

The Paradox of the Women's Game

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1

What Bridge Players Said 1

These events perpetuate the belief that women are intrinsically less good at bridge than men.
(N° 140: Male Tournament, 35-54)

...[T]he fact that women's events exist at all = sexism in bridge, but I wouldn't be without them because currently women need their own arena to succeed.
(N° 63: Female International, 35-54)

In some ways the women's game probably helps to reinforce second tier-ness but obviously in another it does raise the profile of women who would otherwise be few in number at international level.
(N° 137: Female Tournament, 35-54)

They also encourage the undesirable belief that women want to have it both ways – being treated as equals for some purposes but getting special treatment for others.
(N° 140: Male Tournament, 35-54)

4

- The Research**
Exploring gender and bridge
- What bridge players said**
Bridge players' opinions on the women's game
- Paradox and Patriarchy**
Are women's only spaces a help and a hindrance?

2

What Bridge Players Said 2

Women do not work as hard as men, because there is not as much competition among women.
(N° 71: Female Professional, 35-54)

[E]radicate single sex competitions and trails etc. etc. It's a mind sport. You are basically inferring the brains are different.
(N° 120: Male Tournament, 25-34)

There is also a saying that "she plays bridge like a man" – meaning that this woman is actually good at bridge
(N° 148: Female International, 35-54)

5

The Research

Qualitative questionnaire

We designed a questionnaire which explored issues surrounding gender and bridge.

151 bridge players

We gathered unrestricted text responses from bridge players across the world.

Analysis of data

Using thematic analysis we analysed the answers to our questions, but were also open to other issues raised by players.

3

Women's only bridge creates a two-tier system of play and that reinforces the perception that women are weaker players.

Women and younger men were more likely to recognize the broader conditions of society that affect perceptions of women and the women's game.

Majority of participants who mentioned the women's game, suggested that it should be abolished.

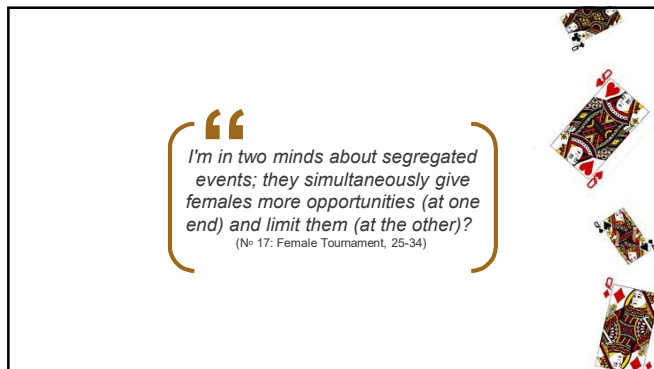
The biggest reason to abolish them is to change peoples' perceptions of women.

Key Findings

Many women believed the women's game provided them with opportunities they would not have otherwise.

Men were more likely to suggest that women's only games should not exist anymore. They are thought to go against gender equality – which appears to be misunderstood.

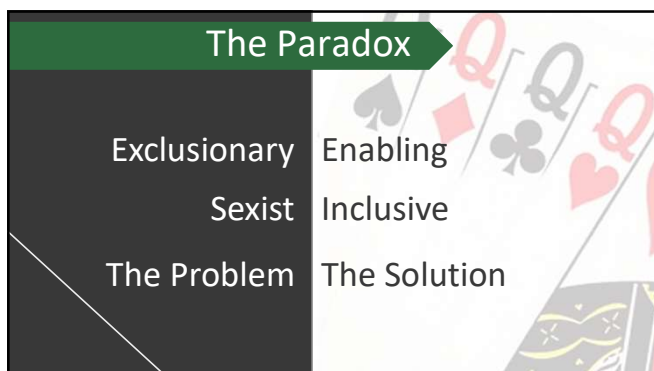
6



“
I'm in two minds about segregated events; they simultaneously give females more opportunities (at one end) and limit them (at the other)?
”
(№ 17: Female Tournament, 25-34)

The slide features a quote enclosed in large, stylized quotation marks. To the right of the text, several playing cards are scattered, including the King of Spades, Queen of Hearts, and King of Clubs.

7

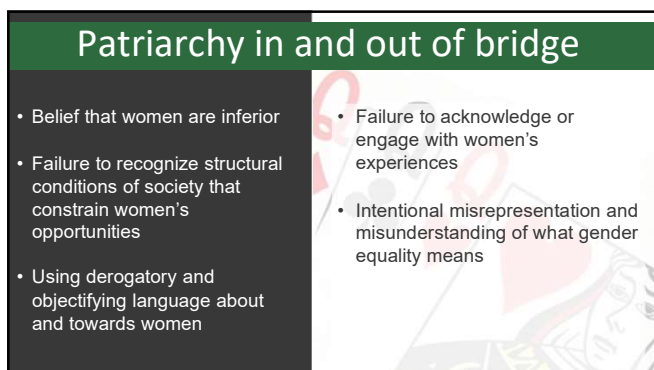


The Paradox

Exclusionary	Enabling
Sexist	Inclusive
The Problem	The Solution

The slide is titled 'The Paradox' in a green arrow-shaped header. Below the title is a table with two columns. The left column contains the terms 'Exclusionary', 'Sexist', and 'The Problem'. The right column contains 'Enabling', 'Inclusive', and 'The Solution'. The background of the slide features a faint image of playing cards.

8



Patriarchy in and out of bridge

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Belief that women are inferior• Failure to recognize structural conditions of society that constrain women's opportunities• Using derogatory and objectifying language about and towards women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Failure to acknowledge or engage with women's experiences• Intentional misrepresentation and misunderstanding of what gender equality means
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The slide is titled 'Patriarchy in and out of bridge' in a green header. Below the title is a table with two columns. The left column contains three bullet points: 'Belief that women are inferior', 'Failure to recognize structural conditions of society that constrain women's opportunities', and 'Using derogatory and objectifying language about and towards women'. The right column contains two bullet points: 'Failure to acknowledge or engage with women's experiences' and 'Intentional misrepresentation and misunderstanding of what gender equality means'. The background of the slide features a faint image of playing cards.

9