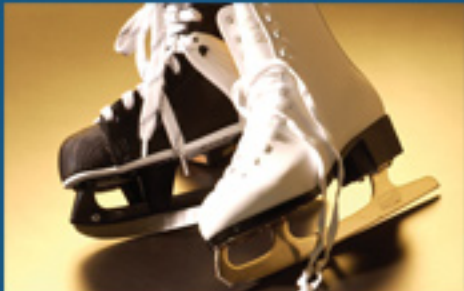




# Environmental Scan 2010: Trends and Issues in Canada and in Sport



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# Highlights

Theme	Trend	Questions for Sport in Canada
<i>Diversity</i>	Canada will continue to receive a significant number of immigrants each year, ensuring continued growth in diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do sport organizations and practitioners have the skills and knowledge to manage the increasingly varied sets of beliefs, values and expectations?</li> </ul>
<i>Religion</i>	The religious make-up of Canada continues to evolve rapidly due to immigration and changing religious perspectives and attachments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are sport organizations prepared to address the changing religious make-up of Canadians, and the possible accommodations this will require?</li> </ul>
<i>Public Space</i>	The ways in which Canadians meet and interact is changing, in some instances encouraging greater public dialogue and civic participation around certain issues, especially by certain groups. The digital commons is playing an important role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can sport organizations take advantage of these new public spaces?</li> <li>• Could sport organizations be encouraging greater participation and a shared sense of community via these new public commons?</li> </ul>
<i>Work</i>	Canadians work more than they used, and distinctions between work and leisure have become blurred.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the shifting work/leisure paradigm affect sport participation?</li> </ul>
<i>Global Citizens</i>	Canadians are carrying out their everyday lives with increasingly global perspectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How might considerations of Canadian youth as global citizens shape sport policy developments across Canada?</li> </ul>
<i>Changing Nature of Leisure and Consumption</i>	Canadians are traveling abroad to participate in meaningful philanthropic experiences, such as working on projects through Habitat for Humanity or Earthwatch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How should or could sport organizations position themselves to respond to changing preoccupations and interests of Canadians in their leisure time?</li> </ul>
<i>Technology / Open and Transparent</i>	Canadians increasingly expect governments, non-government organizations, businesses and other institutions to conduct their affairs in a more open, transparent manner that incorporates public opinion and feedback into decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are sports organizations in Canada responding to these changing expectations of Canadians?</li> <li>• Do sports organizations have the capacity to function in a more open, participatory manner?</li> </ul>

<i>Economy</i>	While Canada continues to see a rebound after the recent recession, the next few years should see slowed growth, lower productivity, indebted Canadians and governments more interested in cutting spending rather than investing in programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As Canadians begin to feel the burden of their extremely high levels of personal debt, how can sports organizations ensure that Canadians are still able to participate in sport?</li> <li>• Given the impending government cuts to programs, how will sport fare in the coming years?</li> </ul>
<i>Sport Participation</i>	Canada is changing, and sport is changing and the clearest indication of this is the decrease in sport participation. An aging population, Canada's changing demographic profile, and a shortage of leisure time are all important factors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can sport organizations adjust to respond to the changes in Canadian society?</li> <li>• Is it realistic for any one organization to reach out to all Canadians, or do sport organizations need to start targeting sub-populations of Canadian society?</li> </ul>
<i>Gender</i>	Gender issues in sport have become increasingly complex, from the organizational to the personal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do practitioners have the capacity to respond appropriately to the demands being placed upon them?</li> </ul>
<i>Evolving Operating Environment</i>	With limited funds, and a rapidly changing landscape for elite and recreational athletes, the compromises made between supporting elite athletes and widespread participation are becoming more difficult.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do sport organizations in Canada have a clear understanding of their objectives?</li> <li>• How can we ensure that funds are being used effectively?</li> </ul>
<i>Increasing Costs of Sport</i>	Hosting games has become a complex and expensive undertaking. Pandemics, terrorist threats, and social protests all complicate hosting. At the individual level, Canadians are spending more on sports than at any time in the past.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can economic and social benefits be better monitored and evaluated during and after the hosting of events?</li> <li>• As the cost of sport participation continues to increase, what can be done to ensure that all Canadians have the opportunity to play in organized sport?</li> </ul>
<i>Sport Structures</i>	The increasing focus on competencies, skills and specialization might be turning away some Canadians who don't appreciate this rigidity in their valued leisure time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it possible for sports organizations to find the right balance between encouraging the development of skills and competencies while at the same time ensuring that sport remains fun and accessible?</li> </ul>

<i>Value of Sport</i>	The purpose and values of sport are not the same for everyone. Some focus on winning and competition, while others privilege enjoyment and fun.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can sports organizations best approach issues that are primarily value-laden, especially given the great diversity of the Canadian population?</li> </ul>
<i>Results-based sport</i>	In today's deficit-fighting and accountability environment any public funds dedicated to sport need to demonstrate results to survive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can monitoring and evaluation be realistically incorporated into sports programming given the complexity involved, and the uneven capacity across organizations to do so?</li> </ul>



# Introduction

This scan identifies key trends and developments that are likely to play an important role in shaping the social, cultural, economic, governmental and sport landscape in Canada in the coming 10-15 years.

The areas for inclusion in this document encompass a broad spectrum of issues that have the capacity to impact Canadians, and therefore potentially how Canadians relate to sport. While some trends in this document might not seem linked to sport issues, it is important to note the sport choices Canadians make are not linked only to sports trends and issues, but to a combination of factors. This environmental scan attempts to summarize important trends and issues in many areas of Canadians' lives.

## Methodology

The methodology employed for this environmental scan consisted of a two-pronged approach:

1) broad-based consultations with researchers and policy analysts at the Department of Canadian Heritage, including Sport Canada; and, 2) systematic media and literature searches within categories and sub-categories of inquiry.

The broad-based consultations were held on three themes: technology, society and international affairs. For each of these themes, participants worked to identify those trends most likely to significantly impact Canadian society in the next 10-15 years. One of two additional sessions with Sport Canada focused exclusively on trends in sport.

The media and literature searches were carried out by systematically searching trends, issues and recent research in pre-defined areas of interest. The environmental scan was broken into the following over-arching categories: Demographics, Society, Environment, Technology, Governance, Economy and Sport. Findings from this two-pronged approach were compared and integrated in order to produce the summaries found in this document.

# Demographics

## Age

As of July 1, 2009, the median age of Canada's population was 39.5 years. Canada still has one of the lowest proportions of seniors among the OECD countries. The number of people aged 65 years or over is projected to surpass the number of children aged less than 14 years or under, between 2015 and 2021, a first in Canadian history.

## Density

Nearly 90% of Canada's population growth between 2001 and 2006 was concentrated in large metropolitan areas, according to the 2006 Census. There are some signs that newcomers are choosing the smaller metropolitan areas.

## Youth

While young adults are less likely to vote than those over 30, they engage in non-political activities (e.g. searching for information on a political issue, signing a petition) at the same proportion as 30- to 64-year olds. The youth crime rate has remained stable over the past decade, but the rate has been increasing since the mid-1980s.

## Migration & Mobility

According to the 2006 Census, the percentages of Canadians who moved, migrated or changed provinces were at their lowest levels since 1971. International migrants represented 19.8% of the total population in the 2006 Census, the highest proportion in 75 years.

## Aboriginals

The number of reported Aboriginal persons surpassed the one-million mark in the 2006 Census. The median age of the Aboriginal population was 27 years. Of the total Aboriginal population, 25% lived in nine of Canada's 33 census metropolitan areas.

## Language

Almost all Canadians (98%) can speak one or both official languages. The share of the allophone population grew from 18% in 2001 to 20% in 2006. More than 200 mother tongue languages were reported in the 2006 Census. The Chinese languages are the third largest mother tongue group.





# Society

## Public Space: Offline + Online

### *Physical Public Space*

Public spaces such as the town square, community post office and public sports fields are becoming less integral to Canadian community life. Both the geography and [design](#) of our communities discourages citizens from inhabiting public spaces, as their distance to most residents has grown, and as their numbers have declined.

Further, there continues to be an important migration to the suburbs, especially for [young families](#), [new Canadians](#) and those buying their first homes. The automobile remains the most popular mode of transportation, allowing residents to inhabit a greater part of their city, but affecting how public space is accessed and maintained.

### *Digital Public Space*

While physical public space has become sparser and more difficult to access informally, digital technologies have allowed for community engagement in virtual “places” that assemble geographically dispersed citizens.

Research suggests that activity online does not result in lesser engagement offline, but rather facilitates this in some instances, for example, by leading to physical encounters between citizens for a common purpose or interest. In some cases, the Internet is making up for challenges to public space that has been confronting North America for decades.

## Civic Engagement

There is often a concern that online distractions could be resulting in decreasing levels of volunteerism, physical activity and other forms of civic engagement. Youth today have less knowledge of government, formal politics and current events than previous generations; yet, it has also become clear that civic engagement can be supported by online activity.

## Work, Leisure and Volunteering

While it has been suggested that the concept of a work/leisure divide is no longer useful in an age where the lines between production and self-expression are blurred, research shows that Canadians work more than they used to and have less leisure time. There has also been an increase in non-standard work and precarious work, especially for women and new Canadians. This results in reduced levels of participation in cultural, sport and volunteering activities.



While volunteering has increased overall in Canada, time given specifically to culture and recreation organizations has decreased. In sport specifically, volunteering as coaches and administrators showed notable increases, while the number of referees, officials, and umpires decreased.

Sport and recreation make up the largest component of the volunteering sector in Canada, and Canada's volunteering sector is the second-largest in the world. In Canada, the number of sport volunteers totals 2.2 million in 33,649 sports organizations. This is more than any other sub-sector including: arts and culture, religion, health and social service.

## Always Online

### *Stimulus Overload / Distraction*

The Internet and its increasingly mobile and ubiquitous nature allow for greater public discourse and engagement. However, while the ability to access information has increased, an individual's capacity to absorb information has remained relatively unchanged.

Research is showing that the new technologies are changing how we think and behave. The ability to focus is decreased in an environment of overwhelming information, and despite a widespread belief that multi-tasking makes us more productive, research shows the opposite. Not only do heavy multi-taskers have difficulties in filtering out irrelevant information, but they also experience greater levels of stress.

### *Individuals in a Connected World*

Because youth feel an increasing need to stay connected on-line, leisure activities that take them off-line, especially for long periods of time, will likely suffer. Activities that are based on socializing, however, such as organized and informal sports could benefit.

This 24/7 connectedness is also placing new demands on athlete and sport organizations to provide constant updates and to use new technology. There are significant costs and expectations attached to these digital technologies and results management platforms. Not only does this include instantaneousness and a high degree of transparency, but also expectations for the use of French and English by Canadian organizations.



# Environment

Climate change, pollution and water shortages and quality issues all have the capacity to impact sport in the coming years:

- Increasing demands on water resources for agriculture, energy production, communities and recreation will have to be managed in consideration of ecosystem needs.
- More frequent heat waves will affect the types of leisure activities Canadians engage in, and where. It will also increase the need for air-conditioned facilities and the cost of maintaining these. Peak demand for electricity will become difficult to manage and alternatives will need to be found (such as shifting non-essential activities to later in the evening when demand decreases).
- As smog, extreme UV, pollen and poor air quality days increase, more Canadians are expected to have respiratory illnesses, and activities outside will likely change or diminish, at least for certain groups. Young children and the growing elderly population will be especially at risk.
- Milder winters and longer, hotter summers, will mean winter sport competitive seasons will shorten and become more intense, costs will increase and snow conditions will become more unpredictable and potentially dangerous. Summer sports will likely need to introduce contingencies to allow for the impacts of severe weather events on competition schedules.





# Technology



## Mobile Technology

From April 2009 to April 2010, social-networking mobile apps increased usership by 240%. By 2013, it is predicted that smartphones will be the most common way to access the Internet. This will have important implications for websites, which will need to configure their sites for mobile devices and not simply desktops.

An interesting example in the amateur sport world is the application [GameChanger](#). The iPhone/iPod scorekeeping tool allows coaches and scorekeepers of youth, high school and college teams to keep score and manage detailed statistics in real-time.

## Social Gaming

Social gaming refers to a growing use of simple scoring and reward mechanisms as incentives to drive participation and ultimately sell an idea or product. Social gaming affects behaviour in the same way that feedback scores on eBay, reward miles at grocery stores, and gold stars from teachers do. Nike has already launched a popular site called [Nike+](#) that makes an individual's run into a game played with and against other "players" from around the world.

## Online Activity and Sport

As Canadians, and especially young Canadians, are increasingly on-line, there is a fear that physical activities will lose ground to these more sedentary leisure pursuits. While there is little evidence to suggest that gaming reduces participation in sport, with so many leisure activities available for consumption, both online and offline, it is likely that traditional leisure activities will continue to see their pools of participants decrease.

## Location

Technology is allowing the public to have immediate information where and when they need it. This means that not only can one see who is playing at the local baseball diamond, but also have access to that league's game schedule, as well as information regarding registration in the league, contact information for inquiries and much more.

## Personalization

With the ability of the Internet to follow us away from our desks, the Internet will become much more personalized. Instead of entering the Internet through a search engine, information that suits our lifestyle and interests will find us. This personalization will encourage us to visit those parts of the city where the things we like are happening in real-time, but it will also ensure that when we pass something of interest to us (whether we are talking about products, events, or people) we will be informed.



# International

## **Population flows and Transnational migration**

Until the early 1990s, natural growth has almost always been the main driver of population growth in Canada. Since the middle of the 1990s, however, migration has become the main source of Canadian population growth, partly because of lower fertility, higher immigration and population aging.

Transnational migration between Canada and other countries is projected by Statistics Canada to represent an increasing share of population growth. In the 2006 Census, immigrants accounted for approximately 70% of Canada's population growth. Among Western countries, only Australia exceeded Canada as the top immigrant-receiving country (at 22% vs. 20%). Based on projections in which Canada would experience medium growth, the number of immigrants will reach 333,600 in 2035 and 406,700 in 2060.

Among the more than 1.1 million recent immigrants who arrived between 2001 and 2006, 58.3% were born in Asian countries, including the Middle East. The top four source countries of new immigrants between 2001 and 2006 were from Asia: People's Republic of China (14% of new immigrants), India (11.6%), the Philippines (7%) and Pakistan (5.2%).

## **Changing nature of Canadian identity and global citizenship**

Canadians have become acutely aware of their roles in both national and international forums in an age of ever-increasing trade, travel, technology, global security concerns and environmental problems. This new 'global citizenship' will have an impact on Canadian identity, culture and sport, domestically and abroad.

Population diversity is expected to continue to increase significantly during the next two decades, especially within certain census metropolitan areas. Increased diversity would be attributed to factors such as migration and the growth of second- and third-generation Canadians who are visible minorities, as well as non-Christian religious denominations. For example, by 2031: 14% of the population would be non-Christian, 65% would be Christian, 21% would have no religion and within the non-Christian population, about one-half would be a Muslim.

## **Changing nature of leisure and consumption**

Globally, travel and tourism continue to evolve in response to broad social, economic and cultural shifts such as the global recession, the movement towards mindful consumption, and the move towards more community-mindedness. Increasingly, Canadians are traveling abroad to participate in meaningful philanthropic experiences such as working on projects through Habitat for Humanity or Earthwatch.

## **Sports and Culture : Tools of geostrategic posturing**

In the current globalized environment, it is interesting to see how the creative energies in sport and culture follow shifting power dynamics. This was the case as power moved from Europe to the USA in the 20th Century, and now is the case as power moves from the USA to Asia and certain Gulf countries. Countries such as China, Japan, but also Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, have made massive investments in cultural and sport infrastructure, not in small part as a means to affirm their growing power and cultural renown.



# Governance

## Open and Transparent

Governance includes consideration of the rules, procedure and practices that affect the way in which powers are exerted. Today, governance models are becoming more flexible, open, egalitarian, respectful of the role of non-governmental organizations, and emphasize collective responsibility, efficiency and transparency.

Recent governance models have spurred the development over the last two decades the idea of “participatory democracy” and its focus on new forms of power-sharing. The impetus for these changes stems from a growing realization of the limits inherent in contemporary democracies, specifically related to the idea of “majority-rules”, the professionalization of politics and the ubiquity of experts. Today it is increasingly important to be open to the perspectives of the citizenry. These changes, which have been in the making for decades, are taking on a new life with the rapid expansion of online tools and networks (i.e. e-government).



# Economy

## Canada

Canada continues to fare better than expected following the Great Recession of 2008/2009. Annualized real GDP rates in Canada are about four times higher than in the G-7 countries as a whole, and the national economy has recouped roughly 75% of the jobs lost during the recession. Growth for the remainder of 2010 is expected to slow, however, as debt-laden Canadians will face higher debt service costs, as the housing markets continue to cool, and as governments begin to withdraw their stimulus funds and enter into an era of fiscal restraint. Arts, entertainment and recreation services, as well as retail trade, are already showing significant declines in growth.

## Changing habits of Consumption

### *Rising costs of living, increasing indebtedness*

While just 50 years ago credit was seen as a last resort, today it has established itself as an accepted part of Canadian lives. Seen increasingly as an extension of one's salary, many Canadians use their credit for their daily purchases, outspending their revenues. In 2008, for each dollar earned, Canadians spent \$1.40. Rates of saving have declined drastically, going from 17% in 1982 to 1% in 2005. Further, the cost of living has increased, especially for basic goods and services.

### *The Creation of Needs: The Importance of Domestic Comfort*

The arrival of new technologies has also been an important factor in the changing habits of consumption over the last 20 years. Technologies that were rare or non-existent at the beginning of the 1980s (e.g., computers, Internet, cell phones, CD and DVD players) are practically ubiquitous in Canadian households today.

### *The Rising Spending on Culture*

In 2008, close to 4 out of 5 households (79.4%) indicated that they owned a computer, while 74.6% indicated that they have access to the Internet at home. 86.4% of households owned a DVD, making it the most popular electronic device in Canadian homes, even more popular than computers, the Internet, cell phones, cable television, or satellite television. In the same period, average household spending for reading materials decreased by 2.7%, reaching \$250 per household. This reflects the overall declines in magazines books, and newspapers.



# Sport

## Sport Participation

Statistics Canada analyzed participation in active leisure by Canadians aged 20 years and older and compared 1992 and 2005 responses. They found that active leisure participation rose during this period, at the same time that activity at work declined.

Active leisure is a broad category that includes walking and jogging, exercising (e.g., yoga, weight-lifting and working-out), sports, outdoor expeditions (e.g., hunting and fishing) and cycling. More Canadians in 2005 participated in walking and jogging than in other active leisure categories. Exercising also increased, while sports, outdoor expeditions and cycling saw little to no increase in participation.

Importantly, if one considers sports to include both informal and organized sports, there was no significant decline in sports participation. If one separates these two categories, we see that participation in organized sports declined from 45% to 28%.<sup>9</sup> While those aged 15-18 have the highest rates of participation in organized sport, this also declined significantly between 1992 (77%) and 2005 (59%).

It was suggested that the aging population is most likely the dominant contributing factor to reductions in organized sport participation, as active participation in organized sport is known to decrease as one ages. As over two-thirds of the Canadian population is currently over 35 years of age, it is likely that organized sport participation will continue to decline. However, other factors contribute to the declines such as time pressures, family responsibilities, child rearing, careers, lack of interest and participation in other leisure time activities (such as watching television, other active leisure, Internet).

Research suggests that Canadians are moving away from organized sport to informal sports and other forms of active leisure. In fact, it was found that active leisure activities that required smaller slices of time and were easier to access or 'get to' had a higher probability of participation by Canadians.

### *Who Participates?*

Controlling for other variables, those most likely to participate in active leisure tended to be women, university-educated, married, with an income over \$60,000, and to have low levels of time stress – and, therefore, more time for leisure. Some dominant barriers to participation in active leisure included: less time for leisure, less access to facilities and sites for active leisure (this is the case for marginalized communities), and less belief that active leisure has intrinsic benefits.



<sup>1</sup> Note that these numbers are higher than the numbers cited in the 'active leisure study' because these include Canadians aged 15 years and older whereas the 'active leisure study' looked at only those aged 20 years and older. Canadians aged 15-19 participate in organized sport at much higher rates than other age groups and therefore their inclusion changes substantially the proportions.



In terms of organized sports, men in 2005 were much more likely (36%) than women (21%) to participate in organized sport, although this gap is decreasing. As is the case with active leisure in general, however, those with higher educational attainment and higher income levels were also more likely to participate. Further, those Canadians born in Canada were more likely to participate in organized sport than immigrants who arrived in Canada both before and after 1990. Students had the highest participation rates in organized sport, despite significant declines between 1998 and 2005. Full-time workers had higher rates of participation than part-time workers.

### *Changing definitions of 'Sport'*

There are multiple challenges to definitions of sport. First and foremost there is the distinction between structured and unstructured activity, e.g. the difference between sandlot and league baseball. There are alternative, counter-culture activities which are also being organized into competitive formats, such as skateboarding. Some of these activities have been accepted by influential mainstream sport organizations, as with the acceptance of snowboard half-pipe and snowboard cross into the FIS and the Winter Olympic Games. There are also activities that we tend to classify as games – bridge, chess, chess-boxing – that are positioned from time to time as sports.

The development of these sports can stem from lifestyle or cultural influences, a natural drive for competition, and potentially a desire to innovate outside of traditional sport structures. Consequently, it can be challenging to identify what the “next new sport” (or discipline) will be, or to fully account for the impacts that these new sports and their participants will have. Because new sports are typically added onto existing sport programs, these new sports can add pressures for hosting of events (expanded timeframes, venues, equipment), for sport organizations (that may be required to take on additional disciplines), or jeopardize allocations for the inclusion of existing sports.

### **Diversity**

The continued diversification of Canadian society poses challenges for sport organizations and sport program delivery. The aging population means that the traditional participation base is decreasing, and these participants are being distributed across more sports and disciplines. Growing segments of the Canadian population are Aboriginal youth and new immigrants, who have been shown to have lower levels of economic and social integration, and who are likely to have sport preferences which vary from the traditional choices of mainstream Canadian society. This may be illustrated by the 2008 Canadian Olympic men's Field Hockey Team, which was comprised largely of visible minority Canadians.

Sport organizations also face challenges managing team diversity. This richness can enhance the sport experience, but can also add complexity given variations in the expression of assumptions and values. On occasion, cultural practice can be at odds with sport



rules, as illustrated by a number of cases during 2009 involving girls wearing hijabs being ruled ineligible for competition in judo and soccer competitions.

Sport is widely regarded as a tool for social integration, as evidenced by the growing popularity of development through sport approaches. While there are a range of assumptions about the personal and social benefits of sport, the literature suggests that the most successful programs in this regard are the ones that have a citizenship component specifically built in, as with the Mathari Youth (soccer) project.

## Gender

While there continues to be inequalities in the sport participation of women and girls, the Canadian sport landscape has changed considerably, including for women and girls. Human rights cases have clearly established the entitlement of girls and women to participate in sport, prompting improved access to sport programs. There are more competitive opportunities for women in more sports, including at the highest levels, and Canadian female athletes are regularly achieving podium success at World Championships and Olympic and Paralympic Games. Women are also increasingly leading national sport organizations, as senior administrative staff.

However, it is also evident that such improvements have not been achieved in all aspects of sport involvement. The number of women trained as coaches and actively coaching – particularly in high performance contexts – remains persistently low. While information regarding women in other roles - notably within the governance of sport organizations or as technical leaders and officials - is limited, there are indications that the experiences and skills of women are not being optimized in these domains either. Also, the rate of participation of girls continues to be significantly lower than that of boys.

These gaps in the engagement of women in the sport system are attributed to specific challenges – such as societal attitudes or assumptions about women’s interests and skills. For some women – namely those who are part of another socio-economically disadvantaged group such as Aboriginal Peoples or persons with a disability – these challenges are compounded.

### *Construction of Masculinity and Sex*

The role of masculinity in sport continues to set an important context in terms of its effects on all genders and sexualities in and outside of sport. The language of sport is heavily gendered: common put-downs include being called a “sissy” or “playing like a girl.” Sport images, particularly in the mainstream media, are heavily dominated by males. Girls can experience a great deal of difficulty in navigating the masculine notions inherent in sports and physical education, and specifically in those sports that are perceived as being especially masculine. Where gendered language in sport is linked to sexuality, the results can be problematic for both males and females, who may experience homophobia and/or pressure to conform to norms of male and female sexuality.





In terms of sexual harassment and abuse, there is little credible knowledge that focuses on disabled or lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) athletes. Such gaps in knowledge make it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of sexual harassment and abuse prevention programs that exist. In order to ensure protection for all athletes, and not just “mainstream” athletes, more research and policy advocacy will need to focus on these questions.

### *Aboriginal Peoples*

There is a long history of Aboriginal Peoples’ participation in sport in Canada. In 1995 the Aboriginal Sport Circle was formed, and in recent years there have been increasingly strong Federal-Provincial/Territorial government commitments made to strengthening Aboriginal sport, particularly focused around the North American Indigenous Games.

The urban Aboriginal youth population is growing, particularly in western Canada. However, Aboriginal children are less likely than their mainstream peers to participate in organized sport, and the gap between male and female participation is even more pronounced. Given the high incidence of diabetes and other chronic health issues in Aboriginal communities, it appears that sport and physical activity could make a particular positive difference for this population.

There are a number of barriers posited to contribute to the under-representation of Aboriginal Peoples in sport. While some of these are cultural in origin, there are also concerns about social, geographical and economic isolation and racism. A lack of Aboriginal sport participation data has made understanding of the barriers and impacts difficult.

### *Disability*

Over the past few decades there has been a growth in the number of opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport, specifically the Paralympics, the Special Olympics and the Deaflympics. Some of these movements are focused on building community and fostering individual development using sport as a tool, while others emphasize performance outcomes.

Canada has been a leading nation in the development of both Paralympic sport and the Special Olympics. Throughout the 1990s there was a strong emphasis on gaining recognition for athletes with a disability as “real” competitors, and highlighting competition opportunities, for example at the Canada Games. This focus is shifting towards developing coherent development systems, through the implementation of *Canadian Sport for Life* and the *No Accidental Champions* supplement.

Information about the incidence of disability in Canada as it relates to sport is difficult to ascertain as the construction of disability in society is different from the technical rules defining eligibility to compete. Reported rates of disability in Canada are rising, linked to an aging population and the loss of function that comes with age. At the same time, advances in medical technology mean that more individuals – as infants, children or adults – are surviving, albeit with a disability.

Personal history and the severity of disability can have a significant impact on one’s sport experience. Children born with a disability are often sheltered, discouraged from perceived physical risk and typically have fewer opportunities to develop motor skills. Those with a higher degree of disability may be assumed to be incapable of participating in sport, or the additional supports required to facilitate their participation may further lessen their opportunities based on the availability of support staff, specialized equipment or program availability.

## *Equity*

There are multiple meanings associated with the term 'equity', namely: a) equality, b) conditional equality, and c) a women's only issue, illustrating the complexities inherent in attempts to implement equity policies.

Very often debates about equity and equality in sport are focused around issues of integration/segregation and adaptation/accommodation. At times, the issues reflect societal norms, profile and respect, or sport development considerations. Even the seemingly mundane decision to divide teams into boys/girls and women/men is not straightforward. Two recent decisions in Canada, one in Manitoba and one in Ontario have seen girls joining the boys' teams in their respective sports at the high school level despite the reluctance of sport governing bodies that felt the decision was detrimental to all high school athletes, including girls.



## *Sport, Physical Activity and Health*

In the discourse about health and sport there is very often a tension. Sport can have positive health outcomes – and it can also be detrimental to health, particularly if questionable practices are employed. Furthermore, stereotypes about what it means to “look” like an athlete can act as a deterrent to participation (for “fat” and “overweight” students, for example) or can cause significant problems such as eating disorders, particularly in weighed sports such as judo or judged sports where image is important. Given the increasing rate of obesity among Canadians, the role of sport as it relates to weight and health warrants increased attention.

While the debate about sport and health exists world-wide, this may be exacerbated in Canada given the jurisdictional separation of physical activity and sport by the federal government, where the former is explicitly linked to public health.

## **Evolving Operating Environment**

### *Objective of Sport*

The operating environment has become more complex for organizations and government bodies that oversee funding and regulation of organized sport. There are limited funds and an increasing diversity of sporting activities, at a wide array of levels. Most governments are struggling to find a balance between their support for elite athletes and their support for community-level participation in sport. Given the significant investment required for success in elite sporting competitions (such as the Olympic and Commonwealth Games), this task of dividing limited resources for all needs becomes increasingly problematic.

While there are obvious connections between sport participation and high-performance excellence, there are also many claims about causal relationships that are not supported by empirical evidence. It is a common claim that hosting mega- increases sport participation, but evidence shows they have no lasting effect beyond retroactive attributions of an individual or a temporary spike in club registration. For governments that are looking to justify investments in hosting sport events this lack of connection to mass

participation is problematic as it excludes health benefits. Some governments frame hosting and sport excellence as celebrations bolstering pride and identity or as economic drivers.

In Canada and internationally there are longstanding debates about the purposes of sport development: is it primarily for elite purposes (performance at major events) or mass participation? There are further questions about what high-performance success “looks like” for a nation such as Canada. It has been argued that Canada is compromised in its ability to implement truly effective sport policy given the desire to “be all things to all people.” A clearer understanding of Canada’s sport goals would assist in more effectively distributing resources.

### *From Amateur to Performance Sport*

Old ideas about amateur sport (where participation is a noble leisure activity untainted by payment) have been replaced by systems of sponsorship and endorsement, similar to but separate from the economic models seen in professional sports.

But despite – or perhaps given – the popularity of professional sport, the same standards are not applied to professional sport often causing confusion. Violence in hockey is tolerated to a much higher degree in the NHL and its feeder leagues than at the Olympics, and doping was accepted and even tacitly encouraged in professional leagues long after the Dublin inquiry and the formation of the World Anti-Doping Agency. One result of these discrepancies is that “sport” is often criticized without differentiation, and another is that the more heavily promoted professional sport athlete may in fact be the more questionable role model.

There is also a pressure for high-performance sport to become more entertaining or spectator-friendly to compete with the influences of professional sport. It is widely believed that this is the rationale behind the fast-tracking of new winter sports such as ski-cross, or the regulation skimpy uniforms to be worn by female volleyball players. In this context, there is concern “marketability” is driving sport development.

### *Geographic Mobility*

With globalization, movement between countries is easier than ever and formal citizenship can often be shared between countries. Sport is no exception. Athletes and coaches are mobile, and may reside train and compete outside of Canada (or even out-of-province in a domestic context) for significant periods of time. Reasons may include climate, training partners, facilities or competition circuits. Whatever these reasons may be, this reality changes conceptions of the national (or provincial) team program, and the oversight that a sport organization has in athlete development.

### *Whereabouts: Anti-Doping*

Anti-doping is perhaps the most significant – and most costly – dimension of the modern sport environment. Anti-doping rules have evolved to become more transparent and more specific, and at the same time the management of anti-doping activities has become increasingly complex and detailed.

As athletes become more aware of their rights and obligations, legal and human rights considerations are further complicating anti-doping implementation. Because anti-doping rules typically exist outside of jurisdictional legal systems, the intersection of these rules with local laws can cause confusion, both from a standpoint of illegal substances that might be involved or from a process point of view. Anti-doping obligations to provide updated whereabouts information also raises concerns about privacy and freedom of movement.

## *Decreasing influence of federal government*

The federal government has, over the years, taken a range of approaches to engagement with the sport community. The current approach can be described as “hands-off,” with an emphasis on sport organizations’ fiscal management over such elements as technical expertise. Not unsurprisingly, the perception of the federal government is increasingly as “just a funder.”

Own the Podium (OTP) is increasingly seen as the major influencer of national sport system development. OTP initiatives are reaching beyond analysis of national team programs to looking at sport structure and governance. Many respected and influential individuals have moved from positions with sport organizations to OTP.

## **Increasing Costs of Sport**

### *Hosting*

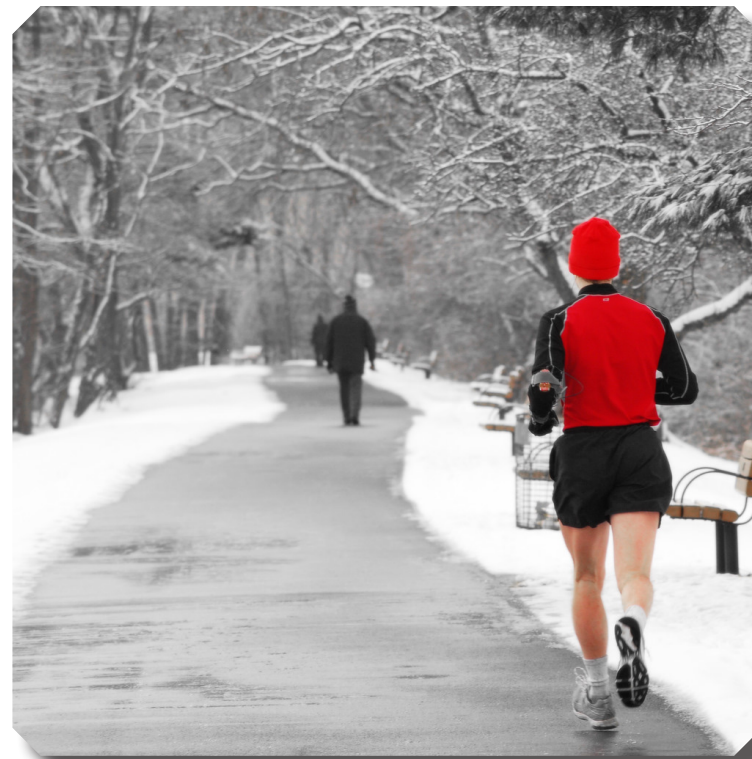
Hosting sporting events has become a large, complicated, and costly affair. While the same positives and negatives are offered up when a sporting event is proposed, research seems to show that the outcomes are mitigated at best, and rarely as cut-and-dry as suggested by civic boosters. Generally speaking, when discussing mega-events (such as the Olympic Games and the World Cup of Soccer), costs usually exceed original estimates, and benefits are difficult to assess. It has been suggested that greater transparency in the bidding process and more focus on maximizing social benefits would be in order.

Hosting has also become all the more difficult and risky given the emergence of threats such as pandemics, terrorist attacks, and political and social protests. While the likelihood of any of these events occurring is extremely low (except for protests, which are increasingly the norm), the possibility is enough to drive up costs, contributing to the prohibitive price-tags increasingly associated with major sporting events.

A common incentive for hosting sport events in Canada stems from our aging sport and general infrastructure. Many sport facilities were constructed as part of the centennial project and are now in need of replacement. In the current economic environment (as well as prior to the downturn) it is challenging to secure funding for these updates and new infrastructure, whereas leveraging sport hosting makes this process easier. Toronto, which was recently awarded the 2015 Pan American Games, has been quite keen to host a summer games and therefore build new world-class facilities. Likewise, provincial decisions about where to host the Canada Games are often influenced by the desire to build new sport infrastructure or to invest in a specific region. Perhaps unsurprisingly there has been a commensurate increase in incremental capital costs for the Canada Games.

### *Individuals*

Even while participation in organized sports has decreased, the amount of money that Canadians spend on these organized sports has increased. The rising costs of participating in sports for the individual or family likely has a direct correlation to the lower levels





of participation seen by families with lower levels of household income. In fact, the higher the level of income in a household, the higher the level of participation is by the children of those households. However, these differences also vary based on the sport. For example, participation in soccer is much less costly than participation in hockey. Participation in organized sport typically requires expenditures in terms of registration fees, equipment, uniforms, travel, accommodations and food. All of these costs are even more prohibitive for elite athletes, or those wishing to compete at elite levels.

## **Sport Structures**

Sport is a highly structured and institutionalized world. In order to be involved in sport – especially as a coach or referee – there are expectations for the attainment of a certain level of professionalism and specialization. To a lesser but still significant degree, even to be involved as a player requires a certain amount of discipline and specialization in order to take part in league-level play.

As illustrated by the evolution of the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP), sport programs are increasingly focusing on demonstrating competency, not just learning skills. The competency expectations for all sport participants are becoming more sophisticated, and this is creating a challenge for sport organizations that rely on volunteer community coaches and officials. Often parents are relied upon to coach and officiate, and they may not be willing to commit to the additional time required to certify their skills. This scenario likely accounts for much of the discrepancy between the number of NCCP certified coaches and the number of individuals who self-identify as coaches in the sport supplement of General Social Survey.

The development of *Canadian Sport for Life*, and its focus on skill development and meaningful indicators of mastery, is consistent with the move towards competency-based sport. The role of the coach in guiding the sport experience and ensuring an appropriate balance between skill development and competition is critical according to this model, however this may be at odds with trends in community sport, including as described above. One significant challenge for the implementation of *Canadian Sport for Life* is Canada's sport-specific system of development. This structure tends to tacitly encourage early specialization because of challenges for the participant in scheduling involvement in multiple sports.

While the need for these competencies and skill sets is well understood, it is clear that the institutionalized and bureaucratic nature of sport, and the competencies required to participate, are likely key factors in the decreasing levels of participation.

## **Value of Sport**

The value of sport has long been a central issue for sport practitioners and organizations. Questions around the place of competition in sport, ethical debates regarding violence and doping, and the many social and psychological benefits that derive from sport have been key drivers of sporting programs and initiatives. Given the increasing economic value of sport as entertainment, these issues have become even more important and urgent.

### *Competition*

While competition is the well-established focus of western sporting traditions, there have been a growing number of opponents to the degree of competitiveness found not only in youth sports, but even at higher level sports such as at the university or junior levels. *Canadian Sport for Life* decries this idea, citing an overemphasis on competition to the detriment of basic skill development. Others are concerned about the detrimental psycho-social effects of competition as contest, insisting that the focus of sport should be more on individual achievement and health, both mental and physical.



## *Violence and Doping*

Violence and doping in sport raise questions of ethics and the values that are meant to underpin participation and appreciation of sport. Even hockey, long known and appreciated for its fighting and rough plays, has garnered as of late a great deal of debate about the need and/or consequences of violence. Opponents claim that violent behaviour diminishes the sport of hockey and sets a bad example for lower levels and encourages young players to mimic these violent practices – to the detriment of skills – in hopes of one day being capable of playing at the highest level.

Doping has tarnished the reputation of many sports and great strides have been taken to reduce or abolish doping in high-performance sport. Anti-doping measures have become increasingly costly and elaborate in order to keep up with performance enhancing drug development. Some see these attempts to ban doping as a lost cause, insisting that anti-doping will only ever be two steps behind. They argue that legalizing certain performance enhancing drugs – creating a white list of those drugs and doses that pose little to no risk for athletes – would be the most certain way to ensure that elite level sports are as fair and safe as possible. Anti-doping organizations stress that doping is not only unethical, but has negative long-term health effects on athletes, though some question the health effects and point to a lack of research to validate these assertions.



## *Social and Psychological Benefits of Sport*

Sport has long been seen as a means of instilling certain desirable traits in youth, such as discipline, the ability to work in a team, self-esteem and leadership. While research over the years has somewhat nuanced the boosterism inherent in some pro-sport advocacy, it remains clear that under the right conditions, sport can provide participants with a great deal of benefits that go well beyond the sport itself.

In general sports programs that primarily foster the development of general physical competence, and promote physical development, fun and socio-emotional development, life skills, sportsmanship and good health are likely to have more benefits for youth.

## **Results-based Sport**

Success in sport is dependant on achieving certain results. In today's deficit-fighting and accountability environment, programs and initiatives receiving public funds are required to demonstrate success to survive. While some impacts, such as attendance figures, registrations, revenues or medal counts, are easily measured, others such as developing leadership skills and building communities are harder.

Programs now need to incorporate measures of accountability and impact into their design and maximize investments in this era of limited funds. This means that programs and initiatives that do more for less (and preferably for more people) will be easier to justify and maintain than those more specialized and limited in scope.

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