzgerald, 2015; Williams, 2018). As the keepers of tradition, participants saw their

role as important, and lamented the potential challenges to curling culture that new rationalized sport practices brought into play.

### **Conclusion**

Like my study of aging male curlers, Kopano Ratele's (2018) work on Nelson Mandela demonstrates the importance of tradition, especially within discourses of masculinity. He argues that scholars frequently position traditional masculinity as regressive and backward, contrasting it to the conceptualization of "new men," which works to "misrepresent gender realities and ignore men's structural positions" (p. 222). Ratele turns this work upside down, demanding that scholars see the importance of tradition. For him, traditional gender expressions (like the expressions demonstrated by the old[er] male curlers in this study) work to challenge the present and create continuity with the past, informing important intergenerational ties. This aligns with Heather Mair's (2009) work on curling culture, where she points out that a traditional gender order structures much of the life inside the curling club, with men and women reflecting so-called traditional gender roles. In spite of a deep gender division of labour in the club, she found that the curling club could be an equitable space, characterized by respect and etiquette.

Ratele (2018) argues that "to speak of traditions may be one attempt to revive a sense of collective and subjective time, to reclaim the continuity of experiences between generations, between parents and children, while also recovering memories and remaking a sense of community" (p. 228). This is especially important in the colonial context of South Africa, where a continuing history of migrant labour, particularly in the mining industry, splits Black men away from

their families (see Davies, 2015). In spite of the very important differences between expressions of tradition within the context of Black South Africa and settler-colonial (white) Canada, there are important lessons to be learned from his work. Ageism in the West means that old men, especially those who are disabled, working class, and/or rural (groups that include many curlers) experience marginalization in their daily lives. Older racialized men also experience increased marginalization, though they are not included in this study. The insights of these older men are often devalued and their expertise thought to be outdated, old-fashioned, and unworthy of serious consideration. As curling culture moves from the traditional to the rational, one of the few social spaces that celebrates different kinds of old men is quickly disappearing, and the values and traditions they brought to these spaces and pass along to younger curlers may disappear with it.

In this regard, the curlers in this study interrogate the traditional–rational binary, sometimes unintentionally. This binary works to position democratic sports practices that privilege sociability, good conduct, and proper etiquette (often tied to the bodies of aging competitors) against undemocratic sports practices that privilege the elite, the young, and those invested in serious body work, training, and rigorous competition. Although some participants saw these changes in their sport as part of an “evolution” of the game, upon further questioning they offered important critiques of this changing curling culture. Specifically, they challenged what the commonsense development of all sports practice — or what scholars have deemed the modernization of sport (see Gruneau, 2017; Guttman, 2012) — arguing that there is value in maintaining continuity with the past. Their traditional

values worked to challenge neoliberal ideas about health, personal responsibility and active aging, creating space to celebrate pleasure, community, and the work of old(er) men within the culture of sport.

## References

- A-Z of curling. (n.d.). World Curling Federation. Retrieved from <http://www.worldcurling.org>
- Barrick, S. J., Norman, R., & Mair, H. (2016). Rethinking our story: Curling and the Olympic Effect. *Journal of Sporting Cultures and Identities*, 7(3), 13–30.
- Bergland, R. (n.d.). Yes, curling is a sport. The U.S. Olympic Team’s hardcore training regimen proves it. *Men’s Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.mensjournal.com>
- Brooks, D. J., Barnes, M., & Stevens, J. (2017). What happens at the national level stays at the national level: A case study of community curling. *International Journal of Sport Management*, 18, 1–24, 65–88.
- Canadian Curling Association and Canadian Heritage. (2010). *Rules of curling for general play*. Retrieved from <https://s17962.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/CCA-Rules-of-Curling-2010-2012-General-Play.pdf>
- CBC Radio. (2018, February 16). “Controlled mayhem”: Mr. T talks about his love of curling on As It Happens. *As It Happens*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-friday-edition-1.4538952/controlled-mayhem-mr-t-talks-about-his-love-of-curling-on-as-it-happens-1.4539621>
- Costa, B. (2014, January 15). Curlers: They’re not so fat anymore. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/>
- Daffern, C. (2014, February 9). Rockology 101 — Part II, the running surface. *Oshawa Curling Club*. Retrieved from <https://oshawacurlingclub.com/newsStory.php?id=220>

- Daro, I. N. (2018, February 12). 17 hilarious tweets of people discovering curling. *BuzzFeed News*. Retrieved from <https://www.buzzfeed.com/>
- Davies, Nick. (2015, May 19). Marikana massacre: The untold story of the strike leader who died for workers' rights. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/>
- Dilts, A. (2011). From 'entrepreneur of the self' to 'care of the self': Neoliberal governmentality and Foucault's ethics. *Foucault Studies*, 12, 130–146.
- Elliott, S., & Bowen, D. (2018). Defending motherhood: Morality, responsibility and double binds in feeding children. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 80, 499–520. doi:10.1111/jomf.12465
- Everitt-Penhale, B., & Ratele, K. (2015). Rethinking 'traditional masculinity' as constructed, multiple, and ≠ hegemonic masculinity. *South African Review of Sociology*, 46(2), 4–22.
- Exercise for healthy aging: Introduction. (n.d.). Canadian Women's Health Network. Retrieved from <http://www.cwhn.ca/en/Exintro>
- Ferbey to be inducted into Word [sic] Curling Hall of Fame. (2014, April 1). *Curling Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www.curling.ca/blog/2014/04/01/ferbey-to-be-inducted-into-word-curling-hall-of-fame/>
- Fit for curling: No place for flab in today's game. (2012, February 10). *Curling Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www.curling.ca/blog/2012/02/10/no-place-for-flab-in-todays-game/>
- Fitz-Gerald, S. (2015, March 3). Etiquette controversy at Brier 2015 over broom tap, a reminder about not 'puddling' the ice. *National Post*. Retrieved from

- <https://nationalpost.com/>
- Foucault, M., & Davidson, A. I. (Ed.). (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979* (G. Burchell, Trans.). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Furlong, Melanie. (2009). Wheelchair curling rocks! *Abilities Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://abilities.ca/wheelchair-curling-rocks/>
- Gilbert, J. (2013). What kind of thing is “neoliberalism?” *New Formations*, 80/81, 7–22. doi:10.3898.newf.80/81.introduction
- Gilleard, C., & Higgs, P. (2000). *Cultures of ageing: Self, citizen and the body*. Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall.
- Gilleard, C., & Higgs, P. (2013). *Ageing, corporeality and embodiment*. London, UK: Anthem.
- Global health and aging. (2011, October). World Health Organization. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/global\\_health.pdf](http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/global_health.pdf)
- Gregory, S. (2018). “They remind me of ballet dancers”: Mr. T. tells us why he’s obsessed with Olympic curling. *Time*. Retrieved from <http://time.com/>
- Gruneau, R. *Sport and modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Guttmann, A. (2012). *From ritual to record: The nature of modern sport*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Hamilton, A. (2016, January 2). Best age-friendly sports for older adults. *50+ World*. Retrieved from <https://50plusworld.com/best-age-friendly-sports-for-older-adults/>
- Harvey, D. (2007). Neoliberalism as creative destruction. *The Annals of the American*

- Academy of Political and Social Science*, 601(1), 21–44.
- Hutchin, A. (2014, February 11). “Buff boys” of Canadian curling are #jacked. *Maclean’s*. Retrieved from <https://www.macleans.ca/>
- Jackson, T., & Clemens, J. (2017, October 31). Canada’s aging population is going to put a strain on government coffers. *Maclean’s*. Retrieved from <https://www.macleans.ca/>
- Jones, A. (2018, April 30). Obesity costs economy up to \$7-billion a year. *Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/>
- Katz, S. (2005). *Cultural aging: Life course, lifestyle and senior worlds*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.
- Lamb, S. (Ed.). (2017). *Successful aging as a contemporary obsession: Global perspectives*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Laslett, P. (1989). *A fresh map of life: The emergence of the third age*. London, UK: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Lupkin, S. (2014, February 12). Too old to be an Olympic figure skater? That’s always curling. *ABC News*. Retrieved from <https://abcnews.go.com/>
- MacGregor, R. (2014, February 14). Curling is the new cool this Olympics. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/>
- MacLean, J. (2018, January 25). Is curling more Canadian than hockey? *Cantech Letter*. Retrieved from <https://www.cantechletter.com/>
- MacMillan, A. (2017, May 15). Exercise makes you younger at the cellular level. *Time*. Retrieved from <http://time.com/>
- Mair, H. (2007). Curling in Canada: From gathering place to international spectacle.

- International Journal of Canadian Studies*, 35, 39–60. doi:10.7202/040763ar
- Mair, H. (2009). Club life: Third place and shared leisure in rural Canada. *Leisure Sciences*, 31(5), 450–465. doi:10.1080/01490400903199740
- Maynard, R. (2017). *Policing Black lives: State violence in Canada from slavery to the present*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood.
- McDonald, B. (2018, March 9). Exercise is the best anti-aging therapy. *CBC Radio*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/quirks/exercise-is-the-best-anti-aging-therapy-1.4569842>
- Messner, M. A. (2002). *Taking the field: Women, men, and sports*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mills, J. (2010, October 6). Around the house: Curling etiquette. *Curling Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www.curling.ca/blog/2010/10/06/around-the-house-curling-etiquette/>
- Olympic champ among curling foursome booted from bonspiel for being ‘extremely drunk.’ (2014, November 18). *CBC Sports*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/>
- Pavia, J. (2015, November 17). Ferbey the last of the beer-drinking curlers. *Ottawa Sun*. Retrieved from <https://ottawasun.com/>
- Phoenix, C., & Orr, N. (2014). Pleasure: A forgotten dimension of physical activity in older age. *Social Science and Medicine*, 115, 94–102.
- Pike, E. C. J. (2011). The active aging agenda, old folk devils and a new moral panic. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 28, 209–225.
- Potwarka, L. R., Wilson, A. W., & Barrick, S. J. (2015). Profile of the Canadian curler. *Curling Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www.curling.ca/about-the-sport-of>

- curling/business-of-curling/profile-of-the-canadian-curler/
- Randy Ferbey. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Randy\\_Ferbey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Randy_Ferbey)
- Ratele, K. (2018). Concerning tradition in studies of men and masculinities in ex-colonies. In J. W. Messerschmidt, P. Y. Martin, M. A. Messner, & R. Connell (Eds.), *Gender reckonings: New social theory and research* (pp. 213–232). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Report: World population ageing. (2015). *United Nations*. Retrieved from [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WPA2015\\_Report.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/WPA2015_Report.pdf)
- Ross, N. (2018, February 9). Canada's oldest and youngest winter Olympians and medallists. *Canadian Olympic Team Official Website*. Retrieved from <https://olympic.ca/2018/02/09/canadas-oldest-and-youngest-winter-olympians-and-medallists/>
- Shimoni, S. (2018). "Third age" under neoliberalism: From risky subjects to human capital. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 47, 39–48.
- Silva, F. C., & Howe, P. D. (2012). The (in)validity of the supercrip representations of Paralympian athletes. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 36(2), 174–194.  
doi:10.1177/0193723511433865
- Smith Maguire, J. (2008). *Fit for consumption: Sociology and the business of fitness*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Thorsen, D. E. (2010). The neoliberal challenge: What is neoliberalism? *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice*, 2(2), 188–214.

- Tulle, E. (2008). Acting your age? Sport science and the aging body. *Journal of Aging Studies, 22*, 340–347.
- Tulle, E., & Phoenix, C. (Eds.). (2015). Introduction. *Physical activity and sport in later life: Critical perspectives* (pp. 1–8). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Valverde, M. (2008). *The age of light, soap, and water: Moral reforms in English Canada, 1885–1925*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- White, P., Young, K., & Gillett, J. (1995). Bodywork as a moral imperative: Some critical notes on health and fitness. *Society and Leisure, 18*(1), 159–182.  
doi:10.1080/07053436.1995.10715495
- Wieting, S. G. & Lamoureux, D. (2001). Curling in Canada. In S. G. Wieting (Ed.), *Sport and Memory in North America*, (pp. 140–153). London, UK: Frank Cass.
- Williams, R. (2018, February 16). Team Canada Olympic curling team under fire for poor etiquette. *Daily Hive – Vancouver*. Retrieved from [dailyhive.com](http://dailyhive.com)
- Zeidler, M. (2018, September 23). 100-year-old Vancouverite set to become world's oldest curler. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/>