

## **“Jumping like a Girl”: Discursive silences, exclusionary practices, and the controversy over women’s ski jumping**

Jason Laurendeau<sup>1</sup>

Carly Adams

*University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Canada*

A portion of this paper was presented at the the 9<sup>th</sup> International Symposium for Olympic Research, Beijing, China, in August, 2008. Thanks to those attending this session for their helpful observations and suggestions. Our thanks as well to Mary Louise Adams, Dayna Daniels, Michelle Helstein, Claudia Malacrida, and the *Sport in Society* reviewers for their insightful comments throughout the development of this paper. We would also like to acknowledge the Revelstoke Museum and Archives for their assistance with this project.

---

<sup>1</sup> Email: [jason.laurendeau@uleth.ca](mailto:jason.laurendeau@uleth.ca). 4401 University Drive W., Lethbridge, AB, Canada, T1K

3M4. (ph.): 403.329.2717. (fx): 403.329.2085

“Jumping like a Girl”: Discursive silences, exclusionary practices, and the controversy over women’s ski jumping

Abstract

This paper considers the recent International Olympic Committee (IOC) decision to deny women the opportunity to compete in ski jumping at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada. Drawing on a feminist Foucauldian framework, we suggest that the Olympics is a discourse that constructs excellence and fairness as “within the true,” with the IOC protesting that this recent decision is not about gender, but about the upholding of Olympic ideals. We interrogate three conspicuous absences in this discourse, each of which trouble the IOC’s claim that this decision is not evidence of gender discrimination. In particular, we contextualize this decision within the risk discourses upon which the IOC has historically drawn on denying women’s participation in particular Olympic events, arguing that the discursive silence around the issue of risk points to “old wine in new bottles” as the IOC dresses up the same paternalistic practices in new garb. We conclude with a consideration of these discursive structures as more than simply oppressive of women. Instead, they may also be understood as indicative of the ‘problem’ posed by women, especially those who threaten the gender binary that pervades many sporting structures. Finally, these structures signal opportunities for resistance and subversion as women act to shed light on the discursive silences upon which structures of domination rest.

# **“Jumping like a Girl”<sup>1</sup>: Discursive silences, exclusionary practices, and the controversy over women’s ski jumping**

## **Introduction**

At the Ninth International Symposium for Olympic Research in Beijing, China, from August 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Dick Pound, long-time member and out-spoken critic of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) gave the opening address for the conference entitled “The Future of the Olympic Movement: Promised Land or Train Wreck?”<sup>2</sup> In his talk, Pound argued that there are many “important issues” that must be addressed by the Olympic Movement and the International Olympic Committee (IOC), suggesting that if these issues are “not properly handled...[the Olympic Movement’s] future will be much less certain than most seem to think.”<sup>3</sup> Among the topics discussed by Pound were the IOC’s mission, managing risk, the cost of bidding for the Games, the size of the Olympic Programme, Eurocentricity in the Movement, the Youth Olympic Games, doping, and politics. Of interest to our study is his barely cursory discussion of gender equity in the Movement. Indeed, he went so far as to suggest that “gender equity has all but been achieved,”<sup>4</sup> a statement we find highly problematic in light of recent research suggesting that there is still a long way to go.<sup>5</sup> For example, a recent Women’s Sport Foundation research report suggests that at the Beijing Olympics, women participated in 137 events while men participated in 175 events.<sup>6</sup> While this report speaks to continued numerical inequities in the Olympic Games broadly speaking, we aim here to highlight important elements of the discourse around women’s ski jumping as one current and contentious example of gender inequality.

The Olympic Games have often served to bring athletes, communities, and nations together. Feminist sport scholars, however, have criticized the IOC for their exclusionary practices, suggesting that despite rhetoric of inclusion and emancipation, the IOC continues to entrench notions of gender difference, and plays an important role in constructing men's sport as the "real" version against which women's sports should be measured.<sup>7</sup> In the history of the modern Olympic movement, female athletes and their advocates have long had to struggle for inclusion in the Games, even going so far as to institute the "Women's Olympic Games," first held in Paris in 1922.<sup>8</sup> The inclusion of women's athletics was an uphill battle, but as we have just witnessed in Beijing, female Olympians have benefited from the labours of their predecessors. In any social system, policies can be altered and ideologies can be challenged.<sup>9</sup> In response to these challenges, the IOC has instituted changes that resulted in more equitable gender representation in the Games.

The modern Olympic Movement, and the systemic relations of power embedded in its governing body, the IOC, has been an important site for contestations between competing interests attempting to shape the face of modern sport. Jennifer Hargeaves argues that the history of the Olympic Games could be retold as a "history of power and elitism, obsessions and excesses, divisions and exploitation."<sup>10</sup> Throughout the history of the Movement, formal and ideological constraints have effectively placed women as "outsiders" in particular sports, forcing women to fight for their rights to participate in these events. As Raymond Williams has argued, it is not until a group poses a significant challenge to the authority of the dominant group, that any sort of negotiation begins in earnest.<sup>11</sup>

In a January 2008 agreement, brokered by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, the Canadian government pledged to pressure the IOC to reconsider a November 2006 decision

denying women the right to compete in ski jumping at the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver, Canada.<sup>12</sup> Shortly after this announcement, representatives of the IOC affirmed their resolution to exclude women, suggesting that the decision was not “about gender.”<sup>13</sup> Rather, they argued that women’s ski jumping failed to meet the technical criteria for Olympic inclusion.<sup>14</sup> In the spring of 2008, several ski jumpers filed a lawsuit in the British Columbia Supreme Court against the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.<sup>15</sup> Recently, a decision was handed down in this case, effectively ending any chance of women’s ski jumping being included in the 2010 Games.

This paper considers the case of women’s ski jumping, contextualizing the events outlined above within the history of gender politics that has characterized the modern Games.<sup>16</sup> We begin by examining the Olympic discourse, considering what appears with regularity across a range of texts, especially media accounts as the controversy unfolded and IOC statements and documents related to gender inclusivity. Our principle analytic strategy, however, is to interrogate the silences in this discourse, considering those exclusions that work to construct and shore up those elements of the discourse that *are* present with regularity. We conclude with a consideration of this discourse as more than simply oppressive. We draw on recent feminist interpretations of Foucauldian theorizing to suggest that the discourse may also be read as an opportunity for subversion and resistance.

## Olympic Discourse

Michel Foucault's notion of discourse serves as a jumping off point for this discussion. Building on (and departing from) earlier approaches to representation that focuses the *meaning* conveyed by visual representations, Foucault approaches representation in a way that permits a more nuanced theorization of the operation of power.<sup>17</sup> Moving beyond a consideration of language, Foucault uses the notion of discourse to capture the production of "meaningful statements" about a given topic in a particular historical moment.<sup>18</sup> As Hall points out, Foucault uses this concept in an attempt

to overcome the traditional distinction between what one *says* (language) and what one *does* (practice). Discourse, Foucault argues, constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others.<sup>19</sup>

What makes the notion of discourse compelling for theorizing power is that it never rests in one moment, text, practice, or even set of practices.<sup>20</sup> Instead, a given discourse appears with regularity across a range of texts (broadly defined) and practices to regulate what may be said "within the true"<sup>21</sup> about a given subject in a particular socio-historical moment.<sup>22</sup> It is critical to remember that for Foucault, the focus was always on the implications of these processes for power:

...in a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor

implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse.<sup>23</sup>

Not only, then, does a discourse constrain what can *meaningfully* be said about a particular topic at a particular time, but it also works to authorize particular voices and silence others.<sup>24</sup> These processes of authorization and silencing, though, are dynamic and contextual, must be continuously reproduced, and are thus open to challenge and contestation from moment to moment.<sup>25</sup>

The Modern Olympic Movement operates as a discourse that constructs what can meaningfully be said about amateur athletics, Olympism<sup>26</sup>, and the Olympic Games. In texts such as the *Olympic Charter* and IOC press statements, excellence, inclusivity and fairness are constructed as “within the true.” The *Olympic Charter*, for instance, outlines that the mission of the IOC is “to promote Olympism throughout the world and to lead the Olympic movement,” promote “ethics” and “the spirit of fairness,” and “act against any form of discrimination affecting the Olympic movement.”<sup>27</sup> Specifically, it aims to “encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures with a view to implementing the principle of equality between men and women.”<sup>28</sup> This commitment to equality and fairness is evident in IOC statements defending the decision to exclude women’s ski jumping from the Vancouver Games. As IOC president Jacques Rogge stated, “The decision of the International Olympic Committee not to include women's ski jumping was taken on technical grounds not on gender issues.”<sup>29</sup>

The other important dimension of the Olympic discourse is athletic excellence and elitism. The Olympics, though committed to inclusion and fairness, is (perhaps somewhat

paradoxically) also about recognizing and rewarding only the most elite performances. Rogge's frequently cited comment about women's ski jumping illustrates this point well:

If you have three medals, with 80 athletes competing on a regular basis internationally, the percentage of medal winners is extremely high...In any other sport you are speaking about hundreds of thousands, if not tens of millions of athletes, at a very high level, competing for one single medal. We do not want the medals to be diluted and watered down. That is the bottom line.<sup>30</sup>

Olympic discourse, then, constructs the IOC and the Olympic Movement as committed to athletic excellence as well as fairness. Furthermore, the discourse authorizes the IOC as *the* legitimate authoritative voice. Our central interest in this paper, though, is not what is *present* with regularity in this discursive formation. Instead, we wish to focus on the *absences* that help construct the discourse. It is to this issue that we now turn.

### **Discursive Silence**

It is not only what is said that is important in understanding a discourse. Equally important is what is unsaid:

Silence itself – the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers – is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies... There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses.<sup>31</sup>

In the same way that discourse marks certain statements, actions and institutional arrangements as “within the true,” it (un)marks others as “without”: “it ‘rules out,’ limits and restricts other

ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it.”<sup>32</sup> It is important, then, that we interrogate the silences in a particular discursive formation as we seek to illuminate the operation of power. As Mills (1997) notes, it is particularly important for feminist researchers employing a Foucauldian perspective to interrogate these absences in the texts they consider, to ask who (or what) is not represented, and why that might be.

These silences are important not simply because they mark what is beyond the true, but because, in so doing, they shore up the true in a particular discursive formation. They naturalize and legitimize the privileged position of those who have benefited from particular relations of power.<sup>33</sup> In the silences about exclusionary practices in the history of the modern Olympic Movement, for instance, athletes and nations are cast as the beneficiaries of the Olympic ideal of inclusiveness, allowing for a continued ignorance about a history of symbolic violence perpetrated against women, visible minorities, and others.<sup>34</sup>

### ***History and successes in women's ski jumping***

In terms of the discourse around women's exclusion from ski jumping, the first silence is the history and success of women in the sport of ski jumping. In Canada, for example, women have been donning their skis and joining their male counterparts on the ski jumps since the early 1900s. One central figure in this history is Isabel Coursier, named “Women's Amateur Champion Ski Jumper of the World” in 1922.<sup>35</sup> Born in Revelstoke, British Columbia on 21 March 1906, Coursier took an interest in skiing as a child, receiving her first pair of skis when she was eight years old.<sup>36</sup> When interviewed in 1977 about her experiences as a ski jumper, she recalled, “...I was always in the out-of-doors sliding on something either on my seat or a pan or a shovel or a piece of linoleum. And then Bob Blackmore ... made my first pair of skis. He was a trapper, a boatman living down near us.”<sup>37</sup> She recalls her equipment: “they started off with

single groove skis, the ones that the, Bob Blackmore made me. And then later on ... bought my first pair of jumpers from ... Frank Wells, who had his shop down in Lower Town as we called it...the first pair of jumpers...were two groove.” For clothing she wore “anything you could improvise...that kept you dry. Mostly... army riding britches...so we just bought men’s pants and you could wear those or bloomers or anything you happened to have....They didn’t sell ski outfits as such, just any kind of pants you had.”<sup>38</sup> As a child, Coursier joined a burgeoning group of female ski jumpers in Revelstoke, known by the local community as the “glider girls.”<sup>39</sup> By the time she was 16 years old, she was a recognized household name in Revelstoke, winning ski jumping and ski joring<sup>40</sup> contests, and touring to tournaments throughout North America. From 1922 until her retirement in 1929, Coursier held the record for the longest women’s ski jump: 84 feet at Revelstoke’s Ski Club in 1922-23.<sup>41</sup>



**Figure 1: Coursier jumping in Quebec, Canada, 1925. Courtesy of the Revelstoke Museum and Archives, Revelstoke, British Columbia, Canada.**

The IOC “has repeatedly said [that] women's ski jumping is ... not yet ready for Olympic competition.”<sup>42</sup> They suggest it is still in its early stages and needs time to mature.<sup>43</sup> Contrary to

this assumption that women's ski jumping is a relatively new sport that needs time to develop and grow (an assumption often made about women's sport in general), case studies of athletes like Coursier suggest that women have a long tradition in the sport. While Coursier learned to jump at a time when ski jumping was increasing in popularity among men in Canada but only had a small number of female participants, she recognized that women's ski jumping in other countries began long before the sport was taken up by Canadian girls and women. She recalled, "...there were more Scandinavian skiers 'cuz [sic] they had learned skiing before the rest of us born here would take it up."<sup>44</sup> Evidence suggests that Ingrid Olavsdottir Vestby competed at what is generally acknowledged to be the first ski jumping competition in 1862 that took place in Trysil, Norway.<sup>45</sup> Other Scandinavian women like Olga Balstad-Eggen, Hilda Braskerud, Johanne Kolstad, Ella Gulbrandsen also set women's ski jumping records<sup>46</sup> in the 1920s and 1930s. In the 1930s, Norwegian ski jumper Johanne Kolstad, known as the "Queen of the Skis," and French athlete Denise Martineau toured the United States offering exhibitions of jumping to promote the sport among American women.<sup>47</sup> In 1937, Kolstad was credited with a 186 foot jump.<sup>48</sup> Historically, ski jumping competitions in North America and Europe were open to both men and women.<sup>49</sup>

Despite this long history of women's involvement in the sport, only recently has the Fédération Internationale de Ski (FIS) sanctioned women's ski jumping as a regular and ongoing competition. In addition, almost without exception, newspaper stories and websites lack any contextualization of the history of women's ski jumping, or present only its 'official' (i.e., sanctioned by the FIS) history. This is an important discursive silence. In order for Rogge's claim that women have not achieved the standards necessary for Olympic inclusion to be "within the true," the silence around women's long history of competition is important, even necessary.

Also important is the silence around recent achievements by women in the sport. As just one indicator of women's competitiveness in the sport, the current record on the 95m jump at the Whistler Olympic Park, site of the 2010 events, is held by Lindsey Van, an American ski jumper and plaintiff in the lawsuit outlined above.<sup>50</sup> It should be noted that only the men's records – a half a meter shorter than Van's jump - are the 'official' hill record jumps, perhaps because Van's jump was completed at the Canadian Championships, not an FIS sanctioned event, held in January 2007.<sup>51</sup> Importantly, the FIS, like the IOC, has operated within an institutional framework that has historically excluded women. This also raises the question of whether, by intention or neglect, women are being excluded from particular competitions and official records precisely *because* they are threatening men's athletic dominance in this event. This threat challenges the binary logic that pervades many (most) sporting institutions and legitimates gender discrimination.<sup>52</sup>

Even this (too) brief overview of women's experience and successes in this sport is enough to highlight the conspicuousness of their absences from the discourse around the current controversy. The IOC's claim that the sport is "immature," or that Olympic competition would be "watered down" by the inclusion of women's ski jumping, rests on this history, and these successes remain hidden from view.

### ***Historical exceptions to technical criteria***

The second important silence is that the IOC has made numerous exceptions over the years to the very guidelines to which they are holding so firmly in this case. Thus, while the exclusion is framed as one based on a technical set of considerations, exceptions to these criteria are not without precedent. Indeed, the 2007 Olympic Charter clearly indicates that "The decision to include a discipline or event in the programme falls within the competence of the IOC

Executive Board” and “deadlines set forth...may be waived, in order to allow changes in the programme with the approval of the relevant IF [International Federation], of the OCOG [Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games] and of the competent organ of the IOC.”<sup>53</sup>

The IOC has seemed particularly willing to overlook certain criteria when there is some commercial or political mileage to be gained by the inclusion of particular events. For example, Pound suggests “there has been some pressure on the IOC to expand the program of the Games to include sports that have any appeal to today’s ‘youth.’”<sup>54</sup> Even at the same time as they announced the exclusion of women from ski jumping (in 2007 there were 83 women from 14 countries competing on the FIS circuit), the IOC affirmed the inclusion of ski-cross (30 skiers from 11 countries).<sup>55</sup> Brent Morrice, Chair of Ski Canada suggests that ski-cross has half the number of athletes as women’s ski jumping with competitions taking place on only one continent.<sup>56</sup> Asked by a Canadian reporter to explain this seeming contradiction, “Mr. Rogge said that ski cross is ‘immensely popular, maybe not in your country, but in Europe. And the technical and participation level is okay for the Olympic Games.’”<sup>57</sup> Other examples of exceptions made for inclusions of women’s events include: Women’s bobsleigh in 2002 (26 women from 13 nations) and women’s snowboard cross in 2006 (34 women from 10 countries).<sup>58</sup> What is generally absent in the discourse around the ski jumping controversy is the idea – illustrated by the exceptions outlined above – that the IOC can and does exercise considerable discretion in determining which events to include. This, again, is an important silence in that it becomes part of the construction of the IOC as a body committed to fairness (and, implicitly, objectivity).

### *The “at risk” female body*

The third silence, and the one that serves as the focal point for this paper, is the history of risk discourses surrounding the ‘protection’ of women’s bodies. What constitutes a risk or hazard at any particular socio-historical moment is itself a social construction.<sup>59</sup> The focus of this paper is not on the objective risks associated with any particular activity, but upon how risk discourses operate to authorize and legitimate particular exclusionary practices. Discourses surrounding particular risks set the stage for the policing of individuals who occupy subject positions or engage in behaviours that mark them as “at risk.” This policing may be the work of state agents (e.g., racial profiling<sup>60</sup>), average citizens (e.g., community surveillance programs<sup>61</sup>), or subjects themselves (e.g., when individuals take up diet and/or exercise regimes to maintain good health<sup>62</sup>). Often, these discourses have particularly targeted individuals or groups who pose a threat to the status quo. During the “witch craze,” for example, women, the mentally ill, and opponents of dominant religious organizations were particularly targeted as those who posed a risk, and were often ‘tried’ and put to death.<sup>63</sup>

Historically, there have been a number of discourses that have marked women as subjects of risk discourses. These discourses serve to constrain women’s actions, and construct them as subjects in need of policing (by themselves and others). Lupton for example, discusses the ways in which lay and medical discourses construct “the pregnancy experience” as fraught with risk. Pregnant women, she points out, become subject to this discourse, and many voluntarily assume it as they take measures (e.g., folic acid supplements) to mitigate these risks: “Producing a ‘perfect’ infant is seen to be at least partly a result of the women’s ability to exert control over her body, to seek out and subscribe to, expert advice and engage in self-sacrifice for the sake of her foetus.”<sup>64</sup> These discourses, Lupton points out, are rooted in expert knowledges (associated with the medical profession, for example) and testing procedures (e.g., ultrasound tests) “to

which the woman has no access except through expert intervention and interpretation.”<sup>65</sup> These discourses construct what is “within the true” with respect to pregnancy, and not only constrain pregnant women’s actions, but also give others some degree of licence to police women’s actions. Pregnant women become embedded in a web of surveillance in which there is no such thing as a no-risk pregnancy.<sup>66</sup> As Lupton argues elsewhere, the discourse outlined above also operates as a mechanism of social control in the case of women who are not pregnant, but are simply *potentially* pregnant, or even potentially pregnant at some unspecified future time.<sup>67</sup>

There is a lengthy history of women’s exclusion from participation in various forms of physical activity, an exclusion often intimately connected to the circulation and operation of the pregnancy discourse outlined above. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, medical discourses rooted in Victorian ideas of women’s moral virtue, and their physical and intellectual inferiority, positioned women as both too weak for vigorous physical activity and morally obligated to “preserve their vital physical energy for childbearing and to cultivate personality traits suited to the wife-and-mother role.”<sup>68</sup> Discourse around menstruation was a particularly poignant example of this phenomenon, with “malestream gynecology” constructing “any menstrual variation as a condition demanding heroic medical intervention.”<sup>69</sup> Exercise during menstruation was discursively constructed as self-centred and frivolous, and women who ‘failed’ to closely monitor themselves and their reproductive capacities were seen to be breaching a sacred duty.<sup>70</sup> Medical discourse focused on the frailty of women’s internal organs – especially their reproductive organs. The uterus, in particular, was a subject of considerable medical scrutiny. Even in an era where some light physical activity during menstruation was thought to have numerous benefits for women, there were strong objections to women’s involvement in vigorous exercise for fear of uterine displacement.<sup>71</sup> Out of this discourse arose different rules and

guidelines<sup>72</sup> for certain activities, especially those involving jumping, thought to be a particular threat to the uterus. Basketball, for example, was embraced by proponents who believed it to produce qualities important to ‘womanhood,’ but was seen as in need of modification to reduce the strain on women’s bodies.<sup>73</sup> Ski jumping during the 1920s and 1930 was viewed as a strenuous sport for both men and women. Isobel Coursier recalls the demanding physical feat of merely reaching the top of the ski jump:

And you certainly couldn’t get up to practice there without going up on your skis, with or without poles. So, you’d have, you know, to zig-zag up, to get there. There was no getting in on a horse or sleigh to get up there. So it kept you, you, you were fully warmed up, thoroughly warmed up. And I think that’s why we didn’t have any accidents. I never had any accidents to my wrist or knees, or my ankles or my hips. Because you know by the time you got there and got your breath and then up to where you were going to come down the jump uh, it was a constant stream of, you didn’t wait and get cold. You didn’t have much of a wait at the top unless somebody fell and made a great big hole in the hill and then they had to fill that in. But, and yet you were warm as you came down, ankles and knees and your body. So, I’ve, I’ve never used chair lifts to any extent. They didn’t exist here and then any place.<sup>74</sup>

In light of the physical demands of the activity, and the perceived dangers of the sport, early women’s ski jumping also faced adaptations to lessen the risk to women bodies. For example, in Revelstoke, British Columbia, most of the “glider girls” jumped with the assistance of a man who went down the jump with them offering support.<sup>75</sup> Coursier stood out from the rest of her group; she was the only female skier in her group to jump alone without the support of a male skier.<sup>76</sup>

During this same period, the IOC justified the exclusion of women from particular Olympic events on the grounds that women's bodies – and in particular their reproductive functions – would be irreparably harmed by such vigorous activity.<sup>77</sup> These exclusions came despite evidence that women's bodies were strong enough for “vigorous” physical activity.<sup>78</sup> Even when women were ‘permitted’ to participate in particularly strenuous events, this was often closely monitored by officials ostensibly concerned about women's well being, despite the fact that men routinely showed signs of the same kinds of fatigue following similar events.<sup>79</sup> At the 1928 Games in Amsterdam, for instance, the IOC granted women access to only five track and field events, and “became, at first, embarrassed, and then, infuriated at what they perceived to be a horrific catastrophe in the women's 800 metres event.”<sup>80</sup> While a number of women set records in the event, others allegedly collapsed on the track in exhaustion. As a result, the IOC removed the event from the Olympic programme, and some members, ignoring the fact that some of the men experienced similar symptoms at this distance, “argued for complete expulsion of women from the Olympic games.”<sup>81</sup> This did not come to pass, though women's athletics remained on the Olympic programme “in a limited capacity and under close scrutiny.”<sup>82</sup>

Canadian women's ice hockey participation, and the associated discourse, offers another example of women being marked as subjects of risk discourses, constraining women's actions, and constructing them as subjects in need of policing. By the early 1920s, women's hockey in Canada had a reputation of being a working-class women's pastime, where brawls, aggressive play, and injuries were common.<sup>83</sup> Women, while emulating the men's brand of hockey revered by Canadians, faced censure for copying the aggressive actions of their male counterparts. Press reports made clear the appropriate social expectations of female hockey players.<sup>84</sup> However, as early as the 1920s, female

hockey players were challenging the residual Victorian notions of women as weak and passive and, by extension, their imposed inferiority status. Newspaper reports from women's hockey during the interwar years suggested that, like the men's game, women's hockey was also fast, aggressive and, at times, violent. Headlines such as "Sticks and Fists Fly Freely as Girl Hockeyists Battle;" "Girls Wanted Another Fight But Referees Stopped Them;" "Hockey Amazons in Fistic Display;" "Girls Draw Majors For Fistic Display" suggested that women played a tough, aggressive form of hockey.<sup>85</sup> Sports leaders of the era, highlighting the risks of this type of behaviour, encouraged women to "clean up" the sport. For example, Alexandrine Gibb in her *Toronto Star* column, "No Man's Land of Sport", repeatedly chastised aggressive players for their "non-lady-like" behaviour. Commenting on the Dominion Championship game in 1935 between the Preston Rivulettes and the Winnipeg Eatons where "tempers flared, sticks and fists flew in reckless abandon as the rival players dropped the foils," Gibb reprimanded the behaviour of the athletes stating,

Athletic girls do not often lose their tempers in any game. They have been taught that it is very bad indeed for the boys to do that, but it is practically fatal for girls....Girls can't afford to stage shows of that kind if they want to keep in sport. It's quite exciting to see it at the time and you get a kick out of the exhibition, but when it is all over and the tempers cool out, they are usually much ashamed. They should be.<sup>86</sup>

Press reports such as this make clear the social expectations of female hockey players in this era. Moreover, the silences around athletic, independent women playing hockey, ski-jumping, or engaging in other similar activities, entrench the biological essentialism implicit in many popular

discussions of sport and gender. The logic seems to be that while men's bodies (and minds) are up to the challenge of 'dangerous' activities, women's simply are not. Hargreaves argues that gender stereotyping has been an integral part of the development of organized sport.<sup>87</sup> It has always been easier for women to gain access to those events considered socially acceptable for women, suitable for the female body, and less threatening to the current definitions of femininity. Yet, despite the censure and criticism female hockey players faced when engaging in behaviours that put them "at risk," Wamsley and Adams suggest that many women embraced strategies of aggression in hockey, sometimes engaged in violent acts, and that, as a result of the aggressive styles of play between female athletes, there were significant injuries to players on a regular basis.<sup>88</sup>

In the contemporary sporting world, we continue to see discourses of risk and gender in operation, albeit in different ways. There seems to be deep ambivalence surrounding women who engage in activities that put them "at risk." This ambivalence is often directly connected to discourses of motherhood. Palmer illustrates this as she describes the experiences of two women who were elite mountaineers. Both became the subject of tremendous public scrutiny for their decisions to "shirk" their family roles to pursue this leisure activity. Indeed, when one of them was killed in 1995,

we saw the morality of risk taking go into overdrive. As a mother of two, [Alison] Hargreaves had effectively abandoned her children by taking such extraordinary risks. The particular cultural definitions and limitations imposed upon Hargreaves ensured she would never dramatically, if fatally distinguish herself from the crowd as a *climber*, but rather as an errant, unthinking mother.<sup>89</sup>

The media constructions that followed the tragedy explicitly questioned Hargreaves' motivations, and indeed the commensurability of ambition and motherhood, asking, for example, "Should mothers climb mountains?".<sup>90</sup> The vilification of Hargreaves stood in stark contrast to the ways in which she had been constructed as a national heroine prior to her death.<sup>91</sup> The following year, however, when Rob Hall died on Mount Everest, leaving behind a pregnant wife, at no point did the media criticize him for "abandoning" his family responsibilities.<sup>92</sup>

In this contemporary discourse around women, risk and sport, the focus is less often on risk to women's physical childbearing possibilities, but instead their "duty of care" as mothers.<sup>93</sup> Though the discourse has shifted somewhat in terms of its emphasis on medical, social, and moral dimensions (and the interconnections between them), it continues to operate as a mechanism of social control over women interested in participating in sporting activities that disrupt dominant notions of femininity and motherhood. In addition, there is some evidence to suggest that traces of the (now discredited) medical discourse remain. Prior to the 2004 Games in Turin, Italy, then president of the FIS, Gian-Franco Kasper, was quoted as saying of women's ski jumping: "...don't forget, it's like jumping down from, let's say about two metres, on the ground about a thousand times a year, which seems not to be appropriate for ladies from a medical point of view."<sup>94</sup> This paternalistic 'protection' of women is also evident in different rules for women and men in terms of which hills they can jump in competition.<sup>95</sup>

Risk discourses (particularly those constructed around femininity and motherhood) have played and continue to play a central role in the way that society generally responds to women participating in activities thought to put them "at risk." This is particularly important in light of a move by the IOC towards gender inclusiveness in 1991. At that time, the IOC made a commitment that new sports added to the Olympic roster would be available for both men and

women.<sup>96</sup> Because ski jumping had been on the Olympic roster since 1924, however, it was “grandfathered”<sup>97</sup> from this commitment.<sup>98</sup> This is a crucial silence. The original decision to exclude women from the ski jumping competition (as well as numerous other events, it should be noted) was made in a period dominated by the risk discourses outlined above, in which women (and their reproductive organs) were constructed as frail and in need of medical protection. The grandfathering of women’s exclusion from ski jumping competition, then, serves to re-entrench the sexist attitudes on which the earlier decision rested. These paternalistic practices of the IOC are deeply embedded in historical notions of women in need of protection. Yet, as Robinson reminds us, it is the responsibility of the IOC and international sport organizations to recognize and challenge historical discriminatory practices, not perpetuate them.<sup>99</sup> Perhaps more importantly, the silence around these earlier discourses in the current formation is a conspicuous one, and is integral to the framing of the IOC and the Olympic movement as committed to fairness and equality.

### **Concluding Remarks**

While the IOC has been criticized for their recent decision by women ski jumpers and their proponents, the discourse surrounding the decision to exclude the women has remained relatively focused on issues of fairness, elitism, the Olympic ideal, and technical requirements. Within this framework, IOC officials, and particularly President Jacques Rogge, are authorized as the experts on Olympism and Olympic ideals. Moreover, their claims that women’s ski jumping has not met the technical requirements for inclusion in the Olympic Games are correct. However, there are a number of important and conspicuous discursive silences and political implications around this controversy. The IOC has made numerous exceptions over the years to the very guidelines to which they are holding so firmly in the case of women’s ski jumping.

Similarly, there seems to be an almost complete dismissal of the history and legacy of women's participation in the sport, dating back to the mid to late 1800s. Perhaps most important (and most silent) among these is the ways particular risk discourses have operated to exclude women from participation in these events at all levels. Not only were these discourses important in the original decision to exclude women from ski jumping, but they are also implicated in the decisions by other bodies (e.g., the FIS, national organizations) to "allow" women to compete officially.<sup>100</sup> This only serves as a further blockade to women's Olympic inclusion, as these other competitions become part of the foundation on which women ski jumpers and their supporters can build a case for Olympic inclusion.<sup>101</sup> Though we have considered each of these silences on their own, they are, of course, intimately interconnected. Isabel Coursier and the "glider girls," for example were public figures at a time when there was deep ambivalence about this kind of athletic femininity. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, to find that this history is virtually invisible in current debates about the exclusion of women's ski jumping. Similarly, the fact that the IOC places an embargo on meeting minutes further marks their decisions as beyond (timely) scrutiny. The relationships between these silences reinforce what is present in the discourse as "within the true," acting to ignore particular voices and authorize others.

While our analysis has centered on these silences as central to, and implicated in, a discourse that constrains women's actions, feminist scholars have suggested that we must go beyond a straightforward interrogation of who or what is absent in the texts we consider. In addition, they suggest, we must consider these texts that construct particular kinds of women subjects as responses to an unspoken (and often subversive) alternative.<sup>102</sup> That is to say that discursive constructions may be read as efforts to make invisible those women, historical data, or athletic performances, for example, that trouble or subvert dominant power relations. The

emphasis here is on discourses as dynamic, contingent, and always already subject to challenges at the hands of those subjects who do not conform to dominant constructions. In our view, the case of women's ski jumping illustrates this point rather well.

As illustrated by the silences outlined above, the controversy over women's ski jumping illustrates the intersection of Olympic discourse with a discourse of feminine athleticism, one that constructs women athletes as inherently different from (indeed, physically inferior to) men athletes. Throughout the modern Olympic Movement, we have increasingly seen a celebration of athletic femininity. But, it is often a femininity constructed within the confines of perpetuated discourses that reinforce women's bodies as "at risk" and in need of protection. The 'unspoken alternatives' here are the women ski-jumpers, past and present, who disrupt these ideas. Women who compete alongside men, who jump further than men, who resist their infantilization, and who push for the inclusion of ski-jumping in the Olympic Games, all constitute threats to dominant constructions of both the Olympics and female athleticism. That these threats are generally silenced in the discourse can be read as a response to these threats, a way of shoring up constructions of the gender binary in sport, efforts to maintain sport (especially the most risky, high-performance versions thereof) as a male preserve (Messner, 1998).

In our view, this way of theorizing discourse both complicates relations of power (as it should do) and relocates women's lived experience as relevant to struggles over discursive constructions and the decisions shaped by them. It would, perhaps, be naively optimistic to suggest that the IOC, a body committed to acting "against any form of discrimination affecting the Olympic movement," is likely to self-critically institute sweeping changes. Past practice does not provide us with much confidence in this. This is not to suggest that the IOC has not made any strides forward, but that those strides have often been partial and/or fraught with contradiction.<sup>103</sup>

What we are suggesting here, then, is that the IOC, the FIS, and other bodies will have their hands forced as women continue to resist the ways they are constructed. The lawsuit described above, for example, was one of the few texts we discovered that shed light on some of the silences we have considered in this paper. This, we believe, is where the real promise of this lawsuit lies. While it may have failed from a legal perspective, it certainly brought the issue to the media's attention, and has the potential to serve as one of the mechanisms that helps end silences that perpetuate old sexist practices and hide new ones from view.<sup>104</sup> Otherwise, we simply have a case of "old wine in new bottles" as the IOC dresses up the same exclusionary practices in new garb.

## Notes

---

- <sup>1</sup> Our title is derived from a 2004 documentary on women's ski jumping that chronicles the struggles of American ski jumpers Lindsay Van and Jessica Jerome as they push for the inclusion of women's ski jumping on the Olympic program. See *Jumping Like a Girl*, Ruth Gregory and Jessica Mathews, 2004, <http://www.jumplikeagirl.com>.
- <sup>2</sup> See Richard W. Pound, "The Future of the Olympic Movement: Promised Land or Train Wreck" in *Pathways: Critiques and Discourse in Olympic Research* eds. R.K Barney, Michael K. Heine, Kevin B. Wamsley, and Gordon H. MacDonald (London, Ontario: International Centre for Olympic Studies, The University of Western Ontario, 2008).
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., 2.
- <sup>5</sup> See most recently, Maureen Smith and Alison M. Wrynn, *Women in the 2000, 2004 and 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games: An Analysis of Participation and Leadership Opportunities* (East Meadow, NY: Women's Sport Foundation, 2008).
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., 10.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid. See also, Carly Adams, "Body Check: Women's Olympic Ice Hockey and the Politics of Incorporation," in *Cultural Relations Old and New: The Transitory Olympic Ethos*, eds. Kevin B. Wamsley, R.K Barney, Scott G. Martyn (London, Ontario: International Centre for Olympic Studies, The University of Western Ontario, 2004).
- <sup>8</sup> At the 1920 Games 20,000 spectators attended the one-day competition, with athletes from five nations competing in eleven events. See M. H. Leigh and T. M. Bonin, "The Pioneering Role of Madame Alice Milliat and the FSFI in Establishing the International Trade [sic] and Field Competition for Women," *Journal of Sport History*, 4(1): 1977, p. 77. See also, Bruce Kidd, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 126. These Games were later renamed the Women's World Games.
- <sup>9</sup> See Susan Birrell and Nancy Theberge, "Feminist Resistance and Transformation in Sport" in D. Margaret Costa and Sharon R. Guthrie, *Women and Sport: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1994), pp. 361-362.
- <sup>10</sup> Jennifer Hargreaves, "Women and the Olympic Phenomenon" in Alan Tomlinson and Garry Whannel, *Five Ring Circus: Money: Power and Politics in the Olympic Games* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), p. 53.
- <sup>11</sup> See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

- 
- 12 Jim Morris, "Canadian Olympic body to join Ottawa for discussions with athletes," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), January 18, 2008, A3.
- 13 Damian Inwood, "IOC rethinking: Premier; Women's ski-jumping may make debut, after all," *The Province* (Vancouver, BC), January 16, 2008, A10.
- 14 Jeff Lee, "IOC won't allow women's ski jumping at 2010 Games despite outcry," *The Calgary Herald*, January 10, 2008, 1. According to 2003 and 2008 IOC documents, the following technical criteria have to be met for the inclusion of women's events in the Winter Olympic programme: the sport must be widely practiced in at least 35 countries and on three continents; be admitted to the programme three years before the Olympic Games; have a recognized international standing both numerically and geographically, and have been included at least twice in world or continental championships. See International Olympic Committee, "Factsheet: The Sports on the Olympic Programme," February 2008, Lausanne, Switzerland; *Olympic Charter*, 2003, 81. Interestingly, these specifics on the admission of sports, disciplines, and events are not included in the 2007 *Charter*.
- 15 Stephanie Levitz, "Women ski jumpers explain why they're fighting VANOC," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), May 23, 2008, A8. The statement of claim can be found at <http://www.skijumpingcentral.com/docs/lawsuitstatement05212008.pdf>
- 16 See Kevin B. Wamsley and Gertrude Pfister, "Olympic Men and Women: The Politics of Gender in the Modern Games," in *Global Olympics*, eds. Kevin Young and Kevin B. Wamsley (New York: NY: Elsevier, 2005), 103-126.
- 17 Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London, Sage Publications, 1997), 44.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid., 44, original emphasis.
- 20 Michelle Helstein, "That's who I want to be: The politics and production of desire within Nike advertising to women," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 27 (2003), 278.
- 21 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 224.
- 22 Helstein, 278.
- 23 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976/1980), 93.
- 24 Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

- 
- 25 Sara Mills, *Discourse* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).
- 26 We use the term “Olympism” here with caution. The IOC promotes the idea of ‘olympism’ as the guiding philosophy of the Modern Olympic and as a philosophy of life that promotes a balancing of body, will, and mind. (See, International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Charter*, July 2007, 11; [http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en\\_report\\_122.pdf](http://multimedia.olympic.org/pdf/en_report_122.pdf)). Olympic critics however, suggest that the “inherent vacuity” in this term renders it almost meaningless and open to interpretation. Wamsley argues that the term is a “metaphoric empty flask to be filled by the next political, economic, educational opportunist.” See Kevin B. Wamsley, “Laying Olympism to Rest,” in John Bale and Mette Krogh Christensen, *Post-Olympsim: Questioning Sport in the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford, Berg Publishers, 2004), p. 231. We use the term here to indicate that it has become a central part of the Olympic Movement discourse.
- 27 *Olympic Charter*, 2007, 14.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 15.
- 29 “Women not ready to jump: IOC boss,” *The Calgary Herald*, February 29, 2008, D6.
- 30 “Olympics not unfair to women, says IOC president,” *Kamloops Daily News*, February 29, 2008 A8.
- 31 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 27.
- 32 Hall, 44.
- 33 James Ward and Diana Winstanley, “The absent presence: Negative space within discourse and the construction of minority sexual identity in the workplace,” *Human Relations* 56 (2003), 1262.
- 34 See, for example, Janice Forsyth, “Teepees and Tomahawks: Aboriginal Cultural Representations at the 1976 Olympic Games,” in *The Global Nexus Engaged*, eds. Kevin B. Wamsley, R.K Barney, Scott G. Martyn (London, Ontario: International Centre for Olympic Studies, The University of Western Ontario, 2002), 71-76; Charlene Weaving, “Like Beauty, Exploitation,” in *The Global Nexus Engaged*, eds. Kevin B. Wamsley, R.K Barney, Scott G. Martyn (London, Ontario: International Centre for Olympic Studies, The University of Western Ontario, 2002), 209-216.
- 35 Canadian Olympic Team Handbook, Turin 2006, [http://www.olympic.ca/EN/media/2006\\_handbook/skijumping/intro.shtml](http://www.olympic.ca/EN/media/2006_handbook/skijumping/intro.shtml)

- 
- 36 Interview with Isabel Patricia Coursier, by Christina Mead and Gertrude Leslie, 22 February 1977, transcripts at Revelstoke Museum and Archives, Revelstoke, British Columbia.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Aileen Porter, "Honour: Canadian Skiers of Distinction," *Ski Canada*, Spring 2002, p. 66.
- 40 Ski joring was a pony ski race popular in Canada in the 1920s and is still a popular sport in North America, Scandinavian and European countries, where the entrant on skis drives a pony at maximum speed. See [www.nasja.com](http://www.nasja.com) and J. Meszoly, "Skijoring," *Equus*, 316, Feb 1, 2004, p. 71 for more information.
- 41 Porter, 66.
- 42 Patrick Brethour, "Female ski jumpers strike deal with Ottawa: next up is the IOC," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), January 9, 2008, A1.
- 43 "IOC defends Exclusion of Women's Ski jumping," *The Canadian Press*, 9 January 2008, <http://www.cbc.ca/sports/amateur/story/2008/01/09/ioc-ski-jumping.html>.
- 44 Coursier interview.
- 45 "Der Schanzen-Floh ist weiblich und im Aufwind," *Skispringen*, 19-20, October 2005. [http://www.sportsfrau.com/cms/red/download/19-20\\_Skispringen.pdf](http://www.sportsfrau.com/cms/red/download/19-20_Skispringen.pdf) (translated from German using <http://www.freetranslation.com/>).
- 46 These records are considered "unofficial" as they were not sanctioned by an international federation. Women's ski jumping was sanctioned by the International Ski Federation in 2006.
- 47 See "Alf Engen Takes Winsted Ski Jump," *The New York Times*, 15 January 1934, p. 19; "Oimoen, With Leaps of 164 and 174 Feet, Wins Norge Ski Club Meet for 7<sup>th</sup> Time," *The New York Times*, 16 January 1933, p. 18; "Miss Kolstad Here Tonight for Ski Meet," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 12 January 1933, p. 21; "Miss Kolstad Added to Ski Tourney Card," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 14 January 1934, p. A2; "Twin Ski Leap on Norge Card," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 January 1935, p. 26; Paul W. Kearney, "Keep Your Eye on Safety," *Los Angeles Times*, 2 January 1938, 10-11; "Ski Riders Perform at New Boston," *Hartford Courant*, (Boston, MA) 2 February 1936, p. C1. "Eight Ski Stars Arrive," *The New York Times*, 26 November 1937, p. 34.
- 48 See "Indoor Snowfall Prepares Garden for Winter Sports Show Opening Tonight," *The New York Times*, 7 December 1937, p. 34.

- 
- 49 See for example, "Ski Jumping and Racing will Feature Three-Day Carnival at Polo Grounds," *The New York Times*, 14 February 1937, p. 78.
- 50 See [http://www.skisprungschanzen.com/can/can\\_whistler.htm](http://www.skisprungschanzen.com/can/can_whistler.htm), accessed October 9, 2009.
- 51 See <http://www.skijumpingcentral.com/docs/lawsuitstatement05212008.pdf>
- 52 Mary Jo Kane, "Resistance/transformation of the oppositional binary: Exposing sport as continuum," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 19 (1995), 191-218.
- 53 *Olympic Charter*, 2007, 86-87.
- 54 Pound, 3.
- 55 Jeff Lee, "Women's ski-jump team presses IOC for change; Female jumpers want to be allowed to participate in 2010 Winter Olympics," *The Vancouver Sun*, January 5, 2008, B5. A press report from the FIS in November 2006 suggest that these numbers are perhaps higher (men and women from 31 nations). However, even at 31 nations, this does not meet the technical requirements of the IOC which require participation in 35 countries. In addition, the first World Cup competition for Ski Cross was in 2005 suggesting that two world championships had not taken place prior to the decision to include the event as per IOC requirements. See "FIS Media Info: Ski Cross accepted into the Olympics," Fédération Internationale de Ski, 29 November 2006, <http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/news/pressreleases/pressreleases2006/ski-cross.html>
- 56 See Jonathan Woodward, "Female ski jumpers set to confront IOC," *The Globe and Mail*, December 20, 2006.
- 57 Rod Mickleburgh, "IOC chief touts China's progress in B.C. visit," *Kamloops Daily News*, February 29, 2008, A8.
- 58 See "Canada's Women Ski Jumpers To Get Their Day in Court," *The Canadian Press*, November 18, 2008. Women's bobsled and skeleton were introduced by the Fédération Internationale de Bobsleigh et de Tobogganing (FIBT) in the 2000 and 2004 World Championships respectively after the decision was made to debut the two sports in the 2002 Olympic program despite the official IOC inclusion requirement that the a new winter sport event must have been included in at least two world championship events. See [www.fibt.com](http://www.fibt.com).
- 59 Deborah Lupton, *Risk* (London: Routledge, 1999).
- 60 Mary Romero, "Racial profiling and immigration law enforcement: Rounding up the usual suspects in the Latino community," *Critical Sociology* 32 (2006), 448-473.
- 61 Uri Yanay, "The Big Brother function of Block Watch," *The International Journal of*

---

*Sociology and Social Policy* 14 (1994), 44-58.

- 62 Pirrko Markula and Richard Pringle, *Foucault, Sport and Exercise: Power, Knowledge and Transforming the Self* (London: Routledge, 2006).
- 63 Linda B. Deutschmann, L.B. *Deviance and Social Control*, Fourth Edition (Toronto, ON: Thomson Canada Limited, 2007). As Deutschmann notes, the concept of a fair trial, as we now understand it, was not in evidence during the witch craze. Routinely, confessions were obtained through questionable means, and evidence was fabricated or simply ridiculous. This concept is wonderfully satirized in a scene from the film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* – see [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrzMhU\\_4m-g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrzMhU_4m-g)
- 64 Deborah Lupton, “Risk and the ontology of pregnant embodiment,” in *Risk and Sociocultural Theory*, ed. Deborah Lupton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 82.
- 65 Ibid., 62.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Lupton, *Risk*, 88-90.
- 68 See Helen Lenskyj, *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport, & Sexuality* (Toronto, ON: Women’s Press, 1986), 18. Class and ethnicity were also implicated in these discourses. The reproductive capacities and moral virtues of Anglo-Saxon, middle class women were constructed in medical discourse as more valuable than those of their working class immigrant counterparts.
- 69 Lenskyj, 25.
- 70 Eventually, certain women in the medical profession were able to shift the discourse somewhat, although even they were seen by many male doctors as untrustworthy when it came to matters concerning women’s exercise and reproductive health. See Lenskyj 1986; Patricia A. Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois, 1989). Even women who challenged the “malestream” view, though, tended to further entrench the importance of women cultivating their capacities to bear and raise children.
- 71 As Lenskyj points out, though, the medical discourse simultaneously cast doubt upon the claims of women that they had suffered uterine injuries as a result of heavy labour: “The old class double standard was creating a new problem: how to convince women that heavy *work* was safe, while heavy *play* was dangerous.” See Lenskyj, 29.
- 72 These rules and guidelines, of course, then become *part of* the discourse.

- 
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 Coursier interview.
- 75 Porter, 66
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 See Vertinsky, 1989. A report issued at an IOC Pedagogic conference in 1925, for example, concluded that “if those sports and games which are suitable for men be modified and reduced so that they cannot in any way injure the woman, and if we can create organizations which will enforce these modified regulations stringently, we will have gone a long way towards achieving our objects” (cited in Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sport Females* (New York: NY: Routledge, 1994), 213). As Hargreaves points out, this discourse, based on a conflation of the biological and the social, was seen as authoritative, and provided the basis upon which the IOC and other bodies could justify limiting women’s participation in track and field in the years that followed.
- 78 For example, Stamata Revithi is said to have run alongside the official (i.e., male) competitors in the first running of the marathon (26.2 miles) in the modern Olympic era, in 1896. See Annemarie Jutel, “‘Thou dost run as in flotation’: Femininity, reassurance and the emergence of the Women’s marathon, *International Journal of the History of Sport* 20 (2003), 17-36.
- 79 Wamsley and Pfister, 113.
- 80 Ibid.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 For more on the risk discourses and censure of women’s hockey see Carly Adams, “Organizing Hockey for Women: The Ladies Ontario Hockey Association and the Fight for Legitimacy, 1922-1940” In John Wong (ed.) *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada Before the End of the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).
- 84 See for example, “Random Notes on Current Sports,” *The Toronto Daily Star*, 18 December 1922, p. 24.
- 85 See for example, “Sticks and Fists Fly Freely as Girl Hockeyists Battle,” *The Toronto Daily Star*, 26 March 1935, p. 12; “Girls Wanted Another Fight But Refferees Stopped Them, *The Toronto Daily Star*, 28 March 1935, p. 14; “Hockey Amazons in Fistic Display,” *The Toronto Daily Star*, 20 February 1936, p. 16; “Girls Draw Major for Fistic Display,” *The Toronto Daily Star*, 4 March 1937, p. 14.

- 
- 86 See A. Gibb, "Sticks and Fists Fly Freely As Girl Hockeyists Battle," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 26 March 1935, p. 12.
- 87 Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 209.
- 88 See Kevin B. Wamsley and Carly Adams, "Stepping in with Fists: Aggression in Early Women's Hockey," Paper presented at the annual conference of the North American Society for Sport Sociology, Vancouver, BC., 2006.
- 89 Catherine Palmer, "Death, danger and the selling of risk in adventure sports," in *Understanding Lifestyle Sports: Consumption, Identity and Difference*, ed. Belinda Wheaton (New York: Routledge, 2004), 66.
- 90 Cited in Paul Gilchrist, "'Motherhood, ambition and risk': Mediating the sporting hero/ine in conservative Britain," *Media, Culture and Society*, 29 (2007), 396.
- 91 Ibid, 395.
- 92 Peter Donnelly, "Sport and risk culture," in *Sporting Bodies, Damaged Selves: Sociological Studies of Sports-Related Injuries*, ed. Kevin Young (Oxford: Elsevier, 2004).
- 93 Palmer, 55-69.
- 94 See <http://www.wsjusa.com/abc.htm>. It should be noted that elsewhere, Kasper claims that his comments were taken out of context. See <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/22/sports/othersports/22ski.html>
- 95 In the case of the FIS Continental Cup, see <http://www.fis-ski.com/data/document/cocj-men-0910-e.pdf> and <http://www.fis-ski.com/data/document/cocj-ladies-0910-e.pdf>
- 96 See [http://www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/missions/women/activities/women\\_uk.asp](http://www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/missions/women/activities/women_uk.asp)
- 97 It is perhaps ironic that such a gendered term is used to describe a profoundly gendered decision.
- 98 "Women's ski jump proponents won't give up the Olympic fight," *Prince George Citizen*, February 25, 2008, 8.
- 99 Laura Robinson, "Hypocrisy about women's sport is one slippery slope," *Globe and Mail*, 4 June 2008, A17.

- 
- <sup>100</sup> Gerd von der Lippe, "Female Flying Bodies in Norwegian Sports Media" in *International perspectives on sporting women in past and present : a Festschrift for Gertrud Pfister*, eds., Annette R. Hofmann & Else Trangbæk (København: University of Copehagen, Institute of exercise and sport sciences, 2005), 321-343.
- <sup>101</sup> See <http://www.skijumpingcentral.com/docs/lawsuitstatement05212008.pdf>
- <sup>102</sup> Mills, 88-92.
- <sup>103</sup> Smith and Wrynn, 2.
- <sup>104</sup> *Olympic Charter*, 2007, 14.

## Bibliography

- Adams, Carly. 'Body Check: Women's Olympic Ice Hockey and the Politics of Incorporation,' in *Cultural Relations Old and New: The Transitory Olympic Ethos*, ed. Kevin B. Wamsley, R.K Barney, Scott G. Martyn, 141-150. London, Ontario: International Centre for Olympic Studies, The University of Western Ontario, 2004.
- Adams, Carly. 'Fighting for Acceptance: Sigfrid Edstrom and Avery Brundage: their Efforts to Shape and Control Women's Participation in the Olympic Games,' in *The Global Nexus Engaged*, ed. Kevin B. Wamsley, R.K Barney, Scott G. Martyn, 143-148. London, Ontario: International Centre for Olympic Studies, The University of Western Ontario, 2002.
- Adams, Carly. 'Organizing Hockey for Women: The Ladies Ontario Hockey Association and the Fight for Legitimacy, 1922-1940,' in *Coast to Coast: Hockey in Canada Before the End of the Second World War*, ed. John Wong. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- Birrell, Susan and Nancy Theberge. 'Feminist Resistance and Transformation in Sport' in *Women and Sport: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. D. Margaret Costa and Sharon R. Guthrie. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1994.
- "Der Schanzen-Floh ist weiblich und im Aufwind," *Skispringen* 19-20 (October 2005).
- Deutschmann, Linda B. *Deviance and Social Control*. Toronto, ON: Thomson Canada Limited, 2007.
- Donnelly, Peter. "Sport and risk culture," in *Sporting Bodies, Damaged Selves: Sociological Studies of Sports-Related Injuries*, ed. Kevin Young. Oxford: Elsevier, 2004.

---

Forsyth, Janice. 'Teepees and Tomahawks: Aboriginal Cultural Representations at the 1976 Olympic Games,' in *The Global Nexus Engaged*, ed. Kevin B. Wamsley, R.K Barney, Scott G. Martyn. London, Ontario: International Centre for Olympic Studies, The University of Western Ontario, 2002.

Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1976/1980.

Gilchrist, Paul. 'Motherhood, ambition and risk': Mediating the sporting hero/ine in conservative Britain.' *Media, Culture and Society* 29 (2007): 395-414.

Hall, Stuart. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London, Sage Publications, 1997.

Hargreaves, Jennifer. *Sport Females*. New York: NY: Routledge, 1994.

Hargreaves, Jennifer. 'Women and the Olympic Phenomenon,' in *Five Ring Circus: Money: Power and Politics in the Olympic Games*, ed. Alan Tomlinson and Garry Whannel. London: Pluto Press, 1984.

Helstein, Michelle. 'That's who I want to be: The politics and production of desire within Nike advertising to women.' *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 27 (2003): 276-292.

Jutel, Annemarie. "'Thou dost run as in flotation': Femininity, reassurance and the emergence of the Women's marathon,' *International Journal of the History of Sport* 20 (2003): 17-36.

Kane, M-J. (1995). 'Resistance/transformation of the oppositional binary: Exposing sport as a continuum.' *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 19 (1995): 191-218.

Kidd, Bruce. *The Struggle for Canadian Sport*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1996.

Leigh, M. H. and T. M. Bonin. 'The Pioneering Role of Madame Alice Milliat and the FSFI in Establishing the International Trade [sic] and Field Competition for Women,' *Journal of Sport History* 4 (1977): 72-83.

Lenskyj, Helen. *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport, & Sexuality*. Toronto, ON: Women's Press, 1986.

Lupton, Deborah. *Risk*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Lupton Deborah. 'Risk and the ontology of pregnant embodiment,' in *Risk and Sociocultural Theory*, ed. Deborah Lupton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

---

1999.

Markula, Pirrko and Richard Pringle. *Foucault, Sport and Exercise: Power, Knowledge and Transforming the Self*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Messner, M. 'Sports and male domination: The female athlete as contested ideological terrain.' *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 5 (1988): 197-211.

Mills, S. *Discourse*. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

Porter, Aileen. 'Honour: Canadian Skiers of Distinction,' *Ski Canada Spring* (2002): 66.

Palmer, Catherine. 'Death, danger and the selling of risk in adventure sports,' in *Understanding Lifestyle Sports: Consumption, Identity and Difference*, ed. Belinda Wheaton. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Pound, Richard W. 'The Future of the Olympic Movement: Promised Land or Train Wreck,' in *Pathways: Critiques and Discourse in Olympic Research*, ed. R.K Barney, Michael K. Heine, Kevin B. Wamsley, and Gordon H. MacDonald. London, Ontario: International Centre for Olympic Studies, The University of Western Ontario, 2008.

Romero, Mary. 'Racial profiling and immigration law enforcement: Rounding up the usual suspects in the Latino community,' *Critical Sociology* 32 (2006): 447-473.

Smith, Maureen and Alison M. Wrynn. *Women in the 2000, 2004 and 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games: An Analysis of Participation and Leadership Opportunities*. East Meadow, NY: Women's Sport Foundation, 2008.

Vertinsky, Patricia A. *The Eternally Wounded Woman*. Chicago, IL: University of Illinois, 1989.

von der Lippe, Gerd. 'Female Flying Bodies in Norwegian Sports Media,' in *International perspectives on sporting women in past and present : a Festschrift for Gertrud Pfister*, ed. Annette R. Hofmann & Else Trangbæk, 321-343. København: University of Copenhagen, Institute of exercise and sport sciences, 2005.

Wamsley, Kevin B. 'Laying Olympism to Rest,' in *Post-Olympsim: Questioning Sport in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. John Bale and Mette Krogh Christensen. Oxford, Berg Publishers, 2004.

Wamsley, Kevin B. and Carly Adams. 'Stepping in with Fists: Aggression in Early Women's Hockey,' Paper presented at the annual conference of the North American Society for Sport Sociology, Vancouver, BC., 2006.

Wamsley Kevin B. and Gertrude Pfister, 'Olympic Men and Women: The Politics of

---

Gender in the Modern Games,' in *Global Olympics*, ed. Kevin Young and Kevin B. Wamsley. New York: NY: Elsevier, 2005.

Ward, James and Diana Winstanley. 'The absent presence: Negative space within discourse and the construction of minority sexual identity in the workplace,' *Human Relations* 56 (2003): 1255-1280.

Weaving, Charlene. 'Like Beauty, Exploitation.' in *The Global Nexus Engaged*, ed. Kevin B. Wamsley, R.K Barney, Scott G. Martyn. London, Ontario: International Centre for Olympic Studies, The University of Western Ontario, 2002.

Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Yanay, Uri. 'The Big Brother function of Block Watch,' *The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 14 (1994): 44-58.