

ICE DANCE REACTS TO THE 2002 OLYMPIC JUDGING SCANDAL:
A STUDY OF SKATERS' MOVEMENT PRACTICES UNDER THE NEW ISU JUDGING
SYSTEM

by

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Abstract

After an international judging scandal at the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics, International Skating Union (ISU) officials introduced an entirely new system for judging figure skating performances. With the goal of increasing the objectivity and transparency in the judging process substantive changes occurred in the performance requirements and evaluation criteria for all skaters. Focusing on the ice dance discipline, the purpose of this research was to analyze ice dancers' movement practices and the ways in which they have been influenced by the new judging system. Additional analysis also considered the role of gender in ice dancers' potentially changed practices.

With these goals in mind, I draw upon Massus's (1973) notion around 'techniques of the body' and Bourdieu's (1992) concept of 'habitus', which suggest that by looking at the movement practices of ice dancers we can see how they are influenced by the social relations in which they are embedded, including historical and cultural traditions, and by authoritative groups such as the ISU. Considering the role of gender in ice dancers' movement practices, I also examine the social construction of masculinity and femininity in skaters' movements and how these embodied gendered practices are influenced by the new judging system. Furthermore, using Foucauldian theories of power, normalization, rank, and self-regulation I explore how ice dancers are disciplined into performing particular movement practices, performance narratives and skating styles and the ways in which they are reinforced.

Data collection included a documentary analysis of the ISU judging system focusing on the technical rules in regard to the ice dance discipline as well as semi-structured interviews with figure skating experts and skaters themselves. Interviews with the skaters also included a video analysis component on one of their competitive performances.

The findings revealed the dramatic changes in ice dancers' movement practices under the new judging system and how these changed practices have contributed to a more athletic discipline where there is now a strong focus on technical requirements. Additionally, the findings highlighted the conservative and stereotypical displays of gender in skaters' movement practices and performance narratives, which continue to prevail under the new judging system.

Preface

Ethics approval for this research was obtained from The University of British Columbia Behavioural Research Ethics Board; certificate number H11-02595. Original approval was obtained on January 9th 2012.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Dance theorist, Jane Desmond (1997) writes about the body as a form of representation or a vehicle through which social ideologies are constituted. She suggests that bodies and the ways in which they look and move can be read as a form of text through which meanings are produced. These meanings are shaped by their social and historical locations and are therefore influential in the way in which we make associations in interpreting bodily movements. As Desmond (1997) writes:

By looking at dance we can see enacted on a broad scale, and in codified fashion, socially constituted and historically specific attitudes towards the body in general, towards specific social groups' usage of the body in particular, and about the relationships among variously marked bodies. (p. 32)

Following Desmond's lead, both Adams (2011) and Kestnbaum (2003) write about the figure skating body and suggest that we can make a similar point in exploring the practices and movements of skaters and the meanings produced by their skating activities.

Over the past decade the sport of figure skating has seen great changes. Skaters' techniques, movements, styles, and competitive performances have evolved since its beginnings. More recently, in 2004, following an international judging scandal at the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics, a dramatic change occurred when an entirely new system of judging figure skating performances was created.

Strong pressure from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to remove figure skating from the Olympic program following the judging scandal initiated an attempt by figure skating officials to objectify the judging process and to create a more transparent system of evaluation. Subsequently, the new International Skating Union or ISU judging system was born

along with substantive changes in performance requirements and evaluation criterion for all skaters.

Having skated as a competitive ice dancer myself for almost ten years, I personally experienced these changes from the old '6.0 judging system' to the new ISU system and the ways in which skaters' practices were transformed to meet the new requirements. The change in judging system and its subsequent influence upon skaters' performances has been noted in both popular and academic literature (see Adams, 2011; Rosenberg & Lockwood, 2005; Senft, 2010) although there has been little in depth investigation into the change in nature of skaters' actual movement practices now seen in competition since the inception of the new system.

In general, this approach to studying the body, or in this case the figure skating body, and its movements as a meaningful form of text comes from a social constructionist view that explores how the nature of human action is influenced and shaped by society. Shilling (2003) referred to this as 'human embodiment'. The term embodiment is more precisely defined by Waskul and Vannini (2006) as "the process by which the object-body is actively experienced, produced and sustained, and/or transformed as a subject body" (p. 3). Marcel Mauss (1973) discusses the social body and coins the word 'habitus' to describe the acquired ability or second natured habits that exist in human movement and that are seen in specific techniques such as running and dancing. Bourdieu following Mauss further defined ones habitus and as Thorpe (2009) suggests, referred to habitus as:

Both the embodiment of our social location (i.e. class, ethnicity, race, sexuality, gender, generation and nationality) and the structure of social relations that generate and give significance to individual likes (or tastes) and dislikes with regard to practice and action.
(p. 499)

Using Bourdieu's (1992) concept of habitus we can see how ice dancers' movements and practices are strongly influenced by the *social relations* in which they are embedded, including; historical and cultural traditions in ice dance, governing bodies of figure skating and their systems of rules, coaching preferences, local training center philosophies and their coaches' choreographic methods as well as the overall themes or characters skaters take on in their performances. We may also consider how skaters' *social locations* intersect with these structures that surround them.

Thus, with the inception of the new ISU judging system and its potential to alter former approaches to ice dancing techniques, choreography, styles, coaching, and modes of partnering, this proves to be an opportune time to analyze competitive ice dancers' movement practices and the potential changes to these practices influenced by the new judging system. To explore these possible changes, the following research questions guided my study:

1. In what ways has the new ISU judging system changed the movement practices and skating styles of ice dancers?
2. What is the role of gender in these changed practices, if any?

Significance of Study

Research on figure skating, both popular and academic is limited. In fact, sport literature that addresses conceptual themes such as gender, sexuality, race, class, nationalism, and the body has rarely reflected on the sport of figure skating (Adams, 2011; Kestnbaum, 2003; Morrow, 1987). Adams (2011) suggests that perhaps the popular debate around figure skating as a sport or an art has left it out of sport research altogether, and that its reputation as an activity only for girls has rendered it less interesting than the more male dominant professional sports in Canada. This suggests that figure skating as a discipline has great potential for further investigation and in depth analysis. As Adams (2011) suggests "figure skating has more potential than many sports

do to help us think differently about the relationships between sports, gender, bodies and styles of movements. It's a waste not to use it" (p. 239).

Adams (2011) also notes that questions around the notions and styles of movement that have been under consideration for decades in the world of dance have not previously been discussed in the figure skating literature. Therefore I propose not only to add to the existing literature on the sport in general, but also more specifically to critically address the current movement practices of ice dancers, post scandal, under the new ISU judging system.

Scholarly literature around dance has previously brought together sport and dance as analytically commensurable forms of body culture and social practice, sharing common status as techniques of the body (Dyck & Archetti, 2003; Vertinsky, 2007). This is to say that both sport and dance can serve as excellent arenas for the study of embodied or movement practices. As Vertinsky (2007) suggests:

One can argue that the embodied practices of dancers and athletes afford aesthetic and skilled accomplishment, but more critically they provide a powerful means for both celebrating existing social arrangement and cultural ideas and for imagining and advocating new ones. (p. 26)

It is within the context of sport and dance studies that the ice dance discipline fits, for it marries the two worlds of both sport and dance. Ice dance involves superior athleticism and skating skills but is unique to the other figure skating disciplines in that it also includes a more prominent artistic component with strong influences from all forms of modern dance, ballet and the ballroom. Thus, ice dance proves to be a valuable discipline for the analysis of both artistic and athletic movement practices.

This study is also particularly timely in that the changes made to the judging system in 2004 and the later inception of the current ISU judging system in 2006, have been refined over

the past seven years, hence skaters' movement practices and performances have had time to adapt to the new ways in which they are evaluated. It appears that the new ISU system caused a reframing of the desirable movement practices seen in ice dancers' competitive performances and although these changes had been noted in the skating world they have not been extensively analyzed. Thus, this study to my knowledge is among the first to formally consider the relationship between the system of rules and its influence on the movement practices of ice dancers' as well as their techniques, styles, choreographic approaches, and the ways in which gender ideologies in ice dancers' movement practices are reflected.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Theoretical Frame

Sophisticated theoretical lenses exist with which to approach the study of both embodied and movement practices. Marcel Mauss (1973) was the first to discuss the cultural importance in what he called ‘techniques of body’ when he wrote about the social dimensions exhibited through particular styles of movements such as walking, swimming or dancing. He suggested that from society-to-society or even generation-to-generation people know how to use their bodies in a variety of instrumental ways. Mauss enlisted the word ‘habitus’ to refer conceptually to these habits or seemingly similar ways in which individual practices vary between “societies, educations, proprieties, fashions, and prestiges” (Mauss, 1973, p. 73). In the transmission of techniques, movement styles and forms, Mauss suggests that the teaching of techniques through education and training is essential for articulating habits in body movements. Thus we can classify these techniques according to the nature of education or training. In addressing dancing specifically he notes the significance of histories in movement practices when he writes; “we should realize that dancing in a partner’s arms is a product of modern European civilization, which shows you that things we find natural are historical” (Mauss, 1973, p. 83). Interestingly, the male and female duo in ice dance is a tradition adopted from upper-class ballroom dance practices where same sexed partners do not exist and thus are also not permitted at the competitive national or international level in ice dance or pairs skating (Kestnbaum, 2006).

Pierre Bourdieu (1992) further developed Mauss’s notion of ‘habitus’ referring to such habits or practices as “a set of acquired schemes of dispositions, perceptions and appreciations which orient our practices and give them meaning” (Thorpe, 2009, p. 499). Bourdieu also addresses the *gendered* habitus which can broadly be defined as the “social construction of masculinity and femininity that shapes the body, defines how the body is perceived, forms the

body's habits and possibilities for expression and thus determines the individual's identity – via the body – as masculine or feminine” (Krais, 2006, p. 121). Thus the gendered habitus exemplifies the way in which females move compared to males and vice versa. It also suggests that ice dancers' possibilities for expression in their performances and via their body are limited by societal ideals around masculinity and femininity.

Overall, Bourdieu's view is that by understanding habits in body movements we can better understand the organized forms of movement practices in different cultures. Hence the articulation of particular movements can be correlated to a particular group or practice community and their broader organizational hierarchies. Howe (2008) suggests that habitus can then be understood “as the embodied practices that collectively comprise and define a culture” (p. 501).

In this case I propose to study ice dance as the particular culture or practice community where specific embodied practices can be articulated through skaters' movements. These embodied practices are learned and transferred through a process of socialization in which skaters are educated, trained and influenced by traditions, coaches, and administrators from an early age as they learn to move their bodies in very specific ways. It is these systems of predispositions that Bourdieu suggests become inculcated in the body in everyday life.

In some cases, movement practices can be considered quite prescribed in figure skating. The new judging system is specific and detailed in its regulations and requirements for what should and should not be included in competitive skating programs. Skaters also all tend to perform what they have learned will be positively received by the judges and which will also be rewarded with top scores. This results in a ‘normalization’ or narrowing of the skating practices seen in competitive programs. Kestnbaum (2003) discusses the normalization of skating practices particularly as influenced by culture and class:

Through this process of normalization, skating practice has traditionally rewarded and therefore produced bodily practices associated with upper class European and Euro-American repertoire of movement, often drawing on classical ballet as a source of movement imagery...the style and values of the dominant class being considered “good skating” and reinscribed on the bodies of every skating student. (p. 10)

Michael Foucault’s (1977) concept of normalization as a form of modern power, which controls and disciplines the body into what he refers to as ‘docile bodies’ is particularly useful for this research. Foucault (1977) suggests that “the distribution according to rank or grade has a double role: it marks the gaps, hierarchizes qualities, skills and aptitudes; but it also punishes and rewards” (p. 181). Rank refers individual actions to the whole, which then allows for a comparison within the group. In order to achieve the highest ranking there is a process of conformity among those who strive for the highest position to follow the exemplary actions of the highest ranked. Foucault (1977) suggests that this kind of discipline “compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes and excludes. In short, it normalizes” (pg. 183). As previously mentioned this type of conforming to the norm readily occurs in figure skating as skaters strive to rank the highest and therefore conform to the practices and movement styles done by their superior competitors or those who rank the highest competitively.

Foucault (1977) also discusses the effects of self- surveillance and monitoring in his writings on modern forms of discipline and power that shape the body. Specifically, he uses the panoptic prison structure as an analogy to describe the subtle and efficient effects of self-surveillance and monitoring within the prison.

Within the panoptic prison structure the prisoners knew they could be observed but did not know *when* they were being observed and therefore learned to assume they were being watched in the absence of the observer. Foucault (1977) argues that self-regulation, as an effect

of panopticism, was possible because individuals would internalize dominant social, cultural and historical discourses. Barker-Ruchti and Tinning (2010) write about the internalization of dominant discourses in their work with female artistic gymnasts who “came to embody submissiveness, dependence, as well as the notion of body-as-machine” (p. 245).

To study ice dancers’ movement practices and particularly the ways in which these practices have been learned and embodied from dominant social and historical discourses, and namely from the ISU judging system, it is critical to consider Foucault’s notions of disciplinary power, rank, normalization and self- regulation.

Background on the New ISU Judging System

The international governing body for figure skating is the International Skating Union or the ISU. The ISU is also host to synchronized skating, as well as long and short track speed skating and as the international governing body is responsible for sanctioning all international competitions including the World Championships and Olympic events. The ISU also communicates rules and regulations to figure skating’s national sport organizations annually including, Skate Canada, the national governing body for figure skating in Canada

For over seventy-five years and up until the 2002 Salt Lake City judging scandal all figure skating competitions locally, nationally, and internationally used the 6.0 judging system, where 6.0 was the highest achievable score, recognized world-wide as a symbol of perfection (Rosenberg & Lockwood, 2005). The 6.0 system itself included two marks assigned by a panel of seven judges on a scale from 0.0-6.0. The first mark was for technical merit and the other for presentation. The technical mark evaluated the quality of the skaters’ elements and the presentation mark reflected the judges’ assessments of the skater’s overall program. The presentation mark included evaluating a program’s composition, originality, use of ice, as well as the skater’s carriage, style and expression of music (USFSA, 2010). On the other hand there was

no specific criterion for developing the technical score, therefore judges evaluated the difficulty and quality of the technical elements relatively subjectively.

A total score was calculated by adding the technical and presentation scores. The total scores were then ranked from highest to lowest assigned by each individual judge forming the 'ordinal' or rank a particular judge gave to each skater compared to the rest of the field. The skater awarded first place by the *majority* of the judges won the event. In fact it was this majority consensus that led to the judging scandal at the 2002 Olympics.

The 6.0 system was long criticized for its subjectivity and its lack of accountability for demanding judges to explain the marks they assigned for both presentation and technique. There was also cause for concern when judges were perceived to adjust their scores to favour particular skaters or national federations and especially their own. This was referred to as 'bloc judging', named after cold war divisions that existed between Eastern and Western countries for many decades. These divisions then became evident in judges scores based on the skaters' federations (Senft, 2010).

In the case of the 2002 Salt Lake judging scandal, a French judge on the panel in the pairs event eventually came forward, admitting to pressure from her skating federation to swap votes with another judge in the ice dance event. Based on the national federations elected to judge the pairs event it was evident that the swaying vote was left in the hands of the French judge who could ensure a win for the Russians if she exchanged favors. Subsequently, the Russian team won over the Canadian pair and it was not until after the scandal surfaced that dual gold medals were awarded to the pair teams from both countries (Pound, 2004).

Following the Salt Lake City incident the new ISU judging system retired the majority rule and as part of the new system only 7 of the 9 judges scores are now randomly selected to contribute to the overall results. The new ISU system also ensures that judges focus on marking

individual elements rather than scoring skaters in relation to the field, as the 6.0 system had required in the past (Rosenberg & Rockwood, 2005).

Similarly, the ISU judging system like the former 6.0 system includes two scores: the technical score and the program components score. The technical score is awarded for the technical elements performed in the skater's program, which are specified by the Ice Dance Technical Committee annually. For example, the 2011 technical requirements for the free dance at the senior level included 2 short lifts, 1 long lift, 1 spin, 1 straight-line step sequence, 1 curved step sequence and 1 set of synchronized twizzles (ISU, 2011a).

The program components score, which replaced what was previously referred to as the artistic or presentation mark, is awarded on a scale of 0 to 10 for 5 specific categories including; skating skills, transitioning movements, performance execution, composition and choreography, as well as interpretation of the music and timing (ISU, 2010). The program components score is designed to grade the overall presentation and execution of the skater's performance. A final score is calculated by adding the total technical score and the program component score and by subtracting any program deductions, for a fall or illegal element, for example. Scores from the short dance and the free dance, the two competition events in the ice dance discipline, are then added together for a combined competition score for the skater's overall placement. The couple with the highest total score wins.

ISU events are now judged by a judging panel as well as a technical panel who work together in evaluating skaters' performances. The judging panel includes nine officials who are responsible for assessing the *quality* of each element performed by the skaters. Therefore, the judges are responsible for assigning a 'grade of execution score' or GOE score on a scale from -3 to +3 from a base value given to each technical element (ISU, 2011b). The GOE score allows

judges to score individual elements as they occur in skaters' programs against a base value, rather than previously where they scored elements comparatively to other skaters.

The technical panel on the other hand is composed of three officials responsible for identifying the technical elements performed by the skaters as well as the *difficulty* of each element. The technical specialists along with a controller assign a level of difficulty ranging from a Level 1 to a Level 4 from a specific criterion. The specific levels of difficulty introduced as part of the new system are updated annually and give detailed descriptions for what constitutes each level, respectively.

Overall, the descriptions for levels of difficulty and grades of execution have become increasingly detailed and complex as part of the new system. The sheer volume of documents and detailed descriptions for gaining points as part of the new system exemplifies its complexities, though it does demonstrate the more transparent approach to evaluating skaters' performances. Skaters and their coaches are now given detailed reports at the conclusion of each competition, which outline the levels of difficulty achieved for each element performed and the corresponding grade of execution scores assigned by each judge. Overall this allows for more feedback between the judges and the skaters as compared to the 6.0 system.

The new judging system has, however, not been without its limitations. Confusion and complaints among skaters and fans emerged with the introduction of the new system including criticism from internationally accomplished skaters. For example, two-time Olympic gold medalist Katarina Witt suggested that the new judging system is "like putting figure skating in a box" (Friedlander, 2012, para. 3). Similarly, Canada's own men's National, World and Olympic champion, Patrick Chan suggested that the new judging system is similar to a production line (Friedlander, 2012).

The more objective calculations made by technology as part of the new system have also posed difficulties. Weeks after the 2011 Grand Prix Final it was announced that there had been a calculation error in one of the grade of execution scores given to Canadian ice dancers Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir on one of their required elements. In fact the skaters should have been awarded an extra 0.5 points resulting in a change in their overall ranking in the free dance event. The ISU suggested that in keeping with a 'transparent approach' the error was announced and points were recalculated although the overall rankings were not adjusted as per ISU regulations (Kwong, 2011).

It should also be noted that changes were made to the way judges are appointed to international competitions under the new judging system. Similar to the old 6.0 system, judges are appointed by their national federations on the basis of their competence and record of judging at the local, provincial and national level (ISU, 2010). Those judges appointed to the ISU can then judge at international events sanctioned by the ISU as well as at the Olympic Games. Instead of selecting judges for a particular event months in advance as the ISU had in the past, thirteen judges are now selected for each event and not until forty-five minutes before the event are the respective nine judges selected for the panel. This is to avoid potential conversations around vote trading prior to skating competitions. As part of the new ISU system, judges' scores at the senior international level also remain completely anonymous to the public (ISU, 2010). This decision by the ISU was to allow judges to try and escape pressures from their federations to vote for particular skaters.

In an attempt to ensure accountability the ISU also appointed an Officials Assessment Commission (OAC), which consists of ISU referees, technical specialists and judges from various skating federations. The commission is responsible for evaluating anomalies in judges' scores at each event and prepares a formal report that identifies any serious errors. The

commission is also responsible for disciplining those judges who make significant mistakes accordingly (ISU, 2010).

Figure Skating and the Existing Academic Literature

Scholarly literature around figure skating is predominantly located within the sciences (see Deakin & Allard, 1991; Kovacs, Birmingham, Forwell & Litchfield, 2004; Monsma & Malina, 2004; Wu & Yang, 2004). There are however a number of key academic works, which examine figure skating's historical development from its beginnings at the Edinburgh Skating Club in London, England in 1778.

For example, Hines (2006) provides a detailed historical account of the people, places, organizations, and events that have shaped figure skating globally from its roots in Nordic mythology. He writes about England's first skaters who traced drawings on the ice called 'figures' which proved to be an early test of accuracy and precision. He notes that the English were also the first to include partnered skating in their practices, which led the first female skaters to take the ice. This was called hand-in-hand skating and was supposedly designed as a method to allow women to learn to skate more quickly having the gentleman's support. The men in general were also encouraged to learn hand-in-hand figures specifically to have the pleasure of teaching the lady members their practices.

From early on the English viewed skating as a form of science rather than a form of art, developing a precise, upright and rigid style in their on-ice tracings. The first forms of more modern day ice dancing however began in Vienna. This was not surprising since at the time Vienna was considered the music capital of the world and ice dance was the first skating discipline to combine skating with music. In fact Jackson Haines, an American skater and dancing master, was one of the first to experiment with a form of skating inspired by dance and set to music. Haines was known for exaggerating his poses, teasing his audience and for the

unorthodox costumes he wore in his performances. Later, he was also influential in bringing ballroom steps to the ice, particularly waltz dance patterns, which became exceptionally popular among the public (Adams, 2011).

Haines was overwhelmingly well received in Vienna and following his 1912 exhibitions skating became a fashionable bourgeois pastime where masquerades, ice balls and cotillions were a regular occurrence during the skating season (Adams, 2011). Thus the Viennese skating style, later known as the ‘continental style’, reflected more musical and theatrical displays and was considered dramatically different from the English skating style. The English actually found the Viennese style to be inappropriate for Victorian, middle class men, calling it grotesque and circus like compared to their more reserved and disciplined techniques (Adams, 2011).

Kestnbaum (2003) addresses the strong influences of ballroom dance on ice dancing in her writings, which connect her technical knowledge of the sport with cultural theory to provide narratives around major themes as well as detailed analyses of skaters’ performances. She describes how the ballroom approach was influential in the original make-up of the male-female duo we see competing in ice dance today and she discusses the traditional gender roles that were clearly emphasized in adopting a ballroom dancing background. She goes on to describe the development of a ‘gender crisis’ in ice dance during 1980’s and early 1990’s when couples began to draw on more theatrical approaches blurring the traditional gender roles between partners. This example shows how changes in fashions around skating styles can lead to changes in skaters’ movement practices and to the kinds of gender roles portrayed by both partners. The famous British team of Jane Torvill and Christopher Dean, for example, along with their later pupils Isabelle and Paul Duchesnay of France were largely responsible for this change in ice dancing style, described as totally abandoning gender binarism in their movements and portrayals within their competitive programs. These changes eventually led to tighter restrictions

and rules from the international federation who wished to re-emphasize ballroom approaches as in the past and to ensure appropriate, 'traditional' gender representations in skating performances, movement practices and even costuming (Kestnbaum, 2003).

On the topic of gender in figure skating, several studies have examined the representations of femininity in the sport (see Baughman, 1996; Fabos, 2010; Feder, 1994; McGarry, 2005; Morrow, 1987; Rand, 2012). Morrow's (1987) account of Barbara Anne Scott, 1948 Canadian, World and Olympic Champion, examines her position in the establishment of the ideal women-first image of the female athlete and the dominant media portrayals that adopted this ideology. Scott was embraced as Canada's 'sweetheart' and one of figure skating's top female heroines at the time after her tremendous achievements at the national and international level. As Morrow (1987) describes "more than anyone else, Barbara Ann Scott was the media's vehicle for the re-entrenchment (or a new wave) of traditionalism that encouraged female domesticity at the expense of competitive athletic achievement" (p. 40).

Cynthia Baughman (1995) also addresses representations of femininity in her feminist response to the Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding incident where Harding's husband attacked fellow United States competitor, Kerrigan at the 1994 U.S National Championships. The incident brought an unprecedented increase of media attention to women's figure skating and to the sport more generally.

Karen McGarry's (2003) work on figure skating focuses on the construction of the Canadian identity and its links to the culture of spectacle within the sport. She provides a detailed historical review on the beginnings of figure skating in Canada and its emergence from the British legacy during 1960's. This occurred predominately through the development of private sport clubs in indoor skating rinks in Montreal and Ottawa and later in Toronto. Figure skating in

Canada, just as in Britain, was initially reserved for the wealthy and elite and reserved for male participation only.

In her article 'Pass as a Lady' McGarry (2005) also touches on the mass mediated construction of femininity in Canadian figure skating and its relationship with social class and the aesthetics of whiteness. Focusing on Canadian female competitor Josee Chouinard, McGarry, draws on Foucault to suggest that, Chouinard's skating success derived in part from her conformity to dominant, idealized norms of socially appropriate femininity. Noting the popular trend by Canadian female figure skaters to mimic the physical appearances and embodied practices of Hollywood icons, like Grace Kelly or Audrey Hepburn, the same can be seen in the ice dance event (McGarry, 2005). For example, current Canadian National ice dance champions, Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir, enact scenes reflecting Audrey Hepburn and Fred Astaire from the Hollywood hit 'Funny Face' in their 2012 free dance program.

Most recently, Adams (2011) has written the most extensive and critical analysis on figure skating to date, focusing on the constructions of masculinity within the sport. Adams suggests that figure skating, once an exclusively upper-class, manly pursuit is now dominated by female participation where strong prejudices around effeminacy exist. She suggests that the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's proved to be significant periods of change in figure skating along with the broader demographic and social changes that occurred post World War 2. Adams (2011) questions, "why is it that male figure skaters, once considered fine specimens of manhood, are so often now perceived to be fey and are deprecated for their failure to meet masculine norms?" (p. 5).

Specifically addressing the new ISU judging system in relation to men's figure skating, Adams (2010) suggests that the nature of the new rules, which require skaters to pay equal attention to both athletic and artistic components, has drawn strong criticism from male

competitors in particular. Some men feel strongly that men's figure skating should be recognized and marketed for its quadruple jumps and athleticism rather than its artistic impressions and criticize the judging system for devaluing the athletic and more masculine perceived component of their skating performances (Adams, 2011). Adams outlines the built-in gender inequalities that exist within the new judging system in general, where women's programs compared to their male competitors are shorter in length and the number of required elements are also less, making it impossible for female skaters to achieve the same scores as their male counterparts.

Specifically in regard to movement practices Adams (2011) questions why, for example, male skaters do not perform spirals? The spiral position sees the skaters glide on one foot with the free leg extended beyond ninety degrees over the ice behind them. The skater's body tilts forward becoming horizontal to the ice and overall the position is typically a display of flexibility and balance. Adams (2011) suggests that the spiral sequence has been "institutionalized as one of skating's principle 'feminine' moves" (p. 220) and the same goes for the layback spin, both of which are rarely, if ever, included in men's skating programs. Adams writes that both elements embody perfectly the traditional attitudes around gender that are evident in skating movements and which prevail in international competition. Overall these arguments and questions provide a useful basis for examining these same issues in the ice dance discipline.

The rules and regulations in figure skating and their history of enforcing stereotypical gendered practices within the sport have also been addressed in the literature, although they have typically focused on the 'ladies' discipline. Fabos (2010) discusses the fairytale and Cinderella-type narratives that typically follow female figure skaters and points to a particular rule change in 1973 when the short program was added to the competitive schedule for women. This came after Austrian skater Beatrice Scuba upset American Janet Lynn at the 1971 World Championships. The short program was added to the already existing figures component and long program

component and was designed to decrease the worth of the figures component, which at the time composed the highest percentage in the overall skating score. Beatrice or Trixie Shuba, a 'stockier' skater dominated the figures competition, often out-performing her 'pixie' American rival, Janet Lynn. It was suggested that Beatrice's heavier weight and exceptional skating skills gave her an advantage as she performed the cleanest tracings on the ice. Thus as Fabos (2010) suggests "with this change in competition format, school figures could no longer give stockier skaters a potential advantage... and the thin, lithe body type [such as that of Janet Lynn's] was strategically positioned to dominate" (p.190).

Erica Rand (2012) points to another example of the ways in which the rules in figure skating have narrowed figure skating preferences. African American skater Debbi Thomas, in her 1988 short program performance wore a black, full length, skirt-less unitard, which the ISU strongly disapproved of. Some even attributed her poor artistic marks to her un-conventional costume choice. Kestnbaum (2003) suggested it was perhaps Thomas's aggressive and powerful movements and in particular her "high energy step sequence involving angled limbs, shoulder isolations and syncopated rhythms... that evoked images of contemporary urban dance derived from African American culture and congruent with Thomas's own racial heritage" (p.141). In any case, the ISU instated new rules in 1989, which forbade unitards for female competitors along with any sort of pants, bare midriffs or excessive theatricality. The ruling against pants and unitards stood until 2004 although the ISU current rules still provide specific regulations around appropriate dress for men and women; "Ladies must wear a skirt. The Ladies dress must not give the effect of excessive nudity inappropriate for an athletic sport. Men must wear full-length trousers: no tights are allowed and the man's costume may not be sleeveless" (ISU, 2010, p. 159). Thus these two examples give good reason to explore the motivations for the change in

judging system and the resulting influences on skaters' movement practices both technically and aesthetically.

Embodied Practices in Sport and Dance

Social anthropologists have studied the close connections between cultures, sport, and dance extensively (Archetti, 2003; Wieschiolek, 2003; Wulff, 2003). Postures, gestures and basic movements vary in nature from society-to-society making dance an appropriate tool for studying cultural differences (Wieschiolek, 2003). The same can be assumed for the study of ice dance.

Wainwright, Williams and Turner (2006) examine ballet in their research, which draws upon Bourdieu's notions of habitus, physical capital, and cultural capital in distinguishing three forms of habitus which together influence and work to shape ballet dancers' practices.

Wainwright et al. (2006) suggest that the dancer's habitus can be individual, institutional as well as choreographic. For example, a dancer's habitus is dependent on his or her individual body type, the institution and its philosophies in which they train and on the movements typically prescribed by the choreographer, which are often a reflection of which movements best suit the individual dancer. It is clear that these three forms are interconnected in forming the dancers' overall habitus and the movement practices in their training and performances.

Similarly, looking at ballet, Aalten (2004) studies the body practices of professional ballet dancers describing them as "slow and highly controlled movements" (p. 266). She suggests that the typically gendered movements performed by female and male dancers can be seen as a reiteration and reproduction of the cultural norms around masculinity and femininity in which we see displays of strength and independence by men and weightlessness and passivity by women. Aalten however writes that if we look beyond representations of women in ballet and more at the actual material bodies of female dancers "ballet can offer women an opportunity to excel physically in ways that are comparable to sports" (p. 272), making the connection between

artistic movements in the performing arts and those in sport, much like ice dancing includes. Thus she is critical of former feminist researchers such as Adair (1992) and Daly (1987) who described ballet as only an oppressive environment for women and who disregard the more complex range of representations in material movements.

Dyck and Archetti (2003) place sport and dance in common in studying techniques of the body. In the past, they pointed out how, Western values around sport have tended not to include types of dance as sporting practice. However, they suggest that identities are inevitably reflected in stylized forms of movement and define movement as having the capacity to express and reformulate identities and meaning in both sport and dance. Archetti (2003), for example, discusses how football and tango are connected historically and culturally in Argentina much like baseball and dancing in Cuba.

Like Dyck and Archetti, various other studies have used theories of embodiment and habitus to explore specific athletic endeavors such as mixed martial arts (Spencer, 2009) or circuit training workout scenarios (Crossley, 2004). Examining gender and embodiment, Thorpe (2009) uses Bourdieu's concepts of capital, field and habitus for analyzing snowboarding culture. She writes that "the distinctive practices of a snowboarding habitus are imprinted and encoded in a socializing process" (p. 499) and that it is during this socialization process that knowledge around the snowboarding culture via instructors, peers, observations and the media becomes embodied. Addressing the gendered habitus of femininity and masculinity which become deeply embodied at an early age, Thorpe (2009) gives an example of female snowboarders who she suggests, will inevitably experience snowboarding in diverse ways based on the gendered habitus instilled during childhood and in different historical, social, cultural and political contexts. Overall she supports the notion that habitus can be context specific and unique to each individual or practice community.

In conclusion, there are extensive accounts of sport and dance and the embodied practices of dancers and athletes alike. Thus one can see how sport and dance fit appropriately in providing a significant area for research for the study of ice dancers' embodied movement practices.

Styles of Movement and Movement Practices

Jane Desmond (1997) writes about how there is a strong need to theorize the relationship between displays of bodily movement and the articulation of social categories of identity while considering issues of intersectionality around nationality, race, sexuality, and class. She suggests that dance is a greatly undervalued area of analysis where much can be gained from opening up cultural studies to questions around kinesthetic human movement. Desmond (1993) discusses how through dance scholarship we can explore the ways in which social identities are codified in performance styles and how these styles are appropriated across historical and geographical contexts. She gives a contemporary example discussing 'hip-hop' and the ways in which the traditional movement practices as part of this style, influenced by forms of West African dance, were 'whitewashed' for North American practice. In the 'white' version of hip hop there is a toning down of the traditional movements, a straightening of the torso and limited pelvic thrusting. Once a marker of 'black' dance or style, Desmond (1993) suggests hip-hop is now more a symbol of 'youth' in North America.

Vertinsky (2004) gives another example of the ways in which movement practices are transferred across history and geographical contexts in her writing about Rudolph von Laban and his lifetime dedicated to movement education. Laban's approach to physical education through dance, physical expression, and gymnastics was shaped and constrained by political theories and regimes during his time in Germany and later along side female physical educators at Dartington Hall in Britain. This work highlights the transmission of histories in movement practices and

their diffusion from one group or area to another as they “illuminate shifting ideologies attached to bodily discourse, including the mediating effect of gender” (p. 274).

Similarly, Jennifer Homans (2010) inquires about these same historical, political and social influences on the practice of ballet in her book ‘Apollo’s Angels’ where she inquires, “what did it mean that the French danced one way and the Russians another? And how had the art come to embody ideas, of a people or a time?” (p. xxiv). Homans (2010) attempts to trace the development of balletic traditions and movement styles as they are influenced by historical and social contexts along the way. As already mentioned in the literature on figure skating, the detailed histories of English and Viennese skating styles along with their association with white, upper class individuals undoubtedly continue to influence movement practices and skating styles in training centers across Canada. Specific styles of movement practices by different cultures in skating where Russian and North American ice dancers have come to embody distinctly different styles have also been traced throughout history see (Hines, 2006; Kestnbaum, 2003) and will be explored under the new judging system in this study.

Of course, the changes in movement practices and skating styles and their genderedness provides a more specific context through which forms of dance have been given meaning. Around gender, Desmond (1993) writes that we may also gain insight into changing attitudes towards the body and the implications of gender in human movement by studying dance. For example, she encourages us to ask, “who moves? And who is moved? What skills are demanded of each dancer and what do they imply about the desired attributes ascribed to men or to women?” (p. 37). These same questions will be pertinent for analyzing the role of gender in ice dancers’ movement practices.

Research on ballet has explored the traditional gendered physicality in movement on the stage, in training and even in specific techniques, choreography and classical ballets such as ‘The

Sleeping Beauty’, for example. As Goldberg (1997) who is a dancer herself writes, “without the polarities of masculine and feminine movements, the conventional dance narratives could not progress” (p. 307). It is these same ballet narratives that are often adopted by ice dancers and thus where traditionally gendered movements become reinscribed on the ice.

Both Adams (2011) and Kestnbaum (2003) closely followed the gendered meanings in particular skating elements, techniques and performances. Kestnbaum (2003) writes: “with few exceptions, when skaters invented original moves, they continued to reinforce images of male strength and control contrasted with female flexibility, pliability and to-be-looked-at-ness” (p. 228). Overall Adams (2011) suggests that the notion of gendered specific movements or styles of movement continues to be widespread among skaters, coaches and critics. Adams is also critical of figure skating in general suggesting, “there are few alternatives to the heavily gendered technical and aesthetic styles that prevail in ISU competitions” (p. 228) and attributes this to the historically conservative structure of the sport as well as the desire for skaters to please judges for competitive advancement. Thus by studying ice dancers’ movement practices in a Foucauldian sense, we can understand how human movement is controlled by those in power, including the ISU and the judges, and how specific movement practices are both encouraged and limited in certain political and social contexts.

Connecting Gaps in the Literature

The studies highlighted in the literature review suggest that both sport and dance provide rich environments for the study of embodied and movement practices where a critical analysis can articulate those practices unique to a particular culture.

In this study I will specifically analyze ice dancers’ *movement practices* as they have changed under new ISU judging system and the ways in which historical and traditional practices based on societal ideals have been upheld or not within the ice dance discipline. I will attempt to

answer the same questions that have previously been considered in the research on ballet and dance and which have not yet been addressed in depth in regard to the sport of figure skating. Both Adams (2011) and Kestnbaum (2003) have noted the need for further investigation and critical analyses in this area therefore this study will attempt to undertake what they suggest is desperately needed in the literature on figure skating.

To my knowledge there have been no studies that have specifically looked at the influence of the new ISU judging system and the ways in which it has potentially changed the movement practices of ice dancers themselves. As previously mentioned changes in figure skating performances have been noted however these changes have not been explored in depth while answering how and what role the ISU judging system has played.

In conclusion, the literature review shows the extensive work that has been done in the field around embodied and movement practices and the value in analyzing movement practices for understanding social and historical ideologies. The literature presented also demonstrates the *variety* of work that has looked at figure skating in general and the limited figure skating scholarship that has been dedicated to the ice dance discipline specifically. Thus overall, the literature has helped to illustrate the potential for analyzing the movement practices of today's leading ice dancers under the new ISU system.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Qualitative Approach

The focus of this study was to analyze ice dancers' movement practices and to explore how they have been influenced by the change in judging system. This approach to studying the body uses a social constructionist view, which suggests that the body is "somehow shaped, constrained and even invented by society" (Shilling, 2003, p. 62). This research also analyses the body in motion as Giardina and Newman (2011b) suggest in both the local bodily kinesthetic sense and in the broader political sense; seeing the body as "a physical and discursive form, entangled in matrices of biopolitical and the geopolitical conflict and negotiation, moving across and within dimensions of space and time" (p. 41).

As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) point out, the social constructionist approach is predicated on the assumption that "the inquirer must elucidate the process of meaning construction and clarify what and how meanings are embodied in the language and *actions* of social actors" (p. 222). Within a particular practice community, in this case the ice dance culture, these socially constructed meanings are often shared and are unique to that particular culture (Atkinson, 2011; Howe, 2008). Thus, to study the shared meanings in the movement practices of ice dancers and the ways in which they have been socially constructed, namely by the ISU judging system, I used a combination of qualitative research methods. These included a documentary analysis of the ISU judging system as well as semi-structured interviews with figure skating experts and skaters themselves on their current practices around training, choreography, skating styles, partnering and techniques. The interviews with skaters also included a visual analysis component on one of their competitive performances as a method of *seeing* skaters' movement practices in context. The qualitative nature of these methods allowed for a holistic and inductive approach to

understanding the social skating world and the movement practices of ice dancers themselves (Bryman, 2004).

Documentary Analysis: Rationale and Sample

The purpose for conducting a documentary analysis as part of this study was to better understand the effects of the ISU judging system on ice dancers' movement performances. Since there was a potential for the ISU judging system to have caused dramatic changes in ice dancers' practices, analyzing the documents outlining the judging system as well as any supporting technical documents communicated by the ice dance technical committee, became a central component to this research project.

More specifically, the documentary analysis was intended to identify structural and organizational influences imposed by figure skating's governing bodies on ice dancers. The analysis was also important for my own understanding of the new system as it informed my flexible interview guide and allowed for more in-depth discussions with the participants.

All official documents for this analysis were available publicly on the International Skating Union webpage (www.isu.org) and included the ISU Special Regulations and Technical Rules 2010, technical communications, as well as pertinent technical amendments from the ISU in regard to the ice dance discipline for the 2011 season. As the data analysis segment of this project extended into the summer of 2012, I also considered relevant updates, amendments and any specific ice dance regulations for the 2012/2013 skating season issued by the ISU as of June of 2012. See *Appendix A* for a formal list of documents.

These documents proved to be extensive and at times exceptionally complicated in their language despite my own skating knowledge. As Erica Rand (2012), an adult figure skater herself, wrote on her experiences with the current figure skating competition rules, "diligent research and decades of experience can be inadequate to the task" (p. 32). Some of the skaters,

coaches and even judges I spoke with shared their frustrations concerning the complexity of the rules and confirmed that the rules and regulations for ice dance are in fact the most robust and complex of all the figure skating disciplines. As one International ISU judge said in an interview discussion:

It's when I go out to judge ice dance, the material that I have to review ahead of time is an entire binder... If I were at a competition and I was judging ice dance that would mean that two weeks prior I would be going through my binder, trying to get it all in my head, again! Thinking that it is all new so I can't just step out and judge. I have to prepare.

I analyzed the documents using a qualitative document analysis or QDA as defined by Altheide, Coyle, DeVriese and Schneider (2008); "a QDA refers to an integrated method, procedure and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving and analyzing documents for their relevance, significance and meaning" (p. 128). This process of analysis includes becoming familiar with the documents pertinent to your research questions, identifying a list of items or categories to guide your readings of the documents, followed by collecting specific supporting data to test the categories outlined. In my case the categories or items I identified from the documents were used to form interview questions and points to be taken up in the interviews with the skaters and experts as a method of collecting supporting data from their expert opinions.

The qualitative document analysis process is also to be considered a reflexive and recursive one, whereby additional categories may emerge from the documents throughout the research process (Altheide et al., 2008). In my experience, the interview participants would often refer to specific rules or regulations in our conversations leading to new points and additional categories that I would then review in the documents gaining insight for future interviews and analysis. Thus there was a cyclical and reflexive process between the interviews and the document analysis throughout the course of research.

Overall, the document analysis was essential to gaining technical knowledge on the new judging system and proved to be necessary for participation in the ‘insider’ conversations I had with skaters and experts. In fact, the reaction from the interview participants was positive when I was familiar with a particular detail in the rules and contributed to my rapport with the interviewees. In some instances where I was unsure on certain elements of the judging system or rules, most participants were genuinely willing to explain and share their knowledge.

Interview Recruitment

Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest that the optimal recruitment strategy is to find knowledgeable informants, obtain a range of views and then test emerging themes with new interviewees. Following this suggestion participants for this study were recruited using a purposive sampling method followed by a snowball sampling method as the Canadian figure skating family is a close knit community where these methods proved to be particularly effective. Similarly, Houlihan and Green (2006) used this method in their study with expert physical education policy makers, asking each participant to identify additional potential interviewees as a way of confirming and supplementing the author’s initial selection much the same as I did.

In January of 2011 I contacted an ice dance coach in British Columbia who agreed to meet with me to discuss my project. See *Appendix D* for a copy of the initial contact letter. Our initial meeting was successful and he agreed to an interview and to pass along a sign up sheet to his skaters. He also forwarded an e-mail outlining my project to some of his colleagues including technical specialists, judges, mentors, Skate Canada and ISU administrators and experts.

I first visited the arena where the skaters train following my initial meeting to pick up the sign up sheet I had left. Having been a former competitive ice dancer I have always enjoyed

spending time in arenas as they bring back nostalgic feelings of my youth and a competitive excitement. Thus I was thrilled to make my way to the arena to pick up the sign up sheet for my research project during one of the ice dancers morning practices. This was the first time the issues and challenges of doing research, which had been discussed at length in my methodology class, became a reality for me and obviously affected the way in which I conducted my research project. As I entered into the arena and took in the familiar sights and smells, I stood against the wall watching the skaters perform their morning training regimes. A feeling of ‘outsider’ quickly overcame me as the skaters glanced at me as they skated by. Although I felt on familiar territory the skaters’ glances seemed to express their curiosity of who I was and what was I doing at *their* training session. I was hoping one of the coaches would call me over to introduce me to the skaters and was disappointed when the session ended and the skaters left the ice headed to their changing room. I was hoping to jump right in, meet the skaters and maybe even arrange an interview or two. I wanted to let them know I was previously an ice dancer myself and that I was excited to hear about their experiences.

After contacting the skaters and some of the colleagues over e-mail, I was fortunate that a number of them were quite willing to meet with me. Despite my extensive experience in ice dance and figure skating in general, I initially was very much an ‘outsider’ to this particular training group though I think my knowledge and experiences contributed to a positive ‘rapport’ with the research participants during the interviews themselves. Arksey and Knight (1999) refer to rapport as “the degree of understanding, trust and respect that develops between the interviewer and the interviewee” (p. 101). I think my own experiences also allowed for more insider conversations around skating specific rules, politics and understandings.

Interview: Rationale and Sample

I conducted semi-structured interviews with both experts and skaters to inquire about the changes in ice dancers' movement practices as a result of the new judging system. As Rubin & Rubin (2005) suggest, "constructionist researchers try to elicit the interviewee's view of their worlds, their work and the events they have experienced or observed" (p. 28). Therefore the interviews were critical for gaining knowledge and experiences from both the experts and skaters who work so closely with the ISU judging system.

It should also be noted that a number of the studies around embodiment included in the literature review have used ethnographic methodology or participant observations and only in some cases have included in-depth interviews as a method of research. In the case where interviews were used the authors discussed the significance of considering and highlighting the dancers' or athletes' words. For example, Wieschiolek (2003) suggests in her study on salsa dancing in Berlin, Germany: "the language they use, the metaphors they choose, the analogies they draw may reveal more than the content itself and much more than a video tape or an analysis of their movements" (p. 119). Therefore to allow greater attention to the ways in which ice dancers themselves identify their own movement practices and the influences of the ISU judging system I conducted 14 semi-structured interviews with 15 participants using a pre-determined flexible interview guide. See *Appendix B* and *Appendix C* for the interview schedules used with both skaters and experts. One less interview than participants was conducted as one ice dance team requested the interview to be conducted with both partners present for time commitment reasons.

The interview process included two parts: interviews with figure skating experts and interviews with skaters themselves. Interviews with these two sample groups did not, however, occur separately rather in random order as the participants contacted me and based on their

respective availabilities. Interviews took place at the arena or at a coffee shop conveniently located for the participants.

Expert participants included coaches, judges, technical specialists, choreographers, and administrators. Most were previously skaters themselves thus many had over 30 years experience in the sport. Due to their longtime involvement in the ice dance discipline the experts could comment specifically on the *changes* since the inception of the new judging system and their experiences during the transition period from the former 6.0 system.

On the other hand, the skaters, who were all novice, junior or senior competitive ice dancers, except for two skaters who were current competitive *adult* ice dancers, had all been competing in the sport for at least two years. They had, however, not all skated under the old *and* the new judging system. In these particular interviews skaters offered their expert knowledge on their current skating practices and on how the judging system influences those practices presently. Despite some skaters lack of skating experience under the old judging system they typically commented on their previous perceptions of the sport or often referred to old competitive skating programs they had seen from the past. See Table 1 for details on the participant's biographical data.

All of the participants completed consent forms and biographical questionnaires (see *Appendix E* and *Appendix F* for a copy of the consent forms for both skaters and experts and *Appendix G* and *Appendix H* for a copy of biographical questionnaire skaters and experts also completed at the interview location). The skaters and experts were given compensation in the form of a ten-dollar gift certificate to a local coffee shop, though the compensation was not made known to the participants until the conclusion of the interview. Interviews ranged from 55 minutes to 1 hour 40 minutes in length.

Overall information from a balance of experts and skaters led to a rigorous analysis on the change in movement practices in ice dance and the current movement practices performed under the new ISU judging system. The combination of interviewees also highlighted some conflicting perspectives on the new system, which will be noted in the findings. Following each interview I wrote a reflective journal detailing my thoughts on the interview, as well as some of the recurring themes I came to identify. I also noted any new or interesting points I wanted to clarify or take up in the subsequent interviews.

Table 1

Participant Biographical Data

Participant #	Pseudonym	Skater or Expert Role	Years Experience	Gender
Pilot	Caitlin	Technical Specialist	8	F
1	Kyle	Coach/Choreographer	5	M
2	Nina	Skater	3	F
3	Anne	Skater	16	F
4	Jenna	Skater	4	F
5	Charlotte	ISU Judge, Referee, Technical Controller	40+	F
6	Amanda	Skater	40+	F
7	Blair	Skater	16	M
8	Ryan	Skater	13	M
9	Peggy	Judge	45	F
10	Catherine	Technical Specialist	3	F
11	Diana	ISU Judge, International Referee	43	F
12	Jennifer	Skater	5	F
13	David	Skater	2	M
14	Lee	Administrator	30	M

Video Analysis

While the use of visual methods has been less well documented in physical cultural studies, such methods can provide “powerful indicators regarding multiple meanings embedded in our culture” (Phoenix, 2010, p. 93). As this research was centered on the physical and material movement practices of ice dancers and their meanings, a visual component as part of this research was particularly appropriate.

In the interviews specifically with skaters, I included a video analysis component where along with the skaters we watched a video of one of their competitive performances and discussed their movements, techniques, and styles as the video played. As Phoenix (2010) suggests, visual images “have the ability to amass complexly layered meanings in a format, which is both accessible and easily retrievable to researchers, participants and audiences alike” (p. 94). I had asked the skaters to bring along a video to the interview however most of the skaters’ performances were available online so in most cases we watched the video on my computer at the interview location. This made it convenient for me to return to the videos during the analysis period of this project.

For the skaters, the video analysis component allowed them to point out some of the movement practices, elements and techniques they had attempted to describe in the interviews. Often the skaters would physically demonstrate specific movement practices during the interviews, as it was sometimes difficult for them to explain or describe particular movements. As Wieschiolek (2003) suggests it is often difficult to verbalize intricate physical movements and motions as movement seems to resist translation into verbal language as both dance and language are two different ways of expressing oneself. Thus while honoring the ways in which ice dancers describe their movement practices, the video analysis helped to confirm and to *see* the movement practices ice dancers perform in context.

Often the skaters would pause the video, pointing to a particular movement or element in their performance. This allowed the skaters to discuss why and how they perform such movements and the rules and regulations that were pertinent to the performance. This particular visual methodology where data is elicited from the interviewees is referred to as ‘respondent-generated visual data’ which promotes the use of visual methods as a way to encourage collaborative work between the researcher and the participant to co-produce visual knowledge (Phoenix, 2010; Prosser, 2011). This method can also provide another layer of insight into the participants’ experiences while also providing a participatory principle where the participant gains a sense of agency in the research process (Pink, 2007). From my experience, the video component as part of the interviews was often the place where the skaters became most engaged and they seemed excited and proud to show off their competitive performances. The videos also allowed the skaters to *show* and point to rather than just *tell* me about their movement practices. They highlighted the visible socio-historical and cultural processes that were clearly embodied in the skaters’ movement practices and this could be seen in the skaters’ postures, expressions and costumes all of which were visible through the video component and would not necessarily have been elicited as easily through the interview conversations. Conversations from the video analysis with skaters were included in transcription and thus in the data analysis process.

Data Analysis

The interviews conducted were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim using transcription software (Express Scribe). I then followed a more general inductive approach as a method of qualitative data analysis defined by Thomas (2003), which is to “allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies” (p. 238). The process of inductive analysis included a close reading of the interview transcripts and the subsequent labeling of

emergent categories supported by examples in the text. Roughly three to eight main categories are typically identified from an inductive study although more categories may be identified initially and later refined to reflect those themes that are most relevant (Thomas, 2003). This study was intended to explore ice dancers' changed movement practices and the role of gender in these changed practices, thus the data collected from the interviews and video analysis were first coded to address these two initial research questions. After multiple readings of the interview transcripts I then identified ten sub-categories and subsequently coded for these themes. The data transcription and coding was organized using MS Word files.

The categories identified were both anticipated and unanticipated prior to the interviews. For example, the power dynamics between members of the ice dance skating community was not a particular research question or an initial focus of this study. In discussion with the participants, however, it became a prominent theme.

Throughout the coding and data analysis process I kept a reflexive journal where I wrote down any insights or connections I saw between concepts and themes or any questions that arose in the process. This is referred to as 'memoing' by Bailey (2007) and is considered an iterative process, which can help with the overall analysis.

Reflexivity

Throughout the research process it was critical for me to be reflexive of my own cultural assumptions, especially considering my previous experiences as an ice dancer. As Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest:

Interpretive researchers do not need to drop their cultural assumptions to assume those of the conversational partners, but researchers do need to be cautious lest they fail to hear the meaning of what the interviewees have said because their own cultural assumptions get in the way. (p. 29)

Dyck and Archetti (2003) also speak to this type of reflexivity in their ethnographic work around sport, dance and embodied identities. They suggest that it is critical for those conducting this type of academic investigation to have some kind of previous experience or involvement in the activity being studied. The problem therefore was less about negotiating access but rather maintaining the separation necessary for conducting critical analyses. In negotiating my role in the research process, I saw my previous experiences as a competitive ice dancer as a rich inside perspective into the culture where I could draw on insider vocabulary and understanding of the sport throughout the research process. Dyck and Archetti (2003) refer to his kind of previous experience as especially beneficial:

The insights, vocabularies, and questions that may be afforded by prior personal participation in one form or another of sport or dance may provide the impetus for initiating nuanced ethnographic projects and pursuing innovative lines of analysis. (p. 13)

Despite my insider experiences, I only competed under the ISU system in its first year at the Canadian national level. Thus I expected the skaters and experts I interviewed to be far more experienced with the new system than myself. While skating under the old 6.0 system I was at times critical of its methods having experienced frustration with my perception of its built in subjectivities. Therefore it was critical for me to be conscious of the assumptions I might impose on skaters' experiences and words in potentially discussing both judging systems. Still an avid fan of the sport, I recognize the subjectivities that continue to exist in the present system though I was very careful not to impose these opinions on the participants. At times this was difficult, especially when the interviewees would look to gain confirmation from me as they recognized we shared common experiences and had similar understandings of the figure skating world.

Chapter 4: Findings

Throughout the interview process both the skaters and experts I spoke with unanimously agreed that there have been major changes to the ice dance discipline since the inception of the new ISU judging system. In fact my questions concerning whether ice dance had changed in recent years were met with overwhelming examples on how ice dance had changed, from all of the interviewees. At the same time, our discussions highlighted the many aspects of ice dance and figure skating more generally that have remained the same, including traditionally gendered and classed practices and styles that continue to prevail. In discussions focused on the new judging system, themes also emerged around the power dynamics between skaters, coaches, judges, and the ISU as well as issues on the perceived fairness of the new judging system for all those involved.

In this first section, I will focus on key changes to the ice dance discipline highlighted by the participants in our discussions. These included both general changes to the sport of ice dance, such as the more athletic and acrobatic nature of the discipline, as well as specific examples of current movement practices, which demonstrate these qualities. I will also discuss the normalization and quantification of movement practices as well as changes in skating styles including the ways in which the judging system has influenced these effects.

In the section to follow I address my second research question on the role of gender in ice dancers' changed movement practices and discuss how a number of old traditions have been sustained and continue to be displayed in skaters' movements and postures today. Finally, I will briefly discuss the obvious and inherent power dynamics within the ice dance practice community, which became evident from my interviews on the new judging system.

Changes to Ice Dance under the New ISU Judging System

All of the participants agreed that ice dance has become much more *difficult* since the inception of the new judging system as well as more *athletic* in nature. For example Peggy explained:

I think the biggest thing that has changed is how difficult it is. I mean ice dancers now, well in my opinion, they are the most elite athletes in the four disciplines, both males and the females. It is so difficult. It is so rigorous... wow! Huge! I mean to look back at what used to pass for a free dance you would be joking now, it is so difficult what they are doing.

Interestingly, discussions around the changed and increasingly difficult and athletic nature of ice dance led participants to consistently reflect upon the lack of athletic practices in the past. Ice dance has always been the more artistic of the four figure skating disciplines with its strong connections to ballroom dance. Thus in order to highlight the current athletic nature of the discipline the skaters and experts continuously compared ice dancing to the other, traditionally more athletically perceived, figure skating disciplines; women's, men's and pairs. For example, Lee explained how ice dancers' fitness levels under the new judging system can now be considered comparable to women's, men's and pairs skaters, pointing to how ice dance now meets the fitness standards of the other disciplines:

The dancers are comparable to the other athletes, maybe not the pairs girls, they are unbelievable, they are a breed of their own but mostly they [ice dancers] are equal to anything. Ice dance is physically as demanding as any of the other disciplines.

Discussing reasons why skaters and experts view ice dance as more athletic in nature, many of the participants pointed to the new required elements, which were introduced to the discipline as part of the new judging system. For example, ice dancers must now complete required lifts, spins, footwork sequences and twizzle combinations where the skaters spin simultaneously on one foot while travelling across the ice. These required elements, similar to those in the men's, women's, and pairs skating events were not required under the old judging

system. As Anne explained, what was previously performed in ice dancers' programs is now considered, athletically and in some cases technically, *sub par* to the elements performed today:

Yeah like it is so much more difficult now. The footworks now... people are actually doing real turns whereas before, and I have looked at some of my videos from 2003 or something and our footwork sequence is ridiculous. I was laughing, like we actually did that? So yeah it is a lot more difficult and the elements are serious elements whereas before it was kind of hokey.

Anne calls the current ice dance elements 'serious' as opposed to the 'hokey' practices she says were performed under the old judging system. These new elements along with their evaluation criteria have encouraged ice dancers to perform increasingly athletic movement practices in order to gain points as Charlotte suggested:

It is more athletic because, well one of the things that the new system did immediately of course, was to define how and what you could put into (skaters programs) and what the skaters and coaches could get points for. The real money.

For each specific element skaters are awarded points for their quality of completion and for the level of difficulty they achieve. More difficult elements require greater skill and athletic ability, leading skaters to perform more athletic practices in order to achieve higher points. Furthermore in speaking with an innovator of the new ISU judging system, Lee explained how the basic foundation from which the new judging system was built also contributed to a more athletic ice dance discipline. More specifically, the two values used to measure the difficulty of ice dancers elements have encouraged more athleticism from the very beginning. As Lee explained:

The principles of measurement in the system were all based on strength and flexibility so if those two words didn't exist then we weren't going to measure it. So difficult positions were required and they were measured based on the strength and flexibility that was required to do those positions.

Thus, both principles of measurement, strength and flexibility, used to evaluate ice dancers' required elements demand a higher degree of athletic ability than what might have been performed under the old judging system where required elements and specific evaluation criteria did not exist.

More specifically, the skaters and experts gave examples of changed movement practices in ice dance, which exemplify the more athletic nature of the discipline. These included changes in both lower leg positions and upper-body postures.

Participants described how skaters are now lifting their free leg to a higher level above the ice, which is much more physically demanding. In fact the skaters and experts suggested that most skaters are now attempting to lift their free leg well over 90 degrees in relation to the body, a position quite different from former practices where the free leg was always kept close to the body. Discussing this change in ice dancers' free leg positions Jenna said:

I know when I was training with my old partner and we still had the compulsory, OD and free dance set up, we would watch old compulsory competitions. The free legs were not as high as they are now. People are lifting them a lot higher now, and back then they were really low, I mean they were really nice and precise and matching, they were just lower.

Past practices in ice dance, like those demonstrated in ISU compulsory dances as Jenna noted, reflect the former English style of skating which required a stiff and upright posture where skaters were encouraged to not bend their knees or lift their arms, showcasing only reserved and disciplined movements (Adams, 2011).

Focusing upon ice dancer's basic skating positions and postures and how they have become more athletic, Kyle explained:

Some things that have changed for sure are speed across the ice, quickness of movement and lean during the edges. Everything is not as upright anymore, like you can lean into an edge because skaters are getting that much stronger and dynamic and the things that are asked for the levels are that much harder that you have to show variety with your body movement.

Kyle continued to describe how skaters are performing more angled positions with their bodies by leaning their upper body forward in relation to their lower body, creating a more dramatic and athletic position. This is one way skaters compensate for the increasing speed at which they are skating as well as the deeper edges and lower knee bends they are currently taking on, all of which require a high degree of athleticism. This also suggests a change to the basic skating

position performed by ice dancers, as a more traditional upright skating position was preferred in the past.

In regard to the upper body, participants also agreed that the new judging system has encouraged more *varied* and complex upper body movements. This has allowed ice dancers to perform more interesting and creative holds between partners beyond the traditional ballroom dance holds of waltz, foxtrot and tango. The rules now state, “changes of hold as well as many and varied holds increase the difficulty of the program and therefore, should be included” (ISU, 2010, p.154). Giving an example of the new holds now seen in ice dance, Anne explained:

Yeah like you have to hit waltz hold, foxtrot hold and you have to hit a couple of different holds throughout your sequence but still changing and you see more interesting holds too, a lot more now. You might hold behind each other’s back. You might hold his neck or something and things are a little bit more intertwined.

Jenna went on to confirm the variety in upper body movements now seen in ice dance and suggested that these movements are also more *articulated* than in the past:

I think it [upper body movement] is more articulated. Before maybe you went side to side or up and down and now there is a lot of ... well it just seems like more articulation and more variety in the upper body movement.

Some participants suggested that the articulation of upper body movements is displayed to ensure the judges clearly recognize the variety and the difficulty of the movements that ice dancers are performing with their upper bodies thus ensuring they are awarded the appropriate points.

Commenting on the increase in variety and intricacy of upper body movements, skaters and experts suggested that these practices also contribute to the more athletic nature of ice dance since these practices require exceptional core strength. As one judge suggested:

Their whole core has to... I don’t think there was very much of an emphasis on core strength 10 years ago but now if you don’t have that strong core strength you just can’t stay upright for 4 minutes.

Some participants attributed these changes toward more extreme and athletic body positions to the new judging system but also to the general evolution of the sport. They suggested that these practices have been taken up by some of the most successful training groups internationally thus making them popular among ice dancers across Canada and specifically with the skaters I spoke to. This normalization whereby skaters take on those practices performed by ice dancers who rank among the highest competitively will be discussed later.

Another prominent change to the ice dance discipline discussed by almost all of the participants was the increase in *acrobatic* like movements performed by the skaters. Previously, movements that were acrobatic in nature were strongly discouraged as this was considered a departure from traditional dance practices central to ice dancing. In conversations around the athleticism of ice dance since the inception of the new system, participants often further described the athletic movements performed by skaters to be acrobatic, leaving some unsure if the discipline was in fact more athletic or more acrobatic or both as the following interview excerpt from one judge suggested:

Diana: Well okay that is interesting. Some are more acrobatic but acrobatics are to be discouraged so there is sort of ...um... I don't think we even use that word any more. I hadn't thought about it that way. It is a good question. I think it is a real blend of athleticism and acrobatics but um, to mehmm... what is the definition of acrobatic?

Researcher: Well why would acrobatics be discouraged?

Diana: Because, it's not dance, that's why.

Although acrobatic movements were strongly discouraged in the past, the current technical rules to my knowledge do not use the word 'acrobatic' to describe illegal movements or poses. The rules do however consistently encourage 'dance' like movements and include deductions for those elements that are not performed to the music or that do not reflect the character of the chosen 'dance' (ISU, 2011a, p. 25)

Further negotiating the athletic and acrobatic nature of the ice dance discipline, Catherine explained how the new judging system has actually encouraged more acrobatic practices in the difficult elements as defined in the rules and suggests the fans have come expect these acrobatic displays:

In the old judging system they were definitely athletic, I don't think their bodies were pushed to the same levels and I think that is why people say now that it is so much more athletic and it is so much more acrobatic, just because they are trying harder things. It is not that they weren't capable of it in the old system it was just that they didn't have to do it. Whereas now the audience expects the wow factor, they like Cirque du Soleil crazy like 'how did they do that' stuff.

Interestingly many of the participants I spoke to suggested that the top teams in the world currently work with Cirque du Soleil professionals as part of their regular coaching teams. In fact, quite a few skaters work with circus experts for help with their choreography and especially with their lifts. They also all continue to take ballet classes as part of their regular training regimes. What was interesting is the current variety of influences on ice dancers' movement practices from not only ballet and dance but also Broadway and circus genres. This suggests a hybrid of influences on ice dancers' movement practices from both upper class and aristocratic ballet to the typically considered lower class traditions of the circus. As Catherine suggested in the previous quote, figure skating audiences expect 'spectacle like' performances in which skating bodies perform acrobatic movements and poses. In the past this kind of spectacularization of the sport was reserved for carnival or show performances performed by skaters once they turned to the professional ranks and were strictly reserved for entertainment purposes and not for competition (McGarry, 2003). This suggests a significant shift in the preferences around ice dancers' movement practices on the ice.

Describing examples of current acrobatic movements in ice dance many of the participants focused on the dancers' required lifts. Made famous by Canadian, World and Olympic champions, Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir, was a lift where he sat with his legs turned

outward in a ballet second position with both feet pointed in opposite directions, while she stepped with one foot onto his thigh. Leaning her shin against his back, she lifted the other leg up and behind, her arms free from touching him. Later nicknamed ‘the goose’ this lift famously started a trend towards acrobatic, balance types of lifts where the skaters’ bodies lean against each other holding the lifted partner with a limited point of contact and their arms free from holding each other. Despite the acrobatic nature of ice dance lifts currently, the ISU states clearly that “lifts should enhance the music chosen and express its character and should be performed in an elegant manner without obvious feats of strength, awkward and/or undignified actions and poses” (ISU, 2010, p. 139). This particular rule highlights the artistic and upper-class requirements that are still encouraged as dancers perform lifts that are more and more acrobatic.

Further describing this significant change in the nature of ice dance lifts since the inception of the new system while negotiating and maintaining ‘dance’ traditions as per the ISU rules, Lee explained:

We have created features within each level, and a variety of different features, which represent strength and flexibility that could be applied. So what happened in ice dance, particularly with the lifts, they became more acrobatic, to a degree. Now you know traditionalists will say ‘well that is not dancing’. But why would you say that? Are we going to stay with dancing as it was in the 40’s? No, it changed in the 50’s, the 60’s and oh it changed in the 70’s. Dancing has always changed.

Thus there are tensions between old and new practices in ice dance where acrobatic-like movements, especially in lifts, are a point of contention. The rules as part of the new judging system specifically describe acrobatic positions that are required for achieving high levels of difficulty, thus skaters routinely perform them. For example, the rules state that for difficult lifts, the lifted partner must perform: a split, full donut, ring position, a ‘Biellmann’ position where the upper body is arched back with one foot being pulled to the skater’s head, and/or a layback, all of which can be described as acrobatic. Focusing on the acrobatic nature of these positions, discussions with the participants on this topic almost always led to conversations on ability and

injury, with many worried about the health consequences to female skaters who are constantly performing these increasingly contorted positions at high speeds. As Catherine noted:

The lifts are so much harder. They are cirque du soleil lifts where the girls are flying around the guys heads and the rotations are fast, whereas before a lift would get credit if the guy picked her up and spun her around once...whereas now they have to do six rotations in a certain time limit. It is more demanding on the body, skaters are getting injured more frequently now because not only do they have to do the technical side but they have to do the performance.

Although I am unaware of any evidence for an increase in injury to female ice dancers due to the change in nature of their movement practices, the demands on the body have undoubtedly increased. As one coach discussed further, the increasingly athletic and acrobatic movements have also given younger ice dance teams an advantage as they can more easily perform the difficult positions the new judging system demands. In the past, World and Olympic ice dance champions were well into their 30's, the oldest of the four figure skating disciplines. Now most of the top ice dance teams in the world are in their early to mid 20's. Discussing the increasing demands on the body as part of the new system, one coach questioned how long young ice dancers will be able to remain in the sport:

Like, my most interesting thing that I would love to see in a research thing is how old will champions be because... now they are getting younger and younger, they are 24 and I just wonder if the young kids will be able to sustain their bodies in the new system, because it is more demanding, it's more difficult and the positions are harder to achieve so you are demanding more of your body. So we'll see how long they last in the system.

Thus as the movements and practices have changed in ice dance so have the demographics of the competition field. It has however not been demonstrated that these changes are a direct result of the new judging system. In fact some would suggest that the politics in the old judging system required skaters to 'wait their turn', thus they remained in the sport gaining political clout before they could achieve any major championship. A current judge and past skater explained how the new judging system and its focus on technique has allowed younger teams entering onto the competitive senior circuit to break into the top ranks more easily than in the past:

I think with the old judging system it was political, um you know? And it was kind of one of those things where if you had been around in the sport and paid your time it was a process you were now at the top. So it was so hard for young kids at the same technical ability if not better to be awarded because it was like... well that is not how it works whereas with the new judging system, you have to get those levels otherwise your not going to win.

It will be interesting to follow this trend as well as discussions on the age and ability of ice dancers as the sport progresses under the new judging system and to see how this is related to the changed movement practices ice dancers are now performing.

Overall as explored in this section the new ISU judging system has had a number of effects on the movement practices and techniques ice dancers are performing as well as on the general perceptions of the sport as an athletic and acrobatic discipline.

Skaters and experts also suggested that the new system has tightened the prescription of skaters' movements causing a normalization of their practices, which will be explored in the next section.

Normalization of Skaters' Movement Practices

- Ice Dance is not my comfort zone; it is the area that is the most technical to judge and skate in the sense of, the number of things that have to be in according to prescription. Every step is a matter of fact (ISU International Judge) -

The required elements skaters need to include in their competitive performances are listed annually by the ISU. These may include a straight line or a circular step sequence, a dance spin, a rotational or curve dance lift etc. Each element is also accompanied by extensive documentation concerning the varying levels of difficulty. For example, a level one dance spin must meet the following criteria; a spinning movement started on one foot by both partners and the completion of at least 3 rotations. To meet a level *four* dance spin, skaters must perform 4 different difficult variations from 3 different basic positions and each difficult variation must

include at least 2 rotations. Difficult variations are then described explicitly for skaters and coaches to choose from (ISU, 2011a).

Most skaters insisted that they strive to complete each element to the highest level of difficulty (level 4). However the elements are also scored on their grade of execution or the quality with which the element is performed. In some cases skaters may strategically perform a lower level of difficulty in a particular element to ensure they can perform the element in good quality for a positive grade of execution score. This is instead of performing a more difficult level, poorly. Like those skaters I spoke with, ice dancers in the junior and senior competitive ranks are all capable of performing level 4 elements, while executing them in good quality, thus they all perform the same high scoring, difficult elements as described in the ISU rules for competitive advantage resulting in a narrowing of skaters' practices. As Nina explained:

I would say that the level of difficulty of the elements and stuff... like now because they have levels for spins and footwork and stuff we are kind of forced to do more difficulty... it's hard to explain...but I am sure you know they have bullets and stuff and you just have to work towards getting a level 4 on basically everything.

As Nina suggested, everyone works to meet the 'bullets' or requirements for a level 4 on all of their elements, forcing skaters to perform similar movement practices in their lifts, spins, twizzles and footwork. Ryan gave a particular example of skaters all performing the same high scoring rotational lift element. Although a number of options were listed for achieving a level 4 rotational lift, one particular example was easier than the others, leading all of the skaters to perform the easiest level 4 lift listed in the rules:

For example from last season to this season, almost every single team, all but two teams in junior did a one arm rotational lift because it is so easy to get the level. You have to pick up the girl with one arm and do three rotations and put her back down, doesn't matter the position or anything. So only Nicole and I and one other team didn't do a one-arm lift.

The skaters explained that they can perform other movements or practices within their elements but that it can leave them vulnerable to lower scores as the judges may not recognize the comparable difficulty if it is not specifically written in the rules. As Anne pointed out:

They give examples of what is difficult and those are just examples so we could technically do other things but people are just scared to do other things because it's like well, what if they don't count that as being difficult.

One coach confirmed this frustration saying:

The high level people are not really going over the edge to be creative and try new things or else they are going to get a crappy level and they won't be competitive. Um same with lifts, some people have done some cool lifts and then they don't get credit for them so I think that is the hardest thing.

Almost all of the skaters I spoke with explained that the biggest challenge with the new judging system and its prescription of elements and levels of difficulty is the ability to be creative and to push the boundaries in their elements beyond what is stated in the rules. As Anne went on to explain, when working with Cirque du Soleil professionals along with her partner they come up with a number of innovative and difficult elements. However they often do not include them in their competitive programs, as they are not listed in rules. Discussing this Anne said:

This past season we worked with the circus and we came up with so many neat things and cool lifts. We brought them to the ice and we would show our coaches and they would be like 'that is so cool but that won't count for anything' and we won't get any level for that or it would be illegal or something. So it is challenging to find things that will be considered difficult and will still get the levels for us and still be different.

The judges and administrators I spoke with on the other hand almost all disregarded the challenge for skaters to be creative in their elements under the new rules, highlighting a disconnect between the experiences of the skaters and the perceptions of the judges. When asked if a loss of creativity in skaters' movement practices was a limitation of the new judging system, one judge responded:

Oh I don't think so. I find some of the programs now are very creative. I don't think it is limiting it at all. Because of all these restrictions, okay, but no I don't think it is limiting. I think it is even asking them to be more creative and to think outside the box.

Some agreed that the normalization of skaters' movement practices in ice dance has decreased in recent years with skaters starting to push beyond what is stated in the rules.

However most of the experts who suggested this gave examples of those skaters who rank the highest nationally and internationally. These skaters often have greater agency to exercise more creativity, performing new and different elements and styles as their competitive reputation can serve as a buffer to the judges' opinions. Lower ranked skaters who are still working to gain a reputation typically remain conservative in their movement practices and styles. Discussing Virtue and Moir and their ability to try new movement practices like in their revolutionary 'goose' lift, Catherine said:

I think when the judging system first came out everybody just wanted to achieve a level 4 and people didn't realize that you can achieve the level 4 by still coming up with new ideas and making sure that they are difficult. So for a couple of years there, I feel like everybody was doing exactly the same lift, exactly the same spin, um, if someone saw a team do a footwork sequence that worked they would often copy it and just put it in their program, so I feel like skating sort of lost its creativity for a while, I think it has gotten a lot better, I mean Tessa and Scott are a great example, with the famous Goose lift, you know, it had never been seen before, it wasn't defined in the rules but they created it and it was technically really hard so it is awarded, whereas when the new judging system first came out people were scared to do that.

As Catherine suggested, the narrowing of practices whereby skaters all perform the same elements is a direct result of the new judging system although skaters like Tessa and Scott have started to move beyond what is described in the rules performing equally as difficult elements where they continue to receive top scores.

Despite the frustration the skaters I spoke with described, a few skaters did point out some of the benefits to having such prescribed movements and elements. As Jenna suggested:

I feel almost like for me, I like to have an outline of what I am supposed to do and if there wasn't this set, telling me what to do then what am I working towards? How do I know if I am doing what the Russians are doing? Now you know that everyone is doing this and you just have to make sure yours is better than theirs.

As Jenna pointed out, the prescribed movements and elements allow her to more easily compare her practices with other competitors and also to work towards set practices. Another skater also suggested that these prescribed movements and elements have given some objectivity to a typically subjective judging process:

I think with the judging system, you know there are things outlined now that we can try to achieve and kind of know where we are going and how to push the sport, whereas before, I feel like you could do something really cool but people would be like 'I have never seen that before, I don't know what that is', so it wasn't awarded the difficulty that maybe it should have been given.

In speaking with an insider on the new judging system, he described the system as forty percent objective and sixty percent subjective in comparison to the entirely subjective former 6.0 judging system. The *quantification* of skaters' movements and practices as part of the new ISU judging system is a major reason for the increase in objectivity in the sport and will be discussed next.

Quantification of Skaters' Movement Practices

One of the main goals of the new ISU judging system was to incorporate an aspect of objectivity in the judging process by incorporating some measurability. As one expert pointed out, if the new judging system did not bring more objectivity or measurability to the sport and particularly to the ice dance discipline it was possible it would have risked being removed from the Olympic roster:

Um, there is no question that ice dance had to become more measurable otherwise it would have become the first discipline to go.

Thus the debate on how to measure both the technical and artistic components in ice dance began and strong criticisms initially came from those who believed the art or artistry in ice dancing would be diminished with the increase in measurability and thus quantification of

skaters' movement practices. As one coach suggested, masterful ice dance performances such as Jane Torvil and Christopher Dean's famous 1984 free dance to Ravel's *Bolero* would be impossible under the new judging system with rules and regulations now required for skaters to consider for competition. Explaining this, Kyle said:

This is a typical complaint of the new system is that you're never going to see another 'Bolero', right, from Torvil and Dean 1984, because... well, you didn't have elements. So you could just weave in and out and create this beautiful piece of art and now we have to focus on getting a twizzle sequence in there, getting a spin, two footwork sequences, getting 4 lifts in, that are all levels.

As Kyle suggested, the choreography process, whereby skaters along with their coaches and/or choreographers create their annual competitive programs, has changed. Skaters explained how they now need to come up with their required elements; lifts, spins, footwork sequences and twizzles and once they have chosen their music they insert the required elements in an appropriate order. This allows skaters to focus on creating elements that meet the difficulty requirements and then to strategically place the elements within their programs. This is contrary to creating movements on the ice inspired by the music. As one coach explained:

In a way it (choreography) is different because in the old system you just choreograph what you want to whatever piece of music and now you really have to be strategic about where you place the elements because they have to fit them within certain phrases for you to get the highest levels of execution. So yes, the way you choreograph is based around the judging system so you can get the best out of your athlete and the elements because there are actual elements they are judging now. Whereas in the old system I don't know how Torvil and Dean choreographed their *Bolero* but when we did it before it didn't seem as much of a process. It did seem more artistic.

Initially, following the inception of the new system, ice dancers were inserting their required elements into their programs with little consideration for the music. Music and rhythm have always been central components to ice dance and thus new rulings came out which rewarded skaters for performing elements that matched the phrasing of the music and gave deductions for those that did not. This further quantified ice dancers' movement practices not only in regard to

their difficulty but also for their appropriate placement to the music. Charlotte, an international judge, explained why this rule was created:

What happened when people were going for levels, the levels remained foremost and teams forgot about the music. So they would just skate through and for the ice dancers music is everything. So again Anne thought, hmmm, I see what is happening here, we better put some points against this and you're going to get a deduction if you don't skate to the music.

Skaters also described how the new judging system has quantified their *training*. For example, one skater recalled changes in her training since the new judging system has been in place, saying:

The one thing that really changed was that I was actually consciously thinking of particular elements. Like I remember when my partner and I would do a lift I could hear him counting, which I would never hear before or even when I was doing a position in a lift I would be counting my seconds to make sure I got the full seconds to get the level.

Referring to the number of rotations in a lift or the time spent holding one position, Catherine points to the quantification of movements that has become central to ice dancers in training and especially in competition to avoid deductions for lifts or positions that are held for too long. For example, as per the ISU rules, a 'short' lift must not exceed six seconds and a 'long' lift must not exceed twelve seconds. Further quantifying skaters' positions while in a required lift, a split position, for example must achieve an angle of 180 degrees and must be held for three to five seconds to be considered a 'difficult' position (ISU, 2011a). Similar specifics go for spins, for example, a camel position, where the body tilts forward to become horizontal with the ice, lifting one leg up and behind in parallel with the body, is only counted as a basic camel position if it meets the following description:

If the waistline is horizontal and/or the core of the body is more than 45 degrees above the horizontal line the position shall be considered as an upright position. If the angle between the thigh and shin of the skating leg is less than about 120 degrees, the position shall be considered as a sit position. (ISU, 2011 p. 6)

Evident from this specific rule are the exceptionally detailed measurements and angles skaters must display to meet ISU rules.

Some of the judges I spoke to also noted how their role had changed with the new evaluation process from an overall feeling or an holistic evaluation of skaters' programs to focusing more specifically on the elements and criteria skaters are required to achieve. They suggested that their work now requires more analysis, calculation and measurement. As one judge said:

Certainly at the beginning [of the new judging system] you didn't have any sense of the whole feeling of the program because you're marking elements whereas before in the old system it was very much a whole and at the end you were left with a feeling of the whole and then when you started judging elements alone... so sometimes you miss that.

The ways in which skaters are now scored points to the focus of the new system to measure and quantify ice dance performances. As Jenna explained, she finds the ways in which the new system gives more specific scores and points helpful in identifying strengths and weaknesses:

I think for ice dance it has gotten better because it is pushing people to make those improvements and I like that there are assigned point values for things and you can see where you are gaining points and losing points and where you can make up for those points and see your weaknesses instead of a vague... you get a 5.8.

Referring to a 'vague' 5.8 score, Jenna is referring to the old judging system where skaters received one mark for presentation and one mark for technical merit for each respective competition program. Skaters now receive two marks for each *element*, one for the level of difficulty and one for the grade of execution along with program component scores that assess the artistic merit of the skater's overall program. Thus the feedback skaters receive from the judges is far more extensive than in the past, albeit entirely numerical. Agreeing with Jenna around the new scoring methods, one coach went on to explain how the measurability in the new

system and the resulting feedback skaters receive encourages his skaters to be more ‘self-accountable’:

It makes it easier for a coach to explain to an athlete to be more self-accountable. Don’t blame the judges or other skaters, just hold your leg for 4 rotations and you’ll get a level 4. They aren’t always out there to cheat you... you just didn’t obtain what the rule says. You didn’t hold it for 3 seconds. You didn’t skate on a deep enough edge.

Described here as ‘self accountable’, skaters now use their scores as a method of self regulation since they regulate their movement practices and elements based on the scores they receive after each competition. Of course the evaluation of program components like performance, timing, and interpretation are more difficult to measure, confirming that subjective opinions still exist in the judging process.

Thus the measurability and quantification as part of the new judging system has changed the approach to movement practices for skaters and their experiences in choreography, training and competition. It has also undoubtedly allowed for some objectivity in the evaluation process, for which the skaters expressed appreciation. One expert however, suggested that the increase in objectivity and measurability has decreased the artistic or ‘cultural’ component as judges’ subjective opinions on style have been diminished, saying:

So the culture thing was a bigger issue in the old system but I think now because we have more measurability, it decreases the effect of someone coming in with a cultural piece and you don’t know it or like it, and you being able to disregard it. I think the system helped in that area, but in regards to the styles it has equalized out to a certain extent and some may say that is not a good thing.

Thus the strong focus on measuring technical elements and levels of difficulty has also influenced the more artistic skating *styles*, in ice dance, which will be discussed next.

Changes to Skating Styles

In speaking with skaters and experts on the changes to skating styles, they spoke generally about the changes practiced internationally, and specifically around those styles performed by some of the top ice dance teams in the world.

Firstly, almost all of the participants touched on the recent success of the North American ice dance teams and their particular style of skating that has dominated the international stage since 2006 when the new judging system made its international debut. At the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games Canadians, Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir became the first North Americans to ever win an Olympic gold in the ice dance event. In 2011 at the World Championships, North American teams swept the podium, another first for the ice dance discipline, which has traditionally been dominated by Russian and European skaters. Describing this shift and the influence of the new judging system, Charlotte, one of the judges said:

That is where it really hit home for me, when I was watching in Vancouver [2010 Olympic game host city] that this new system had gone beyond the Russian mold. This is what is doing it. So that's how the new system all by itself, with so much work, gave that opportunity for the two North American's to be 1 and 2 last year at the World Championships. And, of course, Olympic champions here in 2010.

Referring to the “Russian mold” Charlotte points to the long traditions of elite ice dancers from the Russian federation. Russian ice dancers won 26 World Championships in 35 years between 1970 and 2005 (Hines, 2006) suggesting their distinct style found particular favor among the judges during those years. All of the participants agreed that Russian ice dancers have always embodied a style of their own. Describing this style one expert said:

Well the Russian style has always been, of course, amazing skating. I mean they skate like nothing, always very in your face, over the top performing, it's all set up to the judges and there is never anything subtle about it. It is just in your face.

More specifically describing the movement practices as part of this distinct Russian style Peggy said:

When you look back, a lot of those Russian teams that were brilliant, no question that they could skate like anything but there were huge spots where they were just posing and they weren't doing anything with their feet.

Almost all of the participants described a powerful, dramatic and performative Russian style, although as Peggy points out, the beautiful poses Russian skaters were and still are known for,

meant they were not always performing technically difficult turns and edges with their feet, something that the new judging system demands. Thus this particular component of the Russian style is not valued as strongly under the new judging system. Instead, skaters are evaluated for the *variety*, difficulty, intricacy and quality of their transition movements (ISU, 2010).

Transitions or linking footwork includes those steps, turns, movements, holds and positions that link all of the elements in a skaters program. Thus positions held for long periods of time actually take up valuable time where skaters can be gaining points. As one judge described, transitions have become a focus of the new judging which includes a specific score for these movements and practices:

Um... I think we are seeing a lot more transition movements because that is an actual mark – transitions. So it is very evident the teams that are doing a lot of crossovers or a lot of the old school free dances where it is just kind of, not a lot of work by both partners because in the past.

As a result, one very specific requirement as part of the new judging system has literally changed the preferences around movement practices performed generally in skaters' programs, and in the case of North American ice dancers, allowing them to take a prominent role on the international stage as they have adapted their styles quite successfully to the new demands of the current system.

Although most agreed that the new judging system has played a part in the recent success of the North American teams, with some attributing this change to the new judging system exclusively, others discussed the globalization of skaters and coaches in recent years. At the 2011 World Champions, where Canadian and American teams swept the podium, all three ice dance medalists came from the same training group in Detroit, Michigan, and are coached by Russian coaches. In fact Detroit has become the hotbed of ice dance with two major ice dance training centers, led by Russian coaches, hosting a range of international ice dancers. At the 2012 World Championships the top *four* teams all came from the two Detroit training centers with

their Russia coaches, respectively. Thus the recent success by North American dance teams is perhaps a combination of the change in judging system favoring North American skating styles, as well as the world renowned Russian coaches who now train ice dance teams in the United States and whose skaters are likely adopting some ideas from the traditionally superior Russian style and technique. One former skater, describing her experience moving to train at one of the Detroit training centers acknowledged the great differences in training and techniques taught by her Russian coaches:

We have all these Russian coaches teaching their form of skating from when they trained in Russia. I will never forget going from Canada to Canton [just outside Detroit] and it was...well my home training center was very traditional Canadian training brought up through the CanSkate system and then in Canton I could not walk for like three weeks because I was so sore. The skating was so different, everyday we worked on stroking [basic skating drills] for just a week, all day, seven hours a day, just stroking because it was so different.

These two particular training centers are also host to some of the top trainers in ballet, circus, Broadway and ballroom. Describing the truly global influence from coaches and trainers at one of the Detroit training centers one skater said:

You have Russian coaches, a Montreal trainer who comes in who works with Cirque du Soleil who works on lifts, and then you have an American ballet dancer to teach you ballet and then you know... it is so diverse and cross-functional.

Most of the participants agreed that due to the globalization of coaches, skaters, and trainers as well as due to the significant technical focus of the new judging system, distinct national skating styles have diminished. As one skater suggested:

It is tough to tell between different countries because lots of different countries have different coaches from other countries and it kind of all mixes together. So really it's there, I guess. There was once a point when there was a big difference between the countries but now there are so many Russian coaches in the U.S, well there are different coaches from different countries everywhere now.

Despite the blurring of national skating styles, the skaters and experts did note some distinct characteristics about the North American style. Firstly, almost all of the participants

referenced the top two ice dance teams in the world, Canadians Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir as well as American's Meryl Davis and Charlie White and their *classic* style, attributing these top two teams to exemplifying the epitome of the 'North American' style. For example one judge said:

The North Americans and now certainly led by Scott and Tessa and Meryl and Charlie are amazing skaters but they have done some very subtle work and very sophisticated.

Others also emphasized the focus on technique in North America and the less dramatic performances North American skaters typically take on as one judge pointed out:

So much of ours [North American style] is about technique; most of our dancers have good technique.

A few of the participants also suggested that a popular trend in performances among North American ice dancers includes portraying stories or narratives in their competitive programs. In fact, this proved to be a prominent theme in the performances and styles of the skaters I spoke with. As one skater stated:

I find in recent years the Western style is more about story telling whereas, and maybe it is because I am not familiar with the Russian stories.

In describing the themes the skaters I spoke with took on in their free dance programs, almost all of them described a story or narrative as part of their performances, and how they often portrayed individual characters. This trend was strongly connected to ways in which the skaters described their particular style and as one skater said this is 'what everyone wants to see':

I know they [the judges] like seeing or they are really big on seeing the connection between the partner, they love eye contact and they always... and we have judges come in and talk to us and watch our programs and they always make a point to say, like... they want to feel like, we are having a story and they are just peeking in on it, they don't want it to look like we are performing it for them. It is more that they are invading our story and they want to be in our story not just observers, so yeah I think that is the big thing.

A number of skaters including one former skater suggested that this particular 'storybook' style can have a competitive advantage, especially when those narratives include the portrayal of a

close relationship between partners. Discussing the difference in styles between Canadian's Virtue and Moir and America's, Davis and White, Catherine suggests the close connections between Virtue and Moir makes them unique and most popular among the judges and fans:

Stephanie: Is there a popular style in ice dance right now?

Catherine: Oh that is a good one. I wouldn't say there is a popular skating style, I would say theme.

Stephanie: Okay...

Everybody wants to see the love story and the connection and that is what every team is trying to do whether it is a rumba, a tango, a waltz it doesn't matter they are all trying to do that love story because everybody loves a hopeless romantic movie, and it is the same thing on ice. It is romantic and people want to feel like they are watching a love story and it doesn't matter the discipline either, I mean the Olympics in 2002 with the big judging scandal, it was a love story between the pair teams, the Canadian pair, did Love Story. Tessa and Scott won with a love story. I feel like it is the love story style that everybody wants to see.

Stephanie: So is it because that theme is popular with judges or fans or because Tessa and Scott are doing it?

Catherine: I think it is a bit of both. It is definitely because a lot of skaters are looking to Scott and Tessa.

Stephanie: Is this true in Canada or internationally as well?

Catherine: Yeah in Canada but you know a lot of people, that is the big comparison between Tessa and Scott and Meryl and Charlie (Americans), they are both so athletically strong, they are both very fast, they are both technically amazing, both have crazy lifts and the deep edges but Scott and Tessa have the connection and that is, when they both skate perfectly clean, Scott and Tessa always have that little bit of edge because everyone is like 'oh that is so romantic' and it gives you this feeling of joy, you walk away and you just feel like oh I am happy, whereas with Meryl and Charlie, you walk away and you're like whoa, that was a really good program, that was awesome. So it's not the same feeling.

As Catherine points out in this conversation, narrative themes have become a popular choice for ice dancers in their performances, not only because skaters perceive this kind of style to be positively received by the judges but also because some of the top teams in the world have adopted this approach.

Another more recent rule added to the list of rules and regulations in 2011 has also influenced skating styles in ice dance and was highlighted by the participants in our discussions. The ISU recently set specific regulations in regard to ice dancers' music for the free dance component, requiring the music to be "suitable for Ice Dance as a *sport* discipline" (ISU, 2010, p.152 italics added). The music must also have an 'uplifting effect' (ISU, 2011a). In most of the interviews, skaters and experts referred to this rule and explained how it has notably narrowed the music choices and thus themes, styles and narratives skaters may take on in their competitive programs. As one skater said:

It made choosing music a lot harder actually. I feel like 'Gone with the Wind' it was still sort of like, is that uplifting? Because in the end they are separated and he has thrown her away and she is desperate for him. There is a lot of conflict in the movie and it is war but I think it was still uplifting.

All the participants agreed this particular rule was developed to curb the overly dramatic programs, which might leave the judges and fans depressed. As one of the coaches explained:

Well this is because of ISU rules, they want uplifting programs and that is in the rules. It's like your program has to be uplifting or else your program will get a music deduction. Its pretty silly really, they just didn't want to see any death or dying or stuff like that on the ice anymore. They don't want to see any overly dramatic ballets anymore so... but that is actually quoted in the rules – you have to have uplifting programs.

Some also suggested that with the recent decrease in audience attendance at major competitions this was one way the ISU was hoping to sell more tickets to ice dance events. Some said the new rule on music has also brought an increased emphasis on 'dance' as part of the ice dance discipline and a return to the ballroom approaches of the past. Another reason perhaps why the Russian style can be considered outdated under the new judging system as the ISU rules are clearly moving away from the dramatic, theatrical and balletic traditions the Soviets once pioneered in ice dance. As Kyle explained:

I think the ISU is speaking on behalf of fans with this decision and I think the committee got tired of it going in that direction and they wanted to see dance and for it to be dance-y. There are so many types of dance though – like ballet is dance if you want to do Othello or Macbeth and somebody dies at the end but you can still dance to that? I guess they just got sick of the overly dramatic programs.

Although some suggested that this particular rule around music has encouraged more ‘dance’ in ice dance, others suggested the change to the new ISU system has actually encouraged the opposite, suggesting that with the inclusion of required elements movement practices are more technical and methodical rather than dance-like.

Despite the conflicting emphasis on ‘dance’ as a result of the new judging system all of the skaters agreed this is the component they enjoy the most about ice dancing. They agreed ice dance is more of a spectacle or performance compared to the other figure skating disciplines and they find that unique and pleasurable, for example Amanda said:

The other thing is we really enjoy performing and when we compete obviously we are trying to skate our best, but we really want to give the people who are there watching some pleasure, so we want to share our love of dancing and it really does come from within.

Confirming the artistic and narrative side of ice dance as compared to singles and pairs skating, Catherine said:

I love that ice dance is more about telling a story and bringing the audience through the journey whereas I find that singles is great and pairs is great and you can tell stories and very theatrical performances but it is more about the jumps.

The judges agreed that they enjoy watching ‘dance’ and as one judge explained this is her favorite part of the discipline:

I also love watching people dance so even just off ice dancing, or regular dancing, it is fun to watch people dance so I like the dance aspect and the music.

Thus it seems that the new judging system and the current rules and regulations have influenced skaters to take up specific styles as well as specific music choices ice dancers are to skate to. The prescription of movements and the globalizations of skaters and coaches has also

blurred former distinct national styles although skaters and experts noted popular trends, which continue to define both the Russian and North American style respectively.

Negotiated through all the movement practices and styles that have changed with the new judging system are the very gendered and classed practices that are evident in the movements, elements, styles and narratives the participants described. This leads me to discuss what has remained traditional in ice dancing as highlighted by the skaters and experts.

Changing Movement Practices and the Role of Gender

The role of gender in ice dancers' changed movement practices was a prominent theme arising from my interviews with the skaters and experts. It was also obvious that specific gender and hetero-normative ideals persist in the ice dance discipline and the influence of the new judging system on these preferences is significant.

The new judging system, as previously mentioned, was designed to increase the measurability of skaters' performances and includes evaluating skaters' elements for their level of difficulty based on two values, strength and flexibility. Although there are a number of movement practices, which undoubtedly require both strength and flexibility by both partners, there are others, which require stereotypical displays of female flexibility and male strength. In fact, in all of my interviews, skaters and experts described a variety of movement practices, where the male is evaluated exclusively for his strength and the female for her flexibility. For example, these qualities are clearly displayed in the required lift elements. As Kyle explained:

Usually the boy is the lifter so he's not going to be doing a donut, splits or rings. His three basic positions are something below 90 degrees, one foot and the spread eagle and in a rotational [lift], a one arm, which is sort of a feat of strength or 6 rotations under 6 seconds.

Although the rules provide descriptions for difficult positions to be performed by the 'lifting' partner and the 'lifted' partner, not specifying the gender of those two roles, it is most common for the male partner to lift the female partner in the required dance lifts.

As Lee explained in the previous quote, requirements for the ‘lifted’ partner, which include a donut, split, ring, Biellmann, or full layback position, are typically requirements for the female partner who is thus evaluated for her display of flexibility. Examples of those positions considered ‘difficult’ for the lifting or typically the male partner include; a one foot, a spread eagle position, where each foot is placed in opposite directions on the same curve, a crouch position with both knees bent and the thighs parallel to the ice, a lunge position or a one hand or one arm lift. All require extraordinary strength while lifting the female partner and therefore suggest the male partner is evaluated for his display of strength (ISU, 2011a).

Newly added to the rules in 2011 was a ‘creative’ lift, designed to allow skaters to explore more varied positions in one particular lift without the restrictions of the formal rules. This lift is not evaluated for its difficulty but contributes to the skaters overall program component mark. One skater described how she and her partner use this option to allow her to lift her male counterpart:

They have added a creative lift at the end which has no restrictions whatsoever so we take advantage of that and we do a lift where I lift him. So you know we take advantage of the fact that we are the same size and we can do that and some teams wouldn’t be able to do that. So the system has given us an opportunity to do that.

Anne’s point here confirms the perceived preference of the new judging system to see the male lift the female partner as they only perform this particular lift as their ‘creative’ lift and not as one of the required lift elements which must meet the difficulty requirements.

When asking the skaters to explain the lifts they perform in their competitive programs, the female body is often described as being manipulated by the male partner, requiring the female to remain in a stiff but supple position as the male partner swings, lifts and contorts the female body as a passive object. For example, one skater described a typical lift her and her partner have been practicing for the upcoming competitive season:

We are doing a difficult entry with a flip into it, he does a spread eagle and he holds me and I lay back. It's kind of hard to explain but we get back in and then he flips me out over his shoulder.

This lift described by Nina points to some of the gendered positions already discussed, such as the layback she will perform, as well as the typical male lead and passive female role as he flips her in and out of the lift and in-between positions. Thus the typical gendered displays by both partners are not only present in the positions the skaters perform but also in the movements their bodies perform before, during and after the required lift.

The difficult positions described for ice dance lifts are similar to those required for the spin element. The skaters and experts described how the male is often positioned as a frame for the female as she performs a split, layback or Biellman position during the spin. Interestingly, the skaters and experts also noted one spinning position, which includes different difficulty requirements for both the male and female. A camel position, which sees the skater lean forward until his/her body is horizontal to the ice with one leg lifted upward and backward until it is also parallel to the ice is a traditional spinning position. There are also variations to this position described in the rules as more 'difficult'. For example skaters may turn their body upward to face the ceiling while in the camel position or may bring their extended free leg towards their head forming a donut or ring. The rules state that a simple camel position performed by the male with the non-spinning leg horizontal or higher to the ice is to be considered difficult. For the female however a simple camel is not considered difficult, thus the female must perform a *more* flexible position in order to be awarded points for a high degree of difficulty. Jennifer explained:

I like what they did with the spin. The camel isn't considered difficult for a girl anymore because that is just such a natural movement. Like I don't know very many girls who can't, so it is nice that only the boys can get that level now.

As Jennifer suggested the 'simple camel' is a 'natural' position for the female and so it should not be considered a difficult variation for female skaters, confirming the stereotypical belief that

females possess innate flexibility. Although this is just one example, one judge positively attributed the new judging system to helping develop more flexible female skaters than ever before. As she said:

We are getting pre-preliminary girls who can do a spiral to die for. Because it says in the rules you have to keep your leg above your head for six seconds.

It is clear that in the new judging system flexible positions demonstrated by female ice dancers in their required elements are not only applauded but also required and defined in the rules. Of course positions of flexibility must always be aesthetically pleasing and those that seem awkward or distasteful receive deductions in their grade of execution scores (ISU, 2011a, p. 25). In regard to aesthetically pleasing flexible positions, perhaps the most controversial has been the split position. This position can be considered illegal if the lifted partner performing the split is upside down in a sustained position for too long (ISU, 2010). Considering that the female typically perform this position the rules suggest that it is unladylike and aesthetically unpleasant for females to hold their legs open for an extended period of time while being lifted.

Flexibility is not the only characteristic female ice dancers are to display in their movements and practices. Skaters and experts gave examples of hyper-femininity, gracefulness, sexiness and submission to the male partner that female ice dancers are to perform for positive program component scores. For example Anne described some of the feedback she received over the past competitive season from the judges encouraging these characteristics:

Well this year they really wanted the girls to be more sexy and really feminine. So this year I was really trying to be different from him. In the short dance and free dance they [the judges] wanted me to be really sassy and feminine.

Anne went on to explain some of the specific qualities the judges were looking for in the Latin inspired short dance this past season:

Well a lot of flirtation and a lot of the girls being really being sassy and stuff were encouraged. That was the Latin influence.

As Anne pointed out, some specific themes, styles and genres of music and dance, such as the Latin rhythms require specific characteristics from female skaters. The male skaters I spoke with on the other hand were also very clear on their role within the partnership. For example, David said:

Well, her role is to be more feminine and a lot of the time my role is to just be the frame for her.

From within the male's frame, Nina described how the female partner can help to gain positive grade of execution points by using her upper body to appropriately convey the music and rhythm:

I mean the guy has to hold you but the girl can use her arms and kind of convey the music and that will give you a plus GOE [grade of execution]. Sometimes we bend low, and bring our arm back up and that helps with the GOE.

Most of the skaters and judges agreed it is often the female partner whose movements are used to express the music's rhythm and character, suggesting the female often performs the more artistic movements of the two skaters.

Further conversations around partner relations made clear the preference for displays of hetero-normative relationships where there is a clear distinction between the male and female partner. As Anne explained:

Yeah I think that in ice dance that is really what they want to see. That is the ideal fantasy of it, the feminine lady dancing with her man. So that is stuck in everybody's head and that is what they picture.

Anne went on to describe how the similar height between her and partner has been challenging in portraying the ideals of a petite and feminine female partner with the stronger more masculine male partner, saying:

So with us we are similar height so we always struggle with showing the feminine and masculine side of ice dance, which is really easy for a really petite girl and a bigger guy because you just instantly see that. So I feel like we look more like an athletic team.

The relationship or interaction between partners described by the participants also suggested that a strong connection between partners is essential and integral to their overall performance, as Lee explained:

In ice dance you have a relationship to explore whereas singles skaters are performing outwards the whole time. They don't get a chance to be intimate so it is usually an outward performance whereas with dance you can sometimes not even have to perform outwards if you're that good it can be just completely between the two of you as a team and let everyone into your performance.

In the general requirements for the free dance, skaters are encouraged to demonstrate a 'close relationship' between partners (ISU, 2010), which is often, as mentioned in the section on styles in ice dance, explored through stories or narratives on the ice. Interestingly, almost all of the teams I interviewed described stories they perform, which reinforce stereotypical gender norms and in many cases an intimate relationship between the male and the female partner. For example, describing her free dance program Jenna said:

We skated to 'Gone with the Wind' and so, it is during the civil war time and it is a love story between Scarlet and Ret and yeah it is... well I was Scarlett and she is sort of the flirty but devious play around with your feelings kind of girl and Ret was just sort of in love with her the whole time, and um then finally they are together and then they are not in the end. He doesn't want her anymore he gets fed up with all of her games.

Describing the characters Anne and her partner typically take on, she explained:

He usually takes on the quirky role of the character, like when we did Charlie Chaplin he was obviously Charlie and then I was sort of his... or the lady who he was trying to flirt with. And then we did one to Cirque du Soleil and he was a clown and I was like the innocent little girl in his dream or whatever or fantasy world. We typically do sort of roles like that.

When asked why the skaters took on these particular characters and narratives they explained that they are typically well received by the judges. It is hard to prove if the judges in fact prefer these kinds of performances or if they deduct points from those skaters who do not perform such approaches, especially considering the subjective nature of the program component scores. Most of the judges I spoke with suggested they enjoy any style of program when done exceptionally

well. More importantly, however, skaters felt comfortable portraying these roles, often watching movies or previous performances from which they draw inspiration for their programs. This allows them to mirror these stories on the ice having role models from which to work from. I asked Jenna about her free dance program to ‘Gone with the Wind’ and if she enjoyed portraying the character of Scarlet. She replied:

Yeah definitely, that story in particular and at least I know for sure what I am supposed to be expressing and feeling.

Thus Jenna’s movement practices, feelings and expressions are dictated by those portrayed in the popular film, ‘Gone with the Wind’. Although she finds this more enjoyable and actually easier, it doesn’t allow her to develop her own expressions and feelings to the music. This trend also encourages more ice dance teams to take up similar performances, especially when they believe them to be preferred by the judges.

As pointed out in this section, the gendered and hetero-normative ideals portrayed in ice dance performances are not only encouraged by the new judging system but also influenced by *perceptions* of the judges’ preferences and societal ideals around femininity and masculinity, which are portrayed in popular culture. Thus this leads skaters to develop movement practices that embody conservative ideals of male and femaleness. It should be noted however that many of the gendered movement practices and styles in ice dance have been deeply entrenched in the discipline since its beginnings. Related to this I will next discuss another emerging theme from my interviews, which confirmed the persistence of some traditional movement practices that have remained part of the ice dance discipline and are currently upheld in the new judging system.

Prevailing Traditions in Ice Dancers’ Movement Practices

Despite the many changes to ice dancers’ movement practices with the inception of the new judging system, many practices, as the skaters and experts described, still uphold traditional

basic skating postures and positions that were developed historically. These traditional movement practices were strongly influenced by ballet and thus upper class, white traditions. For example, all of the skaters described a similar posture that ice dancers strive to maintain in their performances and work to refine in their general skating, which have been adopted from ballet traditions. As Jenna explained:

Well definitely good posture, shoulders back, head up, hips under you not sticking out and in relation to the two skaters, the closer together the better. Long lines with the legs, pointed toes and turned out.

As Jenna suggests good posture requires an upright position where the shoulders are pressed back and the hips and butt are tucked under the upper body. Standing upright and tall was viewed as an embodiment of upper-class society, while tucking the hips under is to align the body, giving the image of a straight and curve-less body (Rand, 2012). Although coaches and skaters suggested that ice dancers are leaning forward more dramatically than before to compensate for their deeper edges and increasing speeds they noted that it is desirable to maintain a straight spine. As Lee noted here:

Yeah it's being straight, totally vertical and even when you taking a lean you're still holding your shoulders down and your back is straight even if I am leaning into a knee bend. I am not rounding forward so my shoulder blades are not jetting out.

Describing the preferred lower body positions, Jenna described the balletic influences on skaters' leg movements:

Well obviously straight legs, pointed and turned out, with a lot of influence from ballet. I guess it also depends on your music, for example this year with the polka I guess some flexed toes will be acceptable but aside from that aesthetically it just looks good like that.

As Jenna pointed out, some ballroom and other dance genres require variations of the proper postures or leg positions that she described here. For example, the skaters noted that when they take ballroom dance classes they must make sure not to bring those practices to their ballet classes, as the postures and movement practices are quite different. Jennifer described some of

these differences and why she thinks the judges prefer those postures and positions taken from ballet practices:

So the judges like it when the chin is high and there is a big space between the shoulders and the jaw line. The chest, it needs to be upright, but in ballroom it is more sticking out, and that is less in skating, you just want it to be a confident posture but not a huge arch in the back and people tend to do that and I know they [the judges] prefer the flat back.

As Jennifer suggests, a flat back is the preferred position for skaters to maintain while skating.

Interestingly, many ballroom dances such as the Latin social dances like, salsa, tango, samba and rumba initially required a flexible and dynamic spine however these movement practices were later refined, or as Erica Rand (2011) suggests, ‘up-classed’ and ‘whitened’ for the ballroom by straightening the spine and tucking the hips and butt underneath the body to meet Western dance preferences (Desmond, 1993). The 2011 Short Dance component, a new component of the ice dance competition since 2010, required the skaters to skate two patterns of the ISU rumba compulsory dance at the senior level as well as to complete required elements. What was interesting about the short dance was the distinct differences in skaters’ movements during the compulsory dance portion where the skaters all perform the same prescribed steps and turns in contrast to the free parts of the program where skaters must complete their required elements but are open to moving and skating in any way that appropriately expresses the music. In the compulsory dance portion, where the skaters performed the prescribed rumba steps, they remained very upright and still in the upper body while only moving from below the hips. Once they completed the compulsory dance pattern they immediately took on more authentic Latin movements, allowing their upright and stiff upper body posture from the compulsory dance portion to shift, moving more freely, pushing their hips out and rolling their upper body to express the music. The movement practices in the two sections of the short dance were dramatically different and highlighted the traditional, upper class practices that are to be

performed in ISU compulsory dances, in comparison to more authentic Latin movements that skaters choreographed themselves. Describing this distinctive change, one judge said:

Oh yes and a lot of teams stepped out of the rumba [compulsory dance] and did that move where they both roll their whole body and are suddenly into this amazing upper body movement.

Thus this particular competition component has proven to be a mosaic of ‘classed’ movement practices. Although the short dance does include the traditional compulsory dance patterns, skaters can skate to the music of their choice as long as it meets the specific rhythms chosen annually by the ice dance technical committee. Most of the skaters and judges suggested that they like the new short dance competition event and as one judge said, it has allowed ice dance to move away from the traditional practices required in compulsory dances:

I think one of the biggest, nicest changes with the new system is the ability to move away from the traditional orchestrations or the orchestrations of traditional rhythms that have to sound like the ISU compulsory dances and suddenly you’re doing really exciting things. The ice dance technical committee really took on a risk there, huge risk, and I think they came out with a big winner with the short dance. I love the short dance. I think it is amazing.

Thus the short dance has proven to be an interesting change for the ice dance discipline and clearly demonstrates a negotiation between old and new traditions, something that the discipline more generally is experiencing as skaters experiment with new and modern skating styles and movements. Basic skating positions however, as mentioned in this section, still embody skating’s historical traditions.

Discussions of Power

Many of my discussions with the skaters and experts highlighted the power dynamics and issues of control that exist between coaches, judges, skaters, and the ISU.

Firstly, many of the coaches, skaters and even administrators described the hierarchy they feel between themselves and the ISU which they suggested can cause a disconnect between the rules of the new judging system and the practices of the skaters. As Kyle explained:

It's trying to know what the ISU wants and then their rules that they put in place aren't always what is really happening with the coaches and skaters so it might be a tiny little bit of disconnect between the powers of the ISU.

Skaters and coaches described their frustration at times over specific rules and regulations that are unclear and their inability to always receive timely clarification. The coaches and skaters I spoke with generally have access to technical specialists and international judges for clarification but also expressed the difficulties that can arise over specific regulations as part of the new judging system. Those skaters and coaches in rural areas or at smaller training centers can be further disadvantaged when it comes to gaining clarification on particular rules as their connections with high level officials can be limited. Often in these situations, skaters and coaches will wait until a competition or event where they might then gain insight from colleagues or attending officials. The adult ice dance team I spoke with suggested that this is a notable concern within the adult skating community as these skaters do not always train with top coaches or choreographers and are often left to figure out the rules themselves. As Amanda, one of the adult ice dancers, said:

I mean you know we certainly rely on the coaches to give us the feedback on what the levels are. This person that Blair was talking about is a colleague of ours in Edmonton and she is actually competing at the adult worlds this year and her and her partner were both former competitive skaters but they are working with a coach who doesn't do ice dance so he has no idea what the levels are. With our coaches they know if Geoff picks me up with one foot off the ice it is a higher level than if he picks me up and it is not, that makes sense, and then sure if we dedicated ourselves to finding out about this, we would know, but it is not really written down anywhere.

Amanda's point here also recognizes the difficulty in finding the rules and regulations online. Since there are a number of documents listed on the ISU website, it can be confusing to those who try to figure out what exactly is pertinent or necessary information.

My interviews with the skaters especially brought up their perceptions of the power the ISU holds in appointing rules, regulations and in some cases rewards. In conversation about the new judging system I asked all of the interviewees if they would consider making any changes to

the new judging system and if so what they might suggest. Almost all of the skaters struggled to answer the question and gave similar responses to Nina's:

Oh my gosh [laughs] umm... I don't know [laughs] I have never even thought about that before.

The reactions by the skaters suggested they do not typically think critically about the intricacies of the judging system in place. In fact most were surprised I even posed the question, reacting as though it would be highly unrealistic that they might ever be asked their opinions on the new system. The skaters mentioned that they did, at times, question the old 6.0 judging system, but they never thought to suggest or contemplate an entirely new judging system as it seemed highly unlikely until the judging scandal in Salt Lake City occurred and the global media attention ensued. Not surprisingly, the agency skaters' hold in the sport seemed to grow with their competitive level and experience. For example, one skater noted that as she moved through the ranks becoming a national team member and international competitor, she started to take notice of the politics in her sport and once ice dancing became her livelihood her questioning of the judging system became increasingly skeptical:

I think growing up I was a little bit naïve to it, I didn't really know because I didn't fully understand it. It wasn't until I went to a skating competition and I was injured and so I happened to be watching the practices and seeing just what was going on and I noticed that in-between floods [ice resurfacing] coaches and judges would be talking in the back hallways and having conversations and they were very private and you know when you would walk by they would stop talking and I just started to get the idea things were a little bit weird... So growing up I was naïve but as I got more into the sport I started to realize that things weren't great and it was time for a change.

Skaters' critical thinking thus seemed to become more prominent as they gained capital in the sport.

As per the ISU website, one coach and one skater sit as representatives on the ice dance technical committee, though most skaters and experts were unaware of this. When I asked if any

skaters were consulted on the development of the new system or in regards to the ongoing technical rule changes, one expert responded:

You know to be dead honest, it has happened in many cases but I have never found it to be a benefit because they are not at the stage of life where they want to sit around with a bunch of old farts and your going 'you're talking about that'? Because you're a player in the game, um, you don't realize the stuff that goes around, all the work, the discussion and talk and it is boring as hell for a person who has gone on the ice and done the stuff. Who wants to sit in the boardroom and have a long discussion about whether the bracket and the rocker was clean enough or the proper evaluation? They want to be out in their life. So our experience has been that they say they want to but when they get there, they don't show up.

The relationship between skaters and judges also proved to be an interesting one. At the training center where the skaters I interviewed train, they often have judges, technical specialists, and/or Skate Canada staff visit their training center to monitor their competitive programs and general progress. The skaters agreed that they almost always take the feedback they receive from the judges and experts who visit and that having the experts come in to monitor them on a regular basis gives them confidence. As Ryan pointed out:

Yeah it helps us and we change things and it gives us confidence in knowing that we are doing the right things.

Thus the strict expert monitoring of skaters' movement practices and sometimes even costume choices, as one particular team pointed out, is an integral part to their training and competitive advancement. In fact some of the monitors hold persuasive power over international competition assignments and so the skaters noted that it is especially important to impress these individuals.

As one skater said:

There are people from Skate Canada that you do whatever they say.

Along with the specific rules and regulations of the judging system, experts also strongly influence ice dancers' movement practices and styles as they monitor skaters who could potentially represent Canada internationally. Similar to skaters' opinions on the changes to the

new judging system, they also seemed uncritical of the opinions and feedback they receive from experts and judges.

In regard to the relationships between the skaters and coaches, many of the skaters attributed their coaches exclusively with holding expert knowledge on the new judging system. When creating and choreographing their competitive programs the skaters noted that they often play an engaging role in coming up with new movements or elements but they typically confirm if they are 'legal' as per the new system with their coaches. Moving forward, their programs are then refined based on feedback from judges and experts throughout the competitive season.

Overall, the skaters and experts all agreed that the new judging system is far more fair than the previous 6.0 system. They acknowledged that parts of the new system are not ideal, for example, their frustration with the complex rules and regulations that limit their movement practices and styles and the often unclear rules that come from the ISU that seem disconnected from their practices on the ice. They also noted that the program component marks are still widely subjective, explaining that it can be difficult to define or measure program components, objectively, thus these scores can still be used to hold particular teams or national federations at the top of the standings. As Catherine pointed out:

I do think though that it [the program component score] is still an area where judges can play. I am not saying that they are but it is definitely an area where they can hold people up and put people down and you see it.

Catherine's quote also highlights the inherently biased nature inevitably found in a subjectively judged or artistic sport. Most agreed that it would be hard to completely eliminate bias based on the nature of the discipline. One particular expert discussed this point further:

The dichotomy between objective and subjective is a false one. So when you launch off on a qualitative study don't be apologetic that it involves subjective data, okay. And people will make you feel that you need to be defensive about that and oh well isn't figure skating judging just subjective? Isn't qualitative stuff subjective and isn't that just her opinion? Yes of course it is. But sometimes what is objective or numbers is still somebody's opinion of what numbers count and how you frame the question to get that number... In figure skating what I say, in defense of figure skating judges or opinions is that I would take the subjective opinion of an Anne Shaw [World renowned ice dance technical committee member and innovator of the new ISU judging system] any day over the objective opinion of fans in the audience who clap louder.

Charlotte's notion is an interesting one. As she points out, the subjectivities in individual judgments are inherent in both holistic and measurable evaluations of skaters' practices.

However, she emphasizes the power of *expert* opinions and deems those to be most worthy of evaluating or judging ice dancers' performances. This belief leads skaters to perceive judges and ISU officials as holding the power to determine the ways in which they should move and perform on the ice. In other words performing what meets expert standards can thus, at times, limit skaters' abilities to perform new and different movements and practices without expert approval. Overall, the examples provided in this section point to the complex power dynamics that exist between skaters, coaches, judges and the ISU.

Chapter 5: Discussion

By looking at the social dimension exhibited in the movement practices of ice dancers, the ways in which the new ISU judging system and societal preferences around gender influence these practices became evident from my discussions with skaters and experts. Overall, the most prominent theme emerging from the findings was the dramatic *change* in the movement practices of ice dancers with the inception of the new system and perhaps more importantly, how some strong traditions, related to gender roles, have been re-negotiated around these changes.

Bourdieu (1992) suggests that by analyzing the habits and predispositions in individuals' movements we can better understand the use of sport and organized forms of movement practices by authoritarian regimes. It became clear from this research that the International Skating Union, as one particular social structure or authoritarian regime, made dramatic changes to its judging system to maintain Western sporting ideals and these changes were evident in ice dancers' movement practices. This would not be the first time the ISU made changes to the competition rules in figure skating to meet its own preferences as both Fabos (2010) and Rand (2012) have previously noted.

As the skaters and experts interviewed discussed, ice dance, traditionally an *artistic* discipline, is now largely focused on technical requirements, leading to a more *athletic* sport where the movement practices ice dancers now perform require more athleticism than ever before. The participants described how the increasingly higher free leg positions and the more varied and intricate upper body positions as well as the overall more dynamic and extreme body positions skaters now perform, demonstrate the current athletic nature of the sport. These athletic practices are encouraged in the technical requirements ice dancers must now complete in their competitive programs and as the skaters and experts noted has resulted in a significant focus on the technical aspects of the sport. Rosenberg and Lockwood (2005) predicted this shift in figure

skating, away from a focus on artistry towards a stronger emphasis on the execution of technical requirements in their discussion of the perceived fairness of the new judging system. They suggested this shift would be the result of a more objective judging process and the findings from this research on ice dance are somewhat consistent with their predictions.

Debates around the value of athleticism and aesthetics in figure skating are not new. As Adams (2011) has pointed out, during the 1970's there was a strong push for less art and more sport in figure skating. This push was initially led by United Skates Figure Skating Association official, Alan Zell who advocated for a stronger 'sporting image' including printed programs at competitions providing statistical details on each skater, scoring charts, and large score boards in arenas so spectators could more easily follow the standings. Zell's ideas around athleticism and aesthetics were directed predominately at the men's discipline in an attempt to fight off the growing perceptions of effeminacy around male skaters at the time. However they are strikingly similar to the most recent changes to figure skating and to ice dance, today.

As the skaters and experts in this study described, the scoring procedures are much more detailed than in the past with each element receiving a score for the quality of execution and difficulty achieved. Attending the Canadian national championships in Victoria, B.C in the winter of 2011, the audience received scorecards listing each skater's seasons best score, along with some of the best scores in the world for comparison. These were perhaps used to inform the audience about the new judging system which has proven to be much more complex in comparison to the old 6.0 system. It also points to the change in the nature of the sport, which is now clearly focused on quantification and records and where 'personal bests', 'seasons best', and 'world records' are now common language. These changes according to Guttman (2004) have in some ways *sportified* a traditionally artistic discipline. The themes emerging from the interviews with skaters and experts are consistent with Guttman's seven distinguishing

characteristics of what constitutes modern sporting competition, including: secularism, equality of opportunity to compete and in the conditions of competition, specialization of roles, rationalization, bureaucratization, and the quest for records (p. 16). In this study the skaters and experts pointed out how the new judging system has caused a normalization of skating practices, where skaters' movement practices are subjected to extensive measurement in order to be more easily or objectively evaluated and quantified for the calculation of points and records. The skaters also suggested that these changes have limited their creative abilities to perform new and interesting movement practices in their elements outside of what is prescribed in the rules.

The work of Michel Foucault is particularly useful for thinking about the ways in which the ice dancers are disciplined into performing particular movement practices. As Shilling (2003) explains, “the body for Foucault is not simply a focus of discourse, but constitutes *the* link between daily practices on the one hand and the large scale organization of power on the other” (p. 66). In an attempt to produce ‘docile’ bodies, skaters are subjected to “habits, rules, order and authority exercised continually around and upon them” (Foucault, 1977, p. 128-129). For ice dancers it is clear that their routine movement practices are strongly influenced by those in power such as the ISU and its system of rules and the judges who evaluate and monitor their performances. As the skaters and experts discussed, the new judging system demands certain movement practices over others by hierarchizing particular movements with various point values. Thus as the skaters and experts pointed out, the new judging system has resulted in all skaters performing the same high scoring movement practices and elements for competitive advantage. For example, one skater pointed out how all of his competitors performed the same one-handed rotational lift where the female performs a donut or a split position. Considered a ‘difficult’ or level 4 lift, this was the easiest option listed under the level 4 category for lifts thus all of the teams included it in their programs. Although the skaters noted that they could attempt

different approaches in their elements the judges may not recognize the comparable difficulty thus, leaving the skaters vulnerable to receiving lower points. This limits skaters to perform only those movement practices defined in the rules, diminishing their creative agency to perform different or more varied movement practices. For Foucault the success of disciplinary power results in normalization and homogeneity, which also works to individualize and compare. Similarly, the skaters discussed how the normalization of practices actually allows for easy comparison between their competitors and a way to monitor their own success compared to the rest of the competition field.

Foucault (1977) suggests the order of rank also disciplines individuals into conforming to the exemplary actions of those who rank the highest. As the skaters suggested they often perform what is successful for those top ice dancers in the world, in their movement practices, styles and performance narratives. For example, the participants pointed to the current trend in performing acrobatic-like lifts, where the dancers lean against each other, holding on with a limited point of contact. World and Olympic champions, Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir, made this type of lift famous, leading many other skaters to attempt this same kind of practice in their own lifts.

Thus the instruments of disciplinary power, such as normalization and ranking, result in a discourse, which guides the habits in ice dancers' movements. From this research the dominant discourse around technical and athletic movement practices was prominent and clearly encouraged by the new judging system as ice dance strives for sporting status.

What is particularly interesting is the evolution concerning what defines an appropriate sporting activity for Olympic competition. As Douglas Brown (1996) pointed out in his investigation of the 1906 Consultative Conference for the Arts, Literature and Sport, Olympic founder, Pierre de Coubertin, insisted on fostering a close connection between the arts and sport for the revival of the modern Olympic games. This was a natural match for de Coubertin who

believed there was an aesthetic nature to the athletic body and who, along with his Olympic delegates, believed that the artistic and aesthetic presentation of sporting festivals should be encouraged. It seems that figure skating and ice dance in its present form now provide a strong example for how Olympic sporting ideals have changed since de Coubertin's initial thoughts, since more value is placed on athletic feats and technical accomplishments than on artistic impression in ice dance under the new system.

For figure skating, the art and beauty of the sport has always been related to the traditions of upper-class practices and a symbol of its elite-nature (Adams, 2011; Kesntabaum, 2003). Thus the changes to ice dance from an artistic discipline to a more athletic one are a departure from its historical beginnings as an upper class pastime. The skaters' and experts' descriptions around the increasingly acrobatic nature of ice dancers' movements also denote a departure from the more refined styles of the past. Acrobatic and modern dance influences were prominent in the skating programs of the skaters I spoke to, as many of them work with Cirque du Soleil and floor dance choreographers for help with their competitive programs. Interestingly there is now a combination of new trends in ice dance along with some prevailing historical traditions, which are largely adopted from ballet. As discussed in the findings the skaters and experts pointed to the new short dance component of the ice dance competition, which clearly demonstrates a combination of old and new practices.

Changes to ice dancers' *styles*, as the skaters and experts discussed, also confirmed the current emphasis on technical requirements. The skaters and experts suggested that distinct national styles in ice dance have become increasingly blurred under the new judging system and its tighter prescription of movement practices and technical focus. They did however acknowledge some prevailing traditional characteristics in the North American and Russian styles, particularly. For example, the dramatic performances, strong skating skills and exquisite

poses that Russian ice dancers are famous for, have in some ways, been maintained under the new judging system, though they are not as strongly valued as in the past. The skaters and experts in this study described the current North American skating style as one focused on technique where classical styles seem to prevail. Overall these descriptions of National skating styles are consistent with those described by figure skating scholars in the past (see Hines, 2006; Kestnbaum, 2003). The skaters and experts also suggested that the current focus of the new system on technique has benefited Canadian and American skaters and their ‘North American’ style of skating, as it is more consistent with their historical practices emphasizing technique and a classical style of skating.

Many social anthropologists have discussed the ways in which national identities or cultural practices become embodied in sport and dance (see Archetti, 2003; Dyck & Archetti, 2003; Homans, 2010; Vertinsky, 2004; Wieschialek, 2003) and, as the findings suggested, distinct cultural characteristics seem to remain embodied in the movement practices performed by ice dancers under the new system. In much the same way historical practices adopted from upper-class balletic traditions remain prominent despite the dramatic changes in movement practices overall.

Clearly the changes in ice dancers’ movement practices disclosed by my participants have been strongly influenced by those in power. The re-negotiation of gender roles in ice dance under the new system have also significantly been influenced by authoritative experts, such as the ISU, coaches and judges who influence ice dancers’ practices.

Another prominent theme from the findings included the strict representations of stereotypical masculine and feminine roles, which continue to be represented through ice dancers’ movement practices and performances under the new judging system. This is not surprising as almost all of the literature on amateur figure skating has discussed the popular

discourses around femininity and masculinity, recognizing the ways in which particular gender ideals are privileged within the sport (Adams, 2010; Baughman, 1996; Fabos, 2010; Feder, 1994; Kestnbaum, 2003; McGarry, 2003; Morrow, 1987; Rand, 2012).

The skaters and experts in this study specifically pointed out conservative and stereotypical displays of gender in their movement practices, performance narratives, and partner relations. Perhaps most strongly influenced by the recent changes in the judging system are the ways in which skaters' current movement practices strongly reaffirm normative expressions of maleness and femaleness. With a renewed emphasis on flexibility and strength, the new system demands required elements and movement practices that encourage displays of female flexibility and male strength for competitive advantage. Almost all of the participants pointed to the required lift elements as a particular example of these displays. Although the new rules around lifts describe levels of difficulty for the 'lifted' and 'lifting' partner, the female is rarely encouraged to lift her male counterpart. Thus, in regard to lifts, the new rules leave little room for challenging gender norms, which in this case typically includes the male lifting the female, except for in the case of the 'creative lift', which is exempt from meeting the difficulty requirements. For example, one of the dancers described how she and her partner take advantage of the 'creative lift' option to allow her to lift her partner, which they normally do not perform in their *required* lifts, which *must* meet the difficulty requirements. In fact, most of the skaters agreed that it is impossible for the female to lift the male while meeting the new requirements for the highest levels of difficulty, which are necessary to achieve in order to be competitive. Thus, overall there is only one option within a skater's program to perform a lift that is not limited by the rules in place.

The skaters and experts also pointed to the required spin element, which in some cases reinforces the perception that women are naturally more flexible than men. One specific example

noted by the participants was the camel spin position where female skaters must perform variations of the traditional camel position, displaying more flexibility to meet the *same* difficulty requirements as their male counterparts.

The skaters' performance narratives also included stories, which portrayed conventional gender roles and exclusively heteronormative and in some cases romantic relationships between male and female partners. The themes and stories the skaters used in their competitive programs also often included displays of male power and female submissiveness. The skaters noted that they are more confident in performing such roles since they mirror performances from popular movies and musicals, and thus reaffirm conservative, socially acceptable representations of masculinity and femininity in their competitive performances from popular culture. The skaters also suggested that they believe judges prefer watching programs that include a 'love story' or performances that demonstrate a close relationship between partners. The new rules do include points for demonstrating a close relationship between partners thus adding to the already socially constructed stereotypical ideologies around gender and the perception that judges prefer these themes or styles.

Overall these findings are consistent with the notions of Bourdieu (1992) who suggests that the social construction of masculinity and femininity in society shapes the body's habits and possibilities. The possibilities for challenging gender norms in figure skating and specifically in ice dance are limited at best as these dominant gender norms are historically entrenched and encouraged by those in power, including the ISU, coaches, judges and by other ice dancers, including those who are most successful.

Michael Messner (2011) suggests from his research on youth sport that despite the belief in equal opportunity for both males and females in sport, men are still seen as naturally wired to play sport while females who are increasingly given the 'choice' to participate in sport, are still

in some cases held back from participation in sporting activities perceived to be inappropriate for female participation. Messner refers to this ideology as ‘soft essentialism’ where sex segregated bodily practices are continuously constructed in sport where individuals’ beliefs around gender, reaffirm gender divisions. For example coaches tend to treat boys and girls differently to the extent that they are conscious of this differentiated treatment and reason this treatment with the belief that boys and girls are naturally different. Messner (2011) argues that “coaches’ different treatment of boys and girls serves as an add-on to differences that have been socially constructed through a myriad of gendering processes that shape boys and girls at deeply emotional levels” (p. 164). This is consistent with the findings from this research, which demonstrated that experts positively viewed the new rules as they have encouraged more displays of female flexibility than ever before. Thus it was hard not to recognize the role of ‘soft essentialism’ in female’s access and success in figure skating and the ways in which those in power, such as coaches and experts reinforce gender divisions and more specifically movement practices which are largely gender specific. Remembering attending my own partner tryouts, as a young and aspiring ice dancer, I personally find utility in Messner’s research on the differentiated treatment of girls and boys in figure skating. Frequently asked to perform the splits to demonstrate my flexibility in tryouts for a potential partner, the male skater was never asked to do the same. This experience demonstrates how flexibility is a requirement of female skaters though not for male skaters, clearly emphasizing stereotypical gender traits. As Erica Rand (2012) writes, “in figure skating gender policing is legendary, obvious and palpable” (p. 123). I would argue that the role of gender in ice dancers’ movement practices was overwhelmingly prominent in the findings and furthermore strongly institutionalized by the judging system in place.

The two prominent themes from this research, as discussed here, are not mutually exclusive. The negotiation of athleticism and artistry in ice dance and the construction of gender

are related as the status associated with 'sport' is tied to athleticism and to its historical association with hegemonic masculinity. An interesting comparison can be made with cheerleading concerning these relations. For example, Grindstaff and West (2006) discuss the politics of sport and gender in cheerleading where the bid for sport status by cheerleaders revolves around their desire for more respect from athletic organizations such as National Collegiate Athletic Association or NCAA. Just as in ice dance, cheerleading was once exclusively a male activity and has gradually been feminized with the increase in female participation. Cheerleading, like ice dance, also continually re-negotiates the boundaries between sport and performance and athletics and aesthetics. In their attempt to gain sporting status, cheerleaders have emphasized their technical and athletic accomplishments in much the same way that the ISU judging system has emphasized technical requirements and thus athletic practices in ice dance for its own sporting status as part of the Olympic program.

In ice dance, gender differences are carefully preserved in skaters' movement practices where athletic displays are a valued form of masculinity and artistic movements a quality of femininity. For example, as the skaters and experts described, the female typically performs the more artistic movement practices expressing the music while the male acts as a supportive frame from which the female moves. Thus, there are strong tendencies within ice dance to perform movement practices, which reaffirm natural difference; 'women are more flexible, men are stronger, women are more artistic, men are more athletic'. These ideals are embodied at an early age in young skaters and continue as the dominant discourse through all levels of competition. These representations and movement practices however are nuanced in ice dance performances where in some cases, both the male and female, take on athletic *and* artistic movement practices. As Aalten (2004) suggests in her writing on ballet, if we look beyond the representations in physical movements and more at the material movement practices themselves, female ballet

dancers accomplish athletic feats comparable to any other sport. Much the same, Desmond (1993) suggests that scholarship on the body has largely focused on “representations of the body and/or its discursive policing than with its actions/movements as ‘texts’ themselves (p. 34). For female ice dancers their flexible movements, which often represent female suppleness, also require exceptional athleticism in their material form. Thus ice dance proves to be a particularly interesting discipline for analysis when considering both the representations and the material movements of skaters, especially while negotiating the athletic and/or artistic identity of ice dance. It is however clear from this research how the ice dancers’ bodies continue to be controlled by strong ideologies and powerful groups, such as the ISU, coaches and judges who reinforce movement practices, which embody upper class and gendered traditions albeit suitable for sporting competition.

Strengths and Limitations

An important strength of this study was the triangulation of research methods used in the data collection. Triangulation is typically referred to as the comparison of results from two or more different methods of data collection and is generally accepted as a means of ensuring comprehensive findings (Mays & Pope, 2006). Data collection for this research included a documentary analysis, interviews with skaters and experts as well as a visual analysis component in the interviews with skaters. This multi-method approach allowed for a detailed and holistic approach to the study of skaters’ movement practices where each method provided unique although consistent data. The documentary analysis highlighted how skaters’ movement practices are governed, prescribed and evaluated, the interviews elicited expert opinions from both the skaters and experts and the visual component allowed for a focused analysis on seeing the physical movements skaters perform in context.

Since all of the skaters and experts I spoke with were closely linked to one major training center, this allowed for a detailed analysis of a close-knit, elite ice dance practice community. Due to the combination of skaters and experts in the sample, differing and conflicting opinions on the new judging system and its influences on skaters' movement practices also emerged providing interesting data for analysis. For example, the judges and experts did not express the same frustrations with the extensive rules and limited creative ability the skaters had discussed.

The research sample presented some difficulties as some of the skaters had only briefly skated under the old 6.0 judging system and for some, only during their younger years as single skaters, hence not necessarily in the ice dance discipline. These skaters commented on their *current* movement practices but were in some cases unable to really discuss the *changes* in movement practices pre and post new judging system. Thus it may have been helpful to interview more skaters who had skated in both judging systems. It is becoming increasingly more difficult however to find ice dancers who have skated under both systems and who are currently competing since the new judging system has already been in place for more than six years. Furthermore, likely due to the nature of the sport, the participants were all white, middle-class individuals. In the future it would be important to seek a more diverse sample to gain insight on others access and embodied practices in figure skating including the potentially different performance narratives and movement styles these skaters demonstrate in competition.

Another limitation was the effectiveness of the video analysis component used in the interviews with skaters. Although the videos were helpful in confirming the movement practices skaters had described throughout the interview, the video component did not necessarily elicit new data for further analysis. It was also difficult for me as the researcher to ask particular questions while watching the video for the first time with the skater. In future studies it may be helpful to have watched the videos in advance of the interviews or to have perhaps included two

interviews with the skaters, where the second interview could act as a follow up and more closely focus on the visual analysis component. This would give the researcher an opportunity to review the videos in advance and to prepare specific points to be taken up with the participants.

Conclusion

Potential Contributions

Overall the findings from this research add to the literature on sport, dance and the embodied practices of athletes and dancers alike as well as to the broader research field of physical cultural studies on the moving body. This study will also add to the growing area of research on the sport of figure skating with a particular focus on the ice dance discipline, which has not been addressed in-depth in the figure skating literature to date.

Specifically, these findings demonstrate the ways in which historically and socially constructed attitudes towards the body become embodied in the predispositions, habits and movements of individuals and how these traditions or habits shift and prevail. These findings are also important for considering how those in power, such as coaches and experts, and authoritative groups, such as the ISU, construct dominant discourses around masculinity and femininity in particular sports. This study especially points to the institutionalization of stereotypical gender norms in figure skating, which are clearly encouraged by the new judging system in place. This adds to the already restrictive environment and conservative structure in figure skating which limits the opportunity to challenge not only gender norms but upper-class European and aristocratic traditions.

This project also highlighted some positive outcomes of the change in judging system. As the skaters and experts suggested, the new system has allowed for more objectivity and transparency in the judging process, which they suggested has resulted in a much fairer judging system than before. The finding also pointed to some differing opinions on the new system between the skaters and experts, which should be considered moving forward. In particular, skaters expressed their frustration with the lack of creative ability to perform movement practices outside of those prescribed in the rules, whereas the judges and experts did not see this as a

potential limitation to the new system. This point in particular suggests there is a strong need for international and other sport organizations to include athletes in their decision making, connecting the gap that many participants in this project suggested exists between the ISU rules and skaters actual practices.

The general consensus from the participants on the new judging system and the ways in which it has changed the ice dance discipline and skaters' movement practices is still a point of contention and will likely continue as new changes are made to the judging system and to the rules on an annual basis. Thus, this project would benefit from future research considering the relationship between subjectively judged aesthetic sports and the effects on athletes' practices in figure skating and other sporting activities.

Suggestions for Future Research

As noted in the findings, consultation with *current* skaters was minimal in the development of the new judging system and continues to be with respect to the changes and additions that are made to the rules on an annual basis. Thus, future studies may consider a participatory method of research focused on the ways in which skaters might consider changes or improvements to the judging system in place. Although the skaters and experts were asked if they would consider making any changes or improvements to the new judging system in this study, a more effective method might include focus group conversations. This way the skaters could work together, sharing each other's ideas and suggestions to initiate more response on future recommendations for improving the judging system than was elicited in this particular research project.

Future research should also examine more closely the influences of the new judging system on the movement practices of adult ice dancers, as well as on men's, women's and synchronized skating practices. This project did include one interview with an adult ice dance

couple and from our discussions, a closer look into the influence of the new judging system and the limitations and challenges it provides for adult skaters would allow further insight into their movement practices and the power dynamics adult skaters experience.

Additionally, although this study included one interview with a coach/choreographer, interviews with figure skating choreographers could potentially elicit more nuanced understandings of skaters' movement practices. Choreographers are the experts in creating skaters' competitive programs, thus they work exceptionally closely with the new judging system while considering the music and the skaters' personal skating styles. There are a few elite and highly sought after professional choreographers internationally in both ice dance and the other figure skating disciplines, thus it would be interesting to explore their opinions on the new judging system and the reasons why they have been so successful with their work under the new system as opposed to other professional choreographers.

Following up on the skaters who discussed how they feel performing certain movement practices, especially highly gendered practices and performance narratives, may provide interesting insights into skaters' affect or emotions. The skaters who described themselves as confident in performing stereotypical feminine roles are perhaps empowered rather than limited in their ability to perform such practices successfully. Thus more research on this topic may help to better understand why female skaters specifically perform these movement practices and narratives. This approach may also contribute to the current trend in theorizing on the connection between the biological or psychological and the social in sport and physical culture where a more interdisciplinary approach can be useful as both Vertinsky (2009) and Thorpe (2012) suggest.

In response to the literature on physical cultural studies and the request for a more reflexive focus on the researcher's own body and politics in body work scholarship (see Giardina & Newman, 2011a, 2011b) future researchers may consider an ethnographic or auto-

ethnographic component of research where reflective writing could focus on the researcher's own experience in performing ice dancers' movement practices on the ice. For example, Popovic (2010) uses auto-ethnography to reflect on her own upbringing as a young figure skater alongside her brother who was an avid hockey player. Through this kind of reflexive methodology Popovic examines her personal lived experiences exploring the social structures that constructed her own embodied practices as a young female figure skater, while blurring the lines between the researcher and participant.

In addition to expanding upon research methodologies, future projects may consider the relationship between judging, objectivity and fairness and the negotiation of athletic and artistic movement practices in other similar kinds of aesthetic sports such as gymnastics, synchronized swimming, or dressage. Performance judging is an inherent part of sport as almost one-third of all sports on the Olympic program use judging to partially or entirely to assess performance (Wolfmann, 2010). Thus exploring these same topics in other judged sports would provide further insight and comparison into the ways in which aesthetic sports are subjectively judged and with what effects.

Finally, the focus of this project has been on the social construction of ice dancers' movement practices, with a particular emphasis on the ways in which the new ISU judging system has influenced these practices. Findings from this study could be shared with national and international figure skating bodies and the larger figure skating community in order to consider the strengths and limitations of the system and to share the opinions of skaters and experts who work so closely with it. This might help to facilitate a stronger connection between policy and practice and help to improve the judging system in place and the opportunities for challenging normative practices within the sport.

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Appendix A

List of Documents

Documents Used In Document Analysis

1. ISU Special Regulations + Technical Rules: Single + Pair Skating and Ice Dance, 2010
(Only reviewed Ice Dance Section)
2. International Skating Union Communication No.1677 Ice Dance: Requirements for Technical Rules with ongoing validity: Effective July 1st 2011.
3. International Skating Union Communication No.1686 Ice Dance: Corrections, additions and amendments to ISU Communication 1677.
4. International Skating Union Communication No.1670 Ice Dance: Requirements for Technical Rules. Season 2011/2012

Documents Used for Consideration From 2012/2012 Skating Season

1. International Skating Union Communication NO. 1721 Ice Dance: Requirements for Technical Rules. Season 2012/2013
2. International Skating Union Communication No. 1738 Ice Dance: I. Some changes in Special Regulations and Technical Rules accepted by the 54th ISU Congress II. Requirements for Technical Rules with ongoing validity. Effective July 1st 2012.

Appendix B

Interview Schedule with Skaters

To start can you tell me a little bit about your background in figure skating, how got into ice dancing and how long you have been ice dancing for?

Probes:

- a. Why did you start ice dancing?
- b. Why do you like ice dance?
- c. Is there anything you don't like about ice dance?

1. Tell me about your experiences as a skater with the new judging system.

Probes

- a. Did you skate under the old 6.0 system as well as the new system?
- b. How did you find the transition from skating under the old system to the new system?
- c. What has been the biggest difference in skating under the new system compared to the old system?
- d. Has your training changed with the new system? How and why?
- e. What has been the biggest challenge for you skating under the new system?

2. Would you say ice dance in general has changed with the new judging system?

Probes:

- a. Has it gotten more difficult? Easier? More fun? Harder/easier training? More creative? Less creative?
- b. Have all the changes been positive ones? What changes haven't been so great?
- c. What training centers do the best ice dancers come from? Why is that?

3. Can you talk about how your movements on the ice are influenced by the judging system?

Probes:

- a. Are there movements the judges like to see? Don't like to see?
- b. How does the judging system influence the types of movements performed by yourself and your partner? Are they different?
- c. What other factors other than the judging system influence what you perform on the ice?
Ex. What do the fans want to see? What do you like to skate to and perform? Music?
Coaching preferences/training center?

More specifically.....

Probes: Technique

- a. Have techniques changed with the new system and if so how?
- b. For example: upper body movements. Has posture changed? Dance holds?
- c. For example: lower body movements: Free leg position? Edges?

Probes: Elements

- a. Have the elements you perform changed and if so how?
- b. Lifts?
- c. Spins?
- d. Transitions?

Probes: Styles

- a. Would you say skating styles have changed? If so how?
- b. Do you think those ice dancers from Ontario or Quebec have different styles than ice dancers from the west coast for example? Has this remained consistent with the new judging system?
- c. What about styles internationally, have they changed with the new judging system?
- d. Is there a dominant style in ice dance right now? What is it? Why?
- e. Have modes of partnering changed? If so, how? And why? For example: male lead.

4. Can you talk about your experiences with the choreography process and how it has potentially changed with the new judging system?

Probes:

- a. How does the judging system influence the choreography process?
- b. How long does the process of creating a new competitive program take? Is this longer/shorter than under the 6.0 system and why?
- c. How does the new judging system influence the creativity process?
- d. How is choreography different with ice dancers compared the singles skaters?
- e. What have been the challenges and perks of doing choreography under the new system?

5. Can you talk about the change in scoring for technique has potentially changed what you perform on the ice?

Probes:

- a. Are there different measures of difficulty for the female partner vs. the male partner? Can you give an example?
- b. Are the requirements for the technical score always changing? How does that influence what you perform on the ice?
- c. Has this changed competition strategy or how you compete at all?

6. Can you talk about the change in evaluation of the program components score has changed what you perform on the ice, if it has?

Probes:

- a. Has this changed the types of movements you perform on the ice?
- b. Has this changed the type of music, characters and style you take on for your programs?
- c. What do you specifically do to in your programs to contribute to high program component scores compared to your partner?
- d. Would you say the program components score more 'objective' than the presentation score from the past?

7. Overall would you say the new judging system is more fair? Why or why not?

Probes:

- a. Is the new system more objective? Is that a good thing?
- b. Does it seem that there are less politics involved in the judging process?
- c. Is the new system easier for you to gain feedback?
- d. Are there any limitations to the new judging system? If so what are they?
- e. What changes might you make the new system to improve it?
- f. What is the best part about ice dancing with this judging system?

Video Component:

Skaters will be asked to bring a copy of one of their competitive skating performances. Skaters and the interviewer will then watch the video allowing skaters to describe some of the movements, elements, styles, and choreography that they perform in their program and how this potentially is influenced or not by the judging system.

Anything discussed in the interviews can be taken up while watching the video allowing skaters to clarify or demonstrate what they were talking about, referencing to or to bring up new points of interest.

Appendix C

Interview Schedule For Experts

To start can you tell me a little bit about yourself, how you got involved in figure skating and about your role now?

- a. How long have you been involved in figure skating? Ice dance?
- b. What do you like most about the ice dance discipline that makes you want to work in ice dance?

1. Tell me about your experiences with the new judging system.

Probes:

- a. What were the motivations to have a new judging system in figure skating?
- b. Were there limitations to the previous system?
- c. Can you talk about the transition period between the old system and the new system?
- d. Why did the ISU go with the current ISU judging system in the end? (I understand there was a decision to be made over 3 systems?)
- e. Did you work under the old 6.0 system and how was that different?
- f. What has been most different about doing your work under the new judging system or did you find no changes?
- g. What has been most challenging and then maybe the most rewarding about your work under the new judging system?

2. Would you say ice dance in general has changed with the new judging system? If so, how?

Probes:

- a. Has it become more difficult? Easier? More fun? Harder training? More creative? Less creative?
- b. Do you think the changes have all been positive?

3. Can you talk about how skaters' movements on the ice are influenced by the judging system?

Probes:

- a. Are there movements the judges like to see? Don't like to see? If so what are they i.e. Can you give an example?
- b. How does the judging system influence the types of movements performed by the skaters?
- c. What other factors other than the judging system influence what skaters perform on the ice? Ex. What the fans want to see? What the skaters like to skate to and perform to? Music? Coaching preferences/training center? Judges preferences?

More specifically:

Probes: Techniques

- a. Have you noticed a change in ice dancers' techniques with the new system and if so can you give an example?
- b. For example: upper body movements. Has posture changed? Dance holds?
- c. For example: lower body movements: Free leg position? Edges?

Probes: Elements

- a. Have the elements skaters perform changed and if so how?
- b. Lifts?
- c. Spins?
- d. Transitions?

Probes: Styles

- a. Would you say skating styles have changed or not with the new judging system? If so how?
- b. Would you say that those ice dancers from Ontario or Quebec have different styles than ice dancers from the west coast, for example? Has this remained consistent with the new judging system?
- c. What about styles internationally, have they changed with the new judging system and if so how?
- d. Where do the best ice dancers in the world come from and has this changed with the new judging system?
- e. Would you say there is there a dominant style in ice dance right now? If so, what is it? Why?

5. Can you talk about how skaters are evaluated for technique now and how that influences or does not influence what skaters do on the ice?

Probes:

- a. What are the implications on skaters' movements and what they perform on the ice?

6. Can you talk about how skaters are evaluated for presentation or for the program components score and how that influences or does not influence what skaters do on the ice?

Probes:

- a. What are the implications on skaters' movements and what they perform on the ice?
- b. Are there different measures for the female partner vs. the male partner?
- c. Does the evaluation of the program components score influence the styles and characters ice dancers take on in their competitive programs?
- d. In your opinion, is the program components score more 'objective' than the presentation score from the past?

7. Would you say the new judging system is more fair? Why or why not?

Probes:

- a. Is the new system more objective? Is that a positive or a negative?
- b. Does it seem that there are less politics involved in the judging process?
- c. Are there limitations to the new system, if so what are they?
- d. If you could make any change or changes to the system right now what would you change? If anything?
- e. Overall what is the best part about the current system?

Appendix D

Initial Contact Letter

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



School of Kinesiology
210 War Memorial Gym
6081 University Boulevard
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada V6T 1Z1

Dear, Initial Contact

My name is Stephanie van Veen and I am a Masters student at The University of British Columbia in The School Of Kinesiology. I was also a former competitive ice dancer from the Central Ontario Section where I competed as a junior competitor at the 2005 National Championships.

Reflecting on my experiences as a skater throughout my graduate studies has led me to a research project on ice dance and the new Code of Points judging system. The purpose of the project is to better understand the Code of Points judging system and how the new system has potentially changed and perhaps improved ice dancers' movements, techniques, styles, choreography and partnering.

This letter is to express interest in recruiting skaters, coaches, choreographers, judges and experts as part of your ice dance training group to participate in this project. Participation would entail one, 1-hour interview with myself.

Participants can be competitive ice dancers in the Novice, Junior or Senior categories who have competed in the ice dance discipline for at least 2 years and are 13 years of age and older. I would also like to invite experts such as yourselves, other coaches, choreographers, judges, technical specialists, and/or TV commentators to participate. This research will allow participants to reflect on their understandings of the COP judging system and for skaters to explore how they maximize the system in their competitive performances. This study may also allow skaters and experts to give suggestions on how to improve the COP judging system for the future.

It would be great to meet with you to discuss the project and to answer any questions you might have. In order to recruit participants for this project I would ask that you to pass along an information and consent form to your skaters and colleagues who meet the participant criteria above. Interested participants would then contact me directly via phone or e-mail with any questions or to set up an interview time. I could also arrange to have an information meeting to answer any further questions the interested participants may have.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in helping with my project,

Sincerely,

Stephanie van Veen, BA
The University of British Columbia

Appendix E

Letter of Consent for Skaters

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



School of Kinesiology
210 War Memorial Gym
6081 University Boulevard
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada V6T 1Z1

Letter of Information and Consent Form: Skaters

Dear Skater

You have been invited to participate in a study entitled *Ice Dance Reacts to the 2002 Olympic Judging Scandal: A Study of Skaters Movement Practices Under the New COP Judging System*. You are eligible to participate in the study if you are currently an ice dancer at the Novice, Junior or Senior competitive level and have been competing in the ice dance discipline for at least 2 years. You must also be 13 years of age and older. Coaches, judges, technical specialists and TV commentators will also be participating in this study.

Background and Purpose

The purpose of this research is to better understand the Code of Points judging system and to study the ways which the new judging system has changed and perhaps improved ice dancers movements, techniques, styles, choreography, partnering and performances. Stephanie van Veen from the School of Kinesiology at the University of British Columbia is undertaking this research and a summary report of the study will be provided to you at the conclusion of the study if you would like.

Study Procedures:

You are invited to participate in the following research activities:

1. A 1 hour individual interview with Stephanie at a location that is best for you.
2. Participants will be asked to bring a videotape or DVD of one of your competitive skating performances, which we will watch in the interview session to help with discussing the elements and movements you perform in your programs.

Potential Risks:

Because the interviews will encourage you to reflect on the new judging system and the movements and practices you perform, you may be concerned with appearing to criticize the judging system or the International Skating Union. This is not the focus of the study, which is interested in the potential changes in movement styles and choreography resulting from the new COP judging system. You will of course be guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity of any information provided to the researcher in the interview sessions.

Potential Benefits:

This project will encourage you to reflect on the judging system and may help you to improve your competitive programs. It may also allow you to make suggestions on how to improve the judging system for the future.

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

The identity of all participants will be kept strictly confidential. You may choose to use your own name or a 'made up' name (called a pseudonym) to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher will help you to decide how you would like to be identified and the implications of your decision. It should be noted that you may be identified by members of the skating community based on the answers you give in the interviews however your anonymity is a top priority for the researcher.

All documents and information from the interviews will be kept in a locked file cabinet at The University of British Columbia in the School of Kinesiology and only the researcher will have a key. All electronic documents from the interviews will be kept on a secured computer in a locked office at The University of British Columbia and will be password protected.

Consent

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your coaches will not be told if you do or do not participate and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. By signing the attached consent form, you are consenting to participate in this study and acknowledging that you have received a copy of the consent form for your own records. Your consent is also being sought to tape record all interview sessions to ensure accurate recording.

Contact information about the study:

If you are interested in participating, have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study you may contact Stephanie van Veen or Dr. Patricia Vertinsky.

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:

Additionally, if you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598.

If you agree to participate in this study as outlined above, please proceed to the next page, which is the consent form. Please complete and return the form in the self-addressed stamped envelope within one week. Two copies are included, the first copy is for you to return to the researcher (Stephanie van Veen) and the second copy is for your own records.

Thank you,

Stephanie van Veen, BA
Masters Candidate
The University of British Columbia

Principal Investigator: Dr. Patricia Vertinsky
The University of British Columbia
School of Kinesiology
6081 University Blvd
Vancouver V6T 1Z1

Co-Investigator: Miss Stephanie van Veen
Masters of Arts In Kinesiology Student
The University of British Columbia
School of Kinesiology

Consent Form

I have read the above information, have had a chance to ask any questions about the study and my involvement, understand the study procedures and potential risks and benefits, and have discussed the implications with the researcher.

I understand that my participation in the study is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time. I agree to have the interviews tape-recorded to ensure accuracy.

If I have any questions or desire further information about this study, I may contact Dr. Patricia Vertinsky (Faculty at UBC School of Kinesiology) or Stephanie van Veen. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records,

I consent to participate in this study as outlined in the attached letter

Participant Signature

Printed Name

Date

Participant copy – keep this for your records

Consent Form

I have read the above information, have had a chance to ask any questions about the study and my involvement, understand the study procedures and potential risks and benefits, and have discussed the implications with the researcher.

I understand that my participation in the study is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time. I agree to have the interviews tape-recorded to ensure accuracy.

If I have any questions or desire further information about this study, I may contact Dr. Patricia Vertinsky (Faculty at UBC School of Kinesiology) or Stephanie van Veen. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records,

I consent to participate in this study as outlined in the attached letter

Participant Signature

Printed Name

Date

Please sign and bring to the interview session. Thank you.

Researcher copy

Appendix F

Letter of Consent for Experts

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



School of Kinesiology
210 War Memorial Gym
6081 University Boulevard
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada V6T 1Z1

Letter of Information and Consent Form: Experts

Dear

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Ice Dance Reacts to the 2002 Olympic Judging Scandal: A Study of Skaters Movement Practices Under the New COP Judging System*. You have been invited to participate because of your expertise and knowledge on the sport of figure skating, ice dance more specifically and the Code of Points judging system.

Background and Purpose:

The purpose of this research is to better understand the Code of Points judging system and to study the ways which the new judging system has changed and perhaps improved ice dancers movements, techniques, styles, choreography and partnering and performances. Stephanie van Veen from the School of Kinesiology at the University of British Columbia is undertaking this research and a summary report of the study will be provided to you at the conclusion if you would like.

Study Procedures:

1. A 1 hour individual interview with Stephanie at a location that is best for you.

Potential Risks:

Because the interviews will encourage you to reflect on the new judging system and the movements and practices of ice dancers you may be concerned with appearing to criticize the judging system or the International Skating Union. This is not the focus of the study, which is interested in potential changes in movement styles and choreography resulting from the new COP system. You will of course be guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity of any information provided to the researcher in the interview sessions.

Potential Benefits:

The opportunity for you to reflect on the judging system and the ways in which it influences ice dance movement practices and performances may be of benefit. This project may also allow you to make suggestions on how to improve the judging system for the future.

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

The identity of all participants will be kept strictly confidential. You may choose to use your own name or a 'made up' name (called a pseudonym) to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher will help you to decide how you would like to be identified and the implications of your decision. It should be noted that you may be identified by members of the skating community based on the answers you give in the interviews however your anonymity is a top priority for the researcher.

All documents and information from the interviews will be kept in a locked file cabinet at The University of British Columbia in the School of Kinesiology and only the researcher will have a key. All electronic documents from the

interviews will be kept on a secured computer in a locked office at The University of British Columbia and will be password protected

Consent:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence. By signing the attached consent form, you are agreeing to participate in this study and acknowledging that you have received a copy of the consent form for your own records. Your consent is also being sought to tape record all interview sessions to ensure accurate recording.

Contact information about the study:

If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Dr. Patricia Vertinsky or Stephanie van Veen.

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:

Additionally, if you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598.

If you agree to participate in this study as outlined above, please proceed to the next page, which is the consent form. Please complete and return the form in the self-addressed stamped envelope within one week. Two copies are included, the first copy is for you to return to the research (Stephanie van Veen) and the second copy is for your own records.

Thank you,

Stephanie van Veen, BA
Masters Candidate
The University of British Columbia

Principal Investigator: Dr. Patricia Vertinsky
The University of British Columbia
School of Kinesiology

Co-Investigator: Miss Stephanie van Veen
Masters of Arts In Kinesiology Student
The University of British Columbia
School of Kinesiology

Consent Form

I have read the above information, have had a chance to ask any questions about the study and my involvement, understand the study procedures and potential risks and benefits, and have discussed the implications with the researcher.

I understand that my participation in the study is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time. I agree to have the interviews tape-recorded to ensure accuracy.

If I have any questions or desire further information about this study, I may contact Dr. Patricia Vertinsky (Faculty at UBC School of Kinesiology) or Stephanie van Veen. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records,

I consent to participate in this study as outlined in the attached letter

Participant Signature

Printed Name

Date

Participant copy – keep this for your records

Consent Form

I have read the above information, have had a chance to ask any questions about the study and my involvement, understand the study procedures and potential risks and benefits, and have discussed the implications with the researcher.

I understand that my participation in the study is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time. I agree to have the interviews tape-recorded to ensure accuracy.

If I have any questions or desire further information about this study, I may contact Dr. Patricia Vertinsky (Faculty at UBC School of Kinesiology) or Stephanie van Veen. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records,

I consent to participate in this study as outlined in the attached letter

Participant Signature

Printed Name

Date

Please sign and bring to interview. Thank you.

Researcher copy – Please bring to interview

Appendix G

Biographical Questionnaire for Skaters

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



School of Kinesiology
210 War Memorial Gym
6081 University Boulevard
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada V6T 1Z1

Project Title:

Ice Dance Reacts to the 2002 Olympic Judging Scandal: A Study of Skater's Movement Practices under the new COP Judging System.

Demographic Information:

Name:

Current Competitive Category:

How many years have you been ice dancing for?

How many years have you been skating with your current partner?

Appendix H

Biographical Questionnaire for Experts

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



School of Kinesiology
210 War Memorial Gym
6081 University Boulevard
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada V6T 1Z1

Project Title:

Ice Dance Reacts to the 2002 Olympic Judging Scandal: A Study of Skater's Movement Practices under the new COP Judging System.

Demographic Information:

Name:

Expert role (coach/judge/choreographer/other?):

How many years working in your role?