THE GENDER-BASED EXPERIENCES

OF WOMEN IN

INTERCOLLEGIATE FORENSICS

by

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system for categorizing those statements. The resulting taxonomy of women's gender-based experiences in intercollegiate forensics is in large part the result of their thinking about the critical incident statements submitted by women involved in intercollegiate and high school forensics.

My dedication to this project results from my involvement with the three most important women in my life, each of whom has helped me develop the values and attitudes which tell me these results are both true and important. Dora Greenstreet has demonstrated throughout her life that while she may operate in a different way (from a man), a woman is every bit his equal. Jennifer Greenstreet quietly encouraged me, and never lost faith even when this project took much longer than it should have. She has also shown me the completely unnecessary frustrations professional women routinely encounter. Dacia Greenstreet is currently encountering many of the behaviors discussed on the following pages. Unlike the hundreds of women I have coached, judged, and worked with during 23 years of coaching and directing forensics, her pain (and her joy) comes to my home. These three have shown me the truth in the critical incident reports I read. They have convinced me of the importance of trying to do what little I can to encourage fairness.

This project is dedicated to someone who will never know it was completed, but to whom it would have meant a great deal: John Greenstreet.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Intercollegiate debate and forensics grew out of "the first agency of intellect" in American higher education—the college literary society (Rudolph, 1968). As the institutions which spawned the earliest literary societies were populated entirely by male faculty, administration, and students (as was all of American higher education itself), it is no surprise that those societies focused on items and activities of interest to males. And indeed, the history of intercollegiate debate reflects the male orientation of American higher education during those earlier times (Greenstreet, 1989). Since the students who formed the literary societies from which debate associations (and ultimately, intercollegiate forensics) emerged were all male, any other orientation would have been at best unlikely. As higher education slowly integrated, African-Americans and women gained more equal access to the traditional curriculum, and intercollegiate debate and forensics has seen some movement toward inclusion of underrepresented groups.

However, like much of post-secondary education, the intercollegiate forensics community has not fully integrated. While failing to pinpoint women, the First Developmental Conference on Forensics calls on the forensics community to extend efforts to broaden participation by groups "traditionally resistant to such efforts" (McBath, 1975, pp. 12-13). The Second National Conference on Forensics, citing that earlier call for "greater pluralism and openness within the activity," seeks "wider participation by all sexes, races and classes" (Ziegelmueller, 1984, p. 1). In the report of the second conference, women are mentioned specifically, and discrimination and

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harassment on the basis of sex are decried, as is verbal abuse (Parson, 1984, pp. 17-18).

But apart from calling for increased effort toward inclusion of women, the intercollegiate forensics community has done little to encourage their entry into the activity. There has been no effort to study the way the entire forensics community treats women, nor to determine which forensics experiences particular to women encourage and which discourage participation. Indeed, until the intercollegiate forensics community understands what women experience within it, it will be unable to develop effective measures to expand their participation. This project attempts to discover and enumerate the positive and negative gender-based experiences of women who participate in intercollegiate forensics. Understanding those experiences may allow the forensics community to devise programs to encourage their participation.

This project attempts to discover the gender-driven experiences of women in intercollegiate forensics which result from their participation in the activity. The following chapter explores previous attempts to determine how women experience the world of intercollegiate forensics. Three problems are identified which limit the utility of that research. Chapter 3 describes the major problem facing researchers who wish to explore gender in intercollegiate forensics: There appears to be no clearly-defined starting point for such research. The purpose of this project is to provide such a starting point. Chapter 4 describes the critical incident technique and how that method was used to gather data for this project. Chapter 5 provides a taxonomy of women's gender-based experiences in intercollegiate forensics, exploring both positive and negative experiences. Chapter 6 discusses those results and provides directions for future research.

Readers unfamiliar with intercollegiate forensics, the critical incident technique, or feminist research may benefit from the clarification of certain terms. The following glossary is provided for their benefit.

American Forensic Association - a professional association for communication scholars and practitioners; used here as the former or current sponsor of national championship tournaments in debate and individual events.

androcentric - focused on males; presuming the male model as normal or primary.

CEDA - Cross Examination Debate Association, the most populous of several intercollegiate debate organizations.

Council of Forensic Organizations - coordinating body attempting to encourage cooperation and share data among forensics organizations.

critical incident - a specific event, clearly recalled and reported by a subject.

essence statement - a single sentence distillation of a critical incident report.

forensics - competitive speech activities, including debate, public address, and oral interpretation of literature. The name is derived from forensic (or courtroom) speaking, since debate follows a judicial model.

individual events - nondebate public address and oral interpretation forensics events.

intercollegiate - between or among representatives of different institutions of higher education (used in this paper to distinguish from interscholastic [elementary and secondary] forensics.)

Interstate Oratorical Association - sponsor of the oldest active national championship contest in intercollegiate forensics.

limited preparation events - extemporaneous and impromptu speaking, both of which require contestants to prepare and deliver their speeches at the tournament, rather than to deliver speeches prepared beforehand.

National Forensic Association - professional organization of communication scholars and practitioners which sponsors a national championship tournament.

novice division - a tournament division reserved for students in their first year of competition.

open division - a tournament division for more experienced competitors.

oral interpretation events - individual events in which contestants read aloud literature of merit from manuscripts.

patriarchy - a social system which reinforces male primacy.

Phi Rho Pi - honorary forensics organization.

Pi Kappa Delta - honorary forensics organization.

public address events - individual events in which contestants prepare and present speeches.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Despite the formal calls for action mentioned in the previous chapter, the intercollegiate forensics community has not reached out to women. Considerable evidence supports the notion that women in forensics are treated differently from men. While it espouses concern for this differentiation, remediation is not necessarily a high priority within the intercollegiate forensics community.

Recent research in intercollegiate forensics reflects the apparent ambivalence toward gender concerns. Contemporary research in the field reflects three major problems: (1) It ignores women by failing to account for their presence; (2) it assumes what is true for men is also true for women; and (3) it accepts questionable stereotypes concerning gender roles and behavior. Accepting and operating from a perspective which presumes the primacy of the male model may create a social system in which the potential and actual contributions of women are devalued. If women are viewed without reference to the male model, a more open perspective may lead the forensics community to recognize and value their contributions.

Second Class Citizens

Concerning progress toward gender equality in his association, a former Executive Secretary of the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) writes: "There is no evidence that we are successfully reaching out to diverse groups.... Relying on our pool of 'ex-debaters' to judge all of our rounds, retrenches the very patriarchal attitudes we seek to change [sic]"

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(Bartanen, 1993, pp. 2-3). Szwapa (1992) finds evidence of failure to accept diversity on the National Debate Tournament circuit as well, as she reports that "most stunning of all, almost forty percent [of survey respondents] reported being the victims of forcible sexual advances at debate tournaments or at home while preparing for debate tournaments" (p. 11). Stepp, Simerly, and Logue (1993) surveyed CEDA participants, coaches, and judges "at three major tournaments" (p. 2) and concluded "the CEDA community has a serious problem [in its treatment of women]" (p. 7). Perhaps the strongest indication that women may experience the world of forensics differently from men is the subsequent adoption of an official Statement on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment by CEDA, in which CEDA establishes both a Sexual Harassment Office and a Committee on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment (CEDA, 1993).

Such measures have proven necessary because the forensics community has yet to accept women as first-class citizens. Debate especially appears to be dominated by a preference for males. In a study of seven western intercollegiate tournaments, Medcalf (1984) found that fewer than one third of CEDA debaters were women, and documented a bias in favor of male-male over mixed pairs or female-female two-person debate teams. In a similar study conducted in the east (to check for regional bias in Medcalf's study), Logue (1985) found just over a third of CEDA debaters were women. She could not replicate a bias in favor of males in terms of results (women were represented in the elimination rounds at tournaments in proportion to their participation), but she did find almost twice as many women in novice division as in open division. She felt this imbalance indicated women who enter debate leave the activity rather than continue participation at advanced levels. Logue also found a preference for male-male team composition, but

noted that in the east a stronger likelihood of female-female (rather than mixed gender) teams existed.

Gender inequity is not limited to debate, nor is it revealed only by measuring participation. Friedley and Manchester (1985) found that while levels of participation for male and female contestants were fairly even in regional and national individual events tournaments (52% male, 48% female), males were much more likely to receive superior ranks and ratings at national championship tournaments. That is, while men and women participated in relatively even numbers, men appeared to be rewarded disproportionately. Worthen and Pack (1993) concluded the perception of gender bias against women in the forensics community was widely recognized by judges, coaches, and debaters. While their study does not document actual bias, it does document a widespread concern for such a bias throughout the intercollegiate forensics community. These findings support the conclusion that the well-documented gender bias found in the greater society permeates the intercollegiate forensics community.

A Matter of Commitment

Indeed, even the concern of the forensics community for gender diversity is questionable. At a recent regional convention, this author observed a panel of three male forensics educators discussing the future of CEDA. Rhodes (1994) began the panel with an historic discussion of "The Organizational Assumptions of CEDA." Romanelli (1994) considered the present state of the organization in an exploration of "What Debaters Like and Dislike in the C.E.D.A. Experience." T. Murphy (1994) explored the future of the association in a paper entitled "When Dissenters Dissent: CEDA in the

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Nineties." Although a woman was discussed as an example in one presentation, none of these authors specifically addressed gender diversity as a past, present, or future issue except in response to questions by the audience.

Stepp (1993) cited data collected by the CEDA Commission on Women and Minorities in concluding the CEDA debate community "continues to be a white male dominated activity" (p. 1). She indicated the organization needs to implement a genuine commitment to diversity on several levels. A past president of the organization has expressed the same view to the membership in an open letter (Duke, 1994).

Drawing parallels to the feminist movement of the 1960's and 1970's, Bjork (1993) indicated responsibility for the lack of progress on diversity may be shared by both male and female members of the debate community. She feels women may not be sufficiently conscious of differential treatment to recognize it, and may also feel powerless to confront such treatment when they do identify it.

While the intercollegiate forensics community has formally endorsed the goal of equality, not all members appear committed to that goal. Other members may be unable to recognize unequal treatment when they see or experience it. Despite the leadership of CEDA in gathering data and formally addressing issues of gender, gender diversity does not appear to be the principle concern of any of the national intercollegiate forensics organizations.

Problems with Research

The ambivalence of the intercollegiate forensics community toward gender equity is reflected in current research efforts. Since the Second

National Conference on Forensics (Parson, 1984), some research has been directed toward the role and treatment of women in forensics. Not all of the research has proven helpful, and much other research has ignored guidelines suggested for research on sex differences. Tavris (1992) identified three common perspectives which reduce the value of social science research focused on women: (1) *"Men are normal; women, being 'opposite,' are deficient;"* (2) *"Men are normal; women are opposite from men, but superior to them;"* and (3) *"Men are normal, and women are or should be like them"* (p. 20; emphasis in original).

Eichler and Lapointe (1985) noted several additional problems to which social science research may fall heir. They claim in some fields, researchers have sometimes disregarded sex as a variable or presumed an androcentric (what is male is what is) perspective on reality (pp. 10-11). Such limited research creates problems, as it leads to generalizations from that research which either ignore or discount women (p. 13). Contemporary forensics research exhibits all these problems.

Ignoring Women

Some forensics research simply ignores the presence of women in forensics activities. In ignoring the uniqueness of women's experience, such research fails to recognize women as unique participants in forensics activity. The previously-discussed regional convention panel on the future of CEDA debate (T. Murphy, 1994; Rhodes, 1994; Romanelli, 1994) ostensibly committed this error by failing to mention women's unique concerns until prompted by questions from their audience. Like that panel, Tomlinson (1986) failed to consider any gender-oriented issues (e.g., participation rates, bias, harassment)

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in an examination of issues confronting the Cross Examination Debate Association. When Littlefield and Sellnow (1992) studied stress at the American Forensic Association National Individual Events Tournament, they did not isolate gender as a variable. Porter and Sommerness' (1991) review of "Legal Issues Confronting the Director of Forensics" made no mention of sexual harassment or discrimination on the basis of gender (indeed, they mentioned no gender-specific legal issues). As these researchers fail to consider that women's experiences and perspectives may differ from those of men, they deny women their place in the intercollegiate forensics community. The research denies the agency of women, who do indeed participate in the forensics community.

Assuming Women are like Men

Perhaps the most frequently-observed error in forensics research is the assumption that the experiences of women and men are the same. In a study driven by the objective of the first developmental conference to broaden participation, McMillan and Todd-Mancillas (1991) attempted to assess the value of individual events from the perspective of student participants. While they gathered demographic data, they did not use it to analyze the results from both male and female perspectives. Since 44.5% of the respondents to the survey were female, such analysis was possible. Indeed, since results were reported isolating the variable of respondent experience, including both length of experience and type of event(s) entered, it is rather surprising to find the variable of gender unassessed. Nevertheless, no attempt was made to determine if women's responses differed from those of men (or men from women; the norm was presumed to apply evenly to both). What

such analysis might have revealed is a matter for speculation. These researchers missed an opportunity to help the forensics community learn what female participants value in the experience.

Gill (1990) studied the reasons forensics coaches quit, and explored the variables of time, travel, training, competition, support, ethics, compensation, and workload. Of the 73 respondents, 20 were female, but data were not analyzed by gender. The reader cannot determine which of the issues (if any) were most significant to women who coach, or whether women experienced the coaching role differently from men. Gill may have been able to resolve such concerns, but did not analyze data using gender as a variable.

Sellnow and Ziegelmueller (1988) reviewed 20 years of championship orations by both men and women to determine how oratory has changed as a contest event. Since they reviewed speeches from the Interstate Oratorical Association championships, their data clearly listed men and women in separate divisions during many of the years they surveyed. They compared the level of personal involvement, evocative versus logical appeals, level of documentation, and proportion of the speech devoted to the solution, but they did not explore the question of different approaches based on gender of the speaker, despite clear gender identification of all the speakers studied. Do men's and women's orations differ in the four areas isolated in this study? These researchers had the data to determine whteher men's and women's orations differ, but did not use that data.

In each of these instances, researchers treated women as if they were men. Such an approach denies the reality presented through other social science research that women do experience the world differently from men, and that their experiences and perspectives differ from those of men. These

researchers opted not to take advantage of their opportunities to discover and document those differences in the world of intercollegiate forensics.

Accepting Stereotypes

A handful of studies do recognize differences between men and women in forensics. Unfortunately, not all are helpful in developing a clear view of the forensics experiences of women. In a study prompted by the work of John Molloy (1975, 1977), Jones (1987) explored the influence of attire on competitors and contest judges. Jones analyzed both the types of attire preferred by the subjects and responses of subjects to that attire by sex. Jones' conclusion that both female and male contestants and judges agreed they were influenced by their own and others' attire may not be earth-shaking, but he did recognize women's perceptions and expectations may differ from those of men (although they did not vary significantly in his study).

In an extended argument, J. Murphy (1989) attempted to explain the previously-established bias against women in public address events (especially in limited preparation events) by relying on the generally-discredited existence of a nonrational "women's speech" style better suited to mediated than direct public communication. In suggesting women may either emulate men (thus subsuming their gender identity) or remain female (and become less competitive), J. Murphy lent support to the notion that women are different from, and thus inferior to, men (at least insofar as rationality is concerned).

While documenting the debate community's "unconscionable" affirmative action record, Logue (1993, p. 8) also treated women as wholly different from men, with distinct feminine traits which are undervalued in

debate. Logue contends that since males dominate the activity, they naturally select debate topics which primarily interest men. She argues that debate relies on rules which sustain patriarchy and power, denying women equal treatment. Logue also believes that the very idea of competition is masculine in nature. She claims intercollegiate debate marginalizes women (as well as minorities) through a structure which assures white male dominance. She feels women are better suited to collaboration, which the structure and nature of competitive debate preclude.

Questioning Stereotypes

While such categorization concerning masculine and feminine traits as endorsed by J. Murphy (1989) and Logue (1993) may be interesting, Tavris (1992) indicates the existence of these stereotyped traits is not supported by any long-term empirical research. She feels that while such research sometimes provides a snapshot of the current state of events, with the passage of time researchers cannot replicate the results. Such research provides a glimpse of the time frame in which the research was conducted, but no overview traces the development, maturation, or decline of such practice (nor the onset of new phenomena).

Indeed, research from within the discipline of communication questions the existence of "women's speech," and indicates women may perform as effectively as men in competitive environments. Wright and Hosman (1983) observed the behavior of male and female witnesses in court in an attempt to discover "powerless" speech forms. Their definition of "powerless" (frequent hedges, overuse of intensifiers, hypercorrect linguistic forms, overpolite language, and hesitation) correlates well with the standard

behaviors associated with "women's speech" by Lakoff (1975). They found men and women utilize "powerless" speech forms roughly equally, although they are not treated equally when they employ such speech forms.

Crosby and Nyquist (1977) conducted three studies to test six separate hypotheses forwarded by Lakoff (1975). Like Lakoff (who operated without benefit of empirical data), Crosby and Nyquist found women use submissive speech forms more than men (who also use such forms), although not necessarily to a statistically significant degree. Unlike Lakoff, Crosby and Nyquist felt women's use of such forms was triggered more by role than by sex. They conclude that differences between the speech of men and the speech of women may result more from the context in which communication occurs than from the gender identification of the communicators.

Several studies have focused on the stereotype that males are more aggressive or dominant than women, who appear more submissive or reactive. Martin and Craig (1983) examined social interaction in same- and mixed-sex student dyads and found no pattern of female deference/male dominance. Kennedy and Camden (1983) studied interruptions without finding any significant difference in the style of interruptions used by women and men. Dindia (1987) examined interruptions in same- and mixed-sex dyads and found men and women interrupt at comparable frequencies, even in mixed-sex dyads. She found women no less assertive than men in either interrupting or in responding to interruption.

Infante, Trebing, Shepherd, and Seeds (1984) studied argumentativeness, which has been assumed by studies supporting gender stereotypes to be a masculine behavior. They found women engage in argumentative behavior more situationally than men--usually with opponents of equal ability or high obstinance. Bradley (1987) found women

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no less effective nor less capable than men in persuading others. While she found men to be more confident, Bradley also found women's reduced confidence had no impact on their effectiveness before audiences. She did find women rated themselves lower than their evaluators (while men rated themselves more highly). The men in her study attributed their success to ability, while the women generally credited their diligence.

McMillan, Clifton, McGrath, and Gale (1977) observed women's communication in same-sex and mixed-sex groups to discover whether women communicate with less assurance than men. They found women to be more polite, and more likely to attempt inclusion. Men in this study were likely to misinterpret behaviors women intended to demonstrate interpersonal sensitivity as connoting uncertainty.

The Impact of Bias

This handful of studies questions the notion that women communicate in an entirely different fashion from men. Unquestioned acceptance of that stereotype of difference may lead those who accept it to attribute the underrepresentation of women in forensic activity to women's inability to communicate effectively within the confines of the activity. Worse, accepting the stereotype of difference provides a ready excuse for the underrepresentation of women in forensics--the stereotype leads to the conclusion that women simply are not fit for such activity.

Haslett, Geis, and Carter (1992) feel such perceptual bias also leads society to underutilize women's intellect and devalue women's potential and actual contributions. They document their contentions with studies from the

world of work, contending that as evaluation is influenced by perception and perception is influenced by preconceptions, gender stereotypes affect evaluation of the work of women. Evidence supporting their contention also exists in the field of communication.

Bradley (1980) found that in male-dominated groups, women received lower initial credibility and fewer opportunities to demonstrate their abilities than men. When women demonstrated high task competence, they were accepted as co-workers. Bradley felt initial judgments of low competence preclude opportunities for women to demonstrate such capability.

A number of studies document an androcentric bias in communication. In a study of the impact of gender stereotypes, Siegler and Siegler (1976) found subjects attributed assertive speech forms more readily to men than to women. Subjects also rated speech forms they considered to be masculine as more intelligent than those they felt to be feminine. McMillan, Clifton, McGrath, and Gale (1977) found behaviors intended by women to be merely polite were misperceived by men as submissive. Wright and Hosman (1983) found women were more heavily penalized for "powerless" speech forms than men who engaged in the same behaviors.

The nature of this type of perceptual bias is insidious and pervasive, according to Haslett, Beis, and Carter (1992). As a result, even those who bear the brunt of its impact (women) may share in the very bias which undermines them. Bradley (1987) found women attributing their success as persuaders to assiduous effort, while the men in her study attributed their own success to ability. While this perspective did not affect audience ratings of their effectiveness as speakers, it does serve as testimony to the insidious nature of the impact of bias on the victim.

In forensics research, Friedley and Manchester (1987) found contest judges in individual events generally treat males more favorably than females. Although participation in individual events is more gender-balanced than in debate, "national success [in individual events] is still primarily reserved for males" (p. 13). Female judges were not statistically different from their male colleagues in treating female contestants differently from males (although they actually rated males "first" somewhat more often than did male judges). They conclude that "success in the activity ... is a result of the contestants' sex" (p. 20).

Both the society in which they exist and women themselves appear to devalue their contributions. Whether such discounting results solely from the acceptance of sex-role stereotypes or whether it results from the belief that women should behave as men remains unresolved. Clearly, for whatever reason, the intercollegiate forensics community evaluates the contributions of female and male competitors differently.

Women's Ethic of Inclusion

Foss and Foss (1983) contend many contemporary communication researchers begin with the a priori assumption that women should be like men. Foss and Foss feel this presupposition seriously restricts these researchers' ability to interpret the data they gather, as it leads them to ignore a different (i.e., women's) world view.

Some research contends women may mature toward a moral ethic which differs from that of men. Gilligan (1982) contends androcentric psychological theory leads researchers to overlook the moral development of

women precisely because it differs from the widely-accepted six-stage model developed by her colleague, Lawrence Kohlberg (1981). Kohlberg's study of 40 male subjects led him to conclude human moral development proceeds through three stages (in six steps) from dependence to autonomy. Gilligan contends Kohlberg's famous longitudinal study of males commits the error of assuming females are like males. Her study of female's moral decision-making reveals a 3-step model of development. She claims women develop toward an ethic of inclusion and caring. Rather than the individuation Kohlberg contends males seek, Gilligan claims women develop toward affiliation.

Gilligan's (1982) conclusions have influenced the work of some communication scholars researching gender roles. Cline (1986) found women and men perceive intimacy differently, with women generally more accurate in both rating and reporting intimacy in relationships. While Cline found women to be more accurate, she found men both overrate and underreport intimacy (1986). McMillan, Clifton, McGrath, and Gale (1977) asked subjects to explain their apparently-submissive speech forms in mixed-sex groups, behaviors which the subjects did not exhibit (at least not to the same extent) in same-sex groups. Their subjects reported they were attempting to include all group members in the deliberations and decision-making, since they were (ostensibly) engaged in a group project. Logue (1993) felt women by their very nature prefer to cooperate rather than compete, while males prefer competition to cooperation. Serafini and Pearson (1983-1984) operate from the perspective that female behavior is more relationship-oriented, while masculine behavior is more task-oriented. Of course, Foss and Foss (1983) feel this may be the different world view researchers are ignoring.

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Summary

This chapter has examined the pervasive nature of an androcentric perspective in the intercollegiate forensics community. While that community has made some effort to include women, it does not appear fully committed to accepting them as equal to males. Women participate in debate at much lower rates than men, especially at advanced levels. Men appear to receive preferential treatment in individual events. It is not only the past officers of professional associations who recognize the androcentric nature of the activity . All elements of the intercollegiate forensics community recognize a bias against women.

Research in the field reflects three problems associated with much social science research. It ignores the presence of women, which denies their unique contributions. Research also assumes women are like men, which perpetuates the androcentric bias within the field. Research also accepts (and thus helps perpetuate) questionable gender stereotypes.

Those stereotypes have been questioned by research in the communication discipline in at least two significant areas. While some contend women are less effective than men as communicators because they use a less powerful speech forms, other researchers challenge the accuracy of that claim. Researchers also question the meaning of powerless speech forms, contending that such linguistic choices connote not uncertainty, but a desire to include others. Research also suggests women are no less argumentative, assertive, or effective in persuading others than are men.

The androcentric perspective which permeates the intercollegiate forensics community not only affects the treatment of women by others, but may also influence the ways in which they view themselves. If Gilligan (1982)

is correct, women may operate from a different (but no less mature) moral orientation from men. Operating from the view that women should be like men may also lead the intercollegiate forensics community to overlook the actual or potential contributions of women. An androcentric hegemony may well rob the field of the value of women's unique perspective. At best, such an orientation is likely to preclude meaningful efforts to implement the charge from the National Developmental Conference that the forensics community should find ways to reach out to women (McBath, 1975).

CHAPTER III

PROBLEM

Previous chapters have provided an overview of intercollegiate forensics which is not very flattering from the standpoint of gender equality. Women generally participate in debate at a lower rate than men, especially at higher levels. In individual events, where participation rates are more even, men appear to receive preferential treatment. All aspects of the intercollegiate forensics community recognize a pro-male bias. Leaders of professional associations recognize that debate tends to be dominated by white males.

Forensics research tends to ignore women. When their presence is recognized, researchers are likely to either presume that women are like men or accept questionable gender-role stereotypes. As a result of these limitations, current forensics research is of limited value to those who wish to use it to inform their efforts to broaden participation by women. Essentially, research which demonstrates these limitations does not help the forensics community understand what the forensics experience is like for women. As a body of theory suggests that women and men may differ in significant ways, research specifically directed toward women (without reference to a priori assumptions concerning male normalcy) provides the forensics community its best opportunity to achieve that understanding. Understanding what women in forensics experience may enable the forensics community to develop effective strategies to reach out to women.

Until the intercollegiate forensics community understands which forensics experiences women perceive as positive, and which experiences discourage participation, its efforts to recruit and retain women in the activity

are likely to rely on serendipity for success. Similarly, until the forensics community understands which experiences women perceive to be gender-based, it will be unable to recognize and address those experiences.

The studies reviewed in the preceding chapters indicate women in forensics may anticipate some common experiences which differ from those of men, but those studies are not intended to provide a comprehensive taxonomy of such experiences. Available forensics research provides a few glimpses of negative gender-based experiences, but it neither provides a full picture of negative experiences nor does it allow for any positive gender-based experiences. Future research into women's gender-based experiences in forensics—and a clear understanding of what forensics experience is like for women—can best be facilitated through development of a taxonomy of women's gender-based experiences in forensics. This study is an attempt to develop a schema which classifies women's gender-based experiences in forensics.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD

The Critical Incident Technique has been used in thousands of studies in both education and industry. It provides the researcher access to narrative statements written by subjects. The process of gathering data generally is plagued by low response rates, but yields data which has been only minimally influenced by the researcher. Thus, the method suffers from chronically low return rates, but the data gathered is typically very helpful to the researcher. The method has also been used in feminist scholarship. Because it encourages subjects to determine what to report, it serves to empower them. Writing the reports may also provide a catharsis for subjects.

For this study, subjects were drawn from the rosters of forensics organizations. Subjects were asked to complete both a positive critical incident report and a negative report. As is anticipated in studies using the Critical Incident Technique, return rates were disappointing. The reports which were completed were reviewed by a panel of readers who reduced them to essence statements. These essence statements were then compiled into positive and negative matrixes, which were combined into a taxonomy of women's gender-based experiences in intercollegiate forensics.

The Critical Incident Technique

The research method selected to develop a taxonomy of women's gender-based experiences in intercollegiate forensics is the Critical Incident Technique. The Critical Incident Technique focuses on recalled behaviors rather than opinions, stereotypes, or generalizations (Downs, 1988).

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Developed by John C. Flanagan (1954) while conducting a project for the military during World War II, the Critical Incident Technique asks subjects to provide brief descriptions about specific events they find significant to their experience. These descriptions may be completed by observers who simply record what happens, or (as in this study) they may be completed by the very subjects who experienced the incidents. The latter method of gathering data is endorsed by Flanagan (1954), who writes that "critical incidents obtained from interviews can be relied on to provide a relatively accurate account" of the subjects' experiences (p. 331).

The completed incident reports are reviewed by a panel of readers working independently. Each reader distills each report to a simple statement reflecting the essence of the report. Panelists then share and discuss their distilled essence statements until the entire panel agrees on a statement which represents each report. Each panelist then independently sorts these essence statements into categories, accepting the subjects' positive or negative classifications. Panelists share their categories with each other and reach consensus on a final schema.

Since all data are provided by subjects in narrative form, the critical incident method encourages those conducting the study to adopt the framework of the subjects, reducing the likelihood of research yielding a self-fulfilling prophesy. The placement of specific incidents into broad categories (in this study, positive or negative) is also determined by the subjects themselves as they make their initial reports. Panelists must accept the judgment of the subjects in this regard. The panelists' task is to distill the statements of the subjects and to cluster them within the broad categories the subjects have determined. If a subject feels an incident is positive, readers must accept that subject's judgment in regard to its classification.

This technique has been used in industry for a variety of purposes related to employee selection, training, evaluation, and classification, as well as job and equipment design, procedure development, and diagnosis of perceived problems (Stano, 1983, p. 2). It has also been adapted to a variety of other settings. Flanagan (1954) indicates "the critical incident technique does not consist of a single rigid set of rules governing ... data collection" (p. 335).

Feminist Approach

Variations on the Critical Incident Technique have been used in recent studies in the discipline of communication. The Journal of Applied Communication Research (Wood, 1992) recently published a "SPECIAL SECTION—'TELLING OUR STORIES': SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE COMMUNICATION DISCIPLINE" (capitals in original) to focus attention on an issue critical to communication scholars. The narratives provided by respondents in the study represent critical incidents focused on sexual harassment. Foss and Foss (1994) indicate the use of personal experience in feminist scholarship empowers women by validating their experiences and helping them make sense of their world: "The exploration and use of personal experience as data is a significant and subversive act in the process of constructing new methods and theories that truly take women's perspectives into account" (Foss & Foss, 1994, p. 42).

Eichler and Lapointe (1985) also feel that since as a group women have been largely overlooked in the past, it may be necessary for the foreseeable future to focus studies on women to establish a base for future research which includes both genders. This study thus represents a felicitous conjunction of

feminist scholarship, an established research technique, and an opportunity to explore a problem within the forensics community. For this study, the Critical Incident Technique was selected to develop a picture of what women may expect to experience in intercollegiate forensics. As previously discussed, such an overview has been absent from research.

Sample Selection

To develop a sample for this study, rosters for forensics organizations (the overwhelming majority of members of which are coaches or educators, rather than current participants) were scanned for female first names. While this method is crude and somewhat imprecise (Is Leslie male or female? How about Chris? What do initials stand for?), in many cases possible subjects were known to this researcher or his colleagues. Review of the rosters of six organizations representing the intercollegiate forensics community (the American Forensic Association, CEDA, the National Forensic Association, Pi Kappa Delta, Phi Rho Pi, and the Council of Forensic Organizations) yielded 290 names. One other organization, Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha, did not respond to a request for a roster.

A sample drawn from the rosters of professional associations might be expected to bias results toward the positive end of the scale. After all, these subjects were sufficiently committed to the field to join a professional association. Clearly, the sample was not likely to include women whose experiences were so negative that they rejected the activity altogether. This limitation was accepted for two reasons: (1) The researcher found no way of locating a substantial number of women who have left the activity, and (2) he hoped that members of forensics associations would be sufficiently motivated

by their experiences and their professional commitment to complete and return critical incident report forms. Eliminating those names which provided no institutional address or only provided an address out of the country narrowed the database to 285 subjects.

Survey Distribution

Critical Incident forms were sent to those 285 subjects in mid-March 1994 (see Appendix A for copies of the forms). Subjects were asked to provide both a positive and a negative incident for review. Flanagan (1954) indicates asking for a positive (he uses the term "effective") report first is likely to increase the number of incidents reported, so reports were distributed with the positive form preceding the negative form (p. 333).

Instructions on the form defined the term "critical incident" but provided only minimal direction:

> A critical incident is a communicative event which you feel affected you or made a strong impression on you. The event might have taken place at any time or in any setting, but it should be remembered clearly. In the space provided, please write a one-paragraph description of a critical communication incident in which you participated. The event should be related to your involvement in forensics and your identification as a woman. Your response should tell us how the incident arose, what the other party did or said to you, and what you said or did as a result. (We do not assume women are reactive rather than proactive; we seek incidents women in forensics experience based on gender.) (Appendix A).

To avoid influencing responses, no sample incident was provided.

The mailing included a coded return envelope. The codes from returned responses were used to identify nonresponsive subjects for a second mailing. Reminders were mailed in May 1994 to subjects who had not returned forms. It was anticipated the timing of the first mailout and the reminder would encourage response from subjects who had concluded both another forensics season and another academic year.

Returns

Nine of the original mailings proved undeliverable, which reduced the potential participant pool to 276. Of those 276 potential participants, 44 completed and returned forms by the study deadline, for a return rate of almost 16%. While the subjects could have completed 88 reports (44 subjects x two reports per subject), only 49 potentially usable incident reports were returned.

Several subjects disqualified themselves completely from the study for a variety of reasons. (Some felt they had not been in the field long enough to make valid judgments; others felt they had been in the field too long for their responses to be worthwhile; some had left the field but retained their memberships in the associations polled.) Still others returned one form, or indicated they were unable to identify incidents where they thought gender was the dominant variable in the interaction. Eventually, 39 report forms were discarded because respondents opted not to complete them or because they did not report specific critical incidents. (For example, one subject recalled the joy of competing in female-only events. While one reader reduced this statement to its essence, the other readers felt she was recalling a general experience, rather than a specific critical incident.)

While low response rates are typical and anticipated in Critical Incident studies (since the task of recalling and recording specific incidents is both ambiguous and somewhat daunting), basing generalizations on so limited a sample is risky indeed. No doubt, had this researcher provided a sample incident report, the expected task would have been more clear for the subjects. In addition, for many of these participants, some of the incidents may most generously be described as unpleasant memories which they may have opted not to revisit.

Distillation and Categorization

Potentially usable returned forms were reviewed by four readers who distilled them into essence statements, then classified those statements into a taxonomy. Readers represent the spectrum of forensic activity as current or former coaches, contestants, judges, and/or program administrators. Three are female and one (the author) is male. Collectively, they represent over half a century of involvement in intercollegiate and interscholastic forensics.

Readers individually reviewed and distilled reports into "essence" statements, then sent their summaries to the author. Several reports were discarded at this step, as they did not represent specific instances, but rather presented a perspective based on a generalized recollection (as in the previous example concerning female-only events). This winnowing narrowed the final list to 18 positive and 25 negative critical incident essence statements. As the readers worked independently, their essence statements differed somewhat in phrasing. Other than one reader accepting a general recollection as a specific incident, there were no disagreements about the nature of the incidents. The readers' essence statements were compiled by the author and a proposed

statement reconciling phrasing differences among readers was circulated. Readers then agreed on a consensus summary of essence statements. That consensus summary of essence statements may be found in Appendix B.

Once consensus was reached on essence statements, readers then independently sorted the essence statements into categories and returned their proposed categories to the author. Again, the author proposed a taxonomy reconciling the differences and a final compilation was agreed on by all four. Taxonomies of positive and negative gender-based experiences may be found in chapter 5.

An example clarifies the process. The positive incident report form labeled P036 reads:

> The only gender-based experience that I recall occurred on application to graduate school in 1965. A male department chairman at a state university informed me that he had never hired a female teaching assistant in forensics and asked why he should amend that policy for me. We discussed the issue. In the week following the interview, the job was offered to me. I took great pleasure in declining that position. I have difficulty rating this situation as positive or negative. It happened; we both learned from it.

The panel reduced this positive incident report to the essence statement "Female graduate student declines forensics assistant job offer from chauvinist department chair." The report was labeled positive because the subject returned it on the positive form rather than the negative form, which led readers to conclude she chose to report it as a positive incident. It was later grouped with two other positive incidents as "consciousness-raising." Readers agreed the essence statement fairly captured the important elements of the original, and further agreed the statement fit logically into the category.

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Summary

This study employed the widely-used Critical Incident Technique, developed by John C. Flanagan (1954). This method is designed to assure the primacy of the subjects' perceptions, and requires researchers to accept the subject's judgments. Because the Critical Incident Technique allows subjects to select events they feel are important and to express their recollections of those events in ways which emphasize the elements which affected them, it is particularly well-suited to studies with a feminist orientation. Narrative statements were gathered from subjects who were listed on the rosters of intercollegiate forensics organizations. A panel of readers distilled the returned critical incident reports to one-sentence statements which reflected their essence. The panel then sorted those essence statements into the taxonomy of women's gender-based experiences in intercollegiate forensics which are found in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Demographic data for this study may prove helpful to future research, but they have limited application to this report. It is not the purpose of this project to determine how frequently these experiences occur or how seriously they influence women's decisions to continue participation in the activity. The value of these data is also limited by the restriction that subjects could report only one positive and one negative incident. The value of demographic data is further limited by the low response rate generally associated with critical incident studies.

The combined positive and negative essence statements yielded five positive and six negative dimensions of women's gender-based experiences in intercollegiate forensics. The positive matrix reports experiences which include expressions of gratitude or recognition of the subjects' contributions, mentoring of subjects by other forensics professionals, access to positions of enhanced status through quotas, consciousness-raising, and nurturing of and by subjects. The negative matrix reports sexual harassment (verbal propositions, verbal abuse, and remarks about the subjects' bodies or appearance), overt sexism (stereotyping subjects into traditional roles or assertion of male superiority), discrimination in employment (both in hiring and in working conditions), lack of support or failure to recognize the problem (of gender bias or harassment) by those who should provide support, aggression or conflict (both aggression from others and the subjects' unsatisfactory responses to conflict), and an overemphasis on competition.

The complete taxonomy of women's gender-based experiences in intercollegiate forensics may be found in Table 7 (pp. 45-46).

Demographic Data

Because respondents were limited to one positive and one negative incident, and as a result of the low return rate, demographic data proved almost meaningless in analyzing these critical incidents. Demographic data are provided here in the event that it is of some interest to other researchers.

The returned incident reports are dominated by respondents currently affiliated with four-year (bachelor's degree granting) and comprehensive (graduate degree granting) educational institutions. Twenty-seven respondents identified themselves in the former category, while eleven designated the latter. One useable return was submitted by a high school teacher; four useable returns came from community college faculty. While unanticipated, participation by the high school teacher was probably due to the American Forensic Association numbering many high school educators among its members. Table 1 reflects the distribution of positive and negative incidents reported by the type of institution with which the subject is currently affiliated.

Table 1

<u>Respondent Affiliation</u>

high school	community college	four-year college	comp. university
1p (2%)	4n (9%)	12p, 15n (63%)	5p, 6n (26%)

p = positive incidents; n = negative incidents

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Respondents also indicated the recency of the incidents they reported. With sufficient data, this researcher initially hoped to classify experiences according to the time they occurred, in order to determine if any gender-based experiences were time-bound or their incidence had begun or ended recently. Ten incidents occurred less than a year prior to reporting. Six incidents occurred 1 to 3 years prior to reporting. Eleven incidents occurred 3 to 5 years before they were reported. Sixteen incidents occurred more than 5 years prior to the respondent completing the critical incident report. Table 2 indicates the distribution of positive and negative incidents by recency.

Table 2

Incident Recency

< 1 year	1-3 years	3-5 years	>5 years
5p, 5n (23%)	4p, 2n (14%)	4p, 7n (26%)	5p, 11n (37%)

p = positive incidents; n = negative incidents

Respondents were also asked to identify the other party's gender. While in four cases (9%) respondents reported incidents in which they were interacting with mixed groups, most reports identified a response to one gender. Of the four group incidents, three were positive and one was negative. In 11 incidents (26%) the other party was identified as female. Six of these incidents were reported as positive and five were submitted as negative. Females were identified as the other party in 35% of the positive and 20% of the negative incidents. Males were identified in 27 incidents (47%). Eight of those incidents were considered positive, while 19 were classified as negative. Males were identified as the other party in 47% of the positive and 76% of the negative incidents. Table 3 reports the gender identity of the other party.

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Table 3

Other Party Gender

mixed	female	male
3p, 1n (9%)	6p, 5n (26%)	8p, 19n (47%

p = positive incidents; n = negative incidents

Incidents were also reported according to frequency of contact with the other party. Eleven reports indicated frequent contact with the other party. Fifteen reports indicated regular contact with the other party. Eight reports indicated the parties seldom came into contact. Seven reports indicated no contact prior to the incident. Table 4 indicates the distribution of positive and negative incidents by frequency of contact.

Table 4

Frequency of Contact

frequent	regular	seldom	never
5p, 6n (27%)	7p, 8n (37%)	3p, 5n (20%)	2p, 5n (17%)

p = positive incidents; n = negative incidents

While demographic information provides some limited insight into the incidence of women's gender-based experiences in intercollegiate forensics, of greater interest to this researcher are the reports and the essence statement categories they generated. After all, the purpose of the study is to identify and categorize the gender-based experiences of women in intercollegiate forensics. As the essence statements are derived from the subjects' statements of experiences the subjects themselves felt to be both

gender-related and significant, the essence statement categories lie at the heart of that task.

The Positive Matrix

The 18 positive reports were distilled into five broad categories. Despite the small number of returns, two of those categories (Expressions of Gratitude or Recognition and Mentoring) were further subdivided to recognize the importance of the gender of the other party in such encounters. The taxonomy of women's positive gender-based forensics experiences indicated by these critical incidence reports (and the number of reports classified in each area) follows.

Table 5

Positive Gender-Based Experiences

    I.   Expressions of Gratitude or Recognition

        A. From Males (4 reports; 21% of positive incidents)

        B. From Females (3; 16%)

    II.   Mentoring

        A. By Males (1; 5%)

        B. By Females (2; 11%)

    III. Access through Quotas (3; 16%)

    IV. Consciousness-Raising (3; 16%)

    V.   Nurturing/Personal Concern (3; 16%)

While the number of reports and the percentage of total positive incidents represented in the category are provided, the study precludes using these figures as a basis for assessing the frequency with which women experience

such incidents. Subjects were not asked to report all their positive experiences, but only to report one positive incident.

Gratitude/Recognition

Expressions of Gratitude or Recognition include such things as former students thanking coaches for encouraging them in forensics, contestants and coaches from other programs recognizing professional contributions, and remarks reinforcing professional status or personal achievement. One subject reports a graduating senior male thanking her for encouraging his participation in forensics; another reports being paired with the only two women to have served as CEDA presidents; a third is recognized as a trailblazer for her contemporaries. Typically these memorable moments occur during pivotal events--national championship tournaments, professional conventions, commencements, retirements, or times of significant achievement for those expressing gratitude or recognition to the subjects. This area is separate from area V., Nurturing/Personal Concern, because it deals with items which are work-related.

Mentoring

Mentoring involves encouragement toward professional development as well as help along the way. Subjects reported being mentored by both male and female undergraduate and graduate faculty (typically coaches or program directors). One subject credits her success at a national championship tournament to the tutelage of her feminist (in her judgment) male coach. Another recalls being encouraged by a female program director to enter the field: "She repeatedly told me that college forensics needed strong women

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directors and reminded me that women can and should be as critical to forensics education as men." Important aspects of the mentoring relationship include professional development (publication, professional conduct, philosophical orientation to the activity or discipline) as well as re-visioning the subject's personal orientation (one subject writes "Up until that point, I had not thought..." of myself as a person who would complete a doctorate.)

Access

Access through Quotas includes three instances where subjects felt their gender identification opened doors to professional advancement or enhanced status. One subject reports being nominated for (but not elected to) national office was a positive experience because the organization became more gender-sensitive as a result of her candidacy. Another reports being invited to judge the final round of debate at a national championship tournament:

> When I asked why me? [sic] the caller responded that they needed a representative from my district and he was looking for female judges to be represented.... I was flattered although I wondered if I would have been considered if I was [sic] a male.

Even when not fully accepted, subjects report increased access as a positive experience. One subject reports being named to the administrative committee for a tournament which serves to qualify students to participate in the national championships. Such appointments represent recognition of professional status within the forensics community. While she indicates "the males rarely spoke to me about anything pertaining to the tournament" and "

I ended up doing go-for type things," she nevertheless classifies the incident as positive.

Consciousness-Raising

Consciousness-Raising deals with learning experiences, sometimes simply through participation in the activity. One subject reports using an impromptu speaking topic to "crystallize" her thinking concerning "the women's movement." She says "This topic gave me an opportunity to freely express my views on what liberation really means."

Other incidents involve professional activity around forensics events. One subject reports attendance at a women's debate forum helped her realize she was not the only one perceiving different treatment due to gender. As noted previously, another reports a confrontative job interview in which

A male department chair...informed me that he had never hired a female teaching assistant in forensics and asked why he should amend that policy for me.... The job was offered to me. I took great pleasure in declining that position.

While this latter subject reports difficulty rating the incident as positive, she also indicates its value is that she learned from it.

Nurturing

Nurturing includes items of a personal nature, such as caring for someone who is ill, substituting for a parent, or personal encouragement unrelated to the job. Subjects reported nurturing as well as being nurtured by males and females. One subject recalls a tournament director finding her a

place to rest and suggesting methods to relieve her discomfort as she sufferred from the flu. Another reports that in a low point in her career

> I had become very burned out. Upon expressing this sentiment to an older well respected peer in Forensics, he...gave me that advice that he wished he had taken the opportunity 'to do something different.'... I will always be grateful for his understanding and empathy, because it has made me a better coach today. [sic]

While both of the above cases report the subject being nurtured by others in the forensics community, sometimes the subjects themselves provided the nurturing. In one instance, the subject reports a positive experience because "I served as a female role model for" a student "and had fostered her growth as a person [emphasis in original]."

The Negative Matrix

The 25 negative reports were clustered into six categories, four of which (Sexual Harassment, Sexism, Lack of Support/Failure to Recognize Problem, and Aggression/Conflict) were further divided. Major categories were subdivided for two reasons: (1) Readers felt the division was necessitated by the number of incidents reported, and (2) readers felt these subdivisions would provide potentially significant distinctions for future researchers. In no case were subdivisions created without support from the critical incident reports. The taxonomy of women's negative gender-based forensics experiences indicated by these critical incidence reports (and the number of reports classified in each area) follows. Some incidents are classified in two areas because they bridge categories.

Table 6

Negative Gender-Based Experiences

    I.   Sexual Harassment

        A. Sexual Propositions (4 reports; 14% of negative incidents)

        B. Verbal Abuse (4; 14%)

        C. Remarks about Body or Appearance (3; 10%)

    II.   Sexism

        A. Traditional Roles (3; 10%)

        B. Feminine is less than Masculine (3; 10%)

    III. Discrimination in Employment (3; 10%)

    IV. Lack of Support/Failure to Recognize Problem

        A. By Colleagues (3; 10%)

        B. By Coach (1; 3%)

    V.   Aggression/Conflict

        A. Female-Female (3; 10%)

        B. Female-Male (1; 3%)

    VI. Overemphasis on Competition (1; 3%)

While the number of reports and the percentage of total negative incidents represented in the category are provided, the study precludes using these figures as a basis for assessing the frequency with which women experience such incidents. Subjects were not asked to report all their negative experiences, but only to select one negative incident.

Sexual Harassment

The category of Sexual Harassment includes three subcategories the panel feels represent distinct behaviors: sexual propositions, verbal abuse, and

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remarks about body or appearance. All incidents are of males harassing females. While subjects were not asked to indicate the strength of their response to the incidents, these reports often included very directly worded statements attesting to subjects' feelings.

Sexual Propositions

In the area of propositions, one subject writes "The clearest memory I have regarding being a woman..." occurred while attending a coaches' reception and being harassed. Another, reporting incidents of continuing propositioning, writes that "memories of the actual conversations are vague, but not the effects they had on me. Even years later looking back I would describe it as a chilling effect." She further reports feeling her team's results would be in jeopardy if she responded too negatively, and adds that "My discomfort with male-female relations on the circuit was a contributing factor in my decision to disengage from...coaching." Another reports being propositioned by a coach for a period of over five years, beginning during her junior year of college.

Verbal Abuse

Reports of verbal abuse were difficult to misinterpret. One subject reports after she, as a judge, asked a debater to clarify his use of evidence he "flew into a rage yelling at his partner, the other team, and myself. We were 'bitches,' and 'fucking idiots.'" Another, attempting to encourage debaters who had finished their round to vacate the room so a subsequent (and already overdue) round could begin, reports that "One of them turned on me and yelled 'who the <u>fuck</u> do you think you are, <u>bitch</u>?' I <u>truly</u> believe they would <u>never</u> have lashed out that way at a man" (emphasis in original).

These subjects also report being disappointed that when this sort of behavior is reported to these students' program directors, no action is taken.

Remarks about Body or Appearance

Uninvited and inappropriate remarks about the subject's body or physical appearance generally came out of the blue. Two of these incidents stem from written comments on judges' ballots referring to the contestants' looks or bodies rather than to her performance. One subject writes: "I found this extremely offensive and inappropriate. I was angry at this male judge... [plus] disappointed in my male coach who did nothing about it." A third incident reports a short-lived male mutiny when, as new program director, the female coach banned puerile male behavior from squad functions.

Sexism

The category of sexism is divided into two subcategories: traditional roles, and feminine is less than masculine.

Traditional Roles

Sexism was sometimes reported as stereotyping the subject into traditional roles. Sometimes the source of these behaviors was the person the subjects expected to mentor them into the field. One subject reports being told to go home and cook dinner for her husband rather than attending a night class in forensics program management. The instructor, "the head debate coach and my boss," told her, "debate is a man's world" which she should leave. At the time, she was a year away from her Ph.D. Other subjects report male acquaintances assuming the subjects' reduced level of involvement

resulted from decisions to bear children rather than seek advancement in their careers.

Feminine is Less than Masculine

These reports relate expressions that "feminine" attitudes, abilities, or events are less significant than their "masculine" counterparts. One subject writes about being assigned "soft" (i.e., oral interpretation) events rather than debate or public address events. She also reports her male students' success in those events was attributed to factors other than their preparation and presentation (e.g., the events were perceived as less challenging than other events). Another subject reports increased success in her events as a result of adopting a more masculine look. She writes: "I wore dark brown suits, cut my hair (very short) wore glasses and a man's tie," [sic] where she had previously dressed in "brightly colored suits, had long hair" and "was considered attractive." A third subject reports seeking election to national office and having her candidacy belittled by a colleague who felt she would be foolish to oppose a man (whom she had taught for several years). She writes: "I was very angry, and humiliated.... I won the election but am unhappy that my colleague did not think I was as worthy of the position as my former assistant director."

Discrimination in Employment

Discrimination in Employment deals with hiring, promotion, treatment on the job, and assignment of job responsibilities. All reports detail discrimination by men. One subject reports a college president telling her the school was going to hire the other (male) finalist for a position because driving to tournaments in severe winter weather was too dangerous for a

woman. She was also asked if she would join the women's aid group (composed of faculty wives) to do work for the church which sponsors the school. A second subject reports her only "negative incident in over 20 years of participation in forensics" involved being promised a high school position which was given to a man. Another subject reports that during tournament trips, she was roomed with undergraduate contestants while other graduate assistants were not.

Lack of Support

Lack of Support/Failure to Recognize Problem includes dismissal or trivialization of grievances by colleagues as well as failure by higher-ups to seek redress for grievances. Some of these incidents have been previously described (see "Sexual Harassment--Verbal Abuse" and "Sexual Harassment--Remarks" above). One subject has reduced her involvement in forensics and increased participation in student congress-type activities. She finds her new colleagues less sensitive to her gender identification and more concerned with her professional conduct. She writes: "There seems to be less awkwardness in the presence of women and more respect for everyone's contribution in this activity."

Aggression/Conflict

Aggression/Conflict includes inappropriate responses to conflict by the subjects, usurpation of the subject's authority, and (in one instance) prohibition by a female judge of an argument from male debaters because the argument ("patriarchy") was overly-masculine. None of the reported incidents involves male-female conflict, perhaps because such conflicts are

subsumed into other (more specific) categories. One subject writes of her disappointment in her own conduct, as she failed to confront an unprofessional judge. She writes: "A man would NEVER have let this go-- and I should not have" (capitals in original). A former debater reports being drawn into a "cat fight" with two female opponents during a debate. A third reports a female coach attempting to assume control of the tournament results tabulation room from the tournament director.

Overemphasis on Competition

Overemphasis on Competition indicates one subject's perception that her female colleagues place forensic activity too centrally in their lives. This subject felt her colleagues should discuss something other than the activity during their breaks from it.

Summary

Despite their limited application to this study, demographic data were included in these results in the hope that they would be of interest to other researchers. The study identified five positive and six negative dimensions of women's gender-based experiences in intercollegiate forensics.

Positive experiences include expressions of gratitude or recognition of the contributions of subjects, mentoring by other forensics professionals, access through quotas to positions of enhanced status, consciousness-raising, and nurturing both of and by subjects. Negative experiences include sexual harassment, overt sexism, discrimination in employment, lack of support from those expected to provide it, aggression or conflict, and an overemphasis on competition.

The taxonomy of women's gender-based experiences in intercollegiate forensics suggests women value those experiences which include them—or allow them to include others—in the activity. The taxonomy also suggests experiences which exclude women and reinforce their identity as "other" are likely to discourage their participation. The negative matrix of the taxonomy suggests a patriarchic social system, working to deter threats to white male hegemony. This latter conclusion falls outside the scope of this study, which is designed solely to identify the gender-based experiences of women in intercollegiate forensics.

Table 7

Taxonomy of Women's Gender-Based Experiences

in Intercollegiate Forensics

Positive Experiences	I.	Expressions of Gratitude or Recognition
		A. From Males
		B. From Females
	II.	Mentoring
		A. By Males
		B. By Females
	III.	Access through Quotas
	IV.	Consciousness-Raising
	V.	Nurturing/Personal Concern
Negative Experiences	I.	Sexual Harassment
		A. Sexual Propositions
		B. Verbal Abuse
		C. Remarks about Body or Appearance
	II.	Sexism
		A. Traditional Roles

   B. Feminine is less than Masculine

III. Discrimination in Employment

IV. Lack of Support/Failure to Recognize Problem

   A. By Colleagues
   B. By Coach

V. Aggression/Conflict

   A. Female-Female
   B. Female-Male

VI. Overemphasis on Competition

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

These results provide a preliminary picture of women's experiences in forensics which may explain, in part, why only a small proportion of those women entering the field remain. The results provide some explanation of factors which attract women who choose to continue their involvement, as well as some indication of factors which discourage the continued involvement of women. The results may also provide a picture of a field dominated by a patriarchy which deters participation by women by ignoring their potential and their contributions.

Positive Experiences Include

This researcher feels the positive matrix includes many items male and female teachers find rewarding about their profession (expressions of gratitude/recognition, mentoring, consciousness-raising, and nurturing/personal concern). Several items appear to support stereotypes of traditional gender roles for women as nurturers and care-givers, but (as in previously-cited challenges to "women's speech") other explanations, which are provided below, are possible.

The positive matrix may also provide modest support for Gilligan's (1982) argument that women mature morally differently from men. If, as Gilligan argues, women mature toward an ethic of caring and affiliation rather than toward individuation, the positive matrix may be seen to support Gilligan's view. The women responding to this study appreciate experiences which draw them toward other people in a mutually caring manner. These

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experiences serve to include them (and to allow them to include others) in the intercollegiate forensics community, to reveal the concern of that community for them as individuals, and to reinforce their sense of agency by recognizing their unique place in that community.

Only one item stands out as clearly a concern of a traditionally underrepresented group: access through quotas. Readers were surprised to see this item emerge as part of the positive matrix, because such experiences appear to reinforce the status of women as different from "normal" members of the intercollegiate forensics community. The subjects who submitted these experiences apparently view their experiences more pragmatically, however. Their reasoning seems to be that if quotas were necessary to open the doors to these experiences, at least the doors were opened. The goal of professional advancement and the opportunity to demonstrate that gender is irrelevant to performing the tasks required in these situations appears to override concerns about the appropriateness of quotas. Accepting the subject's apparent perspective, this item may also be viewed as inclusive. After all, as a result of the demand for diversity, the subjects were able to participate on a more elite level in forensics activities. They also reported their participation helped open access for other women by making the intercollegiate forensics community more sensitive to issues of inclusion, at least insofar as gender is concerned.

Negative Experiences Exclude

The negative matrix may further support Gilligan's (1982) view, especially as several items correspond to behaviors which segregate or indicate either neutrality or outright hostility. Women in the field report

being confronted with sexual harassment, sexism, employment discrimination, a lack of collegial support (or even collegial awareness that these events constitute a problem,) and gender-based aggression from other females--all of which are behaviors which exclude them and which label them as "different."

The frequency and nature of reported sexual harassment should come as no surprise to those familiar with research in the area. Certainly those familiar with the research in the discipline of communication understand the field is not immune to such practices (Wood, 1992). Dziech and Weiner (1984) provide further proof of the ubiquitous and insidious nature of sexual harassment in higher education. Their study contends as many as 30% of women involved in higher education may expect to be sexually harassed during their stays in the academy. There is no reason to believe forensics, an area within the communication discipline in higher education, does not fall heir to this problem. Harassment makes the victim feel isolated and vulnerable. In one report, the victim also felt her students' success was also at risk. The combination of feeling personally excluded from the comfort and security males appear to share, and, at the same time, exposing those one is charged with nurturing to predatory behavior, is not an attractive prospect.

As if the prospect of harassment alone were not enough to deter women from participating in the activity, those who would normally be expected to provide a support system--teammates, coaches, and colleagues-- are likely to disregard such incidents, thus denying the significance of both the behavior and the victim. Again, such behavior denies the victim's agency and excludes her from the community's care. She becomes special, different, and outside the norm. If Gilligan (1982) is correct, this exclusionary treatment

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should be particularly uncomfortable for women, who at the highest level of maturity seek to connect and to include.

Forensics as Patriarchy

On the surface, the picture provided by the negative matrix is of a field unprepared or unwilling to accept women as participants. Women are sexually propositioned, verbally abused, and subject to inappropriate random remarks concerning their bodies or appearance. They sometimes perceive that their responses to such behavior will determine their students' future success. They are discouraged from entering nontraditional fields or assuming nontraditional roles (such as arguing assertively or cross-examining aggressively). They are consistently told to stay within their traditional stereotyped female roles, and are reminded that such roles are necessarily less significant than the masculine roles within the activity. They are subject to special gender barriers in gaining employment, and are treated as "different" (read "inferior") once employed. When they bring these problems to those who should help resolve them, they are met with indifference or are discouraged from raising legitimate concerns. They are attacked by those with whom they wish to cooperate, as if every aspect of the intercollegiate forensics community were some sort of competition where one party has to win and the other must lose. Haslett, Geis, and Carter (1992) describe such behaviors as consistent with a social system used to exclude women or devalue their work. If intercollegiate forensics provides such a system, and for many of these respondents it clearly does, lack of participation by women should be easy to understand.

While this study appears to describe a patriarchy determined to retain its hegemony, this data cannot justify such a description of the field. The matrixes described above are based on very few responses from a small percentage of the possible sample. Additionally, this study did not ask subjects to rate the experiences in terms of their affect loading, nor can it provide any indication of either the frequency with which these events occur or the arenas in which they might be found. Of course, the reader should also remember that the subject selection process necessarily biased the results in such a fashion that they are likely more positive than one might expect. Still, future research is necessary to confirm and refine this taxonomy of gender-based experiences.

Once the taxonomy is established, researchers may begin to tackle the tougher questions, such as how these factors relate to women's decisions to remain in the field or leave it, the frequency with which women experience these phenomena, and the commitment of the intercollegiate forensics community to resolving issues raised by its formally announced desire to include traditionally underrepresented groups in the activity. Such a taxonomy enables researchers to draft surveys which may be circulated at tournaments, among program alumnae, or as exit surveys for those who choose to discontinue participation.

Conclusion

This study was not intended to document the extent of gender bias in intercollegiate forensics. Rather, the purpose of this research effort was to establish a taxonomy of women's gender-based experiences in forensics in the

hope that such a taxonomy would enable the forensics community to understand those experiences. Such an understanding should enable those involved in that community to begin movement toward the goals espoused in Sedalia and Evanston and find ways to encourage participation in forensics from a group which has traditionally been underrepresented—women.

The taxonomy described above provides a starting point from which research may move forward. These matrixes also inform forensics practitioners of experiences their students and colleagues may encounter as part of their forensic education. It is not difficult to understand why a person experiencing what the negative matrix reports would be unlikely to continue participating in the activity which enabled those experiences. Clearly, there are valid reasons women may continue to be underrepresented in the intercollegiate forensics community, especially in debate. But just as clearly, the positive matrix offers experiences which have continued to attract women (and men) to the activity.

From this base of information, educators may begin to devise coping strategies to help their students and colleagues deal with the negative experiences. Educators may also find ways to emphasize and broaden the positive experiences which draw women to the activity. Such planning might be expected to enhance efforts to both recruit and retain women in the activity. At a minimum, this taxonomy may also help forensic educators become more sensitive to the real pain the negative matrix behaviors cause their students, their professional colleagues, and their friends.

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APPENDIX A

POSITIVE CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORT FORM

A critical incident is a communicative event which you feel affected you or made a strong impression on you. The event might have taken place at any time or in any setting, but it should be remembered clearly. In the space provided, please write a one-paragraph description of a critical communication incident in which you participated. The event should be related to your involvement in forensics and your identification as a woman. Your response should tell us how the incident arose, what the other party did or said to you, and what you said or did as a result. (We do not assume women are reactive rather than proactive; we seek incidents women in forensics experience based on gender.)

Please check the appropriate response to the following questions.

Did this event occur _____ less than one year, _____ 1-3 years, _____ 3-5 years, or _____ more than 5 years
    ago?

Was the other party _____ female or _____ male?

Had you had prior contact with the other party _____ frequently, _____ regularly, _____ seldom, _____ never?

Is your institution a _____ high school, _____ community college, _____ 4-year college or university,
    _____ comprehensive graduate-degree granting university?

NEGATIVE CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORT FORM

A critical incident is a communicative event which you feel affected you or made a strong impression on you. The event might have taken place at any time or in any setting, but it should be remembered clearly. In the space provided, please write a one-paragraph description of a critical communication incident in which you participated. The event should be related to your involvement in forensics and your identification as a woman. Your response should tell us how the incident arose, what the other party did or said to you, and what you said or did as a result. (We do not assume women are reactive rather than proactive; we seek incidents women in forensics experience based on gender.)

Please check the appropriate response to the following questions.

Did this event occur _____ less than one year, _____ 1-3 years, _____ 3-5 years, or _____ more than 5 years

ago?

Was the other party _____ female or _____ male?

Had you had prior contact with the other party _____ frequently, _____ regularly, _____ seldom, _____ never?

Is your institution a _____ high school, _____ community college, _____ 4-year college or university,

_____ comprehensive graduate-degree granting university?

APPENDIX B

Positive Critical Incident Essence Statements*

P001   Male forensics director mentors female student.

P002   Male student thanks female coach for encouraging his participation.

P006   Female student expresses appreciation to female coach/mentor.

P010   Female tournament director assists ill female colleague.

P012   Female professor mentors female graduate student.

P013   Female competitor uses feminist impromptu topic to "crystallize" her thinking.

P014   Not an incident--drop from future reporting.

P015   Female coach elected to fill gender quota for officer in national organization.

P016   Female judge invited to fill gender quota for final debate round at national tournament.

P017a   Not an incident--drop from future reporting.

P020   Male peer offers supportive counsel to female coach.

P022   Not an incident--drop from future reporting.

P023   Not an incident--drop from future reporting.

P026   Male colleague lauds female debate coach as a role model for women.

P028   Students and coaches offer testimonials on retirement of female coach and husband from coaching and travel.

P029   Female debaters credit female coach for their success.

P030   Female professor mentors female student toward doctoral study.

P031   Female coach is flattered by comparison to female "trailblazer" by male colleague.

P035   Female raises her consciousness by attending women's debate forums.

P036   Female graduate student declines forensics assistant job offer from chauvinist department chair.

P037   Not an incident--drop from future reporting.

P038   Female student compares female Director of Forensics to her mother & squad to her family.

P039   Female debate district tab room staff member is used as gopher by male staff.

*Information set off by quotation marks is directly quoted from the original incident reports. Sequence gaps in numbers is due to reports which were statements of self-disqualification or statements such as "I have never experienced a negative (or positive) incident I attribute to gender."

Negative Critical Incident Essence Statements*

N001   Male Director of Forensics belittles female graduate assistant and men who participate in "feminine" events.

N005   Male head coach tells female graduate student it is more important to cook dinner for her husband than to learn to run a forensics program.

N006   Male Director of Forensics segregates female assistant from coaching staff, treats her as student competitor.

N009   Female tournament director fails to confront offensive female judge.

N010   Female graduate assistant propositioned by male coach from other institution.

N012   Female contestant sexually harassed by male judge, who repeats behavior when she becomes a graduate assistant.

N013   Female debater joins into "cat fight" with female opponents.

N015   Female debate coach propositioned by male coaches during social events, feels team's success threatened by her rebuffs.

N016   Male debater makes inappropriate remark to female judge about pregnancy.

N017a Female judge disallows male-oriented argument by male debaters.

N019   Male college president discriminates against female applicant for Director of Forensics on basis of gender.

N020   Not an incident--drop from future reporting.

N021   Female competitor rewarded for adopting less feminine hair & dress styles.

N022   Female coach denied full-time position which goes to "insider" male.

NO23   Female coach attempts to take charge of female tournament director's tab room; organizes formal complaint.

N024   Male judge's ballots comment on female contestant's physical appearance.

N025   Male judge's ballot comments on female contestant's body; male coach does not support protest.

N026   Male colleague belittles status of female nominee for national office.

N027   Male coaches "hit on" female graduate assistant at tournament reception.

N030   Female Directors of Forensics discuss forensics "as if it were the only thing in their" lives.

N031   Male colleague assumes female turns down prestigious job to adopt traditional female gender role.

N035   Male debater becomes verbally abusive to female judge, partner, and opponents.

N037   Female Director of Forensics schedules team retreat to establish rules concerning puerile male behavior.

N038   Male extemp judge insults then ignores female judge in presence of male contestants.

N039   Male debaters use foul language and hostile nonverbal behavior in response to female individual events judge; debater's coach excuses their behavior.

N040   Female Director of Forensics finds male student congress colleagues more respectful than male forensics colleagues.

*Information set off by quotation marks is directly quoted from the original incident reports. Sequence gaps in numbers is due to reports which were statements of self-disqualification or statements such as "I have never experienced a negative (or positive) incident I attribute to gender."

APPENDIX C

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 03-17-95   IRB#: AS-95-050

Proposal Title: WOMEN IN FORENSICS

Principal Investigator(s): Mike Stano, Robert Greenstreet

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): None

APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT
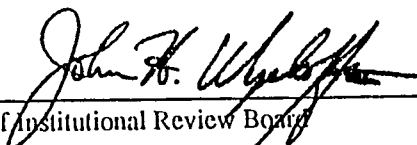NEXT MEETING.
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A
CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD
APPROVAL.
ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR
APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval
are as follows:

HAD THE APPLICATION BEEN SUBMITTED IN A TIMELY MANNER, IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN APPROVED AS EXEMPT.

Signature: Date: March 23, 1995
           Chair of Institutional Review Board

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VITA

Robert W. Greenstreet

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE GENDER-BASED EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN
IN INTERCOLLEGIATE FORENSICS

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National Educational Debate Association, Pi Kappa Delta,
Central States Communication Association, Oklahoma Speech
Theatre Communication Association, National Council for
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