



Retirement and Its Discontents, Retirement and Its Opportunities

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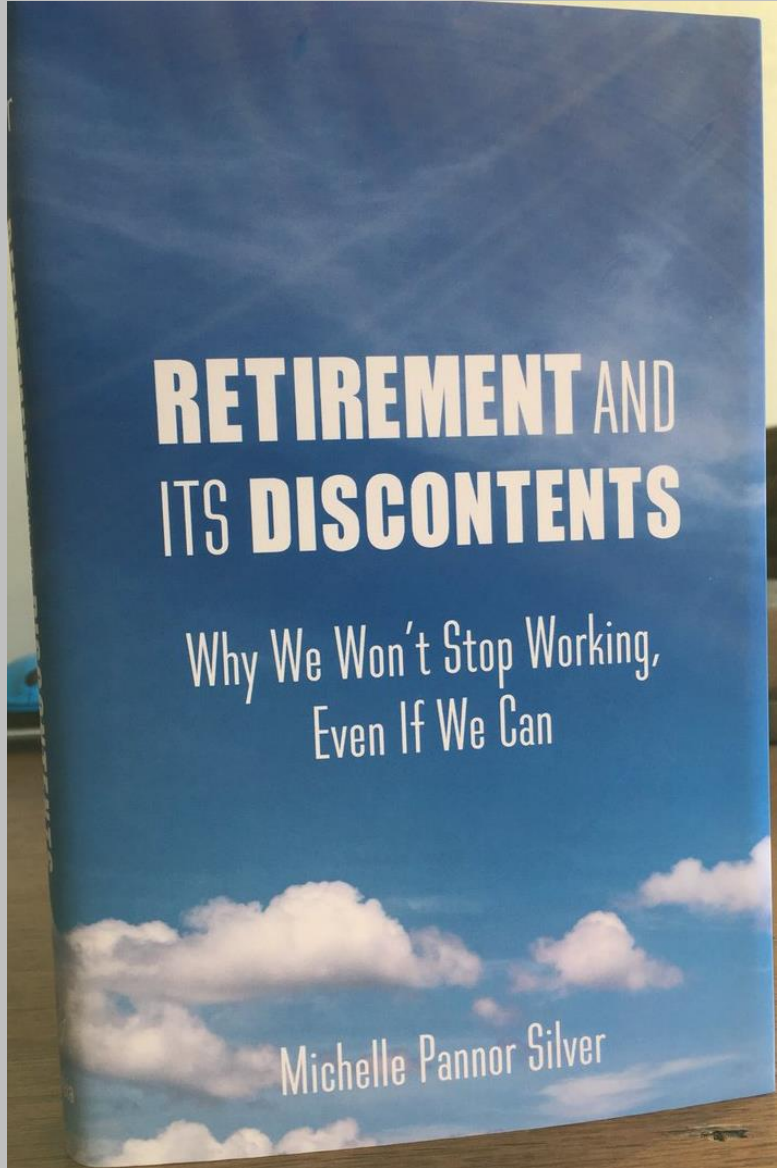
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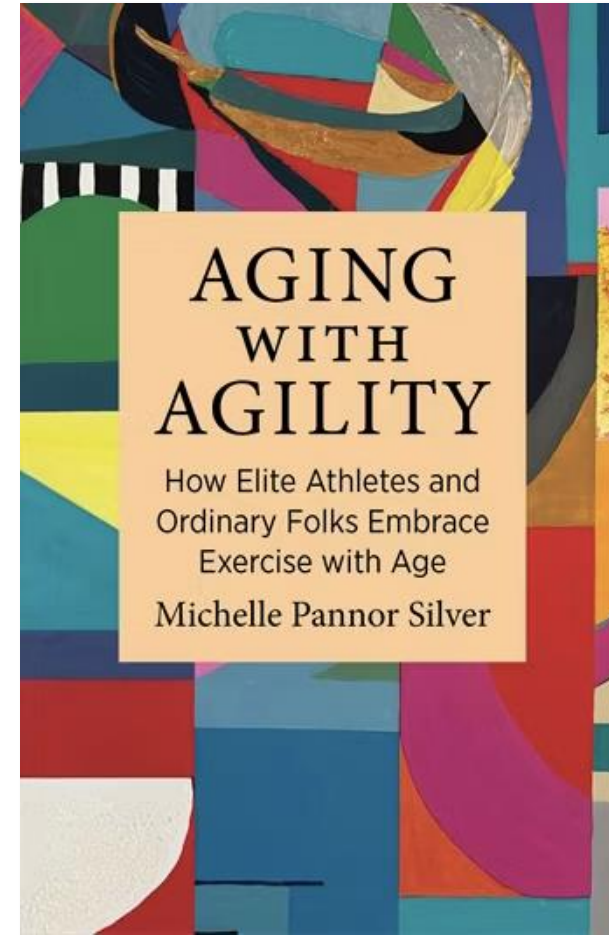
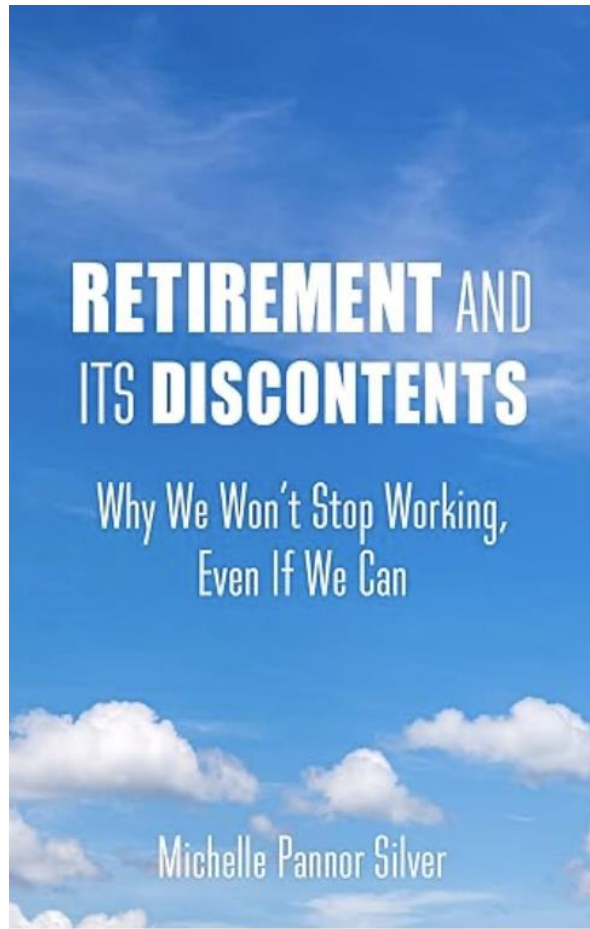
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the retirement paradox

by michelle pannor silver

“I wake up and every day is nearly identical. If I look at the news, my body, or my bank account, I see that things change. But otherwise, I’ve become irrelevant.” The feeling of becoming extraneous is not unique to Hollis, who is now a decade into retirement. Hollis feels the contrarities of being well into mature adulthood, with an unknown amount of time ahead and yet living each day with a great deal of flexibility. Once every day of the week is similar to the weekend, does life become a holiday? What does it mean when a person declares themselves as retired? And better yet, what does it mean when an entire segment of society is deemed done with work?

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The Unbearable Lightness of Being Retired

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RÉSUMÉ

Dans cette étude qualitative, j’ai utilisé une approche fondée sur la gérontologie narrative pour examiner les perceptions liées à la retraite dans un groupe de 26 hommes et femmes qui ont pris leur retraite après un mandat de chef de la direction. Le guide d’entrevue a pris en compte la perspective du parcours de vie. Trois thèmes clés ont émergé : 1) l’importance de la productivité et du réseautage, alors que les participants gravissaient les échelons de l’entreprise ; 2) le sentiment d’avoir une date « meilleur avant » et d’avoir cédé aux pressions de la société en faveur de la retraite ; et 3) l’impression troublante de se sentir insignifiant à la retraite tout en ayant le désir de poursuivre l’épanouissement personnel en continuant à travailler contre rémunération. Après une carrière marquée par des réalisations pionnières, les participants ont éprouvé un sentiment insoutenable de légèreté lors de l’abandon des responsabilités professionnelles. Ces résultats mettent en lumière l’importance de la perspective de parcours de vie pour examiner la retraite à la fois comme une expérience personnelle et un phénomène social. Les résultats contribuent également à la compréhension théorique du vieillissement productif en illustrant comment les idées préconçues sur la productivité contrastent avec les aspirations associées à une retraite remplie de loisirs, d’une manière qui pourrait réduire les contributions à l’emploi de certaines personnes.

ABSTRACT

In this qualitative study, I followed an approach to examine perceptions about retirement, using an interview guide informed by the life course perspective, among 26 men and women who had retired from positions as chief executive officers. Three key themes emerged: (1) the importance of productivity and networking as participants rose up the corporate ladder; (2) the sense of having a “best before” date and experiencing societal pressures to retire; and (3) struggles with feeling insignificant in retirement while desiring personal fulfillment through continued engagement in paid work. These findings shed light on the value of using a life course perspective to examine retirement as both a personal experience and as a social phenomenon. Findings also contribute to theoretical understandings of productive aging by illustrating how preconceptions about productivity contrast with ideations of a leisure-filled retirement in ways that can foreshorten the employment contributions of some individuals.

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Introduction

Since the oldest baby boomers turned 65 in 2011, approximately 10,000 people in the United States alone cross over the threshold of traditional retirement age every day (Cohn & Taylor, 2010). Today, nearly

15 per cent of the population in North America and 20 per cent in countries like Japan, Germany, and Italy are older than 65 (World Bank Group, 2016). In Canada, the proportion of people aged 65 and older now exceeds the proportion of children under 15 years old (Statistics

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“Why Give Up Something That Works So Well?” : Retirement Expectations Among Academic Physicians

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For individuals with strong work identities, the decision to retire can be particularly challenging. For academic physicians, retirement is an important personal decision that also has far-reaching implications for the healthcare system. This is because academic physicians are responsible for producing the research from which key medical decisions are made, for training future healthcare providers, and for providing specialized care for patients. For this study, we conducted focus groups with academic physicians from a large research university in Canada and then performed inductive thematic analyses to examine perceptions and concerns about later life career transitions. This study highlights tensions between professional experiences for the next generation of physicians and individual struggles with personal identity. Findings suggest improvements to institutional programs that support flexible, adaptive, and respectful retirement transitions will not only be beneficial but necessary as medical and university systems continue to grapple with issues of balanced recruitment and succession.

Academic physicians produce much of the research from which key medical decisions are made. They also play a critical role in the healthcare system by providing specialized and advanced care for patients and by educating future physicians. The uniquely demanding and distinguished role that this elite subgroup of physicians fills renders their retirement an important later life transition with implications at individual and societal levels. While prior research points to high levels of dissatisfaction (Bouwkamp-Wimmer, Whiston, & Hartung, 2013), burnout (Dyrbye & Shanafelt, 2011), and attrition within academic medicine at relatively early career stages (Alexander & Long, 2000; Schneider et al., 2006; Shanafelt, Sloan, & Habermann, 2003), less is known about academic physicians’ retirement expectations.

A number of studies have warned of the societal implications of early physician retirement (Pill & Hansen, 2014; Baba, 2012; Jones Anolaga, Papazian, & Azoulay, 2011). In Canada,

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When Working Out Works Out: Program Administrators' Perspectives on Seniors' Exercise Participation

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ABSTRACT

This study examined factors that inhibit and promote exercise engagement from the perspective of individuals who administer exercise programming for seniors in a region of Canada with a large and diverse immigrant population. Eight focus group discussions about exercise and aging were examined using thematic analysis. A socioecological framework was applied to develop cross-cutting themes about factors that promote seniors' exercise engagement. This study highlights the following as factors to consider when addressing multiple barriers to seniors' exercise participation: the role of athletic identity in relation to participants' cumulative life experiences, gender differences, and the importance of offering intergenerational environments. Future research should focus on perceptions of athletic identity among seniors from ethno-culturally diverse communities to examine the role of prior exposure to sport and the views on single-gendered programming.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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KEYWORDS

Athletic identity; ethno-culturally diverse communities; intergenerational activities; program administrators' perspectives; qualitative research; seniors' exercise participation; socioecological framework

In spite of the widely acknowledged benefits of regular exercise for mature adults (Ip et al., 2013; King, Rejeski, & Buchner, 1998; Kosma & Cardinal, 2016; Pahor et al., 2014), the rates of physical inactivity have increased in recent years among adults 60 years old and over (American Physical Therapy Association, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2015; United Health Foundation, 2015). Older immigrants and mature community members from diverse ethno-cultural communities tend to be less physically active compared with mature adults in the general population (Evenson, Buchner, & Morland, 2011; Fischbacher, Hunt, & Alexander, 2004; Gerber, Barker, & Pühse, 2012; Tremblay, Bryan, Pérez, Arden, & Katzmarzyk, 2006; Wang & Beydoun, 2007). Numerous barriers to engagement in regular exercise for seniors have been identified through systematic reviews of studies that examine the perspectives of older participants directly (i.e. Baert, Gorus, Mets, Geerts, & Bautmans, 2011; Bunn, Dickinson, Barnett-Page, McCine, & Horton, 2008; Franco et al., 2015; Koenenman,

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Adaptation to Athletic Retirement and Perceptions About Aging: A Qualitative Study of Retired Olympic Athletes

Michelle Pannor Silver

Self-perceptions about aging have implications for health and well-being; however, less is known about how these perceptions influence adaptation to major life transitions. The goal of this study was to examine how high-performance athletes' perceptions about aging influenced their adaptation to athletic retirement. In-depth interviews conducted with 24 retired Olympic athletes using thematic analysis yielded three key themes: (a) perceptions about aging influenced participants' postretirement exercise habits, (b) perceptions about aging motivated participants to engage in civic activities, and (c) participants who lacked formative perceptions about aging associated their athletic retirement with their own lost sense of purpose. These findings provide evidence that perceptions about aging influence athletes' adaptation to retirement by directing their subsequent engagement in postretirement activities. Furthermore, this research highlights theoretical implications for the literature regarding embodied processes, retirement transitions, role models, and adaptation to new physical states.

Keywords: embodiment theory, physical fitness, qualitative research analysis, role models

Evidence suggests that an individual's perceptions about aging can influence their health outcomes later in life, as well as how they adapt to life transitions (Levy, 2009; Levy & Myers, 2004; Pelsers et al., 2018). This holds relevance for high-performance athletes, who tend to experience retirement early in their lives due to injury or because they are deemed too old to compete (Huxley, O'Connor, & Healey, 2013; Lavalée, Gordon, & Grove, 1997). In both cases, but particularly for those who have sustained injuries, retired athletes are forced to adapt from the experience of inhabiting privileged bodies, capable of demonstrating the limits of athletic potential, to living in bodies in which they must reproduce their sense of social purpose. Unsurprisingly, prior literature demonstrates that retirement can be a difficult transition for athletes by prompting a recalibration of their identities away from athletic focus (Cosh, Cosh, & LeCouteur, 2012; Grove, Lavalée, & Gordon, 1997; Stirling, Cruz, & Kerr, 2012). What remains less understood is how high-performance athletes' perceptions about aging influence their adaptation to athletic retirement. This study examined the retirement experiences of high-performance athletes from different sports and stages in life to gain a better understanding of how their perceptions about aging influenced their adaptation to athletic retirement.

High-performance athletes push their bodies to the farthest limits of what humans are physically capable of. At the peak of their athletic careers, they are admired for achieving seemingly impossible physical standards. However, the extreme demands of high-level sports can limit athletes' development of well-rounded interests at early stages in their lives (Barker-Riechi, Scheibing, Post, & Patterson, 2019; Lavalée, 2005; Stambolova, Stephan, & Japhag, 2007). Once they retire, high-performance athletes are often pushed to disengage from the world of sport, and many tend to struggle to find new forms of employment (Martin, Fogarty, & Albison, 2013), to find social support and people they can confide

in (Lavalée, 2006; Park, Lavalée, & Tod, 2013), and feel abandoned by society (Miller & Kerr, 2002; Warner & Lavalée, 2008). Being forced into retirement can exacerbate the challenges associated with the transition (Martin et al., 2013). Retirement from sport has been associated with other challenges such as eating disorders (Jones, Glimmevay, & McKenzie, 2005), low self-confidence (Stephan, Torregrosa, & Sanchez, 2007), substance abuse (Mannes et al., 2019), and even suicide (Malcolm & Scott, 2012).

Self-Perceptions of Aging

Across multiple cultures, stereotypes about aging have been directly linked to individuals' perceptions about aging (Lackenhoff et al., 2009) in ways that influence their health, habits, and behaviors, including participation in physical activity and sport (Beyer, Wiest, & Wurm, 2019; Knowles, Niven, & Fawcner, 2013; Tuttle, 2017). The term "self-perceptions of aging" has been used to refer to an individual's perception of their own age and aging process (Levy, 2001; Sneed & Whitbourne, 2005). Numerous studies illustrate the importance of self-perceptions about aging in the context of successful aging (i.e., Kotter-Grühn & Hess, 2012; Romo et al., 2013; Wurm, Warner, Ziegelmann, Wolff, & Schütz, 2013), suggesting that positive ideas about aging are associated with more favorable health outcomes such as being physically active and greater longevity (e.g., Levy, Slade, Kunkei, & Kasl, 2002; Wurm, Tomasik, & Tesch-Römer, 2010). In some contrast, other research finds that positive age stereotypes did not positively influence self-perceptions of aging and that positive age stereotypes made participants feel older (Kotter-Grühn & Hess, 2012), raising questions regarding whether and how perceptions about aging interact with life transitions in different contexts. These contrasting empirical observations highlight a need for further research and beg the question of what it means to be "successful" with age.

Stereotype embodiment theory posits that individuals internalize socially constructed negative views into their perceptions about their own aging, thereby creating self-fulfilling prophecies,

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Adaptation to life after sport for retired athletes: A scoping review of existing reviews and programs

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Abstract

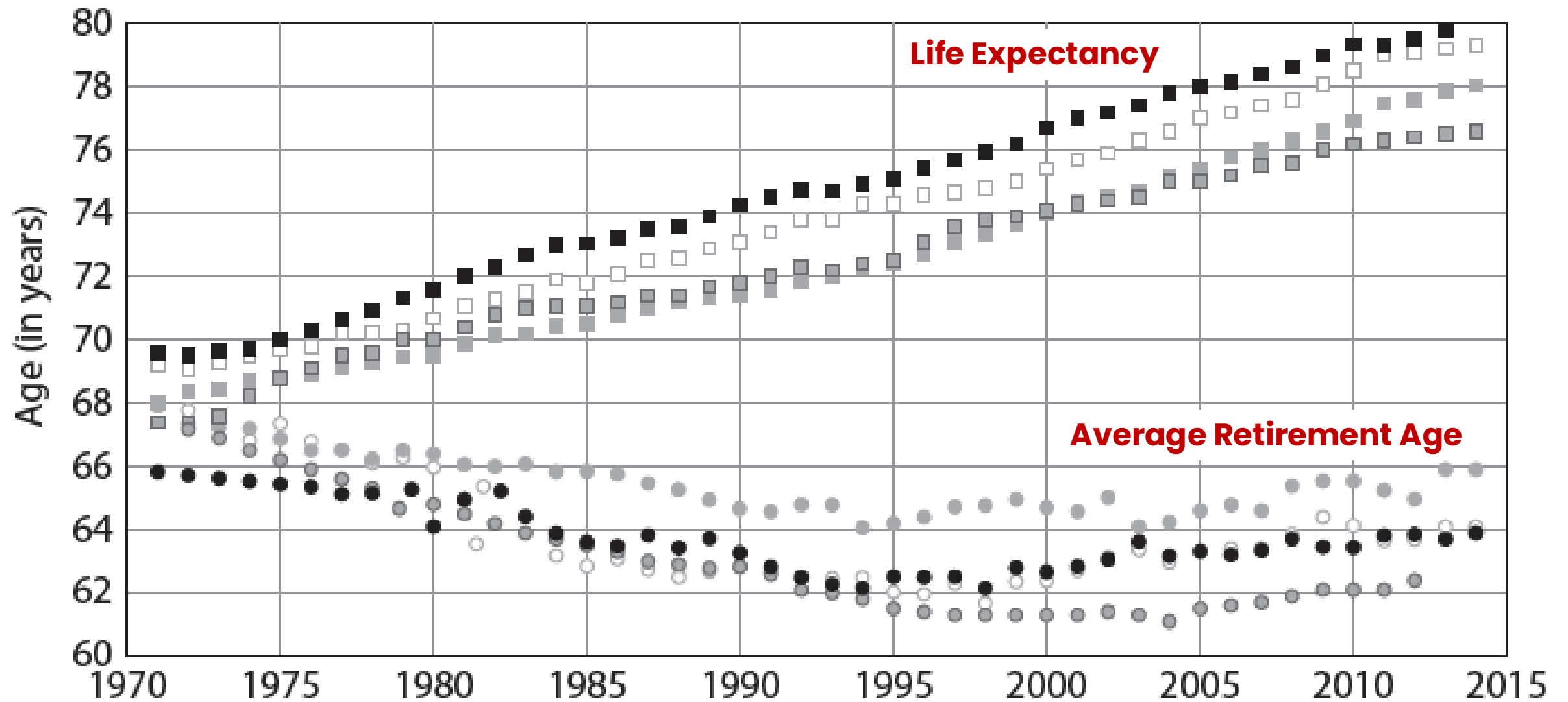
Retirement from sport is a life transition that has significant implications for athletes' physical and mental health, as well as their social and professional development. Although extensive work has been done to review the retirement experiences of athletes, relatively less work has been done to examine and reflect on this expansive body of literature with a pragmatic aim of deciding what needs to happen to better support retiring athletes. This study used scoping review methodology to review current academic reviews, gray literature articles, and support programs on athletic retirement. This review followed the Joanna Briggs Institute reviewer's manual guide on scoping reviews and adhered to the PRISMA-ScR checklist. Academic articles were identified from PubMed, Embase, Web of Science and Scopus. Gray literature articles and support programs were identified using advanced Google searches. This study identified 23 academic reviews, 44 gray literature articles, and 15 support programs. Generally, the results suggest that athletic retirement encompasses a drastic shift in identity, a loss of social networks, a lack of career ambitions, and potential risks to physical and mental health. While there was a gap in the academic literature regarding practical strategies to support retiring athletes, the gray literature suggests many creative ideas. Stepwise programming may be beneficial to help athletes: (a) make sense of their athletic experience and see retirement as an ongoing process; (b) develop a well-rounded sense of self identity and understand how to apply their unique skills and strengths in new ways; (c) gain control over their retirement transition by establishing a clear plan and adjusting to new routines and opportunities; and (4) normalize the transition experience by "living in the next" and building confidence in new life directions. Future research may benefit from developing and evaluating more programming to support athletes through the retirement transition.

Introduction

Background

Retirement from a high-performance sport is a life transition that has significant implications for physical and mental health, as well as social and professional development [1]. Athletic





Source: Silver, M. P. (2018). *Retirement and Its Discontents: Why we won't stop working, even if we can*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Part II

Strategies

Financial
Planning

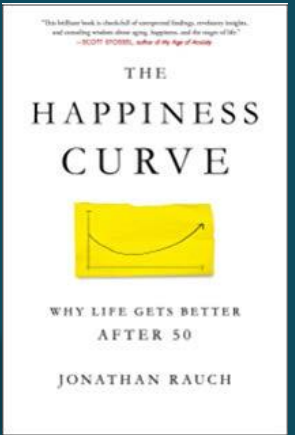
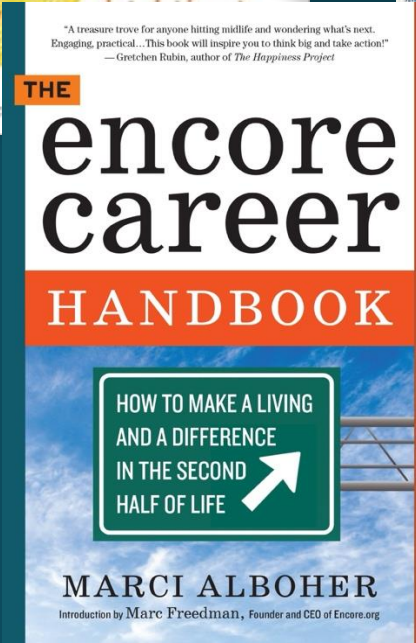
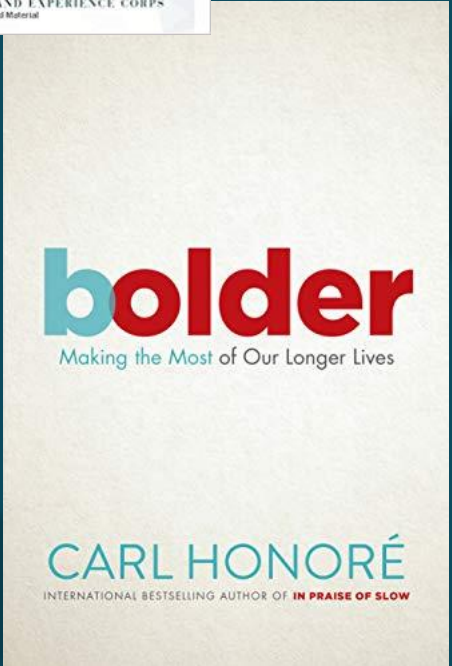
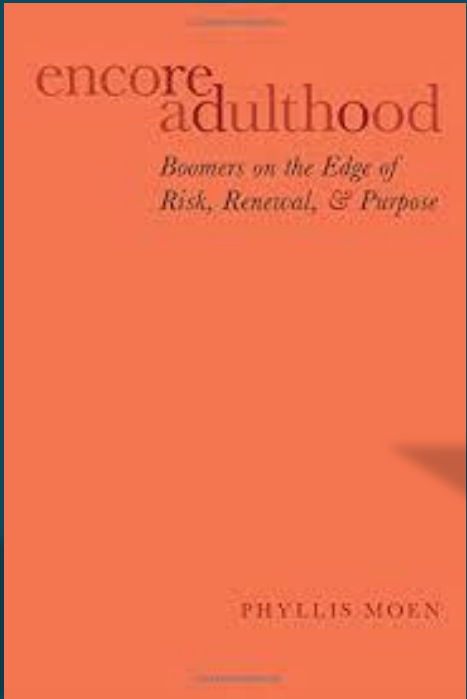
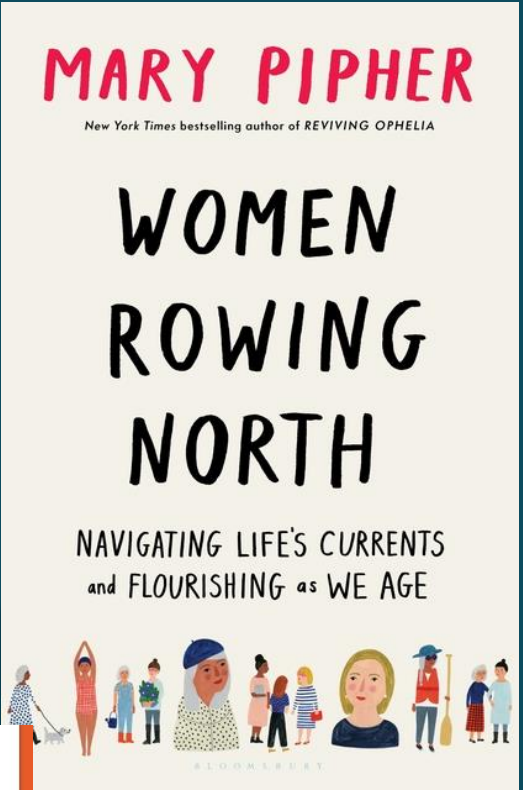
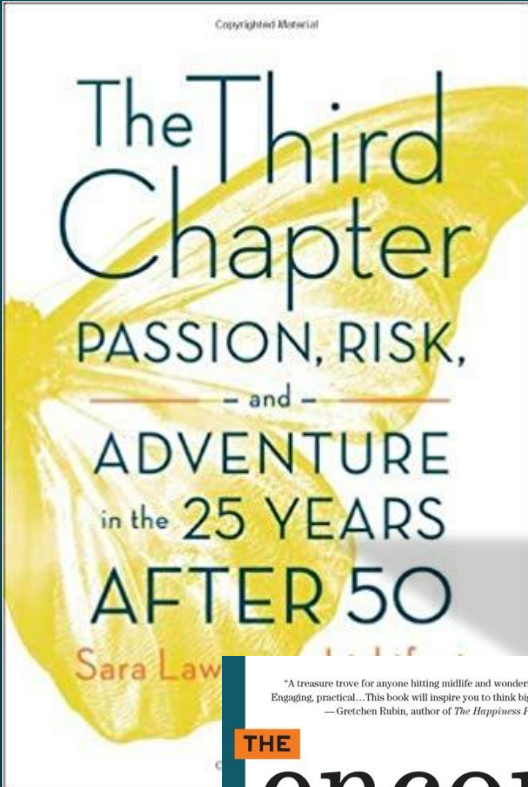
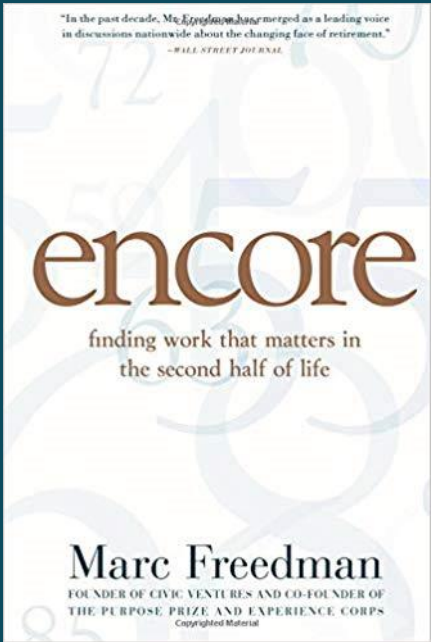
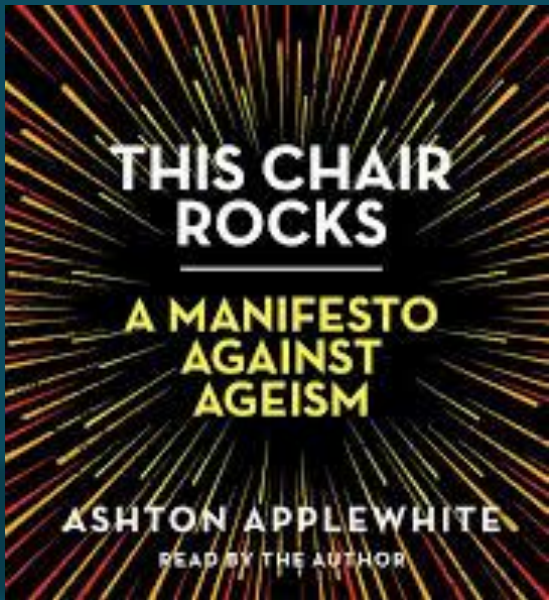
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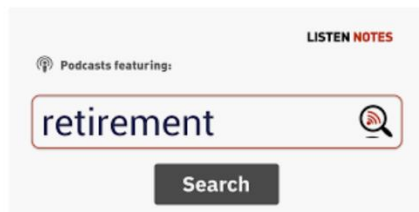
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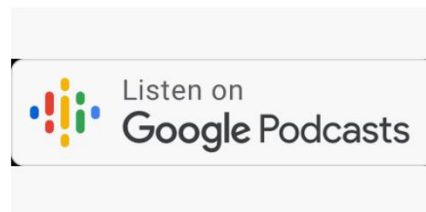
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