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Attitudes and Experiences of LGBTQI2S Inclusion in Figure Skating: The Role of Known Intergroup Contact

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Attitudes and Experiences of LGBTQI2S Inclusion in Figure Skating: The Role of Known
Intergroup Contact

by

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A THESIS

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Abstract

The sport landscape has shifted in recent years in relation to LGBTQI2S inclusion by way of greater awareness through academic research and popular publications, increased numbers of publicly “out” athletes, and the development of ally organizations. In an effort to augment academic and practitioner knowledge, this research project explored contemporary attitudes of athletes, coaches, officials, and administrators toward LGBTQI2S persons in figure skating. An online survey with Likert-scale and open-ended questions was made available to current members of Skate Canada, the national governing body for figure skating in Canada. Intergroup contact theory and queer theory were utilized as the theoretical foundations through which to analyse and cogitate data generated from 106 responses. Results from the quantitative and qualitative analyses indicated (1) that attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating were mostly positive, albeit with some reservations stemming from concerns about the fair and equal participation of trans persons in sport; (2) that known intergroup contact was significantly connected to attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion, particularly in relation to personal support and advocacy of these persons; (3) that individuals’ underlying (non)heteronormative assumptions regarding gender as essentialist or relativist contributed greatly to the conceptualization of trans inclusion in sport as either fair or unfair; and, (4) that respondents tended to phrase their support of LGBTQI2S persons as a desire or willingness to seek educational and/or advocacy opportunities regarding inclusive practices. The knowledge gained from this research will be used to invoke more inclusive practices within Canadian figure skating specifically, as well as sport more generally. Increased quantity and quality of intergroup contact with LGBTQI2S persons, and improved educational/environmental advocacy for inclusion in figure skating and sport more generally are recommended.

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Dedication

*This thesis is dedicated to my loved ones for their endless faith and encouragement, and to my
Uncle for providing the impetus for this pursuit.*

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Sport may be viewed as a “condensed” or “saturated” version of society that not only represents “the way things are” within the larger social context but also influences people’s experiences of social life and conceptualizations of identity. Put another way, sport both shapes and is shaped by the society in which it is embedded, and it is thus necessitating of examination and analysis (Griffin, 1998). Regarding sex, gender, and sexuality, sport commonly adheres to traditional assumptions and ideologies regarding these constructs and grants only a narrow space within which they are enabled to operate (Anderson, Magrath, & Bullingham, 2016). As such, sport often reproduces limited ideas about men and masculinity and women and femininity, offering problematic outcomes for individuals who “don’t fit”. This has been particularly true for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and two-spirit (LGBTQI2S) persons (see Chapter 1, “Literature Review”, and Appendix A for definitions).

Research from the early 1980s into the new millennium has demonstrated that, while the experiences of gay men and lesbians in sport have not all been equal, sport has frequently served as an unwelcoming and unsafe space for homosexual athletes through both overt and covert forms of discrimination (Anderson, et al., 2016). Sport is an even more complicated space for trans, intersex, and gender-fluid athletes. Historically, participation for these athletes has been heavily regulated through policies such as the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) Stockholm Consensus and the International Association of Athletic Federation’s (IAAF) Hyperandrogenism Regulation Policy (Cavanaugh & Sykes, 2006; Shapiro, 2015). Exclusionary procedures such as these at the international echelons have trickled down to other levels of sport.

More recent research on LGBTQI2S inclusion, however, indicates that North American sport is becoming increasingly accepting of LGBTQI2S persons. There are greater numbers of athletes “coming out” publicly, advocacy organizations such as *You Can Play* and *Athlete Ally* have been developed, and more positive media focus on the LGBTQI2S community has been garnered (Anderson, 2011; Anderson, et al., 2016; Denison & Kitchen, 2015; Kian & Anderson, 2009; Sattore-Baldwin, 2012). Nevertheless, we would be wise to remain cautious against overstating the inclusivity of current sporting environments as they relate to LGBTQI2S individuals.

Academic and activist, Pat Griffin (2012), has commented that the quest toward total inclusion should be seen as a staggered rather than linear progression. Scholars have also suggested that most of the changes that have occurred tend to impact or favour cisgender gay male athletes over other LGBTQI2S individuals (Anderson, et al., 2016; Sartore-Baldwin, 2012). Furthermore, most of the research investigating LGBTQI2S inclusion in sport has focused on the experiences of gay men and lesbians involved in “traditional” or “popular” team sports such as football, basketball, soccer, and/or rugby (Anderson, et al., 2016). Inquiry into the experiences of LGBTQI2S persons involved in sports that have been popularly conceptualized as peripheral for boys/men and “appropriate” for girls/women is sparse. Similarly, there is a lack of research pertaining to LGBTQI2S inclusion within the Canadian sport system. How our sporting culture differs from that of the United States in terms of LGBTQI2S inclusion and participation should be investigated. As such, in my master’s research project, I investigated current attitudes surrounding LGBTQI2S inclusion in Canadian figure skating. A sport that has faced both historic and contemporary LGBTQI2S discrimination, figure skating challenges traditional assumptions regarding sex, gender, and athleticism, and brings into question the notion that

sports are necessarily reserved for those representing only the extreme ends of the gender-continuum, namely hyper-masculine males and hyper-feminine females (Adams, 2011).

My research project utilized an online survey (Appendix C) in order to explore contemporary attitudes and experiences of athletes, coaches, and officials toward LGBTQI2S inclusion within the sport of figure skating. It was found (1) that attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating were mostly positive, albeit with some reservations stemming from concerns about the fair and equal participation of trans persons in sport; (2) that known intergroup contact was significantly connected to attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion, particularly in relation to personal support and advocacy of these persons; (3) that individuals' underlying (non)heteronormative assumptions regarding gender as essentialist or relativist contributed greatly to the conceptualization of trans inclusion in sport as either fair or unfair; and, (4) that respondents tended to phrase their support of LGBTQI2S persons as a desire or willingness to seek educational and/or advocacy opportunities regarding inclusive practices. The knowledge generated from this study resulted in a greater understanding of the manner in which attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating are fostered and proliferated, thus contributing to improved inclusivity for LGBTQI2S athletes in this sport as well as the national sport system more generally.

1.2 Literature Review

LGBTQI2S is a popular initialism used to describe individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, or two-spirit. While, collectively, the initialism refers to those who are non-heterosexual or non-cisgender, Egale Canada (n.d.), has defined each of the LGBTQI2S subpopulations as follows: "Lesbian" refers to a female-identified person who experiences attraction to people of the same sex and/or gender. "Gay" describes a person who

experiences attraction to people of the same sex and/or gender. Gay can include both male-identified individuals and female-identified individuals or refer to male-identified individuals only. “Bisexual” depicts persons who experience attraction to both men and women. Some bisexual people use this term to express attraction to both their own sex and/or gender, as well as to people of a different sex and/or gender. “Transgender” (or “trans”) are those who do not identify either fully or in part as the gender associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. Trans is often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions. “Queer” (or “genderqueer”) is a person whose gender identity, expression, and/or sexuality may not correspond with social and/or cultural expectations. Individuals who identify as queer may move between genders, identify with multiple genders, or reject the gender binary or gender definition altogether. These persons may also experience heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual attraction. “Intersex” refers to a person whose chromosomal, hormonal, or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside the conventional classifications of male or female. The designation of intersex can be experienced as stigmatization given the history of medical practitioners imposing this identification as a diagnosis requiring correction, often through non-consensual surgical or pharmaceutical intervention upon infants, children, and/or young adults (some people may not be identified as “intersex” until puberty or even later in life). Finally, “two-spirit” is an English umbrella term that reflects the many words used in different Indigenous languages to affirm the interrelatedness of multiple aspects of identity—including gender, sexuality, community, culture, and spirituality. Some Indigenous people identify as Two Spirit rather than, or in addition to, identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or queer. The term “cisgender” should also be noted, describing persons whose gender identity corresponds with the social expectations associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

LGBTQI2S persons have experienced marginalization both historically and in contemporary times (Gamache & Lazear, 2009). According to Anderson et al. (2016), Western civilization has seen widespread cultural discrimination toward LGBTQI2S persons pass through three stages from the mid-1900s to present-day society. In brief, prior to 1980, society occupied a state of “homoerasure”, during which there was little to no awareness of homosexuality, but both homophobia and the association between gender atypicality and homosexuality were high. Between 1980 and 2000, an increased awareness of homosexuality as well as extreme homophobia and a fanatical association between gender atypicality and homosexuality led to a period of “homohysteria”. Anderson et al. (2016) posit that this occurred largely as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the subsequent realization that homosexuals were present in the population in large numbers. Injunctions by both the Christian church and the Republican political party (which utilized increasingly conservative Christian values regarding the perceived “threat” of homosexuality upon the nuclear family in order to obtain votes), also contributed to the development of homohysteria within the general population. Finally, beginning in the year 2000, a time of “inclusivity” commenced. Since this time, societal awareness of homosexuality has been high, but homophobia is decreasing and the association between gender atypicality and homosexuality is lessening (Anderson et al., 2016). This is primarily the result of improved attitudes toward homosexuals via feminist movements, mainstream and social media, and an increasing number of out-persons (Anderson, 2009a; Harris, 2006; Lee, 2012).

While society at large may be experiencing a shift toward inclusivity, the world of sport continues to prove a difficult landscape for LGBTQI2S persons to navigate (Sartore-Baldwin, 2012). Researchers in the sociology of sport argue that as a result of the Industrial Revolution and the ensuing notion that sport could be utilized to instill the values necessary for a productive

and docile labour and military force, sport has become a catalyst for the endorsement of “hypermasculinity”, which may be thought of as the conscious or unconscious alignment of male behaviour with particular conceptions of masculinity and heterosexuality (Anderson, 2011; Anderson et al., 2016; Rigauer, 1981). Masculinity and heterosexuality are emphasized through two types of behaviours: “positive” behaviours are those that exaggerate stereotypically masculine conduct (examples of this include displays of physical strength, aggression, and sexuality) and “negative” behaviours are those that create distance between male heterosexuality and discourses considered threatening to this construct, namely women and gay men. Predictably, the results of this reproduction of hypermasculinity within sport are that it has become an arena designed primarily for (heterosexual, ultra-masculine) men (also known as a “male preserve”), leaving little space for women or other LGBTQI2S persons to participate. This provides a rationale for the literal exclusion of women from sport until the early twentieth century (and beyond for some sports) and can explain why our current sporting climate is one of mostly gender-segregated participation (Adams, 2011; Anderson et al., 2016).

Thus, the LGBTQI2S community is confronted with a predicament when it comes to obtaining access to and inclusion within our current sporting landscape. As mentioned above, LGBTQI2S persons illustrate that the constructs of gender and sexuality are not binaries but exist along a continuum. Yet sport continues to endorse and reinforce traditional assumptions and ideologies regarding these constructs. According to Anderson et al. (2016), sporting cultures tend to lag behind the greater society in attitudinal and practical inclusivity, as both individual and team sport organizations are often closed-loop systems in which both gender segregation and a near-total institutional nature subscribe a single-minded way of viewing sex and gender. However, the existence of LGBTQI2S athletes participating in recreational and competitive

sports challenges this structural rigidity. That persons identifying as LGBTQI2S are increasingly able to compete and excel at sports traditionally reserved for heterosexual, ultra-masculine males not only disrupts the myth that athletes must embody these traits in order to be successful, but also brings into question the fashion in which sport is arranged, namely that it assumes a sexual and gender binary. Both Griffin (1998) and Bourdieu (2001) assert that the presence of LGBTQI2S individuals in sport may serve to threaten alleged discrepancies between gay men and straight men, and thus the alleged discrepancies between men and women as a whole. These scholars' predictions are being proven correct: the world of sports—particularly within Western team sporting culture—is beginning to change (Anderson et al., 2016).

1.2.1 Gay Men.

Before summarizing the literature pertaining to the experiences of gay men in sports, it should be noted that this subgroup was chosen to be analyzed first simply because it is by far the most researched of any of the LGBTQI2S subpopulations (Anderson et al., 2016). Here also lies its first critique: while it is good news that the experiences of gay men in sport are being studied to a greater extent than ever before, research pertaining to lesbian athletes is lacking, and there is little to no research on bisexual, trans, intersex, or two-spirit sportspersons (Anderson et al., 2016). There are several reasons for this discrepancy, but perhaps most important are, firstly, that men's sports (and thus, straight and gay male athletes) are simply more popular than women's sports (Bruce, 2015). Therefore, issues related to the marginalization of gay male athletes appears more prominent and research-worthy than those pertaining to other LGBTQI2S populations. In other words, because the stories of male athletes in the broadest sense—and gay male athletes by extension—are more prevalent within society, we are inclined to conclude that these topics deserve more research attention than other, less visible matters. This is related to a

second reason, which is that homophobia, in terms of both propagation and experience, really has been worse amongst men than women, at least historically (Loftus, 2001). According to Worthen (2014), women have experienced less policing by the strictures of homophobia than men, thus they have been granted more freedom when it comes to emotional expression and choice of activity. It should be noted that this does not hold true for trans, intersex, or two-spirit persons, as the lives of trans and intersex individuals are found to be much more challenging than those of cisgender gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals (Sykes, 2006), and research exploring the experiences of two-spirit persons in sport is virtually nonexistent. Finally, both the public perception of and realistic discrimination toward gay male athletes as causes of weighted research attention concerning this subpopulation are superseded by the most notorious of variables concerning sex and gender studies: that of patriarchy. That is, whether heterosexual or homosexual, cisgender or transgender/intersex, men tend to garner more media and/or research attention than women, simply because they are more often in positions of power and influence that determine the allocation of goods and resources, intellectual or otherwise. Therefore, before assuming that the lived experiences of gay male athletes really are worse than those of other sex and gender minorities, we must be cognizant of the notion that an absence of evidence—or in this case, research—does not validly conclude an evidence of absence.

That is not to say, however, that the topic of gay male athletes in sport does not deserve the media and research attention it has obtained, nor is it to purport that gay male athletes have fared better than other sex or gender minorities. On the contrary, there remains a culture of silence and fear surrounding gay men in sport to the point that, before National Basketball Association player Jason Collins came out in 2014, there hadn't been a single openly gay male athlete actively competing in a major American team sport since Glenn Burke in 1976 (Lee,

2014). Research suggests that this silence is due to concerns about verbal or physical harassment, as well as the risk of being cut from teams or the potential of financial loss (Martens & Mobley, 2005; Plymire & Forman, 2000). It is no wonder this is the case. Martens and Mobley (2005) suggest that the traditionally masculine arena of sport serves to exacerbate society's already prejudicial attitudes toward gay males, insofar as the deployment of homonegative slurs and taunts occur more often and are accepted more regularly in the locker room than in society at large. Indeed, it is thought that to be an openly gay male athlete in a contemporary sporting landscape is to risk disrupting the very boundary of masculinity that sports are traditionally designed to endorse (Alley & Hicks, 2005). That is, by outing themselves to their teammates and/or competitors, gay athletes supposedly tarnish the traditional masculinity associated with sport, thus disturbing the homogeneity of the team or environment. As Beylin (2006) comments, sport may be thought of as the "last closet" for gay men. That said, sex and gender scholar and activist, Eric Anderson, suggests that we may be witnessing a cultural shift toward acceptance and inclusivity of gay male athletes (Anderson, 2011; Anderson, et al., 2016; Anderson & McCormack, 2016).

Researchers have noted that, in part due to improved attitudes toward homosexuals via feminist movements, the media, and an increasing number of out persons, gay male athletes are reporting less fear and anxiety at the thought of coming out and are enjoying more positive experiences once they decide to do so (Anderson, 2011). Furthermore, gay male athletes claim that they feel strong social support from their teammates once out, as well as a decreased need for "athletic capital" in order to be socially accepted as both an athlete and a person (Anderson, 2011). Athletic capital is the social prestige and status obtained through achieving a high level of performance within a given sport. Whereas at one time only athletes who had accumulated a

large quantity of athletic capital—and thus the ability to utilize their athletic prowess to purchase resistance against homophobia—were able to come out as gay, more recent studies have found that athletic performance bears little impact on individuals’ decision to out themselves to their teammates and/or competitors (Anderson, 2002; Anderson et al., 2016). Thus, cumulatively, it appears as though we are entering a time in which gay male athletes are becoming accepted as valid members of the sporting arena. Anderson et al. (2016) goes so far as to commend that, at least in the United States, the current sporting culture is so inclusive that “it is no longer fair to characterize heterosexual male athletes as homophobic...claiming that heterosexual jocks are homophobic is prejudice” (p. 57).

While the above authors admit that their statement regarding homophobia amongst heterosexual male athletes may appear oxymoronic to most individuals (Anderson et al., 2016), they offer several explanations in order to justify the recent improvements in acceptance and inclusion in sport. Firstly, it is posited that periods of high homosexual inclusivity (such as now)—in which public perceptions of homosexuality improve and the association between gender atypicality and homosexuality lessens (read: decreasing homophobia)—lead to a reduced need amongst men to don a “hypermasculine mask”, which is so often associated with exaggerated masculinity and the marginalization of women and non-heterosexuals (Anderson 2011; Anderson et al., 2016). Appropriately dubbing this “inclusive masculinity theory”, Anderson et al. (2016) assert that reduced homophobia and thus homophobia provides men with the freedom and space to engage in practices that may have once been regarded as feminine, without the fear of being perceived as weak or gay. Secondly, Anderson et al. (2016) utilize Allport’s (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory in order to stipulate the “slippery slope” (for lack of a better term) of increasing numbers of out-athletes. That is, the awareness of a friend who has recently revealed their

homosexuality leads to a period of dissonance and subsequent reconceptualization of prejudicial attitudes amongst homophobic men, thus resulting in an overall reduction in prejudice toward LGBTQI2S persons. This attitudinal adjustment then opens the door for more closeted gay males to reveal their sexuality, which in turn widens the circle of contact and influence and furthers the reduction of prejudice toward these individuals. Intergroup contact theory will be discussed at length in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Finally, these authors suggest that a newfound acceptance and endorsement of open communication between heterosexuals and homosexuals has led to a reduction of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” subculture, which was so prominent throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s. This practice—one of mutual agreement between gay athletes and their teammates to forego acknowledgement or discussion of the gay player’s sexuality—was a significant contributor to the atmosphere of heteronormativity and heterosexism present within the locker room. That heterosexual and homosexual persons are now more willing to share and communicate information regarding their sexuality has fostered an environment where diversity and acceptance are encouraged (Anderson et al., 2016). Thus, similar to intergroup contact theory, open communication lays the groundwork for education, empathy, and perhaps most importantly, connection between heterosexuals and homosexuals, thereby deconstructing barriers and fostering respect.

While Anderson et al. (2016) offer an optimistic lens through which to view the marginalization of gay men in sport, their work does not escape criticism. Indeed, questions must be raised about lead researcher, Eric Anderson, who is perhaps one of the most prominent and well-known sex and gender sociologists in recent times. Anderson has contributed greatly to the field of sex and gender sociology, publishing 16 books and over 50 peer-reviewed academic journal articles. However, he has also made frequent appearances in the media, including

discussing gay men in sport on ABC News, KTLA, and the BBC, and he is famously regarded as the first openly gay high school coach in the USA (Anderson, 2000). This prominence within the public domain is problematic for two reasons: Firstly, that Anderson personally conducted many of the interviews within his research studies may have biased responses such that interviewees awareness of his fame—and thus his sexuality—resulted in the disingenuous sharing of information regarding homophobia and heteronormativity. That is, the knowledge amongst respondents that Anderson is a famous gay male sociologist might have caused otherwise homophobic and homonegative individuals to adjust their responses so as not to displease and/or offend the interviewer. This could have been avoided by allocating a researcher besides Anderson to conduct all interviews. Secondly, Anderson's fame and prominence within the public domain may have biased research results such that a specific type of interviewee may have been attracted to his studies; namely confident, already-out athletes who remained in their sport as a result of positive experiences, as well as liberal heterosexuals interested in and drawn toward sex and gender studies. Given these concerns, it is possible (1) that still-closeted gay male athletes may choose not to reveal their sexuality because of a still-homophobic sporting environment and thus would be less likely to participate in an interview regarding this topic; (2) that already-out athletes who are currently competing within their sport are confident individuals who have experienced positive receptions to their homosexuality, thereby rendering them more likely to seek out and participate in interviews regarding this topic; and (3) that hypermasculine, homophobic, homonegative persons are an unlikely group to participate in an interview regarding sex and gender in sport for fear that their association with the topic might call into question the hypermasculine image that they have created. Indeed, Anderson himself stated that many of the interviewees were approached via popular website outsports.com (Anderson, 2011;

Anderson et al., 2016). This alone may validate the reservations stated above, as contributors to this website are often confident, outspoken, already-out gay male athletes.

Moreover, it should be noted that Anderson and colleagues' (2016) concept of "athletic capital" requires analysis as the researchers have failed to operationalize the dynamics of this term, thus rendering its parameters indecipherable. That is, the authors state that athletes no longer feel the need to be successful in order to come out to their teams, and they support this claim by indicating that many of the individuals interviewed were "average" athletes at the time of their coming out (Anderson et al., 2016). However, terms such as "average" are relative and can vary depending on one's social environment. In this case, all of the athletes interviewed for the study were members of high school sports teams. Thus, while their ability as athletes may have been average relative to that of their teammates, these student-athletes were certainly above the mean when compared with the rest of the school. Furthermore, the mere status of being a member on a high school sports team is more than enough to grant one a level of athletic capital, particularly in the USA where high school sports are glorified to a level that is unmatched by the rest of the world. The fact that these athletes, irrespective of sexuality, were granted the privilege of wearing a team tracksuit to school bestows a certain amount of social prestige that would otherwise be unavailable. They are, regardless of specific athletic ability, part of the "jockocracy". Therefore, Anderson and colleagues' (2016) notion that athletic capital no longer needs be considered an important aspect of a gay male athlete's decision to come out is questionable.

Finally, while Anderson et al. (2016) acknowledge that the vast majority of the athletes studied throughout their research were Caucasian, it is important to note that the authors paid little attention to race or social class and the potential intersections with gender and sexuality in

their studies. More research is needed in order to analyze the differential and compounding effects of these constructs on the experiences of gay male athletes.

1.2.2 Lesbians.

While studies pertaining to the experiences of lesbians in sport are fewer than those of gay men, evidence indicates that (similar to gay males) sport is becoming increasingly inclusive of lesbian females, although the change is occurring in a more gradual, less-straightforward manner (Anderson et al., 2016). Given the historical and contemporary association between sport and traditional notions of masculinity, it is argued that sports automatically offer a difficult landscape for women to navigate. Female athletes—especially those who excel at their sport—challenge traditional notions of femininity and are frequently met with both social stigma and medical dogma (Anderson et al., 2016). It is here where a central tenet of female (both heterosexual and homosexual) marginalization may be realised. Whereas the masculine terrain of sport offers men a refuge of heterosexuality unless otherwise indicated, women who participate in competitive, organized sports are understood to present an image that is incongruent with traditional notions of femininity; thus, it is assumed that they must therefore be lesbians (Lenskyj, 1986). According to Griffin (1998), this association of athletic competency with socially perceived lesbianism provides the grounds upon which homophobia may be utilized to police the expression of female gender identity. Specifically, due to the negative social stigma attached to lesbianism—and the more global influence of patriarchy—women are encouraged to behave in a manner that is not dissimilar from the hypermasculine persona associated with heterosexual male athletes, although in a correspondingly feminine direction. That is, just as male athletes both exaggerate stereotypically masculine behaviour and admonish discourses considered threatening to this construct, female athletes adopt stereotypically feminine

comportment (e.g., participating in certain “appropriate” sports, donning “acceptably” feminine attire, and moving and behaving in ways considered tolerable by society) and denounce discourses thought to jeopardize the heterosexual identity, all in an effort to create distance between themselves and the almost unconscious societal supposition that female athletes are gay. This method of behaviour due to female participation in a masculine domain can be thought of as “hyperfemininity” or the “female apologetic” (Anderson et al., 2016; Lenskyi, 1994).

The desire for female athletes to adopt hyperfeminine or apologetic behaviour in an effort to avoid homophobic marginalization has led to several outcomes. Firstly, elevated hostility toward lesbian athletes as compared to gay male athletes is thought to occur as a result of social or cultural lesbianization, which may be defined as the suspicion of lesbianism one obtains via their association with an openly lesbian teammate. (Anderson et al., 2016). That is, because the presence of an openly lesbian teammate serves to exacerbate the already stereotypical link of female athleticism and homosexuality, heterosexual females are motivated to act in a manner that discourages lesbians from joining or remaining within the sporting environment. Secondly, similar to social lesbianization, avoidance of homophobic marginalization may occur via negative recruiting, or the act of coaches discouraging players from joining rival teams which are known to consist of lesbian players/coaches (Anderson et al., 2016). This may arise due to coaches’ concerns with the team or their athletes developing a “bad name” as a result of associating with non-heterosexual individuals. Finally, specific to the Quebec lesbian athlete subculture, there has emerged a unique and relatively less confrontational version of the lesbian sexual identity known as “gaie” (Ravel & Rail, 2006). It has been found that by donning a more “feminine” social disposition, Quebec lesbian athletes are attempting to minimize the differences between their gender identities and those of heterosexual women, while also creating a

disassociation from stereotypically masculine lesbians; that is, the ones who experience the brunt of homophobic marginalization. It should be noted that this positioning of gaie female athletes away from negative lesbian stereotypes bears resemblance to the above-mentioned notions of social/cultural lesbianization and negative recruiting. However, while the *sexual* identity of heterosexual female athletes may be questioned through their association with lesbian athletes or teams, it is the *gender* identity of gaie athletes that is interrogated through the internal association of self-identity with sexuality. In other words, since gaie female athletes exhibit sexual preferences which are linked to masculinity and “butchness”, their gender identities are automatically called into question, thus providing motivation to disassociate from traditional lesbian stereotypes.

Moreover, Lenski’s (1994) explanation of the ways in which Role Theory has failed to consider alternative discourses associated with sex-role orientation offers further insight into the role of patriarchy and homophobia within lesbian sporting culture. According to the author, the past 30-years have consisted of sports psychologists neglecting the sex-role orientations of female athletes competing in typically feminine sports such as figure skating or ballet dancing, instead investigating the psychological wellbeing only of those whose sex-role orientation is immediately problematized because their sporting events fall outside the boundaries of hyperfemininity (Lenski, 1994). Here, it is assumed that females competing in stereotypically masculine sports will experience role conflict, as these presumably “traditional” individuals are forced to choose between athletic excellence and being a “real” woman. Little attention has been given to females on the opposite end of the spectrum, namely those with non-traditional sexual and/or gender identities who are competing in stereotypically feminine sports. However, one

must question exactly who these sports psychologists were that made presumptions based on traditional notions of gender and sexual identity.

While it is likely that the majority of those investigating sex-role orientation were white, upper-middle class, cisgender males, it is possible that heterosexual females played a role in a manner that is not dissimilar from their current position against the inclusion of hyperandrogenistic athletes in female sporting events, a topic that will be further discussed below. Indeed, both males and females must share the patriarchal burden of excluding intersex athletes on the basis of a discrepancy between biology and womanism, yet the only distinction between this and the problem of role theory is that, while the former fails to separate gender identity from biological manifestation, the latter fails to form a boundary between gender identity and sexual orientation. Thus, we must be careful not to accuse any specific subgroup (whether it be female, male, homosexual, heterosexual, etc.) of endorsing traditional sexual and/or gender norms when it is often the overlying acceptance of patriarchy, hypermasculinity, and hyperfemininity that are to blame. It should be noted that this reasoning can also be applied to the manifestation of social/cultural lesbianization, negative recruiting, and the gaie sexual identity specific to Quebec, discussed previously. Dominant discourses associated with patriarchy are responsible, not the individual desires of women to disassociate with the negative stereotypes associated with lesbianism.

It may be summarized that, in order to confront the current culture of hypermasculinity within sport and further reduce the tendency to correlate masculine traits with athletic ability, spaces of inclusivity whereby athletes are encouraged to express their sexual and gender identities must be fostered. As mentioned above, openly-out athletes destabilize the traditional forms of masculinity associated with sport and dilute the otherwise ardent link between

athleticism, masculinity, and sexual/gender identity (Alley & Hicks, 2005). It has been observed that gay male athletes who out themselves to their teammates and/or competitors call into question the homogeneity of masculinity associated with their team, and the considerably more feminine *gaie* sexual identity within Quebec lesbian athlete subculture provides evidence of a weakening association between athleticism and lesbianism (Ravel & Rail, 2006). The development of inclusive spaces would provide a catalyst for the further reduction of preconceived notions surrounding gender, sexuality, and sport.

1.2.3 Trans.

The competitive environment of sport and sport performance has led to the development and proliferation of two interrelated forms of trans athlete discrimination: the “advantage thesis” and the strictures of hyperfemininity (Cavanagh & Sykes, 2006). Firstly, the advantage thesis contends that, due to higher-than-normal testosterone levels amongst trans women, these individuals harbour an unfair competitive advantage over cisgender competitors who maintain relatively “normal” levels of the hormone (Cavanagh & Sykes, 2006). That is, because high levels of testosterone are associated with the physical attributes deemed necessary for athletic performance (e.g., strength, speed, power, etc.), and because trans women who have not undergone hormone therapy and/or gender confirmation surgery are known to exhibit high levels of the hormone, it is assumed that these persons will unfairly outperform women with more typical sex and gender dispositions.

While the research examining the validity of the advantage thesis is often contradictory, and there is likely some truth underlying the notion that testosterone influences sport performance (Wood & Stanton, 2011), the logic upon which the advantage thesis rests is flawed insofar as its pertinence creates and maintains boundaries upon sport performance that are not

dissimilar to those of the second category of trans marginalization: that of hyperfemininity (Cavanagh & Sykes, 2006; Hillsburg, 2017). That is, just as the quantifications of hyperfemininity have arisen as a response to the view that sport performance is indicative of masculinity, the advantage thesis has come to fruition as a result of individuals simply not exhibiting traditionally feminine characteristics (Hillsburg, 2017). It has been shown that, regardless of whether trans females choose to undergo the expensive hormone suppression treatment that drastically changes both their body composition and coordination, they are met with frequent resistance from fellow athletes simply on the basis that they do not look feminine enough (Cavanagh & Sykes, 2006). Again, it should be stressed that this resistance has developed as a response to the presumed association of masculinity and sport performance within a competitive environment; trans discrimination outside of this context tends to vary significantly (Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing, & Malouf, 2002). More research is needed in order to investigate the effects upon trans inclusion of an environment that has shifted from that of individuality and competitiveness to one of cooperation and common goals. This may serve to (1) confirm knowledge relating to the influence of individuality and competitiveness upon the proliferation of the advantage thesis and hyperfemininity, and (2) provide insight into inclusive practices which may assist trans athlete participation in sport.

To the same effect, research investigating the experiences of trans men in sport illustrates that, in situations whereby trans persons do not harbour a competitive advantage in the form of elevated testosterone (read: masculine advantage), trans discrimination in the form of the advantage thesis no longer exists (Ogilvie, 2017). Ogilvie (2017) has elucidated this point through his documentation of the experiences of five trans men in competitive sporting environments. The participants of his research stated that their involvement in sport as a whole

had been far more positive than negative since their transition, and that they had been treated and judged fairly and on the quality of their performance and work ethic, rather than their gender identity (Ogilvie, 2017). Of the few negative experiences reported, the athletes indicated that the majority had occurred either at the institutional level or before they had transitioned.

While an examination of the complexities that underpin these manifestations is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth noting that one explanation for the differential treatment of trans women and men athletes may, again, include the strictures of hypergenderism. That is, similar to the resistance encountered by gay men as a result of their disrupting the boundaries of masculinity that are reproduced by sport, trans men successfully competing in male divisions before undergoing transition call into question the assumption that athletes must embody heterosexual, ultra-masculine, ultra-dominating characteristics in order to be prosperous. It is worth noting that this assumption—that masculinity and sport performance go hand-in-hand—is currently operating at a policy level within the International Olympic Committee (the IOC). That is, while trans women must adhere to a plethora of restrictions before being deemed “acceptable” at the Olympic Games and events under the auspices of the IOC and international sport federations, trans men face no such constraints as it is assumed that these persons will not harbour any sort of sporting advantage when competing against cisgender men (International Olympic Committee, 2015).

1.2.4 Intersex.

The competitive atmosphere of sport holds that intersex athletes face similar challenges to trans women insofar as there exist presumptions of inherent competitive advantages as a result of higher-than-normal levels of testosterone amongst these individuals, whether this is in fact true or not. Hillsburg (2017) explicates this by comparing women’s 800-metre track stars, Caster

Semenya and Pamela Jelimo, contending that, although both athletes enjoyed similar career paths, success, and ultimate domination of the athletic event, Jelimo obtained stardom while Semenya was vilified. She argues that the contrast in public and media receptions toward the athletes was a result of Semenya's nonadherence to societal expectations of femininity. That is, where Jelimo is petite, feminine, and married to a male teammate, Semenya is "butch", masculine, and has married her long-term female partner. The reasoning follows that, because Semenya looks like a man and has married a woman, she must therefore maintain an unfair advantage over her competitors (Hillsburg, 2017). Jelimo, on the other hand, is "off the hook" because she looks the way a woman ought to. Indeed, it is unclear whether it is only Semenya who exhibits higher-than-normal levels of testosterone, or if both Semenya and Jelimo display hyperandrogenous hormone levels. Only Semenya has been subject to the suspicion-based hormone testing that had historically been sanctioned by the IAAF and the IOC, as Jelimo's adherence to traditional notions of femininity has granted her reprieve from such examination. However, this conception is irrelevant: society has depicted Jelimo as female and Semenya as hyperandrogenous, and the athletes have therefore been subjected to vastly different public and media receptions. Similar to the proliferation of hyperfemininity, the advantage thesis has been propagated as a result of the predefined boundaries regarding traditional conceptions of gender.

It should also be noted that the "traditional" conceptions of gender and masculine advantage mentioned above are based upon predominantly Western and White standards of femininity, thereby rendering Black female athletes vulnerable to suspicion regarding their gender and thus their ability to compete in female sporting events (Brady, 2011; Pieper, 2014). Black athletes are rarely celebrated as both feminine and strong; they are therefore more likely to be suspected of gender "infractions" and subjected to gender verification testing on the grounds

of suspicion (Brady, 2011; Carty, 2005;). Black athletes also face significant pressure to adhere to White standards of beauty. This may, again, be elucidated by comparing 800-metre track athletes, Caster Semenya and Pamela Jelimo (Hillsburg, 2017). Indeed, as noted previously, Semenya is perceived as masculine while Jelimo “looks the way a woman ought to” (at least according to these standards of beauty and femininity). The divergent framing of Semenya and Jelimo illustrates that females who do not adhere to White, Western definitions of beauty and comportment while competing are subject to a significant disadvantage regarding suspicion-based gender verification testing (Buzuvis, 2010; Schultz, 2011).

1.2.5 Gender-Fluid/Two-Spirit.

Unfortunately, research pertaining to the experiences of gender-fluid and two-spirit individuals within society is sparse, and that which is related to inclusion and participation within Canadian sport is close to nonexistent. Interestingly, prominent Canadian indigenous poet, Joshua Whitehead, recently published a collection called *Full Metal Indigiqueer* (Whitehead, 2017), which seeks to differentiate the meanings of the traditional and conservative “two-spirit” identity and the more forward-moving “indigiqueer” persona (Deerchild, 2017). He states that, while two-spiritness is very much connected to indigenous ceremony and land, indigiqueer moves the conversation toward the inclusion of many forms of sexual and gender identity, namely non-cisgender, trans, and intersex individuals. More research is needed in order to better comprehend both the presence and experiences of two-spirit/indigiqueer persons as well as gender-fluid individuals within the sporting landscape.

In summary, while recent research pertaining to the overall inclusion, participation, and freedom of LGBTQI2S athletes within sporting environments eludes to a shifting landscape, many obstacles and stigmas associated with the presence of these athletes in sport continue to

exist, particularly at the competitive level. Increased numbers of out gay men and lesbians are paving the way for the gradual breakdown of the currently hyper-gendered sporting landscape, with the hope that more malleable and accepting realizations regarding trans and intersex participation will follow. Research is still needed in order to explore how best to build upon the promising first steps that have been taken (and also to identify/understand both the presence and experiences of two-spirit and gender-fluid persons). Advocacy of safe, protective, and celebrative (and perhaps non-competitive and cooperative) spaces is necessary for the guarantee that positive environments will continue to be fostered.

1.2.6 Figure Skating.

The research reviewed to this point illustrates the ways in which the hyper-gendered, hyper-competitive arena of sports offers a difficult landscape for LGBTQI2S individuals to navigate. Few sports comply more with this observation than that of figure skating. Mary Louise Adams' socio-historical investigations of figure skating highlight the ways in which the conceptualization of this sport has shifted from one of masculinity to a current perception of "girlishness" (Adams, 2010, 2011). In her significant body of work, Adams has elucidated the efforts made by sports officials and administrators to mitigate the construction of skating as a female sport through rules and regulations, media stories, and marketing initiatives. Specifically, three factors prominent throughout the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s contributed to a shift in the gendered meanings of skating. Firstly, the popularity of Norwegian Olympic champion and Hollywood film star, Sonja Henie, introduced figure skating to a mass audience for the first time. Henie's fame and eminence, as well as her uniquely fashionable and girlish image, transformed figure skating into a commercialized entertainment with mass appeal. Secondly, women played an increasingly prominent role as the technical innovators of figure skating, embodying a level of

artistic excellence that was not achieved by men at that time. Adams conjectures that, perhaps as a result of male figure skaters being overshadowed by their female counterparts, men's interest in participation and competition largely dropped off. Finally, the social and demographic climate post World War II intersected with the two previous factors to create a gender imbalance within figure skating which culminated in the eventual labeling of the sport as “girlish” or one for “sissies” (Adams, 2010).

Thus, due largely to the association of figure skating with femininity, few boys or men chose to pursue the sport for fear of being dubbed as effeminate or gay (Adams, 2010). Although it is possible that many gay or effeminate boys or men chose to pursue the sport precisely because of the aesthetic and artistic qualities it has to offer, the decision to do so rarely came without a cost. As a result, efforts were made to disassociate male participation in figure skating from the real or perceived associations with high rates of homosexuality within the sport. (Adams, 2011). Adams (2011) describes the early 1990s as skating's “macho turn”, where the heterosexuality of Canadian male skaters such as Kurt Browning and Elvis Stojko were deliberately played up while the homosexuality of other Canadian male skaters was (often overtly) downplayed or minimized. During this same time period, several young gay Canadian male figure skaters succumbed to AIDS-related illnesses. In her critical media analysis, King (2000) exposed the omission of references to homosexuality and HIV/AIDS in the media and in official press releases from the national sport body, the Canadian Figure Skating Association (now, Skate Canada).

Figure skating continues to provide roadblocks for the LGBTQI2S community in contemporary times. Prior to the 2010 Olympic Games, former Canadian and World Champion figure skater, Elvis Stojko, commented that,

they've [skating officials, media, coaches, athletes] got to really showcase that male skating is really about masculinity, strength and power.... It's not that male skating has to totally obliterate the gay guys that are skating and the gay public that's watching it. You have to find a balance to male skating... you've got to stick with male skating and strength and the meat and potatoes. (Karlinsky & Harper, 2009, para. 3)

Stojko's opinion gained significant favour in North American media. Furthermore, an article published in *Newsweek* in January 2014 found requests for anonymity amongst gay athletes, coaches, and officials who were interviewed, likely stemming out of fear of repercussion from their respective national sport organizations (Jones, 2014). These individuals were concerned about the possibility of being denied access to international figure skating competitions on the basis of the public awareness of their homosexuality. Finally, in present times, Eric Radford remains the only publicly out male figure skater in the Canadian context, and there are no publicly out lesbian women figure skaters. Indeed, there is a long way to go before LGBTQI2S individuals within figure skating can enjoy the sport in an environment that is free from homophobia and discrimination. It should be noted that research examining trans, intersex, gender-fluid, and two-spirit participation within figure skating is nonexistent. As far as academia is concerned, these populations are largely invisible.

1.3 Research Questions and Rationale

Given the current status of LGBTQI2S inclusion in the sporting arena generally and figure skating specifically, it is evident that work needs to be done to further analyze the experiences of and toward LGBTQI2S figure skaters at all levels of participation. Efforts must also be made to explore the mechanisms by which LGBTQI2S discrimination is fostered, reproduced, and

proliferated within the sport. Therefore, the research questions utilized as a means of guiding this inquiry were as follows:

- (1) What are the current attitudes toward LGBTQI2S participation in Canadian figure skating?
- (2) What role does intergroup contact play in the development and proliferation of current attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion?
- (3) How and why are these attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion in Canadian figure skating conceptualized and/or experienced in contemporary times?

It should be noted that this research has practical significance as it has been determined that LGBTQI2S persons are far more likely than heterosexuals to drop out of sport and physical activity (Denison & Kitchen, 2015). This finding challenges the “sport for life, sport for all” philosophy prevalent in Canadian sport policy and programming (canadiansportforlife.ca) as well as the often-unquestioned connection made between sport participation and health and wellness. To this end, Anne Travers (2016) argues that current sporting environments “operate as points of crisis for transgender and gender-nonconforming kids” and that “the barriers to participation they face are often catalysts for kids’ binary and medical transition” (p. 180). Given this, it is acutely evident that there remains much work to be done.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY AND METHOD

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the theoretical influences and methodological approach for my master's research project. I will begin by introducing queer theory and intergroup contact theory—the theoretical perspectives upon which this project is based. I will then outline my methodological approach to this study and describe the data collection and analysis processes. This chapter will conclude with a critical reflection of my personal role as a researcher, and the affect that this had on the knowledge outcomes of my project.

2.1 Theory

The present research project was largely framed by two theoretical perspectives: queer theory and *intergroup contact theory* (Allport, 1954). Queer theory played an influential role in the development of the research questions for the project as well as influencing the survey tool being developed, due in large part to the greater project on LGBTQI2S inclusion in skating, of which this research is one component. Intergroup contact theory significantly affected the analysis and interpretation of the quantitative data. I will first briefly explain my understanding of queer theory as it relates to the present project, and then outline my understanding of intergroup contact theory.

2.1.1 Queer Theory.

Originating from the perspectives of French philosopher Michel Foucault, queer theory is an interdisciplinary perspective of critical inquiry that seeks to deconstruct essentialist views of gender, sexuality, and desire (Eng, 2006). By assuming that sexuality is both nonessential and purely positional, queer theory refutes majority-minority models of heterosexuality/non-heterosexuality and the power relations that stem from such categorical definitions of identity (Eng, 2006). As a result, queer theory directs researchers to analyses pertaining to the construct of heteronormativity—defined as the structures of understanding that work to make

heterosexuality coherent and privileged within a culture—and the mechanisms by which it is manifested, expressed, and maintained (Berlant & Warner, 2000).

Queer theory has been used in sport studies previously as a way to interrogate the ways that sport policy, rules, regulations, practices, and spaces work to maintain problematic notions of sex, gender, and sexuality. In more recent years, queer theory has also been used by various scholars to question how sport can and/or has been used to destabilize these rigid binaries by focusing on so-called categorical sporting spaces (i.e., sport organizations that are created by and for LGBTQI2S persons) as well as the lived experiences of queer, trans, and intersex persons and the ways that their participation may disrupt dominant ideas about sport. Queer theory thus provided the impetus for this research project—an investigation of LGBTQI2S inclusion in the Skate Canada organization. This project asks whether and how LGBTQI2S persons have experienced marginalization in figure skating in Canada, and it interrogates the “culture” of figure skating in Canada as well as the larger context in which the sport—and people’s experiences in it—take(s) place.

2.1.2 Intergroup Contact Theory.

In order to understand how a culture of marginalization of LGBTQI2S persons may have developed and may be sustained in figure skating, I employ Allport’s (1954) intergroup contact theory. Traditional ideologies regarding sex, gender, and sexuality (often reproduced by sport) have led to the development of prejudicial attitudes toward athletes from the LGBTQI2S community in society at large. Allport’s theory suggests that such attitudes may be reduced through increased intergroup contact with these persons.

This project questions whether the same mechanisms are at work within the figure skating community. To the best of my knowledge, this is one of the first sport-based projects to apply

Allport's theory to the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected. In what follows, I outline the tenets of intergroup contact theory and identify some of its strengths and weaknesses.

Intergroup contact theory is a social psychological theory, which posits that known contact amongst members of differing social groups can assist in reducing both prejudice and intergroup conflict (Allport, 1954; Brown, 2011). Contact may be viewed as any form of social interaction between persons, including via face-to-face, the media, or visualization (Crisp & Turner, 2009; Shiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005). Prejudice is defined as any attitude, emotion, or behaviour toward members of a group, which directly or indirectly implies some negativity or antipathy toward that group, while intergroup conflict occurs when groups or populations interact in conflict (Brown, 2011). An example of prejudice and intergroup conflict based on these definitions would be the interracial relations and subsequent conflict between Caucasian and Black South African individuals during Apartheid.

Expanding on the work of Allport, Pettigrew (1998) proposed four mechanisms by which prejudicial and conflict reduction occurs via intergroup contact: (1) learning about the "out-group" (defined as a group with which a person does not identify); (2) changing behaviour to be more receptive to positive contact experiences; (3) generating affective ties and friendships; and, (4) "in-group" (which is defined as a group with which a person does identify) reappraisal. Tausch and Hewstone (2010) extended Pettigrew's findings to include a fifth mechanism, namely that of "affect". That is, known contact may assist in the reduction and production of negative and positive affect, respectively, thus reducing anxiety and encouraging empathy between social groups (Tausch & Hewstone, 2010).

Importantly, Allport (1954) proposed four interrelated facilitative parameters to assist in the reduction of prejudice and conflict through intergroup contact: Firstly, *Equal Status*, whereby members of the contact situation should not have unequal, hierarchical relationships, but instead

display similarities in academic backgrounds, wealth, experience, and (perhaps most relevantly) proficiency at specified tasks, assists in prejudicial reduction (Cohen & Roper, 1972). While Pettigrew (1998) contends that “equal status” is difficult to operationalize, he notes the importance of expected and perceived equal status amongst groups within relevant situations. The social and institutional structure within which known contact occurs can have a major impact upon whether this is obtained. For example, Russell’s (1961) study investigating a racially mixed neighbourhood during South Africa’s Apartheid illustrated that, while improvements in white attitudes toward ethnic minorities occurred, these were constrained by the larger social context in which they took place. All individuals within the community were acutely aware of the stern South African norms against equal status interracial contact. Thus, for prejudice reduction through intergroup contact to be optimized, it is essential to consider and facilitate environments of perceived equality amongst individuals.

Secondly, *Common Goals*, such that members of differing groups must rely upon each other to achieve a unified objective, can assist in facilitating prejudicial reduction through intergroup contact (Allport, 1954). Chu and Griffey (1985) point to athletic teams as a historical and contemporary example of how and why this may occur. In striving to win or to achieve some other superordinate objective, individuals develop a reliance upon each other which assists in reducing preconceived stereotypes or prejudices. Pettigrew (1998) notes that this effect can be compounded by goal attainment or success.

Relatedly, *Intergroup Cooperation* represents a third facilitative mechanism for prejudicial reduction via intergroup contact, in that members of differing groups should work together in a non-competitive, cooperative environment in order to obtain common goals. Adachi, Hodson, Willoughby, Blank, and Ha (2016) offer a unique illustration of this by testing whether intergroup attitudes could be improved via participation in online video games. They found that

effects of cooperation on reducing prejudicial attitudes were significant even when individuals participated in violent video games such as *Call of Duty*. Their study provides a cost-effective and pragmatic means of creating a successful intergroup contact environment.

Finally, *Support of Authorities, Law, or Custom*, meaning that social or institutional authorities that openly or ambiguously discourage contact should cease in favour of those supporting positive contact, is the fourth mechanism by which prejudicial reduction through intergroup contact may be facilitated (Allport, 1954). The reasons for this are self-evident, as explicit social sanctions encourage intergroup contact and foster positive effects (Pettigrew, 1998). This mechanism is undoubtedly linked to the benefits as illustrated by obtaining equal status between groups. Russell's (1961) study of interracial attitudes during South Africa's Apartheid may again be referenced.

Before moving on to discuss the role of intergroup contact theory in the present study, it is important to acknowledge, (1) that Allport's (1954) optimal contact mechanisms (as explicated above) are not considered to be necessary or essential conditions in order for prejudice reduction to occur; and (2) that these parameters are best conceptualized as an interconnected cluster rather than as independent conditions (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis of 515 studies found that, while Allport's conditions certainly do facilitate in maximizing prejudicial reduction, a generalized effect of contact exists regardless of whether these conditions are invoked or not. These results are encouraging as they provide both a passive and active pathway to prejudicial reduction via intergroup contact, at least with regards to LGBTQI2S inclusion. That is, so long as there continue to exist increasing numbers of out persons in sport as well as society, prejudice will inevitably be reduced. However, this may also be assisted by the facilitative mechanisms described above.

In light of this information, as well as Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) finding that the effect size of increased contact is larger within samples involving known contact between heterosexuals and gay men and lesbians than amongst any other social group (including racial, age-related, and the physically impaired), I sought to explore how intergroup contact theory might be useful in a critical analysis of current attitudes amongst athletes, coaches, and officials within the sport of Canadian figure skating.

As was explained in Chapter 1 (See "Literature Review"), increasing numbers of already-out gay males and lesbians in sport challenge the hypermasculine culture that sports are traditionally designed to endorse. The disassociation of athleticism and masculinity may occur as a result of increased known contact between heterosexual and homosexual athletes. Further, trans and intersex discrimination in the form of the advantage thesis logically requires the existence of an environment of competition and individuality, while complaints specified amongst trans men indicate marginalization at an institutional level. The facilitative mechanisms within intergroup contact theory include both a non-competitive and cooperative environment with supportive institutional authorities. Finally, the simultaneous highlighting and downplaying of heterosexual and homosexual figure skaters (respectively), historically, and the fear of potential denied access to competition on the basis of homosexuality as expressed more recently indicate an unequal, hierarchical relationship between heterosexual and LGBTQI2S figure skaters. Once again, a central tenet of intergroup contact theory holds that members of differing social groups should be in equal standing and of equal status in order for prejudice reduction to occur.

It is important to note that there are several weaknesses associated with intergroup contact theory; Pettigrew (1998) has highlighted four particular points of concern. Firstly, the Causal Sequence Problem holds that selection bias may limit the extent to which many studies of contact may be interpreted. That is, it is possible that prejudiced people may simply avoid studies that

necessitate contact with outgroups. Secondly, the Independent Variable Specification Problem, posits that there is an ever-growing list of facilitative, but not essential, conditions for optimal contact. Pettigrew rightfully contends that such dilution of the theory threatens to remove its pragmatic applicability across research settings. The Unspecified Processes of Change Problem is the third point of weakness; this critique holds that, while intergroup contact theory predicts when contact will lead to positive change, it says little about the processes by which this change occurs. Finally, the Generalization of Effects Problem calls into question the ability for positive effects through intergroup contact to be generalized beyond the immediate research situation.

These weaknesses are indeed a cause for unease, and Pettigrew himself at least partially addresses each of them accordingly. Designing research situations that severely limit choice of participation, making use of longitudinal study methods, and utilizing statistical analyses comparing causal sequences with cross-sectional data assist in mitigating the Causal Sequence Problem, while clarifying and operationalizing facilitative versus essential conditions for optimal contact helps to limit the potential of a “laundry list” of optimal contact conditions (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 70). Specifying facilitative versus essential conditions would also assist in the development of a broader theory of intergroup contact, which could address the Unspecified Processes of Change Problem. Finally, allowing time for cross-group friendships to develop within intergroup contact settings mitigates the Generalization of Effects Problem, such that generalization across situations, generalization from the outgroup individual to the outgroup, and generalization from the immediate outgroup to other outgroups becomes attainable (Pettigrew, 1998).

In spite of this information, however, it is critical to understand that, although intergroup contact theory and its facilitative conditions for optimal contact were used as both a lens and a prescription through which to analyse and encourage LGBTQI2S inclusion in Canadian figure

skating, the aim of this research project was not to test Allport's theory or its conditions for prejudice reduction. That is, intergroup contact theory, similar to the tenets of queer theory, served as a methodological research paradigm, influencing both the development of the survey questions and the analysis of the information gathered.

Intergroup contact theory was pragmatically significant as questions pertaining to the tenets inherent within the theory were easily integrated within the online survey. Furthermore, while much work has been done to illustrate the effects of intergroup contact upon prejudicial attitudes toward ethnic minorities, homosexuals, and the mentally ill, there is little research examining the effects of facilitative contact on prejudices toward trans, intersex, or gender-fluid persons. Inquiry examining the extent to which increased known contact may reduce prejudice and foster feelings of empathy toward these individuals represents an advancement in knowledge. Finally, using intergroup contact theory, along with queer theory, allowed critical inquiry about inclusion at both a micro (or, individual) and macro (or, cultural) level.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Methodological Approach.

This research project was performed using a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods research design (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005; Kowalski, McHugh, Sabiston, & Ferguson, 2018), such that quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously through the distribution of an online survey containing both Likert-scale and open-ended questions. The method of analysis was adopted as a result of a pragmatist methodological worldview (Sparkes, 2015), in that a mixed-methods approach was deemed the most appropriate and rigorous manner through which to answer the proposed research questions. Gaining insight into the role of known contact in the generation and proliferation of inclusive or discriminatory attitudes requires a quantitative analysis of both the level of known contact

individuals from differing groups experience as well as the effect that this contact may have upon intergroup attitudes and opinions. Developing a holistic understanding of the ways that LGBTQI2S inclusion in Canadian figure skating is conceptualized and/or experienced, however, necessitates a qualitative analysis of the ways in which meaning is created and maintained given the sociohistorical landscape of figure skating in Canada. Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative components of the research design inform one another such that known contact may be analyzed as a potential (at least partial) explanation of current attitudes toward LGBTQI2S persons in figure skating (and more generally), while insight regarding the conceptualization of meaning surrounding these issues may reveal the mechanisms by which attitudes develop and are maintained. Implications for future research as well as pragmatic outcomes of the project can be gathered via information from both the quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

While there are many benefits associated with mixed-methods research, several specific advantages were pivotal in the decision to pursue this type of design for the current research project. Specifically, Kowalski et al. (2018) note that mixed-methods research strategies assist in nullifying weaknesses and amplifying strengths of quantitative and qualitative designs. An empirical as well as qualitative analysis of known contact effect and meaning generation offered insight into the development and maintenance of inclusive attitudes that neither a quantitative nor qualitative method, in isolation, could have provided. Relatedly, mixed-methods research can improve both the rigour/validity of a study (through triangulation) as well as the overall comprehensiveness of the variables under investigation (Kowalski, et al., 2018). The empirical component of this research project analyzed “what” may have influenced the development of certain attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion, while the qualitative component analyzed “why” this may have occurred. Taken together, these elements ensured that the knowledge generated from this study was rigorously as well as validly produced. Finally, mixed-methods research

offers a pragmatic means of developing meaningful data, which can be propagated successfully.

In the development of this project, there was a desire from the Canadian figure skating national governing organization, Skate Canada, to gather statistical data regarding the number of members opposing/supporting inclusive policies, as well as to provide both justification for why these attitudes exist and suggestions for ways that they may be influenced. This request could only have been completed through the implementation of a mixed method research design.

It is important, however, to both acknowledge and address some of the potential drawbacks of mixed-methods research designs. According to Kowalski et al. (2018), blending philosophical worldviews that typically underlie quantitative and qualitative research and bringing together researchers who employ these divergent paradigms, offers a potential obstacle to the development of rigorous mixed-methods research. Although it has already been stated that a pragmatist methodological worldview has been utilized in order to reconcile these issues, it is also important to echo Mason (2006b) who suggests for researchers to link data from divergent approaches such that their unique attributes be held in “creative tension” (p. 10). This was achieved by ensuring the existence of dialogue between researchers and research methods so that “‘dialogic’ explanations, which are based on the dynamic relations of more than one way of seeing and researching”, were considered and endorsed (Mason, 2006b, p. 10). Kowalski et al. (2018) also note some other challenges regarding mixed-methods research, including logistical and sampling issues as well as publication and evaluation difficulties. Sampling issues were addressed by ensuring that the survey tool (which contained both quantitative and qualitative elements) was not too long so as to overburden individual participation. As a result, all participants were able to complete both quantitative and qualitative components of the study, thereby negating the need to selectively choose individuals to complete one or both of the study sections. Publication and evaluation challenges can be difficult to overcome and are admittedly

often out of the immediate control of the researcher. However, work was done to make certain that both the length and quality of the project were appropriate for publication, and the potential risks associated with this aspect were deemed acceptable given the outcome requests made by Skate Canada.

Therefore, it was determined that a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods research design was the most appropriate and effective strategy through which to approach the research questions at hand. It should be noted that this research was conducted under the supervision of two professors (Dr. William Bridel and Dr. Jenny Godley) who brought to the project a wealth of knowledge from differing, yet complementary, backgrounds. All researchers were in constant communication, and research challenges were addressed and overcome accordingly and in a timely manner.

2.2.2 Survey Instrument.

Because the research questions developed for this project sought to examine both the conceptualization/experience of LGBTQI2S inclusion, as well as the role that known contact may have upon these experiences, it was advantageous to reach a large number of respondents in order to ensure a valid and rigorous performance of the study. Therefore, the project utilized an online survey that was distributed by Skate Canada to its members as a means of gathering information from athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and administrators within the Canadian figure skating community. As there exists little research applying Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory to LGBTQI2S inclusion in sport, the survey was developed from scratch, taking into consideration the tenets of queer theory and intergroup contact theory as well as previous research examining LGBTQI2S inclusion in sport (see Chapter 1, "Literature Review"). A total of 48 questions were asked, divided into 10 demographic, 32 Likert-scale attitudinal, and six open-ended survey items.

Demographic information collected from the respondents included: the respondent's age; gender identity; sexual orientation; primary role in Skate Canada; years active in primary role; Skate Canada program involvement; total years active as Skate Canada member; provincial residence; and living environment from birth to age 18 (rural to urban living environments). Several of the demographic questions were asked as open-ended questions. The responses were subsequently categorized into smaller groups in order to ensure respondent anonymity and maximize statistical validity. These included: gender identity (open-ended responses were categorized as *Male*, *Female*, and *Nonbinary*); sexual orientation (open-ended responses were categorized as *Heterosexual*, *Gay*, *Lesbian*, *Bisexual*, and *Nondistinguished*); primary role (open-ended responses were categorized as *Athlete*, *Coach*, *Volunteer*, and *Official*). Province was re-categorized as *Western Canada*, *Central Canada*, *Ontario*, and *Eastern Canada*, and "living environment from birth to age 18" was re-categorized as *Only Rural*, *Only Urban*, and *Rural/Urban*. It should be noted, specifically, that the "nondistinguished" category for the open-ended sexual orientation question included any individual who did not indicate their sexual orientation as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

A 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*, was used to measure responses to 32 attitudinal questions regarding LGBTQI2S inclusion in Skate Canada and more generally. Broadly, these items could be categorized as those pertaining to contact (level of contact inside and outside of the skating community), current knowledge of LGBTQI2S inclusion (awareness of LGBTQI2S issues/definitions), perceptions related to the status of LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating, and opinions about LGBTQI2S inclusion and advocacy (personal viewpoints of LGBTQI2S inclusion generally, personal viewpoints of trans inclusion specifically, and participation in LGBTQI2S advocacy). The decision to include questions pertaining specifically to trans inclusion and inclusive policies surrounding trans individuals was

motivated in part by Skate Canada's desire to obtain information about this topic, as the NSO had indicated a desire to implement a trans inclusion policy in the near future (a policy which ultimately was implemented during the conduct of this research project).

The qualitative research items consisted of five open-ended questions regarding current viewpoints surrounding LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating, involvement in LGBTQI2S advocacy initiatives, and concerns about LGBTQI2S inclusion within Canadian figure skating. The survey also contained one "please elaborate" item accompanying the Likert-scale question "I know the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity" which generated additional textual data. A copy of the survey is attached as Appendix C.

2.2.3 Data Collection.

In 2017, the total number of athletes, coaches, officials, and administrators registered with Skate Canada was 5571, 1372, 5291, and 19200 respectively. Skate Canada was involved in the promotion, communication, and distribution of the study information through two different electronic communications—*Inside Edge*, an electronic newsletter that has a distribution of approximately 10000 members, and *Skate Canada Connections*, a Facebook page for Skate Canada members with approximately 1200 members. The survey was promoted twice through each of these communication modalities and once on the personal Facebook page of Dr. William Bridel, who has many connections to the figure skating community in Canada. It is difficult to arrive at a final total number of possible respondents, but 106 surveys were completed over the two months that the survey was available on Survey Monkey. Individuals were requested to follow the link to a Survey Monkey page, which was made available in both English and French. The only inclusion criteria for the survey was that individuals be active members of Skate Canada and be 18-years of age and over. Because of the nature of the survey, identities were kept anonymous. Approval from the Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board (CHREB) at the

University of Calgary was obtained and followed, and implied consent was collected prior to respondents' participation in the survey (Appendix B).

The respondent distribution for the survey was not expected to be representative of Skate Canada membership given the way that the study was promoted as well as the types of people who were most likely willing to respond to the messages promoting the survey. Relating back to Pettigrew (1998), The Causal Sequence Problem holds that selection bias limits the interpretation of many cross-sectional studies dealing with marginalized groups, as prejudiced persons are less likely to participate in studies of this nature. Because the title of the survey as promoted across media platforms was "LGBTQI2S Sport Inclusion Survey", it is very probable that those who were "against" inclusion did not take the survey. Furthermore, Dr. William Bridel is well-connected within the Canadian figure skating community and has frequently promoted LGBTQI2S inclusion at Skate Canada events as well as through his personal Facebook page. The potential respondents to whom he was advertising, as well as the individuals who were most willing to complete the survey, were likely already inclined toward LGBTQI2S inclusion and inclusive attitudes toward this population.

2.2.4 Data Analysis.

2.2.4.1 Quantitative Data.

Initial univariate descriptive analyses were conducted on all relevant variables, including the demographic variables, the variables measuring intergroup contact, and the variables examining attitudes towards inclusion.

I then used factor analysis to summarize the information gathered through the 32 attitudinal questions. I derived four factors which then served as dependent variables, summarizing attitudes and experiences regarding LGBTQI2S inclusion.

Bivariate analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between respondents' demographic variables and their scores on these factors and between demographic variables and intergroup contact.

Finally, multivariate analyses were conducted to examine whether group differences in attitudes towards inclusion could be explained by intergroup contact.

2.2.4.2 Qualitative Data.

NVivo qualitative research software (Version 12) was utilized to perform a thematic analysis of the qualitative research materials gathered through the open-ended questions portion of the survey. This analysis identifies patterns or themes within the qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017), which can then be interpreted and integrated alongside information obtained from the quantitative analysis. The analysis was informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework and was driven by a top-down/theoretical mode of examination, as opposed to a bottom-up/inductive investigation. That is, the specific research questions developed from this project were used as a guide for the development of the themes. It should be noted that Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework was regarded as a guideline, rather than a set of rigid steps, for the thematic analysis. While Open Coding was utilized, implications that no pre-set codes were in place before the analysis commenced (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017), consideration was also given to both the factors developed via the statistical analysis of the quantitative material as well as Dei's (2000) notion of inclusivity, in which it is suggested that inclusion should be about creating new spaces that impact everyone in positive ways and not just "adding" people to a space that already exists. Furthermore, key themes identified in existing socio-cultural literature on gender, sexuality, and sport, and critical studies of figure skating played a role in the development of the thematic structure (see Chapter 1, "Literature Review"). Finally, trans inclusivity guidelines produced by the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (2016) were cogitated.

Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, step one of the thematic analysis included making notes while reading and re-reading the qualitative material such that an impression of the entire body of data was developed. Notes included both semantic and latent observations, meaning that attention was given to what was written and also the underlying ideas, assumptions, and ideologies that were utilized. The reading and re-reading of textual material influenced step two of the thematic analysis, which was the organization of data into initial codes (or "nodes" according to NVivo terminology). Codes were generated according to similarity of both semantics and/or latency of the data and were labelled based on the breadth of material they contained. At this point, the data was reviewed, and codes were modified according to whether they encompassed converging or diverging information. Step three involved generating preliminary themes (or patterns) that captured something unique about the data and/or research question (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). While Braun and Clarke (2006) contend that themes are borne out of the information collected from the study, this stage also took into consideration existing socio-cultural literature pertaining to the topic at hand and the research questions being asked (see Chapter 1, "Literature Review"). For example, because previous research indicated that *The Advantage Thesis*, *Physiological Differences*, and *Trans Inclusion Policies* were similarly connected to issues and concerns of fairness within athletic competition, an initial theme of *Fairness* was created in order to encapsulate the underlying significance of these related codes. Reviewing and modifying the initial themes was step four of the thematic analysis. Here, attention was given to the convergence/divergence of these themes and how they related to the research questions of this project. It was noted that several of the themes conveyed differing but related information about a larger topic, thus they were redefined as sub-themes of an overarching idea or theme. An example of this included how *Fairness* and *Gender Fluidity* both contained underlying assumptions and concerns regarding heteronormativity. Thus, a new theme

of *Heteronormativity* was developed, which contained the two sub-themes mentioned above. Step five of the analysis involved defining and refining the themes in order to identify the core element of what each theme was about (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Attention was also given to the ways that the themes and sub-themes interacted and deviated from each other, as well as the manner in which they could be organized and developed into a coherent structure of information. This stage also involved an evaluation of the overlap, complementation, and integration of the qualitative material with the factors derived from the quantitative analysis described above. In particular, aspects of both *LGBTQI2S Representation and Treatment* and *LGBTQI2S Advocacy* coincided with elements from the *Figure Skating as Inclusive, Personal Advocacy*, and *Cultural/political Advocacy* quantitative factors. As a result, nomenclature for similarly derived qualitative and quantitative elements was kept consistent such that this information could be easily identified within each component of the study. Finally, step six involved writing up the analysis. Please see Chapter 3, Results and Discussion, of this thesis for a thorough explication of the knowledge generated.

2.2.5 Data Integration.

As previously mentioned, this study was performed using a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods research design. As a result, the quantitative and qualitative components were given equal priority in the analysis and interpretation of the data materials, data analysis of the materials occurred simultaneously, and data integration was performed at the interpretation phase of the study (Hanson, et al. 2005). Integration took the form of repeated discussions amongst researchers evaluating the extent to which the qualitative and quantitative themes and sub-themes triangulated and/or diverged. It is important to note that the data were also examined in light of the context provided by the research questions established at the outset of the project. That is, the process of analysis and interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative components was carried

out as a means of investigating both the effects of intergroup contact upon current attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion as well as the ways that these attitudes were conceptualized and experienced in contemporary times. As such, the themes were integrated in terms of triangulation as well as *complementation*. That is, to what extent were the themes able to provide a comprehensive, holistic, and complementary explanation of the research questions being asked. An example of this would be the complementary integration of the quantitative and qualitative themes of *Trans Exclusion* and *Heteronormativity*, respectively. The researchers understood that the quantitative theme describing trans exclusion, specifically, was nested within the larger theme of *Heteronormativity* as depicted by the qualitative data. In other words, inclusive/discriminatory attitudes toward trans persons were thought to be at least partially dependent upon preconceive heteronormative/nonheteronormative assumptions regarding sex, gender, and fairness in sport.

2.2.6 Reflexive Acknowledgement.

The adoption of a reflexive stance in research can be viewed as an attempt to describe the relationship between the researcher and the object of the research (Brannick & Coghlan, 2006). Because of the acknowledgement that researchers are not objective outsiders adhering exclusively to pre-specified procedures, but rather participants in a dynamic relationship with research (De Loo & Lowe, 2011; Walker, Reid, & Priest, 2013), practices in reflexivity are understood to highlight the presuppositions, assumptions, and interpretations of the researcher in order to enhance confidence and credibility of the knowledge being generated (Patton, 1999, 2002). As such, reflexivity is usually associated with qualitative research, while quantitative methods typically involve other means of control in order to reduce researcher bias (Burns & Grove, 2005; Parahoo, 2006). This, coupled with the view that reflexivity in quantitative research has been viewed as a weakness due to its potential to undermine control measures designed to

maximize validity (Ryan & Golden, 2006), render reflexive practices in mixed-methods as rare and potentially challenging (De Loo & Lowe, 2011).

That being said, I adopt De Loo and Lowe's (2011) standpoint that, regardless of methodology, it is impossible to escape our own values and interpretations when conducting research. Thus, we ought to engage in reflexive analysis even when performing mixed-methods forms of study. I also wish to acknowledge that reflexivity by itself does not guarantee the production of more accurate research, but instead contributes to the development of mutual understanding between the researcher and reader of how the knowledge being shared has been produced (De Loo & Lowe, 2011; Pillow, 2003). Below is a brief reflexive account of my influence upon the knowledge production of this research.

2.2.6.1 Acknowledgement of Self.

When Dr. Bridel approached me with the opportunity to conduct this research project, I was immediately apprehensive. As I expressed to him, I “tick” all of the privilege boxes in Canada. I am Caucasian, male, cisgender, heterosexual, Christian, and I come from an upper-middleclass family. Prior to the project, I also had little to no experience with figure skating, and my knowledge of LGBTQI2S issues was minimal. I am, however, a member of the Canadian national squash team, and I have an uncle who was bullied throughout his youth as a result of participating in figure skating (see Chapter 1, “Literature Review” for an overview of the association between figure skating, femininity, and homosexuality). Therefore, my initial point of interest and intersection with the topic at hand stemmed from my identity as a high-performance athlete as well as my experiences learning of my uncle's childhood.

Given this information, it was important to acknowledge that my privileged upbringing and identity afforded me little personal connection to the matter under investigation. Indeed, my position as an athlete enabled the concepts of “fairness”, “competitiveness”, and “advantage” to

resonate on a deep level, thus granting the ability to relate to those in both privileged and disadvantaged positions, at least from an athletic standpoint. However, in spite of my best efforts to maintain a level of empathy and humility throughout the course of the study, I concede that my lack of firsthand experience regarding LGBTQI2S discrimination made certain aspects of the project challenging. In particular, formulation of both the Likert-scale and open-ended survey questions as well as the language being employed to construct the items proved to be a difficult task, especially by way of avoiding heteronormative assumptions and phrasing of words. For example, I frequently used the term “non-heterosexual” to describe the LGBTQI2S community. It was only after Dr. Bridel pointed out that the term “non” implied something as “other than” or “less than” that I realized the underlying insinuation of “non-heterosexual”. As a result, one way that I combatted my heteronormative assumptions was to frequently consult with Dr. Bridel (who identifies as a cisgender gay man) as to the quality of my work. I also made efforts to engage with a plethora of literature pertaining to LGBTQI2S inclusion in sport, which further assisted in reducing some of the heteronormative assumptions I employed.

That being said, the overall objective of the research project was to develop an understanding of attitudes and experiences *toward* the LGBTQI2S community, from which standpoint my identity may have offered some legitimacy. Because of my own previous ignorance regarding the topic, I was able to forego assumptions surrounding the “common knowledge” of terms such as “heteronormativity”, “sexual orientation”, or “gender”, thus ensuring that clear and precise definitions of terms and expectations were presented at the beginning of the survey being administered.

My personal identity, therefore, presented a double-edged sword by way of data collection and analysis in that I was able to relate to many of the individuals being surveyed, while also experiencing challenges through the unconscious employment of heteronormative

assumptions. This was reflected most evidently within the data interpretation phase of the research project. While in some ways I was well-suited to position myself within the circumstance of those being surveyed, Dr. Bridel ensured that the conclusions being drawn were not merely reflections of a heteronormative research perspective. Thus, it is my belief that the differing identities and backgrounds of Dr. Bridel and myself resulted in a strength and legitimacy of research that neither one of us could have obtained individually.

2.2.6.2 Acknowledgement of Fellow Researchers.

The final design, analysis, implementation, and interpretation of this research project was vastly different from what was originally envisioned at the beginning of the study. This was due, in part, to my discovery of and connection with intergroup contact theory (see “Acknowledgement of Theory”, below). However, of equal importance was the influence of Dr. Bridel and Dr. Godley upon both the analysis and interpretation of the data being collected. These researchers come from differing yet complementary academic backgrounds, employing vastly dissimilar research methods in order to investigate similar areas of study. Dr. Bridel’s specialization is in poststructuralist studies and he prefers to employ a qualitative method of research investigation. Dr. Godley, conversely, has a background in population demographics, thus opting for a method of analysis involving quantitative, empirical research designs.

As mentioned earlier, Dr. Bridel encouraged me to investigate this research topic. His passion for inclusion, and his previous advocacy work with Skate Canada, made this research project possible. In addition, he introduced me to methods of qualitative data analysis. My undergraduate degree is in psychology, thus, I had little to no experience with qualitative research outside of a few option courses in sociology and anthropology. Dr. Bridel enabled me to develop both an appreciation and understanding of the differing modes of truth as well as intersubjectivity

as examined through qualitative research. The resulting project is a much more comprehensive analysis as a result of his coaching throughout the study.

Admittedly, this project would have likely employed only a minimal amount of quantitative analysis had it not been for the influence and guidance of Dr. Godley. My psychology degree ensured that I had an appreciation and understanding of quantitative research. However, I lacked proficiency in performing statistical analyses, and I was unaware of the extent to which we could utilize the empirical data generated from the survey documents. It is my opinion that the training I have received from Dr. Godley has not only resulted in my becoming a better researcher, but it has also enabled the generation of a more comprehensive analysis of the data being investigated.

Thus, it was largely due to the influence and guidance of these two instructors that the overall research design ended up as a mixed-methods analysis of data. The conversations that took place amongst the three of us were stimulating and enjoyable, and I believe we have all left the project as more proficient academics.

2.2.6.3 Acknowledgement of Theory.

As was explicated earlier, the purpose of adopting a reflexive stance is to understand the relationship between the researcher and the object of the research. Put another way, to be reflexive is to critically analyze the role of researcher subjectivity in the process of knowledge production. Given this, it is important to recognize that my decision to utilize intergroup contact theory as a theoretical viewpoint was influenced by three aspects of my personal identity: (1) my background as a high-performance athlete enabled me to connect strongly with the facilitative mechanisms of intergroup contact theory (Equal Status, Common Goals, Intergroup Cooperation, and Support of Authorities, Law, or Custom) as my experience within the athletic arena has been one where the *opposite* of these conditions is often the case; (2) my undergraduate degree in

psychology—and in particular my knowledge of the Cognitive Revolution, during which psychologists sought to improve the objectivity and testability of psychological research (Thagard, 2005)—which reinforced my desire to utilize a theory that was both tested as well as testable (this also impacted my desire to use a mixed-methods research design); (3) my relationship with my uncle who, through the telling and retelling of the hardships he experienced as a young boy who enjoyed figure skating, instilled within me a sense of empathy toward the figure skating community—a sense of empathy which I believe can be cultivated through known contact. For these reasons, intergroup contact theory resonated with me on a personal level. This impacted my decision to utilize the theory as my theoretical viewpoint for this research project.

2.3 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined my understanding of the theoretical perspectives used as the basis of this project (queer theory and intergroup contact theory). I also described and justified my decision to employ a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods research design, and I summarized both the data collection and data analysis processes that took place. This chapter concluded with a critical reflection of my personal role in the knowledge generation of this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Quantitative.

3.1.1.1 Demographic Composition.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic composition of the sample. Of the individuals who responded to the survey, 46.7% were coaches, while athletes, volunteers, and officials accounted for 19.0%, 20.0%, and 14.3%, respectively. The majority of survey respondents were over the age of 35 years, while most individuals had been active Skate Canada members for more than 20 years. In terms of gender identity, the sample was overwhelmingly comprised of females (76.9%), while males accounted for 14.4% and nonbinary persons accounted for 8.7% of respondents. Similarly, most respondents identified themselves as heterosexual (73.5%), with bisexual, gay, lesbian, and nondistinguished individuals making up the remaining 26.5%. Finally, with regards to youth living environment and current residence, most survey respondents grew up in urban environments and most were currently residing in Ontario. It should be noted that age and primary role were significantly related ($p < .05$), with younger individuals more likely to report their primary role as “athlete”. Neither gender identity nor sexual orientation were significantly related to age or the total number of years active as a Skate Canada member. Given the non-random sampling methods used to recruit respondents, we know that the sample was not representative of the entire Skate Canada community.

Table 1

Sample Descriptive Statistics (N = 106)

Variable		N	Percent (%)
Age	< 20 years	12	11.4%
	20 – 25 years	12	11.4%
	26 – 30 years	10	9.5%
	31 – 35 years	15	14.3%
	36 – 40 years	7	6.6%
	41 – 45 years	9	8.6%
	46 – 50 years	11	10.5%
	51 – 55 years	11	10.5%
	56 – 60 years	10	9.5%
	> 60 years	8	7.6%
	Missing	1	
Gender Identity	Male	15	14.4%
	Female	80	76.9%
	Nonbinary	9	8.7%
	Missing	2	
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	75	73.5%
	Bisexual	7	6.9%
	Gay	5	4.9%
	Lesbian	5	4.9%
	Nondistinguished	10	9.8%
	Missing	4	
Primary Role	Athlete	20	19.0%
	Coach	49	46.7%
	Volunteer	21	20.0%
	Official	15	14.3%
	Missing	1	
Years Active in Primary Role	< 10 years	35	33.3%
	10 – 15 years	26	24.8%
	16 – 20 years	16	15.2%
	21 – 25 years	7	6.7%
	26 – 30 years	6	5.7%
	31 – 35 years	5	4.8%
	> 35 years	10	9.5%
	Missing	1	
Province Location	Western Canada	30	28.3%
	Central Canada	9	8.5%
	Ontario	43	40.6%
	Eastern Canada	24	22.6%
	Missing	0	
Youth Living Environment	Rural	33	31.1%
	Urban	63	59.4%
	Rural/Urban	10	9.4%
	Missing	0	
Total Years Active	< 10 years	11	10.4%
	10 – 15 years	23	21.7%
	16 – 20 years	14	13.2%
	21 – 25 years	8	7.5%
	26 – 30 years	15	14.1%
	31 – 35 years	9	8.5%
	> 35 years	26	24.5%
	Missing	0	

Note. Some categories may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

3.1.1.2 Overall Opinions on LGBTQI2S Inclusivity.

Mean scores were calculated for each of the 28 Likert-scale survey questions, depicting generally positive opinions regarding LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating (Figure 1). This was somewhat expected given both the way in which the study was promoted as well as the types of people who were most likely willing to respond to the survey (See Chapter 2. “Methodology”). Figure 1 depicts the average score for each of the 28 Likert-scale questions pertaining to LGBTQI2S inclusion. The response *Strongly disagree* was given a value of 1.0, and *Strongly agree* was given a value of 5.0. The results for questions pertaining to trans participation were encouraging, as mean scores on negatively coded questions pertaining to this topic (e.g., “There should be rules that restrict trans participation in non-ISU events”) were amongst the lowest in the entire survey, while mean scores on items that reflected positively on trans participation were generally high. All questions regarding the current status of LGBTQI2S inclusion within figure skating had mean scores over 3.0 (in the “Agree” range). However, perhaps most promising were determinants related to personal support of LGBTQI2S inclusion (e.g., “I am comfortable calling myself an ally to LGBTQI2S persons”), as mean scores for these questions were generally between 4.0 and 5.0 (between *Agree* and *Strongly agree*).

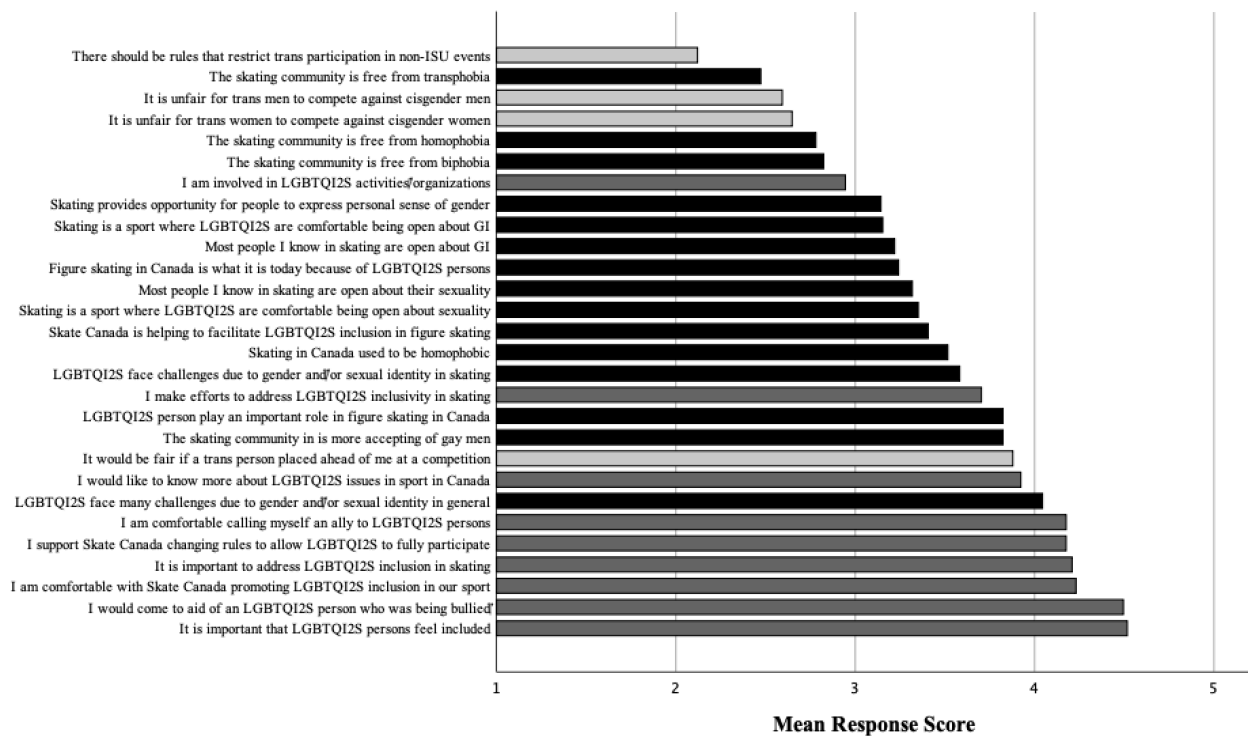


Figure 1. Mean Score for Likert Scale Items

Mean strength of agreement with 28 Likert-scale questions pertaining to LGBTQI2S inclusion for 106 respondents. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each question. Responses were coded in numerical values (Strongly disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Neither agree nor disagree = 3; Agree = 4; and Strongly agree = 5). Determinants in light grey indicate statements pertaining to trans participation in figure skating. Determinants in black indicate perceptions related to the status of LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating. Determinants in dark grey indicate personal opinions toward inclusion.

A factor analysis was performed on each of the 32 Likert-scale survey questions in order to summarize the range of opinions expressed by the survey respondents. Table 2 shows the results of the factor analysis and the items that loaded on each factor. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy ($KMO = .782$) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < .01$) determined that a factor analysis was appropriate to perform on the data obtained. Varimax rotation was used, and coefficients below 0.50 were suppressed. Factors with eigen values greater than one were retained. Four factors emerged from the factor analysis, accounting for 49.35% of the total variation in the responses.

Table 2

Factor Analysis of Likert-scale Questions

Item	Factor Loading			
	I	II	III	IV
In my primary role, I make efforts to address LGBTQI2S inclusivity in Skating	0.684			
I would like to know more about LGBTQI2S issues in sport in Canada	0.653			
I am comfortable with Skate Canada promoting LGBTQI2S inclusion in our sport	0.664			
I am comfortable calling myself an ally to LGBTQI2S persons	0.684			
I am involved in LGBTQI2S activities/organizations at one or more of the following levels: community, provincial, national, international	0.635			
I believe that LGBTQI2S persons play an important role in figure skating in Canada	0.603			
I believe that figure skating in Canada is what it is today because of LGBTQI2S persons	0.769			
I believe the skating community is free from homophobia		0.707		
I believe the skating community is free from transphobia		0.679		
I believe the skating community is free from biphobia		0.686		
Skating is a sport in Canada where LGBTQI2S persons are comfortable being open about their sexuality		0.523		
LGBTQI2S persons face many challenges due to their gender and/or sexual identity in Canada in figure skating		-0.785		
LGBTQI2S persons face many challenges due to their gender and/or sexual identity in Canada in general		-0.686		
It is important that LGBTQI2S persons feel included in my skating community			0.703	
It is important to address LGBTQI2S inclusion in skating (i.e., do things or take action to make LGBTQI2S persons feel welcome)			0.683	
I support Skate Canada changing rules to allow LGBTQI2S persons to fully participate			0.589	
I would come to the aid of a person who was being bullied/harassed as a result of their sexuality and/or gender identity			0.701	
It is unfair for trans boys/men to compete against cisgender boys/men in non-ISU events				0.909
It is unfair for trans girls/women to compete against cisgender girls/women in non-ISU events				0.927
As an athlete, I would consider it fair if a trans person placed ahead of me at a competition				-0.609
Percent of Variance Explained	15.85%	13.41%	10.14%	9.95%
Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	0.877	0.868	0.763	0.574

Note. Factor loadings less than 0.50 were suppressed. Seven of the original 28 items did not load on any factor. Thus, they were excluded from this table.

The first factor, *Personal Advocacy* (16% variance explained; Cronbach's alpha = 0.88), loaded the following items together: (a) In my primary role, I make efforts to address LGBTQI2S inclusivity in skating; (b) I would like to know more about LGBTQI2S issues in sport in Canada; (c) I am comfortable with Skate Canada promoting LGBTQI2S inclusion in our sport; (d) I am comfortable calling myself an ally to LGBTQI2S persons; (e) I am involved in LGBTQI2S activities/organizations; (f) I believe that LGBTQI2S persons play an important role in figure

skating in Canada; and (g) I believe that figure skating in Canada is what it is today because of LGBTQI2S persons.

The second factor, *Figure Skating As Inclusive* (13% variance explained; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$), loaded the following items together: (a) I believe the skating community is free from homophobia; (b) I believe the skating community is free from transphobia; (c) I believe the skating community is free from biphobia; (d) LGBTQI2S persons face many challenges due to their gender and/or sexual identity in Canada in figure skating (negative loading); (e) LGBTQI2S persons face many challenges due to their gender and/or sexual identity in Canada in general (negative loading).

The third factor, *Cultural and/or Political Advocacy* (10% variance explained; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$), loaded the following items together: (a) It is important that LGBTQI2S persons feel included in my skating community; (b) It is important to address LGBTQI2S inclusion in skating; (c) I support Skate Canada changing rules to allow LGBTQI2S persons to fully participate; (d) I would come to the aid of a persons who was being bullied/harassed as a result of their sexuality and/or gender identity.

The fourth factor, *Trans Exclusion* (10% variance explained; Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.57$), loaded the following items together: (a) It is unfair for trans boys/men to compete against cisgender boys/men in non-ISU events; (b) It is unfair for trans girls/women to compete against cisgender girls/women in non-ISU events; (c) As an athlete, I would consider it fair if a trans person placed ahead of me at a competition (negative loading).

Several survey items did not load on any factor and were thus eliminated from the remainder of the analysis. These items were: (a) There should be rules that restrict trans participation in non-ISU events; (b) Skating is a sport in Canada where LGBTQI2S persons are comfortable being open about their gender identity; (c) Most people I know in skating are open

about their sexuality; (d) Most people I know in skating are open about their gender identity; (e) I believe that Skate Canada is helping to facilitate LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating; (f) I think the skating community in Canada is more accepting of gay men than other LGBTQI2S persons; (g) Skating in Canada provides the opportunity for people to express a personal sense of gender.

The factor scores obtained from the factor analysis were saved and used as dependent variables for subsequent regression analyses.

3.1.1.3 Factor Scores and Demographic Variables.

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to compare factor means across the demographic variables (Table 3). While there were no significant differences in any of the average factor scores by age, gender, or youth living environment, significant differences occurred on the *Personal Advocacy* factor with regards to sexual orientation and residence. Results indicated that bisexuals ($1.24 \pm \text{S.E.} = .392$) scored significantly higher than both heterosexuals ($-0.07 \pm \text{S.E.} = .119$) and Nondistinguished persons ($-0.28 \pm \text{S.E.} = .108$) on this factor, and that individuals residing in Eastern Canada ($0.51 \pm \text{S.E.} = .208$) scored significantly higher than those from Western Canada ($-0.23 \pm \text{S.E.} = .237$) and Central Canada ($-0.73 \pm \text{S.E.} = .303$) on this factor. Persons living in Ontario ($0.06 \pm \text{S.E.} = .127$) also scored significantly higher than those residing in Central Canada on this factor.

Primary Role was related to scores on the *Figure Skating As Inclusive* factor such that volunteers ($0.54 \pm \text{S.E.} = .222$) scored significantly higher than both coaches ($-0.11 \pm \text{S.E.} = .150$) and athletes ($-0.59 \pm \text{S.E.} = .237$), and officials ($0.21 \pm \text{S.E.} = .251$) scored significantly higher than athletes on this factor.

Bivariate analyses were also performed on the mean contact scores within and outside the skating community across the demographic variables (Table 4). Significant differences for

Known Contact Outside the Skating Community occurred such that individuals aged 20-30 years ($5.26 \pm \text{S.E.} = .349$) scored significantly higher than those over the age of 50 (50-60 years: $4.20 \pm \text{S.E.} = .412$; >60 : $3.25 \pm \text{S.E.} = .648$) on this variable, and persons aged 30-40 years scored significantly higher than those over the age of 60. Furthermore, bisexuals ($5.83 \pm \text{S.E.} = .167$) and gay persons ($5.80 \pm \text{S.E.} = .490$) reported significantly more contact with LGBTQI2S persons outside the skating community than did those with nondistinguished sexual orientations ($3.50 \pm \text{S.E.} = .439$).

No significant differences occurred for *Known Contact Inside the Skating Community* for any of the demographic variables.

To summarize, the bivariate analysis of the mean factor scores indicated that sexual orientation, living residence, and primary role had a significant effect on two of the factors—*Personal Advocacy* and *Figure Skating as Inclusive*. Furthermore, age and sexual orientation were significantly related to the level of contact individuals experienced outside the skating community. Multiple regression analyses were subsequently performed in order to examine whether the demographic variables remained significantly related to these two factors when controlling for contact both within and outside of the skating community.

Table 3

Mean Factor Scores by Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Factor Scores			
			Personal Support/ Advocacy	Figure Skating as Inclusive	Cultural and/or Political Support/ Advocacy	Trans Exclusion
Age	<20	8	.532 ± .267	.091 ± .415	.264 ± .106	.460 ± .344
	20-30	18	.145 ± .206	-.303 ± .175	-.012 ± .368	-.446 ± .274
	30-40	20	.309 ± .208	.175 ± .284	.053 ± .217	-.044 ± .240
	40-50	17	-.120 ± .259	.048 ± .280	-.177 ± .229	.272 ± .246
	50-60	19	-.299 ± .237	.160 ± .165	.140 ± .178	.051 ± .194
	>60	8	-.476 ± .390	-.122 ± .317	-.340 ± .216	-.042 ± .217
Gender	Male	13	-.110 ± .265	.019 ± .276	.093 ± .151	.090 ± .151
	Female	69	.033 ± .124	-.014 ± .123	-.050 ± .127	.028 ± .116
	Nonbinary	7	.187 ± .303	.228 ± .377	.333 ± .475	-.464 ± .425
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual (Ref)	5	1.24 ± .392	-.309 ± .288	-.283 ± .461	-.235 ± .551
	Heterosexual	63	-.071 ± .119*	-.087 ± .121	.052 ± .106	.123 ± .129
	Gay	5	.342 ± .149	.081 ± .566	-.094 ± .347	-.236 ± .246
	Lesbian	5	.366 ± .264	.764 ± .532	-.475 ± 1.29	-.931 ± .334
	Nondistinguished	9	-.285 ± .108*	.171 ± .413	.342 ± .135	.013 ± .355
Primary Role	Volunteer (Ref)	18	-.365 ± .216	.541 ± .222	.178 ± .163	-.144 ± .230
	Athlete	14	-.034 ± .307	-.589 ± .237*	.006 ± .296	.293 ± .271
	Coach	43	.226 ± .143	-.107 ± .150*	-.139 ± .176	.022 ± .166
	Official	15	-.075 ± .263	.210 ± .251*	-.186 ± .203	-.161 ± .201
Residence	Eastern Canada (Ref)	19	.509 ± .208	-.051 ± .260	-.103 ± .343	-.018 ± .261
	Western Canada	26	-.233 ± .237*	.336 ± .191	-.042 ± .156	-.014 ± .175
	Central Canada	8	-.735 ± .303*	-.168 ± .292	.202 ± .288	.466 ± .474
	Ontario	38	.060 ± .127*	-.169 ± .156	.038 ± .143	-.080 ± .152
Youth Living Environment	Only Rural	29	-.008 ± .178	.016 ± .183	-.166 ± .245	-.025 ± .180
	Only Urban	52	-.054 ± .149	-.006 ± .141	.078 ± .117	.060 ± .142
	Rural/Urban	10	.306 ± .204	-.015 ± .337	.077 ± .215	-.239 ± .331

Note. Mean factor scores reported as: Mean ± Standard Error.

* $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed tests).

Ref = Reference Group.

Table 4

Mean Contact Scores by Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Contact Scores	
			Known Contact Outside Skating Community	Known Contact Inside Skating Community
Age	<20	9	4.56 ± .294	3.00 ± .553
	20-30 (ref)	19	5.26 ± .349	4.63 ± .420
	30-40	21	4.24 ± .365	4.32 ± .351
	40-50	19	4.84 ± .369*	4.11 ± .489
	50-60	20	4.20 ± .412*	4.05 ± .478
	>60	8	3.25 ± .648*	4.38 ± .800
Gender	Male	13	5.00 ± .424	4.14 ± .455
	Female	73	4.48 ± .201	4.04 ± .230
	Nonbinary	9	4.22 ± .521	4.89 ± .655
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual (Ref)	6	5.83 ± .167*	5.00 ± .816
	Nondistinguished (Ref)	10	3.50 ± .522	4.80 ± .696
	Heterosexual	67	4.54 ± .204	4.09 ± .225
	Gay	5	5.80 ± .490*	3.60 ± .600
	Lesbian	5	4.80 ± .490	2.40 ± .927
Primary Role	Athlete	15	4.13 ± .456	3.87 ± .559
	Coach	47	4.70 ± .243	4.63 ± .250
	Volunteer	19	4.53 ± .393	3.32 ± .472
	Official	15	4.20 ± .439	4.07 ± .502
Residence	Western Canada	27	4.26 ± .391	4.04 ± .445
	Central Canada	7	3.86 ± .800	3.38 ± .778
	Ontario	40	4.60 ± .258	4.43 ± .295
	Eastern Canada	23	4.83 ± .224	4.17 ± .299
Youth Living Environment	Only Rural	31	4.58 ± .273	3.97 ± .150
	Only Urban	56	4.48 ± .234	3.75 ± .113
	Rural/Urban	10	4.40 ± .600	3.80 ± .249

Note. Mean factor scores reported as: Mean ± Standard Error.

* $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed tests).

Ref = Reference Group.

3.1.1.4 Multiple Regression Analysis.

The bivariate analysis of the factor means yielded no significant relationship between the demographic variables and scores on the *Political and/or Cultural Advocacy* and *Trans Exclusion* factors ($p < .05$). Therefore, these two factors were excluded from the multiple regression analysis. For the remaining two factors (*Personal Advocacy* and *Figure Skating as Inclusive*), I ran two multivariate regression models. The first model individually regressed the factor scores on the demographic variables of age, gender, sexual orientation, primary role, residence, and youth living environment. The second model added known contact with LGBTQI2S persons

outside of the skating community and known contact with LGBTQi2S persons inside the skating community as a fifth and sixth independent variable, respectively. Tables 5 and 6 show the multiple regression results for the two factors tested.

Table 5 shows the multiple regression results for the *Personal Advocacy* factor. Model 1 indicates that, when other demographic variables were controlled, older individuals tended to score lower on the *Personal Advocacy* factor than younger persons ($b = -.013$; $S.E. = .405$). Additionally, bisexual persons ($b = .925$; $S.E. = .469$) scored significantly higher than heterosexuals on this factor, controlling for all other demographic variables. Volunteers ($b = -.495$; $S.E. = .269$) scored lower than coaches, and persons residing in central Canada ($b = -.912$; $S.E. = .269$) scored lower than persons living in Ontario, controlling for all other demographic variables. Finally, individuals who grew up in both rural and urban neighbourhoods ($b = .591$; $S.E. = .353$) scored significantly higher on *Personal Advocacy* than those whose upbringing was spent solely in urban environments, controlling for other demographic variables.

With the addition of the known contact variables to the regression (Model 2), significant changes occurred in two of the demographic effects. Specifically, once we controlled for known contact with LGBTQi2S persons, older individuals no longer demonstrated significantly lower scores than younger persons on the *Personal Advocacy* factor ($b = -.008$; $S.E. = .008$), and people living in central Canada ($b = -.511$; $S.E. = .416$) were no longer significantly different from those in Ontario on this factor. Known contact had a significant effect on this factor ($b = .175$; $S.E. = .072$), controlling for all the demographic variables in the model, such that higher levels of known contact with LGBTQi2S persons led to higher scores on this factor. Known contact with LGBTQi2S persons inside the skating community did not have a significant effect upon this factor.

Table 6 shows the multiple regression results for the *Skate Canada As Inclusive* factor. Model 1 indicates that, when other demographic variables were controlled, lesbians ($b = .914$; $S.E. = .476$) scored significantly higher than heterosexuals on this factor. This difference disappeared in Model 2, when the known contact variables were added to the analysis. However, nondistinguished individuals ($b = .666$; $S.E. = .386$) tended to score higher than heterosexuals on the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor when both demographic and the known contact variables were considered. The effects of primary roles varied for Model 1 such that volunteers and athletes scored significantly higher and lower than coaches on the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor, respectively, controlling for other demographic variables. These results did not change for Model 2: volunteers continued to score higher and athletes continued to score lower than coaches on the factor, even when both the demographic and the known contact variables were considered. Neither known contact with LGBTQI2S persons inside the skating community nor known contact with LGBTQI2S persons outside of the skating community had significant effects upon scores for the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor.

Table 5

*Personal Advocacy Regression**Demographic Variables (Model 1); Demographic Variables and Contact Inside/Outside Skating Community (Model 2)*

		Model 1	Model 2
Age		-.013(.008)*	-.008(.008)
Gender (Ref = Female)	Male	-.297(.359)	-.125(.371)
	Nonbinary	-.215(.425)	-.211(.408)
Sexual Orientation (Ref = Heterosexual)	Bisexual	.925(.469)*	.817(.450)*
	Gay	.433(.597)	.110(.519)
	Lesbian	.013(.452)	.120(.448)
	Nondistinguished	-.337(.359)	-.232(.354)
Primary Role (Ref = Coach)	Athlete	-.337(.307)	-.178(.300)
	Volunteer	-.495(.269)*	-.449(.266)*
	Official	-.255(.323)	-.159(.312)
Residence (Ref = Ontario)	Western Canada	-.153(.251)	-.104(.243)
	Central Canada	-.912(.392)*	-.511(.416)
	Eastern Canada	.353(.292)	.430(.282)
Youth Living Environment (Ref = Only Urban)	Only Rural	.050(.225)	-.039(.220)
	Rural/Urban	.591(.353)*	.499(.341)
Known Contact Inside Skating Community			.026(.060)
Known Contact Outside Skating Community			.175(.072)**
Adjusted R ²		.181	.235

Note. $N = 106$. Reported as b (Standard Error), where b = unstandardized regression coefficient. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < .05$ (two-tailed tests).

Ref = Reference Group.

Table 6

*Figure Skating as Inclusive Regression**Demographic Variables (Model 1); Demographic Variables and Contact Inside/Outside Skating Community (Model 2)*

		Model 1	Model 2
Age		-.006(.427)	-.007(.008)
Gender (Ref = Female)	Male	.111(.379)	.109(.405)
	Nonbinary	-.257(.448)	-.217(.445)
Sexual Orientation (Ref = Heterosexual)	Bisexual	-.178(.494)	-.115(.492)
	Gay	.168(.630)	.126(.645)
	Lesbian	.914(.476)*	.689(.489)
	Nondistinguished	.620(.379)	.666(.386)*
Primary Role (Ref = Coach)	Athlete	-.697(.324)**	-.819(.328)**
	Volunteer	.719(.284)**	.588(.290)**
	Official	.188(.340)	.115(.340)
Residence (Ref = Ontario)	Western Canada	.338(.265)	.284(.265)
	Central Canada	-.144(.413)	-.308(.454)
	Eastern Canada	.039(.308)	-.005(.308)
Youth Living Environment (Ref = Only Urban)	Only Rural	-.063(.237)	.002(.241)
	Rural/Urban	-.428(.372)	-.420(.372)
Known Contact Inside Skating Community			-.105(.065)
Known Contact Outside Skating Community			-.031(.079)
Adjusted R ²		.089	.113

Note. $N = 106$. Reported as b (Standard Error), where b = unstandardized regression coefficient. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < .05$ (two-tailed tests).

Ref = Reference Group.

3.1.2 Qualitative

3.1.2.1 Thematic Structure.

The qualitative analysis of the open-ended survey questions depicted a total of 28 meaning units (or codes), which were categorized into sub-themes and general themes. The final thematic structure was comprised of four major themes that characterized the ways that current attitudes and opinions toward LGBTQI2S inclusion were conceptualized and/or experienced.

They are: *Heteronormativity*, *LGBTQI2S Inclusion*, *LGBTQI2S Representation & Treatment*, and *LGBTQI2S Advocacy*.

Before discussing each of the themes individually, it is important to acknowledge that interconnection and intersection exist such that each theme reciprocally affects and is affected by

all of the other themes within the analysis. Thus, while it might be tempting to visualize a “flow-chart” of themes whereby (non)heteronormative assumptions influence attitudes and opinions about inclusion and representation & treatment, which then subsequently affect people’s ideas about advocacy, this would be inaccurate. Rather, it is more accurate to think of the themes in a circular manner where each theme is informed by the others and vice versa. Table 7 illustrates the overall thematic structure of the analysis, including the primary themes as well as the sub-themes and individual components that are incorporated. Themes and sub-themes will be discussed, with sample quotes utilized in order to illustrate how each was generated.

Table 7

Major Themes and Sub-Themes of Participants’ Conceptualizations of LGBTQI2S Inclusion and Representative Meaning Units

Major Themes	Sub-Themes	Representative Meaning Unit
Heteronormativity	Fairness	The Advantage Thesis, Physiological differences, Gender Identity Policies, Trans Inclusion Policies, Pairs and Dance Policies
	Gender Fluidity	Gender Roles, Gender Essentialism, Gender Relativism, Femininity Archetype
LGBTQI2S Inclusion	Positive Inclusion Negative Implications	Inclusive Support, Non-Partisan Inclusion Resignation, Indifference
LGBTQI2S Representation & Treatment	Issues and Concerns	Gay Representation, Lesbian/Bisexual Invisibility, Trans Invisibility, Stories of Homophobia
	Figure Skating as Inclusive	Figure Skating an Inclusive Space, Approval of Skate Canada Inclusion Efforts
LGBTQI2S Advocacy	Personal Support/Advocacy	Knowledge Availability, Seeking Education, Seeking Involvement, Organized Involvement, Individual Efforts
	Cultural and/or Political Support/Advocacy	Knowledge Availability, Coach/Volunteer Training, Media Representation, ISU Barriers

3.1.2.2 Heteronormativity.

Heteronormativity emerged as the first of four major themes that characterized the qualitative survey data (See Chapter 1, “Literature Review” for definition). This theme encompassed the major and alternative discourses individuals seemed to draw on in their constructions of LGBTQI2S inclusion. The heteronormative or nonheteronormative assumptions

that were expressed dictated whether or not individuals articulated concern over such issues as fairness and the role of gender. As such, *Heteronormativity* could be further broken down into the sub-themes of *Fairness* and *Gender Fluidity*.

3.1.2.2.1 *Fairness*.

When asked whether they had concerns with policies pertaining to LGBTQI2S inclusion in Skate Canada, participants typically responded positively, indicating both an openness to inclusion and an encouragement toward continued efforts in this direction. However, there were several instances where apprehensions were voiced regarding the potential creation of an unfair playing field, particularly in relation to trans participation and assumed differences in physiology. For example, one individual commented, quite plainly, that “I do not think it would be fair for competitors to have unfair physical advantages in each category, such as a transgender man competing in a women’s category”. This was followed by several remarks indicating concerns over children competing against trans individuals, as well concerns about how trans inclusion policies might affect the ways that pairs and dance competitions are carried out.

Many individuals were supportive of policies promoting LGBTQI2S inclusion but expressed concerns about the ways that these policies would be upheld within the skating community. Other people, conversely, took an introspective view of the issue. For example, one person wrote:

I am still emotionally struggling and processing and learning to figure out the trans athlete. This is my own journey to discover what that looks like and I think that's okay. It doesn't mean I don't accept them or support them or am not an ally ... but I am still learning what this looks like in terms of cis-gender athletes and trans-gender athletes competing against each other.

This individual was clearly in favour of LGBTQI2S inclusion, at least from an ethical standpoint. However, they seemed to be struggling with their own heteronormative assumptions regarding trans inclusion.

3.1.2.2.2 Gender Fluidity.

Also related to heteronormativity was the sub-theme, *Gender Fluidity*. Participants expressed a range of viewpoints predicated upon the notion of gender as either a relative or an essential construct. For example, while one person held that “anyone can participate in the Figure Skating events as long as they meet the qualifications for the category they are entered in. Gender identity should not be a requirement”, another person stated:

I don’t believe any person should be competing against other people in physical sports if they are competing outside of their birthed gender [sic]. There are many physical differences in males and females which is the reason there are delegate male and female categories.

It appears as though these two participants’ underlying assumptions regarding sexual and gender identity has led to their differing opinions regarding the topic.

The respondents also conveyed a variety of opinions regarding gender roles, particularly as they related to the stereotypically feminine nature of figure skating. Many voiced concerns about the expectation of (hyper)femininity amongst women and girl figure skaters as well as how this may affect young boys who are being bullied for their participation. For example, “Judging is very based on normative gender roles...Women who are not feminine enough are rewarded less” and “Flip side of the coin—I know straight men in skating who had to ‘convince’ people they were straight simply because they were males that skated”. Conversely, several individuals seemed wary of the way that LGBTQI2S inclusion could slacken or lessen the traditional gender roles that are maintained by the rules of figure skating. One person stated:

When it comes to Pair events and Dance events, are we going to see male/male or female/female teams? I am concerned with this honestly as I feel that it will take away much from these events such as grace, power, and etc.

Evidently, the sub-theme of *Gender Fluidity* has been dictated by opinions regarding the role of femininity within figure skating as well as the associated dominant and alternative discourses that are utilized in relation to gender more broadly.

3.1.2.3 LGBTQI2S Inclusion.

LGBTQI2S Inclusion emerged as another of the major themes generated from the qualitative analysis. This theme incorporated the range of views surrounding LGBTQI2S inclusion within Canadian figure skating as well as more generally. *LGBTQI2S Inclusion* could be further broken down into the sub-themes *Positive Inclusion* and *Negative Implications*.

3.1.2.3.1 Positive Inclusion.

The *Positive Inclusion* sub-theme resulted from the many individuals who expressed support toward LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating and generally, both from an ideological as well as a policy standpoint. Reasons for support varied from the ethical notion of equality of opportunity (all individuals are equal and should therefore have an equal opportunity to participate), to the artistic archetype of figure skating being a way to express yourself. It should be noted that there was some overlap between this sub-theme and the *Gender Fluidity* sub-theme noted above, as *Positive Inclusion* also included those individuals who expressed support of but confusion about LGBTQI2S inclusion. For example, in response to a question pertaining to whether Skate Canada should be more inclusive, one person wrote, “Yes, but I’m still struggling with what this looks like, mostly in terms of trans people competing against cisgender [people]”.

There were several participants who expanded the notion of LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating to include individuals of all identities within the broader societal landscape, and

not just those with varying sexual or gender dispositions. One person attributed our failed efforts to action this to socioeconomic disparities amongst differing classes. They wrote:

There is an underlying sense of wealth and upper class-ness that is associated to figure skating still (even though Skate Canada is working to make it a more economically affordable sport). This type of unintentional segregation can lead to difficulties in establishing inclusivity in various areas, also including LGBTQI2S.

Therefore, it is evident that inclusion can mean different things to different people and that perceptions regarding how to successfully approach this issue vary greatly.

Finally, a significant number of individuals expressed no concern about Skate Canada's commitment to LGBTQI2S initiatives, indicating that Skate Canada is moving in the right direction of inclusion and acceptance of the LGBTQI2S community.

3.1.2.3.2 *Negative Implications.*

The *Negative Implications* sub-theme represented views on the other side of the spectrum of LGBTQI2S inclusivity. While no one explicitly expressed displeasure with or hatred toward LGBTQI2S persons, several people were indifferent toward the notion of LGBTQI2S inclusion in sport. One person said, "I think that if there are LGBTQI2S skaters they should be allowed to skate, but that doesn't mean that Skate Canada has to put forth an agenda to make that happen". Another was more critical, stating, "What does skating have to do with sexual orientation!?!? Who cares!?!?". While both persons appeared indifferent toward inclusion, the latter's use of exaggerated punctuation implied a level of frustration with the issue at hand.

There were also people who appeared resigned toward LGBTQI2S inclusion, viewing the issue as an inevitable imposition of those in control rather than as an opportunity to become more welcoming toward marginalized populations. In response to whether Skate Canada should be made more inclusive, one person wrote, "It will be imposed regardless of what anyone thinks".

Another sarcastically commented that the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity is “whatever the media tells me I should believe”. For these respondents, the submission toward dominant social structures such as Skate Canada or the media seems to have overridden any potential empathy that could be expressed toward LGBTQI2S persons.

It should be noted that, in comparison to the number of respondents with views located within the *Positive Inclusion* sub-theme of *LGBTQI2S Inclusion*, there were far fewer individuals who expressed negative perceptions of inclusivity. That is not to say that these expressions do not carry weight; they certainly do. However, the opinions of the few should not downplay the overwhelming support of LGBTQI2S inclusion as expressed by this sample.

3.1.2.4 LGBTQI2S Representation & Treatment.

The third dimension of the experience of LGBTQI2S inclusion was *LGBTQI2S Representation & Treatment*. This theme captured perceptions related to the current environment within Canadian figure skating as it relates to LGBTQI2S inclusion. Two sub-themes exist within this major theme: *Issues and Concerns* and *Figure Skating as Inclusive*.

3.1.2.4.1 Issues and Concerns.

Issues with and concerns about the current status of LGBTQI2S inclusion in Skate Canada centred around the following topics: (1) The overrepresentation of gay athletes; (2) the relative invisibility of lesbian and bisexual persons; (3) trans invisibility; and (4) stories alluding to LGBTQI2S-phobia within figure skating.

When asked whether the skating community in Canada is more accepting of gay men than other LGBTQI2S persons, the vast majority of individuals tended to agree that this was the case. One person stated that, “I believe people are more accepting of gay and lesbian than transgender because it has more public awareness”, while another attributed gay representation to the nature of figure skating being a stereotypically feminine sport, commenting “we have come to celebrate

more stereotypical gay man characteristics than we do gay women”. Another person expanded on this notion, asserting

There is one of many archetypes that can be associated to gay men, one of them being that gay men can be flamboyant and artistic, thus making them a good fit as figure skaters because figure skaters too, are artistic. There is also an archetype that lesbian women can be manly (whatever that means) and thus may not be as artistic or likely to wear traditional figure skating wear (often in the form of a skirt or dress) or as likely to wear theatrical makeup – practices that are often common during test or competition.

It is evident the views expressed posit the gay male archetype as a norm within figure skating, while other identities are ignored or overlooked.

Relatedly, concerns were expressed regarding the relative invisibility of lesbian, bisexual, and trans persons within figure skating. One person commented that, while they have many lesbian friends in figure skating, these persons are not easily identified nor celebrated within the media. Others, again, attributed lesbian/bisexual invisibility to juxtaposed assumptions regarding figure skating as feminine and lesbian/bisexual persons as masculine. Regarding trans invisibility, specifically, one person wrote that inclusion should look different depending on which particular community is being discussed. They stated, “There is no way to paint the whole group LGBTQI2S with the same brush”. This person posits that the underrepresentation of trans persons in figure skating should be considered a separate issue from the usual “figure skating as feminine” mantra.

Persons also reported witnessing LGBTQI2S-phobia/discrimination within their figure skating community, mainly in the form of homophobic taunts and slurs from coaches or the bullying of boys for participating in a “girly” sport. Several persons also commented about the unequal judgment of stereotypically masculine/feminine behaviours during competition routines.

For example, one person wrote, “I think there are areas that could improve. Girls are still being told they are too masculine or butch [and] boys are being told they are too girly”. This was supported by a person who stated:

Coaches need to not try to coerce their skaters to present a heteronormative version of themselves. And judges shouldn't ruminate around trying to dispel those who present as anything other than heteronormative. Skate Canada's past initiatives such as "making male skating manly" or whatever they had done when I was a competitive skater are deplorable (they were trying to encourage male skating to be viewed only through the lens of heteronormativity, backed by Stojko and Browning at the time). Skate Canada should work toward the opposite end of the spectrum. One of embracing everyone for their individual differences and identities. That would make things more inclusive.

It is implicated within this comment that figure skating should learn from its history as a largely homophobic/heteronormative space and work toward an environment of inclusion and celebration.

3.1.2.4.2 Figure Skating as Inclusive.

In contrast to the *Issues and Concerns*, sub-theme, the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* sub-theme encompassed the views of those who thought that figure skating in Canada was already supportive/inclusive of LGBTQI2S persons. Some people attributed their view of inclusivity to a personal lack of awareness or education regarding the topic, while others professed the sport of figure skating to be a place of freedom. One person wrote “I think Skate Canada does a great job of rewarding skaters who show their personalities on the ice. You can be totally free to be you during a program”. There were also some who simply hadn’t witnessed LGBTQI2S discrimination within their local community, and thus saw no reason to feel that the community as a whole was excluding these persons.

Thus, the major themes of *LGBTQI2S Inclusion* and *LGBTQI2S Representation/Treatment* varied such that opinions on both the positive and negative side of the spectrum were expressed. These perceptions were likely at least partially due to the underlying (non)heteronormative assumptions employed by persons as they related to LGBTQI2S inclusion, and they certainly had an influence on the final major theme of this analysis: *LGBTQI2S Advocacy*.

3.1.2.5 LGBTQI2S Advocacy.

LGBTQI2S Advocacy represented the ways that individuals actively sought out opportunities to support LGBTQI2S inclusion. These varied from views pertaining to personal access to education to those expressing mandatory diversity training for coaches and volunteers. Thus, this major theme was broken down into the sub-themes of *Personal Advocacy* and *Cultural and/or Political Advocacy*.

3.1.2.5.1 Personal Advocacy.

The *Personal Advocacy* sub-theme reflects evidence of individualized efforts in advocating for LGBTQI2S inclusion. Most often, this occurred in the form of education seeking in order to become knowledgeable of current issues and supportive from a practical standpoint. For example, one person stated:

I think that Skate Canada will have a lot of education to do should they implement this [trans inclusion] policy because if I (someone who wants to learn about this and has many friends in the LGBTQI2S community) struggle, then I can imagine what this might look like in implementation.

Clearly, this is a call for both personal growth and cultural advocacy for Skate Canada to provide more educational opportunities to learn about LGBTQI2S inclusion. Other persons indicated attempts at seeking simple and accessible ways in which to voice their support, saying “I have

seen the gay pride Skate Canada t-shirts and I really wish they were for sale. What a simple statement to show you're an ally". Educational and involvement opportunities appear to be of paramount importance to persons wishing to become LGBTQI2S allies.

While some people were seeking education/involvement, others told of the ways in which they were currently involved in LGBTQI2S efforts. These ranged from blanket statements indicating a love and acceptance of all people, to specific programs or actions to support inclusion. For example, one person stated "[I] was a member of Section Leadership team who helped our first Trans Athletes participate in STARSkate and Syncho competitions". These were encouraging signs from persons already taking the lead on generating equality amongst figure skaters.

3.1.2.5.2 Cultural and/or Political Advocacy.

The *Cultural and/or Political Advocacy* sub-theme represented a call to action for Skate Canada and other figure skating organizations to better represent and encompass the tenets of LGBTQI2S inclusion. One person summed up the need for education, stating:

I think the danger with LGBTQI2S issues is that people in the community at large believe that their personal opinions matter, and they therefore don't have to follow the policies set out by the organization. As an example, it could be traumatic for a trans person who is expecting to participate in a sport in a safe and respectful environment to be constantly misgendered by one of the coaches or a parent, or be told they are not in the right change room by a fellow skater. I think education is a key factor in any initiative, and especially in the form of testimonials from LGBTQI2S persons in the skating community. Such a person would become a role model for other LGBTQI2S skaters, and a tangible example of what an LGBTQI2S person is for the community at large.

This person supports the notion that educational opportunities need to be made available so that LGBTQI2S inclusion can be promoted congruently across the many facets of figure skating.

The idea of increased educational opportunities as a form of support/inclusion was propagated specifically in the form of coach and volunteer diversity training. People stated that, because coaches and volunteers are usually at the forefront of questions and concerns pertaining to this issue, it is necessary for them to be equipped with the relevant knowledge in order to respond truthfully and empathetically. Several individuals referred specifically to “Respect in Sport”, an online education program created by Sheldon Kennedy’s Respect Group, which is now mandatory for Skate Canada coaches to complete; they noted how this program specifically may equip coaches and volunteers with practical information on inclusivity in figure skating. People also suggested providing lessons on the history of figure skating as a homophobic sport and how this may be used as an example of what not to do within contemporary society.

Related to calls for increased education were comments pertaining to improved media representation of LGBTQI2S persons. One person called for more posters and television opportunities for LGBTQI2S figure skaters, while another referred specifically to Olympic medalist and two-time world champion, Eric Radford, stating “Yes, Eric Radford was a step. But he was already a world champion. We need kids and teens to feel comfortable to say, ‘hey, you know what, I’m trans’”. This person was alluding to the ease with which individuals who have a large amount of social capital may navigate social and sporting environments (see Literature Review component of this thesis). Indeed, it is evident that representation and education go hand-in-hand when attempting to address the culture of inclusivity within figure skating.

3.2 Discussion

The preceding analysis explored contemporary attitudes, opinions, and experiences of members of Skate Canada as they relate to LGBTQI2S inclusion in Canadian figure skating.

Results from the quantitative analysis revealed that, net of demographic factors, known contact was significantly related to certain attitudes and perceptions regarding this topic. The qualitative analysis both confirmed these findings and elucidated the way that current views were influenced by preconceived assumptions surrounding (non)heteronormativity and the “meaning” of LGBTQI2S inclusion. In the following section, I discuss the extent to which these results answer the research questions proposed in Chapter 1 of this thesis. I will then discuss the implications of these findings, such that improvements in known contact, education, and environment may lead to more inclusive attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion.

3.2.1 Current Attitudes.

3.2.1.1 Overall Outlook.

Current attitudes toward LGBTQI2S participation and inclusion in Canadian figure skating amongst Skate Canada members who responded to the online survey were mostly positive. As the results indicate, mean scores on each of the survey questions showed that participants were generally in favour of inclusion and generally opposed to discrimination (particularly relating to trans persons and the ways they may be excluded from the sport). These quantitative findings were confirmed by the qualitative analysis, which demonstrated a breadth of evidence in support of LGBTQI2S inclusion and advocacy. Given the previous research on LGBTQI2S inclusion in sport (e.g., Griffin, 1998; Sartore-Baldwin, 2012) and specific literature regarding LGBTQI2S-phobia and marginalization in figure skating (e.g., Adams, 2011; King, 2000), these results are at least somewhat surprising. At the time her important work was published, Adams (2011) asserted, figure skating’s “macho turn” in the 1990s—whereby heterosexuality was endorsed, and homosexuality rejected—continued to provide roadblocks for the LGBTQI2S community in present times. However, the results of this study appear to offer insights that suggest that perhaps this is beginning to change. In particular, overall opinions

regarding trans participation and inclusion illustrated that persons involved in figure skating were mostly prepared to let go of heteronormative assumptions surrounding gender essentialism and perceived physiological advantages of trans persons. Although not specifically addressed in this project, it is tempting to extend these results to include both intersex and gender non-conforming athletes as well, but more research would be required to confirm this inference. Additionally, results from the qualitative analysis showed that the barriers between standard heteronormative assumptions and new perceptions of gender and fairness in sport were beginning to disintegrate, indicating that full inclusion of trans and intersex persons within figure skating may be closer to reality than one may think given figure skating's rather exclusionary history (Adams, 2011; King, 2000) as well as current conversations happening in sport more generally (e.g., the debate over whether Caster Semenya should be allowed to compete in women's track events).

These findings are certainly encouraging. However, they are undoubtedly due in part to the manner in which the study was promoted as well as the types of people who were most likely willing to respond to the survey (refer to Chapter 2, "Method"). Indeed, the critique of Eric Anderson's research methods as offered within the literature review of this thesis may also apply to the present analysis, in that both the title and nature of the survey may have attracted already-inclusive individuals and deterred those who were prejudiced against LGBTQI2S inclusion from participating. Furthermore, one of the researchers for this study, Dr. William Bridel, is a prominent member of the Canadian figure skating community and a vocal advocate for LGBTQI2S inclusion in sport. That his name also appeared on the implied consent form and the survey document may have shaped responses such that more inclusive attitudes/practices were indicated than actually exist in reality. This latter point may have been combatted, to some extent, by the survey being offered online rather than in person (thus limiting the potential for researcher and participant confirmation bias to influence the survey results). Nonetheless, it is important to

acknowledge Pat Griffin's (1998) assertion that progress in sport is often reflective of the larger social context and is therefore prone to backlash from dominant groups. Thus, the overall results favouring inclusive attitudes should be taken with some caution, and continued efforts toward creating and maintaining LGBTQI2S support should be encouraged.

3.2.1.2 Opinion Clusters.

The factor analysis revealed that attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion clustered around four major themes: *Personal Advocacy*, *Figure Skating as Inclusive*, *Cultural and/or Political Advocacy*, and *Trans Exclusion*. To briefly outline each factor: *Personal Advocacy* was comprised of statements that clustered around individual attitudes, opinions, and efforts toward LGBTQI2S inclusion within figure skating. These items were usually stated in the first person and included phrases such as "I am comfortable", "I believe", or "I make efforts". As such, they largely reflected personal values toward inclusion and equality. *Personal Advocacy* accounted for the greatest amount of variation amongst the Likert-scale questions.

The second factor, *Figure Skating as Inclusive*, contained items that assessed figure skating as an already inclusive environment toward LGBTQI2S persons. Individuals who scored high on this factor were likely to agree with statements such as "I believe the skating community is free from homophobia, biphobia, and/or transphobia", and they were likely to disagree with items like "LGBTQI2S persons face challenges in figure skating and/or Canada". Those who obtained low scores on the factor did not agree that figure skating was already inclusive of LGBTQI2S persons.

The *Cultural and/or Political Advocacy* factor pertained to the level of support for cultural and/or political changes within Skate Canada promoting LGBTQI2S inclusion. Admittedly, there was some crossover between this and the *Personal Advocacy* factors, as aspects of both personal and cultural advocacy existed in both themes. For example, while the majority

of items in the *Cultural and/or Political Advocacy* factor pertained to the “support of” rule changes or “importance of” inclusion (indicating policy support), one item recounted the willingness to come to the aid of a person being bullied as a result of their sexuality and/or gender identity. Perhaps the connection here lies between the perceived environmental or cultural cause of the bullying behaviours and the opinions in support of policy change/advocacy. That is, because of the view that a person’s harassment as a result of their sexuality and/or gender identity is due to heteronormative/non-inclusive cultures or policies, a person who responds positively to items pertaining to this would also be likely to respond in favour of items regarding cultural change/advocacy. The qualitative findings certainly support this. One person specifically reported that their reason for endorsing political change was because of witnessing young boys being bullied due to their love of figure skating. More research is needed to confirm and clarify the interplay between advocacy at the personal and the policy levels.

Finally, as is suggested in its naming, the *Trans Exclusion* factor contained items that were positively correlated with attitudes and opinions that discriminated against trans participation in figure skating. Individuals who scored high on this factor were likely to believe that trans participation in competition was unfair and that there should be rules put in place to prevent/manage trans involvement at all levels of the sport. Conversely, those who obtained low scores on this factor were likely in support of inclusive policies toward trans participation in sport.

The results from the factor analysis were largely mirrored by the qualitative examination, which showed that individuals were generally supportive of LGBTQI2S inclusion and advocacy. The qualitative results also illustrated that some people think that figure skating is already an inclusive space, and others are generally against trans participation. The qualitative analysis offered additional insight into the underlying discourses that contributed to the creation and

management of individual attitudes and opinions as they relate to inclusion; namely the (non)heteronormative assumptions surrounding gender and/or fairness in sport. This additional information is particularly important when analysing attitudes about trans participation and will be discussed later in the chapter.

3.2.2 Regression Analysis: The Role of Known Contact.

Before discussing the regression analysis and the relationship between known contact and attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating, it is important to note that the nature of the research design and the manner in which questions pertaining to known contact were asked limited the extent to which contact could be suggested to cause attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion. Our study used a cross-sectional, exploratory design (as opposed to a longitudinal, experimental method) to assess the relationship between contact and attitudes. Thus, the direction of causality between contact and inclusive attitudes could not be determined. Put another way, the research method we employed made it unclear whether increased known contact led to more inclusive attitudes, or if already inclusive attitudes were a precursor to increased known contact. It is possible that individuals with positive attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion were (a) more willing to interact with people from the LGBTQI2S community (thus increasing contact), and/or (b) more welcoming and accommodating to the divulgence of information pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity from LGBTQI2S individuals (this will be discussed further below), thus increasing the awareness of contact. As a result, known contact could not be proclaimed to cause improvements in attitudes concerning LGBTQI2S inclusion; I can only look at the relationship between contact and attitudes at one point in time.

Furthermore, the fact that sexual orientation and gender identity are not explicitly visible characteristics, but rather attributes that require disclosure to be known to others leads to complications regarding the conclusions that can be drawn from self-reported measures of

contact with LGBTQI2S persons. Previous studies analysing the effects of intergroup contact on prejudice reduction have tended either to focus on visible minority groups such as Black South African's during apartheid (e.g., Russell, 1961; Chu & Griffey, 1985) or to employ experimental methods in which personal identity is explicitly stated before the intergroup contact situation occurs (e.g., Schiappa, et al. 2006; Ortiz & Harwood, 2007). Our study, however, asked respondents to self-report their frequency of contact with LGBTQI2S persons. We hypothesize that different types of people actually have different levels of knowledge about and awareness of the sexuality/gender identity of the individuals with whom they have contact. Yet, this cannot be confirmed. As such, this study is said to analyse the effects of self-reported/*known* contact with LGBTQI2S persons upon attitudes toward this group. This leads to questions regarding the effect of contact upon prejudice reduction when sexual orientation and/or gender identity is unknown—a topic that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Finally, it is important to note that the shortcomings of any exploratory design assessing intergroup contact with LGBTQI2S persons are indicative of a greater issue at play regarding sex, gender, and society: We live in a culture where sexual orientation and gender identity are largely assumed to fall within heteronormative categories unless otherwise revealed or stated (Eng, 2006). That is, unless it is explicitly expressed that an individual is LGBTQI2S, they are likely assumed to be a heterosexual man or woman. Thus, in exploratory research designs, it is probable that individuals under-report their actual level of contact with LGBTQI2S persons. However, it should be acknowledged that heteronormative expectations, whether explicit or implicit, are limiting insofar as they provide unconscious approval and rejection of behaviours that fit within or differ from heterosexual, binary categories of behaviour (Anderson et al, 2012). This has been displayed through the 1980s “macho turn” of figure skating (Adams, 2011) (see Chapter 1, “Literature Review”) and is currently being played out in the debate over whether Caster

Semenya should be allowed to compete in women's events under IAAF jurisdiction. As such, we must be cognizant to forgo assumptions regarding sexual orientation and/or gender identity unless they are explicitly stated.

3.2.2.1 Model 1: Demographic Effects.

The purpose of the bivariate and multivariate analyses was to examine the relationship between the individual demographic variables and opinions towards inclusion, and to test whether the demographic effects remained once we controlled for known contact.

Model 1 of the regression analysis demonstrated the relationship between the individual demographic variables and the factor scores, controlling for other variables. On the *Personal Advocacy* factor, it was found that older people and individuals from central Canada tended to score lower than younger people and those residing in other parts of Canada, controlling for other demographic variables in the model. This was likely due to higher rates of conservatism amongst these brackets, as older people and those from the prairie provinces tend to be more right-leaning on the sociopolitical spectrum, as evidenced by the history of governments in these parts of Canada. Volunteers also tended to score lower on this factor than individuals occupying other roles, such as coaches. Again, this wasn't entirely surprising, as these individuals tended to score higher than others on the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor, even when both contact and demographic variables were controlled (this will be further explained below). It stands to reason that, if volunteers tended to perceive the figure skating community as an already inclusive space, then they were likely less motivated to be personally supportive/advocative for LGBTQI2S persons within the sport. Thirdly, bisexuals tended to score significantly higher than heterosexuals on the *Personal Advocacy* factor, controlling for other demographic variables. This is understandable given the increased ability of these persons to relate to individuals in subjugated positions. That is, because bisexual persons themselves are a part of the LGBTQI2S

community, they may be less prejudiced against other LGBTQI2S persons. However, this does not explain why gay men, lesbians, and nondistinguished persons failed to score higher than heterosexuals on this factor, as these individuals are also members of the LGBTQI2S community and would also be assumed to experience less prejudice toward this group. Given that the sample size is so small, more research is needed in order to understand the differing perspectives of LGBTQI2S persons toward inclusion. Finally, people who spent time residing in both rural and urban environments tended to score significantly higher on the *Personal Advocacy* factor than those who had only lived in urban environments. Admittedly, this was not expected, as those living in urban environments lean toward more liberal views than individuals from rural areas (McGrane, Berdahl, & Bell, 2017). It could be that persons who have witnessed the hardships of LGBTQI2S communities in rural environments yet have grown to appreciate the positives of inclusion through residing in urban communities have an increased empathy for these groups. However, more research is certainly required to elucidate this proposition.

Model 1 of the regression analysis for *Figure Skating as Inclusive* found significant differences in scores on this factor amongst varying sexual orientations and primary roles, when controlling for other demographic variables. Regarding sexual orientation, lesbians scored significantly higher than heterosexuals on the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor. This finding may seem surprising, and it should be interpreted with caution as only five of the total 106 survey participants identified as lesbians. The results indicate that all five self-identified lesbians reported finding skating quite inclusive, but this view might not be indicative of the larger lesbian figure skating community. This particular issue is being explored as part of a larger project of which this survey is one part.

In terms of primary roles, athletes and volunteers scored significantly lower and higher than coaches on the model 1 regression of *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor, respectively. The

results for athletes could be due to an increased awareness amongst these persons of LGBTQI2S issues in the greater society, which—as a “carryover effect”—has influenced their perceptions of inclusion in figure skating similar to what scholars have suggested about sport more generally (e.g., Sartore-Baldwin, 2012). However, these findings are more likely the result of athletes witnessing events that other individuals in the sport simply do not have access to; that is, homonegative incidents which occur during practice or in the locker room. According to Martens and Mobley (2005), most homonegative taunts and slurs take place in these periods away from training (and, therefore, direct adult supervision). Moreover, homonegative taunts and slurs are suggested to be more acceptable in these sporting spaces than in society at large as a result of limiting ideologies about masculinity in sport, which serve to exacerbate existing prejudicial attitudes toward gay male athletes and produce underlying assumptions of lesbianism amongst female sportspersons. Thus, athletes may be well-equipped to offer an accurate account of the sporting environment as it relates to LGBTQI2S inclusion.

In contrast to athletes, volunteers tended to score significantly higher on the model 1 regression of *Figure Skating as Inclusive* than other primary roles. This is likely due to the fact that many of these individuals only ever occupied volunteer positions within Skate Canada; unlike coaches and officials, volunteers did not necessarily participate as figure skaters and thus did not bear witness to the cultural norms explained above. Furthermore, while coaches and athletes were likely involved in figure skating on a day-to-day basis, volunteers tended to be more removed from the sport: The extent of their involvement could be largely administrative, rather than participatory. It should be noted that this finding is supported by the qualitative analysis, which illustrated that volunteers tended to hold very positive views of the current status of LGBTQI2S inclusion in Canadian figure skating.

3.2.2.2 Model 2: Known Contact.

Model 2 of the regression analysis examined the role of self-reported known contact upon attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion, controlling for demographic factors. For *Personal Advocacy*, known contact outside of the skating community was found to significantly contribute to scores on this factor when other variables were controlled. That is, individuals who experienced greater amounts of known contact with LGBTQI2S persons outside of figure skating were significantly more likely to score higher on this factor than those who experienced less known contact, and this effect occurred even when demographic variables were accounted for. This result is directly in line with the central premise of Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory, and it represents one of the central findings of this thesis.

The effect of known contact upon *Personal Advocacy* mitigated both the age and the residence effects, which were present in model 1 of the regression analysis. That is, while older persons and those residing in central Canada tended to score lower on the *Personal Support/Advocacy* factor when only demographic variables were controlled for, we determined that these results are actually likely due to these groups experiencing less known contact with LGBTQI2S persons. Once known contact was accounted for, the demographic effects largely disappeared. Conversely, known contact did not appear to moderate the effects of sexual orientation on *Personal Advocacy*, such that bisexuals continued to hold more positive attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion than heterosexuals, even when known contact was taken into consideration. Similarly, volunteers continued to score lower than coaches on the *Personal Advocacy* factor, even after known contact was accounted for.

The fact that the effects of age and residence on opinions are accounted for by known contact, yet the effects of sexual orientation and primary role remain even when controlling for known contact is worthy of consideration. As mentioned previously, that older people and those

residing in central Canada tended to score lower on the *Personal Advocacy* factor was likely a result of higher rates of conservatism amongst these groups. Our results indicate that a lack of known contact between these groups and LGBTQI2S persons also contributed to lower scores on *Personal Advocacy*. Conversely, it has been shown that the high and low scores of bisexuals and volunteers, respectively, were not related to known contact with LGBTQI2S persons. As stated previously, bisexuals, as members of the LGBTQI2S community, are likely to hold empathetic attitudes toward fellow LGBTQI2S persons regardless of the level of known contact with this group. This is due to bisexuals' self-identification as LGBTQI2S persons, and not to known contact with these persons. Again, it is unknown why this result was obtained only for bisexuals, while gay, lesbian, and nondistinguished persons failed to differ significantly from heterosexuals on the *Personal Advocacy* factor. In contrast, that volunteers scored lower on this factor was likely a result of their assessment of the figure skating community as an already inclusive space. We reasoned that this perception toward the status of figure skating rendered volunteers less motivated to employ personal support and/or advocacy toward LGBTQI2S individuals. Given this, one would assume that the sharing of stories/hardships by LGBTQI2S persons with volunteers would result in an increase in empathetic attitudes toward this group. However, this did not occur as attitudes amongst volunteers were not mitigated by known contact. More research is needed in order to understand the differentiating attributes of volunteers that renders them less affected by known contact with LGBTQI2S persons.

That is not to say, however, that increased known contact between volunteers and LGBTQI2S persons could, in no way, lead to improved attitudes toward inclusion. Nonetheless, in order for this to occur, the conditions surrounding contact experiences may need to be optimized, and an educational component may have to be introduced. These aspects will be discussed later in the chapter.

Model 2 of the regression analysis upon the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor illustrated that known contact appeared to mitigate the effects of sexual orientation. Specifically, although nondistinguished persons did not tend to vary significantly from heterosexuals on model 1 of the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor regression, these persons did tend to score significantly higher than heterosexuals when known contact was accounted for. By contrast, while lesbians tended to score significantly higher than heterosexuals on the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor when only demographic variables were controlled for, this finding disappeared when known contact with LGBTQI2S persons inside/outside the skating community was taken into consideration.

These findings highlight the difficulty of interpreting the effects of the known contact variables. Looking back at the bivariate results, we can see that nondistinguished persons report the lowest levels of known contact outside the skating community and the second highest levels inside the skating community. Conversely, lesbians report the lowest levels of contact inside the skating community and the third highest levels of contact outside the skating community. Once we control for these contact variables, we find that nondistinguished persons believe that figure skating is more inclusive than heterosexuals, and lesbians feel the same as heterosexuals (whereas without the contact variables they thought it was more inclusive than heterosexuals).

Bearing this in mind, it is evident that known contact inside the skating community had a significant effect in mitigating the scores of nondistinguished and lesbian persons on the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor, while known contact outside the skating community did not tend to affect the scores for either of these identity groups. When known contact inside the skating community was not controlled, lesbians scored higher than nondistinguished persons on the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor. This was likely because lesbians generally experienced little known contact with other LGBTQI2S persons in figure skating, while nondistinguished persons experienced a significant amount of known contact with these individuals. We assumed that high

levels of known contact with LGBTQI2S persons in figure skating contributed to an increased awareness of the hardships that these persons endure, which lead to lower scores on the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor. However, when known contact inside the skating community was controlled (i.e., when levels of known contact with LGBTQI2S persons were averaged amongst groups of differing sexual orientations), the scores of lesbians on the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor decreased relative to other groups, while the scores of nondistinguished persons went up. This was likely because the differential effects of known contact inside the skating community (whereby nondistinguished persons reported experiencing more known contact than lesbians) was eliminated, thus the effects of low/high levels of known contact were no longer contributive.

This finding implies that lesbians and nondistinguished persons have different “baselines” of attitudes toward the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor, when other variables (specifically, known contact inside the skating community) are controlled. The baseline for lesbians is high because they report little known contact with LGBTQI2S persons in figure skating, and the baseline for nondistinguished persons is low because they report high known contact with LGBTQI2S persons in the sport. Why this is the case is likely down to the way in which each population experienced “contact” and thus answered the questions pertaining to it. Nondistinguished persons might have a broader range of individuals who are considered “LGBTQI2S persons” with whom they have contact, while lesbians may include other lesbians, specifically (of which there appear to be few within figure skating). Thus, it makes sense that nondistinguished persons report higher levels of known contact inside the skating community than lesbians, as their interpretation of known contact allows for this to occur.

It should be noted that, in contrast to known contact with LGBTQI2S persons inside the figure skating community, controlling for known contact outside the figure skating community yielded little significant differences between lesbians and nondistinguished persons on the *Figure*

Skating as Inclusive factor. When known contact outside the figure skating community was not controlled, neither lesbians nor nondistinguished persons reported experiencing significantly high levels of known contact with LGBTQI2S persons. Thus, the effect of the model 2 regression in controlling for this variable (i.e., averaging the levels of known contact with LGBTQI2S persons amongst groups of differing sexual orientations), were not significant in mediating known contact effects as there was little difference in known contact with LGBTQI2S persons outside the figure skating community between these groups to begin with. This differential effect of known contact inside and outside the skating community makes sense, given the nature of the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor being a judgment of the current status of LGBTQI2S inclusion inside a particular association and not throughout society at large. That is, because the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor measures attitudes toward the level of inclusion within Canadian figure skating only, the effects of known contact with individuals who are immediately impacted by the inclusive/discriminatory practices of this organization would logically bear more influence on individual attitudes than known contact with LGBTQI2S persons who are outside of the figure skating community. This is in contrast to the *Personal Advocacy* factor, upon which known contact with LGBTQI2S persons outside the figure skating community had a much greater impact than known contact inside the figure skating community. That being said, it is unclear why nondistinguished persons tended to report *more* inclusive attitudes than groups of other sexual orientations when contact variables were controlled for. More research is needed to investigate the lived experiences of these persons in figure skating as well as sport more generally.

That being said, the results for lesbian participants should be taken with caution, as these persons accounted for only five of the total 106 participants in the study. While lesbian identities within figure skating tend to be largely invisible, and many lesbian persons may stay in the closet

for fear of being ridiculed or labeled as masculine or “butch” (Ravel & Rail, 2006), it would not be rigorous to draw conclusions regarding the effects of known contact upon attitudes of the entire lesbian figure skating community when the sample from this study is so small.

Outside of sexual orientation, known contact inside/outside the figure skating community did not appear to mitigate any of other the demographic effects upon the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor. Interpretations of this finding are somewhat contradictory. On one hand, the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor did not assess the level of prejudice amongst persons toward LGBTQI2S inclusion, but rather the extent to which they found the skating environment/community to be inclusive of LGBTQI2S persons. That is, the *Figure Skating as Inclusive* factor measured objective evaluations of the status of figure skating in Canada; it did not analyse prejudicial attitudes toward LGBTQI2S persons. Thus, known contact would appear to have little effect upon opinions regarding this matter. However, it would be logical to assume that increased known contact with LGBTQI2S persons would contribute to a greater understanding of the hardships endured by these individuals and an increased sense of empathy toward the community as a whole, thus resulting in a greater likelihood to obtain a high score on the factor. More research is needed to delineate the effects of known contact upon perceptions toward the status of environmental inclusivity.

3.2.3 Conceptualizing Inclusion.

The discussion up until this point has pertained largely to the quantitative component of the analysis. Given that the first two research questions addressed current attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion as well as the role of contact in the development and proliferation of these attitudes, it was logical to focus mainly on the quantitative study, while turning to the qualitative component as a means of confirming or triangulating the results that transpired. As far as this was concerned, the results of the thematic analysis of the qualitative materials mirrored the

quantitative results, and there were few discrepancies between each method of analysis. Both research components revealed evidence in favour of personal and cultural advocacy of LGBTQI2S inclusion, and each disclosed information pertaining to the status of inclusion within contemporary figure skating. The quantitative and the qualitative analyses also displayed a significant body of information regarding attitudes and opinions towards trans participation: while some individuals were largely in favour of equal and open participation of trans persons in sport, others expressed reservations insofar as the perceived biological advantages of these individuals over others may result in unequal and unfair competition in figure skating.

The third research question addressed the manner in which attitudes toward inclusion were conceptualized and/or experienced in contemporary times. We determined the open-ended portion of the survey to be the most appropriate method of analysing these constructs, as the nature of these questions allowed the freedom for individuals to formulate their own thoughts and express their own concerns surrounding this topic. As such, the analysis revealed four major themes that characterized the manner in which people made sense of LGBTQI2S inclusion: *Heteronormativity*, *LGBTQI2S Inclusion*, *LGBTQI2S Representation & Treatment*, and *LGBTQI2S Advocacy*. Several interesting findings emerged that assisted in answering the research question: the role that heteronormativity played in informing/shaping individuals' perceptions of LGBTQI2S inclusion (particularly trans inclusion), and the emphasis upon educational and advocacy opportunities as a means of furthering personal efforts at becoming an ally to the LGBTQI2S community.

3.2.3.1 Heteronormativity.

Whether individuals employed heteronormative assumptions regarding gender and fairness in sport was pivotal in their development of inclusive or exclusive attitudes toward trans inclusion in figure skating. In this case, "heteronormative" was interpreted to mean traditional or

dominant ideologies about sex, gender, and sexuality such that masculinity and sport performance are inherently linked and men, as a result of exhibiting stereotypically masculine characteristics, are inherently superior sport performers (Cavanagh & Sykes, 2006).

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between the *Gender Fluidity* and *Fairness* sub-themes present within the major theme of *Heteronormativity*. Individuals tended to employ either an essentialist (the view that gender and biology are inherently linked) or relativist (the view that gender is socially constructed and purely positional) interpretation of gender (Eng, 2006). This largely influenced their perception of trans inclusion as fair or unfair. For example, one person wrote that policies that allow trans participants to compete in their personally identified gender are essential components of full LGBTQI2S inclusion. This assertion requires the assumption that sports are segregated based on gender and that fluidity exists such that individuals can transition from one end of the gender continuum to another. Thus, policies enabling the freedom for individuals to compete in their personally identified gender would be considered legitimate and fair within a gender relativist worldview. Strategies employed by those who utilized a gender relativist interpretation would break down should they be employed within a gender essentialist worldview, as the latter position assumes that sex and gender are inherently linked, and that sport is segregated on the basis of biology. A person writing from this perspective would argue that trans inclusion policies are unfair as they enable individuals assigned male at birth to compete within female divisions, thereby legitimizing otherwise unfair genetic advantages for sport performance.

Thus, the manner in which individuals made sense of or conceptualized their attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion—at least by way of trans inclusion—were largely influenced by preconceived assumptions regarding heteronormativity. These assumptions dictated whether

sport is segregated on the basis of sex or gender and influenced opinions regarding the fairness of trans participation in figure skating.

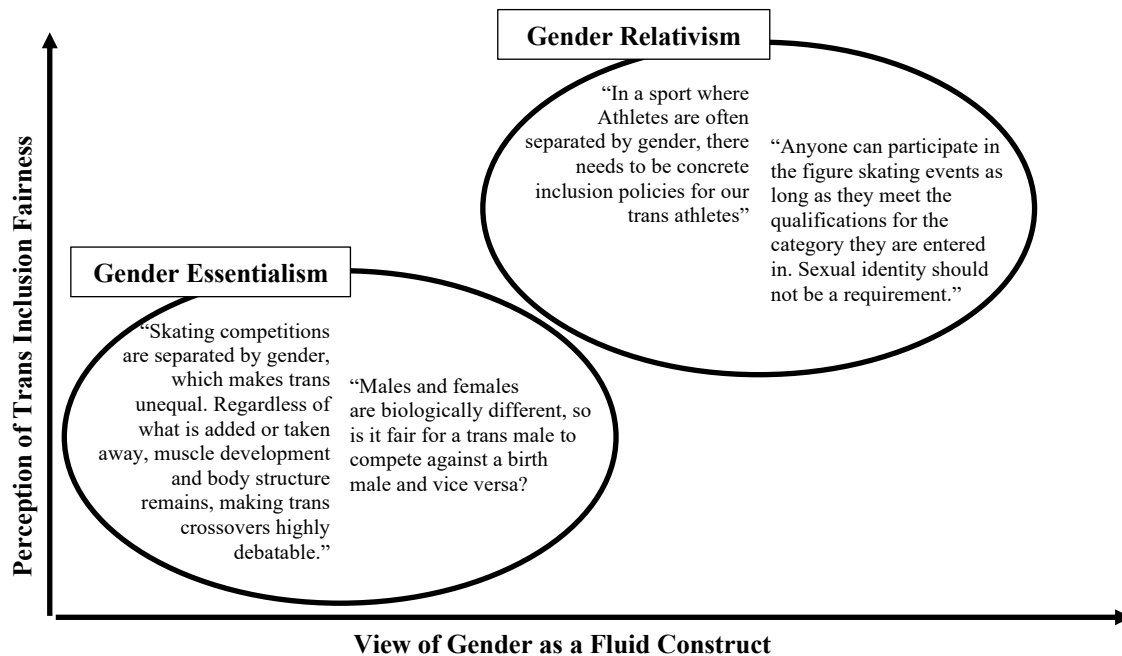


Figure 2. Gender Fluidity and Perceptions of Trans Inclusion Fairness

The tendency for persons with increasingly fluid constructions of gender to perceive trans inclusion in figure skating as fair and equitable. Individuals employing essentialist views of gender saw trans participation as unfair given inherent biological advantages of persons assigned male at birth competing in female categories. People who displayed gender relativist perspectives saw trans participation as fair because of views holding gender to be socially constructed and purely positional.

3.2.3.2 Educational and Advocacy Opportunities.

Learning about the outgroup is thought to be one of the primary mechanisms through which intergroup contact theory contributes to prejudice reduction toward marginalized groups (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998). As such, education is an important aspect of any attempt to improve inclusion/participation for LGBTQI2S persons. That individuals from my research study placed such a significant amount of emphasis upon educational and advocacy opportunities as a means of furthering personal efforts toward inclusion was interesting insofar as it demonstrated both a desire and a willingness to act upon already inclusive attitudes that had been developed.

This desire itself can be viewed as a formulation of inclusive attitudes, rather than as a by-product of preconceived opinions from an earlier time. That is, individuals' willingness to continually seek education or involvement is thought to reflect current attitudes rather than simply current actions. For example, in the "seeking education" and "seeking involvement" components of the *Personal Advocacy* sub-theme of *LGBTQI2S Advocacy*, individuals expressed their desire to become more personally educated/involved in LGBTQI2S initiatives as a response to questions pertaining to whether Skate Canada should be made more inclusive for these individuals. In other words, people's agreement with the central premise of the question "Do you feel skating in Canada should be made more inclusive toward LGBTQI2S persons" was implicit within their desire to become more personally involved with inclusion. This occurred even when individuals stated that they were still unsure about certain aspects of LGBTQI2S participation in sport. One person wrote that, because they were uncertain about the specific implications of trans inclusion, they were seeking education regarding the topic. This was interpreted as conveying an inclusive attitude toward LGBTQI2S inclusion as a whole, and not just as a by-product of a lack-of knowledge regarding the issue.

The action-as-conceptualization notion can be juxtaposed against the "indifference" and "resignation" components within the *Negative Implications* sub-theme of *LGBTQI2S Inclusion*. In these cases, people who propagated views toward LGBTQI2S inclusion that were either lacking care/interest in the topic or representing resignation toward LGBTQI2S initiatives were assumed to possess discriminatory or exclusionary attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion. That is, certain views were considered non-inclusive or discriminatory on the basis of apathy or indifference toward inclusion.

Thus, it can be concluded that the desire to learn or to help is one way that individuals conceptualize attitudes regarding LGBTQI2S inclusion. The implications of this are far reaching and will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

3.2.4 Implications.

Thus far, it has been determined that the sample displayed generally inclusive attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion, that known contact is related to positive attitudes toward the community, and that people tended to conceptualize their opinions on the basis of (non)heteronormativity and through an action-based approach to inclusion. I will now describe some of the pragmatic implications of these findings.

3.2.4.1 Increased Known Contact.

Perhaps the most obvious implication of the findings is that increased known intergroup contact with LGBTQI2S individuals seems to contribute to more inclusive attitudes toward this community. Thus, known contact should be both fostered and encouraged as one aspect of creating and maintaining more inclusive sporting spaces and practices. Relating back to Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis of 515 studies pertaining to intergroup contact theory, the effect of known contact upon attitude improvement exists regardless of the quality or quantity of such contact. Therefore, so long as there are increasing numbers of out persons in sport as well as society, prejudice will inevitably be reduced. Anderson et al. (2016) furthers this recommendation by highlighting the interplay between out-athletes, prejudice reduction, increasing inclusivity, and subsequent encouragement of out-athletes. That is, because of the reduction in prejudice that occurs as a result of contact with out-athletes, an environment of acceptance and encouragement leads to more and more out-athletes, which widens the circle of contact and prejudice reduction. Therefore, increased known contact with LGBTQI2S individuals is recommended. Skate Canada has made efforts in this regard by making its membership aware

of various initiatives in the Canadian context such as You Can Play and the Canadian Olympic Committee's #OneTeam educational program, both of which serve at least in part to share personal stories of LGBTQI2S individuals in sport. Moreover, the organization has provided opportunities for one of my supervisors, Dr. William Bridel, to share his experiences in figure skating through keynote addresses at various skating events. How impactful this "awareness raising" has been will be the subject of future research evaluating the success of educational initiatives and policy implementation as a whole.

Increasing known contact through media representation and awareness is another manner that prejudice toward LGBTQI2S persons may be reduced. A study by Ortiz and Harwood (2007) found that exposure to positive gay-straight interactions via the television contributed to a reduction in homophobic attitudes toward this community. In particular, the authors posited that repeated exposure to positive intergroup interactions may provide a model (in this case, the cisgender, heterosexual ally) that can be imitated when people find themselves in a similar intergroup setting. More exposure to these programs resulted in lower anxiety and social distance toward LGBTQI2S persons, which resulted in reduced prejudicial attitudes. Importantly, Schiappa, Gregg, and Hewes, (2005) found that the effects of media exposure on prejudice reduction are strongest amongst straight people who have relatively little known contact with gay people. Thus, programs endorsing LGBTQI2S representation online and in the media are effective in improving inclusive attitudes toward LGBTQI2S persons.

Relatedly, increasing exposure to known contact via successful LGBTQI2S allies is an effective means of improving attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating. This has been demonstrated very clearly by National Hockey League (NHL) coach-turned-administrator, Brian Burke, and his openly gay son, Brendan. Brian Burke, who identifies as a cisgender, heterosexual man, is a vocal advocate for LGBTQI2S inclusion and speaks regularly at

conferences about the importance of reducing the stigma surrounding LGBTQI2S athletes (Maki, 2015). That his persona is one of a stereotypically gruff and tough “hockey guy” contributes to the overall effect of the message conveyed, as he demonstrates the ability for all individuals to be inclusive, including those who are least likely to be so (white, heterosexual, ultra-masculine males). Given my study’s results pertaining to trans inclusion, it may be particularly important to emphasize positive trans-cisgender alliances, specifically in a competitive sporting environment. To illustrate that healthy, inclusive, and accepting relationships exist between trans and cisgender athletes would provide a model for all individuals to imitate as they go about performing their sport, thus contributing to reduced prejudice toward these individuals.

3.2.4.2 *Improved Quality of Contact.*

While Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) indicated that there is a generalized positive effect of intergroup contact, they also found that the quality of contact matters insofar as prejudice reduction can be maximized when Allport’s optimal conditions are met. As a reminder, these conditions are *Equal Status*, whereby members of the contact situation should display similarities in academic backgrounds, wealth, experience, and task proficiency; *Common Goals*, such that persons must rely upon each other to achieve a unified objective; *Intergroup Cooperation*, where members of differing groups work together in a non-competitive, cooperative environment; and *Support of Authorities, Law, or Custom*, meaning that social or institutional authorities should be in support of contact between groups. Designing and implementing programs that foster Allport’s facilitative mechanisms are beyond the scope of this thesis, and there are numerous studies describing the different methods that these optimal conditions may be obtained (see Pettigrew, 1998). However, in light of the major findings from my research, it is recommended that high quality contact is explicitly encouraged between volunteers within figure skating and members of the LGBTQI2S community. Recall from earlier that known contact effects tended not to mitigate

attitudes toward inclusion amongst volunteers. It was argued that this was the result of perceptions amongst these persons that figure skating is an already inclusive space, therefore personal advocacy for LGBTQI2S inclusion was not motivated or necessitated. It may be especially important, then, to develop educational and intergroup contact programs that specifically target volunteer awareness of LGBTQI2S issues and hardships in figure skating so that more inclusive attitudes amongst these individuals may be developed. Because investigations requiring mandatory intergroup contact tended to report larger effect sizes in prejudice reduction than those which allowed individuals the option to forego interaction with marginalized groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), it is recommended that volunteers undergo mandatory education and known intergroup contact with LGBTQI2S persons, with some cautionary notes provided in the following section.

3.2.4.3 The Role of Education.

One of the primary findings of my research was that persons tended to express positive attitudes toward inclusion through a desire or willingness to participate in educational and/or advocacy campaigns promoting LGBTQI2S participation. Also present was a call for individuals within figure skating—and particularly for those in coaching, officiating, or volunteering positions—to undergo mandatory training or education regarding LGBTQI2S inclusion. This is an important proposition, and one that is supported by research pertaining to intergroup contact theory. As mentioned previously, both Allport (1954) and Pettigrew (1998) purported that one the major ways that intergroup contact contributes to prejudice reduction is through learning about the outgroup (in this case, LGBTQI2S persons). This assertion has been furthered by studies indicating that diversity training as well courses pertaining to the psychology of prejudice can assist in prejudice reduction toward marginalized groups (Hogan & Mallot, 2005; Pettijohn & Walzer, 2008). Furthermore, because the findings from my research indicated that persons tended

to conceptualize attitudes toward LGBTQI2S participation on the basis of heteronormative or nonheteronormative assumptions regarding sex, gender, and sport, it is evident that education regarding the relationships between gender and sport performance is necessary to ensure inclusivity is fostered for all members of the LGBTQI2S community, particularly trans athletes. Thus, it is recommended that educational and advocacy opportunities be created in order to further reduce prejudice toward LGBTQI2S communities.

It is important to note that this recommendation is significant for several other reasons besides reducing prejudice and increasing awareness. Firstly, a desire for education and advocacy was one of the primary manners that people *conceptualized* their attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion. Therefore, these initiatives should be one of the primary ways that individuals can *express* their attitudes toward inclusion as well. Undoubtedly, this will lead to an environment that is more inclusive of LGBTQI2S persons, which in turn will further the snowball effect of known contact, prejudice reduction, and further known contact. Also, enabling individuals the opportunity to express their approval and acceptance of LGBTQI2S persons through educational/advocacy initiatives will contribute to environments that successfully impact the views of young figure skaters such that the closed-loop system of discrimination within sport will be successfully severed (Anderson, et al. 2016). That is, because the conditions that will keep skaters within the sport are inclusive of all individuals, the persons who choose to inhabit coaching, officiating, and volunteer positions will further enhance inclusivity within the sport.

Secondly, one of the main drawbacks of intergroup contact theory is that, in the case of LGBTQI2S participation, too much emphasis is placed upon the subjugated group to foster affective ties with those in control, and not vice versa. Put another way, in the case of gay athletes, increased intergroup contact requires more closeted individuals to out themselves so that contact itself may be initiated. This places too much onus on the LGBTQI2S community and not

enough on cisgender, heterosexual persons. Promoting education and advocacy programs for cisgender, heterosexual persons encourages and enables the development of inclusive environments without burdening the LGBTQI2S community. This is important for sustained prejudicial reduction and it assists in mitigating the potential risk of individuals who feel the need to come out in an otherwise hostile environment. Promoting education and advocacy programs represents a responsibility that cannot be underestimated.

3.2.4.4 The Role of the Environment.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the effect of known contact upon attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion was only significant when it was documented outside the figure skating community. Known contact inside the community had little effect upon inclusive attitudes (although it did influence attitudes of lesbians and nondistinguished persons toward the current status of LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating). This is significant, as it illustrates the importance of *Support of Authorities, Law, or Custom* (one of Allport's optimal conditions) in manifesting inclusion in any environment. In Allport's (1954) original work, he noted that *Support of Authorities, Law, or Custom* is perhaps the most important of any of the facilitative mechanisms for intergroup contact, as a culture of encouragement and approval greatly enhances both the likelihood that contact will take place and the quality of contact once it has commenced. Furthermore, in the case of sport, Anderson et al. (2016) posits that there is often a delay between movements toward inclusivity within society and in that of sporting cultures, due again to the closed-loop nature of athletes becoming coaches and officials as well as traditional ideas about gender (and sexuality) that remain influential in the organization of and practices within sport. Thus, to the extent that the above recommendations will contribute to figure skating becoming a more inclusive environment toward LGBTQI2S persons, the greater society must also act in the

corresponding direction. Otherwise, efforts at obtaining full and equal participation of all athletes (and coaches, officials, volunteers, and administrators) will be largely futile.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

4.1 Personal Reflection

When I was approached by Dr. Bridel with the opportunity to conduct this study, I was a freshly graduated psychology major competing professionally on the international squash circuit. Both of these endeavours emphasized the value of objective, quantitative data. As a student, I was exposed to the deliberate effort of psychologists to develop evidence-based approaches to psychosocial processes and behaviour. As an elite athlete, I had been (and continue to be) trained to let go of emotional appraisals of performance, focusing instead on impartial, data-fuelled assessments of the way that I am competing. These methods of study offer many advantages both academically and athletically, and they have contributed greatly to my conceptualization of and participation within the activities that I pursue. Crucially, my background in psychology and sport have led to the view of objective, quantitative analyses as providing realistic and pragmatic solutions to the problems that I encounter. The answers, it seems to me, are inherent within the evidence.

But what about the processes? Indeed, while it is important to know the answer to a problem, it is of equal necessity to understand the qualitative mechanism through which that answer is obtained. Relating to psychology, research analysing the thought-processes associated with depression is of equivalent importance as the assessment of neurotransmitter quantities and diffusion. Similarly, throughout my career as an athlete, I have kept a daily log of my thoughts, motivations, and emotions regarding competing on the squash court. This has assisted greatly in my understanding of the mechanisms that lead to optimal athletic performance. Understanding lived-experiences is an advantage of qualitative research that cannot be achieved through quantitative examinations.

This brings us to the present study. As previously mentioned, the original plan was to perform a poststructural, qualitative analysis of LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating. This would have provided a rich encounter of the many conceptualizations of inclusion amongst athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers. However, I felt that a qualitative-only approach would have missed out on some of the practical implications that could be obtained through a quantitative analysis, which could in turn be helpful to Skate Canada's desire to address inclusion in more meaningful ways. Specifically, I wanted to understand the ways that attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion were conceptualized and experienced, but also how this information could lead to realistic and pragmatic outcomes regarding more equal or equitable participation amongst and treatment toward LGBTQI2S persons. A mixed-methods analysis seemed to offer the best approach to the questions I was asking and provide the most meaningful information desired by the Skate Canada organization.

But what about intergroup contact theory? I stumbled across Allport's model in a book by Anderson, McGrath, and Bullingham (2016). It was mentioned only briefly as a way that increasing numbers of out athletes can contribute to more inclusive attitudes. Yet, in spite of its only passing acknowledgement, Allport's theory resonated with me on a level that poststructural paradigms did not. Delving deeper into past research analysing the effects of intergroup contact on prejudice reduction, it occurred to me that this theory provided a framework through which to analyse LGBTQI2S inclusion that entailed the advantages of both quantitative as well as qualitative methods of research. That is, intergroup contact theory offered a way to approach the research questions that was realistic and pragmatic, while also elucidating the mechanisms through which attitudes develop and proliferate. Indeed, it is quantitative in nature. Yet the manner in which intergroup contact theory functions is through the introduction of lived-experiences between communities of differing identities. Put another way, increased contact

amongst groups of people enables individuals to see past the “data” of stereotypes and overgeneralizations and into the colour of individual identity and personality. It is an inherently qualitative mechanism.

Thus, my decision to perform a mixed-method analysis of the effects of known contact upon attitudes toward inclusion stemmed from a desire to objectively examine the role of subjectivity. This is what intergroup contact theory does, and this is what my study is about. And this, ultimately, is one of the ways in which full and equal participation of LGBTQI2S persons in figure skating can be realized. My analysis revealed, (1) that, amongst my respondents, attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating were mostly positive, albeit with some reservations stemming from concerns about the fair and equal participation of trans participation in sport; (2) that known contact was significantly related to attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion for my participants, particularly in relation to personal support and advocacy of these persons; (3) that individuals’ underlying (non)heteronormative assumptions regarding gender as essentialist or relativist contributed greatly to the conceptualization of trans inclusion in sport as either fair or unfair; and (4) that respondents tended to phrase their support of LGBTQI2S persons as a desire or willingness to seek educational and/or advocacy opportunities regarding inclusive practices. These findings entail both practical and theoretical implications, which include increasing the amount and quality of known contact with LGBTQI2S persons, providing more educational and advocacy opportunities in favour of LGBTQI2S inclusion, and shifting the environment within and outside of figure skating toward one of acceptance and celebration. It is my belief that, should these recommendations be implemented, we will see a shift in culture toward overall inclusivity of LGBTQI2S persons in figure skating.

4.2 Limitations

The use of a survey instrument to explore current attitudes amongst Skate Canada athletes, coaches, and officials toward LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating inevitably came with several limitations. I will discuss the following three limitations in this chapter: convenience sampling limits; cross-sectional data; and, the known identity obstacle.

4.2.1 Convenience Sampling.

As has been referenced throughout this thesis, the analysis did not employ random sampling methods. A link to the survey was sent to all registered Skate Canada members who have signed up to receive electronic communications and/or are members of the Skate Canada Facebook page, but only those members who clicked on the link and then agreed to the implied consent form proceeded to complete the survey. The title of the survey, the manner through which it was distributed and promoted, and the nature of the project (involving marginalized groups) all could have influenced the types of people who were most willing to participate in the study. As such, results pertaining to overall attitudes concerning LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating are almost certainly not representative of the entire figure skating community. The results may be biased in favour of inclusivity. Notably, the study contained few participants who identified as other than heterosexual or cisgender. Without the opinions of LGBTQI2S-identifying persons—the ones who are most directly affected by participatory/discriminatory practices—it is difficult to acquire an accurate depiction of the true status of inclusion within figure skating. As a result, we may be under-estimating the extent to which varying forms of exclusion occur in the sport.

4.2.2 Cross-Sectional Data.

Although already explored in the “Discussion” section of Chapter 3, it is important to acknowledge that the nature of this study as a cross-sectional, exploratory analysis limited the extent to which contact could be said to directly influence attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion

in figure skating. While increased known contact may have led to improvements in personal advocacy of LGBTQI2S persons, already inclusive individuals could have been more willing to interact with LGBTQI2S persons, thus increasing the awareness of contact. It is also possible that already inclusive individuals were more welcoming and accommodating to the divulgence of sexual and/or gender identity from LGBTQI2S persons, which would have further improved the awareness of contact. Because my study was only able to analyse the relationship between known contact and attitudes at a single point in time, contact could not be proclaimed to cause improvements in attitudes concerning LGBTQI2S inclusion.

4.2.3 The Known Identity Obstacle.

Also elucidated in the “Discussion” section of Chapter 3 was the challenge in asking about contact with others and their sexual/gender identity, as these characteristics are dependent upon personal divulgence in order to be revealed. As a result of this, my study was limited insofar as the self-reported measures of contact generated by the survey could only be said to measure the effects of known contact with LGBTQI2S persons upon attitudes toward this group. The effects of actual contact were not measured

4.3 Future Research

Future research pertaining to LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating should stem from the limitations of the present study. Firstly, because of the sampling biases that resulted from the manner in which the survey was promoted and distributed, it is recommended that future studies delve deeper into the figure skating community in order to more accurately assess the manifestation and proliferation of attitudes regarding LGBTQI2S inclusion. This could be done by issuing incentivized or mandatory completion of surveys by Skate Canada members that analyze opinions regarding LGBTQI2S inclusion, or through increasing the promotion and awareness of studies pertaining to this topic. Further, the commission of ethnographic/

observational studies within less-accessed realms of the sport (e.g., during training times or in the locker room) may also assist in developing a more accurate depiction of inclusion in figure skating. It is also important to note that the voices of LGBTQI2S athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers must be heard so that a clearer picture of LGBTQI2S inclusion in Canadian figure skating can be generated. This would assist in understanding the ways that inclusion of LGBTQI2S persons can be improved; as such, qualitative interviews are being completed with LGBTQI2S members of the organization as part of the larger qualitative case study being undertaken by Dr. Bridel.

Secondly, while much academic literature has contributed to examining the overall effect of contact upon prejudice reduction, research analyzing the differential influence of contact in varying situations is somewhat sparse. Specifically, it was surprising that known contact with LGBTQI2S persons outside the skating community contributed significantly to prejudice reduction, while known contact inside the skating community exerted little to no influence. Indeed, it is understood that the support of authority, law, or custom is integral to the assurance of prejudice reduction from intergroup contact, but this support is assumed to exist (at least to some degree) both within and outside of Skate Canada. It could be that the stereotype of figure skating as a “feminine” sport has led to an expectation of contact with LGBTQI2S persons (particularly gay men) in this space. This may work to diminish the overall effect of intergroup contact on prejudice reduction, although it may not apply equally to other LGBTQI2S persons. Alternatively, it is possible that figure skating in Canada really isn’t a supportive space for intergroup contact to occur. Either way, more research is needed to elucidate the discrepancy of influence upon inclusive attitudes between known contact inside and outside the figure skating community.

Finally, research pertaining to the known-identity obstacle associated with intergroup contact theory and the LGBTQI2S community is necessary. It is unknown (1) the direction of causality between contact and inclusive attitudes when sexual and/or gender identity is not explicitly divulged; and (2) the effect of contact upon attitudes toward inclusion when sexual and/or gender identity are stated only retroactively. That is, to what extent does intergroup contact lead to improved attitudes toward inclusion when sexual and/or gender identity is revealed after the contact situation has taken place? This leads to questions about the development of a new hypothesis regarding contact and prejudice reduction; namely that of *intragroup* contact hypothesis. The effects of intragroup contact could be studied in relation to LGBTQI2S persons as well as other identities that are not overt in their manifestation. For example, what are the effects of contact upon prejudicial attitudes toward persons of differing religious affiliations when identities are revealed retroactively? Could temporary identity concealment be an effective manner to reduce initial prejudice while contact is taking place? Obviously, these types of questions may only be analysed through the administration of an experimental research design, as it would be unethical to suggest for religious and/or LGBTQI2S persons to deliberately conceal their identities for the purpose of research. Granting these ethical considerations, there are important avenues for future research to explore the effects of intragroup contact upon prejudice reduction

4.4 Concluding Remarks

The purpose of my thesis was to analyse contemporary attitudes and experiences of athletes, coaches, and officials toward LGBTQI2S inclusion within Canadian figure skating. On a micro-level, the findings of this research point toward increased/improved known intergroup contact as a means of reducing prejudicial attitudes toward LGBTQI2S persons. The *function* of my thesis, however, has been to think critically about and ultimately contribute to a more

inclusive landscape both inside the sport of figure skating and toward the broader Canadian landscape. From this standpoint, my research illustrates the significance of generating conversations within and between differing communities about the nature and importance of intersubjectivity, and why and how this may contribute to increased inclusivity. It is only through the acknowledgement of the subjective, equal, similar-yet-different person, that any real shift toward true and total equality may be obtained. It is my belief that, should the recommendations from my project be implemented, this dream may be made a reality.

Postscript

The following script has been added to this document per the request of Dr. Nancy Janovicek, the external committee member for my thesis defence. It is a synopsis of my response to a question posed during the oral examination for this research project.

The take-home message of my thesis is this: while attitudes toward LGBTQI2S inclusion in Canadian figure skating are generally good, in order to further promote inclusion toward LGBTQI2S persons, it is essential to identify, understand, and promote the lived-experiences of athletes with varying sexual and gender identities. This, ultimately, is what queer theory and intergroup contact theory are all about. Queer theory works to avoid the labeling and categorizing of individuals into predefined areas of existence. Intergroup contact theory uses known contact in order to foster empathy toward the entire person, and not just the prejudicial stereotypes that are typically associated with certain identities. Both seek to promote inclusion by understanding and emphasizing individual subjective identities over collective objective labels. My research confirms and illustrates that the goals of these research theories are indeed effective. That is, I found that known contact with LGBTQI2S persons both improves attitudes toward inclusion and diminishes heteronormative assumptions associated with gender and sexuality.

On an individual level, my findings imply that getting to know athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers of varying sexual and gender identities by their name, and not just their sexual/gender identity labels, is essential to the development of inclusive attitudes toward LGBTQI2S persons. This can be achieved by taking active and deliberate steps to understand who these persons are, where they come from, and how their stories have influenced the personal development of their identities. By doing so, the individual needs of these persons will be better understood, and one's own underlying prejudicial attitudes and assumptions regarding LGBTQI2S inclusion will be improved.

On a broader scale, my research suggests that promoting LGBTQI2S inclusion should take the form of advancing and emphasizing the lived-experiences of LGBTQI2S persons as they relate to figure skating and life in general. The community needs to understand that LGBTQI2S persons have similar dreams and aspirations as the rest of us and that they are sensitive to similar joys and sorrows as we are too, only perhaps to a greater extent as a result of their unfair treatment both historically and contemporarily. Indeed, both objectively and subjectively speaking, LGBTQI2S persons are persons, and we would do well to be reminded of this.

I shall end with this: it is easy to be harsh toward certain groups when these persons are viewed as “them” rather than “us”. This has been illustrated through the Holocaust, South Africa’s Apartheid, and even the present-day refugee crisis. And yet, I would be hard-pressed to find someone who would refuse a family in need who had knocked on their door and simply asked for assistance. I believe this would be the case regardless of gender, ethnic, or religious identity, and I believe this would occur as a result of individual subjectification rather than collective categorization. How quickly we are revealed to be equally human when our equal humanness is revealed. This, ultimately, is what my research is all about

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Appendix A: LGBTQI2S Definitions

Lesbian: a female-identified person who experiences attraction to people of the same sex and/or gender.

Gay: a person who experiences attraction to people of the same sex and/or gender – gay can include both male-identified individuals and female-identified individuals, or refer to male-identified individuals only.

Bisexual: a person who experiences attraction to both men and women. Some bisexual people use this term to express attraction to both their own sex and/or gender, as well as to people of a different sex and/or gender.

Transgender (Trans): a person who does not identify either fully or in part with the gender associated with the sex assigned to them at birth – often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions.

Queer: a person whose gender identity and/or expression may not correspond with social and cultural gender expectations. Individuals who identify as genderqueer may move between genders, identify with multiple genders, or reject the gender binary or gender altogether.

Intersex: refers to a person whose chromosomal, hormonal, or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside the conventional classifications of male or female. The designation of “intersex” can be experienced as stigmatization given the history of medical practitioners imposing it as a diagnosis requiring correction, often through non-consensual surgical or pharmaceutical intervention on infants, children, and young adults (some people may not be identified as “intersex” until puberty or even later in life).

Two-spirit: an English umbrella term that reflects the many words used in different Aboriginal languages to affirm the interrelatedness of multiple aspects of identity – including gender, sexuality, community, culture, and spirituality. Some Aboriginal people identify as Two Spirit

rather than, or in addition to, identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or queer.

Gender-Fluid: a term used to describe a person who does not identify themselves as having a fixed gender.

Cisgender: a term used to describe persons whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

Appendix B: Implied Consent Form



SURVEY INFORMATION / IMPLIED CONSENT

<u>TITLE:</u>	LGBTQ2SI Inclusion in Canadian Sports: A Case Study
<u>INVESTIGATOR:</u>	William Bridel, Ph.D. Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Calgary Telephone: (403) 210-7246 Email: william.bridel@ucalgary.ca
<u>SPONSOR:</u>	Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

This information page is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, please ask. Take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

BACKGROUND

My name is William Bridel and I'm a professor at the University of Calgary in the Faculty of Kinesiology. I'm also a former competitive figure skater, official, and administrator. Along with my research team, I am conducting a two-year qualitative case study with Skate Canada, with a primary goal of learning about the experiences of LGBTQ2S persons in skating and to learn what can be done better. Accordingly, the case study will focus on two primary concerns: LGBTQ2SI individuals' experiences in figure skating and the Canadian context more broadly as well as policies and practices related to LGBTQ2SI inclusion in the sport. Three specific questions guide this project: (1) What are the experiences of LGBTQ2SI persons in Canadian figure skating and the larger social context? (2) What do experiences in the sport of figure skating and in Canada more generally reveal about sex, gender, sexuality, and sport in contemporary times? (3) What policies and practices need to be revised or developed to allow for trans participation in the sport of figure skating? The project includes this online survey, interviews, policy and rules review, and observation of skating events.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of this project is to explore LGBTQ2SI inclusion in Canadian sport, with a specific focus on figure skating.

WHAT WOULD I HAVE TO DO?

You will be asked to complete an online survey, available on SurveyMonkey. There are 37 questions in total. The survey includes both closed- and open-ended questions. The length of time it takes to complete the survey is variable but will likely take around 40-minutes to complete. Once the survey has been submitted, you will not be asked to do anything further for this project.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Given the nature of this research, you will be asked to express your knowledge of, and ideas about, gender identity and sexuality in general as well as in the context of skating. As a result, there may be a minimal

level of emotional discomfort experienced when responding to questions on the survey. You will not be required to respond to any questions that may bring discomfort, and should you choose not to answer a question, there will be no negative consequences for you; completed questions will be included in the analysis that the research team will conduct.

WILL I BENEFIT IF I TAKE PART?

There are no specific benefits to participation. That said, this survey provides you an opportunity to share your ideas to help make skating, and sport in general, a more inclusive space. It is our hope that participating in this survey may help you reflect on your role in skating and the contributions you may make to diversity and inclusion in the sport.

DO I HAVE TO PARTICIPATE?

You are not obligated to participate in this study; participation is completely voluntary. If you start the survey and choose not to finish it, simply exit SurveyMonkey and your responses to that point will not be recorded; there are no consequences if you choose this option. If you complete the survey and submit it, at that point your responses will be included in the research team's analysis of all surveys received; because the data captured is anonymous you will not be able to withdraw from the study once the survey has been submitted.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING, OR DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR ANYTHING?

You do not have to pay to participate in this study. There is also no payment, monetary or otherwise, should you choose to complete the survey.

WILL MY RECORDS BE KEPT PRIVATE?

All survey responses will be anonymous; at no point during the duration of the project will the research team know the identity of survey participants. The raw data from the surveys will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team. Because the survey is located on SurveyMonkey, it is important for you to know that this online survey company is hosted by a web-survey company located in the USA and as such is subject to U.S. laws, in particular, the US Patriot Act which allows authorities access to the records of internet service providers. This survey or questionnaire does not ask for personal identifiers or any information that may be used to identify you. The web-survey company servers record incoming IP addresses of the computer that you use to access the survey but no connection is made between your data and your computer's IP address. If you choose to participate in the survey, you understand that your responses to the survey questions will be stored and accessed in the USA. The security and privacy policy for the web-survey company can be found at the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/policy/privacy-policy/>

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

Your decision to complete and return this survey will be interpreted as an indication of your agreement to participate. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time up to submission of the survey.

If you have further questions concerning matters related to this research, please contact: Dr. William Bridel at (403) 210-7246 or william.bridel@ucalgary.ca.

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a possible participant in this research, please contact the Chair of the Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board, Research Services, University of Calgary, 403-220-7990.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Appendix C: Survey Instrument

LGBTQI2S Sport Issues Survey

As part of a research project investigating LGBTQI2S issues in sport being conducted by a research team led by Dr. William Bridel at the University of Calgary, the primary purpose of this survey is to understand current knowledge about LGBTQI2S issues across the Skate Canada membership. We would also be interested in knowing what you think about Skate Canada's approach to inclusive sport. Please note that by completing and submitting this anonymous survey, you are confirming that you are 18 years of age or over and you are consenting to have your responses included in publications and presentations that will be produced by the research team. Please note that any potentially identifying information included in survey responses will be removed. The University of Calgary Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board (CHREB) has approved this research study (REB17-1577) and it is funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

****LGBTQI2S is a catchall term that refers to persons who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or two-spirit***

Lesbian: a female-identified person who experiences attraction to people of the same sex and/or gender.

Gay: a person who experiences attraction to people of the same sex and/or gender – gay can include both male-identified individuals and female-identified individuals, or refer to male-identified individuals only.

Bisexual: a person who experiences attraction to both men and women. Some bisexual people use this term to express attraction to both their own sex and/or gender, as well as to people of a different sex and/or gender.

Cisgender: a person whose gender identity corresponds with the social expectations associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Transgender (Trans): a person who does not identify either fully or in part with the gender associated with the sex assigned to them at birth – often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions.

Genderqueer: a person whose gender identity and/or expression may not correspond with social and cultural gender expectations. Individuals who identify as genderqueer may move between genders, identify with multiple genders, or reject the gender binary or gender altogether.

Intersex: refers to a person whose chromosomal, hormonal, or anatomical sex characteristics fall outside the conventional classifications of male or female. The designation of “intersex” can be experienced as stigmatization given the history of medical practitioners imposing it as a diagnosis requiring correction, often through non-consensual surgical or pharmaceutical intervention on infants, children, and young adults (some people may not be identified as “intersex” until puberty or even later in life).

Two-spirit: an English umbrella term that reflects the many words used in different Aboriginal languages to affirm the interrelatedness of multiple aspects of identity – including gender, sexuality, community, culture, and spirituality. Some Aboriginal people identify as Two Spirit rather than, or in addition to, identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, or queer.

Egale Canada (n.d.). Glossary of Terms. Retrieved from <https://egale.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Egales-Glossary-of-Terms.pdf>

Demographic Information

What is your age?

How do you identify your gender?

How do you identify your sexual orientation?

What is your current, primary role in Skate Canada (e.g., coach, official, volunteer, admin)?

How long have you been active in your current role?

What other roles have you had in Skate Canada?

With which Skate Canada programs/athletes do you have the most involvement? (check all that apply)

CanSkate

CanPowerSkate

STARSkate

CompetitiveSkate

SynchroSkate

AdultSkate

Special Olympics

Para-athletes

How many years in total have you been a Skate Canada member?

In what province or territory do you currently reside?

How would you describe where you lived from birth to age 18? (check all that apply)

- Rural Canada
- Suburban Canada
- Urban Canada
- Outside of Canada

For the following questions, please choose the response that best reflects your personal opinion.
Responses are anonymous.

1. Outside of the skating community, the amount of contact I have with LGBTQI2S persons is best described as:
 - no interaction
 - less than once per month
 - one to three times per month
 - weekly
 - several times per week
 - daily
2. Within the skating community, the amount of contact I have with LGBTQI2S persons is best described as:
 - no interaction
 - less than once per month
 - one to three times per month
 - weekly
 - several times per week
 - daily
3. I consider myself knowledgeable about LGBTQI2S issues in Canada.
 - Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree

4. I know the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

Please describe in your own words the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity

5. It is important to me that LGBTQI2S persons feel included in my skating community.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

6. I believe that the skating community is free from homophobia. (**Homophobia:** dislike or prejudice against gay and/or lesbian persons)

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

7. I believe that the skating community is free from transphobia. (**Transphobia:** dislike or prejudice against trans persons)

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

8. I believe that the skating community is free from biphobia. (**Biphobia:** dislike or prejudice against bisexual persons).

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

9. In my primary role in skating (as indicated earlier in the survey), I make efforts to specifically address LGBTQI2S inclusivity in skating (i.e., do things or take actions to make LGBTQI2S persons feel welcome).
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
10. I believe that it is important to address LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating (i.e., do things or take actions to make LGBTQI2S persons feel welcome).
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
11. I support Skate Canada changing rules and regulations to allow LGBTQI2S persons to fully participate in our sport.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
12. I believe it is unfair for trans boys and trans men to be allowed to compete against cisgender boys and cisgender men in non-ISU (International Skating Union) events.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
13. I believe it is unfair for trans girls and trans women to be allowed to compete against cisgender girls and cisgender women in non-ISU (International Skating Union) events.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
14. I believe there should be regulations that restrict trans participation in non-ISU (International Skating Union) events
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree

15. I believe that skating is a sport in Canada where LGBTQI2S persons are comfortable being open about their sexuality.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
16. I believe that skating is a sport in Canada where LGBTQI2S persons are comfortable being open about their gender identity.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
17. Most people I know in the skating community are open about their sexuality.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
18. Most people I know in the skating community are open about their gender identity.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
19. I think that LGBTQI2S persons face many challenges due to their gender and/or sexual identity in skating.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
20. I think that LGBTQI2S persons face many challenges due to their gender and/or sexual identity in Canada in general.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree

21. I would come to the aid of a person who was experiencing bullying or harassment as a result of their sexuality and/or gender identity.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
22. I would like to know more about LGBTQI2S issues in sport in Canada.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
23. I am comfortable with Skate Canada promoting LGBTQI2S inclusion in our sport.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
24. I believe that skating used to be homophobic.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
25. I am comfortable calling myself an ally to LGBTQI2S persons.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
26. I am involved in LGBTQI2S activities and/or organizations at one or more of the following levels: community, provincial, national, international.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
27. As an athlete, I would consider it fair if a trans person placed ahead of me at a competition.
- Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
 - Not applicable

28. I believe that LGBTQI2S persons play an important role in figure skating in Canada.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

29. I believe that figure skating in Canada is what it is today because of LGBTQI2S persons.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

30. I believe that Skate Canada is helping to facilitate LGBTQI2S inclusion in figure skating.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

31. I think the skating community in Canada is more accepting of gay men than other LGBTQI2S persons (please expand if you would like).

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Other (please specify)

--

32. Skating in Canada provides opportunity for people to express their personal sense of gender

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Thank you for your participation in our survey thus far. We would really appreciate your insights on the following questions as well. Please elaborate as much as you would like and remember that responses are anonymous. We will ensure that any potentially identifying information is removed from presentations and publications resulting from this research.

33. Do you feel skating in Canada should be made more inclusive for LGBTQI2S persons? (please elaborate upon your answer).

34. Have you been involved in any specific initiatives related to LGBTQI2S inclusion in skating? (if yes, please explain what the initiatives were and what was your role?)

35. Are there any specific questions that you or others have about LGBTQI2S persons and/or inclusion in sport that you would like Skate Canada to address through policy and/or education? (please elaborate upon your answer).

36. Do you have any concerns with Skate Canada's commitment to LGBTQI2S initiatives?

37. Is there anything you'd like to add here that you don't feel was covered in this survey?

Thank you once again for your time and insights.

If you have any questions or would like clarification regarding this research project and/or this survey please contact:

Dr. William Bridel
Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Calgary
Telephone: (403) 210-7246 / *Email:* william.bridel@ucalgary.ca

If you have any questions concerning your rights as a possible participant in this research, or research in general, please contact the Chair of the Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board, University of Calgary at (403) 220-7990.