

Gender Disparity in Debate: An Analysis of Dominant Discourses in National
Parliamentary Debate using Symbolic Interactionism

by

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an initial snapshot at the collegiate parliamentary debate community's identification and development of gender identities in the debate community. Using Symbolic Interactionism and a Critical Gender lens this paper employs narrative interviews to examine the parliamentary debate community. I interviewed women and men debaters to explain the current gender disparity in the debate community. This community is unique because it is supposed to be *tabula rasa* anyone can win as long as their arguments are developed well. However, research indicates that more men than women are in competitive out rounds. This paper identifies various themes associated with gender identity that the community uses as a precursor to their treatment of various individuals in the debate community.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Act 1: Who Am I?

I am a debater. For as long as I can remember (9th grade) I have identified as a debater first almost before anything else. I remember the moment I decided to join the debate team. I was sitting in Mr. Kelly's 8th grade Social Studies class listening to the counselor from Alta Loma High School tell us about extracurricular activities that we could become involved in the next year at Alta Loma High School. The counselor, who I cannot remember, passed out half sheets of paper asking us to write out information on it and indicate the activities in which we may be interested. I look at the half sheet of blue paper on my desk and happily put an "X" to indicate my interest in debate. I had no idea marking that X on the blue half sheet of paper would set the rest of my lived experience in a specific lens, debate. At the time, I could not formulate a reason why debate interested me. It just seemed like the "thing" in which I should be involved. Images of standing up in a courtroom like Law & Order yelling "I object" passed through my mind. That afternoon I went home and told my mother I wanted to join the debate team. She didn't say much about it; I had always been talkative and what my mother called "argumentative," although I never saw it.

One of my friends asked me, "What would you do if you didn't debate?" At the time I did not know how to respond. Now I think about it and I would not be the same person if I had not debated. So much of my identity has come from debate, my identity as a woman framed my experience in the debate community. There were specific moments in

my career as a debater that shaped my lived experience more than others. My experience, however, was not shaped just by moments; the people who participated in the activity shaped it.

As a parliamentary debater for my entire college career, my immersion in the debate culture forced me to notice the masculine dominant framework of parliamentary debate and how it affected not only how I viewed myself but how others viewed me as well. Notions of my own identity came to surface after my debate career was over and I had realized how much the community shaped how I viewed myself as a woman, a debater, and as an academic. The debate community used symbols as a means to regulate my interactions with the community. For instance, if I were too aggressive in a debate round, I was told to act more appropriately and to be nicer, but if my male partner engaged in the same kind of behavior he was congratulated for being an intense debater. There were times I was told that I should wear dresses as a means of dressing up, while other times I was told to not focus so much on my gender. That debate constructs a neutral arena for anyone who wishes to participate and my gender performance is not a part of that game. I constantly was presented with contradictory symbols and forced to navigate those in a way that allowed me to still come to terms with my identity.

The inspiration for this study came from my own social location in the debate community. As each chapter begins, I share more and more of my story as a member of the parliamentary debate community. I take this action for several reasons. Qualitative researchers have an ethical obligation to disclose their position in relation to their research (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). This formally is identified as the process of reflexivity.

Lindlof and Taylor (2011) say that it is the “heartbeat of qualitative research.” (p. 72) Reflexivity is defined as a researcher disclosing their relationship within the subject or topic that they are researching (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Reflexivity is important because it recognizes the bias of the researcher, and “dispels myths of objectivity” (p. 72). This is important because it also recognizes the social location of the researcher. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) indicate that informing readers of your reflexivity provides richer data and informs the audience of nuances within relationships. In the following section, I disclose my position in relation to this research project, by sharing part of my experience in the debate community throughout my thesis. This form of reflexivity explains my relationship to the debate community and the subject matter of gender disparity in debate.

Goals and Heuristic Value

For the past eight years, women represented 3/16ths of the top debaters in the country (NPTE Rankings, nptedebateaddict.com). According to the National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence’s (NPTE) rankings from 2004 to 2011, there have been three female champions, none of which came from all female-female debate teams (NPTE Rankings, nptedebateaddict.com). In 2005, the NPTE consisted of six women in the top ten speakers at the tournament. In 2010, the NPTE consisted of one woman in the top ten speakers, and the 2011 NPTE had two female debaters in the top ten speakers (NPTE Rankings, nptedebateaddict.com). The decrease in the number of awards received by women in the debate community exemplifies a symptom of a larger problem: women are becoming less active in competitive debate and the number of awards given to “good” women debaters is decreasing.

Speaker awards are given to debaters who use communication styles that the parliamentary debate community values, namely masculine speaking styles. Male debaters receive awards more often than women. In fact, few women received speaker awards. Not only do women earn fewer awards than their male counterparts, the speaker awards are symbolic—functioning to reward appropriate speaking styles and to punish those styles deemed inappropriate by the debate community. The lack of female representation in college parliamentary debate is a unique systemic problem.

The goal of this thesis is to determine how women's identities are constructed in a masculine dominated community. In a community where competition is privileged, and where there are few women in the community, the ways women's identities are constructed in the community becomes an important question that warrants further investigation. This study takes a qualitative, critical approach to discover the NPDA debate community's predominant discourses of gender identity related to women in National Parliamentary debate. This research also seeks to understand the construction of gender identities through dominant discourse in the debate community. Mead's (1934) theory of symbolic interactionism is the theoretical framework guiding this analysis. I employ a critical approach by problematizing constructions of gender this is done by employing a critical gender lens (Paclzewski & DeFrancisco, 2007; Wood, 2012; Butler 2004). Using symbolic interactionism and a critical gender lens provide insights about how the NPDA debate community treats gender in daily interactions, the values that gender holds, and how it affects individual debaters within the debate community.

To date, most debate studies focused on policy debate and rarely focus on parliamentary debate. This lack of focus on parliamentary debate has made it difficult to analyze trends of women's participation in parliamentary debate. The studies focus on policy debate, primarily attempts to understand the number of women in policy debate with regards to various levels of debate (Skarb, 2002; Stepp, 2009; Matz & Brusckhe, 2006; Pearson, 2009). Yet these studies focus almost solely on policy debate, with no examination of parliamentary debate and gender discrimination (Skarb, 2002; Stepp, 2009; Matz & Brusckhe, 2006; Pearson, 2009). Although parliamentary and policy debate are similar enough that concepts and research from policy can be applicable, scholars need to focus on parliamentary debate because parliamentary debate is not evidence-based, which means it differs from policy debate and the win/loss is decided entirely upon what warrants the debaters choose to use in the debate round.

My research adds to the body of communication literature, since no study to date has examined the dominant discourses of parliamentary debate, specifically regarding how women negotiate their identities in that community. Organizational communications studies examine how women's identities are constructed in different masculine dominated communities (Schouten & McAlexander, 2006; McDowell & Schaffner, 2011; Mean, 2001; Pearson, 2009; Forbes, 2002; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Steimel & Lucas, 2009; Touchton et al. 2008; West & Curtis, 2006; Maranto & Griffin, 2011; Bell & Golombisky, 2004; Ashcraft & Pacanowsky, 1996). Isolating different ways women's identities are constructed in certain communities creates tools better to negotiate

masculine dominated communities and is the first step to evaluate the implications that masculine-dominated communities affect women's identities.

Finally, before I continue, it is important to note that I choose to use "their" instead of "his" or "her" in cases where "his" or "her" would be grammatically correct. "His or her" constructs a gender binary that someone either identifies as a she or a he with specific pronouns associated with that identity. This gender dichotomy ignores individuals that choose not to have a specific gender pronoun associate with their identity or someone that does not match the normalized choice of a pronoun. Gendered pronouns are antithetical to the underlying theories of this paper; to construct gender binaries for people willing to participate in interviews would assert an external gendered framework upon the individuals.

In the next section I define relevant terminology in regards to parliamentary debate, describe how parliamentary debates occur, and explain the rationale for this study. First, I describe the history of parliamentary debate, how it evolved and then diverged from policy debate, why that is relevant and then go on to describe what a debate tournament consists of. I do so in order to familiarize individuals with debate, how a tournament functions, and the community's terminology of debate culture. Having a basic understanding to how college parliamentary debate functions is essential to understanding the rest of this study.

Study Rationale

Background of Parliamentary Debate. Parliamentary debate, and subsequently the NPTE, was created in the early 1990s as a reaction to increasing "elitist" practices of

the Cross-Examination Debate Association's (CEDA) debate activity (Johnson, 1999). As an alternate form to CEDA, parliamentary debate progresses along the same lines, emphasizing trends such as spreading (speed reading) and in-depth research as opposed to extemporaneous speaking (Johnson, 1999). Unlike college sports, all schools have the ability to debate other schools; however there are different levels of debate (Meany & Shuster, 2003). Novice debate is for debaters with little to no high school or college experience debating. Junior Varsity (JV) debate contains debaters that have some debate experience but no more than two years. Open or varsity debate technically is open to anyone to access or to debate in, but most of the time it is sophomore to senior debaters with experience debating before high school or college.

A parliamentary debate round consists of a two-on-two debate. Teams receive the topic and are assigned a side to defend 15 to 20 minutes before the round (Meany & Shuster, 2003). Debates consist of a winner and loser determined by a judge, or judges, in each debate round. An average debate tournament consists of five to six preliminary debate rounds and then the top half of the field clears to single elimination rounds. Debate teams compete in a bracket system until two teams remain. The two teams debate in a final round to determine the winner of the tournament. NPDA debate tournaments typically have three types of awards: team awards, squad awards, and speaker awards.

Team awards and squad awards come from the number of wins and losses a team has throughout the tournament. For instance, a team (of two debaters) may receive an award for clearing to elimination rounds, an award that reflects how far into elimination rounds the team went. Squads also receive awards for how their top four teams (of two

people) did overall at the tournament. For instance, if a squad (comprised of multiple teams from the same school) had multiple teams in elimination rounds, they would receive a squad sweepstakes award. Speaker awards focus on the individual debater. During each preliminary round, the judge ranks debaters first through fourth and assigns speaker points for each debater based upon their performance in the round. Speaker rankings and points remain separate from who won the round, although most often the debate teams who win the debate round also receive higher speaker points. Speaker awards recognize debaters with the highest number of speaker points. Speaker awards recognize debaters for communicating in a manner that the judge finds pleasing. I now discuss current views and practices regarding NPDA debate.

Current Parliamentary Debate Views. Parliamentary debate is a unique community, a national group of collegiate individuals who spend two to three weekends a month, and several weeks of the summer, together focused on communication. Young debaters, or people that get eliminated from the tournament early on, watch later elimination debate rounds of successful debaters. The successful debaters become the example of what good debate is, and illustrates what a young debater would need to do to become successful in the activity. According to the NPTE website, few of those examples at national tournaments are female. The lack of female representation in debate makes the women who compete much more noticeable and their methods of communication more likely to be emulated by younger debaters.

Several studies identify fewer women than men in late elimination rounds and highly competitive levels of debate as problems. Dr. John Brusckke, the Director of

Forensics at California State University of Fullerton, conducted a study of high school policy debate and concluded that neither a lack of access to debate nor a lack of participation dissuaded women. In fact, the amount of females in novice junior varsity and lower levels of varsity debate was almost equal. The number of women in the activity decreases when analyzing competitors in higher levels of debate (2006). The decreasing participation of women at higher levels of competition is consistent with the numbers that in current college parliamentary debate, as discussed previously regarding the Whitman tournament. Women are interested, but the disconnect between lower and higher levels of competition shows that something discourages women from continuing in debate.

Further, McRee, and Cote (2002) draw connections between a lack of gender diversity in high school policy debate and a lack of diversity in college policy debate. They conclude that if people did not have access to policy debate in high school, it was significantly harder for them to access debate in college (McRee & Cote, 2002). The lack of access to debate in college identifies a potential origin for the problem, but provides no further explanation for discrimination.

According to Pearson (2009), masculine dominated frameworks in academic debate heavily influence women's identities. Women's identities on a larger level inevitably are affected by masculine hierarchies within society and become affected by a specific type of masculine-dominated frameworks (Pearson, 2009). Masculine frameworks within debate provide specific tangible awards for people deemed "good debaters/speakers" (team and speaker awards) and punishments for those that do not conform to this model of communication (losing debate rounds). The overt rewards and

punishments influence how a woman defines herself in the debate community at an exaggerated rate than in the normal population. Parliamentary debate constructs symbols of what constitutes a “good debater” and “bad debater” via the overt rewards and punishments given to those who do or who do not adopt masculine debate or speaking styles.

Mead (1934) defines community as a group of individuals with similar values, goals and/or beliefs interacting. Based upon the NPDA debate community sharing a common belief of the value of public speaking, argumentation and spending their weekends debating current events they fit Mead’s definition of community. Mead (1934) discusses how within communities there are shared symbols that help shape those communities views and beliefs. These symbols aid in shaping people’s community identities. For instance, how the city someone resides in (local community) views a woman’s role would implicate how an individual in that community then viewed women. Blumer (1969) furthers Mead’s explanation of symbols created in debate communities. Denzier (2007) further argues that gender becomes a commodity (symbol) exchanged between people in a community. If gender is a symbol exchanged between people in a community, this means the community influences how someone’s gender identity is viewed. The symbol as it is traded morphs to fit the needs of that community at that time, as per their views at the time.

Preview

In the following thesis, chapter two outlines literature regarding women’s identity negotiation in specific communities, current research regarding gender disparity in debate,

and my theoretical frameworks. Chapter three discusses the methods portion of my study; including how data is collected, analyzed, and the appropriate methodological viewpoints that are utilized. Chapters four and five are my data analysis of the in-depth interviews from debaters in the community. Finally, chapter six will be implications and the conclusion of my thesis.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Act 2: The F Word and Human Decency

The first day that I said aloud that I was a feminist was the summer before my senior year of high school. At this point, I had been debating for three years with no coach and multiple partners. This specific summer, I attended the Gonzaga Debate Institute and placed in Toni Neilson and Cameron Ward's lab group. Toni and Cameron were both debate coaches for CSU Fullerton. "Back in the day," as they said, they were debate partners. Toni was shorter than me, with long shorts and short hair. She never discussed her sexuality or gender performance. I remember my naivety at the time. We had a box we could ask questions of them—any questions we wanted. I wrote asking her about her boyfriend, not thinking that maybe she did not have one or the truth, which was that she had a partner and that she identified as a lesbian. Now I think back on that moment, my short blocky handwriting on the slip of paper and her reading the question quietly, pausing and simply saying, "No, I do not." I then realized what I had done and what the truth probably was, or could at least be, and felt an immense amount of guilt.

Cameron was the one with whom I spent the most time. I remember seeing him in the CSTV Debate Documentary that I use to watch every weekend detailing his story at the National Debate Tournament (NDT). At the time he had longer dreadlocks, brown freckles, and was taller than I. Toni and Cameron decided that I was going to debate with another debater who was scheduled for a more difficult division. They saw a "DreamKilla" in me (what our lab was called) and wanted to push, or torture, me

depending on the time of day that you asked me. I would spend hours in this small computer lab with Cameron, standing at a stack of tubs with a large jug of water doing speed drills, sweat dripping down my face. I would stop only when the words on the page became blurred. When I would stop and get a drink of water, he would smile and say, "Alright, again." This was the first time that I had a debate coach, a real one at least, and specifically one that taught me I was allowed to read arguments that I cared about and that meant a lot to me. This is how I came to identify as a feminist. I do not say become because one does not "become" a human or "become" decent; they simply are and discover their humanity in certain moments. This was one of my moments.

We were being assigned debate assignments for the week. Toni was at the chalkboard writing a list of relevant negative arguments that our lab needed to research. I was sitting cross-legged on top of a desk about three rows back from her. She had just asked for volunteers for a CP/DA combination. I did not volunteer because I was hoping to write our Theory/T file. She pointed and assigned the disadvantage to someone in our lab. I remember who was in our lab, and still talk to a few of them, but I do not remember who ended up getting that assignment that day. She asked what else people enjoy writing and I raised my hand and told her T. Toni rolled her eyes and looked at Cameron who was giggling. "Why don't we find you something worthwhile to write instead," she asked. She stood at the front of the room like the wizard from behind the curtain about to bestow a brain, or courage, or a heart to arm me for my journey through my senior year. She stood there with chalk in her hand tapping it against her bottom lip, leaving a slight mark as she thought. She pointed at me and said, "You'll research Fem IR," and with a swipe

of the chalk added my name to the board. I felt cheated. I had not gotten a good gift, but I did not speak my objections. I asked her what that was; she smiled and told me to go to the library and look it up.

I entered the college library and began to look at different books. I ended up searching “Feminism” and found shelves full of books. The first book I found off the shelf was by bell hooks (1995) entitled Killing Rage. I opened it to a random page, my thumb running along the pages. My eyes went to the middle of a page to a passage regarding staking men to car seats. I was confused and a little horrified, wishing at this moment I had the safety of the topicality file, definitions, after all, were not violent (or so I thought). Toni found me in the stacks and asked what I think. I look up with a look of bewilderment and stammered that I was not sure if this was for me. She glanced down at the book in my hand and chuckled, “Of course not with this book” and put it back on the shelf. She then handed me a book entitled Feminist International Relations by Jill Steans.

As I began to read the book, I realized it was in line with things that I believed and thought to be true. I looked up and smiled at Toni. She told me to hold out my arms and placed five or six books in my arms and tells me to get to work. I walked back to the classroom and began to read, bracketing different arguments that I found interesting or useful. Toni asked what I thought of feminism and Fem IR. I smiled and told her, “I guess I’m a feminist, although I just thought feminism was human decency.” She laughed and told me to get to work. That was the first time I said aloud I was a feminist; it certainly not the last. Years later for an auto-ethnography assignment I wrote about it with a smile

as I remembered the monumental impact this day had on my life as a person. The funny thing is, I do not think Cameron or Toni have any idea.

In the following, a review of gender communication and different communities illustrates how women identify themselves in other masculine-dominated organizations. This literature provides a starting point for this study. Next, focusing on symbolic interactionism, Mead's (1934) and Blumer's (1969) work on communities provides a framework to evaluate how parliamentary debate uses symbols to construct meaning, specifically women's identities in parliamentary debate.

Gender Communication

Literature regarding gender communication and communities identifies how constructions of women and how women communicate in masculine dominated organizations (Schouten & McAlexander, 2006; McDowell & Schaffner, 2011; Mean, 2001; Pearson, 2009; Forbes ,2002; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Steimel & Lucas, 2009; Touchton et al.; 2008; West & Curtis, 2006; Maranto & Griffin, 2011; Bell & Golombisky, 2004; Ashcraft & Pacanowsky, 1996). Specifically isolating, literature regarding women in debate, studies that were previously conducted emphasizing debate and masculine dominated frameworks (Skarb, 2002; Stepp, 2009; Matz & Brusckhe, 2006; Mazur, 2001; McRee & Cote, 2002 Pearson, 2009). Contextualizing the study using a lens of symbolic interactionism and critical gender studies provides insight to dominant discourses in parliamentary debate. Symbolic interactionism, first developed by Mead and then furthered by Blumer, this theory explains that the symbols that a community values affects how individuals' identities expressed within that community

(Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). Employing a critical gender lens is important in this examination, because such a lens problematizes societal assumptions regarding gender identity (Wood, 2012; Butler 2004; DeFrancisco & Palczewski, 2007). This is true of the dominant discourses in parliamentary debate.

Gender Communication in Different Communities

This section first explores theoretically how women's identities are implicated by masculine dominated discourses within different communities. Next, I examine how specific masculine dominated communities implicate women's identity construction and negotiation within specific communities. I look at communities such as Ranger Service, Women in Biker Gangs, women in coalmines, how women negotiate their identities within sports and women in higher education. Finally, I end by isolating studies that have used symbolic interactionism as a means of determining the implications of women's identities in a masculine dominated community.

Theoretical Implications of Women's Identities in Masculine Dominated Communities. Research conducted regarding how women negotiate their own identities in masculine dominated communities is abundant (Schouten & McAlexander, 2006; McDowell & Schaffner, 2011; Mean, 2001; Pearson, 2009; Forbes ,2002; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Steimel & Lucas, 2009; Touchton et al.; 2008; West & Curtis, 2006; Maranto & Griffin, 2011; Bell & Golombisky, 2004; Ashcraft & Pacanowsky, 1996). Most studies report that masculine dominated communities affect how women negotiate their identities (Ashcraft & Pacanowsky, 1996; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Bell & Golombisky, 2004). These negotiations of identity are not only contingent upon the

individual person's beliefs, but upon the constructions of the people around them (Bell & Golombisky, 2004). Dominant masculine discourses prevalent in a community force women's identities to become contingent upon other people's views within the community (Bell & Golombisky, 2004). Dominant discourses are problematic particularly when women construct themselves in a male-dominated community because their identities are then inevitably informed by the masculine structure in place.

Forbes (2002) argues that while women create their identities in a community, they internalize masculine values into the dominant discourse of their community. Using in-depth interviews with black woman managers, Forbes found that women's identities are constructed via dominant discourse. Moreover, she further concludes that her study creates a patriarchal construct that is more resilient and insidious to combat (Forbes, 2002). Patriarchal structures become more resilient, and thus harder to identify, as patriarchy defines women's identities. The inability to recognize masculine constructions prevents women from recognizing that internalized masculine constructions influence their identities (Forbes, 2002). Failure to recognize external oppressive structures that frame your identity makes that structure harder to identify (Forbes, 2002). If an individual is unable to identify oppressive power structure then the individual is unable to not only identify the implications of their identity in the context of oppressive power structures, but also to combat these patriarchal power structures.

Cultivating different strategies to adapt or to modify an identity to dominant hierarchies changes depending on the situation and person. Specifically, women adopted multiple strategies to function within a masculine framework. Ashforth and Kreiner

(1999) explain that women typically act in one of two ways when negotiating their identity in a masculine-dominated community: either as ideological (re)framing or over-performing their femininity. Morphing their identity to be accepted by the masculine community is the type of strategy used most often (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Women are active agents in their identity construction (Ashcraft & Pacanowsky, 1996). Active agency is an important aspect to consider in regards to a woman's identity, being an active agent means that women feel pressured to actively construct their identity in a manner that they feel will give them success in the organization.

Ranger Service. The formation of identities for women in masculine dominated arenas is an area of contention in the literature on gender. Pearson's (2009) study about women who work in the park service, a predominately masculine dominated work place, finds that women in the park service resist their prescribed feminine roles and traits. Pearson (2009) explains that instead, the female rangers take on masculine characteristics in the workplace and resist receiving tasks that were considered "feminine" tasks. Pearson (2009) concludes that when women assumed masculine roles in the workplace, these roles created a complex identity that differed from their identity before entering the ranger service. Their identity as a park ranger constructs a complex identity that women are forced to assume usually are informed by the dominant discourse of the community. These complex identities exist not just in the park ranger service but also in other masculine dominated communities such as biker gangs.

Biker Gangs. Biker gangs are a hyper masculinized community that women negotiate in various ways. Martin, Schouten, and McAlexander (2006) discuss strategies

that women often engage in while negotiating their identity in a hyper-masculinized situation—specifically biker gangs—when considering other methods of adapting to masculine hierarchies. Women in biker gangs exist in a hyper-masculinized community and negotiating their identities in that community is different from other communities (Martin, Schouten & McAlexander, 2006). Within this hyper-masculinized society women create unique ways to co-opt the masculine dominated community that do not fit into the norm of gender communication. For instance, some women proudly proclaimed their gender with items such as pink stickers on their helmets as a way to perform their femininity (Martin, Schouten & McAlexander, 2006). Other women chose to adopt hyper-masculine norms by engaging in strategies such as “tough talk” to be perceived as masculine (Martin, Schouten & McAlexander, 2006). However the methods that the women chose to engage in this hyper-masculinity did so while still identifying as feminine. Their interpretation of feminine does not necessarily fit the traditional notion of femininity, yet suits the identity of the individuals that have adopted it. These strategies mirror those from other masculine dominated communities. Steimel & Lucas (2009) identify very similar strategies in coalmines, another hyper-masculinized community.

Coal Miners. Coal mining jobs are filled predominantly by men, this means women that choose to work in coal mines engage in identity negotiation for their masculine dominated community. Steimel and Lucas (2009) find that women in coalmines (male dominated community) function within three types of discourse. They were either physically too weak to mine coal (not enough of a man), they would become sexual prey to the men (victims or distractions to people doing the “real work”), or that

mines were no places for ladies (“real” women should not even want to be in the mine) (2009). The three types of dominant discourses that proliferate in coal mining could manifest in debate as well.

For example, both discourses are male dominated communities in which women may not feel welcome all the time. In parliamentary debate those identities would translate into not enough of a debater (debating is for men, so you must communicate as a man to exist in the community), sexual prey to the men (women exist to be objectified by men in the debate community, their communication skills do not matter), and women must only engage in feminine forms of communication (bitch/lady dichotomy). Similar to learning how to negotiate their identities in a coalmine, is learning how to perform their gender in an acceptable manner in sports.

Sports. Women choosing to participate in sports that society determines are male dominated in nature offers an illustration of how women construct their identities compared to how men construct their identities. McDowell and Shaffer (2011) analyze the Gender Bowl, a reality TV series, to compare and contrast the way men and women construct their identities in a competitive field. The study revealed how men sought to preserve the social relations of football and how women sought to contest the masculine domain of football in part by adopting typically masculine linguistic practices of insult. The most common way women adapt to masculine dominated communities, especially in the context of competition, is to assimilate into the community, adopting masculine characteristics in such a manner as to have the community accept the person (McDowell

& Shaffer, 2011). Identity negotiation occurs from the woman's standpoint and how she chooses to be perceived in the masculine dominated community.

Communities function as gatekeepers, determining what types of identity communication are acceptable for women to employ (Mean, 2001). These "gatekeepers" are able to penalize people who do not perform in a manner deemed appropriate by the community (Mean, 2001). The article specifically talks about referees within sports; however the same study is applicable to academic debate as referees jobs are no different from judges. In that instance, the judge would be awarding wins and speaker points to debaters that they deem as "acceptable" communicators.

Women in Higher Education. Women choosing to work in Higher Education are forced to contextualize their identity in a masculine-dominated sphere. Maranto and Griffin (2011) indicate that women often feel excluded in institutions of higher learning. This is noted to be in stark contrast of the college student population, primarily female students (Maranto & Griffin, 2011). Studies indicate that women in higher education decrease in number the higher ranked the university is and more notable academic prestige at those institutions (Touchton et al., 2008; West & Curtis, 2006) The trend of more women being excluded at upper levels is similar to the Matz and Brusckke (2006) study that indicated women debaters are discouraged from upper levels of debate competition.

Summary of Gender Communication in Different Communities

Identity negotiations of women in masculine organizations do not occur in isolated instances. External factors such as communities or symbols constructed by a

community influence how identities are constructed. A portion of someone's identity does not hold any inherent value unless it is contextualized within a community. According to research women often negotiate their identities in three similar ways regardless of the community they are participating in. Women either choose to play down or de-emphasize their gender, sexualize their gender or emphasize their femininity (Martin, Scouten & McAlexander 2006; Lucas & Steimel, 2009; McDowell & Shaffer, 2011; Mean, 2001). While the community may not actively implicate the theoretical manifestations of identity negotiation those implications still exist. Mead (1934), and later on Blumer (1969), argues that communities have a shared understanding over values inherent within symbols. Those values are then translated to someone's identity. Isolating manners in which those women's identities are negotiated in other organizations serves as a starting point to determine the manner in which women's identities are negotiated and symbolized within NPDA parliamentary debate. Un equal distribution of gender in debate is examined in the following section.

Unequal Distribution of Gender in Debate

The most prevalent data that has been collected regarding gender disparity in academic debate focuses on Cross Examination debate (CEDA/NDT debate), most likely because it is one of the oldest debate institutions. CEDA/NDT debate has existed since the first national debate tournament in 1946 at West Point Academy (West Point Debate Council, 1950). Matz and Brusckke's (2006) research in policy debate has spurred the majority of the analysis of gender discrimination in debate. In his article, he observes: "At no point have females ever constituted more than 41% of the preliminary round

competitors. Comparatively, the CEDA national tournament has more overall female participation but shows no evidence of growth in gender diversity, and the NDT shows a trend toward increased diversity but much lower female participation overall” (2006). No research in parliamentary debate indicates that a similar pattern exists; this is not because the problem does not exist, but because no one has done the research.

The number of women in debate overall is small and the number of women who are competitively successful is even smaller. While CEDA and NPDA parliamentary debate are making an effort to increase their diversity and population, Matz and Brusckke’s (2006) findings conclude that the manner in which those changes occur are ineffective in preventing gender discrimination. The macro changes such as sexual harassment committees do not work; instead the change needs to happen at the individual team/debater level. Matz and Brusckke (2006) also completed research on the correlation of female-female teams, and their success relative to their male counter parts. Matz and Brusckke (2006) found that “Females made up 35.9% of participants but only 26.2% of students advancing to the elimination rounds were female” (p. 26). Skarb (2002) found that women had the same rate of success in lower levels of debate (novice and junior varsity) but those numbers were not translatable to open debate. Skarb (2002) identified that all-female teams lost to all-male teams 53.9% of the time overall, and the trend was more pronounced in the open divisions, especially in the elimination rounds in open divisions.

One of the reasons why women do not exist in the upper echelons of college debate is due to the “boys club” atmosphere. Stepp (2009) cites that 34% of women in

intercollegiate forensics have experienced sexual harassment and five percent of female competitors experience unwanted advances by fellow competitors. Women in the activity feel isolated and objectified (Stepp, 2009). Stepp's (2009) study is the only study discussing the implications of fewer women in debate; specifically, she examines how women who remain active in debate react, or are acted upon, in a "boys' club" atmosphere.

Debate women either have to morph their communication styles to be perceived as "acceptable" by the community or the community uses a means of rewards and punishments (speaker awards) to regulate their behavior. This is notably a different type of communication style that what is conditioned at a young age. For example, women when younger are taught to not question and to be inclusive when communicating with others (Wood, 2012). That communication style is the style that gets morphed and changed by debate for women to be "acceptable" by the community. Soft-spoken women would be perceived as credible by the "boys' club" because they do not fit the masculine communication style.

Wood (2012) notes that individuals who view communication as a competition utilize masculine communication styles. The debate "boys club" is seen in the elimination rounds of the NPDA national tournament as well. There is a consistent 70/30 split of men to women in elimination rounds from 1996 to 2001 (Mazur, 2001). Elimination rounds at the national tournament are supposed to represent the best of the debaters for that year, who are competing for the national title. Determining the number of women to men in the elimination rounds, in comparison to the general population, shows that women while

they may exist in the activity are being silenced, or kept out of elimination rounds at a higher rather than men (Mazur, 2001).

Research about high school debate also indicates a lack of gender diversity. McRee and Cote (2002) evaluated the levels of diversity in high school debate versus that of intercollegiate debate. They found the level of participation in high school debate is higher than that of collegiate debate for females. On its face, this may appear surprising and contradict Matz and Brusckke's (2006) research, but it actually confirms Matz and Brusckke's conclusion that a lack of gender diversity in academic debate exists. Matz and Brusckke (2006) find in higher levels of debate there is a decline in female participation. High school is the bottom level, and would thus have the highest concentration of female debaters. High school debate is the place where most college debaters begin; it is the first place that anyone has a chance to debate. The study also indicates females are interested in debate which means a lack of interest is not a reason for the gender disparity (McRee & Cote, 2002).

While McRee and Cote (2002) disagree with previous studies of gender and debate, their research concludes that females have a willingness to compete in debate and actually over-represented in high school debate by ten percent. They argue this means that gender discrimination is not prevalent; however this actually coincides with Brusckke's study because high school debate is lower than open college debate. This over representation does not extend to college debate however. One of the reasons for this is the nature of competition at the college level is not only more competitive, but also more intense than the high school level (McRee & Cote, 2002). The intensity of college debate

would serve to explain the lack of women at those levels. According to research, women feel excluded from those levels of competition (McRee & Cote, 2002, Mazur 2001).

Women have a willingness to participate in debate but the atmosphere of the college debate communities pushes women to the margins.

Theoretical Framework

For the purposes of this study, I utilized several theoretical lenses to analyze the snapshot of the debate community. First, I chose Symbolic Interactionism (Mead, 1964). Symbolic Interactionism seemed appropriate for this study because applying symbolic interactionism to interviews allows me analyze the implications of how gender as a symbol is created and given meaning with a given community. Within Symbolic Interactionism, community identity construction (Mead, 1964 & Denzier 1997) was also necessary for this study. The way the debate community has chosen to negotiate their community identities is implicated by the masculine dominated system. Finally, embracing a critical gender lens (Wood 2012; Paclzewski & DeFrancisco, 2009; Butler 2009) was important to incorporate into this study. The purpose of the study is to analyze critically the implications of masculine dominated communities on women's identity construction; this was most appropriately done from a critical standpoint. It makes the most sense to utilize a critical interrogation of gender categories. In this section I first define and explain Symbolic Interactionism and Community Identity construction and then I elaborate on the definition of a critical gender lens and how I embrace that ideology within this paper.

Symbolic Interactionism and Community Identity Construction. Simply put, Symbolic Interaction frames symbols and/or values the debate community constructs and the implication for those symbols and values on the gender identity construction of debaters in the community. Symbolic Interactionism argues that identities are not merely manifestations of an individual but are reflections of multifaceted contextualized attitudes and beliefs in society (Mead, 1934). Community norms and values contribute greatly to a person's construction of their identity (Mead, 1934). No identity is constituted in a vacuum, but the community within which the individual is located constantly pushes upon a fluid construct (Mead, 1934). Dominant discourses within a community serve as a way to influence the construction of that identity (Denzier, 1997).

Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969) cite three premises to symbolic interactionism. *The first premise* is that people respond to symbols based upon the meanings others have assigned to them (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). The way a person responds to another person, object or idea is entirely contingent upon the values that the entity holds for the individual. This especially is applicable to identity negotiation within communities. *The second premise* is that meaning for the symbols that one reacts to are derived from the community and organization that someone is from (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). *The third premise* is that people interpret these symbols as they encounter them throughout their life (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). Symbols, completely interpreted by the individual, indicate that these interpretations are not only subjective but also susceptible to influence by the community around them. This means that specific communities would have varying meanings for symbols based upon communal cultures. Debate communities, with

very little women represented in the community, would create unique symbols for the women influenced by its masculine dominated framework.

In his theory of symbolic interactionism, Mead (1934) refers to the “looking-glass self”—the understanding of how someone perceives other people to view them. Symbolic interactionism applies particularly well to communities of shared values and ideals.

Gender, for the symbolic interactionist, then becomes social constructed as a symbol interpreted by people within the community, rather than as a constant definition (Denzien, 2007). Gender performances become social currency exchanged between men and women in symbolic interactionism (Clough, 1987). Dominant discourses in a community influence the exchange between individuals and how they perform their gender within a given community. Identifying dominant discourses is a first step not only to evaluating the implications of the dominant discourse in a given community but also to determining how marginalized voices perform within the culture dictated by the dominant discourse.

SI Application. The theory of symbolic interactionism is appropriate to frame how debaters negotiate women’s identities in parliamentary debate. Symbols that the debate community uses to encourage or to discourage certain behavior by women in debate would make the most sense using a symbolic interactionist paradigm, because those symbols are what constitute the dominant discourses in parliamentary debate. The theory of symbolic interactionism in dominant discourse within the NPDA debate community is employed to analyze the data (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). This is appropriate because isolating different symbols that that are constructed within the community in reference to women’s identities would identify dominant discourses that are used to

communicate about women's identities, similar to the Gender(ealized) Other (Lucas & Steimel, 2009). Specifically, employing core principles of symbolic interactionism explains the way the debate community interacts and creates meaning from that interaction. Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969) identify three core principles of SI. The first core principle is that human's act towards other people in a community based on meaning (Blumer, 1969). Applying that core principle to the debate community will illustrate how community interactions create certain symbols in regards to gender identity. The second core principle, meaning arises from social interaction (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). In terms of the debate community, core principle two would elucidate how identity symbols are created in the debate community. The third core principle of SI refers to *mindin*g (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). *Minding* is when people in a given community internalize and interpret symbols applied to them. This is often characterized by the few second delay when two people are communicating (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). This thesis will also employ Mead (1934)'s *looking glass self* as part of the theoretical analysis. *Looking glass self* is when people internalize various SI concepts such as *naming*, and *symbols* from a community and that internalization implicates the perception of themselves (Mead, 1934). Additionally, employing a critical gender lens is valuable for understanding and identifying problematic gender constructions.

For the purposes of this thesis, Symbolic Interactionism is an appropriate theoretical lens for a few reasons. First, Mead's (1934) interpretation of communities is relevant particularly to the debate community. The debate community creates their own values and symbols associated with various identities. This is an extrapolation of Mead's

(1934) symbolic interactionism. Second, Mead's (1934) interpretation of the "self" with the *looking glass self* offers a lens to elaborate on the implication of women and men debaters' application of symbols on their own identity as well as others in the debate community. Finally, using SI provides a foundation from which to launch other studies. Before the symbols and identities are able to be problematized or explained through other theories those symbols need to be uncovered and examined. SI and theory-driven interview questions provide that foundation.

In addition to examining the prevalent discourses and symbols with symbolic interactionism, I also utilize a critical gender lens to further analyze the implications of this study. Symbolic Interactionism coupled with a critical gender lens provides not only grounding to analyze the community and symbols but also to analyze critically assumptions regarding gender identity in debate. Therefore, a critical gender lens is appropriate to problematize the community's construction and interpretation of women's identities.

Critical Gender Lens

The umbrella of gender categories includes multiple facets of someone's identity. Gender is not just a static notion of someone based upon their physical anatomical characteristics but the identification the individual chooses to associate. Julia Wood (2012) uses the term "gender" to include gender identity, societal gender, and sex. Wood (2012) defines gender identity as the self-identification of ones gender. For example, if someone were to consider their identity as a woman then that would be their gender identity. Societal gender is the gender identity ascribed to individuals by societal

expectations, and assumptions (Wood, 2012). Biological sex is defined as ones physical/anatomical representations, often coupled with hormone levels (Wood, 2012). The construction of biological sex is problematic since often there are babies born with both genitalia or individuals with hormone levels that do not match a specific biological sex (Wood, 2012). All of these aspects make up an individual's "gender." When considering that gender is comprised of several multiple parts, these intersections make it more problematic to create static categories regarding what constitutes woman versus man.

Utilizing a fluidity of identity is important to incorporate marginalized voices, or individuals that may be excluded otherwise. Butler (2004) discusses static or stringent criteria to associate someone as man or woman to systematically exclude and silence individuals. She goes on to argue that this is an act of violence. Constraining people to an identity ascribed by society forces people into roles and identities that do not belong to them. This type of constraint dehumanizes people who do not fit into normative gender representations (Butler, 2004). Someone's identity is a representation of their self, and their gender identity is an aspect of this identity.

To resist static constructions of identity is to embrace a critical gender lens (DeFrancisco & Paclzewski, 2009). Utilizing a critical gender lens means to problematize categories that are considered by society to be the norm. This act of normalizing is a critical scholar's responsibility because a critical scholar should not blindly accept normalize power structures, but question the underlying assumptions why that power structure exists.

Research Questions

Having an understanding of masculine communication in organizations and unequal distribution of gender and debate through a critical gender lens and symbolic interactionism, the following research questions are presented:

RQ1: What are the NPDA debate community's predominant discourses of gender identity related to women in National Parliamentary debate?

RQ2: What are the NPDA debate community's predominant discourses of gender identity related to men in National Parliamentary debate?

RQ3: How does the debate community's predominant discourses impact the symbolic construction of gender identities for debaters in this community, if it does at all?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

My Story, Act 3: The Round that Mattered

Two Schools, two styles of debate and six debate partners later I was in Topeka, KS. I wore my “feminist badge” proudly as I embraced what Toni and Cameron had taught me and used debate as a unique platform to express my ideas but to not forget that debate was a game. In college I always had male debate partners. I remember my junior year at Washburn I was debating with Josh Ramsey at nationals. One specific elimination debate round I looked around; this was one of the top elimination rounds at the National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence and this round was characteristic of other debate rounds I had participated in this year. Between myself, my partner, the other debater team of two, five judges, and approximately ten spectators, I was the only woman.

I knew the statistics and the numbers told us that women were less likely to join and to stay in competitive collegiate debate (Skarb, 2002; Stepp, 2009; Matz & Brusckhe, 2006; Pearson, 2009). I knew this more from seeing it than anything else. I could count on one hand the number of times that my male debate partner was not the majority in a room, announced as winners at awards ceremonies, or were talked about as the better debaters. This round was not the round that stuck out most to me at this tournament at the NPTE 2011 in Southern California. Instead the most significant round in my career in collegiate debate was a preliminary round against two of my closest friends.

Sharmi and Emily were debaters from Berkeley, who, despite all their accolades, had a student run parliamentary debate program. By 2011 I had known Sharmi and

Emily for about two years. Emily and I grew up just minutes from each other but did not meet until college. Sharmi had moved to the United States from India during her last year of high school. Sharmi's family was well off and she would joke about having servants back home in India and not liking to wash dishes. Sharmi always told me to have more fun.

I was standing in the atrium, with sunlight streaming through the windows as I read the pairings. Washburn FR vs. Berkeley DM Judge: Melissa Franke & Peter Van Elswyk. I was excited to debate them. They were reading a "project" at this tournament. A project means that they were ignoring the resolution and instead saying something else was more important. The project was women in debate. Making the argument that the decreased number of women in debate was something that needed to be addressed, Emily and Sharmi chose to use their time during the debate round to address it. Their argument was that they could count on one hand how many women had won the national championship and the last time that a woman-woman team had won (NPTEdebateaddict.com). I had a mixture of feelings. While I was excited to debate my friends and to discuss such an important issue, I also experienced some form of cognitive dissonance; I am a competitive person and wanted to win the debate round.

The resolution was announced. It does not matter much; Josh and I know what we are going to be talked about. We prepare arguments relating to why internal debate rounds do not institute change in the overall community and do not start conversations. We prepare arguments that criticize the Ivory Tower from which Emily and Sharmi speak (hooks, 2000). I was excited about the arguments Josh and I prepared for this debate

because I thought that they were true and I was excited to see Sharmi and Emily. We walked into the round and one of the first things I noticed was that women, for this time, were the majority. Melissa Franke even commented on this before the round started. I gave Sharmi and Emily hugs and the round begins. This round resonated with me more than any other round in which I debated. The lack of women in debate is an issue that has been important to me. But what was I doing to change it? The round discussed how fewer women served as judges, how fewer women stayed in debate—which meant there were fewer women who could be role models for new debaters. We discussed the sexual harassment that we have all experienced and witnessed. Forty-five minutes later the judges handed down a 2-0 decision in favor of Josh and myself.

I had intended to quit debate after that national tournament. I was ready to “grow up” and explore a world outside of debate. I had been debating for a long time and was anxious to explore other opportunities.

After our loss in the round where I was the only girl present, and a long plane ride and car ride back to Topeka, Kansas I found myself sitting in the back seat of my coach’s car talking about next year. He asked if I was going to continue to debate and with whom I wanted to debate. I remember looking out at the Kansas landscape whizzing past my window as my mind went back to the round against Sharmi and Emily only two days previous.

I suddenly felt a sense of obligation to a community that literally shaped my identity. I thought back to the moments of sexual harassment that Emily, Sharmi, and I discussed during the round. I remembered the statistics of people leaving the activity

because of sexual harassment (Stepp, 2009). I looked up at the front seat and told my coach, "Yes, I'll debate next year." He asked me why I changed my mind. I responded that I had an obligation to the community that shaped me, and part of that was not feeling like I need to quit an activity that I had belonged to for so long. My coach responded, "Don't do something because you have a sense of obligation to other people or a community, you don't owe anyone anything." As I thought back to Gonzaga and the round against Sharmi and countless other moments of my debate career I respond with "Yes I do."

Below, several actions are taken. First, I discuss specifics regarding the sample of the 19 participants in this study. Second, participant recruitment techniques are reviewed. Thereafter, methods of data collection, data analysis, and qualitative forms of proof are examined.

Participants Sample

Participants in this study were debaters with some experience in NPDA debate. Specifically, participants were required to have been active in parliamentary debate. Active is defined as going to two or more nationally recognized parliamentary debate tournaments a semester. This requirement is to ensure that participants are active members of the debate community. Participants were also in the process of earning a college education. They were also current debaters. A total of 19 debaters were interviewed for this study, ten women and nine men respectively. Participant ages ranged from 18-27. Participants interviewed represented the following regions of the country:

Texas, California, Kansas, Missouri, Ohio and Washington. Finally, participants had between one and five years of experience as college debaters.

Participant Recruitment

Participants were recruited via *purposive sample* and *network sampling* (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002;). Purposive sample is defined as soliciting participants for interviews because their parliamentary debate community experiences provided rich interviews (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). This technique was appropriate for this study. Since I am a member of this community, I inevitably had an idea of individuals in the community who I would interview. Finally, purposive sampling was also helpful to get at populations and phenomenon that I was investigating.

Network sampling was also employed in this study. Network sampling is defined as soliciting members in my social network of individuals (Lindlof & Taylor 2002). This is appropriate since the network in the community is already established and something I have access to as well.

Participants were recruited via an announcement on the virtual debate forum, net-benefits.net and through personal contacts. Participation was voluntary and no incentive for participating in the interview was offered. Since the study focuses on the “exchange of gender as a symbol” within dominant discourses of the parliamentary debate community, interviews were not limited to a specific gender. Everyone with NPDA debate experience was eligible and invited to participate.

Data Collection

Building Rapport. Before beginning data collection, I sought to build rapport and trust with participants. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2011), *rapport* is important to put the participant at ease prior to the interview. *Rapport* is defined as establishing a level of trust and openness between the researcher and the participant. (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) Rapport also means an implicit agreement “about the communicative rules of the interview.” (p.194) I sought to build rapport in two ways with the debaters I interviewed. First, I knew the participants from my membership in the debate community. This meant that they were aware of my background. Oftentimes they would ask me what my research was about and the goal of my thesis. My disclosure of the subject of my thesis and the interest I had in researching various phenomena in parliamentary debate developed a level of trust by my willingness to be open about my subject matter. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) explains, “rapport also grows out of the researcher’s clarity of purpose.” (p.194) Finally, before the interview began I asked them how they were, what they had been up to, and quickly caught up with the participant. This facilitated putting them at ease and to decrease the feeling for formality regarding the interview.

Further, building rapport is key for qualitative interviews for several reasons. First, good rapport between the participant and researcher facilitates meaningful and honest responses from the participants. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) indicate that a participant’s candor during an interview is directly linked to the rapport established prior to the interview starting. Second, rapport indicates a level of respect between the participant and researcher, a lack of respect could make responses from the participant problematic.

Finally, rapport encourages participants' willingness to disclose personal information during the interview (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). This was especially important when discussing women's experience in the debate community. A lack of rapport would mean that I may not receive the entire story, or the story at all, regarding their feelings of exclusion in the debate community.

Moreover, building rapport helps in eliciting narratives about participants' life experiences. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), narrative interviews are most successful when done by an "insider" or someone in the organization that the people being interviewed would trust. As I am a collegiate debate coach, I am a member of the debate community and have an existing rapport that was necessary for a successful narrative interview.

Audio-Recording. With the permission of the participants, each interview was audio-recorded to achieve accuracy in transcription. Audio recording is an appropriate choice to record the interviews for several reasons. First, it ensures accuracy of the interview by providing a verbatim copy of the interview. Second, it protects the anonymity of the participant only having a recording of their voice as opposed to a video. This means participants may be more comfortable sharing information when they know their identity is being protected. Finally, audio recording allows the focus to be on the content of the interview as opposed to body language and gestures that may occur during the interview. Interviews ranged from 26-56 minutes respectively, with 19 interviews averaging 37 minutes. All interview data were fully transcribed, yielding a total of 156 single-spaced pages of data.

Semi-Structured Interviews. The method of data collection employed in this study is qualitative interviews (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Interviews are designed to “unfold a social process” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). An interview “develops a view of something between people” (Brenner, 1985 p. 148). 19 interviews were conducted with 9 men and 11 women, ages 18 and to 27. After conducting 12 interviews, 7 more interviews were conducted to saturate thematic categories (Maxwell, 2005). Interviews were conducted either in-person or over the phone, based upon the location of participants; 9 were interviewed in person and 10 were interviewed over the phone.

To ask interview questions, a semi-structured interview guide was employed (see Appendix A) that focused on the interviewee’s personal experiences and stories from being a debater in NPDA debate. A semi-structured interview guide allows the researcher to probe for additional information and to ask questions in the order participants bring up new information. Using a semi-structured interview schedule was a preferable method.

Constructing the Interview Guide. The interview guide begins with background questions that served as a supplement to the demographic questions asked (see Appendix B) to determine how long the individual has been in the debate community, if they had previous experience, and their levels of competitive success. These questions serve either to challenge or to confirm the previous research done in policy debate about people with experience in high school debate performing better than people who did not debate in high school (McRee & Cote, 2002) and people in the upper echelons of NPDA debate being more exclusive than the lower levels (Matz & Brusckhe, 2006).

The second portion of the interview guide focuses on the debater's perspective of gender in the debate community and their personal experiences with debate. This section considered how (if at all) their gender identity or other participants' gender identity influences those experiences. My interview guide asks if the debater has any stories regarding instances that have happened when the debater may have "performed" their gender. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), sensitive questions should be left until the end, or later on in the interview, to ease the interviewee into such questions. The potential that questions of the individual's performance of gender, and the affect that the performance had on their success, could potentially be sensitive and thus are situated toward the end of the interview.

Eliciting Narratives. Interviews sought to learn participants' stories regarding understanding dominant discourses of gendered interactions in national parliamentary debate (NPDA). To accomplish this, interview questions were constructed to elicit participants' narratives. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) describe narrative interviews as "capturing and explicating the whole story" (p. 179). In this study, interviews empowered co-researchers with the space to discuss performances of gender and to tell their perspective of their view regarding gender the NPDA debate. Gathering rich, narrative interviews was the goal of data collection in this research.

The narrative interviews in this study focused on the stories and experiences of the debaters in NPDA debate. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) claim, "personal narratives are often told in relation to cultural discourses" (p. 180). Boje (1991) goes further, stating, "a

collective storytelling system in which the performance of stories is a key part to the members sensemaking” (p. 106).

Theory-Driven Interview Questions. My theoretical lenses are also evident in the interview guide. First, employing symbolic interactionism, I ask individuals specific questions regarding labels and representations of women debaters in the community. Asking them to identify specific words or names that are associate with “good” and “bad” women debaters to create a starting point of identifying these dominant discourse (Mead, 1964). In regards to a critical gender lens, I asked participants about their instances of gender performance (Butler, 2004) as well as others’ gender performances. Opening the questions regarding gender up to interpretation rather than forcing participants into gender categories allows the greatest freedom for self-identification. Finally, framing the interview with critical incident questions in a manner that allows the interviewee to detail stories in regards to their gender performance. Each of these theoretical frameworks frame the way the data is collected, analyzed, and understood.

Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

To analyze my thesis data I chose to utilize Owen’s (1984) thematic analysis initially and then used Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis to identify and to code themes from the data. Owen (1984) indicates that the initial level of analysis should be evaluated by paying attention to three thematic instances: repetition, forcefulness, and recurrence. *Repetition* refers to finding same key words and phrases amongst transcripts (Keyton, 2005). *Forcefulness* means paying specific attention to vocal tones and pauses

during participants' responses (Keyton, 2005). Finally, *recurrence* refers to two transcriptions having similar meaning (Keyton, 2005).

Owen's Thematic Analysis. Owen's (1984) Thematic Analysis was helpful in the initial coding process to narrow the data set and to identify relevant themes in the data set. A theme was considered important when it either appeared in each transcription or was mentioned by numerous participants during their interview. These themes were chosen using Owen's (1984) three criteria as discussed above. I identified major themes when it was prevalent in a majority of the data or emphasized by several participants. Along with using Owen's Thematic Analysis, I chose to employ Bran and Clarke's (2006) analysis procedures to identify and to code themes.

Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis Procedures. Braun and Clarke (2006) identify a six-step process to code themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) indicates that the six steps are: "a) familiarize yourself with the data; b) generate initial codes; c) search for themes; d) define and name themes; and e) produce the report" (p. 87). I began first by transcribing the interviews verbatim. Next, I read the interviews multiple times to familiarize myself with the data. During this stage, I read the transcripts without marking to generate an overall knowledge of the data. I then read the transcripts a second, third, and fourth time and searched for "meanings [and] patterns" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Thereafter, I created an initial set of codes as I read through the interviews. From the initial codes I then generated themes, which included naming and defining these overall themes. Finally, I looked at the entire data set and examined how the themes were interconnected with each other (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87).

Qualitative Forms of Proof

After this initial process of categorization, I engaged in *member checking* and *peer debriefing* to ensure my interpretation of the interviews are accurate (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). This is important because it ensures that my interpretation of the data is accurate. Due to the nature of qualitative interviews after the initial level of analysis it is important to go back to the community that the research is about and ensure that my interpretation of what the participants said is true. Using proof ensures that the themes I identify as being prevalent in the data set are accurate and not personal extrapolations with no evidentiary basis. Using multiple forms of proof increases the credibility of the themes that were found in the thematic analysis. Checking how other members in the community interpret the themes I understand to be at play in the narratives may show other relationships or interpretations of my initial thematic analysis. Two forms of proof were employed in this study. Both are discussed below.

Member checking. *Member checking* is defined as “taking the information back to the field of study and determining whether or not participants recognize this as true and accurate” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002 p. 242). Member checking occurs with the participants who participated in interviews in my study. Specifically, during this process I was able to clarify the emergent themes that I identified with the debaters (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). I conducted member checks with 3 men and 3 women from my study. Each member check occurred either in person or over the telephone. During this conversation, we discussed general themes I obtained from the initial coding process. I

then asked participants to discuss, confirm, and clarify what they meant from their specific answers. I also engaged in peer debriefing.

Peer Debriefing. *Peer debriefing* was utilized to ensure consistency in interpretations of general themes (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). Peer debriefing is a test of reliability to ensure that what I interpreted from the data reflects other participant's interpretations as well (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). Peer debriefing consisted of discussing the emergent themes with two other members from the debate community who were not interviewed in the study. Peer debriefing is best done with another member of the debate community, as opposed to a committee member, because an individual who is in the community has a better understanding of how identities are negotiated in that community.

For the purposes of this study, I contacted two individuals in the community to determine if I missed themes and to determine if my interpretation seemed accurate to them. This ensures the emergent themes that I identified are themes that even my informed colleagues feel are consistent with the community culture.

CHAPTER IV

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Act 4: The Year After the Round that Mattered

I debated another year. I won some rounds and lost others—none as memorable as the round against Sharmi and Emily. I was the top ranked woman in the country. Emily debated with another Berkeley student and I saw her around at tournaments. Sharmi left to go to law school in India and began working closely with a Domestic Violence group in her hometown. She came back for my last tournament. She and Emily sat in the back of the room to watch me debate. I was the last woman in competition, and the only woman participating in the round (including judges and debaters) in both semi-final national rounds. I vaguely remember that round, unlike the round against Sharmi and Emily the year before. The round was a blur because a few hours earlier I had been accused of having “sexual relations” with a judge prior to the round.

Another school accused me of being too close to a judge who had judged my team against their team twice at that tournament. The other team’s coach, went to the NPTE board after finding out that the judge and I had gone to prom together in high school. He assumed that going to prom meant I had sex with the judge. This objection ground the tournament to a halt. The coach’s argument was that the previous relationship with the judge meant that he should not have judged my team. In debate tournaments, if you have been on a team with someone else, debated with that person, or had a romantic or sexual encounter with them, you are suppose to “constrain” that person. In debate terminology, to “constrain” someone means that they are not able to judge you due to perceived bias.

He demanded that the rounds his team had lost previously be given to them as wins because of this “indiscretion.” I remember the moment the objection happened.

I was standing in the back of the amphitheater waiting to flip for topic before the quarterfinal NPTE round. The NPTE director called down my coach. They spoke in the corner. He walked back up, his face not portraying anything, and brought me out into the hall. He asked how well I knew the judge. I replied that I have known him for years (which is very common in debate) and that we went to prom together in 2004. He nodded and told me that the other team’s coach was challenging the rounds. At this moment my stomach turned, if they won their challenge, my debate career would be over—all because of a silly accusation about something that had happened more than seven years ago.

Two hours later I was sitting in front of the NPTE board answering questions. One board member had already removed himself from the proceedings. Another board member was sitting on the side, hiding behind his laptop, looking uncomfortable. He was sitting across from me, arms folded and alternating from looking at me and looking at the director who was speaking. He explained that they were required to investigate this “indiscretion,” but they were not sure as to what the outcome would be. First they wanted to find out some information. They sat me next to my coach. The director turned and looked at me and asked me to “explain myself.” My stomach was in knots, my hands were sweaty, and I was appalled that I was being questioned about this complaint.

The board did not bring in the (male) judge to question him; the blame was placed upon me by the (male) coaches in power. I remembered the round last year during

which Sharmi and Emily discussed gender in debate, and wished for them to be present with me for support. I looked directly at them and said, "Since you must know, I did not have sex or any sexual acts with anyone until I was 19 years old. If that justifies a constraint, then most of the community would be constraining each other, considering activities that happen at after parties." At this point one board member looked up almost apologetically and told me thank you. My coach and I stood up to leave. He stopped, turned to the board and said, "You wonder why people are leaving this activity. It's because of instances like this that place blame on debaters that don't deserve it." His statement made me feel better.

As I left the boardroom people were waiting for me in the hallway. Gina hugged me and told me she was sorry that this was happening to me. Then she told me something that has stayed with me until this day: "We are women in this activity and we need to stick together." Sharmi hugged me and said she was there for me. Gina's statement was true. Regardless of the outcome of the decision (which was in our favor), we were not just a community of debaters but also a much smaller community of women who needed to build networks to sustain and to support each other in a community that seemed to sit back and be complacent with the eradication of women in a competitive debate activity.

I ended my debate career happily and went on to coach. I have worked to create a network to support and to keep young women in an activity that pushes them out. The people in this activity helped to create my identity as a debater, educator, friend, and feminist. These snapshots of my lived experience have shaped the critical gender lens through which I view the world. Gina, my coach, my lab leaders, AJ, Emily, and

Sharmi—they all gave to me of themselves and motivated me to help create a community in which people feel welcome.

This data set provides an overview of the debate community's framing and treatment of gender, as well as implications of the community's discussion and treatment of gender in parliamentary debate. In the following chapter, data collected from all three research questions will be discussed. Research question one examines how women are discussed in the debate community. Research question two reviews how men are discussed in the debate community. Research question three presents themes from a symbolic interactionism perspective. The data set discussion concludes with an analysis at the end of each research question category. Below, current debaters' responses to each research question are categorized and discussed in the context of emergent themes.

Results: Discussing Women and Men in the Parliamentary Debate Community

RQ1: Discussing Women in Debate

Research question one asked what pre-dominant discourses about gender identity did the NPDA debate community discuss in relation to women debaters. Debaters identified several ways in which women debaters were communicated about. Women debaters commonly were discussed in terms of their success in the debate community. The responses were categorized into two themes: a) successful and b) unsuccessful women. Examples from the data extrapolating on the two main themes and four subthemes are discussed below.

Successful Women. Successful women for the purposes of this these are defined as women debaters who travel nationally, are discussed often, and move to late

elimination rounds at debate tournaments. Successful women had three subthemes which explains how women are communicated about: a) tokenism, b) excuses for female success, and c) resiliency.

Tokenism. Tokenism is identified as an attitude that community members possess that says since there are female champions. It also functions to point out women who are successful as an excuse or an explanation against the notion of gender disparity in debate. Specifically, successful women are over-emphasized as a means to compensate for the small number of women in the discipline. Tokenism appeared thirteen times throughout the nineteen interviews. The discussion of tokenism emerged when debaters were asked to identify ways in which successful women were discussed in the debate community. Tokenism was also identified when asked interviewees were asked to identify two or three labels associated with successful women debaters. Debaters either displayed examples of tokenism or identified other debaters in the community as making comments that displayed tokenistic characteristics.

Several examples of tokenism are presented below. Billy, a 21-year-old white male with three years of debate experience, explained how he sees the token debate woman:

Tokenized I think is a good way. There's kind of the, one woman is successful which is really good and we should focus on that and it kind of draws attention from the failure to create a good space for other female competitors. Like, just because one person may have fought through an unfair system doesn't mean that the system is fine. And I think we kind of take that for granted. We create these tokens—nope, the system is fine. We don't need to talk about gender in debate, or race in debate, because this woman did well or this person of color did well.

Here, Billy expresses the belief that the debate community creates token women to illustrate that the system is fine. Successful women become a symbol to the debate community to mask the inequality of women that exists. The tokens are created and only discussed in terms of success, not how hard they worked or what successful women endured to achieve their success. Next Jake, a 21-year-old white male with four years of debate experience, also comments on women in debate being spotlighted or tokenized (Wood, 2012):

I think that if a girl-girl team is successful rather than just being as a good team . . . I think that a lot of people kind of subconsciously view them as a symbol that inclusivity is happening and that it's working right now or that there are no such things as gender boundaries and stuff like that. I guess I would just say spotlighted would be a good word. I think that they have a unique attention drawn to themselves. Specifically, because they're women in debate.

Jake signifies woman-woman debate teams as memorable because successful woman-woman teams shine in the spotlight as something unique and different. Tokens of inclusivity are created to dispel the “myth” that gender disparity exists in parliamentary debate. If a woman has achieved success in debate, then any woman should be able to do it.

Additionally, David, a 20-year-old white male with one and a half years of college debate experience also refers to the act of tokenizing women, by putting them on a pedestal:

Admittedly it's a tokenizing thing. We tokenize successful female debaters and this is a pedestal but different female debaters act differently in situations they don't all have the same skills sets.

Above, David recounts the tendency of the debate community to put successful women debaters on a higher platform for their success. Tokenizing successful women treats them

all as the same, assuming their experience and performance were identical to achieve success in the debate community, ignoring the various narratives that women experience to achieve success and, more importantly, that all women can achieve success if they mimic the actions seen by successful women. In the final example, Brianna, a 22-year-old white female with four years of college debate experience, explains how women who are good debaters are applauded especially for their successes, like it is a surprise. She said:

I think that more and more are being applauded in debate and that part is awesome but it is taken with a sense of exceptional. Like, “Oh my goodness this women did go great in debate”—the special few that are female and excel at debate. It’s wonderful that the recognition occurs, but it shouldn’t be so surprising that women place at the top 10 in the NPTE.

Here Brianna specifies assumptions of the community that women are not supposed to be successful. So when a woman is successful, special attention is attributed to their achievements. Therefore, successful women are not the norm; they are exceptions to the rule or “tokens.”

In addition to data revealing that women are tokenized in debate, interviewees also explained that individuals make excuses for female debaters’ successes.

Excuses for Female Success. The theme excuses for female success occurred when debaters offered alternative reasons for female success, rather than attributing it to her debate skills. For example, instead of just congratulating women for their success, debaters may often offer other reasons that they were successful as a way to discount the success they experienced in the community. Thus, women debaters are characterized as successful, but with caveats. Even if she wins the debate round, the success is more so

attributed to her male partner, a stroke of luck, bad judges, over reliance on pre-prepared arguments (known as “blocks,” or her great debate coaches. Data revealed that debaters made excuses for female success. This subtheme appeared sixteen times during the interviews conducted for this thesis. This response was often given when debaters were asked how were successful women discussed in the debate community.

Examples from interviews illustrate this subtheme below. Andrew, a 22-year-old white male with five years of college debate experience, identifies instances where a woman debater does not get full credit for a win. Andrew offered alternative excuses for her success:

A lot of times, and this is just thinking off the top of my head, with one team in particular, they say that “She’s good but oh she just reads her block and then the PMR saves the rounds,” PMR being the male debate partner. I think we unfortunately kind of like . . . in male-female relationships I feel like the female doesn’t necessarily get as much respect as the male. You know, I can think of another example with another team where there is a male-female partnership. I have heard multiple times throughout the community people ask the male partner, “Oh why are you debating with this [female] partner” and they respond with, “Oh, that’s just what the coach wanted.” I think when we do see successful male and female teams and default that the male is the stronger partner.

In his response, Andrew isolates several alternate causalities that the debate community highlights as reasons for a female’s success in debate. Andrew explains the debate community readily gives credit for women’s success to anyone but them, signifying that successful women are not the norm but a surprising event that demands explanation. Moreover, Jon, a 20-year-old white male with one and a half years of college debate experience, provides a specific example of Andrew’s observations. Jon talked about a particular female national debate champion whose success was credited primarily to her male debate partner:

Lily was faster and more technical, she was better at coming up with things. She was more responsive to arguments. And even just watching that debate round. Jake was really really good, especially in his last speech. But holy crap none of that would have been possible without Lily and I just I heard people from School M and people from School N uh and people from School O just saying, “Like yeah, Albert was a far superior debater to Lily.” I don’t agree with that at all. That’s the general consensus among the community. A lot of times, and especially in that instance, that female debaters are not as superior to their male partners or what not.

Jon recalls specific instances at the last national tournament where debate community members attributed the female national champions success to her debate partner. Jon’s remarks speak about how, according to others within the community, it is impossible for Lily to be considered the superior debater in this instance because she could not be considered good outside the context of her partnership with Albert because women are not successful in debate without the help of someone. Men, on the other hand, are successful debaters on their own.

Finally, Molly, a 21-year-old white female with four years of college debate experience, isolates how parliamentary debaters characterize women’s success as a fluke or because of their appearance:

I have only debated with like men like at the like upper level and that they’re always regarded as the better debate partner or the more dominant and more powerful like they have more control and like regarded as the more talented person by like coaches or like other people in the debate community . . . Maybe as a fluke. I feel like sometimes they disregard it’s like legitimacy or something. I feel like also one of the comments my sister once got was like from when they want a controversial round against a successful male team—“maybe if I unbuttoned my shirt too.” I guess maybe they just aren’t accepted as much. Illegitimate is maybe the word I would use.

Molly agrees that a female debater’s success is attributed to alternate causalities. The debate community explains a female debater’s success through sexual attraction as

opposed to accepting the win as legitimate against a male-male debate team. Viewing a woman as only being more successful than her male counterpart when she uses her sexuality as a means of winning a debate round, a woman debater then is deemed successful only if she is attractive enough to distract the judges from her arguments.

In addition to offering excuses for female success and tokenizing successful women, the debate community also discusses women debaters as being resiliency when compared to other debaters.

Resilient. For a woman to be successful in the debate community she has to achieve many things. For example, she must be better than a male debater and does not win based upon her argumentation style alone. She has to ignore insults. She cannot respond emotionally when she is called a bitch. She also has to endure a community with hostile masculine undertones. And she has to be conscious of how the judges perceive her—even when she is criticized more than male debaters. In reality, she has to be resilient. Throughout interviews, the need to be resilient in the face of debate community challenges appeared 18 times. The following interview examples elucidate this theme.

Billy, a 21-year-old white male with three years of debate experience, explains that women need to ignore the insult of being called a “bitch,” that they should show no emotion, and that they should continue debating amidst insults.

You have to be okay being called a bitch and continue competing, because publically being offended by that is just going to make you be perceived even worse and there’s no way to get around that as it is now. They just accept that it’s happen and move on which is unfortunate.

Billy explains that successful debate women will often be called a bitch.

Emotional displays by women debaters re-entrench the stereotype of women being

emotional. For a woman to be successful in debate she has to hide her offense of name calling in public because that is not the place to have emotions. Billy illustrates that emotional displays by women should be kept in the private sphere, and not exist in the public sphere. Successful women have to be resilient and cannot take offense to rude comments to be considered successful.

In addition to Billy commenting on women needing to have thick skin, Carli, a 19-year-old white female with one year of college debate experience, explains that successful women in debate need to have strong personalities to ignore insults as well:

I think they [successful women] just have really strong personalities that just allow them to ignore things like that. A lot of it has to do with how coaches treat women in debate. If they treat them as equals. Or if they treat them just like they treat male debaters with these misogynistic attitudes.

Carli highlights that many insults of successful women may originate with coaches.

Coaches are responsible for setting the tone of the team in a position of leadership.

Coaches have a responsibility to consciously create an atmosphere that does not endorse misogynistic attitudes.

In addition to resiliently ignoring insults, women are evaluated differently than men and must be determined to succeed regardless of the lack of preferential treatment.

Jake, a 21-year-old white male with four years of debate experience, discloses that while his experience as a male debater means he is only evaluated on the quality of his argument, that this same guideline is not true for women debaters:

Um, I would say that one it goes straight to the quality of my argument. Whenever I say something they don't evaluate how I said it or how aggressively I said it—they evaluate the content. And that's the ideal version of what you should be judged for the most part. I mean, there are always exceptions to all these rules but I feel like whenever judges evaluate a lot of female arguments, they evaluate how they said it before they evaluate the actual content of the argument. There's

an extra process to prioritizing impacts and arguments in rounds for females in round than most male debaters.

Here Jake indicates that women are evaluated first on the visible and then on the content of their argument quality. Men are given preferential treatment in debate since they do not have to be concerned with the ways in which their gender impacts argument quality the community assumes they are correct until proven wrong. Women are assumed to only exist in the community first for aesthetics instead of their mind, thus a judge evaluates aesthetics first for women and not for men.

Finally, not only do women have to ignore insults regardless of who delivers them, develop thick skin, and debate without preferential gender treatment, they often have to overcompensate for patriarchal constructions in the debate community. Sara, a 20-year-old white female with two years of college debate experience, explains:

I think women in debate have to overcompensate in a lot of areas—twice as much to get that type of credibility in the community. They just have to be better than boys to be considered equals. It's interesting to me to think about women and like the way different teams will be perceived.

Sara describes for women to be considered equal or as good as men in debate, they actually have to be better debaters than men. Credibility in the community is assumed to be given to men, the norm is for successful men to develop credible arguments. However, for the community to move past the assumption that a woman is neither credible nor intelligent in her argumentation, she has to perform better than any other man. Women are implicitly compared to men in the debate community, however the comparison is skewed in terms of men being the default successful debater and women being the default

unsuccessful debater. Women's arguments need to be better than any man's to rupture those community assumptions.

Analytical Summary

The main theme successful women, had three subthemes which explain how women are communicated about in the debate community: a) tokenism, b) excuses for female success, and c) resilience. Below, each of the subthemes is analyzed theoretically utilizing a critical gender lens and a symbolic interactionist perspective.

Tokenism. Debaters discussed successful women as tokenized in the debate community. Debaters could point to women who were successful in debate and use it as a reason or an excuse that the community did not have a gender disparity between men and women debaters. Symbolic interactionism's first core principle is that people in a community tailor their actions toward one another based upon the meaning and symbols associated with that person's identity (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). Within the debate community, to tokenize successful women is to applaud their success while simultaneously not expecting them to succeed. Brianna illustrates this in her remark regarding a heavy emphasis surrounding successful women, creating unsuccessful women as the norm for the debate community.

Also, when successful women debaters are tokenized, they become a symbol for the debate community. Debaters interviewed indicate that since successful women exist within the community, debate is not an exclusionary activity. Billy contends that debaters put successful women on a pedestal to distract people from the exclusionary atmosphere created for women in the debate community. His is an example of the second core

principle of symbolic interactionism—that meaning arises from social interactions (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). People discuss the symbols of successful women, which create a false sense of inclusion for the debate community.

Employing a critical gender lens would problematize the static construction of women as a tokenized symbol (DeFrancisco & Palczewski, 2007). Women, as a tokenized tool, are used to support a dominant patriarchal structure of the parliamentary debate community. Successful women are not just discussed, as tokens but debaters in the community often offer excuses for women's success, discussed in the following section.

Excuses for Women's Success. People in the debate community claim, that the community is unwilling to accept women's debate success on its face, using alternative explanations or caveats for their success. First, debaters offer alternative explanations such as sexual attraction as a reason for why a judge voted for women, thus presenting woman as a sexualized object. While this theme is discussed in more depth later on in this chapter, it is also relevant here as well. A symbol of a sexualized object serves to delegitimize the women's debate arguments and shifts attention to her appearance. The implication of this is explained with core principle one that the way people act toward one another is based upon community meaning (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). Equating a woman debater as a sexual object, and her sexualized body as an explanation of her success, ignores her identity in the community as anything other than her appearance.

Another problematic symbolic construction presents regarding excuses for women's success is that women never are active participants in their success. While the debate community creates meaning via discussions of women's success as being

attributed to other various factors, this moves a woman debater from taking an active role in her own success to being a passive bystander that is along for a ride. Andrew states that a male debater was given the acknowledgement for a success, while the female debater merely was carried to the “finish line.” Member checks confirm that the nature of debate attributes success to one partner over another. It is possible that women passively are more successful because there are fewer women in the activity. However, data discussed in this theme reveals that men debaters are credited more often for success than women. Data presented in the next section illustrate that men’s argumentation style is influential to their success, as their aggressiveness and masculinity are celebrated. Thus, it is impossible to consider the winner without considering the roles that their gender identities and performances played in the victory.

The last symbol predominately used when describing successful women as resilient. This theme is discussed below.

Resiliency. Successful women could not focus merely on arguments used to win debate rounds as interviewees indicated men were able to do. Instead, successful women, have to ignore insults regarding their gender performance in debate rounds in addition to being superior debaters than their male counterparts. According to symbolic interactionism, the thematic symbol of resilient successful women puts women behind in the game of debate according to the interview data. In order to win debate rounds a successful woman debater has to handle multiple different interpretations of themselves, as well as their success, before they are given any form of acknowledgement for their success. According to core principle one of symbolic interactionism that humans act

towards people based upon community-constructed meanings, this creates an unfair advantage for men (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969).

Women are forced to focus on more than just debate arguments to be considered successful, their success is encumbered by their conscious gender performances, ignoring of insults, and having to be better than male debaters to be considered equal. This construction of having to be better than a male debater is problematic in debate because judges are the ones who decide debate rounds. Women are perceived to be less able to be successful in debate than men. Thus, before they are granted success the community forces women's gender identities to match the debate community's construction of a successful woman.

Research question one examined the ways in which women's gender identity were implicated by the predominant discourses in the debate community. In addition to the main theme, successful women, gender identities also were constructed through the discussion of unsuccessful women.

Unsuccessful Women

Unsuccessful women possessed certain characteristics and were discussed in a very different fashion from successful women. Unsuccessful women are defined as women who do not travel nationally, do not have very many wins, or who are new to parliamentary debate. Unsuccessful women were discussed in four subthemes: a) they are dumb, b) waste of time, c) sexualized for male consumption, and d) invisible.

They are Dumb. Community members view a lack of success by women debaters as a direct indication of their intelligence level as opposed to a lack of coaching or debate

skills. Oftentimes debaters denote male debaters as having potential or they are just young, whereas unsuccessful women were viewed as being too stupid to be able to comprehend issues pertinent debate. The responses for this question often were shared when asked what labels or characteristics one would say the community associates with unsuccessful women or how unsuccessful women were talked about in the debate community. Throughout the nineteen interviews, this subtheme appeared eight times. More often, the observation of unsuccessful women came from male debaters when discussing how other people talked about unsuccessful women. For instance, Jon, a 20-year-old white male with one and a half years of college debate experience, elucidates that debate community participants treat unsuccessful women as the worst people in the community:

Awful. I think they are the ... they are just viewed as the worst, dumbest people and even if some times they are not as intelligent as other people. It's not correct to assume that like they are worse than males. For instance, Stacey who maybe isn't the best debater or Sally maybe isn't the best debater—those names stand out to people as stupid, dumb, girl debaters.

In the above remark, Jon attests that unsuccessful women debaters are treated worse than unsuccessful men debaters. The default assumption by the debate community is that unsuccessful women are less intelligent than unsuccessful men and are treated accordingly. Unsuccessful women become known for not having the intelligence to debate. Jon references them as “dumb girl debaters,” not even calling them women but just young stupid girls. Secondly, Abby, a 22 year-old white female with four and a half years of college debate experience, explains that young unsuccessful women debaters are called dumb; their success is framed as an issue of intelligence:

Dumb is applied to young female debaters more than male debaters who are just called young. I think you know that ends up being a reflection of a women's intelligence probably more than it should be.

Abby compares unsuccessful women debaters' label of stupid to unsuccessful men debaters' label of young. The debate community correlates losses to intelligence for women creating a double standard. When males lose it becomes a learning experience. Women lose because they do not fit the stereotype for debate, and are not pretty enough to distract judges, as discussed in the previous section. When asked to describe the community's interpretation of unsuccessful women, Carli, a 19-year-old white female with one year of college debate experience, discussed a woman's intelligence level:

Stupid, idiotic no way that they will be every to measure up to like really successful debaters. I would say people that are really successful in the debate community treat people who aren't like they are smaller schools, who can't really compete. Women from there are like really conservative, there's no way that their school . . . that they'd be intelligent enough to do this kind of debate.

Carli explains that women who are unsuccessful are considered not intelligent enough to be in the parliamentary debate community. Unsuccessful women are assumed to never be able to succeed in debate; the community treats unsuccessful women in this manner. Arguably this creates a self-fulfilling prophecy; the debate community treats unsuccessful women as if they are too dumb to debate, which means no time is spent developing their debate skills. Unsuccessful women are also referred to as being a waste of time in addition to being described as "dumb."

Waste of Time. Women debaters are discussed as being a waste of time, being blamed because they are not focused. The community attributed their lack of success as indicative of a debater that should not be cultivated or coached and instead ignored.

Debaters shared that male debaters were considered to have potential, while women debaters were viewed as drain on resources and a waste of time. This subtheme was identified in seven interviews with males and females. This response occurred most often when interviewees were asked to characterize how unsuccessful women debaters were discussed in the parliamentary debate community. Below are examples from interviews that discuss this theme in greater detail.

Billy, a 21-year-old white male with three years of college debate experience, describes people in the community criticize women's willingness to participate in an activity in an activity in which they are unsuccessful:

Unsuccessful women get the "Why are you doing an activity if you're not going to be your best. You should work harder. Why isn't it your top priority?"

Billy illustrates women debaters being criticized for not being focused on debate, something that is not reciprocal for men debaters, as Billy recalls later on in his interview. As discussed above, women being unsuccessful in debate are the norm, yet when unsuccessful women fulfill the community norm they are then punished and criticized for it creating a double standard impossible to fill. Either, unsuccessful women are unsuccessful and then the community attacks them for it, or unsuccessful women try and do well at debate then those successes would be attributed to people other than themselves. In addition, Chris, a 24-year-old African-American male with five years of debate experience, explains that people assume if women are unsuccessful within debate, it is because they are more concerned with their appearance:

If a (debate) woman isn't smart (it's) probably . . . because she spends more time—or if a woman isn't doing well in an academic something—it's because she spends more time putting on makeup than reading a book. I think that those

normal social stereotypes still bleed into debate, even if debate is an advance[d] (sic) social activity.

Chris explains that debate is not immune to gender stereotypes within United States culture. Specifically, the debate community reinforces the binary assumption that women should focus only on debate and be intelligent and successful, or they are unsuccessful because they are more concerned with their appearance. This highlights the gender requirement that woman should engage in *effortless perfection* (Dube, 2004; Wood, 2012). They should look good, be pretty, and presentable. As women debaters, they should debate well, be intelligent, as well as effortlessly perfect.

Furthermore, David, a 20-year-old white male with one and a half years of college debate experience, clarifies that when unsuccessful, unintelligent debate women are talked about, it is in a condescending manner or seen as a joke:

That's just the problem if we ever do talk about unsuccessful women [it] is normally in a condescending or joking manner. This happens for most debaters, but specifically when we speak about women—we talk about the way they dress and if they meet social norms. Probably the number one word is jokes. They're often seen as jokes.

David suggests that unsuccessful women debaters are not taken seriously. The debate community creates specific assumptions of what an unsuccessful woman debater should look and act like. Regardless of the validity of her performance the debate community does not view unsuccessful women as serious debaters.

In addition, unsuccessful women were perceived as being unsuccessful because of their sexual performances. They were sexualized for men's consumption as an explanation for their lack of success.

Sexualized for Men's Consumption. This specific theme associates a lack of success as being overlooked and replaced by a discussion about their appearance. Unsuccessful women debaters do not win because they are sexualized for men's consumption. Often times when unsuccessful women are discussed, their looks are cited as their attempt to compensate for their lack of intelligence as a successful debater. Debaters employed the term slut and their lack of respect in the community when discussing how unsuccessful women debaters were treated and discussed in the debate community. The subtheme, sexualized for male consumption, was identified nine times throughout the interviews conducted. Examples from the data set follow to illustrate this theme.

First, Jon, a 20-year-old white male with one and a half years of college debate experience, recalls a moment at the season opener where a judge preys on the insecurities of an unsuccessful woman debater:

They [the community] like[s] to take advantage of those female debaters that are not very good. I remember in particular, what's his name Bryan, coming up to me and saying, Jake was just talking to Stacey and she apparently did really badly in a debate round. And "Jake said it's okay, I'll make you feel better." And they ran off. They maybe had sex or I don't fucking know. Whenever there is insecurity with bad (female) debaters, a lot of dudes try to rush in and be like "I'll take care of you." And the women get a stigma attached to them because they sleep with a dude. It's . . . sad.

Jon explains that sleeping with men after a bad debate round is not an isolated instance. Coaches and male debaters prey upon insecurities that unsuccessful women debaters have. Ironically, the insecurities an unsuccessful woman debater possesses may be due to the community's symbol of her as an unsuccessful debater. This creates a never-ending cycle, women are stigmatized for sleeping with men in the community, that stigmatization

erodes her debate credibility further condemning her roles to be that of only a sexual performance.

In a similar vein, even though men initiate sex with unsuccessful women like Jon discussed above, women are less respected by male debaters if they have frequent sex with men after losing. This puts unsuccessful women in a difficult position; they sleep with men to feel better about losing, but that then causes them to lose respect throughout the community. For example, Molly, a 21-year-old white female with four years of college debate experience, shares that females are often portrayed as “loose floozies” (according to a male coach that was used to member check) for engaging in this activity:

When I think of unsuccessful female debaters I think of like Stacey or like Sally. Both of which are very . . . loose and don't command some sort of respect. But I think that goes down to gender issues too right? Because if a guy sleeps around he's not viewed that way, but at the same time I don't know if how they're (men) viewed is based upon their debate performance. So like . . . how easy they are sexually . . . probably also relates as to how men are viewed because they like sleep around as well.

Molly discusses specific unsuccessful women in the community lacking respect.

Interestingly, the debate community associates a lack of respect of unsuccessful women to their sexual performances as opposed to debate performances; however, this is a phenomenon that the debate community has created and reinforced. The debate community creates specific symbols of visual performances being preferred over mind for unsuccessful women and then people assume that the loss of respect occurs from those sexual performances. That premise assumes unsuccessful women held respect in the community to begin with, data reveals, they do not. Women are disciplined to engage

in sexual performances to be accepted in the debate community (aesthetics over content) and then criticized for it—a situation almost impossible for unsuccessful women to win.

Similarly, Abby, a 22 year-old white female with four and a half years of college debate experience, recalls the double standard associated with unsuccessful women and their promiscuity:

There was a young woman on my team who kind of was kind of a very sexually open person. She was frequently kind of dissected by the community for being that way. And um topped like that was really the only thing that was discussed. Not her attempts to learn debate, not to help her as a debater. The discussion of her, with a lot of debaters, was defined by her sexuality.

Abby recalls an example where a woman's sexual history and her partners were more important to the debate community than the woman's attempts to become a better debater. The debate community creates a norm for unsuccessful women as to only be recognized for sexual performances; their debate skills are irrelevant to the debate community because they are not considered credible in debate only in sexual performances. Their relevancy in the debate community is measured directly by their frequency of sexual acts.

After discussing how unsuccessful women debaters are sexualized for male consumption, I discuss the last theme, which positions unsuccessful women as invisible.

Invisible. One of the more common statements is that unsuccessful women are irrelevant, they do not matter, they are not regarded as important in the debate community for their debate skills, they are simply invisible. Out of the 19 total interviews, there were 12 examples of this theme. This theme emerged when debaters were asked to describe how debate community members discussed unsuccessful women in debate. When discussing unsuccessful women debaters, data revealed unsuccessful women's debate

skills are simply not discussed—they do not exist. In the instances unsuccessful women were talked about, conversations were pejorative and characterized unsuccessful women in terms of the frequency of their sexual performances. .

Interviewees could not recall instances where unsuccessful women's debate skills were brought up in conversations. For the most part, unsuccessful women were invisible. In terms of frequency, unsuccessful women rarely were discussed during the 19 interviews, other than when sexually objectified. The most common responses positioned unsuccessful women as forgettable, unknown, and unacknowledged. For instance, Jake, a 21-year-old white male with four years of debate experience, explains the debate community discusses unsuccessful women saying, "unsuccessful women are forgettable, like honestly . . ." Additionally, Samantha, a 20-year-old white female with three years of college debate experience, recalls that while at nationals—the largest tournament of the year—unsuccessful women debaters are not discussed by the community. She explains that success grants debaters exposure and friends that a lack of success excludes them from:

I don't know. I just feel like they aren't really known either. People don't know who they are. They just aren't talked about. People at nationals . . . I didn't even like know who they were because they weren't breaking [winning] and stuff.

Samantha explains that unsuccessful women simply are not talked about. Unsuccessful women are not relevant in the debate community in terms of their success. The debate community determines an individual's worth based upon their success, which creates a paradoxical situation. Unsuccessful women are suppose to strive to be better but not get better (as discussed above), and at the same time can either be attractive and relevant

through sexual actions, but them condemned for those. This creates a situation where unsuccessful women can never belong in the debate community solely for their debate skills. Finally, Kathy, a 22-year-old white female with 4 years of college debate experience, re-emphasizes that unsuccessful women are not recognized and actively are excluded from the community:

I think the bigger problems are not getting recognition at all. There is a general lack of acknowledgement about women debaters. I think the bigger problem is that they are not being recognized at all. I think as a whole of the community that we should be more inclusive of middle and bottom tier of unsuccessful women debaters.

Kathy isolates the problem as the fact that unsuccessful women debaters are not recognized; instead, they are excluded from the debate community. The debate community determines someone's significance, to the community, by their success women are not recognized which means they are insignificant to the debate community in terms of debate skills. This determination of significance existing in debate skills also elucidates the tensions described in this theme between women being considered invisible (for debate skills) and women only being valued for consumption of males in the debate community.

The following section will discuss the themes of unsuccessful women in debate in context of the theories applied to this thesis.

Analytical Summary

The second main theme, unsuccessful women, has four subthemes: a) they are dumb, b) waste of time, c) sexualized for male consumption, and d) invisible. These

themes are further explained using symbolic interactionism and a critical gender lens below.

They are dumb. Unsuccessful women are spoken about as dumb. While unsuccessful men's lack of debate success is viewed in context of them having potential, unsuccessful women are characterized as lacking intelligence. This symbol of unsuccessful women are dumb has several problematic implications according to symbolic interactionism.

First, according to SI core principle one, people's actions are characterized in terms of symbols applied to that person's identity (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). Unsuccessful women are talked about as being dumb, which influences debate community members to then treat them as dumb. For example, an unsuccessful woman debater who is considered to be too dumb to debate, according to Billy's explanation above, does not receive the same attention and coaching as an unsuccessful man would. The unsuccessful male has potential in the debate round; the unsuccessful woman has potential for sex. This serves as an explanation to the study conducted in policy debate by Matz and Brusckke (2006), which indicates that women leave the activity before they become successful in policy debate, because they do not receive the necessary instruction to improve. Moreover, Stepp's (2009) study concluded that female debaters experienced high rates of sexual harassment, which eventually influenced their decision to stop debating. Combined with Stepp (2009) and Matz and Brusckke's (2006) results, my findings suggest a possible explanation as to why women debaters leave the activity and the parliamentary debate community,

The second problematic implication of treating unsuccessful women as dumb is explained through the looking glass self. According to Mead (1934), the looking glass self is your reflection implicated by the creation of meaning, which group members associate with your identity. In the debate community, the looking glass self emerges when an individual internalizes the symbols, labels, names that a particular community ascribes to them. When unsuccessful women are discussed as dumb, they come to believe they are unintelligent and should not compete in parliamentary debate. It is likely that the debate community perceives success in debate being seen as a reflection of your intelligence. Thus, successful women debaters are intelligent enough to debate so the community does not have to focus on their sexuality.

Next, I discuss symbolic interactionism in context of unsuccessful women being considered a waste of time.

Waste of time. Unsuccessful women are considered to be a waste of time within the parliamentary debate community. They are discussed as having their focus elsewhere, mainly on their appearance. The assumption that unsuccessful women are concerned with other things and are therefore a waste of time. According to Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969), meaning arises from social interaction. One interviewee, Chris, indicated earlier that women are criticized for being unsuccessful. Women are concerned with looks and are unsuccessful in debate, or they are not concerned with their looks and are therefore successful in debate. This dichotomy forces a certain level of tension onto a woman's identity. Either the woman can be a successful debater, but then she is not suppose to be

concerned with “girly” topics such as her appearance, or she is an unsuccessful debater and then she must use her appearance to compensate.

Andrew indicates that unsuccessful women become jokes to other debaters. This creates a self-fulfilling prophecy according to core principles one and two of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). When the community treats women as jokes or a waste of time, unsuccessful women come to embody the symbol, being a waste of time, because symbols arise from social interaction (core principle two of SI).

Unsuccessful women are not worthy of coaching or of a judge’s extensive comments, both of which would help them debate better and bridge the gap between their identity as unsuccessful women debaters into successful women debaters. If they are not successful, they are hindered by the symbols applied to their un-success. These symbols essentially hinder or block their ability to grow into successful female debaters.

Finally, Billy indicates that not only are unsuccessful women viewed at as a waste of time they are also reproached for their lack of focus. Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969) indicate that naming of symbols in a community implicates a person’s self-perception. Thus, the condemnation of debate women has a negative impact on their self-identity. When unsuccessful women debaters are told they are dumb and a waste of time, that discourse erodes positive images of themselves as debaters in the “looking glass self” (Mead, 1934). Thus, the unsuccessful female debaters may internalize the “unsuccessful, dumb, waste of time” symbols the larger community ascribed to them hinder unsuccessful female debater’s confidence necessary to become a successful woman debater, as discussed in the previous section.

Sexualized for Men's Consumption. In addition to being categorized as dumb, a waste of time, and invisible, unsuccessful women debaters are also sexualized for men's consumption. Unsuccessful women are talked about in terms of their sexuality. While this theme is discussed in relation to women in the overall debate community, there was a specific "slutty" discourse associated with unsuccessful women. For example, Jon indicated that successful male debaters and male judges literally prey on unsuccessful women who are insecure about their debating ability. When a woman's mind is not sufficient (she loses the round), she is relegated to the body, and the man interacts with her as a body since she cannot truly engage in an activity of the mind. These interactions forces women to either perform bodily (sex) or verbally (debate) but they are not allowed to perform both. The result, however, is that it is considered to be average behavior for the man, while the sexual performance of the unsuccessful woman is critiqued.

This specific portrayal of women as sexualized for male consumption is unique to unsuccessful women as opposed to women overall, because successful debate women do not sleep around. If they do engage in frequent sexual acts, because they are successful, it is insignificant. For example, Molly explained that unsuccessful women do not hold respect in the community, which she associates with their sleeping around. When compared to successful women who have the respect of the community because they win debate rounds, the male community members disregard their sexual performances, and focus on discourse about successful women's debate skills. Successful women debaters become symbols of achievement. Unsuccessful women symbolize persons needing the sexual comfort from male debaters and male judges. From an SI lens, Mead (1934) and

Blumer (1969) would refer to construction as allowing meaning to dictate one's interactions. The meaning held about women has implications in the larger debate community.

From a critical gender lens, the debate community punishes unsuccessful women who perform their sexuality, by labeling them as “sluts,” sexualizing them for male consumption. This is illustrated as successful women compensate for masculine dominated discourse by performing masculinity (they can engage in sexual performances with partners and are not punished), whereas unsuccessful women do not have an acceptable gender performance; they cannot win rounds and are, therefore, feminine and weak—people with whom to have sexual relations, not worthy of respect, as Molly explained above. Since unsuccessful women are unable to perform via debate, they perform via sexual performances. Unsuccessful women are forced into a passive role, and are there to be consumed by the male population. Traditionally, passivity is an attributed feminine characteristic. Thus, as SI explains, the community's focus on sexual performance informs how women may begin to view themselves.

If meaning dictates how people interact with one another, per core principle one, that means this symbol of unsuccessful women as sexualized for male consumption frames the way they are interacted with in the debate community. The symbol of “slut” for unsuccessful women frames the interaction that Jon recalled previously. Men in the community are able to prey on women because of the community's overall focus on their sexual performance instead of their debate performance. Moreover, the focus on unsuccessful women's sexual performance over their debate performance creates a self-

fulfilling prophecy where women's identities are framed by those interactions. Their identity is no longer a debater in the community but as sexualized for male consumption available for people to prey on.

Invisible. Finally, in the following section I employ SI and a critical gender lens to discuss the ways in which women become invisible. Interview data revealed that unsuccessful women were ignored in terms of debate, not talked about amongst people in the debate community. For example, Kathy recalled how unsuccessful women are not recognized or ever discussed; the debate community pays so much attention to the successful women debaters that the lower level women debaters never get recognized. Instead, these women actively are excluded from the debate community.

In terms of symbolic interactionism, this invisible sub-theme is the most problematic because they are rendered meaningless. A debate community generates meaning and values related to their debate community from social interactions amongst each other. Unsuccessful women are rendered meaningless by conversations in the debate community because social interactions do not include discussions of unsuccessful women. If meaning is created from interactions with other people in the specific community, a lack of interaction or conversation about a specific group generates a lack of meaning, lack of value. Therefore, if unsuccessful women are not discussed in terms of their debate skills, they are even more devalued as they are then left out of the discourse that shapes the parliamentary debate community. Even more problematic is that women, as illustrated by the data, are not seen as worthy of shaping the community. This problematic issue is best understood through a discussion of Blumer's (1969) *generalized*

other. *Generalized other* explains that others' reflections and society's expectations shape the construction of one's identity. This specifically impacts the debate community and aids in the construction of women's debate identity as non-existent—all that is relevant is their sexual identity.

Even more problematic is that when unsuccessful women were discussed it is never in terms of debate instead in terms of men's consumption of their body. From a *generalized other* perspective, unsuccessful women come to represent sexual objects. They may internalize all of the symbols discussed symbols—they are too dumb for debate and they are a waste of time for coaches and judges—all they are good for is sex. As women perform this community expectation, the expectation becomes the equivalent of a one-night stand; unsuccessful women do not need to be remembered, merely present for men debaters to prey on them.

A lack of conversation regarding unsuccessful women's debate skills renders them invisible in terms of debate rounds, which then allows them to internalize that lack of recognition, which then frames their ability to exist in the parliamentary debate community. Mead (1934) indicates that this *looking glass self* is implicated by the naming of self through symbols constructed by the debate community. If the debate community informs the identity and the community has a significant lack of conversation regarding a specific group's actions, then the conversation generated negatively implicates the identity of self. As interviews from 10 participants illustrated, while unsuccessful women were viewed as playthings or trash, they were also not discussed. Unsuccessful women, when discussed were talk about as being attractive. Other than that,

however, they were forgettable. In regards to a critical gender lens, the implication that these conversations are only happening about women debaters instead of men forces us to critically interrogate static gender roles.

RQ2: Discussing Men in Debate

Research question two asked how the parliamentary debate community communicated about a male debater's gender identity. This conversation was not as frequent or as easy to identify as woman's identity. Often male debaters would respond with they had never considered their gender identity to be a determining factor in their debate experience. However, debaters identified several ways that male debaters were communicated about. The theme refers to notions of men and masculinity and the ways in which the debate community communicates about masculine identity. Additionally, four specific sub-themes regarding men in debate emerged: a) male as the norm and easy, b) successful men as godlike, c) success linked to masculinity, and d) unsuccessful men have potential. Examples from interviews are provided below to depict each sub-theme regarding communication about men in debate.

Male as the Norm and Easy. The theme male as the norm and easy is defined as a typical debater who is a white male, whose experience is also seemingly easy and not consciously informed by gender. This theme emerged when male debaters were asked to explain instances where they felt their gender implicated their debate experience. Male debaters often noted that there was not any memorable moment where they performed their gender. Member checks with male debaters confirmed the function of this theme. However, they acknowledged that their male debate identity afforded them privileges in

the debate community. Specifically, males explained they are only expected to argue well because they are the archetype. This response occurred fifteen times throughout the course of nineteen interviews. Below, examples illustrating this theme are shown and discussed.

Billy, a 21-year-old white male with three years of college debate experience, explains that for a man to be successful at debate all he has to do is be good at debate:

I think men in debate . . . are just being good at debate. That's it. I think that's all you have to do as a man is to win debate rounds. At least as a white male in debate it is much easier to just win based on having won. There is never really an up hill battle for men.

Billy explains that for a man to be a successful debater he does not have an uphill battle.

Taken with the larger context of Billy's interview, it is likely that in comparison successful women, debaters have to go above what is expected to receive acknowledgement. The debate community's construction of the typical debater being male means only men are able to achieve the ideal, a judge only evaluating arguments and not taking into account the identity of the person deploying them. However, that ideal is almost impossible for women to achieve, their gender identity is constantly taken into context. Not only do men avoid gender challenges by winning debate rounds, they are also more easily accepted in the debate community. For example, David, a 20-year-old white male with one and a half years of college debate experience, said:

For males it's normal, they go and talk to most people and they don't have to do much work in order to make friends in the community they just have to "be who they are." They're usually charismatic and pretty much very sociable people who will always talk to you and be willing to talk about debate or talk about other things related to debate. Women have to try a lot harder to be sociable . . . That's a much finer line for women to walk than men to walk.

According to Andrew the debate community readily accepts men, and all they have to do is be themselves. The debate community norm is a man debater; social interactions with men in debate are not surprising. For a woman to be accepted in the debate community she has to morph her identity to fit societal norms whereas a man's identity is already those societal norms.

In addition to winning because they are good debaters and being accepted into the community with ease, Will, a 20-year-old white male with three years of college debate experience, recalls never really thinking of how his gender implicates his experience:

It's not something I think about impacting my experience exactly. It's kind of a complex question to answer I'm not sure how to approach it. I think it's easier to be a debater when you're a man. I think that people like you better when you're a guy; I think people think you're funnier when you're a guy. There are just certain things you can say when you're a guy than when you're a girl.

Will explains there is naturalness associated to being a man in debate, the community is somewhere where men belong however that does not exist for women. Also, a debater's maleness amplifies sociable qualities; men are allowed to be funny in debate and are more likely to be liked than a woman is. Women have to be concerned with how their gender performance is interpreted by the debate community whereas men do not.

Godlike. Debaters indicated that successful men in the activity were far more numerous than women debaters but there were also several characteristics associated with highly successful male debaters. Participants indicated that successful male debaters were treated extremely well and adored by the general community. Male debaters could do no wrong and would even go so far as to indicate that there is a sense of entitlement associated with these debaters; male debaters are at the top of the social pyramid for the

debate community. These responses were provided when debaters were asked questions about how the community treats successful men. Responses also emerged when interviewees were asked to assign labels or characteristics to successful male debaters. This theme appeared nine times during the course of nineteen interviews. Jake, a 21-year-old white male with four years of debate experience, highlights successful men as being popular and credible:

They don't have to try at all to be popular. It's easy to talk to anyone they want because they get to decide when conversations are initiated or not. Another word I think would probably be . . . say would be believable or credible would be another word. I don't think they have to work as hard to make their arguments sound as credible. It allows basically people to rep out [to vote for the team that's perceived to be the better team, regardless of arguments in the debate round] for them and gives more credence to their arguments.

Jake indicates that successful men in debate are not only popular and more credible, but also the gatekeepers of conversation. The community grants successful men the ability to decide when communication occurs, and the subjects of that communication. This power implicitly given to male debaters carries into debate rounds, where judges assume that male debaters are going to be more credible than female debaters. This credibility may ensure that they stay credible. Also, Andrew, a 21-year-old white male with five years of college debate experience, exposes how successful men are treated almost like gods in the debate community:

I think there are successful men who are looked at as prestigious almost god-like. There are people . . . oh, well—"X person" was so good at running that argument and they know everything about it and what they say is right. What they do is take their opinion on something and treat it as gold.

Andrew above recalls that successful men are credited with knowledge on certain arguments as well as always assumed to be correct. The debate community's assumption

of successful men as being correct dictates then their interactions with judges as well as other debaters. People are discouraged to challenge successful men in and outside of debate rounds because they are almost god-like debaters; they are infallible. Treating successful men as the authority figures on debate knowledge precludes the debate community looking at successful women for similar reasons. Furthermore, Molly, a 21-year-old white female with four years of college debate experience, explains that she feels successful male debaters, in addition to having it easier, being more credible, and being treated as God, also possess a sense of entitlement when it comes to women in the community:

Successful[male] debaters are more likely to be objectifying. I feel like they have a sense of entitlement to the pretty girls.

Molly illustrates successful male debaters feelings of entitlement. Successful male debaters are considered to be the most important social group in the debate community, or at least the most powerful as discussed in previous examples. That level of power suggests that successful men are then entirely to the consumption of women's bodies before anyone else in the debate community.

In the following section the link between success and portrayals of masculinity is explained.

Masculine. The measuring of a male debaters success is linked to their measurement of masculinity. The theme masculine is characterized as a successful male debater who is very strong. However, the community often conflates physical strength with their success in a debate round. For example, male debaters who portray strong masculine characteristics are then expected to do well in the debate activity. If they do

not succeed in creating that performance, they are punished for it. These following responses were provided when interviewees were asked to characterize successful and unsuccessful men in the debate community. Responses also emerged when they were asked to describe what successful debaters look like. This theme was discussed in six out of the nineteen interviews.

David, a 20-year-old white male with one and a half years of college debate experience, explains that a successful man debater is strong with displays of strong masculine characteristics:

Words or labels . . . um, probably one of them is strong debaters. They're often seen as being very efficient, very fast, and very aggressive in rounds. Another one that is probably is having this kind of charisma or leadership. It's the norm.

David creates a link between being “strong” and a successful man debater. He identifies specific characteristics that are considered to be masculine, such as aggression, efficiency, and most importantly leadership (Wood, 2012). In doing so, Andrew creates a masculine archetype of success. In addition, Molly, a 21-year-old white female with four years of college debate experience, explains that the expectation of successful men in debate than creates a dichotomy, with unsuccessful men being viewed as weak:

I think that people expect men to be more successful. So weak or something would apply more to how unsuccessful men work. Maybe there are gendered expectations.

Above, Molly compares discussions between successful men and unsuccessful men.

Archetypes of masculinity as signs of success mean unsuccessful men's masculinity is challenged in debate rounds. Unsuccessful men are considered to be feminine in characteristics because they are unable to fulfill the debate community's assumptions of

how a man in debate should perform. Finally, Max, a 25-year-old Latino male with four years of college debate experience, also echoes Molly's sentiments and explains that it is an expectation for men to be successful in debate:

I think it's [male success] an expectation. Um, it's a sad expectation I think. An example I can give you is just talking about Matt this year. So I believe Matt has been debating since he was in high school. And for a long time now and even before I was a debater in this circuit, he was in like final rounds at nationals of tournaments. We talk about Matt in a way he ought to have success. He ought to be the person who wins this year. He ought to have a championship. We expect that almost. And so I think that a lot of times what we talk about men in debate we give them those attributes (those expectations) for some reason without them ever earning it.

In this quote Max gives a specific example of a successful male debater and explains how the community created expectations for him to be successful—he should win. The community's symbol of masculinity being synonymous with success forces men to perform masculinity in debate rounds to be granted success. Once the community deems someone a successful male debater that symbol sticks with them, and are given all of the benefits of that label. This characterization is in opposition to successful women debaters who have to be resilient to be given a similar social status.

The last section will discuss the how the debate community treats unsuccessful men as having potential, with examples to illustrate this theme.

Unsuccessful Men as Having Potential. While unsuccessful women are blamed for their lack of success and viewed as dumb, unsuccessful men are viewed as the “future of parliamentary debate”; a group to be cultivated and taught. Debaters indicated that instead of demonizing unsuccessful men as the community does to unsuccessful women, unsuccessful men are considered as having potential, but lack the appropriate coaching or

time in the activity. This construction occurs in stark contrast to unsuccessful women. Debaters, when asked how the community labeled or discussed unsuccessful men, highlight this theme. The discussion almost always evolved into a comparison of how unsuccessful men were discussed versus how unsuccessful women were discussed. This theme appeared ten times over the course of the nineteen interviews. Examples from the interviews were chosen and provided below to explicate this theme.

David, a 20-year-old white male with one and a half years of debate experience, explains that unsuccessful men debaters are viewed to have more potential:

We often view them as having a bit more potential. They're often viewed as very smart and very intelligent they just don't have the strategy and the technical stuff down yet. That's just the matter of teaching them that and can bring them in the major fold of debate or moving to a better program with a better coaching staff. We always view men as having more potential.

Above, David explains that unsuccessful men are assumed to have the intelligence to be a successful debater, but that they have not been fully coached or developed strategic skills yet. Male debaters are considered to be more successful than women debaters, so when the debate community is faced with an unsuccessful male debater, excuses are offered for why they have not become a successful debater yet. In contrast to the community's excuses for female success the community offers excuses for men's lack of success. Both are ways for the community to compensate for roles that deviate from assumed community gender roles. In fact, Jon, a 20-year-old white male with one and a half years of college debate experience, agrees with David by saying that unsuccessful men in debate are even seen as the future of parliamentary debate:

But, like, it's underrepresented so that when you look at unsuccessful male debaters they are seen as the future of parli. While female debaters get the shaft and what not.

Here, Jon compares unsuccessful men in debate who are the future of parliamentary debate community, but who have not fully developed yet. Unsuccessful men are poised to fulfill the archetype of a male debater to be successful as soon as they get enough coaching and skills development, whereas women's debate development is ignored in lieu of their sexual performances or "shaft." Jon engages in masculine language common to the debate community, referencing women as getting shafted as opposed to other words that could be utilized. Lastly, Abby, a 22 year-old white female with four and a half years of college debate experience, explains that unsuccessful men in debate are given greater latitude with their lack of success and are paid more attention so that they are able to improve:

In general I think they get a little more leeway, particularly when they're young. I don't think there's as much attention given to women, just because there are more successful competitors (men). It's very easy to identify successful male competitors that you can model yourself after and learn from. I think there is a lot more visibility for them as well.

Abby recalls that unsuccessful men are not only given more attention but have more role models present within the community. Unsuccessful men's ability to look at successful men, mimic their actions and have the community endorse these actions is unique.

Unsuccessful women are unable to do the same thing because of the various contradictory discourses associated with a women's identity in the debate community.

Unsuccessful males' ability to look at successful men and, absent of gender identity, perform success represents an ease in which males exist in the community that is not accessible to women debaters.

The following section explains the themes explicated above in context of the SI and critical gender theoretical framework guiding this thesis.

Analytical Summary

Research question two examined how men's gender identities are implicated by predominant discourses in parliamentary debate. The main theme, discussing men in debate, refers to notions of men and masculinity and how the debate community communicates about masculine identity in the parliamentary debate community. Additionally, four specific sub-themes regarding men in debate emerged: a) male as the norm and easy, b) successful men as godlike, c) success linked to masculinity, and finally, d) unsuccessful men have potential. In the following section each of these subthemes are analyzed using a symbolic interactionist perspective and employing a critical gender lens.

Male as the Norm and Easy. This subtheme discusses the ease in which men in debate exist in the debate community. Often male debaters were asked to explain moments where they performed their gender and their answers were most often, "I can't recall a time or I don't know." The ease with which male debaters experienced not having to analyze their gender identity was characteristic of the masculine dominated discourse in the debate community. This also explains how their identity was influenced by specific symbolic naming practices in which the debate community engages. This subtheme also characterizes a typical debater as being male. The data created a "normal" debater as a white male. Using core principle one to explain this subtheme elucidates specific meaning created from social interactions in the debate community. Core principle one states that a person's actions towards one another, in a given community, are dictated by

meanings assigned to that person's identity. David indicated that being a male in debate was easy, it was considered to be normal, something he never had to consciously think about. David's lack of consciousness about his gender identity is an example of what allows men to make friends and communicate easily in the debate community.

Core principle one of SI offers further explanation because there is nothing weird or different about their gender identity; they are considered to be the stereotypical debater, so communication between them and debate community members comes easier. Male debaters easily accepted into the debate community have an implication on the *looking glass self*. The *looking glass-self* is when a member of a community internalizes specific naming practices and meanings from that community. Internalization shapes their self-identity. The community deems the male identity to be the norm, and males are able to communicate with other debaters and succeed in debate rounds because, as Billy explained, for male debaters to be successful all they have to do is be good at debate, which is the ideal in debate, performance and identity should not matter just the arguments in a debate round. However, since the norm is male, male debaters are the only group that is granted this privilege whereas women have to perform in context of their gender identity to achieve success.

Male as norm and easy has a negative implication for women in debate. Blumer (1969) defines the *generalized other* as an identity that forms after a person in a community internalizes that communities values and meanings of their identity. Blumer (1969) also explains that *naming* and symbols applied to a person's identity have implications on the *generalized other*. The debate community constructs male as the only

successful debater, and the ideal typical debater. This explains Billy's observation that men only need to present good arguments. However, in contrast, women debaters have to be resilient to be credited with debate success. It is likely that women debaters' internalization of being told they are not the norm and are not expected to be successful may make it difficult to create an identity in a community that excludes them.

The following section will discuss men as godlike in terms of symbolic interactionism and employ a critical gender lens to analyze this gender role.

Godlike. Throughout the interviews a symbol became apparent of how successful men in debate were treated, they were gold or even godlike according to one interview (Andrew). In a member check discussion, a male coach mentioned that it is equally possible for successful women to be worshiped in a similar fashion. However, people in the community may disagree that this happens more to men than women. People may think successful debaters are admired regardless of gender. It is likely that there is a difference between tokenizing successful women and worshipping successful men. Thus, as data revealed, successful women debaters are discussed as symbols of female inclusion in the community, as a way to mask exclusion of women debaters. Data revealed that participants discussed tokenizing women as far different from the worshipping of successful male debaters. Even if the action of putting successful male and female debaters on a pedestal is the same, the intention is different. Data indicate that women and men are discussed and worshiped differently. Data reveal that successful women are discussed in terms of their gender, whereas successful men are discussed because they are

good debaters. Male debaters are discussed in terms of awe for being good at debate.

Data indicated that male debaters were given special attention.

In terms of men being viewed as godlike, there exists easiness to being male. As discussed before, there is a standard of credibility given to most men that does not exist for successful women. Andrew explains that successful men are given a god-like status and looked at as being the best at certain types of arguments. He went further to explain that men are worshipped for their excellence at debating specific arguments during a debate tournament. For example, if Matt is well known for reading arguments about the Supreme Court in debate rounds, other community members then credit him for that knowledge and treat him as an expert for that knowledge. A woman who deploys the same type of arguments effectively does not have people crediting her for those arguments instead people in the community credit her success to other causes, as discussed in a previous section.

Core principle two explains that meaning arises from social interactions (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). Successful men in debate are given a greater amount of credibility; data revealed their arguments are believed at a higher rate than unsuccessful/successful women and unsuccessful men. The debate community's treatment of successful men as god-like creates a symbol that then dictates future interactions (core principle one of SI). This symbol explains that successful men are treated better than other groups and encouraged in the debate community. Successful male debaters are encouraged by coaching attention, judge's comments and the overall treatment by the debate community. This symbol explains what Molly observed, that successful men possess a sense of

entitlement to women in the community. The debate community treats them as the most significant group, reinforcing their *looking-glass self* (Mead, 1934). The debate community's treatment of successful male debaters creates a meaning that they are better than any other group, as discussed above. This self-image reifies the entitlement to pretty girls that Molly recalled and Jake's recollection of successful men in debate not having to try very hard to be popular or to be accepted by the debate community.

Analyzing gender roles as discussed by DeFrancisco and Palczewski (2006) draws a connection between treating men as godlike and traditional gender roles. Men are encouraged by their success in debate to be active, popular, charismatic, and, as Molly phrased it in her interview, entitled to pretty girls, whereas women are condemned for showing similar characteristics. The next section discusses success as it is linked to masculinity in terms of symbolic interactionism.

Masculine. This subtheme discusses the community's attribution of masculine characteristics to guaranteed success. For example, interviewees often attributed the word strong to a successful male debate, taking their verbal prowess and translating it into a show of physical strength—a decidedly traditional masculine characteristic (Wood, 2012). Molly explains that men are expected to be strong and successful. Men who do not fulfill this expectation are then deemed as weak or feminine. According to core principle two of symbolic interactionism, meaning arises from social interaction (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). That means the debate community creates a symbol of success as an expectation for men in debate, whereas as noted in the previous research question, the expectation for women is to be unsuccessful. The symbol constructed in social interactions throughout

the debate community is that successful debaters possess certain characteristics: aggressive, male, strong, forceful, and entitled to pretty women. The community's act of manifesting this symbol then forces individuals in the community to compensate and to change their communication habits to fit such an expectation. Women who engage in masculine debate performances as a means to compensate for their lack of power are discussed in a future section. Debaters who do not change their identity performance are deemed unsuccessful by the debate community because they do not fit the archetype of a successful debater performance. However, the *naming* of individuals as unsuccessful has very different implications for a man versus a woman. For a man, it merely means he needs to be taught appropriate debate techniques so that he can be brought into the folds of the community. For a woman, it means she is not worthy of the debate community's time.

According to symbolic interactionism's *generalized other* (Blumer, 1969), male debaters internalize the community commentary regarding masculinity and success. Data reveals a link between masculinity and success as well; Max's example of Matt's identity in the community was the best example of this. This internalization negatively affects their identity construction if male debaters do not live up to the community's standard of success. Furthermore, since the symbol of a successful debater is masculine characteristics, women debaters are placed in a double bind. Either they perform masculinity and are successful in the debate community (but then labeled a bitch for their masculine performance) or they are unsuccessful and excluded from the debate

community. In the following section the last theme, unsuccessful men as having potential, will be discussed in the context of symbolic interactionism and a critical gender lens.

Unsuccessful Men as Having Potential. Debaters indicated that unsuccessful men in debate were not condemned or viewed to be dumb but instead viewed as a group of persons who could be cultivated because, as Jon said, they are the future of parliamentary debate. According to symbolic interactionism's core principle one, this would dictate how people treat unsuccessful men in debate because the principle states that actions are understood through communally accepted meanings (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). In comparison, unsuccessful women are told they are dumb and a waste of time, whereas men are told not to worry, that they need only to keep trying harder and they will become successful David explains that unsuccessful or young male debaters are told they are smart and just need to develop debate skills or be given more coaching time. The debate community nurtures unsuccessful men in debate so that they are able to succeed and achieve the community's symbol of masculinity as discussed above. Also, according to core principle two of symbolic interactionism, each time a judge gives special attention to an unsuccessful male debater the judge imparts meaning as to the potential value of the male debater (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). This is supported by Abby's observation that there is attention being given to unsuccessful men as well.

The following section addresses research question three and isolates specific symbols that the debate communities creates to discuss gender identity in the community.

RQ3: Symbolic, Predominant Discourses and the Construction of Gender Identity

The last research question examines the impact that the predominant discourse of gender identity in the parliamentary debate community has on the symbolic construction of gender identity. This research question isolates and examines several symbols and values that exist in predominant discourse of parliamentary debate that directly implicate gender. This research question developed two main themes with two subthemes underneath. The first is aggression in debate with two subthemes: a) good for men: strong men and b) problematic for women: just bitches. The second theme is meanings and symbols ascribed to debate women with two subthemes: a) weak and fragile women and b) sexual objects. Examples from the interviews explicating the two themes and two subthemes are provided and discussed below.

Aggression in Debate. Aggression in debate was a concept discussed throughout every interview. For the purposes of this study, aggression in debate is defined as men's displays of aggression are equated with physical strength and being "strong," whereas women's displays of aggression are characterizes as "bitchy." While it is possible that some male debaters and members of the larger debate community may actually appreciate aggressive women, or women with strong personalities, data reveals that men were praised for this attribute while the ten women interviewed all reported being characterized as bitches for displaying this attribute at one or more points in their debate careers. Aggression in debate has two subthemes: a) good for men: strong men and b) problematic for women: just bitches. The following section provides examples and definitions for aggression being good for men because they are considered strong.

Good for Men: Strong Men. Aggression in debate is considered to be good for men because it portrays a level of strength. Men's displays of aggression are portrayed as persuasive, effective, and a characteristic of a successful debate. This subtheme appeared eleven times over the course of nineteen interviews from both men and women debaters. Interviewees report that aggression is encouraged for men and that the level of aggression men debaters are allowed to display is higher than that of women debaters. This response most often came from participants when asked what characteristics exist for a successful male debater or when asked to identify specific labels or phrases associated with successful men in debate.

Examples to illustrate this theme are provided below. First, Chris, a 24-year-old African-American male with five years of debate experience, explains that the debate community considers men's displays of aggression as male debaters taking control of the situation:

I guess it's like that but sometimes also it's like say they view exceptional men as being in control not only have like their emotions and arguments but also just like being able to control the round and how they want it. Assertive.

Chris describes above that the community expects men perform aggressively in debate rounds. Successful male debaters are expected to exert force over the debate room and maintain control. The debate community creates an archetype of a successful debater, who has to perform masculine characteristics in a debate round to be successful. The debate community constructs successful men as leaders of the community via their aggressive displays. Next, David, a 20-year-old white male with one and a half years of

college debate, explains that his own gender identity, man, means the community is more accepting of his aggressive displays in debate rounds:

It probably means they would be more accepting of me to be really fast or aggressive in debates as opposed to female debaters where a lot of judges think they are catty sometimes.

In the above remark, David compares the acceptance he experienced as a male debater for his aggressive displays to those of a woman debater. The debate community disciplines women debaters who perform aggressively because it does not fit the traditional characteristics that women are suppose to display. However, a men debater's performance as aggressive is a trademark of masculinity. Finally, Aurora, an 18-year-old white female with one year of college debate experience, explains that male debaters are considered to be funny when they perform aggressively or are snarky:

They're usually really snarky. Um, they're funny, they're sarcastic. They're . . . definitely the ability to think on their feet. I think funny is a lot of it. Like most of them are really funny and they also . . . [are] like super snarky, like just watching like a top school there is just an aura of like "I'm better than you." And when they say things it just makes them seem so much smarter. They just have this air about them that is just powerful. So powerful is one. I definitely think that they're powerful. I think that they're funny, they're sarcastic. I think that's the biggest thing. They're really like cutting and sarcastic in the things they say. I feel like that doesn't go over as well if I were to be the same way.

Above, Aurora compares men's displays of aggressive debater to her own attempts. Male debaters aggressive performances are accepted and encouraged by the debate community as symbols of masculinity. The debate community labels aggression and attacks as humorous by men but women are unable to display the same aggressive performances of masculinity. The community's label of aggression by men as humorous is an example of the community rewarding men for appropriate gender performances in debate rounds.

Women's inability to be rewarded for the same performance is an example of the bitch label women debaters are given.

The next section discusses displays of aggression being problematic for women, which is the second subtheme.

Problematic for Women: Just Bitches. This subtheme discusses various ways in which women are punished when they exhibit instances of aggression in the debate community. Women's displays of aggression are deemed inappropriate and women are often called "bitchy." This category appeared multiple times in every single interview conducted, for a total of twenty-five times throughout the nineteen interviews. This subtheme occurred throughout various interview questions. Often the response of women being bitches was either discussed when asked how gender implicates the debate community, what labels are attributed to successful women, or stories about when women themselves were called bitches. Debaters often discussed characterization of women's aggression in comparison to the lenience men were given with regard to aggressive displays of behavior.

Examples for this subtheme are provided here. For example, Billy, a 21-year-old white male with three years of college debate experience, recalls attitudes from the debate as assigning a large stigma to women who are aggressive by calling them a bitch:

I think that there is a pretty big stigma against uh females who often are aggressive in round. I think that there is [sic] kind of this idea. I think that this stereotypical docile woman is kind of entrenched in the way that we think about debate. When women in debate breaks that debate kind of mold there is backlash. Somebody says, "Wow, she's a bitch." I think it hurts speaker points and hurts performance. It can be a deciding factor because debate is a game of perception. If you're perceived of being defensive or maybe too aggressive it can hurt how a judge comes down in a close round. I mean, that's very possible.

Billy notes that a judge in a close round could allow the level of aggression a woman displays to negatively effect the outcome of the round as a form of punishment for that behavior. The debate community disciplines women debaters who perform aggression as a way to control their gender performance. That discipline can manifest in rounds lost, speak points lost or merely the label of bitch. Women are expected to embrace a role of femininity in debate rounds, which creates a level of tension. Either women debaters are feminine and considered to be passive or women are aggressive and cause backlash. Additionally, Carli, a 19-year-old white female with one year of college debate experience, argues that the debate community associates a woman's success with being called a bitch:

Like it seems that if you're good as a woman you get titled as a bitch because if you're aggressive it doesn't go with your identity. If you're a woman you're not suppose to be aggressive, but if you're good in debate you're suppose to be aggressive. Molly has a reputation of being snotty and bratty which isn't necessarily true but it's because she can be aggressive in debate. When you look at guys they are just funny. Like Bill is funny when he does stuff like that.

Here, Carli explains that a woman debater is called a bitch as a way to punish her for being aggressive and for men debaters they are funny. This form of discipline constrains the way women are able to perform their gender identity successfully in debate. This example illustrates the dichotomy in which the debate community views women's identity; either you are a bitch and good at debate or you are not a bitch and an acceptable woman—there is no grey area in terms of identity. Finally, Samantha, a 20-year-old white female with three years of college debate experience, indicates that the label of bitch is applied to women even if they are just as aggressive as a man in the room:

I've learned like there are just a lot of things that go on. I feel like women are too aggressive we're just seen as a bitch or too aggressive. If a guy acts the same way

he's just controlling the room ... The things that women wear are criticized very heavily, girls skirts are too short or too much cleavage showing. Guys aren't criticized like girls are. We have to deal with stuff that guys just don't have to.

Samantha reveals women are criticized heavily for aggressive behavior, and dress and men are not. Men are already the archetype debater, which means their gender performance is not important to the debate community because men already fit the norm. Women debaters' norm is characterized as not aggressive; instead the community disciplines them to fit various perceptions of femininity. The debate community does not have a specific notion of what a woman debater would "look like," thus the tension between various gendered performances.

The following section will employ symbolic interactionism and a critical gender lens to analyze the themes discussed above.

Analytical Summary. This thesis employs symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective to analyze the data sets along with a critical gender lens to problematic normative gender roles uncovered in the data. This analyzes research question three which looks at the creation of symbolic constructions of gender identity. The first theme developed from this research question is analyzing aggression in debate. Aggression in debate is a value that is deployed into two thematic symbols discussed above: a) good for men: strong men and b) bad for women: just bitches. Both subthemes are discussed employing those theoretically perspectives discussed below.

Good for Men: Strong Men. This subtheme addresses that aggressive displays are strong for men; various people in the debate community encourage them. Male debaters are rewarded for aggressive displays whereas women are disciplined. Data indicated that

being labeled bitch or losing debate rounds punished women whereas being called strong or winning debate rounds rewarded men. Symbolic interactionism core principal two: meaning is created from interactions (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). This is exemplified in this subtheme when Billy and Samantha indicate that male debaters are rewarded and encouraged to behave aggressively in debate rounds. Social interactions with various judges and other people in the community reinforce the image that a male debater is allowed to—in fact, should—behave aggressively. Those interactions then implicate the *looking glass self* of men debaters. *Looking glass self* is when a person in a community internalizes meanings based from social interactions (Mead, 1934). The debate community regulates social interactions in a manner that reward male debaters, this morphs the *looking glass* of male debaters to almost force them into aggressive displays so they receive rewards and have success in the community. Finally, meaning generated from social interactions in which men are taught to be aggressive debaters creates a symbol of men performing traditional masculinity and being rewarded for it—the thematic symbol of men as strong for being aggressive. This performance of traditional masculinity supports men’s performances of aggression as means of winning debate rounds, this creates a mandate that successful men perform aggressively and other traditionally masculine characteristics.

Male debaters utilizing aggressive behaviors plays into traditional masculine/feminine characteristics. The community views aggression as primarily masculine activity. Carli indicates that men are encouraged for being masculine, but it is not expected from women. Aggression is a display, considered to be active. Aggression is

also public intimidation. Both definitions are considered to be primarily masculine performances (Wood, 2012). This creation of a masculine norm for male debaters to live up to punishes men debaters who do not fit the stereotype of an aggressive debater. The following section discusses the second subtheme: bad for women: just bitches, using symbolic interactionism and a critical gender lens.

Bad for Women: Just Bitches. Aggression in debate is not a universal value that is considered to be good or bad for everyone. For men, aggressive displays are encouraged; for women, aggressiveness in a debate round is punished by the label of bitch. Punishment is a disciplining of behavior; labeling women bitch conditions women to not be aggressive in debate rounds. Hence, a double bind either women are bitchy, resilient, and successful or are not aggressive and considered to be unsuccessful and meek. One of the more important observations regarding this subtheme is that it was mentioned in every interview administered as part of this research. The overwhelming emphasis of women being labeled as a bitch denotes the prevalence of this subtheme in the debate community. Member checking indicated that this might be the most common subtheme merely because it is discussed so often between debaters in the community. It also may be the most common subtheme because women are being labeled as bitch as a means of controlling their aggressive displays to bring them in line with traditional feminine characteristics, which do not include aggressive displays (Wood, 2012; DeFrancisco & Palczewski 2006).

Specifically, in the context of symbolic interactionism meaning characterizes the way people act towards one another in a given community (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969).

In terms of women being labeled as bitches, characterizing women as such is a way to punish women debaters for being aggressive. Punishment of women debaters as bitches exists in the form of interactions throughout the community. The community has deemed that it is inappropriate for women to be aggressive, so interactions between aggressive women and other debate community members creates a stigma of that aggression. That *naming* of aggressive women as bitches then influences the looking glass-self. Mead (1934) explains that *naming* of individuals identities implicates their looking glass self, or their perception of themselves. In terms of women debaters the naming of them as bitches effectively changes their looking glass self, where aggression is not appropriate. Disciplining of a women's identity conditions them to act in accordance to the debate community's construction of what a woman's performance should be presented as: not bitchy and sexual.

Member checks with a male debate coach were telling. When coaching women, and trying to pull out an aggressive debate performance, he admitted coaching women differently. He expressed how he needs them to be more aggressive to win and encourages this attribute, but the aggression encouraged must still be performed in a feminine way. This represents a larger tension for women; traditional notions of femininity frames women as passive, so being feminine while aggressive is either hard to do or impossible. Women then are either punished for not being feminine or aggressive enough. Either women become too aggressive and have to modify their behavior to be accepted by the debate community or be less aggressive. Aggression in debate is a form of action. Data revealed that debaters interpreted displays of aggression as not only signs

of success but also as a form of action. Debaters indicated that aggression was equated to passion, having passion for an argument. This symbolic encouragement of women to be more passive via naming them bitches challenges their willingness to act and to be successful in the parliamentary debate community.

Meanings and Symbols Ascribed to Debate Women. This subtheme discusses ways in which women's identities are communicated about within the debate community. Women's identities are discussed in terms of specific symbols that were not used to discuss men. Specific naming symbols associated with women debater's identity characterize the way the debate community values women debaters. This theme has two subthemes: a) weak and fragile women and b) women as sex objects. Each subtheme is discussed below with examples to illustrate each subtheme in greater depth.

Weak and Fragile Women. Debaters characterized women debaters as weaker than their male debate partners. When discussing women community members, they are talked about as the weaker debater and the interviewer equated feminine characteristics with a weaker position within the community. This occurred thirteen times over the course of the interviews. Debaters recalled these characterizations often when asked to assign labels to an unsuccessful woman debater or when asked how gender implicates the debate community overall. Following this explanation are examples to illustrate this subtheme. For instance, Jon, a 20-year-old white male with one and a half years of college debate experience, explains how women are considered weak:

There is a stigma attached to women in the parli community. They are just weaker and it doesn't make sense. You have to not be viewed as weak to get to those out-rounds and that is why they don't even get a chance to go to the top seed final prelim round like because they don't even get that opportunity because they're just viewed as weak.

Here, Jon explains that women being viewed consistently as the weaker debater significantly limits their ability to be successful in debate. Traditional notions of femininity are characteristics that the debate community discourages in debate rounds because they lead to women being viewed as a weaker debater. Women are encouraged to be feminine for male consumption and then characterized as the weaker debater who is unable to be successful. Additionally, Carli, a 19-year-old white female with one year of college debate experience, recalls a specific example of such a partnership:

When people were to address Molly and Chris, it was never people addressing Chris at all—it was always focusing on Molly and what she did wrong. Her attitude in round is what caused this to happen and how she didn't work hard enough. She was clearly perceived as the weakest link. I think that has to do with the fact that she's a woman. She's not quite as liberal as people on our debate team. I think it has to do with the fact that women are subordinate or second to men.

Carli's specific example focuses on the mistakes that the woman debater makes as opposed to her partner's mistakes, which contributed to their loss. The debate community's archetype of a successful debater is male; this means in a male-female partnership the assumption is the woman is the one who made mistakes and the man is the one who did well. The debate community singles out the woman debater and suggests her gender performance is the weaker of the two, whereas her male debater partner's masculine performance was deemed acceptable and could not be the source of their loss. Finally, Aurora, an 18-year-old white female with one year of college debate experience, speaks about a personal experience at nationals where her vocal pitch, while speed read during a debate round, was referred to as "cute":

He came over and he was talking to me and was like you are the fastest debater I've ever heard. But the problem is everyone talks about how cute you are

because your voice is so high you just don't have any clout in the debate room because no one takes you seriously. I definitely felt singled out in the fact when my partner speaks fast he gets praised for it. What I wanted to do was get really fast because that's what I thought was good. And so now I'm so fast and you would think that's a positive but now I just hear like well you're fast but that's not enough because you don't have any authority because you're a girl and you're too cute.

Aurora was considered weak because her voice is higher than other male debaters and is told it is cute the way she sounds when she speaks quickly, which undermines her authority in a debate round. This example illustrates that disciplining women debaters can be done from a place of care, coaching staffs bending to the community's standards and wanting women to be successful. More so, women debater's femininity is not considered to be credible, it is in direct contrast to the staples of success that the debate community creates and values.

In the following section the subtheme of women as sexual objects will be discussed and examples will be provided.

Sexual Objects. Women debaters are often considered as worthy as their sexual attraction not their debate skills. In other words, their image shapes their level of membership in the debate community. Debaters recalled instances during which women's appearance was specifically privileged or discussed over debate skills. This action occurs in and outside of debate rounds throughout the community. This subtheme occurred sixteen times throughout the data set. More often, women who were interviewed identified this phenomenon more frequently than men.

Examples are provided below to illustrate this subtheme. First, Andrew, a 22-year-old white male with five years of debate experience, explains that women are objectified in the debate community:

I think that a lot of individuals in the community objectify women. They say, “Oh, she’s attractive but she’s not good at debate,” or vice versa, but you don’t really hear those types of connotations being made about men in debate.

Andrew explains how a lot of men in the debate community value women for their sexual performance. While women are offered excuses to exist in the debate community by their level of attractiveness whereas men were not discussed in the same context, they merely exist in the debate community because of their potential to be the archetype of success.

Women recalled instances where judges (not just debaters) objectified them. Abby, a 22 year-old white female with four and a half years of college debate experience, recalls hearing a story from a female partnership being objectified by a debate judge:

I know a judge basically told two women that they were so attractive [that] he didn’t normally listen to the arguments, but that day they looked tired and so he listened to their arguments and he wasn’t impressed.

Abby explains above the expectation of women in the community primarily are to look attractive. The judge admits that he neglects to pay attention to their arguments because they are attractive females. For him, women are judged first based upon the visual, then upon the articulable. Women are visual markers, empty containers unless the visible is not appealing. Third, Molly, a 21-year-old white female with four years of college debate experience, explains she felt singled out when her partner would refer to her breasts:

It was offensive when Jake would say we would win because of my boobs. I felt like that was singled out because of my gender.

Above, Molly explains that when she was responsible for a win, that win was not because of her debate skills but because of her breasts. A community's inability to recognize women's success for success of debate skills but instead translates it into their success as being an aesthetically appealing object for men to consume. Women's visual appearance is evaluated and credited before her mind is determined relevant. Finally, Sara, a 20-year-old white female with two years of college debate experience, explains an experience with a specific judge where she was rewarded for her sexuality:

I was giving the MG [Member of Government speech]. I thought I had done horribly. We lost the round and when I was listening to the RFD [reason for decision], there was a lot of offense missed in the MG. So when we're being given the RFD, the judge says to me that I was the best speaker in the round. I didn't think about it. That night I was spending time for a friend of mine that debates for this particular coach but he had said, and swore me to secrecy, that I got a 30 in that round even though my arguments weren't good and I was the worst debater in the room. I got a 30 in that round because he was too distracted to listen to my speech because he was looking up my skirt the entire time. I can tell you what color underwear you're wearing right now. I realized, "Oh, shit, he wasn't kidding; his coaching wasn't lying." This coach had repeatedly talked about how I looked multiple times at multiple tournaments. Not just to me, but women in general. I never noticed that behavior before. Offering to buy girls [a] drink even if they're under-aged [and] offering to buy me a drink. I told my coach that I didn't want him judging us anymore; I was uncomfortable with that. I was given a 30 I didn't deserve and I felt guilty about it.

Sara recalls a specific time where she was sexually harassed by a debate judge who then shared the experience with his debater. Sara's speaker points, a perfect score, directly translated into the judge's perspective of her sexual attributes. As opposed to disciplining a woman debater by decreasing the number of speaker points, this examples shows that judges can also manipulate speaker points to reward perceived sexual behavior or potential of sexual behavior by debaters as well.

In the next section the subthemes discussed above are discussed by utilizing a symbolic interactionist perspective and a critical gender lens to provide an analytical summary of the data.

Analytical Summary. Research question three asked what symbolic identity constructions implicated the construction of gender identity in debate. The above subtheme discusses symbols that identify women in debate. The two subthemes were: a) women are weak and fragile and b) women are sexual objects. The following section will address those subthemes in terms of symbolic interactionism and a critical gender lens.

Women as Weak and Fragile. Women were often described as the weaker debate partner. Debaters would remember interactions between judges, coaches, and debaters that were characterized as treating the women as the weaker debater. Core principle one (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969) explains the observations that Carli made with regard to how a specific squad treated a male-female partnership, their actions were determined by meaning generated by the debate community. She observed that the woman was blamed consistently for losses. This blaming was from judges, coaches, and other debate squad members. Further, not only are women blamed for losing, member checks revealed that women are viewed as weak because they rarely challenge debate round decisions, where men consistently challenge decisions. During member checks, a male debate coach indicated that he is nicer to women debaters during disclosures because he perceives women as less likely to argue a decision. In debate terms, disclosers involve judges sharing why they voted a certain way, discussing the problems with the losing team's arguments. When female debaters do not challenge judges, this male judge admitted he is

nicer to them, but perceives them as weaker as a result. Therefore, from a SI perspective, interactions occurring between debate community members and this woman debater are informed by the community symbol of women debaters being weak and fragile.

Also, the same example illustrates the negative implication of treating women as weak and fragile. Carli goes on to explain that the woman debater feels as if she does not fit in with her debate team, she is the only woman on the team and consistently is told that she is weak. This is an example of the *generalized other* and naming associated with women's identity in the debate community (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). Finally, in terms of traditional gender roles, characterizing women as a weak or fragile debater reinforces a dichotomy of the man debater being the strong debater and woman being the weaker debater. DeFrancisco and Palczewski (2006) identify that traditional gender roles are constructed as a way of reinforcing patriarchal power. The symbols that identify women as weak are a representation of that phenomenon.

The next section addresses the second subtheme, women as sex objects, in terms of symbolic interactionism and a critical gender lens.

Women as Sex Objects. Women debaters were described in interviews in terms of their level of attractiveness as opposed to their debate skills. One interviewee indicated that men debaters want to keep the attractive women in the activity but not for debate skills. Earlier on there was an example discussed about successful men feeling entitled to the "pretty girls" as well. Those along with the examples discussed above create a symbolic identity of women in debate as sex objects. For example, Molly explains above that her partner would attribute her success to her breasts. This is explained through

symbolic interactionism in terms of the second principle. Meaning arises from social interactions, and the above examples create a meaning of women being complimented for their attractiveness and physical attraction as opposed to their debate skills (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). This in turn creates a symbol of women as sex objects. They are encouraged to be in the debate community only if they can handle the sexual harassment and objectification that occurs. Similar to the research done in the policy debate community that concludes sexual harassment exists at very high levels in the debate community (Stepp, 2009). In terms of a critical gender lens, forcing women to receive membership to a debate community only if she accepts the consistent reference to her physical attributes would be problematic because it is a manifestation of traditional gender roles. Women are supposed to be passive, pretty objects ready for the male gaze (DeFrancisco & Palczewski, 2006). Aurora indicates in an example in the next section that all she wanted to do was be accepted by the community and is willing to modify her performances and perform as a sexual object for that acceptance. Masculine discourse forces women into a choice to accept traditional roles established by the predominant discourse or to leave the community. The following section addresses the last theme: women's responses to the debate community.

Women's Responses: Women's Feelings about the Debate Community. This theme discusses gendered dominant discourses in parliamentary debate implications on women debaters as well as their perception of the debate community. Throughout the interviews common themes were found regarding how women cope with the masculine dominated discourse and what happens if women are unable to cope. While primarily

these responses are from women debaters, there are a few examples of men's observations of women leaving the community or feeling as if they do not fit within the community. This theme has four subthemes: a) sisterhood, b) need to compensate, c) don't fit in, and d) drop out. The following sections will discuss each subtheme in depth and provide relevant examples.

Sisterhood. Women debaters recognized that the friendships established with other women in the community were often stronger than with their male counterparts. Women in the debate community often feel alone and look to other women in the community to bond with and as role models. Women debaters noted that this was a way to cope with negative implications of a masculine dominated discourse in the debate community. This theme was seen ten times throughout the nineteen interviews. This theme appeared in all of the interviews of women debaters. Most often this theme was discussed when the participant was asked how they coped with specific negative instances that they described or how their gender has implicated their experience in the debate community.

Examples to better illustrate this subtheme are provided and discussed below. For example, Molly, a 21-year-old white female with four years of college debate experience, explains how she serves as a mentor for younger women:

I always told them if they need help to let me know, like I feel like they view me as like a mentor they talk to me about life issues or debate or different. One of the teams went to the Washburn tournament and she kept me posted and asked, "Do you know who this team is." I feel I'm encouraging them and want them to stay in debate.

Above, Molly provides an example of two women who were in their first year of debate that she has mentored to keep in the activity. Older women debaters indicate a commitment to the activity by helping younger women navigate multiple identities that women have to perform to in debate. Older women create a community inside the debate community of women, where women would be the archetype of success. In addition, Abby, a 22 year-old white female with four and a half years of college debate experience, explains she feels a special connection to younger women debaters and wants them to succeed:

I am probably a lot more personally invested in how I think they're doing particularly if I think they're challenging gender norms in the community. I have a lot of young male debaters that I have a lot of respect for. But I know I attempted to probably take a lot more active role in women debaters I know . . . more . . . a debate team they're a young female team. I've really hoped I see them succeed. I really just like women I guess and that influence my social interactions quite a bit.

Abby explains above that she specifically seeks out younger women in the community to encourage, and that hopes that they succeed in debate. She goes on to say that this influence influences her social interactions as well, as she actively seeks out women debaters and takes an active role in their development in the debate community. Older women encourage younger women to challenge gender norms as a means to counter the dominant discourse that regulates women to be pretty empty objects for males to consume. Also, Lola, a 27 year-old white female with four years of college debate experience, explains the positive experience she has had debating with only women:

I wanted it to be a thing. I did my best to find a female partner and to only debate with girls if I could. Since then it has actually been very positive, the reactions I have gotten. My partner and I have had an awesome time debating with one another. I don't know; maybe it's just male partners I have had, but I feel like we're able to communicate really well with one another and we relate to each

other and want to run the same positions. I have also had two other females' partners and I noticed that was very similar as well. Our ability to bond over topics that were important to us allowed us to overcome any negative reactions we might have received.

In this statement Lola explains that a way she found to cope with the masculine dominated community was to debate only with women. Women understand and care about the same things that Lola does. Although she articulates good intentions (keeping women in debate, feeling included), Lola presents a problematic premise by assuming that all women have identical narratives regarding their experiences in the debate community or that men cannot be conscious of problematic discourse and seek to change it.

Moreover, Aurora, an 18-year-old white female with one year of college debate experience, explains how an older woman who has mentored her has helped her be successful in the debate community.

I think women, like Molly hanging out with me, definitely helped me a lot. I think that's like a big thing. I think making relationships with other women is a big deal. I really think just reaching out and I think new debaters having an older woman help them and talk to them would make a huge difference. I think being more inclusive and hanging out. Just because you're a girl, judges talking to you rather than your male partner. If like one of them would be like and the ones that do talk to me, I'm in love with them and I think they're the best coaches ever.

Aurora, discloses the want to be recognized by judges; she does not care what their comments are or if they are helping her get better at debate, but she views that any form of acknowledgement would be considered acceptance. Younger women's want to be recognized in the debate community can be positive, like the above example, where she seeks out judges comments regarding her debate skills or Molly. However, the other alternative is young women debaters are desperate for attention by judges and they equate

any form of attention as positive attention, which may lead to women being preyed on by judges and older male debaters.

Furthermore, Samantha, a 20-year-old white female with three years of college debate experience, explains that the only other women on her teams offer her comfort:

I reach out to other women. The other girl and I we always talk about debate like we don't know if we could do it if the other isn't on the team. Stuff like that, I reach out to other women I talk to them and stuff. It's hard . . . I don't even talk to people I'm just kind of there. At the end of the day, if I feel excluded I'll talk to her or just wait by myself.

Here, Samantha explains that when she feels excluded by her debate team or in the community she reaches out to other women to connect—a connection she is lacking on her debate team. According to the larger part of Samantha's interview, she often felt excluded on her predominantly male debate team. It is almost as if Samantha cannot connect with male debaters because they view her body first, thus leaving her unable to access conversations. She is unable to exist without another woman to perform her feminine identity with. If another woman did not exist she would be forced into silence.

The following section will discuss another mechanisms women use to cope with the debate community, they compensate for their gender identity by engaging in masculine performance.

Need to Compensate. Since the normative debater is a white male, women feel the need to mold their debate style to the style of a male debater as a means to fit in to the community or in order to win rounds. Women compensate by changing their gender performance to a more typically masculine display. This theme appeared six times throughout the nineteen interviews. Most often debaters identified this theme when asked

how women debaters were implicated by the gendered performance of the debate community or when women were asked how they tended to cope with problematic comments or situations. Examples to better illustrate this theme are provided and explained below.

For instance, Billy, a 21-year-old white male with three years of debate experience, explains that men debating are considered standard and women have to adapt in order to debate:

There's this standard that men should just do debate and women should not unless they're going to adapt to the constant competition and being the best. You can't just enjoy it as a woman, you have to be striving for the protection. I think that men are allowed to just enjoy the activity.

Above, Billy explains that the norm or typical debater is a white male and women are forced to change their gender performance to be accepted. Women are forced to adapt and compensate for their feminine appearance by engaging in a primarily masculine dialogue. Engaging in masculine dialogue and being deemed as a successful debater grants women a certain level of acceptance in the debate community as long as a successful woman debater is able to ignore the labeling of bitch for the masculine performance. Additionally, Molly, a 21-year-old white female with four years of college debate experience, explains she felt that she had to compensate when she first started to debate:

I remember when I started to try to look more powerful I would swear a lot to try to make up that power imbalance. I don't know; it's essentially very different.

Here, Molly explains that she would engage in swearing in debate rounds as an attempt to look more powerful. As a new woman debater in the activity she immediately felt and

identified a power imbalance that was based upon her gender due to gender disparity. Performing masculinity in a debate round is a method to level the unequal power distribution for women debaters, however a changing of dominant discourse in the debate community. Lastly, Aurora, an 18-year-old white female with one year of college debate experience, recalls a conversation with her coach during which she was told to change her appearance:

Yeah, it's definitely hard for me because it changes the way I have to do things. I kind of argue with my coach about it, too, right? They tell me I have to change the way I dress because I dress too feminine because I have to start wearing jeans instead of dresses because it's affecting my presentation. I don't like the fact that I can't. I do like to dress up and I like to do things like . . . that it's part of who I am. I hate the fact that I can't be cute and dress the way I want to and still be considered a serious debater. It gets me mad we're debaters because we're all about breaking down everything and equality. It's hard. I hate the fact that I am considered the cutest debater on the circuit because I have a high pitched voice so I have to practice spreading in a lower tone.

Above, Aurora explains that while she is considered to be too cute of a debater to be taken seriously she has to modify her appearance and actions to appear more credible. Credibility in the debate community is linked almost exclusively to masculine gender performances. Women are disciplined to perform masculinity as a means of garnering forms of credibility that is often excluded to them.

In the next section women describe their feelings about not fitting in to the debate community.

Don't Fit In. Women debaters readily were able to identify multiple instances where they felt excluded or singled out because of their gender. Women are often in a room full of men and possibly the only woman present in the activity, both inside and outside of debate rounds. Being the only woman creates feelings of not fitting in to the

debate community. Every women was able to recall one or multiple instances where they felt isolated or singled out because of their gender when asked. In contrast, no man who was interviewed recalled a time during which they were singled out because of their gender. Most often, women debaters responded that they felt like they did not fit in when asked directly if they could offer an example of when they were singled out because of their gender. This subtheme appeared twenty-four times throughout the data and almost always from women debaters or men debaters talking about women. Four examples to illustrate this subtheme are provided below.

First, Abby, a 22 year-old white female with four and a half years of college debate experience, recalls a time where she recognized that she was the only girl in a room:

I was hanging out somewhere I was in a room of about 15 people and I realized I was the only woman in the room, which is a pretty pitiful percentage. And it's really weird. I mean, everyone else was continuing their conversations around me and I was quietly stepping back and thinking. It was a really strange moment but I don't think I had ever thought about it before. It was a social situation I had been [in] probably a hundred times. At this point in my career, [that] has happened probably on a consistent basis.

Here, Abby describes literally not fitting in because she was the only woman in a debate room. Sheer numbers, create a norm in the debate community. Absent of what happens in terms of disciplining and rewarding in debate rounds, the number of women to the number of men in the activity creates male debaters as the norm and women are exceptions to the static norm of a typical male debater. Second, Aurora, an 18-year-old white female with one year of college debate experience, explains not feeling like she fit in as a new debater:

It's definitely hard. Because like I'm one of the people that community is big to me and I want to feel a part of the community. I hated that my partner was on the in and I wasn't. I shoved it off as, "Oh, he was here longer than I was." Some of the judges that talked to him didn't know him before. I hated the fact that everyone wants to be a part of the debate community. You want to be one of the people that's friends with everyone and you want to know the judges because, like, you're trying to win a ballot.

Aurora explains a double standard between her and her male debate partner. The debate community views her male debate partner as the norm and welcomes him into the community. The assumption for Aurora is that she is to be seen but not heard, women's physical attributes are evaluated before their minds in the debate community, thus judges do not have an incentive to speak with her. Third, Samantha, 20-year-old white female with three years of college debate experience, explains her experience being on a debate team with mostly males:

Yes. It's hard. The team I am on is almost all male. It's me and one other girl who actually travel to tournaments. It's like the guys all had this super tight bond and like we're girls they just don't, like, respect us like they respect each other as people. Just stuff like that. It's minor things like it gets annoying. The conversations they have is so masculine, very like . . . they talk about women and they talk about things that like I'm not able to participate in these conversations.

Samantha explains above that she feels like she is excluded on her own debate squad because of being one of two women on the team. While this supports the observation earlier that sheer numbers lead to a level of exclusion, her comment explains more than that. Men on a debate team coalesce together and form a bond, that bond is exclusive, segregating women on the same team. The bond on a singular debate team is representative of the bond throughout the debate community given the sheer number of men in the activity. Men debaters use discourse as a means of exclusion specifically discussing women in the community as a means of excluded women. She further explains

that she feels her debate team members do not respect her as much because of her gender identity. Samantha's debate team uses masculine discourse as a means of excluding her and the other woman from the team. They choose to talk about topics about which she is unable to engage. Fourth, Billy, a 21-year-old white male with three years of debate experience, explains a dichotomy that women are forced into:

I think that there is a perception of either you're kind of a party girl or you're one of the guys. There's not like a chance for women in debate to be a girl who doesn't really party hard and wants to hook up and is also not one of the guys. I think that there is one of two molds. And if you don't fit that mold it's kind of hard to interact.

Above, Billy explains that women are either forced to be a party girl or one of the guys and if you don't fit into one of those molds than you are excluded from the debate community. There is not a chance for women who refuse to modify their gender performance to be overly feminine or masculine as a means of fitting into the debate community. This example is representative of the previously discussed dichotomy for women debaters: either you perform masculinity and are successful or you are in the community for male consumption. In the following section the last theme will be discussed: women dropping out of the debate community.

Drop Out. The last theme discussed in this thesis is about women dropping out of the activity. These are a result of women's feelings of being objectified, sexually harassed, excluded, and unable to cope with the masculine dominated discourse. Studies from policy debate indicate that women leave the activity at a higher rate than men (Skarb, 2002; Stepp, 2009; Matz & Brusckke, 2006; Mazur, 2001; McRee & Cote, 2002 Pearson, 2009). This theme appeared ten times in the data. This theme was most often

discovered when debaters were asked if they felt the policy research was applicable to parliamentary debate trends or when asked if they had been singled out because of their gender. Women and men debaters both were cognizant of women leaving the activity because of various reasons related to gender performance. Examples to illustrate this theme are provided below.

Aurora, an 18-year-old white female with one year of college debate experience, recalls a fellow woman debater who dropped out because her all-male team excluded her:

Amber from a school . . . she dropped out a week before NPTE because she couldn't handle it anymore, because her coach yelled at her all the time. She was way better than the other male debaters on her team and the attention wasn't put on her at all. It probably has something to do with it. It was all debate stuff she dropped out because she couldn't handle debate anymore.

Aurora explains that a woman debater left the activity because she could not handle her team dynamic anymore. Aurora goes on to describe that this woman was ignored even if her debate skills were better than other debaters on her team and that her coach continually yelled at her. She concludes by saying that she left the activity because she could not handle it anymore; she was unable to cope with the way she was being treated. The archetype of a successful debater is male. The coach ignored Amber because she was a female, which means that the ability for her to be successful in the activity significantly was stunted. This also supports an argument earlier that coaches set a tone for the rest of the team to follow. If the coach singled her out and yelled at her it probably spoke the atmosphere of the rest of the debate team as well. Regardless, the coach decided that it was easier for a male on the team to be successful and thus receive coaching attention as

opposed to her fulfilling the typical archetype of women being a waste of time and unsuccessful men having potential that should be nurtured.

Next, Sara, a 20-year-old white female with two years of college debate experience, explains that she left the activity for two years after she was sexually harassed:

I was a freshmen. I was the youngest member on our team. There was a grad assistant that was very vulgar and very—for lack of a better word—very crude for how he talked to me and what he thought was okay to say to me. After several months of putting up with it I finally took a semester off. I told my coaches about [it] and when my coaches realized how bad it was, they asked him to step away from the team and I came back. I didn't realize until my coaches and I were talking about this past year what had happened to me was sexual harassment. I had never thought about it. I felt it was my fault when in reality it was his fault. That instance really affected kind of how I felt about debate for awhile. Ya know, when I was a freshmen I loved debate, I loved college debate. It was great. Towards the latter half of the semester I hated it. I hated being on trips . . . I just couldn't stand it. It really negatively affected me and that carried on for why I didn't debate and why I was asked back. It just kind of when I had that realization it wasn't my fault did that finally go away. That instance has definitely affected how I think about things. It was very well known to the coaches and to the member of our team, but it didn't affect them the same way that it affected me. I didn't get to go to nationals my first year when we could have qualified. That was one instance.

Above, Sara describes her experience as a first year on her debate team. A graduate assistant targeted her, sexually harassed her and made her feel excluded. She did not speak out regarding the sexual harassment for quite some time. Her choice to leave the activity was influenced by the debate community's prevalence to look at women's looks before their debate abilities. It is difficult to speak out regarding something that is apparent throughout the debate community. Judges, coaches, debaters all reinforce an archetype of women being present to be consumable for men.

Finally, Samantha, a 20-year-old white female with three years of college debate experience, reveals that at times it is difficult to justify staying in debate because of the way she is treated by her debate team and by the community:

I hate it, I don't like it . . . it's so hard sometimes to justify doing it because of the way women are treated. And just like the things that I see going on. I just don't like it at all. It's hard to justify doing debate when I see these things going on. There have been a lot of times where I thought about quitting. I wasn't doing as well as I wanted to. I don't like how the community acts towards one another and how they orient themselves.

Samantha explains that because of the way women are treated in the debate community as well as on her team makes her feel like she wants to drop out at times. In our interview, Samantha indicated that she frequently contemplated dropping out of debate because of how she and other women are treated within the activity. Samantha's expression of not being able to justify debating at times may be a manifestation of the multiple identity performances women have to engage in to exist in the debate community as discussed in previous sections. In the following section, the subthemes will be explained further using symbolic interactionism and a critical gender lens.

Analytical Summary

Research question three examines how gender identities are implicated by specific symbols created in the debate community. The previous section examined the implication of the debate community's construction of symbols in regards to women's identity. This major theme had four subthemes underneath it: a) sisterhood, b) compensate, c) don't fit in, and d) drop out. Each of these subthemes will be discussed from a symbolic interactionist perspective and employing a critical gender lens. All four subthemes are discussed below.

Sisterhood. Sisterhood was a method that women debaters used as a means of coping with masculine dominated discourse in the debate community. Women would seek out other women as a way to encourage them to stay in the activity or to cope with problematic discourse in the debate community. Aurora explains that her older mentor, Molly, really helped her feel as if she was a part of the debate community. This is an example of a narrative that is created by a marginalized group in the debate community. As per core principle two (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), women attempt to counteract the notion of men being the only debaters who exist in a debate community by finding bonds with other women debaters, creating a meaning that is not the community's dominant discourse. Allying with other women debaters as a way to cope with masculine dominated discourse would also implicate the *looking glass self* (Mead 1934). Women find sisterhood as a coping mechanism to the dominant discourse of women being considered sluts, stupid, dumb, and bitchy, amongst other themes discussed previously. Sisterhood serves as a counter-narrative to the dominant discourse. That counter-narrative is a way to morph the *looking glasses self* (Mead, 1934) that has been affected negatively by the debate community, into a positive one. For example, Samantha explains how after she could not take the patriarchal discourse on her team, she sought out other women as a way of coping with such discourse.

Older women, who have achieved the title of success for being resilient, actively seek out younger women to build relationships and counsel them in the masculine dominated community. This serves as a way to create meaning that is counter to the discourse of unsuccessful women being a waste of time. Instead, older successful women

debaters—engaging in SI through core principle number two (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969)—reach out to younger women. Abby recalls feeling more invested in younger women debaters, hoping that they would perform well at tournaments, and helping them if she could. This creates a response to the dominant themes discussed above. As opposed to unsuccessful women being told they are a waste of time by the larger community, successful women debaters spend time with them, encouraging them to get better.

Compensate. Women debaters engage in another response to the masculine dominated community. Women debaters recall that they felt the need to compensate for their feminine performance by employing a masculine-aggressive style. This form of compensation is a response from debate community members' interpretation of how a successful debater performs, aggressive male. Molly recalls that when she first started debating, she felt like her gender performance was not credible so she began to swear to appear more powerful in a debate round. This form of compensation is an example of core principle three. Core principle three (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969) explains that persons interpretation of community symbols are internalized, and then their behavior is modified based upon their reaction to those symbols. Molly internalized the debate community's symbol of a successful debater, which did not include her identity. She concludes that the masculine performance actually was counter-productive and did not help her increase presence in the debate round; it instead resulted in judges commenting that it was inappropriate for her to curse. Member checking revealed that men are given higher leniency to curse in debate rounds than women, creating a double standard. While

Molly's performance was unsuccessful in compensating for a lack of power she was unable to conclude how, if ever, she felt powerful in a debate round.

Aurora is in the middle of *minding* (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). *Minding* (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969) is a person's interpretation and reaction to a community's symbols and meaning. Aurora explains that her debate coach told her that she needed to alter her gender performance to appear more masculine. She understands this to mean that she needs to practice speed-reading at a lower tone, wear more pants, and perform more masculine characteristics in debate rounds. Her coach disciplines her gender performance to alter her identity in order to fit more closely the successful persona of the ideal debater. This placed Aurora in a problematic situation. If she performs femininity and wears dresses as she enjoys and speaks at her normal vocal tone, then she is considered to be too feminine for debate. The other avenue allotted to Aurora is to masculinize her appearance in an attempt to be perceived more masculine and more credible. Yet if she deviates from her traditional gender role and performance of femininity, the community will call her a bitch. She is forced to alter her performance, and deal with the insults in order to be more successful in debate, or to embrace her femininity and be labeled a slut. Both options produce different forms of disciplining from the debate community or Aurora will be told that she does not fit in.

Don't Fit In. Every woman interviewed remarked at one point or another that they felt excluded or did not fit into the debate community. Women would often reveal multiple moments where they were the only girl in the room, were made to feel as if they were not a debater, or they did not feel included in the debate community. *Minding*, core

principle three of SI (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), occurs in this subtheme when women are told they are dumb, sexualized for male consumption, waste of time, and bitchy.

Women's feelings about the community are of exclusion and not fitting in. For example, Samantha explains that it is exhausting being on a debate team of all men, because she often feels excluded or left out of conversations, when asked what the conversations were about she reveals they were primarily about attractive women in the debate community. Women debaters' feelings of not fitting in are also a response to the community's affect on women's *looking glass self* (Mead, 1934). Women are told the typical debate is a smart, aggressive, male. Women debaters do not fit that archetype and thus no space is made for them in the community. Young unsuccessful women are a *waste of time*. This affect on women's *looking glass self* is magnified by situations like the one Abby describes, in which she looks around a room at a debate party and realizes she is the only woman present.

In terms of employing a critical gender lens, women are made to feel that they do not fit into the debate community because a successful debater is an aggressive male. According to Wood (2012), passivity is a characteristic attributed to femininity and to women. Women are pushed out of an activity that encourages aggression because it is not perceived to be the appropriate gender performance by a woman. Relegating women to activities deemed more appropriate for their gender performance excludes them from debate since the typical debater is an aggressive male. Women are placed in a passive role in the debate community and feel uncomfortable because they do not fit in or they leave the activity all together.

Drop Out. Throughout the data, multiple stories exist of women debaters who left the community. Women have either contemplated leaving, left and come back, or quit the activity. Most women interviewed reported having contemplated quitting, if they had not already quit, which is an implication of meaning discussed in previous sections. Women debaters feel that they do not fit into the debate community and are unable to perform the various restrictions of their gender performance in the masculine dominated discourse. *Minding* (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), a debate community member's response to a community's values and symbols of identity, the ultimate response of women debaters from the symbols of women debaters as sexualized, dumb, or bitchy (amongst other things) is that they leave the community.

Samantha recalls thinking about leaving the debate community frequently, especially after longer tournaments where she is exposed to conversations amongst teammates that she feels she cannot access, and disciplining of her gender identity. She explains that she is frustrated because she is not sure what the solution is to this exclusion except perhaps leaving debate, because debate sometimes does not merit the exclusion and disciplining. Sara talks about how she left debate because she was being sexually harassed by a graduate student and was afraid to tell anyone because she thought her teammates would be upset with her. Sara's decision to leave because of sexual harassment is characteristic of core principle number two of SI (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), the meaning generated was that Sara available for the sexual pleasure of the graduate assistant. As she internalized this message via *minding* (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), her response was to leave the situation. She acknowledged that the sexual

harassment was wrong, but she felt it also meant that she had to reject the activity. Since it is the norm within the community, she did not understand that it was not “right” and could be challenged. Sara’s response is characteristic to the observations Stepp (2009) has made in policy debate, in which sexual harassment is a key reason why women leave debate. Ultimately, if women are unable to counter the dominant narrative of masculinity via mechanisms discussed above, they leave the activity of competitive debate.

Women dropping out of debate is problematic because unsuccessful women are characterized as being invisible and a waste of time, meaning that if women’s identities are not integrated into the debate community’s discourse, as discussed in the above subtheme, then their leaving the activity is not considered significant by most male debaters, coaches, and judges. Analyzing the interaction of those two subthemes in context of SI principle number one, meaning is dictated by action, the debate community generates a symbol of women debaters as not mattering to the debate community, the implication of this symbol is unsuccessful women leave the activity. The following section discussed the possible global implications of the various symbols identified and discussed above.

Overall Implications of Data

The purpose of this thesis is not just to identify various symbols of gender performance in the debate community but more so use the debate community as a microcosm of larger societal constructions of gender identity. For example, the woman I engaged in member checking with recalled that one of the reasons why the debate

community's construction of gender was problematic is because of outside societal influences. Specifically, women's identity in the debate community is constructed in similar fashion to women's identity in other organizations.

The tensions discussed above of women's gender performance between masculine and feminine does not exist just in the debate community. Women are punished in other areas for masculine performances as well. My literature review revealed that women in higher education were expected to be nurturing and were considered to be harsh or mean when indicated otherwise (Maranto & Griffin, 2011). Furthermore, higher education is very similar to the debate community with the façade of a community having surpassed gender expectations, as discussed previously the debate community also creates a similar curtain to shield individuals from sexist practices. Along with the tension of gender performance being applied to other areas, this opens up possibilities of new research in Communication Studies as well.

Research focusing on women's identities in a debate community does not exist. This is unique by taking a speech activity, identifying the activity as an insular community, and examining various symbols implicating gender performance in that debate community. The thematic labels identified in this study can start as a foundation for future studies as well. Identifying the tension that exists in a women's performance is not unique to the debate community but a more appropriate description of daily life (member checking confirmed this observation).

In the following chapter I discuss the conclusion of my thesis, including methods of validity for the data, potential limitations of my data, future research and offering proposed solutions to this problematic discourse.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Sharmi died in September of 2011. I was sitting in my hole of an office as a graduate student staring at my laptop working on a handout for a class in about 2 hours. I received an IM from Ankur (Sharmi's debate teammate and close friend of mine). He asked if he could talk to me real quick. "Sure no problem," I typed back, knowing that if Ankur was asking to talk that it was probably something pretty important.

"What's up"

"Aly, I know you and Sharmi were very close friends and I thought I'd call and tell you before you saw on Facebook." He began his quiet, unassuming voice playing in my head that I had heard many times before.

"Sharmi is dead."

I stare at the bright green desk and start repeat in my head, "Sharmi is dead. Sharmi is dead." I grip the desk and try to utter, "What? How?" Hot tears began to cloud my eyes, blurring the sharp lines of the desk.

Ankur recounted, "She fell off the balcony. It didn't have a railing and she tripped and fell as she was on the phone. She fell 13 stories and died immediately."

Knowing how close he and Sharmi were, I respond, "Oh my god I am so sorry. Are you sure?" I felt compelled to ask. It just did not seem real. "She and I were just talking about SAAID last week. She promised to come to nationals and visit with me this year."

"Yeah, Aly I'm sure. I am so sorry," Ankur stated.

I respond, “Thank you so much for calling me Ankur. I am so sorry, would you give my love to her family and her fiancé?”

“Of course. Lets talk more in a few days,” he stated.

My hand shook as I put my head in my hands. Sharmi was dead. This was over a year ago and there are still times that it does not seem real. I think because we lived so far apart and hardly saw each other that it just seems like she is alive in India.

This thesis research is for her and all of the other women debaters because, “We are all women and we have to stick together.”

In the final thesis chapter, results are discussed and tables are provided to illustrate comparisons between themes and subthemes. This chapter also describes limitations to the research I conducted as well as potential future research. The chapter concludes by providing suggestions for actions to improve gender disparity in parliamentary debate, identity construction, and to increase the number of women.

Discussing Women in Debate

Research question one examined the construction of women’s identities in parliamentary debate. This research question sought to provide a snapshot of how the parliamentary debate community implicated women’s gender performances within the community. This started with identifying how the debate community spoke about women. Women in debate were discussed in two distinct themes: a) successful women and b) unsuccessful women. Successful women were women who travelled nationally and had achieved accolades of success in the debate community. Successful women were discussed in three distinct ways: a) resiliency, b) excuses for female success, and c)

tokenism. Unsuccessful women were women who either did not travel nationally or did not win many debate rounds. Unsuccessful women were discussed in four distinct subthemes: a) waste of time, b) dumb, c) sexualized for male consumption, and finally d) invisible. A diagram is provided below to illustrate these themes in comparison to one another.

<u>Successful Women</u>	<u>Unsuccessful Women</u>
Tokenized	Objects of Male Consumption
Resilient	Dumb
Excuses for Female Success	Waste of Time
	Invisible

The above table offers a comparison between how successful women and unsuccessful women are discussed in the debate community.

Successful Women. Successful women debaters were first discussed as being resilient. Data revealed that for women to be deemed successful in the debate community they had to overcome obstacles that did not exist for men; resiliency. Debaters indicated that women had to have a thicker skin than male debaters, be better at debate than male debaters and provide a community appropriate gender performance to be considered equal or as good as successful men. For the few women in debate to be considered successful they have to work harder and be better than successful men, this forces them to start from further behind to reach the same level. This also makes it harder for women to stay in an activity long enough to be deemed successful, consciously working on an

appropriate gender performance as indicated in the data. Next, successful women were discussed as tokens of inclusivity.

Successful women were often tokenized in the parliamentary debate community. Tokenization occurred when successful women were over-emphasized as a means to compensate for the lack of women in the debate community or claims of gender disparity. Data revealed that successful women were tokenized as a way to emphasize women's success. While this action may be a positive one, women being successful in debate as a good trend, the underlying assumption was indicated as a way to assuage the community's guilt regarding its masculine dominated discourses. Tokenism also serves as a curtain to the outside population. If the debate community is able to provide one or two attractive, successful women debaters as a curtain for some of the more problematic discourses occurring in the debate community. Successful women were discussed as being resilient, tokenized. The last subtheme that describes how successful women debaters are discussed is excuses for female success.

Participants offered excuses for female success as examples of discussion about successful women. Data revealed that often women debater's success was attributed to male debate partners, coaches, pre-written responses to arguments (blocks), judges, or pure luck. This thread of discourse regarding women's success is problematic particularly because it discredits their ability to be successful debaters without an alternate force influencing that decision. What this subtheme illustrates about the debate community is that women debaters can be successful only if there is an alternate cause for their success. Rarely are women debaters given appropriate acknowledgement for their success without

crediting other people. This is problematic in the context of core principle one of SI (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), because the meaning associated with this discourse is that women can not be successful on their own, but have to have various methods of support (mostly male) to achieve success. This then dictates how community members discuss future women successes.

In the following section I discuss the overall implications of how unsuccessful women are discussed in the parliamentary debate community.

Unsuccessful Women. Unsuccessful women were discussed as not travelling nationally or being unsuccessful in debate rounds. Unsuccessful women were discussed in four distinct subthemes: a) sexualized for male consumption, b) dumb, c) waste of time, and finally d) invisible. Data revealed that the way unsuccessful women were discussed in debate was markedly different from the manner in which unsuccessful men were discussed. Unsuccessful women were condemned for not winning debate rounds, whereas unsuccessful men were framed as being *young* or *having potential*.

The first subtheme, illustrated in the figure above, explains that unsuccessful women are described in terms of the sexual performance as opposed to debate skills. Data revealed that unsuccessful women were described more often in terms of their appearance or sexual performances as opposed to their attempts at developing their debate skills. Unsuccessful women were condemned for sexual exploits, whereas successful women's sexual encounters are ignored because the debate community accepts them or, more importantly, deemed useful by their success. Data indicated that unsuccessful women have a lack of respect about the debate community and member checking confirmed this

finding. The symbol of unsuccessful women being associated as sexualized for male consumption, combined with a lack of respect, characterizes interactions with debaters as unsuccessful women being present for male consumption. A participant revealed that successful men felt entitled to the pretty girls; if those pretty women are unsuccessful, then their only use to the debate community is for sexual performances with men. However, the debate community creates a double standard; women are condemned for having sex whereas men are rewarded for it. Unsuccessful women, along with being discussed as sexualized for male consumption, were also discussed as being dumb and a waste of time.

The second and third subthemes are unsuccessful women are being dumb and a waste of time. These two themes are discussed together because they were often mentioned in conjunction in the data. Unsuccessful women were described as a waste of time when debaters spoke about unsuccessful women being viewed at as being a drain on, or waste of, resources. Data revealed that debate community members observed coaches spending more time with male debaters, viewing unsuccessful males as just being young, and unsuccessful women as a drain on resources. This was problematic because the condemnation of their lack of success created a self-fulfilling prophecy. SI core principle one says that meaning dictates how people act with one another. If the debate community views women as being a waste of time, then those unsuccessful women will never improve and bridge the gap to successful debaters. Unsuccessful women are also condemned for being dumb. A lack of debate round success is correlated directly with their intelligence. Creating a symbol of unsuccessful women as being dumb and a waste

of time discourages people in the debate community from helping them, and then unsuccessful women never become better. Notably, the characterization of unsuccessful women as dumb and a waste of time are problematic for women debaters as well. If a woman wants to be a parliamentary debater she has to ignore sexual advances from men, insults about her intelligence, and charges about being a waste of time in order to be successful and even in that success the debate community may still deem her invisible. The last subtheme discussed in regards to unsuccessful women is unsuccessful women as invisible.

The last subtheme is that unsuccessful women debaters are invisible. This was the most prominent subtheme regarding responses about unsuccessful women. A veil of silence surrounding unsuccessful women Data revealed that participants characterized unsuccessful women as *forgettable*, *not talked about*, and *irrelevant*. The most predominant discourse regarding unsuccessful women was a lack of discourse. This is problematic for a few reasons. First, if unsuccessful women are invisible or not talked about there is a lack of notable symbols regarding women trying to get better at debate. Instead, women debaters are characterized as unable to get better because they are too dumb and a waste of time. Their debating abilities are irrelevant to the rest of the debate community. The second reason is when unsuccessful women internalize this dominant discourse, their *looking glass self*, (Mead, 1934) changes to accommodate this dominant ideology. Unsuccessful women are told they are irrelevant and do not matter in the debate community. This offers an explanation for the observation Matz and Brushcke (2006) make about the policy debate community about first and second year women debaters

leaving at a higher rate than men. Finally, this discourse is problematic because it makes it difficult for unsuccessful women debaters to feel a part of the parliamentary debate community.

In the following section I discuss the second research question about men in debate.

Discussing Men in Debate

Research question two focuses on how men's gender identity is implicated by the predominant discourses in the parliamentary debate community. Research question two revealed four distinct ways in which men in debate were discussed. The four themes associated with men in debate are: a) male as norm and easy, b) success linked to masculinity, c) godlike, and finally unsuccessful men have potential. A table to illustrate these four themes is provided below.

<u>Men in Debate</u>
Male as Norm and Easy
Successful Men as Godlike
Success Linked to Masculinity
Unsuccessful Men have Potential

The above figure illustrates the four themes associate with discussing men in parliamentary debate. It provides an explanation of how men exist in the debate community.

First, male as norm and easy was the most common theme. Data revealed that most male debaters never thought about their gender performance. More importantly, none of the men could recall a singular moment in which they were excluded or singled out because of their gender. Data also revealed that men felt accepted by the debate community from the beginning. This is in contrast to women debaters, who noted feeling as if they never fit into the debate community. Male as norm and easy in the debate community are manifestations of male privilege. There is never a conscious performance of their gender because it has never been something that has implicated their debate experience negatively. Moreover, meaning determines social interactions—core principle one (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969)—in context of this theme, which means that the debate community treats men as the normal debater. This framing creates problematic symbols for women debaters who are then treated as abnormal or not the ideal identity for a debater. This serves to explain some of the women's feelings in the community. Women reported that they felt as if they did not fit in, they were objectified, and that they contemplated quitting on multiple occasions. This subtheme offers an explanation of this phenomenon.

Second, successful men treated as godlike was a common theme when debaters were asked to describe successful men. Data revealed that more often men were given credit for arguments, were gatekeepers of conversation, and were considered to be more popular than any other group of people in the debate community. Men given credit for arguments during rounds functions as an explanation of the previous subtheme discussed: excuses for female success. As indicated in a previous subtheme, the debate community

often provides excuses for female success. Also, successful men are put in a position of power, as gatekeepers of conversation. Data revealed successful men chose when to initiate and to end conversations in the debate community. Successful male debaters power and social status continues outside of the debate round into the community, where their conversational needs and desires were given prevalence over anyone else's. Finally, successful men were discussed as gaining popularity easily in the debate community. If male debaters are the norm, data revealed that they communicate easier with other debate community members and are seen as being more popular than their female counterparts. Men in debate were discussed not just as godlike; their success was linked to their masculinity.

Success linked to masculinity was the third subtheme when discussing men in debate. Data revealed men were more likely to be characterized using feminine characteristics when those men lost a debate round that they were expected to win. Also, men who performed masculine characteristics had an increase expectation of winning debate rounds. This implicates men's gender identity, for if they lose debate rounds, then their masculine gender performance was unsuccessful. The masculine and feminine performances, in the debate community, function as a dichotomy. Either the male debater wins debate rounds and is deemed to be masculine or he loses debate rounds and is characterized as feminine. The binary nature of debate (winner or loser) creates a space for the masculine/feminine dichotomy to explain debate successes (masculine) and debate failures (feminine). According to Mead's (1934) *looking glass self*, this implicates a male debater's interpretation of appropriate masculine performances in debate rounds. The

final subtheme identified was when interviewees recalled men in debate who were unsuccessful male debaters as having potential.

Unsuccessful men as having potential was the last subtheme discussed in regards to men in debate. Unsuccessful men in debate were characterized as the future of parliamentary debate. Data revealed that unsuccessful men received more coaching time, encouraging words from coaches and judges, and generally were talked about as having more potential. Data revealed that when male debaters first start debate they are given latitude when they lose rounds. For example, if an unsuccessful man were to having a losing record at a debate tournament, that record would be characterized, according to data, as a learning experience. Unsuccessful women, on the other hand, are criticized, called dumb, and referred to as a waste of time. This is explained by previously discussed themes. If male debaters are the norm, then it is assumed that the unsuccessful men eventually will become successful. Successful women debaters are a rarity, they exist only in the context of masculine constructions of success.

After reviewing how men in debate are symbolized in the debate community, I next discuss research question three.

Discussing Symbols and Gender Identity in Debate

Research question three examines symbols constructed from values associated with gender identity. This research question generated two themes: a) aggression in debate and b) symbols ascribed to women debaters. Aggression in debate often is associated with passion and success in debate rounds. However, data revealed that men's and women's aggressive performances were described very differently. Symbols ascribed

to women in debate were specific labels and ways women were described in the data, regardless of their success. A table is provided below to illustrate these specific values and symbols for women and men.

<u>Aggression in Debate</u>	<u>Symbols Ascribed to Women Debaters</u>
Women = Just Bitches	Sex Objects
Men = Strong and Powerful	Weak and Fragile

Above, the figure illustrates labels assigned to women and men in the debate community. On the left displays the two labels given to men and women when each performs aggressively in debate rounds. For men, they are strong and powerful. A man debater as strong and powerful is in line with traditional notions of masculinity. Wood (2012) explains that masculinity is often performed as active, emphasizing strength. Men's displays of aggression fit that norm.

Member checking with one male coach revealed that while these categories are accurate depictions of the debate community displays of aggression should not be viewed in a binary—good or bad. He described displays of too much aggression for either gender are considered to be problematic and punished by judges. However, what is considered to be overly aggressive for a man is very different than for a women. Women often are criticized for displays of aggression that are deemed appropriate for men. Aggression in debate is not an absolute but a continuum. The line where aggression would be deemed inappropriate for women is located in a significantly different spot than it is for men. That line of aggression is a symbol in debate that represents a larger societal problem that

characterizes women as passive (DeFrancisco & Paclzewski, 2006). Women who display acts of aggression are perceived to be more masculine than their gender identity allows. Data revealed that women often were punished by these displays of aggression by being labeled as catty or a bitch (amongst other names). According to the data, when performing aggressively men were given credit for being strong and powerful in debate rounds. Men debaters were rewarded for being active. Data revealed women were ascribed two other symbols aside from bitch: 1) sex objects and 2) weak and fragile.

Women as sex objects were the other symbol frequently applied to women. This data set consisted of women depicting stories of sexual harassment or men noting that women are objectified. Member checking with two male coaches revealed that, while these stories are probably true, they hoped that they were isolated instances. The woman coach with whom I engaged in member checking indicated that she believed the sexual harassment stories were not false or over-reported but accurate, if not underreported. Her observation is the same as Stepp's (2009) observation that women did not report sexual harassment as often in policy debate and that such harassment caused women to be excluded from the activity.

Weak and fragile, illustrated in the figure above, was a symbol often applied to women debaters by participants regardless of the woman's success. Data reveals women were characterized as being either emotionally weak or the weaker debate partner in a male-female partnership. Male debaters indicated that they felt they had to support their female partners emotionally in debate rounds and during decisions. A coach who was used for member checking even indicated that he considered his after round discussions

with women as being nicer and less aggressive than his conversations with a man in the same situation.

The last theme discussed in this thesis is women’s reactions to the masculine dominated discourses discussed in previous themes.

Women’s Responses to the Debate Community

During interviews, women debaters often were asked how they dealt with sexual harassment occurrences, feeling excluded, and debate power imbalances. Women debater’s responses to masculine dominated discourses were divided into four subthemes: a) sisterhood, b) compensate, c) didn’t fit in, and d) dropped out. A table is provided below to illustrate this discussion of themes.

<u>Discursive Responses by</u>	<u>Implications of Masculine</u>
<p data-bbox="496 999 704 1031"><u>Women to Stay</u></p> <p data-bbox="532 1073 669 1104">Sisterhood</p> <p data-bbox="521 1146 680 1178">Compensate</p>	<p data-bbox="946 999 1240 1031"><u>Dominated Discourse</u></p> <p data-bbox="1016 1073 1170 1104">Don’t Fit In</p> <p data-bbox="1032 1146 1154 1178">Drop Out</p>

The above table illustrates the two types of subthemes under this larger theme of women’s responses to the community. First, the discursive responses women engaged in to compensate for feelings of exclusion, women noted that they frequently would seek out other women in the activity. Data revealed actively seeking out of other women served two purposes. First, it provided someone to speak with when women felt like they did not belong or experienced patriarchal issues such as sexual harassment. Functioning as a support system for women to keep them in the community. Second, it provided a

form of sisterhood as older women sought out younger women in an effort to keep them in the community. Several participants revealed either actively mentoring younger women or being a younger woman who experienced mentoring by an older woman. This form of mentoring serves as a way to keep women in the activity. Sisterhood creates a counter narrative, regardless of the larger debate community's discourse about the typical debater being male.

The second discursive response that women engaged in to cope with the masculine dominant discourse is compensation. During interviews, women debaters recalled moments when they felt themselves compensating for their feminine performances. They engaged in specific activities such as altering their dress or cursing to appear more powerful in a debate round. Women debaters physically modify their gender performance to increase their acceptance in the debate community. No discussion occurred regarding whether such modification was successful. However, the occurrence of this phenomenon illustrates that women are encouraged to alter their gender performance to increase their credibility within the debate community. Altering their gender performance is then met with criticism if the woman's gender performance is deemed too masculine, because she is then titled a bitch (as discussed previously). Although a woman altering her gender performance, and resiliently ignoring the insults of being called catty and bitch would then be discussed as a successful women debater.

The other two subthemes in this theme can be described as implications of masculine dominated discourse within the debate community. Women either deal with masculine dominated discourse via coping mechanisms (as indicated above) and/or they

feeling excluded. Some women eventually drop out of the activity. Women described feeling singled out or excluded because of their gender. Often women would recall moments during which they looked around an auditorium, hotel room, or debate round and realized that few women were present in the room. This feeling is a result of a combination of factors: sheer numbers (more men than women debate) and masculine dominated discourses (as discussed in previous themes). Women are told that they are not the typical debater (a male is), to be aggressive but not too aggressive – as characterized in an interview the bitch/doormat dichotomy, to ignore insults, and to be better than men. According to data when a woman is unable to handle the above conditions, then more often than not they drop out or leave the activity. Women leaving at higher rates than men were not observed only by participants, but also by research conducted in policy debate (Matz & Brusckke, 2006).

In the following section, I discuss member checking as a form of proof for my research.

Member Checking

I engaged in member checking with three debate coaches who are active members in the debate community—two men and one woman. The ratio of one woman to two men is more descriptive of the current gender distribution in the debate community, which is why that selection was an appropriate choice. Both men agreed with varying degrees of themes discussed in chapter four. At times one of them would disagree verbally, and then admit to an example of it later on. The woman with whom I engaged in member checking agreed with every single theme that I disclosed and concurred with the portrayal of the

debate community as constructed via interviews with undergraduate debate participants. Engaging in member checking, while offering a form of proof for my work, also exemplified the gender roles in the debate community, in that women debaters are more aware of gender disparity than are man debaters. Often times male debaters offer up successful women as a way to shield themselves from the privilege they experience as men in debate. The male that I member checked with who was more conscious of gender issues attributed his consciousness to his former coach, who created a scenario of gender inclusion within their debate team. This coach encourages an atmosphere where coaches and judges should take an active role in breaking down masculine dominant discourse in debate. After discussing member checking as a form of proof for the themes discussion I discuss limitations for my research.

Limitations

Limitations for this research are discussed in terms of two specific categories: a) physical and b) emotional/personal. Physical limitations are concerned with time, location, and the interviews themselves. Personal limitations discuss my social location and emotional limitations with regard to this study.

First, physical limitations associated with this study would include a) location of interviews, b) number of interviews, c) geographic diversity, and d) timing of interviews. Interviews were conducted primarily in the location of my graduate office. This presented a challenge because there were numerous distractions, such as loud noises coming from other offices and my officemate walking in during an interview. These distractions had to be ignored for the interview to be conducted in an appropriate manner. Also, ten

interviews were conducted over the phone. It would have been preferable to conduct all of the interviews in person, but physical distance and restrictions on time and resources for travel prohibited doing so. I conducted interviews with 19 people—ten women and nine men. Collecting more interviews would have provided more thematic saturation and new themes perhaps could have emerged. Next, geographic diversity was lacking as the people interviewed primarily were from West Texas and the Midwest United States. To provide a better snapshot of the parliamentary debate community, ideally I should have interviewed people from each debate district to provide a wider range of gender narratives. Lastly, interviews were conducted throughout the debate season, which made it difficult to collect data as collegiate debaters were focused on school as well as preparing for debate tournaments. In the future, conducting interviews over the summer would increase the ability to access debaters to interview as well as increase the possibility that debaters have a chance to reflect upon gender issues salient within the community during the debate season. Emotional and personal limitations are the next type of limitations considered.

Emotional limitations take into account my social locations and parliamentary debate. I was a member of the debate community, which implicated my view of the data because I had experienced situations similar to the stories that women debaters described. This was also a personal issue for me, as described in my auto-ethnographic excerpts. A close friend of mine who was an advocate for women in debate was influential in forming my perception of the community. Lastly, some of the people I interviewed were former

team members of mine, and hearing their experiences with men in the community made me feel guilty for not being aware of their situations previously.

Future Research

Finally, I expect that this thesis will be the first of multiple studies that will investigate gender disparity in NPDA debate. The numbers of women who participate in NPDA are not increasing. Identifying problematic constructions of gender identity that exclude groups of people or force people to alter their identities to be deemed worthy to participate in a given community is an exclusionary and patriarchal premise. There have been few research studies performed about communities within which individuals feel the need to perform their identity differently due to masculine influence (Schouten & McAlexander, 2006; McDowell & Schaffner, 2011; Mean, 2001; Pearson, 2009; Forbes, 2002; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Steimel & Lucas, 2009; Touchton et al.; 2008; West & Curtis, 2006; Maranto & Griffin, 2011). Studying gender disparity in debate is a unique insulated community that justifies analysis. Debaters, coaches, and even former debaters who no longer debate isolate debate as a portion of their life that shapes their identity (Pearson, 1999). The debate community, supposedly, has surpassed gender disparity and only focus on an individual's ability to construct arguments, however this thesis indicates that such may not be the case.

Proposed future research could include a quantitative study to determine the prevalence of themes discussed in these interviews. Another topic that should be examined, and is only briefly mentioned in this thesis, is interviewing coaches and tournament directors to discover how their constructions on gender identity influence the

debate community. Data revealed that the way coaches train debaters implicate their views on gender identity. Isolating various themes that coaches believe regarding gender would be helpful in formulating solutions for gender disparity in debate. Third, examining similar data sets using other theories to view the data could provide other implications to the debate community. SI provides a foundation in which other studies can use this as a starting point. Symbols are identified and now other theories can be applied to the symbols to further discuss implications of gender performance in the debate community. Finally, all debaters indicated they believe the community is getting better. Conducting a similar study in five to ten years would test the validity of that statement via longitudinal analysis.

Where Do We Go From Here?

All interviewees were asked what should be done regarding gender disparity in debate at the end of the interview. Few, if any, of the people interviewed argued that a problem did not exist. However, formulating solutions to gender disparity presents a problem that the persons interviewed could not resolve. Most debaters responded with comments to the effect of: “I don’t know,” or “Changing the masculine perspective of gender identity.” While altering the male perspective about gender equality in debate appears to be an easy problem to resolve for persons concerned with debating national and international problems, creating an equitable debate community actually presents a problem for which debate practitioners have no answer.

Debaters went on to explain that they felt that scholarships specifically for girls, or actively recruiting girls, were problematic because it would be an example of tokenism.

I propose that institutionalized mentoring programs would help keep women in the activity. Women debaters reported that when they reached out to other women in the community, it helped them feel more included in the debate activity. Creating peer groups would allow women to know they had someone to talk with when instances of exclusion arose. Second, debate is just a microcosm of society. Debate is supposed to be better than other collegiate activities because a group of progressive men and women compete together. Educated individuals who claim to think that women do belong in debate and who would speak out against patriarchal systems of power. However, themes discussed above occur still. Younger women are sexually harassed and forced out of an activity.

Regardless of an individual's belief about gender disparity in debate, debate universally is a useful and productive activity where debaters develop critical thinking skills and find a voice. That voice needs to be accessible to men as well as to women. Women should be allowed to debate without the restrictions placed upon them by gendered bias regarding the debate performance. Until discussions and institutionalized solutions begin to occur, stories of objectification and sexual harassment will persist within the community.

I began this research before I started my thesis; probably back in the car driving from the airport with my coach. After Sharmi's death, this thesis became a memorial to her memory in the debate community. Sharmi and I spoke of doing this research together after the round at nationals. Our plan was to interview debate women and to capture their experiences in the parliamentary debate community. We both became busy with

school and our personal lives, and put off beginning our research for a few months more. I had thought we had all the time in the world to perform this research, but I was wrong.

I am now not a member of the debate community; instead I am coaching high school debate. In the high school debate community I observe the same identity constructions. I constantly tell my debaters to speak their minds, and that debate really is a place for women. This research began as the proposal Sharmi and I never submitted, researched, or wrote. But as I collected women's (and men's) narratives in the debate community, it grew into something that needed to be said. Women have experienced sexual harassment and discrimination in the debate community, which is unacceptable. Yet, every woman I interviewed said that they love debate—as do I. Each woman spoke of wonderful experiences they have had in the community that cannot be overshadowed by the bad ones. Sharmi loved debate; my high school debaters love debate. If we all love an activity, then there should be more papers, research, and discussion regarding women's experiences, because the problem exists and we might not have all the time in the world to attempt to fix it. I'll leave behind this thesis and continue to coach debate in some capacity. Regardless of if that is at the high school level or college level, I will continue to tell my debaters that debate is a place for women and that they should use the activity to find their voice as Sharmi and I have.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Letter: Gender Identities in Parliamentary Debate

Potential participants were recruited via e-mail solicitation through personal networks. The following is an approximate script the researcher will use.

Subject/Byline: Gender Negotiation in Debate: Volunteer Research Participants Wanted

We are currently working on a project regarding the manner and implications of women's identity construction in the debate community. We are interested specifically in interviewing debaters and coaches who are in the parliamentary debate community or have been within the past 5 years. The information we gather will assist people in gaining a better understanding of how people negotiate women's identities in parliamentary debate.

For our study we seek individuals who are debaters, former debaters or coaches of an active national parliamentary debate team. We define active as going to two or more NPDA/NPTE tournaments a semester. We seek people who would like to participate in a study regarding gender disparity in debate and how those women's identities are communicated in the activity.

Results from our study will help provide communication scholars, professionals, debaters and coaches with an understanding of how the debate community constructs women's identities and the implication of those identities for the community as well as women. We anticipate that our research will glean insights for former, current and new debaters of the implications of the community's construction of women's identities.

Qualified participants will engage in a face-to-face interview lasting approximately 45-90 minutes. Participants' confidentiality will be ensured via pseudonyms. After the interview, participants will be contacted to schedule a time to review the emergent research themes via a process of *member checking* whereby participants verify and clarify emergent themes. You will be emailed to schedule a time to review transcripts and emergent themes once initial data analysis is completed. Participation is strictly voluntary. If at any point you feel uncomfortable or want to terminate participation, you may do so.

If you would like to participate in this research study, please contact Aly Fiebrantz (a.fiebrantz@ttu.edu) or Dr. Katie Langford (katie.langford@ttu.edu) in the Department of Communication Studies at Texas Tech University. You may also reach us by phone at (806) 742-3911. Thank you for your time and consideration.

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a research study examining dominant discourses of how women are identified in the NPDA debate community. The information we gather will add to research on construction of women's identities within a community, and how different people manage that identity. We anticipate that our research will glean insights into how people communicate, via dominant discourses, regarding women's identities and how women negotiated these constructions of their identity. This research is being conducted by Dr. Katie Langford and Alyssa Fiebrantz. You may contact any of us in the Department of Communication Studies at Texas Tech University by phone: (806) 742-3911 or by email at katie.langford@ttu.edu or a.fiebrantz@ttu.edu.

Once this consent form is completed, you will be asked to participate in a video-recorded interview with the researcher during which you will be asked a series of open-ended questions pertaining to your identity, how you communicate to others in the debate community regarding gender and how you think the community as a whole perceives women in debate. The interview will take place at a location of the participants' choice and should last between 45-90 minutes. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and may be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. The identities of interview participants will be protected with the use of pseudonyms for the transcription process. Responses, written transcripts, and any video recordings will remain confidential on a password-protected computer or in a locked file cabinet of the P.I. for a period of one year after the completion of the study.

There are no risks beyond those of everyday life associated with this study. Participation in all aspects of the research is voluntary and you may stop answering questions and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject, contact the Texas Tech University Institutional Review at 806-742-2064. You can also mail them at Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of the Vice President for Research, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409.

Note: This consent form is not valid after September 12, 2013.

Interviewee's Name: _____ (please print)

Interviewee's Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

Participant Information Sheet

Name _____ School Affiliation: _____

Age _____ Gender _____ Gender of Debate Partner (If Applicable):

Hometown (City, State) _____ Current Residence (City, State) _____

How many years did you debate in college?

How many years did you debate in high school? _____

How many years did you coach college debate?

How many years did you coach high school debate? _____

Why did you decide to debate in college? Did someone influence this decision?

Education Level (Circle One): Diploma/GED Some College/Associates

Bachelor's

Some Graduate

Master's

PhD/Professional

Degree

Occupation/Employment _____

Contact Information

Day Phone (Circle One- Home / Work / Cell) _____

E-mail _____

Which method of contact do you prefer? _____

When is the best time to contact you? _____

(For Researcher): Consent Form _____

APPENDIX D

Moderately Structured Interview Guide

(Begin video recording)

Thank you so much for meeting with me today and allowing me to interview you regarding gender and debate. I am collecting in-depth interviews to determine how the NPDA debate community views and treats gender in regards to debate and competitive success. I will be recording this interview with a video camera.

Views on Gender and Debate

In this section we'll discuss your view on gender in relation to the debate community.

1. Why did you first join college debate?
 - a. Was there something that are particularly influential in this decision?
2. On your demographic sheet you identified _____ as your gender identity. How has your gender impacted your experiences in the debate community?
3. How do you think gender identity relates to the debate community?
 - a. In what ways do you think gender identity informs or implicates your interactions in debate?
 - b. Tell me a time where someone's gender identity impacted the way you interacted with them inside a debate round.
 - c. Tell me a time where someone's gender identity impacted the way you interacted with them out of a debate round.
4. How do you think the community views successful women in debate?
 - a. How do you think the community views unsuccessful women in debate?
5. What are two or three words/labels to describe how you think successful women debaters are viewed by the community.
6. What are two or three words/labels to describe how you think unsuccessful women debaters are viewed by the community.

7. How do you think the community views successful men in debate?
8. How do you think the community views unsuccessful men in debate?
9. What are three or four characteristics that a successful woman in debate has?
10. What are three or four characteristics that a successful man in debate has?
11. What are two or three words/labels to describe how you think successful men debaters are viewed by the community.
12. What are two or three words/labels to describe how you think unsuccessful men debaters are viewed by the community.
13. What do you think are some positive representations of women debaters?

Personal Experiences

In this section I'm going to ask you questions regarding different stories in reference to your experience within the debate community.

14. Describe an instance where you performed your gender in debate.
 - a. Why does this story stand out to you?
 - b. How did this impact your identity in the debate community?
15. How, if at all has your gender framed your experience in debate overall?
16. Take me to a moment where you felt isolated or singled out because of your gender? What happened?
 - a. How (if at all) did this implicate your view of the debate community or women in debate?
17. Research indicates that the number of women in highly competitive debate rounds is decreasing for parliamentary debate. Based upon your experience in debate do you feel this research is accurate or inaccurate of your experience in debate? Why?
18. How do you think that individuals in the debate community should to increase the numbers of women in the activity.

19. You indicated that _____ were examples of negative representations of women in debate. What are activities we can engage in to change these representations?
20. What actions do you personally take to increase the number of women in debate? Why/Why not?

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me. I really appreciate your candor and honesty when answering these questions. Do you have any questions? If you'd like I'd be more than happy to send you a finished copy of the paper. Would it be okay if I contact you via e-mail if I have any further questions?

(stop video recording)