



**NOT LIKE FAMILY:  
SPORT, MASCULINITY AND THE  
CHANGING IDEALS OF LATER-LIFE  
MEN'S FRIENDSHIPS**

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## THE PROJECT

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- How do old(er) men who play hockey produce and perform masculinities and friendships?
- How does age change understandings of gender?
- And what do these differences tell us about late(r)-life masculinities?

### METHODS:

- Ethnographic research, including semi-structured in-person interviews in two Canadian cities
- Atlantic Canada: 18 men; late mid-life; aged 54–71 years; mean age 65
- Central Canada: 8 men; late(r) life; aged 71–82 years; mean age 74.5

## LATE MID-LIFE & LATE(R)- LIFE FRIENDSHIPS



“When I first started playing with this crowd, I would have been in my mid-thirties . . . the primary discussion in the dressing room . . . was hockey and women. And I’ve noticed in the last, I don’t know five years, the primary discussion is now hockey and golf.” – Stacey (64)

“Well, when we go to the nursing home, we’ll be able to play [hockey] down the hallway and stuff like this, you know (*chuckle*). They kid about their age, and I think that’s a good thing. (*Pause.*) You’re not . . . sitting at home and thinking . . . about how old you are and what the hell is going to happen to me in the next year. . . . You just try to keep going.” – Elmer (80)



## CONCLUSIONS

- Masculinity is not static over the life course
- Due to ageism, old men's gender expression is often divorced from the social pressures on young men
- Older men can then express masculinity and experience friendships amongst themselves in new and potentially transgressive ways

# Thank you!

This work is deeply indebted to the numerous participants who shared their time with me. I would also like to thank Barbara Marshall, who has worked with me on various stages of this project, and my research assistants, including Stephanie Dotto, Cristi Flood, and Madison Bird.



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
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