

For 10 Points, Fix This Community:

An Examination of Gender and Sexuality in Quiz Bowl

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This study was completed in cooperation with Ms. Jana Lucash, Assistant Principal for Grades 10-12 of Hunter College High School, as part of an Administrative Hunter Scholars Program (in-school internship). The results of the study were also reviewed by Dr. Tony Fisher, Principal, and Mr. David Joffe, Assistant Principal for Grades 7-9.

Please note that due to the timing of the announcement of the new method for reporting questionable behavior in Quiz Bowl, its proposal and potential efficacy are not discussed herein.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank Ms. Jana Lucash for her tireless support of this project. At the beginning of this year, I never expected this research to grow to its current scale (though I know she did, because she warned me that the buzz around the high school faculty was that the two least concise members of the Hunter community had teamed up for an assignment and the world had better watch out). She was certainly under no obligation to foster my work and give it official sanction, and I was shocked and honored when she volunteered to do so. My thanks also to her colleagues, my principal, Dr. Tony Fisher, and my former assistant principal, Mr. David Joffe. I am so very lucky that I go to a school where the administration cares enough about social justice and believes enough in the capabilities of high school students to support my project wholeheartedly.

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Finally, I would be remiss if I did not include a brief acknowledgement of all my parents have done to support my curiosity, both while I was working on this project and in the seventeen years beforehand. Helen White and Carl Levine, Mom and Dad, I hope one of these days you will have enough free time on your hands to read this monstrosity, and I hope that you will be proud of me if and when you do.

This report is dedicated to the younger women on my high school Quiz Bowl team: Rachel Yang, Ella Leeds, Charlotte Newman, Aruna Das, Clarissa Fara, Victoria Freeman, and Inara Kardar. Every time I see one of your faces light up with the thrill of learning something new, you remind me why I became so entranced by academic competition in the first place. I will miss you all immensely next year, but I know you will continue to strive to make the Hunter team a model of inclusivity, camaraderie, and strength.

INTRODUCTION

When Hunter Quiz Bowl won the High School National Championship Tournament for National Academic Quiz Tournaments for the second consecutive year in May 2017 — but the first year for me — I could not stop smiling for days afterward. Carrying our ridiculously ostentatious, six-foot-tall trophy through the hallways to our principal’s office (after we reassembled it; it was too big to fit on the flight home from Atlanta in one piece) was the proudest moment of my life. I was proud that we had won, yes, but even more than that, I was proud that I had been a part of a rare championship team not entirely composed of boys. We were only the third, and everyone knew it. A few women I had never met before even shouted, “Girl power!” to me from across the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport lobby.

Just before we boarded our flight home, my grandmother called me and put my six-year-old cousin Charlotte on the line. “I saw you on the computer,” she giggled. “You are the best in the whole *country*?” That thirty-second conversation made the endless hours I had spent studying for three years straight worth it. One of my earliest memories is of my own older cousin’s college graduation, where I watched her cross the stage and get her diploma and I could hardly believe that she was related to me. I like to think that maybe one of Charlotte’s earliest memories will be the bright May day when she watched me power a question on D. H. Lawrence to win the second game of a disadvantaged final, even though she probably will not hear the name “D. H. Lawrence” again for many years. It meant the world to me to possibly be serving as a role model for her, and for younger non-male players, showing them that identifying as an underrepresented gender in academic competition does not preclude success.

It does often serve as a barrier to success, though. After decades of competition, an activity in which teams typically consist of four players should have had more female or nonbinary members of winning teams than can be counted on a single hand. I have seen the gender gap in Quiz Bowl firsthand countless times over the years. Sometimes, it manifests itself in something as mundane as a tournament director forgetting to ask the janitor to unlock the women's restroom at the beginning of the day, or, on occasion, not even knowing where it is. Sometimes, a moderator begins a round by telling the room, "Good luck, gentlemen," before quickly tacking on a defensive "and lady." Sometimes, albeit very rarely, a question related to the fashion industry comes up, and if a girl is present, all eyes land on her with a desperate expectation that she will know the answer.

Other times, it presents bigger challenges. For example, last year, our team attended Texas Invitational (a tournament right before the postseason with a concentrated field meant to simulate the playoffs of the national tournament, for those who do not already know). Twenty teams attended the invitational and only a couple of them drove to Houston during the morning of each competition day, meaning over fifty players from out of town needed to stay in nearby hotels. Many schools have policies requiring students to room with students of the same gender (and not by themselves) on away trips, so as is usually the case for me when our team travels, I needed to find at least one other girl with whom to stay. It turned out that the one other girl I eventually found was the only other girl attending both days of the tournament. Had one of my teammates not happened to know her coach personally, I would not have been able to attend Texas Invitational, one of the most competitive and prestigious non-national tournaments in all of Quiz

Bowl, and perhaps she would not have, either. Though I've made many friends by rooming with girls from other schools, such arrangements are not always possible.

Another recurring problem is the under-representation of women in Quiz Bowl answer lines. This year, I was Head Editor for Prison Bowl XI, and I made the conscious decision to include more women than average — and faced Hell for it. In particular, many players took issue with asking about Rosa Bonheur, despite that the fact that she is an important feminist, one of the most defining artists of the nineteenth century, and a featured painter in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Another example I have used to illustrate the disparity in answer lines before is that though Alan Paton and Nadine Gordimer are both white, anti-apartheid, South African novelists from the mid-twentieth century, and thus stand on fairly equal footing (except that Gordimer has a Nobel Prize to her name), the former's works come up far more than the latter's.

Then there are times when the gender imbalance is downright destructive. As an example, I will recount an example with which most of the community is familiar by now, so please bear with me. In our national final last May, we faced a notoriously well-disciplined team from an all-boys school in suburban Michigan, Detroit Catholic Central (or DCC) A. DCC has had a universally respected Quiz Bowl program for over a decade, and has many a national title to its name (while I cannot name a single all-girls school which is a known entity on the national scale). Last season in particular, DCC was seen as an unbeatable powerhouse, far ahead of the next best team (us) in the rankings compiled by Fred Morlan, which are widely considered to be official. The team had numerous ardent supporters. My team was undoubtedly the underdog.

While I cannot and would not want to speak to the culture of the DCC program, I could cite many examples of memes circulated around the community last season which described its

teams as being trained to avoid showing signs of emotion and instructed to avoid the social aspects of Quiz Bowl, though the community is generally very active and high-level players tend to have friends around the country. In particular, one recurring claim was that DCC players are subject to an “implicit covenant” in which they agree to never date an opponent, because such a relationship might distract them from competitive success. I have no knowledge as to whether or not any of the above assertions are true, but it is certainly true that they characterize the *perception* of the program. In contrast, though my team was certainly not always cast in a positive light, we were generally seen as personable, involved, and almost too emotional at times. In terms of public image, the final two teams vying for the championship probably could not have been more different. The stage was set for a heated and exciting end to the tournament.

What no one expected, though, was the ensuing activity in the comment section of the final’s live stream on Periscope, which was dominated by DCC supporters (though in most cases I do not know whether or not the commenters had any official affiliation with the school). Things quickly turned ugly. Many misogynistic and sexually explicit remarks flooded the site. While I was not the only one of my teammates targeted, I was the player targeted the most frequently, and I was the only one targeted for an immutable demographic characteristic rather than a specific action or behavior. I was not only the only girl onstage but also the only girl to have been onstage for the national final since 2014, a year in which the state of the Internet, American politics, and social norms were irrefutably different. In my view, no one could reasonably blame National Academic Quiz Tournaments (NAQT) for not anticipating what unfolded. It was not their fault that after Charlotte got off the phone, my mother got on and told me she needed to talk to me when I got home; she asked me what some of the explicit language used online meant, because

none of my family members watching (which included two cousins younger than eight, two grandparents, two parents, and several aunts and uncles) could decode the slang. I swallowed and looked her in the eye and lied, because I did not want her to worry about me.

Eventually, the video records were deleted and moved to Youtube, which allows comment moderation on live streams. Such a decision was commendable. Still, the videos were left up on a public site for over two months. The unacceptable remarks were linked to usernames. It would have been easy to determine the identity of the offenders. No one did.

Late this fall, an incident about which I will not go into detail prompted a reconsideration of what, if any, consequences players and officials should face for voicing “controversial” (a euphemism for prejudiced and/or hostile) beliefs. Could someone be banned from future tournaments for bigoted behavior? Could someone be banned from future tournaments for expressing fascist ideologies? If so, who should have the power to make those case-by-case determinations? How could officials keep a precedent of viewpoint-based exclusion from being abused in the future? A slew of posts regarding these questions and others quickly condemned at least one member of the surrounding discussion as a hypocrite, because he had been one of the users active in the by then infamous Periscope comment section. Remarkably, these posts revealed that, in fact, the identity of at least one perpetrator behind the incident in May was known.

Once again, the Periscope comments moved to the forefront of the Quiz Bowl community’s mind. Adults and students alike began to post angrily on the hsquizbowl.org forums, known colloquially as simply “the forums,” and demand action against that individual. Before long, Mr. Jeff Hoppes, a representative of the organization and the moderator of the national final

in 2017, published this message there: “[I]n reaction to the comments made on the Periscope video, NAQT has banned one individual from staffing our national championships, and prepared a second ban should we discover the identity of a commenter who is presently pseudonymous. Our thanks go out to the community members who were able to provide us with detailed information about the comments in question. We have reason to believe that the present state of our information about the comments in question are incomplete. If anyone reading this has additional information available about offensive commentary made during the 2017 HSNCT finals, please contact me with details . . .” While I was relieved that action had finally been taken, I could not help but remember that if NAQT had not deleted the videos in the first place, they could have recorded information about the comments internally rather than relying on (presumably) the hope that someone happens to have screenshots of the necessary evidence.

Questions and anger lingered after the announcement of the ban. Although, up until December, I had heard a grand total of zero people talking about what happened to me — an official apology had never been issued, and DCC had never (as far as I know) publicly acknowledged the incident — here were just a few of the comments which suddenly appeared on the forums:

- I’m glad [NAQT] will no longer use Periscope, but surely we deserve a fuller response . . .
 - . I believe if the most powerful organization in a game with a disgusting gender imbalance fails to prevent underaged girls in their event from being publicly degraded by observants, it is their responsibility to give a fuller accounting of who, what, how, and

why, and possible consequences, to make it clear to other adults who blurred the line with high schoolers on the internet that that is not acceptable going forward.

- When you stoop to the level of mocking the appearance or playing ability of a girl who is in the middle of attaining one of rarest marks of excellence in the game, you've done irreparable harm to the future of the game and deserve to have your feet held to the flames.
- I told NAQT ABOUT THIS WHEN IT HAPPENED. It seems to me you people have been too busy thinking up more worthless national titles [referencing the new Individual Player National Championship Tournament (IPNCT)] than acting [sic] like proper stewards of the game. 7 months and there were [sic] tons of reprehensible shit said.

Where's any action?

- An organization's first response to wrongdoing probably shouldn't be deleting any evidence that it occurred, effectively ensuring that the perpetrators face no consequences. In this case, it would've been possible to remove the public version of the stream without deleting it entirely, as far as I am aware. Doing this might have allowed the wrongdoers to be identified by their usernames and prevented from continuing their harmful behavior.

Seeing all of these comments (almost entirely left by men) in such a public place brought up a lot of old anger and pain for me. It was a bizarre experience, watching people I barely knew exchange heated online messages about what the right way to protect me was. No one, including them, had ever reached out to me to see if I was okay, or what *I* thought the right way to protect me was. As glad as I was that people finally seemed to care about what happened back in May, the entire episode felt strange. Something still felt palpably wrong.

Later in this report, I will elaborate on the events which followed, but I have spent enough pages on this saga for now. I include what I have described of it so far here, at the outset of this paper which will inevitably stretch into a tome, because I want to set the tone. I want to provide a window through which all of the results herein may be viewed. Lest there be any concern that the struggle to make Quiz Bowl more inclusive is purely an intellectual exercise, efforts fueled by pure politics and victimization — lest anyone think that we have talked about diversity for too long and it is time to get back to the game — think of how I felt when I lied to my mother. Think of how I felt for the next seven months when not a single person thought to ask me if I was okay.

This anecdote is obviously just a reflection of my experience. I have heard numerous even worse stories from my female friends on other teams. Perhaps it did not achieve its goal of getting its reader a bit more emotionally invested in this issue. Perhaps, in fact, some readers are currently rolling their eyes and wondering what place such a confessional has in an academic study. Let me make my purpose very clear. I do not claim to be unbiased. I do not purport to hold a mathematics degree and assert beyond a reasonable doubt that I have the answer to an institutional problem. I do, though, promise to report the data I have collected over the past year faithfully. In many cases, it did not say what I expected it to say; some of the results pleasantly surprised me, and reassured me that things in Quiz Bowl are not as bad for non-men as I had feared. In most cases, though, it confirmed my suspicions. As a community, we have work to do if we want Quiz Bowl to be a welcoming environment for everyone with a passion to learn. If you want to be a part of that work, read this report. Some of it will be ruthlessly statistical. Some of it will be unapologetically personal. It will not be a traditional intellectual paper, nor will it be a memoir. It will be both and it will be neither. It will be the closest I can get to a complete reckoning with the problem of

gender imbalance in my beloved Quiz Bowl, in all its facets. There is more to do. There is more to say. I hope that after reading, you will want to strive to do and say it with me.

PROJECT ORIGIN AND GOALS

I have been interested in the ways in which gender and sexuality affect the experience of players in Quiz Bowl almost since I began playing three and a half years ago as a freshman. It did not take me long to notice the disparity between men and non-men behind the buzzer. Long before I was aware of how to study to become a good player, I was acutely aware that when I made Junior Varsity History Bee finals at the last local tournament of my sophomore year, I was the only girl in my area I had ever seen do so. As a junior, I co-founded the Girls in Quiz Bowl Committee with Piper Winkler (then a senior from Phillips Academy Andover), Megha Prasad (then a sophomore from Lexington High School), Ms. Jessica Symmes Bowen (the coach of the team from the Advanced Math and Science Academy, or AMSA), and a few other players from Massachusetts. The Committee wrote and ran the first ATHENA tournament, a set combining traditional NAQT questions and house-written questions intended to promote learning about successful women across all categories/fields, in April 2017. (ATHENA II is scheduled for next season.) I have also informally published numerous short essays about my experiences as a female Quiz Bowl player on the forums, on Facebook, and elsewhere. Needless to say, making academic competitions more inclusive was an issue close to my heart.

During course selection for senior year, it occurred to me that an independent study regarding women in Quiz Bowl might be the perfect culmination of the work I had been doing throughout high school. I thought I could read a few articles on the subject, compare them to articles about debate and other high-intensity academic competitions, and then maybe analyze the use of pronouns in pyramidal tossups; I had noticed that tossups on women were far more likely to use gender neutral pronouns for the bulk of their text, because the paucity of women

well-known enough to be mentioned at the high school level meant that feminine pronouns early in a question often narrowed down the possibilities enough to make guessing a reasonable strategy. Unfortunately, that idea did not fit neatly into one of the departments at Hunter College High School, and in order for the project to proceed, I needed an advisor. I asked a few history teachers, but they wanted to reframe it as a deep dive into the history of trivia and representation of women in advertising. I asked a few English teachers, but they insisted that the journalism they taught was rarely investigative. Finally, four possible advisors emerged: two statistics teachers and two Quiz Bowl coaches. Unfortunately, one of the math department members felt too overwhelmed by her existing workload for the upcoming year and so backed out, and, for various reasons, the other three candidates announced they would be leaving the school in the fall.

Quietly, I accepted the death of my idea, registered for classes, and moved on.

Ironically, it was a disciplinary summons to the office of my assistant principal, Ms. Jana Lucash, that resurrected the project. As I was sheepishly leaving the room, she called after me: She had heard about my idea for an independent study, and while as an administrator she was unable to serve as its advisor, she was excited about the prospect of transforming it into a Hunter Scholars Program (HSP), or internship. In essence, she and her colleagues were interested in the effects of gender and sexuality on academic competition, too, because they wanted to make Hunter students' experiences in such competition as positive as possible. As a result, my work could be considered official work for her. By spending five hours each week on the project, I could get course credit for simultaneously trying to make the community most important to me a bit more welcoming and learning how to conduct a large-scale research project. Plus, the HSP

would appear on my transcript as a pass/fail class. It was an ideal proposition, and I eagerly and gratefully agreed.

The first step outlined in my action plan was research, so Ms. Lucash and I hit the journal databases. We hit the newspaper archives. We got desperate and hit the search engines. There was nothing. No one seemed to know how many girls participate in Quiz Bowl, or why the gender imbalance exists. In fact, the problem was only even recognized in highly informal settings, comparable to my own Facebook posts. Recalibrating, we decided to start by looking for background information on gender as it affects academic competitions more generally. Surely, we assumed, an activity as respected and important to academic thinkers as speech and debate had been examined through this lens before.

We soon discovered, shockingly, that we were wrong. Even articles that initially seemed promising soon presented more questions than answers. For example, “The Double Standard in CEDA: A Feminist Perspective on Gender Stereotyping in Intercollegiate Debate” by M. G. Jorgi Jarzabek appeared to be a perfect source, but the article, which was published in 1996, was debilitatingly out-of-date and included a number of problematic suggestions about how to address gender inequity, such as suggesting women read the sports and business sections of the newspaper each day so they will have something to discuss with their male peers. Two others promised an analysis of how gender affects extracurricular choice; we soon discovered that one focused on Germany, the other Russia. While many American debaters, Mock Trial participants, and other high school students had publicly commented on the issue in their various events over time, to the point that we found numerous organizations which asserted they were working to combat the imbalance, we could find no official, statistical proof of its existence. I was appalled that it had

been an open secret across academic competitions for so long. The first step to solving a problem must be establishing that the problem is real.

As such, my thinking about the project shifted out of necessity. My goal shifted from joining an intellectual dialogue to starting one. It became clear to me that in order to take any notable steps towards the goal of making the Quiz Bowl community more inclusive, I needed to seize the opportunity the Hunter administration had given me and provide substantial research on the subject of my HSP. For too long, people have been able to dismiss sexism in academic competitions as anecdotal or inconsequential since no research has demonstrated its significance — because there has not been any research. My hope is that in the future, Quiz Bowl players, coaches, and administrators will be able to point to the results contained in this report as evidence of the problem, and then work together to find solutions beyond those I suggest here.

During first semester (from September 2017 until January 2018), after determining that the original action plan for the HSP was no longer viable, my work focused on analyzing the state of sexism in academic competitions as experienced by Hunter players specifically. The rationale behind this decision was that, since my study was framed as an internship, I needed to justify the administration's interest in my topic. I was tasked with demonstrating that gender affected the experiences of the students for whom my principal and assistant principals were responsible. The agreement was that the results from an initial survey distributed to members of Hunter's academic competition teams would inform the focus of my work during second semester. The results from that survey are described in the next section of the report, but in brief, they indicated that Quiz Bowl and History Bowl were particularly affected by gender inequity as compared to the other teams. I was not surprised. After meeting with the administration, I obtained approval for using

second semester (from February 2018 until June 2018) to expand my research on Quiz Bowl to a national — and, as it turned out, international — scale, using a newly edited version of the survey.

Over the course of this report, I will analyze the results of that survey, which was designed to in broad terms appraise sexism in Quiz Bowl. The questions Ms. Lucash and I hoped to answer include these: Is there gender imbalance in Quiz Bowl? Is there sexism? Why or why not? If so, how does it manifest itself, and what can we do to help make the community more inclusive? After discussing the project with NAQT, I also agreed to suggest a set of possible solutions, although I do not claim to know them all. Ideally, other members of the community will read this report and think of more ideas I did not include. If all goes well, it will be considered the beginning of a more action-oriented discussion about diversity in Quiz Bowl rather than the definitive guide for its trajectory. I anxiously await critique. Still, I want to emphasize again that we are doing something different here. We are moving away from the back-and-forth of the forums and the transience of social media to lay the foundation for a more lasting consideration of the experience of non-men (and, hopefully, other underrepresented groups) in Quiz Bowl.

SUMMARY OF FIRST SEMESTER

The results of the first semester of the HSP are not divulged in full in this report, as I have already submitted the corresponding report to the administration of my school to whom it directly pertains. In addition, relevant tables and graphs have been omitted (and their contents have been summarized) to keep this section as concise as possible. Still, readers should still feel free to skip ahead to the next section if they are not interested in the findings about Hunter which informed the development of the survey about which the bulk of this study is focused.

It took Ms. Lucash and I about a month to prepare the first semester survey, during which time we got used to the associated technology and carefully edited the questions to make them as clear and non-leading as possible. Although there were questions pertaining to eight different academic competitions represented at Hunter (Quiz Bowl, History Bowl, speech and debate, Mock Trial, Math Team, Science Bowl, Certamen, and Ocean Bowl), each of those activities was introduced by a preliminary page acting if the respondent had participated in it; those who clicked that they had not were redirected to the introductory page for the next activity so that they did not have to scroll through a myriad of detailed inquiries about an event in which they had never competed. (It should be noted that despite persistent efforts to increase responses for Science Bowl, Certamen, Ocean Bowl, and Mock Trial, including extending the deadline and reaching out to relevant club leaders many times, the results for those four activities were so scant that they could not be considered instructive and had to be eliminated from consideration.) In addition to the administrators, student leaders of other academic competition teams read through the survey to make sure it adequately addressed the needs of their activities, though no changes were deemed necessary based on that review.

Almost all of the survey was of my own creation, but Ms. Lucash provided valuable insights and suggestions throughout the development phase. For example, she suggested that I include a definition of sexual harassment for the purposes of the project, so that everyone responded to my questions about that very sensitive topic with the same understanding of what the questions meant. The definition and explanation I drafted and used for the remainder of the research process (including during second semester) reads as follows, and was included directly below every mention of sexual harassment anywhere in the form: “For the purposes of this survey, sexual harassment is physical, emotional, psychological, or club-related mistreatment due to gender or sexuality, and includes harassment perpetrated by people with more power than you and harassment perpetrated by teammates or opponents which recurred or was not properly dealt with by a coach, staffer, or administrator. Assault is included within harassment to protect the identity of assault victims. Your answers will not be tied to your name publicly in any way. All answers remain confidential (but will be represented as part of the final statistics for the survey).” Ms. Lucash also suggested that very few of the questions be mandatory, which resulted in some respondents providing significantly more data than others, and that the responses be limited to one per Hunter email address to prevent spam. With those changes made, we asked the eight teams to send the survey’s link to their mailing lists with instructions to fill it out within a few weeks.

The survey asked for basic identifiers, including gender, and then moved on to more specific questions about the respondents’ participation in academic competition: the duration of their involvement with their team, the levels at which they had competed, and whether or not they had quit the activity yet (and if so, why), among others. After that came questions about the interactions of gender with academic competition, especially any instances of sexism. The survey

asked respondents if they had heard sexist comments from a series of different figures: tournament directors or administrators, tournament staffers, Hunter-affiliated coaches or advisors, coaches or advisors for other teams, opponents, and teammates. For each of these questions, if respondents answered “yes,” they were given the option to say how often they had heard sexist comments from that figure, specify to which gender(s) the comments were sexist, note whether the comments were directed at a specific person/specific people or not, and expand on their answers with additional comments. For opponents and teammates, respondents were also given the option to specify whether the sexist comments were made in person or online. There were also questions relating to how, if at all, they had addressed such instances. Next, the survey asked respondents if they had ever felt less welcome in the activity due to their gender. The answers to that question were, in my eyes, the most important in the entire massive survey. Other miscellaneous questions at the end of the survey included whether respondents were aware of any female administrators working for a national organization governing their competition, whether they had ever felt sexually harassed in conjunction with it, whether they had ever had a club leader who shared their gender identity, and whether they were a member of a significant gender minority (defined as a third or less) on their team. A final question asked whether or not respondents had ever had a teammate who was not cisgender, but due to the small sample size and the interest in protecting the privacy of students in our relatively small school, those results were not analyzed.

One of the most interesting findings from the initial phase of the study was that no Hunter activity’s respondents were more than half non-male, although many of our academic competition teams have reputations for being female-dominated. In particular, our debate team is usually

considered to be controlled by women. Not only did the data not support that claim but one respondent went so far as to say she ultimately decided not to join the team, though she was interested, because it “caters to upper middle class white men who can afford tutoring and are extremely self-assured.” In addition to bringing up the intersectional issues of classism and racism, which will be discussed later in this report, her comment made clear that the perception of debate as a strong women’s club was not universal.

Getting into the analysis of more specific questions relating to sexism, a distressing finding during first semester was that the type of figure from which Quiz Bowl players at Hunter had most commonly heard sexist remarks was a teammate, though at least one player had heard them from every type of figure except, thankfully, a school-affiliated advisor. Also, as compared to non-male players, male Quiz Bowl players expressed much more uncertainty regarding whether or not they had witnessed sexism. One admitted, “I’m not really paying attention,” while another said, “I don’t remember specific examples because my memory is bad, but I do remember it happening,” and still another added, “I feel like I have, but I can’t pinpoint a specific instance, so can’t really answer in more detail [than ‘not sure’].” The trend suggests that non-male players at Hunter are struck by sexism when it does occur; they feel more confident than their male counterparts that if someone were being sexist in their vicinity, they would notice. However, for all genders, a significant portion of respondents answered that they felt afraid to speak out against sexism. Such fears were often linked to the power held by offending parties; as one male respondent put it, “On many occasions, I’ve wanted to respond to sexism but have held back out of fear of repercussions from the aggressor.”

The results for History Bowl were quite similar to those for Quiz Bowl for non-male players, with slightly lower rates of conviction that respondents had never heard sexist remarks from authority figures, but the results for male players revealed a stark contrast in experience. Although most male players reported witnessing sexist behavior by a teammate, and like in Quiz Bowl no male respondents were sure a teammate had not exhibited such behavior, no male respondents reported definitely hearing sexist comments from anyone *except* a teammate. (On the other hand, at least one female respondent reported hearing sexist comments from every figure except the various advisors.) In fact, with regard to all adult positions, more than half of male respondents were sure they had never heard sexist comments, while half were sure of the same with regard to opponents. Thus, most male respondents were aware that some of their peers experience sexism in History Bowl, but attributed the problem to specific members of the Hunter team rather than institutional issues. Comments left by male respondents support this analysis. As with male Quiz Bowl players, though, male History Bowl players at Hunter also appeared more likely than non-male players to report or directly confront sexist behavior. However, a majority of players reported feeling afraid to speak out against sexism publicly: half of male respondents and more than half of non-male respondents. Hunter's non-male players' lack of outward response to sexist incidents is especially troubling in History Bowl because in many cases they seem to be the only ones noticing them.

For speech and debate, although respondents reported sexism with rates comparable to (and sometimes even higher than) the Quiz Bowl and History Bowl players, most of them added that their answers were largely based on hearsay. "I've never directly encountered sexism within the debate community," wrote one female respondent, "but I've heard others recount their

experiences with sexist judges before.” Another female respondent said her answers were based on “hearing about other’s [sic] recounting their experiences with sexism” and “reading articles that talk about the prevalence of sexism in the debate community” rather than personal experience. Therefore, non-male debaters reported actually experiencing sexism themselves at a lower rate than did non-male Quiz Bowl and History Bowl players. In addition, very few debaters reported feeling afraid to speak out about sexism in their competition. These results coupled with the prevalence of easily accessible organizations working to increase gender diversity in the activity, such as the Women’s Debate Institute, led the administration and I to conclude that, given our time constraints, we should not focus our efforts on speech debate during second semester.

Sexism appeared to be even less of a problem in the Math Team community. Only one respondent of any gender reported witnessing any sexism while on Math Team. With regard to administrators, staffers, and teammates, all female respondents were sure they had never heard sexist comments. No one left any comment to complicate those results, either. It truly seems that on Hunter’s Math Team, sexism is not nearly as prevalent as in humanities-based academic competitions. Perhaps the highly objective nature of mathematical competitions provides fewer opportunities for sexism to manifest itself.

Ultimately, the data justified narrowing the focus of the project during second semester to focus on Quiz Bowl and History Bowl. In addition to being the two academic competitions in which I have the most personal experience and connections, and thus the two in which I feel I have the best ability to make a substantive difference, they had the most troubling results in the survey of Hunter students. More than half of non-male respondents in both activities reported

feeling less welcome due to their gender, a larger percentage than for any of the other activities analyzed. That statistic is unacceptable. Also, though a majority of respondents of all genders had never reported the sexism they witnessed, half of those who did had never seen that action result in positive change (and all of those who did had been disappointed at least once). In other words, increasing the frequency of reports would not be enough on its own to resolve the issues of gender inequity in Quiz Bowl and History Bowl.

The problem would have to be analyzed much more deeply, the data suggested, if I wanted my study to make a difference. I ended first semester eyeing the horizon, knowing that if Ms. Lucash and I were to succeed, we would soon be inundated by data. I could hear the thunder. I watched the sky darken. It would soon be time for the downpour.

DEVELOPMENT AND FINAL SURVEY

Ms. Lucash and I worked on adapting the survey from first semester for about two weeks before its release, which was announced concurrently in an email sent out to the Hunter Quiz Bowl mailing list and in an announcement at the Bulldog High School Academic Tournament (BHSAT) at Yale University on February 10, 2018. We aimed to make the second semester version of the survey significantly more streamlined, because we assumed that by taking up less time, a shorter survey would elicit more responses. Our primary goal, after all, was quantity. We wanted our sample size to be large and diverse enough to allow for statistically significant analysis of the results. As such, we consolidated many of the questions and, as per Dr. Fisher's suggestion from first semester, made very few of them mandatory. Luckily, since we had spent so much time during first semester on careful wording within the survey, we were able to get the new version to the public in short order, and we collected responses for a full two months.

Before we opened the survey, its contents were approved by Dr. Fisher and Mr. Joffe, as well as by Ms. Joyce Sun, who controls the social media presence of NAQT. The first two responses to the survey were from Mr. R. Robert Hentzel, the President and Chief Technical Officer for NAQT, and Mr. Jonah Greenthal, the Vice President for Marketing and Webmaster. As such, Ms. Sun, Mr. Hentzel, and Mr. Greenthal all had preliminary access to the questions contained in the survey and agreed to publicize it, as detailed in the next section, so it may be assumed that they approved of its construction. Ms. Sun made it clear that NAQT was interested in the project's goals and hoped to gain insight into possible solutions to gender inequity in Quiz Bowl from the results. It was only with the support of all five of these authorities that distribution of the survey proceeded.

Upon first opening the survey, respondents were greeted with this message: “All identities are confidential unless you allow us to publish your name in the study. We only require you to provide a name so that we can ensure each respondent only takes the survey once. The only people with access to this form will be me, Chloe Levine, and my assistant principal, Ms. Jana Lucash. Please direct all questions to chloe.e.w.levine@gmail.com.” It was important that respondents feel that their responses were secure such that they answered the questions honestly, without regard for how their opinions would affect their standing in the Quiz Bowl community. I am humbled by how trusting players proved of my integrity; respondents gave very personal, candid replies although they were required to attach their names. Requiring names, though, allowed us not to limit responses to one response per email address, which was desirable because we wanted people to be able to access the form whether or not they had a Gmail account into which they could log in for reference. With names, I was able to verify the validity of the results on a case-by-case basis by ensuring that respondents were, in fact, members of the Quiz Bowl community, using hdwhite.org’s comprehensive statistical database. It also allowed me to eliminate any results from respondents who had already completed the survey and either forgotten they had done so or refreshed their page at an inopportune moment such that their answers were submitted twice.

To begin the survey, respondents were required to report not only their names but also their high schools (names and locations), their current grades or graduating classes, and their genders. An “other” option was provided for the question relating to gender, with space to fill in a gender identity which did not conform to the male/female gender binary. These questions provided the only demographic information used for the survey’s analysis.

Next, respondents were asked if they played or had ever played high school Quiz Bowl. If they answered affirmatively, they were taken to a page of questions specific to that activity. The top of that page specified, “If Quiz Bowl and History Bowl are the same club/team at your school, please answer the questions in this section as they pertain to both activities.” Respondents were required to report how many years (to the nearest year) they had played, and then, they were required to report whether or not they had quit the activity before graduating. A comment box was provided for an optional explanation. The next question required respondents to report whether or not they had ever held leadership positions on their teams, and if so, which ones. These questions were used to analyze the level of each respondent’s involvement in Quiz Bowl within the context of an individual team.

The questions which followed were optional and related to the presence of sexism in the Quiz Bowl community. Respondents were first asked, “Have you ever heard/seen sexist or homophobic comments/behavior from a tournament director, organizational administrator, opposing coach, or other staffer?” They were able to select as many options as they wanted from the following list: “Yes, sexist to women,” “Yes, sexist to men,” “Yes, homophobic/transphobic/queerphobic,” “Yes, directed at me personally,” “No,” and “Not sure.” Then, they were asked, “If you answered yes to the previous question, how often have you heard/seen such comments/behavior?” Each respondent could only select one response from a second list: “Very often,” “Often,” “Sometimes,” “Occasionally,” and “Once.” The same structure was used for three more couplets of questions, which asked about the conduct of, in turn, “your own coach or other advisor/chaperone,” “an opposing player,” and “a teammate.” Before the end of that section,

respondents were provided with a comment box below this message: “You are encouraged to provide additional comments about your experiences related to the questions above.”

The next five questions were also optional and related to the ways players had responded to instances of sexism in Quiz Bowl which they had witnessed or of which they had been aware. The first question in the section asked, “If you answered yes to any of the questions above, have you ever responded to sexist behavior directly?” This question was intended to refer to personal confrontations or “call-outs” regarding sexism — for example, a response to a sexist joke made in casual conversation with a remark such as “that was not okay with me.” Then, respondents were asked, “If you answered yes to any of the questions above, have you ever reported sexist behavior to an authority figure?” For both of those questions, respondents were able to select one option from the following list: “Yes, always,” “Yes, sometimes,” “Yes, once,” and “No.” Next came a follow-up for each of the preceding two questions: Respondents who had indicated that they had ever directly responded to sexist behavior or reported such behavior to an authority figure were asked how often those actions resulted in positive change in the offending parties’ behavior. They were able to select either “Always,” “Sometimes,” or “Never.” Finally, respondents were asked, “Do you think there is stigma against reporting or confronting sexism in Quiz Bowl/have you ever feared you would face consequences from a person or people in power for doing so?” They were afforded the opportunity to select “Yes” or “No” or to key in a more nuanced response with an “Other” option.

The final section of the Quiz Bowl page of the survey contained what Ms. Lucash and I considered to be the most significant three questions in the second semester study. First, respondents were required to provide an answer to the following question: “Have you ever felt

less welcome in the Quiz Bowl community because of your gender?" The only available options were "Yes," "No," or "Prefer not to say"; there was no chance to reply with "Other." Respondents were then given the same three answer options for a more controversial question: "Have you ever felt sexually harassed in Quiz Bowl?" As explained earlier in this report, this statement of definition and explanation was provided: "For the purposes of this survey, sexual harassment is physical, emotional, psychological, or club-related mistreatment due to gender or sexuality, and includes harassment perpetrated by people with more power than you and harassment perpetrated by teammates or opponents which recurred or was not properly dealt with by a coach, staffer, or administrator. Assault is included within harassment to protect the identity of assault victims. Your answers will not be tied to your name publicly in any way. All answers remain confidential (but will be represented as part of the final statistics for the survey)." Ms. Lucash and I were careful not to include any language suggesting that in our analysis we would pass any judgment on respondents who preferred not to answer the question. To conclude the page, respondents were asked, "Are you aware of any people in the Quiz Bowl community abusing their power in a sexist or sexual way?" The following explanation of the question was provided: "This question applies to abuses of power by administrators, staffers, coaches, opponents, teammates, and any other figures involved in the Quiz Bowl community in ANY capacity, BUT the power must relate to Quiz Bowl. For example, a principal who is nominally in charge of Quiz Bowl funding but has abused their power over teachers in their capacity as the head of school would not fit the criteria of this question." The answer choices for this question, which was optional, were the same as those for the two preceding questions, with the addition of "Not sure." Lastly, respondents were given two more comment boxes in which they could provide details elucidating their previous

responses or elaborating on their time in Quiz Bowl more broadly. The first of those boxes was prefaced by this statement: “You are encouraged to expand on your responses to the last few questions.” The second was prefaced by this question: “Do you have anything else you would like to add about your experiences in Quiz Bowl?” Respondents were then asked to click through to the next page.

Although the results for the National History Bee and Bowl (NHBB) section of the survey were deemed too few to allow for in-depth analysis, I will still briefly describe the section’s format. Respondents were first asked whether or not they played or had ever played History Bowl or its related side events (History Bee, United States History Bee, Geography Olympiad, Sports and Entertainment Bee, etc.). As with the beginning of the Quiz Bowl section, those who responded negatively were able to skip the entire section. Next, respondents were asked whether or not there was a distinction between Quiz Bowl and History Bowl at their high schools. Again, those who responded negatively were shepherded past the rest of the questions. The rest of the History Bowl section was identical to the Quiz Bowl section, except that near the top of the page, respondents were asked if they had ever competed in any of the individual side events associated with NHBB and, if so, if they had ever won a regional or national title.

A few concluding questions rounded out the survey and were shown to all respondents regardless of the activities in which they had earlier indicated involvement. First, respondents were asked, “Are/were you part of a significant gender minority on your high school Quiz or History Bowl team (<33% of teammates share your gender)?” They were required to respond with “Yes,” “No,” or “Not sure.” The “Not sure” option was not provided for this subsequent required question: “Have you ever had a coach, advisor, or captain who shared your gender

identity?” The final required question of the survey asked, “Have you ever had a Quiz or History Bowl teammate who was not cisgender?” again with the possibility for respondents to respond with “Yes,” “No,” or “Not sure.” Before submitting their responses, they also had the opportunity to leave their email for follow-up questions and add any final thoughts about the issues of gender and sexuality as they pertain to academic competition.

Ms. Lucash and I estimated that a respondent would need no more than ten minutes to complete the survey, although, of course, the comment boxes created the potential for spending hours composing thorough, thoughtful answers. Still, we did not want to unnecessarily impose. We could have designed a questionnaire with hundreds of questions. We could have designed a questionnaire with one. Ultimately, we believe that the survey we created struck a balance between brevity and detail.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE SURVEY AND DATA COLLECTION

There were several methods via which the survey was distributed to potential respondents. Internally, as Captain of the Hunter Quiz Bowl team and Communications Director for the Hunter History Bowl team, I sent the link to the survey in an email to both mailing lists, and I also reminded players in practice to complete it if they had not already done so. In addition, at most tournaments the teams attended during February and March, I announced the survey to teams briefly during the post-lunch meetings. Several tournament directors (TDs), including Douglas Simons (High Technology High School) and Koh Yamakawa (Columbia University), graciously allowed me to write the link on a board in the meeting room and provided me with valuable time to promote the project. I also told many of my peers in the Quiz Bowl community about the survey in person and publicized it using my own social media, including posts to my own Facebook timeline, posts in the massive Facebook group colloquially known as “Illinois Quiz Bowl Memes” (ILQBM), and messages sent to various Quiz Bowl group chats on Messenger and Snapchat. The response I received via those platforms was near universally positive, and quite enthusiastic.

However, I did not want to limit the respondents to only current players who happened to be competing in the Northeast circuits, people who regularly check ILQBM, and my own friends. Rather, I wanted the respondents to be as accurate a reflection of the community at large as possible, a goal which I knew could only be met with the help of the national organizations. Therefore, I reached out to Ms. Sun, who had been publicly supportive of my efforts to expand discussion of gender in Quiz Bowl before, to ask if NAQT would consider using its social media presence to promote my survey. As of my writing in mid-May of 2018, the NAQT Instagram

account has 860 followers; its main Twitter has 1,621; its Facebook page has over 3,000.

Although much of that count is attributable to parents and coaches rather than players, I was confident that a social media blast on those platforms would greatly expand the reach of the project. As mentioned above, Ms. Sun and her colleagues Mr. Hentzel and Mr. Greenthal agreed, on the condition that the organization was provided with a full list of questions, a timeline, an explanation of the plan for my final report, and a guarantee of developing suggestions for “actual gender[-balancing] changes” going forward using the results gathered. On Valentine’s Day, all three of the aforementioned accounts released the link to the survey. Along with it and a photograph of me taken from the official HSNCT championship portrait last year, the accounts published this message: “Happy Valentine’s Day! Instead of a tradition #wisewomenwednesday post [it was a Wednesday], one of our HSNCT champions from 2017 has a favor to ask for you all: She’s doing an independent study on the subject of gender issues in quiz bowl, and has a brief survey (~10 minutes). If you have a few spare minutes, please check it out!” The hashtag #girlsofquizbowl was also affixed to the postings. The Facebook post was also shared twice, once by an unknown private user and once by a player who filled out the survey themselves, and the Twitter post received at least nine “retweets.”

For a final effort towards the survey’s distribution, in early April, I sent an email to the respondents thus far who had left their contact information for follow-up questions (as a blank carbon copy to each, to protect their identities). The email included the link and asked them to send it to as many people as possible, be it via mailing lists for the teams with which they were affiliated, messages to their friends, or announcements to other subsets of the community.

Following that plea, a wave of new responses poured in; the survey was closed a couple of days later because we had a sufficient sample size to proceed to the analytical stage of the project.

The response to the postings was overwhelmingly positive. The Instagram post for the survey received 80 likes and two appreciative comments from adult figures in the community. The Twitter post received 22 likes. The Facebook post received over 40 likes as well as a supportive comment from a parent. The post in ILQBM received 70 likes and a handful of kind comments. I suppose, to be fair, potential negative comments may have been deterred by the end of the message I appended to that last one: “If you think this is a stupid study because sexism doesn’t exist in QB, you have two options: Answer my questions anyway so that the data helps prove your point, or ignore this post entirely. Please leave the comment section on this post clear of bullshit. Thanks!”

Was such a comment professional and likely to convey objectivity to the survey-takers? Of course not. I offer no excuse to that effect. However, I do offer an explanation. During the summer of 2017, I wrote a brief essay for ILQBM to respond to a flurry of posts alternately supporting or attacking a meme which criticized the Quiz Bowl community for being more willing to debate trivial details of question-writing than institutional sexism (and resulted in the departure of a prominent member of the community from the group). While my essay eventually became the most-liked post in the group of all time, its comment section was also smattered with patronizing and dismissive remarks. As such, I anticipated a similarly mixed response to the announcement of my study. Of course, my critics have every right to voice their thoughts, but I hoped that by discouraging them from commenting on the posts containing the survey’s link, I might prompt them to write about their opinions by clicking on it instead. Some people in the

Quiz Bowl community do not believe sexism exists in the game, or believe that it does but that I am addressing it in an incorrect or unhelpful manner. This report would be most accurate, I knew, if those people took the time to fill out the survey.

The first response to the survey — that is, the first response that was not submitted by a student at Hunter College High School or an NAQT member in the process of reviewing the document — was completed at 12:54 p.m. on February 10, 2018. The final response I used for analysis was completed at 10:30 p.m. on April 10, 2018. The first response which came after Ms. Lucash and I decided to stop collecting data so we could begin our analytical work was completed at 8:45 a.m. on April 12, 2018, and was followed by five other late responses. Although these responses could not be considered numerically, I read over the comments left by their authors and have included some excerpts in an attempt to acknowledge those respondents' experiences. A few responses which were completed before April 10 were not considered at all in this report's analysis. If respondents did not provide a name (or provided a first name, but no high school), their answers could not be included, because I was unable to verify their identities and confirm that they were indeed members of the Quiz Bowl community who had, at some point, competed at the high school level. To that end, responses tied to names and schools which did not correspond to a recorded high school Quiz Bowl player in the statistical database were also rejected. Furthermore, obvious joke responses were not included and, I might add, earned nothing but a roll of my eyes for their lack of originality. The last category of responses we did not consider were tied to Hunter College High School alumni known to have already completed the survey during the period in which it was only available to the Hunter Quiz Bowl mailing list; as such, these responses could be identified as impersonations.

One additional important detail regarding the method of data collection I devised in cooperation with Ms. Lucash is that everyone who responded to the demographic question asking for gender with anything other than “male” or “female” was considered, for the purposes of the figures which follow, a member of an “other” group. Analyzing the results from all people who are not cisgender with the assumption that they form a gendered group in the way males and females do is obviously not ideal, and, frankly, is built on a flatly incorrect cornerstone. However, due to the relatively low number of responses from such individuals, I decided that, in this particular case, I valued protecting respondents’ identities more than statistically acknowledging the nuanced distinctions between their experiences of being members of gender minorities in academic competition. I hope that their comments, where quoted, help lessen the tension that is thus inherent to this report, and I hope to one day soon be able to increase my sample size enough to analyze the data with more than three categories for gender.

With that, the admittedly dry section on the preparation and methodology of this project’s survey is over. Perhaps many if not most readers are now trying to stay awake and questioning why I included all of this information, though I assumed all along that practically no one would bother reading it. The answer is simple. In the pages that follow, I will analyze data related to one of the issues most important to me. It is crucial that readers understand how I got that data. It is crucial that they not speculate about the information’s origins or accuse me of manipulating it. Criticize the methods. Criticize the premise. Criticize me. But do so with an understanding of the work that went into this study. Do so understanding that I left no corner of my process in shadow. The past twenty pages may have made readers yawn, but if they also made them decide to take me seriously, then I have done my job.

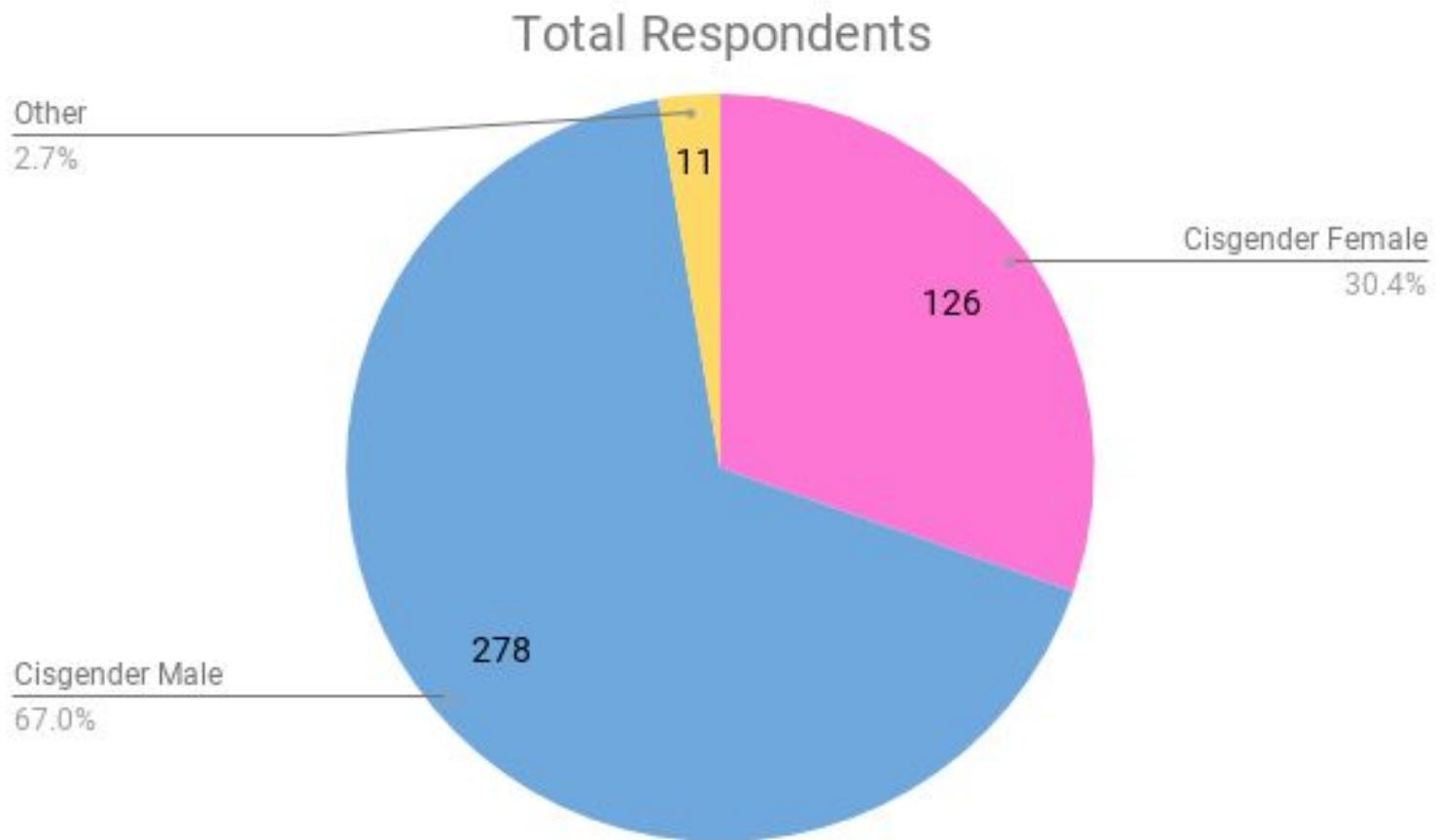
RESULTS: RESPONSE RATES

Figure 1: Total Respondents by Gender Identity.

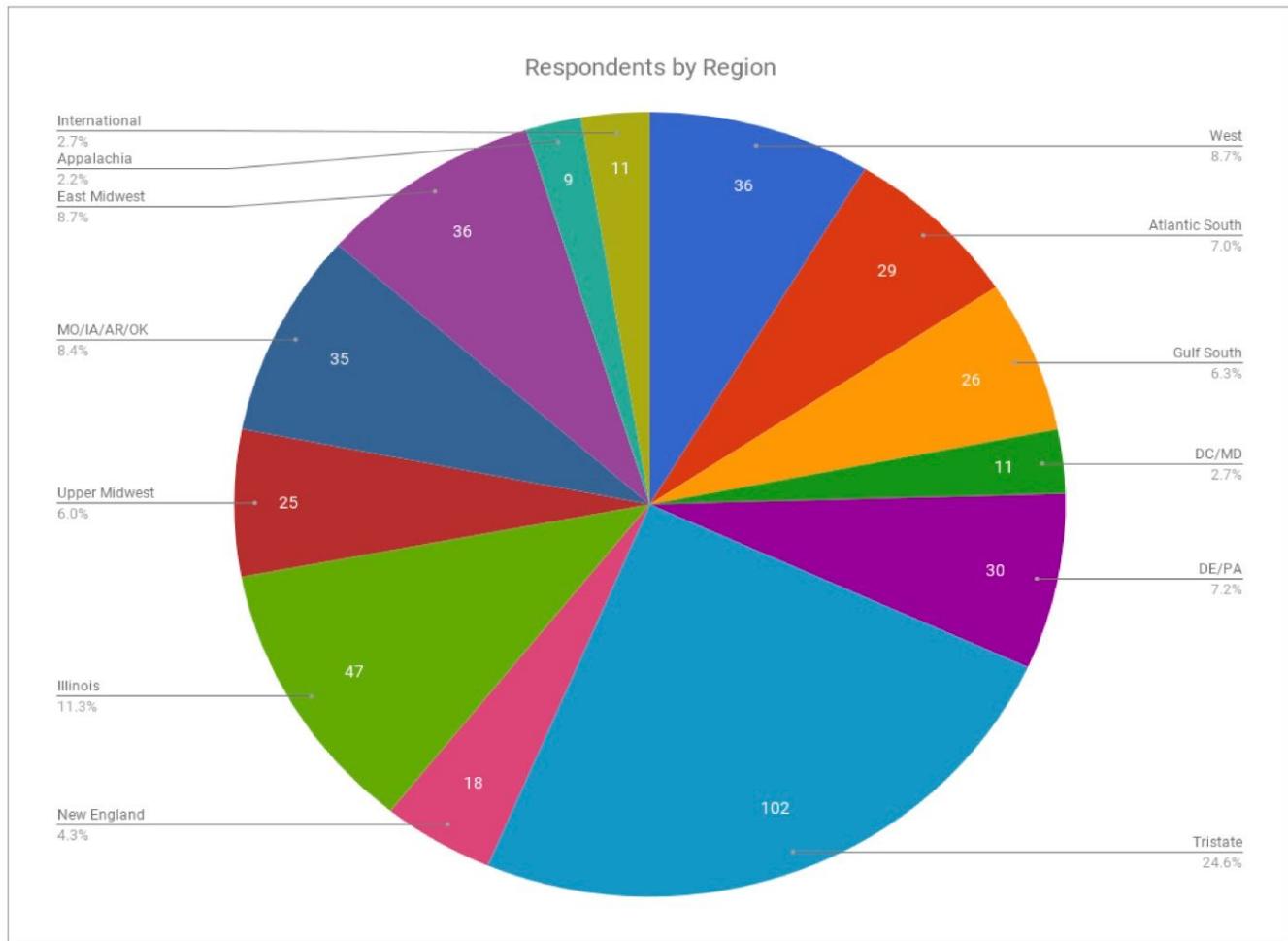


Figure 2: Total Respondents by Region in Which They Attended High School.

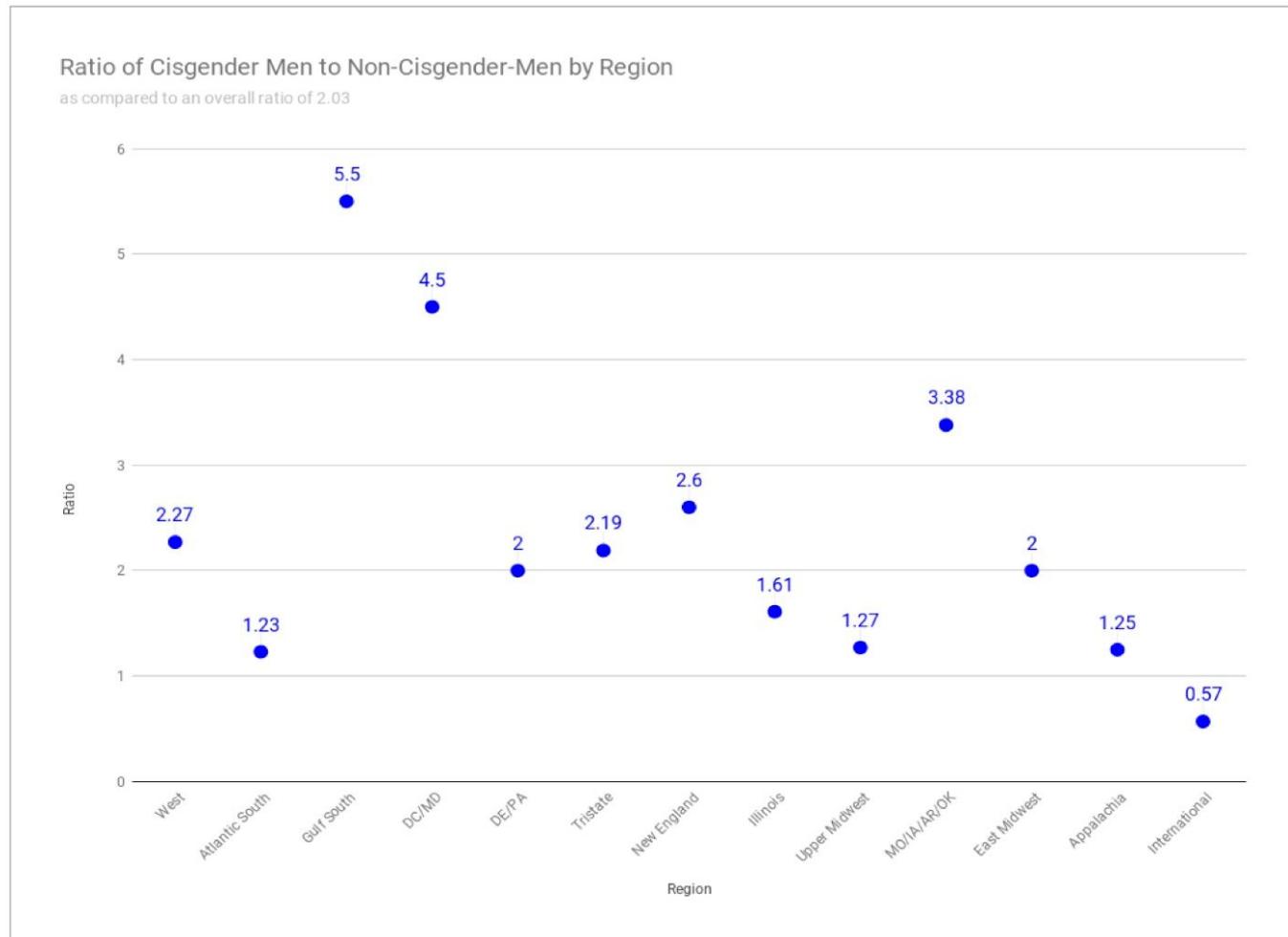


Figure 3: Ratio of Cisgender Men to Non-Cisgender-Men by Region in Which They Attended High School.

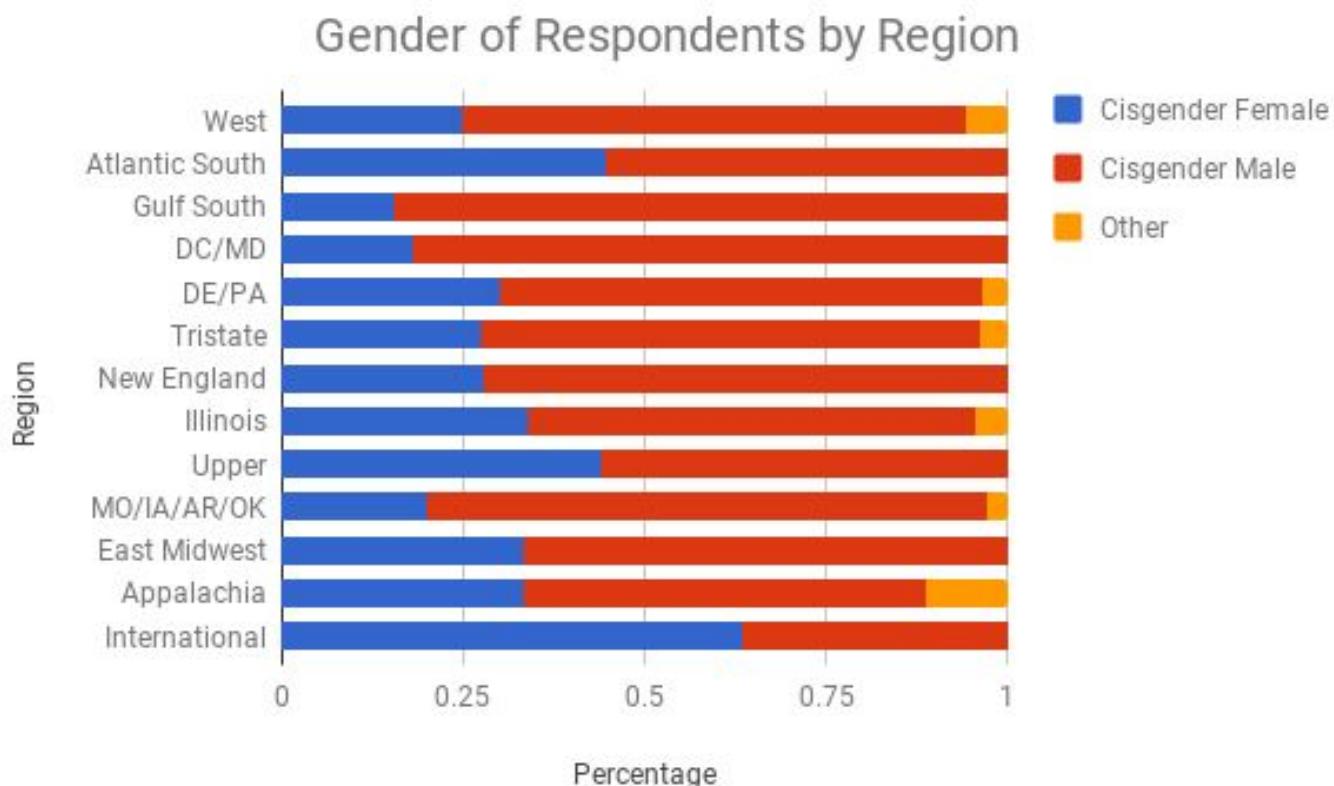


Figure 4: Distribution of Gender Identities by High School Region.

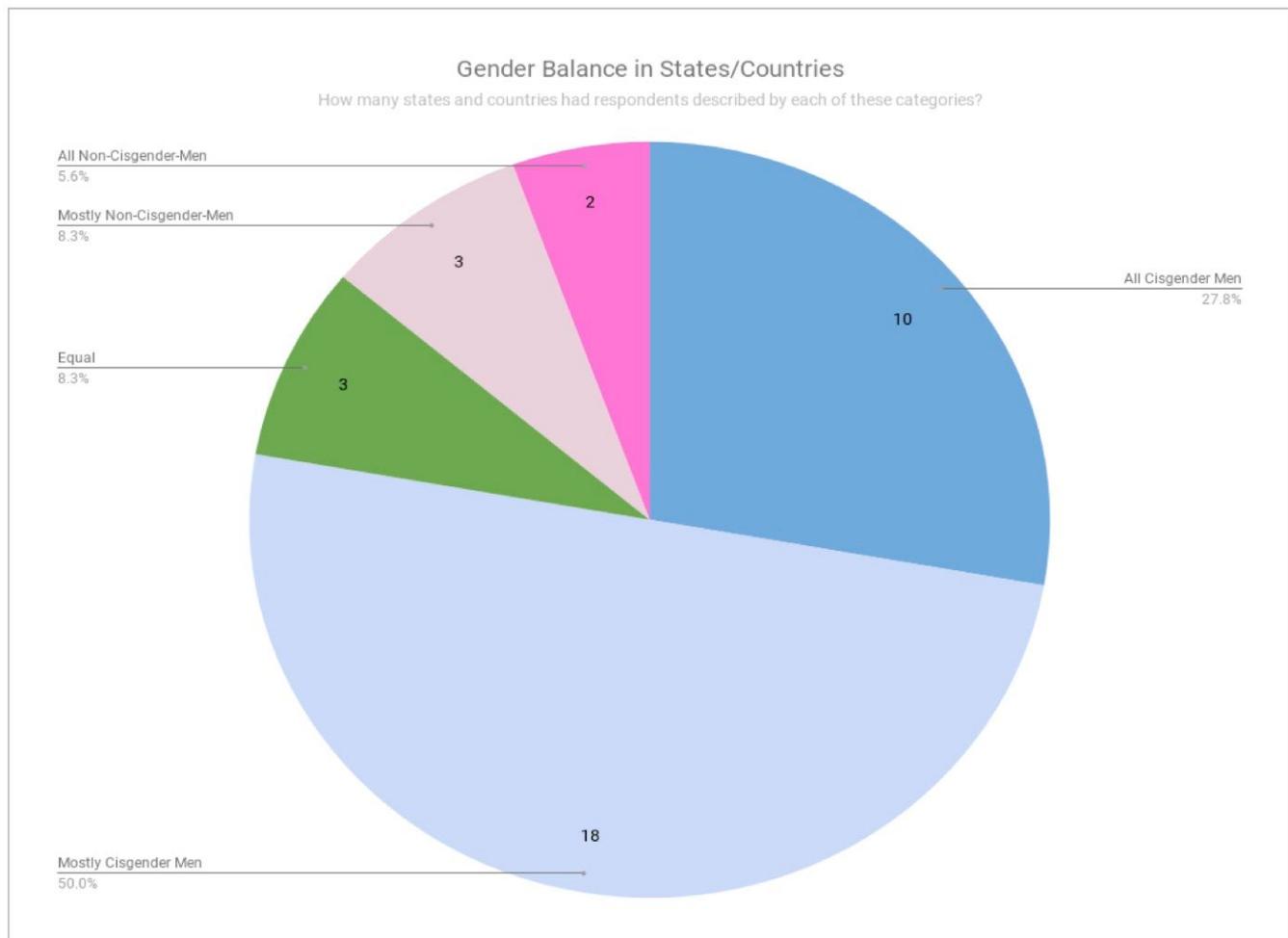


Figure 5: Percentages of States and Countries with Given Gender Distributions.

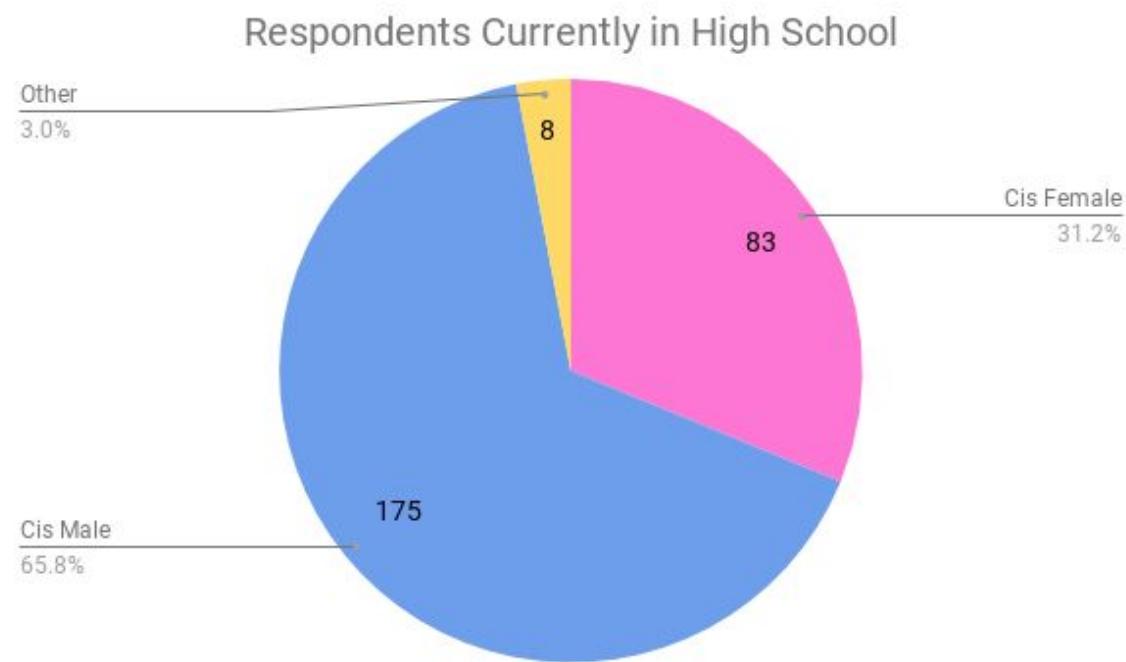


Figure 6: Respondents Who Currently Attend High School by Gender.

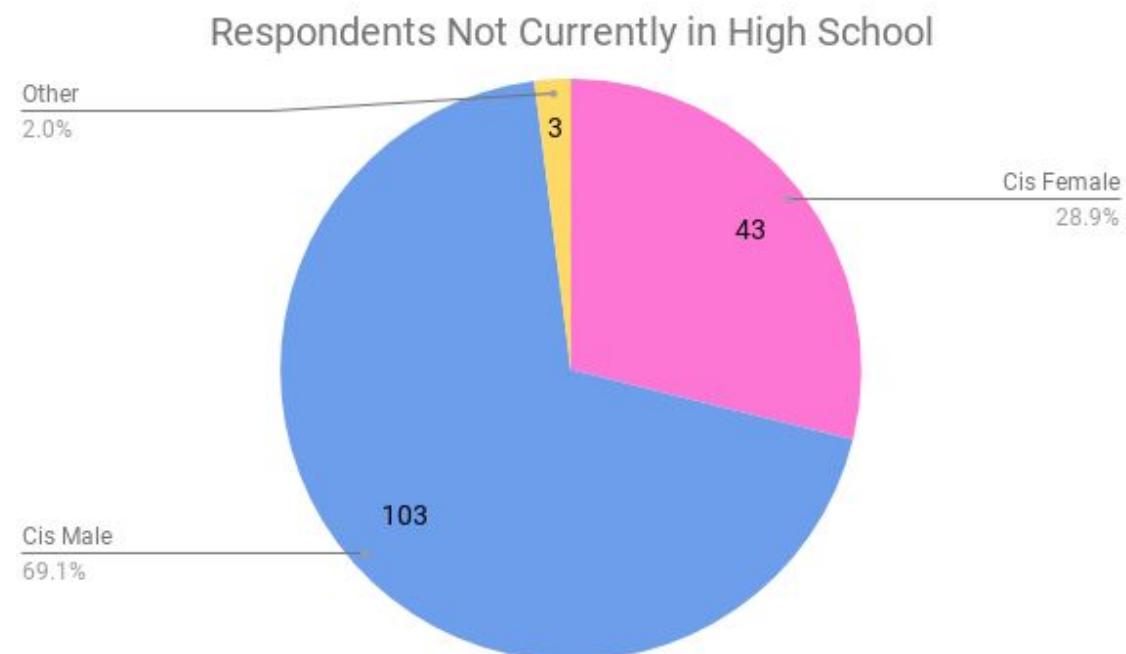


Figure 7: Respondents Who Have Already Graduated from High School by Gender.

All told, 415 responses were considered for the purposes of this survey. Of those, 278 (67.0%) came from cisgender men (henceforth referred to as “cis-men”), 126 (30.4%) came from cisgender women (henceforth referred to as “cis-women”), and 11 (2.7%) came from people with one or more of six other self-specified gender identities. (See *Figure 1*.) Based on these results, the ratio of cis-men to non-cisgender-men (henceforth referred to as “non-cis-men”) in Quiz Bowl is roughly 2.03. However, respondents to the survey are a self-selecting sample; it is reasonable to assume that, because non-cis-men are more marginalized due to gender than cis-men, a higher percentage of non-cis-men who were presented with the opportunity to contribute to a project about gender disparity would take the time to respond as compared to corresponding cis-men. Understandably, busy people are more likely to spend time helping with someone else’s sociological research if they are directly affected by the topic at hand, and as later results will make clear, it is demonstrable that non-cis-men in Quiz Bowl are more affected by sexism than cis-men. As such, the aforementioned calculated ratio of 2.03 — more than two cis-men for every other individual who responded — is almost certainly lower than the actual ratio of cisgender male (henceforth referred to as “cis-male”) to other (henceforth referred to as “non-cis-male”) members of the entire Quiz Bowl community.

The respondents expressed tremendous diversity of high school location. (See *Figure 2*.) 222 high schools distributed across 32 states or other domestic regions and four foreign countries were home to at least one respondent. Their localities were grouped into thirteen regions for the purpose of analysis. The West, which includes Washington and California, produced 36 responses (8.7%). The Atlantic South, which includes Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, produced 29 responses (7.0%). The Gulf South, which includes Florida, Alabama,

Louisiana, and Texas, produced 26 responses (6.3%). The “DC/MD” region, which includes the District of Columbia and Maryland, produced 11 responses (2.7%). The “DE/PA” region, which includes Delaware and Pennsylvania, produced 30 responses (7.2%). The Tristate region, which includes New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut, produced 102 responses (24.6%). New England, which includes Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine, produced 18 responses (4.3%). Illinois, which is considered to be its own region, produced 47 responses (11.3%). The Upper Midwest, which includes Minnesota and Wisconsin, produced 25 responses (6.0%). The “MO/IA/AR/OK” region, which includes Missouri, Iowa, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, produced 35 responses (8.4%). The East Midwest, which includes Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio, produced 36 responses (8.7%). Appalachia, which includes Kentucky and Tennessee, produced 9 responses (2.2%). The “International” region, which contains responses from Canada, China, Singapore, and the United Kingdom, produced 11 responses (2.7%).

Unsurprisingly, regions which are more involved in the online Quiz Bowl community tended to provide more responses, because they were more likely to the link posted in various locations (and possibly because, if they had heard about previous discussions of gender in Quiz Bowl, they might have been more intrigued by the topic; on the other hand, though, several respondents from less well-represented regions left comments saying that they had been anxiously waiting for an opportunity to share their thoughts). For example, Illinois, for which ILQBM is named and which has long been seen as one of the most robust states in terms of Quiz Bowl presence, was the region with the second most responses, despite not being grouped with any other states. The Tristate region, though, provided far and away the most responses, probably both because of its consistent online presence in ILQBM and elsewhere and because it is the region I

call home. I not only advertised the survey internally to my teammates and externally to my local friends but also publicized it at tournaments close to home, reaching players in the Tristate circuit who are uninvolved in the online community in a way I was unable to reach their counterparts.

All but one of the regions had more cis-male respondents than non-cis-male respondents. (See *Figure 3* and *Figure 4*.) Even when broken down into individual localities, more than three-quarters of the states, districts, or countries had mostly or entirely cis-male respondents. (See *Figure 5*.) The exception was the “International region,” which had a ratio of cis-men to non-cis-men of 0.57. The next lowest ratio, 1.23, was more than two times greater. As one international respondent commented, “The benefit of playing on the Asian circuit is that we are isolated and developed independently . . . of US quizbowl culture. I would hazard a guess and say that gender representation is more equal in the Asian circuit.” Because Asia is more culturally and geographically separated from the United States than either the United Kingdom or Canada, such an assertion may not be true as applied to international players generally, but the principle still holds to some degree: Part of the reason gender inequity in Quiz Bowl has proved so challenging to address is a major reason teams have difficulty convincing non-cis-men to join is that few want to be the first in a club composed of only cis-men. International teams are generally newer, and thus spring from a starting point at which there was greater gender equality in society writ large and probably began with more equal representation. Thus, international students likely had more non-cis-male role models earlier. However, when considering the region as a whole rather than just its members engaged enough in the online community to respond to the survey, it becomes clear things are far from perfect. One respondent cited statistics from a 2017 tournament in Shanghai at which only nine out of 47 players were female. “Still way better than being the only

girl, I know I'm lucky I even have female friends to run to when I don't want to hang around the boys," she wrote, "but it's not great." Despite its isolated gender dynamics and the possible implications of the statistics, international Quiz Bowl is separated not just from the American game's culture but also from its slowly but surely developing support networks for non-cis-men.

The region with the highest ratio was the Gulf South at 5.50. In addition, all four non-cis-male respondents from the Gulf South were from Texas; if that state, which like Illinois has a formidable statewide organization and has produced numerous national contenders over the years, had been considered as its own region, the Gulf South would have had no non-cis-male respondents at all. Thinking of stereotypes of social conservatism associated with the South, readers may be unsurprised, but this statistic stands in sharp contrast to the Atlantic South, which had a ratio of 1.23, the second lowest of any region considered. One probable reason for this distinction is South Carolina, the individual locality with the lowest ratio of all at 0.20. Though it seems unlikely that such a ratio reflects the entire state circuit due to small sample size, it probably does reflect the portion of South Carolinians involved in Quiz Bowl's online presence. As with the international respondents, many of South Carolina's results are likely attributable to the proliferation of notable female players from that state who could serve as role models for younger students. For example, one of the two Atlantic South teams to finish in the top eight of HSNCT in 2017 was Southside A, a team comprised of three women and one man. The pre-nationals Morlan rankings had Southside at 29th, but they tied for fifth, and two weeks later at the National Scholastic Championship for the Partnership for Academic Competition Excellence (PACE NSC), they were the highest placing small school team at 19th. Dorman, another perennial powerhouse from South Carolina, has also had many high-scoring female players over the years.

Last year, their A Team included Lex Cooper; in 2016, their nationals squad included Susan Lee and Danielle Michaud, the latter of whom served as captain at HSNCT. In the absence of its history of strong female involvement in the past, the Atlantic South's statistics would probably have looked much more like the Gulf South's.

Such history of strong female involvement leading to increased non-cis-male involvement in the present also points to the relevance of friendship to team composition; in other words, because many teams are comprised largely of pre-existing friends and in general cisgender students (a majority) tend to have more friends who share their gender identity than do not, teams run largely by a single cis-male friend group often remain cis-male in perpetuity. Many cis-male commenters indicated that they believed the gender imbalances on their own teams was a result of them personally not having that many non-cis-male friends. Conversely, Jackie Wu, the captain of Downingtown East, explained, “I’m a girl and I can, like, get my [cis-female] friends to play.” Recruitment is easier among friends, for obvious reasons. Many Quiz Bowl players, including myself, initially start playing because they have friends who are already involved. Max Shatan, the captain and founder of the Bard team, is one example: He “got involved with Quiz Bowl because [his] best friend was dating a player on Trinity’s B or C Team.” Such origin stories are entirely understandable, so in my view, no one should be blamed for having a team based largely around one friend group, even if that friend group is mostly of a single gender. However, when teams of that nature *only* recruit from among their friends, and those friends are entirely of the same gender, then problems arise. Shatan admitted such problems have arisen at Bard: “[B]ecause the A Team was recruited from my personal friends, which is a very small group of people . . . when two or three female [friends] say they can’t do it, that’s, like, all of them.” Team leaders are

responsible for actively recruiting from farther afield if spreading the word friend-to-friend alone creates gender inequity. Bard is a good example of a team taking this initiative, too. According to Shatan, although the team began last season with a cis-male majority, new recruits have been “fifty-fifty” cis-male to non-cis-male.

Also, to be completely fair to the Gulf South, if a circuit does not have any female players, sexism may be hard to see; without non-cis-men, there are no representatives of gender minorities in Quiz Bowl to harass, so the issue of gender inequity may counterintuitively seem less pressing. One Gulf South respondent’s comment perfectly encapsulates the attitude of some cis-male players in such circuits, I think: “I personally have extreme doubt that there is any sexual harassment going on in the game. I could very well be wrong.” On its surface, the first sentence of that statement would seem to be dismissing the problem of sexual harassment, but actually, the player who left probably is correct that there is not sexual harassment going on (in as high numbers) in Gulf South Quiz Bowl, because there simply are not as many non-cis-men to harass. (One respondent put it more harshly: “Of course no one finds sexism a problem. They can’t even see us in.”) Also, I applaud this commenter’s honesty. Like many cis-male Quiz Bowl players, I think, he expresses a strong conviction — with “extreme doubt” he is wrong — that non-cis-male players do not face sexual harassment, a sentiment which is one of the reasons making any progress to prevent harassment is so difficult, but he also admits that such conviction may be misplaced. (As this report will show in the coming pages, it is.) Some other commenters refused to believe that they could fail to recognize sexism; one cis-male respondent wrote that there wasn’t sexism in the Gulf South “or else I would have heard about it.”

Before moving on from the comparison of the Atlantic South to the Gulf South, it should be noted that Virginia, another state in the former region, is also home to several high-scoring female players, including Maggie Walker's Catherine Qian, who tied for 13th at the inaugural Individual Player National Championship Tournament, or IPNCT, this April, the second highest female finisher after Wayzata's Tora Husar.

One other notable result from analysis of the respondents' demographic information is that, when compared to the statistics that 28.9% of respondents who are not currently in high school were cisgender female (henceforth referred to as "cis-female") and 2.0% had other non-cis-male gender identities (or 30.9% non-cis-male in all), improvement of the gender balance in recent years has been scant. (See *Figure 6* and *Figure 7*.) Of respondents currently enrolled in high school or middle school, 31.2% were cis-female and 3.0% had other non-cis-male gender identities (or 34.2% non-cis-male in all). Based on the chi square test, that change is statistically insignificant. This finding (though, again, reflective only of those players currently engaged in the online Quiz Bowl community) is contrary to the prevailing notion in most conversations about Quiz Bowl's gender issues that at least the situation has gotten better. At least movements like #MeToo and Time's Up have us talking about the experiences of non-cis-male players; surely, that must have had an effect, says conventional wisdom. Surely, recent progress in the fields of women's rights and LGBT+ rights, progress like the legalization of gay marriage in *Obergefell v. Hodges* in 2015 and ever-increasing reflection about the way America handled the sexual allegations against President Clinton (in light of the sexual allegations against President Trump), must have run parallel to progress in our community. But while conditions for non-cis-male Quiz

Bowl players may have improved, the response to the survey suggests the actual gender balance (with regard to the most social portion of players and former players, at least) has not.

Finally, since many schools with a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) focus are prominent in Quiz Bowl — Thomas Jefferson, High Tech, Montgomery Blair, and Downingtown STEM, to name a few — the gender inequity in STEM fields (of which much has been written) bleeds over into the academic competition world and causes inequity there as well. Doug Simons, the captain of High Tech, said the ratio of cis-men to non-cis-men on his team is “definitely worse than, like, ninety-ten,” but pointed out that “there is . . . sexism [at High Tech in general] and it relates to the whole thing with, like, women in STEM” so the school “already has a pretty bad gender balance.” As such, “you would have to work decently hard to even match the school [ratio].” Perhaps a future study could delve more deeply into this issue. The major takeaway from this point, though, is that sexism is deeply embedded in many parts of our society, and thus affects Quiz Bowl even when all actors behave “normally.” In order to make our community more inclusive of all genders, we must work to overcome those external as well as internal obstacles to the best of our ability. We should not be satisfied with reaching the societal status quo.

RESULTS: SEXIST COMMENTS AND BEHAVIOR

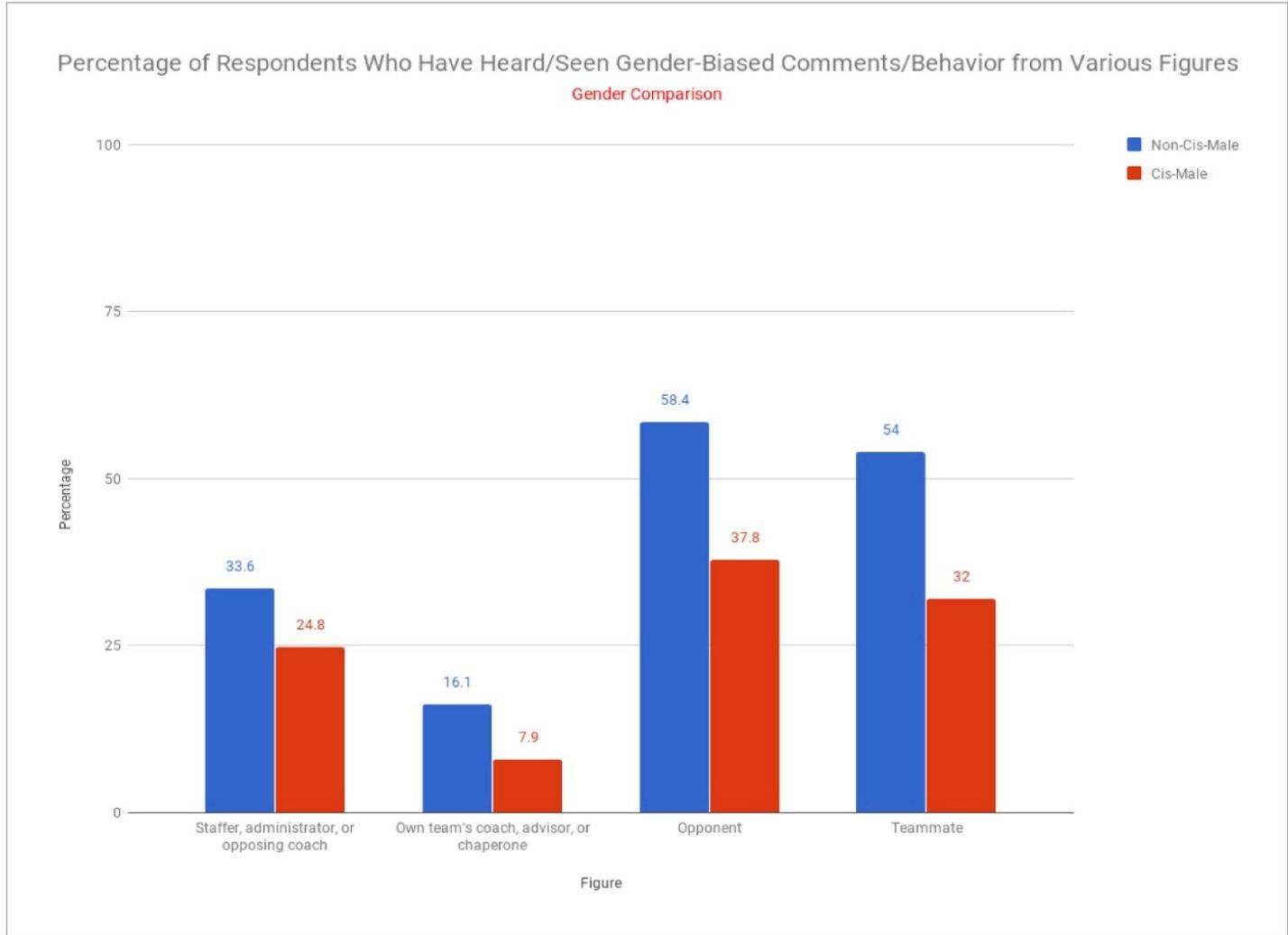


Figure 8: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Heard/Seen Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Various Figures (Gender Comparison).

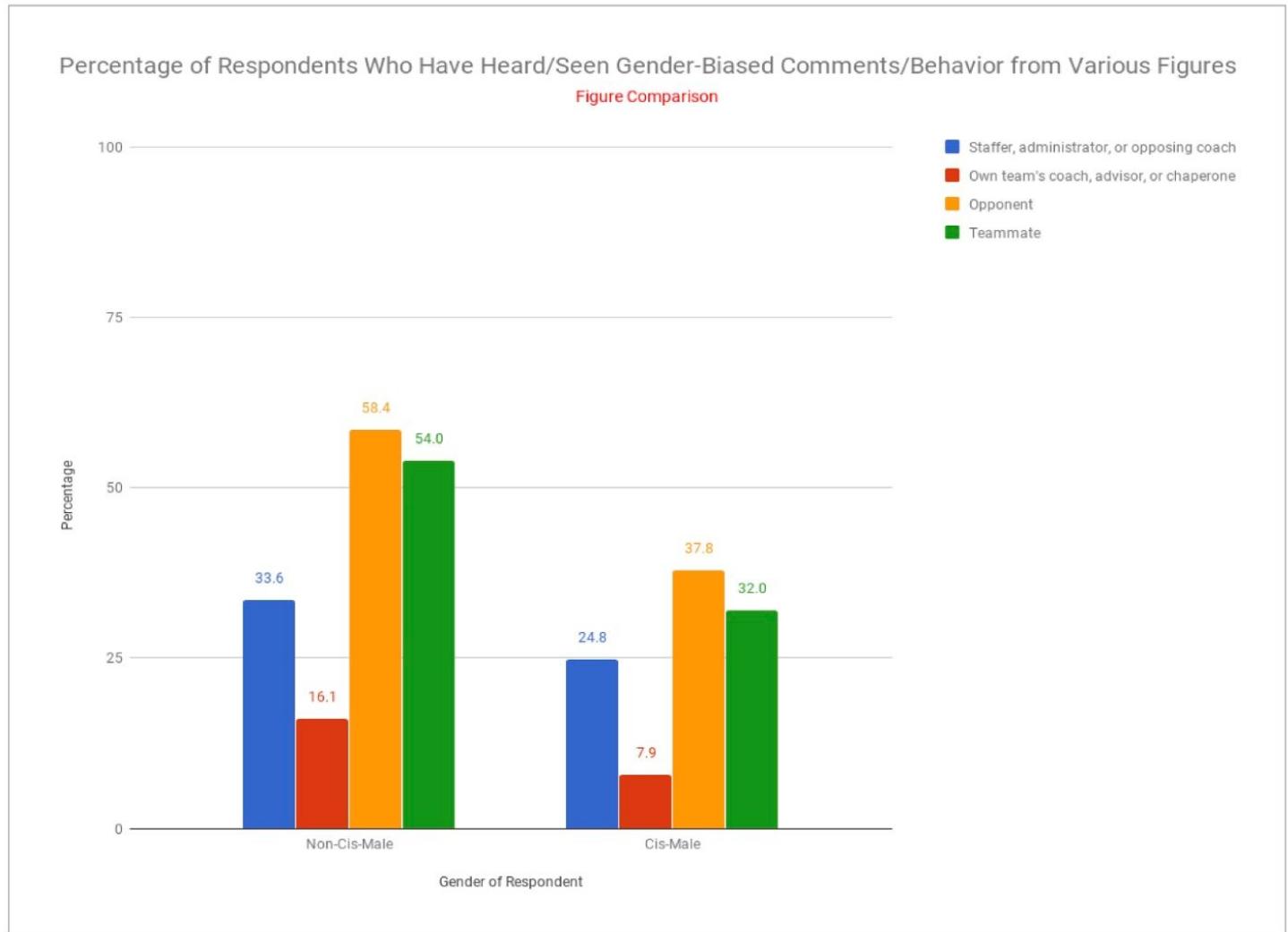


Figure 9: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Heard/Seen Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Various Figures (Figure Comparison).

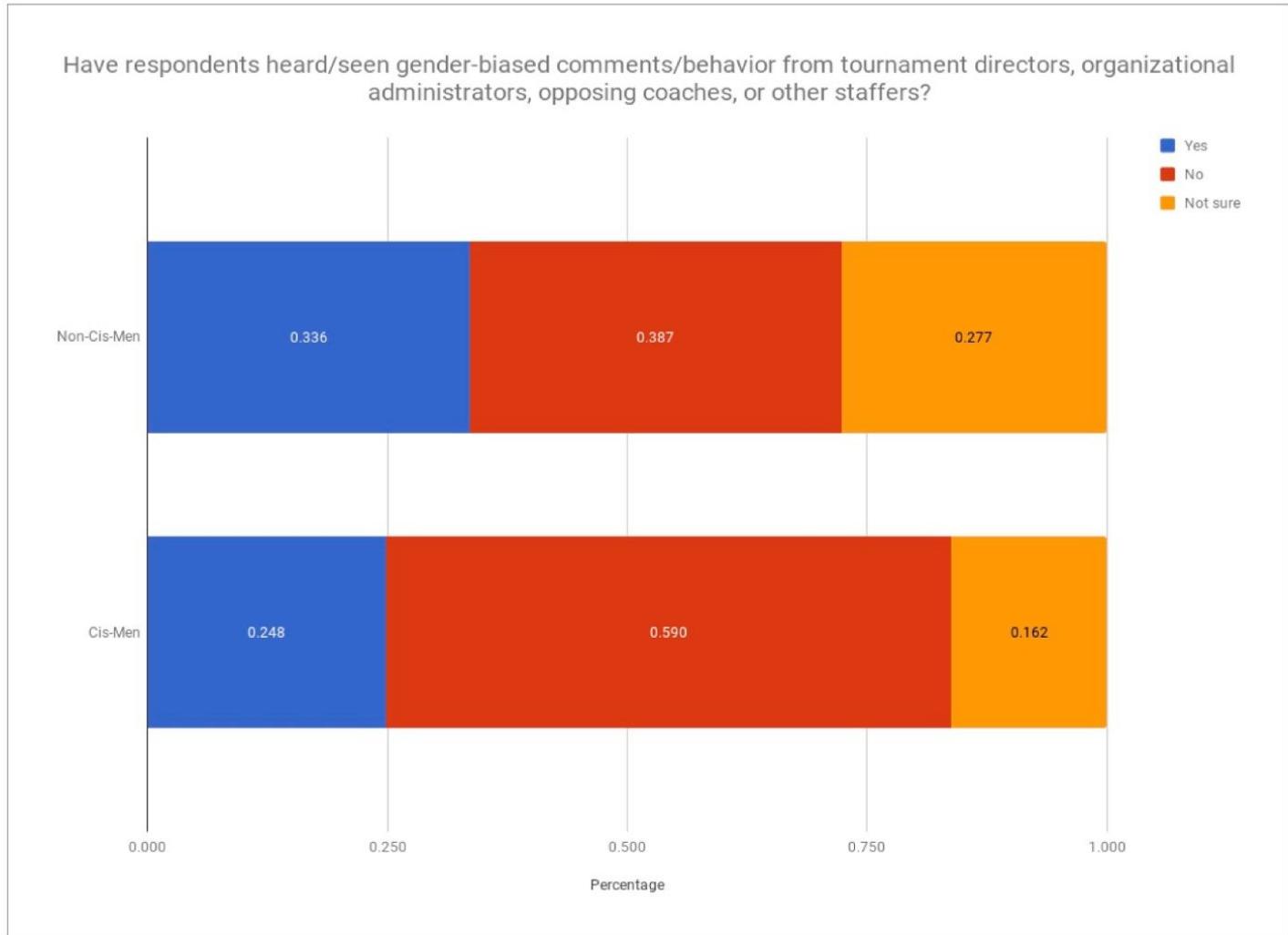


Figure 10: Percentage of Respondents Who Have and Have Not Heard/Seen Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Tournament Directors, Organizational Administrators, Opposing Coaches, or Other Staffers.

Percentage of Respondents Who Have Heard/Seen Various Types of Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Staffers, Administrators, or Opposing Coaches

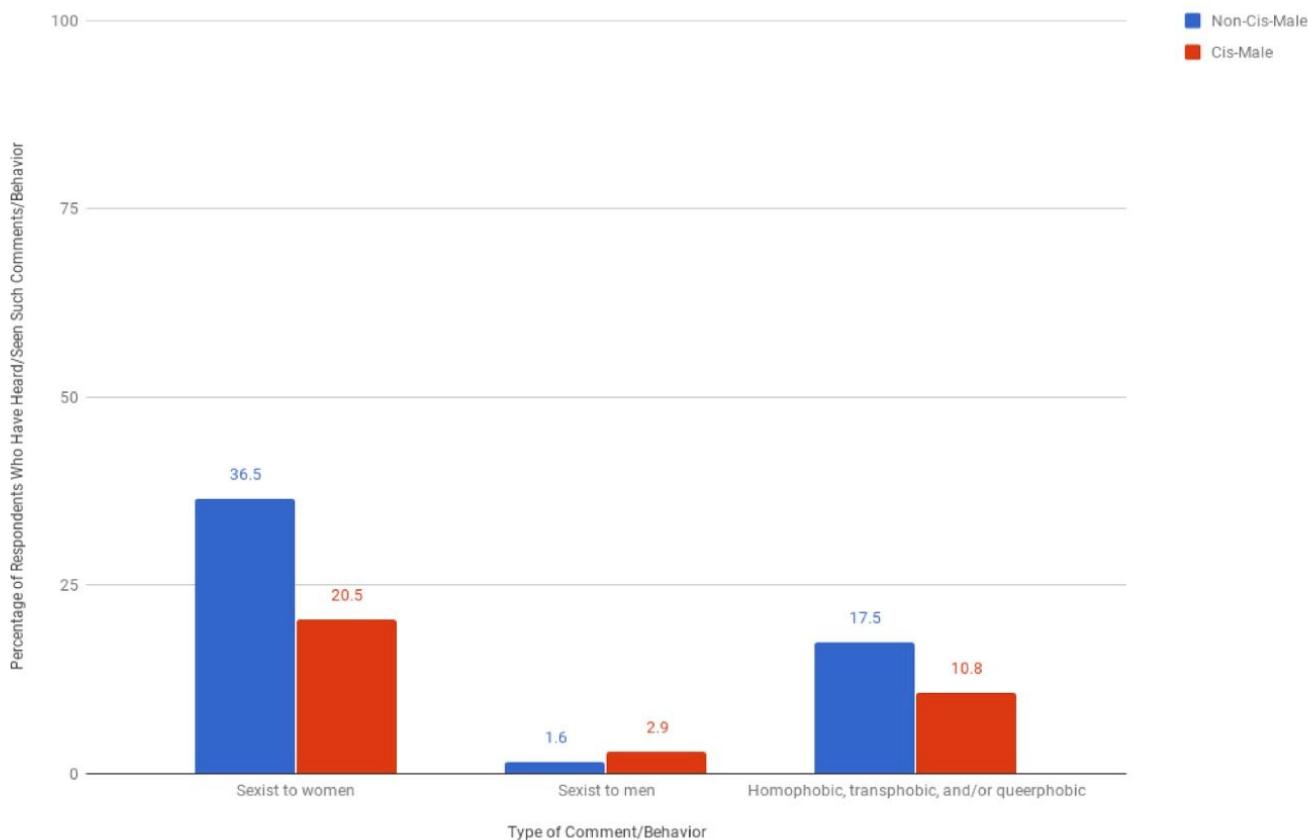


Figure 11: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Heard/Seen Various Types of Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Tournament Directors, Organizational Administrators, Opposing Coaches, or Other Staffers.

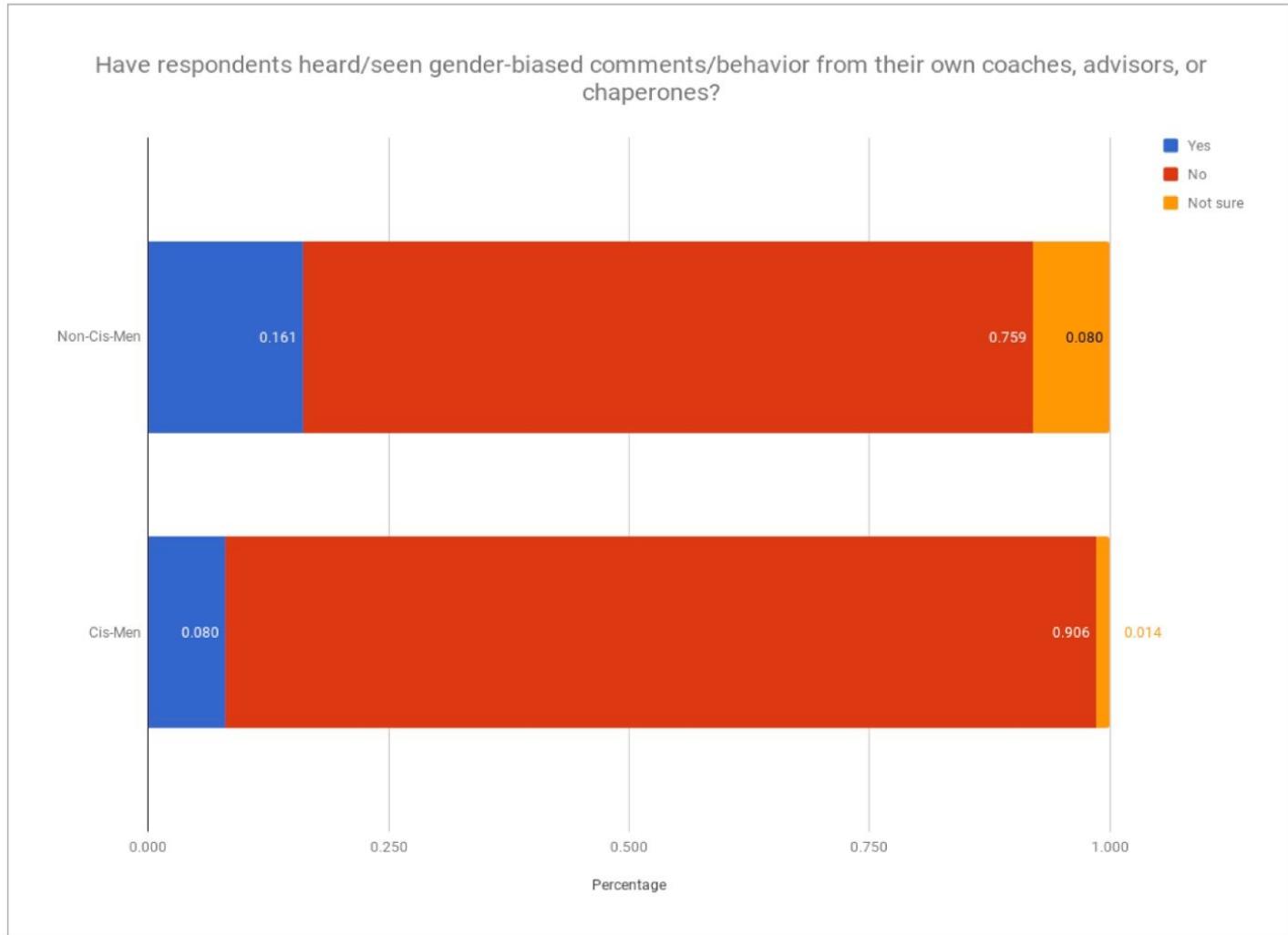


Figure 12: Percentage of Respondents Who Have and Have Not Heard/Seen Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Their Own Coaches, Advisors, or Chaperones.

Percentage of Respondents Who Have Heard/Seen Various Types of Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Their Own Coaches, Advisors, or Chaperones

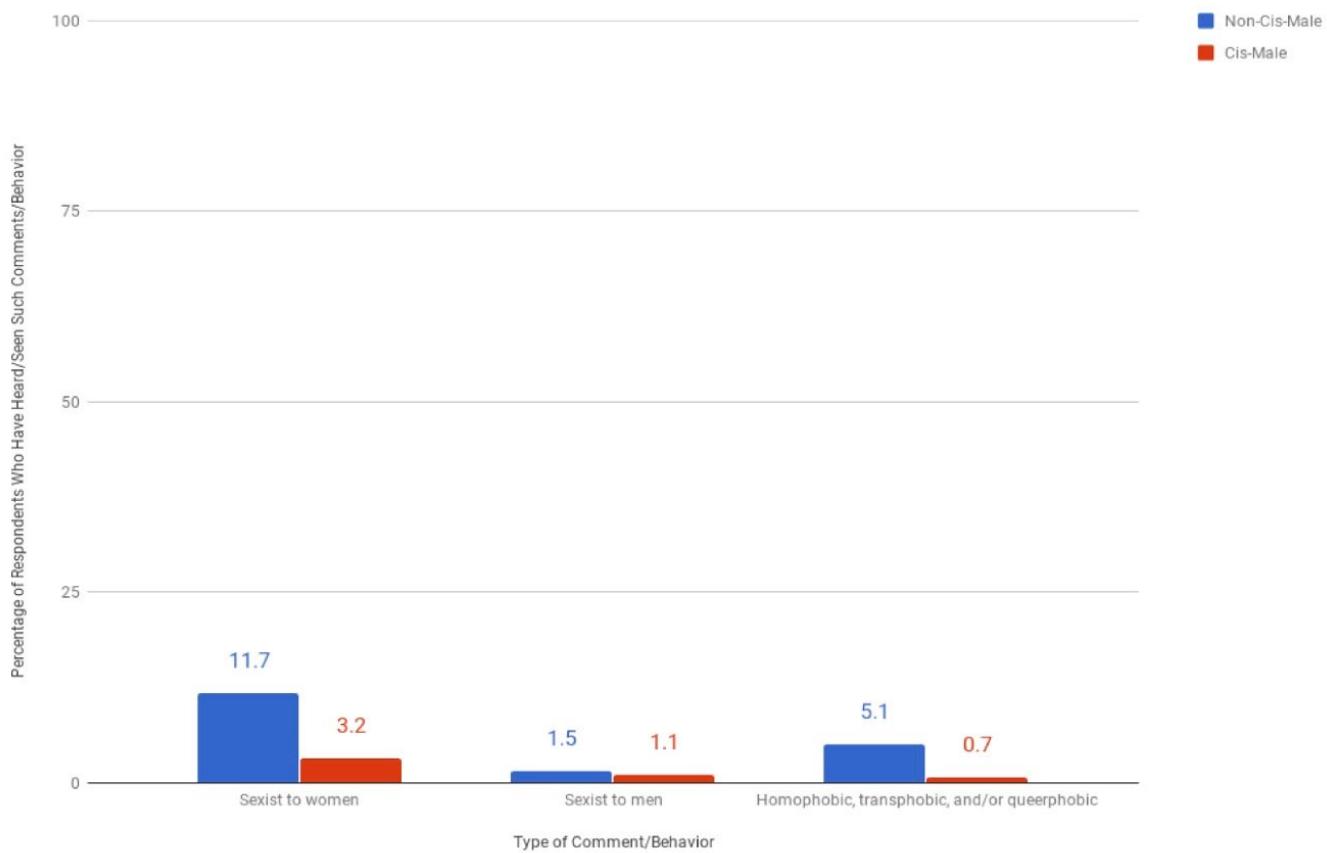


Figure 13: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Heard/Seen Various Types of Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Their Own Coaches, Advisors, or Chaperones.

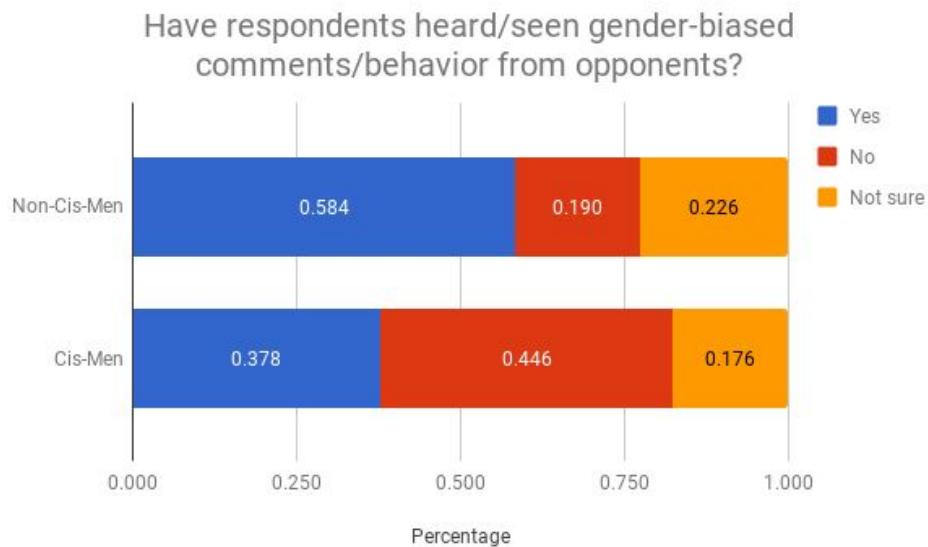


Figure 14: Percentage of Respondents Who Have and Have Not Heard/Seen Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Opponents.

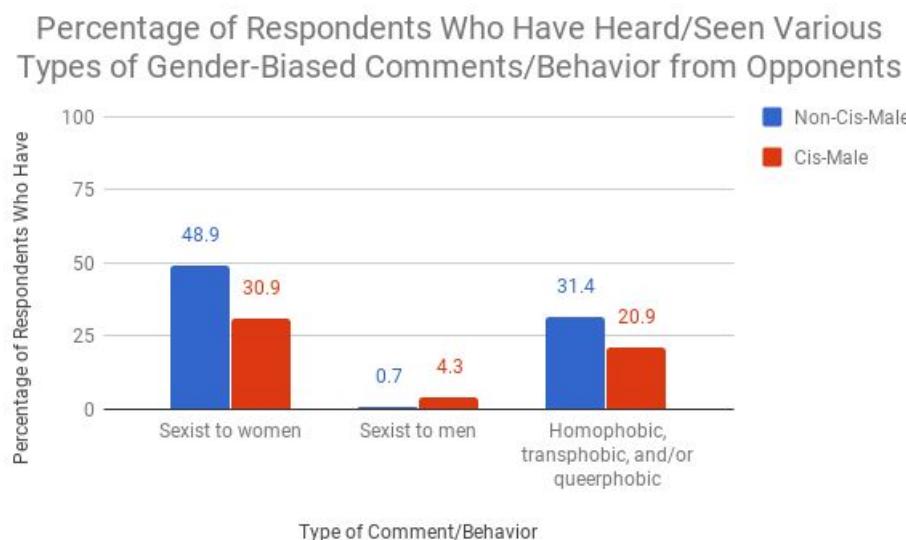


Figure 15: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Heard/Seen Various Types of Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Opponents.

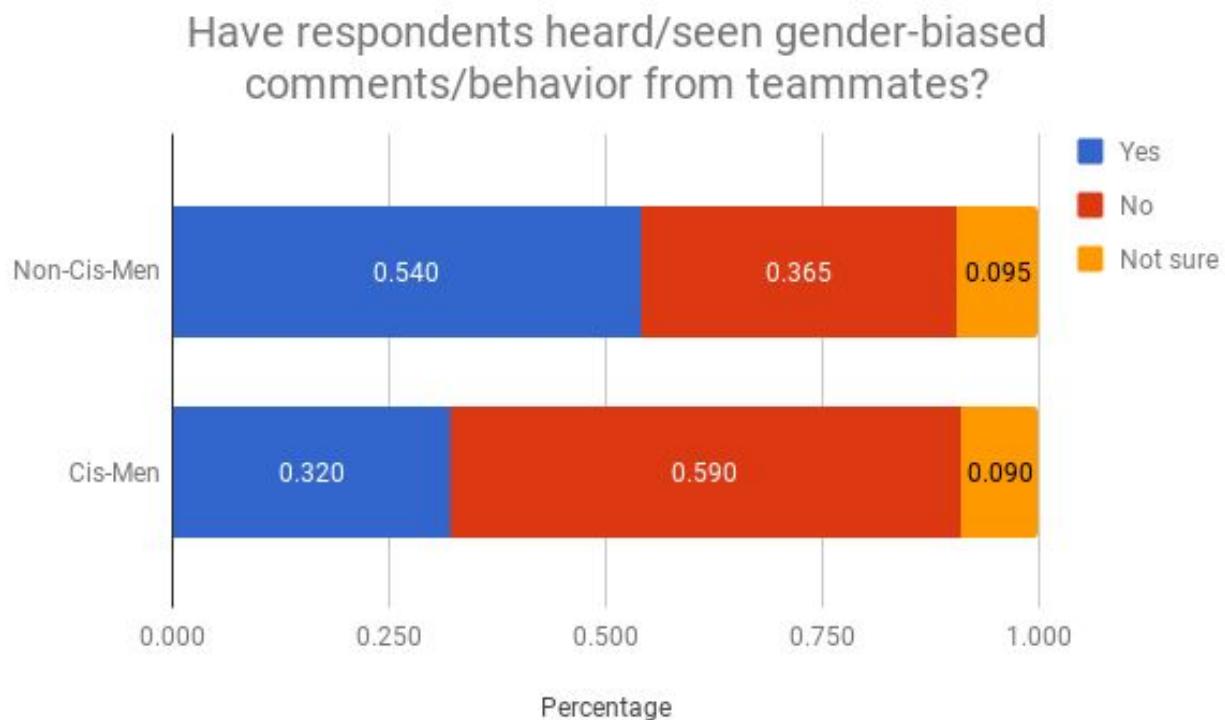


Figure 16: Percentage of Respondents Who Have and Have Not Heard/Seen Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Teammates.

Percentage of Respondents Who Have Heard/Seen Various Types of Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Teammates

Percentage of Respondents Who Have Heard/Seen Such Comments/Behavior

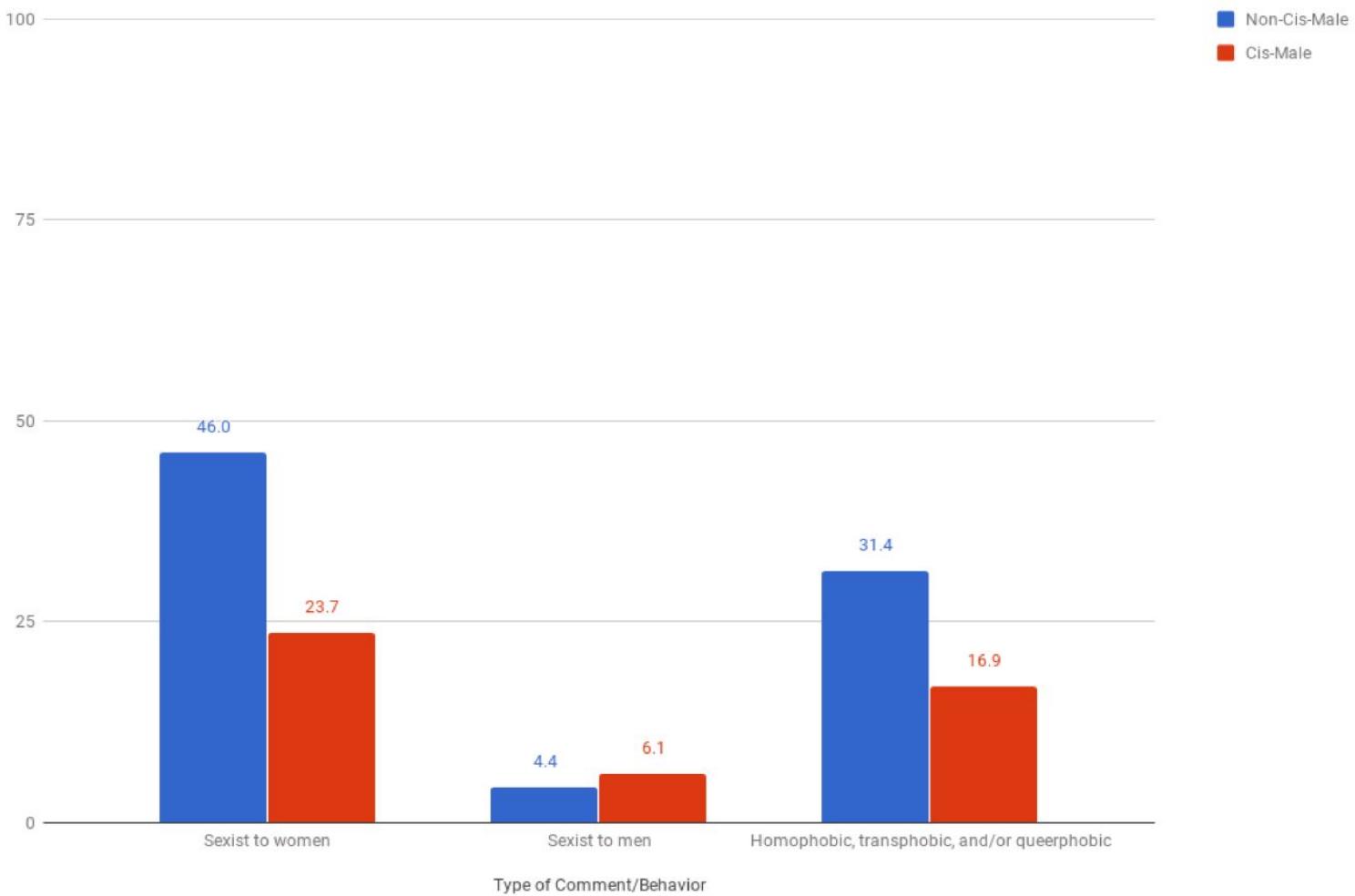
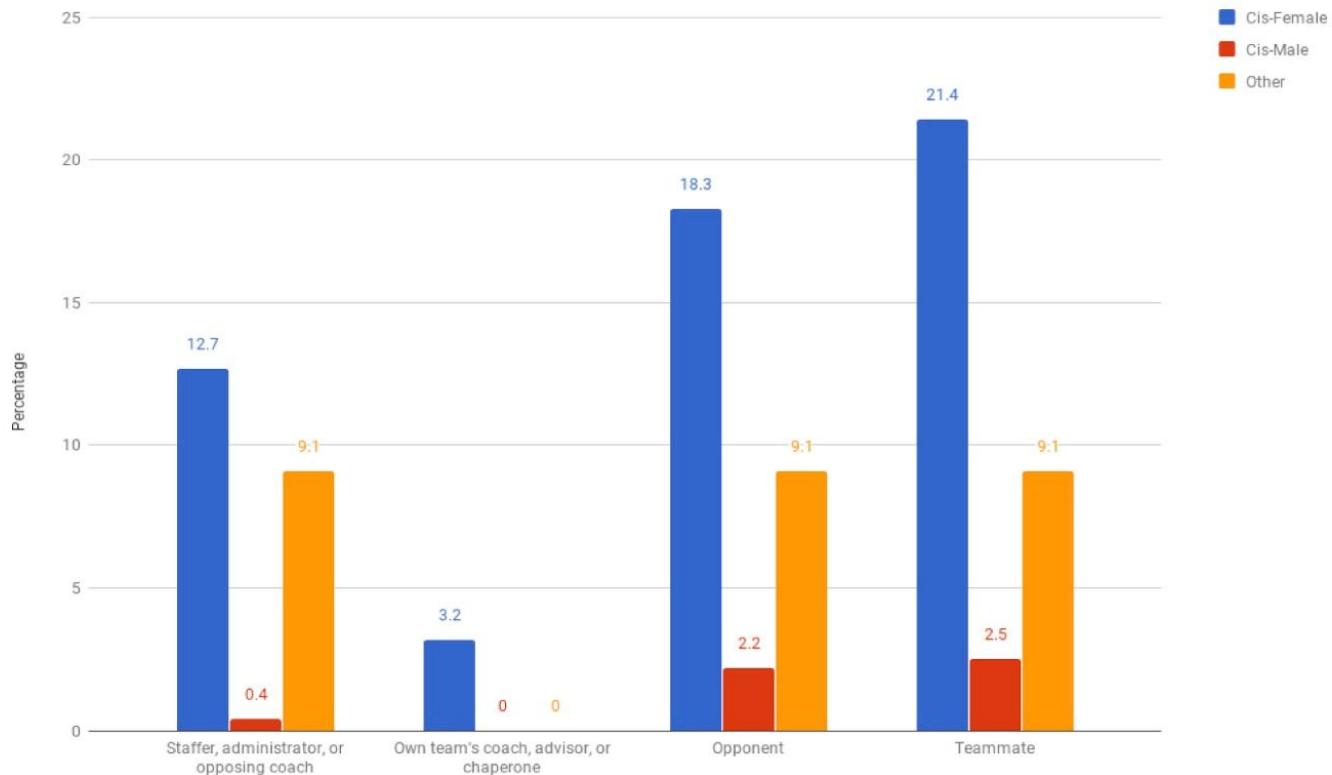


Figure 17: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Heard/Seen Various Types of Gender-Biased Comments/Behavior from Opponents.

Percentage of Respondents Who Have Been Targets of Sexist, Homophobic, Transphobic, or Queerphobic Comments/Behavior

Gender Comparison



Figure

Figure 18: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Been Targets of Sexist, Homophobic, Transphobic, or Queerphobic Comments/Behavior (Gender Comparison).

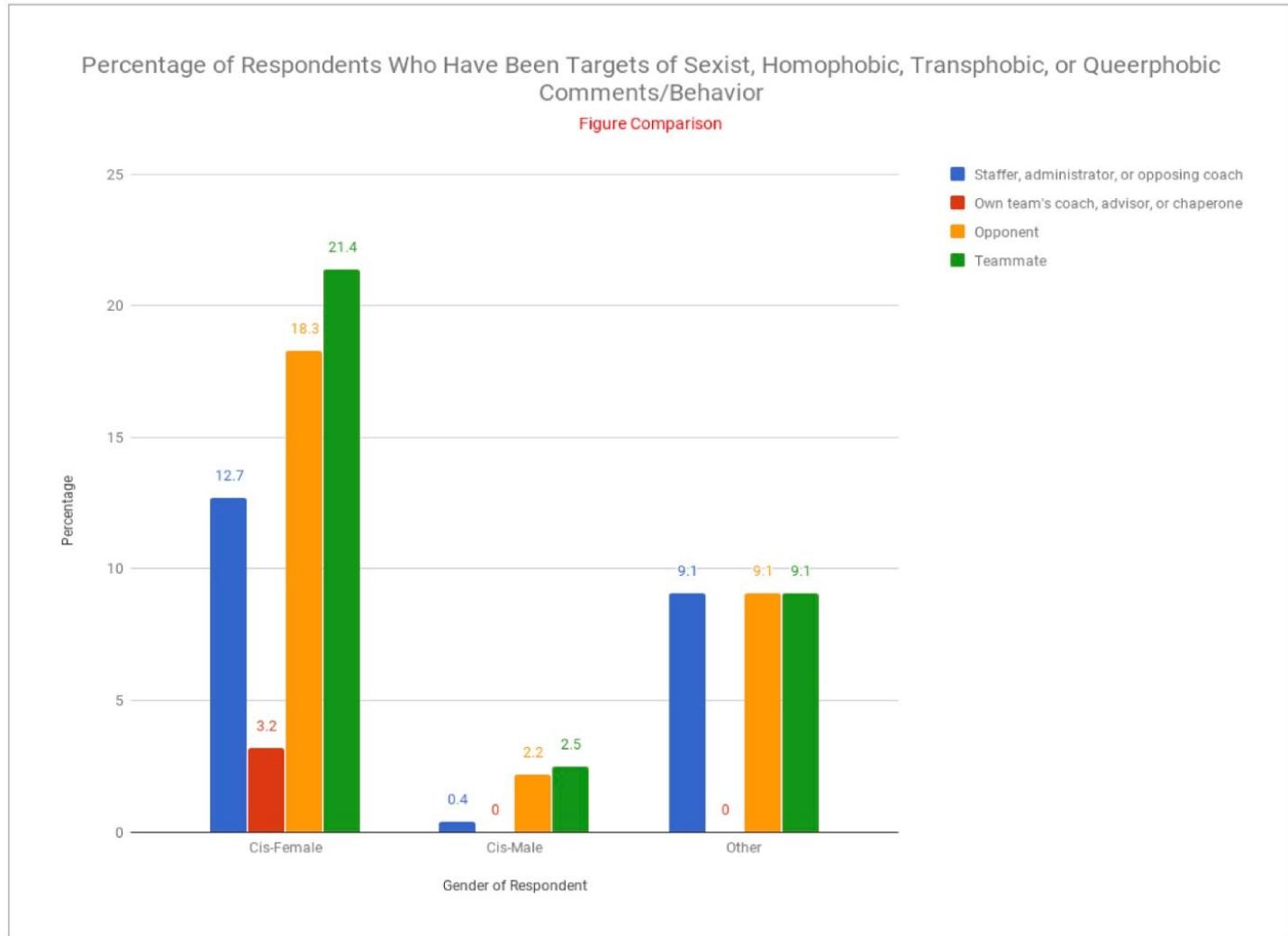


Figure 19: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Been Targets of Sexist, Homophobic, Transphobic, or Queerphobic Comments/Behavior (Figure Comparison).

Unsurprisingly, for every group of figures whose comments and behavior were considered, non-cis-men observed sexism more often than cis-men. (See *Figure 8*.) Perhaps most dramatically, although both cis-men and non-cis-men observed sexism less frequently from their own coaches, advisors, and chaperones than from any other group of figures, 16.1% of the latter said they had heard/seen sexist or homophobic/transphobic/queerphobic (henceforth referred to as “HTQ”) comments/behavior from that group, while only only 7.9% of the former did. In other words, non-cis-men saw their team’s adult authority figures display bias more than twice as frequently as cis-men did. For every one of the four groups of figures examined, though (that is, in brief, staffers, coaches, opponents, and teammates), non-cis-men saw such bias at least 35% more often.

That statistic means one of two things. The first possibility is that non-cis-men notice sexism and HTQ bias more acutely than cis-men because they are, by and large more affected by it. Particularly, people are more likely to remember such prejudice if they are targeted by it, and non-cis-men are directly targeted much more often than cis-men. (See *Figure 18*.) Such a finding would be in line with the results of the first semester portion of the research described earlier in this report, and would also make sense in light of the many comments from cis-men which read like this one: “I don’t recall many instances in which people behaved in a sexist manner . . . That may not be because those instances never happened, but rather because I wasn’t paying attention.” The second possibility is that people are more likely to express biased sentiment when fewer cis-men are present. One reason for that could be the perception that cis-men are taken more seriously than non-cis-men when they report bias; if they observe an incident of sexism or HTQ bias, they have more power to cause a biased individual to face consequences than their

non-cis-male counterparts, all else being equal. Most likely, the explanation for the results of *Figure 8* is a combination of both possibilities.

Both cis-men and non-cis-men observed sexism and/or HTQ bias most frequently from opponents (rates of 37.8% and 58.4%, respectively), next most frequently from teammates (32.0% and 54.0%), third most frequently from staffers (24.8% and 33.6%), and least frequently from their team's own authority figures (7.9% and 16.1%). (See *Figure 9*.) The most obvious implication of those findings is that bias is more likely to manifest itself — or, at least, is easiest to notice when it manifests itself — between people of the same age group. On the surface, that trend seems positive. It means players believe themselves to be much more affected by the sort of quotidien bias that emerges in conversations with snide remarks and microaggressions than by institutional bias which prevents them from advancing in the game. Obviously, we hold staffers and administrators to a higher standard; while sexism is never acceptable, it is far more excusable when it comes from an exhausted sixteen-year-old than when it comes from an employee of a national governing organization like NAQT. It is a positive finding that those adults are not responsible for the majority of bias players observe. However, that does not mean they are actually less biased (although it certainly does not preclude from being less biased). Players have much more interaction with their contemporaries than with staffers and other adults, so it makes sense that more of them would have seen at least one instance of the former displaying prejudice. It is far easier for a player to overhear a bigoted remark made in the bathroom than it is for them to overhear one made in the control room. Also, because the majority of a player's experience in Quiz Bowl consists of time spent with teammates and opponents, even relatively minor bias from those groups can add up to make gender minorities' experiences with the game feel unpleasant

and even upsetting. And since more than half of non-cis-men have observed bias from an opponent, and the same is true of bias from a teammate, this issue threatens to push many non-cis-male players from the game in a very real way.

Another interesting observation is that the rates of observed bias tend to be lower if the respondents have a school affiliation with the figures in question: Respondents less sexism and HTQ bias from their teammates than from their opponents, and less from their own coaches than from opposing coaches. Again, there are two possible explanations. Firstly, perhaps people are less likely to display bias towards someone with whom they must work for success within the context of the game. Breeding animosity within a team is almost certainly not the best strategy for developing a winning team dynamic. In contrast, it is in the interest of opponents and opposing coaches to interfere with the mental state of players (although doing so is obviously highly unsportsmanlike and even unethical). It is also likely emotionally easier for them to display bias because they do not have a personal relationship with their target. Even individuals who hold negative beliefs about all women, for example, may feel differently about particular women they know well who do not conform to the stereotype to which they subscribe. In other words, they might view those women as exceptions to a rule in a manner which would not affect women whom they have never met before. Secondly, perhaps respondents are less likely to report observed bias from people to whom they have a connection (be it just mutual team membership or also friendship) out a sense of loyalty. As with the case above, both of these explanations probably contribute to the ultimate statistical disparity.

That disparity is also echoed by the rates at which respondents answered that they were “not sure” whether or not they had observed any bias from a particular group. (See *Figure 10*,

(*Figure 12, Figure 14, and Figure 16.*) For staffers, cis-men were unsure 16.2% of the time, while non-cis-men were unsure 27.7% of the time; for their team's own authority figures, those numbers are 1.4% and 8.0%. Similarly, opponents, cis-men were unsure 17.6% of the time to non-cis-men's 22.6%; for teammates, the numbers are 9.0% and 9.5%. In other words, respondents were not simply less sure that they had observed bias from those within their own team but rather more sure that they had not.

Also, for every group of figures considered, and for both cis-men and non-cis-men, the most common type of bias observed was sexism towards women. (See *Figure 11, Figure 13, Figure 15, and Figure 17*. To avoid using an *overly* cumbersome list of numbers, please see the aforementioned figures for specifics about all data referenced in this paragraph and the following paragraph.) Another similarity across all sub-sections of the data is that non-cis-men reported observing sexism towards women and HTQ bias with more frequency than cis-men — and the ratios between those percentages remained very similar for all groups of figures and between both types of bias — but cis-men reported observing more sexism towards men. In fact, there were only eleven non-cis-male reports of sexism towards men total, out of a possible 548 opportunities for non-cis-men to attest to having seen such bias. As stated previously, people are more likely to notice bias if it personally affects them, so perhaps such a statistic makes sense, especially because victims of gender-based bias (who are more likely to be non-cis-male) may view the group with social power (cis-men) as solely capable of perpetrating oppression rather than of being targeted by it. However, another explanation for this statistic is that precisely because they are more affected by gender-based bias overall, non-cis-men are more likely to be educated on the subject and object on principle to a question about whether or not they have observed sexism

towards men, because, as one female respondent asserted before submitting her responses, “[S]exism against (cis) men doesn’t exist as sexism is based on a power hierarchy and women do not have the advantage in any modern, patriarchal society.”

Sure enough, non-cis-men were directly targeted by the bias they observed far more than than cis-men. (See *Figure 18* and *Figure 19*.) For example, with regard to bias from teammates — which was the group of figures reported to be targeting respondents most frequently for both cis-men and non-cis-men, despite the fact that both cis-men and non-cis-men observed bias in general more frequently from opponents — 21.4% of cis-women and 9.1% of people with non-cisgender identities (henceforth referred to as “non-cis people”) were targets, as opposed to just 2.5% of men. Teammates being the most likely culprits behind bias targeted at respondents is evidence against the assertion above that, within a team, players are guided in part by a sense of responsibility to preserve the team dynamic and thus display bias less frequently. Because in order to be aware of being the target of bias from a particular individual one must be aware that that individual displayed bias in the first place, the switch of teammates and opponents in relative rate of affirmative response indicates that a higher portion of those who reported observing bias from a teammate (as compared to those who reported observing bias from an opponent) were the victims of that bias themselves. In other words, I assume, respondents were more likely to report opponents than teammates if they were not personally affected by the bias in question, which supports the loyalty theory mentioned earlier.

Before moving on, a brief note on the frequency of HTQ bias: Generally speaking, within gender subdivisions, respondents were about twice as likely to have observed sexism towards as women as they were to have observed HTQ bias for adult figures, and about 50% more likely for

their contemporaries. Phrased differently, the distinction between respondents' rate of reporting sexism towards women and rate of reporting HTQ bias was less significant with regard to bias from teammates and opponents. One reason for this difference may be that high school students are more likely to tell jokes around each other than around adults, and unfortunately, a myriad of jokes in society are told at the expense of the LGBT+ community. Culturally, the reason why LGBT+ people are targeted by (ostensible) humor more than women probably has to do with the facts that their visibility is much younger than that of women and that they represent a smaller percentage of the population. Even now, many people do not recognize the issues facing the LGBT+ community; one male respondent asked, "How many trans people are there that transphobia in quizbowl would be an issue?" One reason, though, why, for every group of figures considered, sexism towards women was more prevalent than HTQ bias might be that it is often (though certainly not always) easier to accurately guess gender than it is to guess sexuality is one is working from appearance alone.

RESULTS: RESPONDING TO SEXISM

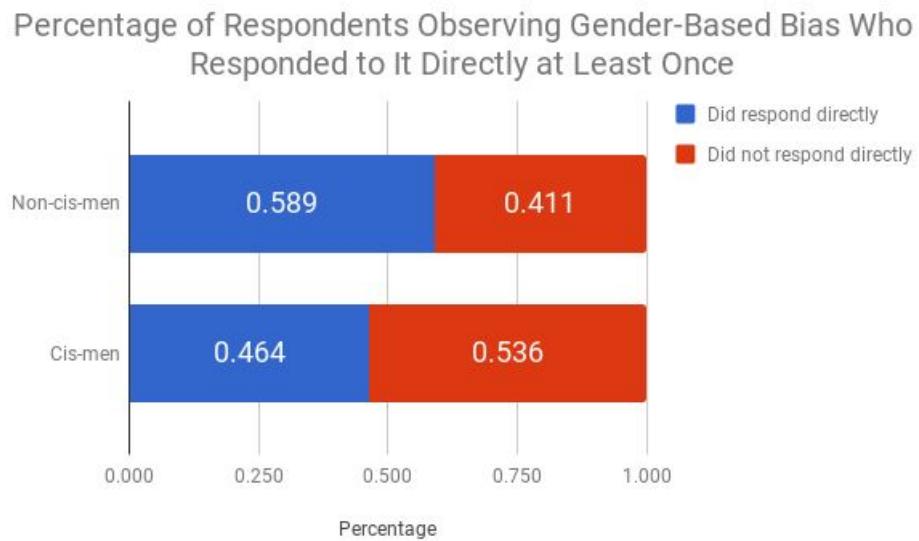


Figure 20: Percentage of Respondents Observing Gender-Based Bias Who Responded to It Directly at Least Once.

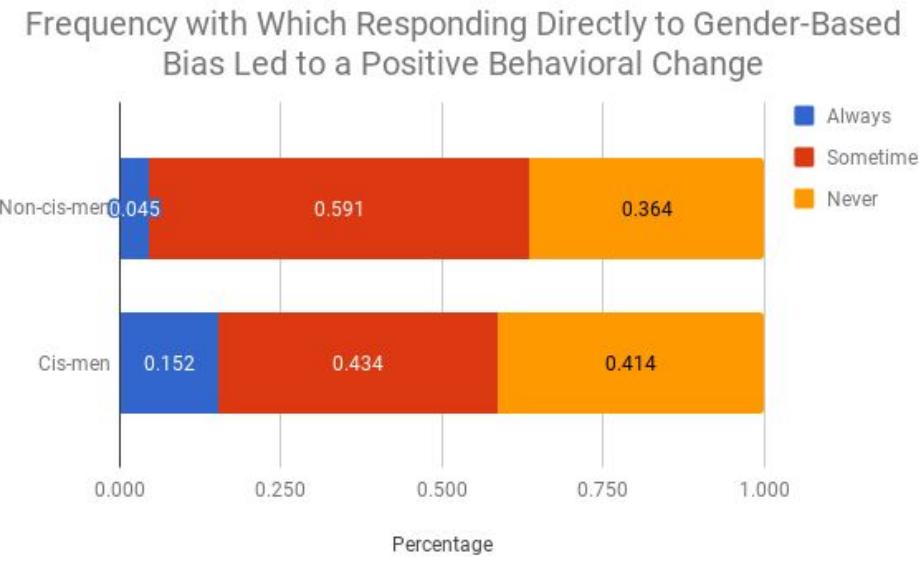


Figure 21: Frequency with Which Responding Directly to Gender-Based Bias Led to a Positive Behavioral Change.

Percentage of Respondents Observing Gender-Based Bias Who Reported It to an Authority Figure at Least Once

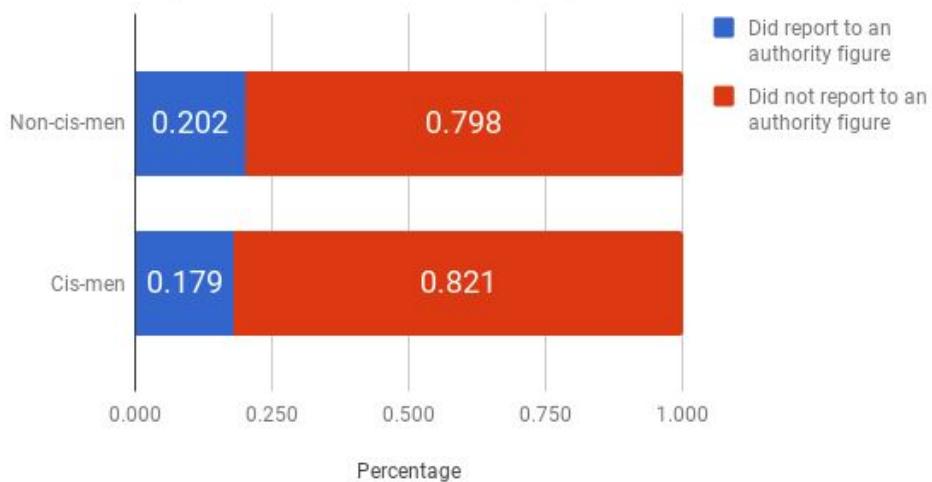


Figure 22: Percentage of Respondents Observing Gender-Based Bias Who Reported It to an Authority Figure at Least Once.

Frequency with Which Reporting Gender-Based Bias to an Authority Figure Led to a Positive Behavioral Change

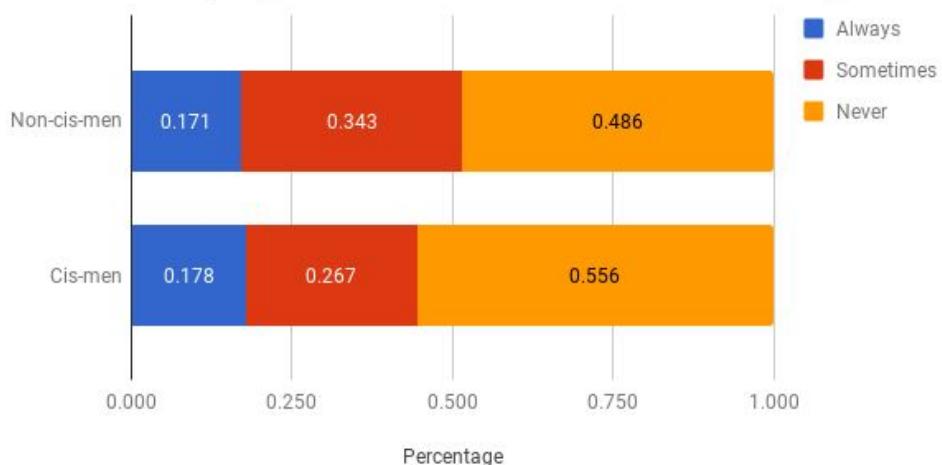


Figure 23: Frequency with Which Reporting Gender-Based Bias to an Authority Figure Led to a Positive Behavioral Change.

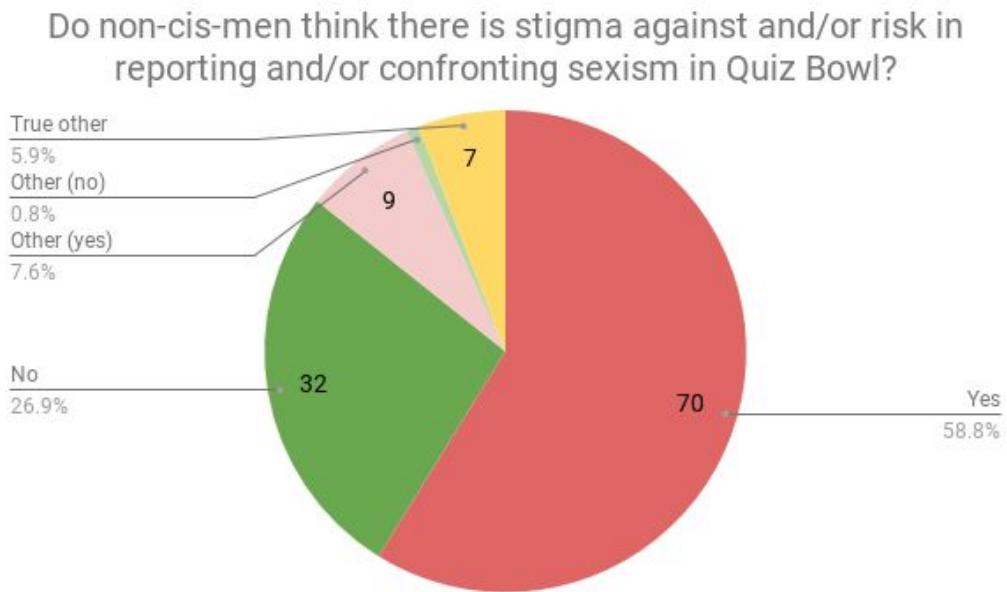


Figure 24: Percentage of Non-cis-men Who Think There Is Stigma Against and/or Risk in Reporting and/or Confronting Sexism in Quiz Bowl.

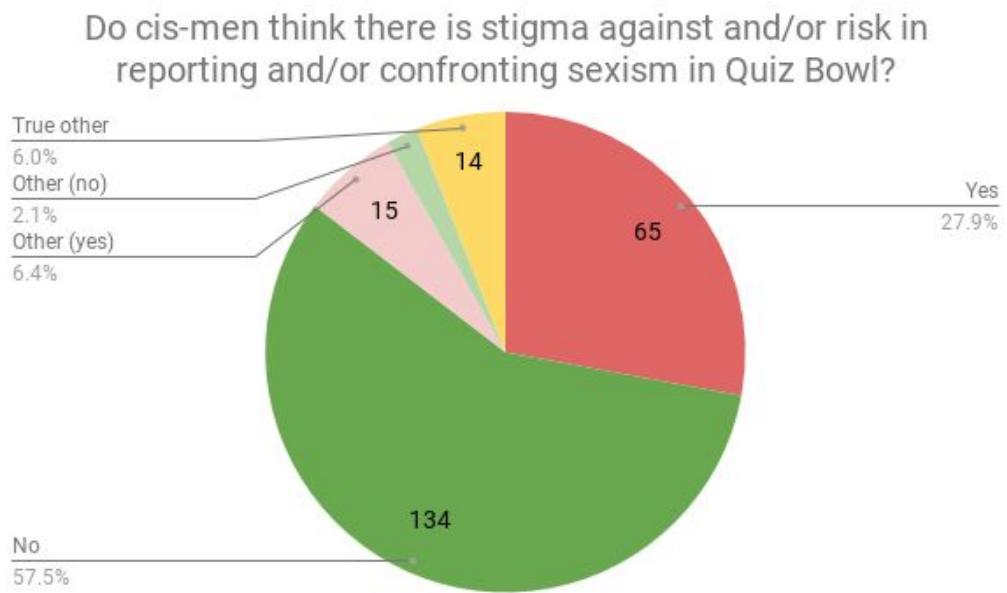


Figure 25: Percentage of Cis-men Who Think There Is Stigma Against and/or Risk in Reporting and/or Confronting Sexism in Quiz Bowl.

If respondents had heard observed any gender-based bias they were far more likely to have confronted the perpetrator directly than to have reported their conduct to an authority figure. (See *Figure 20* and *Figure 22*.) While a majority of non-cis-men (58.9%) talked to an individual about their bias at least once, only 20.2% ever told an authority figure about what they heard or saw. In parallel, 46.4% of cis-men responded interpersonally/informally to bias at least once, while just 17.9% reported it. Since respondents reported observing sexism from contemporaries with more frequency than adults, perhaps such a statistic has to do with the fact that the perpetrators in question were respondents' peers, or even friends, and bringing in an adult would be seen as an unnecessary escalation. Reporting biased behavior would potentially damage the inter-team relationships making up the social aspect of Quiz Bowl, which is, to many, the best part of the game. One female commenter worried that speaking up in a more formal setting would cause people to tell her, "Stop whining, you're overreacting, not an issue." A male commenter explained his lack of official action by saying, "I am . . . afraid school authorities won't care and that my effort is useless," while another echoed that sentiment by adding, "I didn't report it because [it was] an uncomfortable thing to mention, and I believed no one would care or do anything about it." Yet another male commenter pointed out that reporting bias to a tournament director "sometimes feels pointless because you can't really be sure if the TD will do anything especially if you're reporting another team or coach" and they want to maintain good, easy-going relationship with their colleagues, especially those paying to attend a tournament, as well as to avoid the appearance of favoritism towards any particular team and retain the status of objective administrator. A female commenter also noted that most TDs are male. Numerous other comments supported those above, though one (from a male respondent) presented an alternate

take: “[R]eporting is only necessary in grave/repeat circumstances.” But the point at which off-putting banter begins to constitute a “grave circumstance” can be hard to pinpoint, and players may not want to risk causing a major incident or drawing attention to themselves by guessing.

Still, a majority of cis-men (57.5%, or 59.6% if you include those who used the “other” option to write a response to this effect) do not believe there is any stigma against or risk in reporting or confronting gender-based bias in Quiz Bowl. (See *Figure 24* and *Figure 25*.) On the one hand, if these respondents do not believe there is any stigma, they presumably would not judge anyone for responding, be it formally or informally, to sexism or HTQ bias. On the other, if they do not believe there is any community-based reason why people might not want to do so, they likely also believe the current rates of reporting/confrontation reflect the rates of incidence. However, as has already been established, non-cis-men are more often the targets of bias than cis-men, and 58.8% of *them* believe there *is* a stigma — 66.4% if you include those who used the “other” option to write an affirmative response. Those who make up that percentage are thus more likely to be affected by sexism or HTQ bias but less likely to speak up about it for fear of risking their friendships, their reputations, or their positions within their teams or the community as a whole. As one female commenter wrote with resignation, “A he-said-she-said scenario in a male-dominated environment [such as Quiz Bowl] feels like a losing battle.” More basically, Doug Simons (High Tech) added, “I think a lot of people . . . really just don’t want to talk about [sexist incidents which happen to other community members]. It makes them uncomfortable.”

Another reason some commenters gave for not speaking up was inability to imagine not the willingness of authorities to help but the ability of authorities to help. The last female respondent above added to her aforementioned comment, “I’m also unsure how NAQT would

address reports of sexism.” A different respondent argued that the evolution of ILQBM into the main platform for discourse about the Quiz Bowl community means that it is very difficult to be taken seriously when trying to start a conversation; she seemed to feel that the reins steering the community have been implicitly handed to quality memers by actual administrative authorities. One male respondent who wrote that he did not believe there was any stigma continued, “I’m not sure [to whom]/how I would report it in most cases.” Even though this individual feels unafraid to report gender-based bias, if he observed it, he would not be able to act in a helpful way because he has not been educated about the proper avenues to use for such a report.

Unfortunately, authority figures have, according to the survey’s results, not given the community the overwhelming justification to trust them that they should have. Rates of positive behavioral change in an offending party as the result of reporting bias to an authority were significantly lower than those as the result of directly confronting a perpetrator. (See *Figure 21* and *Figure 23*.) 63.6% of non-cis-men have had success with confrontation at least once (including 4.5% for whom it always worked), but just 51.4% of them have had success with reporting. Whether or not taking the risk of bringing bias to the attention of an authority will help a non-cis-man (or someone else they know to be affected) at all is scarcely more predictable than a coin flip. Given the possible (perceived) consequences which could stem from reporting such bias, it is unsurprising that so few non-cis-men take that risk. The situation for cis-men is parallel, as per the aforementioned figures, with the thought-provoking caveat that non-cis-men have a higher success rate with both confrontation and reporting than they do. Such a finding would require more detailed questions to fully analyze, but it is certainly possible that both authorities and offending students are more likely to listen to people directly affected by gender-based bias,

who are more likely to be non-cis-men, though that may be because sometimes a victim's testimony is seen as a prerequisite for action. Personally, I add on a brief tangent, I believe such regulations need reform, because it may be dangerous for victims to come forward in some cases.

One piece of good news for authority figures is that though the overall rate of action in response to reporting was lower as compared to confrontation, for both cis-men and non-cis-men, the percentage of respondents who responded that their response had *always* resulted in a positive behavioral change was higher. 17.1% of non-cis-men and 17.8% of cis-men chose that option with regard to reporting, as compared to 4.5% and 15.2% for direct response. Additionally, those numbers suggest that high school students are far more consistently receptive to cis-men than non-cis-men, which is in and of itself a form of bias. In contrast, 17.1% and 17.8% are very close, suggesting that for those authority figures who strive to always help when people report bias, the gender of the reporting individual makes little difference in the response.

Before moving on to the next section, I will briefly detail an interesting observation from the comments left with the “other” option of the stigma question: Many cis-men felt the need to comment on an optional yes/no question to point out that such stigma exists in Quiz Bowl because it exists in society as a whole, and our community is not an exception to that rule. All in all, six comments making that point were left by cis-men, as compared to only one by a non-cis-man. These comments are not unjustified, but they do beg an obvious question: Why haven’t we worked to *make* our community an exception to that rule? Why haven’t we taken steps to make non-cis-men feel more welcome in Quiz Bowl than they do in many other parts of the world, to welcome them with open arms? These cis-men make well-reasoned points, but they are affected by their authors’ privilege to externalize gender-based bias and deal with it on a

theoretical level. Yes, there is bias almost everywhere in society, but to a female player who has been denied her spot on a team because of her gender or a transgender man who is ridiculed by a moderator, that bias is specific and personal and, because it occurred in conjunction with Quiz Bowl, a part of the Quiz Bowl experience. That understanding of such incidents does not preclude recognition of injustice due to gender or sexuality elsewhere in society, but it does ground the nebulous concept of bias in one or more specific moments, because those moments are memories.

RESULTS: THE CRUX OF THE ISSUE

CW: sexual harassment and abuse of power

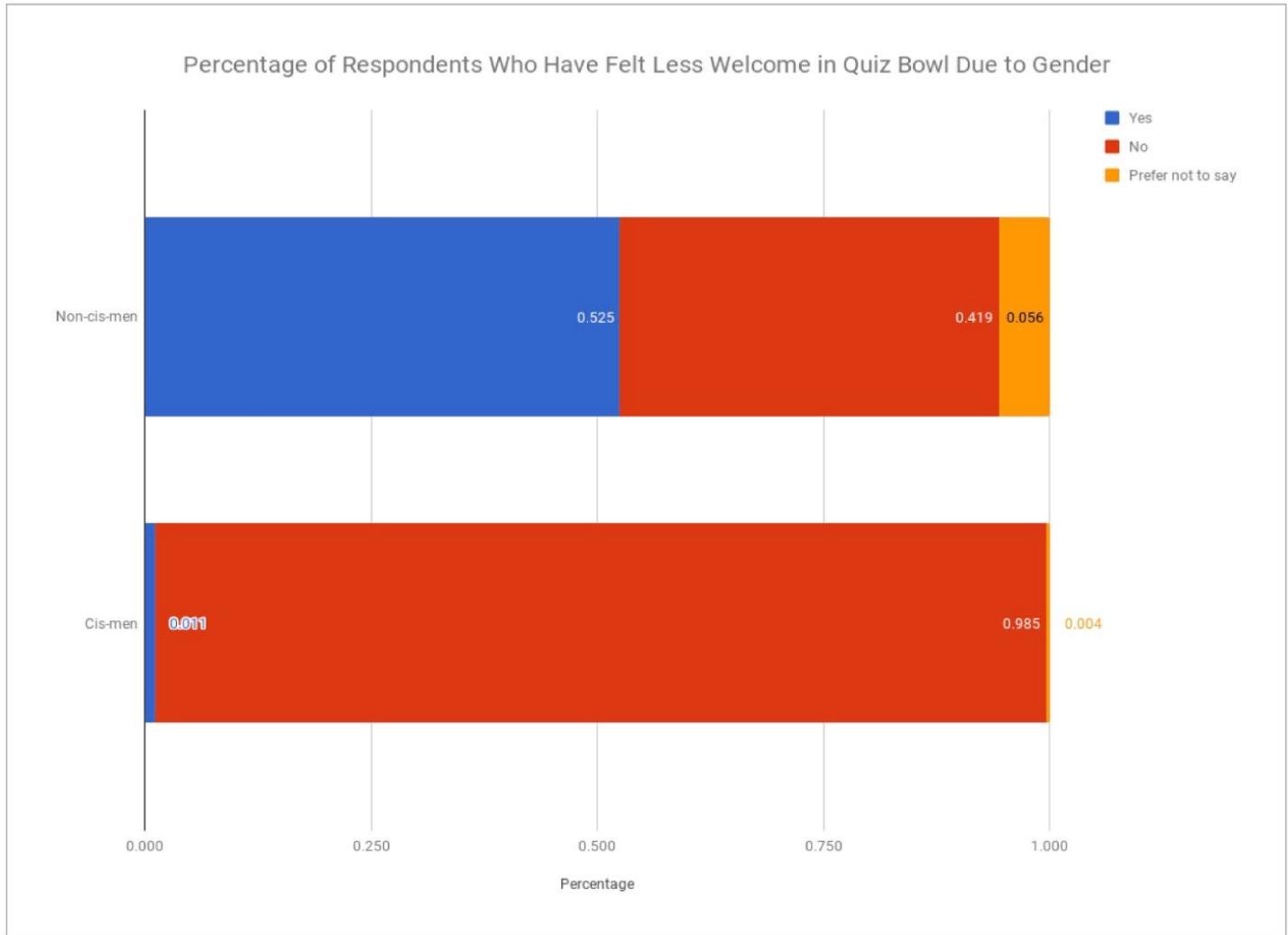


Figure 26: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Felt Less Welcome in Quiz Bowl Due to Gender.

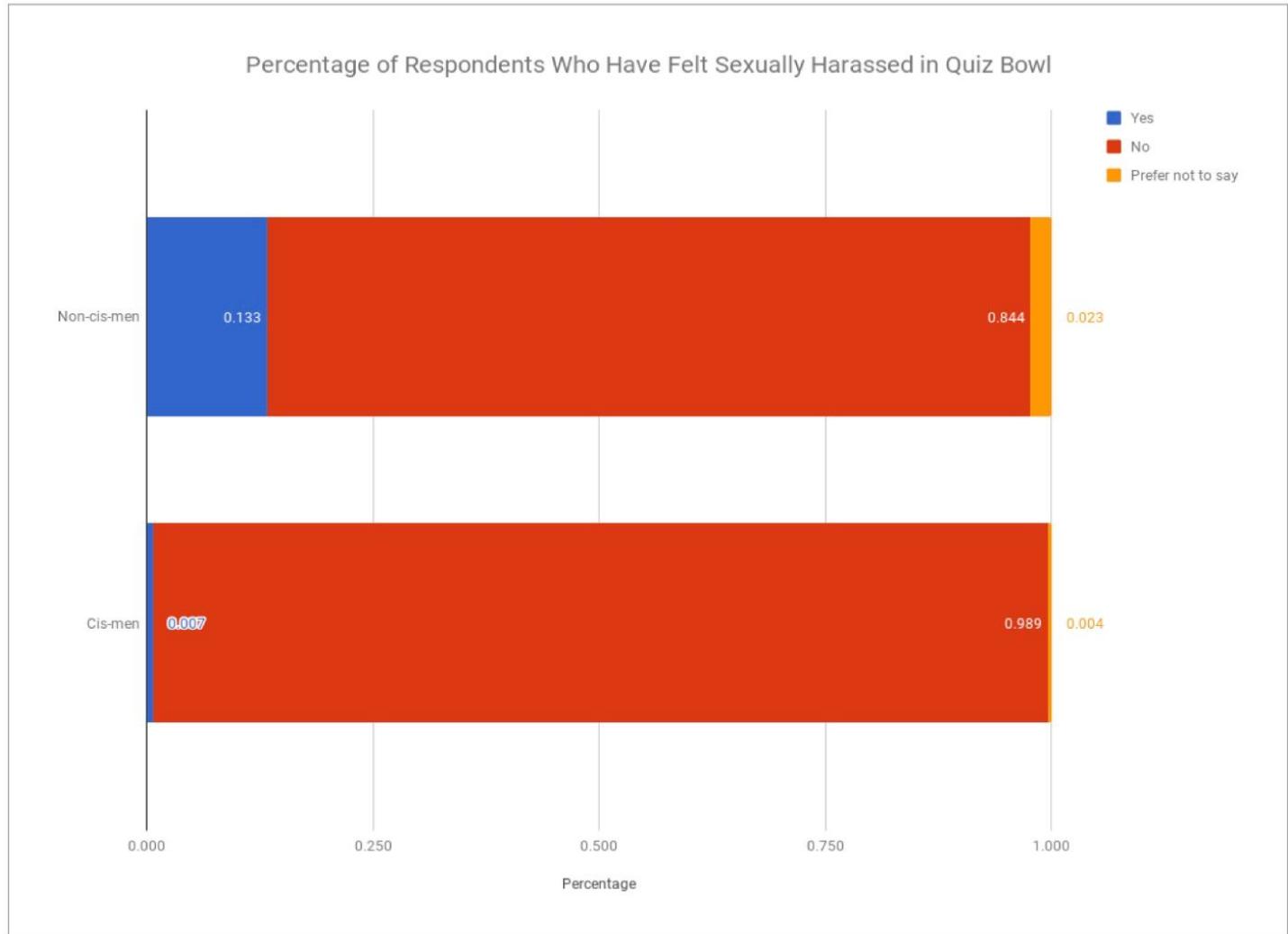


Figure 27: Percentage of Respondents Who Have Felt Sexually Harassed in Quiz Bowl.

Are respondents aware of any people in Quiz Bowl abusing their power in a sexist or sexual way?

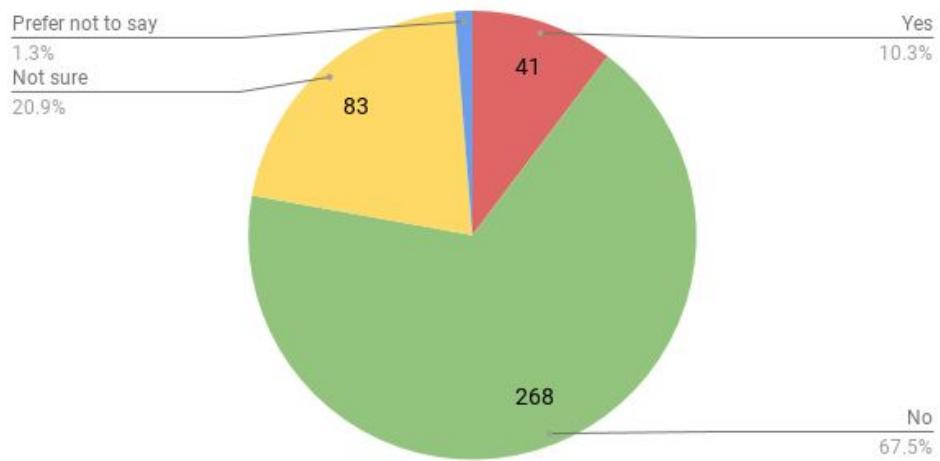


Figure 28: Respondents' Awareness of Current Members of the Quiz Bowl Community Abusing Their Power in a Sexist or Sexual Way.

Respondents' Highest Leadership Positions on Their High School Teams

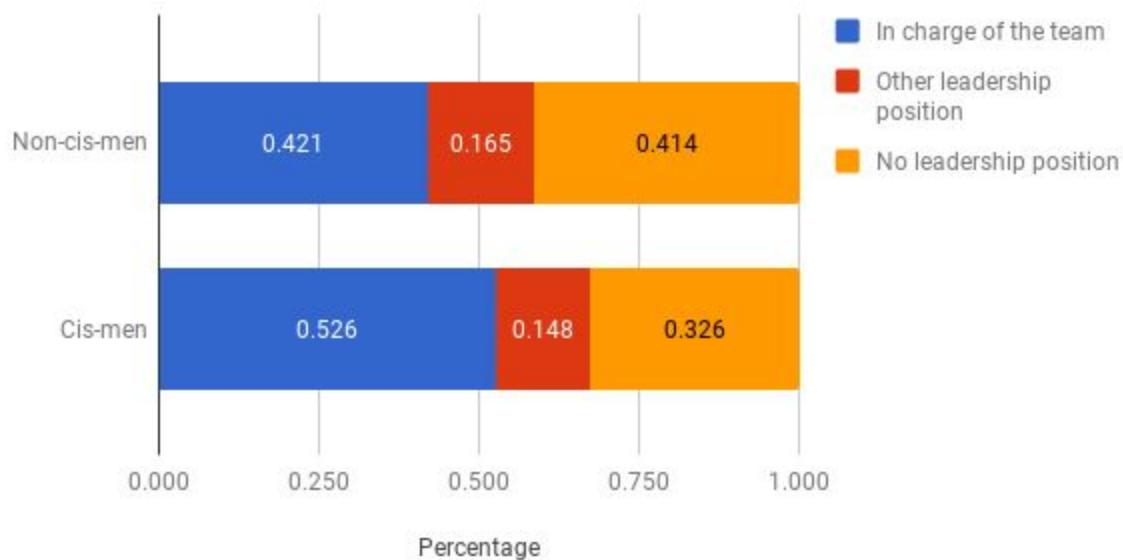


Figure 29: Respondents' Highest Leadership Positions on Their High School Teams.

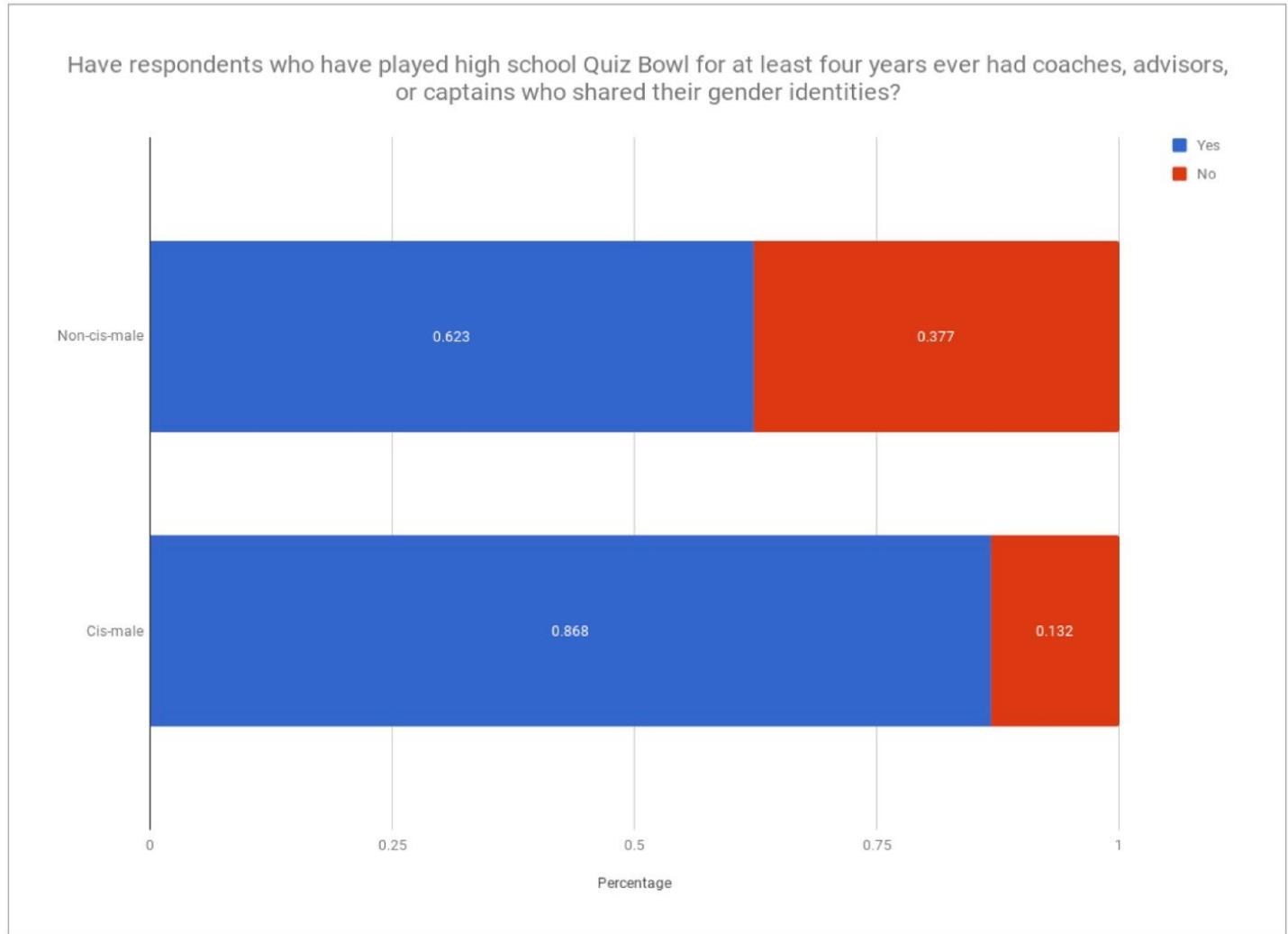


Figure 30: Percentage of Respondents with Minimum Four Years Playing Experience in High School Who Have and Have Not Had Coaches, Advisors, or Captains Who Shared Their Gender Identities.

Although 1.1% of cis-men responded they had felt less welcome in Quiz Bowl due to their gender, that number pales in comparison to the 52.5% of non-cis-men who responded in kind. (See *Figure 26.*) That means more than half of the non-cis-men engaged in the online community enough to hear about and complete the survey have felt as if they do not belong in that community — probably more, since 5.6% of non-cis-men preferred not to say, and if forced, some of them presumably would have responded to that effect. It's no wonder, then, that 53.3% of respondents who quit before graduating high school were non-cis-male although only 33.0% of total respondents were. (Data not represented visually.) It takes a tremendous amount of strength to stay in an activity which mixes academic competition with personal intrigue as seamlessly as Quiz Bowl when you feel as though you are not wanted, especially when, as one responder put it, you “need to be better than . . . male counterparts to stand a chance” of being accepted. A cis-female respondent described her experience this way: “The female players tend to neg less because we feel we are judged more harshly for our mistakes than our male counterparts, and we are also more hesitant to offer suggestions while conferring on bonuses.” Another divulged, “I was ALWAYS afraid to try and answer tossups on any questions I didn’t know for sure, because I knew they would get mad at me for playing out of my specialty subject and getting it wrong.” Non-cis-male players start from an expectation of failure, and often have to work twice as hard to prove their value to a team.

I would know.

In fact, in an interview, Darien’s co-captain (and an Honorable Mention for Morlan’s All-World Team in 2017), Julia Tong, described the Periscope thread from HSNCT as an example of the perpetuation of the perception of exclusivity. Tong said of the issue: “[W]hen

things like that happen, and there's not a huge amount of official response, in my opinion, it does send a message of, like, 'Hey, if you get catcalled, or something really bad happens, like you get mocked on the Periscope video for being a female, essentially, [no one faces consequences].' It sends a clear message of, like, 'Hey, you're not welcome here. This is a very insular community full of a ton of guys who are just really ruthless, and they're rude, and they're not great people. They're people you don't want to spend time with.'" To be absolutely clear, neither Tong nor I feels that way about the community personally. She was merely expressing that she understands why someone in my position might.

Furthermore, the results of the survey suggest that for non-cis-men, Quiz Bowl can be not just exclusionary but also dangerous. 13.3% of them responded that they had felt sexually harassed in Quiz Bowl, as compared to just 0.7% of men. (See *Figure 27*.) That statistic accounts one eighth of non-cis-male respondents. As mentioned above, non-cis-men account for 33.0% of respondents to the poll; they also account for 90.0% of respondents who answered affirmatively to the sexual harassment question. And it is absolutely crucial to remember that these are not just esoteric numbers on a page. Those numbers reflect the violation of at least twenty community members' sense of security and autonomy. Sexual harassment of *one* Quiz Bowl player is unacceptable. When these respondents were going through this struggle, they were not percentage points. They were human beings, made of flesh as the rest of us are, and they deserved better. Of course sexual harassment occurs in other, possibly all, sectors of our society. But society's evils do not condemn our community. *We* are in control, and we have the power to make Quiz Bowl safer than the rest of the world. Not just the power, but also the responsibility. As W. H. Auden writes in my favorite poem, his "September 1, 1939," "We must love one another or die."

I will expand upon this paragraph at the end of this report, but for now, I will introduce the main idea: One of the biggest contributing factors to the continuation of sexism, HTQ bias, and sexual harassment in the Quiz Bowl community is the abuse of power, and the tendency of those who find out about it to do nothing. 10.3% of respondents asserted that they were aware of a member of the Quiz Bowl community abusing power in a sexist or sexual way, while 20.9% were unsure. (See *Figure 28.*) Together, that totals over one hundred people who either feel confident or have an inkling that someone who was active in Quiz Bowl when they completed the survey abused their power. Several also left commenting naming many of the same people as suspicious characters who may be guilty of sexual harassment or assault. And yet, until a couple of days ago, there had been no new revelations of such conduct. There are a myriad of ways in which power can be abused in a sexist or sexual fashion in Quiz Bowl, but none of them are permissible. Not all perpetrators are rapists, but all damage our community — potentially irreparably, I sometimes fear. All threaten the victims' abilities to enjoy the game and advance through its ranks. Sometimes, the relationship may be direct; for example, a captain or coach may ask for sexual favors in exchange for a well-deserved spot on a school's A Team. Other times, the connection is more abstract, but still quite potent. Any abuse of power which demeans, dehumanizes and/or takes advantage of non-cis-men due to gender or sexuality excludes victims from feeling at ease in the community, which has adverse consequences on their progression as a player and limits their connection to the social aspect of the game.

Again, I would know.

Power, as we know, corrupts. One way to prevent abuse of power from affecting gender and sexuality minorities is to decrease the percentage of positions of power held by cis-men. A

more diverse leadership coalition around the country will yield a more understanding leadership coalition around the country. But as of now, the leadership has a long way to go. As previously discussed, the respondents to this survey represent a relatively elite, engaged subset of Quiz Bowl players as a whole, so the majority of them have held some leadership position; still, 41.4% of non-cis-male respondents have not, as compared to just 32.6% of cis-male respondents. (See *Figure 29.*) The ratio of cis-male team leaders to non-cis-male team leaders was equal to 2.54, which was significantly higher than the overall ratio of cis-male to non-cis-male respondents, 2.03. In short, more cis-men rise through the ranks to become a captain or president of their squad than do non-cis-men. However, interestingly, the percentage of non-cis-men who have other leadership positions is higher than that of cis-men, at 16.5% as opposed to 14.8%. My hypothesis is that this finding relates to the idea of the “team mom,” which usually encompasses not just general kindness and care but also willingness to manage the logistics for the team indefinitely without receiving any credit for the hard work. I suspect these are players who held positions like vice captainship and were responsible for the grunt work necessary to make their captain look good for the cameras. Been there, too. One cis-female respondent described how “the female members on [her] team are almost exclusively for set up during home meets and tournaments.” She added, “Our willingness to help and make sacrifices for the good of the team are unfortunately often taken advantage of.”

Power in Quiz Bowl is not just held by student leaders, though. Adult coaches and advisors play a crucial role in the community’s function. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that 62.3% of non-cis-male players who had been involved with high school Quiz Bowl for at least four years had indeed been led at least once by an adult or captain with their own gender identity.

(See *Figure 30.*) This finding is the one from this report which heartens me most, because it means that a significant majority of members of gender minorities in Quiz Bowl who responded to the survey have at least had one authoritative role model of their same gender to guide them along the way. (Of course, captains, coaches, and advisors can provide support systems regardless of gender — Tong pointed to her former co-captain Michael Borecki and the emotional support he provided as a major reason she stayed in the game — but gender minorities in Quiz Bowl undeniably face unique challenges which cis-men cannot fully understand.) Still, though, there is a big gap between that majority and the cis-male majority which has enjoyed the same privilege, 86.8%. To be fair, since this data only includes players who have been involved for four years or more (because the more years you play, the more coaches and advisors you are likely to have, so the greater the chance one will share your gender identity), it does not reflect the experiences of newer players. It is possible that conditions have improved even further. Somehow, though, I doubt it. Even the all-girls schools (and schools with teams led entirely by non-cis-men) of which I have heard, such as Mount Carmel Academy, Archbishop Chapelle, and even Darien, are led near-universally by male coaches.

Of course, abuse of power in a sexual context can occur between people of any genders. However, it is statistically more likely (and also more likely to be effectively covered up) when it consists of a member of a societally empowered group (cis-men) taking advantage of position to harass a member of a societally disempowered group (non-cis-men). Therefore, the over-representation of cis-men in positions of power in Quiz Bowl is worrisome. If this survey were to be administered again in a few years, though, and all numbers were stagnant except for an increase in the percentage of non-cis-men in leadership roles, I would be happy and confident that

our community was making progress; such a shift would be a harbinger of change, and it is, I believe one of the first steps in the never-ending project to make Quiz Bowl better for absolutely everyone in its reach.

Finally, before moving on, I want to provide a list of a few other miscellaneous anecdotes respondents related which did not really fit into the report at any other point but are imperative to note. One respondent felt alienated by the overwhelming gender disparity among flag-bearers at History Bowl nationals. Two different respondents specifically called out a bonus a few years ago with a lead-in implying that asking about make-up brands compensated for under-representation of non-cis-men. Many remembered being called “good for a girl.” One respondent who works as a coach explained that her students question her instructions more than her male counterparts’. One respondent described how a female captain was targeted by a slanderous, *Ninety-Five Theses* style note of disapproval posted on a door. One respondent asserted that until two years ago, a certain team had an end-of-year tradition in which they, along with their adult cis-male coaches, ranked all of the women in Quiz Bowl based on appearance. One respondent recounted how a cis-female teammate was accused of stealing a missing laptop after staffing a tournament, although she insisted repeatedly that she had returned it. One respondent had her coach purposefully leave her out of a school announcement. One respondent was solicited by a teammate for inappropriate pictures as a freshman. One respondent knows a cis-woman who was asked, at Quiz Bowl, to remove her clothing. Many, many non-cis-men referenced crying in at least one of their comments.

With that, we have arrived at the end of the results. That’s everything. Readers now know what I know, factually, about the issue at hand. Our next task is using the data to draw

conclusions about what we should do to make our community more inclusive. In the pages that follow, I try my hand, but it is incumbent upon readers to try their own in due time. I cannot solve these problems on my own, nor should it be my responsibility to do so. I'm seventeen and there are lots of community members who have much more perspective than I do. I'm also just one person. The gender inequity in Quiz Bowl is never going to change if efforts to correct it are not collaborative. In a recent forums thread which I will get to in a few pages, Bernadette Spencer, one of Quiz Bowl's most prominent and inspiring non-cis-men, said that we should "let [our community] crumble" because "[o]ur validity and humanity [are] worth more than quizbowl." I absolutely agree with the second half of that statement, but I do not believe, in spite of everything, that it is time to "let it crumble" just yet. I have unthinkable, implausible hope. Of course our validity and humanity are worth than Quiz Bowl, but there is absolutely no reason why we non-cis-men should not be able to have all three.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggestions for ways in which we can improve the inclusivity of Quiz Bowl on the basis of gender will be presented in a list format, in no particular order. They are the corner pieces of a thousand piece puzzle; there is much more to say. My aim herein is merely to establish part of the area in which we are all going to be working as we strive for equity, so that when we find the next piece that fits, we will already have a general frame from which to work.

1. One of the recurring problems non-cis-male respondents brought up in their comments was a sense of isolation. Fear of isolation is also a major reason teams have difficulty recruiting non-cis-male players if their roster does not already include some. At the end of the survey, one cis-male commenter proposed, “Maybe girls in Quizbowl could get in touch with one another. I feel like the only girl in our Quizbowl club often feels unwelcome, and although I try to address her concerns, I feel like sometimes I don’t understand completely what she’s going through.” I have also discussed at great lengths the importance of having non-cis-male role models and peers for inspiration. As such, my first suggestion is that NAQT create a mailing list/newsletter specifically for non-cis-male players in high school (though a similar step could be taken at the college level, and perhaps eventually at the middle school level as well). Once a week or so, an email could be sent to the list including a brief profile of an interesting non-cis-male figure of historical or contemporary importance, a few recent Quiz-Bowl-related accomplishments of the list’s members (people could send them in, as college alumni do to the editors of their alumni magazine), and perhaps some extra and purely fun, like a riddle or a

challenge of some kind. In addition, the list could be (with everyone's knowledge) open rather than use blank carbon copy so that non-cis-men around the country have access to peers' contact information should they want to reach out for support. (Alternately, the list could use blank carbon copy but could send out a link to a bulleted list of the contact information of all consenting subscribers.) A mailing list of this nature would promote a sense of camaraderie and connection among non-cis-men across the country and around the world, and would make non-cis-men daring to be the first or second player of their gender in their circuit feel less alone. In short, it would provide a support network, and the regularly scheduled emails would remind us that we are welcome in this community, that we have a place, even when the going gets tough. It would also provide an opportunity outside of the regular NAQT social media schedule to celebrate non-cis-male players for their various achievements, because even if that achievement is something small, it is worth celebrating among friends — and hopefully, such a list would build friendships.

2. A secondary idea related to the one above is a mentorship program in which any non-cis-male freshmen or sophomores who want to be involved could request the contact information of a non-cis-male junior or senior who has already signed up. The two would then keep in regular contact for the rest of the season (and afterwards, if they desire), be it for strategic advice, study tips, or just conversations about life in high school. For non-cis-men who are not as lucky as I was and do not have older players of their gender identities nearby to admire, a program of this nature would give new and younger Quiz Bowlers role models. I believe a mentorship program would significantly decrease the rate at which non-cis-male middle school veterans quit high school teams as freshmen, and it

would also help young non-cis-men develop faster as players, eventually increasing the percentage of non-cis-male high-ranking individuals. It might take a few seasons, but especially now that IPNCT exists, there is an opportunity for developing players to rise through the ranks and distinguish themselves in a newly public way. If more of those players are non-cis-men, then they in turn will serve as role models for the generation after them, kickstarting a positive feedback loop of inspiration.

3. One imperative step for every governing organization to take, be it national, state, or local, is clearly and publicly elucidating the process of reporting gender-based bias and/or sexual harassment. Many players simply do not know to whom they should be reporting sexism and HTQ bias. Others know a name but are afraid to make use of that knowledge because they are unsure about what would happen next (and, in some cases, whether or not they would be in danger). Organizations must be transparent regarding their policies — and if they do not already have official and consistent policies regarding sexism and sexual harassment, they must write some immediately — and make clear how a player-filed report works from beginning to end. Specifically, it is important to emphasize the ways in which the organization would protect any victim who feels they are risking their safety by coming to an authority figure. In addition, organizations should have clearly delineated consequences for specific actions to promote objectivity and eliminate any doubt about what procedures should be followed in response to upsetting information coming to light. (Needless to say, anyone an internal investigation finds guilty of sexual harassment should promptly be banned by the organization, and that information should be shared with other organizations as well.) This clarification process serves two joint purposes. Firstly, it

makes it easier for players, especially high school players, to confidently and effectively report any bias which might come to their attention, such that they no longer have to worry as actively about the risks of bringing such information to the organization. Secondly, it forces organizations to reconsider or develop their rules regarding sexism and sexual harassment, polishing them to make them as foolproof as possible. Thus, when players come to authority figures with reports, the reaction by the organization should be the same every time.

4. In order to facilitate the sharing of ban lists between organizations as alluded to above, all national, state, and local Quiz Bowl organizations should have to register with a central governing board and stay in contact regarding dangerous individuals. If, for example, a perennial staffer in Illinois is found to be a child predator and is promptly banned by that state's organization, he should not be able to travel to Indiana and find staffing work there. In order to de-incentivize complacency, punitive measures should be taken if an organization allows a banned staffer to work for them; as to exactly what those punitive measures should be and how they would be administered, I am unsure. In order to prove compliance, though, staffers should be required to sign in at tournaments so that there is some official record of who is working where. Those sheets with staffers' names and signatures should then be sent to the governing board, signed by the tournament director to confirm their truthfulness.
5. As asserted earlier, one of the most important ingredients in a successful transition to gender equity must be increasing the representation of non-cis-men among adult leaders. Thankfully, there are already lots of them working for NAQT and PACE. What we need

now is an increase in female coaches and advisors. As I know the internal workings of neither national organization, my suggestions here cannot be specific, but in vague terms, either NAQT or PACE should start an initiative to work with school districts and/or teachers' conferences/organizations to encourage more non-cis-male classroom teachers to become Quiz Bowl advisors or coaches. Interested teachers could then be coached on coaching by the organizations, provided with free study materials and free admission to a first tournament, and encouraged to reach for the stars. All of this process could occur remotely or take place at a conference specifically designed for training new non-cis-male coaches. Regarding the expense of such a program, I am almost sure either national organization would be able to find sponsors or garner donations to support it; it's the type of project which everyone wants to be on the record as supporting. However, this suggestion is certainly my most nebulous. It is much in need of grounding and specificity.

Now that readers have reached the end of my brief list of suggestions, I desperately hope they are staring incredulously at the page, thinking, *How could she have left out...?* Please tell me what I left out. My final idea for working towards gender equity in Quiz Bowl is forming a task force on the issue, including players, coaches, and administrators. Such a task force could consider and reshape these recommendations, and could certainly develop better ones. We will approach solutions so much faster if there is a group dedicated (at least temporarily) to coming up with them. It is time to stop our current cycle of having heated online discussions a couple times a year and calling each instance a step in the right direction. It is time to give these issues the attention and care they deserve.

SHORTCOMINGS

I hope this report proved valuable, but it is certainly far from perfect. There are numerous questions I should have phrased differently for clarity. I should have split the question relating to stigma in half, such that respondents were first asked whether or not there was stigma against reporting or confronting sexism and then, separately, asked whether or not they had ever feared consequences for doing so. (The number of “other” responses which said something along the lines of “yes to the first, no to the second” taught me my lesson as I mindlessly copied and pasted them into their document a few weeks ago.) I should have changed the gender demographic question to include the answer options “cisgender male,” “cisgender female,” and “other,” because it is unfair and hurtful of me to expect transgender men or women to use the “other” box to specify their gender identities when they are as male or female as anyone else described by those terms. I should have left the survey open for longer and publicized it more. If I had not been confined by graduation to a single year, I would have tried to get the word out at national tournaments to get more geographic diversity. Alas. Maybe I will make these changes one day and do all of this work over again.

The biggest and most obvious flaw in my study, though, is that it focuses squarely and solely on two aspects of identity: gender and sexuality. There is no mention of class. There is no mention of race. There is no mention of citizenship status. Nothing else. Only gender and sexuality. These other factors not only greatly affect portions of the Quiz Bowl community but also interact with the very factors on which I wrote. Gender and sexuality do not exist in a vacuum. Thanks to Kimberle Crenshaw, the academic world now grapples with intersectionality constantly. Had I only the time, had I only the resources, please know that I would have done my

best to cover everything (and inevitably, I would have fallen short, but at least I would have tried). I chose to study gender and sexuality because, since I am a woman but have weighty privilege in almost every other regard, they are the demographic topics within which I have the most personal knowledge and experience. Please also know that I know that there are places in this report where I could have more explicitly acknowledged my privilege and failed to do so. And please forgive me and know that I was trying to do the best I could with eighty hours or so spread over three months. There was not time for everything. I very much hope that I will be able to return to this work and make this report the first in a series, or that someone else will take the lead.

Beyond those points, and relating to those points, even, I welcome all feedback. Please reach out to me with comments, questions, criticisms, and even condemnations. I am here for all of it. Let me know what I did wrong so I can correct it next time.

COMMENTS ON RECENT EVENTS

Before I get to what has been going on during mid-May 2018 (I am writing this section on May 16), I want to tell you a story. Or, rather, I want to tell you the end of the story I started at the beginning of this report: the story of the Periscope thread.

Against my better judgment, I posted a reply to the comments about the thread on the forums. It was something brief and appreciative, but I do not remember the bulk, because only one line mattered in the end: “I also wondered why DCC made no comment.” It mattered because shortly thereafter, something I never expected to happen went ahead and happened anyway. DCC made a comment. Sort of.

A little over a week after forums users stopped responding to the Periscope thread, at 12:36 a.m., I received an incredibly long message on Facebook from Robert Mansuetti, the history player for last year’s DCC team. We had known each other only peripherally, and in the context of a fierce rivalry. We had not spoken since I briefly congratulated him on his team’s victory at PACE more than six months earlier. Nevertheless, in the middle of the night, he sent me a full-length essay in response to my comment on the forums. Here are a few highlights:

I just want to say that I feel horrible that those comments were made and I had no control over their appearance or the handling of their aftermath . . . I know DCC has established a reputation as a sort of boy’s [sic] club (which is understandably and rightly offensive), but I felt the A Team my senior year at least made steps to be amicable and friendly with other teams . . . I know personally all the former team members that made the offensive comments, and it sucks that nothing I ever say to them will help them understand why their comments were bad or why they should make steps to improve their behavior in the

future . . . I'm ashamed that former members of my school felt the need to post such things, and hope you understand that I and my teammates never promoted that type of behavior . . . I regret not sending this earlier, and also not giving this much though[t] after the fact . . . (If there was anything I or my teammates ever did, please let me know[;] I could have done something I didn't consider was offensive at the time, but now I'm able to see if what I did was wrong and reevaluate my values). It's hard to kind of put this into words, but I hope you understand that not every player associated with DCC fits that male chauvinist, low-key-misogynistic image associated with us, and that at least one of them is able to see the grand error in said worldview and make strides to be better than that.

I was completely and totally shocked, but more than anything else, I was touched. I would have been astonished if *anyone* had given me such a complete and heartfelt apology, but the fact that Mansuetti was a DCC player made the entire incident feel surreal. It was profoundly humanizing, and meant the world to me. So I thanked Mansuetti profusely, and then asked if I could quote him for this study. I thought his perspective would add something valuable, something real, something different and refreshing to this report which is admittedly driven not just by my curiosity but also by bitterness and pain. Mansuetti's words gave me a lot of hope. As cliché as it sounds, I feel like over the past few months, I've been building a bridge across a river I thought would form the edge of my world forever. Now I'm just excited to explore what's on the other side.

I bring up this story to underscore my earlier point that there is hope for the Quiz Bowl community. The events of this months have been earth-shattering; without realizing it, I think I accidentally almost helped spark a revolution. For those of you who do not already know what has been happening, a quick summary: A few days ago, the notoriously provocative and highly controversial player and persona Charlie Dees took to the forums and posted screenshots which showed a second- or third-hand confirmation of a notable administrator's sexual assault of someone in college. This post sparked a discussion in the ILQBM moderator chat which revealed to me and several others that the story of this assault was just one of many "open secrets" about predatory adult men in the Quiz Bowl community. In a flurry of overwhelming emotion (disgust, pain, betrayal, anger, hope for the victims' wellbeing, etc.), I left the chat and posted a short essay on the forums admitting that I was once a victim of sexist/sexual abuse of power in Quiz Bowl and accusing anyone who knew the "open secrets" and did nothing of complicity. Overnight, the community went into an uproar. Messages flooded the forums and poured into all of my social networking accounts. My extraordinary female peers and friends posted more essays. Hundreds of people clamored for explanations and promises for action. As of yet, things are still unresolved.

Most of my non-cis-male friends and role models who are still involved in Quiz Bowl are actively upset even now, a few days later. So am I. None of us were expecting it, and if Periscope knocked the wind out of us, this development felt like a death blow. All the surface-level progress we had made over a number of years swirled down the sink drain and was gone, leaving only a thin residue of soap. So many of us are hurting. We do not know what to do. In fact, people, especially cis-men, keep asking me what *they* should do. I'm flattered that they think I have any valuable ideas about that topic, but as previously mentioned, I am seventeen years old and I do

not even know how to deal with my own emotions at the moment, let alone someone else's. We all need time. This week has been hard. In private conversations, some of my friends muse about the apparent hopelessness of change. I write this section into my report as a final touch not because I have any answers, but because I do indeed have so much hope. I wrote so earlier, but I want to take the space here to fully explain, because I want my readers to have it, too.

I have hope because Doug Simons from High Tech texted me in the heat of the summer to apologize for not doing something, saying something, making a different choice when he thought he saw me in trouble but wasn't sure so stayed quiet. I've played alongside instead of across from Doug twice now; I've bought his mother soap as a thank you present for some train tickets. I've taught him how to celebrate Passover in a Massachusetts town commons. In spite of everything, we have become true friends.

I have hope because to be frank, when Emily Dickson from the University of Pittsburgh sent me a friend request on Facebook, I had never heard her name before, so I accepted out of obligation only. Then I got frustrated at the sense of obligation, because I knew I only felt it because of the way manners and accommodation are so impressed upon young girls. Just the other day, Emily and I had one of the most heartfelt conversations I've had in a good long while. We have still never met in person. In spite of everything, I am so glad I felt that obligation, whatever its source.

I have hope because last year, whenever I got nervous, I recited the last stanza of "September 1, 1939" (which, yes, I already quoted in this report) under my breath to calm down. It was a constant source of what I'm sure was meant to be playful ridicule but my panic-stricken mind interpreted as exacerbation of the notion that everything was out of my control. Before long,

those lines were so associated with that teasing that they brought my heart rate up by themselves. But when I told Max Shatan from Bard about that habit, instead of making fun of me, he went home and learned it, too. In spite of everything, “September 1, 1939” is finally able to calm me down again.

I have hope because I spent an entire season believing everyone around me when they said I wasn’t good enough to be a nationally contending team. I believed that, though I was supposed to be a literature specialist, my knowledge of the canon was shallow. I believed that my presence behind the first buzzer was entirely irrelevant, that I would never win nor lose my team a game. I felt invisible. Insignificant. But in spite of everything, the winning buzz at HSNCT was my buzz on D. H. Lawrence, and when you watch the recording of that game, you can hear the audience gasp. You can see me settle back into my chair and smile and start to cry.

I have hope because, even if only for a day, my cousin Charlotte once honestly believed I had earned some official distinction of being the best girl in the whole world, even though I had been convinced for months that I was one of the worst. When I look into the eyes of the younger girls on my team, the twelve- and thirteen-year-olds especially, I see a remnant of her. They don’t believe I am the best, and they shouldn’t. But I think they still believe that either of us could be some day. I have hope because those girls have hope, and I would never want to let them down.

I have hope because of Mansuetti. In spite of everything, he was sorry. So was I. Forgiveness. Understanding. We are not just Quiz Bowl players. We are human beings, and like all living things, we have the capacity to change. Phototropism is our strength. In spite of everything, we are sorry. We start again. We stretch, full-bloomed, toward the sun.

WHO ARE QUIZ BOWL NON-CIS-MEN?

We show up to tournaments in pink dresses sometimes, and sometimes it's because we want to wear pink dresses on Saturdays, and sometimes it's because we think the type of boy who thinks we'll be easy to beat on first glance will take losing harder if we prove it's possible to be smart even if you're wearing pink. We get emails that say things like "the dress code for nationals is suit and tie or equivalent" and know whoever wrote that immortal line just didn't know what an equivalent might be and took the easy way out. We like walking around the Marriott in heels until someone assumes we're one of the parents "because you were wearing a cardigan, I don't know," and they didn't know girls came to nationals to play is all.

Or we don't. Because the secret is we're all different.

We grin and bear it when the new nickname is coined and bounces around the many, many Quiz Bowl group chats like a rubber ball. We hope the next one is a little bit harder to spell so people say it less. We'd rather everyone just started calling us "team mom" again, because it stung in a more subtle way.

Or we don't. Because the secret is we're all different.

We spend a year writing a study without any formal training, trying desperately to make a community we love and can see disintegrating day by day, paint chip by paint chip, find another way to be. We reach out for help and are shocked and grateful when we get it. We think long and hard about what the point was. We guess that writing one hundred pages does not solve a problem by itself; you can't throw a word count at injustice and expect success. We don't sleep for a few nights while we put the finishing touches on everything. We want it to be perfect. We accept that it will never be perfect. We come to understand that we do not have the power to mend a fraying

world alone from our bedroom in Brooklyn. We come to understand that, in just a couple of minutes, we're going to have to send in the report and let it go. (We let the end of the report become highly self-referential.) We want so badly to have the answers. We admit to ourselves that we don't. But we also recognize that we have more than we did when we started, and even in the event that our writing means nothing to anyone else, we think we've learned something, after all. We've compiled the information we've wanted in one place for so long. We reassure ourselves by thinking about how in five years, someone will be frustrated by the lack of materials on the topic just as we were until they find the report and to that someone, at least, it matters. We also know, though, that finishing the project at all proved many people wrong. We know that we hope that the paper will help people, we really do, but it also helped us believe more fervently in ourselves and in our community. We are quite literally the authors of our fate. We hold the laptop to our chest, and take a deep breath, and send it away before we can change our minds and hold on a second longer. We believe, even if only for a moment, that we have done something truly good.

Or we don't.

But I'm glad I did.

Now, for ten points each, fix this community.

INFORMAL LIST OF SOURCES

All external information not otherwise cited was taken from the websites of these organizations:

- National Academic Quiz Tournaments
- Partnership for Academic Competition Excellence
- Quizbowl Resource Center
- Quizbowl TDB Search