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# Practice of Variations in a Regulated Dance Form

A Study with the RSCDS Lyon Branch

Master's thesis in Choreomundus - International master in  
Dance Knowledge, Practice, and Heritage

June 2019



## **Abstract**

This dissertation analyzes the possibility of variations existing in the practice of Scottish country dancing in the RSCDS Lyon branch. This research project presents the results from my field work which was started on April 27-29, 2018 in Lyon and completed until the Newcastle festival on February 9, 2019. Completing observant participation at Lyon, St. Andrews, and Newcastle, attending social, competitive and educational events while doing interviews in English and French, distributing the questionnaire, recording the dances, and collecting RSCDS dance instructions, I analyzed the variations by studying and comparing the videos, the research participants' insight, and the shared standards. The scope of this study examines the variations such as shadow dancing, pivot, high five, twirling, cross-gender dancing, underarm turning as well as non-dancing variations and their relation to the timing and the structure of the dance while acknowledging fun, forgetting, and volition as the three major reasons leading to the creation of the variations. Moreover, the impact of the variations is evaluated considering the role of gaze, orientation, fellow watching, inclusion, position, and interfering dancer in Scottish country dancing. The variations seem to have altering or functional impact while some of them change the covering in the dance. Furthermore, the differences in gendered-dance role assignments seem to be the outcome of the dancer's position rather than their gender resulting in a smooth practice of the cross-gender dancing. The present state of Scottish country dancing in Lyon is the result of the network contributing to its practice while creating a community of dancers who seek to redefine the borders and the potentials of Scottish country dancing.

**Keywords: Scottish Country Dancing, Variations, Formal Analysis, Dance Behaviour**