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## The Mid-life 'Market' and the Creation of Sporting Sub-cultures

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Upon entering the registration area for the Pan Pacific Masters Games, I was funneled through about 12 booths that included Games merchandise, local tourist information and exhibitions. Six of them were selling sports-related goods, such as 'custom made' sports team apparel, 'functional and fashionable' swimwear, 'revolutionary' running shoes, 'state-of-the-art devices' for pain relief and a 'ground-breaking' functional performance exercise program. Four booths were dedicated to promoting the next three Masters Games events to be held locally (Lismore), nationally (Australia) and internationally (New Zealand). One booth was occupied by an airport transfers company and another the Cancer Council. The registration tables were positioned at the back. When I collected my backpack and event program, I noticed that inside my backpack was a QLD events guide, swimwear magazine and Gold Coast visitor's map. As I exited

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the area, I was able to collect information and discount coupons related to dining out, theme parks and sportswear. (*Chelsea participated in golf at the 2014 Pan Pacific Masters Games and the above describes her first ever registration experience at a Masters Games*).

Events dedicated and marketed to Masters/Veteran's sport 'consumers' are gaining popularity across Western countries, with most of the participants aged in their 40s and 50s. This chapter focuses on how the Masters sport movement has evolved into a place where like-minded, middle-class, already-physically active people gather in pursuit of leisure and pleasure. We draw on observational, documentary and interview data collected over a number of studies to highlight the various subcultures within this movement and effects of the commercialisation of Masters sport.

When Masters athletes are positioned as consumers, events like the Pan Pacific Masters Games (described above) become economically exclusive and a place where others can profit. The marketisation of Masters sport also makes it difficult for researchers, politicians and corporations to claim that increasing adults' participation in sport is ultimately about making people 'healthier'. This is not to deny that the individuals participating in these events experience many physical, mental and social benefits, which is a point we have made elsewhere (Dionigi 2005, 2008, 2010a; Dionigi et al. 2011, 2013; Litchfield and Dionigi 2011, 2012). Our purpose here is to demonstrate that the Masters sport movement has become a place where the market can use the 'Sport for All' and 'Healthy Lifestyles' dogma to exploit and regulate financially comfortable middle-aged adults who have a desire for sport performance, travel, consumption and socialising. To make these claims, the chapter is framed by sociological perspectives on the commodification of mass adult sporting events (Hastings et al. 2005; Ryan and Trauer 2005).

## **Absence of Sociological Critiques of Masters Sport**

The majority of research on Masters sport focuses on the motivations, performances and experiences of Masters athletes, with the ultimate goal of increasing participation rates in sport and/or measuring the economic

impact of Masters events (Ryan and Trauer 2005; Young et al. 2015). Notably, in 2013 the Australian Sports Commission teamed up with market analysts, GfK Blue Moon (see [www.gfk.com/au/Solutions/](http://www.gfk.com/au/Solutions/)), to conduct the Market Segmentation Study on sport participation trends among the Australian adult population (aged 14–65 years). This study identified ten consumer segments, namely, current club member segments (Loyalists, Socially Engaged, Sport Driven and Apathetic Clubbers) and non-club member segments (Sidelined Sportsters, Club Wary, Ponderers, Self-focused, Sport Indifferent and Sport Atheists). In recognition that sporting club membership has stagnated across Australia, this study resulted in recommendations about the types of products and messages necessary to appeal to each segment, with an end goal of attracting and retaining increased club sport memberships. It is often assumed and stated amongst such stakeholders of sport that increased participation in club sport will result in 'healthier' individual and population outcomes.

Masters sport is one type of club sport. Masters sport emerged in the 1960s in the United States and in the 1970s in Australia (Dionigi 2008; Weir et al. 2010). The post-WW2 period established particular social, economic and demographic conditions that gave rise to the Masters sport movement in Western countries (Gilleard and Higgs 2013; Hastings et al. 2005). The economic prosperity that was experienced during this time led to an enlargement of the upper and middle classes, increases in disposable income and the expansion of leisure time (Gilleard and Higgs 2013; Hastings et al. 2005). In the context of mass consumer societies, age-based subcultures have emerged in various aspects of our lives, including leisure pursuits like Masters sport. The most economically developed areas, such as Europe, North America and parts of Oceania, have the most Masters sporting clubs or organisations (Hastings et al. 2005). For example, the Australian Veteran's Hockey Association was established in 1979 with the first Australia-wide competition held in 1980 for teams comprising players aged over 40 and over 45 years (Yeates 1999). Over the years, the competition has expanded to include teams of players aged over 50 years in 1985, then over 55 years in 1991 and over 60 years since 1996 (Yeates 1999). Players are either continuing with their sport as they age, or new players are starting to play the game at an older age (Dionigi 2008).

Masters sport typically begins at age 35, but in some sports, such as gymnastics and swimming, participation can begin when a person is aged in their early 20s because it is considered past the age of peak performance for that sport (Weir et al. 2010). Masters events are held locally, nationally and globally, and can include multi-sport carnivals like the World Masters Games (WMG) or the Pan Pacific Masters Games (Pan Pacs), or individual sport competitions such as the World Masters Track and Field or the State Masters/Veteran's Hockey Titles. Competition is organised in 5–10 year age groups, with individual events being in five-year age bands (e.g., 45–49 or 50–54), while sporting team events are typically competed in 10-year age bands. The duration of Masters Games events is generally 3–10 days and often involves a social and entertainment component every night of the event.

The overarching representative body of Masters sport worldwide, the International Masters Games Association (IMGA, constituted in 1995), aims to encourage sustained involvement in sport and physical activity across the lifespan. IMGA support the Olympic movement and promote the 'Sport for All' philosophy. In fact, the philosophy of the IMGA, taken from the Olympic Charter is 'The practice of sport is every human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practicing sport in accordance with his or her needs' ([www.imga.ch/](http://www.imga.ch/)).

In other words, the IMGA aims 'to promote lifelong competition, friendship and understanding between mature sportspeople, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, or sport status' ([www.imga.ch/](http://www.imga.ch/)). Another key aim is 'Promoting and encouraging mature athletes from all over the world to practice sports regularly and to participate in Masters Games, with the awareness that competitive sport can continue throughout life and improve personal fitness level' ([www.imga.ch/](http://www.imga.ch/)). In line with the aims of the IMGA, the mottos of recent Masters Games have included: 'Fit, fun and forever young' (2009 Sydney World Masters Games) and 'Sport for life, sport for all' (2013 Torino World Masters Games). Additionally, one of the goals of the Australian Masters Games (AMG) is to 'encourage a positive active lifestyle in the community that is balanced with social outcome and opportunities' ([www.australianmastersgames.com](http://www.australianmastersgames.com)).

What appears to be silenced in such aims, mottos and past research on Masters sport is the recognition of class-based and moral agendas that

underlie this movement. Such recognition will allow us, as a society, to think differently about sport and admit the obvious—that sport is not for everyone (and never will be). In other words, current 'Sport for All' and 'Active/Healthy Lifestyles' arguments that present mass sport participation as an unanimously worthwhile, 'healthy' choice for everyone, regardless of age, class or circumstance, need to be challenged and questioned. Despite the shift in impact and culture of the Masters Games from mass participation to globalisation, commercialisation, economic elitism and profit, little academic literature has addressed the effects of this evolving phenomenon on the those who participate as 'consumers' and, perhaps more importantly, those who are excluded or choose not to participate.

A sociological critique of the Masters sport phenomenon is missing in the literature. Therefore, our research offers a critical examination of the culture of Masters sport and argues that the Masters Games, particularly international events like the Pan Pacs and WMG, have become a site for mid-life markets and the creation of sporting sub-cultures. In particular, we provide ethnographic evidence of the ways in which international Masters Games events have become a 'middle-class playground' where markets can pander to the already-privileged middle-aged adult.

For the purpose of this chapter, mid-life is understood as a period of life where individuals tend to reevaluate their sense of identity and confront issues of bodily decline, morbidity and death (Blaikie 1999). According to Partington et al. (2005), it is highly possible that mid-life is particularly challenging for older athletes (or older physically active people in general) because they may have come to identify themselves through the effective use of their body and sport places a lot of emphasis on the youthful, robust, performing body.

Our chapter provides a background to the emergence of the Masters Games as a commodity, using our data to demonstrate key reasons for, and implications of, this occurrence. Two key implications that will be discussed are economic exclusivity and the disjuncture between the Healthy Lifestyles rhetoric framing such events and the lived reality of participants. Therefore, we offer a critical analysis of the ways in which the Sport for All and Healthy Lifestyles ideals (which justified the establishment of the Masters movement) are being manipulated by the market to suit the needs of those with social capital.

## The Commodification of Masters Sport

Today, middle-aged and older people are readily encouraged by society (through media, advertisements, popular press, health promotion and a lot of exercise science literature) to remain active as part of a healthy lifestyle, which has created new market niches in sport. Fundamentally, as Ryan and Trauer explain, the interest of many (particularly white, middle-class) middle-aged and older athletes in remaining active characterises an extension in the marketplace for major sportswear, tourism and other companies 'that in past decades would have ceased with the onset of the third decade of a person's life' (2005: 178).

Notably, the interests of Masters athletes vary in that the Masters movement has become dominated by subcultures, such as sport party-goers, sport travellers and performance-oriented athletes. These groups not only value and exclude particular ways of ageing, consumption and sport participation, but provide sub-markets within Masters sport for commercial interests and Masters sporting bodies to tap into, profit from and/or expand at the various Masters Games events. As Ryan and Trauer explain, 'Masters games represent a combination of commercial interests by the sporting and tourism industries, combined with the growth in the public sector of an administrative class of sports promoters', (2005: 178). Hastings et al. (2005) describe the process in which contemporary sports are globalised by using the growth of Masters swimming in the United States as an example. They explain the initiation and expansion of Masters swimming in relation to global economic processes, making it applicable to understanding the growth of all Masters sports. 'The globalization of sports literature is provocative in documenting the intrusion of corporations into a social domain that in the public mind previously was not typically associated with profits' (Hastings et al. 2005: 135).

Masters sport has become a commodity as evidenced by the increased corporate involvement in, and the cost of participating and spending at, mass adult sporting events (Hastings et al. 2005). With regard to Masters Games events specifically, Ryan and Trauer (2005) outline three key economic and social reasons for the expansion of the Games. Each of these reasons is discussed below using examples of our observational,

documentary and interview data collected from the 2009 World Masters Games (WVG), 2011 New South Wales Veteran's Women Hockey Titles (State Vet's), 2013 Australian Masters Games (AMG) and 2014 Pan Pacific Masters Games (Pan Pacs). Therefore, our data was collected in regional, state, national and international sporting contexts and the athletes ranged from first time attendees to seasoned participants. Our focus is on participants aged in their 40s and 50s as they represent the largest age groups in such events and, in chronological terms, are considered middle-aged.

### Catering for Participant Spending and Partying

First, from an economic perspective, Masters events, particularly national and international Games which attract non-local participants and potentially large-spending competitors, are regarded as beneficial for host cities, corporate sponsors and event organisers (Gillett and Kelly 2006; Ryan and Trauer 2005). Ryan and Trauer explained that 'a second reason for the development of Masters games lies in the need for commercial interests in sportswear and associated goods to both respond to and confirm trends that extend the market for their products' (2005: 178). Essentially, the appeal for corporations being involved in such events has shifted from possible sponsorship to a focus on how much economic profit can be made. 'Masters games are thus driven by a nexus of individual interest and changing personal lifestyles that emphasize fitness and a commercial and public sector interest', (Ryan and Trauer 2005: 178).

Events such as the Pan Pacs, AMG and WVG (which have been the focus of observations by the lead author over the past 15 years) 'are seen as attracting above-average income and educated groups who are drawn not only by feelings of competition but also by friendly social environments to which, in turn, they contribute' (Ryan and Trauer 2005: 178). Ways in which Games' participants contribute include attending the scheduled nightly social events and purchasing alcohol, dining out at local restaurants, paying for up to ten nights hotel accommodation, visiting local attractions such as theme parks, purchasing event merchandise and sportswear, in addition to paying the registration fee to

play their sport. For example, at the State Vet's women's hockey event, many of the women were observed dancing, singing, dressing-up and drinking alcohol at the annual championship dinner. Many were also seen smuggling their own alcohol into the dinner (to avoid waiting in line at the bar), which included wine, spirits and hip flasks (Litchfield and Dionigi 2011, 2012). During the day, some of these women were seen drinking alcohol on the sidelines, playing hockey while wearing crazy hats or wigs and having whacky team mascots (like a mannequin family dressed in a team's uniform). Several women explained how they play practical jokes on each other at their hotel, such as placing 'glad wrap' over the toilet seat. Similar party-goers were seen at the Pan Pacs and AMG wearing hats made of beer cartons and t-shirts promoting the drinking of wine while at the playing fields during the day. One particular shirt worn by two middle-aged women at the State Vet's was embroidered with 'My drinking team has a hockey problem' (Litchfield and Dionigi 2012: 182).

The Pan Pacs, WMG and AMG events each had scheduled entertainment every night for ten nights that included live music, opening and closing ceremonies and other social activities. In addition, individual teams and sporting clubs organised their own social functions that often involved dining out and consuming alcohol. At the Pan Pacs, one particular team of 40–50 years old female hockey players were overheard complaining about feeling 'hung over' after attending a 1980s-style party the night before. One participant further explained that she needed to start feeling better as she was heading out again ('to party on') the following night. At the Pan Pacs Opening Ceremony, groups of both men and women were dressed in costumes; however, more middle-aged women were in attendance than men. Two male baseball teams' costumes included beer drinking tube hats and Hawaiian shirts. One female netball player was dressed up as Wonder Woman and another female basketball player was an elaborate Egyptian Pharaoh, who explained that she had been designing, buying for and planning her costume for a year. Other female teams were seen wearing 'Dollar Store' items such as pink cat ears and gloves, matching green wigs and devil horns. Interestingly, when a female 'Myths & Legends' basketball team (as indicated on their team shirts)

was observed leaving the celebration early, they explained that it was because they felt they were 'not organised for it' (meaning that because they did not have a costume, they felt they did not belong).

Moreover, at the Pan Pacs, women softball players were seen consuming soft drinks and alcohol and, at the conclusion of one game, three players were seen smoking cigarettes immediately after coming off the field. Similarly, at the men's baseball several players lit up a cigarette or drank from a bottle of beer as soon as they came off the pitch. One man in a 45-years-plus team was wearing a pink fluffy hat with four pink fake penises protruding from it. He explained that he had won the 'Dickhead Award' from his teammates for making an error on the sporting field. He also explained that he had been consuming alcohol for five nights straight so he 'didn't stay long at the Opening Ceremony because [he] couldn't keep up and then keep playing' baseball twice per day for the eight days of competition at the Pan Pacs event. These findings do not seem to align with the 'healthy lifestyles' arguments used to promote such Games (and health promotion discourses in general). Our data also appear to contradict claims often made by exercise scientists that Masters athletes are typically 'healthier' than their contemporaries.

## Targeting the Fit, Performing, Touring Body

At the same time, and in contrast to the partying described above, our research has found that performance-focused athletes at the Masters Games seem to resent the idea that Masters sport is 'just for fun' (Dionigi 2010b, 2008). They go to some lengths to emphasise it as 'serious competition' and distance themselves from the sport 'party-goers'. Many individual athletes at multi-sport events like the AMG and WMG have expressed that the latter group are primarily from team sports and 'not *real* athletes'. However, we have found that athletes from both individual sports and team sports equally describe the 'killer instinct' or 'white line fever' that takes over their bodies and minds once they hit the sporting track or field. For example, women from the State Vet's hockey said: 'I enjoy the competitive side because I like winning' (52 years); and 'I am a pretty

competitive person. I enjoy it but like to win' (54 years; Dionigi 2008; Litchfield and Dionigi 2011, 2012; Dionigi et al. 2012). At the track and field stadia during the WMG, AMG and the Pan Pacs, many middle-aged individuals were observed using the latest sporting equipment and accessories, such as starting blocks and spikes, and were seen wearing brightly-coloured, scant, tight sporting apparel similar to what one would witness at the Olympics.

Individual events, such as track and field, swimming and golf, at the WMG, AMG and Pan Pacs, and certain team events (netball and basketball), were professionally officiated and organised. Athletes in individual events were seen warming up from 30 minutes to over an hour on the outskirts of athletic stadia, courts, pools or golf ranges and/or at specific venues set aside for event preparation. These participants were usually on their own, rarely seen interacting with others. The stands at swimming and athletic events were full of spectators, who primarily appeared to be family members of the participants as they were heard cheering 'Go Grand-dad' or 'Go Mum'! Personal best performances and winning were valued by participants at the AMG, WMG and Pan Pacs as swimmers, runners and throwers were overheard discussing their times or distances with each other. The results table and scoreboards at the athletic and swimming events were the most crowded locations onsite, as participants eagerly looked up their times, distances and/or placings after their performances. If finishing in the top three, participants either proceeded to collect their medal from the medal table (swimming at the Pan Pacs) or were presented with it at a ceremony (AMG and WMG). At the Pan Pacs there was a medal engraving service (\$10 each) and a massage table onsite at the swimming and athletics (\$10 for 10 minutes or \$20 for 20 minute massage). These commercial services were noticeably absent from most team sport event locations at these Games, as were the crowds and individual warm-up routines. In addition, the athletic wear, swimming costumes, tracksuits and sporting shoes being sold at the registration area for the Pan Pacs Games (described in the opening quote of this chapter) were targeting these performance-oriented athletes and such sports apparel stands were set up at their competition sites.

Market engagement and affluence certainly played a key role in the exclusive nature of the performance-orientated subculture. This financial exclusivity was pronounced at the Pan Pacs where the entry costs alone for the individual golf event was AUD\$225. Chelsea shares her reflections and experiences of the cost to play golf at the Pan Pacs:

The sport of golf is not cheap. Good golf clubs cost in excess of \$1500, golf shoes cost over \$100, golf hats, shirts and clothing a further \$200 minimum. Many of the golfers who attended the Pan Pacs event also had range finders (to work out the distance between their ball and the green), which cost over \$200. Additionally, the costs to play one round of golf can often balloon out, particularly around a golf course with lots of water hazards. Sometimes players will go through three or four balls a round, and will usually only use the best golf balls, which cost around \$8 each. During each round in the Pan Pacs event, a food van travelled around and sold food. Many of the participants purchased sandwiches, sweets and fruit during their rounds. Before or after the round of golf, lunch was often shared with the playing group, so the cost of a meal is included in the day's costs. Once golf gloves, golf tees and markers are added in the expenses for the day, golf is without a doubt expensive and exclusive.

Not only do athletes spend money on sport-related goods, many of them see their Masters Games participation as part of a larger holiday. Participants expressed willingness to spend their money on travel, visiting tourist destinations and accommodation, which is highly encouraged in the promotion of such events.

In the case of Masters sport, corporations are invited by sporting organisations to expand their markets and take advantage of the growing numbers of middle-aged and older people with disposable income. What appears notable about the Masters movement is 'the timing of corporate sponsorship relative to the program's initiation' (Hastings et al. 2005: 135). Hastings et al. (2005: 152) argue, 'Capital flourishes where the fields are already plowed and sown by someone else'. For example, the 2014 Pan Pacs was held on the Gold Coast in Queensland (QLD), Australia. It was sponsored by 'Jupiters Hotel and Casino' and the event organisers invited tourist and sporting companies to promote themselves

and sell their products at the event. Such relationships are symbiotic in a Masters sport context, as explained below in reference to Masters swimming:

The expansion of participants and spectators created a lucrative market for expensive sportswear and sports productions and made commodification possible with relatively low capital risks. The benefits were mutual: corporations profited through sales and the [sport] community reaped the rewards of legitimacy for the sport program. (Hastings et al. 2005: 151)

This growing commercial interest was strikingly clear across the three welcome messages in the *2014 Pan Pacific Masters Games Handbook*, which emphasised tourism, entertainment and participant spending:

I hope those visiting the Gold Coast for the Games take the time to stay on and discover the many tourism experiences on offer across what is a truly Famous for Fun holiday destination. (QLD Minister for Tourism: 2)

Take the chance to indulge in exceptional entertainment and dining opportunities nearby, as well as the Gold Coast's spectacular coastline, iconic rainforests and leisure activities...I hope you get the chance to experience some of the highlights of our one-of-a-kind city. (Mayor of the Gold Coast: 2)

Our entertainment and other social programs are second-to-none and a major part of our on-going success. (Chairman of Events Management QLD: 2)

While many Masters athletes take advantage of the related social program and entertainment as exemplified by the party-goers above, many other Masters Games' participants talk about where they are going after they finish competing or what tours they have been on while they were attending the games. For example, at the Pan Pacs participants were observed going to the Gold Coast theme parks and at the 2009 WMG in Sydney participants recounted their experience of climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Many AMG runners and cyclists who had travelled internationally to compete at other events explained that those competitions were part of a tour of Europe that they had arranged for themselves. At the Pan Pacs,

while some golfers described trips that were only about golf, many other participants said they planned a holiday around the major sporting event, such as travelling across parts of Australia or internationally. Travel, sight-seeing and companionship have been recognised as an important part of sports participation in middle and later life (Dionigi 2008). Our point is, however, that these participants have the leisure time, health status and funds available to support such a privileged lifestyle and the market is taking advantage of this truth.

In recognition of this new market of sport tourism, small businesses to accommodate sports participation and travel are emerging. For example, a self-proclaimed comedian and businessman, Kevin, has created Kev's Sports Tours to assist individual athletes who want to go to these Masters Games events as part of a group (<http://kstours.com.au>). The following mission statement is found on Kev's website:

**'Hold your feet on the ground but reach for the stars.'**

From **World Masters Games events** to beautiful **Golfing Tours**, Kevs Sports Tours can fulfil any travel requirement. Our mission is to actively promote and support the growth of Masters Sports both regionally and Internationally in order to improve the fitness and health of the Over 35 demographic and to help sustain the benefits in terms of tourism and International camaraderie.

Despite the enjoyable and worthwhile experience many people may have as part of Kev's tours, the above is a stark example of how the 'Sport For All ages' message is being used as a strategy for marketing and/or taking advantage of certain groups of the population, in this case active, financially comfortable retirees. In addition, at various Masters events, there were Games merchandise stands set up at event sites, such as hockey grounds, netball courts, athletic stadia and poolside. A lot of middle-aged and older athletes were seen wearing purchased merchandise including hats and t-shirts. Merchandise was also heavily advertised via email leading up to each event, as well as during and after these events. For example, after the Pan Pacs event (which was held in late October–early November) emails were sent to all registered participants which included special discounts on merchandise, with one Pan Pacs-related email message suggesting that a discounted Pan Pacs shirt, hat or bag would make a great Christmas gift.

## Manifestations of Promoting Healthy Lifestyles and Sport for All Through Marketisation

Despite the focus on tourism and participant spending on merchandise, sports apparel and entertainment, sport participation was briefly mentioned in each of the above Pan Pacs Games' handbook messages. However, its mention was primarily in regard to large participant numbers, state-of-the-art sporting facilities and dedicated volunteers. Nevertheless, the Mayor's message did link the event to 'Healthy Lifestyles' and a 'Sport for All' philosophy: 'Athletes of all sports and levels are at home in our well-equipped, friendly city—from elite competitors to those seeking a healthier lifestyle' (p. 2). Correspondingly, Ryan and Trauer argue that, 'The third reason for the extension of the Masters games programme lies in the wish to facilitate participation across all age groups and levels of fitness in the belief that active participation is beneficial to older members of society' (2005: 178). As we were writing this chapter, an email landed in the first author's inbox with the following subject line: 'Your New Years Resolution: The Americas Masters Games'. The body of the email began with the following:

Hi Rylee, The first-ever Americas Masters Games is taking place in the spectacular city of Vancouver.

Celebrating 'sport for all', participants from a variety of skill sets and ages come together in the name of healthy living to compete, socialize, and conquer personal goals. With 25 official sporting events, there is something for everybody, including you!

In light of the findings we have presented in this chapter, it is important to take stock of this 'Sport for All = Healthy Living' orthodoxy.

The Masters Games are promoted as part of the health and fitness, 'Sport For All', mantra. We have provided evidence of the various manifestations of public health policy in action within the commercialised Masters sport context. The reality is that the practices of the sport party-goers make it difficult for Masters Games' promoters and stakeholders to claim that Masters event participants are 'healthier' than anyone else in

the adult population. In addition, the economic exclusivity of the performance-oriented athletes and sport travellers contradict the inclusive Sport for All discourse. The performance-orientated athlete and the sport traveller sub-cultures were clearly dominated by the financially comfortable middle-class groups who were fit to perform and travel, as well as pay for accommodation, sports clothing and equipment and tourist attractions. These latter groups see Masters sport as part of an already-active lifestyle. Therefore, regardless of Masters sport's benefits and how sport is promoted, it is often a place where like-minded, middle-class, active people gather to party, play and/or purchase, which has created and expanded market niches that value particular ways of ageing.

In contemporary Western society, the ageing body has become known as something that can be continually worked on and managed until death (Bauman 2005), not only for the good of oneself, but for the good of society. This shift has contributed to middle-aged and older people becoming the valued targets of anti-ageing products, markets and services that promote youthfulness, consumerism and active living under the banner of 'Sport for All', 'Active Ageing' or 'Healthy Lifestyles' (Gilleard and Higgs 2000, 2013). In particular:

Ageless athletic activity is more than a deliberate tactic of seeking distinction and power through 'age resistance'. It is part of a broader social response to the changing balance between work and leisure, reflecting what Bauman has characterised as a shift from a society of producers to a society of consumers. (Gilleard and Higgs 2013: 141)

On the one hand it appears that today's middle-agers, who were the focus of this chapter, are an embodiment of Sport for All promotion policies and consumer markets that aim to challenge traditional views of ageing, as well as see individuals as capable of controlling their health and bodies through their lifestyle and consumer choices. On the other hand, if individuals are expected to be consumers, exert control of their own ageing and embody the moral imperative not to become old (Bauman 2000; Jones and Higgs 2010) then 'This moves the idea of health in later life away from the concerns of health and social policy and towards a further engagement with consumer markets', (Gilleard and Higgs 2013: 138).

## Concluding Thoughts

Sport, exercise and physical activity are now promoted to all and, over time, have become more individualised, commercialised and integrated 'into the broader 'lifestyles' of those no longer young' (Gilleard and Higgs 2013: 143). Collectively, the findings presented in this chapter describe how participants are leading a highly leisured, active and social lifestyle. At the same time, our findings on the sub-cultures at the Masters Games raise fundamental questions about risks, equity and access. Ultimately, the sport party-goer, performance-oriented athlete and sport traveller sub-cultures appear to represent the death of the Sport for All ideal that founded the Masters movement. Or, at the very least, they are symptomatic of the evolving nature of this phenomenon in a capitalist society.

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